

Poetry Series

Robert Rorabeck
- poems -

Publication Date:
2013

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Robert Rorabeck(04/10/1978)

Sometimes with the one I love I fill myself with rage for fear
I effuse unreturn'd love,
But now I think there is no unreturn'd love, the pay is cer-
tain one way or another,
(I loved a certain person ardently and my love was not
return'd.
Yet out of that I have written these songs.)

Walt Whitman

I SHALL NOT CARE

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough,
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.

Sara Teasdale (1915)

Success

I think if you had loved me when I wanted;
If I'd looked up one day, and seen your eyes,
And found my wild sick blasphemous prayer granted,
And your brown face, that's full of pity and wise,
Flushed suddenly; the white godhead in new fear
Intolerably so struggling, and so shamed;
Most holy and far, if you'd come all too near,

If earth had seen Earth's lordliest wild limbs tamed,
Shaken, and trapped, and shivering, for MY touch -
Myself should I have slain? or that foul you?
But this the strange gods, who had given so much,
To have seen and known you, this they might not do.
One last shame's spared me, one black word's unspoken;
And I'm alone; and you have not awoken.

Rupert Brooke

" Look here; there's one thing in this world which isn't ever cheap. That's a coffin. There's one thing in this world which a person don't ever try to jew you down on. That's a coffin. There's one thing in this world which a person don't say - 'I'll look around a little, and if I find I can't do better I'll come back and take it.' That's a coffin. There's one thing in this world a person won't take in pine if he can go walnut; and won't take in walnut if he can go mahogany; and won't take in mahogany if he can go an iron casket with silver door-plate and bronze handles. That's a coffin. And there's one thing in this world you don't have to worry around after a person to get him to pay for. And that's a coffin. Undertaking? - why it's the dead-surest business in Christendom, and the nobbiest."

Mark Twain's Life on The Mississippi

'No Protestant child exists who does not masturbate.'

Mark Twain, Letters from the Earth

The Meteorite

Among the hills a meteorite
Lies huge; and moss has overgrown,
And wind and rain with touches light
Made soft, the contours of the stone.

Thus easily can Earth digest
A cinder of sidereal fire,
And make her translunary guest
The native of an English shire.

Nor is it strange these wanderers
Find in her lap their fitting place,
For every particle that's hers
Came at the first from outer space.

All that is Earth has once been sky;
Down from the sun of old she came,
Or from some star that travelled by
Too close to his entangling flame.

Hence, if belated drops yet fall
From heaven, on these her plastic power
Still works as once it worked on all
The glad rush of the golden shower.

CS Lewis, Time and Tide

Danse Russe

If I when my wife is sleeping
and the baby and Kathleen
are sleeping
and the sun is a flame-white disc
in silken mists
above shining trees, —
if I in my north room
dance naked, grotesquely
before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head
and singing softly to myself:
'I am lonely, lonely.
I was born to be lonely,
I am best so! '
If I admire my arms, my face,
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks

against the yellow drawn shades, —

Who shall say I am not
the happy genius of my household?

William Carlos Williams

The Sleeper In The Valley

It is a green hollow where a stream gurgles,
Crazily catching silver rags of itself on the grasses;
Where the sun shines from the proud mountain:
It is a little valley bubbling over with light.

A young soldier, open-mouthed, bare-headed,
With the nape of his neck bathed in cool blue cresses,
Sleeps; he is stretched out on the grass, under the sky,
Pale on his green bed where the light falls like rain.

His feet in the yellow flags, he lies sleeping. Smiling as
A sick child might smile, he is having a nap:
Cradle him warmly, Nature: he is cold.

No odour makes his nostrils quiver;
He sleeps in the sun, his hand on his breast
At peace. There are two red holes in his right side.

Arthur Rimbaud

October 1870

Arbole, Arbole

Tree, tree
dry and green.

The girl with the pretty face
is out picking olives.
The wind, playboy of towers,
grabs her around the waist.
Four riders passed by
on Andalusian ponies,
with blue and green jackets
and big, dark capes.
'Come to Cordoba, muchacha.'
The girl won't listen to them.
Three young bullfighters passed,
slender in the waist,
with jackets the color of oranges
and swords of ancient silver.
'Come to Sevilla, muchacha.'
The girl won't listen to them.
When the afternoon had turned
dark brown, with scattered light,
a young man passed by, wearing
roses and myrtle of the moon.
'Come to Granada, inuchacha.'
And the girl won't listen to him.
The girl with the pretty face
keeps on picking olives
with the grey arm of the wind
wrapped around her waist.
Tree, tree
dry and green.

Federico Garcia Lorca

Meditations In An Emergency

Am I to become profligate as if I were a blonde? Or religious
as if I were French?

Each time my heart is broken it makes me feel more adventurous
(and how the same names keep recurring on that interminable

list!) , but one of these days there'll be nothing left with which to venture forth.

Why should I share you? Why don't you get rid of someone else for a change?

I am the least difficult of men. All I want is boundless love.

Even trees understand me! Good heavens, I lie under them, too, don't I? I'm just like a pile of leaves.

However, I have never clogged myself with the praises of pastoral life, nor with nostalgia for an innocent past of perverted acts in pastures. No. One need never leave the confines of New York to get all the greenery one wishes-I can't even enjoy a blade of grass unless i know there's a subway handy, or a record store or some other sign that people do not totally _regret_ life. It is more important to affirm the least sincere; the clouds get enough attention as it is and even they continue to pass. Do they know what they're missing? Uh huh.

My eyes are vague blue, like the sky, and change all the time; they are indiscriminate but fleeting, entirely specific and disloyal, so that no one trusts me. I am always looking away. Or again at something after it has given me up. It makes me restless and that makes me unhappy, but I cannot keep them still. If only i had grey, green, black, brown, yellow eyes; I would stay at home and do something. It's not that I'm curious. On the contrary, I am bored but it's my duty to be attentive, I am needed by things as the sky must be above the earth. And lately, so great has _their_ anxiety become, I can spare myself little sleep.

Now there is only one man I like to kiss when he is unshaven. Heterosexuality! you are inexorably approaching. (How best discourage her?)

St. Serapion, I wrap myself in the robes of your whiteness which is like midnight in Dostoevsky. How I am to become a legend, my dear? I've tried love, but that holds you in the bosom of another and I'm always springing forth from it like

the lotus-the ecstasy of always bursting forth! (but one must not be distracted by it!) or like a hyacinth, 'to keep the filth of life away, ' yes, even in the heart, where the filth is pumped in and slanders and pollutes and determines. I will my will, though I may become famous for a mysterious vacancy in that department, that greenhouse.

Destroy yourself, if you don't know!

It is easy to be beautiful; it is difficult to appear so. I admire you, beloved, for the trap you've set. It's like a final chapter no one reads because the plot is over.

'Fanny Brown is run away-scrampered off with a Cornet of Horse; I do love that little Minx, & hope She may be happy, tho' She has vexed me by this exploit a little too.-Poor silly Cecchina! or F: B: as we used to call her.-I wish She had a good Whipping and 10,000 pounds.'-Mrs. Thrale

I've got to get out of here. I choose a piece of shawl and my dirtiest suntans. I'll be back, I'll re-emerge, defeated, from the valley; you don't want me to go where you go, so I go where you don't want me to. It's only afternoon, there's a lot ahead. There won't be any mail downstairs. Turning, I spit in the lock and the knob turns.

Frank O'Hara

The Little Girl's Dance

DEDICATED TO LUCY BATES

(Being a reminiscence of certain private theatricals.)

Oh, cabaret dancer, I know a dancer,
Whose eyes have not looked on the feasts that are vain.
I know a dancer, I know a dancer,
Whose soul has no bond with the beasts of the plain:

Judith the dancer, Judith the dancer,
With foot like the snow, and with step like the rain.

Oh, thrice-painted dancer, vaudeville dancer,
Sad in your spangles, with soul all astrain,
I know a dancer, I know a dancer,
Whose laughter and weeping are spiritual gain,
A pure-hearted, high-hearted maiden evangel,
With strength the dark cynical earth to disdain.

Flowers of bright Broadway, you of the chorus,
Who sing in the hope of forgetting your pain:
I turn to a sister of Sainted Cecilia,
A white bird escaping the earth's tangled skein: —
The music of God is her innermost brooding,
The whispering angels her footsteps sustain.

Oh, proud Russian dancer: praise for your dancing.
No clean human passion my rhyme would arraign.
You dance for Apollo with noble devotion,
A high cleansing revel to make the heart sane.
But Judith the dancer prays to a spirit
More white than Apollo and all of his train.

I know a dancer who finds the true Godhead,
Who bends o'er a brazier in Heaven's clear plain.
I know a dancer, I know a dancer,
Who lifts us toward peace, from this earth that is vain:
Judith the dancer, Judith the dancer,
With foot like the snow, and with step like the rain.

Vachel Lindsay

The Sick Muse

My poor Muse, alas! what ails you today?
Your hollow eyes are full of nocturnal visions;

I see in turn reflected on your face
Horror and madness, cold and taciturn.

Have the green succubus, the rosy elf,
Poured out for you love and fear from their urns?
Has the hand of Nightmare, cruel and despotic,
Plunged you to the bottom of some weird Minturnae?

I would that your bosom, fragrant with health,
Were constantly the dwelling place of noble thoughts,
And that your Christian blood would flow in rhythmic waves

Like the measured sounds of ancient verse,
Over which reign in turn the father of all songs,
Phoebus, and the great Pan, lord of harvest.

The Venal Muse

Muse of my heart, you who love palaces,
When January frees his north winds, will you have,
During the black ennui of snowy evenings,
An ember to warm your two feet blue with cold?

Will you bring the warmth back to your mottled shoulders,
With the nocturnal beams that pass through the shutters?
Knowing that your purse is as dry as your palate,
Will you harvest the gold of the blue, vaulted sky?

To earn your daily bread you are obliged
To swing the censer like an altar boy,
And to sing Te Deums in which you don't believe,

Or, hungry mountebank, to put up for sale your charm,
Your laughter wet with tears which people do not see,

To make the vulgar herd shake with laughter.

Charles Baudelaire

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'Goldilocks And The Spear of Longinus' Monkey Kettle Vol.26 pg.4

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'Siren or Beowolf's Mother, Whoever' Monkey Kettle vol.32

Poetry being used in a English Language Project/Book,
Cyprus International University

A Flower In The Rain

I want to fall on you like rain
upon a wildflower
Opening new reason from you
Scaring all the old bees away from
Pollinating your bed
Scaring all the fake men off who
Can only stand the sun
So it's just me and you in the
Meadow
The rabbits in the hole
The grasses are wet and beginning to bow
The forest is damp and sleepy
And in the meadow
I bend down and kiss your petals wetly
Falling all over you
Letting your pistil slip into my mouth
Sucking off your honey,
Almost plucking you
But not going so far
Just pulling you so that you can feel
Your roots leaving
To let you almost taste
My world in the sky
So afterwards you can go down
Believing
The words on my lips
When I fall on my knees for you
A flower in the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

A Quick Poem Done In Time

In the amber woods, the beetles call-
The rain falls upon the school.
The cats and the children awaken from their sleep;
Their eyes awaken to the moon-
My children alone know the spells
The rewind the mollusks into their shells,
Upon the soft, smoothed stones.

A stolen twilight plays across the backyards
Of the middle of America
And her graves:
Even the dead look beautiful in the middle of the night,
With all of the schools closed for the Summer;
And water falls upon the flatlands,
Curling from the busted lip of Michigan.

This is the last verse we shall remember,
Before we have to awaken and go to school tomorrow:
Look at our acne- the fairies with wounded wings
And the would be starlets who are wounded
In the heart moving in a homeless exodus to
Hollywood:

And Disneyworld-
And Disneyworld-
Above her paper dungeons, there is a listing kite in the sky:
Blinded school boys who are done playing their videogames
Gape and mew to look up at her-
The lamentations of wordless sitcoms fallen into their wide
Open eyes-
The castle they look upon is a piñata made of chicken-wire:

Therein lives the giant of their catastrophe,
A rotund bachelor extended from classical times,
He catches stewardesses as they fall,
And handles them above his fires: the parking lots of
Their skies are alight from the confounding thefts of gasoline:
And the emollitions of their thefts spread twenty feet
Above the suffering peninsulas where we advertise tourists to their beliefs.

Robert Rorabeck

A School Their Souls Will Never Attend

Mobilized into other parks farther along- buying
Her flowers and sending them to places
She no longer works anymore:
Streetless cars losing their clothing and pornographies
Never making a sound anymore in castanets of
Australian pines-
Ripples in shells and areolas- the tiniest sea otters
Laughing on her chest,
Mermaids whose mascara never seems to stop running,
And little boys flying away from school:
Flying up into clouds to see airplanes populated entirely
By stewardesses,
And giants who look into their windows and seeing them
Like foxes and sword fish in zoetropes,
Turning around with their arms raised
And laughing
Exulting in the showers of the sun, their noses bleeding
From the altitude,
And kissing like magnets on refrigerators, and always mothers
To be
Conceptualizing their children across the mowed grass
As the busses turn around like chartreuse butterflies
So far down beneath them, and in front of
A school their souls will never attend.

Robert Rorabeck

A Secret Color Named Alma

Like an otter come out and into her own:
Outside of classes, and outside
The impenetrable bosque:
She is now selling fruit to speaking
Dragons:
While the traffic shuffles unhesitatingly over her
Shoulder:
She is an angel that doesn't even realize.
And her eyes are darker and more perfect than the
Known seas,
And the creatures who live in them, delighting in the
Caesuras, have known my heart,
Even if they do not care: and when she drives home
For the day,
She puts me in an unmarked grave- headless, without
Flowers, or smelling of the
Blown gas of industrial lawnmowers-
And I go home too, and get on my knees and
Pray for this muse, this soul: a secret color
Named Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

A Single Kiss

Well, it is raining, and the raindrops make
Furtive areolas in the puddles of muddy bellies,
And their mists are like nebulous shrouds,
And unfertilized thoughts of maidens dreaming of
Weddings and fine bachelors in their highest high towers-
And I am warm, as down in the valley the safe cabins
Huddle against their pines like satisfied lovers,
And I read my book once more the way a captain checks
Over his ship preparing for embarkation,
For I will be published mutely and celebrate with my dogs
In the consolatory monsoons of this lush season;
For it is what I can hope for, and my smiling mother's eyes,
And the way the doors lay sometimes half open letting
In the glows; but I cannot love her anymore, when my
Words grow tangled about my mind like weeds and skeins
Of my dead aunt's yarn the kittens have playfully disemboweled,
For on the swings so far away she is moving in her arcs
As the policemen patrol her, and the apex where her legs grow
Up together and into the seat of a tall ladder placed below
Her window where the work is finished and she leans outwards,
Her eyes so maple and October, and she sighs never thinking
How the rain touches me, as if the kisses from cold little children,
Never once desiring her match-head, and the humming bloom
Of a single kiss....

Robert Rorabeck

A Single Pine

Single pine
stranded upon a sandy hill
here you remain
in a haunted crèche of coniferous rises and valleys,
lost in between the stony caesuras
at the bottom of a maze of unwound lovers
winnowed by the disenchantments of time

So far away from the suburbias
where the milkmaids walk
clothed only by sunlight
unforgettable center pieces of nature's
strutting architecture

Where the tourists take their
summer loves,
returning to outdoor movie theatres
that cool in the dimming visions of sepia's dust,

single pine,
haunted by the sterile poisons
of the past's unremembered dreams,
as far from the sylvan evergreens
whose dew-sapped boughs entwine in
nocturnal yuletide wreaths
comingling with elves and hares
in an unending boreal table of Christmas

Not even a poisonous serpent unguates
closer to inspect such ghastly loneliness-
bones of master less dogs and the pottery of extinct tribes
ring your salted mound,
embittered in the boreal maze unspoken of
by brighter and more well known fairy-tales
that yet flutter above this abducted entanglement.

In a coffer of needles
stretching pointedly towards that thieving moonlight,
a man disavowed of his heartfelt trust

metamorphosed now, yet trying to grasp
the sunlight stolen from long ago reflections of your love.

Robert Rorabeck

A Single Tear Drop

I own two bicycles because I still pine for you
Alma,
Even while you make love this evening, even while you
Turn out all of the hope in your lighthouse,
So you cannot see my beauty drowning,
While during the day your eyes seem like brown
Maelstroms swirling with your breath,
Devouring the young heroes far more beautiful than me;
And still you accept my dreams and my bouquets,
While now all of the flowers are getting smaller as I too
Shrink,
Soon I will be so diminished as to be in danger of drowning
In a single tear drop,
Which is all that I wish from you.

Robert Rorabeck

A Siren For Truancy

An acrobat in the high numbers:
Rainbows that taper and billow in
The towers of trees.
The land swelters, the maidens sweating,
The paladins that we all once knew
Are taking a knee:

Mexicans, boys and girls,
Playing beneath the overpasses-
Terrapins digging holes in the sandy armpits
Of the lees.

I see you now, beckoning as a mirage:
Lingering, a siren for truancy,
But good boys and girls go from and return
To school:

They are looking socially beautiful,
But ignore them. See them as a mirage,
Pass the traffic going busily and in both ways:

Come to the greenest side of the canal,
To where the cats can talk,
And childhoods linger in the ill-begotten pornographies.

A land where your mothers are still beautiful
And housewives are in chains.
Float above the mountains-

Here is Ovid's metamorphosis- turn into a bird.
Migrate above the color changing parapets-
Calmly hallucinatory,
And in the midnights which douse crepuscule
Linger,

Observe the broken virgins,
The pietas mass produced in infinite number
In their cradles of industry.
They have all turned into something

Expectantly:

But, aside the green cages,
The lions are yawning,
And boys as old as Peter Pan are
Touching down from their infinite slumbers.

This place is rich with football players,
And the creatures whom have made themselves
Are at a standstill.
The entire scene is a still life awaiting the joy

Of an erstwhile holiday.

Robert Rorabeck

A Siren Who Has Forgotten All Of Her Songs

Tonight my muse lies in sleep with him
Like a mermaid who has come ashore smelling the rose
That will become her grave:
There is her bed between the dunes, and her eyes
Have already bled all of their tears:
And now what is she doing, held over like a prostitute
Underneath the biggest neon cross underneath the
Biggest all night supermarket
While the convenient stores are getting robbed:
There she is with her nightgown slipped over her
Brown shoulders in the middle of the orange groves
So far away from where she belongs.
But she was so far away anyways- but I linger there
Still listening at the bus stops, the lions lamenting
A siren who has forgotten all of her favorite songs.

Robert Rorabeck

A Smile You Had Never Seen Before

Like the dissected rainbow of abused starlets
Like the beginning or the end of my misappropriated
Hope
That I cannot see the outcome for, and yet the sea
Is certainly some busy yard of beautiful graveyard and nursery:
And my parents are going away,
And as I jogged alone for you, I saw the first happenstance of
A prism leaping like a colorful gazelle from the asphalt:
And my mother couldn't do any better than loving my
Father,
And I love you this way, like a gagged symphony, like the last
Stripes of a fish who knows she will not survive even while
She bares her young to the unthoughtful spectacles of the
Deep,
As you bared yourself for me maybe for the last time,
As I lamented the loss of the tall swing sets
And then I brushed your lips and yours to mine in the hidden
House beside the albino alligator who seemed to smile
Up at us a smile you swore to me you had never seen before.

Robert Rorabeck

A Thought In Their Bones

Pains in an organ, open to the trees,
Exposed to the sun:
Cadavers of little boys bathing in the shadows
Of school buses:
Words resurrected off their mollusks tongues,
While all the pretty girls like blue jays
Ate their lunches of
Nectars and other boys,
And then went straight out into the sheer field,
Like kites stuck to the sweet whispers of what they
Could find there:
The ants marched underneath them, their little ant
Hearts beating like drums- the suns stroking them
Like cats:
They marched on the straight edge, the alligators
Watching them without a thought in their bones.

Robert Rorabeck

A Walk In The Wind

I am the only one who
Orgasms
An origami jungle
Screaming in papier-mâché
Vertebrates
Where the sun is a paper
Plate
Burning orange-flamed lips
At the picnic,
Turn to curling ash in the whispering
Grass,
As something like 10,000
Army ants march past,
The pomegranate armored conquistadors
Of a luscious past,
Looking for the fabled city
Through the bladed forest,
All that wealth fallen from my sticky
Splayed fingers, piano players
Stretching out from my slumbering palm,
Made entirely from sweet vermillion
Watermelon
Which glistens in ruby pyramids
In butchered geometry toward the sun,
Circled by gossiping horseflies
Who are taking a walk
In the wind.

Robert Rorabeck

A Wedding At My Funeral

The time has not come before
And this is new.
The light is opening for the day
An ingénue displaying her bosom
To man's face-
I remember when
I was young in following her.
Her tassels feeling through the trees
And drinking roots,
She laughed even while
Alone;
Giggling,
She rode her bicycle across campus.
I staid up all night and prayed for her.
When tired, she slept
In the shade of a house-
Eyes half closed. I came to her,
She yawned and turned me away.
She said she loved me
Only when she was drunk,
And it was yet that time-
So long ago, yesterday....
Then early this morning she came to me
And offered me the quaff
Of lips.
Dripping nectar on the limbs,
She said, "Never before now, old man, "
As they lowered me in the grave,
Her light budded
A valleyide of rubrum,
A wedding at my funeral.

Robert Rorabeck

A Woman At My Door

I need a woman at my
door to drive home to
some long honey momma
who will love me
simply and cook frijoles for me
a woman I can lie
down on the couch with
and just love appreciate her silhouette
a red earth woman who
always wants to sleep
all night long careless in my arms
a woman who miraculously
will not look at
other men to judge
them sexually or not sexually worthy
a woman who likes my face
and the lines and briars it takes
and doesn't mind
that the paint flecks
from my truck when it
gets up past fifty-five and
doesn't care how long
my hair gets
a woman who can
show me new ways
to religion and introduce
me to this world
again the right way this time
and might not care or be concerned
that I write poetry good
or bad about her
or question my questioning
of capitalism's excess waste
and this fucked up interpretation
of Judeo-Christian religion
that supports it
a woman who will work
beside me
breathe and live on

my ribs
kiss me deeply
with her pretty
lips
show off her
self only to me
in new lingerie look good
forgives my atheisms
shows me how to
light candles for
Catholicism reminds
me of those old
great saints
who saw god in everything
wet comes at me like
bright news like
bathing my eyes with light
and doesn't come
until I come
lets me use my
tongue longs
all day for our
bed gives me
head rides
horses with me
in those green sea
washed valleys that
split the land like
a woman when she
takes me back to
the classic forest
to let me swim in the
pool the moon
birthed her in and
then to sleep all
night inside her flesh
when she sleeps
with me entwined
in a tree.

Robert Rorabeck

Above The

Here, at least, we have new monuments and
Times for the dollar—
And checking the minute hands of all of our
Scars, at least different times to survive:
While we have our few minutes,
And the earth ticks off its monstrosities across
The heavens-
While, then, at least and un ceaselessly
We can at least count of her different times
For her,
And in at least invariable speeds—
Try to pretend that she lactates just as beautifully
As all of the heavens:
And, at least in this place, this seems to be the
First and the last of her—

While monuments build, hugging to the first and
The last of her,
We continue to continue to build for her from
Somehow,
The first and the last of the monuments making for
Forever
Their few minutes above the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

Absent Without Leave

Close set the stores and hide
The abdomen of my laziness. Feed chickenpox
To alligators,
And go outdoors, brown bagging liquor and fireworks.
Go to the head of your class and stink
Up the place.

Look at pictures of the amber roadie who
Fauns the chestnut eyes of her shallow
Conviction over the muscular tattoos of
Bouncers, of Jews- Make fun of her conviction:
Show her how you can be a swan too;
By holding your breath, turn it green,

Go out into the middle of the school,
Get dizzy and scream- Look down the crinoline
Blouse of the harpsichord substitute-
On your free time bight your tongue and scribble out
Novels to her freshman joy,
But otherwise tell her she should be working concessions
At the roller rink,
With those legs, with those legs!

Misspell to her three times in once sentence,
And wait to hear a mouthful of her wildflower convictions.
She will say that those boys are rowdy swans to her,
Like big, meaty hibiscus; and she goes to them the way a little
Princess goes to sleep with her frog princes in
The aloe of the carport of drowning cars;
So don't tell her how to fly,
But sell to her things she doesn't need, pointed obnoxious
Poems she doesn't need to hear,
And tell her you'll be right back- Go over beneath the
Australian Pines and use the crumbling pornography
Inside the junked cars to pleasure yourself.
Range into the dunes, converse with cenotaphs of confused mermaids,
The awol GI Joes praying down wind of
The bright copper crosses of conquistadors

When you are back, don't tell her a thing.

She won't even look at you; and smile-
Feed the gold-fish to the swish-tailed cat,
Because you already knew she wouldn't finish
This anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

According To Death

With others old and gray,
Or not so old at all—Maybe they will
Mostly be fair haired and young,
If it should be a tragedy. Who knows?
But this is known, I will die some day
When Death comes to collect that part of
Me that he sees fit to remain,
To gather me up— a silhouette
Of the somber procession upon the hill
Backlit by a tired sun— The busy insects will
Eat what is left, the scuttling carnivores,
Nature's vacuum cleaners which God created to
Keep things cleaned, so there are no leftovers
As everything is satisfied—
Away from the anthills and plaguing swarms we
Will go, being grinned out by our own death masks
As we leave, bidding adieus—
Those heartless grins ex-lovers put on for show-
Go down with that orb if Death leads us there,
But who knows where Death goes, except that
He will take us with him to the other side,
His black robes billowing importantly, for
He is the herald of our great king, his
Skeletal hand pointing ever onward like a compass, onward in the
Shade which is so very quiet where no hearts beat,
No blood flows— And maybe our procession will never
End. We will just keep going down in some great viewless stairwell
Beneath the world until we forget that we ever knew the pains of settlement.
In that abyssal fjord where Death will ditch us,
And leave us to the tricks of his shadow as he dives back up
To collect some more....
But this is known— that one day I shall die
And so shall you. My mother will die....
And on that day of the week people will be born
And the people already there shall live— People will go out and make love.
On that Friday a movie will come out you will never see
And there will be a book written that would have made me cry....
And the sun will come up afterwards like it did for us,
But not really so similar all in all, for our sun will be dead,

And this new sun rising is only for the living. Perhaps,
Though, we shall not care at all, knowing that these gifts are
Laid about to gladden the living, as we find newly indescribable
Things to attire our naked souls, or maybe we will not remember
At all. Maybe we will be like the egg in the nest in the crook of a branch
Of an expansive tree. Laying there in our nooks waiting to hatch again
To be filled with new thoughts, like the river's changing gown,
We will become again something we never before were.
But one thing is certain,
That one day you shall die
And I shall follow you, before or after,
It matters little as we shall all accord to Death.

*For Ingmar Bergman

Robert Rorabeck

Across The Open Mouths Of Your Starlet Constellations

Your lips taste better than this bottle

Alma:

I know because I have tasted your lips today.

And how is that possible when you are more beautiful than

The most beautiful woman I have ever known:

What are you,

And you don't believe me, but you have a beauty mark,

And you were right here today,

Telling lies and moaning; and I love you, and all of my other

Muses pale and turn to jealous ghosts,

And now the bottle is empty, but my windows are filled with the

Zoos of your eyes,

And all of your kind animals, Alma. Move into my house and

Bring your family because I love you:

I worship you, Alma, and any other possession would be most

Contrary:

Your world is a breathing portrait which would elevate me

To the cockpit of a fabulous daydream; and I am right

Here, Alma, holding my breath and counting steadily for you:

I am sorry that all of your rabbits were unlucky;

And I am sorry that my dogs are still in Arizona, but I don't

Have to vagabond anymore: you are right here and fluctuating:

The movement without movement of your body is a

Carousel that really turns me on, and

I am glad that I don't have to go anywhere, because I have already

Slept on the roof of your house;

And I already know that you really love me, while the comets

Burn their graffiti across the open mouths of your starlit constellations.

Robert Rorabeck

Across The Orchards You Abandoned

Busy visions of a childhood and her ghosts,
Words that linger in a poor man's clutch, as she looks
Away perpetually, browns stems quivering over
Her children, but she is out of leaves and warmth-
Sexy vision of catastrophe, how you loved my gifts
Of flea markets for a year, but could not entirely give
Up your sailors of Mexico, and the pretty cannibalisms
You put into your bed across the train tracks at night;
While he still doesn't satisfy you, you are the personification
Of any soul, but it wouldn't be right to say your name again,
Not on anyone's birthday- though I will not be waiting
Anymore like a rabbit in his green hutch or rock garden
In the little yard I remember bordered by rattlesnakes
And aloes- Like the urban legends that exist in the
Highways of gossiping sky: I showed your aunt the hickies
You gave me as we made love for the year that is over;
I gave your sisters and more of your cousins fireworks.
And now I am left counting other butterflies who migrated
Across the orchards you abandoned, while my mother
Falls down in some mock Pieta, a wasp or some power
Cord stinging her foot again with its preschool lavishing,
As she dries the clothes of my childhood underneath a thunderstorm
That is already passing.

Robert Rorabeck

Across The Promising Remains

Anthropomorphic conquistadors
Bending, bowing to
The prettiest curls—
Blond-curled, but not accounting for
Their less than perfect
Aerobics—Sweltering in the pistils of
Their daydreams—
Without a single echo lost to them—
In an apiary of singing topiaries—
In a surplus of breasts and racing legs
That remain idle even
As they are waterfalls down from heaven—
Every boy's sport
In their exuberant yet tightly buttoned
Pornography—
Another way that desire languishes—
Across the promising remains.

Robert Rorabeck

After It Is Almost Done

If the day yellows, it sings to her as it curls up,
Winnowing its airplanes who are coming down
Like whippoorwills of dreams
To fasten to her hair, and sing to her of secret springs
With epiphanies of animals lapping there:
They are all there, like a zoetrope of astrological signs,
All the possible loves of her life,
A rest stop up in the woods my mother took me to,
And never once while I was there was I thinking of her:
This new girl, this thing or muse that I have made
Love to for these last eight months, who sings to
Me from so far away and then, like another animal
Migrating with the sun, and happily distracted from her
Way home, goes out of her way to put away my fears,
Coming over after it is almost done, and makes love
To me.

Robert Rorabeck

After School

Trying again, the young children yawn,
Hatching beneath the tombs- as all of the day is haunted-
But your body blooms-
Driving all day in its loneliness, and yet so
Happy with what you are-
Advertised beneath the billboards,
A muse diminishing in her car, and I have to think of
You,
Terrapin in the shoulders of the sunlight looking down-
Angel clouded by blue and
Purple cobwebs-
Sunlight melting through you, another ghost
Haunted on holiday
My famished dictionaries try to perceive,
But it doesn't last-
The loneliness of playboys- the guts of unicorns
On display in the museums of witches
Casting spells,
As it takes a long time remember, but we try
Every afternoon, after school,
Touching ourselves.

Robert Rorabeck

After School'

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Robert Rorabeck

Against His Brown Skin

Physical imaginations of a poet—
I dream of picking flowers now that I am without you—
I dream of slinking away to the
Avenues of Venice,
And disappearing with the inevitability of these sentences—
The vines bringing about the strangling contaminations of
These crypts,
As I wait for you—eyes and senses filled with rum—
Having trouble breathing—
As lost as the Indians—as wayward as the tourists from
Their homes—
And the purple unicorns—
Like someone with emptied pockets outside of
Disney World—
Satellites falling to earth as she lies in bed with him,
Bring her brown body easily up against his brown skin.

Robert Rorabeck

Against The Carports And The Misspelled Hotels

They will make a sound at the doorstops of your
Castles, even if you never drive this way—
This is how it will turn out:
You will get around the end of my old neighborhood,
And collapse next to the antlers of a chinaberry
Tree,
And then say to all of the forgotten woods that it not
Alright to be here,
And the blue gills will burp and hiccup in the canal—
And all of the children will seem to move
Sideways in the canals of their high schools—
And their mutual bereavements will continue to
Pretend to be so unreal—
And maybe you will find her past out one night while on
A delivery:
Maybe she will be collapsed next to a watermelon in
Her negligee:
Maybe she will have collapsed in the middle of a game of
Battleship,
And in her dreams made it halfway up to State College
Where she inevitably messed around and
Played with herself—until the summer came,
And all of the sororities rode white ponies and continued
To gesticulate to their continually pregnant grandmothers
Who were still luxuriating in their confederacies—
But, otherwise—the moon got out early and shone over
The hallucinations where the busses were turning around,
And you spied them like an eagle, like an osprey,
Until your true love got out of one of them—
And she touched the ground herself—and disappeared like
An angel in a sea of burning promises—
The fuses disappearing into the maelstroms that consume
All of the bones of the wayward marionettes—
As they still struggle upwards from the sea—delighting in
The nocturnal perfumes the lighthouses have bought and
Sold to them, giving them the vanishing luxury
As the sea swells against the car ports and the misspelled hotels
That become so filled that only the virgins of the streets
Are allowed to enter in.

Robert Rorabeck

Airplanes And Night Blooming Jasmine

Child, you are lost and you don't
Wish for me to find you "climbing up through the
Strange spinsters of the night"
Looking for apples in the arboreal bosom
The stars chickenpox but dancing
Beautifully "your memories on a bus to school,
The alligators in the canal,
And your parents in bed together while the moonlight
Is dancing in the pool like a toy sea"
I left fireworks in a bag underneath the night blooming
Jasmine
That you will never find
And you know, there are so many airplanes climbing
In the sky and leaping forever across the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

Airplanes Touching Down

With the sun going down I think of you—
Linger, nearly unperceivable heat
Which once flooded the highways, blinding men:
Poisonous light contaminating grottos,
Like the franchises that have turned
This country into
A land for well-fed zombies:
Parasitic, you infect me, but I have all but
Shaken it off—
I allow you to surface as the day cools,
As the housewives get ready to receive their
Children once again—
Families coming home, airplanes touching down—
I sit and drink and open old wounds,
The painful craft of trying to recombine with
A woman that was no good for roses—
You languish as the day proceeds, rejoining the night
With its habits—
And tomorrow and afterwards—life and tombs,
Made of the same stuff—a togetherness that
Separates for eternity.

Robert Rorabeck

Alexandria

I have seen you lying under the sky
Like the Great Victoria Desert of Australia,
Your body the milky smoothness of Oasis,
My eyes come to drink with the animals off
The streets, to cool on your body as it yawns
Up to the night—So I toss my head up and
Howl and laugh on you with the speckled
Hyenas, as mysterious goldfish swim like
The reincarnations of mute children
Through your reedy shoulders; As your hair
Ripples the auburn banners of its nature,
The aboriginal flag of the forebears of this
Mystical continent your body relaxes upon,
Estranged from other women you drifted away
To become the extraordinarily distant place,
The exhaustive study of man's science;
As your thoughts coalesce in the stratosphere,
Each of your memories a winking constellation,
Eerily distant and indiscernible from all others,
Unreachable by our lips as by our fingers,
Though we sate our lonely thirst upon your body,
As our eyes drink in like throats your soul the
Length of the earth in dusty dress, you who rises
Before us like an Aleutian well in effluvial waters
Which spray and mist the night-lit desert,
As your eyes are sometimes seen relaxing in
Camouflage in the folded places you purposefully
Shadow, until the sun emerges like a bannered king
In the bright conquest of thoughtless empires;
Then you turn yourself away again, become the
Settling earth, the crisp red earth, the dry talking
Earth where we hunt upon with naked spears.
We feel you beneath us, guiding,
As we long to lay down beside you, to sustain
Our bodies on your streams and otherworldly portions
Which crouch and pant with us, as we become but
An aspect of your indescribable nature,
When you lay down your body, the Oasis in
The desert, sustaining and defining.

Robert Rorabeck

Alice And The Spooks

Little girls in little blonde curls
In reddish frilly messes
Eat their lunch alone,
Served by brunette waitresses
The eyes the color of
Burnishes doors,
Their thoughts slipping from their dresses.

A six year old Alice
Finishes her chicken and waffles,
She goes outside, screams,
Grits her teeth, unloads her guns
The bullets bang
Onomatopoeics.

There are boatloads of boogiemens
Eating the streets,
The gangs of vampires kissing
The sweet coeds' necks,
While the Goth chicks take
Snapshots like Japanese tourists.

Her mom and dad are out there too,
Dressed like Ralph Lauren and Lash LeRoux,
But they are not who you think they are
As they moan to her, "Why aren't you
In preschool? "

But school, she knows, is the worst
Place to be,
Because there's a hole in the courtyard
As deep as the sea
Out of which the Big Bad things churn,
Not unlike a scoop of ice-cream soft serve.

Down at the end of the street
In the atmospheric light of a terminally ill sun,
Someone is whistling like Clint Eastwood.
She sees who it is, all the old gang,

Death and his boys: Pestilence, Famine, War,
Frank and Jesse James.

They're all smoking as they come
Out of the brothel.
They just killed all the gods in the sky,
So the heavens lay like breathless still-life—
Like the black apple and the brown pear
They made her finger-paint in art class;
But all she really cares about is that
Her chewing gum is getting tasteless.

She steps forward, our dear young Alice,
Her little blonde curls tied in red bows,
In tumbling, frilly messes.
She swears, she curses, she gives
A useless Jesus the bird,
Then she takes her little foot
And draws a line in the dirt,

She blows a pink bubble,
Cocks her gun and gives all that's Evil
Ten seconds to run.

Robert Rorabeck

All A Little Deeper

When I drive for two weeks,
I don't survive very well: I grow new scars
On my cheeks like plants in sunshine:
I drive down a corridor of ruffled clouds, like
A bridal party's frilly suicide hung out over the desert:
I look at myself at strange, furtive angles,
Flitting away from it like a frightened bird too
Thirsty to leave off it: I look in angles like
Sylvia Plath, and I think up wonderful novels to write
Over her entombed carriages, but once I reach the destination,
I scare off the easy boys who have been suckling all over
Her like flies, and I grow sedentary, and just lounge
By that corpse. Instead of writing prose to praise her in languid,
Scrawling lines like the phalanxes of a bedecked army,
Victorious and out on parade, I instead write lazy poetry I
Will never look at again. I don't even meet her, or revise my
Fingers across her waxy brow, or grasp her ankle to squash the
Ants: I watch the clouds douse the sun, the scattering mothers who
Will soon again sow their winter. I feed the horses moldy hay, and
They greet me in little manner at all, though the dogs leap and
Nip and grow muddy and truncated until I hose them off. Now
I lay on the sheet-less bed with all three of them. The German
Shepherd is new: I had two others, brothers, who have died. I have
Been here for half a decade, in fact, and have so much hypothetical
Ink under my nails as to resurrect her if I could match her gaze for
Any amount of time; but she just lies there as the horses do,
A carriage of a girl gone away, a scarecrow, an easy trick:
There is laughter on the cusp of the hills, and maybe it is from people
Who are not real at all. And I listen to it, and wait for the falling of
Snow, which will imbed these scars all a little deeper.

Robert Rorabeck

All But A Child

And the words are thrown away,
Like tourists over the desert which has your lips-
The buses are greyhounds,
And they take your golden dollars of wishes like
Wishing wells:
Over which your reflection seems to hover: Alma,
Showing off your brown skin to the sun:
Like motes of amber angels making me sticky tongued:
So that my words are glued
Like stamps
Like horses hooves in a deep forest or a swamp:
But when riding beside you as we drove
Down to Miami to get the official documents:
Why then, it
Felt for almost all of the time that could be counted
That my changes were done,
And my motions just a zoetrope performing for children
On a merry-go-round:
The lush numbers of the fairytales with cobweb wings in
The aloe-
Already stolen from the neighbors citrus before the old
Neighborhood was developed
And paved: when the cenotaphs of the conquistadors
Still sang and looked through the dunes
Of blue pornography: - and all of it was about something,
While the waves rolled in from off the gods' breathing;
And you were all but a child in old
Mexico- Alma, to whom your mother, Rose, was yet singing.

Robert Rorabeck

All But Nothing

Sick and on my knees,
Throwing up
A half digested God,

I am pregnant with love
Who cares all but nothing
For me.

Robert Rorabeck

All I Wanted

I wanted to hold your hand
While your mother was away,
Bringing back sack lunch for her
Little birds:
To hold up that slender portion of
Junoesque gravity;
As if I had become your moon,
Receptive, stuck and dizzy like a crippled
Bee on the dumb lip of a sated terrapin:
To solder a new crèche for your hungry
Digits
At the edge of the carport of
The Catholic Church;
But you, already mystified, socially husbanded,
Given to the responsibilities of a flash-epoch,
Goddess like, yes- lactating with a vine
Of children at your hip;
You had become disinterested long before,
When you saw me take ecstasy at Disney World,
And I lost focus:
I lost my train of thought, became lethargic,
Bound to sleeping in lavatories,
Green smoke doing calligraphies out from the
Pullulating landscapes:
I couldn't feel the rides at all; demystified in fast
And modern trips of coming ups and goings down,
My eyes something nocturnal and sated
With nothing much to do:
And in body, you went away from me,
Red-bricked versatile, but forgetful to the needs of
Wet clay;
Tremulous afterwards, I could never fully realize,
Hobo in my transient rooms I tried to conceive the flood;
I teared ankle-deep; but it was no use:
All the animals were safe,
And you in Colorado, stabilized, ocean-deep couldn't
Know-
All I wanted to do was hold your hand
While your mother was away.

Robert Rorabeck

All Of My Lamentations

It comes up to this, and then it goes forever away:
Lapping and making love and counting the strokes that is necessary
To acquire each color,
And I have lived alone for so long that it isn't even necessary to
Matter;
And the girls who I once loved before and during class,
They too have ceased to exist, for now my palate consists of only
One name and one color,
And she has reconciled, or whatever she has done, and she is
Sleeping with one man underneath the carpentering waves
Of the burnished sun;
And maybe she remembers his name as she sleeps;
And her name is Alma- and she is my fatal muse,
For it is for her that all of my lamentations
Weep.

Robert Rorabeck

All Of The Airplanes

Dying to begin,
Just as any angels underneath the weathers of the
Mountains:
This is how we sing out, waiting for the caracoles
To finally sing again,
Rising, at first, up above the weathered monuments
Into which we cannot possibly hope
To believe in,
Falling out through the ashes of the water fountains,
Even while all of our parents have finally
Decided to grow up:
This is just another sad number, while you are just
Another ghost I presupposed to
Believe in;
And this is just another element into which
Are presupposed beliefs
Have finally decided to believe in:
This is a settled calm, and this is just another
Way to distinguish ourselves, multiplied-
But our gardens sing to no one, pretending that
They are, perhaps beautiful- as another night
Proceeds to fill up, all together, the
Habitual loneliness underneath the leaping pages of
All of the airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

All Of The Brilliant Stores

I can tell of things saddened in the park: things
That never have to die
After they have run away: words drooled from
The lip,
As they drooled from the snail:
Lactated off of Colorado, and gone through her
Aspens and her key stones
After the lightning storms: they have followed
Me down,
And I have whistled to them through the darkness
And brought them into my truck to sleep-
Residing there gradually serenaded by the rushing
Fixtures in the subtle trees:
Each wind a blessing tearing off her clothes,
Scratching carvings into the sky
And caracoling the light form the heavens that I
Swear to god doesn't even belong there
Anymore: while the creatures hibernate anyways,
Waiting until morning for all of the brilliant
Stores to open in a hexagonal flood.

Robert Rorabeck

All Over Us

I'm sorry—but she looks like she knows
That I love her,
And she is my wife—and I get up every day,
Evacuation,
Becoming the art of archeology—and the vanishing
Indians end up misconstruing and vanishing again
Into the heart of an emptied airplane:
And this, at least, is the place I have dug:
Waiting for all of the rest of the armies to finally come
Out from the jungles and fall over us:
Peace in her eyes, just like a corpse's peace—
And a bouquet in her hands but for a dead man,
As the fireworks play out in a dance hall that the angels
Once danced in—but long since have moved
Out—as the angels leap and leap about across
The uneasy ululations of a Ferris Wheel from which we've
Had a falling out and this is the all and the last of
What can be said of whatever we had to say of our amens.

Robert Rorabeck

Alma

How you accuse me on this beautiful earth:
How I pocket the emptiness that needs to be mended:
How I strut out and turn around and faint, for every element
In this yellow day might as well be a beautiful woman
Breathing and bosomed as the clear, blue sky:
And if I said I wanted to die in Disney World, then you know that
It had to be true,
And I drink liquor, liquor, rum and liquor, and I curse and
Think of you;
And I wear out all of my Alma's, which I think means souls:
Both of my feet and of my body, and I go down into the valley, following
The tresses of an infatuated earth:
I pass up all of the arrow heads and unicorns just to get to the bottom of
Your worth;
And as it turns out your mind is flooded by a sea, or by a bloody river;
It makes no sense to me; all the firemen are climbing your trees,
And the pitch-fork pines are raising their necks like herons up from
Your melodies;
And your body working; and your body tired out smells like perfume
And your eyes are transoms: they are the carnivals that move in time together,
That make the sweet music that both delights and hypnotizes the
Breath in my soul.

Robert Rorabeck

Alma's Favorite Color

Alma makes love next to her rabbits:
It rains and the canals engorges: cats dance like the pages of
A zoetrope,
But she never thinks of going outside to see all of this:
Alma will never be a suburban housewife;
Alma is a Mexican housewife who I just gave a bag full of
Jalapeno peppers to tonight:
Alma is little enough to fit into a sack, and Alma is pretty with
Satin red hair filled with shadows;
And Alma has curves that she shares with a window shopping world
Full of gringos: but she doesn't love a single one of their
Pasty faces:
She only loves her husband, and if not him other men from Guerra,
Mexico;
And that is why I must convince Alma that I am the tallest Mexican
She has ever seen;
So that I can sing to her tomorrow and give her flowers, and make
Her accept these privileges as if we were stuck together up in the
Andes looking at the Plaedes far beneath both of our homes;
And then striking together like matches in a green bedroom,
Alma and I, as if we were on an Arthurian journey,
Looking for the immortal blueprints in an important cup;
Except that Alma doesn't even know who our king is,
And she never looks outside when it rains,
But watches her two children who I have never seen;
And Alma's favorite color is green.

Robert Rorabeck

Alma's Fruiteria

You gave me a humming sound—stringed instrument
Going down on her,
Always vanishing over the rivers, and becoming a
Mystery for her knights:
The clouds clouding over the telephone poles,
The brindled neighbors making love like cats:
The fountain continuing to sing of
Immortality,
But the prettiest of song birds refusing to drink from
Her—
And now, where are you caught up,
As I dance in those echoes you never recognized,
Your car repossessed—
And your patrona stealing your flag—and nothing about
Us remembered, like the colors
They keep bringing to the disorganized patriotisms—
But we kissed
And made love day by day,
And I brought you music by these fingers—they are
Still singing
As I try to teach school, stringed instrument in
Your echoes—
Men who cannot cross from the borders of your heart—
But I remember how
We played
In the sandy lot of both of our hearts—
And I watered the petunias, getting ready to move on,
As you pretended to flirt with my cousin,
In the fruit market our dreams have left abandoned.

Robert Rorabeck

Alma's Song

You showed me your children today,
Alma, and found out from Pedro that the N
Tattooed in the web of your left or right hand stands for
North America, or the man you love:
I can't remember his name right now: I keep imagining
You out in this one front yard in all of this
Florida,
Standing like a pinup beside an open throated mailbox;
Oh, Alma,
Aren't you such a bird: Oh, Alma- that you would love me for
More than a month or two before going back to the man whose
Initials you have tattooed right there on your hand;
And I have been so diligently faithful keeping this up for you,
Wanting to pet the brownness of your flesh,
Wanting to wake up with you in the butterfly house where the sky
Is always smoking upwards like tresses with the young and virginal
Angels swinging their legs on the top wrung:
Oh, Alma, I have another song for you that no one else has
Ever sung.

Robert Rorabeck

Almost Nation

I have the Almost Nation in the back of my throat,
All the armies gathered and defeated who would once
Have rallied forth to capture her, and to tell her those
Voluptuous words which grow in fair gardens or hang upon
The delicate flesh of the youngest women,

All those failed ghosts are caught in me, all the fish
That Jesus forgot to catch in his nets before the Romans
And the Jews caught him, his father forsook him,
And he realized the terminal mortality of all men
After the Spear of Longinus made a river flow
From his side, and his eyes became dim, rolling like
The sea one last time upon Mary Magdalene.

So, I grit my teeth and make my home far away
Deep within caves within caves, the farther back you
Go the bluer the blackness becomes, so
I have returned to my mother, but nothing is made
Up, for inside here is Plato's Ultimate Form, the illusion
Of illusions demystified and ugly in its nudity; this
And all that she saw when she hung up my phone
And crawled into his bed.

Now I swallow my soul and grit my teeth,
And from this porch I can see the revolution of
Far away spheres, their small orbits, when they turn away
From me, and when they come towards me; and sometimes
One of the delicate night's decorations will fall, a
Blazing fire shot down, a God dying, and
I will watch it come down into me, for me to swallow it,
The thing that once was but now is lost,
Inside me the Almost Nation.

Robert Rorabeck

Alphabet Soup

Ferris-wheels of diamond mice run
Around the salty pan,

Laughing men as tall as houses
Fold themselves in the squealing wind,

Ginsberg is back in the mutinous queue,
Toting lead for the Adonis biscuit,

While harems of uncommitted tumbleweeds
Flaunt in a species of cartwheels,

Slowly, slowly then she sees us,
Feeding her the alphabet soup of our wanderlust

Served up from the dregs of an abandoned high school's
Knickknacked Library,

So she nods Atlantian, and goes back to bed in
His crook, drooling a species of mollusk distended from
Her hyperventilating womb.

Robert Rorabeck

Altogether Too Beautiful

It doesn't take so very long to surrender
Yesterdays echoes the very tit teaming at the very gates
Of another echinopsis of Disney World—
While then, all of the boys are already dissolved
And making a Peabody out of our very own imaginations:
Here is the very strange swill that they are left to
Suspect without the nights alone or the admirations of
Anywhere;
It is a very beautiful journey across a void where the
Voluptuous ships seldom often have to correct themselves,
And that is why that out of anywhere I have to end of here:
Even if it is strange, enveloped in the graduation of-
Your young night—it doesn't always have to end up
That way—a million volumes of echoes mean the same
Thing—that the baseball team or the football team
Has won, eventually—and you are so busy,
Enveloping yourself into the echoes that fall so far
Beyond my fingertips, that the other world also all of
A sudden awakens and spontaneously
Becomes altogether too beautiful to be explained.

Robert Rorabeck

Always Awaiting You

Bodies really tumble, Tumble,

Alma:

When they feel strong enough, they get up and dance next to

The fading eclipse of all of the seas,

And it doesn't matter if I have enough quarters to share my time

Equally with my car and with my sea:

Alma,

Alma, I have lost my dogs, Alma, and now won't you look at me:

Alma, I will never know what your kids mean to you,

But I may one day know what they mean to me: but, Alma,

Alma, my only wish is that I was more beautiful

For you,

My Alma, Alma,

And that I hadn't been away to school for so long so that I might

Have wooed you sooner, and had a sooner chance at wooing you:

My Alma, Alma:

And the night dances, and the ships ship,

And I think of you,

Alma, Alma:

And I pray to you Alma, Alma,

While the sea casts away again, rolling its dice, trying to make its

Body into your favorite

Color,

Alma, Alma; it is all we are ever trying to do:

While the rabbits wait at home for you, Alma, Alma;

Under the green sun and the green moon:

Alma, Alma.

They are always awaiting you....

Robert Rorabeck

Always Kind To Me

Passing myself down into the emptiness,
Like the snake that has found the concrete sheath,
And so tired of tricks descends,
While the hummingbirds demote themselves from flowers
To clovers,
And not the lucky ones, and the waves descending to the shore,
Fashion their kisses by the demonstrations
In the viaducts of her vanishing gown; and now she has him
On her mind instead of me,
And her children come lurking, wanting for milk or
Trouble,
While more and more of the gold she wears is purchased by me:
I bought her a silver rosary today and told
Her I was Catholic,
And promised her that I had written her this before she'd
Ever met me;
And Alma this is always for you, so you should take it:
Take it, and be
Always kind to me.

Robert Rorabeck

Ambulance

When you are on the highway
going down the lines like
words of the poem pull over
for the ambulance her red light
district swirling, but she'll only
take in her wounded men
with poor hearts and gaping chest wounds
watch her like a red elephant on parade
like a Christmas tree lit up her automobile
is the speedy whore of service-
here she comes, pull over for
her- it's the law so she can get to politicians
quicker- she is about to engulf a injured man,
like alcohol- she is about to
resurrect the dead
pull over and wait for the gory
scene cross the lines and
put your eyes on that mess listen to her
scream the ambulance screws
toward you a battle cry a
rebel soldier charging a blue
hillside let her through don't
let her see your rusty
underside, don't let her get a whiff
of your potential wound, or she will take you along
let her whine on through
let her come and let her go
and then put your foot on the gas
collect your thoughts note the angulations of the sun
begin to think again about the movie you just
saw, let her slip on past, trying to forget dead
love no longer think of the ambulance
she's picking up another man worse off than you
how she bled past you for him and didn't but notice you
how she screamed on this valley through the mountains
how she hummed murder, and didn't hide her lust for
her job do not think of the mess she is going to pick up
to rush to the hospital to replenish him in her bed,
or to send him on the further journey to the morgue,

packing with him a new marble color/ think instead of
the parts the doll's head down in the pasture
the forgot arrowheads in the red earth in the hills
do not think of Vietnam just
Drive on,
Drive on.

Robert Rorabeck

American Classic

What can I do for you,
Beautiful snag?
The still virginal tatters of
A promised gown
Stripped on a snare
At the river's high-water mark.

The gem of the world could not
Hold you nor buy your wealth.

Even drowned,
You mix with the richest silts,
As the ghostly bellies of glaciers
Bump against you.

Your eyes are speckled with 10,000 lakes...
Each one no less deep than a soul...

And, like the rest of the
Country, you sell cars,
Because in this economy,
It's your beauty's worth.

Robert Rorabeck

An Agnostic Pieta For A Mexican Fairytale

It was the madness that is always here, raining hard
In the afternoon,
While the morning was a litter of sun; and I strutted in
My diminutive foyer like chanticleer yawning into
The bred basket of morning:
My heart being swung and bled by a sieving grievance
That harvested my soul without anesthesia:
You were late, but you came in your miniskirt-
Your shirt had a blue ribbon in the back,
And I wrote a poem while I carried you into the bedroom;
And we made love: it was happiness for awhile:
It was the end of your period, and you wanted me to
Pull your hair-
My fantasy for a little while, breakfast before I leapt into
My car and to another day at work at the fruit market:
You were a time saver, something immortal with a
Family who would not tell me she loved me,
And you grew distance when I finished what we had started,
Spilling the frog-like perfume into the slender ballrooms of
Your wildflowers;
And grew unreasonable, though I reclined on my knees
And pleaded- an agnostic pieta for a Mexican fairytale;
But later on when I saw you, you were like the sea on a calming
Fieldtrip, and I invited you into the cooler and gave you
A hundred dollars to spend with your two sisters at
The mall, Alma- until the world spun around again, just a joyride;
And now you lie there with another man, delicate crafts of
Soft brown dreams protruding from the afterthoughts of
My daycare, while the liquor mollifies the little wounds
You left on my entire naked body,
As you come to me again, my eyes closed, in your mini-falta,
Your tiny brown knuckles as soft as the dun snow-bells of angels,
Inquiring pleasurably on my tiny little door.

Robert Rorabeck

An Even Greater Disaster

Now I have this joy- this silent feeling apart
From me,
Underneath all of the advertisings, I've begun to
Smile:
Words on my vision, in my pearly skin:
Water moccasins in their basins curling like
Ribbon above the stolen bicycles:
And I am not lost, as the fair rain begins to fall-
I will remember you as well as when your
Young body struck across the hall:
You haven't fallen yet- it is yet perfect,
And I've just been drinking
Underneath the eyes of a goldfish: and I am still
Right here in perfect unison with the afternoon that
Is about to unfold,
As it has done before to so many countless other men:
Men who now if they are lucky have become
Cenotaphs- while the airplanes proceed across their
Numberless gardens- and it all looks somewhat ghastly
As the houses melt down the streets of the
Phosphorescent traffic: yes, why aren't they going faster:
As the beautiful women without any husbands sell
All that they have to sell underneath the overpasses-
As we wait for the clouds to pass and pray there won't
Be an even greater disaster.

Robert Rorabeck

An Untried And Untrue Song

If I was so incredibly young as not to have this constant
Passion to make love, to grow bigger and so forth,
While I could just get up and go out of here, and make it all the
Way to Colorado,
And then answer all of those reasons why you've never even
Thought of me:
The school yard like so many places where haven't we forgotten
How to belong,
The belladonnas tucked away- and by and large we have forgotten
The beauty of the fields, how she answers to no one;
How she at first becomes a colloquialism before taking off all of
Her clothes and then slipping away underneath the flight plans of
Airplanes;
And I wanted this to be something great, but this just turned out to
Be another roller rink with all of the rock candy gone,
Another field trip with all of my misgivings, the warbling of
An untried and untrue song.

Robert Rorabeck

And Anyways

There are—are castles from
The finger-tits of the mountains—and while
I am not here anymore,
While then you don't have to believe in anymore of
My idioms:
In fact you don't need another home anymore:
While I am pretty sure that you will
Be doing all right—
Fed by the aphrodisiacs of narcoleptic housewives
And the stewardesses who don't live here
Anymore—
But then you are here, anyways—lost to transgressions
Of the vagabond teenagers:
While I have been telling them everything that I have
Tried to teach them, even though
I am almost lost anyways:
Then there is a new kite—a new kite in the shallows
Of egrets and herons and blue herons—
Like bobcats made to serve the carrion out beside the
Busied south Floridian
Highways of anyways—and just because
As if you didn't know—as if the billboards couldn't advertise—
We serve this Disney World—anyways—
As all of the beauty of the butterflies go to touch down
Dying upon the sugary pastures of the forlorn housewives
From all of Mexico—and any—and anyways.....

Robert Rorabeck

And Even I

Even this house doesn't sadly wonder
Of all the creatures with eyes:
Eyes,
Who are wandering, fixated, opened eyed,
Open lipped,
Drowning or starving by all of the elements:
Fix hooked in their gut or stamen:
And all of this, a hand of nothing:
Girls, girls in cars, and girls in planes,
And girls on merry go rounds:
And all of them looking up into the sky:
Ants and fish, and flying fish:
And wishes on their birthdays that leave to say
Goodbye:
And blue gills in the blue bells who are taking their
Last breathes,
And ants, and blue ants blown from the lips and
Stamens of tulips in games of love into
The canal:
How long do you think it is that they can swim before
They too have to say goodbye:
Just as stewardesses leap through the sky, like Jacks
Off of hot candle wicks, leaping like nursery rimes,
Like busy airplanes of mobiles above the vast infinity
Of newborns:
And cockroaches in forgotten cabinets:
And even you. And even I.

Robert Rorabeck

And He Was The Playground

And they had another shower
While they pretended at loving—
And the sea came in
Spinning and spinning
Just like the wheels of the helicopters did:
And she could never—never
Love anybody else but she loved him:
Coming to him on
Sunday mornings—
Well, the sun pretended to cough as it got up
And made ready for another day at
The school yard:
In fact he made the whole place get up
Until there was never enough rum for
The last man
But he said his prayers anyways
And got up
And up
And showered naked in the sunlight,
Because he was the sunlight anyways:
And he was the playground
And it felt good.

Robert Rorabeck

And Then This

It doesn't hurt when it rains: it sounds
Repeatedly staccato- daydreams in a classroom of
Freckles,
The old joys of kindergarten: and now I live alone,
And take strikes off of this
While sunshine works all night on the other side of
The road,
Doggy style, smelling like road kill,
But making some other man's flowers happy:
Landscaping,
And the secret terrapin of incest: the failed boys at play:
Wet like paper in their pants:
Defeated baseball- ropes that lay impotent in the grass
Near the footstools of half nude Madonna's and their
Ugly sisters:
Like snakes without backbone, slipping their tongues
Into the singsong elbows of greenery:
And giving off dismissive promises all night
For which they never receive the right percentage of
Compensations:
And then in the morning: hurricanes, rodeos:
The sad hibiscus who knows what happened to the little
Girl: rattle snake clutches as soft as abuse;
Lost tricycles in the corrugated drainage: and then this:
And now this.

Robert Rorabeck

Animal Pain

The birds fly over my house-
I don't know where they are going, probably south,
And they look beautiful under-belly even though
I don't know them;
But I don't really live here- This is just a dream-
I have never seen the birds, and I don't believe in God,
Since you laid down with him,
Or whoever, combining your fingers through the fireman,
Caesuras through sunlight just as through snow-
I am almost done with the last chapter,
Before the class which will be my execution-
The f*cker said he was an atheist before he found pantheism,
And unicorns,
And stole away my mermaid before I could paint her,
But she had nice breasts, successfully areola-ed by Ulysses
S. Grant, or somebody-
Now these long aberrations, these stints of death looking
Up through the sky-
The stewardess who gives him the wrong number, and I can't
Go through with it,
Because she's changed her name and is in love with the tallest
Cross in Florida,
And I would like to name my children after her,
But I've forgotten how to ride a bicycle,
And I don't believe in God anymore-
Still, Mickey Mouse has a strong jaw, burnished by the
East coast- He rides a Harley on weekends while his wife
Takes the Lexus shopping with their two kids;
But I am not warm any more,
But a tourist on the job- I am not asking for a handout,
Bu it is so cold,
And I don't believe in G-o-d.

Robert Rorabeck

Anne Sexton

So you've written poetry,
And have beautiful scars, like
Burns in the pie-crust of American:
And I'll write your introduction,
Even though we've sold all the trees
And I don't know you.
I've seen one picture of you,
But I will not stare when you come awake
Again under my tents, swooning like
The damp laundry, or the birds
Picked from the dunes by the sky;
And I would lay my arms down beneath
You, to be christened or knighted,
Though you might not think to speak of this
Until the depressions of the next millennia;
And though I should be the dirtiest man
In the bookstore, I will smile even as I buy
Those things they forgot and have fallen into
The vague quarries of such professions:
Though I cannot see it anymore, I am
Published in mutations of sky, and I love you.

Robert Rorabeck

Annie

I spend all night living in exile
And dreaming of my beautiful sister in laws
Exhumed by the flames:
There they are, continuing up from their
High schools,
And looking as if they could be in charge
In their little bedrooms
Without any shelter-
Wont they ever set out again, lingering
Against the vanishing
Jasmine just like the spells of their folklore,
Or the songs that I sing:
There are the waves hurrying against the moon
Light: and just like them, she too will
Grow up and get her part in this world,
But I wonder if she will ever know
Who she really is,
As the dragons sing and loose their teeth underneath
The pillows, and smile innocent
As she holds her auburn head up next to the sun.

Robert Rorabeck

Another Drive-Thru Heaven

In the morning the sun
And other things—other things all around
The avenues of their places will unfold
In the mechanical ways of the petals
Of their diurnal births—
Pretty women diademing their
Cul-de-sacs,
And rotten boys in their canoes
Going either way as long as it isn't straight to
School—
The world was made to be this way,
The housewives shut into their smoldering dins,
As the angels on roller-skates float through
Another drive-thru heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

Another Poem

I've never used the adjective
Gun-metal until now.
Because, thinking about it,
My p*ni\$ is, in fact- Gun metal blue
From the savage arteries like Hebrew
Slaves building for my libido;
That forever-object of phallu\$, my forefather's
Springtime monument
When erected vibrates, finds out water,
salutes the stars,
Zigheil\$
Fires its bullets around New Years,
Is highly speculative, and well drawn:
A cerulean tarp without any sag;
A cavernaserai into the sea,
Perhaps with a sense of smell and not just
The taste buds of the icky-groin;
A radio-active spelunker which when exploring
The lie of her Plutonic cave does away with
The senses of any other motion,
Begins the roil of the sea of two bodies
Exploring through the cliched poetry of Chinese
Fireworks. She can write me a single word,
Or walk by the whispering traffic with her legs
Showing off and and I become patriotic especially for
Her and such polished color engorges
Though when expelled, shrinks into the white
Ghost, the capless octogenarian,
a terrapin tired and lazy on its orchid,
Sleeps under the school bus and my scarred chest,
Like a hermit, beautifully retracted into an oil slick,
And I have written this for her,
Who in my dreams has eyes and lips of matching
Gun-metal blue; she stands like a wingless herald
Beneath the troubled sepia skies,
But I've already told you
This in another poem.

Another Way To Believe In Thus

I get these words while you were dreaming,
And then the sun doesn't have to come up over the
Elbows:
and here we are by the same places anyways—
And if Mexico awakens: while then, there she is,
Into a million possibilities of all of her haunts—
And she isn't feeling so certain,
As this I her death right, and her song has been sung,
And her angels have been flown—all over the armpits
Which were the right places for us to live
Or to remain anyways—and so the accordions
Of our jungles fill—And yet we don't get anything done—
According to our junk- - or the detritus of our
Most beautiful hemispheres—
While then we happen straight into the happenstances
Of our hallways—and the jubilees filibuster:
And this seems to be the double "b" trust between us,
And then all of us fills—AND the world, all of us fills in—
Prettiest pictures at the nuptials—and another year
Dissolved into her shoulders—
Another way to believe in this-

Robert Rorabeck

Antique Haircut

Filthy lies are unstoppable from
The holes in my flesh,
The decanters of weevils turning around
Like the striped sign in a barber's shop-
My sister is an angel they hung in
The store window, brilliant snow,
And when they take her down she will
Be just as beautiful-
I almost forgot who I was, when
I remembered I was lost, another
Car leaking gas from the bullet holes
Stolen in the blushing hibiscus-
The viaducts of dentists dissecting my childhood,
Like an amputee I take my childhood with me,
And down into the easement of mostly teal
Gentlemen we refuse to look,
As we catch sooty brook with our cane poles
In the easy greenness of the afternoon's veil,
Where the earth is still crumbling like the
Crust of a blueberry pie.

Robert Rorabeck

Any Aspects Of Your Eyes

Struggling into the whispers of the night—
Pretending to remember the rocking horse of
The merry go round that brought us joy—
That you would not ride, as your children
Were at home,
As your husband was just outside putting a new
Trim on the car—
Until the horizon turned red and, yawning the
Grin of a yellow cat,
Somehow leapt down and partook in your
Grin as well—really only a smile,
Like a promise of springtime and butterflies
Across you laconic exterior—
And now you are not around forever—
It is as if I have lost the soul of my little sister—
Somehow you disappeared from
These bedrooms
Where the mechanisms still move, steal jointed
Through the lush foliage whose tourisms
No longer hold any aspects of your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

Anything Close To A Lie

When you don't see me, I love you:
And I have been with you so many times you don't
Remember or many other lives
In the incestual high waterfalls of the high Andes:
And it is hardly ever enough,
While the white people make love, while you make love
To,
To your other brown man, as short as I am tall:
And I guess he satisfies you fully in your bedroom without
Any other dreams:
And I am sorry that I am scarred, or that that cannot do
The many other things for you that you want:
For example, I can only ride the bull for an unlucky seven
Seconds,
And I am not the father of your children, or maybe
I am not even here,
But maybe I will live forever even while I am not
Even home:
And maybe now you will live forever, Alma: and you will
Become the homeless fairytale for so many
Pilots who will leave this place, licking you on their lips,
And the solstices turn for the other Christmases of dog years,
While I felt the contours of your ear like a car,
And never once had to turn away for fear that all of my
Loves you's were anything close to a lie.

Robert Rorabeck

Aphrodisiac Hypoluxo

I missed you on the elevator;
But I was wrong, I wasn't really there-
I was sitting in the sidelines getting older,
Waiting for it to snow;
Witches fly like imperfections in the eye
Of a hurricane;
I thought I saw you there, and in my
Grandmother's last smile,
But I wasn't really looking.
People get to know each other in their cars:
It is the fastest way known to anything,
Or by watching cartoons on Saturday morning.
What is yours? Hold on, we're almost there;
But mostly in their cars, parked on the wrong
Side of movies; and the leading man takes you
Like Count Dracula, a stone cold bride swooned beneath
The alders and the high camelback of the dark overpass.
Oh my god, would you look at his eyes;
Those are really something, and
There is a store of syrup in your neck,
But his fangs are as good as the Spear of Longinus;
The silly straws of a rattle snake?
I wouldn't know,
I called your name out the door, but it wasn't
Your name. I opened the door thinking it was your
Car, but it didn't have the new you smell,
And it drove away with me hostage inside, and only me.
People get to know each other in their cars,
But who am I to know. Now all the weather is falling,
The trees are fast undressing, and it looks like
Sherbet snow;
But this isn't even your boulevard,
You don't even drive around this town and the lights
Are brilliantly cold and I just go on and on....

Robert Rorabeck

Apiary I Can Never Have

Unicorns under her feet and this is how
It plays out in the penny ante labyrinths that she fears:
The trucks build their shoulders
As her children grow up numbered to the nameless heavens—
While I have thought of her to the ghostly playgrounds
Underneath the overpasses as to all of the heavens—
She goes to her carnivals once a year,
But she becomes less and less amused, eating grasshoppers
When she cans—and filling up the lapses in her
Amusements with the echoes of my barks—
Who was once a pretty muse in the amusements of my
Disenchanted biceps—where is she going now—
Reciprocating once again with the clouded hemispheres—
Her amber skin as rich as an orchard at the moment of
Closing time—And nothing else is real—
The sun returns to the earth as I remember my grave—
Maybe now she will lay beside him forever echoing—
The carnival filled with the overabundant sweets lactating from
An apiary I can never have.

Robert Rorabeck

Apiary Of My Heavens

I cannot befriend you, as if I were some
Token to a wolf,
Even though we live around each others houses,
And the world is filled with
Such familiar
Stuff:
The rains have stopped that we both felt:
Sometimes the same raindrops might have fallen
On either of your houses,
While your mother Rosa's rabbits have long since
Disappeared,
As you are surrounded by your beautiful sisters
And your beautiful children
The way a stewardess feels surrounded by
Such passengers approaching the apex of
Her flight:
Even though she is sober, she must feel up to
Her bosoms in libations,
The heavens laughing and multiply like starfish
Over your honey-skin, Alma:
For there you are dancing, a goddess in the zoetrope
Of the orchards outside of my window,
An apiary of my heavens on the other side of my world.

Robert Rorabeck

Appomattox

In bed with the early morning shadows
bleeding the night into another killing
where glorious colors like afterbirth flows
in nebular jets into the horizon's bowl,
revealed, I have the presentiment that my
life will fail, and rising against my Northern
dreams, I secede against their human impulse
of hope, and the cities inside me scream,
"You will never have her. She will never love you! "
and through me a million men suddenly
charge into battle, slamming into each other
like tectonic plates mounting inside my body; after
a few bloody seconds there is a fissure running
through my forehead and over 650,000
of them fall dead, and my deep southern
thoughts fall down like sweat to the oppression
of my continuing hope for her; many of the
confederates are hanged, the remainder forced
to sign their lives away in indentured
servitude in the back of my mouth, never to
be spoken out loud; and so I go to sleep in the
North, victorious, the day beginning its bloom
in the low cut bodice of a harlot, my last words
being, "She will be mine. She will love me."

Robert Rorabeck

Arizona Lullaby

Again, the hollow night is knocking against
My fiery eyes: This sun does strange things to the earth,
As it sinks- No one escapes the depths of the night,
After all the sun is just a sliver of glass in the west
Cutting between the pine bows and my tired though insouciant wings-

The dogs are with me as we begin to sink in unison.
The little one howls, the big one yawns, and I ask them
If they can smell her in the distant perfume over the lazy hills:
Her eyes, her eyes like moonlight in a dream's pool
When nothing exists in the mirror but art,
And I cannot really say who she is, but my primary sadness,
The constant of the dirge, and the well which maintains
Words in me-

When night is fallen and she is asleep, or as the day is yawning
The drooling dawn, and I am asleep in an Arizona lullaby of
Hooves crunching in the last of winter's crinoline,
With my ancestors up on the hill swaying not a lick,
Remaining the constant puzzles of the livings furtive pulse;
I search for her in the cool valley, in the lines of shadows
Beneath the quiet cliffs, and only the footsteps speak before
The fiery motes awakenings, and when I stop to listen
If she is my predator or my prey,
Then there is not another sound at all
But for the knelling of the day,

And the postures of arrowheads like fiery directions which
Once tasted the hunted ribs,
And if one should slide into her like a growing pain in
The middle of an exam, then my eyes should linger upon the
Eastern plains and tear, because I imagine all I am
Is but her untouchable wound.

Robert Rorabeck

Arseny Tarkovsky

The mad-eyed bloom of the
Fiery Russian poet
Incinerated by eternity's fist
And fed to toy-sized sharks in the
Oversized aquarium
Of the studio apartment
Where the old-style yellow
Phone sits voiceless,
Without fingerprints for
Evidence—
Yet, by shivering moonlight and
Vodka on the lonely lips
On some 21st century kid
In the pale-horse light
And singular footsteps of
The hallway,
A reborn poet can test the
Depths, a bee-sized phoenix
Coming reformed for a few
Minutes,
Inches of hand-signals from the
Clock,
To be published in the middle of the
Sea
In the calm eye of an
Apoplectic hurricane
Which fortunately dies before
The drunken scientists can think up a name.

Robert Rorabeck

As An Empty Highschool

Oh, I've looked at you from your window again:
Like a still life jogging by the fire hydrant:
That you never left the boys from that university:
Never got scarred into married lives:
Bosomy, as brown as an eternal flame, a lighthouse making its
Tips off the sailors it brings in,
Dragging them over the bones and pompadours of the
Cenotaphs of seahorses and conquistadors;
Until they can smell the boudoirs of you and yours sisters orchards:
And they make believe that they are dancing
Under the homeopathic gravity of the stars: they make believe
That they are well, and that you are already home,
Your bicycle sleeping nose first into a bouquet of grass;
And I am feeling myself in the darkness, the world spinning
Like a knowledge filled fruit falling down to sleep beneath
Her mother, anyways: the thinker vacant as an
Empty high school, the philosopher never even entering that town.

Robert Rorabeck

As Far As Moving Pictures Go

There you are underneath that grave in the
Middle of the shadows where I saw you undressed
And every dog sweated
And the heavens unclothes and the great men
Shed their tears like fireworks,
And the lizards panted and the cicadas took off
Their skins,
And it all became some kind of busied metamorphosis-
As if it was all a plan for September,
And the canoes of lovers passed the sunken fields
And saw so many pretty sights that even I didn't see
As far as moving pictures go
But it lasted for a little while, but after that I do not know.

Robert Rorabeck

As His Expressions

Pale are the feathers the sun plants
In the everglades—everyday he goes over her
Fawning:
First hunting over houses as a soothsayer
And afterwards, unimpressed and losing his
Dignity,
He forgets how to say the things the
School of heaven thought to
Teach him—
And he goes down on her like a child
For a million miles—
Each wave of the sea a rolling pearl around
Her neck—
And she laughs and smiles a last warmth
Burying his love with the nocturnal perfumes
Her true lover the moon steals
As his expressions.

Robert Rorabeck

As I Dream

I'm passing through my day on a blue bed sheet:
I can hear the birds and I'm directly underneath the
Flight plans for airplanes leaping across
Palm Beach:
The vegetation is resilient green cutlery but all the rest
Is a jungle in concrete:
And I dream of a girl so brown and so sweet:
That she torments me, so brown and so sweet,
Soft little fingers the spindles of drift wooding teak,
Eyes as dark and strong as the coffee of a
Sober dream,
While the cars move and the workmen tussle
Building up higher the hustle and bustle;
But it is only for her that I dream:
I dream for Alma as I dream.

Robert Rorabeck

As If A Lion

Downed in the pantheon like Christians making
Love to lions,
Something triumphant as it dies into a bigger universe,
The headlights of cars,
Mismanaged into the many shops of songless birds:
All of it equated by the strange ribbons
Garlanding her wrists in the bathtub:
The gifts of peasants- the atrocities of garish airplanes
Trying to circumnavigate the Christmas tree:
The misspellings of my soul
Who has to awaken again and get up to work tomorrow
In a world that doesn't know how
To receive- a father flying up to his son who
Burns him like a forest fire of lighthouses-
The exfoliations of many legged angels upon the barks of
Cypress until we get down to here:
Until we get down to the bosom of nature, and sing to her
Throat like a hidden fountain we drink from:
With the foxes, and the silent turtles:
Debased in a soul of forest fires: this Alma from Mexico,
Trying to cross and re-cross the borders,
The fronteras teaming with the mismanaged jungles of
Serpents and fireworks- like chickens and dead
Bodies telling jokes across the railroad tracks,
Smiling at the flea markets of cerulean madness:
Just to sojourn into her castle perilous,
To sleep on her roof housing the brownness of her perfection,
Until she awakens again,
Forgetting us like a dream of a healed scar- and the sun
Rises, and leaps as if a lion in its perfections of flames.

Robert Rorabeck

As If I Was

Light falling through a keyhole as a voice
That echoes of the airplanes it has passed—
Under the skirts of stewardesses that
I imagine smell like roses—
Falling down through the highest bivouacs—
And across where the boy scouts have fallen to
Their deaths:
Corpses in the green crops where the elk
Have shed their antlers—
Pick them up and it is like the sound of
Katydids brushing against the bare naked mountains,
Or another ululation for the plagiarists—
Giving up all of their disingenuous gifts as if that
Was all there was to give.

Robert Rorabeck

As If You Were A Pilot

Pitiful, yellow, and untrustworthy- but buried in the
Ground, you bloom like the best parts of your
Youth,
And the tiniest uncertainties of the earth flock over
To investigate you-
Brown eyed poet in the earth, buried as if in your little
Mine- Knowing words a hundred years before
My own heartbeat,
So many words like currents that the river can take-
Beaming in the shadows:
Are you holding your breath, waiting to be resurrected
In new colors?
Can you tell me anything about my wife, as the traffic
Excretes over your chartreuse shoulder blades-
There isn't anything that hasn't been done to you-
Your teeth are a pick for an angel's harp,
And that is your hotel that the prostitutes and stewardesses
Cry over, bosomy, lactating alcoholically,
Anointing you as if you were a pilot, as you have
Touched them.

Robert Rorabeck

As It Did To Me

The hedges crawl up further around the stewardesses,
Like unruly rinds around their ankles,
While my parents were kicked out of your fruiteria today,
Alma- and tomorrow I might be without a job:
I might never even see you again, while I listen to the sleeping
Angels who pass carelessly above me like the purring of
Airplanes- they pass above me,
And today we jogged and ate together and played like instruments
In a stove:
Like golden instruments- like diamond instruments,
Like instruments who by themselves defeated the unjust kings and
Laid down to kiss and play and otherwise be by themselves
In the gardens which they sang- in an enamored melody which
I truly believe meant as much to you as it did to me.

Robert Rorabeck

As Long As The Early Part Of The Century

When the moon lit up it
Swung around the apartments,
Seven times
Looking at the boys and the girls—
It was mad since it had stolen the light
From the muse who didn't love him—
Stolen the light given to the
Bosom of the waves,
To the girls upon the merry-go-rounds,
As the deer fed themselves in the
Pussy-willows,
And the grasshoppers fled off from
Leaf to leaf,
Missing the bare, tanned legs of the
Indians they used to have running among
Them—
As the Earth spun and spun
Like a wild pony trying to give itself to
A blue lion it found itself in love with,
But who refused to wake up
For just about any one—
As the blue eyes of just one angel bled
And bled through the sky,
And last as long as the early part of
The century—
And for a while after the beautiful
Automobiles began to awaken and purr.

Robert Rorabeck

As She Comes To Me

I read my novel when no one writes to me,
And I go to sleep when there is nothing left to complain
About. I dream that my father doesn't sell fireworks;
I dream that he is an ornithologist in an irrigated desert,
With marble benches and low gravity to increase
The longevity of hummingbirds- What lies!
What lies I tell my uncle as he ploughs beneath the
Corn silo, while little nieces laugh between the rows
Of raspberries, which, like costume jewelry will be
Their heirlooms: I think if I saw Rimbaud reincarnated
In college, I would not hesitate to turn his chin up beneath
The ceiling fan, and kiss him reverently, the breathing gold
Cups beneath both of his eyes filling up with clever tears:
Oh, what are the sad things the knitting circle brings to
Gossip on: The manifestos of alluvial plains in the
Salinas Valley: Steinbeck as a boy on a red pony,
And the tender please of innocuous driveways curling up
Through the rich insouciance to the gentle knuckles of an
Older lover. What lies! Now in a week, beautiful women
Will be dressing up for Halloween, and after midnight test in
The tight grips of a lover, and there should be rain,
But she has nothing else to say to me, and so very few
Costumes to choose from, that when I go to sleep it will
Be very easy for me to recognize her as she comes to me.

Robert Rorabeck

As Something Else You Cannot Have

Bullying on the grass with the gnats,
And the bees:
Words that bask in splendor sticking to your
Scabby knees;
And you never read the words for you anymore:
Not anymore, Alma:
While I study over simplified Spanish in my
House all alone:
The aircondition a place for you, the airplanes of
In the sky as if children running to an from
School;
But your words are on their lips for you-
In the aloe the faeries play, as my mother kneels in the
Carport:
And even the most slender of rabbits has a soul:
Its Alma, running and leaping through the junkyards of
Pornography, as through my childhood,
As something else you cannot have, which I would so
Eagerly have given over to you.

Robert Rorabeck

As The Housewives Caught Their Own Rides

A Disney World—Flatulent—
Buzzing flies all blue and glossy underneath
Where the airplanes fly—
Where the tarps flap, something grotesquely opulent—
I haven't drunken in years: now make believe
Dolls are in the morgue,
Crying—beautifully silent, breathless—
Filled with a thousand bonfires extinguished
And upon their shelves,
Pestilent—the sororities I'd left behind all of them
Making love beside their graveyards
In the houses they could never own—
Lights flashing off and on—
Placing themselves in harm's way and the lands
Flooding elegantly as the housewives caught their own
Rides home.

Robert Rorabeck

As The Lighthouse Closed Its Eyes

Now you have here a blue Cadillac without any
Angels in the carport like a
Grotto,
And your mother is here, barefooted and still very
Young,
On the other side of where your muse now lives:
So if she was still living there,
We could, together, envelop her in an ellipse,
As she considers her two children
Who mean more to her than any of this:
Than any of these promises of romances sent to
Her in bouquets of red wheelbarrows
Cultivated from her gardens of forest fires
Where she seems to live alone,
Her deities hung with fishing line and hooks
From the palmettos and cypress:
Paper angels and piñatas- and I just wanted to
Say that I loved her one last time,
As she drifted from me like the sea from a defeated
Fort, as the lighthouse closed its eye,
And all of the tourists went inside to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

As The Waves Took Breath In The Tide

It snows in the coquina forts,
And the fox roots wither like tourists in their
Shorts:
But what about the glassblowers in their
Hypnotizing art,
To which the chickens are attentive, and the
Heathenish flames flicker and dart;
As you lay down your finite body, and its infinite
Soul,
Down across the brown slim tresses of your world
Quite literally across the railroad tracks;
And I don't want anymore dreams after you:
I told you that I would kill myself for you, and that
Was real:
And the switchblades glisten over the foreclosed
Hives,
As the otters dunk into their homes,
And the stewardesses leap like nursery times, at least
Two or three times,
As I say your name and extinguish all of my wishes;
As I have blow your hair out my window as we drove
Next to the sea to whom I compared you to,
Gasping like another fish to your soul,
Or singing like a drowning butterfly you name
To a laughable star: Alma, Alma, Alma,
As the waves took breathe in the tide; as, heedlessly,
The wives collectively came inside.

Robert Rorabeck

As The Windmills And The Heavens Turn

Pageants of their blood
Sleeping like crickets in the sun;
Upon any day as new as this,
Colors of her flag flowing
After midnight and
Fireworks,
Tadpoles waiting for metamorphosis
In the tidelands of her hair;
And now I have something
Else to believe,
As we all go sleeping into the
Beds of the promises;
The day laborers, and the
Wiving loves:
The donkey carrying its savior and
Its gods,
As the windmills and the heavens turn.

Robert Rorabeck

As Useless To Believe

Will you still be with your man in
The summer of the fever of your unrequited wedding—
Will I still have to slide down the banister of your
Church and into a graveyard—
While my wife talks drunkenly on the phone to
Another relative in China—
And the other fashionable existences have to believe
That the sun is coming up tomorrow—
And you have new men either in the bull pen or
Up your sleeve—
And it is new years—and the bottle rockets that
We've sent up the mountain can just lie there and
Never have to come down
The mountain to see this side of heaven or
Anything else that is just as useless to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

As You Do

Hard noses of airplanes sticking out their
Proboscis above the clouds where the giants go snoring or
Taking their gifts
Of blond headed fairytales who eventually become their
Fables, if not their housewives:
When all I wanted was a kiss from you, Alma:
When all I wanted was for your brown sense to turn my way
With the same admiration I show you
All day long in the fruit market my poor, poor uncle owns:
And look at my good luck,
As if angels knew my name, as you reciprocate:
And the heat of your body sends out its waves as you do:
As you do.

Robert Rorabeck

As Your Lips Are Red

Tossed away from this, you have made a sport of
My soul,
Even as angels, weeping, take picnic and
Pieta on my shoulders:
But they are borrowing bicycles and have stolen
Little boys,
And the clouds ink my cheek bones
Like the poisonous snakes there at the races to
Bite their lips at the ankles of
Race horses:
And another holiday is approaching:
Some other holiday, while I will take an airplane
Like a rain cloud to some other muse,
Even as I am becoming terribly,
Terribly lost- even after I should have already
Drunken myself into whispers underneath
The chicken legs of the house of the witch-
As the young boys are still playing basketball and
Football,
And some venal muse is still serving drinks in
The armpit of Florida:
Well, my words swell out the doorways of middle-class
Cathedrals and travel down the perpetual hill:
My dog still sleeps at the feet of my body-
It is a tomb in the stacks of rain clouds and purple
Bowling alleys,
As your lips are red or they are brown-
And these are the words of an anonymous wreck as it
Is going down.

Robert Rorabeck

Assertions Of Torpidity

If I stare at you too long,
You may be mistaken that I want something,
But even though you represent a beautiful
Object going nowhere with a busy background
Of traffic,
I am only waiting like you, for things to come
My way and then depart;
Or maybe you are waiting for the bus?
Or on your mother, or the ice-cream truck?
Did I tell you I'm attempting to finish my
Fourth novel this year? It should be my last,
For I don't want to seem intolerably desperate,
Though its quite easy as long as you shouldn't
Be bothered with publication,
Or that I saw my dog drool on a swarthy
Caterpillar, which sounds vaguely romantic, but
Turns out to be rather gross, like most
Acts when they get down to the nitty-gritty.
Are you like me, preferring tomboys to bimbos,
And find it rather sad when flushed women graduate
From one to the next, and then on to grandmothers?
But now the sun is slipping upon us as if we
Were displayed under glass in a museum, and
Even the insects are torpid and crawl upon your
Neck like tiny cerulean motes, or tree frogs,
And their insouciance of farts and quiver chirps
Accentuate how callous is your beauty,
And immutable your heart, such baggage of
Chastity you take with you standing in the
Middle of nowhere, disproving such philosophers
Who assert that movement is a possibility.

Robert Rorabeck

At The Very End Of My Dog's Life

I should be writing novels about you:
You, you who never read, who's done nothing to
Help me stop doing this.
All you've kissed is my neck, and by doing so
Made it the most cherished portion of my body,
Do it so again and it will spontaneously become a goblet for
Spilling cheap fortified wines
For the hobos in my castanet way up in Michigan;
Catch me with your feral dew filled eyes,
Collect me and make my body a corrugated runway
For the arguments of your evolved necessities-
How in bodies by and by we look the same as our
Contingent of species, but how sometimes I might suppose for
Your soul to flutter vibrantly a long ways down different
Multidisciplinary pathways- all the way back to the hidden
Greenness's of my forests- where you might settle down
Anywhere, but be assured of your protection- Oh, there,
I would misspell my love for you in so many different ways;
And you would pretend not to care, but you would listen,
Restive to my rhymes ringing pedantic but not truly instructional;
And we could go back further to where our mothers bathed
The very waters of the mountains' tears,
Or I could drive straight for you void of introspection through
The vast monotone of our continent, catch you unawares
And let myself become a vase for your nebulous politeness,
Let you serve me and tip you well, and then disappear into
The educated night, pissing like a dog in that Florida University,
Dreaming of you despotic but wisely, never seeing you again
Except maybe at the very end of my dog's life,
A wayward latchkey to the masters I no longer believe in,
The gravestones then very ready and presumptive.

Robert Rorabeck

Automobile Explosion

Don't worry- I will do
Circles around you from
Far away, and crash and burn
Somewhere where it wont interrupt your dinner.

Robert Rorabeck

Away, Away

Your lines are the fleeting
Clips
That you try to advertise,
Rounds for the rosy gun
To sell more than your adversaries
Across the street,
Those little things you say,
Syllabic stings you pin in her chest,
From miles and miles away
To compete,
You sell yourself in the dreamer's
Marketplace,
Knowing though that you
Can never reach her,
Even if you learned the travels of
Light.
For there she is already hung
Upon him,
Her eyes already half asleep
Against his arms for all
These nights you've tried shouting
To her,
Spent yourself in her mouth.
No matter what you say,
Your lips splattered with blood,
Those things that die on midnight roads
To be eaten by granite vultures in ovens of sunlight
Before a single soul drives by,
The bloom of roses in a deep forest,
Speaking to no one the gifts you would hand
Over to her,
The vowels of wild flowers dewing on
The velveteen fields, nourishment for newborn feelings
Arises bravely from their hiding places
To be collected by a ship of sunlight
Disembarking across the daylight's sea,
The communications of matter through space,
Your whisper to dock soft and restive
Through the sheltered bay of her eardrums;

But her body is too far away to feel this tide,
Though you might explode to communicate,
She can't hear what you say, and like the earth
With the moon, she ignores the pull of your gravity,
For her universe is always expanding
Away,
Away.

Robert Rorabeck

Baby

If we were all Angelina
Jolie, and Brad Pitt,
We'd just spend all day fvcking,
But it would be the way Susie's
Palms slap puddles;
I mean, real shallow,
Tabloid weather, like two
Nuns mucking

Baby, you must understand
The pain is yours,
The scars the evidence that you are
Here, and let them pass by you
In a victorious cavalcade,

Let them win in court,
And give them all the room they need
To go home to better structures
Stepping gently through the purple
Lilies and burping frogs,
Into the portico where they will
Watch t.v. And have sex,

Baby, I will be yours until the sun
Falls into the sky; Baby, I will be yours
Until my echoes swim in the sea,

And in the atoms of waves the theory
Is proven, an entire metropolis of shrunken
Men, cuckolded and brought there on the
Stem of a dandelion spore....

These are some ideas I have for books,
And a gothic romance where I help Snow White
Escape Disney World;
She laughed at my writing, until the werewolf
Leapt up and took her like a cat takes a mouse
And did away with her behind the couch,

When I went to Hollywood
I never left my truck until all together I was
Arrested,
Spent all my quarters at the arcade,
graduated in lesser faints,
And took her hand and lapped her taint,
But eventually, she took to being what I ain't,

But, baby,
Look at this place, where the land rolls out
To where you've never been, the jobs roiling on
Endless sea,
John Wayne laughing as a cloud,
Fred Astaire pirouetting on the bow of our
Ship,

Baby, we are all broken,
Incapable men, and under the moon the eels
Are black and migratory,
And I should never touch your salt, but
Give into you the throb of my story,
My pain, and the prodigious scars,
I open up to you and smile
Like the sun on the day that it dies.

Robert Rorabeck

Baby Blue Behind

Diana is the goddess of the hunt and in her
Lunch truck, talking all the time on the phone, she has
Amble beauty:
She magnetizes the earth, and she has tried on the baby blue
Lingerie I bought for her, because she wanted me to
For her birthday;
This weekend will be my birthday, and all I want to do is take
Her and her daughter to the zoo,
To touch the same animals all at once, to feel the same existence:
To make the mermaids jealous in their topless pools,
And to look at my aunt's derelict car parked in the irresponsible
Forest in which a careless cigarette has already started a cheerless
Fire;
And if we can find some swings that are high enough for the playgrounds
Of Diana's body,
We can pretend to fly in the censer's arc: with her daughter,
We all can be glorious waves over the graveyard, and we can laugh
While the traffic checks us out,
And all the boys and all the men there swear that they have seen a goddess
Swimming over them on their drive home,
Something they can search forever for afterwards but never find,
When it was only Diana humoring me on my birthday,
Though ever after even I know she will be almost impossible to find,
The common reason for our male truancies, swinging with
A baby blue behind.

Robert Rorabeck

Baby-Doll

Hey, baby-doll: Tomorrow will be Saturday: and it will
Be Saturday's sunshine that shines her way across the canal:
Kids I don't like anymore will light off fireworks across the
Canal—
Kids that were always will be too good for me, will take
Down stewardesses from the midway rooms of the afternoon sky
And stick them to the roofs of their mouths like
Sacraments for Easter: see what they have found in their
Eternally suburban rooms: they think that they know so much—
But everything they pretend to know disappears before
It blooms—their fireworks are duds—
Their minnows never metamorphosis—and their greatest loves
Vanish in the evaporations of their unexpected ballrooms.

Robert Rorabeck

Bachelors And Howling Dogs

These are the painful errors reflected from my face,
As if I had been in a knife fight instead
Of going to prom, and bled in the swimming pool
Where my luxurious sisters had planned to swim,
And I am left injured in a mirror where my friends
Have been cutting coke,
But feel so bad about it, they make me promise to
Keep it a secret, but I am so far out here,
Down past the bustling rapids of cars, where the
Waters begin to pool into the everglades,
Where they burn sugarcane
In the celibate shadows where the caged lions pace,
Where not even games of baseball intrude,
That there is not a soul to tell, swimming in the higher
Clefts of palm trees, skipping like flat stones of sunlight
Along the underbelly of aeroplanes;
Thus, I thought my disease could be an aphrodisiac,
Like a trilling call, which would thus enunciate myself to her,
The way a grandmother may sometimes fall in love with
A young musician,
But she is too busy pouring the liquors of preoccupations,
To listen to a drunken demiurge, the first desire of a greasy
Teenager to become a god of the fallow classrooms,
To write love letters on the chalkboard as if a universal answer
To the indescribable equations,
But she has a real artist cutting her hair and
Walking her dogs, buying her ice-cream dripping in sweaty
Cherries down at the parlor- a groupie of the pretty boys
And their polygamy, thus I remain the scarred and chased,
Dreaming of the weedy paths first brushed by Conquistadors,
And the house I might have one day in the humid island of
Bachelors and their howling dogs.

Robert Rorabeck

Bachelor's Row

Look stranger
The women now are moving
Over the stations of the cross,
Like moonlight on silver,
Like an assassin's blade, like
The stinging barb of the wasp.
To the east they dropp the fags
Into the sea,
A funeral pyre for the man
They just lost,
They cross themselves and sigh
And kiss their novel knight under
The cherubic harems of the old,
And his whispered lies crawl up and cry,
Pollinate the conjured wind with a
Banishing storm,
The wet strength she finds suites her
In the city of the brand-name heart:
They F— and fart, laugh and smoke,
And piss and defecate over those
Murdered bones of yesterday's business card
All rolled up in a bed that
Has been thoroughly washed,
After he was kicked out.....
They found that his scent did not
Smell right,
So they sent him down the road,
When all they really needed was something
Unexpected, the stranger unloading
His bags at the door and spending
The night to move on into a different estuary;
They keep him for a year or two,
Sniff his armpits
And say that this is one c-ck they might
Not marry.
I pretend to love her and her end,
The tail of the addictive fiend
The lubrication of my tongue skating around
Her ring and

The way her eyes strut unafraid through
Her gardening of men,
As she waters and tends to them by
Her various plots;
But I do not love her, my vindictive spot,
But only need her to unload,
The posy from my spindled wand,
That expanding mollusk which smells her
End like the rich earth where our children
Lay buried in waiting,
But I will not be defeated by her,
And her nature the nether wind:
She will move on as fast as she can,
Because her life is in the two weeks
Of an insect's vacation:
She cannot sin, because she does not love.
To love is to understand,
And that is not a part of her receptive plan:
She is the lioness in heat on the savannah,
Moving on from one King's
Harem to the next,
The ugly Lisa waiting for her second place:
She only worries that her crotch is
Waxed and shaved thoroughly at
Both ends.
In the end she hits the spot
And cries his name in pretend.
Sometimes she gets it right,
And sometimes she calls out the tag
Of some john she has not so long ago
Sent packing down to
Bachelor's row.

Robert Rorabeck

Back In Mexico

Birds lying low in the scars after fireworks
Waiting to make love to other birds
As the serpents approach through the doorway
Of flaming swords, as I was thrown out of
Her gardens in the trailer parks at the edge of
The orange fields- as my muse makes love
Tonight to her husband in a bedroom beside
Her parents, and beside her sisters:
They make love as quietly as they can, as
They made love back in Mexico- they will continue
Carrying on as they can,
As the waves will recede with the moonlight that
Has not her own face- as she is pulled to him,
Like an echo lost from my lips,
Like a warmth shed of my body, as the trucks
Pearl into the darkness - deaf and blind creatures
Sleep as they are awakened

Robert Rorabeck

Back Into The Graves

It pains me to say this,
But I am done: a morgue of ancestors- a morgue of
Come,
And words that fill up the pockets of a superfluous midway:
And pretty verbs who sell themselves throughout the day-
And pretty things:
And things that linger through the green tatters of a
Anyways:
While bodies in the shallow waters pray-
And take account of themselves: these same shapes casting their
Shadows equally,
Unperturbed- luxuriating in their vessels anyways,
Riding their bicycles across the blood vessels of their forts:
While the cenotaphs lay spreading arms
In the waves: and the conquistadors muscle- and the children
Return to their graves-
And she wears her gold again, while the mockingbirds
Proclaim to the old recording over the supplanted swing sets,
While the flea markets make love over the waves:
And Alma turns her conscience away: fleeting like a song bird
Who doesn't get paid:
And the night warms its perfumes of off colored sacrifices
Telling of their bemusements straight away-
And right again back into the graves.

Robert Rorabeck

Back Into The Sea

Here is the washing machine, turning around
With the sun going across the street-
About like a pinwheel on a journey- rum on my
Lips,
Failing into the night, like the death of songbirds
Into the mine:
Singing with their bones that their muse has gone
Back to her husband,
And they will never be up to seeing her again-
And all that is preposterous will just
Float over the earth,
Never having to touch the earth- breathing like a
Jellyfish up there,
Imperfect, while the insects make love and die
So many times within the long and beaten
Necks of the aloes-
And the housewives make their usual sacrifices in the
Carports besides the toads and rebar-
Either with the sun coming down,
Or the rain- a kidnapper patrolling the street
While the kittens inspect the rattlesnake in
The ditch;
And in the back yard, there is one perfect orange
That will emolliate before anyone will ever see,
And the pilot, while daydreaming of
The finest stewardess, will crash once again
Back into the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

Back To Work

I love you in your whispers,
And the fact that you have a hard time breathing;
I only look good in select shadows,
But I only want to be your flag bearer:
I want to stand outside your tent and listen to the coital
Trumpets of your and your fellows heat,
The elephants right next to me,
The mountains above;
Because if we aren't going to go right now and
Conquer the world then you are not realizing your
Full potential,
While the airplanes fly so close above,
And I get back to work.

Robert Rorabeck

Back To Work On Monday

By sweetened virtue I start out, dashing as the cavalier

Knight:

The butterflies cut from the paper from the womb of a

Beautiful girl's diary:

And I read her out under the sun, as I wait for the bank robbers

To drive by:

This night is pillaged by lucky horses, while I have never

Been by Sarah's grave,

Or my grandfather's grave, but I know that my one good grandmother

Is buried atop the hill underneath the welded cross at the northern

End of the summit of the Springerville Cemetery:

Sharon, she is buried just above her little house, across the churches

And the swings that I have articulated back and forth on the

Other side of her;

And you never even saw or knew her body's warmth, Sharon:

Sharon: but your body is still sparking like a wish culled from

A cloudy day:

And I wonder what is was that made you choose the man you love;

And if I had just one wish rubbed from the gilded belly of a genie,

Then Sharon, that wish would be for you love,

But I still have to go back to work on Monday.

Robert Rorabeck

Back Up Against The Breathless Rosebushes God Knows Where

It feels good to finally settle down in a lawn chair
After a long day,
With a harmless green snake wrapped around my
Sweaty leg,
Everyone gone and done calling me sir for the day:
I guess it's better than nothing;
If they could only imagine who I were,
What a star thug I am out amidst the slash pines
Watching the steady unperceivable line of traffic trying
Forever to disprove Zeno;
Proving him every time,
Just as the swing set arcs like the day,
And the housewives come in sweet smoky parade,
Like legged censers, homeopathic crosses tucked into
Their salty bosom;
And with the lights turned out, and Romero away buying
More beer,
I can be assured that I am the handsomest man in the
Darkness,
And no one is playing golf; and no one is losing their
Virginity
On the back nine, or in the front row:
And though the ingénues are as seamlessly pretty as they
Are unfaithful, there are none around for miles to disprove
Me;
And I don't think of them, anyways: How barmaids so
Easily disproved me, unrequitedly disproved me:
And I am the cotton mouth captain of toy boats, and I work
Next door to the sleep otter,
And I don't have to prove anything to no one: I am just
Another creature in the zoo,
And all the proof I need is in a sommelier alive and well
Back up against the breathless rosebushes god knows where.

Robert Rorabeck

Bad Luck

Searching for the right words tonight,
By the television,
By the campfire- The coyotes up to their
Sleep-walking tricks,
And me up to my own too,
Like tawny black boys out in the sugar cane,
Smoking Cubans,
Waiting for her ankle - Trying to find her out,
To spy on through the knot hole in the fence
As she shampoos in something early,

To drink this prescribed auburn liquor
and say a sad testimonial to my
Grandfather, but I wasn't there:
My sister was there and her new husband
So free of scars and unnecessary words resulting from,
And somewhere in the country they are playing a night
Game, and the boys are randy and they stink of the
Worm.

But swing the bat, Johnny.
The dirty ball's arc over swing sets and trailer parks-
The scabby coyotes moon long-tongue through
The green copper-fields

Johnny and his cool gang
running around half naked on the dusty diamond;
And the teeth are yellow when once they used to be
Beautiful, and their cars used to be beautiful,
And my words;
Or my dreams used to be beautiful,
And I could turn off the radio when I was driving past
World famous amusements and listen to my dreams sweat in that
Darling humidity, because I was going up to meet her,
Because I had a chance,
But I blew it- The same old tragedy, the knife in the ice-chest
Beside the fluting copper eel;

And I could cry tonight underneath the bleachers looking up

The skirt of the universe,
That it is beautiful and see how I try to polish a dictionary
To mirror its perfect scars,
But I am neither a debutant nor sommelier:
I don't know how to taste without swallowing:
Afflicted by loneliness, my
Existence lies further out than anything you could possibly
Imagine,
The aphorisms of the ostracized middle class,

And I can only give it little impossible sacrifices that no one
Cares about:

I can resurrect my childhood and stand with it on the easement
Skipping concealed shadows down into the canal,
And spit slang at blue gills and alligators,
And put black cats in the creases to see how fast I can throw
The awful luck,
What I have made of myself across the teal bodies of
Torpids slumber to disappear around the knees of the pines
And red holly on the other side,
To say, why am I here if I can't share my sorrow with my
Loneliness,

When even those two don't know each other it's
Going to be a strange weekend,

And what I have will never be looked for to be found,
But in the morning the novel spit of dew,
The dripping fags surveyed by cerulean dragon flies,
And red blistering of industrious fire-ant mounds,
The repopulations of great cities overnight through the
Suburban jungle,
Who never think to look up at the greater thing and say
Now what is this,
Even as this shadow falls upon them like a monolithic body
Floating festooned through the dislocated movements
Of the ever present void.

Robert Rorabeck

Baking Your Cakes

Baking your cakes,
Your crocks of clay in Colorado:
Can't I come?
It was where my mother was born.
In golden.
In aspen- She looks like Colorado,
Her hair silver, not gray:
A black woman came in and talked her up
For hours,
Because this black woman thought or hoped
Or figured that she
Looked like my mother,
Or wanted to look like her according to all the
Daytime talk shows and game shows
And soap operas
She spent her life on:
And I don't blame her. My mother is
A very beautiful person;
And she is very simple, and loyal:
But it is you who I am thinking of,
With your raven hair
And mascara and your daylong job:
Better suited for the evil though beautiful witch,
You still have more friends than I've
Ever had,
But I find it hard to believe that you even care
How many friends you have,
Or how beautiful if
Venal you are,
Though if there was a single black woman in the
Town you live in,
High up in that stony cleavage who'd been
Fed off the very same licorice stuff,
I'm sure she would talk on and on with you
For hours just the same.

Robert Rorabeck

Ballad Of Ecstatic Truth

The days feel good coming home with no darker
Thoughts sunning in the grass- just the opal palms of feminine
Flesh testily over crackling wheat,
Farmers of spikenard and cormorants unwieldy in their
Turns, sell their poetic stock for a saccharine carnival;
And all throughout the night it yearns very sophomoric but
Upright, pacaderms of gears trying to throw off little gallant
Men- Girls with hidden sores and holes for snakes and
Hummingbirds- The true feelers of the world always branching
Outwards, always reflecting in like gaunt and garish faces
Rippling down into the wash basin's porcelain;
And right about now, as my feet go stomping by on those roads
Of sparking time, realizing how the beautiful lies spend off more
Perfume than an entire pyramid of dry good truths- I would sell every
Button, every leathered soul to forget the delusion of memories
Myself extols to swing up there with the forgetful menagerie
Bought by the high mountain's vacillating fruits, guarded by
The irreverent farmers, now insouciant and rhymed-eyed,
Clapping together all across the stone-gemmed waves, a
Ballad of ecstatic truth.

Robert Rorabeck

Ballroom

Two abreast in the morning tombs:
Two abreast like pallbearers
While my dog sleeps beside me
And my belly widens:
Engravings of the tabernacle, of a hot
Lunch on a holiday:
As angels braid their hair and put in
For a touch of an adolescent
Whore, plastic barrettes,
And in the secret society of their wings,
Reach down and pick up the tortoises
To kiss,
Or other strange young men beside
The pestilent canal
Or other waterways that are not so
Pestilent:
But, oh, how I loved her beside the
Green rivers of a romantic
Way- or just as much so beside a
Bowling alley:
But I will remain here tomorrow,
Advertising in my sadness,
And doing a rain dance with my broken
Body, until the green swans fly,
And the tadpoles swim into other
Ballrooms,
Dancing a metamorphosis of forever,
Or at least until the not so heavenly sky makes way.

Robert Rorabeck

Ballrooms

Two abreast in the morning tombs:
Two abreast like pallbearers
While my dog sleeps beside me
And my belly widens:
Engravings of the tabernacle, of a hot
Lunch on a holiday:
As angels braid their hair and put in
For a touch of an adolescent
Whore, plastic barrettes,
And in the secret society of their wings,
Reach down and pick up the tortoises
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Robert Rorabeck

Barefooted Through The Grass

My life is as insignificant as a grasshopper hatched
On your shoulder
Blades,
And you could crush me with your freckles,
Or you could gently blow me off
And have me seated beside you in time for
Breakfast;
But that is how little of life I am in comparison,
While you kiln your bowls and ferment your orchards,
And all of that given to your
Sweet daughter from the mouth of your breasts;
And you could be so generous,
And I could be your lucky friend and give you tips of
Apple-orchard wisdom,
If you set me down beside you
And sometimes French-kissed by spider-webbed wings.
I wouldn't imagine or mind that there
Wasn't any special holidays for that:
Just take me up with you when you jogged.
Or set me up on the dash of your car when you
Wanted to get somewhere fast,
As the river walked.
Your husband wouldn't even care,
Because I still must be the most insignificant of things,
Like the wisdom of a kite lost to some
Kindergarten,
While the beach is so needy and populated by
Underaged tourists gotten lost from older fieldtrips;
It would save me entirely
To be baptized beside you in those little pools,
And who is he to care to know
The homeopathic taboo I wish to choreograph in
An acre of a centipede pinioned
Along your ruddy clefts
Just as wholesomely as a snake running along
Barefooted through the grass.

Robert Rorabeck

Barking Dogs And Crying Children

This is the manuscript lost in the woods:
Peter Pan before the head hits the pillow—
Woebegone thought tossed to a wave,
And then the night proceeds
To lose little boys into it—
Visions in procession—
Cuckolded husbands and spotted dear,
Forts defended by fireworks
And deranged soldiers—
Zoetrope of ancestors turning into a zoo
While the night is out,
And the ocean calls down the moon—
Places that are lost,
Kidnapped children—
Teachers believing in what they've taught
To no one, while the rain extends—
Hobos vanish with unicorns,
Housewives make peace with their loneliness,
And the poet panhandles for a crackerjack
Prize—what these lines are good for,
What they can be used as—
While she makes love to him,
Technicolor prisms lost to the blindness of
The night—
Words of love over-spoken by barking dogs
And crying children.

Robert Rorabeck

Barking The Thunder

Those things were once beautiful
When they were young and holding hands.
Now they are speared at the sides
And give little struggles
Though it is never in the direction
They once laid down towards.
And far, far above
The sun still burns, like a lantern
Keeping watch in the loft of a barn
Where a blonde angel sleeps out of the
Rain in the place where inhabited lovers once joined.
Here, her quiet light lingers
Wavering like incandescent waves
Of the desire now smoldering over muted
Flesh, the pearlescent avenues curious
Fingers strolled for hours upon
And lips pressed furtively searching for
A definite meaning. Now her sea-curved
Limbs only wear the bucolic lingerie of
Her surroundings, like a virginless grotto
Painted without meaning,
The landscape of a lonely plot.
Wings clipped and darkened,
She searches for a deity as chaos
Swirls blacker, barking the thunder.

Robert Rorabeck

Barren Room

I shall never feel her body's
rush
the long slow pain she
has inside her
it is no longer for me
she is now the strange
vegetation
the distant pornography
again the lady on the
street
that goes down the way
without brushing me
she no longer yearns for
my body's heat
she left the furnace
unlit
naked she goes out of my
house into the snow
to die or find another
she does not care which
only that she is through
with me
before she started
she is the startling ice on the
lake
she is the fog on the
mountains gone before I awake
her heart is ethereal
on another man's plate
her eyes hiss for him
her body is a heat mirage
for him
when I have gone onto the frost
pasture to follow
her she has gone down to
him and the wind has
covered up for her
leaving me to stagger
lost, orphaned to the

night and the loneliness,
my barren room

Robert Rorabeck

Basking In Her Pollens Of Her Wake

Holdouts who are so finely implored
Pullulating like moths up in the ancient gutters-
I could have sworn this was the right way to
Her fancy,
The pitter-patter employed in layers to see how
Much she drinks,
The pills and constabularies she keeps so rich
On the nightstand by her bedside at midnight;
And if I could take her hand,
And have her to agree that I should be able to
Drink her liquors,
Then all of this squalor should burn away so that
I would become the full-bodied rehabbed gentlemen
On the cover of the magazine;
And through a bit of hard won faith and osteopathy
Rise her from the sheets and take a few practice
Runs following the trade winds of the ceiling fan,
And then off to jubilee, past all the hollow secrets
Of the hearted oak trees,
Past the silently drifting cars, and all the squash-
Past the tennis courts of teal and drooling lawyers too-
Going past the bits of absent murder,
We would never leave the cool anterooms beneath the
Deeper atmosphere, for that should be our zone,
Slowing imbibing until we understood the full exegesis,
And learned to do a good job without even broomsticks;
I could kill her alcoholic father if she wanted,
And then we'd just skate through canopies, selling
Sparklers on the fence;
And when it finally came time for her to fully change,
I'd sit out on watch and masturbate over the sheer delight of
Her chrysalis;
And when she'd had her time and forgotten me, I'd let
Her float straight off through the next archway,
Basking in her pollens of her wake.

Robert Rorabeck

Basking In The Heartless Urbane

Monsoon season,
So when comes the rain:
The forest is dying,
Its lost its brain: and 13 people
Read my poems today,
But they didn't say anything-
They just shrugged and showed me that
They their pockets were empty;
And they went right into the bookstore,
Weeping,
Because I told them that you were serving
Drinks right next door; and you were naked
And beautiful, and Catholic;
And they believed me- They said,
They would have tipped me for the experience,
But I didn't believe them;
And I parked where I wasn't supposed to,
And I had a fight after school,
But no one was hurt, because we both left off early
And made love on the swings- I swore
Afterwards never to get into a fight with a girly,
Especially my cousin,
Because her lips were beautiful, even though she was
My cousin, or my second cousin-
And I am not good at baseball, and mathematics don't
Mean a thing,
And I have to bike home early, because its supposed to
Rain;
And I want to be Vachel Lindsay- I want to know what
Its like to kiss Sarah Teasdale, to hang out around her
Cemetery smoking cigarettes, basking in the heartless urbane;
And I want to be Rupert Brooke; I want to be
Arthur Rimbaud, but I still have both my legs;
And I have to get home early, because its supposed to rain,
But so far she holding out for a man with better promises,
And I haven't read a thing.

Robert Rorabeck

Bathing In Their Throats

Said something beautiful to the windmill
That lost its place
In the hapless orchestra disorganized upon
The hillside overlooking the sea-
Like place for you in my heart,
In a miniskirt and knocking on my door:
Seances of broken love
And noses-
While out in the coppering yards,
The ants continue to mound for their
Queen, whoever she is,
And the monkeys play baseball into the
Sunsets of Halloweens,
Where the witches fly, but jealous of
The stewardesses,
And the frogs bathing in their throats,
Washing their armpits illusively,
And still swearing one day they to be princes.

Robert Rorabeck

Baudelaire On Everest

Bivouacked in outer space,

You eat your own words
Just to stay alive.

Robert Rorabeck

Beaten In The Sun

Perfections that are not there,
Hunting through the backyards of
High school girls
Metamorphosed into housewives
Who stay at home and drink all day
Beached upon the suburb's roads,
The twinkling tar beneath the
Spinning wheels,
Prick your fingers on the
Quarter acre field, the tracks of
Land- Her eyes say it all,
The forgotten avenues of
The young jogging legs-
The embryos still within them,
Hibernating like bumblebees
In the rosy caves of seashells on
The brink,
Their lips part now,
But they only subtract, take away,
They cannot feel what they say-
I'd like to think there was a time
When they could,
Naked in the storms off the eastern
Seas,
As I stepped nearer out from
The pines and the junked cars
Shouting,
But this is a misrepresentation in
The stringing lights from day to day-
I have always been too far away
From the girls in their backyards,
Putting the glasses to their lips-
Their eyes glaze, until they go to
Bed and wake up with their few men,
So I remain in the burry dunes
Beaten in the sun.

Robert Rorabeck

Beatific White

What am I doing placing some words on the
Beatific white again?
Trying to appear before beauty as something
Similar,
A mote of sunlight on a cypress,
Seven ants weighing down a dying bee;
But these things I've tried to say slur with the
Inebriation of a certain mind,
Like a child of snow waiting at the bus stop
Down the street from where the lions are caged,
As the mists are unfurling from the grasses,
Putting on their second form;
And all of it is beautiful, yes, beautiful,
But neither fully discovered nor understood.
The sea is beautiful too, but much deeper than
The excited tides of its flesh, pricked by the distant gentleman:
I've seen these things, and would like to become their aspect,
To draw down on the pages the lines I am able to remember,
And make love alone in the afternoon atop
The roof of the geometry class, while all my peers
Go on to the greater professions, being led with their blinders
On, but now there is only blindness, earth and sky,
And road kill on the concrete river between the disappearing jungle-
And that is how it must be, and nothing needs to be
Said about it, and I am made lesser for saying so,
And lesser still for failing in brief interludes of free verse.
There is no service in the lonely existence of fateful prose,
The ego's doggerel, the famous gift of wiser men,
And the young Shakespeares already half asleep in their grottos'
Wombs;
If in failure, you fall further still, stand out like a red thief,
A stuttering performer, a griot who cannot remember the
Stories of his ancestors,
Then it is indefinitely better to say nothing,
But to get up with it all and, silently, remain an aspect
Of the greater poetry left unwritten on the beatific white.

Robert Rorabeck

Beating Its Soul

From her body the brownness stems, youngish, quivering,
Dancing into the light of the yellow world,
Like sailors into a lighthouse,
Or snakes of smoke up from the lavishing ruins of
Empty friends:
This pillar of my love transcends the opened hoods and doors
Of cars,
Or the laughing violets of my adversaries, the canary tourisms
Of the peppermint mines, the unicorns on the make:
A motherly reason who I have intruded and wish to tattoo like
A windmill into this flesh,
The perfumes of her overworked body she dismisses as anything
Sweet;
Her eyes open a jewelry store of disregard: she says everyday
That we will get married tomorrow: I dream of her like a cross
In an otherwise feral mind;
Her sisters mature her divinity by means of ripening sorority,
As I wish my body to pantomime the metamorphosis of
Rain back again into the sky,
Into her body, heart gathering wings, beating its soul, its Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

Beauties Parade Through The Otherwise Lonesome Dreary

This is what some ladies who are doctors
Diagnose me with,
The unearthly desire of a heavenly kiss;
And I fail them every time,
As pretend arrows knock me off my broom-
Stick horses- It isn't getting better,
Fighting windmills as a matter of course-
Pretending I have x-ray vision,
I let the water overflow, so busy masticating
The bones of the surreal:
Even if I lost the contests of this earth,
I saw them all, the sorority in their beautiful
Girth, delinquent though Junoesque:
The waves could almost reach them, the spirits
Of the sea wished it so,
And it rained so hard that day, you couldn't
Know: The alligators went on parade
And heroes started to show, dead comrades from
The easement with their dragon tooth-hoes;
I wanted to help each one up into bed,
Or lay them beside glistening middle-class pools
Where they would be easier staid,
But they got up themselves and went along their
Way,
And the storm went on teary-eyed and dreary,
Each marbled nebulous flashing its proposed
Rings to their derrières; the complexions of the gods
Started signaling, hoping to enrapture their somnolence,
But they just went straight home after school,
As was their way, and talked long and insular to
Their boyfriends of a better fairie- For so was the
Way and nature of the beauties parade,
Strutting and busy through the otherwise
Lonesome dreary.

Robert Rorabeck

Beautiful And Lost Out Of Doors

My days are numbered while your eyes will
Always stay brown and childish:
Paradoxically, your children will grow and say things of your
Own,
And you will still not know how to swim, but maybe you
Will remember how I carried you into the sea and cradled you
Beneath the diademing airplanes:
And crooned for you just that day when we were both playing
Hooky off of work:
And the sun was both of ours, and it shown down on our
Bodies, and the kind angels sang the goodest of news,
And we both admitted that we were both too nervous for our
Interviews;
And you dabbed my lips, and I dabbed yours; and we
Were both so free and ours, beautiful and lost out of doors.

Robert Rorabeck

Beautiful As Each Of Them

Peaceable sailors with candles in your beard,
How your eyes shimmer like drunken caminos to
The stars;
Every day you don't bath, another working girl
Falls in love with you,
And they crowd the docks so, like eager shoppers,
Like birds on a wire;
And the wind gets so salty licking off their sighing
Busts,
All of their backs to me and cracking farts as I lick
My lips like a starving dog and put my pen to anything slow
Enough to catch,
And write about their hourglasses while the shadows
Move and quiver like succulent steam off of each
And every wave,
And the clouds spindle, yes they spindle straight up to the
Moon, pregnant like the thoughts off all these going women,
And they keep their senses pinned to the duck pond
In the east,
Where hurricanes stew: it is the biggest thing going,
And none of them scientists, they always wonder about their
Hoary men,
Otherwise they would have figured out long ago,
Like I do, that the earth is as round and as beautiful as each
Of them.

Robert Rorabeck

Beautiful For A Minute

And you looked beautiful for a minute—
Now the minute is up,
The airplane as flown—
The fox has flown the coop—
The children have all gone home—
And penniless,
Diving to the recesses of the most
Nocturnal of architectures,
I can only write yourself this way
Well after the nights and the nights
Of stolen bicycles—
And the moon seems to make sense,
Hanging from the chicken wire—
A mouthful for foxes—
As the excitable beauties, winged,
Make a noise through the pines.

Robert Rorabeck

Beautiful Playgrounds

Beautiful playgrounds, aren't your memories
Here in the ambushed bushes,
And the latchkeyed children are yet beside the
Road—I cannot remember the rhymes
I've used to give to them,
And Arthur Rimbaud has been gone all week—
I still keep him smoking on my wall of
My windowless compassions—
As I still pretend to be a talentless freak—
And I am here, dying—
My firstborn son will come this April,
And Shakespeare is immortal:
He has won the lottery, and I keep complaining
To all the prettiest princesses in Disney World
Who are too cold and unreal to listen—
The world is melting,
Soon it will be an ocean within a week—
The portables where they teach the windowless
Children bend and creek—
Maybe my wife really loves me,
Maybe there are diamonds in the bed of the
Crick—
But I know the busses will turn, and turn around
Tomorrow, and the love of my blinded muse
Has been gone all week.

Robert Rorabeck

Beautiful Silhouette Who Doesn'T Feel

Everything fails this way; it is all I'm doing,
Crying out to you in the bent censer of swings:
These trees, long armed, beseeching don't
Care- The cherry of my cigarette an ashy searchlight-
The ghosts of little sisters on the merry go round,
The runaways sleeping upside down in their stolen car:
But I don't care to find them;
I am only looking for you, trying to perceive the flight
Of green eyed angels who can spread their capes like
Superman above the Nordic foliage and go anywhere:
And I am an old man, drunk on soul, who has been caring
For you for so long; since kindergarten when I saw your
Eyes vacillating as I stole plastic bicycles from the paper
Pirate chest:
And your name is the sweet water that gives vampires tooth-
Aches,
And I love you, but you don't care- You are not here;
You are not even in the trees, but alone with your daughter
In the mountains, sharing your eyes with a bespoke dress
That turns you swiftly around, granting nobody wishes,
A beautiful silhouette who doesn't feel.

Robert Rorabeck

Beautifully Venomous Revival

Alma, the suns of liquor burn my throat:
I am wearied and undone, just an illusion now on the
Deserts of my bachelor's domesticity:
Your elephants hang above my head across from
Monet's sailboats,
And everything I have ever done has broken and turned
To the cinders
Of a careless match in the once green mountains:
And pretty boys still go out to make love to anyone
Even through the audacity of sudden and
Violent rain,
But all by myself all I can think of is touching your brown
Skin,
Of squeezing it for a little while in my imperfect hands,
Of rolling you across the cotton caesuras of my bed;
And my desires of having my own wife and children
In a sea that only knows your eyes and senses:
That I love you through the concordance of this chaos of motion,
While all of the heavenly bodies spin and lose their heads,
And I keep settling down to the bottles of a fermenting metamorphosis,
While the monarch butterfly or its imposter flew over my
Shoulder today,
While I was just around the corner from where you attended
Your register,
Punching in the beautiful numbers before sending all the strangers
Outside the tents of your
Beautifully venomous revival.

Robert Rorabeck

Beauty Lies In His Troubled Dream

In the absence of lies lays beauty:
She is looking up at Midwestern sky,
Just a palette, unhemmed by the artist's verbiage:
No power lines distending from house,
No flickering news from windows,
Nor leaping of dogs from porch-
And she is not moving, but not to pose for him,
To let the temporary imprint of grasses thatch
Her bare shoulder-blades,
Her tan-lines fragile, exposed:
If he were there, he would say that wings
Could hatch out of bone, and she could float,
And that her lips were choking and black
From huckleberries, where she went naked
After bathing in the mellifluent river,
Because he liked her that way, and he paid her,
So he could say all these things
And she pretended not to know, lying down for him:
Now in those silences, she is:
The cornucopic space of empty sky,
Or the light of it through the loose quilt of branches:
She is, when the crickets come out
And the night steps out and darkens:
She is, the anticipation of another turn,
For a moment, she thinks she knows
The pungency of the sporadic earth clinging to her,
As the streetlights turn on like moon police,
And the last of the tardy children turn in:
Then she thinks she knows that she is this:
Alone, quiet, anticipatory in closing-
Quivering in the disbelief of freckled motes,
She almost sees herself extending in the fields,
But on the periphery he is there,
Carefully jotting her down with his eyes:
They are flickering the rapid succession of
Unconscious romances in the park,
Because she is his troubled dream, and he is well asleep.

Because

You've got bruises on your body:
Like rain clouds in the sky,
The opal trunks of aspens
Quiver in the afternoon's sorrow:
The wild flowers are suppliant
About the dead oak
Halfway up the draw:
If you came to see me tomorrow,
And your nails were painted red:
It would not matter,
I could not love you, because
You've made me pass the time alone.
I still see you like ancestors
Rolling across the prairie
In the briars of the lightning storm,
But if you came to me tomorrow
And your lips were painted red
It would not matter,
I could not love you, because

Robert Rorabeck

Because All Of The Princes Have Gone

Beautiful as the nuisance of traffics along the
Highways,
The scars of eagles drying like wet paint upon my
Face-
And I remember that I was not here,
And that it was the legless words that ushered
Me upon their belly
To see something like my dead grandmother in
Those weeds:
Hung out in the cathedrals of reptilian young,
The rains doing nothing to the fattened bellies of
Their mothers,
As they cool alongside the hapless re bars of
Car ports,
As the virgins sit atop of washing machines,
Listing in their gyre,
Waiting for the amphibian throats to flood and
Sing that this is no good- no good,
Because all of the princes have gone.

Robert Rorabeck

Because I Have Yet Anything Else

I forget to feed my deserving adverbs:
I go through the drive-thru for breakfast,
And the Chicana who serves me, like a tiny
Bell-shaped flower, has indigo an inch deep
Into her wrist; a perfunctory epitaph that
At night is perfumed and more or less naked.
I look like an old man to her: thirty-years old,
And gray, and proud of it, because I have a
Publication in my backroom I cannot take her
To, and now the world is filled with sharpened
Ironies: And inside, it is easier to smile;
But I would rather be a poet; and I have dreams
Of resurrecting yellow dogs, in procedures
Which cost five grand, and when I wake up the
Yellow dog is staring at me and whining, as if she
Could smell that I had dreamt of her.
She licks my face in her fidelity, as I remain
A part of the unspoken fraternity who continues
To dream every other night of those fine girls from high-school;
And we should dream of them until we are old men,
Liquored into a room so quiet it roars like Niagara
Falls, the yellow dog underneath the table with the
Daisy patterned table-cloth, her moist black snout
Twitching intelligently, like nerves on the temples of
A genius. I did not share the poem I wrote before
This poem, because its lies were easily found out,
But I will put this one down as a public notice,
Like a wanted ad in the fading classifies, like a lost
Child's photograph stabled to a telephone pole,
Because what is has spoken of are the finite truths
Which deserve to appear for awhile in the empirical happenstance,
And because I have yet anything else to say.

Robert Rorabeck

Because It Was No Longer Any Holiday

It is happening right here, under the cockspurs of dreams:
All night long where the landed maids are going down into the
Ghostly corals of my mother's rock gardens,
To sleep with the sleepless songbirds and the coral snakes;
And the moon turns as if dancing before the mirror
Of the minnow's sea;
And it all seemed to be quite beautiful to the conquistadors
In the sand dunes of missing kidnappers before exhaustion took
Over and the blankets ate all of the army men;
And childhood slipped away through a forest of junked cars
And pornography: it became just as series of images happening in a
Zoetrope in a house where only the cats dreamed,
The Christmas tree blinking in the Morris code of forest fires,
Until the shadows turned in under the sun, curling like aloe that
Had already had its ecstasies,
And people returned to their hollow jobs, because it was no longer
Any holiday.

Robert Rorabeck

Because Of A Happiness

Or a day of rowboats out on the lake,
Seen through the beaded curtain:
A new day, bright as seeds- there was a whole
Room for her,
And the colors of flowers needing her
Fingerprints-
She almost felt she could be naked under the
Sun, off from
School,
The mallards and swans swimming around
Her asking for things,
The brown pines like knights standing watch:
And she bathed
While around her was joy like footsteps
Their echoes
Entrancing the neighborhoods until they fell
Away-
And she swam, the sunlight milky upon her
Nipples like beads,
As we all watched her from the slats of
Dragonflies; we could tell that she smiled
Because of a happiness.

Robert Rorabeck

Because Of Lightning

Angels sell prisms above the lunchroom
As the children argue for half an hour—and their thoughts
Wander in a tangle of strings: that night
The baseball or football game will be cut short
Because of lightning—
And the woman who runs naked through my heart,
Will get off of the horse she calls by my name,
Forever abandoning it to the outdoors and
To the amusement parks of others—
And she will walk indoors—
And have an easy time of it, with her children crawling across
Her brown skin—Then, by tomorrow, she can wake up
Any time she wants too—her cousin or someone else
Will already be cutting the grass—running the glass
Snaked and the metamorphosed princes to their borders—
And the mail will arrive—from the beaks of storks
Or evaporated from mail trucks—and she will
Sit forever peaceful on the cinderblocks where she thrives—
Knowing—half-contended that she will never again
Receive another message from the very man who used to be
Who I am.

Robert Rorabeck

Because She Thought Of Me

At the window the pretty flowers
Underneath the airplanes:
It rained all evening, but she came to
Me: and we made love,
We made love, we made love;
But she is back home again,
Though she promises very soon to be
With me,
And I think of her in the lion's mouth,
And I think of her in the sea:
Tossed through her wild nights
In which I rhyme for her-
In which I rhyme for her-
And she thinks of me: underneath the
Ceiling fans of her slender room,
And the man there who has never
Properly loved her;
She told me her father put a gun to
Her mother's head in Mexico,
But it will be alright- alright,
Because the stars are falling-
And I love her,
Jewel of honey- insect of nectar stings:
And she doesn't forget who I am,
Even as she meets her day faultlessly,
And my words come as the pretty happenstance
Of the garden she grew because she
Thought of me.

Robert Rorabeck

Because The Angels Were Lost

Billygoats in the maelstroms of their youths
Think about crossing bridges:
They don't think about baseball games or
Football games,
Or any kind of sort of that kind:
The tadpoles are beauty marks beneath their
Cloven hooves,
And when they get to the middle of the bridge
While the alligators have been taking their
Time thinking about laughing at them,
The old troll gets out of her slumber
And jumps like a purple soar to
The middle of that arc
And demands a toll- and demands a tax,
While the truants and the children of those
Truants play in the shallows with the marbles
And the jaxs-
And the sorry old boys are lost out into the world,
Thumbing for rides, or panhandling on the
Islands amidst the sea of cars-
And if you were me, or I were you, it might
Be alright to rest for awhile and to take a trip
Indoors-
Because the angels were lost across the canal,
And now their wings were wetted, and their slips
Slipped:
Unfortunately, I think they must remain there
Forever, underneath the holy and the airplanes,
Kissing the riverbank like burned fireworks,
Because their beds had burned,
And their ships had shipped

Robert Rorabeck

Because Their Beds Had Burned

Billygoats in the maelstroms of their youths
Think about crossing bridges:
They don't think about baseball games or
Football games,
Or any kind of sort of that kind:
The tadpoles are beauty marks beneath their
Cloven hooves,
And when they get to the middle of the bridge
While the alligators have been taking their
Time thinking about laughing at them,
The old troll gets out of her slumber
And jumps like a purple soar to
The middle of that arc
And demands a toll- and demands a tax,
While the truants and the children of those
Truants play in the shallows with the marbles
And the jaxs-
And the sorry old boys are lost out into the world,
Thumbing for rides, or panhandling on the
Islands amidst the sea of cars-
And if you were me, or I were you, it might
Be alright to rest for awhile and to take a trip
Indoors-
Because the angels were lost across the canal,
And now their wings were wetted, and their slips
Slipped:
Unfortunately, I think they must remain there
Forever, underneath the holy and the airplanes,
Kissing the riverbank like burned fireworks,
Because their beds had burned,
And their ships had shipped.

Robert Rorabeck

Because They Never Give Up

Birds go somewhere in the night.
Because they are afraid of breaking their wings;
They disprove the river theory,
The way your eyes have been looking back and
Forth between the boys,
So frenetically, or whatever that means;
As long as it is spelled correctly and all the lights are
On,
And he has at least one good side.
The rest of it is numb and four limbed,
And you think that it can go on forever, like the sky is
The biggest organ around the earth,
Or either the biggest shroud,
And even now airplanes are failing or
Touching down,
And either your palm foretells that you will live for
A good many years,
Or you are already sleeping beneath the earth, inconspicuous
Beneath so many feet of sated tourists,
Because the as\$holes never give up,
And yet because of you all of this is so beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

Because You Are Not Real

Rubber trees are shivering like stretchy men
Undecided as to where they will be going, waiting for
The extinct show girls to blow in:
Girls on dynamite motor bikes their turn of the century
Engines caracoling, giving off into the atmosphere
The unreal power of mythical birds,
Each engine block a phoenix caught and held and
Perpetually resurrected under her sweet as\$.

It's just that I have nowhere else to go,
And thievery is so much more beautiful near the seashore,
Now why are you coming in swimmingly or up in the air-
Why don't you love me, if only because I am not
Of the flock of other men in your immediate vicinity,
Or it is because you are not real.

Robert Rorabeck

Become

It's time to leave now,
Before the last Christian dies,
The way I am dying; it's time
To take up all the few things I
Know and walk away—Sylvia
Plath stuck her head in the oven
And turned it on, so I can do it.
I can't stay here with the last
Christian after the sun has died
And all the lights are turned out,
Still waiting for Jesus, still
Believing. I have to work these
Bones, because she never loved
Me, and I always was alone,
So I must move upon this earth
As the days grow hotter and
The tears run in floods, I must
Go toward her and forsake
The ark, the forgotten
Goddess who hears my name
As the wind whispers through the
Leaves of trees still high upon the
Mountains. I must escape the cities
And find her there, alone, naked,
To make love one final time
To a truth no one else sees, there
I will disappear near the summit
Of the highest peak and become.

Robert Rorabeck

Become A Flower

If this cascade tumbles to where you
Hibernate, it will wash over you until your sleeping
Lips become a flower:
And when they yawn spring time,
I will carry my lunch to the valleys beneath you,
And partake in the sunlight pouring across
Your threshold,
And bask in the ecstasy every way that I can
With you
Looking down and yawn—
Carrying me in a basket of your meadows
As if I knew something about being a child
Of your heart

Robert Rorabeck

Becoming Just Another Beauty

They spend all day riding this song:
They go up through the low heavens, and give their
Tender blood to
Freckle the shoulders of midday grandmothers-
As all of it is a ride
Singing through the midway's loneliness,
Because all too soon they will have to move along-
As the glass boats sing through
The orchids bleeding together- as I have tried
Holding your hand,
As you turn away and drive home through the
Misanthropic shadows, becoming just another
Beauty I have more and more trouble
Believing in.

Robert Rorabeck

Becoming The Moon For My Daughter

I am married—married. Let
Sunshine fall upon a waterfall,
And let the otters play in her cerulean bosom
That sometimes flashes like a spear
Coming from an orchard
And over the forts
And over the sea—Herald of the fountains
Calling all tourism, like Disney World,
That they should know
I am married—married—and the park is greener
And the little girls swing even higher:
Higher,
And if one should fall, and come out of her dreaming
And into my life—I will catch her
And call her daughter
And watch her eyes like pools with deeper pools,
Like wells that other things have dug
Shrinking and growing larger:
My child—epitome of a heavenly flower
To which I have become the moon,
And my wife the sun.

Robert Rorabeck

Beds Of Concrete

Her eyes the
Deep deep aqueducts
The sunlight skated on
Like water spiders
And beautiful couples
Never revealing
The murdered love
Down so very deep

The skeletons peeling
Inside
The rusting landrover
Flipped over against
The bed of concrete

Robert Rorabeck

Beds Of Forever Midnights

And once within a pleasant carnival
I lost my heart—
I gave it to her who was looking at
Him—
As the fish had to swim and
Swim
And swim—
All of the time in a glowing bowl—
In each thrashing vein of
Each fleshy soul—
And above—metamorphosis—
The evaporating
Carnival—
Dancing in all of the secret
Spots and
Grottos—
Emollition—
As fireworks kiss
The lips of
Kites—
And the stewardesses,
Ever leaping,
Fall down into the
Beds of forever midnights.

Robert Rorabeck

Bedtime Story

Here is a canvas I must destroy, for soon the lightning
Will be on the peak, and we will need to scramble down
Into our graveyard before we are struck by a juvenile deity
Who is angry we have been playing outside our gray rooms;
But before I go, I wish to leave this for you, where you are
Just a glowing insect in the East, burnished by the waves who
Leap up to greet your hips like happy pups.

Where the air is thin, I breathe for you, light my eyes like
Kerosene so that they burn over you flickering like the scene
Of an early stage, where you perform your life like a bosomy
Role, far away in the inebriation of a pretty set: casually you
Tromp across it, extending your lips and hips for the
Patrons of your pinkish stores, the vertebrae silked in flesh
Which chimes when someone enters.

But now the storm is upon me, and the red devils are cracking
Their whips and flailing swords, and my house is an airy dream
In the small suburbia of a green yard, and your sailors are all
About you like flaxen tattooed waves, and oh how they attract you
Like a magnet on their staves. So, I must leap and tumble like
A nursery rhyme back into the trees, where the graves are sunken
In the lime, and virgins on their knees pray for me that I make it home in time.

Robert Rorabeck

Before All Of The Stores Are Closed

Around in the hairpins of another lonely fiasco:
Fingers moving toward what they will- like car doors and
Unicorns,
Apple pies and the shadows of little girls on the windowsill
Underneath the maple trees and the American Flag:
And the journey of short cuts,
The little league fracas that don't get too far: the leaps on
The sojourns of green velvet fields just crenulated enough
To feel the warmth of skipping flight:
I wonder who they are going over to see, while the red holies
Grow, and the sun tattoos the blueness with its over eagerness
To get to her before all of the stores are closed.

Robert Rorabeck

Before Another Christmas Falls

Un wonderful in the night, each pine a silent lady—
Orphaned words beckoning me as I've run away
Beneath the swing-set—
If there was a joy in your lake of tears,
I could see all of the way to the bottom,
To the coral
And the mermaids—to the chandeliers of
The filthy rich—
But now my time comes in the weekend—
Your take off your brown skin to hang across
The runways of your lonely man's bed—
And you have bent to him in every way,
Taking the meanings of your silences as you can—
My face and soul a wreck for you,
Otters cracking legumes openly in my neighborhood
Where the birds fly west and south
West and south—
Going to see the virgins and the drug cartels—
Going to kiss your aunt's lips
And your sister's lips before another Christmas falls.

Robert Rorabeck

Before Christmas

Up in that calling where
You make new friends,
And I can still hear the neighbors complaining about—
After you have walked away—
Before Christmas
And another new year
With our baby crying outside,
And my wife lactating—
I haven't seen you after I've been to China,
And I wouldn't want to
Even if I said so—
Tomorrow is your birthday,
And you are far away
Even if you are down the street—
And my little boy has some lungs,
And when his mind runs off into dreams
Without language—I cannot possibly imagine
Where he goes,
But I know he gets there—without even having to
Think of you:
Places I haven't been to:
Fruit markets of moons, sleeping in jumbles
And heaps—the cars in cathartic stasis—
The wolves fallen amidst the nurseries,
Their long-snouted senses pollinated
By the night blooming jasmine
We once smelled together,
Hold hands,
As we both tried to walk away.

Robert Rorabeck

Before Going Back To Sleep

Killing myself like the overindulgence of flowers eventually
Does to bees,
Drinking Guatemalan rum while the other and all too rich families
Go down to sleep in their downy wells,
I glance out of the windows of my mausoleum's shell,
And wonder what Alma believes as she dreams in her bright
Man's arms,
And her children, and her missing rabbits: She is all the proof in the
World,
As the cars drive in the pinpricks of the rain,
As the children rush over to the flipping sides of the carnival:
But today I drew her a line in the dirt that she would not cross:
She is going to save herself instead of knowing a better and more
Lonely joy,
And the world slithers away across the imaginations of the desert,
And the genies wake up without any wishes,
And pet the fabulous though make believe horses in Ocala three
Times before going back to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

Before Her Uncountable Lair

I lick store brand rum from the hair on my
Forearm; it is sickly sweet, but I must do it; and tomorrow
I will look at houses,
And I will think of some sweet thing or another,
Who I will beat my drum so softly for she can never hear,
Especially if she cannot read English;
And I will buy a house to live in alone while I still wait for her,
While she makes love to her more professional men,
Or her train robbers,
Giving her children guns so that they can learn early too,
While her matchbox of a house swings underneath the muddy
Bottoms of bamboo:
And I have written entire Bibles for her; I have resurrected
Strange words to press onto her body, and I have revisited old
Parks and thought of the places now emptied that I would
Have liked to have swung with her;
And I am think of her even now, and destroying my most
Precious materials into pumice, anonymous and
Priceless,
Giving over all of my guts and escargot as if to a litter of hungry
Puppies, calling the unhinged serpents away from their
Hampers and wash basins,
Setting fire to even castles of army ants: all for her,
And sending up signal flares of roman candles, stopping traffic,
And showing her just where on my heart she need to barb her arrows;
And I am laying bare, hopeless and despondent,
A speck of a man before her uncountable lair.

Robert Rorabeck

Before I Disappear

The goldmines are filled with random flies,
And the evidence laid still in the prehistory of trees:
I keep writing her, from my sadness dripped into
The eclipse where the rain has drunken the excavation;
And this is nothing new, but now no one reads me,
And the world has moved on in a funny way;
She never thought that she should lose me: she never
Thought of me at all, and now he is open in her lap
Like a new dictionary, even as I think of coming to her
By so many ways, now that I am drunk and so beautiful
As to steal her voice. She doesn't care. There is no way,
And the bicycle thieves ride away with their new finds,
The spokes of high-elements receding like a Mandela
Through the trees: I thought I should love her,
I thought I had the voice that would carry through the trees
And disturb her even while she was making love,
But now the rain has stooped the bows, and the evidence
Is fat and lucid that I only know so many words; where in
People are driving expeditiously from their suppliant rendezvous;
I have nowhere to go, but already they are cheering, and making
No room for me to leave: There is a new sunrise happening upon
Me, but what have I left to say, before I disappear?

Robert Rorabeck

Before It Has To Again Diminish

Even by myself, my body feels warm tonight for
I have drunken so much liquor by these thirsty lips,
Searching for a muse
Through the holy grounds of a bachelor's afterlife,
And even though all of it was a failure,
I have continued breathing tonight, and overcome by
Your cloy spirits, I was possessed,
Like a girl in the first night of her sorority;
Or like a young mother experiencing the first night
Being tugged upon by a newborn,
Like the flag of a new country stuck to the wind,
Victorious knowing that it will be so long before it has to
Again diminish.

Robert Rorabeck

Before Our Time

All calmed and cooled like classes that are
Over and found to be insignificant as the loves I had before
Her,
In the daycares of third grade- all the waters on their backs
In the drainage canals cracking legumes;
All the teachers as hot as wax and then made to cool wherever
They fall.
Not a deciduous tree to be found, and in my mind only the
Eroticisms of substitute teachers,
Nothing truly scarred, the moon bleached of its patinas and
Palls;
And I have only read Encyclopedia Brown, I haven't yet missed
You or follow the scent of your echoes down the halls:
Little patrols as vibrant as greeting cards; and the grass as
Green as lavender bathing suits: and all the insects uniformly
Green like lush young girls in preparatory school carrying their
Books of slither and drool;
And the day starts out as a song; and then bullies blacken it a little
Around the robustness of its rind; but it is made even more beautiful,
Like a penumbra glistening on a coal pile in the deepest of winter,
Grandfather smoking a green forest;
And your eyes closed and soft as Easter brail, because
That was before your time.

Robert Rorabeck

Before She Could Fall In Love

She'll breast feed and we'll
Finish off the bottle-
The world will tilt a little,
But nothing more than it does,
And we'll end up at the dead ends
With the signs that tell us so,
The weeds and smoked engines,
The working girls like slave fairy-tales,
Uncle Remus with his cane pole
Casting for blue gills;
She'll live in a blindingly rich house,
Attended by waves of light
That will do a dance from room to room
To the cadences of money reports
And the gurgling of richly milked fountains
Harrumphing off her teats,
Crenellating each mastiff areola the way
Minerals slobber down stalactites in the
Still fertile Carlsbad Caverns,
Beautiful Venus flytraps of tourism off the
Crisp highways of New Mexico;
And we'll end up somewhere further away
In the mountains of inebriate Navajo
Teeth aching from the poisons used to ferment
Our souls dreaming of that self-sustained woman
Glowing with the incandescence of a deep sea
Ballroom, always attended by the behemoths of
Said grandeurs, having no need for the more
Airy sorority of heavens to which we sacrifice
So much infertile howls, and unconceived
Ululations drunk in midnight parks,
Station wagons crumpled softly into nearby trees,
Horns bleating while she fixes plates of
Immaculate beef; Remembering the bleating of
Such slaughter, her blood mixing in the creams,
How much material must we steal to fill up
The sinkholes of compromised limestone
To keep on the affluent palliation,
While we cry outdoors in rainy crèches of palmettos,

The first born ba\$tarads who had her virginity
Only to be abandoned to the doorsteps of a feral
Church,
Wounded at the far corner of her neighborhood
Before she could fall in love with our first word.

Robert Rorabeck

Before She Touches Down

Sybil in her wreath of cones: I don't even know what
She is,
But I pray to her in the little square of jungle kitty-cornered
To the fire hydrant,
Where the infants sleep underneath the rubber bands of her
Swings,
When they are in the mood; and the slash pine colonnade
And gather the bed of hushed brown needles
Where there are no more lions, and from whose room all of
The alligators have crawled back underneath the
Ceiling fans of orchids
Turning with the pirouettes of their molestations;
And I collapse here, and grieve for her,
Removed for my bicycle, my feet the balderdash of
Hyperventilating butterflies:
And the figures in the sky of a movie theatre revolving with
The reasons of a beloved silhouetted by the moon;
And I don't even know who she is, or how long it must be
Before she touches down.

Robert Rorabeck

Before The Creeps' Parade

Before the party reaches climax
And suffocating home makers begin
The desperate groping
Through the adulterous treasure chest
Of their neighborhoods' keys,
Proving their eyes' covetous
Fetish for the flesh they see every day
Walking out into the muted sun
From chintzy front stoops so alike
That they sometimes forget
They are different people,
Fools' goldfish in the drunken tombs,

I cut my teeth on my wrist's open shell,
Realizing, like Sylvia Plath,
I am not new anymore/
I am not in her heart/
My cheek is scarred like a Great Poet
..... But not,
For the marble bust of her immortality
Is already taking up the
Crawl space under her mother's stairs

Out under the open night
And I am not doing so well/
I cannot make up my mind,
As their laughter fulfills the wishes of their hearts.
Secluded and beaming, in great strides
They copulate
And fill up their shopping carts
With their religious beliefs and
New children birthed under
The propitious neon signs....

And if they vanished?
And if they move away?
But it is okay, because this is mitosis,
And, decided, fixed, assured,
They are one and all.

What is broken can be fixed.
Insured, they can never die.
Socialized, they will live on....

They are the multiplicity
Of good capitalism/
If in a shattered mirror
See
Exponential suburbia

All the same
Subtle changes on the
Surface of pleasure

If the economy is healthy
They will continue to grow

From the self-ostracized shadows
I watch them walk out into the cold blindness.
Already they are beginning to feel-up
Whoever is closest to them,
Their lips drunkenly cradling
Lusty sale-pitches. They will get into cars.
They will drive to homes which look so alike,
To wives and beds and rooms
So alike
That they cannot be blamed if they make
The small transgressions of their class' bliss.

I see her in them and I want to cry....
But she has already taken his name/
The great salesman, a man of her faith.
They bless the mezuzah on the threshold
And follow through.
Soon children will come and a larger house
With many guests their eyes will pass around,

But they will never see me again.
She will never say my name again.
Already she cannot recall the hour
I walked outside and lost my way
Pallid anemic hope of the lesser word.

Agnostic and fleeting,
I remain the juvenile scholar,
The half-assed philosopher eating fast-food,
Imagining the average woman naked
And versatile,
The greater lesser man with his dogs
And his traveling case,
A wanderer's identity slipping
From the show early
Before the creeps' parade.

Robert Rorabeck

Before The Dust

Best to be alone in this
Listening to the jackdaws of a skull-ravaged
Thesaurus,
Thinking of no particular aunts,
Dreaming of touching delicates on rain drenched
Clothes lines,
Having trouble once again looking at one side of
My face or the other,
Having trouble reciprocating with the sashays of
Tides
At the prom,
Building toy cabins like frontier castles underneath
The ceiling vans
Vacillating like smutty hallucinations over the
Come stains of
A vermilion carpet: gem-like beetles making another
Conquest through the house,
Six pillars standing out front like Mexican sisters
Who turned to look back.
Now there are Match-box cars in amidst the cenotaphs
Of pop-rockets,
And little girls who don't drive around here anymore,
Because they have all forgotten who they are-
And the sky is as colorless as a torn down movie theatre,
With all the beautiful people moving
On before the dust can burry them along.

Robert Rorabeck

Before The Monstrous Cognoscente

Carried into the room
Outside the eyes lies all imperfection-
I should have never taken off my
Hat to step outside,
For soon the dog had killed the cat
In the geological guts of the rock garden,
Though almost inchoate my father
Came home for Easter
Trailing behind him the sad hopes
Of the waves' Diaspora
And we siblings grew up failing
With the natural lips suckling
Nourishment from our fingertips:
Until we grew faintly anemic
To a downhill graveyard where
The new Cadillac's park
And the living suffer in the structure
Of the inevitably departing-

Standing up
With eyes closed I can see
The world I left.
The way she looked back in high school,
Untouched and nicely stratified.
When I lie down alone
In a bed nothing yet knows me in
I can almost return to the time
Before the monstrous cognoscente
Isolated in the gardening before the apex
The fluid sky hoping in a pin wheeling
Sea of yet optimistic comets swimming
Inside the unawakened consciousness
Where yet defined my fortunes continue
Breathing in the unmalleable
Cornucopias of inner possibility.

Robert Rorabeck

Before The Mountain Begins To Cry

This is a wound that an arrow cannot cut:
This is a sleepless place basking amidst the hills:
Where the young wolves drink
Forever from the throats of starling foals:
And then they are gone
In the moaning sunshine, where the fences lay
Down and naked,
And useless,
And the pools are so supple and shallow,
That you can dip half of your fingers
In and pull up a beautiful fish
Big enough for your lunch- and it is for awhile
A song,
And then into midnight it is a church,
With so many somber amusements and fallen trees
You have to step around:
And there is snow white in her glass coffin
Next to the spring my mother used to take me to
With the dogs; but you still have to figure
Out if you love me,
While the airplanes fill up the sky, as if
The wings of airplanes in a carnival of breathy
Gardens- as if incestual twins multiply
Perpetually,
And clouding over the final results that this doesn't
Have to be forever:
That just has to be in the print of this heartbeat
Before the mountain begins to cry.

Robert Rorabeck

Before The Reaper Could Own Him

Do you realize even now, Kelly, that you are playing with
The Grim Reaper:

This savage scythe who will pretend to never touch the
Harvest of your legs until called upon,
But you have already awakened me; and if I am not beautiful,
I still come;

And I will eat your boat:

I will eat your canoe: I already know the way, and I write these
Things.

And I meet the president and congratulate him and then they
Put me on a coin but I don't care,
And now all of these things are in a zoo, and maybe they think they've
Captured me but I don't care:

I am Houdini: I can set myself free, even if I don't know myself:
Even if your mother is a lesbian,

And there are all these free formed sharks in the sea:

I am not a beautiful man, Kelly;

But still you kissed me; but still I have this need to die:

Maybe I will awaken tomorrow and be the star suckling like a little
Scar from Sharon's bosom,

And maybe I will be quieted for awhile, maybe I will be perfect for a
Moment in which you cant hope to know me,

And then I will steal your sister away to Mars and make to love
Her and infect you brain with forgetfulness so that you
Fall deep in love with you husband again:

Deep, deep in love like Briar Rabbit in the thorns he always wished
To be thrown in before the reaper could own him, own him.

Robert Rorabeck

Before The Resilient Gazes Which Never Move

If you put me here,
Then this is where I'll live;
And workout,
And shave- And hang my things out
To dry.
I will be the only ant in his new mound
Across the canal,
Whistling industrious
Where all the tattered things from your
Brighter new homes are blown;
And I'll make crèches out of the loosened
Things you have forgotten,
Or misplaced purposefully over here,
And though there will be no swimming pool,
No ancillary bath to sing with those white
Birds who are exhausted from their
Expensive habitats,
I will run my eyes with the minnows and
Plasticine toy boats sunken all the way
On my side of the canal:
It is a funny thing,
That they have made it this far in their voyages
To me,
Like scraps from a dictionary nobody has read,
And the first star for me appears under
My left eye,
But it isn't a star at all,
And I have come to realize that there isn't life
Anywhere else,
No matter what the scientists suppose,
And there isn't anywhere real at all except
For where you have misplaced me,
And it is a beautiful world the conquistadors never
Awakened,
A song of the superior Chelonia basking in the
Deadfall before the resilient gazes which never move.

Robert Rorabeck

Before The Zoetropes Of Cats

I like the sounds you make that I cannot hear,
I try to fathom your shadows like cats purring in the rain,
The pets who are not afraid and who are the queens of men:
And I have slept on your roof,
And skipped school to remember you, but the days do not
Get any easier,
Like the hard worlds like cairns on the bare naked mountains
Who summits always seem to slip away out of view:
But A-, you are here, and I know there
Are paths leading up to you that I can find,
And sometimes I can still smell you in my house, and remember
The appropriate verses to call you down from the sky,
And away from that faithless lovemaking you must be making even
Now in your house,
With your soul so far away from your body:
For she is here, looking over my shoulder,
And becoming my muse in this glow from the lights in the sky,
As the rain comes down through the street lights before the zoetropes
Of cats prowling and making love in the street.

Robert Rorabeck

Before They Can Even Take Care To Step Aside

Empty alone in paganistic band-rooms;
But you know there is something about that
Which is not right,
Like these words the way they fret for me
In banished playgrounds overlooking the
Great lakes of catastrophe;
I should have bought a house, or told Diana
I loved her myself,
Sharon- but this is how it goes:
The people in wanton throws, picking up
Stray baseballs, the cats looking at them with
Glassy eyes- I suppose that like Mexicans,
They can really speak English,
Or they know so many ways through the weeping
Mangroves;
And I have done so much of this,
But what about time- what about recognition
And blue ribbons: Now main street is muddy,
And walks with her legs. She is going to the candy
Store, Sharon- with her husband, with her children;
Or she is going bowling,
While the mountains drool with all that lightning,
And put bullet holes into horses before they can
Even take care to step aside.

Robert Rorabeck

Before You Fly Away

Ubiquitous, salty women
Tremulous through the highway of souls:
Why do I keep on doing this
For you,
Sweeping out the theatre no one attends.
Then at night,
I can be either man or woman for you;
I can be an airplane running with my dogs free-flowing
Through the woods.
I have no occupation, but for your love,
For it gives me summits and lightning in clear
Blue vases of sky;
And, didn't you used to paint, long tongued-
Didn't you used to own the high school of fire-drills and
Blonde boys, like me;
And I got drunk swilling ripple in bathrooms:
I could barely look at myself, but now I am almost
Beautiful;
And how many hands did you need to count your
Boyfriends, I don't know;
I got lost one holiday driving out to the airplane club,
Thinking I should like to leap nearer where you
Live,
Where the greater men keep you in their gilded nimbus;
And how many children you've had by them,
Growing on vines in drunken ennui,
I don't know- but would like to hold you in my hands for
Awhile, and revel in your crests and sloughs,
And tell you the names of hypothetical children I would
Like to have by you before you fly away.

Robert Rorabeck

Beginning To Make Love

Inkless, I expose myself-
I am just a shell pressed to your lips:
Drink my flesh,
Gnaw on my elbow I toss to you
Like a bright hinge where all is naked
And living in yesterday on the dry rented
Lawn, in the deep aloe and the
Chain-link fence where the
Old neighbors are smoking and drinking
American beers distilled from
The smoke stacked refineries of Denver,
Letting the sun into them so they crinkle
Like a mouthful of raisins on old newspaper:
Let the waves caress you as you feed-
They would not be near enough to you,
Except that I am carrying them now with
My one remaining arm,
And setting them at your feet:
Where they wash you as Mary washed
Jesus and anointed him with frankincense and myrrh
Eat, eat.
Your eyes are so beautiful,
I wish that they were pearls, but then
They would not be so precious: Naked,
You are the dawn, and clothing you become
The dusk-
And you are the best thing I've seen all day,
Even brighter than the budding hibiscus next to
The old door to the trailer driven down from the north
Where I once lived-
I can see you getting restless and touching yourself,
But do not go away where you think
You must be- He can wait,
Remain with me now,
Even if you feel that you must look towards him....
From here we can smell the sea past the darkness of
The woods, and there is the failing light glinting
Off the small white skulls of forgotten animals
Across the canal that is made iridescent

With the purple perfumes of oil and refuge,
The air above it blotched by a persistent pallet of
Gnat and mosquitoes:
Come closer now, and I will quiet these waves
Into a lull, and we can remain here and become the blur
Of shade, feel the day sliding off of us with
Its worry and light which reveals
What one might own:
Now in the quiet, everything is yours:
I am yours and I have brought the dusk unto you,
And in the time of transient dreams
I wish to kiss you only this once and
Never again
To bring on the crickets and the little lights,
As the clouds jumble the promises of rain,
And from the little house whose yard we're now in
Comes the sounds of my parents
Beginning to make love.

Robert Rorabeck

Behind The School

Teeter-totters behind the school and stewardesses
In the sky:
Reckless drivers newly busted underground,
And beneath them, conquistadors whose patinas
Bleed into a bed of restless
Indians,
And the still grinning sabers of cats:
And above that the universe, bright and spinning like
A firework that is still going off
Over all of those highways going back and forth
Between two seas,
Who are making their own rounds, great washing
Machines
And carnival rides with so many fish-
With Jupiter and Saturn in matrimony above and
All of their uncountable satellites of frozen
Seas and volcanoes
Wedding guests- but no where between them
And us a unicorn-
The imaginary creature, like our love, like
A turtle without a shell cannot exist in this world
Where both you and I are both separate and
Both real.

Robert Rorabeck

Believing

All open and epitaphs to graveyards,
And now all of the dead waiting open mouthed
For the sparrows to sing,
Brightly and presumptive out from the mines,
While all of the time
I tried to love you, while even my dog or fox
Left off to panting-
And all of the sparrows curfewed while I went to
Kill your father or some other murdered,
And while all of the other bright numbers
Rubbed together and counted off to themselves;
And even though it was not even they who
Rubbed together and found new warmth in the boxcar:
And found new warmth altogether
Even though it was not that all the pretty birds sang together
In their bathing:
And even though it wasn't so that the thieves all together
Founding what it was that they were saving:
It was that the sky was so yellow that it was
So beyond believing, even as the buses turned around,
As the trumpets echoed through the newest baths of sky
Upon whatever it was that they were believing.

Robert Rorabeck

Believing In A Wife From Mexico

The song ends like this—don't you understand—
They don't open their lips again—
On their mascaraed of a parade, they go down into
The shrinking land,
Of mothers' lips and nursery rhymes—
Housewives in the nourishments of the feathers
Of their headdresses, go out into
Their front yards just so that they are observed by the
Sun—the forever voyeur—
Or for at least as long as they live—
Climbing those higher than high daises—
Drunken on the spirits of the denouements of
The earth—as the littlest of people follow their own
Personifications,
As the kings light off their retarded fireworks—
And until it is just a jungle of anybody's worth—
Spirits that flit light palm fronds above the earth—
Come down as dying wishes over
A Mexican fair—
Languishing in the bereavements of traffic jams
In the everyday consternations of how life
Ever so happily brings you down.

Robert Rorabeck

Bell Jar Of My Current Inventions

Venal breath marks on the tears of windows.
New air-conditions which cough like sad gentlemen
On your cheeks and perfumed neck,
But you can never see what they look like, and you
Are just about to go outside to first take in the weather
And then go to work;
The cypress trees are hung over, and would that they
Were filled with so many lost kites from little boys,
Like tiny little trinkets from the beach,
But they are not;
And this is your world, and it is not filled up with the
Beautiful joys that you have never thought of,
That I think about every day, that I put there all the same,
Crowding in the amusement, trying to cover you up
With festive cereus even though I haven't beheld your
Liar's frame in so many years,
To disavow who I am not to you, to smother a careless muse
In a bell jar of my current inventions.

Robert Rorabeck

Belladonna Charade

This fever is from alcohol;
And I can't spell-
I am no samurai-
I have no code of honor, no greater ideology
Than to sneak out after midnight and
Kick my heels up on the swings;
And I wonder if alcohol makes me a lesser man,
Gives you a reason not to think of me;
Makes me gray:
Yes, I am dying- dying for you- dying for you
All alone, the spit of flower in the crook
Of the mountain's bosom higher up than
Your head- you will never see the spot
Where I die: I will die, and my color will fade,
And my belladonna charade will wilt-
Not even your sister will pick me up,
If I choose to move nearer her;
And it is all wrong.
The alligators fart in the silt- and I never buy
New clothes- I never go to Disney World,
But I love you,
And why that is, I suppose, is because I have a spot
In me which likes to migrate nearer the beautiful
Highway which has your eyes,
Which is so long and dangerous and never-ending
Which is the moral of the sad fable,
I suppose.

Robert Rorabeck

Bellefontaine

Midnight passes against me,
And Sara Teasdale sighs,
Her lips have touched the gloom again,
And the fairies of her eyes have dowsed their
Wings under the blankets of a breathless poem,

And on the street it snows a mile
Wide, but for the first time the lamplights
Glow, the new inventions an epiphany,
And she is but a child again, in the
Carriage slow,
And for once her soul should laugh
As it carries through the snow,

And though I should never look upon her
As her husband or lover so long before,
I might struggle into the ink-stained river which
Poured from out her door,
And lips so red that they made a garden of roses pale,
And mind so sharp that it made a phalanx of legionaries
Seem dull,

Though her throat be sunk in a graveyard,
And her luxuries given to wanton's whim,
Her beauty is the endless ocean,
All lovers must baptize in.

Here she rests, I can see her now,
For her passions have blazed away the night,
And Chanticleer is crowing, and the thieves should
Run in fright,
And though my eyes should close, and my body become
So calm,
I can still hear her singing to me the melodies of
Her sweet psalm.

A religion of a subtler grace, and a chorus
Which burns and sings like coals,
And as the winters harshness approaches,

Like waves leaping the hoary shoals,
To her singing I should cling to, like an affixed beam,
For there is the perfect avenue, the ever flowing stream.

Robert Rorabeck

Bellefontaine Neighbors

I beat the Lord at his own game,

I snuck into the graveyard before my shift,

Saw the pawns but I let them live;

I kissed Sarah amidst the awful tulips,

And my aunt applauded and swung her hips.

I proceeded him blindly down into my crypt,

Where he lets me live;

And above it rained and the shadows moved in

Fawning and jubilant, playing bare naked games,

Paddy-caking and hop scotching the red faced tenements;

Sometimes I might hear them whistling feral when the day is

Particularly clear and the cemetery grass like follicles of

A bassoon's ear brings it to me;

And the Lord just stands there knowing

That all the old masters are dead, and the city is held up

By liquor and inanimate dreams, and murder;

And we are where we belong, just a little further down,
Under the quick-witted feet of ants, and the pullulations
Of the sweaty parade grounds;

And My Lord, what is he going to do about it?

Robert Rorabeck

Bellies Of Rattlesnakes

Proud filters of cowboys and
Boyscouts moving the herds and mowing the yards,
Crushing scuppernongs into wine,
And watching the terrapin disappear, retracting their
Senses into a mossy rouse,
The cormorants down the rows from them like mailboxes
At the hair lips of caesuras,
As the gladness of overeager foams- and the girls
Ride the ponies far back into the storage rooms of
Orchards until they find each other kissing
Themselves and spilling over the
Variegated paper cuts that lay corrugated like nourishing
Crops upon which the fat and sated bellies of rattlesnakes
Make indistinguishable patterns,
As if the spilling of discarded foreskins or weathervanes
Through the anonymity of the loams.

Robert Rorabeck

Belonged

I've cried upon the rusting shoulder-blades
Of the airplanes that
Are not here—
Going back and forth—
All a glow in the statutory hallucinations
Of a bivouacked—soldiered all together
Of a dream
Of a murder—
Words whom are rolling off an inebriated tongue—
A million miles and
On top of mountains—
Going, or trying to go,
Like rose bushes where they should have
Belonged-

Robert Rorabeck

Bending To The Lamplight

Going down the aisle into a fun world
Of rabbits in their favorite briars—recounting all of
The words I know and reusing them every night—
The world a geode on my shoulders—
And in its prisms, turning around—the beautiful
Junk of flea markets—and my muses who live on
The other side of the canal—
Tortoise in the soft sand planting her roe—
My mother weeping in the cathedral, nowhere else
To go—airplanes in the sky never touching down—
A king bending to the lamplight to reveal his thorny crown.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath

What will they say about your children
After they've gotten onto the bus in the middle of
A sad rainstorm,
And you've driven off to sleep in some other bed
Than your husbands,
When the dogs are crying over the cats they cannot
Steal,
And the cats are mewling beneath the clocks
For the boys to come and step down the hidden
Corridors and down to the sea where
Some other maiden is waiting:
Some other maiden, as wonderful as the sea
Of a broken heart:
A woman who is not their mother- and she is not
You: they must take an airplane to reach her:
They must go over so many canals,
But eventually they will find her-
They will find her,
But then, they wonder, what they will do.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath All Of Us

You need to come home to me from the
Offensive legions:
Because this dusk has no eyes, and no
Juliet—
The airplanes cannot see by this, words
Underneath an overpass—
The cars pass seemingly like roses collecting
To the sea—
Each one being thrown away into
The grief of those caesuras—like feral
Bosoms rising from the old phantoms—
Pantomimes of the storms
Trying to catch up to her, their hearts in
A lonely place trying to leap to breathe
From the city beneath the sea
Beneath all of us.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath My Trespassing Overpass

I like to run my fingers down your extra
Small ribs
When we were in bed together, when we weren't
Suppose to be,
Just to feel the little thefts that you have
Given me,
While your daughter slept her day away,
And your son burned things in the grass:
And your body moved so deep and brown, and moaning
Beneath my trespassing overpass.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Banking Snows

I told her,
"I'm the man who shot Jesse James."
She said,
"Poetry don't work on whores."
Her lips moved as little as a virgin's womb,
Early in the spring
In the young town
High in the furs before the snow.
The place doesn't exist any more.
She said,
"You cut the head off a snake,
You can eat it,
But never become
As friendly as pigs."
I told her,
"I have never seen such well shaped limbs."
She said,
"You can move into me now,
But go away before I give birth,
Because I don't want him
To know your name."
I had already killed my friends.
I said,
"Now in your bedroom,
The omens promised bad luck,
Which moated and dungeoned him."
Afterwards, I grew a beard
And walked away
Like a faded lance buried in the stream.
She grew into red dresses,
And hung around the child's eyes,
Though never thinking to search
Beneath the banking snows.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Clocks

What will they say about your children
After they've gotten onto the bus in the middle of
A sad rainstorm,
And you've driven off to sleep in some other bed
Than your husbands,
When the dogs are crying over the cats they cannot
Steal,
And the cats are mewling beneath the clocks
For the boys to come and step down the hidden
Corridors and down to the sea where
Some other maiden is waiting:
Some other maiden, as wonderful as the sea
Of a broken heart:
A woman who is not their mother- and she is not
You: they must take an airplane to reach her:
They must go over so many canals,
But eventually they will find her-
They will find her,
But then, they wonder, what they will do.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Footpaths Of The Mowed And Chiming Grass

Gunfighters and dancers not knowing who they
Are,
And I kissed Alma inside of her car, while all of the graveyard
Waited,
And waited, because that is what we finally are:
Not giving a damn about the institutions of learning, or
Of the green bordellos,
And the colors of lovers who bleed like first graders practicing
Letters over the lines,
Spindling and sweating and making a mess:
What is left is the dimmest brightest things of us, who keep
In touch with the ghosts of stars:
And grow at the ends like glass blowing cenotaphs,
Who flute for the winds, and curl and succor and call
Out for seconds beneath the footpaths of the mowed and chiming
Grass.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Ground

The dog looked at me with eyes of
Happy oysters,
While the road was too busy going both ways:
And the barmaid slung the alcohol
Across both her brown and brindled
Shoulders:
Where is she now? Where has she fallen to?
Like a geode kicked out of school—
Like an unrecognizable park between two
Houses lost in the forest on the other side
Of the road—
The beavers build their dams between her
Breasts,
And the mountains weep their lactates
Beneath her eyes—
And comets are barrettes in her hair,
Speaking of the beautiful luxury bedding in
Her future:
I can tell her nothing: when I step outside,
I vanish in the sunlight—
And the traffic vanishes both ways in its individuated
Crowds:
Going somewhere to games and churches—
Little boys hold on to their delusions at the bottom of
The slope,
Like hypnotized chickens riding atop soft shelled
Turtles—the grave open to them at both ends—
Their ancestors in the amusements parks above the sky
And beneath the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Haunted Lights Of Man

Horrors of character can be ascribed to nature,
And if you are eaten by wolfs,
Know that they only do this to feed their young,
And it is neither cruel nor gluttonous;
And they might howl over your bones then like some
Starry pale way post, and circle about in
A feral ritual, as they transcend, and
Pass down through such hoary valleys,
Where the dead float and whip like tattered flags of
Destroyed and scattered armies.
For, after they are gone there is no more crying,
And the only movement is from what the wind does
Through the crooks of barren trees, that which is a
Kind of an illusion, and overtime you should disappear
Entirely, spoken of no more by far away lovers,
As each wave bores into the earth, boring it through
A pinprick, as if a hole in an egg; until all these are perpetuated,
And woken up, and started over: and then the lights should
Flicker, and the doors should open, and all kinds of man
Made anew out of spittle and clay, and walking up from
The earth, from the Appalachians, as from all parts,
Go down from the forest, and from the valley, into the locis
Of civilizations, and weddings, and into supermarkets to
Buy those necessities which put more flesh onto the bone,
To fill in the hollows, the recesses, the valleys;
And gather together, forgetful, and indoors, paying no attention
To the vulpine patters, the hungry footsteps that go through
Temporarily abandoned parking lots on four legs,
Quickly and under such godless lights,
Open mouthed and fanged, but speaking not, as the wind guides
Them beneath the haunted lights of Man.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Horses

Grasses sweating beneath horses
That are standing asleep the night in my father's
Pasture
My son's grandparents having irrigated this day
On the other side of the planet:
Horses better known and
Better loved than me
Beneath alligator oak on the verge of the
Pasture,
Fat bellies painted by stolen moon light,
And about them dancing
Along the borders of the hill hides,
Pretending to crush the last of the misplaced
Arrowheads into diamonds,
Coyotes and elk
With minds constructed the same as
Peach pits—
And I am but the boy drinking the bottle
His feet dangling at the end of the house
At the edge of all of this,
somehow seeing a strange movement
Repeated,
Like a wild merry go round—
Like a card game in the hands of the elements.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Infinite Trees

A little bit of rum with my grape juice and
I'm feeling fine: I am a child actor with
So many girlfriends,
And paper snowflakes falling on my death scene.
My grandmother smiles,
There are stars on the Aristotelian popcorn
Behind my ceiling fan,
Plastic stewardesses on my folded airplanes,
A cat purring in my lap, little brown bunnies in the forest of
Cactus in mother's rock garden,
Cars on blocks chock full of nudie magazines;
And in the yard, isn't it Easter, and the snakes are
Laying colored eggs:
Girls who just learned to walk with painted nails
Are going to get their photographs with
Roman Polanski- Most important of all the it-girl
Is giving me falacio, trying to tell me the truth
But her mouth is full,
And I smile and pat her head- It feels as if I've eaten
A steak dinner, or written something very good,
And my soul is buzzing around its feeder, jumping out of
A body too vibrant to understand,
And there are all these tourists who have left off the foot ball
Game to come and see me next door to the otters eating
Their clams off the naked breasts and abdomens of
Housewives fresh from the mall,
All of us in a house so full that we know we should never
Be alone, even as the ghosts sing with the throats of empty
Swings down the hillside out front of our trail her home
Beneath the infinite trees.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Moon

Bountiful rainbows of blue glass going home,
Traveling with their rucksacks across the schools,
Saying their prayers otherwise:
Baseball diamonds silhouetted in the skies,
The Pegasus's turning around,
Catching the wax from the sun that the light houses
Have been so studious for,
The waves pulverizing at their door; and my loves
Opened like letters before the sea,
Asking for love, but not asking me- They're bottles
Like cradles whose joys I have drunken,
Who sunburn in the yoke beaten by airplanes,
As the yellow slants through the stalks of green cathedrals,
And the little boys come, calling a hullabaloo,
While you can be seen but never touched through the
Ethereal transoms of your bedroom,
Blushing and brown hooded like a cobra so deliberately
Charmed by another man,
That I can only use my rope tricks to go above your locked
Doors,
And there sleep like a mountainous cat above your bed,
Alma, and beneath the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Skies

Before days of empty pallets I toss these words like
Stones,
In empty classrooms where the girls have gone:
The have gone to sun in the green and Alma's favorite color
With their preferred men,
And my world is left in the chicken yard to feed the ghosts,
Soft and blue, but whose colors our out of date,
Whose chances have faded too: but I remember them, like a
Virgin grotto in her dark and far unremembered eyes:
These are the placed that you lived in when you were young, Alma,
When mother and father sang you asleep in arid adobe
Or wherever it was you made your home near the thirsty creaks,
While I colored on my desks all alone Alma:
And when I drove by your house tonight Alma you were not home,
But you told me during lunch today that I should be quiet,
Because I having nothing to lose, while you have everything:
Yes, you are as rich and as many as the wildflowers in the Spring,
And I want to worship you and suckle you in the private estuaries of
Your shallowest of brown wells:
I want to paint your wish there spoken in the crepuscule of awakening
Pantomimes,
Where the wooden boys can believe and become real;
Alma, Alma- you are all the gold in my eyes, and I come awakened and
Moved, and I dance for you while the police put their colors
Like merry-go-rounds across the streets and beneath the skies.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath The Traffic Of The Stars

Life is full of failures
In a sky of light
And the hangman runs
Through the classroom
While the housewives stay
At home weeping
Before the jewel eyes
Of an alligator
Looking from his palace
Beneath the traffic of the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

Beneath Your Effluvious Floating

If I killed organs for you, and to slowly
Seep out of this country and make it past all the
Round titted sphinxes,
Then would you consider me a warrior and unbutton
Your thorax:
You seem to be singing softly as pumice around the
Juicy oranges,
Protecting your breakfast:
Cadmium and chartreuse as the rule of the tiniest of
Deadliest serpents,
Spending your ankles in a cornfield silver feet off the
Earth,
The sun is glorious; and they are all talking about you,
Given up into the lilacs of happy meals,
Overturned in the soft shells of crepuscule,
Or in the vestibule of the church of counterintuitive,
When at night you go to bed in your favorite nooks,
Like a song bird snoring:
You've never even read but a single word, and thus you can
Go by happily over spilling,
Not knowing they were all written for you by the dictions
Of men who end up quite lesser beneath your effluvious floating.

Robert Rorabeck

Beside Another Man

All the night is unreal; it has snuck up all of a sudden
Again and is pedaling its nocturnal fruit:
Of course the ghosts are dancing, as if diademing over my lonely
Head,
As I am remembering all the few days spent with Alma,
Casting our souls like nets across the silent green exposures
Of the world that is numbed to my desires
So now I even wonder if she can even feel it: that it is so strange
And necessary;
And I have built up every which way I can to be with her,
Even though our house is perfect and sings with the uncanny unisons;
And it makes me a pitiful man, when I am alone:
When I am here trying to partition myself away into the art,
A genie in a bottle in the woods underneath the reindeer
Who move so beautiful,
Or they never move at all, while the cataracts fall behind them,
Delusions with the tears of poor grammar,
And she falls asleep beside another man who she says will not even
Speak to her.

Robert Rorabeck

Beside Forever

Now the quiet intrudes on the silence:

Bodies lay as restive as hummingbirds who have stopped

Breathing:

All of your offspring are lying beside you just as most

Of them will lie beside you in the ground somewhere

Where the sky is weepy;

And your mother is downtown kissing a fiancé;

And the place you used to live is up in weeds and rattlesnakes;

This is just my poem to you, something I promised myself

Against:

This bad habit, because I am ugly, and I am afraid that you

Once kissed me and afterwards went away forever:

And I don't want you to read my poetry to you, because how

Can I take that back from you

When it will be and is even now someone else you will lie

Beside forever.

Robert Rorabeck

Beside The Brink

A joy in the sweeping shallows, in the emptied
And broken throats that once used to hold

And thus pronounce diamonds:
A store of loitering thoughts
And manticores and unicorns and
Other stolen though immortal things:

Cannot you hear me breathing now,
So close and so lost there beside your schoolyard—
Quilled from the beautiful accoutrements:

Inebriated besides the banks of your forbearers
While your beautiful thoughts go shimmering
Like misplaced coins and wishes
Beside the brink.-

Robert Rorabeck

Beside The Glade Of Vampires

In a little wood, beside the glade of
Vampires,
And blue faeries, up turned, flaming
Their waterfalls
For weddings of the passersby—
There lies the woman who makes the hills,
Her thies the weave of caesuras—
The moon a child of her bossom,
With airplanes and jets in her weedy hair
For barretts.

Robert Rorabeck

Beside The Sea

What is the space underneath a swing set—
It seeming forever at leisure in the park beside the sea:
Underneath the sun in his days—
Becoming a fenced off illusion where the grass grows
Above the knees—
There was my childhood in no places good—
Finding a way of getting around her and climbing up her
To sit there like a bird in its nest,
Cradled in her arms, sucking upon her breast—
And now I drink liquor in some form of illusion—
Bizarre and orgasmic,
As other children come home weeping—where
Are their mothers,
Who have for so long forgotten them—
And I see them forever leaving from our places
Beside the sea—

Robert Rorabeck

Beth Law

They turned her into dust
Because they didn't believe
She could survive-
She was their first daughter,
Conceived before the
Conservative renaissance,
But they had no faith
In her;
She could not live
Forever.
And it was cheaper to
Bury her
Like a kitten,
Or an infant crocodile,
In a shoe box rather
Than a coffin.

When she wakes up,
Like softly singing bees,
How will she tell them
What she knows....

Robert Rorabeck

Better And More Glorious Men

I'm going to a wedding in Colorado,
Taking the highway which snakes up the plateau,
While in the west first rise the Sangre de Cristos and
Then the Front Range; there where all the dells
Are nestled waiting for tourists to come with
Skis and dollar bills after the first of the snows;
I went there when I was a child, and cradled in
My mother's bosom as by the resounding basins;
And later on, scorned, I summited there alone,
And saw her spread infinite by ghostly wealth;
There are girls who sell wine I know from high school,
And I will salute them the same as the ones I used
To salute when I knew the alphabet of their homesteads
Riding the dependable bus into school;
And I will go until in my sister's house, and then
The next day we will practice, and then the ceremony
Where she will change her name, if not her habits;
And, perhaps, when the strangers and relatives see me
There alike, they will think that he is wounded, so wounded,
And they will think that I should stay wounded still,
And I must, but if I were to show them pictures of Steinbeck,
They would agree that, yes, he was wounded, and Whitman,
If not wounded, queer, and Bukowski, yes, wounded, proud
Of it, then I should be justified and thus prove the theory
Of my relations with great men; and they would say,
Why then are you not also great, if you are so wounded,
But I should say not a thing, but walk down the aisle and
Take my place, and wait for my sister to be given away
By my father; and, yet, say not a thing, looking at them,
Knowing I am wounded when they never shall be, and
That is good, because not everyone should have to suffer so,
And then drive back down alongside the new homes of married
Women, grateful that they should not have to see me,
But should think of me still, subconsciously, along side better
And more glorious men.

Robert Rorabeck

Better Princes Than These

Tenderness in the vagabond, going about his lost
Routines- in his ways to worship on
The side of the road- hunting for the shade with the
Panthers- waylaid from the tourists off
To busy in the storefronts of shells: like pollen who finds
Asphalt to kindle into-
Looking out at the passings by of the enthusiasm of
Housewives:
A stream of lottery pearled in skirts- their strange gills
Swim in the sooty alcohol by which they feed
Themselves despotic dreams;
And go about their ways, their suits getting dirtier,
Becoming even better princes than these.

Robert Rorabeck

Better Suited Romoes

Recitations are fed up, engorged on the conifered
Wilderness,
Heady from all its echoes, but what can one sing
To the ears of no one who loves it;
And I will drive my car and let its wheels perambulate
Caracoling the great stony heart of this country-
I will go down into the great Precambrian jungles and
Steal their folklores,
And get stabbed in the eye over false gossip,
If I have to, but I will never let off dreaming about
You; and this is all I mean: You are a feather in my cap
When I am such a consumptive dandy,
No good at mathematics or teaching the social classes
Anything- Everything I do is but to puff myself up
Next to the bouncers and he-men you enjoy-
I know, because you buy their cartoons: and soon you
Shall be married and baring children,
And looking fine all strung out and humid beneath the
Palmettos, and if I could I would conduct all those waves
To cry out for me, to censure everything about you that
Wasn't concerned for my pity; and the air-condition is making
Me sick, and I bought a watch at the dollar store to keep time
About you, and I still look for you on campus, which
Is silly, because this is my new University and you are not
Here to serve me free beers, or to look anxiously beautiful
As you show your teeth, waiting for other romeos who
Shall enter that lacquered stage. Watch for them now, your
Barrel-chested Popeye's,
Better suited romeos than I.

Robert Rorabeck

Betting On Her Races

Then I will laugh at the old voices
Who seem to be coming out of
The radios in the basins of the mountains-
To the tourists, they are just the old heat
Of elbows or birds that once ate
Lunch around them, singing into their eyes
As if echoes of their own voices;
But now lighted out, spent from cars like
The off-giving love of gasoline,
To settle near the nipples of angelic cul-de-sacs,
To give aspens hallucinations,
Making them disrobe- that love is unspeakable
And ill rendered,
But beneath there is perfectly collected another
Gunfight- all the loud hurrahs of mom and
Pop heroes going out on the town again,
Or taking their ill perceived children
To another penny arcade- to buy whatever souvenirs
They have, or to ride the narrow gauge railroads-
When high over their shoulders,
Feral and Mongoloid,
Nubile headlines spilling from the cracked lips of
Geodes fingerprinted by grizzly bears,
And angels fully unclothed in sport, tossing liquid
Coins in each others hearts,
As the streams are running
Down her naked body,
Giving her throes, betting on her races.

Robert Rorabeck

Between Her Overpriced Pretzels And Cheap Bananas

I look like white Tennessee with
These scars on my face:
It's great, and it's gory: somehow through the
Appalachian gin fields the prettiest girl
These breathy atmospheres,
The punk idea of torrential butterflies thriving
Around in the constant migrations of her
Refrigerated dinner truck:
You could store bodies in her back seat:
And that is where I want to go when I die,
To be cut up in choices of cheap and worrisome meat,
To be tinkered through her caracoles through the
Bad parts of the neighborhood
Where there are very few white families left,
So that my eyes can stare at her sweet culito in pink
Sweat pants:
This Diana giving new definitions the functionality of
Female beauty;
She says with her eyes that she loves me,
For she stares at me for some time, and I always drink
Her chocolate milk even through heavy bouts of influenza;
It's like beating my head against a warhead-
This luscious Amazon: I have no greater wish than to be
Parceled out on her delicious slab and sold
Between her overpriced pretzels and cheap bananas.

Robert Rorabeck

Between The Mangroves

Honeycombed in the loneliness of a swell diatribe,
My heart is half empty and a long
Ways from home-
And, if you've slept in all three of my beds,
How come you still have
A hard time kissing my mouth or holding
My hand-
And you still won't be here with me, as the ghosts
Float across the earth of tattered waves-
And it all seems like a golden coil of a serpent
Echoing- echoing over the wishes of
A sacrifice:
As the gravitational pull of a lonely satellite coaxes
The waves again over
Her exhausted body between the mangroves-
There seems to be a twist in the plot of her roots,
And a Barrett in her hair- snowshoe crabs
In her eyes-
As she remembers that her wishes are gone,
And this is how she spent her honeymoon-
Loneliness of a Ferris Wheel without any friends
And with nothing to believe in:
The no longer distant curl of death sneers her lip- as another
Woman has been making room in her house-
As her wishing wells are cleaned with bleach- and all of
Her penny candy stolen by kids on bicycles-
So her zoetrope doesn't have to turn anymore-
The extinction of a species never thought about by
Television,
Like seahorses underneath the caesuras- or latchkey
Children underneath the monuments of
Another thing I don't have time to forget anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

Between The Sand Dollar Leaves

The day is good on Sunday before noon:
No church, no gunfights: I will just touch my troubled face
Again and then I'll drink,
I'll slug my buffoon while my starfish is not there:
I cut her in two like a paper cut in snowy weather beneath the
Migrating wings of commercial airplanes,
And she said her insouciant thrill, and did her insouciant thing:
And now she is in love with another lover according to her will
While I am closing on my first house on Wednesday,
Erin,
And if you still are heady from the bouquets of my swill,
Then I am still just as empty as the boys who build upon you,
Like a Disney World invading the reality of the sandy dunes,
Obscuring the pathway of greasy haired cougars,
And the key deer which flit
Like latchkey children playing games between the sand dollars leaves of
The coco plums.

Robert Rorabeck

Between Work And Home

At my uncle's fruit market
I told you your eyes were so dark and beautiful;
And you said that my eyes were also dark and beautiful,
And then I bagged for you for the rest of the afternoon,
And we seemed to reconcile
Even after you said we could only be friends even after
I had made love to you;
Alma- and now it appears as if I want to die,
But everyone does that anyway: because of you, I think I will
Go on forever,
Somewhere curled up in your shadow, forgotten but where
I must belong,
As your dark eyes make decisions down the road that is always waiting
For you to come and take its ribbons in your grasp
And travel its familiar and forlorn path back and forth
Between work and home.

Robert Rorabeck

Bewitching Eyes

The sea and all its planes has not as many colors as your eyes;
Wines of uncertain ages and uncounted times-
Vineyards collected and stamped by cherubic
Paramours- they have put cool storms and tennis
Courts into your soul,
Windowed high-pitch songs which draws the sailors and
Purple tongued dogs
To the rocky shoals of your proof;
I just want to sleep beneath them,
Breathing the fumes of your pistils arisen;
What are you doing now, but kissing your French
Soldiers down their musket lines;
When did you come to this country so long before the trappers
Came after you; Or you leading them,
Words bent around the spores floating freely never quite
Written down; but my spry ancestors following your languid
Tremulousness: You have two breasts, one for the child,
Swinging, censer to your fire-brand, the other for my mind;
The spindles of these planets, like young lovers on a swing:
You are bitter sweet and I wonder how many men you have
Gone necking with at drive-in movies; and I wonder too, when
I will have my time: I will not give you up; I am quite lazy otherwise,
But I have heard your song; I have graduated from the same state
University as you, so we are brothers of a kind: A brother I love
Neither ubiquitously or plutonic, but I love you unrequited;
I am a petty soldier for you, and if times get tough I want you to
Feed me to your child- it s*cks titty that you haven't yet
Seen me looking in,
But that is all there is, my message of strange friendships harrowed
Back to life from the fangs of the dragon I have slain;
Because I have written so many things to you, hypnotized,
And put them into bottles and tossed them into the sea,
And slept beneath the windows of your hearth's fire,
All of these the same colors as your bewitching eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

Beyond My Window

Beyond my window
The sky blooms in a voluminous garden
The sun attends,
And there my childhood goes wandering
In the thick forest of nebulous—
There is no time on me
And there are no scars—
Gravity is a funny thing that still spins
Like a top in the palm of my hand....
My heart is not lost in a panting jungle
Of her red fingernails and long, curling locks,
Like chains made of unbreakable feathers,
For now she stalks me without even thinking about it,
A filmy poltergeist doing her life
Five states away near where the East Ocean breathes.
She eats its salts every day and doesn't even think about it,
The way the world tastes inside of her....
Inside me, she is the romantic acid
Spurting through my soul, taking turns with time
And gravity to bed decay in me....
My house quakes with her and I am coming down,
Though beyond my window
Where the sun gallops, my childhood still plays.

Robert Rorabeck

Beyond The Veil

All the fish who seem more beautiful in the rain,
Running silently,
Leaping in the shallow rivers, just know that you are
Coming soon,
From the rush of pantheisms they are waking up;
For that is the weather you disappeared in,
With your daughter, and your ship never came up;
The quaint little voyage of tourisms, see what trouble it
Got you into, and now there is no more discovery,
No more quarrelling or worrying over travel expenses;
Now it seems as if the fish that you new are yellow
And despondent, and where they are really going is always
A mystery;
It still hurts to look into most mirrors, and the world is almost
Dead since you disappeared down that seemingly tranquil
Avenue,
Leading your daughter down toward the tourisms that had
Made your rich; but it is easier like this:
I can get up in the morning and go about feeding my gray cats,
And don't have to worry about hurting the feelings of my
Ferris Wheel gold fish;
Or that I might wake you up, or see you across the shimmering
News, or the other worlds of the canal, since I know that you
Are gone, and your husband has gone on to his other ways.
Don't think that I don't keep on trying for you now;
Your river remains so cold, for I take its temperature every day,
But my chicken coop is full, and my dogs are well groomed,
And we lie together listening to the digestions of interstate
Traffic, keeping up with the news, thinking all together with our
Ready senses how empty it all is, the misfortunes of the world,
The re-animations of the disbelieving orchard,
Not understanding how its best muse could pass beyond the veil.

Robert Rorabeck

Bicycles Stolen From Their Own Children

You sit down next to
Me and we
Watch the boys loading
Trucks-
They were half donkeys
Anyways-
And as the sun rose
Their ears
Grew-
Some of the dissapeared
With houswives
From view-
Lost mothers who insisted
Their freckles were
Birthmarks
But kissed them anyways-
And played hooky from work
And gave them
Bicycles
Stolen from their own children.

Robert Rorabeck

Bight By Bight

Where are you? My heart is cold and un-pure:
I will like it to stop before I got to the top of the apex
Of the house which should be ours- Erin?
You don't care- I am a terribly asymmetrical boy,
And the money I should have by the end of the year is
Of no account:
I just want to put you into my car and drive as fast as
I can out into the wildlife preserve to show you what
History I can find,
Because here is where my parents fed the elephants the
Extra lettuce heads when they were only teenagers:
Now it is almost all stampeded, and I shouldn't know if
I am cute are not: and who have you been spreading our
Pedals for- who have you let steal your bicycle time and
Time again- and I am really, really not doing very good,
Even if I've buried the witch under the blown out candles,
I didn't really give her much of a chance:
And all of you girls are so beautiful- Kick up your legs
For death, show him what you've got, and put your children
Out before you like presents on a satanic Christmas,
Show him what he might else take before you;
But he will come none the less, sucking in all that light- all the
Skating waffish wishes;
And the moon will stare down, like a policeman out on his
Watch speaking Spanish to himself,
Too afraid to come, even as death consumes you with his heavy
Uninsured teeth, bight by bight by bight by bight....

Robert Rorabeck

Bikini Atoll

We make love in upright coffins:
The sun protrudes and harasses the skeletons
Of the day like umbilical hernia,
As the students sweat to and fro from their
Portable classrooms:
Their teachers carrying books they don't cherish
Anymore,
Like exlovers sent like paper airplanes across
The canals.
The weather vanes kick start, as the albino alligators
Fart in their zoos underneath the flight paths of
Stewardesses who are passing through
Perpetually with the bronze wings of their
Pilots on their boisterous minds.
They wonder if they wonder if they will reach
The newfound beds of their destinations on
Time- as the cocks crow from England,
And monsters rise in the early morning hours
Of a disastrous Japan.

Robert Rorabeck

Bildungsroman

I do not know how to love her properly;
My mind sparks words that have no fear,
The heart-strung knights
Who leap upon the world. Like entrepreneurs,
They push back the devilish borders
Of scaled and undulating beasts
Who have a taste for virgins;
But alone at night I hear
Myself crying,
While the wide world creaks
Like the bowels of an empty ship,
Utter less, adrift at sea;
I don't know the mathematics to control her.
I can find no direction in the stars which
Churn above in briary paths which only
Lead me deeper in.
Set adrift on a drunken ship who is my master,
I can only cry out madly to her safe on shore.
A paraplegic traveler, I am stung
By the great beauties and terrors
Of the deep world;
As she sometimes turns me on,
Laughing at the show.
Not knowing how very close to death I am,
She enjoys a snack and then
Turns to give a salted-buttery kiss
To a casual lover.

Robert Rorabeck

Billy The Kid

And so we spoke of the time of angels—
And Shanghai became the kind of quiet that you can barely
Hear:
Translucency of echoes that come on winged carriages
That take me to another place:
To graveyards above Sara Teasdale,
And to imagined perfections where my words can
Stand on there own,
Coming inside so many warm libraries,
Like birthing trinkets inside cemeteries, to transform
The into amusement parks:
See in this little lot of dust, some kind of poetry is
Also formed—a dust devil delights in the opened palms of
Star fish and dances for awhile
Besides the barren canal, and the over turned carriages
That conceal the bones and rosy cemeteries of
Billy The Kid.

Robert Rorabeck

Birds Of Paradise

I'm tired of bicycles,
The still tinsels of spokes;
How she rode away her ass an
Apple, bobbing, a carnival game:
It wasn't even drunk,
Like pumping coins
Along the asphalt river of all
Those immaculate green lawns,
The sprinklers spitting water.
Lazy husbands come out after high school,
Kiss their long haired sons who
Go down underwater to role-play
In the sleep that forever comes like
Seahorses in popular spotlights,
And mermaids who striptease and jaywalk,
Eat fried chicken until they become just
As greasy and grinning after midnight,
Pet the sleepless cat, and then steal a
Piece of chocolate cake from the birthday
They will celebrate after daylight;
Short-changed, they will wear paper crowns,
And laughing at the dress code, they
Will fire their popguns smoking into the
Rumba of ceiling fans, swig Champaign
From chocolate eggs, then sit restless
And cross-legged, as the living room spins,
Watch their youngest cousin color out of
The lines in a long list of super-heroes,
Clap and play toy guitars, as their eyes
Look up, imaging they have crossed the borders
Into Spain, and that there are rain clouds
In the rafters, where grandmother swims
Laughing, waiting to see her young husband
Step foreword and propose more cake,
And alligators sit watching the sun on patios
And tennis courts, supposing in languid
Torpidity that it is all mostly true,
As the young boys swam in the chlorine
Stitches of the vanity club, never supposing

Who they might marry once
They towed off and, dry once again,
Grew up impressively,
And moved away to other green yards,
Both beautiful and sad,
Where newer mermaids swam, distant
Sisters to the others mentioned in passing,
As they jaywalk, awakening the dinner
Party from the symbolist's ennui,
And the beat-red lobsters jumped down
From buttery bibs, clicking their
Claws all the way again into the waves,
Like hip-necked troubadours, and other
Nonsense;
They joined the stewardesses serving cranberry
Juice and gin on the red eye,
The last flight of a poet going to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

Birds On A Wire

They make love in the east, but they
Sh! t where they eat;
While I play baseball alone, a dusty boy
With a cap and scars; it is not easy to laugh,
But convenient:
Matzo balls, gefilte fish, potato latkes:
They have two stomachs, a synagogue,
And a pool that sparkles like Herod's spit:
I went to school to be close to her, and didn't
Try for an occupation, so now I can feel myself
Sing with or without rain:
I am the chief of my own nation,
Though it is so very sad I didn't listen to the
Doorbell's warning, and the way her eyes swung
Like censers around newfound men:
I loved a girl named Sharon, and jogged around her
Hood, but she shook her head and farted,
Said, "Oh no, this will do no good, " because she
Was to me like Clint Eastwood, and I didn't
Even know her, and she wasn't altogether sure,
But one day she will wake up and walk outside her door,
And let us go with her down to the tilting barrooms,
And sit beside her like a piece of a dream,
And watch her bosom whip up something sweet while
Her boyfriends play games of darts, and the fire crackles
The way it does when it ends empires outside,
And the city rolls out its red bricked ghetto the way I've
Seen it do, and the lovers swim in pestilence,
Gnawing each others salt from the bone, until
Pinpricks of children are shot into the flume, and then
Ignited like gasoline, an entire field on fire,
And we will all sing together, all in neatly rows,
All just like birds on a wire....

Robert Rorabeck

Birds Who Will Never Fly Again

Out front in the houses of hibiscus,
The rain engorges like chariots; and I touch myself,
And I bleed- I want some of it to be beautiful;
And I want it to be published,
But this is just how the nights proceed like careless enterprises
Way up in the space of what they proceed;
And the traffic doesn't care where it is not going,
Back and forth like a beautiful gown;
Can't it even see that it is dying, that its words and paint
Jobs are ugly;
And how does he fill filibuster your mouth,
And why don't you have children yet if you are so beautiful,
While I buy pornography to fulfill myself;
And I wonder yet how you were wounded, after you lost
Your virginity to guitar playing spikenard;
I wonder yet how you have become who you are,
And yet you are weeping deep, deep in the crepuscule of those
Yards who aren't even yet who you are,
Wounded like birds who will never fly again....

Robert Rorabeck

Birthday Of My Latest Muse

Lamplight like the soft mother of a zoetrope
Looking out into that yard busily mowed during the day
Now vacated save for the lizard and the lazing
Hummingbirds: but across the street, and stacked around
The bluer dunes, such a thing:
A unicorn has made his nest in the tree—
Like a sailor on the mast of the very tallest of Australian
Pines:
What he is doing up there, but pretending to be a look out,
Trying to figure out when the birthday of my latest muse will be.

Robert Rorabeck

Birthday On The Keys

Sleep entails smoking hideous white,
Getting married in a horn of a snail, reclining
To the green zinc coffins stamped up the hill,
The mad processions recalling your little sisters
Moribund- Almost beautiful forever asleep:

My sad confessions to the since dead priest:
I've been trying to emulate Rimbaud, the evil young
Boy; and I've been lying-
I've been looking at the back of her neck, and smoking
Inadequate things beside the musseled viaduct of
My crimes:

And if she is a lawyer, she is still beautiful:
As petit and beautiful as her onyx-banged crimes of
High school: And she has since gone and married
A fair haired lover,
And they keep a dog without any cages,
And let him dig frivolously down beside the sea:

Where, I suppose she's never seen my mermaid weeping,
Even though I hear rumors she still weeps twice weekly for
The boy I was,
For my promised suicides, my dry-wall abusements;
And the sweet innocents, as the jaybirds sing I still
Can't drive a clutch:

I still don't have a yard: Though, my mother's cut my
Hair: Its turned gray. Crow's feet and apoplexy shirk my looks,
But it won't stop me from going back to school:
I'll skip out to sing with weep-some lions;
I'll feed them my same head; and the alligators, I'll
Cry for them
Just the same as the punch lines for sincere young crocodiles

All in a swampy chorus line underneath the blush armpits
Of Bromeliad Tillandsia, where I once stole a nudy magazine,
And went back to the excruciating hotel room and stared longingly into
Your eyes who were still so young and human and having a birthday

On the keys.

Robert Rorabeck

Birthday Presents

A joy that they taught themselves while they
Were folding airplanes,
And their mothers slept upon the other side of the
Canal-
Now how did they get here themselves, I wonder-
But the sugar cane burns,
And the song birds sing- they light up the candles
In the heads of the mine,
As the brave men go down to kill the witches
And dragons, and to dig you up birthday presents
That you pray they never find.

Robert Rorabeck

Birthday Wishes, Of Course

Tired rooms in opulent boredom,
And today I drove through the Zuni nation:
Our tax dollars had bought for them a hash of
Repetitious houses,
And I thought of you: Oh, Erin,
My flower of evil, as I ate sweetened popcorn
And drank guava nectar,
And dreamed up new dire novels of incest and
Witches,
And waited to get all the way home into these
High brushes to get drunk safely and to think
Of you;
And Monday is your birthday,
And all the boys know the road courses of your
Flesh,
And I am just doing this to put myself to sleep,
To sate on the fermented sugar cane what you
Would not give to me,
That you would not settle down upon my bed
And bare my name and your breasts,
Because even now I am sick and I am dying,
And the day is long and hung over the canals like
Dirty folded sheets of laundry,
And the blue gills are eaten by the alligators,
And the fallen cypress don't lead but to no where,
And I've said I love you, Erin,
But no one reads this anymore,
And the seasons are obsolete where I used to find
You in, the feverish pornography of junked cars,
And no one gives a damn,
When the words are mortal and not fully hung;
And I've already said I loved you,
But my pitch went foul and you were too beautiful
To swing, and waited with baited breath for a
Better artist and friend chiseled at the usual gym,
Blowing out your candle with his tongue,
Knowing which way you come,
And the words I've told you,
You couldn't possibly care to know.

Robert Rorabeck

Biting The Hand Of A Beautifully Careless Master

Dogs can do as only dogs can do,
Just as man does as only he knows-
He prays to the mother starship, or he picks
Apples down south in neat and tidy rows;
He makes love, panting, tongue lolling on
Her salt-water belly-
Keen to the pungent swelter, decorated
By the persistently winged blueness,
All twisted up in a sweet-fire pose;
And god knows that raising a family takes
A lot of money, but I've had enough of this
Bullsh! t- Seeing fire-engine red everywhere
I look,
When I'm supposed to be colorblind-
This is why, so scarred in the forest of my night,
I almost killed myself when I told you I loved
You and there was no answer,
Just the persistent crickets in the darkness,
Which is as good as nothing; I almost starved myself,
Became another ghost inside my truck with
A dead battery- The same one I've had since high school,
The same one I once picked you up from your royal
House, with its rain-soaked cathedrals;
but you don't remember; Now all of
This goes away, painfully leaping like an
Illegitimate fairytale right out of the stain-glass of
Our irrefutable belief: I've gotten a new lease on life,
Buried those precious bones of you where I can't
Remember, I've bitten the hand of such a beautifully
Careless master,
Like tearing a wing off an awful butterfly,
auburn eyed and drunken lipped,
She went swaying with her fraternity of pirates,
Leaving in her titillating wedding gown, gently whistling
But me unfed, though now better realized,
My tail is wagging, for I am the brand new four-
Legged man, now leaping through
These neat and tidy rows,
Fetching only for his own knowledge as it ripens,

Weighing down the spry boughs until it becomes
Very easily enjoyed.

Robert Rorabeck

Black Cat And The Ruby Birthstone

Put away that sun:
What is she doing now,
Crawling through the cupboards?
Painting her lips after some midnight hour,
Erasing the sums of the daylight:
Does she think that I still love her
When she knows that without a doubt I still do?
What could she be doing now that she's graduated?
Is she trying on his tweed eyes,
Brighting his pipe in her intelligent teeth?
Filling the bath with bubbles and joining her dogs?
What could she be doing now
Since she's worried back home after midnight,
And stubbed her toe on some stoned toad?
Should she be caring that I'm curious,
Curious, curious like a cat on her fence
Scenting her tasseled bicycle in the little hours that I live?
Knowing that I'm just a boy stashed away in some
High mountain, but when I come down I'll be a man
With his pockets full of cash, running around
With his dogs- with sophisticated streaks of gray
And his hands full of firecrackers?
Could she even remember what direction I'll be
Coming around whistling away the clouds, tapping
My feet like a dancer feeding the hungry reindeer:
I should call her, but she'll be busy eating and
Playing with her Atari. Maybe she'll be a cockroach
Now that she's graduated, completely unexpected
Except by flaunting Russian authors:
What is she doing now? I don't have an answer,
But certainly she is at the open graves dancing,
And laying out the flowers, preparing for the early unions,
Forecasting: Either there will be sun or foul weather,
But I don't know- She is a roller coaster,
A fortune-teller of relaxing aqueducts and the lilies
Which grow there, like murals of the minds of young
Women floating patiently for their princes,
And I am just a cat pacing the stone shoreline,
Curious but too timid to swim out and taste her....

Robert Rorabeck

Blackbeard

You were my fiancé
And I loved your cleav-ge
Milky in the phosphorescent
Hiss of kerosene lights
Burning like a fuse
So close to your flesh
But the night when Blackbeard
Came in, you swooned
You left me and straddled
Him at the bar
And served him
Rum the color of sunset
Dripping from the inlet
of your brea\$ts
Shallow waters where
His black lips swam
And you let yourself drip
Down his long unruly beard
That frightened the men
And tickled the women
And all the lights turned out
In my head
Like a ship sinking,
Cut on the rocks,
I turned very grim
I resolved to kill the pirate,
But when I came up to him,
Fists clenched, face set,
He just chuckled heartily
In a motion like a drunken sea,
He twisted around and gave me
The boot
And made you laugh and squeal
When he pinched your flesh
And kissed your cheeks
He sent me rolling out with
The other artisans
Into the humid salt air of
The night exhaled from the sea-

I made to go back in
but my brothers held me back-
When I looked, you were already
Topless your flesh open to
The famous pirate who only
A week before had capture the
Port of Charleston-
You were so impressed,
You undid your self for him
And slid like a salacious mermaid
Between his thighs-
Completely devastated,
I went across the street to
The Dry Bean
I got drunk on cheap rum
And crawled down to the docks
To drown myself,
But I fell asleep instead.
In the morning the gulls flying
Through sunlight awoke me
And there you were
Walking in Blackbeard's arms to
The Queen Anne's Revenge
Your eyes were hostages in love
And so pressed against his body,
His unruly black beard fell in your
Blouse, coarse hair scraping against
Your softness,
And I knew then that night before
That he had had you many times
Slippery from rum and coconut butter,
Feeling you like the steerage of a new
Vessel
Though you had said to me with a kiss
That you were saving your womanhood
For the night we were wed-
The hung-over sunlight of that new
Terrible day showed me how you had
Changed for him in love,
A devilish cutthroat who had plundered
You out from under me-
I did not stay to watch the ceremony

On his ship
I went right away to get drunk
And then I went and signed up for
The Queen's Navy,
But my brothers told me he did marry
You that day on that ship, and then he slipped
Into you, making you swoon as he took
You to his private quarters
He made love to you for two weeks in port
Only to leave you compromised,
In a needing position,
Stranded, immobile,
Helpless and weeping as you watched him go
Did he promise to come back for you some day,
To steal you away once more?
Your belly crawling with his ba\$tard
Seed
I suppose you broke down then,
Tore at yourself and meant to heave yourself
Into the natural force of the sea,
But the other whores pulled you back,
Though they were weeping too
To see their captain leave
Word around Nassau was you
Came looking for me, a far second
When only weeks before I'd been your first,
Wanting me back
But I had joined the naval forces
Under Governor Rogers
Whose sworn purpose was to hunt down
And garret Blackbeard
They gave me new clothes and a pistol
They ordered me into a new life which
I gladly took, since you'd
Destroyed the one I left with your frivolity
I became a sailor in Her Majesty's
Armada,
My heart pierced from you infidelity
From your one lasting night with him
My eyes a stormy birth
I left your needing for the sea
Chasing after the man who had forever

Stolen you away from me for two week's game,
For the rest of my life,
Hurricanes, my wrath,
I would end your love for him and stop
His for you with a bullet plugging his heart
I would take his scalp and go home to show
You and his child the prize I had made myself
From your cheating,
but when I came
To his frigate he shot us down with cannon
Bucks from his broadsides,
And I nearly drowned,
Sinking to the coral deeps
With your anchor chained about my middle,
When I emerged I was a ghost,
Fretful, destroyed, I threw down the
Badges of my past
Hearing Blackbeard's laughter,
I walked far inland away from your sea.

Robert Rorabeck

Blackman's Backbone

Best to let yourself go so far to where it doesn't matter;
If you shoot your sister in the eye, make sure she's good and shattered:

To avoid the gossiping repercussions,
The steadily swelling lines queued up for holidays,
The way your lovers looked you in the eyes,
before they looked their other ways;

And if you must go to where there are celebrated days,
Then turn you back and go down the easement of yesterday:
Down to the teal basements dredged out by demiurge,
Better to gather the poisonous boughs and sprigs
In the venomous cenotaphs that foundation in the dirt

Than to swell up all the higher riding caesuras of spit and flirt
Where children are uncorked and braided from unsealed sorts of
Domesticated climates,
Like secrets spilled from the backyards of flirts and firemen;
And if you were to see from the fiery window that woman
Supposed to be your wife cleaning dishes in another man's kitchen,

Smiling so finely out the window, know then too that she's been
Told to buy those things by which she might be more finely censored;
And the girl she once knew has flown so near the forest that she is
Not herself to mention, but a twitter tattered in the branches,

Better to do your penmanship by unacknowledged midnight,
To sough your friends in furrows under the red lights of the Martian influence,
And to call them rightly when they develop fully bodied out of circumstance
And leap upon one another in a regalia of unclothed pugilists;
To kiss and slap them bleeding in the painful cuts of such a friendly
reminiscence;

Or if this is not the thing to do, well at least you get the gist of it.

Robert Rorabeck

Blame

Blame causes the sun to fall from the sky—
He is in love with someone else.
The sky is his wife whom he does not love—
She has gone shopping leaving him
To the suicide—
The bosom of the sea is his muse,
What gentle allusions she gives him,
Showing off the jewelry she pretends to
Steal from the thieving moon—
The night proceeds over their love making,
The messenger of blind men
That raids over the university with the dawn,
Or other places nearby where I look up,
Pretending to see you in, the cool air
Filled with the valentines of vampires—
Or whatever delusions that leak like the runaways
Outside of theatres—in the avenues of
The casualties' soldiers, and in each wave
A vanished kingdom that crashes
Against the playgrounds of her bosom
As they descend once again into the marriages of
Evermore.

Robert Rorabeck

Blanket Of Laughter

Dandelions have nothing to say
As the wind puckers and blows them
In the meadow,
The Diasporas of springtime,
Lovers on a honeymoon,
Kids on a fieldtrip—
Trapped unfairly as car doors open,
Some die airconditioned—
Umbrellas over a sea of grass
In no time at all float a mere eternity.
The sea is so green
Upon her verdant eyes;
Some sit in the shadows cusped
In Buddha's palm,
They grow crimson yellow
In the blanket of laughter.

Robert Rorabeck

Blessed Ablutions

The light happened on the kid in his time:
The class stood up and listened to their named and
Then brushed their heart to the flag,
And I eventually and for evermore fell away, and started
Thinking of you quite depressingly:
My wick so full of tears it would never light, so I
Just sat right there alongside the mother lode of beetles
And listened to the ripples of airplanes in the grass:
It was a sad show like guts of a three ring tent that all of
The animals have left;
And when the summer rain blew across the school yard,
It carried your eulogy to me as if on the wings of a
Really champion paper airplane,
Even though you had taken so many lovers as to have your
Good smells rubbed off you: and you had finally settled
Like an exhausted tourist down in the apathetic bosom of
The Grand Canyon,
And got married just to have something to sustain yourself on
While you wondered aimlessly,
Though I have already forgiven you and even dug you
A grotto where the waves come in and crowd the pews of limestone
Where my cannons sit with the make believe crocodiles
Like true believers waiting for the day hikes of your body
To give them blessed ablutions in your penultimate flesh.

Robert Rorabeck

Blessed At By Fireworks

Repeated as the day consumes- wildfires trying to
Kiss hot air balloons:
Words on an uneasy stage, unicorns overused:
My parents on the highest parapets being kissed at by
The incarcerated waves,
And every day is beautiful for the beautiful slaves:
Wounded, but charging up the hill-
The beautiful boys will go to fight one last time:
They will go to fight whomever they will,
Until the ticket booth is even closed, and the even shows
Its evening shows,
And ticks off its monarchs into the west, passing from
Our America, being blessed at by fireworks,
And being drowned again into a Spanish forest-
Sunken like leaves in coital metamorphosis- what do these
Fine acolytes say as they talk to themselves:
What do their little minds rehearse for a lifetime of a day:
Being tossed to the arboreal gutter like paper corsages:
Never going to taste the lips of her prom,
But savaged there, made to court in the dusk, shadows-
As beautiful as the illusions of roses to the dead prostitutes
Anonymous beneath the old fort for tourists- they lay;
The waves rush an anarchy- their bouquets an illusion of
Bones eaten by wingless horses,
While the tourist can only rise up and think about in their
Ungodly cathedrals of what they must be having for breakfast.

Robert Rorabeck

Blessed By Seahorses

Impossible fume this heart
Reading new lines—sweating— sweating—
Blessed by seahorses
And things that don't go so well with the light of
Day—
The windowless room swings above the
Labyrinths into which we will finally be going home:
And a Mexican rides my bicycle to the supermarket
Tonight—
You who I can no longer write poems for—
You who no longer reads my poems.

Robert Rorabeck

Blind As The Music From The Holidays

What do katydids do when they whistle in the
Grass,
Naked and anew and metamorphosed as the airplanes
Fly past:
I have not learned the words for what they do—
I fold paper airplanes and light of
Roman candles and wait for you:
The traffic sounds just as distant as the lions yawning,
As the traffic enfolds suburbia,
As the sun goes to rest—
All day long, truant, hapless—a terrible infant lost
In his canoe—
I have tried calling to towards me—down from
The mountains—diminutive crescendo
Above tree line—
Where the stones speak of angels—
And the gods step in their nudity—
All throughout my childhood, I have wanted you down
From there—
Tried to figure you in my neighborhood—
Tried picturing you in my mother's naked aspects—
And sometimes when it rained,
Even pictured you inside the hallucinatory confines
Of a car—taking off your clothes to get warm,
Lying in a bed of foxes and reindeer—
Your eyes as blind as the music from the holidays that
Cannot hear.

Robert Rorabeck

Blindest Gold

I've tromped upon the blindest gold.
I've made myself into a fist,
And grasped her as I was told,
The angel hidden high up in that clasp:
She smiled and drove away with her kids;
But you will not see what I have told,
I've tromped upon the blindest gold.

Robert Rorabeck

Blinding A Better Man With Your Kiss

Reading too much Walden to have a jubilee:
Thoughts about that lake just go on and on, but it's
Not a pretty lady; it's not sex, and I skip chapters,
And I would have a hard time summarizing: I bight
My cheek- I wonder if spiders have scars, like these
Walls, these villages with legs, and dimly lit eyes
For windows: Walking up some hill, walking down:
Walking, walking: I read Of Walking In Ice,
The window is slightly opened, like a cracked shell
No one is home, so intrude, but it is cold inside
And on into dreams the letters continue; they have been
Crossed out, corrected. Remarried, they parade. I am
In the middle of a great rainstorm; it never rains,
And I breathe in these newly painted motes where ghosts
Should walk. I walk underneath the ancient pillars for
Railroads. The grass is mowed here. There is a quarry
Fenced off. I don't believe in my parents anymore, though
They sometimes call: They've always had it in for me-
That two headed monster in their bed I should never go
Back to. The horses have killed the trees, and if I slip
Away it will be to the other side of the Mississippi,
To culture and slavery again- Postbellum promises of
Better fairytales just in the vicinity where you are blinding
A better man with your kiss.

Robert Rorabeck

Blindness's Feast

Bats sleep upside down
Sacked into the moist air in the womb of a cave.

You sleep horizontally, I imagine west to east
In accordance with your street-
Unaware of the gentle lull coming from
The waves of the ocean-

And the creatures trapped there in,
The mythologies they could not pretend to know in school-

Awakened blindly, the sun as a guest upon your shoulder,
You are guided by the awareness available to you-

Sirens increase the volumes of the atmosphere,
Traffic roils as fish-
Progressing in a haze of comingling shelters,
Artistries are crucified into religions
Houses molt or burn down-

A market of insects happens in a flash
That is eaten by a cloud of wings:

As a maggot on a beautiful rose remembers the earth:
A womb furrowed by roots-
A school yard that is in essence a grave carved
From a once unmolested orchard-

As blindness prepares a feast, so dines the wetted
Snouts of such a romance.

Robert Rorabeck

Blissful Bigotry

To mention you
Without knowing you
Is a bigotry-
For you have sensitive ears
And missing ancestors,
And nightmares in your sleep,
So do us all- My dear,
Though we are not allowed to weep.
When I come calling
In my distant sport,
Perambulating in the mad gardens,
Please do not be afraid,
But look up from where you sit,
And offer me your eyes,
And feel me on your lips,
But do not stand up
And come towards me,
What shame!
To mention you is bigotry,
For I do not know your name.

Robert Rorabeck

Blissfully Across

Parks are chirping in sweat:
Parks with mist in their swings-
They don't ever have to worry about getting home,
Or having strange men mine coal from
Their bosoms;
But they sigh underneath the reprobate mountains;
And there are already so many stewardesses on their
Swings serving drinks,
Tourists in their lees waiting to get married
Through the open corridors and the perfumes of
Unabashed skyways;
And I don't know what I am saying,
Because I am not a pilot- It has been some years since
I've been to Colorado:
Colorado,
The breasted centipedes, I want to hike your legs:
I want to get going up and up past the things the venal muses
Should only sing,
To eat my ham and cheese up above tree line,
To not have to worry about the suspecting eyes over my body,
To enjoy my scars above the faces of the world
Where everything is a light air vertigo,
Where angels cut clean,
Where all the birthstones grow: If you are my muse,
I'll meet you there in the clouds of make-believe,
And above the trains.
Otherwise I don't know what I am doing,
And I am just a liar who made you believe the sky is coming
Down blissfully across your bare naked shoulders.

Robert Rorabeck

Blistered In Your Carnival

Over the eyes of the stomping
City,
I bought you pearls and then set out across
The waves to marry a witch
Who lived on a Christmas tree
Floating in the center of
Forever:
I wanted her to take my head- and to
Take my lips,
And put carnivorous wings in a
Masquerade over my eyes:
And this is what she did,
And this is what she is going to do;
But you are still right there,
Softly blistered in your carnival, wondering
Which boy you can cheat with
Next, as the blazing contraptions flow
Like electronic dinosaurs in a wilderness
Of unstemmed traffics that just goes on and on
And back and forth.

Robert Rorabeck

Blistering Of The Hot Brigade

A blistering of the hot brigade
Makes youngish girls swoon and kiss and
Gasp for love in the sweltering shade—
Their eyes hung over from mad delight
From the houses they have fled
To the meetings of each other at the end of
A starry metamorphosis:
As they kiss, the horses kiss too—puckering
Across the fences speckled from the shade of
The apple orchard—but soon they will
Be off again: girls riding to the sea or the sky,
To become mermaids or stewardesses—
Who once held our hearts like throbbing pomegranates
In the crèche of their fingers—and we might
Swear to ourselves that they loved us,
But they loved one another all the more—
As they disappear from our eyes holding one another in theirs.

Robert Rorabeck

Blond-Headed Solar Flare (Or Until The Cows Come Home)

Vibrant green acrobats who touch my lips
At the end of their Catholic censor- and
Then pool away just as gleeful as sunbirds:
And if you think that is sweet,
You've never read Baudelaire,
Baudeliare- anoint his feet with ambergris
And valentines: Stick fat pedaled to the crèche
Where the immaculate brat is sucking with the
Cerulean diamond ants at the end of the pool,
And Jordan's sister is taking it off: Like a pornographic
Raven in love with the grateful dead-
And the lawnmower breaks off the steal horned cenotaph
Of some prehistoric Pedro or Don Juan:
And you don't want anything to do with me,
Except to put me up on the shelf of your bull pen,
Raisin eyed: I don't even think you like having sex with
Mortal men; and I don't want anything to do with you,
And I laugh at you from the sun-splintered roof of
My genetic truancies, all my flares taking off at once,
Hoping to be saved by a blue shift, by prettier girls from
Saturn: So spit in your tin and ring your bells until the cows
Come home,
If you read me but not Baudelaire; it's all you're worth,
Blond-headed solar flare.

Robert Rorabeck

Blossoming In The Emptiness

Daylight unifying us as our bodies
Move- this species
And its baseball, the failures of my words:
The empty cadences of a busy hall-
The grass in the sunlight moving as she
Whispers:
The soft fall of sunlight perfuming our
Senses,
As we continue to desire blossoming in
The emptiness-
And further off mountains and forests
And the nomenclatures of the beauties
We are too deaf to describe.

Robert Rorabeck

Blue Collar Schizophrenias

If I could live forever somehow
Rectified as a psalm,
It really wouldn't matter that all my
Best friends are dogs,
And that my latest complexions scribble worry
On my belly,
The stillbirth of my isolated karmas,
And that my poetic images are really not
Much more than blue collar
Schizophrenias:
I love you, I love you-
Isn't that what I was supposed to sing,
To pull up next to her and rev these engines,
To put my eyes on the cherry sport of her
Jogging legs:
Her name is Erin, and sometimes there are
Storm clouds in the afternoon,
Which wet the equine bodies between the trees,
And I should have my own house sometime
Soon after July 4th,
Where I will begin to daydream beneath the
Stain-glass alders of a new classroom;
And isn't that absolutely strange: That I should
Be thirty-one and going back to school
For a Ph.D. in Saint Louis, Missouri; and how long
Should I make it before they call me out,
And smell the cheap liquors on my breath,
And find out that I can barely even spell,
That I might be the real reason for the holocaust;
But these lines aren't nearly even publishable-
They are the sad infatuations I've carried on since
Junior high- They are cheap grape soda the fox
Drinks, plump bellied under the broken school bus-
They are her eyes carving caracoles
Like pulling tricks through the despotic cumulus
Over the thorny heads of the grinning reptiles:
This is my thing, my little sport of lines casting into
The freeway's river: and her name is Erin,
And this is all about her, even as the traffic crowds

And better faces turn to meet hers: These lines
I remember,
And recite just as one of my ancestors getting off
The boat under the burning torch of
Lady Liberty in New York Harbor- Only but the
Freedom of alliterate; and yet I boastfully remember,
Riding a new bicycle through the distended ghettos
Of the reawakened suburbia,
My chief lines- Her name is Erin,
And I am cheaply drunk, but it is love.

Robert Rorabeck

Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain

I love you, but you don't weep like
Extinguishing amphibians in the car port,
So azure underneath the burnished stars,
And I don't need new clothes;
And I don't need a dog tag- It's you I want-
You my war, to piss stain cops,
To show my parents a real good time,
The Satanists- the beautiful cesarean crutches
Who would never have surmounted without me,
And yet they refrain:
And I want to show you fireworks and superhero
Powers,
And green stars and lamps and holidays I haven't
Yet the willpower to explain;
And if you haven't yet loved me,
Don't answer- the flower is delicate between the tresses
And the leaping airplanes;
If there is a god, then I will see you again....

Robert Rorabeck

Blue Faucet

I am killing myself for evil causes.

Like the rest of it, I often wonder
Who the boss is,

But don't we get the just of it,
Especially when we're lit,
High flying, agnostic,

I wanted to love her, but she was already
Wearing my closet:

The dogs are circling the bush,
Or they are making a deposit:

I wish to god I was on an airplane being
Entertained by a stewardess,
As we leap together, mostly inebriate,
Over the inextinguishably
Blue faucet.

Robert Rorabeck

Blue Omen

I'm going to kick his ass,
The blue general with the feathered hat;
The bootlegger who keeps you in his silk tent,
Like a giant cocoon on the green prairie,
A stash of alcohol with all those lips and legs,
The new campaign over spilling Manifest Destiny;
Because your c*nt makes me woozy.
Never mind the crown of diabolical Indians
Thorning this vermilion canyon;
And the imported swans bloated in the river's urine:
They will find us in their time,
And line their satchels with our eastern skulls,
And say we are now the new fetishes
For then there will be no telling us apart,
What was yours now is mine once was his.
Even now they are slinking amidst the fluted reeds
To where the willows bow, like giant ants,
The segmented torso and sunlight, the hybrids
Of men and wild horses and the spotless sunlight:
This is the novel territory we meant to invade,
Though halfway to the ocean is nowhere at all;
The Spanish ghosts are even now spilling from the dunes,
Their ancient rusting heads trapped shut and echoing:
A line of festering insects pontiffed and crossed,
The claustrophobic dolls and neurotic tortoises.
Will I find you there if there is still time,
Nude and bathing in his luxurious decanters:
Filigreed by all the stolen opulence, a transient gem,
An exotic still-life, like the ones half buried in invaded museums:
You legs the knobby trunks for my arachnidan fingers to saunter:
You lips the bulbous muscles of nectared aphrodisia,
The clever metamorphosis we could give our souls,
Before the savage war cry rents the breathing walls,
And tears our organs into meals:
Too late we have learned to fly, an apparent metamorphosis
Of coital enjambment hazardly punctuated with his blue ostrich
Feather perched like an hilarious omen at the foot of the bloody bed.

Blue One

Your children are the most important things,
I know not even college is important,
At least not right now:
And now where will you live, as neither of us are
Getting along with our
Father, Alma,
While Saturn and all of her rings flicker and wink for
Unicorns,
As I do for you, Alma; and I am just turning away for
A moment to bury a nail,
To kiss a wink,
But when I am through I want to nod my head underneath
Your seat:
I want to sit for a very long while with you,
Alma,
And hold your hand under the roof of your car as the
Sky starts and finishes its rain,
Just like in the ways that we used to do,
While the candles leapt like little boys over their beds,
As I shared a blue one for a moment of you.

Robert Rorabeck

Blue Windmills

Red fountains
Over blue windmills
And then there be
Cadmium swans burning into
Vermillion swans-
Won't you see how they change,
How they awaken for us like
Fireworks spewing their two minute
Guts
In the frantic dance of their life
Crying sparks over all of those things
That seem to want to change,
Turning around frantically,
But never changing-
And thus living while they live,
As we- those swans
Become those things that were
For them.

Robert Rorabeck

Blueberries

Salient solution in Ganymede's
Ablution;
I have been up and down the Grand Canyon,
Up and down
Three times, brushing against her side,
And candy canes and rainbows-
Lonely men doing lonely jigs in between the bars
Of their favorite barbershop cemetery;
And I don't know if I want to wake up tomorrow
Here in the clandestine halls of nothing at all;
And I wanted to ask Kelly, as a friend,
If she thought I was not insignificantly beautiful,
But I thought she should really like to lie to me;
And I thought they would all always like to lie
To me,
Going back and forth across the blue jay
Colored rug, where all the eggs had cracked into the
Scribbles of shallow water estuaries;
And her favorite color is blue berries:
Her favorite color is always blueberries.

Robert Rorabeck

Blued Kindergarten

If you know that the nights fall hard on
The spikenard monuments, then you know nothing but
Your letters and of footballs
That the balls are round, the oranges orange:
And America is beautiful, while my muse has come so far
Across the hills and the plateaus
But this is not her country: she is just trying to make money to
Survive:
And that is how she loves me; because she has never yet been taught
How not to love me;
This muse, my Alma: my last and fatal and beautiful thing:
I hope, like a firework, to reach up and find her,
And spill into her unison all of the boats of my milk,
And into her the other words I cannot even hope to find,
But which she deserves that I should find,
And so for her I go out searching before the mailman and through the
Yards where the cars are still at home
For the beautiful reasons that come up through the
Early jubilation of daylight, transforming, and turning around
In metamorphosis across the gardens where all of the pornographies
Who are so like her, but who are none like her,
As if in a blued kindergarten, keep on lingering and linger
Like misallocated statuaries holding their breaths.

Robert Rorabeck

Blueprints To The Banshee

I cleaned myself in the shower
And thought of the sea upset by
The hurricanes cast outward from god,
I followed the blueprints to the
Banshee-
To where the rocks part in the
Unreachable kiss of two things always
Moving away,
In that isolated throat where there
Is autumn,
And she is always there, her
Breasts the twin mounds where Rome
Was founded in the dropping twilight
Where her pups play and nip amidst the
Shoals of the falling ocean around
The tree that is also falling,
Phosphorescent leaves the
Crippled angels of dreams for her,
Shot and clipped they surrender into
The pools,
Waiting around my feet
As I stare into her across the
Gulf of the dying storm that is
Wildly blowing eastward and
Away.

Robert Rorabeck

Boarders

There are people in their rooms
Above my wilting head.
As my thoughts shed like tiny fireballs
From the horse's ears in a lightning storm;
Their voices are colorful vowels,
Like birds singing, like Rimbaud's
Poetry in the perfect juxtapositions of
Pretty sounding things laid vulnerably
On silver platters—
There is an azure maiden peeing
In a opal vase filled with gladiolas
The little crippled boy picked from the
Newly painted graveyard where all
The dead soldiers are sleeping—
There are people talking in their
Separate rooms above my head,
As a Red Indian walks into a bar and
Trades his mustang for a bottle of sour whiskey—
Outside, an electrified snowstorm is falling
On Alaskan pastures, and fiery snowflakes
Prick themselves on barbed wire fences,
Like candles offering delicate flames—
From the window, a murdered woman screams
Purple threats, as she is backed up
By the whippoorwill's peppermint trills on
The vermilion steeple—
Listening, the dying man takes off his boots
And then follows his brother's shadow,
Because a phantom has promised him a
Bag of cunning gold he hid in the quietest
Snow covered meadow
Where frostbite waits in hoary amethyst furrows,
Where the den of amber foxes sleep
Mortally exhausted, their skeletons half exposed,
Like anemic waitresses flirting with time
And customers,
The sounds of her bare feet crunching the
Frozen pasture as she moves from table to table,
The angelic specter in black violet tassels

Serving them the cold bulbs of winter's divine
Harvest the dead man's brother made love into her,
As far above, people laughed boisterously
In their separate rooms.

Robert Rorabeck

Boca Raton

Nothing ties me down:
I am loosed into the world.
Strangers come out of straw shacks
With used knives
And say hello—
Single women I once sat next to
Are getting married,
As I continue digging deeper,
My hole.

The land is a planet of
Gargantuan size, I crash landed into:
Between me muder's thighs—
My father is a golden Sheriff
Marching down the street—
Whistling, he struts and
His feet rattle ready warning....

There are rich females swimming
In the concreted watering holes their
Husbands dug for them.
Like fine yards, they are well owned,
Manicured, trimmed and blossoming....
Amarillo panthers

Fine yellow jackets,
Belly-fat, abdomens pulsing,
Circle around them,
The invisible instruments
The immaculate watchmen
Sleep in the webs of
The green lady palms

To this the sea shushes
As the traffic continues
As lines of hungry soldiers,
Silver-gilled mercenaries,
The carriages for the middle of
The line aliens

Imbibe imported gasolines

Proceeding across the land,
The ready suntanned herd:
Forages, the city's latest generation,
Bulking at the slightest thing:
Herbivores, land-owners,
Hypocrites,

Exonerated murderers....

Robert Rorabeck

Bodies And Parts

I only slept two hours last night,
And in that time dreams of you filled me up—
Your legs which scissor in a blur of liquid sun,
Your eyes that take off from your incredulous face
To land on my ruddy shoulders
To sing like opera stars who bat their
Lashes at me, corpulent premodonas I feed
Bread crumbs to until they are tamed and become
My faithful satellites, circling one after the other,
Petit versions of Phobos and Demos—

I have you in my head, and little ten year
Old bits of you are stuck between my ivories. I leave you there,
So once in awhile a vintage sliver becomes dislodged
And I can taste that part of you before it goes down,
The bouquet of a rose petal shed from your eye
As you bent down to tie your shoe, and I saw your
Cleavage and pocketed what I could, so when
You looked up I smiled sheepishly before pointing
Out something random—

Did you hear I'm likely getting published? Over
In England I may become quite famous, but I worry
You've come to some serious trouble without me
There to cloth you. You can't rely on anyone else
But me. I will send you a bouquet of daises to cheer you
Up and a first edition, and if I see you we'll shake hands.
If you allow me to grin like a sheep, then I will allow
You to grin like a wolf, and in our mouths' parting
Gestures, the precursor to the devour, we shall begin....

Yet maybe it's that you've fallen in love
With a dashing young professor of antiquity and
Even now he's driving you through the drive-thru
For a burger and coke with love in his eyes and his pen
In all those scholarly journals with titles that circulate
The world several times before running out of gas,
And acidic essays which peel the skin right off the eyes.

If that's the case, I see you've found me out for the hack
I am, Plato plus one chromosome, and the only thing to do
Is to get in line at the hardware store and try to shoplift
A big axe to chop down a tree in your path, to hold you
Up for a little while, so I can return your flowers from my
Throat, to give back that not so old kiss you once gave my
Neck.

Robert Rorabeck

Bologna And Bouquets

Yes, you are looking beautiful, dear,
But I'm just here to buy my groceries;
And when at night, I run my laps and grade
Those papers, I might think about you,
And the way you looked grabbing each thing
With your painted nails like bruised Easter eggs;
I suppose, the way your eyes were winged like
Bawdy butterflies, I might have told you I'd
Been published quite drolly, and then when you'd
Made love to the everyday boyfriend, I'd come
Upon you like an asymmetrical headache, and
That little silken brush I gave, what passed between
Us besides our commerce, I could not say;
I am in my studio with my dogs, and a slight fever,
And it rains outside engorging the pool, who too
Is hungry for lovers. Thus across the weedy fence,
Frat boys fart and light off fireworks, and a stray
Hound is stuck between the rough iron of the cemetery's
Gate. I don't know, but beautiful blonds are already
Trying on outfits for Halloween, and it isn't yet
April. Do you work on Sundays? I don't care,
For I've just come for my bologna and bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck

Bones Of Swingsets And Conquistadors

Understand that silence is better than this,
Translated from the German,
Or the hummingbird- and grandparents are passing
Away:
Working class soda jerks standing outside of
Glass windows up here on the bluffs above the great
Mississippi,
And Mark Twain was down there but we didn't see
Him;
And the greater and lesser professors parlayed,
And I went on campus and stole a novel, something
I couldn't write for the life of me;
While I was gone my dogs got into an argument:
They almost ate each other,
Starting at either end; and it's a long ways to Christmas:
No so long to Halloween.
They put a hole in the air mattress,
Now we all get to sleep on the floor, our working class
Dreams: big cities,
Bones of swing sets and conquistadors in the desert.

Robert Rorabeck

Boniface Shadows

Boniface sanitariums, oh how I love you-
People who are in the next room over,
Live in a different world than I;
Sometimes the shadows turn like playgrounds,
Prehensile- Shushabye- Shushabye say the scars
Peeking in the sleek corners,
While outside what a world moves,
On long, gunning legs go by:
Young things move through a green space some
Darned gods molested into being just to
Captivate their truancies- Oh look at them go,
Not real enough to touch,
Fingers fall through them like steam rising-
Their thighs are steam highlighted by great blushing
Landscaping; but if they are dead then so
Am my- Mighty steam track trains coil through the
City- they've eaten everything, yet they still seem to
Be moving,
Shushabye, shushabye goes these trains through the
City of trains,
And her legs running like water over a place they never
Saw;
Down in stony clutch where other birds gather,
And I drive by as slowly as I can, slow enough to keep
A butterfly- but it is never enough: and then
On and on, never to see them again, but oh their lips,
As if the cradles for the ears of little children, sing:
Shush-a-bye, shush-a-bye

Robert Rorabeck

Bonnie And Me

You could say to
Go on changing the
Deputy's plans
And we could continue
Fooling with the law,
But I am riddled with
Bullets and
Growing tired.
The Hudson is out of
Gas down in the valley
Under the oak tree,
And you are seeing
Other men—
You say you don't remember
Where you buried the
Money,
But that's a swell new
Dress you're wearing.
I don't want you to swear to
It on your mother.
Now come here close to
Me and lets kiss, so
I can feel the warmth of
Your cheek,
And hear your heartbeat
Fast and reckless
From the cocaine;
But, listen, I hear it going
Away,
Like a car's engine,
Receding like the tide, as
The sea lifts up her skirts and
Begins to follow a new sun—
I'll just lie down here
In the front seat and
Stain the upholstery with
My final breaths,
As you steal my gun
And run on.

Robert Rorabeck

Books By Dante Alighieri (Censored)

Somnambulists cutting hair with sexual charm
Walked into the student barber shop on 13th St.,
Across the blackface cops raise taxes in the ghetto,
Say I look like a writer: I, look like a writer, shooting range
So Huck Finn drifts down the river, Jim
Stop me before I piss in the street.
One night I got all drunk over you,
I got all drunk over you and went back to her-
There is a yellow studio apartment in the 2nd story:
I don't live there anymore; She is married
Under the oaks with one headlight out,
Because I didn't resist their badge's lavender authority-
But I only do cursive with my d-k out on the handlebar,
And then its all in Old English allegory:
Because the opal virgins are on their way,
The Green Knight's mistress gives me a girdle
To save my neck, accepting I lose the challenge:
I'm no good at French, though
I wouldn't turn down a rimbaudian kiss.
Doing liberal arts, the red queen is naked bare breast
And solving coital arithmetic with an associate professor,
Also not her husband, though a suave card player-
At the top floor of the library, there is a living dictionary
Then the University is the abandoned prairie- 12: 01
With the Indians out, sterile: the game is fixed- chickenpox:
Extinct, everyone is going to the planetarium, the widow
Is left over from holding her breath,
And the healthy young carnivores are learning business
With pie chart shooting off middle-class trajectories-
She might be standing under the network-lights
Tentacle the Church, as if she wanted to get hitched-
I see her now whenever I go out,
She permeated the horizon, an unknown chemical element
Fulfilling the atmosphere's solution: all persevere,
I jogged all night for her, I jogged all night for her,
And now I go through hell: at the end the devil's windmill
A trifecta of betrayals in his mouth: Judas, Brutus, and Cassius,
Amen- In the seventh concentricity there is a forest of suicides.
If you break a branch, the dead girl's soul with child

Scream out and escape, spilling something valuable:
On the hills in winter walks Augustus Caesar
Though we must not now hesitate, runaway
For Virgil has a woman's soft hand, and your pre-Socratic face.
He has told me behind the greatest evil, there is a
Way out. There is a way out, but first down the crimson hall,
The straight track breaching the school, the fast night
Where the children are deciding
Between books and sex, all night the faces swim,
Who they will be with the rest of their lives
Will not be the one they're with:
So their bankrupt parents can't complain
And there is only one way out,
And there is only one way out
Hanging with the wolves on the green
After the football game.

Robert Rorabeck

Books Of History

She had a silver moon cusped in her bosom,
Like a second hand trinket traded
At the flea market:
Or was it blue. I meant to ask her,
But she wouldn't talk to me,
How she rippled in the waves the baseball
Players and giants wept for her:
The basins they watch her in, her nudity
An insouciant television show which just ripples:
And I see her from outside the window,
The curtains blowing like negligee.
And I am out on that yard, but I don't belong,
And I cannot hear her speaking,
But her lips move with the homeopathy of
Shrunken mollusks, move like the whispered thoughts
Of gravity: I could knock on her door,
But not enter there, her home the shell which clouds
The bay where the conquistadors disappeared
From the books of history.

Robert Rorabeck

Boothill

Now the words are thrown out
Ashes of the dead beloved to scatter
From where the breathing look
Across the desert atmosphere.
Here, where petals soon come to wilt
After the crowds of distant families
Disperse, the words lay thirstily
Upon their backs with open throats,
Waiting for the generosity of the
Universal bartender, but it does
Not rain for them. They are laid
In the row of tombstones jutting
From the jaws of Boothill,
And their ghosts do not speak to them,
The way their mothers once did when
They were still young and learning their voice.
They are the empty center of this town
Which moves the way ants do— never away
From their work, the forgotten dreams
And ancestors their unattended to garden,
Beautiful bones that once displayed lips
left to scatter by the
Elements, the cold things, the only
Things that bother to brush them,
Scraping away the entirety of their meaning,
Until they are caught up in the earth
And twisted under the boots of the workers,
The only things to remain, marching, accounting to
The government, and the words, the unblemished
Memories that once touched the fingertips of lovers
Lay barren and muted, scattered upon their dry hill.

Robert Rorabeck

Boreal

Through their anemic wonderings
The family drives by the
Real unicorn on their way
To Disney World-

There, above the power lines,
Is a yellow kite bobbing
That will never know again
The tug of the human hand-

From the east,
The sea is vulgarly lapping
The shore like a beast for affection,
And her eyes

And her eyes turn away
To him,
In the red bricked garden
Where professors tell stories
Just before nap time in kindergarten-

They sleep together
Nuzzled by their dogs in another world:
Contented to see no more,
She drifts away into the soft matrimony

Never to be thought of again,
The way our eyes hit like
Light surviving from two ends of
An impossible forest.

Robert Rorabeck

Bosom Of Humid Secrets

Jesus- blasphemy this disease,
Here I am out cursing underneath the beautiful
Trees:
Every evening doing this while the greater public
Shoots off to baseball games;
Watch my mouth, feed my dogs, and pray,
Tell god about who I loved today-
Stewardesses served me drinks, and showed
Me leg,
But it was all but a necessary game; they were
Just hungry, they had children and wolf pups
To feed-
They lactated their honeys for dimes and jobs:
All sorts of jobs, the women undressed beneath
The eaves,
Getting suited up for better offices,
Skipping across the canal, the underworld,
The pornography molting in the junkyard under the
Chirping overhang of Australian Pines and palm
Trees-
Lots of changes with meaning: blue birds out in
The open, the storms, the hurricanes, the sugar canes
Burning; and if it is beautiful, then it is real and the
Wildlife worth feeding,
To steal and show to god and let run across the
Green carpet where you've been quietly bleeding,
Waiting for me to come home from the show
With your bosom of humid secrets waiting.

Robert Rorabeck

Boston, Massachusetts

I happen to be real and in the pains of my immaterial zed novels
I birth the stillborn beliefs of my sterile beauty and religious
Beliefs;
But for tonight, Alma, I kissed the lips of my broken Virgin of Guadalupe
And it rained
And I wanted to bring you fireworks: the fires arced over the emasculated
Sea as you sank into his arms:
And the grass grew up around your house and above its roofs the sororities
Of clouds basked:
While you never made it up the steep avenues to college:
You never even got out of high school in Mexico, but you are still someone's
Favorite student, even if she wasn't a good teacher:
And now I am doing all of this as my irreconcilable failure,
Remembering how girls once loved me, and how I held you last Thursday
And led you to my bedroom and undressed you:
Your feet are so small, Alma, and I weigh twice as much as you;
And you have never been to Colorado, even though you claim to have
Take a plane all the way up to
Boston, Massachusetts.

Robert Rorabeck

Both Of My Hungriest Arms

Yes,
This night whispers up and down into
The shadows of love makers,
And even the lights of the windows are dimmed
Behind the palms;
And it is really beautiful, and I don't
Even feel qualified enough to tell you how beautiful
It is,
But it is as beautiful as the one armed woman with
The pretty face shopping for palm trees I knew
Nothing about:
I was just standing there in a slice of sun out
Amongst the Dominican pottery thinking
Of Sharon,
Because she made pottery in
High school,
And she even tried to trap me in art class,
While even then I was all about hiding one side
Of my face or the
Other from beautiful Sharon,
Thinking that I could run so far away from there,
And the woman pulled around
And smiled so brightly and so demure,
Her eyes wanting me to keep looking into her eyes
As she motioned outside the van
That she was just showing her husband what beautiful changes
We'd already made to the place,
And when my eyes fell down to her missing limb,
As I guess she knew that they must,
I wondered if her soul diminished a little, and ran away
Too:
For her hand was clearly missing, though it made
Her no less beautiful;
And I wonder if that is how you might think of me,
Considering all that I have which has gone missing like
Bits of knights cut from the round table to go
Searching for your sweetly everlasting liquors in high basins and
Aeries,
Far from the trains and the systems, like the words from my stolen

Liquors I send out every night using the
Advantage of both of my hungriest arms.

Robert Rorabeck

Both Of These Things

Peeks clouded in ennui: I don't even think they
Could even be real,
As schools are closing, and teachers are going on vacation,
But eventually all of it clears and maybe I can make love to
You again:
Alma, maybe I can write the lines that will keep my love burning
For you forever:
And you'll never even have to go to Washington DC,
Because as they start out they will begin building all of the monuments
Right around you,
And the lifeguards will baptize you and you will make love down where
The truants smoke in the high velocity sea
Over which even the most steely of airplanes seem like wishful feathers,
Because I love you, Alma, and you are beautiful,
And both of these things will always be....

Robert Rorabeck

Both Our Virgin And Our Mary

My hats are off in support for the congratulations of
This country:
And to the forts who have been saved, or who have been conquered
Brawling in giant squares which dwarf the tenements
And the trailer parks with their brisk fires and
Cauldrons of beers:
But I have stolen my hats anyways during the Mondays when we
Were all right here,
Waiting knee deep in the torpid estuaries of semi permeable
Fairytale- with our knuckles
Clenched around the tangles of mangroves and jungled fairies
Through the torn down wall
Where even our best men were defeated by your dimpled brown
Breasts who'd hiked so far from Mexico,
Your fingers the forks of snakes curling through the water breaks
As they tasted the vines of our hearts:
And reach up, tore us down like weeds, as the overeager wind
Tares down the tents over fireworks:
Making us work doubly wearied, so that we could only come home
To you, just as with what happens to unrequited beauty at the
Summit of gravity:
Baring our muscled forearms and our wind milled tattoos,
Admitting to you that we were your day laborers, and the whippoorwill
Songs from our throats were not contrary- and on waterparks
We had walked for you, as if coming down from the parks of soft hills,
Seeing your soul through your unmarried chest:
Alma- For you were the only woman for us: both our virgin and our Mary.

Robert Rorabeck

Bottom Of The Bottomless Sea

Torpedoes in twilight
With the mosquito biplanes,
And the polygamies of ire- the spotter
Marked the Bismarck, and you were over
That like a galloping cloud, a nimbus of ill refute,
Riding high a kilter on the steed with a Florida
License plate,
The busy parks where failing lawyers dine,
The initial casualties who got us caught up in this
Kind war- The sun cuts a dividing line across
The mellowing yard, as if to say it is now your
Time to step forward, to disembark from your
Virginity, to lay down your maidenhead at supper;
Thus, you performed well for your distended family,
Of which you swelled out from the infected wound,
The vermilion spore at first beautiful like a beam,
Though steadily more irksome and unsettling,
A condition of unfettered laughter barking in the
Parking lot as the footsteps approach the room;
The spotter marked the Bismarck, the greatest ship
Of its century, but the trusty sopwith with its discerning
Eye dropped the charge towards its belly;
Skipping waves, dripping with the semen of its advance,
And sunk the powderkeged behemoth like an apoplectic
Bloom, a harem of gasoline, and the young German didn't
Even have a chance,
But he is still storming through his life sleeping at the
Bottom of the overpass
At the bottom of the bottomless sea.

Robert Rorabeck

Boudoir's Memory

Pocket words,
A thimble full of fruit:

The cross is strong and well held still
By the eyes of heavy weight tourists:

I haven't been to that town for years,
Nor the Spanish, nor the British;

But they owned it once,
And I owned it too, and write letters
To its waves through my scars,

And the women who work there serving
Lunch, fluffing bedrooms for little girls:

I have written about them south of them.
I have written about them northwest of them,

But east is the sea and it is too grand to write,
Too verbose in ferality: a thousand legions of cheerleaders
And sororities, and all those flavors of that crush;

They comb there as if trapped in a boudoir's memory,
And wet and swim in scissor cuts;
They think none at all of me, basined in swells
And caesuras;

And I think I should drive that way and sit and lounge
Just as well as forever where they play;
Or buy a house on a burry mound
Over looking their selky playground;
It is just as well that I do.

Robert Rorabeck

Bouquets Of Liquor, Bouquets Of Lips

As this liquor begins to cool,
I first pee and then will
Ejaculate in the tall grasses where
The bizarre snow has been accumulating:
Pretty soon,
I will be selling fireworks with the real descendants
Of a trick rider,
And there will be whisky,
And maybe a few high velocity bullets,
On highway 66 where I cried your name
As the competition fired mortars into me,
But I didn't care,
As I try to figure myself out,
And where you are, and how you might be called,
Especially who you love,
And the anonymous hillocks and mountains
I named after you, as if you gave a damn:
Who do you love,
And if that love is real, make a paper airplane
Out of it and toss it across the canal,
For soon there will be a fire all over here,
And nothing can be saved, Even though there are still graduates,
And strange declarations leapfrogging across
The celibate rivers,
And the wishing wells, the lucid estuaries
Of our childhood high school-
I am only pretending to be drunk, Erin-
But I am every bit the lost child of the gold spined
Story books, and if you are a good women,
With the fermented yeasts stirring beside the breasts
Of mothering cows, do not forgive me,
Unless you dare to believe what I say is wholesome,
And your breasts are the fulfilled dewdrops of the
Pasture outside your home.
There is no secrets to this flawed text:
Every word is for you, dearly longing,
And though I may have to look at unfamiliar women
Tonight in order for me to exacerbate my need to seed the
Earth, and thus nod to sleep in chainsawing snores,

You know every word of every imperfect line
Has been for you, Erin.... If you love me or not,
Inside my little books, I keep on scribbling you
A library which will one day disappear,
Though I am no killer, and have nothing useful to say,
Though everything has been lucid, especially your brown eyes,
And if you feel the need to forget me, do so,
Because I am not pretty,
But I will be around,
And even though tonight I will look at other women
Before I become exhausted, remember you are the only one,
And my hand on my flesh is only for you,
Wishing it was your flesh spoken in warm spittle,
And the engorged strangenesses of your bouquets,
And me saying the pledge of allegiance is for you,
And the flag swaying in your hips,
Which is all, if you gave a damn, surfing in the enunciations
Of your poor but perfect heaven,
In the cypresses and gaudy pastures of
Her uncertain amnesias.

Robert Rorabeck

Bouquet Of Eels

Wishes in the daylight as the wounds of ourselves
Spill over,
And coagulated with the nurseries in the afternoons
Where my love for you disappears,
And I find myself alone reciprocating to the echoes
Of the vineyards far away from the mountains
And no longer busied by Christmas:
Just my pitiful art, held to the moonlight in the shallows
And tied by a bouquet of eels:
While your passion finds another chariot to ride upon:
Up and up again, past the stalagmites
And the industrious mines where all of the cherished
Knights are buried:
So, eventually, the mountain gets emptied,
And the dragons, in clusters, consume the fires of heaven
And other pretty verbs that used to be tied up in
Translucent or indigo ribbons in your hair-
As the elephants wander aimlessly, as the airplanes leap into
Air.

Robert Rorabeck

Bouquet Of Empty Songs

Unbeknownst to the vanishing castle,
The highways all but vanished as the sun did,
And put the egrets into the cypress.
And put the waves away, as with a brush stroke:
Put the mermaids
And the manatees into the somnolence of the bay:
And shushed the cars as well,
And closed the fruit markets- and emptied
The daylight's well: and my love for you was gone
As the waves crested waves in the darkness:
But all of the things I thought I'd thought
For you- I couldn't even spell-
And I could no longer open up to you the things
I'd hoped to sell- and the many feet of
The echoing throngs disappeared like the octopi
In the depths that spread of like roses from a
Bouquet of empty songs.

Robert Rorabeck

Bouquets

Standing in a blue abscess, wounded around
The eyes:
The nocturnal pugilists countingimps,
And the gates awash with freezing water
The blue spruce cried-
And other planes coaxing down: inside their
Golden necks, their stewardesses all
Asleep-
The weather about them a blanket that pulls
At them softly,
The sea, a mother waiting in the deeps-
While each pine tree rises just for them,
Nocturnal spectators in the senses of the hills:
And they go over them, nodding in
Sorority,
As the hillsides sigh, damply drunken,
And holding up to them bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck

Bouquets Of Seahorses

Making airplanes to land in water fountains—
As the days slip like cowardly serpents in a bouquet of
Palmettos—
The keys of my soul dancing out another canvas—
Like strange spiders doing what is natural,
Skirting across the surfaces of some juvenile god's
Drinking fountain,
The beautiful women drunk and nubile and beautiful—
Just halfway through all of the world,
As the sculpture of a palace slips into the tears of
All of her inescapable daydreams—
Mermaids glimpsed between the caesuras—smelling of
Bouquets of seahorses and other lands not so
Far away from her that all of her teachers say do not exist.

Robert Rorabeck

Boys Who Are Doves

And boys as light as doves,
Who are doves,
Swim in the nimbus,
The kidnapping rainstorms
Who curl into homes
Nestle in the backyard swimming holes:
The deluge of their mothers' soul
Broken from the eyes;
But they are gone
And ever will be young,
Until their memories stain the creek
And their mothers' tombs/
They are there in the future
Playing in the white field
As the new city builds its crosses/
And they are there swinging over
The abyssal planes,
As the phalanx of sunlight
Lances the bosoming waves-
When they congress
They play a ring around the hurricane,
And the laughter is the prick of the spine
Along the beach without a shadow
Where the men in the ghost less cars
Can never observe,
Returning home to careless wives,
The weightlessness of their lost brothers.

Robert Rorabeck

Boys With No Name

Words who like customers come in
Awfully late,
But who are they to say: they are looking beautiful
And they have mistaken the halogens for
A baseball field of sun:
And one team has one, and the other has looked into my
Eyes,
To see that I am scarred, and their eyes know
And will know forever as they look away,
As they turn to Africa and all that cliched darkness:
As my old teachers come into the fruit market and
Remind my mother of tattoos I got in Barcelona my
Junior year of high school:
The last time I made love was in a Spanish orange grove
Overlooking the cliffs,
The perfumes of citrus and suicide,
Like a super sweet commercial:
But even girls in Colorado don't care- When they yawn,
When they stretch handily in their taught yard
The tickle the simple vertebrae of airplanes
And make stewardesses dream too of boys with
No name.

Robert Rorabeck

Brand New Home

Bums work and engines burn,
And I am traveling through time: Today Alma asked
Me what color my hair was growing up,
And I want to take her on Monday to my backyard where the lions
Still roar and
The alligators promenade,
Where the comets keep their sororities of dimwit light bulbs over
The green fields and the sugarcane:
I want to burn for Alma:
I want to really light up for her, and turn her around and show her every
Last aspect of her reasons,
Like an alligator newly aware of her blindsides,
And I want to call up stewardesses from the dank alleys of canals
For Alma,
And I want to lay Alma down in the sweet young aloe beside my
Mother's carport,
And I want to sing until my throat is a pitchfork glowing in
A fire of burning monsters for
Alma:
I want to start a ride in her name that I can never get off, like the river walk
At the Alamo in
San Antonio Texas, where her ancestors defeated mine,
And called them gringos and tramped on their dead and bent trumpets,
Because Alma is a butterfly driving to and from her house
Into and out of her two worlds of work and home,
As I imagine this same situation is repeated in so many routines across the
Country,
The casual strangers of the workplace hitting and discombobulating
Home,
Only, Alma, you don't know me, or how bright my tomb is,
I can be your anumbis- I can be your gentle throb: I can take you to the
Movies when you are not home,
And I can do this all night, and give you the same voice as the rainstorms
Of wildcats that will pick you up and displace you into
A brand new home.

Robert Rorabeck

Branded (Censored)

Anything can be purchased
Inside 7 seconds:
H-rd-ons, hangovers,
And Happy-Meals
Here in America's
Drive-thru (Dear God)
We are all up for sale
Our love-lives are commercials
Selling our lo-n's lettuce,
Product placements
We drive around with our children,
We remove their heads early and cheap
With pacifying machetes /free trade genocide/
And tattoo them with the
Billboards of our
Gods/ Headless, driving over the land
The tin herds run on
The sheer surface under the sun/
Everything is the constant motion
As this sphere is sold,
Bodies moving and pretending
To succeed in getting things done,
Like trees playing around
In the storm

The marketplace trembles
Opening 24 hr. systems of thought
Dedicated to the cycles of deliberation
We work and celebrate under,
The categorizations of the day to better ourselves:
The gated community, the name-brand
Purchased and inspected by the well-manicured
Hand moving around and around like
A pair of roller-skates under the sparkle of
Dead skins draping our shadows in a
Pretending light.

Branded:

Spread across the c-ck as it shoots and
Stains, wasted in the cement when
Bastard things continue to grow
Neon lights blazing the filament garden,
Our heads beginning the steady drift together,
The tide of buying and selling,
The natural selection of this community
(And I so God-damned estranged to it!)
Taught to us, pitched into us like the Spear
Of Longinus from every angle available:
The hideous beautiful torture available to us,
Like bolts from Medieval crossbows
Quilled in skulls, like eager housewives
Warming to the false brightness, the gentle
Death of the shopping mall, the flytrap-
Middle-Class concentration camps

Their men fat, balding,
With great flatulence from
Sunday afternoon chips and guacamole,
While they watch College football,
The useless education of the State that
Schooled them,

Propaganda in the kitchen:
Their women the beautiful shells,
The plastic dolls
With multitudinous curves,
Like a highway shooting it's
Body northwards along California's
Coast,
That allows them to slip down
The road like silver-gilled
Fish
Their bounding bo-bs
And fat blue lips
Catching my eye

As they crawl in and out
Of their shells.

Brave Enough To Tell You

I drink rum, I am so amazed that the plastic
Remains of cowboys and Indians still populate the shelves
Of toy stores;
Or that you still are my candy store: Maybe this weekend
I will forget about you as I shell out,
As I start spending a half hour's worth of time near the airport
With a girl from Spain:
They all come from Spain, originally, girls:
Even blue eyed and milky skinned, they were all birthed in
Catalonia underneath the milky clocks
When I was just a young thing in high school and not a single
One could teach me a thing:
That was the when and where girls have come from,
And I am glad that I could remember enough and also that
I was brave enough to tell you, my love.

Robert Rorabeck

Braving So Many A Nightly Storm

If I am sailing now to even the heights
Of Tenochtitlan
It is because even now my scars are golden,
And I have a flag of your hair
That my lips are always blowing;
And it seems to be the very energy
Of the part of you
That can never fail; In fact, it is the very part that
You cannot remember,
That used to leaven you and took you up past the
Quagmire of leaden stones which
Played havoc with your compass;
And why I am always writing love poems about
You,
It is because of this homeopathic spell I hold
In my gut or in my heart,
And the fact that I cannot spell it with any certainty
Only proves it even more:
The coral snake that went to a warm place in my beer
And pierced my Adam's apple going down,
Just a small reminder that Satan knows who
I am:
The horned devil who lives in your cellar,
That you don't suppose to deny, because his fruit is so
Sweet. I just want to move in there with him,
Next to the wine bottles
And cenotaphs of the usual conquistadors
And listen to your noise making bed above our heads,
Like the halls of a merchant ship out
Braving so many a nightly storm.

Robert Rorabeck

Brea\$t Feeding

She looks dynamite.
She feeds her baby apple-sauce-
He wants teat-
There isn't any worms;
It is in the middle of the summer solstice:
She has an athletic figure,
But she isn't getting any jobs.
Romeo loves Juliet,
But their love bombs:
French-kissing caught them too many
Germs a good week before midterms.

The apothecary carries hemlock,
He doesn't have any qualms;
The lady is in the lake. She looks
Beautiful raising both her arms.
The knight goes cantering over the
Drawbridge-
The drawbridge is in a figure eight,
A skating rink where the priests
Are punting psalms.
The hermaphrodite's displayed in the
Tank, he/she catching cold and
Qualms,
But we go down to the sea to watch
The turtles hatching, little blackish daubs;
And the albatross amongst the seagulls' glut,
Brings us hope of good luck,
So we kiss, and cross the feeding mother,
The infant, ruddy cheeked in the sauce,
Seems to understand hunger's shrieking song;

But it still wants teat,
And now it wont be long-
The woman has an agent
And they are negotiating over lunch.
Romeo and Juliet sleeping in the grassy
Foreplay without a hint of hunch,
The knight galloping to the clink,

To save his misinformed brothers from
The green ax's knick.
The sea-grass' lady raising arms,
The infinite teenagers tracing her gifted charms,
The fine young priests selling pop-corn and
Buttercups get paid in alms.
The albatross resting on the marble cross
Seems to stop and reason over the both of us.
The hermaphrodite, he/she is left to be,
And so we watch he/she swimming with the
Fortunate young amphibians deeper out to sea.

Robert Rorabeck

Breakfast And Then High School

Green unicorn replete in the snow fields,
Nurses her foals
Under a massing nursery of clouds- as the horny toads
Watch
Underneath the alligator junipers
Down the hill from my father's house-
A blind man, he sees nothing,
But hears the wolves at night-
And when they leap to the second story,
To steal away my sisters on their
Hoary backs- no one can tell which
Way they are going-
The moon closes her curtains- and the
Vulpine shadows coalesce:
They go to hidden brooks were tadpoles are
Married,
Where slender fires burn through the
Sisterhoods of aspen,
Like a serpent selecting which one he will
Love,
And give his clandestine knowledge to them-
As my sisters are made brides
After midnight,
But are returned home in a metamorphosis of
Breakfast and then high school-
Nocturnal things that somehow survive during
The day,
Smiling, but no longer believing a word
Their blind father tells them,
As he nails his own thumb to the door-
And they try not to make a sound.

Robert Rorabeck

Breathe Someday Haiku

Like the flowering
Of Water I am go-
ing to breathe someday.

Robert Rorabeck

Breathing In The Echoers

The pageantry of her eyes calling
Like a crisp dollar bill
While the sun and the ceiling fans are snoring—
There she is in a clip of stars
Beholding the fanfare of her sisters—
Girls in the silky forests and the crenulated waves—
I think I know who they are—I've seen them
From the fort even though they always
Seem so far away—
Taking up all of the space that they please,
But hidden—lapsing in the shadows—
Brilliance of copper bodies reanimated—
Their bodies like fans—
Breathing in the echoes of gills and leaves.

Robert Rorabeck

Breathing In The Echoes

The pageantry of her eyes calling
Like a crisp dollar bill
While the sun and the ceiling fans are snoring—
There she is in a clip of stars
Beholding the fanfare of her sisters—
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I think I know who they are—I've seen them
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Taking up all of the space that they please,
But hidden—lapsing in the shadows—
Brilliance of copper bodies reanimated—
Their bodies like fans—
Breathing in the echoes of gills and leaves.

Robert Rorabeck

Breathing The Water

Glittering fish of our world,
Weren't you won at a fair in the middle of
Some newly past year:
A prize not even for Christmas, you weren't supposed
To survive this long,
And that is why we have to forget about you-
And sing our song of death over your cold,
Bright bodies:
And sing to you as you proceed through the unusual
Merriment of your glass rooms:
We won you without a care- and you have no
Name- and you are going nowhere.
But there you are- on the eaves of some house
Underneath some stars and a moon-
Just as we are:
Without a care, breathing the water, swimming in
Air.

Robert Rorabeck

Bright And Coital Philanthropy

Daydreaming of grazing on a god,
Heaven seems almost possible:
Strange indescribable eyes are caught in
The teal bosoms of someone's mountains,
Her armpits the concavity of insouciant chalices
That could drape her body over my own,
Like riding in a cloud bank on a fair holiday.
All that spirit the traffic couldn't arrive at,
Hunting for her, but going home without
Her womb,
A hutch of flowers some rabbit tongues and nibbles,
Making the sky squeak like a well used bicycle,
Making the moon change colors like a chameleon
Anemone,
Like the epiphanious ornament crowning the
Christmas tree,
And then she coos to her child like banks of snow
Sliding down from the altruisms of all too red institutions,
And we go to sleep for awhile,
A kine drunk in its blistery meadows, sated and tonguetied
By what it supposed it should never have
The lay of the land shifty with snoozes and avenues
Of concordant wills supposing in common shelter
Underneath the mobiles of this gift basket of
Suddenly bright and coital philanthropy.

Robert Rorabeck

Bright As The Brightest Bright

Oh, you night- you poof up sirens,
Finally to uneasy capsizing bed you keep me from
Remembering to look at and worry
Over my face,
That I didn't continue school- that this is my mausoleum
Of consternated chrysalis;
And I really like you, batwing cenotaph shuddered in the lake
Of your mascots:
All the teachers and students have come off of you now
Like water off a duck's back, but you're still up
There counting in your zoos,
Like sitcom on so long it now has nothing to prove:
So many fans and harems and country boys with their
Electric guitars:
You shoot your mouth full of soap in the arcades of Catholic
Schools,
Because you are so in Charge: and all of this has been a fable
For me that has casually rhymed,
I've forgotten the girls I've slept with, but for you I always
Turn out in rhyme:
And the cities, and the buildings of our species are like waves:
They are like copies of hallucinations:
They are the same of the same; but this definition of love
I had to steal from myself,
As I would take you down and give you oral pleasure stolen
From your shelf:
I would do this for you and turn you out into the night, and plug you
With my flesh, and make your lightbulb as
Screaming and embarrassed down the hallways of our promised
Highschool as brighte as the brightest bright.

Robert Rorabeck

Bright New Cars

They decorated the star-well
Until they became the center
Of gravity's loose attention
And all the eyes of their peers
Shone toward them like Cadillacs
Falling headfirst down a sinkhole
Through the highway/
They went to bed naked and
Had ceaseless love until their
Sheets became like the heavenly
Layers leading up to God,
Stained and bleeding

Who promoted them to
Squad leaders, put a down payment
On their house in a gated and well-lit
Community
And bought them both bright
New cars.

Robert Rorabeck

Brighter Than Any Fireworks I Have To Sell

Dancing on the plebian shores,
I can pretend to have all the answers without knowing all of the words,
Like Shakespeare smearing the bones of pigeons to all of
His dogs,
Like water coloring above the grand canyon and all of the words
She carries to her graves,
The out of print and apocryphal hymns that grandmothers never had
To give in church:
And this is what it means to be out of print and singing to my Spanish
Turtledove:
Singing to you, Alma, from my drunken coves, trying to meet
My quotas for your spent though ageless love;
Because you love me now, Alma, and you've said it before driving home,
While I still have so many fireworks to sell,
While your eyes light up across my body brighter than any poems that
I have to spend, and again, brighter than any fireworks I have to sell.

Robert Rorabeck

Brilliant Fraternity Of Knavish Satellites

Maybe I remember the time when you
Were here,
Like a sailboat underneath the moon,
Ferris wheel in my heart-
And the heavens flagged around your
Superstructure,
Like the lucky housewives at the supermarket:
All of them beautiful sights,
Made up as they go, being pulled as if
Waves and their husbands
A brilliant fraternity of knavish satellites.

Robert Rorabeck

Brilliant Roman Candles

In a sad world of brilliant roman candles
You get your picture taken in the middle of the school day—
You've had so many boyfriends you cannot remember—
The candlelight goes out over your birthday—
And then you go to sleep
Underneath a fake Christmas tree—
And while you are sleeping, I enjoy you while I've been
Drinking—and the starlight comes out and shoots off
At a safe distance—I am sure you will find your love
Tomorrow, wherever—but there are just so many places
Left to live—sometime in the spring of next year,
My wife will give birth to our child if she
Is lucky—
But until that happens I have nothing else that I can
Give.

Robert Rorabeck

Brilliant Survivors Of The Dark World

Little boys run in blue shirts
And black shorts on brown walls,
Of rooms of missing girls
In New Jersey
I want you to come on a run with me
To Africa,
Where the animals can talk
With Alice's primitive ancestors,
Even though she is dying
Of stage four cancer
With her daughter in Vermont;
Old people in newspaper houses
In the subway,
Come upside on Christmas Day
To sell things
For show and tell
In the elementary school of Bavaria
Where girls hide dolls in nests
With silver chalices and mirrors
Rocking in the wind,
Towers above the land where
Wolves are circling,
Circling all they control,
Their tongues lulling in
The armies of the moon surround
The outlines of men of chalk,
In forensic work books
The bright girls can finish early
And leave for home
Skipping through the springy trees,
Reciting Latin to the woodsmen,
They are eclipses in the night,
Brilliant survivors of the dark work.

Robert Rorabeck

Bringing In The Sheep

Forlorn characters migrate and forage
Upon the open planes of newly printed
Novels;
Their movements, the paradox of reflections,
Imitating our own,
Gives us pleasures and minor erections
To see the author's mimicry, how she
Has refracted what she has learned into
A spiny meal;
Close to finishing with the first part,
I think about her in New England, my fingerprints
Now all over this crop she has grown,
Doing a good job of mimicking Dickens,
Sowing her petite mort into the product,
Once marketed will buy her meals, but this
Is one dame who will never feel the cruel
Job of the cutting tools, the self inflicted wounds
Baked and sat brightly dysfunctional at the
Dinner tables; for her tastes is for the novel
Gentry, picnicking far from the bitter,
Though bravest stones, and yet shows me how much further
I have to go; for it is a sad dance one must do
To cross the perilous mountain in the snows,
And it is a lonely kiss one must know,
To bring their children out from the senile mine,
And parade them in melodies until they
Molt, and are revealed in unchallenged recitations,
In lines in fealty to their owner's soul,
Shepherded through the burry forest, and then
Brought into the revelations of their acknowledged home.

Robert Rorabeck

Broken Glass

Broken for so long without any glue,
Like glass on the short arch of the bridge leading home:
The color is beautiful but dangerous to touch,
For it has been hording sun, and the edges are sharp:
Down stream in the insouciant evening,
Where almost every color mingles, and otters,
And alligators, the vivacious foxes in the shallows courting
Water moccasins, their young's red feet tracking
Playful mayhem in the loose anthills,
Cords of wood floating in blue clouds of sleepy midges.
The lights are coming on from the little houses amidst the trees,
But I cant still go home, for I am shattered though cooling.
How her eyes lied to me across the street in the classroom,
How my skin failed her in the moment our souls would touch.
The delicate breathing of the quieter things, the fruit
Bats who come out in a cycloning math from the plate of
The bridge, the bicycles which ride by frantically,
The skunk which lingers, the turtles which bobber like
Molasses in the darkening cools; but none of this she'll ever see,
For she is in a home across the way being fed by her mother
Who is on her third glass of wine, answering innumerable
Phone calls for her daughter, afraid they will distract her
From the homework and the game shows which like company;
The moon is out and she is bleeding the silk which traps the nights,
And the bridge is in the crickets' orchestras, and
I am all alone watching a cottonmouth move the fluting reeds
Like a slight gentleman.

Robert Rorabeck

Brontosaurus With A Blue Hair Lip

Brontosaurus with a blue hair lip
Trying to kiss the stewardess over the river
That is really a stream:
There, she seems to bend in towards you though
She is truly disgusted by you-
And I wonder what game she is busy at playing-
And the sunlight is the color of
Silver and as busy as bees over the still open
Coffins over the still open graves,
But over their shoulders they are having some kind
Of carnival in the careening valleys of
All of Mexico-
And the skeletons are dancing with the skeletons
Of the horses-
The pinwheels are leaping with the worms and
The lips,
And it is crazy, crazy how I was not invited-
Because surely, if I was, it would have put an end
To all of this.

Robert Rorabeck

Brown And Agile Child

There is nothing more than this,
To say that it is enough and now to lie down
In my agile drowning,
While newer birthdays come for the paradoxical
Old,
And it takes something more than just being liberal,
When her eyes are so deeply auburn they hurt,
And in all her pictures with her lost boys
Who she pretends are just her friends,
She is always showing a bit of tongue, as if in quiet
Sexy challenge,
And it is the organ best used for verbs and jests,
But not for the quieter things
Which come out and slip through the suburban
Trees after midnight, slip into the easy lakes and
Concrete streams which really are just yoked curbs;
And I could say now that I would love her,
If the seasons fell over her, and her eyes swung like
Leafy estuaries Thoreau would have liked to move
Into,
And the clock is silent, and the crocodile approaches
Silently too, and that is why there are so many things
Who are dangerous,
And her eyes most of all, even after we have packed up,
And the sail is over where the moon is quietly skimming
The neighborhood's canopy—Her eyes will look over
Us silently, supposing,
And there will be a greater intake in which we will find
Our young reticence being filled and looked upon
By someone so beautiful that she is deadly to be alive with,
And there is nothing we could say that would challenge
Her to move closer to us,
To say anything more with the rich, deadly eyes,
Who have already won for her everything we cherish or
Would have taken upon us those selfish gifts to steal.

Robert Rorabeck

Brown Bag Of Reasons

Night fills up the yards: all of the yards, bottled into
Their uncertainty:
The penchant for fretfulness, which the airplanes try their luck
At escaping:
All the words made for abuses, starting the fires, or the first
Words in the throat of an abandoning letter:
The lions separated like two dogs done with a fight,
Halfway way eaten
And whispering with the foxes under the grapes:
The new lines that start like waves then and carry out towards
Their haunts of those destinations,
Like manless ships going out across the night, the fertile orchards
Laying in their séances of ghosts,
The universities attended by the shadows,
And then the rumors of tears, cousins to the rain, which makes
The world fattened, fertile,
And gives her a brown bag of reasons to come and season again.

Robert Rorabeck

Brown Embers Of Your Children

I cannot remember the points of your country—
Of how many star-fruit you put into a basket for a
Bitter easter,
Everything twined about your brown shoulders—
Brown rabbit made it all of the way from
Mexico to make love and hurt me for
A year and her embers
Until I decided to disappear because I kind of knew how—
Into the middle class into which I was supposed to ascend—
Busied at nothing,
And I found a wife whom I rode bicycles with
And fell in love with,
Even though I could do nothing about you—disappearing,
You left a scar
That contributed to my alcoholism and my afternoons
Alone troubled by what it was between you—
And the two brown embers of your children—
That would not allow you to leave-

Robert Rorabeck

Brown On Brown

Saturday schools of canals, of wild otters playing with
Rolled grapefruit,
Of star-fruit and snails,
Of the wicked fairy-tales of water-moccasins twined
Like barbed wire on the rood:
Elizabeth teaches everything that is good,
But once her light fails,
I still want the underbelly of airplanes, the venal escargot
Of your beefy entrails:
I want to say your name and invade the country of your
Caves:
I want to paint your art and lick your slaves:
Oh, living cadaver of darts and valentines,
Brown, brown eyes:
You who love all the boys and go out onto the basket courts
For dinner time,
Spend one down struck evening with me:
Unbutton your blouse like you've done for every
Mouse in the entire infested house,
And lay your eyes softly down in the crèche of my own
Brown:
Lay your hands and body brown down into my
Graying town,
And we will hold out while the oil leaks,
While the rivers creak, while the sun is going down over all of
This playground-
By our anonymous things unrequited prom king and
Queen,
What a luscious venal scene:
Brown on brown, sand dollar-otter,
Sugar cane burning town- with the sun going,
Going, gone.

Robert Rorabeck

Brown Shoulders Of A Muse

We'll share our own portions with
The forked tongue of a king—
He has come into our garden while we were
Kissing toads and lucky rabbits feet,
While our mother was doing the wash in
The grotto underneath the orange tree:
Where some kittens died,
Pressed like beautiful flowers against the
Stacks of rebar we pound closely into the
Ground at Christmas to sell Christmas trees—
And still, even now—the sun is
Burning—blue ship going down—won't it
Still be cerulean—it wasn't long ago
That we lost our identity—
Going away upon the brown shoulders of a muse—
As she travelled up the highways with her family—
Now the airplanes sound overhead like golden
Arrowheads shooting into the heavens—
Going to spear the other side of the world where
I am sure you will find my wife waiting for me.

Robert Rorabeck

Bucolic Pietas

I need to get out of here
As fast as I can,
And surround myself with the personifications
Of nature in the tallest of forests
Innocent of patriarchal gravity,
Or mothering worries and caveats:
For, if I followed the tresses and the bounding
Play of my hounds, I might find an open meadow,
Like a theatre or green mouth,
And lay back inside that sloping throat, as
The clouds passed like insouciant thoughts
Where there were no ghosts bigger than my hand,
Where truth ambled with happy lovers perpetually
Unjaded by the higher catastrophes of people
Bound by obligations and savage business habits.

Robert Rorabeck

Building Up To Snow

Desiring to runaway
Between the
Places that move,
These airplanes have
Cold feet,
The clouds are
Not long enough
For their tails
In their theatre of
Sky
Building up to snow.

Robert Rorabeck

Bull's Eye

Spinning and a trinket of colors,
Maybe somewhere still in the young valleys in the middle
Of adolescence,
When it was all sweating but demure;
And I held your eyes, if not your hand until my
Bicycle took me away
Until the dreams were gone and things had migrated
And we made love,
And your eyes were so brown like butterflies with infinite
Pictures of themselves on their
Wings;
And your body meaning everything, which was the very same thing
As your name:
Alma,
Which is your soul, scoring on me bull's eye.

Robert Rorabeck

Burning At Both Ends

Home of kitty cats and blonde headed housewives,
I just want to be in the absolute darkness with all
These bandages and scars:
My heart needs a darkened table to survive;
And though the daily mothers are very beautiful,
They are as migratory and borderline
Eye candy:
I cannot get through the day without thinking about
You,
And the way you peel away through the night,
Listening to the bold crickets of your high circus
Night- and you've already married a better man without
A sliver of waste, who is more skilled at technical
Climbing,
But I still want to share bloody and rare cuts of meat
With you, if I should ever evolve and become a pugilistic
Journalist brave enough to climb the magical beanstalk
Of highways up to be with you in your swell shops
While the bilious lips of winter solstice finds no surcease,
And the paper crafts keeping piling up over the avalanche
Of wet clay you've forgotten to bake;
And even though our high schools are far away in another
Fairyland, we stave off the reintroduced empiricism of
Wolves by keeping our candles burning at both ends.

Robert Rorabeck

Burrowed Ground

I am the king of remote control boats,
In my little unnatural habitat off to one side
Of the show-
Past the peanut-ed pacaderms, and the orthodontine
Lions:
Giving of my good side beside the unlucky carousel,
Like a teal mold,
Like something dashy and cheap from the other side
Of the earth:
And I have everything I might want to control
Stuck to my thumbs like a joystick;
And there are pleasure ships and destroyers and even
A real live
Fresh water otter I stole one evening while skipping
School from the bust of a housewife
In her aimless come and go;
And he squeal and cracks chirping farts with his favorite
Barbie up on deck,
Enjoying a thimble martini; and the housewives
And single mothers come in with their little boys,
Their important though permanent treasures-
With fingerprints on soda pop and ketchup;
And they put in their quarters to my sideshow,
While the lions roar and the wild horses bray and the
Fleas dance atop all of us,
And I conduct them, grinning sideways, my eyebrows
In a mad genius corkscrew and for
Their little while and their little ways they conduct their
Invisible crew through my giant bathtub,
And the elephants sound a primal revelry,
And the lions show their teeth,
While the great and long winded terrapins take their luscious
Orchids and little deeper into the shade of the
Burrowed ground.

Robert Rorabeck

Burying Words

Christian dogs recalculate how
Much money they brought to the rodeo;
But they don't really know what to do with her
Beautiful eyes in the sun,
Or what they may say as they go about telling them
Everything with out a tongue;
Or so I've seen or heard say before:
Now I lounge inside of house without a wife,
And poems come like little children with butcher knives;
But they cannot reach me from where they are with
Scowling lips that cannot spell:
They do not know the words they say, and that is
Why they lay down without supper by the end of dusk:
All the unpublished schoolyard boys lay down as if in a kiln,
Not able to be sold, not a single word, the freckled pests:
Not even outside near the fort next to the ice-cream vendor:
They are my scars, the little imps- And no one loves them,
And that's just the thing, because I can drink and keep them
Bottle up as upstairs someone says that was a good movie,
But it wasn't; it really wasn't-
And I should move away now- I almost can,
And forget to record how my day went lonely and unspoken;
And somewhere else she is married, but she doesn't have
Any money- I have money and I can lay down and say
My simple things, say to myself now here it is
And take it; and if I do, and buy myself a plot, then
That entire yard will be mine, so green and tranquil that my
Words can lie across it like paper-airplanes now,
And I can say to them without speaking- Here is the thing for
You children. Lie down here and be at ease while your
Father drinks his liquor. Just be quiet while you can,
And when I get done, and my gums are bleeding,
And the dogs are howling,
Then I will get back to burying you as I will; and then
They should be just as quiet as thieves until I come for them.

Robert Rorabeck

Busied In Your Lost Joys

Word is the jewel in the throat of
The prism—
Lips are the arms of the sun and
There you are
Growing as distant as a child running
Away,
Diminishing from the school yard.
I can see that you do not want your
Beauty to overstay its
Welcome,
So I have become all of my impotent
Weapons—
And when I become lost from the
Hunting of you,
I can pretend to understand myself in
The wounds of your absence—
Beautiful attire,
Brown skin a frock of gold—mestizo,
Unrequited,
See me burying my face into the
Casks of rum another night—
Waiting for the heavens to bloom with
Fuses—
To spin in concentric occultisms
That make themselves busied in your lost joys.

Robert Rorabeck

But A Poetic Lie

I try to ink these lines. See that I do,
So you will not turn away, and the sun is the promise
You never gave sinking. But you,
How many poems have been written to you?
How many Dantes have written to you, Beatrice?
And I travel by myself in the park looking up at the empty libraries, weeping:
I have gathered grinding stones around me to build a cairn,
To pinnacle the summit where you could tell me of traditions
Forever, taciturn folklores set in books of strangers,
and we would never sleep but watch the
Whisky Migrations of homeless men traveling beneath the cuckolded overpass:
Each one goes towards, and then away, stripped of all societies,
They are imitating the sea beneath us, and off to the east;
They are but the feral cadences left off of war and dead children
Drowned in the Somme and the Psalms.
Standing right beside you, I fly toward you, things which cannot be escaped
but how does it happen
That you should not see me staunchly decked:
An officer and if not a gentlemen, a wolf making room for your
Scarlet tallow;
If perceived, I would be a knight and you could send me out
From your boudoir's loci of honeymoons for three
Things you wanted the most, and such trinkets, I would bring them back to you.
But on the third night, be warned: I would deceive you even as you listened
To the cars rushing outside the silken lace whispering upon your comely window.
I would come to you like a charm, removing your girdle,
And lay those projects upon your weeping openness which I had found or
Made for you, not matter the price;
and with my fingers let you know how to wear them;
But the third thing would be the parts of my own blossoming
drizzled upon you, confection's foreplays, soon knocked and entering: See by this
now,
The gentle line the rains transcend, the storm into the glimmering streets:
I've walked where the alligators smile, and smelled you in the fields of
sugarcane.
Now do not tarry for what is coming in the east, a strange eclipse captured
But once, a somnambulating photograph, and if seen again will be but a poetic
lie.

But A Star In Its Shell

I am nothing but a star in its shell—
As the plagiarists and the tourists return home—
As the lost kites get stuck in the apple orchards
Or the orange groves—
And there is a dragon or a kitten about,
As it is the same thing—
And the grottos of the obnoxious selkies that
I have already told you that I have seen while
I was skipping school—
That there isn't another rule to this road—
And the only unicorns that exist are handled by
Blind men—
While, there it comes, that I have travelled home
To her,
A girl whom I've figured out will never be my muse,
Even while she is providing milk for
My child—and the winter sings—
As the fireworks hibernate in their caves, as your eyes
Populate all of the green billboards
Until this way comes again.

Robert Rorabeck

But All For Your Pleasure

My fingernails are dirty,
And I am sweating pot bellied on my love seat:
I cannot hear the song birds,
Alma, but my grandfather wrote my mother a poem for
Mother's day,
So that must mean I am doing some good,
While all the night swings perfumed on its censers, and all the waves
Come like tender little girls who don't yet know who they are,
Except that they are the first kindling flames soon to burn
Out upon the muted tattoos of the shore,
And all the sting rays- and all of the water moccasins,
That, Alma, I'm sure don't know what for- but for your love,
Alma- but for your love:
I told you today that I don't know who Sharon is:
Alma:
Your body swings out in the open with pleasure, like a letter opened
Obscenely, but for my leisure, while all of the pretty poets dance
So nakedly out in the heather:
Oh, they dance so nakedly, Alma, all breathing like wildflowers
Galvanized up in the hot-saucer slopes of
Colorado,
But all for your pleasure.

Robert Rorabeck

But Another Huckleberry Finn

So you start up by pulling some machines by the rope
Around their necks.
And the lawns get mowed, while I am sure that I can fall in
Love with just about anyone as long as they are long hipped
And female:
And the words come like fires burning like rest stops down
The interstate that we skip off like
Stones or wishes;
And don't you bet I want to take Diana to Disney World
And swim with her and the lucky gold fishes:
What is she doing right now, but kissing her opulent gentleman,
His fingers around her throat, and he in her hands:
As the bodies make love underneath the prancing ceiling fans:
Bodies that traveled to see one another by so many means,
The fates of the fleeted dreams of clever jeans:
Bodies moving and filibustering up the jet blue and jade streams:
She is having a birthday, or she is getting roses:
Their lips are parting for creatures like marsupials or terrapins:
The little freckled boys are escaping mostly down river;
Maybe they are her children and they are lost into another
Tributary of the songs of rich folklore I have been singing,
Seeing that for her I am but another Huckleberry Finn.

Robert Rorabeck

But Another Lie

You are burning- you are a tip of gold,
And I am just a lie in a nest,
A lie of alcohol,
And there are swings:
Even in Colorado there are swings,
And old forts and forget-me-nots that young children
Can attend,
Wishful with pockets full of buffalo nickels;
And I wish I knew the proper names
For things,
I wish I had a father,
And that time might slip like your hair over and down
Your puckish ears,
Slip like wine into lips while quiet enfolds before
It finds me,
Your flesh quiet and refusing to be tremulous-
Your thoughts kindled in
The downs of so many years in soft sheets,
Hooked to your name, just like that other man:
Wish that I could be him,
And believe for awhile in the beautiful lies
I make up about you rather than having
To go outside,
To go to school- to anywhere without you;
And the mountains have a name for you,
But to describe it would be but another lie.

Robert Rorabeck

But One Fortunate Day

All of the joy of the athenaeums cut from the field
And made to enjoy the holidays of dinner tables
And left for awhile as the forest fire burned and all of
The animals had to run away just to be safe:
Except for one ever so lucky and unworldly unfortunate
Key deer who slipped through the keyhole and
Right into her bosom just as she was about to make love
Again to the man sized and radio active centipede
Who held an entire pinball arcade in the exercises of his
Mandibles: well, anyway, the poor little thing distracted
Her and they made love- and it was the most fortunate of
Unfortunate loves, and he took her away with him for
The day underneath the airplanes and the burning sugar cane:
Took her to the dog tracks and the race tracks
And they placed their bets on so many- oh so many
Four legged things who all seemed to run away only to
Come rushing back to them, the way the surf moves
In the sea, giving hickies to the sandcastles who only
Unfortunately live to enjoy but one fortunate day.

Robert Rorabeck

But You

It is better said when all the beauties are not
At home;
The way the sea sometimes comes in answering;
Oh,
The sea,
Giving its little works to the feet of men and
Indians;
In its dress partakes the recreations of our time,
And dolphins;
And the sun peeps through through the clouds and leaves:
There is a blond haired girl making love
Upon the shore:
A girl I once adored but can adore no more since
She took my heart and gave it to her lover next door:
And words fail me in the darkness:
You know they do; and you have a candle right there on your
Lips,
But you.... But you....

Robert Rorabeck

Butterfly Haiku

You seem to be da-
Ncing while I die but you do-
Nothung, butterfly.

Robert Rorabeck

Buy One Get One Free

I suppose I am selling again,
The words that come
On my lips after midnight,
And everything has changed
Into shaded hypocrisies:
You can have me for free,
The few that even care,
If you can find me.
Packed up and on the road,
My possessions slung over my shoulder,
I might be anyone along
This dark stretch
Whistling amidst the pines and cypress:
Bankrupt and smiling,
Without a ring, but
I have my dog:
And he doesn't lie,
Unless I tell him to-
The daylight gives me a chance
To find a job,
Because everyone is working
In the land of opportunity:
The wealth you recommend
As your drive by in definitions of
Distended Capitalism
There your are:
The adulteries hung up in
The store windows beside the lapping shore.
A parking lot of married couples
And their growing versions:
Stream by,
And I will scream at you,
Here is something else I am selling,
Because it's something you haven't got.
Step up and take a listen
To my miracle cure,
Placed in your ear, you can hear the sea,
And the first words your mother
Told you-

Today is the busiest day of the year,
But tonight you have found me
Alone on my corner
Selling you things
As you pass by.

Robert Rorabeck

By Another Icarus

Tiring hands on the sounds between the grasses,
Motes of the slenderest estuaries of light,
Beacons of the microcosms—
Every creature here diminutive in comparison:
Looking up, jet planes shooting like arrows
Across the hemispheres of crowded buildings
Going to the heavens where some
Pine trees struggle to grow up just to peek at
Leggy stewardesses through their elliptical porticos:

I should like to climb them in pursuit of you,
But there is no job title for this: no way to make money
While looking at the sky;
So I stopped closing my eyes in school and drive
A truck across the earth for a living,
Above the grasses, beneath the clouds—
And thoughts of you retreat with the mailboxes
Whose trunks are ringed by everyday daisies as crepuscule
Proceeds

Chasing night into the neighborhoods again,
And the houses of milkmaids and housewives become like
The grottos of darkened aquariums again
You fold into this like moistened origami.
Your children bedecking you
As you go about your business, both night and day,
Searching for something unrecognizable,
Your society already reclaiming you in bits and pieces

You do not dream of the little boys who grow
Up just to find you,
Nor do you turn to see the sun dropping beneath your feet
Flung like a golden disc by another Icarus who tried too hard to
Draw your attention,
Who flew all the way past the moon to steal your memories away.

Robert Rorabeck

By Another Mourning

Lost poem on a rope
So it is not really lost:
It is just a child not allowed to
Stray-
Airplanes I once knew are leaping through
Her bedroom;
The sky is Grey anyways
And my imagination has turned to buying
Another house-
There she is in the yard where you supposed
She was-
The lantern's light slips.
The heavens are clouded by another morning.

Robert Rorabeck

By Both Of Their Legs

In little places of poems
And shadows that don't have to move unless
They hope to be destroyed—
Just the way I remember your eyes like sunken nebulas
In the darkened bed before I moved
Away and had a child—
And now the places are not so condemning,
And maybe your father will be out of the hospital tomorrow—
But for awhile,
We will remember the hinterlands, and the other softened
Dolls that could only make it half way to Alaska or
Colorado before soiling themselves—
And then in the morning:
Morning—moonbeams and omletts
And other movie theatres that moved away by themselves
From here,
Carried away by both of their legs.

Robert Rorabeck

By Candlelight

Filling a coffin with rum—making a sea of the graveyard:
And I remember in the middle of my thirty
Years, skipping work and playing hookie with you in
A hotel:
After we made love, I took you to an art museum,
But you were bored: This is after we both kissed each other
Underneath the eyes of the albino alligator,
And you pretended to be jealous, saying that I was making
Eyes at the gringas: but you knew my heart was wild for
You—even as you made house for your husband—
What relationship we had lasted long enough for the last
Of the paper airplanes to touch down over the wet breasts
Of Miami and to be burned up with the fireworks I was
Selling for my father—
You want more and more free things—to captivate my love
In the somnambulant cages of a Ferris wheel,
Even while your eyes were kaleidoscopes filled with the broken
Hieroglyphs of your children:
They were filling up your sea, even while I called you the fairgrounds
Of my heart—and then he was home with you again,
Illuminant—matting you onto the pages of a tattooed soul,
Leaving nothing left for you to remember me by—
Until I eventually drove away, as
The animals I did not know the names of boarded the arc by candlelight.

Robert Rorabeck

By Graveyards Of Baseball

Belly fattened by graveyards of baseball—
Another startling blue jay out on the battlefields underneath
The Christmas trees and all of their weeping monuments—
Why does it have to come to this—
As the cities lactate cerulean exegesis into their canals—
And the gods that they birth the alligators are arisen
Underneath the airplanes and the ceiling fans—
Another way to lose himself is here—
And my parents come home too late to see the strange trees
Bloom over the pignosed rattles—
As the cicadas come off like confections, and the only mermaid
I will ever know loses herself in the canals and the
Detritus of my backyards as the
Sugarcanes burn and burn—
And I get up too early again to remember my childhood—
Strange, spinning monuments to those who know the
Cremations of the dusk of another baseball game
I never saw with my father
As my estranged wife buries plastic flowers over the
Mounds of ants and ant lions—and I wait for another weekend
To extinguish—filled with plastic dolls
Losing all of their dresses over the playgrounds we were never
Meant to extinguish.

Robert Rorabeck

By Heavenly Tears

Baton twirlers play until the lights are blackened
And someone's alligators sleep for eons;
How can they do that?
Like bears beneath the purplish aurora borealis—
The land steams in hot beds,
And still the girls play until they suffer blindness,
And in their blindness spend their time caressing
Trees in gardens their loved ones assure them are safe—
Where they can hear the cars from a safe distance—
And the empirical illusions of bottle rockets and
Roman candles—sparking off the god's knee caps;
As they can hear the sea filled with the illusions of muses
Gone feral—like a great winery corrupted by heavenly tears.

Robert Rorabeck

By Her Insouciant Perfidy

Her husband's little boy's little fingers
Making plastic ships do sarabands on the couches
Underneath the virgin by the doorway
Of their highly mortgaged house,
As the wind tries to defy the vespers, as I know that it
Does,
While even into the canals of south Florida some sort
Of autumn comes.
But the words still go away like leather tramps without
Stanzas,
Like feelings without Mickey Mouse:
The conquistadors disrobing and chasing mermaids
Through their prayers,
The first pornographies brought to this country;
While I sat beside Alma today for breakfast: it was all we
Could do,
Because her insides were bleeding, realized from old Mexico,
Her bare arms as copper as revelry horns
And good hood ornaments speeding towards the cowboy
Shows which seem to be coming up like dusty flowers
Over the higher basins like velvet fireworks which
Make tourists crook their heads until
They get too hungry, and crawl away for ice-cream;
But I disappear with her all day, wherever her thoughts are
Leading me: the light in her eyes all turned out so that it
Is too dark to tell if she lies when she doesn't say
That she loved me,
And I think of being nearly beside her, and how she likes
Feeding me;
And it becomes the job of my art, savagely needing,
Waiting her to forsake me, so I must immolate like forest
Fire on a birthday with all of my singularity of wishes
Betrayed by her insouciant perfidy.

Robert Rorabeck

By Her Own Amphitheatres

Oh fantasy while I haven't been sleeping—
Another mirage of a muse I haven't know
Starts out her own way in the
Sky—
Happenstance of a bottle rocket over
The university
Doesn't have to be cheaply beautiful
Anymore,
As she disappears from my life with
The sendoff of one hand—
Even sophomores have taught me how
To fold her better:
There she is, creased and folded
Beside the left behind armor of the katydids
Up in the combinations of cypress,
The sky of burning sugar cane creating
A florid tapestry behind her—
And I guess I cannot describe any better
For the little while I have seen her—
She will be gone tomorrow,
The commuters will go along without her—
Her husband will love her blindly
Never even trying to believe in the
Metamorphosis that she escapes from us in—
Amused by her own amphitheaters,
Leaving the fuses to their graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

By How The World Has Turned

An epiphany occurs above the used cars:
The sun turns, a pinwheel, glowing over the girls who stand
Like spectators before the traffic,
Hoping absentmindedly for a parade
Until night washes its tide through the once kindled glade,
And moves back and forth like a ball of silver snakes
In a bath,
While all of the birds twitter excitedly in a colony up in one
Corner of the ceiling,
Altogether so very unhappy by how the world has turned.

Robert Rorabeck

By Its Fireman

When the night gets really busy with its loving
And all of the cars are parked with their houses:
Then you are dancing with your sister
Like double scoops of butterflies in your tenements,
And all of the cypress is in a foggy sorority wishing too
To join you;
And it has become so beautifully dark, that I am almost
Beautifully too: then I want to step out and join you,
While the rivers sing in place of the homebound traffic,
And the topiaries are rich with the verdure of
Your surplices, those things you've traded in for his arms;
And they are so big as to be thought over:
And pressing into you, as if making a crèche for you,
Aren't you so relieved and you feel just as safe as a kitten
Being taken down from a tree by its fireman.

Robert Rorabeck

By Laying Our Courting Eyes Back And Forth Upon Us

Terse lips, though soft, say nothing,
Such pensive sadness;
And if they saw me, adjoined to the senses of
Speedless boats;
They would not smile, but they would love,
Quiet and unmystified,
A good exegesis for a young and leggy grandmother;
And if you came my way
While the grave was still yawning its yarded lay,
We could quietly spread the blood of
Roses between us,
And there would be no football teams or switching
Sides;
I grab you with my keen mind, my well tuned and
Inebriate instrument,
My drunken sword and I'd put you like a cannon along my
Copper broadside;
I'd explore you and buy you a double wide to stash
Between the splintered wings of
Orange groves and commercial aeroplanes;
And I'd dress you up every night as my stewardess and
I'd undress you just the same,
And drink with my tongue the salty mercury of your
Hallucinatory compass;
And we would not starve, with sweet shopping malls of
Children to feed us,
But we wouldn't say and think; we'd buy and sell each
Selection of ourselves we wanted using absolute
Telepathy,
And we'd play tennis out on a greater teal esplanade just
By laying our courting eyes back and forth upon us.

Robert Rorabeck

By My Early Forties

In the land of the green rolling hills
The green dragons live,
Smoking in renaissance, snouts curling:
As their steaming caracoles rise to the armpits
Of airplanes:
And my wife cleans the pimpled floor-

Forget-me-nots have, perhaps, forgotten about her-
A Chinese girl lost to the malaise beneath the clouds,
Wimpled by the diamonds of social espionage,
The games playing in recoil perpetuated between the socialized slaves:

But she saved me,
A mermaid for a werewolf, in a space where there
Was no one else to believe:
A ghost-town-drive-in-movie-theatre,
An abandoned lot with a naked stem of a rose,
And an arcade in its electronic grave:

she saved me after all of the false chances had relocated
Themselves into the walls of the childrening cul-de-sacs of
Their married unwater caves:
All of the beautified damsels already distressed and
Trapped within the surfs of their inescapable,
Beatific waves:

Perhaps once beautiful women demystified,
Revealed green snouts unfurled, trapping for diamonds,
Wounded by quotes of insincere boys,
But no words of their own from the forked tongues
That serve them well at dinner parties,
Pretending that they can escape from death's parties:

There she is, sincere, floating as a billboard, angelically
Advertising, a bodisvatta
For the blindness of men she never has to save:
In life, a promise for a wounded thief-
A promotion for baseball after the end of an abandoned
game:

Upon her bosom rests a cornucopia of mandarin apples:
My one year old drinks and tugs:
Her poets drinking too much wine, dying before
Their teenage years:
Virginal and sincere:
Their mythological bridges noted in their epitaphs of
Literature:
We have crossed them holding hands,
The sun in a mote of its dallying séances:

And now our children play half-hazardly, interrupting
The soldiers of another drunken poem,
Proving that a loneliness is broken forever,
And political movements, wherever, have no grasp upon
The ethereal heavens.

The cadaver is retrieved from its high school that
The gullibility of her boys will win forever.

PS

I will be a millionaire by my early forties.

Robert Rorabeck

By My Nocturnal Tears

In the fieldtrips of demigods of cartoons
I keep going on and on while the day is spent and my peers
Get older and older until they become reprobate—
And this lands becomes a mutual fairytale
Too obscured for me to understand—and the busses turn around
And around, like solar powered marionettes that
Slow down after daylight—
And the same reason do exist for no one—
As the arrowheads re-emerge like fossils—
And the places of our joy cannot like off,
Because the wicks that I can never fear
Are wetted by my nocturnal tears.

Robert Rorabeck

By Pablo Neruda

This is how you made me feel—in this poem by
Pablo Neruda—□

And it is not the right way to go down laughing all by myself
Upon the hind end of all of those canals
Without any stilts or fanfares: this is
All I have done—blemished into the promises
Of the caves,
As the stage crafts of the airplanes crashes and all of
It becomes some kind of another bad news:
This is all you have deserved into the hinterlands—spelling out,
That you have left some kind of husband upon the
Playgrounds while the mountains are still glowing—
And I am left playing some kind of ketchup even though
I am not good enough to stay alive- and
The child that I have effected will have to determine itself
Into Shanghai—growing itself into another religion
As if into another five thousand years of
A text adventure of all of those disaffected dreams
As your brown skin awakens upon the palates above
Disney World—kissing its brown tomorrow-
And swearing that it already knows all that it needs
To know—for tomorrow and until all of the yesterdays
Until it is finally young and falling out of its nest—
And safely besides the highway before it can be curated into
A nothing that has to take care of itself.

Robert Rorabeck

By Pablo Nerudo

This is how you made me feel—in this poem by
Pablo Neruda—□

And it is not the right way to go down laughing all by myself
Upon the hind end of all of those canals
Without any stilts or fanfares: this is
All I have done—blemished into the promises
Of the caves,
As the stage crafts of the airplanes crashes and all of
It becomes some kind of another bad news:
This is all you have deserved into the hinterlands—spelling out,
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Playgrounds while the mountains are still glowing—
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Until it is finally young and falling out of its nest—
And safely besides the highway before it can be curated into
A nothing that has to take care of itself.

Robert Rorabeck

By Sunlight

Now I'm sure I have another angel of my soul
Swallowed up by sunlight
And keeping hours:
This is how it feels making love
Beside the rose bushes,
And the sunlight storms
And it feels for awhile that there isn't
Any other love,
But the daydreams are here and you
Are smiling across the fields
And this isn't even our house.

Robert Rorabeck

By That Hidden Date On The Calendar Of Injured Gifts

Now here is another thing for you,
Imperfectly fleeting:
Words which would have stayed as if in stone,
If they knew their older brother's wiser crafts:
These are just dalliances
For your eyes,
Chancy rainstorms which dry up on your lips,
The leaping conjugations which need
Your hidden moistures to survive:
That is all,
And do you not know when they come out,
By that hidden date on the calendar
Of injured gifts:
The eager tadpoles-
They would serenade as if in love,
If you had a spare moment to listen:
They would crowd around you and mew,
And look up into your eyes with awful needings:
They care nothing for me,
Even though they come by my hands-
They have nothing to do with me,
The silly things:
They would deny me if they could,
As you have proven in unrecorded history:
They would walk out and leave me right here,
Without a chance of domestication,
If they knew you would let them in,
But it is such a long road to where you live
That they could hardly get halfway to you
Before beginning to dissolve
Into their fancies' impermanence,
The lilting melodies of the street-singer's
Rhyming panhandles;
They are the cheapest thrills of the fairground's
Calendared visits,
And even as you are about to look up,
To listen, and to perhaps believe,
They, like you, are soon distracted by the closer
Things:

The bright colors of the fair lips,
The auburn stares which answer beckoning;
So they will forget you now,
And you embrace a closer friend;
Dissolving, they will become a reliable truth,
Until tomorrow when I wake up,
And think of you right off, like I always do,
The constant dream of awful distance,
And then we will set to sophomoric work again,
Going one by one across the field
Where the fireworks are lined up and ready to go off,
Showing you in brief expulsions of
Colorful truth,
The patriotism we keep in our chests,
The lovely propagandas our fingers shoot-off
Like harmless wands above the driest field,
A display thirsting for your attention.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Day

If it works: but it is broken:

The apple trees in the orchard, the virgin's token-

And the airplanes upon their wings:

Fly straight over the forts of

Anything, where the tourists mull and the sky crumbles-

The sharks perambulate the sea above that which the sun

Mumbles:

And bumble bees, and silver colored tuna going back

And forth underneath the motor boats in the loch:

Strange delusions of our ancestors going to and fro

From home to work-

And the plans of housewives coming home in the crepuscule,

And the street lights like dimming birthday candles

On the streets of cake whose wishes never end:

Sweet daughters entering in to their boudoirs they must

Soon leave: to find husbands and lovers,

And then children to milk, and to defend: and Christmas trees

In their engorged parlors,

Like the secret but open stings of so many winged fiends

That their friends are allowed to see:

After all of their fairytales have tumbled down their

Curtaining hills; languishing broken and then sweltering like

Kilns into the morning in a valley

Of suburbia- in a hidden graveyard that grows more sweeter

And more cherished by the day.

Robert Rorabeck

By The End Of The Pep Rally's Fortnight

On some dark valentines,
I molt around the eyes of a pristine high school-
The words give birth to a beautiful cadaver and
We all lay around it on the floor
And let it tell us about the flight plans of a dying
Autumn; and the flies work briskly on my friend,
Though I wish I could say what I want about
It more succinctly;
Instead, while going to the bathroom, I am propositioned
By the venal muse just hopped off her paper
Airplanes, smelling like dead lilacs;
Maybe she supposes I am her grandfather, I have
Been looking so kindly lately- Looking as if I've
Been pin striping windmills;
And this is just the gist of it, the way model soldiers
Die in tin meadows bemused by guts of paper streamers
Popping the jubilancy of a Sunday's fornication;
And I hate to think it has taken me so long to get a job
Of beauty, to feel her punctured breath rise like a swamp
Against my neck again;
And I suppose there are much more beautiful young boys
Fighting fires or getting tattoos in jingoistic regiments
Marching off to the east, but she cannot catch up with them,
Seeing as her umbilical cord is vined to the grave-
So she saw me out at lunch under the crawl of moons, and we
Decided to be together and run track, and learn spells
To make a brood of enriched golems; and we rode saw horses,
And she looked pretty once the maggots were picked
From her thrashes, and we watched them metamorphose into
An entire colony of erudite fireworks who were not frightened,
And I don't know if I've said it right,
But it does not matter as their beauty was again dead by the
End of the pep rally's fortnight.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Hungry Day

There are maggots in the stars, and underneath those
Filthy heavens I have been jogging again:
And the sea lights out like an infinite drawer of unruly knives;
And they seem to be trying to kiss the brows of the
Sleepless sheep that I've
Been counting,
As the airplanes are falling down the stairs, and forgotten relatives
Are never coming up again for air:
This infinite regress, and the birth of crypt-orchid hair:
It blooms in the night-time caverns underground
Where we find that so many of our friends are sleeping,
Gloriously:
In their trailer parks they sleep and play their tin horns and their
Forgotten eyes reflect up to our souls the great distance into
Which they have been away,
And they continue their dour reflections until the sun is eaten
By the hungry day.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Knowledge That What Is Unreachable

All of the different gods have the same love,
And hold to it by the metamorphosis's of the day: they go along
The racetracks of the dogs,
Or of the milkmaids lying golden headed in the hay:
They have been gone so long, that we have become latch keyed:
And just look at all of the minuscule folklores that we've
Had to bleed:
But I found you today: you knocked on my door, like the secret
Thrust of a genie wanting to breathe again in the outdoors;
And I have walked beneath the prominences of opal stone,
And I have wanted to kiss you and hold the brown flesh
Over your bone: Alma:
And I have: and I have, and I have held your troubles next to my
Chest,
And I have seen halfway into the secrets of your eyes,
But the rest of you I will never know, like a creature of its own
Limited element,
This is all I can believe; but I swear by the knowledge that
What is unreachable in your tiny body of flesh and soul:
Alma, Alma, is infinitely more beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Movie Theatres Of The Graveyards

Poems of racehorses in
The snow—or anywhere—
Even star-crossed over my once-
Muse's abandoned household—
And will she still have
To go away tomorrow—still because
She is married
And now I am married
And expecting child—
As a little blood is drawn from the
Wounded playground—
As I get bored and blind myself
From staring at the pornographies
Of sunlight—
And she will have to go to him tomorrow—
As their shadows will swim together
After midnight—
Until the fairgrounds of my heart have been
Packed away and are gone—
And then another summer of another sorrow—
All told by the movie theatres of
The graveyards—appreciated by the naked
Yet beating above the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Sands

Before there was another sound
Bivouacked into the tree tops, the moon sang
To us:
Pretty echoes, like friends she had pulled up
From the ground,
Albino crocodiles who watched us kissing at the
Zooâ€™s;
The last lines coalescing across the spaces
Over which the airplanes flyâ€™;
Their wings the thread of stitches bringing together
Our wounds to be healed for
Christmas- into just another afterthought
In the life giving day-gone oasisâ€™;
Where I once kept dreams of touching you until
They were buried by the sands.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Sweat Of My Proletarian Brow

There is no subtlety, so this is not art,
The pornography of a greeting card can say
I love you as coolly as an apathetic banker,
Thusly I greet you again, like a stranger out
In the humid woods, perhaps next to a queue
Of terrapin in a teal traffic-jam:
There are tadpoles in the sludge, their flagella
Ululating with the squeal of metamorphic atrophies,
And the muses are the butchered canvases,
Leftovers for the fine young forensic teams,
Their eyes now gone the way of heliotrope flies,
Gossiping as they go about their janitorial duties,
And behind her not a grotto glossed and brushed with
Micas, but a junkyard of abandoned cars up on
Cinderblocks, their vinyl stabbed and holding not
Passengers but stacks of nudie magazines which started
Molting when the rain blew through their abandonment,
And the bejeweled spiders began their trapeze acts:
Now I love you, but this is where I take you to make out,
Telling you I am someone famous with an intricate disease,
But you have turned me over and seen that my belly is
Tapioca and my navel the indication where someone stole
The cherry- I am very utilitarian- You can send me
Out to the store and I'll come back expeditiously with a carton
Of chicken eggs, not one of them broken: Or you can hand me
Your mail, and I will walk down the street whistling, passing
It out, making sure to return the love letter you mistakenly
Disavowed; but it is not proof of any genius I hoped
To exemplify, nor a pretty lake I hoped to entrench you near,
But the spittoon of a muddied furrow, along a slender track
I laboriously plough by the sweat of my proletarian brow.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Sweat Of Your Brow

Giving me too much time to consider that
I am not going home:
Snails on my shoulders in their little houses:
Roman candles pointed earthwards toward
The canal-
And I am in a place they thought may not
Have existed-
And they burn effigies of broomsticks until the
Candles become sauce and gravy,
Until, sometimes, the midnight works,
And you can float underneath her as a little boy
Going up and up into a chimney
While yards of aerobuses circle beneath you
And the magic is in your armpits:
And the magic is by the sweat of your brow

Robert Rorabeck

By The Tattoos And Other Bruises Of The World

Open theatre on the hillside of a graveyard of
A campus:
Purple bloom: there in the student ghetto of
A tomb:
Wasps and werewolves
And watermelons: the sky looks up into a
Birdcage of gigantic skeletons:
As the world continues selling around us
All year, or all afternoon:
And I will have to get into my classroom tomorrow:
I will have to unlock the door
An answer in the morning to her and her
And her:
And it will become a sparrow lost in her nest
Of doorknobs:
And it will become another firework in mimicry
Underneath the space shuttle,
As all of the doors close in, and the beautiful animals
Retreat, and you look into his eyes
Forlornly for another hour- your soul
Disfigured by the tattoos and other bruises of a world
That will never close.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Time It Got There

Your empty eyes are socked with your
Husband's heliotrope fist,
And Pedro is talking to me in Spanish:
And what is the night,
What is the night but the other side of the
World,
And Antarctica and girls who habitually touch
Their faces when they see me.
How I've been trained to avoid the rush of
Traffics, to sleep
Underneath the overpasses and dream of
Teal
And the antics of playground balls under the
Sun
Where concrete tunnels perform the initiation
Rights of
Preschool flirtations,
Where cats trounce nine-lived up in the bunny-
Trees,
Their spinsters and gamblers asleep in their
Furs in
The pet cemetery down the street from the
Elementary school where in
Second grade I brought tulips for Denise,
But didn't have the guts to hand them
Over myself.
After school, her parents were fat, and I wondered
If she had been adopted,
And the buses turned like corpulent honey bees,
So that stretched out the entire road
Was like a black orchid playing in the séances of
An ineffective heart,
Who then rode its bicycle home, but
By the time it got there was very happy to have dinner
Waiting.

Robert Rorabeck

By The Waves

You get home and take a
Shower trying to wash off the
Molten day, how the sun has made love
To you and is now done with you;
The way it flooded around you:
The swarms of eyes and tongues
Directing with noise and implication
The thoughts, desires, and rejections.
Each day awakening,
Arising up from the oily bed
Into the old but always triumphant furnace
The body aching: the teeth throbbing
In bloody gums, the skin chapped and
Burning, blemishes under a mask of
Promises, the joints twisted and rusty,
Squealing like old gates and rodents,
The flesh weak and changing,
The simple, repeated needs of the
Animal repeatedly thudding like your
Heartbeat
Getting dressed, moving out of the
Door and into your car,
Turning the keys in the ignition
Deliberately starting the day,
Remembering the faces who wait to judge you,
Driving on the mercurial sphere, drowning
In the rich and disgusting layers of
Polluted gravity and polluted oxygen,
God's hands pressed upon you,
Knowing Religion is the cheep out
Of a weak mind
Who follows it's own shadow
Down dead-end caves-
By the time it comes back up,
Everything is sold and everyone has
Gone home for the evening;
Your father deciding to have a
Son, so he f@cks your
Mom and out you come,

His ascendancy, his hope,
The successor of grief and the
Family business
With the eyes scrutinizing hard upon
The flesh, your mother the very worst,
The knuckles flickering white-hot
Around you,
The undertow taking you
Further and further,
Stretching you until you
Become the dissolution of
A self broken apart
By the waves.

Robert Rorabeck

By These Monsters

I busied myself with cutting wood
Until the men braver than me came with glorious
Instruments as well as women enamored on strings;
And they invited me into the labyrinth for which there
Was no answer save to proceed: And they gifted me with
Battlements and miniature forges worked by industrious
Insects and clever bats and their ilk;
And there was one strange instance where they sat me out
On a gun-deck in a green field before I went underground,
Like a driving range, and I sat in the seat of that gun and fired
Off heavy charges into a swarm of balloons, like jellyfish
Let loose before the rows of Australian pines, swaying like
Rootless dancers, trying to convince us the highway wasn't
Even there, though it could be heard streaming in both directions,
But mostly southbound: Afterwards, we dived like Beowulf into
The first fitt, and the door closed behind us and we drank as
We dried off, but then I was alone, with my selection of arms,
And the tattoos imprinted upon me by lasers upon joining the
Company. Beyond this, it is horrible, for after each sequence the
Door is closed. No one told me this: there is no going back,
And the water is over spilling so all the time you are about to
Drown, as the monsters become exponentially more terrifying,
With greater and more sympathetic back stories the readers get no
Chance to hear save for in the denouement, which is never gotten to.
But I must confess, these scars are my own, these brilliant regalia of
Pain which makes the eyes flit to, and the mouths to dropp with the
Morbidity of dead ancestors. Underground, they provide the only light,
Save for when my bitten blade sojourns along the plate necks of
Dragons and alligators, while above tender house wives drink expensive
Liquor and masturbate like teenage saints crossed upon a fourpost bed;
But I don't know any of that, but must keep heading downwards. Soon
I will meet my father and his gang, and the hungry windmills pin wheeling
In the frozen lakes. Soon students will crowd over me with their bicycles,
Swarm like ants, and professor will ask me why there ain't no stanzas.
Certainly though, coated with gore, my old skin hung upon a coat rack
In a far distant dimension, it is true what they say now: That I can only
Know myself by these monsters.

By Way Of His Chili-Peppered Tongue

Snakes leap like dogs,
Comics & games at my bare feet.
After one a.m. Everything has changed and
Real, except for the cops. I think
About fu*king my aunt every chance I get.
Ants bivouac between my toes. Copper-headed
Serpents, bearded try to sell me apples
On my way to the plastic bathroom draped
By the crumble of concrete irrigation, and
Florida Holly. Just last week, robbers got away
With the till from the sub shop- I suppose,
They are still hiding out in the latrine: I cover their
Heads with immaculate worms, as I c%ck my own,
Lilting backwards like a marvelous captain and saying
A wish: I slide down, just like the banister on her
Wedding in that rustic museum: Her husband is
A cripple, but I fill her up, her nightgown like the hood
Of that car, chromed with incest or that creative
Dysfunction which moves these lines anonymous,
Troughs the depths of the fermented mind, even as galaxies
Pinwheel and do their thing, until I too am done,
And stepping back into sleep have to listen to the little Mexican
Boy Pedro call me a fagg%t by way of his chili-peppered tongue.

Robert Rorabeck

By Which She Can Never Be Found

Another word thrown like a rose on
The tomb:
My heart is the tiny echo of one tear
Sliding down the entrails of
A funnel;
And all that I love is married, and taken up
Like prospected land,
And spoken for;
And the Indians are whooping and
Every last one of them has a chubby-
There is no more room left between the clouds,
And the seashells beneath them are
Creeping like crustaceous ghosts back inside
Her dresses,
Like little orphan children who are so shy;
And I am going to finish off my last drop
Of sun,
And then I am going to buckle myself in and ride
Underground inside her
Roller-coaster coffin; and I am going to feel
Again the ways and avenues
By which she can never be found.

Robert Rorabeck

By Which The Fires Came

Troublesome mind make the fingers play
Giving amusements as tall as fairies
To her glowing, entrepreneurial eyes.
When the tornado warning is over in
The middle of the day,
And school is over except for tomorrow,
But then for good—at least for those
Such as me—
What reason is there but for the tripwires
Of dusk—
The shed skins of crepuscule over the
Mailboxes,
And those that light the zoetrope are put
Onto the back burners—
And foxes, long tongued, turn toward the
River,
And she to the forest, trying to look
Back up at the mountain at the scars by which
The fires came.

Robert Rorabeck

By Your Makebelieve Heavens

You make all of your love at the dry cleaners,
Waiting for the bed sheets to dry out, but you are so
Near the sea—the waves sound like
The wounds of animals echoing—and you are so
Near to me, but you don't come over—
You wait in the closest of spaces for him to come home:
He haunts you, as if this were still Mexico—
I place the Virgins of Guadalupe inside my house,
Trying to tempt you—but now I am married—
You go home wandering where you will find
Your next lover—you keep better men locked up in
The toolboxes of your breast—
I think that even once or twice you made love to one
Or many of your uncles—but your sent is yet sweet upon
These walls, and I get drunk for you—
And the liquor burns through my increasing body,
Passing through my joints and down near the baseball diamond
Where my dog sleeps,
And when you awaken tomorrow it will be a luxurious journey—
As you make friends with ghosts and skeletons—
And enjoy the illuminations of the disasters of all of
My hopes fall down, astonished by your make-believe heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

By Your Moon

All of Sunday I was in your land while
You were not home.
You were out getting your nails done,
Leaving to look up at the stars while I
Was alone:
But the primordial skeletons came out
And danced for me,
And brought me two petal roses and
Three legged dogs
And some syllabled curses, but it wasn't
A big deal:
I preferred to lie famished in your front
Yard, waiting for the mailman to come
As if to resurrect me from the sunny
Open tomb-
When you came, you laughed and stepped
Over me, and helped him across
Into your little hotel room; and made love
Up all night,
Until in the morning you flew away again,
Using some chariot or broom-
And I waited for the spikenard to pierce
Through the gut,
As I lay there as if all of my light had been
Stolen by your moon.

Robert Rorabeck

By Your Side

Sharon,
In my trailer park gloom, you are the lightest of
Shadows:
Your soul floats over the net like a cone of badminton;
And I am sorry that you could never be a councillor,
Or something just as professional,
Or that you haven't climbed more mountains to see your
Reflection laying across the land as if an entire
High school of angels had sprung a leak;
And I am sorry that I couldn't have been a better and
More forthright man for you; and that I had to mess
Up my face deliberately,
And that I had to hang my flag upside down because I
Figured that I was in some kind of distress;
But I used to figure you out most weekdays when I skipped
School and got drunk and lit off bottle rockets:
And it really meant something when I finally matriculated
To your state college and saw you once or twice,
Even if it was kissing your soon to be husband in the line of
That Chinese restaurant now demolished just so they
Could widen thirteenth street:
Sharon, you've never looked like Jodie Foster: And you've
Never looked better,
And I just wish I was your bicycle, Sharon, something for you
To sit up and ride, ride, ride, over the mountains of your
Colorado countryside; and I don't mean that in a sexual way,
Sharon,
But in a friendly way, the way that lions are supposed to lay down
With the lambs and share snow cones or something deep in
The esplanades in the state fairs of Telluride or something
Or somewhere,
Just as long as you are there, Sharon, and I am by your side.

Robert Rorabeck

By Your Very Flame

My heart, my heart:
What is it doing: it is dying into the emptiness
It expected you to be;
It is a day laborer mindless of the beauty of the deeper
Mangroves;
It is out cutting your lettuce, satcheling your citrus;
And it is a beautiful if curious world;
And cartoons rule it,
And sharks who cut their fins like paper cuts like
Middle-fingers into the air;
And I want to touch myself and wear what I cannot wear.
And what else do I want but to turn of the television while
You are still there,
Sharon, while you haven't turned away to your paper families,
To the dolls you have erected from your own creation:
I wish for you to remember me,
And come to me as if a boy in a ballroom and really come
To me,
And touch me like something still in its cocoon, if you
Can still believe and hope for me in that way,
Then we can both leave the movie theatre together,
Holding hands and touching the bodies of our luggage together,
Helping me survive
When I have been drowning for a lucky seven years, hoping
For a girl like you to remember my name,
To reach out and keep my light kindled by your very flame.

Robert Rorabeck

Cadmus' Amnesia

Even when the sky is full of disaster,
Tell me, what can they take from you-
When you have hidden the hungry mouths
Scattered in the silken forest,
Tossed into the hyperactive rivers,
Furrowed with the serpent's fang
In an opulent blanket provided by the needing moon:
So early in the morning from this
Your friends up sprang, bellicose and frightened
Born decorated in the instruments of their careers
Already they began maiming their old fellows
The clanging, persistent greetings killers give,
Until like a woman unjustly wed,
They fell back to slumber pell-mell
In all parts the catastrophe
All this the red lizard watched
Tasting the act on his budded tongue
Not far in the forest, curled about
The top most coned bows of a fur tree
Like smoldering garland draped there
By a wicked woman who sang nakedly
The promises which whisper in wells
To little doe-eyed children who bend over
To give their ears a listen
Further and further
Until down and down they fell.

Robert Rorabeck

Cadmus's Hounds

The unicorns are striking above the airplanes-
It is because the airplanes are lying down, creches into
Green valleys-
Into which cerulean cataracts fall:
This is the beautiful place of your childhoods, where
The heroes fell your public schools have made you forgetful of:
Looking up, the motes in pinwheel blindness,
The hummingbirds touching down upon the shoulders
Of a boudoir of roses:

The dogs have run their course- they are celebrating,
Cadmus's hounds, on a dinner of fried chicken,
And you have your hand on her knee in
The drive in theatre-
Watching that one note play; it is as good as making love
In a cemetery-
There you see the ghosts of fireworks in her eyes:

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, and I will go to work,
But it is as if I am retired- the apples ferment in a tangled
Orchard hidden in the Everglades:
You will see your favorite teacher tomorrow and he will
Tell you that you have gained too much weight,

But you have beautiful children in either hand to show him,
And sometimes, after sleeping, the airplanes will leap so high into
The sky after dinner that they will metamorphosis-
And they will become the swans and herons who come here
Every year in the wintertime on their wayward trips into Mexico:

As the country yawns and rises up into the basins of
The tallest of mountains, you are not fit enough to hike into
Tomorrow-
There will be a peace for a moment- and a flower, like a weed,
Will bloom amidst the cracks and the recesses
Of a high school that, after the holidays, you can no longer
Imagine yourself as ever having a belonging.

Caesuras Of The Out Of Work Sea

The tents will go up in New Mexico
And Arizona:
They will rise higher than the fires,
And we will sell fireworks in their penumbras-
And the cheap dragons will dance inside them,
Curling around their toolboxes,
And then they will steal the moonlight from the golden moon,
Who itself is a thief
And a voyeur of stewardesses and the ways home,
And the few words that I cannot even describe will leave my
Body like a eulogy, like cheap science-fiction,
Like a rose over the anonymous grave of a prostitute,
And somewhere else in this country
There will be a song sung better than mine, and it will
Rise for awhile above the conflagrations of
Mountains in Colorado,
Making the tourists stop to consider, before even
They get back to business-
And the kidnappers will arrive at their destinations;
And it will be another sad story
Told through the lips of orange groves and pressed forever
Against the romanticized caesuras of the out of work
Sea.

Robert Rorabeck

Cage #9

Your panthers kiss in the dream of helium balloons:
Their lulling tongues drip the sweat of last night's carcass:
And I can see you reaching up your forearms,
And the vase of your breast inside the loose shirt:
The pearly meat is like a perfect anthill in summer's sleep,
Your eyes are smiling like a plastic doll coming nearer,
As you climb the chain-link fence that keeps us
In the separate habitats: You will not go unconquered,
As the peacocks fan behind you the majesty of the jade crocodile:
When you leap down in your fevered panting,
And wrestle me into supplants amidst the sticks and mud
Where I'd been feeding on the penny candies:
Then you take us back to where we were first captured:
In the hot sand dunes in the cradle of the early peninsula:
Where we spread out naked in the nape and the winds,
And you bit my wrist several times in the same place,
Signifying that you were growing tired and soon wanted sleep:
Even then we had no other language,
Except in the engorged junctions where our bodies merged:
And you called me with your needful pressures,
The flowing areolaed press of your lenient opal stems
Before we were both captured and were bound for domestication,
Feeding the tourists' melting pleasures,
And the unblinking eyes of curious fifth graders out on fieldtrips.

Robert Rorabeck

Cake Delivery

Rainbows of ski-lifts looking into her eyes,
While all of my nights are alone
Learning how to spell in the overgrown grass,
And the pornographies of misspent fireworks
Beside the canal,
While the teal, teal heron eggs are cracking:
The sugarcane is burning,
And we look up together, the sugarcanes burning
In a truancy of a shadows-
Mailboxes whose lips are unpainted, and the day
Goes like this,
Rising over the limestone, and the birds who lay
Here,
While the carnivals turn around and around,
Repeating the fallacies of superheroes-
Then we sell Christmas trees into the dust, and in
The night we collect marbles
With our hands in our pockets in our bedrooms:
The moon arises, and the grapes
Grow pregnant, with the foxes beneath them:
Their fathers, braying, and licking their own coats,
To clean off the cockleburs,
And to remove any of the tears that may have been
Placed there by the fieldtrips that sweat off our tomorrows,
And burn off our little yards of tomorrows,
While the wives that we once hoped to know kneel
In our carports to the kisses of sad toads,
And kneading their hands into origami over the seals
Of frogs in the rusting rebars of the rains,
And pray, and pray.

Robert Rorabeck

Called Her Home

Traffic continues on like four-legged sorts
Of galaxies pin wheeling away,
Traveling home, or to gentleman's clubs:
The pretty girls pick up bouquets in the surf,
And they never look at you-
They never pick up books written by men with
More voodoo than you:
The terrapin sleep in the crux of a misspelled log:
They watch the women nakedly down
In the surf:
The most resilient flowers bloom in the sloughs,
Tourniquets of roses they pick for the darkest
Pirates with entire cathedrals of candles burning in
Their unruly beard,
Who lay the maidens on coquina slabs and make
Them sing like ornaments,
In the short days time traveling to when the first conquistadors
Saw the teal lions near the flower shops in the
Waves and called her home to dinner.

Robert Rorabeck

Campaign For My Scarlet Letter

Campaign for my scarlet letter,
My love, my love, my dinosaur:
And I'll come back and be your lover,
Your first crush, your index finger,
Your older brother:
And we'll bask our heads into the evening's
Pillows,
And dream of magnanimous plums,
And sugary super heroes: I'd love you for
The day, like a field trip,
Like a scar that goes away-
And while I'm doing this, you can shake your
Head and say I don't know you,
And I'll quiz you to make sure; and to see how
Well you do: You do so well at things that do
Not matter, and I am even worse than you,
Because before you left me I stole your bicycle and
Danced so the rains would fall so no one else could
Come out and steal it,
And then I caracoled your university because I like
That word especially when I can use it as a verb,
But by the time I was done reciting the sharks were
Busy just off shore,
And the ice-cream parlors had closed their doors,
The conquistadors had either crucified or Christened
All the poor dead Indians,
And the dog had masturbated onto the kitchen floor.
My mother whispered that she wished we'd
Been a little wiser, and then she shut the door,
And we closed our eyes and hit the pillows,
So far away broken up one into your expected migrations,
And I into an entirely different metamorphosis,
And yet dreams of you hit my pillow like a pile
Of cinderblocks,
A city full of busted bliss, a curse and a
Rhyme anonymous,
But I didn't love you anymore.

Campfire Tale

Cars are running on fingers of diamonds and loose change.
The woods are humming a catchphrase you don't know.
Down the easement on the left,
The forest-blue barge is taking a young Adam to a new affair;
He is out on the deck filling his pockets with sunlight
And the skim of water lilies-
Without long hair, you are less attractive than you used to was,
And the pugilists have made you lose the fight,
Evidenced in the dark mask around the rim of your gaze;
She has taken the yacht of his sleeve and doesn't care.
The petty thieves purloin the embarkation of the naive heart.
They are in there now sowing the city as white as Damascus;
This road is the downward vein attributing to the sad populations,
Where pricking corn grows like ruddy children around the hem of pines,
And the sky whistles the silky knives, the silverware which pullulate
Like throbbing moths pulsating from the yellowjacket's joyful barb.

Robert Rorabeck

Can You Imagine?

Can you imagine,
How many lawyers and doctors
There are in South Florida?
I can see them, crapping in their toilets,
So close to the Atlantic, in their
Upper-Middle class homes so near the
Sea—They never think of the sea,
Because their wives are beautiful,
They have no use for the sea....
But I have no wife,
So the sea is mine and I lounge with
Her and slip her the tongue,
And we play together like Bonnie and Clyde—
We rise up and rob and make love in wreathing,
Vengeful fits.... Can you imagine,
All those useless professions scheming,
Accumulating wealth and accomplishments
They use to dress their cheap lives,
Never thinking of the masses who move beneath
Them, the limestone that is rotting away beneath
Them.... They have no time for such things....
They are making grand additions to their lives....
Their walls are clotted with plaques and honors,
And every single one of them has a picture of
Themselves with a famous politician....
Is this what you want? Is this what we were made
To become? Never mind the advertisements,
Or what your parents tell you....
Listen, is this really you?
Is your soul there, walled up in a high-rise office,
Asking your secretary to take notations....
I can not think. I can not see....
There are homeless people without names,
Without identities walking like shadows on the street,
But they are angels, they are the scholars of Jesus,
And they come to her shore and watch us swim
Like a motion picture backlit by the flickering sun,
The ancient Hebrew who denotes right from wrong,
And here there is beauty and infinite change....

They cannot see this.... They cannot know,
So let us be very quiet and pull a curtain over
Our love making, and move into one another
Very quietly but with much passion,
Because if they knew, they would want what we have....
But they can not know, they can not understand...
They are mystified by the Pharaoh's gifts,
By the slick promises of dead emperors
and sad presidents.
They cannot imagine all that we have....

Robert Rorabeck

Canals And Ballrooms

Retreating by a trail of lost words making
Their way across the
Vermillion apertures of the continent- as if,
Finally, Mexico had really one
And even the angels had changed their names and
Appetites-
Going more naked over the clouds, like schools
Of dangerous fish,
And fighting all of the time: and never going to
School,
But hanging out in the hallways riled up by the
Tornados the victorious gods sent to
To lavish over the land:
The trailer parks made of adobe- the wild cats
Fitful, blue- sabers preferable to guns,
And the conquistadors now all of our mascots,
Resurrected, done up
And trundling with the fanfare of our darker
Redder skin:
Skin of fire, and the cities burning with the movements
Of their dance- so many lovers prowling
Through the yard, clutching fireworks- spinning
And making duels- the canals and ballrooms
Doused and burning gasoline.

Robert Rorabeck

Candelabrum For Seahorses

We happen outside into the world again today,
Fibrillating, saving our grandmothers- open mouthed with the
Fireworks
Leaping at first underneath and then over, over the great
Inner states;
As all of the world is collected, and put right here,
Candelabrum for seahorses,
Shrinking, then growing big again, like little kids underneath
The heavens of Christmas trees:
What it feels like as if to be alive in the traditions of make-believe:
A grave of wildflowers hissing with steam,
Realizing from the upward motions of the blue miners
And swift constructions of transcontinental railroads-
Laid between the comely passing cars, the heirlooms of ripe fields,
As all of it goes passing both and either ways-
A wound in the heart where the ghost of your mother can live,
Passing forwards and backwards, like a zoetrope without any foxes,
As the groves in the desert wait and wait
To give and give.

Robert Rorabeck

Cannibalistic Daylight

The empty page of silence flumes,
While my mother corrects her face:
My mother who is more than fifty years old,
Who just asked me what Kelly's name was:
And soon she'll be going to bed like
A fish.
Just like a lucky fish, who'll never see the lips of
Liquor or brushed the lips of mountains.
Then on Sunday it's Valentines and I can't even
Spell;
But it will be beautiful to suffer through all the
Reflections of stage lights and false lions,
The penumbras of great amusements that
Are already leaving,
Those things that I have already loved that will live
As many lives as cats,
That will have as many children-
When the night is already cold and turned off into the
Avenues of her dead husband, I will turn her around
By her naked shoulder,
And ask her to come back and touch my cheek and ask her
To make my neighborhood again as luminescent as the
Fish who live so far beneath all of these affluent
Trailer parks as if to be from another planet
As far away as we are,
And as beautiful as never having to take another breath or
Having to tell my mother again the name your parents
Decided to give you;
Then you will be just as wonderful as if there weren't another
Person beyond the two of us,
And the dreaded occupations of the immersed daylight
Had gone away into the bonfires of another truly tragic
Lullaby of cannibalistic daylight.

Robert Rorabeck

Capital Punishment

Wept the Lord on her doorstep,

“But I loved you for
A burning summer;
The lonely feeling lasted:
We laid naked on the barren field.
There the speckled serpent curled
In the grass in the
Warmth hugging
Of an unexplored tree,
Promised evil
While I was fertile;
Laid off,
Then I could only look
Back on you,
The little girl hiding
In her woman’s form.
In the mute chorus
They harvested bitterness
In the meat of sweet dreams
Up and down the rows
Collected by Nubian grandmothers:
Unfeeling shadows,
Unborn children:
You drank away
With your luxury
While in the background they
Paid their quarters to hear
Our song,
The illegal mariachis;
What would it have been?
Baby, do you know what
You did today?
Baby, do you know what
You took away?
I don’t believe in capital punishment,
Baby,
But, for something like this,
You should have been killed.”

Robert Rorabeck

Captain Stormfield

You believe in God
And you live in New York City?
You deserve a blow-j\$b
From the Smithsonian:
Space traveler- How you wake up early
To flirt with your god before cartoons,
But you don't make much out of a
Canine's four legged flatulence:
I wouldn't presuppose much on what you think
Of your own,
Being that you are a yellow dog,
But you are not scared;
And I know you will live forever with
Captain Stormfield satirized, but I'm too
Busy making money to help with your
Ranks of flagellated logic:
You are married and there is a new ring on
Saturn-
In the end, you are better left alone to float
With the angels deep in the throat of your
Wonderfully fabled moan:
Everything is beautiful when animals can speak
Of the moral of the story
After twenty minutes of selling cereal:
And so I love you- but I am just a hobo who isn't
Real,
On the swing-set of censer knowing I can go back
And forth without any real power,
But I can never get again to where you are,
Motor-powered, righteous and surreal,
But that's the true game-show of my dysfunctionally
Empirical ordeal.

Robert Rorabeck

Captains Of Their Bedrooms

Adolescent tears stolen to the ravaged
Cheeks of crocodiles:
Look how they are smiling, slanted on the bank:
The whole classroom is smiling,
Even though there are no windows,
Or roses on my desk:
This is the time they are in now, pretty finks
Like adolescent jasmine:
They will bloom like canaries into the carnival,
And then they will disappear-
The metamorphosis of the juvenile stations,
Captains of their bedrooms,
Matriculating; but what will they change into:
What hope do they have
With their ships melting or, who will they hold
Hands with
Will they ever make it outdoors to see has
The charade of their tears,
To see who blooming for them ceaselessly
The emotional clock that makes no room for
Tardiness and he is smiling,
And shedding their tears, though their hours are
Still so young.

Robert Rorabeck

Captivated And Alone

The sun is crawling through the sky—drinking and singing songs:
I lay in my bed alone,
My lips pressed to a canal of rum—□
And the sorrows of the flesh overflow and overflow—
The fish are tender-hooked—
But it seems alright to believe that they will survive
For a little while until they are ganged up on—
And for the while that you live in your window above
The clouds—can't you think of me,
Swimming four-legged and with a tail beneath you—
Trying to sing you the songs of a prince along his journeys—
Trying to captivate you until the airplane that I am sure
Will take us away touches down—
And all of the lights go out—
And all of the fake tourists leave their theatres
And stadiums underneath the mountains
And I can spare enough time for you—
Imagining that both of our hearts will remain
Captivated and alone.

Robert Rorabeck

Captivated With The Giants

Dun by moon-side,
By pool-side, by beach side:
All of the children missing
From the merry-go-round that was meant
To be beside the sea:
All of my exploits of my later years
Cheating my face
Through the open windows of the
Hapless desert,
And upon above:
Saturn invisible, and Jupiter invisible,
And Pluto mostly invisible-
And the children were all supposed to be
Right here,
As the blind men build their houses on
The steep side of the mountains
Where the cars are always crashing
Down like tears
Into the empty bedrooms where the lovers
Were meant to be:
Estranged, though fleshed,
And now walking somnolently through
The waterfalls of carwashes,
The airplanes resting thoughtfully above
Them, captivated with the giants who are
Also looking down.

Robert Rorabeck

Careless Though Divine Providence

I have no more choice but to continue my either or
Torment through the zoetrope of my breath:
There we go flickering beside the people we know so
Little about
Seeming to dance like animals search for truth:
The parade comes in over the waves into which the
Amphibic airplanes are touching down gentle enough to
Kiss but not unsettle the water moccasins
Who live in the stone rainbows underneath the places
Where I still try to breathe:
Alma cannot love me, but she is all that I see,
As we wake up together a stone's throw away; her in the
Happenstance of her husband's arms,
And I alone in the pitilessness of careless though divine
Providence.

Robert Rorabeck

Carelessly And Long Ago

Seagulls on trams of busy rides;
And she has her new inconceivable family:
See how we all proceed, leaving like the migrations of
The fair,
Or the butterflies who move from pages to pages of
Fairytale;
But now they are all married and have silver slippers,
Or something new:
They can go anywhere, except they are as calmed as
Lions with their chalices:
See how the knights have returned with bushels full
Of pomegranates.
Some of them even made it past the flaming swords,
Some of them are still swinging upwards;
And the light is just the trick of starlets in coffins,
Still shining on through the zoetropes of movie theatres,
Like my love dancing in the shadows of the desert;
It is just the motion of families of cars reciprocating
With one another in far away neighborhoods,
Fully sated and off to bed, their light skipping somehow
Along the materials that also makes
The reptiles slither and quicken their tongues into the buds
Like beautiful women through the spines of the city
And into the defeated forts of vanities and wine racks,
Where tamed rivers flow like family pets,
Where lovers too can go, and be as becalmed as if everything
In the world was made of glass, and singing from
The echoes your fingers or your lips placed upon it
Carelessly and long ago.

Robert Rorabeck

Carelessly Precious God

Over and under
Rivers
Indian givers are
Precious liars;
And I always wondered
Where you
Disappeared to after
School,
Because it was as if
The day was ending
And my bullies
Existed in a void
While I awaited
Always for the return
Of the education of
A carelessly
Precious god.

Robert Rorabeck

Carnival Of My Soul

I've been out on the reservation but known nothing of
Its sorrows:

Across the muddy streets trying to move further

Away from my father's horses:

Into a corrugated teepee

Where I can believe that the airplanes are still angels

Or bottle rockets he cannot sell:

This beautiful world alone with the coyote

Who scents amidst the bricks- where sometimes

A flower will grow, just the beautiful armpit of

A weed the wild dogs love

And the Mexican girls lay across saying that they

Are broken and yet float down the reservoirs

Into the carnival of my soul.

Robert Rorabeck

Carpenters And Stone Masons

First off,
I can't sing, even though
I want to be beautiful for Jesus—
I want to praise him—
From a distance you might say
I am beautiful, but you have not
Lived with me. Just ask my girlfriend.

I want to be the best shot
I can be—
I want to own a new gun—
Polish it ever day,
Morning and night,
Engrave His name on
The holt—

I am a fan of carpenters....
Several good carpenters built
The house I slumber in;
I praise them,
But it will be someone
Altogether different who
Builds my mausoleum—

Who is that laid
Hands on my eternal resting
Place before I even got
There?
A stone mason—
I hope I can shake his hand
Before I get there—
Praise him as well—
And when I die he shall inherit
My loudest, most deadly weapon
And use it to engrave
My name in stone,
In shifting permanence laid on that slab
A marble blanket for my bones....

Carry On

Overly puzzling lovers out on the open tarmac,
And it rains:
Which makes it safe, because it stops the airplanes,
And the dogs from racing,
As I have held you a couple times this way, the landscaping
Rattling with tears of green
Which peel down the houses: the beds are warm,
The horses sleep standing, and after it all, the clouds still
Pile up over amusement parks whose astonishing bleachers
We can drink and then pass out under;
And let the butterflies land and nap, drooling homeopathically
On us,
Or at least let us dream that they do this, as the baseball players
Come like ruddy wedding processions, and carry on.

Robert Rorabeck

Carry On'

Overly puzzling lovers out on the open tarmac,
And it rains:
Which makes it safe, because it stops the airplanes,
And the dogs from racing,
As I have held you a couple times this way, the landscaping
Rattling with tears of green
Which peel down the houses: the beds are warm,
The horses sleep standing, and after it all, the clouds still
Pile up over amusement parks whose astonishing bleachers
We can drink and then pass out under;
And let the butterflies land and nap, drooling homeopathically
On us,
Or at least let us dream that they do this, as the baseball players
Come like ruddy wedding processions, and carry on.

Robert Rorabeck

Cars Dancing With Waves

cars forwards and

In back of

Me.

This life a road

Of

Cars

Filling up my child's

Dreams

And my dreams

Too:

A parade of

Humanity's invention

Each engine's

Combustion

Empirical,

Energy from

Friction.

Cars lined up

And juxtaposed

Next to

Each wave of

The sea...

The fanfare quieting,

My child held tightly

Next to me.

My heart is his

And the waves come

Beckoning to the cars,

Wanting these

Cherry red

Inventions

To come dance

With them.

For all of Man's

Realized inventions

Such as these

Must disappear
Eventually.

Robert Rorabeck

Cartoon Of Their Delights

Giving up the proverbial children for the offerings of
Speechless faith:
All day long in a cathedral mimicking the human race:
Pestilent and song-wearied,
Trying to close my eyes and picture a sea of whales:
And entire roadway of these beasts in catharsis;
Or a glossy Mandevilla or some other flower that
Chokes itself into the sun of merry go rounds,
While the great beasts are talking guttural and surreal -
And the mammoth echinopsis sticks out its tongue to show
The tourists and their doctors, that not everything
Is made to be a cartoon of their delights.

Robert Rorabeck

Cartoons In The Afternoon

Tortoise of the skies and butterflies:
Waking up upon an airplane
While looking at her in the mirror:
Another way of
Remembering her unforsaken architectures
While all of the knights I know flow
Into her—like toads serenading in her busied carports—
And then they are dancing in a place
Of unsold monsoons:
This is how it tends to be—after high school,
Walking past the mounds of ants and the dens of
Ant lions—
As my sisters and I watch cartoons in the
Afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

Catharsis Of Filth

Catharsis of filth
Woebegone in the mountains—
The cars drive by the closed
Burger joints
As the mountain lion
Eats a blue bird for supper:
As a little boy,
I don't look up—
I don't want to look out of my window
To see these things making love
In a movie theatre
Beneath the pines—
I don't want to send out flowers to the
Open winds,
But if I know I open my eyes
I will have to—
So I live right here,
Truant slipped classically out of
High school
With the cadavers of alligators
Before graduation—
And I write you another line
Just before the dead end of narcolepsy—
Necrophilia
Is your name,
Muse whom I exhume
Like a puppet
From the roadside—
I don't want to touch you but for
These words—
They fall upon your stamens like
Hummingbirds and bumble bees,
As like wise upon your
Cadavers as red ants and
The larvae of inch worms—
Each one the same diameter
Of each of these petty chimes—
They sing out for you,
Your soul an infinity in

The convalescence of your marriage—
Even after nothing is left of you
To survive.

Robert Rorabeck

Cathedral

These are the different worlds we bring together
Touching in forgettable cornucopias which only live
For a small while:
Say, her sky is purple, but her eyes are green,
And turned down anyways- as they watch her youngest
Child fallen from the swing set-
The horse eats from the yard across the street
All of the black men live around her.
The tortoises have turned into themselves- or I
Have walked down to the canal,
Turning my back on her- maybe she is hurt-
But her brown skin is a cathedral-
Jasmine perfumes midnight, and I think she will survive.

Robert Rorabeck

Cat's Cradle

A fly in the liver drinks
The worm.
The knife with no
Conscious can see
The translucent arrow
Barbed in the flesh,
The shaft out of the
Abscessing heart cavity.

Stop her now,
The thief in her house
Disguised with a
Ring and his last name.
Her auburn curls
Cascade,
Because she has gone
Down on me—
I let her play my video
Game.

The lawful charade
The court conspired,
And her stock-broking
Fathered footed the bill.
From another state
They bound me in
Barbed wire and
Turned on the electricity.

Pulling the catgut to
Her heart,
Like a cellular phone,
She shot through the core
Like an apple,
The organ that sang for her
Is now harpooned.
In the midnight hour
I can feel her power,
As the dish ran away

With the spoon.

Robert Rorabeck

Cause For René Char

Rene Char died at 80- I keep getting empty
Searches for him, scars of constellation on a bleary night
Of street cars. It has been so long since I've walked with
A girl, held her hand and she didn't apologize, or look away
And think of pools dressed with other women,
Swimming like gold leaf to the somnolence of the satellite
Garlanded by commercial airlines: Renee Char in France,
Long entangled orange groves beneath the Roman forts twith the cloven
Footsteps of goateed wine drinkers,
Sommeliers on the hoof, ritual of stony vineyards:
I was virginal, hopeful- A Spanish artist, a mother and housewife
Just in Port Bo, kin to Salvador Dali, loved me when I
Drew caracoles of lavender on her son's desk- When I'd
Never read Rimbaud, when I went out tramping for a copper
Cannon, she called down from the roof with her friend that she was
In love- In love- Oh, to be in love again- Oh, if she were to read
My poems about her; if I could find out more about Rene Char,
Or have the chance to skip summer school again, to in my mind
Envision punching the principle in the jaw- To have a good and
Steady job far away from the lunch meat horses, the sandwiches
Of my upstairs parents- To rearrange the common occurrences of
Neighborhoods of dead ex-girlfriends, to imbibe the beauty of a
Two week youth again, to time warp on swing-sets in a boreal
Seventh Day Adventist Michigan, to water-ski to the lucidity of
Minor saints and professors enjoying soggy crackers and cheese,
To perambulate the cemetery, giving cause to wild blue ants and scientists
To explore, to get married and published, to live in Spain as another
Soul, another prick in the constellation, a lesser light to Rene Char,
Who isn't even one of my favorites, but I'm doing him a favor tonight,
Giving him another séance amidst the foot soldiers of his elite cause,
To go down misspelled and speechless in the Somme,
To awaken metamorphosed, a gifted birthstone kept around her neck
As she goes out on her bicycle with a basket of varieties of pain,
Breathing around her neck, a cenotaph rimed from the sea, sighing
With her cause.

Robert Rorabeck

Celibacy Of Housewives

Celibacy like a bubble bath in the sky,
Effervescing these springs of invisible rooms
Where no one pays,
But does his time look up at ceiling fans,
Predicting disasters purposefully,
Inventing the light bulb; and if I could love my
Mother, I bet I could; I bet I could be asleep
In five minutes and have the stewardess'
Uniform ablaze in a controlled burn;
And all the way down to the hemisphere, nothing
But thigh, a pink ribbon of outer space ending
In toes that splashed jelly-fish,
Gar, and cheap plastic minnows; and for the houses
Asleep in their cost, the women who live in them
As curried as palominos, like poets fortunately
Lost, bullet-ripped to feed the olive roots,
The peaceful trauancies of curved and dangerous
Routes; Or, to carry on with this line of tinkering,
In hurricane season housewives bickering,
Fully busted in blouses cut short, thighs un bemused
By anything unfit for a tennis court; and their
Eyes upon my wicked holidays, I'll sell them pumpkins,
I'm make some bread, and hang them like trophies,
Or stockings premature for Christmas,
In my private self-satisfied library, well-fed.

Robert Rorabeck

Cellar Door

Before I grow tired and die,
Like a sickly infant before it knows this language,
I want to look up and see the world metamorphosed
Into a single thing, a word spoken in a whisper,
Like the blurred shape of a blue bird lighting
Too fast against the sun to be sure it ever flew—
A word of unrecognizable sound, yet irrefutable meaning—
The finest chorus in a single thing,
A dove of peace sent through my ears
Conceived from a true realm where I am not alone—
A medical stone that has the power to raise the dead,
A healing word— The word of a faithful lover.
A word mothers use to conceive and birth flawless children.
A word when spoken creates perpetual daylight—
A word when echoed resonates fertile planes and singing
Rivers into being—
A word that I could use to whisper upon her lips,
To take back the shadows, the ball of adders growing
Twisted in my heart— A word to cascade into her,
A word that she could recognize me with
And be sure that I was right. Before I grow tired
And sleep....

Robert Rorabeck

Cemeteries Only I Can Remember

Warm beer and I can begin forgetting this night,
Like all the girls who long forgot me on roller-skates
And infinitely swell legs:
Norman Rockwell girls whose time has come
And video games:
The traffic is a centipede going on forever:
Stopping and going,
Ignoring the park- Perhaps even hating the park,
Because it was not made to those proportions,
And somewhere out there amidst its peeping
Segments young beautiful lovers
Who stop in to buy Christmas trees, who actually seem
To like me:
And I toast to them and the waves,
The somnolence of a careless god whispering to
A gentleman, the devil, underneath the what so ever
Palm trees:
And girls I knew, and coral castles, and promenades
For forever better and even immortal poets,
This being the last thing I have to say to this humid hour,
For my clocks are changing into hearts,
And yet I still try the ever familiar illusion upon myself:
That I will live forever,
Solitary down the hallways of high schools and
Cemeteries only I can remember.

Robert Rorabeck

Cenotaph Upon A Tree

Snow angel like a beauty mark next to the nosecone of
An airplane—where will you be swimming
Come Christmas with the
Sea boiling over with ducks headed south—
After the hurricanes have lain their havoc and then
Evaporated, and the truth smokes like a phantom of
The truth—
A world that is almost done surviving gets over one
More time—paper airplanes and dead fireworks
Lying upon the other side of the canal—
And then nothing else can be said that is any good—
What was once joy in the echoes of the harmonies—
Remind me of you, shell of a katydid lying star naked,
A cenotaph upon a tree that kissed your lips
That never knew the truth.

Robert Rorabeck

Centaur

Touch him now if he cannot move
The legions are marching between them,
Dragging the sky behind them
Like a curtain torn down from the theatre,
The red secret draping the early morning
Woman's lips.

Then she rolls over and plants her
kiss on him,

Those petals trough like mollusks,
Leaving their trails upon him.

Daisies grow up from behind his eyes,
But he does not blink.

He cannot move. His body is hiding
The forensic evidence of so many years
Separated:

They were hooked and when she stepped

Away, her two legs an entire Calvary-

Subtly she tore him down,

Gutted the sky like an entire beast

And cast him off her shoulders,

A meal for the earth. Afterwards,

And for a little while

She was so ashamed.

Entrenched in the storm,

She steadied her steed and cast her

Sorrow in the furrows he was

Turning into,

But with the memories quickly

Meeting their end,

The sky curled and turned into

A beautiful rainbow,

She encouraged herself to follow.

Quickly then,

Dragging the sky behind her.

Robert Rorabeck

Centrifugal Offices Of Young Tom-Boys

Centrifugal offices of young tom-boys
Laughing in the sacrifices of wasted times:
They go tilting upside down in a strange
Eclipses above the highway,
Their light-bulbs honking,
Areolas winking with waving gasoline-flames:
And too, down by the zoo,
Swimming with the aquatic crew, I've seen them
Doing some of the same time, smoking peanuts, tonguing
Limes:
And they have not yet manifested in a harem-
Or a club: they don't bake pies of take delicate sips of some;
And they make no social sense,
They just go leaping backyard fences like exactly wavering
Hurdles,
Stealing apples from the polished senseless;
And you might say that they aren't worth your time,
That they go without getting dolled up,
And do not diadem the affluent jerks of railroads
And beef jerky- Heck, they don't even know how to
Carve turkey,
And they're just wasting time, laughing in a roadside
Show like crimson diamonds, wet and pouted-
Their filaments burning in full blow,
Free for a lark, like honey mustard on shark,
They are my sibilant holiday- and I don't want them
To ever get out of my mind:
Their legs straddle my vane purple temples and squeeze my turtle-head
And without their bosomy infection,
I'm sure I'd be amidst the well-suited dead.

Robert Rorabeck

Certainly Sure

I havent dressed out for so long,
But I'm great at the arcade:
I'm really great after hours and all alone
With the vespers and
Ghosts,
Pretending to have god and paper snowflakes,
But now all those mountains are
Undeniably empirical,
And you are so lonely in between their
Creches, aren't you, Sharon;
And I cant understand that, because I
Am no good at any sort of science,
And your father is dead, and where does your
Mother live.
You daughter is beautiful, Sharon, like grapes
Upon your breast,
But I suppose you already know this,
As the weather comes, and all of this is real,
And you can barely stand it;
But whatever they do they are inventing for you,
Sharon- and I hope you can understand this:
That you cannot ever be undone,
Holding out all men want to become a service in
Your army,
Even if you get sick and fall out of love,
You will reawaken again, even if this page is given over
To the age-old fire,
You can't blame me for trying, Sharon,
Because my rum is weak but flowing, and my dogs
Are to me as I wish to be to you,
Beautiful and needy, basking in the lower slopes of your
Shadows well before the grave;
But those are the best places to grow,
Well before the graveyards- Maybe my name will even
Hang sometime not well beneath yours and your husbands,
And your child:
For we all must die, Sharon, and I am perfect,
And must die before you, to clear the path, but my dogs before
Me,

And the tourists all around us basking in your
Wonderful jubilees;
But you have made it all so much more possible,
So when we become like the dinosaurs and the grinning
Sharks whom you've been weeping for,
I can stand up and declare that you made all of this
Passage way so much more brighter,
Coming down well lit singed briskly by your flairs,
For you are a full blooded debutant
The wings of ever careful airplanes encircle,
And every good government and all of their orchards
And cemeteries
Are yours, Sharon-
I am certain,
Certainly sure.

Robert Rorabeck

Chandeliers And Candelabrum

All of a sudden to start and finish—I hear airplanes
As terrapin and hare,
Tortoise and jack rabbit race—
The same as the fables they carried from deep,
Deep Africa—
Africa of golden eyes and nipples—or serpent tongue,
Forked, cannibalistic, evangelical—of so long ago—
Calling up to her parapets again—
Languishing, cracking knuckles—almost older
Than Christ but sophomoric Romeo:
Give me the reciprocations of pinwheels, of windmills
And Ferris wheels—and valleys and valleys that
Believe in my madness—and girls filled right there,
Spilling with wildflowers and aspen—
Paper airplanes and longer jets flying around their
Hair like barrettes—and other places that call and
Call on us—
As all around us they sing, light prosperous in the
Chandeliers and candelabrum even though we are
No longer here.

Robert Rorabeck

Chandeliers For Their Kings

All the chambers of the heart are filled with
Roses:

And your lovely bedroom is filled with lovely poems
That wait for you to get up for breakfast
Even after all of the airplanes you were always in love
With have gotten up and left you—
As the perfect angels continue to sing in their perfect
Choirs—

As the beautiful rabbits continue to linger in their
Beautiful briars—
As above them, like a winsome king—the sun is singing
And singing—

The waves break unabashedly and upon your hand you
Wear my ring.—

And the ocean is ringing and ringing—
Like an ocean of beautiful girls calling to the heavens of bright
Chandeliers for their kings.

Robert Rorabeck

Chaos Of Thugs

The likelihood of petrification
By the level 5 monster
Is astonishingly high.
Then again, he will turn you
To stone near the
Sea,
And, even defeated, you can
Stare off
For miles,
Though the waves will have
You,
As you must concede the ratios
Of rose petals
In a game of love
Fall much higher in your favor,
Than the actual matter:
Of her eyes remaining perceptive
Unto your being
Through all the chaos of thugs.

The decades of eternity pass as minutes,
As the ocean carves you indiscernible,
The tragic hero defeated by monsters.

Robert Rorabeck

Charlatans Of Playboys

Never figuring how it started out—all of this union,
Contraptions in an animatronic
Time—my wife humming while she is washing her
Face: I never imagined she would be the
Girl whom I loved,
But she is the only one here after all of the conclusions
To the baseball games which happened out of
Time—and the words which my fingers palaver
Like water spiders skirting on a dime—
And the rainbow being somewhat akin to the midnight's
Apertures—
When the best boy finally strikes out—
And home runs are given to the unoccupied bedrooms
Of nuns and the charlatans of playboys—
And only this weather permits—
Filigrees of plums,
Silhouettes for the last time out of doors—
And then long truck rides into darkness—
Into the places where the cities can never survive.

Robert Rorabeck

Cheap Laughter In The Affordable Sunlight

I have found an affordable ghost town

(not in her eyes, as you might think)

But on the east coast south of the first home of
Conquistadors,

Where they have buried all the sepia nuns,
Whose bones have lain virgins for so long,
Awaiting the salt of Jesus on their root
Enjambment crypts:

Palm City is up for sale: Houses fat and immaculate
Going for \$150,000 or less, homes for entire
Families and for kids skipping school,

Bright blistering yards all in rows like costume jewelry like
Where I grew up down the road from the wildlife estuary,
Cinders of dreams which once blazed north
Of Daytona Beach:

I imagine living there, the only house on the block
Not foreclosed, stepping out my door into the easy dimming
Lights of dusk,

Expecting to see beautiful housewives out jogging with
Their carriages, legs like glossy lips, like swimmers in the
Humid air,

Blown away like kisses given to relatives in fleeting departures,
The skylights all ablaze over those winsome ghosts,
A place for myself to tease my dogs, to vagabond from house
To house, and drool upon unfamiliar carpets,

Chasing a woman who doesn't live there anymore,
For she cocooned into a fine last name, and had to migrate,
And now those houses glitter with for sale signs on

Each green lawn needing a hair cut, like dog tags on corpses

Who have yet to lose their glow,
A sight built suburbia who went up quicker than a boom town
For Mickey Mouse,

But there wasn't enough bread to spread cheese for the clicks
To cut the mustard, but I have saved just enough to buy a fair
2,000 square foot crypt outright,

And live on a whistling block where the wind pirouettes
Blowing the tumbleweeds,
Where I can follow her for hours and never know where
She is,
And then lay out in the middle of that suburbia's road

And wait famishing for days for the Pavlovian
Melodies of the ice-cream truck,

And for the sea to come in like effluvious retribution,
Filling in the shadows, and drowning the geometries where
There was once cheap laughter in the affordable sunlight.

Robert Rorabeck

Cheerleaders Of Inner Or Outer Space

I'll piss as my dogs piss,
In the night in the snow, heedlessly as the traffic moves
I'll think of Elisabeth Shue and karate;
And I won't care how long it will take me to get
Back to them.
My back will be tired and no females will love me,
But I will find my dogs again and they will love me,
And then there will be time enough for stories to
Tell S-,
And pirates, and the lisps of waves and light houses even
When there aren't no more conquistadors,
As we left them all back through high school,
Worshipping at the drinking fountains,
And I am just a boy who wants to live forever
Who doesn't know any kungfoo;
And I just want to live forever, but it is still so expensive
To even begin to consider leaving this casual place
For the sweet cheerleaders of inner or
Outer, outer space!

Robert Rorabeck

Cheers

Out again in the high altitude of this
Self imposed prohibition:
There is nothing saintly about my sober condition,
I've just been trying to save more money for
My neurosis,
Wondering in the red eyed daze of dry and thirsty
Liquors, the spirits I inhale with the airing of
Her season's show, out in the spores and
Floating motes high up in the anemic mountains,
Far away from any touch she might on a whim
Encroach into me, and thus awaken the flow of
Blood and search of eyes through the bones and
Body of my ghost town;
And let again spirituality build up along the shores
Of this mortal river, and I will give up
Putting off my hobby as if it were a chore,
As if this here line was difficult algebra,
As if I had a profession and a housewife to play
Scrabble with, and to lounge near the chlorine
Pool of her disinfected eyes,
And never say another world like this, and her likewise:
To stretch all out as if in one long day,
And breathe out children and exhale my grave,
But eventually I'll sneak down into the valley and at
The supermarket buy 750 ml of \$10 rum,
Because even the cheap stuff can put the hair of the
Dog on my tongue, and that will let out a poem
Or two moaning from the circuitous doors of
My wounded tomb, allowing for a few hours to
Dance alone with you in my high altitude room,
Knowing even though that it will not get me buried
In West Minster Abbey, in between Percy and Mary,
Nor will it unimpose your coffee eyes from me,
The flirting organs that swim like lighthouses through
My sober sea.

Robert Rorabeck

Cheese Sandwich

Pugnacious wit of the settlers' blood
Eventually paved America:
Discovered Wal-M*art, invented presidents,
And cold turkey with mint jelly;
All the glassy men have fallen in battle;
Broken jawed,
Even the brightest were scalped by/for the prime minister's
Male pattern baldness,
And I stand now below my major professor,
Blow him a tuna kiss from my ass;
Out of Chaucer's trumpet, erupting not unlike Dante's Inferno,
Notice he has a photo of himself and Bobby Bowden,
Signed in the red bricks of Doak Cambell Stadium.
My pillow- on the 50 yrd. line with a box of wine.
If I was a better poet, my IQ would summit Everest,
And I would experiment with Verlaine
In the Montemarte district of a bankrupt airplane:
Punch my wife in the belly, and cut off my ear
For the stewardess with the saline park bench;
In this time of year, the wolves are hungry;
They've only had a cheese sandwich for lunch,
And the foals are crying like horny virgins all across the
Windswept valleys;
It is fifteen years too late to meet Rimbaud,
And Baudelaire is too busy hang-gliding upon the
Glued clitoris of my infantine high school's ferny courtyard;
The novel incumbents are grinning for photographs as they
Release the hybrid wolves into the gated community
Of affluent used car sales men and failed Olympic gymnasts;
And now I am out of time, for though these words are free,
They are part of a curse, and, like everything else I sneeze,
Will turn back to pumpkins and rats,
As soon as the clock strikes midnight, the skeleton drinks
His wine, and Dorothy pulls back the curtain on the emerald humbug.

Robert Rorabeck

Chelsea

The uncouth rhymes of
consciousness live in
the harem of the noun.
In kindergarten
you learn the alphabet;
you put dirt in your mouth.
Half asleep,
pull up strands of yellow
and orange carpet,
pretending you love her,
singing the song of the south;
After school,
In a house above ground,
mother and father are not
speaking.
Language is sound.
The white hound kills
a clutch of rabbits
in the rock garden
God strolls around.
As mother dresses you in
a grey suit for Easter,
Death keeps a hole
in the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

Cherie Currie Or Another Feral Young Thing

The wind lays off its blowing and starts
To clap,
Wipes its mouth when it sees the movie is
Over; it didn't realize,
But was dreaming of the savannah so svelte
With ibex and koala bear;
Then shuffling out on pretty legs, rips the
Soft satin of well-supposed roses,
She tilts her head back and with a gleam
Takes the hallucinatory substance- day trip in
The afternoon while housewives are getting
Their cartons of milk- one for each breast,
And their husbands are getting the same thing
But from an entirely different store;
And a different maid, she refuses ice-cream-
She begins to trot, goes on four legs between the hills,
Houses like coffins with doors nailed shut-
One for every yard, and I try to keep up, but she
Didn't like the movie I was in, sayings she want to
Keep the company now of her fellow troubadours;
And she's switching sides, and running any bases
That she finds- The umpires wont be around until
The morning,
And she can go down to the lake and puncturing it,
She can ride its alligators to the sea- she can think up
Stories to tell, and scoop up the feral orchids
And bow, and bow, and bow.

Robert Rorabeck

Cherished Sorority

Turning into another day of low catastrophe
Where lunchrooms are
Banished into Cadillac's or it becomes
Another peaceful sound
Of engines
And locus and hummingbirds while my veins
Feel cold,
And there is someone else galloping
And even backwards across the bridge of my spine:
While, looking up, won't you believe,
Another blinded angel is spinning
In freelance fireworks,
While another day laborer gets off early and
Pretends to shuck his duties-
While telenovelas parade across another
Day's screen,
As the fires spread across the mountain,
Marching-
And the aspens say their prayers and continue
Looking up to the jovial moon,
So happy with all of what she has stolen even
While beneath her all of that cherished sorority burns.

Robert Rorabeck

Child In Your Orchard

I have proven that the world is my dream,
But my dream is my death,
And I don't even have money to spend at the racetrack;
And I can still hear the traffic and your name,
As he lights into you under Pike's Peak,
As he gives you the juice to turn on all the scientists;
And what were you thinking:
That it was just your time to become a mother,
Or that common fairytale they serve almost everyday
In lunch rooms all across the country-
And now the world is bespoke, it is being talked to;
My dogs can understand more of it than I can.
I get nervous in restaurants. I am afraid of things that
I appreciate; Like death, I wait for you,
But unlike him, you should not come- The moon is runny
Like yoke,
Like a chariot of reindeer,
And now I have thoroughly deceived myself;
And very soon you will have another child in your orchard
That has no business being named after myself.

Robert Rorabeck

Childish Burn

A new day goes over like this,
Like Jack over his candle, and what am I to
Say for this,
Only that I am not any more than yesterday unless
It is contented;
I certainly don't know you anymore
(who are you- and why do I sing to you like a
Dying soldier in his basement meadows?)
Mostly, it is about new things now, and the repercussions
Of holidays, and the good music left unresolved,
And your legs? Your legs? Let them run for other men,
Let other men put their fingers down their rivers like
Little boys and their slaves.
I don't care. Who said I ever cared? I am only this,
And I don't mean to brag. I have a book published no one
Reads, and I am thinking of buying a house full out and living
In it just like the afterlife of one of those Egyptian Pharaohs,
And I can walk to and from the humid green yard
And the air-conditioning, to intersperse the ululations with the
Hums; and what of you by means of this? It is not a thing
But a childish burn, a birthmark: Something that can not
Be taken back, like a murder the sun almost has solved by morning,
And I make my omelets and look out my window
At the empty yard and all those bilious clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

Child-Land Of A Place That Has Moved On

Kindergarten of muses, of tinker-toys:
Little girls on the sherbet rug,
Pulling up day dreams, already know who
They are going to marry- Premature
Leave-alone,
I am outside on the swings, censoring like a
Smoky bishop in a pointy hat:
I can only move diagonally this way and
That underneath the slash pines.
My mother's cold noodle soup makes me
Want to throw up-
I want to kill that queen, but will have a hard
Time at it,
Lollygagging, Shetland ponies, collecting shells
On the west coast of Florida,
Pensive on Sharon, and I am already so old:
Look at the cereus, look at the dog show:
Pantomimes leaping on the half shell of airplanes:
Sharon beats them all,
Beautiful bone structure, tan as a pearl,
Baking her cake in the kitchen of a house of cards;
And I am just about no one all dressed up
To leave for the moon-
The day is almost over, my lips and hands covered
Only with mud,
My little sister weeping to be with me-
The pine trees weeping houses down through their
Lees;
And I don't know Sharon,
But there is her sun crinkling through the lilac trees,
Already baking my prepubescent pottery;
Pretty soon mommy and daddy will come for me,
And I will get to dream of her more
Into the corners of darkness- spiders looming about
The refrigerator,
Giant teddy-bears stolen from the trash;
And all of us wanting her, wanting the first rounds of
A child-land of a place that has moved on
That will not exist.

Robert Rorabeck

Children With Another Man

Up in the woods where they keep our
Grandmothers:
Where the prop-planes have crashed,
And there are
Not even one or two survives:
Where I have run with my dogs
To try and taste lightning,
Feral tongued:
Up those hills where the Indians
Preached
And down those hills where the beaver's
Dammed-
And your children are sick, but they
Can be healed- if not tomorrow,
Then the next day- And the wild flowers
Are truly something to behold:
Drive your truck here while the airplanes
Are far away,
And the fires are jumping like electric
Current across her bosom-
And you and I were just growing up-
Seventeen- do you remember that
Time where everything inside the movie
Theatre had to be real-
And we hadn't made love to other people,
And we still thought about each other
Before you moved to Colorado and had
Children with another man.

Robert Rorabeck

Children Without Us

Growing where we fall
Beside the glacier, beside the waterfall:
Beautiful foundlings outside of
The ballrooms-
Near the summit, where I guess we have to look
Up at the stars, disgusted:
Above tree-line- our dumb luck:
We can never grow here-
The witches and angels will browbeat us they
Come around in their games:
We will turn to midgets, stunted beside the
Glacial lakes the size of minnows:
And the girls we want to love we will not
Even see- and they will have
Children without us:
And you will never think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

Chinese

Now this is nothing
Special-
Asian girls are
Yawning-
In the evening I play
Chinese chess-
With my father-
I don't know his name-
Whatever his name
Is,
He wins most of the time-
I've won three times-
He cooks frog legs,
Liver, and duck tummy-
Afterwards,
At night,
I make love to his daughter
In the bedroom he has
Given us to
Make love in-
Sometimes I wish she was
A better lover-
Sometimes I think she
Is just right-
And in the day the sun
Is made of Chinese characters
That seem to be
Trying to describe
Something to me
I cannot understand.

Robert Rorabeck

Chinese Characters

Now this is nothing
Special-
Asian girls are
Yawning-
In the evening I play
Chinese chess-
With my father-
I don't know his name-
Whatever his name
Is,
He wins most of the time-
I've won three times-
He cooks frog legs,
Liver, and duck tummy-
Afterwards,
At night,
I make love to his daughter
In the bedroom he has
Given us to
Make love in-
Sometimes I wish she was
A better lover-
Sometimes I think she
Is just right-
And in the day the sun
Is made of Chinese characters
That seem to be
Trying to describe
Something to me
I cannot understand.

Robert Rorabeck

Chivalrous Aphorism

Every day's a new day,
But I've been dead so very long
That all my songs are just
Echoes of songs.

Robert Rorabeck

Chorus Lines Of Jumping Jack

I only fell in love because I bought you flowers;
And I am alone because I drink beer,
But now we are together in state sanctioned borders,
Which greatens the odds of running my fingers
Through your hair:
Maybe we'll meet on another planet in Disney World,
And I'll use roman candles to divert your
Candy cart off the tracks,
And I'll overthrow your knickers and unhinge your straps,
And eat all your salt water taffy while the munchkin
Automatons do chorus lines of jumping jacks.

Robert Rorabeck

Chosen Insanity

With the rest of us
You are living well
In your chosen insanity;
I know because I sometimes
Cut your voice into my
Wrist.

Then ordinary veins become
Red lips,
And you speak to me,
You speak to me of him,
Your ordinary husband.
You describe the affluent
Sex and say,
Say you are doing well,
Quite well
Like an oracle
Sleeping in a red well
Somehow much deeper
Than my wrist, so I cut
Deeper still
To hear you crying
All that you own living
Inside him: The house
You rent,
The car you drive
Somehow fits
And you dress in your
Ordinary insanity,
Your influence.
You are doing
Quite well
With the rest of us.

My father is digging up
A hundred acres
And putting in water spickets
Every twenty inches
So the earthworms
Don't grow thirsty

As the Queen Bug
Insists.
In the trenches,
He is fighting his hell.

My mother is doing
Everything people are asking
Her to do for them:
She is doing the work of
An army of prostitutes.
She puts her prints
On the pricks.
She washes dishes
And encores, she bows
To her father's wishes.
In fact, she married
Her father,
As he insisted;
It is her particular insanity,
And she is doing quite well,
With all our compliments.

For three decades
I have run away and
Chained my fists against
The backyard fences.
Where the dogs live,
I live under the house
With them. I refuse to
Change. I bark at
Strangers,
I follow their scents.
Across state lines,
I hunt fugitives.
I check for ticks,
But down deep in night
I still hear your
Heart beating in my
Wrists,
My ordinary wrists.

I am living with the rest of us

And we are doing quite well,
Ordinarily,
In our chosen insanity.

Robert Rorabeck

Christmas Of At Least

You seem to think the stewardesses I paint
Are so beautiful,
But so much for your mouth or the way you've
Been daydreaming
Right beneath the faux teardrop of another
Disney World
Whilst I've been drinking from another rummy
Fountain—right there are the ends of
The world and all of the prettiest fairytales
That you know—and it doesn't
Much so matter that you've lost your job—
And my own words fly to their own
Cathedrals—this is just the imaginations which
I love,
All burnt out and trying to recover to
The steam-engines upon the patios—
You can fire me,
But I will still awaken, upon Christmas or
Whenever—
It doesn't seem that I am going anywhere—
Even with all of your seas so strung out,
And the dogs of wherever licking the bones off my
Foot:
Don't you think that it happens to be beautiful
Anyways,
At least until there is a Christmas, a Christmas of
At least, anyways....

Robert Rorabeck

Christian Truth

Whose c*ck do you go sucking now? :
I do not care,
I give you mine
To delay on until I get you there:
I can not stop you from playing in your
Nursery rhymes:
Your bare-ass exploited like a rental car:
You are as confused as a dislocated kine,
But I will find you in the end,
I swear:
And ride you like a bucolic Ferris-wheel:
If you bleat, I will mention the stars
To distract you while we reproduce.
Alongside the highway,
There are many neat men going by,
And they might try to net you in a business-suited
Deal which sounds too good not to,
But don't:
Because I am still here,
Doing my best cursive to get you to strip:
My smile is never insincere,
Even if I am unreliable, I know your zip code,
And I will never apply to law school,
Even if I am as lonely as my friends who do:
I will get you in the end,
Because it is the best conclusion:
Like two unrequited lovers who seem to drink poison,
The clichéd Shakespearian tragedy,
Only to wake up healthy for Christmas
Surrounded by their children:
This is Christian truth,
And I will undress you there
Beneath the garlanded tree on four legs,
In a house without a mortgage:
I will take you ever time,
Like a cultivated garden:
All you have to do is believe,
And I will trough you like a reawakened army:
You will put your head in that pillow

And cry my name,
And I will supplant this poem inside you,
And reawaken the names of our children
In all the fine rows:
And you will smile in the morning
For real and for the first time.

Robert Rorabeck

Christmas On Jupiter

A gorgeous bowl of teak,
But I don't understand- There isn't
Any trees,
But a grove of cairns some devil's
Field, all the skree is broken pottery:
The junkyard Indians are out right now,
The gentlemen are lighting their cigars,
But I am on the wrong mountain.
I am on Jupiter,
And all I have is cheese and crackers.
When contemporary daylight falls,
She will be alone with him; he'll have
Brought over his videogames,
And she will have cleaned off any traces of
Our domesticity;
She'll have renamed the cats,
And sent the mercenary lightning storms calling after
All my scars: And all I wanted was to
Be beautiful, to junk up the breathless sky with
My name;
But this range is apathetic,
My tent is blue and torn, and all the stones
Are gossiping,
And I have gone down the drainage of the wrong
Basin,
All the wildflowers are evil,
And they will be making love in our bed,
And by the time I've found the narrow gauge
Railroad and refilled the canteen by its creek,
She'll have boxed up my Christmas Presents,
And hung a crown of her new name;
And the foreign exchange student working the service
Car will look at me appraisingly, but
Have a change of heart, and by that she will put
A new lock on her bicycle,
And I shall disappear amongst all these tourists
Before we should make it back to Durango.

Christmas Sea-Shanty

I've gained weight,
But its mostly muscle,
Because with these Christmas trees
I like to hustle:
Two Chinese women come in and they're
Very thin and beautiful, I'm not
There to greet them, but the boys are
And with them tussle just as the females
Who work in factories building silver bombs,
Their forearms, too, are well muscled.
Now the days are through, and I'm neither
Italian, or Hindu: I've never built an igloo.
Well supposed, I love Erin,
But she could be one in a million of Erins,
I suppose: but this one doesn't live in
The mountains, the secret crèches or double-
Adjective. Maybe she water-skiis:
She fits nicely into this,
She is an allegory for the sea:
And now I sway, my cheeks smooth from rum,
And tomorrow we'll sell two hundred trees,
And daddy will smile,
And then I'll get some....

Robert Rorabeck

Christmas Sky

Sunlight has its new management again in the sky:
You were kissing her:
I could not describe you
Again in the sunlight of the cul-de-sac of another
Honeymoon-
But I saw you again in the ferris wheels of
I don't know-
But I saw you again in his arms and across the
Train tracks even though nothing else of it was
Anything special:
And the daylight seeds over the teeth of dragons,
But anything more from the classical
Literature is lost to me-
And Johnny Apple seed has burned down my throat,
And you are still climbing up the latter to him
In the stars-
My uncle is still selling grapefruit and calebasas-
The ukuleles still sing across the yards
Like the hind ends of
Locusts-
That this is the very end of summer, and the fireworks
Have burned,
And all of our greatest loves have disappeared beneath the
Rose bushes-
As the fish still try to leap to kiss the tattooed lips of
The angels bending down in the constellations of
A less than Christmas sky.

Robert Rorabeck

Christmas Tree

Good men love bad women
And visa versa—this I know- as I sometimes
Kept the feminine serpents
In my house—
But kept my ears to the sunlight, listening outside
To the serpents who measured their bellies
By the ways the grasses grew—
And yet somehow serpents never learned how
To grow fat:
They had bulges when they ate the rabbits—
And the sunlight made new sounds around them
Until they shed themselves,
And then became the failing sunlight around
The carports that only sometimes existed—
As the planets turned inside the ballrooms of their
Satellites—
And she followed her husband to the very ends of
The earth—even though he beat her—
She dug herself out of the grave every morning—
And painted her nails for the mirages of
Skeletons—
And then, even though it wasn't enough—
She pretended to love me, as she left her skin
Underneath the tree for me at Christmas,
As some kind of present she meant for me to have.

Robert Rorabeck

Christmas Trees Of Oh So Far Away

Places lost from treasures, and crystal, mathematical labyrinths
Bled around the perimeters of likeminded castles—
Girls who have wondered so lonely from the isometric holidays,
Who have burned away from those cages—
And enjoyed themselves, collected to the hemispheres of
The graveyards around the lakes—and are silent
And as wholesome as mirages whose younger brothers
Bicycle to the penny candy stores—
And steal jaw breakers and licorice to feed to the ants before
They burn them—when the sun lays in the meadow like a rhinoceros
And seems to develop beneath the infinitely cerulean
Debarcation of sky—where angels evaporate from the silent
Thoughts of another summer's Christmas trees of oh so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

Christmas Trees Or Video Games

Consumed upon the terraces of the
Ferris Wheels
That are turning from the evaporations under
Their streets:
Girls who have gone away never come again
To the same place—
Metamorphosis of cheap carnival into
A water wheel
Conquistadors lie down their granite crosses
To hear the whispered
Gossips of- and butterflies come and lay
Down beside the recesses where there
Once used to be fixed
Carnival games—
Where I once set the piece of my flesh,
Like the center of a kaleidoscope
Because some cat or
Some fox would have said it would make
Me rich,
But she didn't return—lost up into the
Castanets lit up like
Christmas trees or video games:
Only the waves returned, beating themselves
Like hungry beggars against the pedestals of
Bars and churches the same—

Robert Rorabeck

Chrysalis Of Bull-Sh-Tters

Covered in the chrysalis of bull-sh-tters
I see how you smile to woo
What are you doing now but calling
In the same old weather fronts over
The used car lot,
The pennants are flapping
The gossiping of clucking throats—
Now everyone has one
And are being noticed, the beautifully
Needing eyes—
The lovely women in the glass vase
They taste like the sweetest things as they
Tease swimming with their tight legs
Over the unmowed grass and weeds;
And the trailer is fading on cinderblocks,
And no one here has been to school in
So long,
And go leaping in the trolling dusk,
Their adam's apples bobbing the sweat
And bad skin of the truck stop's colloquialisms,
And the women are so beautiful like little
Unschool'd fairytales bighting the inside
Of their flushed cheeks all their unwashed children
Following them like ugly gosling the
Beautiful swan, their hands around the sticky
Things never quite bothering with
What they must become.

Robert Rorabeck

City Of Red Slumbers

I suppose you are lying- the sky so wide
It drapes the rivers and the places
Where people lie
Beside the traffic where light is moving;
It is a zoetrope of businesses- haven't you
Seen it before in this kind of light.
The antelope are stargazing- they almost
Seem to be frightened
As they stumble out of the forest covering
The arrowheads- as the planes tip in
The sky,
Soon they will be touching down in a
City of red slumbers-
And the people will come stirring out,
Swearing that they will do some good.

Robert Rorabeck

City Of Their Daydreams

Place me in the salesroom of another
Gypsie's queen and I will moth off for you—
I will throw my own father underneath the buss—
As the most beautiful of women still try to survive
In the exact middle of the country,
And as the school children get home today
They try to watch cartoons—
But the tortoise has lasted as long as the
Dinosaurs, so what is his spell—
What does he have that we are missing—
Now that the time is almost gone underneath
The airplanes—
And the same illusions become lost underneath the
Zoetrope—until the space explorers are finally explored—
And the zoo has time to touch itself beside the sea—
And the rest of our reasons are left over to time
And perpetuity—in the kindergartens of the day-glow
Recesses where all of the other mountaineers have already failed,
And these are the last tracks the mountain lions have already
Pretended to caresses—so the night is already lost beneath
The immense tourists who come like winter to a daylight
They mean to explore—perpetuated by their unawareness
In a daylight where they become as meaningless as the
City of their daydreams.

Robert Rorabeck

Clarity (Nov.9th,1989)

Let me be clear:

The sun before it goes down

Has no home.

There are still people inside

The earth

Who have never held the night

Sky-

Around the corner,

In blue lamplight,

She dresses and serves

Strange men her eyes

(Their atmospheres merge 9 to 5) -

Inside a room, talking,

She is more lovely than the sea

Breathing;

I want to take her shift Sunday,

So she can go to church

And pray for me,

But she cannot say clearly

That she loves me nor does

She remember how her lips felt

Press into me,

But I see her with perfect

Clarity....

Like the sun in his bright house As the world lays sleeping....

Robert Rorabeck

Classrooms Of Stolen Lights

Career for knights
In a playground where the perfumes
Of damsels remain:
But they have gone, matriculated up to the
Sky
And college- terrapins out in the open weep
At stages-
Tinfoil thunder with lightning creases
Across the cars that will not stop
Because they think they are going home to
Something real-
As the grass struggles underneath the moon
That gives nothing but illusions with
Its classrooms of stolen light.

Robert Rorabeck

Cleaved Needfully Into Weedy Tennis Courts

Slash pines coming at every angle,
Like stiffly exploding vermilion tinsel.

My mother cut my hair today,
Out back of our new produce market,

Or I shouldn't say,
Because you were not there:
You are not here,
And it has been so many yesterdays-

You have never seen my mother cutting my
Hair,
And yet Florida is such a beautifully wimpled
Esplanade,

And the slash pines don't so much care if they
Grow without the thoughtfulness of your
Senses;
It is a sad park, and yet they grow so beautiful,
Twisted and bent
Like swords that would never have suited you
Cleaved need-fully into weedy tennis courts.

Robert Rorabeck

Cleopatra

Sally want an apple,
Sally want a ball,
Sally want Mark Anthony
But don't we,
Don't we all.

Robert Rorabeck

Cleopatra Of The Atlantic Basin

There are cabarets in South
Florida,
In West Palm Beach up and
Down Military Trail,
Entertainment for the army-
Girls in high-heeled parade with pink
Fingernails that smell like
Industrial glue,
Dead horses and dollar store
Glitter sprinkled in tatters
Above their eyes-
They go around tables with
Love handles, overweight Barbies
Picked out by strangers from the gutter—
Like naked panhandlers
They are working....
There are cabarets in South
Florida
And dark corners where
You can pay, but walk
To the East
And you will find the sea
Spread out the wreathing bed
Pearlescent in the seducing moonlight—
She will let you swim all night
Through her salt—
Her waves undulate like terrific steeds
Rearing along her inner thighs,
Her breath, the wind moans,
Motivates the passion's tide—
She will take you in and
Play with you as the moon's pull heaves
The waves of her bosom over you....
She will never tire nor lose interest
And when you are finished,
You can lie against her
Shore as the sun rises,
Smoke a cigarette and
Get a tan all day long

While she caresses your fingers
With her tongue;
She will never stop-
There are cabarets in South
Florida,
But just offshore to the East
Is where She lies,
Unashamedly bared,
In perpetual motion, going nowhere,
Over-spilling from her dress
As the traffic goes by like metal fish,
Glinting on her flirtatious eyes,
Cleopatra of the Atlantic Basin.

Robert Rorabeck

Cliff Notes

In all its ways
The land goes down,
Goes down falling as children
Float and laugh in the waves,
To the sea in the sun,
And everything is inevitably real:
The beautiful and the scarred,
The amphibious life
Which takes no surrender,
Though always eventually
The heroes die,
For they forever create the better monsters:
The unconquerable things that
Have her eyes,
Things left undefeated with no last name
But their own,
In the mist, in the park,
At the edge of the all too real continent,
When you went alone
And believed it could be true,
Though afterwards you crawled home
Licking your wounds,
And she walked on down the hill,
When another man became her king,
And sailed off with him into another land,
In the space across that is leading upwards
Far away where things carry new names
And children are born
From the golden caesuras,
Pauses between the lapping waves.

Robert Rorabeck

Climaxing The Rhyme

Slit my wrist on sabotage-
Just learning how to feel- The words are
Real or they're not; they won't
Make you young, or feed you hot twat;
I really think that they cannot,
But they're my fun anyways: Better than baseball,
My words, the game,
Sluiced enough with rum they can give you
A day job out picking fruit,
To whistle to the girls speeding along on their
Route;
And, yes, I've loved- loved airplanes and dogs,
Love the girls spinning, spinning Cadillacs from frogs:
But it gets cold here restive both day and night,
Spinning my words and smoking my pipe:
I cannot remember the last time it was I've read
A good book,
And even when a really good poet dies, he overshoot
By consumptive actors, the baby-faced paramours
That I know that I'm not;
But I find myself singing here anyways, my fingers and
Toes tasting the grave,
Needing to shave: And the girls who love their
Athletes are spinning in time,
Hooked altogether a mighty fine catch on a fine
Fishing line, making an easy mobile for guys on their
Line;
And I find myself rhyming, rhyming for food-
And I could start giving the Christian names for the girls
For whom I'm casting but that would be just rude;
Instead, I'll try to wrap up this thing,
Burning with a match and a squirt of gasoline;
That seems much like the best thing to do,
To smile sincerely hearted and burn down this zoo;
And meet her under the bleachers if she's got enough time,
And caress her so that she climaxes this rhyme.

Robert Rorabeck

Climbing My Usual Mountains

So many numbers reveal,
The divine platitudes to the ear-
I want to live beside her and whisper
And reveal my scars
And have her accept them;

So I care nothing about math, and skip out
Over the canal, and wash myself
In the alligator's dribble,
And swing upside-down under the warming dykes cut up
By palmettos

Now the days are dripping,
And the horses stumble far beneath her
Contemplative gaze- far away on
New savage continents too busy
Getting drunk
To be able to walk a straight line:

All my lines tumble.
They are no good, and they are hungry
But we are out of food.
I would lie and say that I am standing here
Waiting.
Rather I am sitting-
I have eaten my lunch and thrown it up again
To get a goodly poetic look at the inside,
And now all the flies come prettily like
So many crowds fallen winged too high
From all those rollercoasters....

Blue mothers and their offspring decrying
That they deserve more prizes,
While choking on the influx

Waiting for the traffic to bypass,
For some surgery- a year or more since I've seen
The ocean I used to flip casually nondescript into,
To piss warmly, an exurban bachelor in that truancy

And now I thirst for her briny lips,
And her brown and kelped bosom.

Tonight I will get drunk and pretend to go into
Her again and steal things which are precious to her,
Which she would have me steal;
But not on Sake, because I live in the far west,
And the best I could do about it was
Cheap rum, the kind I drank as a tip for Christmas-
I will see the barmaid who in my dreams
Is a raspy DJ mostly fading,
But I should not go on about that until I am goodAnd drunk,
And have gotten well started climbing my usual mountains.

Robert Rorabeck

Close Your Eyes

I finish off my last beer while Romero is outside
Walking around in the last of crepuscule;
I remember that there is a swing set in the black apartments
Down the street from the produce market,
And then I get out of the truck where I sleep and toss the
Beer bottle into the tall grass;
I come back inside, the textures glossed with rain
And try not to brush my burning face: Somewhere there is a
Beautiful woman for me- Somewhere like a Disney Movie,
There is a beautiful woman- There is, isn't there:
And the traffic comes and the traffic goes,
Vertical indentured traffic, never touching:
It is so impossible now- and I sling the last of my words like
Tossing colors onto a weary palate- like finger painting
In kindergarten, which is still maddening from the
Girls I love;
And pretty soon I will put my head to the truck's bed
And go on a fieldtrip somewhere vast,
While my lips drool and my snake bleeds:
I want to go all the way out into the sea and meet you on
Some very grand atolls and kiss your lips,
And troll the depths of your shallows and hang my head between
Your clefts,
And sing like a prisoner running free until morning's red lanterns
Enthrall me and with its hateful dogs brings me back around
To capitulate with a reality that cannot be refuted until
You close your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

Closer To Me

When did she lose herself after shop class
And maybe barefoot in the crown of thorns in some part
Of the off centered diamond
In the landscaping of middle school:
Where she went to instead of going to lunch is where
She has always gone to,
And we will never know, except that we already know:
And she has made beautiful things with her body, marching,
Played out under the sun
Where she can actually relax for awhile while her
Kids are playing;
And then her eyes have to wander, because that is what she
Is made of, and I can only hypothesize that is what she is
Always doing;
And at night while her trailer makes the sounds of ghosts
Too impossibly large to be there,
I think she is moving again, her body softly breathing:
I dream that she is getting closer to me.

Robert Rorabeck

Closer To The Sun

I drink gold fish
Like a girl;
I look at you
Sideways
With your guys.
I wonder how many
Clouds live in
The sky,
And how long they live.
I want to find your
Secret hearts
And survive.
And I want to build a
Castle of chicken wire and
Papier-mâché
Light enough to float enshrouded
By airplanes;
To steal your beautiful days
Away with me
Into the sky;
I wonder if I could:
What shapes you
Might take
Whistling in the kitchens
Closer to
The sun.

Robert Rorabeck

Closing In Colorado

Girls in dormitories in Spain,
Religious girls,
In curls, who sigh in the rain:
They go to school in Spain.
Maybe they are near the sea,
The ancient terrapin where ghosts who
Have no home go to collect salt,
And I love my horses
And do not have enough time to watch
The beautiful girls swimming away
In short skirts,
Like tennis players,
Their bones as light and well-mended as
Drift-wood.
Where are they going; it is as if they can hear
The song I cannot hear,
While the sea bolsters the meatiest of storm
Clouds,
Like entire racks of ham, bloodied, dudgeoned,
Going up and up like Wedding Cakes
Circled by buzzards;
Like the gowns Sharon wore when she took the
Name of another man,
Outside near the river that eventually formed
The Grand Canyon, oh-ing and awing
While my snowflakes fell melting too high for
Her to know to care,
So by the time they touched her special picnic
They were only but a whisper upon her
Bare shoulders as she danced in the seeded grass
With the man who would soon bare children
By the upright womb that can always be found
Walking home after closing in Colorado.

Robert Rorabeck

Closing Your Eyes

When you try to run away from school,
As the alligators yawn
While the princes try to feed it apples, hoping something
Will change-
You get away and find the overgrown paths up to
The clouds- there seems to be some hallway there,
Evaporating-
Leading up to the promises of a three ring circus
With you skin so brown and lying passed out beneath
The Christmas tree
The chimney coming down to you- and at midnight
Your body is golden and so rich that,
Closing your eyes, everything you've ever imagined
Is all at once stolen.

Robert Rorabeck

Cloud

It may have been cloudy
When the clouds sang one afternoon:
They really sang,
And evaporated dryads crowded in the
Ephemeral visions, cried the tears which did
For the allegory of a sun shower:
So light above our blooming heads, we
Couldn't even tell:
But you came over to me, just as well,
And we studied Latin. I was already becoming
Scarred, and I was surprised when you asked
Me what was wrong, and you couldn't tell:
I loved in the only language germane to my
Tongue: stuck like a fleshy spelunker to the
Roof of my mouth when confronted by you:
Can't even speak now, but lays quietly hostage
Against the classroom of my skull;
In the quiet classroom abandoned by an eerie
Tide. The seat you occupied now empties,
Like a liquor bottle; your legs no longer echo,
Laughter no longer fills the adolescent halls,
The language quiets and the clouds pass by as
Casual as strangers who do not remember how
They passed their tears down to us,
And you didn't even know.

Robert Rorabeck

Cloud Of Vapor And Heroes

As a cloud of vapor and heroes,
Floating over the keyholes where Alice disappeared—
She seems to have metamorphosed with the
Sunset,
She seems to be burning away into tomorrow—
And an upset jubilee stretches herself out
Where ever you might find her—
Maybe she even becomes something utterly
Beautiful that cannot be remembered—
And then they are making themselves up
To be presented to the beautiful theatre—
While the Alamo lies surrounded—
And the tin man and the scarecrow lie together
Underneath the narcolepsy of forgetful rainbows—
So when the moon arises she offers up
Her unconditional surrender.

Robert Rorabeck

Clouds Out To Lunch

Wasted dollars out to lunch,
Words left on the bank like dead flowers.
She takes herself to find new love
At the roller rink amidst all
Of the glitter—
To forget about backyard swimming pools
And the school boys that can be found
Sometimes coming home in
An almost hedonistic rain.
We all have a price to pay
But our time is up.
Clouds are built to fly away.

Robert Rorabeck

Cold Beer And Web-Pages

Derelect of friends,
I look at beautiful pictures of
Fit tourists in Colorado,
Half-Asians and the Jewish
Boy I remember sleepovers with:
Street Fighter, Cathy Ireland,
And ballrooms of ineffective light
Over the backyard pool-
His sister dating a kung-fu artist,
And the first time I got drunk
Watching Alien 3,
Girls in high school fully clothed
Who are now lawyers and
Sommeliers who sleep at the
Neck of the woods but go no further:
In the pictures there are self-effected
Smirks, eyes sealed shut from
Greenish smoke,
And all the undeveloped afternoons
Of videogames, the eventual
Slip away from college,
Quiet expulsions; he never had
His bar mitzvah, in Telluride they
Ride the ski-lift over her new restaurant:
They make raids on banks,
Have snowball fights. I am applying
For my PhD. I have a published thesis,
But I play videogames in my parents'
Basement most afternoons when I
Am done feeding the horses; I remember
How the lions roar, and the tourists
Sweated. I think about reading something
Academic by Auden, but his rhymes are
Routine. I write insouciantly;
They fall in love the same way, and
In the casual meetings order burgers and
Fries. The world is a wonderful scar-less
Place which rolls over in the sunny grass,
Panting without abstraction:

His sister eventually gave up
On martial arts, and married another
Banker from Poland. They have
Never read of Sylvia Plathe;
He designs web-pages and drinks
Cold beer.

Robert Rorabeck

Coloring-Book Conquistador

Are you still doing this, or are you too busy
Stealing bicycles, the spoken fauna of the student ghetto;
I know, and there are trailer parks further out in the brush
And people who live in them sometimes
Dress up and go to work at Renaissance Festivals:
I've been to one or two,
And just down the block a little toy airport where my paper
Airplanes are always breezing, mottled in the rain,
They still taxi with hidden appreciations in their spectacularly
White fjords, with plastic stewardess serving drinks
To your painted fingernails: Rub my belly like a lottery
Ticket, see my magic rabbit hanging in the cactus garden,
These images I have for you, like pornography not
So deep in the woods that a little boy can go easily for
Awhile, a coloring book conquistador, find out how you
Lay your legs around every fire-hydrant- a sure thing,
Tomboy; and once I live nearby the sea, won't you come and
Visit, and watch me spill out my guts into the fine, fine
Sands, like a toy chest itself, cowboys and Indians and great
Presocratic heroes spilling out; its what they do,
Because I've brushed my teeth.
Because I have inside me most everything you can pickup
At the dollar store and walk right out the door with;
And I don't know why I am doing this, bequeathing my
Genuflecting art into the night, the penny candy the werewolves
Eat like after dinner mints after feasting on the neighborhood's
Cats, and then always returning to doorsteps and toady
Carports. Restive on their burry haunches, half-man thinkers,
Reciprocating with the waning gibbous, down they salute
You whilst you drool like a creamy mollusk across the downy
Pillow half a body's length above the saltwater good atrocity
Of that aromatic maidenhead.

Robert Rorabeck

Colors Never Known By Our Previous Families

These are the gentle scribbles of my childcare
While I hear new cars,
And I don't want to go to New Mexico and lose my job
Fornicating over you,
A-, just to sell fireworks for America, which isn't even your
Country;
But early in the morning I wished that you heard my words like
Going out barefooted in the dew to pick strawberries
And sell lies,
Because I have been busy articulating for you, because
I want to attend my tongue to your sweet rind again:
I want to take you out to eat near the sea, underneath all of the noises
Of the flags and the airplanes,
And then I just want to lay you down in bed and kiss you everywhere
That doesn't count until you can hardly stand it,
And then I want to make a bright gallery of you that cannot be
Turned off:
I want you moaning symphonies of special elements and light parades:
Then it would be our amusement filled with horny caracoles and new
Colors never known by our previous families,
And I would keep you so light in your fancies, that you could
Never come down without apologizing and getting off on me.

Robert Rorabeck

Color's Ransom

Underboiling in color's ransom
Three sisters courting
A cavalier sea
His waves go cresting
Handsome
Caressing the subtle knobs
Of six related knees

On the indefinite horizon,
Merchant ships go trading
On him,
Following the roads of
Whales beneath them
Sleepy leviathans swimming
Through the gloaming
From home to home they're
Roaming
Through the current he is
Breathing

Earth, sea, and sky are weaving
Translucent borders
Upon the day,
Like the lips of
Three young lovers
Sunlight leaping across
The rocks defining the bay.

Robert Rorabeck

Come Another Wonderful Morning

I meant to say something beautiful, tossing the bottle up
To taste my lips,
While I thought I saw the coral snake underneath the trailer
Some weeks ago:
Yes, wasn't it mother's day: and I can't remember if I had yet
Tussled with A-,
But it seems to me now as if that too was a dream,
For surely I can never do that again:
How close I go to her while even then the icecream trucks were
Getting up and not even yet dreaming about their
Songs of ululating;
And then I think that there are so many statues of the Virgin of Gaudelupe

Up and down Cherry Rd and where her uncle Romero lives:
I was in his house tonight even though he wasn't home:
Mierna fed me dinner,
And then I looked at her collection of Virgins and thought of A-:
Then I went to Walmart and bought a Mexican baseball cap,
And now I am at home drinking without air-conditioning,
Hoping that I will be all sobered up
Come another wonderful morning.

Robert Rorabeck

Come At Me

Come at me
In cadmium waves
The fateless albatross aflame
We suicidal whalers
Ignited with gasoline and
Roman candles—
Come at me with
Hissing torches the survivors of
Shipwrecks see
The ruby hearts of angels
Flying aces, saviors
Like Jesus' words penned in scripture
The catcher in the deeps
Wearing a red hunting cap
As he pulls them kissing
From the saw-toothed waves
Come at me, my
Ship of bedded breathing,
Disrobed in exultations,
Swimming breathless
Our love moving,
Make a
Growing garden
Bobbing and blooming,
Leaving a wake of phosphorous
The finned Fates circling—
Come at me
Like a wave cresting,
A high heeled viaduct
Blushing and wreathing,
As she steps up,
A Roman legion marching
In crackling wheat in silver slips
Jangling,
Come at me—

Robert Rorabeck

Come On

Dark and blue satellites are around my eyes-
I would almost look beautiful
In a mask for valentines; and would the petit
Nocturnal orbits,
These ellipses of ochre proof attract your eyes?
Would you come dallying like a curious serpent
Through the grasses, before my time was up,
To share my cup and show your teeth?

But, this is just one of the pretty things I think
About when I am concerning you-
I want to put your chassis up on cinder blocks so
I can drink lemonade shirtless next to the sharp
Thicket of weeds which I know will come
And explore you-
The namelessly ba\$ard wildflowers:
Oh, obsessively bloom

Anonymously, in all of its glory,
With the sun laying his hands on you, a
Positive general; and even if you rust you are kind
Of beautiful;
But now I must go to Saint Louis to become a
Doctor;
If I blow my whistle, won't you come?

Robert Rorabeck

Come Sail Away

If I came to you now, wouldn't you stand without
A dropp of sympathy:
You might even laugh outwardly at my scars,
And that would be okay as long as you served
Me beer.
Rimbaud was laughed at too, and he lost his leg;
And you could get your bluer boys with anchors on
Their biceps to rough me up a bit,
And then swing lippy into you to show me how it
Is done, if I was brave enough to drink from
Your venal crèche; but my body is constructed for
Hard labor,
So it might surprise you that after I knocked their
Lights out and dragged you past the cheery
Buildings of your favorite University, thrashing up
All the not so wild flowers along the way
As another useless gift of suffocating beauty,
I would keep my balance and stamina, and it would
Only hurt a little, coming up out of the sea
And losing your breath, and saying such names
That I suppose, after awhile, we might name our children.

Robert Rorabeck

Comely Furnace Still Round With Grace

The day slips good- I try and read Carl Hiaasen,
But I don't have the knack for it anymore:
I play with dolls in little churches with thimble blue
Crèches,
And matchbox cars that have crashed belly-up through
The hedges. Lawrence's tortoises go at in a way that
They make it clear they see no need to finish;
And she is upstage in her play, later on making out with
The same actors that I have seen in outer space-
On cherry wood floorboards covered by smoke curling
From slightly opened, pensive lips; and it seems as
If the world has gotten stuck. Perhaps it is,
And only the clouds move and the trailer parks ripple
As if trying to come out of a long standing social dream,
But otherwise the hands superimpose on domestic beers-
The baseball caps are dusty and have attracted the occasional
Fly. The baseball diamond is looking down the rows of
Softly sunk canals where the alligators freeze, their bark skin
Run over with jackets of tough ice; and now neither team will
Win; the finely outfitted boys just standing there, chewing
Their lips, bats in half-swing, runners in half-slide-
The brown eyes curiously unafraid as the balmy sun glides
Its pace, a comely furnace still round with grace.

Robert Rorabeck

Comfort Porn

Serpentine scars are better left alone:
But I'll do all of this for a dollar
Out in the desert of some war, and Christine has a
New friend,
They have long conversations together when
I am not home- Subconsciously, they have a family
Together;
And the best thing about the family is the pool:
Here is the concrete slab they'll pour the water in;
It will be so clean and new,
And their children and their dogs will bathe in,
Fidelity and affluence esteemed by the pool;
And down the green easement, mowed, the canal
For more obscured things to swim in-
The language of the ground when it rains is a funny
Thing: They make love when the kids sail away to school,
When their thoughts are away at work, drawing paychecks;
This funny thing, the woman transformed from the girl,
Who kissed my neck, who stared at me in brilliant shades
Of sunlight out at lunch, who I caught wild fish for
And petted, and named for her; and let them drown and
Think for awhile at the end of my pole-
Gone away now, some awful war, another girl in a deck of
Nude playing cards manhandled at the businessman's association,
Or by grease monkeys when they're done hooking up cars:
And on the streets I can hear no guns or bombs,
But young Mexican women eagerly pushing castanets and prams seem to
Be doing well for themselves; perhaps their husbands are even now
Working and trimming and dying in those fair yards of
The girl I once knew or women like her.

Robert Rorabeck

Coming Around

They didn't like what I said:
I told them they were going to die,
And after the patterns scattered like
Seeds blown into the earth by time's
Autumn wind,
They would never think of her again,
Nor see her glittery gown
Strung out like New York addicts
Copping for tricks on their street,
The way the Indians died early in the show,
Butchered by the Spanish knives of silver,
Their bows no longer arching after the divine does
Through the splay of sunlight through the palm fronds.
So they too will go,
Some before and some after their mothers.
They will recede like the tide of a salty sea—
Their pains will not linger. Their thoughts will not stray,
For time does not tarry upon men such as these,
But sets to work cleaning house for
The new guests and the new lovers.
Everything they ever learned will be cast out
And found to be falsehood,
And their old neighborhoods will gradually
Fill with strangers of another race
Of the same socioeconomic class....
Where other men will say of them what they will,
But it will make no difference,
For death does not listen but goes
Straight for the ending. He takes their wives,
As he takes their lovers.... With no remorse,
He takes them down, and he will not listen to anything
They say,
For even now he is too busy
Coming around.

Robert Rorabeck

Coming Back With The Rain

Oh my, but my pedestal is empty:
She must have stepped off to use the bathroom,
Or go shopping-
She must have gotten tired while waiting to
Inspire- my art,
But you should have seen her fireworks:
They were all leggy, a chorus-line of shaven
Gypsum- She was taking time off serving drinks on
Airplanes,
Leaping the sea, so handsome;
So all the Bible salesmen blamed me on their
Descent in,
Their hands empty, their glasses thin,
And their lips were so hungry for her eyes:
I'm no good at explaining,
But everything she was selling was buy one get one
Free,
So the boys queued in her meadows: the bouncers,
The baseball players, and me;
And everything I did for her was extemporaneous,
But nothing I had to show her was original:
She said she would have liked it better if I was more toothy,
Feral, like one of the boys she'd heard mooning on the
Radio- Handsome, at least in general;
But all that old gang had done too much howling,
And they were so good at their husbandries and grooming,
They'd gotten married well before her show was over,
Prowling;
And she had nothing to show for it,
So busy was she in her cabaret's preening:
Her entire career was empty, the bees had already knocked
Up their particular flowers;
And so I persuaded her up here into my
Moony studio; and then down into my gutters, and swung the neighbor's
Galleries and swimming pools in to accentuate her,
And I climbed up some mountains and nearly died
Just to give her an example,
To remind her of her powers;
And I bought or stole her entire shops full of flowers;

But all of that only bought me an hour-
And I don't know where the heck she went,
But my mind was bent, cause it knows there's a billion goodly
Boys out fetching on their red diamonds,
Spitting tobacco, punchy, and well-versed at busting
Hymens:
But I'll sing for her still from my open window, as
The empty sky feeds the corn field,
The defeated heroes hoe their friends with the serpent's
Fangs;
And I draw her allures with my fingers, invisible,
Auburn bangs;
And pray that she comes back with the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

Coming Down On Us All

Now they have a place for you too:
The same place where they butchered the unicorns:
I suppose you cannot remember:
Underneath the shade of the overpasses—or
In the luxurious orchards that made up the long shoulder-blades
Of the forts that stood beside the sea:
They said they took away the bride I could never have had and
Stranded her in a place filled with day laborers above
The Laundromats of
Disney World in the center of the state: and I suppose it was
A beautiful place, if I had to believe in it—
But then all of the while the sun was coming down, touching off,
And melting the ice-cream of the ice-cream parlors
Where there wasn't any ice-cream anyways—
And the banana splits became like naked stewardesses
I drove around in sometimes, trying to reciprocate myself with
Them,
Like a dying butterfly trying to have a good time at a party
Outside of the Laundromats
When all of the carpenters were passed out—and I could not
Belong anywhere outside of the graveyards even though
That was the only place to shelter in
With another god-d#mned judgement coming down on us all.

Robert Rorabeck

Coming Up Going Down

I've seen you now,
Your mystery,
I've summited and found out your
Elevation,
Through my proficient scars,
I junked your cars,
And took accurate triangulations:
Smelled your lingerie like prayer-flags,
Whipping reverentially in
Your laundry room
Underneath your gods
Where you keep yourself
When you are falling asleep;
And as a favor to you, I went back outside
Wet, and on the take,
I mowed your grass,
I cut you a break: and smiled, and smiled,
But took no pictures
What I learned in your eerie elevations,
Manicures above tree line
Where lightning strikes become especially
Dangerous; it
Was all incredibly beautiful, you belong on
The cover of magazines;
And what I took from you,
I couldn't take from teachers.

Robert Rorabeck

Commercial Pilot's Longing No Longer

Yes,

The Heavens are beautiful, but I no longer care;

And yet I stare, and stare, and stare.

Robert Rorabeck

Common Courtesy

What does my heart feel like now;
But it feels like a long poem wanting more the
Poisons of my muses of putrescent Janus;
Looking both ways from the doorways of these
Awful purple valves,
While there are little keyholes of vision,
Then the crickets and golf balls, and the wickedness
Of water-breathing reptiles in the tall grasses of
Head-shaven cannibals:
I awakened this day of my third decade and asked a
Girl out for the first time,
And she said she couldn't because she said she was
Not mine;
I asked a girl out for the first and for the last time,
And the candles melted under the pillow of unanswered
Virgins,
And I slouched off to the sea alone in my diesel truck
With the amphibian airplanes leaping above the ankles of
These almost vanished Titans;
And I thought of my muses, but paid to be laid by a little
Ballerina in the marmalade shade;
And it was so wonderful, and it was almost surreal for a
Second to lie to myself and to almost believe in the
Statues franchising in this dusk,
That I wasn't a man so alone that it was just a common
Courtesy to fail.

Robert Rorabeck

Comparisons With Auden

I read a hundred pages of Auden for a lark.
I really want to like him, but what a jerk,
Addressing Lord Byron as if he were the Queen
Of New Denmark:
Keeping to his clever ways of rhyming, eyes
Closed in the dark- I think he should live forever,
Like a unicorn, or some other phallic faerie
His humor as quietly insincere as canine flatulence,
Tipping his glass and toasting to his own upper middle-class,
A real fine Mary; young Rimbaud, I'm fearing,
Is gravely more sincere, even one legged than that
Pickled herring. Even though some critics are fond
Of comparing those two alike, in such sentiment
I shouldn't be sharing- It would be like coupling gold with
Bronze, is such a paring; or,
If we were to take a fieldtrip down the avenues of
Later day debutants, juxtaposing Charles Bukowski with
Silvia Plathe in a damp cellar is less crass:
One checks the oven, the other his liquor glass,
And it is up for the reader to decide what's more worth sharing:
The celebrated letter-poor or the subject of this evening's English
Class.

Robert Rorabeck

Con Quien

The bodies peel out and
Make friends while I
Have been languishing here
For a
Diatribes of angels;
I guess it's true that I hate
Your cars,
And the ways that you
Drive
So insouciantly past
The Mexican family playing
Con Quien underneath
The overpass;
But they are just as
Happy to be ignorant of
You.
And this is just a game
I tell to myself while the
Airplanes recede
That way to the ocean,
And your reflection
Recedes back into
The antique diamonds
And prisoms
Sweated from the
Epidermis of the
Thoughtless pool.

Robert Rorabeck

Concerning Our Great Divide

Mark Twain's a great genius-
Spilling of boys, has fine numbers and
The arithmetic of condors,
A Midwestern steam captain, pipe teeth-in-clenched,
Brow molded by a draftsman trough,
A Zoroastrian of the fable fields;
Look at how he goes, skipping the wake after
Other steamboats have exploded,
Given up on the race, and his younger brother
Has died, sacrificing to Twain his innocence,
Giving inspiration and zeal;
And all the better man has to say for it is that he
Is but a Machine inspired by his master's impatience,
The same as a ant or dog or pachyderm;
And underneath his circus comet dare deviling still,
Skipping a sand dollar over the earth's astonished
Atmosphere,
I am but a small boy farting out words, like messy
Fingerprints, while Death is handling the lions, laughing
From the caracoles of gasoline fires, as he will have his thrill.
Flustered by Clemen's victory, the Great Rectifier will
Glut with the flies, return my mottles into the reveal ivories
Of a discarded bouquet, if I can't bight my tongue tighter,
And figure out more of the mysteries of lackadaisical genius
Of the bathhouse and smoke-hall,
If I can't learn how to simply spell before its all over-
Because this isn't kindergarten- Twain is palavering with
Satan in the garden, those two great despoilers don't care
An inch for this anonymous roil, and Death their faithful
Hound, excited by the broiling elements of the hoary field,
Will have a handy soul for lunch, a basket of pullulated sweet
Meats to enjoy the show, regardless of Sunday School morals;
I can see my mother and all the ladies calling in their
Skirts from across the canal, but it is the only vision
The world has afforded to me, and there is nothing of it
To which the world now recalls.

Robert Rorabeck

Concessions Of My Language

Call me by something better,
A golden word,
Not by my Anglo-Saxon utterance,
Something long ago conquered by France:
See, even now she is following
Him into the gym where he will sculpt
Himself like a Mandela of sweat and
Grease. Even though he will never
Last, like David, he will only
Come into her see-sawing for this semester,
She will moan his name, and rejoin
Into him the way the ocean gives
Its crests and caesuras. Rather, I would
Like to be a great author who doesn't
Have to prepare for his time,
But rides on in primary colors making
Lawyers and politicians fade, but
This can never be true, because people
Need their heroes, and the park is
Lonely, and the moon has its pull:
I should go to her even tonight, walk down
An empty street that two lovers forgot
So long ago. There is only a shadow
Weeping for me that takes her outline,
And in even the faintest light
She is barely real, but accepts
What little talent I can give to her,
And is so polite as to not even mention
My name at all, and hides when drunken
Traffic comes by, conceding that I
Should be alone.

Robert Rorabeck

Confectious

The interstate is beautiful:
See it going both ways, expeditious and
Almost free of cops:
I've taken her avenue so many times
Between West Palm and
Gainesville,
Before I had a scar of a job:
You can go to Disney World and kiss a
Plastic princess in your palace of chicken wire:
You can be a fox,
And put the needle into the red:
Put the glorious weed into the vein of your left
Arm:
Or I can forget you and all the roadside distractions,
Remembering the call of the sea and helicopters
Yearning,
The coral beds of otters and spacemen:
I can take the courses all the way to Colorado and
Continue up:
See where she is lying translucent and open in a
Mollusk shell,
And I can imbibe her while she isn't even looking:
She is cocooned in her extraterrestrial,
And soon she'll be extending like a earthbound
Plume down to the lips of
Her careless man,
Leaving me only with the graveyard,
The empty carcasses of woodpeckers and coyotes:
Already identified,
The scientists don't care if I become extinct:
Just another Christmas tree sleeping in the intercostals:
I would have liked to touch her flesh, coming in like
Storm fronts over her raspy androgynous:
I would have liked to have worn a fine cap denoting
Me as her hero:
And planted rose bushes over her sleeping tomb,
But she was too salty and confectious, and I loved her still
While she took her child to the library,
And I crawled into the casket and died.

Robert Rorabeck

Confrontations If Immense Sunlight Over Stalwart Gravestones

The body of my being only knows so much,
How to write silently but with much ferality,
How to caress long distance after 4 am,
And the traffic streams like vibrant electricity
The squeaking of its joints like the yawn of a
Misplaced jungle. And I used to dream that there
Were so many places to go, even with all the
Eyes falling down upon you, but not hers;
Now I know there is only one or two in this body
And its streams; and the brain cannot tell the difference
Between reality and a television program: In
Both situations there are things to sell, and primary
Colors, and also the sea rippling like a ballroom full
Of trapped women, or a polished and buffed gym
Converted for prom, and the yet mostly virgins are
Sweeping across it hesitantly, clasping and unclasping
Hands and sometimes lips, just as furtively as bees upon
Their meadows: and I love them as we keep plot
In a movie with scenes of long families, and confrontations
Of immense sunlight over stalwart gravestones.

Robert Rorabeck

Consecrated Roses

This is not fair: what I want:
Breathing without lungs
Over consecrated roses: if this is my art, it is
Blind and infantile
Listening to words it won't understand,
While I gave her everything only to watch her
Make love with a serpent-
Beautiful in naked purple
And other lies- and I didn't suppose that it
Had to happen so many times
In trailer parks underneath the singularity of the moon:
While the scientists reminded us there were
Many other worlds,
But I could only remember this....
And it was a lie they told us to believe in,
Which I supposed was just about enough.

Robert Rorabeck

Constellations Enjoying Themselves

Mouthing off a pace in the proximity of
Hoarse sparrows
Who should have already flown off:
Looks like its going to rain again, and looks like
The power lines will be bedecked in icicles
For another while;
And why should I be doing this while the world is
Flooding,
While cars are piling up outside of auctions and
Drive in movie theatres,
While children are piling up outside of school and
Some in sand boxes;
And you have your little castle doublewide in the
Weeds,
And you were mouthy to me yourself just once
The way the most precious of pollens pincushion the
Sky;
And I can hear it like lions cry before a feast;
And then your friends come in the yard and there is a bonfire
And so many trucks,
And eyes fill with the light of other eyes, none my own,
Because I don't know how to do that to dance like nothing
More than constellations enjoying themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

Contemplating Haiku

I can spend hours
Contemplating on the Con-
tours of your clitoris

Robert Rorabeck

Continuing To Slip Away

She relies here- shipwrecked,
Under another bus at lunchtime: so many words
From high school,
Allowing ones self to survive
Under whatever colors are flown by the flag-
Mouths mouthing in unison,
Opened to the windows that aren't so bad:
Barely even surviving,
But running away from all of those haunts:
Lives without bodies burning in their fonts-
Concreted as well into the joys of their epitaphs:
Slipping away,
Repeatedly- waves of blue marble nuded before
The eyes of preschoolers,
Runaways- innocents dancing in ridiculous
Pantomime,
Foxes back upon two legs, leaping at the goatees of
Giants
Who themselves are flagging down the tall drinks of
Water,
The sexy legs of stewardesses who walk through
The clouds, serving drinks,
Talking boisterously to their sororities who all together
Continue to slip away.

Robert Rorabeck

Convictions Of Dawn

Dark dreams and intercourse-
The highway is empty except for you
Driving into the cities, but the sea beholds all,
And the night is busy hiding its addictions;
There is the salt leaking through
The crack in the window, as the radio sizzles;
Off the avenues the metric pleasure
Seesaws beneath the bangs of palm trees,
Where tawny alley-cats leap to and from
Their ochre nests, purr and clean;
They have relocated the heart of the homeless
Stonemason, who built her a sundialled fortress
Of coral slab fingerprinted in his blood,
But she never sailed to him,
And in the high rises of the anonymous night
Her banshee still tosses the fluted bones,
Dissatisfied by the room service and tiny bottles of liquor;
She falls from the balcony successively,
Only to find her loneliness butchered again
In white sheets of innocence she does not recognize,
The noir of her appetites curls tenebrous from
Her red fingernails,
As down beneath her the ragged gypsies set up
A tent as pink as shell, breathing in the humid circulations;
They will sell fireworks for New Years as their
Children pickpocket early into the morning of
Another resolution, as the schools of fish go leaping
From the anonymous masses of fletted waves,
Never breaking from their private shadows for as long
As night persuades the convictions of dawn.

Robert Rorabeck

Cooing As She Does

Desperadoes fighting the good fight:
I cannot go to sleep at night without kissing
My mother before hand,
And maybe you saw the light by our window
While you were out jogging,
Excited by the prospects of your new husband,
While he was coming home that night, his plane
Touching down on yours,
Great engines roaring in a bed you'd prepared
And turned the living room into a picnic with tulips
And ground orchids
And another song of merry-go-rounds and little sisters
Who are always into trouble;
But I must confess I was thinking of you,
And hoping my mother's lips would one day be your lips:
I put on a Liverpool fetish for so long for,
It sort of became the guarantor for all of my new life
And everything that came after it;
Yes, I couldn't teach or make love again to any true woman
I might find in my heart,
But I did put you on my swings one time and made you kick
Up your heels in the very same spot where that
Very same night I conducted
The moon to ladle the sky as I wished to conduct my body
Into what refreshing pools you allow your husband to imbibe
Daily and nightly,
As he is always touching down on your sweet body
The places my mother will only allow me to dream upon
Cooing as she does, cooing.

Robert Rorabeck

Cops And Robbers And Cowboys And Indians

Lights in the clockwork of Ferris Wheels,
Or in the Christmas trees over mausoleums; or in the things
That they turn on in kindergarten-
Soft cooling promises like waxing window shades to fall asleep under;
Something so beautiful, but so tranquil that it doesn't
Have to be disproven,
Or woken up: it can just be a little girl forever, hibernating:
It can keep its thesis, and its plans to move anywhere:
From the graveyard to the trailer park,
Like marks in an exodus that the blades of the grass keep like
A metronome;
As her body folds over me, moaning until it beads in sweat:
And her soul becomes my soul: my alma,
And we swap names and spit:
We kick the ball around after work in a friendly yard, or in the warmth
Of a carport as it rains- and her husband calls her home,
Doing away with cops and robbers,
And cowboys and Indians.

Robert Rorabeck

Corduroy Dungeons

If she sold it to me
I'll eat all of it
Even if I don't need it,
And the plagues
Of
Wasps and spiders
I will
Tame under
Softly hissing tallow
And put to nest underground
In corduroy dungeons
And feed
Those pallid monsters
Boxed lunches the
Same as she
Fed me
Rolling in on steaming
Skates
And sandals
So many years
Ago.

Robert Rorabeck

Cornucopia's Young

Your stewardesses are still all here:
Their gunfighters have melted into the slugging rivers,
And someone has to sing:
That I have been up past midnight, but I have been disproved
So many times,
While the new graves are being dug, but what will
We put into them,
Alma- Except that I hope that your child is well, or at least
I hope you have seen another good movie,
Which will give us a little something to talk about,
Because you have not seen Colorado:
You have not been that far up in the loins of the tourists
Beauty, the other opulent camouflage the gringos
Either stole or bought from you,
After the conquistadors had defiled your grandmother,
But you will still be here tomorrow,
Alma, because I know you are practicing to become a citizen:
And you are still quite beautiful while the lesser men
Water ski in the opposite direction
While I drink to your soul and read Shakespeare,
As your day births it cornucopia's young.

Robert Rorabeck

Could They?

Birthday cake was good in Spain-
I was drunk and chasing a guitar into Southern
France,
Blowing through wind tunnels on Christmas;
But it isn't yet new years for this old year,
And why didn't you love me,
Why didn't you hold off for me until I was done
Baking;
It's taken some time, and I'm behind the rest of
My class,
But I'm almost almost yummy;
And we could have gone on paddle boats together,
Or costarred as romantic interests in some
Romantic sunset movie:
But the trees aren't going anywhere,
Nor am I: I could come up there and jump on your
Bed like a faithful dog and just lie there.
I wouldn't even recognize if you were naked:
I could lick your kneecap, and it would be just as good
As sweet ice-cream for me- I'd hate to move near
The sea now,
But it's almost what I have to do: I have to get out of here
And nearer the wallets of walrus sized tourists,
Sell them slick amusements and cool refreshments,
The ice-cream from my aluminum tram underneath the
Rosebud shadow of the Castillo De San Marcos,
And take solace in the fact that they could never think
To find ice-cream so sweet as you;
Could they? Could they?

Robert Rorabeck

Counterintuitive To The Natural Gulf Stream

If I get drunk I am inclined to hear
Oscar Wilde singing of the grumbling bees;
Scarless, he is quite beautiful, though I'd
Hate think of him now,
Or Mark Twain, but he just goes on and on
More metered than Bukowski, the mailman-
But such rhyme schemes are not good for liquor:
There is no meat in the house-
I eat buttered bread with molasses-
The flies want some, but who are they to partake
In the uneven strumpets, the imaginary paramours
Who'll mow the graves for me-
I'd hate to wake those old poets up to tell them
What has happened to the Mississippi,
Or that Florida is a fully privileged state where she lives
In, driving leased and unspotted, around and around
Counterintuitive to the natural Gulf Stream;
Soon I will light a fuse, and watch the purple cabbage bloom
From the spewing lips of cone,
The chicanos take tattooed and one for free-
These little things I tend to say with too much cheap
San Marcos rum in me- and little bits of sand shaken from
The webby cleats of deep water terrapin sung to me by
Uncle Remus and his black faced cotton-picking harems;
I think its likely to make me an ambiguous regent for
At least another half hour down the cool walks of this evening,
But sooner than later they'll put me out and find a place for me
Where my dreams will come soft and practicing-
Not knowing how purple it is now or in which mythologies
I am to allude in, but my mythologies are my own,
Smothering this southern evening:
Cars sunken in canals, airplanes dissecting the friendly skies,
And her name is Erin;
And I'd wish she'd serve these things straight into me, her
Auburn hair done up bobbed like a waitress in a hairpin,
From my couch she'd come to me, sexed tiki-torched hips a' sway'in;
I'd rhyme to her like a little fish with my glass house all but
Paid for and shaped especially to keep her in.

Country Fair

Another put on:

The queen of the fetishes gave me
A shape-changing mask,
So that I might see her undress,
Spending years of luxury in the hem of
The boudoir of swamp, on the cusp of
A cheep suburbia megalomaniacs and
Alzheimer's daughter go to fornicate after
Class; and their are potions and spells
In the woods, and cheeky barmaids who
Serve you the fermented spits of trees,
The excitement of spreading roots, the
Merry-go-rounds of cypress with red corsages;
Her armpits the little hairy boats, your
Tongue the man singing on the gondola.
A purple city spinning, and panhandlers glittering
Your lover's eye with custom made poetries,
And tiny erections not meant to be too imposing.
Men who never talk,
And salt-water flats where they feed you
Taffy ladled from the brine, and upstairs beds
That are forever knocking, inquiring of the
Faceless maiden's forever moaning,
Tiny nebulas kept in lockets, French-kisses
Over the telephone, and electric ponies running
On tightrope overhead; she has written her phone number
In lipstick for every boy who has attended,
And play on the swings which overlap her glossy
Canals, and the seesaws which swap spit with
The exertions of long distance runners; and I can see
It all looking up from my windshield of the red oldsmobile
In the carnival's parking lot, her rosaried bosom
The nimbus over the line of constrictive trees, a greenish
Girdle; Even in the rain the colors turn laughing,
As she catches every glorious peck of the awakening horizon,
And I have to take my head off and exchange it
To keep from crying.

Courage To Burn

Pearle scent bodies waiting for the
School bus out in
The snow- waiting for so long beneath the overhangs,
As something else imperfect is said
Or written down:
And their mothers behind them, like their
Shadows stretching- their first words
Forgotten on their tongues which stay inside
Like terrapin hiding from the blistering stories
Of this cold weather;
But eventually they come- poking their sensitive
Heads out,
Or running away between their classes to their
Secret parks over the impasses of canals-
Running along the riverbanks, roaring
With snowflakes metamorphosing,
And skipping over the irrigation moving slowly
With blue gills,
Filling into the tardy drainage while the encephalitic
Sun tries to find courage to burn

Robert Rorabeck

Cousin Windmills

Sensuous wound, you are my cleft hoofed soldier
And this is your penny-ante cathedral—
The little boys are gathering up their marbles for you,
And their dimes:
They are shooting the b.b. guns at their little sisters
All in honor for you—
And the day is young and getting over chicken pox—
There is a nest of pig rattlers in the palmettos—
Your father is hard at work clearing them out—
Later in the afternoon, there will be a complex storm,
That will cast an unusual shade of blue onto all of
The cypress: the cause of it will be the penumbra of
All of the stewardesses flying ever so high
Until they are finally gossiping and doing their
Laundry in a sun shower—they are the only sorority
Up there—they managed to make it above the
Ferris wheels and their cousin windmills—
They spread their wings and illuminate the porticos—
Like decorations of an arrow shooting over
A sweating hearth.

Robert Rorabeck

Cover Up The Beautiful, Beautiful Words

Now I have a mask and typresets but
It will not be halloween—not even tomorrow
And I am in China
Not in Paris with a muse,
But in Shanghai with my wife,
And nothing else lasts forever—
My paper novels fallen at the feet
Of unknown guests like stillborn sacrements,
And the yellow angels waiting to expand with
The corpulent sun:
Nothing else is beautiful,
But my little family on a paper- dirt road:
They are beautiful and they will go on forever,
Abandoned at the borders of the
Zeitgeist's page:
I wasn't even trying to make money,
I was just trying to live forever, eventually,
As my illgotten liquor sweated and lactated off the
Borders and the forts of the page:
Now, anyways, there are no more heroes,
But television shows are getting better—
Novels are getting more contrary and more abnormal to
Understand,
Though I am certain that it will snow somewhere
And it will, inevitably, cover up the beautiful, beautiful words
That we still cannot understand.

Robert Rorabeck

Cradled In Your Shadow

Touching friends of bodies:
Like snow on apathetic woods,
I suppose I want to be with you
In the crèche of mountains,
Or anyway between you and your daughter,
I want to crush your grapes and
Expectations with my imperfect body:
Or anyway, this is what I want to
Be coming down to your doorway,
Whistling like your mailman,
So we can forget about the power lines and
The airplanes:
All we have to remember is to drop her off
To school,
And then back to your kitchen and fireworks,
Because after New Years this year,
Sharon,
I'll have \$200,000 dollars, and I want to give it
All to you,
Because I can imagine swimming in the opalescence
Of your color changing vestibules
Is better than summiting Everest,
Or spending my summers at Disney World,
In between the pointlessly shipwrecked middle-classes;
And dreaming of you I find my way,
A pilgrim halfway to Canterbury,
One of the sadder stories Chaucer left untold
Before he died,
Waiting for you to fill me, giving you all my money
Just to swing my dying sword like
Something desiring to be religious
Cradled in your shadow.

Robert Rorabeck

Craftman's Heaven

She said she never stopped reading my poems;
But from her venal mansions she never cared to right more
Than a hair's-lick;
When I told her so many times that I wanted to undress
Her midway,
And sail like a flute-boned bandit through her arid
Spanish streams;
And then she would know that the sign language of my blood
Beat with the percussion of her winsome curves,
Like bows and arrows striking down across
The living cadavers of plywood men,
Cutting right through the knots of hearts:
Erin said that she never stopped giving a damn about the
Words I wrote to her choke-cherry orchard,
Coming up with the stuff the way hair and nails grow after
Death;
And she went with her men and her gods back and forth
Through the sea;
She said my words made her come, but it was only
From a distance where she saw herself reflected in my craftsman's
Heaven:
She neither saw nor thought of me.

Robert Rorabeck

Crawling

I can't even remember who I am
anymore
and it is a beautiful thing
when the lights are cut,
to move around
the vast concrete easment,
man's measurement
of God's design:
To feel the twisted glory
in our dissected humanity-
Like a ghost
in its wayward park
deep in the wispy light's
suburbia
watching in their backyards
the strange middle-class
dreamers
grow up and wilt
back again the lower things
The Ages of Stick and Mud
that take on the
classifications of upwardly
mobile society
to survive off the photogenesis
of light prancing on the
lips;
There ex-lovers slip
further into the new
meaningless comforts- They
comfortably bleed themselves
Dry,
holding hands in the
powerful living rooms
and spacious coffins,
in upwardly mobile basins
where their children
swim thoughtlessly in
state-funded schools,
safely into the

shallows of their
white-collared pools.

Robert Rorabeck

Creatures Of New Glass

I'll follow you until the windows shut,
And then I'll die right into the snow;
I was meant to be a lonely cut
From a Dickens novel- I was meant to look at
Old loves getting married in this spy glass,
And then slit my throat on the downside of
The next caesura;
Isn't this the way to go, to end up broken down
Well before familiarity,
To last the afternoon breathing alone in this room,
Or in a car alone in a park down the hill from
Where the houses laughing live;
I've mentioned the scars- I see your eyes by
Them, sliding away as if out of control,
Hinging to new lovers who carry you through the
Thresholds into their huts
Where the fires live, where the spirits birth, breathing-
Shaping the creatures of new glass into their world.

Robert Rorabeck

Creatures That Were Never Meant To Exist

Maybe you will call her, like a unicorn in the
Waves,
Laughing, tantalizing and making fun of the kings
Who would have her tasseled and made to
Perform
Looking across the flaming sunsets, the green ducks,
And the airplanes receding like wishes she would
Hate to remember;
And all of his hopes fail, calling to her like winos
Bleeding sooty alcohol out amidst the traffics,
As their bodies curl like crustaceans into the cut
Grasses of their graveyard shells:
But it seems to persevere for awhile, even while it is dying;
As it hangs on to her advertisements, some other
Gods stealing her away-
Red accolades hurdling into the eventual sunset
And the promises of creatures that were never meant to exist.

Robert Rorabeck

Cremations Of Paper Snowflakes

Cremations of paper snowflakes:

Some thoughts last forever, just like the winos

Kissing their bottles,

I give you this:

Outside, the trees dancing like silver and green

Fireworks in the dying dreams of

Sunlight—

And with the surcease of it,

My eyes close to see the sex of your brown

Shoulders swimming in some bed

I will never enjoy—

But I lie down quiet pledges like these,

From my bachelorhood

Which is some kind of lie that you can

Pick up in a flea market underneath what pretends

To be heavenly light cast off of the migratory

Ferris wheels—

Like beautiful visions lost in a park

The losing baseball player carouse before they

Have to come home again

To wives and children—

The sun obscured in a banquet across the street

In the blindness of another world.

Robert Rorabeck

Crenulated Like Goldfish

This is another palm crossed out into the
Traffic of the usual drunken night;
And I would like to say that most recently I have
Perceived myself into the seemingly beautiful,
But that is just another tooth ache;
And why did you buy your house when we couldn't
Live forever together,
Crenulated like goldfish happy and baking near the pool.
I am a fool,
A working class hoping fool, just wanting to be at your
Party;
Just wanting to bust a tooth for a tooth fairy,
Just wanting to vagabond And move to Colorado,
But there are so many words I don't know,
That I am unsure about;
And the earth is weary, and the earth is earthy
Running out of candles and its majestic cars running low on
Gas,
I cannot fool it; as I cannot fool you, S-:
My mouth is numb, my eyes are empty, and already you've
Found your better man skinnier and better than I am:
I still want to live forever,
But the engine won't start, and the dogs are purring and the
Rockets are just about ready to leave the earth,
But they are still waiting for you,
S- Sommelier, immortal- they are still waiting for you,
As my tent Is still waiting for you like the night of jubilee
Of so many affair,
Waiting to be taken down, awaiting there:
S-,
S-, S-, and your lucky last man all hyphenated and unfair
That he has won:
He has won and the ships are leaving your planet:
The ships are leaving your planet,
S-,
And you don't even care.

Robert Rorabeck

Cricket

I am here to teach you how to draw
All the sad lines for children,
To make believe there is a sea who has
Adopted them into a world of singing paper
Upon whose unwritten surface they might
Reach out and find anything,
Like the finger prints of ghostly cousins
Somehow living in the watermarked rings
Of underwater forests,
Whose glossy canopy is flowing like swings,
Like mermaid's uncut bangs,
And their parents coming home behind the
Twin headlights flooding after dusk,
Somewhat worn and cuffed from their years
Of outdoor labors;
Simple basket weavers and glass blowers,
The mortally pure care-givers returning to the swirling surf
To occupy them from those pages like an insect with the
Scrawling music the eyes first hear before it
Is given over to the full outfit of senses;
To which the calligraphies are singing,
Making believe that they can be anything,
That they might last forever chartreuse and weepy,
Naive like make-believe swans of their changeless beauty,
Everything surrounding them, circling,
And occupied by what strange vermilion burgeoning,
Until they are laid fully grown, smoky haired and
Lined, folded into beds out of water forever, but through it all
So preoccupied with the faerie land's illusive enigma
Never having known that their sweet author has gone
Before them, over the swelling ditches, the caesuras
Where the rains tremble on branches above the gentle
Roof housing their parents restive,
And that now, too, they are called home,
Their thoughts so gently with them,
Breathless, yet somehow children still swimming the depths and shallows
Of that brightest world they have known.

~~~With thoughts of Lloyd Alexander

Robert Rorabeck

# Cried Your Name

You wrote me today  
(Oh, how I count the times,  
Though they are very few)  
The little lines you seem to pull out  
From absolutely nowhere, the kites  
From your mind in another universe that take  
Off and reach me five states over,

Traveling along tree-line graphs the dizzying hills  
By day, and the somber and perfectly flawed  
Mirror of sea by night,  
When your hot tears swell the effervescing  
Combs of waves,

And a ghost of your shadow lingers in  
The ebbing flow, a liquid spider-web  
Of anemic veins

Sheets of the lightest metals,  
With your eyes' patina, dragging like  
Golden filigree your angelic guts  
That touched everything they could  
As you sped toward me with a revenant's message

Because you were concerned on how  
My words were arranged for you,  
Like some cheap bouquet torn up all of  
A sudden from the weeds  
and thrust toward you, as if I  
Was peddling sex organs gathered off  
Strange women walking the streets,

But I told you not to worry, dear,  
Because at the edge of my red precipices  
Out here in Arizona, all things are born mad,  
And I haven't thought about you 365 days a year  
And those arranged like a dozen azure horse-sized roses  
With saw-toothed thorns that tore open my  
Veins and 4380 times cried your name....

Robert Rorabeck

# Crocodiles In The Egyptian Sea

Cold is the bone under flesh,  
While drinking liquor, colder still—  
Cold as the reptilian heart with a warm  
Stone—  
Cold as the lonely school marm,  
Uncomely cousin to the librarian—  
Imaginary lover to the nun—  
As cold as I feel myself in this room,  
Five stories up in a suburb of Shanghai  
Stealing all of my mother in laws boxes of  
Chinese wine,  
My ninety pound wife finally asleep in the  
Next room with the twenty five pound child—  
All three of us sick for three weeks  
Since we've been here,  
As airplanes go missing from the sky,  
And the lingering of my art is without a muse—  
As I am without a job but have a home paid for  
And 100,000 in the bank  
Just the same, there are crocodiles in the  
Egyptian sea who also do not linger in my thoughts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Crocodilian

Crocodilian, I manhandle you,  
Are my slave in a paper-bag. Moonshadows  
When she crosses her legs,  
The light turns green. Tulip bulbs in  
Second grade, and after class dodge ball.  
I saw my peers kissing in the shadows  
Under the subtle lies of metallic quarries:  
The engine classrooms made of tin,  
Just like containers of refillable propane:  
The school-yard something like a meadow,  
Unclassified bubble-gum. We get together  
In the gym and runaround in circles;  
I pretend to stop and hold her eyes like  
A religious vision, but I am getting old,  
And she is leaping onward. This is little more  
Than another sin I have yet to confess for,  
But we should have a potluck downriver from  
The graveyard,  
And slip this girl into an albino canoe, and  
Take her to hear the whooping crane, and slough  
Through the mathematics of semiprecious reeds,  
The cattails an instrument for vociferous reptiles,  
And lay her there and brush her hair,  
And hold our breath for a hundred counts,  
And read to her what the heavens say above  
The fading billboards and the zephyrs of indescribable  
Traffic, which go along far beyond us on the  
Concrete stilts, the megalithic steps of a tireless  
Daydream repeating between the bookends of  
Sunlit motioning.

Robert Rorabeck



# Crossing The Cemetery

I work like a dog,

But I live inside

My mind—

I am published young,

But the day is

Long while

it takes an

Entire week

To cross the

Cemetery.

Robert Rorabeck

# Cruel Winter's Shade

There are times when you must be real,  
And tintured in the mountains of a wimpled soul-  
Not just these words,  
Like toys dragged up from a sea chest, moderate  
Attempts to make me whole-  
So I haven't seen you from high school, and I am  
Wounded so-  
You have dogs, and I have dogs which make us whole,  
And we are both at the top of the food chain,  
Or I guess the rumor is that you were, a flight attendant,  
A modest success who endears to lower class angels;  
Or at least I've heard-  
Always in the clouds, don't you get nose bleeds and  
Commercial airliners come roaring down your streets,  
You toast the busy passengers in their business neats,  
And then listen as some busy coyotes drain the bleated  
Bleats:  
But that is just how I have occasion to imagine you,  
Your eyes as changeable as a stormy arcade,  
And I guess you have that too- in an aerie the glaciers made,  
Illuminant and wimpled, really in the cold, cruel winter's  
Shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Cruelly

Going down to do myself, cruelly;  
Everything you told me was a thrill-  
Amusement parks,  
The sounds for dogs, and boys with  
Blue eyes, pooly;  
But I can't make up lies,  
Your lips were pursed and surly  
And you didn't wait at the bottom of the  
Hill meant for graveyards and for temples,  
What god would not will. Palominos glide  
So lightly- Your father is a pilot, your boyfriend  
A harness racer, three feet tall,  
And I didn't meant to get in the way of your  
Dinner bill. Surely, you're so happy,  
You say so in your will. What are you doing  
Now about the paycheck on your brow,  
I should not think to wonder.  
My hands as light as air don't disagree,  
They are leaving to shake the forest, to hang  
The goose on its tree;  
And you have to be so silent with your metal on  
The street; it is precious metal pressed by precious  
Feet;  
And the windows are left open, the felines flicker inside,  
The day is brought out to splendor,  
But we can't go on forever; though, cruelly,  
You will always be a rose between the thorns, thus abide.

Robert Rorabeck

# Crying From The Butchered Mythologies

How the waves are tired now—  
I cannot rightly describe their lull,  
How they go like this, smothered,  
Like lovers into a full-moon threnody;  
And there are cars far beneath them,  
And lonely young girls with freckles  
And bangs on simulating swings,  
House wives too—and what are they doing:  
I shouldn't say,  
When I am nothing to them and all  
Seems to be coming around—  
They are taken under,  
Taken down beautifully like cut flowers  
Carefully arranged  
Without corners, smoothed into the  
Interior decorations of a suburban  
Cenotaph when I do not have the  
Beauty they might appreciate to resurrect  
Them, the divinity they might have found  
If they chose to surface and breath,  
If they came up in the morning, burnished,  
Exposed, picked up like sand dollars by  
The careworn hands of heartbroken bachelors  
Who once shared the twilight beds with them,  
Who saw them lying there in the shallows,  
Waverly, the ignis fatuus that came to them  
Crying from the butchered mythologies and  
Barely let them live.

Robert Rorabeck

# Crying With Whatever Cenotaphs

All day long in a cloud of dynamite  
Rattle teeth as  
Golden as the armpits of the moon, until finally  
Released  
And settled down and succeeded in the shallows-  
There off in the penumbras  
Of the satellites of  
Anywhere, I wonder what it must feel like  
To come down off the cooling steps  
Of the bus and to fiddle on home  
Like a crustacean touching its open wounds:  
Like a firework who has figured out how to handle itself:  
Over the bridgeworks of bleeding gums where  
The otters still swim anyways,  
And the hobos toss their overused bottles underhand  
Like flutes with too much spit,  
Cursing and writing to the awful green grass in short  
Hand,  
Mystified again by what the day has done to them:  
Until the housewives scuttle across their heady bones  
All in a home ward circus of Cadillacs and roses,  
Esteemed that the day is just going to be all right,  
And then their in their weeping bodies  
Crying with whatever cenotaphs who can bleed all throughout  
The night.

Robert Rorabeck

# Cuckolded Husband

I am writing poems  
And then I will be joking  
With the bottle:  
It is my longevity,  
It is my throttle—  
While not one single werewolf  
Howls,  
All because they do not  
Exist—I'm sorry—  
Just as none of the old swing-sets  
Exists—  
But Disney World's exists,  
In fact, it is the epitome of my  
Story—and we all have been affected  
By it somehow,  
While the most beautiful and  
The most innocents of knights has  
Been bleeding out in the aloe—  
Until the moonrise comes over itself and  
Its fairy kingdom,  
And you kiss and swoon, and become  
A better wife all over your cuckolded  
Husband.

Robert Rorabeck

# Cups Of Earth

Daydreams without heroes- underneath school  
Busses,  
Underneath cathedrals: angel-less  
Heroes  
Playing hooky, spending all of their Roman Candles,  
While the daylight flickers  
Like the light through a zoetrope:  
And now you see her brown skinned, being chased  
By foxes  
Into that world over the trees,  
And what you would have wished to speak to her  
Has clouded in your mouth  
Like the guts of an orchid- and you can only  
Guess at what she does, as the night inevitably overfills  
Its cups of earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Curious For Awhile

Heart attacks from  
Looking at clouds;  
These gods are made  
From nothing real,  
But look at all of them,  
Undeniable pantheism  
Grazing on a blue table  
Who will remain curious  
For awhile  
And then mosey on.

Robert Rorabeck



# Curiously Amused

Girls come in all day long:

New girls, long young mothers with flocks entrained,

With their elements amused:

They are rocket ships who never got out of

Earth's atmosphere,

So they just kind of fizzle around in cars and air-conditioned

Foyers, buying things:

They don't bet much on me- Maybe I will love one of them

Some day- Maybe I will have my own vermilion swan

Who I can watching swimming around the green carpeted

Pools of my living room,

And drink beers to her silent green silhouette,

And then at night pull back the olive drapes like a weeping

Willow in a fairytale

And listen her weep of all the things she'd forgotten to

Buy that day to fill the refrigerator,

While I trained all my senses to the erogenous spheres

Which kept our children so occupied,

While the alligator sat like a corpulent emerald general down

The mowed easement digesting the family dog no one

Could remember having anyways,

While I remembered that I really loved a girl from another

Birthstone which for a while must have me

Curiously amused.

Robert Rorabeck

# Cursing Dismissive Allusions

You're so good at teaching,  
And you're so very beautiful, like a Disney  
Spell,  
Something mass marketable: Oh Hell!  
I'm no good for you,  
Let him bare your child- He's your husband  
Anyways,  
My thoughts are rootless, feral, wild:  
But I'll sing to you,  
I'll slip and swell: I'll be like the sea for you,  
Oh Hell!  
If I were anyone, they would say I'm mad,  
But I am not anyone, so I'm glad;  
And you are like a silver dollar, or you are  
Like a seashell,  
Your future is bright and wonderful; won't  
You teach me beautiful: Oh hell!  
I would have bared your child; I would have  
Shared my thoughts with you,  
As you cast your spell, but I'm homeless or,  
I'm only good for little things for short whiles:  
I want to do my best for you,  
And sit and learn and smell all your pretty wiles,  
Your gardens and the things you refuse to sell:  
I wanted you to teach me, and I to bare  
Your child, but you are already teaching,  
Your thoughts married to your husband and his child:  
You are so bright and beautiful,  
I am thoughtless, feral, wild: Oh Hell!

Robert Rorabeck

# Cursing Every Hurricane

Adapting to jealously on a celibate rug-  
Reusing airplanes, folding them with spit,  
Pretending in coitus,  
Each mobile set above the cribs like the stars  
Above the fjords of ancient heroes  
Going down to sleep with the best monsters  
They have slain,  
Bleary eyed, making love to their amnesiac sisters  
Even as the rest of the world is getting up,  
Buzzing, kindling:  
And I go down with them, with so many of us  
Like little fish, like tatters of silver in their  
Masculine shadows- Never more being delivered  
To her quite by ourselves,  
But handling the pain with masturbation and  
Rum from Barbados, ancient and plausible gold,  
Ho-yo-hoeing, looking at houses we would like to  
Break into,  
Swearing our self to the clockwise typhoons,  
Cursing every hurricane.

Robert Rorabeck

# Cursing The Stewardesses

There is a diving board in your eyes—flashing, vituperative—  
And you are already in the downward motion—like  
The most beautiful thing: like lips blowing upon a pinwheel—  
When you remember that there are things yet  
Brilliant, as you lay your head down to rest into the dreams  
Of the thesis of an adolescent hypothesis—  
Then let me give you this—like a corsage for prom,  
As the rain echoes like mascara down the eye of a hurricane—  
And we all wait in the popcorn theatre—threading our tongues—  
Across our lips—and we cannot possibly remember if this  
All that they mention to the clouds who do not know how  
To fall from the sky—as underneath them, the milkmaids open  
Their amber windows, and looking up, curse the stewardesses—  
For being their sisters who were stolen away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Curtains Drop Into The Sea

A wall of curtains drops into the sea;  
It is beautiful, like a bride falling from the rocks,  
And we drink whiskey as we look at her,  
Though we are afraid she will turn and see us  
And suddenly become self conscious and less alluring;  
Her ankle is the bobber in the foaming lips,  
And we stand around her, sway and sing drinking songs,  
And her groom is floating on his back as she  
Feeds him mouthfuls of cake, his polished shoes  
Have come off and sunken in the warm bottoms, and the government  
Wants to shut us down, because they cannot understand  
What it means to be French with only two hours left to live;  
Unlawfully, they are taking down the fabric, pulling  
Off her tresses and turning off the lights,  
But now she is full of salt, and they are both full  
And young and as they kiss, we the audience applaud,  
And then shuffle out of the honeymoon; In the humid night we share  
A light and satisfied conversation in which  
We discuss what we will drink with out dinners,  
And the jealous housewife looking away over the parked cars,  
Still remembering how beautiful she was extending miles  
Across the land says, "She was born Catholic, but  
She was not a Catholic when they baptized her that way  
Before everyone."

Robert Rorabeck

# Damp Jewel

Damp jewel in the hair-lip of grass or  
Hanging from the obnoxious skin of a cypress-  
Petty witchcraft that evaporates  
And the clouds plays hooky- until another sunlight is  
Gone, mumbled into the vocabularies  
In the west where the sugar cane burns and the dragons  
Make love to bare breasted virgins-  
While, around here, after dusk, after all the Mexicans have  
Gone home from cleaning our house and mowing our  
Yard, the washing machines still do a strange pirouette  
Trying to mimic the great tornados they hear so much  
Gossip about.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dan

I've already written about Dan,  
And I've watched him drive away.  
Now I listen to traffic, and I'm on my second glass  
Of rum. I try not to feel my face, or how I love  
Her or say her name: Erin. But damn, I have,  
But at least I haven't dedicated anything to her,  
But if I get something else published then I might;  
If I stopped this useless anonymous sway, and went  
Over to her house and mowed her lawn and held  
And petted her cat; and kissed her father on her lips  
To make him laugh, or delivered her a Christmas tree,  
Or caught a blue bird in one hand and taught it into a song bird  
I carried on a thatch of sprigs over my shoulder like a knapsack  
Like a transcendental soothsayer going from classroom  
To classroom as from town to town in high school, selling  
My lines for bread, and stopped masturbating in the bathroom,  
Over the porcelain fjord, the useless sex organ fixed by  
Plumbers, destroyed by cherry bombs, evacuating into the  
Anonymous saltwater estuaries which mingle with the sea and  
Atop of that the oil rigs like water spiders skating. I suppose  
I should end with the way the traffic is moving, horrendously  
Useless and expeditious and naive, and even if I go back to  
School I will have nothing left to say to her; but will read about  
Mark Twain and how tonight I delivered a Christmas tree to  
A drunk French woman and how, afterwards, I came after her,  
And how I remember her daughter smiling at me, her angelic  
Bone structure open, but also fretful, her eyes wandering like  
Careful hikers over the halfway ruined side of my face.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dancing

Dancing,  
Dancing, stars and elbows:  
Another song underneath  
A river:  
Another place that cannot survive burning  
In the ribbons;  
But it takes awhile, accumulating to  
The dragon in another world.  
While the mermaids sing and then they  
Teeth on the pilots  
Who came down just so they because-  
And I know it doesn't  
Make any sense while I ride my bicycle  
And look for beauty wherever she may  
Be underneath the heavens of  
Loose change.

Robert Rorabeck



# Dancing Angels

Dancing angels- Don't you stop and look  
At my scars:  
Why the cars drive and drive beneath you:  
Don't you stop:  
You are the heavens dancing for  
Drunken sailors:  
You know who you are- you are the housewives  
Who stop to bend down to give  
Kisses to the lips of lucky goldfish in the  
Canal:  
Don't you stop now- they know they are lucky,  
And your children are lucky as well-  
And they give you paychecks,  
And wishes down the well- dancing angels,  
You fly above them:  
You perfume the orchards of their suburbia-  
And pubescent truants light off  
Blue roman candles and bottle rockets  
From the summits of houses for you- and you fly  
Above them and their old schools:  
You fly in any direction- like wishes-  
You have become the things you once dreamed off-  
And you go to places in France,  
Where your lovers wait- and you make love to them  
Like colors in a pond spilling over without reason.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dancing Haiku

I can't wait until he  
is dead because I Want  
to dance on his grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dancing In A Zoetrope

And then they will say that you have  
Abandoned Colorado with the arcs and the blueberries  
Uneaten by cats as with canaries,  
The lightning leaping from nipple to mountainous nipple,  
Trying to draw attention from the airplanes  
Or something else even more beautiful  
As I steal fireworks and a three legged dog walks underneath  
The trees and then the overpasses:  
And a breeze blows up from a very young age,  
Settles in the trailer parks beside the orange groves,  
And wonders if you have heard him whispering your  
Name,  
As pearls grow in their grottos like the ghosts of seahorses  
In their saturnine estuaries, as preschoolers do  
Drawn and lonely from the school bus to the teeter-totters  
As the wolves watch the housecats on the edge of the parks  
On the edge of a country where I have seen you  
Riding in my car, taking off your blouse as if a picture  
Dancing in a zoetrope in pure sunlight just  
Trying to tease me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dancing In Their Weekend Proms

Fridays all the pretty swans must be out swinging-  
And even the clouds are well instrumental,  
Going cork-bellied over teal tennis courts;  
And the lawyers are perambulating, the best of them in  
Short tennis skirts- kneed divine;  
And I can walk out of my mind, like a mollusk tipping his  
Hat over now that all the birds have  
Gone deeper into the south, roosted into  
Cemeteries and rusty centerfolds,  
Now that all the Monarch Butterflies are whistling strangely  
Transsexual in the butterscotch cocoons:  
I can stroll hunky-dory out between all the balmy sidewalks,  
Lighting off my sticks of spitting tinsel,  
And the housewives won't even mind, because  
They'll be too busy entertaining- and only their most insincere  
Daughters will find me out,  
Call me out on the swings which arc almost all the way out  
Of the neighborhood:  
They kick start, and they can almost jump over the drooling  
Jaws of alligators,  
The drunk procrastinating Spaniards out on their pool floats  
Taking depth soundings and muggy green temperatures:  
And I can whisper or scream that I love her,  
And the air plants will stick out their bristled tongues- and some insects  
Will vibrate in their armpits; and even my scars will seem to  
Glow industrious like mica;  
And I will realize that I am only a cartoon with four fingers,  
And my heart is a rubber turkey- and the girl I love the motivation  
For a really miserable time;  
But I wont abash my silhouette, and I'll finish what I've  
Been smoking with my tender meat hooks; I'll humor the black sheep,  
The girl in her ridiculously lonely séance and maybe we'll  
Even steal a car and make it all the way down to where the  
Sea is made up of horded tinfoil from the spinsters of  
The greatest generation,  
And we'll just lie on our backs and let DH Lawrence make up  
Better rhymes over the ochre-sexed tortoises;  
And watch the cloud creatures dipping their proboscises and whatnot  
Into the daffodils of the sea's whatnot,

And pretend to have a good time and be in love,  
While everyone else is dancing corked in their weekend proms,  
Cocooned there on the shores of the city's ice-moon,  
Un admittedly transsexual and horded around the living room's  
Football game with chips and guacamole in a  
Disassociative fugue.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dandelions Of Playboys

Dandelions of playboys grow up  
Learning to drink the sweat off the  
White house-  
While all of the wine in this house-  
In this little apartment  
Way up high in Shanghai, China-  
Is housed in boxes left over  
From our wedding-  
Boxes meant for Christmas  
For the vikings  
Toating that we had our years-  
And I made my wife come twice in her  
Parents bedroom in the early afternoon  
Yesterday:  
The same bedroom we conceived our  
First child in-  
Out of the window:  
Snow  
And farther in the distance,  
Airplanes:  
Airplanes making barretts for beautiful  
Women-  
Airplanes making sashes and garlands for  
Monolithic women-  
While beneath,  
In their caverns of I know not what,  
All the cold women  
Crossing their legs-  
Scribbling their chicken tracks on the  
Obvious sides of better and more  
Esoteric of things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Daniel Johnston Personified

Before I go to sleep  
Your songs lay like  
2by4s on the rainy  
Earth. I gather them  
Up in stacks to make  
A-frames for Fireworks  
Signs on July 4th—  
Your colors are as  
Bright as everything  
And down the street  
Under a sad cloud,  
You have built a house  
For her from your lips,  
You have breathed lonely  
See-through children  
Into her, playing in  
The front yard on the  
Rainy earth—  
Some things last a  
Long time...

Robert Rorabeck

# Dark Caribou

Dark caribou  
Eating broken winged sparrows  
Who are trundled in the branches  
Like poisonous holly,  
Whispering the  
Contaminated thought:  
The afterbirth you eyes deluged  
When the neighbors could smell them  
Crying red hot cinnamon  
His experienced body dripped on  
You shed of his office's  
Blue second skin  
While I was at the somber market  
Trying to find the right children  
To take home like undernourished  
Strangers  
To silence and grow in the 1970s windows  
Our world experienced through.  
You slipped away like a white hare  
In blinding snow further up the sinewy  
Backs of the Alaskan Range.  
Past the gated threshold where your  
Body displayed the dripping adultery  
Plucked from your vine,  
You transformed into naked ribbon  
Spooled in his hands, tangled about the thumbs—  
I watched with  
Kaleidoscope binoculars near the sea  
Until the feral child's hunger obscured  
My vision,  
And I led him with my kidnapping hand  
To the backyard and let him feast on  
The orange tree  
As I fed the crumbs of broken memories  
To the goldfish in their invisible school,  
The acidic spray of murdered citrus  
smearing my eyes.





# Darkened School Yard

If I knew how cars could park through the city  
And into dark,  
And the love they had made inside of them, the evaporation  
Of steamy legs;  
Then I would also know what it felt like to be a patrol  
In a long sleek train,  
Straight northward to the capital of our brains: Look at the pretty  
Monuments rising their contentment;  
Follow the leader through the sandbars, following the  
Populations of our uncles:  
Going prettily ankled through the snow drifts; and the cars park here;  
And the cars park there.  
Cicadas sound out through the night and they leave their old bodies  
Behind stuck to the ornamental cypress of our yards,  
The pretty pagan ornaments that housewives never even think about  
Nor surrender to:  
The jewels of the earth, Precambrian and making love, stuck inside  
The distillations of our juvenile throws:  
In the parks where the lovers seem to lean on stilts and the stars  
Play music,  
On violins or dobros,  
And there is something always more required, and it is more  
Beautiful than this, or a darkened school yard.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dawn

I love the dawn,  
But that doesn't mean anything-  
Those are just words in a language  
We've been weaned on;  
And if Dawn is real,  
Than she is girl,  
And too beautiful to belong  
In my language of dawn,  
Though I am still in love with her:  
Dawn, but that is meaningless, if  
It means anything  
Than Dawn is real, a creature of my  
Language, we sing a similar song,  
But she's too busy to just belong  
In my words attuned and worshipful  
In the language of dawn;  
And still I see her caroling on the street,  
As the world quiets, she skates  
Sweating beneath the cypress and palms  
My imagination decorates,  
Tinselled and tawn,  
Young and gone goes sweet,  
Sweet unobtainable  
Dawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Day Of Celibate Rain

Day of celibate rain,  
Stamping the tomfoolery of birds  
To the line.  
Maybe the last time I saw your eyes  
Was in high school graduation-  
You said goodbye,  
And now the rains, they keep up what the  
Customers should,  
They dampen boxes and wet wood.  
And I know your name  
While the airplanes go leaping,  
Leaping on the weathered planes;  
But it is so lonely not having you here,  
And the rain makes me realize just how absolutely  
Good it is to be alone,  
Without a son drafted from your silver  
Womb,  
Without a plumber for his tomb:  
And I want to think of your eyes somewhere  
In the curtains of this weather,  
But your eyes are good and gone  
And making their own celebrating where  
No poinsettias can grow,  
But where the tourisms grow so much that they've  
Become fanciful with their own generations,  
And where it doesn't rain  
It snows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Daycare Underneath The Swingsets

Daycare underneath the swing sets—knowing all  
Of the colors of this thievery:  
Only one or two words found out so far,  
But there will be school tomorrow across the highway—  
Not far from anywhere—  
And you will come outside of your house and look  
Across at the orchards,  
Or up to the apoplexies of skies not too far from  
The power-lines anyways—  
And not pretend to wonder what it means  
To be in-love,  
You are not so confused with the goings on:  
Mestizo—as it is your right to be:  
Child of conquistador and Indian—product of  
Rape anyways—  
No wonder how it was that you had no problem  
Coming up to my door—  
There might have been blue feathers in your hair—  
And I thought we made love,  
But you were too busied to stay inside—  
And so you went home to the man you've had two children  
With even though you do not love him anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Daydream Beside A River With A Unicorn

Daydream beside a river with a unicorn  
Of narcolepsy drowsing as even to fall amidst the blue gills  
Open-mouthed and snoring:  
And even if this is just a water-coloring just like  
The other things that we tend to do to  
Survive in the middle of our days through and through  
High school—forgive me if my heartbeat gets too loud  
And begins to thunder beneath the clouds of these  
Thoughts of you—improper pronoun in an improper church—  
They don't even have stained glass windows to look out  
Upon the bus loop—or to filigree the light that passes over  
The new scars of my cheeks—and I am not a used  
Car salesman—the sunlight echoes outside as it can—  
Until each cottonpicking strata gets magnified—  
And in a drunken lurch, I can call for you across the baseball  
Diamonds and the apple orchards that do not  
Exist—and even though other and better words do exist  
For you so many times, and you are kissing another boy  
Opened mouthed whilst I am getting beaten up  
For another time in the locker room—  
Maybe I will see you out again in those woebegone yards—  
And you will look across me without seeing that I traverse a  
Dungeon for you in my heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# Daydream Of Drool

Her water colored bicycle has many dreams  
Of pin-ball, and ping pong, and pool;  
I used to sit across class from her and pretend  
That I could know her in a swimming-pool  
Of flushed and bright eyes,  
The marriage vows we could say underwater  
As the daylight swam around like a coy otter,  
The elusively effluvious life, the hunger of  
A birthmark; Oh, what a fool. For instead,  
I would just slip out of class and tight-rope  
The canal, swing in the park, the elliptical stretch  
Of a canary on a string- She rode away to marry  
Better things, the bell on her handlebars a-jingle,  
and I was left alone in my classroom, scribbling  
The homework of pastel numbers, my cheek  
Bejeweled by a daydream of drool.

Robert Rorabeck

# Daydreaming Of All Your Dark-Eyed Welshmen

I find it easy to kill little things that  
Belong on planets of weeks,  
If they are attracted to the light and  
Getting in the way of me finding out how  
To better suit you;  
But you're just out watching football,  
The gentleman's sport with many colors  
And bruises:  
I have scars of my own; they will not heal,  
Nor are they beautiful,  
And I find that I have too many lines to be  
Considered immortal,  
To many lines to find your hand through  
To walk you to the park near the elementary  
School in the student ghetto,  
To rehash with you how I floated with my  
Girlfriend pantomiming what it would be like  
To live in the middle-class shadows:  
The funny thing was,  
I was still thinking about you even then,  
Wishing that I was alloyed with a shinier base  
For which to suit you- Erin:  
Thinking of you even then while you rode the  
Locomotive burning coal through all the cloak  
And dagger overpasses;  
Perhaps daydreaming of all your dark eyed Welsh men,  
Knife fighting atop the first class passenger cars.  
With their backs turned replaced by the scarred stuntmen-  
I know that if I were you, Erin, that's what I'd be  
Daydream of, anyways.

Robert Rorabeck



# Dead

The body fled:  
It went down river,  
It wound up dead.

Robert Rorabeck

# Death Is Insatiable With His Spoiled Blue Eyes

I wanted to be true to you,  
But death took me up in his spoiled blue eyes  
And I had to watch, bivouacked,  
As your husband put on a corset for you and  
You came home-  
And I have climbed four mountains in one day with  
A feather in my cap,  
And I have called my dogs my masters, and become  
A better man for it;  
And I have eaten an apple- And I too am libertarian,  
And not a dirty hippy;  
Yet I can appreciate a tattered red white and blue  
Underneath the look out tower stashed away by  
Some overweight cowboys:  
And every citizen should have his guns,  
But it does no good. I eat apples and look into the  
Skies, but it does no good- I am only slightly above  
Average intelligence,  
And I am still waiting for the pizza to arrive,  
For the literary agent to return with a positive reply,  
But it does no good: and what about you,  
All the men you've flipped,  
All the séances you've conquered- it really does no  
Good- Let the terrible infant suckle there at your hip,  
Let the paper airplanes fly:  
Death is looking in your window; he has already eaten me,  
But he is insatiable with his spoiled blue eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Death's Table

The eye ducts of God,  
Heartbroken,  
Send floods down from the peaks  
Of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains  
In spring, the sun's shadow  
Resurrecting in steep fields  
The schizophrenic colors of Van Gough's palette—  
In somber expressionisms spill over  
The quartzite cliffs, like the ruin  
Of stone viaducts stolen by the Romans  
From Ancient Greece—  
Like silver faucets her eyes crawl upwards  
As if spindle-legged water spiders along  
The anemic channels from the Orient  
Veined in rivers of amethyst  
Bled, my opened wrists  
Perfuming the bathtub with anachronistic murder  
Framed in the open window through which  
The world barks like a sick dog.  
Breathless feeling now wears crawling bracelets  
Of six legged flies that eat death  
To dim and clean the fires, checking in  
Along the porcelain shores of his clotting  
Cadmium pool in twilight  
Glints of our smothered son;  
It is how Jupiter must observe  
Loosely robed by her courting moons,  
Like Queen Elizabeth keeping crowned,  
She stands out on her dark terrace  
At the end of our life—  
There she sets Death's table to dine....

Robert Rorabeck

## Decorations Of An Arrow

Sensuous wound, you are my cleft hoofed soldier  
And this is your penny-ante cathedral—  
The little boys are gathering up their marbles for you,  
And their dimes:  
They are shooting the b.b. guns at their little sisters  
All in honor for you—  
And the day is young and getting over chicken pox—  
There is a nest of pig rattlers in the palmettos—  
Your father is hard at work clearing them out—  
Later in the afternoon, there will be a complex storm,  
That will cast an unusual shade of blue onto all of  
The cypress: the cause of it will be the penumbra of  
All of the stewardesses flying ever so high  
Until they are finally gossiping and doing their  
Laundry in a sun shower—they are the only sorority  
Up there—they managed to make it above the  
Ferris wheels and their cousin windmills—  
They spread their wings and illuminate the porticos—  
Like decorations of an arrow shooting over  
A sweating hearth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Deep Beneath The Untrustworthy Sea

Like your brother who got killed so far away,  
By sharks or trains-  
I don't care- I only weep for my own solicitations:  
I'll cut down any unsuspecting tree in the lips of forest  
To be my tannebaum;  
I'll decorate as I please, turning my back against the  
Balmy traffic;  
Because it is so difficult to find truth in what the  
Soul has to say,  
Jogging lethargic through its socialized parks, meeting  
Old friends and sharing their likeminded adulteries;  
But I believe, I will steal the wine from  
Her husband- and the dog might speak, and if I  
Click my heels high enough up on these swings,  
I will surely fly,  
And skip school and migrate over the lactating heads of  
Wounded tourists- and all their unspecial cities;  
Go where I please, hold my breath and visit the feral  
Continent deep beneath the untrustworthy sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Deep In The Forest

I put on pageants to excuse my scars,  
To delay my inevitable novel: It has a flat  
Tire, and the night is wild and flipping over itself  
Like a firework pinned to a tree.  
The mad man has taken over the fort and shot the  
Donkey, and no one is brave enough to harvest  
His meat;  
But for a little while he's made the street beautiful,  
As beautiful as a woman society has given  
Over to him for a dance or two: a serene  
And agreeable woman,

He crouches like a gargoyle with all the things  
To say. His hands are scarred by the pull strings of  
Divine Providence. He wonders,  
How far will he fall once all the lines are cut and  
The fish is free to roam with a giant hook in his mouth,  
And his mate dead,  
A trophy on some fisherman's wall;

It is like he has stumbled unto a valley where there  
Used to grow grapes until the grandest fire tromped,  
And now there are only stones,  
And an entire colony of windmills like church goers,  
Waiting for the wind to take them in spend-thrift fits,  
To see the hallelujahs of their spinning hands' jubilee;  
And to see this is madness,  
And it came upon him in a host of swirling motions,

So for the rest of his lines he wasn't there:  
He couldn't be seen except for a distant threat lighting  
Off homemade fireworks,  
And for the rest of the movie there were only officials  
Debating what they could do about him,  
Until the audience all left,  
And the argument continued like a tremendous tree  
Toppled like an erroneous whisper deep, deep in the forest.



# Deep Inside My Cave

Dreams are caracoled while I lay off in the shadows  
Trying to do better work for you;  
But your man is a fireman: he is a classical hero with  
Big tits that bounce like dancing girls:  
He drinks so much juice and curls so much iron:  
This is what the mongoloids do while they drool up the  
Blouses of airplanes:  
This is your world in the little houses underneath the  
Deciduous trees, underneath the park benches:  
This is ironically the greatest turn out of the university,  
And you feed them your amber juices and they grow  
Big, big:  
Until they become bulls and slide under cars to look  
Up their skirts: I wonder if you can remember who your  
Sister was, because she was once like you; and I  
Make up memories just to try to recall who you were:  
I pretend I carry your books to school; but the dancehall is  
Empty and all of the corsages have been donated to  
Graveyards: Only your men can truly say where you are,  
Curling through the darkness, saving you like a well  
Bosomed unicorn and glowing with your immortal insouciance,  
The waves resonating from the pools of the monsters you've  
Laid to rest; and I imagine all of this high atop my castle,  
Or deep inside my cave.

Robert Rorabeck



# Deep Into The Shallows Of Your Next Beatific Day

Grab your gun,  
And kiss my soul-  
I've made total of \$7 on all my scroll  
Over all these years,  
Bootlegging in my dampened, elderberry  
Hollers- but I'm whole:  
And I can see you floating over me,  
Just a bosomy tattered caracole over the  
Swings where children are moping like  
Pimpled flowers:  
And I used to cut my wrist almost every hour:  
Used to read Shakespeare down near where  
The dead girl wouldn't die-  
Crab-eyed, cut up into a million pieces of stained  
Glass- I've made so many missteps  
Until I landed in the high basins of Colorado:  
I've never really been beautiful.  
If you were with me now, you'd be wishing  
For another man, but that's just my misfiring spell:  
I suppose you're in love,  
But I'm doing fine- I've got rum and fireworks,  
And time: gray-haired and despoiled,  
Yet I've never lifted my gun for oil-  
Rather I like to slur my rimes like spewing precious  
Bits of clementine;  
And if you are not looking, and if you are away,  
I'll ride the giant sea tortoise over the Gulf of Mexico,  
Over the cannibalisms of conquistadors,  
Over the spew of uninhabitable atolls,  
And land my soul in more balmier of climes:  
I'll kiss the cleavage of a blonde stewardess who  
Gets my gist,  
Or I'll just swing in time to your eyes as the look away  
Deep into the shallows of your next beatific day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Defeated By A Casual Angel

Rather this meadow is vacating-  
An esplanade curled at the corners like the  
Sly smile of a coy lover-  
It is too late now to start anything on fire;  
I just have time enough to grab my baseball  
Cap  
And head off to work-  
It is snowing in the oilfields, but the horses  
Are watered.  
I have holes in my boots, but you are not  
My wife,  
So I can go along unmended underneath the  
Caesuras of power lines:  
The men are empty now, the oil pumps are  
Iron cradles for palindromes-  
There is not a spot of unspoiled sunlight in  
All the sky-  
And I haven't seen where my mother is gone.  
There is only the memories of smoke  
In that theatre which was once raucous and unschooled.  
Now envy isn't even green, and nothing is  
Said of your eyes-  
Maybe they spill like your lips wasted into the  
False atmosphere,  
Or they are the reasons why I went away,  
Tossed like an AWOL soldier across the hindered  
Fields- defeated by a casual angel,  
But would not cry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Delaware

A same old night in the city  
Shedding like a river of holidays the  
Preciously bought lights of movement  
Pale and heavenly bodies  
Revolving forward and missing,  
The shift of direction,  
Even more akin to the delicate veins  
Inside us, the precious mineral inherent to blood  
Depleting only to surge forth again,  
A cavalry charge,  
The purpose of continents, lungs,  
And women giving themselves the  
Chance to look again:

This the two lanes of traffic moving  
With the direction and drive of red  
Ants through the dusty body of their hills.

Jammed into the places they've  
Been made.

Here,  
The old cat is on the roof tonight  
Pawing the meaningless motion above my head  
Then resting, trying to  
Lick itself into  
Heraclitus' river;  
Here in Lake Worth the  
Electricity finally comes back on  
Two weeks after the hurricane,  
And everything is the same and  
Moving again

And I have to look at everyone's  
Face again,  
Most horribly my own  
Before I can forget and pass away  
Like Christianity  
To become the expanse of materialist wasteland

My mind the repeated batter in servitude,  
A zygote born to die incomplete  
And needy in a spasming orifice:  
After all this time I've forgotten  
To take account of things,  
Inviting the creditors to come  
Pillaging in me like Conquistador  
Virgins eager for a first time  
And ever after exchange  
In 3 piece suites  
With bags of ice and posed relief  
Hiding agendas and papers to sign  
With fire axes behind their backs  
Waiting in line-

I lay on the bed and let  
Them on me and all over the  
Furniture they dropp their DNA  
In a dazzling miasma excreted from  
The fornication of this life  
Like pollen dripped from the bee  
Wasted from flower to flower  
All over the furniture and especially spread  
Across the bed  
Pistil stained I see ghosts of  
Her opening every door every day she's getting  
Out of the shower  
Undressing the way specters do  
Before them:  
Too fast and speeding down the  
Interstate,

A reckless waste of gasoline  
Spilled from the lips

I don't know her, but my mind  
Keeps falling back down into  
The luscious sinkhole of a brain  
Destroying 3 lanes on I-95  
Dreaming of 3 bedroom  
2 bath sex spread eagle willingly  
Rings on ring fingers,

bones and flesh pressed like flowers saved in a book,  
And all those middle-class values,  
Cheap wishes that come true:  
The possibilities of Feng Shui  
A lottery of Pre-Socratic philosophy  
Clothed in Judeo-Christianity  
With Jesus still fresh and on the  
Hunt for a star on the walk of fame;  
All of this laid down the suburban lanes  
Like paradise

So far away from me

I see her in the blue revelry  
In the expanse of tomorrow's  
Wetness, an ocean reaching for her.

I sate the hunger for her  
With  
An expensive hooker called in  
After mom and dad have left  
With their racehorse for  
Delaware to place in in the stakes/  
She has Pape tattooed  
On the nape of her back like the  
Graffiti on the side of a building  
Given up in the ghetto  
That keeps staring at me  
After she tells me to  
Do it to her doggy style  
So she and I can finish and  
Move on to the next lovely boy  
Homeless for a night under the dark overpass;  
She's the first Latino I've  
Been with, but she tastes the  
Same (and puts my score  
Up in the double digits)

Now the waves crown,  
Rush and come to us  
On the beach, the city  
Is panting,

Tortoises  
whores  
Wasted and dark swimming  
In the water's orgasm  
ignited  
and  
We ignore it;  
The sea spills away from it  
Like her hair falling in  
The sink of a vociferous garden  
Outwardly beckoning me,  
As if I were a classic hero  
With a sword able to do something,

I think of brushing her hair  
In a bed next to her.

But both the cat on the roof  
And Heraclitus are liars,  
And Zeno knows I will  
Never reach her,  
But the tree next door  
Still whispers

Her name

To me:

There she is and here  
Am I,  
Two ends of an ever  
Extending line.

When I get a day off work  
I go to the movie theatre  
To break the law, remaining  
There all day  
Falling in love with the  
Dark emptiness and the illusion  
Of light,  
Attainment flickering flatly  
Magical before me,

As if she were bared there  
The two of us dreaming together,  
A Zoetrope of  
Children suspended forever  
In a black and white film,  
The revolving carousel  
Holding hands and laughing through  
The disguises of Halloween, pictures of forgotten  
Relatives taken in rapid succession  
Before the world could change us  
Into the inescapability  
Of a paused existence.

Robert Rorabeck

# Delicate Promises To The Fireworks

When the windmills stop-  
The silence of death: the waves do not move:  
The fish seem to sleep:  
They make a blanket of their gills,  
And a teepee of their steps,  
As we reside at their shoulders, trying to believe  
Even though our grandparents are  
Gone  
And scalped:  
And the new flag only has the color green:  
Grasshoppers lose their bodies  
In the barely,  
And so do their cousins- but their cousins  
Are still beautiful  
Beside the latchkeys of deer and foals  
The wolves milk:  
Reintroduced,  
They are so careful now not to disturb anything:  
They are so very careful:  
The way sometimes intelligent fire steps  
And gives its delicate promises to the fireworks  
Held in the churches of a holiday we were all  
Supposed to believe.

Robert Rorabeck



# Delighting In Every Airplane

Dancing in the cathedrals breached from  
The mayhems—  
And then their grandfathers died beneath  
The mountains that themselves  
Died underneath the airplanes—  
And I have forgotten all of my time in  
Limbo in Arizona, but the scars upon my cheeks  
Are still upon me,  
And I have grey hair—and now I have been  
Teaching for one or two years in the very  
Same school I used to lament about—  
As I beckoned, open wristed,  
For the humming birds to come in and sit about  
The fields of my classrooms,  
So they came, just as all of  
The children were closing their eyes—  
So they came,  
And cursed and chatted about—  
Just as I imagine all of the stewardesses were  
Doing just about the same—  
All them above me, and above the earth,  
All of them bathing and delighting in  
Every airplane.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dénouement Of The Empty Theatre

I think I would like a house with an orange tree,  
And neighbors who never grow old,  
And laugh and kiss openly on the patio;  
Already retired, now they drink beer and smoke,  
And gossip over their highly successful children.  
There should be dunes across the street,  
And swaths of trees, who sing after midnight,  
And keep the secrets that they touch, the rivers  
Underground, the better words my tongue has  
Yet to tell my mind. And I would work  
Part time for places my parents had never eaten  
At, and make deliveries in short order, with nothing  
More complicated, attending to my rock garden  
And sleeping with my dogs, take up smoking.  
I would lay on my landlord's roof, and remember the better  
Times I tried out, and the offices in beautiful white  
Lines over the canal. I would swear off reading  
Better poets, men with minds as sharp as ceremonial  
Weapons, who have already pinned the eyes of  
Virgins and flight attendants,

But this will not happen, and in two months I will  
Drive to South Florida and sell trees in a failing economy.  
I should never go back to college, less I destroy the  
Idiocies of my nostalgia, and I should never see her again  
The way she sleeps in the arms of bodybuilders, my words  
Too dull to kill or wake her up; but I should be outside for  
Awhile, and I have enough money to pay my bills,  
And steal away at night when the sky is beautiful and smells  
Of citrus blooming on the better pages of flowering ingénues  
With genius grants and succinct phrases which honey  
Her lips, so that they make her swoon,  
And take her home long before she  
Could hear this final line.

Robert Rorabeck

# Depthless Sorority

Hide the bicycle beneath the holy  
And slip away from school—  
Come to learn from the otters, and the housewives  
Who are all drunk and combing themselves  
In the backyards so calmly  
The fawns come to lick them like saltlick,  
And they don't care:  
And special cowboys, beaming down from the blinded  
Stars, like jars of liquor,  
Lap their jaws—and those nude occurrences,  
Like stewardesses who have undressed of their wings  
Get as brown as Mexican cleaning ladies  
And speckled because of the sprigs bobbed with  
Oranges:  
They cannot recognize themselves,  
And that is why they slip down the banks and into  
The canals—and learning, swim away,  
To forget everything from their husbands and children:  
Escape like hourless clocks into the sea:  
Metamorphosed underneath the lighthouses until  
The sky is wearing a necklace of floating airplanes,  
And the sea welcomes them into  
Her depthless sorority.

Robert Rorabeck

# Descendant Of The Golden Fleece

Sum of the body in prettier words-  
Aphrodisiacs, kisses of fire eaters to drunken angels  
In the moonlit spotlights  
Of suburban parks with tadpoles in  
Tears between the grasses,  
And virulent lizards climbing up the swing-sets:  
Another pretty scene between the houses  
And business parks  
Like a casserole for the nocturnal creatures:  
And for my thoughts,  
Wounded between the arcs of the microcosms  
And the golden means:  
Pantomimes and zoetropes of amber  
Dragonflies and cerulean foxes; they say  
I will find you here, my love,  
Tumbling in the puddings of toddlers—  
In a chicken soup of fieldtrips gone into the dusk  
Of a weekend,  
If you would ever come out into this yard—  
And let the ants roll over your barefooted knuckles—  
And let the sunlight drape you in the affections  
Of its golden circus.

Robert Rorabeck

# Developments Of Fairytales

Developments of fairytales—whatever they are—  
Made to imagine the tomorrows that could not weep forever—  
The miss stepping mothers reclining in pieta against  
The road kill—while they sing songs—evangelical-  
And Christmas trees evaporate—I remember skipping school to  
Head down those roads—and when my wife was beautiful—  
It was not an easy process—stealing my mother's clothing  
To sell at the book sale—and when the unicorns awakened  
They had no one to cry for—the Mexicans were already  
Done trimming our yards—the hemispheres were so baby blue  
And emptied of airplanes—the playgrounds kept their  
Ghosts on the swings—and it was an hypnosis altogether  
In the bright and airy winter—but you are coming home to me  
Across the world—and you lethargic with child carried  
In you belly's retinue cannot remember the forget-me-nots  
That were never passed down—I seem to be hanging upon  
The precipice where the dwarfs fought with the dragons—  
Left nude and empty underneath the negligee of the stars  
And forced to watch as another hero entered the beauties of your town.

Robert Rorabeck

# Devilishly Heavenly Body

She's a hot Jupiter:

In a summer meadow she burns out all

The other planets,

Or at least that's how the scientists described

Her in their catalogue, i.e. Leggy science fictions.

Mamma's boys drink their milk in slugs

As she revolves so far away and yet so dangerous.

Because of her my good side is now my

Bad and visa versa, and always will be:

I took over an old Spanish fort near the Mediterranean

Sea and held it for five days calling her to come down

Even around noontime and destroy me with but

A peck of a kiss,

In her hips sways the surf, an entire legion of

Perfect unborn children, slated for Plato's epiphany;

And this is all true, and I've gone mad,

Sitting on the rock strewn stoop and

Drinking Chablis or Thunderbird- Only a sommelier could

Tell the difference between a cheap slut and a

Real princess,

But of her the windmills lined out like a sorority of

Daydreams spinning, drying their multi-armed laundry

Like the cobalt blue of a Hindu goddess- I don't know the name of

Which one; but she is there.

Each windmill said her name as they made the slightest

Amount of energy all at once like a flower-pedal army;

But in the daylight she isn't even true,

Just a thorn so deep under my flesh no one would believe

The homeopathy of such an unquenchable influence.

I'll fire the green copper canons all day,

And howl with the dogs after the corrugated sunset-

And point her out there in the vast breathlessness, and say

Now won't she come and step forward and blow some

Smoke, and all at once reverse the poles,

And turn me to inheriting ash as I so deserve,

The bomb-shell of my catastrophe,

Destroying me with the immaculate energy of that

So devilishly heavenly body.



# Diana

You f%cking douche rag of honey;  
Yes, I want it in the fridge, where it can live forever;  
And then your fart blooms like an incontinent strawberry,  
And the ferry makes love under the bridge;  
And the dolphins play with their dogs,  
If they are smart enough;  
And we will all make it enough to our end,

And we will spell out, and we will put it down;  
And it will all drool like honey,  
Diana- all from our other ends, and you will never  
Read this Diana;  
And yet your daughter is beautiful, even if I have never seen,  
Her, Diana: she must be almost as beautiful as you  
Are,  
As beautiful as strawberries,

As beautiful as watermelons all strung out and stolen  
All week  
Which are now hanging like fattened scuppernongs  
Underneath the wishing wells of  
The Christmas tree,  
Or at least the dark and unthankful places where I wished  
We could go and  
Make love;

And make love.... Diana.

Robert Rorabeck



# Diana Haiku

Diana, I want  
to play with you in the  
Schoolyard, Diana

Robert Rorabeck

## Diana's Ploys For Salty Boys

How easily the lifeless men poke their  
Heads out of the shells of broken down school  
Buses, covered in heliotrope motor-guts,  
And being congratulated by the alligators and  
Forget-me-nots;  
But do you really want such men, eyes so  
Nocturnal and fibrillating; they are not rich;  
They've given all their money underneath the goldfish  
Making wishes;  
And they only drink cheap rum, and sway that way  
Real instep waves do underneath the covered walkway  
Into school: Arms around each others' shoulders,  
Swaying, singing a sea-shanty for you, their coy  
Naiad- their queen, but will you be good to them,  
And let them pool and run around in your shadows like  
Silver roe; or aren't you not Diana's assassin-  
What mean thing will be the end result of the infatuated  
Metamorphosis. Rather, instead, feed them popcorn  
And tatter tots and watch them leap around the shoals  
Of your coral aerie; and watch them play baseball for you, poorly,  
And mount the field even as the propitious storms bring  
Braver, better men to be enraptured by your ploys  
Of angelic bone structure, such kryptonite for these  
Salty boys.

Robert Rorabeck

# Diatribes of Crossbows

Diatribes of crossbows as the lights go out  
And the young girls have to bow and bow—and then  
Have to fend for themselves as there is no one left  
In the living room—  
In the morning—daylight and sunshine and sharks teeth—  
And the deliveries are delivered  
And the lunches are made and the school yards are  
Attended to—and in the shade there is shade—  
And the bobcats sleep amidst the grave stones on a slope  
That pretends to say the pledge of allegiance to the  
American Flag—  
And the numbers swear off the higher elements—  
But, eventually, there is another playground filled with echinopsis  
And shade—and another muse figures out just how she was  
Made—in the daylight with the boys all around her—  
Spitting their fireworks upon her shoulder blades—  
Doesn't she just figure out just how she was made.

Robert Rorabeck

# Differences Between Tomorrow And Voodoo And Zombies

I will teach the children tomorrow  
About the differences between tomorrow and voodoo and  
Zombies—  
Even if there is a butterfly over the dead mule,  
The sound of my lips will sound again  
Over the emptied baseball stadium—  
And my muses will echo—  
Like the sea in a glass in a museum—  
And you will know nothing of me,  
But I am a good man—  
On the swing-set, in a church,  
Or teaching Sabbath school—  
I am the reincarnation of my great- great grandmother  
Who married too young,  
And wrote her poetry to the nothing-men  
Who lived between the apexes of the overwritten mountains  
And the valleys of the nameless heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dinner In The Ocean

Feed me my dinner from the haunted table,  
And I will see your eyes when they open,  
A book of poetry which drinks light, but your lips  
When they speak, they do not return what is put in them,  
Like broken vending machines,  
Molds of plastic lions and teal penguins they keep  
At the zoo,  
And the remote control boats in their contained pond,  
Where there are no alligators,  
But only shortly trimmed grasses about the concrete;  
Their crews belong on the top of wedding cakes,  
Then you should say to me as the light fails,  
What you really mean, if it is in you,  
Allow me to bring this utensil between my teeth,  
And consume the hollow points, the way the spigots go  
Spitting out amidst the lawns of clean workers,  
The tenderly obsessed, the town of hazy borders,  
Thus, unlike them, let me know how you are wounded,  
And the proper way to leave you alone,  
For we will be parting soon out amidst the midgets of  
Twilight, back into our slender rooms, our bricks of good  
Will, where I see you across the table like a murdered ocean,  
Your eyes open like a book of poems.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dis-A-Pear

You know that the séances were broken by trees,  
And now that your children are  
Asleep and thumb-sucked,  
Christmas is finally laying in: even the stewardesses  
Are coming home out of the sky,  
Eager to pluck their thumbs into something-  
And their daddy's abide with green eyes  
And jumping jacks,  
Petting the thorny heads of the precious amphibians  
That wait there beside them  
Perpetually,  
Forever- Just as tourists by ice-cream,  
And the scars run down my neck like necklaces of  
Waterfalls,  
Or pictures I have seen of Kit Carson peak falling  
To the left shoulder of my once muse:  
As these pleas I write for another woman flash  
Like phosphorous in the mouth of  
A trapeze of that other time  
When you were, for a moment here,  
And then literally,  
Utterly- and forever-  
Dis-  
A-  
Pear.

Robert Rorabeck

## Dis-A-Peatr

You know that the séances were broken by trees,  
And now that your children are  
Asleep and thumb-sucked,  
Christmas is finally laying in: even the stewardesses  
Are coming home out of the sky,  
Eager to pluck their thumbs into something-  
And their daddy's abide with green eyes  
And jumping jacks,  
Petting the thorny heads of the precious amphibians  
That wait there beside them  
Perpetually,  
Forever- Just as tourists by ice-cream,  
And the scars run down my neck like necklaces of  
Waterfalls,  
Or pictures I have seen of Kit Carson peak falling  
To the left shoulder of my once muse:  
As these pleas I write for another woman flash  
Like phosphorous in the mouth of  
A trapeze of that other time  
When you were, for a moment here,  
And then literally,  
Utterly- and forever-  
Dis-  
A-  
Pear.

Robert Rorabeck

# Disappearing Mexicos

What about autumn, showing himself to Disney World  
As the tourists fall down amidst the leaves that are  
Changing and the billboards:  
If there is someone who I love, she is waiting for the snow  
Or she is holding my hand—as I languish  
In a fieldtrip I can hardly believe in: the day is in morning  
Along the road where we pay our taxes  
And our coaches roll against the sea—until we get to the  
Places of our amusement where the skeletons are  
Laughing in their skulls, and we wait in our serpentine  
Rows until we get on the rollercoasters  
And disappear so jubilantly all into the hinterlands of our  
Disappearing Mexicos.

Robert Rorabeck



# Disastrous Eyes

I left her in the store where she belonged,  
And as I drove away I knew she was helping another  
Man just as intently as she had done for me,  
With those disastrous eyes, in the casual way a housewife might  
Let a stranger into her house for a cup of sugar,  
And I knew she had done good for me, for her day was  
Long and filled with bearded patrons going in and out:  
Some whom she knew and called them by name,  
And others like me whom she had never seen before,  
Or maybe only once,  
As her hours were filled up humbly with restocking shelves  
Of tacks and screws and duck tape and all of America's wants  
Under the halogen lights of the small town hardware store,  
So that she was most likely related to the owner, or worked  
There part time, and lived with her husband in the corrugated  
Trailer parks where the rattlesnakes slept too in the nooks  
Of cinder blocks, but drove a nice car. I will never see her again,  
And that is perfect, because I knew as I drove away with  
My receipt for sledge hammers and drills stuffed into my blue jeans,  
That her effort would soon be going into our revivals of fireworks  
There across the New Mexico state line, and she would  
Become a part of the history that is altogether forgotten in the  
Dusty commerce;

Already I was meeting new people eager to get away,  
Bearded men in orange coveralls standing beside a warning  
Sign which told me not to stop, for convicts were working here,  
But when they looked me in the eyes, those disastrous eyes,  
I knew they had to get away,  
And I took them all together up the unwhiskered throat of my mountain  
While the sheriff's back was turned, and asked them nicely  
To get out into the wilderness, and left them there without  
A survival guide, though I already knew at least some would survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# Disbelieving Traveller

I used to climb mountains to see god:  
I'd only do this on weekends, and I'd skin so  
Much knee,  
Like a stone skipped from Tallahassee Florida to Colorado,  
Like a star crossed aphorism following the sexual  
Horizon even though  
He didn't believe in god; but this left his girl  
Unattended in her gardens,  
And you can only imagine all the milkmen,  
Postmen and fire hydrants to draw milk and water  
From;  
But now I don't hike anymore, and only dream of  
Documentaries,  
Of making good tips selling Christmas trees,  
And setting up gifts of girls from high school I shouldn't  
See anymore-  
The sweet little gifts of other men who answer their  
Phones, who bake apple pies and attend to their offices:  
With eyes that never close, badly bruised drinking coffee  
In offensive movies,  
Blowing like tattered ragtime out the open windows;  
And I loved her but that was just in the park, in the nursery  
Rhyme: If I really had to spend time with her, to clock in my  
Hours by her, I would have run away long before,  
As I have done so many times;  
But now I am already perambulating in the greater nocturnal  
Gardens they thought to keep under wraps; and I can feel my  
Pulse in low oxygen, something alive and needing more of  
It making the marble statues move  
Giving gifts to no one; and in the altruistic summits I haunt  
While lower down even then tourists are skiing,  
And a god that is almost a possible thing to which I travel  
Disbelieving.

Robert Rorabeck

# Discarded By The Professionals

Dangerous allegations of the supernatural  
Landslides,  
Going down like this, making love to pilots who  
Haven't spread their wings,  
Words shed and quivering on a basking yard  
With the unclothed bicycles,  
Discarded by the professionals who are up to no  
Good.

Robert Rorabeck

# Discovering The Wan Distance

Valleys of families and little girls  
Running through them, picking rosaries  
While submarines hide out in fjords- or  
The skeleton dances in the  
Tower of whatever amusement her eyes look up  
To discovering the wan distance  
And the men driving the airplanes- they  
Seem to be migrating  
And she wonders if they have lovers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Diseases Of This World

Days and days of fieldtrips for stallions where everyone is  
A winner:  
Now I wonder if I will ever win, down at the dog track where  
The unicorns surrendered;  
And I get very tall and go masturbating through the parking lots  
For Alma,  
Skipping and saving myself while the cars pearl and sparkle:  
And I catch fetching visions as if I was a crocodile of  
Young lovers hinging upon hinges,  
And tonguing each other like letters collected in a rain shower:  
They are not eager to leave, and my car  
Has a dead battery: I watch Sharon go by: the grass lisps:  
Lighting hits the converter,  
And the day is bright but dark: I fight a young boy named Bruce:  
I sucker punch him and I win, and then we all drive off together  
To other houses where I can fight a succession of other men:  
Beautiful lice crawl through the bright hair of my forearms,  
The parks are downsized.  
Alma is married. Sharon is married.  
And I think my aunt gave me her lice before she left for Chattanooga

Robert Rorabeck

# Dishonoring Satan's Prison

Cheeks lie scarred with roses in the clouds—  
The apaches are approaching with intentions of  
First rate abductions,  
And I remember the wishing wells of your malls—  
Where I could fall down forever  
And you would remain in love with my best  
Friend—  
And when the daylight curled over,  
It saw its own reflection in the music box of  
A carousel,  
And it could never find an absolute desire to  
Touch the earth—  
The beautiful harem remained in their grotto,  
As my mother electrocuted herself in  
The carport—beautiful illusions all of them,  
Swallowing up the daydreams after midnight  
Until they were all shut into a poem dedicated  
To Satan  
And words became a sacrifice whose  
Heart was utterly—  
Absolutely abandoned.

Robert Rorabeck

# Disney World

Glory days of a thirty-three year old god called over—  
The morning glories thin to a haze  
And the Fourth of July turns into the sleep of dusk in  
The hotel beside the road—  
But when you get up, there is your family, and breakfast;  
And no matter where she is, there are more trucks to  
Be loaded, the last of the fireworks to pack away:  
Yes, the holiday is over for another year:  
But there are so many billboards peppering the road  
To sell almost anything—and going into the panhandle  
You can enjoy sunlight, and nude entertainment,  
Until, finally, you find your way into another  
Disney World.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dissimilar Stranger

Omnivores in nylon  
Strutting at the fair,  
Damsels in leaky blouses  
Floating through the air

I have seen her over the Castile De San Marcos  
Waving like a flag,  
And in the Sangre De Cristos,  
Amber light sleeping in a crag,

But as I inevitably disintegrate  
Into the hollow east,  
Is best to forget the dissimilar stranger,  
Neither man nor beast.

Robert Rorabeck



# Dissolving Me

Your roots never charmed me  
I did my best  
to prefer the silence of numbers  
laid out so I could see them  
on my bed  
the failures  
show up on my hangdog  
face  
eaten into  
scorpions  
the burrowing of my  
fears for you,  
the hunger in my gut  
for life  
on the dead plane  
OH GOD  
the life's ba@tard  
I have you inside me  
dehydrated  
sunk, wounded  
righteous  
we both need HER  
water inside us  
OH GOD I can see her  
for 3 days now  
f-ing a big strong man,  
occasionally thinking of  
me  
the #s I need out on my  
bed, I need her to solve,  
since the watering hole  
of high school I've needed  
her  
since I saw her legs take  
off on the runway  
since she showed me  
her pistol  
and claimed to be some  
great deciduous mathematician

seeded with numbers  
the snow of chaos  
in her eyes  
her legs the easy reason  
the swollen fulfillment  
of my needing  
bed  
empty  
bottomless  
the night strains me  
silence harasses me  
and she repeats  
in my eyes  
scrolling  
like a bad reception  
human desire  
divine creation  
I swore not to  
when I looked at my face  
I know I cannot  
OH GOD  
I need her roots in  
me, dripping sweat from  
flesh  
arms spreading on me  
and her eyes back to  
the origins  
planning  
understanding  
solving dissolving  
me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Distant Flower

I give long witness to your eyes  
Looking for silence.  
Where is your child underneath  
The mountain- There could be so many  
Ways.  
I will save her, because I know what  
You're thinking,  
And the bus is turning around  
Having forgotten so many things.  
Maybe she is in the sky, the sky beneath the  
Mountain,  
Your child, your daughter of so many things.  
Words are spit on the window of heady  
Vagrancy,  
But your eyes are really wonderful,  
They go so far away; they see so many things.  
The night is a cryptic flower turning in its  
Jewelry case,  
And you forgot to know who I am in any case.  
And your daughter is so far away,  
But I will save her. I'll read her the words you  
Couldn't say in any case,  
When the song is over, when life and breath are  
Over,  
I will return her to you under the mountain  
The night whispering,  
Your daughter safely to your arms,  
With your eyes so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

## Dive Bombing For Your Bloom

If you had to kiss me, at least it was before noon:  
That way you could dismiss me, and so easily engorge yourself  
As to be fully sated and yet quite beautiful for the  
Other evil bumblebees who will surely soon come dive bombing for your bloom.

Robert Rorabeck

# Divine Acceptance

Pitching tent where we think the  
Sun should go,  
My cheeks weeping trouble in the  
Shadows,  
And I've not had an easy day.  
My days have been troubled for so long;  
I pretend in my religions about you  
That you would not care,  
Stumbling upon me from the porthole  
Of an airplane,  
Every cloud another creature god was  
Figuring up:  
You caress me like an underage aunt,  
Sigh and nod and forgive me my troubles,  
And give to me your body as a shade tree  
With no hesitation expeditious on the tarmac  
All the tourists somehow ignoring us,  
As I looked up through the symmetry of your  
Branches,  
And nodded off into the jubilee of your  
Divine acceptance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Divine For You

The night is here in a private romance I have forced  
Upon the stage,  
And Alma knows that I cannot cook, and she makes fun of  
Me for buying my clothes at the thrift  
Store,  
Even though I caught a forty pound king fish for her and watched  
Its dying straight into my eyes  
While Anibal told me it was a night I would never forget;  
And I suppose I wont, just like there are words too intelligent for  
Me to ever come back to use;  
But I was the drunkest man on the boat, and I swam my songs  
Out to you and your brownest of wings,  
Still dreaming that there was something left in my points to prove,  
While the sea kissed me,  
And bobbed with the greatest and most hollowest of moons,  
And I suppose there was something in the strangest of reasons for  
The divinest of providences,  
While my dogs were the lonliest and away, while you sister is  
Turning fifteen today;  
And I suppose very soon she will strike out and get married;  
And I don't suppose that there is anyone yet in your family who has  
Finished high school.  
And I suppose that is why they will all someday soon have to work  
For my father,  
And to think him beautiful, while the sea swims greener and more  
True;  
Alma, all day long I think of you while the airplanes swim;  
And I want to drink of your lips and douse and divine for you,  
But all you want to do  
Is blow out your candles and go to sleep in his arms,  
He who is always the most untriest to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Divine Plan

The highway is long and here:

There it goes like escargot whispering in my father's ear,

And I never visit anybody's house without watermelons.

And all of their spouses could breathe beside the pools

Of their

Fabulous enjambments of houses; and I don't understand any of this

Alma,

But I just walked the Sahara Desert and suffered through all of its

Baseball games of mirages;

And I just talked to Pedro, Alma, and he said that he slept with you;

And he said that you were in love with Nelson, but why he doesn't

Know,

And the swing sets are shrinking over my grandmother's grave.

And I love you, Alma, but I don't have to tell you,

Because it never snows over Guerrero, and you are hardly asleep in

Bed with your man,

As the planets turn heartily like eggs slipping and sizzling noisily

All according to some

Other god's than mine's divine plan.

Robert Rorabeck

# Do Them Right

Just remember that no matter how beautiful  
You are,  
I'm the one with the book published,  
No matter how insubstantial or petty:  
The book will still be alive on Monday,  
And you can have your  
Used cars  
And lawyers and gay parades- What is done  
Is done,  
But now I am so drunk from looking at my  
Destroyed reflection, I don't know  
What it is I was going to say,  
And when I try to get the free liquor out of the  
One armed farmer's house,  
I back up into walls, and there is no one out  
Here at this hour to apologize to,  
Just these crickets and mosquitoes recycling the  
Scottish whiskey out of my legs;  
So that one day I might be well know for making  
You slightly inebriated with immortality:  
Erin,  
Sharon: I'm doing my best to get the word out,  
Doing my best to survive.  
Boy, I do not look pretty, while the traffic makes the  
Careless music,  
I sit again and cut myself in similar angles every night,  
Because I love my muses,  
My cats with nine thousands lives,  
And this is the only way I know  
How to  
Do them right.

Robert Rorabeck



# Do You Understand It

Don't you know that you shouldn't  
Be cruel to me,  
S-:  
My heart is butchered me on wax paper for you,  
And I am making love to my  
Uncle for you,  
And I'm cleaning all the palm trees near the  
Canal for you,  
To make it beautiful for your new  
Wedding,  
And the coral snakes on the cake;  
Because you are not my bride,  
S- and your name is just a word from  
Another country,  
But I've made you immortal now,  
Just as your daughter will also make you immortal:  
I try to remember the names of beautiful plants  
For you,  
And I try to keep on going,  
And try not to think too much about my Catholic  
Libido and the rivers that just keep on flowing  
And drowning children,  
Because you are my sick muse,  
S-,  
And E- in my venal muse:  
Do you understand it....

Robert Rorabeck

# Do You Want

Do you want to f-ck?

Sea

Breeze

Green

Trees

Like a little boy

In Sunday

School

Asking.

please.

Do you want to?

Get lost in Rebecca's Cave-

All the gold in the

World,

Cadavers for medical science,

Slaves

t0

Zombie romance,

Everything

Appeased

ghetto

Stiletto

Palmettos

Please-

Driving in the backyard with

Sun-

paint

Leaves

Erin,

Do you want a f-ck

With me?

Robert Rorabeck

# Dodo

Call and you will find me  
Wandering around like a misplaced  
Star in Hollywood  
Confused and naked in my room.  
You can bring your new boyfriend  
Down and introduce him to me,  
And we can shake hands,  
The cordial sort of flesh like  
White bread smeared in marmalade,  
In simple lies that cross our lips  
And tender-hooked eyes,  
As the flies sit outside whispering  
To the earth that time  
Is almost finished baking this pie.  
You can see me here as you can,  
That surface of the sea,  
Sleeping in my shell. You can see  
That part of me and walk away  
And make love to my stranger relatives  
On far distance spheres,  
In the buzzing cities where humanity  
Shelters its fear,  
And goes fornicating around  
As instinctually as koala bears in Sidney,  
Fearing extinction,  
The Dodo Bird, grandfather's hungry coffin.  
You can do all those things  
That trickle outwards shallowly.  
Sure, you can see me in my room,  
And I will shake hands with you.  
I will even give you my autography,  
Because you want to be my fan;  
But I am not really here. I am near  
The end of things, watching the world  
Blown around on a string,  
As an infant god plays in his  
Crib on the edge of the Arctic Sea,  
A kite tugging to be free in the hands  
Of a vagrant king. I could whisper so many

Little things to your lips up from my core,  
But these are just the shallows,  
The night crawlers in the shoals.  
Down in the nocturnal depths the  
Grand things speak in blind gestures,  
The unmentionable behemoths  
Guarding the golden mermaids,  
The greater whole of me  
I shall never unveil.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dogs Get Smarter As They Drink Rum

Going down into the dreams that are  
Detrimental,  
Opening our hands up like this like the  
Mimes for butterflies,  
Even when there is no walls of shade;  
Drinking too much liquor makes you cool  
And forgetful,  
And I wanted to relate this to the impassible  
Summits in Colorado,  
Which I surmounted four at a time:  
I really did, and now I am trying the publishing  
Tricks and no one cares unless your  
Smile is straight and polished,  
And I loved you, I loved you, Mrs. Sommelier,  
And look at your usual children-  
Yes, even they are beautiful, but where will they  
Homestead;  
And will you look for me under the earliest lampshades  
Of discovered electricity after the day is gone,  
And you are lying down with your pomaded husband,  
And isn't it very casual and thought out-  
Utterly serene with the car in the garage, and glitter  
On the pool- and two and a half cable Tvs,  
And golf clubs leaning in the wall beside the car:  
I can grow bigger or smaller according to the degrees  
Of how your corneas dilate on my passionate scars,  
And the angles I use to nervously relate to you,  
Courting you gloomily and calling you out under the eaves  
Of the new stars before Halloween,  
Assuring you that the alligator can read your sweaty fortune,  
And the lulling of the stagnant tide will persuade you,  
Out into the adulterous penumbra where I will put my  
Hands upon your shoulders, feeling the outline of your bra,  
And pushing you up and down, your bare feet leaving  
Their eccentricities of the alternate reality I would like to  
Cartography into the unbounded territories I would like  
To leave for with you.



# Doing A Millions Seconds

Moon, cool and vermillion,  
What are you doing a million seconds away  
From the heartbeat of a grasshopper,  
Of a flickering emotion upon  
The hidden side of a cloud—  
Even passengers looking outside the porticos  
Of airplanes cannot imagine—  
The first loves, or the pets we have had—  
Words that are above our vocabulary,  
Or the fabulous delusions that  
Are too busy acting pretty to ever  
Get us anything—  
I remember the downside of your old  
Neighborhood—the chicken shack  
And the pizza parlor—  
And the flowers I bought you—  
Spreading my garden of unobtainable love  
Out the spring-time's door—  
But my wife sleeps like a rosary in my  
Homestead—  
And the passions I once kept for you  
Have flown to the cathedrals of  
Oblivion—  
Where I once kept all of my love for you  
But nothing more.

Robert Rorabeck

# Doing As I Should

Girls still love me even when I get drunk,  
Brown haired, auburn eyed:  
Careless bandit, I still think about what I might do for them,  
What I might steal for them,  
Or if breathing out I could be anywhere,  
I could be real hung-over like a mighty wind-banner of the clouds:  
And S- has beautiful eyes, and a child,  
And she goes on walks with her husband, her husband,  
Her good man in her good land:  
I want to serve in the service of her army: I want to be a shadow of  
Her good man;  
But where I sleep, the wells of shadows run so deep,  
And the cousins of goblins keep good keep,  
And they keep around their savage green billboards:  
They can advertise anywhere,  
On C- B-'s tennis courts, or anywhere there is a sun or moon  
Or their penumbra sweet underground,  
And the woods are well spoken,  
The woods keep going to the river,  
And you can use the river to find your way out:  
It's an easy way out, S-, an easy way out of here,  
And I can smell your penumbra left behind near the  
Drinking fountain near the hall:  
But you have a beautiful husband, and I know he is a good, kind  
Man, and he just keeps on going,  
Eating those ghosts like you- Maybe he looks like me while he eats,  
When I was skinny, or when I was famished:  
S-, look at your eyes, and look at your daughter's eyes:  
They are the very same,  
Like receiving the same letter in the box of your heart,  
And it proves you will live forever,  
S-,  
S-:  
And I will keep on protecting you, keep on shooting the dragons  
In the heart over the poolside resorts,  
Even though I am only half a vagabond conquistador,  
Even though I am only half beautiful,  
S-:  
I'll keep doing, doing as I should.



Robert Rorabeck

# Doing As She Does

Muses of my species, like paper airplanes lost in  
The metamorphosis  
Of the rain:  
What will I do with them, like dryads sunbathing on  
The other side of the canal as the sugarcane burns:  
What can I say to them from here,  
Shooting off my offerings of fireworks  
And sugar starts:  
Burning all of my army men in the armpits of  
Bonfires:  
Offering a mouthful to the clouds where the  
Stewardesses live,  
And all of the time checking themselves, leaping  
Like fables themselves from house  
To house,  
And doing their laundry out in the carports like  
Grottos that shouldn't have to exist:  
Why then it was here anyways,  
And the nocturnal rain comes, and the frog princes  
Sing, and the oranges somehow grow like  
Globes produced from the flowers  
Of her lips that perfume the backyards of all of our  
Childhood as she keeps on doing as she does.

Robert Rorabeck

# Donna Inez

Translucent shreds of paper dolls  
Falling through her auburn locks  
In winter's night she stands  
Shivering in a streetlamp's glow.  
Teardrops freeze upon pale, peach cheeks  
Crystals of her inner soul  
To have but one to taste and share  
Even the smallest part of her;  
To touch her cheek as the tears now do  
And hold her head against my chest  
Her breath hot upon it.

To run my fingers through her hair  
And smell the scent,  
Like daisies after morning dew  
Upon mountain valleys  
Where snowmelts run  
Frigid cold  
And the sun burns it's grinning life  
Where aspens sparkle in the breeze,  
Gentle whispers of the wind  
Their trunks like her body,  
Smooth and slender,  
Creamy white skins;  
To touch them is to touch her;  
To smell the scent of the breeze is to inhale her.

Her lips are red,  
Rose petals brushing  
Butterfly wings  
Parted softly as if to fly;  
Her breath, the wind off Caribbean seas,  
Salt and sand whipping against my face,  
Seeping deep inside my lungs;  
Her whispers,  
The waves  
Breaking against the beach,  
Waters seeping between my toes,  
Shaping the world with a sculptor's graces,

Molding it in a lover's caress.

She seems so sad,  
As if a love was lost,  
Like a child shadowed by the night,  
Her face hooded by the moonless sky

Her eyes look up  
As if she hears me whispering her name.  
She sees me now,  
Standing on a shadowed hill.  
I can hear her gasp,  
Her body shaking more from shock of me than the wind.  
For a moment we share each other,  
Lost in the bottomless wells of blue and brown  
And then she walks into the night  
And I do not follow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Donning Of New Satellites

They were shown the mark of his kiss,  
And afterwards they could not be friends  
In the red bricked aquariums where  
Knowledge grew in the coital branches  
And the cheerleaders budded on luscious stems-  
They made love for some time after,  
Trying to diffuse what they were sure to be,  
But persistently he came knocking,  
With an invitation to become a vampire.  
For then the walls were sad and stormy,  
And their silence echoed like an army,  
They saw each other infrequently in the courtyard  
Their friends gossiped lackadaisically in the gym,  
But the time together has had its passing  
And both the wiser, they were graduating  
Their odometers were flipping over, they were aging  
And the time that held them both so closely,  
The likely heroines of our story,  
Was the frantic passing of a dying season,  
The way love calculates without a reason;  
So now on new pastures, their eyes go fawning  
And to novel bodies, like faithless satellites,  
They are so far away donning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Don'T Tell

I am thoroughly shot through with windmills,  
Alma,  
And I plant the glass bottle on the glass table next to the wooden  
Picks of the bird house;  
And it sounds as if there is someone outside my door:  
The airplanes leap just like your new family of rabbits,  
And the cars will drive through the rain tomorrow:  
I drove by your house tonight,  
As I remembered and worshiped you,  
And I slept on top of a roof near your house almost a week ago,  
While the other homeless specters fell down drunkenly in the aloe  
And tried to kiss your doorknobs from where they fell,  
But they didn't get so far:  
Oh, Alma, Alma- if you can remember please, please,  
Alma- don't tell.

Robert Rorabeck

# Don'T You Remember

The trucks pull the sea over you like some sort of  
Blanket, because I wonder why anytime you see me you start  
Shivering;  
Am I that most beautiful form of cadaver; when I just want to  
Ride the tamed rapids with you:  
I want to be a grinning tourist going through the routines  
Of sweet amusement with you and your daughter:  
Those very long and twisted tresses I could find you on,  
Trying to become a kamikaze mariposa,  
Trying to leave the perfected states of your body for abstraction,  
Or just trying to look down the blouse of that old fort in the bosom  
Of Saint Augustine, while all the nuns sleep like stamps pressed  
Sweetly up against their arrow-eaten conquistadors;  
And what really am I doing but becoming the extinction of fireworks:  
I am becoming the green copper canon with digestion problems at  
Your wedding:  
I am gurgling up spells for witches and trolls; and I still remember  
Your eyes, Kelly, floating like azure moons over those canals  
I skipped school on just to look in to your eyes, Kelly;  
I was the otter placing himself moribundly in your lap for so many  
Seasons; and don't you- and don't you remember?

Robert Rorabeck

# Dorothy In The New America

When Dorothy got to Oz,  
She crawled out her window and said,  
"Is this still America? "  
Because she felt so strange,  
She took the ruby slippers off the dead  
Girl,  
And in vanity covered her bare feet  
And walked down the road,  
Singing,  
"Does anybody want to make love,  
Because I am so afraid  
And I have no money."  
That was when the Scarecrow  
Leapt off his stick in the flaxen fields,  
And trying to walk in a straight line,  
To appear as if he were in a confident state,  
He declared, tipping his stuffed head alluringly,  
"Hello, Dorothy."  
"That was the first time you said my name, "  
Said Dorothy and then  
They embraced and grew naked  
And wet in the cornfields that grew  
For miles like a chartreuse sea  
Bordering Munchkin Land,  
While the wicked witch picked apples  
In the sad forest wondering  
Where her sister had gone,  
All the time studying the skies, fearing their  
Myriad possibilities.

Robert Rorabeck



# Down From Heaven

Today we are looking in at the sons of Walt Whitman  
And the torpedoes floating softly beyond the stained glass windows  
Just on the other side of the hypocrisies of the church  
That has sunken with the tears from the girl you abandoned:  
Little girls filling you wine glasses,  
Like soft feathers lost in the aloe: and I convinced you of these  
Affections as your mother wept in the carport  
Beside the car that was salmon- and the frogs sang that once were  
Tadpoles, as the angels looked down from heaven  
And everything turned into the vulpine darkness and consumed the  
Orange trees by the fall of shadows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Down Her Interstate Of Cadaverous Holiday

This wind, she is a banshee- she is relentless,  
See her shake the cones from the conifers, make aspens  
Opalescent naked with this still yet early autumn;  
And today I walked the dragon's ridge,  
Trying to pretend that I was somnolent, in a state of  
Fever dream, or half-real in love:  
Like a re-animated cat, something absolved,  
Something that might fuse with her and go out with her to  
Lunch and have so much money as to bare children with  
Her; and to never have a hunch:  
What I am doing now, lighting the wicks for the less than  
Virgin theatre- maybe the lost cause of the lost boys  
Launch, to crenellate and in-flume the air,  
Over the picnic baskets of stuffed watermelons;  
And she is on the yard, the gently sloped abutment of  
Old cavalries named after their gray generals- she is a southern  
Bell- she is ringed and pierced and swelled;  
And they are having lunch- sweet peas and fried chicken,  
And their children, I can see 'em, half ornamented behind the  
Red aquarium, getting drunker, diving down into the golf balls  
Of the alligators' hutch: I suppose I might save them;  
But she doesn't dream about me, the lazing conquistadors  
Who, pompadoured, have taken off the parade:  
Look at them sleeping rusting, weeping in their translucary  
Hibernations: I don't suppose they should ever care to  
Wake up again- absolved to see her speeding fast and leggy  
Down the freeways of her pristine arrangement;  
Perfumed at the hinges of wrist and ankle: she is a fast beauty,  
Metamorphosing, illiterate, what how she destroys us without  
A thought, savage instrument, necrotic-fanged, busted,  
Down her interstate of cadaverous holiday.

Robert Rorabeck

## Down His Path

Loneliness over the yellowing adobe of  
A teacher's hovel- the street winds from here:  
It goes to your house,  
Where you lay browned bodied with your children  
Laughing in your yard-  
Your father underneath the engine of a truck:  
You still live with him even though you told me  
He put a gun to your mother's head when he came  
Back to Mexico.  
Now the stars bathe you, and you think of  
Your own man, and the roses he didn't give you-  
You have taken his hand, and begun to  
Look across the orchards to where the sandstone  
Lay suppliant to the sea: soon she will be combing  
Over him, taking as she wishes-  
Then over this, as your eyes close like butterfly wings  
Over this, you may think of me as you continue  
Down his path.

Robert Rorabeck

# Down In The Valley

The horses are sick again,  
Leaning over the blue meadow in an  
Uneasy way;  
I follow their rut, my nose stuck  
In Chaucer at the part where he died,  
And gave a justly permanent cessation  
To the poetry,  
As if there'd been a car crash in  
Merry Old England,  
But even then the sun was the same sun,  
But a little younger, and the continents  
Have yawned a breath or two more,  
And there are new aqueducts,  
And its easier to be nameless and not  
Pressed into feudal wars, if only by a little.  
Language has grown corrupted,  
While science profound, the seas are  
Beginning to taste her salty ankles,  
The butchers make their sombulent rounds:  
And she is in the dewy eye of an insect's  
Arrhythmical heart, the years,  
The years, the years, she goes beating,  
Just as the horses' hoofs trample around the  
Ovals making room for the weathers,  
But eventually in aberrations concluded,  
Even while she is like confection in angora,  
She too will be the ancient husk lowered  
By the pulleys of strange men, but they will  
Still read of her, high upon the newer aqueducts,  
Biting their lip at the personifications of a resurrection,  
The illuminating filament ironically in the dullest  
Print, for I have placed her there for the years,  
Like a beautiful flower distilled between  
The pages of a book.

Robert Rorabeck

# Down The Highway

All of the tables are turned and all of the dogs  
Are asleep—  
The Christmas tree is lit; Oh god it is so bright,  
And the angels are learning  
As the gift wrapping collects beneath the  
Vanishing lives—the highways continue to matriculate  
The wives—  
As some kind of punishment,  
As some kind of spear in the side of god—  
The television shows continue to laugh and nod—  
As the voice of the real lions roars like a waterfall of  
Water fountains—until the angels can finally be  
Found inside, going to school except for on weekends—  
And enjoying the places  
Where they are so fortunately found to exist—  
They kiss and tell for show and tell  
And then they'll pretend to disappear—the god  
That they believe in travels by himself down the  
Highway, cursing the sun as he drinks a beer.

Robert Rorabeck

# Down The Open Road

By the pictures of their high heels,  
And laughing up past the carefully grafted cinderblocks  
Who happen up from the lone and dusty yard-  
The goldfish and the beaded curtains while a young couple  
Is fabulously in love, and he is bleeding out children from her,  
Like specters  
That flicker behind the marionettes as they dance from the house  
And over the canal to the land of the talking cats;  
And afterwards, while he is in snoring recess, she goes out beside  
The orange canopy and the Shetland ponies, and kneels  
In the grotto of the carport and the washing sheen:  
Beside her an uncountable number of toads ululating in the aloe  
And discarded rebar,  
As from over her shoulder, thousands upon thousands of  
Hungry and bare-chested can be seen leaping across the barbed  
Wire garments,  
Counting their blessings and their tear their feet on the empty  
Seashells compacting along down the open road,  
Until they find shelter in the bosque across the street with the  
Cenotaphs of conquistadors, and the pornographies of junked cars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Down The Road Of Cerulean Canopies

Delighted in the eyes of sincerity's rearing-  
The beefsteak of juggernauts obscenely  
Unclothed for the traffic that pearls and beads on a dry  
World covered around by the thin  
Curtains of an unmistakable ingénue bathing in each  
Caesura of the sea,  
Cantankerous and bee stung- the size of every woman  
Swaying the magnitudes after tearing down the  
Four walls of her grotto,  
So that each little door is nude and filtering in the  
Unwholesome dinner guests who open up their flashlights  
Like rubies on the beauties of clams  
And look at themselves backwards down the road  
Of cerulean canopies even while they drive.

Robert Rorabeck

# Down Their Awful Hall

You are my secret prejudice  
I haven't yet found a way to give up:  
I don't believe you actually love the  
Human race,  
But you sup right beneath the football  
Coliseum;  
It would be better if you more appreciated  
Baseball,  
But your hair is so perfectly auburn.  
Listen to the way it swings,  
Back and forth like an unhurried sea.  
Even in your coffin it should swing that way.  
You are like the titillating prize at the bottom  
Of a crackerjack box,  
The very thing I used to drive to Miami with  
My father for deep after midnight,  
To get my fingers sticky,  
To populate my soul,  
To watch the winos basking against the fire drums;  
But the prizes are getting cheaper,  
And night after night it gets so cold;  
I know you have never really loved me,  
But how can any woman really love me,  
Especially the sea, or my venal muse;  
When it is only the interlude between seventh period and  
Halftime,  
Though the traffic never abates;  
It comes like rain, or like my fingers,  
The way they would like to fall through your fingers;  
But they don't know you at all,  
And now they pause to smoke and listen  
As your echoes fade down their awful hall.

Robert Rorabeck



## Down There In Mexico

Bench marks for tadpoles who stare with wonder lusting  
Eyes up to the green airplanes that fly  
From here to Mexico:  
Because in the bosque they have fireworks, and butterflies  
Who no longer wonder how to fly:  
They have made their way to decorate the smoky forest  
And on her lips to die: some fairy tale who is  
Sleeping there,  
Born in the womb of Mexico- her children will sleep  
Beneath her, lamps doused at the entrance of  
An impoverished church,  
As the daylight is siphoned out of the sky by the lips  
Of bats who ballet around her, singing with their ears-  
Going up from the scarred lips of the earth-  
And going straight up to bleed on the  
Stars- while her mother sweeps the dirt out onto the mat,  
A mountain cat eats a coyote, and from her lips  
The infernal spirits sprint like cinders-  
Before they get to the earth around her Mexico,  
They will look like fat black caterpillars  
Until they crawl into a zoetrope full of shadows,  
The end result of whatever metamorphosis there is  
Down there in Mexico

Robert Rorabeck

# Draft Dodgers Of Midnight

She doesn't care,  
The weathers I've made for  
Her,  
The fragile sun I've flaked from  
The hallways of  
The derelict high school.

Out in my high yard,  
Masturbating, watching traffic through  
Cyprus crooks,

Bet she's off with her newest of new boys;  
Out in the orchard at picking time  
With the handsome eyed Mexicans  
And step ladders;

And the windows are wicked  
Always looking in;  
And she is filled with original sin.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dragon Car Blues

Even if I was the Dauphin of France,  
I wouldn't use you as a paramour-

The ancillary vagabonds never had a chance;  
They fell asleep in poppy fields on  
Their way to war-

And I smoke in my dragon car-  
With the ghosts who preen like rain,  
Who enter through my hollows like snakes  
Search for corn in a cracked vase;

They are just as cold and as tender hooked,  
Like wounded kins bleating under blusterous  
Lindens,

Off the careworn easements of the old shell road's wind;  
The Australian pines tussle.

On Saturdays there are dragon cartoons  
On the television-  
But I'll never be the Dauphin of France;  
I'll never use you for a paramour, or make you take  
Other countries for me:

I never even thought to roll the chance,  
But keep to my paranormal conversations,  
My cactus gardens sick of the hummingbird's fast-beaten  
Molestations

Smoking in accumulating rain, consumptive  
And miss formed in my dragon car.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dragonflies All Over Whatever She Had

Then there were dragonflies all over her lips-  
But She could have spoken if she wanted to,  
Only her eyes wouldn't tell me what was wrong.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dragonflies On Tulips

The sun gets so yellow it gets nose  
Bleeds 'fumbling for oxygen as the little  
Children lead one another away  
From school:  
They are climbing up the orchard,  
They are pushing up the swings'  
They are acrobats in charge of their own  
Holiday 'singing to no one as they please'  
Pretending to map the extinct paths of  
Conquistadors 'settling down to eat  
Something sweet they have stolen,  
And then getting up again  
To steal into a Catholic church in the middle  
Of the afternoon'  
To fall around dizzily beneath the rafters in  
Their headlong canopy,  
Or to collapse next to the water fountain  
And oleanders out of doors,  
To become mottled as the sun freckles her  
Branches 'to languish there,  
Lungs falling and rising again like membranous  
Wings without any reason at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drawn By The Wounds

As I am here, so you are still there:

Oh Alma,

Oh, Alma- all full of your dieties or whatever it was:

Famous, and from Mexico, while all of the white

Girls I once knew try to ululgies you:

I can cut my throat like a yellow toothed guppy cut from the gold

Coins rung from the fair and still live:

And still live, alma:

And I love for you- I live this way, even if it is just for you because,

Underneath the watermelons and underneath the simple stars:

I live, smoking and telling a dime story for

You,

Alma, flashing through the cantankerous woebegone;

Even after the fairs have gone, and the fast food franchises grow

Woe begone in the first spinning depths

Out into the first fields of praise- and I don't remember what I've

Been saying,

Even as the out first chariots have been aloud to be out and

Cantankerous- and even as it is all spelled out,

And even as the words for her birthdays try to span the heavens

Through the kindergarten fingerprints of my hands;

I will love her through the ruby dimes of the roses that grow underneath

The footprints of the windmills or anyways: and here it is,

And it is dying- but here it is, anyways, and in its premature bedrooms

It is crying- and it is crying for you anyways, Alma- for you

My muse, anyways, it is out on the roads, open throated, drawn by the wounds-  
and dying.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dreamless

We did away with dreams.  
Like accountants we made practical  
And timely love to one another—  
We didn't waste minutes with  
Affectionate words from our lips,  
But left those necessities to our  
Cost effected eyes to talk loudly  
And instantaneous the truth on  
How we felt,  
How our irises gorged upon our flesh—  
In night, we were each other's watchmen  
Who grabbed one and then the other bodily  
But gently making sure neither  
Would escape our blanketed cell,  
Intimate mates who were in for life,  
For if we were ever to become responsible  
Parents with modest to comfortable incomes,  
Effective citizens of our united enterprises,  
We must continue on the assembly line  
Of our sheets around the clock,  
To keep fitting our parts together  
To make the final product, busy insects  
Pollinating the others' meadows,  
Forever dabbing and fiddling with one  
Another to perfect the processes,  
And during lunch breaks  
When the whistle blows,  
Playing with each other's feet while  
Socializing at dinner parties.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dreams

Those are the littlest bits of  
things, the color of God's  
Eyes too dangerous for a  
Man to touch, for brought  
Up to his heart  
They would cause it at first to  
Cry and then to bleed,  
But there in the rainless gutter,  
Where they lie like a stained-glass  
Mural, shattered,  
And no longer describable,  
The heat coiling upon them  
Like poisonous snakes,  
As the cars drive by in schools,  
In Scottsdale, AZ, those are  
The littlest bits of things.

Robert Rorabeck



# Dreams Of Ferris Wheels

I have had dreams of Ferris wheels:

Oh, don't you know- I have, swimming through the slow

And deepest seas of Guatemala;

And I have seen your silhouette in the fruit market,

And I have called you like a bird or butterfly home to me,

Alma:

Because your body swings so bright and brown through the constancies

Of the day,

That I should not be so proud to not answer and obey:

I have been all across this country:

I have been up and down, and barefoot on railroads:

I have been around, but you have been so deep and so young,

And the rainstorms came to entertain your young:

Your children who are so bright and brown, they are citizens of this

Country that you in your adolescence found:

And I love you: and I love you, Alma- and that is no lie:

And if you do not love me, then I will go off somewhere to die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dreams Of Life Not Far From The Zoo

There are great places to live and die  
Under the skyway of peacock plumes;  
You can sit on your porch all day and look at a  
Sky filled with blowing scars;  
You can make love in the afternoon to who you  
Choose, the buffet of wives and honeymoons:  
For a few dollars more, you can have dancing girls  
And cocktail parties, and hot air balloons;  
And invite your friends over to look at cars;

Anyway you look at it there's a downhill slope,  
To the unanswerable graveyard: friend or foe,  
You're going there, win or lose,  
But from the freshly painted windows of this nesting  
Living room, the pain goes down easier,  
The liquor blooms like spikenard in the sunburn yard,  
And you can do exactly as you choose,  
And catch the newspaper every morning from your front  
Yard in a robe and dancing shoes;

You can buy it all and outlive the bank,  
And watch the weather blow across the roof in her sororities,  
You can put some gas in the tank and drive in and out of  
Your restive loci,  
Or ride a bicycle just the same, for it is such a lazy, summer  
Game to live here and listen to the mating echoes from the zoo,  
Like a miniature version of your childhood,  
Flashing through the trees and canopy; If you find yourself  
There tomorrow, then sit and nod and wait for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dreams That I Cannot Share

Held the fellas in their days:  
Stood straight up inside cars, as if it were  
A parade,  
And got drunken at the shoulders of pine trees,  
As if in the ghettos of a  
Baseball game- and here it is- a boda, a wedding,  
A way that they slew the witch in her  
Perfect night while her children were flying their  
Perfect kite,  
And the cat sat up right there, and purred into that  
Very air-  
As if you had awakened from your sleep,  
And remembered me, and took me into your heart  
From the very deep-  
And in a very deep somnolence held me there, and whispered  
Into me things of dreams that I cannot share.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dreams That We'D Had

Buried me up to the elbows of their  
Sandcastles, lost children  
Who had also lost their hearts  
Into a zoetrope of stars as close as the sun,  
And the dolphins leaping  
Into a world where roses became extinct—  
As she,  
The finalist from all of the muses I have had:  
The one I made love to some sixty times  
Amidst the pornographic daydreams of my bed,  
Eventually moved north of the nursery  
Rhymes and rollercoasters  
To be someplace  
With her husband and her children  
Forever—she killed my graveyards dead,  
So I married another woman on the other side  
Of the world,  
My knees knocking off the heads of so many  
Candles,  
The wishes of all my dreamy birthdays spilling  
From the hollows of my instruments,  
As I ran away to find someone other,  
Fearing the dreams that we'd had.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drifters

Long ago two people made  
Love, with their eyes long steady,  
Flesh and bones pressed, in mid April,  
Two days after my birthday— at 8,000  
Feet above sea level it snows in the  
White Mountains where I finished my  
Work early to have time enough to  
Think about dead relations facing eastwards and the  
Marble tombstones that ornament their  
Skulls on far away hills like crowns or trophies with  
Birds fluttering hollow-boned and darting shadows along  
The cemetery's black iron gates, as I open  
A popular book beneath a cloud smothered sun.  
I look up and dad has brought home a  
Drifter named Joe to help with the  
Horses—19 pregnant mares whinny amidst  
The pines before the hillside slopes steadily  
Down to Highway 180— Joe was walking  
The 60 miles between here and Showlow,  
Singing songs to his newborn son, his eyes  
Following the line of highway to a home unseen—  
Now,27, Joe sleeps in the room near mine,  
And when Grandmother comes this Sunday,  
She will greet us both the same, and pretend  
To worry that I didn't go to Japan to teach,  
And say now, it is too late. I will smile because  
I can not explain to her, like an Indian who  
Passes through the boundaries of another man's  
World, those things, beautiful extinct  
Animals, which can only be sought in the  
Frosted steps miles above the world's highest  
Mountain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drifting Before I'M Drifting

Drifting now before I'm drifting:

Oh, Frank O'Hara, my new girlfriend, sanctified

Like a long legged mailman for awhile:

I will worship you good, go down on you for lunch,

And then grow fickle and let you disappear

Beneath that bad meat and flies of a dune buggy:

And I want to have dreams, but they are made for

Better boys who can understand and teach their grammars:

Or boys who don't mind at all,

But who can swing that bat and cross their blue-anchored

Arms over themselves and look like well-developed

Swans:

There is just nothing for my disease, something like a

Scattered prince blowing out his ashes along the Mississippi:

I work for no one, and it's a good job, because

Nothing has as of yet broken down,

And the city is vagrant and made for versatile fuel:

And all the most beautiful people are so beautifully employed:

They have so much going for them; they know the classics

And can allude to those sunny sororities: Like,

There's a girl in a garden misquoted, and my two dogs are

Laid out but in their time will wake up again and worship

The things I should dare thing to sea; and I loved a single person

Wonderfully, but I am not brave enough to publish my

Poems for them:

I am not brave enough to find a suitor and disappear into

The unsuspecting trance of commuting angels:

And down, and down, and make yourself comfortable on the

Way to the job; but it wasn't suppose to end like this,

My love, but so it ends.

Robert Rorabeck

# Driving Away

Soon the world will be getting up and  
Breaking through its banshee membranes;  
And even though I haven't seen her eyes  
Since high school,  
Since I entrenched my senses like a sated  
Terrapin underneath the school bus,  
And saw her things,  
She is not mine: like a telegraphic scream  
On unsubstantiated news,  
She dresses to sell to her jockeying guys  
So slightly involved in her diamond minds;  
And I put my hands on dirty fruit to feel her  
Effervescing pulse,  
But everything I sell so too will eventually be  
Someone else's,  
Like our language, our thoughts of cars  
Parked on the gilded throats of brilliant esplanades,  
We can only lick our throats over the weathers sure to  
Come;  
Though they will always involve her in some beautifully  
Uncontrollable way,  
We will never steer them, the apoplexy of our tongued  
Storms;  
Just so, she isn't she always around, opening the doors  
And driving away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Driving Away From Her

Powers fill my gold toys, simulacrum that they have  
Chosen to hide in the keystones of mountains:  
Breath in my lungs as I remove her to the bedroom, into all  
Of the warm loneliness the experts were sure would  
Remain forbidden-  
Getting nearer to her, even as we crawl away into the viaducts  
Poured into the mouth of a parking lot goddess-  
Where the tiniest of ants begin hyperventilating, where her  
Breasts become the meat for unapologetic sparrows:  
And kidnappers get too lazy and go back down- like kids  
Who still wet the bed scrambling higher to light the  
Gas lamb of some stony lion of weathered pugilist:  
Just because this is where she happens to be tossed, stolen  
By the gods who have long since eaten themselves,  
Made to weather the cryptic nourishments down through  
The lavender abutments until it is all just some words she has found,  
Crying to her like her daughter at her tit, and she must decide  
Whether to lift her blouse and let the latchkey in, or  
Step away further into the million fired night- to kiss new  
Gods in the airy grapevines of their perforated apertures-  
To put an end to my fears, as she looks down, her nose bleeding,  
The entirety of her world left behind and driving away from her.

Robert Rorabeck



# Driving In New Mexico, Laser Beams

Selling fireworks  
in golden dungeons  
high in the mountains  
across too many streams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drowning Home

Wherever you are you can make  
A go of it,  
If you ask your government or mother for help;  
And there's cold beer in the fridge,  
And warm waves they are saying her name outside  
The cozy door;  
And I can take you down this way,  
So many steps, the flowers all pinpricks of white;  
The poisonous envy of coral snakes which can do  
No harm unless thoroughly pressed like perfume on  
The palm;  
They've shaped how the birds sing,  
And all the professors are naming, drunk of the polyps  
Of space they hear breathing through the screened lanai;  
I want to say that there are so many passages  
Into Mexico, the bereaved highways un sanctimonious,  
Declassified going their way;  
And would sure like to see you twice in one day  
Out at some dog track or chicken coup, the places  
Where foxes like you naturally cohabit with the spaces  
Of haranguing blue which match your eyes like a good  
Suit for an interview for your wedding day:  
But this all just a goof, not even good enough to feed my  
Dog, though I saw such beautiful houses today in the  
Quaint pandemonium of all that could be wrong;  
And women who looked like you, who should have been you  
Walking their dogs- should have been your dogs;  
But I am just drinking Mexican beer, and trying out a new  
Variance into the constant puzzle of my magical emasculation,  
The bad science of my loneliness deserves another try  
Even after the last inning has thrown, and all these f%cking  
Tourists are drowning home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drowning The Graveyards

When I saw you standing there, I knew that this was America.  
The sea encroaching like an unwanted lover,  
Shimmering with its cenotaphs of conquistadors-  
The crowds gathering separated by infinitesimal lovers.  
Hands reaching out, dividing like starfish infinitely wounded,  
Recreating the reciprocities of an untouchable classroom:  
Seeing him attempting to pin a corsage on the hem of  
Her phosphorescent dress:  
Like a weeping bouquet dredged from a mortally wounded womb:  
Here they are roaring with the silence,  
Moving forward too fast to remember- In pauses, holding out to our children,  
The shopping malls devoid upon midnight,  
So in-glittered drools the eggplant mouths upon pillows-  
A noise embittered with silence,  
Our flags whipping as the mane of the animal who stands still,  
A river drowning the graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drunk Kisses Of Love

Tonight I told myself I would write—  
I bought a bottle of Captain Morgan spiced rum  
And a bag of limes, so I could sail those long forgotten seas alone  
And end up someplace familiar along Florida's east coast where  
I used to skip school with the old gang, and smoked between classes  
In a studious alcove, a buccaneer's bedroom beneath old stone steps  
Where the sea came up in her mighty whiteness, and foamed like a panting  
huntress  
Undressing and lying wetly in the buff about our middles as we toked—

I was going to finish ten single spaced pages, churning out the  
Blurry words, with her eyes behind the picture as inspiration—  
In my lonely drunkenness, it's how I reach out from my world  
In my chair 8,000 feet above the earth in the White Mountains,  
While she plays cards at sea level, putting on the invisible pout of her poker face  
With the strong armed boys who fleck her boudoir which was once  
Inside a purple porpoise that has now changed its name; but the  
Delivery boys still go there to get hung-over on her when their  
Shifts end at 4 am leaving only the zombies to moan through streets  
Dripping dew and used c#ndoms—

Instead, I failed miserably, as it is my sallow way, when I come  
To think of a sickly grad student, a short haired blonde who used to  
Take Old English with me— She's now married and going for her  
Doctorate in Kansas City and does not notice Dorothy getting kidnapped by  
A hurricane outside her window— But she's still a raging feminist  
Decrying the Anglo-Saxon man and his new arousal to the machine  
Gun stashed in the woodshed, leaving the old axe and pitch-fork to  
Rust, leaving me beside the dead pilgrim on Chaucer's way, smiling  
And calling me a text-book trooper....

I only finished one page leading up to where Blackbeard will steal  
My love and the last of the rum away  
which is foreshadowed by the strange and deadly  
Rose thickets growing in the waves in the Port of Nassau, before I  
Realized I was failing again, that my language was weak,  
Though the rum was strong and knotted like oak—  
I packed up for the night and the pirates sailed off into other sunlit  
Bays, fornicating with their stolen women and my sad hopes,

As I settled down and watched a documentary on the lost Sudanese boys  
Who come to America to find heaven—

Here, they are the blackest black, the lowest of the low,  
In dirty streets they are the beautiful rebellion of machine-gunned orphans—  
Like all the rest of us, they want to lie with the most petite white women  
In the rushing beds of sunlight and waves and give them giant brown teddy-  
bears  
where motion comes upon  
Motionless and a new medium buds in thickets and avenues for the awakened  
Artists to strut down towards her—

Is she still here or have they stopped serving drinks?  
She must still be here, in these ancestral halls which echo the long  
Motion under the waves upon the beach— My desperations for the  
Barmaid who swims with indigo dolphins, who puts a pot on the fires  
For the blackest of black boys, the darkest of orphans, those who come  
Unsuspecting towards the tumultuous glut of the red, white, and blue  
Mechanisms, there to lose themselves to the childish identity, the  
African-American. They cannot escape their pigment, which the  
Fires of stolen rum highlights, but she sees me standing outside of them,  
A tanned pupil with tanned eyes—

Back in middle-school where I used to pretend I was a slave  
Shackled to a shit stained bed, dying in my last days in the hut of the  
Pitiless white master—  
And in high school I used to tell these two guys I ate lunch with that  
I should go to Morocco to become a white slave, to pay the debt of my  
Ancestors' capitalistic transgressions, even though I found out later my  
Great-great grandfather was an abolitionist preacher who got shot in the  
Mouth fighting for the north, going up the gray hills thicketed with seceding  
muskets,  
Only to get married at seventy to a sixteen year old, and the kids I ate  
Lunch with laughed at me—Now one is a drug dealer and the other is the  
Same thing he was in high school—

I want to tell these Sudanese boys to go back to Africa, because the  
Tortoise has always been faster and wiser than the hare. Back in Africa  
They can hold hands and call each other dearest love without being called  
f@ggots—  
Back in the original savannah, they might be greeted by the machete of their  
Unforgiving counterparts, but at least they won't be cast upon by white eyes,

The fundamentalist drive-thru's who have butchered Jesus and sell him with Greasy fries, those who cause heart-attacks, those ridiculous pirates who even Now steal her away from me.

Go back! Go back I should scream with ½ a bottle of Captain Morgan  
In me, causing the length of this poem and its transgressions, as it calls  
Out for her once again, the woman I see serving me the drinks which  
Burn these words into me. Go back! Go back to the original space, the  
Form without the abbreviated language of the salesman, because she is  
Still waiting for you, nude and hungry at the edge of the sea. Go back,  
My blackest of black brothers, my beautiful dears, and maybe by  
Reclaiming yourselves, you will wake her up and she will take a break  
From surfing and come to lay beside me under the steps like a cave  
Above where she will lie down beside me, and serve me her  
Drunken kisses of love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drunken Honeymoons

In a weather of summersaults I fade from you:  
I remember me,  
Do you remember you: or the evidence of your  
Children living in the armpits  
Of the aboriginal empires,  
Building pyramids in Egypt or in Mexico:  
As the phoenix becomes a bonfire of the inebriates  
Of our drunken high school only to bloom  
Again—  
Repeating the metamorphosis that cannot begin to  
Be described—  
We love each other equally, and all of the time:  
Forgetting sometimes until we come into view—  
Can we ever look up into the heavens  
To see from our high school:  
Whatever it is we cannot remember—as the Ferris wheels  
Turn away, as we are on our drunken honeymoons,  
With wives hung around our shoulders whom  
We cannot even begin to describe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Drunken Shame

want to love you, but that's the thing:  
I've worked it all out, but it's obscene:  
You're laying down with your bouncer,  
You're serving drinks to the derelicts,  
And this isn't even yet Shackleton's invention:  
I might be going back to high school,  
And that's cool: for as in between your legs  
I would like to play out as the fool:  
I'm not Shakespeare, but here's the thing before  
You leave, I've written entire novels about you  
And the sea. As a juvenile, I've stolen those things  
Pre-requisite to know about you; or, at least I  
Stole a Pl-yboy in Key West on my friend Jordan's  
Birthday; eight(teen) or so years ago- but, how, even now  
I'm being considered by a major literary agent,  
But not now- they've reconsidered, and are not  
Thinking about me, how so now I don't have any friends  
Who are not Bahia; or that guy, but I almost have enough  
Money to buy a house next to that Mouse;  
Another insouciant orchestra lives in South Africa,  
But he's German, and given to the jaw. Now this is just  
Getting ridiculous and I would be remiss to not insinuate  
The jest that I would not like to be under your blouse even  
Though you are a jaunty stewardess: but this is not true,  
I drool: I would be remiss to insist that under your blouse  
I would like to lay the foundation of my house, the forensic  
Evidence of a shooting evidence of a mouse: I would like  
To lay it down like a louse, but I've had too many sips to go  
Through with this, I love you, E-:  
And this is not a rhyme. You don't consider me anymore,  
And that is just a crying shame. I would like to shoot myself.  
I have consider this already. My sister is married, and I am out  
Of bullets; and you are f&ck-ng a bouncer, but I don't know anything  
About that. See now how you pose him holding up your friend's  
Tit like a chalice, what the f- is up with that?  
E-, I hate myself: I've tried to kill myself over you, see how I s-ck  
At this: I don't know anyone. I don't even know my sisters;  
And I shouldn't self-publish this, but here it goes out the window  
Like an insouciant airplane; and I am drunk, and where you live



It is Saturday, and this poem has bled off onto the next page  
Like a gangsters; but you're not even reading it are you, E-  
I would like to buy a house near you and sink into a swamp, because  
I can't even think of anything better: I haven't even been with  
The juxtaposition of my s-x in two years, E-  
And where are you, because I cannot write anymore tonight  
Without your ghost, and I am lost without you,  
And that is all there is, which is all of this:  
Only a crying, drunken shame.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dying Daisies

Open my throat like red curtained windows,  
And you will see the sun has set on my  
Words for you.... These lines are the last  
Remaining embers two surviving soldiers  
Sit around, stirring the ash,  
But they are freezing to death,  
And soon they too will lie down beneath  
Their thoughts, and let the flowers of evil  
Curl up and devour the fleshy pinkness  
Of their happiness. There, their boots  
Will stare straight up to God,  
But he will wave them off, as he sees  
Death crouching like a vulture on his carrion;  
He knows that they are no longer his,  
But for the pale woman behind the veil  
As they now become disinfected from the world,  
As the fire now starves upon its muted spot,  
No more flames like tongues licking, tasting  
The night for bits of you,  
So too go my words for you, and these thoughts,  
March down to their graves like good soldiers  
Nearby the windless lake where you live  
With all the beautiful girls without memories  
Trying to catch your new fish that flop  
Like pale satanic promises up and down  
This dead man's dying shores....

Robert Rorabeck

# Dying Too For My Bit Of Fun

Rain looks like whisky falling before  
The sunlight,  
But the day is almost over and  
I'm still out of alcohol- and it hurts to  
Look at my face. My teeth hurt as I think  
Lupine on girls that already died in the 70s,  
And girls from high school died:  
They died in North Carolina, they died in  
Saint Augustine- They used to play the guitar,  
And I dreamed of them under the broken down  
School bus and on, and on;  
And, when I could, I sucker punched the  
Bullies in the locker room- I didn't try out,  
I didn't run; and in between my classes,  
I smoked the sea underneath an umbrella  
In the moonlight, and made love to colors there  
Are no names for, following after the  
Daphnes and Carolines, dying too for my  
Bit of fun.

Robert Rorabeck

# Dysfunctional Conquistador

Waylaid by a prom queen denouement,  
The sky is green or the sky is amber:  
Or I am just hung-over.  
High school is only halfway finished, but I  
Have no business finishing it-  
Relegate me, delineate me to any sort of  
Truancy. Beat me into the quiet insouciant sound  
Of middle-class homogeneity:  
There where the housewives live,  
Those gunsmiths who take only the most professional  
Sort of lovers;  
Bivouac me near the sea or near the mountains,  
Position me as you would your play-dough lover:  
Say you want me and you want no other.  
Strike me dead with a kiss,  
What eternal bliss- Check my pulse to make sure I  
Can't recover. Kick some dirt where I no longer  
Hurt- and the cars pass by in their eternal metallic slather-  
Then go off and homestead the other;  
It is what I am good for- dysfunctional conquistador.  
Just say you want me and you want no other....

Robert Rorabeck

## Each Famishing Word

A languishing perception of the classrooms holds over,  
Like rain trying surmount the stained glass of a church in between  
Where I worked and the bar where  
You served beer- Now all of my words are echoes—  
They are unforgivable—  
Each one a freak brought to represent another fear:  
My wife is in the shower while I write these things  
Underneath a lamp underneath the  
Cabbage palms—  
Where am I going, as the night treks out,  
Each wave a hypnotism for sea-horses and jelly-fish,  
And each famishing word a stain upon my soul  
That was supposed to be immortal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Each Of Our Mutual Wishes

Touching the soundless chords of perception,  
As airplanes are touching down ever day,  
Their bulky wheels kissing over the perfect stone lips  
Of cemeteries,  
The forts firing off their cannons and the madmen in them  
Fireworks,  
And there are dreams that I've had in the middle of classes  
Other people were taking,  
But those dreams are what no one else can have:  
And I have you in the, Alma, and it feels right to admit this,  
And that there are angels living in our hearts,  
Sleeping like genies in gas lights waiting for our frictions  
To make them come awake  
And fulfill each of our mutual wishes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Each Of The Peninsulas

Wearing a baseball cap to  
Disguise identity,  
You stood barefoot  
In the shade  
Cast from the nude  
Lamps of the  
Trailerpark;  
But you grew up and  
Were blessed with all the  
Amphibians  
That crowded the stadium  
And sang through the  
Rains  
That united the cats,  
Collecting them in the cinderblocks  
With the moths  
Where we perennially  
Sold Christmas trees  
With the Mexicans- your  
Uncle amongst them-  
Making love to other women,  
Carolling and sending the  
Zygotes to the chimneys- until  
He understood that there  
Was nothing that  
Could not be loved by him-  
Abandoning his loneliness to  
His wife and children,  
And caressing each of the  
Peninsulas that were  
As close and as easy for him as  
Stepping stones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Each Of Their Hair

I am Briar Rabbit  
And you are super sexy,  
And I've been folding paper,  
And my eyeliner doesn't stream  
So I can look straight up at the dusty  
Mighty god folded  
Over the ceiling fans:  
We have six of them in our ceiling fans,  
My parents so lucky and so forgotten  
From picking  
Watermelons and lettuce  
And f%cking cotton:  
And I have seen you on the bus,  
And I have seen you a dripping heroin beneath the  
Florida holly,  
And you are my poem tonight, even though you are  
A dry river bank,  
And now I have my own money, so maybe I'll even have  
My own house to farm alone for some years.  
Maybe I'll even have my own wife who will read  
Insociantly by the intercostals light dreaming her days  
Away in the brewery of more handsome men,  
And old teachers have asked me to hand job for them,  
And old girlfriends are a year or two old wives,  
And rightly I should be a virgin or two since them,  
But I've been inside almost a dozen holes,  
Because of the caustly loneliness,  
And E- couldn't possibly understand,  
Because I summited the mount of the Holy Cross alone,  
And now the words are not mine,  
And my dogs have wandered off somewhere else,  
Because they are so tired of searching for their old master,  
And they are limping and soon they must die,  
Like the fire my tenebrous fingertips are constantly lighting,  
And I am only thinking about one or two women,  
And they are so beautiful,  
Like stewardesses,  
Even though I am not,  
And it is not possible that they could be thinking for



So long about me,  
Even though the cold wind is blowing forever  
Through the forlornly patriotic banners of  
Each of their hair.

Robert Rorabeck

# Each Unbothered Nod

Glorify the homeless man,  
The one we stole the world from:  
He who tramps without shelter of home,  
Without junction of wife, or yet fully grown  
Caress of children: Glorify him,  
And his marvel of beard, and  
Name each of his scars as the constellations,  
And road maps, so that we might see by them,  
He who has never know the prostitution of  
Business, nor the condemning judgment of  
Peers; never reciprocated with the foibles  
Of the classrooms of gaseous ego,  
Who picks up nothing but what is of immediate  
Use, who loves nothing but the open wounds of  
Sky, or, casually, the entrained lovers of business  
Men as they pass by insouciantly air-conditioned:  
Love him, the continuing transcendentalist,  
Whose teeth have disappeared from the malnourishment  
Of tasteful enterprise: find him, unwashed as the  
Tramping messiah of boxcars, the underpasses his hooded  
Cradles, the enthralled forest his lexicon;  
Kneel there in the hermitage of humilities: his wealthy  
Silences, and the purities of simplicity, which baptize  
Thoughtlessly as he proceeds down the verdant uncontained  
Hallways, the waves leaping like silver dogs of unrequited  
Fidelity: the road so surely his element, that he goes  
Down just as unknowingly, encompassed by sunlight as  
By twilight, and the dusky hues of her unwedded dress,  
Blindly feeling her as if awakened newly metamorphosed  
From each unbothered nod, each unburdened repose.

Robert Rorabeck

# Early Morning Paramours

Kick up your heels and scream-  
Show me the mammalian gardens which make  
Me dream- full bore like a conquistador  
To explore,  
Paying by the hour the things to which I am sure,  
The early morning baseball cards,  
The diving boards, her bee-stung tits-  
And some of this: her birthmarks in the red bloom age  
Of a dream,  
While her mother is away,  
And the dogs are out long tailed checking under  
The moon for a dream:  
Taking me out there consumptive in a cart,  
And I'll point you out the way,  
Nothing I am doing here has been real:  
Bicycle thieves are more real than this-  
Wait for them after midnight and they will take you away,  
And you will never have to dream again:  
And now I am bored and waiting for Jordan's sister  
To take off her clothes and swim,  
And all of the yard is an excuse for high school and the  
Third chapter of aliens,  
And things are budding in bunches yet fermented,  
And the fox is toothy,  
And the airplane is paper folded under the crenulations of  
Air-conditioning, I can't spell,  
And my youngest sister should live so many years after  
Me; and I've been to the bottom of the Grand Canyon three  
Times.  
But hell- and time is a hummingbird fast-toothed in  
Its claret box,  
And I am just that gummy toothed fox leaping for the vine  
It can never reach- oh hell,  
The bus has left me anyways, and it is such a short walk home,  
That it should be easy to go and see what fine things  
Are waiting for me short skirted, insouciant, singing  
Like early morning paramours on the color TV.



# Early Morning's Play

Let's string the stars  
along our street,  
so you can look at me  
and say nothing,  
and I can see in you  
the great distance of  
our sexes;  
In our loins the needs  
of curious time travellers,  
the experiments in  
the humid cul-de-sacs  
that lap one another  
like folded space  
after you have gone  
away to become a professional;  
I am still following you  
through highschool-  
I spent so many days  
with you thinking back,  
both of us ingenues  
of our state's education,  
the highest rung of  
mammals  
walking on hind-legs  
through the sunlit jungles  
of South Floridian modernism.  
Now a cubist sitting  
in your office,  
collecting you things;  
now you can not see me  
nor do you recall my name.  
You are busy tasting the  
Hind end of a pencil  
figuring out the plan:  
grown fully now, the  
result of a high-end nebula,  
a family recipe-  
but in strictly geographic  
terms,

I am even higher up,  
kissing the sun's ass,  
thinking further west how  
your toes must feel  
the Atlantic's tongue  
licking them like  
an allegorical puppy  
I imagine you must keep  
hidden away  
within the preschool  
of early morning's play  
when someone not yet fully  
realized  
caught your eye and  
called your name to come play.

Robert Rorabeck

## Early Poems

I will only have my early poems,  
My blue period, the nights alongside the basinets  
In the monte marte when the one whore showed me  
Her cuneiform,  
And I cut my tooth on the petrified rind:  
Saw you across the fluttering windows, wasting you  
Time with you tongue along side that awful man,  
In the cape of whoever:  
Your eyes the spittoon cloisters of a dirty park,  
The pranksters and the dead prying the coffins out of  
Jest: Out of that I was stymied. I couldn't even leave  
Out of my patriarch's jail,  
And it wasn't a good time to imagine the postcards  
You never send, and I made up epitaphs to the imaginary  
School bus you used to drink your pints of homegrown  
Milk on under the pinkish teal under-wings of herons:  
And all those animals rushing out of the mammalian brush  
Fires of sugarcane and rush hour stripping their  
Furs and crowding into the sea, making the tourists bulk;  
And there was no greater beauty than the infantile spit  
In my sandbox which was used to denote your pallid  
Areola, the aboveground swimming pool in the tenements  
Of a desert: And here it is at hand, trying to turn twenty years  
Old and not looking any better. My hand is outstretched  
Showing you the key to nowhere, and the publisher is  
Not accepting unrequited solicitations- so there you are.  
This is a poor man's house who can't even afford dog food,  
Who sometimes imagines the brightest azaleas all spun out  
Beside Diana's pool where all the great mothers have come  
Far south to bath in and get a taste of good homeopathic  
Magic; but I can't even rightly picture that species of flower,  
And mine remains the vague failure drunken on a park  
Bench far too deep after midnight to be reading to anything  
Brilliantly open or available for lovely romances.

Robert Rorabeck

# Earth

If I wasn't so tired,  
I could tell you where we're going,  
For there is an entire language of tricksters not so  
Deep in the earth,  
The laughing bellies of rain-men: ho, ho, ho;  
But I'm not so good with other things,  
Like driving cars and dancing girls and football,  
but the earth is like a mirror, and I should say  
Nothing more,  
And the earth is like a home, or like a cemetery.  
The waves are always leaping like class clowns  
Onto it, not realizing that evaporated the earth  
Smokes them as a truant under the same musseled  
Trellises where they go leaping so gleefully:  
The earth is a king at a waltz, and the sun his emperor,  
But no more of that stuff: This is not supposed to be an  
Early model of the universe,  
But only a tiny little thing, a handful of dirt:  
The coyote sniffs the earth. Fleas crawl up and stowaway  
On his coat from the earth- Furrows of scars make tracks  
On the earth. Chickens eat between the tracks,  
Sometimes, while crossing the road, they are hypnotized by  
The median: Otherwise, they too become the earth,  
And this poem, or a quiet novel, and last century:  
Great men say now the earth is thier's, but they are not so  
Correct that the earth doesn't laugh at them, nor does it mind  
The entire civilizations of footsteps marking up his chest:  
He is good for scars, the earth, and knows that what we say  
Are only the echoes we hear while even now we are  
Coming back to him.

Robert Rorabeck



# Earth Angel

Poets spill words from their lips  
Like unattended gas tanks at the pump.  
Spitting like babies they learn reckless  
Sounds they mistake for heaven's joy,  
When it is even more than that,  
Her legs running in the humidity atop  
The concrete, and saying I love you to  
Her shadow is some kind of earthen poem  
Amidst the dandelions and crippled bees,  
And the ants spewing from the crack in  
The sidewalk like an overused womb.  
Recognizing the verbs of her lunch, her  
Lips smack like flames licking candles,  
And her drenched shorts suit her bum  
Like a nun's habit rife with the smell of  
Blackened persimmons tangled about the river in  
The slender woods. Then there is hardship  
When she doesn't return the thought,  
But keeps right on with her exercise, not  
Knowing it only makes the poetry better,  
More prodigious until it is spewing as if  
From a cartoon bubble out of the paper mouth  
Of a bullhorn. Thus, stymied by the interest,  
And now confused between the old lies and  
The musing's truth, she gives in and becomes  
A fine catch, a trophy of some thousand lines,  
The busy aphrodisiac of the art form until  
Her and it are indiscernible and magnified,  
So her areolas take on themselves the aspects  
Of twin moons balancing milky cherries,  
Dishes served to infant kings,  
And her lips drunken boats torn free from their redskin  
Haulers: Even better than a doctor's wife,  
Or a lawyer's- she is like the thing professors  
Find without looking, a soft paramour of the  
Craft, an attentive student with her blouse unbuttoned,  
A singing interest of poetic actualization,  
Now so like a paper doll folded at the elbows  
And knees, a book of words in the form of a

Dove. And then again just a girl jogging  
Along the road beside the university, as sunlight  
Skips through your window and gives a fit of  
Erections which over last a decade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Earth's Fine Funereal Song

It is a big turquoise coffin  
Pirouetting in outer space-

In it is buried the entirety of  
Our human race.

Robert Rorabeck

## East Of East

You can hold up a Christmas tree almost with your  
Eyes and I am near then I can defeat the caterpillars  
And the bees making dresses in the yellow coral,  
And the snakes will moan the fire signals  
In the reef where the pieces of heart will find us and make us  
Stronger,  
And the airplanes will go far off and so comfortably,  
Bearing all of the signals of the modern age: the beautiful carriages  
Where women serve man and beast,  
And your eyes converse with the windows opening far away  
In a bed of lovers east of east.

Robert Rorabeck

# Eat My Bouquets As I Drown

Come back to me and give me rainbows and death  
Even though I know you are trying the rivers to  
Survive or to paint a pretty picture:  
Even though you are all right here and there is  
The reminiscence of nothingness so near to my head—  
And in the busied architectures of the butterflies in the  
Forests- whilst it takes only so much time  
For the songs to me sung—molting- changing rhymes  
An depictions of ourselves until we are upon other  
Planets—and then what is left for our high schools to do:  
You have scared almost everyone—and there isn't  
An airplane already taking off who hasn't already peed his  
Pants—and this is the uncalisified middle grounds-  
Even if you don't know anything about your own young  
Art—This is how it happens to be, without a pay check whist  
Your young dog continues scratching himself—  
So many perfumes in the private bedrooms of the underclassman—  
What does it mean—  
With the waves coming in, and the private ballrooms decrying  
Baseball all over themselves....

Robert Rorabeck

# Eat My Bouquetsa

Come back to me and give me rainbows and death  
Even though I know you are trying the rivers to  
Survive or to paint a pretty picture:  
Even though you are all right here and there is  
The reminiscence of nothingness so near to my head—  
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Robert Rorabeck

# Eat My Bouquetss

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What does it mean—  
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Baseball all over themselves....

Robert Rorabeck

# Eating Pie Haiku

I want to fall on  
my knees and kiss your Knees  
and eat your pie too.

Robert Rorabeck



# Echoes Of The Blind Man's Hammer

Neon sign of  
'Food'  
Written for the blind man  
He has bloodied his nails  
While building a  
House for  
Himself  
Up the switchbacked  
Slopes  
Outside of  
Golden, Colorado.

This is from  
My mother's childhood.  
See her.  
Her brother and  
A raven are following her.  
And the raven sings  
'Jupiter! Jupiter! '  
This is the name  
Of my mother's horse  
Kept in the valley  
Crowned by aspen.

Robert  
(The name of her brother)  
Will never leave this  
Haunted world.  
Even after his parents  
Are dead,  
He will wake up  
In the trailer park  
In Firestone, Colorado,  
Ringed by emptied cans of  
Domestic beer,  
Still hearing  
The raven  
Calling for my mother's horse  
And iron echoes

Of the blind man's hammer  
Upon the bloodied nails.

Robert Rorabeck

# Echoing Before School

Merry-go-rounds of feral children,  
Aunt Mary's in Pieta,  
Like the poster for a blockbuster movie:  
Sharon is in Colorado  
Bundled up, driving a stick shift:  
The world is made up of icicles cross-stitching  
A racetrack no one gets a good look at before  
The race is over,  
All the tears have melted, Sharon:  
Your child is beautiful flipping through the pages of  
Her naïve life:  
What will it mean to you, Sharon,  
Your daughter bathing in the same auburn light that  
You have known for so long,  
Carelessly, taking advantage of with your pale and  
Milky limbs:  
Your eyes sleeping burs half perceived through the  
Neighbors hibiscus;  
Sharon,  
I couldn't even begin to say, to speak of what dreams you've  
Had,  
How you perceive this garden, but it seems to be as if  
I've been walking after you for so long,  
Echoing, biting my lip while the footprints you leave  
Are coming up  
As the mailbox is raising his flag,  
And the traffic is beginning to drive right through the earliest  
Of passing through light,  
Wimpled grasses unbending, taking away its another greenness  
Signifying its wish not to be discovered:  
The mist leaving the vermilion baseball diamond,  
And Sharon....  
And Sharon is echoing before school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ecstatic Truth

What bedtime stories  
Will you choose for your children  
To knock them back  
Into the poppies to sleep,  
My pretties,  
To send them snoozing  
From their overfed  
Satanic Paradise  
Caged in a middle-class house  
Sequestered by a manicured  
Golf-course  
Locked with a gate code  
The nitric oxide allaying fears  
Into the briefest of  
Sugar-coated comas?  
Certainly not the vulgar  
Hypocrisy of your  
Communist youth—  
That the man you first loved,  
Which was I,  
Is not their father,  
Nor is the next one  
(The stranger you left me for) :  
But the third one,  
You assure them:  
You are rather sure he is their father.  
The ecstatic truth  
That you can never  
Explain to them,  
The poetic justice you fear:  
That a homeless man,  
A breathless copse of shedding limbs  
In the croaking gutter,  
Maggots vortexing a writhing sea  
In his swollen liver,  
Has more glow of deity  
In him than  
Their poor,  
Well-kept mother.

Robert Rorabeck

## Eden #2

The coldness runs too deep,  
Even if the weightless scientists discovered  
A new planet with budding life on it,  
Abound in rich gardens still standing,  
Two brothers in love and weaponless,  
A place where death never touches the sad corners,  
Where prostitutes never hunger and the winged  
Serpent was denied and left early,  
Where the forbidden fruit still hangs forbidden,  
Gladdened on the ripe branch, even still in reach,  
Where the innocent flesh  
Of those distant ancients are nubile and sinless,  
Still clothed in fig leaves and Lilly pads, with  
The open fornications in the tranquil gardens,  
Between the lions and the lambs who gambol in  
The yellowing fields where the winds blow warmly,  
Here where the pastoral borders expand with  
The holy procreations of cousins, where there is  
Only one age, and ageless, in the green space  
Where throats sing praises to the fecundity of  
Angels swimming in the trees, and God still  
Visits every Sunday to read to his great flock  
From his glowing book, where there is not space  
Enough for gravestones, the unnecessary markers of  
Sin never to be perceived, here where a thousand years  
Is still infantile, where thoughts grow in  
Temples like glistening chalices upon which the  
Untarnished souls sustain and the knowledge received  
Is given to all daily in little bits, breadcrumbs that fall  
Down from the clouds like manna softly bumping onto  
Those gentle heads,  
And the goodness continues on and on  
In glowing, manicured waves.

Yet, not for us— We can not climb aboard the rocket  
Built to take us to their second paradise, we who have tasted from  
Her drunken lips, our Eve bedded with the Serpent,  
Creating the dark places of burn and rust, the pallid  
Coffins in which we live, and though, ashamed, she

Left him to come back to us, and we forgave,  
That first coldness remains and runs deep, forever  
Lining our borders with the hoarfrost of her eyes, shivering  
As we stand at the entrance to our once fair garden  
Where God's burning sword defends eternal,  
The half eaten fruit still rotting near the place she fell,  
So even if we were to sneak back in, either here  
Or 20 light years away into that undestroyed paradise,  
Illuminate and gentled, we could not escape, for the  
Bittersweet taste of knowledge is still choking our throats,  
And the coldness of our sin burns forever colder inside  
Our dislocated bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Edict Of Parking Lots

Edict of parking lots  
Upon the borders of which a few  
Blue yet sincere  
Ghosts remain caught in  
The brambles—  
This is the same spot where  
Edgar Allen Poe turned up—  
Death from alcoholic voting fraud—  
Where no children are left behind—  
The metamorphosis of men into  
Soldiers,  
And women into stewardesses and  
Thus into airplanes:  
It is beautiful to behold, if you can—  
The changes  
They do not wish for you to perceive—  
The only things that you can teach  
Yourself—  
Madness—  
Wildernesses choking on arrowheads,  
Paths into forgotten or ignored  
Beauty—  
An adventure into the stagnation of  
Boyhood  
how Peter Pan and myself  
Learned how to survive—  
And we are still here,  
At the place we found across the street,  
Following the first star until morning—  
Naked, feral  
And enjoying the company of dead  
Poets in a place so near  
To you you forgot to overlook  
As they taught you the good things of  
The earth and,  
lining your pockets with gold,  
sent you on your way.





# Edie's Garden

Edie threw white roses from the balcony;  
And the finer generals said, "She doesn't have  
Any hair, " but Edie didn't care:  
She went around Bel Noir tossing candy like  
A bouquet exposé,  
And the no talent bards wrote songs about her  
No one would sing,  
But I remembered her from high school,  
When no one else did: I did, but Edie didn't  
Care. I went out during lunch and slept underneath  
The broken down purple school bus,  
While even then it rained for a cabaret of  
Crocodiles, even though there weren't any crocodiles  
Anywhere near there; but Edie didn't care:  
She went straight out and down the bank before  
Latin, and straddled them like steeds;  
The principal said they'll eat you Edie, take care;  
But Edie didn't care: She just threw her hands up and  
Sang, and sang; and she wore a red scarf thatched through  
With sun flowers and wood thrushes.  
I imagine she rode them around the entire neighborhood  
Until it rained so much it flooded;  
But Edie didn't care- She moved up to her Long Island  
Summer home, and laid down amidst the cats and kissed  
Her mother until it was time to go back to school,  
But she stayed at home anyways,  
While in the vast lonely habitats the lions roared,  
The traffic squawked and two handsome brothers came  
And set up a camera to make a movie of Edie;  
So when it was all over, the audience agreed that it was  
The most beautiful thing,  
But Edie didn't care, and threw her white roses  
From the balcony to the fine young generals,  
And of them in later days, retired under the palm trees,  
Edie sang and sang.

Robert Rorabeck

# Edison's Thievery

Let us pinch the cheeks of dearies,  
And go out into the yard in the light they invented  
Just last century,  
The mowed and fertile plane,  
The miniscule and microcosmic all down below,  
Curling and multi-legged in the grass.  
Across the street, the neighbor has his expensive  
Car all waxed and cherished glean,  
And the girl I once slept with and  
Moved into many times, how she rows:  
She lives there too, an aphrodisiac of capital,  
A curling iron unplugged in the backyard patio  
Where the pool stays lighted and cleaned; She swims  
Back and forth, pretending that she is pure,  
Still the daughter of her parents, and yet there are weeds  
Beautifully accentuated by Edison's thievery,  
The brick-laying thugs smoking her....

These truant fingers skip over this like pollination;  
They no longer move through her secular pubis,  
Or twiddle in a thimble full of her cottaged quim.  
For certainly scarred, they are still the cicadas on the brim,  
Sloughing off of themselves, the luxury of metamorphosis  
Whispered in the ear of a dandelion before she spores:  
This is how they go away, and this how they remain,  
The patterns the tide leaves on the beach, or on my temples,  
Throbbing as they watch pieces of vampiric angels  
Unclothe and bathe immortally in the open and concrete showers  
Their tan-lines hauntingly androgynous.....

These conquerors of better sport farted through an education,  
Made love to phallic pestilence, were married in a mopped  
Apartment store: Look at her going up the poor mathematics of an  
Escalator, and coming down with defining sacrifices, Now  
How the trimmed grass whispers around the little feet of the house,  
How the buds come out and flaunt clitorises for the wet blue wasps,  
The stinging quips of rain;  
And the luxury of the sea, salt all over their bodies, and  
The hurricanes rife with unruly children, like truants kicking

Feet on the swing-set outside the stained-glass where  
The Catholic's choir sings,  
And after all the redded hymns, back under the humid pine trees,  
He opens the door for her, though her dress is ripped and her  
Eyes away;  
She goes in politely, her lips bruised,  
Her hymen a torn curtain of a forgotten play,  
And they move like gangsters to their plotted psalm:  
He to watch gulf all afternoon, her to take her sister's  
Medicated phone-call,

I watch the ants move in the grass.  
They have found a whisper and are carrying it away  
To their queen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Edith Piaf

There is nothing on t.v.,  
But the ocean is very deep.  
I have been hurt in the forest  
Where I sleep.  
The glaciers are losing face.  
The announcer is speaking French.  
The little sparrows are trying to teach  
Me to sing again.  
The woman is smiling at me.  
The woman is not smiling at me,  
But someone I thought was me.  
The church bells are ringing in  
The steeples above the naked leas.  
The shepherds are herding sheep  
I have been hurt in the forest  
Where I sleep.  
The butterflies are flying over Egypt.  
The announcer is speaking French.  
The boys are taking their girls to a formal dance.  
Under the banisters, the boys are sharing liquor.  
Out in the street, the night is awful deep.  
I have been hurt in the forest  
Where I sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Egret In A Tree

Egret in a tree in a parking lot  
Word starting out,  
First candle on a bonfire overlooking  
The Christmas trees and giving them  
Your shadow  
And you stare as the thunderstorms  
Give pearls to your shadow.  
The tourists drive around you like  
Wild persimmons,  
Giving you their caracoles,  
Dreaming that they were flutes.  
The waves joust  
And sometimes they become tears  
Let down by gravity like grapevines for  
The city that stands at your back but is too  
Frightened to approach you—  
And the airplanes take off, the stars  
Bathing in your shoulders.

Robert Rorabeck

# Either Of You

Stay away from me and my unicorns:  
We don't believe in either of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Either Way

Cinderella smells like beer after she's  
Done with all the mice,  
The lab experiments of pitter-patter:  
They've pockmarked their feet all over her,  
And smeared their cheddar and now she's  
Passed out and handcuffed in the  
Weeds beneath the monorail,  
And the cardboard moon is lirting, floating upon its  
Track of would-be espionage;  
And all the tourists with their careless balloons  
Are returning to where they hope they parked their  
Cars;  
And this is where she left me, and went off to reassemble  
For her husband,  
But I think I've stumbled upon something significantly more  
Beautiful,  
Because she is just there one breast over spilling caracoled  
With the track marks of overturned carriages,  
Her heart now as quieting as race horses given in finally to  
Mightier rivers;  
Or I might be all alone in a park after hours,  
And she is just a shadow of an overweight bone;  
But it is just as well,  
As either way she is my beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck



# Ejaculating In The Misspellings Of The Afternoon

Tallest of trees  
Laughing, stretched out all arms  
At the edge of the parking lot:  
People coming in,  
Doused by sunlight—  
Animals making believe they are people  
Wearing masks,  
Ready to make a sacrifice of their  
Greatest of gifts in order to survive—  
The sun going down all  
Around them  
And their campuses,  
Dousing them in crepuscule,  
The little children amidst them laughing  
But fearful—  
Going home to get warm in their  
Souls,  
Bathing suits shed in the sunlight  
Until they are all nudity of the darkness:  
And the waves roll in,  
Caressing, being orchestrated by the  
Satellites—and the wind  
Pulls strong and swift,  
The marionettes making love comply—  
Ejaculating in the misspellings of the afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ejaculations On The Green Carpet Of A Thirteen Year Old

I thought to hang out with you today,  
Angel of clichéd genitals; I thought to become a basketball  
Star of my high school, and take you out to lunch  
To sashay beneath the epileptic streetlights and the protuberance of sun:  
Here, I've written things up and down my skin never  
Knowing certainly what the next word will be, but that is yours:  
My skin and all its scars are your prayer flag, this tattooed patriotism  
Sending young men off to war; clammy thoughts come to you like toy soldiers,  
dripping zinc  
With their bayonets and wounds: Fix them!

There is nothing perfect in this scheme, nothing mathematical,  
And when I nock on your inner-city door they say you've gone off  
To pursue a dream: In college you knock on wood, you  
Exercise, and underneath the somber rays you run until the  
Maples display in their deciduous strip shows, chorus lines of  
Hard working cherry and dog-wood.  
Now all these things I've put into a bottle and skipped it on the waves,  
And tonight I will fold it up into an airplane and send it off the cliffs,  
And over so many insouciant graveyards you will never know  
The generations, how the scientists said today that comets scattered  
Diamonds so that women would start wearing fur coats:

This you will never know: every word that has come to me bubbling  
Up like oil in my entrepreneur fields I've pumped,  
Silky ejaculations on the green carpet of a thirteen year old:  
I put back the scars,  
And lay my son across you like a beam, so you might go to and fro,  
Showing off your legs, competing in roller derbies, cutting out snowflakes,  
changing very little  
From decades even while whole conglomerates fall, sickles and bears  
In a red field. And this is the third stanza of my most recent fit: Since  
Christmas I've started a novel; I am waiting to hear from a literary agent,  
And if I learn to fly it will because you gave me such a current,  
And the insouciant tug I get off this vicarious breast-feeding;  
And if I must fail, then please forget to give me your fire in a horn of tin  
Aslant on the grave, but stay warm inside and kiss the columns of his more

Journalistic neck, and wait for the storm to pass, and then proceed  
Into the newest story of your next beautiful day.

Robert Rorabeck

# El Agere

El agere becomes willful at dusk,  
Chapping the buttocks of the canyon,  
Spinning pools of light like children until they  
Tip over the cliffs, and string into the glossy waters-  
I have laid on my back for hours atop the teal carport  
Of mildewing golfers, some things on my mind,  
And listened to the jangle of spurs, the friction of tires  
On the minute and abrasive surfaces, like some sort  
Of rhyming code- Each hair stiffens under the shadow of  
The palms, and I write a note to you and stick it in crease  
On the roof, just an hour before the hurricane-  
El agere comes leaping like a lion from its Atlantic cave,  
Circling around me and thrashing all the oranges out of the tree,  
Pushing a toddler on a plastic tricycle apoplectically down  
The avenue, taps out the windows like a mad lover, an eel  
Who has sickly slithered in the zoetropic shadows of his  
Wife's adultery- El agere came about me too in high school  
As I slept in the effluvious oil slick under the crippled bus,  
Thought of you in mirrors that were blind, came and  
Whispered to me from the trees, that I would soon be old,  
And as lonely as I am now- That was the day you came and  
Sat with me in Latin class, and asked me if I was okay,  
When I would not look up, for I knew who you would become,  
Taken by el agere in swift degrees, fluctuating like a paper  
Doll far across the inebriated ocean el agere soups up, for  
Now all my hair is gray and even now el agere is leaping out-  
Side my glass door, dripping cones from pine trees, shoving dusk into  
The hills, and you are far away in pictures of motes and  
Caesuras, learning to love the men el agere has pushed you  
Towards laughing, like a spore plucked in season from a garden  
I once attended with my eyes: Now el agere comes draping  
The roofs, and eddying highways, and I have asked him to take  
Me to you, but he only laughs a violet radiance, like tiny wheels  
Rushing on concrete, he exhales that you have gone shopping,  
Dressed all in new things and boys, you couldn't possibly  
Remember the day you sat next to me in class, laughs el agere....

Robert Rorabeck

## El Arco Iris

If I go away and leave her to sell fireworks in  
New Mexico,  
Guys will start jumping all over her like rats leaving  
A drowning ship;  
And I wouldn't even blame her, as beautiful as she is;  
And I want to bed her down next to the Palm  
Beach zoo,  
And tell her things I cannot explain about herself to her  
Every night while the same old moon waxes and wanes  
With the black cats over our bedroom;  
And she isn't even mine: she only kissed my neck twice:  
Today is her birthday, and I am trying to buy a house  
For her:  
Not the virgin of a small town in Peru: not even a good  
Sized metropolis, maybe, like this place;  
But maybe of everything, at least for me, and that is why  
I am trying to collect myself and gather my courage and  
My green canon balls, to line them out and count them  
Like paper airplanes before the tremendous thunderheads,  
To show her daughter and her daughter's grandmother  
Even though I am sure that they cannot hope to fathom an  
Estimate of who she really is.

Robert Rorabeck

# El Canto Palido Por Mi Primo

Tinhorn cufflinks and pale alligator boots tapered to a point,  
And Marteen is ready to return to his second wife in Mexico- Only  
Yesterday, I stopped for him to get a fifth of southern comfort whiskey  
At the Old Red Barn in Sanders, AZ, and he talked all the way home  
With a language as insouciant as his whistling on  
The standard bred horse ranch where is his precarious employ,

But he cannot find his visa, and his shirt and pants match like rich  
Cadmium, and he is ready to go with all his worldly goods stacked like  
A metal and wood hive on the back of his truck which sings Mexican cantos  
Laid down the way ghosts move from the little town of White Rock,

And sometimes I feel that my words should move like Robert Frosts',  
And that when I too grow old that I should look for the apertures of my photos  
In my books spined in the color of golden wasps who no longer exist,  
Slightly askance with my homily visage, my eyes the sort of somnambulists  
Walking through the broken gates of old corals in the twilight smudges,

But such whimsy is my condition, and I do not know how to dance,  
And Marteen with the lanky frame which no longer exists on the East Coast,  
Has a better chance with the made of Carmens sunbathing their spotlights in  
Miami,  
And this brittle careen which I do to touch the pale whiskers of unnoticed flesh  
Is but a performance that anyone might try, for in words to live but a day longer  
Is all there is to be hoped for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Elbows Of Memory

The fireworks were over  
Whence they were barking for a Chinese Christmas  
Or a Chinese New Years:  
And my brother in law's dog has finally collapsed at my feet:  
A golden retriever named Bonnie  
Too large for this apartment in Shanghai—  
Can you believe, this place is worth more than a quarter of  
A million dollars—  
And all of the savings of my in-laws,  
Just to provide for the trappings of a son  
So that he can be married.

The sky is in stilettos. And I have been drinking \$500 dollar  
Chinese wine, usually only drunken by officials—  
I have lost another tooth and gained a belly;  
But when I take my kids through Century Park,  
Dozens of Chinese families exclaim,  
&quot;Jin piel-yell&quot;—or 'extraordinarily beautiful, '  
However they might say it.

Now, three years ago, I lost a teaching job in a public  
Highschool—as I was trying to reclaim the ghosts of the girlfriends who  
Were never quite aware of me:  
The beautiful girls who I let haunt myself—  
A valentines of ghost ships of so many castaways' memories

But I don't love them anymore,  
And I don't write poetry—  
I just get lost at the elbows, and when I return—  
Milky eyed,  
I get to enjoy them all so thoroughly, equally—

My children in the space of my heart—  
Captivated before my eyes:  
They have done away with my habit for muses—  
They reward me with all and both of their prizes—

And the sun looks up at the clouds and smiles,  
And the cars peruse the roads,

Will the alligators fawn—  
Examining something that has been lost for some while- -

The smoke echoes up from the fireworks,  
And the shadows hang on, clouding to their elbows of memory.

Robert Rorabeck



# Elbows Of The Garden

Elbows of the garden stretch cantankerously  
As I try to look at you from  
The corner of my eye—  
Brown skinned Mexican, beautiful girl we  
Want to steal the world from—  
As children come in glistening like traffic,  
Shifting through the strangely sentient hallways  
Of the earth,  
None of them afraid of monsters,  
And seeming to know how to get wherever  
They are going—they know more than me,  
And can even spell words only using three or  
Four letters,  
Until this pageantry settles down in the afternoons,  
Back in the theatres of their own abodes,  
Mesmerized by the kaleidoscopes of  
Their very own televisions.

Robert Rorabeck

# Election Day

Great despotic emperors,  
My parents are back home again  
And knocking upstairs;  
I'd thought they'd been dead for  
Seventeen years:  
I try to reassure myself by looking  
In mirrors.  
My jaw unhinges, I try to make  
Wishes,  
Bloody Mary comes and gives me  
Bloody kisses:  
While then, all the while, she's been  
Down on the grotto toting the bottle,  
Passing herself around amidst the boys,  
They un-tuck and start out on her,  
She becomes for them quite an adventure,  
But where it is they find themselves on her,  
I don't know;  
For I am left under the briars,  
Under the snow, the cabins are rotting,  
The rivers slow; she goes away on a bright  
Strung bow,  
And I hang around with nothing to say  
For myself, while my parents rattle through  
The dusking sky: They wish they remembered  
How to cry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Electricity

I try not to worry about things,  
And I day dream:  
The trucks come, and the trucks go:  
Delivering to graveyards through the f%cking snow,  
You know;  
And what your name is the pain of my bleeding fingers,  
Your skin on my mind a blind man trying to build  
A house;  
And I just keep at it for you in curious and pitiful ways:  
Snow white is in her tree fort  
Being propositioned by alligators;  
And everything about my body is warm and mostly  
Celibate;  
And I don't want to live without you:  
I will just keep on getting prettier through the  
Alligator Juniper:  
The buses have wings and their own segregations of sky:  
We all die into each other,  
And sing sky-shanties; and I know you have a lover  
And four children;  
And I think I know that I shall see you again,  
Before I die; but oh how tonight he is making love to you  
In the saw grass estuaries where the trucks are loading up;  
And how many boys do you have other than I who  
Have rounded the bases through your sweet figments of  
Sky;  
And lying on your back counting the stars, the world is a figment  
Of your imagination;  
And I wanted to touch myself while the terrapin shot away;  
And I invented electricity as I thought upon you today.

Robert Rorabeck

# Elements Of Echo

Liquor is bright,  
And the world is silent in its go around,  
And the least things have the most to say,  
And it is unbelievable I am still here-  
Though I am not here,

But cradling the weight of her thoughts after  
Some midnights, letting the skeins overspill  
The spirit of our high school,  
As the diminishing coyotes howl,  
As the plated alligators lurk,  
Sometimes I curl up to her like this,

Though she is not here tonight,  
Though she was not here yesterday,  
And to those classrooms there is only subtraction,  
And the kind of tricks they pull forth from long hats,  
The gentlemen who love her toothily,  
Though it may be far along after midnight,

And the liquor is like a chlorined pool,  
And tomorrow I will be collecting money from a Navajo  
And carrying on to Aztec, NM, and on into Moriarty,  
I have a song to sing because my fingers would trace her spine,  
Each plate a cusp of her construction,  
A bridge over thoughtless waters,

Though I am better like this dreaming of Latin,  
I would sting myself by her cursory lips and inattentive meanings,  
Though she is pressed into him as a peninsula between great lakes,  
I can still sing into her these elements of echo,  
As if this were the great depression, and the transitory landmass  
Of sugary tramps and weekends of flea markets,  
Though she is not here,  
Though I am not here,

I am here, and singing her again a song of meaningful quiet  
As the clouds migrate the blushing herd of their extinction.



# Eloquently

Silence has its own echoes too:  
Each of your eyes are its sisters walking the tresses  
Of a railway I cannot remember,  
But sometimes it goes leaping over great unanswered quarries:  
It goes leaping and gets a jubilant,  
And that is went your throat is grazing on the hills of  
Green gods,  
And I can't remember your name, because it doesn't begin with  
A K, and I've never swung with you;  
But maybe I have lied before, and I am lying now:  
Maybe we struck out together: maybe we panned for silver:  
Maybe we summited her together:  
Maybe I have liked to taste the placed on you, the hidden estuaries  
And water fountains that your daughter tastes even now;  
And because I have said so so eloquently, how could  
You, with a clear conscious, possibly deny me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Elysium's Chimney

Subtly now but every day  
Grandmothers are passing away  
Thoughtlessly they are floating upward.  
The sky is greeting them  
Playing the orchestras of their youth,  
As their grandchildren mourn for them,  
Thinking them the once kind vessels  
That held them in Sunday School-  
But they are not here  
In our neighborhood graveyards,  
Our non-canonical saints,  
The beautiful gray-haired women  
Who like lovely verbs  
Worked hard to keep households  
The places of well-kept safety.  
Here they go now,  
Passing through the clouds  
Blurry eyed and delighted,  
Clutching their favorite handbags  
To their breasts as they shoot upwards  
Through Elysium's chimney,  
Exclaiming "Brother Ned! "  
And "I declare! "  
But neither cursing nor blaspheming,  
Keeping their souls as they  
Kept their houses clean for company.  
Now all the saints do them honor,  
Conducting them like  
Pardoned convicts  
Exonerated from gravity's decay,  
Loosed from the sun's patriarchy.  
So soon the conductor is calling,  
"Last stop, Pluto. Last stop now! "  
But not a single grandmother gets off.  
They stare curiously at the  
Dark old bachelors walking that place  
And hold their breath until  
The train is moving on,  
Past the planets now,

Past all that is imperfectly known  
Into the beating hearts of their mothers  
Like old philosophers  
Rejoining what they have always  
Known to be....

Robert Rorabeck



# Embittered Metamorphosis

Too old to turn back,  
The teenage army disbanded in the North;  
Many starved, though there was cannibalism,  
And after all their eyes could not move,  
To speak as they should,  
To rest periodically under the windows of flesh.  
The sky was beautiful.  
Yes it was,  
And there were white-lung tents sent up in  
The absolute tundra,  
Breathing from the winds' manipulations  
and fireworks  
Vendors put on displays for free,  
Upon the azure fields overlooking the military highway,  
But no one bought anything  
Which could not be eaten,  
And people found there was no money  
To buy food,  
And loves wished to rekindle something,  
But they couldn't go off to find where their other was,  
Who was lost some ways out looking for them:  
As their teeth ate their lips,  
Everyone was sure they saw something out there,  
Something coming closer,  
Whose needs they could already feel  
Taking away the feeling of their extremities.  
At the last, they were too tired to move,  
To throw the bones in ciphering,  
Crowded in invalidations of the senses,  
They would not even cry, for that had been  
Thrown out as useless some years ago.  
In their end, all they had was themselves,  
The last flames leaping in the petrified bodies,  
And then, upon dusk, when the curtain came  
Down like the sleet storm on a hostile planet  
Alien to human form,  
Isolated in beauty, the new adults  
Went to bed in morbid slumber,  
Never to wake upon themselves again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Emoting With No Tomb

Dashed in crippled sauces-  
Doing the juvenile bliss, every word is  
A miss throw,  
The bases are loaded with lisp:  
And I loved a green dragon fly on the areola  
Of a charge-  
Or it was a blue beamer tucked under the  
Olive groves,  
The banshees mowed the seashore,  
The anemones were claret and really poetic:  
The selky taught all her boyish otters  
The hook and the throw-  
Going down to her was a long ways down to  
Her,  
And all over her other suitors were using motorized  
Vehicles; I guess being transcendental  
Was a mistake-  
That yellow snake in my soul hissed the phosphorous  
Of pornographic technology-  
The movie stars so beautiful all suped up with  
Scientology:  
And by the time I got down to the last devilish ring,  
It wasn't my name she was singing,  
But I got to watch by the shore  
As my uncle lectured-  
I must have thought I was really clever-  
I probably thought I would last forever; but then  
They had to close her down,  
And all the apples trucked away- and I grew a beard and  
Forgot who I was, ate bred with no mayonnaise;  
Baudelaire laughed top court, flatulent in his sway,  
But I didn't look up,  
I could smell her perfumes all over his switch;  
He, the grave, the plot who had beaten me forever  
And disproved that I was of his family that should live  
Forever,  
But just the plastic flower that should swing in fits,  
Without oils or insects of my own,  
Just something gone along the trail,

Her pigtailed swung and boomed from  
That venal master's lips-  
Her echoes the crass bassoon, the teal persuaded;  
And I was left emoting  
With no tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# Emptied Glade

Raindrops in a tortoise's shell,  
Overturned beside the road—no more little  
Souls inside of it,  
And no reason to call this a soup of tears:  
The wolves no longer give off colors,  
Red or blue,  
Going either way, and in their guts are no longer  
Pinwheels—the sky is no longer brightened,  
But neither is it afraid:  
The gardens are not hidden—the waves lay where  
They are laid,  
And the curtains open upon an emptied theatre,  
And the sun opens upon an emptied glade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Empty As A Loveless Heart

Dysfunctional as the fireworks burst over the  
Roadways of old epiphany,  
The angels in lawn chairs painting their toes, their  
Glowing hair like weathervanes taking account  
As the pussycats sleep  
With the rattlesnakes whose wings and voices are  
Gone  
In the theatre whose roof is as sharp as a house,  
Underneath the Pleiades where the cars drive hopelessly,  
And out into the be speckled yards where  
Alma wears her miniskirts but not much else:  
She herself is a star, and I am wounded in her brilliancy:  
I am just a little boy lying low in gray headed make-believe:  
I can rob bicycles, but there is nothing much else  
I am good for,  
While the moon grabs the brown marionettes and drags  
Them across the glossy dews;  
And the simulacrum up in its lofty room keeps on repeating  
Its two or three things of thoughtless merit  
To its weebegone room as beautiful and empty as a loveless  
Heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# Empty Bottle

I throw my empty bottles down into the grave,  
The shattered glass of a baby's cradle;  
The things which always fall so far from trees:  
The punji sticks are whispering,  
Their cleft palates whistling in their orphanage  
So far down below, where the quartet of my uncles sing  
The stolen enjambments of the black men and their cottonmouths.  
This is the pit where the hungry tigers prowl,  
Disguised by a beautiful sky so far away-  
The clouds are blooming to their orchestras,  
And soldiers died in their campaigns are resurrected  
As the birds who busy in their migrations:  
This is the opera where she gypsies across the world,  
And her footsteps are the weather which glazes the pots  
Of men, the discombobulated crowd bumping together  
In the trances of their empire; foolishly they fall  
In love with her nude horizons,  
The expulsions of nimble cannons in her storms,  
The way she sheaths their eyes in her dewy draughts,  
And swishes off the oriental perfumes of hidden spikenard;  
Not meaning to lead them on, they fall for her anyways;  
And now down in the pit we loom together like injure birds,  
Fluttering against the tigers' smile,  
As she sweeps across the lantern moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Empty Handed Pain

Airplanes fly low enough to hurt,  
If I had a soul:  
They trough right through the dirt,  
They caracole the bitter fruits of  
Childhood stains-  
Wherever I am going I have you on the  
Brain,  
And not enough dirt to bury you,  
Or to extol myself for the wounds I  
Always seem to bring upon my soul,  
If I had a soul  
And not just empty handed pain.

Robert Rorabeck



# End This Nonsense

I weigh the same as a  
Small planet.

Check to see if my hands  
Are clean.

My mother's name is Janet—  
Dusty and cold,  
With only a dog walking  
Around me.

If today was your birthday,  
I'd sing you a song;  
I'll sing you a song anyway

As I eat candy cars,  
Because today I climbed  
Molly's Nipple—

And looking down I could  
See all the way across the  
World  
Into your bedroom window,  
As the breeze fluttered your  
Curtains,

You were sleeping with him  
On your naked bosom,  
But you were so  
Lonely, my eyes could  
Tell,

The alphabet of my  
Name was stuck to the  
Red hinge of your lips,  
Like buttered toffee,  
My love,

I will fold myself up

In a paper ship,  
And blow and blow  
And blow,

To sail across sky and  
Interstates and  
Into your window  
I will not wake you up,  
But rest my head on  
Your unoccupied breast,

I will whisper happy birthday  
On your lips,  
I will fall asleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ended

I pour liquor in my car for the last poem of evening:  
I have no idea where my mother has gone,  
Or why the wind is moaning; but the same old vicissitudes  
Have out,  
And beautiful women saddle up and ride their ponies:  
Just as houses line up for a beautiful woman who is promising  
Kisses,  
And the sky is filled with runaways who have evaporated,  
Who started out through high school but never finished;  
And the baseball diamond is red and needing; it is the color of her  
Birth stone that she is bleeding;  
And she sleeps all day and wakes up in her bar; and she touches the  
Burly flesh of the men who control her fires, but she doesn't have  
To drive too far;  
And this is the potency of high altitude bouquets drying on her lines,  
Like the romances of fish fluttering on her vines;  
And she is my venal muse, and she drives through the lushes of her  
Environments that I am trying to think up better names for;  
And the fires burn beneath her, and my mother runs away:  
And the city dries up like coral in the dusty bay:  
And she rests her head in the beautiful beds of historical hotels that  
Seem so far, far away;  
While the eels slither through the remains of her auburn hair  
Caught up through the tangles in the sky- And she no longer wonders  
If I should ever be her guy;  
Because the city basks not so far beneath her, and there is so much variety  
That she is happy with the stock by which she can pick and choose.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ending It

To begin something is only to end it:  
This love, this paper cut of an airplane in the sky:  
To love a woman who you went to school with,  
Who only remembers things clearly from  
The first ten years of her life or  
So;  
And that you gave her flowers and birthstones,  
Because she was your first or second or  
Third obsession,  
But always one of the best ones:  
To receive three or so kisses from her:  
Two on the neck, one on the lips; and then to never  
Hear from her again  
Because you disappointed her fancy, while  
She was looking away across the sea trying not to  
Get caught:  
Disappointed her but not quite as much as you have  
Disappointed yourself or your mother;  
Not quite as much as you would have disappointed  
Her four children  
Who are already hungry and waiting for her to feed them,  
As you would have had her feed you; ending it,  
With her lips, and eyes, and tongue.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ending This Thing

I've drunken you to distill by  
Unsober soul;  
And nothing that I have is perfect,  
And it is because I have no children-  
All I have is my lonely song,  
But for the last several days I have become finally  
The budding thing, misspelling;  
But finally, yes beautiful; and you know, I am over  
Six feet tall- I am about as tall as your husband,  
And I have so many things for you to use,  
If you have a garden that needs tending,  
And I know you have a garden-  
You have a beautiful, anonymous garden-  
And I've almost caught upon it,  
And these words are sickly things, sickly birds,  
I send out to you to play with your young child,  
Cartoons, mobiles, entire airports:  
don't see I am the alligator smiling at you from the  
Rippling shallows; it is a good thing to have death so  
Near to you,  
To know that I am a pet for you,  
That I will deliver your mail to you- Wherever you live  
You know how faithful this mailman is;  
And my sister is coming because it is her birthday,  
So this evening I bought candles, and vanilla ice-cream,  
And a bottle of cheap rum; but the bottle of cheap rum  
That was just for me,  
So that I might sing tonight for you;  
That last stanza, a run on sentence, a nonsequitor,  
An unapologetic romance, was just so that I might serenade  
You; because I am not Shakespeare,  
Because I am skipping school,  
Even now leaping over crenulated canals filled with the ululations  
Of approaching reptilian death,  
To slip into auburn liquors atop of suburban roofs,  
To shoot of fireworks underneath the blowing skirts of sky,  
To be a teamster under you, to show you my teeth,  
To worship you, the only religion I know how;  
And your eyes are green and not unlike unmowed yards

I guess you've never seen,  
Which, I guess, is how I'll choose to end this thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Enemies

A marvelous execution is coming today.  
New boys are becoming men,  
Though already their wives  
Are taken by the enemy.  
Newlyweds are introduced to shame.  
Their children look backwards in the Polaroid  
Impatiently waiting after school  
For the beat up blue Chevy to get off work.  
How long can they crouch down  
So their schoolmates cannot see.  
In the living rooms of shadowed latchkeys  
The pallid microwaves bake their dinner,  
While I've secretly been seeing a friend of yours.  
What would you say if I wanted  
To make a museum of our love?  
Before the honeymoon, it was all over.  
The enemies took us away, and made us enemies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Energy Left Over

Each of us is the decaying  
Static of the initial  
Action each of us is  
Resonating outward from  
The center a metamorphosis  
Of the first energy  
The great fucking bang  
That explodes in  
Us still  
Reverberating to a point of  
Singularity we are a  
Defined to return to  
And though our  
Decadal ideologies  
Tell us we can do  
Great things with our minds  
And our morality plays warn us  
That we get to choose  
Our black and white  
Paths there is not  
A single one of us  
Who can step beyond  
That sufficient energy  
That is not just inside us  
But the wave and hum  
That we are still resonating  
Busily outward  
From the center not knowing  
How quickly we are to  
Collapse back into the  
Great black pit  
Where those nothing dogs  
Nip and gnaw our bones  
As they are destined to  
So are we predestined  
To live upon the line  
That we are space and  
Time stretched out from  
The center and us a



Manifestation of that initial  
Incredible action we are  
Going nowhere but outward  
In our decaying energy  
We scream for  
Personal freedom  
Lost to our society  
And all of this still  
Only a desperately  
Kicking wave of red shift  
Shooting outward all  
Of us God's first  
Breath  
And with inhalation  
Eternal death  
Forever until  
God breathes us  
Again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Enjoying The Game

Estranged here—feeling alright—passed out underneath the  
Overpasses of another country—as the girl you love,  
Pretending to be a stewardess, checks in her dolls:  
And you can pretend at making love in a little  
House you paid for with cash at the end of a cul-de-sac  
In Saint Augustine when your dreams were just a few years old:  
Can't you remember: how the stewardesses leapt and leapt,  
And the frog princes sang and sang, and your face became  
More and more beautiful, until all that you knew became a  
Tourist attraction—another place to attenuate and enjoy the  
Light, after the Indians were vanquished—  
And the ice-cream had all melted into your refrigerator that  
Never worked even though you were all that was beautiful—  
And the conquistadors came home to your forts, furrowing their  
Crosses like tourists and other worldly passengers who  
Kept themselves so busied at enjoying the game.

Robert Rorabeck

# Enough

I can hear the arcades down the street,  
And even the crickets are purring:  
Wherever I am jumping cars, wherever there comes  
Rainstorms,  
The crickets are purring- Crickets you have never heard;  
And birds on power lines you've  
Never seen, because you've never lived where I have been,  
And I have only lived at night,  
And seen so many things you've never seen,  
But you get the gist and you can tell some fortunes by my scars,  
Though you haven't seen me since the fairgrounds in  
Florida,  
I imagine that you might believe in at least some of my scars:  
And the patrons move in and mill about,  
And the pregnant mothers lean far over and it seems as if  
They might shoplift,  
And you have little plastic cowboys and Indians where you  
Live,  
And maybe some cats- and a husband who always looks nice,  
And a child at his hip;  
And it really doesn't seem awfully fair,  
Though the dreams spin around alike, and people bicycle and  
Bobsled wherever they are, even if you or I haven't seen them,  
We can ask the very same moon who reigns over all of these  
Chain restaurants and colleges,  
And make-believe romances, and she will kiss us just the same  
With her equal glows, and we can get the gist,  
And be pulled by her like two waves trying to fight it out  
And that is really all we can ask for,  
And it might just be enough.

Robert Rorabeck

# Enough To Use

Basically I just did this for you, Erin:  
I just got so drunk that I lost the most beautiful poem about  
You again,  
And this isn't even Disney World, and ah-ha, I am going out  
Again jus to be getting drunk again;  
And you wouldn't even believe me, what I just lost for you:  
How I enjoy ice cream in jaundice and in address  
For you;  
And now all of the old amusements have played out,  
And even Miguel has left my house alone, because I couldn't  
Even drive, because I was too drunk to Chauffer for him,  
For his dinner;  
And now I am stranded in a spook house; and now I am too  
Drunk for you to even care about me;  
And now your mouth is watering, so soon I must garden it;  
But remember, Erin, you are just my venal muse,  
And if I wasn't just enough beautiful for you, I wouldn't  
Have to change costumes, but I am otherwise  
Beautiful enough for you: but now I have to laugh,  
Because my mother doesn't even recognize who you are,  
Or who I am; and like I said, I am just a pet cemetery so easily  
Petted for my venal muses:  
And once again I have lost everything to you, and I am  
Just the experience of tomorrow, just another film that you  
Cannot even wake up early enough to use.

Robert Rorabeck

# Enough Riches For The Both Of Us

Where the car has gone away—taking the hands that  
Hold her breathing—  
Taking her children up the road and into the orange trees—  
To sleep underneath some basking moon,  
As my moaning comes like terrapin out of my body's  
Shell—  
That I am dust underneath a race horse—and I cannot see  
Where the metamorphosis bathes around the knees of  
Cypress:  
And there is an absolute glitter in the slowness that the  
Alligators drink, hungry-throated—holding their breath,  
Swallowing enough riches for the both of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# Entangled As The Snowflakes

Soft and as entangled as the snowflakes of  
Siamese twins who have been  
Weeping upon the subzero playgrounds  
So much that they've become stuck to  
Themselves  
Underneath the graveyards and the ufo's—  
While the dog in his silence  
Remembers how he could not sleep,  
As some lady in the cloud banks above him  
Could never chastise him for how he could  
Never weep—  
And the moon peaked out over the bible  
Belt of America  
While the housewives, unbelievably,  
Could never think of slaughtering themselves—  
As the golden chains which held the Titans  
Ran down the embankments  
As the alligators who always were,  
Who even saw me kissing and congratulating  
With a Mexican housewife who  
Could never be my girlfriend,  
Farted and came all over themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Entering (The Shift)

I look down from  
The red balcony,

Oh,  
So red!

The masked assassin  
Spies his mark,  
The lovers lie naked in blood.

The stage is open  
Under the trees,

Even the aspens are naked  
Shedding golden coins,  
Blanketing the coyote's skin  
The blue ants are feasting....

I must hurry into work,  
For the world is about to  
Enter a tunnel:  
And blind, and blind....

The pressures are growing distant:  
There is blue

(when she comes near)

And there is red,

(when she walks away)

Both of them entering blindly

Forward and away  
The motion of the azure sea  
And the crimson tide:  
Rapidly

A Cadillac  
A shoe,  
A crab scuttles before the sea.  
The only sea.  
The sea,  
Pulling back its  
Curtains  
Reveals her slender leg  
Rippling over the earth....

Robert Rorabeck



# Entire Apple Orchards

In the middle of high school  
I used to leave classrooms—I used to leave  
Right out of school  
And flop and drink right beside the waves—  
Seahorses teaming from some anonymous  
Father's liquor cabinets—  
The sun a stream of pugilists, beating me until  
I was stinking of nocturnal perfume:  
What a way to live—  
Little children at my door—entire apple orchards:  
Now I am a teacher—  
The sky cries in the afternoon on weekends  
While I drink—  
The eyes of Dr. TJ Eckleburg are in the room.  
My Mexican uncle just sold his truck  
And his son and nephews are over celebrating.

Robert Rorabeck

# Entire Orchard Of Things That Are Lost

If there was a turtle sitting there  
Slanted into the canal my mother dove into-  
Could I ask him where she fled  
Off to, the house wanting to follow her-  
The car in the carport,  
The laundry in the laundry machine missing her:  
She fled,  
And left the smell of the orange blossoms, and the  
Screams of the neighbor girl being molested  
While we all drank beer and listened until  
Later when the goldfish sank,  
And when the cats were making love: I was too  
Young to skip school, so I rode with father down  
Into Miami and we picked fruit out of  
Boxes and spoke nothing of how she could  
Have disappeared in the shallow murk:  
She once showed me the tadpoles metamorphosing  
In there, a green bathtub-  
And when she took me home we ate apples with  
My sisters off of dinner plates- but now  
She is gone into that pool in which the stars have  
No reflection, but down there I can see  
Stolen bicycles and the statuarities of moribund alligators-  
An entire orchard of things that are lost which now  
Belong to her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Entire Planet Of Venal Wildflowers

Jingoistic prisons- I love you in suave deserts,  
I misspell you and undress you and wait for you to  
Emerge with the drowned golfers from  
The alligators beds- gurgling your putrescent snows:  
And if I happen to always get you mostly wrong,  
Be kind to me on the rack- Make the pleasure last  
For the loneliness is grander than the Sahara desert:  
Let her taste her wines up there, gurgling in a swooning  
Hillside of opalescent rubrum,  
Let her ride her stellar tortoises in wild abandon,  
And give me new cruxes to be a thief under the nocturnal  
High-school scars, the ghostly corsages of prom:  
And let the entire country pullulate like an antonymous worm  
Twined with all of the dead king's men like  
Christmas ornaments in balmy July in trailer parks and  
Tennis courts and little white lies-  
Let the fireworks be duds like impotent penmanship,  
And the roofs cave in- or the entire carnival turn off amidst  
Gyrations over the sticky sweet pine trees,  
Let the joggers undress and be undone- let hot air and weather  
Balloons despair and grow envious of commercial airliners  
Because of their heathenish long legged stewardesses;  
Isn't it like Mars, the things I say- dealt with and now certainly  
Obsolete- and a swing set some how got there and never  
Experienced the oxygen of her jubilee's anatomy,  
And thusly the Grand Canyon is an ant lion crevice a place too  
Infinitesimal for dye cast cars to die when put up against  
That delinquent fathomless, her body's sweet residue  
The eerie squeezes of an entire planet of venal wildflowers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Entirely Undone

The prettiest séances are in her eyes and all of  
The piñatas are in the back yards where her young boy  
Michael goes;  
And we divide ourselves by the sun and the shadows:  
And made love on Tuesday,  
And kissed on Wednesday, and I held her knee for awhile, today:  
But now she is back in the home underneath the franchises of  
Stars, in the home her father has promised her, but she can never  
Pay off:  
And when we made love together, she told me that she loved me,  
But the night is so loud and diademed by the careless airplanes  
And the hurricanes that are sure to come with her maiden name,  
Whose pirouetting can be seen from outer space;  
While all of these words are harmful, they are so careless:  
And she is nearly naked and into his arms again:  
She falls this way, the same way rockets and space shuttles  
Fail:  
She passed through the frontera with love on her mind, and soon  
Had her first son into Florida, and across the backyards so akin  
To mine, but which I had never thought to explore;  
And all of my words are wounded, and they are falling from  
The majesty of the sky; and my parents aren't even barely alive anymore,  
And my dogs are far away:  
Stanzas don't exist, and school carries on: there are only licensed  
Paths over water;  
And she falls asleep, her beautiful body cradled into that mess of a  
Misallocated Mexico; and I have tried so very hard for her,  
My Alma, my soul, but it cannot be said that anything that I have done  
Is so finely said as not to be entirely undone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Entombed

My love returns to nothing.  
Dead relatives place black tulips on  
My living tomb, as her eyelids flap like ravens  
Around the branches of another man—  
She is hung on him, like a horse-thief  
On a bough he's sentenced on, the engraved  
Strangulation of one heart distracted for  
A lifetime— When there are many numbers  
Which might lead me down streets coated  
With the trails she leaves, they are the  
Mathematics of men already dead,  
Haunting the sunny crypts of married  
Women, their souls dredging the deepest  
Bottoms, perpetually looking upwards  
Toward the faintest light she casts down  
Carelessly, the parts she casually sheds  
Like the blushing skin of a reptilian bride,  
Blinding manna settling before them,  
The thoughtless material they use to  
Entomb their mortally wounded hearts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Entrepreneur's Haiku

Golden chimpanzees  
Can make money by being  
Golden chimpanzees

Robert Rorabeck

# Eras Of Soldiers

Eras of soldiers lining the highways like billboards—  
Beautiful delusions in their gears of playgrounds.  
And I amidst the tourists of cars—  
Waiting for my wife to give birth to our  
Half-blood baby,  
Waiting for a sign to beckon from the barbed wire  
Of constellations—  
Something to correct the sense of beauty—  
A child who knows how to piece together the  
Pieces of a china heart:  
There is a long roadway from his atrium—  
See him fitted in strides inside his mother's  
Womb:  
See now he has no problem:  
He is in a little village. He is in a neon tomb—  
He who knows no words I speak of,  
Knows better ways of expressing the warm  
Night of his heaven's cocoon- -  
Enjoying the festoons of his egg-yoke Christmas—  
Soon he will be outside—  
And he will know lions. I will want to drink for  
Him—I will want to bring his china-doll fingers  
Up to caress these scarred billboards  
And ask him who he will be fighting for  
Now that he has stepped into a bigger tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# Erin

Should I try to write you a sonnet  
Named after you—I believe I have  
Done that before, but it only made you  
Concerned, so your fingers crawled away  
From a keyboard that sometimes would speak  
With me. If I told you I loved you, would that cause  
You to pack up and drive five states further  
Away, to begin to scr-w a new man just  
Because you couldn't understand why it  
Was I loved you? Should I need a reason to  
Say the reasons for the things that I do,  
But if I can't stand now, will it be okay for  
Me to dropp to my knees and ask you to marry me,  
If only to rest by your head breathing on our pillow?  
I have now had a desire to taste you for over a decade,  
And the least you can say is okay, you can  
Dine on me unprotected for one night, even if you don't  
Know the real reason why my parents gave me  
My name. Blinded by the fury of the world,  
I have followed you like a dog who smells the  
Unexpected blossoms in a hidden glade he comes upon  
Which jogs by him with a night decorated in your legs.  
If I love you, so what? If I love you, need there  
Be a reason? Let us pay the man, and ride on that together.  
There you are, the ripeness of life  
Strung on the tree where you live, being plucked  
By invisible gentlemen who will never see you. If I have  
Known anything, it is my love for you. If I have seen  
Anything in this life's starless night, it was your face  
Adorned by lips who spoke my name and kissed my neck.  
For 2 years, you have kicked and neglected me, because you  
Didn't like the way I crawled up beside you when you  
Were expecting someone else. I won't even send you  
This now, because you will say that I've been drinking,  
And shake your head even though secretly you want  
To believe me. Instead, I will wait outside your door  
And hope that you will find me early in the morning,  
And let me in before anyone else sees, to sleep naked  
With you and your dog. There, before the sun becomes



Fully reborn, we might share secret sips on Shakespeare,  
And we can begin to sell each other on the names of  
Our children, if you aren't so frightened when  
I tell you I have no other reasons for loving you  
Other than you will always be beautiful and  
You know my name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Escribiendo Telemundo

My mother's tear rags are all but used up,  
Father is at the auction buying used horses,  
But the South Florida Fair isn't here for another  
Month: I won't be around to flip around then:  
I will be back under her shadow where the aspens  
Crowd in a cool harem, where my dogs leap and  
Lick my face, showing that they defer to my  
Dominance, and I feed them double-cheese burgers  
In kind:  
Now, my scars grow like briars and thistles,  
And the traffic bustles with the insouciant whim  
Of gallantly saturated capitalism: I read a book by  
Randy Wayne Write and try to fit in, a grown up boy's  
Wet dream, la de da, and other notes that take the  
Afternoon to plink down the keys, to disappear into  
Basalt and a lime grove which only existed many yesterdays:  
They have cleaned up Military Trail, and put the working  
Girls out of business, but I have some sort of rash  
Making vulgar continents on my belly, and I'm trying  
To reserve my savings: I gather nickels and buy a  
Chocolate bar for dinner, just like Bukowski,  
Just like the old kraut but not as exacting; and the traffic  
Rushes back and forth disproving Presocratic philosophies:  
I don't care. I've only had five bottles of rum all year,  
And I still might think of her more than she does of me,  
But what holistic remedies enter me like slender ghosts serve  
My mealtimes of writing well; and still, there are people  
Going their wheres on their withers, and my ex-lover polishes  
Her super-saturated lawyer with the talent of an industrial  
Paint brush, while I have a manuscript in print she will never  
Read, and such irony lays fat and salty upon the curling  
Tongues of heedless waves as they are introduced to the  
Soundlessness of her shore: hushed there, they dissolve  
At her touch, and disappear forever like everyone,  
Like this poem.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ester

Ester

Monday, February 20, 2017

3: 13 PM

The sea besides the castle shook for her  
And I drank a lot.  
The pilots sang for their mermaids. They took  
Their planes diving for her,  
And their passengers turned green,  
Singing and holding their breath for her-

The sky spumed, the clouds ejaculating as fireworks-  
They were showing off for her-  
As the last of the titans kidnapped stewardesses from  
Airplanes and married them:

I told my children bedtime stories about her,  
Just as my father told me stories about the feral boys  
Raised by the badgers themselves trained by her:

By the age of twelve, I sold fireworks in Miami for  
My father  
Who himself was working entirely in servitude for her.

-

In the mirages of daylight,  
Along the franchised strip,  
The streets sweated for her, turning into teenagers  
Who committed suicides for her-  
And I called her up and I hopped on stage for her:

I sold for her- naked  
Before the stars and dinosaurs,  
Barefooted in the strawberry fields,  
She stepped down from the castle:

A muse on a geometric waterfall besides the watermelons  
And the centipedes  
And the narcoleptic unicorns-

The shaggy man covered in locks of blonde crawled  
Out from beneath the courtyard of that old high-school  
And danced in courtship of her

I ran away from home and achieved the highest  
Scores in the arcades for her:  
I ran all night for her,  
Past the nocturnal graveyards and the all night drive in  
Movie theatres for her-

I smelled her sweat pattered like the homeopathy  
Of the coldest holidays, as chameleons shed their  
Technicolor skins in the daylights on the popcorn rocks  
For her-

And turned into a cenotaph in homage hunting in  
The waves for her-

I saw her today. The prettiest thing from Haiti.  
34 years old, building a trailer to sell things in underneath  
The bridges. She spent \$150 dollars on me  
And laughed and talked about a thousand false things  
Before she went away and I started once again  
To mind my own business-

And now that I am done- and it is a holiday: President's  
Day-  
During these hopeless hours the young queens of Mexico are being  
Sent home to be re united with the graves of their grandmothers-  
I can lie down underneath of a highway and pretend it is  
A beautiful meadow:

And with my eyes closed, I hear my son say that you are perfect  
And I know that he too is talking about her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Estuaries Of Forget

Lay with me like trysts of gold and I will forget who  
I am or that I ever loved Alma,  
And we will hold hands and drink the sad breath of the  
Ceiling fans:  
And nothing at all will be sold: all of the out of  
Work prisons will clammer and din:  
And when I look into her eyes tomorrow at the fruiteria,  
Hopefully I will not be so easily trapped in,  
While her husband calls her and she has to get up and look  
Away,  
As the airplanes fart and then attack each other on the  
Nose bleeding planes,  
Making us feel intimidated and threatened, while  
The bums beat each other for quarters on the street corners  
Underneath the red lights of the little girls who have  
Forgotten who they are,  
Who are so insatiably hard at working to forget into the  
Deeper and deeper estuaries of forget.

Robert Rorabeck

# Eternal Sleep

Salmon spawn and die somewhere else  
Far above my head and across the canal:  
And I've worked all day, and have a nice tan.  
The Mexicans don't look at me funny,  
And they call me primo- The gringos still stare;  
Their eyes are blue and wet like frightened  
Newborns, and they are growing bald.  
The traffic rounds and moans,  
While I drink one hundred proof bourbon and  
Prepare to read Lorca, to watch after all the open  
Balconies out past the lime groves in Madrid,  
The hidden continents of Roman platoons,  
And the rocky clefts like open breasts entombed  
By the cursive winds; the pensive scribes who  
Behold the oldest of seas, their expensive fraternity  
Shipwrecked on her left collar-bone, the patio  
Of the outdoor restaurant in North Central Florida  
Where I walked to buy books that were on sale;  
Pensively, still searching for her, and she recalled my  
Name and migrated towards me the few steps it took  
To imprint her species upon my neck. Now the  
Recreational vehicles sink from the procreation of  
Intelligent cockroaches, but even they are crooning her  
Name: And we sing to her, even tonight under the  
Tangled nets of power lines, a book with Lorca's  
Poetry in both Spanish and English next to my hip.  
Tucked away, a book I have written, and still  
Further off, pink-bellied but persistent, swim the  
Other things I would give into her before eternal sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Europa And Ganymede

Spending so much time  
Going home to hide—to stare out of the jaded zoetrope  
Of the window  
At the housewives returning home—spinning in  
Cadaverous fits—legs turning on and off—  
Like the jubilescent  
Lights of any fun-time Ferris Wheel—  
While the sea-clouds blew across the finest strands of  
Land—and puffed themselves across the armpits  
Of the mermaids,  
As the peacocks laid down to roost with the conquistadors—  
Into a silent blow- job—  
As the trees held their crooks up to the moon  
Who turned them in  
Until they turned silver and played themselves over and over  
Again in the wishing well of a movie theatre—  
Like at any lunch room in any high school—  
Lonely, silent kids looking off into the Scandinavian bone structures—  
Counting off all that they could for themselves—  
While the werewolves hunted underneath the moon  
And over-ripened orchards -  
And the marionettes plucked themselves from the violin's  
Vineyard—  
And life was discovered on Ganymede and Europa at the same time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Euthanasia Of Airplanes

After the failing loom of dusk,  
Crepuscule,  
Soft smotherer of parks and waves,  
Eventually bedrooms—  
Blindness of the common sense  
Puts the common man to sleep  
And everyone else  
Inside houses  
Cats and dogs—  
Lovers left to swim in minds alone.  
No more emollitions underneath the sun.  
The soft thief of the night is out.  
You know who she is  
And the mind, having no more sense  
Of its own,  
Cannot even command you to hold  
Hands with the ones you know,  
The insincere strangers  
You are attached to;  
But in her beauty floats, perpetually hovering—  
Kite of balled snakes  
Each with a venom of a planet,  
This euthanasia of airplanes trusts us all  
To be infatuated with the veneer of closed parks.  
Paper airplanes sleeping and spit upon by  
Wasps,  
Impervious to the tiny thrill of their thoraxes—  
Like cloth dolls hung upon by wolves—  
I love you now,  
Stranger, thief,  
Planet made of wax alight by one candle.

Robert Rorabeck



# Evaporating Back To Homes

Transoms moving on fieldtrips, like sororities of  
Open rooms  
Going underneath the pool hall of sky- going at a clip so near  
The shallow waters, as if to be partaking in a heady  
Honey moon:  
And the little children riding in their cars watch the waters fall  
As well,  
Falling like themselves, collecting and then evaporating back up  
To homes I am not even sure it is possible to believe in.

Robert Rorabeck

# Evaporation

Divine providence, a prostitute for a month,  
And seven kids,  
A lucky number: The hours spend to lunch  
And fornication,  
Moving through the motion pictures of our nation;  
And when once it gets cold,  
It freezes; and I can't look at my face-  
I can't do most things anyways. Even in school I couldn't  
Spell,  
And I was always the tremulous procrastination following  
The tardy bell-  
I experienced a certain noirish- vertigo while copying  
My rushed plagiarism of her eyes.  
Then I stood up and masturbated to the pledge of allegiance-  
Out in the laundry mat of the student parking lot,  
I followed the suave tortoise to its narcoleptic victory;  
I.E. I slept underneath the mortally wounded bus:  
I failed PE;  
But despite all of this I loved her throughout the trials and tribulations:  
The blue-jay eyed bully who pummeled me in the gut  
With her inky quills, her tomahawk sensation when I saw her out  
In the playground's field kissing other swells against their  
Wills,  
Until she drifted away and found the poor sap she would marry;  
And I sort of drifted after her, like a mollusk dried out of its  
Shell, a stage of evaporation of the sky,  
Not in any noticeable sort of hurry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even A Ladder Needs Its Fireman

Everything is at its finest, so worry.  
In the groving rows the pits are buried deep to  
Hurry;  
And the lion has no need to count,  
The clouds in the sky don't want to hunt:  
And the movies are on television,  
The finest vestibules of our species who couldn't  
Lift a gun to save themselves.  
The wedding bands, so soft and smooth,  
Are lost to the ocean's sales.  
All the pretty wives are hapless in their kitchens.  
The kittens in their pails;  
And when I lived next to you, I lived so far away from  
You;  
But now that I don't know where we are,  
Are we so close that I can close my eyes as you orgasm,  
As your man touches you like butch-fisted bouquets,  
And you squint your eyes trying to make out who  
He really is.  
And your daughter is building sandcastles in the grave.  
Even a fireman needs to save a kitten from its  
Tree every now and then,  
Even a ladder needs it fireman.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even After You Have Gone

Horses in the shadow of a cross  
As it begins to rain-  
And my parents are somewhere  
(Maybe in Spain)  
And you are somewhere.  
Where are you? But don't look  
Behind us, my dear,  
Because the waves have taken the  
Evidence of our time together  
Away-  
We were together yesterday,  
But not today-  
How I long for you, I cannot say-  
Because everything we knew about  
Each other we have cast  
Away- but there remains a Ferris  
Wheel in my heart for you-  
And it keeps a light for you even  
After you have gone,  
And reciprocates through the memories,  
As it rains softly over the emptiness  
You have left in my body  
As you have gone- The rain continues  
Whispering to the echoes of you  
Rippling in my hidden lawn-  
Where I lay naked waiting for you,  
Expectantly, even after you have gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even As It Flies

My body sweats inside of new junctures:  
All of your life swimming in the banishing ambers of  
The rivers that no longer move:  
Alma, I have had dreams of Guerrero where you lived, where  
You come from,  
Where no Romans ever conquered, and I have had fits and fought  
Vampires for you  
Alma, even while you were with your husband and your sisters  
And your children  
At the movies, and I was at my teachers house, and the palm trees  
Rose like little boys who had  
Survived plane crashes; and all of it was so sweet, like  
Christmas trees who stay up all year:  
And I hope I still know you come Christmas time,  
Alma, because I want you to work my cash register, so I can still  
See down the slender avenues of your luscious  
Tributaries,  
Calling you up and calling you down, even though we are so far beneath  
The mountains  
Alma, even though I am making no money with your eulogies:  
I can hardly walk, Alma; and my jaw is wired  
Shut- I have been through so many plane crashes and accidents,  
And maybe you thought that I was beautiful once before,  
Just as you thought that your husband was beautiful once before,  
But cant you hear me calling to you now,  
Alma- like the castaway wish down at the bottom of the evil well:  
Alma,  
Alma, I will live forever because of my words of love for you:  
Don't you wish to live forever, because I can happily step aside  
And offer up my spot for you on my airplane  
That is always burning even as it flies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even As They Fly

My soul beat through the schoolyard:  
Soul,  
Frightened rabbit as the stewardesses flew:  
And I wondered,  
What were the colors of their toenails,  
As they flew:  
But they had their colors, and their perfumes:  
They flew above all the tender heads  
Of the school yard,  
As they flew strange goddesses of escaped  
Domesticity,  
Like waves in church where will they  
Go now as the students leave,  
As the traffic coalesces what mystery of things  
Changing just to go back home  
While the women up there fly across the ocean,  
Taking with them the theft of their hearts:  
See how they metamorphosis while  
The children go home  
I expect that they change colors even as they fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even As We Said Our Goodbyes

She told me if the world had to end  
She'd move to Mars;  
And I didn't know what she was telling me,  
Because I was too intoxicated from her  
Sex:  
She lay spread red delicious rump on the same  
Old bed;  
But she was telling me something significant,  
How she could stand her ground with a switch blade  
Knife,  
And then shop the town:  
She had four children, all of them good and  
Conceived outside Mr. Roger's Neighborhood;  
And yet there was something of the unreal in her eyes,  
And I stared at them as long as I could  
Even as we kissed and said our goodbyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even Before Men Learned How To Fly

An empty crib at me feet,  
A bottle in my lips—  
And it is time to hear my dog breathing,  
My wife lost in the other room  
Of the tiny yellow house,  
Her mind still speaking mandarin  
As it always will,  
But the oily haunts of the daylight gone—  
The illusions of the sun light's architectures  
Sunken into the other side of  
The vanished swings—  
And I have grey hair, and yet I can  
Dance like a little boy—  
All over the stage of the graveyard  
As it pretends to appreciate me—  
And the illusions I give of beauty,  
Like fireworks lit off before the teaming eyes  
Of foxes who want to drink all of  
The time, even before Rome—  
And I imagine one fox crying there,  
Weeping at the foot of Calvary  
Up to the vineyard that he was supposed to  
Believe in even before men learned  
How to fly.

Robert Rorabeck



## Even Higher

I have sung you into being through my little doors  
Of glass,  
As it was butterflies that I had tamed and taught how to  
Walk and dance,  
And I blow away the hopes of dandelions using the lips  
Of my mind,  
Like you blew out the candles on your birthday cake  
You had not so long ago  
At supper time  
When the world was young and new and so many waterfalls  
Yet did fall,  
And smoked and gleamed their destroyed reasons straight back  
Up through a world kaleidoscoped with prism,  
Like a mess of promises from god,  
And I laid you down on a matted bed of your favorite color  
And made love to you  
Alma, while the fish leapt and leapt even higher.

Robert Rorabeck

## Even If I Call Again

Shallow wounds, I know you are here, and I know  
I can't win - cadaver with a bouquet of roses, you will  
Go home and home and home to  
Him,  
Going through the rainstorms and underneath the overpasses.  
This is just my sad nocturnal memory for you:  
You live across the railroad tracks, or in another world,  
While Saturn has all of her rings,  
As you sometimes wear the rings I bought for you from  
The sunshine flea market- Don't worry, my scars  
Will heal even as my heart fails and they may bury  
Me with the nameless prostitutes underneath the roses  
Smelled by all of the tourists: this is just my thing  
As the gardens open up a store of stolen jubilee to  
The rain,  
And you smile through the afternoons like a creature burning  
At the seams who is lighter than air, but will never come  
Even if I called again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even If No One Would Listen

If I could tell you how beautiful she was  
You would never believe me:  
You whose language knows my tongue, but I try to  
Sing her up every morning anyways:  
How she never had to finish school to be everything more  
Than beautiful,  
Even while we were truants, or even when I found myself  
Alone under the emptied school buses:  
And all of those houses were occupied by us like the  
Lightest of tombs,  
And the airplanes sparkled and the pools were chalices  
For diamonds;  
But neither of us can know the real meaning of this muse,  
Because she was birthed in the  
Boundaries of other throats, where strange birds gossip  
While brown babies are being born  
In the hurried fronts of dying mariposas whose  
Glorious poisons accumulate across the rugs of  
The bosque;  
Even though I have cupped a hand across her unclothed boundaries;  
And I have inhaled the ovoid hallucinations of her oasis:  
Even today while her children wait for her back on  
Cherry Road,  
Alma came over, and I tried to sing for her a crude mirror of  
The beings of her soul;  
And she was my muse, and I made love to her,  
Even if no one would listen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even If She Said Yes

Bicycles of little boys trick or treat all day,  
Trick or treat all year:  
I happen to think about the blond headed mother who  
Came in one or two days ago:  
If she comes back I will ask her out and it will be  
The first date I've been on in seven years-  
And I plan to take her to walmart to buy bicycles and  
Then drive off with her near the sea,  
And ditch the car- and just ride bicycles with her for  
Our first date- If we have to, I would take her to  
A really nice restaurant;  
And if I have to, I'd buy her a whole bunch of corpulent  
Flowers-hyacinths and whatnots,  
But I'd rather steal them from all the insouciant though  
Comely gardens of suburbia;  
And now it's not even ten o'clock and there's not  
Even a customer,  
And the clouds are just visible though it being well past  
Crepuscule, and I am the only man alive,  
And she is the only woman alive- and we are tremulous  
In our gardens of plum tree and spikenard;  
And if there was a second date, I'd take her to Atlantis  
And practice the forgotten art of roller-skating,  
And make heaven a place on earth-  
But I doubt it's there anymore-  
Even if she said yes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even If They Cannot Fathom Me

If I am going to die by your inclination,  
At least make it as beautiful as a drive in movie  
Or a wheel barrow  
Out in the open summers, and their seasons:  
And then the weathers who are without  
Reason,  
Because your name is Alma and you are my muse,  
And certainly I will love myself and my possessions and  
Travel alone and nameless for you,  
And this is but only the beginning of my declination,  
Just as the waves hustle over the infinite sea of  
Nameless heroes:  
And I love you; and I love you, like an echo who can't  
Even love me,  
And I've got your back, and I love your fathomless  
Eyes,  
Alma- even if they cannot fathom me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even If They Never Make It

Broken, and the children are moving home now  
Like snails through a forest ruined  
By fire: and someone is shouting,  
And someone is pointing out,  
But gold hangs in the trees: at first it looks like  
Serpents hanging there,  
But it is some other tale- infatuated and fanciful;  
And the crowds gather and dress up and go to  
Dances:  
It almost feels alright to believe again, that your  
Loved ones are coming home,  
And even if they never make it there, at least they  
Are thinking of you.

Robert Rorabeck

## Even More Esoteric Rose

Bushels full of fireworks in the dirty keys of  
Love:

I am no longer beautiful, but I still send out my doves;  
And you are perfect in your rain or in your shadows,  
While all the pretty knights compete for you  
In all their pretty battles;  
And one has taken you to his house, and kissed your hand  
And spun you like hot glass in the fires of a bedroom's hearth:  
He has figured out exactly how to spread your worth;  
While I am but a disqualified pugilist weeping gore-faced  
Under the bus  
While all of the other kids are enjoying their high-schooled lunch;  
And they are looking up into your eyes:  
Sea green or sky blue, and they are following in love with you;  
But you don't know exactly yet what you need to do,  
And each day comes and each day goes, and you grow into an  
Even more esoteric rose,  
Spreading thimble-tongued in secret estuaries, and cloistered  
Basins where the sun burns down on you, giving you your dunness  
To which you fill your enthusiastic young.

Robert Rorabeck

## Even More Lines For The Sacrificial Untouchables

I've used too many words-  
I just wanted to recreate the sun, burnished  
And tan, over your sweet swing-set,  
I wanted to be your man,  
And make up for my scars, my undefined chest  
I could open up to show you the glass-blown  
Gifts of who you really are,  
But I've said too much- I've become lost in  
The third fitt of this modern fairy-tale-  
Who are you really? I won't tell,  
And all the flowers are beautiful in the meadow,  
Like Catholic candles lit for mass-  
Though they might now be dancing, they will  
Soon blow out, but even then  
You are my Jesus, and I'd drive all day for you,  
And write down the exegesis of your thighs, underlining  
Our children, spit on my palm,  
If that was how it was really meant to be,  
But I don't believe you- your hair is as auburn and  
Waverly as a drunken wave- If you are not a mischievous  
Otter in your sweet and alcoholic habitat showing off  
For ever boy,  
Your thighs tight and gripping the bicycle's seat,  
Then you are the naiad of some seven seas, a tall drink  
Of water, a wedding gown flowing down into the other  
Man's lap, delighting in the breathlessness of my pain-  
I can even see you now, and how your gaze burns healthily  
Nocturnal and satanic,  
I wanted to love you and live forever swinging like a  
Gleeful censer in your nipples park, but you are not my kind  
Stewardesses- With your knives, you cutpurse,  
Didn't you only want to come and delight over  
The wound you carved and salted.

Robert Rorabeck



# Even More Than I Believe

Forecasting this usual loneliness,  
So easily displaced into trailer parks where there  
Is just this one trailer,  
And all these slash pines and the stone nests of  
Rattle snakes:  
All the lucky rabbits feet are gone,  
As my feelings have gone for you, like the hero  
At the end of the movie;  
Like the beauty in your amber face being bled over  
By your lovers candles;  
I am not sure of anything, but airplanes have perfect  
Armpits:  
I have stepped through the stone archways of many  
Vanished Indians, hearing the myth of Custer  
Translated from their victorious lips, and all my will  
Was lost.  
I was sold as a slave across the mid-western states-  
I passed beneath a better muse in Colorado, and eventually  
Was reunited with Mexico City,  
Like a monarch butterfly; but in the morning I will never  
Get back to Spain: My aunt who took me there is still  
Gone, even though she is living;  
And there are so many fine houses across the canal  
Where all of my old classmates are sleeping, wavering like  
A mass of candles on the mowed waves;  
But all of their women are occupied, all of their fireworks up  
On Saturdays of roofs, all of their paper airplanes folded  
Into nodding beds: All the ivy is stretched up to the  
Titans and their heads,  
And she is in love and not coming down not even for all  
My sacrifices of baby's breath; because she is never there,  
Even though I wish even more than I believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even She Didn'T Taste As Sweet

Proper English of pronouns sleeping homes in the  
Parks,  
Indistinguishable johns resting their sooty foreheads  
On gravestones in the darks:  
And I have loved you right here, which isn't very far:  
And I have sat and inhaled you in your car,  
As just today, this morning in fact, I lay on a bed with  
You and it too seemed to levitate:  
You handled my rope trick and I rose my far and ancient  
Friends from your declivities:  
I have bought you birthday cake, Alma,  
But even she didn't taste as sweet.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even The Abyss Of The Hereafter

Daylight troubles the mouth of the wolf  
Or my mother—  
And I get drunker and drunker—  
It seems to last forever—  
The bouquets of fireworks of my past years—  
And my hearts that have had to surrender—  
In this place where the real lions live—  
And the poems that keep getting spread out and spread  
Out like stories for a dollar underneath the overpasses—  
Underneath whatever it is that is finally defeated—  
Moonbeams and crossbeams  
And the epaulets of wire and telekinesis—  
It is not as much a shadow show as it is for puppets—  
And the daylight surrenders to the kidnappings of rounded  
Corners—of libraries that have shut down—and  
Hallucinations that go into hibernating at the day-barks  
And the ballparks while you kiss the armpits of your sister—  
And the daylight—and the daylight—  
And the amulets reflecting off her—if this was a stage  
Then it would be filled with the echoes and the echoes of laughter  
But this is not even an amusement park anymore—  
And there is not even enough to pay my passage way into the abyss  
Or even the abyss of the hereafter.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even The Poorest Thing

I look at you and I want to kill gods;  
And I do. I get them drunk in their Christmas  
Tree trailer parks,  
And I cut their throats and coyotes lay off the  
Neighborhood cats,  
And come loping, telling jokes in a lappy  
Drum circle around that immortal wine;  
And I really do love you,  
And to prove that you are mine, I shoot the eyes  
Out of commercial airplanes with my BB gun:  
And the stewardesses scream until the young  
Boys leap up and French-kiss them,  
And they go to sleep across the spotless canal,  
Where alligators like grandmothers watch over  
Them forever, forever,  
In the beds of conquistador metal which can never  
Be unproven;  
And I sleep with my good side turned to you,  
Because I am always afraid that you might care;  
But I never let go off your finicky palm,  
And we jog together around intercostal golf  
Courses landscaped in spikenard and palm;  
And I should be delivering these blue letters of other  
Lovesick men, to pay for our dinner of bread and gin;  
But instead I just keep slipping my words through thin air,  
Folded in the eye of a misconceived hurricane,  
Hoping you'll believe even the poorest thing is rare.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even Though

Emolliating in the soft green prejudices  
That I cannot understand,  
And everyday awash underneath the mountain  
With even the swiftest of arrows embedded into  
The deepest wounds  
Already cut from the cultivated forest of  
Fruit trees  
Falling down- and little feral girls have bruised  
Their elbows  
And broken their favorite heirlooms and the lonely  
Devices that flash all night  
Trying to be saved by the fireworks who themselves  
Are dying;  
And it feels so far away, even as the trailer parks  
Slumber,  
And the beautiful angels are looking so good even  
Though they are holding their breath,  
And even though they are not real.

Robert Rorabeck

## Even Though I Know

The forts are crawling with delusion and with the  
Spent fireworks of where we don't belong,  
Though Alma called me twice today over the insouciant waves:  
She wants new breasts: she shaves,  
And soon it will be Christmas and I will absolutely have to  
By her something.  
By all of this writing I feel like I have come to know myself,  
And I have discovered the misplaced parks of my childhood,  
Near the ocean and the restored school houses,  
Though it still doesn't feel right to be here,  
Or to be believing in all of the little things I happen to believe:  
I don't want to see movies anymore,  
For they remind me of her perfect life, and the other nicknames  
I have cultivated for her,  
Even though I know that she does not love me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even Though We Both Yet Breathe

Laughing cenotaph: good fun for  
Soldier boys being christened and charley horsed  
By the waves;  
I walk through dying houses, while my words  
Crayon your fore brow like the numbers of  
A little girl;  
I get mistaken for who I am all the time,  
I hang out and chain-rhyme; and the wimpling  
Orchards blow like your bangs, like burning sugar  
Canes;  
And the egrets wake up and make love with the  
Herons, and then blow themselves over billboards and  
Over silver vines,  
And I am awakened and smelled the rummy ants  
Running over the cut blades; and everything was  
Saber toothed and unafraid; and I leapt from the shadows  
Of the forests on either side of the golf courses  
And the everglades;  
And I ran to you calling to you in the waves which  
Were your changing room, and your graves;  
But the better knights had already come before me,  
And enraptured you and turned you drunk, so you  
Were cheery and unafraid, and with your glad children  
Summering in your trains;  
I used to have a dream of slipping out of my window  
Into your dreams, but now it seems as if neither of us are  
Real, even though we both yet breathe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even Though Wounded

There was nothing under the airplane,  
But the sun:  
The sun was female and seemed to be  
In a wave of sky-  
Where was she going, underneath stewardesses,  
Paper airplanes trying to be  
Consumed by her like kindergarteners  
In midday baptisms-  
There was nothing extraordinary about her  
Otherwise:  
She floated there in a steady curse, while  
The spiders buried their mothers  
And we said the pledge of allegiance  
While standing, even though wounded,  
In the classrooms where we didn't belong.

Robert Rorabeck



# Even Though You Say You Are Still A Good Girl

You don't care if you hurt me, as long as you stay  
Beautiful:  
You are like my mother- maybe you live down a ghostly  
Street under the manticores of parasitic street lights:  
I have watched you hang upside down from them  
Showing off your training bra,  
Trying to start a fight of little boys, making them lay of  
Their paper airplanes and masturbation:  
Your eyes are time machines, but you don't care;  
And I just lay out for you in the implausible weather, watching  
You playing your plastic trumpets in and out of movie theatres,  
With the favorite sweets of your bellicose boys:  
And maybe once I wanted to be Shakespeare or the doggerel of  
His brother Marlow:  
I wanted to take Tamberlaine's crown and smash in your  
Apple-pie halo:  
And then I am a black eyed surfer beaten up thorough the angry  
Caesuras: the forts of opals and coquinas looming straight over  
Me  
Filled with their dead memories, and their extinguished candles:  
Their copper canons like pews at mass:  
They sit forever as the ice-cream melts like your legs,  
Like the simple heirlooms you keep in a chest,  
While your areolas flagellate moving back and forth in a bed of  
Dreams that has been a wonderful ship for so many men  
Even though you say you are still a good girl.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even Through Those Hours When You Are Far From Home

Like a sickly grove of trees worships their  
Lady in the sky,  
I reach up from my weedy encroachments  
Wishing for you,  
Seeing each frame of your shadow through  
The monsoons streaking your glass windows-  
You are inside, baking and warm,  
Your apron tied around your hourglass waist,  
Doing your thing, dancing for your children;  
Jewel of domestications,  
And I am immature, and out of a job-  
Quite suited for this economy, I tramp and  
Slip through the hours of this industrialized swamp,  
The tourists making a busy cream in my mind  
And the pistils of air plants bloom like tongues  
Enjoying their perches in the yards, and in each  
Womb a beautiful car, restive and showy;  
And when you wake up you drive all day, or you  
Bake, and I sneak into your house and smell the hours  
You have spent, and, trespassing, against the  
Crenulations of your engorged pool- pretending to  
Love, or know who you are, even through those  
Hours when you are far from home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even When I Told You I Don'T Believe In Satan

Simple words like cherry red  
Cars in the sun-  
And I don't believe in Satan-  
Potted spikenard consumptive upon the sea wall,  
Crinkled by salt, diminished by seagulls,  
And I don't believe in Satan;  
But cast eye downwards in the telescopic sun,  
Why then are you there in the sand  
With that man-  
Why then are you there in the sand with that man:  
My girl- my girl. My only girl-  
Wasn't it me who breathed you from the sea  
Instead of going out to dinner-  
Wasn't it I who payed your way and gave you  
A wishing well of fair won goldfish;  
And there isn't a cloud yet in the sky- it is a blue  
Color all its own,  
And grandmothers are alive- and grandmothers  
Are alive,  
But what empirical corruption so close at hand-  
I telescope with my eyes,  
His hand winnowed upon your shoulder blade,  
Your balmy fan,  
Except I cannot see your eyes- they must be looking  
Toward your home,  
But the spikenard is stolen from the mountain-  
The meter is out of coin;  
Grandmother is in her grave-  
Isn't that your hand in his hand even when I told you  
That I don't believe in Satan.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even When You Are Fleeting

My jaw is a soup bone for your cold dinner;  
Or it ornaments a barbed wire fence softly  
Singing in the drying pastures,  
Gnawed on by standard bred horses and  
Antelope:  
You can drive by, but you should not see it  
From where you are at,  
Keeping time with your better movements,  
Your eyes illicit waterfalls down the good-side  
Of his face as he drives,  
As he flexes for you and you pass into the  
Shade of the forest  
Before returning to the later half of New Mexico,  
To all those silver mines and jewelry shops  
Where he mined you;  
But if you should come back around this  
Way maybe on the weekend or for a make-believe  
Holiday, doing your arbitrary shopping,  
Or pretending to visit the high lonesome places  
Half shutdown where once John Wayne ate his  
Breakfast,  
Do me a favor and do not stop if the sun should happen  
To whistle me down to you,  
And skip like a little street boy polishing the sweet sounds  
Of politics and religion right out of me,  
Even though I have nothing to pay him for the job-  
Do not stop- Don't even slow down, because that  
Would make some tourism out of my unrequited decorations;  
And because I am already stood-up,  
Just let me keep hanging around doing what I do because  
It would be all but useless, and I prefer to think of  
You as something beautiful even when you are fleeting.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even When You Are Not To Be Found

The city goes home and bifocals in  
Its wrathful arcade;  
And you can tell that I have been drinking:  
I have slept in my clothes for seven years,  
Because I didn't  
Want you to know the scars I have since been wearing;  
And maybe you lost your virginity as nude  
As soft shelled love birds  
Out upon the sandpeppered shores of the fresh water  
Estuaries;  
Maybe even you were snapped at by beatniks,  
Maybe you carried the equipment of the band from the  
Cars-  
And now these pretty words just make you tired;  
Maybe you are in love with a great voice, and when  
He comes swinging down at the batting cages of your body  
In the rudeness of your collar green night,  
You don't even care how far he high tides in you;  
And you give out his name like solicitations in a mailbox;  
And you come and afterwards you circle the town  
Like Zoroastrians for your fairer grandfather's icecream;  
But I still know where the wild figs lay,  
Or how I crossed your body with my eyes on its skullduggery:  
And I still know where that treasure is buried that  
You have never quite found;  
And I know how to lay you even when you are not to be found.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even While She Looks Away

Ignited by a night and all of its candles:  
So many candles that it must be on holiday:  
It must be like the tourists  
Preparing for a parade- while the fort casts its long  
Shoulders again up against the sea:  
The stone rising tidily, but conceding  
To the water and her breathing:  
And girls I do not know, coming to me, but looking away:  
Surely afire as they make their wishes up into  
Other heavens,  
Swelled by the virtues of those bulbous decorations,  
Hair curling around alluringly- until they are finally  
Called up,  
And the world of straight arrow carriages bemoans their  
Newfound chastity- the orange groves  
Try to accentuate them with an often claret bouquet:  
And the sun; what does he do, but jump through the day,  
Freckling their shoulders,  
As they go out baptizing their sorority- maybe even  
Metamorphosing through the uncalled for weather:  
Staggering the tourists and the unwise children on their  
Shoulders,  
As they try to make out what it is, straining their necks through  
The airy clouds, even while she looks away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even While The Sky Was Hurry Hurry Down

Existing here in the farfetched algorithms of  
Gut shot aeroplanes-  
Running around speechless like an overwrought  
Marionette  
Trying to be scalped by Indians who are not even  
Sure they exist themselves,  
Until it is time for lunch: pretty girls curling with  
Their own enchantments  
About the may, may grasses, where each warm animal  
Has a surname and feminine hands to  
Hold him as if his heart were in a pink nest  
And everything was fine even while the sky was  
Hurrying down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Even While They Drive

Delighted in the eyes of sincerity's rearing-  
The beefsteak of juggernauts obscenely  
Unclothed for the traffic that pearls and beads on a dry  
World covered around by the thin  
Curtains of an unmistakable ingénue bathing in each  
Caesura of the sea,  
Cantankerous and bee stung- the size of every woman  
Swaying the magnitudes after tearing down the  
Four walls of her grotto,  
So that each little door is nude and filtering in the  
Unwholesome dinner guests who open up their flashlights  
Like rubies on the beauties of clams  
And look at themselves backwards down the road  
Of cerulean canopies even while they drive.

Robert Rorabeck



# Even While You Slip Away

Fire hydrants in mistaken Iroquois,  
And now you taste his lips, while I've been down to the  
Bottom of the Grand Canyon three times  
To taste hers,  
While my legs and body ached upwards for you,  
And saw the amphibic silver bodies of airplanes  
Leaping in the illusions  
Of the telltale weathers: and I didn't even know who  
You were, Alma; but now shouldn't it be  
For all times, for good and for evil,  
Now that my soul has tasted yours,  
That I will always know who you are, even while you  
Slip away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Evening Of The Seventh Day

Spiders with red scars crawl up the  
Wall to the sadness of the church's organ;  
There is a leak in the corner molting the drywall,  
The practitioners avoid it with their eyes.  
The preacher's wife leads the weeping in prayers,  
And they move as somberly as though ghosts  
Through the eye of a hurricane.

I wait outside with my red car idling,  
Her lips on my mind, my hands on the ignition.  
Snow flurries make flirtations with autumn.  
There used to be Indians crouching on the windswept  
Plains, now there are aluminum trailer parks,  
And swaths of concrete which bleed into rivers.

Beneath the steeple, I say her name 7,000 times,  
As some kind of offering,  
Until the bats leave,  
But I keep my money in my wallet,  
Except when there is liquor. Then the planets swim  
Unanswering even to the most fervent reverence,

Beneath them, the donkey has feverish dreams,  
Its teeth showing as it is urged up the cryptic back of  
The most wounded of canyons, laden with sacks of ravished  
Gold; it sweats remembering the story grandfather told  
Of the babe in the manger, and the three wise-men,  
With gifts of the like which the special interests garnish politicians,

But now there should be only one sun, and the hive  
Of lips which drinks up the sweat from its fur, for it  
Doesn't know of such things; those stories belong  
In the green of gentled worlds, for now he only knows  
The switch, and the cragged pass which slips upward  
In steeper garments,

As the world flips over like a hound hit and wounded  
On the interstate; sure to die, the sallow finger's of the  
Preacher's wife prick upon the keys,

The organ plays, and the spiders march across the  
Effluvious webs in spindles over where  
Gray and balding heads bend to pray upon the  
Swaybacked ropes of creation, a spooky world  
Now bonded beneath power-lines and the leaping  
Bellies of aero planes,

Who had once seen god naked and panting,  
Hunting across the permafrost, awakened from a  
Motherly glacier who slid away and wept until  
Scalding, birthing but a single world, he feral and  
Windswept who swam from the lake of her womb,  
And like a tadpole metamorphoses, decided to  
Dawn cloths and speak no longer to the trees of her woods.

Robert Rorabeck

# Eventual Super-Heroes

The strangers proceed through the yellow air.  
They are not quite super-heroes,  
Though once they were acquaintances,  
With their arms outstretched  
And yawning in the impoverished parks, or  
In little turn of the century rooms  
Of silence filled with scribbling insects:  
Their eyes are the saddest things  
When they go down the  
Intersections of faded walls  
Looking like blind people for their next love:  
Nervously, they chew the asses out of pencils,  
Not yet knowing if they are passing,  
And it is raining outside and how will they get home.  
Eventually, not even super-heroes  
Can fly in such weather, though they are  
Too afraid to ask the opposite sex for a ride:  
There on the walkways, they write  
Their names in Old English on the wet  
Cement and wait for it to dry in the rain-  
Eventually, they will manage to look up again,  
And everything will be gone,  
Or starting over....

Robert Rorabeck

# Ever So Motherly Limbs

It's no holds barred in the venal  
Contagions of the sound:  
I almost have \$200,000 dollars and  
A c&ck as hard as spikenard,  
And a Jewish lip that I want to press as fat  
As a cherry red mollusk who's been making  
Its fornicating rounds around the sea,  
Who has been eating legumes and thinking of  
You and all the sounds you make with your  
Husband deep in the crèches of your bed;  
And I just want to move up and wet my pants  
In your basin,  
Maybe once hold the gossip of your hands,  
And throw back your spirits and count the changing  
Of my wounds,  
Perhaps fart and navigate for one afternoon through  
The mausoleum of your rooms:  
Sharon, I am not beautiful, but I can go on and on,  
Meaningless and harmless, erecting my art like  
A child,  
Looking up for your holocaust eyes, because any mortal  
Could die into them,  
And I have given up, and I am no good while the  
Police are not around. If you saw me  
You would think me imperfect, and I was.  
You would love my brother in law just because,  
But I want to be perfect, perfectly asleep in the moving  
Shadow, the zoetrope and perfumed orchard  
Of your ever so motherly limbs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Evergreen

I have stopped watching the movie,  
But it shouldn't matter,  
Because its only black and white;  
Even the dogs could identify it.  
And though I am now doing nothing,  
I have stopped dreaming and spend  
Hours looking at a photograph of a girl  
Who should make the world spin,  
But she doesn't sell used cars,  
And the landlord is so fretful for this month,  
Her beauty couldn't help, but she doesn't  
Worry, and plays with her new husband in  
The snow, and this weather compliments her  
And keeps time, even though all the birds have  
Gone. The mountains loom, and even  
Then from the front door there are quite so  
Many bears hibernating in the indentations  
And the folds, snoring through anonymity,  
So far away from the ocean, and the salty  
Cuts of high school, and the truancies smoking  
Cigarettes, and the insignificant games of  
Eyes. The mountains build their own weather,  
As if jealous lovers holding blankets to them,  
Teary eyed in the dark,  
But I have stepped on their highest summits,  
Trailing away from tourists who glut there on  
Her beauty, and should make her rich by and by.  
She shouldn't even see me,  
Though I have walked high above her doorstep,  
Disappearing in a storm, and down again  
I cross her street, and the world slumbers like  
A beautiful merry-go-round to which children  
Sleepwalk, and in the morning she should arise  
In the perfect climate, freezing,  
Seeing herself in the weather, as the bows of  
Trees proclaim her, and the mountains her  
Cathedral, rising up in patriotic basins spilling  
Down to her, the places I have seen.



# Everlasting Life

Every day I experience  
A billion eucatastrophes  
As tiny gods smaller  
Than drops of honey,  
Dying only to be reborn  
On her budding lips,  
As they reawaken the  
Far distant religion of  
Everlasting life.

Robert Rorabeck



# Every Bit Of Nothing

How are you while you are not imagining me:  
There you are with husband and children after the ferris  
Wheels are taken down,  
And my wife is in the bathroom where you used to  
Fix your hair after we made love,  
And the sports of winter are over,  
And you are up there with those horses after  
I have supposed a thousand songs for you—  
Now he lays his brown body across the apiary that you  
Once lost to me—  
And your children coo indoors having no clue of  
How you once shared every bit of nothing with me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Bit Of Nothing'

How are you while you are not imagining me:  
There you are with husband and children after the ferris  
Wheels are taken down,  
And my wife is in the bathroom where you used to  
Fix your hair after we made love,  
And the sports of winter are over,  
And you are up there with those horses after  
I have supposed a thousand songs for you—  
Now he lays his brown body across the apiary that you  
Once lost to me—  
And your children coo indoors having no clue of  
How you once shared every bit of nothing with me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Day

All day long I clean white shoe polished tables,  
The sky is that naked equus on a stage of white washed  
Blue:  
I think of Disney World and the hidden cormorants busted  
Wing in the rich and eerie foliage:  
I would love to spend a life in equally dark spend thrift  
In the dark of that wonderland,  
Repeating all the papier-mâché vaudeville sweltering over  
The plutonic love of silver-fish conquistadors  
And their extinguished teal headdressed mates:  
And I think that's what I'm doing, anyways- down from  
The ski-lift of the sparkling sun- Because I have an erection,  
And I am holding your hand even if you aren't yet on my  
Planet: I will come down eventually- elliptical but wild,  
The ice centaurs shooting pell-mell across the frosty void  
Like poky little puppies who dig holes underneath the fences  
To go home early when the silver triangle rings for  
Tapioca pudding- And everything is slightly off kilter,  
And certainly at fault- one side of my face is always better,  
So I shook keep that side directed toward your fancy as  
We lounge and fart like love birds to the big headed animal  
Parade- take our shirts off and swimming into crepuscule  
In the utterly killed waters where Peter Pan always smiles,  
And the crocodile it always ticking even though he shouldn't  
Be afraid to die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Green Morning

Look at me now  
To where I open my chest  
These marionettes play for you  
Make a stage as my ribs open like opal curtains.  
Here, my heart is the tiniest sun—  
It pulses with vibrant expectancy,  
Like a ruby that is alive.  
There is a Persian army of sweat rolling  
From my brow,  
Wild horses whose hooves make tumultuous  
Language like water sculpts earth and bone.  
My eyes are caged sparrows,  
The irises their eyes growing  
As they hope to feed on things  
Those are still awakening from the dewy grass,  
The bed on where you sleep and dream  
Of tiny children sleeping inside flowers  
Your fingers brush across, those too memories  
The beautiful things which still toy like colorful  
Ribbons running like Yuletide virgins  
Along your peripheral vision.  
These things inside me dance for you  
As they kill me,  
And I open myself up for you mortally  
Waiting for the every green morning  
For your eyes to awake  
Blue upon me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Inch Along The Way

They have tourists buying crystals and  
Junk beneath the valley of  
The angels: Now that it is snowing, they are  
Eating icecream  
Next to the geysers of a superficial water park—  
Holding their hands over their eyes—  
Skiing in the down drift—  
But looking up there: there—amphitheater  
Of light in her mysterious boudoir where the whitest  
Of rabbits lay buried—  
Comatose in dreams of spring—wherever everything  
Thaws and runs down jubilantly in feral braids  
Amidst the aspens:  
And I walk up her slopes once more—in a truanacy  
Of unequalled scars,  
But seeing things upon her that cannot be described—  
So high above the dictionaries of the tourist's  
Schools—  
And kissing her every inch along the way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Memory

Well, there were flowers outside  
For sale,  
And we moved amidst them, inhaling,  
Stealing their perfume  
As the bees did: this was something my  
Uncle couldn't save,  
But he still has his unicorn in the cooler,  
If you know what I mean,  
As my grandfather was in his grave:  
And the children who should have  
Been to school,  
Waited underneath the overpass where  
The waves yet echoed:  
And in those feral voices, a song-  
The memories of sirens saturated there,  
And the bells and the lips  
Of naiads in their hurricanes-  
So the secret orchestras were sung in the  
Graffiti's of their overcast cathedrals,  
And at night at home  
Sports continued being played- the  
Gardens whispered,  
And the family prayed- but through the daylight  
Desires continued- streaking, foaming,  
And answering- vibrations from extending  
Shadows- going to brush their lovers  
Across the sea- while in their classrooms  
The lost girls forgot every memory they cared to  
Keep of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Night

I drink beer and masticate:  
To my left there is an entire household of aboveground  
Graveyard,  
Each grandparent off wandering their stucco tomb,  
And at night I always have to masturbate like  
A cat on a hot copper roof just to give them something  
To listen too:  
I try to make it sound like old times,  
Like past lives with my flag pole silhouette underneath the  
Slash pine with pervasive scoliosis,  
And where my futile seed spits, glued with incomplete  
Thoughts of your auburn living dead,  
Then an entire badland of cops and robbers flumes:  
And there is Bonnie and Clyde and  
A rat a tat tat:  
And the old people turn over in their grave,  
And tomorrow it might be tapioca and marshmallows,  
But some eternal zygote splashed into their  
Extinguishing fireside graves  
Will remember how every night I come for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Night Your Beauty Is Stolen

If there is beautiful, it is in the faces looking away;  
Or it is in the warm and itchy bodies pooling upon the  
Tennis courts of an insouciant housewife's

Day:

The condominiums who strut out like hydras, and the young couples  
Who curl up to them like song birds who are loving their  
Pythons,

Or the children who are lost again like field goals who never clear  
The pylons;

They are like new springs growing breasts and migrating once or  
Twice in their beautiful lives, while the Mexicans and Guatemalans  
Cross the deserts,

Only to fall back down again, emolliated, naked organs corsaged with  
Wounds,

Houswives slathered down into their song-bird kitchens;

And I see you now and again here like a centerfold folded up into  
The bedroom where like some flowers,

Every night your beauty is stolen.

Robert Rorabeck



# Every Other Holiday

Scar of sun in the  
Sky- spider wound- floating  
Like a match stick spume  
Burning Christmas trees in  
July;  
And bicycles run speaking  
Over the bridge,  
Going to collapse with the  
Maidens whose skin is as  
White as icecream-  
Ferris wheels evaporate  
In perfect delusion-  
And I think of the  
Girl who can only love  
Me on  
Every other holiday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Picture Of Her Ever Made

Tussling, tussling on our brooms into dusk,  
Never letting the long shadows from the sun exactly  
Escape us: cheering with our bottles of  
Liquors over the trees,  
Make our complexion finely rummy:  
Oh, I said she was beautiful,  
I shouted across the land into her sports utility  
Vehicle- She kind of looked up as if to  
Understand, but her expensive shoes were already  
Polishing the gas-  
She had a new boy, so she wagged her fine a\$s-  
Maybe in the air-conditioning underneath the tinted  
Shade she made a tear, but if she did it  
Was Faberge- my words could not endear her to the  
Weariness and literature of a grey-come sea:  
I loved her, I loved her, yes indeed, but she was always further  
Away, and always smiling in every picture of her ever made.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Piece Of Penny Candy

Repetitive joy in the belly of a whale—  
Geysers the long throat of the wishing well  
Like a wedding train to heaven  
Somewhere over the desert—  
Lost and found fireworks where you left him,  
Words coming out from your mouth  
As a tortoise from his shell—  
The uneven forgetmenots of makebelieve  
Habitats  
Wherein the corners the ghosts are laughing—  
Little frail things, they are the weathers for  
The spiders in their moats  
Remembering the work places that  
Couldn't go on forever—  
Prayer flags fluttering above abandoned  
Drive-ins—  
As the replacements flooded in—  
A girl in a convenient store that is sold out  
Of every piece of penny candy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Time The Sunlight Chooses To Yawn

Epiphanies underneath the windows  
Of society,  
Where the little ferries pollinate quite  
Readily:  
Making love to the browned stems of  
The flowers and their counterparts  
Alike:  
Their pornography in the bird baths as in  
The sadomasochism  
Of the wayward kite:  
How I love you there looking out at the  
Things I could not see,  
Unlike anything else in the word,  
As you made love in the pill bugs and  
The broken ivy  
Stemming across the shingles underneath me:  
As you made love so small in your  
Haunts, but exuberant- experiencing the  
Honey of every bee's sting,  
Dripping with diamonds: what I could not  
Say for you,  
Are the words collected in tears or in  
The fonts of blind men,  
But I am sure that you are- underneath the  
Rearing of cats,  
Laying like dew in the fans of the yard,  
The roe of wonder lust colonizing around you  
Every time the sunshine chooses to yawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Unreturned Drop

Pilots drink rum and sing  
Sea shanties  
And they are passed up by little boys  
On their way to never, never land;  
And the stewardesses sigh,  
Swooning as they remember lost love:  
And these words are his,  
To an adolescents of vermilion orchards  
And spells which would work,  
While they play sports beneath us like Salamanders  
While the rivers boat:  
And oh how I loved who I loved,  
And I didn't even have to finish class to spell her  
Name,  
To keep it like a fetish under my pillow,  
To seep in the wounds of her being, to surrender to  
Her at daylight,  
And to carry her books for her with whatever hands I  
Have left;  
And I am the little shepherd boy still tending to the  
Sheep up in the mountains,  
Weeping into the deeper spells of the lakes she knows that  
Will never move;  
As she bares children and changes her name and fights  
To stop the wrongs of the earth,  
These waters still bare her name, but what she does not  
Remember is that I have cried every unreturned drop.

Robert Rorabeck

# Every Way Home

Thanks for nothing,  
Old-time marionette of the sky—  
I finished another bottle  
After the shock value has spent another  
Token  
And sunken,  
Disappeared into the sea—  
One way or another  
I still have to awaken tomorrow,  
With the sawhorses  
And then the cold  
Green grottos—housewives  
That made their money off of  
Stolen video games,  
Escaping against the teal  
And blue green waves—  
And other ways out of here,  
Echoing through the evaporating  
Canyons of their daughters' lunch rooms,  
Believing in lunacy and other  
Ways out from here—  
Crippled amusement parks that she was  
Too afraid to take me too—  
Drinking tequila at midnight,  
I am too afraid that I cannot turn into another  
Person's doll,  
So I remain right here, echoing, heart-fallen,  
Last ember in a bedroom that has no place  
With itself—  
Can't you remember, or are  
You trying to forget—the ways we tried to make  
It up that mountain, dead turns at midnight,  
And falling behind other things that you could  
Not love—  
But the dogs loving me,  
And the eventual moon light showing me every  
Way home.



# Every Word

With everything there is a

Word:

On tree or branch or

Bird.

Well, then the sea is

Round as the globe-

My eyes open

My eyes close;

They see only you,

My muse.

Robert Rorabeck



# Everyday

I can document how I feel from  
Out in the long, slow yard, while another airplane  
Passes in all of its  
Garments of instruments:  
And I can put myself this way for you,  
Lying through the illusions sweating as shadows  
Off of the bodies,  
Waiting for my parents to come and end another day-  
I can say the things that the sunlight seems to  
Say, as it leaps across the canal and across the burning  
Cane fields along its way:  
It slides across the razorbacks, and the rattlesnakes-  
And it goes into its unknown romance-  
And where it is has gone, you will go- into  
That blanketing horizon where I swear I  
See it go everyday

Robert Rorabeck

# Everyday Foreplay

Going down again for my lonely song,  
After the thunderheads have cracked like gems,  
And showed their true bodies like the lit up  
Thoraxes of lightning bugs, but....  
When will I finally find my way from here,  
And roar down from my mountain like a Comanche  
In a Cadillac, a government apology,  
My hair turquoise and feathered, my body fully stemmed,  
For upon the highway I could be the long ejaculation,  
The neon sign, an out of the ordinary invention  
Conceived of Tesla's self-imposed celibacy,  
A fine gentleman shyly scribbling in the shadows, half fawned  
By the hibiscus in the corner of the doctor's office:  
I went out of high school anonymous, while the  
Gypsies danced in the rain in front of the duplex,  
Selling key-chains, while letting their bosoms air for  
All the lonely mothers turning their cars around,  
Meeting their destinations, never turning their eye again  
To the recluse in the Mohawk;  
Back home again, their fingers and legs running the  
Kitchen, their father-husband cracking farts on the divan,  
How can they not think to see the verdant peel-away,  
Making a left with their virginity toward the apoplectic sea,  
To whom these few words skip down to worshipping,  
The everyday foreplay sketching each caesura the moon encourages,  
As in the roofless sky the clouds leap up blushing jubilantly  
From every suburban window; Their curtains drawn,  
They couldn't see, as they sit at the table to pray and eat.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everyone Else

There was a sandstorm:  
But we didn't belong in her garden of  
Mirages,  
While the students were blowing  
Glass to make fun of windmills  
While it seemed a silent fit:  
But it was beautiful,  
Especially for the tourists-  
And she kept her palms up, even while  
She was sleeping,  
And her houses were beautiful,  
But needed work:  
Oh, silent dog with one eye:  
How you limp, like a wounded rainbow  
Across the movie theatres of the  
Graveyards,  
And it almost seems impossible that  
We don't have to arrive here  
Anymore:  
We just have to look up, and the airplanes  
Are already gone,  
Like breakfast eaten by the over eager gods  
On Christmas day in the sunlight of  
A child's eyes- full of the blinded innocence,  
While everyone else steals all that they can see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everyone Sits Alone

Life is the cage  
We are all born into  
The zoo  
Drives down the long  
Snake in the rain,  
Everyone sits alone  
In the park  
In the car  
In the theatre  
Everyone sits alone  
And looks through bars  
Of their flesh and bone  
No eager hand  
can grasp out of this  
No willing hand has the  
Reach,  
We touch our flesh  
To the flesh of our cages,  
We lay down chained  
And little birds sing  
Beside others miles away  
And barking  
We touch steering wheels  
As the lights cross our eyes  
We learn to believe  
The birth of shadows  
We drive, a line of slaves,  
Down the road  
Everyone sits alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything Else

We looked at the albino alligator today together:  
You said it was the first one of its kind that you had seen,  
And then you took my by the jaw and kissed me about the  
Mouth the way the waves sometimes can be seen kissing the  
Dying cenotaphs,  
And I couldn't remember anything else- except that the  
Tables had turned, and I was your mistress:  
Like a turtle who sometimes lives away from his home,  
I returned with you to the underbelly of my house:  
And what did we do- what did we do so far away from the  
Frontier,  
And two days further still until your home town in the dry sticks  
And woods where Walkin says that there are too many mosquitoes to  
Even breathe during this time of year:  
Alma:  
I made your hair look like a witch's today- and that is what you said,  
And when I called my mother on the phone she said that you  
Were a very sweet girl, but  
That she didn't wish me to be hurt again: but, Alma, I have a castle  
In the sand and I know its time will come before the evening of  
The day:  
But I can hold your hand, Alma- I can hold your hand while the  
Waves take everything else away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything Else That Has Fallen From The Sky

Long shouts of glory through the forest  
Even still die away:  
The sky is cold and gray, and your buttercup orifices  
Have been trounced into the path by the drunken soldiers  
Of my fingerprints:  
Gainesville is dust: the mermaids were soldered together,  
Their tailfins rust:  
Airplanes full of lurching tourists kamikaze into the barking  
Woods:  
It is no good, but the sun still whittles all of this from  
His seat on high,  
But he is such a lonesome guy. The rainstorms come and  
Make him cry,  
And the earth pitter patters teardrops that drool obliquely  
Around the convexity of scuppernongs  
On the wild paths sniffed by homespun dogs;  
And I think of you and everything else that has fallen from the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything Is Yours

I settle down with the pain,  
The human base from which  
The fountainhead springs:  
The five senses riding forth  
Like lunatics,  
Each one wanting to rob  
More than the others  
From the bank of  
Your lips,  
But you shoot them down  
And scatter them  
From so far away.  
They come back riding  
Through the beggar's dust,  
Their saddlebags starving,  
Bringing back the pain  
Of all that emptiness—  
They all sit around the porch  
Of their mother's blouse  
She unbuttons to try  
And let them in but  
They are too drunk to  
Move.  
Every second they are  
Petrified by you.  
Opened or closed,  
Their senses see you,  
Feel you, taste you,  
Hear you riding around them  
Like a buxom phantom,  
But they cannot win,  
For you are the Devil's  
Instrument,  
Man's first sin,  
The knowledge that made desire  
Bloom in Adam's empty  
Chest,  
The abscess of his missing rib,  
So need set forth the exposed

Cartilage and bone of his open wound  
Like a cadaver's bouquet  
Upon the silver platter of  
The human race;  
You let them in and trapped them,  
The caged animals watching you  
Move around them,  
Your legs tall shots of liquor,  
Your eyes blinking gardens,  
Your dress the breezy curtain  
Over your body's gold mine;  
Before you tasted the honey  
Of savage wisdom,  
Injected with the serpent's  
Neon poisons,  
They didn't even know  
What you were  
Though their eyes touched your  
Flesh through every young day,  
But now that you made  
Man aware of you,  
With the knowledge leaping  
Out of you  
Like electric briars from  
Your roses' spasms,  
You ungrate backwards,  
A mirage, you are somewhere else  
Even though you seem close enough  
To make love,  
To touch,  
To taste,  
As you flaunt your form  
Before his sight,  
While, from your secret room,  
You whisper his name into his ear,  
While your scent calls him  
Like a hound to the hunt,  
The blue mountain lion  
That disappears with sundown  
Through the white spools of aspens.  
You play your beautiful game,  
Calling him once or twice a year



When you get drunk.  
Naked pictures of you are on the  
Playing cards in his hand,  
But it is you who will take the purse,  
For when you open your legs  
You make the rules,  
As you made his senses become aware.  
Lying mortally upon you,  
Everything is yours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything Tastes Better

Eating out at restaurants weakens a soul:  
In the light of the same snide pettiness,  
Look at the menu,  
A delicious assembly line: Look at the tourists  
In the atmosphere of those booths.  
Even if you aren't the one who pays for it,  
You are becoming theirs:  
Words fail you, greater words become unknown  
The more you eat.  
The savage airplanes are calmed, and the professionals  
Line up to shake your hand.  
Even sports figures eat at restaurants;  
And the sky is so blue overhead for everyone,  
But you can't see the sky full of blind portcullises;  
And you can drink and laugh and carry on.  
Even the dragonflies grow fat against the windows dripping  
On the obese hibiscus,  
And your mother farts like to the tune of a high school marching  
Band,  
And you father is selling used cars right there at the table.  
And before you know it all of your old crushes are eating  
With you: they are married and yet they seem to  
Be available, entrained in a wrecked space,  
This country gloom- I don't know.  
I guess I am being really perceptive or just out of line,  
But I'd rather drive real fast up to a window and steal my  
Lunch of pie:  
Eating at restaurants deludes your soul,  
But everything tastes better with wine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything That Has Wished To Be Stolen

Arriving reasonless in the center of  
The country—  
It feels like a washed out fairy tale now  
That the girls I will not love  
Are not here:  
Only my mother, because she will not  
Leave me,  
As I scramble up the mountain  
Like a capitalist of horse shoes without  
Any friends—crying for her,  
Not realizing that she already lies  
In the heart of a strawberry field that  
Has been picked clean for the season—  
And so she slumbers, waiting for other  
Stories or for me to impress her—  
But I don't know what to do—  
The moon must be large by now—  
The turkey and the pies must be ready:  
But someone has set them where they cannot  
Be found—  
The moon like a thief, like a detective,  
The horses beneath her eating everything that  
Has wished to be stolen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything That I Dream For

I met you the Monday after I was robbed at gunpoint:  
You were beautiful right away, Alma,  
But I could ignore you, because I'd just bought lingerie for  
Diana,  
And my dreams were still falling uniquely somnolent for  
A sommelier in Colorado:  
So I said that I could work with you and not lose my mind,  
But then the others proved to be so impossible and  
So untrue:  
I had dreams of open graveyards without them, and all of these  
Sore wounds could not heal,  
But you did so much for me this Monday that we both took  
Off and you brought me over a painting of two  
Elephants caressing that I finally got to lay straight on my wall:  
I wonder how it is that you can find me beautiful:  
Because I called you Linda, and you called me Lindo,  
And there was the smell of peanuts, but otherwise I chastised myself  
For not doing better art for you,  
And we are all still just trying to survive, while you remain another  
Man's woman,  
But you are mercilessly beautiful, Alma, and you live next to the dog  
Track, and I have walked to your house:  
It was so easy:  
Sunday is your daughter's birthday: You can put two candles on  
Her cake,  
Because you are everything that I dream for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything That I Need

The bodies spill over into bankruptcy and I wish I had  
The time to express to you what opulent beauty your body carries:  
Alma,  
You are the paradox of all those cats on the fences:  
Alma you weigh one hundred and ten pounds, nearly half my weight,  
And yet you carry around with you all the curves of Spain:  
And you told me that you wanted a boob job,  
But I assured you there wasn't any great need for it:  
Alma,  
I want to water your yard: Alma, I want to captain your ship,  
And hold your hand while the cicadas go undressing:  
Alma, I want to be the sailor you guide home with your almost ochre  
Engines of fire and bright weed:  
Alma, Alma,  
You sell everything that I need.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything That I Would Forever Know

I made the sign of the cross and other  
Holy anachronisms that my name could not provide,  
Then we cut out of the square dance and went to a private  
Rink amidst the sun-vanished trees:  
We drank of each others eyes, and drew each others thoughts:  
And then I was sure that she would be everything that  
I would forever know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything That Is Soon To Be Real

Day is first dark, and it ends in dark:  
Softly, unobtrusive; but in the middle of its arc,  
Day is so abusive, a ribald in his lime tree park:  
Making copper cannons squint green with  
Envy,  
Making forts flash against the sea,  
Or housewives topless in their driveways:  
Words cannot really describe the apex of the day,  
The saint hood of immaturely overage boys  
Making muscle gyms in their fathers' garages,  
Keeping out for girls  
With their thorny corsages: if they can make it through  
Noon, who's to say what all they can love:  
But in the dawn, and in the dusk, most amphibian,  
Swings the swing sets of the monarchs,  
And sit the prettier girls all lost in shadow,  
Books waiting patiently in their laps; but it is so sad  
To them when the sky begins to arc golden,  
For soon the bus will come and the day will go  
Leaping through its wonderful keyhole:  
And everything that is soon to be real will certainly  
Be sure what it does.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything That Pretends To Learn

Yellowy embers in a field of burning houses;  
An entire society of wives losing their places,  
And giving their necks up to the  
Leaping sea:  
There she is always doing her business,  
And her laundry underneath the gulls and the  
Albatrosses:  
This is her busy work which makes her a kaleidoscope  
Of princesses:  
And how I've been saving myself to the homeless  
Tune besides  
The busiest afternoons whose bugles have been  
Burning entire forests  
Whose heads shimmer over the waves and go off  
Like phosphorescent buttresses,  
As the heavens bend down in Pieta—  
They listen gratefully to everything that pretends to learn.

Robert Rorabeck



# Everything That She Has Promised Me

In the green avenues of her favorite color,  
When I was young and skinny,  
I hunted up snakes for two weeks in California:  
It was my dream.  
To sleep in empty train cars in the tall, tall grass,  
Like a fairytale without any wine:  
And the apartments that we reported to no one but  
The ghosts in their swimming pools  
One story below;  
And my face was all so awful to look at,  
And I got my stories and my furniture from the trash:  
And I failed right away,  
Marooned off the graveyard shift, and I crawled back  
Home and lived there,  
And went to college in Florida: I got nobody pregnant:  
I went to Disney World once or twice,  
Lived with and then separated from a girl, thank god:  
Diminished into a wave and found a city of  
Other fools and an apartment as big as a single footprint  
Left in the smeared trail of a centipede,  
If you even cared; and thought about movies, and went to  
Them:  
And I am still singing my imperfect song underneath the  
Limpid runways of the off worldly values of the heavens,  
As tomorrow I will be waiting for Alma: for Alma,  
Because after all of this incest and decents and flights  
From the terrors of hell, the suicides in the flutes of  
Trees,  
And the witches casting their awful perfumes of spells  
Over the vacated baseball diamonds,  
I have finally found my true love, my true love;  
And I believe in everything that she has promised to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything That You Would Leave

Another light over another avenue  
You traveled on before I was born, and you are  
Gone but your song lays evidenced on  
The stones  
And the bees have laid their wax across  
Your bones  
So now you sing like a yellow holiday  
Over the specters of the yellow and somnolent  
Graveyards  
Your lips lay pursed like the furrows of the  
Orchard  
Like the canals that don't take so long and skipping,  
Or the bottlenecks that the genies are keeping  
Up from which the sky yawns and  
Burns- even it doesn't remember how you felt  
Even though it filled your house with his light  
And called you into his yard everyday  
To spring and lay your eyes across the orchard's  
Sea that it was laying its truth across for you  
Just so you could remember everything that you would leave

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything To Me

Auspicious fire now aren't you burning  
Free and clear in the kettles of the roadways:  
Without any other mile markers besides her married blue eyes:  
Now aren't you burning down between the arcades,  
And in the bosom of those absolute mountains:  
Inside that sorority where dye cast cars collect, and from which  
The clouds swim up gurgling like chorus lines of pool girls;  
And now don't you remember we lived here once,  
And we touched ourselves in public bathrooms, outside of  
Which the swings very nearly took us up to god:  
And the early afternoons were full of sweet propositioning, and hopes  
That you would come like divine providence out from the tributaries  
Of the less offensive school yard, as if some demigod had finally  
Let off slaying his father's, and had given you to the both of  
Us, or at least to me; and that was when you could fine arrow heads  
As green as envious coke bottles, and the cenotaphs were still  
Being farmed in the sweet recesses of the early morning see;  
And your eyes were so good and blue that they meant just  
About everything to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything Will Last Forever

New movies come out on Fridays  
And I buy newspapers expectantly,  
But you like they,  
Have awful taste in men, in movies:  
Look at all the jigsaw science I've  
Laid around you like  
An ecstatic truth, or a curse,  
But how easily you move away from  
The borders that seem to spill like  
An overeager humming bird from my throat:  
That this too is too surreal,  
Esoteric and hurt:  
It will not sell or dress up for Parade,  
It will not be seen out strutting with the girls  
In fine silk negligee, the fake sailors  
On the promenade:  
And they will drink root beer floats,  
And the castle will rise like a tortoise in disguise,  
And the sun and the sky and everything  
Will last forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# Everything You Will Ever Be

I drink to airplanes when they fly so low  
They should be barrettes in her hair,  
And S- stands there.  
She's just won the game, but I'm all out of quarters  
And I want to do the same;  
And even tonight the teachers are fully engorged,  
Touching themselves when they'd  
Really want to touch the lord.  
And tonight you look magnificent,  
And you can keep running on for a very long time,  
But the hike really isn't transcendental unless it  
Has a steeper grade;  
My sister Rachelle is coming in two days.  
She has a DMV from Colorado State,  
And I want to look beautiful for her,  
Because she is good proof that I am at least halfway to a  
Genius;  
And I have visions of you, even though I am not well:  
I cannot pilot airplanes.  
I just swing on the swings, S-:  
E-:  
I want to live forever. I am no good otherwise.  
I need a good woman, one or two.  
I want to live forever, I want to rob banks by thinking of you.  
And your beautiful as I imagine you with your Tommy guns  
Up against her pert breasts like babies out of Kalamazoo:  
Do you really read this, sh%t, S-,  
Do you really know how much I think of you:  
All I want is a vision of you, like a Christmas tree in immaculate  
Weather,  
But it is just because you are so beautiful:  
So many guys have wanted you, S-:  
So many guys still want you, and you are married but that just  
Makes my romance more romantic and heavier like the coats  
Of the heavily sated lions.  
Soon they will remember who you are, S-, and they will  
Wake up and eat the hands of whoever is so careless to feed them.  
They are hooligans like you were,  
S-:

Don't you remember how much of a hooligan you  
Were,  
S-:  
How many hearts you've broken or destroyed;  
And I just want to live forever in your divine entrains,  
In you pagan penumbras;  
And it is as if almost any word will suffice for the sacrificial  
Knife,  
The dirty nouns, S-, they are like nymphs,  
S-:  
They don't care: they work by the hour, and your daughter  
Is so utterly beautiful.  
And your husband is beautiful.  
And I just want to be your janitor after your sweet  
Cadaver S-;  
If I could; it is my only knowledge; and I don't know what  
I am doing,  
Or where I've gone; or what flowers grow on these  
Beautiful slopes,  
But they are all I want S-:  
S-, and I love everything you will ever be.

Robert Rorabeck

# Evolution

When men come to live in space  
They will forsake religion.  
Like a two year old  
Refusing to suckle his  
Mother's breast,  
They will learn to breathe  
In the atheistic void  
Realizing they will never reach her,  
For she is still young and  
Forever running away  
From her heart.  
They will have no use  
For modern transportation,  
But will walk around aimlessly  
On foot and be tricked by the sweltering  
Mirages,  
Thirsty nomadic bachelors who  
Fiercely defend their territory,  
The airless acreage  
Between the forest fire  
Of stars;  
So if they come upon a stranger,  
They fight like feather-light pugilists,  
Their lungs starving for air and liquor,  
Not understand how anything  
Could come towards them,  
Even the smallest gravitational mass  
Recreating time's memory in them,  
Her lips and eyes blooming like  
A nebula's newly born solar system.  
Refusing to admit she is near,  
They fight like saber-tooth tigers  
Ending life in the volcanic savannah,  
Tearing away the voice from the  
Breathless air  
To reclaim peace in their space.

Robert Rorabeck

# Evolutionary Friendship

My dog used to be a wolf,  
And I used to be a monkey.  
Now he is my dog,  
And I am a better man.

Robert Rorabeck



## Ewoks & Escargot

An hour past noon,  
Fingers itching from the caffeine,  
Gun in the bottom drawer with the bullets,  
But there isn't going to be a fight.  
Pissed in the high jewel-grass where the  
Bouquet of wildflowers rots,  
F\*cked into an anonymous grave where  
I dropped from the homosexual-yellow  
Apartment; saw her lips mulling,  
The dykes had their fingers in the pool;  
When the moon got out, they'd howl like  
Cats, and it was easy down those collegiate  
Ways, to inebriate and swim;  
She decried me that I should have taken  
Away her buffet of suitors, eyes grazing in  
The well-lit cafeteria,  
But now you can buy my little book in Japan,  
And I had my opportunities, and even more  
Scars, a favorite place to sit in the sun and  
Read well-viewed from the windows of  
Liberal arts, about fateful mountain climbers  
In the cerulean crevices of Everest,  
Infants in full gear and crampons engulfed by  
A subzero womb, the howling of silence;  
The girl from folklore class came up and sat  
By me for several minutes, hoping for a turn,  
That I might teach her mathematics with a full  
Set of fingers, but I only got up to her black nylons  
And the midnight polyester dress she wore:  
I was always afraid to look her dearly in the eyes,  
And she gave out on me and flirted with hombres,  
No greenhorns tacked to books, sweaty ledgers  
Which held my tells: So I became a latchkey and  
Fell through a well of well-shined skulls,  
And they laugh at me, while I mull over a novel  
About a dark skinned dwarf named Milo,  
Who knocked on my door in the student ghetto,  
And said he'd once been a giant, but had made  
The same mistake as me, and moved next door

To a witch who cursed him with her switch,  
So he could no longer deliver pizzas,  
For his feet would not reach the petals, and  
He was ignored by the barmaids and the bimbos;  
Thus there was autumn, and the supermarkets  
Carried gourds and corn stalks,  
But we didn't buy any, but worked the midnight  
Shift and got drunk in the crook of  
That sh\*tty north-central city.

Robert Rorabeck

# Exactly What I Should Not Do

The silent ships proceed through the forsaken  
Shadows of your old neighborhood:  
All the places where we used to make love,  
And even before us, where myself and my aunt would  
Experiment out amidst the corn snakes and the old  
Tomato hampers,  
Under the harvest moon, and the balloons that we would  
Send away with dollar bills taped to their strings  
For the hobos,  
While your mother and father were slipping away:  
While my grandparents were separating like two parts of  
The disenchanting sea,  
And we could both go up to Disney World at separate times,  
But it would do no good to save any of us:  
Your husband was too beautifully drunk to be faithful to you,  
And now he lives like a guest in the house of your children  
And your new boyfriend;  
And we hardly even talk anymore, because we are just  
Related- And it will rain tomorrow, the trucks will come making  
A mess off the peat, at the caribou will fumble,  
And the Mexicans will roll some more dice out amidst the stampedes  
Of the cloven feet;  
But you will not remember me, nor will I remember you,  
Because I do not speak to anyone anymore, though if I have loved  
Anyone, then in our early morning pagan schoolyards that is just  
What I did before I knew exactly what I should not do.

Robert Rorabeck

# Exactly What She Does To Me

Deep at night, somnambulating,  
My scrotum tucks in like a shivering terrapin:  
It feels like an icebox cupped in the long-nailed  
Feeling of a highland banshee;  
And when she kisses me, this dreadfully tattered  
Woman of the far north country,  
It is like I cannot breathe, and so hang from the  
Long shadowed neck of the deep south lynching  
Tree;  
It is like I am that ancestral ash shed from a  
Cigarette's cherry by a snaky teenage truant swinging  
Like a leggy black-nailed serpent along the moony  
Shadows of some ancestral maple tree:  
This is how she places me, an entire colony of greedy  
Ants feeding on a dove's flightless cadaver,  
An airplane falling silently like a stone into the awaiting  
Sea, and I am too lonely to gather, so easily she  
Breaks me like a windmill's blades tasting the salt from  
The windcut sea- She winnows me,  
And every night by that hour of her name she encases me  
In the dark resurrection of her habitual sensory:  
I jog around her for seven miles, like seven times, like a spell  
While the rest of the world drifts off like a poorly crowned  
Paper-ship in a spilling gutter. I can hear her laughter  
Long after her drinking games are over. She doesn't  
Even know that she does it-  
What she does to me, what suicide inspires in me,  
A woman who doesn't know my name, her legs spilling like  
Shaven ways of kneed and opal tributary; and when it is over, and  
I am gone, but an empty space ready for viewing, then she  
Awakens and travels on, filled with the gyrating pinwheels  
Of blissful energy she has consumed of me;  
Her bosom then too like sweet burial mounts topped with  
Sand dollars and those with cherries, just a final allusion of  
Exactly what she does to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Exactly Where She Is

Apples of poison above her  
Auburn head: barrettes in her hair, and airplanes  
Flying low:  
Her lips stung now by jacketed wasps  
And later, in the waves  
Jellyfish:  
She will think then that she can almost  
Swim,  
As she does: against the false lights of the  
Trailer parks and the dorms of sparrows:  
And she will swim so far,  
She will almost make it home,  
The pockets of her slip filling with sand  
Until, finally, she has to open her eyes  
And find out exactly where she is.

Robert Rorabeck

## Examples Of Your Divine

Dancing around the spikenard and  
Their dead rabbits of luck; these American women  
Have dreams, and they are emerging  
From the bummed out trailer parks with their briars  
Of Christmas tree lights: Oh, you young breasted  
Mothers, roller-derby and junk- Oh, you  
Bright toothed lassies, housewives who sleep on  
The roofs and howl, make love to necrophilic  
Conquistadors biting their pieces of eight at your  
Gate: Oh, yeah- And you stewardesses touching down,  
Newly emerging feminists with your pharmaceuticals  
And 14 karat stitches, drink drinks and flying  
Aeroplanes high- Come out in a wealthy parade from  
The crashed pornographies of the Australian Pines,  
Come out right into my childhood drumming heels-  
Take my fireworks and my little sister, for examples of  
Your divine- The mother b\*tch is suckling her litter  
Close to the engorged canal, the kittens are mewling  
Against the rattlesnake in the swell, but its almost time  
To douse your esoteric songs, those things only little  
Boys could know pressed up against his nursery of ululations,  
And climb up onto daddy's roof to shampoo and  
Root beer floats, bottles of liquor and screaming bottle-  
Rockets; and do not worry, for in the morning where the  
Yellow-jacketed buses circulate,  
There will be plenty of time for your junoesque worship,  
And time to run away too, truancies of divine and quiet  
Places out in shady hutches, to give your lips proof  
In the uncanny moments of incredibly beautiful quietude,  
When you are not putting on a show.

Robert Rorabeck

# Except For Yourself

My heart drinks its rum at the movie theatre  
The day after we make love,  
And I look up airplanes through the ceilings,  
The piñatas and the paper fans,  
And I see for a little while that I keep  
Feeling for you,  
A blind man in an empty playground-  
Because you are not here:  
It rains, and I see your sisters at the supermarket;  
It is like a dream that I've been trying  
To tell myself is still alive-  
Trying to buy something beautiful even though  
All of the shelves are empty,  
And I will have to arise another Lazarus  
And teach school tomorrow with a broken nose-  
Knowing that my art is bankrupt;  
It is not even sugarcane art, and you don't  
Deserve it- and my virginsitas stare with open  
Eyes at my barren pain, after the festivals  
You sougled inside my chest have packed up  
And trunked all of their singing butterflies;  
And you keep your roses in your gardens  
With your hearts and queens,  
And no one paints them for you except for yourself.

Robert Rorabeck

# Execution Of Our Loneliness

Come and crawl into me,  
Loneliness,  
You are mine  
And I wear you like a medal  
Won for a war I am still fighting—  
When the night is so deep  
I feel like I will drown, without  
Her flesh to cling to, a soundless well—  
Without her warm breath on my skin  
To wake me up before I sleepwalk off the cliff....  
She turns away from me every night  
Wondering where I am;  
She doesn't realize that I am not so far away—  
If she could only look across the sun,  
She would see me sleeping like a dead soldier  
On a bed of dripping gladiolas in her echoing valleys.  
Even halfway across the country,  
All it takes is a leap of faith and a plane ticket,  
And in two hours she will be the arbiter of me peace,  
The tranquility in my arms,  
Conspirators snuggling under the covers,  
Cartographers of the continents of our bodies,  
Mapping out and laying claim to our country's  
Loving-making—  
The name of our new royalty  
Spoken in whispers between our lips,  
The execution of our loneliness....

Robert Rorabeck



# Exhausted Hood

Come now you contagious voodoo sound,  
I've been fluctuating around the semi-fulvous  
Of librarians:  
When I get too drunk, I wear the old baseball cap  
Of my ancestors,  
I make fun of published poets,  
I have to laugh:  
My scars look glorious, glorious  
And I'm bubbling up above ground; it's the shoots  
For the best tourism,  
Sea-jaded terrapins farting their eggs on  
High-school aqueducts, and  
Black eye-linered bitches smoking their flumes  
If you couldn't tell this is where we  
Once butchered our knives in our lunch rooms:  
And I'm high on highly combustible fumes:  
Dancing, dancing repeatedly across the concrete  
Atolls that I spume:  
I am beautiful, beautiful And lonely at last:  
Oh, sommelier, you are such a wicked blast,  
And I'm feeling beautiful caracoling under your lips,  
So beautiful I could almost die scrimshawed like this-  
And Michelle, I am no longer bleeding in my car,  
Michelle- you who are iron pyrite,  
Who are not beautiful, who could just about die  
To the centipede of vampires- The movie is over,  
The dance is over,  
And I am looking beautiful to the birds that are hungry-  
I am looking almost edible to the cheerleaders-  
Yeah, I'm looking real good in my black cape and  
Hood-  
Though I'm getting kind of chilly because of the alcohol  
That should,  
But in the first time since the dinosaurs I enjoy looking  
At myself, and I love sommeliers with eye-liners and mirrors  
Tilted toward themselves;  
And I love Sharon, as any good boy should- and the  
Lawn is mowed and the c%nt is good;  
And I love Sharon, Sharon as any good boy should,

And the lawn is mowed and we are  
In the dream of the road; but I'm not sure how  
I should spell it, under the mountains with a flat tire,  
To the streams of tourists and storms coming in,  
And I am no longer sure if I love Sharon,  
Or if this is any good,  
Or if I should continue breathing with the steam  
Hyperventilating under my exhausted,  
Exhausted hood.

Robert Rorabeck

# Exhibition

Constant rain provides the atmosphere  
Where even lions cry,  
Dripping on the iron bars of their capture,  
Their muzzles also wet from their domesticated  
Kills,  
Just as the lonely women stare out from their  
Kitchens in the winnowing dusk of green landfills:  
See that the moon has affixed to the obscurity  
Of the storm, and their father isn't home  
To light the candle,  
Though their children are seemingly warmly glued  
To talk shows precluding their primetime t.v.,  
And out in the yard the pine trees shiver as they  
Are frisked by the drippy wind,  
And unfortunately seeded in the places they might  
Not wish to bed,  
Extending the woods into the driveways of  
Special handles;  
The rain slicks the doors of automobiles,  
The tourist flesh, the warm transportation now killed,  
For their husbands are not at home,  
But out searching for gold under the flooded hills  
Until they become the barons of this menagerie,  
And cannot go home anymore because it is no longer worth  
It, just as the thunder exonerates the lion's roar,  
For fear of truer tears in the places of their false preservation.

Robert Rorabeck

## Exhibits Too Far Beneath

Off to a party of Ferris wheels, while the little girls—  
Spendthrifts—are all gathering their stuffs:  
When they get done,  
Bloody-nosed—they look up the slope to the atmosphere  
Of the waterfall—  
The waterfall is seeming to come down in  
Some kind of pieta for them—  
Maybe it is almost Christmas—I wonder what has been  
Happening, while, all of this time they  
Metamorphosed—  
Yes, they did—until they became the grandeur of  
An astonishing zoo populated by girls all of  
One of a kind—  
Fed by the offshoots of the nipples of the mountains—  
Like carnivals of weathervanes spitting chewed up  
Confections and candied apples—  
To feed her in the exhibits too far beneath all she  
Ever knew.

Robert Rorabeck

## Exhibits Too Far Beneath'

Off to a party of Ferris wheels, while the little girls—  
Spendthrifts—are all gathering their stuffs:  
When they get done,  
Bloody-nosed—they look up the slope to the atmosphere  
Of the waterfall—  
The waterfall is seeming to come down in  
Some kind of pieta for them—  
Maybe it is almost Christmas—I wonder what has been  
Happening, while, all of this time they  
Metamorphosed—  
Yes, they did—until they became the grandeur of  
An astonishing zoo populated by girls all of  
One of a kind—  
Fed by the offshoots of the nipples of the mountains—  
Like carnivals of weathervanes spitting chewed up  
Confections and candied apples—  
To feed her in the exhibits too far beneath all she  
Ever knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# Existence

If they felt like making love, they made love  
And that is how they existed,  
Even if neither their existence nor their love was real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Expectations Of Metamorphosis In Insectoid Degrees

How do you like yourself now that  
They've named you the new class ornithologist?  
You keep your lucky cricket next to you  
To get advise so that they don't turn you back  
Into what you were before, that thing of wood  
Who slept in my bed- I know all about that,  
And the tricks you pulled, the common average day  
Tricks with simple geometries: I look you up  
When I'm feeling lonely, too lonely to carpool,  
And the people there, the unwavering faces of all  
The gems of high school, all the old and unacquainted  
Revelries, the too hard crushes, the mushy encores,  
The tricks and the quarter sticks of dynamite lit  
Off in the ruddy court just before spring time: Now  
Not mostly bachelors and maidens, but crackerjack  
Attorneys, air force lieutenants, housewives of umpteenth  
Degree: All alike in lettered rows of Christian names old  
And new and spotless like gravestones just placed in  
The green lawns beside the lonely cypress, and the  
Carport: abracadabra, spoken by the race, and there you  
Fall alone smack-dab on your face, and my name too,  
And her name, and others I don't remember who the hell  
They are, some girls who look too pretty, some guys  
In formal snide: All of us are doing so well at our stations,  
And we are looking at you, looking to you, and wondering  
Where are your collections of psocids, arachnids, tarantulas,  
Butterflies, and moths, for shouldn't they be tacked above  
Your head like diplomas with the red ants, the subtle metamorphosis soon  
Stymied by formaldehyde- In those cleanly echoing hallways  
I so seldom attended, though I've probably written more cues  
Than anyone in the history of that school, my record is  
A lonely stain, a glacial pool, a single set of boot heels clicking  
Down the hall, but today, my dear, we have something new,  
For we are all here in some sort of science looking at you,  
Waiting to see if you have truly changed in what we expected  
You to....

Robert Rorabeck

# Expecting And Describing That Only She Can Be Real

How to have been away out through the suburbia  
Our legs the pistons for a pantheistic heart  
Out on the hunt, pattering for muses, proposition  
The moon for them to love us-  
Hating and denying its stolen light when she does  
Not love us;  
And try to recreate our jaunts in the middle of broken  
Number school days- defying the flaccidity of  
The less than stellar rhododendrons haplessly placed  
By the teacher's desk by her enamorous pet;  
And I didn't even realize then, but if I could I would  
Have just stolen out under the quite even habitat of her  
Desk, while she was weeping for her father,  
While her unworthy boyfriends were falling away like  
Uneven petals in a game of love;  
And I could just close my eyes and listening to the ringing  
Of her chapbook jewelries across the graffiti's  
Enamored beneath the swollen elbows of her rich pane:  
To be like a cenotaph beneath her, this Sharon or muse,  
The hallways to us like ancient sea caves made perfect by  
A worrisome god,  
Echoing and sieving out the sounds of that maudlin beauty,  
Knowing that she is everything priceless,  
Expecting and describing that only she can be real.

Robert Rorabeck



# Expensive Skeletons

Expensive skeletons

Prance at the fair; their bones  
Are tasseled with ribbons of air,

And the flute players play notes from  
Their yoked eye-sockets out their dazzling muzzles,

And they canter in long ovals all a hustle,

Amorous scientists stand at their markers,  
Admiring their glistening absence of muscle,

And the fine ladies up in the lees,  
Whose hats are an expensive nest of taxidermed chickadees,

Cry out for the glorious good-byes,  
With tickets in their hands, and hands on their thighs,

As all around them, like a show of cadavers,  
The morbid gentlemen's rimy ponies whiny and slather,

Those expensive skeletons  
Prance at the fair, and their bones  
Are tasseled with ribbons of air....

Robert Rorabeck

# Exploding Galaxy On Shaven And Silky Legs

Words come like on dates after careless movies,  
Or after rum: when no-one is giving a thought to the  
Crèche of waves, but are hung over from the lap dances  
She brought out of the tin flask like a horn for plastic  
Flowers: she dances half naked and veiled before the screen,  
And then he brought out her tits like fat nickels and  
We went out for ice-cream: motionless wars in her beauty,  
And the watermarks over her tears like the osmosis of far  
Away plant life yet proven, but studied in the carefully  
Monitored habitats of her tears sans gravity: I haven't kissed  
A woman in half a decade, and that is fact, but I still crush  
On romantic love, the language pressed like attended insects  
Between two teenage bodies, or anybody: As out from here,  
Like a long plane were thousands of rabbits are raised for dinners  
In exorbitant countries, families live well polished in gaited  
Communities: I might stroll up and down those buffed sidewalks,  
And sleep like a privileged hobo tramped from San Francisco  
In the shady architectures of their landscaping, haloed by a palmetto:  
There she dances for me yet in the lackadaisical séances of mid-afternoon  
Clouds, or, if not, who cares: She was French and tramped away  
After two weeks, and her tongue touched the roof of the mouth  
Of reptilian men who seeped through her midnighted window without  
Legs: Maybe I loved her, and drank her wishing well: maybe I am  
Thirsty for that taste again, but I cannot remember her name, or the  
Theory of how she expanded away like an exploding galaxy on  
Shaven and silky legs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Explore

I'm trying to go to sleep; but I'm harrowed:  
I think your p\*ssy is ethereal-  
It really is a candle flame, and you have red  
Hair:  
And if I cut my ear off, and painted you  
Sunflowers; I could lay you across these  
Springs and have it; I could make you sing out,  
And smell your breath, and go about the  
Oldest definitions in the book without really  
Thinking about it, just like two old professors  
Studying their old English:  
And if this is really a song, it goes silently like  
A poor child drowned in the ice-cold river;  
And if this is a psalm, it starts by speaking of  
Your two red legs opening, diving the river,  
Giving conjunctions: and contours,  
And I haven't really gotten to it, what I really  
Meant to say about your p\$ssy; about that  
Spot, Tom and Rebecca exploring:  
There should really be a philosophy meant to  
Expound it, and a profession just set up to enjoy it:  
And maybe there is, a carnival and a circus;  
While I'm standing on the cliff surrounded by  
Caracoles and the strange young purposes of man:  
And you are really the velvet bull's eye I was meant to  
Hew for, to perfect a cure for: And thus I go flying  
With my eyes closed to dream about you, to strip  
And peel for, and to slip behind the secretive curtains  
Of those wet-walled cliffs who lay down crying for  
Me to explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Extraordinary Machine

Preparations for warmth by wood:  
There she is in the little cabin,  
Smiling I suppose,  
But her back is turned-  
The gestalt of the cold woods  
Come into sleep on the floor:  
Molecular spindles strung out  
And snoring,  
A female poet from another planet,  
A fine aberration-  
Powder burns on her hands:  
She writes words by firing guns:  
Poof bang!  
The natives run,  
Though soon she captures their worship-  
Tentatively, I step a little creepy step,  
Which leads to another:  
I want to make love to her,  
As I can see the powdery slopes  
Her breast mounds rising,  
The areolas stretching like inflating balloons:  
The suckle and nip of wolves,  
Tiny worlds on each nipple not known to me:  
I want to be hired  
To pluck and suckle them like grapes,  
To pick the spilt food off the floor  
And eat every crumb;  
But what gifts do I have to offer up:  
My unpublished hands are too juvenile  
To buy her charity,  
My face too careworn from mother-worship,  
And if I proceed across the border,  
The Martians will take away all I know,  
And hang me out before her ancestry  
Like a distraught poltergeist verging on Messiah;  
This is what I should do,  
But stand there watching the long shadows  
In a vanguard of flickering foreplay  
Across her pinkish napes,

Her shoulder blades the careless knives  
Bared priceless in the jumping lights.

Robert Rorabeck

# Extremities Of Love

If you saw me before baseball,  
Would you hold my hand, and would you say that  
We could now be  
Friends, before all of this hibiscus, or the weathered  
Ways home  
Just for virgins toward their grandmothers:  
As this is just as song,  
Or a broken place: with its mouth filled with  
Echoing and  
Broken glass,  
As the fireworks at first burned the grass  
With their over expensive love that I was really fond  
Of: but then the holiday was over with  
And lost amidst the un glorified placed where  
Most of us tend to live:  
Like vampires, like werewolves, in those  
Eternal carnivals that forever give and give-  
As we take our place amidst the motions of the  
Killers and their husbands- as the lotus's  
Stick around the palmettos of the yard: and the orange  
Groves tend to go on forever,  
And the beasts yawn in the sunlight towards their  
Extremities of love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Eyes Of Raccoons

Eyes of raccoons in the darkness:

I have spotted caracoles of nocturnal eyes

Hung over like narcoleptic dreams in the darkness,

While I have thought of you,

Pushing your trams and your coffins for your

Different gods,

For your young bulls that come off like different

Fireworks, who pinwheel clockwise or reverse

For the different librarians and

The ways you love them:

Like I have loved you over the hijinx of many expansive

Canals:

That I have love you this way, leaping over the burning

Sugarcane of smoldering black men relocated from

The Caribbean;

Bighting my lip, hoping that my gun powder might be added

To the green copper cannons,

But all I can wish for is to hear your laughter rolling through

The smoldering darkness again:

Erin, you never said you loved me- you never said,

Because you'd rather have gone to bed with so many, many

Men:

Sailor men and tattooed rimbaudian gentlemen, kangaroos:

Erin, how dare you- you carouse,

And that is why I am kicking this caboose over the scars again,

Trying to get high again,

Back in the stars again, swinging my throbbing wet

Red bat again while the traffic moves, Erin-

For anyone- anyone but you....

Robert Rorabeck

## F. Scott Fitzgerald

Meretricious beauty—the definition of my very own  
Muse struggling toward higher art—  
The same way that F. Scott Fitzgerald loved his wife:  
For no reason except for her chassis  
For a very long time, and she was unfaith to him  
With a fighter pilot—  
As he looked out to the sea—and drank—and drank—  
Imagining what was abandoned there,  
But it was unfathomable,  
So he wrote *The Great Gatsby*—separating himself  
Into two parts—  
For recollection and catharsis—and drank and drank,  
While his very own wife went insane  
And burned up in a fire after he had died from a heart  
Attack—  
But I still tried to teach him the very summer of  
My June—Not really understanding him,  
But appreciating his alcoholism—  
Like a goldfish won on a Ferris wheel swimming  
In a windowsill that overflowed with all of his most  
Insensible lights.

Robert Rorabeck



# Faberge Tears

Child in your arms: grown man in your arms,  
Mother—made of topaz  
And living outside of a church in  
New Mexico—  
Where they don't sell fireworks anymore—  
I don't even know if you are really there,  
But I know you exist just as much as I know  
That the Best Western  
And the Safeway exist—down slope from  
Eagle's Nest where my father used to  
Set up tents and shacks and sell and  
Sell fireworks:  
But you are also a place in my memory,  
Delivering from the faith of girls who  
Should have been my muses—  
And I can hear the stream running beneath  
The form of your dying son:  
But put him in his crypt and he shall arise  
And live forever—making nests of Ferris  
Wheels—sleeping nude  
And warm: do not cry mother,  
For your son is dying—and in your arms,  
His warmth escapes like the sun does over  
Arizona—  
But he is more real than that: the children  
Will come and the go to high school  
Tomorrow—  
The stores will get busy—the beautiful fares  
Will pack up and go to the next town,  
Molting all of their Faberge lights in the  
Process:  
But your son who was already dying,  
He has already arisen  
And he will be kissing away the tears from your  
Cheek tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

## Fabulous Selection

I just want to sit beneath your chair  
And listen to your beautiful farts  
Out in all that pinstriped spring;  
I'd place your school desk underneath a tree  
Where pythons and blue jays live;  
The biggest thing out in the middle of Africa  
And admire you in our own winsome country;  
I'd tie a swing for you daughter and keep her  
Occupied while I curled up beneath you  
Like a cat exhausted from hunting turkey for  
You on thanksgiving; knotted in the grasses with  
The Easter eggs, your eyes catching most of the light-  
Do you realize that we are pin wheeling on the  
Edge of the universe,  
And you are the most beautiful thing I have ever seen?

Robert Rorabeck

# Fade

Only in rhymes  
And silence then.  
Empty hallways,  
Ghost sitting inside cars  
As it rains,  
Something blue on the swings  
In the northern park.  
Trees weep beneath  
Slate gray sky  
And high heels down the lonely  
Walk:  
Her eyes observing the prairie  
And she is very young,  
There is so much sunlight  
In the emptiness,  
An empty theatre  
Performs,  
The thespian's tongue  
And the mountains  
And their young,  
The city is a stranger,  
She keeps her lights on  
All night,  
She makes love,  
Unidentified  
She is here  
In the shadows touching me,  
But I was wrong,  
I must go away  
The dogs are crying,  
She doesn't know,  
Trusting her eyes,  
I was another man,  
A mirage-  
My heart is on  
The night table  
For the morning,  
But I have disappeared.



## Faded Page

Now with the greater light  
Out  
Gallop the underbelly  
I cannot see the names  
Of the things  
God chose to cage me  
With in this world's  
lonely exhibit;  
With his light failing  
Slink forth the scavengers,  
The tinkers,  
The half-blown men  
Who take tickets to ride  
The girations  
I keep alone;  
When the palate drips  
Obliquely where  
The mountains bleed,  
And the clouds drape like  
The inky tentacles of  
An octopus  
And night's sea blinds  
Our eyes  
Like an owner  
Trying to put a  
Skittish horse in a trailer;  
There I come,  
Like a slinking skunk,  
Like an industrious spider,  
Like a scavenging racoon,  
And put down the  
Restless things only I can  
See inside me  
In oscillating marvels  
On this faded page.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fading In The Spanish Sky

Under the buffalo road,  
Through the windy tunnels in Spain,  
We lost ourselves and fell in love:  
She had eyes lacquered with marriage,  
And her paintings sold in Japan;  
In Catalan, walking down from  
Her second house, she showed me  
Where Salvador Dali was born  
Upside down from a tree of clocks  
And he smiled at us before we walked away:  
Then he was just a smile,  
As the Spanish Armada watched  
Jesus baptize Generalissimo Franco  
In a sea of Neapolitan ice-cream,  
Before they set out for England  
In the fated storms that would sink the empire;  
While we drank sangria in the bay  
Where the wind tore the sash from  
The lady in the rocks,  
And the Roman ghosts marched through  
The dry orange groves,  
And spoke as the wind through the  
Green leaves cradling the fruit  
Of an ancient womb.  
Now, nothing is as it was before,  
For we lost her grandfather's guitar  
On a train that crossed the border  
Into France on Christmas Day,  
With nothing to do but to kiss in  
The empty streets, and wait for the sun  
To sanctify the clouds, as dawn  
Married the world;  
Now all of this has disappeared,  
And she is a grandmother hanging  
Her memories in a show in Madrid,  
And the time passes slowly like the  
Wind off the cliffs,  
Where all the old ghosts gather like  
The torn curtains rippling on the battlements,

Above the town where the virgins are all engaged,  
And the little boys, in their  
Summer trancies, don't even see,  
As they light off the stolen fireworks,  
The beautiful things leaping in the sky,  
Things that are for their brilliant seconds,  
Fading in the sky,  
And then no more.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fading Rainbows

Its so hard to begin with  
The pronoun that could be  
A dog,  
A ba\$tard,  
A son while I  
Read my books and weep,  
Jogging in my basement  
While the movies run:  
I am ready to move out near the  
Muddy threads,  
Ready to audition for an  
Original voice,  
The bachelor's blood,  
My transcendental imaginations:  
So, even without liquor,  
I think that this is good,  
And should be read and tattooed  
Upon her body's pink chariot  
While she holds her breath and watches;  
And I even think that now her eyes  
Are expecting this,  
And now reading it her lips  
Curl pleasantly redacted like roses drinking,  
Even though it is only average;  
And some lions maim the brave Christians,  
And afterwards the flies hover around the  
Windows, the voyeuristic loading bays and docks,  
Tax collectors for the great American pies,  
Coagulating,  
And the fading rainbows leap washed out  
Into the tan dumpsters,  
Little children ardently riding tricycles which  
Squeal and grate each time with rust,  
The oaks clinging overhead as they try and  
Hide those scars- In fact,  
They are also weeping.

Robert Rorabeck



# Fail To Mention

Bragging of the silence,  
The emptiness after the last of the echoes  
Of really great music  
Have gone away, and stepped off the buses;  
And I watch two brothers jerking  
Each other off,  
And have to be disappointed that it is only  
Figuratively-  
And I read Borges, and want to kill myself,  
Because I am not Borges:  
I am just doing this- Maybe I a betting for  
Divine Providences at the races,  
Hoping that my tongue will be loose and  
Skip well through the mud of  
My liquors:  
Doing this to quench the tears that I am not  
More,  
That there is another, much blacker man right  
Now fulfilling the swing-set  
I want to get on,  
Just as my dreams of her will undoubtedly for always  
Go unfulfilled,  
And it is a slick circuit, and a turning wheel,  
And the potter's clay is all ghosts,  
And I am the irony of the opposing pre-Socratics,  
Turning all at once into something that should  
Never be repeated,  
Getting nowhere all the time,  
As the rivers flow in sheets of eyes where here eyes turn  
Towards so banally,  
And yet fierce, when her husband is away  
Doing very important things I should not fail to  
Mention.

Robert Rorabeck

# Failing Tonight's Class

I could buy a house now, almost,  
And direct it over your grave- and mute you as silently  
As anything so beautifully failed into the intricacies of such  
A spacious earth.

And even now only a 100 hours after the nappy haired  
President has laid down in ju-ju for the first time in the querulously  
Painted halls who had previously mastered his grandfathers,  
They are salaciously criticizing his first decisions,  
Beginning the swift matriculation of his exploding-head suicide:

Even now, though, I am too impressed by my infatuations  
With the voluptuously breasted bartender to give a damn about his  
Midnight; In fact, is what I mean is I am too drunk to be writing poetry,  
And then what I do conscribe is too wordy to be lauded by liberal professors  
Who are recognized for their criticism;

Right now I might be yet too scarred to give a damn,  
But I am working as steadily limbed as a Roosevelt towards my America's  
Well0built tomorrows to give a damn about grammatical errors;  
Dreamily, I am still skipping seventh period history, and drinking  
Golden rum from Bodicelli's half a clam to give a damn about  
What I meant to say previously;

Plathe's Ariel is laudably fantastic, and I am leaping for it  
The fable of the red haired fox with his grapes; when I am and so  
Many others on their mortal fleet shall never reach it; Still,  
I don't care- I scratch at flees- Six years ago I played Mrs. Pac-Man to  
The left of her, the yet single barmaid good enough to be a flight attendant  
In high heels I want to come into:

I just finished fourteen pages today, living a life in a catacomb I've  
Long since died into and thrown upon the oleander bouquets of another  
Flower I am too drunk to recall the proper name of which I mean:  
She lays down tonight in his He-Man bed, to drunk to also to be  
With any other cartoon; but it is good enough,  
Even as my scarred visage is being considered by two NY literary agents:

I forgive it all and will even give it time to nurture:

I didn't vote for him, but have enough consideration to offer  
The quaff of water from the palms of my immortal occult:  
When they have given him enough time, there will be enough werewolves

Between he and his daughters to give reason to regret:  
For now there is only history and the wide open deck of aircraft  
Carrier on a secret mission, and her blonde hair flowing salty  
And altruistically official.

Robert Rorabeck

# Failing You In The Mortal Night

If you let me love your shadow,  
I will follow you in and out of stores, my tongue  
Never touching anything but your souls:  
And I am failing, failing like a kite with not  
Too much wind- Doing something that is Anti-social,  
Not bothering hunting out the eggs for Easter,  
Or Passover,  
Not having any religion which isn't pentagrammed-  
I can smell my rum,  
And you eyes all the way from the racecourses,  
From the glacial glades where no one mows your yards  
Because they cannot get that high;  
And if you can hear my screaming, do not care,  
Know that it is just a dusky dream- something a poor  
Boy does because he doesn't have tack for his horse,  
But his flock is alright-  
He's just upset because he's outgrown his mother  
And her bed- That he's lost all his money betting on a girl  
That has no business loving him- who shows to her  
Every night his two unshelled wrists, and gets no reply  
Except when there is a fire under her skirts,  
And that happens as much as the good guy wins;  
And now let there be silence except for the sparse code of  
Bare canopies on power lines over your house  
Waiting until there comes the paper snowflakes, the thunder  
Of rolled cannonballs and the other theatrics of this  
Winter's burlesque resort- Every so often the skiers slosh  
Through the snow and you look up,  
Hoping like me that they will enter, but unlike me,  
Who looks for milky friendship, you the Madonna with the  
Rich child already suckling,  
Only needs them to buy the spirits they entered for  
And then to leave by the same way they came in.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fail-Safe

It is impossible for you to fail, but you have already  
Begun- Your family is on a honeymoon,  
As swift as you the rivers run:  
All your exercise is for the tourism of paddle-boats;  
They think you are infinitely beautiful,  
But they don't want to have to pay for anything that is  
Beautiful  
If it can be stolen away, and used to populate their  
Keyholes and garages;  
And I have been above them; I have been at the top of  
A flag-pole,  
And watched the weathers roll in to cover you:  
They were always watching you, as I was watching them,  
And saw you reflected as if through the perfect somnambulance  
Of a bath;  
Or I am just lying, and I still live with my parents,  
But now our home has wheels and there are no dogs.  
The trees still lead down to the canal, and if I were to ever  
Step across I am sure I would not end up in the trailer park  
Which seems to be there,  
But underneath the lotus flowers they are cutting for your  
Hair;  
And you are in your store so fair with the foot traffic coming in,  
The middle-class families of gypsies. I know they will buy everything,  
Because the weathers are like your guardian angels,  
Burning rubber off the lips of mountains;  
And they are just as sure as I am that you can never fail.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fairytales That Cannot Be Counted Upon

Lapses in the rituals of her eyes,  
And other things that don't provide anymore  
Promises for salvation;  
The churches are all tucked in underneath the  
Melting snows:  
The windmills chew themselves,  
And the deltas divide like the winnows of a  
Fan,  
Each prong pollinated by each one of her  
Mermaids-  
The fish looking grimly up to the brotherhood  
Of her otters,  
And it all swims for awhile back and forth,  
Telling to itself fairytales that cannot be counted upon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Faith In Her Ever Effluvious Dress

Headless and naked,  
The dandelions have begun to blow  
Their spores.  
No longer virginal, they will become  
All but indescribable come winter,  
And atheists will say that now they  
Are a myth, and pull the lever of  
The machine, to see what prizes fall  
Out from the golden ring of her science;  
But like pricks from nervy spines,  
Or the cold shock of the invaded lake,  
I should not shake off how I imagined to see  
Rows of devout soldiers queuing like ants up  
To her phototropic stems,  
And in the cavalcade of ceremonial suicides,  
Mounted her like toddlers climbing up atop  
The four-post bed where they were conceived  
In the sun-tossed basin,  
And floating away on the gilled parachutes,  
Like ghostly bouquets tossed over her shoulder  
At the reception as the wind blows;  
These then are their secret missions, the  
Diminutive espionage of a vanished spring,  
They shrink into the lips of waves and join the  
City-dwellers in atoms of water dispelled along  
The foamy caesuras and crests, measuring  
Only beside the dolphin's fins,  
Metropolises of unspoken numbers which twirl  
In the chaotic universe without centripetal ellipses;  
These I know, from faith in her ever effluvious  
Dress.

Robert Rorabeck

# Faithful And Beloved Pets

My houses look like they have survived the fall of  
Their bust  
To land on the wicked witches of their ruby toed trust;  
And now I am out of liquor,  
And the parks glide like silent, water-killed rainbows  
Through the darks of all this metropolis:  
This is how it is going every night without candles.  
And somewhere close Diana is sleeping- and further  
Away you are sleeping;  
And up in the mountains Sharon suckles her child while  
Her husband congratulates himself with farts of jokes;  
And I am doing this like a rodeo clown, suspecting that  
Kelly has it in for some other man,  
But all the time either wanting you or something else,  
While my poems die like billfolds, like forlorn trusts;  
And yet there are places yet perceived underneath the overpasses;  
There are green copper cannons that I can still trust;  
And the sea is just off a pace; and I almost touched her today;  
And later on I touched myself and I am gray:  
And I am a story book you will never read, Erin. How beautiful  
You are physically to believe in nothing,  
And I wish to speak to you again, but I hate you; and you are  
Like a dangerous and venal flower being sniffed by the nostrils of  
An extremely disastrous crocodile, E- And I want to love you,  
But you are a movie that has sold out in a theatre full of brown faced  
Though innocuous men, like something I have failed but  
Can never understand; so keep to the contagion of your camps  
And those things that you can enjoy,  
Because I really want for you to love something, to prove myself wrong;  
To prove I am an amputee in my failed art, Erin:  
That I don't or should not exist, and the graveyard is yet blooming,  
And your lips are yet beautiful and even now bending down  
To enjoy the snout of your faithful and beloved pets.

Robert Rorabeck



# Faithful Mountains

Maybe the mountains curl around  
The haunts of your neighborhood,  
And you awaken in the strange contracts  
Of the scientists perfecting hope-  
The entire forest is expectant, seems to be  
Pregnant with the thoughts of your senses;  
And all the houses are made from  
Those dead ancestors who used to celebrate  
The wind and figured the airplanes  
As the higher hopes of god.  
Each snowflake falls for you, Is  
Attracted to you like faithful metal,  
Curls and whispers around your cooing daughter  
Like faeries,  
And you don't have to wonder, tucking her in  
What her first word will be,  
Because it is certain to be as beautiful as your  
Own language blessing that sky that curls up  
Against your faithful mountains everyday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Faithfully Home

Trees have been growing  
Up beside the streets- and the Indian reservation:  
Navajos get drunk with dogs and  
Fleas-  
They fall amidst the trees, which sometimes  
Collapse upon each others shoulders,  
Like consorting friends-  
Twins that multiply all through out the green  
Sun showers in the valley:  
They copulate up one side the mountain and  
Down the other-  
And they fill those spaces with a fraternity of  
Wilderness:  
And we sometimes walk through their  
Crowds with our dogs,  
Find our way sometimes, and losing it others-  
And the roads twist like ribbons in her hair-  
Green monument-  
Like the first goddess of the earth-  
Sometimes they say she is beautiful, as she spits  
Out cobras and badgers  
And wolverines-  
And the rivers run down from the lakes of her  
Eyes,  
And the evergreen forest never loses her  
Complexion,  
Though the Indians never sing anymore-  
But they get drunk and dance  
Just as quietly as ancestors lost forever in her  
Bosom-  
As the sunlight lays trapped in her pools and  
Estuaries,  
And daydreams with crustaceans underneath  
Her canopy,  
Painting the fibers of arachnids with their  
Iridescent pools of daylight,  
Until all of her beauty disappears in the blindness  
Of her night,  
And the Indians become happily lost,

And the dogs follow us faithfully home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Faithless Home

I can't go back home-  
My father is waiting to tell me what  
I'm worth:  
The sun is setting, watercolor on the  
Sullen earth:  
I am worth one racing horse,  
And I am scarred; I can work like a dog,  
But what about my balls to be entrepreneurial?  
And I just want to write a poem,  
One poem that shouldn't burn:  
An irrefutable, beautiful term that should  
Banish any other words for how you've  
Perceived the city's world:  
Everything you had to say like a painful joke:  
I want to roll up and smoke every green wave,  
Every misplaced love:  
I want a poem to be beautiful, my epitaph into  
The vulgarities who multiplexed ascend down  
From this drooling tip:  
This end, but here is what I've had to say for it,  
Like bricks in the mausoleum,  
And here the people are, professional tourisms,  
Taking their cars and lovers  
To get washed and manicured.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fall In Love With The Great Abstainer

How to break this form- Fall in love with the  
Great abstainer, two horns; ride the riverr too tough  
To cross, pillow fight angels:  
I still want to skip school, receive my degree from the  
Greenwood,  
Procure the golden bough, become some king before  
The next knife fight,  
But I am blowing revelries to a dead regiment,  
The seashell cavalry trundles around the hips of burying  
Children,  
Average in the sand out of hotel rooms; mothers tanning  
Their souls back in the suns shadows,  
High school heirlooms, drunken goddesses who lost their  
Bloom,  
Rich and muggy- Should have gone to Harvard  
Trailer-park; now the pay check is nothing but the next  
Rum- car payment: Girls on the boulevard rollerskate,  
Ice-cream, lick their rings around tourism's runny; it doesn't  
Pay for it. The entire park is in need of a graveyard; and  
What have I done.

Another name for Ireland, an older name,  
Was Erin, or maybe she was their capital, or their king:  
I can't resist misspelling it the misdone deeds of the young;  
The more superstitious religious have to kill their king;  
And I've forgotten how to unbutton exegesis, marble  
Fawns run broken into yards; Trojan horses for spare preschool  
Children- Spartans spar with the agoraphobia of a broken  
Heart, mistrusting the bloodsplatter of gods who were off  
To work, preoccupied with another alphabet;  
And all around the brightly falsely, the sharpening cart is full:  
Sky high- Read books all summer, and put them done,  
Feeling up the produce, look around:  
But you didn't go to Ivy League: You are with me here  
In the dirt: Listen to them crocodile's weeping,  
Are kids are kicking in the soccer field, good boys; but  
Where are the waves- waves anyway,  
We're almost done unbuttoning.



# Falling Away From Our Earth

About those sad things which rise up and fall  
Perpetually to and from this earth,  
God sends the rains in a sideways motion  
The gray spoonfuls he feeds those empirical children,  
The proof of his courtship with the world.  
He does such gardening by a gentle light—  
See now, he takes her by the waist and drags her  
About the fading dance floor; Drunkenly,  
Around and around as if he is having fun. She  
Swoons in full seasons for him, so her clothes fall off  
Like waves leaving the shoreline of her knees and thighs  
And she births in her great natures of orphaned children  
Which roll forth upon the earth in migrating extinctions.  
For, he's already gone away, leaving his cadmium residues  
Like lost soldiers calling blasphemies from the caves  
Where the Holy Virgin is in Pieta with her stillborn son—  
Listen now, through those falling rains,  
And you may hear again the sounds of his footsteps falling,  
Falling away from our earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Falling Down

It feels okay like this—to know that we are  
Going nowhere while the cities built up like  
Permanent playgrounds  
Around us, while she didn't know if she loved us—  
But it took her awhile, so she never forgave us—  
The gravity like the sun occupying us on these  
Rides, the four ways to find her, groping with our  
Loins, whilst the seniors were graduating,  
And my newborn son in his castanet was looking  
Up the streams of heavens, hoping that it would  
Be god who was falling down.

Robert Rorabeck



## Falling In Love With Foxes

Cool as the road is going, goes I,  
Underneath the open unabashed day gone sky:  
Full of new reposes and places off to the side  
To rest and lay easy, and with arms wide open glide:  
Receptive to the two lips of wind,  
Following the marks of the weathervanes:  
Going forth and back again,  
Reticulating to the uneasy senses and maybe right over  
Holidays of football games and entire student bodies without their  
Senses:  
Maybe it is I am saying just the things that have no need for saying,  
That have already been said and so now in the grass are laying;  
But I am still gladdened for these sorry gifts,  
These back and forths a back agains, these crisscrosses  
Over her heart or some other vital organ, these leeward intersections  
To fairytales unspoken:  
These gentle crosses also to those previously mentioned fables  
Where housewives truly can do falling in love with foxes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Falling In Love With Yesterday's Light

Mother,  
I want another cigarette.  
I come into your room  
When you are not looking,  
And when you are asleep  
And worship you using the  
Matchbox cars  
And paper airplanes I still  
Remember.  
I keep an eye out for the cops  
When it rains-  
I watch the purple ants biting  
Your tits-  
The traffic still continues  
On for miles leaking and  
Histrionic from cities I've  
Never been- mother,  
I have a book published like  
A little polite brother-  
You don't understand,  
If I were to die tomorrow I  
Should still live for a few years  
More.

Robert Rorabeck

# Falling Into My Arms

The forest is waltzing right underneath  
A pickled moon,  
And the dungeons are all emptied, and the housewives  
Are sweeping:  
And I don't even live here, but I keep coming up to  
The surface and breathing,  
Sticking my head through Alma's window and kissing  
Her three times,  
Like the structure of childhood folklore before she could  
Drive away,  
Promising to see me in the morning and come to  
My house to do the laundry:  
So now I feel like a hero, and all of the monsters are  
Hibernating:  
There is time on my hands, and the world is at large,  
But it is just an overgrown living room  
With healthy lamps speaking over the propitious  
Dinners:  
And the trees are smoking while the hearty gods smoke  
Their pipes:  
And I pick green things for Alma, but I don't even have  
To before she is falling into my arms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Falls City

The factories of our lives  
The managers  
Create us on the assembly  
Line of needing parts  
The duality of sexes  
Requires insertion  
Like light sockets  
Like a slaughter house  
To come undone in  
Midwestern planes abandon/ feeding it/  
Streets and long fertile  
Fields roofs and fences  
Fencing overweight lives  
Fed on troughs of bright TV  
Caged in by slick cords  
Of power-line and preaching Elvises  
Towering sentinel communication  
Towers broadcasting sparks  
Above the prefabricated  
Houses across the street  
From paradise city trailer parks  
Lined up in rows of  
Forgotten promises and  
Christmas tree lights  
Subordinates to the factory  
Processed meats  
Great conveyor belts  
Running down hands  
To put us together on  
The long dead end roads  
Of dust  
Of America's heartland  
Forever looking out windows  
Seeing inside the panes  
Trains leaving down the tracks  
Of another's childhood  
While the power lines  
Stream with electric  
Clatter

Of minimum wage

Fallout

The alienist

Our life here

The dust bowl of America

Manufactured

\*For Brandon Tina

Robert Rorabeck

# Familiar Song

My great middle-class evil  
Going out to lunch  
And dinner dates,  
Spending your monies wisely,  
Apathetic to my scars  
And how beautifully they might make me,  
In a far away and lonely light  
Exhumed from the disastrous water-  
Drenched proms;  
You have to strain your neck to look  
Down on me- How told,  
I am apart from you,  
I am diminished and scribbling out the directions  
To the golden chalice you keep  
Pell-mell discombobulated in the backseats of  
Your cars;  
And you have so many children  
And apostrophes you don't know how to use them,  
So you just sling them like Jackson Pollock  
And somehow they turn out all-right;  
And you have horses, but they are all on poles,  
And all your dreams you have to wait for in lines  
In vast amusement parks,  
And in every aspect they cost you a dollar two,  
Even for the common everyday hot-dog;  
And it all ads up  
When I have relocated to a sea banished of  
Corpulent tourisms,  
When the eager-black turtles are undoing your  
Sandcastles and making great black clutches to  
Inseminate themselves, and bare gurgling broods  
Next to the weave of her salty gown;  
And all these things are going into her  
And simultaneously away from you,  
And I follow them like an unwashed French boy following  
Wolves;  
And they call her the whale-sea,  
And no matter what you say you can not develop  
Into her; in fact, she may be coming into your neighborhood,

Sweeping it clean with the nudity of  
Her pantheistic sororities,  
And then how might you cry for me looking for  
A door to knock from those vengeful caesuras;  
But somehow I cannot hear you,  
Because this tends to happen through the great  
Carelessness of time;  
And you have already driven away from this  
Song,  
And are now enjoying ice-cream under a  
Fairy-light  
With equal distance to the church and park,  
And airplanes go leaping over your heads like  
Strange, overzealous folkloric angels,  
None of them laden with led balls or witchcraft  
While I am fantasizing in a tree you can't remember  
Where the little ripples grow and the sad hummingbirds  
Dip,  
Where I am in tattered raiment, drinking of beautiful  
Women you couldn't possibly understand; who, sadly,  
Couldn't possibly know me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fancy Fib

I can carry on without you without any  
After affects; You left me for his morning sickness,  
And figured I should be all alone with my scars,  
Most evenings to be found reading Dickinson in graveyards;  
My bicycle you didn't give me sleeping well besides:  
And this is where I am, and the sky is a wonderful tarp  
Hung far over the wrought-iron fences,  
And the old dead armies always to be segregated;  
And even before the storm, the ants are busy masticating  
Bird carcasses; and I can smell her on the storm,  
And she is not you; you never where but a heirloom  
Pinned on my existence, something else to go through  
My door, to share my bed and pets with:  
And now that is gone for coming near a decade;  
Can't you see, you never where but a thing well decorated,  
Never were the sea, or the woman inside of her who I will  
Always love- Never were but a thing of fancy fibs,  
Sometimes beautiful if well told, but gifting nothing but time  
Into the ears of your listeners- Now take his hand and proceed  
Through the gentle ways by such you have been gilded:  
Go into the brightly lit room and share teeth and eyes and  
Family; but do not share me: I go on my own way now, homeless,  
Untied to the little lies you molted, the little rings you stole:  
The sky is unbound and ceaseless and I'll drive under her even  
While she turns green; in all of her darkening colors  
Heedlessly pillared and threatening your busy suburban happenstance;  
And the sea is uneducable; it cannot be financed-  
I blow her kisses from the castille where I march duty free,  
And all the ancient wanderers of her conquests roam with me,  
Flipping well-filled by her salty being; we gossip through the  
The living and the dead, knowing nothing transient,  
and not a one of them  
Hears who you are, for I would not tell them such a lie.

Robert Rorabeck



# Fantastic Patriotism

America killed a unicorn,

And turned on all the lights  
Throughout the defeated forest;

We started to drive our cars around  
Her, and didn't stop until we'd had a good cry.

And someone made a movie.  
And some attended home economics,  
And some ate cornpone,  
And some had a drag race;

And some debated,  
And some relaxed  
And stripped down to their bathing suits  
And I swam in her light  
Which was still effusive and not dispersed;

And the celebrations  
Lasted a long time,  
Well after July 4th  
By most estimates;

And even after the rain,  
The fuses evaporated hissing into cones,  
The lawn littered and welcoming weeds,  
And everyone up and gone back into the suburbs  
Aglow from the chandeliers hanging from white popcorn,  
The nostalgias  
All alone,

There she lay  
Yet beautiful and yet dead-

Robert Rorabeck

# Far Above Another World

Pleased as the pleasant bees taking over  
A small corner of the house—  
Little wildflowers outside sipping of the sunbeams—  
In just a slant of a garden,  
The forest otherwise over grown—making a poetry of  
The inner space—  
Little windows looking through keyholes—  
A little goldfish swims back to his garden—a little girl  
Holds hands  
And examines the ribbon of a canal—maybe she lives  
In a fish bowl, or at least a trailer park—underneath the  
Talking lines—only if she ever looked so  
Beautiful as to ever be my muse—  
The parks lay barrenly across from her—the mountains  
Gather up their news—  
Wild horses on the forefront of a graveyard of missing  
Parents—Airplanes making an apiary in the  
Sky over a forest fire lactating a breakfast  
Of honey and eggs—  
As stewardesses get together begging to be remembered  
As they keep continuing far above another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Far Above Another World'

Pleased as the pleasant bees taking over  
A small corner of the house—  
Little wildflowers outside sipping of the sunbeams—  
In just a slant of a garden,  
The forest otherwise over grown—making a poetry of  
The inner space—  
Little windows looking through keyholes—  
A little goldfish swims back to his garden—a little girl  
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Sky over a forest fire lactating a breakfast  
Of honey and eggs—  
As stewardesses get together begging to be remembered  
As they keep continuing far above another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Far Away From Here

I put your name in all of my meals:  
I ride around with your syllables on my wheels;  
And your besos are my wings,  
When you skip around and kiss me open mouthed  
In the rain,  
Like a scratching record choosing its own tunes to  
Pick up:  
Your body is as light as a kite, it feels like a butterfly on  
My swing;  
And when I get low, my suicide gets distracted by your  
Kites:  
Pulled away by the wrists of your children.  
Alma, I become a coloring book waiting open mouthed  
For the first signs of the storm:  
Hurry, now, Alma and color me in:  
All of your hopes and inspirations tattoo onto my open  
Wrists who is like a mistress or a song bird  
For you,  
Before I bleed, before I steal bicycles and buy rides  
Far away from here.

Robert Rorabeck

# Far From Reality's Home

Places of fealty in my soul have dried  
Up- Are scars slathered with green algae the  
Toads with sun stream eyes matriculate toward-  
I put myself in the middle of pantheistic mountains,  
With Diana's doorways to other worlds  
Of fan fiction and accolades; but, oh Jove,  
I am getting old, and nothing that I thought was  
Beautiful has ever sold;  
And down by the crick she takes her men, luring  
Them with bottles of copperhead gin-  
She lays down with them in grasses her father mows,  
And makes her living preening under comely parasols-  
And when its over and the earth is quiet,  
The sunbeams orangish and westerly, the airplanes drowsing  
Like the earthbound souls of the lower angels,  
The elk come preening, each felted horn an opportunity  
Toward feral religion; they gather around the tatters  
Ofa lover, folded through like lost kites disproved in the  
Woods- the elk bugling the sorrowful calls of planets  
Without life, but they never awaken, neither man nor  
Wife.

Robert Rorabeck

# Far Too Late For Me

You have no idea how cold it gets  
Alone in the car  
With the dogs lost up on the mountain,  
And you are still doing this  
And no one else- The moon would seem to be  
Looking curious over the lip on the  
Other side of the road where the coyotes'  
Silhouettes lope; but you are no longer  
Sure- it may just be her nature to seem that  
Way- what glows heavenly obtuse from the  
Other end of the marionette,  
The little boy's dream who escaped from his  
Father,  
Stealing whatever automobile there was,  
And driving down the road to do everything badly:  
Now I've buried my fool's gold in  
The hills which seemed to be at the same time her  
Bosom, and am waiting for them to bud;  
But the seasons have come earlier this year,  
And soon it will be her birthday, and she will forget  
The stunts I've pulled: Maybe it is her nature,  
To be the beautifully polished stone the tourist's  
Bribe- Changing as the colors of the wine she sells  
Swirls, hypnotizing, somnolent:  
But I don't know: Everything with half a brain has  
Already flown south for the winter, to get there in  
Time for the matinee; but I don't know- I haven't  
Bought a new pair of jeans in over a decade,  
And my wrist is naked of any sort of time piece,  
But I don't need to know the hour to know that it is  
Already far too late for me.

Robert Rorabeck

## Far Too Sweet Or Too Sudden

A thief and then a liar pass over the two dueling overpasses  
Who are fighting their ways into the jungle of heaven:  
Words break down about them, and are disregarded and fed to  
The toothless lions looking with uneager vanity into  
The shallows where the blue gills are mating,  
Where the suddenly dashed bicycles rest;  
And it oh so happens tonight that Alma does not join her brown  
Loins to my pale streets:  
She sleeps with a man who ran away from Mexico with her,  
Who ran away from her and then back again, crossing the frontera  
So many times, seemingly unafraid of saber tooth's:  
Certainly he hasn't read these comic books, and his pornographies  
Are all alone,  
Even though he will be losing sweet Alma again come the next  
Downy morning, when I sing to her like the carnivore of a blue jay,  
Like a wolf in the forest of a candy store;  
And somehow she has recognized me and called me in, and her body  
Presents a storm of Ferris Wheels down across the empty bones in me,  
And plays there a melody so fickle and so real,  
That I can never capture for a meal, nor own as something for to sell;  
But she will sing down to me again by the successive displays of  
The sun,  
A firework with a pulse, a happenstance of an apathetic providence,  
Far too sweet or too sudden to understand.

Robert Rorabeck

## Farther Away From Her

Long avenue that is the serpent of our history,  
We live in trailer parks that do not exist  
And drink beer beneath the deer antlers—and go outside  
In the rainstorms for a piss—  
And I have loved my women here—browned skinned  
Daisies continuing up into the stars:  
Goldilock's who do not know whenever they will  
Be getting home—  
And love that disappears into the insouciant of nocturnal  
Bars:  
Feelings in the rhythms of my glass—another way to go  
Home before I sleep—  
Terrapin and hobos sleeping beneath the overpass—  
Soft whispers against her absent minded cheek—  
The lactations of a world that moves so far away from here—  
Crystal clear rivers bleeding from an ocean  
That rushes nearer and then farther away from her.

Robert Rorabeck



## Fast And Fleeted Heart

Because I haven't caught her yet,  
I'm casting out again letting this silver net  
Of lies free to sink and entangle about her  
Pinkish knees, where she rests wading  
Upon the briny knolls reading books to selkies-  
The women who come up half amused  
To stare when in the daylight they have lungs,  
And lips to smooch, and mollusk tongues,  
And appetites to preach from sea up to sun.  
There as if imagined by Botticelli, with  
Eyes of cousins they stare for awhile amidst  
Those interpretive eddies which fasten to rocks  
When the tide exhales, they learn of the  
Others' declivities, and how the souls unfasten  
When they sleep and swim around  
Murmuring their subconscious dreams and shopping,  
And I become but an interrupting wave of  
Masculine instinct breaking once upon them  
And then away, back again into all the others  
Bemoaning their loneliness and playing sports  
In the brief enraptures of entangled brethrens,  
The nets I threw nothing more than a spider's  
Spume, a roaring chorus on the shoals, which lapped  
Her knees with scrawling drool, the unbanished  
Light quickly scrubbed away, and took the memory too  
Of the finite wave I was, leaving my mark well  
Below the bosom of her fast and fleeted heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fast Food Graffiti

People who don't write well  
Will be forgotten:  
Good, bad, or indifferent  
It doesn't matter.  
Your name might be  
Mentioned in  
Dante's Divine Comedy  
Going down or  
Coming up,  
All this virtue  
Condensed in the few lines,  
Reflected upon by Virgil,  
But who reads it anymore:  
You might have the  
Highest office  
In all the world,  
But I don't know you;  
Look at the stick of a bird,  
No wider than a finger  
In the middle of my hand;  
It is singing your name,  
And me?  
The least of all  
The scribbled egos  
In a Super Walmart's bathroom,  
Trying to get laid;  
I am not even done  
And already no one  
Can remember  
Who I am.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fastly Fading Noons

I am drained by people,  
And the subtleties their eyes can put upon a body,  
The small business adventures they go on,  
When the sky is open to them like a freshly eaten shell.  
I am aware of the traffic on all these streets,  
Like concrete tributaries to the greater good-bye;  
If you spend so many years with schoolmates  
Only to watch them latch on to their new work,  
Forgetting the casual love that must have pricked them eventually;  
I can go back to those neighborhoods in a sober  
Calming rain, and walk those avenues yet fully grown,  
And I will not recognize a single person,  
Though the landscaping is the same beautiful resilience  
Of thatching green and budding red, the storm makes  
Fertile and quivering;  
I can go to the park where I skipped school, the dream  
Of the somber girl still waiting for me on the swings;  
But she is not there- the desire is a ghostly place,  
And she is far away in a brilliant new suite smartly defending  
Her client, earning her way, loving a male of her new  
Socio economic privilege;  
Slowly, the houses grow weary of the parade of families,  
And their facades dull, their gutters weep and dribble in  
The cold, salty storm;  
And I can lie there for all my time, in the corner of a world  
No longer belonging to anyone,  
Watch a caterpillar disappear into a cocoon to come out something  
New, but not me; As the river speaks and floods,  
I go down the avenues of friends I don't know anymore;  
All that I lost too soon, as if I were some unstable bystander  
Who needed to step away.  
There where they are singing in the softly glowing church,  
Where I kissed her mouth and felt her leg in between the play's  
Rehearsals. The next week she was with someone else,  
And I no longer snuck out of her window to watch the world  
Smolder beneath the fastly fading noons.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fata Morgana

Far above the adobe's swaddled dung,  
Though yet beneath the formicaed solar-system  
The care giving mountain squirts  
Leaping sunlight from her tit  
Like an effluvial stampede of floating doves:  
Down, and down, and down  
Into the open mouths of the receptive orphans,  
So called, they grope her flank,  
And climb upon her, the needing pups,  
And towards her head they bank  
Where the milk flows from the ancient glands,  
As from the fountains gating the affluent neighborhood;  
And listen as they mew and lick,  
And rub against the adopted flesh,  
So to her chin they grin and plump  
As she lifts up her head and her eyes open  
Like invisible moons, and thus she  
Gives life to the little things she  
Never cared to own.

Robert Rorabeck

# Father Of Their Easy Captivity

These words may fall from my fingertips  
Like gentled children  
From their mother's breasts down into cribs,  
But I do not know where they come from,  
Save that there is gossip from the fields  
From the tawny women whom winnow  
The wheat in pollinated swaths of bucolic rapture,  
That they have heard them once feral  
And ill-natured running unwashed through the  
Great forests of northern France,  
Before the king sent for chorus girls sequined  
And feathered  
Like song birds, their bosoms a perplexing ruby  
Cleaved in a powdery river;  
Thus was his plan, to capture the lycanthropes  
Before they erased themselves, and calm them  
And pluck them as peacocks paraded on pink marble,  
The stones themselves raided from the virgin's grotto,  
And put them here, now strolling along the concrete  
Sidewalks of suburbia, where there are holidays,  
And peaceful alligators glutted in the drainage,  
And the sombulence of housewives, their secrets  
In smooth blue cabinets, and ceiling fans that hypnotize;  
Thus they fall down, teeth cleaned, bodies clothed  
For the following morning's play,  
And they go to sleep well fed but with short attentions.  
They do not remember whom they belong to,  
Nor should I concede to the committee before me,  
To being their father of the easy captivity.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fathomless

A deer in the cauldrons altogether:  
Looking up, fathomless to the fathoms—  
And stars and stars  
Of places filled with ghosts—  
Submarines lying in the trenches of the sea  
And on Mars, Mars:  
Two dogs leaping are her moons—  
And in these streets at night,  
The antithesis to Arizona's limbo—  
And the things I saw today,  
Riding on a bus, the caesuras of my wife's  
Legs, and the laziness of being alive  
Brings us back to familiar places:  
The dow in the meadow,  
Eating grasses,  
Chances upwards to see the ghost  
As the moon, the thief,  
Bends down to drink the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Featureless Resting Place

Happens here, and laughing- spilling out the perfumes  
From the places that will not heal:  
Just here alongside a highway, where ever we are:  
Not exactly getting any of it out: not really believing in anything:  
Stumbling upon some luggage in the dusk of the roadside  
The tourists tossed out;  
And our knees are scabbed, and our body weeps,  
And how much longer I do not know:  
I do not even have a map of the country that we are in, but something  
Is singing in the grass- intent and venomd by purpose;  
It is there singing of us, and to sleep to a place we must go;  
While the conquistadors keep busy in the dunes foraging for  
Pornography,  
And the traffic rushes like Mexican brooms, able to displace us  
Even though we are not moving, but weeping for a kiss without  
Legs, slithering through the easement anonymous:  
A lover's nameless bed, a featureless resting place.

Robert Rorabeck

# Feelings Of Our Mutual Lonliness

I can still smell a muse's perfume as it  
Draped me away in the car,  
As the old devil of satanic providence drove me  
Away from her:  
Up in the morning in the field of clattery bones  
Where the poisons drip from  
The mêlée of old friends who never got my letters:  
Her eyes I remember, the brown water marks  
OF a sincere abyss:  
The absence of furniture across a living room  
With a canal on one side of it:  
You were still in Mexico while I was growing up,  
And I wonder how many butterflies have come and gone  
Since then.  
Over my burning sugarcane, like poisonous love letters,  
Only to die in your arid Bosque,  
Felt up by the fingers of death who know so well  
Our feelings of mutual loneliness.

Robert Rorabeck



# Feral Mother

It is easier not to make a sound.  
Sound is the coming apart of words in  
The imperfect senses of our mistaken  
Reality:  
Language, the social construct imposed  
Upon our minds  
Like birth—Thought, inseparable from  
Death, taught to us in school,  
Senses sharing a common cause  
In a neighborhood that shelters us.

The earth shelters the coffins and does not speak.  
The multitudes without headstones are there  
As they were before,  
Matter animated for awhile  
With the purpose of finding a job  
That hopefully meets the status quo:

The rain speaks lucidly of this without saying  
A word.  
Nature is constantly wanting to take you back into  
Her.  
The forest is throwing her hearth of green  
Arms,  
But men, awakened by the minds of others,  
Mistakenly deem themselves apart.

They have built homes to live apart from her  
And airplanes to leap across her wet appetites  
And warm caves;  
But I look for her when I am alone  
And not with other men.  
I remember that I am an orphan stolen  
To lie in beds,  
To eat the meals that humanity has prepared for  
Me,

While she watches me like a feral mother,  
With a heart of beating oceans,

With Appalachian breasts,  
With jaws of sincere obliteration.

Robert Rorabeck

# Feral Wanderings

The wet body of blushing fountains,  
Fieldtrips the night:  
A swing-set in kindergarten's backyard:  
You say you love her,  
But the teacher thinks the tulips are for her:  
When you travel,  
You eat your mother's chicken soup:  
It is not good, because she doesn't know you,  
And you get sick:  
She knows your sisters better,  
But there is still the girl you love-  
Sleeping on the rug next to you,  
As you inch toward the paltry theft:  
Soon you will be discovered,  
As they line you up for the end of class....  
Outside, the sky is a blue cabbage  
Darkening off the sea, the thoughts  
Of deeper men you don't yet fathom....  
But even then you knew where she lived,  
And your parents took you past her every day.  
Then you could go to the woods  
And be with your dogs,  
As the rattlesnakes patterned the sleepy  
Motes of sunlight,  
The fractured rooms of slash pines,  
Who still hold no thoughts for you  
Amidst those feral wanderings....

Robert Rorabeck

# Festival Of Russian Roulette

Wounded and lost,  
Like a knight never to make love with  
A princess again,  
Or even eyes- Lost like a school yard  
Of impotents,  
Swaying to the sultry lips of minnows-  
As it seems for awhile  
That the entire conflagration can come up  
With one word to describe  
How they can never see her again:  
Because she is gone forever  
From this high school:  
Gone up north,  
Or transplanted across the sea- and I seem  
For awhile lost through the heirlooms  
Where I am not here-  
Arduous perfume calling to a tempestuous  
Love knowing that she can never  
Leave her batting cages,  
But it rains and her weapons whisper as  
They glisten and cry-  
And maybe they never awaken for another  
Breakfast again,  
But what I know: I've kissed your mouth,  
And fed you mine-  
Your children are lovely,  
And you will go out with them in the great  
Hibernations of all of the weathers,  
But you will not become my world:  
Like a zoetrope jumping for a fox,  
You captivate me with illusion-  
And I watch out marriage like a silent  
Film  
Before a festival of Russian Roulette.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fever Of Glowing Horses

Balled into a fever  
Of glowing horses-  
Broken-legged down in the  
Valley-  
The clouds move over a  
Well the naiads  
Have fallen into  
Whenever the flags are made  
Out of the carcasses of  
Butterflies-  
And your father's corpse  
Roams the earth  
Waiting for a king he can  
Finally  
Appreciate-

Robert Rorabeck

# Fever Of Unkind Loves

I am dying, dying,  
And the traffic doesn't give a piss;  
And all these boys are born,  
Fighting,  
Sunburned pugilists.  
And the night is up: it is real up  
Like a carnival of cast iron,  
And it wont be coming down for months,  
And you'll love your boys and  
Flip over for them,  
And the slash pines and the Australian pines  
And the boys with better names  
Will applaud and they will fight fires  
And learn how to spell and some math,  
But the traffic wont give a damn;  
It won't hush,  
It just continues on like the noise of a pilgrim on  
Its ways to Canterbury in a rush  
Knowing without knowing that its author is dead,  
And there are only so many things to  
Spell and misspell,  
And the night is beautiful,  
And the dunes- the dunes hold your eyes in the caesuras  
And cenotaphs of burnished conquistadors,  
As the traffic comes on insatiable,  
And you teach school from your desk high on a  
A fever of unkind loves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Few Inches

A difference of a few inches  
Counts big time within the species,  
But I would rather stand very still  
And let the red rubber ball  
Sting my thigh, than play the game to the end.

Because even now the afternoon clouds  
Are leaping like a herd of frightened elk  
Over the ill-proportioned fences,  
And soon mother and father's shift will end,  
And they will be back around to drive me home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fictions The Truants Tell Themselves

Upon the bones of heavy slumbering  
They cheated on their loved ones inside a bus  
That was broken down in the  
School yard  
That the heavy and unsolvable terrapins ate  
Orchids underneath of  
In the oil slicks of bled unicorns- Those  
Uneasiest of fictions the truants  
Tell themselves as they bite their tongues  
Just to make it to the other side of  
The canal  
To escapes those rooms where you have forever been  
Looking away from them.

Robert Rorabeck



# Fields Of Barbed Wire

Eden in the cowslips—bluest sort of thing:  
The airplanes are resting,  
Lightning languishes, cerulean disease in the evergreens:  
Making love to bears across the  
Stone nipples of that volcanic garden—  
This used to be engulfed by a sea that has evaporated through  
Some sort of abominable love,  
And the blue cats take shelter in the tallest trees  
Where my dogs whine for me all night  
Lost across the valley where the  
Trailer parks snore like tin-nosed crocodiles—  
Maybe it will be all right, as she sheds all of her tears—  
Daughters of the pilgrims making love to  
Lost Indians, as the conquistadors glisten like rubies peeled  
Away across the supple grasses, intermixed through so  
Many fields of barbed-wire.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fieldtrip To The Moon

Up the saddles of the high monuments-  
Waiting with nose bleeds  
Up the skirts of aspens- looking haughtily from  
The fire towers,  
Down through the break neck valleys into the  
Innumerable lost lovers-  
Words that escape from here without mothers,  
Feral and never paying taxes:  
Going down nakedly, drinking melted snow:  
Sated into the mowed greenery  
And spikenard below the monastery as if plane  
And shipwreck survivors:  
Selling sets of knives to the belief of divinity:  
Where the otters pray and slap tails for  
Housewives  
Until there are rows of orange trees, and pools  
The glisten eternally-  
In a suburban boudoir underneath a fieldtrip to  
The moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fieldtrips Of Summers Gone

Too far away from fieldtrips of summer gone-  
Of goods things of past young gods,  
Of words that ring these feral bells-  
You really alter my artistic horizons, but how much  
Do you care,  
Now that the summer of my beauty is gone:  
And there are no more unicorns in the tides surcease,  
In the ways of going down far from the east:  
No roller coasters or roasted peanuts, tamed alligators  
Out sunburst eyes in wicked crepuscule,  
While helicopters hang low over wine gardens,  
And there are dunes where bicycles lay asleep half doused  
Like shed crustaceans,  
And I don't know where I am going-  
And you are out in your classroom trying to create little  
Things that never fall down,  
But your lips have been unsealed and you have gone up  
Through the deep surprises of his field,  
And the traffic pauses to be surprised at your romantic  
Silences,  
But you never stop and wander where I have fallen and  
Am unmendable-  
Just some busted guy now indescribable and indisposed  
To great breasted witches down in the long shadow  
Of the other side of the wall.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fieldtrips To The Zoo

Oregon girls have orgasms  
Orangutans have them too—  
Sometimes I think of you  
And then it passes  
Like forgetful children meandering from  
Fieldtrips to the zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fieldtrip's Truancies

Watching alligators farting like  
Bottle rockets,  
The butterflies spinning like  
Jumping Jacks,  
Dancing like Ants in  
A possum's a\$\$hole.

Robert Rorabeck

## Fifty Fifty

I have given to the world  
Much of my  
Beautiful parks and  
Estuaries  
But never once  
Has any of its  
Traffics  
Stopped to  
Even consider  
To offer in return  
But a kiss  
Or a day spent holding hands  
And  
Perambulating a place  
That half reflects her beauty.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fighting Romeos

Look how quickly my inky bugle scrolls the air,  
Sending out in the spider's fingers  
The madcap rows of my fighting Romeos:  
Without a general, they are leaping over the ditches  
You have set up with your reserve, to nock them down,  
Your silence putting many of them to sleep,  
The euthanasia you garden, cultivated to keep a distance:  
And your eyelids drawn upon the windows  
Of your body's house, when you crawl into familiar estuaries:  
Disbanded, like the valiant zygotes which  
Will one day penetrate your cyclical eggs,  
Like the victorious knights at a jousting contest,  
They search you out alone,  
Some the wanderers of a lonely country,  
Nodding under the overpasses of careless men  
Who, arriving too early, find you in an unripened bed;  
Others, the seafarers, like otters  
Looking for you through the oystered fluids,  
Drawn to the wetness your eyes partake of them,  
The sea creatures who swim on your daydreams  
When the rains shutter on the roofs  
Of your old classrooms, noticed until the weather passes:  
Here are my few surviving romances,  
Cleaned up, they wish to take you out on a date,  
And they will fight for you like brilliant tigers;  
If they knew where you lived, they would send you  
Springtime hillsides of extroverted daisies;  
If they knew your key, they would already be inside.

Robert Rorabeck

## Figuring That I Have Everything Down

Now you get out into this night; and you don't  
Wonder, you just go, go, go:  
I think you have graduated- I think you are even more  
Beautiful than I have eyes for:  
Maybe you are even my mother, but I am not thinking about  
You,  
Or hurrying to get along with a quest for you:  
There's a whole waiting list for that, and your species of blue  
Eyes and bangs:  
No, I'm just drinking liquor with my feet up thinking about  
You; maybe I am even singing, but I am no good at it,  
Licking my lips to the sport of grizzly bears and obnoxious  
Strong me who are possibly just your lovers;  
And you have them all conquered, and they are just defeated  
In a valley where there is no bashfulness, where nothing  
Ever falls down into, and that is why there is no pleasure;  
Or, you know, that is why I have won,  
Because I haven't had to go a step out into the naughty weather  
To touch you: I have you right here, spinning in the moan  
Of gypsies, and you cannot get away,  
Because you don't want to, figuring that I have everything  
Down which could be worth anything to you.

Robert Rorabeck



# Filling In Blanks

You don't dance  
Or read to me anymore;  
And I am all grown up,  
While upstairs there is a distant female  
Voice saying hello,  
But you are probably working and  
Lucky for it,  
Because of all your great stuff  
And easy bounce;  
While those twisted men, those men like  
I am,  
Will soon lose everything:  
At the track or somewhere close,  
And not beckoned in will crawl into gutters  
And into ditches,  
Brothers to the crocodiles,  
And look up the skirts of sweet young  
Tornadoes,  
As the country dries up and turns into  
Kansas, a toothless fairytale,  
Where even the most renowned pugilists  
Are out of breath from so many hapless blows,  
And young wives go weeping towards  
Empty swings,  
And entire flocks of houses are left abandoned,  
Heartless and naked,  
And green recedes like a salt-licked tide,  
And bones look pretty thrown bleached and  
Saturnine through such influential happenstance;  
And if I were to find you there,  
And we both got out of our cars and approached,  
Shyly across the callous lane  
Above the flea markets of silent permanence,  
What could I say to you knowing  
Even then you would not read my poems;  
But instead look forward to that balding sea,  
For even though dying her love was indifferent  
To unconditional soul.



# Film

I wanted to make a film of our love,  
But it is better to walk away someplace else,  
To fornicate with strangers  
In a Hollywood movie;  
But your eyes are projecting on the screen  
Flashes of light skipping children  
Around a desolate tree  
In a lightning storm.

The purpose of filming you  
Is to show the incredible beauty you exude  
When you sit in the satin chair in  
A Victorian meadow  
And stare outward as  
If seeing a secret girl  
Skinning her knees in a  
Narrow passageway into  
The sky:

For a moment there seems to be nothing,  
But then you notice there is a color to it,  
As your eyes search the tiniest swath  
To the left (Which means you are telling the truth)  
There is the sound of your flesh panting,  
Like a kitten scratching at the kitchen door,  
And of the microscopic  
Combing in the field of trimmed grass,  
Death and field-mice cleaning  
Their likely plates.

The purpose of the art form  
Is to show the stratification of human life,  
To get laid because you do something competently  
In the motionless conviction  
Sitting in the rainstorm.  
Your blouse is papier-mâché  
Glued to your breasts,  
Your eyes the conduits through  
Which the audience appreciates

The wind is corrugating the lake.  
The waves in perfect phalanx  
Dying on shore,  
The power of invisible force  
Revealed like a harem of ghosts  
In the rising smoke curling from  
A cigarette's cherry.

The cautious adversary,  
I use field-glasses to watch you  
Cross your legs  
As raindrops meet up and celebrate  
In drunken rivulets  
Down your shins.

Deliberately, your gaze turns  
To a place off-camera  
Where you seem to see  
Something you recognize....

Robert Rorabeck

# Finding Peace

I used to jog around you for seven miles  
After four in the morning  
While the girl slept I was going with,  
Who has been married to a lawyer for the past  
Some years:  
And I could see the lights on in your patio,  
And hear you laughing with so many things,  
But I couldn't stop- I was like a shy firework  
Shooting off with you on my brain-  
I caracoled that old Florida University seven times,  
And Chevy's of drunken fraternity shadowed  
And laughed at me-  
I pissed on their tires and told them I would not,  
And I thought of girls sunken with conquistadors  
Deep in the east,  
But finally I gave up and returned scarred to my  
Parents' basement and finally,  
Far away from your overcast hemispheres,  
From your unending sleeping walking joys,  
And your immaculate silhouette,  
Running alone, empty with my dogs,  
I found peace.

Robert Rorabeck

# Finding The Truth

Look! I say nothing to you-  
My hands are empty-  
They hold not weapons,  
No bouquets- drive home to him  
Just predestined as a wave  
To crash and burn against the sea:  
Make love to him  
When you said that it was me-  
And the sky became awash with the lying  
Promises of daylight,  
Who was going the way she always does:  
Leaving us,  
As the dolphins swam as in a drowning  
Carousel-  
And my beautiful words dimmed,  
Without ever finding the truth in your name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Finding Warmth In The Darkness

It doesn't have to be like this, even though  
The day is gone over my shoulder,  
As you have gone home to your family, but already I am  
Wondering about what next time it will be  
When we will make love, Alma; and I really want to  
Kidnap you and take you to Arizona,  
Or I just want to run away from you and rob banks  
Against your shoulder;  
And I can take you up to see the lonely boy gods of my  
Mountains,  
To the exact if roughly hewn pulpits of my heavens  
Where I pined for you even before  
I had the opportunity to consider you: these footpaths that I  
Have always known,  
Can carry your gold too, and we can pet my dogs together,  
And I will carry your children away on my shoulders,  
Laughing and making you carry your brownness up  
After,  
Until even the highest aspects of the journey look out after  
Us,  
And we go down perpetually, floating like magic over  
The misplaced graveyards, and finally into the bedrooms of  
Wildflowers who shut into one another,  
Finding warmth in the darkness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fine

I thought it was over,  
That all the scars had dried up like fish  
Pinned on trees,  
That the wagon had turned over spilling its sin  
Into a double scoop of holocaust,  
That I was kicked out of the house with the  
Dirty cat, like a starving beggar:  
But now this comes, new mutations up from  
The anointed feet: feel me,  
The itch of seams, the molt of butterfly.  
How I come dancing over the purplish tor,  
Giving motion to the lack of better words. A  
Dictionary is flotsam without its society's notions,  
And now everyone is losing their houses:  
They are floating down river calling to helicopters.  
How so, I am above them, a needle of light doing  
No work, but feeling fine.  
Where are they going spinning? Will they soon  
Catch fire? Or, who is this, a bit of sugar at my shoulder,  
Perhaps tossed there like smoke billowing from the  
Glades,  
And I am not even there? I am hung out to dry,  
And the crowd has traveled south like a carpetbag-ing  
River flooding the banks. Winnowing fingers  
Lock on to saints and talking rabbits;  
But the sky only whistles, too lazy to make rain to net  
A rainbow- it is doing fine.

Robert Rorabeck



# Fine Young Yesterday

Soft pacifists in murals of malaise:  
I can barely see you sweaty over the bedroom of  
My young days,  
Because my ears are burning from cheap wine,  
They don't hear reveille or get up on time,  
And they are past over like sated lions on Mondays,  
And the tourists have all gone down their enthroned  
Gullets like strawberry Sundays,  
And up in the sky didn't I say they are advertising  
Your wedding day;  
But anyway, hip hip hurray: and didn't they once have  
The world fair in Saint Louis or  
Chicago; and weren't we there high stepping through  
The papier-mâché jungles-  
And didn't you know that Sara Teasdale is buried  
Belle Fontaine, that she was married to someone she  
Didn't love,  
And the way she thought of him along the stark midways  
Of her younger days- I'm sure I know, if I can't rightly  
Say-  
The traffic skips by like amphibians opening wide  
And ululating on into crepuscule,  
And I missed you in school today, but I guess it doesn't  
Matter, because I am not beautiful  
And I don't think you love me- at least not the way  
I love you- forever- even if you once loved me that  
Fine young yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

## Finis, Mary

Put it out like milk for the kitten's tongue;  
Or let us say our prayers without speaking before bed.  
Then by the moonlike light your breasts grow tinsels of  
Spikenard, your eyes the fine jubilee of a sommelier's discriminating  
Palate: and here is a donkey, and three wise men,  
But I am scarred, Mary, even in your bed- My words are  
Just as scarred. They more often than not fail. There is nothing  
Immaculate about me, but maybe my hands- They do  
Commercials; but that's why the baby can't be mine.  
I can see how you conceived him somewhere between Dallas  
And Atlanta with the commercial airlines pilot,  
The old quarterback, his blue cap hiding  
His bald spot you didn't know, or his grandfather the octogenarian:  
But my scars you cannot hide,  
But the grass is green, Mary; it is so green, and I enjoy mowing it  
On the weekends- I give the Mexicans time off, and I drink  
Rum, Mary, burned from the sugarcanes where the alligators tan;  
And why I can just look up and tip a cheap glass and look at  
Your belly shooting like a silver star over suburbia; while you smile:  
Soon they will be selling it on major intersections across America;  
But now there are two oblique wet spots on your dark blue pantsuit;  
And I am not going anywhere. Only pink angora can hide how  
Rich you are, Mary, like a Vineyard growing up the stony nape  
On the hill of Golgotha fed by a river from Jesus' side, a holy  
Spigot which first gave Catholicism its preemptive ideals;  
Holy plagiarism decorated in pagan's garlands,  
And now the sun and blue velvet curtains, exeunt stage left  
Then a fine living room, and drink, and skinny dipping in the Jacuzzi  
Around teal shadows with people I'd hate to know. Then finis,  
Mary, Finis.

Robert Rorabeck

## Finishing Migrations

I went too late to the party-  
The evergreens were too full of herons,  
Restive,  
Not at the end of the migrations,  
In the wake of monarch butterflies-  
I grew beautiful,  
Too late, too early;  
Or she was a child, or she was married  
In little houses in the rain-  
With little lights;  
She would go out sometimes and smoke,  
And I watched her from the sea,  
Shivering- too cold to make out,  
But every one there was good and famous,  
And they told me it would be better  
For me to go along the way;  
And her eyes were sad, but forgetful,  
And they seemed to tell me  
To be along my way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fire Engine God

If you are brown and you do not love:  
If you are a forest underground, or in the sea;  
Or if you are a homing pigeon or a turtle dove  
Who never returns with  
Offerings of peace:  
Then I know you, and you are just the traffic  
Stopped for a pace of a light cycle-  
Maybe you turn and look at my star fruit tree,  
Maybe you halfway come to the conclusion to  
Think of me, your stomach, your engine rumbling:  
Maybe you are an airplane hovering in close  
Space- Maybe you are just opening,  
Spreading pedals or spokes, something beautifully  
Concentric and round, but you don't consider for  
Long- and there you go on your way,  
Shampooed and legged in your pierce-nosed  
Parade- Once all my fireworks are spent and left  
To just smoldering surcease, and there are better  
Boys happening just nearly in the east:  
And you go that way, and they flex anchors for you,  
And I die exhausted, and happy that you stopped  
And maybe were pensive and thirsty for the weight  
Of a hummingbird carried in the matted hair of  
A saber tooth tiger on the lam from a fire engine god.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fireballs

Some pretty flask tossed into the canal  
Sleeping in the alligator's bed as he dreams of Girls  
As the witches fly over their housewife cousins:  
They go to make love in the cypress,  
As the row boats sleep above their heads  
In their shallow journeys from the islands-  
Around their roots the crypts sink in  
And the moccasins lumber in erstwhile balls-  
Their ballrooms of bellies entralling,  
As the young girls clap majestically at the airplane's  
Fireballs are tumbling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fireworks

No more baseball playing without  
Those witches,  
New or old, floating: they are my muses;  
And the high school sings with  
Glasses of pain,  
And the windows open and share eyes  
With the rain;  
If this is not a song, Erin- Then what for  
Are its poses;  
If this is not a song, Erin- then why for  
Did I buy you roses;  
Because I am not a he-man,  
And you can never open up to me;  
How many strong men have you been with,  
Leaping forth across this  
Country,  
The America, Erin; and my body is not so  
Beautiful,  
But tired and lagging from the races,  
Unqualified to meet you in the middle of wildflowers  
In the higher basins  
Where the windmills of maddened soldiers beat out  
The clouds,  
Where I have perceived you underfoot of the breathless  
Continents,  
Where I suppose I am not proud to be,  
Erin- Erin, I sell fireworks, so why cant you fall  
In love with me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fireworks Again

Yards and yards, in the plagiarized field;  
But what is the king doing, but turning you down:  
Or he is turning into  
A four legged thing, that his son will kill;  
And he is losing all of his friends, but  
The movie theatre is  
Quiet and peaceful, because sometimes here,  
I skip into other shows,  
And I listen to my grandmother on my birthday,  
Telling me promises of artificial fire,  
As I try to think of how things should feel right  
While dance, or not dancing  
Without wings or legs, and there is just the  
Pornography in the blue dunes, like the major  
Event for the cenotaphs  
Of conquistadors, or anyone else who cares enough  
To be here, pounding on a door in the middle of  
A forest that takes a long time to get to,  
While the prettiest of honeys sing, or stretch their  
Arms to become another attempt at the make-believe  
Fireworks brushing their lips once again into the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fireworks And Christmas Trees

Wound is a vision that comes again  
With the glass—  
Let's open her up again, if only because  
We have to go to the graveyards  
Of school tomorrow  
And we need to feel alive—  
As the seahorses nibble the mermaids'  
Breasts—of course they do—  
Let's show our obscure pornographies  
To the grottos of the pieta—  
To that well lit and beautiful  
Slaughter house, to the backsides of  
Muses who have now collected to their  
Children—  
All of their snowflakes have melted—  
And they do not cry—  
But let us listen to the insides of those  
Tears, anyways—even if it's not  
What we are supposed to be doing—  
We are supposed to be selling  
Fireworks and  
Christmas trees—  
But let us try to amuse the language of  
The corpse just one more time,  
To shake up the fireflies  
Into suicides of daylight—  
To pretend to be brave even after  
The fairgrounds of her heart have packed up  
And moved away.

Robert Rorabeck



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Robert Rorabeck

# Fireworks From The Roadsides

Cave of envelopes in your dreams-  
I've been sleeping for a while in the folding spaces—  
Promises of whispers,  
Lips of butterflies—  
Rains descend over the cities of the cliff's side,  
And we sell fireworks from the roadsides of  
Mars where Christmas trees grow  
As tall as roofs,  
And the men you love float about like snowflakes  
Stuck in mascara—  
And the little children who fall down from them,  
Scabbing their knees on presents of  
Roller skates and bicycles  
Think they see arrow heads and Indian nickels  
In the open markets of the naked slopes—  
Where one flower blooms at  
A time and the sun holds his hand out  
Trying to panhandle through the offerings of his day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fireworks Sometimes

The saddened reindeer of her eyes  
Looking over the emptied parking lots of midnight—  
Wondering which way her boyfriends or  
Her pilots have gone—  
The mountains rising up like their own gods halfway  
In the middle of the country—  
She has never seen them, but she listens for their  
Songs—she sees fireworks sometimes,  
Costing so much from their brilliant distance  
Before they are done—  
The love lives of the silver and heroic—  
Maybe they languish just as much as a commercial—  
As another of her dreams weathers the crenulations of  
A somnambulant pool—  
They will be taking down their tents tomorrow—not  
Because they have nothing left to sell,  
But because she doesn't know  
Her holiday has already gone away.

Robert Rorabeck

# First Star Of Morning

My parents live on the precipice....

My ears are ringing like maudlin wind-chimes,  
From the last of the rum,

There are flesh-eating horses out in the hoary yard,  
Devouring verbatim my father's estranged love,

The same sort of love I give for you,  
Until they turn off the lights and tell us,  
"Now that is enough. Each of you go back to your  
Sea, "

And there are wayward Mexicans living in our  
Front lawn,  
A man and wife, and his father,  
Jesus and Antonio, mi primos-  
Do they know that they are eating him too?

Last 4th of July,  
Finished on Route 66, in Moriarty, NM,  
The famous nemesis, I gave myself this strawberry  
On the side of my face,

And called you twice-  
A man answered whom I didn't know,  
But we still made bank in the desert of empty snow-  
Now it comes around again,

And you still do not love me,  
And I still do not know what to do,  
For I am not pretty. Just so, I am lost, but if you  
Should find me,

Then there is a house for you, my fingers, my tears,  
My soul, and all the saccharine cadences my body wishes to  
Swap with your body,

And this is another pitiful attempt to call up your eyes,

Wayward and nameless on their stool in the empty bar;  
Warm exchanges, I promise, and luckless fidelity,

For soon I am homeless, and I ask you if  
You could be my first star of morning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fishing For Sharks

My father looks so beautiful  
As he kills what is his:  
My father looks beautiful, dressed up for showbiz:  
How many enjambments has he come to cost;  
I don't want to talk about father-  
I want to get lost,  
In your amber eyes- In your auburn amusements:  
I don't want to acknowledge your guys,  
I just want to fornicate in your salt-water abutments:  
Oh, I love you- I love, but that's like saying  
I have a soul- So much a cost,  
And so much a toll:  
Rather that you were a ghost, a holiday of fear,  
And instead of wondering of your beauty,  
You just curled around me ear,  
And spoke to me of the strange sciences of loss:  
I don't want a father, whatever the cost:  
I just want you in a house in a room,  
With your fingers in pies, and your hands on a broom:  
I don't want mountains or streetcars or mountain-lions:  
I just want you naked, suppliant,  
And rather a mother of tombs: I want you swept and  
Colorless and weaving stories on looms;  
And, if you're fetching like broken glass,  
While then I'll leap over the low bridges of centipedes  
And water moccasins,  
And make you my lass;  
And feed you the fingers of my silhouette,  
And mount the svelte of your back, and make you moan,  
And eat turkey and mash potatoes with you;  
And call you my pet- Then we'll go out into the bottomless  
Merry-go-rounds- and catch my sister,  
And fish for sharks.

Robert Rorabeck

# Five Foot Tall Heaven

Cabbages in secret muggy rows,  
Like the clefts you'd have  
If you were a centipede,  
Like the children I would leave needing gasping  
Like silver-pinned fish if  
I were Silvia Plath,  
But now everything is on the move:  
I used to take the Turnpike up every weekend  
To where the alligators perpetuated  
The condolences of adolescent post hibernations,  
And I saw you once there all decked out in your  
Soiree,  
You all smoky and creamed, never once suspecting  
You might once have been my muse;  
And you even beat out your mother, and thus  
Had very little to prove.  
Because you are so very beautiful and your name comes  
Out of the tips of mountains like the very fine  
Secretions of fairytales,  
Like raspberries higher up on the footpaths away from  
Cars,  
Where all the light is smoky from the forest fire that  
Has a moral conclusion and a finer point,  
And you are there around about in your higher heels like  
A fire station so I have to look up to see into  
The sweet smelling kitchens of your eyes  
Even though I am a hefty centaur and you are little more  
Than a five foot tall heaven in a pony tail.

Robert Rorabeck

# Five Hundred

When Dale Earnhardt died,  
I fell in love with NASCAR.  
Delivering pizzas at the time,  
I understood the dangers of the  
Sport: when I saw her jogging, it  
Was very hard to control the car.  
When in the wee hours after  
Saint Patrick's Day a drunken  
Sorority sister invited me into  
Her portico to exchange my  
Pizzas for sex with her, I accepted;  
And inside her boudoir flecked  
With Johnny Depp and Backstreet  
Boys posters, her drunken legs  
Open  
Like a starting line,  
I fell in love with the inevitable  
Speed of life, and the little death  
Inside women, inhaled like  
The moment of breathing,  
Involuntary, like an erection  
And inescapable ruin of the  
Body.  
Running along her backstretch that night,  
I understood what it took to be stock car driver,  
Applying rubber feverishly under her panties,  
Under the night the world circulating in  
A giant socializing oval that sometimes led  
The victory lane of sex.

Robert Rorabeck



# Five Star Ranch

The elk are starving,  
And the rivers are growing bold.

Novice wolves are practicing  
On latchkey children discombobulated  
On the red saddle,

Eerily tall gentlemen avoid speakeasies,  
Brush their heads through the anorexic pines  
Where the wind is coughing,

The hills make a dry and cricketing cauldron  
Where the opaque cattle swirl, their horns christened with barbed wire,  
They turn and turn with strange instinct summoning potions,

The gyre of skeletons rises in the roofless caravanserai,  
And baptize the heads of uneasy tramps with the spitless drool:  
Their home is under the weathercock which

Is turning like a little girl pretending to dance,  
As the hateful eye burns spots of forest fire which ring  
Rounded stones and clutches of rattlesnakes,

While magnificent gravestones crowd to the east,  
Entire families waiting for the redeeming plough to unearth  
From the expectant sorrows these tuberous crops.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fleeting Appreciation

Butterflies going back to Mexico  
Put new poison in my body:  
Just going back over the absentee borders,  
Beating their wings until they come  
Up with new numbers over the shadowing abysses  
Until you don't know where to  
Find them:  
They have only gone to kiss the knuckle-bones of  
Their dead grandmothers,  
And then to die plated by the rain in the hillsides of  
Corn:  
As they become paramours of the ashen storm,  
As the hurricanes halo the volcanoes,  
To warm kisses of their own lovers take over  
Their bodies,  
And that is when your eyes bloom up from  
The graveyards, to retrieve thoughts I have given you  
Underneath the playboy sun:  
Letting my own ochers run down your lucid tributaries:  
Showing off your apiaries budded upon my  
Fingertips and tongue:  
And as those thoughts of our lovemaking dye like  
The poisonous aspects of butterflies over the graveyards  
Of your ancestors in the nameless town of  
Your upbringing, I hope you think of me as well as find  
Some fleeting appreciation for the songs I have always sung  
For you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Flight

A little bit of good is in the wings of an airplane,  
For it can take us the farthest away, in amphibian  
Leaps, in the sexy legs' choreography-  
Misguided lovers may wake up on Sundays, rub their  
Sleepy eyes and say hello, hello? And be most perplexed,  
Because already you have sacrificed for passage through  
The concrete corridors where souls not already dead  
Are disembarking; All sorts of failures can be handled this  
Way, spent fuel streaming behind you like effluvious confetti,  
A vagabond holiday of flippant services, the bone smiles  
Of your conductors and their perked tits, the coffee percolates,  
The danish twists, and you can let the lucky sleep droop  
Your lips: Then, back down from featherless heaven, disjointed  
And amiss, the new cities, the old cities, spill out before  
You like a toppled candelabrum starting to fire, and for  
Day labors you can buy your fill of cheap hotels, cigarettes,  
Runny liquors, and squealing girls: and the forgetful type of  
Honey stolen from the impish bees combed from the altered  
Branches by the silver bellied flight, and if all is not right,  
Then fugitive flee, for already the engines are purring like  
Tadpole kittens to skip your across the sky once more,  
And string you out again upon another's floor whose blacky  
Histories, thankfully, you know nothing of, nor care nothing for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Flights Of Leafless Fancy

Now all swing-sets speak in  
A singsong way.  
Now all the stars glisten from the  
Fangs of rattlesnakes inside  
Bottles of rum- For she has led the  
Battle out into the occupied breath,  
As I piss and water the venal flowers in  
The ankle-deep grass;  
The castles of America are stolen from the  
Jungles of Bavaria,  
As her eyes are castaway upon the boreal gyms.  
We found the evidence in your brother's room  
Before he could escape to kiss the lips of a visiting  
Swann- And I am apolitical, but your legs  
Make you my queen, and when you bend them  
To go somewhere,  
Don't you create a sisterhood of swishing motion  
Which makes me tremble,  
But just as cuckolded men are afraid to step out  
Of the waves to buy cups of ice-cream,  
So am I certain that your lips are the illusion of  
Man's approach to god,  
As if I was to reach you, moon-audience,  
Would lose all sense of reality- become a flightless  
Loon. Yes, and I'm proud of it.

Robert Rorabeck

# Floating On A Lucky Gentleman's Balloon

If we start fogging our four windows,  
One day soon- nine months or so,  
All of our children will be storming the gates of  
Heaven;  
A womb of filigree and midnight spume,  
You know the room, vertical underneath ceiling fans  
And plastic stars and blue brooms-  
I've laid you there and cleaned your flower with  
My tongue,  
And beat out a jingly tune on your petal soft drums:  
Oh, I guess that was just what I was meant to dream  
About doing to you,  
Passed out in class, or fondly depriving some other  
Boy's father's liquor cabinet when I was supposed  
To be eating lunch:  
Staring into your eyes instead of the instructor's,  
Drowning out any other lies;  
But now there is only the static of a poorly received moon,  
For aren't you so busy living out your life in another  
Man's bright balloon;  
And sometimes I see you go flying through the sky  
Like a motion picture in a velvet room,  
That I want to smoke you out of the sky and drop you into  
The crèche of aloe so near the passion play  
With a slight rain coming down, that I would make you real  
Enough, and plush and comfortable enough  
To believe in you for always, even after school is such  
A long ways over,  
And you are floating in that lucky gentleman's big balloon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Floating On Airplanes

Inside an airplane is cool and easy,  
Where everything is moving steady,  
Like the quietly humming specials of car salesmen;  
And balloons of many colors,  
And children weeping holding hands with their  
Mothers at the zoos, and suckling;  
And when your lips impart to me snacks  
And dreaming,  
I can say that I have a lover above any mountain,  
Even if she is getting paid to be polite for it-  
Because the words on airplanes don't have a certain  
Meaning,  
And it is expected to meet ancient childhood and  
Heavenly abundant sororities at the end of it,  
Wherever one might be going- Touching down there,  
Then the sun is steady and is as warm as a furnace  
Like glass blowing,  
And I could say that I love you from all the way up here,  
And not really mean a thing,  
And all the professors and their critiquing and even those  
Successful lawyers the widest fonts are advertising  
Can't truly touch me-  
Cupping your bosom like water leaping,  
Like bending over the fountain breathlessly panting  
In some half destructive kindergarten,  
Just your lips and their services, lipsticks' fjords  
smelling of another tongue's vociferous language, rowing-  
Yet evolving, and there the colors are yet blooming:  
Even on fixed wings,  
Virgins stringing the vaporous garden like the crowning of  
Some celebration  
With the physical tendrils almost giving up their evaporation;  
And here I love you,  
With the blooming mythologies wearing seamless nylons,  
And your ankle curling, mythological vases  
Stuffed with valentines;  
But this is just a song without its certain meaning  
Wondrously sailing, just a piece of paper  
Floating for a second above the forgetful earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Flooded Earth

Here you go thinking that I was dead,  
You turned on and on like the little girl dancing  
Without gravity, untwining all of her things  
Until she is fully grown and Zephyrus even without  
Any sky to denote her breathing,  
Just the sharp blue quality of her eyes,  
A star dying, jubilant and blushing up to the very last  
Second:

Lying on my back beside the waves, looking  
Up you kept changing your dress,  
But it couldn't stop who you were....

I bought you flowers, I stripped myself naked  
Before the mirror of my words and showed you  
My scars, my hollow places, the places that were  
About to cave in, or already had: I wanted to become  
An artist on your planet, and garden unrequited bouquets  
Through the bare footsteps of your deity.  
When I failed, it was because you had a boyfriend and  
So many admirers, I knew  
The way they strutted like tobacco princes in the dusty  
Redness of your out-of-state photograph collections-

but who was the one who might  
Wish to see you through the unavoidable beauty of your perfect suit?  
Or cast a net like a spell which would ensure the fidelity of  
Your body to my conquest with the stamp of one kiss?

I ask like an echo- How long now since my art truly felt  
For the beating of your soul, that resounding basin I used to  
Share a class together with, just one- And now out there  
You have gone like some bird looking for the tranquility of mountains  
Resounding above a flooded earth,  
Which is what I have become, hypocritically dry-eyed and  
Taciturn- a dry county who has learned how to float so well,  
Who doesn't booze anymore,  
Who doesn't even go outside to enjoy zoos or sunlit parades,  
The way a young boy's balloon might attached to his hollow wrist



Like a jubilant wind-kicked pet;

And you, and you- There you are some ten years away, barely  
Even obtainable even by the speed of light: I can barely even see  
You from my bedroom underground where I used to pray for  
Your nourishment before each of my meals of sweet holocaust:  
And you didn't come, and still you turn, blazing,  
Some sort of sexy idea yet caught upon the way a doe flits  
Leggy through a forest of snares,  
The dangerous consequences yet avoided, some sort of unkept  
Promise, you just keep leaving, turning brighter and brighter,  
Turning, turning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Floodings

Murdered and drowned eyes  
Queue up to me in my sleep  
In the cold dark waters that flow  
Underground and connect us all  
In our labyrinthine womb—  
Their hands wear marriage bands  
And promise rings— Their lips  
Cry out strange words beneath the  
Frigid world, as they seem to  
Want me there. Beneath them I can  
See pale houses settled in small yards  
With one cypress tree pressed into  
Each manicured lawn, and rippling  
Driveways decorated with  
Landscaping, little fish-like children,  
And cars— And I know I should go  
Drown with them, to let them show me  
How to become a professional in this  
Middle-class estuary— It wouldn't  
Take long for me to stop breathing,  
And then to learn the recreations of the dead—  
To move about in schools in the diaphanous  
Vail of dreams semi-fulfilled, to do all those  
Things successful people strive for altogether  
In lakes underground, collectively holding their breath—  
Here, where I can see my wife waiting in the  
Wavering lawn, bodice full with promises of  
Gurgling chastity, and my children sprawled  
Like marble fawns drowned in a flooded creek—  
But I will not go to these tonight, if only because  
I do not know how to swim so blindly—  
So, fearing responsibility's bottomless embrace, I  
Feint into lonelier pools that swirl away  
In the reeds and shallows— Where, in warmth dawned,  
My own mermaid sunbathes for my eyes....

Robert Rorabeck

# Florida

Where was she in  
The fairy stories  
An invisible woman  
Fainting under the orange trees-

There she gives me hope,  
As in her background  
An alligator slides into the canal  
And disappears-

When she is out to make money  
She serves young men under the palm trees  
And looking up they wander along her neck  
Into the Bay of Horses-

I do not know which one  
Of them is having her tonight,  
So far away  
And I cannot care,  
For closing my eyes I am with her,  
Always admiring  
The oldest city in America

Nearby in the mangroves  
Behind the hidden pinkness of shells,  
Maybe our children will be playing  
As the waves are tamed into  
The domestic estuaries

Where our fingers interlace  
Then our lips share the salt  
The wind has carried this far to us....

Robert Rorabeck

# Flower Devoured

I sit beside this uncouth firelight;  
It is not warm-  
It is a fried chicken charade,  
So I strum my legs; it is the best I  
Can do.  
Your windows are dark and on  
Silent parade-  
It is a death sentence;  
It is a train, a wedding procession  
Dark and veiled.  
Yes, I can smell you in the rain  
And on the far side of the cemetery's  
Immortal segregations;  
You came last year, or years before  
And where you are going  
You have long since been,  
Deep and queer  
Like napalm in the jungles,  
Like the pricks of pain of Spanish  
Stars eclipsed by waves  
And drowned ponies  
Of legionnaires and knight-errants,  
Your tresses just the mane  
Of a green girl sinking:  
If I turn away,  
Where will your fire be then,  
Or will the seas of cars devour you,  
And smooth you over until you  
Are fine enough to hang in  
A kitchen:  
If that is your cell,  
And it suits you, then allow me one  
Last howl,  
And a fling with you atop the corniced  
Top of a crocodile as it cries  
Across the canal,  
To deposit me at the banks of university,  
Where I turn and watch you devoured,  
Your pedals plucked by the

Curious game I keep about you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Flower In The Rain

I want to fall on you like rain  
upon a wildflower  
Opening new reason from you  
Scaring all the old bees away from  
Pollinating your bed  
Scaring all the fake men off who  
Can only stand the sun  
So it's just me and you in the  
Meadow  
The rabbits in the hole  
The grasses are wet and beginning to bow  
The forest is damp and sleepy  
And in the meadow  
I bend down and kiss your petals wetly  
Falling all over you  
Letting your pistil slip into my mouth  
Sucking off your honey,  
Almost plucking you  
But not going so far  
Just pulling you so that you can feel  
Your roots leaving  
To let you almost taste  
My world in the sky  
So afterwards you can go down  
Believing  
The words on my lips  
When I fall on my knees for you  
A flower in the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

## Flying By The Stars

Nicknacked by the busybodies whom do not drink—  
While I am in Shanghai having insouciant dreams of  
Living back in Arizona—  
In Show low, in a little town of 10,000—  
Can I support the sport  
When my writing cannot even uplift angels,  
Or buy off the metamorphosis of their wings:  
Cannot calm them down,  
Making them part of the normal revenue:  
Now we have stewardesses flying back and forth  
Wingless, who have never seen me even though  
I have been once or twice back across their planes  
Even though I have not learned to spell,  
But the night is calmed,  
The unplanted roses are sleeping just as ghosts  
Beneath the cosages of the white mountains—  
Maybe ten years ago my sisters were going to prom—  
But now the night is out and the fire has burned  
And it will take the blind man a thousand  
Unbelieving steps to meet the carressess  
At the end of his road.

Robert Rorabeck

# Flying Monkeys

I'm calling on you because I'm a wreck,  
And I used to dream of becoming a professor when I  
Jogged around the junked golf course  
By the side of deep twilight, and the paltry swathed condominiums:  
To tell you the truth, I haven't loved too many women-  
Mostly, I've been able to count them on two hands  
And you rank right up there,  
But now my legs are cold from drinking cheap rum:  
Can you love a man without any fashion sense  
Or social position?  
A man terribly wounded in the dark of a fraternity's  
Pick-up truck, so he doesn't even know where he's  
Hurt, but he just remembers you sometime in  
North Central Florida before Halloween in that Asian  
Restaurant joint now demolished on 13th street;  
What the F-, now it flows- now it flows- I don't  
Yet have a bicycle or a home on an island, but give it time:  
And the girl I neglected by dreaming of you has a new  
House and better ways to make her living;  
And this is not good, and now I don't care to teach anything  
To the living; but love me, if you will, in your time,  
In the quieted spaces between the snows and your inevitable  
Breast feedings- because I love you,  
And it is the only thing that reoccurs to me every evening  
As I chop down trees, oiling my joints and looking up from  
Time to time to keep an eye out for flying monkeys....

Robert Rorabeck



# Folded Airplanes And Paper Butterflies

In families, the warmth of science's loneliness disguised  
In religion's degrees: You whom think him your lover,  
Cannot actually touch him, your husband, for the both of  
You are forever encased in an electronic sheath—  
You have to go to the sun; it's thermal reactions the metamorphosis—  
Butterflies over Nagasaki and Pompeii—  
While I was sleeping on your roof one hour before yesterday—  
And in those words, filigreed with imperfections and enuendo,  
I wrote you a thousand poems written in a language you do  
Not know—  
And when the coffins of your lovers and your ancestors  
Are laid beneath the ground, they do not actually touch that  
Place—they are developed from the ectoplasms of outer space—  
Better to be cremated in the fire that burns in these pages—  
Better to have seperated from those lesser sages,  
And awakened in these momentary arms—  
Folded airplanes and paper butterflies dying as they try to  
Cross the canal to be noticed by your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Folded From Paper Dolls

Paper airplanes folded from paper dolls—  
You still hold my heart in another world,  
Even as I bleed gasoline,  
And I am forgetting vocabulary  
And better and more eager parts of my soul—  
When I get up in the morning,  
There is so much jingoistic patriotisms  
Over the happenstances of the fieldtrips of  
Our playgrounds that I don't know  
Anyways—Or all because of any number  
You cannot even guess—  
The beautiful women hyperventilating on  
Their birthdays—just waiting for  
Just any wish—  
Or in the saddest playrooms of the daycares  
Where I left you—  
Even if across the canal the cats played and  
Talked to themselves—  
I've said I love you to too many Mexicans,  
And now I guess I have to suppose  
That the angels will have to  
Take care of themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Follow Me

Long day envelops me:  
I drive past the president on highway-70,  
And it is a rusted ride full of strange,  
Slow motion appeasements.  
Rival take my house-  
I don't care- I sneak into libraries.  
I read Leonard Cohen for free and  
Masturbate,  
And then deep in the night that  
I shouldn't say,  
I drive past the university,  
And see slender, peeked students making  
Love over some nameless bridge,  
Over the Mississippi,  
And how they touch, how languidly,  
Like the gently driven cadences;  
And it don't matter that they really shouldn't  
Love- I will buy an apartment next to them,  
To listen to them making love,  
And I will take my dog out at night,  
And watch the airplanes skipping,  
Pretending that there goes so many important  
Men, warriors sailing the heavens  
Served by leggy, cup bearing women  
Who know how important they are,  
And given my studies, I  
Should whisper everywhere to no one:  
I never found a woman.  
I didn't get rich.  
Follow me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Following Lost Dogs Home

It gets cold in the automobiles of twilight  
When there are no charms or stores opened.  
In the points between her map,  
The lady is cold and beautiful sleeping in her car,  
But she could be anyone,  
And young professors caravan to the conference to  
Add their two cents to the collection jar;  
Oh, but look- Aren't they something?  
F&ck,  
But there still isn't enough pictures of Sylvia Plathe  
In the garden to identify her,  
Her lap is empty  
And she could be anyone; and the people couple young and  
Happy in their car,  
And they go on the sweet vacations, they go far,  
All the way to new horizons along the train tracks smoking  
Time,  
But they only drive there:  
They sleep with the new people entering them,  
Heads on pillows, thoughts upon the lips of who they are-  
My love was here yesterday, but she doesn't  
Belong to me; she is in the tunnel with the new  
Trains entering, smoke and grease,  
And no one is out on the swing set but the wind,  
Who says come to me, but no one answers: It isn't her.  
I have lost my dog,  
And no one answers but  
If the moon is on its final quarter, I couldn't tell,  
And the woman is sleeping in her car, her breath the  
Chamber whispering- In Spain, there are poets who could speak to  
Her, all asleep under the olive boughs, but she doesn't  
Answer them by the moon or anything; her blue jacket  
Looks nice on her pallid skin;  
It resembles her, and I wish I could love her,  
But who am I  
Jumping trains;  
I wish I could cover her up and speak to her &  
Become the smoke  
She is beautiful if only half way to other ways than here,

And doesn't give a d\$mn of pain,  
And she has no home of where she knows,  
Most beautiful without the land she flies along;  
Or if she joins & is lucky  
Getting lost about anywhere, follows her dog home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Foolhearted Voyage

If I describe you fool heartedly, isn't it that  
I love you,  
And I hate to go off and leave you to sell fireworks, just  
As I hate the things you make me promise you,  
Because we spent our foreplay on my goodwill couch  
Good enough for any whitewashed family,  
Good enough for the longest rivers of America,  
And I helped you try and find out how to become a citizen of  
This great country,  
But not because it was your country and that you wanted the vote,  
But because you needed the status to save your mother from the  
Newest immigration laws,  
And how many times then did I tell you that I loved you:  
Alma, and how many times did you say that I  
Was lying,  
But even with all of that how much did I discover about you in  
A couple of hours,  
The willing journeys we took together, and I will always wish  
To be more beautiful for you,  
Alma, and I wonder if you know how absolutely beautiful you  
Are: In your strange opulence you far outstretch my  
Previous muses,  
And you are the only one who has given her body so readily to me,  
And I love you and kiss your lips like a starving conquistador  
Who has bungled upon your drinking fountain in amidst the  
Savages of a concrete jungle,  
And I wish to appease you somehow, and to call you out of the  
Somnolence of your parents house,  
But also to congratulate them for all of which they have accomplished  
In the short seven years they have been in this country-  
All of that time I have been mostly celibate,  
And dreaming of how to reinvent the light bulb or of other girls  
Like weak butterflies less perfect than you,  
But now that I have found you out, I am a like a struggling dog  
Who has finally made it home,  
And I finally have something to believe in, because the  
Virgin of Guadalupe has answered my prayers and delivered you up  
To me:  
You wear her golden visage about the grotto of her neck:

I think you might be the embodiment of her immaculate  
Spirit, Alma, but anyways I have prayed to her several times tonight,  
And thanked her for you,  
But since I have finished off the page with this poem  
I should say no more,  
But fall asleep and thus set out on another voyage to figure out  
Any other means of finding you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Foolish Gold

Their parents had the appearance of impenetrable value-  
The rumor was they were made out of real gold:  
You couldn't break your teeth on them,  
But it was still painful  
To embrace the process that was necessary  
Just to be sure-

I used to hide my books on witchcraft under the  
Bed. They didn't find them until I ran away to  
Michigan with Jordan-  
That was where I used to live,  
And slept the night in the back of my  
Grandmother's Toyota,  
And forgot to keep a watch out for ghosts.

There was a graveyard there and there  
Is a graveyard still-  
Where the janitors still go weeping,  
and a loch, but they called it  
A lake, a great American lake cut up and entangled  
By water skiers all with perfect skin;  
But oh, how very pale;

And my great uncle, the physicist, the head of  
His department, an ancient smile which doesn't fade,  
A beautiful house on a great American lake,  
Fulfilled promises,  
But tomorrow is the first of the month, April:  
In ten days then I'll have another year on the world,  
The quietness of too many scars:

That will be some sort of jubilant holiday,  
The best of its kind: No solicitors just the usual  
Jew, Priest, and African American coming into the bar,  
Except not so politely spoken,  
And everybody drinking and pretending  
That the rent isn't due.





# Fool's Gold

Told itself to the jungle—told itself to the lies  
Of the busy airplanes,  
While the neighborhoods lied enfolded—  
And the sun became a yellow balloon in the hands of  
A dwarf amidst the palmettos—  
And all the day long you were dancing or painting  
On your body the pretty brown alphabets of  
Your skin—and doing your own numbers—  
As an exercise upon how to maintain yourself—  
While the clubs went out around you,  
Swinging their bats at witches—  
Or planting bottle rockets into the fertile grounds at  
The feet of the mountains,  
While another antediluvian god swore to his dumb  
Luck underneath the sea—  
As we remembered swimming this way—back  
And forth in the current of unicorns—  
The commercial airplanes in a mobile accumulated  
From the fool's gold in our hands.

Robert Rorabeck

# Footlockers Of Scorpions

Footlockers of scorpions underneath the  
Chartreuse palmettos-  
They cut up the birthday cake of sky as the cars  
Drive by,  
And the dolls lay in the castles of ants and  
Sand lions,  
And your mother is in the regular house doing  
The laundry,  
But if you saw her, her eyes would be  
A long ways off- looking across the canal  
To the hill of Calvary  
Where the wolves dance on their hind legs,  
And the foxes are the vintirs of their own  
Special kings,  
And you have some muses here, but they  
Don't know it,  
But the airplanes continue to fly lower and  
Lower,  
Soon the will have to touch the ground  
As if entire harems of mirages for their  
Narcoleptic lovers,  
As the wind blows the weedy instruments  
Across the canal again,  
And you close your eyes into a blue abyss  
Waiting for him to come home.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Birthday Of The Gods

I will live for a while  
A skeleton with rum in my gut—  
With thoughts  
At the bottom of the sea—  
An orchestra so far away from  
The wreck of the Titan as to go utterly  
Unnoticed—  
Just the bare bones down in the waterlogged  
Trenches without any other metamorphosis:  
With old girlfriends up upon the mellifluous  
Stage, singing their hearts  
Out to kings and their reindeer:  
And when they get out, a gentled thunder shower—  
But, anyways, I do not have to die for my young art—  
Because what I write isn't good enough anyways—  
And I don't love with white girls, anyways—  
And if my muse was venal, at least she was Mexican—  
And I stole the virginity of my thirty-one year old  
Wife if that is at all possible,  
As the heavens pretend to cut the sky like a knife  
For a birthday of the gods who do not even believe in  
Themselves anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

## For A Chance To Be Petted

Oh the banal bones of the old horses  
At the airport, irritating me with their bloodless flow:  
And it is so nearest to either of our houses,  
Alma,  
Except that I own mine like a graveyard, while you pay  
Rent for yours with the sweat and bones  
Of the loved ones who don't even belong here;  
And I want to tell you about how I remembered  
Running away,  
And the greatest things I saw even while I was alone:  
And I know that you don't like going up on airplanes,  
But you would make in invaluable stewardesses,  
And now you don't  
Even want to make love, but you still want to go on  
Fieldtrips with me,  
Just to walk barefoot in the green grass I have protected  
Just for you,  
And over to the lilacs or any of the other names of flowers  
Who happen to grow their stretching their pretty  
Necks if only for a chance to be petted by you.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Dollar

Fingers crossing over the numberless playgrounds  
Of your amusements' Just words spoken to grasshoppers  
As they flick themselves:  
Like flames emancipated from the damaging wishes  
Of a birthday cage'  
They go across the campuses of high school and end up  
In some lady's yard:  
She is standing topless out in some sunny sun:  
And her areolas furl, crenulated delicatessens:  
Now, this is her art that I hear they keep chained near the  
Sea, and the airplanes fly over her,  
And the man-o-war come up to the beach like cerulean pillows  
Dreaming of electricity underneath the kites or one day  
Children will fly'bought for them for a dollar,  
Another cheap home that encourages to fly away.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Forever Of Any Awhile

For however long I will have to travail underneath  
The prayer flags drying their  
Laundry across the forever mountains: I will.  
I will- And I will bight my knuckles,  
And will try to look as if I have been doing something  
Dangerous,  
But nothing ever changes: the elk shed their horns  
Every season, and you can make money, if you  
Know where the look:  
While the mailmen live alone until they are old  
And vanquished:  
And the housewives come in like a sugar sea making  
Wishes on your birthday:  
And they just do and do their thing until their  
Daughters are in high school and then graduated and  
Meandering up stream:  
And soon they will have rings on their fingers:  
And they will have forgotten their favorite colors  
Until the raindrops hit their windows,  
And have traveled down the easement to agitate the minnows  
And to make the insouciantly eager alligators to  
Smile.  
While the kites who have been abandoned by their careless hands  
Travel the seven seas for a forever of any awhile.

Robert Rorabeck

## For A Full Blown Christmas

In fine philosophies the souls retreat and  
Make love to the shadows beneath the broken down  
School buses- I was there many times,  
And I don't even know the words for today's vocabularies,  
And maybe I will never make love to you again,  
Alma,  
Because you are trying to be satisfied by your regular man:  
How his eyes are even darker than mine,  
But not quite as dark as the anxious nights he has taken to you  
And across the frontera and the bosque where the mariposas  
Are multiplying only to die:  
And you will never read this, won't you Alma,  
Because you've had enough of the deficiencies of my playrooms  
Of model boats and crinkled airplanes:  
So now you are only waiting for a full blown Christmas  
As he lays down beside you and gives you duplicitous propositions  
For marriage.

Robert Rorabeck



# For A Kiss

Away from the night  
Everyone moves across the street  
To be together, far from,  
They are attracted to the light  
And the music the flesh makes  
As it dies  
Traveling away from home  
A cross to where I have no eyes, intersecting without hope  
And I can not see where she is, gone,  
The thing that never was between us  
And the flowers in the gutter leading  
To the sea- before the sun rises,  
The thing that never was dissolves and goes away  
In tiny fragments before the sun  
And her kiss imagined, always felt,  
But never,  
All the pleasures of the system, petals budding  
From the glowing stems,  
Like lines on a road,  
The conduits of rushing people,  
Discarding me  
And I am roadkill lying dead beside  
Her bed (as they make some kind of attempt at love)  
And forgotten on her neck, a broken gem,  
Once priceless- now trash-  
In the shadows beside where all  
The lives move  
Dances to the lights and forgets  
Neighborhoods drunken and empty, abandoned museums,  
And the life flipping over in mausoleums  
Pages in a book read but  
Not understood, a bed of transgressions  
And falsehoods made-up to hide the stains  
Like the nights coming on attracting the  
Insects calling our humanity, a god of weekends,  
And spirits past,  
Forgetting to resist the temptation,  
Where my wrist lays open and waiting

For a kiss.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Little Ways

There were dragonflies and there  
Were swingsets:  
And at one time they had one all over the other:  
And the helicopters were  
Approaching- the first one a phosphorous  
Yellow,  
The second one as red as periodic tear:  
And I took Alma to the  
Playground,  
And made my love to her, sincere: but she was just  
An echo then:  
Turning around, coital, abstract:  
Her brown body lifted off the earth and into the  
Waves where I carried her,  
When she couldn't even swim: her two children  
Drowning around her,  
Like hapless mermaids: and when I watched her leaving  
Me everyday from work,  
It was like an entire forest fire drowning higher  
Up on the higher ledges,  
Where the airplanes can hardly even fly: and it has become  
More distant from now until then,  
And her body is an abstraction from my pain:  
Like a painted butterfly drifted off into the severe forest of  
A Civil War Spain:  
Rattled with snake bites, and shot through with bullet holes:  
She arrives one last time, kissing the pigeon holes of  
Angels like the most intrepid of kites:  
And then she goes away, back into the rest stop of his  
Brown armpits: she resides in the nests to which were  
Born her first and last children:  
And with her eyes closed, for a little ways: she sings to me:  
Or I think that she must, anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Little While

On the loose though exhausted, what would you  
Do in the backyard shirtless all afternoon, remembering  
The bottle rockets that you wasted-  
Or the girls that you left behind to learn math in school-  
There in that open habitat that your mother mowed  
Shoeless on the weekends,  
The ants riled up to see their gods birthday cake in the  
Green steak knives of the palmettos-  
Or the blue insects like Christmas toys, walking up the  
Joints in a river of trees,  
While the ghost of the girl you loved floats in a canoe  
Aimlessly:  
There she goes, as the sugar canes burn her motifs-  
She seems to have drifted down from Tallahassee while  
The forest fires were still all burning around Disney  
World- and some Mexican girl  
Was lost in the Dry Tortugas, crying for her sisters that  
You supposed you ate breakfast with yesterday-  
And she leaves to take her daughter up to her husband  
Through the orange fields and dunes- and they  
Are even making love right now fallen brown skinned  
In an gossiping apiary, even the while college  
Students flood their campuses- and the pain lingers  
For a little while.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Little While Everyday

Ruined as I go this way singing to my  
Tomb,  
Over foxes in love with their prey: little things getting  
Littler ever day:  
Alma makes love in her bed of far away-  
Brownness and evaporation,  
The sport of the numbers never figured upon,  
The hidden estuaries cleaved from a world of bereaved clouds:  
She spreads like an envelop cast into the sea  
Without a bottle:  
Is torn up and sinks, and never wanders over her wounds  
High in the skydiving places where she first made love:  
She sings as she goes down into the bosoms  
Of the world,  
And forgets how he haunts her for a little while:  
In these little times we make love,  
Before she remembers all that she was to her again-  
A wildfire in the back of an untamed horse,  
Performing for a lighthouse who cast her light away from  
The sea that I cried for her for a little while  
Everyday.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Long While

When I started out I was all alone and I could go for so  
Many ways,  
Crossed by the angels and silver bodies of their skies:  
Crucified by stewardesses who didn't even know why; and if this  
Is a dream,  
Then isn't it real, because I haven't had so much time for dreaming,  
Because I was buying a house and hitting on Alma:  
I know where she buys her jewelry: At the Sunshine Flea Market:  
I am going to go there on my next day off and buy her jewelry,  
And an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe that I will keep  
In my new house, which is old enough to be a grandmother,  
And I will pray to her for Alma, in the utmost moonlight, and in the  
Opulent rain,  
While the students divide, matriculating in and out of their classes,  
I will give something to Alma that none of them can ever have,  
Because of the way you looked at me today, Alma:  
And when you made me flinch when you pretended you were going  
To punch me:  
I am just a lonely gringo, anyways, and yes, I was sad when you asked  
Me if I was,  
Because your beauty is the only answer to the breathless permanence,  
And I can stare at you for a long while,  
Alma: I can stare at you almost as long as that.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Metamorphosis

I have to go to school again tomorrow  
Since that is all there is—  
Like starlight and venison and rum—  
Down the halls where the girls have turned  
More Mexican—  
They eat more chili than sugar plums  
And at their windows the Virgins of Guadalupe  
And in their stone gardens the Pieta—  
Uneasy delusions of their apathetic husbands  
Around their carports,  
Their merry-go-rounds derelict: but I will see  
Them tomorrow,  
And swoop to see them, promising with my  
Eyes the theft of bicycles—  
Mutually hoping for a metamorphosis  
We cannot give.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Nameless Road

Reptiles moving in their viaducts,  
As airplanes in each section of their airy road:  
Manned by girls I once pretended to know from  
Latin Class:  
Floating, floating, ambergrease and mir  
Until they look up and see my eyes  
Soft pedigree of kidnapped children slipping  
Into abeyance between the mountains—  
As, approaching night, I might misspell the name  
Of the girl I once loved,  
I might grow in hunger from a man to a werewolf,  
Just as the roses amidst the valleys might become  
The forgotten lovers on dragons  
Who, having approached the twilight of their heavens,  
Forgive all of the illbegotten heroes that once  
Tried to slay them  
Just to make a name for themselves, and thus  
Become cenotaphs, nameless markers  
Contained like naked caverns—mile markers  
For a nameless road.

Robert Rorabeck



# For A Place To Land

Hands in my own yard—little boy's hands underneath  
The banners and castles of a paper tree—  
Doing his afternoon delusions into a pit of bonfires:  
Burning his toys again,  
As his father kills the snakes in the garden,  
And piles them up with the help of a Mexican—  
Pinecones and palm fronds, a bier for the greatest  
Illusion of a king—and where is my mother?  
In the carport? In the Laundromat?  
The lilac amphibians are singing underneath a  
Rhinoceros moon—in the beautiful séance of  
A crepuscule cartoon—and I loved you as each bud  
Pearled into a fruit—  
And the moon beamed down on the cloven hoofed  
Satyrs playing their lutes—  
As I lit off fireworks, and watched the serpents  
Sipping gin—I remembered that very soon we'd  
Be selling fireworks again—  
And the pine cones whispered in the boughs,  
As the palm fronds gathered in the sand—a stolen bicycle  
Slipped across the earth—a wayward airplane searched  
For a place to land.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Pretty And Nameless Fox

In the enfeebled armpits of kittens:

An Alamo, and roses- they are lying against the cinder

Blocks listening toads

Waiting for the rattlesnakes, as the housewives make

Grottos out of their carports, as the graveyards no one single

Anguish, enfolded by mountains and forget-me-nots:

They go this way forever, flooding over with marble

Busts and streams: here it says the dates for my

Grandfather; here is a pet cemetery the fire ants

And kindergarteners are stumbling over on some

Occult holiday- pretty animals leaving their

Fingerprints in the crimes, making a name for themselves,

As a flower buds in the chain link fences for a pretty

And nameless fox.

Robert Rorabeck

## For A Purpose Already Entombed

Here is the other sort of blasphemy- written down  
With out her eyes to look upon,  
With out her limbs to drape: the incurable sort,  
The decade long absence, the affair that never was anything  
More than a script persuaded beneath her door she was to  
Pick up and read and fall in love with, so that by the  
Many implications of the sad characters, and the stage notes  
For rain, and the invented thunder- the plywood lightning bolts,  
And the octogenarians as Grandpa Zeus and President  
Hoover, that I meant to set out to have her,  
Entangle her along the ways of the roots of fruit baring  
Trees, to kiss the hem of her maidenhood after climbing the  
Trellis two-thousand miles, and then the swift intonations  
Of a great orchestra encouraging her further,  
Her hands opening up her blouse like a gift basket according  
To this gray-haired conductor:  
To yip and leap behind me on this horse, waving our hats to  
The village, before we ride away, kissing behind the curtains  
To another staged sunset, another successful night for two  
Young and over eager thespians, drinks and fieldtrips around Europe:  
But where has she ever been that was nearer to me, or what  
I have written to her anymore than a dimming hope, that is fading  
Still. Now it is here put out before the eyes of her childhood,  
Just a cold bug seeming to wither into obscurity after two weeks  
Of its glow-bulb evenings; and after that an ember  
Licked by the carousel of waves by the empty sea,  
A cremation of a flea: always turned around  
And seemed to douse, a cigarette butt flicked out of a speeding car  
Going the other way from Saint Augustine- Just a poem  
Of a single, extended note crying for her amidst the potted cactus,  
A lonely hiker amidst the mountains looking up as she flies high  
Overhead, a beautiful airplane: When will she stop picking up  
Superfluous tourists, the coworkers and stage-coach drivers going her  
Way: I could give her a better sort of song, but she must first need to listen  
To whispers to pick up this dance in an unremitting canopy far from  
Society, the cool places of her dives and work; I will love her here  
If she recognizes and listens, as if to a seashell,  
And if not than this is written for a purpose already entombed.



# For A Supermarket Of Imperfect Unions

Capitulating, as if they will finally eat themselves  
In the fruitless ballroom:  
And I have no children, which makes the world  
Larger and full of the sounds  
Of hollow machine guns:  
And Alma only called one time this day, early in the  
Morning while I was just arriving for work,  
And she had done jogging with her sister,  
And now I dream that I will have all of this money:  
If it was that I was only more lucky, or more beautiful,  
Or filled with the heavenly spirit,  
While the sea spits at us all day long in her worried  
Dress,  
But especially entering the night and languishing in  
Crepuscle when she is especially beautiful  
And she really has nothing for us but all of these folklores  
That are all blue in the face,  
And I have really only been contemplating Alma's eyes anyways:  
How they go so far back in their folk memoirs anyways:  
How it is that they transcend the theme parks of the smiling alligators  
And the sad theme parks,  
And maybe her body hums and purrs anyways: but I only have  
This,  
An unopened letter clinging to itself alongside the perpetual roadways:  
And maybe it is that I will never know how I am,  
But I have know Alma, and her every part of her gets more beautiful than  
The others, perpetually,  
Even while the monsters get more immense and bothersome,  
But it cannot be adequately described,  
And I can but wish that there was an epitaph carved in the fading  
Stones of this world that pressed us together as if trying to squeeze  
Out the perfumes of wildflowers into the floor boards of the  
Carport,  
Bringing her and I together across the floorboards that ached and  
Clung together as the bisexual animals marched across their imperfections,  
Trumpeting with their snouts for a supermarket of more perfect unions.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Very Long Time

I have no more abracadabra- I can not raise  
The dead hearts of a beaten hand: I do this for no  
Plausible explanation,  
Death has already beaten me, and if you showed  
Up tomorrow I'm sure I couldn't look into your eyes;  
And yet you are ghostly, and you are haunted and  
Are made up of all the better contours of if  
I had really had your pets; but you are really so self-  
Enamored and have such a fresh paint-job,  
I doubt I could get you any wetter- I am just trying not  
To starve, so I wear sundresses out in the despotic  
Daylight to elicit hate crimes- I carve a harelip  
Into my pumpkin as I drink a cold beer-  
I want to hop suicide trains, I really want to play Russian  
Roulette- and Scott isn't really anymore-  
And you and the moon are certainly not real,  
And I am just trying to deliver the kill-daddy mail to  
The sea, though I can never hope to escape my masturbating  
Cannibalisms;  
And the day is a better ghost without any sound,  
And the traffic goes about as if in a séance of busy weekdays.  
Maybe they are trying to resurrect you and maybe they will,  
But I don't want to be there if they do,  
Because this is only my job- Once my two hours of grave digging  
Is over I'm done,  
And it really doesn't matter how beautiful the venal treasure  
Is I've found if its blueprints are still radio-active:  
I need a good girl, a care giving scientist, who will lie beside  
Me when all of this tomfoolery is over, juxtaposed, two  
Similar sounding cenotaphs which should last forever,  
Or at least for a very long time.

Robert Rorabeck

# For A Village Of Love

My throat feels like a cauldron of fireworks,  
And I laugh in my empty house which still moves like  
A zoetrope of coyotes in the woebegone desert:  
It still moves like the never mindful carousel,  
Because Alma was here today and we made love:  
Like a scratched record, we made love:  
Like a scratched record, we made love:  
And the airplanes flew  
And the waves continued  
As the airplanes flew  
As the waves continued  
And we made love until just the two of us  
Was all that was needed for a village of love....  
For a village of love.

Robert Rorabeck

# For All Mankind

They make fun for a little while  
And then they play is over: the go back to work,  
The rattlesnakes circulate:  
The airplanes are coming down, and then it rains;  
And when it rains, the shelters feel so warm,  
And even through the night the roses bud,  
And share their perfumes with the jasmines who  
Are up to so many wonderful things:  
And in the morning, sunlight, and more truancy:  
And the airplanes are like crystal chalices  
Exposing their blessed sacraments for all mankind.

Robert Rorabeck



# For All Of Night To Fall

Another daylight for you  
To believe in for an infinitude—  
Whilst the blue ants burrow, whistling  
Underneath of the bicycles—  
And if you had studied more—there would  
Be no reason for these  
Rain clouds—  
But the cities shape themselves like  
Diamonds  
Out in the rectitude—and then it is finally time  
For all of night to fall—  
And fall it does,  
Across the cities and their halls—  
And the words that you could never memorize finally  
Become dimmed,  
And the beautiful ships sink—  
And the demons enter in:  
But they are beautiful, crawling around  
Over the graveyards of you eyes and your skin.

Robert Rorabeck

## For All Of This Time

All of these times filibuster my lunchmeats and my sister  
Wishes that she was bought out by now, and now the yellow sun  
Kills through the bluest skies;  
And if I had a stream then it led to your bedroom, and all of the night  
Was young and filled with the bodies that couldn't sleep.  
While Alma was breathing and all the sheep were counting their  
Fine corsages and if was such a disgrace to really reciprocate by the avenues  
Of golden foreclosures;  
And now I have some plants to sell- I don't know how tall they grow,  
But they grow, and put them up beside your house in your rock garden  
And then you'll know while your daughter is sucking tit in the ashes  
Of her habits and I have loved other women by other men by you;  
And I'll be some mammals uncle while under all these haberdasheries of  
Planets I haven't thought of you; and now you think that I have money,  
Or that I have had the time,  
Put I just press my fists deeper into this earth and smile up past the rest stops  
And ask if you don't have an answer by now for all of this time.

Robert Rorabeck

# For All The Times Singing You Home

So my face has its own zeniths that the puppet strings  
Of gravity keeps pulling down:  
I look sadder and sadder, and I am the jubilant paradox  
Waiting outside of college classrooms  
As chubby as cauliflower who wants to get with his  
Cantaloupe:  
Of course the moon is pregnant: of course it is, but buy its  
Stolen religiosity, I can see you swimming all of the way  
Down the highway,  
And soon I know you will be getting off into the steep  
Jungles of another Catholic topiary: You will comb your  
Hair at each traffic light,  
And then you will come back on for me: because you only  
Have on destination, and that is to make it all the way toward  
This mouth who is for all times singing you home.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Another Harvest

The cloyness that I overuse is here,  
And you are now asleep Alma, just as brown and as  
Delicious as a caramel apple in a medieval fair,  
Or a penny in a wishing well:  
But there is still that witchcraft sealed in your  
Brown eyes:  
Sealed with the brown feathers that you lid your genies:  
And you want things,  
And these things come to you through hard work:  
And the lights stay on, but you have to pay a little:  
You tell me that you have never crested mountains:  
That you are not close to your sister,  
And that your man tells you that he can find a better woman  
On the next street corner;  
But I am just right here, collecting the dollar bills,  
Looking at you the way the doe looks  
At the stamp of a most solemn forest, knowing that footpaths  
It has made towards the heart and the  
Hidden springs:  
And maybe my son will have changed from prince into  
A spry animal,  
But like him and the other words that I cannot control,  
I do now own you, and yet I am right here,  
Still guarding the fire hydrants, and making them burn under  
The collect hopes of the sun:  
And I watch you turn around, a hundred bounds of sincere  
Daylight,  
As brown as the joys of the blowing wind who whistles ferally  
Over the virile and auburn clips of all the land  
Who waits in its yawning bed  
For another harvest.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Another Makebelieve World

Filling in things here, as if in a delta all of the traffic  
Streams to- past museums  
And down the luscious concrete slope of a  
Parking garage as smooth  
As a virgin's brow:  
Boats rowing on her body, park here when the current  
Gets off work,  
Looks at things that might be sold basking in the cooling  
Shadows underneath the overpass  
With the Mexicans, the snakes, and the rainbows:  
It feels okay for a little while,  
Outside of high school- filibustering in the weeds,  
And the songs that come from them come out of  
Tune,  
But perfect and carrying on for a little ways  
The sad music the ants must here as they think of  
Her, galloping towards her ankles like  
Monoliths of reindeer,  
Holidays of natural monuments-  
For a little kiss, for a little sting- for her to recognize them,  
And then the little death  
And no more breathing- ants have lungs no more,  
As they recognize their queen stepping from the mowed  
Grass and across the street  
Like another god leaving their graveyard,  
Leaving their home for another make believe world.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Another Man

Up in the air where no one lives,  
And then looking down  
And feeling humbled- Remembering a house  
That doesn't stand anymore,  
A forest that burned- her body  
Left for the buzzards at the stone, the knight  
Strung up in parts,  
In parts eaten by witches: the soft motors that  
Purr,  
Robot engineers on the tight ropes of their  
Quest,  
The petals falling away in the game of love,  
And then it is all over-  
There is nothing left to do, but to reside,  
To wait out the storm, as the cats have their own  
Dreams in the aloe,  
Beside the carport where the rebar lays stacked,  
And Christmas is over-  
And someone's mother is there, kneeling, cursing,  
Or praying,  
But waiting for another man to come home.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Another More Fortunate Of A Night

Crossing and recrossing the panhandles  
We sing like jet planes to orchards: we sing as if we would  
Have liked our father to sing to us;  
And it all becomes a lesson better left unexplained: As Alma  
Resaddles home to her old scars  
And open wounds- the cars that pistil there into junkyards  
Overly exhumed from all of Mexico,  
The airplanes crossing borders sweet on her- while her secrets haunt  
Under the highly mortgaged roof of her father:  
Her mother Rosa cooks and recooks dinner; but beside the telltale  
Fireside of the same old television, it looks all right:  
And if there are monsters, they are monsters better left to be battled  
For another more fortunate of a night.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Another Year

And a castle on a sandstone cliff  
Surrounded by dragons who are ejaculating flames  
On some desk in the middle of high school  
Where the poor prince mopes—  
Motes of crystal stars and plastic tears:  
I know what he is feeling, falling in love with the milky way  
Of her skin—  
As she goes and kisses in her car—paper snowflakes fall  
On the hoods of toads:  
It lasts all sophomore year, jelly-fish and sponges  
That weep and sting, but never think of all of this—  
Carried by the waves as if by their roller-rinks of  
Mothers—  
Sea urchins beneath them as red as the Siamese jewelry  
Decorating her bosom—broaches pressed in her  
Brazier—She comes up to another slide  
And the sunlight collects around her like hungry grasshoppers  
Before she goes down for another year.

Robert Rorabeck



# For As Long As Men Can Remember

I want to describe the flowers that they keep giving  
The dead;  
It is quite common knowledge to some men: men who work  
On boats and float in rivers:  
Then they are like the song in her throat when she is lying down  
And bathing,  
Her nudity the unchaste rises, the abrupt hotels and  
The estuaries of alligators and spikenard;  
And then she whispers to them how she must be cremated underneath  
The sky,  
Through the reedy shoulders where the canoes float like  
Softly rollerskating freckles;  
And she gives them the answers for all the pretty names of the bouquets  
That must be placed over her on the solitude of  
Unwakeful lines: That she should grow forever in a hoary sheath,  
While the flowers of our dictionaries will only  
Bloom for as long as men can remember her.

Robert Rorabeck

## For As Many Hours

I carry pictures of that miraculous cloak,  
But I will never make it that far to Canterbury,  
Or wherever;  
And it is almost as if now that I have gone down beneath the sea:  
I can see you changing her, Alma:  
I can feel you body almost disappearing the way it does at night  
Laying beside your man:  
You were pregnant with Michael when you were sixteen,  
While I was kicking out the lights of my own dream:  
There are many lights refracted deep in the beds of her sea,  
And you can pray to your virgin and sea them all while you lay  
Beside your man;  
And nothing that I have had to say about you has been enough to  
Describe a single one of your fingerprints,  
Or the way you breath around me the three days a week we have together,  
The nine hours a day:  
I think it must be more time than you spend consciously with your husband,  
But he will make you harvest the rabbits that you love anyways:  
Bring them over to my house and save them, and we can start a new family;  
And the sea will love us especially,  
And we can still work together nine hours a day,  
And sleep for as many hours together for so many nights.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Awhile Of Nothing

Often in clothes as vague as my soul,  
I step out enthralled in the traffics as brilliant  
As Christmas:  
The mothers and their daughters are living large,  
Fawning, and making quick work out of  
Their meals:  
I am captivated with this as much as I am with  
Vampires,  
But it all seems to be a trick of the old woods:  
Going further in and slumbering with the carcasses  
Of overturned circus and the animals  
Who can only breathe in the moonlight which  
Gives them a path to follow the terrapins out again  
And into the backyards of high school  
Where we took days off and made love to her while  
Her husband, returned from Mexico,  
Was on the job of digging pools as thick as diamonds  
For the peers we use to know, and jeer with as  
The fireworks resonated with pinfire constellations  
For a while of nothing in the undetermined sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Azure Hours

Replace blue with azure,  
Her apathy with sure romance,  
Your scars with angelic beauty, and there  
You are: You're a poet now  
So sell your lips and tongue for potatoes  
And chives-  
Drive slowly down streets with girls with  
Slender vased legs: Those girls are French-  
No matter if they aren't;  
And by nature, they know so many words for love:  
Suckle them like flowers. Invite them into your  
Car- Tell them it is such and such a propitious  
Hour, and they'll know just by the look in  
Your eyes exactly who you are.  
Take them to a graveyard, any one, and tell them  
Jokes that weep and lactate under the moon,  
And they'll respond with frivolous and unhealthy  
foreplay; but it suits you fine as red velvet,  
Like the tongues of Catholic dolls, and if that's  
Who they are your eyes are closed;  
But don't take it too seriously, since now nothing  
Is exactly empirical.  
You can imagine them as generals in the Dolphin's  
Army, spurring you like witch's spurs, sweating  
Deep southern folklore the kind that became popular  
During Reconstruction-  
Remove their delicates like prayer flags whipped away  
From the darnedest Himalayan summits;  
And give them silver spurs and love bites like pugilistic  
Sirs: Gothic or feral, one or the other- Why now you  
Are studied reptilian. You breathe azure fire. Skip all your classes,  
Because you are a genius especially in the rains-  
Sleep on all your neighbors yards,  
Hunt on four legs- Forget to wear school  
Colors; and if you ask the alligator he will take you  
Across the canal to the other world donned in the brotherly  
Shadows;  
Or he will devour you- Either way you'll get there-  
Remove her social instrumentations,

Marriage ornamentations, and swing with  
Her on the swings; or just gather by the lake where everyone  
Else is baptizing,  
Or underneath the desert graveyards where your grandmother  
Is walking,  
Or floating like the hummingbirds,  
And just stare and stare into her azure eyes  
For azure hours.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Both Of Us

Alma:

The day was ours, but we did not enjoy

It,

Together:

I fought beside the water cooler by myself,

Until I found your eyes:

Smiling,

Smiling, and not at my idiot of idiot cousin:

But when we sat

Side by side like husband and wife

At lunch on that pitiful table outback of the

Fruiteria,

And I transplanted that little ring to your married

Finger and it made you laugh,

And you expressed your sadness at having children

Before knowing me,

But still was swayed by your desire to take

Michael to Disney World on his next birthday.

And still the airplanes swam as if it was your birthday

In their crosses of fire,

While everything that I had to say was failing,

As the orchards knew themselves by their own colors;

And only if I knew by that hour of loneliness,

And floated above its grave,

Taking your warm hand to my wounded chest, and

Blessed by still beating breath by your warm

Tardiness;

Then couldn't you tell by any of this that there wasn't

Any longer anytime for school,

Or our mutual misunderstanding of both of our languages,

While the bottle rockets shot off like salutes to the court

Where we could both be rhymed together and

Find reasons for both of us to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

## For Care Or Reason

Feeling unsure now that anything will happen

Between us:

I still like looking at your face, and your daughters face,

Like the Oracle of Delphi in a mug shot against the

Peg board:

Out in the natural habitat of spruce trees: out in the yard

Where the peacock dances for the foxes;

Does she know where I've hidden her eggs, where I've

Taken them off to the zoo, while the clouds baptize

In the rains- and the carport glimmers like a shroud

And you are taking refuge in there with

The husked shells of conquistadors: now you can wash your

Dishes and your clothes in them, and comb your hair a thousand

Times,

As in the somnolence of all the rains there seems to make some

Kind of reason, and I can smell your firm architectures of your

Body as it is folded inside that very shelter, with the washing

Machine, and with your daughter-

And it is all I need for care or reason.

Robert Rorabeck

## For Different Occasions

Locked inside their cars for a long while  
Even children who haven't learned to spell see  
The make-believe beauty the sun lights  
Anonymous birthdays in the trees- shoppers  
Walking to and from the malls,  
The green avenues braided occasionally through  
The concrete-  
They feel her on their skin, their mother-  
Gone away- even though they cannot see her.  
Airplanes and birds barrette the sky  
For different occasions.

Robert Rorabeck



# For Each Other

I don't know anything about their  
Better sorrows:  
All of the Mexicans who were my better  
Uncles are  
Shedding tears:  
Because,  
All of the eagles have eaten the black snakes  
Who  
Use to make love amidst their  
Crops of Jalapenos-  
But I will not cry,  
Because this is not my sorrow:  
I am back in high school- again,  
Repeating the same memory I dream about  
Every night  
As the moon tries to steal the tides,  
And all of my muses have flown away in  
The mouths of airplanes-  
And I cannot remember her name, or why  
I cried for her  
But every night I still sleep underneath the  
Hood of the heavens-  
And I know that if I do not cry for her,  
And she does not cry for me- At least,  
Sometimes, we still cry for each other.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Even Brighter Fields

In the art class of your eyes there was a fire,  
When all of the kindergarteners were on a fieldtrip  
To the communal wishing well-  
Then you still couldn't even see me, but you  
Thought of the insouciant canal your day laborers  
Dug for you, and to your backyard which made  
Shipping your gifts easier;  
And they laid out busier poems for you an  
Cracked oysters on their bare chests underneath  
A sky that was a blue junkyard and even the  
Blue birds came down your avenue bringing gifts  
To place underneath your armpits hoping that  
They could birth their young there: you were a  
Virgin at this time, and there was no central air-conditioning  
In your house: there were bars on your windows,  
But the sun wasn't as hot; it still evaporated the pleasant  
Vapors in your yard, and in the winter you went to  
See your great uncle in Clearwater, but there was  
Only more paper snowflakes and more tears for me.  
I sometimes haunted your palmettos with a  
Dwarf, but you became more and more busier and more  
And more indoors- and soon you left those daydreams  
For even brighter fields of even more brilliant forget-me-nots.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Fear Of Doing Wrong

For fear of doing wrong,  
I have done none for many years,  
And it has made me hungry  
And aware of all the strange women in the world  
Walking about like transmogrified deer  
In the shopping malls,  
Leaping like infant sun coils  
Halfway dressed in the tennis courts,  
Or outside in the green lawns surrounding  
Their rented domiciles,  
Though I have forgotten that certain whistling,  
That trilling call from the back of ones throat,  
Which takes sometimes years to master,  
To turn their heads my way,  
To start their hearts beating like  
Little frightened birds careening amidst  
The power lines,  
Chased by the persistent hawk:  
Sometimes I see them calmly skipping rope  
And hopping through the a labyrinth  
Outlined in chalk,  
And I would have liked to stop what  
I'd been doing to join them,  
To bring together in so many ways  
Nature's harbingers of life:  
Here it is, and there it was now,  
But to do so would certainly be  
Some kind of wicked folly,  
For I have tried it before, and it all went bad,  
And now the pain lingers:  
A mark, a scar, an unpleasant scent,  
So in this spring, as the cherry trees blossom  
Like opening silk vests,  
I can only walk by and watch the fruit  
Fall criminally from its bowers,  
Leaving me to walk away empty handed,  
For fear of going some wrong course,  
Leaving young smiles to linger in sadness.



# For Forgiveness

Alone in a bankrupt Spain- How I look at  
You; it's like I'm locked out of the house wearing  
My stuff for Halloween way back when  
I still had friends and potential; I'd kicked out all  
The lights and hid from the cops,  
And if you didn't come like something trained,  
Came into the beating penumbras of what wasn't  
Real- And you were everything, just the perfect shadow  
Doing what she was trained- How your body was like  
A bag of free sugar to me,  
Dabbed on your like an addicted hummingbird,  
In ways that couldn't spell, went on all along you until  
I became dehydrated, and realized everything I said  
Was failing with the dawn- Handcuffed on your blue  
Mowed lawn, and weren't you inside moaning like a leggy  
Tide with your stuff for better boys, a new holiday of  
Things,  
Christmas under the tree tackling your dining saints,  
Loving your godly sailors through the tides of your bed sheets,  
Two houses with wet paint; and when the mailman came  
With misspelled gifts for you, lifted by the eager tongues of  
Other admirers, you let us in with the ants crawling  
And at the breakfast of a hung over sky, all you had to offer  
For forgiveness.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Good And All Night

Burned into the reasons of being, all the old words fit  
Into the new graves:  
The infinites wake up cooing like eager gas tanks;  
And your breasts I wonder how it feels to feed under the old  
And Spanish ships,  
Eclipsed by the green skies; and all of the waves out in the  
Combing mess,  
Worshipping the migratory patterns, while mothers slip away  
And weep beside the canals dredged up by man;  
While my words try to recall her number, and the cars  
Cross the land,  
Until once again the city is made impotent and polite,  
And the cheap, cheap dollar's worth of kite pulls on its lovers  
Wrist,  
Tugging like a displeased goldfish trying to leave into the darker  
Goodbyes for good and all night.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Heaven's Sake

Unconquered sunlight falling where I planned to  
Live:  
In Saint Augustine—up next to the saintly giving—  
In a trailer park lock-stepped  
Accounting to the orchestras of moonbeams in  
Her insouciances of ghettos:  
While, then—she is living right here—  
Brown skinned apogee:  
How long will it take her to find her place,  
As she moves up into her busied  
Holidays—  
And the nights of wherever bleed down around her,  
And the traffic whistles in her ears:  
She will be beautiful wherever she is-  
And the sun will give,  
And the moon will give,  
And the sun and the moon will give and take:  
Even if it is not as beautiful as the both of them were  
In our memories—  
I hope it will be enough, finally, and for heaven's sake.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Her

Cheeks stained with the tears of baseball  
That somehow Alma cannot see:  
I told her I have all of these scars in her car:  
She laughed at me,  
And she let me kiss her, and for awhile to hold her hand,  
While all the other cars moved as if in a fraternity of  
A band:  
And the clouds did whatever they were doing:  
She said that we could only be friends; that she must stop  
Reading my poetry,  
But then we made love, and we made love again:  
The forest opened into the glades that sang for the affections of  
Her eyes,  
And when she drove away from me again, across the  
Parking lot of the fruiteria, that was when I went back into  
My own tomb and waited for her to call for me,  
As some times she does:  
She becomes a wetted mariposa when we are alone together,  
Her brown skin prettier than anything I laid eyes upon in  
Highschool;  
And I just want to take pictures of her pretty feet and hands,  
Juxtaposed with my working scars, and the dirt in my nails:  
I want to show how she can become an airplane for any man  
Who opens his eyes upon her,  
Even though she will only take away so few,  
Her promises as finicky as birthday candles; but she makes  
Me glad that I had to suffer for so long,  
And that my silent art is so pitiful if unabused, because now  
It can all be for her- she can be my insufferable muse,  
And the affluence of the world will never  
Off color us at all,  
And we will swing together without echoes; and if I still had  
A shadow, it would only be for her.

Robert Rorabeck



## For Her Day At School

I want you to remember my classroom with great joy  
Even as the frogs go singing across the rebar  
And your mother is falling down, stung by the open  
Extension cord after doing the laundry—  
She is like an acrobat practicing her Pieta—  
And the world is conjoined around her into  
Siamese twins—the night becomes the hemisphere  
And leaps across the canal—  
Where inside something is waiting for metamorphosis  
Forever and it comes and comes—  
Minnows pressed against the shallows like bathtubs of  
Submarines—and other pretty images all awakening alike  
To get a look at her as the sun rises—and she draws  
Herself from her bath like an angel beginning to practice  
For her day at school.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Her To Love Me

So long have I had to resend my sins of love,  
Packed away in the glove box or  
The attics for better, and less precarious men,  
Considering the heredity of my complexion,  
And the state that unabashed sunlight puts me in;  
But I was beautiful once:  
I was beautiful once in a fairytale halfway through  
High school  
When I ran away to Michigan,  
When S- made crocks of clay and won the  
Irish lottery;  
But what was I doing all this time, hoping for the  
Quiet interludes of beauty between the street lights,  
And the soccer field's esplanades:  
Oh- Oh, I loved her: I loved her, her indescribable eyes,  
Or her amber Latin eyes,  
Light the drunk street lights for pirates,  
But it wasn't enough; it wasn't enough;  
And the cops come and shine their lights all back and forth  
All over our amusements, but it wasn't ever enough;  
And I loved her, oh god I loved her,  
But now she just street races coffins:  
She does her thing, she sells her thing, and she is pierced  
Like a moth dying in the sepias of your church yard-  
And I loved her,  
And her voice is always singing more easterly,  
But it wasn't ever enough that I loved her enough,  
So I sling my wine,  
And cry with my face buried in the graveyards of my plaid  
Shoulder blade,  
As the cops come shining their lights for Christmas,  
Because my presents were never enough  
For her to love me.

Robert Rorabeck

# For I Swear For Both Of Us

The day turns out like my body sitting on a love seat  
In the armpit of Southern Boulevard and Old Dixie: I am now living  
In historical West Palm Beach, in a house I paid for  
With cash,  
And Alma has been to my house twice, like the cat who comes through  
The whole in the fence:  
Alma, if you could have seen her eyes as she was cleaning herself underneath  
The blue umbrella this morning: I saw her after I had showered and  
Was trying not to look at myself to endearingly:  
She cleaned herself, as pregnant as the snow as it was disappearing,  
And you must have been at the market, Already:  
Alma: Today, you called Charlie Robert, which is my name, Alma:  
And last Saturday or Sunday you said you had something you wanted  
To tell me,  
After I swore to you that I loved you, but you didn't tell me what it  
Was;  
And today, Alma, you told me that I knew nothing, only that I had upset  
You- While I threatened to get drunk and to go straight to your house  
And sleep on a nearby roof, like I had done the other night,  
But you compromised and promised instead that you would come and  
See me tomorrow:  
Alma: what are we going to do tomorrow, while the cats sleep,  
And the fairs migrate like butterflies across our America,  
And you study to become a citizen, of this country that has become our  
Soul,  
For I swear for both of us that it is another great land.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Ingmar Bergman

With others old and gray,  
Or not so old at all—Maybe they will  
Mostly be fair haired and young,  
If it should be a tragedy. Who knows?  
But this is known, I will die some day  
When Death comes to collect that part of  
Me that he sees fit to remain,  
To gather me up— a silhouette  
Of the somber procession upon the hill  
Backlit by a tired sun— The busy insects will  
Eat what is left, the scuttling carnivores,  
Nature's vacuum cleaners which God created to  
Keep things cleaned, so there are no leftovers  
As everything is satisfied—  
Away from the anthills and plaguing swarms we  
Will go, being grinned out by our own death masks  
As we leave, bidding adieus—  
Those heartless grins ex-lovers put on for show-  
Go down with that orb if Death leads us there,  
But who knows where Death goes, except that  
He will take us with him to the other side,  
His black robes billowing importantly, for  
He is the herald of our great king, his  
Skeletal hand pointing ever onward like a compass, onward in the  
Shade which is so very quiet where no hearts beat,  
No blood flows— And maybe our procession will never  
End. We will just keep going down in some great viewless stairwell  
Beneath the world until we forget that we ever knew the pains of settlement.  
In that abyssal fjord where Death will ditch us,  
And leave us to the tricks of his shadow as he dives back up  
To collect some more...  
But this is known— that one day I shall die  
And so shall you. My mother will die...  
And on that day of the week people will be born  
And the people already there shall live— People will go out and make love.  
On that Friday a movie will come out you will never see  
And there will be a book written that would have made me cry...  
And the sun will come up afterwards like it did for us,  
But not really so similar all in all, for our sun will be dead,

And this new sun rising is only for the living. Perhaps,  
Though, we shall not care at all, knowing that these gifts are  
Laid about to gladden the living, as we find newly indescribable  
Things to attire our naked souls, or maybe we will not remember  
At all. Maybe we will be like the egg in the nest in the crook of a branch  
Of an expansive tree. Laying there in our nooks waiting to hatch again  
To be filled with new thoughts, like the river's changing gown,  
We will become again something we never before were.  
But one thing is certain,  
That one day you shall die  
And I shall follow you, before or after,  
It matters little as we shall all accord to Death.

(For Ingmar Bergman)

Robert Rorabeck

# For Its Second Of Infinity

If I bought my own clothes,  
Would you cherish me in the day:  
Would I come out just as sunny as the workers  
Who trouble themselves dallying on your vines;  
But I think I would rather be sunning naked with my dogs,  
Because I can smell you better this way;  
And this is a sunnier sort of play, crawling to you on  
My fours:  
Not knowing how to open doors to you, I leap through windows:  
I span towards you like bottle rockets who whistle for  
Your throat,  
And won't you let me pierce you like an arrow with your  
Name on it,  
Perfumed in the grotto with the tadpoles of my religion by  
Which I worship you,  
And even these over-kind words dissolve just as your life  
Is going backlit into the crepuscule of its hidden cove,  
So there isn't anymore than a perfect memory  
That for a second flickered in a shallow pool for your eyes  
To see and for you to come back to perfectly  
When you are trying to conjure up a friendship that burned  
For its second of infinity.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Love Of You

The day was long and hot for the old man,  
And he was very lonely never having  
Accomplished anything:  
You had never given him your love,  
The holidays of your children on fieldtrips  
Or feeding elephants at the zoo:  
He used to have dreams of being in charge  
Of the remote control boats well beside the  
Hungry lions din,  
Just to watch the young mothers and their  
Truants licking snot and cigarettes,  
Because they would remind him of you;  
But you didn't even know who he was,  
And he grew lettuce in his backyard underneath  
The clothes line and the evil serpents in  
The apple tree  
Who were always telling terrible lies that turned  
Up true every time an airplane flipped across  
Or a kidnapper drove up and down the street;  
But you never called:  
He got a cat and named it after you,  
And you never knew until now how empty his  
Christmas tree was, Sharon,  
With gifts he could never give to anyone,  
And what trespassed through your life, your husband  
And the segues of all of his foals underneath your  
Saddle is not the point of this story:  
The night was warm when he died, the forever temptress  
Was out doing her laundry underneath the  
Plaedies of Kalamazoo; and maybe she loved him.  
Maybe every woman in the universe loved him,  
Even the busted superheroes,  
But he never thought of them as he was going through  
With the gettings done with whatever he was doing;  
And his parents were prematurely drunkards and gray,  
And after nine lives his cat died,  
But he kept on keeping for you;  
And that night he had a fever and dreamt of pinball,  
And you were always there feeding quarters to the machine.

But wherever you were really, Sharon,  
Is not the point of his story;  
It is that you were not there, and died:  
You were out seeing movies,  
Or swinging deep in the backside of parks,  
So far in your censors that you passed over the  
Graveyards and then back again,  
Tasting the luck of both sides;  
It was almost as if you'd twice lived, but that  
Is not the point:  
He was gone in the morning and the sun sounded  
No siren,  
While the goldfish he'd won for you played too  
Close to surface of the shallow pools in his  
Bedroom where the clawed ghosts of his gray  
Cats were still purring attentive,  
Their voices almost screaming the sharpest weathers  
Of the lips of the steepest mountains,  
Living longer than they should have,  
Returning back again across the canals no man or  
Cat should have to come return across  
For love of you.

Robert Rorabeck



## For Lovers In A Feathery Rain

I want a Mexican wife:

I want to trick my white wife, and all the things she would

Have wanted from me,

To fill her condominium with the affluence of my sweat:

Now my introversion and dysfunctions may finally have done

Me some good:

To see beauty for real every day slipping out of her clothes

Across the canal,

Haloed by the repercussions of helicopters, striped by airplanes

And the reflections of school buses in the middle of a

Mirage miles and miles away;

Here they turn out better than anything that can be bought and put into

A home,

They clean up better than boys who hold your love in the seconds

Of crepuscule,

As we all leave each other and the things we've procured,

And go into the divinity of the body's infinite sink hole, and there

See for real the things that we have

Collected,

That are spoken in the lubrications of an unconscious mouth;

And my wife is there baking in smoke

Her skin as delightful as a baseball diamond; and her children with her

Who I will collect with her like the echoing

Laughter of a Ferris Wheel as it turns for lovers in a feathery rainstorm.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Many Years Onward

Where do those eyes fall  
That will one day fall on me?  
Where does the head lay that  
Will in time lie beside mine?  
Where do the lips breathe which  
Will tomorrow press again my neck  
To say my name sweetly  
Like the first evidence of Spring?

Not in this misplaced season,  
Where the stamp of pain lays justified  
Upon my heart,  
In these cold evenings where my body  
Numbs in loneliness,  
So that I cry out in feeble words  
Like some ancient wounded thing  
In the sorrowful hollows of its everlasting cave—

Come to me now through the  
Swirling limbo of these timeless mountains.  
Like a golden fairytale part these dispassionate  
Curtains of the darkest loneliness,  
And lay the direction of your soul upon me  
Awakening me with a kiss conducted by your eyes.  
With warm hands enfolding,  
Show me the evidence of God,  
And after all this time I will come alive again  
And fuse with you in the brightest burning  
So that after we are gone,  
Like some stars now above,  
Our passion will leave its glow as evidence  
For many years onward

Robert Rorabeck

# For Me To Move

Recorded through the pale subway,  
Losing myself here—another exegesis as red  
As Mars—  
The life unnatural, as far away from the lures of  
Middle class housewifery as one can be—  
And finding myself in a lazy manner as I turn  
Thirty six—  
Once again the fox who has disregarded the  
Savage advertising of the grapes—  
Though in their cages of cities, the vixens move,  
Spilling into the orifices  
And the ballrooms of their zoos.  
I watch them from an unnaturally safe distance—  
An impossible distance for me to move.

Robert Rorabeck

## For More Important Things

There are no more wells here- in this fair  
City, worth looking down to, though you can cast your  
Loose change and wishes  
Into many of the fountains that I have sat next to  
In the faux paradise,  
Watching Alma kissing her daughter, remembering old  
Loves that I have also had,  
Mentioning apple orchards because they are worth  
Mentioning in times like these-  
Trying to win her goldfish, even speckled, even though  
The fair is gone,  
And the lions have done their roaring- they now  
Paw at the loose armor of katydids; the fireworks have  
All returned to ash,  
And the tourists are busily dining- and soon you will  
Return to your dreams as well,  
As the clouds are puffed into the stars by the wishful sea,  
And the wishes that little girls now  
Soon disappear, as they leave their bicycles for cars,  
And keep pressing their bodies to the coins  
Tossed for more important things.

Robert Rorabeck

## For More Than One Week

Busted up over the hedgerows of paramours trying  
To fend for themselves,  
Shivering in their fleecelless shoulders:  
Without a good or a bad king, and no sign of heritage or  
Its loot:  
They mime the green fountains of cypress,  
Swaying for a little while in disbelief- Only going for so  
Many more flirtations  
Until they are hung out to dry, limp as shaven lambs across  
The creek,  
Where red throated minnows kiss their buttocks repeatedly,  
Stamping their heliotropic promises the size of  
Newborn ants to the flaxeness of overturned caesuras  
Who have never given them assurance that they will be there  
For more than one week.

Robert Rorabeck

# For My Night Of Nothing

No more poems for my night of nothing,  
My soul of nothing—  
I am lost underneath the bus outside of the  
Woebegone daydreams of a high school  
I am still bleeding from—  
The airplanes seem to tackle themselves,  
Trying to devour their silver, winged  
Jewelry while seeing down their throats  
To give dark red roses that don't  
Exist to the stewardesses who are flying in  
Them anyway—  
As then Christmas happens and  
Then the summer-  
Two things leaping in a zoetrope,  
Like friends taking the place of lovers—  
Like a sky pretending not to be in love with  
The sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# For My Songs To You Unlistening

Pitiless night, undress me to no one,  
And publish me in the pit of an entombed unicorn,  
Throbbing with the still life deep beneath the sea:  
Take me to museums of mausoleums  
And play my quieting face to all the shade of empty playgrounds  
Where the chalk no longer steps:  
Where the silent voices have it right, because I am sure that I  
Am doing nothing either good nor properly:  
But I will soon have my mute house and my boneless dogs,  
And I will yet think of you turning, turning like bright candles  
In the air-conditioned Mandela's of your cars;  
And I will think that there still may be time to tramp barefooted  
Underneath the cones of slash pine trees,  
And to listen to the old and yet extinct teachers making love in  
The sad groves and overgrown parks, because that is just  
What they were made to be doing; and this night is just  
Another night for my songs to you unlistening.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Night To Fall

We're going to have a good time,  
Even though all of Spain goes missing,  
We can go to the drive in movie  
Theatre in Lakeworth ever night:  
And experiment on her jawbone:  
This just because of where I love in the  
Country that is America:  
Coming from Shanghai, you will be my  
Wife, and maybe my muse—  
I will not tell you of the other muses come  
Before this: □  
We can spend time together near the sea,  
Beneath the red and yellow helicopters  
Up above in their bright estuaries—  
Or this is just a plot meant to dissemble beneath  
The stars, or I can touch your knee,  
And recall how we made love in bed together,  
As nature echoed, and the housewives  
Called to one another,  
Like elk bugling in the forest—plundering their  
Rich stanzas above the earth,  
Dressed in the slips of their ethereal nature,  
And waiting for night to fall.

Robert Rorabeck



# For Nothing But

The city cries as it is gone, and I am coming into this world:  
I who have two sisters:  
I who have been to this Disney World: Disney World of senior  
Trips, what were they teaching us:  
While the herded us onto the splendiferous bus, doctors and lawyers  
And each to his own:  
Oh what, oh what were they teaching us;  
And I can remember you there underneath the free spaces  
Of Space Mountain, Sharon:  
But oh what were they teaching us while I did ecstasy and your  
Last thoughts where of your late father: oh, Sharon;  
Oh how do I think of you now, while the city burns up its quantrills  
So high up on its windowsills. While your first and last daughter  
Is almost forgotten, while your co-captain, what's her name,  
Shows us pretty and well lit chambers of her equaled and well lit house,  
While the city burns down beneath us and I give her tongue;  
All the prettiest of whores who are out tonight on the pretty terraplains  
Blushing with hibiscus, asking for nothing but getting some.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Nowhere Again

I get to leave for nowhere again. I am  
Planning to take off for the show;  
It is the best way, when you are rather the  
Monster, or at least it is who you remind her of  
She tells you on the other end of the phone,  
Halfway to Spain  
Too close to the air-conditioning unit to be understood  
Or felt good about.  
The truest light bulbs are naked and have been  
Around so long they've never changed; there is  
Something lucky about them turning just more  
Amber above the heads of a succession of  
Girls; perhaps they are the ancestry of a great show,  
And they have loved their men.  
You can even hear them here singing their bawdy  
Limericks, kicking down the halls to the rowdy  
Orchestra and its fraternity of men;  
Hanging here, near the dust and different kinds of  
Spiders, it is another attempt to think of her,  
The one denoted by the mind of a whole filament  
Another bereaved heart palpitating in a backroom  
Without furniture, waiting her to return to change  
Her clothes,  
To smell her a little while around the hot glass,  
And to see her from this vantage speaking of ambergris,  
Powdering up and waiting for the clad elegant men to  
Do to her as they certainly will.

Robert Rorabeck

# For One Moment

Days percussion all week,  
And white men take turns climbing  
Ladders,  
And turning the other cheek:  
And it isn't long until they are perfectly  
Fitted in the jobs and punctuations,  
And the sweet nuances of suburbia:  
They look at the same,  
And the city builds all up,  
The butterflies first metamorphosis and  
Die:  
My sister went away upon the back of  
A bull who happened to be some  
God,  
And I can't remember who I am,  
Or how I got here,  
But the portraits of the vinyl interior  
Of classic cars aren't half bad;  
The hallways of high school the echoing  
Coffins of the early labors slipping  
Into the auriferous sounds,  
Like trumpets that bled out into the air  
And then fell like death knells  
Into the ground,  
The earth tombs and crèches of popinjay  
Profits;  
But all of this is meaningless when all  
I wanted was all but to  
Hold her hand for one moment.

Robert Rorabeck

# For One Of Them To Turn

Barbie's around the cloy  
Flutes of spears,  
Forgotten sisters of girls in  
College, like Disney World,  
Undulations of the fun rhythms  
The saber tooth tigers  
Enjoy,  
Looking up all night long,  
The stars like a cane field of  
Burning rum,  
Hurrying together in the stores  
Already torn down  
In ellipses of dog tracks  
Masticating off the main  
Route to  
Canterbury,  
The mountains rising up like  
Steps, like fountains,  
Where they sit to enjoy like  
Statuaries in a  
Game of graceful degrees  
Everything that they  
Are expected to  
Learn,  
As I watch this scantily clad harem  
Unconditionally,  
Just hoping for one of  
Them to turn.

Robert Rorabeck

## For Only I

I have waited so long for you to walk away;  
Salivated for your stilettos' echoing, so I could speak  
Monosyllabically with the women from their graveyard,  
In tattered passing notice the beauty extinct but under pine,  
And lulling in naked enjambment like fallen whispers  
In those dunes; This, if I were a better poet, I would see  
Laying there, the brightest corsage upon the hood of the  
Rusting Chevy, inaugurated by flies: This plastic bloom,  
A cheap discovery no more beautiful than a doll's nudity,  
But I find it here: A better place to be with my knocked-out  
Childhood barefooted down the diapered lanes: On bicycling  
Holidays where the moon is a pregnant seraph courting earth,  
And each wave's caesura a needing thrust; This I orchestrate  
With my conducting phallus, undulating forlornly away from  
Your instinctual prom; These things you have no words to see,  
I will speak  
For only I....

Robert Rorabeck

# For Other Joys

Greenness of walls, of fields and rivers, of the envy of  
Foxes: all day long waiting for the wash down the  
Long throats of mountains into parlors  
Or arcades  
Of old muses: as Colorado gets dirty where my mother  
Was born, up the silent switchbacks of Golden,  
Up the long tailfins of her brother's mountains  
As the days got lost  
And the snows melted and she dreamed of beautiful  
Swans between the wet pages where she'd been crying-  
As in the sky, the airplanes flew with all of those  
Stewardesses bound to be jumping overseas,  
Their noses bleeding, their hearts pounding fortunately  
For other joys.

Robert Rorabeck

## For Right Now

Now eventually we'll have to peel away from mountains,  
While the narrow gauge railroad still takes her tourists  
Back and forth between Silverton and Durango,  
Even while I went back to her and climbed her peaks  
After running down in a lightning storm  
Not wishing to hear what the stones had to gossip to me:  
That is how far up I've been Sharon,  
And that really is all that I've seen:  
That I have been above your bed by which you made your child on,  
While my body was all alone and vagabonding;  
And it has been ages since I have field tripped to a museum,  
Except I took Alma to the zoo a week ago while my  
Parents were losing the fruit market,  
And then we kissed in the darkness: and we kissed:  
Before that I slept atop of Alma's roof and cursed and blessed her,  
And before that I skipped school and took off all of my clothes  
All the way down to my under wear and stole a raft from  
A middle class pool and luxuriated in the canals you never tasted:  
But on Friday I smelled Alma's perfume:  
It lasted all the way down to Miami; and she only weighs a hundred  
And ten pounds,  
And she is younger than my youngest sister and more beautiful:  
And that is no exaggeration, and that is why I write to her:  
Because I can take her in the morning, Sharon, because she loves  
Me even if she won't admit it,  
For all that I have written for her, but I can still remember you,  
While all of the houses sleep in their darkened abutments,  
Even though your perfume has disappeared into the abutments of  
Another eclipse I fear that I shall never taste,  
While Alma's lips are a well I can reach tomorrow:  
For she enriches me, and for right now I can live forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Such Awhile

Mother thinks there's something wrong  
Around my eyes,  
She should know, its her heredity:  
Too much caffeine and no sleep,  
Bad poetry, rhymes-  
I've been hibernating in a well of hallucination,  
Now look at my shadow swing across the  
Wall, like it did in kindergarten,  
It is the only thing that is real.  
I am reading Auden, six-hundred pages  
Is not easy, so intermittently I ejaculate  
On a green towel, on a cloud,  
And ask the simple colony of gods which sting  
And eat their own, if Rimbaud wasn't  
Real, but one of them, and Verlaine a kind of  
Courting thrill, the way the sunlight might often  
Fall but only when a body is alone,  
Reckless and on mowed grass, insects as azure  
As the bottom of airplanes exploring the sky.  
A glass of coffee between my legs, this little  
Dog wet from the thundershower which broke  
The horses until they trampled over arrowheads  
I stole and gave to her.  
Too many of my poems use the second person  
Pronoun to be anything but helplessly amateur,  
But if the roses I bought for you are still in the  
Infant's vase upon the window sill,  
They have turned brown for such awhile.

Robert Rorabeck



# For The Attentive Audience

Quivering in an entropy of  
Miles;  
While I really love you on  
The highway, Alma,  
The skeletons of the donkeys smile  
In their overturned avenues;  
Figuring out in their rock gardens  
With so  
Many towers  
Why it is that people have to  
Be frightened-  
On their birthdays  
As it is with so many  
Of their holidays  
And the curtains curl their lush toes  
For the  
Attentive  
Audience  
Who closes their eyes and smiles.

Robert Rorabeck

# For The Both Of Us

Cherry blossoms and the rum I hide  
Beneath the foldout couch-  
I dream that Diane loves me;  
And I don't sell fireworks: I hold out and  
Wait for her daughters to awaken on the shell-  
Rock road,  
Because I want to dance and flirt with them;  
I want to touch my own face and feel good about it;  
And the things that have died in their own sea  
Are dancing above it  
While I am still trying to swing, to breathe out for  
A long distance like a stewardesses flirting on her  
Fieldtrip to Spain;  
And I want my words to appear just as beautiful  
As a naked terrapin;  
I want them strung out and bawdy:  
I want them to undress my two awful muses and stroke  
Them until they come together like comrades in a game  
Saying my name;  
And I want to be a lost girl with dirty fingernails  
And tangles of curls knotted in the tall cabbages;  
And I want to see my own face and smile,  
And be blinded by the sea which is always crinkling like  
Uselessly wrapped presents under the naked fir trees:  
I want to be just as beautiful as you are for me,  
And I want to wake up tomorrow making love to you;  
And our children to follow waking up, scared  
And beautiful every morning before the bus to the sound  
Of our love making in the house at the tops of  
This impossible forest so we can climb up together  
And keep a look out for the both of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# For The Echoes Of The Wind

Turn off the fireflies and make  
The dragonflies into code words—  
Now I know who you are  
While I lie here working—  
And the subtle temperament of your temple  
Stands alone in the student ghetto  
Or the parking lots of your high school—  
Like a single dog left out after  
Christmas with only but a single rose  
In his teeth and to his name—  
He doesn't know any better—  
He has never been in love with anyone  
On the other side of the canal  
And yet the maidens still go as sleepily  
As most river otters-  
The banks of where their true knights  
Have abandoned them—  
And now there is no other echo for  
Them—their wind chimes have vanished—  
And their true loves have collapsed  
Knee deep into the cenotaphs of  
The graveyards—  
And there isn't much of anything left  
Save for the echo of the wind.

Robert Rorabeck

# For The Excuse Of Love

If I want to be fine,  
And set up to be found out by you,  
Half carousing the parking lot with a heron feather  
In my beard, chewing on something sharp,  
Patina-ed in the pure blindness of a mid-April  
Eclipse,  
And keying the choicest cars  
To give you somber orgasm underneath the palm trees,  
Or back at home air-conditioned on your adolescent bed,  
The ceiling fan masking your toss moanings,  
Then why do I keep at it like this?  
Pretending we're both in high school when my beard is  
Grey and knots entangle my eyes,  
When instead I should be tossing a football  
And lifting weights and looking less slightly grim,  
With more sunshine and acrobatics.  
I can't even believe that it's been twenty some odd  
Years since I was in Spain kissing the girl whose guitar I  
Stole, just like my mother's arrowhead lifted from the  
Dollhouse pastures and sent in a box to your address in the  
Cheering swamps:  
Yes, why do I keep on doing this, beating my little drums for  
Danny, and you a girl I almost knew,  
Slicking my beard like a beatnik squinting out in the brilliant  
Day, only halfheartedly waiting for the rain showers to roll in,  
Clicking my fingers like a gift when there is no one there,  
When the sorority has long gone off to the diner for  
Pigs in a blanket,  
And the truer poets have all rolled over like newborn puppies  
Down the greener pastures of their steeper embankments;  
And sadly, it must be said,  
You have taken his hand, and walked him into your boudoir,  
Like the inside of the purest shell I shall never see,  
Flecked by the perfumes of your agreement.  
I stand outside and relate to nobody what the emperor  
Has planned for the day,  
Those things I try my best to make up for the  
Excuse of love.



## For The Fireworks Show

I told you that I jerk off underneath my sister's  
Car three or four times a day for you,  
Alma, and your aunt said it was only natural  
While the students were moving as busy as you please  
Between their two or so classes of  
Love making,  
While Sharon was putting her hands on clay  
Never realizing that she would end up book ended between  
The highest and sweetest clefts in Colorado:  
Or that you would take a bus through the frontera and end up  
Here,  
As the gods zoomed and the white man made his bread off  
Your sweat and bones,  
Never hardly even realizing how beautiful you are:  
Immortal like a well who still feeds from the marrow of the  
Country of your childhood,  
A place you have taken me to once or twice while all the  
Rest of the world was sleep,  
And the rains came in staccato over the flash pan roofs  
Of all the cars waiting breathlessly for the fireworks show  
I wished that you would attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# For The Hungry Puppets

What I wanted for this:

A song of beauty to burn its effigy over

The loneliest graveyards,

As it seems to be for awhile a poem

In a crypt

Burning hungrily,

Waiting for the authorities to arrive,

Waiting for no one

And then someone- until it will finally be

Christmas,

As the faithful dogs run around in the

Spotlights,

As the spaceships look down, perhaps

Wishing to make love

To aircraft carriers- as this is just another

Thing called up to do its duty-

Species that is going nowhere, escaping

Nothing:

Families in the elbows of televisions,

I look at you now,

While your children grow up- become

Grandmothers and

Grandfathers, whilst my vision is nowhere

Grand,

As all of the spirits escape from Mexico,

As I've been killing myself for the hungry puppets,

As the paper snowflakes fall over

My very own grandmother- who, mind you,

Is only pretending-

As never you mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# For The Life Of Me

I shouldn't have made love to you,  
For I shrunk,  
In hiccupping seasons where the world turns  
Away; and I was cuckolded for good  
Reasons,  
Because, blandly I ate the cake before her  
Birthday, and ruined the party.  
All her cousins wept and made fun of me  
By getting naked except for the vocabularies I  
Hadn't the intelligence to learn,  
And they jested and held up mirrors,  
Until I could not open my eyes, and the witch  
Who had added the freshman fifteen to her jowls,  
Went three times around the palm tree,  
As if it were some ritual;  
But it was not Christmas, not even Halloween,  
But how I went down on her, because she  
Said something needed change;  
And I worked until it was good and cleaned,  
And left little gifts for her children around her knees,  
And they opened them on Christmas day but wept  
Because of how she refused to remain so  
Calm and pleased, and saturnine:  
She was Junoesque, that I learned, but  
Disinterested as a sated bee, lips plump and busted  
By the rimes of early-morning honey;  
And she flitted, and how I shrunk, until I could  
Swim away unperceived, and she lived for many  
Year anonymous, yet in his arms, her eyes in  
A book of pulpy dreams, I could not dream,  
Or think to write for the life of me.

Robert Rorabeck



# For The Love Of You

I've stolen things from stores that doesn't  
Exist but that was okay- that was even better,  
Because they were made broken anyways;  
And I love Johnny,  
And I love your cunt, and the hills up it;  
And I tell you what:  
I am not a fireman- I am not even a hanged man,  
But I will live forever-  
Or, I just want to live forever in the little velveteen  
Fires between your fairytale legs,  
Sharon;  
And wasn't that why you came to my classes,  
Sharon? Not because I was beautiful,  
But because I worked for something immortal,  
And that was for the love of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# For The One Who Really Does

When the night gets busied,  
How the airplanes sky, stretching like the velvet  
Canopies of hummingbirds across  
The classroom's constellations,  
Gliding while all other thoughts are forgot—  
Thoughts of Armageddon and creation,  
Of how we really got here,  
Like toads into carports,  
Like little girls into fairytales—  
While this poem spins around in the  
Delusions that do not have to exist for anyone  
Except for the one who really does.

Robert Rorabeck

## For The Owls And The Spiders

All of the Mexicans looked up to the moon,  
And I could not dissuade them into disbelieving in  
That old sphere,  
While the faeries that were still alive but  
Left unburied in their old hijinks seemed to disbelieve forever, or just  
Until the luminosity became too great,  
And they could only live there,  
Forever the lost boys into the headlamps of their  
Own cars—  
This was how it was seemingly forever frozen  
Just for the owls and the spiders—  
Or supposedly,  
Until it got too far out of hand,  
As their classrooms seemed to last forever,  
Clapping underneath the airplanes-  
Until it was over already—you see the sea had come home,  
Foaming headily all over the carport and into the recesses  
Without even one other thought for me

Robert Rorabeck

# For Their Amoral Truancy

This is the way I feel alone,  
And daydreaming-  
While the butterfly stays folded up after the metamorphosis  
Of its dance,  
And you are still not home yet- but the airplanes  
Are laying softly in their beds,  
And the serpent has floated up into its tree  
Where it tells so many pretty lies  
To all of the girls that happen to come its way-  
Giving them candied apples  
As gifts for their amoral truancy.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Their Makings Of Love

Piling up all of my desires before the threats  
Of loneliness,  
As pale as the happenstance of a song bird taken  
Under the river who cherished its bright energy,  
So now the beds are long and accumulative  
And they never stop until they get to the deltas of the sea  
Where airplanes are leaping like stones  
Too high up to see what they are wishing for:  
I don't think that they will ever come down, carrying  
The girls away from the green arcs I made for them  
While I pissed my pants in preschool;  
And they developed so beautifully baking like pies in  
Their grottos,  
Their female hands as right as instruments that fix around  
The hampers of laundry, doing the wishes for the men they  
Love,  
While I sing with the other frog princes in their driveway,  
And we make all the music we can before all of her fulfilled  
Wishes travel home,  
And gather her in special soft quadrants of the house especially  
Built for their makings of love.

Robert Rorabeck

## For Their Own Gods

I have written you alone,  
In Colorado- drowned out by all the tourism  
Who never sees the higher summits burned  
Where I have kissed you,  
And tattooed you to airplanes- and lost my soul,  
Slipping down,  
Metamorphosed, scarred, hung up in the alders,  
Watching the cold fires burning in the  
Armpits of careless stones placed there by  
Devils:  
And all of this wrecked and alone: the traffic  
Fibrillating, a valentines of families  
Washing cyclical- a chant to the reliable gods  
In their faithful architectures cartographed-  
While anemones articulate, washed there  
In the high mass of stone- and boys of  
Loneliness file out of church-  
The sky thunderously apoplectic, like an orchard  
Cremated before a diabolical lighthouse  
In a marriage thrown to the wolves love stricken  
Who are bloodily drowning for their own gods

Robert Rorabeck

## For This Too

I drink to swing sets and charley horses;  
In my loneliness I drink to anything, or I touch myself:  
And there are familiar intersections that I cross just  
South of prostitutions where I have written novels  
Where I left then,  
And I wonder if my mother can smell the liquor on my breath,  
But it is just how I have been trying to taste you,  
Waiting for you to write to me:  
I am scarred, but I am beautiful: I am a candle burning behind my  
Mother on her wedding day;  
And I want to be the beautiful kiss given to you,  
And I just want you to turn out for the show: you can bring  
Any of your men, or even your husband, while the waves catch the  
Light like cutlery in your kitchen when houses only cost a dollar,  
And your sister was still saving herself for another man;  
And this is just what we've been doing to pass the time  
While you've been too busy shopping;  
And I've been waiting for this too to pass.

Robert Rorabeck

## For Those Original Loves

I make these games out of a cannibalistic night:  
I eat myself across the grand highways and fjords where the  
Silliest and most beautiful of flowers  
Prove to have no lovers,  
And the goldfish sink: Oh, how the goldfish sink just before  
Your eyes,  
While your brown flesh wonders, and makes its wishes  
Up to the infinities of skies,  
And then moves away farther than even the most vibrant of  
Midways could ever move:  
And you become a queen before my eyes, migrating across  
The caesuras and billboards:  
Where will you go now but across the woebegone fronteras  
And there again to Mexico,  
Where you will reminisce and pine like an endless candle  
For those original loves that I will never know.

Robert Rorabeck



# For Those Original Loves That I Will

I make these games out of a cannibalistic night:  
I eat myself across the grand highways and fjords where the  
Silliest and most beautiful of flowers  
Prove to have no lovers,  
And the goldfish sink: Oh, how the goldfish sink just before  
Your eyes,  
While your brown flesh wonders, and makes its wishes  
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Robert Rorabeck

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And there again to Mexico,  
Where you will reminisce and pine like an endless candle  
For those original loves that I will never know.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Those Who Can Pay

I don't really want to save the world.  
I just want to buy a house,  
And sleep within it with my mother-mouse;  
And lie in the yard I'll mow  
My arms akimbo like a battered cross,  
And pretend to be Clint Eastwood,  
Or even better, Kate Moss:  
Because this really is your world,  
You'll drive in it, and you're the boss;  
I just got lost here somehow- You see,  
My ship hit turbulence sea,  
And I was tossed, and the fleece was lost  
And drowned and never worn again,  
The beautifully golden shirt I used to roam  
Around in, and grin in, and get laid in,  
But why lament the hungry nature of each of  
Your seven seas, neighbor?  
This world should have a fuse in its equator,  
And another world shadowing it for free like a weaker  
Ancestor, both for our offspring and we,  
Their progenitors. Because why shouldn't we  
Light it off, pretending to know where the best  
Sales are in the corner of our universe,  
Like beautiful women mixed with ash from  
Iceland's glaciers,  
Breasts red from iron, who circulate the tectonic  
Shelves of your woody playground,  
And sometimes crashing up together to make  
Blue-green orgies;  
But its easier being a bachelor than one might  
Think- I let the ice clink around the rim of my  
Nocturnal drink, and lay back and lie and have my  
Way,  
And let everything else buy and sell and say  
How much for everything, because its all had its day;  
And there are far too many chiefs who have their  
Beautiful harems, and used car lots, and sweet  
Religious beliefs;  
And I can watching the movers leaving with everything

That couldn't stay,  
Because on this blue semiprecious earth everything is for sell  
For those who can pay.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Today

Sometimes she  
Wants to come over  
And look at the  
Sea, but not today.  
So for today,  
There is no sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Us

Writing on the downside of a hill  
The puppies our father gave to us for  
Easter emotionless and  
Asleep—  
The sun creeping on the other side  
Like something surreptitious:  
As some girl all of our words are about  
Looks at her reflection far down  
In a well, where  
Minnows swim with the small vibrations  
Of her weeping voice  
Waiting for the moon to climb  
And to steal from her—for us—  
Another chance.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Us To Believe

The children of the grapevine of vanishing airplanes seem  
The be according to eh fullness of the emptiness  
Of anywhere—  
While we still try to pull out, the vanishing purple  
And blue fireworks who seemed  
To have fallen everywhere—  
While Mars lies unexplored, like a virginal marionette,  
Until the summer time comes  
All unannounced over the knights,  
And they have to take their very same places over  
The fields of happenstance, until there happens to be  
A river and new beautiful visions of the  
Beautiful fevers of blue women dancing—and  
They all happened right here in the shallows of the creeks  
Of our echoes- while the same séances broke out to  
No one under the throats of the wolves of  
The undo crutches of the awakening mothers—  
Then, on Sunday, another residue to the playgrounds,  
And to the off-hand pits of anywhere while they were  
Pretending to believe in themselves,  
Another echo to the star dust—while another  
Family was found out in the disbelieve of the  
Stars—it didn't happen to be beautiful,  
But there wasn't any more room for us,  
So we both held our breath while we pretended  
To believe what was happening was for the best  
For the both of us, while the stars skipped  
Across the tenements, and the other planets  
Grew to their best for us to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Us To Hear

When I go to China  
I don't know so many poems: foreigner,  
My tongue is cut out  
But I find a wife who speaks to me in  
Fifteen dollar hotels as we  
Try to find a child in  
Shanghai—over the land owned by the  
Government—they are supposed to be  
Her own people:  
She loses her virginity:  
Afterwards, she makes me wear sandals  
To go out and find the means  
To collect all of the golden eggs.  
And above the  
Tenements: there are the heavens that the  
Dragons come down  
From:  
She calls me a lucky man,  
As we shiver like strings on instruments  
In the cold from this world  
I have entered buried underneath the earth:  
All of the riches of  
The ancestors,  
Ghosts that busy us inside cabs—  
As we pass through the overpasses of beaming  
Shells,  
Making love in their absences,  
Pretending to listen to the architectures of  
Waves  
Building and destroying deliberately too far  
Away for us to hear.

Robert Rorabeck



# For Want Of Liquor

The night just spindles for want of liquor,  
Like a dream of death one may never become aware  
From, the mortal amnesias from a brainstem eaten  
Into by encephalitis, like a stemmed vine from which  
The heliotrope orbs have fallen:  
And I have never been in love, and the fire engine  
Rolls by silently, because there is no fire;  
But the traffic is busy and making avenues which lead  
To so many homes, and in each of those dinner and  
Love-making, and wayward children who pray in  
Sky blue-pajamas, which are damp from piss in the morning  
Before school, and make puddles in their little primary  
Colored plastic seats in third grade, or get in fights  
In after school daycare playing dodge ball,  
When even then the limpid shells of cicadas cling to the  
Bark of mottled cypress, not unlike the smell unfaithful  
House wives leave for years in their old homes, their cuckolded  
Husbands long since gone mad, and ended the pitiful  
Spite which clings inside their jaws and horn-rimmed  
Eye sockets like the pungent resin in an intolerable tree,  
So that they protest by self-immolation out in the finely  
Mowed yards of suburbia, out beneath the near perfect sun,  
Even as the traffic goes by slow and eddying, even as the kids  
Laugh like bullfrogs in the yards, and the mail comes, and the  
Afternoon currents flow like warm drapes across the neighborhood,  
The flames rippling like cellophane pennants,  
Until there is nothing left but an imperfect spot of char,  
And maybe one picture from a pocketbook, and when  
The skaters come by with their cocky Mohawks, and crooning  
For the awareness of the spotlight of their ilk, they are disappointed,  
Mistaking the human stain for a place where fireworks were  
Shot off when they were not around to see.

Robert Rorabeck

## For What Was Happening Here

Snow-cone underneath the slush of the mountain:  
Whatever will they paint you with the colors of  
My tears—  
And will you remember me tomorrow in your ballrooms  
Beneath the lactates of the stalactites  
Drooling their jaws down from all of the pitiful cities  
Of the blind men while I get drunk  
And sit on my corner in the city block and scribble  
By poems like the outlines of the graveyards of  
Chalk:  
And as soon as my very new wife gets here—the first:  
The very first place I want to visit is Bellefontaine  
Cemetery in northern Saint Louis  
Because this is where I almost got my doctorate  
There:  
And the other delusions of mortal man sweltering:  
But that is also where Sara Teasdale lies buried and  
Un accosted—and maybe we will move underneath her  
Memory forever and un accosted—and maybe you  
Do not remember the moonlight under which  
She remains a luminous wave caught into the nets of  
The bivouac without fear— and the poet only remembering  
Her as the muse underneath the transgressions of  
The peacock that were already on fire—until it spilled over  
And over: barrels of liquor and rum on fire  
Into a labyrinth of preschool that all of my peers tended to  
Prescribe as the only rational explanation for what  
Was happening here.....

Robert Rorabeck

# For Who Knows How Many Hours

Fireworks in the desert- fireworks in the sky-  
Like little girls who take your money-  
Only to show off, and then only to die:  
And I want to go away to make money for my mother and  
Father,  
To ferris wheel above the traffickings of the earth,  
Holding my breaths of wishes,  
While the clothes dry, and the cats make love on the  
Fences: and in whatever fields that are left,  
They are playing baseball,  
And I perform for my muse- brown eyed and brown  
Bodies, fearful of mountains,  
She faithfully returns to her family every night,  
The way a freshman returns to her favorite water fountain  
Between classes, while the truants leap hot footed over the  
Canals- and she never sees them,  
Or the playgrounds that they have molested: she simply  
Enfolds back into the lectures  
That envelop a brown stage beside the cafeteria;  
As outside,  
A bit of green rain cloud follows a lost trail over  
A broken down school buses, where a corpulent tortoise  
Has been busy making love to a woebegone orchid  
For who knows how many hours.

Robert Rorabeck

# For You I Hoped To Have Found

What of this silence, repeating, like days,  
And getting on the bus and going to school,  
Of getting punched in the lip  
By bloated-gut bullies, and skipping class in the  
Rain to bundle up under the school busses in  
Bruised weeping-  
While even then Diana was turning around in her  
Part of South America,  
More beautiful than anything I have yet to  
See on television;  
Exotic flowers like the ones they keep trimmed  
And sexy in the amusement parks of Central Florida:  
What is she doing but flirting with every man who  
Comes in carousing under the tent,  
Feeding them more for the eyes than with the teeth:  
Diana, Diana- it is her, well-bosomed;  
I want to buy entire yards for her, while that careless  
Jove is away:  
I want my house to finally be picked out by her.  
I want to meet her daughter, and for her to meet my hounds,  
To let them lick and sniff her together with me:  
Her stems like crutches against which the entire earth  
Weeps- Diana, only I can appreciate you fully picked out  
OF all these used car salesmen: Diana, you are making  
Your rounds, your native bow propped up against your breast,  
And I have gone to see a movie with my favorite teacher,  
And I fell asleep and would have dreamed of you,  
Except that you didn't come to me, and so now I must go  
Searching, putting rum against my lips, so that my senses might  
Spindle out like the waves in a hypothetical shift,  
And I can shake off the burning senses of the empirical towns;  
I can skip school so many years ago,  
Not realizing until now that it was for you I hoped to have  
Found.

Robert Rorabeck

# For You To Remember

The night looked really pretty as it happened unto you:  
And you looked really pretty eating all that was brought to you;  
And we went up to Orlando and watched the surplus  
Timbuktu:  
They were brandishing their swords that the waves had brought for  
You;  
And they galloped through every theatre that was an enclosed space,  
And the put on their mock battles and their mock loves for you;  
So at night when they stole you away from me,  
They made mock love to you, and so inside you their mock gardens grew,  
While I wept and rubbed my star-scarred eyes on the roller coasters  
All alone:  
I wept and tried to remember if their caracoles could take me home;  
And through the haloes of a terrible jubilee I watched him carry you  
On his back and across the sea;  
And I cried to my own mother for you, but she was all dried up for me;  
And I could not metamorphoses,  
So I stuck and burned like a match for you until there was nothing left  
For you to remember me.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Your Most Beautiful And Next In Line

The moons winnows; oh my god I've seen it done  
And now I have to spit or I should choke;  
Sharon, why do you write to me of these things:  
Sharon, I am not beautiful:  
Sharon, I am all alone, and the traffic proceeds; they are the  
Perfectly placed butterflies,  
And I have plenty of the apple juice inside of me:  
Sharon, your first daughter is named Sabine:  
When shall you have your second daughter: your womb is burning;  
It is yearning like the spitoon of a kiln all afire;  
You know that it is, and I am hardly enough beautiful for you:  
Sharon... Sharon, what are you are doing:  
You are hardly patriotic, but Sharon who are you; while I have so many  
Fireworks to panhandle, what I am doing for you:  
You don't give a damn about our capitol, so by our gods what am I doing;  
Sharon, I just want to swim in your Shadow:  
And, Sharon, I am so sick for you; I am a cricket mouthing off for  
Disney World,  
And, Sharon, it is alright to be mean; but, Sharon, otherwise I love you,  
And otherwise I drive my truck around for you, but the beautiful men  
Have already built their irredeemable castles so far up for you,  
And what am I doing otherwise, but riding bareback and scarred  
While the folk artists sing for you and paint your glowing windows,  
And you nurse the first of your hot born butterflies, clicking your tongue  
Your bosoms jubilant and awaiting for your most beautiful and  
Next in line.

Robert Rorabeck

# For Your Soul

I ask you about your family all of the time  
A-,  
Because I have none of my own, and because that  
I would die for yours:  
I never met anyone as beautiful as you are throughout all  
Of my high school:  
I have spent all of my time singing to lesser girls,  
And today you gave me a better present than all of the angels,  
Because I got to see all of the clothes you wear:  
I got to taste you like a water fountain of butterflies:  
Your skin so brown and beautiful:  
There has never been another woman like you, A-, and there  
Never will be:  
After we made love you wanted to sleep, and then you wanted  
Jalapenos on our pizza for lunch, but your bad man rang,  
And you had to go home:  
You gave me so much today that you had before promised me  
That I could never have,  
But now I want your name, and all of the time for your amusement:  
A-,  
I have this house: it is yours: I want to live with you forever:  
I want our two bodies to be mutual shores;  
I want my everlasting songs to be about you, A-, while all of the  
Pinpricks of the night burn,  
I want to love your children, and I want to learn how to  
Be a better man for you,  
A-, because it is for your amber soul that my soul burns:  
It is for your soul, Alma, that my soul will always, always,  
Burn....

Robert Rorabeck

# For Your Time

Thank you for your time, I said to the mountains and to the shore.

They said, don't bother to write to us no more.

Robert Rorabeck



# Forbearance Of Her Memory

Getting up is getting easier now that I know  
Who I am:  
A poet of some possibility, as the sun shies through  
The leafy arcade,  
A man of no account, a drifter of the hills:  
I know myself better than most: I lie, I cheat,  
I steal, but I am a good man, as the whippoorwill  
Trills around the freshly painted roof, like a red festival  
Above where no one lives:  
And there are better men than me, those who pronounce  
Themselves to a room, those who have something to say  
With the verbosity of so many planets,  
But when they are done proclaiming their accolades,  
There is first echoes and then only silence, and that is  
Where I stand out, a better silhouette, someone  
Who lives in instances of lucid memory, loving the reflections  
A wishing well gives in the brightest noontime,  
With the bodies walking above it rippling, the dislocated  
Fish in the experiment of my eyes: the women  
I dream about swimming above me,  
Not stopping to throw in their loose change;  
They are better without me, and gone to the loud men,  
They leave me alone now breathing in the shallow water  
As clear as a single note plucked on a harp upon the breast  
Of a powdery virgin in the flaxen glade of her woods:  
She sings to me throughout my days, as the meadows dance,  
And it is no longer painful to listen to her voice,  
For I have wanted her for so long, and now I remember her  
Sleeping on the school bus, just a little tramp grown up  
Near the waterwheels which drooled like silk my ancestors  
Spun from wooden thoraxes, the juvenile cataracts rushing like  
Kittens; My grandfather saw her eyes once in a dream he  
Gave to me, and now I awake gladdened, assured that my  
Love once looked deep into the eyes of my forbearance,  
Before dancing away like the long trail of a wedding gown,  
Like the effluvious ribbons of a stream which has gone  
So far, and has yet so far to go.



# Forbearing

Scents of her hair  
Searching out the windowsill;  
Dried by the pollinated breeze,  
She stares down the road  
Surveying for lovers of her will:  
Young men whose job it is  
To go from door to door  
Selling tuning forks  
They absentmindedly use to  
Pick their teeth.  
The further the day proceeds  
The older the houses become  
Until they are kicking up dust  
In their ancestors' neighborhood—  
You can never say what was,  
Certainly,  
Except for the marble truth  
Carved in the tombs' resting boards  
Robed in waxy ivy  
And folded spindles of  
A spider's home.  
Pulling back the hiding ways,  
You smell her like a crisp  
Green apple cut to its core,  
Mortally explored and fed upon  
As she lies sleeping there,  
Your grandmother  
Or someone who might have  
Known her....

Robert Rorabeck

# Forecasting The Storms

Animals love it when the grasses grow,  
Unattended what is supposed to be taken care by men,  
Where serpents swim so patterned along the  
Uncomplicated prestidigitations of precious darlings;  
As men love it when there is liquor or a new  
Interesting woman in the house; but what am I doing,  
When I've cried myself to sleep again in embittered  
Cities coming down: coffins are in the heart of things,  
Mausoleums for great generals or more successful sisters,  
But I don't think I've failed again, but thrown a little salt  
Into the open wounds like in the science fictions where  
The ants are tremendous and we can take it out to the parking  
Lot- Grandmothers are thieves open bloused and  
Waiting in the spliced shade of the palmettos for some  
Mysterious stranger; and I am a wreck without my liquor  
With no need for more tattoos because of the proliferation of  
Some more scars, unpublished, having no care for the  
Professors and their leafy tenements: this blood is only  
Condiments- the arrows are glued felt; the woman who is  
A harlot only an unoffending Christian dressed herself that  
Way for the evening's stage: These snowflakes are paper,  
Her lover someone she saw on television; and alligators can  
Cry. In fact they are doing it now all up and down the empty  
Swing sets of my neighborhood, dressed in the moon's ridiculous  
Penumbra waiting for the children to come out and forecast the storms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forested In Daycares

Forested in daycares, we have built things that  
Will never grow up:  
They just diminish and are swallowed up by when it rains:  
They are not even graveyards,  
And the pillows that we go home to when our parents pick  
Us up after work only know a little of our tears-  
For the girls that we have made love to as good as naked underneath  
The skies  
Do not have any well known names- they are just as wild  
As the wishes that get away with the flames of an out of control  
Birthday:  
They are like the stewardesses who have mutinies on out of  
Control commercial airliners;  
And this just spills over and becomes the debased wishing wells  
For the dashing smiles of crocodiles and vampires,  
Or any of the other age old legends who never even had a thought of  
Love that would have ever made them wish to disappear.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forever

Oh to be short of life,  
But heady and well drunken,  
Like a bee that has no reason to fly with its  
Two days left;  
It has seen all of the sweetened wardresses it has needed  
To see, and has slept with all of them,  
So that it carries all of her names on its leg like tattoos,  
Like battle tacks, like stars  
Won in elementary:  
Now belly as fat as to be tamed, it sleeps in the overweight  
Penumbra of something that has been just as beautiful  
For it is as it would be for any other  
Fly-by-night creature of man:  
For in the morning her lashes curl and drink on the body of  
A man I have never seen;  
And they will die together again, sharing each others' bodies  
For the life of a bumblebee, which makes good enough out of  
Forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forever Above Her Burning Dish

So many professions  
Hang on the dying Christmas tree: So many lovers  
Forgetting to recall the soft scents of echoes;  
And the ever present day is in charge,  
Role calling, keeping count. The waves are anxious,  
Stuttering cavalry;  
But I still remember kindergarten, what Chelsea did  
To me;  
And I am no one, no one but someone still brings me  
My lunch.  
I saw Diana today and my eyes still work good:  
It was beautiful.  
The cars came, the cars. They did not become.  
No one cares if I am passed out in the aloe. The rebar  
Has rusted, and what about my dogs? When are they  
Coming,  
So I can climb mountains and hear the pulse of my wrist  
Rush like the tide over the rocks  
Where the sun is like a pulsing skeleton- Where the sun  
Is wimbled fish,  
Leaping forever above her burning dish.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forever Across The Sea

Child, you are lost and you don't  
Wish for me to find you—climbing up through the  
Strange spinsters of the night—  
Looking for apples in the arboreal bosom—  
The stars chickenpox but dancing  
Beautifully—your memories on a bus to school,  
The alligators in the canal,  
And your parents in bed together while the moonlight  
Is dancing in the pool like a toy sea—  
I left fireworks in a bag underneath the night blooming  
Jasmine  
That you will never find—  
And you know, there are so many airplanes climbing  
In the sky and leaping forever across the sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# Forever Faithful

I've been Alma's champion:

I've been Alma's slave:

And I'll be Alma's Alma's

Anything:

I'll sleep my forever sleep besides Alma's

Forever grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forever Far Away

There are so many words that hardly give  
Good excuses;  
Even Rudyard Kipling cant write a good poem,  
And I've drunken tonight-  
And I have to pee  
In my bunk in the RV,  
While the old teachers study the night,  
While the fruit waits restless upon the shoe polished  
Tables,  
And I hate my father, but yet I have saved so much money,  
And I think of the same old things,  
The two muses of my disease,  
One venal and one sick, and I curse them and  
Whatever they are doing tonight,  
And the pictures they take of their beautiful visages  
Like a garden well content and fluttering in the  
High basins,  
And even now I can hear the traffic, and I want to live  
Forever like a cheap kite with delusions that he is  
An angel,  
Or whatever he is: I don't even have a house,  
And I've never seen the sea, but I could move her  
And shimmy up next to the graveyards and  
Their sweet pornographies;  
And drink rum under the fake penumbras that never  
Charge you extra,  
And your name is S-, or E-,  
But whoever you are tonight, you are carefully insouciant  
In your sweet titted playgrounds and you are  
Forever far away from me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forever Hers

The television started with the scars of life;  
They are always echoing, and my bed is full of  
Dirt, this one and that one two.  
From the slopes of the mountain's angelic  
Neckline, she makes fun of my songs, because  
They were before her age; but how else  
Am I supposed to sing to her; and when the  
Roads are closed when the snow comes,  
How will she ever get my fresh fruit and bouquets-  
But the tourists will come out of their woodwork  
Traveling in their caravans, their families fully  
Formed. Will she sing to them of me- How I  
Used to chase some Rimbaudian god up her  
Skirts- How I didn't mind which end I started or  
Finished up at, but would jog her neighborhood my  
Knees keeping time on the black pitch, she guiding  
Me nonsensically many houses over,  
Past the lions and the coral snakes, probably off  
Drooling on her vanished bed, dreaming of less  
Esoteric boys- Until I fell down in  
The dunes and clasped them in a bosom which spilled  
The ant lions from their dens, unearthed the grinning  
Cenotaphs of conquistadors; but what she will do,  
Is turn her doors open and let them in, trying to survive  
Another winter where the beauty is just as harsh as  
Her own, unapologetic, almost whimsical in its fury-  
She will never think of me more than a needless  
Curiosity she couldn't bet her livelihood on-  
Swirling her finger in a glass, she will upset its bouquet  
Like starting evil flowers to burn- she will make  
Everything she owns sing for her, until the storm is  
Over. Closing her eyes, she will rest with the one remaining;  
He has won, and now is hers forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forever Too Afraid

I'll have to wait until yesterday and listen:  
The crickets in the four corners of the yard,  
The Indians underneath the easements of  
Grounds:  
The alligators listening toothy-eyed:  
And the bandy legged men: the grand daddy  
Long legged men  
Who cross like firemen's ladders into the orchards-  
Picking and wondering what they have here:  
Halos over the heads of Mexicans-  
Asleep and enjoying themselves- while I watch  
For them from my window of the house  
That I suppose I own,  
After she has driven home again across the  
Train tracks like the prizes of a goldfish in a bowl  
Hypnotizing the feral cats that are forever too  
Afraid to come inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forever, Forever Need

Oh my god what a mess:  
That the city shouldn't sleep, but goes around  
Its rounds,  
The pretty girls of their cars giving you  
The very poignant ups and downs:  
With their eyes, their eyes like Ganymede,  
Like f^cking stars:  
Girls that you'd like to remember, who are  
Impossible to forget,  
Girls who are always like after a rain shower  
In a bamboo forest,  
Wet and wet and wet.  
They slip through the city in a sorority of pretty  
Hash,  
And their thighs are always ready to bash,  
And bash- and bash.  
Their thighs are always ready. They are like baseball  
Bats  
Even at seven in the morning, which is the time that  
It is now,  
And they sing to their young daughters all  
Transitory in sleep,  
Of how to defeat the cowboys, and of how it is that  
They should never weep,  
While some of up them hold my heart in their pretty  
Clawed hands,  
And sip of it like homeless wine as they gossip in  
Their chicken coops:  
They sip of it and straddle the spaces through which  
They proceed:  
They sip of its beating, beating,  
And they sip of its forever, forever need.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forgetfulness

Now that forgetfulness has settled  
His spindly fingers on your shoulders,  
Like cobwebs crossed with spider bones,  
I am no one, I am no one,  
And even if you furrow your brow  
And press your tongue to the roof  
Of your mouth, like a mollusk  
Stuck to its opal shell, Showing  
The world that your body is  
Trying hard to figure out if I ever  
Ran against you like a river in bed,  
And saw by candlelight all the  
Secret tricks of your unclothed skin,  
Your body questions my existence;  
And then you see him, the sinewy oarsmen,  
Who rows you away, far away  
Down from my broken vase rivers,  
Into the calm of his suwanee lakes where  
You body disrobes entirely of my sway,  
And forgetfulness rises up before your eyes  
Like a great white heron lancing your  
Memory away and so you say  
I am no one,  
I am no one.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forget-Me-Nots

Obeying the fallow months,  
They bought the shortest headstone in the catalogue,  
And when that was set they took  
The blue peacock feathers of the dead flamenco dancer  
To the forget-me-not's dump  
Where the very squat and very onyx man  
In the yellow construction helmet,  
Unaccustomed to such fineries had them placed  
At the very top of the hill  
In a fluttering row beside the diamond navel  
Of the dead belly dancer,  
Where their blue faded into brilliant gray in the  
Circling shadows of the vultures and gulls,  
And until he retired, the very squat and very onyx man  
Could look up past the bulldozed hillocks  
And see the hem of feathers shiver, the diamond sparkle,  
Until his shift was over and he went home to watch  
His Puerto Rican wife's ass as she cooked him dinner.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forgiveness

Guardians of gypsum satellites  
Fight against the destroyer of hopes  
The strange watchers in the night  
Like banks of candles lit up  
For Catholic mass

Each one holds a secret priest  
Burning for your confession,  
As she grips you about the waist,  
A savior from the murdered sea,  
Begging your forgiveness....

Robert Rorabeck



# Forgotten

I've begun to trust the truth of blindness  
In the colorless recesses where life does not dwell  
Where hungry words drip and gather  
In the needing echoes that pool in her eyes  
The shapeless things that blink at me in the  
Darkness of my weeping bedroom,  
Early coffins from behind the curtain where  
Skeletons bloom only to sink again without protest  
The murdered ancestors of when we  
Were teenagers, the yet formed glass glowing  
Like a wound before an audience facing away  
To where an unrecognizable man fades like a  
Memory cast out in the rain, a flawed life  
Cast back into the chaos of God's forge, seen  
Just briefly by the woman who bore it and  
Wept beneath the petrified spheres until forgotten.

Robert Rorabeck

# Forgotten Cradle

You told me you didn't want me writing you anymore  
Poems,  
But you told Charley, my third uncle during lunch,  
That I was a poet, and you seemed proud;  
And you've accepted my roses so many times now:  
And you wear my ring now, Alma:  
And you are my bright cloud, like a glorious forest fire of  
Dreams  
Tumbling upward through the most invisible of dreams:  
And I can see you laying large across the land:  
I can almost perceive your entire penumbra, like a collage of  
Feral green butterflies and trampolines, like grasshoppers  
Feeding on the exfoliations of the sea:  
I saw you waiting in line today Alma, without your children,  
Your husband waiting in the bright shadows  
Like a hungry carnivore of grandmothers- mean and really fit:  
I was frightened,  
But I practiced my own witchcraft and put your eyelash into  
The eyelash of Picasso's lady my old teacher gave me;  
And now it is almost always done:  
I may have to go off and sell fireworks: I may disappear into the  
Desert and the mirages of caves folded away with the  
Gunfighters and the Indians in the sizzling red pan  
That we stole from you great great grandfathers; but  
Now it is hardly enough even for the most  
Clever of spies:  
I have prayed to the Virgin of Guadalupe so many times,  
And now I will have you,  
Alma, because I have seen this playground in the sky, the places  
Of joy caracoling your body that even you can't remember  
The scents and smells of your childhood  
Lost under the jaded bellies of the flat bottomed rattlesnakes  
In the dry lands and basins  
That once served as your forgotten cradle.

Robert Rorabeck

## Fornication In Brevity

I will go then like a doll in a park into the sea  
And waiting for you,  
Drown or burn in that enshrouded estuary with memories  
Of the cars that passed by us as we kissed  
And your children waited at home  
For you—  
And why don't you come back to me, for the flea markets  
Remind everything of you—  
This entire city is filling up with people of your color,  
Though you have moved away with your husband  
Into the horse country in between the orchards—  
With their ladders seemingly as tall as  
Cathedrals—  
Where, imagining, fireworks kissing, fornicate in  
Brevity—as you are passed along—reminded of your mother:  
Youth leaving you behind—  
Forgetting everything you played with, and I a lonely  
Part of that back in the footfalls of a high school you  
Never cared about—  
Until the right man comes along and eventually  
Sweeps you off your feet.

Robert Rorabeck

## Forts Of Early Morning

Your children were laughing and snaking towards reason—  
Like bottle rockets snaking their way to the other side of the canal  
To lie in languishing epitaphs  
While I remembered my professors at the university had pictures  
With themselves and John F. Kennedy:  
And now I die at your doorsteps—and you don't even have to  
Come out to listen—It is not a gentle art that I am doing,  
Getting drunk and languishing into the sleepy business that lies  
South of Disney World  
Our out in the early morning baseball diamonds—  
This is the aesthetic truth that is struggling to be truthful enough  
To procure a wife—  
Line out with them in the forts of early morning—  
Very soon there will be a battle where no one will survive—  
But until then, I just want to buy her flowers and sing and sing  
And sing to her....

Robert Rorabeck

# Forty Pound King Fish

I hooked a forty pound kingfish-  
I fowled him on my line,  
But my house still has termites and Alma:  
Sweet  
Alma still pretends that she is not mine.

Robert Rorabeck

## Four Feathers

Flamboyant childhood, I have lost you in a swamp,  
And the four boys down on their cerulean lane making love  
Too early to see when I come around at midnight  
In a plastic boat, but where are they?

Spread across the country with nothing on their minds,  
Not even drooling of devilish nostalgias of high school-  
Not a single one of them with my scars, my dark future,  
The only fire escape is kept in a drawer with a cold mouth  
To kiss-

And another poem to keep me trucking up to  
Another sun- Another night with the dogs, and a roof  
But no one at home: no firm legs to cross, to drink with me  
Beneath the blood-banks of stars, to light off fireworks and  
Mark the padding of wolves,

There is only this- the sad unction coalesced from  
Blessed fingers, but not another soul to divide with me, to  
Settle down with near the remains where the river flows.  
Not another stanza like a wooden vase carved into a crutch,  
To carry me down the hallway where I still smell her,  
And where those boys go yet laughing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Four Legged Shakespeare

Inside Shakespeares:

One, two, three:

My dogs are barking sonnets

As they mark their territory:

When the horses stumble,

When the snowflakes fall,

My dogs just sniff the earth,

And howl:

They can smell your

Absence on my crotch,

And sympathize

With my hungry tooth,

About the hypothesis of children

They pat a watch,

As through the forest

They slink and sleuth:

Their noses know the

Penumbra of the moon,

And when the weather is

Turning gray,

They come clawing on

My windowpane:

I let them in,

We sleep all day and

Sprawled in the blankets

Sniffing dreams of

You and the things we'd say:

Happy days of long walks

In the countryside,

Friends well met and forests green,

We go together as a pack,

Tongues lolling to the side,

And you would be our sonnet's queen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Frank O'Hara's Endless Poem

Sabotage me with scars and parking lots,  
And take me outside the dirty city and down to  
The dirty sea;  
And why do my farts smell like my dreams for  
You,  
And things I have enjoyed but have not really  
Partaken of;  
And Frank O'Hara for the first time at 31;  
I watch him talking on the phone and for some reason  
Gives me a hard-on, but probably just the liquor-  
Still in my parents' basement and I don't even want  
To think of my batting average,  
Even though I am very rich but homeless,  
And the days go over, but they don't really end,  
Each sun in the same portfolio abandoned by the  
Artist on the move,  
Territorially sniffing out the next wound, bandaged  
At both ends, the flowers in the graveyard whispering  
Of the girls he loves,  
Whose fingers are all married under the Earth,  
All given over to tidy, busy homes; and his poem just  
Goes on unlistened to, untidied up, but it never ends.

Robert Rorabeck



# Freddy Mercury

The work is really about the work, they sing:  
The young punks with Mohawks and hair-lips.  
Tree frogs jeweled in heliotrope, they sing. The  
Epitaphs they give these graveyards in mass, our song,  
Sylvia who by good scars comes, and enters Anne,  
What ridiculous, what five-pointed song of light:  
I call her Maggie Pie Crust by my five-fingered star-fist:  
And now, boys, smoke and light and cigarettes, and tits!  
Now we have a band, and we play for the werewolf,  
Staunched and emboldened, we howl in the shopping malls:  
Our base invades tennis courts; We are all the monsters.  
Girls in short skirts take cover, daddies run to their mothers.  
We are overspilling into the lap of luxury, our dyes ink their  
Pools: We swim like submarines, we drool like five-year  
Olds at play. We jettison. Subtracting such joy that the Cadillac brings,  
Girls, girls, we awaken the chickens from the hypnosis of  
Chalk, and enlighten like spry willow sprigs jaunting along  
The riverbanks of witchcraft:  
We jump up, jump up, jump up: Up until mommy and daddy are  
Home and idling out-front in their car,  
Up, until the newscast is over and the make-up unmasked, and  
Indeed the rain-clouds in for unprompted mass:  
And, I love you, and her, and her too: Now strum,  
Since this is the beginning of the new weekend sum: Up, until  
The bell rings for school, and make eyes down the hallway as we  
Are all hurrying in; for the band is calling us from the courtyard  
Bricked in red; they have fireworks and fingers which fall on the  
Strings like water-spiders in autumn; and this is the end of the school-  
Year, and the beginning of our lives; and no one will remember us  
Here. Our classmates will forget us all. Now sing, strange-girls sing,  
And light the fireworks, Sylvia; and play the drums, Anne,  
And the other girl, the one I can't remember, take a hold of this  
Hand: Jump up until the light strikes us dead, and then lay low  
With me, but still sing, and sing; and now come to bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Free Falling

When last I saw her, her eyes were exhausted acrobats  
Who fell to my shoulder and then plummeted away.  
Like off the cliff, they went.  
She did not scream. She went quietly and free-  
I think she meant the fall, for her body looked as if it'd been  
practicing - I think she'd had enough.  
As she went, she went down and her head turned away  
Toward the distant drop- I mean, she did not look back.  
She was like that- She was real gone! And all I could do was  
See her go, falling forever through the sea that way.  
She created my new exhaustion as the city's lights died  
Where the old cars circled me as if for an execution.-  
They were so hungry and the lights were out so  
No one could see.  
The pallid streets roamed my flesh beyond which my  
Legs walked to the bone and walked on, because I was  
Broken. I could not stop walking. I had a few drinks,  
But they did not get rid of her salt or her sting, and she was  
That photo in my eyes made by the sun. The realness of the  
Image in bed with another man and free, free, free-  
Like the type of thing you see after staring at the sun too long,  
Something that doesn't go away. She's still there in another  
Bedroom across the world.  
Free falling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Freewill Of A Trance

Each following word is like the freewill of a trance:

I can give roses, roses, roses,  
And sun, and sea, and sun, and sea,  
For I have spent most evenings laying on your floor  
And watching you dance around the ceiling,  
The fan spinning you like a marble in a pool;  
But your lips, those open wounds, they belong to  
Him who waters you,  
And on your birthday you let all of yourself be taken  
Into his hands, for him to say, how beautiful,  
How beautiful, how beautiful, not believing

I could do the same: You have made wishes upon  
His body, your body swollen with tears,

Each following word is like the free will of a trance:

I can give you roses, roses, roses,  
But they have been stolen from beneath your sill,  
Just as these words I have pulled up from beneath my tongue,  
Stolen from a heart how pitiful: Won't you turn now  
And take them, and put them in a glass, and say thank you,  
Before falling back into him like the freewill of a trance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Freezing Water The Blue Spruce Cried

Standing in a blue abscess, wounded around  
The eyes:  
The nocturnal pugilists countingimps,  
And the gates awash with freezing water  
The blue spruce cried-  
And other planes coaxing down: inside their  
Golden necks, their stewardesses all  
Asleep-  
The weather about them a blanket that pulls  
At them softly,  
The sea, a mother waiting in the deeps-  
While each pine tree rises just for them,  
Nocturnal spectators in the senses of the hills:  
And they go over them, nodding in  
Sorority,  
As the hillsides sigh, damply drunken,  
And holding up to them bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck

# Friday

Friday, the sky is falling, the perfect mailman  
Over those hills, whistling into another country:  
And it is already darkness where she lives,  
And in my unstructured poetry where she also lives,  
But now she is bothersome because it is Friday night,  
And the college is always open-  
Students dropout like overripe grapes even with  
The hands of busy sun washed immigrants working over  
Them, trying to save them in gunnysacks of penitence-  
But already, Friday is falling, and the sun is stepping  
Away behind the studious hills, and the light is cascading  
Like little children laughing and throwing up a lucid  
Sheet to let it fall on their unwrinkled faces, like they  
Will never do again once they pack their lunch tin and  
Step foot on the school bus;  
And where I see her, she is hemmed with cypress and  
With folly when once I saw her fading as I ran across the  
Drainage to skip out of high school math, to sit and fart  
And light off pop rockets over the slow green mobiles of  
The alligator's teal and ribboned amphitheatres; There where  
The middle-class houses stretched like high mortgage affluence,  
Where the Jews and the unwashed goyem finally gathered together  
Free of pogroms and ghettos: The clean suited families with  
The color televisions and Ataris hooked up in the screened in  
Swimming pools, and young daughters helplessly topless in  
The glow, and slow drunks, and candy apple adulteries,  
And numb divorces, and SUVs, and over all of that my life  
Cut in half fifteen years ago there was another Friday going  
Down, whistling his song over the Gulf of Mexico, and she  
Sat somewhere else just as far away, thinking thoughts I couldn't  
Know, loving who I couldn't say.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fried Chicken

Pistils blooming like pop-guns, like  
Party favors—  
The sky explodes over the horses: it riles  
And blooms in cartels of witches.  
What a show for the airplanes as well as  
The otters,  
And myself—skipping school, lying on  
My back in the hollow canoe,  
Floating through the changing rooms of  
The canal—  
The housewives do not see me,  
Lying on their backs and watching the  
Young Mexicans picking in the orchards—  
The pilots do not see me, nor  
The juvenile titans, for they now are  
Watching all of the stewardesses who are  
Dreaming of playing baseball games back in  
High school, until it is finally time  
For all of them to go back indoors  
To watch television and eat fried chicken.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fried Chicken, Long Life, And Valentines

Floating for a weekend- a heart on anesthesia,  
And fingers numbed  
To the identity of the theft of their owner's  
Heart:  
Strange relationships ignited by gasoline  
And trips to the  
Supermarket- and daylight proceeds over  
The dreary carnival  
Where men have the shadows of monsters  
Tattooed to the busy thefts  
Of time-  
And I drive around in my car watch airplanes  
Leaving through the sadness:  
They roar like lions leaping over  
Monuments,  
And they go away over the museums  
As I spend my money unwisely wanting a companion  
To come from the waves  
From the direction the angels have fled:  
To emerge from the reefs of stolen bicycles and  
To touch my scars  
And to carry with her fried chicken, long life,  
And valentines- and to give me all of these things  
Without asking for any reward.

Robert Rorabeck

## Friend And Master

If you are no longer interested in the crude sky  
I've painted for you along my  
Hapless sidewalks right where one story book city  
Ends into another,  
Here is a knife of rain and a muted song;  
Here is the quality and fineness of love you'll have  
With him,  
I can guarantee you, if you end it and make  
A canal to dredge my throat, clearly separating  
The two irreconcilable countries of reason and love:  
This is the hapless thing I want,  
To be anonymous feet up and bloated and enjoying  
The sun,  
Sniffed at by a hungry dog who is getting curious ideas  
When once before  
He would have considered me friend and master.

Robert Rorabeck



# Friendly Mountains

I smell like the liquor of an insouciant troubadour;  
And this is the way I've been going out,  
Gummy eyed, aroused, smiling like some terribly  
Amateur amphibian,  
Wanting to breath forever as I was going down on  
Her, scuba-diving through the pylons and to her  
Rich corals;  
And now it is so cold outside as to hobble horses,  
And the dumps are all frozen,  
The cormorants and egrets of gray herons are shaking in  
Their boots;  
And Nichole or someone is grabbing their other's body  
Tightly,  
And closing their eyes to imagine the passions of stock  
Cars;  
And Erin is in her knickerbockers caves, flashing shadows  
For the sun,  
Making believe that her world is real and always for the best,  
While the rest of the Florida is dressed up in another  
Color of green,  
Even its Pegasus's are green and plural and they can take you  
All the way up over the cover girls all tootsie across the  
Nose cones of fat gutted airplanes;  
And I live in a little house that is always struggling to float  
Upwards like balloons through dreams.  
Wanting to see you house and swim to it like the lucky fish  
In its golden stream,  
And while away there making love, two houses making love  
In a honeymoon of forbidden neighborhoods beneath your  
Friendly mountains.

Robert Rorabeck

## Frisbee With Lindsay

I'll get drunk and try to emulate the Beats,  
Kerouac wasn't very good at it, but he's still neat.

Then I saw the Congo creeping through the black,  
Cutting through the forest with a golden track.

When my dog and I want to go old school,  
I'll throw a stick. Otherwise, we play Frisbee.

(And if you didn't know, the middle stanza  
Is Vachel Lindsay.)

Robert Rorabeck

# Frog Princes

Sun of an obnoxious quarry as we seem  
To be laughing—  
Open throated frog princes all of the way  
Up to the chandeliers—  
While my mother waits in some awful  
Mockery of a Pieta—  
And the lamps bloom in the gold dusts of  
The mines—  
Another song mimics the song bird's,  
As the traffic becomes utterly confused—  
Losing itself into the darkness—  
The mailman apexes, but he is no excuse  
To me—  
Lamp posts lining the streets of my adolescents,  
As wicked men travel home after  
The fireworks' pageantry—  
Licking their stolen wives' bodies of  
An adulterous  
Apiary.

Robert Rorabeck

# From A Fountain Birthed Of Mexico

The calendars are fraudulent over my body-  
They say what time of the year it is,  
As if playing a game of cards- as the brown body of  
My muse, crossed over the thresholds again  
To be with her young children- and her husband,  
In the little house-  
Alley cats have eaten the rabbits that once ate her  
Mother's mango tree,  
And there are helicopters underneath the stars-  
Cars pass before her threshold like pilgrims on  
An easy journey- but she doesn't have to think of  
Any of this- and as she turns into him,  
Brown bodies coalescing from a fountain birthed  
Of Mexico,  
With the lights doused around her children,  
And fake programs on the television, she doesn't  
Have to think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

## From A Resilient Bird

Combining the alchemy of paddleboats across the  
Torpil acrobatics of the a living room's holiday, waiting for  
All the yawning mouths of lions  
And water moccasins to close, for the stolen bicycles of  
Kidnapped children to be revealed,  
And a perfectly beautiful epiphany to be blundered upon  
Somewhere out in the make believe moving around in  
School buses,  
Or through the forbidden transoms of the graveyards of some  
Midwestern university, where the strange girls finally become  
Perfectly, and unspeakably beautiful,  
And the night learns of my laughable prayers for her,  
Burning in its attempts at homeless unison,  
Like little feathers plucked from a resilient bird who will not  
Quit singing.

Robert Rorabeck

# From An Almost Forgotten School

This day comes like wild horses- ta-da,  
You know:  
Waking me up and putting me in preschool;  
And the day is as all shimmering as  
Glass,  
And her eyes are changing colors with the  
Weather,  
And I get so happy until I fall to pieces,  
And then I place my head in my hands and I  
Stop congratulating myself;  
And I think of boats and helicopters as  
Slick mirages-  
And I don't know what I've been doing, only that  
I want to come,  
And at the same time say her name, in the backyard  
Alongside that glistening pool like a sweet diamond  
Of captured, enraptured nature:  
So sweet you don't even know, like a slice of your  
Favorite kind of pie cavorted away from your  
Best friend's older sister;  
And now I should say my peace, and go to sleep;  
And in my sweet wet dreams, weep a piece,  
And wait until she is sleeping too, and pluck her some  
Like a narrow-minded conquistador out beside  
Her kitchen windows,  
Reminding her that we are both together at mile zero,  
And the waves are even now tapping parallel to where  
We are,  
Wanting in to the bedroom where we've been busy making  
Love while the sea has come up expectantly,  
And the buses have returned our younger selves from  
An almost forgotten school.

Robert Rorabeck

## From Another Forth Of July

Now they shuffle off—  
In a time of piss and envy,  
I collect a new gut and a new body,  
So decry this up to the airplanes,  
To the spaces that once could happen  
Anywhere—  
This is another of my poems that for once  
Will never go remembered—  
This is the place where the dead can  
Lie anywhere—  
And they do,  
While the monuments that once were  
Now gather  
The strangest confections of their memories  
Underfoot-  
Was not this where they pretended to once live,  
And in their neighborhood of rotten gas lights  
Pretended somehow to  
Concoct this ordeal:  
Yes, this is how it happened, the murder  
That was noticed by no one—  
By the little boy amidst the merry go rounds  
Of the shopping malls of anywhere,  
Stared upon by the glass tombs  
And the ruby eyes of the albino alligators  
Just after his first kiss,  
Just after he thought to disrobe from all of  
His clothing of lies—  
Another play unfolds  
Another butterfly spreads her wings,  
And at the moment of preternatural climax,  
Another American finds the opportune time to become  
Indebted to the moment of climax,  
All of the fundamentalists inside of her  
Knotted belly unutterably sure that all is needed is  
But two of a kind to be rubbed together  
To see the almost religious dawning of another  
Sacrifice to the crucifixions of  
America that was paid all too little to lie down

Upon her fading bed  
And to pretend—just pretend  
For another fourth of July.

Robert Rorabeck



# From Body And Bone

As awful as the pools without sisters,  
Nude stores emptied of unclothed nuptials and now  
This,  
A short cut to a bosom that dead ends as the waves  
Toss,  
And all of the necessary washing machines stop their  
Machinations,  
Like parked cars where lovers no longer caress;  
And I think it would be awful if she had to forget me,  
No less-  
But after the swift lives of fireworks, only so many  
Cenotaphs lie with the emptied wrappers  
In the trash;  
And the fairs of her heart where I once laid captivated,  
Tormented and beating my chest through wreathes of  
Fire  
And pagan fare thee wells- moves on,  
Like the fox pot bellied from all the fairy tales he's destroyed:  
And the witches he's made love to now  
As calm at cheerleaders after a show, their bellies like  
Stolen watermelons bashfully distended from what jubilations  
They have had with all of the charisma exuded  
From body and bone.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Burned Out Homes

All of the spoken light told  
To the girls of the world,  
Spoken into the windows where  
They used to work:  
Now all of the lights are out  
And she is hungover in the billfords  
Of the places that don't have  
To pretend to exist:  
Another light shatters the abutments,  
Sunken ships going down to their  
Beds of death amidst the trees  
And the movie theatres that glow and  
Glow—  
New species found in the trailer parks  
Of the mountains—  
And new ways in which to love  
Old species  
That are on the move from burned out  
Homes.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Deeper Waters Still

These storm clouds caterwaul around me in  
Their august monsoon, like jaded debutants wailing  
In their pretzeled boudoirs,  
Leaving a hallway where the angels descent whispering:  
I am five hundred pages into Whitman again,  
And the flies are in their house in their vaporous mutations  
Accentuating the ache and the bleed,  
While my bones juxtapose on the concrete where the  
Unmowed greenness is seeping, disobeying borders and  
Vows where poisonous butterflies rest lispig,  
Tangled in their beautiful gowns, forgotten the grossness  
They lost when they flit from the knee-high cocoons,  
Forgotten their wormy friends, and that they are still poisonous  
Though no more so than a paper cut to me; if eaten,  
The death of the presocratic burnished into the furrows of  
Ancestry, entire armies lulled blue coated in platoons of  
Stabwounded hillsides, bayonets blushing the necks of  
Beardless infantry; just boys, and their eyes on her halfway  
To a psalm, the suppositions of juvenile daydreams:  
And this delighted reason cut short as her eyes flit away,  
Thus the rain commences into its dispassionate orchestration,  
And little girls cry flung from bicycles with bled knees,  
Never to look again at the unjustified strangers who met them there,  
Like elegant spiders stepping up the flume of a drinking fountain  
In high school: There is no reason for this line, nor the one after,  
For my eyes have skipped across entire oceans, and drunken  
Far deeper from deeper waters still.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Ears To Ears

Brand new aggrandizing scars:

I wake up in the morning and I try to breathe not too

Hard:

Some ones are dyings and some ones are being borns,  
And fine young fine ones are always blowing their horns:

Areolas are seashells

Washed away from mermaids, like this new day washes

Away those old ones,

And the sky: maybe she is serving drinks in the sky,

Like a sorority in a Catholic school bus that spread its wings and

Fly:

Now they stretch their legs and yawn, tawny legs of tawny

Ribbon,

Copper arms and bronze: and they lie for awhile in their blue

Suits and pinafores while their captains draw them along,

With far too many reasons not to find me,

To look so far down and gone where then the earth is just a

Trinket blown of vermilion glass,

And their days are always passing beneath the sky, their

Overpass;

And it seems that they are resting for awhile against the inclinations

Of the spheres,

The blind old men, those peeping toms who grin their daylight

From ears to ears.

Robert Rorabeck

# From High School

Don't you feel that we really belong because  
There are windmills in your eyes  
Darker than for your mother's sadness when she goes  
Away into the loneliness in her kitchen:  
And there doesn't have to be any more reason for these  
Tattoos except that I went away to Spain so many odd years  
Ago:  
I barely graduated high school: a truant with a purple  
And silver jaw who is no longer beautiful-  
Lost so long ago: kidnapped by the long extinctions of fireworks:  
Each peeling whistle strangely reminiscent of our lives together,  
Until collected under another school bus, I have nothing  
Else to do but to listen to the long day as it rains  
In fake knives- and my Muse named Alma turns in,  
Frowning over my misuse of the queens language and all of  
My scars, scarred like a spearing pylon  
Presumptuous in the bay that the terrapins circle, with jokes  
And farts, as she bites her fingernails,  
And the green cannons bask in the seashells of the afternoon sky:  
It might as well be Easter with the beauty resurrected there:  
And the airplanes like metamorphosed school buses,  
And the stewardesses languishing there, high atop the  
Revolutions and serving drinks, smiling with the affable  
Insouciance that I remembered all of my sweet hearts giving to me  
From high school.

Robert Rorabeck

## From Mexico

Enveloped like a wino in the beautiful loneliness  
Of a park  
I think of things that everyone thinks upon while alone:  
Alma calls me on her way to work,  
Says we can only be friends:  
She won't call me again for a week;  
I write about her- I sleep alone; the city writhes,  
Shadows gesticulate to one another:  
She kisses his lips on Christmas  
And then looks away  
And thinks of me;  
And her children at home  
Wonderful and filled with so little pain  
It is almost impossible to imagine  
That they were birthed from a mother who ran  
Away from Mexico.

Robert Rorabeck

# From My Soul

You have so many numbers:  
Bodies attribute to their cars and those  
To their streets—  
Contemplating airplanes rise again—  
They go to leave the sirens,  
As men get up into other lives for  
Another world—  
Well, the sun just turns around,  
And there is nothing very  
Beautiful about that—  
But her work speaks for itself—  
It has found something indefinite:  
It is stealing my heart away,  
And counting the wealth  
Now stolen from my soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# From My Zoetrope's Flickery Meadows

Passions of school yard plays: Sharon,  
You took creative writing on the very first day and leapt across  
The classroom  
When we were suppose to gather and queue: How I feared that you  
Would leap across the classroom with your knee high socks  
And black pony hair,  
Like a waterfall that answers to no one: How perfect you stood and  
Removed yourself from the desk,  
Like a sexy paper airplane of fluted unrest and glided over to me,  
And sat beside me and I am sure saw very little of what  
You were hoping to find; but never mind:  
That was over a lifetime ago, chicken wire on the patio,  
Old-flames in the sky: Now everyone talks on cell-phones until the  
Day they die:  
And you are gone with the cars and the Indian givers: gone straight up  
Stream and never even had to count the depths;  
And yet I wonder if you weren't the product of my insularly dreams:  
Just the girl I was looking for combusted out of the shadows  
And made to dance like a peony springing from my zoetrope's  
Flickery meadows.

Robert Rorabeck



# From Other Worlds

Plaguing the newness of an intersection,  
Song birds shift to the ladies' perfumes—where  
They are going—  
High-heeled in echoes—bodies like stairwells  
Leading  
To the accumulations of their senses in their  
Parloring rooms—  
Like a merry-go-round of orchards for the fox's  
Zoetropes,  
Like mirages in the desert, shimmering—  
Cast from the fallen angels  
And the touching down airplanes—  
Everyday in their classes of daydreams—  
Breathing through the mirrors of an ideology  
That turns their beasts into kings—  
And the sunlight falls upon them in birthmarks of  
Windmills,  
Not only from our familiar sun,  
But from other worlds as well.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Our Child Cut From The Moon

We wait forever for the moon to arrive:  
We have to unload the moon eventually-  
Make him see truth,  
Make him watch myself from the bedroom window  
As I blow up a house to stock you inside:  
With kites and ribbons and kittens,  
And gramophones of cotton candy and honeydew-  
Then the gibbous specter will be so fat with'  
Intrigue as to be a tourist,  
And we can cut a big slice out of him and raise it  
As a child;  
And it will slip so beautiful and wild through the  
Bastions of crawl spaces and suburban pools:  
We can name him after you. He takes after you anyway,  
Or Federico Garcio Lorca anyway;  
And maybe it's his child we are borrowing for awhile,  
And it doesn't matter if you lost your head to a better  
Poet or the mail man or the American Flag,  
As long as you are now well and settled and fat like  
A tourist from our child cut from the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Our Dreaming

They both shared likeminded wisdom  
From knowing each others' tells;  
But their young boys died from eating unlucky  
Snails:  
And the rivers flooded, and the natives disappeared  
Anyways-  
The bromeliads wilted straight over their  
Graves  
The Mexicans sat around having their lunch- and  
Then sleeping,  
And over their brown saddles the insects  
Measured the instruments of  
Their short lived keeping- and there was something  
Else in the sky,  
But who ever remembered it, I am unsure:  
And though I recalled this to you,  
Like stone arrowheads pinioned into pine-  
Embezzled from a point of reason there is no use in  
Explaining-  
And when we both awaken from our dreaming,  
It will be raining, but I am unsure why.

Robert Rorabeck

# From So Far Away

Slowly,  
If we had the same shift,  
I would want to make love to you in front  
Of the big mirror in the changing room.  
And when my brother in law gets here  
Maybe I will go up to the north side of  
The old renaissance park  
Next door to the junior college I went to  
After you had gone up to Gainesville and  
Forgotten me,  
And make discombobulated love to a \$25 dollar  
Spanish whore:  
Because I can do that,  
And I've been to Spain and I want to go back again  
And I want to have thirty two birthday candles  
Burning in my hair  
So tucked away like a plum tree tremulous atop  
Her red clay we might  
Blow them all out together like wishing a genie out  
Of her hairy bottle  
And wish for anything,  
But I would wish all the time for a house for you  
To come down to in near the sea  
The wolves couldn't blow down,  
And you could bring your daughter,  
If you could learn to love and see from so astonishingly  
Far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Ballrooms

Awakened into the orbit where they are  
Without voices—somewhere shouting mutedly  
To the remaining coyotes who have no dinner dates:  
The circus and the fireworks tents  
Are taken down and someone else writes a better  
Novel and dreams of running away—  
Ogled by truckers in the shopping malls of their  
Heirlooms—as the Indians sleep downhill from  
The flea markets of their gas stations—  
And their dreams have no stanzas—maybe it is  
Because they fought too long, and that they couldn't  
Understand any of their numbers:  
When they saw the goldfish in the wishing wells of  
Their shopping malls, they just pissed on them—  
And did not wait for the rain to leave to step outside:  
They became too drunkardly for their girlfriends  
Who left them for boys who could almost always be  
Defined by their occupations—firefighters and werewolves,  
As the lights fell away from the cities at the edge of  
The world that no one cared about—far away from  
The ballrooms in which almost anyone could become famous.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Beds Of Ambiguous Tenements

She came fitfully like a knife in shallow water  
Never discovered by the ambulances of sky:  
I stole her away from her husband and gave her a better house  
To live in;  
And I could never tell if she appreciated me, but I had a bicycle and  
Took it out through the rain clouds while the helicopters  
Were flying low and the orange trees were shivering;  
And the ghosts had started evaporating through the mangers and  
Spanish harems,  
While the frogs wept across the porous stone, and I knew that soon  
I would have to leave and sell fireworks  
While the day bloomed and sweltered and the waitresses awakened  
So very much appreciative, curling from the beds of ambiguous  
Tenements; and the day was beautiful even though I knew it would  
Not last a long time.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Crepuscule

Wives lost into graveyards,  
Strewn from their imperfect marks: now bachelors  
Traveling in their distraught cars  
All over town, getting ice-cream alone- windows  
Of abandoned businesses,  
Snowflakes lost in trees becoming infatuated  
And falling into the veins on a leaf  
Like the extending lines of  
A river, cheating chalk and death- above the heads of  
The law abiding citizens,  
The chief misfits, and the short ways home from school-  
Pinpricks of imperfect light boiling in the yards  
Like freckles over ants,  
And the weeds pushing through, hungrily while foxes  
Are underneath the houses tired of  
Dreaming of vineyards too far away, they proposition  
Alley cats to become a zoetrope together  
And thus they move from the crepuscule, and naturally  
Approaching darkness  
They go up the hills after each other, loping until  
Their shadows are removed from view.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Eyes Of Young Lovers Whose Beds Are Already Burning

Speedy bicycles far beneath the motionless skies,  
The saturnine gentlemen burning like candles  
Skull-caps brushing the fertile crescent of commercial  
Airplanes:  
Bowed sheet-metal echoing in thunderbird stilettos-  
Don't get me wrong, but it is impossible to be  
Young again, to play stripped naked in the weeds  
And pretend it is any other thing;  
And yet the atmosphere is so beautiful next to where  
Tourists f/ck, but it is why they have come-  
They spend good money to get drunk under her  
Gown, to seed their destinations within the deeper  
Ballrooms of the turquoise furrows,  
The caesuras of drowning unicorns; it is the  
Only thing, like a Ferris-wheel turning even if  
The bleeding won't stop-  
They won't shut down. You can't escape her eyes,  
And the way she fireballed as you went down from  
The mutual consumption of a harlequin flue,  
Half-avian like bird-men,  
or like a Precambrian stream gushing newly unresolved  
From their changing climax of your evil romance,  
Clots of alligators and coelecanth- a better thing not to  
See, the traffic blinded, the liquory holidays disposed up,  
How the terrapin proceed over the rusted crowns of conquistadors  
And their diminished saints, into the cooled beds of sands,  
While the tourists sleep hand in hand, or in their family cars,  
A derision of anniversaries and commercialized planets,  
Air-conditioned, leased- But  
This rutting of the torpid and disposed, clutched in the motes of  
Sunken castles and baby's breath,  
That true love comes this way only when the lights are out  
And the waves are fully roaming,  
Dispossessed bachelors on the other side of the canal  
Hard up and singing rummy shanties; and it is all over by morning,  
The young are hatched and speechless, and given little chance;  
Their room is a mess,



Yet by instinct they follow her, revealed like pattering evidence  
Beneath the spotless sun,  
Slipping through the mouths of gulls and waves  
Like white cutlery, immaculate and disappearing  
From the eyes of young lovers  
Whose beds are already burning.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Fairgrounds

Mountains on a stage overlooking  
The fruit market,  
And beside her the road home:  
It doesn't hurt to look at her more,  
But yes it does:  
And to remember her,  
Like a birdbath of honey spilling  
Over the watermelons:  
Or the same old song that sleeps  
Alone in a world  
Fitted for her children, and the fairgrounds  
Will come back around once a year,  
And want to collect her,  
And she will pretend to go with them,  
As if she were climbing up a ladder into  
My misconceived heart,  
But then, tenderly,  
She will go down again, and return  
Home in her thievery,  
Counting all of the wonderful things  
She managed to steal from the fairgrounds of  
My heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Fertile Womb Of Such Orchards I Was Meant To Attend

Bugger who made the sky in amethyst,  
The clouds as handled as uneasy gypsum:  
Plato sat beneath and in the dusk understood  
That there was two of each thing, but only one  
Perceived in this world,  
But Aristotle denied him, said there were  
Nine celestial spheres leading up her  
Bashful eyes lashes, but not doubled;  
But hemlock was needed to be drunk, like  
A sure potion to take the leap,  
Socrates insisted, as he did:  
Hercules didn't care, he drank her where he  
Saw her, and the sea was his court:  
Unabashedly, he ran around and through her  
Legs until she was thoroughly weaved,  
And fell down on top of him, bosomy; but she  
Didn't care: it was just her philosophy....  
Time passes on, and I almost killed myself over  
You, the little bit of carbon monoxide thrill,  
And dad has three pistols fully loaded in the  
Bottom drawer; and I know who he voted for:  
And still I need you, even when all you care to say  
To me is, hello; but it won't get me to shave,  
Or to stop moving around with carnivals, smelling your  
Ways along the route: I'll find you in the particular  
Light of a particular date, and lay you down  
All in corduroy, and punch you with my lips  
Until you apologize, and I will teach you all about my  
Pre-Socratic philosophies, my thirsty swordsmanship  
I use to denote you as a certain queen;  
And we will do this on the ranging easement beside  
The community college, while the ants go through upheavals,  
Carrying away the boll weevils to their sandy indoors;  
And I will carry off publications for you, in the  
Homeopathic coitus of our fingertips; until we are  
Burnished and freely living, with children growing like  
Seedless grapes from the fertile womb of such orchards

I was meant to attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Garden Of My Dying Fingertips

I read over words that shouldn't have to be real;  
I make them come to half-way life as pain  
Killers,  
As little things which shake fists of animated dust  
And twigs toward the sub-stellar night:  
Customers drive in and look at the pumpkins,  
But the tent isn't coming until Monday-  
I don't know why I say these things- I think it should  
Be better to live near you,  
To smell the same mustard seeds  
Blown from the clock towers  
Of the state university,  
Lungs of Furies blowing intelligent pumice:  
Walking the same streets as your serviceable gardens,  
Looking nearer the same things which shouldn't have  
To make you smile,  
Even happening across the men you're more likely to  
Marry:  
Now I am so far away down in a dry well of palm trees,  
Conquistadors flanged amidst the sharp blue cactus,  
Everyone licking his paws from trying to get to it:  
And it's funny that no one down here thinks of you  
Anymore in passing-  
But here I am, weeping like a little bird, congratulating  
The nightmares of rhododendron and sharp toothed  
Adversaries,  
Tempting them nearer in our reciprocation of insouciant play,  
All to have you a little closer,  
If not in reality then at least in the jungle kingdom of  
Ghosts and fairytales who come crippled and gimped  
From the garden of my dying fingertips.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Kidnapped Fingers

Despotic world of  
All of the loves left behind  
Like the shells of  
Katydid going to better places  
Across the canal  
Or underneath the moons,  
As the kite slips away from  
The kidnapped fingers—  
Then, is this a kind of  
Song, the graveyards sings to  
Its visitors?  
Is this a place, a flower allowed  
To survive underneath  
The playgrounds of the  
Oceans,  
As the fireworks tents peak in  
The desert,  
And the illusions carry on  
Carrying their fairgrounds into  
Movie theatres—  
And those places where you  
Can close your eyes and  
See what has left you forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Movie Theatres

I am getting fat in the layovers of milkweed:  
And someone is calling me—  
The bottle rockets have fallen into the perpetual  
Night in the serene gardens across the canal:  
It is code for another kind of death,  
As the dogs run their tracks, as the angels fall:  
And snowflakes melt across the windshields  
Of a blinded muse:  
Or, I suppose they don't have to, while I am  
Driving away—and she doesn't answer me—  
As sunlight and water fountains  
Peter to the hummingbirds—and my mother will  
Have her fifty-fifth birthday tomorrow:  
What will she think of that spring—  
As she sees her father laying stark naked amidst  
The plastic roses of his graves—  
And the tourisms surround her, making her the  
Higher end of a see-saw—  
As the ways bask in the luxuries of her abandoned  
Forts: it seems as if they've been falling her  
Forever—forever—  
And still she is not done, nor does she want to  
Come indoors from collecting all of the fallen antlers  
Shed from the kings she has rejected who go  
Weeping from the movie theatres  
And across the prairies—  
The firelight of another man's yesterdays following  
Her across the cinder-block steps and indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Nocturnal Prisons

Lost marbles in the playroom that opens  
At one end to a field without end, and to the canal  
That doesn't exist,  
Evaporated ribbon, like promises  
Of girls lost with the yellow-jackets caressing the  
Tiny nipples of the kumquat tree  
Filled with the wayward paper airplanes.  
Underneath their tinfoil daises,  
The wax lions sweat—trinkets of the zoo  
Left over our shoulders—fieldtrips to roller rinks  
And movie theatres,  
While over there each wave a thrust—  
A new reason—an animalistic breath as a stark  
Contract against the fragmented delusions of  
The séances of the amusement parks:  
And holding your hand in one of these places,  
And fall off the pace,  
Lying with you in the abandonments we both hope  
For,  
Calling to you hopefully from the nocturnal prisons  
As jasmine blooms from the soul  
You could not fill.

Robert Rorabeck



# From The Old Mailboxes

This is the curse of the brotherhood that wished that it  
Had existed a lot more in what could have been the soft brown  
Baseball games in the immeasurable depths of your deep  
Brown eyes,  
Like coffee that wasn't stirring from its sleep:  
Like your arms enfolded around a newborn that made up its  
Own sorts of spells,  
While the terrapins wandered, and the boats flew:  
And the gods who were still alive spoke to themselves, until  
The oceans that we circulated around were really cut up  
And emoted the silver destinations of your Christmases:  
Alma, or whatever else it was that you really wished to  
Decide for;  
And you children learned the language that your mother Rosa  
Cooked for them, as I died for you every night, under the arms of  
The special curses,  
As your occultish young body swung around like the heady metals  
Of an undecided compass on a journey in a fireside by which  
It wasn't made up in any way to know how to prove, or heroically,  
Disprove;  
Until the pinwheels of my family's name finally regained their  
Colors, and flew off your lips  
Like mockingbirds from the old mailboxes somewheres in a neighborlessly  
Honored sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Other Side Of The Canal

It is my job  
To get drunk and pray to you underneath  
The sun-  
Floating in the railroad tracks of the un busied  
Weekends,  
As beneath the rose bushes,  
As all of my art is forsaken, and you go  
Home to your husband: you say you do not  
Love him.  
But you go home to him,  
And I climb mountains to get closer to the mountains  
So I can taste the rain off their lips  
As I curse your name,  
And all of your high school turns around again-  
What beautiful monuments that are not  
Supposed to be ours,  
As your direct your attention underneath the blue tarps  
Of the weddings of another tourists trap-  
You seem almost to belong in a museum,  
While I've been cultivating my apiary,  
Waiting for the sunlight to fall upon our lives,  
Even after the goldfish has died-  
And I want to take you towards the places I've  
Already lived, and hopefully haunt those  
Places with you as the sunspots flash across  
The early morning carports from the other side of the canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Pool

Imperfect as a body glorified by the iron struts of  
Day:  
Selling the heirlooms of Christmas trees:  
The traffic causally articulating to the grass along the  
Way-  
Playing a Mexican card game with two friends of  
Mine,  
Pining for that muse who allowed me to use her  
Body one too many times  
To only be friends: because I would buy her things and  
Then look the other way,  
While the night was a castle building up to stay  
And looking down across the miniature panoply across  
The roof of her house,  
Burning in imperfect estuaries- crowded by other  
Mexicans and minorities-  
Brutal games in the park for years before school,  
Played by women and her sisters who are  
Causally beautiful,  
And as voluptuous as vixen and serpents,  
Just stepping out of the movie theatre, just glistening from the pool.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Pressing Conflagrations

Our bodies wake up from the pressing conflagrations of  
Fathers and mothers;  
At first we have so many needs, but then we wish that we were not  
Here;  
Because we have seen you slipping on your sweet belly through  
The weeds:  
You all but stuck your tongue out at us and hissed, and then  
Went off following his footprints:  
Are his father and mother better than ours? We bought a house for  
You on your birthday:  
A yellow house with flowers, and we apologize for being born  
So far above the equator our skin is so pale and sickly  
Compared to yours;  
Or was it just that his father and mother knew how to work their  
Fires better than ours.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Reasons Towards Her Accords

Pretending to do good deeds, jogging beside the  
Fires of Christmas when it isn't even yet Halloween- but all of the new  
Babies will soon be suckling of the massive egos enjambment ed  
Into the swollen crèches of another woman  
I don't suppose I ever belonged to: as new words rise up like gravestones:  
And all that was here dries out of color and folds into itself,  
Supposing that it has never had to be for so long;  
And my muse, she- lies down with her husband, kissing the centerfolds  
Of another grotto or car show:  
Forgetting about me, but wounded and breathless: while she is my heaven  
I've been calling the fires into and kissing the feet of the other  
States of Mexico while all that was left has yet to be  
Serenely proven: and then I eat my lunch next to her, like a kite next to  
The stewardess in the waves: and I become soft and swollen with the indentures  
Of the Wisconsin whose music she never deems to listens, but to which  
She lives so near towards- and her name is Alma, and this is but the latest  
Canto bled from my reasons towards her accords.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Seasides Of His Homesick Canal

Destroyed by the sunshine in the monuments  
Of loneliness:  
Everyday getting up and quivering at the treeless  
Summit, looking down into the  
Greenness of valleys populated  
By people and marionettes: thinking of doing  
Good things,  
And then dividing: like plagiarists and scientists,  
Losing ears and noses:  
To be replaced by gold and comets,  
And other strange voices  
The students only hear when they are alone;  
And in the carport, and  
At night, after the rabbits have exhausted all of their  
Wishes,  
And are sacrificed in the rock gardens by  
The dogs and their vulpine grins:  
And the carnivals are all tamed and starting out,  
And the kidnappers are all stargazing under  
The blue and cerulean banners,  
And the grizzly bears all are praying:  
And my muse is not even born, but when she is  
It is in Michuacan, Mexico into a world I have never  
Seen and for seventeen years  
Until she is pregnant and traveling across the frontera  
Into America until all of this way, so finally she takes my  
Hand and occasionally falls in love with me,  
Fleetingly, burning out like fireworks, like doves falling  
Asleep into peace only to be burned home again,  
As I brush her brow and kiss her-  
And wait for her to call me: Alma, Alma, until she falls  
Asleep in her distance like the daylight of  
All that I'd hoped for; and I call to her through the cascading  
Orchestras of my loneliness- pitiful and malformed  
Through the amber playgrounds;  
For her to rise again and caress me, cherishing,  
As if a browned eyed goddess moving winged from a bird bath,  
Slipping into my sight again,  
As sleek as an otter serenading the housewives from the seasides

Of his homesick canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Sky

In the glove box of my day  
Hot ashes and cigarette cherries- Other mothers  
Whose other girls go by the name  
Of Mary's- and they sit in the blue Cadillac's  
Like shrines in the carport:  
They sit in their sashes, and make eyes across  
The canal:  
They are waiting for any man to find them,  
To teach them and show them how.  
While their pornography is in a daydream, or with  
A pill bug in a pill box- the cavalry is  
Returning high heeled to Appomattox-  
And you know about the flowers ushering to  
The gutters, picked by the lips of tortoises  
As gifts for the arms of butterflies  
Who are never present- who are skipping school,  
And remained traveling, exhuming fairytales  
From the sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# From The Sky You Left Behind

The good witchcraft of my song impedes my weary  
Epiphany: see the light house in her gory sorority looking  
Far and then further away:  
And now this poem: all of the angels up in arms,  
Getting good numbers for the lottery of lost virgins uncorked  
To their dragons, slipped like tallow conquistadors  
Across the canal- all of the sad shoulders, and the meandering minnows  
Whose throats are speckled with the glitter of iron pyrite:  
What a holiday to sleep with you, Alma, all and every night;  
And new poems for you up in these burning hibiscus,  
Destroying for you the words I never once thought of you for you:  
Alma, why- the entire architecture and its landscaping is burning up  
For you, in a world that is otherwise going down:  
How he got you to come back to him while I was never around-  
Thoughts formed in echoes, estranged into the estuaries of your  
Silent throat- won't you hear, my muse, the words for you,  
I never thought, I never wrote: and the roads are coming home for  
You- my god, and his angels, the airplanes are touching down  
All over Mexico- Alma:  
And I will die for you- an epitaph for your victory: watch them build  
The gilded monuments all atop my throat: while the salts of your luxuries  
Ululate and play for home, expressing the virtues of the rules of  
A world you were too far lost to give to me, Alma, as if these words  
Were the breads crumbs spent in the frontera for your lost children,  
Like rose petals spread across the lips of wolves and angels,  
Just like the spokes of stolen bicycles confiscated after midnight  
For you, Alma: how I fail, and then how your children  
Return home, anyways, happening to your own joys- into a world  
That is the splendor shed in the bosque,  
In the beauty that quakes from the skin you left behind.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Snake's Mouth

My wife, come over to the  
Other side of the work,  
Like an ant crossing a river in  
A jungle—  
An egg fallen from the snake's  
Mouth  
And into a nest of sleepy-eyed  
Crocodiles—  
A beautiful jewel that sets  
The dinner table—  
Anyways, so lay down the angels—  
And when they get upset,  
They leave their hang-dog shadows,  
And go on dates with better  
Men—  
The world echoes of its contraptions—  
No part of it is without a history  
Of destruction—  
But I have stopped looking for your  
Face alongside my own reflection  
As it drives through the zoos and  
The church yards—  
And, for a little while, the best of  
All of the men put on fireworks  
To turn the fickle amusements of  
The abusive gods towards them  
For an instant,  
As a latchkeyed airplane breathes  
Its birthday wishes in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Tables Of Divine Providence

In a bliss,  
My wife and child lie sleeping  
Entangled in the next bedroom  
Of this apartment  
Somewhere on the outskirts of Shanghai—  
And in her belly, another child—  
Somewhere, the first collection of cells,  
As a bouquet in her belly,  
Trying to help me out,  
Just the primordial blessing, telling or pretending  
To tell me that I have been doing  
Alright,  
As the sun hangs down like a dog going through  
The doorways of the kissless stars—  
And somewhere in China,  
While I have been writing of her,  
A billion or so some odd souls lay sleeping, opened  
Mouths on their backs like lizards basking as  
The moonlight spills over the Great Wall of China—  
And I don't have to believe in this  
Or anything—  
Not in helicopters or firemen or the rooftops of  
Their restaurants—  
And not what they taught me in school:  
I just have to look down into your eyes  
And see you staring back at me,  
As light is kidnapped from both of our worlds  
To consider the possibilities  
Laid out philosophically, like nude tourists  
Basking for the waves,  
Like dogs leaping for the scraps thrown  
From the tables of divine providence.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The Window Of A Junked Paddle Boat

I am calling again casting the paper-snow  
Flakes of my show,  
That easy death my grandmother applauded some years  
Before she herself died;  
I'm doing this like a shell-fish without his shell,  
A shoeless baseball player, which is my thing:  
The lips of the hurricane are drooling even so far  
As this place in Arizona,  
And I have my heart out again of its fleshy pocket,  
Trying not to dispel the nervous things which are  
True, the coy in the lake of a bicycle's tear-  
Trying to fool you into believing that I would kill myself  
From the window of a junked paddle boat,  
Tossing myself into a feral mouth, leonine or crocodilian  
To the applause of the remote control tourism,  
For only a second of your eyes- To turn you away from  
His fleshy gymnastics by my esoteric poses,  
Even the failing of my things I collected for you by the dozen,  
To watch them losing color outside the fire of your senses,  
To see here for an instant the uncanny inebriation of  
My vermilion truancies- How I dance for you, jobless,  
Only wanting you, and then to run away to someplace mundane  
But sacred, to feel your absence in the sun, the isolation  
Life gives like getting drunk in the darkest room until  
It burns with all the simulacrum of a beautiful cemetery your  
Consciousness doesn't have be anywhere around to be enjoyed.

Robert Rorabeck

# From The World Of The Friends Who No Longer Exist

Warmed by cheap rum, I start reading my own  
Words,  
Paragraphs of premature novels which seem to run  
On forever;  
But they remind of sunny days when it was sunnier than  
Its ever been,  
And we were moving out so all the funeral furniture  
Was scattered across the lawn as if a hurricane had it our  
Feng Shui;  
And so the possibilities are with the lizards, and the  
Tourists are on the paddle boats after feeding peanuts  
To the elephant,  
And there isn't anymore need for money,  
So ex-girlfriends are now married on ruby red cruises  
With older men they now call their husbands who  
Make their lives easy like Hollywood movies;  
But I keep falling back to the poesy- its because I like  
To lie out in the front yard before a hurricane and smell  
The citrus on my fingers like the foreplays of oral sex:  
And she is a gentle ingénue in her seasons, smiling with  
Her tan lines, but the liquor makes me think that I am even  
More beautiful than her: that I am stained glass in the gutter,  
That I am the truanicies shooting off fireworks:  
And I am, and I am: I am more beautiful than I've ever been,  
Than my mother or grandmother have ever claimed me to be-  
I am more than a character actor- I could be a leading man,  
Except I am too good for him: I am metamorphosing- I am  
A butterfly at the top of my house at thirty-one, and I love  
My novels and the things I've kept saying for so long so  
Alone; and I want to buy a house and hold scientific experiments  
In the backyard while the lions are escaping down the street;  
And I want to do all of what isn't necessary, but I'm afraid  
That my poem should have to end before it overstays its welcome,  
And the last of the houseguests gets married and leaves me alone  
To climb up the bean stock in the backyard while the  
Alligator watches me with eyes the color of her birthstones  
From the very world I mean to write about, the world of friends  
Who have made new friends, who no longer exist anymore.



## From Their Earliest Romance

Over the little green room it  
Rains,  
And the ladies wait out their labors- the fish  
Are done swimming outside-  
The men are done with their banter,  
And the rooster is underneath the gutter  
With the dog-  
He is silent in all of his color;  
And after the rains, smoke over the earth,  
And the crops who make their heated gains  
In the night time;  
The insects change through them- and if you  
Are lucky, you will see the little girl  
Kissing the lips of the corn snake in the  
Dirty gutter  
Before classes and the light arising over the world,  
But not for the last time,  
Making measured exchanges- and then you  
Will have to sit behind her  
And wonder  
What he tasted like to her, and what secrets  
They shared  
So fertile was the light newly born  
From their earliest romance.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Their Games In The Sand

Crepuscule will be happening again:

Here it is: oops, it has gone, and the parks are emptied

And the homes become brightly lit as the traffic

Is parked and we are home

With our lovers or our soon to be party guests, and the televisions

Are on,

And they are gossiping in the middle of the sea:

And we cook for ourselves, or they cook for us: and the airplanes

Leap:

Oh joy: they leap up and up- they cascade, but Alma will not

Tell me that she loves me,

And my tears float like watchtowers of balloons over the

Coquina fortifications which become doused with trumpets and

Petty kings and barbeques with

Gazebos and homeopathic primates and silent unrequited gifts

For Alma every evening after crepuscule has come

And her one or two children have come home again

Their toes curling, exhausted and finishing with be playful,

And culled to us and her tawny bosom,

Like ships returning to port all famished and weary but happy

From their games in the sand.

Robert Rorabeck



# From Their Highways

A single light bulb hung over  
A ghostly baseball stadium—and I cannot come  
Home,  
So lost in the basements I am,  
In the grottos of her tricks—  
Even the fabulous letters across a billboard cannot  
Save me: I am lost well,  
As the bicycles and the busses turn around—  
And the butterflies head into Mexico:  
Mexico,  
Where my dog jumps like a marionette in his dreams:  
While all of the ships disembark in the dark  
Theatres where they are already returning—  
And where there are no suburban estuaries for  
Truancies and romances:  
Where you have already escaped from me so early—  
Looking up to the stars and learning,  
Learning—after all of the lamps have gone, accorded to  
Their bi-ways—  
And the midgets fawn with the whoring princesses underneath  
The palmettos:  
This—a dream that was lost—  
Though I can almost remember your eyes—your eyes,  
Advertising like angels beside the cars from their highways—  
From their highways.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Their Long Darkness

Overused, but vibrant and alone,  
I wonder if you make love while lying in  
Bed with your daughter,  
As I come across all the words I will never  
Own,  
As I am just going up the familiar paths overused  
On the indescribably beautiful mountain:  
You remind me, Alma, of my mother, if she were  
Of another country,  
And another time; and I know that my word counts  
Have entirely exhausted you,  
And my knights have weebegone into your more  
Simpler world,  
And these are things that by conclusion you just  
Can't love,  
Or no one else for their pitiful sake: while you  
Remain over me an elephant of warms, that the airplanes  
Cloud:  
They cluster like the memories of a summer around  
Breathless wildflowers,  
And I think of you while the desirous bears slumber,  
Waiting until their new seasons come so  
That they come stumble out from their long darkness  
And kiss you as if you were their own.

Robert Rorabeck

## From Their Lovely Game

Every ornament in carport of the heavens, looking good  
And flirting with the oceans that know  
Our echoes- the push of our graveyards, and sometimes  
How swing sets still leap over the culling of their  
Mulling weddings:  
It is there that their hearts drip, like irrigations for a vineyard  
So far beneath the tufts of lilies,  
Where alligators float like airplanes, and five year old  
Princesses fly when they learn to swim,  
As from the yard of a perfect white house they go down,  
Causing stains and blood, and little chips in their once perfections  
That will not go away;  
But it only makes them more precious, as some lights go out  
Absolutely far away- and I hurt myself again,  
Kneeling in prayer through the dime sized caskets in the infinity  
Sucreased from their lovely game.

Robert Rorabeck

## From This Sad Folklore

Stood up in the huckleberry woods,  
Been thinking of Briar Rabbit and your nipples,  
And the sky above the coned limbs whispering like  
Drunken neighbors;  
They have so many things to gossip yawning upwards,  
Pretending like the sky is some communal pool,  
And that they were all working class evergreens,  
Handymen and plumbers,  
And some who tow away cars from the university;  
Down on their luck except that it is the forested weekend,  
And I could really leave here, because I've just been drinking,  
And I've just started out,  
My sack is full of peanut butter and jelly,  
And the dogs are nippy,  
And the trails well paved by the long bearded uncles,  
The boys on coins,  
The puritans and their yokey horses-  
They are of only one class, the masons of the forest,  
Who make homey amphitheatres from stricken lumber-  
But in the Appalachians it is always raining,  
And I've been drinking,  
And the planes are down,  
And the stewardesses stolen naked into the huckleberries,  
And the rabbit is in his own delusions,  
While Twain scribbles out an Arthurian farce to pay the bills  
Against his elaborate contraptions;  
The storm doesn't abate, and I am alone and taken shelter in  
A tiny outhouse beside a giant highway,  
And I will wait out the night and then walk back the twenty miles  
To my car,  
And go home to the girlfriend who disappeared what,  
A decade ago- She stricken up a tar baby in the front  
Yard with a golden arm, and it is so beautiful  
And frightening in its ant-hilled nursery beneath the palm-tree;  
The black men are dancing all around it  
And making it a peony to keep occupied until I get back,  
Not knowing that I am watching them with the ghosts  
In my truck,  
And that I can barely contain myself,

From this sad folklore I am weepy.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Time To Time

What they have is real, and what you are is a smoking  
Ruin.

The mountains will play their bassoons for you only  
Because you have been to the tops of so many of them;  
And have come down limping with

Grandmothers:

And pan will play his lyre for you: but you will eat your  
Lunch in the lunchroom of the single men

While outside the window it is raining but only for a little

While,

Because nature recognizes what you've tried to accomplish

For her,

But she can only be sad from time to time.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Town To Town

There lay a shoulder to the sun—  
Atop of a giant who packed a six gun:  
And the dogs were laughing  
As they hunted the graveyard—next to the  
Movie theatre—  
Next to the museum of our hunting grounds:  
And maybe tomorrow I will have  
My honey moon in the foothills of the Appalachians  
Or maybe really in the foothills of the  
Himalayas—  
And I will drool in very many primary colors  
And count my feet against the séances of very many  
Tourists:  
It will seem as if I am one of them:  
The ice-cream will melt back against the cul-de-sacs  
Of my house—  
The dogs will run in their race-tracks or the horses  
Will run, or the men—  
I cannot remember: all that I know is that I have married—  
So I no longer have to wonder as the pretty  
Dresses of the Ferris Wheels return from town to town.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Under The Crescent Hills

Twitterpated on death,  
Flies know so many lips;

They may not get her message,  
But they love her tasty gist.

2.

Mathematicians of chaos sing a plague,  
In pestilent orchestras castanet her head,

Until what is unfinished becomes revealed,  
Moon-lit, contented.

....

They carry their instruments in rain-slicked  
Cases, under shoulder-

Go home to empty kitchens and beg for more;  
They will only live for a fortnight,

But will always adore that woman still grinning  
From under the crescent hills.

Robert Rorabeck



# From Very Far Away

Bright as any shroud over a candy store:  
Womanly vessels that sing and cry over the  
Rounded stone of  
Vanquished lovers- on the higher plateaus  
Where the Titans who have  
Yet cannibalized themselves sit lamenting,  
Spreading the pools of virgins from their eyes:  
As the day shifts  
And metamorphoses beneath the clouds  
That have journeyed in from very far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Which You Have So Faithfully Have Strayed

A casual touch to be the end of me, like the purring of  
A ghost:  
I carried your cigarettes to the cemetery, and you were  
The most utmost;  
But you could not linger in my dally,  
Weren't your eyes made of far away:  
Weren't they just as newly painted as the happenstance of  
An all of a sudden story,  
And I will not say your name to save me:  
My joy was the joy of a firework making for a moment  
The curb brilliant,  
Making even the most religious of mailmen hesitate:  
All of these colors foaming and sizzling down into your  
Hot plate;  
And this was just you out there in the outstanding cold,  
Lost for a little while pressed to the jubilee of a needy child at  
His favorite game:  
Hot and wild, until my paper flamed and curled,  
And all that I loved darkened and mewed to you, which made  
You realize that I wasn't your favorite,  
And that this wasn't even real, and that you had a home,  
And a father whose warmth was even more certain than the empty  
Darkness to which you  
No longer linger, from which you so faithfully have strayed.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Your Fountains

Wound up by whatever hypotheses are in my labyrinth  
And suffering nightly-  
In the cooling estuaries of a suburbia I was never allowed  
To attend,  
While my brown muse sinks into her husband,  
And all around her the tamed natures of my America sing:  
Dear Alma, you have two children,  
And you wind up so far away from me: you have never flown  
Minisculed into the rafters of my overweight houses;  
You have never been with me across to another world  
On the other side of the canal,  
But I have tasted your lips like priceless penny candy;  
And your body has sunken into my own,  
A body that ululated with the needs to be set free;  
And into another night, remaining scarred and alone,  
And underneath the flight path of ambivalent airplanes,  
I sing another song- deafly muted into your window,  
Hoping that you will look up and remember- and touching  
My hand with gentle hopelessness, winding away into  
Another world where the expectations of your family fall away-  
Shed like katydids from high school,  
And all I am is there for you- set free, a dream of promises  
And bouquets that drink from your fountains never to die.

Robert Rorabeck

## From Your Hair

Airplanes make ribbons—yes, they do for  
Lonely girls,  
And I almost forgot that I left you here:  
I do not suppose you remember me—  
Semiprecious virgin with your two  
Children—  
Will you go into the flea market,  
Or will you just sit outside with your two  
Children in this hot day?  
The drink comes to my lips again.  
My wife and child sit it out in the other room—  
Soon it will be summer,  
And the airplanes will be touching down,  
Untying from your hair—  
And it is a blessing that you do not remember me.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Your Hidden Wounds

I think it is possible that you should consider committed  
Relationships,  
With the sun going down over Portland, and every other  
Color is primary and needing to  
Be touched by the uninhabited hands of children,  
While I can only come so far towards you before  
Running away,  
As the lights finally hushes its lips and burns away across  
The blow holes of dolphins,  
As the lovers douse their wares into the wash basins  
Of what they expect to find,  
As the canaries kiss the lips of the deadly mine,  
As the tourists stumble towards you blindly and unawares,  
As your brown eyes kindle and burn before  
That dinner table that your children always come to,  
Hoping unexpectedly to find new stories spilling of you and  
Me, blooming in a hidden catastrophe,  
Perfumed from your hidden wounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# From Your Sun Brownd Orchards

Ten minuses and it subtracts another day; but it was a good  
Good day,  
And well remembered, though it is going away;  
It is true that I am no cowboy, even though I have many sad  
Things today,  
And maybe it will be that I never again get to clove and  
Pluck from your  
Sun brownd orchards, but it will always be the case that  
I so happily did today.

Robert Rorabeck

# Frontera

Coming across the frontera is like dreaming:  
There is no entry for it in any common dictionary;  
And there are no peach orchards:  
The flaming sword swings like disemboweled airplanes:  
And there are plenty of serpents:  
But that is something that I cannot truly express:  
Even though I gave Alma three bouquets today before she  
Could drive away;  
And she has passed through the frontera, and lost her virginity at  
Least by the age of fifteen:  
Her first son is six years old and she is twenty four, and her man  
Has come back from:  
Has come back from Guerrero Mexico like another life, like the  
Gift of a weapon that joined in the defeating of  
The Alamo:  
And now sing, and drink and play cards:  
My face, perplexing beneath the common day moon, buying  
Alma lunch and sitting underneath the fox tail palms,  
And letting her feed me:  
And promising her my house, telling her how beautiful she is:  
Like a guitar or a violin: promising her so many things;  
And just as faithful to her as a lion yawning, and still she goes  
Back to him, giving me all kinds of nightmares,  
And more nights of alcoholism, and phone calls from my  
Still surviving grandmother who I don't even like:  
And the rings of disemboweled trees and other things that used  
To belong to angels; and now, Alma: and now this....  
And now this....

Robert Rorabeck

# Fuerte Del Diablo

I am smiling because  
Her eyes are green, and just beginning to  
Open- How so like the migratory song of the butterfly,  
The ideology of the life's spittoon, and cast underfoot  
The prettiest things are without reason  
Or fanfare, but come out in the down hours  
To be fed by my hand, and the secret smiles I give;  
How so,

Like the effluvious sides of new sports vehicles,  
Like the auctioning cries from the dinner table and bright  
New linguistics and the politically correct sideshows,  
So well-groomed and porous and even now living  
In the corner acre lots with their lawyers and lonely cypress,  
But I say:

I am now reading a book I wrote,  
And never again will I look into your eyes, even how  
The Mexicans despise me for employing them,  
For making \$207,000 dollars this holiday off of her independence,  
And then driving across the land we stole from them,  
And picking up the cut pieces of language which should be  
Given for free to the drunken Navajos.

Somewhere,  
The devil is laughing and turning water from the frozen lake  
Like the work of a heavy windmill, but I am ready for him,  
And the way her legs have bounded away from the loci of my rest,  
The way frightened deer pass through the headlights of calamity:  
For, I have bought myself a home and a headstone,  
And am prepared for the brevity of this job,

Thus I play baseball alone, and look at the sides  
Of my face equally, and eat two hot dogs for dinner, and  
Lying with my dogs at 9,000 feet say quietly now that this is  
Freedom: The liquor in the glass and in my veins,  
The loneliness opening away like strange flowers in a high basin,  
Making me say now that this is all,  
This is all, and I am a simple yankee



No longer afraid to fire the laughing vatos,  
For I am even now laughing as if I were a coyote,

For even now I am smiling, for  
Her eyes are green and just beginning to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fully Fledged Flight Attendants

In the city lies the citizens laid quiet off the ejaculating of  
The exhausting angels:  
Those pretty demigods that put them to work, and then  
Sent them back home again,  
Down into the jungles and the purple fjords of their deeply  
Shadowed  
Cribs: perhaps like heroes defeated by their own monsters,  
The motifs of satellites nearly invisible in their rooms:  
The footprints of super heroes,  
The metamorphosis of Cinderella's brooms: and they go this  
Way by the byways of nocturnal rivers,  
Pretending that the night blooming jasmine is the only  
Thing in the neighborhood that will keep them  
Intoxicated, as school comes,  
And the ixora blushes and turns into full hedges  
Just in the very same time that the youngest sweethearts finally  
Grow up and become so leggy that they leap across the continents  
Wearing the finery of the heavens on their strapless shoulders:  
They are now fully fledged flight attendants.

Robert Rorabeck

# Fun

Give me the functionality of bob-cats,  
Mariposa,  
And I will turn around like a ballet for you,  
Under the bright lights of the goddesses  
All in the art classes,  
Or Latin,  
Filling up the streets all night long for two  
Weeks  
With their milky love: their eyes as salient and  
Lasting as the teal caesuras, you know,  
Like humping tennis courts;  
They felt me up like a tender orange from across  
The room:  
They candied their apples and sugared their  
Breads,  
And the sky foamed with their perfumed heads  
Before they went away:  
Upstate upriver, and I followed after them like some  
Loyal, beaten dog,  
But it was already too late: Erin already had a boyfriend  
In her bed,  
Sharon was long gone,  
And the rest-stop bathrooms were pitiful-  
The flatulent alligators smelled like dead cats, and now  
I am too afraid to go into a house of mirrors,  
To perceive myself in different gravities rolling around,  
Filibustering; keeping the time that has  
Already passed away,  
And it is no longer any fun.

Robert Rorabeck

# Further And Further Away From Old Mexico

Now you say that if I go this way  
I can take your hand:  
If I hop the cars and slay the dragon:  
And I have been up all night pining through the darkness,  
Kissing the empty blocks underneath the overpasses,  
Pretending that this is Alma's  
Brown skin:  
Because I saw her once today and called all that I saw  
Of her heaven:  
And I stole a brick of firecrackers from my father for  
Father's day and I gave to her in a brown  
Paper bag along with a brick of jumping jacks  
And a picture of a werewolf,  
And I saw my younger cousin who is taller than me,  
But I forgot to say hello;  
And in the evening I guess Alma's man came to drive her  
Away,  
And all of this seemed to come and go  
Even further and further away from old Mexico.

Robert Rorabeck

## Further Away

I am in the right place for another glass,  
And perhaps I will never write another poem tonight,  
As today I have to explain to Antonio that there is no more  
Work right now, for the horses are hungry  
And eating up all the money garnered from our patriotism;  
And soon it will all be gone, and they will still be hungry  
And young and growing,  
And the liquor in their legs spent in the egotisms of the racetrack  
And the little men atop them like unified Napoleons,  
And I will still not know her number, or the saccharine rhyme of  
Her heart;  
For I would like to take her to the zoo,  
And notify her to each of the carnivores' appetites,  
And run against her like the bachelor otter in the falsified  
Eddies of his plastered architecture,  
The way higher mammals purr, and tell her now that this  
Is how it should be, if she could remember,  
The food I feed to her, the milk like fine liquor I take from her  
Breast as I steal from our children-  
But she is just the rhythmical fantasy stolen by the Indians  
And taught their languages and the mathematics  
Of their casinos-  
And I should have been in Japan by now and laid,  
And talking in different languages: In a year a father in conjoined  
Decade a grandfather enjoying Disneyworld with the newly  
Spent and bewildered eyes of its doey offspring;  
Instead, I let the yellow b\*itch in by the static door of my  
Falsifying basement, offer another toast to Whitman and his  
Genius linesman, and tell her now that she should not read me,  
For this is the weather of a new holocaust, and all hope is spent  
Just getting up to the teller, and even though her breasts are immaculate  
So that she should be named Mary and feed entire queuing of  
Third world countries; it is still not enough to justify another  
Inebriation, or another night without her,  
Whoever she is trying to me- I give her this as if I throw  
An infant love letter out of my moving vehicle, and now  
That it is screaming there can be nothing more,  
Nor shall I revisit this utterly disjointed psalm, another poetry  
Conceived on my rum- For her eyes are beautiful though

Far away,  
And though tomorrow I may live close to her again.  
I could never be further away....

Robert Rorabeck

## Further Away Than Memory

It feels good to be away from the other unmasked bodies,  
To be asleep in the day where the airplanes recede like signed  
Treaties;  
And it is wonderful to be directly underneath the flight path of  
All the airplanes leaving West Palm Beach,  
For now all the stewardesses go leaping straight above me,  
Like Jacks over his candles, only that they are Janes and their  
Candles are the soft sheets over my eyes:  
And I don't need thunderstorms or air-conditioning to sooth me,  
For I can still remember how the telephone booths glowed with  
Some sort of heliotropic light,  
Like fish tanks for the wayward and color blind; and sure she  
Still has blond hair,  
And a family that sways like the wind chimes she grew while  
Breathing,  
But I am not in her room anymore- and I am a place further away  
Than memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# Galahad, Son Of Lancelot

Lancelot of the green heart and other  
Immature words—  
Had an illegitimate son as pure as many gods—  
Who sat with the bangle tigers  
As he ate his lunch of peanut butter and  
Jelly at the zoo—  
Galahad was the boy of Timbuktu—  
Chosen by the angels to tie his shoe,  
And quest for the Holy Grail:  
It's what he did,  
And this much is true—  
He found it he, did,  
But I don't know where—oh if—  
Oh if I only knew—

I wouldn't have to bet on the races  
Or go to work in the zoo—  
But I've lost my habit of knowing what  
I'm doing and my wife  
Run away with my shoe.

Robert Rorabeck



# Galaxy Of Christmas

Admiring the echoes in a well  
Where no one has drowned-  
Weekends of Saturdays  
Come,  
And serpents around them- a few words that  
I know  
Like fire drills in high school getting up  
Tomorrow  
Tanned and scarred,  
Busy day of infatuation steering for the long  
Emptiness  
Where there are no more planets or  
Seas or animals-  
I will see you, if I still love- busy perfumes on  
My mind  
Eating up the minutes-  
And then there will be another woman-  
She will stare and stare from  
The distance of a galaxy of Christmas-  
Maybe she will pause-  
And then, I am sure- she will go away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Galleria Of Nostalgic Senses

Love me when the show's over,  
When you have the rosy glow from  
Walking barefoot beneath the lanky mangroves,  
Teething on the saw grass, teething;  
And when it rains over the service industry of  
Well-calved stewardesses:  
When the university is pulsing through  
The young steams bowed in holy:  
Love me, and put dried flowers in my book of  
Blank verse,  
Turn your head and cough,  
Black-eyed in the shadows, put on injuries,  
Dirty your nails and jog for me short-skirted  
To the semi's h\*rny bl\*ws-  
Graduate for me in the lighthouse's slender  
Cathedrals on the land spit, spikenard  
For alligators,  
Defanged lions cleaning themselves in emasculated zoos  
Of androgynous thunder.  
Love me too in old picture books of the Holy Land,  
In Mark Twain's moody vitriol and broken narrative  
Structures,  
Love me in the tramping disillusion of handsome  
Winos taking to cardboard shelter with their dogs-  
Love me to the drenching pitter-patter.  
Love me because I drive all night for you, and  
I plow the fields of ambitious sunlight,  
And I am impregnated by the distant pit of your  
Turn-based carousing;  
And I drive all night for you just to be under the  
Cheap liquors of your sundry billboards,  
Following the sandy curves of wise men and their hunchbacked  
Dromedaries, the red tracks of shoeless baseball players,  
The wandering Jew whose name I am carved beside,  
Hitchhiking in the stripped galaxy of cars led by  
Ferguson through the  
Galleria of nostalgic senses,  
Love me looking upwards from all those saintly grottos,  
The muse painted ceaselessly by all the old masters,

Or scribbled dreamily on a desk in math class:  
This star that doesn't sleep,  
Or the wound that will not close:  
One breasted, where satin drapes like the denouement  
Of a wishful play,  
Where the wind cuts across the abandoned lot except  
For all the lesser cars,  
And the greater airplanes leaping from the tarmacs of  
Their home towns to a faraway land where there  
Shall be no love to return.

Robert Rorabeck

# Game In The Sand

The crack in the sky  
Is full of ants:  
Cadmus' bull is taking  
Europa away,  
Little children are making  
A game in the sand.  
Their father is hypnotizing  
A chicken.  
I heard you were getting  
Engaged,  
To the tallest of the  
Cavalry men:  
His teeth are perfect,  
His skin is smooth,  
His eyes are wanton blue-  
Near your feet  
The ants are crawling,  
The clouds are gathering  
On the Mediterranean,  
The same as they did for Rome-  
I am kissing your column  
On the quiet lake,  
You lay in my arms  
Like a broken doll,  
I have been away to war  
So long,  
But now I can smell the storm:  
There is silver in you now,  
Up and down  
I will not go away:  
The ants are crawling  
From the sky,  
Little children are making  
A game in the sand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ganymede

Long lost passageways come down  
sometimes from the sun they help  
you remember how the holy ghost  
burned when you were young  
and still going to church you  
thought John Wayne was a real  
cowboy and wondered how he could  
die to be reborn the next showing  
The Cowboys The Searchers  
there were so many movies that  
taught you to watch in your grandparents'  
trailer even if parts of the floor  
were missing don't you remember  
the night you slept with them in that  
bedroom overflowing with the backlog  
of dirty laundry and new born kittens,  
do you remember smelling your grandfather's  
armpits- strong basic stuff, like the earth  
but it's been so long since your  
father's parents were together-  
their love gone, Clarence cheated on  
Jackie- He found another mother  
the same age as his first daughter  
Laura, a messianic Jew, you hugged her  
once and how come? You don't like her,  
you politician; it doesn't matter what  
everyone thinks- spit on her, that's what  
it takes to be faithful to grandma Jackie-  
you've got to hold your own in this world,  
even with your face coming off, you  
have a certain power- isn't it true  
to get out on the street to get arrested  
like Johnny Cash for picking daisies-  
or starting forest fires with you axle  
sparking flames on the road, while you're  
hopping on pills, getting drunk and  
crawling down the throat of the Nick-a-  
Jack caves to meet your maker- the stoned  
loneliness of life comes at us all, and we

all got to play ball until we drip into the  
grave- not everyone can be Shakespeare-  
not everyone can change down the drain  
into Lewis Carroll's wonderland, but you  
still might stop the red queen from painting  
the white rose bushes- bet your cowboy  
boots Alice was a real girl and the places that  
she went were no more real than what  
Lewis Carroll wrote about her I want to fall  
down the hall in love I want to get my own  
place in the ocean to meet and maybe you  
know who will love me far away when I write  
this it's okay, the sky's coming down- there  
are plans in the village, places for you and me  
to come down to the chapel to swap  
spit and rings I love you or the memory of you  
like the ghosts high in the skylights of  
the city; I still have a jaw though it was  
broken and wired shut at age four when I  
fell out the back of my father's truck/ let's  
have a round to that and my defunct grandparents  
alone- Grandpa's in West Virginia  
with his messianic wife Laura whose first  
son died from an overdose and Grandma's  
homesteading in Oregon with her mother's  
ghost- And I'm riding on here in Arizona  
listening to Johnny Cash's rendition of  
Ghost Riders in the Sky trying to  
communicate the true love across country  
and tell you all this so I can be like Johnny  
Barleycorn, somehow something important  
in this country alone at this table.

Robert Rorabeck

# Garden Of Your Lip Service

The roses grow up:  
They learn their way: they get straight up  
And do the day:  
They go to town, they make love too:  
The roses, the roses, am me and you:  
I see you across the street: I go to you and you  
I meet,  
And I kiss you and lay you down,  
And buy you roses,  
And kiss you in your car before you drive away  
To your man:  
Before you return your house on the spinning  
Topaz world:  
You who came to me across the arid sea:  
You who came to me so I couldn't paint wings on  
You as I worked beside you,  
Alma: and I kept all of your secrets while I remained  
Alive:  
I brushed next to you, like a butterfly who happened down  
Into your fire, but who was dying anyways,  
And only wished to kindle you some more somehow:  
And I so became fruit for your lips,  
Whose firing flesh leapt busily, and entrepreneuringly  
Ate my metamorphosis,  
Until I became a garden of your flesh.

Robert Rorabeck

# Get Better Things

You keep thinking things will get better,  
So you go on with yourself....  
In an afternoon's rain shower  
For the first time at your new house,  
You go into your backyard and  
Scream privately that she will love you,  
When she doesn't even know where you are,  
And can hardly feel you anymore,  
The sunken plan of years lost  
And all the souls drowned so deeply  
Even recovered they are unrecognizable-

How can she love you,  
When you are without form?  
When you might step outside and not  
Remember how you got there,  
As the cars speed by coldly-  
Let her take comfort in the familiar man  
She clings to and stays afloat with/  
They worship the same God  
And they get drunk together,  
And things are easier and well-lit beautiful-

You may keep writing to her  
And some evening she might hear you  
As the background noise on the radio,  
But she cannot make out what you are saying.  
She cannot understand why it is you are feeling,  
For through your confusion  
She doesn't know who you are,  
So continue writing her love letters  
But burn up the words before they get too far  
Otherwise they will reveal your heart  
To someone you don't even know  
And things will get better.

Robert Rorabeck



# Get Up Good

I want to get up good,  
And go to work, easy open sky work,  
Like the open lips of love-letters:  
Good easy work,  
Like being back in preschool and going on  
Field trips to the  
Naked galleries in the over spilling  
Art museum,  
Inebriate, leggy women- their first explosions  
Of chartreuse rhapsody,  
The easy, every day spilling spume,  
The alarm systems and identical sisters colonnading  
The rosy earth, and I don't want to every have  
To get up again with a tooth ache,  
With a bend; I don't want to ever have to skip school  
Again,  
With these two legs, or a bicycle to listen to a lion's  
Stomach growling all day while watching  
Cartoons and the trash the housewives are made  
To watch in stagnant captivation:  
I want the carnivals of work, under fluttering cerulean  
Tarps or out in the open sky under the riotous  
Tracks of slash pines,  
Giving up into them easy, sluicing words of gusto,  
Being a gentleman and passing my time,  
Never having to escape to the other side of the  
Canal again,  
Just dreaming of her out in the open, putting it softly  
To her throat,  
In a way that should never have to be explained to any  
Other of my less stranger sort of kind.

Robert Rorabeck

## Getting Closer To You

If you cannot see it, I am putting off my scars for you:  
I am trying to become beautiful, I am doing good work  
As the sky yawns like a lazy king. I am sorry I am not  
There for you. I am sorry I never really knew you outside  
My simple literature, or that when I finally buy a home  
I will love in it only with my dogs. You will be married,  
Or you will have other obligations which distract your  
Marvelous eyes. I bet you don't even think of how they work;  
How they bring about other men gaping to your charms;  
I think about it all the time,  
but I am not the director of your gaze- That is for  
Another man, Herculean or droll in an overzealous  
Proximity, a ready concoction of hips, bosom, and ass-  
But I will give it a good study  
From here- All the way across this fine country. Curiously,  
I can see it the best of all. Your gaze is another wonderful  
Invention I would like to drink from with my own;  
Auburn challises toasting to the senses- but sometimes the  
Easiness of proximity is the common paradox, and even though I  
Do not have you at all, look at all these volumes you unjustly fill.  
The potential of your body laid rasping languorously across my own is  
Almost too potent a display to imagine, but I do it all the time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Getting Pretty

I feel like getting pretty,  
But I have no liquor  
So sing me a song  
From your drunken lips  
And stare at me  
Until the moon multiplies  
And swims,  
Like a naked woman in  
The sky,  
And then you can come  
And kiss me with those lips  
God stung on his way to Zion,  
Because I am not here.  
I have gone out the back door  
To lay beneath the sky.  
Here, I feel you moving  
And I know what's right.  
So press into me early  
Into the morning  
And kiss me deeply  
With your drunken lips  
Because I feel like  
Getting pretty  
On you, my sexy liquor-

Robert Rorabeck

## Getting Ready Again

Should it come to this,  
Then I will be found out: That I have been careless again,  
Thinking of Erin,  
Great and auburn muse who raised my nocturnal flagpole  
In the night,  
And gets busy with all my redundancies,  
Or in the least the ghost I have collected off her corporeality,  
Like the tiny white buds premature off the citrus trees:  
And Erin is going to Tampa,  
Swimming in her car once again under the clouds;  
And Erin is singing to her pretty boys, not a one of them  
Can get her down:  
Erin is even better than the most of Florida- Erin is jasmine,  
But even more so the scent I have never found,  
Creeping lankily through the sepias of crepuscule,  
Doing the only real worship in the Catholic Church underneath  
The power lines, in the penumbra of the great football stadium;  
And what is Erin doing now:  
Sweet Erin, with her hair coming down,  
But gathering herself up again, and collecting her secret wishes,  
And getting ready again to do the town.

Robert Rorabeck

# Getting Up

Now they have a dove:  
And it is filled with pain and ants:  
And I am still here:  
And my neck hurts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ghost Freshly Mowed From Her Grave

I get drunk and get sallow, puppy dog eyes:  
I get flag poles of creamy surprise-  
When I get drunk,  
I just want to look into your eyes; or,  
I get drunk and drive in round about ways,  
In juvenile merry-go-rounds to your seas:  
I lay out and spool, homeless, skipping school:  
I listen straight up through the palm trees,  
And try to hear you like the far away purring of  
Commercial airplanes,  
Something beautiful and yet popping, yet blooming  
Out of her graves-  
I sit and close my eyes and blister for days,  
And the traffic trundles, and the tide sways,  
And the tourists go on forever through their sunnier  
And more insouciant farces;  
And if I could but live in your sweet town, I'd be  
Happy just stocking the shelves,  
To watch you, a wife in her wedding gown,  
A ghost freshly mowed from her grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gifts To A Newborn King

Delivering the goods,  
Listen to me preen, my little dilly worm;  
If I am the devilish milkman this is  
The city, the archway over the river like a picturesque  
Canal, a literary devise; it denotes the passage  
From east to west,  
From mortal coils into Heaven; and I am here  
Screaming and calling names at the gate,  
Pitching scripts to Caron;  
As long as I get the phone-call, I'll get the job  
And will be delivering lunch to the pantheisms  
Crowded into the sky-wired tenements:  
Gods and godly-men, and wives and godly-wives:  
I should soon be seeing them all,  
Caracoling my selected neighborhood like a  
Fine gentleman, a cheap cabby making his hourly wage;  
And when it snows I'll drink coffee;  
When it gets too late, I'll sleep: I'll keep doing this  
Until its my time to skip out and follow his other way:  
Each compass has four points, mostly, and there  
Are so many canals and ditches to leap:  
I can go far across the everglades: and see how many  
Colors there are for the word blue,  
And sleep in the outskirts of strange high schools in the  
Oil slicks and ink wells of angels and engines,  
Skip out of there and drive around and get a new job,  
Pretending to follow a bible passage,  
Keeping in my pocket stray things to give as gifts  
To a newborn king.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gills

Nine or ten orifices can help  
With flying  
If your a fish and you take in  
Any air at all  
They keep you in schools  
And family  
And fresh clothes and careers  
While all of the time the  
Busses are looking good  
Under the sun-  
Turning around even though  
They have nowhere to  
Go  
At all-

Robert Rorabeck



# Ginless Sin

Sucker entrepreneur  
Bring your lords to the dump-  
Underneath the sea gulls' teeth  
Lay your frumping frump  
Up that fat mountain gilded with  
The city's pride,  
Sack your wife and carry your bride,  
And hang over the cars of  
Bangless joy, raise your men into boys,  
Those girls who are toys.  
Sense the fumes of you rusting guns,  
Take their money  
And invest their funs,  
While the world goes over to the other side  
Of righteous philanthropy of whipping  
Storefronts,  
Collect the gold and burry the c%nts,  
While the sea rolls beaten down,  
And all the nights dropp to town-  
You are pretty, you are sure,  
And with the deadly artist forgotten,  
Her world is yours-  
But what world is yours  
If she has been dragged out of the sea,  
Made to wash your windows which advertise  
Nothing but  
The awfulness of everything that you can  
Think to sell:  
But the penultimate rhyme will send  
You to hell  
Where you can set up again, caracoled  
By ginless sin;  
And sell, sell, sell.

Robert Rorabeck

## Girl Named A-

I love a girl named, A—  
But now there is no more reason in these careless matters:  
They've been selling themselves away—  
Kissing and pressing themselves  
Up the bunt cakes of the slopes: you cannot say  
That they haven't been looking good—  
Just like Mexicans growing corn underneath the  
Volcanos the butterflies travel to and then die into just to  
Have a look-  
Until it becomes a vulgar habit and a possibility that cannot  
Be dispelled—  
I will say again that I love you, but then I will awaken and then  
Go to school tomorrow—travelling back into  
A world that I'd just left starving—  
And then I will see you dressed in the positive alphabet of  
All of the heavens—  
And I will lie down, striking with my thoughts all of the negatives  
Of your fires—  
Building and pushing my own soul like a spearhead through  
The morgues—In fact, through all of the busy highways of  
The cadavers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Girl Who Sells Liquor With Indescribable Eyes

Her eyes are tired but not the right color;  
She doesn't love me because I've called them blue,  
And that was wrong of me,  
And everything I have done while breathing has been  
To caracole her, to search for her like a blazing fire  
Lost in the pines,  
Like an airplane dying, or the way some ballerinas go  
To sleep-  
I am useless otherwise, and I want to drink  
Liquor- I want her to serve me everything she sells,  
A girl who sells liquor with indescribable eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Girls I Sometimes Like

Oh these dreams pass me by like  
School buses pass my truancy- I hang out in the  
Speckled eaves of the Florida Holly;  
And dream of Saturday morning cartoons and  
Multisided dice, that the bullies will not  
Mess with me:  
And by now she has an entire house populated with  
Updated domesticity,  
And a pool, and a cat, and a extra bedroom to store  
Her extra;  
But I don't want to live forever- I want to be able  
To go through doorways which don't lead to anywhere-forever,  
Or dinner parties, or the first draft of Alice:  
I want to get wasted on turtle glue and fresh water  
Anemones- I don't want anything more than to be able  
To raid the refrigerator, or for girls I sometimes like  
To sometimes read my poetry- Now its after midnight  
And the useless things are changing again,  
Even more useless- the failing of my little toy men  
Go back on the shelves of my bedroom,  
And I've skipped out of my skull, smelling her down  
The burnished hall where the Mexican ladies have been  
Cleaning so brightly; and I'd like to catch her in the turnaround  
The next time we have a fire drill, spin her around her  
Slender waist were everything about me can fit several  
Times over, and end this thing in a secret haunt, in a brash  
Keyhole up in the Rockies, to bend her supple lips against  
My stone hard pricks, to lie her in the shadows looking down  
And confess unto her heady brevity- That she's had children  
By other men, and afternoons to joy;  
But that's just the beginning of the reservations I would make  
For her- I'd show her such delightful iconoclast epiphany;  
Now that I have spoken my peace,  
And smoked the bright amusement laying on the flesh river  
And tracks of her ride, I should lay off and finally dream,  
And so impose myself like the childish magic of a paper airplane,  
Flown from my fingers underneath the ceiling fans which halo her:  
That's all I have to say to her.



# Girls Just Want To Have Fun

Another day flips over and lies still,  
With its flag distressed but unobtrusive:  
And people just keep doing what they do,  
In the world so bellicose with out a sound-  
The waves gossiping,  
Romero rearranging pumpkins:  
And I have my old hunch- I think of you,  
So beautiful underneath the salty lungs of a great  
Winged place,  
Where better words try to find you and run underneath  
The table,  
And up and down your legs;  
And I am so far away, romanticizing this displacement,  
Laying out my wayward bed of damp straw on  
Rotten palates:  
And nothing I can say will save me, for the tomb is  
Limestone and drinking water,  
And you are knee deep in the venal aqueducts of your  
Somnolent pleasures,  
More successful at getting at what you want- the refuse of  
Blood-stomped orchid- the feeding grounds of an entire  
Species of venal pleasures-  
It's what we all want, but some people are just better  
At getting down and dirty than others.

Robert Rorabeck

# Girls Who Are Never There

Pick me up and carry me because  
I don't care-  
I have golden centipedes in my hair.  
I wake up drooling  
In the middle of class,  
Dumb eyed and doorbell shoed  
For girls who are never there.

The sky a yawning precipice  
Of pockmarked heroes,  
The sky a blue hero of chicken  
Pox  
And broken matchsticks,  
The sky a blue daisy of rotten  
Eggs  
For girls who can never be found there,  
For girls who are never there,

Baring all their broken sorrows  
Like eyes hatching blue phoenixes,  
Deep and swollen,  
Swooning like deeply affected ingénues  
Or overfilled shopping carts  
For my tomorrows  
That are never really over  
For girls that can never be gotten there,  
For girls who are never there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Girls Who Kissed Me Long Before Her

I can spell from here the lights of the neighborhood's  
Boudoir, the greater and lesser lights, some newly  
Invented or dispelled- The seething charms of tricksters  
And Halloween- Kick out the lights around the  
Epitome of laws, let her tell me in the dark how he held  
Her jaw in bed, made her speak of Christmas trees,  
Made her say the things that I would say slipping through  
Her window like a radio active centipede; I plagiarize,  
Trying to remember hypnotized way back in high school  
The pain she gave to me, the poems she read a strip show  
Out in the student parking lot, the flask she used to dip into  
My envy, the wild melons that grew in the soccer field  
Of good calves and taught, ankle length socks swinging like  
Smoky censures: We lay on the floor of her bedroom that day,  
And she let me feel her up above her bra- In afternoons,  
After cowboys and Indians, we had phone sex once or twice,  
And she was so proud when I finally came staining the old  
Green carpet more, like an overused Victorian field of pulp  
Novels and cheap hotels. She's married but they keep coming  
Into her room, the multithreaded pantheism I like to use; and  
I am thirty years old- I've lost all my Lincoln logs, my paper  
Airplanes are sleeping with hidden pornographies across the  
Canal, but look at how she remains an inconstant muse,  
Though what I already know about her: She cannot turn into  
The forest, or transform into the sea- She remembers everything  
She can use to entertain far into the night, but she is just a woman  
Now, but I keep killing my green great dragons with butter knives  
For girls who kissed me long before her.

Robert Rorabeck



# Girls, Girls, Girls

The drink has my mind in a pickle where I don't  
Care;  
It is easier looking at myself, and thinking on my dreams.  
This is like being in the eye of a hurricane  
Where no one else cares,  
Or is around to hear my lesser efficiencies:  
Girls who once road bicycles no longer wear shorts.  
They're houses are as tall as some minor resorts;  
But other girls aren't girls anymore, according to Ovid,  
They are birds- Birds who girls could never compare too,  
And girls in the sea too- Lost like entire cavalries  
Of conquistadors out lunching  
With Jesus and got drenched in the sun shower,  
Made to do laps in their backyard pool- These girls are cool.  
You could spend all day long thinking about where the girls  
Are hiding,  
And where they're diving, their rumps are wreathing to the  
Convenient store. Younger girls are more beautiful,  
They have more to explore,  
But the older the girl the more luxurious, the finer the carpet,  
The wealthier the habitat and more vibrant the jungle,  
The deadlier the snatch- Girls whose houses follow them in the shadows  
For some ways, and girls who in public fountains like to  
Bathe- Girls in chorus lines all ready for bed,  
And girls who bob, bob, bob, from giving so much head:  
Girls, who make my tummy warm like wine,  
Girls, girls, who metamorphoses are so fine;  
And my muses, girls who wash each other with garden houses.  
And before I go to sleep tonight in my wild track of fright,  
Would like one or two to come to me,  
Girl genies who carry their lamps on their ass&s like racing snails,  
Girls who mount sand upon their t^ts with bright colored pales.  
Girls, girls, girls- I've lost my senses.  
Girls, girls, girls- up on the fences, clapping and swishing their  
Tails;  
I'll turn you over in my rhyming bed and twine your curls,  
And whisper lusterous and mirages all whose names  
Carry themselves on the long, shaven legs, the bicycle swirls  
Of girls, girls, girls.

Robert Rorabeck

# Given Enough Time

She is unfaithful:  
People die in her all day-  
I roll up my half-finished novels,  
And put them in her,  
And then raise the tiny red-metal  
Flag,  
When she is on all fours and turning backwards,  
Like a pinup at play  
With blue-eyes:  
And I wished I was really in love,  
And making love to her at the base of a  
Juniper Pine,  
And all the horses had gone away and followed  
Those long roads of America after the last sun,  
And I was too busy putting my things in  
Her to awfully care:  
And I don't know her name,  
And she's just changed her hair style,  
Making her difficult to describe,  
But still if you are patient and restful,  
You should see her fawning, or roller skating,  
Or biting her lip outside the post office,  
Or university, or cemeteries you've been watching,  
Given enough time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Giving Back To Me

It's magic,  
How you trap your children in the  
Glass beauty we all faun in:  
Soon they will know every avenue they should  
Proceed down in  
To avoid the monsters drinking cheap  
Rum outdoors by midnight:  
The merry-green eyed darlings  
You shouldn't see, you shouldn't have  
Anything to do with;  
But I've come back from the sea outside your  
Soul,  
And you shouldn't know,  
You shouldn't see, you shouldn't have anything  
To do with me:  
Because, I should scar your soul slightly on the  
Cheek like a poisoned kiss,  
I should invade your house and stock your green:  
I'll engorge of the sea-life  
You reflect from your eyes back to the television,  
Because I am very vigilant at doing  
Bad things, and I'll spear you up for a close gaze  
Without blinking,  
Make it so you can't breathe,  
And I'll hold your child in one hand like a slender doll,  
Like a ward of the high altitude earth,  
And breathe things into her to you shouldn't see:  
You should just go away  
Back underneath your abominable mythology;  
And I'll keep your child long enough to feed her ice-cream,  
And return her to you screaming all the way:  
But look,  
She's learned how to walk, and she can sing to you all  
The songs I've forgotten into her,  
Breathing the dying embers of an epoch off forgetful things  
Plagiarized of life-like stills of your eyes  
Which are even now giving back to me.



# Giving Her This

This little brook is encapsuled in time:  
And me spilling liquor, and making my rhyme:  
Forced and exposed out upon the parasols  
That have always tried to awaken early enough to deliver their  
Lunches to you on time:  
While the little birds take out before forest fires,  
With homeopathic birthday wishes on their wings, while entire  
Ships of Mexicans sit out and wait before the orchards,  
Waiting for the first pinpricks of celestial  
Light to appear through the fruits that their fathers and forefathers  
Have already harvested:  
Through so many turnstiles of so many fruit markets, and through  
So many accords of the fruitless holidays who opened their  
Throats up accordingly beneath the dampening wings that bled  
From Georgia,  
And settled like the down syndrome of wishes to be carried by  
The sheltered backs of terrapin through the blue lions' graveyards,  
The quills that flattered the armpits of conquistadors  
Out across the clairvoyant dunes and palmettos:  
And now all of this, whispers of loved ones to one another through  
The ghosts of drywall, like the impotent walls of a university,  
Or the stain glasses of a church; until it is all gathered up in a psalm  
And placed at the skirts of the Virgin of Guadalupe;  
Where it is sworn to her, by me- that Alma has always been my first  
And my last wish- and as my first and last muse,  
Like a fabulous deer whose life has all been played out on the nocturnal  
Carnivores of the highway- with all of the birthday candles being  
Blown out, and the stewardesses finally going to sleep in a long  
And burnished flight over the Atlantic: it is all I have to give:  
And I swear, as if my thumb was singed by a fire from the overgrowth:  
And pulling back, retreating: eating myself- but even while  
Defeated, giving her this.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gladiolas Of A Wider

I can listen to the wind for hours and it never  
Haunts me;  
It is soft and careless as a mother drinking in her rays;  
Busting like a hound dog or a retarded gumshoe  
Through the lees of slash pine trees:  
And the joggers fall through it like stick-legged demons,  
And when they cut their knees and taste  
Their wounds, they remember things that now live swooning  
Like fattened doves into other houses:  
In strange boxes which throb with warmth, like wombs  
Of whales in furnaces,  
And the creatures across the earth move in similar details;  
And I think all of this is nice, the zoetrope of the next day's  
Casual mammals,  
Floating like in a tub of plastic trinkets that the greatest  
Harlot of them all enjoys herself,  
Dabbing her pits like Siamese orchards: How she positions us,  
And how we enjoy our defeats of victory anyways-  
Rising up and shooting down according to her drunken will,  
Resurrected, mouthing off, and accumulating in our fraternities  
As she bathes, nipped, gladiolas of a larger world until she  
Rises nude for an even greater sort of game,  
Leaving us emptied of her will.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gladly Knowing That Is What She Knows To Do

Enraptured coelacanth of nothing;  
What I am afraid of, the aphoristic nothing,  
Shark's breath, wolf's bane:  
I looked into your eyes once, Sharon,  
And how I felt I will never feel the same;  
The hallways of high school like corridors into the  
Afterlife,  
They could never sell, lined with pine coffins  
And gun fighters- star-pilots:  
Sharon! Sharon!  
I cannot look at myself in the mirror, but I am  
Even now swimming lucidly in the shallows and I have  
No fear of death;  
Your daughter is your afterlife- Sharon, but why did  
You have to do this to me- all of these dying epitaphs,  
Sharon. Do you think I am beautiful now,  
When I can hardly do this, when I am going to live  
Forever Sharon,  
You and your lucky sister plucked out of the denouement  
Sorority:  
You two will live forever with me, but you don't have to  
Thank me.  
I doubt that you hardly want to, but I will gladly pay for  
All of those amusements,  
And will keep them strung out until they think they will  
Have to move away- Then I will slaughter them for  
Your child, Sharon,  
And for the rogue for Erin to paint her lips while we smile  
At her  
Gladly knowing that is what she knows to do.

Robert Rorabeck



# Glass Of Spirited Sorrow

So overcome with a sadness that I cannot feel  
The air conditioning:  
I sit and eat in my little house and watch movies,  
Waiting for you to call;  
But it rained all day, and my words were no good,  
Really- they were like puppies abandoned on the cement  
Slabs of got up and gone trailer parks,  
And now only all of the rattlesnakes are sunbathing;  
And it is not right,  
But it is fair: and you called me some times today,  
Alma- either three or four, and I could hear your daughter crying  
In the distance,  
And maybe you made love to your husband, as he was home all  
Day as well: If you did, I do not blame you, because I know that it  
Is only that you are frightened;  
And when I see you tomorrow, your brown skin in the exceptional  
Outfit of a perfect child, I will call you my life- mi vida-,  
And I will inhale you the best that I can; but for now  
I am waiting for the rains to let off abating,  
And for this bachelor's night to finish its glass of spirited sorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Glittering Rum

The night is warm and apoplectic and I am drunk.  
I should be out searching for her: she is so close, and  
In so many ways, and faces like Janus, like the moons  
Or rings of Jupiter: The night spreads diademed by neighborhoods:  
Where do they all go, after the last buck is spent and they  
Are done calling in their séances; but I am still cartographed  
By scars, scars, and sad scars, like inebriate depression,  
The constellations of car crashes: Oh I love her, and I  
Still do, and have seen her through so many narrow ways and  
Dreamy fountains, alone and wandering against the Rocky  
Mountains in Colorado, driving up to get my meal: her bosom  
Fine and pale, her eyes aquamarine and just as unjustifiable:  
I should have loved her and bared her children, if I were a better  
Man, or a sports broadcaster: I would have done her by now,  
But I only know so many words, frugal, debased: She is a harlequin  
Up against the stage of time. No one will remember her name  
Or face, but they loved her while she was out and amongst them  
And shopping. She didn't save a nickel, but it didn't seem to matter  
At the time; and I loved her, while she was about, and didn't  
Think of me at all.

Robert Rorabeck

## Globe, New Mexico

Apache of my soul cantankerous'as luxurious and as  
Blue eyed as any of my muses'  
Waitressing in Globe, New Mexico 'I saw you last  
Year while setting up tents to  
Sale fireworks 'in a world that is not yours,  
You pretend to be busy in the backyards of my mind'  
As my otherwise subconscious skips school and  
Messes around 'a truant upon another neighbors roof,  
Before any of the stars of the world unfurl'  
Just another make-believe making itself known'  
Beautiful knots already sewn into the fabric'  
You probably live in a trailer park 'and the river sings your  
Name as you awaken next to him  
Never knowing who you are 'with eyes cast away into  
Another movement of the ever concealing clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Glorious Playground

Apertures, and openings, and arms,

We work in the service of the divine;

I have seen you rolling in the calms,

With otters basking on your tallow chest,

Eating oysters, and stalks, and ruddy anemones,

Saying your name in the waves' knocking of the hull,

Saying your precious absence from the city's arcades,

And wine halls, out beneath the bare-all sky, where

Your husband has taken the speed boat, passed you by;

We are the tattooed cleavers, the cannibals, the thirty year old

Baseball players, the hot-dog eaters, with our harpoons

They wish to sting you, to haul you in and operate on satin,

But I staid them with my gun and with my chances,

For I saw inside of you, and the way you moved in the

Glitzy caesuras; apertures, and openings, and arms,

We work in the service of the divine, or so is the motto,

And the company of our paycheck, and thus with forearms

Rippling, and teeth clenching like taught rope, I took the

Steerage from your carnival, and fearing the pillars of salt,

The backwards glances of marriage ceremonies and nostalgia,

I took us into the warmer torpid waters deeper

Than this theatrical fear and out of sight of your glorious playground.

Robert Rorabeck

# Glueless Horses

Fieldtrips of glueless  
Horses,  
And I am here talking to a  
Butterfly stripped of  
Flight,  
Like legless stewardesses  
Given up on smiles;  
The traffic pullulating  
Like an open wound  
With the underdogs  
Less than victorious  
With the seas as  
Mute as my love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Go Down To The Sea

Go down to the sea and listen  
To it slap the docks like a sailor  
Slaps the thighs of his barmaid.  
Listen to the gulls screech like  
Murderous souls sentenced to swallow  
The wriggling, scaled bodies of  
Drowning fish, as the sea spits  
Hoary waves up at them,  
As the sun lances spears of light  
Down upon them,  
As the day gyrates like a drunken waif,  
As daylight tumbles and slips down  
Through the watery sheets,  
And there to begin drowning,  
A hypnotizing death  
With the slow slumbering eels,  
Like loose cords of fat brown ribbons  
beneath the  
Bellies of sharks and rays  
Down to where the menservants slip away  
After a lifetime of shuffling for the aristocracy—  
There is the cool, cool place  
Where you cannot breathe.... Where you  
Become forgotten liked drowned ships and trees,  
And sound is muted like screams  
Pressed beneath pillows,  
And the sea above is like the sky,  
Is like outer space, that strange distance  
Which sucks your skull out from  
The old, fleshy cage and in that drowning  
Park where kelp and bodies sway,  
In the black black sea far beneath the  
Streets where drunken lovers still spat and play,  
Nothing there will see your pale, eternal gleam.....

Robert Rorabeck

# Goatees Of Extremely Charismatic Martians

Days that repeat, species and religions of  
Days,  
Crowded avenues in forest fire haze,  
Crowded love like captured elephants in  
Kalamazoo,  
Uneasy sisters saying I love you's;  
And all these parks sitting still, supposed to be  
Quieting spaces, waiting still;  
Even their loves are lost, the sky is a hapless pail:  
All I can see is the traffic repeating like gibberish  
Brail;  
And I loved a woman who happened to me,  
But as she happened she happened to be  
But as a fata morgana, a mirage from exhausted and  
Expended fortitude,  
Leaping across the dromedary's desert,  
Humping in the accosted stamens, front door and  
Back door men;  
Her lips seeming to be right there like a fire-engine red  
Rose exposed and ready,  
But really she was making love miles away,  
States away, even countries away and further,  
Exposing herself to cosmonaughts and the extremely  
Thin goatees of extremely charismatic Martians.

Robert Rorabeck



# God Bless The Yokels

Park, Mister, and take a ride  
To the zoo.  
Tell me what I mean to you  
In the photographs underneath some  
Banyans-  
Both of your eyes jungle canyons

Eat lunch near toy boats and  
Shadows,  
Read post cards tune into football  
Battles;  
Out in the student parking lot sleep  
All day,  
Underneath a sky newborn from  
The sea, Atlantic

When you write me once a year,  
Imagine what it does to me-  
Already scarred and hanging like a defeated  
Flag upside down from the  
Crook of a cypress tree;

So I will climb my usual footpaths  
While banging the cookware to stave off  
The panhandling bears- and things will grow  
Red from boots and stems;  
Everything here needs something,  
A little pollination,  
As I need you- Imagine what that does to me,

When I can't swim, so I god bless the yokels-  
You made me swear off meat and long dinner  
Engagements so I  
Only eat takeout and tofu.

Robert Rorabeck

# God Calypso

I am god calypso:

When at night and I've had too much light coffee,  
Got a molar that has come in sideways like an  
Insubordinate ship,

And the most accessible sliver of my lips is beginning  
To bleed,

I have so many irreligious thoughts, as the

Boy sings to me, "don't let the sun go down

On your grievance, "... I understand you are part

Of the new band's harem, and cheetahs leap like

Suntanning students at the communal pool,

Where I saw you once outside of Burger King, and you

Seemed too happy to see me, as you do with most

Anyboy- I was getting a Krispy Kream chubby,

But you got off on your bus and sped away like a

Cocaine heirloom- When the kitty cats were having

Sex on the 2nd story of my first studio apartment in

Gainesville, which was a yellow submarine, which was

Cliché, and I was sure that I would marry the weeping girl

On the dirty rug, as the lesbians swam naked like

Paraplegic mermaids in the ephemeral wealth of the

Chlorine glistening, not far from where I got a cheap

Traffic ticket, and just across the street from the anonymous

And overgrown turnabout, where I got drunk with my

Manager, Kevin.... So drunk I lost my Christian name,

And went back to her forgetting how to walk:

At night, when she is gone, and you are too careless to be

Forgiven, in my diminutive seasons,

And soon fireworks and paycheck,

Mobiles that swim for infants in wicker baskets on the

Reptilian Nile, and homosexuals stroking in the park where

I've been to the Renaissance Festival and was questioned

For jogging too close to after dark,

Where my mother took flight lessons, and Palm Beach

Community College, and Mary;

In that night, and down the street from your breasts in

Their filmy bras whose colors I can only imagine (

And I do) I am god calypso,

And this is how I sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# God Sent Me Here To Die

Relatively speaking,  
I am cold,

Made out of gemstones,  
But I am not bold-

Neither beautiful, nor quite old.

I ride a bicycle made from a special  
Mold,

And all my love is sold to buy  
A frame of fool's gold-

Sold my soul and got my machine,

I circle the neighborhood on a lark,  
I go round and round it,  
The working class garden of ancient,  
Rusting park,

Where she was last of told-  
I cry somnolent in the stain-glassed  
Dark.

I'm worse in a fight,  
Here where the nocturnal scavengers  
Forage on the helpless flowers,  
Those beds where soft-terrapin sleep  
Retracted and un-supposed;

And I imagine her dancing without any clothes,  
But she's either gone shopping or  
Migrated to University,  
Over the sea but alone-

Made out of gemstones  
Quarried from  
Recaptured atolls,

I ride my bicycle of worried  
Spoke,

Hapless,  
Remote-

She's left by the highway  
Which is, of course,  
Long, empty,  
But her right.

I am neither beautiful nor bold-  
She is far away, and everything-  
And the night is so very cold.

Robert Rorabeck

# Goddesses That Never Were

If I drove now, I would not be defeated:  
I would be arrested  
And placed in the bouquets of another Disney World  
Into which  
Some sweet hearts have found light forever  
Reflect by the thievery of the moon  
Up from the diamond pools:  
And you can go along forever,  
Kissing  
And cursing the serpents, as I become the shadow  
That falls into the basement  
After you have rearranged yourself for college,  
And had your hair done,  
And forgotten your boyfriend: and this is just  
The strange carriage you somehow carry yourself  
In through the metamorphosed sweethearts  
Before the transmogrifications of  
Another midnight: but rest assured, underneath another  
Saturn,  
Your coachmen will be mice again,  
And your Ferris wheels will come down again,  
Like the scars of tears across your window, even while  
You will not French kiss me and I make love to  
Working girls underneath the stain glass, the wolves,  
And the feet of serpents in the gutters-  
And you make love to your werewolves in the theatres  
I can no longer believe in- in the temples dedicated  
To the goddesses that never were.

Robert Rorabeck

# God's First Epiphany

Though she didn't know who she was,  
Waking up, she was God's first epiphany,  
His first real work of art since he made the world;  
So when she yawned it seemed to him the  
Clouds were stretching like silken curtains  
Across a rosy sky; And when she smiled,  
Not know that she had smiled, it was all God  
Needed to justify himself, so he put away his  
Secret knife and feeling lucky, decided he wasn't  
Going to kill himself after all (Not until she grew  
Old and died, anyway—and that being a great long  
Tomorrow in his way of seeing things) :  
And he slid along the branch of a tree  
Outside her window, looking  
Like early morning sunlight flowing in milky  
Pools which caught her eyes and grabbed her  
Attention for several moments, and she wondered  
"Who am I, anyway? " Though she didn't know  
It, she was God's first epiphany;  
So she set about getting dressed and fixing herself  
Breakfast not knowing who she truly was,  
As outside her window God played around  
Like happy sunlight....

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Ahead With It

Professors have their most beautiful language,  
And the hidden cameras in the bedrooms of actresses  
With consumption,  
And they listen as if haunted by the marching step  
Of armies, of men in the shadows,  
And of waves. I sit out and sweat on the porch,  
And drink from a flask,  
My lips quiver like molting insects across the  
Space where the girl dances erotically,  
Like a fruit tree, a postcard of a sickle moon  
Above the trances of absentee tourism;  
I should say I have scars, like bruises a fighter  
Carries on tender-hooks,  
And stranded on the concrete islands I watch cars,  
Like furtive glances of advertisements freshly painted,  
Where the sun plays a violin over the brightening  
Of crosswalks, and students dressed up in firs and  
Lipsticks of oilfields, and enormous eyelashes like  
A peacock's flounces; and now we are going to pay  
For it all, and the soldiers will burn the cabaret, and  
We will be run out hungry onto the street and have to  
Make entertainments volunteering for the experiments of  
A holocaust, and the professors will watch us from  
The portholes of high towers, taking notes and ejaculating  
To radio signals which speak to them like busty brunettes,  
Telling them of the weather,  
And how they lay upon it there out across the ocean  
And far from their didactics, debonair and swooning,  
Their lacy garters, like the kind chorus girls wear in  
The silver mines of Colorado, licked by the waves,  
As cigars toast lips and lungs, and entire novels  
Are sacrificed, tossed down from the ancient rocket-ships  
By the mad kings, and entire classes burn,  
And the liquor burns from this shadowed stoop,  
And the parade is coming, creeping like a thief with  
Company, for they have went ahead with Halloween.

Robert Rorabeck



# Going As It Goes

And your boyfriends have wax dreams;  
But how many of those do you have, Like there  
Are only so many words in this book:  
And books to fill the shelf, and hours to spend our days:  
To awaken and groom and to join you on  
The bicycle ride or the bus, without even having to know  
Your name;  
Like basking for a moment in one of that shadows that  
Has escaped your bedroom,  
Whilst the sun was coming up so haughtily and strange;  
While the lesbians frisks in the pools of their chlorinated  
Graves;  
And Kelly, you come up like a basketful of bouquets  
Chagrining the lions mouth,  
The pinion in the staves; and your brow is sweaty until  
The body of your censer is hung down, Kelly;  
As I wish I could sing for you in brighter and more balmy  
Ways;  
But your body hangs down Kelly, and I am speechless as it  
Goes, panting, saying the name of its loved ones,  
And going as it goes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Away Going Nowhere

Old new light over good sides of flesh  
Sometime in the late early afternoon, washing  
A piece: This is when the familiar strange traffic  
Moves amongst the  
Stop go shade; this is when nothing good moves,  
When the intrinsic is sleeping like mollusks bivouacked  
To the runny insides of quited sprinklers:  
This is when all the childish teenagers are away getting  
Drunk in some classes,  
Or better truancies are shooting black cats out of  
Coke bottles, and all that you never knew is happening  
Outside the lipping windows; and light gets its hand on  
Anything it can touch, and rightly increases the green  
An inch. Maybe your hand fumbles for the glass,  
Maybe your head rolls, marble or opal but unsure  
Yet thoroughly tried: And this is what I've said I'd give  
To you, a somnolent nod from the awakened empty neighborhood.  
A lover of some lines who used to travel here, the ceiling  
Fan moving overhead, going nowhere. Your blouse is  
Well tucked in, and it feels like you are out in the middle of  
A greatly unabashed sea. All the china and crystal are  
Done and drying in the kitchen, but where are you moving  
Nowhere- your navel is an instrument of the sea,  
Plucked many years ago and not thought of until the spontaneity  
Of the moment; another sheath whistles in the yellow,  
And you lilt a little ways around the white fenced white,  
But I have already gone away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Back To Florida

Going back into Florida no longer  
Seems like anything real, but a furtive play  
That comes alive between the crowded shadows,  
The sun pours down its thespians in a sheen of  
Performing limpidity, they are all brightly grinning  
And well-paid, the nostalgia of a script,  
And it seems to me as if I should be on an airplane  
Crop-dusting over the red-headed caps of semis,  
Coming around her to see if she won't grow up and  
Be my unsuspecting bride, because I have snacks  
But there is no leggy stewardesses, and several times  
A minute I glance repeatedly up into the mirror image,  
Trying to believe I was never wounded; but it is not  
Possible: I am unwound and scarred and built upon  
The tangles of a children's fable, but yet here I continue  
Down into her, and the sun does not go away, but shines  
Down there like the fertility of a young woman rebellious  
In her puberty: I should not have her, unless I steal her,  
But she is gone at night, the best time for thievery,  
And they have hidden away the womb of her everglades  
Back behind the entrepreneurs selling those specific ploys  
Which has led her away, and crowded the otherwise nubile  
Body; and yet I will do good work in her while I have time,  
But she has stopped taking notice of me, for I have not  
Ventured up to her lips for so many years, and when I leave  
She will not acknowledge me; even still, I join that train who employs  
Upon her their industrious revelry, and will love the flatness  
Of her clays and limestone which carry her to the sea, and  
Settle her under that caress; so should be my way, until  
I have nothing more to sell, and leave off her beauty, like  
A fish breeding back up his granite river, evacuating the humid flat-chested  
Cradle, so that she might not be disturbed in her salty boudoir,  
But return attention to the sky, braided by the tonal rays  
Of sun, and the seabirds who speak and gossip; her sisters  
Who honor her there even amongst the tourists,  
With bright and stinging kisses upon her dun flesh.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Back To School

Strangeness of unaccounted numbers slithers  
Through the unmowed grass,  
Through another day of monsooning summer  
Under the mobile of a smiling moon,

Thus the night pants with the rasping breathing  
Of plagiarists and the dimming gentlemen in their  
Unofficial meetings the next field over,

While the girls in the petticoats in love serve  
Their bodies' inebriate liquors to the unscarred  
And untried men,

Where the trains are busy with their bodies' long coils,  
And the highways of unpaid and starving truckers,  
Alongside which the state workers sleep safely for now  
Married to lawyers, diamond wedding rings glistening  
Like cut poisons on their dreaming fingers:

Thus, I write it down sucking the paper cut digits,  
Alongside the infinite shore where the horseshoe crabs scuttle,  
Where the fateful anchovies shimmer in orgasms of silver and  
Breathless death,

I say, this should be Spain, and the trees olive,  
And the clouds the curtains behind which she is naked,  
But none of it is true though none the less moving forward unabashedly  
With the recklessness of some liquor,

And the banners the way her hair flowed out his window  
After the last period of rote lessons and full-toothed dentists,  
And the side of her face the profile of a freshly painted billboard  
I stream by attentively in observation of what there is for sale.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Down

Going down into the shows of green coy,  
Going to where I once was just a boy- going to see your  
Body,  
And the sweets of its round:  
Going, going, going down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Into Wind Tunnels

In my cars- no one- no one,  
But underneath the overpasses, shadows, red moss:  
Where they should have been selling something-  
A stain of rainbow over the concrete,  
Weeping mascara of a torn away promise-  
An eel in the sea that is an  
Aunt to other eels, accordingly, like a lost ribbon  
Stolen away from a house wife-  
Herself torn away from a lighthouse before a hurricane:  
And the storm is coming up over a world of ghosts:  
The weathervanes shirk their telling signals:  
The orange groves rustle,  
And the lights of an indistinguishable mass hover  
Before the throats of the sugar cane in which the herons  
Haunt,  
Waiting for a telling signal- or a wish to blow their  
Hopes into the sky,  
Kindling their senses into the other world:  
Underneath the traffic echoes- going into wind tunnels  
That sing of a Christmas to no one- no one.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Somewhere

My windows were replaced while the boy scouts went down to  
Spain;  
And wasn't this just the way that they were going:  
While my aunt had the hardest time knowing where her old husband was  
Going:  
He was going to take things off and then become, while in her the children  
He was sewing:  
While in the stream of gunfighters, the trout were multiplying,  
While I was just on the green carpet masturbating, just like I was stealing my  
Pie from the old folks and their questionings for the answers of the reasons  
While;  
And just so that you know why we are going, the lions are a roaring,  
And there seems to be so much power in the air, and I guess that is why the  
Lions were roaring:  
Trying to make sense out of the science fair, and her body was piling together  
With the flotsam and the jetsam, both of them guess, guessing that they were  
Going somewhere.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going Straight To Bed

I don't really work hard to  
Displease my heart-  
I take long breaks half hidden  
Under the hydrangeas,  
Eating cheese sandwiches,  
Listening to the zoo's ululations:  
There isn't much romancing that  
Needs to be done:  
The sky is already finished,  
And it is always wishful and haughty;  
And that is why all the best girls become  
Stewardesses, to warm their bosoms in his jacket,  
Sighing like school kids on swings,  
The last and the best of the Titans going  
Unnoticed over head in his  
Cape of blue camouflage;  
And I love to watch the winking fuselages  
Under his chin as they go by,  
Winsome, cryptic: Soon they will land somewhere  
And the girls will be so exhausted;  
They will have to take off their shoes and  
Take down their hair, catnap at some terminal  
In a little country in Europe;  
But that is enough explaining what I've  
Already said- I'll play hooky for awhile,  
Then I'll stack some more cans-  
I'll smoke a few more cigarettes, drink some coffee,  
And go straight to bed.

Robert Rorabeck



# Going To Burn

Diana has an  
Open minded  
Boyfriend  
So I am back  
To  
Slugging whiskey  
To my two  
Awful muses  
And I am the  
Banal grandeur  
Who is tossing  
Flammable airplanes  
Over your  
Matchstick  
Church  
Pretty sure that  
Something is  
Going to burn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going To Saint Augustine

Into those actions dancing—youthfulness—  
Full bodied—torso of still yawning grass  
Spindles around the exasperations of a Ferris  
Wheel,  
Needing your art down a highway  
Going up to Saint Augustine:  
My hand in my own yard, and what lies beneath her:  
Sea shells bivouacked in the road:  
It all seems to be a dream—after my sisters have  
Grown up,  
And my muse is married—carried away by  
Predators:  
She lives across the way, and the moon covers  
Her, stealing the light that pretends to be hers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Going To See The Wizard

Share in my city  
These emerald illusions:  
Where the jaded fox leaps  
For the bridesmaid's unripened fruits,  
Unaware that he is a fable,  
And just too short to reach,  
Her expectations: His purpose is  
Salivating over the tallest  
Girl standing like a tree in front of  
The row of olive pews:  
They are singing untried songs,  
While little boys and girls  
Are rushed to the bathroom:  
The sea is waltzing in the lime streets:  
The sea that no one believes  
Can be real,  
Because her eyes are just as salty:  
Her eyes that birth green ink  
Which has smeared our world  
And flooded it  
Doing away with golden picture books  
In the shallow estuaries where  
Reptiles crowd  
Like a new wave of immigrants,  
The bejeweled frogs,  
The streamline snakes,  
The ambidextrous salamanders,  
And the age-old crocodiles:  
The fractal cacophony of the sparkling jungle:  
Close your eyes,  
And they will reverberate inside of you,  
Like glass smoothed in the waves' undulations:  
Offering you a scented kiss  
Carried over the oldest hills  
The words they keep cupped in books,  
And the silver slippers  
Which can bring us home.



# Gold Collared Disney World

I want to ride on a tourism  
Of words, pass my ticket to the fine  
Man leading to a gold collared Disney World:  
This is it,  
Where all the lawns are shaved,  
And pomaded and made to waltz,  
Where all the dogs are laughing and only  
Using two of their paws to dance:  
Where nothing ever ends,  
Where nothing ever dies or is given to  
Chance,  
Here there is no distinction between you  
Or him,  
No reason to read the classics, or feel that you  
Don't understand- No obligations but to buy the  
Hotdog from the young and freckled vendor,  
Where all the rivers are carvings of glass,  
And trams on their tresses are  
Wind chimes ringing over the dead who  
Were really brought back to life,  
And everything is singing and  
Popular and friendly;  
And I hold your hand, and we kiss with our  
Eyes without ever having to think upon the  
Deeper tragedian meanings of making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Golden Boy

It looks just like this,  
My house in a playground of stars, so that when I go  
Out everything is blinding as a golden city in heaven, and god  
Is shining:  
God is real and he is diademed atop an opulent hill:  
And he smiles a rich smile and offers to pay for everyone's rounds,  
And the city loves him and beneath him makes joyful sounds:  
And I have a littler house down near the bottom of this hill;  
It is as yellow as the canaries who rest upon the windowsill;  
And my house is filled with the golden rods of our father's joy,  
And if I ever have a child I sure hope it is a golden boy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Goldfish Of All Of Their Tomorrows

A little time more for reindeer in my blood,  
And just because of these words,  
A little more-  
And then the forest is closed- the elevator is  
Shut without anymore echoes,  
And then like missing children turning up in rhyme-  
And then as if waking up drooling mouthed  
In the revelations of an rv again,  
Like a goldfish won across the canal, in the fair  
Grounds of another moon,  
While your penultimate muse keeps on swearing  
That she loves her family,  
And she loves her family again, while the waves  
Leap up,  
And keep in kissing the teal of another sad tomorrow;  
While in her morning, the icecream you bought her  
And the words you've had to say to her fail:  
Then the day clouds over,  
And any friends that you've had find shelter underneath  
The overpasses and wait for her tennis courts to shed  
Their fears, like rattle snake snaked shed their  
Skins- and for you to come over,  
Allowing her to kiss all of her cheeks, and all of your  
Hemispheres, while the medias continue to play the  
Hemispheres of her favorite colors- approaching her  
Again and again, touching roses,  
And biting her on the mouth, trying to poison this  
Reason into her, while the traffic waits out in the shadows,  
And the fireworks hold their breaths,  
Wondering, and wondering when they will be lit off  
Again just so that they can once again kiss all of the lips of  
The goldfish of their tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Goldilocks And The Spear Of Longinus

Daddy laid me down in bed  
He said,

"I saw Goldilocks  
In the surf up to her  
Breasts holding the Spear of  
Longinus  
The caps of waves  
Swirling in little red pools  
Sunlight riding hoods  
Of the giant beasts circling  
Her.

I yelled, 'Goldilocks,  
What are you doing? '

Goldilocks replied in the  
Sun,  
"I've already killed 3  
Grizzlies and ate their  
Porridge,  
Slept in their beds too-  
Now I'm sporting  
Deadlier prey.

Come in  
And kiss me  
If you dare."

"Did you kiss her? " I asked Daddy.

"No, " he said. "I was too afraid.  
So I married your mother."

Robert Rorabeck



# Gone

No perfumes at nighttime- the house does not  
Proceed, does not lie yellow  
Spangles of family against family- does not  
Read by the luminescent lights  
Nor do soft feet cross and bless the foyer:  
Bachelor's room without a dog to spell by-  
And the flowers do not bloom,  
But up in the morning after super time:  
School again, and yards and yards of students who  
I cannot look in the eye- after years of passing,  
Will they finally be gone:  
And like them, will I finally have her echoes finally  
Then out of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gone Into The Sky

Birds of crayons and  
Water snakes,  
Unlearned birds in the  
Firebreaks;  
And otherwise the wheels of the  
Sky are-  
They are a long shot over ever  
Getting dry,  
But they spin and they put off  
Spit;  
They go a long ways between  
You and this:  
While the pastels surcease like  
Busted lips,  
And still all I have to give you  
Is this to make up for  
Everything gone into the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Good American Man

Robert loves it with his name slipping  
Into nothing, and becomes John;  
Like a kid in a paper airport with perfect  
Teeth,  
Puts a quarter in the machine when machines  
Cost a quarter,  
And the quarter disappears like the sun in the  
West: This is America,  
This is why I groom early for the coffin-  
There are only so many trees in the forest,  
So many gifts for young men to sleep-  
She turns over in the night, and wakes up in  
My hand- I want a stewardess whose legs over-  
Slip the folds of my paper airplanes,  
Which gives good meaning to my play-  
A woman in a blue suit who takes it off half  
Disposed in the aloe beside the carport- God knows:  
Vortexes and hurricanes of ceiling fans-  
Men in trench coats writing the news, breastfeeding  
Army ants:  
We drive keeps to battles while paper snows  
Flakes fall in the long-nosed estuaries of sleeping tanks;  
And yes, I know it sounds so good, to become aboriginal  
America, the sick white muse- Then you can  
Watch college football, and know your teams,  
And you can come home to die with dignity,  
The death rattles of the heart in the cages of its dusky  
Obsessions:  
Red roses in the horn of tin for a corpse at twenty-five.  
We can choose to do anything we want with  
Our lives,  
And that is why this evening, thoroughly tanned,  
I've named myself John- A good American man,  
I would never drink my liquors with Charles Baudelaire.

Robert Rorabeck

## Good Chance For Rain

When there is lightning, I want to be close to  
You, and help you gather chickens under the  
Propitious stars,  
And listen to you clucking what it means under  
The new rafters of a Pacific home;  
With your eyes abolished like nocturnal flowers  
Greeting the dawn and laying off the boys,  
Kill my lines for you, finish of the glasses around  
You neck making them resemble a homeopathic  
Spell- like an object in a morning class,  
Whispering to you in the dysfunctional language  
Of boys gathered from the comely harvests of France:  
That I've had two dreams of you over the last  
Fortnight: One was just that you'd left your backpack  
And gone off wandering, searching for wild berries  
And sustenance, but last night I kissed under long  
Moments laying here with my loaded rifle,  
Mystified by the constellations around your bereavement-  
But I'm still in Arizona, perhaps higher than any grave  
Yard on this continent, and by Tuesday of next week  
There will be a forty percent chance for rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Good Cheer

Now broken and as sad as the shadows I live  
In underneath the overpasses  
With the unicorns and bums:  
Over which the paper airplanes her father folded  
Bend down so low,  
So low that they figure that they have to kiss  
Me and this is how they go—  
Even though, abracadabra-ick,  
They have never seen the inside of the mountains  
And the spaces that they live in are not  
That rich just two bedroom one  
Bath apartments—  
Which I closed my eyes and taught in once or twice  
For two years—  
Condemned by the faculty and the administration  
That all I was doing was giving them  
Candy.  
But this will end their fears:  
I am a space ship made of freshly baked bread  
And fish,  
And none of your classrooms will read  
Me unless they want to wish:  
And remember that a cadaver lords over the ill-  
Forgotten seas,  
And comes up before the winter  
To pray and bend his knee  
To the cenotaph of the waves that crashed  
And drank such bouquets  
Of poetry, like sharks who dined on sailors' legs:  
Well, I am right here  
And I am in memory—  
My wife is waking up in time for supper—  
And Santa Claus is getting ready to give away  
Good cheer.

Robert Rorabeck

# Good Kid

You are a good kid even  
If your eyes don't match  
And I drink too much rum from Brazil  
Or Cuba or the middle of the sun—  
And it isn't the easiest of things—being fit for it—  
In the middle of the day after your  
Girlfriend ran away  
Because she was too beautiful—and dumb—  
And there were no more fireworks left  
To sell—  
But in the morning—the roosters gave to us their  
Echoes—  
And it was that very anonymity of things that  
Seemed to resurrect us to our jobs:  
Like the turtles to their canals—  
The conquistadors to their cenotaphs—  
The used car salesmen to their Christmas trees—  
And you to some other classroom across the school—  
But your bravery is a calling card—  
And I can tell your fortune to the sun and the moon—  
And the children will come out of the southern theatre—  
Echoing recreationally until their mouths are  
Filled with ice cream—or the mirages of their  
Mothers' cleavages—which seems to imply that the entire  
World can do fine without you—  
Even though it cannot—  
The airplanes are jut mirages bouncing off a hot pan—  
Even after your heart is twisted enough—  
And scarred—and, oh, what a memory to behold until  
There is nothing left—and the tents have been taken down into  
The palmettos, and the cat is licking herself-  
And then the entire family of the forgotten memory is heading  
Like a rocket into Disney World—precisely as I had imagined-  
And fantasy and imagination where I thought  
I had forgotten you suddenly found out that she could do  
A fine job of taking care of herself—  
And forgot herself in your eyes—and you became a blind man  
And sold used cars like your father—  
Until the night spread its feathers and filled the faces

Around the sidelines of the flea market we couldn't even  
Go to because the hurricane scared away the pedestrians-  
And that was the night I finally figured out you would  
Be spending the rest of your life with your husband.

Robert Rorabeck

# Goodbye

Building up dreams in palatial hair suits of loneliness:  
Where the most diligent but fool hearted climbers disappear  
In the highest slip:  
And, like this, I have undressed you: I have listened to my  
Fingers play upon your instruments:  
I have taken off your panties and wept beside you naked:  
I have petted and cleaned the twin sisters of your  
Head;  
And I have submitted quietly as a thief, but going down my  
Sorrow was not brief,  
For now I have all of these songs suckling like nascent swine,  
Like hungry Mexicans fighting for the truck at picking time;  
And so I swore to you today that I would take you to  
The playgrounds of Disney World,  
Even though I do not like Disney World; and you get mad  
At me when I do not bring you enough fireworks:  
But my entire house can burn, and I can tramp and hop trains  
If you don't believe  
That this isn't the same as dying like unkempt flowers into  
A priceless graveyard, or however else that I was supposed to  
End this poem:  
Then went out into the sea like an empty bottle begging for  
A thoughtless home.

Robert Rorabeck



# Goody-Goody

Swimming with the cadavers of the young,  
We pledge allegiance to the flag.  
We didn't quite finish school,  
But we don't feel half-bad;  
And there's a bird that doesn't swim,  
And a girl in training wheels quite young in  
The retirement home kicked back  
Between the palms;  
And a good friend of mine takes his paycheck  
From the government,  
While you come home and cook for him,  
And look at him in his eyes,  
Goody-goody;  
And when I was in the valley listening for the waves,  
Weren't you in a dream I had,  
You politely asked me if you couldn't feed the horses;  
But who cares,  
You rolled away with him, and the credits rolled  
Like caesuras:  
I held my hand over my heart; it became that broken  
Watch melting in its bows-  
Then there was just a prick of sun in the caesuras  
And the final scenes they never showed,  
As children played a game in the sand:  
Goody-goody.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gorgeous Folklore

Her eyes fill with the cups of trances,  
And I am getting things wrong, still not a  
Diabetic like my grandfather, I think of  
Going to work in Disney World to write  
Novels of utter fantasy, for I will not loan  
To my parents what I do not deserve,  
And still she is there made of naked pearl  
Entering the subway; there is a tornado  
Dancing against her backside. He is tossing  
The rains like the tears of conceiving mothers,  
But she goes away and on the tram circulates  
The magic kingdom, coming out of the darkness  
To the sound of trumpets, her breasts like  
Cherry sundaes. There is a wolf above the rafters,  
And he is panting, but only a cartoon.  
The black men inside with her are what is real.  
They have scars of pure empathy, though they  
Are too dark for it, and it is from them this  
Whole thing springs, the gorgeous folklore  
They carried with them shackled in the debasement  
Of waves, Mickey Mouse and Minnie hunting  
Nubile in the toony jungle, and the wolf panting  
With eyes of unmined diamond, and all the children  
Are laughing, laughing at what they've seen;  
And all upon her are the trunks of feminine ivory,  
And the black men they are on her, trying to prove  
What was stolen. I am there but lonely, a ghost  
Of the post-modern, just an infantile notion,  
And down beneath us the children are playing,  
And bright balloons are floating, and the jungle is  
Well-organized and lucrative, and the ghosts are  
Phony floating, and the fireworks are twirling,  
Constructs fleeting above the Styrofoam parapets,  
And all around this we go circulating, and she is  
A wanton princess whom the black men are courting,  
Like primitive knights drawn to her temples, sweating:  
A notion of satellites which will never end, though  
She has called the tornados up for what is owing,  
And my eyes, like flames, are floating,

Fill from her eyes, pouring cups of pearled trances.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gorgeous Youngish Things

Spilling water like drunken wishes out into the space

Of nothing:

Yes, yes, yes: this is the last Aristotelian plane of nothing,

And it has proven to be up to no good: no more haircuts under the

Moons of quieted nothing:

No more haircuts for nothing, Melanie: and why, oh why I am

Singing to you, and seeming to swim toward you coyly just like a

Jelly fish or tadpole,

Because you cannot love me, because I am not beautiful,

And this is nothing given up like a song in an auction:

And the days go by and your children develop, grow long legs

And spearmint arms: and what, oh what am I doing:

Oh, but the old classroom is dimmed but still coming on,

And the skyways go on a ways, and I just want to buy a house under

The pestilence of satin moons:

I just want to be excepted and to lay low: I don't wish to rob any more

Trains, but look into this another bag of fireworks, spinning and

Twirling around just like a bungalow of circle jerks;

And your children; Oh your children have the most beautiful eyes,

But only beautiful, just half as beautiful as my eyes gleaming;

And my eyes licking: yes, my eyes cleaning, and sucking and cleaning

Straight in between the straight of your greedy young dragons of your

Gorgeous youngish thighs....

Robert Rorabeck

# Gorgeously Penniless

Toil nettled in the sun,  
The abandoned hand with fingers clutched  
As if a tool of desire furling,  
Blue ants crawl inside the pewter thumb,  
Resting on the temple of the abandoned lot  
Naked for the cars happening sporadically across  
Captures in the web of sinewy power lines,  
Hollow buildings of cinderblock tattooed  
By the names of loveless dolls,  
Their gaze in the perpetual sheen of tinted windows;  
Visions dimming as the hearts burn out,  
The humming of the engineer's bib.  
The river goes falling from her zoned thighs,  
Down to the million dollar sea  
Where real boys are conducting trade,  
Epiphanies of enterprise, jet planes run  
The glowing conduits above the docks of stone,  
Where the sea is lapping the city's caving shelf,  
But she is just a defaced infant immobile  
Beneath the slanted beams, the invisible squabbling  
Of the gold-toothed franchise,  
She keeps her secrets in the sharp glass garden,  
And the weeds which flower like Scottish queens,  
A burning scar over her eyebrow where the man  
Who once loved her touched her like a blistering dune,  
Came down hard on her poverty-  
She waits gorgeously penniless for the rest of the  
Body to come and claim her,  
While the ants go marching one by one down into her bosom,  
To get out of the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gossamers For Puppets

Old men who used to be convicts  
Sleep near the sea—  
For a thousand miles up and down—  
Old men,  
And white birds,  
Anything but vultures circling above  
The miserable clouds,  
Like a story book for kidnapped girls—  
Like long lines waiting for a popular  
If moribund movie—  
With all of the possible hairpin turns  
Played out—  
And gossamers for puppets—not  
Yet real boys—still on strings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gossips Of Esoteric Rain

Her eyes held all the playbooks and the strangely wonderful  
Mechanisms of golden simulacrum,  
And I fell on top of her like a beautiful bridge going down  
Over the smoky streets of London:  
I tasted her in my mouth like the watering hole for unicorns,  
And she never once questioned my face:  
Her brown skin was perfect, even holy, and wrapped up in my  
Cheap blue sheets it was almost a prayer:  
That is what I did for her: I kept on telling her I loved her,  
While the men fixed the end of the street with their  
Heavy hammers,  
Which were drowned out by us, and the bed moved across the room  
Like the forest returning to Dusanine,  
And bringing with it soft kisses throughout the glorious  
Gossips of esoteric rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# Goyems' Goodtime Variety Show

Oh, the days flip: they flips so well!  
At lunch, on the swings, lets have chicken and noodle  
From our thermoses and out our noses,  
A midday sort of feverish eclipse,  
Pausing for a second along our arc for a word from  
Our sponsors.

Then we'll go into the cool museum and look at the breasts  
In oil and pastel- The inkle blots of bruised areola and  
Roundish nipple, the mermaids are in the lapis lazuli tide,  
And they are so young,  
But they've been working at it for so long.  
They are real professional, and can swim for any sort of poses.

Now why don't we line up and sing  
With this Finnish chorus line, and click our fingers  
And bob our heads and pretend we're only  
Fifteen again, and British and snide. Alright?  
All right- And we'll stay up until morning and on and  
On and watch nude anime and swing in the orange tree out  
Back of our cerulean abode, and ride on the backside of  
The torpid alligators, switching them with spikenard  
Alamode.

While they'll study math and what not, we'll  
Have nothing to do, but flick our boogers and color in  
Books of Shakespeare and Marlowe. We'll take out  
Our knives and have impromptu get togethers and cut off  
Little pieces of our flesh and feed it to them fishes, and then throw away  
The evidence in the low tide, and watch the claret dye sashay  
Very fine- Very fine- If that's what we'll do, then all  
That's what we are-

The midnight shift, the checkout boys,  
The kids who missed the bus- We sing kind of cockney out in  
Loxahatchee- Even if we do be part aborigine-  
We'll do just fine until the real guys get suited up for the main  
Show, the big deal, and then we'll slip out back and peel  
Our rubber shoes until they smell like the aftertaste of a



Real insouciant sort of hell.

By the third act we'll be so high,  
We'll be Icaria with paper wings held together by  
Sealing wax. We'll put our fingers to our lips as we fall into  
The sea, or the backseat, a grinning cushioned death on her  
Purring lap,  
And her eyes will swing above her lips, so pursed like roses,  
Curious aboriginal roses  
Wondering who might we be;

But that, as we know,  
Is just who we are;  
It was so easy getting here, and we'll take what we  
Get by the back seat.  
Cause no one else wanted it,  
That's what we got: Petals bending lower, guessing  
Who we are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Granaries Of The Sky

Compassionate will be my new  
University;  
And I will sing of flowers by which I  
Cannot explain,  
And I will lie alone with make-believe cats  
And read William-Carlos Williams:  
I will toast my dead aunt,  
And bight my lip over the alive one-  
And even in the afternoon rains the traffic  
Will come, this way and that;  
And if my house should be beautiful enough  
Why then look at the healthy ivy on the trellises  
Going upwards above the clouds like a  
Commercial fairy-tale, taking its notions by  
Mark Twain: I will love great men more silently  
That I did before,  
But will be just as removed from the rest of the country,  
And still as disabled by my patriotism for the  
Beautiful bodies of girls who could never understand,  
Bartenders,  
Bartenders, by their auburn light I've made the world  
Of good polished wood, but they haven't set down the  
Glasses of their job and given me a kiss in, Oh!  
Who knows how long- They love other, sweeter men,  
Who've never spoken to them by the body-prints of  
Airplanes, sent their love letters on the clean pressed  
Lingerie of flight attendants:  
That I should do this, and worship in the long since paved  
Rock garden where the dogs killed the lucky rabbit,  
And I do,  
And I sit with her on the easy roof and we wait  
For the sky to turn pink and bring to us the revelry of  
The sea's combing obsessions,  
As she still does everyday for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Grandeurs Of Mountains

Grandeurs of mountains in their most solemn of echoes:  
I bought my rum today nearest the airplanes,  
After I jogged and had a difficult time looking at my face in the  
Rearview mirror,  
After old memories came more clearly into view:  
And right now I can put you into a severely opulent pool:  
Alma, I can let you swim right here,  
With your body as brown and as tremendous as the elephants who fly  
With their ears,  
Because they are spectacularly unreal, and yet they have so much  
Unreal love:  
And you can laugh at me, replacing my he's with your j's,  
But it will be no less unreal:  
I know you read these words that I give, just like at night the nocturnal  
Song birds eat them the seeds that I scatter in the low branches  
Around the trees of my house,  
While your eyes slip away with your breath into his armpits,  
While your parents pay the mortgage of your little sagebrush house;  
But I can love you forever, Alma:  
I can buy you a bicycle- I can buy you a canoe;  
I can do anything for you Alma, but I cannot do as you wished,  
And stop writing these songs for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Grapes On A Vine

You cooked for him a baby like brisket  
That grew into your soul;  
And now your soul jingles:  
Your soul has a soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Grass And Trees

I'll drink the tears, after the genie has  
Deceived you underneath her tree, while the busses  
Wait beside the portables,

And the schools and libraries are closed:  
And it is a beautiful world, filled with grass and trees-  
The students walk through here,  
And the most beautiful girls with scabbed knees

While the tortoises snore-  
And heavens daydream in their perambulating  
Estuaries- and the foxes lay, fat bellied-

They are counting the housewives leaping the grapes  
Of the vineyard like candle flames:  
And seeing what they've been growing,  
The simulacrum finally arrives at the predestined  
Conclusion

That he is a real boy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gravedancers Union

They're modifying you in your sleep somehow;  
While you sleep they're milling around  
And studying, rubbing their legs together making  
The eerie chirping sounds;  
They're shedding old shells for you,  
They're coming unwound....  
They're modifying you in your sleep somehow  
They're passing you around  
They can't figure out what to do with you,  
How to handle what they've found  
They can't figure out what....  
They're modifying you in your sleep somehow  
They've removed the top layer of your fleshy gown,  
But they cock their heads like curious dogs,  
Because they still don't know what they've found....  
They're modifying you in your sleep somehow,  
They're digging you a home in the ground,  
They're digging your hole in the ground,  
But they're still not quite sure what they've found....

And I have to say you  
Look good, real good, with all of us standing around,  
But whatever it is we want from you  
I don't know  
I really can't say what we've found....

Robert Rorabeck

# Graveyard Of Sunbeams

Clarity under the moon of a little house  
In the little sanctuary of a village lactated from these mountains  
That swells in the season of the tourists,  
But otherwise is nocturnal: somnambulant village where are  
You now—where I spent half a decade of my life kowtowing  
To my father as he bought more and more horses—  
Disappearing into an entire estuary—or a carport where my  
Mother burned herself in Pieta to the song of the frogs  
Against the rebar and the bluegills in the canal—  
In that place where my aunt now disappears:  
What awareness is there where the scotch pines are so burned  
That no one will buy them for Christmas and all of her fabulous  
Tits are so blackened—and my wife doesn't call,  
And now even the mountains are all gone—  
And there isn't a muse in the world that ever loved me,  
And you know that you went off to college without me—  
And the kites that we once shared are all stuck in the mangroves  
Against the beach where we forgot to share each other,  
Where the angels seem to burn hidden against the jellyfish  
That always look up to her even in their graveyard of sunbeams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Graveyard Shift

Without music a body is  
So alone,  
Even with the dogs beside him,  
He's drunken too much caffeine  
To shut down,  
And its 2 am,  
And tomorrow the sun will  
Rise to Chanticleer,  
But for now the celibacy resides  
Until his body shivers like a little girl,  
And he is left with all her pictures,  
Smiling quite beautiful,  
With the men and strangers;  
The world is utterly naked and white,  
But she should never be his lover,  
For she can do as little for him,  
As he can do for her,  
And up town, and downtown are useless,  
As quotes from a bible,  
While other girls in their own religion  
Douse close to lawyers,  
And nothing changes,  
And the novel lays unready and  
Misspelled, and the greater lunatics  
Are already underground,  
And the rest of the class is conforming  
To the graveyard,  
Where the song ends, where the song ends  
And not another quarter for the bolero,  
The scars quieted and defenseless,  
A routine laying still and restless;  
Thus a song has ended, but not another  
Song resumes,  
And even the dogs do not howl.

Robert Rorabeck



## Graveyards Of More Familiar Haunts

She doesn't like you,  
She just wants you to make believe:  
Look, there are the shadows: go there, grief:  
While I fatten my body with all of this  
Liquor:  
While I become a Christmas turkey, and the passengers  
Look up, blessing god, as their planes  
Touch down,  
And their little worlds attribute to their larger arrangements  
And dinner parties  
That I have volunteered to leave from, to step out  
In the mowed yard, listening to the kittens  
And to the fountains,  
Spilling myself alongside the traffic- beginning to  
Forget myself, scarred and bludgeoned:  
This is the way I will go now- a pilot of a wolf,  
My words sounding through the abandoned estuaries of  
Gutted houses,  
Looking for a place to bare my children from these wounds  
That the homeopathic silvers have kissed, slightly  
Before retreating like terrapin into the pockets  
And graveyards of more familiar haunts

Robert Rorabeck

# Graveyards Of Trapped Penumbras

Fortified wines how typically  
Un-unusual you are-  
The base garden of your eyes  
Dirty soda pop-  
Phosphorescent depth charges,  
And you'll find me alone  
In weed-clung gardens-  
Counting loose change and  
Scars-  
Nothing I've had to said is  
Unusually beautiful-  
Only but inebriate,  
The birds aren't beautiful  
Either, and see if  
I don't give a d\$mn for you  
Usually unusual eyes-  
Beautiful- cheap- eyes-  
Fresh graves of brothers and  
Sisters,  
Graveyards of trapped penumbras.

Robert Rorabeck

# Great

All the cherished lives building chicken coops  
Up into the  
Ceruleans of ceiling sky where the Titans were  
Once rude,  
Those old, basketball playing gods, like the crushed  
I had way back in freshman year  
With palindromes and  
Tarpon: I was already like the old man in the sea,  
Wearing old shoes and skipping gym;  
And masturbating- and masturbating:  
Then my venal and my sick muses were a still far  
Off threat;  
I was still in shop class, and not failed at Latin;  
And the only angels I knew lit up for Christmas:  
But this sky is not new-  
There are dead kittens in the drainage of the sky,  
And his brother died young too:  
And Sharon is in Colorado, and busted:  
She will sing until the mine falls down, and the clouds  
Slanting like green cannons in a sinking ship;  
And they lie down like exhausted and dying hikers  
And sigh at the last;  
And I will cut your hair in the night with the politicians;  
And I am writing now- and I haven't smoked  
Since I felt my Disney World right next door to the canal-  
Diana is single again, and Anibal wants her;  
And might have her, and my cheeks are cherry red:  
Diana is single again, because of my song she heard whispering;  
My beautiful song she wanted from me,  
She may never hear again;  
And Erin didn't admire the opening; she doesn't like poetry,  
But the opening was as perfect as the going out:  
And this is the coffin floating like a gondola in Paris,  
And I am presumptuous for I am already great.

Robert Rorabeck

# Greater And Lesser Tells

Who cut down the celebrities,

The limbs of method acting wither  
Along the path weeded with stars,

The footprints, like cheap astronauts  
Waking up in the lunar park-

Give haikus to the girl  
Working the drive through window,

Because you can read her name  
Painted in glitter in her nails,

The tells of the trailer-park slumbers,  
Fearing the Hassidic tornados,  
The foolish paths of gilded men

Fly like paper airplanes on Park Avenue  
Thrown out the window by little boys.

Robert Rorabeck

# Greece

Easy days of kindergarten are gone:  
And who is left who reads my garden?  
It is better that pretty girls  
Surf, so young and so long- their bellies wash boarded  
Their pubis thonged:  
And I will get out of their way like this,  
Remembering jealous girlfriends  
Because the anonymous flirt showered naked next to me,  
And the tortoises panted hidden in the brush  
Except for their star-flint eyes;  
And my starfish has cracked for another man,  
And she watches soap-operas all afternoon,  
And gives her kittens plastic violins to play with-  
She looks so good when she always takes the bus,  
And she knows how to enjoy the exhumed  
Smells when one of her two dogs fart;  
And she is getting so good as to distinguish:  
And tuna-fish,  
And I want to rob graves with her; and I want to go on honey  
Moons with her to places we last talked about on the  
Phone when she asked me if I liked to travel  
And then hung up,  
And made me think I was a ghost full of conjunctures,  
Filled with the sad absence of her time  
Which would ripple outwards in an endless lake,  
In the weathers of her somber absence,  
Lost in a nature preserve, starving on knuckles of white  
Ham,  
In a beautiful atmosphere of nightmares that would never  
End.

Robert Rorabeck

## Green Axes

Wounds on a face that has to return to work in the  
Morning while the sky is still a crucifix,  
And the snails curl underfoot with the terrapin:  
There are diamonds on the path of lost children,  
But they lead nowhere: not even to witches,  
Or the hapless knights up in their Christmas trees  
Whose green axes were once known for taking down  
These woods  
Through which the pointless weathers bluster:  
And the mountain lions yawn, like roses up from the footprints  
Of overzealous geodes who once discovered are taken  
Up and admired for awhile,  
While the elk forage through the sleet and hale;  
And then finally, they are set down again: and the old  
Forest is burned away, until even more beautiful girls come  
In to a house opened to the sky- and sit together in  
A church of cryptic sorority, praying  
For the flowers to come again, never once taking anymore  
Account of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Green Banks Of Vermillion Snow

Now it has to be so awful,  
Drinking my five dollar wine after all of the fireworks  
And birthday cards;  
After the night has shown itself to the door,  
So only the words come: you would think so softy  
As to occupy with little girls in their bedrooms in soft  
Shoulders  
There; but not there, for just as suddenly the serpent uncoils  
By the new energies of moonlight,  
Striking like liquor from the curious basins of its amusement  
Rides:  
It strikes right out and marks her, playing in her band  
While she was sleeping with another man  
Up in her tree forts or her dorm rooms:  
As the wine or liquor drips down like tears,  
Like sweat in a garden and in the adulterous trees,  
While her son is yet to live and then yet to go away:  
And in tomorrow, promising, I climb up the facades of mountains  
Just to swear to her,  
My fingers grasping arrow heads and pottery: my dogs licking  
Their wounds stories below:  
And she awakens tomorrow, her eyes undressing a world of its  
Green banks of vermilion snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Greetings

Tongue the lightning-lord,  
The cowboy plowing dust in  
The beat up Ford:  
Shush the baby ripening on  
The umbilical cord:  
Clap the green knight's neck  
With the sword,  
Then notice then:  
She is marrying the strong men,  
Traveling sales-men,  
Nautical heroes, seamen:  
The golden skinned Jason,  
Their loins in engorged juxtaposition:  
Another drunken mother  
Laughing in his harem,  
Lying down then in  
The sky's bend, unworrisome:  
Her hair undone, her dress undone:  
Her eyes unwound to the skies,  
Her lips balmy and practiced,  
Her limbs like resting kines  
Waiting for the new fragile  
Butcheries to come in,  
Greetings.

Robert Rorabeck



# Grey

A peaceful color, grey.

Something to turn into as you exhume time,

The traditions of mothers and fathers

Becoming slowly immortal: grandmothers,

And grandfathers, and so on, and so on:

Tortoise grey:

Fire breaks which distil the flames of youth,

And douse the tendencies for strangling suicides,

And speeding on confusing highways:

Grey of professors, and grey of established

Thespians:

Wiser uncles who have given up on the family

Business and taken to wearing spectacles,

The grey of the scuppernongs on vines of

Chain-link fences in northern yards beside

Sprawling lakes,

The grey of the first cat who was your reward

For learning to go where you should go

When you needed to,

Grey of thick rope trustworthy by ships for

Knotting anchors,

And grey for the frothing sea in a tumult against

The foreign hull, like a splinter in the unfathomable

Gullet:

And grey for the sky when the earth is furthest away

From the sun, when rain freezes and becomes

Gentler falling and a deadlier paradox,

Grey for mice who are not cartoons,

Grey for the mothers' closing wombs,

Grey for some of her eyes,

Grey for long good-byes,

And for the German Shepherd's panting tongue,

Grey for that part of the moon shyly in the shadows

Watching her from the sky,

Grey for the inevitability of true loves which come with

Time, after the stores are closed and the nights

Are all but empty save for the red leaves threatening

To tear away,

Grey from the lovesick heart walking alone the empty avenue,

Grey for the silent movies and phone calls,  
And the birds who never learned to fly.  
Grey is the open hand waiting for you,  
And the open tomb.  
Grey will never be Japanese, but eventually  
Everything else will find grey, but find my lips  
As I find you,  
And we will find grey together.

Inspired by Jack Micheline's Green Poem

Robert Rorabeck

# Grim And Dusty Ship

Grim, grim and dusty ship  
Where are you going as light  
As a pip

Out above the far out yards  
With their housewives playing triangles  
Like a chorus line of  
Open-mouthed clams.

Robert Rorabeck

## Growing Up Far Away

These days are lonely and humid,  
And the year so far one long warbling trill  
Filled with innocuous hunger,  
And the hands of planets who have been  
Demoted into balls of ice,  
And thus float so far away they have no  
Recollection of the linchpin desires of modern  
Homo sapiens, and how the highways run  
Distended and spilling over into  
Other towns with all the same billboards,  
Department stores, and drive-thrus worked  
By the hair-lipped and greasy dispossessed,  
But still closer than the other things,  
The harder elements we have no names for,  
Because they are so far away from the sun,  
And they spin around and around like stone children  
In their ellipses, and weigh so much that  
They drag the lighter things around them,  
And spin them like coy playing with wine corks  
In a Japanese pond,  
But if they have a color, it must be added,  
For they are not orange, and their hearths do  
Not blush, and they do not have a work ethic  
Or awards ceremonies were doctors are hooded  
And their lives turned into a dreamy soiree  
Filled with easy hours, facile sex, and crumbs  
Of salt and vinegar  
Placed like cake by hummingbirds in the corners  
Of their smirking mouths: This is the brightness of  
Our world, or so I am told by the body language of  
Lovers making the pleasant intercourse of interlocked  
Fingers in the chirping parks, biting their lips over  
The names of unconcealed children, the following  
Generations of amusement parks, while the darker things,  
Those without skin or heart disease warble in  
The fugue of unfathomable motes unrequited by the  
Celestial spheres, the folded maps of little towns with  
Steeple through which starving men walk with  
Bowed heads.

Robert Rorabeck

# Guessing That We Do

I want a family of pretty girls to be smiling at me:  
I want to be holding the last flame out before the Cadillac's  
Of the last primitive estuary;  
And this is my plight, crawling beneath the salty phalluses  
Of washed out lighthouses:  
I want to be a little boy attending my own funeral:  
I want to be a thief who steals over bridges and into the women's  
Locker room;  
And to taste the salt off the ankle bracelets of her ankles,  
And to come down with her right here in the middle of nowhere as  
If it was my job,  
And everything else in this dirty blue planet was lost and didn't  
Care:  
I want the architecture of her brown skin to hang in the arbor of  
My elbow after midnight:  
And so we can listen to the trains and witches go by together;  
And we can become not so sorrowful,  
And I can smell like her uncaring right beside my coworkers  
And my cousin who is taller than me  
But whom Alma finds less beautiful; and I want to go with her  
Until we become irrefutably lost up the swaybacks of gulping mountains:  
So we lose sight of just about everything and making a dressing room out  
Of evergreens undress and sing like songbirds feeding their  
Young to each other,  
And go down and give her gold into the little cricks gossiping and  
Building up of otters,  
So when the airplanes come again they seem just like gods  
And we light up like diabolical candles of graveyards and amusement  
Parks just about right underneath them:  
And we run away together to the canyons of Arizona; and god helps  
Us after that, or just holding her arms into the crepuscule and  
Through the modern mailboxes after dark, listening to the last songs of  
A baseball game over the graveyards where no one happens to be  
Buried that we can remember to love; and yet we go together,  
As the light bulbs of Ferris Wheels comb the night's migratory  
Brilliances, guessing that we do.

Robert Rorabeck

# Guiding You In

The night tries to play catch up with itself:  
I have never been in this room before: the house is as  
Quieted as your soul  
In a low cut blouse- the gossip of the night whispering  
Through the transoms of the house like  
Sailboats through green storm clouds;  
And you were not home, Alma- your shift was over  
And you slipped away through the skiffs like paper snowflakes  
And butterflies underneath the orange grove cliffs:  
The ponies were as quiet as buttercups,  
And the ghost of your child lay higher up in the roman ruins without  
A flag:  
Your children moved like games across the marble,  
And I pressed my lips to the soft brown skin that the morning's  
Light stepped in to worship,  
As the churchyard sang around you like a lighthouse giving off hope,  
Guiding you in.

Robert Rorabeck

# Gunfighter Of Roses

Put me in a coffin all beautiful at last,  
A gunfighter of roses beneath the  
Over pass;  
Dressed up and laid out there so sweet  
And fine, in the middle of the weekend  
Flea Market with nothing on my mind:  
(Nothing on my mind.)  
The Mexican wives with maize and  
Turquoise tigers; praying to saints where  
The herds of cars bluster,  
They seem to sweep like four-legged angels  
Through the sky;  
And I'd think to say I love you,  
But I had to go and die: (I had to go and die) ,  
So there's no more reason for making bread,  
And you can pass right through me with  
Unfaithful thoughts so untrue in your head;  
And your gilded lover holding hands,  
Buying anything you want for you second hand.  
They've stolen my guns from me anyway,  
And tossed them into the unruly sea;  
There's no danger of me awaking and calling out  
You pinstriped dilatants in the afternoon,  
Your tinhorn firefighter so mustachioed and pressed,  
Though I wished you could see how beautiful  
It is now that you mean nothing at all to me,  
(Nothing at all to me) ,  
The lid of heartless wood closing above my chest.

Robert Rorabeck



# Gunpoint

I was robbed at  
Gunpoint tonight,  
Erin;  
So where the hell were you  
Anyway,  
Darling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Habitats Of Unicorns And Mermaids

What passions leave by themselves  
From the sinking ship:  
Aged body like a burned love letter  
To the gods with gasoline on their lips,  
Their beds the fireplaces of  
Unmatched juvenile truancy:  
When, the poets in their youths,  
Could not be touched—virgins masturbating,  
Like great, muscle bound men with swords—  
Giving themselves as heirlooms and  
Talismans to their muses—  
Losing themselves in books,  
As the girls they loved lost their  
Virginity to better endowed young men—  
Girls who went out into the courtyards with  
Tennis-shoes and heartbeats—  
And it was there that the sun struck across  
Their unclothed necks  
And seemed to want to get closer to them from  
A million miles away, or more—  
Where the teachers had no thought about such  
Things—  
But the girls grew up and married one or two  
Men who also had no such thought about such  
Things—and the boys who once dreamed  
Of them married other women themselves,  
Women they had accidentally called from so  
Far away—across so many canals that they  
Became oceans—  
But still, in the fall, they sold pumpkins,  
And the children grew up from them such as  
Weeds—so it was that even their beautiful dreams  
Were not enough: they vanished,  
Just the same as the fabled habitats of unicorns  
And mermaids.

Robert Rorabeck

## Haiku / Forty-Two Times

I am going to  
Tell your husband that we made  
Love forty-two times.

Robert Rorabeck

# Haiku Butterfly

You seem to be da-  
Ncing while I die but you do-  
Nothung, butterfly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Half An Artist

I look so troubled with ringlets which  
Make like hungry mouths of little birds,  
Or knots of wood around my eyes;  
And is that why you are going, my pantomiming  
Love,  
Exiting the revolving stage, leaving the  
Audience in such a hush, never to reveal again  
Your burnished areolas like sand dollars which  
Marked you as the half cousin of the mermaid  
Topless at the biker bar somewhat inland  
On the southeast coast of Florida?  
I spread my lips and imbibe the poison which  
I must drink to expel the memory of you,  
Like a German translation, like a slight holocaust  
In sexy lingerie; but it's just pulp fiction-  
Over eager, I've begun digging up the roots of  
The dragon's teeth Cadmus planted before his friends  
Were fully formed and riotous,  
And so it is with you: Even with all these scars,  
Battle wounds, truancy badges which should send you  
Whistling at me from out the bus while you head home  
Towards the zoo,  
I never learned to wait until the rains had gone to unpackage  
The dozen roses,  
To sit them like a resting vagabond next to the  
Mewing kitten up the cinderblocks of your steps;  
Both of us wanting in and milk,  
and so I am only half the artist,  
The spotty hullabaloo, the conquistador out of armor  
Easily masticated by the greater blue beastly things;  
Only semi published in half aware fits.  
My house is sold, and I can see you through the window,  
How that giant of the man has you all unclothed and folded  
Up in him;  
But I am still dreamily swimming like a dazzled fish in its  
Living room bowl, thinking that this is the entire ocean,  
And your eyes such heavens to gaze and delight upon.



# Halfway Home

Up in their castles battling for air,  
And not a single one of their beauty coming down  
To bed me:  
Me like a cormorant and the gulls a sisterhood in her  
Bivouacked cathedral,  
Her logic sweet- stolen from the apiary, and that a delusion of  
The Ferris Wheel,  
Turning around backwards on itself, molestations of  
Sticky apples and other fruit  
That will not heel:  
Plymouths and flaming swords showing on the streets underneath  
The palm trees,  
The way that sometimes mermaids bask in the brine of daylit  
Televisions, of teenage boys skipping school-  
When, all of a sudden, it all feels out, looks lonely, and under  
The hood- the plagiarism of all of those heavens,  
Of empty baseball diamonds overlooked by witchcraft:  
And me getting all of it, sad-footed on an empty lot,  
Halfway home, out of school:  
Wanting to kiss orchid in the canal, not wanting to say her name:  
Bending over it, as if in acquiescence, but not going all of the way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Halfway Knew What I Mean

I've dropped the book of Wallace Stevens in the crook of  
My fold out bed, Alma;  
Along with my empty liquor bottle; but lucky me, I have another  
That isn't so empty;  
And now these things spill, and I wish that I had known you before  
That you were real,  
While all of this was going down, and your children were still capped  
In your virgin town:  
Oh, Alma, I cannot sing- I can only stutter after school in the depths of  
Apoplectic weather; and the white curls only find me  
Halfway curious, while the ball is being passed around,  
But even in the penumbras of moon glows the grass is so curious  
And so green;  
But Alma, oh Alma: If you only halfway knew what I mean.

Robert Rorabeck



# Halfway Up The Mountain

I am not doing it right now, not hitting it home:  
I haven't traveled out much,  
I haven't even been to town- I just saw one cloud  
Halfway up the mountain that got me excited  
About you, and otherwise turned me on:  
And the cowboys came down pin wheeling their  
Horses across the steep esplanade  
And I held my dogs close to me like two daughters in  
The yellow shade,  
And they tipped their hats to me, and some twirled  
Their guns,  
And on the summit they'd planted a miniscule tattered  
American flag,  
Which made me dream of you,  
And I laid half naked under the watch tower,  
Pretty sure that there would be no forest fires, because  
The trees were getting naked-  
And the entire hemisphere wore the most cerulean of hats  
And it made me think of you,  
And made me otherwise excited- I was real ashamed  
That I made no sacrifice,  
Being only a single father and rather poor,  
Always having to take a few nips now to get anything out,  
And I rippled quite consumptive in the sun shower  
And the virulent wildflowers who were closing shop-  
I remembered I only saw you once through all of college,  
And the airplanes leapt like frogs  
And I wept and got on all fours and picked wild strawberries,  
But they were hardly enough,  
And the other tourists laughed,  
All of which, you know, made me think of you....

Robert Rorabeck

# Halloween

I met a woman  
Named Halloween.  
She was already  
Married.  
She was a distant  
Relative.  
Her eyes were candy  
Her lips were candy  
Her legs were candy too.  
When everyone was  
Away  
She played tricks on  
Me.  
She gave her treats  
To me.  
Halloween  
Undressed  
And prowled around  
The room  
And through the house  
Our shadows  
Detached and made  
Love  
In the laughing flicker  
Of Jack O Lanterns  
Until Sunset  
And the night's  
Parade  
When strangers came  
Knocking on the door,  
Married men,  
Distant relatives,  
Uncles whose names I  
Can't remember.  
Each time she gave  
Herself to them,  
French-kissing them  
Pressing against them  
Her dribbled sugars

Through the threshold.  
Her name was Halloween.  
Her eyes were candy.  
Her lips were candy.  
Her legs were candy too.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hallways Of Another Careless Day

School in another day of clouds, where song birds  
Slip into words,  
Hurrying the boys to class, and slipping the girls at  
The water fountains into all sorts of narcolepsy:  
Then there will be toy boats in the streams,  
And paper airplanes molting underneath the flecks of  
Red holly on the other side of the canal.  
Even though the cat may be dead  
And may even be eaten away by its platoons of  
Ants,  
The rabbits that ran away can still watch you from  
Where they love—on the other side of the shell rock  
Road—in their hideouts of pornography—  
As another sun trumpets its rigamoral through the  
Hallways of another careless day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hamburgers Of Plate Tectonics

Hamburgers of plate tectonics be with my soul  
As it teaches another hummingbird  
About the housing market - beautiful menagerie  
A thimble full of hollow bones  
Floating over this catastrophe  
Of the sea repossessing all of her holidays of  
Prettied homes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Happenstances Of An Unreal World

I could have given you a pleasurable existence  
Through all of these words,  
While I've continued diving underneath all of  
The broken school busses  
And paper airplanes- I could have shown you things  
You should have never seen,  
Instead of all of these banquets in twilight,  
As you were coming down  
And changing your clothes- my first muse, while  
I was still a virgin underneath the helium balloons of  
The hollow throats  
While all of the rest of the high school was play football  
And they could never speculate on these  
Estranging gifts- maybe I will run away again,  
In order for you to become another muse,  
Underneath the bleachers of Colorado or the spotlights of  
The Catholic church,  
Maybe I will save new promises for our broken family  
While the frogs are singing light hearted  
To the teddy bears of the chameleons who are always changing  
Color: there they are, and there is their school spirit  
Wherever it was- my mother is showing me,  
As the clams open, revealing their infinite pearls,  
As the airplanes spiral as if mobiles through the heavens,  
As the trailer parks curl their pretty bangs through the  
Happenstances of an unreal world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Happily Illiterate

Inconceivable, that she could  
Have thought of me today, the one I  
Love best and injure myself still deeper  
Until I am thoroughly carved,  
Petra glyph west of the Mississippi,  
The river an incision, the spine in the book,  
And we two pages, where I am a  
Half-hazard illustration of her prose,  
Shunting the swelled cerebellum with a plume  
And ink, dabbing the labyrinthine bloom:  
I have no other reason to crawl around these  
Lines, elicit the agony that I still  
Do not know how to spell; but a subtle  
Scar from high school, ghostly she echoes  
Through the turn-about where parents came,  
And deposited us again into our separate estuaries,  
Whose cajoling currents in time caused the  
Subtle amnesias which took us to other moons,  
While I continued to swear by her earliest light  
Mottled through the evergreen: Laughing,  
She partakes of the fermentations of the salted bar,  
Tossing back the citrus of anonymous piracies,  
She looms, full mast and out the door,  
Bosom the orbs which light the streets,  
Her lips and limbs are luscious words,  
I read to her, though she remains happily illiterate.

Robert Rorabeck

# Happiness

I saw you riding your bicycle  
Through the magnanimous puddles  
In your dreams.  
You were riding around in your  
Childhood, riding around without a care.  
When you saw me standing by the verge,  
You looked up and smiled.  
I smiled back and waved at you  
Then settled back beneath a shady  
Tree and watched you playing with  
Your bright new toy.  
You played all day and laughed,  
And tossed your head back with joviality.  
Then I could see that you were something  
New and wholesome.  
You were complete inside yourself,  
And when you stopped to catch your breath  
You would sometimes turn my way  
And cast yourself on me with a friendly look.  
I could tell you were trying to share your  
Happiness with me,  
And for that day I felt warm and carefree,  
As your presence made my worries crawl away  
And hide in dark places,  
So all I knew was you riding around  
Enjoying the motion of your being.  
That was the only time I can remember  
I was ever happy....

Robert Rorabeck



# Happy Birthday

Then there was Colorado  
The tourists traveled to, never once thinking of  
Aspen,  
And the steep paths up which my mother was born  
Into the cabin of a blind man  
With her brother:  
How they became lost together, suffering  
Various metamorphosis, until  
My mother smelled of lavender, and flew away:  
And her brother dropped off the cliff  
And into a trailer park,  
Drinking himself into a working class epiphany:  
And I thought of them together while I  
Was alone,  
And my mother was an attention in the sky,  
Shining in the sun, wishing me a happy birthday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Happy Birthdays

Rejoining through the sabbaticals of wonder,  
Every day in a glorious prosthesis: how I hold you without  
Even feeling,  
Not even coldness- the day pigeonholed with these rays of  
Marionettes,  
Amputees growing stuff back like jellyfish triaged in the  
Sterile hallways of high school that doesn't  
Even feel anymore,  
While the rain comes expectantly the way girls want things  
When all they can see is their beauty in your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Happy Weekend

Now I've said too many things, as pensive as an apiary  
Of afflicted numbers,  
And now I question the space between our bodies, and how  
To rush through that space to find you:  
There you are another night as brown as your rabbits in the  
Clutches of his abusive arms,  
And I don't want to think of you too long there, or I will walk  
To your house again and sleep on your  
Roof:  
I will pretend that it is another Christmas and slip treats through  
The windows of your children,  
So that they might love me, even though I know I can never  
Take the place of their father:  
There are still other ships to sail, and the burning grottos  
Lactating on the missing shores;  
Maybe you have sisters there who you cannot yet remember,  
But let me take you to them,  
And then we can all drive to Orlando and spend a happy  
Weekend at Disney World.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hard At Caressing Your Tide

Conquistadors like waves buried away,  
Like beautiful orchards the Zephyrs suckle:  
They comb over the pine trees on their way to filibuster  
My old uncle;  
And you are on your way like something quit sincere,  
The crux for every fable:  
As you go whistling along your way, I draw your this  
Still life on its table:  
And in my mind your daughter burns like an effervescing  
Candle;  
And my sea of yearns reaches out to grab your sweet young  
Panhandle, and serve myself breakfast from you in turns:  
Your breasts the meat of a poultice for my flesh,  
And your flesh the surcease of a poniard's aloe:  
And I wish for you with every breath, as if a musician through  
The fluted hollow;  
Coming up upon me like the crest of every tide, ever part upon you  
Like the wedding of a bride,  
Filigreed and kindled, you come stepping side by side,  
My wishes upon your body echoing like coins skipping through  
The orchards of a mermaid's pride  
Until I have all of my wealth planted deep inside you, and you have  
Come out to feel the cool of my words spoke to your lips,  
Allowing my thoughts in like paper ships who in tomboy armadas  
Work so long and hard at caressing your tide.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hard Times

A bag of crooked angels  
Mews like hungry kittens.  
God slings them underhand  
Into the reservoir  
Because times are getting tougher  
And he can't afford to feed them;  
But as they sink,  
Like blowtorched feathers  
They burn like a bag of fireworks  
In playful leaps and shoots  
And he watches the weak little  
Demigods swim away  
Like store-bought gold fish,  
Like gold foiled leafs crinkled  
In the demure light;  
But their youthful, inexperienced bodies  
Already attract the attention  
Of convicts,  
The children of the slaves,  
The hungry pugilist fish  
Who have survived  
Molested into the wild.  
The dark things swim up to the little  
Candle-flames,  
The great snuffing beasts, circling.  
Before he can see what happens,  
God turns away,  
Because if he cannot see then  
He cannot say  
And blindness is a brand of medicine;  
So slowly, though still a teenager  
In the affects of progeria  
He shuffles back home,  
His back bent from carrying  
Man's sinning  
He hopes to sleep for awhile  
Longer in his secret garden  
Hidden in his backyard surrounded  
By technology's new boom sounds:

The airplanes and delivery vans,  
The power-lines and swimming pools.  
Along his fence where life is still getting busy,  
The busted virgins disrobing their wings,  
Like alley cats screaming,  
Having their filthy litters of crooked angels  
God can no longer afford to keep them all,  
The addicts of his glory  
Strung out like Christmas lights  
After they should have come down,  
Because, for now, his season is over.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hardy Sees Upon Writing Tess

Sleeping now on the open plateau  
I see the gypsies arriving in bright display  
Pouring like spring into the town,  
Opening like the trap of flowers,  
Lets see what they will steal.

A heart or two fluttering,  
In the blue field nearby the quiet house  
Where the farmer sleeps,  
The maidens walk out early  
And dance in a ring,  
Virgin palms clammy and clasping,  
Going round and around,  
They are all chanting for a man.

Here he comes walking,  
The gentleman of ancient ancestry:  
He is a good man who will save many lives,  
But will any of the naive woman find him,  
Or will they choose the darker stranger  
Now rushing from the hunt,  
Smelling of all the things  
He has killed and conquered  
Disturbing the night,  
He has stolen a name to suite him,  
And as he moves he rends the world before  
Him, causing the maidens  
To gasp and hold themselves  
From the galloping cold  
Of this man, who will take many a maiden's head,  
Though only one may call him husband.

Robert Rorabeck

# Harvests

You fell in love with another man,  
Though broken before you touched that God.  
I saw the fine virgins dancing in  
The early mornings  
Careful between the bluebells who  
Saw us all,  
Heads drooped and tearful  
Bedecking the rest-stop on the highway.  
Where I drove by ever so fast:  
Defeated and sterile  
North bound with the hammer down.  
I could not rest.  
The country was up in turmoil.  
The ants boiled over the grass,  
Eating the outstretched hand left unanswered  
In the ditch.  
The highjackers jumped the plane  
Before it crashed....  
Rich off the plunder they made vacant  
Love to you on the roof of the carport  
Outside your dorm room.  
Where they landed  
I never saw.  
I never knew.  
At night in the library  
I floated past the moon.  
In the womb of the mother  
I kissed my Aristotelian shadow  
And stole the words spoken by greater men  
Who in different centuries serenaded your mothers.  
At dawn,  
The moose with the cadmium antlers  
Trumpeted for sex  
Before it click-clacked its extinction-  
Annexed, I crawled back to your concrete lap,  
But from that terrace your lips were bruised  
From heavy petting-  
Exhausted from thwarted attempts  
At impregnation,



You would not let me in.  
You sighed, "Go away, my love.  
Go away."  
You had sated on the fruit of strangely  
Insignificant men....  
And in no time at all,  
I would leave you as you took their name.  
Expelled,  
You did not look back.  
Rather, upwards your eyes lingered  
As your long forgotten sisters  
Curtisied demurely in the farmer's  
Unplowed field.

Robert Rorabeck

# Haunted By Astronauts

Scars have windows, as fish have gills,  
Clouds have mothers who remind them of  
How old they are;  
And old boys want to do tricks,  
And I pick her daffodils- She puts her hand in  
Wet clay,  
And the potter's wheel spins-  
And I've been thinking of her all day  
As the storms trundled in, and rattled the sky  
Like an empty coin tin-  
She used to believe she could speak to animals,  
And kept a very young serpent in her green  
Corduroys; he told her she was part Cherokee,  
And that was why she was so beautiful-  
But it was a different lie than the one  
He told me;  
And back then, Scott read cards-  
And the storks floated s-shaped over the screened  
Jacuzzi, the orange tree rustled a piece of  
Torn story;  
And I slept alone beneath the new born skies,  
Practiced witchcraft close to midnight, conjuring  
Your eyes: And death was so far away,  
Like a long bike ride,  
And you slipped so far away, and the moon grew  
Fat and haunted by astronauts,  
Which meant that god didn't believe in me,  
I guess,  
And the snake curled up like incense and told you  
You were part Cherokee,  
But that was a lie.

Robert Rorabeck

# Having Forgotten The Taste For Her Living

They've stepped out now, they say to smoke,  
The eyes of salient nimbus, excited violins:  
Their legs the stretch of granddaddy longlegs  
Surveying the pipes: When we were ghosts,  
I cradled her ancient Hebrew curls, apoplectic  
And stubborn, when we'd fight, though she hadn't  
Yet admitted the problem wasn't in the figure,  
Or my old truck marking ruts on the corner  
Of the manicured lawn, with the single cypress  
Latchkeyed, drunken and swaying in the  
Eventual storms, but because she wanted to be  
Rich, or the appearance of that thing:  
The values her parents impeded her uneven breasts,  
My yellowed studio crawling with ants, and  
Blemishes, and down below naked lesbians cooing  
In the pool; It was all wrong, so she left for the  
Summer for her sister's wedding, and I grew worse,  
Took water coloring at a community college,  
Farted and cracked nuts, and sated on uneventful porn;  
But that was worse, how her eyes grew to terseness  
And perfunctory like a rejection letter by a professor  
Too lazy to read, or like a poem which has no sense  
Of form, just tap-dancing like the rains on corrugations:  
Now they sweat together, and have kosher sex,  
Wedded by a rabbi, ate latkes, did the Ashkenazi dance;  
Swayed me into the sleep of the purest of goyem,  
Laid with a thorn intruded in the small of the back of  
The most innocent of mountains, hibernated and the  
Insouciance of rivers dammed by industrious otters,  
Slapped by spawning trout, speckled quartzite and magnesium:  
I was the rime smoothed and hidden by the tumble of  
Cataracts, curtained by the seeded ferns, unable  
To migrate, or do better, forgetting to spend my money,  
Loving foreign women who got lucky at bars,  
With no sense of tradition, no tempo, but areolas  
I imagine which could circle the sun like greyhounds;  
And I have yet to find my weapons, or the copper  
Button torn on the run, but the night is cyclical, and  
I am catching up with the disembodiment of my iron-

Willed foundling, and once together we  
Will compete in the quiet brilliance in the  
Red nooks of an unemployed campus, and  
We will move and laugh with much ambition  
And enjambment,  
Having forgotten the taste for the living,  
But will remain ever faithful beside the eternal  
Graves of falling leaves, and poetesses  
And paramours with cheeky scars, and  
Epitaphs in stone, we would lie upon  
As if lying upon their flesh,  
Waiting for the winds to bluster excitedly,  
And moan in their wispy element,  
Relocating into an estuary received by our  
Senses.

Robert Rorabeck

# He Who Should Never, Ever Cry

I can tell now that everything is fine,  
Because you've left the porch light on while you've  
Stooped that sweet youngish boy,  
While I was out jogging the golf course pretending I could  
Be a major professor;  
Or out breathless upon the steeper slopes of scree,  
While he was under your cottage cheese blouse, fumbling  
With pink fingernails of the presents of your crenulated  
Flesh;  
And I had to take my car to the carwash, and then for a checkup,  
As the tortoises stared at me dull-eyed, hiccupped:  
I bought you a plush green teddy bear once for Valentines day:  
Do you still have him in some corner of your newly  
Cornered house behind the gate of your fabricated community-  
This isn't something I think much about:  
I stomp my boots- I zigheil, which is easy to do from Pluto  
Without being lampshaded by all your anonymous ancestors:  
Look girl,  
I actually made it further in school than you, and that's because  
In evening my phallus expels and greedily eats all the best orchids  
Laid out as offerings by all the under-aged girls;  
And even scarred, you were no competition, and I would not  
Wear your ring: You rode your bicycle while I jogged,  
And it was an easy thing: Other girls looked through the Venetian blinds  
While I masturbated- It was no special thing,  
And even now I think of swimming away; I wait to hear from  
Some literary agent as I ejaculate, as I spume,  
And the airships trundle in herds across the unbanished skies:  
And the football players throw their games,  
And I am the ever constant alligator eating the blue gills in the canal  
Behind your house waiting for you to bare your inevitable  
Children: I am he who should never, ever cry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Headstrong Shores

Sharon, you don't live here: where do you live-  
While our days wake up together, breathing in teams like goldfish  
Who don't know who we are;  
And they are digging up all of the deeper swing-sets because  
They are afraid of lawsuits,  
And, Sharon, I am really worried that I will never get to smell you again,  
Underneath the pitch-fork pines imported in from England,  
Or anywhere:  
Sharon, the problem was that I didn't know how to huff bouquets before  
When I knew you; and now I want to hold your hips like a crutch,  
Like canticle that means so very much;  
And to relive you like a curse, and to fill my senses with your earthy  
Purse:  
Sure, you know, these bodies will go to sleep underneath the infinitely  
Of welted snows; and the bodies that they breath will go;  
Just as bouquets have children and fantasies;  
But I want you knew again underneath my open window of senses;  
I want to hold your body like something necessary for a cripple out of doors,  
Because I know you are a good woman- and you will work  
As a bosomy prosthesis for this man who is your Prometheus  
Stranded and punished in the infinity above your broiling and headstrong  
Shores.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heart Haiku

I want to listen  
To your heart which will prove  
That my god is real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heartless Bicycle

Interacting with all of the catastrophe inside my  
Soul, listening to your children echo around your footsteps  
Even as they fall'  
And your heart spinning away 'the rain falling like  
Trinkets outside 'as if you were wanting to  
Return again to Mexico'  
To see and kiss your children 'to remember what it  
Was to be a foolishly welcoming bride.

Robert Rorabeck



# Heather?

Do you give me the chance to glance at stars-  
I used to lay on my back in the sweet suburban dunes and  
Affect such scars,  
While the houses moaned and creaked like an armada  
Of sailing wax ships, captained by mothers with  
Their own tennis courts and hand blown crystal:  
Far out at sea the lions would roar, the fish would starve,  
And I couldn't see where I was going,  
But anyway it bloomed somehow, and I gave my stains  
To the green rug like a Victorian garden,  
Plastic army men died upon, Indians were defeated while  
Paper airplanes flew above and got stuck on the ceiling fans:  
Their captains came over the intercom and said,  
Everything was going to be so fine, and the roses stuck their  
Heads out from the crack in the drywall; it smelled like turpentine.  
Grandmothers came by concrete rivers,  
And their husbands with paper snowflakes. A Catholic girl  
Kissed my liver, and then threw it across the canal to see which  
Way it would break. Now the sky is overcast and I am  
Expecting the commonly uncertain weather;  
Today is my birthday, thirty some years- I can't remember;  
But if I had a wife, I'd name her Heather, and salute her every  
Morning. Her legs would be a good reason for any old revolution,  
And I'd set them as gently as kittens outside for the morning,  
For the sun to play upon them, to weep and drive;  
And I'd wind her up and set her out to get groceries, tuna fish  
And glass cleaner and a box of matches so we wouldn't  
Have to starve.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heaven Haiku

As long as you know  
My name heaven seems  
Almost possible

Robert Rorabeck

# Heavenly Hymn

I am Godlike in infamy.  
Jesus Christ came down  
Dressed in a man-sized  
Planet and crushed me,  
So I broke wide open,  
A ripe geode from the  
Little girl's hands up to  
Her eyes,  
And my seeds spilled out  
Like soft pearls over her toes,  
Until I grew there, as  
God so commanded,  
A humming meadow  
Full of green holes  
With two newborn  
Aspen trees through  
Which a slender bright  
River sings, cascading  
Down to the pool in the  
Palms of his thirsting hands,  
Where wild animals  
Gather and drink and  
Blue birds sing upon  
His gentle fingertips.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heavenly Scarred Adolescents

Then I will go to California to  
Look up:  
Bottle rockets over a sharp and homeless  
Field,  
And razors of fiends in the park with  
Lights as blue as a church's;  
And I will take flight,  
Moving across the plateau we stole  
From Mexico—  
Underneath spaceships which seem like  
Angels, and the airplanes their dogs:  
The delights of a heavenly scarred  
Adolescents,  
A playground behind the steering wheel:  
Looking up,  
I will see mother and father and other old  
Loves pretending to be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heavy Pines

Bruise me again against the starless sky,  
So that I might feel asymmetrical couched in the damp pines;  
I can see your jocund face in the fusing light of a cigarette-  
Your friends surround you like a fraternity of hazy secrets  
Upon the temple of an unconscious giant out so long  
They have decided to build a university down the side of his face  
Where the winsome professors stutter like ants over  
The weight of all the knowledge they have produced,  
Distilled into a little brook of drool that disappears over the rim of  
His awesome jaw; Some kind of prism lights your space,  
As you get ready to develop into a new creation,  
Something with two last names, a bank account, and steady occupation;  
I remain where I was, where I am still, and continue as  
The town leaves itself for my cousin specters; Listening  
To your fond echoes, we wait for the largess to move us;  
Until this, we are lost in the woods and the needles die and  
Cover your laughter, muffling the colors into sepia, and  
Drone out your smell like snow and volcanic ash;  
But through the miasma of heavy dreaming, I see you onwards,  
A painting in the far distance, just a silhouette now  
Only I can remember watching bruised between the heavy pines.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heirlooms Of Another Life

I have done nothing wrong-  
But this is the curse of the proceeding afternoon:  
Looking up through the horoscopes of  
Peeling, soft-brown yards- strictly speaking:  
The Mexicans lingering, bodies like the first evidence of  
Autumn- as she goes out of me-  
This muse who has promised me so much, like  
The tide- the innocent sculptor underneath the airplanes-  
She will go away again, and this time I cannot  
Linger to pick up the pretty shells revealed inside of  
Me from her vanishing:  
I must go as well- into the heirlooms of another life  
I must vanish,  
As the lions yawn dismissively- they too have only kissed  
So many men- and in their careless afternoons not  
So many have thought of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hell

Now real in a crooked harem of any sport,  
Michelle, because my two good muses are dead:  
Give me you and rum and five empty champers,  
Give me immortality halfway through high school  
In Catholic church with some cypress showing knee:  
Do you care that I have gone,  
Or that I was only beautiful for maybe a week,  
And when I skipped, and when I sighed with my erection  
I blew green smoke, and I stole condiments  
And thought the sky was really something underneath the  
Lunch room where I first came and then ran away underneath  
The school bus with that f%cked up terrapin;  
And the alligators ranged, and you swung a good backhand and  
Performed on the sweet timber boards,  
And laid down for the Chinese dragon of any men crooked  
Enough to find available;  
And I tried out for track for Erin, and was lapped by the  
Proverbial black man; and I didn't care, and spent  
The rest of the summer in Arizona watching a house I also  
Didn't care about rising up- Blue monoliths that never  
Existed giving me erections which were temporary,  
But always tremulous and refurbished in budding;  
And then summer again, and oh well, graduation,  
But you were a year before me, and your little dog is sick;  
And I have obviously given up if tonight you are my muse,  
Or I am in Hell.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hello

It rained today  
Coming down on our solar  
System,  
Slicking our hair  
Like cherry pomade,

They discovered a  
Planet made entirely  
Of tears  
Where I carved her name;  
It rings like pure  
Glass.

I see her outside the  
Window moving away  
Unopened packages in her  
Arms, a hail storm pattering,  
Distorting newly birthed planets  
Named after her.

Robert Rorabeck



# He-Man

Crime is calling me out now, for some kind of job-  
The graveyard shift of wet street, the lonely moon swaying  
In the niggardly cradle;  
All the students passed out,  
Musicians with sway-backed guitars in laps drooling  
On the dirty stoops of the recent days;  
Me, just cleaning up the linoleum floor of  
The chain restaurant, thinking of her legs and the willows'  
Spriggy depressions; a slice of pain,  
How I might toss her a few lines, spoken under the  
Breath of eager inebriations, jealously daydreaming  
The last peck of darkness before the abruptly crowing dawn,  
Of the bountiful man she is taking home to  
Tease and spoon feed, to yawn and crack eyes in lazy jest:  
To see the signs of chirping day, to douse and  
Sink against his wooden six pack until noon, and then  
To gorge of the greasy feasts of fried lunch;  
The American jungle of her eyes; and her wild legs,  
The types of sports they played in high school;  
Now they just kid around as they walk across the bar,  
Serving drinks and souvenirs to the freshman and the sailors;  
She has the hidden colors of the flag all over her body's sway;  
And its been a decade since I've seen them,  
Or since another woman has met my eyes in maybe meetings,  
And I didn't even care; because I was full of patriotism for her,  
And how I might spend my twilight hours  
Running the courses like a misspent champion, 7 miles  
Around her rented dirge of philistine advertisements;  
Just to get her planted in the back of my tongue, like a wedge  
In the Pharaoh's army, ready to dive into her fleeing seas of red orchid;  
Now all of that is gone, along with the woman I used to sleep with,  
Gone into the Diaspora of obscure Judaica,  
The sweaty flee-markets and untamed men with Spanish tongues,  
Flooding the needled tip of flora bouquets of forgetful Florida;  
She is in with it with someone now, cradle in the lap of rum;  
Cradling in the same lap she has always been in, ready to get done  
And out of there, while I am just done and ready to settle  
Into the services of the obscure; ready to settle in a home built  
Thirty decades ago; As I sit down on the pot and bite by tongue,

Read the sad declarations of her forgetful eyes on the manila stall:  
John Wayne flunked basic training,  
She moved in with him the very next day....

Robert Rorabeck

# Henry David Thoreau Whistles At The Girl In Blue Jeans!

I really want to touch  
The cliché of your golden ransom:  
Oh yeah, hemlock,  
Also other pain killers like-  
Shark's teeth like little good luck charms  
On the wingspan of airplanes-  
Cereal prizes;  
And really want to camouflage in your  
Requiem:  
The forensic panorama of your lips-ticked  
Bite-marks...  
I want to become the one trick pony who  
Catches your eye,  
Who leads you all around, roaming,  
Strutting stiff in your wood-chip stables,  
All blue and silver and twined up nice,  
A pugilist just as handsome as pain on  
Ice-  
Out on the badland roam of thirsty illusion:  
I want to have a wedding with you in  
A funeral parlor,  
I want to roller-skate with your hand in hand  
Like thornless cereus,  
Budding foreplay attracts thirsty hummingbirds -  
I want to lip-sink, hair-lipped to your punk-  
Rock:  
I want to have pets with you, and shower  
With you, and use your shampoo-  
Hot, steaming enterprise!  
And clean you proportionally  
To my love- Rub you raw;  
And I've had a little nip of rum,  
And I'm listening to Joan Jett,  
And sometimes I think about hanging myself  
Looking at myself scarred naked in the backyard  
Sun;  
It is so impossible, the equation of the apex

Of your blue-jeaned stride!  
But the dogs:  
But the dogs love me-  
They howl when I've left;  
I've gone to the city to fix you pretty:  
But it would mean that I'd not try my hand  
At another poem-  
Have another chance to exquisitely fail,  
Not summit another mountain  
To name her after you or  
Fantasize about another nun,  
Or an aunt, my mother doing dog-fights  
And tricks: or I'd put my hand in  
Your pocket and make your climax for  
Loose change  
In an aspen grove:  
Has anyone every told you that he wanted  
You naked in the back of a wild mountain, Erin-  
Oh well, that's all it is, and soon I'll be moving  
Out, and selling fireworks in New Mexico;  
All the little tricks who dissapear beautifully  
Instead of money;  
But I still really want to be Henry David Thoreau  
In your woodsy, throbbing  
Walden!

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Always Absent Tears

Bodies pounding hidden chests where ribs always  
Happen to grow two by two:  
Like sisters and brothers looking in at the red organs  
Of this operations zoo:  
And if you breath too hard, your wishes will mess up the hair  
Of trees,  
And it will fluster princesses and warble knees:  
It will ripple the hidden grotto of hers and crenellate  
The dying sensation  
Of her always absent tears.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Back On Me

Now here is Sabbath school- here is a charm for your  
Body, Alma- here is my spit and whistle,  
And I getting drunk in my littlest of homes, trying to cultivate  
Roses for you,  
While the buses are all daisies: My childhood is all gone,  
And here are your children coming up,  
Just like each one of you: Michael and Heidi, and they have that  
Home where your parents live,  
Where the sunlight is also slipping with the airplanes and the  
Copper heads,  
So far away from the erudite backyards that I once knew,  
And so much more beautiful- the playgrounds are like hot wax,  
And now there is a killer in my house as big as a snuffing bull:  
You left me here Alma, just like you came in before me,  
While I was still working and left the rose I'd given to you:  
Now you are home with your husband and children in another world  
Which happens on the other side of where the airplanes are  
Leaping,  
For I am continuously bothered beneath these flight paths,  
While you are just as tragically beautiful as a fairytale who has turned  
Her back on me.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Backyard's Memory

How sadly the pictures hang from their quiet song,  
And I keep looking at them out of the apartment  
I don't live in anymore;  
I might be there holding her hand, but the graveyard  
Is out of frame,  
And she has let go of my grasp and wedded a man  
I have never met, but he has met her tongue  
And her body laid down at night, which I had met before,  
But those photographs she has kept of us  
Mean the things which are in the coy twitters  
Of her backyard's memory, bricked up inside the  
Mouth of a dismissed tree, with her childhood  
She doesn't play with anymore; in the waning lights  
Out of reach, shredded for a nest of carnivorous bluebirds:  
They look pretty, and we matched,  
And we used to smile at each other and sometimes peck,  
Until the red tide swept away the heirlooms of  
The leased spaces, like a waitress who has left her job  
To flumes of the flooded and encroaching sea; She admits that there was  
Once a beautiful if sparse hemisphere in the cheap stuccos  
Of undergraduate dementation, but I don't ever believe  
She saw the communal pool as I still do, drooling from  
The steps of my worn spine: the haunting estuaries of silent  
Bodies of water unoccupied except for the sway of  
Artificial light, and my eyes like yet hypnotized  
Moths metamorphosed and dancing to the undulating patterns,  
like amorphous leopard seals of celibate drifts,  
Remaining there in the luxury of decades as strangers walk  
Through the shadows, unreadable books in their fleeting grasp.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Blaze

Pleasant thoughts, like a rainbow on the tit of  
An alligator,  
As she lays down with him, and tastes the murder of his  
Smile,  
After they have run so far away together and taken so many  
Names,  
Even after he left her with a child in the great armpits of  
The apathetic human race,  
With death in his entire smile over every last one of the dinner  
Party-  
And there were rodeos, and concerts to attend;  
And on the sanctimonious finger of her taken hand,  
A stone as beautiful as a wild horse that was tamed and taught  
How to speak the Queen's  
English:  
And I saw her in all of this across the canal, as she spoke to  
A genie in a wineglass when I was supposed to be in  
School:  
And she laid on me for awhile her gaze, in between the blue knives  
Of the Bismarcks framing her respectable grotto  
That controlled her blaze.

Robert Rorabeck



# Her Boyfriend's Fireworks

Didn't you see the  
Busses  
Turning around  
Naked upon the grass-  
Entirely in love  
With a girl who  
Was trying her best to  
Be so beautiful-  
But even the enamored  
Heavens gave  
Up like  
Dogs forgetting their masters  
For she had watched her boyfriends  
Light off all of their fireworks  
Before she went off to  
Love someone else.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Breath

Everything is good but broken,  
And when she calls out now there is no fear,  
But challenge,  
Naked in the firmament of graveyards  
Above the hills of the defeated ghosts of Rome,  
She sees all the things which men have seen  
And names them her own,  
And carves them handily with the wind she breathes:  
For centuries she has slipped caves into rocks,  
And petted the back of the ancients seas until they foamed.  
When she comes now she does so rattling  
The window frame, knocking on the doors of drowsing homes.  
Absently, she pollinates the rocky meadows,  
And tussles the backs of mauve foxes, and kisses  
The open lips of the water lilies, giving them pirouettes in the  
Silken canals, gives berth under the wings of moonlit owls,  
And thus cries around the continents,  
Weeping for those things which cannot be born of her,  
The children she can only shape once they are gone,  
Thus removing the chiseled epitaphs of gravestones,  
And shushing mountains back again into the coy seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Brown Father

Starting out of a thought like an unrecognizable sail,  
Like a puff of cloud,  
Or a heart in its cage: and I told you that this love for me  
Was like being in the fairgrounds all of the time,  
And you laughed with your aunt, and your eyes were bright,  
Even though they were dark brown:  
And I think that you still hold an inkling of a love for me,  
Alma, even though my time is short and I will soon leave me  
House and learn how to migrate all the way to Mexico  
Like the last of the contagious butterflies, and there to start  
My own family in between the clefts and caesuras of the  
Rocks and corn:  
A family as bright and ill-equipped as yours, and that I love you,  
While the stoolpigeons weep, and your daughter eats the candy out  
Of your tattooed hand; and when she sees her brown father coming  
Indoors, she gets so happy, and her happiness is yours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Careful Procession

Gloomed ambition sequined in a dress,  
Brought in sunset to the bank of the canal,  
Where the crippled people have been drinking  
And enjoying the insouciant feelings they don't  
Care to delve into:  
They look at her as if she is in solvency,  
Going down to feed the mouth of reptiles, but  
I've known her for the better part of a trifecta  
Of decades, and she has never slid her hands into  
His pouch to feel his cool hearts:  
But he is there all the same, though none approach  
To catch his name, and the darting palavers of his  
Watery dictions, the softy spawning randomness  
Of her hands cupping his throat;  
Perhaps, while we are turned away, and the furthest  
Shadows creep, she drinks of him, and her heart runs  
On all cylinders, but that is a secret thing only a woman  
Must know, for already she has a last name which  
Is neither his, nor known to us, but  
She must go back to it, sitting far into the empty green  
Living room; As she turns, and stretches up the slope,  
There is a dollop of mud on her ankle, and a bouquet  
Of burs in her trail, but she fails to notice,  
And we do not speak to her, for that is beyond our reason,  
Though we have seen her come down beside us  
Unfailingly to peer into the waters unrestive jaunts,  
To that nest where bares the coolness of his throat as  
He awaits her careful procession.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Dry And Ceasing World

Words change until the syllables are taken together  
And understood,  
And I am no longer lost in the beauty of the unutterable woods:  
I have come down to the tarmac to watch the big silver  
Airplanes descend,  
Those who before I thought were imperfect angels  
With heavy wings,  
Like cheerleaders stumbling to the water fountain with leaded  
Eyes  
And in heavy bruises caracoled; and I never thought about  
You while I was in high school, Alma:  
But this is your world, and your lips the homeopathic fountains  
For hummingbirds or my over eager dodos:  
I spent a week's paycheck to buy you a silver rosary with  
The virgin of Guadalupe the day after you made love to me  
For two hours;  
It was like you were a lighthouse laughing as she rode her heavenly  
Lights across the tattered see, smiling in all of her levitating dresses,  
And saving upon the fortunate sailors taken into the cradle  
Of her dry and ceasing world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Favorite Colors

We don't have to have sex:  
We can eat ice-cream underneath the maypole  
Waiting for the weather and  
For airplanes to come around-  
Because daylight will be here tomorrow,  
Even if she throws it all always,  
Or the highway always leads to death  
And the dead brothers  
Who accepted his gifts:  
There they remain, immortalized for the troops  
That march towards the mountains:  
They go beside the preschools  
Obsessed with their primary colors-  
And the little children stop and gaze  
Like oracles-  
And tell the men through the night blooming  
Jasmine  
What limbs they will lose,  
And what permanent gifts they will gain-  
As they laugh into the future,  
And the dogs follow them- for a little while  
There is joy,  
Until their masters are lost through the impenetrable  
Penumbra of mountains,  
Except for those cavalier few, who fall beneath her  
Waterfalls and ruffle her areolas  
Until the geniis come out gasping, naked except for  
Her favorite colors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Final Man

The firefly of sun creams its own shade:  
It does this over the playgrounds, over the old hats of  
Neighborhoods:  
Its dance is on fire; its hemisphere running out of room,  
And still it goes and swims, and turns;  
As she tells me she can never have another husband:  
She will only be single after this brown government should  
Fail:  
But she still shaves and wears miniskirts for me:  
I call her my rainbow, and the butterfly to my soul: and we  
Sell fruit together:  
Like a knight, I eat habanero peppers to prove my love until  
She blushes, or I tickle her feet when she is like  
Cinderella overcome by the counter, cleaning, clean:  
She asks me to stomp cockroaches, my Alma, the queen on  
My soul,  
But I let them leave, like a quixotic knight all flushed out  
Under the windmills while the cats are milking  
And the moon: and, oh the moon;  
And then I follow her down the highway for just as long as  
I can, but I have to finally have to turn down the other tributaries  
Of my bachelor avenues, since, because, alas,  
I am not her final man.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Folkloric Senses

Castrations do not know my shadows—  
My dog sleeps at my feet until I do not know  
Anyone else:  
The racehorses turn around like my father  
Until this is no better news from Christmas—  
And I have learned from all of the  
Estuaries—  
Strangest of cathedrals where no one plays football  
And none of the babies sleep—  
Across from the high school—or across from the  
University where there is an ever busy beanstalk following  
The fairytales up into the clouds—  
As my make-believe wife rises from her bed of clouds,  
And giving me her folkloric senses, pretends to love me  
As best she can.

Robert Rorabeck



# Her Gaze That Beam

We will live in our own property,  
Separated by our bodies, our  
Secret hungers steal into the  
Chicken coup after the magic ends;  
It is so late, but the miner's are still  
Down beneath the earth,  
Burrowing like hungry foxes;  
They do not know that their  
Daughters are getting married right  
Now to red haired men  
Who have deserted the army—  
In celebrations, men take women  
Hand in hand; they reach over  
Fences, they drive across state lines  
To look into the virgin's eyes,  
To take her in their arms across the  
Threshold and stomp on wooden  
Floors high above the workers heads.  
In the ancient hollers, in the moonshine  
Basins cut into the earth,  
Men look for her beyond themselves,  
A wife like a diamond,  
The preciousness brought to the lips,  
Inspected by the eye,  
And once secured, identified,  
Held in their hand, given a name,  
A value, a place to sleep,  
Brought across continents  
And shipped overseas, given whitewashed  
Homes in somber green yards,  
Rose bushes and dishes to wash—  
Then, when the men come home they  
Observe the wealth, their accomplishment:  
A woman in their living room cooking them  
Dinner. The back of a woman's neck  
Shaped like a marble slope;  
Her scent reminds them of places  
They've never been—  
The orange groves of Valencia, Spain,

And the Roman battlements high on the cliffs  
Overlooking the sea,  
Her eyes, the places that they are brought across,  
Caravans of loneliness to the oasis.  
What she can prepare for them and serves  
To them at the dinner table:  
Hope, accomplishment away from the segregated  
Bodies that garment gravity and rust,  
Children, the infant seedlings, the continuation  
Of existence,  
The fertilization of lips  
Reaching over the fence,  
The borders without will—  
Pressing like coal for eons,  
Mined from a marriage bed of principal—  
Her legs the rich veins, the star dust  
That brings men across their long lonely fields,  
Her gaze that beam which disintegrates  
Emptiness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Glens

Across the grass the pigeons spill  
Up and down and down  
Some still—  
Along her legs,  
Around her glens—  
These pretty girls and some pretty  
Friends—  
I know some words—  
I have some scars,  
And the angels want to see—  
I have some boys who play some  
Games as they follow me—  
Up to some stars  
And some heavens,  
Around the seas and multiplications—  
And then this world,  
This place of joy that is right here—  
Another night echoes  
Calling to herself from  
Her cul-de-sacs—  
The joys that cannot be present—  
The day awakens upon the graveyards—  
As upon the hearts that are already gone—  
Up again and yawning,  
Spreading her wings and opening her  
Presents upon a heavens already done  
With its dawns—  
And the lions yawn, as if I've kissed  
Your mouth a thousand times—  
Through the echoes of the witches' minds—  
And in the trailer parks all fast  
Asleep—  
I end the day as the little girls weep—  
In the morning,  
The last shine of the moon—  
She puts on new shoes and she goes to school—  
And I take pride in all of the absences I've  
Had—and your mother's apple pie—  
Even though it was store bought—

Wasn't have bad- yes,  
It wasn't half bad.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Gloriously Immortal Tomb

If I knew some more words, I'd have a mirror  
Hung up in an evergreen by a little girl who steals more  
Things than a horny sparrow:  
Twined by red lace, the mirror of words would bleed  
From the vocabularies of dawn:  
What a beautiful thing to behold it refracting through the  
Thorny cones the very sharp mathematics which when  
Pricking the deader things burns up:  
Like the luscious tinfoil bent around a pencil in some  
Lower level class aroused near the canal and smoked-  
Before that, shining in the right direction, maybe towards  
The penumbras of the sea-level east, those shallowly bustling places  
Where socially competent people perambulate and  
Share expensive drinks, I could send signals figuring their  
Code that I was worth recognition, and turning towards them,  
Blind them instantaneously with such luscious numbers of light  
Inconvenience cry out throughout all the world that I had a  
Dictionary in my high forest that could now conceive the truly  
Meaningful emptied from the tipped chalice of all the national  
Throats: It was but one angelical compound swimming through  
The darkness of the living pond, at first  
An infiniteness of blue sucked dry by the bitterly entwining stars,  
The awful interludes of injustice sacrificed for the enthroned gold,  
And then a mule-gray,  
A female poet with a scarred cheek, two children  
And a fine new oven for baking pies and ancestral recipes  
To which even this mirror is but a muddled reflection  
Going down then, eaten and masticated up in her brilliant light,  
The forest doesn't burn and yet is revealed as a stop-light ghetto,  
Where she is the deadness of a prime number,  
Sweeping steadily like sea-combs atop of polished marble stone,  
A stronger twin my scarred pettiness is nourished into:  
One heart fumbles and dies into its sister,  
And then only the spotless kitchen-beat of her gloriously  
Immortal tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Heavenly Drink

Give me despairing hope  
Going up the highway I should have left  
A decade ago:  
Give me tombs for my shoulders, and  
Coagulant for these wrists:  
Still living on another world of pretty  
Mimosa- and I only can give  
So many names to the trees that shade  
In the night:  
Flapping trees and gilded- trees that flood  
The harems beside the highway  
Or dream of the goldfish getting fat and  
Cantankerous in the wishing wells  
Not too far from here:  
But anywhere, anywhere but here-  
And I have loved her, but she has flown off:  
And I built this coffin for her so like an arc,  
But the prettiest days are over-  
And the parades of ice cubes are melting  
And contaminating her heavenly drink.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# Her High Horse

Scars vanish in  
The spokes of a hypnotic  
Bicycle-  
My eyes have been  
Drinking in the canal-  
Dragon girls in hoop  
Skirts  
Light off fireworks-  
Flirt with  
Rattlesnakes  
And dragons small  
Enough to fit  
Underneath loose stones-  
There is a parade of  
Dare devils in the sky-  
They are never coming down-  
They are flying far enough  
To touch the  
Colorado Rockies-  
Beneath them they are selling  
Baseball games  
And drinking wine to  
Pass the time  
And a girl flirts with a boy  
And another mother comes down  
From her high horse and touches the ground.

Robert Rorabeck



# Her Home

Doggone traveler, take comfort in your unrefundable works,  
These wasted allegories of the mountains and streams which  
Breath and mold from her breath and down from her neck,

For, yes, you will soon be smithereens, like the young and darling  
Aspen leaves curling in the hoary lick of October's cusping sickle,  
Pummeled by the fledgling doe, and by the hypnotizing tracks of  
Men who, such as yourself, travel deeper in trying to  
Coat themselves by her musk,

For it is in that inescapable season, when you come best bloomed,  
Then shimmer like someone not altogether real, sitting on the edge  
Of a bed in a dream, that she materializes and leads you far astray,  
Into the meadows and estuaries you knew to be but couldn't say,

Thus cupping her effluvious trunk, combine her with your stuff  
And she doesn't even know, beauty in a tender suit of amnesias,  
How even then she might fall into another man, distend and offer  
Herself like a hungry meal, believing this is the truest she could be,

But held up to your transitory works, she transcends her body's  
Moods, and the panting infatuations of those eyes, becomes a memory  
Materialized by the sifting dusk through the slender bodies, enters  
Your house unaware and lays bare her shoulders, looking into your  
Eyes, for you to lay fingers upon this actualization, and move each hinge

Until she can know for sure her home.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Hungering Dish

I have a book of all of your shoulders—  
And you do not remember who I am—But  
Won't the dolphins surrender to the sun—  
Evaporations of the merry-go-round of  
Your mothering shoulders—  
Until all of the day is cradled in the night of  
Those mountains,  
And the magnificent spins—a world of spiders in  
Their equinox—and other things I do not  
Wish to comprehend—I can hear a muse putting  
Her fingers in the kiln to  
Retrieve her children—they are already something  
I haven't knocked—  
And the sun blooms in its kaleidoscope of knuckles,  
Another easy if insouciant wish—  
They day is a pinwheel of airplanes and arrowheads—  
Another soldier goes dying in the amusing waves  
Of her hungering dish-

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Inconsiderate Moonlight

Another busied soldier waits upon the tarmac  
Of a sepulcher—  
This is how it's been forever since we've been selling  
Christmas trees—  
In the venomous thoughts of my soul, reticulated  
To the labyrinth—and to a sea of unconsummated  
Tears—  
Never remembering so many words—why the soldiers  
Are still fighting,  
And the memories resurrect themselves after midnight:  
When the damage is already being done,  
And the televisions of daylight are over with—  
And the dogs are spinning around underneath the moons  
Chasing their own shadows  
Stolen in flight—I remember that once upon a time  
In a rainstorm you came to my house,  
And fluttered there beneath my evangelical make-believe:  
Moth in a consummation of a wedding in the  
Daylight—kissing both of my wrists like the repetitions in  
The meters of plagiarists—as another crowd surrenders  
Its hearts into the sunlight, and agrees to come up  
And up—to finally see her, my most beautiful of  
Muses—as, yes, she dresses in the great opulence of  
Her inconsiderate moonlight.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Incontinent Love

I can hear the airplanes calling like grandmother from  
Her graveyard,  
As if tomorrow were Easter and she was getting ready to jump  
Up in the middle of paper snowflakes and congratulate  
Me now that I have a house;  
But I wonder what she would say if she knew I was dreaming  
About a working girl as rich as crepuscule,  
Like a mermaid kept like a bobble in the backyard swimming pool,  
Coming up after school with lips like roses over spilling  
And capsizing the drunken yachts of my britches:  
Now I don't see her anymore, and I can't conjure her up with  
Any of my spirits: I think that I will love again, because that is what  
I have been doing all of this for,  
And I want all of my own children. Then at night in one of my two  
Bedrooms I will have her, and she will say my name and mean me,  
And I will give her the token for our offspring in the very humid  
Banishment where we forget everything else  
And he grows: he grows inside of her, the spitting image of myself,  
The rich folklore of a youth climbing up her umbilical beanstalk;  
And I will look through the transom of her black market eyes  
And really wish I had something more, something priceless to trade  
Her for this and all of her incontinent love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Inevitable Afternoon

You keep on giving us cadavers that seem  
To tell the truth,  
But there is not a goldfish on my windowsill:  
And I no longer think of you  
So dreamily a few hours away—  
The playgrounds we enjoyed have rusted or  
Been removed:  
It was just a game we played next to the sea  
While other, truer bicycles made love—  
Stolen bicycles in the grottos of cave-bears  
Beneath the sea—  
Bicycles held in the Pieta of our strikingly  
Beautiful aunts—  
And bicycles still perched upon store shelves  
Waiting to go home to the  
Amphibian nests that surround suburbia,  
To bejewel a crocodile's clutch,  
Or to feel the cloy farts of an unfaithful  
Housewife as she peddles away  
After another mailman  
Down some lane of her inevitable afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Insouciant Victory

Nomenclature of my lips and  
Senses dressing the habitat of my despair-  
The failure of such pretty atmospheres  
To linger,  
As the cars drive away- the housewives collapsing  
Like dry wood and pantyhose  
Where the weeds are tangled,  
Where the latchkeys play cards and where the  
Thorny citrus hangs so low as to be kissed at  
By rattlesnakes: this is her valentines,  
Corrupted by truancy and jealous smoke  
Signals- this is another one of those impotent  
Flairs remembering my childhood  
Spent in the pornographies of the damp woods  
Across the seashells in the skin of the little road;  
And this is how I linger for her, felt up  
Like wet kisses on bloodstained paper,  
As she inches nearer another highway of massacre:  
There she goes lightened upon by the perfumes  
Of her insouciant victory- the fairies make  
Pavilions out of her shoulders,  
And they gossip to her greedily, even as she  
Carries away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Knees' Opal Bowl

Blind men are shushing in the mount,  
The trodden hill covered with spectators  
For another event:  
The insects of the summer's frenzy:  
With spy glasses watch the gun-metal bulls  
Stampede ovals and advertise  
With their painted gills:  
"I've seen these things, " I say to her,  
Over my wounded shoulder and down a ways,  
But it is not clear if she's understood me:  
The woman all the young stallions are  
Smoking with the penumbra half concealed  
In boreal smiles:  
Her unfiltered legs crisscross slightly  
Like bent, yet perfectly deadly scissors:  
Her eyes in a disinfected trance,  
Watch the moving billboards for a sign,  
An aura of a bright clue, a marriage vow:  
"I want to ask you to make love, " I tell her,  
But the sport is roaring like a thunderstorm,  
Though sun-dogs are leaping a concentricity  
Around their laughing king,  
A blue invades the spaceless land,  
An infinity of gentle contradictions,  
The working class failures who worship half-hazardly;  
They would break her, if she wasn't careful,  
Though already there is a someone else's  
Hand on her knees' opal bowl.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Knight Of Knights

It is cold over the highways and over the  
Race horses,  
And the just born rivers coagulate in the clods:  
Entire trailer parks are  
Kidnapped by tornados- and the words don't get  
Any richer than this-  
A lonely art, a roofless place beside the canal,  
Between the sea and the gods in the sky-  
Runaway horses stop to eat the apples rolling down  
The bank-  
Soft shelled tortoises remaining there all day,  
Even before and after school-  
Her children get home to wonder- and I remain  
Outside of her nude kitchen in the clothing of  
The sun,  
As she weeps and drinks from wishful glasses  
Waiting for the day  
That her knight of knights will finally come.

Robert Rorabeck



# Her Lips Fly Away

Little ships blossom  
In blown glass spheres.

Her lips fly away,  
Across the green holes where  
The river sings.

Fragrant dreams bud  
In cabbage green cabinets.

Her lips fly away,  
Where a young soldier sleeps  
Suffocated on a tomb of flowers.

Flooding pools dapple the  
Blue lips of breathless mountains.

Her lips fly away,  
Between the hummingbirds  
Darting like thieves siphoning  
Honey into their weightless tanks.

Veteran fingers uncork  
The eager casks of fermented barely.

Her lips fly away,  
To his lips positioned above hers  
The wet entrails of hunters coming down  
On her lips.

Her lips fly away far  
From mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Little Tail

Days are coming in and looking too  
Like sweet young daughters:  
I see her eyes, my eyes run down the  
Alluring cataracts of her thighs  
Too- and they are just beginning,  
And her eyes are caracoled by sweet heliotrope  
Like forbidden plums;  
And her hair is blonde and winsome as if  
For a almost boy,  
While her grandmother is plump and harmless-  
So I pick her out a tree, because it is all I  
Can do to her,  
And the clouds and helicopters come through  
The sky,  
Seeming to circle around her things,  
And they are all wondering why, if they are wondering,  
All that we would like to do with her.  
And we help her to her car, like a honey bee on  
A crutch,  
And she buds right there- she smells like yet to  
Ripen lunch,  
And she is driven away like a heroin in an inconspicuous  
Fairytale,  
Like an almost blue swan before her  
Adolescent storm-  
Wondering how it will be more possible  
To be more beautiful still; but she will,  
and it hurts too much to watch her leave,  
Wagging wagging her little tail.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Little Yellow Birdcage

Alma tried to give me back the keys to my house:  
I told her I would kill myself,  
And then I didn't kill myself, and I planted royal palms today with  
Her uncle, Romero;  
And when the day was over I showed Romero my house,  
And he showed me his two homes, and we tried to figure out which of  
Our possession was the bigger haul;  
But he was the one whose sister in law cooked us dinner,  
But I wanted Alma anyways: I have two fruit trees growing in my  
Backyard, but I don't remember what either of them are:  
I am not good at growing or cooking,  
But now I can walk to the sea in less than five minutes:  
I can spit right into the backyards of palm beach and be home in  
Time to turn off my lights;  
And Alma thought that my house was beautiful: Alma who was birthed in  
A little pueblo in Guerrero Mexico, who is a legal citizen of  
America,  
Who lives with her mother and father and her two children  
And her man right off of Cherry Rd two houses down from the little  
Park for the bambinos;  
Yes, I know where she lives: I have spoken to her in my sleep even  
While the tomcats prowled and the fishermen wept,  
And now I must be going home: home to my little home which may or  
May not be better than Romero's, only that I paid for my in cash;  
And maybe I can't remember what two types of fruit trees are growing  
In my backyard,  
But it is of little importance, as long as Alma comes home to her  
Little yellow birdcage I've made for her and dances, and sings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Lover's Shore

Outside—the werewolves  
Walked blindly  
Up to the roses—  
Not a one of them could see  
What it was  
The virgin was holding,  
But the emptied promises  
In her bouquets of  
Amputations—  
Old muses who'd lost their  
Heads to other men—  
The stewardesses who'd  
Looked away at just  
The right moment—  
As the white ships embarked upon epiphany—  
The silver letters loosed  
The other way—  
And I got my reprieve for  
Another day—  
In a lifetime lead between the ocean  
And her lover's shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Midnight's Speciality

Dysfunctional knights,  
Not used to being out of doors, taking lunch with  
The frogs:  
This is just the place, the wishing well backed up against  
The sea—  
The freight trains running home to get out of the  
Rain, the new born children reclining towards their  
Mothers' breasts,  
The same old protuberances winding down—  
And only just one or two children yet out of place—  
Soon the entire show will stop—  
Petrified by the kaleidoscopic lights of the midway,  
And someone brighter than all of this place  
Will show her face,  
And the angels will come running home  
As the night blooming jasmine closes her buds,  
Perfumed into the boudoirs of her midnight's speciality.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her More Prestigious Gentleman

For just a little longer, pain,  
To get what you want to, perhaps-  
A year or two more with your dogs,  
Your parents and their disapproving scowls.  
Who would have believed their son would turn  
Out an antisocial hippie with a thing for  
Cherry Pop-Tarts:  
And the days, and the days, and the days flip over  
Like picture books for the pug nosed kids tucked into  
Bed up to their chins in claret sunsets, and saccharine sheets:  
Who would have believed, that it would go like this:  
You and your dogs celibate- might as well be  
Neutered- A good man, healthy canines, and the stars,  
Most of whom you don't know- a little uneasy  
Under the mirror, the way things always were-  
How they began to make fun of you at parties,  
Because you got too drunk and passed out and drooled,  
And vomited, and how they thought about calling the paramedics,  
Because they thought you had alcohol poisoning,  
But you only leapt up, pissed on them, and ran out  
Through the cloistered hibiscus, leaping on the back  
Of an alligator in the canal, and spurred it to swim away,  
To the secret parks where the clouds overshadowed the moon,  
And the obscure footprints in the penumbra on the grass from all  
The soccer stars, the whined housewives, and the libidos  
Of silk- The things you are supposed to say while sharing  
Dinner, the way most of the thoughts drift towards sex,  
And the jumpy eyes falling upon the aspects they find pleasing,  
And then leaping away-  
Surely tonight, you are drunk, and those nights back then you  
Were certainly an outcast, even if you were the only one to escape  
From the cops in Wellington- Now, all those fools are becoming  
Something, building up reputations, producing television,  
Stifling farts, great adjectives, but in your singular weathers  
You will survive until you have no more teeth,  
And by then you will be at home on your humid island,  
Where there is only one serial killer, though you have nothing to  
Fear, for the sky is filled with rapture, and she has long since  
Gone and married her more prestigious gentleman.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her One And Only

Places where I sleep are  
In you sleeping  
Like children along a long highway  
Resting their heads  
Where their mothers should have  
Been,  
While they are taken across the road  
Kill and the crocodiles  
Who are always pretending to cry  
As they get ready to have lunch- and they  
Are spent but downsized,  
Like rockets sleeping in cornfields  
Spilled across baseball diamonds:  
As you pass across the girl you were once  
Sure that she loved  
Sleeping like a pregnant rattlesnake  
In a disconcerting trailer in the sated  
Parks with her one and only husband.

Robert Rorabeck



# Her Paper Boat

A muse—I mean a  
Poisonous butterfly, like a  
Pick pocket who  
Purloined my heart  
That now lies wet and  
Heavy  
Enfolded in the butcher's  
Papers  
That makes up her paper boat.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Pearly And October Glades

The rum was exquisite as a virgin: and girls from Spain light out  
On the bicycles and  
Roller-skates and they have no curfew and they don't worry about  
Making it back to the boat;  
They lick their lips and pine for the taste of new oil,  
And upon their keystones I bend my foils, as I wish for them running  
Back home like pregnant trout unwilling to leave behind their  
Gold;  
And if you listen outside, you can hear all the armies marching,  
But I am not afraid: Her birthstone is opal, and it was from this stone  
That everything upon this earth was made.  
So like a gardener, I step outdoors, and attend to her ever present gardens,  
Unobtrusive, and celebrate my happy birthdays in the opulence of  
Her pearly and October glades.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Playgrounds That She Cannot Possibly Remember

Spells kiss wildflowers until the fall: and then they  
Kiss the shoulders and breasts of stones:  
And the tigers fly over the abutments and through the keyholes  
Where the cerulean tribes no longer mean to say  
Their things:  
And the sky over your village is crenulated by lightning when it  
Is in the right place;  
As this is the exact point from which the entire sorority of rivers  
Fall,  
Their tears cooking in the feral aqueducts until they fall down and  
Palaver quietly in the deep canals  
Beside the wayward highways- as if it was their church,  
Until they run on down to your house that would be perfect  
Save for its crooked mailboxes:  
And they try to make a lake for you, an estuary as well for your  
Daughter to find whatever metamorphosis,  
The sky looking down the uncountable steps like a proud mother  
As her child runs skipping through the forest,  
Kissing every blade and fish, all the daylight in the world trying to  
Strike words upon her playgrounds that she cannot possibly remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Princes

Erections of school yard monuments.  
I read to love, but who was Shakespeare anyways,  
But a conspiracy;  
And I am the child of a farmer, and a basket maker;  
All around me the city divides like the gears  
Of a clock, and  
Dances,  
And moves the skeletons underneath her gowns like  
Steely fish,  
Like gears of a clock; and in the park they are out of  
All the roses I once wanted to  
Prove my virulence of affliction,  
And the paper snowflakes move like stone-hearted  
Mailmen:  
And what is that I am doing but trying to become a popular  
Mode of transportation,  
For her heart, for her steaming rooms:  
For her bodies glory, the newest and brightest of all heirlooms:  
And she is going up to the trains and blowing kisses  
For rides,  
But how many boys can take her for their brides:  
The polygamy of her sports makes even the rains weary-  
I wanted to love her in the rock gardens where all my childhood  
Fairies were pinned like stalwart religions,  
Like badges and stars on a general, but instead I wept for her alone  
On the corner of her garments in the depressing patios  
Where the cars glowed and the toads bit their tongues  
Never even pretending their could be her princes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Reign

Bound under a cliff of worry alongside a  
Coast that bled truth,  
Like two turtledoves in a blue rookery:  
We made love and supplanted our flesh, and pressed our  
Sweet curses like love letters to lips.  
And it was all because I knew sorcery, and crawled  
Up on her roof and sang to her while  
She and her children slept:  
And I wept, and fell down through the surf for her,  
Like a hero diminishing,  
Forgetting his table manners and words, until the sky fell away  
And fainted,  
And she knew no more, but came for me hunting through my  
Open door,  
And we made love while the waves crashed and the workmen  
Repeated their evermore,  
And the hapless housewives leapt with one another in and out  
Of each curious door;  
But we made love, and the sky did not complain;  
And when she left I prayed my thanks to the Virgin Mary:  
I god blessed her rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Roofless Caves

Wayward bodies of men somnambulate stealing  
The tired, black-lipped kisses of housewives in parks,  
So far away from their trailer hoods of dreams,  
Like something of a decrepit wish the sea has washed to someone  
Even more anonymous and unreal;  
And I guessed that I wasn't her savior anyways,  
Because I am shadier than that darkening neighborhood because  
I never bathe;  
And the satellites overhead have been there since Christmas,  
Running around and ululating like videogames;  
So underneath the garlands of power lines, she and her sisters live  
And breathe, and like the waves they come again and go away,  
Causing a fright of the surreal, petting animals with their  
Caesuras, asking us to shave: I wished that she would come again  
Someday, stepping barefoot through the threshold of my  
Yellow grave I am just opening for her like the opened books  
Of a butterfly who is hoping for time to save him until  
He can reach the sweet nectars growing as bright as nenuphars from  
Her roofless caves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Sculptures Of The Shore

With the sun drifting towards my sisters  
And the cars parking,  
The heads of mammals laying down—  
Even the truck stops sleeping,  
I search through the echinopsis for  
The bedrooms of a feral muse—  
I raise my phallus like a bottle rocket—  
I am skipping school at midnight—  
The shadows peel from the playground  
Underneath whatever moon it is  
Like cheerleaders leaping besides the bleachers—  
Soon they will know what it is to make  
Love forever,  
The same way that the ocean knows her sculptures  
Of the shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Shadow-Skinned Heart

Bodies pressed in their rented engagements;  
And over-used bodies scrimshawed with tattoos, in her beautiful  
Room like a bedroom Michelle made love in so many times  
Before her high school dried up and blew away,  
And her neighborhood eventually lost its gentrifications:  
The cars changed hands, and their keys:  
And new eyes met their matches conveniently located nearby the  
Supermarkets, and the airport,  
Where the girls still live too working the graveyard shifts on their  
Backs,  
Trying out their favorite positions and asking me to fill in their time  
So far beneath where the commuters are skipping like stones  
Never once thinking to hold their breaths for good luck;  
And they will soon make it home and sleep like infantile gods of  
Love draped in the effervescent ivy;  
And the sea will moan for them, weeping every inch up and down the  
Coast,  
Not wishing to believe that she is already forgotten, but knowing  
In the whipping grottos of her shadow-skinned heart that it must be so.

Robert Rorabeck



# Her Streams So Rich And Brown

Poisonous beauty affixed to a  
Blushing stem:  
She barely weighs a hundred pounds  
And I happened upon her at  
Wal-mart today;  
And I promised to buy her a bicycle, while  
Looking into the  
Brown phoenix of the rebirthing laughter  
Of her eyes:  
But she wouldn't let me hold her hand,  
Because her mother was in the store:  
There were so many people there, anyways-  
What a fabulous microcosm of this  
New jungle,  
But we found each other anyways:  
And when I got home, I was too tired to ride  
My bicycle, but she called me again  
And I pleased myself to the sound of her  
Cloy voice  
While the tropic storms past like sick gardens  
Beneath my feet,  
And then I drank more liquor and tried not  
To remember the opulent distance of our  
Bodies standing side beside:  
Her streams so rich and brown, and joyously  
Daring me to look away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Sweet And Auburn Teams

Cooling children cooling on the sills of  
Church:  
The perfectly scraped pews where Satan is  
Extinguished,  
The hymns of America, and I know  
There is a garden with a flaming sword and a high school  
Not so far away  
Where pretty girls still practice their redeeming sports  
To this day;  
And the city around that perfected jewel sparks just  
Like the sea;  
And I can see her turning in her new car,  
Turning and turning:  
Her nose is pierced and her eyes are perfect, like Siamese sailors  
Always in perfect orbit on the habitual seas and  
In no need of home or shelter,  
She is so brave, she is always combing;  
She is the chaste pornography of this new century:  
She is a perfectly bosomed astronaut enjoy the choicest orbit  
Low in the gravity of the swings,  
And her eyes are closed as the leaves are falling:  
They are brushing her like so many caresses of all the boys  
Who wish to join her sweet and auburn teams.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Sweet And Multiplying

The treats are almost done,  
The little girl's fingers sticky with salt and she is  
Almost home:  
Her eyes satisfied by what her fingers have given to  
The taste of her mind;  
Her basket is full, and her leg is rich,  
Her abdomen lathered by tallow and sweat;  
Behind her many a ditch that she leaped to reach this  
Final pitch;  
But where is the wolf, and where is the man:  
Where is the savior with his ax in hand;  
I am not telling all of her secrets, the many that I don't  
Know;  
But her belly is as fat as a watermelon wreathed in its  
Vine;  
And she has been as busy as a day laborer at picking time:  
Inside the basket the head of a wolf with  
A purple-fine tongue,  
And cradled on her back the ax of the lover she borrowed  
And swung;  
And they made love not far from the path nearer her young  
Mother who has yet to hear her daughter's song of victory sung;  
But she will have by morning,  
As through the valley rings the joys of her sweet and multiplying  
Young.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Sweet And Sundry Land

Tomorrow is Diana's birthday:  
And she made the woods silken, and she made the  
Grottos good,  
And even while she was doing this she banished the  
Old gods to their hidden neighborhoods;  
And she trash talked  
And gave politicians everything they really wanted,  
Walking off the path  
And making love to the wolf, while I cried alone in  
The valley she had already attended,  
Alone in the aloe of dying scuppernongs all underneath  
The echinus in the armpits of aspens:  
I sang to the rivers that ran after her, they also crying  
For what they had to loose,  
And the fireflies got all funny and so did the canoes:  
All the trappers in the prairie,  
All the undertakers in the land, gathered together in  
A horny procession and followed after her birthday party  
Where she was blowing wishes somewhere  
Even further across her sweet and sundry land.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Tearless Eyes

If I loved the svelte aphorisms and I drink more  
Liquor then who will save me now  
While Alma is at her own house making love and  
Caring for her children.  
While all of the rabbits I told her I would save have already  
Disappeared,  
And the birds have eaten their seeds but they still are hungry:  
My house has termites,  
And I am a poet;  
And I breathed inside Alma's car today, but otherwise  
Who has the will to save me  
Or light up my Christmas tree while the words  
Are going down to the bottom to sing into the abyss of joy:  
Like the incest of a hero with his forgotten bride,  
His sister of the cataracts with the blood of  
Dragons,  
As they are tossed over like coins in a wishing well  
For tourists,  
While Sharon is in Colorado just trying to survive,  
While Alma is right here, in a house she loves more than me,  
And the balloons are drowning in the sky,  
While the butterflies and mariposas fall to earth like gasless  
Airplanes and dragonflies  
Who touch the corners of my yard where they drown  
Like diamonds in the peripheral visions of  
Her tearless eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Three Untimely Swings

It feels to me that I am here,  
In a candelabrum, in a sugar bowl- swimming around,  
Looking out at the distortions of the dinner  
Guests swimming like flies all around the caesuras of death  
Which has them surrounded and out manned:  
But for awhile they glow like goldfish in the midway of the greatest  
State in all of America:  
They glow like the fulcrum of Halloween, and they sing outside  
Of the schoolyards and into churches,  
Passing around:  
Until they spill their own ways into monuments and dog tracks,  
Until their particular unction takes hold  
And they become fully developed the same way as metamorphosis  
Or evaporation,  
And the fingerprints you left on them like a lover's evidence,  
Disappear, or linger: and it is their shoulders that disappear  
With their last names or whatever; while another  
Thing even more lovelier than them gets up to  
Bat at the plate of your breast work to take her three untimely  
Swings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Tottering World

Up into the opposites dawning their smatterings  
Of mailboxes:  
The lawns seemingly pressed underneath the  
Christmas trees,  
Entombing jubilantly the long, wide families:  
Upstairs and downstairs,  
Sleeping with their kites, breaths all filled with unreal  
Metamorphosis,  
The joys of tinderboxes, and the first steps of little girls  
Who break outside and pinwheel to the hiccupping  
Ablutions of the speed boat lake,  
And down to there the foxes with coy snouts come to drink  
Beside knees:  
He lets her pet him, while his eyes quiver like the  
Fata morganas of red saddles; and she cannot speak,  
But he never says a word,  
Preferring to let her minimalist actions, and those of  
Her tottering world, express his joys,  
His eyes aflame as his tongue is panting.

Robert Rorabeck

## Her Twin Sisters On My Page

I receive a copy of my first book,  
And lay back the cover as if I would a woman:  
A good treat, five days before Halloween.  
Scarred, but who cares, as now I can hold up  
My head while walking down the echoing hallways  
Of high school.  
Who else will follow me, as I write down this  
Draft on a paperback copy of Mark Twain's  
Huckleberry Finn:  
Now I can settle down to lunch atop a better poet's  
Gravestone, pretend that I understand the multiplicities  
Of insects riling over my joints as song birds over  
The romance of sea;  
Or that I was almost held back for failing to learn  
Algebra, or that I have been scolded many times by  
Librarians for my tardiness a insouciance,  
A favorite word of mine. Now I am a geode displayed for real,  
Cracked open at the racetrack by the many hooves of  
The leggy runners: and the winners cry, and the loser  
Shamble away, but in time their fortunes of poverty  
Will see reversals, as I have seen mine; but a little  
Thing, these few words of mine, toy soldiers who  
Deny the mirrors, but what better foreplay than my book  
Laid down on this bed beside me, so will not she come  
Like a curious bee to my flowers, to my cage, for  
I have done good work for her, so now she should lay  
Down beside me, and her twin sisters on my page.

Robert Rorabeck



# Her Unbuttoned Wasteland

Remember nothing,  
And that is good....

Go after every new day like  
A fisherman on a swift skiff;  
Heedless with the nets,  
Of the bad silver hungry beneath the skim....

Touch her hand across the earth,  
Hold it if she cant feel you,  
Hold it like you would a knife  
To defend yourself....

Kiss the harsh mugger on the throat,  
Like an adder until he is blind  
And living in the boroughs of warm trains....  
And singing of his cartoon mother.

Never look into the mirror  
Without a friend, but call it  
The carnival rag,  
The broken toilet,  
Or the concavity of the ruby rats;

But let the lights meet your face  
Ignorant of their signals,  
For each one is a harmless animal  
Blossoming in the windy street;  
Take them up to your room  
And watch them swim around the whipping fan....

Dust off her legs and admire the opal flume;  
Let them kick like restless alley cats eager for their fences,  
Her calves like muscular salmon,  
Until their jasmine and vanilla rub off on you  
Her first and last names,  
The accents of her explorations and trade routes;

Then take her there as a child greets a complete stranger;

Innocence and folly graffitied like a salted wound  
Explored by nocturnal hunger and his accoutrements,  
As your fingers, like a thorax,  
Web effluvious touch against her unbuttoned wasteland....

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Unnatural Face

Making busied skeletons that do  
Not dream to have fun—  
Even though they do  
Not have throats, drinking rum and  
Rum:  
And unicorns do not exist,  
But exist in the unbusied racetracks  
Of the sea:  
Coming back again and again tomorrow—  
Will they remember me—  
Folded out  
Where they cannot be observed—  
The dead that are not really dead—  
The butterfly on the crown  
Of a narcoleptic king in the beautiful grass of  
A cemetery—  
Laying and sunning his un busied bones—  
The mountains underneath the narrowest shade  
Of the telephone poles—  
The muses coming home for tomorrow—  
Tasting their lips,  
Figuring out what they can borrow: world of grapevines  
Amidst the zoetropes foxes:  
Prettiest of the youngest girls in their most beautiful  
Boxes:  
Someday I don't wonder that they will be wedded to kings:  
As the mountains tumble—  
As the heavens stream—of a yellowing beauty  
Alighted with her fire—  
She kissed her knight and her children—as the beautiful  
Day puts out her unnatural fire.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Unopening Door

Beautiful words stricken like matches given  
Over to the weddings of a graveyards:  
That is how far a field we have flown, and how little we  
Matter:  
The hollow bones skip the classes in the sky, but  
Even they come down in time,  
Like wishes in a bothersome well- downed like pennies  
In her eyes- like firetrucks saying their good- good byes-  
Never more hoping that we could  
Get ourselves to her in time- a harvest of barren shoulders,  
She avoids the ladders of forget-me-nots we have placed  
Underneath her high strung boudoir,  
As the waves of a forgotten memory lap softly,  
Caressing at her unopening door

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Very Mother's Heredity

Balsam graves of trapped  
Song birds  
Beautiful lunches over  
Filigreed sunsets in  
Unenchanted mountains-  
Housewives with nothing  
On but spangled slavery,  
The bare minimal  
Architecture of their  
Very mother's heredity;  
She that I love doesn't even  
Care for my beasts,  
She just serves drinks and  
Blows boys away with her  
Brown gaze-  
The auburn broadside of  
Her very mother's heredity.

Robert Rorabeck

# Her Wonderfully One Thing Of Become

All we have known down here has been young  
While I have been busy at growing my lottery of fairytales  
Even though they are not all right here;  
And this is how it happens after the shower of fireworks  
Of a poem:  
This is how it happens that all of the drawling jaws of  
Lawyers and their hangman are salivating before their apartments  
And better parts for the Faberge parts of their  
Derelicts and space machines;  
And I am going where the sun keeps shining bit that is just  
Because my mother isn't even here anymore while my throat  
Keeps starving,  
While the pantheons of bedrooms keep getting really shiny and really  
Pretty;  
And all what else: I am new here in town and I am looking for the  
Statue of Liberty;  
And I think that you ought to be ashamed of yourself while you  
Ought to be ashamed of yourself.  
While the waves crash anyways- and anyways they come full of the  
Mouthfuls of their pretty colors coming up and caracoling and  
Thinking of all of their pretty colors while all of the pretty  
Mariposas are coloring if they are lucky enough to travel down the  
Freshly blown avenues who think, or who are thinking of  
Cooling,  
In streams of by streams of everyone;  
As if all of us from high school had become a confection of a constellation;  
And as of yet I was still shapely and svelte so as to become  
The only one thing she had yet a vested interested in; as if I had become  
The only one thing of her own and only one thing that was so wonderful  
As to become her wonderfully one thing of become.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heralded By Zeus's Lightning

Heavens budded as roses to which the foxes  
Are already leaping:  
It is an easy thing to do already  
While doorbell rings,  
While the tortoises finally start out upon their  
Race:  
Whist I've been so long at touching myself  
Underneath the misbelieving heavens,  
And too soon it will be  
Another Halloween,  
And the skeletons will be altogether dancing:  
And they will be handing out the sweets  
Of vanished daylight underneath another  
Banner of defeated heavens,  
Because this is just the memory of the things that  
All of humanity has already forgotten to do:  
As I reached out to touch the last  
Nuptials of whatever goddesses remained  
In the nocturne of my bedroom  
After all of the cartoons had turned out  
And this just turned out to be another line strung out  
Around a forest where my aunts made love  
To foxes: and this was just the joy repeated  
Underneath the rainstorms as the last of the latchkey  
Children marched on home in mockery of the anthills  
Underneath the paper trees and plastic army men  
That, heralded by Zeus's lightning,  
Could hardly contain themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Here

Here, these are filthy things  
In unnecessary lines.  
I try to express myself to the firmaments  
But I come down halfway  
Like a pop-rocket spent  
In some vacant lot in Kansas.  
I reached to grasp you from the ledge,  
But you leapt anyway into the strong man's  
Arms. I guess the fall wasn't as dangerous  
As I had thought,  
But you moved away too soon  
From you childhood home  
And now your memories sit around like  
Squatters on that vacant lot, wondering  
If they should be forgotten so  
That they can go down to the swings  
In the high Michigan park  
Where the ghosts of my love hangout  
Like juvenile delinquents  
Flicking hot ash from their lips  
As they take elliptical swipes at  
Being angels, as the chained wings take  
Them....  
Neither of us have to go to school anymore,  
But I want to sit in the class and stare at  
Your eyes, even if they never turn  
This way again....  
Even if I never learn anything more  
Than a few lines, like names pissed in the dark.  
I'll always have a bushel full of fireworks  
To shoot at the gods,  
So if you ever decide to come around  
That will be something we can do....

Robert Rorabeck



## Here I Will Be

Soon the night will be crowing gold,  
And the oilmen will have their flume,  
And I can leave them and saddle up  
The leather tack,  
And volute out amidst the coalslicked fields  
Where the cranes rise their antediluvian stilts,  
Their sugar train phallus' peckering the ground  
Where the cactus were once purple  
But now drip like the inside of souls  
Of men, the sharp nards and urchins they  
Grow into out here,  
But I will leave them out across the salty  
Plate skipping sunlight around the skulls of  
Dimmed amphibians, in this godforsaken sea,  
And go to a place of sparkling womb with  
Veins that can feed me, the indented areola  
Of her milk round hills, where the ants are  
Red and crawl like pets over my tools,  
And there strike her with my work, sharp metal  
My saliva peeling the pregnant topaz,  
You can leave me here, where I have found  
Gainful employment hooded outside the unions of  
Man, and baptize naked down in the curling tassels  
Of her throat of leaping salmon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heredity Of Nurseries

I will think of you until the  
Day I die,  
And not one thing but the kind ocean  
Eulogizes my death-  
And cormorants lace the unbroken sky;  
And yellow buses keep returning-  
And you are buried with  
Your fine husband-  
Buried with your nose in  
The crèche of his armpit:  
Oh lucky man;  
And right now  
Somewhere in Texas,  
Horribly disfigured-  
I am in ancient love;  
But you can be sure underneath the  
Highest peaks of your cumulous sky,  
I will think of you until  
The day I die.

Robert Rorabeck

## Heroes Without Any Joy

This is the world of the fjord and I am not  
Your hero—your ancestors have been beaten down—  
Whatever rose there is, is destroyed unto the carpet  
Of the vagabonds—the future of the spacecraft is  
There's, and the space of their wishing wells is null and void—  
And I suppose that you loved me once upon a time  
To the silence of the pecking song birds:  
But while I dozed in the student parking lot, you were  
Making love upon love, studying yourselves in mirrors,  
And learning how to awaken later and later until  
You perhaps didn't have to awaken at all—  
And with your eyes closed could enjoy all of those  
Great dragons who pretended to prey upon  
My world that was so chalk full of heroes without any joy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Heron

I love the way the sun  
Shines on your shoulders  
Like off the wings of an aeroplane

When you stand there on  
The side of the road like a river  
Always moving,  
Though you are the calm heron  
Unperplexed, waiting,  
Noticing reality  
In the midday tide acquiescing  
To your eyes,

The shade and the light  
Like passing freckles  
Hurdling torpidly  
Across your wrist watch

A still-life with subtly violent  
Changes,  
In the palm-grove's heat  
You chew your gum  
And wait for the bus.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hi, How Are You?

They should bury me  
Right now,  
While my heart still  
Beats with your love,  
Before that goes away  
To die  
Like everything else.

Just kick the dirt over  
The daisy with the toe of  
Your boot,  
Hide it from the sun  
While it is still beautiful  
This spring

For this thought of you  
Is the best thing I  
Have ever owned,  
And I want to rest  
With you blooming inside me,  
Displaying to me seasons of fragile life,  
For eternity.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hidden Glass

Customers are empirical and their  
Holidays,  
Search for that special sort of perfection to  
Take home to abuse to throw away;  
They cannot be denied,  
And there is no stopping them,  
But with your vision I light the ambergris  
Floating in my head:  
This is a glass behind my eyes, this is  
A chalice: I am its knights errand stranding right  
Here looking out at the blaze;  
And the weathers will come and go,  
And the tourists will pick up what they need.  
Even if they saw you they wouldn't know how  
Beautiful you are,  
A beauty that echoes like the soft light of  
A cave cherishing its crepuscule for as long as it  
Could,  
Wishing that it too had a mailbox to feel your  
Hand,  
And your child is out in the park learning to stand,  
And I am still right here,  
My eyes closed enjoying the indestructible glow  
I have blushing in a hidden glass.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hieroglyphics Of Our Nostalgias

As a child, I dreamed of produce:  
Radishes and cabbages blooming prodigiously,  
And rabbits enjoying just  
As richly as a young boy might pornography:

It was my parents' business,  
The selling of the growing of things, the coming up of the world,  
And it took us to the very ends of the earth:  
Millions of dollars of ears of corn,  
To where the lawyers and the doctors lived,  
Swaybacked near where  
The tortoises with the diamond shells basked.  
And where we didn't belong:

Here, the sun shot up and spumed over  
The burning golden sugar cane fields- where the upper middle  
Classes flocked such as golden herons to the schools with  
The good ratings:

Here, the sun raked the earth with its rays,  
And the greenness increased: it was easy enough to pick it  
From our back yards, in the orange fields,  
Choirs elaborating in battalions of sunlight;

Things that we could tell our tiny sons in spots of daydreams,  
And look back on as hieroglyphics of our nostalgias:  
A tangible void usurped from the mestizos, and the ancestors  
Of cenotaphs:

We drove our cars across their graveyards everyday:  
And in front of our eyes there were billboards, and billboards  
Of a million dazzling things,  
And places to park our cars so they couldn't move:  
And an organization that we were sure to belong in,

In the schoolyards, noises rich with trumpets,  
And herons flocking to the metamorphosis of alligators-  
A long line of observers, and school kids like monarch butterflies  
Migrating in yellow school busses:

a rich canopy that smokes with the abscesses of a magician's

Fire:

A mirage put upon the flesh of boys playing in the sand:

Hands of gossiping angels trying to dress them up in dinner attire:

And girls stretching as the shadows do,

Wringing the necks of mailboxes at crepuscule:

Distending into parks and playgrounds,

Causing mirages far beyond the places where we really lived.

Robert Rorabeck



# High Altitude Graveyard

Delinquent children now making love  
Under a desk of bubblegum and sunlight,  
Like blue turds in a trout lake high up in  
The glittering basins the  
Mountains secrete from fornication,  
From slow but tolerant mobility, jangling storms  
Like cloaks, like moats of sadness.  
I smear expensive snails on my face so that  
My mother will love me; I wear a tragedian  
Death mask and eat  
Red liquorish and clap farts to French cartoons  
Where ladies and bicycles are synonymous.  
I draw trees on the walls of my prison and girls with  
Scabbed knees and grass stains. What have they  
Been doing, I wonder, as I lick their inks from  
My palm,  
And fat salmon swim by, pregnant and backwards  
Not at all perturbed by the high altitude graveyards  
Where they are going to pearl all their pretty children  
Around a corpse.

Robert Rorabeck

# High On Our Enamored Perfumes

I gave you a book of Borges today,  
As I gazed at you like a fox from the water cooler:  
What a shame that I have forgotten all of my Latin,  
And I only know bastardized Spanish:  
The book I wrote when I was twenty four, you held in your soft  
Brown hands when you came over  
And made me promise not to tell anyone that you'd  
Come over;  
And then we rolled around on the floor, and you said you were  
Mad at me when you were leaving;  
But your eyes filled the sky, and from my bedroom window  
The fishtail palms weep upwards to you; they are green and emolliate  
And I have seen fiery green lizards dancing on their limbs:  
They are of your favorite colors, Alma:  
And we ate your birthday cake yesterday: And I drove my teacher's  
Car by your house tonight while he was in Philadelphia,  
And then I went to your church and had a look around,  
And Miguelito stole a gardenia's bloom as we laughed all the way home,  
High on our enamored perfumes.

Robert Rorabeck

# High School Anatomy

Vivisected for high school anatomy-  
See that it don't grow new curious  
Red veins and purple arteries,  
Like a staunch starfish;  
And then stop moping and beat  
Itself to death for girls  
It hardly even knows, but only because  
That is the nature of its selfish wound.

And I know that it is futile and will  
Spend the rest of its life alone,  
Lost with its classroom of weeping brothers  
In the soft gray ash down  
At the bottom of the greatest torrential sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# High School Tourism

Stalemate of the ploughs as another year is hers:  
The girls get busy for Halloween and then for Christmas:  
They play outside of the windows, as if the windows  
Were our eyes;  
And they seem to fashion inward, like trees growing  
Toward the sun,  
But moving along from class to class—brown shoulders,  
With hair down around her ears,  
An epiphany of a nickname—  
Until she becomes all of the boldness that gets stolen  
During naptime, and I remain sleeping underneath the bus  
Until she peels away with another boy to  
Travel upwards and upwards  
Pass the congregations of the trees—slanting at runaway  
Speed—the slope is her runaway  
And soon she will consume herself in the air:  
Ephemeral, metamorphic high above the daydreams of  
High school tourism.

Robert Rorabeck

# High Schools That Are Still Pretty But Probably Never Existed

I wanted to go on the merry-go-round with you,

Alma:

On the day of our truancy, which I kissed the lips of the virgin of  
Guadelupe, praying to her that it would never set:

And I held your hand Alma while we looked at the Tasmanian devils

And you chastised me for looking at the white housewives,

When I only made eyes at you:

And I don't know why you wont move out of your room and come live

In this house:

The termites will all be smoked out after July 4th, and I won't have to  
Shoot myself in the mouth if you come:

We can go and look at the sea, and I can laugh at how with you I have  
Inevitably beaten every white girl alive;

And the last time I made love with you, I brushed my fingers across  
Your ribs and seemed to recognize them:

It felt so good, like going down to Miami with my father back when I  
Was still reading Encyclopedia Brown,

And I listen to my parents howling in their missionary positions

Hiding behind the beaded curtains:

And I am getting to comfortably fat and sedentary to hike to your house

Again, Alma; and I sent you orange roses yesterday that

Had almost died; but I bought new shoes today,

And you are still beautiful, as the cream rises above the beaten down

High schools that are still pretty but probably never existed.

Robert Rorabeck

# High Schools That Surrender To Me

I went towards the flea market:  
I fell towards the sea—  
I surrendered to high schools that  
Surrendered to me:  
And I saw how the world had changed,  
Had went back towards her  
Aboriginal thought  
Underneath the first of the airplanes:  
And I perceived how the kisses from  
The sun were so swift:  
As she did all of her work and then got  
Off from her shift—  
And slipped into bed, and made love to  
Her man—  
And remembered her sweetest memories  
As best as she can-

Robert Rorabeck

# High Up In That Colorado

I cry in my house in Florida:

I cry and try not to breathe: the virgins sit in my

Foyer as green as an aloe's sheath:

And the cars gossip so loudly through the day,

But at night, and deep at night they have such very little to

Say:

Like Alma's love for me, they sleep, in the grottos of their

Love,

Wishing they had courage to end the incredible loneliness

Of my parade,

While all the sky puts on a play before getting teary eyed

And coming down as rain,

And my truancy of words remembers a high school it never

Believed it,

So it rides stolen bicycles up to the roofs of super men,

And there it seems to loll forever,

Trying to become Alma's favorite color, while the alligators

Turn purple,

And their virgins put off their lights, figuring that all of

Their knights have turned far too old to care for them:

And the moon cups and whispers to the wildflowers

Disturbed by no other men and yet utterly beautiful deep in

Their airy beds high up in that Colorado.

Robert Rorabeck

## High-Class Stuff (Censored)

That less than average b-tch can go straight to h-ll  
Well decorated in the cheaper ancestors, floating on  
Their lips:

Straight down with all their bills and catalogues  
And name brand puff: Let the chipper scalawags  
Walk the plank or tie them to the northbound tresses.

We could sacrifice paper airplanes and shoot them  
Across the canal watch as the upturned noses crinkle  
With the red holly, or we don't have to do any of that  
At all: We don't have to go to class, or even stay on  
The ground. The palm tree's flute is an easy lift above  
Into another filament, like the lighter portions of the sea.

Say, now we are here. Smoke and sing quietly.  
Those aren't the rules, but it is what you do  
and if they don't like us, give them  
A bird that will sing a song right up their a-ses,  
Their little extra chromosome a-ses, because look at us  
Like prayer flags, like real highfalutin swags. If they don't  
Like why we're here, why we can just nod off. We can  
Be real crocodilian and watch as the buses pirouette like  
Great yellow dragon flies, and then recite from books that  
They've banned, the well said pornographie\$.

We can show our digs to snakes and compare.  
Or we can just mouth off to prospectors trying to steal our  
Rocks, but

Enough said,  
Give the others a shove down to the roadside and point them  
The way home.  
Give them a spotty red handkerchief for their stick,  
So they can truck and roam.  
Then its just us, yes sir, and the memories of  
Her shampooed hair whipping as she jogged around and round in her  
Little thing, like auburn tinsel for a switch  
Whipping up confections, her legs stirring  
Two scoops of vanilla ice-cream with the suds.



Yes, who cares about what they said-  
That was some real high class fireworks- That was the stuff.

Robert Rorabeck

# Higher And Higher, Singing

You looked so divine: I wonder what the world is like  
In which you carry yourself: It is no more real than my world,  
But it is so much more beautiful  
Than mine,  
Alma;  
And I called you to me like a wounded beast calling a butterfly  
Who had just changed,  
And still wondering what she was- she came, she came,  
And on my dying lips was your national anthem,  
And we studied together  
Into my deathbed until my dying wish melted into the snow at your  
Wings,  
And you brushed them aside, and glittered away over the fireworks  
And the fake boys trying to propose to you in the false light  
Of the rosy tinfoil,  
Until your stage burned beneath the mountains, and you flew and flew  
Until you laughed and poked out the sun and  
Stole his day away,  
And carried yourself higher and higher, singing.

Robert Rorabeck

## Higher Up And Purer

Lights through the brambles,  
Old homes and overturned wagons:  
Where have all the airplanes gone,  
And why did you have to write  
That you like football,  
Because now I know you have all your better  
Men, your chotskis and heirlooms,  
Even though I don't know who you took to the  
Prom,  
And you dress all in black while your bush your  
Toboggan down the main street,  
And all the people looking at you consider you  
Casually beautiful,  
And they don't have a problem with you,  
But they are just tourists:  
They belong in the back of taxis where they  
Won't stop talking:  
They have never seen the summit of my luxurious  
Mountain,  
Higher even now than the naked aspen in their  
Wide open woman's locker room:  
Where you belong signaling airplanes like a fire engine  
Steaming against my back  
Milking the star-beams, catching the entire hay barn  
Alight,  
The fabulous momentum for the ellipses of all these circular  
Objects,  
These sports of fine young gods:  
Something that is impossible not to believe in.  
Rubbing two sticks together I capture you for a moment in  
A moving picture,  
And it was how I evolved,  
And loved you higher up and purer than any other man  
Yet living.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hijacked Bosoms

I have blood baked in an oven,  
And flowers cooked on the stove,  
Salted and  
Made runny for your lips  
Down to your legs:  
And your belly-button is a glacial lake  
Just beneath the bosom  
Where your unabashed child suckles  
Through bike rides  
And sunsets:  
Like two milkshakes riding high  
And unbraziered,  
Like stewardesses done with leaping shift:  
I would like to smooch and suckle  
Just one or both  
If I pay my toll,  
If they are unoccupied:  
I would return them to their  
Rightful place and owner,  
Given enough time:  
I would put them back, or I would reveal them  
As communal property  
And take them into box cars with me and nourish  
Upon them all throughout them Midwest,  
Going no place in particular,  
Skipping trains,  
Hibernating like a Buddhist bumblebee on your  
Hijacked bosoms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hippies And Sand Lions

If she called me a hippie,  
My misquoted Tallahassee lassie,  
I could have told her that those rubber tramps  
Were fine gentlemen compared to me:  
I could have been a lover but now I'm a pest,  
And the only way I could get her to look  
At me was to die,  
But I haven't done that,  
And now I am just something that crawls across  
The shade of her picnic table while she eats  
Melons from his hands and doesn't mind the stick:  
I am either a spore or an ant carrying one,  
But I am working,  
And soon I hope to build up and take the bar  
To become a sand lion,  
And then disappear into my trap and wait for her  
In the little funnel in the patches of dune beneath  
The slash pines,  
And say that I will mow my yard and paint my fence  
And hang up "For Marriage" signs,  
And wait, and wait, and wait for her, until the sun  
Gets greedy and over fed.  
Then she will come and I will kiss her like a  
Doctor's mallet, and then knock her out in bed,  
And say things to her beauty which she will never  
Know were said;  
Thus in the morning I will take her to the kitchen  
Over looking the teal canal where the early sun is  
Rising like a returned tennis ball,  
And I will feed her likewise from my hands,  
Thus she would know for certain what I am....

Robert Rorabeck

# His Beautiful, Beautiful Hill

Penny ante pageantry so blinds you that  
You cannot spell—  
I've been the sunlight over-spilling on  
Your window sill—  
And the world becomes just so many places  
Without any sound—  
Holidays and werewolves,  
And housewives cavorting across the grounds—  
In the beautiful echoes from which they  
Spill,  
As the crucify another god upon his beautiful,  
Beautiful hill.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Burning Town

All of it falling into a fire- while the fish leap  
At first lucky,  
But then expire: before the lips of the fox  
Who leaps, it sears:  
Beneath the airplanes, it wastes its years:  
And burns away,  
A tinderbox that was at first a music box:  
At first an heirloom  
Now a souvenir, and not one of the handy pilots  
Seems to care,  
But closes his eyes as the ship is going down,  
Or kisses the stewardesses, one by one,  
As they happily leave his burning town.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Calmest Light

The way the sun shone all over this  
Pretty planet,  
And saw all of us, insouciantly spontaneous  
Grew us like garnish on a liquid plate,  
Run his naked fingers of roman legionaries  
Through your pretty hair,  
And saw and swore that you were who he  
Wanted,  
And took you even further away from me,  
Up to the slopes of high banishment,  
The pretty psalms who echo like  
Spanish tears, and the cheerleaders who are  
Dying,  
And now you are in his pretty chamber imbibing  
Her never mindful thoughts,  
And he shines on you his calmest light,  
And you awaken and are lost.

Robert Rorabeck



# His Favorite Hawaiian Shirt

They found  
Him dead,  
A cenotaph in  
A hammock  
Strung like a  
Loose guitar string  
Between annabell  
Palms,  
A monkey husk,  
His face turned to the  
Side he wanted  
The world to see  
Him as,  
An evaporated martini,  
Of salt and rind  
In his paw.  
He was wearing his  
Favorite Hawaiian shirt.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Favorite Song

You are right out there listening to  
The plagiarisms—  
Wondering when they will finally come inside to  
Make love to you—  
As the housewives go gallivanting  
From their husbands to their playboys—  
As the oceans lie starving  
And there isn't a bird in that sky who hasn't  
Forgotten his favorite song.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Forgotten Creation

If I try to find you now  
Serving the wanderers the old road brings,  
Where Chaucer left off and died  
From want of your lips,  
I will only end up back here  
Alone and wounded in my room,  
Crying out loud to the four walls,  
The bitter end of this continent-  
When I last saw you,  
Weren't you entrenched in the coital exhibit  
Near the beautiful dead boy  
With blue stockings.  
Carefully, you were pronouncing  
Again and again  
The name of a real man  
Making sure to get it as right  
As he was getting you:  
And that was the most singular  
Devilish sort of survival right off the  
Way where the pilgrims were moving,  
Kicking up dust to Canterbury.  
And you failed to make it into the cut,  
I suppose, because the old poet was entirely jealous,  
That he wanted you ousted from  
The history he was distilling in his immortal lines.  
Thus reducing your golden paladin into  
The plebian knight on the roam,  
And you to nothing more than that moan  
From the lascivious wind  
Recreationally laying bare-assed,  
Inhaled like caffeine snuff by the proboscis  
Of the Wife of Bath;  
But, unlike the greater tradesman,  
I could not deny that I wished for a piece  
Of such a wanton lust,  
The naked geometry arcing in the pines;  
Thus along the way,  
I wrote these few lines,  
Scratching my foot in the dust,

Though I could not stop to guard you for all time,  
And already the wind he cast your identity with,  
Was picking up and claiming you  
As his forgotten creation.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Handless Instruments

Kisses like coral snakes—like rum spilled  
Down the neck of her wedding dress,  
As the world spins from her in a kaleidoscope of  
Airplanes:  
Burning off her phosphorous abuses:  
She spins and spins arse-backwards  
Just as fast as apples fill their bins-  
Until her art falls asleep into darkness:  
Imagine the brightest angel  
Experiencing blindness—the senses of nonsense—  
And one day of her childhood lost in her backyard  
In the pornography of her frog princes:  
The dog eats the rabbit and the paper airplanes  
Do not make it across the canal—  
The fireworks get spent into her dresses,  
And not a single person in the audience can understand  
The soliloquy of her final exegesis  
As she becomes adrift underneath the houses  
And disappears even though the firemen burn up the  
Night above her—  
As nothing but a lily in the ocean she languishes—  
An uncountable time surrounding her,  
Recording her in the infinity of his handless instruments.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Meal For The Night

Night blooms from the day,  
And I've just been checking to make sure everything was  
Alright:  
Your husband sure looked hungry through the blinded windows,  
And it is such the shame  
That you must bloom, his meal for the night.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Most Unfortunate Brother

There I was shipping across the sea  
With so many coins spread beneath me and kissing  
Alma's toes,  
Congratulatory now that all the monsters had surceased  
Into the forgotten sounds of  
Airplanes- and everyone rode bicycles and looked so  
Far away,  
Now that they didn't have to worry about their houses,  
Or the always panting tongues of mailboxes:  
Now that they had seen us together at the zoo for the first  
Time,  
As we kissed and looked at the encapsulated wildlife  
All in their tender cages like warm presents:  
And I felt her lips, and she swore that I shouldn't  
Write about anything more;  
But I have already written about the novels of her future;  
And today was the best day of my life,  
Alma,  
Even if my father lost the fruit market to his brother,  
Long after Cain had already slain his most unfortunate brother.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Own Wish

Beauty is recluse: it goes far back into its boudoir;  
And I have never seen beauty, just her conjunction, and her pierced  
Nose, which I overuse;  
And the night is in delectable, just as if I am selling oranges  
Along the boulevard in Miami  
Back struck against the holocaust museum,  
And this is something very serious but all the same cannot be proved;  
And now I will have a little house, and tiny, tiny wishes that  
Will take me all the way to her;  
But she is so expensive- She is fleeting, and she is the beauty jeweled  
Into a body that is even more beautiful, but dying;  
And, if I had been but a politician: or, say, a successful lawyer,  
Then in the stillborn courts of her brethren I would have been beautiful:  
I would have been all strung out and beautiful,  
But now I will never speak to her again; and all I am good for is tarnishing  
The grapefruit of her nonexistent harem; but who am I writing this  
For tonight, for this certain isn't a fable, nor do I wish her for my harem;  
But I am parroting the rhymes of a popular gentleman that  
Disappeared before me decades before this;  
And this is just the industrious goldfish making laps in his little bowl,  
Biding his time, and awaiting his own wish.

Robert Rorabeck



# His Penumbrae's Gaze

Listen to the night stutter on the hem of the sea.  
The moon has stopped its infinite tug,  
A dream of an incarcerated god who still has fever over her;  
But she is going away now, exhausted  
Without a thought of the life teaming inside her,  
Without a thought of men other than the one she belongs to  
For awhile,  
Her wetness will indent the shore like the notches in  
A harem of brown throats where the crabs scuttle like  
Discombobulated coachmen returned to the more basic forms  
Of survival,  
And the effervescing waves will lift away, as if she  
Has slipped off her dress, as if the night watchman has  
Sipped off the foam from his amber glass,  
And drunken until his mind swims in her inebriations;  
And she is going away, receding into the amnesiac thoughts  
Of her maiden boudoir,  
Letting the wind slip over her flaxen body like the whispers  
Of a patient bachelor through her inviting windows;  
And the night is alone in the sad wonder of eerie traffic,  
The rush of the alien no longer minced with her calibrated sway,  
The carouseling waltz gravity rips off again her surface,  
The needed touch she gives mindlessly to the sun.  
He hangs over in his great darkness the entire length  
Of her shimmering bed, but not once does she awake to return  
His penumbrae's gaze,  
For she doesn't know how he longs to run the felt  
Of extinct reindeer, or the red trumpets of olympic moose,  
through the crests and troughs in which,  
Like a whipping banner over an unsundering fort, her body moves;  
And he remains there, sobbing in a barren garden attended  
By misdirected ghosts and the sad laughter of lost children,  
Until the sun banishes him with a stroke,  
And she leaps up to kiss her fellow.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Pitiless Caresses

Purple ribbon in colorless hair-  
Lying in the bed where I placed you somewhere-  
Gone over the roving combers,  
Gone to play baseball and to make eyes with  
Dynasties,  
While the fireworks dying, hissing golden rods  
Into the two for one sky,  
Over the slopes of horses, their hoofs stamping  
Arrowheads in the moonlight stolen  
To belong there-  
As you have lost yourself beyond the train tracks  
Again,  
And stolen into the slopes and raiment of  
His pitiless caresses-  
As a long ways off, the sky shutters-  
And seems for an impossible while that it will  
Never come down.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Regular Music

You have your patron, and he has his regular music,  
And now there is nothing left that cannot be believed, while the  
Neighborhoods of the affluent just get more and  
More beautiful- just don't look so guilty there in the last evening before  
Christmas: and we are still making love,  
While I promised you all of these gifts- and I touched you just while  
The last of the winter's sun was rising up:  
And you moaned your wish that showed as your children grew up,  
And filtered through the rooms of your house:  
And your brown, velvet brown body showed its goose bumps:  
As my cousin looked at you out in the yards of your infidelity:  
Alma, but you said it was okay to play around as  
Long as he didn't touch you: even while my poems graced the vanishing  
Lips of my poor grandmother's grave:  
And I still sing for you- As I've been to Spain, and the night still keeps  
Culling up, and pulling its cattle past the tree lines of the richest mountains;  
Until all that remains after the airplane's song, Alma: is you and I  
Calling to one another like shadows weeping toward themselves;  
And it is all less than gold, or the science fiction of the ancient Greeks:  
As the candles promise so many birthdays, but they just keep dying before  
They can add anything more to your youthful adventures:  
Where you have so faithfully gone off the surest paths, and let all of your  
Roses bleed into the un chiseled smiles upon the feral swing sets  
Of the loping gentlemen who have stolen your tiny brown legs  
Alma, just so you could watch them run.

Robert Rorabeck

## His Senses And Gestures

Lines to the fisherman who in his  
Insouciant architectures has gone to sleep:  
Lying like the shadow on the wall  
Beside my wife:  
Is she sleeping, or is she listening to me  
Getting drunk and typing.  
Either way there are still orange groves,  
As you as women in love but  
Abandoned—ladders emptied of  
Mexicans—her brown apiaries left  
Abandoned, her fires skipping town—  
And I am left with the principal coming  
Into my room tomorrow—  
With his senses and gestures,  
And the world on the lines of a little  
Thing—so little that the puppets seem  
Disturbed. Here it is they thought they  
Would end up being real, but, as it  
Turns out, they were wrong.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Smile Begins The Gleam

In a confused night, the stars close up like  
Virgin buds,  
The gloomy tortoise parts his mouth to eat  
The nocturnal roses,  
The somber petals turning brightest red to pulp  
Somewhere within the silvery drawers of the ancient beast  
Her slight hands come down upon, eggshell trembling  
For the sound and force of thunder, as from the  
Dark fleet of clouds gallops vigilantes off the Mediterranean—

Her youth has drowned and it feels like  
The bodies of azure sailors are lodging  
In her clotted throat, revenants the sky displays garroted with  
Briars of scarring lightning that flicker the undeviating sorrow  
Her face contains, a failed vessel overflowing at the eyes  
To look upon the grey tombs of sunset and the sea  
A necropolis coming alive, each wave a white stone  
Rolling over, as if the dead underneath wished to  
Rise from the briny knolls, to overcome the guard-man tide and  
Walk the cindered beach upon sunset—

There on the torpid cliffs she is only an echo,  
The grey shroud her heart lays in a sack for murdered game,  
Her lips play like muted instruments against the storm's  
Wicked lamentations, the carnival of mattered beasts  
Stealing away the dreams of a young girl's bedroom,  
Leaving only the sky broken apart, a window thrown wide,  
The clouds its tattered curtains, revealing to her the  
Horrific silhouette of night's face,  
Crescendos as his smile begins the gleam.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Sons And Nephews

In the middle of high school  
I used to leave classrooms—I used to leave  
Right out of school  
And flop and drink right beside the waves—  
Seahorses teaming from some anonymous  
Father's liquor cabinets—  
The sun a stream of pugilists, beating me until  
I was stinking of nocturnal perfume:  
What a way to live—  
Little children at my door—entire apple orchards:  
Now I am a teacher—  
The sky cries in the afternoon on weekends  
While I drink—  
The eyes of Dr. TJ Eckleburg are in the room.  
My Mexican uncle just sold his truck  
And his son and nephews are over celebrating.

Robert Rorabeck

# His Today

The day becomes really grand holding the books that I  
Plagiarize with so many javelins that burn my eyes  
While my mother washes clothes in the carport with her machines,  
As if it was a grotto:  
As if the puppies had survived, and I was good enough of a man  
As to look her in the eyes;  
But when I got to the flea markets now, I only go to buy gifts for you:  
And we made love today, but I don't have to tell you:  
The traffic rushes and the airplanes roar,  
And the air-condition crashes against the walls behind the closed doors:  
And you did the laundry for your extended family today,  
While I lit candles for you and prayed;  
And I read poetry of graveyards- and I wrote the poetry of fools:  
None of my professors shall remember me,  
Or understand that you have become my sharpest and most important  
Tool:  
And this is your kingdom, your deep brown eyes shine upon,  
So famished and so young, that when your love grows in the spherical  
Gardens of those twins, it is impossible to know for certain:  
It is love for a blind man who loves you that way,  
Because he has lost his senses for you, and yet you were his today.

Robert Rorabeck

# Histories That Are Yet To Come

Cars pool into Colorado,  
Backing up for ice-cream and wine, you know:  
Cars pool into Colorado like diamonds around her neck,  
Like blushing baseball players in an organized  
Wreck through wolf pass and then up through the collegiate  
Peaks:  
That is your backyard, Sharon, all the little hotels I did sleep in  
While climbing in Buena Vista,  
And you were already well set down your way huffing  
Into Colorado Springs,  
Like a miner with snow shoes, tossing your hair and counting your  
Silver,  
Blowing ordinary boys away: The traffic stands up for you,  
Sharon:  
It waits for you, because these are educated tourists who know the  
Ends and outs of science museums: How Nicola Tesla sensed you  
Out, that you should be there one day underneath the highest  
Race tracks in the world:  
That you should float up to the very golden foam in which my mother  
Was born; and forever celibate, not unlike myself,  
He should create electricity for you and run it up and down the street,  
And they should have festivals of the dead while you ancestors  
Were but teething;  
And somewhere in the back of his mind, he knew that the world would  
Glow intelligently for you, just as I do now,  
Even though I am just the premature historian for the greatnesses of your  
Histories that are yet to come.

Robert Rorabeck



# Hitting The Bottle

Another night,  
And I am taking it upon myself again  
To steal those things which aren't real,  
Postulating on my silent houses  
I haven't moved into,  
Avant-garde Jewish neighborhoods  
Where my certain dysfunctions aren't any longer  
In the majority,  
Where everyone can spell better than me,  
And I am certain to find a lover truer than the beaten  
Heart I now wear soldered into my chest  
Like a watch that has stopped working;

And I do this instead of doing anything which  
Might be considered productive:  
I lie on this piss stained bed as the little dog whines  
In little colorless dreams his four legs abound through,  
And I salivate over far distant mermaids  
And the cleated avenues I might leap with stewardesses  
Serving me drinks to get to her:  
But I don't do it—There is cheap rum in the  
Drawer, and I should get to that before my next  
Poem,  
Should get to that before I ever again begin a new  
Novel, a newer sunrise trying to caress my sad brow which  
Will not have it,  
Will not know again the light of an undeniable illusion,  
The very same light that she lie down with her to kiss  
The world all over her,  
While she goes into the suddenly whimsical hibernations she  
Is right to have,  
And into dreams fully locked with a man so handsome and rightly  
Hers, that I should not justly described him  
Even after I hit the bottle.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hoeing My Father's Row

Any day now the planes will fall,  
The plum will fall from the plum tree's  
Lip,  
And the little blue girl will look upon it  
And drool- She will not think that  
These are the tools she's seen,  
Or that the deeper narcissisms would have  
Begun constructing gravities and fairy-tales-  
All the neurosis of having fine young  
Entrepreneurs as forbearers- Angelic  
Youths whose blond hair wilted to silver,  
Who no longer straddle the earth dirtying their  
Short pink buckskins,  
But instead go inside when it rains and talk on  
The phone. She will tell the ants to take the plum,  
Even as the sky quickens and begins to fester  
Like putrid cottage cheese.  
I watched her stare at it for hours atop  
Hadrian's Wall- I wasn't supposed to be there.  
I was supposed to be hoeing my father's row,  
But the composition of the still-life she formed  
Intrigued me so that it was too late to learn my lesson,  
And the enemy's keen arrow knocked me in the side  
From out of nowhere.  
Pirouetting like a gallant destruction  
I became still and broken beneath her gaze,  
Like a whispering fruit where I could see the ants  
Marching with multisegmented expectations,  
Heave-hoing from her saturnine conduction. I didn't  
Know what I was doing, and neither did she.  
The arrow had broken off and dug deeper like a serpent  
For more knowledge.  
She watched me until the rains started  
Showing her bee-stung cleavage.  
I thought maybe she almost decided a wicked smile  
Before she turned like a heavenly shadow at morning  
And drove home still drooling to eat;  
I pretended that after I died she would come and look at  
Me again, but I knew she would tell none of her family,

The enemies.

I took comfort and waited for the ultimate return.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hold My Chains And Warm My Face

Windmills on the back of the earth,  
My eyes half asleep,  
My other senses half bled and lazing like well  
Pallid damsels with beautiful breasts  
Distressed in the sepia of  
Snow storms  
And all of that and dim lights  
And the patterns of woodland canopies flickering:  
And I have done no wrong,  
And look at my bank account,  
Yet I am celibate and extremely alone:  
I am so alone,  
And there is nothing romantic about it,  
But if I had a wife and children,  
Wouldn't I be just as far gone,  
Misplaced over the railroads and fields  
Of Easter eggs,  
Like the swings waiting in the cold park,  
Still waiting  
And waiting as if for resurrection day,  
For the girl to come and sit  
And hold my chains  
And warm my face.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holden

I was the only one in a class of fifty  
Who defended Holden Caulfield,  
Even though I look like Robert Ackley,  
Have his name,  
His complexion, and his religion!  
But I'm not so simple a nemesis, for I  
Have watched Phoebe go around on  
The red horse in the rain:  
Around, and around,  
And around. She could be my little sister  
Too, that's how much I can relate,  
But there is no use in saving her or anybody  
Else, not in the way that is expected.  
The feminist professor  
In the night class in Turlington Hall,  
In Gainesville FL. wished to identify him by  
Proclaiming him a misfit, and all the petit  
Feminists agreed, in pink rows, and the  
Boys in baseball caps agreed too: that was  
The game. There could be nothing scarier  
Than Phoebe sitting there with us and  
Carrying on: That's what Holden knew.  
I barely talked, I barely talked  
At all and that must have been eight years ago.  
I would ride home to her religion in  
The student ghetto and  
We would catch Letterman on t.v.,  
Laugh, and eat, and fart, and fool around,  
But she's gone away too, married a lawyer  
And gotten a good haul, but she has failed even  
When the professor would say she was right to do so.  
Not like Holden or I have, fallen because  
We have gone down like model rockets and  
Never re-ignited, down into the misplaced  
Weeds crowning the heads of alligators on  
The other side of the canal,  
Like paper burning from the open windows  
Of sky-scrappers. I worked at Taco  
Bell for four months, and got fat for a little

While, and filled tacos with one of the girls in my  
Class.

We both got C+s, but she had nothing at  
All to say in regards to Holden Caulfield,  
And her name was Greek for catastrophe,  
Though I tried my best in his defense, I could say  
So little out loud, since we were speaking in a  
Language whose annunciations only work while  
In a crowd, but still I would put on the  
Red hunting cap against the world,  
And recognize the inability to proclaim  
The hypocrisies which only silence's observation  
Identifies:

The cannibalisms of well-dressed loves,  
And the people who pull in the shades of gossip,  
But only get in by dress-code.

That professor is still astonishingly prolific,  
And grew-up across the street from the  
Caulfield's I suspect, but  
She'll never be even semi-autobiographical  
To Salinger,  
Though she has said many things that echo up  
And down the hall, into each child  
Who she deems her reverberations, it is oh so doubtful  
She has yet to acknowledge Holden Caulfield's  
Inability to succeed as a judgment call upon those  
Artless establishments where she very happily  
Nooks her world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holding Hands Haiku

Holding your hand is  
Better than making love  
With other women.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holding Kites

Now I am afraid of this scar,  
And another picture: the other students are holding  
Starfish in their upturned hands,  
Asking how they can be so easily divided.  
And the music boxes are  
Holding kites.  
While, today, I made love to a girl with two bullet holes,  
And then I went to see the principal,  
But in between them I wrote some poems.

Robert Rorabeck



# Holding Your Arms

Tears from a scar less cathedral  
Where the crystal dragons go to think of you—  
Belly- up anemones—  
Blue gills without any right to the echoes of  
Minnows—  
And just another song to sing:  
Just girls passing in the hallways—  
Pretending to find shelter—lips fighting the water fountains,  
As another day passes—and cold minnows  
Solidify on the  
Shoulders of the narcoleptic butterflies—and if you know  
That this is a fable,  
Then you know that you are here—sleeping underneath  
A car, as sleeping underneath cathedral  
In the middle of school—  
With neckties of your favorite flowers waiting for their  
Prom dates—  
And all of your favorite colors hypnotized—  
Your coffin become a zoetrope—or more like a kaleidoscope  
With strong boys holding your arms,  
Lifting you up to see the illusions in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holes In The Sky

There are holes in the sky:  
How so? But my aunt isn't coming  
Down. I call her with the songs I know,  
That were taught to me casually  
By the song bird, my best friend,  
Before they took her into the mines  
To be sure:  
Now the rivers swim without water,  
But without that how can I be sure:  
I haven't a home, and yet I am living here:  
They make a quarry out of her tears,  
But she hasn't cried since they began  
Panning there;  
And the old men who adopted me and  
Carried me on the litter they decorated  
With cut boughs and round stones,  
Let their beards grow down into her,  
And echoed in the bristles of their stir:  
Now I am so close to her, that I can feel  
Her breathing in her home, but there is no  
Light where they make love,  
But I should know the way, and walking,  
Could take her, and carry her to where her  
Wealth would be found and given as the  
Names for new children the sky dropped down,  
But it hasn't rained in the camp,  
And the pans have rusted, and all the songs,  
wilting without lips to sing,  
Have sunken beneath the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holiday Mythologies

I feel like Hercules under this tent.  
I finger housewives while they give me that  
Eye. I swear in Spanish: La verga-  
I sell Christmas trees to Catholics, and  
What not. Sometimes they want a crèche  
Hung under their eyes like a mobile for a colicing  
Child. I abide, and at night I wander the moguls  
And estuaries they have decorated in, her state of  
Pretty egrets: the streets flow like constables  
Our perambulating, spinning their sticks and batons:  
When I see Jews, I don't talk to them, but they still  
Circle around me and try to carry on. I whistle silly  
Pietas, and when I drive, I roll planets up and down my  
Forearms. Comets buzz, and before bed I buy strawberry  
Icecream and crackerjacks and eat in the hedgerows with  
The never-settling ants while the last of the customers  
Leave, and the chainsaws stop their whicker mastications.....  
When the parlays are over, when the poetry is read,  
I drink a few sips of rum, listen to China Forbes sing Dosvedanya;  
Pedro puts on a pseudo-orgasms for his own amusement:  
I drink out of a special cup I've stole from a man I've  
Never met: he might be dead. Still, I am careful not to write  
In stanzas, but I have nothing on Sylvia Plathe, who will  
Live forever for 32 yrs, but I can only give this this,  
Which I see you already have.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holiday Of Rattlesnakes

This is how it happens that there are  
No more brides in the park,  
With the sun coming up and the larks singing  
For a lark;  
And in her golden wedding dress she sets me down.  
And with her roaming eyes roams all over town,  
Across the train tracks,  
Through the thistles,  
Into the peonies of muddy dirges where the water moccasins  
Make eyes  
Flagged into the coattails of coal cars,  
As the nocturnal planes skim the micas of daylight from  
The skies;  
And you sleep in your little room all at a loss,  
Alma- soul carried from Mexico, but your baskets  
Are full of bread  
And artichoke hearts; and it all seems to come to me for  
A reason:  
Deaf and blind, I somehow hear and see,  
Your brown lips echoing in warning and straying me towards  
A holiday of rattlesnakes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holidays Further And Further Away

Sodium is the same one we use for  
Street lights,  
And I love you, but I am out of wind,  
But should still be good use for you on  
Halloween,  
Or maybe even other Holidays;  
And we can go out holding hands until  
The brightness dims,  
And no one should ever go home knowing  
Us,  
And we can get rich on toothless famine;  
And under the lights of Enceladus's  
Icy crust, the housewives are washing dishes,  
And the cops are gossiping at every corner  
So everyone is safe:  
And I can see how colorful your eyes are,  
Even when they ring other planets;  
And if you'll allow me before you run away,  
To take you to the park where they dug the lake  
To increase property values,  
Then there I'll keep a house for you that no one  
Else can see,  
And room it full of children and hold séances to  
Such grief  
After you have let go of my hand and left,  
And October ended and the kids died at the lake,  
And I married another woman who didn't have  
Your eyes;  
But I will still, from the lowest roof, light off white  
And blue fireworks that will die into the butchered  
Revenues of so many mistakes,  
And holidays further and further away from you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Holidays Of Interchangeable Heirlooms

They are such good people they have no more liquor  
In their souls,  
And she has been cheating on him again in the early morning  
Falseness of trailer parks and  
Doused Catholic  
churches:  
And I've been busy touching myself again, croaking and  
Combining primary colors like married couples:  
And these are the trailer parks where you pretend to survive,  
The super heroes are exhausted on park benches and  
Sleeping underneath the old news of their accomplishments;  
And I know you don't need to be saved,  
But I am doing it again, making a suicide of so many sodas,  
While the ball parks are sold out on the green,  
Green esplanade:  
And your boys are just as blonde as you are, and I don't  
Think they will ever be growing tired:  
Their bicycles are tireless as unicorns; and I don't want to  
Have to look at myself in the boy's bathroom again:  
I just want you metamorphosed and coming to me  
Before all the games break down and I forget the better way home:  
And all of this is just as suspicious as the semiprecious barbs  
Of sting rays:  
And I love many other days of holidays of interchangeable  
Heirlooms I guess I shouldn't suppose to have to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hollowed The Stars

Sad, sad decomposition  
These atoms are frantic,  
And tired of waiting to take her  
To the prom- They have thrown away their corsage,  
Even though they still might love her;  
They have ventured into the unlit football stadium  
To drink with the boys and their knives:  
They can piss everything away then;  
They can escape from the sun before  
It is devolves into the inescapable:  
They can buy their mother a birthday card,  
And say it doesn't matter,  
Because it doesn't:  
The little words like a hungry fever  
Will eat the starlings before they learn to fly:  
A rattlesnake will find the withered nest,  
And even bones will flit away once they  
Figure out how to conspire with her breath.  
She has already found another man,  
And has fallen into him like a pollinated crutch:  
They will go together for the length of the song,  
And even if she forgets the memory,  
Tears will line her cheeks curiously, as  
He will love her long after the conflagration has  
Hollowed the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Home Across The Carports

Alma, I am listening to you right now,  
While I am wishing that I had a bicycle to ride toward your  
Clever boudoirs;  
And while I think of you I also praise all of your immaculate  
Jewelry,  
While over these past two months you've become my one and  
Only muse:  
Don't you wonder now, Alma, as I do too, if Sharon and Erin  
Read you too:  
Maybe even Kelly reads you, if she can read- while my house  
Floats on a sea of your world,  
And I will meet you everywhere, for you are as brilliant as  
You are beautiful, Alma:  
Really, you are more beautiful and more brilliant than me:  
I am just the hungry satellite orbiting the aforementioned brilliance,  
But I can still buy you dinner,  
Even if you love Nelson: I love you, and I want to take you to  
The movies, and I want to pan gold for you:  
And my nose bleeds and my feelings are unconditional for you,  
For the astronauts of their ice-creams will soon be floating home  
For you,  
And we have my mother so worried:  
But she is a good woman, Alma: my mother, she is a good woman,  
And if she really knew you, she would really love you, but right now  
I am always too busy climbing up your sweet and darkening brown  
Slopes, bighting my lip for the grizzly bears of your cupids to  
Give a damn to even begin describing your stupid beauty for  
Her Alma:  
And I have been so high up to kiss all the pleasurable white necks of  
All the passive tense aspens, and not even give another word or  
A damn for:  
Alma,  
I love you: I love you and my lights give off their brilliance,  
And my canons fire off their ordinances for you, while you are drinking the  
Perfumes of your defeated orchards,  
And all of the greater amusements that I have already defeated for you,  
Just to call you home across the carports and again into the  
Drunken teddy bears of our shared  
And unexplainable bedrooms:



This is how hard I get, and this is how hard I always try for you,  
Alma...  
Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# Home Again

Silver slippered grasshoppers in a cloud  
Of ambulances—  
My pregnant wife in the bathroom attending  
To her grievances—  
I am tossing wine on the couch with my  
Dog,  
Trying to spell my amens—  
I hope nobody can find me out—  
I hope I can get all the pretty girls I've  
Fallen in love with and find my way home again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Homeless

If you were my daughter,  
I'd put you out across my knee,  
Like two lonely sea-sick lovers throwing  
Glances in a spatial dance of four limbs,  
And two opposable thumbs which eventually  
Found the avenues of her dress,  
Each button and hook,  
And street lamps, and science:  
Even put down for the recession of the latest  
Franchise, these words are no good-  
They don't do the trick, they don't know anybody.  
Already, we have forgotten which way to turn,  
What things are good- There are only so many words,  
And most of them awful, and crippled,  
Like cadavers nameless through their yellowing  
Stacks,  
Or at the other end decadently bourgeoisie, reserved  
For the upper classmen who never think to smoke or  
To cut class to purvey the lanky canal in the slip of  
A silken canoe, to greet out of the way housewives  
Sunbathing after doing the dishes down the fickle easement  
Beside their pet otters. These things I have never seen,  
But have heard of from the rain, or while skipping classes  
And dream under the bus  
In a heliotrope or darker slick. I will wake up now, and every  
Thing will have changed, matured or gotten a profession.  
Even my little sister is older than me; and the girl  
I loved? It is like she was a daydream passing through  
A sunbeam who has broken into new continents,  
Bathed in reawakened seas, who doesn't say hello,  
Doesn't even know that I have come out into the front  
Yard after the storm where the kittens have drowned.  
Now the neighbors are drinking beer and the rabbit is  
Dead from the dog's affections in the rock garden.  
The kidnapper has already passed by,  
And the Australian Pines are leaning against each other  
As cripples. The sun is out again, innocently composing:  
I am only four years old. The house is made out of old bricks  
That will crumble,

And I will blame him because you are gone,  
And I have nowhere else to go.

Robert Rorabeck

# Honchos

Mammals with  
Swollen heads strut  
Around like young gods  
Who have just learned  
How  
To brush their teeth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Honey

Tipsy: I have been published by a criminal,  
A privateer commissioned by the queen-  
For where is my money, I say, or I sing:  
I wish I could write derivative science fiction by the  
Truck load, I wish I could swashbuckle, or, at least,  
Be as industrious as my most industrious of uncles:  
For now, however, I am doing all right, sipping my rum,  
Looking mighty fine tonight; and finding myself in a rhyming  
Mood, over eagerly laughing at how impossible it is  
To be published, to become lucrative in my dysfunctional  
Condition: but, you see, I love the moon,  
And the mountain; I am like a pig on its truffle: I am  
Done delivering Christmas trees, and I didn't do have awful:  
I am almost him, almost enough money to buy a house,  
Almost enough talent to get my name out: What I would really  
Like to do is get down on my knees and worship you;  
If you have a scabby knee from roller-skating, I would like to kiss  
It and press it like a scabby flower against my scabby cheek;  
I would like to cheer for you at the roller derby this weekend  
Or all week; Now the sea, that is something else, that is a funny  
Thing, and I would like to live right next to her, but she is an  
Expensive thing; and what of you now, honey, how much I  
Want to say your name, but you have given me no excuse at all-  
To say your name, and you're the one I blame.  
And maybe someday soon, honey, I will  
Move right next to you, and work upon you, and give you all my  
Money; because I love the moon, and the mountain, and concourses  
Of waves; but most of all it is you I love: I love you most of all,  
Honey.

Robert Rorabeck

## Hoping To Appear Mysterious

I was on the mountain where there  
Were tourists, and it snowed for the first time  
That season, just as it snowed for my birthday;  
And looking down,  
I could truly say that I saw the whole thing,  
Those villages in the nooks and crannies  
Where citizens cried and made love,  
And dogs ran in slightly feral wonders to and  
From the bakers and the butchers,  
Amazed and distracted by the dinner-time smells.  
I could only sit there for a few minutes,  
For down at sea level there were things to do  
Waiting for me, and even greater than these was the  
Continuation of what now amounted to over  
Five years of insouciant limbo truncated in a  
Celibate bedroom; slightly scarred, I departed  
Justly separated from the others of my kind,  
Thinking of sweet little accolades and comparing the  
Aspens to segregated sororities swaying the deep southern  
Continents where oral folklore still existed;  
There was a video game which needed beating,  
And a halfway cohesive poem to write, a little  
Bit of yard work, and then to record the footprints  
In the valleys which meandered from turquoise arrowhead  
To ochre; and looking up, after I had come down,  
There she was, the constant goddess shackled to the  
Earth, as airplanes leapt over her head like silver frogs  
On their way to Alaska, or Honolulu, and some of those  
Travelers had their faces in totem-poles, and others  
Made thousands writing romance novels;  
But they could not say who I was. If they looked down  
They couldn't even see me, but I did not blame them,  
For I had already turned away, and disappeared into the  
Tule fog, hoping to appear mysterious.

Robert Rorabeck

# Horrible Child Throughout The Snows

At night aren't you a god of snowbells?  
Don't you practice your paper crafts with wine  
And cheese,  
A little teacher of the northern hemisphere  
Deeply in love with your husband-  
I don't know anything about married life, but  
Yours must be great-  
Your indescribable eyes so far away that I don't  
Even try,  
But you should be proud that you are that much  
Closer to airplanes.  
Right out front of me the traffic goes leaping all  
Day,  
But what does it know of your coming winter?  
What does it have to say,  
And so where is it really going- I figure that I  
Want to die by that little part of you that is Indian,  
Because maybe you are just about thinking of  
Me,  
Or otherwise I am not real, and my brown eyes  
Are the only thing about my sadness which isn't  
Scarred- Still young and ironic,  
I want to put on miracle plays beneath your house,  
And let you shoot me full of turtle dove arrows-  
I want to be scarred by hail and so unsalable that  
I just sit and lick my wounds in the back corner  
Of your miracle shop,  
Shrunken like a cannibal's head, so that you can pick  
Me up and coo to me nursery rhymes along with your  
Daughter,  
And share with her your milky twins, the little roman  
Crests I guess you know,  
And look up into your eyes and become your horrible  
Child throughout the snows.

Robert Rorabeck



# Horses And Unicorns

Here are the seating arrangements lactating  
In mausoleums  
With ceilings full of blown glass in the shape of  
Shells—  
The day spinning industriously—the patrons  
Burning in and out of the supermarket where  
You worked with her—  
Like candles turning in a rink—the small candles,  
Children—or the dimming elderly—  
And the alligators smile and yawn with the lions  
Not knowing what they do—  
As you disappeared from riming the cusp of my  
Dreams—and flew away with your children  
To the land of horses and unicorns.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hospitals Of Spain

Rains, you patter on  
The tents- soft mouse-foot  
Patter,  
I think of Tennessee aunts  
In wet tall grass-  
Two headed horses feeding  
From her hand,  
Feeding her of this;  
And flying army  
Ants-  
Escorting pregnant airplanes  
All the way over the  
Royal crown sea  
To the hospitals of Spain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hot Legs

In cerulean day shifts  
Power-lines are gold  
Floss,  
Ladies wearing rows of  
Curious pigeons  
By her salubrious lips;  
Legs like bicycles:  
Legs, legs,  
Legs, legs,  
Legs  
Two for one,  
Legs.  
Get them while they're  
Hot.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hour Of The Wolf

Senses heightened for Halloween,  
I become a werewolf, her heart ululating  
At my jaws, like the very rabbit, torn  
And velveteen, caught on the ribs of thorns:  
We sit on the grass and feed,  
Grin and show our teeth, think of evil  
Rhymes they use to tell children to put  
Them to sleep:  
Her fingers and toenails are red, and we  
See close-ups of her eyes, frantically looking  
Askance from the hidden camera,  
Which is our eyes, and we draw her to  
The earth and cigarette-butts beneath the  
Swings and the falling maples,  
Lounge around her neck, whispering the  
Lines sunken in the bottom of the lake,  
The eerie sleepers, feed of her rises and moans,  
The penny-candy we rode our bicycles to,  
Stealing cheap fantasies from the library on  
Our way, going behind the churches on  
The dirty peninsula scarred by the migrations  
Of icebergs, the shivering house who stepped  
Away long before our mother's wombs nested  
Us between the unsealed wax between her thighs.  
The cheapest of homesteads is naked and  
All but abandoned, and we change in them,  
Our body curling; we begin to resemble each other:  
She is a paper doll torn, though colored,  
Moaning through the emasculations of incest,  
A little girl runaway sleeping in the backseat of  
Her grandmother's station wagon;  
The world turns blue and haunted, and she looks  
Away. We creep up the hoary dunes from the  
Sea; our salts boiling, she doesn't move,  
She doesn't change; she opens her neck  
Like a love letter; she knows we will have  
Our way.



# Hours And Hours Of Days And Days

As the bodies work themselves out,  
Angels get their wings:  
He touches you like folding the laundry, after all of  
These years:  
The music plays in the background happening upon itself  
Like candlelight in the deeper through  
Of caverns,  
While the grottos are all warm and unberieved-  
You stand up tall and announce to the world your plans;  
And the worlds flow from your lips like  
Applause from the stands:  
And the tourists know they came; and the cars return to  
Their starting points as trustworthy as buzzards:  
They just keeping going and going around,  
Though I would still so very much wish to lay atop of you  
And plant my apple luck within the furrows of  
The garden already attended so very well;  
He who knows when school is over, and how your body  
Enjoys itself flitting in its ways as it knows it does  
Back and forth through hours and hours of days and days.

Robert Rorabeck

# House And Headstone

I've called you by the last line of a poem,  
As often as by the first,  
And you answered insouciantly the way an obese  
Detective decides to solve murders only when  
He is not enjoying a spotless dinner,  
And I have wounded myself by a weapon described  
To myself as love, and by your name which  
Has its own sharpness of metal and deadness of echo,  
But all of that is enough,  
For even now when I am getting drunk,  
I am sure I am wounded, and scarred higher up,  
And walking around shivering for I am the last of a species,  
But have come to realize that I will be made no more  
Precious nor immortal by your touch, or by lying beside  
You bare-chested, with your breasts pressed through  
The shadows, and your eyes like ruby pinpricks up  
Against my own- For I have seen you in your  
Photographs with other men, and you are a beautiful woman,  
But now nothing more, and this invisible flaw lays like  
A drowned goddess immobile in her amnesiac lake,  
Her lips pressed in statuesque laughter to the hemlock of  
A bearded philosopher, he too drunk to death and holding  
His guitar tighter than he would hold you;  
And my dogs love me, and the night of my world is too  
Miraculous and transitory to cause me to hold my breath for  
Anything but; And this world is a projective moving high  
Above a nourishless field from the womb of its cannon,  
As we are all twirling away from each other even as we move  
In to kiss, and I do not know you, or why your eyes filled  
Me up and gave cause for the heartbeat of my sport,  
But you cannot blame me now that I am independent and rich,  
Even if you should not remember my name, you should not  
Say it out loud to anyone, for soon I will have both a house  
And a headstone, so even if you should move in close to  
Visit, I could only greet you at the threshold to tell you  
It is not necessary.

Robert Rorabeck

# House Cats Anyways

Inside the broken jubinations, a blue gill that sings another song  
To his goldfish:  
Anywhere, anywhere that she might be, nudging the golden sky:  
I have a child now,  
And I am not alone, so I have a wife,  
But I dream of being far away from here:  
Beneath the mountains that fit the favorite coloring of  
The tomb,  
And the places that molt like the peacocks of  
Rainbows into the skies—  
Even while she is away, she becomes so beautiful that you  
Have to believe, that the night starts out the way of  
The second color in reverse,  
And then the fever becomes a river between the trees:  
We will become alive again while we are not here,  
Just surviving for a little while inside the book stores  
That already have no reason to exist:  
But in the morning, the plagues and firestorms down  
The rows of middle class housewives,  
And a special distinction, a hunch in my gut,  
Like a catfish cleaning the rug of the living room until  
Christmas:  
And, once the gods arrive, you suddenly have to believe:  
In department stores, and the white tits of mountains,  
And in any other way that it finally, ultimately  
Has to turn out:  
If there are dungeons, at least we can fill them with roses,  
And if not roses, wild flowers—  
As the ponies that do not live here trample the  
Serenade—  
And when we wake up in the morning, there will still  
Be house cats sleep underneath of the clouds,  
And if there are not clouds, anymore—  
Atleast there will be house cats anyways.

Robert Rorabeck



# House For A Lover

Lines I've given you, like feeding the  
Hungry mouths of heaven  
But joy- as you look into my eyes as you eat,  
As I then drive home through all of  
The loneliness in your daylight  
Trying to sing to you without its tongue,  
As arrowheads are discovered underfoot of a  
High school of somewhere,  
And then the day doesn't know where it is  
Going-  
But it proceeds to build a house for a lover  
That it then burns down.

Robert Rorabeck

# House Of Bees

Then there was a pretty boy on his  
Bicycle  
Like a tool, Siamese of glowing pinwheels  
And the spots in between  
The trees  
A zoetrope, a glowing lantern—  
A house of bees:  
You know what it is, or at least meant to me:  
As I followed you,  
As you were going to feed the loins  
An entire bouquet  
From the games of your heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# Houses Of Glad Kisses

Houses of glad kisses strung out  
Perpetually through the forest—  
Greatly seeding the lost paths of vanishing children—  
Here, they can find one last story for them—  
While the sky is a vermillion avenue too well  
Above them—  
Strange chandeliers are hung amidst the vanished  
Airplanes—  
Everything soft has evaporated,  
Even the stewardesses are floating by themselves  
Above the classrooms—  
And they send down their love once or twice  
In a playful manner, like free tickers,  
For the boys whose last kisses  
Will be presented to them  
By the grinning trysts of the protected wolves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Housewife Pie

There are hills where houses live  
That I have drawn with damp lights in the classes  
Of high school,  
When I wasn't skipping and resonating in the waves;  
And tomorrow I want to see Kelly;  
I would like to give oral sex to butterflies, just to see her  
New tattoos,  
She gives so many children her bad news as she caravans:  
She spots the dolphins in their wishy-washy gazeboes;  
And she isn't quite seventeen,  
Just a sudden page in a beautiful broadside,  
A ship that was there, I swear it, but then was lost:  
A place where lost men disappear to what else I know not  
What to compare it,  
But to runaways and dead poets, and the geniuses I do not know  
Listening with their one ears:  
Pulling their horns all the way up to mountains while  
The skies are wailing and giving their signs of unresigning loves;  
The planets will have Pluto kindly put on its gloves,  
And the philosophers and foxes go down to the  
Rivers and there to sit and eat their dinners the very poisons  
That cannot be proven,  
And I will swing upon my rope swing over the bodies of  
Both my vixen;  
And the paper airplanes will fly,  
And the paper housewives will offer us all slices of homemade  
Housewife pie.

Robert Rorabeck

# Housewives

Nonsense of ribbons tied around the apple bows:  
The houselights linger and the housewives  
Prepare the pretty feast of the bodies  
In their views: they spring around the tables that  
Are being used,  
And fall flat into the hearths of the springing news:  
Their husbands, glad to be architects of the leggy  
Game, catch them and mouth them, and they  
Do the same:  
Every evening as steady as they prove:  
Housewives, and sun showers of the evening's news.

Robert Rorabeck

# Housewives Or Our Own Mothers

This is true- that you are not here, and I am  
Drinking,  
And tomorrow I will have to go to school again  
Building a pledge out of my body  
And of my gut:  
Distinguishing the gardens where I belong  
Where the trees are busily in a topiary of a glass  
Encased bower  
Outside of which it rains and all of the sisters  
You've forgotten lay trapped,  
Or have escaped: because sometimes they enjoy it,  
And sometimes they want in:  
Sometimes they come baring fire, and sometimes  
I watch them kiss snakes who caracole the rock  
Garden or other places that I cannot  
Spell,  
And I linger at the windows of my box, and drink  
To new liquor while I inquire of the borders  
Of the canals  
And railroad tracks, and wonder what it would  
Mean to cross them and to become a part of that  
Other world, glowing in the strange vertigoes  
Who resemble the pallid cadavers runaway in a park  
Underneath the regresses of airplanes  
With the stewardesses climbing down or calling from  
The perfectly spherical windows as if they  
Were housewives or our own mothers assuring us  
That they would soon be on their way home.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Beautiful

The cat says my mother's name  
Why the alligators realize it is her birthday;  
And far away from baseball,  
And used cars,  
And the beautiful girls with tattoos on the submarine,  
The elk are shedding their antlers  
As the aspens shed their leaves;  
And this is the truth of the meat of the  
Blushing mollusk;  
Its sad architecture, its cancerous science,  
The denouement, the epiphany sewed shut in its  
Coffin for viewing,  
All dolled up but bloated,  
Another cavalry charged of the disembodied men,  
Trying to feel her up without their corporeal libido:  
This is the stanza that has to end,  
The peat of her eyes, the crook of her grin;  
And I still love her,  
And I am still trying to get it up, like a sick daisy who  
Burrows its head out of the skull socket of that  
Fresh young grave,  
And finally looks up to see the moon eat by wolves,  
And all it has to say for itself is  
How beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Beautifully The Church Rose

I have dressed up and done worship to girls whose  
Eyes are as fat as lambs,  
How simmer everywhere like the amethysts of geodes  
Weeping mightily in other mens hands;  
Oh, they wake up in bed and the flags of the mail are immediately  
Raise:  
They go to the smoke shop and get enough smoke to make the  
Appalachians haze:  
Bosomy and so round as to be caramelized apples, the spaces that  
They drive become music boxes,  
Controlled and sweet: they can never escape the luxuries that they  
Pantomime:  
They sweep the street like the moon at harvest time:  
They are so full and luxurious as to be a house or at least a love  
Seat unto themselves;  
And then when they stop and listen, their eyes like water spiders  
Skating across the crepuscule underneath the gesturing fans;  
They don't have anything to lay off of,  
And they can't remember how beautifully the church rose  
Through all the mornings next to their bars,  
Or how I tried to caracole them and catch them up in a plan  
That I didn't have enough legs for.

Robert Rorabeck



# How Bukowski Ended My Poem

Growing this budding numbness:  
Listening to Bukowski- it feels good to hear  
A man as scarred as me,  
Even a better man; but, Oh lord,  
I don't believe in you, but in the old roofs  
Of houses,  
Of graves being filled in and covered with the  
Masturbations of green carpet  
Of loneliness of the less professional acrobats:  
My dog farts- one or the other, it smells  
Good,  
Makes me think of Disney World, of the lower  
East coast of Florida- I wonder if houses are  
Growing cheaper- I need to move out.  
I need to get laid, but it is so difficult,  
And now my chest is the part of me with the  
Most scars:  
I am embarrassed: it floods, I think of Erin.  
She calls me by an old name.  
She doesn't read these anymore; its all old news,  
But I'm pretty sure her tits are still great.  
Bukowski is over. His cat is asleep,  
But Erin's tits are still great some place in Florida.  
That is how I imagine Bukowski would have ended  
My poem,  
Erin.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Dangerous It Is To Pretend Being In Love

Ah God, the sun is real; isn't it,  
And it made the sky so blue and young;  
And I don't know any better words for it  
Don't I; and that is why you stabbed  
Me on the spot,  
And then christened the new highway  
Where you commute to new boys with wings,  
Where you killed the young heroes and stuffed  
Them under your frilly things;  
And you made it: the new sky, and the new sun,  
And if I am not beautiful,  
And if I have failed, and am destined to live alone,  
It is because I haven't recognized how beautiful  
You are; and I haven't said enough about you,  
Or wounded myself enough over you-  
Like a wounded animal, I am moving away,  
And bleeding these words as I retreat, a chess piece  
Doing as he is not allowed, watching you get married,  
Making foreplay with a dangerous queen  
Who is on the move,  
Who is already holding up her own dresses and slipping  
Through the mangroves;  
She is killing her own tourisms and not asking  
Permission from the boss;  
And I am not doing my job, if you are not here fornicating  
With me, but it is only a breathing game,  
And it doesn't matter if I Haven't ever graduated from  
High school if you aren't playing with me,  
Or realizing how dangerous it is to pretend being in love.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Did They Survive

Fetishes for airplanes and bicycles and swing sets:  
Young lovers underneath an apple tree underneath all of these  
Things,  
Tornados making love across the canal, drinking sandcastles  
And talking cats—  
Afterwards, prisms in the sky—the disguises of a drinking god—  
He lowers his hand to you in the parking lot as  
The waves come in to see the Pieta in the grotto:  
They are paying for soggy Eucharist and lighting electronic  
Candles:  
Afterwards, Siamese and amnesiac mermaids will drive  
Home to cul-de-sacs, routed in beautiful cars—  
Into atmospheres of kitchens and pools that chime full of  
Midnight up slope from the alligators-  
Like stewardesses touching down into place in which  
It is a wonder how they survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Easily You Stole Our Breath Away

The bodies burn in yellow candles like cadavers  
Who are on the Spanish hillside,  
But I guess we always have to start somewhere and somehow:  
I broke your golden jewelry when you let me make love  
To you one time and forever,  
While all the cars passed like painted lions on the streets,  
While all of the dying Indians crossed their hearts with poisoned  
Bows and then flew away:  
Up and up to the gods of your grandfathers, and from the arid forests  
And jungles that I can never pretend to know:  
That is the strange and beautiful mask of your opulent virtues by which  
You proceed through your day with,  
By which too you fawn for my father because he is your patron,  
While you asked me in your car today what made my mother a good  
Mother, and I responded like an unwelcome echo that  
I did not know,  
And you made fun of me for buying my clothing at a thrift store,  
Even while you wore my gold, even while you'd been in my house that  
Very same morning I had bought with the fishhooks of cash,  
And the lights went out and the stars did not shine  
But were remembered in the blackout of zoetropes,  
While the hurricanes whispered like washing machines around and around  
In the limpid miss numberings of the fools I had planted for you:  
While your body moved through the sky and through the streets of  
Our day,  
Never imagining- Alma, how easily you stole our breath away.

Robert Rorabeck

## How Full Of This Knowledge

Her high school is at the top of the hill like a church  
The boys are always falling down from like marbles and  
Breaking themselves against one another,  
The bigger ones making a mess of the smaller and laughing about it:  
And she stands above them like a glass object on stilts;  
And she has given her hands up to the sky to  
Undress her:  
And he does and then he comes down upon her like a nursery  
Of kittens,  
Her areolas sparking with the wonderment of the minutiae of  
The crystals of an orchard blessed by a basilisk:  
Her sweat gives of cities of bachelors who really know nothing  
From nowhere about where they live  
As they roll like gentle curses down her; and it really is so pleasant  
That she makes a mess of everything all day,  
And not a plane as the balls to shine anywhere above her:  
The stars hang down like over watered grapes until they are as  
Dangerous as power lines nettled in the aftermath of  
A truancy of hurricanes; and none of it makes any since;  
And I am like something without a backbone struck up beneath her,  
Showing my guts like a disaster of coloring books,  
Because that is I how full of this knowledge I have become.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Girls Go Good With Boys

Girls go good with boys; I see them  
Out walking all the time in  
My neighborhood;  
They rent what cannot be seen; I wonder  
About how long they've  
Been here,  
And how deep they are:  
How easily lives go when  
Girls go good with boys,  
The ribs of serpents who conjoin  
Underneath the  
Airplanes like rabbits over  
Flowering graves-  
Like luxurious tankards filled with  
Stewardesses and their  
Bouquets; such elixirs make my  
Nostrils heave;  
All I have is a pen bleeding  
Stars into my jeans,  
And the shadow that I cast,  
Not even a god to follow me;  
Girls go good with boys,  
Hot footed underneath the overpass-  
I imagine that they go good  
For days and days  
Walking to where the waves  
Leap and dance-  
I follow them at some distance,  
And watch them  
Heartbroken-  
How girls go good with  
Boys  
For days and days.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Grown-Ups Shoul Behave

Weeks of cessation,  
The car won't star, the grass doesn't grow:  
The bricks are red but growing old,  
And all of the biblical passages have been read—  
Lovers, looking each other in the eye, have passed  
Away through various means and woes—  
Cadavers, once dancing in the rain,  
Pretend to be terrapins and cenotaphs in the rain,  
And little girls look up at the sky's nude are  
And really believe that this is how grown-ups should  
Behave,  
And how they too will behave once they have  
The right car and edicate married within the ballrooms  
That otherwise wouldn't move.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Happy I Am

The gardens are so green, and culled by the road:  
Hibiscus rises up and is breezed by the cars:  
My parents used to make love in a Michigan trailer that  
Crunched the backs of mitigated shells;  
And the sea foamed and hiccupped and was a lush to the trees;  
And there were days where this was nice, and I was just born:  
My memory still not hardened from my mother's  
Loins,  
Like purses of the lions that never grow cold: they stick out  
Of the savanna and leap just like hungry fires;  
And the road burns both ways, with kidnappers and lovers:  
And I saw you coming or going, but you didn't see me:  
My mind was so young, but now it waits like a kite stuck in  
Its tree,  
While the dogs bark, and night takes over with its perfumes and  
Transvestites, or the novels of vampires;  
And you ride in your cusp, a blue wave like a chariot that stays  
Busy brushing your flanks;  
And you swell right through the pornographies of my world,  
And the kids from yards and yards over crowd the fences as if at  
A baseball game just to see how happy I am to see you.

Robert Rorabeck



# How Her Beauty Betrayed Me

I have this sailboat under my  
Left eye- it doesn't diminish even  
When I sail out in it looking for you-  
But I used to be beautiful,  
I used to be good and young,  
And the sea is so immense-  
Herself the usual beautiful woman,  
The real estate agent,  
The Avon lady  
Flaunts herself something like a  
Pantheistic bombshell-  
Broad sided, variegated lips billboards  
For casinos,  
Waves and sharks-  
She comes to drink my milk shake,  
But there are no heroes on the boat  
Under my eye:  
It is only one of the newer, more damaging  
Scars- I get them as I drive back home  
To weep,  
As she leaps and shines and laughs,  
Thrusting the bosom of her unappreciative  
Tide after me;  
And it is ugly and doesn't rhyme,  
But I will never look away.  
Even my body will point the way  
How her beauty betrayed me.

Robert Rorabeck

# How I Care About Your Little Black Sandals

You have buttons: buttons,  
Buttons,  
And your friend shot himself in the head:  
In autumn, your buttons will turn  
Venal and consumptive.  
I will drink and there will be no wish to continue,  
But if you let me continue down,  
Then I will get all the way down to you,  
Down to your buttons;  
Of course, they haven't yet turned off,  
And I am in real trouble, but  
I am a real troubadour:  
Let me be your Sancho Panza!  
Let me be your Sancho Panza!  
And I will have razor blades and red lasers  
And x-ray vision.  
What you're doing isn't cruel.  
What you're doing isn't cruel- we can still dance  
As ghosts,  
I suppose: I suppose, and there are fretful vampires  
Yet in Norway,  
And great cerulean bouquets of flowers with their own  
Minds, which I guess is all you deserve,  
And I want to be down into the clefts of your fjords,  
Clefts of your fjords,  
And sell cars with my tongue, sell cars with my tongue for  
You:  
Oh,  
Even if you aren't yet in Michigan, I play for you,  
I play for your daughter and her titular muse:  
My muse:  
Set off on airplanes and fireworks, because I am lying down  
Now  
And aren't you all that:  
And aren't you all that, and we graduated from the same  
Sweltering state,  
But you couldn't care.... You couldn't care:  
Oh,  
God... how I care....

Robert Rorabeck

# How I Feel

All of this dying yellow:  
And all of this:  
All of this awakening from the graveyard-  
And all of this make-shift  
From the happenstance of conquistadors out across  
The dime forts,  
The car ports- and all of this:  
Keeping time with the kings of no one and not  
A thing,  
While a one find time to hang himself, answering to  
All of the yellowed courtyard,  
And all of the diminished heirlooms:  
Why who answers to who is not here anymore,  
And not at all:  
While it all seems to me happening to and waking up  
Monstrous but luckily without any children:  
And this is the offspring of my gut  
Across the great lakes of Michigan or whoever it is that is  
Not here anymore: shut in, this is how I echo,  
While the fields and the playgrounds are filled with mouthfuls of  
Mud, and my buried grandmother cannot sleep anymore:  
Answering to the pallid echoes: this is how I feel:  
And, echoing: yes, this: this is how I feel anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# How I Hold You

Candelabrum at my mother's wedding, like ancient  
Movies and whales moving like kingdoms in the sea,  
And making love:  
You know I've seen you there, when you open your eyes  
To the glimmer through your transoms under the mountain:  
How you move amidst the pinball machines, your  
Daughter cooing,  
Grapes of your majesty where the gods drool like mollusks,  
And the boys kick balls like souvenirs for Christmas:  
You live in a little house atop a crust of snow.  
Some people ice-skate: your eyes are as blue and distant  
As virgins in their forgotten strong-holds,  
And now I know who you are. This is how I hold you.

Robert Rorabeck

# How It All Began

I get so drunk I want to just go to sleep:  
The last time I got so drunk,  
I was a junior in high school and only had the busy  
Information  
Of roman candles coming off multicolored in my  
Hand;  
And leading up to that, and Spain, and afterwards,  
Any combination of words could come,  
Corruptible, still-born, homeless,  
Or incredibly lucky, but they always came bursting for  
You,  
Even though I went to California alone and slept  
With ghosts in abandoned train cars in high yellow  
Grasses for two weeks,  
And left alone;  
And went to college, and lost myself-  
I became more horrible and friendless- I still don't  
Have a telephone, as the airplanes leap with their important  
Men,  
Leading them where we are all headed as long as there  
Is so much gas to pass beneath the stars while pretending  
Not to notice them,  
While down beneath if there is still magic on this pale sphere,  
This esplanade which becomes less greener every day,  
It resides in your dripping bosom which pools  
Like a hidden spring in your womb  
Where the wildlife of other men grow and you give those  
Offspring names,  
And love them- as if a stewardess on his ever skipping  
Plane,  
Though I love you- and will always love you just the same,  
But that is no reason for naming names,  
Or trying to recall how it all began.

Robert Rorabeck

# How It Goes

I'll win because I'm not real,  
And I've been doing this for so long,  
Putting cheeks on my scars,  
Scars on my cherries,  
Getting married to shadows,  
Shadows who love me and say so  
On the swing sets of sweet afternoon  
Truancies:  
I've been doing this for so long,  
Staring from the back of long haired girls  
On buses,  
Reading over their shoulder,  
Throwing stones at bullies if they happen  
To rise against me,  
Saying that I love you, saying that I love  
You; but I've been doing this for so long,  
And I don't even look like myself anymore,  
And I can't remember how I rode  
Up the lightning, or swept long legged into  
The zoo,  
Or skipped across the lake like a stone;  
And your wrist is so supple you belong in  
My art gallery, you belong with the other things  
Who are not real, who I have made more beautiful,  
At least in part,  
And I wish to captivate you and love you,  
And string my fingers upon your body and make you lose  
Your voice,  
And I've been doing this for so long,  
Or at least I've been wanting to, but I am not real,  
At least not any longer, and this is how it goes.

Robert Rorabeck

# How It Happens

Now it happens that I drink good rum:  
Burning like a fire in a forest emblazed by the sea:  
Losing all of my numbers, and the ways to go home:  
My good dog licking my face,  
And all of the silent prayers erasing the features of her  
America:  
And then we go home, anyways: we luxuriate in her shadow,  
While our dogs bask in the sea:  
And I have been thinking about her anyways, even after  
The fireworks have all been lighted off,  
And the words go home to new mother, talking to themselves  
Over milk and scuppernongs:  
While then the electronic hallucinations talk and whisper over  
Themselves,  
Making their own way home after super, precluding the smacking  
Lips of the wolves:  
And it all has to happen for a little while, anyway, underneath  
The overpasses,  
Presupposed by the pedestrians, but walked upon them anyways:  
It all has to happen as a kite unmanned by its brother:  
The rainbow slipped from her mother's bosom:  
The scars on my chest- the way to file at taxes:  
The losses into the sea: the losses into the sea, anyways- I go,  
Anyways- this is how it happens to me.

Robert Rorabeck



# How It Has Happened For You, Alma

I want to kill myself because I am even now in the penumbra's  
Cage fits:

I want to kill myself because I am even now too far into the  
Inevitable fight of the reasoning to the very

End of this:

While I guess he crossed the frontera with you, and  
Had to children like sting rays,

While I cannot even breathe with you anymore:

All I can do is scream and scream while the  
Age old traffic passes,

And it cannot ever be sold by Disney World:

It just goes on an on,

While you have his initial on your right hand, Alma:

While none of this hubpla can ever be bought to be even sold,

And the age old Satan never even gets a day older,

And the days just come:

Alma, don't you know, that this is just the way they belong to  
Us,

And they just belong, like tool sheds, and toy chests,

Like fish happening unto these wishes:

Don't you see, how it has happened for you Alma:

That they have come and come.

And finally and eventually, that I have given up and welcomed them.

Robert Rorabeck

## How It Seems

Imperfectly in a beautiful park: runaway underneath the  
Lights of Ferris Wheels and a Spanish Heaven,  
Singing to the armpits of those  
Angels who fawn around the clouds, laughing right to the  
Areolas of the up thrusts of land:  
Pewter marionettes, as if promises of trees:  
Boiling from the greenish cauldrons of satanic grottos:  
Laughing the smoke of delusion:  
While all of the prettiest of girls are kidnapped by the most  
Churlish of foxes,  
As the flags in their silly banners pester the tailfins of  
Airplanes,  
And then the pretty lips are let off the water fountains:  
And all is seen: like opal:  
The silver blue bellies of the fish showing like fireworks  
Above or underneath the silent prayers of  
Unmanifested dreams: as the children return home from school  
Again,  
Crossing the canals, blessing themselves even as their  
Bicycles are stolen, and the foxes sleep with the mouthless  
Marionettes in the ditches again- as always,  
Or at least this is how it seems.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Little All Of That Must Cost

Did I impress your husband with  
My accidental thoughts;  
Did you share yourself with him,  
Through my words;  
And why are you eyes now green-  
You are well published under your mountain,  
And so you should have no fear of being picked up  
Alone in my sea and crafted into  
Something you always hoped that you should  
Not be;  
Enveloping, little fairies housed in sunken  
Cantelopes;  
The world is a strange world enveloped in a stage;  
And you know not what I know what I should  
Do,  
But I run through the darkness and smell your  
Perfume on the jaded fingertips of all these  
Wayward airplanes,  
Like silver cones shaken awaken from the lips of  
Early morning waitresses;  
And tomorrow I think that I should like to finally be  
Laid:  
And I am all of one number, and I paint by her  
Sweet taint and tell the world of passing cars and wolves  
Of what we should have to sell,  
So that tomorrow if I should have to die, at least she  
Should know with quiet certain how little all of that  
Must cost.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Long It Has Been

Up in the clove of death: Mars, Phobus and Demos  
Circling,  
And little cherished starlets: Alma gets her nails done  
Before she goes up to see her  
Husband: and I love her: I love her like a gold  
Bee dying in the lips of a house cat  
Who really wanted the gold fish while the fair is  
In town- with so much liquor in my gut,  
And so many tourists underneath the mountains-  
They are speaking to snowflakes falling down  
Across the tan trick water fountains-  
And all of the wildlife is learning to carry sticks  
Of fire and there are spreading gossip over how  
Long it has been since my mother has been to their town.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Many Legs I'll Have To Lose

You've combed your hair again and I am drinking wine  
I bought tonight after I left you at that party in wounded  
And high weeded guts of  
West Palm Beach: the grapes are from the grandes bodegas  
Where the poets rest in the trenches of lime,  
And I jogged today after I left you Alma over the waters and  
Into the soft terrain of the rich man's homes,  
And they made me smile and think of you, because you are  
So beautiful that you could fit into any of those homes and  
Make them smaller;  
And how you've cast your eyes out of buses traveling far  
And to the east;  
And how you've never seen the Wizard of Oz, and I never  
Want to have to fire you:  
I feel like a torch in a warm dungeon full of booby traps when  
I am nearer you:  
I feel like a teenager slipping away from school to bask in his  
Pastimes of cemeteries which border the teal tennis courts  
Where the topless din mothers and their professional sisters play  
At ease in their early retirement:  
And after I left you I jogged until I stopped to yawn up at the  
Soft belly of an airplane: it almost didn't seem real.  
Just as none of this seems real: the monsters that I have to kill for  
You are out there but impossible,  
And I love you, but the journey is long and the windshields  
Have fogged  
And I don't know how many legs I'll have to lose to win you.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Much I Have

What uninterested sadness those alligators must feel,  
Laconic in the expressions that never end,  
Reptiles and their grandsons basking under the unremissioned  
Sun-  
Like days of middle-class housewives,  
Or writers better received than this who relocate their heroines  
Back again into the same mixing pot of cul-de-sacs;  
It is in some obtuse way very beautiful, with the rich palm trees  
And yachts all displayed in the distance of the back-nine,  
And the players white on white who I might once have known  
Way back in high school who stayed in class and grew more  
Affluent,  
While I wept scar-chested in the oils and pastels from the guts  
Of broken down school buses; and even what I am doing  
Cannot be excused- The day is clear and influential,  
And the new mothers are in the parks pushing their  
Brilliant trams, and I should be out mowing their yards,  
Or becoming the tail end of a snappy movement-  
I should come out and dazzle alongside all the stunningly  
Bearded minds of the politically correct counter culture,  
But I don't even polish the teak furniture while her parents  
Are driving her up to state college,  
I don't even walk the bichon frise- Too insecure to be a native,  
I finish off all the alcohol,  
I pretend to be a conquistador well famished and lost in the  
Crenulated wilderness; I let my dreams distend from my  
Virulent libido, I smell her general direction and go to sleep neatly  
Choreographed;  
I'll let the rains truncate my sunburned body out in the screened lanai,  
And then I might get up and rob this house,  
Eating all this petty bourgeoisie's expensive jams;  
Never wanting to be this son,  
Tipping the religious silvers to my chin- How quietly the cypress  
Should crook outside mossy shoulders in little blooms;  
Those very same alligators and the uneven traffics shouldn't even  
Say a thing, and I'll walk off with my polished guilt,  
Leaving better insects to pollinate and molt her womb's bouquet-  
They'll toss it to the graves in the end,  
And I'll walk off nearby into the restive shadows, counting

How much I have.

Robert Rorabeck

# How My Story Goes

Walking out in the roses and the waves  
Not knowing where I am,  
And you not knowing why you feel the need  
To bring your body so near to me  
When your eyes are so far away,  
Engorging.  
And the mountains are filled with evil spirits  
While Pedro takes off his close,  
And the Christmas trees sleep like starving conquistadors  
Fearing that they have been brought too  
Far into the wilds of the state of Florida,  
Beautiful men so full of turquoise thrills.  
Men on roller-skates,  
Men slinging the news to girls who live in their mothers  
And fathers trailer parks,  
Girls who always go out tattooed and runny like liquid  
Throws,  
Who know the cries of unbowed rebels,  
And who sing once they have their Christmas tree decorated  
In their tin cans,  
And the canals flow so torpidly while two boys  
Skip school  
Underneath the crenulations where the Florida holies grow,  
And the foundling tiger opens its eyes  
And seeing the shade through the chirping canopy  
Thinks it the pinstripes of its luscious mother,  
Superimposed and handsome he closes his eyes  
Again and dreams the dreams of a young  
And handsome tiger out back behind the rows,  
Or at least that is how my story goes.

Robert Rorabeck



# How Permanently Remains Beauty

Sleepers in the valley—  
Dreams of Richard Nixon in ash,  
Yoke of mascara for her eyes,  
And she's lost her virginity:  
And it all goes this way:  
The flowers crinkling like little girls diaries  
Who've been emolliated,  
Who you think you saw walking away;  
And the uncertain directions their skirts  
Take from the bus stop  
All the unearthly crinoline about which  
The government has worked hard  
At reintroducing,  
Feral parliaments slipping little things  
Inside trees while the moon waxes,  
The bumblebees hum absently  
Especially in springtime and at  
The town hall dance  
While the weight of her legs loses its streamlined  
Shape over all the years,  
While younger and toothier of men keep introducing  
More streamlined cars,  
Which out do her,  
Which make you look away from her,  
Until there is only the quiet outline outside of some  
Store,  
But you still think you've seen her  
Walking about in the ubisunts of unfair weathers,  
Believing that just for a little while  
She could just about raise the dead  
If her eyes lingered in one direction,  
Searing back the layers of untrustworthy tomorrows,  
Proving just how permanently remains beauty.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Precious You Are

Just as I sleep, I drink alone:  
You don't need to see my I.d.,  
I have my dogs with me,  
I have gray hair as proof,  
Still it makes me want to kiss you when  
I buy my liquor, my cheap rum  
Once a week to write my poesy:  
I should kiss you at this line, I will,  
Then I'll return to Florida and sell produce  
With my father, expectant of your greetings.  
They are starting classes tomorrow at the  
University I was to attend,  
I wont be going:  
The light is a shallow play across the shallow bay  
Of my amusements;  
And eventually I'll buy a house here  
After all the girls from my class are married,  
And I'll drink my rum, and say  
Now I know you won't be coming, but it is a  
Beautiful thing to sit out alone and await you  
While breathing my spiced rhymes across the streets  
Where like the steady tortoise, the tourists  
Are amusing,  
Housewives and husbands, with children finely  
Pressed, and I would like to emulate beside the bay where  
The sailboats are sleeping like hypothetical moths,  
Like the greater mythologies are sleeping in my scarred  
Chest,  
Hoping that you will open me up like a legume, like an  
Orchard, like a clam, and eat of me as I would have of you,  
And wear what pearls I have written of you  
Around your neck,  
Even though no one of importance yet knows how  
I have maintained through my thirsty vocabularies how  
Precious you are.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Rupert Brooke Died

I must remember to tell mother that I found out  
How Rupert Brooke died. We heard his poetry on the  
Radio as we passed through Albuquerque, just  
Two poems before we stopped to get gas and corn  
Chips. He died of sepsis from a mosquito bite, before  
He had a chance to see that action which was his  
Pageantry: Only twenty-eight, and considered beautiful,  
And I have found his poetry the same, undiminished  
After a near century, after the body that wrote it has  
Flagged into a cenotaph somewhere in fair England.  
Now I try to figure out where to go, and I read Rupert  
After the sun is down and the dogs are snoring. I have  
Come back from my sister's wedding, and all the little  
Souls gathered there to see her off down the next avenue,  
Freshly shaved and perfumed we went in the finest  
Revelries of twilight. Now, depending on how it goes,  
I may move to Saint Louis or Saint Augustine by the  
Middle of next year, and I look at diminishing real-estate,  
Something I can put my quiet art inside, and thus repose,  
And not long afterwards, hold a kiss to the fragrance of  
Her possibilities, and raise children there, and tell them how  
I found out how Rupert Brooke died, and then hold them  
To my lap and read to them the words of a dead young man;  
Pressed tightly into the beating of my chest, they might  
Come to know what it all means to me, how such twilight  
Echoes even through the youngest estuaries....

Robert Rorabeck

## How The Defeated Angels Fornicated On Rusty Swings In Close Proximity To This Song

If the genius doesn't mow his lawn,  
He feeds the demons that are living there,  
Poisons like crumbs for birds,  
And he realizes the world isn't entirely real,  
And bicycles leap through the sky  
Motioned by the curled and burry dunes,  
And he has forgotten how to get to school,  
Or all the poems he 'd read by Auden when  
His parents were in Arizona,  
And the sky was a water park evaporated in sick  
Capitalism, angels foreclosed upon,  
Beautiful wings taken away,  
The mutation of Christmas bells;  
And something else around the hard corner,  
Something like a defeated pugilist,  
Or the epilepsy of a spoken-word smith;  
And even that night he will squat with the insects  
To light off homeopathic fireworks,  
The fumes of celebrations quite too small to see,  
Forgetting the words his teacher told the class  
And wrote in chalk for all to see,  
And little girls to skip across,  
And melt witches with, while he was sleeping under  
The bus, and the alligators were bathing down the lee,  
And the world was eaten up,  
And the grass drank and grew heartily in humid shadows.

Robert Rorabeck

# How The Moon Steals Her Light

The airplanes roam the earth as I make a home for  
Myself:

The fires burn across her lips, and the beasts with horns  
Trumpet like wedding day gems through the snow;

And down from there we sell Christmas trees

And fireworks,

And the Ferris wheels leap torpidly in their belligerence-

Her world is dressed in a surplice slathered

By tallow,

And when she goes out into her yard, the waves lather

The shingles,

And the otters chatter like birds in the waves,

Laughing up to her as they lie on their backs

Seeing perfectly and enjoying how the moon steals her light.

Robert Rorabeck

## How The Poem Must Go

The best way to do this poem,  
Is to ask which exit I must take to go  
To where she is,  
For the highway is like a flooded river,  
And might deposit me into  
An undiscovered shady grove full  
Of anonymous lives, an enclave where  
No one goes to work anymore,  
But plays baseball on the dusty red diamond  
Out back of their mobile homes,  
And drink domestic beers in lawn chairs  
While asking each other what things they  
See in the clouds,  
And listens to what the sea might tell them  
From far away, though they never venture  
To find her, because gas is so expensive,  
And they might be disappointed by her shore,  
And they let their hair grow long,  
And the women don't wear bras,  
And the children don't wear shoes but  
Read the bible straight like whiskey,  
And let their homes be camouflaged by the  
Brown tears of the eager to strip pines  
And oaks;  
But to conclude the poem how it must end,  
I would rather know the mathematics to her  
Driveway,  
The number to her soul, and the keys to every  
Lock of every hinge,  
For the highway is a big mother, and the  
Sun is blinding, and the roads are lonely and  
Not fond of findings, but if I could know where  
To love her, and if I were allowed,  
I would go to her and carry her out behind her  
Little house to the winded river she has never  
Seen and baptize in one part river  
And one part lips,  
And say her name consecutively for every day  
Onwards, and bare children and watch them

Grow until they took off down the highway  
In brand new cars of their own,  
Looking for their own exit ramps, and new  
Lips of their own,  
And that is how the poem must go.

Robert Rorabeck

# How The Sky Is Blue

The bicycles gone by everyday from school:  
Telling of their littlest of selves across the bridges  
Leaping across the heads of water moccasins:  
The jewel-sized grottos, the bats  
And frogs strung there like the strangest of garments  
Drying in the darkness of housewives  
Who have slipped across themselves to sleep-  
And these are the words inbetween the homeopathic  
Motes of their lips:  
These are the hummingbird canoes looking their  
Own ways while the otters make love, and the  
Truants pass off fireworks absent of holidays:  
And everyday is here, glistening, touching one another  
And praising how the sky is blue.

Robert Rorabeck



# How The Song Should Feel

This is how the song should feel—  
Drunken and giving birth after school—  
Vomiting into wishing well  
At the tiny malls while the china dolls  
Sleep all to themselves—  
And the heavens take up all four corners of the  
Universe—  
And the eyes of the crocodiles cannot cry,  
But you remain my delusion—  
Like life on a planet where no one can breathe:  
I read stories about you that no one will believe,  
And the children go home  
Weeping up to their stars,  
Waiting for their wings to be clipped  
And the wounds the be banished—  
So the can be finished playing baseball and  
Make-believe  
To go home to full bosomed mothers  
Who have no better excuse than to love them,  
The way churches love their congregations—  
And the way the long and lonely and absent hours  
Love their highways.

Robert Rorabeck

# How They Rise Again

Favors for my soul:

These are these, mountain and trees, and other things

Through the purgatory of our eaves;

And it hurts me Alma every time that you are still going home to  
Him,

When I am a good man, even when you called me a great man,

And the stars, and the sun,

And the friends that I couldn't even resurrect hoeing with the

Dragon's fangs underneath the falling tears

Where I lost my sisters, but who came back again, bugling and calling

Home again their better men across the prairies

And the savage stains of Indians:

The tattoos and the stolen horses, and the other things that are so

Painful and homeless,

The ride the range looking for their strange and moaning:

The sun in the sky beating the clouds, and the fairest of airplanes

Swearing as they are touching down;

And then in the new morning the same old thing: other things that

I cannot truly be describing, cursing and beating themselves

As they rise: Oh, how they rise again.

Robert Rorabeck

# How To Become Men

There in a tweed outcome- pretending to be a  
Friend of hummingbirds along their  
Busy highway-  
When the airplanes are milking the sky,  
Or at least  
Leaping for it, their stewardesses teetering  
On the precipice of the middle class  
Taken off  
On bottle rockets: where will they land,  
But over the saddles of  
Frog princes- so far away, they cannot  
Remember their high school classroom  
Or what they learned in dazes  
Through the courtyard's sunshine- but it  
Doesn't matter to them:  
Soon they will be laughing with new men,  
In the back of their minds knowing  
That, if they have to,  
They can always be returned to the lost and  
Founds of their husbands  
Who even them weep in the dim crepuscule  
Across the work stations of their  
Garages- like men who want to become foxes,  
Or like foxes who have learned how to become men.

Robert Rorabeck

# How To Count

Antediluvian city in its high equinox of  
Ladders  
And key stones, I don't know what  
You mean.  
I curl my pretty bangs to hide my scars and  
Look up through the stratified séance of  
Aeroplanes swimming in the  
Albino mud,  
Like birthday cake and different areas of  
Fish:  
Like letters to god, but there is no religion.  
He is a man of the sunken forest  
And he holds up the Hottentots and headhunters  
With his gummy fortified roots,  
Thing of stuff he would have liked to have had,  
Waiting for his parents to come home with  
Fried chicken  
And good comely apples to make a sauce to smear  
At bedtime,  
While the Mabrookes floated their impotent  
Curses like paper jets around the suction of ceiling  
Fans,  
Representations of high heeled utopias of silver  
Winged captains and taught calved stewardesses covered  
In tinfoil like hot deserts that burned your  
Fingers and your teeth,  
Just an idea for a chain of restaurants that would have  
Floated over the snow caps and the skiers no tinier  
Than ants except that they too had learned  
How to count.

Robert Rorabeck

# How To Cry

In the reeds: bottle-rockets—  
Cenotaphs shot off like celebrations besides  
My scarred cheeks years ago—  
Besides girls who don't echo anymore:  
They are done bartending,  
Their wings have touched down and have  
Folded up softly—  
So now there is not a place left on the  
Highway that is not marked with  
The copper plagiarisms of a cenotaph—  
Disney World is a close as death.  
The alligators are all left smiling but only  
Because they do not know what else  
To do any they never learned  
How to cry.

Robert Rorabeck

## How To Finish This

If I could die tonight I wouldn't  
Have to try to give bouquets to Diana in the morning:  
In the morning,  
Who does she love- There is a red delicious apple in  
My throat and now I've  
Slain  
Frank O'Hara while no one was watching:  
Frank O'Hara, you are a faggot, and I am that destroying  
Flame,  
And now Beowulf is dead, by the dragon or whoever,  
And Tolkien has really beautiful hair,  
Grown out and Norwegian over the tulips and violets field;  
And Sharon is in her kiln of Gold:  
Hello, Sharon: Save me Sharon from all of these  
Goblins,  
All of this luscious horde, but don't worry, Sharon,  
Because you cannot save me- you are so very beautiful  
Sharon:  
You are the stained glass that makes a sweet church of this  
World-  
You desalinate the sound for dolphins, Sharon:  
Do you hear me girl, while my tired face gets busy washing  
Citrus,  
While the sun and traffic repeats laughing, never having to  
Know me:  
They are in Disney World, and if they could they would  
Butcher you:  
And they would; and fireworks, and fireworks,  
And independent belief-  
The apostrophes of the consolations taking walks across  
The encrypted flow of really lustrous glaciers and all of their  
Roe:  
Sharon, I am dying tonight, and you should have to finish this,  
Because I cannot remember how to finish this-  
And I guess this is how we go....

Robert Rorabeck

# How To Fly

Bruised around this new eye and not looking  
Good,  
But when have I ever.... Really;  
And I never learned to surf.  
I got lapped by the black boy when I tried out for  
Long distance running,  
Didn't I,  
But I still loved to jog alone,  
Under the curiously voluptuous moon,  
When there was no vultures,  
But houses on stilts which went so far up  
Across the fields of bamboo where the samurai first  
Fought and rested,  
And nothing was figured out or resolved,  
But it kept them busy all day,  
While we shared steaming cups of chi tea,  
And once in awhile I tried to save a sweet victim of  
Cholera or some other truly romantic disease  
Like that.  
You almost looked jaundiced as you went off first in  
The early morning and then more and more later in the  
Afternoon to see the men you preferred  
Making love too,  
And I wept like a truly purple flower,  
And injected the tears of poppies and we both won Oscars  
And learned how to fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# How To Get Down

Animals of toys and cloth,  
Or my mother's hands brushing the rough  
Skin of  
Christmas trees. She is even saying to  
Me now,  
You must be good- you must be,  
As the canal slopes away,  
Past the sleeping campers and down to  
The hypnotized alligator  
To where the little girls come sleepwalking  
Across the slow green water,  
Crushing the lilies whose throats hang twisted  
Up with lost bicycles  
And wavering prostitutes: this is the thing  
That is,  
Falling down from the suburban giants:  
Here is where she is, reptilian- green throated,  
Singing her wares,  
As the airplanes whisper to her like anxious  
Bees because they cannot figure how  
To get down.

Robert Rorabeck



## How To Play

Circuses of tricks and good looking women:

The inspectors want more money from me: I just want to

Ejaculate and string out on the swings:

I don't need to be around other blond boys: I can be my own

Sun flair quiet alone:

I can change the dates of the month while my grandparents

Are no longer alone but up in their deep or shallow graves

Names pressed against their hill.

Like I wish my name was pressed against yours:

Two be the other wing of your butterfly, to smell your scent

While I deliver your letter to the world:

I have been delivering your letters to the world for the better

Part of a decade, while you have sucked off the spikenard

Of really lesser Sherpas:

I can carry my own truck up the icebergs of the Mother Goddess:

I can make it back down on my tippytoes, barefooted:

Don't you believe that my wishes for you have been real,

And that you are the only instrument that I have ever cared to

Know how to play.

Robert Rorabeck

# How To Ride Bicycles

The night is almost pretty like a fun house  
Cast off its solar light bulbs,  
And the breeze can say anything in the night,  
And she can walk right over the pools  
Of the elite houses looking in through the backyard's  
Windows,  
And see that the fine, fine families are fast,  
Fast asleep,  
And the words that went throughout the day unspoken  
Lie with them,  
Cozy like a shadowy fire:  
And there are entire seas milking beneath their eyes,  
And anyways,  
The alligators are tied up like zippers in love and sated  
With their unlucky golfers,  
And last month was Halloween, but I rarely have enough;  
So that the cat ate the poisoned lobster,  
And now we walk the neighborhood together,  
Both of us purring, imagining you fast asleep wearing your  
Plastic berets all fast and ready for school,  
So then tomorrow you can leap straight up,  
While we pine on with the cups of pine cones in the shadows,  
Still wishing we knew how to ride bicycles.

Robert Rorabeck

# How To Swim

When the moon rises above the movie theatre  
There will be no more thoughts for  
Unicorns, or cherry orchards,  
But I will have to get out of my car  
And explain a bit,  
Or I will have to forget about this  
Christmas tree in my foyer—  
I will have to carry it outside to the nuisance  
Of all of the feral cats—  
Or maybe I will have to go back to school until  
They discover a new planet with life on it—  
But until then, there will be new rum,  
And problems with my features—  
And ways to get around that are faster than  
On foot—  
And my wife will sit beside me, and we will  
Think up a mythology together that will become our  
Domesticity—and the lights will go out in  
The cathedrals—as the dragons return on tippy-toes—  
And the moon abates for the selkies who  
I am afraid never learned how to swim.

Robert Rorabeck

## How True To Life

The clock always seems to be reading  
9: 11, which is a good time to be drinking,  
Since she isn't coming out,  
And all the grass all around the castle is fully  
Grown and there are so many rabbits  
And snakes in it you think you'll never starve;  
And it is an orchard, or a clearing,  
Or a divine place for different states of witchcraft  
Above which the airplanes are always leaping,  
And the deer, even the tiny key deer, are always  
Trying to emulate them:  
Bounding like the lower forms of aristolean spheres  
You learned about in your community classes on  
The pre-Socratics; and somewhere off in the woods  
There are houses; and you've gotten it confused,  
Because the dogs are purring- In fact, the woods are only  
A green ring, and it is mostly houses,  
And buildings building bigger concerning their importance,  
And the churches are very small and populated by  
Various species of talking rodentia and souvenirs-  
The televisions are always preaching though, and food  
Can be delivered to where you lay barefoot in the grass,  
You head up and waiting for her to appear or disappear  
Atop the top window of the tower;  
It is the easiest thing to do, and there was one time  
When you thought you heard her singing or taking a shower,  
But now she is so captivated by what is going on inside  
Her little world beneath the airplanes and flying men,  
That she doesn't even care to prove to you  
How truly to life she might be.

Robert Rorabeck

# How Truly I Love Her

I fear I am drowning youth by your  
Tongue:  
I have gray but I still get carded,  
And now I want to by the psycho skull,  
Monster-eyed  
Quenching his thirst off your paps:  
My teacher still lives here,  
But Sharon is in Colorado a million miles  
Up,  
But I don't give a d\$mn about airplanes:  
I am a very swift Jack-  
I can leap right over airplanes:  
All day long at the aquarium hypnotized by  
Sting rays,  
And all the world boils down to a toy boat  
In the bathtub of a true lover,  
And when she comes tomorrow all I want to  
Teller her is how truly I love her.

Robert Rorabeck

## How We Close

I dreamed that I loved you  
All made up like a burlesque debutant  
At a funeral,  
And that is the best of what I can say of  
You,  
Because of my rum and immortality:  
That you are a beautiful girl,  
S-,  
And when it comes to the hardness of each and  
Every night,  
I am a needful man,  
But you are married;  
And yet you are as sweet and scientific  
As Bengy's sweet and scientific kite,  
And I want to jog and need for you in new old ways,  
And I want to break into high schools for you and  
Remember the good old days:  
The ways you never held me,  
The ways you made fun of me,  
And forced me into the library,  
And made me think up these things,  
And all the nights spent like a paper snowflake,  
Cut up and lonely,  
Always drinking like cut flowers,  
Visiting prostitutes and visiting lies:  
I just want to plant myself between you pale and  
Milky thighs,  
And that is just what I do with my narcoleptic  
Hullabaloo:  
I just do this,  
And imagine us both lost together in a train that  
Was never to exist,  
Lost in the movies, and lost in Greece, spinning the  
Lost and sexy road:  
It curves and curves like Wolf Creek Pass which is now  
Closed for the winter,  
And all the better mountains weep naked and white:  
Naked and white,  
Naked and white- Thinking of you, S-.

And this is how we close.

Robert Rorabeck

# How You Might Cry For Me

Oh god- why even try to record what I m doing:  
If I am failing as the sky is looming then what, of what am I doing:  
In the prettily worded lips of high school,  
While the city bastions, whole the monkeys rest their wings momentarily upon  
The doorstep of our haloes of what we are doing then I have  
Nothing left to prove: Sharon, deep and ancient Sharon, my sick  
Muse,  
I am really worried, because I am thinking that with your body you haven't  
Been down into the ancient and luscious throat of the grandest of canyons  
And only if I could take your hand and make love with you far  
Past the voyages of our savagely honest and vulgarly promised land,  
I would find you sleeping with the sharpest of instruments who kept, e  
From  
Breathing: Sharon:  
Sharon, aren't I dreaming, to find you bared naked near the shore:  
Sharon, aren't you reading these little pedestals arrested out in the bare  
Naked center of this clay cemetery;  
And if I should continue then it would just be just one footstep before  
Another, Sharon;  
While I am drowning in your sea, lost and beautiful, without a single  
Hoping thought of how you might cry for me.

Robert Rorabeck



## However Far Away

Bodies persistent in their new marriage and I am  
Taking the long way around my caracoles,  
And I don't want to have to say anything more about  
Alaska:  
The grizzly bears there and the cathedrals that I have trained  
For,  
Not to mention the candelabrum of mosquitoes:  
I would rather spend every reckless breath in Florida alone and  
Celibate pining over  
Alma- playing that I will give her the winsome keys to my bright  
And yellow house,  
Give her all that is good: give her the breath of my soul,  
And make sure that forever she is only populated by the love of  
Her best man, her groom that sang to her on her wedding day  
While my mother peeked inside a window and then  
Went back outside to gossip with her sister,  
While the alligators gargle their fluoride and Erin listens further upstate  
To her bands; and she smokes weed and jerks off too, just like  
A real tomboy that I've hidden many splendiferous things for in the  
Real hollows of the old oak tree, while the hobos skip town,  
And sing the better blues until I have no one left to sing to;  
And then the day finally comes that there is an eclipse, and Erin  
Metamorphoses, but she still has nothing to give to me,  
And I look deeply into your eyes, whoever you are, and however far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Howling

Imagine what the sea is  
Looking like tonight  
With more liquor in  
My body,  
And your love budding like  
A black orchid  
Between my lungs,  
My dogs howling out  
In Arizona as  
I am being hit  
By a car.

Robert Rorabeck

# Huddling In Septembers

There are places I still believe in  
Where I never met you  
Huddling in Septembers  
Near the sea,  
Where I walk past your window  
Every evening and never see you  
Though your curtains are drawn  
And you are sitting at the  
Dinner table, holding hands with  
Your family,  
Praying,

And though I walk past you  
Time and time again,  
It is always the same night  
For the moon is hung and  
The stars, like ornaments  
Decorating your neighborhood,  
The way they did for us,  
Now the blue whispers  
Resting in graveyards of  
Rooms we once occupied  
Now occupied by others

The night I was with you on  
The walk, where I still walk alone,  
Your night lies  
Further  
In the necessities of carrying-on  
Where I am the thing best  
Forgotten in the seas  
Of many nights passing,

Where I now walk,  
Looking forwards,  
I can never see you  
Through your window,  
Though you are always  
Occupied there

As you set your table  
Carefully under the lights

You are singing to yourself  
And are warm inside

I am outside

And the green lawns  
And the newly washed cars  
The tiny stone walkways  
Curling beneath cypress,  
And through it all the quiet  
Sounds a neighborhood  
Makes when it is contented

All this  
Decorates your new mind  
And everything here serves as  
Pillows on which  
You rest

Where I walk now you  
Never go, and your eyes never linger,  
Though I am always right there  
Walking by you, looking in-  
Every evening is the same evening,  
And all the evenings huddling in  
Septembers,

When once we walked together by  
Your house and held hands and  
Swung in the park. Where we had  
Tremendous dreams of children  
And publications  
Here you never go  
Alone. You bring your husband and  
Your children, and when you go this  
Is now your park,  
Your green space in which you grow,  
And I am to you like a thing thrown

Deliberately out to sea,  
Washed away from your memory

So I am left walking alone  
In front of your house, every night  
Looking for you through your window,  
But never seeing you,  
My footsteps moving backwards,  
Year after year,  
Remembering you as you  
Step forward

Leaving me  
huddling  
In Septembers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Humbled

What can I do to save  
My God?  
The cheetah has eaten his  
Left leg and he has done  
Moaning in the cavorting  
Grass/  
He called my name so many  
Times;  
He reshaped me with his  
Last breath,  
With his eyes lost,  
Dying-  
I look a little bit like him,  
The graying man in the mirror,  
The remains of the quiet kid  
Who skipped class  
And none remembered to  
Yell out his name  
As he stole across the canal.  
Then out on the wilderness  
The cops are getting killed-  
They are trying to reach God,  
There are so many traps;  
I'm sure you know/  
Her eyes are full of quicksand,  
Her tongue is a  
Slithering gold,  
She ate him  
That night you tried to  
Dance with her  
Ten years old she told  
You were forgotten-  
Lit you afire and tossed  
You from her body,  
Like a paper airplane,  
Crash landing across the bedroom  
She waltzes away  
Like a beautiful air-born plague;  
Now you too old-

The winter is loping like  
A hoary clown-  
Ice is blanketing the crime  
Scene  
Where the corpse lays  
Fed on,  
The remnants of God  
A Hollywood massacre,  
Pulp-fiction:  
Cusped, Humbled.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hundred Dollar Bill

Going to Colorado for a celebration,  
But not one of language-  
We don't do that in my family, put on airs  
For things which might not exist-  
The poet's self immolation in the waves  
Is ignored, because there is nothing  
Lucrative about dying for a form which  
Cannot be bottled:  
So we celebrate the pseudo-sciences,  
Break horses in the high dust,  
Vote Republican and bury our dead deep enough:  
When it comes to taxes, f! ck them,  
Because we did what we could and we're  
Not drinking their tea anyways-  
We work straight on through noon,  
And my sister has done good and well,  
And sometimes I see her swimming in the sky  
When the forecast is hazy, and the fires are bringing  
Out the sweaty lions from their kills:  
Hauntingly they gambol into the traffic,  
Their tongues rippling a silence which in stanzas  
Has not been written down outside the sycophantic  
Trills their tracks lie under:  
She is getting married in August down the neck  
Of my mountain, and it will be such a thrill,  
And we will fire our guns high up through the  
Unbroken forest, mother and father will kiss,  
Like my sister and her husband will kiss,  
Like the lion's sudden kill,  
And I will lie against the earth like my woman,  
And smirk like a drunken toy again to my other sister,  
And night will fall,  
And god will have his will.

Robert Rorabeck



# Hundreds Of Thousands Of Years Ago

Oh- yes, the night proceeds;  
And it is a haughty night,  
And not everything will succeed through it-  
The wind tunnels I can only make it halfway  
Through to Christmas-  
I can't even finish this thought-  
And I want you as if I was Mark Twain cherishing  
The cheapest tobaccos,  
And now I have nothing left to sing- Maybe I am  
Being rude,  
Or maybe accept me as your king.  
Right now I am letting the mosquitos drink my blood,  
My scars, my chances,  
But I am really wanting you-  
Erin, or anything: I am not doing good- I've written  
A book and I am homeless and no one cares,  
And I wanted you for a thousand reasons hundreds of  
Thousands of yesterdays ago,  
But even in high school you were reintroducing me  
To your newer me,  
And I couldn't even look at myself in the mirror  
When I skip classes and stole into things  
Hundreds of thousands of years ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hungary

The trumpets are sounding  
Because there is something grand;  
They are heralding the sun,  
Jove, bull-formed, trampling the land:  
All of America under the hoofed meat  
Of a man once-godly,  
The stampede of cuneiform  
Smoke-signals choking the cities—  
The heat of this oven scorches my body  
Awake, I struggle to breathe  
First and foremost I remember your name, Oh Lord!  
The angels sing like a choir of school girls  
In the shade, on their knees under the trees—  
Behind me, those old days are dust,  
And my life, the murdered man walking  
Around with a knife sleeping in his chest.  
My dreams piled together forms of transportation  
All a rust,  
Your name like a serpent's tongue tasting your breast—  
Outside, you go swimming in the sky.  
Upon the green bowl of earth I see you lay.  
Birds hear me say you name when I cry—  
Oh Lord! There you are swimming all day,  
The first light of thought when my mind dives away,  
Your thighs like marble statues high-heeled to the east.  
I just want to go back to sleep and forget you today,  
And let my hungry dreams be deceased....

Robert Rorabeck

# Hunting And Gathering

Weren't there poets before there were words,  
Cause didn't they need love in the boreal eras of moose and rime-  
My brothers, the grandfathers of her eyes of sad prehistory;  
When her shoulders are naked opal on the stereoscopic hills:  
Expressing themselves with bitter howls to  
The throbbing night,  
And in the flickering stalactites of fanged caverns,  
Dripping with the minerals of torpid architecture,  
As in the wombs of the earth, and the animals without names  
Roaming, the men without names:  
They can smell her joints through her skin, and her needs.  
Wasn't there love then all of the truth,  
The magnetic directions without slabs of death:  
The concrete tombs we go into work now:  
And the occupations which give us the speech of our employers,  
The busy blue cars buzz from each infected wound.  
And didn't our antediluvian lovers know better of love,  
Wordless, speechless hunting for the vocabularies  
Nothing more than mist from her sought lips:  
The need to survive,  
Her thighs skipping across stones on the high banks:  
An icicle drips, she cries naked like a blue lion in the trees,  
As the clouds swathe the highest points of the earth like mourners:  
Wanting them, wanting something from her peripheral vision:  
The heavenly crux of his stonebuilder hands cupping her,  
Unwashed, untrimmed;  
The poetry in the body like scraping flint,  
The discovery of fire: the ecstatic truth of the leather tramps;  
Now: all of this,  
And the attempts the blue collared scribes make to  
Scratch it out: This is not love. This is not rhyme.  
The city moves, but doesn't breathe, the lines do not lead to water.  
This is not poetry, and there is not a poet left alive  
Who doesn't live in the cages of feral wolves, snarling his proofs,  
Though we fools swirl the wine down our throats,  
And call the doggerel of cadavers good:  
Where they found her then could never be spoken,  
But the quiet sentinels horned and pined swayed unreasonably:  
That was the only time there was poetry:

Poetry is forgotten.... Poetry is living above the mountains,  
And beneath the seas: Poetry has fled to the moon Unspoken: Now,  
Only arithmetic of uneven sums,  
The tin halos of politicians who worship no one but steady whores;  
The men with cap guns, the plastic conquistadors.  
Come down from this; it isn't real. This is the last quarter in the machine.  
Afterwards, it will go still.  
It will stop entertaining us with whizzing predictions.  
Then my love will find us muted in our time, and she will press  
Our love to us from her love,  
As flowers are kept in between the pages of lonely authors,  
And there will be nothing to be said;  
And there will be everything shouted from her gaze.  
We will not say a word. We will return to her shelter,  
And to the throbbing chambers,  
The poetry we will reclaim,  
We will neither hear nor speak.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hunting For Your Elusive Love

How can I give you more of this ever failing verse?  
I pick a line for you, it withers before it reaches your lips.  
If I do not pick something beautiful enough,  
You grow inattentive,  
And give your heart to brave soldiers.  
So I travel up the lighted stairs to the attic  
Where the grandfather lives with his little girl.  
They know everything about the mountains,  
And they can sing:  
I bottle their romance in an empty medicine bottle.  
The label is torn off,  
And you can use it for a vase;  
It is easily big enough for all the things that I say,  
To puncture your heart with an arrow head  
I stole from my mother,  
And that gives me time to look for new phrases  
That grow where the dead men lay tongue-tied  
In the ravishing gardens:  
As you pause,  
Because it is dangerous, the games we young men play,  
And at anytime you can return to your queen:  
In the forms of water and wood,  
Just one suckle from the breast of that muse,  
The lady only the published can tackle,  
And you will never again turn your head to this page,  
So I must open up these wrists  
And search for the novel species of a diviner kingdom,  
Leaping through the canals and estuaries,  
For phrasings of thought I have to discover,  
To butter your lips, and butcher your heart,  
Because you are the kind my wanting needs,  
And no other, though I may live alone  
In the valleys of unrestive attentions unto old age,  
I will remain for you the cartographer of perfumes,  
The trapper of far away gazes,  
Hunting for your elusive love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hurricane Of The Headless Chicken

Extreme actions have gotten you defunct,  
Sweet lady of wild freedom,  
Swinging like a b\$тч-swung censer by the hopping  
Priest,  
First to the left and then to the right:  
From the hillbillies to the huckster darkies,  
Blowing your nose straight through  
The freedom night;  
And I have nothing more to say to you:  
Grey haired, and quietly scarred, what more could  
I say to you to keep you from straying from  
My libertarian yard.  
As long as I keep myself unmolested I can keep my  
Own country in the wild and extravagant  
Yard,  
Stroking my pink flamingo and cursing the free birds,  
Biding my time,  
Practicing delayed gratification in the eye of a  
Hurricane of the headless chicken.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hurricane Season (Censored)

The great sea's rim overflows—  
The hurricanes in South Florida  
Flood parking garages and low  
Grave-like suburbias in cornucopias  
Of spiny sea-urchins, the color  
Of anemic arteries; waves riot  
Through gated communities and salt  
Bow-ties and bleach lady's bobbing evening-gowns  
Upsetting the dress-codes of moonlit swarays,  
Making old ladies gasp in Palm Beach  
And grab their jewelries, as old men  
Clutch their toupees—  
Down military trail and US 1, mother  
Nature shuts out the lights and beckons out  
The looters, as if she is showing us  
What she thinks of social distinctions,  
As her waves rise up, a commune of  
Salty blue horses, the blue collared laborers  
Of her tide that swells and march down  
Okeechobee Boulevard stopping traffic—  
Conducted by the moon, oared as if in a  
Cauldron by the moaning, chain-rattling winds,  
Her waters wreath and spit and curse and laugh;  
They slap down high rises and \$uck in condominiums,  
They turn golf courses into lakes  
And parks into swimming pools;  
Professionals are downgraded into castaways  
And day laborers find permanent employment  
As rummy pirates;  
As she reclaims the everglades for those  
Things that slither, Florida's reptilian ancestry,  
The ghosts of the Seminoles in great tribes spill out  
Of unmarked graves as the useless student body is packed  
Into the stadiums now mass undersea tombs,  
Where entire fraternities and sororities now  
Sway waverly like leafy kelp upon the sea-bed, while  
Horse-shoe grabs eat out their disinfected eyes and  
Nest in their hollowed skulls....  
As illegal aliens ride by grinning waves, on old

Rusty bicycles gifts regurgitated from the sea's throat,  
Drinking the free liquors that come floating opening by,  
Equalized with the pasty professionals half-alive,  
Bits of flotsam and jetsam, as their transportation  
Is dictated by the tides, while their clients cling like  
Wet rats scurrying up  
The highest boughs of the mangrove trees,  
As sunlight cuts up the land like a comic tragic play,  
Bounding in brilliant flashes along each crest  
And down through each trough,  
Like leaping yellow spiders—  
The only show in town, the drunken boats go spinning  
By as if God was a little child playing his games  
While his mother bathes him, as the sea over-  
Spills her salty gown, drooling over the rim of  
That porcelain basin down I-95,  
From Miami up through Palm Beach,  
The great shadowed beasts swim, the leviathans  
Called in by the sea, like strange aeroplanes  
Over the eerily swaying heads of the sleepy masses....

Robert Rorabeck



## Husband's Haiku

I f'ed her bet-  
Ter than her husband with-  
Out even touching her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Hypothetical Kiss

Canoes drifting the Mississippi all a little while  
We had an apartment  
With our dogs in Saint Louis Missouri-  
And we dreamed of Sara Teasdale  
As we drove beside the Bellefontaine Cemetery,  
But never figured out exactly where  
She existed for  
Eternity- while the fire hydrants were red  
At the corners,  
And the black children played into crepuscule-  
Until all of it was lost  
And we got blood poisoning and nose bleeds  
As the Ferris wheels churned  
The tourists into a make-believe confection-  
They seemed to resist themselves,  
But then they thought better of it and evaporated-  
Into the pretty wives tales and open lips  
Of foxes,  
And I drove away, heartbroken- matriculating,  
Trying to find my love even though to someone she  
Had already spoken-  
And now here she is, filling up my life as she  
Comes to me from across the railroad tresses-  
As I think of her, and hypothetically kiss her lips,  
And pretend to count her blessings

Robert Rorabeck

# I Also Worship You

The bus drivers love one another as they deliver  
All of the children to their school,  
And then they pass away like salmon, like mariposa,  
Like birthday cakes in your sweet forests,  
Alma:  
And I would like to pass away like that too:  
After I don't see you anymore, after your body doesn't come  
Around me anymore,  
But goes back to your children and your rabbits;  
And I really like it when you let me buy you lunch;  
But I know you are trying to keep fit, and speckle against the sun  
Like the candles of all of those saints:  
Your body is always on the run, washing tables, picking grapes:  
And I approached you in your truck today, the favorite color  
Of your body,  
And ate the sandwich you offered me, and then I went off through  
The forest to transplant plant palm trees:  
I got a hundred dollar tip while I was away from you, but  
It wasn't worth it,  
To be away for a moment from the orchards of your body,  
The sibilance off the gunfights that you breathe:  
When everything else isn't real, you become the arcade:  
You become the highlights of all the best girls,  
And I worship you when I am next to your body:  
Alma, I worship you when you are home again with your husband  
And children and rabbits:  
Alma, when I am alone I also worship you.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Always Find Myself

Asphodels in the glorious equipages of  
Unmined bedrooms where the canaries still sing,  
And I ejaculate on the green carpet  
And kiss the paperclip nosecones of paper  
Airplanes:  
And when I am alone I can go outside and shoot  
Off fireworks into the blistering night,  
And try to look up the skirts of the goddess who lives  
On my roof,  
Because I don't have any money, but I have so much  
Time:  
And maybe I am feral, and maybe I rhyme:  
Maybe I can only ride my bicycle around in my own  
Neighborhood:  
And maybe I don't know why it is that the sky floats  
Or why it is that girls love the men that they do,  
But the bus always takes me home past the den of foxes  
And to the symphony of torpid lions,  
And when I am walking my way alone across the  
Murky rink of the canal's hotel room,  
Why it is, Alma- that I always find myself thinking of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Am Dancing Alone Tonight

When I get drunk, say like tonight,  
Then I go out under the stars and piss: Say,  
This is not like Disney World, this is not like  
Any other night, and the sitcoms are over,  
And I have to piss, and look up into the awful  
Expanse like any other trailer park, and pretend  
That I have not been climbing any other mountains,  
And my name is not Evan, but Robert;  
And I am not a sommelier; I cannot tell the difference  
Of wine, and my girlfriend of 5 yrs ago is  
F\$cking her husband tonight: and you have to excuse  
Me because I do not drive Lexus, and I am not a Lawyer  
Who lives in South Florida, who married my ex-girlfriend  
Tonight: ha, ha, ha, like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs  
But rewritten so one of them is a lawyer and is loving  
My girlfriend tonight; but now that the show is over,  
You'll have to excuse me, because I am going home to feed  
And water my dogs, and it is such a night for lackadaisical drama;  
Or insouciant, drama, a vocabulary I a familiar with,  
But I no longer love, her; but I love her,  
And I am dancing alone, I am dancing all alone  
Tonight, and there is nothing for it; except for tomorrow.  
Perhaps I shall call her, if her name is tomorrow;  
I shall call her tomorrow, but for now  
I am dancing alone tonight.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Am Going To

I think about calling you,  
But what is your name?  
Red River? Indian Giver?  
Did you star in that movie  
With John Wayne?  
Inside the ribbed cage  
Of your heart's room,  
Do you have an old soul?  
Does it still play the drums  
Of your life's pounding need  
With the same religiosity  
As when you were newly born?  
That is not rain rattling  
On your window,  
For that is me— I want  
To smash through the glass  
Pain of your eyes and tear  
Down those curtains  
Blocking the light—  
Then you will see me,  
Like a terrible policeman  
Come to save you even though  
You haven't called to complain—  
I don't care. I am going  
To step straight through  
Your walls,  
Like the nightmares  
Your father gave your childhood,  
I am going to hold your  
Neck to check the vocabularies  
Of your pulse.  
I am going to lean you back  
And there I am  
Going to kiss you—  
Afterwards, if you  
Cry for me,  
I will ask your name.



# I Am Waiting

I am waiting for a knock,  
A recognition, a need,  
I am waiting to French kiss  
A woman again—  
It has been so long;  
It has been forever—  
I am waiting for her to take my hand,  
To take my body,  
To take my lead,  
And we will go down like exhausted  
Workers in a brilliant factory—  
She will have no need to wonder,  
She will have no need to worry—  
I am the ripe prince of her story....  
I am waiting for her glance,  
I am the vessel on which she must disembark,  
But nothing is left to chance—  
This is my right hand,  
This is my left....  
They both do good work,  
And they will ensure her safety....  
We can get married in Church,  
Or in a park. We can get married on the shore,  
Or at our place of work....  
But I am waiting,  
For her eyes upon me,  
For her breath to inhabit  
The space of my breathing,  
Her lips to spread open like  
Wildflowers needing the sun,  
My words, my hunger....  
And from there to spring forth from,  
My promises, my name, our children....  
I am waiting for her to come,  
For her to linger,  
For her stay and lounge here  
And to remember all the lives in which  
I have come forth in to love her....





# I Beg Your Pardon (Or Max Von Sydow)

Marie sees miracles everywhere,  
But her son is dead.

Red roses in a vase.  
I want to smash her head.

I want to kiss her mouth,  
To taste the salt of liars,  
I want to hold her hands in the fire.

If it is rain,  
Then I will stare out into the street  
Until I find her.  
I will stare until I find her,  
And then I will follow her forever.

When she kissed my neck  
It felt like the bottom of a snail.  
Sometime well before that,  
She was just a child abandoned  
In the sand with a plastic pail.

Marie looks into the wild blue sky,  
And begs for an answer,  
That night they rolled the stone from his crypt,  
But he was not there to answer.

When lightning strokes the earth,  
I look for you for hours,  
But you are off drinking with your men who  
Remind you of your father.

You are growing now in the glooms of your gardens.  
Laughing, though crying still,  
I beg for your pardon.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Can Say Nothing

I can say nothing that doesn't die.

A word spoken quickly returns to the silenced void,  
Unless it takes root, to nest behind her eyes to live awhile longer;  
But this, sadly, it rarely if ever does—  
And I have seen things I cannot explain,  
Those elusive things unnamed and without definition  
Foraging nervously in the backgrounds of her sleep—  
And I have tried to hold her hand before to take her back  
There amidst the shoots of spinning newness, to behold  
With her the shared grandeurs of this new species,  
But to exclaim of such things, to try and birth them  
Into our world, is to cause death to come and feast upon them—  
I have done such murder, as I pulled the silvery dreams  
Out of my head and held them like delicate hatchlings in my cupped hands—  
Look and see what you have made in me, my eyes seemed  
To say to her, but as soon as I breathed my thoughts upon  
Them, they came apart like spores taken back  
To sleep in the hidden recesses of their natural environments, the inner seas,  
And there to bud and bloom in the inexplicabilities of undiscovered sciences;

So, she could not understand, and took to liking the  
Great expensive things our species so readily creates—  
Those things, which like us, seem to last for a good long while  
Even though they are already dead, the carcasses who stroll on in breathless  
motion;  
They are the necromancer's alchemies that comes easy into our world,  
And because of this they are so cheap and they mean nothing at all to me—  
But she couldn't understand my abhorrence of their stylish normalcy,  
And eventually she gave up and began to die that sad way  
Women do into the men who have learned to walk so well, dressed  
And dazzling like the proudly bejeweled peacocks of the marketplace.  
So they were married in a dying world, holding hands and walking down  
As pieces of them fall off they will never see nor miss,  
And the greatest things in them will remain hidden forever, the borderless  
Sea of efluvian delights, the billioned things this world never beholds  
She walked away from as I said nothing,  
Knowing that as soon as I spoke my words would fail upon her,  
Like dying children from another world, they cannot breathe in our pallid  
atmospheres;

But they flourish inside me, spawning in the infinite gyre—  
Even without her in me, their beauties spill over....

Robert Rorabeck

# I Continue Beckoning

Sharon, you give me the reason to live through  
Another day.  
Now I get all excited because I can hear the sexy voice  
Of a low flying airplane;  
And I have rum inside of me, and your birthday wish:  
That you remembered me, means everything;  
And though I have been lost in the desert even while my  
Sisters were getting married, becoming profession,  
And buying houses,  
You have resurrected me, and I salute you with really good spirits,  
Because you are absolutely a lady:  
And I wish I had found you in high school: I wish I had know the  
Proper bait for you: I wish that I had the guts to call your soul  
To the shallows if your body and fondle it with  
Some sort of voodoo;  
I wish I could have been beautiful for you, Sharon; and I continue  
To hope that I am doing right by you. You are the one candle in this  
World that is still burning, that should never go out.  
Sharon, you are the last remaining wish that evaporates the  
Uncertainty of every tear in this afternoon's rainstorm;  
You are the lighthouse in the eye of a hurricane; and like a lost  
Sailor jumping for air, I continue beckoning.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Didn'T Even Need A Car

Dictated to by high society,  
I tried my best,  
But the wild scuppernongs called me better far deeper  
In the backyards  
Unattended to by the wildeyed and learned  
Younger professors;  
And so I went, leaping, until there was no turning  
Back,  
Pretending I was an airplane  
Who was too wide and bright eyed to turn around,  
I soon became lost and sad,  
And too wonderful to be exhibited because  
No one would know rightly what I was,  
And they certainly wouldn't take me for  
Any old kind of marvel;  
And it got so cold being outside of anyone's country,  
Lost in the cruel caesuras which came and went  
Like a housewife's knife cutting kale and  
Rutabaga for dinner.  
Left without the spasming warm of your natural declivities,  
Which was all I was shooting for,  
This arrow of spikenard and come- I didn't need  
Any other language or clothing style.  
I didn't even need a car-  
I just wanted to make love to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Don'T Know

The day turns down like dogs in heat  
Thoroughly thrashed, their feet gone into the beating layers  
Of fire-engined flesh:  
They still lay out like gay fairies on parade,  
Manhandled like goldfish drowning in  
Marmalade;  
And Kelly, Kelly, don't you love me like a goldfish floating  
Above your jellies:  
Kelly, Kelly- You still lip like a song of a knife over my wrists,  
And I would walk out all night for you,  
Trying to rightly describe this curious gist, Kelly;  
Your family is as beautiful as you are, like a stamped letter,  
Kelly; and that is all I know that you are-  
Kelly- The rainstorms come and I am all alone, and I don't  
Really believe in the beautiful dwarfs who are smaller  
And more precious than the both of us,  
And I just want to spend more time with you Kelly:  
Kelly, I don't care who you really love-  
I don't care about your mother; Kelly, your eyes are the depths  
Of all fairytales, and I wish I could speak to you of what I know;  
And I enjoyed your lips on Tuesday, Kelly;  
I told you that it was the first time I've kissed a girl in seven  
Years on Tuesday, Kelly.... And I don't lie;  
And I love you, Kelly.... Kelly in your doublewide;  
In your papermache tomb that never touched the end of high school,  
But I don't know.... Kelly, Kelly.... I don't know....

Robert Rorabeck

# I Dream Of Nothing Anymore

I dream of nothing anymore.  
The great sea before me is dead  
And so thick with the salt of butchered  
Tears that even the average man  
Can walk across and  
Pretend he's God—  
The seashore is nettled in briars  
And blue suffocating jellyfish  
Where upon scating gulls blister their  
Beaks, but devour their stinging meals  
Heartlessly none the less,  
As they circle mercilessly hunting a  
Smothered heaven and cursing all deities....  
The flesh rots off leviathans in the  
Green and murky wharf, where the  
Muddled water sloshes against the planks  
Like something sickly asking for help;  
And I lie there in the tumult of wrecked things,  
The failed hopes of men the sea has  
Spit back upon the shore,  
Not liking the taste,  
The broken bellies of sunken ships....  
On the pasty horizon, the humid sky seems  
To sink into the sea, to merge like a bloated  
Angel too corpulent for its impotent wings,  
As the sky is in a shabby dress  
And always promises rain that never comes,  
Torpida and sweaty nimbus the  
Drawn curtains in need of dusting,  
The veil I have never seen behind,  
Though I know the sun and you are there,  
In an early morning bedroom making  
Love and feeding each other sweet things  
As his light lies coolly on top of you,  
So never do you hear the slosh and rust  
Of my world so far beneath you,  
Upon the infected beach I haunt like a blind  
And ownerless ghost,  
Between the burry sand dunes where the



Drowned sailors sleep like tangled nets,  
And the sea like a headless graveyard stretching  
In a field of ash, the cremation of my  
Waveless heart, for  
I dream of nothing anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Guess I Will

Fermenting yachts you yawl all day  
Back and forth atop the red packed clay-  
Little girls in tremulous laces,  
Little older girls with stainless steel braces:  
And the traffic moves, and the traffic yawls-  
The socially elite go to hangman's balls:  
And I love you- And I love you the way the  
Feral child loves the woods,  
And scribbles and masturbates and doesn't  
Know he is no good;  
And my father has so many horses, like fish,  
Like cars, like Christmas ribbons,  
And the sky is so wide it yawls- and you don't  
Know so many things- so many things it's true,  
But in your bright room spinning the crèches  
From the satellite's loom,  
I spill my guts for you and cry over something that  
Isn't real,  
And the roller-rinks are displaced, and the traffic  
Yawls- and the whole thing moves the persistent  
Tortoise's pace;  
And I throw entire ballrooms of pennies into wishing  
Well,  
And each wish is to have you, so I guess I will.

Robert Rorabeck

## I Hope So....

I can't afford expensive lines myself,  
And I don't want to be indebted to the Man-  
I need my soul to be homeless and wayward,  
A tattered gown rented and torn after it was  
Used up at the backstore prom....  
That is why I write poetry, and buy cheap rum,  
Even though it doesn't help with the problems,  
It helps lay me down-  
My face is hieroglyphic, with manners for each  
Wound, my eyes ringed like a sallow tree,  
You can see how far I have yet to grow-  
My hands the prayers for alms, wanting her to  
Spit in them, for her to tear and pee and come in  
Them, so that the gardens will be most profound:  
The flowers corrupted into glowing mutations  
With buds that come once a year on my birthday-  
Filling the back nine with excrement under the tawdry moon,  
I read Ginsberg to figure out- His entire codex,  
The a\$\$ clown of the bomb, the ditzzy word smith,  
The Hasidim, one million lines of government cheese,  
Until they laid him down in his red pyramid with his  
Blond retainers no more than twelve, and they had sit ins  
And walk outs and fluoride for the kindergarten mouth,  
But I still wasn't down enough to figure it all out-  
I like Lorca better, because his translations sound experimental,  
And though a homosexual he kept it out of his mouth,  
Preferred the solemn surreal spikenard in the spangled cloud,  
The assured sadness of a dead moon juxtaposed with a living spring:  
I read 900 pages of Lorca poems, skim the translations, but  
I still haven't figured it all out:  
I write 400 poems myself, this year pass my quota:  
I'm a good father, my face is a hieroglyph,  
And her eyes are just pictures fawning over their masculine,  
When I would have preferred their round organs sappy and lucid,  
To rest above the cenotaph on my shoulder and give a drawn out  
Sigh of surrender, her to breath the hot accusations of cinnamon orgasms  
In my palm as if figuring it out was all we had to do,  
But I still haven't figured it all out, but I am a cheap alcoholic:  
All I've had to drink this year is rum- three bottles, under a \$30

Sack, fermented cane raised up like weeds in Haiti, stomped  
Into smack by the dripping feet of the poorest black men,  
Stored away in barrels and bell jars of mutated aberrations who  
Didn't make it as far, but will live a long time down by the river,  
In the side show, to attract voyeurs to the used car lot, under the  
Slapping pennants, red, white, and blue- they will go a long ways,  
For their tumors and goiters and mysteries so far stunted;  
The rum slapped with a cheap label and a Surgeon General's Warning:  
No Pirates or bombshells, no varsity smiles, no camaraderie-  
The staple fermentation of sugar cane- I like it like that:  
On an airboat in the everglades, the alligators grinning with ruby  
Eyes daring crooked experiments,  
But I still haven't figured it all out.10% of my poems drunk,  
But another 20% lie and say they are, to give excuses for their  
Obsessions, the poor similes, the ugly metaphors-  
My poems are the soul of a homeless man, ruminating eyes,  
Gap toothed, swaying like ancient mariners thrown off with  
Limes at the port of Nassau, but they are free men,  
And though it may take them a while to figure out where to go,  
In the end the are calypso lacking satire, wordy salesmen  
Chain smoking and as twitchy as jackrabbits,  
Mumble footed fools fallen down before they reach Juliet,  
So they just stare up and cry and pet the night-  
They cannot afford to choose which way to go,  
But they have yet to be crowned with their obligatory headstone:  
So they sing their wordy calypso for you tonight,  
Hoping that you might canter down the stairs, hold  
Them gently upon your bosom, whispering softly your  
Tender criticisms: What they do wrong, and maybe  
What they do right.  
I hope so....

Robert Rorabeck

# I Know I Am Not Pablo

She wakes up in Colorado  
Some mornings; the aspens are taking off  
Their blushing clothes; they don't stop  
When she yawns, they get done and naked.  
In opal crooks where birds no longer sing,  
And mountains dawn powder white caps,  
Winter's hoary pollens,  
As tourists bring their skis into their downy basins,  
And her mother sells them used books  
About Hemmingway and far away,  
Matadors in red deserts of spikenard,  
Lorca breathless under his olive tree;  
I should not stop in front of her storefront on my  
Way to the graveyard,  
I should not write out another poem in childish  
Fingerprints upon the windowpane;  
But the pain is this far tattooed into the walking cadaver;  
These noiseless sounds from the industrious fingers....  
What then? Another poem before midnight,  
And the abatement of Tesla's inventions down the  
Ghostly main street. How so will she find me in  
A fur coat. She is not even six feet tall, but would balance  
Me well enough on the see-saw if we leaned over and  
Laughed the way children do before they tire and  
Fall asleep; but when I read my own words by the  
Illusion of fire, I know I am not Pablo. Untalentedly  
Scarred, how should she love me then when she already  
Has the ring on her finger; this is no longer kindergarten,  
and what should I make of  
Her but a nature allegory, a dryad kneeling into a  
Glacial tear. I could do it just as easily for the girl who  
Serves me from the fast-food window,  
Before I drive away and start a greasy séance, and I would  
Be faithless to her, for the talent that I lack is the knowledge  
She would give, her body draped like an answer, a  
Blanket of warm fidelity, so much warmer than what  
Has become, that I should lapse into amnesia, forgetting  
Where I live.



# I Know I Believe- In Fact I Burn

Lapping in the wound of your eyes-  
With very little costume, I don't know what else to  
Say- The basest of elements, I yet attract nearer  
Where you root in the colonnade  
Of colored spaces;  
Everything I have chosen to speak has turned  
Corruptive, but such ash can be used to emblazon  
The hills across the valley-  
And even when times are tough, there is reason to  
Succeed from the canvas you are looking out  
From, the paradox of necessity:  
I would have to pick your fruit and sell it to all the  
Carnival tourists to keep you alive;  
I would have to allow this other man to take you as  
His seed of family,  
But it meant the crèche of your unspoken joy,  
That crippling thing that pantomimes, that doesn't even  
Correct its spiraling descent into the apathetic pines;  
I would like to speak to you across country,  
But it cushions all sorts of blades either in my chest or  
Soul, the ratty innards always gnawing-  
Every part of you is the arcade men turn pugilist for,  
And for that reason I am a defeated victor,  
Puzzling his tongue over the sadness of your beauty,  
Even more cryptic coming toward the nude winter:  
And caracoled in the greater downs of the darker sea.  
If men were to really see, they would wither; and so they  
Only play on fingers, leaving me alone to break the trail  
Toward the beautiful apex you have no reason for;  
That is you religion fluttering in tulip prayer flags that  
I know I believe- In fact I burn.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Lay Down

All books should begin  
With sunlight, with rain,  
With jovial violence, with her lips parting:  
A cliché, a motif,  
French women getting changed unabashedly  
On the red wet diamond of baseball,  
And men singing and  
Swing clubs, making love furtively  
Or running away from love and climbing  
Mountains to see her from far away,  
And feel her breathing beneath them insouciantly,  
The transcendentalism of better pilots,  
In the freedom of misspelled names and  
Open dictionaries,  
The thieveries of survival and recognition,  
And go down in the cathedral of wet and weeping  
Bows, holding hands, praying standing up,  
Recognizing the newborn mathematics of her legs,  
The immortality of her swollen breasts, the  
Unprintable memory of that evening,  
The indefinable beauty of her eyes courting in the  
Dimming glow, the crowding of this loneliness  
Sparks the ether of these very woods,  
With words soothe the rattle of the poisonous  
Viper and fill her mouth with verbs and tongue,  
And wash together in the dewy pinions,  
In the indigoed vespers, the stars milky candles  
Wavering leaping over the summit high above,  
Cliffs as her neck stretched in this shower,  
A monument in its ochre lather,  
A woman far away, misspelled, begins the language  
I lay down....

Robert Rorabeck



# I Only Have God In Me When You Are Near

We both have tailbones  
Which means not so very long ago we  
Were fish,  
In the greater scheme of things  
Those godly days which stretched for eons  
In slow interludes between the arc of the sun,  
Way back when the Lord was still young and  
Adventurous and would spend all day in his artistry  
Creating the new words which caused those very things  
To grow upon the earth, the first couples in spring  
Molded by his hands and breath, and then at evening  
Settling down upon the first stoop under the soft door-light  
Of his modest middle-class abode, and enjoying a pipe,  
He would smile satisfactorily and with admiration  
At the two of us playing for his show, the first of our kind,  
Leaping through the waves, that earliest sunlight dancing  
Upon us brilliantly, as our streamline bodies tried on the  
New world, skimming along the young sea and leaping  
Youthfully upon his eyes alone—Our only thoughts were  
Of each other, and that was all we knew, the two of us our world.

But then one day God was gone and so were you—  
There were more of us now, but those were the same ones  
I still do not care to know—The two of us was all I've ever needed,  
But maybe God felt differently, and seeing how we were many now,  
And maybe all the same to him, he may have lured you out  
And packed you up for lunch, to fry up with some salty chips.  
That was when I forgot how to breathe,  
In my gills that stretched out and brushed along your silvery sides,  
That touched your neck and exhaled into your throat, and you into me,  
But with you gone I had forgotten how, and began to drown in the sea.  
And I flopped out and began my devolution into Man,

So now the only thing remaining to remind me of you is  
That useless hidden tailbone down the back of my spine, that  
Still in ghostly fingers sometimes tries to wag—Now, stranded,  
I am always an atheist—And though the world is filled up with  
All the many things God made into it, I don't believe in a single  
One of them, because I cannot feel them running through me,

Coursing the first purest thought through me—you through me—

But there are those rare days where my spirit awakes and you  
Come around me, when I see you trying to jog, putting on your new  
Legs he must have given you after he realized his mistake, you moving  
Like the first of your kind down the lane beneath the deciduous trees  
Shady in Central Florida, the brightness of faith before the faded lawns  
Near the University—I watch you go by at 4 am, after my shift is over,  
And I am proud, because though you seem to have metamorphosed into  
Someone else, I can see you all the same, and it is as if you are swimming  
With me in the sea again like those very early days when it was only me and  
you,  
And I can almost taste you again—

a mirage, He only allows you in my  
Vicinity maybe once a decade, and that is when I saw you last, when I had  
To move away from where you continued to swim in those schools far away from  
me.

I do not know why you go and do not come back to me, unless it is because  
You have forgotten how we once were before anyone else arrived.  
And without you, I cannot breath and I am virulently faithless, but in those  
Fleeting instances when we share the same atmosphere, it is almost as if  
We could shed our clothes once again and let our truthfulness grow outward into  
The sea, wetting our tailbones, that I become alive—those few times,  
When you breathe near me, are the only  
Ones when I allow God once again to enter me.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Ran Amongst The Trees (Censored)

I ran amongst the trees today  
following the path of a dozen  
of my ghosts the uneasy boot prints  
of my nostalgia when I daily  
inhale these woods, when I go into  
them to scream to open up my  
wind to suck in the air between  
the pines, to think her name  
and to run through the disillusionments  
I know you don't call, I begin to  
understand the chaos of the world  
on this track, inseparable from  
it: we are not above it,  
we are but one of the infinity of  
incarnations from these woods,  
we are like one of these trees  
subatomic we are the same material  
as the woodpecker-  
we go down thinking, we rise  
up believing, we are the appendages of  
the mother- we cannot be removed  
from her- we are a manifestation  
of her thought- How come the  
Indians knew this and she destroyed them,  
creating white men with muskets  
and joneses for blood out of her  
centennial dreams- we come out of  
her conscious while we sleep we  
move on her as she turns on that  
celestial bed, and each time she  
comes awake our personal consciousness  
dies- before we moved through  
woods, now we are buried in coffins-  
returned to her- swallowed up by her,  
our manifestation is complete, but her  
conscious is infinite, longing, dreaming,  
arising, changing, dressing and undressing  
on the moment, I run through the woods,  
knowing it, knowing she has dreamed me, and

my limitation is that I will die, yet  
she will dance forever, she will dream  
up her children forever, she will  
forget me to birth anew, but I will never  
leave her  
descending into her my unfulfilled desires  
will settle and leave my body-  
they will go nowhere they will  
vanish- running through the woods,  
I recognize this part, and yet  
continue my human hunger for the woman  
across the country who is yet another manifestation  
from the same source; in my dreams and  
poems I would have her, I would recreate  
the power of the mother, but I am only an  
arm, I am only a thought reaching out,  
and my only comfort is that very soon  
we will return to the same source  
under the deep river's water  
under the great earth's bed  
we may lie 1,000 miles apart, but  
in this breath, in the dream of her  
world, we walked here together  
we breathed and rejoiced in our  
living in this point in the infiniteness  
we saw each other- what a  
miracle it is to see another of her  
dreams, what a miracle to lie a  
hand upon another dream and know your  
love for it even when it steps away  
from you and is forgotten- in the  
nocturnal cycles of the earth, all of her  
dreams are forgotten and her dream of  
me is like this, fleeting, unreal-  
once I am laid down once I am no  
more I will have run through the woods  
on the same night of the dream I  
will have scribbled this in inky  
gusts in flashes of awareness the  
fish makes coming up- and in my  
dream I will have loved her, and  
after I go down, another dream will love another.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Remember You Too

Kelly kissed my neck today just like  
Erin did ten years ago-  
While I was done buying books and heading home;  
And now I want to buy something else too:  
I want to buy a home,  
I want to throw a baseball game; I want to settle down like  
A fur coated animal fully infatuated with the zoo  
Who on his Sundays is let out to look  
Out at the waves;  
And I want to hold Kelly's hand and look out at all of her  
Trapped sisters and ask her where  
Her mother lives; and ask her too her middle name,  
Because I cant remember:  
She told it to me today and we went to the park,  
Just like the virgin went to her grotto;  
And the little black slaves danced, and the apartments bloomed:  
The pirates were laughing in their trances;  
Their gold the filigree around the screen at the movie theatre;  
And I will die and I will dance,  
And girls who I have loved will dance before me,  
But now I have nothing at all to prove, or if I do then it is  
Only something I cant remember;  
But I remember holding up my hands inside the butterfly house  
At the zoo;  
And I remember today you kissing my neck-  
And I remember you too.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Saw You

Evil men win in this  
World- I saw you dancing with  
Him- I saw you dance.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Still Keep For You

I remain on our corner,  
Where the moon is hung as you left it,  
Where the light pools down as if on  
A stage, turning the neighborhood blue  
With the somber possibility;  
I am still here,  
Holding my gift for you,  
My eyes beholding the last image of  
You, how you moved like an ibex  
Grazing with beautiful legs  
Across our teenage suburbia  
How your attention lit upon me  
For no more than two weeks and  
We made loving play on those old hunting  
Grounds of Latin class, before new  
Men startled you into their forests  
Where kings saw you bathe with the  
Dryad Galaphile, in the emerald tinctures  
Where your legs scissor with the sadness  
Of crocodiles  
How you dried off and walked towards me,  
Naked and without reason kissed me long  
And deep, like something very old  
Remembering childhood  
Only to lit off again, like a beautiful insect  
Resting for a moment on me  
For the briefest moment in the shortest life.  
See how I wait for you still  
In the neighborhood down the street from  
Our high school, in the old hunting grounds,  
This sad light cast down upon the space  
Next to me  
I still keep for you.

Robert Rorabeck



# I Still Want To Go Down On You, ....., Oh Well

What wonderfully warm suppliant:

Now that I am drunk, and probably shouldn't

Be writing anything. Yes, I should shut up,

And look at pictures of you, down the well

Of high school, with your tawny legs,

Shaved and brown like the elbows of trees;

But, as you can see, I am writing anyways,

Even if you or anyone else is reading this.

If you do, it will make me laugh, now that everything

Is thoroughly maudlin: I am neither as ugly as I

Fear, nor as handsome as your drunken expectations

Might have hopes. I am drunk, and it is Halloween,

And I am thirty; and I am published, by the great

Philanthropic arm of the queen's navy, and undoubtedly

You are making lovely eyes with your patrons, or

Whoever you are with. I love you, and I thought

About writing you and telling you that, but

I am not as stupid as you might hope, nor am I

Emily Dickenson holding to the arm of her newly

Procured husband as they are floating down the Nile,

Or anywhere else: My great uncle made fun of my thesis,

But he is a liberal judge, and a c\*nt; and now I am

Published: yahoo, and anyway, and anyway, like I said:

I am drunk, and not as handsome as you might expect,

And now I am listening to Jack White spew extemporaneously:

And he is rather quite good, given all the possibilities,

And even if we grew up in Wellington, we loved the true

Happenstance of sunrise of bankruptcy and exports:

Now that I've said that, I should laugh and play a video game.

I am only 1/64th Jewish, so I don't mind where I park:

Today, a woman came with a summons for my father,

Because he has too many horses, but what do you expect?

I'm bone broke, but that is a lie, because I have \$150,000,

And I want to go down on you, Erin: I want to go down on

You, Erin, because you are the only thing which is real.

Now pay attention, because I love you,

And you shall survive forever in my voice, if it should

Survive forever; and I want to buy you a house and live with

You for sometime in it, if you should still have the eyes which fancy

A kiss from me:  
But like I said, I am drunk, so I do not know if  
This is true, but I know who you are, because I  
Have painted you in my novels like a salacious virgin,  
And let you swim in my grottoes,  
Because I love you, or the theory of your thighs  
Opening like heavenly doors:  
But what now should I write, in order to procure you,  
Except that I love you, and when I look at pictures  
Of you it makes me swell:  
I love you, or the theory of your impermanence;  
And I am sure I always will  
(Which makes a rhyming couplet.)

Robert Rorabeck

# I Suppose We All Must....

Stacked against me,  
I suppose we all must die,  
But I have a nasty trick of taking a whole  
Lot of ba\$tards with me before I go-  
Even in daycare after school in Elementary,  
I caught the dodge ball between  
My trembling knees and called the teacher  
Out,  
And he had to go; and that was the end of  
That, and we had won,  
But, I suppose we still all must die;  
And I'd check out Sherlock Holmes from the library  
And keep it in bed with me well overdue until even the fine  
Detective smelled of piss and fear;  
In fact, he entirely lost his sense of smell,  
And ended up following the wrong trails,  
And was bettered by feral young bloodhounds with  
Immaculate olifactories;  
But I guess you've already been told that  
If you've read Mark Twain's A Double Barreled  
Detective Story; and if you've been listening,  
You'll know I suppose we all must die-  
Think of the flowers picked for corsage,  
Or the flowers I picked for you who came all the way  
From Sweden,  
Were yet molested by Swedish bees and late at night  
By romantic Swedish vampires, before they gave  
Their extinguished photosynthesis to you,  
But what did you do with them?  
Didn't even those flaming sex organs mean a thing,  
Before you chose to settle down into the blue anchors  
Of his smiling wounds  
Which took you all the way down to the bottom  
And sat there making unmitigated love with you;  
And how long do you thing you might be able to hold  
Each other- For another poem,  
Long enough for a finer gentleman to paint you naked  
Into prehistory, glamorous and exposed like a  
Newly discovered extinct species, like a postmodern pictograph

Upon the walls of a working class cave;  
And I've thought of you driving up to Michigan,  
Or selling fireworks in New Mexico;  
I've thought of you down with the broken  
Arrowheads scattered like seeds out in the pasture,  
Or while reading from my indebted cliffs far into  
Each succession of afternoon;  
And maybe one day I will find you out,  
And call you by some secret name, and catch you  
About the neck, and drink off your lips as if I were  
Tipping back a flower,  
Your tongue a pistil, your limbs undraped each petal  
A game,  
Solving you for a little while before the end,  
And the dawn of a knife blade along the dusky arteries  
Where the bank comes reaping what we all must owe;  
And I'd thought I'd find you then while  
The curtains close and all the dancers wilt off the ballroom,  
But even if we won't at least we danced together  
Mammals of the same language, breathing so similar  
Of thoughts that we might have been of the same body  
Even though we were so far away;  
And I would hold your hand even as the book was closing,  
Even after I had failed at the last chapter,  
I would keep to you and decorate your passing in the  
Beautiful gifts of finished stone that said you name,  
Whatever I could buy or steal for you;  
And even if I suppose we all must die, I would like to pretend to  
Having known you,  
Of giving you my drunken thefts bottled, tossed into a weeping sea  
And carried so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Think She Knows

I think I love her  
And she knows,  
And that is why she  
Can afford  
To think she loves  
Another man....

All that I am is  
Already hers,  
And I think she knows....

Robert Rorabeck

# I Want To Be Alone And I Want To Talk To People

Pain burns out eventually like an exhausted fire,  
Like a scarred baby shushed into sleep approaching  
The bleary dawn,  
Smoldering as it faints, dreams of walking:  
Sift it, though, and it is still alive,  
Hibernating in the starless coals,  
Black caterpillars to be metamorphosed into blazing wings,  
Hiding like a little girl who can speak with dragons,  
When these mountains are very dry,  
Like parched lips waiting for the ore of lovers, and lightning comes  
Riding like a debauching gentleman promising  
Rain, but there is none, but he already has her in his saddle,  
Carrying her to the complicated alders for her to swoon,  
Thatched in the crossties of sickly peeling trunks,  
And wake up enveloped and undeniably compromised,  
And the wind is crazy and dispossessed,  
Can move the bolts against the stockpiles,  
Can bend trees like great bears foraging for the rarest honeys,  
And pollinate the valley in a single huff,  
Like a drunken giant can fornicate with mountains,  
Can caress their nipples until they spill volcanic milks,  
Can give the scent of elk to the wolf and lead him on,  
And the natural elements know the pain is waiting, the  
Foreboding instincts under the misrepresenting rime-  
Pain is the sort of predator which hibernates inside the  
Greatest judges, and the microscopic flees,  
And is even there when the circus is in town, and when  
Someone is smiling, and does not need shadows to hang around  
And though there are times when pain is numbed,  
When kissing in the lawn, and swimming in the glistered chlorine,  
When having a good dinner, and petting the animals who come  
Out of their hutches to be fed, pain is all around,  
Waiting for the butterflies to wilt,  
And the game to fold, for love to disperse to strange continents,  
For parents to die, then pain struts and is king,  
And he can be seen for miles around, and felt coiling like  
A ball of infant coral snakes in the marrow of the bones,  
Striking with venomous precision in gleesome darts-  
And I told her, if she came to me pain would dry out like

A starved criminal upon a moldy couch in the middle of a  
Black forest surrounded by the industrious city; I told her  
To come to me, and she said she would, but she did not come,  
Knowing that it would only attract more pain, eventually;  
Thus my pain lingers, and she kisses a tall gentleman gleaming  
Like mercury whispered down from the weeping moon;  
He is seemingly without pain, and this why  
She touches him all over in slow ways, and says his  
Name the way the sea sloshes and licks the legs of  
The dock, but pain is there too, mumbling in his dreams,  
And soon he will wake up like a sudden catastrophe,  
And then pain will be all over that place,  
Like salt in the fire's wound.

Robert Rorabeck

# I Will

I really only have one leg,  
So you wouldn't shoot me if I am not enough,  
And yet I go and get your ice-cream  
And get in a fight- blue jaws laugh at me,  
When afterwards but before school  
They are eating carnivores their nest over  
The trucks I've come to for you;  
And afterwards, waiting so long to return,  
You are kissing another man, both of his legs  
Playing football:  
And now I have hives, and I am melting  
When I get up I have no equilibrium and the  
Ringmaster told me what good would I be;  
There will always be a better man for him to feed  
The elephant: the n#ggers in the sacks, the gold  
Lying in the hay: and I heard you making love  
Dripping tongues of flesh while the new ones came  
In circling like buzzards waiting for your fruit to dry,  
But it never will: You've gone through your  
Transformations, and held battle and now the victor  
Is yours, and you lay in the bed of flowers and ask  
Me to hop along and bring you some,  
And told me to name them whatever I will,  
As long as I name them for you; and I will.

Robert Rorabeck



# I Won'T Stop

My computer is about to crash,  
But it is still too dangerous to touch you.  
In a week I will be in the same state as you,  
And I will sell pumpkins on Halloween,  
But you will not see me;  
No one will see me, but the same girl  
Might stop by to get a discount on a Christmas  
Tree, if only because she pretends  
To want to have sex with me....  
But I will think of you;  
It is what I always do,  
And I am sorry. When the planets move  
Like silken virgins between the trees,  
It's what we sell: Frasier Furs, Scotch Pine,  
Asphodel—What the hell is Asphodel?  
All I know is that it rhyme and it's  
Either a plant, a tree, or an herb.  
How do you pronounce herb?  
I mean, yourself, when you were young  
And you went into your backyard to play  
With what you were. I wonder about those  
Things, and the tiny spaces of green I see  
You in. Way back in high school,  
One night you called me out. My "friends"  
Told me, you wanted to see me, but I didn't come,  
So even then I knew you would move so far away,  
But then: always then and on through now  
I knew I'd love you. I love you now,  
Because it is all my soul does: It writes for you;  
It centralizes its pain through this existence  
On you, Erin. I love your name and my soul  
Pines for you. I'm drunk and this damn  
Computer is about to crash, but my thoughts  
Are true to you, as you disappear into another  
Woman, your forgetfulness eludes me,  
Excludes me, is God Damn F—ing rude to me,  
But I don't blame you. This is life,  
The nature of our existence, and we are not  
Stars naked and getting love in a movie.

I love you and you know this and in a week  
Or two I'll be in the same state as you,  
But you won't see me, though I might swim  
In the same sea as you, breathe the same air as you,  
Look up at the moon with you from so far away.  
You must not see me, because you know you  
Love me too, but this life needs it's pain,  
So we'll both do what we've got to do.  
Marry another man, let him enter you.  
Bare his children and take his name,  
And all those things which f— away the pain,  
But, Erin, here's the thing:  
I won't stop loving you....

Robert Rorabeck

# Ice Climbing

Send shivers to my loneliness.  
Look at me with starving eyes,  
The places where isolation roams  
And imprints startling tracks in  
The permafrost—  
Show me your breath so that  
I might find you  
Outstretched like Prometheus'  
Lover on a glacial step,  
Your blooms the frigid  
Chrysanthemums upon  
Winter's open sill.  
There your soul is an ice sculpture,  
Carved and held captive by  
The Northern deities insured  
No men will come and find you,  
Hidden in the declivities,  
Beneath the freeze framed falls  
Of great longing, in the crystalline azure  
Monoliths that rise up beneath  
The blue underworld sun.  
The defeated heroes of this adventure  
Stand there before you  
In the jaws of amethyst stalagmites.  
Like a child lost in the night  
Listening to the wolf's snuffling  
Approach,  
In the great and barren upper peninsulas  
Through continents of frozen lakes  
Where wiser men sleep unabated;  
Where I will find you  
And save you somehow—

Robert Rorabeck

## If He Is Really Smiling

If she hyperventilates repeatedly, how can she kiss  
The frog who is hoping, hoping-  
After the students have returned to class, and vacated the  
Topiary-  
And the bicycles have led thieves up onto the roofs to  
Smoke and feel the redacted blemishes  
Of their one of a kind lovers-  
While then not so far away, in some carport of  
Suburbia-  
A housewife practices her common place adultery,  
And the tortoise in her carport eats an orchid at the foot  
Of the washing machine- eats an orchid:  
God knows where he found her- but after eating her,  
He will slip away to become a meal for  
An alligator who is waiting patiently down the slope to  
The canal, but can anybody tell if he is really smiling.

Robert Rorabeck

# If He Isn'T Immortal

Getting fat, driving up to windows too far past  
Crepuscule,  
Beginning to disbelieve in French-kisses just as  
Much as important mail:  
Now if there is only vanity, at least I can say that  
When I will wake up it will be to work in  
The garden of Eden:  
That's what this place really is, with sports stars  
And Guatemalans and prostitutes and whores:  
Grandmothers softly tucked away in their graveyards,  
It having been so long since I touched the flesh  
Of their hands as I have raised the tin-foil flag on  
Some mailbox,  
And these words I use can never justify the alcohol  
The unsteady means by which I use to get here,  
To stand out front of her door along with the kittens she  
Would rather use for sacrifices;  
There are two silhouettes through the portcullises of  
That silly little house,  
And Erin is in love in Gainesville with a man who plays  
A guitar,  
And god is barefoot in the palmettos his feet in the stigmata  
Of freshly cut coral,  
And the corral snake is milking his wrist, because d\$mn-it  
If he isn't immortal, and he has nothing left to lose.

Robert Rorabeck

# If I Called You Tonight

You reek of amusement parks,  
And dorm room sex,  
The memories of fieldtrips you never went on.  
I want to call you,  
But I don't know what to say,  
And there are so many things to attend to  
In the worrisome Gulf Streams of  
North Atlantic loneliness-  
Soon I will have to attend my sister's  
College funeral, and there will be so  
Many suspecting eyes, blinking spontaneously  
The instinctual needs of far away flesh-  
The dark rooms where life develops,  
And the places we go to remember nostalgically,  
The best places are not real;  
I want to call you, but I don't know  
What to say, trying to forget the dissection of  
Galleries from the homeless artist-  
Couldn't I take you there without lifting a finger,  
And we could spend the entire time not  
Looking at each other, but riding the rides,  
The mechanisms which try not to comprehend gravity;  
One day there should be children and  
Merry-go-rounds and fly elephants,  
And my eyes on your hips like a weapon,  
And love made in pastel paddle boats on lazy  
Rivers where the animals are given luxurious cages  
And fed popcorn;  
There I could see the sweat of your eyes, and  
Clasp your forearm to stabilize the trade of tongues,  
And we could abandon ourselves,  
And become the exhibit of coupling in chlorine,  
Like otters, we play with these mollusks  
And cannot comprehend the affinities for time,  
Our children would be the squeaking pups I would  
Hold up to your breast as you sang,  
So what would it matter at all then,  
If I called you tonight?



## If I Once Lived There

Wind like Mexican tigers suddenly upspring,  
Making me pause from where I'd been forlornly touching  
These things;  
And the pool is right beside me like a faithful dog,  
The pool whose friends are gone off to college, who cannot  
Quite his day job;  
And I sing to the empty waters, into the false blindness of  
Lost friends,  
And the sunlight skips on the waters, seeming to winnow it,  
Searching for a lost purse, or probably more so for her:  
How she used to come out and change her colors from his  
Flesh,  
By laying down in the back of a neighborhood who has all  
Gotten up to the traffic of musical chairs and changed its  
Positions so much it is impossible to say if I once lived  
There anymore.

Robert Rorabeck



# If I Were A Fly

If I were a fly,  
I'd crawl on your lips,  
I'd lick at your eyes,  
If I were a fly-  
What would you say,  
If I said your name to your ear,  
If I were a fly,  
And could I go about you this way,  
In the secret procession  
Of my choo choo train legs,  
I'd tickle your neck,  
I'd shade in your bangs,  
If I were a fly,  
And what would you do,  
If you knew my name  
Would things be the same  
If I were a fly  
Would you let me be  
Familiar to you,  
And explore you like a new  
Continent,  
And cartograph your things,  
And plot each inch  
And sketch  
Would you allow me to be  
Alone with you in  
Your bedroom,  
And feel you stretch and breathe.  
In class,  
Could I go on being your  
Unnoticed tattoo  
If you were a girl I knew  
And I were a fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# If I Were Daniel Johnston

Make me a drink and I'll call  
You joy:  
Is that my drink,  
Did you just get over the boy-  
Well, well- I'm still hung-over these woods-  
Well, and I'm not looking too good, well-  
Brindled under the cover of a stewardess,  
But maybe this drink will  
Get me out of first grade hell- well:  
You're eyes are still beautiful,  
And everything to believe in- you are my  
Laurie, if I were Daniel Johnston-  
If I were Daniel Johnston-  
But Laurie never loved Daniel- She married  
The mortician- and she drove around all  
Spaced out in a hearse through midland cemeteries  
Under the swayed backed Mick Jagger Power lines-  
I've loved you since I colored you with  
Crayons, out of lines; or, I heard you laughing well past your  
Bedtime- when good girls were sleeping through  
Their rows in the woods,  
You were laughing, wiggling your toes- and looking  
Good; but this is my own disease,  
Impossible to share it with anyone else:  
And I love you this way quietly on my swing-set; and on my knees,  
Trying to blow out wishes through the trees,  
If I were Daniel Johnston, and you my Laurie....

Robert Rorabeck

# If I Were King

Dying with the bluebirds who haven't found  
Their summer:  
I supposed I loved you, but there is only this:  
The inconsistent artistry  
Across the spine of broken continents  
Trying to sing:  
Across the dying world, another angel  
Fading- falling as ashes to the lips  
Of the somnolent fish in its  
Playground: falling down that way, over  
The train tracks of the playground:  
And I hate you:  
And I hate you, while I remain theatrical,  
But it doesn't matter as I am dying-  
And it seems to take a while for the fire engines  
To sing,  
Across the playgrounds, making a boisterous  
Noise into the amphitheatres that I suppose  
Were never there:  
While in the morning, there will be breakfast:  
And the daylight of their songs only lasts for  
Another summer,  
And then all of the pretty architectures diminishes-  
And we sing for our own money, as the preternatural  
Daylight fades, as if I were king.

Robert Rorabeck

## If I Will Ever See Her Again

Candle light doused in the sea underneath the  
Pretty fort: what have you been doing, but holding  
Your breath and not making any wishes,  
And now your time is out, and nothing can be given to  
You, neither the waves nor the pearls beneath the waves,  
But it all still goes on beautifully, like pulling  
The ribbons off a stewardess' legs- and if she is a present  
For you, I cannot care- because soon she will leap, and  
Leap, and take to the air: soon she will fly away with  
Her brilliant cavalry of men, her sorority for an  
Entourage- and I can't- I will not care- how brilliant  
It is, nor if I will ever see her again.

Robert Rorabeck

## If It Meant Anything

Palm trees are awakening on the other side of the glass:  
There are so many words I've dreamed of,  
In the language which cannot be communicated to  
The commuting species; they are going as fast as  
Apoplectic car salesmen out in a storm,  
But they are as beautiful as the unripe sky before the  
Tumultuous harvest: once settled they will lie with  
Those permanent scripts above them, and the fronds  
Will brush like careless women resettling their hair:  
I dreamed, though, she was entirely bald, like  
A cancer patient, who had reverted to her original name,  
And yet nearly as beautiful as when I clipped her in the  
Bleached halls, until she fell so far away from me she  
Ended up in Colorado between the red stones of  
Ancient masonries the tourists peruse, and her the same;  
And even in my dreams I was too in awe to speak to her,  
Though I met her eyes at certain intersections,  
But now that I am awake and the traffic flows, and my  
Old lovers make love to new calls,  
I don't believe I've seen a thing, or even so,  
If it meant anything at all.

Robert Rorabeck

## If It Pleases You

If it pleases you then yes;  
If it does not please you, then forget it:  
For I am displeased with my form, and I would like to  
Travel around a rich cul-de-sac in a park  
Where the storm clouds belly and press cannibal song birds  
To each blade of grass;  
And eventually she drains herself while you are so full and  
Far away;  
While they say that it is the very same moon over all of us,  
But I do not believe them: here is my moon over my world,  
And where is your moon; where is your world?

Robert Rorabeck

## If It Should Ever Rain Again

The nights were spent alone,  
Evaporating, and now this: not even a knighthood,  
Estranged from my parents,  
Vagabonding in one place, jump roping over graves,  
And the curly hair of the spirits indistinct of color:  
I have a book published,  
But I end up working for my awful uncle, making  
Ten dollars an hour:  
I drink too much: I love Alma too much, and maybe or  
Most likely it is that I will die:  
Maybe it will be in the hurricane season, which will give me  
A good excuse,  
So I don't have to look anymore at the overspent old ladies,  
And feel guilty for despising them,  
Or trying to move them along all the quicker;  
And I can't hear anymore if it is raining, but it really shouldn't  
Matter, since all of the historical forts are locked,  
And the celebratory fireworks eagerly spent,  
All of the flatulent tourists sleeping, their cowbells silent in  
The overprized hotel rooms stocked up against the easy way,  
If it should ever rain again.

Robert Rorabeck

# If It Was Your Happy Birthday

Like puppies who somehow shut up at the sight  
Of the next round of glorious sunset coming through  
Your window,  
Like a glorious tsunami that the clown fish have been  
Dreaming up  
In their tanks in those shops, dimes of water filling their  
Gills like breastfeeding;  
But you are already gone down the other side of the hill,  
Your pail empty,  
Your daughter starving though next month will be her  
Birthday:  
And I am the bank robber, or I am the fox,  
My easily avoided arrowhead shot near your shoulder bade  
Like the tattoo of a windmill tempting you to surrender;  
And I am the ever so many things that you have never  
Picked up to read:  
I am an entire library at the bottom of the oceans of my hell:  
Your body is an orchard running away into the gloom  
Of a preposterous family,  
Rootless, telling each other nightmares, while you get off work  
And take your high schooled sisters to the mall,  
The airplanes floating above your head like the perusing  
Majesty of obese angels;  
While your religion remains back in Mexico in a Virgin emblazoned on  
Some disbelieving farmer's 15th century cloak;  
But I will chase you like an adolescent fox plays with a hyperventilating  
Butterfly through the forest,  
Until we both exhaust and lay like a rookery of fire engines fallen down  
From the steep slopes of the airy basins;  
And then the greenness will sing to us, as if it was your happy birthday,  
And all around will be painted your favorite color.

Robert Rorabeck



# If It Were Real

Open me in the shadows, my son of boulevards,  
And you will say I am brilliant,  
Even though it isn't enough:  
For all my songs are an echo;  
And all my hair is gray, and the sun has beaten my  
World;  
All the girls are empty oysters, all my words of  
Them the eventual failures of a burned out fire;  
And I exist within the minute pauses of traffic;  
I try to exist right here,  
Or when I leap it is to breathe inside the mobile  
Shadows of a goddess;  
It is the only thing that is good for me,  
And she rests in holidays but never quite repeats herself;  
But I keep swilling up from the bottom of a glass,  
Each time my eyes a little wider from less oxygen;  
Each time the rain hitting further apart, her canopy a little more  
Spread,  
And I more drawn out and tenebrous;  
The train tracks shallow basins of my dogs' muted tongues;  
I sleep all day in their loneliness,  
Or in the brilliant loneliness of her shadow which shimmers  
Sometimes off her body as it waves as if it were real.

Robert Rorabeck

# If Only Sunshine Could Cry

The power of the spell over her, as dark as a  
Starless Mexico,  
As elusive as the eel of onyx slipped into the grottos  
Of her favorite virgins after  
All of the celebrations- after the suicides of her  
Inextinguishable uncles,  
And the last ashes of the madder than mad fireworks:  
And I wanted to kiss her lips  
Through the open windows of all of the possible sorts  
Of transportation imaginable,  
Thought up by man- helicopters and even through the  
Transoms of a forest diademing the shell rock  
That ended in the brink of a childhood canal;  
But I was only eleven and petrified of  
Kidnappers while the rabbits laid eggs,  
Excited by Easter sunrise, and another resurrection,  
While I bent and nibbled at her painted toes;  
And when we made love in my cerulean bed, and  
She held my breast, my ample flesh clutched in her painted  
Nails for the few minutes we had,  
It seemed that it should be raining outside, if only sunshine  
Could cry.

Robert Rorabeck

# If Our Suburban Streets Could Divide Entire Hemispheres

The sunlight kisses the swing-sets, if that is what  
It really does;  
And the swans set out to some place really beautiful,  
If only for because:  
And there over the sand dunes of the park,  
Beneath the mangroves and the sandy pines, the sun  
Is leaving for the dark:  
The mailmen are finally home, and the mountains are  
Cooling and waiting for stories,  
And all of the airplanes are settling to park,  
Where some such lovers kiss deeply in the heavy fuselages;  
But I remembered this morning and how we made  
Love,  
Even though I have never been to Mexico, I have been to  
You, Alma,  
And into the sweet darkness kindled like phantasms in your  
Eyes,  
Finally welcomed me and gave me new names. So even now  
Though the sun is fading like flowers in a graveyard,  
I am trusting,  
As I remember the single syllable's flame that I spoke  
As we came together,  
And I ran my finger over the old friends of your ribs, until  
All too soon and just like the sun,  
It was also your time to go away, seemingly to a home on  
The other side of the earth,  
As if our suburban streets could divide entire hemispheres.

Robert Rorabeck

# If Pain

If pain, then let it be slow like mercury-  
Let it eat the moon in all of its hemispheres,  
Entwine like beautiful barbed-wire glowing under the sea,  
Time and time again around her neck,  
Until the blood is roses,

If pain, let it dally for many years all around  
My sunken eyes, my raccoon eyes, the nocturnal visions,  
Where he is under her skirt like a welcomed thief,  
Like a heirloom clutching her neck,  
Or a brooch of lips tucked into her breast like  
A giant infant at the tug,

If pain, let it be the wounded memories which make  
Dogs raise moist muzzles and howl from hairy throats,  
The playgrounds of abandoned winters,  
And old men hauling their guts in red wagons  
Back and forth from the store to loneliness',

If pain, welcome,  
For you accentuate all my failures,  
Leave entire pages unread, find out I am a plagiarist  
Whose dictionary consists of three dozen frosted words,  
Eaten up by serial killers with the rime of screams under  
Their nails,

If pain, enter,  
For I know you,  
And you have stuck around since my childhood,  
To dig the graves of little animals, to bow my head as she walks away.

Robert Rorabeck

## If She Does

We've got in pumpkins-  
Entire bins of pumpkins- and my job today  
Was to kill the ants,  
And think of something:  
And this really beautiful mother came in today-  
She looked like someone's sister.  
She looked like she'd played soccer in high school.  
Then a man came in with gold teeth,  
And I think he made a comment about my face  
Under his breath-  
I shouldn't like to think what he had to say,  
But I know he was Italian and a painter  
And from New York,  
But definitely not an artist,  
And I was glad when he went away,  
And after he went away I thought again of myself as  
An artist  
Who must try and look at his face from the sunburned  
Shadows from the best possible angles  
And try to make the best of it,  
And be happy that that beautiful young mother came in  
And asked my name,  
And said that she would be back to buy a Christmas tree.  
If she comes, then I'll have to find out her name,  
And see if she doesn't want to ride bicycles near the sea:  
If she does it will be the first time I've been with a woman  
In seven years,  
And the very first time I've been with a beautiful woman  
Not counting a couple prostitutes  
If she does.

Robert Rorabeck

# If She Ever Dreams Of Me

Every day I say nothing, and at night I nocturne  
As soft as the lingerie of negligent sparrows: I go nowhere  
While my sisters grow up,  
And it is beautiful if only because I have so often been under the glowing  
Lip of mountains;  
And I have seen wolves and bears:  
I have had a gun pushed to the back of my head, and I have slept  
For three nights in the castle perilous;  
And most of my muses know who I am, even if I have only kissed one  
Of them;  
And she knows who she is; and Sharon lives in Colorado, which  
Isn't bad;  
And she knows all about the perfumes of spirits, and her daughter is  
Beautiful: Her husband has the highest score in pinball,  
And how he ever won her I don't know,  
But it is a beautiful dream they are having, asleep in their house  
And up in the mountains deep in snow;  
And if she ever dreams of me, I should never know.

Robert Rorabeck

# If She Refused To Come Home

Some things glide through the aspens on  
Their bicycles,  
Full of hopes even though there isn't a path,  
And it snows  
While the river doesn't have to need to sing,  
And yet the hidden spring  
Replenishes itself in her dressing room,  
Quite sure she is beautiful  
Where the red foxes glisten like the wayward  
Contestants of a baseball game;  
And what I had to say to her was for without  
Reason,  
But love.... A concept of panhandling,  
A homeless, toothless sport,  
A smoking hole in my shirt; and now I would  
Like to go to her  
And climb up her, nesting in the summit of her  
Gaudy beads, all the fashion she puts  
On moving with the circulations of the forest  
Only she knows,  
But she is not entirely jealous and would stare for  
Awhile up at the pretty thief of moon  
As it snuck the meanings of romance out  
Of weighted sky and plied it to her trade,  
As she grew more children  
To shade a house for me, even if she refused to  
Come home.

Robert Rorabeck

## If She Wasn'T Already So Far Away

Twilight drinks itself to sleep and I am  
Here doing the same and yawning trying to picture the  
Dusky clouds over the  
Retiring golf courses and the teenage cemeteries,  
And maybe it because that I am not even real  
And had to sit tonight behind Romero's house while his  
Special needs nephew had his forth birthday party:  
And I sat beside Alma and her mother  
And her daughter:  
And she wore the dress that I bought her last weekend at  
The flea market underneath I-95:  
And I got to do this until the man she lives with came in  
And sat between us: he had fake diamonds in his ears  
As big as a black man's birds eggs:  
I didn't care: I went home and jogged so far I jaunted past  
Where the drunks were fishing and into the rich man's  
Yards and still I jogged, and I jogged,  
Thinking that I could still breath in the loneliest perfumes of Alma  
If only she wasn't already so far away.

Robert Rorabeck



# If She Will Ever Be Alright

You understand that I love you for real and that is  
Why I am sweating out prostrate with my liquor and holding  
Hands with the ethereal:  
That I am so scarred and the ghosts are tatters, and the cars drive  
Incessantly,  
And no one hardly ever thinks of the orange groves, the strange sustenance  
Of orange women,  
The candles lit and falling down in the grottos for the Virgin:  
They all just want to get to Disney World and start making sounds of joy;  
And I can hear the wind; but I can only imagine what it must have  
Felt like, the tugs of need that they gave to her after she was born,  
Like knights laying in her castle and demanding gifts  
Without even knowing how to speak; and the pitch-fork pines  
Go up so high like gaunt kings- the second money of their crowns  
That calls the lightning down;  
And mother counts the payroll all night; and mother is very beautiful-  
Almost as beautiful as you, the metamorphosis of all the butterflies  
Ending like the last surviving conquistadors into Mexico City;  
And I wonder if she will ever be alright.

Robert Rorabeck

# If There's A War I'll Sleep With You One Last Time Before I Get Killed

These nights are falling like stairs to nowhere,  
And I have no idea where your eyes are leading,  
Though I have seen them grazing  
On the natural selection,  
And if you don't remember seeing me, never mind,  
Because I have set out to find you  
Alone as my body rests-  
I will come to you and pick you up,  
For an eight hour adventure of a lifetime.  
We can go to that theme park every night,  
Even if you are married to another man,  
I have a million things to tell you,  
And it won't cost a thing,  
Undoubtedly, you won't even hear me,  
But I will still be here for you, trying my best;  
This is all I can do, for you  
Are some kind of perfect summer,  
And I know I shouldn't love you, not anymore,  
But this is not something that needs to go away,  
There are so many points upon your unfamiliar lifetime  
I can drop down upon,  
Places you've never been, you will take me to,  
And afterwards, if you let me, I can show you  
All these things I continue to try to say,  
Because I don't want to die a virgin:  
Long distances kisses from a man who really doesn't  
Matter, who sees you blindly, fool heartedly  
He is building a ship to sail out to you,  
Just to see you once more, in this quiet life,  
He hopes for one more chance,  
To hold your hand and step out the  
Doorway,  
To the backyard you have forgotten to explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# If They Are Alive

I am going to die, mom.  
Do you understand, father?  
I am going to die,  
Soon after you,  
And I will remember you  
Until I die  
And if I have children  
They will remember you—  
These words I am writing,  
Are they alive?  
If they are  
Then they will die—  
Like a monarch butterfly,  
One upon millions,  
Poisonous,  
Migratory;  
They will find their place  
In their season  
Or they will die along  
Their way;  
They will die  
In a week or two,  
In a year,  
In a day;  
They are never to be heard again,  
Stoned away;  
They may seem to last  
Forever  
But if they are alive;  
They will die  
They will leave no choice,  
They will have no children;  
They will look like you,  
Written in my hand,  
They are your ancestry;  
But if they have anything to do,  
In a season  
Once in bloom, They will die;  
They will speak without reason,

They will bow down and deliver  
Their message to their king;  
They will sleep in the living room  
Awaiting Christmas  
For some years  
Only to grow old  
And thoughtless;  
They will begin to forgive the  
Reasons you came together  
To give birth to the hands  
Who gave birth to them;  
And weary,  
They too will lie down  
Upon the earth,  
Finally breathless  
The journey met  
In a language discovered  
And fulfilled  
In their rented and well  
Maintained plots  
They will rest  
If they are alive—

Robert Rorabeck

## If They Are Of Any Worth

The rest of the campus is asleep, so who can I talk to:  
Who can I raise up to walk with me through the poisonous  
Show offs of the  
Carnivals of smoke screens:  
Sharon, you are up and the world is so young:  
You might as well be a starlet, Sharon:  
The first and the last star,  
Like a wave that takes forever to disperse, if that is what you  
Are doing:  
A wave so perfect in mind and body that she somehow made  
Her way from the Atlantic basin to  
Colorado,  
And up in the chimneys of little boys she made up her mind.  
Now all of the cars are rusting,  
And I am losing faith in what all the muses are supposed to be:  
Oh,  
If I had been beautiful enough for you, Sharon;  
If I had set out early enough from my door, proudly slinging my  
Powder and sword;  
I would have won any war for you, Sharon:  
You are just as beautiful as my mother in her bitter youth,  
Sharon;  
And these are just my few words still flung for you:  
Sharon, like chicken scratch;  
If you saw me waking up beside you, Sharon, you would not  
Love me,  
But here is just a little more, like a silent carnival evaporating  
Before the threshold of your beautiful door,  
Like costume jewelry left under your door, the little play things  
I leave your quiet though startling mind;  
It is up to you to decide if they are of any worth.

Robert Rorabeck

# If They Should Fail

Coloring in the vermilliad, they have a safe time  
Talking with themselves:  
The snow is hung over, the icicles have inched all week:  
Libraries are closed underneath the heatless sun;  
It feels good,  
As if I have made new friends that shouldn't have to move,  
Even while the plates tinker over the warmth  
And passions of the poles that sit and wonder if Spring  
Might come,  
While all of their gods make a zoetrope for the kings of  
The past,  
Who are still turning, keeping clockwise so that they should  
Never have to wonder if they should fail.

Robert Rorabeck

## If We Were In Love

So they called us out of the ballroom, and we  
Necked in the tall grass while the lions tried to swallow  
A harvest of satellites  
Like children in a junkyard of cradles; or it was in  
The green bottlenecks of cars,  
Swimming away from school- and from the things we  
Couldn't say ourselves,  
While cowboys rode the gods metamorphosed into  
Bulls with strange names, and eyes like the confections of  
Terrible disasters,  
Where the most beautiful of virgins were kidnapped into;  
So all of our lines read like bad science-fiction  
Wrecked into the mirages of a graveyard of oasis's;  
The geniis flecked the ash out of their rolling studebakers  
Down the streets where the blue bells still seemed to  
Waver up into the green forts of vanishing mad men  
Stocked full of fireworks,  
And against them- each wave a madness, each a house of  
A windmill; and the housewives held the hands of their  
Tourists and thought that it all was special;  
But the whores thought nothing of it at all, buried beneath the  
Rose thorns, the esplanade turning like a blanket over  
A dragon;  
And we held hands and walked together through the denouement  
Of another evening, but I could not tell if we were in love.

Robert Rorabeck

## If You Are Around

Who do you think I am now that the night pedals,  
And most of the shoppers are done;  
And don't you think it so sad, Alma, that I haven't as of yet  
Bought our bicycles,  
But Alma, I am listening to beautiful music:  
It feels like your skin,  
And I wish I was more beautiful and easier to be understood by  
You  
Alma:  
Tomorrow I will see you, but I doubt you will be entirely pleased  
By me until sometime in the afternoon,  
Which is about the hour that you seem to come around,  
And the cat fish are so fat and so round,  
And they are always surfacing through the sweet and young canals  
Just to see if you are coming around  
Alma. Just to see if you are around.

Robert Rorabeck



# If You Cannot Still Save Me

I almost gave up again but then I remembered my sister's  
Horses- speckled like the shoulders of the girl  
You brought here last night-  
And all I can remember of my sister's wedding is the brick with her and  
Her lover's husband's name smack dabbed with the other bricks:  
And now there is a song, another song coming in with another  
Wave,  
And I am sweating pot bellied out on the coach, my face as mottled  
As something that is really insecure and thus always halfway in between  
The metamorphosis that it always seems to seem:  
And the day is broken: the day is on the toilet or is the waiting machine  
Inside a phone booth that is dead since high school,  
And so I weep beside you in the weeds overcoming the grass like a  
Movie theatre that has gone to pot,  
But otherwise I am good, and I can look up from the little planted tree,  
Too small for firefighters to ruin, and I can see her looking back at me:  
If her name is Sharon, then Alma you don't remember her,  
But she did not save me- so just imagine that this is the parking lot of  
A super high school that is still surviving,  
And Alma you still nook the keystones of my soul, and I am always and  
Forever climbing up into your treeless bosom;  
And, Alma, why I'll be damned if you cannot still save me.

Robert Rorabeck

## If You Know What You Do

Going away from the trains further,  
Going away for good- going to become a beautiful  
Innocent girl smoking in a store-room,  
Going up the switchbacks, and going down the  
Switchbacks and the traffic is always rushing,  
But my dogs will only live for so many years;  
So many years the cats and goldfish will live,  
Kelly; and you don't know what you've found:  
My words they are perfumed badges, but they are just  
The sweet cadavers still exhumed above this ground,  
Above this earth, like sweet melons trying to disavow  
Their marriage of gravity, or their marriage to so many  
Things that are still weeping, that haven't turned  
Out;  
And you saw a dolphin; and you saw a water moccasin,  
And you gave a shout,  
And danced above your grave; that was what you were  
Doing, dancing like a dying airplane above your grave;  
Kelly;  
You didn't even know you were dying: I caught a glance  
At your breast, at your tattoo and you were wheeling to  
And fro,  
And I didn't know what I was doing, but I had to let you  
Go and you spilled from my fingers like the early morning  
Holidays of paper snowflakes, of bamboo;  
And your children shot off fireworks and fell asleep in  
The zoo;  
And you are a beautiful woman, Kelly; Kelly,  
But I really, really wonder if you know what you can do.

Robert Rorabeck

# If You Liked That Sort Of Thing

With this face I like to pretend  
To be an old man with this glass- A nearly  
Perfect old man, with this glass  
And with his bag of fireworks near the sea:  
Won't you just sit out and wait and see,  
What I could do;  
And I've never spoken of this before,  
And I am so proud and hung over, while I  
Admit that there are better things for you to do:  
Luckily you are doing them,  
Meeting people I would never meet,  
Making love out in the sidewalks of the Catholic  
Church I can remember positioned quite blue and still  
Across from that great secular university;  
But I won't go to school anymore,  
And you know that, but when I did go to school,  
It was very difficult to look myself in the eye  
In any bathroom mirror- I always looked so awful,  
But not quite as awful as I look now,  
Revealing myself to you, meaning to do anything to  
Draw your attention to me in my lonely house,  
Like an old widower under the despotic sun,  
Even while the waves are crashing and the traffic is going  
Around, calling in the girls like feeding birds in a pine  
Forest, flaunting to the short skirts in roller skates,  
Meaning that I have dictated this evening my sour candy  
From my ineffective bag of tricks,  
Hoping that it would captivate you like a poison apple,  
Desiring your endearing dishonestly, suspecting that you  
Were willing again to make love, if you liked that sort of thing.

Robert Rorabeck

## If You Must Look For Me

If you must look for me, do so now,  
For my temples will soon be done molting,  
And after I've taught my dog to speak, I'll  
Smoke a fine cigar as I walk away,  
My pockets chewing money; though I'll  
Whistle for a ways, but its not because I'd  
Want you to find me,  
For it is such a sunny day, along the avenues  
Which run so swiftly by the cemetery, and the  
Clouds are pages on their way over the burlesque  
Sorority, where southern bells swoon off their  
Bidets, blowing kisses to burly mailmen on their  
Way home to the misses, while children on the  
Swing set kick their feet over burry ditches,  
And latchkey kittens mew and sway their tails  
Up the jumbled gutter, were blindly hungry chicks have  
Given themselves away;  
Little girls pass by gingerly on glittering roller-skates,  
Down the windy hill-way, wishing they had three wishes,  
And grandmothers sing and do their dishes from the kitchen,  
And I am almost all the way,  
All the way to the end of the sidewalk; The day is passing  
Through, and that is nothing beside me, for you have  
Walked away, you have walked away,  
And left me nothing to do, but to do what you already  
Decided; If you must look for me, do so now,  
For the day is gently gliding, dousing the trees in their black  
Well, turning off the library, but there is no one beside me to kiss and tell,  
As you have walked away,  
Leaving only my slipping shadow beside me.

Robert Rorabeck

## If You Were Mine To Marry

I have driven past graveyards of Olive and fuchsia:  
I have been down to Miami with my father to gather produce,  
Before he had his toothache and he wasn't  
Always so angry:  
Before I even knew Alma, or her Virgin of Gaudelupe,  
While these nights I tend to bow and pray to both,  
While her children are glistening with the lactates in their grottos  
And the stars are swinging like smoky censers  
And I have a house but it is as hollow as a trick of woe begone  
Shoes,  
Isn't it Alma: and I drove your aunt and your god mother home today  
And I expressed all the things that I desired out of you;  
And Meirna wasn't displeased, and she only said that women needed  
Some time for such decisions,  
And I hoped and prayed that this was true, and that you might want  
Me;  
And that you shouldn't be afraid, because I, Alma, could be your safe  
Loci:  
My entire body could be your yard for you yawn and tarry and rest with  
The alkaline deer, if you were mine to Mary:  
The entire world would be a place for sweet an slow moving fish  
Who never had anything to worry,  
And the snow would water the grass- Alma,  
If you were mine to marry.

Robert Rorabeck

# If You Will Be Pleased

You don't seem to see my scars, even while we sit  
In the wavering penumbras of your stationary cars; and the bulls  
Have gone to the quick markets,  
And the sun is as red and as wide and as hungry as an offering  
Bowl:  
And I do all of this in the quietest howls of the hungriest night:  
I say your name like an apocryphal prayer:  
Your eyes are serpentine timber, Alma- and your body is a smooth  
Bicycle filled now with the familiar tricks of  
Our delusional marriages: and you are my friend, and we shared  
A breakfast together this morning. You fed me pancakes with  
Strawberry syrup: and your legs were shaved  
And they went so far up your little body, like brown ladders into  
An arboreal heaven I delighted in plucking before  
Noon:  
And now I pray for you, while your eyes turn in the strange lights  
Of your home that seems so far away, Alma;  
As I wonder how much time it will take you to get around to  
Reading this,  
And if you will even know me then, and if you will be pleased.

Robert Rorabeck

## If You'D Been My Sister

Would that you'd been born my sister,  
Then you would already be happily married,  
Free of the holocaust  
When your mother left to be born again;  
And you'd already be happily married:  
Maybe you'd be considering me,  
But you never would;  
And I would be sitting here all alone,  
As if I had never known you, if you'd been my sister.

Robert Rorabeck

# If Your Eyes Ever Chose

Part of the hemisphere is thick with  
Rainbows,  
Alma: and I can barely remember Colorado:  
That is how far away I am from my last love,  
And you said you didn't want to hurt me even while you  
Moved your car over and idled on my tomb:  
And I went over to our aunt's house and looked at her  
Virgins and ate her sister's  
Cooking, but I couldn't help thinking of your country,  
Verdant and green and full of swing sets  
And birds of prey:  
And I want to propose to you atop that hill we went up  
Together  
Where there aren't any hungry dogs that could carry you  
Away,  
Because you barely weigh little more than a hundred pounds,  
But you know that I can anchor you and feel the  
Vibrations of your kite string as you moan in the sun showers  
Of my lucky bedroom Alma,  
And the fish tale palm winnows like a waterfall of your favorite  
Color right outside the open window  
Where the airplanes are always leaping like well thrown  
Stones or lucky amphibians if your lips ever moved off my  
Water fountains and if your eyes ever chose to look that way.

Robert Rorabeck



# If Your Eyes Jog Away

Please don't go away and marry  
The mortician—I have been in his rafters,  
And the black widow spiders tell me he is no good for you—  
I am dead, but I am Casper the friendly ghost—  
You are looking right through me now,  
Your eyes are s@xy legs; they jog right through me—  
There you go jogging through the heavy rain—  
See how you make the trees sad, because you won't  
Say your name, nor tell me what your first word was—  
Please don't go away from my lonely University,  
Even if I am a ghost and your eyes, s@xy legs run  
Right through me—  
I am Casper the friendly ghost and we can sit  
At your front door and let you get out of the rain—  
We can sing songs together, even if I sold all  
My albums to get my soul back from S-tan—  
I can sit in the same spot you sit, and go inside of  
You, and sing the songs that you sing from your lips—  
I can know you, if you let me, and live a warm  
Afterlife within, inside the u-bend of your left ear—  
I have been in your lover's home, and it is no place  
For the living.  
The black widow spiders have told me—  
Even though I am dead, I am Casper the friendly  
Ghost, and I can sit with you out of the rain or you  
Can watch it come down right through me,  
If your eyes jog away—

Robert Rorabeck

## If's

If I saw tamed lions walking in the sea  
With seahorses riding in their manes,  
There would never have been a civil war  
In Spain;  
And little girls torn by kites high up in  
The trees,  
They'll look down at the parks of the world,  
The reedy lakes now all of it no taller  
Than their scabby knees-

And, in the afternoon, when all the buses have  
Gone home,  
And there is no more music lessons,  
And each kind of little bird is building its nest  
In the gutters or the limbs,  
And I saw the trapeze-cat walking a tight rope  
From this home to the first moon,  
To steal your birthstones,

I would lay out a saucer of milk as a reward  
To fill my hands with the jewelry of your notions,  
To eavesdropp on water-skiers,  
And the specters of the service industry  
Who used to be teenagers, smoking in the park,  
Burning little holes,  
And misty arcs hung on chains;

And if I said I'd love you,  
You would not complain, but hang on me  
Like a fruit in its garden-  
We would watch airplanes skipping- if  
You would take my name.

Robert Rorabeck

# I'll Sing Your Name (But I Am Just Drunk)

I said I loved you,  
But I'm drunk- The only way I could  
Get you to look at me would  
Be to die,  
But I'm too afraid: Listen to the clacking keys  
As they promenade:  
If any better they would make the sulky  
Race through the oracular glade:  
I won't write to you directly,  
But I'll sing your name- Erin,  
Why do I sing your name?  
With every night and every poem,  
I sing your name:  
If it ever goes down,  
If I go down as something, it will  
Be your shame:  
Erin, why should it be your name, if you  
Shouldn't make your name mine?  
I want you to be mine, but isn't that just the  
Liquor speaking,  
Isn't that just the mother's concern,  
And now who do I hear echoing around each and  
Every impossible turn?  
Why, it's just you, Erin- Isn't it?  
Because I'm drunk- And I spent \$500 hundreds  
Dollars today, Erin, to go down a new path  
Just as far adjacent to yours as my old one;  
But I guess it is still just as beautiful in this weeping  
Orchard not concerning all the ankle-deep  
Weeds, Erin,  
And the stolen watermelons. Won't you  
Show me your naked breasts, Erin?  
But I am just drunk, and the new born foal  
Is dying.

Robert Rorabeck

# Illusion Of The Failing Light

Fell off the stage for somebody, and slept underneath  
A school bus  
To lay in an orchard of shadows with a terrapin-  
With your eyes,  
And breakfast all around you, laughing-  
Until you made them cry by breaking up with them-  
And the saddles are between the mountains-  
Isn't that where aspens grow in a different type of  
Sorority than what we have right here-  
While our little brothers sleep outside in blue tents-  
Out numbered, they pretend they never have to  
Go to church again,  
Just as I pretend I never saw you kiss his lips-  
As I watch you from the shore,  
And you became the illusion the failing light played  
Across the cliffs- and kept the firemen up  
All night with your illusions- until  
The lighthouses dimmed beneath the horrendous  
Mobiles, swearing they'd had enough.

Robert Rorabeck

# Illusions In The Beauty Of A Hibernating Heart

We sold watermelons together and  
Now these songs  
Cut up into penny candy for 20 cents—  
So far from Mexico,  
Just a few hours by plane—and I am  
Diminishing,  
But I still love you—cicadas crossing  
Their legs and  
Changing their clothing in the night—  
I remember sleeping on your  
Roof while you slept  
In the bedroom with your husband  
And your children:  
I was your wolf gusting away—trying to  
Sleep in the storerooms of your chimney—  
Trying to make believe we might once  
Enjoy the sunlight of rollercoasters—  
If we became the plagiarisms of  
Tourists—if they kept us together as  
The snow melted and ran down the cheeks of  
Summer—  
Now your knights follow you as your car  
Is repossessed—where are you going,  
Where the rattlesnake lies coiled?  
I keep trying to paint for you in these echoes—  
Illusions in the beauty of a hibernating heart:  
As the school days continue lapsing over themselves—  
You are all I can remember,  
Even though I will awaken tomorrow and lapse  
Through another day without you remorse.

Robert Rorabeck

## Illusions You Can Find

Whatever illusions you can find in a carnival  
With nursery rhymes tumbling into her at the end of the hill,  
In a sweating navel of extinction's joyous echoes  
The bones of sounds:  
Where your mother and father met and got lost in the woods  
Amidst all of the prettiest elk and chicken wire hung up in  
The lees and around their antlers:  
Strange mote of a dance with the airplanes picking berries  
And coming so close to the ground as to kiss starfish  
Where the angelic arboretum pulls back, where there  
Is a sea and dryads disappear into mermaids  
Evenly beautiful through the lactates of the heavens:  
Where cars park and the first loves weep  
Over orange lipped extension chords,  
And tourists getting their pictures taken with the Pieta:  
I know you are here—In a fantasy that weeps for itself  
And the swordfish who have lost their lovers  
And come to wreck their silver bodies beneath a lightless house.

Robert Rorabeck

# I'M Yours

Wasps close to a flower who's dying  
You know your name,  
And you know I'm yours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Imaginary Real-Estate

Baudelaire is finished and already out in the yard.  
I would say it was green, but he has done something  
To it, so that only he might properly describe  
The hue of its dying;  
and all the stars are like shrinking violets as  
The busses pull up, yellowing,  
and the lions roar, meaning to yawn.

Look at all of this, where we've laid our heavy stakes,  
And fashioned for ourselves a finite space which needs  
Governing and river boats,  
And a psychiatrist who listens to her and takes notes  
While she lays back under the whirring patina  
Of the ceiling fan  
and pretends that she'd rather not be  
Our wife, and that her legs do not contribute to the playground  
Violence and bullying of our microwave childhood,

Or that all of this is something awful,  
Even while the organ plays in church, and afterwards  
Kids dressed for Easter swing above the hill,  
Cuffing ants, eclipsing all the  
The rows of fine marble stones, like song birds with bad habits  
And tobacco stained fingers; and eyes which linger  
Without reason or jurisdiction, even upon cousins,  
Especially upon them:

Freckled apples and kittens,

Lines following in a parade of costume sailors.  
I prefer only females saluting each other and tipping their  
Negligeed plumage:  
Rootbeer floats and strawberry shampoo,  
I dream about them underneath the finest  
Cross in the oldest city, I give them their own paragraphs  
And supporting rolls in tinkering novels.  
I do so much for them that I even clean the dishes,  
And take the thorny pie out of the suicide ovens of distinguished



Female poets with stains on their cheeks, like tears on fresh ink,

I leave the air condition on as the traffic hurries to the  
Places I am afraid to contribute to- A younger serpent cuts its  
Way through the grass heading to drink from an evil flower  
Growing from the nostril hole of that francophone beast:  
I don't even get a dial tone; but use the spare dictionary as a step  
Up to kiss her. Except that the pedestal she was put upon  
Has gone empty, and someone has stolen the only car from the  
Sky blue carport:

A tarmac hot and empty, and somewhere further off  
Petty crime and hesitant sirens,

The sprinklers are jewelling the yard;  
Teeth ache in my jaw like pearls in a clam, the newspaper is  
Wet: all the energy is escaping like words improperly used,  
Like mathematics developed instead for feeling as for effect:  
Like tourists out on holiday picnicking distinguished by a  
Religion which really isn't theirs to speak about;  
The bulls are tearing through the China shop,  
The waves are leaping,  
And I am holding hands with a little girl,  
And, don't you know that I am all alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Immaculate Lapels

Airplane on Christmas- you are my  
Present:  
You are how I managed to be here, open  
Armed,  
Waiting for the divine providence of  
Something,  
As the light held my shoulders even though  
It was growing cold,  
And the movie theatre was a cave  
From which echoed the dancing of  
Pretty pictures that should never  
Have been made-  
As it comes around again: as the jungles grow,  
And the eagles fly over,  
And the waves become surreal as they try  
To kiss the angels-  
And the stewardesses fly over them-  
Their fingernails painted like sherbet and  
Marmalade,  
Their pantyhose seamless- and their pilots  
Wearing copper wings in the geometries of  
Immaculate lapels.

Robert Rorabeck

# Immoral Car Show

I don't know sh^t: I studied enough to learn  
The job,  
But I forgot everything:  
In the new continent where I watched my peers  
Kill Christians;  
But all I killed was a dancing chicken,  
And the trees went forever upwards, haven't  
Being used: Fry the meat, live in waddle and daub,  
Steal the girl: get a good paying job,  
Tie your shoes:  
This is what they sang to me from their cars,  
Going up the hills with ease, graveyard shopping,  
going fast and clean  
And surreal, Catholic injuns- the feather light professional Christians  
With new tongues and tickets to ride the ski lift:  
Odin said kill them all, but  
All I could do was fall in love with her at the university.  
I lived in a hole like a rabbit:  
I had a red lizard's soul, and I sharpened my knife  
On her wet stone heart,  
But she was thoroughly petrified and I broke my  
Gift on her and it didn't come back,  
Like a dog would, or that careless, captured sea:  
I wrote a worthy thesis and climbed some mountains  
As an exegesis, and no one cared:  
They moved in together and shared, and I lived in my  
Hole in the earth, strange erotic dreams of bright teal  
Tennis courts where my papers flew like late blooming moths:  
All over the place, restive and reasoning under her leaping tennis skirts.  
The housewives loved me, molted the exoskeletons  
Of their insouciant habits: Those auto grazers  
Were giant and had so many legs, and ate themselves  
With afforested tongue, and then laughed about it  
Going to the tanning salon in their blazers:  
She changed her name and forgot how I'd showed her  
The tattoo south of my navel I got in Spain:  
I forgot everything I learned about her,  
My comrades forsaking me thinking I was dead,  
A consumptive pickle-faced Mary Jane, I drank alone in my

Pine-needle bed- my toes peeking out of the covers to  
Check the weather, and continued to worship the reindeers I could  
No longer raise with my impotent necromancy  
Stuffing my head.

Robert Rorabeck

# Immortal Gold

I keep reminiscing  
A cool sweet gun behind my back,  
A pop barrel of kill  
Joy,  
And children's rhymes are selling smoking  
Tires in the sky:  
I ain't going to die,  
Not this: I am the surprising exoskeleton  
Who fell asleep under the bus  
During math;  
And that's all they're going to get,  
Custer's Last Stand left a small cleft in the  
Unseemly mountains  
As I crawl through, trucking my lunch of  
Cold ham and cheese folded up in plaid,  
Putting on a wolfish camouflage,  
I'll pluck straight up to god  
And steal a kiss in the deepest, oldest caracole  
Of his cheek,  
And sit at his good side for all week,  
Clicking my heels  
And remembering my stride,  
Because of all the things I told you and didn't  
Hide,  
While the day and ride were long and tried:  
Even if I never got a tip for the effluvious timber  
Of my immortal gold,  
I get paid cause I ain't  
Going to die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Immortal Ice-Cream

Women have been looking at me tonight  
As if I were a wolf:  
Beautiful women, and I don't know.  
I just want to sit down and eat my ice-cream  
Along the gentle bend of the easement  
Underneath the airplanes who don't know my name;  
And it is amazing, absolutely amazing to think  
That there are people flying through the air-  
There really are people flying through the air,  
Like super heroes, like Russian acrobats without  
Trapeze;  
And I think of Erin, as I always do, how I sent  
Her flowers,  
And then she sucked the bouncer's c%ck-  
Or whatever she did, in her independent boudoir.  
Who's to say,  
Except I am an independent entrepreneur and even past  
Midnight I can here the traffic rushing, rushing  
To and fro,  
And she said she would read my poetry forever,  
But I- I don't know.  
The bouquets I sent her are long since dead, and I can  
Only imagine her now as a headstone underneath the  
Deciduous trees who are shedding lonesome tears  
For that barmaid,  
Shedding tears, shedding tears, far beside my great uncles  
Lake, while the stars seem to last forever  
In the sky, even though they do not:  
And I want to live forever, and I deceive myself that I will:  
I am a better writer when I am murdered under the rose  
Bushes,  
Or when I am stacking cans of soup, my throat thirsty for  
A cigarette,  
But now we are closed, and beautiful Russian brides  
Are riding bicycles,  
And Erin is still beautiful, but I don't know:  
I think maybe she is not beautiful, because she is not a grandmother,  
And I damn all the novels I have written for her,  
Or with her on my mind:

She doesn't deserve me-  
I am immortal ice-cream,  
But I still have Erin, sweet venal  
Erin melting on my mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Immortality

Lost things parked on the road, and the satellites mew  
As they fluctuate over a heathen's suburbia:  
And I don't have to look away- but I do: there is wine in the  
Glass,  
Dessert wine from somewhere arid where there is no need for  
Canoes,  
Or hypnosis: the mirages come at their own will,  
Piling like butterflies over buildings: if there was a fire,  
It would be leaping everywhere, as the rain comes down  
No where:  
And there are no canals: the alligators there are just cenotaphs,  
And the world that no one survives to know really flies by;  
It leaps through the catastrophes as it burns away,  
Like something of a pulpit as the lion hoops, grinning continuously  
For the catastrophe of its tourisms:  
And I say these things to myself as I imbibe; as I just lost another  
Far better poem to oblivion- but it was rubbish anyways:  
And I am alone, and have no fear of ever finding immortality.

Robert Rorabeck



# Impenetrable Shade

Something dark is breathing outside my tent:  
He is as big as a house- he is a wino with a scythe-  
He is the pestilent horse of death;  
And I am not afraid,  
Because he knows what I am doing for him,  
That I have mowed his field for him,  
And will soon be selling all his laughing children orange  
And flickering like kerosene lamps lit by barmaids  
In the prehistoric Caribbean;  
And he wants me to get laid- and maybe I will,  
Underneath the teal copper cannons in some semi permeable  
Esplanade;  
And afterwards I will lick my fingers by which all my tricks  
Were laid,  
And we will laugh together and I will happen finally into sleep  
Above ground and yet deep, deep in his  
Impenetrable shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Imperfect Art

Now I feel like dancing, of opening up  
Forever underneath the heirlooms  
Of my sideshows,  
Underneath all of these vanishing places  
Where we have to be found out-  
That we made love, and broke  
Ourselves underneath the hapless sunlight:  
Don't you understand that  
I decided to find you here, and so I  
Found you here-  
And it feels for awhile to become a bridal  
Temptation:  
But what are your children doing,  
Even when sometime you are not home,  
But leaving your body to think of me as I buy  
Your dresses underneath the rose gardens  
Of the overpasses:  
As I prey and make love to you while  
I am alone on my weekend:  
And I know nothing of moving making,  
And this is just a scene that I am thinking back  
Upon you,  
As you lay there, opened mouthed- but  
Very soon you will have to sunbathe for your  
Family,  
And then you will have to get up dancing,  
Like a marionette- and this is a true love  
Story- and your name is, Alma-  
But my art is so imperfect, that the world  
Will never know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Impermanence Of Stone Butterflies

Impermanence of stone butterflies,  
This another night puts its reasons to my lips,  
And there are relatives in their graves:  
I don't know where grandfather is buried,  
But I know how to get to Disney World; and I have  
My ritual put to work by the light of day,  
That uncommon light like a sea of light shining on  
All of this species- This mobile of tailless masses,  
And what does it mean, but it is so easy to ask that;  
It is so easy to pretend to perceive the mundane,  
But I am just trying to impress the opposition of my  
Species: I am doing the same thing as baseball players,  
Principals, and astronauts;  
I am trying to dress up for her in the park, to dress her  
Down;  
And I have been drinking my liquor and dreaming of  
Shaving my head, of being a husband to Diana who doesn't  
Love me,  
But loves her homeless captains, and how long will it last:  
Will there be similar fairies in the morning,  
Soliciting over the parks and the avenues where the serene  
Cars drive; the little lights in the grottos of witchcraft,  
The little trails she bleeds, the perfume of her footsteps;  
And that is why I get drunk, and don't have a family:  
I am waiting for something that cannot happen:  
I am waiting to buy a house, and become the ghost of her love,  
The memory of her sweet flower plucked before it  
Could open and given to its cartoon mouse.

Robert Rorabeck

# Impermanent Beauty Mark

I want to come, and streak your face  
With an impermanent beauty mark while  
The winos float by just as insouciant as doves  
And fainted conquistadors down past the pool:  
For you to wipe me off and smile like a holiday  
That as ended, a hearth in which a fire has soon died,  
And exhausted you can go back to picking dates  
And wild scuppernongs to the better suited  
Fables, long-tongued, and gooder for wiping your taught  
Pink wrinkled as\$,  
So that I might smile too, and picking up my plastic  
Stewardesses for a fix, become the paper airplane  
That rests pullulating across the other side of the canal,  
Never intending again to return to your careless,  
Adulterous palm.

Robert Rorabeck

# Impervious To The Senses

Refusal to do your songs, as you would have me do them—  
Looking up in the midnight you don't believe in,  
Seeing the immense yellow eyes of a deer that is just  
Shadows: cars and RVs driving beneath her,  
As she is on a rise:  
Her eyes are the only places in her that are lit up:  
Something never perceived on my parents' property—  
Something left there, remaining—after  
All of the fireworks and Christmas trees and commercial  
Heavens are sold—  
Like a friend to a werewolf—deer without any light except for  
In the eyes—eyes of the homunculus  
That even the dogs couldn't smell—the trees are dying,  
And there are airplanes and the Pegasus above her—  
Stewardesses dreaming like water fountains over the earth—  
Where she is like a graveyard that wants more—  
She has the carnival smell of perfume interrupted by adultery—  
And she is there, impervious to the senses,  
Still—even if she doesn't believe in me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Impossible

Teal monuments hover and vibrate like  
Threatening broadcasts over the sloping greens  
With little holes,  
And little flags which wave like little surrenders,  
The crocodiles who smile back strokes,  
Sleep in their prehistory, have no judgment for  
Fashion, faux pas- Exgirlfriends, dermatologists,  
Thesis defenses-  
There where the storm comes riding like something  
Which can't ever be experienced in  
Moribund hallways, the echoes of grammarians,  
Longitudinal fathers put the spurs to their sons,  
And the crocodiles smile with nine irons and  
Backstrokes, teal monuments hover and vibrate like  
Threatening broadcasts over the sloping greens  
With little holes,  
And little flags which wave like little surrenders,  
The adulterers in the window's cuckolding, can only  
See each other liked peeled plums-  
They stick fingers into the steaming desert stolen from  
Their mother's birthday,  
There where the storm comes riding like something  
Which can't ever be experienced in  
Moribund hallways, the echoes of grammarians,  
Longitudinal fathers put the spurs to their sons,  
So they rise up with good posture, professional arrangements  
Corner offices, big windows where their contemporaries  
Play the sport of kings, the green body of the woman  
Conquistador, rising up in little holes, with little flags  
Like little surrenders,  
The crocodiles who smile back strokes, and the cold front  
Where the storm trundles in brushing the lips of pine trees,  
Salting the arcade of their limbs,  
Like something which can never be experienced....

Robert Rorabeck

# Impotent Musings

-ucked up despotic universe burnished  
In cruel despotic time,  
You've really got it in for me,  
Given me the bad-luck of dysfunctional rhyme,  
Slouching shoulders and drooping  
Mustache,  
Two good legs to the liquor store to dash  
To pick up my clichés of state college,  
Bastioned in hemispheres of unpublished knowledge:  
And she's a fan of my impotent implementation,  
And I would like to make her the first mother  
Of my impotent nation,  
And send all my faux politicians over to her auburn brow  
So she can crown them each with the head of  
The cow of my semi-pulp benediction-  
The fair movie is over and I didn't even listen;  
I didn't kick my old woman like Bukowski,  
I didn't worship the splendid grave in splendiferous mood  
Like Baudelaire; Perhaps I rhymed a little bit like  
Lindsay; Perhaps I am too gray to care:  
The lovers are still young from talk and tongue-  
I haven't spoken to anything since the dinosaurs,  
And this is just the impotent rush of spell of impotent spikenard-  
I am not even going to get on the bus,  
Because I am too tired and burned out to love a good woman;  
I wouldn't know how to begin- All my muses are venal,  
Lock-jawed in marching bands of handsomer and more  
Important men.

Robert Rorabeck

# Imprint Of My Memory

I don't have no rum,  
So I don't know how it is that  
I'm going to say  
That I don't belong to you-  
That I haven't belonged to you for so long,  
Sleeping gray eyed in hostels,  
Never weeping even when the poets disappear  
In that forgotten civil war-  
Like dogs who lose their fellows out amidst the  
Coral paths:  
Their noses snuffing, their ears ragged,  
But as long as there is spaghetti and red velvet  
They just don't seem to care:  
And you have your own man in a phone booth or  
In another booth in some restaurant,  
And he or someone else is smoking, crenellating  
Smoke, of course-  
Yeah, maybe he is checking the papers, going to  
Bet on a horse: a sure thing;  
And you are wrapped there like a style,  
Like a word that is sweet to compose- And I am watching  
You eat your bloody breakfast;  
And I am consumptious with another jaundice sunrise  
Coming over me,  
Happening without repose;  
And you are so contented to be with your man-  
Your blue eyes the tender jazz extemporaneous from the  
Body's fountain;  
And soon I will have to wander off again barefoot through  
The shallows of the coral reef,  
And the bloody anemones will bask there all day long in  
Their thimble pools,  
The sky undressing as she does; and you will have never even  
Looked up, but how should it matter  
When there is no sand from which the eking tide to steal  
Even one imprint of my memory.

Robert Rorabeck



# In

Becoming sheathed in the vanishing colors of  
The yard;  
I would have liked to say that her favorite color was  
Red, like an ixora:  
Maybe she bordered the walk into high school:  
Maybe she was just one of many I couldn't stop to smell,  
But now crepuscule is entering the yard:  
The rattlesnakes curl into balls: It is almost time for their  
Young to hatch underneath the hamper where  
The whelps are being birthed:  
They come out so faithfully to the side of the carport  
Where the toads are ululating in a fevered pitch:  
And there is the washer and dryer all warm to the side;  
It is almost like the grotto of a virgin,  
And the little back yard where the pet rabbits are kept,  
And the orange tree weeps; and over the chicken wire fence  
The entire sky laments as it is turned away;  
And I wonder too if you wonder what that must be like,  
In your other little yard not so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Ball Of Kissing Dreams

Stillness in the river  
In the unanswered season—pledges of  
Allegiance to a classroom in  
The summer—  
And other ghosts—like the graveyards of  
Kindergarten—  
The television still turns on when you  
Are not around—  
Hummingbirds hover in the ether,  
Propelled by the wishes of  
Abraham Lincolns—  
You are up in Ocala with the orange trees,  
The horses,  
And your husband—or you race above  
The earth,  
A comet who struck matches across my  
Bedroom like rattlesnakes entwined  
In a ball of kissing dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Bed Of Moonlight

The calves mew their tibouchinas  
And I wait for Alma to  
Call: the cats are building their castles across the Canal  
Where the salmon lactate their minnows  
And the cowgirls spill with their dinner bells into  
The hall:  
When the busses come, they put purple flowers in their  
Hair and turn around so many times that it  
Seems preposterous:  
Just as Alma will never leave her family for us-  
It is as if someone refuses to leave hell to spend a fieldtrip  
In Disney World;  
And yet I have felt her up, and given her legs the bouquets of  
My lips-  
And I have pleased her the way waves break in the pylons  
Of the fishermen of milkmen:  
Sipped the lactates of her caves, and have otherwise enjoyed  
Her loneliness- and closing my eyes,  
Committed the crimes of bathing with her out of doors  
In the fountains of banks and other  
Places in Miami and across the Gulf of Mexico that we  
Were never suppose to go in to value one another:  
And yet we go- with our eyes opened, and our eyes closed-  
With the pilgrimages of the snakes and  
The foxes through the heather- and the shampoos in the corridors  
Of her daughter;  
Until we have to burn away anyways, offering our souls like  
Paper to the dead,  
Her tiny hand closing around my hand the way the sated wildflowers  
Go to sleep atop of their lingering firemen in a bed of moonlight.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Bed That The Streetlights Douse

It's peace- and it's reason,  
And the foliage is wet around the house:  
The wife is sleeping with her  
Spouse  
In a bed that the streetlights douse.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Blissful Sea

Imperfections in a blissful sea of  
Waves- waves that never any man shall sea-  
So far away from any lighthouse, and yet  
Imperfect-  
Full of the wet enunciations of their feral amusements-  
In a school of whelps wet dreaming of  
Mermaids  
Hearing myths of coral reefs hoping upon for their  
Bodies to dash:  
And racehorses, and other harder stuff: while neither knowing  
That they are almost all of the world;  
And that they are in her dreams, and cousins to her tears;  
And on, and on they rush.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Carney's Dream

Translations in a Carney's dream: I want to buy my soul  
At the flea market,  
While my muse has been making love off and on underneath  
The school buses making their rounds,  
Calling halleluiahs with their caracoles; and then they pray down  
To their dinners, and  
Laugh and shout, and by some other ways muse:  
While I have crawled under the blankets with you,  
Alma:  
After it was your birthday, as very soon it will be Christmas:  
And the lights in your eyes are the most perplexing brown:  
So dark as to be filled with promises, and the wings of  
Stewardesses too;  
And your children are somewhere calling from the svelte lawns of  
Graveyards up underneath the plastic cardinals of gauzed wildflowers;  
Until I stole you away from this  
And gave you CPR through the first elements that crepuscule gave to  
The paramours and starlets at their first attempt at making a movie.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Comely Zoo

Contagions of the landscaping of the world:  
Flowers flaming their hair for cars:  
Two tiny windmills on the corner of our store, like  
Harmless monsters,  
And it tells us that our bodies have blown up to enormous  
Sizes:  
The girls we have loved from high school have turned away,  
And kissing the stamens of other gentlemanly surprises  
Having nothing more to us to say;  
But Sharon, our sweet muses, has wished us a happy birthday,  
So now all of the world can go down many leagues into dungeons  
And kiss and pocket all of those corduroy dragons,  
The stolen hullabaloes and wealths of Easter Eggs:  
And I have been out myself into the middle of the lagoon, of the  
Sunken prairie,  
Have felt the arrowheads of sunken stewardesses kissing my feet  
Like my aunt Mary,  
And offering my naked if scarred soul promises of weddings too;  
But I tell her I have no more room for promises to marry,  
Unless she is a Mexican, and her soul is migratory, illegal, and poisonous  
While the silhouettes of school buses reflect for miles across the  
Desert,  
Sending us on wild goose chases while our doppelgangers kiss the  
Lips of aunts name marry in between the pretty cages of the pretty  
Animals in a comely zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Common Destination

The first thing Alma gave me was elephants- and I  
Got so lucky I caught a forty pound king fish:  
Then when we made love, the scars of our two bodies  
Melted together made singing cadavers and  
Dancing tattoos:  
At night, alone I drink fire for her, and of course I bleed  
These songs,  
While I watch birds perpetually mate in a sky of  
Blueness-  
The traffic sings of masterpieces, and insects skate across  
The water, as the lips of a girl I imagine I have known  
Bend closer to the fountains:  
The castles and the mountains rising behind her, or  
Looming in, all their majesty bent upon finding out  
If she has a single perfection, and the traffic follows her,  
Sure that she will provide answers and reasons  
That will bring them together in a common destination.

Robert Rorabeck



# In A Country Named After You

My legs are cold  
I feel like an amputee from the civil war,  
And my parents  
Are sleeping:  
I don't have anything better to say for myself-  
You might like my words,  
But if you saw me juxtaposed with better men,  
Say buzz-cut astronauts,  
You might pretend to still love me, because you  
Pretend to be a good woman;  
But at night while I was away selling fireworks,  
You would go to sleep with them;  
And that is no good, but something you can  
Be sure to believe in;  
As I believe in you, pagans believe in animals bare-chested  
And fornicating at the zoo-  
The West Palm Beach zoo, where I first fell in love with  
You,  
With my Amazonian goddess, while I watched faggots burning  
And smoking as they touched themselves,  
As the spider monkeys leapt and flew;  
And little tragic heroes grunted with sweat and the flu  
As they tried to struggle over the guard rails or the cattle  
Guards like  
Terrapin or stray balloons on a quest:  
And they are almost there, to the silver palace of wherever,  
And their friends are beautiful; and I am with them,  
And we can pull down the sky and eat the  
Fruiteria of the figments of our imagination;  
And we spend all of our time  
Composing and playing make-believe games in a country  
Named after you where it never has to rain.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Courtship Of Nonsense

It isn't that I want to live that way—like the sun  
And the moon,  
In a courtship of nonsense—like bodies pegged to  
Bodies—  
The billowing cadavers of another preternatural  
Midway—  
And always someone who is gossiping—  
As they seem to be trying to make a tract of their  
Shells—  
Most of the time failing—sometimes doing some  
Good—  
But giving everyone else a hard time—  
Yes, I believe—this is how it fairs, if it fairs so well:  
Weather, foul or good, overhead—  
Like over passes over the flea markets,  
With all of the beautiful wives always going somewhere.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Creche In The Mountains

Tricks of tombs and spiders  
In a crèche in the mountains—  
There in a pretty womb,  
Tumbled together  
With the wolves and arrowheads,  
My parents bedecked with white hairs  
And my mother's sister—  
Yet lost in the limbo I enjoyed for  
Five years:  
There they are where the Milky Way  
Cascades in a rich and expansive swath  
So far away from the cities  
Or the thoughts of sexy women  
Who dream of driving towards those apexes  
Of society  
With thoughts of seduction:  
They are constantly going there with  
A purpose,  
To the crowded plots where manmade light  
Drowns out the heavenly ones—  
For procreation and survival  
Until they are returned to stone or  
Dust or whatnot  
And the rivers take them back again:  
First their painted toenails  
And then their tattooed ankles—  
Take them from their beds to  
The gutters  
And wash them down the streams,  
Down the muddy and weeded runs  
To cool the lips of deer and foxes:  
Here they are intermingled with the nocturnal  
Thoughts outside my parents' window:  
They are already sleeping.  
My aunt is reading a book alone.  
Beneath of where  
The Milky Way turns like a pinwheel  
Upon a young boy's lips.



# In A Deeply Sated Creche Against The Eves

Now today maybe my face is almost pure like  
A butterfly demured into the forests in the far underground  
West,  
Into Mexico:  
The way she has shed off her old cars and boyfriends,  
But has kept her birthstone clasped close to her breasts,  
Because that is the way she started out,  
And that is the bath she has taken which sometimes floods in  
Crepuscle,  
Leaving watermarks on the posts of mailboxes,  
Leaving tawny calves bitten by sharks or werewolves;  
And in the morning to the cartoons all beautifully arisen  
As beautiful and as light as hummingbirds and vixen,  
She cleans herself or she sings:  
What exactly is she doing, but putting on her new boy's rings:  
She doesn't even have an understudy- She is not afraid of  
The passageways from one to the next revolution:  
This is all a merry go round in its solution, that she showers in  
Nakedly and shampoos and has her ablutions;  
And maybe they speak about her in classes about her,  
In which her auburn distributions are the penultimate solution;  
But for she is just touching down again  
Blushing like cherries carried on paper airplanes, her paper as  
Red as firecrackers;  
And she crawls down and finishes hanging from the crooks of  
Cypress trees; and maybe she even cares to think or remember of  
Me,  
As her day finishes and she passes out once again like the most  
Colorful and beautiful thing in a deeply sated crèche  
Against the eves.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Dragon's Fading Dream

Weapon in a cloud in a dragon's  
Fading dream—  
The sea happens over the open windows  
Hoping that their search will find her—  
Verbs of actions—  
The proverbs overlooking the methods—  
Soon the entire nocturnal garden  
Will be enshrouded with the sunshine—  
Airplanes will burn like arrows in the sky—  
And the weekend will surrender  
To the merry-go-rounds of impassible  
Joy—to the cenotaphs of high school  
And her soft hoof prints over which the  
Milk weed sways  
Until the lights turn off—and there is  
No more room for wandering—  
And the church is a lone and stumbling—  
Bloody-footed and tender-eyed—  
Like a marbled child in a latchkeyed  
Fairytale of any passible Monday.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Fat Mexican Sea

Old fat Mexicans in a fat Mexican sea—  
Rolling over the star light,  
The candle light,  
And the light from the grotto of  
The virgin of  
Guadalupe- as the strangest of  
Suppositions burn their roses—  
The busses happen to end up with  
Their gray hounds—  
And there are only so many words  
For poetry in the mongoloid's  
Alphabet that ends up either  
Way looking beautiful  
To a blind man half in love with  
The sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Fretful Slumber

If I am skipping school again  
I wonder where I will go  
Now that I am a teacher  
And locked in here:  
Over my shoulders, the perpetual rainstorms of  
Boulders  
Billowing upwards in the fabricated zoo:  
Like my love  
Underneath the overpasses- and my wishes for  
Her,  
Muse who has betrayed me once again,  
And after so many nights has not given me  
The secret to these castles  
And has left me to love so many no ones  
In successions of the rainstorms  
Of hotels  
Besides the passageways up and down to her-  
Conquistadors in a fretful slumber,  
Lumps of coal tossed to rats  
As it seems as if we are made to believe in her anyways:  
Strange echoes of her mother leapt into the fields  
Underneath our banderas-  
She has had us for a laugh, but as the fair continues  
Away, she is still laughing  
And it seems as if she's begun to cry.

Robert Rorabeck



## In A Fruit Market

I loved you in a fruit market—  
For days and evenings, checking out—  
Ways before and rain in the clouds—  
When you went home,  
You sometimes stopped by my house—  
And we made love for the hour  
That you were at my home  
And then dissolved into the reality of  
Your life—  
I wrote poetry for you, in and out,  
And tried to make love to you for  
As long as I could—  
But you were Mexican and couldn't leave  
The one you had children by,  
And you broke my heart—  
A thousand poems, drunken bottles  
Left on the side of the road for you—  
A dozen roses guarded by the rattlesnake  
That wouldn't go away—  
And now I am writing like crazy,  
Drunk again after a thousand years,  
Waiting for you to come out of the sea,  
Waiting for the sun to shine after it has died.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Garden I Can No Longer Enjoy

Brown bodies coming onto shore  
Echoing with the horses in the well mowed Yard,  
And falling in love with their cousins;  
And they are here,  
As the moon hovers like a zeppelin, and the  
Graveyard waits open lipped for horses,  
And you can feel each blade  
Of grass and the ants' sting- as the blue feathers  
Fall down from the sky,  
And the airplanes fly in their flight paths  
Echoing-  
The ways up the mountains are far from here,  
And her bedroom is right over the train tracks:  
She is in his arms  
Folded like soft laundry, until her eyes close  
And they go to sleep like serpents  
In a garden I can no longer enjoy.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A God's Bed

Languid as the spiritual beliefs of green hummingbirds  
Who seem to just float there  
In the high resorts after the snows have gone away with the skiers;  
And the valleys are naked and surreal:  
They are motes of yellow that the aspens pony-tail:  
And here the nude angels frolic across the  
Venal earth, wearing nothing but  
Wrist watches and jogging, their legs leaving the dew for the  
Thirsty centipedes  
All the way up to the fire towers who look then again  
Across the bands of the earth  
Where the valleys of green caesuras rise again as if they were  
A woman's body, lying there as a lover in a god's bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Merry Go Round

Graveyard bright, ruby graveyard  
Right underneath the graveyard busses- there you  
Are  
While the terrapin leaps  
While the terrapin runs they don't seem to be  
Doing anything  
But they seem to be having fun: underneath the  
Uneasiness of that trespassing  
Until the hallways fills:  
And, yes, they fill, until they turn around  
Burning up:  
And the buses turn around, culling up from the  
Earliest moments above the ground  
They come up and up again, just as rain on her  
Cheeks  
They come up again, and they have a special  
Spell over their meaning  
And they come over once again  
Rounding the earth, and kissing her kin  
And round, and kissing in a merry go round  
The earth again and again

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Museum

Down at the casements and banisters  
Of another wedding in a museum in  
Michiganâ€&quot;  
The parks not very far awayâ€&quot;;possibilities of  
Playgrounds cooling in to the tresses of  
Dusk,  
A few apples blooming,  
A few airplanes touching down over the bloodless  
Graveyards populated by the ultimatums  
Of our families and plastic flowers in  
Horns of tinâ€&quot;  
Paid for by a tenth of the dayâ€™s wagesâ€&quot;  
As the dogs go around and around the tracksâ€&quot;  
Betting of familiar wages,  
As my wife crawls to sleep agoâ€&quot;;Across so many  
Seasâ€&quot;;I voyage to find her,  
Intrepidly vested in my weekly scars and  
Drunken delusionsâ€&quot;;I will find her and lay her down  
Upon the road that I call a bed  
And pay someone to stop the traffic so we can  
Make love.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Place Of Trees

As I interviewed in a  
Place of trees,  
Castles crept up to Heaven's  
Knees;  
As the ladies in them waltz  
Away,  
I do not know what else to  
Say.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Place We Can Never Go

My false promises burn with their adolescent

Stupidity:

They have been truants again, reading Stevens in the park

Of their transcendences:

But not understanding any of him: wanting to come on to

Alma,

Wanting to be her fairytale and to swim with her

Through the white bred canals,

And look up open mouthed through the spindling entrails of the

Clouds:

Oh, I am afraid that I have failed you again, dear Alma,

My dear:

I am just afraid of that black knight who is your husband as

You are,

I fear:

I do not have the girdle needed to brashly cut the dragon's

Sultry neck,

But we can run away together and play cowboys and Indians:

We can bring your children with us and feed them

Holy milk like weebegone kittens,

And I can hold your brown hand out beside the summer pool,

In a place we can never go to, but isn't far from here.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Possibility Of Unending Directions

What do I know about all of these,  
Watching the make believe of bodies  
Trying to create the fire  
One last time  
Across the gravestones of abandoned churches  
Up in the clefts where it is still too  
High for trees to breathe:  
Where I've thought of you, through the  
Confections of evaporated tourism-  
Where I tried to evolve myself:  
Above the white washed monuments and the state  
Fairs,  
And every day of breath sliding into the cooling  
Recreations of the canals-  
Where they keep their arcades, in the hidden  
Alcoves, where the girls do not have to  
Sing anymore: they can just nod off while  
The laundry does itself  
And the plethora of airplanes kisses across the  
Nighttime sky in a possibility of unending directions.

Robert Rorabeck



## In A Pretty Unison

All together in a pretty unison—and you can hear  
For yourself—  
Aren't you listening: all of you pretty boys for  
Christmas—  
Isn't this the avenue in which the plane is flying—  
And the sunlight starts up its motors—  
And now she is stroking her hair a hundred times—  
Doesn't she seem to be filing outside of  
Doors—  
As the horses are running, pretending to  
Break their necks—  
And the shadows are over—nocturnal accumulations  
Across the cricks—  
Or painted across the canvases where we were  
Meant to believe—  
And hasn't this been all of what I've been teaching—  
As you shoulders fell out from beneath the  
Evanescent wings—  
And I suddenly remembered how to spell for you love—  
And you have me just the kisses—  
The evaporations for just the promises of almost  
Anything.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Promising Sky

Beauty in a carnival here at home;  
And in acrobats over seas where I talk to a girl,  
Calling down from a comely terrace- wanting to be married-  
The girl I loved from Mexico has abandoned our  
Adultery,  
And returned to her husband- he is there to love her like  
A prize he doesn't appreciate-  
Maybe my soul has lingered over the wingspan of her  
Brown shoulder blades for a very long year,  
My heart pounded on a butcher's sea saw- but finally the beaten  
Waves leave a mark,  
The seahorses are stunted and amnesiac- did she ever  
Love me, I hardly wonder- as I begin to step  
Up to cross the hurdles into another girl's yard  
Floating with delight in a promising sky.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Purple Thought

And then I had you in a purple thought—  
It was just like the one they kept around the cemetery  
To show off to the old widows and their bystanders:  
It was a beautiful cemetery in the middle  
Of everywhere—  
Across from a flea market, a circus, and a military base:  
They trained the men to march and bring to  
You plastic flowers—  
And the wished for you in the middle of the night  
Pleasuring themselves,  
While foxes who were not really there, leapt and pirouetted  
Underneath their windows—  
The waves, not far off, pretending to wait for the  
Castanets of the heavens—  
The lush pull of the occultism's séances—just across from  
The corner deli where the Jewish women overate  
And complained—  
They complained so much they could hardly remember their  
First boyfriends who weren't even Jewish—  
And when the grandest of planes dropped almost a  
Thousand feet—well then, oh well—  
They pulled up the tadpoles just as quickly as the lampshades  
To shadows—and grew them into tall gaunt princes  
Who were always in love with unicorns but were never very  
Good at any sort of baseball—  
And I remember you standing outside in the rain watching  
You little sister Phoebe go around on a carousel—  
My best teacher said it was a symbol for the best kind of  
Change—  
But—oh well—you are not really here, anyways—  
And I am afraid that I am just a character in a dime novel.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Sea Fluming Our Celibate Rooms

Going down into the vocabularies which  
Are undeserving,  
Who are barren and can't make things really grow,  
Even after being f-ed by alcohol;  
Going back to the familiar hallways of rhyme,  
Looking out for her, and the spell of her legs:  
And here she'll come echoing, the catch that we meant,  
But will her eyes fall on us against the lockers or,  
Will they be spent on other boys with their more  
Apparent charms; it seems we've always been here,  
Catting for her, chewing the little Jew's tobacco,  
Spitting for sin; and the day will turn on and spin  
The earth on her axis, and she's on a swing,  
The priest with his censer chanting his thing; and other  
Girls who are married, with offspring on flesh,  
Gurgling and chewing like aborigines fresh from the bush;  
And all day long its like fishing for her:  
When she finally comes along, I almost forgot what I  
Was going to say; though she pauses for awhile to care for  
Her feral Rome: We think of abductions, of carrying her home,  
Like a Christmas tree above our heads.  
Even with so many lost souls faceless and unremembered from  
High school, she is still the one who dances like spiced holidays  
Both late and early projecting such faithful fury,  
A zoetrope so romantically blurry, in a sea fluming our  
Celibate rooms.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Soft And Vibrant Rain

World of joy fill in my veins, a coloring book when no  
One is at home,  
The paper airplanes folded on the lucky carpet like dying birds:  
Eyed by the serpent that no one thought to see-  
And places over the canal not so far away, that housewives will  
Never see:  
The joy I do not know, and things that will never sell,  
Hands that never brush the wardrobes of the forest,  
But like boudoirs in the dusk, pricked by antlers of the  
Tallest beasts,  
Bleeding sap and tears, wondering when it will snow,  
As the flowers spring wildly,  
Giving their heads to the sunlight, like children pushing their  
Lips beneath the venomous buttons,  
Searching out a mother's breast, like a fire hydrant  
In a soft and vibrant rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Sweet Chicken House

The get up to school and work  
Traffic soft now, coming into the cone of my senses-  
I lie on a bed of recompense; I think cemeteries  
And jewelry stores and junk heaps where a mugged dancing  
Girl's peacock costume flutters:  
They all have something in common: nude women in an  
Apple orchard,  
I guess: The Castillo de San Marcos, making love next to her  
Next to the sea,  
Children who love cartoons and their own reflections where  
The mirrors are like soft pools that they can always enjoy:  
Their soft bodies like low watt light bulbs, so that  
They can grow up and contain themselves  
Casually- the queens of ephemerality drizzling above the  
Cotton mouths,  
Like softly rolling daydreamt thunderclouds within the clutches  
Of candelabrum and chandeliers  
Made to dolly-up  
In a sweet chicken house.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Thousand Blankets

Wreathed by the corncob shadows:  
Silhouetted by the healthy bones still with some meat:  
The headless saddles,  
The heartless treats: and the old homesteads burn  
With only the feral eyes around,  
Crenulated light make a play across the famishing leaves:  
The canoes in the garage, the scallywags in the  
Eaves:  
And the entire street is lost: it seems to swim back a ways  
And then disappears- the schoolyard empty;  
Its baseball diamond a taboo; and the hands which once  
Ran over mine, and through the fields  
Of parked cars and airplanes  
Have disappeared toward new and more fortunate weathers,  
As if my little brother was kidnapped,  
And lay shallow and breathless wrapped in a thousand  
Blankets of moldering pornographies.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Tomorrow Of Tomorrows

There is a boy who is taking a brown bag  
Everyday—and enjoying the whatever savageries  
That do exist  
For whatever and into whatever reason  
That I have enjoyed for you for this little time  
While you were playing and enjoying whatever waves  
In my little classrooms—and then you were  
Half-hazzardly building to the maelstroms—  
And either way it was not espionage—  
But it was just another plan that was drunken and  
Echoing over the business park  
And into the satelittes that could not pick me up:  
That this was then a pretty swallow—  
And into the anonymity of the graveyard,  
As the graveyard itself was picking up the heavier elements  
And again and again carrying and carrying  
Heavier and heavier tools up the mountains  
And up the mountains—well, then—here seems to  
Be the very appreciation of it—up again—  
And up again—in busied estuary of tomorrow—  
While you will try swearing of the cloaks in the clouds  
Of the forays of the tomorrows—I have done enough  
Studying to remember how it is that I need to survive—  
And while then in the busy elements: remember that I love  
You, and I will love you in a tomorrow of tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck



## In A Town Of Lotuses

In a town of lotuses,  
What does the grass say to the trees—  
With you walking across her paths,  
My wife—  
Weighing less than 46 kilos—  
Asking if I consult the stars about you  
Sometime in the early summer  
While the rattlesnakes are still  
Shedding  
And the early night cannot get rid of  
Himself,  
Settling around the tin mailbox and  
The cheap flowers,  
Considering to itself if it has other  
Friends than the ones that can be  
Found here—  
In the fierce holidays that distillate  
Around the ring-tailed foxes  
Making a dance toward the moon—  
Wishing to call down the marionettes—  
All feminine—who have learned to  
Dancing without strings—  
Like souls reclaiming their shoulders—  
Like baby's breath dancing upwards from the graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Trailer Park

We can paint the slash pines with fire  
Running down from the mountains,  
Chasing the coyotes and stirring them from  
Their sleep:  
We can even call up the bluest sirens in the  
Sky  
That wake up all of the Titans, disturbing them  
From their wettest dreams of  
Stewardesses,  
And disturbing you from your classes too—  
Divorcing you from your daydreams,  
And make you run through the oils of one of  
My grandmother's paintings above her  
Shaggy carpet in a trailer park  
Near the cemetery:  
There you are, a call girl dispelled from the  
Mountains,  
And all of the trees terribly beautiful all around  
You if they were not all on fire.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Womb Of Stars

I want to be black in a womb of stars  
In order to know the catastrophes of your falling airplanes  
And womb of rattlesnakes:  
And I want to know just where I cannot belong, spilling  
Out from the epiphany of waterfalls  
At the exact moment the god you believe in cries:  
And I have been trying to pleasure myself even while you've  
Been up to no good—my sport already lit in the wicks of  
The fireworks you sped away—after I was already too busily  
Breathing underneath the amphitheaters  
Spilling out their patrons into the streets of the joys  
We could not have—after all there was only so many words  
And so many afternoons spent after school—  
Video games and labyrinths and places we never believed  
In—after we were collected into the evenings of home—  
And your father got back together with your mother  
Momentarily-  
And sang of all of these festivities—of these bright lights strung  
Over the alienations of our radioactive tombs.

Robert Rorabeck

## In A Wound Of A Pyramid

Beauty in a wound of a pyramid—standing over  
Mummies and the clefts of the sommeliers—  
It is all you need to touch yourself and to find yourself  
Out, while  
The night echoes like a bouquet the bats as  
To the vampires—  
And these are only words—these are only  
Sacrifices of chum to the indoor swimming pools,  
Trying to wait up all night for  
Santa Clause after nothing else has survived,  
Trying to figure out the echo of  
The divine,  
Repeatedly—  
Throughout all of the choruses of the hummingbirds  
As through the lactating apiaries of the lusciously divine.

Robert Rorabeck

# In A Zoetrope Beneath The Sun

There are still places we can go.  
Like green lights for the fox to follow  
Where mermaids are as swimming emeralds  
And trees emerge from the sky—  
I suppose you do not think of our  
Swing-set anymore—  
Continually, you have to return diurnal—  
Disappearing to where there is smoke  
In the sky—  
And unkept promises of your metamorphosis -  
Words as offerings left for you in  
High school,  
And I wait underneath the chinaberry tree—  
Referencing black gods  
Who dancing in a zoetrope beneath the sun  
That so blinds you.

Robert Rorabeck

# In All Of Its Colors

Sugar in all of its colors poured from the moon  
As she shakes through the night,  
Face so scarred and beautiful above the traffic;  
But nothing truly artistic about her thievery-  
The things she steals every night  
While you sleep across the train tracks that glow in  
The parallelisms they were made to do-  
But you barely come anymore,  
As your children grow up  
And the reindeer step over the empty glass bottles  
In the ramshackle parks  
Where no geniis can possibly live  
Any longer:  
No more hope in the world she steals from-  
The waves like crippled tinfoil  
Balled into the armpits of the tide- even oceans  
Glowing in the emptiness that she somehow  
Takes away in the paradox  
Of the world that she makes her own.

Robert Rorabeck

# In All Of The Heavens

Set us together in some parks and  
Tell us we are lovers'  
Light fireworks off over our shoulders  
As we try to kiss'  
Giving our tongues a dictionary of  
Confections  
That will play upon our hearts forever'  
We will become little trinkets that  
Will bear children  
And name them as you have named  
The constellations,  
For they will mean just as much  
As all of the angels sneaking around with  
The airplanes in all of the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# In All Of This World

Nights slip away- they peel according to reason;  
That is just what they do,  
Like stewardesses slipping out of their shoes after long,  
Leaping shifts;  
And I am doing all of this right now for you,  
Alma,  
Because I took a mental picture of you before I left for work this  
Morning,  
And your body swayed next to my body like a brown  
Censer,  
And we took a test together, and your eyes were like pregnant  
Butterflies:  
Really pregnant and down deep in the deepest forests of Mexico:  
Your eyes swam and swung across my body,  
And after that you went to church, while the flowers bloom all around  
Your cathedrals,  
And there was never any prettier girl in all of this world.

Robert Rorabeck



# In All The Many Shapes

Clouds are here around the  
House  
And it is too late for us  
To make love-  
In fact, we won't be doing  
Anything,  
While they metamorphose  
In all the many shapes  
That they truly  
Happen to never be.

Robert Rorabeck

## In 'America'

What do I know about Mexico:

Tell me about Mexico, Romero—where you are

Born, my favorite uncle:

Tell me how to get past all of the mirages by winged-

Chariot or by airplane

Now that I am married to a girl from shanghai

And the muse I made busied love with

Has gone up to her husband,

Disappearing into Ocala and all of the nights that

She will make love to him:

She passed the Frontera into 'America' to get here:

And now she is a beauty and a joy and

In love with the things she cannot see,

But tell me, Romero—off Mexico:

I have seen her underneath the overpasses here,

Skulls with diamonds as blue as the sea—

And the Virgins of Guadalupe doing their laundry

In the grottos and the strip malls beside

7-11: tell me if you can see them, anyways:

Because my eyesight is about as good as my vocabulary,

And I am only hoping to become more innocuous

And it seems to take me longer and longer to

Breathe:

But you know all about Mexico now,

Even long before the sun is even thinking of starting out

To molest the forgotten bones strewn over the

Far side of the mountain—and I have love you niece

A thousand times and once again in my soul—

Another night drinking rum beside the imaginary candlelight

For her, only to have it fail into the curious delusions of

Another day in 'America.'

Robert Rorabeck

## In An Anonymous Week

If I am not beautiful, nobody really has interests  
Or love; and I am quite shallow,  
The pittance of an unreturned dove:  
You know, you know- all of our graves or quite  
Shallow, too- like animal graves,  
Like animals shoes; and this is what I have been doing,  
Digging up shallow tubs of earth, throwing dirt  
Over my shoulders like a dirty curse, and doing it  
Without appeasing anyone in the eye;  
If I should have to die, If I should have to die, let it  
Be little animal tears for me, and distant cars,  
And distant echoes of somnolent feet; you know,  
I am not pretty, and the way the earth moves, I shall  
Be dead in an anonymous week.

Robert Rorabeck

## In An Emptied Place

They sit there remembering what it was  
To be outside of your classroom:  
Shadowed into the reminiscences they have to  
Move away from every day:  
Busses collecting upon the busied mounts  
Of high school whatever it was that you were  
Meant to describe to them:  
This art in the daydream of a dead end:  
And they play baseball or they forget their locker  
Combination:  
They kiss the other truants, and they say their  
Amens:  
It is only they who know what they do:  
But I still remember my memories of you—  
Lost upon the bleachers of outer space—  
Many now a tombstone in an emptied place.

Robert Rorabeck

# In An Hour

How much time do I get if I just want to lie naked with you,  
And try to figure out the color of your eyed,  
As you turn away to look at the two-sided mirror:  
That I just want a person to fall in love with me.  
Can you do that in an hour?

Robert Rorabeck

# In An Obviously Bright And Sunny Day

All the superheroes go down the rabbit holes  
In the rain,  
And even the traffic packs up, the recession proceeds  
Underneath the greasy lamps underneath overpasses:  
All the sweet flowers that I have sent crawling up  
Her walls like healthy surprises on Easter close up too:  
All the penny candy for boys on bicycles in the lower  
Peninsulas of Michigan  
Are dripping away, and I don't know:  
I don't know what I was meant to be doing, only that I have  
More money anyways for not knowing what I should  
Be doing:  
And I've sold fireworks out in the middle of a pitchfork  
Desert, while I've grown new scars and waited for the deluge  
Of the things that I would say to her,  
And after that the watery proofs of El Arco Iris, and the  
Mysterious things that come inside a house after the mailman has  
Left,  
The children who grow there after school being fed by the  
Bright circuses, while the otters swim on their backs and crack the  
Legumes in the shoals;  
And, anyway, that is just what I've meant myself to be saying,  
As if life were a musical in an obviously bright and sunny day.

Robert Rorabeck

# In An Open Classroom Of Sunshine

Doing my new part for the hunger  
That already finds me alone, even though I  
Remember hotels that remain always halfway vacant  
One or two days from here across the country  
That is our country-  
As these are her easily spindled wounds, as my muse  
Lies down her head again with him in a bed of brown  
Skin liked hushed cane that is soon to burn  
Until I can pick her up and carry her across my shoulders  
As if through a sea of traffic  
That has no mind for us, and so we are peaceful through  
All of their chaos,  
And I can raise my head and nod my chin to  
Some unspecific star- and kiss the hallucinations  
Across the burning asphalt, and check my distance-  
As my living body carries her onwards  
Across the wounded battlefields of fleshed delusion:  
And all of the way, until I can lay her here,  
Honeymooned in the spot I've told her about,  
And both of us of different colors, our senses collected  
Like a bouquet distilling forever through the  
Heartbeats in an open classroom of sunshine.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Another World It Should Begin To Snow

Misplaced in a forest that I cannot tell,  
Words look up as divers drown, sharp utensils  
Of another day placing themselves like organized serpents  
Through the blinds,  
And girls who I will always love drive away:  
If this were a grotto it should be rich with the feral smells of  
All their kills,  
And everything they didn't have a mind to put me through:  
Now I have a house, I have a tomb, and a tin horn placed  
To my lips like a kind of technologic mother  
Spewing- Going alone to movies on my birthday,  
Feeling the saboteurs undermining the intersections that cross  
My body,  
Waiting for torches and the long veils that they should wear  
Stepping up to kiss me,  
If everything the sun has had to say finally went down,  
And in another world it should begin to snow.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Another Yard

Armpits of matchsticks in the memories of  
Her kitchen-  
Alligators as big as bears in her backyard woods  
Where I used to play  
Until my very own father was out of monies,  
And done making noises  
And I had a house of my own that the clouds whispered  
Down to and the traffic matriculated by-  
That this was mine too, with a kind of yard and a  
Telephone,  
And a lover waiting for me in another yard while  
My mother looked again across the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Any Case

The waves glisten or  
I don't know what they've been doing like  
Hooded snakes underneath  
The lampshades:  
And through the malls of your yesterday  
I suppose we've been holding hands  
Or kissing mouths,  
But becoming misshapen anyways  
Through all of the science fictions of our Halloweens:  
We've  
Been headed all out and this is Christmas-  
What is there left to sell  
Whilst another couple has become married:  
Theirs is a preternatural vow  
For the vampires and the werewolves:  
While we are almost done,  
And this is another honeymoon for the dead:  
They stand beside the heavenly lights of another fruit  
Stand-  
Hardly containing themselves, as at first the lions yawn,  
And then grow hungry,  
As the little girls at first pretend to dance before  
The heavens and then go indoors:  
They will not be metamorphosing anyways, today-  
They've been doing good to themselves  
But only between their classes:  
And I suppose you know that the hummingbirds  
Don't know any words in any case even though they've  
Been drinking from out of our  
Fountains- just as if they were our wishing wells,  
As another shuttle tries to breach our  
Impossible hemispheres anyways-  
In any case.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Anything We Want

Your body pearls its flea market hearts as for  
The decorations of  
The cheap thrills filigreeing our favorite carnivals;  
And this is real again tonight:  
That you took me in your car at lunch and we kissed,  
Alma- Later on I danced for you in the rain,  
Because you always keep yourself so clean and  
Beautiful,  
A little musical girl without any song and a nice  
Ass that is only for show;  
But I have been to your petting zoo,  
And I listened to you reading Borges in English to me  
In your car sitting like a panther in the rain;  
And then I read him too, and we switched languages  
And sounded so nice,  
And I kissed your brown skin, and thought I would  
Die again as you drove away and left me,  
And made all the silversmith airplanes look and sound  
Like buzzards;  
But I have given all of my bastard's art over to you,  
And I plan to see you first thing tomorrow and press you  
Against my wall like a very brown wildflower,  
Like a mirage picked from the desert, and make love to  
You, and continue inspiring all of my hopeless  
Art into you,  
With my quiet lips all over your body- and then all of the sky  
Pretending to make us believe in anything we want.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Between The Mailboxes

Shoulder to shoulder,  
We, crying, compete for the spear:  
It hurts, down at sea level,  
Gasping underneath of the airplanes,  
But what do they have to say  
To any of us?  
That the day burns as it echoes and  
Gasoline leaves pretty scars and  
No memories—  
The way they play beside us is uneven—  
The gifts they give after paying their  
Monies are unoriginal—  
The daylight has already taken off—  
The fairies are disrobing into the pornographies  
In between the mailboxes  
And I think of you far away from here.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Coitus With The Devil If Only For A Second

As the night laid her somber dress  
Across the street and fondled the  
Drowsy corners of the houses,  
All these ordinary members of  
The neighboring family  
And the prefabricated dreams  
They held like cheap eggs  
In a carton,  
Dozens and dozens of  
Them planted along the street,  
The children continued to play on,  
Fumbling blindly,  
Hoping to soon figure out,  
To understand without the aid  
Of helpful trained animals;  
They tried to pick up the  
Tools and vehicles they were  
Practicing to be made into,  
All night long  
When their parents prayed for  
Them,  
The sun sinking behind them into  
The sea  
Where I joined it's army and sailed  
Out to the West, across the  
Prairie where the dark silver  
Conquistadors marched in the river  
Into granite extinction of text books,  
All the way to the other place,  
Long forgotten and run over,  
The sexless chambers of God's bedroom,  
Where he swiftly took us up  
And made us and the earth  
Into a great red brick he threw  
Through his ex-wife's window  
And disturbed her, if only for  
A second,  
She in coitus with the devil.



# In Colorado

When you get up in Colorado,  
You are not my muse: your children  
From another man  
Suckle either of your breasts equally if  
For awhile:  
Maybe it is because of you that they believe  
In carnival—  
As the clouds queue into the mountain's  
Nipples,  
And the fairies of sleep leap down from them  
To bathe in the glaciers milked into their  
Bosoms:  
And there you are, rind in the hillside—  
Myth of my high school—and you are not  
My muse,  
As another night rides over my shoulders  
Like a passengerless airplane—  
And I am a homeless man off to feed the giants:  
And I am married too—  
Your eyes are blue,  
And you are not my muse

Robert Rorabeck

# In Cu-De-Sacs Of Sweat And Tears

Bath of voices and of  
Hummingbirds—the children sing forever, going into  
Their shelves— A wash with their own echoes of  
Laughter matriculating through the halls—  
Pretty and bashful with acne and smiles, and all of the  
Bloom, like a meadow excited by windmills-  
With the craft of the dark moons hanging like twins  
Above them,  
And in September—fireworks—great bonfires of weddings,  
And other women's love down through the forks  
Of rivers, accumulated in cul-de-sacs of sweat and tears.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Days After Christmases Are Dead

In days after Christmases are dead,  
And in houses where no marriages happened—  
Ghosts, cantankerous and green,  
Filling out the apertures beneath the satellites  
Of the chandeliers whom  
Brandish their lights like fairies—  
Exhumed in the void  
As it seems to be the reasons,  
As the littlest of the boys are still in love  
With their very first rubber balls—  
And something else yet again must have to come  
To its conclusions—  
Beautiful girls get all of the luck,  
As butterflies who look just like them are still  
Migrating into Mexicos, to die habitually into the  
Hotspots of those lukewarm grottos underneath  
The volcanos of their playgrounds  
Of poisonous amusement parks.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Disney World

Found in a grotto of cash- bound to make money  
While the dogs howl-  
The moon is round but sharp, and she is stealing things from  
The supermarket:  
She is out of control, but going down the ancient highway.  
While my love may be a firework:  
She may last for awhile, and cost too much,  
But she may not even be real-  
And standing there beside the road, watching the trucks drive  
Through the night,  
The orange groves an entire heavens in pinpricks of silver flowers,  
I go towards her, not wanting to find her in Disney World,  
But expecting that is where she probably is.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Each Lock Of Your Hair

I love the way your hair curls through  
The ribbons and the gold;

It seems to me the laughter of children prancing  
Around a Maypole,  
With the hair-suited creatures out and pullulating:

This is something sincerely pagan-  
It really doesn't exist anymore,  
And I try and mouth it to the briny star,  
But the traffic roars and pulls  
Filled with things too fast to care,  
True and modern gods to plush and placate to,

But it exists in your hair in this time,  
The cheerless castles and their wan girls,  
Their grotto's water-dragon's aquatic swirls, the spume of  
Fairies in the waves  
Make invisible phosphorescent too ephemeral  
To be proved,

But every paraplegic scientist who keeps close-lipped  
To secret renunciations of every entire hemisphere,  
Deep in the night, tremulous- brought out in  
The dark empiricism of somnolent senses,

Knows beyond theorem, beyond the dire motherhood of the grave,  
And slinging star of death; beyond the rhythmic chaos of the waves,  
The proof of things which shall never be reclaimed  
All a glimmer and alive in each lock of your hair.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Every City Of

I am not going to see you anymore tomorrow-  
Dancing a thunderous jig-  
The same way you have never seen aspens,  
Because they don't grow  
In the red mountains of Mexico- and you don't  
Like to read about them  
From these words that I've already said  
For you, and lain beneath the night like a  
Cemetery for the stars-  
You who don't care anymore how you are my muse-  
Brown and perfect midway of  
Daydream hallucinates:  
And I've shown you where I've walked  
And patted your thumb like a hummingbird  
Does a flower-  
And read to you of this joy, and eaten beside you  
Out in the sunshine  
Where your children will never see us- even though  
He has given you marks on your neck  
During this time- and you have, finally, gone home  
To him,  
Leaving me here heartbroken for Christmas,  
Writing these terrible things,  
And pretending to worship the crow who stares  
As if hypnotized at the uncountable and homeopathic  
Seahorses that he is sure must abide in every city of every wave.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Flight

In Spain—I drank sangria and watched a fleet of roses  
Sailing underneath the feet of Salvador Dali—  
That was near Port Beau—That was in Catalonia,  
Where my aunt learned the Spanish tongue over the graves  
Of dead Spaniards—  
And there was artwork hung, and bulls, and corsages:  
And a long ways to wait until graveyards—  
Pigeons singing in Madrid, and still cheeks on my scars—  
My love was hidden in blond curls and dressing rooms  
And placed upon girls with lips as orange  
As the sun:  
Fetishes of swing sets—drunken nights, New Years—  
The places that fill up inside of us—  
Souls that become phosphorescent underneath the moon—  
Avenues, slender ways, to struggle up to the balcony  
Where she is sleeping—but what to say to her—  
What tricks to pull:  
The Mediterranean, captivated by a sea of rocks:  
Petrieved women, giantesses, wondering what it is that happened  
To their dreams and when it is that they again can believe in flight.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Forests Of So Many Far Aways

Bodies pill and recluse for videogames:  
My father pees close to sundown, and we don't go to church:  
And the new government is taking charge,  
While all of the earth worn cheerleaders are awakening mostly  
Eaten from the trench coats of canals just as their graves;  
And I am looking beautiful, just as beautiful as possessed slaves:  
And the nights full of moon, the very same moon,  
And her dresses at prom and all of her secret toys;  
And it makes me think to wonder  
That she was a really sweet vivacious girl and she passed away:  
She stopped to help someone in a roll over vehicle and she got hit  
Herself and this is just some modern folklore my mother just  
Told me while I was meaning to do well by myself:  
And the night looks all of a sudden, as if it suddenly remembered  
That it was forgotten, and maybe on Mars or on Saturn  
There are girls like muses floating around and holding their breath  
On all of their birthdays, girls or muses that looked just like you,  
Who are lying like Sara Teasdale or some other Sarah beside the  
Graves of some others, but otherwise all by themselves;  
And the candles are blown out and the night is done.  
And the gypsies pack their medicine balls, and the crows of all those  
Girls fly away like darkened pages flipping over so many alders,  
So many alders in forests of so many far aways.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Front Of Whatever Friend

I can hear all of the Mexicans in a deadly festival over  
My house;  
Even as my roses have gone uneaten: they remain in the Ferris  
Wheel lights of a store that will never  
Multiply before it turns out its lights: and she cannot come over,  
Because she can never be rude:  
Though her skin is beautiful: Alma, my muse- and is worth  
Going to school over,  
And figuring out things over, even after the stores have closed:  
Even after my parents have stopped crying and brought home  
Fried chicken to tease the eyes of  
The alligator: as she goes back to sleep inside the fallow gardens  
Of her luckless man again:  
And he bites her lip like a poisonous root meaning no good,  
Even as the airplanes abort, turn tail, and return to the  
States: over and across the farthest matriculations of wherever  
It was they were going;  
And it is not beautiful, even left alone and selling an insurmountable  
Amount of fireworks in the deserts of New Mexico,  
Before the movie theaters, before the forest fires:  
Without any forests, without any breast feeding mothers:  
Maybe without even any mirrors, I will figure out that I am not  
Beautiful, while she awakens from her nest, sour fingered,  
Eyes as hungry as a fox in the loins of its fable;  
And remembering you, as you occurred like the first séance of a wave  
Before the baseball games of whatever birthday it was:  
Even you could not stop me from dying, or wetting myself before  
Waking up in the whatever morning and eating hotdogs with  
Ketchup and mayonnaise before the eyes of the alligators  
Or the crocodiles  
Or, whatever senses it happened to be in front of whatever friend that it  
Was.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Ganymede's Shadow

They all turn swell in Ganymede's shadow—  
While we are all just looking out,  
And we cannot see just how she turns around—  
For the trailer-parks as for the nimbus:  
Perpetual bodies in the tomb—  
Counting and swearing by the werewolves and  
The whatnots that we still live here,  
And that we are all fed up:  
Bodies blooming in the clover hoping to win  
The four-leaf lottery,  
Spelling out of the love letters that are all thumbs:  
Until finally that fine mother cat has given birth to  
Kittens: kittens—underneath the brightest lights  
Of the midwives of the séances—  
Of the aphrodisiacs of the candelabrum of the waves—  
Of a I don't know what else—  
Except for the preternatural existence of their  
Nature—life right here—nude and showing off in  
Color—  
Soon to be reborn without nuclear remembrances:  
If just enough to spread the nebula upon the palate:  
A day light, a dilemma—  
And another yard amassed that doesn't belong  
To the bedded light of the dreams  
That sway upon the cobwebs of the headlights of  
The nebulas—that there remains always a tomorrow  
That forgets most of itself—and even though  
The waves come and go so beautiful—  
They are yet no so swift to dream.

Robert Rorabeck



## In Greening Tides

Addicted through the sport of clouds,  
All the day's visions last until gone;  
Snakes come out and are  
Frightened by the blankets of sunlight the blasted  
Gods make nude love to the  
Housewives in the shapes of mailmen and weathervanes,  
Across the acerbic vineyards  
Of another suburbia's blindsided malaise,  
While the children latchkey, and get drunk under the  
Crooks of the thoughtlessly transplanted cypress  
Trees,  
Who seem to petition the phantasms of every airplane,  
Like wayfarers in greening tides of those imaginary yards.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Her Arboreal Sorority

And this is another sound, a protuberance to  
The alert jack rabbits:  
The way I sometimes hear the airplanes leaping  
A leap year:  
And I am in my yellow house, and you are with  
Your auburn spouse:  
And the trees outside go like this:  
And the trees outside going like this,  
Not as the waves go, but in mirror image:  
The trees go like this.  
The waves go like this, as you are yourself  
Beckoning-  
Stewardess in a mirror of long ago-  
From my boyhood I remember you, even though  
Now all of that memory is the sad sheath  
Of a forgotten cicada hanging like the forlorn  
Decoration of a weeping holiday against the throat  
Of another tree lost in her arboreal sorority.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Her Beautiful Hair

Nubile poem on the cleft of an orb—  
Silence slips over the curves of a river-  
And the strange jewelry that decorates the housewives  
Without a sound—  
Sandlots of castles of missing cars  
And other mouth less amusements—matriculating  
To themselves until they happened to believe that  
The most fabulous invention of all happens to  
Be the hallways of their highschools—  
And now if you can picture what joy they are in—  
In the strange memory of fishes swimming around  
A midway of an unbelievable palace that was  
Never there—why then,  
A joy to them- a joy to them—  
A spark of a firework igniting in her beautiful hair..

Robert Rorabeck

# In Her Blond-Blonde Hair

Corrupted into the grandeurs of the theatres of incents—  
Of grandeurs of grandeurs  
Of sounds that cannot rest—the hummingbird of a mockingbird  
Seems to consist of the ringlets of the starlight  
Of moonbeams—  
And it goes around themselves—speaking of other heavens in  
A different language—but once a midway must have used to  
Exist here—lying in her daydreams and combing her  
Blonde—blonde hair—  
But now there are only graveyards being awakened by roller-rinks  
And the spaces that never seem to survive in the vanishing  
Never Lands—and more and more playboys are laid and laid- off  
The girls—the girls just look more and more  
Beautiful the younger—and the younger they get—  
Well- anyway—well anyway—there is a well of enlightenment  
Somewhere and, otherwise—moon beams—and moon means—  
Star crossed—and star crossed in her blond and in her  
Blond-blond hair.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Her Demension

If you decided to skip school where would you  
Go,  
Overpowered in your ideas to be alone—  
Coming along into her parks and comingling with  
The sunshine in the palmettos:  
While everything else takes awhile to finish  
Around her and so to become real:  
Like the ants beneath her, these are your playgrounds  
Too—and while you masturbate,  
With your lips busied upon her—what is your  
Thought—  
What a strangeness lies between you—she will  
Marry another man,  
And your teachers will not pay a cent to see the dimes  
Of your teenage tragedy: it will just become another  
Fault beneath the mountains—luminescent—  
Vulgarized by the commercials trying to sell her spirit:  
Then the heavens will melt off of her,  
And she will slip away like a torpid afternoon—  
And you will scald your hand in her dimension,  
Until it is time to come alive again.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Her Favorite Color Of Gods

You can fill up this butterfly with words  
Like amber liquors into a shot glass over ruined fingers,  
While the thoughts tumble the speechless birds;  
And all of it can be a canyon of a heart waiting to be filled,  
All the speechless wilderness that burns behind the  
Senses,  
And the feral boys there who are unlucky shots:  
They are trying to call you from the banisters of an apathetic  
Nest,  
Because anyone can see how rich you are, and how foolish:  
While Alma is smooth,  
Her hair like the penumbras of a punchy comet:  
She'll ride her ponies anywhere, and when I practice witchcraft,  
I put her eyelash in a portrait of a woman by Picasso,  
And then I lay back so greased and count the verbs,  
Those actions that I saw her out doing through the day,  
What a fortunate curse to be so positioned near her in the world,  
And to have come upon her after she has already settled  
With her beautiful family in a golden forest where the hummingbirds  
Sleep on the ground like the loose and homeopathic change  
Of sated serpents,  
And you can count the rings of their hollow flight paths they once  
Took, singing like thirsty halos around Alma's  
Head,  
While there was movies, and the Incas rose their green nosed  
Pyramids through the cracks in the smoky coronations  
In her favorite color of gods.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Her Little Heart

Some cattle bonfires for luck  
Whilst my father drives a truck full of golden fireworks:  
He is going somewhere over the heavens  
To look for work—  
Underneath him, archangels are in the forests of  
The heavens—  
They are telling stories of the times they remembered  
Eve trying to poke out the stars  
And picking strawberries.  
At their footsteps, the schools of men are wild—  
Teachers get fired,  
And butterflies tangle into balls outside of school—  
Antennae lactating and kissing the stamen  
Of the wildflowers who bloom in the armpits  
Of the neighborhoods and the cemeteries out of  
School—  
And I feel inspired by these things,  
As my life drives away in her little heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Her Most Careless Of Days

If in a vacant rodeo,  
Words are swallowed beneath the  
Sky already bled,  
Past the sundials and the ways that the  
Dead were thrown into those cliffs,  
Then think of my mother  
Here,  
And of her mother, and her sister buried-  
And forget my dented trumpets,  
Or the hapless birds that procrastinate for  
Her shoulder:  
Think of how the sun rises over her banks,  
And the very horizon peels away in  
A sheath of occult blue-  
And how she lays all day underneath the  
Tourniquets waiting for those children  
To come home to her from their  
Season,  
To relinquish the things that they now have  
And return, though she knows  
That they cannot- her bones growing so  
Uneven and empty from these thoughts  
That she is sure she can now fly to  
Them,  
Or become just as careless as they are, exploring  
With them over the swallowed caverns  
That use to burn altogether with the sunlight  
That once dripped from her shoulders  
As she fed them way back in her most careless of days.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Her Nocturnal Gardens

Don't you know what the queen remembers?  
I have gone to the liquor store and tomorrow will be  
My birthday—  
Another birthday and I will keep with the kids at school:  
Having drunken so much rum from Barbados,  
How will I explain to them tomorrow what they cannot  
Feel—the aesthetic of my vanishing muses—  
Now that I am married and another year older—  
Even one year older than the God of Easter,  
Will I keep the ventriloquisms of my art:  
Of stolen bicycles and terrapin with cerulean shells,  
And stewardesses who fly forever on airplanes  
Until they are kidnapped into the vineyards of venal foxes:  
I do not know—but the waves swell with mermaids:  
Don't you know—they are just as popular with the sea  
As the people in red China where my wife lips:  
Tiny as a sea shell, I put her in my pocket—a wish worth  
At least one candle—  
As I walk away with the sunset—as the moon cleans my  
Pockets, shining like a leopard  
In her nocturnal gardens.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Her Remembrance

Tide moves out, breathless,  
Leaving us time to smoke in between classes:  
Moving up, apexes—  
Then I'll have to return to a school that is  
So far away from her caesuras:  
Listen, mannish boys—as we smoke: what does  
She sound like to you? How many  
Mermaids can we count in the rhythms of her  
Sounds: pretty echoes  
Engulfing tears—or other words meant for her—  
Entire trailer parks of her cessations—  
I wonder if hers is an easy rode: most of her daughters  
Lay forgotten—business of her nebulas  
And areolas: we can watch her for only so long,  
Before we must carrying ourselves indoors  
And watch the television:  
But she is always there, riling in her business:  
And though we will lay forgotten, she will come to  
Our tombs and overpower us in her remembrance.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Her Sleep

Laughing beside their plots,  
Relatives and forget-me-nots, do not decide  
Upon a thing:  
They lay right there through the oratories  
And gypsum confessions,  
While young girls go to school, flowing their hairs,  
And dragging their trains:  
Even the angels seem to drink from them; words  
With flowers in a vase,  
The smell of her two month old perfume still in  
My bed.  
An iguana climbs my lime green wall. Outside there  
Is gas in the tank of my car,  
And Mexicans across the street, moving in their  
Brown shadows- while the mausoleums rise like  
Orchards of Christmas trees, kissing their  
Last hurrahs- sending them off to make-believe;  
And all of it in a lottery of hearts,  
Creating the tide of our Siamese bodies, listening  
As we fall down beside her,  
As she rolls over and forgets us in her sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Her Vast And Burnished Soul

When I take my first taste of liquor,  
Something moves; it could hardly be expected  
With my dogs breaking wind, snuffing the  
Smells of my liquor;  
I am as if in the tilting whirl of the carnival,  
You know, who the steady buzz of big brass lights,  
The carnies know- they have the same dreams;  
They can go anywhere, as long as there's  
No where to go: Around, and around, and around,  
Repeating the words to sound ridiculous,  
Still knowing there's an even better foul mouthed  
Vocabulary in the libraries of the university  
Cropped near the sea- The stone women, the  
Atolls which arise enmeshed with the bellies of  
Cherubic nimbus: Societies on the move,  
Spinning out their old- I fell in love with her eyes,  
But now I have to swear they were fool's gold;  
And I am here now, spinning, spinning  
Repeating words and heady, because I'm about to  
Taste my first dropp of really cheap soda pop;  
Daddy- And the carnival is built up next to the balmy  
Eaves of scrub pine and palm trees. Flipping our  
Heads back like cans uncorked, we can see up the skirts  
Of the girls across the canal leaping like lime-green  
Fauns on the teal tennis courts: Girls we used to love,  
And on and on, Diana we worshipped in the suburban  
Gardens of our backyards; and finishing real quick,  
Like the quickness of a song, or the vacillations of  
This migrating show, then if I've done my job the sensation  
Will linger and skip, like something tiny and alive  
And yearn, ululating like cheap soda pop in her vast  
And burnished soul.

Robert Rorabeck

## In High School

When the day is saying what it meant  
And ultimately lying down for the unctions of  
Jasmines, what fairies will play with the cats  
As their owners work all night at some carwash  
Or roller-rink,  
And the stewardesses take all of the time  
To the sky—hopping and gallivanting like tree frogs—  
Like knights with copper wings—  
I wonder how many corsages have bloomed for them  
At so many airports underneath the moons:  
Sometimes they must feel as if they are upon other  
Planets—taking their first footsteps out into  
The neophyte cities—their wings drying in the background:  
They are in high school again,  
Their heavens have touched the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

# In His Eyeless Rooms

Airplane over a rose—over an old avenue—  
A place where my parents used to live,  
A trailer park,  
A used dictionary in the hands of a skeleton—  
A cenotaph kneeling to a cross  
In the wave,  
A blue lion in a cypress perch—  
Infatuated with a drifting cloud—  
The sun so high over the gems of its burials—  
Nocturnal hearts beating in the burrows  
Or the shallows,  
Waiting for the hours that midnight perfumes—  
Waiting for you to come to see him  
In his eyeless rooms.

Robert Rorabeck

## In His Shell

It happens that I am not at home,  
And that I am filled without reason for a place that  
Will not heal,  
While the stewardesses come in talking nonsense,  
Fresh from their leaping bivouacs,  
But famished from their overpriced breastfeeding  
Of their constituency of tourists;  
And they lie across the room and wait for the special  
Cases of lions,  
And the fire drills during homeroom:  
And they mouth off to me with their eyes, swimming:  
Turquoise and dove-shelled:  
Almost salient, and reachable across the dime-store  
Canal,  
So my breathing becomes busied,  
And I am held over, and lightened by their speak-easies,  
Hermosas of the airlines,  
Or other waxy fairytales, until my parents arrive and  
Drive me home to bedtime and to other places  
That I awake and praying, like a tortoise who becomes  
A lighthouse in his shell.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Illusions Such As This

Fitfully the fire must molest other  
Trespassers who are as equally unblessed:  
They started together falling pitter patting in the halls,  
And perhaps sharing lips,  
But they eventually found their way out of doors,  
And god blessed the sun  
And god damned this: as the fish tramped legless  
In the canal,  
And the cypress bowed around the opened foyers of the  
Houses;  
And it was a slow wound upon a worriless battlefield:  
The sky was a blue cream,  
And there was no logic to her hips, but the way they  
Danced,  
Like a penny in the streams, like a flower in the meadow:  
And the dogs leaped after the foxes,  
Deciding that they too would love them, and be fair  
Game for the show that I wished to take her to later that  
Night, to bent nearer to her caress in the balmy illusions,  
To promise her more as the moon awakened  
And happened perchance to stumble on to a field  
Spread out to her in illusions such as this.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Its Apathetic Shade

Nights of storyless jubilee-  
The soldiers truncated in the cemetery,  
Nothing about them sparse,  
Just a little warm- balmy- their petticoat  
Flowers are melting,  
And full of garden snakes:  
And there are no mountains, no muses;  
At least she doesn't  
Call- The soldiers are full of broken wax-  
They are weather-destroyed books I think  
I should not sell-  
I try to look through the dour indigo of that  
Massive tree,  
But the sorority is dark behind it, and turned  
off; she has her  
More eloquent men who wouldn't  
Be caught dead here:  
Men who like cartoons with no interruptions;  
And I am in the dog house again,  
Without children, just the tiny scabs of fickle  
Wounds:  
And I doubt she cares to know that I want nothing  
More than to sniff her ankle,  
To bow in her shade and curl my tail for awhile-  
To whine in suppliant mastery.  
She probably thinks I'm sick.  
She doesn't think of me at all; and that's good:  
She's moved out of here like a carnival turned off  
And packed up, telescoped into a saddled centipede  
Rhapsodies of daydreams  
Sashaying with a hundred cadmium legs down that  
Faded hall;  
And the highway she goes is high and leaping,  
And I think it should never come down.  
I am in its apathetic shade, feverish and weeping.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Its Zoetropes

Crawling to the forefront of another misery of  
Guatemala—I drink my rum,  
I say my lines—and I await for another day to splay me open  
To the eyes and senses of fishermen—  
Or, if I suppose, the sunlight cannot keep you here  
From another catastrophe,  
Like stolen bicycles sleep walking back to their masters—  
Cannot keep you from his love,  
Or from the marionettes of his children he  
Conceived inside of you—then the cave is stolen,  
But in its zoetrope still dances—  
Laughing under the moonlight for the wolves to come  
Into its movie theatre, or for the planes flying above  
It to look down,  
Causing another catastrophe, awakening—  
The moonlight over a valley of windmills—cousins to  
The caesuras—they spring around them,  
Never bothering to wonder what is laughing at the  
Same time with the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

## In July

In July,  
After the tents are down,  
And I've sold all the fireworks I could,  
I will pack up and move away for a week  
Or two, and climb in the high cleft footsteps  
Of God, and swim with my hands scrambling  
Upwards into the sunlight cast from his  
Gaze looking down, staring through clouds,  
Like doorways with  
Bright keyholes I slip away into—  
I will take pictures which I will send to you  
To give you proof of places where the  
Brilliant angels of your shadows swim, places  
In which I have  
Hidden thoughts of you....

Robert Rorabeck

# In Kind

Hibiscus and words,  
And tracks of land all around Disney World:  
Like, like fat bumble bees too fat to pollinate  
And around the knees  
Of flowers.  
We play musical chairs twenty-four hours,  
And I want, and  
I need,  
But my vocabulary is a slim volume,  
And this is why I don't succeed,  
And piss and stain plastic something chairs;  
And your hair is golden,  
And your hair is green, but like a garden full of  
Conjunctions,  
Like pet cemeteries or very homeless men,  
And I guess I just want to breed and sling my  
Slang,  
And rot your flesh right off of you like the kiss of  
A boomslang  
Where the country is wide and gorgeous  
And you can bring all of your children down the rosy  
Mouth of the canyon to watch the river roaring  
With my name,  
And you can stretch your child's hand out to let her  
Pet my wild mane,  
If, and only if, my undying love, you might kindly,  
Oh so kindly, allow me to do the same,  
In kind.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Love With A Turtle

A window in the shadows looks out into  
A chord of wood  
And a length of beautiful velvet torn  
Off the elbows and womb of  
A woman as she escaped down the tree:  
Maybe from the serpent:  
Maybe a fireman was calling her to come to  
The flea market that afternoon  
That weekend-  
Maybe she had golden hair, and a diamond  
Ring on her finger-  
Maybe she was in love with a turtle.  
She might have even been my mother-  
Anyway,  
There is still more school tomorrow,  
And the mountains continue to grow  
So far away.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Lue Of Something Else

Dove sail like gaudy Christmas cards between  
The trees,  
As my scars cast darker by the sun beside the  
Swings and slide,  
And the little men buried in the sand-  
She drives like a rich person, she drives all day  
Until she hit's the ice,  
And out of control she looks up and catches my  
Sadness,  
My sister fully graduated in cap and gown,  
The disco ball reflecting nature's imperfection  
Or God's sorrow, or just the mailboxes out front  
Of all the yards,  
The little red flags up in expectation or surrender.  
She used to board her horse near here,  
But that is sold and far away- The leaves are yellow  
But not quite gold and next month she and her  
Husband will be leaving for the phoenix desert,  
But they are not ornithologists, not even that;  
And as I hurry through the splicing complexions of  
The yards, I think up these things, like greeting cards,  
Little Capitalistic prayers I choose to give her in lue of  
Money, when I go and save her from her disregard.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Me

Traffic creeps on Sundays,  
Away from church,  
Or toward the whore:  
I want to skip off work and gallop  
To the sea,  
I want to lay in her  
And have her lay in me.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Me, Alma

I am in my little house in historical west palm beach:  
O, I can see all of the indiscriminate scars on my body, and almost  
Hear all of the palliations of the sea:  
How the fish are always coming up to be raised and then to be dying in  
Her,  
All the little boats slipping through her saltwater canals without  
Any cares:  
Then the werewolves loom and the mountain range comes up so  
Sharp like undefined cutlery,  
The esoteric heirlooms of you occult, and I can feel like I am alive,  
Because I have seen the washrooms of your eyes,  
Alma:  
And you are brighter than anyone, even though you got turned out at  
Such a young age:  
And, Alma, I just wished that I was saved: I ate two hotdogs tonight  
For my dinner, Alma,  
And I bought you and my mother both Mother's Day cards,  
Because I didn't know what else to buy you:  
And this metropolis is so big, Alma, but we still live close to five minutes  
Away from each other:  
While, I am sure that you know that these bodies live, they really live;  
And we dig all day to burry holes for different types of palm trees,  
But now you body really moves,  
Alma;  
But I have no greater wish then in the deity that is transplanted next  
You and your kids at the petty zoo; if that body was mine, then all of the  
Greater professions of the science museum would have nothing  
At all that could be proven to me:  
But we would have drums and buses and ways to get out of sight and into  
Our other worldly destinations;  
And if there is a goddess, then I have believed in her; and I see her every  
Day, Alma;  
And I believe in her: Oh, Alma, won't you ever believe in me?

Robert Rorabeck



## In Mermaids Anymore

Tricks of racehorses lying in bed with my  
Wife—waiting to go to school again  
Tomorrow—  
So many sorry archangels—the stained glass  
That all night looks down into emptied  
Carports and now the wreck of mountains—  
The fox is in the chicken coop—  
The shooting stars are anywhere—  
And there is someone to love other than me—  
Boys who get their hearts lost in  
The waves—  
Tattoos that say that they could be anyone all over  
Their chests—  
And the night starts out in a tent of  
Bright surrender—the night blooming jasmine  
Come to the old men who no longer  
Believe in mermaids anymore but  
Who are still in love.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Mortal Form

Sullen women, and beautiful,  
With no lines in their palms:  
Their mother is inside the red tent  
Under the swaying palms:  
I saw her go in running from the sea:  
Crying for her daughter,  
The woman of palest earth  
Who the greatest god tricked into the waves,  
And took her away from the  
Earliest forest on the back of the bull:  
Her mother is weeping jealously,  
And the stars are singing like virgins:  
Her sisters are weeping in  
The hem of the waves,  
Hoping that the greatest god will  
Kidnap them, and anoint them  
Under his heavy brow:  
How can they know that  
He is never to return, for he  
Was only in love with their sister,  
The one of muted form.  
She has now swooned into his opal  
Nape,  
Her feet drag limply through the  
Constant waves,  
And when she wakes up she will  
Be a married woman of borrowed form,  
And soon must forget the slender boy  
She loved in mortal form.

Robert Rorabeck

# In My Adolescent Centerfold

I'm listening to your songs,  
And drinking my rum:  
I am afraid of every man's death:  
I'm afraid of grandpa,  
And I'm afraid I can't spell-  
And that's why I'm listening to this pulp  
Espionage,  
Surprised that I made it so far through college;  
Not surprised that I ended up play on the  
Green crop circles of the carpet  
Again,  
Folding paper into airplanes,  
Fire-bombing He-Man-  
All day long while the ants are in a rut.  
DH Lawrence is fornicating with the lady-  
Grey spiders up across the white cotton  
Pillars,  
And I have friends passed out in the grass;  
And I have a craving for bat mitten and cricket;  
And I am the king of England,  
And I have soldered mermaids tucked in my pocket-  
Tomorrow, I have Latin class,  
But I only go to see your comely eyes staring back  
At me across the hemispheres of  
Easy lighting;  
And when I get up I should follow you out into the  
Fire-emergency esplanade;  
Or go to the musseled grotto to sell advertisements,  
To smoke with my friends-  
I named my Cherry red Oldsmobile Jodie,  
But that doesn't mean I didn't have feelings for you,  
Or undressed you naked and laid out with  
Your list of favorite amusements and  
Video games  
Fully spread in my adolescent centerfold.

Robert Rorabeck

# In My Dreams

I wasn't invited to her wedding.  
I cast myself out of the insouciant hotel room  
And waited for the stars  
To hold up like taxis for gangsters and their  
Mob,  
And I made where horses ran as snowflakes  
And picked up gas and speed:  
It was some intelligent forecast,  
Like a fieldtrip I can hardly remember to the art  
Museum where I cut my teeth on  
All the naked ladies  
And horses;  
But Sharon wasn't there, she never was,  
But across the empirical fairy tales of the canal,  
And yet she is always ready to lay down:  
She is always worthwhile to write about,  
And there is nothing wrong with doing it.  
She can run for miles,  
And I won't give up. Sharon is my new immortality,  
My Olympic swingset tucked beneath the  
Rockies,  
And I don't think her husband would mind,  
Knowing just how rich of a car this girl is.  
I don't know how he got her- I don't know anything,  
Except that I was more beautiful,  
And that I was enveloped in a playground of dates  
And figs,  
And vines nuzzling beside her daughter her breast  
Like a gas tank,  
Tucking in to the tannin revealed by the open lips  
Of areola Sharon has no choice but  
To give to me  
All that she ever had or never thought of  
In my dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# In My Fumbling Rains

I drink rum, and by the end of the month I will  
Even have my own little house  
That the pets can lie in, and we can hear the waves the same  
As we heard the lions roar down the street  
In our adolescents:  
And one time Erin called us out because she wished to  
Sit near me beside the bonfire,  
Though I didn't come, and she was already beginning to realize  
Just how many boys that she was good for:  
Marching their royal palmed legions:  
Absolutely gorgeous bicep-ed centipedes like hefty candles all  
Those so many nights  
That she tossed liquor at the bar, and shrugged me off:  
Those patriots of her body really enjoyed and she fell in love  
Every other day,  
And now my poems are short and cadaverous: They don't make  
Eyes with anybody save for substitutes;  
And the come out like piss-stained wimps from the cardboard  
Vacillations of their libraries and pet cemeteries  
And weep for little superfluous things that never had much of  
A reason for existing:  
And they think of you and complain as they lose cohesion and  
Melt like witches,  
Or beautiful working girls named Melody, that lose track of time  
And enjoy getting lost in my fumbling rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# In My Heart For Yesterday

A weekend disappears and I sit on my  
Couch across from my dog—  
My wife in the shower and I am drinking  
Rum. The airplanes have either gone to  
Shanghai or outer space,  
Like the love in my heart for yesterday—  
But what absence is without pain—  
Words that cannot figure out beauty—  
Like kindergarteners painting their colors  
In ancient caves and then laying down  
And sleeping— sleeping forever  
And sometimes dreaming of the women  
They've loved.

Robert Rorabeck

# In My Lonely Bachelordom Of A Pinball Game

Pitiless contributories aglow in the hearths of  
Collegiate mountains:  
I have been drinking rum, Sharon, but tonight you might  
As well be my muse: Do you yet read these awful dalliances,  
These rubs of antique genies,  
Or these rope tricks to no where: I'll have a house now  
Sharon- by the end of this birth month, I will be all alone in  
A yellow fort older than your grandmother,  
Owned by a Norwegian artist of eggs for twenty years before me;  
But now it is mine, Sharon, and in its humid nights I might as  
Well think of you,  
Because you were an artist and maybe a friend, and maybe  
I fought to control myself across the classroom for you: Sharon;  
And maybe this is all wrong: and maybe you were meant to be shoeless  
And lost in the same forest as me, Sharon; if you are reading these,  
My consumptive and sickly blue butterfly: That is who you  
Are, like a candle that burns without oxygen, your daughter  
Needing another sip of your name: maybe your husband is all wrong,  
Or maybe this is just another quarter in my lonely bachelordom  
Of a pinball game.

Robert Rorabeck

# In My Tiniest Of Backyards

Gold is carried over the hills by Alma's sweet wrists  
That I carried and kissed today,  
That I reached over and held like newborn hummingbirds  
In the crib of her air-conditioned car before  
She had to drive away:  
But I bought her a three hundred dollar rosary of white gold,  
So maybe now she loves me:  
And when I listen to her pulse I can look far away toward  
The northern clouds, and maybe towards Disney World:  
And the atmosphere seems to intensify:  
There is the music of angels being picked by the wings of  
Airplanes;  
And in the instances that were never meant to be,  
I can seem to feel alive: as the day hibernates, as I wet her brown  
Skin with my weeping letters,  
Only to let my mind drift to the tattoos I got in Spain,  
And to the yellow Senna trees I want to plant in my tiniest  
Of backyards.

Robert Rorabeck



# In My Trembling Fairytale Arms

Dragonflies and horses;  
And everybody counting sheep: you ask me  
How the world can be more beautiful,  
Alma,  
While the ships are sinking into bathtubs,  
And I am too drunk to go outside on my bicycle:  
And I have eaten too much again,  
Underneath the unkindled lights of your birthday  
Cake.  
And if there was really a stratosphere here  
Again,  
Alma,  
I would pull out the kites that the feral children  
Have stolen from me,  
And I would teach you how to fly just high  
Enough above the poisonous spiders in the  
Forever forest so that you would  
Never have to fear upon being bitten and thus having  
To sleep forever in my trembling  
Fairytale arms.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Nostalgia's Brutal Junk Heap

Yellow rainbows smile upside down from  
Cheap liquor bottles  
In those retired rodent neighborhoods where dogs  
Take charge  
And fleas hold circus; they are all in love with the  
Gamy mermaid who takes her bath of tricks  
Sometimes when right before  
The ice-cream man perambulates with his cursing  
Wind-chimes,  
His balmy vanilla fireworks: She takes all the dimes  
That would've been his  
From the bicycles of adolescent kisses;  
And then she swims away, swearing that she'll make  
It all the way to Spain,  
But she never does- She just gets to Lake Worth  
And then dances topless for bikers;  
And I would have liked to see her before she was all spent  
In a house of bruises underneath the palmettos,  
Their suppliant cutlery that is peppered by cicadas-  
But for these scars, they make me sad and agoraphobic  
And I just watch all the fallow girls playing soccer,  
Their knees in bits of rashes  
Crenellated in the absence of colors of ancient newspaper;  
And by my tomorrow, they'll all be sad and hung-over,  
Would-be super models, now housewives with their  
Elicit stashes-  
The mermaids weeping with only bitter star fruit to eat,  
Spider monkeys going bananas on each of their irritated teets;  
UFOs fluttered in the landscaping, and their big-eyed captains  
Sprawled out drunk in her bushes;  
I would have given it all just to be one of their pubescent  
Rashes- and the rains come sweating- And I  
Am a vagrant on the squeaking swing-set in the suburban  
Cages the cops patrol showing off their badges- They have caught  
Me out of time,  
And all I can do is look at them sideways, trying to give them  
The best angle, so I might wriggle off this ancient hook  
And escape the rotten meat brigades attracting such beautiful  
Suburban flies going out to lunch

In nostalgia's brutal junk heap.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Open Throated Vibrations

By the gowned streets  
Cited with people  
Walking in trails of phosphor  
About in the slag of the metallic quarry,  
The weary maiden lays down to rest  
Red-capped and lost in  
A two lane path through the  
Petrified forest. She bites an innocent apple  
Thoughtfully from her wicker lunch basket.  
Chubby and boisterous tourists stop  
And take pictures of the elegant juice beading down  
The indented pink basin of her plump lip,  
A child of clitoral dew dreaming of a waterfall.  
She smells like hot cinnamon taking a shower.  
When her eyes look up into the flashing bulbs,  
They can not understand what is happening  
Though the irises swell with curiosity.  
The domineering conductor takes his troop  
Away, trundling down the marble foliage  
To the cottage of three narcoleptic grizzlies.  
Left alone, exhausted like a long distance  
Runner naked in the middle of Africa,  
She begins to hallucinate. There beneath the marble  
Roof planted in cement sheaths thickets of orchids  
Are humming, in opened throat vibrations.  
Some are white and some are blue  
And some are changing colors rapidly.  
She steps off the path, not hearing the tourists  
Scream far away, not seeing the beast's  
Long-tailed shadow stalking like a debased gentleman  
Obscuring her shadow

Robert Rorabeck

# In Order To Survive

Always wanting more,  
The jasmine blooms: it smells beautiful and causes  
Tranquility:  
I let you into my courtyard today, Alma, and we picked a gladiola  
Or something else together,  
And you told me it was what your mother always liked:  
Alma, you got pregnant at sixteen in America with Michael,  
And I went shopping at the Sunshine International Flea Market for something  
To buy you for your birthday, which is on the Wednesday of this week:  
And then you came over and I kept on wanting to touch you,  
And you kept on telling me not to touch you:  
You smelled so good, and you used my bathroom, and the lions played  
With the rabbits, and the planes touched down and felt a beautiful  
Weight lifted from them once the stewardesses walked out  
And realized that they'd been touching so many precious things:  
And I am so glad that I know your name, Alma- and surprised,  
And I am feeling slightly unreal, Alma, that you came today-  
That you stayed and spoke my name in the shelter of my house, which is  
A necessity every man needs in order to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Our Unrecognized Hands

Lovelessly, enjoy the tennebaums of infrastructure:  
Salient as a terrapin just knocked up at a  
Bowling alley,  
Jog your pin-shelled hips along the consumptive avenue,  
And tell your girlfriends at hand that there  
Is something not at all right in  
All of this:  
But look at how the grand houses have made it all up  
Beside you,  
Pillaging like ruthless children and down right bullies  
Into adolescence,  
And saying to one another neighborly, and tongue less  
But using all of those gaping transoms like  
A gauge:  
Look what we have done, grown brawny and well-  
Developed in the competition of our  
Neighbors,  
And now we really have swung so high that it no longer  
Matters to contemplate where the swing sets and  
Other dalliances of our youths have gone:  
We were jaundiced anyways and out of sorts;  
Our family's pets loved us better than anyone, but they are  
Now all cotton mouthed down south into graveyards,  
Where the airplanes lick them like thoughtless quills over  
Paper,  
But without any ink:  
And men come anyways and trim our yards and verbiage,  
And put roses in the lapels of our front doors:  
And housewives come in and frequently cook, or infrequently  
Make love in us,  
Their haughty daughters swimming and sunbathing half nakedly  
In our backgrounds of pools: so, so what- if that girl we  
First knew was never fit for us,  
And has forsaken our grand playgrounds of ballrooms for not  
Even a fifth of us; and sectioned off in her little hut  
With her brown man and wonderfully breaded children, maybe she throws  
Fits, like the sea in her carrion of whimsically sociopathic  
Dressing rooms; it is never for us,  
And our affluence is wide open and gaping, not even good for

Carrying grapes: until we rot we will think of her  
With the sun coming up like a popgun over the marble busts  
And trellises of our head rooms:  
And we are only good for apiaries of homeless, sugar toothed  
Wasps;  
We think of her hair as it glistens, and cascades; and we look  
Out at our roses the men who do not know us have planted at our  
Knees,  
And think day after day what it would feel like to hold them over her  
Like a rosary in our unrecognized hands,  
And become our hoped for parts by offering her the shady perfumes  
That she has already told us she can never willingly accept.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Parts A Poem

Monday is having a holiday. I can see it all the  
Way, over seas-  
Girls in little photographs who've been in  
Little plays,  
Who now sail out on cruise ships on weeks of  
Sundry days: While, I am in the riddle  
Of my writing room, but I don't care.  
Mommy Fortuna's carnival, forensic underwear:  
The familiar song of the road danced upon by my truant  
Fingertips,  
Every daddy wanting to be so bold, discovering  
Ballerinas, ingénues fast asleep under wayward pines;  
I see her, but I have someone else on my mind;  
And it goes down like this, naughty boys in the rain  
Sputtering from the gutters, carports in washing machine  
Noise, my mother almost electrocuted by a naked  
Extension cord, and latter on a jubilee of spikenard.  
Retired neighbors drinking domestic beer, pornography  
Across from here, busty blasphemies, oh bright dear,  
Oh azalea, what are you, but getting your pilot's  
License, daydreaming like an angelic acrobat swooning  
For the slick mustache of her swashbuckling lord-  
It has two means, which is why I keep coming back to her,  
The smell of gasoline and her shampooed hair,  
Another night of cheap liquor spilled precisely 1879 miles  
Away from the lacquered bed board of her boudoir:  
3 parks Jesus, to one part wh\*re.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Pictures Of Strange Midnight Yards

Tenebrous squalor of words, I do not love you,  
And the world is disjointed and all of the sons of all of  
The mothers and fathers are far away from their  
Trailer parks: they are being looked after by strangers,  
As their zoetropes languish underneath the sky  
In pictures of strange midnight yards who are always pulling  
Back and pulling back as the airplanes fly to get  
Outside of the houses who are chasing them but  
Cannot fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Places We Cannot Go

Heart stems in the forgotten cul-de-sacs  
Underneath the willows- and I wonder if you've  
Seen us:  
As it's been raining, but the airplanes have been  
Flying in the sky anyway-  
And my face is scarred, but not as much as the  
Way you left me  
Because you are the mother of another man's  
Children  
And the angels hatches in places we cannot  
Go anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Pools Of Bright Shade

The night is a night of brother less panthers:  
Those beasts who don't wear any shoes, and never get hurt:  
They are hunting tonight and breathing out from the open  
Windows of  
Virgins who haven't yet traveled up state to die in the cataracts of  
Narcoleptic incest of fraternities:  
And I can't really imagine that bartenders are reading me anymore,  
Or that the azure lights are still undressing behind the eyes and  
Gullets of her church,  
Because here you are, Alma: Here is where you will always be  
Remembered  
And loved by the vagabond foundlings: those who rest without any  
Cars,  
Whose songs are swallowed by the glutinous trains:  
That I have run away all the way to Michigan, and I tried out for  
Awhile in California- I have almost mined for silver in Colorado;  
And I have been up her frost bitten neck to admire the  
Grandeurs of Vampires and down again into her peaceful grottos  
Where the alligators are smiling;  
And I love you, Alma- and I have nothing in my refrigerator,  
But your brown body is as warm as an incubator that could raise  
Entire households of chickens on the north pole;  
And your eyes are a holiday, your lips a portico to foyers of your  
Soul where I stand waiting to dance with you while the storm clouds  
Winnie and the waves roll in so grandly never even figuring that  
They cannot hold a candle to the toy like caesuras or bodies  
Have made lying together in pools of bright shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Rainbows

Beautiful page,  
Someone laid you beneath a helicopter in the  
Dead center of a garden,  
As the virgin kissed the snake who fed her  
The apple  
And all of that was ripe and golden,  
And we rode bicycles against the wedding dresses  
Of her road,  
Away from home and to the circus,  
As the buzzards washed the clouds—and my mother  
Caught her feet in rainbows  
Into the marital bliss of another mirage's estuary,  
And we held hands as we  
Rode horses,  
And cut the paper into snowflakes and  
Told ourselves we didn't have to worry.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Shanghai

In Shanghai I practice a mundane drudgery:  
I lay in bed all day  
Some five stories up in a Shanghai suburb:  
And so I sleep off and on in my wife's  
Parents' bed—my inlaw's bed,  
As it seems to have some magical properties:  
We conceived our first child in it,  
And now, for a second time,  
My wife is nearly two months pregnant:  
But I concoct various non life threatening illnesses  
In this bed,  
Not including my 'poetry'  
Which I get yelled at for when I write,  
Because I am never anymore allowed  
To be drunk—  
I've been sick for almost two months in Shanghai,  
I lost my hearing briefly,  
And now I have hemorrhoids—and a pimple  
On the side of my nose.  
My back is breaking out too,  
But my wife, surprisingly, loves me—loves me,  
As my child does—  
And my second child soon to come—it has  
Served tremendously  
As a tremendous weakening of my insouciant  
Art-  
I'll get drunk once a week and write  
Down my pitiful thoughts,  
But the saviors and the ghost like angels will  
Not come—  
I guess it is that they have since abandoned me—  
It seems that I have lost my job but I yet still have  
Plenty of money—  
But yet no room to better my art—  
While somewhere in the mountains of my dreams  
My dogs yet lay awake for their honey.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Some Backwards Story Time

In the sabbaticals of light, lost daughters glaze:  
Their mother's fingers on the pedestals of a collegiate haze:  
Rounding the points of a bosomy hill:  
Go up to the steep slopes where angels bleed to fill:  
A merry go round of forgotten  
Tears, circling, areoled and waiting for the tears to fill  
The voids of lamentations in the throats of  
Astronauts choking themselves in the Mexican Laundromats  
Just to get another point of view:  
As I drive home from all my haunts on a flat earth that does  
Not tear away at the end, that does not get novels  
Published or remember its dear old friends lost in the cricks  
Of the kicking glades- washed down stream with the freezing  
Mermaids:  
And here it all was spilled out so fine, like gold turned to  
Straw in some backwards story time.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Some Kind Of Esoteric Glory

You've slept with me, and we've made love:  
But this has never been your home- but a place to run away.  
Maybe an oasis;  
Only my dog is here now- even the airplanes are gone,  
And you make love with him too:  
I've seen the evidence on your neck from time to time  
In the same places that you've given me  
The wounds that heal like apples still hidden in the trees  
Down the rows to a professor's house;  
And the lake there holding out, the weather around it camouflaging  
Where the giant woods live  
And the hardware stores- the great silent long streaks of highways  
Where the headlights cut through the darkness;  
And when it snows, the wolves come onto the highway  
Unafraid-  
As if you and I were to meet in an airport filled with all the ambivalent  
Light of people who never knew who we were  
To each other;  
And then running away into the darkness, and wings folding us  
Together in some kind of esoteric glory I would be too afraid  
To describe.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Song

I am a good man until I am gone,  
And then I am only a good man in song

Robert Rorabeck



# In Such A Way

My bed is no longer indigo,  
But I have strange, milkshake dreams  
And I can put you in them,  
Most of the time after I have mowed the yard  
And picked up all the empty liquor bottles,  
Then look at me,  
And all of my blue phalluses spinning,  
Pullulating like dumbwaiters and pitchforks;  
And girls are pretty, aren't they,  
And I have dark shadows around my damaged  
Eyes even darker than Don Jaun's  
Valentine's mask;  
And I can stand out and shirk the crowds and  
Become my own pagan holiday,  
Give off my own little pantheistic sacrifices  
For girls who don't even care-  
I can kiss my wrists like kittens, like goldfish,  
Under the streams of unreachable traffic,  
And you wouldn't even know,  
The girl who wouldn't care even if the lighthouse  
Was turned off,  
And all the dorms emptied of pretty pony-tails,  
And all the sea pitch black and moving very little  
And seeming to court the disinterested orange groves  
In such a way.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Sumptuously Being

I do these things for you, Sharon- because it is as if  
I am trying to chant for rain in a tinsel of silver nimbus:  
It is as if you've called me over to fix your sink,  
When all you really want me to do  
Was look up your skirt:  
And I remember passing by you on some sad Wednesday in  
That book open hall with so many locked tin coffins  
Of lockers that led to where you put your hands  
On the ghosts of soft clay in art class  
While your father was dying,  
While Erin was studying Latin unsuccessfully,  
Where before I kept my greasy forehead to the gummed desk;  
And I was already heading out,  
Out beyond the failsafe borders to hide like a terrapin exhausted  
From the fixed race underneath the broken down school bus:  
I only did this one or two times,  
And the lunch lady caught me on the last and called me out,  
But ended up letting me go-  
But I saw you on the way out, and you were so beautiful,  
And you seemed to understand and love me even when I was not,  
And maybe I only passed you by while you were  
On your way to better things and Colorado;  
And I doubt you should ever have to read this or tell your sweet  
Daughter about the lies of Pinocchio,  
But I am not a fool: I would plant the aroma of my gold underneath  
Your bended knees at some desk in class,  
And sniff you and make love like a sommelier to some rosy  
Bouquet-  
Now don't you understand, I am not perfect- I am only commuting  
Through states of awful imperfection,  
But if I might sit beneath you for some leaps along the way,  
It would give meaning to the journey;  
It would force some deity out of the shadows, and astonish the  
Rest of the disbelieving passengers when they see that your overpowering  
Mythology is the very reason for all that  
Is sumptuously being served to the dining senses of your flighted  
Beings.



# In Tattered Pools Of Shrieking Glee

When will these new scars die-  
They cannot possibly outlive me, the silent  
Unmovable fantasies of a graveyard's soul:  
All the little jewels half remembered in her flesh;  
I like to think she will take just one more,  
Down in the iceberg earth where the deeper  
Parts of trees fish-  
I would like to get drunk again and proposition  
Her, but now there is a light turned on  
And someone is coming down.  
I should tell them I am not alive, that she is  
Too beautiful to go untouched by me. Even now,  
She sings she has room for one more sailor  
In her wormy sea, almost as if she heard me stepping  
In: that we shared the same mind, or that my soul  
Was just a piece of her tapestry- She sings,  
No one will remember you, but I will forever keep your  
Body unto me; and we will make love under the  
Busy fashions of the brighter afternoon above,  
Where the traffic slurs and the hearts repeat, as if  
Applauding something too great for them to certainly know;  
And we will wait for them, and in unmoved exploration  
You shall captivate me in your perfumed box that  
Is a crib underneath the regular mobiles of ants and rime  
Never to be exhumed; though, someday,  
If my sorrows flood, won't you come again bobbing in  
The raiment of forgetful atmosphere, making them terrified  
Of you once again, but a fine young man utterly ruined,  
Cannibalized for my song in tattered pools of shrieking glee.

Robert Rorabeck

## In That All Too Obvious Repose

Time clocks me in and gives me new scars,  
Which repel women's glances; but it is fine, as  
They are married and motherly and finely suited.  
They belong in parks, muddled by pastels, necks  
Like vases housing water lilies with odors and  
Perfumes, how they stream home from there in such  
A sorority that espousing their element I become over  
Zealous, spill my enjambment into only this stanza,  
Forget about revisions and the hangdog natures of the  
Professors I. In fact, call my cuckolded by them, mystified  
In their suburban parks where even they never go, but  
Fan about in their cars and hearses given over to their  
Once lovely grandmothers, shopping into graveyards stood  
Up with horns of tin and plastic bouquets of blue bells and  
Glass roses which start forest fires under the sun on the dry  
And mowed grass. Eat up entire oaks, and deciduous natures,  
Burn up ant mounds. The fire licking, tries to crawl up her  
Leg like a mewling kitten, tries to franchise her, but she is  
So subtle, and hollow like a flute the piper blows and her  
Lips are quivering under the mistletoe foaming with eggnog  
Even then all out in the open on some prepubescent Christmas  
Day; and she only has the idea for tattoos. Thus the sun wreathes  
Her as the traffic goes, and she stands there in and amongst all  
So many rows, like a canary, like a distillation of her womb,  
Until turning away from my fumbling, turns to the winning team  
And unbuttoning her blouse, has her lips drool, and is soon tight  
Into him in that all too obvious repose.

Robert Rorabeck

# In That Catholic Miracle Show

I keep on doing this, beating my drum in an  
Out of season high school,  
Misspelling, picking my teeth, farting into old  
Shoes- If they could see me, I would  
Be arrested,  
But everyone is out at their own particular sport,  
Everyone with a recessive light bulb attracting  
Bugs and vampires in their own heads-  
I used to lounge the neighborhood,  
I used to have real fun and fast food and nostalgia-  
I visited her at Winn Dixie, and bought her a cheap  
Bouquet I gave to her after paying her at  
The check out table, the ingénue with scabies-  
With a bag of condoms in the trunk of her car,  
With fishnet stocking, and an all night pass to trouble.  
Looking up on the stage where she presupposed her  
Dark-haired rhymes, I was getting color, and it was  
Pretty near perfect in that Catholic miracle show,  
And it could all be beautiful, and we could have walked  
Out to the sound of church bells,  
Except the rains would never come- under her feet  
No flowers would grow, and when I was too fast asleep  
To show, she kept her store open for other boys,  
Like a Chinese Dragon with rug burns- so many of them,  
Both fast and slow, powwowing, clapping their lips  
In a pinstriped finishing school taking numbers in and out  
Of her all night suburban window.

Robert Rorabeck

# In That Emptied School

Down there in the orange groves  
Where the rattlesnakes hibernate telling their  
Long winded fairytales to little girls:  
I do not know who they are, but they believe  
Themselves to be real-  
They languish over the cathedrals, or make small talk  
Upon the windowsill,  
While the ixora blooms red and yellow like  
Helicopters in tandem across the park,  
Across the adobe:  
Inside we made love: we sweated perfumed waterfalls,  
And butterflies too wet to fly.  
We made love, but you went home across the chicken  
Tracks to your husband's  
Children, and you left me teething in that emptied school.

Robert Rorabeck

# In That Orchestra That Pulses With The Tide

The lighthouses are uneven,  
Hugging the cliffs like infants—  
But at least they are beautiful,  
Crippled and dissolving  
Wondering into the effluvious exaggerations  
Where little girls metamorphosis with  
Tadpoles—  
And unicorns drink from the imaginary fountains  
Halfway through a school day  
Where Peter Pan is skipping school—  
You can see him up on the houses  
Sleeping in the wildflowers—  
He has stolen everything from their mailboxes  
And his lightning off Roman Candles—  
Guinevere and Geronimo are asleep  
Down by the canal,  
But when the kaleidoscope turns they will  
Will lose their identities—and be on their  
Way, like each wave in the afternoon  
Returning to the instrument of their desires—  
As she beats with all of the hearts inside of her  
In that orchestra that pulses with the tide.

Robert Rorabeck



# In That Touch Of Clouds

Soft in that touch of clouds: dying a bachelor alone  
At a baseball game  
Without the touch of his dogs- while beneath his  
Casket and Snow white  
The terrapin are yet waiting patiently from their  
Logs for happenstance to deliver my mother  
To them and the alligators:  
Pregnant with my youngest sister, and upside down  
Beneath their shells, she will only have so much  
Air to breath, but it will be the Christian god that  
Saves her and keeps her healthy for next  
Week: and when the ravens come their mouths will  
Be busy with stolen things to decorate the Christmas  
Trees that we will sell underneath them-  
As the tourists cloud the goldmines- and they find out  
Things that they never had- and the brown skin of  
My muse is clouded over my hummingbirds and  
Lactating unicorns, all just as busy as tourists to find  
Out about all of the sweets that I am sure that she  
Ever had.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The

With everything about the  
School  
Dumb and mute  
I got drunk underneath  
The school bus  
Where the tortois was  
Amongst the shade  
And didn't come out  
Until  
Beowulf was in charge-  
Who muzzled all  
The teachers,  
But was mutually killed  
By the dragon as well-  
And on the green  
It was finally safe  
To buy icecream  
and say The Pledge of Allegiance  
To the flag  
Without a favorite color  
In the soul of my heart-

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Abdomens Of Marionettes And Manikins

Absences in the abdomens of marionettes  
And manikins,  
Like the absences in the lakes of the hearts of  
So many girls—  
Of sororities of cheerleaders and  
Flight attendants—  
Who've skipped across the Earth stalling away  
The wishes from the boys' dime-store wells—  
And these girls,  
With their legs diademed from the new-fangled  
Bonfires—  
Seem like bottle-rockets on the god-blessed holidays,  
Seem like tinsel from the spokes  
And the tits of  
Christmas-gifted bicycles—  
Seem to know what they mean:  
That they could be anywhere,  
Flashing off from roofs,  
Falling like silver snowflakes from the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Abscence

Dying roses smelling of the putrescence of  
The open throat of a sink—  
Going down the many ways to the abeyances—  
The movie theatres of graveyards lying  
Beneath their places  
Or the millennium of hearts underneath the  
Patrons of museums—  
Oh what a joy to believe in the bivouacs of  
Sparrows—  
And the other keener mediums  
While my wife is pregnant and the week has  
Finally lapsed—  
I am finally done with the lamplight of  
The fading light towers—lying on my back—  
Hypochondriac—kleptomaniac—  
Mermaids persuade in the sea  
And the stewardesses above them—  
Sororities of many colors—evaporating into  
Sounds—soon it will be Christmas—  
As the beautiful angels leave the earth,  
Like smoke from over the empty carports  
Just as the higher basins—  
And I believe I have seen an angel  
In the absence of any god who might have happened  
To be around.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Airy Heavens

Castles underneath the penumbras of waves:  
Little school kids looking up into a bouquet of their graves:  
Waves of fire, running like horses,  
Like drinks in the single hands of lonely men going down,  
While all of the dogs run their tracks all over town:  
And Saturn sits alone:  
Without any girls, breathless, hopeless: matchless gas in the  
Oven-  
Discovered in recess like the skeletons of a jobless knight  
Underneath the windmills,  
As other things move, as cats make their dance underneath  
The mountains the priceless princes tried to mine:  
Just to get your birthstone, to get your name from their  
Throat:  
Alma, Alma- and to try to birth your young like a match  
Fluttering like a song bird across the ant mounds in the airy heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Angels' Filigree

Up in the angels' filigree—she thought of me,  
She thought of he-  
And the world flipped over and pretended to  
Be dead,  
As the mermaids and the angels awakened from  
The sea bed—  
And, oh, listen, oh—  
While it was coming around—  
It was playing itself dead, it was laying itself down—  
Upon our anniversary—oh, with the satellites doing  
Calisthenics to their very toes—  
And the angels were laying themselves to the  
Very playgrounds—  
And the umpires were crossing themselves to make  
Sure there were no vampires around—  
And the world got up and shook itself  
Down—  
And the children remembered themselves before  
The town—and spoken words as epitaphs that  
Would never have to know—  
That the only thing the angels were good at  
Was making their own silhouettes in the f—ing—  
f—ing snow.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Aspects

Simple traffic, it is no art:

I get drunk at the museum—I get

Drunk at the mausoleum,

And the butterflies follow, landing on my ever

Widening shoulders:

I once had a muse that was equally bored by

Both places—

But now I have a wife and not enough time for both—

Maybe by some Christmas she will have followed me—

As my muse that once was—to whom I made

Love some sixty times—now lingers in

The orange groves of North Central Florida—

Like a proper noun next to the arcs that are being built

For all of the zoos alongside the flooding valleys

Of my tears:

And my poems emote these things—like kaleidoscopes

Collecting the first hallucinations of a day at kindergarten,

And then to sing unbroken into the springs—

She may walk past an empty baseball diamond and

Never recognize it—what I see:

Her in all of the aspects of the red ghosts—

And sailors lost for so many days in the aspects she cannot

Even recognize to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Balmy Reservoirs

I look out at the sun of my backyard.  
Katydid's are crisp at play,  
And your dress is shorn around the cutlery of  
Palmettos,  
Or that's just the spider's wicked bay;  
And the trees go up forever in their careless  
Geometry,  
And the planes they are always leaping from  
The shopping mall to the sea.  
Paper airplanes are scattered everywhere and  
Easter eggs, and  
I have hidden mirrors to hide my scars;  
And aren't the alligators ululating to the f-ing  
Stars-  
There is school tomorrow, but I have better greens  
Effluvious though colorful up in the playground of  
My lonely orange tree;  
And I will go to them instead, and without eyes  
Looking give them my airy hickies:  
I know I will, and I won't even miss the bus;  
I'll be tom sawyer in my fiberglass canoe,  
I'll fish for blue gills and drool over girls from  
Latin class- I know I will,  
And I'll drink my fill towards dusk, following the slight  
Banishments of otters on the slow and ochre rust;  
And latchkey onto thick blue crepuscule;  
And then smoke plantations in the stars- so thankful  
To be blanketed in the balmy reservoirs which  
Hide all of my delinquent scars.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Basins Of Those Clouds

This bed of pearls sequesters  
The little eels- the black urchins- the jewels  
Of black eyes  
And thunderstorms underneath the busses:  
The axles spent on cinderblocks:  
The housewives of midnight and liquored joy,  
Going down to the shadows  
To French-kiss their princes- their used car salesmen,  
And the boys who play in the field:  
And then all of the rest of the way you will find  
Me alone and spun out with the dwarves,  
And counting on my fingers nearer a nest of  
Coral snakes who need  
My help and the wings between my fingers-  
Like raindrops upon the nipples of  
The playground-  
Like sand dollars in the mailboxes: to skip  
School,  
And fly above the playgrounds: to get out of hear,  
And kiss other lovers who were never  
Allowed to swim with me, or to swim with  
You in the busied amphitheatres of commercial  
Airliners, yawning silver wings and booming  
In the basins of those clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Bays Of Your Horses

News to the plagiarisms:

The pinwheels are still spinning around both hemisphere's

Of your favorite daughter's lips—

Yet now she is up in Ocala, with her favorite father

And her favorite horses—

Too young to know how he undressed each other—and so

The moon enlarges like a dying organ

Before your birthday—

And the few months we spent together at the fruit market

Dying,

As I pretend that the fireballs fall down from the sky—

And I remember holding you and kissing your lips

Around the playground of the albino alligator—

Not knowing of our séances, though

He was in a séance himself—

And you loved him, bush-wacked beneath the apple orchards,

Sometimes collecting your skin like an all-too-aware snake,

And crawling back to,

Dressing in your reptilian apiary, while I had a house for you

And all of the gold you could carry—

It wasn't enough—a thousand songs were not enough—

Neither would be just as many oceans—

The drunken nights carrying your echoes to me,

As the knights that would have had you drown in the bays of your  
Horses.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Beating Shade

Saying the séance to the séance  
Says with all of the will of a marionette  
Propped as a doll  
Against the sea—she will come and she  
Will lull,  
And the moon will pull her up against  
The sky scrapers for a better view—  
If it is his wish—  
A silver knight will see her there—  
A silver fish in a silver dish—  
And the airplanes spinning around her,  
Silver-winged mobile in the swelter  
Of the paraffin sun—  
And she will slink and pray and hold her  
Head between her hands  
And think about all of the time that  
She lost-  
Or she will yawn, and there will be no more  
Time for the narcolepsies of such pretty things:  
And she will cast off all of her beauties  
And sleep open mouthed in the beating shade.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Beautiful Sea

I am telling you to teach yourself the truth—  
To stay there and listen  
To all of the footsteps of students, even if there  
Are no echoes—  
In the rain, there are tears even if there are  
No angels—  
As your nights return with their silence—  
Ferris wheels of a mute carnival—  
And the art of a homeless vagrant—search for  
The barrel of your heart to strike a fire—  
To be surrounded by your warmth  
As he drinks from the bottle—the weather  
Making it more difficult for the tourists  
And the automobiles to proceed nearer to you—  
As some swimming without any shelter in  
The beautiful sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Beds Of Her Grandparents

And then there was a chimney:  
Didn't you see her, long columnar like  
Christmas in the forest:  
Everything else covered by the snow,  
But she was still a claret trinket the wolves  
Lathered worshipful, pantheistic,  
And the children practiced around her  
When she was a husk when the leaves fell,  
And the mountains wizened up so that  
They only knew the smoke of the forests,  
Or the cerulean pots lost in their bosoms  
Like the girls from the long abandoned  
High school- until all of her trinkets were  
Scattered in the forest  
And yet her pagan hopes arose to proposition  
Airplanes, or they floated into other worlds  
In the beds of her grandparents-  
And the stars were just the sparks and burs  
Shed off by a fox up there as he  
Continued dancing.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Better Instruments

Drinking in a church of Apaches- not Navajos-  
Face scarred and changing like my body,  
My grandfather is in peril in Tennessee, already wanting to go:  
And my parents sleep in a bed of wallow fire  
160,000 acres long, praying to their horses, and feeding  
Them green embers, like jewels to the unjinged mouth of  
Serpents,  
Until even rivers flow up to them, asking for more;  
And the stewardesses hang low from their airy porticos,  
Showing pearly breasts, and challenging them that this is all:  
And soon I will go to sleep in this church too:  
My three dogs sleep outside like pages- I sleep underneath two  
Castanets,  
And the world is a natural disaster in love with my body-  
It is at first soft, until it is sure that it has overcome what I know,  
And then it enjoys it monuments like cenotaphs atop of me,  
The way crepuscule eats a mailbox until all of the lavender unfurls  
Blooming in campfires of my uncle's circus,  
And then its sequined vests teases around the sky, stirring up  
And making girls I once knew crazy and infatuated with the promises  
Of an over easy quest, just so he can make love to them  
Repeatedly- overjoyed, zealous- until the trumpets stampede  
The sky, reveling the cavalry outfitted and running wild  
In the better instruments made to take over the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Blackness Above The Sky

Unequaled in my parallels as to be a road  
Going on through the sagebrush and bric-a-brac  
As never to be untouched by  
Attributing avenues, gaining only bad luck by flying too  
Fast and running over owls  
Dinning on the previous carnage I should have  
Foreseen:  
Above, no waves glistening through the caves,  
Baited without echoes, maybe Indians are hiding out in  
Them still,  
Selling plastic bones; but I am too tired and weary to stop:  
There is only one home:  
On and on past the ravaged gardening of chalk,  
Past the milky flakes of the emolliations of the failed:  
There seems to be a woman's heart somewhere in the blackness  
Like a loveless moon,  
Saving herself only for one who can meet her in that blackness  
Above the sky,  
In that place that by my very nature I am not allowed to return  
To:  
Pressed like an over determined salesman to my wheel,  
I ply the night hoping for something that cannot even apply:  
The avenue is weary, alone,  
Nothing I have seen is ever returning, I must continue.  
The moon is in the blackness above the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Bosom Of The Woods

Simplicity on an abandoned road speaking of  
The thoughts left amongst the shells,  
As the sunlight weeps down through the vines  
Caressing the pine trees—  
And strolls in falls across the stolen bicycles  
In a heap of collected metal frames—  
Like dye-cast forgeries once belonging to a little  
Boy's heart—  
In the next yards over, housewives become  
Distractions in their elements—and the days  
Yawn in the myriad glows—like lions as  
Sweet as watermelon—  
Pacifists of the solar systems singing in the echoes—  
Open cathedrals make a nude retreat for  
The plagiarists and the tomb-boys—  
Who come here, sweaty knuckled—  
Here is the very time for their survival—  
A beautiful kaleidoscope in the bosom of the woods  
That shall never be revealed.

Robert Rorabeck



## In The Breathings Of Your Vicinity

Muse come from Mexico: I saw you today,  
Your camouflage still brown:  
The pennants of the fronteras body yet blowing youngly:  
Having birthed two children  
Who will have their next two birthdays in the next  
Two months, consecutively:  
Alma: the fairgrounds for my heart, beating the green sweats  
Of venal playgrounds- of ripening graveyards:  
Oh muse across the strange lines of another tongue:  
If found you here knocking again:  
I wanted you to be a pilot- I told you while we drove to  
See your family's lawyer, that you would look good in an  
Airplane:  
And then I took you to lunch, and home again to make love:  
Like a wish spent on a journey, you then returned across  
The rose bushes where the  
Jockeying coins are spent, like gold bleeding from the satchels  
Of something running away:  
And the caves were closed to tourists: and the windows took  
On inward lights,  
Like a beautiful snow was falling inside: and I couldn't move:  
I was a statuary turned to life in the breathings of your vicinity:  
And I realized so many things far away from college,  
With the brown light living in your eyes,  
Casting upon me; and your lips trespassing on my ears:  
Even if I wouldn't live right now- It wasn't all impossible,  
And you were not that far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Brown Webs Of The Pond

Soft in the brown webs of the pond,  
Leaking from the roots of the cemeteries,  
Airplanes who get up and yawn—  
Like lions in their estuaries—  
And the roots of the tinfoil gods crinkle with  
A sunlight amidst the palms,  
All of the youngish boys pretending at trying  
Not to be in love with them—  
Soft-shelled tortoises nibbling at the ankles,  
As an ancient mother holds her new born  
Up to the messages of the skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Candy Graves

In the candy graves of your mother's breast feeding  
You will lie down,  
And your eyes, yes your eyes, will close  
From looking at too many birds;  
The highways will encircle you,  
For you yards and yards—  
And it seems as if you have come so far,  
But this is just the preamble to the flea market,  
To the graveyard,  
As the housewives return home,  
Matriculating after the fourth of July,  
And the sky feels alright even though it is full of  
Clouds—and your super heroes cannot even save you  
Even though they are so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Caracoles Of Our Homes

Landscaped in the caracoles of our homes,  
Like benchmarks in whatever kind of weather exists for  
The day,  
I find it hard to look up as stone, even when the butterfly  
Lands on me;  
She is all brown, and her eyes are the ideal color of  
That:  
She seems to swallow me, as she does every other boy:  
She seems to swim around me in the waves of sunlight,  
Her limbs busily cleaning,  
Trying to keep busy as she asks me not to look at her;  
And neither of us are perfect,  
But we were built for the other, and to fit across bicycles,  
And laughing as melodiously as some kind of  
Hikers going up the tranquil paths towards their deaths  
In one final sun shower that has matted  
The wild flowers and set the yellow jackets in their  
Wings  
And the coral snakes on their bellies into some sort of  
Religious if apocryphal frenzy.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Chinese Theatres

In the zoo on Sundays,  
I try not to think—speckled in the shade,  
I drink in the sun—  
Thinking of nothing is the best thing,  
Failures put on hold,  
Swans in the man made river  
Look beautiful—  
All of these captivated animals intermingling  
With the housewives—  
Born to shoplift from their own shadows—  
I am drinking tequila I won from a locker  
For a hundred and seventy five dollars—  
Echoes brandished in the sheathes and  
Armpits that hang lower to the  
Light,  
Like brandy licked by the tongue of a very  
Bold serpent:  
Soon, tranquilized, I will fall to sleep—  
Once again without any hope  
Outside of the cabin where the warm people  
Hibernate—  
Special, with bold privileges in their cannons,  
Wanting to come down but striking no  
Compromises with their ever young helliums—  
And warn out this way  
While cradling their first born children—  
And loving in the day-gloom ballrooms  
Of the tangled ribbons of glassblown rivers—  
Without the daylight or the moon,  
Going down the passageways,  
Drinking in the Chinese theatres of their misplaced  
Atmospheres.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Churches Of A Holiday

When the windmills stop-  
The silence of death: the waves do not move:  
The fish seem to sleep:  
They make a blanket of their gills,  
And a teepee of their steps,  
As we reside at their shoulders, trying to believe  
Even though our grandparents are  
Gone  
And scalped:  
And the new flag only has the color green:  
Grasshoppers lose their bodies  
In the barely,  
And so do their cousins- but their cousins  
Are still beautiful  
Beside the latchkeys of deer and foals  
The wolves milk:  
Reintroduced,  
They are so careful now not to disturb anything:  
They are so very careful:  
The way sometimes intelligent fire steps  
And gives its delicate promises to the fireworks  
Held in the churches of a holiday we were all  
Supposed to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Classrooms Where Nobody Goes

Beautiful as a young woman lost in the  
Daydream of a boxcar between the bosoms of  
The mountains—she might as well die here,  
Like song birds collecting their hearts into the snow—  
Their sweet voices failing to attract a mate—  
So only now the echoes are calling for survivors—  
Hibernations in the seeds of petrification—  
Like babies in jars—and rubber chickens falling in love—  
In the classrooms where nobody goes.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Clouds Of The Sky

Now what a daydream:

Now what a daydream in the world for a while—

Another chance through the forests—

Pistils of love

In a roller-rink for the apiary—

Smoking Ferris wheels become a metamorphosis through

The heavens,

Until it all takes an absolute while to cool and

Distillate:

\$5 dollars of romance to watch her surrender to those

Flags:

Taking off in the middle of the day,

Forgetting to reimburse ourselves through the courtyards

Of our school-time daydreams—

Until she had her own children, hatched from underneath of

The webs of a crocodile,

And they were counting the dew drops of the minutes

For class to end—

And they were all getting up together and swearing to

Themselves:

So many words to remember, but only so many

Passages upon their ways home—

Like airplanes stuck in the clouds of the sky—□

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Comely And Fragile Sorority

Imperfections latchkeyed from bliss,  
And looking down the mouth of the lonely roads that  
Don't exist anymore:  
Gone with kidnappers on blister some holidays:  
Gone back through the bluish forts of incests where the tomahawks  
Rest and the mountain lions underneath  
The dwarf apple trees:  
And little girls there no bigger than triangles, counting their  
Luck with the plums on their fingers,  
Promising to undress and climb up to the pinnacle of  
The Christmas trees, or not promising another world;  
And in here in the silence of my house:  
Silence, and the lost bets of bobcats who spill their teal and milk  
Across the tenements of the Atlantic:  
Each wave a microscopic city of the appropriately disposed  
And cuckolded;  
With the horns of reindeer and moonstruck elk rising out of each  
Caesura and crest.  
And the other scientific names that come out of the habit of wandering  
Far astray from the ordinary path in the forest,  
Like Goldilocks, like Red Riding Hood, and the other sisters  
In the comely and fragile sorority who should have known better.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Cornea Of A Hurricane

Whatever beauty there is- you are here now-  
Like a house filled with a sad family in an uneasy  
Cul-de-sac- that I sometimes remembered you  
In- in Saint Augustine-  
Thinking from my parents' basement if I couldn't  
Move there- to be surrounded by teak and  
Thrift stores as eternal as you and I-  
As you were serving drinks in the cornea of a hurricane,  
As the rattlesnakes made their hut around the cured bones  
Of a family dog-  
With the moon out the same time as the sun, trying  
To survive, and thirsting off his light meandering through the  
School buses- Well, those days were just as lazy as  
You are now- and you can throw a fit, or eat a plum:  
But I've put a hundred dollar bill in your back pocket  
In the cooler where we used to work together for  
My uncle: Now never mind the thieveries in their  
Satellites- or how they throw their dice over the rock  
Gardens where the unlucky rabbits cannot  
Breathe- and never mind the street lights over the church  
Way up north where we never came together- or the  
Highways that took you so far overnight to where you  
Lay beside me in another ideology across the train tracks-  
But let me kiss your auburn limbs- and buy you  
Chocolates and roses- and let me call you my muse  
From time to time, as the waves don't care about dying.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Crowd

Imperfection at the sport of angels  
All a wonder downed at the bottomed angles  
At the circus,  
Like racehorses beneath the midgets sunbathing to  
The clouds—  
Perfection in their hubris, and rosy bottles  
To their lips  
While flies whisper of carnal and feral love:  
That is their perfection,  
A two week's bliss of I love you's and candied  
Apples  
And then to move on amidst the crowd  
Of sinister confections and saintly business—  
Another quarter in their pockets,  
Their lover another stranger in the crowd.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Crypt Of Utopia

If everything was better,  
I could take off work,  
Or I could cut hair for a living;  
But now it is impossible to be occupied  
Not ever having learned math  
Or memorized the periodic table-  
Imagine if the country hummed like a chorus  
Of wasps again,  
And the neat choreographed segregations didn't  
Bleed,  
Or that gray wasn't the new color in our flag;  
And I imagine deliberately unbuttoning her shirt  
Speckled by the ancient canopy in the cemetery  
The fence around us high enough to  
Keep us in the crypt of Utopia,  
And this should be our gothic Eden  
Where the insects philosophize in the lips and  
Beards of the old hemlock professors,  
And sting her breasts like little flecks of  
Homeopathic telegraphy  
While the Mississippi trickles off in our left ear,  
And our eyes hypnotize us simultaneously  
Until our bodies swim to the steady rolling of  
Traffic and over us,  
Bright smoke and shadows, the orgy of angels  
Singing and laughing,  
And the humorists orate in long, effluvious  
Folk verses,  
All the time they are building newer skyscrapers  
Over our wonderful séance,  
Never realizing who is now our king,  
Or that death has sucked all the sweetness  
Of the flower as the  
Snake has sucked the yoke,  
And the bouquet is wilting on the table to the  
Home where there shall be no return.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Cushions Of My Most Amiable Of Skies

I took a lover to the mouth of the river:  
You could see down to the bottom of its speckled liver;  
And she hung upon me like a bulb  
Of rosy weekdays; but I still walked back home through  
The slender topiaries of this basilisk forest,  
Searching for your eyes that defeated all of the actresses:  
I seemed to concur you well up from the stage of  
My premature blindness;  
And you did come caressing like the queen of my bodies  
Slave;  
And now I suppose I must say something beautiful  
Concerning the stones of my mother's rock garden,  
But I never really knew them nor cared how carelessly you  
Misconstrued them:  
Now it seems as if I am just taking my car down in the  
Tunnels in between Arkansas and Missouri; and now you  
Are rising up like a paper dove who is burning;  
And your eyes also have your daughter's eyes; and they rise  
Together through the friendly skies,  
Serving in them to anyone they like; and the truancies of  
Never ending boys salute you from the never ending rooftops  
In the cushions of my most amiable of skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Dark Locis Of Bedrooms

All of the silence that Alma gives me today,  
Finds me cultivating myself, a gray landscaping for  
A flooding grave:  
Even though as always the cars come, seething, spinning  
Their wheels,  
And making their wishes over the head rooms of the  
Roofless yards;  
And it is painful to breakdown, realizing all of the scars  
Drop you so far away  
From Mickey Mouse, like Dorothy up amidst the stratosphere,  
Pirouetting while asleep,  
In the dance classes of lighter than air angels,  
While their fathers fence beneath the smoldering eyes of the  
Stand to for cats  
Who seem to smile as if they know it all:  
And I am sure that they do,  
Even as the passageways tend to run down until there are no  
More monsters,  
And in the dark locis of bedrooms without incest,  
The heroes diminish without candle light until they are without  
Anymore need for themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Dark Secret Echoes

Put me to the lips of a cave like a thrush cavorting  
With the whirlwind:  
Put me above the heads of the male tourists who  
Are always trouncing down into you  
Like a washing machine:  
Going counterclockwise with their tongues as if they  
Were trying to retrieve  
Family pets, or the vulgarities of the mailboxes:  
Put me above you on a spoke,  
Like the special poison of a dirge; and I will see deep  
Down into the rich deep concavities which are inside  
Of you,  
Which you put to bed at night, which you slip out of so  
Easily and so fine to make a bath of love  
In the glowing aloe while the rabbits are  
Dampened and sated;  
And as your trailer yawls and hems, and the rattlesnakes  
Brush like ribbons around the sinkhole of your eyes:  
Put me there as well with you and your children,  
Put me on a shelf over the television,  
Or in the tiny miniscule kitchen that you can so easily and  
So bravely leap fully blown out of,  
For this is your night and I am but one infantile star  
Reaching down and peering for hours into the dark  
Secret echoes that seem to make you whole.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Darkness Between The Trees

Lands are populated high and low,  
And airplanes make love and prowl in the darkness  
Between the trees  
While their stewardesses are sleeping, and singing about  
The knees,  
While their captains are turned out,  
And the street lights are doused, and the greatest of all miseries  
Blankets the cages of the beasts and the empty habitats in which  
When the world was much bluer and sang like  
The incests of rivers, we walked and I held her brown skin;  
And her eyes were just as dark and saturated with hidden promises  
As mine.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Darkness Of The Theatre Many False Things Who Bloom And Forage

Scrub pines  
And Ajax,  
Ruby Red  
Grapefruit  
And  
Thumbtacks-  
A lost  
Shopping list.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Daycares Of Everywhere

Broken in the arch of rainbows while I grind my teeth  
And wait for another quarter to spin  
My lunch in the gumball machines of pac-man or into another  
New euphoria of this or that hallucination of  
Romance while taking off my cap:  
And it all spills away like the lunchroom of tears or chickens  
Over the caesuras of lunchrooms or midday forays  
While the fighter pilots lie down and touch themselves  
After the four colors of whatever primary  
Nurseries that fail to premier and then all there is this:  
In the lines who cavort over the short shaves of destiny and the  
Long formicated courts who someone lead all the ways up  
To the blonde and justified summits of whatever gods that were  
Always there; and failing to premiere in their bathrooms their  
Resolve to appear just as they always was:  
Naked and justifiably ululating, communicating with the planets  
Of the chimps and the butterflies, in the daycares of everywhere,  
Overspilling and lactating over the continents who have  
Come together over the potlucks of all the just who have always  
Was.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Daydreams

All of the day falling through your summits while  
The watermelons keep cool in your wells:  
I write you love letters,  
But your valentines read what the hell:  
And this has been the standoff for so long, circulating,  
Basking in the epiphanies of the roadside  
Rodeos:  
I loved you, even double chinned with love:  
And it takes so long to remember  
The shadows of our  
Doppelgange of twins- as my young, young parents  
Delivered me up into another high school above  
Or beneath the clouds and tried to tell me things  
That I could not possibly ever prove:  
But there they were, already rounded  
Like resurrected Easter eggs: but there they were,  
In the pretty fakeness of another Disney World we all  
So happily traveled up to:  
Somnolence in the busses of any catastrophe- starving,  
Counting the yokes drooling from any open mouths:  
And there they were,  
I suppose starving on any Christmas and you couldn't  
Figure out if you loved me,  
But the flight of the airplane was almost done-  
As our Christmases floated over the skies of flea markets,  
As I supposed to myself in the daydreams I had never won.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Deepest Houses Of The Deepest Forests

In my ganemede was a transom; and of course it was in  
Outer space:  
All of the jockeys took their positions and settled into the dawning  
Of another race;  
And it wasn't like this, if it was at all: it was just the silence of  
An adolescent canoe going past the emptiest hall:  
Because you were all in your classes, and learning all of your things,  
While  
Alma was kissing the opulent wattage of angels, and passing  
Through the bilingual rains:  
This is where you go, Alma: this is where you fit into a story,  
Where you become the virgin in the grotto for your children;  
And this is where you always are burning,  
Burning:  
While the airplanes pass out and the housewives pass out and all of  
The stories they have been gossiping about you finally go  
To sleep,  
And you wake up and bloom, and the waves bow,  
And I can finally kiss your brown lips and seem to slumber as deeply  
As a family of grizzly bears held up in the deepest houses  
Of the deepest forests.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Divinity Of Morning

There will soon be a storm, where her tiny brown hands  
Will come hunting mine,  
Wanting to survive, while the waves play out like a nursery of  
Carnivorous birds:  
And Alma doesn't want to make anymore adulterous fieldtrips  
To the museums or the universities  
Because she finds them boring; and they are tucked so far  
Away into my yesterdays, anyways:  
That I cannot remember how they affected me, how their  
Bicycle thieves stole away with midnight the jubilation  
In the panting transportations of girls I lived with who  
I didn't even love;  
Just while the butterflies last for only awhile, and leaving their  
Husks like flags over the empty cannons of coquina forts  
Left alone even by tourisms,  
As the moon makes love in the orchards: how will I ever explain  
This to her,  
While I wait for her- my Alma, to return:  
That it all was beautiful, but left alone to the dying elements  
In the highest rungs of the smallest things: how might it come  
Down again, to bless me in the divinity of morning  
With the loving winged twins of her burning lips.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Doldrums

When the stewardesses are into the sky again,  
What time will it be?  
And when will they ever be coming home again,  
Like mothers and grandmothers  
Finally remembering me,  
When I am already lost down in the bosoms of  
The sand dunes  
Where the panthers are talking'  
The unicorns are whispering to the mermaids  
Gossiping over what the billboards are advertising'  
The stagecraft of clairvoyance'  
The children become lost from the school again,  
Like ripe fruit gallivanting down from the armpits of  
The tree'  
Trying to bloom their burry citrus near the lips of  
The cypress trees,  
Where the werewolves are snoring  
And the angels are purring'and the sun is like a  
Drowsing commercial in the doldrums of late night t.v.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Early Morning

Bodies burn like sugarcane, the food and rum  
Of the teenage gods, the bombardiers  
And the cheerleaders:  
While I saw you out on the red oval resurrecting your  
Un thought of children from sweat of unhealthy  
Jocks;  
And I remember your womb like a runway that I  
Would have liked to have run down:  
If I had been your son, I would never have had the need  
To have loved you, the way that I love you now,  
To get everything wrong and all of these misspelling;  
And when I look up at you from my seat above the  
Earth,  
Underneath the chin of the mother goddess, you just ask  
Me what I want to drink while you go on to serve your  
Other business men;  
And I drown after you take the air away, or I continue writing  
Like a blind and thoughtless man,  
Even while I can hear the funhouse springing in your bed,  
And even in the early morning on the day that you gone and  
Done got wed.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Echinopsis Of A Busied Dream

Poem in the echinopsis of a busied dream—  
This is all of the stuff now that the neighborhood or  
Wherever is laid all out—  
This is the land I believe that unicorns come from  
And airplanes all of their obnoxious art:  
Or this is just another way to breathe in the air of  
Tomorrow—the fairies are all gone and the fairgrounds  
And the goldfish under them—  
This is the art half-forgotten or puffed up from the  
Mailbox—into another estuary swallowing itself into the  
Bluegills of its moonbeams—  
Another cauldron meant to beautify the volcano  
Through the pieces of its vanishing art:  
Days that look like this,  
Beaten around the mouth as around the breast—  
Flowers that pistil into the ever present fanfares of the  
Aqueducts of the blindly sublime—this is the  
Same strange arrowhead that tickles the truth through  
The porticos—as the selkies of the mermaids submerge,  
Coughing to themselves,  
Enamored of the same corsages that forgot to remember themselves  
So many ages ago—and in their gardens swim as an example,  
While you looked so beautiful, as the pools glistened  
And picked up on the echoes of the memories that  
I guess I'll never know.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Echoes Of Gills And Leaves

The pageantry of her eyes calling  
Like a crisp dollar bill  
While the sun and the ceiling fans are snoring—  
There she is in a clip of stars  
Beholding the fanfare of her sisters—  
Girls in the silky forests and the crenulated waves—  
I think I know who they are—I've seen them  
From the fort even though they always  
Seem so far away—  
Taking up all of the space that they please,  
But hidden—lapsing in the shadows—  
Brilliance of copper bodies reanimated—  
Their bodies like fans—  
Breathing in the echoes of gills and leaves.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Embers Of Jackrabbits

As it was in the embers of jackrabbits, I took off,  
Became the epitome of racehorses that didn't  
Have to follow  
Except for the in the shadows of their own  
Shoulders—  
And the night was enlarged and engorged into  
A movie theatre,  
And the space rockets took off by  
Their innumerable waves  
While my very own wife never  
Had to think again over the next weekend of  
China—  
And the moon and the satellites prayed the  
Prettiest of the pretty girls straight  
In—  
And straight in to their graves—  
Rhyming as the shouldn't do  
As long as if  
They wanted their pretty savior to  
Be pretty saved.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Empire Of The Sun's Playground

Poetical devices leaping for their only god,  
Hoping the darkness of the overcast blackout  
That he is still there throwing bird crumbs  
To the thorn bushes  
Against the quietly segregated dorms I used  
To deliver to in my old truck;  
They don't give a thought to failure as they come  
Suckling like piglets on my fingers,  
Like tapdancing soon to be mothers open bloused  
On a stage for blind men,  
Still hoping that she is there in the tramping crowd,  
desperately certain that they will find her because  
She loves them;  
But she cannot even see the wayward children, the  
Freakish carnival daycare that I lead around,  
Affecting more scars, becoming further isolated from  
The rounds of cheeky firemen:  
She cannot love them when she is fully situated in his  
Arms, when she can look the racing hard-edged world  
In the eye and give it a good run for its money.  
She has no use for such devices,  
And thus they escape her, they run through her like the  
Finest elements yet understood by the scientists who  
Would define her by them,  
Giving proof to the atheist and revealing the glinting  
Epitaphs of dead explorers elbows bat winged like the  
Washington Monument in the hallucinatory dunes riling  
Just outside my backyard window,  
Thirsty and husking in the empire of the sun's playground.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Empty Playgrounds

Late again at night I go down into the bottle  
To reminisce with the genie who never gave me anything  
That I wanted,  
And the words crumble away like a papier-mâché Ferris wheel  
In a sad god's shower,  
And the grapes tremulate celestially above the forever gurgling lips  
Of purple foxes,  
And you can feel everything that never got what it deserved,  
And you can hear the airplanes all too eagerly leaving town,  
Even as new saints are discovered in the empty playgrounds  
Where I guess we once believed.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The End

Lighthouse mating with a Ferris Wheel,  
Stayed nudity revealed to the nomadic contraptions  
Caracole in their whimsy  
While bicycles lay dismissed atop of rooftops  
Beneath a sky of clay  
That seems to be falling down impregnating the belly of  
The ocean- stars that dim and pulse speaking  
Their codes to the blindness  
Through the orchards to which the valleys sing,  
Both with their own wombs, lonely,  
Fertile and overstacked beside the little towns of  
Their brown men in the middle of nowhere  
It happens- and cars are ants:  
In the sky, lions feeding on airplanes until they  
Tumble down to light the candles of winsome birthdays-  
As the manmade lights fall in love with nature,  
And she kisses them, and turns around blindly,  
To send them off with a sword for the forest-  
To disappear in the end.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Enormous Room

The good, good teacher said that  
Her favorite molecule was red;  
And we all lived in the enormous room  
While Zeta loomed  
Until Kurt Cobain was dead;  
And we played 4-square and listened to  
The dead:  
Oh yeah, jump yip: all the rats are skipping  
Ship:  
And her lips were red,  
And there were clouds in the sky,  
And winged pus\$ies- Oh yeah, jump ship,  
All day long at a steady clip;  
And the cormorants circle the yellow buses  
Before doom, like doves on strings-  
Around a junior high school tomb-  
I could never look her in the eyes, and the teachers  
Said things I wish they hadn't  
Until the days were almost over and I trounced  
Out to play video games all afternoon with my  
Blue eyed Jewish brother;  
After we played 4-square in the enormous room  
Where all the soldiers were triaged from exploring  
The higher grades, the flattened esplanades of  
Their daddy's golf courses-  
And she road horses in the enormous room  
And the red molecules floated like envious doves  
On strings- and I sang alone in my room,  
To a crooked pestilent rood:  
Oh yeah, jump ship, why does she always shoot  
From the hip,  
And Curt Cobaine was dead,  
And I pissed my pants and read Hardy Boys and John  
Wayne- the flag rippled like something sadly annoyed;  
And the good, good teacher's favorite molecule was red  
In the enormous room.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Everglades Of Your Overrun Soul

Christmas ornaments strung out and smashed  
When they were supposed to be up on stage  
Garlanded and thrashing for  
The miracle play- and you said it was going to  
Be a good show,  
But now all my words are wrong- they are unconcerned,  
And she doesn't love them-  
I am the sort of thing vanished into the narcolepsy of  
Life's deception and there you go back and forth with  
Your new ghosts cheating into cars;  
And it's not something I like to envision:  
That I should have to vanish or even die, while the  
Alligators and saber toothed tigers remain, insouciant  
In their own sort of passion play,  
And you've taken his name, the way it rings around your  
Bosom like a fresh areolaed paint job,  
And I am not a bad man, but I am not beautiful,  
And I suppose that is why I should have to die and leave  
The stage halfway through the show,  
Without the audience's sympathy or any note of fanfare,  
Just another tiny island overrun with spikenard and cormorants  
Deep in the everglades of your overrun soul.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Everyday Constellations

The song ends like this—don't you understand—  
They don't open their lips again—  
On their mascaraed of a parade, they go down into  
The shrinking land,  
Of mothers' lips and nursery rhymes—  
Housewives in the nourishments of the feathers  
Of their headdresses, go out into  
Their front yards just so that they are observed by the  
Sun—the forever voyeur—  
Or for at least as long as they live—  
Climbing those higher than high daises—  
Drunken on the spirits of the denouements of  
The earth—as the littlest of people follow their own  
Personifications,  
As the kings light off their retarded fireworks—  
And until it is just a jungle of anybody's worth—  
Spirits that flit light palm fronds above the earth—  
Come down as dying wishes over  
A Mexican fair—  
Languishing in the bereavements of traffic jams  
In the everyday consternations of how life  
Ever so happily brings you down.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Eves Of His Quieted Sort

I drink more liquor like a lucky seahorse drinks of its  
Velveteen sea;  
And perhaps I love you, if this is the worth of my soul,  
And I am returning to myself in the bodies of  
This great depression of soft blue oceans, and all of these  
Wrong words:  
And I wanted so long ago to step through the nigh toward  
You with the conviction of really penitent heroes,  
But to not tell any lies, that wasn't the boy you were looking for  
Anyways:  
So you make love and mouth off, and who knows what you  
Do to your modern day guy:  
This is just my own next day failure anyways: This is the last  
Poem towards this early morning solitude;  
This is the banshee taking it easy and pretending she is just  
A torn kite, just a little shrivel of rag having a good time  
Strip teasing the sun:  
This poem isn't about Erin, or what she never did to me, you  
Understand: Nothing I have ever done for her was ever about her,  
While the boys pile up underneath her and have a good time  
Sucking the lichen of her stalagmites; and yes tonight I am  
That quiet sort of god who rests in the eves of his quieted sort  
Of epiphany and waits doing the best that he can  
Saying all of these ungodly things just trying to conceive  
Or disprove her love and her love making for her sort of any other man.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Exhibits Of Wingless Animals

The entire classroom stands up and yawns:  
It seems that it is time to go  
Even though it is just the beginning of the day—  
But shouldn't we go,  
Just to be sure—instead of saying The Pledge of  
Allegiance to the Flag—  
Shouldn't we go out of doors and across the streets—  
And even over canals—  
To light off illegal fireworks off of neighbors' roofs—  
Then sing sea shanties to the first evidences  
Of the nuclear moon:  
It is what Walt Whitman asked of us—to join his  
Song in the brotherhood of the workplace—  
To coalesce our senses alongside  
Sea horses and weathervanes—to find a truce for  
Ourselves outside the voids of sports stadiums,  
Ignoring the monuments of our heroes—  
To ride bicycles to flea markets on our weekends—  
And to glance up at the moon when our bellies  
Are full of stolen dinners and stolen rums—  
To listen to the nocturnal wonderments of  
The absolute heavens perfumed by the nocturnal  
Bouquets while the housewives make their  
Tamed love in the exhibits of wingless animals indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Extinct Romances Of A Christian Valentine

Do you remember the bicycle clutched to the  
Cursive edge:  
Not waiting to go anywhere,  
And waiting for nightfall—  
The beautiful death of infants,  
And her parents to come home to her—  
And the shopping malls filled up with  
The birth of Christmas—  
And rainbows apexes of their own surmises—  
All in yellow surplus,  
Harrowed of their own realizing:  
Courts of virgin acrobats—  
And the tomorrows of pitfalls and search warrants:  
A beautiful curtain called to her room,  
Done in by a poisonous mermaid  
Or an asteroid—  
And the sky all of a yellow nimbus,  
And the mariposas birthing clouds in the extinct  
Romances of a Christian valentine.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Eye

You breastfeed your daughter in the hedgerows of  
Dear gypsum  
In a still life beside the unruly stream where Joe's  
Brother drowned.  
Then at night when I drive to the movie theatre,  
I see you there as well,  
Sharon,  
Luxuriating beside the very same waters as white as the  
Housewife of Bath,  
But your daughter has grown and is playing jacks  
And eating wild huckleberries:  
And there is maybe an airplane or a helicopter over your  
Left shoulder,  
But I know it is only a hallucination, and like an unwanted  
Tattoo it has nothing but  
Superfluous meaning;  
And I curl my toes like cats tails in the darkness,  
And I bite the inside of my cheek for you as you skin a deer;  
And you play pinball, and you are very adept at  
Everything you set your mind on;  
And in the next vision you've constructed a swing set;  
Your daughter is even older than you are,  
You look like sisters:  
You are studying the periodic table: Your husband has a cane  
And an eye patch- There is a sense that you've all been  
Stealing things to survive:  
The river has sunken like a precious vein underground,  
And there are worrisome musics in the darkness, and maybe wolf's  
Eyes;  
But everything is bright around you:  
I suppose that is the photosynthesis you've always had in the  
Girls bathrooms of your jaw structure;  
And I just want to fly away and partake in the feast of your nectar;  
Like a little butterfly in the little patches of soot  
Kicked over from your picnic the rains seemed to destroy;  
But then I see you again at some reststop along another very different  
Rose, catching you out of the corner of my vision  
When I couldn't stand to look myself in the eye.



# In The Eyes Of Your Unappeasably Beautiful Lawn

This is delicate to talk about, of all things-  
The most important that I want to take your spirit  
Out of its forlorn and social habitat,  
Make you want to say new things-  
Speak in tongues and caracoles of cut-throat trees:  
Down on my knees,  
Worship you and sacrifice leaves to your  
Teak-bowl knees:  
I say, I say, I say: Please-  
Start drinking with me the new liquors you either  
Fear or never think about,  
Let me take you out of the classroom of your chummy  
Louts,  
And go down for a ways, passing unnoticed through  
Each of these wash-basin days,  
Taking down the streams of cadillacs like Chinese  
Junks,  
Speak to alligators and steal their trunks;  
Or just tonight, under the gibbous moon- let me make  
A milky smooth movie out of your  
Thighs,  
Let me pan what amusement I can get off your distilled  
Body, the other old men have been looking at  
And working on for so long:  
Let me put one unopposable meat hook underneath  
Your delicate lingerie;  
Or, hey,  
Let's just sing for a tune of a song,  
And watch the yellow school buses pass for so long,  
And skip our heels up into the sky,  
Which is just the lover of sea-life a homeopathic  
Cenotaph, an ancient god whose gone up  
And died-  
Who lives forever, I fear, laying so gone in the eyes of  
You unappeasably beautiful lawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Failing Memories

Awash in the glories of a hidden sanctuary,  
The sun beating down its feisty gold,  
I carried you out into the waves and your tiny brown  
Body conformed to me, having to trust because  
You could not swim,  
As afterwards I settled down with you and kissed your  
Mouth in the shade of a shelter,  
Making out while the lifeguards were turned away towards  
I see that I compared your beauty to, Alma,  
As we drove toward her: calm as  
A hospital that has gone to sleep cradling all of its wounded  
Men,  
Like a blue kite who has found a gentle elephant to kid too;  
And your beauty is still there:  
Motionlessly building, counting the unbearable stars  
Even while your consciousness lies away,  
Cradled in your senses, maybe remember Mexico and all of  
The steps that it took to come here again,  
Like a butterfly who decided to change one last time  
And to return to the homes of its shed bodies, following the  
Footpaths unrequitedly printed in the unfailing memories  
Of my love, knowing that yourself is all that it concerns.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The First Place

What's up my girl,  
You who are like the dragon I've tamed  
And put to sleep in crags  
Liked crèches of deeply wooded artichokes,  
And I don't ask you to call me,  
Or even give me the slightest wind to blow  
My heroic sails:  
All the sea monsters are tamed,  
And I am not bragging:  
The sea is in fact grass, sod well planted by  
My fists and swords,  
And all that cool stuff, and I hear the rumors  
Of criers and bards that you are  
Fully breasted and warm in your brilliant  
Halls,  
And you have gotten the wall paper you have  
Wanted,  
And the chandeliers. Men patrol your borders  
On fire-engines and clipper ships,  
And it is like you have gone on fast ahead into  
Another century,  
Inventing the forge of ire and the spelling  
Machines,  
Now that I have cloven all the fears that used  
To keep dreams from denting your pillow,  
And the sky above your tender curls  
Is always a brilliant cerulean bonfire  
Signaling that everything is well  
And that you are with child, and forgotten what a  
Paladin I once might have been  
When I first came meaty fisted into your dilapidated  
Bedroom  
And smote that unseemly roe curling, curling like  
So many children who you should have never put  
Your hand out to feed from the darkness  
In the first place.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Forest

The places they leave me alone in are as white  
As snow—

They don't seem to believe themselves, but go on forever,  
As dogs get lost in the forest,  
Until all that is beautiful is over.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Furrows And The Littered Ruts

We're in Parkland, which trumps even Wellington:  
The people are bigger and smile affluently: They drive around  
In crashing space-ships, or they have entire China sets  
For knees and joints. I swear, one can get rich off them with  
Just tips: I have! I am rich enough to swoon into a blue-collar  
Home, to drink domestic beer, to clown around with niggard-sure  
Dwarfs with bruised lips in funny cars: I could never see me  
Parents again, or serve the middle-class. How swell, to swoon  
Like that, to give up on her eyes, to downcast into Chevrolets:  
I loved, I loved her until the store was closed and she grasped  
His crotch while looking at me; she took it out and slung it around-  
It smelled like horrible perfume; it had the right of away, so long  
And it bent in neither direction, but I could go away from them:  
I do not need to look her in the eyes either way, to see what she  
Is packing. Suited in my scars, I could go down these jaunting  
Truths, if there is any salvation in my apocrypha, to sojourn  
Into the jubilant cadence of clean pools and baseball diamonds  
After hours in the dun and allergic mists; to rhyme the way I choose,  
With my dogs howling, busting up the night. Oh so, she might say,  
Looking at me either approvingly or with condescension, the foreplay  
Of that ancient rut: I wouldn't give her my two cents or the permanence  
Of such a high-class holocaust: But let her come in for two more weeks,  
To see what I might get off of her and that husband of bitter-circumstance,  
And I will see what it might prove; For I love her, and how she goes,  
like the rest of us, skipping like lip-blown tinsel through the day,  
Only to end not so very long from now, in the furrows, and the littered  
Ruts.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Garden Of A Witch

In the garden of a witch and  
The moon is a boat,  
Fat as a tick:  
I went over the wall to pick  
Delicious fruit but  
Was bewitched—  
The hue of the night doesn't change,  
But clusters of airplanes  
Begin to appear.  
Time seems to be going by  
As my children grow up without me—  
I remain frozen in exhibit  
Trying to remember my  
College years  
And my first loves that were  
All false.  
I suppose that I belong here.  
And I imagine that my wife  
Has finally learned how to  
Drive, but she never once  
Thinks to come find me.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Gas Station

Wounds in the gas station,  
And I have come this way before—  
Looking beneath the airplanes touching  
Down like falling stars,  
Or exhausted—working class angels—  
In words like fingerprints of  
Pornography,  
I leave my traces of you during the grave shift  
Over the preposterous tanks that seem  
To forage beneath the burnt out hills,  
And the Cyclops's of watch towers—  
New words abandoning the once  
Seemly valleys like mares  
And beautiful women who have found  
New firemen and heroes—  
And there they are, piling into the movie  
Theatres of the bedrooms—  
Ready to close their eyes and awaken again  
In their exhibits of wax bodies as their houses blissfully burn down.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Ghostly Cauldron Of Her Eternal Soiree

My dimes of civility should pay  
For hours of blowing glass;  
Then to look up from tall strangers  
And fall in love with the prettiest  
Girl behind stained glass:  
This is my some kind of religion blowing  
Like kisses from the key stone of  
The overpass;  
This is the dead fall in the ditches,  
The donkeys bothered by spikenard and  
Cormorants;  
And if my mother asked me, I would concede  
That I can still fly,  
But there would have to be some concessions;  
I couldn't go outside anymore to foreplay in the  
Working class malls of Michigan or  
Indiana-  
And she wouldn't raise anymore her eyes to my  
Broken promises, all the foreign flowers  
Which have fallen out of the brotherhood of  
My hands  
And gone to war:  
She would have to fall in love with another,  
Of this I am unwontedly sure;  
She still stands there playing to the music boxes  
Of my mind,  
Like a stalwart young hiker pirouetting like  
A dream in the tallest basins above tree line:  
Eerie, and dancing and pleasing as a flower  
Sipping its photosynthetic drinks,  
Curling its lashes obnoxiously flirting, calling in  
The whip flashing lightning to come and  
Bask in the ghostly cauldron of her eternal soirée.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Glances Of Pinwheels

Boys made of wood showing up in the glances of  
Pinwheels  
Painted in the sideshows of abandoned parking lots,  
Like boudoirs for the shadows of an eclipsed  
Moon:  
Stand there gawking, drinking sour milk—  
Each word stolen from the lips of the substitute  
Was the penny candy for our ears—  
And her bosoms an arcade  
We stuttered coins over like wishing wells for the slender  
Amulets of dragonflies and conquistadors:  
After housewives vanished with the flood, we took to  
The indoors—air-condition and ceiling fan  
And popcorn ceilings high above  
Rugs as tangles as cotton candy—  
Like the memories of kindergarten of a kidnapped boy:  
See him waiting in the graveyard of a shell—  
Like the sticky sweetness of Eastern  
Waiting for the resurrection—  
Somewhere abandoned to the baseball diamonds  
And watermarked centerfolds of his old neighborhood.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Golden Dusts

Sun of an obnoxious quarry as we seem  
To be laughing—  
Open throated frog princes all of the way  
Up to the chandeliers—  
While my mother waits in some awful  
Mockery of a Pieta—  
And the lamps bloom in the gold dusts of  
The mines—  
Another song mimics the song bird's,  
As the traffic becomes utterly confused—  
Losing itself into the darkness—  
The mailman apexes, but he is no excuse  
To me—  
Lamp posts lining the streets of my adolescents,  
As wicked men travel home after  
The fireworks' pageantry—  
Licking their stolen wives' bodies of  
An adulterous  
Apiary.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Grass

Festooned by swooning song birds:  
The ground crumbled by lopsided crowns-  
Sea anemones, water grapes;  
Places under the bus, the truancy of canoes-  
How long does the otter hold its breath as it knows  
Its craft,  
What words doesn't it sing, held tightly to its  
Own chest:  
Vestless, the world of housewives has no need for  
Windmill,  
Buxom- Chablis on a quartz patio festooned by  
Omnipotent clouds and sunshines:  
The rays burning through her childhood, heartstrings  
Her bosom:  
Her children play with the ants across the decorations  
In the grass.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Graveyard At The Top Of The Hill

Call me over to where the sun is weeping  
Lost in the woods but not far from  
Where your mother does her laundry:  
She dreams she is in love with another man  
But she will never leave her husband—  
The houses where she has left her heart  
Seem to evaporate  
And the sea sings a song that cannot be sung:  
It is so beautiful,  
As the Mexicans dreams of Mexico in the flea  
Market underneath the overpasses:  
And I open all of the wounds I have for you—  
The faithful pledges disembarking through the  
Wounds of our incinerated cathedral:  
Where the boys and girls once kept their  
Thoughts of love until they were carried  
Away to sleep with the angels in the graveyard  
At the top of the hill.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Greatest Opulence

Sweat of drills of bodies moving to and throwing,  
Moving everywhere that bodies can think to go:  
Like waves in the sea,  
Like everything you could even think of:  
Like kids on swings,  
Or leaves coming unclothed, and the mountains sing  
Their snows,  
Doing everything that a body needs to know:  
And maybe Marie ain't no good:  
Maybe she moved away before she should:  
Maybe or any other goddess never thought to need to look  
Into my eyes,  
Maybe they never opened what I needed from them,  
Like the amusement gates of opal thighs;  
So I sing for them, just as homeless and mobile as a stone  
Above tree line,  
Weeping always weeping for all the lusciousness he can  
See down beneath him,  
But only speaking when there is a hell of a rainstorm,  
When there is the greatest opulence that traffics in talky lightning.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Hallucinations

Open the windows of airplanes- and look  
Down as if angels  
In the parks, in the nudity of their swings-  
And think of the joy that echoes  
Up from the swollen armpits  
Of those trunks-  
And the runny entrails of honey that go  
To waste amidst the pine trees,  
As you dance before me, turning in the hallucinations  
Of a windmill-  
Of a Ferris wheel, as the final orchestras of  
A summer day cloud over,  
And we can sit in the cooling recesses with the  
Sleeping snakes,  
To watch all of the housewives proceed back indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Heavens

I have a future and this isn't Disney  
World:  
All of my friends can be counted on one hand  
That  
I use to masturbate, and the crowd isn't so  
Full:  
There isn't a single person on the moon, and she  
Steals the light from the day,  
Echoing up there in her boudoir of shadows,  
Where less than a dozen suitors have been:  
My dog farts in my little house,  
And the television waits for commercials-  
The otters slip through the slow cessations  
Across the impossible bodies of  
Bicycles the truants have given to the canal  
For reefs;  
And come December we will be selling  
Christmas trees again- with or without Alma-  
Making love in the same old car,  
Stealing away the oxygen of bumble bees,  
With new birds migrating in the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Heavens And The Choruses

You hurt me; and we have forts here where we don't have  
To grow up,  
But we still have to sing; and I miss the idea of your communion-  
And how you held your breath while you crossed the fronteras  
And the other things that you could not sidestep on the move:  
Alma;  
And you tell me you will play with whomever you want to play with,  
As long as they don't touch you, like conquistadors leaving their  
Prints behind stained glass:  
Well, whoever he is, is a luck moth\$rFucker and your children,  
Well they still have mouths to feed, and places to grownup,  
And horses to need: and they will go this way- and one day they will  
Have to stand over the grave of their mother-  
And it will rain, and the sun with rise geriatric again like in a wheel chair  
I pushed her; but they will never have to know  
How I wished for her out in the autumn and on the arc of the swings:  
Their mother- starving with her brown eyes a color that needed into  
The world, and which I loved- and she loved me;  
And we sang together and made love in the heavens and the choruses  
That they will be oh so happy to never know.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Heavens Of Marriage

Do you know the  
English word for electric?  
And that your father  
Is in the bathroom  
Right now  
Doing carpentry- what  
He is really doing  
I don't know-  
I am not smart enough to  
Know-  
My own parents are  
Selling fireworks- not  
Christmas trees  
Right now-  
The earth is but an egg in  
A nest lying in the  
Heavens of marriage-

Robert Rorabeck

# In The High Meadows Of Their Oh So Special Wars

How am I going to stop my heart head on  
From picking all of these flowers,  
In believing in Diana as the beautiful Bellefontaine  
Of these woods;  
Oh, the pain of sweet numbers, the euphoria of never  
Having to go to math class again,  
Just playing half a truant out beside the lunch trucks,  
Panhandling for Diana's sweet return,  
Hoping for her handouts without really knowing who  
She is,  
Believing in who she is, whoever she is, and her  
Daughter, her daughter swimming in a nude sea  
Biting her lip and hoping for pearls;  
And I want to take both of them out to a really great lobster  
Dinner and afterwards  
Dinner rolls and drum rolls and we can go out into the street  
And horses, and wild horses, like the flickering tongues  
Of sunlight on the road;  
And more rum! And then Shetland ponies and orange groves,  
And we are almost all the way to the west coast,  
And maybe I wont have anymore scars come morning;  
And Sharon, and Sharon; and great causes, and dolphins,  
And the word is just a bonfire burning up all of my origami,  
And there is a smile on my face,  
Because my hands are finally sleeping, and I have survived the  
War and realized that we are all out of star fruit, and Erin,  
Sweet, Sweet, sweet, sweet Erin doesn't love me;  
But she has never loved anybody; she didn't even love the mailman  
As he came up stepping beside her and kissed the mezuzah she didn't  
Even have a thought that she shouldn't have;  
And now the planes are touching down again,  
And they are bringing home all the soldiers, like Sharon's  
Father, like Sharon's father, who should have been wildflowers  
Burning in the high meadows of their oh so special wars.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Hours Before

And any numbers of them are here too:  
And they look up as the first light of day returns  
So that they can now see what  
They are doing- held over from school-  
Their bright muscles the song birds of  
Evolving dwarves- their candlelight inside of  
Trucks,  
Like luscious ribaldry tipping the pinpricks of  
Arrows inside quivers  
Jostled through a woods that one can hear the  
Traffic besides:  
It goes this way, and it goes that- while the stags  
Molt the successions of their unnamed kings,  
And the terrapin enjoy the foliage beneath them,  
Their table lit my moonlight-  
While the fairytales still slumber, their mouth drooling  
Over unseen things deep in the hours before  
They have to wake up and go to school.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The House Where No Housewives Live

Keeping the routines of the dead,  
I have beautiful women in bloom in my head;  
They are the only color in my gutted soul,  
But they are not real,  
Not real, these spring-time gals;  
And they are dancing and counting all the goods  
They've stole from my mythological patio,  
And some of them are real good at figuring out  
The shared origins for our stories,  
But they keep that to themselves; and their love,  
Like the waves, always comes back to them;  
They've kept me in so long, that I can't hardly go out  
And look for more real, less affected girls:  
I haven't been to barbeques or graveyards in so long,  
I haven't seen the empirical sea, any evidences  
Of god in nature- I haven't built my house in the woods,  
Chopped wood near a lake, blistered my fingers on  
Wild huckleberries: These girls, they keep me jobless,  
They give me enough time to go to the convenient store  
To buy chocolate milk and two donuts;  
They are gossiping like heady butterflies over my scars,  
But it is their liquor which sustains my consumptive soul;  
But it is not real,  
The animals howl- fed but wanting something else,  
And thus we go, in the house where no housewives love.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Illusions Of Her Forests

Pantheism in my symbols- up a creek, the birds  
Are singing to other birds,  
Singing to the weathers of the mountain:  
She flies higher than them:  
Flies over the schoolyards and the graveyards  
And the carnivals of lonely men:  
See her now tempting us- look up the skirts  
Of her cathedrals:  
She is a pretty woman you can get nosebleeds  
Trying to summit- perpetuity of her embrace  
In the longevity of my scars-  
Hopscotch in the cinderblocks of her summits,  
Time and time again- void in the  
Bouquet of her Buddhism's where the horses  
Linger:  
What will they eat but the stones- and I love  
A girl from Mexico, as she lingers in the illusions  
Of her forests,  
Even though our heavens are absolutely the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Immense Daylight

Devoted to the cornices of tadpoles,  
And this is the way we sing: the way I have been together  
With the lips of female mouths,  
Across the stamens of high school, and down the truancies of  
Exotic blue streets:  
Most by myself without any help, and down those ways of sun,  
My bones popping a rhythm to my flesh  
Underneath the flag of sky that vagabonds,  
An imperfect art that can be spoken to foxes who den underneath  
Carports wayward of where the housewives are cooking;  
And it must be wondered of the two which one is  
More alluring;  
And then my mother in her shift in the carport of a small house,  
The clouds building and swearing so much weather,  
The apiaries singing like kidnapped children;  
But even though I have smeared my bones over all of these places,  
Your mothers children still sing to me when we are  
Alone Alma,  
And you sometimes read the words which I sing to you,  
The way a house cat wards of a rattlesnake while she is defending her  
Young across the cinderblocks atop of which the gold fish  
Is wishing insouciantly and forever young  
By the graveyards of the minutes, and by the sudden flashes unnoticeable  
In the immense daylight by which we have sworn our mutual love.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Invalid Sky

A bodies still moves with the stream-  
In the dulled actions a more glorified man might have  
Give a sky full of summers:  
Now he hushes from the kitchen sink, and waits in  
Line at the canal:  
The slow vision of his uncommonly stupid work  
Takes him,  
Across the hooks of hold overs and latchkeys,  
Truants who have ditched the unimpressed  
Cheerleaders,  
And found their way alone down the easement  
Against the cones of spent fireworks:  
Here he rides, like a canoe of ribs, missing bits of  
Himself who have gone off to marry better men,  
Anyways-  
And this his delusion slowly peppered with the kisses  
Of rummy ash hopefully shrouding the showboats  
Of lovely angels and clandestined airplanes further up  
In the invalid sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Joy As It Happens

Awakening in the joy as it happens to be  
Like goldfish swimming for the bourgeois-  
And her ankles  
Cenotaphs for the stars that are still moving:  
And starships up there in the grapevines,  
As she is lying down to let the  
Foxes milk her  
As the headlights of the churches shine across her  
With so little grace,  
But there she is: crude- of blue paint beneath an  
Overpass,  
And the turtle at her shoulder, coming from  
The canal:  
What will it say to her, and will they take shelter  
Underneath a school bus,  
Will she kiss him in time for metamorphosis  
Or dinner:  
Will she change for me as well, and how will we  
Lie together then  
Making numbers with our thumbs, my elbows  
Stitching over her a penumbra as the greater  
Numbers of people come and go.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Kitchen Of Some Other Man's Because

Held court,  
But now I've got to go out, and footsy toe  
With these thugs,  
Zombie the supermarket shoplifting for rugs:  
And it's a dandy short day,  
But sometimes it's a might bit long,  
And only the little girls are aloud to skip out  
Harassing their fathers, ripping along  
In such a blaze,  
Pretending the horticulture is a violent theatre  
Having them bemused-  
They can call truancy and kidnap themselves,  
Break out the boozey, manhandle themselves;  
And I can like them for awhile,  
I can cut them a rug,  
I can sing with the crickets and pass them  
My jug-  
But eventually I've got to go to work,  
Dress up a dandy, circle jerk- let the pornography cool  
In the shadowy pools, in the oily, indigo pools  
Of junked cars,  
Say if she doesn't call it is because she is so far  
Away, getting to work for herself- And if she doesn't  
Know my name, never who I was,  
Its only that she's a lady now, not a little girl,  
Chrysalis, bemused in the kitchen of some other man's  
Because.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Liquidated Heavens

Choruses of Mexican girls at first following and  
Then riding atop of trains-  
Proceeding to the north, and the greater basins  
Of Colorado  
Who promise sheltering them- across so  
Many ditches  
Closing their eyes so they cannot see the kidnapped  
Bones of their  
Latchkeyed brothers-  
Unclothed, hoping to be sheltered in the new  
Colors of its bloody-nosed banner  
As if spring were breaking and running down  
The mountains-  
The eggs of hypnotized chickens, magnetized  
In the bathtub of her wrists, as  
Windmills turning in the liquidated heavens,  
Cry chandeliers.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Little Things That You Have

Absorbed like our penchant for slavery,  
Amber-dark skin reeking of liquor and acid:  
I see you there in the darkest pinafore,  
Holding your daughter over the scrub, and the  
Leaking tongues of vampires and foxes:  
I have sawed at suicide all day, while the sun dripped  
Like full-blown yoke through a tall canyon of  
Clouds;  
People moved like werewolves; their coffins rolled  
Like easily justified houses; and there are so many  
Mausoleums for sale like regal cenotaphs moted by ceiling fans,  
And the unjustified ridicule of their inevitable fathers;  
And I think of that tattoo on your leg in the briars,  
And I starve;  
And the moon pulls me so I can see past the midnight  
Guardrails where all of the students' bikes are restive:  
The yard well kept, the bricks so red-  
And you are there on a bench like any number of ghosts,  
Counting your want for children,  
Gladdened in the little things that you have.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Loneliness Of The Greatest Certainty

Open wounds, and start the show;  
They made love while the crocodiles sang  
Before recorded history;  
The scars don't look so bad on film;  
They are almost gentlemanly- I search for  
Exlovers through the gloom,  
Who have no idea what they've done to me:  
She, for one, has gained weight,  
Yet, I shouldn't be the one to judge others  
On their looks. I know it doesn't work that  
Way, and yet she puts her make-up on to kiss  
Her man, and not for me, and  
Straightens her hair to look less Ashkenazi,  
But I can do nothing to her anymore,  
And the play is halfway through, but full of  
Reawakened relatives, and cars which won't start,  
And a red head in a red light, playing her usual part;  
I sat there in a nondescript evening, while a  
Nondescript rain pattered in the parking-lot;  
I was not invited to the wrap party, I did not kiss  
Anyone, or see anyone naked, but went home  
Directly as I should and leapt in a great wide house  
All alone, and put on my own sort of show,  
In the loneliness of the greatest certainty, while  
In their cages not far away the lions roared,  
The children played in joyful cacophony;  
They sounded the same to me;  
They said that they didn't want to see me anymore,  
Or review the movements of my song,  
And thus I stood so very still  
In the loneliness of the greatest certainty.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Lowest Frigid Season Of Hell

Drunk and humid and in South Florida  
I drink banana rum: A tip from a house wife in  
Park Land. I imagine she's already decorated the tree  
I stood for her, and made love to her husband under it;  
And I should be reading Anne Sexton, but I've gotten  
Board by her moribund and suicide: And I'd rather  
Be smashing glass through a library or finding exotic  
Lovers transforming through a thunderstorm. And I know,  
Yes, this poem is for her, as even now I am out on my roof  
Watching her come in, bawdy and open bloused spiced  
By rum, her face dun and well disclosed: There are so many  
Housewives and their daughters around her, and they roll in  
With newly glossed cars. I can tell they've made it; but even  
With all these scars, I am still fine, and they can only distract  
Me for the littlest while, or if that makes you jealous, none  
At all, if you think of me. Tonight I talked with a guy named  
Dan, whose name is the same as the quarterback for the Miami  
Dolphins: but its not Dan Marino, but another Dan, or not  
Dan at all: but he goes fishing on Michigan's upper peninsula  
Where everyone is drunk and redheaded, and dysfunctional,  
And very far from here: and I love them as I love you:  
And I love Dan, but he is enduring chemotherapy and a rarest  
Form of cancer, and he won't survive any longer than you or  
I should survive unless you acknowledge this caress; or Dan:  
Dan, Dan, Dan. If I were a better man, this would be a fine  
Epitaph for him, but this is sure to be another day without a word  
To greet the sun, and the Dan I met tonight will be gone, and  
I will not be published again, as I would wish, but I will think of  
Dan until I might see him again, and kneel with him in the ice  
Near the pin wheeling mouth of the devil, and care a hole with  
Dan, and dropp our lines and fish, and drink bear and laugh, and  
Laugh anonymously and for all time in the lowest frigid season  
Of hell.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Luxurious Absence

What beauty that happens in the luxurious absence when  
You cannot see your backyard  
Cannot be describe: but it is there, when I am waiting for you—  
When the traffic of early-ing morning has stemmed  
To its least  
And I have gone to school only to skip away again  
To smell the armpits of the yards where the perfumes of  
The night blooming jasmines are yet lingering:  
And I can call your name up from the absent minded rows:  
Here with the insects and the minnows far away  
Of the housewives who have gone off beneath the sun  
To some beauty parlor,  
Leaving me free to roam abandoned into your backyards  
My footsteps triggering the pollinations of the flowers:  
As bees fall around them onto the grasses mowed,  
Sated from all of the breakfasts of honeyed pornography:  
And I can lie down in the grass and jack-off or  
Masturbate:  
I can light off roman candles and drink the liquor until  
All of the paper bags are emptied—  
And then dream you up into the soap-operas of sky,  
Even as you fall asleep—evaporating—your ashes  
Crenellate my afternoon,  
As I lay there sweating, hyperventilating, and conjuring you  
Into the places you are absent from.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Make Believe Heavens

Even if I lose my job, I will have new sorrows  
Here waiting by the spring  
Pristine curling reservoirs gossiping with the water snakes  
And the things who float here as slow  
As girls who think their name is Mary  
The sun will burn until the walls of heaven hop like  
Eggs,  
And the clouds around them will make a camouflage  
Of something we will not even think to see for  
Days and days  
But you will come strutting out of your orchard  
And down from your cinderblocks and kiss and bless  
The earth  
And think new and preemptive thoughts  
Until the boys who once were your brothers are kidnapped  
Across the street- and you go home, barefooted  
Remembering how they left you to play in those woods  
Across the cenotaphs continuing through the streams of  
A nude transparency  
Running in a hidden avenues beneath all the Sunday  
Blue lights of Churches which you enjoyed arcing under  
On the swing sets that seemed furtively to take  
You away, while the moon and airplanes mimicked  
You like candles dancing to and fro in the make believe heavens

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Makebelieve Twilight

Shoulders of airplanes over the rainstorm of  
A forest- While I think of you, it almost feels alright to  
Be alone, even while all of the castles are so brilliant  
After midnight though there is no one ever home:  
And the palm trees linger, and the cypress blooms,  
And I think of you contented in your glowing room:  
Like a candle across the ocean, like a wish across the  
Sea, something left to linger in a lingering memory-  
Small and auburn fruit carried from outside her yard  
Into an orchard that is forever blooming in the make-believe  
Twilight of a lover's bedroom.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Medians Of Interstates

Lost into the presupposition of the glass—  
Knowing only so many words  
And those discovered at the racetrack of her legs—  
And what a chariot—  
Alighted with the things I saw—turning on its  
Blinkers as it swung around the garden—  
The bears full of special lighthouses  
Now that they held torches and dined together  
In the medians of interstates,  
Moving further and further south—  
Competing with the tourists with cartoon souls—  
The brass of their elbows echoing  
As the butterflies knocked over the swing sets  
Hurry to follow their lovers into the sea

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Middle

Some small reward other than  
That love I wanted to win- some little prize  
Printed in the ink of zygotes spilled  
Out on the empty sheaths  
Of notebook paper there are millions of  
Them on each  
Paper snowflake that wilts into the canal  
As the cowboys and knights pretend  
To die together, moaning in the phosphorous  
Of their grand exegesis:  
As a woman posing as the messiah sings through  
The mosquitoes and holly boughs  
Through the morning while the buses turn around,  
Picking up her little sisters who are  
Never mindful,  
As she continues daydream of a skating rink  
As if a glade in the middle of the myriad of the  
Vermillion cenotaphs upon which the flies lap  
And the wolves do drink.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Middle Of Making Love To All Of Them

You were never supposed to sleep with me,  
Erin: Where would the trick of impossibility be in that,  
To come into my wigwam all cheery and  
Rose colored  
Like a snake too big for the highway;  
But I was supposed to lean on over myself in the middle of  
The night,  
And pick a few strings upon a lyre or a harp,  
Strings that had no meaning except for a dog's howl of  
Emotion,  
Strung and fibrillating the guts of the sky, of both the old  
Gods and demigods,  
The little virgins who died too young dreaming of just  
Your weekends scrubbing naked in the bathtub:  
My art, if any, was supposed to die for you this way, a lonely  
Truant caught smoking in man eating vegetation,  
A little girl who paints a picture too dark to discern for you;  
And this is the sweet thing,  
The scribble of haiku in the meaningless rainstorm:  
The way one boy sits forever alone sitting in the grass that the  
Worms know and love,  
Waiting for the bus that will never come around again,  
Because it has already brought home to you all the boys you  
Should want,  
And you are even now in the middle of making love to all of them.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Middle Of One Of Her Many Flights

Falling into the dunes,  
GI Joes worn into cenotaphs,  
Equalized into the desensitized conquistadors,  
Underneath so many oceans of vanishing moons—  
The pornographies  
Stacked into the cars that cannot run—  
The heat in prisms,  
The housewives in love with their  
Banana fish—  
And another world across the canal—  
Like Mexico,  
Or the jungles of a systemic opera  
Cut away by the floods of baseball games,  
And the tangles of highway—  
A tear drop of sweat on my wife's tit as  
She sits down in the tiny yellow living room  
Across from me—  
And a few more words from now,  
Another heart be  
As I imagine my son's lips touching her  
Areola another way stewardess may imagine  
The taste of a sand dollar somewhere  
In the middle of one of her many flights.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Middle Of School

Pranksters of my boyhood still lighting off  
Fireworks across the roofs of another school day—  
Like all of Mexico laughing  
As they propagated and made new streams into our  
Beautiful delusion—and shot roman candles straight into  
Our eyes,  
Scarring us with the song that was in their loins:  
Not afraid of airplanes, because knowing that, like the moon,  
They could steal that too:  
Until I found you safely under a bus in a rainstorm  
And we made love forever right in the middle of school.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Middle Of The Day

And there they saw you in the middle of the  
Day out beyond the water slogging portables—skipping  
School with narcolepsy—you'd just exhausted yourself  
While heading down to the canal—  
You hadn't even made it off the school's grounds—  
And the prettier girls headed towards you  
And then away—  
You had a pack of fireworks in your corduroy pocket,  
And with indescribable words, you were  
Trying to sell secrets to the tadpoles and the minnows—  
Trying to convince them that they could fall in  
Love with other things  
And make it all the way to the sea, if they really  
Wanted to—or be anything after another night fell and  
The next morning came.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Middle Of The Night

In the middle of the night I will buy you a house  
Underneath the flight paths of airplanes  
In a surcease of all of your grottos—in the teardrops  
Or the estuaries of all of my art:  
I will find you there in my arms,  
And call to you as the lamentations of the echoes  
Of the Ferris wheels I forgot to kiss you on—  
Cannot you see,  
This is what I do for you, turning the heavens into  
A windmill that keeps on repeating itself—  
And in its urban setting is all but found out—  
And in the belly of its Mexico, turns and turns for  
All of the fools and  
All of the werewolves—but up until now I have  
Sworn off selling fireworks for my father—  
And I would just as soon sleep underneath all of the  
Train tracks as all of the heavens—  
Until your busied noose becomes a cloud—  
And into its spot on apiary we give new credence to  
The pagan natures of your adulthood that I am sure you are  
To become.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Middle Of Town

I went to the old park today and saw a girl just like a peach,  
Passed out in the mowed grass with her bum in the air,  
Her bottle of dousing wine sticking up rather angelically and  
Phallic; and I had to stop the car and check again  
For myself,  
While the children came out like goslings from the old green  
Science museum I used to date her in:  
But this girl just slept on and on, passed out and heady in the grass,  
Her drool probably feeding an army and queen of ants  
As the airplanes passed their times insouciantly with just  
As godly seraphs of stewardesses taking the breezes:  
Then I had to turn around and get a better look at her, up and  
Down, the way the biker gang was looking too right across the  
Little estuary and not far down the road from the quiet little house  
Backed against antique row: The house will soon be mine,  
But the girl I will never know; but I saw the way that she grew there  
Like the furrow of a receptive field, and I was busy needing her,  
Wishing to bench beside her while the dogs tumbled awake out  
From the wilting suburbia that happened all around like the color  
Around the cornea as pink as an Easter Egg hidden in the middle  
Of town.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Midst Of Our Gorgeous Streets

The night in her elegant mountains can do  
No wrong:  
She is a balmy sweetheart,  
And I sing to her beside the unsteady traffic:  
Everyone is getting home to  
Pop popcorn and cozy up with the workaday  
Denouements- those young cravings they  
Still have:  
And her eyes are blue and far away:  
She doesn't have to go up to see angels bathing  
At the top of her treeless sisters:  
She is already there, or in his arms;  
It is the same- that early in the morning she felt  
Guilty of thinking of me,  
While even then I was stepping up to get a better  
Look nearer the day gone surroundings;  
That she had forgotten herself, that she was here:  
One of these blown down and truncated in the store-  
Front abominations,  
Dropping jaws throughout the day:  
I should think that she should make all the money there  
Is in the mortal realm, to have such a radiant truant  
In the midst of our gorgeous streets.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Midway Of An Overgrown Jungle

Filling up on a carnival of lactates while just  
About anybody dreams,  
As their houses burn down while the slopes are  
Covered with snow that approaches  
The knees: the opal bowls, holding the grapes in their  
Sundries  
The fjords effortlessly iced so that the dragons skate:  
And the daughters curl to their mothers'  
Tendering inoffensive foxes suckling legumes,  
Her brown body in a midway of an overgrown jungle  
Where everything floods and blooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Missplaced Playgrounds

The tigers and kidnapped children,  
Paint by numbers the clouds  
That are above the islands—  
They disembark but remain close to where it is  
They believe to be their salvations,  
And in south florida,  
There are girls whom partake of the fine and  
Illusive weathers—  
They seem to become a part of the beating hearts  
Of the waves,  
The salt water enigmas and the carrossels of  
The cenotaphs of sea horses—  
But what am I doing right now  
But dreaming of other homes and other  
Graveyards—  
Soon I will become just as forgotten as my  
Grandfather,  
To join the sleeping children in the bedroom of  
My ancestors' skeletons in the missplaced  
Playgrounds on the other side of the ever constant  
Road.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Momenty Of Her Heart's Beating

Anemones floating before my children's eyes  
As they awaken once again,  
Flicking forwards,  
Newly awakened zoetropes to the swiftly turning  
Earth:  
Pages in a book that is burning:  
Ambulances sounding like cocks crowing  
In the middle of a city's brightest afternoon:  
And they are almost lost in the immensity of sunlight—  
Skyscrapers made of her scorching faces:  
The multi-feminined god,  
Changing like the butterflies taking off their clothes  
In the forest:  
Look at the traffics—reflections of yourself given  
To the universe:  
The sun in its basin: there bathes the earth:  
Pictures of our muse from the habitats of  
A thousand hemispheres.  
And if I open up my mouth, my wife will all of a  
Sudden know that I have been drinking—  
But this is the amusements of the world that I am  
Living—a moment's flickering in a picture book,  
A unicorn drinking from a mysterious  
But commercialized fountain,  
Her eyes blinking in the moment of her heart's beating.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Morning

And then they said that there  
Were planets too far away to touch—  
But I am still right here,  
Or lying down in bed—  
The sun comes up over old men and  
Their daughters—  
Boys skip school and adventure  
Down some rivers—  
I seem to touch you in my absence—  
In the mind that can get lost anywhere—  
They've taken down all of  
The tall swings in the county—  
My girlfriend is and ever shall be  
In love him her husband,  
But my child grows in my wife's belly—  
And the waves seem like spears—  
Splashing as they cut—  
Nobody notices their clever operations  
Underneath the helicopters—  
Death takes time off to spend an anniversary  
In Hawaii,  
And he knows her name, but she doesn't  
Call—he will come for her anyways,  
Sooner or later,  
And sleep on her roof,  
Whether her front door is green or blue—  
And the children will come into the school  
In the morning,  
As the alligators sleep in the canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Motosis Of A Disbelieving And Isolated Earth

No one seems to be going to sleep in  
This house of mine—  
My parents, making up all of the haunts of  
A timeless space,  
Bend down to kiss the abstractions of  
My werewolf adolescence—  
And the effervescing shrieks happen  
One day at a time—  
As the waves foam like beer from  
The tap spilled by my old muse across the  
Street from the old university  
Where I just found out that my favorite and  
Best professor committed suicide—  
Adding,  
And doing the math of grasshoppers no one  
Believes in- almost two years from now—  
There will be a teepee which burns down  
In a jungle, and I will think of you—  
A student I have right now,  
Coming back into my life after all of her  
Father's battleships have sunken—  
Impossible for her to be thinking of me  
As I have sometimes thought of her—  
And tomorrow she will have graduated  
And wilted into the tenements of her  
New and ambivalent neighborhoods—  
And nothing will ever accord to me  
Or even evaporate off of the happenstance of  
Her unbelievable menagerie—  
As the macabre lingers like fruit that is too  
Afraid to slip into the fingers of the earth,  
As the highway divides itself both ways—  
In the mitosis of a disbelieving and isolated earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Mountains

Playing around with elbows before  
School starts with the big boys- and with  
Baseball and possibly alligators,  
Because they are all right here, underneath the  
Hypothetical ceiling fans,  
Sweltering- and there isn't a jot left to be  
Disclosed: they will start school,  
And the children will survive by eating themselves  
And the classrooms of them will divide through  
The architectures- and some of them will be  
As pretty as candy,  
And some of them will daydream of the waves,  
And some of their mothers will clean the school  
Afterwards-  
But this will not be in Mexico, because she is no  
Longer for me-  
But up in the mountains I am sure the airplanes  
Sleep and dream, and dream of so many  
Things that I have already abandoned.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Movements Of A Schoolyard

At first the cathedrals stuck up in the  
High water marks of the trees  
Where we used to skip school and tried at looking in  
The most absurd of ways which we  
Hoped would make us beautiful,  
As I alone thought of the fallen angels licking their wounds  
At the water fountain,  
Trying to drink in their time between the classes in the movements  
Of a schoolyard that said would enrich through the summers,  
But in which they were sure, kindred hearts, that they  
Should never belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Movie Theatres

Now I am laughing- and you are gone,  
Back again to the cathedrals of  
Your brother's arms:  
Brown arms, sinking in the feelings of a roller rink:  
Sinking in through all of Christmas  
While we tried kissing ourselves  
And turning out like children  
Into another holiday- and selling ourselves:  
I suppose you could have never been there,  
But it was still our movie  
Through the bosoms of the mountains,  
And I suppose you could never have been there,  
But it still felt strange to be alright,  
As our mother and father still felt strange  
Making love in their bed forever,  
As they did at night:  
As couples in the movie theatres of I don't  
Know-  
As strangers kissing each other lucratively  
As it begins to  
Snow.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Mowed Field

Succession of alphabet: tongue of amphibian  
Over a lover's nipple:  
Circus tent of areola sprigged by pubis  
In the moonlight coming over  
The house too close to the highway:  
The rattlesnake flattened across  
The road,  
Halfway made it underneath the Florida  
Holy where the kids have made it  
Safely run away:  
Across the street from housewives who are now  
Lovers—  
Adultery in midway daydreams before  
The naked bodies of goldfish  
Not even worth a dollar:  
The television silent besides the Christmas tree:  
The lizards in the yard basking like  
A statuary of primordial deities:  
The cats too sleepy in the mowed field to care.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Mysterious School Yard Of Your Fatalistic Glades

Days will glow hard and yellow because they  
Will have their bouquet of rich sun,  
And I wonder what dinner goes best with autumn-  
Oh, how the elk leap and run,  
Follow Satan's thankgivings through the accords of  
Pine,  
Along their trails to hidden springs, such esoteric  
Rum;  
And I would like to take you here on your nocturnal  
Birthday, to watch you bare your shoulders  
To the glade- such opal reveille: You don't know  
How much I am scarred for you,  
How much I might earn for you by the barrel of  
My cap gun,  
And I used to time travel and jog all neighborhoods  
For you,  
And because of you my dogs are never sad,  
And my lips are never thirsty; and even God doesn't  
Give a d&mn if we break our social impositions,  
Because concerning you he's always glad,

And so we end out across the signifying canal, while  
They are laying on in school, we swing in the amber glass of setting sun:  
We have our weddings and funerals alone with secret spit and  
Cheap rum; and our own burned out and ochre divinity,  
He also would sell anything for you,  
For he has been forever celibate out on the reservations of  
The everglades,  
Like a reticulated serpent as thin as a bridegroom's ribbon,  
Waiting to swallow you entirely  
Once the crepuscule caps the sugarcane's candle  
Deep, deep in the mysterious school yard of your fatalistic glades.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Naked Estuaries

Juvenile is the lips: there you are in your  
Fortress' stronghold looking up  
Through the hours of my classroom:  
See if you can find me at the water fountain  
Between classes,  
Until the buses turn around and the seahorses  
Drying like trinkets won in the shoals  
And all of the pretty gods  
Are gossiping over their numbers in the clouds:  
Strange banks such as these  
Filled with salmon dreaming up to the skies  
Of movie theatres and the pretty  
Tricks of cathedrals who only hold the lotteries  
Of the merry go rounds,  
And as I fall down from your heavens, having  
Little thoughts of me  
Try to remember what I once was for you,  
Even while you sunbathe in the naked estuaries  
Of another man.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Nameless Adventures

After school so many points on a road  
Home through the forest  
Where so many nameless fires burn  
And so many wolves  
Are trying to sell things  
And have sex beside the road where the  
Canals are dredged only a few feet  
But hiding an infinite undertow-  
And all the otters and mermaids  
A growing boy can imagine:  
While the route off the path leads to the Emerald  
City,  
And somewhere in a secret cove  
Far away from the yearnings of my mother's  
Washing machines,  
Your lips waiting for me in the semidarkness,  
Jewels of a juvenile  
Affair partaking in all of their mindless truth-  
As I step out of the way to find you,  
To join in you another day in the nameless adventures  
They do not teach you in school.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Offices Then

Broken pillows in an office of unwed sleep-  
Birds peering from outside of windows  
And it rains sunlight:  
This beauty where you are never here to see:  
You only come after the carnival is moving away,  
And childhood is gone,  
Or sprawling, broken and toyed with down  
The golden backside of some hill,  
But soon the sun will slip and the moon will slip,  
And it won't take long for you to breathe-  
In the offices then, married, and everything working  
Out as you'd planned.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Open

I have a book published,  
And your dreams are stupid;  
But your legs are very sexy:  
And that is why you have all of your children:  
Scissoring in the sky,  
Swim meet of your meat:  
Your eyes are like the sky: your meat is their  
Meat;  
And I don't have to explain why: I'll eat my  
Mother's chocolate: I'll go outside and get dizzy,  
And I won't even look at the one or two cars  
That drive by, because my old neighborhood is  
So empty; and my crown is rusting- Exhumed  
From the time capsule with the paper airplanes  
And plastic Indians;  
I am still this quieting land's chief, and I know  
How to describe:  
I know how to pull you out of class and press you  
Proportionately against the lockers, and hold your  
Eyes on into crepuscule: after the mailmen have made  
Their rounds, and the cats are coming out,  
And the housewives are going down;  
And I still hold your eyes and press your buttons  
To your thighs,  
Even if you aren't here- even if you are home,  
I can still catch you briefly out in the open of your skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Open Against The Banks

When they kept new time with the lotus  
Weren't the maidens falling from the sky—  
As if airplanes had wrecked with themselves—  
Contemplative elements over  
The soundless gardens—other avenues upon the  
Way home from high school—  
Each way of describing things another  
Prospect for domestication—  
Underneath the tent where we sell Christmas trees  
And fireworks  
And my father doesn't talk with me anymore:  
She is so beautiful,  
But she keeps with her family: all of the butterflies  
As far away as Mexico—They seem to be  
Remembering where they belong,  
Out in the open against the banks and the lending houses:  
I don't know how she will really survive,  
But she keeps her children close to her, and otherwise  
Doesn't seem to care.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Open Glades

I will take you up now to the  
Level of heaven where I believe you have never  
Been,  
Sleeping alone with your husband,  
While my door doesn't close  
Around you same neighborhood the trains and  
Airplanes contract:  
Where I no longer believe I can survive  
Wholeheartedly,  
Even though my mother and father used to live around  
These parts:  
And I used to work with you- didn't I,  
Muse,  
While the angels have been making love like  
Kissing cousins,  
And another heaven fades,  
As daylight fades, as the serpents and their  
Saints go to sleep enfolded:  
And I just found another reason to be alone,  
While the school closes  
And all of the beautiful students go home,  
Accumulating to themselves:  
I suppose some of them have been in love, underneath all  
Of this- but in the morning, with or without  
Airplanes, it will start out so early all again,  
While the roses open  
And the housewives forget themselves and give into  
Sin:  
As they sunbathe for all of the elements- while they  
Lavish in the open glades,  
Just as the hummingbirds remain to fair and open  
Occupying the water fountains outside of the classrooms  
Where their souls just so happen to get laid.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Orchards Of The Highways

In the orchards off the highways near the burned  
Out fires of your dirty honeymoon-  
I do not care if you cannot look into my eyes, or  
Read these things I have to say to you:  
Arounding in my bachelorhood, I enjoy the fecund  
Night with my booze, while your shoulders  
Of amber linger on the swings, and in the waves  
That I pushed and enjoyed with you- both of  
Us inept and not wondering what we were around:  
Both of us making love like birds above the ground.  
Until you went away burning back to your  
Family's cathedral to make a meal for your husband.  
I agree, it was extremely awful, as you lay  
All wrinkled and loosed skinned wondering what's  
For dinner back at home again.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Organs Of Your Marching Band

Far away windows of shattered visions,  
The corpses that lie waiting  
Inside of your salt:  
The Jack-in-Box wound  
In time and forever clinging gravity,  
Soon you'll become the exoskeleton  
Of grinning thought:  
Soon you too will lunch with the grubs,  
And the white things which clean the room,  
Before churning into  
The confections of drifting air-  
Here is the play we are in,  
Dressing up to respect the dead on  
Holidays of funerals:  
The distant relations to which you are  
A fast growing seed:  
Blooming in the high basins for one season,  
Tended to by the sunburn angels:  
Soon too you will see the  
Dead girl's skull at the end of the rainbow,  
The petit but savage necessities  
Of change,  
But for now you remain contently housed  
In your music box,  
the organs of your marching band....

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Out Of Work Zoetrope Of The Emptiest Room

Up in the echoes of tall trees:  
Or remembering the ways that we had to use to  
Drive home.  
Through the thick and adulterous forest, causing the hijinx  
Of forest fires  
Off the thick tongues of lustrous foxes,  
And then getting home without remembering the key  
And masturbating onto a purple rug:  
Getting high up into the atmosphere as if to see our muse:  
Straight up into the armpit of the heavens,  
Lavishing in her cockpits, desiring her sport, as if sneaking into  
The day glow crypts of dead heads of state:  
And then remembering her words, and how she sat right here:  
Like a feather, like a pillow,  
Spun out for a sort of glow  
Like the lamps at high noon in your mother's first sort of  
House while the dogs chased the rabbit around the  
Rock garden in the rented field,  
Before you even knew of the primordial pornographies across  
The street,  
Underneath the canopy of dead fireworks,  
Of out of work conquistadors, or took off your shoes to tiptoe across the  
Drainage of high school or any old sort of canal-  
Like a terrapin sated off the school bus,  
Like an orchid glowing with the brightest gods together- for no one  
In the out of work zoetrope of the emptiest room.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Pages Of Her World

I've seen her pictures again  
Beneath the torpid palms.  
She does not know she is smiling at me,  
Or that she is the sea and the east  
Upon which the sun opens,  
And cooks the smells from the lips of the tide,  
Which reminds me of childhood, noon, and midnights,  
Nor does she care at all,  
For life is too painless,  
And all so fast, and the hands of the mammals  
Are running along her feeling her up:  
She is a photo album of sexy smiles,  
And life is so fine,  
Like another sip of rum,  
And then stick em' up, baby,  
Because the ride is just beginning,  
But turn the beautiful page,  
And watch the butterfly recede in the  
Torn petal-wings of old age,  
Just a second  
And it is almost done....  
Nothing more than a memory in the yard.

But it is all right,  
Because she is still smiling,  
And she should smile forever....  
In the pages of her world.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Pantomimes Of The Plagiarisms Of My Father

Now I may be starving in the pantomimes of the plagiarisms  
OF my forefather  
Until all of this isn't enough—and we have to thread  
Our otherwise rainbows underneath ridges  
Of an otherwise Christmas—  
And all of the ghosts of wherever have to pretend to  
Be swinging swaying into another graveyard  
They happened to talk about or  
To believe in—into that most beautiful of echinopsis  
Just like the tin toys of our children striking out and playing upon  
The stage of all of our happiest  
Children: sway and pretending to make love—basking  
And obeying the daylight before they all became  
Heirlooms of what they were expected to become:  
So they became these things—and the rest of their yesterdays  
Echoes anyways—became beautiful for the things that weren't  
Even there—of daylight an daylight—and ballrooms  
And ballrooms—  
Those perpetual amnesiacs that could not sustain themselves  
If it wasn't inevitably for the fact that we  
Just kept them dancing- in our rooms—in our rooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Parapets In The Sun

Ambered joy in the parapets  
In the sun and the clouds—  
I wait for you at lunch or  
In the middle of math-  
While the daydreams of the busses  
Turn around and around-  
And we can partake of ourselves  
Here in the soft nonsense—  
In the purple and the nebulous—  
And I can promise you no need  
For revolutions, or  
Politian's or cockpits—  
But there will not be any need for daylight  
Because there will already be so many  
Fireworks—  
And envelops for lovers forever  
As the playgrounds laugh over the graveyards  
Without ever imaging of coming to an end.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Park Of One Too Many Shadows

No one is getting any closer than  
This, and the airplanes  
Are taking off to somewhere I cannot believe—  
The words are gone like  
The patrons of a church gone up in smoke  
Over which the dragon is singing like  
A happy camper,  
And someone is in love, as the forest is  
Painted with gore for Christmas—  
The festivities continue until I am finally in  
Love with someone else's mother,  
And the delusions of the past happen all  
At once—memories which cannot control  
Themselves,  
And all of the muses of my life languishing  
Together in the park of one too many shadows.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Parking Lot

Another viewing's slowness: it looks as if the dead  
Are on television,  
And she is waking up, dressing in fireworks that will  
Persimmon off her body in a two for one sale—  
From the heavenly depths of  
Miami—  
She will look up into a sea of airplanes—and spin outside of  
The tent,  
And next to the trucks and the supermarkets and  
The fast food chains:  
And all of that traffic—long fuse rapping around her  
For a moment she is delighted—object of holidays—  
Red and brown queen as amble as a deer wearing silver  
Sparklers—  
A spectacle in the parking lot at the end of the day.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Playground Of Unremembered Rules

Wine is cheap and of one note-  
The airplanes are but a whisper.  
Your concerns are of others.  
The alligators nod ceaselessly,  
With no need to buy houses  
Or look beautiful.

It so happens you have a family,  
And it is the beginning of the new  
Baseball season:  
Blue skies bloom as bouquets  
Above the playgrounds your children  
Will ride over to come home-

And this is not a burden even for  
Lancelot's shoulders;  
But a way to enjoy the night-  
This night as you are becoming old.  
Lovers whom have exorcised you  
Do not think of the past.

They do not look up to see even  
The memory of the moon through  
A fornication of post-midnight clouds- -

Stewardesses seem to float above  
The earth as you lay down,  
A hapless saint across the red clay of  
A baseball diamond,

A red ghost tossing his foul balls across  
A darkening earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Playgrounds Of My Heart

They had a family for a little while,  
And they made love indoors with  
Their family-  
I suppose they figured they would never have  
To be found out,  
Even if they fell in love with some else,  
And the road down from their house wound  
Away all afternoon-  
But the world was not a frightening place,  
Even if one or two of their children  
Disappeared- the minnows existed,  
And the tadpoles were always growing up  
And losing their tails-  
And very soon there would even be new houses.  
And little sun showers where rain would  
Have to exist but only for a little while,  
And the amusements they would know  
Would go around their shoulders  
And keep them warm like liquor- until the  
Amusements and the lights left  
The playgrounds of their city- and you discovered  
That your true existents laid in the playgrounds of my heart.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Playgrounds Of Your Never-Ending Holiday

This day will be a fieldtrip,  
Skipping with arms enfolded in a small click of friends:  
We will have songs to sing, or we will evaporate:  
For the rivers come here thirstily: they get salty from grief:  
They disappear like tangled ribbons into the  
Ever glades;  
And when I look up it is into your transom, while the  
Weather shakes the hedges and the blue flowers of plumbago  
Stick to your lips and temples,  
And make you close your eyes and remember the soft touch  
Of your mother, and the faithful things she told you  
In your crib; so come with me, if you believe me, if you  
Have nothing left to do:  
The sky is starting out our runway of blue blankets; it will come  
Down and gather us up and remark that even it is not as  
Blue as your eyes,  
Or the gears of your bosom that used to run tripping around the  
School yard, your senses funneling the awkward sounds of your  
Budding immortality; and I stole things for you  
And followed in the footsteps and in the playgrounds of your  
Never-ending holiday.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Playgrounds That You Can'T Remember

If I had a girlfriend I would call you now  
The summer of my Mexico but if under the strange  
Banners of your country, after another day,  
You've forgotten how you've loved me  
Yesterday What am I to do about it,  
But to turn around and go back home from the  
Wonders of your amusements Here you are  
For a little while, flooding over me  
With the banners that you keep so carelessly lingering  
In the playgrounds that you can't remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Ponytails Of Abandonment

And I haven't even been to Mexico-  
And the silent thoughts are soon averagely undone  
By fireworks in the ponytails  
Of abandonment:  
While you lean into him from the abandonment of a  
Fairytale- and you kiss him,  
Even if he cannot metamorphosis from a wolf:  
You kiss him this way and that,  
As the obese ballpark curses its insincere numbers  
And tries to work out for itself why it cannot  
Divide:  
As all of the Indians turn out in the tobacco of billboards  
While their silent and supernatural forests  
Still seem to exist and to divide somehow  
Through supernatural mitosis:  
And they all seem to be going their own way-  
As the daylight recedes over the picture perfect earth once  
More,  
And the housewives lumber half-hazzardly, fawning  
With their hands upraised to their unequivocally buttered  
Foreheads:  
And their still-life of their half purposes is like  
A Disney World: is like a dimmed light over their orchards,  
Anyways, that they are trying  
To burn out through their wishes:  
They are trying to kiss again the inevitable apple of their  
Truth,  
As the sunshine burns through them like the troubadours  
Of army ants through the sugary papers of another page:  
Even if it all doesn't happen to be real:  
Because then it will all have to reawaken again- once  
More into the purple armpits of the surreal-  
Holding its breath and waiting for the sea to breathe  
Again-  
Like a serpent on its birthday- or like an insincere  
Page folded into a love letter,  
And made to send its way once again  
across an embittered canal.



# In The Populous Shade

Shameless lion  
In the lazy snow—  
I look out through  
My perspective's  
Window—  
The sun goes down  
Jealous of who you  
Are—As  
My wife arrives home  
In her yellow  
Car—  
As I try to recall the  
Soldiers who thought  
To save us from  
The zoo—  
The trees grow up  
In a serpentine glade—  
There is nowhere  
To hide in the  
Populous shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Preschools Of Graveyards

Orchard imprints in your kitchen- as sunlight  
Through the glasses,  
And against the wishing wells of gold fish:  
And you don't have to worry:  
You are young, and your husband is young and  
Coming home to you-  
So you don't have to run away across the canal:  
The other world is just for show-  
You don't have to belong to it, and I am your son:  
Abandon me if you want to  
In the preschools of graveyards- leave me there  
Underneath the slash pine and the egrets  
Who ornament the drooping sky as the traffics  
Rush by forever- though they never have  
To be gone for very long: and, rest assured,  
They will all be soon coming home to you, as you lie  
In wait for them,  
As the tadpoles change and the cicadas molt,  
And the dragon flies whisper into the rattlesnake's  
Mouth- as they all come home into you.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Presence Of This Usually Cowardly Lion

I make a beehive out of the best that  
Are nothing;  
I've drunken all of the liquor and my teeth feel  
Again like they should be the stuff sewn again  
To feel the resurrection Of your friends;  
And why have you rejected the resilience of your dogs;  
Why don't you speak of them anymore-  
Why it is the same reason why I do not speak or resemble  
My own face,  
Why I cant speak or say better words for it;  
I want to touch myself to your bugle, the way so many boys yet  
Do;  
I want my hair to turn more gray and fall like cataracts over your  
Shoulders,  
And now you should know that you shall never be anymore  
Universally popular; and yet you are right:  
You are my starlet and I yet swing for you; and yet  
Who are you doing, and you who are yet who I still love,  
But my heart is still empty and broken from the love  
You would not shave off the bust of your infinite ice globes;  
And wouldn't you like for me to come up and see,  
But I am afraid that you would feel degraded to be in the presence  
Of this usually cowardly lion.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Pulp-Noir Eclipse

Clouds palaver,  
But how should we say it: that  
They are having a parade  
Over the cliff-dwellings and condos;  
Anasazi graffiti:  
Isn't it- I wouldn't know.  
I only went there as a  
Tourist- ten or twelve,  
Dimes with the heads of  
Dead Presidents  
For payphones  
And valentines etched  
In my pockets;  
The pretty things that  
Never heal,  
The left over fireworks  
Should we ever sell?  
The houses look so pretty all in their rows.  
I remember, I used to stomp out their lights.  
The housewives look so pretty  
Having graduated in liberal arts,  
Who went right to the car lot,  
Got lit and flashed,  
And returned as usual until they were  
Satisfied to have gotten their wants:  
Newborns all around here,  
Lined up to Colorado,  
Cooing in cradles or crèches,  
Left beneath the cathedral ceilings and  
Bay windows,  
Where lights like watery rum falling  
Somehow as good as forever,  
And the everglades landscape the employed  
Wingspans of commercial  
Airlines;  
Like a graveyard  
With the lakes its tears:  
Each stone propped up extols its silent  
Prayers.



They make their movies in the pulp-  
Noir eclipse,  
Long legged mothers driving home  
The goodly impressed school-  
Kids;  
But I'm a truant around here-  
Haven't you heard me singing this song?  
Been sleeping underneath the palmettos,  
Just like the rattlesnakes and housecats,  
And later on I'll screw around in  
The neighbor's garage  
To steal and make things, resurrect  
Whatever teenage petroglyphs that haven't  
Yet faded;  
I don't understand what they are saying,  
But I the only one left so I recon I  
Say it,  
As the clouds palaver, drink their rum off  
The sea and sugarcane,  
And then they too carry on.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Purple Ozarks

Dusk in the purple Ozarks as they  
Make a film about you—girl I've forgotten  
With the night flooding the sky,  
And bats with capes from the granaries' roofs—  
Slough over the hilltops searching  
With the blindness of nocturnal reason—  
Search for you in dreams that are no longer aloud—  
And in places of make believe tourism  
With the memories of the light bleeding like purpled  
Diadems between the glossy nipples,  
Foaming the inebriate memory amidst the losing waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Quiet Forest

As little as a candle's flame, I hold  
Dreams for you, like  
Amethyst on the courthouse floor,  
Like a heron perched on a branch in  
The belly of the jewel-weed lake;  
I bight my lip over on the veranda of  
A wedding, and the entire sky is dismissively  
Beautiful as an open lover;  
I drive beneath her, the day proceeds in  
The courting of its hours, but come never  
Nearer to your breathing space;  
The cold-blooded alligators peddle toward  
Warmth, and the key-deer nuzzle against  
The knees of cypress. There are story books  
Lost like children in the everglades,  
And down airplanes like freshwater coral;  
But I held you in my head today, coming up  
To the surface, this hopeful oxygen,  
Both the naivety of my artistic dysfunction,  
And the entrepreneur of its creation;  
If justified, I would open a store of you, and sell  
It in colorful grains in bottles, and in shells;  
If you were to come in, I would show you around,  
And show you how easily you sell, or catch you  
By surprise, press my lips to yours, and  
Hand over your self worth in a book of distilled  
Lines, how you lay there, the lucidity of my creation,  
A little dream of you, like a candle's flame,  
I keep folded in my pocket when I walk alone  
In the quiet forest, hiding your light from the darkness.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Rainstorms Of Wonderful Valentines

If I wanted you to sing to me underneath the  
Mangroves  
And kitty-corner to the short skirted tennis courts  
With so much zeal as to stop the professionals  
From snoring;  
If I asked you to play the booby trapped organ,  
Or to lick your fingers against the  
Underbellies of the airplanes in that airplane house  
Which is our sky,  
Then maybe you would- all auburn, with gypsum earrings:  
Like beautiful stuff trapped in the amber;  
And maybe it just wouldn't be enough for you to  
Really love me,  
And maybe you were behaving that way just so you could  
Sell me things,  
Things I would have bought blindly anyways:  
And I have an entire house to give to you with gaudy trellises  
And a mother and father and teak cabinets:  
Maybe there are even now little children running up and  
Down the ghostly steps as if a game of my kind of  
Dreaming;  
And I know all the pine trees are softly whispering hungrily  
In their canopy that is smothering the thorny  
Graveyards where the bumblebees are perpetually dying,  
Giving up in the half darkness which is neither here  
Nor there,  
Like the premature fading of somber pornographies,  
Like nosecones and tiaras made of soft paper that is tearing  
In the rainstorms of wonderful valentines.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Realms Of The Unreal

In the heathenish country of enslaved white children,  
Nine little girls become the martyrs who lead the Christian charge  
(Sometimes stark naked,  
And other times in blue dresses,  
Coroneted by snow white swans)  
Following the example of the god he knew,  
He wrote the battle hymns to fill the bullet holes,  
While his angelic daughters  
Held half naked in his room,  
Practice standing still against the trees,  
So the professors of the hurly-burly come by  
None the wiser with their muskets discharged  
Into the earth in retaliation for the thirsting bayonets.  
The godheads for the never-ending war,  
These golden-bobbed generals  
Share phone conversations with Shirley Temple,  
As they tuck in all the dead and lonesome girls in Chicago,  
Alone in his room, Henry Darger  
Traces his Christmas sorrows:  
All his fine children ravaged in his personal crucifixion,  
The mute genius of the unrecognized collage  
His fingertips tracing the unfixed continents  
Of unparalleled girls and angels  
In such hidden beauty, every movement an unseen danger,  
Recording the unuttered defiance  
Of the janitor's little boy, as it was recorded,  
When he beat his fist against the windowpane,  
Challenging God for a change in the weather.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Red Clay

Friendship in the tears of ghettos,  
Mud daubers pooling quietly along  
The lips of fences  
And lanais- while the men pile up  
Underneath of these fences,  
Entire hemispheres showing through  
Their sides:  
They have become awakened in their  
Echoes,  
And set out in the innocuous fields  
Of journey.  
Rattlesnakes eat the rabbits that eat  
The clovers,  
And school buses drive around twice  
A day:  
The waves beckon; they seem to  
Be doing something with the sky.  
The baseball diamonds rest in the red  
Clay,  
As the insouciant cars drive by.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Red Entrails Of The Sun

All those same things that were without you  
Are inside me now—  
The dogs are running over the forgotten clay,  
And parts of suburbia become  
Flooded from the last of the titan's tears:  
And no more brave than this:  
Skipping school,  
Pulling the wings off grasshoppers,  
Trying to remember the last letter put into  
A word about you—  
Now that the lake is gone and there  
Are only salamanders and Gollum  
Who speak something of the red haunts of  
Baseball diamonds—after another wish has been  
Exposed—  
After another day dream ends in the red  
Entrails of the sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Refrigerators Of Their Own Bedrooms

Heavy petting while you have trouble breathing  
As the sky is clotted with the heavens that the airplanes  
Fly through as if some silver instruments for  
The operation- while down beneath of them  
The purple museums are all wandering for the lost  
And found fieldtrips of the children of televangelists:  
Each one coming out of his or her sugary dreams  
With their guardian angels drooling, and dripping spotty  
Sunlight down their shoulders: soon they will grow  
Out of their lilac rollerskates and discover acne,  
And the ways to live alone underneath the unhealthy  
Zoetrope made from the ceiling fan of their bedroom,  
But they will still dream of one another, of how they  
Once kissed and held hands and roller skated  
In a sort of de evolving heaven where all of the rock  
Candy was eaten before noon and the return trips home  
To trailer parks and little estuaries where some of  
Them were beaten for scalding their little sisters with  
Curling irons: their beautiful little sisters who have  
Now grown up into luxuriously grown women  
Who have moved into the Phoenix deserts, one or two  
Of them: and they sit there dreaming in the refrigerators  
Of their own bedrooms: and they lay there  
Dreaming like fish who have grown too big for their  
Own streams- dreaming and dreaming,  
And waiting and waiting for what must finally become of them.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Rest Stops Where The Water Falls

Naked in your truck,  
Startled across the asphalt with the purple  
Ribbon and barrettes dying in  
Your hair-  
Looking at yourself in the adulteries of the heavens,  
As the rattlesnakes continue telling  
Whispers to the cotton mouths in the canal,  
And then you go home,  
Or you go somewhere: but wherever you go,  
You get more and more tragic,  
And doll-like,  
And I wander if you can even remember that  
Day I slipped a hundred dollar bill in your  
Back pocket while your sisters  
Were waiting,  
Because all three of you were going to the mall  
Like a lucky but uneven number:  
And now I sing songs for  
You I cannot even sing,  
As the beautiful throat of the world opens up  
For the both of us,  
And we continue holding hands down  
The bricked paths  
Unafraid through the blinding forests,  
As the lions whistle and the  
Angels roar  
In the rest-stops where the water falls.  
Naked in your truck,  
Startled across the asphalt with the purple  
Ribbon and barrettes dying in  
Your hair-  
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Angels roar  
In the rest-stops where the water falls.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Revelry Of Our Lost Cause

They look best when they're under the chupah  
And getting married-  
The girl I used to sleep with in October,  
Surrounded by sharks: mazzeltoff, because now  
You've found your better man practicing law  
And oral sex, that ancient thing:  
How the tortoise beat the hare, that same old game;  
And there is no more reason to buy a new bed,  
Or carve the pumpkin, or kiss the mezuzah-  
I am always the same old thing,  
Doing my lines better than you,  
Getting drunk and practicing the bicycle,  
the little truancies  
I draw to give the cleaning ladies something to do,  
After midnight and all us unbounded and hung  
Like exhausted sisters in the draperies and Laundromats  
And landscaping with the cicadas in your suburbia;  
I am not dancing with anyone: Celibate, I am inventing  
Humid electricity- See by which way I come and  
Hold court smoking cigarettes in the old neighborhoods  
And upon the old swing sets you've forgotten:  
Happily you are with child, or you are expecting; or taking offices,  
Always clinging to your traditions of silver and gefilte fish:  
He drapes the diamonds around your bones, you become  
Kabalistic and forgetful- You don't go outside anymore  
Save to the dress codes of fine restaurants, and never anymore  
To studious dreams; but you are something your mother  
Wrought, while I still don't care and even now cherish  
In the revelry of our lost cause.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Rhyme Of A Pegasus

Love in the rhyme of a Pegasus who flies as high  
As airplanes over the school—  
So high where girls can dream of him—  
Girls here and  
Girls there, and the beautiful animals in their heads  
Or along their ways—  
Until busses return to them in some kind of  
Psychosomatic waltz back and forth  
From fieldtrips to the sea—  
They mean business with their eyes closed,  
And each wave a leaping caracole of an intangible  
Menagerie—  
Images slipping until they are governed  
And given their place at the table of eternity—  
Glasses fill with crimson and heads with  
Narcolepsy—  
So young boys nod beside the road with the  
Penny ante butterfly—  
Waiting for the traffic of the continent to  
Proceed in time—  
Diaspora of illusions between the buxom cliffs—  
Native accoutrements underneath the  
Nativity—  
Graveyards of the middle-class's promenade,  
Governing through the jurisdiction  
Of their clandestine society—  
While eyes of the virgin look up at the first  
Time,  
Like presents underneath the Christmas tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Room

Little separates us but those canals  
And even then we are close enough to spit,  
And we can go on for 365 days a year  
Like good outboard motors,  
And then Christmas and on and on:  
And we can continue anywhere from this,  
Because we are all one and the same,  
The only difference being our society  
And our hair colors,  
Which are illusions;  
And my legs are tremulous like plum trees  
From swinging in the balmy pines,  
Kicking sweet disillusionment,  
And you are just about as pretty as Disney World,  
And you belong there thoroughly enjoyed in perm  
Caracoles,  
In little aquatic habitats in bikinis,  
Though you would probably rather marry a successful  
Lawyer or a television producer,  
I can still see you there, sunbathing for many an eye,  
Like the dun houses across the canal all in their  
Simple rows,  
Like mollusks in the shoals, and I love you,  
But I guess I can love just about anyone as the airplanes  
Proceed like minnows and giant fish through their  
Escalating levels of sky,  
As long as you are not their competition in the room.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Same Movie Theatres

Soft candle,  
The last one to be blown out  
On your birthday  
In the fruit market  
I named after you  
The one year we  
Were in love—  
And you wouldn't leave  
Him,  
So I found a new  
Wife amidst the Christmas  
Trees,  
And took her after you  
To all of the places we had been  
To see the animals and  
Eat pancakes,  
Until the realized of another sort  
In the same movie theatres  
That at one time held both of  
Our eyes,  
As we sat in our seats both of  
Us seeing visions of our own worlds.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Sea

Going through the poses through the fence  
Posts- I suppose you have seen her  
With the slanting sun-  
In the ballrooms of gunpowder, flying with  
The smoke:  
I suppose you've seen her auburn eyes  
Like an apiary of lost supposes  
In the daydreams above the classes of losing  
Boys- I suppose you've seen how  
She attracts them, and they come to her,  
Falling into her various rooms,  
As she drapes across the furniture- and  
Even her bones relax; and then you can  
See that she can fly: yes, she can fly,  
Though she has never shed a tear for them  
Until she has fled far across her cages,  
But then what she does with her tears in  
The sea I do not seem to care.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Seances That I Cannot Understand

Doing all of this while the girls are making love  
In churches,  
In cars, along the stairwells of their science museums, their  
Apartment buildings:  
I see girls making love in the dark pressed to grills:  
Girls who would have wanted all of this, if it wasn't from me:  
The rains grow quiet and listen to girls:  
My aunts listen to girls, and graveyards fill with the sad talk  
And lips that these girls once knew  
And had;  
And I am up on my fire tower too high to feel the reasons why the girls  
Move back and forth in their plentitudes,  
Almost too high to prove a reason for breath, smelling the perfumes  
Of these girls, their wild fires pulling up the hills  
In the séances that I cannot understand all around me.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Second Of Their Metamorphosis

Now, going to school you will be saved  
By kissing tadpoles in the second  
Of their metamorphosis-  
You will make them princesses from a long ways off,  
Or what else, I don't care:  
But it all pretends to be beautiful, while  
America is broken:  
And the angels of gaudy filigree pirouette like  
Cantankerous instruments over our bunk beds:  
And they seem as if they've been making love-  
Or they are just holding over for the saviors of the  
Fire trucks,  
While all of the catastrophes sing out loud  
And I crowd your mouth with my tongue  
Like a crowd on a Ferris Wheel.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Seeped Earth

Venal muse of amusement parks and  
Blind households,  
The teasing lighthouse about the reef whose  
Beacon goes off for ten seconds like  
Overpriced fireworks,  
And it is still dazzling and the men knowingly  
Use her to commit to short shot hara-kiri,  
And I sell good leather and tomatoes,  
And all day long I keep my flag furled upside  
Down, distressed over her,  
Singing my old hound dog wails:  
And the sea in the sky is filled with all the things  
She has needlessly put away,  
And they are still waiting for her- and even the  
Airplanes gettyup to get to her quicker,  
But where is she but on the other side of the canal  
I somnolent evening dress,  
Consumptive off of low-grade Florida Holy-  
Perhaps she is dead, and we'll all meet her at the grave:  
That is when we'll throw the game for her,  
And bare her children grinning deep and forever in our  
Honey moon right there in the seeped earth.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Senses Of An Alienist

Three dogs are on my bed;  
They fart and drool... And beg.  
Each one is my best friend, because  
I don't have to prove anything to their vision,  
And I must smell good,  
As I give them the treats I take down from  
Cabinets made of wood: The forest is getting darker,  
And each line is made from the spume of a  
Poisonous eel. I write by the light leaping in  
A sheep's bladder, as the waves grow  
Passionately sharper. The entire family has not  
Resumed. The light house has shut down and is  
Not taking orders. My face has lost the definitions  
Of well-positioned and youthful borders.  
My sister has bought a new car and dedicated it to  
Our father.  
Tomorrow, two men will come and we will unload  
Hay for the horses, then tomorrow I will take down  
The gilded harpoon from over the mantle and  
Dash it the way it must go between a garden of  
Harping dragonflies: In this method, I will take  
The dark liver from far in the forest,  
Stolen from the hapless giant of granite who I may  
Never see, for he passes quietly far away from me;  
And I will feed my grandmother, when she asks for me,  
And I will think about the other weapon in the darker  
Cabinet with a new name for me;  
But I am pressed to look upon it, but will I open it.  
These are those things I have to say that my  
Dogs will never know, and where I must eventually  
Go they will not have the path to follow me;  
There is no room between the plots of those relations.  
Dark corridors which lead all ways across the country,  
Disembarking from any house such as this,  
But for the time being my hounds border me; they  
Snore and fart and dream in the senses of an alienist;  
And it is such a sober bliss  
That I mustn't yet take it away from me....



# In The Sepias Of Regardless Holidays

When I am young, I drive up early to take look  
At your face; And I do not drink, but sailors  
Tell me your stare hits like rum, and how you sway  
Makes the teak of ships well embarrassed,  
And even immaculate carpenters a bit leery: These men who  
You don't see greet me before morning and lead  
Me to you singing salty sea shanties- I suppose  
This has happened before,  
Just like the lolling of dogs who like to bury,  
and now I am just boastfully reminiscing;  
And that you were my girlfriend, and now I have  
Nothing else to do but to swear and drink and play  
Atari; but I greeted you there in your first sorority,  
Well gowned for that portion of the upper-  
Middle class colony,  
The blue jays of fables primarily chirping,  
Before the sun was bright with chores,  
And the eggs were cracked and running,  
Before they were beaten into cakes for birthdays, and you  
Had to apologize, because you couldn't let me in,  
Because it was too near the beginning, especially with the  
Standard-bred men's choir singing,  
The wild ponies were braying,  
And everything in sweltering spring and  
Never for foreclosing,  
- but you couldn't even hear them- Even now my  
Pirates are just my artistic license, as I lie out on  
The verge under the red speckled boughs of poisonous  
Holly, daring such epilepsies through the brilliant canopy,  
Letting the terrapin pass regardless of toll  
Across my body, their saturnine fins dragging-  
Even now college is over, and our lives are  
Over too- for longer than I would like to think of,  
though we graduated together, and came together  
Sometimes moaning like two ships showing  
To each other their bare-chested broadsides,  
Spanish ships I would like to think of in a bottle while  
The cat purred atop the washer, the dryer tumbling;  
Something alright and something even better than tourism,

And maybe this happened, and maybe it did not,  
And maybe that day you took me to the cafeteria on  
Your lunch program with your good friend Lisa, and told  
Me how different I looked, and how old and worried- How  
Long ago was that?  
To think of it makes me old and worried, and sleepless too,  
Makes me want to hang upside down in the orange tree  
Of my backyard with the invisible naked maidens,  
Reliving it in my bastardized silence,  
But some father has sold them too;  
And how I delivered pizzas all over campus,  
In the sepias of regardless holidays, mopping up after  
The graveyard shift and then went jogging seven miles  
Until pretzel-salty with private dreams goldenly foaming;  
And on the first or second day we saw Erin like sexy lightning walking her  
Dogs and she waved to me- Isn't it funny that now  
You have your lawyer and his name with you,  
Whom you kissed under the kippah, the crystal glass breaking,  
and passed through  
The mezuzah's blessing,  
Now that you don't have need for the alliteration  
Of my homeless name,  
Be it agnostic or Christian,  
Or to hear the faithful axles of my  
Old truck to your forgotten house returning; and she has someone else,  
The bartender whose skin is as slick as an otter's,  
Who lays back in the teal shoals and eats oysters on  
The half shell:  
Who takes Vitamin b-12 to recover from vampires,  
the sun on her bare chest glinting,  
Like the hood of a car parked at a zoo,  
Caracoling her areolas and bruised nipples,  
She has the whole crew, tattooed and cursing  
and their world liling,  
Putting ocean-flowers to her neck,  
Her dun cleavage envasing;  
and all I have is this, and it is  
A queer thing, something cursed like a golden arm or  
A monkey's paw, trying to reach into the gloom across  
The overpass and the heedless traffic fast approaching,  
Playing chicken with my soul,  
Pervasively taunting;

but it isn't worth much,  
Not the gas it took to reach you every weekend,  
Not the flowers in the vase in the wilted kitchen-  
And especially not this.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Shade Of Another Sabbath

I will write about jingoistic nunneries  
Riding white army ants all across barbaric planets  
Where you can't breathe from the sight of your  
Love;  
And that is all I will have to do, embittered in the novel  
Tombs of my new tiny home:  
But I can curl up anywhere; I can draw on any where I  
Want:  
And I will definitely make love to so many women:  
All the time these housewives or Chinese waitress will come  
In as subtle to bow as willow sprigs:  
The witchcraft of their twats curling up at the end like  
A fat lima bean at the end of its green candle:  
Like I made love to that sweet black woman just last night  
With the red and black star southward of her navel;  
And after I came in her, she straddled me and jerked me off  
Until all of the sounds were drowned out by the airplanes  
Taking off;  
And all the students were parked far back into the darkness of  
So many games, their eyes just as far away as the nearest  
Conveniences:  
How I floated over them using the old rope tricks of really hot  
Swamis: how I am floating over them still,  
Petting the flat nosed cobra, and playing my ukulele  
On April Fools day in the shade of another Sabbath.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Shallows

It's time to go to bed up in the rafters of  
Soft light  
Where the roosters never carol- and the girls  
Good at witchcraft are sleeping-  
It seems to be a bucolic spell, fat and milky  
Bellied:  
And they are selling pumpkins down in the  
Hazy estuaries on the other side  
Of the forest  
With the trolls tucked underneath their bridges  
Good for eating students who have traveled  
Too far astray in their truancy  
Looking for a swing-set or the idle promise  
Of a housewives:  
I've seen them share the gory saliva with the soft  
Shelled turtles,  
Their books tumbling with the puppies in the shallows:  
Pecked at by the nimble lips of minnows,  
Like lovers who are not even sure they are even there.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Silent Places

Underneath of a rose the jaundice pinpricks  
Of another metamorphosis of things- your friends  
Here in the undefined colors  
While tourists move and gesticulate to the sea  
Maybe thinking she will make a fine lover, how  
The waves row in her bed, how the sky is spent  
With smoke signals like  
Genies coming uncorked above the séances of  
Windmills while the lobsters dance  
And little girls draw pictures of a world you watch  
From the window of a supermarket painted with  
Green sales, and you daydream about riding a rickshaw  
Downtown- while the girls underneath their  
Roses spin, pricking their eyes until they tear,  
But when they spring from that bed they will be like old  
Friends on new years, and they will enjoy the revelry of  
Their sorority underneath the dragon of Mars  
Who will sing to them of bicycles- and other flowers  
The grow long toothed in the silent places along the  
Long and winding path that only their ancestors remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Silted Sheets

The stones of the sun are making love to  
Cowboys,  
The traffic is moving back and forth like an insecure  
Christmas  
That the stewardesses are showing legs above:  
Each one of them like an incandescent bulb  
In a Ferris Wheel that turns for Don Quixote  
Right over the world,  
As the mothers press their children into the cars,  
And the nights come together against the naked backs of  
Mountains,  
Saying their lottery of prayers far across the shops  
And brambles snuggled in the silted sheets of a higher and  
More impenetrable world.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Singing Shadows

The words go mumbling from their tomb,  
And the labyrinth of spy holes where pride  
Has led the thirsty man,  
So now little girls laugh down and guess at his  
Name, the dark stranger of scars,  
And it isn't fair because he cannot see,  
But can only guess at their curls,  
And if they might be princesses painted up  
For the vermilion festival, and the sacrifice of  
Scarlet bulls who once took away their mothers  
Across the highways of iridescent seas;  
Though he is amazed by this spacious coffin he  
Has defiled, for he might die anywhere though  
He wishes he could see stars  
And feel the wind lifting his feet off the grass;  
Or find the heart of the coy architectures, for  
In there is the reason for his fool heartedness,  
For wasn't it the godking of the old dominion,  
The seller of everything with a handsome smile,  
Who took away the shadows which he loved,  
And the woman who lived in them, silent as the  
Bosom of a stone, even if he only beheld her from  
Across the street, and didn't know her;  
He has sailed the broken seas to this spot and  
Become entombed beneath the eyes of laughing  
Children, just to be lost in the tangling veins,  
Like the branches of a hollow tree  
Which once chased the light until it all failed,  
So as he succumbs to the inevitable plot  
Where the little dust will forever mote his bones,  
He can hear her breathing once more, in the  
Singing shadows under the stone.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Skies Of Skies

Oh so you know that the boundaries shoot of like  
Gloriously indigenous fireworks: green and green things,  
And the old man in the sea, and love letters:  
I misspelled my face between her legs and repeated the  
Transoms inside her until she moaned and she thought of me;  
And then there were werewolves in the darkness and  
Better writers,  
And silly things: Stephen King go f%ck yourself: I am your king,  
And the planets divide like unhealthy pies,  
And I can still look down her blouse from where I live:  
And her kitchen is golden and well kept:  
She keeps on going down her racetrack of endives,  
Which is just something else I have rightly learned to spell;  
And the road is still on a dirt track,  
And the animals are still talking to me, keeping a neighborly feeling  
With one another:  
And the families grow fat after stealing all of my father's feeling;  
And the city is on display like a diamond which in the school is my  
Birthstone, spinning, spinning in the mall of fault lines;  
And now all the women have fallen in line because they want to cast  
Their bets on the fireman who is as tall as any god;  
And soon they will be right, and I will be down;  
And I will be meat for the Zoroastrians; and the ancestors will know  
My name as the pick their beaks and work out to the disenfranchised  
Junos in the skies of skies.

Robert Rorabeck

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My name as the pick their beaks and work out to the disenfranchised  
Junos in the skies of skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Sky

In backyards things grow  
Un worrisome of the  
School kids in the school  
Yards, bathing in ripe  
Open abutments picking  
Chicken poxs,  
Feeding foxes grapes  
Climbing up on the  
Chains of grandmother's  
Graves-  
A thing with horns,  
And red eyes  
Appearing at the window  
As sugarcane burns in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Slow Motion Traffic Jam Of Sky

Today, the same old things- the new scars,  
Ringless fingers,  
And the way the clouds tended to move like  
Somnulent cars  
Across the nettled draperies;  
Then didn't I think of you; yes, the eerie  
Aphorism of spilt milk- the drizzle of the snow  
Plow your baby missed-  
That was what you misquoted at the end of  
The article,  
And the sand lions sleep not so very deeply  
In the silt,  
Like Spanish glassed mothers in their patio,  
Staring forlornly at the apathetic death from the  
Eyes of the alligator down the mowed  
Green- the very same one who ate Sancho  
Panzo while hypnotized by a windmill:  
And that is how you should have ended it,  
Whistling like a Clint Eastwood movie since I've  
Lost all that I've loved, or never loved,  
Except for my dogs- and we go long-tongued anyways  
Looking for the sweet spots where you might  
Be lying carelessly disengaged in the slow-motion  
Traffic jam of sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Soft Darkness

Wait in the nervous thistles,  
To cannibalize the vessels done with their  
Studies in a wooden house,  
Down from the slopes of jumping rope;  
All the little books are little dollars  
That can buy flowers and marionettes,  
And it seems that the train vacillates the entire time,  
Caracoling the gardens its mind undecided,  
But not until the crepuscule you know opens up that  
Letters are finally unsealed, and throats open up  
Squeaking of mucus and disavowed marriage.  
Song birds plead to their kittens for death,  
Because in the soft darkness it is easiest to see who  
I have become.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Solitude Of The Sane

This hinge squeaks like a mottled-gray  
Mouse,  
Or that moth who likes the corner room in  
Your grandfather's corner house:  
These words stay up some nights and drink  
High-balls inside your dreams,  
They laugh and smoke and go out to take a leak:  
Back inside your skull again they are echoing  
High-heeled gentlemen who don't give a lick  
What they have to say,  
The gray mustachioed nonsense awakes and talks  
All day:  
Nothing publishable or very keen- You're  
Quite too sure they don't have any means, but they  
Are too silly to be insane,  
And thus they crack their jaws like joggers yawning  
In the jogging rains- They'd wish they had something  
Beautiful to think, but after all they are only like  
Mother's hands washing dirty dishes in your sink.  
They haven't traveled very far for many a year, or kissed  
A woman's lips or smacked an orchard sweet  
Derriere- No, they seem instead to be waiting for all things  
Like meadows eager for flowers in a hibernating spring;  
And thus nothing better from them out should come,  
But maybe if you bought them a little home,  
And brought to them like leggy breathy gifts a little wife  
And from her ploughed like Cadmus in red Martian fields,  
Toothy, friendly kids, a mini-van, and the usually other  
Commodities, if then they could think of nothing better  
At least they could circle around these things their  
Choice of songs,  
And you could unlace yher speckled shoulders through  
Their freckly psalms,  
And after work and all that such, call the children in from  
Playing for a late but satisfying lunch. Then maybe these old  
Fools would come to join you too, and sit some quietly  
In those rounded calcifying halls like typifying bowls where  
The general organs bunch; or grow so quiet as barefoot steps  
Out in the soft green blades under rain,

And then you could lie down in your own bed and rest  
And kiss your wife, and whisper quite safely in the  
Solitude of the sane.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Somber Ozarks

Languishes in the bullfights of  
Pot bellies and cantaloupes—pregnant women—  
Husbands drinking too much beer—  
Hillside corpulent from dead aunts and dead  
Grandmothers—this I know: forest fires  
In Arizona—ant mounts infuriated in penumbras  
As the blue as the sea—  
The creatures swimming there silver angels—  
Terrapin, coy dolphins, and airplanes  
Taking me to my bride—or other pets I cannot love—  
Places that remain standing after everyone is gone—  
Past events in echo's coliseum—  
My mother in the somber Ozarks watching the bloodless  
Horses running around.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Songs They Will Never Know

I try, match in the wind- I flame-  
And die after school- the busses leave me  
Like Monarch butterflies,  
The lions finish the yawn,  
And I walk home across the canal  
The blue gills and alligators underneath me  
But above the stolen bicycles,  
And I think of the imagination of words;  
I give them an entire cathedral  
Which I hold in my heart,  
As across another canal the sugar cane burns,  
And the men I will never know attend to it;  
But they are burning up my muse  
Until the entire sky is taken up with her,  
With the beautiful goddess who forms above  
The earth in the songs they will never know.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Soul Of My Heart

With everything about the  
School  
Dumb and mute  
I got drunk underneath  
The school bus  
Where the tortois was  
Amongst the shade  
And didn't come out  
Until  
Beowulf was in charge-  
Who muzzled all  
The teachers,  
But was mutually killed  
By the dragon as well-  
And on the green  
It was finally safe  
To buy icecream  
and say The Pledge of Allegiance  
To the flag  
Without a favorite color  
In the soul of my heart-

Robert Rorabeck

# In The South Of France

There's a bullet  
In the south of France that  
Can make your body dance.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Spittooned Canal

Now the November winds are calling through  
My door, and I have nowhere secret to go since the  
War is over: I have books I love, and secret handles,  
But her breasts have slipped from my cusp to feed the  
Infants, and the sea is so reclusive, so alien; How the  
Politicians rise in sleuthy gleaming, how my dear  
Uncles come knocking upon the doors, and even in their  
Silences I stalk out through the old widow's catwalks,  
Into the flumes of citrus: I would kiss her here,  
If such was the implore, but she has sagged away into  
The calls of another lover, and her hand is ribboned with  
His lore; and yet, I walk richly through the darkened  
Nebulous of a forgotten neighborhood: sleep walking,  
I dream of marking the cleft of her lips with my cheek,  
Like bighting into a firm apple already voted:  
I am scarred, and far away, and yet clearly her man:  
If she should see me, and swoon, I would catch her in time,  
And lay her down in the passenger seat of my expensive car,  
Drive her far across the ocean, where young actors are  
Recalling extemporaneously their lines before they are incased  
In carbonite; and "blah, blah, blah." Can't you see I am  
So much better, but we already have a new president, but  
Such politics mean nothing to me: I've already queued up into  
The line with the seven dwarfs, and with our rich applause  
And jenesaiquoi, I exhume her from where my grandmother is  
Already lying; even though she is just a child, I will buy a crypt  
Nextdoor to her tombstone, and saying this is real, pertain  
To her diseased recitations and the egos of her high school already  
Passed away: Nobody shall read this, as already it is rainy and making  
Plinking jazz on the corrugations, then we get drunk on Dave's  
Roof, vote for Republicans, and shoot of fireworks, as he tips  
Her back as a chalice, fondling her breast; and in the end, haven't  
You seen how good I am, how I come back for seconds, after you'd  
Though I'd already done; I come in you again, and you swoon,  
Like a bosomy opera; even though he was better looking than me,  
It is I whom you remember, because I came down to you, and  
Gave you the quaff from my lips, because even though it was clichéd,  
It was right for you in the dusking period, and you bent over  
For me, and showed me the outline of your panties, and I knocked

Into you from my suppositions, my handy vagabonds from  
The doorsteps of eerie holidays: Now here is where I laugh,  
Like a well-published conquistador, or adventurer back from her  
Door step: Never fearing, for I know nothing can be certifiably  
Real. Thus I am driven back to my doorstep in the wildlife  
Preserve, turn the key in its latch, and diminish, microwave  
Dinner, watch tv, and jack-off; because, in the end of the plaintive  
Romance, she is the only thing whom is real, and you are the  
Man who is real, and I salute you from the back door of my  
Castle, and jack-off, while the alligators fart, like trumpeters  
Blowing their instruments in the spittoon canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Stoplight Jungle

Pearled fragrantly in the fragile vacillations  
In the stoplight jungle pressed by its more bucolic peers  
To the coast  
Where the conquistadors once fumbled amidst the Indians  
Who were so many and all like virgins,  
And showed them the colors of the diseases of a religion  
That became the savior of their extinction:  
And I thought of you, in a caesura over my dead grandmother:  
I thought of you, while my body tried to metamorphose,  
While all of the shops were closed,  
The forts now only good for tourists also closed,  
And the echinopsis in the thistles and spines, hooded,  
The cloying fragrances of jasmine mingling with the alley cats,  
As if telling them all of those tales to keep them feral and up  
All night, while the indigenous moon hung over the transplanted  
Churches,  
Its lesser lights beaming down, beaming for the gesticulations of  
The saints who seemed all too eager to eat that manna of  
A lesser and more pagan existence, while their greater gods had  
Betrayed them, evaporating into the beds and shops,  
Only to awaken most thoughtlessly to the play and bustle  
As the wayward legacy of a bumbling family who could hardly be  
Said to deserve him.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Summer Green

I have a picture of Alma hanging on the wall  
Of my second bedroom  
That I carved myself; At least that is what I tell myself,  
And that the moon is full, even though I haven't checked:  
I have done away with all my American friends,  
And so my aunt doesn't love me,  
But I can still hear the cars softly, softly like the daydreams  
Going by in math class:  
And then, maybe then while the schools are young and green,  
I will make new friends who are shoeless in the red baseball  
Diamond, or in the summer green.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Sunlight

Half-hazard benevolence once again  
In a crooked world  
While looking up her skirt on a merry-go-round:  
There she is,  
A flower presupposing to the alligators:  
The opposite of my sex,  
And everything that I mean:  
Almost extinct,  
Armpits full of narcoleptic fragrances, and the  
Entire world about her a grizzly bear  
Done with séances  
Or the fabulous tricks of their migrating trailer  
Parks-  
Overabundance of senses attuned to her architectures  
Peeling in the sunlight:  
Soon they will be cursing her, as she feeds them,  
And cursing her all the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Sunlight Of A Room

I heard the noise of casual horses underneath  
The pines,  
And then the moon was unsecured and drifting-  
I was frightened because my dictionary was  
As slender as an anxious poetry volume,  
But I wanted to impress you, and I didn't want to  
Die until I had impressed your lips with the sponge  
Of blindly reaching life,  
Even though I have nothing else to sell, and you  
Are already diademed and truncated and beautiful in  
A crèche of stolen automobiles,  
And your eyes are never around anymore at the séances  
Of high school drinking fountains-  
I am creased like a delicate thinker, grayed on a stone  
Down in the valley of an empty parking lot-  
And all the planes are leaping as if in a ballet, as if  
Choreographed by an effeminate flight instructor-  
I don't want to leave off even though the bus will never  
Be returning to me, and all the tamed lions have died  
Who used to sing to me on afternoons of sun showers  
And Saturdays in their permastone habitats circumnavigated  
By the uncouth but jolly tourisms; and I have choice cuts of  
Flesh and dollar bills to tempt you with, and influence you  
Down from your tall gardens:  
I can feed you and a child in the effervescing light  
Of televisions and trailer parks too. Come down,  
Come down and let me wonder close for awhile, prowling  
Your hypnotic smells,  
Suddenly reintroduced to extinct but roomy  
Foliage. Let me imagine  
Animals in your bosom's Siamese  
Nest- and let me wonder how many bones you  
Have in your hand;  
If I guess correcting what will you let me win,  
Or band you with; and I just have  
To say before the nightmares of fried chicken  
And unicorns are coming home that being near you seems to  
Palpitate my soul like wet clay-  
Like wet clay that dances for you in the sunlight of a room.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Sunshine Again

If I went down to Mexico, it was to drink  
Salt:  
And standing up that way from the impossible  
Watering hole where the purple  
Wilderness was rising up  
And making a canopy of her gazes:  
I froze for a moment,  
Trying to remember the high schools of America  
I once believed in,  
And the stupendous tortoises who foraged there  
Off oil black orchids underneath the broken  
Down school buses  
In the middle of the incredible rainstorms-  
Where they laid out baseball and alligators;  
But there was only her lavender wilderness,  
A soul of effluvious wings,  
Poisonous and immortal: she sang to me through  
Her body's forest,  
And I came to her. Leaving myself never to sell  
Fireworks in the sunshine again.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Sweet Sweet Bossoms Of Alma's Laughing And Pollinated Cenotaph

The midgets have my new heads in their cradles,  
And my mother enjoyed her flowers on her day,  
But I am greedy and the rest of my flowers have been for  
Alma,  
And I took her to eat pancakes,  
But we haven't yet laid on our backs and consorted with the sky:  
I have so little time with her:  
There are always customers and coworkers and greedy,  
Greedy uncles  
With high and popping knuckles,  
But I look at her all day juxtaposed with the water coolers:  
Actually, the water cooler- it is just one- it is in the foreground  
Like a Christmas tree,  
And when my uncle gets back from West Virginia he will probably  
Fire me,  
Because these are the times of our lean mountains,  
And my parents are gone,  
But visions of Alma happen repeatedly to me every day,  
And so I or my ghost lives on,  
As I press her kisses to me, as if my body was a book collecting her  
Pollens,  
As if I had some vested interest in the sweet, sweet bosoms  
Of Alma's laughing and pollinated cenotaph.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Theatres Of The South

Here is the joy that makes no sound,  
The pleasure given to a lover  
With duck tape over her mouth-  
The blindfolded surprise led down  
To the river where  
The procrustean preacher is  
Figuring out how to baptize  
His flock where there is only desert  
For miles around-  
After school, the fox is in the chicken coop,  
The cops are on holiday,  
The dogs are asleep under the house,  
And there is nothing left to do  
As the rattlesnakes slither by,  
But to pack your few things and  
Head for the war they are  
Performing in the theatres of the south.  
Where after the silence,  
Great men decorate the earth  
Before they are found, while back up North  
Their wives and their lovers,  
After the fireworks and parades,  
In the humid bedroom where they pray,  
Lips cut upon missing letters,  
Carefully perform the joy without a sound.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Time Of Your Sorrows

Maybe I made love to you and maybe there are still Ferris  
Wheels, Or maybe I am just as drunk as  
A gold fish in its plastic bag sold away from your golden  
Silhouette at the fair:  
Maybe I am all of this and none of this is real:  
Maybe I have stopped breathing, Alma,  
Maybe you are all that is boreal under the moon, and maybe you are  
All that can save me,  
While various professionals make love: and marsupials and primates,  
And the other detectives make love smack dap in their spot lights  
While the more reclusive lovers of these endives sip and feel  
In the gallows of the penumbras of high noon:  
And maybe I will never know how to feel you, Alma,  
But it is high time that all of the children awakened and wiped their  
Eyes in awe and speculation,  
Thoroughly recognizing the grandeurs deep in your despondent  
Eyes that you loved an mailman high in the arid grandeurs of the departures  
Of your old country, Alma: even though he could not hold you:  
I took is place and loved you forever and tomorrow just to fill the caps  
In the time of your sorrows, Alma, Alma, while he was away.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Tombs

Dollar for dollar at the spotless cathedral for  
Unicorns- becoming disbanded through the intractable  
Union of my thoughts- her hands of green  
Scars like paper sailboats across the grass- and in our  
Horizon, her tombs  
Laid like easily defined lamp posts down the streets:  
Or in the many meat markets of  
The middling of our days: how many bright boys  
As bright as we forget to clean themselves and thus  
Fell anonymously fighting for to be the captains of her  
Days- and the good English diction eat out of  
Their filibustered tongues: eat out in action  
Underneath the tombs of the wild and philanthropic  
Hibiscus as if eaten out from underneath the sun:  
As, if they could, their skeletons would all be dancing:  
Dancing in the tombs pulled out from under the rug.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Trenches Of Mars

Solar tresses  
Breed the sacrificial renaissance  
Tossed amidst the Negroid stars:  
The blind men who speak boldly  
With both tongues,  
But they have not choice but to set sail:  
For their kingdom is on fire,  
Set by a little boy playing in the flaccid wheat:  
The book of matches a Molotov cocktail  
The silos are full of hungry mice,  
And the limpid police don't know which  
Lead to follow:  
Their women are in two parts,  
Both something of a failed actress,  
The jungle is curling up the slopes;  
They are pulling the steamer over the  
Mountains to see the Opera,  
And the little girls who have yet to fail,  
Contemplating the deadly fangs of their  
First loves, the Boom slang  
Draped like wet laundry in the olive trees,  
Which will molt the skin in the pews of church:  
The hierarchical depictions of men in uniforms:  
Bullets for the gun, and the Ferris Wheel's light-bulb barrel.  
Tonight they have come to town,  
Selling spun sugar under the abducting lights;  
Their hands are full of little tickets for the rides,  
And the things we say to impress our grandparents:  
The lonely fingers weeping on the piano until dawn.  
If I kiss her lips, it will be in the deepest sleep,  
In the trenches of Mars, where the air is untried,  
And the natives balloons in the evacuated park:  
If I kiss her lips, it won't be tomorrow,  
But tonight....

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Truancies Of Our Escapes

Sleeping in the carport of the high school where I now  
Teach,  
All of the heavens out of reach and my body filibustering  
For angels who will never learn  
As the sky is a cathedral that will always burn,  
And looking up into her  
As the airplanes cross her skirts, and are in her hair  
As if barrettes like girls famished in a  
Busied Eucharist,  
Waiting for the swing-sets to set- while all of the housewives  
Are getting wet wet  
And the jewelries around their necks, a Ferris Wheel  
A midway above the notches of her clothes,  
Recoiling softly dismissive as a single night into which  
The frog princes sing sing of metamorphosis  
Sing, sing  
To the mirages in the desert- of words that have never found,  
Of possibilities never reaching the flesh of tongues  
Into a strange chorus where there are no gods exactly  
But there is a certain metamorphosis  
Of the daily thought: of how I can change into a prince for you:  
How I can lay out my raiment across the fields for you,  
In your legs of whatever colors you are:  
Over the mowed grassed and the trimmed hedges of ixora  
Celebration how this has become a game without any  
Touchable rewards, just as if these were knights  
Adventuring naked, into the wilderness without swords:  
Or across the rivers who come grandly, cutting us out  
Of our middles,  
As we sleep as soundly as minnows drooled outwards onto  
Our pillows into a popular world of our dreams,  
With paper snowflakes for our weathers and paper airplanes of  
Our dreams:  
We come down softly as winnowed hoof prints into our  
Meadows, in the daydreams of our twilight  
Like jasmine in the séances of our artistic sleeping walking:  
I reach out to touch you, the wind marking my fingertips,  
The windows staring into the open yards  
As the goldfish always see the truancies rising just as wildflowers

In the trauancies of our escapes.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Unforgiving Reality Where I Already Belong

Scars, like punched roses, the ungainly pugilists  
Tattooed by rich spined anemone, I have all these  
Expectations, like tourists lining a parade of  
Conquistadors flashing crustaceaned for the hurricane,  
Blasting their green copper cannons to bemuse,  
To wake up early the venal and the sick muse;  
To lick his lips on liquor for breakfast, to be so sharp  
And lucky as to read Baudelaire and Rimbaud in the  
Original pig-Latin; or girls in pigtails hiccupping on  
Spotchy ponies- Bullies waiting at the bus stop to punch  
You like a type-writer, to send you spinning back over  
The iron pyrite of her happy tresses, to the school day  
Again in the green lanai with cartoonic blisses;  
And I thought I'd succeeded in loving you by writing down  
The perfect thing, and putting it in this bottle to save  
Me, but it seems I have to turn it out first, and upset the  
Apoplectic indigenous with my latching afternoon diseases,  
Francaphonic and gardening, trying to think up impressive  
Names for flowers, ending up defeated by lesser countries  
With more beautiful covers; it would be so much easier  
To take you out into the sun of my abandoned five acres,  
Raping you to the sounds of lonely traffic, and spending  
The rest of life doing penitence in the unforgiving reality where  
I already belong.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Utter And Unbounded Surreal

Now I have really felt the worth of my dreams:  
They were first golden but they soon grew into your green,  
A-,  
And I cant help bragging of you:  
You told me that you don't like going out into the sun,  
But you came from that dry country in the elbow of another world  
So far nearer the Equator I can only imagine what it  
Sounds like:  
I think that I want you for a wife, Alma, and this time I think  
That I cannot help getting what I want,  
Because I have your patron Saint on my side: The virgin of Guadalupe  
Has woken up and rubbed her eyes:  
She likes the fact that her imagine is in the last window of my car,  
And that I have two candles burning for her right now:  
And I colored my hair for you tonight,  
Alma- and on Wednesday I wish to buy you lunch, and I hope I  
Can work your aunt Mierna's shift again, so that I can give her my pay  
For more of the jewelry from Mexico that you like  
To wear;  
And I am aware of your inequality, Alma: I am aware that you are  
Far too beautiful for me,  
But I will use my tricks and my witchcraft to carry you through  
The stanchied hibiscus and all the way up to the heavens where  
The dragons and the other heavy beasts are breathing,  
Because even though I didn't hear you come,  
You have come and you did prevail,  
And my twerps of penmanship are all so busy humming, and trying to  
Carry your melody,  
To lift you up from the rusting hinges of this mundane and diadem you  
Forever where you belong: In the utter and unbounded surreal.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death

I thought maybe today it would snow,  
But I still went ahead and did the regular things;  
If I drank more Chablis, I think I might  
Get my poems published, in lustrous broadsides,  
Knickknacks for worms and other handles,  
Scattered there in the valley of the shadow of death along with  
The loosed cannonballs and ceaselessly joyful cavalries,  
Find that I don't have to shave to become  
An associate professor of poetry at a local college,  
If I lived in New England, or knew how to  
Fix and ride a John Deer tractor, or write a  
Letter to a best friend, or someone who could become a politician,  
But I only drink the cheapest rum, and do not watch  
Football, and baseball only when it comes to  
The world series. I fixate on bartenders who do  
Not come, who are busier with better handles-  
I'm a strange sort of bum, who shoots roman candles  
Across the canal, spends the day alone chewing his  
Gums under the roly-poly sun: I have spend days  
And days alone, throwing sticks and bones to my  
Dogs, lulling; and yet tomorrow, I shall join weddings  
In the shadow of the Colorado Rockies, only to  
Go back down again away from the lips of sommeliers.  
For now I will stay up until I come down, and these will  
Be the last few lines of another evening in limbo:  
What strange inventions, these last charges of the light  
Brigade, while grandfathers snore the next room over  
From their favorite sons. I used to crack her knuckles  
For her, and c\*ck her guns; but that really isn't true,  
None of it, the unruly schemes patter out upon the  
Skree along the nape of nostalgia's summit.  
I can see it like yesterday, and thus I scramble to reach  
Her who I am forever approaching.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Velvet Ballroom Of Your Hapless Soul

I do not call this house my house.  
How does a crustacean choose its home;  
Is that its mission from an early age  
To set out and beat the worm-  
When I was packed posthaste into this flesh  
And bone  
With nothing to say about it, and all of its  
Lonely wounds:  
Rather, I can hear the cicadas like alley cats,  
And you know the sky is blue but only sleeping,  
And I'd like to set out right now and leave  
This cenotaph, let other creatures wriggle through  
The open house and reanimate it into  
Rich bouquets of adulterated spume;  
And leaving all that has haunted me, enter you with  
No presumption,  
That leggy ballroom- the sumptuously busted promenade  
How you go straight out into your workaday- and make  
Love, and call out names, and play-  
Your arms would be my swing set, your tongue my  
Spongy bed- Your eyes the windows burning across  
All that I was meant to see,  
And I would once hinder you, seeing how you made love,  
Spelunking in your echoes free of charge,  
All your juicy spaces- your pomegranate hordes,  
Your butcher's holiday would be a great wilderness for  
My spirit to explore,  
Or dancing with you in the velvet ballroom of your  
Hapless soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Warmth Of Familiar Holidays

I have a house that is fully grown:  
I have a house that is a grandfather, who I bought from  
A homosexual artist and his mother who  
Was at least as old as this house:  
He painted each room a different soft shade of shell,  
And now each room flows around my barren body  
While I think of Sharon and fireworks:  
I think of the things that will sell, that aren't already venal,  
And yet are not scarred like me;  
It must take a beautiful being to be not either of the two,  
And yet someone who hasn't seen the soft tips of mountains  
Underneath the coiling planes of nimbus:  
For surely the rains will be blocked up like traffic,  
And they will wait for awhile like rabbits in the briars,  
Enjoying their festivals until it is time again to escape:  
Just as I can write my novels, and think upon Alma  
And her warm children  
While around me the people who are renting their bodies two one  
Another make the sounds of a joyful orchard;  
And if I have been away, it has only been to Arizona, or maybe  
My soul has been away,  
But the planets continue to shuffle their feet. They are getting cold  
Waiting outside,  
Wanting like little children, like us all, to return home once again,  
Basking in the warmth of familiar holidays.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Wastelands Of South Florida

I burnish words to distract from my impotence,  
Like homosexuals go to pet in the zoo:  
If I knew a better way I would look you in the eye  
While I wrote short fiction long-handed;  
And I would not turn away in dénouement,  
To make a tragedy; Carefully, I should imprint you  
In wayward publications, the way a mother wolf  
Teaches her young how to hunt through a feral education:  
And use a windlass to crank you up from the sharks,  
Who smile like carnivorous dentists, the Precambrian  
Utensils who wish to use you as the heroin in their toothy fairy-tale;  
But I would whisk you under a tipsy sun;  
If we had children, we'd set them out before the waves,  
So that they could catalogue the way the sea breathes,  
In each motion, where the fish leap like squadrons of  
Biplanes; and it would be easier, the way we napped,  
And the places that we chose, my nostalgia readily dipped  
Into, for it has always swam the dimple of your navel,  
Where your mother picked you like a fruit, and held you  
In the hospital's sanitizing light, and drenched you  
With those amorous eyes, until they and all the other senses  
Knew you well, and sent you spinning into high school  
Where our gravities touched like a microcosm of heavenly bodies,  
Until you spun me away by your centripetal force never diminished  
By all this time and years sweating like octogenarians  
Enduring their perilous calisthenics in the wastelands of  
South Florida.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Weddings Of The Sea

Imperfect repetitions- how I throw my body again  
And again, Like the  
Sudden but happy fish coming out of the river to steal a  
Bolt of sun,  
To watch the horse and her children run:  
And before that there was high school then, all the children entering  
And exiting there:  
I don't care- This is my song running out barefooted out into the  
Grasses of the front yard,  
No matter how small that front yard has to be:  
It must always stop and look breathlessly at the traffic swaying there:  
Back and forth, like curtains, like lungs:  
And the funny things we've had to say, we've had said to us:  
And this is America,  
So take the bus:  
And Alma had to get on home again today, her body moving through  
The boleros of the jungle and the sea:  
Her body that was pressed so close against the cash register,  
And so close again to me this wonderful day,  
That I could almost see the birth places in her eyes, and the needs of  
Her children:  
Oh Alma, Alma: you are a mirror, and this is my mirror trying to fit  
For you,  
As the waves march in the weddings of the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Wilderness Of A Vast And Heartfelt Desolation

If girls are still up in Colorado,  
I don't want to go to sleep  
While the aspens are still changing;  
And I feel consoled by looking at their children  
And their liquor bottles,  
That I should be like any number of deciduous timber  
Deep in the forest or a long ways up  
Her rocky gown,  
To change my words only before the feral eyes  
Of the creatures who live in desolation;  
To wear my lightning scars without a kind voice  
Of comparison:  
I look at her eyes far away and say this to her  
That I could never belong even in her lap looking up in  
A castanet of eyelashes,  
Like the trunk of a velvet car: In another life we would  
Have made a go of it  
Homesteading in Clearwater FL, playing scrabble and  
Tennis with my uncle;  
But she's married now; oh boy, and an entrepreneur,  
And I am immortal, even if the world doesn't  
Care to know about it- After winter hits  
And there is no more gold to breathe, I will let my  
Colors change underneath the calligraphies chiseled into  
The common epitaphs of prostrate bachelors,  
Letting the nurseries of earthworms smell the fermenting  
Perfumes of my wrists;  
And wait for her to never come, and say how she did not  
Know me, or look at me with any kind of consternation,  
Wondering why it was I lived for her,  
And sang my silent songs to her in the wilderness of a vast  
And heartfelt desolation.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Wind

I am the only one who  
Org\*sms  
An origami jungle  
Screaming in papier-mâché  
Vertebrates  
Where the sun is a paper  
Plate  
Burning orange-flamed lips  
At the picnic,  
Turn to curling ash in the whispering  
Grass,  
As something like 10,000  
Army ants march past,  
The pomegranate armored conquistadors  
Of a luscious past,  
Looking for the fabled city  
Through the bladed forest,  
All that wealth fallen from my sticky  
Splayed fingers, piano players  
Stretching out from my slumbering palm,  
Made entirely from sweet vermillion  
Watermelon  
Which glistens in ruby pyramids  
In butchered geometry toward the sun,  
Circled by gossiping horseflies  
Who are taking a walk  
In the wind.

Robert Rorabeck



# In The Windowless Room

See me after school in the windowless room  
Sitting next to the sixteen year old Mexican girl—  
Not a scar on my face  
Can hide my uneasiness, but she has control Over  
Every blade of grass,  
And even the airplanes become her angels  
Of the sky,  
Until we become lost from ourselves,  
Going home to see the old families before  
The televisions—  
Those whom we've enjoyed so many Christmases  
Together  
That even the snowflakes have become sick of  
Turkey—  
Soon it becomes Chinese New Year—  
And all of the people dance and light off fireworks  
Upon their make-believe continents,  
Just as you can assume that they've been doing—  
Yet Antarctica remains nearly empty and  
Yet as big as Russia—  
Can we go to see each other there, sixteen year old  
Mexican girl,  
And make our own continent out of her—  
Disrobe our minds of the holocausts of our anyways  
Societies—  
And see what emotions cut from the papers that  
We are yet to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Wings Of So Many Throaty Migrations

It takes a whole year for some people to  
Reject my words,  
But they have just done it; and gifted me with  
All that time of tiny little hope,  
Of hidden jaw-bone springs,  
Of all sorts of tiny new birds who have come  
To these lower eves to pullulate and twitter as if  
They were the leaves;  
And I love her still, though being defeated,  
And last night I would have hung myself with an  
Orange extension cord- but that doesn't need  
To be repeated- the light is daft, and the light  
Is starboard; and I am swimming hard toward  
Her craft- In fact I am flying upward using  
Pillows and holding my breath, making the gesticulations  
Of a homing pigeon- so let her crease me with  
Somnambulant light and lay me down across her bed,  
Her study board- and interact with me while spinning  
Her jubilant records over the trees who are dancing  
In the wings of so many throaty migrations.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Womb Of Erstwhile Conclusions

The tenements starving underneath the hoof-prints of  
Angels—and he comes home to you, brown-skinned—apiary  
And you make love for fewer than five minutes—  
And when you go to sleep you become all of my heavens,  
Like a cemetery on fire islands—and words that go together  
When there is nothing else at home— just as a turtle  
Cannot reach a doorknob, or a playwright who is being  
Pierced through the eye—and so many nights come leaping  
Down through the Aristotelian Spheres while I cannot figure out  
Anything else that is even remotely beautiful to say—  
There once was I time where I didn't seem to know you,  
And as the seasons seem to go around perpetually  
Famishing forever—like enamored Ferris wheels making an  
End to their own midways—underneath the savage heavens  
Where all the gods we've abandoned can never even  
Spell—it all seems to be coming back around—  
And sleep in the womb of erstwhile conclusions that I am never  
Sure that we can even spell.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Wombs Of The Daylight

In the wombs of the daylight we get our summers:  
And in the spring times,  
The airplanes touch down—  
And when they do, they get wet—  
They also become a catastrophe,  
The same way that your eyes  
Never fell upon me—  
Woman across the aisle from me—  
And this is some kind of wedding,  
Because there is cake  
And baby's breath—  
And when the daylight awakens there will be  
Trips to other planets on quests for water,  
And the school buses will return for the  
Butterflies—  
And there will be much noise and jubilation  
But not much else,  
Even if there are survivors.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Yard

Now you fill me up with  
Airplanes  
And goldfish:  
The cats sits for awhile: the sun milks up  
The dish;  
And everything else just turns around:  
The music gets up in the grass:  
My mother dries her clothes-  
In the yard, another rabbit: another rose.

Robert Rorabeck

## In The Yard I Knew As A Young Man

I don't know how you figure this- how you call  
Me up buried in my weathers:  
I don't know how the light sounds nor feels around your  
Shoulders,  
But they are an orchard still breathing outside of  
Disney World,  
And I have so much free time to experience loneliness:  
Possibilities unwrapping on the other side of  
The world,  
Like crickets pursuing the mermaids in their every changing  
Cerulean changing rooms  
Until they can finally back up into a grotto and make love  
With the juvenile offspring of orange trees  
Teasing them- and the world in the trance of a zoetrope  
Filled with cypress trees  
Who happen to be growing up in the yard I knew  
As a young man.

Robert Rorabeck

# In The Zoos Underneath The Ceiling Fans

Emolliate another night, and give me succor  
With my fingers scoured from  
Try to light of roman candles above the ant mounts  
Perpetuating a baseball diamond:  
Let me strike out again after midnight upon a  
Terrible odyssey,  
Masturbating over the moldy pages of another  
Pornography  
Whose light flames like vermilion turpentine  
Trying to turn its sickness into another believe  
Even while all of the children are coming  
Home combustive in a rain cloud  
And all of the lions are roaring, yellow maned-  
They seem to be yawning up at the yellow coated  
Heroes who are already returning to their bedrooms  
And eating fried chicken their parents bought  
Them on their way home from the other day laborers:  
And so they rest, as the yard crickets,  
In the zoos underneath the ceiling fans like so many  
Other things that could once have been said  
To have almost existed.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Battalions Of Loneliness

My pitiful voice hurries along in the loud  
Whispers in the footsteps of a world that doesn't  
Change;  
If you knew she was getting married, and you still  
Went to the park to watch the funeral processions,  
To sniff the crotches of angels;  
And to know just so many words to believe in  
The challenges of evil gods,  
But to be impotent when mocking them:  
To be a lost bird speaking colorfully through the trees,  
Mouthing off to muses while they make love in other  
States,  
Or even other worlds and never really once even  
Thinking of you, how you are already dying for them-  
Why you might as well be crucified, lining the park  
In golden chains,  
Pretending to be a song bird, your paper songs  
All strung out and disorganized, quickly forgotten  
Under the more necessary cigarettes in their battalions of  
Loneliness as it rains.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Their Colors

Dogs lay brilliant beside their home:  
The entire mountain has burned, and Alma has run  
Away to Ocala:  
When I made love to her, it was just after her husband  
Made love to her  
Coming down on father's day across Palmetto-  
And her breasts had two nipples where he seemed to  
Have sucked in unison,  
And I made love to her as the day grew dark,  
And the ants returned home,  
Marching- and the dogs closed their eyes and in  
Their colors, dreamed.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Conquered Countries

I'll go back home to the love joys  
In the sessions of hypnotism in their kindergartens,  
Breathing like goldfish in paper bags  
With their hands on the handlebars of plastic bicycles  
From paper chests;  
And this is a lesson learned before memories can form:  
This is the rain calling up the long-fibrillose tails of  
Worms  
Through the roots of a tree of death, through its long  
Spanish roads like veins of precious stones  
Slithering past the groves and along the ancient fortifications  
Of the Romans who used to look down at the unquieting  
Sea as they stole and made love to all those girls  
In their conquered countries.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Dances Of Airplanes

Memories for a little while  
Look like words,  
Letters curled up for her in séances  
While my dog gets drunk with  
Me on my bed—  
Then fade, the forgotten art of  
Muses that once could start fire with  
A baring of their toes—  
Now have gone home to the  
Average husband  
And wait beside the opaqueness in  
The theatre of his television—  
No roses now stuck to the windows  
Of parked cars—  
Or ways to find out drunkenly which  
Way she has gone home,  
Following her like a wolf besides  
The dog tracks and baseball diamonds  
All in a drunken serenade and all  
Beneath the soirée of the stewardesses  
In their dances of airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Their Dinner Parties Of Geodes

Franchises beneath the palmettos and airplanes,  
Trying to say her name into dusk,  
Losing myself like cicadas- watching the little boys  
Turn gray in the wash of cenotaphs and  
Orange groves, while that very angel they love  
Is just above them, fawning on a carnival  
Of wires,  
Like a kite they could not buy- and all of their reflections  
In the windows of other's cars, mimicking them  
Covered with dust from some girl's, or their sister's,  
University- and it feels quite fine to lie, or to  
Do their parents harm in the middle of the day:  
To sit up there as high as any house in their neighborhood,  
Woebegone, or sitting in armchairs anyways, across  
The canals segregating their counterparts like intersections  
Do winos, and lighting fireworks, fireworks to the  
Recalcitrant gods who refuse to work anymore,  
And lay ensconced anyways in their dinner parties of geodes.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Goldfish Bowls

I wrote most of my poetry for you  
When I as twelve years old,  
In pure delight upon the saddle while  
The blue bird sang,  
Radiant in the cannibalisms- as the sun  
Doused the fire tower in the summit  
Like gasoline,  
And the mummies remained perfectly  
Entombed:  
So they remained, and Grand Central  
Station remained,  
And the pond where the ducks were  
Remained,  
Like Allie and his baseball glove:  
Perfectly obscure around the outlines  
Of school,  
While cheerleaders were swimming,  
And the goldfish were dancing in their  
Goldfish bowls.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Grottos Of Carports

Slow despotic merry weathers under the tunicates  
Of the zoo and her ever soft tributaries:  
Glass bottles being blown open like flowers from their  
Long necked wounds,  
As we held each other today, the bed springs  
Playing the long entwined legs of our  
Amber harpsichord,  
And I saw churches in your eyes, Alma- even as you had  
To go away and open  
His doors, your children coming home from daycare  
And latch keying around the despotic living room  
Like spots of green,  
While I have seen the lions yawning on anonymous holidays  
Through the holly,  
And I skipped school and floated with the ceaselessly  
Optimistic otters,  
Without even knowing who you were then, or that I would  
Have to run to make you my wife in time before the fairs  
Of my enamoration closed their bright midways,  
As the mothers swooned in their grottos of carports underneath  
The lattening, fat bellies of storms.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Homeless Gardens

Now we sang of the infinite yards: and now this:

And now this:

The way I sometimes still see my own mother inside the blue carport

Getting undressed and electrocuted:

They way sometimes too I wished that I knew my own

Words:

Like a self aware mocking bird, and the songs that I give again

To you- to you, like a sophisticated if inebriated fantasies

Up the three stories of the galleries of my fantasies

That I walked with you today:

Alma, on our Tuesday of today: while last time we held tennis and

Then I carried you into a sea where you couldn't even swim,

And I kissed you, and held you underneath the teepees of the

Sun,

And all of her vanishing elements: while today we took my own

Car up and down Military Trail, and you told me that your man

Wasn't unkind to you,

But then I remember how he left you and Michael and went to

Mexico:

But he came back again; and again he is here:

But today he was in Orlando with Mickey Mouse, finishing his

Pools for over eager housewives,

And that was why you were right here; and you are either a good

Woman climbing my proverbial beanstalk or I am blind;

And even if I am blind, I still have so many harmless stories

In their homeless gardens left to sing for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Hopeless Schools

In the school:  
Echoes of bleach- pitifully superficial  
Holocaust  
Of adolescent fanfare the busses bring here:  
Children come here  
And they are lost- from class to class:  
What brings them? They have no  
Will to learn,  
But they giddy up through the turnstiles  
With youth to burn:  
And I watch them matriculate from  
Copper state to bronze-  
The airplanes don't even pretend to brush them:  
The airplanes leap across the canals  
These children don't even think to leap across:  
The greatest angels burn their  
Fuselages across the milkweeds and the puss willows:  
The pilots are taking their stewardesses into  
The bosoms of the mountains,  
Populated with wildflowers and honey due:  
To make love  
Far above the mindless heads of the children  
In their hopeless schools of every afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Their Mornings

Prisms in the bottom of a cup,  
As if I am pressed to your lips themselves  
Mirror reflections of Siamese pronouns,  
And softly bathing manatees at the bottom  
Of a housewife's pool—  
The day's long surrender into the nocturnal  
Honeymoon  
Where the otters bathe twisted about like  
Olives in a martini glass—  
Slowly, the sunlight like cadmium and  
Gunpowder sacrificed to the universe—  
Sinking with all of her animals,  
Unto the séances of houses where the mammals  
Barely whisper,  
And she walks over them, taking their numbers,  
And talking to them softly—whispering, whispering  
And promising them eggs and bouquets  
In their mornings.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Navel's Caesuras

And unicorns eating lunch underneath the  
Overpass avoiding the roses  
As they gossip—gossip:  
&quot;The roses are too beautiful—beautiful&quot;  
For lunch—  
And I rode by them on my bicycle on  
My way home  
On the weekend underneath the airplanes that  
Could be leaping anywhere,  
They were paid to be up to so many chances—  
Yes, like wishes—wishes in  
And evaporated wishing well,  
As the moon swung her hips and then swung  
Her shoulders:  
And I thought to the busy cemetery—cemetery  
Even though she wasn't going anywhere;  
&quot;Where have you buried my pretty love—  
Oh, cemetery—Oh, where? &quot;  
She said, &quot;Look up into the pretty sky,  
Since that is where I've buried her—since that is  
Where I-&quot;  
But even then I could not see her, lost in  
The house as she was lost with her man—  
And clouds accumulating, blinding the lighthouse  
With their caracoles,  
As the waves galloped abandoned,  
At once bosomy and lapsing in their navel's  
Caesuras.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Their Own Makebelieves

Words in picture books have less meaning- accompanied  
As they are by the sweet verification;  
As herons are fencers in the park where childhood still gets  
Up through its blazes  
To burn its forehead on the reflections of the snowfields  
Blinding down  
From the happy trauancies of the gods who are up there  
Once again summer above tree line,  
Adulterous, restless,  
Believing as do we in their own makebelieves.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Regalia's Crenulations

Time crawls at a steady pace- snails over  
The backs of terrapin-  
Foxes laying in the grass, tasting grapes:  
We watch the race horses,  
And talk about busted uncles, as the mountain  
Wears the fire like a necklace-  
The planes, like angels dance, and the traffic turns around  
Underneath her,  
Lost in the prefabrications of the city. Where is  
All of this going,  
I wonder, as she slips away with him, back to  
Her marriage underneath the bridge-  
The great bodies of water trying to reach up towards  
Her, slowly breathing in their regalia's crenulations;  
And I sit and weep  
Even after all of the beautiful tourists have somehow  
Swam away.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Unabashed Visage

Rife with the kites in the air- the inexperienced  
Wind blowing anyways,  
Over the super markets and estuaries, and the  
Young girls gone astray losing themselves  
In the grass like emerald ashtrays,  
And looking up for no good reason, counting  
The good luck of elephants in the clouds,  
And the pinstripes of pilots burning their  
Showing their armpits for the gods  
And bathing in their unabashed visage.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Their Unutterable Pain

I suppose if I eat lunch alone I will have a brand new  
Girlfriend,  
And she will look at herself so finely like a golden fish in  
A lavender dish in some long and fabulously slender  
Home,  
While even now Alma is kissing his mouth as he calls her home  
Into the weeds and scuppernongs:  
As he calls her home and home and home;  
And I just want to lie with my dogs, and travel fancifully up  
The backs of unplanned mountains:  
I just want to disappear into the lightning apertures that tear apart  
Sunlight:  
I just want to bight my lip and write another new novel:  
I just wish that I could look good riding my bicycle,  
While the planets grew fat in their loneliness,  
And the erstwhile meanings of the perpetual sorority flaunted  
Their glowing stuff over the  
Cemetery where all the old generals and grandmothers continued  
Weeping;  
And maybe it is that I will die, or maybe I will just return to  
The library;  
But it already feels so long,  
And even as the lights dim, the sailors sip their stuff and wait  
For the pinpricks to cover the stratosphere and thus  
To realize that they are never alone for long in their unutterable pain.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Their Work

Wounded by airplanes and agape,  
And then to be seeming to look away at new wounds:  
The sky opens up,  
Like the proverbial sea parting,  
And the old lovers find untried things to say to themselves-  
Their bed sparking of the utensils of heavily  
Used fireworks,  
As the rusty wolves wait in the timbers of the over-fallen  
Woods,  
Where even the tinniest of little girls have over-slipped  
Their playgrounds  
And are making new wounds into the dirt,  
Their skirts all too open for the busiest of ants  
Who are themselves too busied in their work.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Their Yesterday

Prettying ribbons around a heart—  
She is dying in a flea market: around her,  
All of the vanishing houses and  
The sea:  
Getting up tomorrow, tasting on my lips  
The salt lick of sea horses:  
Their fishtailed homeopathy:  
Swooning in the bathrooms between  
The classes of my students:  
They disappear at an hour's length:  
They go home,  
Dividing like starfish—they all know their  
Way home,  
And they go that way,  
Like intelligent rays escaping the sun,  
Biting their lips  
Too self conscious to talk back to  
The heavens that birthed them in their yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Them

Another promenade of a sorority,  
Bringing out their show around their water fountains,  
Preening and attempting their peonies—  
They love their football teams—  
Entire parking lots of them,  
And there elbows bend away like the hemisphere—  
Growing through the stained glass of the churches  
Of their universities—  
To end up as trophy wives—  
Somehow there are too many of them to number,  
And they sing together in the afternoon on  
Weekends—  
They know nothing of astronomy, yet they are up there—  
Like vanishing pictures in the coloring books  
Of girls who are too old now to find  
Any understanding in them at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# In These Features Of My Metaphor

I put this on my face so that you will love me.  
My receding hairline is the bosque they are clearing,  
To make room for the grandest boys selling the biggest  
Fireworks that go on forever.... Effluvious  
Victorian showers of velveteen gold;  
My little scars are fading fast like salt pools on the  
Inland sea,  
Each imperfection of a feeling, the earliest realization  
Of a wicked infant's propensity for sin;  
I wear it like a heirloom of a drag queen, what the father  
Said atop the roof before he took off his belt and beat  
Him under the winsome moon, and the feline panting:  
From there you could see the junkyard of cars across the  
Ditches shaded by the pinetree harem, swinging shady,  
Shady- Take it off; and my mouth, that bruised harbinger,  
That lady killer who mouth-offs to black widow spiders  
Who scuttle across the kitchen linoleum when the housewife  
Stumbles in drunk after midnight to wash the cerulean dishes,  
He is the rock garden out from that is no long there,  
Because they widened the road; Filled with svelte cactus  
Quills as fine as dandelions, and dead rabbits hung upon them  
Like short haired saints- Compelled into their draping penitence  
By the peer pressure of neighborhood dogs;  
And my tongue, and we could go from here to my neck.  
She used to say it was the best thing about me;  
And she kissed once or twice between entanglements with  
Cotton candy. But she was a churl come down to get out of  
The weather, and I soon learned to disbelieve her;  
In fact, I am certain she is no longer in these features of  
My metaphor.

Robert Rorabeck

# In These Woods

Your body a brown misfit with silver  
Haunts; it jaunts across these borders, bones moving  
Beneath the jeans in the luscious traffics  
A few but many see-  
The eyes the quacks like the breakfast of over easy  
Eggs for wolves:  
The tongue that pants and lollygags, and then strips  
Naked in these woods,  
And says the few things to you lying down that  
It could:  
The few but many things, as you pant, that you can understand.

Robert Rorabeck

## In This Morning Of Unwieldy Exercise

If she can live here, I suppose I can live here too,  
Even though the breaths of her life are populated by another man:  
And she shares his bed right now, while her daughter is singing  
And the stars are right up there but so far away;  
Like drunks on the roofs whose dreams are turning like carnivals,  
Whose dusty cats have become entire lions:  
And there is where I have walked for most of my time, lonely and  
Out of school, down the dismissed paths unused by the  
Populace, through the shady trees which leave little room,  
Into the cloudy fiends whose houses have disappeared and whose  
Fireworks all lay spent like young do-gooders exhausted and pell-mell  
Into the grasses who have been dewed too well to come awake  
So early in this morning of unwieldy exercise.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Those Intoxicating Skies

Taking advantages to this flower:

Lost in an Ozark off a pace from the trailer park,

Musing to the untalented halls of everyone else

Who exists here:

There will be school tomorrow and rain

And sunshine.

And lessons to be learned, and colors to be

Colored in the lines:

But her eyes will always be there, with her bosom,

Aureoled,

With her brown shoulders like a vessel in a hidden

Forest:

She will remain for the brevity of vagabonding

Amusement parks,

Until her lights are all done with,

And crippled, giving their carnival shadows to the

Illuminations of midgets,

And the rivers continue somewhere sideways from

The baseball diamonds- continue,

As the pilots look down, and the stewardesses

Remember their childhoods,

As they dance the night forever in those intoxicating skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Unexplainable Goodbyes

Hold outs for penny courts,  
Hoodlums with nothing to hold:  
All the pages I have filled with the drizzling of  
Caracoles:  
How like snowflakes that all together fall,  
Each one significant, and yet none of them mean  
Anything at all;  
But they come together in a fraternity that will  
Not last for you  
My muse- their very souls a transitory pigmentation  
That will metamorphose before  
Your brown eyes:  
Alma,  
They will turn away into rivers at your feet,  
Just to kiss your forgotten footprints as they whisper  
In unexplainable goodbyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Unnatural Toys

Embalm me in unnatural toys and I  
Will await you above the forest  
And above the Ferris Wheel until I become  
But that familiar vision walking his apex  
Over the abandoned cornucopias and  
Television programs—  
I have tried my best to sell fireworks to your  
Soul,  
Even before I knew that it was you atop  
Of my friend's house in the middle of a school  
Day—transfixed with all of your charms,  
Spinning in the sunbeaming spiderwebs of  
The truancies of our postmodern saturnalia  
And now you give a new daydream for  
The beating of my heart  
Even before I return and start off again towards  
That infected afternoon where you can never be relieved  
In the venal baseball games of a penultimate summer:  
It is the venomous sport that the rattlesnake is  
Grinning and this is just how we get up  
Again above Miami and all of Mexico: this is just  
How we start of dying—trying to make copper or  
Bronx—while the shadows cool themselves—  
And the words keep on spinning—and you are half naked  
Beside your husband's pool—and you are getting up  
After the jasmine are all done closing:  
Isn't this your spell them—and if not—well, at least  
I am all done supposing.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Vermilion Accolades

If the night is freckled with ixora, then I will make a wish,  
While the children are like kites waiting in their doorsteps of sky  
For their fathers who come flying in,  
Hoofed and in chariots of airplanes; and I have been down so long:  
I have cut my fingers to feed the minnows in the canal,  
While their homeopathic silver ness has gone on to feed even  
Bigger things:  
And it is nice to lie here in the fat oxygen in a house painted with the  
Soft colors of a seashell  
And do things for Alma, even while new souls are getting ready to  
Graduate again from high school-  
To get up and stretch their legs and go a little further down their  
Ways,  
While the emerald waters rush in vermilion accolades.

Robert Rorabeck



## In What I've Already Said

Brands are burning in the sun—  
The sun light is all but over  
The trailer parks—  
And even before the show is over,  
The moon rises—  
It becomes appeased—a collector  
Of arrowheads and souvenirs—  
And other words I neither dare to  
Read or say—  
But your first loves started here,  
In the valleys of their contraptions,  
And settled downwards as  
The snow melted and you had  
To decide if it was you who was becoming  
More or less beautiful—  
And you took a husband as your art.  
When you graduated, you stopped  
Riding the school bus—  
And you fornicated in the afternoon  
As the tin horns melted—  
And the wild bucks swooned into the  
Snowmelt—  
And you forgot about the corruptions of  
First loves and everything else—  
But you remain my sister—  
And I write about you everywhere  
Especially when I am drunk—  
And the moon is hooded  
And the muses and wolves are in bed—  
If you are quiet, you can listen to what  
They are doing,  
Or you can just trust in what I've already said.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Which No One Is Ever, Ever Home

Pretty words rhyme like pretty girls making love,  
Lactating in a sorority of a self-picking- picking time:  
The instruments of a nubile flesh look best  
Juxtaposed next to the iridescent graveyard:  
The youth of milk and ladles pouring over grandmother's bones;  
And I don't really know the characters of these species;  
I am just familiar with the carports of these grottos, of the goldfish  
In his loam,  
And of a house in which no one is ever, ever home.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Which They Once Belonged

Tonight in the haze of glory, shooting off our mouths  
To the nocturnals, and we'll have new fun by those moons:  
The entire forest will have a fire,  
But the bears will sleep: they will find new crevices, and  
Grottos and deeps:  
The fairs of my heart will move in above their doused heads,  
And light up:  
And all of the rides will sing Alma's name to the netherworlds  
Of the paths that twist in their half ways up the mountains  
Of motherless folklore, to disappear in sandy beds,  
In the entrails of ululating waters where the feral otters douse their  
Heads;  
And dream like companions of my beds: the dogs at my feet  
Like acolytes, or the wayward airplanes in the sheets of clouds:  
Dream of her without any thoughts of blessing themselves  
Again onto the tarmacs,  
Of waking up again into the kindling of bitter news, cut into the  
Snowflakes falling in the make-believe over the blue streets;  
As I hold her in the sumptuous mission where her ancestors  
Defeated my ancestors,  
But who returned back again into the golden deserts, seeming to  
Map for a ways the loneliness in which their children must follow  
Forever the way back in which still sing the places  
In which they once belonged.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Which You Have Never Sung Nor Been

They say that there are dolphins floating through  
The timbers and the trees:  
They say that they go there for little girls who kiss and curl  
The lilacs as they color;  
And they stand taught against the limbs of the verdant lumber  
Who seems to cradle them like giant mothers:  
And I think of her beneath these wild and coned conifers:  
I think of her from the lips of mountains  
Combed with cliffs of burly stone: I think of the men who were  
Lost into the brilliant stratospheres who she still hopes  
Might come down,  
Even if there is no hope: and I hold your hand and pray to you  
From the resounding basins underneath the schools of  
Stars in the bloody nosed plateaus in which you have neither  
Sung nor been,  
Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Your Auburn Hair

A blasphemy upon the walls of a religious  
Bathroom:  
This is what it is, and scarred with dyslexia—  
Devils hanging upside down.  
They are who stole all of your mother's jewelries  
While she was kissing her new bo—just  
On the outskirts of town—  
And when I saw you in the classroom,  
Like upon the far banks of an entirely innocent  
River- In unkempt séances these were born—  
Pets, lactates—and staples of every kind  
Of luscious meat—following you through the hallway  
As airplanes circled in the sky—  
And sometimes you would look up or  
Fall to your knees in pieta—as a yellow butterfly  
Presses like a barrette in your auburn hair—  
But it was only to show your appreciation  
For the heavens' cerulean discharges—  
And then you went on your way back home,  
Or to grandmother's house—  
And back into the world where you could not  
Be appreciated by me.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Your Doll House

When the day laborers peek under your skirt,  
In your doll house there are bears,  
And after they make love, what will you say to your  
Mother- that I am waiting outside in your car,  
And there is a mermaid riding a unicorn, but I do not  
Believe in her. I do not know when I will run away  
Again,  
And you and your brown skin army, who are doing  
Pushups on you: I thought I wanted to die,  
But then I thought of how the dead things die in  
Dead coral,  
And they remain beautiful for schools of fish-  
And I wonder how the fresh water fish dream under  
You when they go to sleep in their alligator beds-  
Do they wonder what it feels like to pet your  
Brown houses, as I did for a year, and you cleaned  
Yourself for me and made yourself look pretty  
As the bicycles lay underneath you and your even  
More beautiful and even more younger sisters  
Slept in their bunk beds and dreamed about flirting  
With boys even more beautiful than me.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Your Dreams

Oh, sure, the moon dreams of its  
Pretty women and its pretty  
Men,  
But when will it dream of me,  
If it is only one moon and there is only  
So many faces in its month  
Of cycles,  
And only so many suburban dredges it  
Can float across all at once;  
But doesn't it like to linger too where  
There are no tourists,  
Where the mountains run uncaged,  
Spilling their guts down into your little  
Christmas town,  
And I really don't care about what it dreams,  
Always pregnant in its pauper's  
Row:  
I want a golden canoe to lay you down  
To float with you across the zoo of many seams;  
That's all I care to do-  
F\$ck the moon, I want to be in your dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Your Eager Graveyards

Over the four shoulders,  
Of the monuments at the end of highways:  
The soft ways the birds sing—  
Echoing in castanets of blue-gilled canyons:  
The cars drive as if charioteers,  
And the days long with the shadows of  
Puppeteers and grandfathers,  
But I am going home now,  
Following the wet caresses as the entrails  
Of tears of words—  
As I saw you as if from the elbow of a passing  
Airplane,  
Taking a shower, a little debutant in your  
Haunts and aloes:  
I thought I had loved you,  
As the reasons sped away, and the high schools  
Laid barren as if on the weekends;  
And you lay with him,  
Caressing in your eager graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck



# In Your Estuary

Groggy night in your estuary—  
I can still hear the Mexicans trying to sell some  
Ice-cream  
In the afternoon after church on Sunday—  
And it is all a miss—the graveyards are dancing,  
Your knights have chased off  
After their witches of another Christmas—  
And the baseball fields lay out all  
Emptied as an archaeological dig after a rainstorm:  
My muse has hung herself like the  
Heavenly ornament in the living room  
Of another man she cannot possibly love  
Because she happens to love me—and this  
Is the end of this—nightmarish serpent devouring  
Herself throughout the swing-sets of eternity:  
As the day in its life goes:  
Candles blown like paper airplanes across the canal:  
And the boy whom we have known as Jack flits and  
Leaps, doing all of his tricks without so many  
As one single love possibly being in his heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Your Flaxen Hair

Talking in tongues of  
Landmines  
The night smells really  
Wonderful  
Like how I imagined  
Your bedroom to  
Smell in the  
Middle of tenth grade,  
While I promise myself I've  
Made it through  
Greater wounds than this  
While the  
Alligator watches me  
With sweet promise on  
Its lips,  
And I swear I haven't seen  
A better pair of eyes  
Inside a decade while  
Up ahead the traffic  
Moves like  
Unbound ribbons  
In your flaxen hair.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Your Holy Banners

The universe runs on your legs:  
See it dressed up the stars of your limbs:  
Oh,  
The universe has bangs,  
And we all flee north in your shadow,  
In your holy banners,  
Panting like kittens with holistic eyes;  
And the shore,  
The shore runs for miles-  
The shore is your ribbon, and it runs for miles,  
And these are the things you prove,  
And I have seen them keeping time from the  
Roof of our old high school,  
Because I loved you there, even if I couldn't  
Say it:  
I always wanted to be more beautiful,  
So I could run with you;  
And there were chickens in the halls, and  
I failed math,  
And I couldn't find you, but you were there:  
A short skirted general in charge of the green copper  
Cannons,  
Didn't you know that these are the things I've  
Had to say to you for many miles;  
If I could drink from your shadow,  
To lap from your dime sized amusements it would almost  
Be enough,  
And I want to buy you a pool and a very little dog,  
Because you are my universe,  
But you are already married and I don't know what to  
Do about that  
But to get drunk again and pretend I am a very modern  
Conquistador,  
Sailing blissfully down his canals fully adorned in brilliant aspects  
Of your truly holy skyway.

Robert Rorabeck

## In Your Modes Of Lackadaisical Use

Blue as your eyes are they only go so far in:  
They only provide so much shelter for your man and your  
Children:  
They go burning like the tinsels of fire blown from an  
Un concealed fan;  
Your oranges are luscious for the frying pan:  
And even if I am not your man, your lips were as good as  
Salted ham,  
And with my body in my hand, I can fling my self up into  
The deceptive riches of your ruled ceiling,  
Like a paper airplane altogether with a harem of plastic stewardesses  
All in the full body of their conformed dress,  
The night your last cigarette, and my words your best reason  
For opening your eyes to the hibernations of your family:  
They go weeping straight into your shallow abyss  
Just like the tearless bodies of crocodiles and of Indians,  
Opening up their grottos of casinos in you;  
And you are busily reciprocating with them in your modes of  
Lackadaisical use.

Robert Rorabeck

# In Your Office An Orchid Blooms

All the paddy-whack in the woods is returning to  
The sound of the comely boys beating themselves into the  
Grounds,  
The bicycle slaves, the Lincoln-log towns:  
The cherry trees who are just stumps, the axes of woodsmen  
Buried in the baskets of red-hooded runaways:  
And this is our town, or playground of dirty streets:  
Where you lost yourself and covered your naked body with  
Dust and peat;  
And you courted alligators and felt the shells on your feet,  
And the day couldn't last forever- it was bitter sweet.  
Returning to your chicken coop of trailer parks,  
All the drunkards effervescing on stock cars-  
Waiting on your father, recognizing different sorts of plants  
That were in your nursery in the back yard:  
And what are you doing now, but becoming your mother,  
Metamorphosing into someone who made you who you are:  
Your feet curl and kiss and dance far beneath the skyscrapers  
And power plants and Disney World  
Far beneath the stars, right alongside the immobilized and doused  
Cars, like candles lined up for a mass that is all a hush;  
And your crawl to him while your children ululate in their  
Various soft-boarded rooms- Nervously you give him your lush,  
And in your office an orchid blooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inappropriate Haiku Of Tranquility

Please save me from  
This vanishing tranquility:  
As you sigh, making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# In-Between The Hours

You tell yourself you  
Are a special case,  
When you bloom by your  
Own hand after midnight—  
Giving yourself the satisfied  
Present of bouquets  
The audience on the plateau  
Throws at your feet  
To seed the earth—  
After the applause,  
You can grow quiet  
Because your heart is satisfied,  
The same satiation of any animal  
Between its grazing.  
With your eyes closed  
Like stores on Sundays  
You soon shove off in your  
Bed to Elysium's Fields where  
Diana's hemlock maidens  
Blow you overpowering kisses  
From the sidelines of the  
Football field,  
To land like wet minnows  
Upon your premodona cheeks  
Cheering you until  
Just around 8 a.m.,  
When the sun slams like a  
Bulldozer through the  
Glass door  
And without even a prayer  
Before you wake up from the  
Sports centers of Mount Olympus,  
Your bachelor bones rise  
Into the routine of the living mausoleum  
Resting at the bottom of the atmosphere's ocean,  
And you dress yourself for  
Mortal combat to the cheers of  
Spectators lining the cliffs,  
Hoping to see you or your

Opponent brutally defeated.

Robert Rorabeck



# Incomprehensible

If I begin this this way,  
I will surely begin again: a song bird awakening  
With my pen:  
Dreary eyes, dumbly cast- the serpent like a moon in  
Her eyes, burning down with stolen light:  
You see it is here again, this roiling tinfoil of life:  
Alone with my dog in a house that turns around:  
Not walking towards you anymore,  
Alma-  
Letting you steal the flowers from my grave, and the hard work  
That you have won over,  
Never mindful, applying to your children and school work.  
Where will you go from here, but back across  
The frontera- through the green fires of the bosque,  
And back to Mexico- never kissing my lips  
Again,  
Dreaming of a Christmas that I will never see, as I stumble  
Out once more,  
Striking my pen at a windmill,  
And crying up to you like a snake trying to kiss a stewardesses  
Who is sailing away like a careless angel  
To other lands that lay unmapped and incomprehensible:  
Into his bed, a runwayish fever,  
Landing in the feeling that your insouciance hungerlessly steals  
Away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Incredibly Further Away

Fat men are driving across country  
In their mausoleum cars.  
I jack off into the bright kitchen forest  
Of rusty rebar,  
And the frogs sing. Of course, they  
Sing all the time.  
Their favorite stone is topaz, like  
Their throats.  
They wait for the buses of children to  
Get home from school,  
And they sing the flume of my serial  
Insouciance,  
As I curse you with the kisses of my  
Far distant dysfunction,  
Thinking that you will never know what  
It means to be like a pirate,  
Sleeping two men to a bed,  
Our ancient beards glowing like fuses  
From the candles that burn in them  
Like lights on a tannenbaum,  
And like the ghosts of fireworks that  
We scream and whiz banging across  
The sea  
For someone who was forever in those  
Obese cars, always in the air-condition,  
And always driving incredibly further away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Incurable Gallery

In this night the subtle stabs impermanence:  
Her lips down open,  
They wear blue foreboding:  
In the morning, they may speak whispers to inspectors:  
They will tell all they know  
How they saw the old artists in the theatres  
All the sad men with gummy eyes and loose skin,  
She will tell how they put on to her,  
Their forms of jealous beauty,  
They cremated her in sanctity-  
In the graves that will not heal,  
Upon the tan anthills feasting,  
The dandy sun, the boys at sport:  
Her ankle in their hands,  
The octave of bones the sea makes.  
Then her lips will lie closed,  
For they have done them in,  
The futile epitaphs,  
As her legs provide the hungering strangers,  
Loping in the school yards,  
Curling with the bells which bring them in,  
Clanking in the churchyards,  
The names of twins at playing,  
Then to lay discarding and sweating  
Upon the summit of the fingertips,  
The sunlight rolls down falling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Indefinite Lives

The verbs are broken:  
See how they hang out giving  
Purpose to nothing,  
Smoking in the van through  
All their classes,  
Not willing to participate,  
Yet they will stop when she walks by.  
Their lips don't move when her legs move.  
They hang apart like broken hinges,  
Like anticipatory insect wings,  
Bookcasing nicotine patinas,  
But they don't even smile,  
Because she doesn't look their way:  
She goes by like a long industrious train,  
Like a caravan in the desert,  
Giving off its mirages.  
Soon it will be the last day of high school,  
And the boys in the van  
Will never see her again,  
At least not in any meaningful way.  
She might last awhile longer,  
She might become anything,  
But that day in the student parking lot,  
While the sky inhaled the sun  
And exhaled the clouds off the Atlantic,  
She will remain forever,  
A vision unspoken to,  
While the meaningless things carry on  
With their indefinite lives.

Robert Rorabeck

# Indefinitely

Riding out on the bus  
Where the president is younger than my parents,  
But it is even more a curious thing  
I am no longer beautiful; and I am doing nothing,  
And I have been these things for so long  
That it wouldn't matter if I went out along the  
Pier after midnight and tossed bread to the sea,  
And figured out that all the time that was where  
You'd been waiting for me,  
Dark bodies graffitied with silver and misused  
Wishes;  
How you'd left the indentations of your scent in  
My frontal lobe while you left on your luxury cruise  
For your honey moon with the older more professional  
Man-  
In some ways, you only showed your tan-lines;  
and how after class was over, I'd go home and  
Lay you out on the green carpet, on the green carpet,  
As the sun set beneath the canal and cypress;  
How little girls came with gifts and games, on roller skates  
Through the serpentine ways, calling out to their personal  
Saints, but not a one called out to me; and paper airplanes  
Flew, and stewardesses served me drinks on the television;  
And I thought of you- I thought of you, while the black  
Men drank rum. Bicycles were stolen and no one remembered  
To feed the alligators. Trees slipped into the sea that didn't  
Move; it didn't move,  
And you didn't think of me- I stayed up until morning  
And laughed with the rattlesnakes warming around the ankles  
Of my dogs, and by dawn it started to rain slightly in at least  
Half of the mowed yard. The paper trees were burning,  
And the sugar cane- The moccasins were snaking,  
And I came across the decision to never return to your school  
Again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Independant To Nothiing

I have a band-aid but not where you kissed me;  
This is a new hemisphere,  
A spherical galaxy over my eye while the traffic goes blinking;  
And there are famous cemeteries and famous ladies of the night,  
Even better and more prolific than my own:  
of two long black veils, and they go sweeping underneath  
The sycamores, sashaying and winnowing out across the planted bones  
Like the lightest filigree of a dissolving soul,  
They travel over the smoothed marble, and the dogs whine stuck  
Between the teeth of the world, and the apartments light up  
And girls make love to girls  
Where the city is a bright place just like a wound under them stars  
Who are the first wound:  
Who have sat down and eaten the meat off the table while the  
Airplanes harrowed them like flies,  
The little passengers stupefied by how beautiful and grand was that  
Deaths of the loves looming up above them  
Like the titans of landlocked hemisphere, like entire constellations  
Come into bloom and now evaporating into the necessary  
Grandeurs that seems to give all life reason to believe and then go  
Happily away leaving only the massive continents of pain,  
Like fireworks that never have to die, and yet are independent to  
Nothing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Indian-Give

Some random announcement from  
The soft and middle of the usual day—  
Allowing light to pass through  
Like a ghost underneath an airplane:  
Maybe there will be a fire-drill,  
Maybe it will rain—  
And the students will eventually light out  
To come again tomorrow-  
Following their own shadows successfully:  
It is what we reward them to do—  
Pretty pictures in a window less classroom—  
And gold fish in the suburban estuaries  
Of a glass menagerie:  
Until the same footsteps drain the sunlight's  
Apiary around the headstones,  
And the heavens dome their cathedral  
As the elements Indian-give us our names.

Robert Rorabeck

# Indian-Giving Virginit

Voyeurs on the fly  
Passing through the sky-  
Return on rollerskates  
Going to the arcade-  
Wanting to see the  
Parade  
To watch the lions jump  
Through rings-  
Hypnotized marriages  
Underneath the plates  
Of the mountains  
That put on their dinners  
Of Eden-  
The lions lying about in a  
Fraternity of narcoleptic manes.  
Above treeline  
Her shoulders are golden.  
She has taken off her  
Small clothes:  
She is metamorphosis  
Above the tourists-  
So light she  
Swims,  
A Pegasus on each  
Tit.  
She brings fear into  
My heart  
And steals it away,  
Indian-giving her  
Virginit  
As the school busses  
Flee  
From the Mendalas of  
Forest Fires  
Sparked from her  
Hip  
As she dances  
In feral kaliedescope  
Of kites torn



Away from the fingers of  
A young boy's town  
Up to a makebelieve that  
Swears he will not  
Give her away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Indications Of A Lost Game

Indications of a lost game, and of Indian slaughter:

The moonbeams seem to rush over the chassis of the simulacrum,

As their hoods take on the aspects of a French wilderness:

And the trappers beckon hoping to snag the pony tails of

Their prized fables;

As the angels go down like photosynthetic bric-a-brac, showing each

Other their diseases, and falling for inspection inside the

Beautifully narrow grottos of canoes

Where they make it past all of the slaves, belly pregnant from

Witchcraft and stolen watermelon:

Going down this way to the unexpected falls, like the murderous

Curtains of another lover's dream, disentangling from all of the

Claptrap of honeymoon that they were not invited to:

And the scene widens, becomes obese and monolithic,

So they take on the homeopathic aspects of the superfluous,

Until they stop falling entirely and seem to float up again

For a littlest while, as if trapped in the ecstatic gravity

Of another heavenly body moving full on the approach over

The luminous tribes, all centipedal from the many sexy legs of

All the woe begotten stewardesses that he has kidnapped into his

Employ.

Robert Rorabeck

# Indifferent Godzillas

Indifferent Godzillas,  
They'll break what you just bought-  
If you are ready, or even if you are not;  
Their eyes are coal-trains fast stoked in  
The storm,  
Their horns Siamese Jewesses wreathing  
Like corn,  
And they'll tear through the city,  
And they'll tear through your sleep,  
Fondling the children and shearing the sheep:  
They'll pluck all the Sheilas from atop the  
Tall cony boughs,  
They'll trough through the cloud banks and  
Sneak into shows-  
I've seen them there dwarfing me in my surliest dreams,  
Abducting the damsels and licking their creams;  
And I suppose when the proceeding day comes and  
Newly abides,  
They'll slip back under the sheets until their carbuncles  
Hit the deepest waves,  
Still grinning like sailors, and chanting like braves.  
Next time you'll come and I'll show them to you-  
We'll stand on the safe precipice overlooking the zoo.  
Maybe we'll hold hands, or maybe we wont-  
Those tall tailed cities with easy persuasions,  
You'll look so pretty, and maybe we'll kiss, or maybe  
We wont; They'll turn about like a thieving metropolis,  
As they pick and choose how to ravish our nation.

Robert Rorabeck

# Indoor Harvest

How was your weekend- good,  
Especially if you didn't mind spending it  
Outside of my festivals of nothing;  
And if it wasn't for the liquor I just wouldn't know  
What to say anymore,  
As I lay like a naked moth underneath the hyperventilating  
Tent, like something beautiful unmasked, unfurled:  
As the traffic spins and pets the wet paint  
Off the billboards, the mascaras of the heavens,  
And the lines douse their veins as straight as canals, like  
Torpids tears that the blue gills drink, where girls  
Such as you lay in deep trances with bicycles;  
And the otters swim over you clutching bouquets of orchids  
And up to the banks to greet their sunning housewives:  
Well, anyways, this is something for you, Alma- I have just  
Made, while you had your weekend of family:  
Michael's birthday- a cake of tres leches: but you were  
Too lazy to make enchiladas while the deer and the  
Foxes played with the metamorphosed kings in their  
Suburban glades:  
And I waited for you, humming in the outfit of my scars,  
Watching the hummingbirds waiting for me to bring them more  
Roses out my front door: that you sometimes come to,  
Knocking, kissing the lips of my knuckles, letting the sunlight like  
An apiary gossiping over your body,  
And dripping from your clothes like firing honeys, your  
Wayward expressions a venomous ax finding on me a forest;  
And blessing you to come in and harvest me indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Infatuated Atoms

Leap over to me and ask me my name,  
And I will point into the sunlit sky like a barbershop  
And humph:  
Because that is all you should know about me,  
And the game you are beginning is dangerous,  
Long and tiresome- Bachelors know like  
Homer cast upon the green humping bluffs,  
Waiting for his mother to return with a sack of Burger King:  
What better joy can be found than in the motioning motionless:  
Yes, sex, but that is a ploy:  
Roller coasters are the same but dismissive, abstaining,  
Silly masturbations, conjoining the sky and earth like they  
Were getting paid to do a video:  
I am scarred, and the day is long and not very real:  
People who do well are not very real, more like heirlooms,  
Sales pitches, donkeys in a minefield of windmills, old soul....  
This is the better game, the camaraderie of plastic sheriffs  
And papier-mâché injuns- We can have fun at war,  
But no one need to get killed eventually:  
Certainly, there is a form in church, like a snake sleeping in  
The grassy sun: Oh joy to be unwound, spooled like the tasseled  
Wind in the pines above the abrasive traffics and  
Ghost towns of the crocodileteared starlits in plastic bodice:  
The sea is always waiting, playing rhyming games, biting its  
Lip, and you can go into her and swim all day, but don't  
Get too close to the little thing waving her bum in the shower  
On the concrete abutment at the crest of the dunes,  
Because that is how the old things die and new things come  
Into growth, where coral snakes lie coiled in the form of her  
Seemingly innocent thighs: mortgages, and arguments,  
And cocaine, and mindful infidelities, when still the crickets  
Serenade the lucky people of the lonely sport: So, if you  
Come to me wanting to straddle behind the kneecap of my blue-jeans,  
That is okay for a moment or two, until mother is finished dicing  
The strawberries, but then we must go into our own separate corners  
In the house with no furniture, and question of the consequences  
Of our needful actions, and the motions we seem to go through,  
Spinning around each other like infatuated atoms.



# Infatuations Of The Sea

Heavens brought a forest fire onto the lighthouse  
And another song  
Of dead heartbeats of Indians  
In the graphite  
Of narcoleptic estuaries: while I remembered so  
Many times passing her way-  
Swaying like the traffics of the tide,  
Inland to the city, and then away;  
And praying to booze  
And fireworks,  
Even while my parents were up all night  
And making love,  
And the tigers became tangled together in the cages  
Like the first afternoon in which we made love-  
Holding hands and  
Playing baseball as the gardens grew-  
And the storms sweated cerulean confections  
Too dangerous to touch,  
And the jellyfish spread outwards in an electric  
Garden manifested in the glowing infatuations of the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Infernal Sacrifice

What can I say about you, but you are flawed.  
You are not the girl I paint in green storms, or put the  
Autumn aspen boughs behind the seat of my truck for to  
Take to your storm-city, to douse you with under the green  
Patina, the kind of unripe sky you smile under,  
And cut your hair, and leave your blouse undone to the  
Belly-button, the corkscrew scar the doctor plucked you off;

I cannot say that I love you, with the dozen flowers wilted, given  
Enough time, or that I've smelled you fluming like rich cigars  
While I've sat staring at my own meager reflect dimming  
In the places of your harlequin business once or twice. I used to smile  
In my sleep, and give all night renditions of your perfumes'  
Sonatas to my misspelled olfactory while the lesbians  
Skinny dipped in the leafy pool quite naked one story beneath  
Me-

Back when I didn't have my dogs, and my girl let off  
Nocturnal immolations like a fertile garden potted in cushions right  
Beside me, farting just as heinously as the devil in the ninth ring  
Of hell, or fish stinking up the frozen foods section:  
Stinky fireworks in cones of tuna

This is just a put on, just  
An act of compulsion, like a bad habit, an infernal sacrifice  
To an unhealthy muse; but I am kicking the habit- I will move  
To the invested sea and let her persuade me off you; she will give me suckle  
Quite thoughtlessly of her nubile multiplications, the waves of nameless  
Sisters birthed off her by the happenstance of unabashed weathers,  
See how in flawless blue sororities they come rushing  
Inflamed like so many rosy nipples of a lactating bitch,  
Plump with milk for a kindly litter.

I can lick my fingers and raise them to let me know by which way  
She is coming, sending of her forbearing messages, the little whispers  
She holds me in, the moistures of her swagger, or on her darker  
Days in more somber dresses, the storm clouds entangle her in  
The weather of a torn nimbo-theatre reciting over the  
Saturnine geometry of rooftops of a pure



And green clad suburbia which is better off without the  
Misinformation of your haphazard communications;  
The day or two you come torn and weeping semiannually  
Ready to give confession;

so when she

Disrobes of her silken mantle, then the weather travels westbound  
Along the mortar and pistil scoliosis of elephantine switchbacks,  
And over the smoking cane-fields, leaving her demystified, and  
Her gaze upon me like the brightest sunlight pouring downwards  
Burning up your lies  
like a dying forest fire coup de graced in a blessed sun shower.

Robert Rorabeck

# Infinite Grave

There are enough people who know that I am  
Dying to not have to care:  
I just want my toys too, to run my fingers through your  
Motherly hair,  
To suckle beside your seventh grader on the porch swing  
Of your glades;  
As the airplanes circle like wooden boys, wondering  
Why they were made:  
And you once wanted me outside my house to fall down  
Beside you in the paper snow;  
But now you don't know anything but football:  
You are the marmalade queen: Your tits are savage and  
As fat as cabbage or hibiscus:  
You fill the cups, you are a cupbearer, and I wonder if you  
Know yet for what hero,  
Or if your heros are as yet interchangeable, as are their evils:  
I think maybe you are all cartoons drawing your  
Colorful guns out in the middle of the trailer parks of these  
Hilarious afternoons,  
While I have been burned by all the fun lies I have sold or  
Stolen;  
And all my houses are empty or they haven't yet awoken;  
And you know your name, and your hair flows like  
A thin young and auburn cemetery.  
Who are you an aunt to, but why have you hurt me so:  
I keep crying out my song into the emptiness of this high school  
Dance;  
And I just wanted to draw you close to me like a piece of broken  
High school romance.  
Erin- Why can't you love me, and why do you let me go by you  
This way,  
Dying like a sad young river like a beautiful Indian princess  
Just another conquered tributary accumulating  
To your insouciant and outstand brilliance- just another  
Avenue stepping out fearfully into the crepuscule of your  
Infinite grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Infinitely Lost Platoon

Here: the scars are awkward:  
They prevent romance, but not love;  
They prevent a meaningful conclusion to  
Those erection which go up like cerulean tents  
In the mist forest of Appalachia,  
Set up by little boys and their scout masters  
In her tangling crooks and sways: they don't  
Know how to speak with her,  
But cannot prevent the use of different meanings  
For the word blue; The scars the obscurity of  
Dense foliage, the aphrodisiac bloom, dark and  
Meaningful, which always conclude in suicide:  
Suicide of lip and tongue folded in a wilted cleft  
Of language: So I love her, and slept thirty  
Miles south of where she made love in isometric  
Weddings, kissing the boys and suitors all as like  
As a compatible species in a zoo:  
Those azure tangles which lace down into the dreary  
Canals where the extinct languages sink,  
And the fiber-glass coffins lay exposed and wealthily  
Holy standing up along the bank: where  
Hands unclasp like the shed wings of a demetamorphosing  
Butterfly, like a amputee crossing the floor or the highway,  
Calling out in the sad numbers of an infinitely lost platoon.....

Robert Rorabeck

# Ingots Of Dark Gold

Ingots of dark  
Gold are making  
Love through my  
Eyes,  
And people are getting  
Ready for  
Christmas and  
Bedtime.  
I feel like I should  
Have been playing  
Baseball  
Forever-  
And Erin doesn't love,  
The sky has no holder,  
And the amusement rides  
Are always traveling around  
Like little girls  
Just learning their first  
Birthday bicycles;  
But I keep hearing rumors  
From the Pope  
Underneath the banyans,  
Even underneath the  
Alligators too-  
It seems impossible  
But I am always getting  
Distracted by the  
Slightest parade of the  
Swings,  
And beautiful women  
Who don't know my  
Name,  
Trapped in the  
Tide's coppertone  
Beach,  
Coming and going back again,  
Sighing heavily but not knowing  
What else to say,  
As if they've been making love

And not knowing they are  
Missing school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inky Zippers Of Linear Octopi

We can't get married- the little princess tells me everyday,  
Brown and dizzy, like Pocahontas on a seesaw,  
Braving all of the elements that took her here across Mexico:  
Now she wants a boob job  
But not another child- and she has a hernia that I hope will  
Soon mend;  
And when she gets home to him, she goes right to sleep:  
Or she slips out of her clothes and into the bathtub from which  
She can see the mango tree in the backyard  
About which her rabbits have disappeared which made her  
Mother Rosa happy, as they were eating all of its rich leaves;  
And I have gotten drunk to sleep on the roof  
Across the street;  
And when she is washed and my Alma is cleaned, she goes into  
A bedroom where she never reads and she turns out the  
Light and turns to sleep: or she makes love,  
While the dogs run their ever faithful races over her shoulders:  
Either they are lucky or are they are not,  
But at least I do not think she can hear the rattle of trains  
Like inky zippers of linear octopi that separates her world  
From mine- and I am almost certain she never wonders out at  
Night to bite her lip and shiver looking up into the strange curses  
Echoing from the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Innocence

Sometime soon after birth our  
Deities are give to us,  
Like ray guns zapping in the  
Sideshow of the three-ring circus,  
And remain there swinging  
Like incense burning censers;  
And if I could feel her- My first  
Word was goat, as we drove down  
To Florida- I can barely remember  
Her heated pleasure, for not soon  
After I was reduced to reading in  
Unlit graveyards where in it is  
Hard to imagine the bodies  
Segregated beneath us,  
The unsexed ancestors, and their  
Gods resting forever then like  
Their first words, breathless forever-  
For, I am still too young to remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# Innocence's Byway

How innocence wanders the innocuous highway,  
How, bearded, he dreams of the thigh he's  
Never touched,  
As he sleeps in the weeds like a disposed general  
Of a hungry army without any shoes,  
Believing in his forthcoming victories, and preserving  
How he might end up at her, and take her  
By the hand, and by the subtle dissolutions of  
Armistice, become sort of a Disney movie with her  
Belly distended like a parade balloon,  
Little children in a line and hung around the  
Doublewide trailer at the mouth of the babysitting  
Swamp,  
The humid dulcets of the arachnid menageries,  
The spider webs breathing in the corners of green rafters,  
The nameless dogs chewing on the knobs of corn,  
As the light flows like wet paint down the overgrown  
Pines and deciduous hardwoods,  
Where death is an old creeper who has yet to contain  
The shoots of red, or the discarded exoskeletons spiked  
Like hidden jewels upon the mossy throats of cypress;  
But just as he is saying this to himself,  
Mumbling the misspend educations as if scratching an  
Itch, the roar of the disinfected traffic wakes him up  
Like Niagara Falls, and there amidst the blown intestines  
Of the highway's flared refuge, an orchid makes a show,  
The specks of yellow pollen upon the petals belying  
The sullied intentions of its virginities of innocence.

Robert Rorabeck



## Inside A Geode

Or the day is gone for dreaming of its labyrinth  
Again—spelled out in the recluses of its  
Fabled  
Estuaries and drinking fountains—  
And it looks so beautiful turning tail and  
Burning away:  
Over the sandy monuments as over the overpasses—  
Or don't you know—  
That this is my song—open throated,  
Giving fast balls over the trailer parks and the  
Swingsets—  
Dirty things—believing that the world can believe  
Without sound:  
Echoes here,  
Beside the tangling vines that never had to find  
Themselves anywhere else with child—  
My cousin pregnant on an abandoned couch and  
All of the heroes gone off to fight dragons that do not  
Exist—  
She is lactating up in the rafters of spacecraft:  
And this is supposed to be beautiful—beautiful- but how  
Will you ever know up inside a geode that  
Will never crack.....

Robert Rorabeck

# Inside A Schoolyard Of Pearlescent Shells

Pines filled the loose change of cars,  
While a entirely other world happened across the  
Canal;  
And the airplanes were touching down softly,  
Softly as the blue turquoise feathers of the chiefs headdress:  
And he made signs of smoke of peace  
And turtles in the sky,  
Like weathers of love from their teepees,  
And the blue gills made beds of love underneath the roots  
Of thoughtless aloes,  
Who above the fairies stuck to like stamps on lovers,  
As soft lights do lamps in other rooms of others;  
Houses,  
As the cats pant, dreaming of their kittens and of baseball,  
And the graveyards bloom as they always do after immaculate  
Rainstorms,  
As the mermaids remove their bras and pose above their  
Coral for their missing boys, and their sunken conquistadors,  
Enraptured by whatever weathers are out there to sea  
Them, and by the misspent letters tossed out into their  
Beds,  
Soliloquizing them there, like candelabrum lit inside a schoolyard  
Of pearlescent shells.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inside Adam

My thoughts wake up  
Inside Adam,  
Before he learns of Eve's  
Transgression—  
Then the sun and the world  
Are naked and weeping  
Newborns,  
And there is the earliest  
Light everywhere;  
The pure heralding light,  
God's fixed gaze.  
The world of the garden is  
Sonorous with innocent birth  
And light breathing,  
But I am that speck of  
Shadow  
Wondering in Adam's head,  
The ache of his missing  
Rib,  
Wondering where she has gone,  
The first premonition of sin:  
Of things to come.  
I tell him not to round the  
Corner to the tree in the clearing,  
But he cannot understand how  
Everything can be so beautiful,  
Yet to have such a thought  
In his head—  
Then he sees Eve, smiling,  
Shadowed by the tree the serpent  
Looks down with eyes of adultery,  
Smiling his pornographic wisdom,  
As her guilty lips drip the juice  
Of the most sinister fruit,  
The honeyed seduction of a  
Fallen angel.  
She begins to speak,  
But already Adam knows....  
He knows,

For inside him, I have  
Warned him  
And, ashamed he tries to  
Cloth himself as  
He stumbles through the  
Darkening trees,  
And the day seems to flee with him,  
Fearing the things to come.

Robert Rorabeck

## Inside Here

Quiet is the solitude of all of my certainty,  
Lying here, resting in the places that will remain as quiet  
As the shells of animals given to the loins of their feasts:  
I am here and airplanes are in the sky,  
Hanging there like jewelry and each cloud a Christmas tree  
Going its way,  
And singing the songs that it keeps to itself:  
The sky is a forest fire burning a wreck of all of my dreams,  
Girls with coyotes flung out in the desert with the sharp  
Ends of chicken bones,  
Unlucky drums that have the sound of the skin of pythons;  
And when I drove by Alma's house tonight she was not home,  
And now I am drinking the cheapest wine in my quietest of abodes,  
Hoping to find Alma,  
The mariposa stuck like hot taffy to the greenness of the aloe beside  
The carport and the sick old neighbors are drinking beer  
And never dreaming of her;  
And I am lucky and across the canal, petted like a pure stone by  
The soft dirt;  
And Alma is gone, and my house moves inside here.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inside Mornings

Mornings come like kindergartens,  
With fine and easy thoughts,  
Like flowers simultaneously budding  
And rippling in the schoolyard-  
Morbidly obese maelstroms stomping the  
Coolest darkness on the roof as we learn,  
And they are our mothers,  
As we breathe like space age polymers,  
And the rains splatter and trail the frosted pains  
On the windows,  
Like the paws of a litter of freshly batting kittens,  
They unstring the scorpion's barb,  
Who has been waiting in our shoe for us  
To get up, yawn and put on all the heavy clothing  
We wear to eat breakfast, and then catch the bus  
To the classroom, or go to work in a pool of  
Untrustworthy lights,  
The borealis like a hood twinkling with a hum  
From the popcorn ventilations.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inside Of Those Poor Muses

Never tarrying for werewolves, the roses bud:  
Over castles tormented by rain,  
Over tattoo parlors,  
Over the inparticular ammenities that cannot spell:  
The night is out and she has opened her throat  
To the boys who are still hanging out,  
Whilst the neighborhood is vacated,  
Made to throw tricks of towns at the sea—  
Overcast by the places that loom large in her  
Ill-begotten memory—  
Another novel spun out of the womb of the  
Dungeon of a fairytale—  
While wolves in Colorado lactate on the stars,  
And cars move underneath the pregnant jubilations—  
What is this, but some form of pornographic glee,  
Stuck too the teeth of a snake that causes paralysis by  
Stone:  
I remember when I taught at my old high school,  
I remember when I was all alone—  
And the stars were out, naked dancers in their cabaret of  
Astrology—  
Another plagiarist does not have to move;  
This isn't religion, but a poem—  
The muses that i have all loved all are home,  
And if it is raining outside,  
It is raining on the roses that are still alive  
And not stuck inside one of those poor muses' adulturous homes.

Robert Rorabeck

## Inside The Prettiest Geode

Or the day is gone for dreaming of its labyrinth  
Again—spelled out in the recluses of its  
Fabled  
Estuaries and drinking fountains—  
And it looks so beautiful turning tail and  
Burning away:  
Over the sandy monuments as over the overpasses—  
Or don't you know—  
That this is my song—open throated,  
Giving fast balls over the trailer parks and the  
Swingsets—  
Dirty things—believing that the world can believe  
Without sound:  
Echoes here,  
Beside the tangling vines that never had to find  
Themselves anywhere else with child—  
My cousin pregnant on an abandoned couch and  
All of the heroes gone off to fight dragons that do not  
Exist—  
She is lactating up in the rafters of spacecraft:  
And this is supposed to be beautiful—beautiful- but how  
Will you ever know up inside a geode that  
Will never crack.....

Robert Rorabeck



# Inside The Religion I Had Given Her

They swerved by the coliseum mostly disrobed  
From the zephyrs- in their chariots of old drift  
Wood,  
And castanets of roses: it didn't even matter that this  
Was the way that they were going;  
It was just their thing: proceeding the lions and  
The Christians who ate up the main events-  
They didn't even have a plan,  
But they all held soft turtles and doves as pets,  
And maybe they were headed towards the mailboxes  
In hedgerows fathered against the primordial lighthouses  
Or sucreased by the moon anyways,  
Though if they'd held still for the moment of a photograph  
They would have seem me carrying my young Alma  
Like a amber cenotaph into the waves; and kissing her  
As she perfectly trusted me, so I seemed to bask  
Inside the religion I had given to her,  
Even though she couldn't even swim.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inside Your Car

Waiting for you tonight: all the cars are silent,  
And making me think you have parked somewhere else,  
And the besos you give with your bright eyes  
Closed,  
While in the movies that you see, you have dreamed:  
And the airplanes that you have never experienced,  
Continue plugging the sky with their sheet metal;  
And you say that you will never leave your very bad man,  
And I don't have a gun, but  
Ambition, while I have been asleep atop of your house  
Until which my legs accorded my inebriated attrition:  
Alma- and all my art is now connected to your soul, and the silent  
Gifts that you have given to me of your favorite and your body's  
Colors;  
And I feel that I have made it down your falls, and I have given  
You pleasure before you have given it to me; and it was all that  
I dreamed for- and I have kissed you inside your car.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inside, A Garden Or A Gun

I do this because I think,  
If I peel out loud enough I should identify the  
Kidnappers;  
And I am not my uncle, nor my father,  
No good at grooming horses or selling  
Produce,

But noticing the twisting ribbons of overpass  
Shadowing the heads of my tumbling future,  
The tramps in the running shadows,  
The snakes sucking eggs in the crèches of  
An organized woods;

And you would think that there is so many things  
To do,  
So many arrangements, and holidays for marriage;  
Elise in her faux jewelry bighting the inside  
Of her cheek,  
Thinking that she should get off the couch and bake  
A pie, do something for evening,  
But she doesn't do but another glass,  
A slight adjustment of comfortable legs;

Outside and far away,  
The almost blue is falling, failing like this into  
The next sweltering darkness when the cars will return  
In yellow parade,  
Them too to only turn off, to shuffle through,  
And clink ice in the dry glass soon to swim;

I do this for the corn fields sleeping in the hair-lips  
Of melted glaciers,  
And the beautiful women who inherited car dealerships,  
Because I stumbled through the interview to deliver  
Their mail- I assigned my body to the lonely post  
Where it is best so,  
And would be better if it knew the just names of  
Flowers, a horticulturalist,  
Or Swedish Tulip farmer;

But I give it over to your decision,  
My head depressed like one of the weary mountains,  
My dogs curled at my gray feet,  
The bureau drawer half open- fake wood-  
Inside, a garden or a gun.

Robert Rorabeck

# Insignificant Infinity

Coldness comes best under the hardest of sun,  
When you cannot wear enough clothes because of all you have drunken,  
And loneliness on the busiest street of the biggest city,  
When you cannot recognize a single face and no one looks at you,  
When all the little boys are up in the rooftops counting  
Down, their misdeeds in glass bottles in paper bags high above  
The alligators' heads,  
When the little girls are sitting knob kneed in the  
Bowers of golden cypress,  
Believing in things they shouldn't say, as the green lips  
Of the water rises and slobbers the hem of their dirty  
Pink dresses with seahorses and brine;  
Then the insignificant infinity rolls out like a Catherine Wheel,  
And the otters come out of their lonely hollows to watch  
The sky spin,  
And the foxes yip with the pin wheeling the pine trees  
Make overhead in a ringed gathering of serpentine forest;  
For the day is getting over, and you take the curve of the road home,  
And the bridge which falls over the canal where the soft  
Shelled tortoises burp and fart brown enduring bubbles,  
Floating up with lazy curiosity amidst the plastic bags and crumpled tin,  
And the coral snake curls up black and red and yellow  
In a smutty, faded magazine, glinting like a venomous pearl.  
You go home to sit in the immense barrenness of the  
Living room's green carpet, think of a girl obscure by bitter orange trees,  
ejaculate, watch t.v.,  
Listen to the screams from the wildlife preserve down the far road,  
And wait for the light to fail over the burning sugar-cane,  
For your parents to come home greasy and exhausted,  
And then to shower and sleep upon the aching coils inside  
The bars of the humid nocturne, waiting for you eyes to open  
Once again so long ago, as the cautionary friends slip further  
Away into insignificant infinity.

Robert Rorabeck

# Insignificant Wound

Do you sleep with dead women?  
And when they look at you, can you feel them  
Cascading in the opal vases of the spine,  
Before they shattered in the rainy war:  
As if you'd shot your sister's eye out with that BB gun-  
Miraculously, how they became new women then,  
Who wouldn't look at you:  
Somnambulists in a coma,  
How they shed naked right there and sat  
In the barber's chair, as he cut them anew:  
Farting nervous anticipations, until  
When you saw her laughing on the red brick steps  
With people you didn't know,  
What did she say to you then, as you walked by  
In the cathedrals of the novel year:  
Was she another woman you didn't know,  
Kissing him in the renovated places you used to kiss  
Her doggy-style behind the couch  
When grandmother and Jeanie were visiting on  
Their way to Oregon:  
Some kind of plan of Succubus, she'd sucked it out  
Of herself, the poison of venomous wound,  
The pellets you'd planted in her gut:

The shed skin you sleep with, the lingering scales  
Of this mirage, the same hair you knew still curls like  
Finger nails up from the grave,  
The bud-less roses of the decapitated garden she does not attend;  
Walking away, she pulled the glass out of herself  
And metamorphosised into the strange,  
Leaving your triaged with an insignificant wound....

Robert Rorabeck

# Insouciance Of Rest

When the day is gone there is an  
Insouciance of rest—peaceful insects  
Slumber in the bordellos of the hibiscus—  
The road of shells and tears  
Becomes a beatific ribbon leading to and  
From the canal,  
And the world beyond:  
Orchards and baseball diamonds creeping  
Up between the spotlights—  
Luminescent,  
Reminding us of our daydreams, like children  
Kidnapped underneath the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Insouciant Eyes

My eyes flash like drunk fish in a saucer or a  
Saucy dish:  
The traffic flutters like strange happenstance,  
Like Mexican cleaning ladies wanting to  
Get done in a flash:  
The leggy fauna pocketing money, skipping home  
And licking honey:  
The scarless places, the taught openings of  
Unjust reservoirs ticked off my the endeared red-  
Pricked sheriffs,  
The family daytrips- the feudal tariffs:  
I wake up into this comely mess, and it passes right  
Over me on the esplanade of horned sheriffs,  
But I do my best  
To envision you in my mind in your virgin boudoir  
In a state of mid undress;  
And I like to think that the housewives love me  
As they buy things- as I look my best;  
And then they go home and complain, and beat their  
Husbands with their bird-hollow fists,  
And then undress like school girls underneath the buses,  
Outback of their pools-  
And they lounge like titted alligators and regress,  
Of the more somber times of when it was all an innocent  
Guess,  
And they even forget to bake their apple pies;  
And America flutters away like winsome ashes underneath  
Their cool painted insouciant eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# Insouciantly Gamboling

The mother is gone,  
To cut her hair- and the day is humid,  
Because its not wrong,  
The sun its constable pin wheeling;  
The house is raw,  
If made of bones the dogs gnaw:  
I wash her coats and think of her, or you-  
The girl fair swimming in what bright sea;  
It serves a javelin to pierce:  
I read Vachel Lindsay, and he is out in  
The yard: all the way down where the coffins  
Have melted and spilled their roots,  
Hibernian in its lucky creation; and girls come  
Over the flowering dead, barefooted, swinging, glib;  
What knights there are raise their arms and  
Construct swing-sets for these naked sisters  
Who hem and haw and bight their cheeks over  
Such Paladin's starred propositioning;  
And I write them novels, or at least I should;  
But I get no play from the fairest things who  
Are not real, when I am lackadaisical myself;  
I should turn away and cast a thunderstorm  
To make them slip and scab themselves;  
And then better girls will come,  
Nocturnal and done with hibernating, and I will  
Have little difficultly preferring them,  
As long as I pay- in temples constructing;  
and they will make up songs  
And chew gum, and say I have done a good  
Job, even though they do not really care enough  
To want me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Bed As Blue As An Endless Sea

Whistling in a beautiful way that was never really here:  
While each of our pets enjoy their rooms;  
Even while our daughters climb too high up into the trees,  
So that they have to squint down at the pornographies nestling  
There:  
And above them, the airplanes fly so high and far, like deep sea  
Divers holding their breath through the coraling nimbus;  
Until it becomes another holiday-  
Until the highways end at the amusements;  
Or leap over the graveyards, or the flea markets:  
And it all ends right here: at your lips, Alma- at you tiny braveries,  
So naked and brown:  
You could take down any knight: you could even take down  
A forest,  
Or talk the mountain lions and the wild fires off the backs of their  
Mountains,  
Culling the tourists to you like promising ice-creams:  
And, afterwards, I swear I could follow that charcoal catastrophe  
To where there was still some new wildlife,  
And pick for you there the wildflowers or the fallen egrets- or whoever's  
Nest had been overturned:  
I could become a music box, or a combing shell; and I could whisper  
In your ear as I laid you down into a bed as blue as an endless  
Sea; as I always do for you, and always shall.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Bosom

Soft moonlight in a movie theatre  
And kisses-  
Touching over the handicaps of the senses:  
And it is alright,  
And the girls are out again- what are they doing  
Over the lilacs,  
Or on their ways down the highway:  
I wonder if they will ever see the special forts  
Underneath the moonbeams  
In the trances of simulacrum: and I wonder if they  
Will ever make it to shore again,  
Talking to themselves in the theatre,  
Hungry over the zoetrope of their metamorphosis-  
Yet trying to figure out what they saw:  
Wondering into the noontime  
Topless, calling for their old lovers:  
Only the crocodiles come, o  
Insatiable over the remote control boats, as  
The light fibrillates in its hopeless amusements,  
And the tourists take their turns,  
And then they take their turns again- over and  
Over, leaving us to wonder with the tadpoles  
In the spit and drools of  
Suburbia and with its housewives,  
If there is any sort of permanence- and waiting  
For whatever change to occur  
And call us permanently into the bosom of a world  
Which lingers onward.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Bosom Of A World

Soft moonlight in a movie theatre  
And kisses-  
Touching over the handicaps of the senses:  
And it is alright,  
And the girls are out again- what are they doing  
Over the lilacs,  
Or on their ways down the highway:  
I wonder if they will ever see the special forts  
Underneath the moonbeams  
In the trances of simulacrum: and I wonder if they  
Will ever make it to shore again,  
Talking to themselves in the theatre,  
Hungry over the zoetrope of their metamorphosis-  
Yet trying to figure out what they saw:  
Wondering into the noontime  
Topless, calling for their old lovers:  
Only the crocodiles come, o  
Insatiable over the remote control boats, as  
The light fibrillates in its hopeless amusements,  
And the tourists take their turns,  
And then they take their turns again- over and  
Over, leaving us to wonder with the tadpoles  
In the spit and drools of  
Suburbia and with its housewives,  
If there is any sort of permanence- and waiting  
For whatever change to occur  
And call us permanently into the bosom of a world  
Which lingers onward.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into A Cathedral Of Infants

Also, in the empty hallway next to the water fountain  
No one is drinking from—  
The mountain has burned—the mermaids have been found  
Out to be soldered from monkeys and blue gills  
And I am married to another woman,  
As you keep house for the man you've had two  
Children with  
Though you don't want to marry him: but you keep with him—  
Cooking or ordering Chinese—  
You keep appealing to his orders,  
And your brown skin is a apiary whose honey I have tasted  
As we have lain alone together in a house only the  
Airplanes have crossed:  
But those airplanes filled with stewardesses who metamorphosis  
Into angels when they get too close to the sun  
And the wax that binds them melts  
And they become untangled—and into a cathedral of infants,  
Growing wings,  
Making love, and remembering all that we have done.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Different Color

I smell  
Soda pop and dirt, and this is how I  
Even struck out  
On an empty lot, pop-empty:  
Moving down from the south,  
Almost drenched by the sea:  
Look at my new house following her through  
The shadows,  
Like an empty shell wishing it had some  
Amphibian meat in it to do the crawl;  
And bleached tables smell like math,  
And the reason why the sky is blue is because  
It was wounded long ago when the older  
Gods were killed,  
And she took over and played soccer after  
School,  
And kissed the boys who didn't know how  
To play any instruments:  
They were too proud and  
Beefy,  
And they hold flags and make it almost  
All the way across the field before really dying  
Into a different color  
Than what she bleeds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Game Where I Do Not Belong

Seesaws in my liver- I go to the flea market underneath  
The overpass to flume:  
On Easter, both sides of my face sell nothing to her:  
A girl from Columbia with tattoos buys two of  
My grasshoppers; they are the only thing  
I sell-  
And I go back to her, holding out my hands like the weariness  
Of oleander-  
How will they come for her again, with the airplanes touching  
Down just to save face.  
Will this be my art for another dark night, spilling my guts  
In a juvenile tantrum of scarred and lonely  
Bachelorhood- My dog rests beside me in a house  
That needs a wife;  
Its months since I've been to see a woman, but the day throws  
Over her shadows, accentuating her voluptuous green,  
And I think of my muse- tiny and brown,  
Cast like a marble into a game where I do not belong.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into A Lawn Of Soft Darkness

Playing in another child's sandcastles,  
While the sun looks up into her eyes,  
Pretending that he is swimming and each wave is  
A mountain in his heavens—  
A yellow orb over the playgrounds the sea  
Stalks like lions—  
The parking lot filled with beautiful toys he doesn't  
Have the mind to cherish:  
There is his love, at the borders a metamorphosis  
She doesn't know she is in—  
And there he is in his perfect disguise languishing  
Perpetually—when she goes home,  
He will float over her house until he puts her to sleep  
And then he will send helicopters to  
To hover over her and drunken and obsessed boys  
To climb atop her roof,  
Piling their nocturnal bicycles upon her front yard  
Like gifts lain to sleep in a lawn of soft darkness.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into A Place

The forts with sticky noses looking up  
Through the snowfall:  
Glossy eyed and drunk- and a killer off somewhere,  
But not sniffing through their keyholes:  
And hoses curled up besides the fountain of youth  
To which we tended to get there  
As the sandstones were still steaming through the night;  
And the forest was pitched:  
The night cursed itself and tried to look down your blouse,  
While commercials ate themselves on the radio:  
While all I could think about was true love  
And cold night going up the lonely slopes in the blues of  
Arizona  
With the wind strewn pine cones across the old Indian  
Reservation:  
The old wounds that we all hope to never have to cross again:  
The arrow heads buried in there, into the cheap but  
Freshly blown glass- and the waves curling,  
Beckoning,  
As if calling us all like children away from our supper  
And up into a place where we could never belong.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into A Poem Dedicated To Satan

Cheeks lie scarred with roses in the clouds—  
The apaches are approaching with intentions of  
First rate abductions,  
And I remember the wishing wells of your malls—  
Where I could fall down forever  
And you would remain in love with my best  
Friend—  
And when the daylight curled over,  
It saw its own reflection in the music box of  
A carousel,  
And it could never find an absolute desire to  
Touch the earth—  
The beautiful harem remained in their grotto,  
As my mother electrocuted herself in  
The carport—beautiful illusions all of them,  
Swallowing up the daydreams after midnight  
Until they were all shut into a poem dedicated  
To Satan  
And words became a sacrifice whose  
Heart was utterly—  
Absolutely abandoned.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Town That No Longer Exists

If I lost my leg in the same old illusions of  
The desert and now this:  
Nothing of silver bells, just old hair, and the long sad  
Memories of climbing over-bellied over mountains,  
Alone, in love with the wrong girl;  
Perpetually looking down on the soured heads of tourists  
Walking inter the tinkering bells of  
Ice cream parlors and bad theatres;  
And there she was, hung up as a blue fleece in the sang-froid  
Weathers of a bitter tree;  
And now this, like the science trying to describe her, like a lost  
Muse of the byways, or the first attempts of flight  
That go pell-mell into graveyards, not swerving too much,  
And then there: segregated but well kempt,  
And she sleeps in the always mowed greenness with her best  
Friend forever, as I am just a hiker going down through the  
Back end of darkening Sundays, like a stray dog stuck in between  
The keys of a Piano and straying there so long  
As to be making my home into a town that no longer exists.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Warm And Familiar Class

Brilliant cathedral of an overpass,  
Pushing through its girdle so many cars- flowing in  
Parts closer to the sea,  
Reminding themselves of the things they see everyday-  
And strangers come out and look at one another,  
And sell things to one another,  
Until there is a perfume of trust in the air- and the birds  
And the airplanes seem as fireworks  
On an ordinary holiday- and I would have to swear that  
Everyone is as brown as a Mexican,  
And as beautiful, while I have been missing myself  
Trying to recollect the motion of my heart  
Even while there was nothing left of it to give,  
And the little girls came into a warm  
And familiar class with me,  
And gave reason with their looks that I can barely even remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into A Whole Other World

Pretty reddish underbrush,  
Scars on a knee in the penumbra of a schoolyard's  
Skirt-  
The fires go away after classes, and the busses moon:  
The boys have already gone away, flown like artificial  
Fireworks, their arms spread wide,  
And kissing parks- all the way to Orlando:  
Faux conquistadors,  
Warm bellied- lit by the moon, and eating pretzels,  
They go swinging, kicking their  
Heels up over a green rug scattered with pine needles  
And bugs,  
Just to see up the skirts of stewardesses, just to  
Catch nose bleeds up into the ambitious sky,  
And then to swing down, shivering, sweating minerals  
Off the saints they have seen:  
To go home together lost in secrets, to sleep together,  
In the tiny bedroom, poor at math,  
Masturbating into the shadows that somehow slip out  
Again into a whole other world.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into Africa

When you don't make a sound,  
I love you,  
And I want to abduct you and take you to Africa,  
Realize the bloom, and become a new species-  
Where the entire country is poorer than Alabama,  
But I can look you in the eye the entire day,  
And bathe you in the red dust made of our grandparents,  
And imbibe you the way the crocodiles drink  
The muddy river, the way they will do it forever-  
We won't wear shoes or underwear, and our farts  
Join with the song births and green snakes draped in  
The trees amidst the long brown seed pods-  
Where I can take you into the bush, and we can cry  
Over the mud cross we put over your father's grave,  
And let you fall down and beat the earth and water  
The anonymous sanctuary hidden away from the machetes,  
And the long joyful years you held together, until I  
Cover your mouth and remind you that weeping so  
Loudly will only draw the predators, as now we connect  
And make love rolling in the purpose of traditional foreplay:  
No watches to keep track of how long it takes to enter  
You, and then for you to say my name, the way the  
Limpid shells speak of the sea, the way your tears could  
Be mistaken for a sudden shower prattling on the bundles  
Of sticks on the roof of our small round hut-  
The unhindered warmth of mammalian compressions,  
And the comfort of the griot's oratories back in the village  
Forum where books are not aloud just tongues,  
The feverish answers in the theatre of one man's mouth,  
And our children lined up in a tribe of laughing ochre  
Where airplanes are the silver trips gods take on holidays,  
Where heaven can be located in a bed along the river,  
And church in the roofless chorus and the clouds vespers  
Sung long before man followed the animals north and  
Paled into the deeper troubles of his own invention. Being  
Here in the large continent without amusement parks or directions,  
I can keep your heart pressed to mine as shelter, and know  
The rain falling on our roof like choral students tapping the  
Xylophone, is from the same cloud that came yesterday,

And so many times before that.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Alma's Eyes

Bodies are tender boxes- and my ears burn over the dells  
Of wet mountains,  
And the fireworks sizzle and come off, and someone is always learning  
To read or ride a bicycle:  
And I already want to make love with Alma again,  
While two lovers shake the sands of their love making off in the car  
Or in front of their home,  
While the rabbits are panting or ululating in the rock garden,  
And the little lights like Christmas lights are winking on in the yard,  
And maybe the front door has a reindeers antlers hung over  
It and  
A beautiful car in the carport and children already asleep in bed,  
Because soon it will be another Christmas, and I still want to lie  
Down with Alma, while all of the rest stops empty,  
And the crowds leave Disney World, and I can stop holding my breath  
And begin to believe again in a world that will never leave us:  
An infinite world of curling mountains and insatiable hunters  
That probably doesn't exist except for when I look forever  
Into Alma's eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into An Eager Morning Sun

Pollinating an instrument beside the  
Bus stops,  
While the fireworks worm in the overgrowth:  
The silvery airplanes leap frog  
Over the moon who is beginning to grow blind-  
Like all the gods over their breakfast  
An empty shell-  
An empty grotto: the virgins fed upon, and now  
All a cloistered in the barnacles-  
Raped and nude,  
Blushing wounds that sting in the tide:  
The housewives shudder like fish in a glass sea-  
The mermaids take the bribes of sand dollars-  
An apiary bleeding golden sweat  
The fish enjoy with their lips of haloes  
Until they douse like pinwheels in her beds that  
Separate  
And disappear up into an eager morning sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into An Ivory Tower

Building upwards its massive strata of bonfires  
And lucky children,  
My wife goes to a Buddhist temple and makes three  
Wishes with her best friend:  
I will see her for five days over Spring Breakâ€&quot;;  
For now the boughs bend,  
And the airplanes fly like curve ballsâ€&quot;;into several  
Months after Christmas. Oh, how the common  
Holidays have maimed me,  
As I wait for her out in the tiny orchards of my yard,  
Buzzing like fliesâ€&quot;;  
And the child I cannot remember playing across  
The street in the blue pornographies underneath the  
Pinesâ€&quot;;it takes a while to remember I am not  
Here,  
And as I try to decipher, she wonders offâ€&quot;;  
Across the canal, a common border for our worldsâ€&quot;;  
Where the cats talk, and she can win prizes for meâ€&quot;;  
Though it will take a long time to find her way  
Back into an ivory tower we both try to amend.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Another Far Off And Lycanthropic Night

Sickness swimming in its caesuras; its beautiful  
Absences where the living go beneath the swirling horizon,  
Are very well forgotten:  
This sea like the incrimination of stones;  
Or a wax euphoria going to lead the masses to burn religious  
Candles in the tallow of masses;  
And it almost seems like a Christmas tree the lions have  
Been gnawing; or something dangerous like an opium  
Pipe conjoined to your lips:  
And you are missing school, partying with your friends,  
Shooting semiprecious angels with bb guns;  
And you have an entertaining time even if you don't win  
You immortality: Like my words birthed like empty amphibians  
In the open games of the carport:  
Over the hills there is sunlight, but what is it good for if  
You wont ever lay down your powerful instruments and go to  
Bed: You body breathing its wimpled stems, and the other  
Words I don't know;  
And yet it all seems really strung out and happy;  
And I suppose you wont ever leave that town again;  
But you will go on and on chasing guitars and mailboxes  
Long after your classes have ended, and all that was envious of  
You has disappeared like gypsies into another far off and lycanthropic  
Night.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Another Movement

Apache of my soul cantankerousâ€as luxurious and as  
Blue eyed as any of my musesâ€  
Waitressing in Globe, New Mexicoâ€I saw you last  
Year while setting up tents to  
Sale fireworksâ€in a world that is not yours,  
You pretend to be busy in the backyards of my mindâ€  
As my otherwise subconscious skips school and  
Messes aroundâ€a truant upon another neighbors roof,  
Before any of the stars of the world unfurlâ€  
Just another make-believe making itself knownâ€  
Beautiful knots already sewn into the fabricâ€  
You probably live in a trailer parkâ€and the river sings your  
Name as you awaken next to him  
Never knowing who you areâ€with eyes cast away into  
Another movement of the ever concealing clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Another Neighborhood

Bellies of dungeons  
Running as shallow as my tears-  
She will awaken dreaming of  
Another man  
Across the train tracks like  
A homeless unicorn taken  
Shelter in a carport  
On the shoulder of a canal:  
She will reach out,  
One hand filled with laundry,

And feed him melon rind:  
And sugar cubes,  
While the houses move

In bright circus over

Rebar;  
And the winged serpent  
Waits in tangled boughs

Of citrus blossom

Over the rabbit coop,  
And the chicken coop alike,

Pledging them so many  
Silly things-

As down the street some other  
Woman's children are  
Kidnapped into another neighborhood.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Crepuscule

I have struggled for what I have to sing:  
And I am not a conquistador, I am have not even seen the verdant  
Lips of the Amazon:  
All I have is some words, not even enough:  
And I have skipped some chain-links of the swings near the animals  
In the park,  
And I have held Alma's hand while we jogged and then had breakfast  
And then went to the zoo and then made love:  
And then we made love,  
And watched the extincting birds become really extinct,  
Like vanished classrooms, like the lips that were never deserved;  
And I have made love to Alma off and on,  
And it was all because she was innocent enough to recognize my love  
Above my color:  
So our bodies have swung together, as I hope they will continue  
To swing like swings over the park and on into dusk,  
And the continue verdures of the close lips of mailboxes and  
Stewardesses on into Crepuscule,  
Of all things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Diamonds

Spiders spinning into diamonds  
Or other make-believe'  
Your father steps outside, shuts the  
Door,  
And fires at unicorns'  
The place is unclear, but maybe it  
Does exist'  
The professors say you have to  
Be more certain in your writing,  
But even they don't know'  
They ski on the lake next to the graveyard,  
But never go into the graveyard  
Or the changing bedlam of the trees:  
I look up to her'  
She had eyes once for me in high school  
But no more:  
I have become the satellite of her worldâ€™  
And disenchanted, her heart swings  
Around the earth  
As the cats cry, pretending to want to be indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Her Eyes Everyday

Something gibbous just made a sound  
Over the traffic which is always motioning like  
A snowy reception on the tube of this  
Hazy town,  
And the sea is just there on the other side of 95-  
My muse, but I wonder if I should  
Ever go and see her,  
Because even when I am in town,  
I never go courting my muse,  
Too afraid to be found out, to knock on the effluvious  
Door of her tide.  
She might not let me in- Even worse,  
She could laugh at me;  
It is better to leave her to her natural motions,  
To the easy boys and tourists she lets flood into her  
Eyes every day.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into Her Turns

People that sweat in person with the spirits,  
But they are not here right now—  
If you come back tomorrow,  
They will be here tomorrow,  
But if you wish to open your eyes  
You will see that my young son is growing younger—  
Inside the song of light,  
And inside of the mountains which cradle him  
And the stars,  
But for awhile they have been laughing,  
And making fun of the mechanizations that are  
Supposed to control their lives.  
Tomorrow, the forecast in Shanghai is for  
Pollution and burning airplanes,  
But, otherwise, my tomorrow is resolved—  
There is nothing else that can describe it:  
I will have a house in the hills,  
Higher up than the horse heads—  
And in the heavens of the merry-go-rounds—  
I will find the opportunity to believe  
Again  
That it is all right here,  
One way or another—  
As the cars sway back and forth  
And the merry-go-rounds turn about,  
Occasionally,  
Whenever money is considerate enough  
To put their presidential heads  
Into her turns.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into Her Yard

In stems of light, her brown body breathing:  
Something of an angel collected of itself, I know-  
A windmill metamorphosed,  
The spokes of a bicycle skipping away from school,  
Portioning the gifts of the heavens for  
Our sight:  
Her brown skin perfect, moving with the egresses of  
The otters who have learned some kind of  
Fire,  
And how to speak: who sleep on woebegone rafts  
Underneath the low bridges,  
Chattering of housewives to the water-moccasins;  
And laying so that their bellies get some sun  
In the afternoon long insouciance;  
As my muse goes home to watch her novellas,  
To eat her mother's cooking,  
Her clothes drying out on lines across the yard, as she  
Lies into herself some more,  
Reclining with her children, or the other more make-believe  
Of creatures which I happen into her yard.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Its Conclusion

They will wake up and they will have to  
Go to school again:  
The cars will flash, and the fireworks will  
Go off like  
Grasshoppers trying to kiss dragonflies-  
And the other things I do not know  
Will be left for the housewives  
To discover  
Outside in their backyards, topless in  
Their preordained natures,  
The alligators watching them like the transmutations  
Of bachelors underneath a witchcraft of  
Burning sugarcane:  
And the highways will rile up and down on  
Either side of them,  
And their reel will continue blissfully into its  
Conclusion.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into Its Little Brown Reservoir

Banded into a version that cannot be destroyed,  
Overlooking the aqueducts  
That the fish rise up to believe: in each caesuras the unicorns  
Of your sisters who are still in high school  
And just about finished at what it takes in the learning of  
Good Americas:  
While the tourists at the fruit market unabashedly take pictures  
Of your brown sorority:  
Who even in their first generation made it all of the way  
Of Mexico, whose brothers are named Raul- who  
Cross dress in Texas underneath the penultimate pinafores  
Of the Alamo:  
Who you would like to kiss, yourself, Alma: like a fish coming  
Up for all the fireworks across the skylines of a night of  
Very patriotic holidays,  
When all the world was a vision- like a unique dream of  
Your childhood, and you held my overeager hand until it  
Over spilled into its little brown reservoir and you could do  
Nothing else but to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Its Tributaries

Lining up in the judgment of the  
New rain:  
What will the children do?  
What will they sing?  
High above them, their vacant mother  
Has turned into another mountain,  
Trying to touch the airplane:  
She doesn't know what  
To say to them anymore- her tears  
Are not the rain.  
The playground remains vacant-  
The stone classroom only has its flag:  
They gather up to go  
But they do not know how they  
Will get there they lose  
Themselves as they go there,  
Like a river winnowed into its tributaries,  
Until there is no more passion  
One way or another, and, individually,  
They understand that they have  
Gone too far.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into My Arms

I am right here in another vineyard after midnight

Again:

I am pantless, and I am beginning to grow a gut,

The ceiling fans turn, but they are useless while the heavily golden

Voices sing,

Singing about the sinks, the graveyards of the repeating heroes:

And I wish that I had my own voice,

And better voices for this while so many gunfights were going down,

While so many tin starred badges were being thrown into the dirt,

But I have leapt so many times past Disney World that I cannot

Remember;

And now, Alma, this is another thing for you, because I want to feed

You and cage you in a cleaned house world:

I wish that I knew you,

And loved you through the brittle opulence of another Spanish

Holiday,

But now all of that is over, and this is Mexico- the dry world

Running over:

The borders of America singing like angels, waiting for your brown

Legs to leap like fairytales,

Straight over the crowns of barbed wire, and for you to come to me,

The ochre séance of another butterfly and to fall asleep right away

Into my arms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into My Soft And Anonymous World

Alma, I spent my day away from you:

You called me three times, it seems- and would have called me once

More, except your man had both of your cars,

And he was picking you up from work: so you couldn't call me:

But I leapt towards you whenever I could, like a firework wanting a

Special purpose,

Into the direction of its pretty young muse: and I thought of how all of

This daylight made its festivities upon you;

And I remembered you told me not to drink today, but look at what

I am doing, disappointing you while you sleep with

Heidi:

While I sleep in my bachelorhood, calling for you through all of my

Licorice and scars, with no children to sleep with myself;

But I remain here, praying for whatever I can:

Failing eventually, like something who thought itself beautiful

Really realizing what it was,

And burning down into the grass, nothing more than the hair lip

Of a cenotaph of ash, still hoping for you,

Eyed by rattlesnakes and grasshoppers, like a paper airplane

Who once desired to make love with the moon who still has hopes

Of finding you here tomorrow, and wetting the wings of your lips

Down into my soft and anonymous world.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into My Windmills

Eloquence in the starving amphitheater—  
By another song to be doing this,  
Disappearing by riding bicycles and speaking of  
Housewives and getting  
Married to a woman that cannot exist by  
Herself in this country—  
Her true love sober if far away—  
And the truancy of her body's limbs from my shore  
Designating the nest of her softest places:  
Taking her virginity at thirty and  
Riding the bus with her—trying to remember how  
Wet the waves got that we have never tasted together,  
Even if she doesn't like roses—  
She has already bought me my birthday present over  
And over—like the sun and the moon rolling over  
The earth,  
Her body the milky place of smoothed cataracts that falls  
Like milk and pearls into my windmills.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into Myth

It gets so sometimes I'd like to pray,  
And on my knees I'd like to say,  
"Now enough! Why do you have to be  
So f\*cking tough! "  
But to do so would make me a hypocrite,  
Believing in a God when it is convenient,  
Rather, I should take the blows,  
Laughing from their pews and rows,  
And beaten, battered, alone in the end,  
Turn my face away from this all, and grin,  
For that would mean I was still inside,  
And hadn't given up and lied.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Rocket Ships And Fireworks

Up in the angel morning with their  
Kissed:  
Frying like eggs, soaring like bacon:  
And above the clouds,  
Heirlooms of metamorphosis in the wide  
And open rooms:  
While angels fly to get here:  
Up and up  
And up: daylight and pigeons and the moon  
Propositioning the sun:  
Eagerly,  
Roses bloom, perfume and perfume  
And fly and fly around them:  
Graveyard and dump and tomb:  
The daylight grows up into rocket ships and  
Fireworks  
And other careworn exhumes: and school will  
Come tomorrow  
And the whores will watch cartoons.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Rust

Here is a bedroom as rich as a rose garden to lay you  
Down in,  
Underneath the cockpits of illustrious and busy men,  
Calling out to the fields of wonder all above the make believes  
Of the clouds,  
Burning in airy splendor, pinwheels to the more porous gods:  
Latching on to the spokes of  
Bicycles who in willing their own metamorphosis learned  
To fly,  
And so kissed the sunny streets of sunny kids goodbye:  
And took to here, and took to there,  
And swam like runny Mandela's through a Buddhism of  
Sky,  
Until the feelings were given away as gifts, and their reasons  
Answered their lonely bodies marching on lighthearted skiffs;  
And it somehow happened that they all marched up  
Here,  
Where the rockets glamour and the corporeal jackets of  
Glades and volatile roller coasters disappear,  
Blinded by a cardinal in his dreams, kissed into blindness  
By a church,  
Giving the Eucharist to lungs as they spill over breathlessly,  
Albinos in the rattlesnake strata of a cannibal king,  
Forest as pitched and long as a folklore of witchcraft that collects  
The failed wishes of downed airplanes like coins in a well  
Whose wishes always bleed into rust, and never heal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Something That Cannot Be Stolen

Adding the angel bright kerosene to my heart  
And stumbling through the smoky forest where the bees  
Are laying with the leaves:  
The boys are dark in Mexico, dark as the shadows between the  
Pits of trees;  
And I saw you and your man today, Alma, waiting in the line  
At the place I was shopping,  
But I got there before you came, like a shadow that was tired  
Of following:  
I went by you as quiet as a frightened dog, and he was in the corner  
Watching you,  
As saturnine as a bear culled by an owl; but I could feel you:  
Feel that you were mine:  
I went by saying nothing, and wondered where your children were.  
Then I drove home, towards the ocean and the bushels full of  
Stars,  
Went home as lonely as a beaten hound, which I am afraid is what I  
Am, but then I put your eyelash into a painting by Picasso  
And made it disappear entirely into that woman's eyelash that  
He painted;  
It was my witchcraft without practice but picked up from the driest  
Country in the land where you come from:  
And I want to take you and your children to the movies,  
And on bicycles to run parallel with the spangling cutlery of the waves:  
I want to share a life with you that we do not yet have,  
And I want us to look each other in the eye and remember how I  
Have hidden your soul away into something that cannot be stolen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Stranger And Other Streams

Trailer parks of my ancestry where nothing ever  
Closes,  
But nothing ever gets done on time,  
Because everyone is enjoying the Ferris Wheels  
Underneath the mountains  
In the lackadaisical metamorphosis that never  
Really changes,  
Or goes to the forest to shed the old skeletons  
Or armors,  
But they bend down and drink from the challises  
Of wishing wells and waitresses,  
As October comes around and its so many birthdays,  
While I suppose you haven't seen her,  
Because she lives upon the other coast;  
But the angels burn like candles for her, even though  
She is so young:  
Her first born son is just learning to walk,  
And her husband is playing tennis:  
Soon she will even forget where she lives-  
As she enjoys one Fourth of July after another,  
And her children metamorphosis into demigods with  
Wings,  
And tadpoles grow legs and arms and swim and  
Leap into stranger and other streams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into That High School

Now to the ghost towns flying  
Without looking up into all of this cantankerous spume,  
Without even a word to remember on our  
Pillow,  
Drooling and spilling over into the gunfights that mound  
The hills all around our  
Red and pornographic fort: and now I have my head held  
High,  
Remembering the yellow emblem, the flaunting of conquistadors  
Throughout the ripe orchards,  
As throughout all of those fluming carcasses,  
Cursing as they remembered themselves:  
Life some kind of god looked over by airplanes,  
Whilst all of this dust returned to the cropped grasses  
All about the fingernails of the trailer park  
As into dusk we figured out how to stop touching ourselves,  
With all of the industrialized engines touching down  
And figuring out how to look so pretty  
Even amongst the fields,  
As the baseball players spoke up and cursed, even as all of our  
Pinwheels faded, folding into nothingness  
Completed, just as the fist traffics bundled into the mists,  
And swore, making the fist missive steps into that high school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Aforementioned Princes

Each day in her echoing clay poets  
And dogs:  
And the princes in her carport ululating,  
Looking up to her like a goddess as she strings  
Out the clothes to be washed,  
As the lightning shakes the orange tree  
Like a little boy who has tied his own shoes  
Above his head  
And walks out in the mud to the open tongues  
Of alligators who would be laughing,  
If they knew how to feel:  
Here there is so much joy it is on the verge of  
Drowning, and the frogs crowd her like  
Tadpoles, encouraging her to remember  
When they were just tadpoles as she bent  
Down above their shallows admiring her own  
Reflection,  
When they thought for all this time that she  
Meant to kiss at least one or two of them  
And at last turn those lucky few into the aforementioned  
Princes.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into The Arc

Looking up into the arc, it is time to celebrate:  
See there, there are balloons,  
Being blown by the zephyrs into the lips of  
Vagabonds—and in the living room there  
Is enough space to count out the terrapin—  
Until another bedroom is divided—  
Your mother and father are still alive—  
But the katydids like themselves inside the cataracts of  
Cypress,  
As the airplanes fly across overhead,  
Spilling their silver ribbons over another theatre  
That is too afraid to disappear.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into The Aspects Of A Broken Sea

When the horses gallop through the pine trees,  
Their heels click against the apoplectic  
Rattles of snakes  
Balled up in a boreal movie theatre:  
But it is just a trick, and now they are not even  
There:  
Underneath the pitchfork pines where my parents  
Once sold produced picked from Bell Glade—  
There is now only a strip mall  
And a massage parlor—  
A fast food joint: what happened before  
Was just a trick of the light:  
My childhood looking up through the bower,  
Flea-bitten, long snouted dog whining beside me—  
And the speckled light of what could have been an  
Audience of guardian angels  
Waiting for the curtains to travel west—and again  
Into the aspects of a broken sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Blaring Eyes

Comely reasons resting here,  
And combing comely hair, while the angels intrude  
Through the footsteps of busses,  
While the rattlesnakes sleep belly-up underneath the rude  
Cherubs of holly;  
And gold crenulates the earth, as grandmothers surface  
In Saint Louis,  
Segregated in the firehouses of Bellefontaine, underneath the  
Chalkboards amusements and all laid out there all Silkily  
Even before I knew anything  
About Alma; as she showed up real good today, and it made  
Me formed the way sometimes gunpowder can contemplate  
In a wound;  
But I left the battlefield so that I could get here first thing  
To you,  
The continents melting like ice-cream, treating themselves  
Into the tears of the ocean:  
And bicycles, and bicycles who become the reefs and grottos  
For otters and alligators,  
As Alma's daughter learns her firsts words, and looks up  
Smiling into the blaring eyes of her most overtly Mexican  
Of fathers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Brighter Hemispheres

I am so drunk and so defeated now,  
Alma,  
That I am laying on my floor in the darkness:  
Reposing underfoot of the verbiage in the landscaping of  
My misappropriated zoetrope,  
I pine for you- Alma: I tell you I love you all day long,  
And it makes you laugh,  
The way a butterfly laughs at the passing roar of an airplane:  
The way the jubilation of innocent bones laughs in the graveyard;  
There are yellow houses here waiting in the verdure  
To bare your name: Alma,  
And the sun is famished and jealous because you know that  
She doesn't shine as brightly as you  
Shine-  
Your very name the soul of my being- At last you are the  
Personification that metamorphoses into the brighter hemispheres,  
Shedding my artwork and suckling your children.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Caesuras Of Death

The work is steadily picking up,  
Folded into arrows and made to cross  
The canal I remember,  
In any weathers, where the fish are all alone,  
Where they aint getting any bigger;  
And the trolleys of pre-socratic gentlemen  
Busily unshaved, not knowing either where  
They are going,  
Drinking steaming hemlock,  
Pointing out my scars like foreclosure  
Constellations, saying now which one is truly  
Beautiful, and which one is not,  
Trying to get myself into a bigger dictionary,  
Understanding how to laugh at the beautifully, dolled  
Women now who are like mannequins posing down  
At the debased roots of the Rocky Mountains:  
Now, with their proboscises evenly jeweled,  
And their hair slipping down like readily desirable  
Women from the north-country,  
No one really cares, because all they are is selling  
Something, something headily perfumed but not  
Disclosed until bought;  
And I ate all their parents' expensive jam,  
And I stepped out the door into the sea, and named it  
My sea, and gave it my colorful vermilion,  
And fish which grew spurious from my gentlemanly palms,  
Who before where butterflies from a yet unexplored moon  
Who metamorphosed,  
And then flew away, crash landing their brilliant quartiles  
Into the caesuras of death,  
Believing that even though, like me, they should be  
Remembered for what they have done strung out and  
Dimpled before all of that careless society,  
Knowing that even if they are not it will not matter,  
For who is better qualified than they to know what they are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Canal

I know there are trophies of what you  
Want in your eyes,  
But I cannot see them- they say your eyes  
Are brown,  
But I think they are lying- Siamese octopi  
Have inked the fish tanks of your eyes,  
And I think of their wolf-like  
Silhouette as I sleep underneath the overpass-  
Words conjoin like lines on my palm;  
And it rains, coming down- jewels and acronyms  
Of fireworks-  
Of what it means to be here- waiting for you:  
Even the cops are sleeping,  
And where there is no concrete, the grass is matted:  
And somewhere soft and far away,  
My parents are sleeping together near the road  
That vanishes into the canal,  
And from there begins a whole other world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Crepuscule Of Her Olive-Skinned Neighborhood

Bottle caps under sewing the spikenard:  
Where there is jubilant literature and students of  
Premodonnas and words as plentiful and  
Carnivorous blue jays,  
But also where I hate to think of her making love  
Under the big and huffing circus tents,  
Because I imagine that is what she does:  
Kind of how I found out tonight that there are  
Still women coming down from other worlds,  
But stepping down and looking real good and  
Enjoying the moment  
Like the fair moving beside the freshest ports,  
And it doesn't bother me to have to look into her eyes,  
Even though I know it should:  
Because she just goes on forever, whistling the minerals  
Of a Nubian world, and this is the splendor curling  
Up into the crepuscule of her olive-skinned neighborhood.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Earth Until You Cry

Going home again to remember  
That some roads lead into the forest, and not  
All airplanes make it  
To their destination- and the parks sometimes  
Turn into salt mines:  
And I know you cannot leave him, but I have loved  
You the way a stubborn bumblebee will  
Sometimes love only one flower,  
Even though he's gotten all off her that he  
Can:  
And now lies drunkenly besides some wishing well  
In a mall of wherever,  
Having cast his wishes into the shallows that will  
Never return,  
Nor even give a reflection of an echo:  
And that is how I will starve for you- each Christmas  
Underneath the stewardesses in any of my  
Houses- as you go home to him  
And you children, and the sunlight burns  
Into the earth until you cry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Forver Backyards

Each stitch in the peacock's feather,  
A crenulation upon the mountains, stones waved into the  
Quartzite caesuras where the lovers fall,  
Teeth chipped upon the false romances of hoar frosted mermaids:

The milkmaid riding on the last-most seat of the bus  
Turns a blue eye away,  
The wind succulates upon her blondness,  
Ovid turns her sisters into kites,  
Zeus draws a bone and turns into the conquistador's bull,  
Pursuing knee-high into the foaming surcease:

My children drizzle into the tiny yellow rooms  
Where we have planted them,  
Their insufficient nudities beginning to dry like dew in the morning  
of the first day of school:

They are looking up at her. They have forgot all of their memories.  
A goshawk touches two weeds together in a thorny bush,  
And a new pornography is born high up in the coned armpits  
Between two war-begotten countries-

The last word spoken to their virginity has no meaning;  
It is sent to turn them feral so that they may escape these earliest of  
Classrooms:  
Leaping billy-goats of metamorphosis,  
The fairytale spumed between two nests of giants:

They are freed to roam the canals dredged behind the backyards  
Of society. The little girl pauses to kiss an alligator frozen by her presence,  
And the land beckons in a bucolic, mowed excellence-  
Where nocturnal boys recline forever, arms crossed behind their fermenting  
brains,  
Where gem-sized grasshoppers speckle their  
Acned cheeks, far into the forever backyards of the most forgetful housewives.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into The Lukewarm Stones

I tried many nights surviving to the sounds of  
Airplanes—  
As unbusied bachelors jumped and left the  
Earth—  
Going on their honeymoons where no one could  
Disavow them-  
Taking off their shirts to sunlight  
And moonlight, but never to the all too  
Many Disney Worlds—  
As the housewives stood at their thresholds  
Counting to themselves and biting  
Their lips—  
They'd been at the pleasantries of masturbating  
While their young boys tried to  
Launch model rockets  
To soar above the carports to a cream-pie moon—  
As across the street, the pornography  
Molded with the blue cats—  
And the cenotaphs of the conquistadors cried  
Themselves into the lukewarm stones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Months Of Noon

I am your sadly resolute countryman  
Erin,  
Kept higher up on the taught purple hillside:  
I have been tending the golden sheep  
The heroes keep trying to barter from me  
With locks of your hair.  
And it is a shame that tomorrow I should have to  
Go down into so much humorous swelter,  
And traffic with those muscled tourists;  
And I wont even be around,  
Because I am not a model specimen,  
And I will go through the day mostly dejected and  
Past over,  
Thinking about you, Erin- A specimen of Plato's  
Theology,  
A red hot candy all f%cked up- And then I will be  
Back up again,  
High in my lonely bed,  
Masturbating, trying to remember the few Easter Eggs  
I thought I found in College;  
But if you really loved me,  
You'd lay off your extra-curricular tea-parties  
And come and make love to me in my upper bunk,  
Because I am not beautiful,  
But I am honest and simple- Erin,  
Don't give up on trying to be  
A good woman:  
There are so many saddened colors to farm,  
And our children would take after you,  
And our sheep would shine back to the infantile moon  
The tremulous swaying of our buxom love making  
Far into the months of noon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Most Naked Of Cathedrals

Resentment illustrated eternally—it is a juvenile fear  
That comes home alone—latchkeyed, microwaving dinner—  
Expecting the estranged fascinations of  
Televangelist joy: I saw you out walking out in the courtyard—  
Bosomy and with a crown of ivory—you were attracting  
Every boy—and the attention of all of the heavens was  
Spilling over you like some sort of waterfall irrefutable of  
Divine Promise—so in the middle of the day when I had to swim  
Home while I was horny and could not express myself by  
And more lucid thoughts to you—I enjoyed myself underneath the  
Ceiling fan—as thoughts and airplanes spread away like  
The nebulas your eyes try to fabricate—as you step out unarmed  
Into the most naked of cathedrals and look far, far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Mouth Of The Lion

I come into the mouth of the lion  
Where I dance,  
When my wife is taking a shower,  
And in a zoo near here there  
Is a merry-go-round  
That doesn't turn once there are  
Stars in the sky,  
And some Disney movie is playing  
In a nearby theatre  
Until the lights shut off and the  
Strip joints  
Open—like my mouth and my  
Thoughts after I have drunken too much—  
And all of the playgrounds have emptied—  
And the little thing that will be my son  
Shadow boxes in my wife's Chinese  
Belly—  
Until New Years, when there will be fireworks,  
And a few more days off until  
I will have to go back to school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Next World

Busied in the tomb  
As papered airplanes flew, burning, looking up  
Through the maelstrom,  
Heavily scarred- deaf to the hierarchies of whatever they  
Though about,  
Even burning as they touched down, pin wheeling without  
A thought,  
Conquistadors on a throw, or another way to liven up:  
Ancient harpies up in the sky,  
But what are they doing:  
Burning,  
Burning- red apples thrown to the plagiarisms of the  
Ants:  
And all of my scars: and all of my scars buried beneath the  
Orchards,  
Buried beneath all of this, while my paper soul burns  
Through its semiprecious elements: burns, thrown across  
The lips of the canal,  
Tossed across the bosoms of my brown  
Alma, leaping like a bullet shot horse without a care into the  
Next world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Nights Of Those Christmases

Baseball lays wetly upon my skin-  
Fallen like tatters from a web in the forest:  
Here it lays,  
This past-time outside of the parking lot  
Or the tent where we used to sell Christmas trees  
And I listened to your brown  
Words telling me wonderful lies in the weedy  
Pasture beside the canal,  
The traffic streaming, keeping up with the reports,  
But heading home:  
The Christmas trees from slave states cut down,  
Entombed underneath the palms,  
As I kissed your pretty lips through the air,  
Alma- as if you were a fire to keep me warm,  
And I set my own soul outwards like a wet cloth  
Of wounded children into the overpasses  
And against the waves I never saw-  
To find you,  
To make you give promises to keep a residence inside  
Of my ribs- while the carriages plundered  
And the alligators gave their promises to  
Bicycles- into the nights of those Christmases  
Trying to remember the games I wished that we'd  
Played.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Nocturnal Bouquets

Into the nocturnal bouquets how  
Will you pretend to find me, before and after  
You've had children with another man—  
And what was I but another playground  
That you could leave  
As the sun called you further and further upstate—  
And the waves flooded themselves around—  
And the mermaids took off their bikinis  
And floundered around—  
Sometimes I imagined that I would live in a trailer park,  
And sometimes a playground—  
Even after the amusements had closed,  
The more carnivorous stores remained open  
All night as I waited, open chested,  
For my soul to be flooded by them,  
Even though you were far,  
Far from  
Being around.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Rich Classes Where They Belonged

The boys really brag that they have the candles well  
In hand,  
Softy as gossiping butterflies, and tiny drinking fountains  
Purring over her fingers;  
As if this is where they'd found her out while they  
Were all alone, early before school in the mowed ovals of  
Sleeping tracks,  
In the wet enclaves of baseball diamonds, and wherever  
Their feet fell- far back along the last vestiges of the easement,  
Watched by the eyes of alligators who would never own a  
Name  
Until the seeds of the city actually poured into the classrooms,  
And they walked back into the halls and saw once more  
The breathy wishes on crutches of skirted legs, bemoaning the  
Conduction of their courses,  
Enclutched by golden musings, and bending low across the theatres,  
Stopping for awhile and then just as regular as carnivals  
And geysers, removing themselves once more from these visions of  
Daydreams,  
And promptly sitting themselves deep into the rich classes where  
They belonged.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into The Richest Hillside of All of Her Mexicos

Busting a full pageantry of the male peacock;  
Until the heavens have such bliss as to become a church:  
And then we can think together reasonlessly  
Into the highest Pharisees of windmills: that it all exists right here:  
And that it has all been keeping its time alone,  
Just to recite into the homeopathic lights of doll houses,  
That the tiny fingers of lovers are on their way:  
And on the move like the hopelessly helpless fires of firecrackers,  
Like the thunderpuss of seahorses along the spines of  
Young lovers who've all had too much caffeine on their birthdays:  
And then I go to the dog track with Flaco-  
But other than that, I only have one or two bad habits; and neither of  
Them have anything left to do with what you believe in:  
But my muse is right here, and mulling over the backs of Salt Water  
Terrapin like the tafees of waves through the echoes of  
High class amusements somewhere not so far off from the candy land of  
The light house; but still far away enough to be on the side of  
Dangerous, like fish who have somehow evolved the effect of  
Touching their gills, and saying to themselves as they swim away,  
That this is not enough- until the games lessen and turn surreal; and maybe  
Decide not to happen at all, like the first born child on the graveyard shift  
Of an airplane- as the muses who just happen to be from Mexico,  
Turn their slender brown asses in bed, and look away from the rattlesnakes  
Who are so fully sated from kissing and eating the magician's rabbits,  
As to be fearless and tamed- like the mothers of tourists who have all  
Eaten the icecreams and sherbets underneath the scissoring switchbacks  
Of my insurmountable ranges; and the mountains who don't ever have  
To say my muse's name; but, unfortunately, never have the  
Class to contain themselves- like rain showers in an orgasm of  
Practicing school buses who would like to pinafore my Alma with so  
Many souls:  
Like butterflies matting to the weathers so far entrenched into the richest  
Hillside of all her Mexicos; and so, unfortunately, Alma, rarely if ever  
Do....

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Rivers

Mother of a yellow wolfâ€”This is my art,  
Sinking beneath the sunshine of a sailboatâ€”  
The tourists donâ€™t  
See youâ€”What lines you have gone  
Through the trigonometry of any horizon:  
The apple falls, consumed,  
And her bedroom she looks up to the ceiling  
Fan, fancying pilots in their acrobatic  
Delusionsâ€”and everything else is a pulseâ€”  
A way to behave which I cannot describe:  
The knights have crossed the river on their  
Quest, and you are still in college  
Casting your dimensions into the rivers from  
Which I have long since vanished.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Sea

There in the drainage, down by the clutch  
Where the special whispers ululate as soft as my mother's  
First memories:  
What is this, but words spoken prematurely before the rain;  
And it is coming down over the first house that  
I can remember  
While my parents are making love  
And the frog princes are in the carport laying eggs all over  
The rebar and the open extension chords  
Besides the blue Cadillac my mother almost drowned in:  
And all of it paved and done away by  
Kidnappers a long time before I came upon Alma-  
And she gave me the desire which kindled  
All of this pain-  
Airplanes sleeping on the roofs, French-kissing weathervanes:  
And Alma and her children right there, in a world  
I cannot see:  
I buy them gifts- but she floats away like hapless genies  
Bottled into the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Sea Again

And that sea a languid beauty: I do not know her.  
I am just sweating in a tenement in Shanghai,  
But soon I will be returning home,  
Without a wife, and the sky is hung-over  
And filled with the vortexes of dead ends,  
As the foxes hang upon the barbed wire:  
But I made her pregnant,  
Travelling the sea to her, and back—and  
Back again:  
It took maybe sixty times to make it permanent,  
And not she rests just on my shoulder,  
Like a string of stars around a Christmas tree  
She cannot possibly believe in—  
But I will take her around here to meet  
Those holidays that I was born with:  
And our child will know all about the fairies  
That happened to partake in the both of us—  
Even if he doesn't believe in them:  
He will have both hemispheres, and so many  
Places to go hiding—  
And he will close his eyes, and the sun will melt  
Into the sea again.

Robert Rorabeck

## Into The Seas Of

Making another line in the wilting snow:  
It is just make-believe anyways—  
The cathedrals are over-run with parked cars  
And the bouquets which were supposed to be  
Here—It doesn't matter if the lovers  
Can hardly breathe—  
They have been too busy getting all over themselves—  
The words hunger, and then they starve:  
The rain starts out,  
Like beautiful banshees in a traffic jam press ganged  
Before the mountains:  
Those beautiful apiaries in their boudoirs of  
Nose bleeds: and I suppose I can say it  
Anyways,  
Because no one shall find this anyways—  
There she was, on a high shelf, the airplanes making'  
Her barrettes—  
And no one had to languish too long beside her  
Swimming pools—  
Her amusements were all torn down upon the day  
She was married,  
And all of her senses dived into the seas of  
The impenetrable heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Shade

Cicadas echoing to their house wives  
That is this  
And this is that- as the cars drive by,  
And the cat  
Sleeps on holidays- sleeps a long while on  
The mat:  
The sky above the trees of that- the houses  
In ribbons upon the lake,  
The families within them taking the take-  
Festival of their bodies  
I watch them partake, them never conceiving  
The mistake of mistake  
And they are leaning fully into the shade  
As the fox cleans out the chicken coops  
In which the hens thought to have laid.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Sky

I have a girl  
And she is married  
And the sun  
Sings  
And masturbates  
Into the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Soft Flesh

Dragon of infinite colorsâ€”  
Of seas shells and the tattoos of little girlsâ€”  
Challenging you in high art and witches:  
Venal forest in your eyes filled with the tears  
Of the crashes of airplanes:  
What country do you represent kidnapped  
Into the war we have fallen intoâ€”  
Broken pavements who cannot remember  
The tantrums of their disillusioned soulâ€”  
And so you now send things into meâ€”  
Busy quills like soldiers dying into the soft  
Flesh of sinking valleys:  
And I become drunken for you underneath  
Churchesâ€”and become fulfilled,  
Lost beneath you with all of those things which  
No longer must evolve.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into The Tide Pool

Without a ghost I am dead.  
And languishing on the servicing highways  
I wander—  
In a marriage I am allowed to drift,  
Cultivated into the working class—  
I go about my way the same as anyone—  
Happy marionette  
Pulled by the stolen lactations of  
The moon—  
The elevators of my dreams escape me,  
But at least I don't have to  
Go to school anymore—  
I can meander as far as my English mind  
Can take me:  
Pulled back and forth like the tide  
By forces I can barely glean—  
But it is a beautiful act,  
Staged by the ideologies of men  
Forever freeing themselves into cages,  
Little shadows, like minnows,  
In the tide pools upon the edge of oblivion.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Waiting Constellations

It hurts:  
And the cars start in the morning-  
Go off  
To work,  
Like the last breath of a newborn  
Of great grandfather is breathing,  
As the morning  
Surmounts  
Disney World,  
And the alligators pant, if they would-  
And a bit of truant sunlight  
Lies making love  
With elegant herons and deer and  
Tadpoles in a make-believe  
Woods  
That is sorrowful enough to be a swamp-  
As you hold his light up  
To your face, having already turned down  
Mine-  
Your brown skin like the copper of  
A snake with emotions and lips  
And soul big enough to have  
Swallowed my heart like a candied apple,  
Then turned away from the fire,  
Hips and elbows already attracting  
To chrysalis of every sort and kind of  
Metamorphosis:  
And you step into that threshold commonly  
Bled from all of the traffic  
Back into the waiting constellations you  
And he have somehow born.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Waves

As a stricken day looks beautiful,  
At long last the horse missing a rider lies down  
For the wolves,  
And the moon is a lighthouse too far away to help:  
And the tourists are just getting off  
A ship that isn't even hurt:  
The dogs panting a chasm of red love bleeding off  
The lovely roses,  
And what light that isn't lost to it slowly slips  
Away, curling around  
The pinafores, as the perfumes drift off into the waves:  
The women there upon the parapets  
Save themselves,  
And make love as before mentioned while  
The fireworks are sacrificed into the waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The West

Boys, as they are lost turn narcoleptic:  
Counting the crooks of trees and all of the ways down,  
The weeps and tinctures of sunlight that expose  
Housewives to the foxes who leap for their wine;  
And the world is good, in its real places,  
Its architectures of lawns, the chessboard of canals that  
Hedge into them so many fairytales:  
The slender bridges for the goats, the very first words that  
Laid me off the tits and eventually put hair on my chest:  
And now they are riding back and forth like censers  
In a church:  
The purple day looks out through the windows and feels so  
Sorry for the cars;  
The fireworks shoot their arrows, and burn in the green outdoors:  
And it is a holiday, or at least it has been blessed,  
And all of the angels strum their guitars as they get undressed into  
The west.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into The Wishingwell Of The Armpits

Swearing by these mountains that they know their  
Paths—as mothers and mothers  
Come home tumbling upon mountain bikes—  
And the sky is a necklace of pearls above the mine  
Shaft—  
Eventually I will have to come down from my spying and  
Have dinner with you—but for now it is  
Taking forever—and my joints hurt and are in need  
Of a good oiling—  
And every time I look at you, I see that you are looking  
Away, and collecting your head into the wishing well  
Of the armpits of another god-d@mned  
Good man.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Their Brotherly World

Beautiful it is to be another while  
Anonymous beside the sea:  
Beautiful words happening from the monuments of  
My destroyed body:  
Roiling up through the pores of a session of long nights  
And windmills of tattoos:  
Going overboard, and licking their wounds all the way  
Down the Grandest canyon of the ants:  
Drawing the blood like the sacred swords from them  
That my father never drew-  
And then standing like the tiniest man inside a forest  
That grows up to the heavens,  
Where the angels are doing their laundry just like  
My mother across the blue sheaths of  
Comets and moonlights:  
The waves like wild horses collecting their blue ribbons  
From their tiniest and most unsurest of bedrooms:  
Soon they will be up there to meet her,  
But what will they see: and what will they say to her  
As they go down together,  
Back into their brotherly world, to breakfasts, gossips,  
And sleeps.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into This Old High School

Into this old high school of my dialect,  
You represent something I am seriously not fond of—  
Even as I watch disbelieve as older  
Than old frogs  
Leap and jump to the moon—  
And the rockets burst like chardonnay—  
Or anyway I cannot spell you—  
And I am not clear that I am otherwise happy  
As the busses and the busses and the busses  
Turn around anyways like the mariposas of  
The poets of anyways—  
And I've just been languishing here besides  
The bedside of the telephone—  
Anyways—  
Wondering and wondering of  
You cannot make out the souls of the remote  
Control boats that seem to be happening  
Like the bursting hearts of fireworks beside  
You and always and just because in the  
Holidays of the bedrooms and the bedrooms of  
Your holidays anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Into Your Eyes

How these poems will not be remembered,  
Half written- semi-delectable:  
Will they be remembered by periods of such great muses  
The world will never think to know beyond their bodies passing  
Of brown skin across the soft and verdant snow:  
Should I not be given a name to defeat the pagan vines of  
Rome,  
To ignite the months of rain- Let them know at least that my last  
Muse was the most fortunate,  
And that I was with her and as true to her as the most incidental airplanes  
Are to the sky:  
That I kissed her lips so many times through the parks of our many  
Days,  
And I drowned myself into her eyes until the gravity took us away  
Together:  
Alma, I drowned myself into your eyes today,  
And it doesn't matter if anyone else in the world cares to remember.

Robert Rorabeck



# Into Your Forgotten Mexico

Words are imperfect, but they hold true:  
Cherry trees blossoming in the hue; and your eyes warming up  
Across the lakes overflowing with the things they  
Cannot hold,  
The pretty voices who have told of everything stolen  
From these shelves over all of these years:  
The golden forest thick with bears,  
And the humming caterpillars who bed up to your throats Alma  
And change right there,  
To disappear across the carnivals of the world you put into me,  
While your daughter grows up,  
And your son enlivens the day; as I want to hold hands with you back  
Into your forgotten Mexico, to kiss, and kneel and pray.

Robert Rorabeck

# Intoxicate

I drink a little when I write,  
To dull the pain and blind the errors,  
To give a new shine to the crypt,  
And put blue birds in the shadows:  
Inebriation lines up the holidays on the fences,  
And draws out the kids painted like Indians  
In their suburban yards,  
Like bottles which glisten and whistle  
From their glass canals,  
And scatters sun in the pasture-  
Fish leap like scaled notes of music,  
And footprints change their species in the  
Scalding storms arriving on the beaches-  
Then, at night, I can easily become a poet of  
Middle America- something between the store  
Bought saccharine greeting cards for doe eyed mothers,  
And the lucid fart from Walt Whitman whistling on  
The cartographed prairies;  
It is inexcusable tomfoolery, which imbibed in the  
Dimness of a parked car, is easily mistaken for genius  
By the mouth who spills it,  
And the fingers which tap-dance it excreted on  
The keys like painful if muted jazz,  
But it is rarely if ever cousin to the pink titted scientists,  
And those who build their mansions in the nouns  
Can rightly say that my home is a dirty studio  
Paid for by the month by middlingly lucrative crimes,  
For her eyes never stray across me, as if I was  
Something she had never seen before  
Swimming beautifully through the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Inventory

100 caskets of blue  
Blooming planets  
Beneath her tired eyes,

Beneath her 12 fingers,  
Twelve dozen hungry  
Alligators hidden in sandy  
Pools in the sand box  
Of the dog park,

Sixty-six dogs in 11 grains  
Of sand,

Sixty-six boxes of  
French chocolates to  
Feed grandmother's purple lips,

5 hungry grandmothers in  
5 marble caskets,

15 hardy boxers fighting  
Satans on the fences,

29 roaming fences,  
Coiling loosely about his properties,

2 bright new rainbows  
Leading from our homes to  
Fine new apartment stores,

22 apartment stores with  
Cabbage green floorboards,

One calico cat on  
Her naked purring lap,

Just her naked purring lap,

And more of that

And all of that  
And more and  
More of that.

Robert Rorabeck

# Is Believe

Starting out through the porticos and transoms of  
A house:  
Then the Pleiades, over looking the garden mazes of so many ways:  
Wanting to go down the bleachers and ending up in the search  
And kiss and f%ck  
Underneath all of the windows whistling from the airplanes:  
Eyes opening up on my wounded body,  
Sounding its bugle to your lips: the forts are surrounded  
And the enemy is filled with your uncles and brothers: they look so  
Fine, reporting to themselves,  
On horseback and in silver and gold, while your children  
Suffer before the television;  
And I told you that I loved you, and you shook your head and  
Cried,  
But then we made love: Let me say that we made love under the  
Soft plates of lime in the orchards that the angels love:  
Your sisters looking away to themselves,  
Sleeping in their own room in the house that your father promised  
To you,  
Sleeping next to you but not by so many words;  
While I caracole around you, flying like a boy who cannot die:  
Families of cathedrals going up in smoke; I delayed you and you came,  
But not in time to buy the flowers for the anniversary of your  
Grandmothers' death: Alma: and all of my art is weak,  
And I am just trying to deceive for whatever reason that I cannot  
Believe;  
But I see you at the movies, and then I see you at my house-  
And we walked hand in hand through the galleries today; and I  
Tasted your mouth-  
I am sure tomorrow I will bring you breakfast: a blueberry bagel with  
Strawberry cream cheese; but whether or not you will like it  
I don't know:  
All I can do is believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Is It Beautiful To Say I Love You

Is it beautiful to say I love you  
Even though I haven't seen you for ten years?  
But you once kissed my neck and you are not my aunt.  
I still feel you there, and you are behind my eyes.  
I look upon you though I haven't seen you for  
All this time.

You said two years ago that I don't  
Really know you, but that was on the telephone.  
How come? I want to know  
You, and in the language my hands create, I pretend  
To know you. I know you! Or I am just foolish  
And have never loved.

Stand in front of me and tell me you  
Do not love me, and then I will leave you alone,  
Though you might follow me if you wish,  
With the trail my heart bleeds.

My favorite high school teacher says these  
Poems are good, even though they are all about you.  
He says get over you, but he also didn't know  
That I could graduate—I say, I don't need to  
Get over you. You are all that I have.  
In fact, I need you.... not so much the poems....

And is that all there is when I touch myself  
Involuntarily in the night, because I need you there?  
Or will you finally come to me, and allow us to  
Create for real all that I have hoped  
And written.

Robert Rorabeck

# Issues Of My Absolute Affections

If you come to me tomorrow- Alma,  
And we make love hidden by the ixora, in a house  
That is as old as my grandfather,  
But which can still get up and dance, then I will be as happy  
As anyone:  
And I can look forever into the auger darkness of your  
Brownest of eyes and never see how big your corneas can grow:  
And even while the graveyards grow like wild berries on the drooling  
Sunlight and crying rain straight up against the kindergartens and  
Playgrounds of the most innocent of children,  
Not a single person can deny my love for you:  
Or the repeated infatuation of my art for you, or my broken promises  
Of sobriety:  
And I don't want to have to make love to any other body, though  
I find making love a great necessity:  
And I can douse my head underneath the soft skin of your atmospheres  
And find so much untroubled gold, and this I can  
Take up and save for you like beautiful newborn kittens drooling  
The milk of venomous rattlesnakes who had the will never to strike  
Anyone, especially star-crossed sailors- right there in the  
Bright palm of my hand:  
And we can make love forever, growing old together and trust each other  
With our suitcases and locker combinations;  
And maybe you don't understand all of this, Alma, but you understand  
Enough to know that I love you more sincerely and more incandescently  
That the sexiest of stewardesses can love her handsomest of  
Passengers,  
So when I tell you that I have never laid eyes on a woman as beautiful  
As you, how can you argue with the unrequited issues of my  
Absolute affections.

Robert Rorabeck

# It Is Not Easy

It is not easy to find  
New words to justify myself  
These days,  
To keep the knife balanced  
On the fruit of my throat  
Without slipping in,  
To sever the secret  
Things I'll never say;  
It is not easy to look  
At things in the mirror  
And say that they are not  
So different from their  
Reflections; in the homeless  
Summer, failed men make  
Love in the park and  
Little blonde boys with  
Red lunch boxes return  
Home from school—  
When no one else is  
Home, it is not easy to  
See the world from  
Where you live— The  
Roof is too low to watch  
The ocean rolling infinite,  
To see the planes flying  
Like choreographed  
Angels of superstructure as the alligators  
Swim lazy like prehistoric  
And ugly mermaids through her  
Man-made waterways—  
To see the homeless come  
Toward your childhood,  
To lead it away from school  
And down to the sea  
To feel forever through the  
Waves as stoned professionals,  
The adulterers make love  
In the sad nearby;  
It is not easy to look her



In the eye,  
To take his hand and let  
Him lead you beneath the rolling calms—  
And the sky is hollow  
And filled with echoes  
Where she takes you;  
It is not easy to keep  
Writing these things,  
The woodcarvers and  
Morticians lay down in their  
Architectures  
In the land of graveyards  
The dead go on forever,  
But it is not easy—

Robert Rorabeck

# It Just So Happens

The world feels like the static mariposas in strange auction;  
And the night sleeps: perhaps it will enjoy the broken chrysalis of  
Daylight,  
When the love making happens and the song birds become so  
Pestilent,  
And all the happenstance of lovers have to get up again to also start  
Making joy into the world;  
And now all the books are filled and the numbers written down,  
Everyone accounted for, like they taught you for in school:  
Why you had to get up early and count on your fingers and blue toes:  
How alma's eyes can almost come through the very opulence of  
Nothing in particular: How she drives a gray Dodge Charger, but  
Can hardly afford to pay for her dinner:  
And now Alma is very beautiful: She is an open extension cord,  
She is a candle lit for mass: She is someone who laid down once for  
A conquistador in a garden of Spikenard I know not what for, except  
That they were very early disturbed by the macho animals who  
Came two by two, beating their chests and singing Haiku;  
And I am really uncertain what they did that for, but now I should have  
A house that is just a jaunt away from the see; and I see Alma every day,  
And it just so happens that she sees me.

Robert Rorabeck

# It Never Seems To Get Cold

Thoughts of fickle roses and  
Credit card machines-  
A police dog's bite mark in my  
Left forearm,  
New scars along my left cheek  
That might finally heal underground;  
And this very instant iguanas  
Released by ten year old hurricanes  
Are sunning themselves on the  
Banks of canals all across  
South Florida;  
They must be good to eat,  
And I sing the blues  
And practice dirges in the dark;  
The palmettos down here first cut up  
And then decorate with your light,  
But you never look up,  
And yet even with the sun further away  
It never seems to get cold.

Robert Rorabeck

# It Rains

Rains sure are wet:

They get that way when they are cast outside,  
Down sleeping in the hedgerow,  
Dampening the smoking pipes of old English Professors;  
And the woods seem to cry with rain,  
Yet to be defeated lovers underneath the aeroplanes:  
And the woods seem dampened and that is when  
You go out to meet your other man,  
Feet pressing the switch backed crèches over the  
Cemetery,  
Going with all the muted pitter-patter,  
My great uncle huffing paint out on the lake  
And all the mortgages whispering, the greater poets tucked  
In and well-hung, lucky hands molesting  
All the things they gathered from class;  
And bees are hung over in the still-life of their vases,  
And all those flowers sit there drinking quietly uncertain  
About death,  
Rains flooding the eaves and making crepuscule early and  
Confused, yet none the less beautiful, as I said  
As it rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# It Would Be Almost Worth Living

My eyes fog like San Francisco:  
I have never been to San Francisco,  
But I hear that long red bridge,  
Like a woman is great for suicide;  
And, I don't know who I am- On my second  
Beer,  
And I'm already not looking half bad,  
Keeping one eye out for cops,  
Or pretty unwed mothers with one leg:  
I just don't want to starve-  
I need someone to clean and change my bandages:  
If I could just find a very, very tired eyed  
Woman to stay with me forever in one or two rooms  
In a very, very simple home,  
That we could live in and sweep at midnight,  
And practice child-making through the short,  
Unsteady halls- it would be beautiful,  
It would be almost worth living.

Robert Rorabeck

# Its Fallen Princess

At home again, called out from seashells,  
From the illusions of our workaday world, the doll I  
Paint in my poems,  
And position in my two bedrooms: the both of us  
Alone on Holidays of Tuesdays,  
Your brown skin makes love to a baseball ghost  
In the twilight of voiceless lions,  
So I am the crippled king of beasts, and you like it  
When I pull your hair,  
Your eyes as dark as the confections of torture,  
Your sweet body tumbling and ecstatic, at times  
A Ferris Wheel,  
At times a Roller Coaster, sweating in the singularity of  
My tourism,  
But always the park gets over itself; the trees, disrobing,  
Weep like newborns,  
And I like a forest in a thunderstorm, as you remember  
Your daughter, and where you left your keys  
And your car outside, the means to escape a midway  
Who has given you all of its prizes,  
And declared you its fallen princess.

Robert Rorabeck

# Its Promises

Cars drive by- laughing, the light fades as the bow shoots  
Its quiver full of hopes up into the sky-  
Through the panes of windows, the last of another day's  
Bright visage can yet be seen mottling, friendly:  
And there is sure to be cares left in the world, even after the  
Fair has migrated,  
As she works in her little clay court to pay for her joys,  
And her young family dances around her, clapping,  
Dousing the fire with wreaths of flowers and  
Gasoline  
Until everything in the night descends, roaring, tumultuous  
Puppets getting off on their own numbers,  
Cutting paper dolls from the paper trees of their woods:  
And all of the woodsmen gets out their axes,  
And old fashioned, go to town, saving the kittens as they  
Timber her will,  
Collecting her apples- calling to each other like braggarts,  
Removing her from the tallow halls of her high school-  
Like a candle removed from church,  
Apples from the orchard, a light house from the sea:  
And having their fill, even as that very same day the sun goes  
Down into the world,  
Sinking with the last of its promises and couples of  
Elephants, going into another places where, even with all of  
Its promises, she should never see.

Robert Rorabeck

## It's Still Early

Anywhere can be beautiful,  
If I hadn't planned to be there and  
Found you quietly breathing in a  
Glade of second grade tulips;  
And it made me believe in the pastel  
Resurrecting of a god who wasn't  
Even mine;  
You that cute sort of breasted deity,  
Never minding how the ants crawled and  
Perspired on your unscarred parts,  
Like an entire zoological collection,  
A leggy car- Oh, how so easily you forgot  
Me, perhaps even now forgetting your  
Erstwhile pills, doing phallacio,  
Trying to get a jumpstart on teenage pregnancy;  
But I'm just kidding,  
Because aren't you even now eclipsing thirty,  
And pretty soon I'm sure you'll have a  
Hyphened last name,  
A two car garage, and a dog scratching on  
All your doors and four-post beds-  
I'm sorry if this poem is dirty, because I'm  
Drunk and that is just how it is;  
You see, the teacher thought that I'd brought this  
For her,  
And the entire colony followed me in and started  
Dripping honey while you practiced beautifying your  
Cursive; and this makes me laugh,  
That I should have to pay a toll to draw on your  
Bridge, to take off your panties,  
But didn't I already apologize for this poem being  
Dirty- You see, I'm getting drunk  
But its still early.

Robert Rorabeck



# Its Sweet Surprises

So the cavalry arrives and thanks their luck stars  
In their lucky skies:  
And the instruments of make-believe and regret wind down  
Through the world,  
Taking with them the last of the pretty bets into the  
Casinos of the sea  
Whom never take any pleasure in this, but go on swinging  
Like the simulacrum of an indescribable religion,  
While the last lines delineate steadily across the fables of  
The yards,  
Until the schools finally lay closed like flea markets underneath  
The overpasses of the rookery of airplanes,  
The gorgeous stewardesses dreaming of their men as tall as  
Giants who bathe in the sea,  
And sell used cars in a forest far enough away to be a fable  
Told to children on the cusp of sleep  
Whose mothers have them smell their favorite shampoos  
So that their eyeless visions can be as sweet as the commercials of  
Hummingbirds who, amidst the apiaries of an old grandmothers'  
Wishes pollinate the world all through the night until  
It finally breaks open its sweet surprises into another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# I've Put You In The Fairly Benevolent Surrender Of The Sky

I've put you into the corner where it doesn't hurt  
So much to look at you—  
The coral snakes come up and kiss your feet just  
Like the corners of my cheeks,  
And the sun comes out after the rain—other words  
I don't know about you,  
But I will take shelter in my classes and oh my gosh—  
Why, you've already gone home,  
Discreetly in your corvette—too busily to give me  
Any of your numbers—as the boys watch you  
And then step inside to watch something else they  
Would like to forget.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ivory Billed Woodpecker

I was drunk when I called you down from the sky.

Now I don't know what to do with you.

Goodbye.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jack And His Stewardesses

In my new house I am  
Leapt over by  
Stewardesses hourly,  
Which is really amazing,  
And just now I have nothing  
Else to sell,  
And I am happy, so happy  
For all these just scars  
That some untrue god has given me;  
I know that I will still  
Go to sleep forever under  
The séances of  
Ceiling fans,  
But now these too will be  
Leapt over by  
The opal stems of the  
Erudite stewardesses, who  
Go away  
Not unlike birthday wishes  
Serving overpriced  
Drinks to  
Their breathless if  
Lucky businessmen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jack Johnson

Women like us  
Because we eat cold eels  
And think distant thoughts  
Stolen from the opal waves.  
When there is no rain for sometime,  
And the sea doesn't swell,  
Then we grow hungry and roam.  
Our eyes, half dreaming,  
Stumble to the amusements beneath  
The grinning moon,  
Where her thighs are bared from  
The slip and she revolves on a  
Carrousel, laughing distantly  
On a wooden horse;  
The same one which destroyed Troy.  
She is so young she is like a youth  
We could hold with little exertion,  
And so naive we could steal famous words  
And hang them to her lips like sardines,  
And she would take them out of our  
Fingers and swear to marry us.  
We go to her,  
The darkest pugilists who  
Do not raise a hand,  
And let her fall into us like a silk ribbon,  
Like a single vein inside us, but most precious.  
Faithful and faithless alike, their eyes shine like  
Polished dimes from the cold gutters;  
And we eek out which rooms we will give  
Her to sleep and sing and to groom.  
Thus clutched in the embers of our troubled  
Dawn,  
We take her to the couch of the woods,  
Where, looking back, she is like a pillar of salt  
Building our thirst,  
And our night is the truest thief,  
But our smile is just compensation.



# Janice Headed Reckoning

I love you,  
Susan;  
You are my god-  
I want nothing more  
Than to bask  
In the verdant esplanades  
Beneath your tremulous bosom;  
But I am a pantheist  
And the other gods,  
They are insouciantly jealous  
Just waking up like flies from  
The daub;  
It will be for us the same kind  
Of hell, I reckon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Japanese Beer

I can see the tresses of some bridge  
Where I sit  
Manipulating myself with a  
Can of beer  
Angels in a smoky changing room  
Calibrated by the blueprints of  
Man's divinating modernity-  
My mother's birthday was earlier  
This year  
And now no one shows up at  
The shop at all  
But it is an easy life  
With airconditioning and fish  
As big as pennies  
In glass bowls  
We had to pay for  
We should have won,  
But the fair and the circus have  
Both fled away  
Looking for stars that are nowhere at  
All in the heavens  
While the girl behind me is taking  
Inventory-  
They tried to charge me 58 RMB for  
A airport bottle of generic  
Cognac,  
So I bought Japanese beer instead.

Robert Rorabeck



# Japanese Werewolves

Japanese werewolves in sandboxes-  
Muddled beneath the overpasses of cars going to  
Worship Godzilla up in his  
Strange, nose-bleed of a land:  
As we sell fireworks between his big toes:  
Set up our tents to challenge the model  
Tornados—and sell fire-engine cones with our  
One grandmother who is still alive,  
As the horses eat the cabbages across the valley—  
And strange smoke rises up to the artisan gods,  
Painting their amusement—  
They languish in Topaz above the fire-engine  
Chiefs of Taos, New Mexico—  
North of Billy the Kid's grave—North of  
The Navajo peoples, many who are lying drunk,  
Downhill from the Circle K—  
Not far from Eagles Nest, the wet séances of  
Her bosoms—and almost to Colorado.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jarrett, Or The Stewardess's Son

I'll never christen the sun where he can be  
More successful:  
I don't like men like him that much,  
Outdoors or in the post-office,  
Always whiskered and driving  
A chariot,  
Parlaying to girls with guns,  
Who are good shots and scientists,  
And they lay down in the good numbers of  
Their city fields and listen to easy listening or  
Pops,  
And I can't go to sleep when they are doing this  
To me: with all of his lights out on her bare-bosom,  
Unifying her colors, taking her bouquets further  
Away from the grave, smiling because he knows  
Who is going to get to drive her home,  
Up and down her elevators, publishing young,  
Overseeing her clean wrists,  
Kissing them with all that he's done,  
Hanging his blazing mobile over all of her suckling  
Young.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jasmine In A Church

And then they call us, so here we are, open chested like  
Banners licking the eager wounds of a flood,  
And I don't know if you have exactly seen them:  
But I have seen them: I have seen them almost touching down:  
Almost blindly, as if blind men could play a football game:  
They play, blinded pilots filled with gold on streets you and  
Your neighbors have been selling:  
They are already here for early ransom, ad the beanstalk has been  
Growing;  
If you get up early enough you can even see the horse growing,  
Growing, and changing color, and then while any muse that you  
Once had, while you once had her makes love to  
Any man: to any man while you are thinking over her bones  
As soft as roses down the shell rock road,  
And just as delightful as dolphins, while wasn't it as it was  
That you'd already mentioned her, playing into her salty and galloping  
Fields:  
Why there she was, as delightful as any angel:  
Why there she was, and everything that you'd ever created  
Came happening all at once all around her:  
It came happening, as if jasmine in a church underneath all of those  
Airplanes far away: the perfumes of monuments of countries that  
Never existed, and you could smell her for sure: for sure,  
Even if she was not even there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jean

It's almost 3 am, but no one  
Cares;  
Tomorrow, I want to ask you your middle  
Name,  
Kelly- and then I want to set out with you  
To the swings of a joyful place:  
While all the canooks break ice in the quarterbacks  
Of Spanish glaciers;  
I want to read the brails of your face,  
And swirl the wine of your comely features;  
If you want to go back to college,  
I want to help you- I want to resemble you in all  
Of your features;  
I want to help you remember what your first word  
Was;  
And by what roots you came down to Florida:  
You were born in Texas, and you can remember the first  
Name of all of your teachers:  
You love Jesus and all of his lives; and I am just  
As celibate as he was; and we both knew some  
Prostitutes and some Jewish teachers:  
Misplaced into the golden dromedaries of your defeated  
Armies,  
I would like to sun and dry my clothes;  
I would like to place on the bat winged shelves of your  
Shoulders and your  
Blades all of my family's heirlooms,  
Or anything else that was yours by right, or that I could  
Rightly steal for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jesus

Jesus tells me he hasn't had any beers  
Since he got back from Mexico- that being  
Some four months, because he got into too  
Much trouble in Mexico, muchas putas,  
Mucho mota. Now he's sober and working for  
Mark, grande patron, and we're setting up stakes  
Here in South Florida, getting ready to make a  
Buck celebrating Christmas; if there's a buck to  
Be made this year, we'll be the ones who make it.  
Now the sun is down, slipping over this flatbread  
Peninsula, slipping, in fact all the way to Japan where  
Strange little men are eating raw fish and doing  
The well-paid secretaries doggy-style, And the exhuming  
Night has squelched the humidity, and all the Mexicans  
I worked with today are back in their apartments,  
And the imperfect trailer parks where infants squeal and  
Chase motherless kittens;  
Even the new guy, Jorge; and I have more scars than  
Any of them, except when looking into the blushing  
East, and I might easily join the ironic train of homeless  
Drunks who stink of fermentation and oral sex:  
They come by, and they are almost all white, so white  
And bearded I could call them cousins; and today at  
McDonalds where I spend a two dollar bill on lunch,  
A black couple sits across my line of sight, and looks at me  
As if in challenge, waiting to see what my look in return  
Will tell them about themselves. I want to tell them not  
To look at me, but it is some sort of fun, because I look  
Beautiful at their distance, so they could hardly know,  
And we give furtive glances while the Mexicans chirp,  
Not knowing what to say to each other; except that I know I  
Love them from an impossible planet, and even now back  
In their casas, the Mexicans are having sex with faithful  
Mujers, who cooked tortillas and pollo all day long, sweating  
And praying under the turquoise statue of the Virgin Mary,  
Who kneels there weeping over such labors these housewives  
Perform, just like the snowy angels and cherubs we take out  
Of boxes to adorn our living rooms on Christmas.



# Jesus Is Risen

The dead already walk the  
Earth  
And strangely breathe the  
Tricks of the segmented Atmosphere.  
They reach out in the basic  
Need to taste her lips,  
The way sometimes 2 rosy  
Insects come together and Mate,  
But she has already  
Called her brother over to  
Move her out- A 4 hr drive  
To Scottsdale AZ one way-  
An 18 hr day  
To watch her fake boobs swell  
Against a t-shirt with  
Nothing written on it,  
Just time.  
Eons and eons  
He dies while he looks for  
Her. He forgets to drive away.  
He loses himself like  
Misplaced keys and just  
Stands there  
A zombie in 110 degrees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jesus's Bicycle

I wish I  
Wasn't here:  
I wish I  
Was upon  
Jesus's bicycle  
Riding atop  
The fathomless sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# Jet Planes

I saw my little cousin today:

I see them almost everywhere, at the movies,

Waiting at home in front of the television,

But I cannot hardly recognize them

They've grown like weeds is the aphorism,

And they've removed their pea green houses,

And their unicorns aren't for real,

But lonely in their front yards with the tenebrous

Blue weeds:

You know, I see them on the swing-set and I want

To join them, but I am too old

For the sports of Christmas trees and young

Jet planes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jewelry Of Ants

Jewelry of ants having a picnic on  
A paper airplane—  
In the definition of a valley of purple tint  
In tents of cerulean  
With the moon as large as a saucer  
Tossing up the waves,  
Trying to see their brothers off to school—  
And the land lays like a century  
In gardens of wilderness  
Through the seesaws of epochs—  
But most afternoons, puckering to meet  
The salt and molasses lips of a truant who  
Stands a top of his parents' roof in the afternoon—  
He is holding a molatov cocktail  
And his d\$ck; knowing  
That none of this started out  
Right—the prettiest of girls lounging off  
In busses,  
Followed by the coaches and their wives—  
They are just pretty enough to pretend  
That he should burn it all down  
To the end.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ji Kwon Kong: A Poem For My Father

Ashes of yellow umbrellas hung from the skylight of a maze-  
Where are you now? My children grow blind without your gaze

Memories of you once unappreciated in life's fast moving stand-  
Now I remember you, realized, the mortality of a fine man-

Immobile, turned into a cenotaph of lingering flesh-  
Our hearth is emptied, hollowed by the wounding of your death-

Unequaled, I would give any prize to win your reprieve-  
Yet knowing, emptied of vessel, the soul has a right to leave-

Where you go now, is the unquenchable question of living men-  
Remembering your teachings as a way to raise my children-

As the lights glaze the malfunctioning eyes of heaven  
Underneath of gravity's dementia into the wounds we are pressed-

I reach for you, silhouetted, magnified, straddling the horizons of a god-  
Yet the mornings of life beckon, habitually forgetful, a flawed land of nod.

Awakening tomorrow, I will press the reasons why you have gone;  
But the fruits turned to wine will only lead me down a path of forgotten time:

Only in the awful moments of calamity is your memory appreciated;  
And by those moments I stand by you, a moment that is then abated:

Life is pressed-  
Your day is soon awaited.

Robert Rorabeck

## Jig Of Bones (Censored)

Reclusive death,  
How will you find me if you continue  
Reappearing amidst the pale and bleeding;  
Keeping your dinner appointments with  
Banqueters gorged of salmonella-  
The runny eggs you tap and \$uck  
With your morbidity turned up with a sallow smug:  
All the laughing moneyed do not know they let you in;  
But your extinguishing soul is blowing  
The candles gently from the bared window;  
Little souls themselves, you test.  
Snidely, they are snorting,  
Never imagining your grim shroud  
Does not meet their dress code;  
Though soon you will be leading them away from  
Their earthly accounts, in the procession  
Of silhouettes, like marionettes the moon pulls-  
The fickle saints who go down beneath the fens,  
The little haunts where you jaunt with your best of friends;  
But for certain, death,  
How will you find me if we have no mutual friends,  
For I am yet young and healthy without tumor or scourge,  
Without enemy or sentence of execution;  
How will you find me then, if you can not smell me  
Or hear me laughing like a contaminated dinner party;  
I will keep the door open, reclusive death,  
And then the day will come when you will find me,  
Sooner than is thoughtful, I suppose,  
Like a hungry wolf who smells an open rose;  
Then lead me down to the funneling river,  
As we do the jig of bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jill

I want to die: I want to die by the useless cause,  
The ceaseless cause;  
I want to be Mark Twain and set sail,  
But I'll say anything to take over this planet,  
To swim in your innocuous pools,  
To look beautiful to you in one ways or another's.  
I want to be more to you's than you's brothers,  
While the poets sleep like the erections of  
Dissatisfied mountaineers forced down in the despot  
Weathers of discordant storms:  
I want to wreath myself in your arms, and wake  
Up as something professional,  
And charmed:  
I want to swat your backside funny, make it rosy  
And run it's honey,  
And then alert with you to our Chanticleer alarms,  
The fact that I love you,  
But I have no arms:  
I am a Blackman in his sack, the bushman who got  
Whacked,  
And Jack who jumped too low,  
And who got so burned by that candle stick, oh,  
He never came back,  
But forever when you thought of him, he imprinted  
On your brain's chin,  
So that he became the most chivalrous zoetrope,  
The dun honey of your crepuscule with weird tattoos  
On his back:  
I want to be that Jack.  
So what do you think of that?

Robert Rorabeck

# Jobs Of Wonderful Sky

Fields of books in love that the traffic jewels:  
Pigeons sent out to find promises over an endless sea,  
While I wait at home with my dog-  
Getting drunker, listening to him chew the bones up of  
An ex lover I had though to have buried  
Sufficiently deep:  
The tortoises removed from the sea, fawn during lunch  
Time underneath the broken down bus:  
Eating purple orchids, and making eyes at me:  
When there are cyclones and gold fish in the canal,  
And footpaths of vagrant truancy underneath the  
Slash pines: the sky is burning a crop of honey:  
Stewardesses bare their breasts- girls I don't even know  
Playing hopscotch in the sky:  
Looking down, I must be a scar of diamonds to them-  
Or like a shell they learned to leave behind- Now they perfume  
The sky, and the sun burnishes them- metamorphosed  
Out of the school yard into jobs of wonderful sky.

Robert Rorabeck

## Joe & Jolene

Percussion lines and scars, the little heated throbs,  
The ants bite in lines of stream-line conquistadors-  
The humid park is sweating out the bugs,  
And the vendors come turning little things,  
And everything has a piece and the sunlight is eaten up,  
And school is out, and the fences are painted,  
Where I hold still and look at her face.

My entire body is humming like a tuning fork pricked  
By a gangster, and the clouds are banking in high towers  
Over the shivering pines; and I am only sure that I want her,  
Even as the police surround me cradling bell-jars of  
Collected change:

That she was a child on the verge of metamorphosis,  
Her feet webbed by the arachnidan spume, the drool of the  
Crocodiles who aren't even supposed to live here,  
Lost crocodile tears and of the sad old men whose first  
Born sons have drowned: The power-cables hum and the wind  
Skips them like rope- There is a rhyme in the air, trying to  
Cajole her, but the bullhorn is also speaking; I don't want  
To give up, but everything is shutting down. They are turning  
Out the lights and the red clay of the baseball diamond is dimming.  
The masters and their dogs are evacuating, and everything is sauntering  
Off to homes of careless mothers, the wives and girlfriends of  
The well situated lost; but still she hesitates, and if I stay long enough  
I believe I will see who she is:

After all in this park, it is really only her and me,  
Even after they've taken down the sides of the thing and moved on to  
The next town, I will still believe I see her sometimes rippling like a  
Sheet torn in the higher canopies, like a lost kite,  
Or something that is once again almost free-  
And I await her return into me after the rest of the show has given  
Up and walked through the diminishing spaces, happening to be  
No more alive than the well-populated cemetery,  
Leaving only this to wait upon the precipice of belief.

Robert Rorabeck

# Joel Chandler Harris

Manic, and psalms now-  
I've wanted to live forever in the somber  
Utopias that housewives covet,  
The neat kitchens and prim sheets,  
The secret lines sniffed beside the  
Supermarket bouquets beside the crenulated  
Swimming pools in the early afternoons  
And soap operas, topless, and or whenever as needed;  
But I find myself moving to the other side,  
To the rainy borders gnawed at by thorns  
The barbed-wire grown into weary jaw-bones,  
Wired shut to the whisperings of deceased mothers  
And all their lot, the fairy-tales of n\*ggers  
Escaped in the briars to mend the bloody fingers  
The spiders up the spigot of Mary's cotton gin,  
The mouse is turning the wheels of the abandon  
Amusements, the convalesced parades along the old  
Sea-shell highways of the motionless fossil sea-  
All that priceless pain, cabinets of miss assessed worth,  
the bottomless envy:

the  
Blue button eyes that stare out at windows to  
Watch her practice cheers, the stuffed hands that  
Must not ever wonder what it would feel like to  
Come alive and caress the perfect innocence  
Of each tawny river of those expressive legs,  
Roman candles, batons- silver tasseled,  
All the exclamations of her excessive spring  
Which must fade before the self conscious stutters,  
Lips sewn shut must wait passively velveteen,  
Soft forgotten, a teenage childhood that can not thwart  
The more adult sting, the deadly scorpions of the wider  
Desert whose poison barbs bare children,  
Entire households hallucination that afternoon,  
Jobs, and stations, and cars which give mature purpose  
To her earlier explanations now have to shave  
Though before they leapt around all afternoon with  
The ice-cream trucks and special patriotisms after school;



But it is the dinner hour and the wolf is already in-  
In fact she's taken his name, his root, but really, Robert,  
What was a stuffed toy ever to say to such muse's perfection?

Robert Rorabeck

# Jogging Down That Busy Way

Traffic speaks some kind of wishy-washy language,  
As if its not sure it wants to go to work,  
Maybe it just wants to hang on the bell all day,  
Or sniff flowers; and what are you doing?  
Powdered, taking gifts from a long line of gentlemen,  
Like the queen of England; And I am writing poems  
To you, but I haven't made a name for myself, so  
What are they worth; and you parents are south,  
Beneath you in the middle-class playground:  
Will you ever return to it, and let its humidity lick you  
As you jog,  
Swirl like tongues around your ankles and knobs:  
Will you ever think of me, no longer perfect,  
No longer privileged to be near you, or just down the  
Road pullulating near the wildlife habitats, showing my  
Christ sized heart to all the tourists going to feed the  
Lions;  
And why do I do this, when outside they are cleaning  
The streets: They are making places, destinations to go  
To, extract and fulfill a lively hood of blue-collared  
Saints, bric-a-brac- Angels and chopsticks on a shelf over  
Couch and cushions. Who worships the sun anymore?  
Who dares to look at the sun and go blind? If I ever look  
At you again, I will drink you like prohibition moonshine,  
Like good old fashioned high school truancy;  
And you will have to stand there and take it, posing as you  
Interpret my eyes, blushing and dewed in your  
Short skirted grottoes: Like a flower to me softly swayed,  
Pulled back by the deep snouted lips of a bear and sniffed:  
And whether you like it or not, I will drink my fill should  
Ever I see you again jogging down that busy way.

Robert Rorabeck

# John Crow

John Crow, John Crow  
Hair as white as winter's snow  
Your love was lost in a mist of salty seawater  
That broke your heart to pieces long, long ago  
And now you are but a disgrace  
To the Holy Father.

Inside a darken wood  
Is where one can find you,  
Down a deep, dank path  
Made from rotting wet earth  
Far into an unearthly sticky goo  
Where you skitter, skitter and skirt.

Evil does lurk inside your rotting head,  
And the earth shivers with your dark thoughts.  
Worms and rodents are the only companions with you  
In bed,  
A bed of death, decay, and a thing that rots.

You came for me an hour past midnight  
And brought me to your home down deep in the earth  
And told me stories of ghastly frights,  
Of how you lost your love and after that the dark birth.

You brought me close and breathed into my throat.  
I drank you blood and became your kin,  
And then to the sea we went  
Search for your love on death's boat.

Deep we dived in the sea's waters,  
A dark blue, and found your love  
All alone in a cave of crystal  
All silver and hue.

She sat all alone upon a tall and sparkling throne.  
She beckoned us nearer and nearer we went,  
John Crow all a smile like a man gone insane,  
And then she demanded respect,

So to our knees we went,  
And she told me to leave  
But for John Crow to remain.

With a flash I was home.  
What happened to John Crow and his love  
I do not know,  
But I don't wish to stay here all alone,  
So come with me  
And together  
We'll go looking for  
John Crow.

Robert Rorabeck

# John Wayne

Shanghai is the biggest city in the worldâ€”  
It is where I found my wife:  
And we road busses together and went to the  
Zoo:  
Like Romeo and Juliet, we were married  
The second night of our daydreamâ€”  
But this doesnâ€™t have to be a tragedy:  
Our families are not ancient enemies:  
They mean nothing to one another, but are stock  
Full of good will:  
I told you, we will name our first son John Wayne,  
Because I always wanted to be a cowboy,  
And that is alright with you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Johnny Gets Done For

Unquiet, lasting quiet,  
Even under the tallest buildings the world  
Is moving and trying to get it done,  
And I try to stay away from there,  
Even though I was pulled from there;  
And that is where she lives, and, and  
For an uncountable number of days it was  
Only a fata morgana of the school grounds  
So many years ago- I like to pretend it was  
Only ten, but it was maybe more-  
I know it was more, and I loved a girl that  
Looked just like her, but this girl didn't  
Exist- I don't like to know which one,  
And I don't like to mess around with the  
Alternative- that she was evil, and carried  
A gun, and went out with other boys,  
Out where the leaves wreathed like molested  
Crinoline that some careless mother had wrapped all  
Around the fences and Australian pines and palm  
Trees; and it was uneasy looking for her, for my heart  
And my teeth were coming out, and it wasn't a good  
Fairy-tale, because I was like the rabbit or hart following  
The wolf, and I don't think exactly that she wanted  
Me to find her, calling now his name beneath the broken  
Down motor of his showing automobile,  
Arching now the dirty cruxes of their disheveling truancy;  
It was that she didn't care,  
And didn't know my name- and when the next wind came,  
They drove off to long summer parks, where they would  
Kiss and foreplay all afternoon and into the next day,  
And I just stood there for a very long time,  
Blown away because nobody could tell me who I was  
Or what had happened to affect me this way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jolly Rouge

Let me raise the Jolly Rouge to you lips,  
As if to say I mean business  
Like Captain Kid in the Adventure Prize,  
Ready to seize you about the hips  
And dance with you to feel the warmth  
Of your soul peering through your eyes' portholes—  
Let the sky grumble in a thunderous deluge,  
So that we can drink rum in the rain  
And swim, bodies pressed like wet paper,  
Like drunken fishermen waltzing in the waves,  
Your eyelashes drenched like moist petals  
And your eyes the nocturnal flowers  
Opening to kiss blanketed moonlight—  
Let then the world become around us  
A zoetrope of motion and darkness,  
And the shore to be our bedroom  
Expanding through the sea our shadowed engagement.  
Through the electricity of the storm,  
Let our lips give off static charges  
Into each others' bodies,  
Like Tesla, harnessing heaven's arsenals,  
Jumpstarting our cresting motions, allowing us  
To feel the excitement of this single moment,  
Carried by our memories' current along through  
Our fingers, our bodies' channels pumping  
With fervent belief and expectation our  
Cargo of mutual needs sailing stored in our feeling,  
Your lips the Jolly Rouge perched beneath the sky,  
Christening my name, conquering,  
Laying us down in the surf, the salty waters  
Eddying around us both, interlocked sea and sky.

Robert Rorabeck

## Jordan's Room

Hours echo from the breakfast nook from the  
Kitchen,  
And rabbits take over the front yard in colonies of  
Earthy holes which break the horses' legs servicing  
The army:  
From where I stand, I am in Jordan's room,  
And there are bits of sun falling on our youth,  
And I haven't run away yet to Michigan,  
Or gone to summer school, and we look across  
The street to where the cheerleader is flexing her legs  
For all of this suburbia,  
And we eat hot dogs, and play video games,  
And masturbate in between the glints in the pool:  
I haven't yet known you, or graduated or slipped away,  
Nor have I known to think that I cannot change with  
The other tadpoles flagellating in the concrete brines;  
After the migrations, the torrential rains, and the clay  
Left unevolved in art class needing her hands,  
I lay under the broken bus and try to keep my eyes closed,  
While the fat and ancient tortoise eats her orchids,  
And the rains patter on the corrugations of weddings,  
Women with new names who used to ride their  
Bicycles back and forth before my eyes,  
Their legs waxy axioms now receive the brush of  
His pistil, powdered chartreuse they nod like violins,  
And the neighborhood grows evening, like the end of  
The play with a whole new cast, encoring, taking bows:  
People I cannot recognize mow the yards I used to play,  
And the school is filled with younger versions,  
And the old friends carry off laughing and mumbling with  
The silhouettes of tide, leaving only the alligator basking  
With the last of the sun, acknowledging my  
Petrifactions and patiently waiting.

Robert Rorabeck



# Journalism

He has a gun to his head,  
And he is smiling.  
They hold the barrel to his temple,  
As they join together in a Persian bed.  
He says, f! ck you to them,  
As they swap spit/  
Soon they will give up  
And have the gardener cut off his head/  
There are so many sad children  
Unattended to in the garden  
Buried up to their necks in the roses  
Needing watering,  
But their parents are careless if faithful,  
And busily copulating  
While her old suitor lays tied up  
And hungry watching from the edge,  
Like an early wanderer lost on an  
Incriminating shore as the  
Sun moans and it rises.  
In her eyes are the last memories of  
All the things they had done,  
But with laughter and his name calling,  
She is the first destroyer  
Coming down for the morning:  
Counting the stairs,  
Each one a nursery rhyme's  
Anticipation.  
And breakfast? And breakfast?  
The gardener is too busy honing  
The blade of excommunicative reaping,  
While even outside the birds are singing  
And down beneath the rose's red blushing,  
The children buried unto their necks  
Are whispering,  
While in the Victorian yard  
A young foal lays eaten away  
At the ass and neck/  
While the wolves lay fat in the forest sleeping.  
Are you getting all this?

As the gardener cuts off his head  
On his birthday,  
Hitting the notes of the stairs  
And he goes away while  
The immaculate house singsonging  
The perfectly recorded hours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Journey Of Another Night's Dreams

The same as the waves who are in  
My soul—  
They are still burning, while my wife sleeps,  
While the house sinks,  
And the Earth turns underneath the  
Diademed atmospheres of  
The heavens—  
Wherever we are,  
The cars pull out of driveways,  
To conjoin with avenues,  
And there are births  
And deaths—  
The greatest of mountains have already  
Formed for now—  
The angels still have to hold their breaths  
While the wishes are blown out  
Over the birthday cakes—  
And when it rains the cats come inside.  
Tired from kissing the lips of coral  
Snakes,  
The day ends, and the intruders upon  
The steps disappear—  
A faithful companion sleeps upon the lap  
Of otherwise solitude—  
And on the other side of the world,  
The oil burns—  
The dreams of things are sold and  
Then returned—  
And, right now, as if my dear benefactor,  
My wife waits for me in bed,  
Hoping I will join beside her in her journey  
Of another night's dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Journey Onto Home

Who knew I could be so quiet in my  
Dark aerodrome in the fork of a tree  
Outside of the park,  
Lisped by the trepidations of the wayward  
Sea:  
All of my paper airplanes are parked-  
The mermaids are taking baths in the waves-  
A few of my favorite things are moving away  
Like the red stars do-  
Very few of them are blue stars:  
Very few of them are getting anywhere at all,  
And we are all out of blueberries,  
But the people just keep coming into the store-  
They are shopping and the sun is at play-  
They seem to be doing this out of some necessity  
For love or thanksgiving,  
Or it could just be that they are out and about  
And breathing,  
While the rivers fall straight off the mountains,  
Like ribbons unsecured from her gown,  
And she becomes for him on her honeymoon,  
In Crepuscule on the alluvial planes where all the  
Mailboxes are panting opened tongues  
In paradoxically wild straight packs until the  
Morning,  
The morning lights up the place and shows her  
How she might quietly leave  
And thus continue her journey onto home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Journeys Of A Little Sadness

It's sometimes necessary to salt the earth,  
But you can't get back your tears,  
Like jewels you thought were real as  
You threw them out feed the birds;  
That is why you must be careful,  
And you cannot cry over spilt milk,  
Or hermaphrodites, no matter what angles  
They pull down from the clouds hugging the  
Stormy sea;  
If I moved next to her again, at night I could  
Hear her breathing, like a sailboat extended and  
Leaping the leaves of waves,  
And when she touched the other man,  
You could almost feel as if she was touching you,  
In your new house so near the sea,  
That you could cry over the shore's edge  
Like a young child leaning down to where they  
Keep the languid lions, and say,  
Now the sea is my tear, and she will forever roll,  
Crush and embrace the earth, as the continents beat her,  
As if she were a recipe;  
Distilled she takes the Gulf Stream to sleep under the  
Bellies of other men, and she is inhaled by whales,  
And cupped in the oyster's mouth, used to sculpt a pearl;  
Evaporated, curious over the land again,  
Perhaps while you are waiting for her in a thunderstorm.  
Looking up, your tear returns to you and tells you  
Secretly of the journeys of a little sadness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Jubilant As The Sky

Now into this song the birds sing  
In the middle of transit—evaporating the frogs  
The ethereal swords have picked clean into the sky  
Until they become another task—  
And you again are the memory I cannot have—  
And you are as beautiful again as the rainstorm over  
The mountain  
As the wild horses come home, stampeding for want of  
Liquor—and unearthing all of the forgotten arrowheads—  
And you say, in your admonishments—that now  
Wouldn't be a bad time to call you—  
But when you look up, there is another man in your  
Vision—  
A pilot that I cannot believe in—a pretender of faerie -  
And as jubilant as the sky at high noon  
And then we are the same thing echoing—  
And at this moment I am sure that I cannot do enough  
To deserve you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Juggernaut

Sleeping in an RV that isn't  
Mine,  
The traffic dead, crepuscule dead  
For now I still feel like  
Some Viking king buried in his  
Ship,  
With a horde of sweet horse bones for  
His accoutrements,  
Cracking farts off the body like the  
Perfumes the dead must give  
To kindle each golden worm,  
The bouquets of weepy Pharaohs  
While the air-condition hums for  
Burnaby,  
And the greater whales sleep in their  
Greater seas,  
Crypts of stars and mothers too far away  
To milk or weep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Juliet

Come to me naked in  
A hotel room in France,  
And I will make love to your  
Bruised body, Juliet:  
I will show you what all  
You relatives together couldn't show  
You:  
I will make a feud with the  
Two of us,  
The reverberations of your will say  
That there are no others,  
But that is just for tonight:  
As down beneath us,  
People are getting drunk in the streets.  
Their music is fondling upwards,  
Plucking notes until they reach the stars.  
I will lay you down and bruise  
Your lips, Juliet-  
And the way your eyes look at me.  
What could it mean, that they stay  
So open,  
The way little girls look at the world  
When the women go to washing in the river,  
And the wind has the trees in  
A subtle trance.  
The rocks are so smooth under your  
Feet, Juliet- It is like a dream  
You can feel the world in,  
And perchance you will survive  
On my lips, Juliet-  
As the night is your mother with open  
Arms-  
What does she say, Juliet,  
When I am in the other room?  
How does she hold you, Juliet,  
When I am no longer near....

Robert Rorabeck



# June And Then July

Tomorrow or the next day will be  
Your birthday,  
But I am not good at math,  
And I am not even immortal, though  
I read them as I drive around New Mexico,  
Doing the work of so many Conquistadors.....  
Finally, I lay down and think about you  
And get drunk and ready,  
Though I have more scars than yesterday  
I still sometimes get carded for the quaff  
That blooms these words.... Oh so,  
I call for you, a barroom rose, the reason for  
America and those legs! Because you know who  
You are because you are crazy and wind tossed  
And never settled,  
The same as me when I am driving though cautious  
Of authority, salivating to the renaissance of your shaven  
Legs: You know they could go on forever if I  
Didn't have to turn away, but this is just another  
Line burnt to a cinder, a sacrifice to your holiday,  
And even though you remember me,  
You have never seen me though here I am even now  
Lying down my hand: Though when I rise again in the  
Morning it will be blaring just the same,  
And this poem will have been passed to the hands of the  
Dead, as I will have thought of better lines I cannot remember,  
But this is your America,  
And this is your poem in place of my body,  
The failure of the truth of my language, your blistered lavios  
The doorways to the pollinations of high school,  
Your eyes the hidden planets who have turned away,  
As I would have thought to turn you towards me with  
A motioning finger, as if it were a humming verb,  
And I am only slightly drunk,  
So tomorrow there will be more work and standard bred horses,  
And old Mexicans name Antonio who insists on being paid,  
And then it will be your birthday,  
By Saturday at least, and you won't even know  
The little things I give to you all day

Until there is nothing left but a single candle  
Like the tear of a burning angel leaping like a hungry  
Bumblebee over the lips of a passive if elegant rose....

Robert Rorabeck

# Junkyard

Every mad bit of courage has a name.  
I can stay here and love you, but who am I?  
I won't drink liquor unless I find a job,  
So I may never drink liquor again- the way this  
Is going-  
For how can I find a job without a tomb, that fine  
Piece of marble to lay my head,  
The way a hummingbird denotes its invisible young,  
Like a pebble spit on by a bit of spume- Wouldn't  
It be better to skip out of town?  
To ride the rails, I suppose. To get romantic out in  
The open with no roof, just both of my dogs,  
Jogging in my hobo shoes- Go down the side of  
Florida and recognize all those haunts,  
Where its warm enough to live outside your room,  
To stop by and see all those girls I really want,  
To smoke out beneath the same old aqueducts  
Passed out in the shade the same as some decades before,  
The other kids waiting for the bus, the lions roar;  
And we just caress ourselves out into the land of nod,  
And float on our backs the same way as the otters showed,  
And crack macadamias and soft shells terrapins  
With no use for canoes,  
Go uninvited along the backsides of the easements where  
The housewives are busily sunning topless with their sisters in law,  
Reading south Florida crime novels;  
Looking up they bight their lips, wondering what good  
Use they'll find for us; approaching, as I figure I should.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just

The day burns its yards: oh to the day,  
Of magic books and the sixty degrees of vision  
Given over to my brothers of this  
Mirage,  
This great blue desert harassed by grizzly bears;  
And you don't know all of the things I've  
Missed,  
The insurmountable figures of antiquity's greatness  
I have been too unmindful to pronounce:  
I just took the tracks one time to get to your grandmother's  
House;  
And she was so beautiful, opening the door:  
She could have been your twin, and you were placed there  
At her feet like the resolution to a needful fable;  
Somehow a trinity in your bisections, a perfect symbol:  
One woman embodying all three,  
While the night leapt long and occidental filled with the  
Esoteric gardens where I still know you exist,  
Like a virgin weeping down blue eyes across the bosoms  
Of two estranged lovers,  
Bringing them together like the deli meat in a sandwich,  
Your neck and body like the vase of a pear,  
Which makes the fox to jubilate and leap with grins;  
And I am the fox,  
Sly enough to know what I am leaping for will always be  
Just another nip beyond the lessons of my reach.

Robert Rorabeck

## Just A Boy

Its so easy to think of you  
In the decadent art where all of the butterflies  
Have closed upon the flowers-  
It seems as if they are in metamorphosis with  
Their cousins  
Along the eaves of the carport in the crepuscule  
Where your mother still does the laundry  
Like a saint, like a martyr-  
And a Christmas tree is stood up somewhere in the  
House,  
Dying beautifully for its pagan joy  
And the lamps still light with kerosene  
And you are just a boy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just A Butterfly Of A Tomb

Spume in the twilight of my senses  
While the blind women have been touching the  
Apple tree,  
And I have been curling my toes—  
And then I seem almost a race horse-  
And into a forgetful season, a canal to nowhere:  
We set up a tent  
And sell pumpkins and Christmas trees and  
Fireworks.  
We drink too much and get heartburn—  
We worship a Haitian hoodlum—  
While my little sister swears she is going to smell  
The bouquet of the armpit of  
Africa:  
And I cannot blame her—I cannot blame her—  
I can only swear to her that I am still right here,  
Getting drunk and calling over the satellites to her:  
Yes, and that I am yet more beautiful for her-  
And the gangsters of her headlights have no say so—  
And the broken angels of her all to sudden Hollywood have  
No say-so—  
They are the same thing as being agnostic—  
And then the family finally sets in—and her uncles  
Are high-diving—and the last of all is her memory,  
But who cares about her—  
The bicycles are already home—and then there is no  
Memory—  
There is just a butterfly of a tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just A Little Boy

Imposes on an empty room-  
A bouquet of parked cars, echoes from  
A parking lot-  
Other promises the moon steals- pretty  
Ladders leading up  
To second story bedrooms: but she  
Has already gone to the nuptial-  
She is a school girl at a  
Banquet, and  
She is not alone:  
In a forest fire of uneasy businesses  
Waiting to come home from  
School,  
As I fixate vulpine on the pornography of  
Her saturated woods:  
But I am just a little boy, and the canal  
Lingers torpidly:  
All of my words flood out to her,  
Saturnine,  
And she brushes her hair- the alligator  
Smiles,  
And looking up to her, asks her for all of  
The time in the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just A Little Further Down That River Without My Song

I wait for you to ring out your song;  
And hang it above the tree,  
And look further up where you cannot look,  
To see I have been making paper airplanes  
And crashing them into ceiling fans,  
Even while you were in your red dress in  
Your Catholic play. They didn't make me up  
To take outside this evening,  
But left me back at home without air-conditioning,  
Without a diving rod:  
Now the tourists are here and giving good shouts,  
The bravest of them performing with the lions down the  
Street; and their sad daughters hang out on our block.  
They write one or two good poems a day,  
And pretty soon they have a collection of subtle immortality.  
They will last as long as the human race cooks good dinners,  
So now they sigh and go, they leap like slender rods,  
Into the algae: their dresses areole their heads,  
They float a little ways downstream, but it is too torpid;  
They know what they are doing. The soft-shelled turtles  
Know, the moccasins and the alligators know;  
The fat otters crack muggy clams and dropp the empty shells  
On their heads, or mistletoe:  
They wait there for seven years, or, in fact, doing but this  
One disappearance; I lay over them on the bridge, just  
Broken glass, until there are only residence, and the moon  
Is full and dripping milk; In fact, she is all pregnant,  
Or isn't that what she said,  
Now that they sleep beneath me in one piece. There is  
Nothing to put back together,  
For I have failed to kiss her and take the bicycle from underneath  
Her thighs, her inner thighs which go unkissed, and drip:  
The lion's cage is empty, but she doesn't move at all  
From where she has gone just a little further down that  
River without my song.





# Just About Any Man

I never have to sing about the future  
Anymore:  
Retreating underneath the parapets of the carport as it  
Rains down indistinguishable roads  
That they have all paid,  
That the kidnappers have washed away from- and they have  
Swept up  
The pornography too- and my Aunt Mierna  
Hoping that I buy a warm blanket to keep me happy underneath  
A witch's well:  
But I never get so far as to have to pickup a hitchhiking  
Navajo anymore:  
I just buy more gold for Alma, as she needs an operation that  
Will not heal;  
As the fire hydrants wait like lapping dogs for another catastrophe,  
While the fireworks and airplanes burn up on the hill  
And then I lose myself:  
I lose myself anyways, looking across the supernatural  
Estuaries and back to her,  
Giving her all of my wishes that will never sell;  
And lusting after her as I stand next to the water fountain  
And her eyes return up at a safe distance, frolicking and as jubilation  
As if I was for her just about any man.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just About Anybody's Pool

I drink alone to the usual sounds:  
The night in somnolent rush through the softly exploded  
Palms,  
Picking dun cones,  
Yeah, and the racehorses far away, the men hanging themselves,  
The ever tremulous palms,  
Like feather blades,  
Cutting the shadows like generous birthday cake  
Without any candles and without any love,  
Giving off the perfume of tomorrow's wishes,  
And the slender fact that I might  
Live forever,  
Or that this is just Disney World, and I've never ridden  
A roller coaster with a girl I truly loved,  
And the fare is only in town for a week,  
But I don't really need to make love to you,  
Just to hold your balmy hand through the reckless Midway,  
And win for you all the prizes that I can  
That you can put in the trash after tomorrow,  
When the teddy bears with sad button eyes have wilted,  
After the milk and the goldfish and all the moon has  
Gone sour,  
And you've found better men to love,  
Because this is your thing, and all I am doing is my best  
To pleasure you remotely from far away  
Atop this esplanade of insatiable alligators and the homeless  
Conquistadors  
Always hung-over and willing to do any job just to get one  
Look at you sunbathing topless juxtaposed against just  
About anybody's pool.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just About Everything It Ever Saw

Early morning days reeled in by cold  
Flute-boned birds  
That know what they are doing,  
And down in the peat moss trailer parks  
Almost to Michigan,  
You can resurrect me from the giant once-pink  
Tombstones of narcissism's valentines  
Even if all of the earth was sucked dry  
By mounted vampires  
And the stars lost their appeal and didn't jounce  
Anymore for drunkards,  
With your female hands like wands of teak  
And the usual cypress bows,  
Hanging upside down from your usual trees  
Doing all the tricks they taught you in high school  
Before you melted away like tawny lavender,  
Like plush rabbits in the field of blind carpenters  
For those boys:  
You could include me too, and put on me a spell  
With your casually eager senses that would  
Make me as stiff as a red mailbox flag that would take  
Some time to go down again,  
Even miles after you'd found your disinterest,  
And sunken again like a rumor into the grotto of your  
Ghostly virgin's bed,  
Becoming once more the afterthought of a tuning fork  
For boys as quick as proverbial lightning  
Striking out of the extemporaneous cerulean escargot and  
Conquering just about everything it ever saw.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Another Catastrophe

Westernly and bold, as if fireworks being shot  
Down from the stars that are skirt  
In the pinpricks that freckle the highway in a  
Heavenly zoetrope of lush but  
Bashful girls who live there: right up there:  
Over your shoulder, and over the mailboxes too:  
They live in the heavens because they do not know  
What else just to do:  
And the airplanes drive in their neighborhoods  
Bringing them a sorority of stewardesses, for them  
Like dolls to play with, and their houses  
Are always moving along with the continents:  
If they had horses up there they would ride them:  
And when the comets come once ever few years,  
They do ride them:  
And they think much of nothing, and they stir  
The shadows of the clouds to look at visions  
Though they do not even think to try and conjure  
The faces of the men staring up at them and wondering  
Who is really there. Each man is a teardropp that  
Has already fallen from them, and grown into  
A life of sorrow that they will not permit-  
Sorrow is just another catastrophe to say to nothing,  
But the swans get close enough to imagine their  
Beauty, before they have to dive down again  
Into a world that is envious of them- while they  
Are envious of another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Another Lackluster Part Of The Hoodlum's Tapestry

I'll bend down to clean my car  
And when I'll look up there'll be:

Glittering tombs  
Alone, in the little eternal rooms,  
She'll look up say she'll love me,  
Lie appeasing,  
Because we're sure to always be in  
Her,  
Rippling echoes: the lips of the dead,  
Unmigrated sparrows,  
Chalk lines unskipped,  
Promises, yada yada yada,  
Bouquets on a tomb,  
Petals wet, sleepy lips,  
Bent subtle by an arachnid's  
Migrations who is out of spume  
But hungry,  
Vanishing jet planes who speak loudly  
And then disappear,  
And not a person looks up around here;  
And the library is as empty and  
Unvisited as  
Her gaze,  
Silhouettes of distinguished gentlemen,  
Long extinguished into the closing time  
That never closes shop,  
Tourists who amble about unsure of  
What they are supposed to see and buy,  
Just another lackluster part of the hoodlum's  
Tapestry dissected by her  
Wanton gaze,  
Like stars above a crooked smile,  
Magnified by a nocturnal glass by a truant wild,  
Starts the first blisters on the cheeks of dry leaves,  
Hazes in the outskirts of a dead-end city escalate  
Then into a childish blaze.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Another Rainbow

I still haven't had enough wine and this is happening  
In your shadow:  
I am still kissing in any cave that isn't yours, but soon I will  
Be flying home underneath another airplane,  
While all of the shadows glisten and  
Are filled with the cages of escaped  
Animals:  
Why then doesn't it feel alright to play in the snow  
Of your tears,  
Echoing perpetually, enraptured like any other  
Escaped animal drooling unto its jaw in  
The full thralls of the moon, or just another rainbow.

Robert Rorabeck



# Just Another Star

Oh your city, f%ck it all: in its streets my mother is moving;  
Oh, Oh, Oh, live a wet titted Godzilla I haven't yet waited  
To suck her songs:  
And she gets up and bemuses me, while in another year  
I wont even have use for these songs which are just  
Another reason to bemuse myself,  
And maybe all of this is just another age old space opera  
With opulent tits, maybe that is just another reason for  
Me to have her mistaken by you:  
But, otherwise, I have had the world turned out in the  
World of calculating gloom; and otherwise, otherwise,  
Her words are just another way to step out carelessly in the gloom  
Just like the star she could never afford the name of:  
That is just what you are, Sharon: just another cheap alphabet  
The just another star we couldn't afford the name of...

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Another Unlucky Song

Oh now all of these scars, believing that I was wrong,  
Trying to find their own way back from Mexico  
After you had fled with your legs:  
Here are the words spent in the silent interludes of the  
Mute and fixated circus: this is how we do our  
Change,  
As the washing machines wash- the metamorphosis  
Of windmills and princely kings:  
The joys that we have known for awhile in our reddened bricks:  
The city flies, reciting its metronomes:  
Her fingers caressing, filleting the bone:  
Words that find rhymes far away from school,  
Scuppernogs on the vine, pulling down her clothes in a dressing  
Room of Michigan,  
And then to her all of these estranged hopes fly,  
Like unlucky eyes in a dressing room:  
That I was here: I spent the most of my life in Florida, getting an  
Education, going home again at night to an old woman  
Who never whispered to me- Getting up again,  
Filing for the battles: as a child, remembering the rattlesnakes  
Coiled in their rehearsings of gold: the wilderness so wild,  
The dolphins on her tears of shoulders, the battles  
Boiling like memories, practicing the things I never told her:  
And then it was here again, bodies of flesh and bone,  
Smelling up the bedrooms- the baseball fields- the playgrounds-  
The witchcraft I never loves: just the joy of love they stole  
Away from me, and basically imprisoned; while through it  
All, Alma is my searing fire,  
And this is just another unlucky song for her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Another Wave In The Untimely Sea

That sad place in the bones can't help itself,  
It makes fun of all of the little boys,  
Those things like butterflies going in and out of  
The schoolyard,  
Performing some sort of metamorphosis  
No one in the world understand  
Underneath the grandness of the sun  
While girls they once thought they loved  
Happily escape them—  
And the escarpments that are too far  
Away for their eyes to see  
At first blister and then catch a blaze—  
On new years eve I travelled down with my  
Wife and her friends to the keys—  
And where were you—the funny thing is  
I never even thought of you—  
You were just another wave in the untimely sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Arriving

No fields can disguise the flaxen natures of  
My own fears:  
What gods I have spent- what sorrowful tantalizing  
Memories have grafted themselves,  
Tattooed into my un hollowed skin,  
And even while the housewives bask in the young abutments  
Into which they know they can belong,  
The tide pulling away beneath them, like the surprise of  
A wedding dress sashaying in a ballroom that knows  
The hour is growing late,  
And soon the metamorphosis it bought at such a high price  
Is sure to come undone  
Into mice, as the marionette practices one more prayer,  
The cars driving themselves home have no time to  
Wonder at the vanishing forests-  
Or the deeper mysteries who once suckled on the teat  
Of a greater kingdom that happened away just as our unborn children  
Were waving goodbye,  
As we were just arriving there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just As Beautiful As You

Someone told me today that she was already mine,  
As the waves bit the comb, and their sea did shine;  
And yesterday there was Alma,  
In my house and in my shirt, while the animals made love  
In the zoo,  
And flirts did flirt: it all felt alright for the first time  
In a long while,  
As the airplanes carried around their sweetly legged cargo:  
They went this way, and they went that:  
The clouds were their love bed, their bellies fat:  
And yesterday I crawled on my knees and kissed the virginsita  
Before your eyes:  
Kissed her and only asked all that was good for you,  
While this evening I am all alone, but the sea is still just as  
Beautiful as you:  
She will always be just as beautiful as you, Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just As Beautiful As You Are

Distending avenues of the glutinous eels in the shallows  
That we all knew:  
There all day and black as forever with their surceases,  
Like the cessations of every sex and every love:  
The last flights of airplanes  
And their stewardesses who are approaching their mid thirties;  
And all of it repeating with so much affordable luxury  
In the beautiful primary colors of the foxes and  
The rabbits in the fables  
That the preadolescents know while they are in the cars  
And going to preschools out from underneath the ceiling fans  
And underneath the power lines,  
Going past the cemeteries of the ancestors who no longer  
Look out for their best interests;  
And the days that they know shall accord to themselves like  
The evaporations of vibrant colors into the shake out of past  
Tenses,  
Knowing both sun and showers, mailboxes filled and emptied,  
And even after they have long since been kissed and tucked into  
Their limelight's bed by the mothers just as beautiful as they once  
Were,  
The mountain still will seem to look out forever across  
The vast cerulean sea that we both drove near to one day Alma,  
And I told you it was just as beautiful as you; and I hoped that you  
Would remember for just as long as it took for those mountains  
To sink back underneath the sheets of our vast and ancient love,  
That I promised would even last forever, though we had metamorphosed  
Like our grandparents back once more into the effervescing  
Borderlines of the torn mountains into the cascades of the very sea  
Who is just as beautiful as you are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just As Good As Heaven

Showing up as I am building to you these news songs—  
Cannot you see the Ferris wheels standing  
And waiting outside of your window  
Crouching as a pet of inexhaustible lights  
And flooding the bays of your eyes  
With the brilliant methodologies  
That galvanized Don Quixote into action—  
Making you want to abandon the tiny-hearted gold  
Fish you found there  
To leave her on one of those thirty second rides  
With only a paper ribbon and  
A rubber bow—  
And go off somewhere, metamorphosed into the  
Heavens—  
To find another love that waits for you,  
Crouched in a brilliant pillar of smoke undulating  
In a yellow amphitheater  
That looks just as good as heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just As I Do For Her

After all of the liquors are gone,  
And after making love and eventually children.  
The bodies of once lovers arise and go their own ways,  
While their cars sit languidly palavering to the  
Absence of fireworks in their own parking lots:  
And the sun shines or if not it rains real hard,  
And my termites seem to have miraculously vanished after I have  
Signed a contract to tent my house;  
But every morning and every evening I still kiss the lips of my  
Statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe,  
And I god blessed her imagine shining like an inexperienced planet  
Over all of Mexico,  
That you came to our house one last time Friday morning and held me  
And let me kiss your lips  
While you looked at the dying roses I bought for you on the threshold  
Of this world:  
Flowers you could not take home, because you were  
Afraid of what it might mean,  
But with ever passing sun is the opportunity for me to sell more  
Fireworks and buy you new roses,  
While you go home to your children, Alma, and the virgin watches over  
You,  
Kissing and blessing you as you drive in your car,  
Just as I do for her.

Robert Rorabeck



# Just As It Seems

Holding out for hours of playgrounds  
While the new wives come home  
Leaving finger and toe prints across the leaves  
In the sunshine-  
Spiders and unborn children whispering in  
The swings,  
Talking it up to no one- the holidays play  
Tricks-  
And just as it seems, it seems.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just As Long As He Possibly Could

Dead girls have no good rhythm, they just go  
Knocking on doors;  
And you can never really tell how good and dead they  
Are unless you really love her,  
Or she is your little sister who you dream about,  
Or she is something like that:  
And it is a sad daytime movie,  
As she moves in the snow, as she continues to filigree  
The time that passes swift and slow,  
As her baby suckles, as her life needs,  
And airplanes go slipping like smoothed stones  
Through the woodwind reeds:  
And I love her,  
And the day is long and smooth like a balmy park until  
It is time for supper:  
And I love her, but she never has time to wake up and  
Remember  
The beautiful possibility I once was,  
As a strange bird standing posed on his abutments waiting  
For her to give him the cue to come on over and continue,  
And to look forever into her awful,  
Awful eyes;  
Or just as long as he possibly could.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just As The First Man Dreamed

I am the joy that you don't have to feel,  
Back alone with your thirsty family, don't move a muscle:  
Hear the train calling to no one;  
It knows where to move;  
But you always say that you will marry me tomorrow,  
And you wear the gold that I bought you:  
You don't seem thirsty:  
Perhaps your body is a brown river, hallucinating and going  
Back and forth,  
Harping in the school bus that is miles away, taking away  
Your son to imaginary places:  
Maybe he will fall in love with a princess and her sisters in  
A crystal house,  
While I wait alone in my home, the lions curling about me,  
As we all dream about you, Alma,  
Just as the first man dreamed about his fire.

Robert Rorabeck

## Just As Well

There it is: On a plate of baseball,  
Or its richness of paganisms the witches fly  
On their brooms  
On their anyways- looked up upon by little  
Boys off their masturbating in their  
Untidied rooms,  
Like sinners at the beach, and the sky another god  
To believe with the sun running through it  
Up and up in its own halations,  
Doing its damnedest just as well to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just As Wishes Of Little Boys

As numb as the heavens that  
Do not sleep,  
I go down on you weeping,  
Filled with exuberant joy,  
And the clouds make a Christmas  
Out of the sky,  
Even as the day and its heroes  
Are leaving,  
As stewardesses skip across the earth,  
Just as wishes of little boys.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Because

Oh now all of these flags:  
Snapping sticks and burning bridges:  
You have two daughters, and you have two sons:  
And I am not moving any nearer to you:  
And maybe I am not moving away, but they are all still rippling,  
Banishing like luckless stones who so finally wonder  
Into the depths of the bay:  
Where the Indians baptize, and where they all get along their  
Way: and they have been at wondering- they wonder for  
So long,  
For a little while; and they have cleft lips, but they are so beautiful,  
Gradually turning so slowly around,  
Like a Christmas tree on display, under the water, or whistling  
Like a car on the show room:  
And then they douse, and in penumbras for whatever  
They make love: and they have been ululating, or praying, and maybe  
And just because that I go this way, I wont have to know her anymore-  
While all the rests of the stations puzzle- until they figure out  
And hand over themselves to the authorities- while the jet planes  
Whistle and make the noisy business to whatever clouds that tried  
To cover up whatever there was- just because.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Before That

Down at the powers of guilt,  
I drink my fill with my reindeer and the jack a lopes;  
And the really retches wanders come it,  
Thumbs stiff from fornications with scuppernongs,  
And all of the jewelry of the dear  
Dead grandmothers hung around so nonchalantly gaudy  
Like Christmas trees who don't even know who  
They are:  
But we all keep inside, because not so very far from here  
You cannot breathe,  
And we clap our hands together, and count and  
Smell:  
For from the windows you can see cathedrals and ballrooms,  
And the grottos of the metamorphosed king:  
And anyways, in make-believe spindles of forest fires that  
Just keeping getting up and up:  
And they go past your bedrooms or ballrooms anyways,  
And how is it that I cannot keep from talking to myself,  
And the families lie here just as puzzles as rulers who can no longer  
Count;  
And the fun of it begins with the first animal who learned how  
To clean itself:  
As the otter laid across the mermaid's bosom for awhile,  
Before moving on a pace; and maybe it even went to school and  
Learned something, but before that: and just before that it  
Learned: it just learned how to enjoy itself.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Dancing

I have trained my lions  
And slept in cop cars, Erin:  
Tonight I was caracoled by no less  
Than six cop cars, Erin,  
Because I was robbed at gunpoint,  
And some poor boy has stolen my poem  
Book,  
The greatest evil of the world  
Set free like spilled milk somewhere in  
The mothering loins  
Of the grotto  
When all I wanted was  
To come inside just once,  
Like a birthday wish,  
Just the way he is  
Dancing  
Just.

Robert Rorabeck



# Just Enough

I can hear the arcades down the street,  
And even the crickets are purring:  
Wherever I am jumping cars, wherever there comes  
Rainstorms,  
The crickets are purring- Crickets you have never heard;  
And birds on power lines you've  
Never seen, because you've never lived where I have been,  
And I have only lived at night,  
And seen so many things you've never seen,  
But you get the gist and you can tell some fortunes by my scars,  
Though you haven't seen me since the fairgrounds in  
Florida,  
I imagine that you might believe in at least some of my scars:  
And the patrons move in and mill about,  
And the pregnant mothers lean far over and it seems as if  
They might shoplift,  
And you have little plastic cowboys and Indians where you  
Live,  
And maybe some cats- and a husband who always looks nice,  
And a child at his hip;  
And it really doesn't seem awfully fair,  
Though the dreams spin around alike, and people bicycle and  
Bobsled wherever they are, even if you or I haven't seen them,  
We can ask the very same moon who reigns over all of these  
Chain restaurants and colleges,  
And make-believe romances, and she will kiss us just the same  
With her equal glows, and we can get the gist,  
And be pulled by her like two waves trying to fight it out  
And that is really all we can ask for,  
And it might just be enough.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Enough English

When the world closes  
Every afternoon-  
Closes its stories of shops,  
Then all of the Chinese women  
Come down off of  
Those high rises  
Where they've been migrating,  
Taking busses  
Receding for home- with  
Stockings filled with rice  
And watermelons-  
Then they walk by me-  
Their high heels upon  
A dam-  
Their soft brown loins that  
Get as yellow as tigers  
And lightening-  
They know just enough  
English to  
Say hello and to walk  
Away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Exactly What You Are

If I see you sweep in like the traffic,  
I am speechless,  
And these words are motherf\$ckers;  
And when you get up and make nude your blue eyes;  
Then I wish I knew how to read your music;  
And only your blue music exists-  
Like I only have plaid to wear; and I don't care that  
You have to smoke,  
Or look into the eyes of your beautiful men;  
I am just a chimney sweep anyways, with my own scars  
And the mountains I have climbed that you don't  
Know;  
And the city pearls and makes love to the hemispheres  
Of its vibrating sky;  
That is just what it is doing; and then your eyes open up-  
They are just like flowers blooming; and that is  
Just what they are;  
And I wish I was more beautiful for you-  
And I want to worship at your church every day;  
And give you oral pleasure, and make you moan like the continents  
Touching themselves amidst the clay birthday cakes,  
Because that is just exactly what you are.

Robert Rorabeck

## Just Faces

It is alright to have to sing by yourself  
Into the shadows,  
To have to swing over the make-believe  
That you have to pay for—  
So when you get there,  
To your relatives or two heaven,  
You behave and look like  
A monster—  
Well, it is New Year's again—  
The world didn't end, or it didn't  
Come down to what you'd hoped for—  
And the beauty in the eyes of a egret  
Was just looking up into  
A primordial cloud—  
The shadows pantomiming their obnoxious  
Memories—and she, your  
One or two muses just faces  
Lost in the crowd.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Fine

The night is warm, humorous,  
And you give me new reasons to believe.  
I have my grandmother's old car now;  
She is in the cemetery and asked  
Me in her quiet ways to bring her flowers.  
The aspens are getting ready to change,  
Like chorus lines of juvenile girls giggling  
As they blush ahead of the ballet;  
And I want my words to be the colors of a revolutionary  
Pallet, to help you remember your own art-  
Do not recognize me, but cast me in your pool.  
Grab your man hard around the lapels,  
Kiss him in the ways which fabricate the houses  
Of the past;  
Put your hands on the clay again, remember the  
Briar patches of my visage, where your trembling forensic  
Shot and fumbled like waterspiders for awhile  
Over the effluvious canal of terrapin and crocodile;  
And if I fail you, it doesn't matter,  
All my words are fireworks shot into the dark for my  
Lips alone- You are far away, hung over his chest like  
A family crest- He provides, and soon I will be selling  
Christmas trees in a dripping world,  
And other girls will work and sweat, and maybe even read  
My lines; further away then, breast feed your daughter,  
Sell your wines- I know who you really are,  
And it was good to have our bones caracole around one  
Another, scribbling on desks in high school some many  
Years ago; and if that is to be all, the elks bugle that it  
Is just fine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just For You

I want your children inside me, Alma;  
I want all of this flesh to wilt, and all of the motor boats  
And speed boats to go their own way  
And I want nothing else for you, Alma.  
I want you out in the soft and wanting penultimate summer  
Of South Florida,  
For your jaw to be coming through another cenotaph for me bones,  
Or another softly dying firework,  
While I like a feather from the tail end of a peacock cry out for you,  
While all of the other mastiff have their two point children all  
Out for you,  
While all of those astronauts have their primary colors heading  
Home for you,  
While I am just as hooded and as peninsular as a jasmine headed  
Home into the sweet or semisweet bodies of your work out that  
I have kept just for you, while you are no more sweet  
Than all of the others that I keep just so sweetly just for you;  
And all in a garden kept so sweetly and just for you:  
Just in a garden kept so sweetly just for you, Alma:  
Just for you- just for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Good For Lying

I've wanted to sacrifice for you,  
Let fingers see-saw across your neck  
Where the tiny silver cross in dangling,  
A curse for vampires,  
Or a virgin taunt:  
It has its own pink cave that reverberates  
To your band's excitement;  
And I've wanted to swing in the highest arcs  
For you,  
To pluck little muggy birds from their nests  
As far as my fingers can reach;  
To pluck legumes for the landscape's  
Palms, that sway and bend with late  
Afternoon traffic;  
To defame the crèche moldering out  
In the crumbling tar of the Church's hip:  
To become a truant,  
Far a field from the turn-about,  
A high holy thief for you who makes entire  
Long days into weekends;  
Who has seen the womb of silk worms,  
And each hex in a bleeding comb;

But don't you listen to me,  
Because I am not really good at sports;  
And my shoes don't fit,  
And its been so long since I've seen any real  
Lions, those better seafaring men who spit  
Their plugs and grin like sharp metal  
On the grind for your joints:  
Oh well,  
The sea is going, and its time to get up or  
Go to bed- In fact, everything must be going.  
We are going to climb mount Vesuvius today,  
To light our cigars off fuses from her bosom,  
To fry some eggs,  
To tweak our mustaches and fix our  
Kid cloves for these photographs; but look at me now, dear,  
As I must be lying- I'd dig up entire graveyards for

You, and say that airplanes were shiny love birds  
Going so far that they are just as passionately migratory-  
Wouldn't I- Just wouldn't I dear,  
Or am I just good for lying?

Robert Rorabeck



# Just Graffiti

All of the contenders were still laughing whilst the sun  
Was just graffiti—  
And the mother of my wife told me to look up,  
As her father smoked all of the cigarettes  
I was forced to buy for our wedding banquet:  
Sad stars—  
Bright over the fairgrounds—  
Turning around, menstruating over the individual  
Conundrums of the highways and the high schools:  
It was all we had to do—  
With the singing trucks selling icecream—  
And another day was spilling its orgasms over the overpasses  
Of her shoulders,  
But she was just concerned with her children—  
Like goldfish collected all together from all of the winners  
Bedrooms—  
Until there was gunfights and another architecture with  
The paper airplanes and kites all up in the air:  
And then we were moving into another impossibility  
Of shadow—  
And the schoolroom kept to itself—  
As the fires burned like poisonous butterflies dancing all  
Across the busses:  
And contributing to nothing else—but the houses that they  
Kept in their minds—  
Until their mothers found them and collected them,  
Carrying all of them to their breasts  
And reminding all of them that it was time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Like I Would Have Had Judy Garland

If I begin this way for you, and you see me,  
And you are on your bicycle,  
Petit infant, well contoured- as last I saw you color-  
Blind, and working the fondue fountain at  
The old Spanish café,  
You would turn your bike around and ride away,  
And I would smell your dreams for other men  
On the sidewalk the other students enjoyed holding  
Hands and arguing if the moon was waxing or  
Waning:  
And I really do not care, but to be put into other ideals  
Of you, not transitory bouquets, but ifs that if are not  
Realized at least never die;  
And say to explore your courtrooms while you are for  
A little while adjourned, smoking with the judge, or  
Talking on your sweetheart in the phone of the big  
City;  
And it shouldn't matter now if you've gone away, if  
You've went ahead and gone and done the big deal with  
Your swell friend- I'll see you anyways in a dream,  
And there are a thousand miles of graveyards in this city,  
And with my eyes closed can recline beside anyone  
And pretend that it is our lover's grave; and the world  
Can sound just as good asleep and blind,  
Enough to be as if you were there and this somber place  
The university that forgotten day, and you rode your  
Bicycle to me, didn't you, pretty sparrow,  
And stayed just as I would have had you stay.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Like Something Written By Chaucer

Put the spear in me,  
As I would put in the tongue;  
And watch as whole cities pour out  
Of men who wear antlers to bed,  
Who were cuckolded and made to run around  
Feathered and spitted upon  
Twelve days before Halloween;

How bucolic her ass looked, sticking out of  
The kitchen's window; it could not be denied  
As it bobbed up and down, like a steamy plum  
For Thom to plumb with his thumb;  
Just like something written by Chaucer.

A day before the hurricane, the chickens ran around  
Until hypnotized,  
And we went to the super-store and bought a forty-eight  
Inch t.v., and a fichus, because they were out of water;  
The cashier said we could enter a raffle,  
But I asked her why bother, and when we got home  
We plugged in the tomb and waited for the house  
To fill with laughter.

After class was over, she cycled home,  
Her forehead peppered, sweaty with loam,  
Her hair curled by the wind's daughter; but she didn't  
See me, as I watched from the top of the palm tree,  
Making love to the very same daughter,

And then at night, she ate quite a bite,  
While I watched the bike-thieves unsolder the wheels  
From the spokes, they stole from us folks,  
As she cooked the eggs like I taught her;

But even as I swum, she let in her chum, and they made  
Love like a hooked bobber; half in and half out,  
They see-sawed about, while I bit my thumb as I aught'r;  
After he left, she fixed up her dress, and laid-out the table  
That I bought her; but I was not ready for bed

With that over-used head, so I just laid back and  
Kissed the wind's daughter;  
Who unbuttoned her blouse and opened her house,  
Just like something written by Chaucer.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just No One At All

You give me reasons to pull rabbits and roses  
Out of my wounds while I tramp,  
While I keep doing this, evading cops who aren't  
Even paying attention, going into the park after midnight  
Under the slash pine trees and cursing the various  
Neighborhoods you undress in,  
So ducky and appreciative of the crocodilian flatulence;  
I shouldn't blame you for all the bullet holes I've misquoted,  
The friends who are always tossing the sweeter grapes to  
You from the higher rungs: you have a hyphenated last name,  
After all, and a brother who does nothing but does it in  
NY, NY- While all I have are my sloppy visions of  
Trailer park sommeliers who sell all their wines from boxes  
And fish bowls, who ladle out to their smoking fathers the  
Incest of their dragon sown fields- Girls without any teeth  
Who used to be like angels crossed with wolves,  
And who swam like stellar jays and lacquered otters through  
Home room and economics, who could crack any sort of  
Legume or oyster between their breasts,  
Who made me so nervous I never went to school- and they kissed me  
Through the shade of palm trees and student parking lots,  
So long ago that it might as well have been their younger sisters,  
Those things who change into lakes and slender aspens  
They have so well forgotten, or according to the nature of  
The game, just no one at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just One More

They just go on and one,  
Don't they- and they can start up in  
Anyway,  
Like pulling the choke string on a kite  
Or lawnmower:  
And once they get going then it's like a poor  
Catholic renaissance,  
Unprotected, unbroken, parroting with crackers  
And cheese,  
But they really are so much love:  
Love like the top layer of a cake which is  
Symbolic for the sea, for the bolero-  
For Ave Maria- for nectarines:  
There are no three strike rules, no prison sentences,  
When no lips spell out, no eyes perceive:  
This is the tree in the forest no one hears,  
This is just the last one falling before the lonely night  
At bed:  
I loved a few girls from high school- I loved a few  
Girls,  
And now I sleep in an old green Chevy beside a canal  
In North Riviera Beach-  
I trick for you- Erin- I trick for you: Erin:  
I am yours and if you really want to love just one man upon  
This Earth,  
You don't have to read the Palm Beach Post to know that  
Man can be yours with just one word:  
Erin Elizabeth Adamson- if you are tired of bullrings and  
Batting cages,  
This is just one more to tell you- I have healthy lungs  
And a clean cadaver, and time is short- but with you it would  
Live forever;  
And you don't care: Who are you with goblet stolen from  
The pervasive dragon stuck in your nose:  
Who are you but a paramedic trucking for other men,  
Fine you men who like to play ball:  
You are beautiful now, but you are beautiful forever-  
And you don't care or hear me fall,  
Because I am on my knees

And this is just one more.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just One More Last And Perfected Viewing

I drink to the bereavement of windows and  
Airports  
Because this is just where I am going as I am about to  
Fall asleep:  
Even my very mother wasn't beautiful enough to  
Presuppose me,  
And this is my drug:  
And this is my plan, to swing out sweet footed straight above  
The sure promised land.  
To make love to myself as a presupposition,  
To give all the banished playgrounds back to the sweating  
Womb of my underground grandmother;  
As Kelly sweats away her days next to the underground sea,  
Just a creature in the first level of  
The dungeon that was promised to me: Just a lady bug on  
A petal weeping in spring,  
While the trucks twirl their new engines entwined with the  
Gases of their long lost loves,  
So too do I keep to myself, and keep weeping for her as the rivers  
Awaken in spring and peel down the mountainside and  
Do their thing;  
As they are waking up, so too dose my dove,  
For she is busy weeping as she cannot fly high enough  
Up the skirts of my another mountain to see what  
I have perceived: Kelly, you are very fine, and you are waking up,  
And this is my world naked and divine and pure  
As the opalescent pornography as unmarketable as the  
Time you closed your eyes and dreamed up me,  
What silly backwards thing, like climbing up against the paths  
That you have already breathed; but they were already so  
Beautiful that your naked patriotism allowed them  
Once again into the showrooms of your unadulterated mind  
For just one more last and perfected viewing.

Robert Rorabeck



# Just One Of Many

Numbed in the chilly amphitheatre.  
Baboons are beating the chests,  
Ruining tulip corsages- my aunt's wedding  
Is all a mess, so I drove home early,  
But the highway undressed and danced for me,  
Cheeky, bosomed: I slipped a dollar in her  
Curve and fell asleep.  
Knocking, the black man woke me up and said  
It was high time to move over-  
I thought I wanted to be famous, but I was out  
Of money,  
But it didn't matter because the air-plants were  
Out and blushing in the crooks and armpits  
Of each and every cypress.  
The snails were white as apples, but with  
Not so many words,  
And I shouldn't even mention the birds, the  
Birds, the birds,  
Over Jupiter's dump, the humping of young and lordly  
Lawyers  
Who commissioned to have their picket fence painted  
White by Tom Sawyer and oh so many confederate  
Toy soldiers:  
She makes love there, going down somewhere on that  
Weepy and pester some peninsula,  
And I'd thought of going back to her, drying my jaw  
Out under the same sun; but school is over,  
I'd loved a waitress over her through the slipping shadows  
Of unkempt banyans; but isn't that how it should be.  
Stop. I'll go to sleep now and have her sing to me  
A song that doesn't matter how it comes, because I've  
Had my shots- I've buried my bones of which  
She is just one of many.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Out Of Reach

Entrain the beautiful adjectives,  
That's what you do, like tools of a scientists  
Out naked on the steps,  
A bottle of beer, a can of pep,  
And the day rally's on: it's a speedy centipede  
Who has forgotten or cursed all of its  
Old gods and boyfriends,  
And this is what it does,  
But combs the crew cuts of dungeons,  
And gives beautiful tans to monsters who look  
Up through the crackerjack fjords  
And yawn like a thousand sharp saines,  
Each tooth pretending to be a water fountain  
For the little birds  
And girls of makebelieve,  
And thus they swoop down all attracted  
And are caught up by the misplacement of shady classrooms,  
In cages forever underneath the sink of tulips  
Where they tend to sway and bask  
Just out of reach of the great poets,  
Stumbled upon by the minor poets who do not know the  
Not to their inconsequential salvation,  
But they are too eager to way, and thus they stare through  
All the afternoon of talk shows and lost airplanes,  
Looking at the beautiful harems of sweet  
Girls and their songbirds  
Who are even more beautiful and sweet because  
They are lost forever  
Down in the shallow cracks where the sunlight reaches,  
Just out of reach.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just So Busy

Going down the road are cars:  
Cars full of family inherited to their declinations:  
Fathers drive, and mothers watch out,  
And Spot is sticking out his tongue enjoying the  
Shampoo of uneven light;  
And I know I have seen this time and again while  
Coming out of sleep:  
I think it was that I ran away from some school, and there  
Was a lot of woods,  
And then this highway which entrenched me:  
I cannot pass because of this busy river,  
All of these laughing families spindled from the loins  
Of two pilots ever leaping in and out of bed and also breakfast:  
So I must wait here while I can hear the bugle fading in  
The distance: whoever it was has given up hunting  
For me,  
But I wish they would come: maybe it was my mother in  
A purple dress: maybe my father carried a devil's lamp two shades  
Above his head,  
But if it is them they are growing more distant, while this  
Traffic is always building:  
Soon I think they will flow over the cliffs and over my shoulders  
If I lie down beneath their hard choruses of chassis,  
But I do not think that it is they mean any harm:  
They are just so busy at dancing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just So Busy At Dancing

Going down the road are cars:  
Cars full of family inherited to their declinations:  
Fathers drive, and mothers watch out,  
And Spot is sticking out his tongue enjoying the  
Shampoo of uneven light;  
And I know I have seen this time and again while  
Coming out of sleep:  
I think it was that I ran away from some school, and there  
Was a lot of woods,  
And then this highway which entrenched me:  
I cannot pass because of this busy river,  
All of these laughing families spindled from the loins  
Of two pilots ever leaping in and out of bed and also breakfast:  
So I must wait here while I can hear the bugle fading in  
The distance: whoever it was has given up hunting  
For me,  
But I wish they would come: maybe it was my mother in  
A purple dress: maybe my father carried a devil's lamp two shades  
Above his head,  
But if it is them they are growing more distant, while this  
Traffic is always building:  
Soon I think they will flow over the cliffs and over my shoulders  
If I lie down beneath their hard choruses of chassis,  
But I do not think that it is they mean any harm:  
They are just so busy at dancing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just So Buy

Going down the road are cars:  
Cars full of family inherited to their declinations:  
Fathers drive, and mothers watch out,  
And Spot is sticking out his tongue enjoying the  
Shampoo of uneven light;  
And I know I have seen this time and again while  
Coming out of sleep:  
I think it was that I ran away from some school, and there  
Was a lot of woods,  
And then this highway which entrenched me:  
I cannot pass because of this busy river,  
All of these laughing families spindled from the loins  
Of two pilots ever leaping in and out of bed and also breakfast:  
So I must wait here while I can hear the bugle fading in  
The distance: whoever it was has given up hunting  
For me,  
But I wish they would come: maybe it was my mother in  
A purple dress: maybe my father carried a devil's lamp two shades  
Above his head,  
But if it is them they are growing more distant, while this  
Traffic is always building:  
Soon I think they will flow over the cliffs and over my shoulders  
If I lie down beneath their hard choruses of chassis,  
But I do not think that it is they mean any harm:  
They are just so busy at dancing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Some More Thoughts

It hurts to bum, and to disappoint them saints:  
I'm out of better words, out in the graveyard of disenfranchised  
Sports;  
And this is early morning: my parents are gone,  
Maybe I am singing as I touch myself to your spectral form:  
The sky is full of horses runaway from their  
Brush-fired barns:  
These words are just the simple afterthoughts of more trustworthy  
Yarns:  
And the day opens in a colorful flood of girls touching themselves,  
And touching themselves again:  
Later on, if I appreciate, there will be rain clouds and wet paint,  
And song birds, and a-mens;  
But for now I don't even want to touch myself, to clown around;  
I know that there are prettier houses and your sisters  
Are undressing in them- Looking at themselves in mirrors and  
Contemplating marriage and aquariums;  
But for now I'm really bummed, and the neighborhood of houses  
Seem uncharmed,  
And the fireworks bag is empty, and I'm really going down:  
The cats are burrowing like rabbits underground,  
Like homeless men drinking under the overpasses that you step or  
Leap over so easily like the object of a fable,  
Like a birthstone on display over a long-tongued earth:  
And these are just some more thoughts to which you have always  
Given birth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just The Average Dream

Oh discombobulated house behind the citrus  
Tree, Can't I enter you  
And hang up my scars, and drink sour whiskey:  
Oh what a night when all the street lamps  
Glow,  
The cars return, late night talk shows.  
Beauty queens jog, patinas and tits-  
We pay our mortgage and polish salty clits;  
Through the house a gondola, a wet avenue,  
Rose bushes in back of the city zoo.  
Juxtaposed between the confections of sky  
And the briny sea, words composed between scoliosis  
Back and scabby knee; My little sister has eyes that  
Weep at the bottom of the hill where they  
Water the dreamy sheep- Where up go Jack  
And down come Jill- Just the average dream, please-  
Is what I deserve at the end of the cul-de-sac  
And the lip of the curb.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just The Last Bit Of February

Again- its snowing in May,  
And all the flowers are down below  
Way beneath the darkening keen of the  
Mountain's knees.  
She hasn't dressed up for so very long,  
Not even when he made his first movie at  
Twenty-something  
In a little town in Greece-  
She didn't take herself out of the pittance of  
Unpublishable plays- So anyway,  
They are waiting like shrinking violets to  
See if they'll be going back to school,  
Plucked so gently for a lover's bouquet,  
To take on a bicycle ride on their last sunny day  
To swoon before her eyes like comely sailors  
Out on leave, petals spreading with the same  
Concentricity of anything homemade, more  
Delicate than anything you could buy at the supermarket:  
But that is how it is  
And I wish I could take them all up on a fieldtrip  
To her eyes- But I don't go out anymore to lounge  
Upon the honey-suckle gravity of her stony bosom  
With the same hopeful molasses of summer flies,  
To masturbate up inside of naked trees:  
I hardly even write anymore, because for all the flowers  
- There's really only elk down there  
Right now, in a bugling colony that can see its own  
Breath; and its now even yet May,  
Just the last bit of February- Though not really,  
And still the snow is falling,  
And all the flowers are but sleeping.

Robert Rorabeck



# Just The Type Of Creature

My scars are a pretty mix of roads and intercourse.  
Where they are going there are the new creations of lights  
On the boulevard,  
Coming like an almost blind horizon of lighthouses;  
And then you are almost there, like the first thing in the  
Anti-crepuscule of the university, waking up before books  
In the mists of coed fields always paradoxically mowed,  
The sweet green beds I hope you remember,  
The art classes, the rent of venal lovers, the left over casserole  
Your mother sent you that you would never eat,  
Your father the last casualty of that war, and you just a busty  
Half-breed in a place you never belonged; and now you are  
Still trying to do the thing of another princess, and I can't  
Blame you: That you killed me and left me for dead on the bus  
Of our last fieldtrip. Resurrected by the unbelievable spikenard  
Of the truant alligators, and suckled back to health in the theme-parks  
Of poltergeist orchards, I can still see by the light of the moon,  
And I'd hate to find you, but isn't that the way I am just going,  
Over the ice-cold planets who aren't even real, even over yards of  
Pets and empty parking lots. Soon I will be crenellating the airy sisters  
Over your room, but you will never look up, because even though you  
Are so beautiful you are just the type of creature who is never  
Allowed to do that.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Thus

Seasawing the epitaphs to my shoulder bones,  
I somehow still manage to hang on:  
The world turns around on its belly, and stares me in the eye:  
The horses hang from the trees, braying, looking out  
At the sea too-  
That great heart that is beating its last dancing in the foaming  
Strength of the jaws  
That certainly know- in the meals of the hours of the work  
Day this is just thus;  
The doorknobs that await like Siamese twins the busied hands  
That come home to rest,  
Curling their lashes toward and away from the dusk-  
The bones of leafy shadows sweeping across  
The window sill,  
Like a zoetrope of rabbits and foxes:  
And then the eyes close the window fronts of the soul:  
And the sea settles dismissively- and this is just thus.

Robert Rorabeck

## Just To Indian Give

They have poems that famish and then lie with the  
Gods that they want in  
The shallows, where flames cantankering over monuments flatted  
By the unconstructions of the forever nubile sea:  
Black when it wants to be,  
And as deep as a muse's eyes: Oh, Alma- your daughter is having  
A birthday in four days,  
And you made love to me today and then spent a hundred dollars  
On your hair:  
It is probably more than my mother has spent in her entire  
Life time:  
And you belong in the vestibules of Mount Olympus with her,  
Or somewhere,  
Spilling your time, while I spill my cups every night, and they  
Headily sing to me of all of my wishes,  
In crippled operas of hobos that wait up for you all night and then  
Try and panhandle a couple of quarters,  
Just to Indian Give wishes from my wishing well.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Too Kind To Say Goodbye

I wished that your schoolyards would have opened up  
Their eyes to know me,  
Like an apiary where a friendly fire burns;  
Its cathedrals of orange lips smacking the bushwhacking leaves  
From the spare forests  
Around the houses near the sea- like a fieldtrip that your  
Son and your daughter went on, and both on their birthday:  
While I stood and I watched them  
And I caught the biggest kingfish of the day; but it was still  
Not enough to save your heart from the families of  
Its grave:  
And I took to riding alongside cars, and to climbing up the  
Roofs of your neighbors just to get a look into your  
Backyard to see whatever it was that you and the devil  
Were cooking;  
And it was that you looked good from my point of view  
That I was already coming down: but I got there too late:  
The bank was already empty: the lions had already eaten  
Their witches:  
And you had left for Mexico for your operation, or to see  
Your sister- in a place where there are never teardrops in the sky:  
You wore your miniskirt that I had once or twice lifted  
Like your flag of surrender; and you wore the gold  
I had bought for you every time to say I loved you;  
Alma- but you were just too kind to say goodbye.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Trying To Survive

It is cold to be without blankets,  
Or tumbled with the paradoxical attributes of the  
Female's sex:  
She has so many friends and she smoked and lives  
In a double-wide:  
Why can't I train myself if her hair is so blonde, though  
She's been giving it high lights:  
And the stock cars moves in righteous herds;  
And it is not fair those boys who drive:  
I remember her laying back in high school like a one of a  
Kind firework while I was still alive:  
And now the houses of my better ancestors are real and have  
Eyes,  
And they can follow their housewives straight over the  
Parallel roots of the canal: they can become fairytales too:  
That is what they do, and all the children perambulate,  
And they remember the men who once were presidents;  
But all I care about is how her legs divide:  
She is my classroom, while more than one child has birthed  
Outdoors from her truancies:  
Butterflies are dying like paper cenotaphs in Mexico;  
And what am I doing, but quieting down and falling down  
Like a drunken hiker into Mount Saint Helens:  
That I am just trying to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

## Just Two Ingénues

In your great urban heart there are so many boys,  
More than are in Peter Pan's;  
And you let them fly around your mouth before you  
Wake up,  
And they land there and then give a soliloquy,  
Don't they; and you pretend to be asleep,  
And even when you're up and eating breakfast with  
Your sister, just two ingénues,  
You let in enough light for them to see you in  
Your lingerie;  
And you've just bought new tires for your car outside,  
Which make you want to stay inside;  
You don't want to have to leave for anywhere,  
And ruin their perfect tread-  
They yet smell like where you bought them,  
And the perfect man, tattooed and smudged;  
And you've cut your hair down at the barbers the  
Same place the politicians do it,  
Down by where the mermaids work in the lake,  
And the officers keep them there sequestered, trying to  
Put them bodily into jars: That's where I've brought my  
Lunch so many times, trying to fill myself near where I've  
Remembered you,  
Wanting to read to you out in those public gardens,  
So you might be amused and bare a breast,  
But its been so long since I've painted a picture;  
Though I still write, and go by your yard several times a day:  
I see flashes of you like consecutive pictures moving around  
In a zoetrope: You are smiling, and you are smiling and  
Showing tongue, and holding hands with your sister,  
And didn't I say I only know so many words,  
And very soon I should be leaving- I am going to get lost  
From you,  
Even though you couldn't say who I am,  
Because its so long since we've been to school,  
Though in your playgrounds I can still hear the boys laughing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Underneath Something That Seemed So Beautiful

Even though as silent as a fox watching whatever  
Housewives are on display behind the bright  
Bright windows in the upset zoetrope of  
The apoplectic weather, I sing to you like a mute  
In a feral cathedral- sing of the lonesome seabed  
Of my youth, and the otters who floated  
Above me while I skipped school, and the stolen  
Bicycles floated down across the mermaids  
That I could not really see- and the world was  
Torn up, and made to settle down, like something  
Marvelous for a day attracting tourists-  
The paper wounds like a eucrists for my body,  
And the green yard an entire play, with the red,  
Red ants always crawling just underneath something  
That seemed so beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just What I Do

Hard to think of something to consider.  
I am getting drunker and drunker,  
And the stain glass I frame you in grows into a  
Church,  
And the airplanes come down and pray  
Where cartoons grave on cereal Saturday mornings  
And this is just what I do  
To get outside and mow my fair portion of the lawn:  
This is what I do for the girl with  
Watercolored eyes when there is nothing  
Better on television,  
And I am left with nothing better to do than to  
Type these mud daubed love letters,  
And to wait alone in my zoo:  
To swing for a little while, to pass the habit,  
To pretend to have the potency to stave off killer bees  
And death,  
And too look you straight in your eyes and to caracole  
The death with life rings of your initials:  
I jump through hoops for you,  
While the traffic sings,  
And burns like fearless dogs,  
Like candles in my own beard:  
This is just what I do.

Robert Rorabeck



# Just What They Deserve

Popgun séances who hear me dancing:  
I am dancing, and I am right here,  
Underneath the Christmases where the planes pretend  
To be touching down,  
And maybe they are doing just that in their  
Wedding gowns,  
As the little girls plummet, as the school girls look far away;  
And the busses turn around and around,  
Dropping us off fairly underneath the sun, like sailors  
Into their warm and striking grottos  
That the virgins serve and who anyone, why just anyone:  
Alma,  
Can get just- just what they deserve.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just What They Do

Oh, whatever wound, you are here,  
And I am singing,  
Because I do not know what else to do:  
And I look up through all of  
The pages while I am sing,  
And even while I walk my dog you  
Seem so beautiful, but it is only because I don't even  
Know what else there is to do:  
And you come up into the morning like a mystified orchard  
While the sugar cane is burning:  
And all of it is yellowed, and a banshee, and the new litters  
Are being propositioned even by the diminutive coral snakes:  
And that is just what they do:  
In the rainstorms, and underneath the rainstorms:  
Openmouthed and mewling, underneath the airplanes,  
And the paper airplanes,  
Because that is just what they do.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Whom It Is

They have their friends in the stables  
Of Christmas- in the sweet nativities of a suburbia  
Where it never has to snow,  
And the housewives go out shopping, and then  
Rejoin home again:  
Look at all of the prettiest things they are taking home  
With them, and I think of you-  
As the power lines sway, as the alligators cross the  
Canal:  
I think of you as the homeless men think of the moon  
Underneath the overpasses:  
She has dipped down again, she is kissing them  
And bakes them a thanksgiving in a stolen cauldron of  
Her shadows- and lingers in their peasant  
Heads,  
As the three legged witches fly as high as commercial  
Airliners- and I am left wondering, beleaguered once  
Again, just whom it is I am going to marry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Just Your Man

Quizzically, as if from the blue fjords I  
Look at you: maybe it appears that you are beginning  
This suicide for your man:  
And you look great, and your daughter is neither sad  
Nor weeping:  
And it doesn't hurt to look at you now that I have  
Become numbed to beauty,  
And my mother is home and flipping through papers and  
Being otherwise distracting:  
Soon maybe she will go out and ponder underneath those  
Swings just where I picture you  
As your penumbra swings and the algebra teachers bite all of  
Their lips:  
And I hated all of them but not half as much as when they made  
Your swings safe and closer to the ground,  
Even if you came sooner like an elite wind turning windmills  
From the long hot stretches of yellow mountains;  
And that was just your element that I had nothing to do with,  
Because he was just your man.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kaleidoscope Perched All Alone

If there was a kaleidoscope perched all  
Alone above the sea,  
And beneath it the otters were swimming  
In the grottos of the disenchanted mermaids,  
And some school girls,  
Who were all alone except from their selves  
Who were playing hooky  
Just to practice falling down and catching  
The shadows of the boys they loved in Pieta—  
Well, then this was the new delusion nobody  
Would see, except for the wooden  
Puppets and the rainstorms above the  
Talking cats—  
As the airplanes sped both ways—  
And the stewardesses serving drinks inside of  
Them were always in love with this or  
With that.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kaliedescope Of Semiprecious Shade

Now you can cry for me  
One or two stories up  
From the road-  
While the son you once were  
Dissapears-  
After the dogs whose sharp senses  
Are pinpointing rattlesnakes-  
What foothills are those  
In that cool path  
At the bottom of the  
Kaliedescope of  
Semiprecious shade-

Robert Rorabeck

# Kazoo

Her husband has the Hebrew alphabet on his  
Knuckles;  
At least some of it.  
She sat next to me on the shoe polished table  
Underneath the tent which was  
Rejected by the ginger inspector today:  
She sat next to my problem side  
Holding her twenty ton six month old underneath  
Her awesome breasts,  
And told me she was completely over him  
Was this bleach blonde trailer mom-  
She was completely over him,  
And here was my chance to turn her pumpkin into  
Magic dust;  
That I could lay her low and plant her in my mobile  
Truck,  
While the waves crisped like an orchestra of  
Watery cutlery for the both of us; yeah, but I just smiled  
Politely and never once looked into her  
Yard chair eyes- I couldn't even tell you the color of  
Her eyes,  
Her desperate Catholic day school eyes,  
But if she came back again this other cheap tomorrow  
Who knows what I might do-  
But can't you imagine such a daytime talk show  
Zoo I'd sure to get a fist full of kosher knuckle sandwich  
If I played that buxom, bleached and infected kazoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# Keep Busy

I eat ice-cream-  
I eat ice-cream- I drink rum:  
In that order,  
Or that's what I'm going to do.  
Maybe I will read William Carlos Williams.  
Maybe I will write a modern rendition of  
Little Red Riding Hood- Looking down  
The misty but un-shy valley I might see a streak  
Of red, like poisoned holly, and it will be her-  
And I will write about it,  
That she should love me for a little while,  
Or just keep me around because I feel comfortable,  
Until she gets the steady drip of her silver-fanged  
Lycanthrope: Oh, what a handsome thing,  
Or shouldn't I say that is how I must write him;  
And I am thinking of soliciting Fantasy & Science  
Fiction Magazine,  
Except that it might be that they are out of print,  
So I might just put that away-  
I might think longingly of Arthur Rimbaud and how  
At only seventeen he was still a might better than  
Walt Whitman, and if they ever met or held hands,  
Or shared lemonade through the epileptic parks  
In sunny fits. Because it seems that it was the right time;  
But I will not call her- That's what I should never  
Do, even though soon I should move three states closer  
Or so and be able to lay my head upon Sara Teasdale's  
Grave in Bellefontaine, though I would never take  
A photograph even in the middle of the night,  
Because to be that kind of tourist is not a mere amusement;  
But once I've had my nip of rum I might be  
Brave enough to write her name; it is Memorial  
Day weekend after all, and shouldn't there be at least  
Some kind of fireworks? Ah heck- Erin, I said it....  
Oh well: It is still such a pretty thing,  
But now I must keep busy by something else.

Robert Rorabeck



# Keeping The Faith

In the rain,  
In the end,  
In the metropolitan museum,

I've tried to write words for us  
That will not sleep,  
That will stand on guard duty,  
That will keep perfect account of  
Useful sheep,

But I've come upon myself misspelled,  
Laden down by fairytales,  
Hoping to demystify the real,  
Ending up on a dead end street,  
Thumping my firsts alongside the beats,  
Precursors to the counter-culture,  
Flaccid meat, and groceries stores  
That still close on Sundays

Jack Micheline is Harvey Silver,  
Is hardly memorized.  
I saw you once in the video store,  
And briefly looked into your eyes,  
Before I stole the prime rib from next door,  
And went home with lifted blood on my lips,  
Sat down behind the door and typed a little this,

For you,  
For you, my darling pronoun,  
And all the liquors which you excrete  
While the rain goes bitter patter like little feet,  
And the waves come up and give and take,  
All the cliches we're aloud to make,

I loved you because you didn't even know what  
You've stolen,  
And I love you even more when you turn away  
From my heart you've broken,  
Like a grandfather clock outside skirted by a picnic,

The arms still soldiering on its face,  
Even though the sun can clearly tell us  
Its time to eat.

Robert Rorabeck

# Keeping Time With A Stranger

Light as smooth as rainstorms  
And then of purple cars- I can feel my pulse  
In the highway  
Underneath the sky- as you move with  
Your echoes to the delight of  
Clocks  
In the ballroom of your thoughts where  
The tenements never decay- I can feel your  
Thoughts streak across me-  
They are keeping time with a stranger they  
Can never know,  
And the heart beats its metronome's  
Song, and I suppose you've heard it before  
If you were ever listening.

Robert Rorabeck

# Keeping To The Jungles

The chances were golden and made to fly and  
They stuck to the roofs of all of our loneliness like  
Little children of nocturnal mothers  
And I saw you hanging out at your favorite store with  
Another man,  
And then you were on the seesaw, but you didn't look  
Like you were having fun:  
Now all of the waves crawl with the undulations of  
Unending centipedes,  
The way sick dogs crawl on their bellies and worms devour  
Themselves in unhealthy wood,  
And I have been keeping to the jungles where the canopy  
Is so thick that I don't have to read the stars,  
Or look up and tell the time, though I am already certain  
You are not coming.

Robert Rorabeck

# Keiper Belt

School children coming home for  
Christmas—  
A fox's tongue in a crackerjack box—  
The things you said in  
Whispers  
Too soft for lies—  
Rope tricks on Ganyemede, a sea of silent  
Thoughts obscured  
By astroids  
Surrounded by the Keiper Belt  
With smoky swings and censers  
Inside a church too far away to reach.

Robert Rorabeck

## Kelly #9

They make their lives up in rows  
Of tumbling houses  
Glitter transformingly under the sun,  
And even so far away you might  
Reach your hand out to try and touch  
This skin, like the way a sexy fish  
Swims in a brightly lit television.  
All the houses rise up in silver spirals,  
Collecting the light off the sea, turning windmills  
On the ancient coasts of Spain,  
The forgotten ancestry spread over her hills,  
And in dimly lit bars where she reached out to  
You and spread her fingers on your cheek,  
Like spiders walk on water  
Before breathing, the way her bee-stung  
Lips parted trying to parse that she loved you  
Between sips of beer.

All the way to her  
Shores, where dead knights glitter  
In the bosom of her bays and  
Billboards read you can buy a home on her  
For \$139,000 and I know this =s a very  
Good price for South Florida,  
And by the end of the year my bank account  
Will have enough that I won't even need a  
Mortgage, and can just lie out and love her,  
And spread everything I own out to her  
And the silver flash of her breath which moves  
Like a speedboat against the break of the sea.

I drive with some kid across the  
Intercoastal, and begin to search for her  
Here in bed before I wake up I just  
Saw her cross the street right next to my  
Old high school before you turn into the  
Housing development where my ex-lover's  
Parents used to live, but I cannot be sure,  
Because they all hurried and packed up to

Begin the post-modern Diaspora. But I am  
Sure it was her, Kelly #9, because I started  
Loving her blonde locks in 4th grade, and hid in the bathroom  
While her friends handed over my poorly thought-out  
Gifts of love; but soon she was a bad  
Girl, already taking advantage of that wicked beauty,  
Forsaken the bobbles I spread out to her for a map  
Towards me,  
She took many lovers on back-country roads,  
Bumping against her young men in the languid beds  
Of American pick-up trucks. Beer in left hand  
Cock in right, she moved far away from  
Me. Finding her purpose in dead ends, she never returned  
To school, yet my eyes still lingered down the alphabetized  
Dirt roads of Loxahatchee; she lived down E Street,  
Never minding all the sacrifices I left for her—

She lives here now, on this forgotten island off  
The south coast of Florida, where she lays forever  
Naked upon her small green front lawn, her tanned thighs  
Sweaty on the tongues of her pink lawn chair,  
Still dreaming of men she has yet to meet—

Me and the kid drive across the intercoastal  
And the certain part of the day when the island  
Materializes—I've looked her up on the internet,  
Found her phone number and checked the maps.  
She lives on Albatross Lane, so I go to her;  
But soon I find that all these roads flow into  
Each other like rivers or lovers, they drink each  
Other, so the ways leading to her are devoured  
By watery legs that sex in flashy ways under the sun,  
So that this woman of my heart still defies me,  
And I give up, buying a house somewhere close by,  
Using up my bank account, I never forget her, and  
Walk the flashing streets,  
a bachelor struggling up the steep hills,  
My eyes squinting in the spears of sunlight she  
Calls down to blind me between sips of her  
Salty liquors; Always, I can smell her near,  
And always hunger for her, and she escapes me,  
Playing with the lost sailors she calls up from the sea,

So even after I awake, I still search for her,  
Waking from the bed, I smell her, and lick her  
Salt off my palm, and I shower and prepare to  
Walk outside to feed 100 horses.

Robert Rorabeck



# Kelly's Child

As soon as Alice died  
She transmitted to her daughter  
Her last recipe:  
Barefooted,  
Fertilized  
Kelly lay sweating in bed.  
She'd been a good Catholic,  
Now look what it had done.  
In the rented house,  
With more mice than men,  
The young lady had gotten pregnant,  
But there was no air conditioning,  
Just a screen door  
Overlooking a rock garden  
Where the dog had killed a rabbit.  
Standing on the  
Cinderblocks that made  
The front steps,  
Kelly looked into the dirt road  
And waited for her  
Husband to return from work.  
She bit her lip,  
And a fat toad farted  
In the earth beside her slipper.  
Inside the little house,  
The kitchen lay in feverish shadow,  
But floating in the east  
The clouds were the  
Nakedness of seashells,  
And Kelly saw those and prayed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kicking Up Her Gowns

Boiling either way,  
Taking left turns- incredibly reckless bicycles  
That shot out of school like cannons,  
Or other inept fanfare:  
If this is the way you are going down to the joy  
World,  
Take me there on you handlebars:  
Be a good sport if you're going to find out  
Where the girls don't even know where they are sleeping  
Without ceiling fans tapering their illusions  
Like the Oxnard of windmills:  
The man made lake is to trap a beautiful woman an  
Make her into the wish of the evening,  
The lady of the evening, tattooed in crepuscule and  
A sorority of mailboxes,  
With the niggardly seeds pushing her in the censer,  
The fat bacon of the swing folded beneath her whistling  
As\$; and this is as far as we've gotten with her,  
Some decades out of high school,  
But fist fights will abound in the jubilee weeds once we  
Unfurl our foreheads and figure out how to spell,  
Then to understand that she's just a mannequin  
Of spurious the ill effected hope,  
Her body gone higher up to the mountains after turning  
Her tassel counter clockwise and kicking up her gowns.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kidnapped Children And Your Love For Me

The bad cliffs where they keep their arrowheads  
Where nothing is sacred anymore—  
Where the stream comes up from where the  
Dragon grins from his footprints,  
Where it doesn't rain anymore,  
But the everlasting boys come in and pretend  
To be Peter Pan or  
They play baseball—  
In the boreal theatres where the moonlight is  
Lost without a lover,  
And the passengers look out from  
The unending trains—  
Where is it that they are going—  
Why is it that no one can see their destination—  
But the jungle is voluptuous,  
Hiding all of the secrets of the fairy tales as  
It happens on and on without ending—  
And it seems as if everything can grow there—  
In an orgy of confused feelings  
Where kidnapped children and your love  
For me once existed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kill Joy

Men drink hard liquor to  
Kill joy,  
To see you sitting on a park  
Bench  
In some kind of necrotic penumbra,  
Feeding the crows  
With just your eyes-  
We stagger there remembering high  
School,  
The way you touched yourself  
By the lockers  
And went away, leaving room for  
Us to cry in the bathroom,  
Or under the school bus-  
Then only to see you from a distance,  
Switchblading with all your friends-  
We lit off fireworks to draw your  
Attentions,  
But they were only duds,  
And the great penumbric lizards continued  
To sit and glow,  
But even they didn't know how years later  
Along the canals and  
Resting airplanes,  
Just how big their family would grow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kind Enough To Wait For You

These fish too dream of their affluence  
They too deserve to be so beautiful as to have  
No fear of going to get their hair cut;  
And the rain has passed us on the highway-  
Maybe it is another forty miles to another rest stop  
Where you can recline in your car and sleep;  
Or you can just go outside and shiver and  
Look at the clouds but never anymore wonder to  
Pretend to conceive the belly dancers in their shapes:  
There is a woman on this very same road, you know;  
But she has given up on you; she doesn't even remember  
Your echoes down the very same halls of the interchangeable  
Sexes of your shared adolescents;  
Oh, how you often dreamed of touching her,  
And the evidence of your infallible desire remains  
Like spots of dew on the green rug in the  
Shade of the weary ceiling fans. I know, but the  
The eyes of the alligators are just as dangerous as they are  
Beautiful,  
But the only difference is that they haven't moved on:  
They also don't remember who you are, or were, but they are  
Kind enough to wait for you.

Robert Rorabeck

## Kind Enough To Wait For Yoy

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Robert Rorabeck

# Kindergarten Tears

Easily I die into the poem of her lips,  
The stains on her cheeks from her addiction to flowers-  
Let us say the light opens, hosannas,  
They molest for hours on the cinderblocks leading  
Up to the chin of the moon,  
I sit and watch them and peal like a cat, but I only  
Have a nickel to buy what mother insisted,  
I only have an hour for the show,  
And then I must walk you home down the dirty  
Road lined on either side by football players,  
And alligators, and the girls who move naked through  
The sprigs of aloe. There is a girl I once knew  
Carnally driving up in a fine automobile,  
Finished with her day, she walks upstairs to her husband.  
I wonder what they'll say,  
And later on in a bar an angel with clipped wings,  
A song bird who doesn't care, laughs away the hours  
And nocks out farts, and plays darts,  
But onward we must go, and cross the busy intersections  
Until our feet float over the pavement scarred with  
Chalky games, and kindergarten tears,  
But do no fear, do not fear, for the gates are swinging  
Open to this yard, and it has been so long since you  
Or I stepped home,  
So easily I die from the poem of her lips,  
But you are holding my hand, and the door is open and  
The house rises before the lake like palms in prayer,  
And then the dark's affluence ripples and ripples without a shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# King Author

If you said all my poems were very fine,  
I would find your plot of ground where all the little  
Children bored by their Sunday best tear about you,  
Offer little unlined palms and finger-paint your stone;  
If they had read you, at least, they would know  
And the weekday pilgrimages to and from their classrooms  
Would be less painful,  
For they would have your words spread warmly on the  
Marmalade page upon their laps like purring kittens of  
Fine story, like butterflies resting like naked lovers on  
Their corduroys, and the places you would reveal to them....  
If you were not dead, and the lie of your author's  
Immortality beginning to slip off like an earlier coat of skin:  
Overgrown, this world finds new if lesser refined sugars,  
And the saccharine pleasures of the eyes no longer curtsy  
Yet evolving to your fancy: I suppose, your words might live  
Forever in the narcolepsy of sleeping beauties and  
Social isolation each day as the grass whispers atop what  
You really are- I keep in my mind, like awakening to a dream  
Of better humanity, and I wait for other children to put  
Down the delinquencies of saltwater taffy and come about  
You like a mute prophet of verbose page, and lay about your  
Stories as peacefully as lambs licked by fiery lions in the  
Gardens of your fine and yet budding imagination.

Robert Rorabeck



# Kings Falling Down A Hill

Kings falling down a hill into a playground,  
Beside the traffics,  
Or in California made up with  
The make believe unicorns—  
I remembered her—  
How she remembered to pretend to  
Love me,  
Outside of the rain or the dog tracks—  
Faces scarred in a carnival or trucks  
And other illusions that have to  
Fend for themselves—  
Until the moon rises over the evaporated seas  
As it rises over the Disney Worlds—  
And you don't have to pretend anymore—  
You are having a child—  
The world has lost a leg, but it looks like it  
Will survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kirikou And The Sorceress

Another orphaned day in whirlings  
Around the sun:  
The sad day of lashes, and her eyes  
In distant faints,  
Before the motes of slothful angels,  
The curling fire's comatose tongues,  
Epochs of sad daughters swimming  
In numberless seas:  
The haze of burning empires  
Mingles with her cigarette:  
The real world beckons impatiently,  
Smashing the car's horn,  
Wanting to get dinner over with,  
So it can get paid  
And then laid in the sticky and  
Dangerous sap of hemlocks- She is with  
Him, though she cannot get at  
The deadly thorn in the small of her back,  
Giving her all those incredible powers:  
If I could get it out,  
If I could dig it out with my teeth  
And lay her down beneath the laureli,  
She would stop becoming my sorceress,  
And I could proclaim in my full body,  
The wish to marry her,  
And to reclaim the forgotten village  
From her sick fetishes:  
If she would look my way,  
Like a beacon carving a lucid mote across the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kiss The Sun

Isn't it enough to love  
Someone like you,  
You and you alone,  
And let the rest of the  
World be  
The helpless dream  
Running through the epileptic  
Forest at sunset;  
Then you must concede  
The light is brilliant  
As it is failing  
And yet still playing  
The last of its childhood games.  
When the soft shadows  
Mature into a starlit honeymoon,  
Enclosed,  
The leaping vision of that  
Day becomes entombed  
In the night's chirping bossom;  
Yet, awakening,  
The heavenly fires  
Breathe upon the slopes  
Reveal evidence of our  
Entercourse,  
Our children the golden  
Aspen, yawning,  
As the populated meadows disrobe  
And kiss the dawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kiss Your

What I haven't said grows around the house,  
Fills up the children's games,  
Engorges the canal until the otters know Christmas  
And the housewives leave with divorces:  
It fills up with all the oilskins of firsts love that you'd  
Thought burned out quilled in the armpits  
Kissing through the hinges of the exoskeletons of  
Conquistadors; and doesn't do anything right:  
Ads more names to the fire: and it builds, and the gold  
Melts down her honey breasts and ankles which  
Are light as birds and take off my themselves- Into churches  
That have no names but the beautiful stained glass,  
And their banquets and baseball games of Sundays  
While it has all been coming around, shedding off the failures  
Of the years- Cicadas rhyming and then leaving their  
Old cousins onto her pinafores: and she, your muse:  
Your absolute muse of this year or any other, as advertised,  
Beds down again with another man: why look at you:  
All of your snowflakes are paper, and as busy as sunflowers while  
Housewives remarked that you've burned yourself:  
And you surely have: by fireworks outside of high school,  
By dying avenues chalked and embalmed in their crippled  
Horses: and, but if Alma could see you, she would  
Light out upon the indescribable streets, pin wheeling like another  
Indescribable festival out of her Mexico: and get wet and uneasy:  
And kiss your bones: and kiss your bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kiss Your Bones

What I haven't said grows around the house,  
Fills up the children's games,  
Engorges the canal until the otters know Christmas  
And the housewives leave with divorces:  
It fills up with all the oilskins of firsts love that you'd  
Thought burned out quilled in the armpits  
Kissing through the hinges of the exoskeletons of  
Conquistadors; and doesn't do anything right:  
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And kiss your bones: and kiss your bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kisses Of Very, Very Different Kinds

Cuddling at the far corner of the fair grounds  
With the wind swept pornography,  
While maybe Alma is in her warm corner of her  
Warm house, doing her nails,  
Turning her soft brown head up to the heavens,  
And swearing,  
Swearing: but when the day really gets out,  
It sweats salt like pretzels,  
And my belly rotunds underneath the swing sets,  
And the greater bodies move back and forth,  
At first running away,  
And then being kidnapped-  
And the days in their labors hold such a great stink of  
Marbles- and the fawns lay in their fields,  
Kissing their cloven feet,  
While all around them is so softly mowed that all of  
The ants are of one kind,  
And to think of mountains- mountains in a cake  
Of rainstorms, and of light night-  
Is to purse ones lips to kiss and make wishes of very,  
Very different kinds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kisses Upon The Mouth

If it wasn't a rose, then tell my why the stars don't shine—  
Pictures of beautiful men in a blind classroom-  
And heavens that don't let out until the catastrophes of  
A classroom are done—  
The night bloomed jasmine while you held my hand  
For a moment,  
But I am almost done speaking while the  
Tourists climb the mountain—  
Even if it is a pitiful joy, you have come so far—  
After all of the catastrophes have fallen down into  
The pit, there will be the beautiful answers above the  
Stars—and in the monuments of the heavens we don't  
Even have to believe any more- with the contraptions  
Falling down—kisses upon the mouth of the  
Albino crocodile and no one left alive who has to  
Believe in me anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kissing Her Man

Stars have shadows don't they, dear:  
I saw them casting on the tail end of a zoetrope for  
Half a year:  
A tail of foxes and cantaloupe:  
If I love you now, later I won't:  
But I'll stand up high in the middle of the road,  
Blessing your children  
And promising them food: as the peacock follows  
Her chicken across the railroad tracks underneath  
The airplanes,  
As the snail reminds itself of the grotto it once saw  
Her in, kissing her man, and suckling her children.

Robert Rorabeck



# Kissing In A Hearse

Your yard instep with the voting booths;  
And I just pulled out my favorite tooth-  
And I have sold quite some many fireworks,  
But I've never been a soda jerk-  
But go around moping mighty tired, like a winsome  
Bird on a wire barbed:  
I am still looking for you, smelling your sea salts  
Like Epson salts on a wound,  
Going around and around on a dizzy halo:  
Sometimes in the hallways I never knew, you come  
So hard and fast, like a hall monitor demanding to see  
My bathroom pass- And I don't really smoke  
Or drink, but I'll do both anyways in in cumulous  
Clink- and think of your dark beauty drawn back  
Like maple syrups poured off a steaming short stack  
Underneath the mountains so blue and weepy with  
Forgotten time,  
Like the snappy sisters crenulated and waiting compulsively  
For the next rhyme: In high altitude grottos I'll wait for  
You, because I paid Jove in his tawny cathedral a  
Bushel full of money for him to release you;  
And then you come down, dressed in a stylish curse,  
And kiss you all over your womanly flesh, less metamorphosed,  
If you don't grab me by my despotic lapels and kiss me first.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kissing The Earth

Calling out and giving away the hidden places,  
With the fingers that can stop the games  
And tell the truth of witchcrafts, that the bodies  
Aren't really here:  
The sky is nude as her open wrist: her eyes swim in  
The long divisions of the things she tries  
To forget the anatomies of,  
And the good stuff just keeps bubbling over,  
And curling its toes,  
While the rhythms move and the blond girls are  
Blond,  
But Natalie was freckled, and she skipped across the  
Earth like a doe tattooed in the spring  
By her grandmother's final wishes, until her feet  
Finally touched down like a playground in  
Kindergarten  
At last kissing the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kissing Your Dirty Mouth

I give more words, like an overdose:  
We use shovels to raise the dead, cheap  
Eucharist. Mother is looking at me again,  
With those eyes like robin's eggs,  
The little fragile promises who get sick  
In the rain. I am doing it again, using  
Pronouns to try and make love to you,  
But it is so vague, and I have too many  
Scars to be in a reality show, but enjoy  
The insides of cars, well air-conditioned,  
The conduits flow, the bourgeoisie make  
Dinner dates, read stock markets quotes,  
Like rhyme schemes: I knew where you  
Would be, even when I stared across the  
Room at you in high school: you would  
Be this and that, and make a career from  
Kissing the necks of tawny men, when all  
I wanted was to swing with you in the park  
For sometime after midnight, underneath  
The roof of an elementary school, the colors  
Darken, and we have vaguely importance  
Things to disrupt the silence sporadically;  
But you turned into a novel by my fingerprints.  
Today I said your bosom was like the twin  
Mounds of Rome, but who will read this  
And pay money. I just heard my dog fart,  
And now it's time to tuck in, because my  
Bank is tanking, and I have to get up early  
Tomorrow to raise the dead, and take from  
Them the secrets of reawakened heirlooms;  
One of them has a hole in his ear from where  
The nail missed its mark, but I will put all  
Of them to good use, because grave robbing  
Is the one industry on the rise, and we do  
It by midnight, the time I think most upon  
Kissing your dirty mouth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kissing Your Tadpoles In Their Yet Awakened Amusements

I drink rum- I drink rum so  
I won't die tonight;  
And do you read me- do you read me  
As I drink rum:  
There are psalms in those mountains.  
And incredible storms like  
Entire clutches of rattlesnakes,  
Even when it's too high for poison:  
\Take your dress off,  
So I can smell your perfume:  
You are the best aphrodisiac-  
You are a real lady, wearing nothing, just  
Your conviction,  
And the psalms of some dusty angels  
Diadem your ear-lobes,  
World-renowned,  
I know you- I've heard you screaming in  
Your bedroom,  
Because I want to live across the street from  
You,  
Sometimes with your husband,  
And sometimes alone:  
My girl betrayed me: She was no good,  
Well, she was good,  
But for another man:  
And I need to a warm place to keep from being  
Alone,  
Because I am not beautiful enough to do it alone-  
Drunk now, who the f-\*! is PJ Harvey:  
I know who Carl Sagan is; Say, do you know who  
Carl Sagan is? Oops, I almost made a mess,  
Almost tipped over my soul:  
Say, do you know what I do for you- I mean,  
I sleep with my dogs, our four legged souls sniff and leap  
Together; and I am not Shakespeare,  
But I still don't want to die;  
I would like to cool like cooling glass on your window

Sill:

I would like to sit and lie there for you: Do you understand,  
Me and my four legged friends would  
Like to join your menagerie underneath the mountain:  
We would like to rest there underneath your  
Husband and child,  
Purple tongued, hobo-shoed wresting for a while,  
Like truants, like druids,  
If you would let us, to kiss your lips softly for awhile  
While he was away,  
And then, imbibing what we could,  
Loping on down through the forest, one eared,  
Without any paths any longer,  
With you long in our minds, because our tails or wagging  
This way:  
And you are famous and with child,  
And we will never forget you no matter where we go  
Snuffling along our pine-coned ways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kissing, Crimson Shore

Cream corn of foxes underneath the busy airplanes:  
This wasn't supposed to be how it would  
Develop—  
Unicorns and mermaids left to their own devices:  
I was supposed to sing to her in the middle of  
The busy avenues of the pretty wedding—  
But now it is too late—  
And I am still right here—  
Maybe it was because she had entered a fever from  
Our love making—our very busied love making—  
Like the sound a frog makes as he sings:  
Calling to her in the rain to come home—  
To come back again one last time to sit on her shoulders  
As the car drowns with all of the pretty windows  
Shut to the last door—  
Then won't she kiss me—kiss me, like a Ferris Wheel  
Bowing to the shore—while tomorrow—tomorrow—  
Won't there be more and more—  
Kissing, crimson avenues bowing to the kissing,  
Crimson shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kneeling At The Waterfountains

Can you not tell me which way the rain decided  
To go, after it had fallen:  
Which side of the slope it decided to take, and which of  
My muses did it decide to follow—  
Even while all of the lamplight has become shaded,  
And they wont be selling Christmas trees or  
Easter Eggs until tomorrow:  
But I love you in the morning of this casket:  
I kiss your legs and your eight year old breasts:  
And we both hold our breasts waiting for the sun to swim up  
Tomorrow—both of us knowing that it never will:  
There is it's cemetery: there is it's hill:  
And it will linger—and it will vanish: poems will have no  
Tongue for it—and it will disappear with the animals who have  
No care for the school yards—and the angels will fall  
Away from the paths of its memory—  
And then we will both hold hands together, waiting for  
The sports cars to emit their own pin wheeling holidays:  
Because surely they will, because up from them springs all of  
Our heavens—and here is the garden of what it means to us:  
Kneeling at the water fountains where we care to  
Say our Amens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Knighted By Her Cool Everything

Marriage of twins,  
Procession of venal stars:  
I tell you what- It can go on forever,  
The leaping vegetation of  
Cold freezers-  
The housewives always in stages of undress,  
Smelling like the day glow perfumes of  
Completely annual department stores;  
I don't know exactly where and when,  
But their life is the light jazz that they  
Don't even mind,  
And they always seem open to suggestions,  
And in need of a little help and encouragement,  
And a smiling look into their serene but  
Timid eyes;  
And I don't think a single one of them could be  
Named like -: She is too dark and wonderful  
Than any one of them I've seen,  
While they sleep and dream all together in houses  
Streaming and softly attributing to the  
The atmospheres swishing underpower-lines,  
You could strike out across unnamed hills  
And start such wonderful countries  
By -: That's a promise, not a lie:  
Why would I be lie when I am a good man,  
And all I need is for her to give me a good son,  
And we'd strike out right away  
And be the first father son team to leave this solar  
System anyway,  
With a girl of a wonderful country on our mind,  
We'd sleep all day in the indigo shadow of the broken  
Down school bus outside of art class  
While she breathed her dreams out of life into clay,  
And we wouldn't have to sweat the little things  
Anymore, the petty wives, the day glow thugs in  
Sun dresses,  
We wouldn't even hear them trying to decide anymore,  
Shadowed coolly as we were,  
Knighted by her cool everything.



Robert Rorabeck

# Knock On My Door This Morning

Alma,

I wanted to see your car parked down my one way street:

When you left this morning after tickling, I whistled

After you,

But then I felt so bad when you followed me out onto the road

In your car,

Because I have been followed by other girls like you not so long ago,

But not as beautiful as you are, Alma.

Back and forth from the sea, like the way I have been sleepwalking:

The waves park and kiss,

The astrologers reminisce, while this evening I watched the Mexican

Kids go off and play hide and seek:

Their world is as perfect as cats are pure: Stars hang from the sky of

Chicken wire

Like the tender hopes of Mariposas, and I never want to spend

Another day without you,

Alma:

You are so beautiful and so delightfully sincere:

Your eyes are even bigger than my sister's: I want you to cashier for me

In New Mexico,

So after midnight we can watch the celebrations smoking up through

The clouds,

Tarnishing the soft bellies and wing tips of the airplanes going their

Own way,

And I can put my arm over your shoulder and look into you eyes

So deep and untamed and brown as the desert you came across,

Pregnant and embarrassed with Michael to get on a bus

And get here,

And knock on my door this morning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Knocking At Their Door

Getting better—all lit up in the Cathedrals triaged against  
The high schools  
In a tragic garden of paper snowflakes:  
Truancies dripping off the cheeks of canals—  
Alligators sounding like the recordings of goodbyes and  
Good lucks of Jewish spinsters:  
And there they go, bending knees in their own habitats—  
What beautifully inoculated gardens where  
Sometimes airplanes roar—mouths filled with stewardesses,  
With nyloned legs crossing and crossing,  
So anxious with entire oceans to explore:  
And this their entire wonder lit up like an advertisement  
Upon a billboard—something they've tried so hard to  
Get to—mirrored and mirroring—  
Another night to get to the graveyards and canals of  
France:  
There they can last forever—as their children cook  
Their microwave dinner—simulacrum—  
Hyperboles—obvious and intention exaggeration—  
Their orifices wetted for fried chicken—  
The unintentional foxes with bags of roman candles  
Knocking at their door.

Robert Rorabeck

# Know About Love

In the daylight with the school around us—  
All of the exciting promises of the fair having left us:  
And the fair she kept in my heart  
Like a divine illusion is gone in following-  
But replacing her a truer muse from parts unseen,  
And even further unguessed:  
So that old muse, called up by the serpent's fangs  
Asking for friendship amidst the corn fields  
Will live her life over the canal from  
Me:  
We will never have to see each other again,  
And I will no longer have to cry over her for my  
Breakfast: I am married—I took a silver airplane over  
The avoided earth to find my wife—  
And we finally know about love, so what business do  
I have anymore with that muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# Know For Now

A day behind the curve of now:  
A rainbow waiting through the snow: words that slips  
Like sleeping minnows beside the prow:  
All the kings buried on the pyres that somehow sail  
Between the waves,  
Like the leaping apathy of a church full of show:  
Women silently undressing before a mutating crowd,  
Sparrows in orbit tempting the bow:  
I wish I was beautiful, but this is all of beautiful that  
I know for now.

Robert Rorabeck

# Know Thyself

New scars jig to the front of the line  
Like flamenco dancing:  
On good days I'm Sylvia Plath, hardcore,  
Yet to be distinguished by the mother-brain of  
Housewives pulsing in New York City....  
I sit and imagine her decked out in red and  
White plaid like a slender picnic table.  
Sometimes I eat watermelons I steal from peoples'  
Yards and abutments (I am not proud) . And then  
On bad-days storms, shadowy prominence.  
I wear a mask and suck in kiln-blown glass  
Like stars, and the cockleburs off dogs and dunes  
- I am Anne Sexton,  
Or Maggie Piecrust- My poetry works thirty percent  
Of the time, but I am not genius enough to sashay  
Into madness- The worst I can do is buy a house in  
Suburbia, a pool, two kids and a swing-set;  
To see Mickey Mouse from the jewel-green yard  
And wave to him over the road kill and  
Heavy trucks, but I might be entering a doctoral program  
Instead to read more Russian authors than Mark Twain:  
Then secretly at night I can put on for them,  
Plays with paper snowflakes, the gentleness of pantomimes:  
All the little girls and their ladies,  
Through the divine narcissism I worship while lesbians  
Belly-flop in the pool like golden fish,  
And I get to know myself.

Robert Rorabeck

# Knowing How To Swim

Higher up in the shadows that can hold no tears,  
Swimming with the animals  
Who have fled likeminded fires;  
And ended up in this birth of sanctuary,  
Now coyly fawning with different  
Species,  
And zephyrs- like a hidden spring people go to  
After they die,  
Or after their wife leaves them- to be kindled while  
Standing in one place,  
Or waving like the slenderest grass in the shallowest  
Sea, so that the sun  
Can touch them and paint down their sides,  
Like reasonless teardrops from angels who enjoy  
Knowing how to swim.

Robert Rorabeck

# Knowing That The Sun Finally Did

All day long the motherf\$ckers said  
The sun would shine,  
And I watched them swish their slick behinds;  
But the moon was an apple,  
The moon was a lime,  
And the city clunked and kept its sweet time:  
And the knights rode in,  
That's what they did,  
While she milked her babies, and she bled her  
Kids.  
And maybe, just maybe she loved me,  
Or that's what she said, or seem to say with  
The gist of her forlorn eyes  
And all the glory that they hid,  
While in my cap and gown I left with the  
Train tracks, and I hit the skids,  
Never ever quite knowing that the sun finally did.

Robert Rorabeck



# Knowing They Could Not Escape

Cathedral in a sea of lights—search beams for something  
Already there—  
It seems they have found this in their hands—  
Mad in love, headed home in their car,  
Touching brown to copper skin  
Underneath the wires hanging of the same color  
In the arboretum,  
A castanet over the shells of the neighborhood—  
They stretched and laid  
And sweated—spilling into one another's estuaries  
Like trout pearling into the higher dimness—  
Until they were forgotten by the entire world  
And, resting,  
Were gladdened, knowing they could not escape.

Robert Rorabeck

# Known To Man

Sick and overdosed from the new day light:  
I think I've seen this day before,  
Or I'm sure I've heard its traffics,  
And its mother on the phone,  
But it is not Mexico, it is not home.  
The Christmas trees are very hot,  
According to Pedro,  
But Disney World is just up the road,  
The bitter sweet tolls of old girlfriends,  
And their enemies,  
While all the ancient, oh so ancient  
Wild life now sits intelligently disregarding  
The ochre streaks of dark fairytales,  
And they pray for lightning in the cloudless  
Day,  
And yes it comes right down from the patios  
Of ageless giants who have no weaknesses  
Known to man.

Robert Rorabeck

# Kuiper Belt Blues

High kicking pantomime-  
Haven't you yet married your used car salesmen-  
They dysfunctional pain in the gut  
OF the comely Bible Belt-  
I'll never sell a novel, I'll just melt  
Down in the center of crowds of screaming girls-  
I'll dissolve right into the escaping center of their  
Expansive world:  
And Pluto isn't even a planet, because it revolved with  
Other things of ice- but Charon is his slender friend  
And isn't.... isn't that nice:  
My brother already has a job- My sister polished off  
His knob,  
Because she's a good girl, and puts the holy spell  
On four legged animals: Oh hell;  
It feels good to feel just a little hung over,  
After strange things happen on the autumn equinox  
And I'm doing pretty good for a boy who can't  
Even spell,  
Even as all the pretty birds are disappearing-  
I think I'll follow them and pick up the jewels they leave.  
I doubt they even think to feel how steeped they've  
Made my pockets;  
The mermaid is wading sideways through the sloughs;  
I think she's done bathing and beating oysters on her chest-  
I think she's finally watching me, hypnotized through the post-  
Modern midday rush,  
And I seem to recall, half-heartedly- that is a beautiful thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# La De Da

How many times should I start new lines,  
While thinking of your eyes, or that your gaze is all  
I see looking at my words. I smirk to think that I can spell  
Well enough to make your breasts hard, to apply  
Posthumous valentines day kisses to your lips from these  
Buzz bombing airplanes, these tap-dancing digit-fritters:  
Oh Lord, I don't know what I do, except that I do it often  
From my neon sarcophagus I take requests. I don't say anything  
But I line them up and shoot them down, and then all night  
With the ghosts of my friends we play video-games in the  
Lulls of the tide. We don't know why George Washington crossed  
The Delaware except to get to the other side, and I guess he did-  
He was probably trying to get to you- These words are a highway  
Of the same thing. They are meaningless without you, but they  
Have no script, anyways- The stay open twenty for hours  
Waiting for you to step in and undress and lay down beside them  
And carry on like passionate monsoons of smooches even though  
High school is over, but it lingers: It lingers like the oil-slicks  
Of a latchkey daycare, and I don't know the words to the song  
On your lips, so I'll hum it:  
La de da.

Robert Rorabeck

# Laces To String

I wouldn't have painted my room—  
I wouldn't have gone to China without you—  
Now,  
Some bird is singing against the bell—  
Can't you hear,  
It is time to go to school—  
Time in its metamorphosis of truancy,  
And you are still hear—  
Lasting,  
Echoes of your steps—like the places where  
Raindrops fell and kisses touched—  
Dimples in a shell—  
Wall-less windows where the sunlight tugs—  
And airplanes carry stewardesses  
Like marionettes without any strings—  
But places to go—  
And laces to string.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lack

All the quiet people move  
In ways like weathered trees,  
Or stricken, ant-conquered birds-  
Like sleeping cats they move,  
Just glinting from the hollows and basins  
Which have long since been pummeled by  
Unorganized comets and cooled,  
And the world folds over them like  
Finished greening pages

And the hands finally lay off of them  
And resign to other work.

I stood watching my lover cast out  
Over the perfect lake,  
But I turned and awoke before  
She might see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ladies\$ In Waiting

Beginning to grow beautiful-  
Metamorphosed by my letters and drinking  
Habits,  
Getting to be frenetic and daubed,  
Masked by the penumbras of a stranger:  
My face uniformly mottled like an ancient,  
Though subversive book of forgotten fiction,  
Or the next pseudoscientific hike of impossible mountains-  
My real scars now are hidden by my jean jacket:  
The hollow between my ribs hurts like sore  
Teeth, pulled out from where they took her,  
Like a restless, stolen flower;  
And now here on the mountain it is raining,  
And upstairs the simulacrum is drawing and singing  
The few things its French inventor gave it unique copper gears  
To draw and sing;  
And I have hidden on my person the lichen and pyrotechnics  
For the capital of a new bride; and so I sing to her  
From my body's convertible wounds- I fill it with my vociferous  
Ululations, and the truanities stolen and hidden from  
School buses;  
And from my backyard, though it be endless, I encourage  
The hooped zebras to bend down in the mowed grasses and  
Kiss the hyenas even though they are breathless from taunting;  
And behind this the virgins are getting naked across the  
Canal, and now they are dousing and laying amidst the holy's  
Crinoline,  
Just as similar to the eclipsing blindness of a scene;  
and they are shivering in their rainy, crippled  
Bedrooms, uncrossed with letters awaiting, to be broken  
Beneath the waxen seals, like the lips of a queen or one  
Of her hyperventilating ladies in waiting.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck



# Lake Tahoe

Sorrow is the next word in the bouquet-  
Heart wounded without  
Reason in the streets of the mortal ling  
Grey:  
Then you saw us as the exhibit  
On the granite of the stone,  
Like the dog starving through the weathercock  
To fetch  
Himself the bone:  
And abounding, thunderheads perpetuating the  
Thirst of windmills all across  
The unmentionable crop:  
It is how we happen here, faceless looking  
Down into the indescribability of  
Lake Tahoe,  
Hoping that our clock will stop- but it doesn't  
And the crow sings  
(how can she do that) - how can she  
Describe the unmentionable to the already mentioned  
Kings?

Robert Rorabeck

# Lakes The Size Of Minnows

Growing where we fall  
Beside the glacier, beside the waterfall:  
Beautiful foundlings outside of  
The ballrooms-  
Near the summit, where I guess we have to look  
Up at the stars, disgusted:  
Above tree-line- our dumb luck:  
We can never grow here-  
The witches and angels will browbeat us they  
Come around in their games:  
We will turn to midgets, stunted beside the  
Glacial lakes the size of minnows:  
And the girls we want to love we will not  
Even see- and they will have  
Children without us:  
And you will never think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lamenting Over Their Fireworks

There will be a sorrow against the house  
As you go back to the shells of  
Your road,  
Barefooted like pornography for the rattlesnakes  
Down the lonesome road of  
Your childhood,  
Just as your marriage did: and I remember my  
Mother almost drowning here—  
But she was saved—  
Just as last Christmas I was married and saved—  
It didn't hurt that I still had arrows in  
My throat and no other way out—  
And my bicycle waits for me down at the edge  
Of the verdant canal that some anonymous man  
Has mowed again for all of the housewives—  
And the otter I have seen before is outdoors  
Again, never tasting the lips of the sea—  
And the doors of the school are open again,  
But they are not kissing me,  
As I am vanishing—  
And all of the nameless waves, like cathedrals of  
Nameless tears,  
Lamenting over their fireworks—  
Collecting over the imaginary orchards that do  
Not have to pretend to grow anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lampshade

It is not worth anything anymore:  
What I barter for your patience,  
To maybe get a whiff of your skirts before  
You go home and begin to prepare a fine dinner-

When I used to drive you to the hospital for  
Your inherited schizophrenias- How I used to leave  
You in the middle of your casual emergencies,  
Knowing that you were on birth control, and made  
Out of the dead parts of the strongest of your species:

Yes, I used to jog around the neighborhood for her;  
I used to speak my poems nearer the Catholic censers of  
Her swing sets: yes, I used to perform by that moonlit crush  
For her,  
But you'd just remove the thermometer and laugh,  
Uproariously, knowing I was destined for the boyish  
Gutter, because I couldn't even spell-

That college is over and scribbled in the chapters of  
My broadsides,  
The scars of my apoplexy and liver diseases-  
Never really published, not anymore, but casually stolen  
By the bicycle thieves whooping at some rich midnight;

And I can't even spell (I'll admit that) :  
This is what I do instead: I lick cheap rum from my drowsing  
Fingertips as if they were her nipples,  
While I imagine her giving hickies to some blue-anchored biceps of  
Some ball-playing bouncer:  
I check the encyclopedia, I check the thesaurus,  
And I burn bouquets for most romantic holidays:  
I don't know any other words for it,

But that same university is still made all out of red bricks  
And yesterdays- and you are not even there anymore,  
Not even in echoes; and you don't even know that I  
Still write these poems anymore:  
You've got something else on your lips,

While she is still serving the boys coming in through  
Her doors, kissing them softly after midnight,  
But I don't go there anymore, but still  
I have no other words for it:

It was I who had the greater fever,  
And you were no medicine for it.

Robert Rorabeck

## Lancelot's Vertebrae

See the place and time of Lancelot's vertebrae  
Stand out like a neon sign for  
The eyes of women:  
Cenotaph in the shape of a phallus, stone angel  
Without wings,  
Serpentine gallant, a pagan creche amidst the  
Ferns of his anonymous burial plot-  
Fallen aphrodisiac blessed by  
The insincerity of its wizards-  
There it lies for the elves in its Paleolithic  
Forest: see it sunken underground in the  
Immortal caves,  
Spumed from its mother of coitus-  
An esoteric talisman far greater than Arthur's  
Excalibur- waiting for the awakening shadows  
Of a falling society to awaken it-  
To grow anew its anarchic body  
Writhing with the pagan lovers crowned  
In the underworld's stalactite monoliths,  
Lactating with lurid translucence around its  
Dieses of photo luminescent bone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Landing In The Sea

I am the one teaching these kids through  
The afternoons as the airplanes fly away—  
It is not an easy song they are singing,  
As they go around anywhere because  
There is no place to land in the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Languishing In The Sun

Traffic passing over my head- rushing angels,  
And I am homeless:  
In my cathedral, tomorrow, there will be a flea market:  
Can you not remember my name-  
Crazy distillations as she takes off her brazier-  
Maybe she is your mother-  
Maybe she will take you a long way from here-  
Even through the tadpoles' metamorphosis-  
Even through the echoes of the banshee's high school-  
Long and silently haunted tenements  
Looking down-  
And down- a cradle down there in the river so far  
Away- a child without a mother- languishing in  
The sun.

Robert Rorabeck



# Last Days Of A Great Muse

I can hear the highway—the engines of airplanes,  
But not the arc:  
I cannot hear the sea, nor hear the beating of  
Your heart:  
Fallen away from me, back into your grotto:  
You are not a house wife, but what  
Tragedy:  
I would have you bare me like a fruit,  
But you have not the basket for me—your husband  
Is more equal to you—  
Your young children run around you,  
Hearts beating like Indians in a game—  
My ancestors defeated you and took all of your  
Lands—and made this country,  
But I've given you fireworks, and you've  
Defeated me anyways

Robert Rorabeck

# Last Forever But Not As Long

I have been so long at play  
Maybe that makes me a thing of gray:  
While your lips are so vibrant  
As they sing to your child;  
As the ships roll in and the houses gambol:  
The fairy tales have flesh:  
They are very real, and they last forever,  
Just as crocodiles last forever,  
And they don't cry,  
Just as crocodiles don't cry;  
And it makes me weep that I had to move to Miami today,  
And you called your man into the fruit market  
To open up your  
Car- Alma;  
And it makes me weep that I am not your only song, or that  
When I am gone,  
Maybe it will be that my bones will be so far displaced from your bones,  
The blue prints of the body of your carriage;  
And it makes me weep that we have to be so frightened  
While the sun flips through the pages of  
Our days,  
Laughing and crying  
While the crocodiles, you know, last forever but not as long  
And not even smiling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Last Night

Water whispers like going to the bath:  
It makes its runs through the old steady pipes,  
Laid out through the fair skin of the  
Earth,  
Reticulated from porcelain wash basins for  
Muses, going down to the sea of never mind,  
Or I don't care wherever it goes;  
And it's early morning and I can still remember going  
To college,  
Making my rounds through the mists while my  
Girlfriend was sleeping,  
Delivering, delivering while keys jingled sleepily inside  
Of doors,  
And mother's weeping for their newly turned whores.  
The rest of the world was upside down,  
Hanging from the rafters of blatherskites; and I just  
Woke up to the frozen morning decades later,  
But I didn't think of you last night.

Robert Rorabeck

# Last Of The Conquistadors

A coyote yips somewhere close.  
I pause the movie to listen,  
And step outside and masturbate.  
The new stallion is penned next  
To my glass door. Unsettled,  
The beast screams and tries to escape  
Nearer the females' scent.  
Startled for a moment, my eyes focus on  
The small points of light above me,  
A beautiful map I cannot read.  
Before I finish one of them falls.  
I feel alive, but soon  
I will die as distant obsessions surfs  
The beaches of Saint Augustine, trapped  
In beauty, gated by men, and the empty  
Echoing of high school where her mind  
Roams forgotten. She is an addict  
With metallic bouquets in her forearms.  
I think of her, that warm continuation  
Like floral wallpaper at the right  
Moment feels alive and saintly next to  
The porcelain basins. She still serves drinks  
And I pretend to be a Catholic walking drunkenly  
Through the emptiness of the University  
I once attended, trying to find her, yet  
Only seeing her twice far down the halls  
Many years ago  
As my mind becomes disinfected from  
The weight of bones and takes off  
Through the dropping palm fronds which  
shade the stone benches of resting students  
somewhere in the center of Florida, where a hart  
Stumbles blindly upon four legs before  
Kneeling in an unknown space before  
The last of the conquistadors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Last Thoughts Of A Dream

I wake up breathing the last  
Thoughts of a dream,  
Like leaving an aspen forest in  
The nape of a mountain,  
Where I saw glimpses of your  
Gypsy eyes through the bowers  
Of golden branches, as if you were  
The strange and eager sunlight in  
My head, turning about beneath my eyes,  
Not knowing how you were attracted  
Only that you came with the natural desire,  
One of the laws of nature;  
You came like the tide orchestrated  
By the sterling satellite.  
In your opaque gown of evening,  
You shifted like the nervous continents  
Of earth,  
Your eyes fell on me like nectared fruit  
From the limbs of an apple tree  
Awakening the scientist—  
And you did not know you had come.  
Awakening, it was as if you had never dreamed,  
And you had never been the light in my woods,  
But I saw you there, undressing in sleep,  
Swimming naked in whispering pools,  
Daydreaming naked in yellow motes  
In green beds lied out between the trees;  
So, even if you forget and tonight you  
Fold yourself up like a classified letter,  
I know that you will come to my subconscious,  
As waves die into the shore,  
As moths burn like paper in the kerosene's flames,  
I will see your eyes through the golden leaves  
Of aspen trees tonight,  
As we shall dream....

Robert Rorabeck

# Late Bloomers

Late bloomers are on the window treatments;  
They are all about the sad long  
Movements;  
And they are nonsense:  
And I don't know which intonation you would  
Like best,  
And I am trapped in the boy's bathroom to weary  
To come to class;  
And wouldn't it be nice if it started to rain,  
The grass was freshly mowed, and they canceled  
Physical education,  
And made room for us to French Kiss out in the  
Empty courts without a racket,  
Like concrete theatres  
Waiting to be filled up at the edge of abyss:  
Down to home-grown easements  
Irrigated by canals and imported reptiles, with purple  
Eyes and purple smiles,  
And housewives so careful about their legs all steaming  
Upward trapped in their kitchens:  
The crenulated pools bleached of childhood echoes;  
And later on the great processions of school buses,  
Moving into the tardy afternoons,  
And us latchkeyed onto a green rug where we fold  
Paper airplanes, and  
Arrange cowboys and Indians; and pretend my sisters  
Aren't really there watching us sleepy-eyed making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Late-Night Tv

Color me green and we will  
Play  
On the back of a match-stick  
Pony.

I'll hold your hand  
As you read Ayn Rand  
In a lightning storm  
Lounging in the ash of Pompeii.

Kneeling low,  
I'll receive the  
Bright-hoofed blow,  
But will remain conscious  
Long enough  
To ask you to marry.

You'll answer yes  
Because it is best when  
You can agree.

Then we'll recline in the  
Sea;  
You'll answer to me  
As we watch the Roman  
Navy invading Bali  
Like a show on late-night TV.

Robert Rorabeck

# Latest Season Of Your Paramour

The clock is ticking on the wall  
no one can hear the single words  
that are falling outside  
your open window  
snow covers up for murder,  
the transgressions of  
door to door lovers  
who can not know the name  
of this conscious  
golden manacles around your  
wrists,  
you lay in the downy bed  
and wait for him  
the latest season of  
your paramour  
the armored peacock  
of several colors  
the precisions of nature  
fawning in the bedroom's  
albino cage;  
outside the sun will be  
blinding himself  
in the snow's basin,  
though inside you continue  
unblinking,  
your otherwise rosy lips  
chapped and licked  
by the blizzard leaping  
in the open window  
the latest season of  
your paramour.

Robert Rorabeck



# Laughing And Playing Games

He will come home to you—oh glorious bodies  
Absent minded into a church—  
But tomorrow he will not buy you ice-cream—  
You will have to awaken next to him in the morning and  
Make that kind of joy that passes for love.  
While in two weeks, my very own wife, will fly home  
To me tomorrow—Now I want to promise you I  
That I have not bought her a new bed;  
It is a lude thing, but I will make love to her again and  
Again until in the bed we once shifted our tongues,  
And you once sucked my phallus  
And he is coming, and you can say to him:  
&quot;Oh we have children, and we will live upon this  
Forgotten peninsula for what amounts to the  
Next half a decade while the scientists have to give  
Up wonder if there is live on Europa or  
Ganymede or Mars—until the silent unicorns come  
Home or anywhere—until it is their joy we have to  
Impregnate and their wishing wells become the songs I  
Do not know about,  
Laughing and playing games forever because they  
Are absolutely sure that they never have to end.

Robert Rorabeck

# Laughing At Home

Laughing at the monuments—what does it mean to be  
Here—in the afternoon,  
Sweating as my wife lactates over another child  
With nothing ever sold:  
Muse up in Ocala with the horses—where she deserts herself,  
Thinking of her children and prom queens  
And race horses—  
And ways to get off the low swings:  
I know I will give up all that I have for the girl that I love:  
Forgetting about the places that are between us:  
Giving up everything for nothing,  
Except she cannot unhinge from her spouse: her fate:  
She will have other children—  
As the hallways will fill up tomorrow—and she will go  
Home laughing,  
And echo over the monuments  
With nothing else to live for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lavender Apairy Of Your Honey Eyes

Are you in love with him,  
The man you sleep with, with your flag around:  
There in the pools of what joy your family has given  
To you, Alma- You called him down  
From Orlando, doing your good around you,  
Brown body driving cars-  
Gas of your toys, well I am here too,  
Underneath the cattle call of airplanes and all of  
Their slick venues: I have been selling fireworks  
Trying to impress you- Well, take me out to  
The firing squad so I can bask one last time  
Underneath the saturated ecstasy- the brown and  
Lavender apiary of your honey eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leading Nowhere

Lights as if in a naked carnival:  
Taken down from the sky, rivers laughing or falling in love:  
Or dying-  
The racing of unending beasts that know the hearts and  
Bosoms of  
Airplanes, and creatures that never really did exist:  
Maybe as they get down low,  
Beneath the ululations of the cars:  
Down beneath the happy grooms, and the fourth turns of  
Winning numbers:  
At the level of the snake's parade, the cenotaph's belly:  
They find the meaning of the lucky rabbit killed outside  
By the nighttime in the rock garden,  
When they were not there- and my mother was casting  
A spell of loneliness in the carport- and it rained  
Across the world,  
As there was no light sliding down the soft ribs of the road  
That she had stolen away from me,  
The angels laughing across the canal, but their happiness  
Leading nowhere.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaping Aero Planes

Headdress of reindeer up in the pullulating  
Lambs,  
As we've been born in the morning from  
Another hospital  
While the parks spring like  
The wetted wounds of unwedded kisses-  
As the rattlesnakes sleep:  
As the sharks sleep,  
Underneath the curtains and blinds of adultery,  
As another séance goes through the class,  
Until the children spill out like roe  
From the uvulas-  
And the zoetrope spins: a Ferris wheel if the  
Mirage of my heart in the desert,  
While the poisonous snakes kiss another  
Thing,  
And the classes continue forever underneath  
The mirages of the forever leaping aero planes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaping Blurs

I'll be dead  
Before I'm handsome

Before my parents know,  
The sea will believe me,

Some girl in Oregon  
Used to have a crush on me,

Now shore makes love  
To wings and wind,

In the classrooms of summer school,  
I waited for the teacher to call on me,

And when the jokes went outside  
To smoke, I sat where I was and wondered

If she might turn to me and  
We could laugh over Romeo and Juliet,

The girl who is married with a polished  
Named, a child,

Who I do not know, perhaps she  
Lives in Loxahatchee, on an alphabetical road,

And works at the cake factories,  
And makes love while drinking the nameless absence

The people and places who come and go,  
Lining the highways like leaping blurs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaping Bon Fires And Ferris Wheels

Steady action in the racehorses- in the broken  
Jaws of teenagers,  
Or in the words I don't know, as the airplanes fly  
Passing by the zoetrope  
Of foxes leaping underneath her kitchens:  
The alligators seem to be lying all of the time,  
Underneath the moon who is  
Winnowing the waves like an orchard of zygotes  
And the windmills are  
Dazzling  
Across the slopes of the aurora borealis-  
Like kaleidoscopes straining their necks like chickens  
To see her from the window  
Where I've been presupposing that she's  
Been dancing:  
This fetish- this allegory lost in the working class  
Wilderness across the train tracks:  
There she is, and I love her, and my heart is her playground  
Of leaping bonfires and Ferris Wheels,  
And she laughs in the weighted midway, enjoying all of  
Those things she's so easily stolen from me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaping Through Rings Of Fire

I feel as if the temples lead to nowhere,  
Even if the despondent kings are looking up those  
Stone tits over the hills and estuaries of another bloodthirsty  
Forest,  
And I have cut my toes bloody across all of the cleft palates of  
The rusting though once over eager cars,  
Now all up on cinder blocks and cypress knees,  
Being smelled upon by the blooming armpits  
Of air plants,  
While their pornographies steep and mold and never find away  
To dissolve themselves,  
And down into the headgear of thoroughly evaporated conquistadors,  
Quilled by the extinct Indians that their luckier cousins  
Did in:  
And there in the long stretch of sand dunes where the Australian  
Pines go liling like uneasy strangers,  
The exegesis of sand lions finally finds them out, and they  
Clean their homes quite exaggerated,  
But without the need for housewives or the tamed urges  
For to go leaping through rings of fire.

Robert Rorabeck



# Leaping Through The Snow

Words are liars and they steal from the moon:  
Words are worms trying to escape from  
Her succulent womb  
In the pink willow tree like a bat in a lee,  
Like blood in a bloom:  
They are the habitual liars of my false immortality;  
And now that I am so very far away,  
And spilled my green beer all over the floor  
Of the RV,  
And Pedro is laughing at me:  
And I am scarred and lost and can't watch TV-  
I just want my dogs, my loving kind dogs:  
Oh, how I've betrayed them when all I really  
Want to do is give up everything and  
Trip with them to Colorado:  
But the words are no good: they are always failing me-  
I try to find words to describe my love,  
But she just turns away, and doesn't grieve- Too  
Beautiful to be described by these pitiful syllables,  
But how I remember her,  
How I made her from my words, the slick shadows of her  
Siamese sister I suppose she never guessed I had  
Fashioned of her,  
As if from an assembly line of careless fears,  
While my dogs never spoke a thing; and I think it would  
Be much better to just run and run  
With them, purple tongues lulling, and try to fetch her  
In that feral way,  
Heartbroken but pure  
And leaping through the snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaping Through Their Usual Skies

Airplanes take off like  
Medians of rain slicked light,  
And you don't have to deny it anymore,  
Because it has already become,  
This usual labyrinth of cheap inebriation  
And days off, and children.  
Looking so good next to the swimming pool  
Of crenulated seems,  
You could be anyone- you could be your  
Sister,  
As the alligators fawn into insouciant dreams,  
And good Catholics go to church,  
Continuing the axes of latitude and longitude  
Of the first conquistadors who  
Brought them here;  
And I should be in school,  
Learning better words, scribbling on the makeup  
That is supposed to make me beautiful,  
But instead I am underneath some shade somewhere,  
Down by the encrusted mall of cemeteries,  
Having my licks of boos:  
I don't even know if you are real anymore,  
But you are real enough, I suppose, and I hang your  
Dun limbs out on my tongue to dry,  
As the usual airplanes go leaping through their  
Usual skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Learning How To Fly

Down at the high planes of nothing-  
Well, at least we are starting somewhere, as the river  
Sings and claps  
And wets the hungry mouths of blue birds,  
Meaning something special down in the fairyland canyons  
Where my father gets lost  
And becomes a new man- learns of dreams of wild horses,  
And loses all of his money but not his lovely  
Rose colored wife:  
My mother, who entertained me with blue whales,  
And ran with me to see the edge of the canals  
Where the tadpoles and minnows  
Were fishing for themselves, and the cats played and taught  
Their purring, fire-like young to dance  
In the shallows that they were too young to fear:  
The sky an untouchable brilliance where the women who  
Were yet to become my loves were still learning how to fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leave Me Behind

Mailboxes are resting like pegs in  
A game,  
Their tongues undone or bundled up,  
Stolen copper painted red,  
And I cant wait to get back home again,  
Into your streets, down your rows  
Where old friends are jubilantly popping  
Up like cherished spikenard in the  
Armpits of air-plants;  
And there is the little swingset where we  
Used to suppose,  
While even then I thought of my better muses,  
Women who could run on all fours  
And never stopped to take a breath or hand out  
For lunch,  
Who could suckle two to four young against  
Their chest all the time keeping at a steady gallop,  
Girls who grew taller on rainy days,  
And disappeared with the blanketing patina  
Of light bulbs of  
Drunken carnivals:  
I don't know where exactly those ones have gone,  
But they're the real reason why I've come back  
To our old stomping grounds-  
Not to look you up or to take you out to eat,  
But to smell them out again,  
Their perfumes like sinful filigree, strung out and  
Dragged through the clouds,  
Their scents spilling demurely leaving such an  
Exotic trail from where they didn't even think  
To leave me behind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaving Behind

Emptied by my occupations, as by your thoughts:  
This is how I dream out wounded on the perfect field,  
Like the yellowest of birds with a broken wing,  
Fallen from the roof of your house, fallen past the gold fish:  
The little silken cadavers of your purses, and your cat;  
And maybe I have dreamed of girls in Colorado,  
Or girls just taking off, but I have always thought of them alone  
In a tincan house upon which it is always raining-  
And last night the thunder hit so hard that it made the world rattle;  
And I couldn't breathe because I knew you were taking refuge with  
Your man;  
And my place is a sunken place, like a bowl underneath a rock  
Where the rains come gently, muffling, suffocating too the modern  
Wonders that you are always leaving behind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaving His Country

Scars and you are there- gods of apple trees  
And dulled spears:  
I call for you, and you call for me,  
And come home to watch your youngest sister's  
Communion  
Down the cataracts of the fort:  
Down where there used to be conquistadors  
And grizzly bears  
Getting scarred and getting dizzy- where there  
Used to be bags of fireworks-  
Pilfering, and now the airplanes fly, jump,  
And leap-  
In that order so they can brag- their bellies filled  
With silver,  
Cheating death- leaving his country,  
Only to land in the conventions dying in other  
Similar worlds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Leaving The Sky

Up in the wounds of tall trees, sent up like embers  
From her kicking feet: she is dancing atop the  
Spines of  
Rattlesnakes and pinecones- making love to something  
Bigger in the woods:  
Mexicans are laughing in the next room to  
Their dead brothers;  
And all of the forest burns with whistling tongues stretching  
Out across a green fairgrounds where the bears  
Lay sleeping with butterflies upon the like jewelry,  
And airplanes like angels leaving the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Left Foot Blue

Pals in opposing sexes  
When in agreement  
Slap lips  
Tongue twist  
I've seen mommy and  
Daddy doing this

If I fed it a quarter,  
Would you come alive  
And give me  
Your tongue  
Through the bars  
At the zoo?

Robert Rorabeck



# Legion

There are serpents in these trees  
Who wear laceless shoes and legless appetites;  
And swear that they know the question to  
The answer of popular game shows;  
How they rustle and slither so, and coil like  
Reckless fathers around the trunks of our Christmas  
Trees, even while the naked bodies of soup kitchens  
Press together once they close: One is busty,  
And the other well-hung, and they cling together  
Tongue-ily, and well endowed, and I swear I wish  
To know nothing more about them,  
But leap the way the mule-train goes carrying off the  
Gold in gunny-sacks, and the spices and the meat;  
They are taking us all up to the vermilion clouds  
Herded together like rumbling swine on the verge of  
Some damned precipice: I will join them in my time,  
Because I have been cast from in between them;  
And I will pound the tent-stakes surely into the ground,  
Even though I have no body or worth, nor do I notice  
Yet how the cops patrol me, caroling in two colors,  
Asking for 25% off- They will get their due, or I will not  
Sing, up here in the sky, with the nimbus, and the Furies  
Whistling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Less Than A Memory Of A Shineless Beacon

All of the stellar hubbub passes above us  
At work,  
Ephemeral necklace,  
Heavenly spokes over our grinding shoulders,  
Eyes chalice to the ground,  
Expecting the motions  
Pre-ordained—  
We have stopped waiting for the miracle  
Of recreation.  
Placed into a fit of numbers,  
Our days given to a society of succubi  
And we linger,  
Souls of the prune  
While the heavens go floating- jobless-ether—  
The tits of the mountains blacken  
And shrink into speculation,  
School children like ants through the passing  
Days—  
Latchkeys into the vulpine caves  
Of the woebegone canyons-  
And the blind goddess in the shrinking stars  
Is less than the memory of a shineless beacon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Less Than These Things

Days in long shadows rejoice,  
You have dressed yourself anew in long shadows;  
Every morning the same trees grow like colorful bones,  
Like bad children,  
But by the same measure of eye-sight the shadows grow too,  
And then shrivel:  
Each day a new dress of coldness under the bodies,  
Elongating our sad truancies and yours:  
And there they are the shapes without bodies, the dresses  
Of churchyards and graveyards,  
Who have nothing of their own, and are gone before morning,  
But new ones will grow alarmingly quick by the time your  
Old nose sniffs this world again:  
They will pop up like disembodied orchards and kindergarten  
Satellites under the orbs of justice;  
They will have whatever they can manage to steal, though  
They want for nothing;  
And the bodies pass over them just as plum as can be,  
Never once pondering that soon even they too will be less than  
These things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Let Forever Begin Tonight

The finishing lines rely on ejaculation;  
And I was hoping not to have to rely on your name,  
-,  
But now I am pregnant, and looking at property near  
You-  
Maybe I will come by you in five years after you  
Have cut your teeth on the emerging pulp fiction of  
The men guarding your tomb with fast weapons,  
But otherwise, I hope you don't mind if I move nearby  
You singing my rummy tunes, maybe even spending  
Afternoons with you while my ears are burning  
From rumors, but otherwise your wines might be too  
Expensive,  
And how many daughters might you have by then,  
I don't even know, but I love by you, - -,  
As even now I'm half asleep in my basement meadows,  
And I don't even mind that I use your name,  
That I could be challenged by more propitious knights-  
I am done with school, but not the darker knights-  
If I had followed you more closely for so many more years,  
I might be closer to you, but now I must apologize for the  
Fumes of my classes, that I might move nearer to you by so many  
Years, but it would just be to stick my nose in the bouquet of  
Your wines, to give you the moneys that you so well deserve,  
To help support your industrious husband and all your  
Children by him I can't even suppose: this is my late- night  
Graveyard by you- I haven't yet hiked in the elf horn range  
And my cheap liquor helps me repose and say that I love  
You by the spells of inexpensive liquor,  
Correcting my changes to where you live now-  
And I love my darling, misspelling in my plagiarisms  
In the playground of this dark listen: I love you forever,  
And let forever begin tonight.

Robert Rorabeck

# Let Her Know

The city dissolves; the planes are played out; and I want to develop  
A potbelly for Thanksgiving:  
There are so many questions which I still need to ask Alma;  
And I already love her children: Her children who are so carefree that  
They can still smell the ghosts in their bedrooms,  
And the rain comes like far away mothers, both soothing and frightening  
Them;  
And I hope to god that I never have to be with a white woman again,  
Those petty whores try to claw their fingernails up the detritus of  
A professional world:  
I hope to a god I'll never believe in to have Alma; and after all of this  
Liquor wears off I'll have to stare at my face alone again;  
And I know that I will be selling fireworks and sleeping in celibate hotels  
Save for Alma;  
Alma in a week, or Alma right now, but certainly all my dogs will love  
Me, even though I have done them tremendous harm;  
And it is a good thing that I am not driving a car right now, and that there  
Isn't a mirror present:  
I have a house waiting for me point two miles from the intercostals and  
At the end of my month it will be mine and filled with my liquor as with my  
Dreams;  
As my mother comes in through the fiberglass door and says that it is  
Really windy out there, but I am about to set out anyways;  
Because Alma is very beautiful, and I am very eager to go ahead and let  
Her know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Let Me Have Stars

I write fairly often about the stars,  
And other places I will never go, because it  
Sounds beautiful to my ear,  
The way a mountain lion mews like a newborn  
Child, its distempering drool,  
The naked mastication out in the early morning  
Glade, the conclusion to a crisp novel-  
And the panacea for my lonely scars, the evidence  
Of cardinal sins drawing me away in a high mountain  
Bedroom to read my books,  
To say my little things to an open room-  
That I should have never gone to college and so become  
An uneasy murderer who, fumbling cuts off first his  
Foot and then his toe; or to say now, the decapitations of  
Soldiers line the pages sent back from the protozoan  
Attempts of publication in France, like the spurious flumes of sex:  
They sing this will not do, young man, this will  
Not do, but you are looking more beautiful than you've  
Ever been, which is still rather complicated. I could be  
Thirteen or thirty, and there would still be too many ex-girlfriends  
And grandmothers- This I know, and I could volunteer  
All day for it, going around and around in a red fire-engine hosing  
Things off, saving cats; but what would they have to say for  
Me by the end of it, but a little plot, and a little stone:  
Instead, let me sell flowers, to put baby's breath to her bosom-  
Instead, let me have stars, the distant bodies who have already  
Died- Who seem to look down upon me, but have already turned  
Away and gone into their lover's bedroom- So far away,  
I could never know them, but to attempt to kiss their burry lips  
Is an attempt to prove the art; Childless, I will climb up on the  
Roof and count them and fold dollars bills along the horizon,  
And slip them between their garters of dusk and twilight, and  
Say here is another thing I can never touch  
But is real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Let Me Hold You Dear To Me

If I had a better vocabulary,  
I could call you in by a special whistle,  
By a single word undress you with the meaning  
Only you would know:  
But there is only this, half hazard lines like  
A crumbly paper-airline shot from the diabetic fingertips  
Over a roaring forest-fire where  
Everything dies;  
But in the spring, flowers: more and more flowers  
At your doorstep,  
And bottles espoused from the sea; if you want to  
Pretend to be a mermaid.  
Anything you want, I swear-  
I could learn to write better things for you,  
Learn the names of whole gardens worth of flowers,  
And grow old in our secret diseases.  
We could pick up Victorian afflictions. I could run  
My fingers down your chalky bodice. Heck, I can think of a million  
Things to do to you more brilliant than any page ever written  
From a man to his lover,  
If you only give me a second to suck this paper cut,  
Which reminds me of breastfeeding,  
And to visit the grave of a dead poet in Bellefontaine;  
I am digging her up, because she has whispered something to  
Me I promised never to tell,  
But I will give it to you if you close your eyes and let  
Me hold you dear to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Let Me Show You

Do you make love in familiar rooms,  
On the backs of tug boats, cusped in smoky flume?

Your beauty is so easy to love, you are like a ride.  
Selective in your romances, you still turn around hard as  
You approach your zenith, give resolution to gravity-

I couldn't say how it is done. I have never been with  
A woman like you, a sunny sky in a child's pastel.  
I've had one real girlfriend and nine others, indiscriminately  
In places of cheap mortgage along the major avenue  
Where I and so many filthy others grew up under the pines?

But, I suppose, it must take a gallant man to swing you,  
Or a fool, as long as he is appealing and you are tight-  
I wish I had a bit of liquor to float down the highway tonight,

As you are in your room dolling up for your engagements,  
I am on my sightless bed with my dogs, dreaming of walking  
Away lost in some cheap Floridian suburbia,

Where I can go around in circles until I lose my mind,  
Turn down the avenues of twilight, and approach death who will  
Take me in kind, and he will ask me of you and how you were,  
And I can only shrug and say, "I never knew. I never knew."

Perhaps, then, he would be so kind as to respond, "Let me show you."

Robert Rorabeck



# Letters From The Mailboxes

Clouds the color of young gods  
Leaping or breathed from the lips of a plum eating Dragon  
Like mist rising from a petit lake from a land where  
The castle is missing  
And the lovers are left in peace: here they are,  
Foxes tangled with tomato vines dripping with  
Destructive sport.  
They look as if they could be cousins of truants  
Eagerly lost on a road this is hard to fool,  
Kidnappers of tortoises who cry into the wombs of  
Limestone where the stolen bicycles live,  
And the august pines remain swaying, swaying  
Coated in the unbelievable memories of Katydid  
The nurse maids of paper dolls and rusting cars,  
As tadpoles wait in the ovens of canals  
And the monarchs return from the south to  
The north making graveyards out of  
Estuaries along the way  
Their children like their own paper tears unfolded  
Out of chrysalis and made to  
Walk the zoetrope of dusk, their magnetisms just  
The whispers of lost girls vanished like missing  
Letters from the mailboxes of their yards,  
Who manage to find the wet throats of the lovers  
Who knew perpetually where they belonged.

Robert Rorabeck

# Letting The Enemy In

All of the families such as these vultures,  
Picking and eating the apples of over ripe flesh:  
Fallen down from the three fold tree  
Of kidnappers;  
And it is raining, removing the road there and  
Rediscovering the seashells:  
Maybe three children in the miniscule yard making  
A pact of some kind,  
And then running away: running away or being  
Kidnapped, but either way  
Never coming back again:  
Taken like metamorphosis back into the sky,  
Like raindrops that I could have sworn were never shed,  
Until all of the moats just evaporate  
And the tearless mothers open the floodless gates  
With open breasts and opened arms  
Letting the enemy in.

Robert Rorabeck

# Letting The Enemy In'

All of the families such as these vultures,  
Picking and eating the apples of over ripe flesh:  
Fallen down from the three fold tree  
Of kidnappers;  
And it is raining, removing the road there and  
Rediscovering the seashells:  
Maybe three children in the miniscule yard making  
A pact of some kind,  
And then running away: running away or being  
Kidnapped, but either way  
Never coming back again:  
Taken like metamorphosis back into the sky,  
Like raindrops that I could have sworn were never shed,  
Until all of the moats just evaporate  
And the tearless mothers open the floodless gates  
With open breasts and opened arms  
Letting the enemy in.

Robert Rorabeck

# Liberty

The future we will create  
Is up in arms,  
Because you are not writing:  
Kissing the masculine lips,  
Like pressing inescapable bars in the zoo-  
You don't have anything to say at all?  
I suppose you are too busy in  
Your making-love room;  
You go singing into a cavalry of  
Muscular dreams unafraid....  
But I don't know you,  
I don't know you- that's for sure,  
But our family album is in the sky.  
Look, and our little children will go skipping by-  
I say- On the reservation,  
The natives are restless, drunk,  
And flee bitten, but they know you:  
The one cloud in the sky is  
Where you hide behind,  
But with their lances they call down rain,  
They make you cry;  
The oldest fathers are holding a revival  
In the white-lung tent in the desert of New Mexico:  
The ladies there are the only pure oasis,  
And you inhabit them, and make them speak  
With peach fleshed tongues, rich with  
The oils preserved in the canning earth-  
I sell fireworks off Route 66:  
The semis honks as they go by,  
But they flight the red, white, and blue country  
With you on their mind,  
The long distance inebriation we all can  
Celebrate at any time: I light the fuse,  
And then step away with a beer in my hand,  
And looking up, I watch you take off into the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Libraries

When it is easy, I wake up and there is a  
Fog on the hills, and the stones lay sweating in  
The grass,  
And north there are great holes above the earth,  
And she has cut her leg while washing  
The baby,  
Perhaps, if coupling, the animals could escape  
And row into the breathless reservoir  
Where those of us who are yet fully grown  
Are swimming,  
But before that needs to be peace made with  
The other tribes, and the old houses need new glass  
And families,  
Where the angels coo, then for birds it is time  
For dinner, and then to scavenge the brightly discarded,  
To gather together and form the nest where  
Their eggs will speckle,  
And, incubated, the librarian wakes up from where  
He has stamped his forearm in drool,  
And listens to a cavalcade of raindrops, as a single  
Dreary car turns about;  
Finding himself alone in a mouthful of weeping voices.

Robert Rorabeck

# Licking Your Wounds From The Sky

Liquor is the loneliness in the sun,  
After you've forgotten your name or  
How many times you've been here-  
Hearing the classroom echoing, who reads you  
Anymore- Who cares to gather you up before  
The tide comes in, hurrying with all its lines to  
Erase and take away,  
And you are doing it again, pretending to be so proud,  
Trying out the words of joy which seem to bloom  
Spontaneously only to be revealed as things who aren't  
No longer there- The bad grammars of her  
Womb, the young men you fought for and stole their  
Cars and sucker punched when they weren't looking-  
When the scars taste so good, like fortified liquor,  
And you're pretty certain now to be one of their  
Tribe, imbibing the migrating spirits like stewardesses  
Metamorphosed in the tresses of debutant kites,  
Really now falling over yourself to catch up with those  
Shadows of those who are no longer there, or were  
Never there to begin with until the forts and stores are  
Closing, your dreams are rude and patronizing,  
And you don't know who you are where to go,  
Out of ice cream and liquor, the sun a persistent thing  
Licking your wounds from the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lies From A Busied Restaurant

Doorbell to these classes:  
Rusted hinges over the silent creaks of  
Salt:  
Whose eyes to you cry from:  
And from what heavens do you fall  
Down from.  
Saying you loved me- lies from a busied  
Restaurant,  
And the daylight fell upon your brown  
Shoulders,  
As you thought to forget about  
My broken body of  
Broken kisses: the busses faltered  
Through the mottled pornography  
Beside the eaves-  
Until it became just as still as Christmas-  
And, just as lucky for you,  
The angels forgot to take you to school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Light In A Cup

Quiet, quiet  
Slow to seep  
Weeping oil  
Go to sleep  
Early morning  
Is waking up a  
Slice of orange and  
Scrambled eggs  
Words are tokens  
Nests of mouth  
Crèche of tongues  
You can't see  
A hummingbird's  
Moving wings,  
A spirit across the  
Table perfectly laid  
Drinks the flowers  
Ripples shade;  
Your eyes a napkin  
Sop it up,  
Azure outfits  
Light in a cup.

Robert Rorabeck



# Light That Has Already Dissapeared

Rainy monuments without summer time,  
Even after the busses have unloaded their cloud-like  
Children  
With their open ended daydreams and scabbed  
Knees like naked terrapin  
Back into trailer parks- and now they're home,  
But so what:  
They're home, and in that easy shade, like  
Sardines,  
Wishing for pornography or fireworks: there they  
Linger,  
Hoping for fried chicken, and the earth of their  
Parents to somehow find them-  
To bathe them underneath the plastic flowers  
And crèches,  
Until they are somehow renewed in that soft  
Though inflexible light that has already disappeared.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lighting Off Firecrackers

Wound of a Ferris Wheel-  
OF another low dive to kiss the earth of  
Scattered candy,  
Where her eyes are all made up by tears:  
And my neck is tattooed with  
Gung-ho-  
Drinking the rum of the British Navy, and  
Trying to persevere beneath the  
Flight paths of the constellations,  
But very soon I will be sleeping  
Next to that ever living nothing who grounds  
Us all like the tiniest of dreams slipped  
Out of the atmospheres of plastic  
Bags-  
And loves us in her little ways: the ways in which  
She loves a brontosaurus after we've  
All been kicked out of the garden-  
And now there is a riot of our love,  
As down the street it is very empty but  
I can hear all of them lighting off firecrackers....

Robert Rorabeck

# Lightning Woman

This lightning woman works on gasoline.  
See here,  
This is where you fill her up, right  
In these lips; they are adjustable,  
And come in any color;  
Her tank is good for twenty gallons,  
And her breasts for two gallons more,  
To get you that extra mile;  
But don't overload her or she'll spill!

The lightning woman can kill two chickens  
A second,  
And she is mad transportation-  
If you start out on her,  
You can start out in snow and wind up in sun,  
Or visa versa, as is you wish,  
But keep her out of the graveyard weeds,  
Or she'll bog  
Happy man....  
Happy man, now, I can tell-

This woman here, my man,  
She sells herself, and you can do other things too,  
But she don't cook;  
She don't do that, my son-

Careful now;  
If you break her, she's yours,  
But I can see you want to buy her anyway-  
There isn't a model I haven't sold;  
Used to sell Bibles, and edible tattoos,  
Now just her,  
And I always will....  
This one here, with the vermilion stems and  
Peacock eyes,

(We can put bolts on her ribs,  
And tickle them when you are alone,  
After we are done)

She's good for the road at a gallop-  
Heehaw, boy can she leap traffic too,  
But it will take everything you got to own her,  
And more, son, and more,

But she's unafraid, I can guarantee that-  
She'll peel a rattlesnake or track a bear,  
But after she's done with that scene,  
You'll have to deal with the mess....

And did I mention she can kill two chickens a second?

Just remember to keep her out of  
The graveyard weeds, or she'll bog.  
Good, now I see that we've come to an agreement:  
Which of these lips shall we put  
On her kiss?

Robert Rorabeck

# Lightspeed Champion

Make love before the coffin  
Or a waterfall,  
For here are the cleats of low oxygen,  
Where the gods have been competing;  
Her green breasts lose color,  
Peeling back her gardens, only the  
Petulant clouds can look into her eyes.  
They are the latest in the evening,  
When the deadly thunderstorms unfurl  
Their insouciant venom.  
Look at how we are climbing, way past  
Our mother and father,  
So far out swimming, they have no  
Hope of saving us, the enfant terrible,  
Loving our strongest professors,  
In docile elegance from the back of the classroom.  
See how our eyes portray our feelings,  
Like spears piercing the side of the mightiest,  
Then something more unremarkable,  
A colloquial exercise, painting her eyes-  
If she looked back, but she shoots straight as an  
Arrow; past the garden, and the harrow,  
Becoming a particle of the light, she slides  
Off the banal, and into a wavelength, a sonar's  
Echo; we try to place her amidst the constellation,  
The lucky bedfellow,  
A nymph in Saturn's garden, her lip's mollusk,  
A seashell's dusky echo; the footprints lead into the  
Waves, and the day is ending its path,  
For into the quieted element we cannot follow,  
Though we must pine from our bones, our blood must  
Bellow,  
Though there is no promise she will return upon the morrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Barrett

Little tenements filled  
With boxes of wine  
And, having contended,  
Lets have another  
Revolution they say  
Right after the next-  
And they bundle up to stay  
Warm in-  
They won't waste electricity-  
The dragon people  
Reconstructing the avenues of  
My structure-

As an airplane flies  
Down to carress her hair  
Like a barrett-

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Beautiful Wish On A Beautiful Birthday

Words underneath the palate of a grave,  
Crawling like worms, even while there is nothing left  
Upon the bones to save;  
And quietly the river dreams even through its most  
Uproarious streams:  
And fish go that way: they can only go this, and the night gets  
Older until it gets younger,  
And then it perhaps gives births to births and deaths:  
And the children come out through the open mouths of yards,  
Who are all of one color, Alma's favorite color;  
And when I am near her my heart feels that it can stop vagabonding  
And enjoy the delightfully brown midways of the fair;  
And it is enraptured, and holding her hand I am without a care:  
And the lonely night is just a trifle as long as I can awaken  
And find Alma like a candle, like a beautiful wish on a beautiful  
Birthday awaiting me there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Beautiful Disease Of Butterflies

Alone into the echoes you could not enjoy  
Giving yourself the pushup completion for the empty fans  
Who have no recollection of the ghosts evaporating from  
The baseball diamonds,  
While you were too busy calling up the numbers from  
The graveyards of the plastic flowers:  
But somehow all of the seahorses seemed to be able to  
Resolve the problem—  
And so she filled herself up in the memories of the sunlight  
Of the movie theatres,  
And into the beautiful gestures in the sidelines and the pews  
After the penultimate numbers matriculated into  
All of their mazes and all of their labyrinths—  
And she came home alone—vested in the fantasies of  
Her stagecraft:  
Her children as brown as embers—while other emotions gave  
Up on the spotlight of fireworks on the other side  
Of the world—  
And all of it turned, and turned—until there was no single  
Memory—and it became ultimately a sideshow  
The divested itself of all of its corsages—until it was inevitably  
Responsible for nothing—and still it believes  
In the constructions of the hemispheres that held no believes  
In daylight—and turned itself into a priceless sculpture held for  
The briefest of nothing without the moon glowing beside  
Or next to the river of nothing—  
And all of the astronauts sat next to the Mississippi and kept  
Their breakfasts to nothing—  
Like a beautiful disease of butterflies—even though there  
Was not enough shows to cover the same theatres that they kept  
To hold over—like playgrounds lit by candlelight upon the other side  
Of the moon.

Robert Rorabeck



## Like A Bleeding Painting

The cubby holes lay open-mouthed until they  
Are filled with the shed skins of children,  
Like in a chrome world suddenly decorated for Christmas;  
And it is quite beautiful, to pay the meter, and spend one's  
Life open throated, watching a world bedecked by the sea  
That seems to be burning off its whimsies into the sky:  
How the palmettos and all of their cousins speak in the winds  
Behind me,  
All the unchosen avenues branching away: That life is a vineyard  
Of pulsing needs and shooting pulsars,  
While the engines rev, and the kittens purr; and there might  
Have been a time that she would have laid down beside me,  
Like the ocean burning into the sky, like a bleeding painting strung  
Out before where I had parked my car.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Blue Marble

Professors in their day dream of gloomy weather,  
And these are excuses for them to read books in the library's  
Rookery:  
And even I like sliding off my bicycle once in awhile  
To go into the cool of a movie;  
But my mind has a tendency to dally over you, to slip even  
Further away:  
And I put the dolls of you into the playrooms of wherever  
I am, and I have fun over you:  
Maybe I haven't seen you in a decade, but what undying sport  
You are:  
Maybe it is that you only kissed my neck, or no part of my body  
At all:  
Maybe I just sat next to you during a pep rally before you got  
Bored of watching me shoot pop rockets  
Over the student parking lot; but being that I have no pride  
At all,  
I still am like a dying humming bird trying his best to imitate  
The chesty pullulating of a song bird,  
Going down into a mine where I picture you immortally perfected:  
And I am up on a brightly lit stage with a harpoon stuck  
Into my side, but do not chide me:  
Haven't you heard, scientists have found life miles beneath the artic  
Ice, shrimp and palominos,  
And the greatest bluest operas that I have been defining congratulated  
By Frankenstein's monster on his sojourns of ice-fishing:  
And I have finally come to the surface like a marble cannon booming,  
Like Ganymede or one of her lovely sisters,  
I orbit you like a tiny moon,  
Like a blue marble who is somehow impossibly winning whose imagine ripples  
unobtrusively  
In your eyes, and thus I minisculely bellow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Bosomy Obstacle

Softly embittering bruises on my flesh,  
Each as unique as a snowflake,  
As a rattlesnake's kiss- living underneath the diesel  
Paths of airplanes,  
Permitting to the horticulture of this un heavenly  
Place:  
With and without daylight and sunlight and moon beams,  
As the waves rise and breathe softly in crèches and  
Wreathes in which the mermaids cultivate  
Like a bosomy obstacle course, but no one believes  
Of them anyways- which only  
Increases their worth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Butcher's Flower

Somewhere beautiful overflows with airplanes:

Her hair is made up for date night,

And cottage cheese is pressed to her lips like wet baby's breath:

And the hours of her youth are vibrant, loving not a soul,

But as clear as a water fountain reserved for privileged

Men:

And she can step out into a world and make it her high school:

The song birds and mariposas will nest in her hair and try to

Gather pollen off of her, as the avenues continue by her feet

Where the grass is perfect and almost blue and rather crocodilian:

Her wrist that sways before the parked buses seems to swim

Against the savage tongues of echinopsis and she can remain

There all day long, her worshippers resonating off of her

Like waitresses in restaurants all a wreck running up and down

With all those legs, making dollars to pay the bills is easy:

Like a butcher's flower she kissed my neck.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Careless Bumblebee With Its Honey

It rains before autumn- This is what I've  
Been thinking of, walking with my dogs,  
Handling curious sticks over the terraces of stones:  
I can hike any mountain before her man gets off  
Work,  
And I would buy her some flowers as a reflex,  
She knows, but she is not my consumptive muse;  
And I am busy on this lonely pitcher's mound  
Again, swirling the liquor of pirates around my  
Mouth,  
Checking for cold sores, seeing her lighthearted over  
The horizon relaxing in a weekend of bathtubs;  
And I ought to fly right over her and begin my foreplay  
With Baudelaire, or take her to a dinner show  
And eat her out, making her feel each rose thorn,  
The mammalian virtues of a slender reflective night;  
And even alone, I am trying to do better, to get the right  
Mixture of liquor and wherewithal to spring inside her  
Something eternal- That will turn into noir, with the  
Rain falling over the abandoned swing sets, over each  
Of the town's dimmed churches and lit graveyards,  
To see where we are going into a sort of private amusement,  
The extensions of space into exclusive clubs where  
The greasers and tomboys have given up and are dancing,  
And each yacht out in the water has a secret knife,  
Just an esoteric talisman of my doing to open her hinges  
Like an envelope to read inside, dripping every word onto  
Her body like a careless bumblebee with its honey.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Cenotaph To A High School

All of the pleasantries  
Of a studio in a drunken garden-  
Having a honeymoon before  
A marriage  
And a woman in love with me  
Who cannot see my scars  
As the words roll through  
The inebriated feeling of a skeleton-  
Like a cenotaph to a high school  
Where he could never seem to fit in-  
And another evening lays down her cards  
And goes to kiss the sailors in the  
Movie theatre  
That moves beside her like a pitted ark  
And gives back to her all of the animals  
She cannot see in the darkness,  
Begging for things that last forever,  
But in the morning will mean nothing to her.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Child Delighting

I seem to be partaking in a sea that has no memory—  
And this is my last day in Shanghai,  
And I have been finishing up a bottle of white wine  
Held over from our wedding:  
I am not trying to appease you—  
My wife is already married and is going to have my child.  
The world I will go back into tomorrow is a world  
Of ghosts and phantasms—  
A desert of Disney World, and maybe I will think about  
The things I once almost had with you,  
Touching down upon the cold facts of that concrete  
Tarmac,  
But truthfully my heaven is already with me,  
And she has forgive everything that I am,  
And everything I have already done—  
And you are just a well the unicorns drink from  
Hypothetically,  
Though I will come back to you like the times of  
A merry-go-round, stealing little glances like a child  
Delighting in things that will soon become mundane.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A City With So Many Stars

A field fills up like a city with so many stars  
Lost from the bedrooms of spaceships,  
But these words just become latchkeys for foxes  
And homophones—  
Words that sound the same to the conventional franchises  
That don't have to heal until they take a dive:  
I am the product of the fast food mountains—  
I am so deformed, when I pee it is from all of  
My joints and my eyes:  
I am a Frankenstein burried up from roses:  
I used to teach at your local high school,  
I used to dig up both of my eyes to use  
To bore into you who have beautiful daughters,  
But not alone:  
There are still racecars,  
And beautiful water falls in Tennessee:  
Let is pretend that they are falling from the water fountains  
Of the rural high schools  
And I do not have to proofread this poem before  
Going to sleep  
Or drinking anymore of this white liquor:  
Tomorrow, the cars will move back and forth across  
Shanghai like ants,  
And we will have very little else to prove  
Except that I am not beautiful and you will most  
Certainly not love forever.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like A Compass's Signal

Even catastrophes go to sleep, they go:  
This way they go like an exhausted sister from a deflated  
Sorority:  
She go, and the night becomes a womb as if the space  
Inside the pillow beneath your head: She dreams of one slick  
Sword golden,  
Floating like an investigator, like a party favor:  
Like this sharp explorer bursting cannons overhead:  
She dreams, she dreams of all the vanished swing sets,  
Of all the sweet thrilling sweetish things she wished I'd  
Said,  
But I've never said: and pinball games and cabarets and all of  
Our children putting softly to bed up in their bedrooms  
In their upstairs canopies,  
While her golden sword floats through that fog of space and she  
Tries to remember and not to remember  
All of those lonesome days of lumberjacks and hunting boys  
Of footballs games and smoke signals  
Like thrilling ghosts over the mowed lawns and estuaries of all of  
That immobilized space;  
And of the flowers I'd bought her she can't remember or she  
Won't: Now there are orchards and orchards of heavenly flowers speaking  
Like opening presents on Sundays underneath that vessel  
Like a compass' signal pointing to her throat.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Conquistador Atop The Roofs Of Cars

The midway isn't even here: perhaps it is going overboard:  
The very fair has disappeared,  
And the only pilots are cursing the addictions of weathervanes:  
The landing strip burns in blue gas,  
All of its brides corpses, alluring- their supersternal notches  
Diademed with the very vapors that they tear;  
And I end up spent like a conquistador atop the roofs of  
Cars: a shell,  
A cenotaph- a vague monument about to disappear, while  
The school children rhyme in chalk, and eventually their lions  
Jump through so many rings that they return home,  
And lie on the kitchen table and on the floor,  
In their mouths carrying the carcasses of saltwater tears  
And watermelons- and the delicate fingers of latchkeys dab there,  
And saturate their hungers from the milking tear ducks  
Of the feral natures who briefly became trained to do all that they  
Could for them.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Crocodile's Reputation Down The Military Trail

Against the borderline,  
I try for her pulse, warmth to my jaundiced cheek;  
She is still alive,  
But it is so dark from where they are fleeing,  
Maybe she isn't even there;

Maybe she already went away,  
And joined the others' chorus....  
Living in his house at the edge.

Probably not,  
Already strung out like a kite in power lines;  
The material electrocuted,  
She hasn't yet removed herself from the unsuccessful dream,  
Lost by the hands which are now weeping  
In the mobile home as the rain pellets,  
Rusty and corrugated,  
And the rabbits scurry;

How can I say that she even is,  
Just the open wasteland where her eyes once met  
Beneath the foundation of abused toys and sick dogs,  
My eyes in the classroom at dusk;  
The trigonometry of awful lies,  
It meant nothing, not that it ever was....

But property lines of retired patriots,  
Rented sex of dusty infestations,  
A flag of grout and color blindness,  
The fences of rusting locomotion,  
Blindness and scurry... In a straight line  
All the way out....

Her bus fled through the turnaround before mine,  
And went home; Chasing her like a rube,  
I never saw her again, for she left this land,  
Partook in the cannibalism of the dark mob of  
Silenced across the wall.

I wanted fame and her body like a door knob turning,  
Everything read for eternity, like a crocodile's reputation....  
Down in the cool tanks of the disabled tourism  
Of humid refuge, where the egrets sh\$t marking white

Sheer silence, but at the core the shrieking of the end,  
The cadaverous breathing and then the escape,  
The silhouettes inside the holes,  
The coffin floating over the power poles;  
The sexy levitation of the cheapest mirrors,  
The ending shrieks of princesses and nails being pounded in the wooden palms;

This poor who live over there,  
In the removed chapters of weedy beauty,  
The language which tastes foreign in my mouth;  
Her sad but hungry eyes the blindness,  
The outline of the darkness that no one can ever see again....

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Dawn Cluttered With Song Birds

Snowing over the bodies of the forest  
That are a nest for  
The wolves and the white hares- and my memories  
Of this- before you are born-  
When you are not even a pearl in a clam,  
Or a tortoise in her shell  
Underneath a lonely school bus down hill from  
The graveyard:  
But this remains your place, in the high basins  
Aspiring to be stewardesses-  
Or angels in their skating rinks- Someone has stolen  
The moon,  
And put it in a bouquet, but you haven't arrived  
Yet- My parents are coming,  
But they do not bring you gifts- They will sleep  
In my house, and I will dream of you,  
Though the fire-pit is empty,  
And your eyes, like a dawn cluttered with song birds-  
Have yet to even open.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Delicious Plague Of Roses

Aloneness with the stageless skies,  
Where are you going alone from this house:  
I have painted a chalk road for you to leave  
By,  
And the weather is crippling the apple orchard,  
Ruining my pastels-  
Your maker has put a heart into your chest you  
Will not sell until it is condemned by  
A prettier love, and you have to:  
And your children sleep like the presents of  
Hypnotized chickens: where are they going all done  
Up and trained to suppose,  
Making their attempts at pie on their bunny slopes;  
And they go down and afterwards the smoke  
Signals rise,  
Like tears steaming from the jungles of your thighs;  
And I suppose I haven't spoken things  
I didn't have to: And still you are all rosy cheeked  
And good enough to star in your first movie;  
The lobes of your ears are very Christian, listening  
To conches snoozing in their libraries:  
And I imagine you in the school you were kicked out of,  
And all your beauty blooms like a delicious plague  
Of roses,  
Savagely red and too deep for our friendship to take  
Advantage of.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Dinner Of Atrocities

You'll have to go with me  
Again underneath the  
Mountain roaring fuselages  
Of airplanes  
To drink from the hidden springs  
Halfway up the mountain;  
And after we make love  
You'll have to do your  
Hair again,  
Only so you can go home again to  
Make love to him;  
While I sleep like a ghost less wishing well  
Across your house-  
You give him your empirical fires,  
Like a dinner of atrocities  
Before all the fanfare of windmills,  
While saving all of your soul for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Dove Returned To My Hand

I ran away and got into a bike accident:  
And then I went to the arcade where this beautiful woman  
Was there,  
The lady and the tiger: She was at the very same time  
Behind two doors;  
And it was like a dream, because she liked the same things  
I liked,  
And we both spoke the queen's English: and we sat together  
And held hands and listened to the whippoorwills  
Distinguish the killers who would come and kill in the park;  
And the churches wept and the palates were dark and  
Dark;  
And the real woman I loved was very poor, but her tattoos  
Curled up from the grass and placed their tattooed fingers  
Between the cheeks of her very fine ass:  
And she sang to me, or she just looked across the terra-plain,  
Which is a place I have seen before which is impossible  
To explain;  
And very soon the earth will be shaking with dinosaurs, because  
My parents will be coming home; and I want to share with them  
My liquor bottle and tell them of this wonderful girl,  
A woman I am not supposed to love,  
Praying that once she reaches dry land she will return to find me,  
Proving her love, like a dove returned to my hand.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like A False Arrow

Tired by words- just these ink scars  
Moths and masks all over me,  
Nocturnal jewels-  
The color of evil on a beautiful lake,  
The egrets horn-rimmed up in the swaying  
Slashes,  
I want to sing a siren's lullaby call you  
From you household, your two-car garage,  
Transform you in the breeding grounds of  
Dun amphibians, ask you what you see over  
My shoulder, the planes and god,  
And the crooked tatters making merry:  
I want a voice to make indelible to you,  
To feed you my marble games, the roe from my  
Fingertips, the svelte shadows from my shoulder  
Blades;  
But every word is a failure, a burned face,  
Romance to a blind woman that doesn't intrude-  
I can see you down in your neighborhood of pure  
Somnambulance, seeming to dance, but you  
Are distracted- There is so much needing to do  
To keep you up, and not one of my brown eyed  
Syllables is handsome enough that they might  
Transgress the even boundaries,  
To steal of a sudden to your lips, or through the taming  
Dusks, to wake you from the dream of the well you  
Willingly fell into where a prince called singing  
Words I'd hate to think have you situated in a fond place  
and callous to my wounded page,  
Which I send like a false arrow burning to ignite  
A cooling heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Family Of Hungry Bears

Kissing the termite's bottlenecked prize  
On the highest shelf perceived by her eyes:  
The planes go up and up until they get  
Nose bleeds:  
As if the sun was saltlick and they the speckled deer,  
They kiss the sun:  
Their throats taste like fire, and then they go down  
Again at night:  
Their bodies fold and cool like paper grasshoppers:  
I suppose that is how it is:  
How it begins and ends, and the fates we have in our own  
Mailboxes,  
And the turbulence of dreams that fall asleep and compose the  
Shadows,  
That seem to tent your house- Alma- like a family of  
Hungry bears.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Famished Stage

If you want tomorrow off, I will work your day,  
So I don't have to spend mine staring at myself in insane  
Places,  
My eyes as deep and uneven as cesspools,  
Checking the pseudepigrapha of Oregon to find out how  
Girls have the power to change into midnight doves  
Of swings and dark and fetishistic lances  
To trick their casual knights into honey moons of caldrons  
Of orgasms that can never be returned;  
Or walk out into the pile driving clouds, turning quick silver  
Airplanes into mobiles for drowned gods,  
Or gods in their segregated graveyards; and snakes fat off  
Of so many, many men that the trees of wisdom are empty;  
And yet here is Eve's hand still curling for the fruit,  
Whispering harshly through the narcissistic  
Bows of empty honey jars: This is the law she gave us,  
And black generals are under her feet like congratulatory  
Cenotaphs, and they try to bow,  
And the wind breaks loose and is disinterested and mouths off  
Some place else;  
When, then will she finally have to figure out that we are emptied  
By her- And there is no place here now that her inglorious wisdom  
Has not found out, or peeled away with titted teeth:  
Made us her husk of Ganymede and put that infernal sword  
Flaming before our house beneath the graveyard beneath the creek  
Where we painted her and held out for her;  
And watch her now horrified by our animosity as she leads her  
Well-suited family by the hand through the doors of heaven,  
The glow closing like a famished stage behind her,  
Leaving nothing left for us that we would care or wish for to understand.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Feathering Rainbow

Tell me what you want for Christmas and  
I will single you out and worship you- and set you a sail like  
Little children across a game of  
Make believe in my bed- in a room that is a night led by your singular  
Candle:  
And I will be transmogrified in a the red fox who leaps high enough  
To destroy your fables, Alma,  
And to command your acrobatic ships: to make you moan and deluge:  
This is what I am good for underneath the atmospheres  
Of the honey moons of roller rinks, and the long days good byes and  
All of the failing sunsets in which I never knew you:  
But I place you here now in my stuff, like a love outside the tenements  
Of an elementary school while all of the skies are  
Falling and all of the chickens are hypnotized, and your daughter is  
Calling to you with the reasons for your life:  
But here I am, homeless, wise, and baring your gifts, as you open up  
A nebula of light across my friendly skies- like a feathering rainbow  
That reaches across your elbows, kissing and squeezing your  
Shiest breasts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Ferris Wheel Sneaking Away

Where am I going—another day gone into the  
World—  
Where is the bed where the sun rests,  
A bachelor,  
Tawny and crackling with his books: I think I  
Saw him underneath the overpass,  
Like a Ferris wheel sneaking away—  
Elbows and necks filled  
With gawdy flashbulbs—the tourists following  
Him like sour-milked puppies:  
And he rested there, cramped—his light turning  
Everyone not Mexican Mexican—  
And when he arose again, the first thing he  
Did was rushed to the sea,  
Merely a step away—and calmed himself naked  
Dousing her feral adolescents into a mother  
He could not call his.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Fish In A Pool

I drink, I drink- My eyes burn like a fish in a pool:  
My house says nothing:  
Alma, you at last are at home with your husband and your children:  
I think I want to die as beautifully as a bouquet thrust into the open wrists  
Of a grave,  
While I think of you: Alma,  
I yet still live:  
I turn, I pinwheel, and I give, over the sweet and youngish throats  
Of all of those graves that all of the stars have turned their lights out for,  
Forgetting how to save,  
While all the racetracks turn in cursive, tucked in far beneath the snows,  
While all the bodies tuck in perfectly beneath the perfect rows  
And ghosts of the orange groves;  
But Alma, don't you know that I have a fireplace built from the same  
Coquina stone as the Castillo de San Marcos in  
Saint Augustine;  
And, Alma, my sweet young Alma, with two everlasting butterflies  
Birthed from your womb,  
I ask you if you still don't know anything: anything.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Fitful Prayer Given Before Sleep

A rhyme, a dime, a talking fool:

I step outside and in the insouciant yard my

Pen\*s jewels:

By my lead, my dogs go out and scent the

Earth, which is you, my foolish muse:

I peruse you like the easy mediums on their

Shelves: Can't you see now, how even the

Easy trees are shaken. This is not their season,

And yet in their locker rooms they are getting

Naked,

As by the open doors the November breath

Shivers, my little dog growls at its unwelcome

Brother: I call the German Shepherd's name

And he hurries back in,

But what does it matter, when you spread your

Cheap legs for other men, and I should have

To wake up to the early morning, and perform

Before my parents as if I was never drunk,

Or had saved enough money to have my own house

In some unsettling plane:

But what does it matter, when nothing I have written

Has been unnecessarily true:

More beautiful men from other planets are already

Married and given off their names to strange little

Gentlemen who will follow us in their more civilized

Manners out the doors:

The laziness my scars is written like nail polish

Along the seats of the bus in junior high school:

There in the jubilation of yet unshed puberty, I had a knife

Fight which was staged, before I even knew you,

And I loved a black woman so feverishly they couldn't

Even know; but now I am called up to the office from

My little crimes of toys, but looking toward you in the

Backwater mirrors, I believe I have said enough,

And if it should come to war, even with the belly of the ship

Lilting towards the bottom, you should love me,

Because it is in the way I have given you to follow me,

And you have come to me unasked for, and thus our lips

Should embrace like a watermark, the way the final seal is

Given to a defeated army, thus I conclude things  
Until you, and this inevitable poem, written the way  
No one should read, thankfully, like a fitful full prayer,  
Given before sleep.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like A Fool

Going down again and making an easiness out  
Of the incense of the gypsy camps I've seen grazing in  
Alma's eyes:  
And I want to propose to her atop the hill we both surmounted  
While jogging in Dreher Park:  
Alma, I don't want to leave you again, because I am fearful that  
My words are not strong enough to truly capture you:  
I love you here in the hours that slip away over your brown shoulders:  
Even when you are mean to me, Alma, I love you;  
And it is as painful as the unrequited love I once felt in the daycares of  
My earliest of thieveries,  
Because I could never quite make my own way like my father,  
Alma:  
And you know that he is a beautiful man, but he doesn't know that I  
Love you,  
But maybe he wonders why I am still working at the fruiteria he was  
Banished from.  
So I now feel like a deposed prince who without any power gets to  
Look at your beautiful country sides;  
For there you are in a gentle slope of your gloriously eyed thieveries  
Slanting throughout my day:  
I stayed here because I love you, Alma: I became a cenotaph who moves  
And breathes,  
And my body is an engraving on a tomb that thumbs its chest  
And behaves like a fool for you, Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Girl Named Kelly

Like a river sings despondent blue grass  
For the baby Moses,  
I uncurl this cap:  
I hate to say that I still dream of barmaids of  
The letter E,  
And now sommeliers:  
Propellers turn like mobiles, but there is no  
Easy geometry:  
Suicide in the foreplay of wet grass, while new  
Men are being christened from the clay,  
Liquor like uncountable tribes of reptiles and  
Venomous snakes in my veins;  
And I made love today, to someone new-  
A stranger underneath the fields of the new years  
Sky,  
And I pretend that it is something wonderful,  
But it is no more wonderful than marriage; and there  
Is nothing new under the sky:  
It is all the way that the ancient lovers died-  
Venal, star-struck and sick; and the old men then like the  
New men now invented science to impress the girls,  
Just like the spotty youth two decades ago  
Wrapped their hands diligently around their joysticks  
And tried to level up past the last gorilla,  
The blonde hair flowing at the top of the ladder  
Like a girl name Kelly near the sea of names that have  
Been repeated to me through my youth- Through  
All the time I may never know, nor experience again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Goat In The Zoo

If there must be princes singing like  
Cicadas getting naked,  
Dancing  
Like rivers, then let death come too in  
Her horny shoes:  
So high up and against my back repeating on  
The swings,  
Like a poet, like a carnival these things I  
Seem to me,  
Underneath the moon,  
Underneath the lost airplanes looking away  
Way up into the sky of your carnal bed  
Where the footprints of untamed animals leave  
Tracks all around your place,  
And you are bathing like a heavy cloud that never  
Keeps its shape,  
And you are so rich from the suicides of high  
Society,  
That you might never come down,  
Ringed in copper, bellied in ink: You float there  
Like a séance, like a dream,  
And down on the earth and grottos I can taste you  
Like blood on my lip,  
Or, reaching out, I can almost run up against  
You like my first word, like a goat in the zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Graveyard Of Butterflies

Losing your feelings in the yard- mowed by a Mexican who slept  
Beside the junks of your house  
And while he was asleep you scattered like Johnny Apple  
Seed  
Jugular boats and dye cast cars and paper airplanes of both  
Sexes  
Far across his work: and you swam in the sunlight as if you were  
The delusions of a piggy bank,  
And that was all your gold siphoned by the lips of your tank;  
And it felt so good:  
Why even then the pilots were taking off and landing in the  
Sky, going to see their forgotten relatives of  
Giants, like nosebleeds at the end of the vines;  
And you supposed it was all possible, while the cicadas disrobed  
In the gallant spectacles of jewels wept into the changing rooms  
Of cypress:  
And your sister was somewhere around, but not invited,  
And your mother was upstairs sleeping with your father in a house  
The same size as a modest university, and ever inch of it covered  
In a carpet so green that it was where you'd hidden all of  
The birthday cake you'd stolen those sometimes- so that it could  
Spill right out,  
While Alma was growing up in a little place in Guerrero Mexico  
In a wilderness as brown and deep as the feelings you would come to  
Know for her as they made their own way back again, finally resting  
Like a graveyard of butterflies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Heaven That Vanishes Indoors

Bones lain in a house—  
Reclining next to the Virgins of Guadalupe  
And the plastic roses:  
The first rose I gave to her in April or May of  
2009 still stuck in the trellis  
Next to the stucco painted yellow,  
But now just a stem:  
She called me a week ago but hasn't  
Called me again:  
She lives north of Disney World now,  
Waiting for her husband to come  
Back from Jacksonville  
And maybe that will make everything all right—  
Going out and buying meat for  
Dinner,  
Keeping her children close—close to  
Her,  
And driving back home underneath the power-lines,  
Clouds performing away to a sea she never  
Goes to—  
Like thoughts of me and the fruit-market  
We once made love in—  
Waiting for the man she was destined for  
To drive home through the saw-grass,  
Returning from forts she has never seen with  
Her eyes—  
No longer concerning herself with me laying my  
Drunken bones across the roof of  
His house—  
And then he is home, like a heaven that vanishes  
Indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Knight Himself

Oh, the black knuckles fought with orchids  
Of the dwarves of semiprecious high school:  
While I only thought of myself, and I curled that way:  
And I got up late and I missed the bus:  
And I floated down the avenues, and I touched myself while  
Trusting the innuendos in the ransacked pornographies  
Of the hallways where I was supposed to be  
Learning algebra of calculus:  
But while I was a lone, all terrapin and accordingly self-  
Motivated,  
The mariposas got really fat, and I learned to love the  
Amphitheatres in graveyards of after hours:  
When the night was all shot off and cenotaphs, and the baseball  
Games were just what they really were,  
And all of the runners had stopped running and all had become  
So spent and so marvelous,  
And the words themselves resounding in the cauldron of  
A caracole: perhaps they killed some make-believe fathers in a  
Bloodbath of holidays:  
But what it was I won't rightly ever know: all I know is I  
Saw you jogging outside my cherry red car some day: some day  
Erin, and I fell in love like fairy tale, like a knight himself:  
And long ago: and far, far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Lamp Underneath The Sun

The moon looks like a lamp underneath the sun  
And now I remember that you are not speaking with me—  
And my jaw is swollen—  
And this night, Hurricane Ivan is making his run up the  
West coast of Florida—  
And I am on my ninth poem—the passengers are already asleep:  
They are done with looking out of their windows—  
And the world beneath them is a joy to the eyes of  
The foxes—who have clouded over in their  
Vineyards—and we are a happily done with all of that specific  
Stuff—I don't even know why you had to follow  
You husband up to the backyards of Ocala—  
But there you are still with him—  
As the fireworks lie smoldering beneath the orange trees,  
And the mermaids have come up from  
God-blessing the petals of the lotus—which is the favorite  
Flower of my wife—but she is still in China—  
And with child, incase you didn't understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Letter In A Bottle Propped Amongst The Seashells

The colors are cold,  
The flowers melt,  
And my legs are too long for my torso,  
My fingers sore from typing;  
But if I look directly into the sun,  
Then I look all right,  
And I begin to fashion dreams again  
About her;  
She is almost there, spinning like a German  
Temptress lost under immense power lines  
Deep in the heart of Texas;  
And I've told her my story lost beside  
The traffic, so many times,  
The insides of my cheeks wrecked from  
Nervous chewing over her through the halls of  
A far abandoned high school,  
But sometimes I have good lines,  
And little thoughts appropriated from places  
Which aren't fully understood,  
But are dangerously delightful-  
So here I stand once again, chest flushed like  
A starling, sick from hepatitis, calling out such  
A revelry that it should find its way  
Through the caesuras of dunes, to her  
Wayward doorstep, like a letter in a bottle  
Propped amongst the seashells.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like A Liar From Kindergarten

Christmas trees, Christmas trees abounding in the  
Lurching woods, talking of the pinpricks of light  
To the reintroduced wolves:  
Talking of Satan to my dogs, while all of the day snows,  
And the town grows rich with iron pyrite and make believe  
Vampires;  
And the busty sorority of milkmaids all lactating their  
Virgin Springs:  
Why, any one of them could be the mother of our lord,  
And cast into high towers while I pine for them:  
They get nosebleeds with the ethereal flowers,  
While the airplanes send smoking séances for them; and then  
I really do believe that I want to picture them down in the  
Carports of the grottos of my mother next to the washing  
Machine and the high voltage electricity:  
I want to picture them like this while the ditches bleed over  
With the lactates of creamy frogs and mash potatoes;  
As just across the way, hunchbacked on the cenotaphs of  
Conquistadors, reading the junkyard of the cars' pornography,  
Some kidnapper awaits toothily for me:  
Grandiose and verbatim, his strides like plates of mica through  
The grass: I have the feeling he wants to take me to a flea market underneath  
The leaping overpass; and I wonder like a thief, like a liar from  
Kindergarten: should I let him: should I let him....

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Maelstrom Of Bicycles

Isn't it beauty, getting drunk and remembering  
The lies she whispered so beautifully  
Underneath the overpasses above the scars  
Before it got time to be Christmas and then any of  
This—  
The places where beauty remains, hidden in  
The estuaries of a childhood vanished from the schoolyards:  
It becomes so difficult to behave, distracted like  
The moths under her—  
Until all of the traffics arrives, turning brighter and  
Brighter,  
And making all together a maelstrom underneath  
The overpasses of burry mountains—like a maelstrom  
Of fireflies with nowhere else to go.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Makebelieve Theatre

Without looking up the gold of sheriffs,  
This is the way that sometimes the goldfish have to survive  
On Tuesdays,  
Open mouthed, while the housewives' Mexican cleaning ladies  
Are cleaning all of the edges of the house,  
While I have had at you and your mouth in all for corners;  
It is a game,  
As an orange is orange, I love you the same:  
Without any stanzas, my broken words trample in, breathing on the  
Neck of your body like the delta of a river:  
So brown and wild and pure,  
As above us the sun is so pure; and beneath us all the depths of the  
Seas and the buried men;  
While on Tuesdays I can compare your beauty to the sea,  
Alma: On Tuesdays, driving in a car,  
Just as so many mammals now do:  
Pressing my foot past Palm Beach, I can show you the shimmering  
Azure, and say that is exactly you;  
And then to the heavens, the aspens prey: they line up like sisters  
In a queue to see Elvis, to sing of the joy of sisterly things,  
Just as I know that you have your own private joys in the boudoirs  
Of your heart;  
And of such private joys I should never sing: but to you, out in the open,  
Your pretty organs out to breathe, like something I somehow  
Won at the workplace of a fair: I open my heart up like  
A makebelieve theatre; and sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Minnow Blushing In The Nylon Mask Of Your Tawny Calf

What I am doing is putting on for you  
These shy speckles,  
And swimming on through your windshield,  
Flashing my broadside;  
Pretending to smile, if fish could smile,  
If that is what I truly am, or just a story getting  
Bigger with each reincarnation of its telling  
From grandfather to father to son,  
After wars are over and the weather has retreated,  
And the horses have come back out stiffed hooped from  
The dripping forests  
To begin amassing once more out into the open;  
This is where I go, down slipping imperfectly fleshed  
In the swift threads that are melting off the seasons,  
Like another sort of metamorphosis,  
The way a butterfly must disrobe from chrysalis,  
Or any form of poetry disembarked from its birthing woods.  
I come unspeaking dripping down the muddy slopes,  
Past the micas of collecting estuaries,  
Past the old tire swing, and the secret haunts of twin  
Lovers,  
Past where the lightning scarred the trunk,  
And where the miners rest, or any other sort of allusions,  
Either in the Adirondacks or the red clay and maize of  
Countries I have never truly been:  
I come slipping down to you dry mouthed with all these words  
Hoping that I will be caught up inside of you,  
And feed you, and thus come to nourish you, to know  
The requirements of your body,  
And thus come into the fulfillment of my task cease in my being,  
But a remembrance you sometimes recall,  
Walking to and from your classes, causing light to be more  
Beautiful through the contrast of the body of your presence-  
What I was always meant to be,  
Clapping your echoes, I hope to carry on in each of your steps,  
Like a minnow blushing in the nylon mask of your  
Tawny calf.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Mute Spokesman

I'm showing you so the sun burns  
Over the yellow ribbons:  
It burns the songs right out of the throats  
Of birds  
You have never thought of to love:  
It burns the fingerprints  
Right out of my victims,  
And you continue down the mountain again,  
Rowing,  
Rowing in your cantankerous light,  
Waiting for your father to find you and laugh at  
You,  
While the rest of your classmates somehow  
Make it down the bend in the river  
And continue over the cataracts:  
Falling, laughing and tumbling just like newborns  
At Christmas- until I have something to  
Say to them,  
And then the journey is over- completed,  
Sublime- and there isn't a mouth laying hungry on  
The road- for all of the families have made  
It home for super time,  
And their kitchens lay golden beside their pools  
Like diamonds: and haven't you been listening,  
Listening to the woebegone angels beside  
The canals while the alligators, like mute spokesman,  
Didn't say a thing all of this time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Paper Cut Of Beauty

I have turned out again:  
I am here on my early morning stage, waiting up for  
Crepuscle's backwards sister,  
Looking for Nubian eyes over a despotic river of  
Mailboxes and the housecats  
Who curl up in every yard underneath the stunted cypress:  
I wish there were bicycles I could take to you:  
Take straight up past the chicken wire guts of Disney  
World,  
Blowing all other Popsicle stands and Space Mountain  
Just the same,  
Forgetting my adulthood and the times that you have spent  
With just your other men,  
Just as you probably did tonight, while you blew off what  
A really good graveyard could mean to you:  
While you never swing nor go down into the Devil's sink hole  
To hear the happening echoes of the flappers that  
Once drank and spoke easily flirting with the fisted heavies  
Of your town;  
And if I turned up, you would have so many favorite colors  
To put me down,  
But still I wish there was a sure fire way straight into the glorious  
Gizzards of your happening little town,  
And candles to light the manholes of your transoms behind where  
You swim so slowly with the laces of curtain draping over  
You until you surface come morning,  
And eat your breakfast in the pool of your own grotto,  
Maybe your eyes never shifting from their eggs and salty venison,  
Because you never have to believe again in the superfluous  
Beauties of who have been making tracks toward you  
In the days and nights of your drunken coolies,  
The tourists who spy you out of doors and the students who study  
You superfluously like a paper cut of beauty who goes  
Unnoticing through her chores.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Pearl In The Throat Of A Rattlesnake

Meretricious beauty, even properly astray—  
Leading the artist's soul  
Into the bad houses of the forests—  
With the wolves and talking cats talking and  
Crying over the silver dollars slanted like  
Cenotaphs in the sand dunes:  
But there, dying with the spurious pornographies,  
The weeds spitting through the open  
Throats a junked garden of cars:  
Where he sings alone, after her legs have  
Metamorphosed into a kite—  
Scissoring with the hollow wishes of rainy birthdays:  
Up to kiss the lips of some auburn pilot in his  
Airplane—  
Lonely, malnourished—aesthetic truth is discovered,  
Like a pearl in the throat of a rattlesnake.

Robert Rorabeck



## Like A Pledge To Their Senses

Looking up at the green wall:  
The feature of her fairy void: that she should have  
Two men attending to her,  
But only one stricken enough to bare along her children:  
Along the glass rows,  
And the store shelves, where the blown things grew  
Like chickadees;  
The lances that could be seen and felt forever advancing,  
Pilling heatedly over their shoulders,  
Giving off warming medicine like smelling salts;  
But having no certain words about their nature:  
What a conundrum, to be of so many sorts, but all too soon  
To be evaporating back into their apartments,  
With the only memory of her palm like a pledge to  
Their senses:  
They hung on her then, and bounced off the walls,  
And their light turned unholy and cursed the day.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Primate Weapon

Lights in the places around me,  
Places across the street  
I have never been to,  
Like a dog or a cricket in its yard,  
A thing you can never be too sure of:  
If it knows the language of your  
Generous hand,  
Or if it still goes around looking for something  
To feed off of:  
And I will finally have my peace,  
And lay out into the canal,  
So angelically for want of a better word  
As to captivate all of the water moccasins to  
Send them sprouting like an army of  
Dark Mohammedans  
To the pallid green shore of my exegesis,  
My silent and lonely event,  
To let their black bodies come and caracole all  
Over my baptism,  
And cover me with the pecks of fresh poison,  
Better than the love you never thought to  
Spend from  
Lips or eyes,  
Or that hairy arrow you keep well drawn between  
You shopping basket legs  
As you tremulate down the street like a primitive weapon  
Taught and drawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Promise

Dogs of light and dogs of fire,  
Dogs holding their breath, digging under chicken wire:  
Dogs in Christmas,  
Dogs in the sea, dogs panting under the clotheslines of  
Panties,  
Dogs waiting for me: dogs whose full mouths are filled with  
Bones,  
Dogs waiting on the knolls of other dogs' tombs:  
Dogs who worked for kings,  
Dogs who worked for bums: dogs underneath the airplanes;  
Dogs sticking red to revolutions;  
As the poems are hurt on liquor, trying to find their blind ways  
Home to Alma,  
As the air fills unceremoniously with the cadences  
Of the perfumes of other men who  
Are not any of their masters,  
The dogs who fill the streets and curbs, who through  
Happenstance speak French and feed the alligators, lifting their  
Legs to the red hydrants  
Without the proper rhymes for the Ferris wheels of cheerleaders:  
Another trick, for another bone:  
Eating their dinner alone: dogs and dogs who knew me and who  
I've never know,  
Leaping and wining faithfully, and then by midnight sniffing their  
Way through the most acerbic of vineyards,  
Underneath the silver overpasses of the naked airplanes who  
Never saw the same tears in their eyes,  
Coming home to the doorways and the transoms that speak the same,  
Giving off the same light as the lighthouses who pretended to  
Know a world without wars:  
Dogs licking their wounds, like lovesick men calling your name,  
Alma,  
And wishing only to sleep with the rabbit stated rattlesnakes in the  
Unending shade swinging in the antebellum of your old world  
Home,  
Like a serpent in a playground of a tree, like a promise, like a bone,  
You never intend to share with me.



# Like A Promise Burning

Amber perfumes of a forest with bees,  
Up in the joints where the butterflies go to  
Die going blind in the moping  
Draperies of angels, and languishing there  
For young boys with weapons who still  
Hold delusions for her in their eyes:  
Coming out of the air-conditioning of a museum,  
They weep and masturbate on the marble,  
But don't know how to learn Latin:  
They remove their clothes and slip into boats  
Of shadows for her, while she flies above them  
Like a promise burning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Reddish Song

Defeated by what scars mar truly,  
Each paragraphs lies like sated kindergarteners in the  
Tall grasses,  
Windswept from a honeymoon of fieldtrips,  
Already like cut letters opened and scattered to the  
Enjambments of their society:  
What are they going to be now, who are they  
Going to know, with the sky that is the batter raining down  
Then the things they breath, the snakes of knowledge  
Coiling around the clutches of sunny stones in the grass,  
Using their ripple-bellies to kneed closer,  
Curling around the wrists of the prettiest girls,  
Forked tongues stealing away the hopes of the follow  
Youth who shall never find a wife  
Or home- The boy sleeping there in the field without a  
Car or a way to mow the yard; but following through the weeping  
Strands, the poisonous kinds of flowers with the equanimity  
Of a scientist of dying children- like suburban gossip;  
And he will leave you there in his house alone, perceiving  
Indistinguishable women floating long-legged from the lips  
Of his folded airplanes; and you might see him there stretched  
Out exhausted on the green carpet, but his loosed thoughts  
Are skipping like amused seashells far across  
the abutments of so many  
Unheard of canals, finally to unrefined rest where so many black men  
Are cutting sugarcane, teaching him their ancestral folklore,  
And pressing cheap rum to his lips like a reddish song.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Ship That Needs Mending

Pleasantly, your fingers run down the street  
Like a barrette in your hair 'laying it down  
Over the shoulders of  
Your brown midway, doing away with the classroom'  
Perfectly contented that your children  
Will never graduate high school'  
Or the sad roses waiting at your doorstep have  
Disappeared along with my drunken footsteps  
Upon your rooftop 'or that I've made the  
Rooster hold its tongue until it has forgotten  
How its instinctual crow'so the daylight breaks silently'  
Milky, smoldering, waterfall  
Cascades like tumbles of fire over grim amusements'  
And you lean into him, like a ship that needs mending  
Caressing the dragon that destroyed it.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Silence In Your Life

Now I see like a silence in your life,  
Laughing, gismatic—and full of so many other misspelling;  
I stab you in the eye while I wait for myself  
In the elevator  
Until it finally comes down to the silence of angels—  
They are there hiding in the spotlights of the foliage of  
Your front yard—  
And then it seems that the abyss is echoing for business—  
What joy in the plotlines that are too busy to be described—  
Beautiful, silent places outside of the spotlights—  
Where deer have to forage and eat for themselves without  
Cartoons—  
And even though I know that the planets really do exist—  
Just like Phobos and Demos will seem to  
Reciprocate around those heavens forever—  
I cannot survive for so very long without you being amidst my love.

Robert Rorabeck



## Like A Similacrum On The Hunt

Like a draft of words, calling up the armies  
Into the arms of loneliness, knowing this all at the start,  
And folding paper snowflakes into my wounds,  
Trying to forget about the ways that the dying cowboys  
Had a hard time breathing  
Like the salting mermaids who came up through the orchards  
Calling for the boy they loved  
Who himself had gone away on a bicycle through mindless  
Carnivals of suburbia  
Like a simulacrum on the hunt for the one or two things  
That it could ever know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Sky Full Of Airplanes Coming Down

With the stillness back in the shadows,  
I struck out;  
And something is ululation, and it is not  
Looking good:  
And things, big horrid domineering things  
Are growing,  
But they are not corsages or bouquets;  
And this is the way it must look to anyone alone  
In the middle of the sea,  
Without the shadows, and only sun: then beauty  
Becomes its own shadow,  
And, circling, she comes:  
And you can't breathe once you discovered the  
Treasures,  
And the body is broken down, and the soul is  
Just a salty mobile,  
Going around and around an empty cradle,  
Like a sky full of airplanes coming down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Slick Goddess Over The Last Pages Of The Earth

In webs of disregard  
She paints me the color blue:  
You should see me.  
I don't even belong this way,  
Because it is the purest thing  
Just like the virgin butterfly,  
And I am all choked up,  
And the sororities are drinking their  
Lemonade and beer,  
And practicing their solicitous weeps  
And giggles,  
While polishing off entire bottles  
Swiped from the pregnant sommelier.  
But she has already gone away into  
His arms,  
Like a tattooed Polynesian  
Thoroughly domesticated-  
That is where she is going with those  
Great breasts,  
And even greater calves,  
Walking like a slick goddess over the  
Last pages of the Earth.  
I hold my breath, my heart ululating  
In the immense sunshine,  
Hoping that she will turn my way one last  
Time,  
With the smile of auburn liquor,  
And her eyes like hungry sea creatures swaying in  
The brightest reaches;  
But that is not what she does.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Smothered Wish

Pea sized versions of the truths who lie scattered  
Like uncaged pearls in a bathtub,  
In the grottos of cleansing spirits who are just polishing off  
The knees of little girls who are getting ready  
To fly away to college,  
Like fires getting up the nerve to metamorphosis into  
Wishes,  
While the dragons all remain as red as fire trucks and all of  
Them according to their unions:  
Hallucinations who stare out at the wind blown tents of  
Revivals all throughout the corners of a desolate  
New Mexico  
Around whose corner some copper trumpet has been blowing,  
Becoming drowned out through the repopulations of  
The twin markets of stores  
Unto who so many mothers are beckoned like wet tears  
Across the rounded stones,  
Until they are either sharpened or dulled,  
But in their spaces and high heels become rather pleasing  
But keeping on moving as the chatters of echoes,  
Until the finally unreels and envelops the green, and they  
Are all rounded up until the shapes of a zoetrope are finally  
Recognized and misplaced by a single finger,  
Like a smothered wish, and they are brought back to their  
Trailer parks  
And without another word stop making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Soul For Its Home

I won't say anything more about what you shouldn't  
Do,  
What you do:  
Your children are in the backyards of preschool,  
The mariposas are back again in Mexico following their  
Never mindful flight paths,  
Forgetting that they were once creatures as almost  
As beautiful as you,  
They sift down like crackerjack leaves through the forest  
And bask on the cool lips of  
Rattlesnakes,  
While down beneath their arboreal leaves, the state  
Of Guerrero Mexico is in a great cacophony, but it also  
Does not remember that it is where you were  
Born,  
Alma- but my song remembers everything- lingering like  
An enamored nimbus above a herd of unicorns,  
Like a child waiting forever for his mother,  
Like a dog for his master,  
Like a soul for its home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Star In The Sky

Hearts of lucky entrepreneurs dispersed into homes,  
Like waves into carports,  
Sea horses into foam;  
And airplanes with their stewardesses into their vast bays of sky:  
And it was all that you could do to hope,  
As over the turkey the relatives said goodbye;  
Or when it was raining and you hadn't a home, you saw through  
The windows, the relatives who could've been yours;  
And the English wasn't very proper;  
And it was out of luck, out of doors; but it was underneath the haloes of  
The largest cross in all of North America;  
And the mountains rolled and aid their own names to themselves;  
And it was really going somewhere:  
And it was making love, maybe all the way underneath the rattlesnakes,  
To when you were a child  
And your beliefs roamed the playgrounds like real men  
With swords,  
Feral, heroic, wild;  
And your soul, your Alma, was a vagrancy- but you could watch it  
Satchel the goldness over the corridors of your preschool  
And you knew for awhile that your pets couldn't die;  
And even the goldfish was immortal, like a coin in your pocket,  
Like a star in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Story Book Of Gasoline

Hushed from the toppled gates of apples:  
Or the farewells of the firemen's applause, where the coliseums  
Of cluttered universities  
Become rain stormed: where we remember the footsteps  
That no longer echo for anyone  
Of our situations- surrounded by the night, all of the copper axes  
Tormented into woods,  
With scuppernongs everywhere, but evil: and the brown flesh  
That is hers pullulating.  
As we let her in and make love; but then she disappears for days:  
She doesn't read of us, how we skip school and  
Make applauses with her with liquors and bachelorhoods;  
But she doesn't exactly leave:  
Like a butterfly who comes back for more:  
To rob the store of the naked flower on the lonely mountain:  
To start a fire there no bigger than a match which burns  
As if the only soul in the woods:  
Worshipped by every animal fortunate enough to live there,  
Gathering to tell stories in congregations of svelte and horns-  
They love her without knowing a word,  
Even as she steals from them all that her little body could:  
Like a story book of gasoline: this is how her love burns.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Thrown Away Honeymoon

Now this feels right:  
That the bulleys and dragons are sleeping:  
And the princesses too,  
In the negligees of their mutual incests and desires:  
Their bodies at play just as migratory as a state fair,  
But now it comes down to the period of  
Rest  
And then there will be feasting, and gift giving,  
And more battles:  
Maybe Alma will make love to her old man again  
Like a going away present, a ship of love bound for insurmountable  
Hurricanes,  
While the sweet penumbras of her favorite colors of orchards  
Come over us,  
And I can pull my rabbit out of its hat, like a birthday present  
Of a metamorphosis,  
And she can just kiss me in the first and the second darkness,  
While all of the heroes, famishing, put down their swords  
And stop make inopportune love to their forgetful sisters  
Who always afterwards have to cast themselves  
Like a thrown away honeymoon topsy-turvy down the maudlin  
Falls of their aborted bliss.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like A Torpid Afternoon

If you decided to skip school where would you  
Go,  
Overpowered in your ideas to be alone—  
Coming along into her parks and comingling with  
The sunshine in the palmettos:  
While everything else takes awhile to finish  
Around her and so to become real:  
Like the ants beneath her, these are your playgrounds  
Too—and while you masturbate,  
With your lips busied upon her—what is your  
Thought—  
What a strangeness lies between you—she will  
Marry another man,  
And your teachers will not pay a cent to see the dimes  
Of your teenage tragedy: it will just become another  
Fault beneath the mountains—luminescent—  
Vulgarized by the commercials trying to sell her spirit:  
Then the heavens will melt off of her,  
And she will slip away like a torpid afternoon—  
And you will scald your hand in her dimension,  
Until it is time to come alive again.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Vermillion Errol Flynn

Can't clean where you've already started  
The cut,  
The hari-kari, the great amount of sea-shells;  
Or when the little girls step in from the beach,  
Smelling like salty confections,  
What could you even say to them,  
Imaging how you do the brush strokes of storm clouds  
Put in over the beach they only left minutes ago  
When the full day was out;  
But to settle down now into the misfit's yard  
Would be a sort of tragedy at the dusk of youth.  
Imagine rather, that there is still time to be a student  
With all the fine elements of this country being  
Shot down the tank. I can't think of a better thing;  
Or, being that you can't write or spell or  
Fix your hair like a vermillion Errol Flynn, then  
There is still time to learn those trades, or at least to try  
If it is impossible. She might be swimming naked in the  
Cerulean yards, any one of them, but lets not make much of  
That. Pick up what you know, and touch your face  
Lightly like an infant, like picking out a cantaloupe;  
And say now, is this the one? Surely it must be, for how  
Could we have any other with one so fine as this?

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Watercolor Left Out In A Sun Shower

Poems for grown up boys who still like the look  
Of their mothers:  
Hot rooms too without air conditioning- usually unusual thoughts  
Can grow,  
Looking up into the way she turns out, reasoning the air  
Like a deck of cards:  
And you can lie there and say that I am the prettiest boy alive:  
Like a wolf who's seen the dentist,  
Look at all my unknicked knives: I can pull Colorado anywhere,  
I can sunder her, and make her speak like a rabbit does  
Of endives,  
I can roll my words like a lover's fingers through her hair:  
I can make the azure in her eyes follow what I have to say to her,  
To cause continents and storm fronts that make her stare more  
Imperfect,  
Like a watercolor left out in a sun shower;  
And thus more beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Weapon Stealing From Its Kill

Night of twenty-four hours in twelve months of  
Holidays,  
Crooning in séances, sharpened on the wet stone of  
Spikenard's epiphany;  
And I can hardly even feel how the campus must have  
Felt like in your amber night,  
So late as to be early when the sky is so wet with  
The perpetuity of the milkmen of dew that  
Kites drown and kittens get stuck to their mother's  
Teats and they are too flabbergasted to mew;  
And you were just coming home through the rippling fog  
Dreaming of your boys like the first smoldering of  
A really grand procession that heated up through the red  
Bricks of your liberal minded canon;  
And I searched for you, and called your name through the  
Long standing drainage,  
And smelled your hair like a flag strung on a caravan on the  
Move;  
And I got all bothered and danced for you in a great wide  
Circle, like a glutinous spell, and remembered you name,  
And gave it to the darkness that would not dispel,  
Like curtains on a stage that refused to reveal, though I heard  
You everywhere, the play of your heart  
Rattling the thunder of my cannonballs, and making me  
Stomp my guts through the parks and playgrounds that dripped  
From your nooned shadows,  
Even while your laughing body eluded me like a weapon stealing from  
Its kill.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Windmill

How they turn golden, sometimes little boys,  
Others old men,  
Stretch from their graves into eternity, their theories etched into  
Papyrus read forever,  
Echoed into the classrooms of other planets,  
Spread out in lecture halls, scrutinized, worshipped,  
And mimicked,  
Decathletes for their seasons of breathing go on running  
After the sun is down, after the housewives have returned,  
After even their children have passed on in infinite  
Cessation,  
Those blessed men, the silky authors of their fate the stars  
Caressed and queens knighted, to whom mortality  
Is a pet always cherub and perfumed, led around when  
The thought requires,  
But to these honored few, exhumed every morning, stone is  
Not immortal, and the sky is lowered to a ceiling  
Their fingertips brush, and in each county they come  
Welcomed and fed,  
Perpetuating a rosy garden where women casually romance  
Them, preferred to their husbands,  
Or if not read, put away into hibernation only to bloom forthright  
When rediscovered,  
Or never discovered again,  
And left to the earthen echoes of us all,  
but for their time elegant gentlemen,  
Showing their anatomy to scientists and dreamers,  
Cheering for Olympians and taking prodigious notations,  
And when the book is closed, lying down,  
Praying selfishly for truer forms to extend themselves,  
To sneak up to the roof of this house and cry seeming to be alone,  
But the elements pricking them, awakening the hidden thoughts,  
The epitaphs which conclude their bright séances,  
As they ladle from the great unseen gyre supporting us all,  
Turning like a clock, like a hurricane, like a windmill.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Wish Of Saltlick

Night burns for a time its pornography:

A troop of snails endeavor to drink the sea above which

You are riding on winged seahorses that have just

Leapt from the waves who are themselves the teal lips parting

For your glistening ship of worship:

Then you are the thing to be worshipped: shirtless, even still

They let you into the store of thoughtful clouds who have been

Building up like evaporated carpenters a grotto

For your racetrack:

Your areolas have just as many years as you've had boyfriends,

And I count them,

For they make the ripples of two wishes I once had

Both for the same woman who for the moment seems to be

Leaping like a wish of saltlick of a promise straight over me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like A Wolf Over Her Stone

Evangelically short,  
She sat where she started:  
It was enough to rough me up,  
To see her ruffled:

And my bad side was as good as  
Silken lace,  
But my good side had been erased,  
Caracoled into the hungry sea;

And she scissored for awhile,  
Doing short hand,  
But had already made up her mind  
To jump the bones more mother of pearl than  
Me,

But the lady in the graveyard in the dressing  
Room of worms then dust,  
Wanted what good was left in me,  
Asked, already engorged,  
Why hadn't I come so she could put the words  
Of her gravestone in me;

And I lounged all alone like a wolf over her  
Stone in the great burned out center of the dead city.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like A Zoetrope

Vanishing in its place a pretty lie:

A tear shed by the angel whom had said she could

Never cry-

As a horse is held my father, as the airplanes

Fly into night

And night again- a page folded over into the spine

Of cannibalism:

And into the joys of flesh of busy mouths and

Busy organs:

Into the joys of ourselves perfuming the highways

In a night of parks and moonlight,

As the blue gills swam hoping to live forever

In the canals that moved so slowly

They were like a zoetrope

From the petrified forests of your forever heart.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like A Zoetrope Turning For Lovers

Day of everlasting just needs rest  
From prose and football games; those sad fingers  
That act delectably upon the shoulder blades  
Of opal treasures;  
And I said this all before that it was a trick,  
But I might just have been lying-  
I am no super sleuth anyhow, the days are dying;  
Or they are not:  
Housewives think so; they are in their kitchens  
Practicing,  
Just as their pies are baking in their ovens,  
And what of their husbands' doing? Who cares,  
Their daughters bright unawares fully showing in  
The last crenulations of the backyard pools;  
It seems as if something is burning gloriously,  
As if a present is being opened up;  
As if to us our first words were returning,  
Like airplanes that disappear into the crepuscule returning  
From a mailbox with its flag up;  
And the cities lay down and beg beneath us, and the houses  
Fold up, old lovers move away like origami drifting into  
Snow;  
And the seasons change, but this is the very same day,  
The very first day that I've known: a resilient cheerleader  
Changing gowns and looking pretty or sullen,  
Depending on who's in town.  
Either way, that gal is still putting on quite a show,  
The world revolve and changing the complexions of its hemispheres  
Like a zoetrope turning for lovers in her childhood's room.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Airplanes Across The Sky

I have such fear of all of these nothings  
Out in the open of another busied truancy of an actual  
High school—as the plagiarisms make their rounds—  
As the rainbows sing across the unicorns:  
As I know nothing about what is underneath her things:  
But I am thinking and drinking—  
As there are voices outside of my house—as my unwholesome muse  
Doesn't call anymore,  
As all of her kites get stuck up in the trees:  
Soon there will either be a fire or a hurricane, and there will  
Be nothing left to save us—  
But the same minnows will transmogrify—why do they have  
To do that tomorrow or the day after tomorrow:  
I will be drunk, and the flea markets will open underneath the overpass—  
And the same amusements that I don't know will swing like  
Airplanes across the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Airplanes Up In The Sky

Come to me through the angles of lost  
Science,  
Of how the pleasant men used to have to  
Look at the earth:  
Now there are no unicorns,  
And all of the counties are taking down the  
Highest swings—it has something to do with  
Human relations  
And the ways toward which the children  
Have disappeared—  
But somewhere in my house right now  
Lies an echo of your memory that looks  
Very much like you—  
I almost didn't have the time to  
Graduate high school,  
But the skulls are becoming further and  
Further unburied—  
And the angels are beginning to look again  
Like airplanes up in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like An Abandoned Infant

Ships sail on my glass,  
And I drink to them, and bring all of that  
Weather to my lips;  
The colors flush,  
And I put fictional autobiographies into their still  
Warm graves,  
Right next door to where I'd like to run my finger-prints  
Over your yet burgeoning crow's feet,  
Just as light polishes shadows upon fine silver wear:  
I keep forgetting to buy a Frisbee and test it out  
With my dog in the wide open bedrooms, the  
Angelic stadiums we sometimes call pastures:  
Where I dream of floating over your androgynous zones,  
Like a wandering spore, gusting myself over your  
Blushing shoulder blades, kicking my legs under your  
Puffed up dress:  
All of this just to blow out the candles on a birthday cake,  
Three centuries of flickering sunlight and the bulb is dimming,  
But not yet visibly. Very soon I will progress to the next  
Stage, like Janus' other face, return to the state where  
You live and try to interest you without all my faculties,  
As you embrace some other man's light,  
And bathe in it like a creature who enjoys the teeming life  
In the highest surfaces of water without knowing any name  
For it, dancing in your flagella and stringy threads,  
Coming undone but  
Making love for awhile filling in the footsteps of tourists  
After the tide washes in:  
All the while I will do this for you,  
And place myself like the bluest crèche, like an abandoned  
Infant, some holy b-stard  
Red and weepy at your door.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like An Engine In The Rays

Another day goes by doing what we're suppose to do:  
A house a car  
Out front of so many waves that you can't see:  
Maybe that is what is affecting me,  
Giving me tears as real as music boxes  
With their delicate gears. I am not old  
Enough to be falling apart, but I am not living,  
Just turning around in one spot with my arms raised  
As if I'm being held up,  
As if this isn't my house I am naked in before the  
Rusting dawn, with only my pets looking at me,  
My wife and daughter content and fully fed into dreams,  
Open electricity:  
I undress myself to you like the orchid-flower,  
An engagement ring not knowing  
What it does, not even having to be trained, and I imagine  
Your breasts too: nipped, Grecian sand dollars, vases from  
arms raised, like you are trying to  
Be a superhero doing good deeds along the gardens;  
Thinking that you are floating like a pillow thrown up by  
A willful child,  
And Ferris wheels and so many haunts we can only stay so  
Long in, because they are so expensive and unreal;  
But none of the tourists can see you like I perceive.  
Even fully in a desert you are my own mirage, and you turn  
Yourself around to me and the traffic hasn't even started. Soon  
Busses of school children slip in and out of the sea,  
Trying it on, and you seem to smile.  
Soon they will all be up, and the sun will be washing the waves  
Just out the front door. The mail will come, and the dead will  
Raise; but before that happens, I will drink of you what I can,  
I will overspill on your expensive energies. Maybe you will  
Smile- I don't know what you will do,  
But I will believe in you, running, even after your shadow  
Is gone from the breakfasting living,  
I see you turning like an engine in the rays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like An Erogenous Handshake

Could I kiss you for a better kind,  
Force words into you like the press of tongue;  
It has been literally years since I French-kissed  
An orchid counter-clock wise,  
Because she let me know, because she liked his  
Car and the way he was hung;  
Is the sting more of a tickle, now because  
The park is closed, there are drunken men moaning  
On the swings, pulling teeth,  
There are alligators unclenching in the torpid  
Green changing rooms, I suppose.  
When he lays on top of you, how does it make  
You feel, to not have to be force-fed,  
To take it in strides like a professional baseball  
Player- I've been writing plays with your legs  
In the center lines for so long. When I was younger  
I let Indians kill me for my grandmother in between  
Papier-mâché snowflakes hung beneath the  
Australian pines, before I knew that I did not  
Know you, or that I've never seen the shaded  
Complexion of the areolas under your nocturnal  
Shirt, or that I won't measure their circumference  
With the bone of my index finger to the knuckle;  
I've written over five-hundred poems this year and  
Published only one, but I am an author, and I signify  
You and put in my habitat with glass walls and shampoo:  
I hang you on my wall for a jack-off symphony,  
Echoing the high-heeled affair along the piss-stained hall,  
But I'd have a little bit of pride, if you'd let me  
Put my right hand firmly to the base of your neck,  
And hold you there like an erogenous handshake, sometimes  
The way red buds in a garden, what the bees get at  
I'd get with you, because I've published one poem  
This year, which amounts to first base,  
A little bit of foreplay, ring around the rosy, to  
Taste your taste buds while looking you in the eye  
With endearing honesty- When you see the novel,  
To lie you down and travel back and forth without  
Much reason besides the tourism of your few landmark

Destinations.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like An Eternal Yesterday

I haven't seen you in three days, so how  
Will you find me tomorrow,  
But the blanchness of your old man, who buys lunches  
For you whenever he can:  
Some kind of kind old farmer, making love to your eyes:  
Grey headed again now that the illusions that you so  
Wanted have washed out,  
But I still have both of my hands that have so well run over  
You,  
Like water over a kindergartener's lips, or from a fresh young  
Water fountain in preschool;  
And I know that you did all of your family's laundry today,  
And pinned it all up in your back yard,  
While you called me four times today. And I have to admit  
That I pleased myself as many times think of your heartbeat  
In my bedroom,  
Like a butterfly pressed up against a copper horn, knowing in  
Some small intelligence that it was going to die and  
Change,  
Like rain like clouds, or the airplanes passing through  
The promises of a rainbow; as I think upon you like an  
Eternal yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like An Immaterial Promise

Waves that weep in lagoons like homeless children  
Kiss the feet of stingrays,  
And look at me with broken glass eyes:  
I go through them spreading my wings and hoping for  
Impossibly sunnier days:  
I remember high school, reading Romeo & Juliet as a freshman:  
I look up through the wild scuppernongs and wonder why I cannot  
Be the fox that forever wants to crack her cheerleading  
Joints, and suck the marrows;  
And now the Mexicans are flooding back into the old country  
Of extinct Indians: They are celebrating Easter right in the neck  
Of palm beach,  
The lavish houses surrounding the lagoon like a cathedral,  
And I walk out alone and look up at what the sky is advertising:  
I think of her, all the girls who can represent just one goddess  
Folding clothes and baking pies for different gentlemen across  
The waves;  
Looking through the banners held in the teeth of clothespins,  
Maybe they can see all the way across the traffic to the park, and  
The little wilderness surviving there in the minutiae of their surcease:  
That is where I am crossing the shallows, fingers out like whiskers  
To feel the ripples she sends  
Like something that has suddenly gone away into a glowing bed under  
The knees of cypress; and I wonder if looking up from her bedrooms  
If she doesn't see me there, long jawed and hungry like a gaunt  
Zoetrope that stretches through the darkness of her window  
And lands like an immaterial promise across the foot of her bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like An Infant Of Terrible Daydreams

Narcoleptic, waving in their kelp skirts  
Who fall fat onto the highway,  
Bruised, unshelled terrapin:  
The traffic doesn't mind them, all their  
Breathing body parts bisected by the  
Yellow lines  
Painted by their overweight highwaymen-  
And the sun is doing its pushups,  
And I really want to cross the street  
Pick her up halfway and figure out  
The positions of her pinked engine and cranks-  
I imagine though, that her eyes are  
Oil tanks in full swoon,  
That busty cadaver- she makes me a loon,  
And the cypress thrashed with the red  
Tongues of air-plants, waiting impatiently  
For their pollinated lunch- For us to come,  
And she's still sleeping like a white godiva fish  
Tank- I would put her to my scarred  
Flesh and flex and wax unbelievably to her, like an infant  
OF terrible daydreams- while the school buses  
Rushed,  
And the housewives thumped in a fever dream of  
Jolly cabaret- and new cenotaphs of houses  
Went up straight on stilts all around us-  
And our old lovers melted away into their children  
Who shot straight up like thunder brush to college,  
While we remained in a time capsule of holidays,  
Watching the bird of time crescent straight above us  
Never losing its innocent color,  
Until there were wild ba\$tdard cities cradled on the crescent moon,  
And all the beloved dead in soft crypt-orchid  
Beds beneath our longwinded arcing swoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like An Otter On A Calm And Salty Sea

Your house is proof that you live here,  
But I still prefer to eat with the feral boys in their woods:  
The night in its bed chamber making love to  
Invisibility,  
The saints in your blue sheets as if your blue sheets were the sea:  
Walls of different color looking over the sea:  
Alma's soft brown legs curling in the caesuras, rising like  
Cenotaphs or mailboxes:  
Alma's beating heart a casino, a lucky streak down a ululating  
Row;  
Alma's children the nectar in a Hollywood garden  
Above whose innocent caps Alma's fingers winnow as she takes  
Michael back and forth to school  
Down Cherry row, where the crystalline animals play in the tiny  
Little gardens choking with  
Spikenard and scuppernongs, with the dogs barking;  
But Alma has a new haircut: Like a vast-hearted sailor Alma conquers  
The day,  
The cars and airplanes riding out before Alma,  
Until she closes the treasure chests of her eyes and floats to sleep  
Like an otter on a calm and salty sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Angels Over The Stolen Bicycles

I get up into the affections where  
The airplanes get so nettled,  
Like the city fallen into the forest  
Or my heart in the wires of the gutter—  
Then the stewardesses don't know  
What to do in the broken glass of  
The orchard:  
They seem to be turning around in mirages,  
Reverberating to the cartography  
Of the last days of her grief:  
She stands before me, like a housewife after doing  
The wash:  
The stars are done crying,  
And she flings herself across the canal—  
Like the angel over the stolen bicycles and anon,  
Anon, anon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Angels Purring In The Sky

Isn't every bachelor just as wounded  
With their dogs,  
And the cats making love outside:  
But I just keep singing my song, and the waves come lushly,  
Stupefied,  
Proud that another aunt is getting married, and I am going too:  
So that the rest of the family can have a look at my  
Scars,  
While I am going down the canyon's heart,  
And all of the world is falling away: candlelight dripping like  
The tears of lighthouse,  
An the airplanes are like angels purring in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Angels Rounding First Base

Mainstreams of white pages—the Mexicans play  
Outside, all of them remembering  
The frontera they needed to endure to get into  
Oz—  
The airplanes jump across their brown shoulderblades  
Like angels rounding first base—  
They can stare up at them even though they do  
Not know what to believe—  
And their wives can threaten to run away,  
But they all know that they will never leave:  
Those things that were made to weep inside of houses.  
The faithful dog sleeps at the foot of the bed,  
But she keeps her heart somewhere else,  
And I am left wondering if  
It is anywhere close to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Angels That Didn'T Really Care

Scarred into the apologies of my landscaping-  
While I was sitting at home and masturbating,  
And you were making love  
To anyone- like a stewardess doused in a ghetto  
The night that the college was all lit up,  
And the fields were crenulated with alligators  
Learning of the inventions of walking  
Upright with fire:  
Then I wanted to tell your husband how many times  
I made love to you  
While the witches were still turning  
Their soups of lost children in the soft pits of their  
Bread houses,  
The airplanes flying back and forth across the  
Heavens like angels that didn't really care.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Angels That Evaporated From Sun Showers

Every night is an echo and it  
Goes like this:  
Who have you been making love to:  
Who have you been making love to:  
Now slumber,  
And hush- and dream next to the black stove  
While the fire is just an infant  
The rains will smother,  
While the bees and the butterflies make love  
To the adulterous flowers,  
And under the first brisk match the baseball games  
Will pick up,  
And summer will start with its lawnmowers  
And jeweled dragonflies-  
And we will remember together kissing her lips  
At the zoo,  
Like feeding a lonely animal reaching through  
The narrowness  
That keeps it there, like beautiful women in their  
Bedrooms,  
Like angels that evaporate from sun showers.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Anna

Oh, what trouble I've begun  
Tonight; it says its 7: 07, a palindrome,  
Like Anna, like Anna, like Anna.  
I am fishing at the lip of the canal,  
And the land is so very flat, and dictionaries  
Are floating with torn spines from the  
Last hurricane; and the city is no longer  
Recognizable. I sleep under her still,  
And try and comfort her by telling her  
That he will come again and make things  
Right; but I know that he is gone,  
As I am going too, graduated to the west  
Carrying nothing but a thimble of crocodile  
Tears towards the spell. His classes are over,  
And there are new students, and the University  
Has bought more land, and there are so many  
Students not a single one knows anybody,  
But they are paying good money to learn something.  
Then at night, she has wondered into the bar,  
And all the men are drinking, and looking at her legs.  
Just a couple blocks over, where the land is very,  
Very flat, the dog walks under the swings in the  
Park connected to the elementary school,  
Where there should be lovers, where I swung with  
Her and then away, for now there is nobody.  
She has new dreams, and starts out upon them by  
Kissing him, and taking his name; perhaps,  
A palindrome, like Anna, like Anna, like Anna,  
Or any other.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Another Animal

If the day yellows, it sings to her as it curls up,  
Winnowing its airplanes who are coming down  
Like whippoorwills of dreams  
To fasten to her hair, and sing to her of secret springs  
With epiphanies of animals lapping there:  
They are all there, like a zoetrope of astrological signs,  
All the possible loves of her life,  
A rest stop up in the woods my mother took me to,  
And never once while I was there was I thinking of her:  
This new girl, this thing or muse that I have made  
Love to for these last eight months, who sings to  
Me from so far away and then, like another animal  
Migrating with the sun, and happily distracted from her  
Way home, goes out of her way to put away my fears,  
Coming over after it is almost done, and makes love  
To me.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Any God

Whatever joy that there is walks the streets  
Down to the rose garden  
For a single tear- or an uncoupled word beside the  
Church, as blue as she is-  
She cannot fly- There she is, waiting in the flesh of  
Her birthday,  
Because that was all that I could write for her,  
As the days held over as if in a traffic jam-  
Waiting for her with the cloisters of honey in  
The apiary made out of a dry rotting home,  
While the cross  
That they held up to her muse vanished in the waves  
With the rest of the Indians,  
As the wet sea horses came upon the land-  
The trucks and the iguanas watching them, inside the little  
Places in which they were left- and I was there,  
Armless, captured by her blue eyes upon a carpet  
Or upon a canvas invented for her,  
The pain I was feeling for her like any god that wasn't even  
Real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Apple Orchards Sunken Into The Sea

How are our soul jettisoned by this gravity—  
And the classrooms of our behests swarm with infections of  
Insects—  
I remember slipping beside you on a swing underneath  
The helicopters as the day moved like  
A Ferris Wheel, and then carrying you on my shoulders  
Into the sea—but I am like words on a tongue  
That cannot speak—That is why I failed you,  
And why I come out only at night from underneath  
Overpass my father flung me under—  
And wounded, cry to you of these pains, though you  
Are like a fire galloping up hill and away from me—  
Or like an arrowhead shot and stuck into the imperturbable  
Flesh of a giant doing pinwheels in the sky—  
Maybe he is the one who has stolen you, giving you  
As a heart to a coliseum—where I imagine you,  
Beating away—languishing and cooking for your children,  
Your reflection like apple orchards sunken into the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Beautiful Serpents

Now I have a blond and you have a blond,  
And my house is clean and it has two bicycles outside  
Laying in the zoetrope of dancing moonlight  
And something else that cannot possible be seen:  
While my father if figuring out horses in another world  
Of ghost sheets,  
And the salient plans of the uncountable bodies that no longer  
Move,  
While the momentum just keeps pushing us on the swings,  
And the eyes widen engorging like beautiful serpents  
Something insatiable and hungry for us to learn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Beautiful Siamese Twins

The children who didn't live for real  
Are hidden in September,  
Or in the graveyards with all of the defeated generals,  
Or with unicorns too- I know:  
The housewives who don't bat an eyelash but who take  
Their sexy stance out from my toy chest,  
Swinging their hips beside the diamond pools  
And beneath the gaunt and sexy cenotaphs of airplanes:  
And I have had dreams in which I was beautiful,  
And in which I was with Alma too:  
That I was Alma's only boy, and only ride:  
And we laughed long and naked along the lonely country  
Side,  
And we both had the guts to summit and see the righteous uprising  
Of god's glorious epiphany  
That shot like an arrow on fire over the enemy's wall,  
And tore down the steeples  
And felt all of her flesh: she who could not be avoided:  
She who was all that we were fighting for:  
It was our manifest destiny,  
And we were selling fireworks while our hearts still beat,  
And the sea drooled on each side of us  
Like beautiful Siamese twins who had no one to answer to.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Bicycles Sleeping

Acrobatics in the crypts,  
Cribs of tomorrow—  
I sing to you as song birds over their  
Cannibalisms,  
Joyful that no academics or housewives  
Will have to awaken tomorrow  
To hear these things:  
Like the waves—there will only be  
The backwards rush of traffics,  
Of school children who are having trouble  
Breathing off again—  
And pet cemeteries underneath the newly  
Mowed and verdant sky:  
And people making money,  
Or coming across from Mexico to make money:  
Like children going to  
Sabbath school, like bicycles sleeping in  
The shallow estuaries of the canal—  
Not knowing where they have gone—  
But singing softly to no one in particular—  
As the airplanes and the angels fly so high that  
They cannot possibly hear a thing.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Birds

Sometimes when it rains in my dreams  
You come to me through damp oak trees,  
When the day is but a suggestion of  
Grandfather's light smoking between the leaves.  
When the sound is soft and pattering,  
You sashay towards me in your mother's cotton dress.  
We dance together in a falling world as  
The showers rattle down through the  
Scribbles of sleeping limbs, we too come together  
After daylight has gone out and moonlight comes in,  
And the weather abates and watches you in my arms.  
You grin like a woman who knows who she is,  
And I kiss you and taste the dampness of your lips,  
Like tiny wet oak leaves beginning to burn.  
Holding you, the world just turns and turns,  
And on the swings we hold hands and  
Fly for a little while just like birds....

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Blind Men Imagining A Diamond

Secret fountain listening to the hummingbirds  
In the garden:  
Build at right angles to her trinkets-  
Thick with the amoebas of tadpoles  
Bathing in green membranes  
The traffic could never think of intruding,  
So when the orange fell it stayed there  
And rotted,  
As the waves danced over her shoulders,  
And she lay in peace,  
As the roses whispered, sucreasing from  
Her grasp,  
And the mollusks opened up to her  
Like blind men imagining a diamond.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Bright Sunlight Underneath The Moon

Muse- I want to see you wearing barrettes  
In Paris-  
Alma- rings of golden satellites between brown  
Knuckles-  
Warm sweet kisses underneath broken school  
Busses- Alma-  
Warm sweet places, like hot clay in  
Art class- and easels waiting in the broken  
Monuments of honeysuckle daylight  
With saw horses underneath open hearts:  
The way the wilderness waits across the canal  
For you- Alma,  
To step into the crepuscule of the burning sugar canes  
At the dead ends of suburbia,  
To leave the senses to go to sleep behind you,  
And to start our barefooted, your feet  
The size of toy boats, as you exhilarate the heavens  
And pull them down to examine your own heavens-  
And they see the truth to your passivity,  
As the canoe lays tinkered up to the bank, underneath  
The holly you left behind  
Being given little kisses to its throat by tadpoles  
Whose only hope is for metamorphosis  
To join with your heavens- to bask across the  
Fields who grow rich in the antediluvian things that  
Evolve in your longing classrooms-  
They follow you- muse, as you go leaping,  
Caramel- muse of honey and applesauce-  
Like bright sunlight underneath the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Brighter Things

Diamonds in the daydreams and rain clouds  
Of your pugilistic heart-  
While I'm just trying to survive for you by  
Swimming,  
And the long journey is told to the desire of  
The opened throats of reptiles  
Who are carnivores, and waiting for your stores  
To open-  
And what lights when they do! Why, I don't  
Suppose you could ever be  
More surprised- all of this talented stuff they  
Keep heaped about the mailboxes  
Of trailer parks- and then you have your  
Old love,  
As now you have your new love,  
And now this- and won't it be a beautiful wound  
When you have something else-  
When we have to try for just a little while  
Underneath the national monuments who  
Are headed into the sea- like  
Sea monsters:  
And this is Halloween, and you are not here, Alma,  
But you are out on the streets with your children  
And with your sisters,  
And I wonder how long you can make me believe  
In falling continuously for you-  
As the lights know their own cathedrals and  
Stadiums, and go to them like schools of  
Minnows, wishing that they could grow up  
To survive like brighter things in another world.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Butterflies

I cannot remember how I have not slept beside you,  
Bottle rocket across the canal,  
Leopard without any spots—  
Above me, just the tan elbows of airplanes—  
The soft joy taken across the lazy, one-eyed river  
And made love to  
While the girls and the boys are at a completely  
Platonic picnic,  
And grandmother has been preparing for  
Christmas—  
Well, school is out and the prospects the baseball  
Game are not half bad—  
We can only move upwards from here:  
Seeing there is so much joy in airplanes leaping,  
Like puppets being thrown up to the sweet armpits  
Of god—  
And me languishing on the cinderblock steps,  
The soft pattering of the bullfrogs—  
And the snake curled up underneath the hollow,  
Belly filled by kittens,  
The housewife in her negligee doesn't know—  
The aloe tingles like wind-chimes expectantly—  
The world of yellow nimbus,  
The fruit of wind-chimes,  
And the long bus rides home to think of these  
Things while the children whisper and grasp  
Like butterflies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Butterflies Wilting Onto A Flower

Every valley has its song,  
Its fruit indented in the balms of beautiful girls who  
Have gone to sleep to early:  
Like every child has his world, and if he is lucky  
Bicycles and worms to sacrifice for fishing  
While you are in your house tonight,  
And it makes me laugh to imagine you naked  
Save for roller-skates because where you live that is very  
Difficult,  
But even more beautiful: That your every night is a church,  
And you have already killed me like a sacrifice for breakfast  
Like butterflies wilting onto a flower even while they  
Are mating.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Candles Are Held Up To Wishes

It feels rich, these foibles of camouflage,  
Making love at the races, grasping for one another's hands  
While the butterflies are torn like empty tickets,  
As the fabulous tenements burn up to the skies,  
As the dogs run free and naked over the yards where the  
Cars don't even park,  
So who's to say, Alma, if soon we once again won't be  
Making love,  
And holding each others eyes up to our lips like candles  
Are held up to wishes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Cats Who Have To Put Things Down

I pay for anyways: and I die, or I go  
To lunch:  
Skipping stones over the haunches of bicycles, while  
No one from my school can remember me:  
I cannot remember myself:  
I am selling Christmas trees: Now look at this pretty crowd  
Lost in the chalky bleachers before the hurricane:  
What do they have to say for themselves:  
They are just as numerous as the stars, even as they divide,  
And the sharpened tips of every wave,  
Colliding, returning to the shoulder blades of their sorority:  
And perhaps some lines are good, but it  
Is too made up,  
Like frantic legions along the white walls of some moon attired  
Graveyard,  
Panting like cats who have to put things down-  
And black people skipping rope and making promises of  
Banishment all across the wispy tenements and gunny smoke of  
Some woebegone and waylaying ghost of a town.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Chariots For Little Girls

New scars tarrying where they will- always, always tarrying;  
And I have had my fill, and would have found my unrequited  
Love returned and returned  
Bright and spendingly in bathtubs and pools, in the open day  
And in the open Bible of housewives,  
Except for these excuses I have somehow unwontedly given to  
Myself,  
So that I could sing alone, casting the last sweet breath of  
Mine out into the darkest contamination of the most  
Poisonous of mines; and so I sing  
Like a homeless man watching after puppies in the shallowest  
Of gutters beside the traffic:  
I sing like a rattlesnake to the kittens in their bag given over  
To the weeds and the pu%sy-willows  
Where the murderers lay relaxing just some feet from the pretty  
Lilies,  
Where the frogs sing they too coming up from their metamorphosis  
Amidst the sticks in the mud;  
And the airplanes sing high above them like bottle rockets with  
Feathers,  
Like chariots for little girls and their beautiful mothers.

Robert Rorabeck



## Like Children In The Sky

Looking up now—children in the sky—guts of butterflies  
Over flying saucers: kissing cousins,  
As high schools reopen and spend their afternoons  
Weeping in the fabricated existence of adolescent wisdom:  
And all around the blooming tombstones,  
The housewives circulate: shopping and coming to  
Check the pools, but there are no stanzas in their eyes  
And unrecognizable words hurt their souls—and that is why  
I wait right here—masturbating in a park in just the right  
Corner underneath a cypress where they cannot see me,  
Where the light pools, skipped off the underbellies of airplanes  
Cutting so sharply that they make the earth squint like a  
Diamond—and before it is over, she is already gone—  
Gone into the earth like a womb that gives her bouquets  
And addresses her with the epitaphs whose only wish is to  
Remember her name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Christmas Trees

This is often the summer, or the way the housewife  
Feltâ€leaving herself beside the  
Long necklaces of the poolsâ€while the diamonds  
Sparkled off of her and her armpits,  
And the alligators waited downwind from her:  
Yes, they were lesser godsâ€;  
As her youngest son skipped school and lit off fireworks  
Atop of the roof just a few doors down from herâ€;  
As they carried up furniture to all of the heavensâ€;  
And the canals sang torpidly to their own amusements,  
And to the space rockets farting off retarded into  
The skyâ€;  
Here are the spume of her cathedralsâ€;her areolas  
Lapsing sensuously into the caesurasâ€;  
As her canals become overcome with the raptures  
Of the churches she can no longer feel right to  
Attendâ€;they illuminate her and make her a cathedral,  
As, however, her swiftest hero is surely coming  
To meet herâ€;fighting off all of the monstersâ€;skeletons  
And werewolves regenerating on the other side  
Of the bends of the catacombsâ€;until she crosses the  
Canal to meet me, and we kiss full mouthedâ€;  
The tortoises languishing there, like Christmas trees  
Underneath the tents of things we still have to sellâ€;  
But for a while we are safeâ€;in the sidelines of the  
Amusementsâ€;as the airplanes swell  
Into the skies until  
There is no more room to moveâ€;and we have to meet  
Her eyes even though the lamplight is turned to  
Meet the gardens of another man.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Clockwork Skipping

Pillbox of hammers upon hammers—multitudinous,  
Exponential—missing items of the missing heroes—  
And in the morning, as bright as yellow,  
The busses overflow with school children,  
Wayward and yet knowing their destinations;  
All at a loss as they travel out upon the field—  
What weapons will emboss their shoulders, what shields  
Both big and round—  
They do not know how defeat their enemies,  
But for the next four years they will have to learn  
To confront them, as their hearts work like  
Clockwork—skipping over their fears like chess pieces  
Making for the safe angles hidden in the invisible wings  
Of angels that seem to sleep forever and forever  
All over that town.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Cloud Buried Under The Stone

Going to bed through the brightness of clouds  
Blearing like kindergarteners wearing orange at the pool:  
Bodies unscarred, just plucked from their mothers  
Who think that the air-conditioning is a natural occurrence:  
I stole so many trinkets in kindergarten:  
I stole the entirely jubilant rug: I stole it for Chelsea  
Because I was a kindergarten thug:  
My mug was crooked but golden: my grandmother took me to  
The palm beach zoo and science museum:  
Now my grandmother sleeps like stones under the clouds:  
Her body ruptures, and her hair grows like clouds:  
Beautiful women from India wearing their chemise- Wash naked  
Next to the jaguars and the cheetahs, walk barefoot and naked  
Across the wide open cemeteries:  
So brown and cool, like perfect mud slipped through the fingers  
Of a sculptor,  
While the airplanes burn and gyre so far up above;  
And looking up, I wonder if they can even remember her:  
Who she was,  
While the earth turns like cooling marble- not as pretty as it was,  
Or prettier-  
While girls from India look up with eyes from all of their lives,  
And my grandmother still grows like cloud buried  
Under the stone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Comely Hallucinations

Despondent mayhem, all of your super heroes  
Are losers;  
And now I hate you, and take back all of my bouquets,  
And I wont sell red roses:  
I take them back, and keep drawing rivers on my desk  
That go outside of class,  
And icebergs that sink beneath your skirts:  
You sit inside me still, burned like all that is forbidden into  
My eyes. I stare straight forward while my friends  
Go off and roller-skate and make love in pet cemeteries,  
And still you come up  
Like a bad rumor; and I want to starve myself until I find  
Myself alone at night by the light that has been declassified,  
And now is darkness;  
And I want to return beside you to the classes that are no  
Longer real, and I want to touch our disbelieving and put my fingers  
Around one of your ornamental joints,  
And laugh in the shallow basins of a bird bath.  
Just to do that thing, thinking of you in the reasonable somnambulence  
Of what we all supposed to be real, or hoped along as cripples  
When we were still young and unconcerned about seeing what  
Hemispheres lay like comely hallucinations spread out like  
The blankets of lovers from the summit of unobtainable mountains.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Cormerants In Luxuriant Hell

Black men sleek and creaking through the woods-  
Twelve percent white men because their old masters  
Were up to no good-  
Maybe a little native American according to their  
Taboo, but that is lucky toothed rubbish-  
And today we sell gardens on the carport of fifes,  
Older young men and young older wives:  
And the sky, why wasn't it just the witch's sacrificial  
Knife: and yards and yards of cystic clouds,  
And young born strangers richly accorded: We sold  
Them an entire garden we wish we could have afforded:  
And I jogged alone at night beside the canal;  
And in Arizona my puppies howl- but our harpoons  
Found the angels and dragged them purple hearted into  
Our balmy garden sale; yeah, like cormorants in luxuriant hell.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Corpulent And Boisterous Tourists

My mother didn't realize that this was  
A satire,  
Growing up and worshiping Satan in the white  
Flowers,  
The moon like smut over her pale shoulders:  
Maybe she was a fish,  
Or maybe I should not be singing anymore, seeing  
All the wrong I have done,  
All the cars I have crashed- They said after the  
Evils and the journeys to the secret skating rinks  
Down deep in the basements in the  
Middle of high school, they had to put my face back  
On like a kaleidoscope,  
And all the meanings of affluence escaped my lips,  
And the pretty girls no longer loved me;  
But I still want to be the chief of some beautiful little  
House,  
Like a little country between Spain and France,  
And I wish to grow grapes; and more than anything I hope  
To see her riding out through the day, this beautiful reason  
In no need of any other occupation,  
But to enjoy the songs I sing to her, to watch me swordfight  
Amazingly with the mailman,  
And then to touch her in the copious darkness of our lover's  
Box,  
Mobiles and ceiling fans spinning,  
Her womb like a roadside garden of tulips my lips attend  
Like corpulent and boisterous tourists.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Cremations Into That Air

They made their persuasions at his elbows—  
Like mongooses in a used car sale,  
And I remembered her as I worked alone  
Before the sun's blindness:  
Attributing thought to her, trying to call her to my  
Bareknuckled shoulders in her absence:  
She used her other senses—followed a dog underneath  
A Christmas tree tent and fell asleep in  
A forest that couldn't drink—  
Beside a canal where the iguanas and turtles teamed  
And the black men and Mexicans lingered  
Their hair and fingers intermingled with the ants  
Who slipped down to see the blue gills  
Drinking their fill on either bank—as the airplanes  
Rose like cremations into that air.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Ephemeral Roses

As if the very wildflowers were your family:  
Alma, but I am still right  
Here, like a rattlesnake with a sweet tooth for your  
Woebegone ankles,  
And it feels alright to lie that I wont bite you:  
You only weigh one hundred and ten pounds and you  
Are really a sight, especially when I can lie down  
Across you like a buzzard on its eviscerated  
Highway and make love for eons,  
As the moon showers us with the preposterous and light  
Hearted gifts,  
As the lines end and begin again, underneath the Indian  
Monuments of the earth,  
The stone rainbows, or the ways to remember you own kind;  
And to just kiss your lips again in the semi-permeable  
Atmospheres underneath the overpasses of any kind of flea  
Market would feel like it would be enough,  
As quarters are enough for the homeless regiments surrounded  
By the eager cannibals,  
Lying down after dinner to sleep with the man of your young;  
And it all seems to bleed away into other immortal promises  
That you swear you will no longer read:  
But the Virgin of Guadalupe remains your goddess,  
Remains my goddess,  
And the fires in her hearth of promises are like ephemeral roses  
Whose burns are very real.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Ethreal Chorus Lines

She is buried in Bellfontaine:  
The cars stroll like rain washed gentlemen,  
Or above her the oaks whisper,  
They don't say a thing, and this is not  
Ariel, Sylvia Plathe's immortality,  
This is not even her kitchen, or a customer  
Who might have entered into that endless foray  
Upon spick-and-span linoleum; but it wonders  
Did they keep that oven of a guillotine in someplace  
Sacred and higher up, as in on an alter, and why wasn't  
She anointed as a saint? I can see her from where I stand  
In the shade of the broken pines; but she goes forever upward,  
Her neck dissolved by the hand of god compressing her like  
A brutal lover, holding her like the trunk of a Christmas tree:  
She should stay with him forever, signifying the thoughtlessness  
Of the pre-suburbia now passed through. Everything has gotten  
Bigger, but only in the common sense, for she has dissolved  
Altogether like a tablet of a pill, or given birth to a thousand  
Doves hatched from a crèche at her breasts: I would have made  
Love to her, if given the time, and compared scars, if she'd  
Lifted me up those fretful cliffs, and laid me there like a child  
Her head happens upon, stuck there sideways above the ether  
And the multitudes of cars, watching the convection waver  
Like ethereal chorus lines of baking apple pies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Fattened Lizards In Your Body's Song

Windmills disposed to know they are necking,  
Like flowers breaking themselves,  
Looking up with glorious beauty but no wonder  
In a hillside of towns which is desirously  
Helpless;  
And you are there, plutonic, with eyes like the minerals  
Of blue jays,  
Your children with popguns and candies too beautiful  
To eat:  
The traffic swims and your lips move, and I try to  
Match them  
In the hemisphere of smoking cannons,  
Heavily breathing; I have never touched  
You unwontedly, but I should like too:  
Upon the swings that always move predestinedly;  
The song I put off to you, like a lucky curse silly kissing  
In the palmettos;  
Like the still life or pieta of an unsunken grotto,  
All the proof I need in the absolute absence of shadows in  
This courtyard;  
And I am underneath you, like a cat purring while the  
Stones are basking like fattened lizards in your body's song.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Fireworks For A Blind Man

So hard is the disillusion of the body—  
The miscegenation of time and gravity,  
The wilting of Disney Word like wet,  
Old wood into the peat bod—  
Eventually nobody gets up,  
And the robbers lose their gold—  
What is left of the world gets beautiful by  
Itself—and heaven happens like a fireworks  
Show for a blind man who disappeared  
Many years ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Fireworks Upon Their Knees

Burn my soul in a hole—in a hole as deep as a bucket—  
As a bucket waking up on Sundays—  
And teach me—teach me to rhyme and sing like a king—  
Like a king come Tuesday—  
Come Tuesday, with all of his busied alphabet  
Spilled upon the shore:  
And it just doesn't have to happen until—until she is  
Beautiful—  
With the pallid fish in their buckets—like knights hanging in  
The trees—  
Until all of the story is beautiful—beautiful—  
The most beautiful parts running alongside of the highway  
And kissing—kissing her up her knees—  
Knees-

(In an uneven stretch  
In Miami—  
In the shoulder blades of the evangelical tr—  
The coral Castle in Mondays—  
Like fireworks upon their knees.)

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Fish In A Young Aquarium

Washing away the salt from your lips,  
Bending over the drinking fountain in the hallway  
In the middle of the day,  
Lost in a daydream—you don't wish to be taken  
Back to class—  
Blessings swimming around your perfumed joints  
Like fish in a young aquarium—  
This is all the beauty that I've learned to have,  
And it disappeared into some classroom abandoned  
Half a lifetime ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Flowers Beneath The Sea

Somnambulant and shut out of doors and  
I am still hungry,  
Waiting for her truth to return home against  
The current—  
The cat is waiting for her too, but for different  
Reasons,  
And the students pretend to read books  
I haven't assigned to them—  
And all of my scars collect into as kaleidoscope  
That they think is best kept indoors:  
These are the same spirits that I show to you,  
As I read about zombies by the  
Light of a living room that has been sold so  
Many times—  
As I remember his hands building through  
The dead homes of the seas corals,  
Trying to make something beautiful for you out  
Of corpses—but soon you will be home  
Anyways—if you learned your way passed  
The wolves in the apple orchards—  
As I pressed the swings into the empty cathedrals,  
Like the fish stamping their lives into the heavens,  
Their gills like flowers beneath the sea,  
Wondering as they did so if there wasn't any other  
Way that they knew to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Folded Paper

In the sunlight in the morning  
The cars shine without riders in the chicken coop  
On Sunday they dropped off behind us  
A ways back into Church the schoolyards emptied  
Trying an ambush underneath the swing sets  
Down hill from the graveyards  
As the fires burned all of Arizona,  
And the rattlesnakes took shelter in your yard:  
In your yard, there wasn't any grass,  
But there was a pleasantness- the school busses  
Lingered after the butterflies and Indians were  
Gone-  
Liked sundials emptying their throats  
Out onto the lawn,  
Doubling back in chartreuse holidays,  
Their wives as yellow as their summers-  
And they made love to her- or they pretended to make  
Love to her even after she was gone,  
Like paper folded paper and thrown across the lawn.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Footsteps In The Snow

Oh, longevity of a cathedral,  
And paper snowflakes wishing you were  
Here, just as stewardesses, yawning,  
Step out onto tarmacs,  
Like flowers in their high basins:  
There is nothing evil or  
Supernatural about them, and yet they  
Exist outside of books:  
You can scramble up the long side of heaven  
To reach them,  
And call them the verbs of epiphany:  
They will kiss you- They will even make  
Love to you for just as long as  
The lions roar:  
But then they recognize you as but a tourist  
Once again, and they take you  
Down from their suckling bosom  
And set you like a fox at the door  
Far from their orchards where their brown  
Stems grow,  
As the clouds cover up their summits,  
Like footsteps in the snow.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Glass Blowers

Words in the bottom of a brook,  
Counting stones and looking backwards at the fish  
Swimming up stream  
Changing classes in this part of America:  
Up in the sun: nosebleeds, airplanes,  
And stranded visitors who will die victorious  
While mothers sip wine in their yards  
And look across a street of roller skates,  
Entirely ignoring the heads of the serpents batched  
Into the landscaping and boiling their young  
Through the cedar chips:  
Moving in a particular void that burns with ruby light,  
In an entire city hypnotized  
And enjoying the somnambulating of a bed that weeps  
As the moths crowd the windows  
Slapping their lips to her like glass blowers who  
Will never reveal the secret ingredients of what  
They do not know how to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Golden Cornfields Wreathing

Antelope in the rose bushes  
Tangled around the slopes of tomfoolery:  
There they are, prizes lost  
For lovers,  
Underneath the infernal jet liners  
Who are going all the time  
To the orient,  
And leaving over the moon and the  
Pacific Ocean  
As the butterflies get lost in Mexico:  
And the stewardesses upon them become, somehow,  
Cheap angels of another  
Dream- and their pilots, like their demigods,  
Are underpaid but well nourished  
With their bottles  
The geniis have succeeded from:  
And the highways lie tangled beneath them,  
The wolves running freely-  
The mountains yellow and crooning  
With Chanticleer somewhere in the armpits  
And their antlered cuckoldry growing down their  
Slopes like golden cornfields,  
Wreathing, that the heavens shine upon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Goldenrods Towards The Moon

Travelling boys put to rivers—  
As cemeteries overflow the northeastern part  
Of the city—  
Where Sara Teasdale is buried—  
And buildings of red bricks tumble like donkeys:  
These age old canyons of the Saint Louis  
Slums I've driven by once upon a time  
On my way to sell fireworks for some bum—  
Where the moon cavorted over the golden arches  
In the fast food temple filled with black people,  
Where there is no Fountain of Youth  
For a thousand miles—  
And where the airplanes never touch down  
The stewardesses in their diamonds fearing the lack of  
Water, the way their eyes turn like goldenrods towards  
The moon.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Hapless Kites

I don't want to play around with you  
Again, around the parks of the dead railroads  
Or the willows of the murdered  
Girls: I have felt your brown skin in my ghostly  
Hand,  
And put it inside you like clay in a lost school  
Yard the children are abandoning  
Like hapless kites, as the weather floods  
Whatever existence that is there's to have,  
And they go away:  
Softly. Butterflies laugh at them, and the housewives  
Never look up to see how it is that their  
Children all but disappear.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Harmless Fireworks

Boss in the shellfish of my tears:  
You are playing the last minuets over our gravestones  
In the highest mines,  
And this is real, the smoking mannerisms of light into  
This work hyperventilating through the evergreens;  
And girlfriends in the blue tents shaving to look good  
For the cavalier gods  
Blowing their trumpets over their mountains,  
And stampeding in a fraternity through the shallow surfaces  
Of the heavens, like seahorses multiplying in the brines  
In the manifold cradles that smear like jelly  
Around the lips of the smiles of  
Crocodiles; as tomorrow there will surely be another sun coming  
Around,  
And the heroes underneath her embarrassment, cheering in the  
Golden camps that the bears intrude,  
Hunting like saber tooth for the lottery tickets and pomegranates  
Made up or wished up  
Like harmless fireworks sleeping in the atmospheres  
Of fabulously volatile propane.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like High Priced Traffic

Eye sockets tell the lies of high priced liars,  
S-,  
And the night is forever warm like high  
Priced traffic and piss,  
And I just want to live forever, S-,  
At the summit of your unobtainable kiss.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Honeysuckle Far Underneath A World That Any Man Can See

Overeager, through the per severances of  
Rainy theft- looking out  
Through the windows of the first house  
My parents ever had-  
Long winded, distended to the elements-  
As the night whispers of conquistadors  
Basking  
Underneath the Easter Baskets we dressed up  
For:  
Now I own my own house in a little world  
That doesn't belong to me-  
Eager to seize that telltale raiment that  
Lays scattered in the yard  
Like a marriage for the red ants- who see their  
Cousins in the holly berries,  
Or look up to the sky and say that is the thing:  
Will they ever reach the sky at the end of  
The yard, they wonder- they plunder through the  
Grass, and bare their heads to a queen  
Who kisses them like honeysuckle  
Far underneath a world that any man can see.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Houses And Their Tiny Swimming Pools

I think that you should come upstairs  
And drink with me,  
Because there is nothing else the doctor can do:  
You've already showed every young man in the regiment  
Your tits:  
The sun washed you amidst the clay-figured wild flowers  
Along the battlefield,  
While planes flew and plummeted:  
And the peacocks grew in the shady symmetry of what  
Seemed to be rainbows,  
Along the cut in the valley from which the mountains grew,  
And there the cliff dwellings and the ceremonies  
Of the perfected virgins who could become  
Stewardesses underneath the ornaments of birds of prey;  
And someone said there was just a little house off in the  
Forest of your hair,  
Back in the elegance of this unseemly painting;  
And from it a bride rode over the creek and went to school.  
The buses turned and returned and the sugar cane  
Flumed. The green copper cannons rolled in, and the wind  
Blew;  
And the beautiful girls went and then returned to their  
Little houses and their tiny swimming pools all of which was  
Hidden from view.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like It Always Does

Sun glints on the insouciant promenade,  
Yes it does- Like it always does,  
Like a queenly octopus who isn't ever afraid,  
Or just like javelins of burning lemonade;  
And the boys and girls does what they always  
Does,  
Get up and shave their peachy fuzz:  
Get up and get paid while the sun, their ever burning  
Mother keeps them warm in her oblique nest,  
And the oceans brush like tears  
Of a giant unlucky in love, the oldest and most  
Unremembered giant;  
Yet it does- Like it always does.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Jasmine In The Seances

Sleeping in the carport of the high school where I now  
Teach,  
All of the heavens out of reach- and my body filibustering  
For angels who will never learn-  
As the sky is a cathedral that will always burn,  
And looking up into her  
As the airplanes cross her skirts, and are in her hair  
As if barrettes- like girls famished in a  
Busied Eucharist,  
Waiting for the swing-sets to set- while all of the housewives  
Are getting wet- wet-  
And the jewelries around their necks, a Ferris Wheel-  
A midway above the notches of her clothes,  
Recoiling softly- dismissive as a single night into which  
The frog princes sing- sing of metamorphosis-  
Sing, sing-  
To the mirages in the desert- of words that have never found,  
Of possibilities never reaching the flesh of tongues  
Into a strange chorus where there are no gods exactly  
But there is a certain metamorphosis  
Of the daily thought: of how I can change into a prince for you:  
How I can lay out my raiment across the fields for you,  
In your legs of whatever colors you are:  
Over the mowed grassed and the trimmed hedges of ixora-  
Celebration how this has become a game without any  
Touchable rewards, just as if these were knights  
Adventuring naked, into the wilderness without swords:  
Or across the rivers who come grandly, cutting us out  
Of our middles,  
As we sleep as soundly as minnows drooled outwards onto  
Our pillows- into a popular world of our dreams,  
With paper snowflakes for our weathers- and paper airplanes of  
Our dreams:  
We come down softly as winnowed hoof prints into our  
Meadows, in the daydreams of our twilight  
Like jasmine in the séances of our artistic sleeping walking:  
I reach out to touch you, the wind marking my fingertips,  
The windows staring into the open yards-  
As the goldfish always see the truancies rising just as wildflowers

In the trauancies of our escapes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Jewels Being Put To Sleep

Standing out in the beautiful Pygmalion  
Wearing our purple  
Baseball caps- and the atmosphere as blue  
As an egg shell over  
Where she does: across the student parking  
Lot, the kaleidoscope of a truant's  
Memory dances,  
And the children skip on home, laughing  
With tongues cerulean:  
And I swear amongst them: that I have seen  
An airplane, like an angel,  
But I am left with only so many words to  
Describe her- and very soon even those few  
Things will evaporate  
And the yard will quiet like jewels being put  
To sleep- but I have no memory of  
What she does after that.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Katydid on Her Summits

They made love so many times underneath the silent  
Passes.  
The roses kept on growing right over the silently laying  
Prostitutes just where they had planted them  
That the tourists past everyday like headlights in  
The night, and fled to Disney World damming up  
The yuk yuks where the cartoons were always  
Kissing themselves and then falling down the jubilees  
Of the cataracts and taking pictures and eating  
Cotton Candy, like the Titans do with the clouds:  
And she is up there holding my last grave like a pill  
Box filled with the jumping beans possessed by  
Her ancestors- the train tracks of the impassable heavens  
Hollow resonating with her fever like the amber  
Tears of a forest passing down and dancing for the most  
Intrepid of tourists: the young boys with the longest legs  
Struggling up the mountains alone and well after midnight  
Daring to see what they will be turned into,  
Like rabbits leaping to kiss the lips of a rattlesnake:  
As she calls down to them her ever changing gifts:  
And they sit like kins for salt lick in the monuments of  
Her dinner table- breathless, and they lose  
Themselves up there above the forests and the butterflies:  
Their girlfriends calling up to them from so far below,  
They will never answer, because soon they will lose  
Their bodies like katydids on her summits, and then  
They will be dancing ever after in a zoetrope of the spirits  
Of the intrepid men, which is her business to be at  
Busily collecting.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Kindergarteners Holding Hands

Up- and upping the arrow-  
Gutteral throats in  
The Adam's Apple:  
I think of Vachel Lindsay and I want to  
Get hard ons and play video games  
Once again for  
Zelda-  
The arms of heaven in the orchard:  
Your sweet lips cast out to sea:  
And how many bottles has it taken to find you-  
So many action sequences in the deep  
Pornographies of the forest  
Trying to rub  
Out geniis-  
While Huck and Jim take on so many aliases  
Floating down the Mississippi  
Past so many fast  
Food joints- and the churches of  
Rattlesnakes-  
Until, back again in your blue eyes,  
The cascades of sinks and faucets-  
And, inevitably,  
The breathless orchards of the royal nonesuch-  
Like kindergarteners holding hands  
On another fieldtrip that they cannot possibly remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Kissing Cousins

So there is a home down from the  
Mountain  
Where there are lemon trees highly acidic  
In the moonlight  
Where wolves never tend to linger,  
And old, wizened teachers who sit out on  
The cinderblocks,  
Puckering their lips at the foxes and whittling  
Little dolls,  
As there is a broom in this sky above them,  
Sweeping all of their old wives to  
The horizons,  
But the airplanes are lingering- lingering  
Like kissing cousins to the weather  
Balloons of a sentimental birthday.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Kissing Your Mouth

Parks of windows looking out  
Into truancy and fireworks where all  
Of the blue birds are decorating  
Their nests in the necks of  
Cypress- or other beautiful words,  
I don't know- like kissing your mouth  
In the sunlight  
In the snow.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Knights On A Quest From Far Away

If you'll smile I'll believe there are  
Angels in Puerto Rico  
And not only cheap rum,  
And we'll find some way to evacuate the  
Airplane together,  
As our plans become dissolved  
Like virgins in acid—  
Even if the rainbow disappears and  
The better poets disappear into  
The civil wars of Spain,  
And you have no more time for me  
Right now—  
All what isn't eaten becomes pretty decoration  
For you on Christmas,  
While my wife sings in the shower,  
And our child who is a little boy we'll name after  
My father grows and grows  
In the oriental orchards of her belly—  
And somewhere the sun will rise along the  
Contours of the highway, and the little  
Runaways will feel like knights,  
Will feel like knights on a quest from far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Knives Through Birthday Cake

Jumping for joy, the waves jump above the fire hydrants  
And the sailfish jump  
As if pooled by the looming moonlight, or something about  
That night anyways,  
While a muse as old as kindergarten or at least as old  
As fifth grade  
Leaves her husband for a cheap captain of any other ship:  
While I remember her there on the shell rock road  
Counting astrological  
Mythologies of toads and washing machines- while I was  
Still working with my parents,  
And living in the trailer parks of abandoned nurseries;  
And all of my thoughts drifted towards her  
Like a cloud of pollen escaping to the petting zoo of  
A rattlesnake,  
And rolling over her shoulders for her to kiss me:  
And she kisses me one time,  
And swings with me: away, away, away:  
One kiss- Now she is with a new man and thinks that she's  
Been baptized, but it is too early to know,  
And her four children awaken beside her, shedding themselves  
Like katydids at least twice a week,  
With the palmettos cutting up the sunlight like knives through  
Birthday cake.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Lost Airplanes In A Week Of Clouds

Words like lost airplanes in a week of clouds—  
The sun upon the summit of another birthday,  
My grandmother with a soul of sea shells,  
And other words that seem to defeat themselves—  
Like lovers crisscrossed on their birthdays—  
Where the righteous men have to linger over  
The precipice while  
My wife thinks she is drunk and speaking  
With her aunt on the phone,  
The baby and other planets kicking inside of  
Her belly—  
And the espionage of another muse is kicked  
To the sea while the birds  
Like old people  
Turn into another hotel for the night  
Warmed by the armpit of  
Disney World—attended to and paying tips  
To the fiberglass angels  
Just to hear  
And to pretend  
That everything is alright.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Marmalade In The Shade

Going home and crashing cherry red cars  
Just like the verbs of puberty; while earlier that day there  
Was math and Lincoln Douglas debate and really great  
Girls who couldn't care a lick for me:  
And the bus came home like a faithful dog, but there  
Was no telling who was in charge:  
The cypress swayed like coy mistresses freckling their  
Shade:  
And my younger sister and I walked past the perverted doctor's  
House, and then we were chased by the dogs:  
I thought of bare-a\$\$ mermaids underneath the shallow bridge  
In the slows of the canal where the otters play:  
They have done nipping up the drops of coal-black persimmons  
Stolen from the house-wife's hard while she and her sister  
Were sunbathing quite nudely:  
And I told this all to Jordan or someone on the weekend, never  
Even thinking of going to church, just squirting with rum  
And the ululations of video games;  
When I really wanted to be with his sister, that daughter who is  
All grown up now;  
But she has forgotten all about me; but I don't know how when these  
Bridges to those houses are all the same,  
And you can take the walk out underneath the ceiling fan of pink  
Cadavers really any old day- and there will be the same old  
Otters in the green fires at play:  
And somewhere down the street the housewife and her sister have  
Stripped off from tennis are somewhere in the backyard;  
And yes they are spread like marmalade in the shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Melting Snow

There was the Alamo somewhere underneath  
The sun  
And forgotten boys underneath the sun  
And horses they would ride  
And rivers and flowers beside the river:  
Or just the daylight from long ago, while I was  
Trying to breathe somehow outside of  
The shopping malls  
Where I collected these things, or stole them  
From the busied, harrowed shelves,  
While all of the daylight was a go:  
And the houses that we all live in burned down  
In their rows; but after midnight,  
After the catastrophes had all come to an end,  
The wild jasmine grew  
And perfumed her nocturnal dresses that diademed  
Her hidden show: for years she was my secret  
Muse- even she didn't know- but she remains  
My muse and my lover,  
And I long for the sudden nights where our bodies  
Caress like melting snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Milkmaids Migrating

Don't even try, because she could never love you:  
Your words are for little boys; Kelly will never  
Write again,  
So its best you go back to manicuring for your little toys:  
Touch yourself in the window panes of your pain,  
Become naked for your cats and dogs,  
And let it rain alone in the rain;  
And she will kiss the boys of her various Halloweens,  
And she will be apologetic and understand how you have  
Collected the various figurines of her through your own  
Pains;  
And you will never be published again, but ride mutely through  
The interstates of such premature death;  
You will never be able to come up again for another sweet and  
Tender breath;  
And the orange groves will tremulate, but thankfully the  
Mexicans will come again to weed and hoe quite greedily;  
And she will fall in love again quite steadily  
And so will never have to recall again how you fell away from her  
Reminiscing, how she touches all the fully grown sperm again.  
Laughing in the creeks of her permanent university,  
Letting the rivers flow into rhymes again, never suggesting that  
She even pretended how to remember how your crooked logics flowed  
Over her like harems of heroes on their way to pull over the  
Dreamy sheets of cotton gins and hang overs;  
To kiss her mouths and swear again to be the heroes of her  
Soul for her; to wake her up and call her again to the birthday parties  
Of her childhood, in the concrete grottos she swam down from  
Wisconsin, like milkmaids migrating from the cliffs of Dover.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like My Dogs

We vend into crepuscule,  
And I think of nothing all that time-  
And my parents, white headed, dance;  
And my aunt, she dances-  
And then they leave me to myself, stealing my home,  
My shell- and they go out to eat,  
And I am left outside, while my dogs are in Arizona;  
But I have something that is fifty proof  
Stolen from a house today- but my belief is that  
Liquor is communal, and it is fifty proof,  
Like a coin, it can go down on either side;  
And there is a canal to the back of this property where  
The more than half empty failures of life proceed:  
There are two horses in this yard and they eat our old  
Tomatoes,  
And I am pressed up against this house to which I have  
A key but no permission,  
And the sky is wide and full of illusions, all those airplanes  
The old people sing there memories to,  
Or moan like my dogs for want of my:  
Like my dogs, I moan for you.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Nocturnal Daydreams

Words respond to lovers  
As the trucks move and move by themselves;  
And I went to California for a week and then two while  
I was very young  
Where there'd been forest fires; and I rolled down the parks,  
Just as long as you thought you could love me,  
But I didn't hold out:  
I couldn't be sure if I was really talking to ghosts.  
That is why I have never succeeded or stopped touching myself;  
It is the very sad reason why I am sleeping alone again  
Tonight once again  
In my daylong work clothes:  
I never take off my clothes now, slip into the comfortable nudity  
Of your better game:  
While, aren't you sleeping now with your back up against the green  
Man smoking forever your sweet young children  
Out from the crepuscule of the sweet young glades:  
It is what I know you have been doing for so very long-  
You break like the waves,  
And you kiss the glass chalice your wine without having any real  
Faith:  
That is why your sweetness perpetuates the wave machine breathing  
Like starfish forever in the shallows and the tidelands  
That are always sending out the chivalrous knights on their  
Unconditional quests to reach you and bring you back to me,  
Like grains of sand carried like freckles upon the foaming shoulders  
Of its unabashed tide  
As it moves between the countries of your bedspreads,  
And slips like the ethereal tendrils across the fluttering hemispheres  
Of your doors steps where you move back and  
Forth like the shadows of animals in a zoetrope pushed by  
Your motherly fingers to reinvigoration each of your children's  
Interests until they fall asleep  
Drooling the minerals you lactate like pearlescent syrups,  
Like nocturnal daydreams from their open and pleasant mouths.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Nothing That Was Even Ever Supposed To Be Real

Grey headed and nothing more like a  
Teddy bear,  
I have never fought fires;  
I just don't care to look out for cinders that  
Haven't yet changed their substance to the cooler  
As of dead relations,  
But I'll slide down the pole just the same  
For Christmas;  
I am never a sincere greeting card- I am the  
Ruined stained glass you might use to feed a curious  
Ball of coral snakes,  
If there was ever such a ball;  
I hide in my polyester blanket good for starting fires  
And swig my glass;  
I half perceive novels under this kind of ingendered  
Overpass-  
My mother pays the bills and watches movies as  
I jack off verbally,  
Orally: I want to kiss the lips of a butterfly  
And experience with it the changing rooms of humid forests;  
I want to be fine for a little while,  
Within reason,  
And then I want to die, become the paper falling from the  
Rooms of a beautiful girl's boredom,  
From Sharon's room, I think;  
I want to float all the way past her beating continents,  
While her little daughter suckles and gurgles like  
A tourist,  
Finishing off all of it, this muse that spumes like a natural  
Monument;  
And I fall across and into her shadow without reason,  
Like nothing that was ever even supposed to be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Opulent Mobiles

Teeth are hungry, and golden, smile:

Teeth fall down and cover with lips for awhile

Then teeth in rows like bodies sleeping, glaciers, pearls:

When I ache at night for you, it is through these tools;

And upon that I would stake my life even before

The dogs run in the gambling ellipses, and I know

I can never make it home:

These words are waiting in their air-conditioned chariots

For the drawbridges to come back down,

For the song birds to roost in our backyards when they

Have already changed color to match the sky so that they

Can fly above our rooms all day, and smile and sing

Those very same things we should like them to perform,

But can never be sure; and we smile with the pains of the goddess

Herself broken like dragon's fangs, like serpent's scythes

And made to muster her armies of friends across the furrowed

Ground:

They will soon be getting up and yawning, bodies of dolls in

Soft woolen surplices, whisking up the candles from the dunes;

And that is what the heavens are reflecting: all of this

Sweetened sorority of liberated moons, as they swish before us

In the satellited chorus, as they swim above us like opulent

Mobiles reciprocating for us in our waiting rooms.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Our Dogs

Clinging to the broken memories upon cowardly buses  
And broken airplanes,  
Like toys of shrapnel in the green yards fallen from the  
Astralplanes,  
And what am I doing but recreating my mother:  
What am I doing but picking up shells from the creatures  
I have massacred to show to your eyes  
In this butcher shop of daydreams we make use of all  
The materials:  
We make candles for one time virgins; and it is as if we  
Make contact with their eyes at great distances:  
And we sing to them the mute man's lullabies:  
We always sing to them;  
And we feed the dogs, and they lick our hands and  
We remember the places where we skipped school and  
Lived;  
And like our dogs we are satisfied.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Paper Cenotaphs

You are here- in the palm of my hand,  
Like a snowflake melting, like a butterfly I have captured  
And there is no words to say how I have killed  
You- and you cannot pay for your bills  
And you don't even know how to swim in your backyard pool,  
But there is still something from the moon you have  
Stolen and your nipples are still as raw and beautiful as  
Raspberries from your preschooler's suckling-  
As angels start to warm up to take a bath and  
Practice in the sky,  
And then you are over me like a park weeping over a butterfly,  
And my fireworks are in your pocket like paper cenotaphs,  
And the foxes and the bears are dancing around  
You dreaming that they have discovered fire.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Pebbles

Liquorless words there melting in the  
Sky,  
Down the same old avenue of childhood:  
Words that evaporated  
From angels- like the sweat of ice-cream,  
While the school buses turned around, and around  
As the days grew fat  
And in disbelief: and I had to look up into your  
Eyes again,  
Puzzled, affixed: there was joy in the freckles of  
The trees;  
And cops, and robbers, and fire engines that got up  
And swam  
Or went to school- my muse was there in the clouds,  
Abstinent  
The dry county of her shoulder blades spreading  
Across the sky,  
The airplanes kissing her like pebbles thrown in a laky  
Heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Pinwheels Over The Engravings

A path to a graveyard can seem beautiful while walking  
Down upon it—  
And there is a lake against your left shoulder  
And speed boats dancing and interrupting the respites of  
Swans—  
And you move through the swells of houses and  
Periodic apple orchards—  
Abodes of professors or musicians, and certainly  
People who have made enough to afford them—  
And the sunlight gets rich in the daytime  
Over the gravestones—spins like pinwheels over  
The engravings—  
And the dead who no longer have eyes can at least enjoy  
The feeling of the playgrounds of sunlight  
Where beams of it get lost in the loose foliage  
And seem to dance for a while like those mirages of  
Girls that never even pretended to be in love with a boy.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Postcards Of Our Romances

If I haven't seen snow falling over empty parking lots  
How can I become a habitual prairie for your séances  
After I have given all of my father money  
And all of my mother good wishes-  
The lions are roaming free in the Colorado, and the cars  
Will not start- In fact they have no need to  
And there is no better time than now to sit with me  
Before an empty forest where the insects are trying  
To breathe still nakedly, repeating their own  
Skins down her savage and bluish dresses:  
That they too have come up from the fires the houses of  
Tourists have stolen- and they wait for you like crystals  
In the naked armpits of empty parks  
As the moonlight sparkles down from the mountains  
Like postcards of our romances  
Or something you can buy without taking any time to  
Think about it.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Present Underneath The Christmas Trees

Stalwart Ferris wheel—now another  
Song for you: you are a mirage of a fairytale  
While I am selling  
Christmas trees—the patrons come in  
Underneath the palm trees and  
Buy Frasier firs from North  
Carolina and  
Michigan—at night we sleep in the trailer  
Whilst the rattlesnake coils up next  
To the rebar—  
And the horses run without a thought of  
Holding their liquor—  
Like the abeyance of the homeless men  
Up against the torpid cathedral of the canal—  
And this is just another song for them—  
While my muse has disappeared into the  
Hoof prints of her usual echo—  
Not a beautiful thing by any means—but  
She is with her children underneath the bowers  
Of orange trees,  
And that is all that matters, like tourists  
Underneath the billboards, like presents underneath  
The Christmas trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Quavering Hummingbird

Shellfish in the sea equating the ways in which we  
Came around the bases,  
Or all of the unspoken estuaries which carried or  
Received the vanities of our sea horses:  
While the grass grew over the  
Graveyards,  
And I waited to see what the sea would do:  
I waited all of this time of paper snowflakes,  
Stoking my make-believe altruisms to the windmills,  
Waiting to count out the hours  
Into the ways I wished to feel her underneath the common  
Flight paths of airplanes:  
While all of it was waiting again to start to strike out  
Even after the game had ended in a rainstorm:  
And we waited,  
Waited watching the bases of mud, as the school days ended,  
And the sun light out, and regressed in its own carriage:  
And we stood alone,  
Waiting for a miracle, while the evening living rooms  
Turned on their televisions- as from their unmoved yards,  
You could see what they were doing:  
You could see exactly what they were doing, and it all appeared  
To be alright- and even the angels appeared to be commuters,  
And they stood for a long while like quavering hummingbirds  
Upright against their monuments while the presidents  
Prayed and the rest of us wonder what it  
Was all about.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# Like Rainwater

While I was thinking of  
another girl's atoms  
and how even  
though distant from her  
I had touched her  
once or twice on the cheek  
and how bits of her skin  
must have come off  
like invisible apples  
and mingled around with  
my bits  
and all those bits dancing  
and have posotronic s-x  
before my eyes  
unseen ballerinas you  
were playing Little Red Riding Hood  
in a dark forest of books  
thinking of your high-school  
crush-  
you'd f- anyone  
and not even think about their atoms,  
just to get rid of me  
when I some dysfunctional Plato  
was content to feel  
the unfelt flesh  
of my dear love-dryad-  
from a distance  
let her envelop me  
with subatomic particles  
and let her eyes and organs  
revolve like hurricanes  
inside my head, a flashing  
galaxy of her parts,  
but I wasn't cheating  
you had to go get  
f-ed by some  
booky, hook-nosed nobody  
and I bet you  
didn't even think of

the tiny bits of him  
floating around your head  
in our bedroom  
you destroyed  
with his c^m  
overspilling your v-gina  
like rainwater in a  
barrel.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Rockets Exploding For The Fourth Of July

Fruit slipped from a Spanish vine-  
Looking up, I am here:  
A hold over, a fleck of gold and a snag from a river:  
Look into the horse's widening eye,  
And see the strange, petrifying visions  
That he sees:  
Rider less, worshipping a cathedral of billowing clouds:

Rattlesnakes coiling and coital at the edge of a  
River on payday.  
Wayward families and buses of school children going home  
From church, burgeoning at the edge  
Of the abyssal mountains:

Each time a rock slips off a cliff,  
Comes down to a grave of someone once breathing upon the  
World:  
The carcass of an octopus enveloped and husked into a cenotaph  
After eight weeks:  
It may have well have been a miracle, a famous scientist,  
A love letter:  
But dying, a tryst:

Here, in the burn downed garden of crypts and melted crayons,  
Satan takes off his pants and dances around,  
Kissing a plastic horse made to stand there according to  
The rules of man:

Like a teacher administering tests the school children  
Like a politician getting elected for a second term:  
Like a sperm whale eaten alive by crows at the knife edge of  
The city:

Lit by your eyes,  
The billboards of mascara,  
The little treats and carrion that chum the roadsides  
For the latchkeys and the school boys  
Who turn into werewolves at the smell of you-

Like rockets exploding for the fourth of July.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Roller Rinks Of Enamored Lighthouses

Think of true love  
And try a few lines.  
I know you are only in  
Kindergarten,  
But you are still old enough  
To live:  
While outside the cops'  
Lights go flashing like blue pigs,  
But even they are quited and  
Out in the sticks:  
Male and female cops making love,  
Passing limb through limb  
While the homeless people and  
The bad people easily get away  
On bicycles;  
And even now the sea is calling over  
To you; it is her who send the clouds  
As fare marksmen over the playground  
Where you swing,  
And she is building up.  
When she finally inhales it will be a long  
Draft,  
And she will want you in her,  
And the tide will go out, and even though  
You are very young you should go,  
Taking your time barefooted to get there  
With the homeless men and thieves  
On bicycles  
Or barefoot and alone  
While the cops are making love,  
Their lights flashing like blue pigs that seem  
To beckon deeper to the trees,  
Like roller rinks of enamored lighthouses.

Robert Rorabeck



## Like Rose Bushes

I've cried upon the rusting shoulder-blades  
Of the airplanes that  
Are not here—  
Going back and forth—  
All a glow in the statutory hallucinations  
Of a bivouacked—soldiered all together  
Of a dream  
Of a murder—  
Words whom are rolling off an inebriated tongue—  
A million miles and  
On top of mountains—  
Going, or trying to go,  
Like rose bushes where they should have  
Belonged-

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Ruby Stars

Upon a crisp shore of grass  
As blue as a cerulean egg stolen from  
Some bird too far away to mention,  
I will watch my mother lie down—  
Putting away her works,  
She will bathe in the tranquility of  
The valley—  
Hers is the beauty I work to perpetuate  
Even since she sat me in a library  
And read all of the wonderful things  
From her motherly lips—  
Oedipus' muse, I swear.  
I have made love to other girls not  
As good as her—  
And they have only given me so many  
Words to express my feelings—  
One lies waiting for me in bed right now.  
Maybe she understands I am drunk.  
But I will swing the bottle around again,  
As my mother lies there weeping  
On the other side of the state  
In a field of strawberries  
That have fallen into her grasp like  
Ruby stars of the horizon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Salt Stolen From The Hypothesis Of Waves

Turns out the world is crisp and golden on the  
Other-side,  
Rich like the rind-like geodes:  
All velveteen and thunderously yellow purred  
Down in the throat of the waves  
Ushering jubilee:  
And you can invite her family over to dinner  
Down in the pussywillows of suburbia;  
And all the things that will never be published,  
Nor will ever strike out can sit down to dinner  
And demure,  
Enjoy puissant fireworks and chilled watermelon  
For desert;  
But if you strike out that very night on the claptrap  
Bicycles of your very will,  
Maybe you'll find the darker things collected  
From your woods of mailboxes;  
Maybe you'll find out where the farther lives,  
Old boyfriends from high school you'd thought to  
Displace, drinking from the chartreuse chalices of  
Stewardesses they'd called down from the sky,  
Or were recreating little invested trips with on the  
Kitty cornered swings where you'd once kissed:  
Now that you are well settled in the holidays  
Of denouements,  
You keep your little Shakespearian silhouettes;  
But boys who live forever can rise up the mountains  
Straight from your backyard without enunciation:  
They can come at will and recite the night backwards.  
Your predawn will become crepuscule,  
And you'll have to s\$ck tit to save face, another sad  
Exodus from there, those sad boys chirping with the  
Amphibians and the stewardesses procured from  
High school, like salt stolen from the hypothesis of waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like School Kids Skipping Away To Nothing In Particular

Cannibals slum as rain streaks the windows  
Before el arco iris,  
And I have seen her turning to me like a beautiful  
Ship made out of the lumber of trees  
That don't grow anymore  
Except for in the rhapsodies of her eyes:  
There they grow and captivate little school hood boys,  
As the airplanes dye cast from precious metals allotted  
From the school boxes of our young trancies  
Build a tiara for her sainthood;  
And she yawns as foreplay and shows her teeth,  
Her incisors imbedded before her smile like the sharp  
Moon kindling for the wolf;  
And the firemen come out to greet her and lay down  
With the dragons after the busy work day is over  
And the wind is picking up around our little house  
The same way it does for school buses;  
And the mariposas dance and sing in her throat as if they  
Were teenagers somehow enjoying a ballet,  
And she lets them there, and purrs like a mountain lion  
As their pulpy tender wings tickle her all the way  
Down the avenue where her heart pounds again and again  
Like school kids skipping away to nothing in particular.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# Like Schoolgirls Around The Wishingwells

Life is a hell of a crippled youth:  
Drinking liquor, shooting guns, hitting nothing:  
Finding arrowheads,  
Kissing his mother, getting lost on the mountain going  
Down,  
Cursing under the blue entrails evaporated from  
The half-blooded Indians  
Who now live in trailer-parks cursing their ancestors'  
Tombs,  
Daydreaming of canals surrounding beautiful suburbias  
And amusement rides:  
Seeing how they go down like the sun,  
To die beneath the rubber chickens, hypnotized  
Like school girls around the wishing wells that cannot  
Carry a tune.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Sharing A Movie Theatre

They will dream for us in airplanes  
As it happens down hill,  
And I will sing alone forever, trying to  
Act as if I was beautiful  
While walking down an unmentionable  
Midway alone,  
Like sharing a movie theatre with myself-  
And you say you love me,  
But why do you have to say so from  
So g^d-d\$mned far away-

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Skipping Hopes

There are places where we have been,  
And to which the holiday horses have strayed, but it seems  
Like a long time ago,  
In a forgotten Christmas, in a forested glade:  
It seems like eons ago, as in our sky we see the mausoleums of  
Stars,  
All the happy go lucky children dispersed into a peony of  
Hibernating wombs;  
And it seems as if we were all here, lucky and going to  
College;  
And even when the rain was falling, and maybe when the leaves  
Were falling over her freckled  
Shoulders,  
Maybe you caught her for an instant with her bicycle propped like  
A statuary,  
Like a clairvoyant wanderer, like a hart at the edge of  
The diabolic wood;  
And she turned your way and shared your eyes;  
And then the sun burst over the crypts that cast the stony hearts  
Like skipping hopes across the sea  
That would soon have a mouthful of her tears anyway;  
And that was all that there was to say.

Robert Rorabeck



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And to which the holiday horses have strayed, but it seems  
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Robert Rorabeck

# Like Sleeping Jewelry

Rhinoceros coming into his own,  
Rising like the lilacs in the carport—  
Does he have a favorite color,  
As the little boy climbs the orange tree  
In the backyard to see the sunrise:  
He can see: cats sleeping,  
And little girls stolen like young birds  
From the nest: metamorphosing,  
Strangling like peacocks as they learn of  
Marriage—  
They have gone over the canals—leaping over  
Many of them, where stolen bicycles rest  
Like sleeping jewelry—  
Where they are now: they are across the  
Stories of many deserts—  
And the little boy peers and peers:  
He wants to go to the fair with them—he  
Can barely see them,  
But from this distance, they seem to be happy:  
So he goes back indoors just as  
The school bus comes,  
Because he prefers to sleep forever—  
And so he will.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Some Adolescent Giant Reaching Through The Clouds

Groaning like some adolescent giant reaching through  
The clouds—  
Spilling above the tankards that transit to the pylons—  
There is a stranger in my house  
Who comes to the eyes of my windows and  
Disappears  
Back into the gardens of the beautiful neighbors on the  
Other side of the road,  
As the girl who once was in my bedroom keeps  
Saying that it is all right to be here—  
And the giant steps over the fox trying to make love to  
The grapes—  
And this very night you put your head into his loins  
And he brushes your hair  
Not able to remember that you are so far away—  
Even though it you he has stolen away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Some Birthstone Whose Month Is Green

Awaken, deserted- the entire beach emptied,  
The castles drawn,  
Her lips tucked away in the car;  
And aren't the thunderstorms so jealous-  
I can't leave from beneath them they captivate me  
Entirely like some birthstone whose month is  
Green-  
Yes, the birds are harrowed- it's their own mistake.  
They only come here when their first lover turns  
Them away,  
Stops baking sunflower pies for them, and then  
Her mountains are all ice, and they aren't  
Even real-  
They are the things I think of saying to you if I  
Ever come into your new habitat without feeding money:  
That I care for you like an enormous rat  
Smiling with the boy tremulous from his lack of  
Sugar,  
While young goddesses in their bilious esplanades  
Bend down and their bosoms are filled with the rich grumbling  
Thoughts of gray kings- wolf daddies  
Who whip the tenebrous popets up in a soup full of chariots,  
But nonplused, return to the empty gains  
Thrashed across the sea;  
And these consumptious darlings take photographs to prove me to the darker  
Things in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Somniferous Tan Lines

He turned the ducklings blue  
And licked the rum from casks of my wrists:  
The monkey's paw opened,  
And we all got our dreadful wish:  
I wear blue angora when I am alone, I slip  
Into the fashions of the housewives under the  
Ceiling fans of mid afternoon feeding time;  
And the sailors come and pirouette with their  
Young dolls outside on my yard,  
They lay out like survivors, and I genuinely have  
Fine memories of them,  
Even after the ants have covered them up like  
Pagan slaves being led by mercurial conquistadors  
To put a stopper in their king sipping with the  
Heads of his queens under the parasol;  
And then all the coast is golden and full of houses  
And making us squint,  
And the rest of the surviving housewives don't  
Care about the waves, if only because they  
Are so much more splendiferous,  
And they feature all together one curious coincidence,  
And they are singing a song that will carry on until  
The end of America, and it signifies each and every day  
Of getting up and sending the kids off to school,  
Of stroking themselves simultaneously in the backyards  
Like little kids molesting Christmas presents before  
Their propitious day;  
And I don't know all of them, but it is enough to know  
Only one or two of them, and taking advantage of  
That special feeling, loving them all and the same,  
Like a colony or bouquets of inbred wildflowers  
Kept in the petting patinas of their deep bay windows,  
Bars striping them too like somniferous tan lines.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Spanish Fields

My sad youth can almost smell your  
Bolero,  
When there is nothing left to spell and  
Just lightning stores;  
And I have been in and out  
And in and out of Arizona and New Mexico;  
And that is where my dogs are now in a lightning  
Storm:  
Tonight I looked at her youthful body in a room  
Almost full of crepuscule,  
Like a guitar in Spain, what the artists  
Accumulate for;  
Youthful séance of the time we have yet to live,  
Truck dealers who have yet to deal with  
The hours of pain- Never a truck filled up with  
Cement or citrus:  
And the day starts out like this glorious, and it  
Was well worth it;  
So the pain mummifies, prostitutes in their  
Perfumed mausoleums waiting out the storm willfully then  
Come out into the yard and smell the  
Opening sky,  
Like Spanish fields of  
Purple butterflies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Speartips Into Your Bosom

There are reasons that I keep writing it down,  
But I am not sure that I remember;  
Maybe it is because the lines have made a tragedy of my  
Features;  
Maybe it is because she has gone away and I know there  
Is no more collecting her:  
And so I remember things from a life while it was still  
Breathing:  
I remember my mother stepping over an exposed extension  
Cord toward the washing machines in her grotto;  
And the Australian pines hiding the chassis of junked but  
Beautiful cars,  
And in them moldering great heaps of 1970s pornography:  
And the days would weep, and shedding their clothes through  
Daycare, would get naked: and I would piss in a little  
Plastic chair, too afraid for some reason unknown to me;  
And my sister would weep for me in turn, and the dogs would  
Chase the cats chasing the rabbits through mother's rock garden  
That bloomed especially for Easter;  
But all of them would be eaten in the end; my sister would become  
A married professional: the road would widen,  
And I would be left with nothing else but the sky above smoking  
In a cathedral of cerulean fire;  
And I would remember other things in the half truths that would  
Make me a liar;  
So I put them down, realizing that if I can no longer look into your  
Eyes, you might still see into my own by these little  
Things inching like spear tips into your bosom by soft degrees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Steaming Snails

Yellowing house of cowardice, I will move into you  
The Thursday after next:  
And I will masturbate and call beautiful whores from Spain into  
You:  
Melody or Candice, or I can't remember her name;  
And I will surely call a wife into you to cook for me, to fill the  
Frightened house with your senses;  
Like buses filled with row, and it will happen that it will rain over my  
House,  
And my mother will continue sighing wearily but thankfully I  
Will not have to hear her any longer,  
Even though undoubtedly my father will continue blaming me;  
As you will live high up through the deltas of snowmelt of your  
Valleys,  
And I will go on crying out for you, mortified by my scars, while you  
Bare more children that would not make any sense  
To listen to me  
Until the evening of another wedding begins to glow, and you can  
Look into my eyes and see past ship wrecks and graveyards,  
And weep apologies that will run like steaming snails down my lapels,  
That you shouldn't sooner have remembered.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Stones On A Lake

Beautiful girls who are like  
Disney World  
While the sirens sing like angels—  
Visions of the quickest of the silver rains—  
My wife is taking a bath as  
I am thinking of you—  
A pauper is made out of my heart—  
But somehow Pinocchio's nose shrinks,  
And the heroes are laughing  
Between a rock and a hard place—  
Where the mermaids gather  
Like a sorority  
Come to some quick decision after school—  
The airplanes skip across the earth  
Like stones on a lake,  
And someone else thinks of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Summer Tomorrow

Now if I am feeling beautiful and purple in my innuendo-  
Then we will wind up here, singing together beneath the sad  
Beauty marks around her eyes:  
She is leaving, but soon there will be another forest  
To skip school and swing into,  
And it will be just like summer tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Sun Dogs Around Her Spotless Eyes

I get too drunk to be anything but pitiful:  
To eat anything but macaroni casserole,  
To think of any place but Colorado,  
And the girl there, or the married woman in her  
Heightening degree of espionage  
Who I can love for so long through the winter's  
Snow:  
I can just sit out in her front yard like a marble  
Bust,  
And lose bits of myself until I am entirely hole  
And made the wisp of a quill who flutters  
Perpetually around the tin flag of her corrugated  
Mailbox:  
And I could be anywhere, but I prefer this  
Strange weather to the desert.  
The professors, they don't give a darn,  
They just eat their wordy dessert: you know:  
All the frosting on the cake, and how Sharon, that  
Girl,  
That hyperbole must have tasted the cake with her  
Husband,  
And if she still thinks of the sweetness of that day,  
And where it was,  
Or the many boys who came before her one man,  
And me off to the side,  
Weeping in the cafeteria before going to repose in the  
Heliotrope under the school bus.  
Maybe she only loves the feel of her hands caressing  
Through wet clay.  
I don't know- this is only my poem while the snow  
Flakes fall heavy on her borderline,  
And where she goes right now I am hard to care,  
Only that she might remember my hand  
And lead me there, like a strange friend,  
A homeless acquaintance that she might take in  
And molest if only with the somber disturbances,  
Like the shadows of dogged satellites put off under the  
Beautiful mascara which makes its penumbra like  
Sun dogs around her spotless eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Sunlight Slipping Over A Splendiferous Windowsill

Knighted amongst the periwinkles of conquistadors  
While Sharon was getting nose bleeds up in her mountains,  
We all pretended to be any sort of privateers  
Up in the nosebleeds of our truancy;  
And I must have had her imperfections in my eyes since  
Kindergarten:  
I must have cut my teeth on her cerulean rock gardens,  
While the rockets exploded in the sky,  
And patriotism collapsed into the pornographies of its shell,  
Because in the real world all grandmothers are wolves,  
And it always takes a long time to drive to  
Disney World,  
But Alma I just want to kiss your throat like a wildflower  
Living on the sunny folds of a moat;  
And I want to become the witchcraft which you don't suppose to  
Know:  
I want to wander the streets with you for all time,  
While the candles lick the lucky air, while the dogs run around  
Making money,  
And your children become infatuated with the new rides at the  
Fair:  
We can let the wind bare us where it will, while I kiss your lips  
Like sunlight slipping over a splendiferous windowsill.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Tadpoles

Perhaps unicorns will have to come this  
Way again,  
Said a cloud to a cop- and better words that the  
Aspens stole,  
And the juvenile fireworks underneath their opal  
Shoulders,  
Slightly burning and round, as the entirety of  
The beauty slid down from the mountain,  
Like a purple veil crushed and eaten  
By elk and grizzly bears-  
A primordial Zion, with sugarsnaps and clover-  
At the summit, a water tower spying  
On my mother- before she was even married,  
Or had to think of me;  
So, before my muses had ever awakened- or even  
After they had to have awakened,  
In the soft rain cloudy the carports, or the uneasy  
Forests of Australian pines,  
Filled with the loafing conquistadors and decades  
Old pornography-  
They were just there, yet transformed, like  
Tadpoles in the slow green- but even after they were  
So beautiful, they hardly ever had to think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Tears

Wounded by my feather light sport,  
Perfumed by arrows of bouquets, and skipping school  
Across the canals:  
Little otters there diademing the canoes' prows-  
And the long yawns of lions turning deeper golden in  
The cage with the butterflies-  
Wounded angels taking airplanes to look at the sun,  
Basking like nude carrion in the upper echelons:  
Why their father is there bowing the ties-  
As down from his heaven, like tears, the fire dies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Airplane In

Entwined into the mausoleums of a soul,  
We have no yellow yesterday,  
There is just a movie theatre where the skeletons  
Stand,  
Clapping chalk for the substitute of the teacher,  
And time runs backwards from the shell fish:  
I remember so many amusements  
Once the mouths of mailboxes were closed—  
Sticking elbows to the starfish  
Into the estuaries of the busied moon:  
This is just how it had to be finished—  
Words on the edge of a hotel  
Falling into the streams of a musical cartoon:  
Mickey Mouse wanting to wear the  
Antlers of the house—  
Calling from stage left: his handlers wanting him  
To daydream through so many busied hoops of  
Fire—  
While they were loving one another—  
Elbow to elbow,  
And after a few seconds the bottle rockets  
Died—it just so happened that they disappeared forever  
On the other side of the canal  
Like children kidnapped into a bouquet of happenstance  
While the alligators watched them,  
Farting roses—just like the airplane in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like The Airplane In The Sky

Entwined into the mausoleums of a soul,  
We have no yellow yesterday,  
There is just a movie theatre where the skeletons  
Stand,  
Clapping chalk for the substitute of the teacher,  
And time runs backwards from the shell fish:  
I remember so many amusements  
Once the mouths of mailboxes were closed—  
Sticking elbows to the starfish  
Into the estuaries of the busied moon:  
This is just how it had to be finished—  
Words on the edge of a hotel  
Falling into the streams of a musical cartoon:  
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While the alligators watched them,  
Farting roses—just like the airplane in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Bismarck

At the bottom of the stairs,  
An estuary where you can look up and see  
The billboards of your souls:  
Things that can be sold to survive—  
Until the daylight wavers and then goes  
Down, down—  
Like the Bismarck—and the ninth layer of  
Dante's Hell—  
Into a frozen liquid place where you can  
Only escape through the mouths of  
The devils—  
As the lonely girls ride upon their Ferris Wheels—  
Here is the endless matriculation—  
The places that have learned to show off—  
Where sunlight and moonlight play  
Across the miscegenation's of the graveyards—  
And I know I can find you here,  
All tied up in your skeleton-  
This is no place for a sonnet—but this is  
Where the vultures keep the folklores of the yellow  
Mule, and the traffics mill like ants—  
Like burrows of salted dreams trying to come up  
Again into the awful pornographies of  
An unholy world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Bones Of Angels

Down in their beds again brown angels across  
The street in the house with her brown mother and father  
And her brown children,  
Like sticks in a silver river the helicopters make eyes  
After, and the owls know, for they resemble their  
Sanctuary, floating in their magnetisms trances:  
And she enfolds into him, and says things to his  
Ear while he is not listening,  
But she enjoys the silence of his soul as she spreads over  
Him like gasoline, as she spreads over the house  
In the strange flagella of wicks ignited for the  
Virgin of Guadalupe. Outside the cats are burning  
In the ignited trees,  
But the world is very silent as she dances in her sleep.  
The moon is tattooed between his shoulder blades  
Which are like the bones of angels,  
But it has already stolen all that it knows can be his.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Bough Of A Christmas Tree

This is an answer to a prayer huffed from a freshly painted  
Magazine:

This is the part in which you don't care,

This is the amateur thespian who euthenizes his audience

With a craft of wet glue:

This is the water moccasin waiting in the sunken bicycles with

A cottony kiss for you:

This is your sister smelling like jasmine through the night of

Thugs:

This is how your body bugs at the crematorium:

This is a little ticket with a price for you on your toe like the bough

Of a Christmas tree;

This is me stringing lights for you and caroling;

And your body moves- ever organ a street performer pushing the

Breath of life for you- and the stories that parlay through

Your trances;

This is what I have to give for you- and this is how it dances.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Butterfly

I evolved,  
but,  
like you,  
the butterfly  
was created  
by God.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Candles Over The Wishes

I will go with my mother where it will be safe  
To later on become a lawful king;  
And I will think from the statuaries of my benches  
Who are the new presidents  
While the airplanes leave trails behind them, like  
Footpaths for hikers who have learned to evaporate,  
The cello unaccompanied sounds the sweetest through  
The drowning blue ness,  
And maybe she does love me while I am all alone and she is  
Rearing horses and kissing cousins down at the rattlesnake  
Quarries of dead end roads,  
While my paper airplanes gather like snowdrifts in my sunnier  
Than though incarceration;  
And my quill bleeds its imaginations of justice, while my mother  
Bathes in her wet surplice;  
And the choruses rejoice from the chapels for Easter: what is  
It they are singing, but the sounds of the victors in a wonderful  
Baseball game,  
I can almost imagine stepping onto before hand at the break of smoky  
Day before high school, the woods all around blanketing the  
Slumbering homes of children so young that they believed they should  
Never have to go away; or that eventually they would blow out  
Like the candles over the wishes I had made.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Cartoon Leaving The Eyes Of A Kindergartener

Your gloves in the room of tilt a whirls, so what  
About this arcade inhabiting the things that you've made:  
It is just as easy for my muses to be breathing in  
Colorado,  
Catching the first golden affixes of the sun, and all of the  
Possibilities of our children riding in his chariot and laughing:  
I was never surer that I should be the father of your children,  
And that we should name him after the both of  
Our fathers,  
After Mexico and America, and the newest unions of the greatest  
Possibilities that no one likes to admit;  
The recreations of my lips upon your flesh never felt so good,  
Until you had to go, like a cartoon leaving the eyes of  
A kindergartener,  
Or something more unsuspecting I could never even remember  
To forget.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Clouds Leave The Sky

This kind of unobtainable heart  
Can only be given by a father for his son to  
Eat  
Considering the transformations of his lions:  
Well, the red ants are busy anyways  
Underneath the airplanes  
And going so far in their yards as my words  
Are the cicadas on the cypress or the  
Christmas trees  
And the iguanas have learned to dance across  
The canal over the swelter and  
The pestilence while the homeless men somehow  
Find other tricks to buy so much beer  
That the slender forest is over flowing with that  
Evidence  
And the traffic sings carols back and forth  
Through their yards  
As everyone they love is going away into other  
Holidays, until the sands leave the fort  
Like a cathedral  
Like the sea leaves a lighthouse- like the clouds  
Leave the sky

Robert Rorabeck



# Like The Echoes Of A Baboon

Oh, opulent pains in opulent grottos:

Oh, opulent pains, living with forest rangers, or living without

You:

Seeing Kit Carson Peak, but not suckling from that bastion, nor

Suckling from that summit,

Just believing, believing in something like it: and starting up and

Realizing all of the ups that are up about it:

The proud nursery rhymes, the cleverness of tourisms ringing

Just above the nursery of a newborn's eyes:

Ringing just there like the gentlest of satellites and churches of

Braziers and camp fires:

And it goes up and up and up into pyres, and nothing I have said

Has been just right

While Diana lies down straight for the night; and all of the open

Jungle, and all of the unwashed space,

Each wave a grandmother to the entire human race: each wave

A type of species in the meaning of it all,

While I recline out into nothing to the echo of your two legs going

Down the hall:

To the echo of all of your stuff going to fix yourself in the ladies room,

While the principal's music plays like the echoes of a baboon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Fairytale Of A Very True World

So I am going up as I am going down,  
And the bodies recall their positions and I remember that  
Erin once went into my bedroom in high school and  
We watched a movie with the door closed:  
And now there comes all of this music through the forest:  
The unicorns carefully picking their immortal routes,  
And Red Riding hood getting away with murder:  
And the storms that are in each of our souls have their own  
Private classrooms and estuaries,  
And the milky grottos of virgins, as even now there  
Is a cheap bicycle in my little foyer,  
As my opulence comes at a somnolent price,  
And I only talked with Alma once today after she had jogged with  
Her:  
She said she wasn't close to her sister, and then I had to look  
Away as I thought of the sea that I rode next to today:  
It was going back and forth again,  
Having already devoured all the gifts underneath the Christmas  
Trees:  
And now I don't know about any of this, but I keep going on,  
Mowing the extinct grounds, defying the bankers  
And waiting for the first truly immaculate storm of the season:  
And awaiting for Alma to finally come to me  
And dissolve into my arms like the fairytale of a very true world.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like The First Letters Of A Place

She does not call me: she hasn't gone out shopping,  
And I imagine the panties she must wear in bed: and I am  
Foulyly envious even though I know that eventually she  
Will be well shaven when she comes out  
Of her shell to see me again;  
To make love and moan like preschoolers enjoying the saccharine  
Tastes of fieldtrips,  
And the soft memories that they almost cannot even spell:  
Like the first letters of a place that once enjoyed they can never  
Go to again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Flesh Of A Woman

Come with me into the  
Opulent grotto, and I  
Will breathe my genius  
Between your petals;  
We will both be robbed at  
Gunpoint, and  
Forced to make love,  
Which will give you a good  
Excuse for what you  
Wanted anyways: afterwards,  
It will snow extemporaneously,  
And I will have to  
Write on paper again,  
Like the flesh of a  
Woman;  
And you will be a  
Little girl again;  
It will be Christmas,  
And your parents will  
Remain married  
Forever.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like The Folklores Of Dragons

This is very exciting- this is another night swallowed  
Without wondering where all of the conquistadors  
Have gone,  
But back to their shallow estuaries and nurseries where  
The wounds of the brown children  
Are lessening- and if you listen with dedication,  
Pressing your ear like a wino against the kitchenettes of  
The palmettos, you can here them  
Like the fireworks the truants take out of their pockets  
Atop of the roofs of suburbia in the middle of the afternoon,  
While their mothers are all tossed around inside,  
Or making out with other boys beside the illusions of  
Diamond mines that glisten across the fallacies of their pools,  
Like the folklore of dragons that the alligators down the  
Easements of the manmade canals are too wise to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like The Japanese

Make for me inside an insouciance with your wonder,  
And I will build for you with my muscles,  
And these things I say which are steam engines,  
And organic turbines; Do not let your eyes become instead  
The blunders of the richly accessorized middle-classes,  
Do not say those things which are readily understood and  
Manageable, but instead ride with me to Mars,  
This sort of amusement park made out of fire-axes and  
Other pigments given to indigenous holidays. That is what I  
Said: Make this life into an aqueduct, a prevalence of my  
Scars hung with tinsel, your lips blowing the sawdust of such  
Carpentry, your nails newly painted black and draped against  
My cheek like the human brand of peacock; Or come with  
Me to my grandmother's grave and let us worship there like  
The Japanese, let us spread origami like our bodies, into new  
Shapes for Christmas, and let us not mind the way the snowflakes  
Drift indefinably unique like little Chalets floating through a  
Francophone space, or let us ride away from this back through  
The vanished sea the mountains attend, as carefully as explorers  
Approaching the epileptic fissures through the persimmon trees.  
They grow wild here where there are just words blown like  
Ashes out amidst the bicycles of each of their careworn students,  
And the ladies who exercise readily dreaming of their inevitable  
Motherhood and what fine kitchens, like bosomy Popes  
In a suburban Rome, they should first graduate and then soon attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Latchkeys Raised By The Cartoons

Soon the moon will see us or the sun—  
Kissing in the carport of a vanished honeymoon—  
And the bluegills will have to sing to themselves anyways—  
The tomorrows will get up as an entire band of  
Awakening elbows who go polishing their silver—  
Because this is their world that we cannot remember—  
It is a joyful place with the sunlight of the daylight  
Floods us out of school—  
And I give to your bedrooms, awakening in the morning as  
The rooster crows—gallivanted into the pastures  
Of the arrowheads crossed before the  
Nosecones of the airplanes on their honeymoons—  
Perfumed by the strangely obnoxious steps of the  
Infatuated conquistadors—as they stepped out of their crypts□  
In the early mornings just after the wetted séances of  
Star crossed lovers—  
Realizing at that very moment that all of the rivers led  
Up to colleges and this was just another given to us to believe  
In—like an afternoon abandoned indoors,  
And like latchkeys raised by the cartoons of their children.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Mixing Teardrops

Most tender eyes upon the womb  
Of a child of a night'  
The vampire sits forlornly at her window in  
Tallahassee, Florida'watching the switchbacks of  
The hills,  
And the apartments that roll through them  
Like a labyrinth'the blue children going  
To school'getting up  
Kitty-cornered to the graveyards: all the lost  
Heroes forsaken to their epitaphs'  
The heavens having sunken up to her  
Elbows'the airplanes her berets'  
Her parents lost somewhere in the sea like  
The mixing teardrops of one too many gods.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like The Nocturnal Flowers

You make the sunlight and  
I make the moon—  
Yes, we both have ghosts who haunt us,  
But our daylight holds its gun—  
And we can make fun in the moonbeams  
Beneath the light house  
And the forts—  
In the daylights, we can even pretend  
To be the shows of tourisms—  
While, in the evenings,  
We bury ourselves together—  
And your children embark together in  
A wonderful estuary—  
You can be the mermaid if I watch you—  
I can be your sunbeam on its lance of  
Joy—  
And we can enjoy our amusement  
Rides together  
Only if you were my wife—learning to  
Step carefully across the soft shelled tortoises—  
Learning to trespass from your gardens  
Of trailer parks in my the wealth of my heavens—  
Learning to express your lips like the nocturnal  
Flower—  
Who together, in the changing rooms of  
Their shadows—showed off the songs of their joys.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like The Penumbra Of A Candle's Flame

They will bloom by themselves, though the window is  
Empty—  
The supermarket and the parking lot is empty:  
They are ghosts, they do this anyways—someone is playing  
A violin over the pornography across the street—  
There is not a single girl that is yet dead—  
The goldfish and the cat—  
The fair is still in the town—the bottlerocket is only halfway lit:  
And you are leaping into my arms like the penumbra of  
A candle's flame—  
Maybe today is your birthday—maybe tomorrow will be the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Plagiarists Leaping For Shakespeare

Insomniac of banshees, or like a  
Child addicted to the backyard's séances,  
While someone sleeps up a hill that  
Has evaporated;  
Like after the dog is done doing good tricks  
It becomes emolliated  
And no longer eligible to attend a good  
College—  
And the housewives whose hands are always  
Filled finds it a hard time to buy trinkets  
Halfway up the taoist's temple,  
Looking as forlorn as a hummingbird without  
Any midgets—  
As I remember you, back pressed against  
My great-uncle's raspberries—  
All a flummox in your cultivations, and not  
A space for you left in the junior parking-lot,  
And not a star left for you in all of the heavens:  
Then didn't you become the brightness of  
An amnesiac,  
While there was a typhoon in your carport,  
And a lovely song skipping through the echoes of  
Your cellular phone,  
As the foxes were jumping for Eucharist,  
Like the plagiarists leaping for Shakespeare at  
Picking time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Reconciliation Of Doomed Lovers

Well sated in the casual bereavement  
Of my particular socio-economic class,  
My scars are fading fast, but the storm cloud  
Memories refuse to yield; and even if I  
Was chosen by finer men persuaded in their  
College's uniforms out in the green fields like  
A moving canvas before where their ladies swoon,  
I think I'll pass, because the expectations are too  
Much for me: The way the lights dim on a softly  
Wooden stage, the imperfections perfect in the  
Lisping homological couplets of Elizabethan England:  
The gallant knife fights, the black plague, the rue  
Of words chopped inside newly masoned castles:  
All of that rising up and sending out the privateers with  
Roomy bellies, greedy desires for Catherine's gold:  
Even then, down in the horse-shoed valley, the little  
Girl is twelve years old, and she's lost her porcelain  
Doll, rolled over in the tracks not very well above the  
Arrow heads, and the smoldering inside turquoise pottery:  
Now it rains in a present tense, and I sift through the muddied  
Witchcrafts of the Zuni's disappearance: the grandfathers of  
My white men settle like ghosts of sheets out drying in a  
Caravanning line, like a virgin's yet bloodied ribbons in the  
Buffalo's tallow: Now all of that is gone and we've gotten  
So casual that I'm wearing shorts in the snow, and the easterners  
Are reintroducing wolves in the places they've never been,  
So they don't know the savage hypocrisies of the ideologies  
Their minds are caved in, but after so much rain things are  
Revealed and come up from the earth like the reconciliation  
Of doomed lovers, come upon my fingertips like a butterfly  
Turning saturnine, wishing that it should always have been the  
Caterpillar, for now it is beautiful, but poisonous, and should have  
To leave by the windows of the stoic homestead, past the plums  
Of sequoias and dehydrated ornithologists, all the way to the  
Great chili forests of Mexico, there to join the bright graveyards  
Of the rigamortis of chartreuse wings, fallen and scattered like  
Leaves upon an empty playground, or like those ceremonial  
Petals which leap from an innocent girl's fingertips  
before a bride on her wedding day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Spirits She Enjoys

Wherever I am these rainbows make me  
Loopy,  
The contraptions through the sea the mermaids  
Are working,  
Churning caesuras like cotton candy:  
And I will die, I will die,  
But I have looked into the sad blue eyes  
Of a woman of another man,  
And my words have failed her, because I  
Am no good at baseball, and the flowers I meant to  
Give to her were stolen from her sister's grave;  
She has gotten most everything I could not steal for  
Her, and she is doing fine,  
And in some indescribable rhythms through a night  
Enjoyed with my dogs' similarly dreaming,  
I search for her in the only ways better left undescribed,  
Just another swimmer in the tourney of boys who  
I know are looking for her even now:  
Jousting, pillow-fighting,  
Because no one forgets how she threw to them in  
High school without even looking,  
How she could make me fill up an entire page alone  
In my room while all of South Florida was raining;  
And I could go out and look for her,  
But I'd have to buy new clothes-  
I could begin to tramp my souls, and kill whatever dragons  
Are leftover, though I'm sure the braver fools are  
Already halfway there; and her eyes are beautiful,  
And lonely,  
Like blue candles under the weeping shadows of  
Her mountains, pooling like the spirits she enjoys.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Spokes Of A Bicycle

Oh- I want you, parables of the  
Lavender tit- oasis of shimmering gasoline:  
I have searched for you through  
The numb cataracts of my classrooms  
And my neighborhoods,  
And I have seen you changing clothes  
In the changing room of  
Palmettos,  
Baring areolas of sand-dollars; and then  
This is just what was:  
Words biting my lip over the feminine  
Beauty of the day- yawning, reawakening-  
Lathered with yoke and spikenard  
And then turning in the geometry of perfected  
Sorority, like the spokes of a bicycle  
Leaping the neighborhoods like a candle's flame.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like The Sun

How will it look if we get lost for a while  
And areole the mountain,  
And look for the shadows of our footsteps,  
The disturbed berries that fall  
To the mouths of archaeology,  
Of the arrow heads that stick up like phalluses  
Of a midnight of a Valentine's Day,  
While I just worry about how I will return  
To school on Monday—  
As my wife sleeps two months away from  
Giving birth to our first son—  
The words leave my imagination like a disease  
I cannot remember, like all of the highways  
I've been across, or the women whom I have  
Fancied that I have loved—  
The places that seem to be inseparable from  
The things we have done which we cannot  
Mention—  
Just as the truth revolves around the earth  
Like the sun.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like The Sun Burning Down Into The Sea

I will write something else, but it will do no good,  
With the sun going down, with the final jet stream  
Following it over the personifications of nature:  
Today, I've walked around one hundred acres and fed  
The standard bred horses, and I haven't seen a soul,  
But my perplexing face in the mirror, and the dogs  
As they got trotting after the indefinite senses,  
So now I lie here much like a fetus trying to hear its  
Mother's heart, with a precognition of what her breast  
Shall taste like once I wake up in the morning; Mostly,  
I am just lazy: I watch the flies wilt in the chilling weather,  
When before there were raucous thousands, and there  
Will be again; and I play around with a pseudo-pen like  
A second-string Shakespeare, waiting to be called out  
From the dugouts to taste the red clay. I bother agents  
All the way overseas, sending them misquoted manuscripts;  
And I pretend that in some states further east, she will still  
Dress up for me, and going around as carelessly as I  
Go around, tips the glass in my direction, and skinny-dipping  
In the sea, alone save for the disorganization of waves,  
Feels my thoughts burn into her the way they often do,  
Every day, like the sun burning down into the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like The Times Of A Merry-Go-Round

I seem to be partaking in a sea that has no memory—  
And this is my last day in Shanghai,  
And I have been finishing up a bottle of white wine  
Held over from our wedding:  
I am not trying to appease you—  
My wife is already married and is going to have my child.  
The world I will go back into tomorrow is a world  
Of ghosts and phantasms—  
A desert of Disney World, and maybe I will think about  
The things I once almost had with you,  
Touching down upon the cold facts of that concrete  
Tarmac,  
But truthfully my heaven is already with me,  
And she has forgive everything that I am,  
And everything I have already done—  
And you are just a well the unicorns drink from  
Hypothetically,  
Though I will come back to you like the times of  
A merry-go-round, stealing little glances like a child  
Delighting in things that will soon become mundane.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Transoms Of Two Airplanes

Hollowed like a cove by these immortal things  
That have come to die,  
To give their spirit over the pure intentions of this  
Pieta,  
Something as immaculate as this liquor approaches;  
And I have not known a good world,  
Or a satisfying Christmas:  
But I have known Alma a handful of times, and her  
Eyes have wrecked upon me,  
And I have flooded my graveyard with her vineyards,  
Until her perfumes rose my antebellum Lazarus,  
Who looked into her eyes with so many souls,  
Like the transoms of two airplanes who were once  
Passing unlawfully close together.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Waves Into The Easy Sunsets

I am always caracoled by the quietest yards of landscaping  
Through which the always migrating butterflies and  
Serpents move;  
And they are ever so wise, or they are not so wise as to  
Be frightened by me:  
As then the sun comes shining, over new games of baseball,  
And the world lights up again across a birthday that is  
Never failing,  
And we don't have to wait so long again for another move:  
And it feels alright while the oceans are basking,  
While they are holding themselves in the deepest courts of  
The world,  
While the pilots check all of their gauges of all of their  
Airplanes over the astrologies of all of those mountains,  
Until the purples tend to move again across the tips  
Of the planes again,  
As your love whispers its perfumes to all the pretty fairytales  
As diminutive as my hopes, as they tend to have to move again,  
Gathering up the words like a newspaper into another yard,  
And kissing other lips upon which they fall again  
Like the waves into the easy sunsets, hoping to prove again  
To these beautiful things something that I could never hope to prove.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like The Wish Of A Firework

Pains of practices of death- flaunts of metamorphosis:

And now this:

Overeager, green- debased tenements, spending their fires away until

She is covered with goose bumps:

Shivering, flaxen- a sacrifice to the elements,

Because she is sober, and she needs an operation:

She waits three hours and gets free medical

Care,

And then I take her to dinner- dessert (tiramisu) , a kiss or two and curses:

Maybe she's decided who she's going to love.

And who she's going to flirt with:

My muse, my Alma- she likes roller coasters too,

But on one with her I've never been with: and I don't know how

Much longer I can hang around,

Vanishing like a tumbled apple through the pains of its bruises,

While the uneasy fires are in her house, but they are

Taken care off- and then she will have birthdays with her families,

And more careful wounds:

But she will never change- the paralysis of metamorphosis;

But look at how I have opened up for you, mi linda- mi vida:

See how I have already become a river, flowing beside you on a painful

Holiday, until all used up like a wish of a firework that you never thought to make use.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Thunder

Money on the vine of crows-  
The dogs are laughing at the tricks of the coyote,  
And you have grown further away from me,  
My muse:  
I've been drinking seven times: I just made a girl  
Come four times who I never hope to see again:  
In the morning on Monday,  
I will return to my classes and teach and teach  
And teach underneath the moon  
And underneath the sun while it all keeps  
Praying to Christmas,  
As the sanctuaries are remembered and they  
Are forgotten across the sea of the ribbons  
Of mermaids-  
As the gallant nights straddles the vocabularies  
Of their charges,  
Until they hung from trees, toes dribbling in  
The defeated brooks- what color were  
They then, only trinkets for the witches,  
As the first thoughts of all the monsters bubbles,  
And the planes roared like thunder amidst the  
Cliffs of the heavens, so mindless- an apiary  
That could never figure out whatever it was meant  
To become.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Unsettling Lovers Above The Banks Of Bloody-Nosed Clouds

Castles have strange identities:

They share of themselves under the snow white

Bosoms:

Maybe they believe these mountains are swans;

And I am done explaining for castles

With their heads in the clouds, always up for breakfast,

Roosting with rookeries of sweet princesses:

The hallways of candles flickering like wildflowers

With so many shadows:

All different sorts of flowers burning, each an inkling of

A prayer;

And the pilgrimages leading up to castles:

Through the orchards of peach trees and apple,

Past the pearly salmons' row in the bow-strings of

Ribbon streams leading down past the buttresses of

Castles;

The ancient things: but I don't have to explain myself:

There they are purchasing,

And the sweet young girls flee them as if the suitors for

Notaries:

The candles flaming like fields in those narrow halls:

The young girls like animals lighting out on the frothing tide

Of a forest fire burning their ancestry;

And they fall down the hills until it turns green, and there

Are cars leading home to symmetry of drive ways;

And cul-de-sacs: swimming pools like diamonds, and places

To take oneself further away from the castles who

Are now like the gaunt young suitors turned away:

Watching like unsettling lovers above the banks of bloody-nosed

Clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Us So Many Dreams

What moves without more reflection than this,  
And I am standing in a terminal watching the hallucinations  
Fleet:  
They go like soft sailors tickling the skyways, and beautiful  
Women who ride in the bellies of pure daydreams,  
Serving their sharp suited men:  
Maybe they even divide like rivers once they get high enough,  
And my words on my tongue have to lay off and float down  
Weeping,  
Still crooning for their soft underbellies, their various gems  
And birthstones:  
So like a feather with a heavy grain we return to the greenness  
Beside the canal, beside the busy road;  
And we take catnaps while beautiful girls have their birthdays  
In amidst great fanfare; and we would like to just hold their  
Hand but once,  
To say their name and smile at their daughters, and forget how  
Even then the fires should grow over the paper earth,  
Each tremendous tendril engulfing entire sororities of paper dolls  
Who had so much ambition and like us so many dreams.

Robert Rorabeck



# Like Venemous Daggers Parting A Shroud Of Sky

Woe to the angels breaking in  
The bay;  
Woe to their song and dance,  
And the boys I remember hanging out  
With,  
Who remain out together,  
Out through college and now  
Domesticated  
Crepuscule;  
Woe to the strange sadness of my face  
Not beautiful enough to be believed in;  
And to the space underneath these trees,  
The esplanades of parking lots  
Which cant be understood  
I would ransom all of this to understand the  
Desperation of my heart,  
To have it soothed by a color she wears  
On her body,  
Something about her higher than those angels  
Themselves,  
Something never even touched by any of those  
Boys,  
The fever of her temples conceded to the sheets,  
If they are mine for but minutes  
As the virulent years divide, as the airplanes shoot  
Like venomous daggers parting  
A shroud of sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Washing Machines Inside Carports

There will be fireworks and sad joys and more bird cages:  
Maybe my aunt will come to New Mexico and reciprocate-  
Maybe she had something left that she wanted to tell me,  
But now I am on my own floor as warm and bloated as any zeppelin of  
A boy who has come down to the peeps shows of quinceanera;  
And when I work with you, Alma- I sing,  
I sing and swell like beautiful pythons let loose amongst the banyan  
Trees,  
And dangling there like the distended pipe dreams of preschoolers;  
And when I don't work with you, Alma- I drink rum alone:  
I am not much of a drinker, but you skin is beautiful, and you told me  
That I was very smart:  
And you tried to explain to me one of two things: that we should just be  
Friends,  
Or that you wanted to sleep with me and keep secrets from your  
Abusive husband;  
Either way, I will be fine as long as I get to see your jubilant contours out  
Amongst the daylights;  
And when I think of you Alma, why then I think of Christmas,  
And I think of the absolute joy that every man must have for the things  
That he love,  
Fishing or going on the road- you are this for me, Alma:  
You are my reason for my next breath, and for my next line, which may as  
Well be my final line for you, Alma, for me tonight,  
While you go to sleep with your husband hushed into the whispers of  
The outer space on Cherry Road:  
I will climb up on my own roofs next to yours and fall asleep, while the spaces  
Of all of these chests and Spanish tombs whisper your name,  
Like washing machines inside carports, like housewives shushing brooms.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Wildfires

I've seen a wreck outside my door—  
In the highway, confused by green smoke,  
Old friends  
And past muses—  
What did it look like but a broken kaleidoscope  
Amidst the skree—  
The sailors of other planets were coming  
Down upon,  
Either like vultures or  
Like doves—  
Beauties of their avoided delusions—  
And things that learned how to  
Travel without minds—  
Bodies moving into their preordained  
Beds, into their preordained loves—  
As above them,  
The airplanes roared like wildfires,  
Like waterfalls of angels,  
Like ecstatic words that never found  
Their way into those minds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Windmills Kissing The Sea

Numbness of her beauty in her shell- how I've  
Tried crying out to her:  
A piccolo underneath the bleachers at the end of  
School:  
And now she comes, dividing from kindergarten,  
Losing herself every time she graduates-  
Growing husky and calloused  
And abused by the heavens- but there she is,  
Burning the decrepit chrysalis of her  
Religion across the baseball field  
When it is still too early for there to be many  
Spectators- but come the afternoon, they will be  
Selling things across her,  
And crossing their hearts even in the sun showers.  
There, in the middle of the sport,  
Alligators will swear by her middle name,  
And the airplanes will lookdown, folding their  
Wings- who said they cannot metamorphosis into  
Swans as the sun is going down like  
A train going into a tunnel: and there she remains,  
Falling down and kissing the insects' feet:  
Wishes bouncing off of her like windmills kissing the  
Sea.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Wishes That Disappear

Warm song in the throat of a frog  
Daydream of metamorphosis—why then—  
Why then why  
What will you turn into next to the carport in  
The open storm—  
What will you have to say for your self  
While the cops are robbers—  
And nothing is left  
That doesn't have to mend—  
Minnows in the crick  
And lizards on the sidewalk—  
And nothing else besides the rest of it—  
But airplanes taking off  
Above the forever exploding blue palms—  
Like wishes that disappear with daylight  
Which once thought of themselves as  
Never having to end.

Robert Rorabeck

## Like Wishful Scientists

Alma, I love you, and when we sleep together I will love  
You even more,  
And I love your children, and the light that plays upon them out  
Of doors:  
Tus ojos son muy lindo, Alma, and you are just as intelligent as any  
White woman I have ever met,  
And your skin is so beautiful, Alma: your skin is the gold sheathes  
Of the sun- While the other patrons just want to love you,  
I want to squeeze all of the honey from your bosom:  
Every part of you is a liquid treasure- all of your sweat is alcohol,  
And I am living in a house that is yours,  
But until you get here it is my tomb, and I want to push our belly buttons  
Together and make extraordinary wishes  
Like wishful scientists who push electricity through the snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Yesterdays In Games Of Baseball

Manner less bandits japing at my tents,  
Paging through their thesauruses—  
While I am left mumbling, numberless fingers  
In my mouth wanting to ride the  
Merry-go-Round of Pegasus's—  
Like Phoebe in a weeping dream—ready to  
Become that thing that can no longer be reclaimed:  
Ready to become another adult playing  
The adult game—  
And there to be lost—gifts of the magi given to the  
Coffins, like beautiful girls wandering off  
Into another well-lit church—  
Like ghostly cousins whispering as if of the echoes  
Of holidays amidst the bowers of predestined  
Christmas trees—  
Partaking in silent parks—scarred of cheek and soul—  
The rainstorms come and freckle the swings—  
Like yesterdays in games of baseball where the emptied  
Batters swing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Like Zeppelins

There she is like a seahorse attending bar-  
Underneath the halogens of the football stadium like a  
Lighthouse:  
She trawls through the night laughing with her brown  
Eyes, serving drinks to freshmen and  
Poltergeists- while my wounds get out like zeppelins from  
The rose bushes, and they pull themselves like  
A red wagon across campus- the wind chimes of my  
Girlfriend mutely perverse, and I sing to her  
To the library and to the other places that I think do not  
Want to let her in.

Robert Rorabeck



## Lilly-Livered And Poisoned-Arrowed

But what beauty apart from the body:  
That mythology dancing to the ground—Parades  
Piggybacked on parades  
Like roses in the graveyards—  
They touch without a sound—lilly-livered,  
And poisoned arrowed:  
They will be made to do what they can do best:  
They will go back to school tomorrow:  
They will settle into the west.  
And they will do what they can to forget about her:  
She was left in pieta in the wagon;  
And they will be hung over tomorrow, but they will  
Remember where they buried the gold:  
It was either next to the ice-cream shop or  
Arcadian alley—they will try to remember how she  
Touched them, and how much they paid her:  
Maybe, they hope, they will be able to get their  
Driver's license to go out to find her,  
But after all—and anyways—they were just doing  
What they were told.

Robert Rorabeck

# Linear Flights Of Airplanes

Now the day has a word and I  
Feel hard pressed to travel to you,  
Even though after I was done selling fireworks you  
Said that we could only be friends,  
Even while my cousin who is taller than me was pursuing you  
But making little progress:  
And then I broke into my own home and laid down with  
The feral cats who were not frightened of me  
As they ate the grasshoppers and garden snakes:  
And there was a glass slipper there underneath the bromeliads  
That could not be explained:  
And looking up there was a ladder too- taller than a roof,  
Hopelessly in a loverless math over the roof of  
Antique row  
That someone of your lovers had misplaced with his ever  
Giving chalice and his surreal antlers:  
While in the back seat of my Mercury Tracer still lay the two  
Tennis rackets that we'd used to play tennis poorly on  
Some Tuesday not long before I took your tiny brown  
Body into the waves, Alma- and kissing your  
Mouth promised myself to you underneath the linear flights  
Of airplanes: trusting me even though everything else was chaos,  
And you couldn't even swim.

Robert Rorabeck

# Linear Reckonings

Soon we'll all be married,  
And fighting up the stream,  
Those cold Alaskan eyes weeping with oil  
And prehistoric moose which step so high  
They forage on the cherry moon;  
Where we scrape our speckled bellies  
Under the caves of insane snow,  
We give our children to the slough,  
The greedy lips of claret lobsters and their claws;  
The politicians' leather boots,  
The slick mustache, the shoe store in Charleston, SC;  
Then the honeymoons we'll have,  
The sad events, the overweight aunts attend,  
The junkyard of used tires under her skirts  
In the places we can afford, Hawaii  
And the paper church soon to burn from  
The cloy foreplay of hermaphrodites,  
Dressing up in Falls City and the bends-  
Her eyes are a hungry light- turned off, that is all-  
Down by the river where she woke up  
She learned to write her name,  
And his name on her palm, but that is all-  
They live in a trailer in Michigan, and that's what  
They called their son, and their second son, Jesus-  
He performed miracles with cigarettes  
On the swings in the park next to the river  
Of flotsam and used tampons where the  
Professors water ski- the minor smirks of  
Small publications, the ransoming of life from  
The green reaper for a season, maybe more,  
Where the trees are ancient and shadowing,  
Where the vast oaks are the real immortality,  
Where the roses weep at the end of the swift  
Season, with the ruddy apples in the farmer's market,  
The stalks of nettled corn, the grandmothers in their  
Shawls walking to the daughter's boyfriend's  
House to retrieve their grandson who has run away,  
And will be held back a year;  
The blushing leaves fall like kittens down the steep hills,

Where the wild scuppernongs grow bitter on the waxy vines  
Upon loose spools of chain-link fences forced to the ground,  
Where the old blue lake weeps in its basin of carp and willows,  
Down to the graveyard we all attend;  
Riding our Christmas bicycles, our glittered roller skates,  
Our tassels streaming out behind us,  
The noise of wind and revolutions down the breakneck hill:  
The beautiful and the famous, the poor and the kind,  
In the dirt of the cold peninsulas of the final depression,  
On the seventh day when god rested his David lost  
His arms as the wind whipped his clothes off him too,  
But the graveyard is beautiful in white marble,  
And budded with plastic bloom torched in tin,  
In epitaphs grander than the bodies they denote  
Restive in autumn's red oak blanket upon the luxuriant hill,  
Just another season here we are again  
Floating through the thoughts of a young god's finite will.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lines For Little Boy's Games

Pen some lines for little boy's games,  
Or grow a beard and sleep in the back seats of  
Passing cars,  
Scribbling love notes on the floorboards, cheeks  
The briar scratches of barbs and burs;  
And the world turns again, because it has nothing  
Else to do,  
Young mothers exercising in the park now say  
How do you do,  
While the alligators burp and fart,  
The horses in the race track of flatulent emperors.  
Curious air-planes go to bed in the dirt,  
And the swings swing their easy chains-  
Everything is beautiful if it arcs, the nest of her  
Back and calves, the little nooks of science,  
The blue and red shifts, the kisses she serves to the  
Black and blue pugilists;  
I can turn on the light before I go out to sleep under  
The yard, dear, pull up the grass in a cape of sod,  
Listen to the hummingbirds whispering to god,  
While your and your newborn sleep in the blue crèche  
I bought,  
Or maybe not.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lines In The Dark

Words are scars,  
I put them here to lace some kind of virgin,  
To smell her like a flower,  
And pick her up and take her across the canal  
Where the airplanes lay sleeping half  
Devoured by the cricketing earth;  
I want to show her the dead,  
The eternally kneeling men serving beneath the  
Censer of swing-sets outside of the church  
Where the clouds go climbing up the  
Celestial spheres to the footsteps of stormy philosophers  
To lose her in the green palatial spaces of the park,  
Skipping school with her,  
Blowing out the candles of the dark-  
These words are scars, imperfect and wounded,  
Sometimes dying men, swelling around the heart,  
Primordial ululations I can't even understand,  
But feel like venom secreted on the radioactive battlefield  
Of apocalyptic anonymity; they are beautiful weeds  
I have pulled up screaming,  
Jogging around her, crippled, unseen:  
These words are all I have, but I have tended for her  
Mercilessly-  
I have left the bus and gone home with her  
Throbbing in my chest, remaining there after  
I have turned up the television, and thrown away  
My school books-  
After the impulsivity of my convictions,  
I offer her the only thing which I have  
Stolen from the very fields of the tongue, wishing to  
Lie her down in the orange groves of Spain, under the  
Shadow of Mars;  
These words are scars whisper to a blind maiden,  
So that she might see beyond the selfishness of my tears,  
The wounds I have uprooted from the lapping furrows, for  
Her, and crafted into singing friends who decorate  
The highest evergreens:  
Scars I would have her feel, to lay beside her every night,  
These few trembling lines,

The damaged crèches of lippy pugilists,  
Shyly grinning, like a knife gifted in the dark meant to  
Romance and prod something beautiful that once enjoyed  
Only daylight, to now come awake nocturnally like  
A thick tulip outback amid the dunes, legs gently trained off  
Her bicycle now open to me such a theatre,  
Revealing a good meaning for my existence,  
Proving that sometimes what is meant to be said does not  
Have to be perfect to be beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lines Of Magnificent Surrender

Prettily the light is winnowed by the green  
Fingers of the pine,

As if sorting out the empirical yarns from the  
Hypothetical ether, stealing her teases,

When whipped about by the tizzied wind,  
Frantically lost in warm forests of May,

Thus, the earth is separated from the sky  
By a blue line clear as a seam following the  
Hem of Spartan alders,

Their roots the tuberous axes of persistent time,  
Wheedling into the enjambment of quartz,  
Showing the silver mouthed tussle,

And the effluvious drool from the earth's womb,  
All of those words we meant to say,  
Never heard but in the spurious roofs of swaying confusion,

A chorus of pretty soldiers queuing into the green country,  
For reasons to grow their belief,  
As the dyed rivers dwindle in scribbling lines of magnificent surrender.

Robert Rorabeck



# Lines Of Thirsty Mourners

Dimes at the party:  
Her cheeks pinched with gold-  
They are holding her breasts like heirlooms in  
The photos,  
I am so drunk I am getting cold....

I've only had three bottles of rum  
This entire year,  
And three dogs leaping and licking  
In the salt of four legs and paws:  
Is this February a leap year?

They surrender the wealth to her hands,  
And she laughs as she passes them on;  
To her, my words are just little pawns,  
She casts out in the brighter glories of her  
Yard, where her expensive car is  
Parked in the prestigious concrete  
Smooth as the premises....

There is something broken inside me,  
As I cannot make a buck,  
And I keep infatuated by her tawny lakes  
Leaping like unspeckled trout in their  
Stormy brooks,

Because she has better lovers,  
And finer prospects than me, for I am  
Just an old man fishing with empty hooks  
Too far out in the endless sea...

For her throat to remember which way I  
Might have burned, to catch her head and swivel her  
Neck, across the red bricks of the ancient sorority,  
To get her to turn towards me,  
Entwined in a better life assured....

She is the fulcrum of erring poetries,  
The lines cast out as if trying to be suited

For a profession,  
Ending up homeless, soliciting on the hazarding corners,  
Soon they will be awakened, bleary eyed  
And exhausted, in lines of thirsty mourners.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lingerie Of Spider Webs

Capturing the Golgotha in parks too  
Pretty to sleep in,  
I went out to become an actor I never became:  
I rolled down from the high swings  
In the cooing parks, and slept inside the empty trains,  
And thought of you burning in your  
Dresses:  
Now you are in Colorado so high up as to be a prayer flag,  
And I am holding myself to become two cheap kites who  
Disembark symmetrically to scout for you  
Riding Pegasus-like bicycles high above the petting zoos,  
And singing to you that we would like to steal you away from  
Your bird's nest,  
And build new nests with you, to resurrect our never figured  
Out children in the hidden adulteries in the healthy green  
Church yards,  
To buy you refrigerators and unicorns and to listen to the whippoorwills  
As I blow on the pinwheels and mandelas  
In a brightening eucatastrophe resurrected in a bedroom of  
Graves,  
Like grandfather clocks stolen to feed fat and hungry sparrows,  
And you wearing the lipsticks of all the mariposas in Mexico  
And wearing a lingerie of spider webs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lions Who I Never Knew

There are lions there- further inland, underneath airplanes  
That go everyday leaping over them:  
Lions yawning, overfed: the tourists gaping with even  
Bigger eyes-  
Lions surrounded by a constant stream of cars down the road  
From where I used to live:  
I used to hear them every day before I had to go to school;  
And when I lingered in my truancy,  
I would hear them snoring all day like fire snoring up a  
Forest-  
The canals around them making them save, and the yellow of  
Their kingly coats reflected in the sky:  
The lions of the offspring that were once overfed, still are  
Overfed-  
Lions who I never knew but once lived so close to me:  
Lions who I never knew, who will never see a single wave in the  
Sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips Of A Misanthropic Storm

Making love to line her pockets—  
The lasting wish she uses to feed her children, as the  
Mexicans encourage themselves  
In the southern florida landscaping—  
The conquistadors gone  
To pay our taxes—the granite crosses they left  
Eaten up the apiary of waves,  
And the songs they kept of silver palaces shoveled  
Over by the lycanthropic moonlight—  
Then there is a place for us, stacked up together  
Like vipers in the common place moonlight—  
They have been singing a busy accord—and making love,  
The fairs come and leave us—with their  
Exhibits of lycanthropes and mantacores—  
I suppose the housewives will never climb the  
Vines to find us, even though we are just across  
Their roof tops—shooting off roman candles  
Into the green lips of a misanthropic storm.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips Of An Empty Sea-Shell

Open lips of empty sea-shells are beautiful—  
And I think of you  
While I am walking alone at the flea-market  
On an usual weekend,  
Trying to remember the way we caressed  
Like two otters in their joy—  
Who use simple words to knock on doors  
That the crocodiles see—  
Long passions spinning as ferris wheels next  
To the highway—  
As pregnant mothers lose sight of their first  
Loves as they look away,  
And the amusements spin up beneath them—  
Graveyards blooming like televisions  
From the anonymous crypts where the  
Unambitious promises of kindergarteners used  
To sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips Of Busy Ants

Acrobats of Spanish glasses,  
Of peat most that feed the sod and grasses:  
I broke my jaw,  
I broke my glasses; and the winters came and  
Beat our asses:  
And you sang; and you awakened; and you jangled,  
And with the stories of your comely bangs  
Entangled  
The world in an angelical séance of archangels;  
And I pushed you on the swings of very same angles;  
And you swam through the void azure of your world,  
That really is just another womb;  
And your cherry toenails kicked up like runaways putting  
Their noses into the armpits of pine trees;  
Your hair was a yellow weathervane;  
And my knuckles cracked along your shoulder blades:  
And in my mind I entered the wind tunnels of Spain with  
You on Christmas day,  
And we chased Olga's guitar into the south of France  
Both of us couldn't play;  
And we sang dirges to the lips of busy ants;  
Which was our punishment, anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips Of Chaos

Understand the Fury's noise  
And you will drink from  
The lips of Chaos.  
The murdering science  
Bled the universe  
And she is still giving birth.  
And lovers slowly separate  
Like continents  
That once clutched each other.  
The painful tectonics  
Of gravity's invisible shroud  
Weigh upon us our  
Ancestral sins  
Like forensic evidence  
Stratified in the clouds.  
The wolves would blow  
The house down  
But we let them in.  
Flip the switch,  
The electricity of a  
Good blow job  
On her knees like the pietà.  
Then her eyes are  
Concave rubies  
Geometry swimming in  
Fiery motes,  
150 watt angelicism  
Filigreed by opal stems  
With a blue bird behind them,  
Like a wizard humming  
Behind a curtain- a stage  
By which the traffic is a  
Galloping herd  
Of thoughtless silver kins  
That we use to steer  
Ourselves further  
Away from our kind  
Outlined by the tumorous  
Rays



That flop and lay like  
Beached porpoises upon our  
Clammy foreheads  
And slide like greasy  
Fingerprints along our  
Gulping throats,  
The pain that we cannot say  
But taste the suffocating  
Poison like the gallow's noose,  
When at the edge of the  
World  
An old man and a little  
Girl hold hands  
And turning away up  
A glass staircase through  
The sky leading to  
The white white room  
Of early childhood  
On the 2nd floor  
Inside which innocence remains  
Wisely agoraphobic  
To the truancies of his  
Professional siblings  
Committing the crimes  
Of time and gravity  
Decomposing on the street.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips Of The Gardenias

The fan I bought you blows your auburn hair:  
The ibex leap across the savannah and the children are lost:  
We stand in lines and stare with our materials under the crooks of  
Our dreams,  
While the cats are out under the giant blue umbrellas,  
And the statues carry their own hammers,  
And we have been away, while the turtles were making love,  
Brandishing their children like coal spilled across the corrugations of  
The beaches,  
And the little girls moved just a little,  
And your eyes burned for another birthday across the horizons  
Where the schoolyards were leaping;  
And Alma's sister passed through the arms of Jesus for her confirmation,  
And the white flowers budded underneath the fountains  
Across the perfumed lips of the gardenias.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips Of The Native Prom Queens

And now they are sleeping in their pigeons of  
Ecstasy while I had to wait another year to see if  
This was even real,  
Working for the church and giving away food every  
Saturday,  
Underneath the airplanes and underneath the  
Mountains while both of  
My grandparents were left alive—  
Now my Chinese wife is with child,  
And I made love to her tonight while it rained—  
I seemed to have skipped out of class  
And second base with her—  
As the day after we met we were married  
And I consummated what we are now to be:  
Our first child is born,  
Our second is waiting in the bull pen—  
I am drinking a beer  
After one in the morning and still have not  
Experienced metamorphosis—  
There is yet someone better than me able to  
Teach and make a profession  
Out of the finest conundrums that were never  
Really there—  
But for now they plot and seem to be happy  
With themselves  
As the glaciers melt like the tears of a goddess  
Looking down  
At the foxes who were too clever for themselves  
To ever have gone after any of the grapes  
From the movie theatres or anywhere—  
And they just waited for a time like this,  
For fireworks and no commitments,  
As the criminals fled the industrious scene,  
Under the sweltering tits of the bilious mountains—  
The misfits who one pretended to kiss the Indian giving  
Lips of the native prom queens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips Of The Rattlesnake

I will publish my art through the new diamonds  
And then I will survive by holding on:  
What candle that wept beneath the burning bush—  
What silent lip set afire by gasoline while the  
Airplanes are pushing out:  
Oh, mute child in Colorado underneath the mountains;  
Wait for the rainstorms to come—  
For then we will all be mute, and the you can  
Sell yourself to the lips of the rattlesnake without any  
Grief.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips That Can Describe Nothing

Sea is there- cold sea, and the many  
Legged serpent is swimming in  
Her,  
Tangled up in nectar and gills- its  
Chorus crowding the waves,  
As it swims with so many heads  
That break as if monuments  
Into the cloisters of sunlight spat down  
From the adulterous heavens-  
The serpent continues with the swimmers  
In a hapless cornucopia  
Of sinking Ferris wheels with too many  
Axis's- broken apart, a kaleidoscope  
Of beasts no hero can conquer-  
The very ends of the beautiful meaning eating  
Themselves- going away to come  
Again- the many avenues of a funhouse  
Of missing and abandoned lovers-  
This great thing is the centripetal force  
Of stormy windmills- an assured madness  
With too many sweet eyes, and lips that  
Can describe nothing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips That Cannot Sing

Everyday peels unforgiving to the new threats:  
Doggies die,  
And pets die-  
Goldfish are bought at the fair-  
Little girls turn upside down and shout to the fibrillating  
Shadows of the carnivalesque moon;  
And I have no one to love,  
And this is not a theatre- and this is not art:  
This is the casual tortoise choking on the oleander,  
Or on the rubrum;  
These things are not even meatloaf- they will not  
Sustain- they will not sell:  
These words are broken amber toys who wished they  
Had more little boys to play with:  
These are the sad things from high school,  
The only thing new about them is the scars, the imbibing  
Of their father's cheap alcohol:  
And the earth is on a tilt and imperfect-  
So around its table floats the icy centaurs, the jilted pin-palls  
Who sing all woken up in Colorado,  
But her dress is up and receptive to the javelin of her  
Middle aged sun: If there was a younger, more vibrant  
Conquistador of light, she would have him,  
But then she can't even open the garage door:  
And all of it is tricks tied up in a nap sack and slung over  
The shoulder to truck:  
And tannebaums in a spring never thought of, never celebrated-  
Ladies crying from the peeled vestiges of flesh, or from  
Heavy duty kitchen work- the chemical pools sting their eyes,  
And they press some wine to their powder-doomed lips that cannot sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lips To My Cool Shade

My father gives me direction and a couple dollars  
For lunch:  
We sell salted coelacanth and Indian corn by the dozen  
Bunch:  
And I think of you and hold my hand over my heart  
And chant to you;  
When the roach coach comes for lunch, I spend five  
Dollars,  
And sit and relax and drink Mountain Dew,  
And I can almost hear my dogs and who you must be  
Making love with-  
I am celibate and horded- I am very much Nicola  
Tesla in Colorado Springs or somewhere else:  
I am making invention by stealing your blue prints,  
By lifting your skirts and peeking inside,  
While you just go about you f%cking hay ride:  
What will you be for Halloween:  
Won't you be my orange tree? Won't you be my shade,  
Won't you be my Spanish harlot and with your  
Cadavers escalating through the bases of marmalade,  
Climb up my swinging husk and put your  
Lips to my cool shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Listen To The Mausoleums Grow

I am beautiful but tight knotted:  
I will never sell,  
But I am good for suffocating boats;  
And the rest of your day is full of liars,  
But you read me and it is good enough  
For making love with  
Acrobats;  
And I can't drive trucks, and the funny thing is  
I cant even spell,  
But I am getting out of the bird bath before the  
Mass migrations;  
And even before the song ends, the bird bath is quite  
Empty and perfectly teal:  
And Erin doesn't return my calls:  
She thinks she has the upper hand, but she doesn't  
Even remember who I am,  
And I lie my head underneath the clouds and seem to give  
The same smile that they always give at the end of the show;  
And happily I listen to the mausoleums grow.

Robert Rorabeck



## Little Bit Of Perfume

A little bit of perfume after the sun goes down—  
That is when the jasmine spring their wares onto empty  
Trees—white hearts that cats look up to,  
Buds of corsages for boys no bigger than toy trucks—  
The garden laying anonymously beside the road—  
As the clock stops ticking and begins to purr.

Robert Rorabeck

## Little Evidence Left Behind

Fingerprinting a theft—little evidence left behind after  
A sun shower on a broken heart—  
Broken words told the empty street that is iridescent—  
Like an oil slick trying to impersonate a rainbow:  
This month there will be Halloween  
And next month elections: I will try to wriggle my way through  
School—I will bend my neck and drink from  
The water fountain at my discretion—  
The neighborhood of our avenue will continue tumbling  
Through the pine trees of an unspeakable truant's joy—  
And awakening in the morning,  
Mouth filled with the information of sleep walkers—  
Only to pull over—our kids collected from the rodeos of their  
Daycare, making sand castles to the individuated gods—  
Surprised by the words they know—  
Awakening in the afternoons of their weekends, clever,  
Well-fed—and playing down their one way streets  
As airplanes shoot like bottle rockets through the skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Little Goldfish

Pleased as the pleasant bees taking over  
A small corner of the house'  
Little wildflowers outside sipping of the sunbeams'  
In just a slant of a garden,  
The forest otherwise over grown 'making a poetry of  
The inner space'  
Little windows looking through keyholes'  
A little goldfish swims back to his garden'a little girl  
Holds hands  
And examines the ribbon of a canal 'maybe she lives  
In a fish bowl, or at least a trailer park 'underneath the  
Talking lines 'only if she ever looked so  
Beautiful as to ever be my muse'  
The parks lay barrenly across from her 'the mountains  
Gather up their news '  
Wild horses on the forefront of a graveyard of missing  
Parents 'Airplanes making an apiary in the  
Sky over a forest fire lactating a breakfast  
Of honey and eggs'  
As stewardesses get together begging to be remembered  
As they keep continuing far above another world.

Robert Rorabeck

## Little More Than A Happy Candle

How rude the cross to lay dreaming in golden  
Filigree on Monday  
While in less than an hour Alma will be cleaning things in the  
Fruiteria:  
Alma who must weigh less than one hundred pounds;  
And I am up near two hundred:  
She was born in Guerro Mexico, and I have never seen how the  
Monarch butterflies must have migrated across the shoulders  
In the cantinas of her childhood,  
But her eyes are as ochre as their sadness:  
How rich and stimulating, like the soul penned by big brown  
Buttons into the stare of a paper doll:  
Strong weather could pick her up and carry her into the makebelieve  
Of unicorns:  
She loves the Virgin of Guadalupe: she wears her around her neck,  
And she cleans the counter while the day leaps over her  
Like a boy enamored with her body, like a brown tree wayward  
Of its orchard, but happy,  
The sun little more than a happy candle basking over her soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Little More Time

You put a church into my body  
You didn't even believe—  
And a fairground, like a well-lit spear into  
My heart—  
And for a while it made you laugh with  
The springtime toads  
Chuckling on the rebar—And when you drove  
Past my window when I was not  
Home,  
You could see the Virgin of Guadalupe well  
Lit upon her church—and it made  
You smile until your amber mind drifted  
Back to the orange groves,  
And thoughts of another love your  
Ferris Wheels could not leave behind—  
Drivers of your sorrowful sunshine—  
And you went in with him and left your cathedrals  
Emptied in my mind—  
Until the rains inevitably put out the candles of  
That love, and I put new saints inside my windows  
That were neither yours or mine—  
And you drove away into a new playground across  
The graveyards- and sang songs  
Of how you used to believe in my affections—  
And would have returned their love to me, you swore,  
Listening to the childhood's evaporations—  
If only I had given you a little more time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Little Office In The Gloom

I've never battled with the ancients,  
And she kisses you and spins on you:  
I don't know what to do with this spear:  
The angles of battleships are very sweet going down  
Amidst the gawking icebergs.  
Venal muses ringing bells in the sky don't care-  
They lift a leg and fart and then savage more  
Sugar cane for their rum:  
They bight the tails of puss willows; they keep their  
Boys on ice in the little streams in the ribbons up in their  
Hair:  
And my day is long and untrustworthy, but I keep assuring  
Myself that it will one day lead to paradise;  
And Kelly comes in on Tuesdays and we count dolphins  
In the sea, or at least she does with her better eyes,  
And isn't that nice:  
I keep wanting to hold her hand- she kissed my neck today.  
I drink liquor and I want to die:  
The panda bears inside the zoo are very sad-  
I just wish they could talk to me like astronauts stranded on  
The moon;  
And she is in her night garments, and her mailmen are all home  
Almost sleeping from their hours spent walking and humming  
On her;  
And she has a little office in the gloom,  
And a beautiful husband waiting at home for her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Little Porcelain Doll

It's time for people to start paying me, really,  
For to hide in the glorious spread of fondled light  
Winnowed from the spiked palms,  
Where the diminutive refugee of the circus lives;  
Her tits the tart apples they pay quarters for ten second  
Beholding; I've tried to pick her up and carry her  
Into the white washed rime and pumpernickel where  
The dentists and clairvoyants, and romance novelists live  
Out as in estuaries of chlorine, where the pools vibrate  
Like belly-dancers, and little sorts of harems,  
And underage spoiled-brats get virtual reality games,  
And acne-scarred hookers to bight their teeth on without a  
Glint of shame; I've tried to pick her up from her dugout in the  
Heart of the palm at the left edge of the frame of the football  
Field, where she floated to disheveled and feral from her  
Flight from the screw-tape ringmaster and the pinching hell,  
Her topless mermaid suit and the tank of teal,  
She came crying on the knobby back of a crocodile she charmed  
With her sequined skirt and a funnel of the king's liquor;  
But she will not go, though I tease and tug her, for she says she  
Likes it here, in the buggies of spikenard, especially after  
The Mexican has cut the grass and gone away, and the crickets  
And grasshoppers are hopping headless and madly, and the midgets  
Are garlanding the cypress, and the housewives are driving home  
Like sepiaed and dulled floats in a parade of winsome hearses;  
Then she can stare at them all like a little porcelain doll, and  
Coo in her creel, and if she were still a child, I would love her,  
She says, but not now with all her tattooing and banishments;  
But, quietly, I love her still, and creep to her out from the middle  
Of school, and bring her sacks of hamburgers and things I  
Weave for her from different colors of worry; and she promises me  
One day soon when sleep becomes the professionals, we will  
Creep out together on the drooling green, and swing in a pattern  
Of circles, likened to two planets making love in a dizzy universe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Little Sparrow

Where are you, little sparrow,  
Because you don't sing anymore  
From your lonely cage by the yellow window:  
Truth be told,  
You hardly sung to me at all,  
But I am sad now, little sparrow,  
And your grandmother wants to see you  
Once again before she leaves this world.  
Because you sing so beautifully,  
Little sparrow,  
When you let yourself go,  
And reminisced on the things which  
Never happened to us....  
Even though that was quite so long ago,  
And I have never become the great artist  
You told me I could be:  
Further from the sun,  
The world is sadder now, little sparrow,  
As you must know where ever you might be:  
We need you to sing to us to keep us warm;  
You are such a small thing,  
But you are the one who can lighten the earth.  
The trees are shivering now on the edge,  
And the lawn is full of blue frost  
Which doesn't know where else to go,  
And the last light is keeping like a  
Candle on an ancient desk,  
But soon too it will be gone-  
Old friends are returning to the far away  
Places I once knew them,  
And you might see them again  
Without even noticing, little sparrow,  
But it is doubtful I will hear at all,  
Little sparrow,  
Unless you can resurrect me with  
Your needful song....

Robert Rorabeck



# Little Wildflowers

Pleased as the pleasant bees taking over  
A small corner of the house—  
Little wildflowers outside sipping of the sunbeams—  
In just a slant of a garden,  
The forest otherwise over grown—making a poetry of  
The inner space—  
Little windows looking through keyholes—  
A little goldfish swims back to his garden—a little girl  
Holds hands  
And examines the ribbon of a canal—maybe she lives  
In a fish bowl, or at least a trailer park—underneath the  
Talking lines—only if she ever looked so  
Beautiful as to ever be my muse—  
The parks lay barrenly across from her—the mountains  
Gather up their news—  
Wild horses on the forefront of a graveyard of missing  
Parents—Airplanes making an apiary in the  
Sky over a forest fire lactating a breakfast  
Of honey and eggs—  
As stewardesses get together begging to be remembered  
As they keep continuing far above another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Littlest Heaviest Thing

You complicate the sky  
Every time I run toward you,  
You flick on the brights  
And become the neon angel  
Spreading its wings,  
Hiding the barreling train  
Only to step aside at the  
Last moment to watch  
Me devoured by the  
Prehistoric processions,  
A stampede of cheerleaders  
With heavy singularities  
Flecking their eyes,  
Which start unraveling  
My guts, strings of spaghetti  
Sucked through the lips  
Of the succubus who cheers  
Rosy cheeks and pompoms—  
There, between eerie white teeth  
To become compacted, all  
Of it in a single point—  
Arms and legs drawn in  
Like a turtle playing defense,  
Breath drawn in from the  
Heavy blow, fist balled with painted nails,  
To my chest, all sensibility knocked  
Out of me—all that remains is  
The point of the heaviest gravity,  
Which nothing can escape, the thought  
Of you like epileptic nebular  
Clouds stampeding through the  
Riverbeds of coal black sky,  
Driven by the whips of her storm,  
Pressing down with all the weight  
of your anti-matter,  
the mirror of the Universe—  
You swoop down like the  
Angel of death making an encore,  
And pick me up where I

Lie on the sidewalk,  
The littlest heaviest thing—  
For some reason, you  
Drop me in your pocket  
And strut on down the street,  
The points of your high heels  
Sizzling the concrete.

Robert Rorabeck

# Littlest Of The Talented Children

Hat tricks burn the air over the erstwhile celebration;  
Where the little boys are sleeping with blotchy coats,  
The bouquets of fluidic clitorises of red hibiscus,  
Reveal the deep quieted organs beneath the ripped denim;

This is all that was had to say, said the king touching down,  
And surveying the destroyed hymen of the disentangled relationship:  
His children were tangled like topaz nettles,  
The emotionless lovers of a mutilated culture;  
Twins who once shared a constellation,  
Where the hares nuzzled in a warm clutch,  
Now this the spilled inducement of overeager wasps,  
Who have swollen the garden's neck with their forthrightness....

Beneath the few remaining trees, a pitiful swath of anemic glade,  
The poets are giving up and going indoors;  
Like premenstrual geniuses, they are too soon perturbed  
By her absence of the gesture of her eyes upon them;  
They are contemplating imports and the amputations of  
Their right leg, as they hang the impotently soaked broadsides on the  
Pontificating coat rack;

Soon they will be sitting on cushions and out of it,  
And cannot be blamed if she cuts her wrist at the end of the rhyme,  
Their eyes sharing this empirical wall which we can all see:  
The certainty of callous hands on indifferent wood,  
The craftsman's sons returned home from the battle which  
Killed all hope of the littlest of the talented children.

Robert Rorabeck

# Living God As Blind As Midnight

The milk of satin estuaries and of the milk men—  
Who may or may not have been your father,  
While we were abandoning your households on  
Holidays—and the greater tenements seemed to sing  
Of long forgotten holidays—but there remain places  
That as of yet provide the kindling for  
Other monsters and their housewives—whose kitchens  
Sing, and whose pools glisten—  
Words written down to win the lottery—  
Stories told to abandoned men—horses who've leapt  
Over their grottos and estuaries,  
As the busses return just as the butterflies—  
And the moon rises like a pregnant kite-  
Stumbling across all of the hopelessness to find their  
Living god as blind as midnight.

Robert Rorabeck

# Living In The Coliseum Of The Creeps

Plato invented the first Barbie for example  
And said, "This is what I mean, "  
And set her on a model horse  
And watched her leap the scene.

And all the beardless students gathered there  
Clapped and roared,  
Not knowing that they too exemplified  
The imperfection of the horde.

She spent her days grazing knee high in the  
Sultry wheat,  
But getting to the higher fruit proved a tougher  
Feat;

But when she got up to the sweetest bough  
And such rare fruit she did perceive,  
She thought now I have the means to prove that  
I shouldn't grieve;

Yet, when she leaned outwards to get the rarest thing,  
Her ample bosom stymied her: her breasts got in the way,  
And she had not the wings to save herself from  
The most innocent of graves:

She fell so far for she had not the means to fly  
And by this I mean she went into a languorous dive:  
Drinking from the evening eyes of men, she stopped along  
The highway and entered into a place of ill-refute:  
She lingers there while the world had a changing of the  
Guard:

She never made it up to college, she didn't keep her guard;  
And thus bringing her into the fruition of a newer lord;  
And there was many a evening he sat her on his blue-jeaned knee,  
And said, "Now, Barbie, it's time to play with me."

Thus the moral of the story, folks, is that nothing

Can be real with any perfect certainty; and thus Plato was deceived,  
Later on Newton ate the apple that defined our certain gravity;  
But that's little more than hearsay, mentioned in more loquacious stories.

One thing remains for certain, though;  
We all live in the coliseum of the creeps,  
And what doesn't kill us, though,  
Will surely make us weep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lloyd Alexander's Unapologetically Forgotten Relative

I am touching on you  
The places you cannot feel.  
When you look up,  
It is only coincidence,  
Because I do not know who you are.  
Instead,  
You turn to the liars you believe in,  
The men in your life  
In coincidences of flesh  
They pollinate you steadily,  
When I am lost in the park down the  
Way, my voice gone  
From crying your name,  
Though the old great author is dead,  
I write to him about you in real life,  
When you are far away  
You remember nothing of our  
Casual lives apart together,  
Departing the way secret relatives  
Say goodbye at the airport.  
Your eyes reveal someone I have  
Never seen,  
Though soon all the world is waking  
Up and donning their body's work.  
This is when you close your eyes and  
I cannot wake up without you,  
So here I am,  
Hoping to make friends by  
Humming a fragmented song,  
Because the greatest men have already past,  
And I cannot go after them until,  
Because the rules say they  
Will not let me in,  
Though if you put on your robe  
And step out onto the sunlit balcony,  
Yawn and drink a glass of milk,  
I will climb up to you and sing,  
For as long as I can hold on.  
If they see I have tried hard enough



To appeal to the unfamiliar muse,  
My adopted fathers will seize up  
And patiently wait upon the fading paths  
For me to follow into the  
After hour's dusky writing room.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lo And Behold

A lilac sprig pressed in a playground of an otherwise emptied  
Middle-class estuary:  
See how the metals of children rust when they are made to go to school  
And the housewives are in town  
And their daddies are in town too:  
Children make-believe in a séance until they are all grown up,  
The lions yawn-  
And the houses they grew up in turn green and the trees fall all around  
Them-  
The schools continue with their processes.  
Blindness is a fever along the road. Beautiful women come and go.  
The traffic of their eulogies carries a wind that uplifts the flags  
And makes them seem safe.  
Toothless and plasticine dinosaurs unlocked with katydids  
Amused with broken promises the women,  
Metamorphosed from the smiles of crocodiles,  
And come up upon the banks of the amusement parks of frozen childhoods:

In the glass and ether, they commit to relationships,  
Taking pictures amidst the Paleolithic,  
Warm hands holding in the blindness- the stars crawl about and buzz-  
The traffic of eyes moves down a bucolic armpit-  
They are married inside the bastions of amusement parks the armies of  
Cypress all around them-  
Abortive dreams losing their slumbers, a forest of embers creeps through  
Their picnics.

Robert Rorabeck

# Loneliness Is A Refuge

Loneliness is a refuge  
For the frightened soul  
Already half devoured  
By the burdens and the tolls  
Of the emperical  
World,  
Bought and sold,  
Butchered and looking good  
In the name-brand clothes  
On display  
In the middle-class windows.  
Further afield  
Through the hypnotic shoals,  
Like a feral child  
Unafiliated and unafraid  
As the thunder snarls,  
The light unfurls,  
And the waves explode  
Like fearless soldiers,  
Inebriated and uneducated  
Revolting in the shallows;  
Looking on,  
Loneliness is a refuge  
For the frightened soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Loneliness Of

Honeycombed in the loneliness of a swell diatribe,  
My heart is half empty and a long  
Ways from home-  
And, if you've slept in all three of my beds,  
How come you still have  
A hard time kissing my mouth or holding  
My hand-  
And you still won't be here with me, as the ghosts  
Float across the earth of tattered waves-  
And it all seems like a golden coil of a serpent  
Echoing- echoing over the wishes of  
A sacrifice:  
As the gravitational pull of a lonely satellite coaxes  
The waves again over  
Her exhausted body between the mangroves-  
There seems to be a twist in the plot of her roots,  
And a Barrett in her hair- snowshoe crabs  
In her eyes-  
As she remembers that her wishes are gone,  
And this is how she spent her honeymoon-  
Loneliness of a Ferris Wheel without any friends  
And with nothing to believe in:  
The no longer distant curl of death sneers her lip- as another  
Woman has been making room in her house-  
As her wishing wells are cleaned with bleach- and all of  
Her penny candy stolen by kids on bicycles-  
So her zoetrope doesn't have to turn anymore-  
The extinction of a species never thought about by  
Television,  
Like seahorses underneath the caesuras- or latchkey  
Children underneath the monuments of  
Another thing I don't have time to forget anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Loneliness Of A Swell Diatribe

Honeycombed in the loneliness of a swell diatribe,  
My heart is half empty and a long  
Ways from home-  
And, if you've slept in all three of my beds,  
How come you still have  
A hard time kissing my mouth or holding  
My hand-  
And you still won't be here with me, as the ghosts  
Float across the earth of tattered waves-  
And it all seems like a golden coil of a serpent  
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So her zoetrope doesn't have to turn anymore-  
The extinction of a species never thought about by  
Television,  
Like seahorses underneath the caesuras- or latchkey  
Children underneath the monuments of  
Another thing I don't have time to forget anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lonely God Behind My Eyes

There is a lonely God behind my eyes  
Who still cries for you who are so far  
Away, like a lost child forgotten who she is,  
Her identity soothed away by time  
So she becomes someone else's child,  
Though my God remembers how she played  
Before him once or twice in the early days  
Before the world was fully formed—  
There is a lonely God behind my eyes  
Who screams at things because you can not  
Hear him, who hates everything he sees  
And wanders far up into the glacial lakes  
Of my cranium where he sits on a nameless  
Stone and cries your name, the word  
That would set him free if he saw you dressed  
In the fine syllables your parents christened  
You with. There is a lonely God behind  
My eyes who has tried to commit suicide  
Just because he no longer believed he existed,  
Because he knows not a thing to be true  
Except that you have walked away, like a  
Ghost shed of identity, so now you float down  
The roads and caress nameless men thoughtlessly,  
Forever and ever forgetting how your love  
Was the fulcrum for this creation, how  
Everything began to bloom as you opened  
Your eyes. There is a lonely God behind my  
Eyes who still cries for you who holds the  
Key, who has forgotten.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lonely Satin Dog

Lonely satin dog  
Gets out and howls,  
Pretends the sky his by  
Marking a fire hydrant- pretends that you  
Really care to die by his words,  
That the sea is his by pissing in the indigo soot  
Of a fashionable puddle,  
That his words are this by pissing out the ink;  
And the icy centaurs shoot  
And laugh above him and coat him with unbounded  
Star stuff- things they don't even have words  
For,  
And he never looks up to recount,  
But howls and howls and finally goes to sleep,  
Wishes he could stand up and get on swings to find you,  
And to evolve into your bed that way:  
But you are so far above him couched in a garden of  
Otherworldly play,  
And he finally gets the notion to fall asleep,  
Or he just does after marking everything he can think of  
Which might possibly give you to his lonely  
Belonging.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lonely Singer

Leaving the center- what do the heroes hope to find,  
Leaving their women behind,  
And all the pretty things that they bought for them,  
Their lime stone carports and their two and one half children:  
All of their hearts of palm,  
And their beautifully beautiful landscaping:  
Now I just wish I was not at home so that I would have to be  
Forced to watch them,  
Going into the smoldering crags where they will forget themselves:  
They will find their sisters, and not recognizing them,  
Make love to them,  
Until the dragons help them to remember, and then they will  
Need to help to force themselves down into the unending spray of the  
Glutinous cataracts;  
And I am sure that I wish that I have no relationship to them-  
Even though some women think them beautiful,  
And their shields are golden: they are all doomed into the spiraling  
Caesuras, leaving their wives at home to become the fetishes  
Bedded by either greater or lesser magicians;  
So now I am sure that I must be glad that I am a tramp, a lonely singer,  
Who has neither known a center, nor has a center deep inside of him.

Robert Rorabeck



# Long Abandoned Muse

Fish stuck in a kiss who are now singing forever,  
Like over used words at the lip  
Of the mountain in  
Deep snow, knowing nothing about the moon, who  
Is just there-  
Just over the rise, where the angelic stags are rutting  
In anamorphous movements-  
There, like gold near the saddle, rising high  
And swayed back like gods over  
My childhood,  
Like the golden sweat won upon a long hike,  
And nudes upon nudes kiss,  
Like kindergarten and goldfish all over my  
Missbehaved childhood, but now- oh now, my  
Long abandoned muse- what- and oh what,  
Can they possibly be doing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Long As She Gets Paid

Harem of chimps, this is what I do  
With my extra chromosomes- I ignore trees,  
I get envious of pretty girls,  
I try to avoid my face: Most of all, I finish near  
The bottom of my class,  
So clichéd, I drool into the lower octaves of canals,  
I vomit rum to feed minnows,  
And diminutive mermaids, homeopathic romances  
To which I don't have to shave;  
In the back of my mind, doing exactly what  
I want to do- I climb mountains, I sniff the glue  
Of wildflowers- I burn my fingers over the  
Lightning stoked river through the pussywillows-  
Of her pubis, through the grand engorge of her certain  
Fits- the bucks, the rhymes of saddled hips,  
The cries I remember like little children coming out into  
Their mowed yards for the ice-cream truck;  
After school, I like to swing, I like to f\*ck-  
Then I get lazy and watch Donald Duck, and the sky-  
The sky is our neighbor and we hang tennis shoes by  
Her power, and she watches a while, concerned,  
Turns rosy from drink, is shared by hurricanes, but I don't  
Know what really else to say- After she is over with  
Herself, goes down beneath the constellations I hate to  
Describe- Powerless, I hide love poems underneath the  
Shingles in the roof of a professional golf player-  
I actually did this- and I've masturbated in a garage,  
I've stolen a good thousand dollars worth of quarters to feed  
To feel the plastic ululations between my childish thighs,  
Sometimes she is blonde, and sometime she is colored-  
Up and down her trails, she'll be anything, but she doesn't  
Care so much for expensive bouquets, or romantic thundershowers  
Lisping down across the corrugations of wildcat or  
Thunderbird trailer parks- Near or far from the sea where  
I pretend to catch her, as long as she gets paid.

Robert Rorabeck

# Long Forgotten Men

Silent cars like fat women walking  
Torpidly,  
Not even animalistic through the despotic  
Night;  
And it is so bad,  
This masturbation,  
This recessive alcoholism in the din,  
Wind-f^cked hills trying to be  
Beautiful  
To whistle to her legs:  
She's selling lunch,  
She has so many children,  
And I call myself a genius,  
But I cant even spell the word,  
And I get nothing done,  
Forgetting how beautifully death hung over  
Me as I summited all those dour mountains  
In my spring,  
While my sick muse was getting married and  
Postulating the names of  
Children to her various pantheisms all awash  
In the spotless glow of  
Her household beauty;  
And these decade of years feels like a week of  
Shakespeare,  
Being read to the dogs in the dark:  
And I swear that I am doing a tour in Vietnam,  
And the caskets come like a wedding party  
Being rolled out by our gray uncles,  
And I still love you,  
While the machetes synch paper cuts into the  
Voluptuous jungle,  
The steam boats singing their operas to the natives,  
And mad men going leaping with arrows  
Through their throats,  
Their tin crowns lost and being gathered about  
By curiously metamorphosing minnows,  
Spider monkeys now populating the raft once crafted  
By strange,

Long forgotten men.

Robert Rorabeck

## Long Version Of The Truth

If you know what you are, collect in my wishing  
Wells, and hold up for dinner,  
Run underneath the bellies of the cars and their  
Starlets,  
And come over for dinner with the ghosts in the band  
Of death,  
Because I have felt you here all in the empty parks,  
And in between the stones of cemeteries,  
And I have been in your back yard through the infinitely  
Inclining caesuras that run up the spines of Angels  
Whose liquor I have tasted,  
Whose flowers I have smelled: and now it all seems like  
A long version of the truth,  
When all I wanted was to lay my thoughts in your bed  
And be watered by your lips.

Robert Rorabeck

# Look

Look.

And how happily innocence plays  
On the underside of the opal coffin  
Like light-giving minerals in a cavity no  
One will see:  
Clinging to someone she doesn't know,  
Who doesn't breath:  
Her lips are twined like barbed wire in  
A kiss grown tight in a struggling tree,  
Her shoulders a high wall hiding the wildlife  
From the smoking highway;  
There is a forest fire in her touch,  
And an ancient lake; her leg has been broken  
By a crush, and mended by a snake bite;  
This is where she dreams, her curtaining lights  
Cast from the underside of the little bridge  
Upon the dark waters of a skip;  
She is coiled up next to a cell of bees  
Feeding their larvae the pewter essence of a gift-  
In the earliest morning she cries dew on a  
Single blade of grass in a patch of sun on  
A mound of sand, where the ants wake up  
In a red kingdom and eat her cherished sorrows,  
Though she remains the embrace of a thorax,  
And the tracks of insects on the desolate yards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Looking At The Stars

Night in its cradle just looking at the stars:  
Girls in the ballrooms, like coming up for air from  
The fairytales of goldfish trapped in their  
Little life sized glass rooms  
Pushing brooms alongside the road, while the rabbits sniff out  
The excess of wild, hyperbolic kale;  
And the rattlesnakes them:  
Beautiful diamonds on their backs, the rustic cousins to  
Satan,  
Underneath the slash pines, and wreathing for Christmas:  
All of the world breathing at the edge of sleep,  
Calm, but discontentedly: fires in the barrels of off perfumes,  
While I dream of a multi legged midnight galloping away  
In her bedrooms: very fetching, and still in high school,  
Calling through her necropsies to the sailors  
Horse-headed in the bay: they seem to be able to float there  
All day, underneath the light towers of the moon  
Who are too far away to save them anyway; and they will never  
Grow up knowing her love, but they will have tasted her  
Leggy through the waves- and they will go back to their  
Mothers preaching, preaching narcissistically of how,  
Eventually, they had been saved.

Robert Rorabeck

# Looking Away As They Do

Peeled into the joys of an excellent body destroyed  
By rum:  
I weigh as much as my muse of today or yesterday:  
And while I am a bachelor,  
I sit out and have lunch over the ants unapologetically:  
They cannot turn their heads up to see.  
Of course, the cars are entirely blue around me-  
They seem to be burning sugar cane in the sky:  
Yes, that is exactly what they are doing,  
And the juvenile swans are abandoning our parking lots  
And malls,  
Before they are truly beautiful- looking away as they do,  
Before we can truly figure out where they belong.

Robert Rorabeck



# Looking Good

Now I am looking good-  
Now, I am your man, and I want to f-  
And I'm in Spain, just a boy  
Drinking sangria with my aunt in Catalonia,  
Looking at the lady in the stones of the  
Bay across the rippled silver of Port Boa:  
Cross me, be my rood, be my stewardess,  
Be my goody-good:  
Love me, lick me, stamp me, stick me:  
Whatever I am doing now, I doing good,  
And the entire early autumn hemisphere over  
My burry head is its own kind of Mobile,  
Turning, turning without a hitch-  
Looking at the brilliant serpents handicapped bodied  
Down in the ditch:  
They are evil, and they hell, and they will take us  
By the hand straight to the principal;  
And I love you, and I'm warm,  
And in my head there's an entire swarm;  
And the courtyard is red bricked and palmed,  
And there is so many ways down with vodka and dynamite-  
The extra chromosomes of extra midnight;  
And thank you for having me, out in the balmy lunchtime  
Theatre: I've sharpened my butter knife and I'll fight  
To be your wife,  
Fight to tie tight your spells trackside just west of the  
Parking lot's dinner bells: Someone keyed my car,  
Someone didn't like me;  
I don't car who they are; let the strike straight out  
In the bullsh&t carnival, and the kitchens sail brightly:  
I am a wheel running under you, steer where you'd like to  
Go somewhere sandy, hyperbolean- show me where  
You take you other men, silver-bowled;  
Let me metamorphosis again into a sheet metal knight  
To press your lips again, reddish smears,  
Stamped in monarchal wax of a newly family tree, secretive,  
Give your soul and body straight and pure to me; throbbing,  
Strumming, with newly strung filament humming,  
Turn around and without blinking give it all to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Looking Into Your Eyes

I'd rather eat dirt,

And f- excommunicated

Angels

Than ever again look

Into your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Loose Change In The Sky

Pretty song of the nubile wave  
Going home again over  
The oil rigs:  
What passion is in the empty moon-  
It goes so far across the  
Heavens  
And nothing has to sink, in the life  
That is so long,  
Hallucination over the trailer parks:  
As it takes all of the Ferris  
Wheels away,  
And a long apple field of emotion  
That disappears in the  
Topiary of empty birdbaths-  
And I have to sing like this,  
Wino underneath the overpasses-  
Because it is my art:  
And I sing as I die, as the stars  
Scatter like loose change into the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lorca's Olive Tree

Oh gilded earth,  
How come you hide the bones  
Of dead poets under amusement parks?  
Even the masses have more anonymous names,  
Though written in the calligraphies of paid for stone....  
Is it because they have predicted their  
Own deaths,  
Like wounded birds too weak to migrate,  
And so to dally in the wormless North;  
Or is it because they have know that you too  
Will fail one day beneath the asphalt  
And the escaping sun?  
They have meant you no harm,  
Gentle womb of the virgin prostitute,  
As far as I know them, they have dressed  
Warmly in the sad blues of their alien depressions,  
And written love poems for their professors and bartenders:  
Neither the buyers or the sellers,  
These egotistical arguments are beyond them,  
Though the laymen continue singing like cocks crowing  
The first murdered color,  
Yet you allowed men from their own nation with riffles to find  
Them, and destroy them with high velocity punctuations  
Buried out somewhere in the Spanish hills  
Near the olive tree where we still call their names....

Robert Rorabeck

## Loretta?

It is not proper to call her,  
The woman you never knew but  
Once walked besides and shared the air  
And street, when the light fell upon the  
Both of you and you glanced her way.  
There, on the moment, you were together  
With the world, when the spirits and her  
Legs brought you so close to her, see  
Her lips open as if they would call your name,  
Or take off and fly, like something gentle  
To land softly on your cheek and whisper.  
When you were so close to her, the  
Brief eternity of your life, and her skin so  
Near that you can smell her bath she had  
That morning, then and only then you  
Are sure that there is a God, and maybe  
He has finally taken notice of the world  
And he is ready now to begin anew the  
Tangible creations of beast and man, by  
Bringing her nearer to you and having her  
Tell you her name, to pollinate your ear,  
Like a great conductor  
Waltzing the crackling light down from the sun  
To lance off her open bosom, to share with  
Your eyes the ornaments of natural selection,  
And then to embrace and spend the night with,  
Curled together in the soft moonlight washing  
This young city to the beat of the sea still  
Sucks off the pill of swallowed conquistadors  
From so long ago, where wolves live so far away from,  
But then she has passed, she is gone from here,  
Where clouds now cover up the sun, and the strange  
Ugly people reemerge along with the honking and  
The flashing lights, and the world has lost its color,  
And the word red no longer exists, and the empty  
Crowded street has returned once  
Again to it's natural chaos where the sun is so distant,  
As if in winter on the wrong side of the earth,  
but all you can do now

Is to live desperately in the moment passed, the moment  
When she came so near to you and you were so  
Sure of divinity, and so you live with her still, destroyed  
By the permanence of the fleeting vision, still sure that  
You speak her name in kisses upon her neck when  
She comes to you in dreams, but waking, you are  
Torn apart by the lonely paradox of having her in  
Your heart, and not knowing where she is.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lost Cargos Of His Immeasurable Wealth

I am lying aboard an unpromised ship  
Needing to get passed you,  
But you will not see me out.  
Where will I go to live without you?

I am lying in a swath of your  
Burned-out memory, the dead-life  
Shed of your reptilian shroud  
Hearing your breath against me  
As I sleep in the knelling of bells.

I have swam for five years deeper  
Into the singular sea.  
Now I am too far exhausted of salt  
To turn back,  
As your echoes have stopped  
Like a music box that  
Has wound down—the trap you set.

Down beneath me in the swimming cliffs  
Bathing Moorish in  
The breathless currents of deep azure,  
Spider-webbed widows are selling  
The pieces of my capsized future,  
Bartering through a somber Mercado.

In greenish kiosks amidst the sway,  
Young students still helpful in love  
Put those thoughts of me in you  
Into breathless bags where what remaining swims.  
They display me in the dark corners  
Of their dorm rooms in the highest  
Layers of the sea, exhumed from waves  
Where the bravest light is refracted  
And jumps to live again  
Through the sky.

After they make love and smell  
Of mingled bodies, smoke and wine,



Echoing the panting aftertaste of temporary divinity,  
He tells her, his first love,  
I once knew him to live here with us,  
Through our doorways where life is cheeriest,  
But now he sleeps forever  
Where we bought him: through  
The roots of unimagined mountains  
Drowned beneath the surface,

Sunken miles beneath the place  
Where he gave up in her memory  
And now lies forgotten,  
As she has entombed the lost  
Cargos of his immeasurable wealth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lost Loves

Fasions of playboys in their cemeteraries  
And we all tried to start out from here in the plumping hills:  
I seemed to call your wife to my neck,  
But then it turned out what I was feeling wasn't real,  
But the cemeteraries enveloped what it was  
That we couldn't stand—  
And they seemed to envelop all of the beautiful loves  
Lost and spilling from another land—  
Until found out on the patio of a television theatre—  
While the open throated frogs tried and seemed to weather—  
Voices without joy and boys who seemed to know how to steal penny  
Candy to envelop their many- jubilant souls amidst the pentagrams  
Of the highways of frozen and childish carracols  
And misspellings—  
But I loved you wrapped or inveloped in Christmas or Easter  
And the playgrounds of the cenotaphs of the apple orchards  
That couldn't begin to bathe and pretend that it was all there  
Was—  
New worlds spoken for old amusements in the amphitheatres  
That remain an incredible adventure—  
Lost words lost and misspoken for lost—  
Lost loves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Love

Warm burn in the throat,  
Horses out in the darkness with the wolves,  
Innocence demystified:

Her eyes lay upon him,  
As her mother told her each step,  
Soon this will be October,  
And their fingers will have reason to harvest,

They are watching at the bus stop,  
But his eyes are unfixed, hingeless and sad,  
And the boys in their siesta sleep through  
The resonance the professors give for state wages,

Plausible excuses why you are so far away:  
There is another man inside of you, arrhythmic harmony;  
You don't know me, and that is a forlorn caesura,  
But I steal flowers for you, destroy entire lawns,

And the moribund housewives come out in diminutive  
Bankruptcy, see how I have changed them to fit you,  
A verb tore up from the roots of my heart,  
Four letters and bee stung....

--, can you guess what it is?

Robert Rorabeck

# Love Craft

Lord over me in the funny spaces only you  
Perceive,  
Peeking in between and moting the wings of airplanes;  
And I will just be down caracoling in the zoo,  
Because I don't want your species of wife anymore:  
Strange and exotic circumstances have led  
Me to find refuge in the pieta of a banyan tree:  
Here all the limbs are emoting: here where the salmon  
Flamingos nest like an unexpected lottery,  
Where the graves of conquistadors fester; and the Mexican  
Boys play futbol in the long and chartreuse playground  
Just one yard over;  
And I can look up to you and play my ukulele in my yellow  
House built long before you could even be the muse  
That I finally turned away: she that has gone to her  
Expectedly casual boudoir like a green canon ball resting  
Dead center in the alpha fraternity;  
And I will sing of you no more; and I will turn away and  
Open my windows and my door for one  
Just as beautiful that happened suddenly and was not expected;  
But one I will be forever practicing my love craft for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Love Dolls

I would like to plagiarize if it meant being  
Perceived to worship a stronger god:  
If it meant crawling between your legs,  
And hyperventilating the oxygen of your planets;  
If it meant watering the plants in the new room,  
And being come on to by little girls all sweaty back  
From their fieldtrips: I've tried so long to be  
Original- I've waited outside your stoop and crooned  
Until the morning broke open, bled and died,  
And the trinity wilted before it could get to Sunday-  
So I would steal to be your bride,  
To make love, murder you through the threshold with  
An audience, a laugh track, and a roller coaster.  
I am not a good Catholic, and I've never taken communion,  
But you are so beautiful; and I want you spinning inside  
My bedroom, so I'll pick the flowers the neighbors  
Procreated; I'll pinch from the mailman when my dogs  
Are on his leg; and all my cars will be hot for you  
Passing the presidents who aren't real, speeding into the  
Hemispheres where I can't really survive, but it doesn't  
Matter: the flowers are plastic anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Love In The Woods

Whatever pretty architecture starting out□  
Yawning and seesawing her legs and trying to find her  
Way to grandmother's house:  
Getting lost into the busiest prisms that hang beside  
The rented houses of our shared childhoods  
Remembered at the end of dead end streets  
Amputated into canals:  
Streets now paved where Mexicans and Mexicans now  
Live—reminisces of you come up to surface  
In the beautiful rainstorms of a summer that is  
Made up of just so many pretty words:  
As I try to teach the children their manners,  
As their idols are incarcerated,  
And their parents or whoever make love in the woods.

Robert Rorabeck

# Love Is A Silence Whispered In The Dark

Love is a silence whispered in the dark,  
Curled up like sleeping flowers,  
Curled up like a newborn's fingers,  
Given to her from your thoughts.  
Love is a chalice offered to her lips,  
Filled from the unspoken lake,  
Filled from the blind lake flooding your heart.  
Love is saying nothing  
Watching her flying away into  
The sky's blue influence, until she is  
Hidden in distance's forgetfulness.  
After you have fed her,  
After you have healed her,  
Never speaking a word,  
Love is watching her leave  
And keeping her with you  
When you could have forsaken her,  
When you could have just driven away.  
Love is a silence whispered in the dark,  
Soft like baby's breath,  
Or the unspoken grass underfoot,  
Love is the unbroken truth  
The holy language laying unpronounced in the heart.  
Love is a silence whispered in the dark.

Robert Rorabeck

# Love Letter To The Wonderful Absence Of Everyone

I am one of a species on this block,  
Have been so for three decades now,  
And the sun is the watermark on the fold  
Of a blue envelope, or even more profound  
An unending escarpment thatched by blue  
Herons; their wings perpetuate the serenity  
Except when there is a storm, and from where  
They matriculate across the two hemispheres  
For so long that they have seen both conquistadors  
And SUVs, the men beneath them scuttle for  
Gold, in and out of doorways of constructions  
Which give them definitions of borders, and rooms to  
Unclothe and make-love openmouthed, or eat  
Eggs sandwiches with tomatoes and mayonnaise,  
The females of their species reposing in silk, lie  
Like fauns beside ribbons of suburban chalk, some like  
Lawn ornaments, paint themselves and augmentations;  
Everything works out under that cerulean canvas  
Which is forever floating like a misappropriated  
Verb, running on the fumes of restless oxygen, and  
This is just something else to put down beneath it  
While I am alone, a pantomime of beauty, a love letter  
To the wonderful absence of everyone, though  
Understanding that starting out from this point if  
I continue walking and swimming I will revisit the places  
I have been; I would walk through the tumultuous floods  
Of humanity, and their honking courtships, their  
Decisive exchanges, and the botched murders under  
The tresses of amusement; but would I ever see her eyes  
Again, or, if not, would it be right to assume that they  
Never opened upon me, but lancing off the waves refracting,  
And somehow escaped the tealish canopy, or hung around  
In twilight and nourished upon  
The body movements of a man with dun colored eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# Love Letters

And I love you;  
I and loved you, and Mickey Mouse came up and  
Farted in my scarred face  
And showed off to his pretty princes and his unicorns;  
And to you of course,  
While you pretended to demure, while you didn't want to hurt  
Me.  
Erin- you pretended you didn't want to hurt me, but I am  
So scarred;  
And yet I am a braggart, don't you think that it is okay  
That I can't even spell:  
I still think up these things while the fish tank,  
And the housewives glow in their rows of escrow and endives,  
Starving like the goldilocks prizes transomed at the fairs;  
And the days leap and the days proceed like  
Giggling sisters through the surgical procedures of papa bears  
And mama bears;  
And the pet cemeteries guzzle the stars; and then they lay down at  
Large and wait for the tourists to come in their tourists  
Barge, to dredge the lake and to figure out who is in charge  
Of the Alamo and of all of these things;  
And don't you think, Erin- Erin, that I do not care that I am  
Forever scarred and you that you are getting married, married, Erin;  
While your lover penetrates you like a song of different lovers:  
Don't you think that I do not care that I can no longer peer  
Inside- Inside the folded dreams of your lover's  
Love- Love letters.

Robert Rorabeck

# Love Story Of Nothing

Red shifts of good fortune dragons  
Celebrating the Chinese new year of so many  
Things,  
Eat little birds and pelicans who themselves  
Have sweet fish on the brain:  
And aren't we always going outwards, outwards,  
Into vagabond parks and  
Estuaries teeming with little girls choking on  
Wild huckleberries:  
At the center of our great majesty is the most  
Marble of blind things:  
The great mother goddess whose furnace has long  
Since encaved,  
Who we shall in time refund our souls into,  
Make her sparkle like the most gaudy of wounds:  
We will all re-enter her like pulsars of  
Head wounds;  
Out amidst the red souls of so many souls,  
With such sweet paladins on polo horses or playing  
Football- Or as the weather crinkles like cute  
Noses,  
And the alligators tinkle like garden hoses,  
Let me hope to find your hand again, thoughtless,  
Unabashed, grinned:  
That I might reenter your molecules and swing  
Back into the Yule-tide theory recreating the big  
Bang,  
Which is just a love story of nothing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Love To A Lovely Day

For awhile the dragon didn't have to  
Drink:  
Even for the lives of some men, the intelligent  
Beast  
Could sustain itself with thoughts of your love,  
A graveyard,  
A carport all a-hush:  
And the moons were pillows of Siamese twins or  
Ex-lovers;  
And the pretty birds sighed over where the cat  
Smiled,  
And the dragon wept for a great long while,  
Remembering the arrow-head of love you  
Planted in him  
While just a girl: How you brought him down,  
And he built a house and  
Practiced being a man while you got married and  
Fell in love,  
Bared hillsides of children; and thus were gone,  
And the Dragon  
Drank nothing  
Because he could see the windmills over the cross of  
Your grave  
Like a smoking transom:  
A cracker-jack shot, you had killed him and returned  
Your gold to your lips where it belonged,  
And he lingered  
Like a sack of bones in a suburban playground filled  
With the happy thoughts of your  
Successors' blonds, the echo of your lipstick  
War cry multiplying,  
And he cursed every angel he knew with the pestilent  
Rancor of his  
Overripe immortality  
Tasted from the fruit of your tree and fallen so swiftly,  
Just like a man fallen restlessly into an open grave  
Cursed to always look up and see your chariot  
Making love to a lovely day.



# Love You

I love you:

Airplane of angels or butterflies,

But Isn't this just

About your last song:

Because soon we will have to cross the river

And learn to fight for ourselves,

Just to learn that this just

Wasn't just another

Television commercial underneath the

Summits of whatever there wasn't

Until now:

And I have been dying, while trying to survive

Forever underneath the playgrounds

Of the unreal sentiments:

And it is just a beautiful joy,

While you've been in bed with your husband,

And maybe the fire has altogether but

Burned out,

While they've been making love while

I bed:

Just another sanctuary, as you've been cuddling

You young- while just another number

Accounting to its heliotropes of

Scars- as then you are here,

And amidst the baseball diamonds- as it seems

For awhile,

As it just seems a place- and I've just

Been friendly out to any number, while the throats

Of any of my wrists have been wetted and busied

All throughout the number while they've

Been skipping school-

And then the song sang through the school-

Just as the busses turned around,

And then it became just as familiar as all of the unfamiliar

Turnarounds of any school-

As they've been according to the school books,

With any of their fires out- and I cannot

Breathe, while underneath the high school they've

Just been laying out- and you never

Know from day to day that this could be another  
Thing of another beauty-  
As this could just be the thing- as I could just  
Know that she'd been smelling my echo of my one  
True immotion through my emotional  
Amusement parks of anywhere-  
As your children just head home over the baseball games  
Of just their anyways as just through  
Their because- as I've been starving,  
Trying to starve for myself- and this is just the song,  
And I am not alive- but another amusement,  
While not able to give up to whatever household  
Or whatever beauty- just another line for the tenements-  
And a beautiful number that cannot ever excuse  
My amusements- but I come for you-  
Unromantic, but filled with all of the presupposed  
Catastrophes, as I suppose the very  
Nature of it was through the natures of the rotations  
Of the racehorses of all of its perpetual numbers-  
Filling out amidst the graveyard-  
Pillaging throughout the bedrooms as it was just as sensible  
To believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Loxahatchee Lassie

I could be perfect for you still,  
After work,  
Drinking warm beer folded alongside the  
Highway where they are yet holding  
Dusty constructions-  
The alphabet soup of these roads  
Linger with your perfume,  
The lascivious orchids which float around  
The drainage off the golf course  
Where the richer people go to take time off-  
Those people who chip and  
Shout out scores, whose children have long gone off  
To college, to forget who we were,  
And to take time doing better things.

I could skip right out of my life and find you,  
Swing you up in an old tire the tree holds,  
Its mossy crook a castanet for fables  
And those sorts of mouthy lies-  
We could watch the rusting bellies of  
Antique airplanes leaving the earth,  
As now all the busy and Hispanic fires to balmy life,  
Celebrating and shooting off guns where there  
Once was only us in that little day gone school,  
Or kissing under the chicken wire ornaments,  
New brides decorated with alligator skins,  
The stained ceiling fans making do for better  
Constellations;

You were beautiful even then,  
Mostly then- the teacher's pet, and that was  
The only time my spelling was near perfect,  
But it was still all for you,  
The wishes in the grass, even the weedy  
Crèches suddenly flooded with water moccasins  
And their aphrodisiac vision;  
But even now I am a bigger boy and lonely  
Except for my dogs, trying to do reasonable  
Long division, trying to ripple my stones across

The sunken rooms where I have long  
Misplaced you,  
But if you are there it is only your lascivious  
Sister, the Naiad of your Christian name,  
Entrenched with deadly songs not bothering  
If it is for me or some other sailors,  
And I should know better,

Allowing you to carry on down your particular  
Life with eyes for the boys and their Budweiser-Chevys,  
Knowing what only you could,  
Remembering you half-perfectly maybe in fifth  
Grade while you sang so blondely in the chorus  
And I sat and watch and dribbled like an expectant  
Confection in the day gone humidity;  
The soft shelled turtles poking extemporaneously,  
Retarded interest nearsighted from the corrugated  
Drainage, and

I suspected you even then for a wife, but look how  
The time has come and flooded us apart,  
Taking you quite eagerly to better men with their  
Trucks and flags,  
And sending me back to the ghettos of some  
Midwestern Catholic school,  
No longer interested in wresting or Daniel Boone;  
Perhaps with the expectations of some kindly sister,  
That I should learn my better spellings,  
And honor you by such distances,  
And the better utilities of my childish art that  
Should bring me back around you in so many ways  
Too small to notice, or bother you,  
Hoping you kick up your heels for another dance,  
All locked up and fallen into a husband's arms.

Robert Rorabeck



# Lucifer

Imperfect stairway up to God,  
And there are many distractions,  
Changing  
Their dresses:  
They disrobe in Aristotelian layers,  
But there are not many,  
Riding the stillborn foals  
With championship legs  
Led by Virgil  
Through the motes of the Pre-Socratics  
Who never knew Jesus,  
But tried to figure him out  
Before the train arrived at the station.  
They are feeding on the spores  
And the dandelions  
Blown this high-up,  
Nose bleeds,  
Beautiful without danger  
Is innocence,  
Her eyes gleaming looking out the class:  
Can she see me there  
Mounting the spindle's thread,  
Far above the silver swing-set?  
If not,  
If not then there is still time,  
Though I am growing gray  
I will forget my name before hers,  
And fall like Lucifer,  
The handsome betrayer,  
The spikenard of uncommon haste.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lucky Thirteen

The agreeable bodies must have said dive like stars;  
And she was very nervous, and I cleaned my  
Telescopic spaces with alcohol;  
And she asked me if I hadn't come from the bars,  
But I had been seeing outlaw movies with that old teacher:  
Where once there must have been an apple orchard,  
We made fabulous love over the armpits of the cenotaph  
Of alligators;  
And I could almost hear them meeting as she exhaled,  
As there was no television; and the right parts fitted good:  
She was only twenty, and my lucky thirteen;  
And she was just new at this, and now there are no  
Places on her body that I have never seen:  
I will go to sleep at some odd number over thirty, and wake  
Up like a mailman whistling on his rounds,  
Retreating from no dogs, remembering her body like the  
Positions of a lost precious thing up in the wavering tree:  
The bodies move in unison like the ripples of a pool;  
As my old muses must lock jaws with their old and new men,  
Synchronized to the bodies that they too must enjoy;  
As I enjoyed this wonderful young thing this feverish eve,  
Awfully, nowhere near New Mexico, not even a sound anywhere  
Near her grave, like an angel on the plate,  
Entering a child who has no fear of death, the body thwarts  
Itself and flies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lucy

Hold her mouth so she doesn't scream-  
I'm in love,  
And she's moving away,  
First she was a pagoda of sad light spinning  
Under the sunken beams,  
Then an extinct horse found with the  
Shrapnel of the first war;  
She learned how to stand on her back legs,  
When we were young we moved up north  
And killed off an entire species of our second cousins;  
That was before history could see  
The deep mote over our eyes,  
And she laughed,  
And she laughed once more,  
Learned about fire,  
Took a fancy for the dark turns,  
The horrible truth her body bloomed for:  
Found open bloused in the shadows with the landlord,  
Men with many grinning teeth;  
She learned how to swim naked in the plastic algae  
Of failing amusement parks,  
Held her breath until I was deceived,  
Came up for air and climbed naked atop  
The unexploded bomb,  
Farted a wet nuisance with the sun's earlier brilliances,  
Dripped without fear, her nipples the fetish  
For tyrants and cowboys,  
Her womb a hostile atmosphere we are  
Drawn to kiss- the moist trap;  
This eventual death too,  
I have seen her using a tool to fix her ride,  
But I was not invited,  
To the cheap hotel room of new destinies, echoing  
The two headed leap of nocturnal shadows  
Against the acid light of the dead tv,  
My youth but a missing link abandoned in the grayed earth,  
A fossil glistening after the rain but left unexcavated  
In her pursuit of modern man.



# Lunar Eclipse

There should be wolves tonight:  
Whole footballs teams of animals  
With grinning opal teeth:  
And so there is,  
And there should be a devil in the woods  
Tonight,  
A little infant with mal intent  
Scratching on the trees,  
And so there is,  
Tonight,  
There should be a wind,  
Like a gallows' hungering noose,  
Snapping the necks of pines,  
Bending aspens suppliantly,  
And so there is,  
Tonight  
There should be a maiden singing  
In the shadowed moonlight,  
Upon a certain stone in the  
Sleepy dimpled glade  
Words that draw the feral herds  
About her,  
A four hoofed audience  
Bowing in the darkness,  
And so there is tonight,  
High up in the sunken hills,  
Tonight,  
Through the whispering  
Gardens,  
Tonight,  
Down the end of the  
Overgrown path  
Tonight,  
Atop the lip of stones  
Standing with the cerulean lion  
Tonight,  
As our world steps between  
The sun and his silver maiden,  
Asking for her hand at the dance

Tonight,  
Imposing himself on something  
He doesn't own,  
And she follows with him  
Far away in her celestial  
Sphere,  
Crying in her clever veil,  
Tonight,  
The words which darken ours,  
As the shadows align with us,  
Kissing us like lovers,  
As the hungry red fox crawls out  
The den,  
And howls.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lunchtime

All of the glade spoken to of houses:  
Expensive, expensive, expensive spouses: all of this space  
Of animals sure, so sure that they were marsupials:  
And up river, and up stream a river full of a specific dream  
Of all those mammals in all of those houses,  
Cooing softly into cooling blouses:  
I wished, I wished to unlace those houses and see exactly who  
These spouses;  
And trailer parks and dart boards, and weedy ways to grouses:  
I wish is my wish is that I knew who my spouse was:  
And under the mountain lays a town where get me up and get me  
Down;  
And Alice lives without a frown, both a big one and a little one  
And another one who took me to prom, and pinned a corsage on  
My vest and made me yawn:  
And in the earliest early of morning the seven satellites or somewhere  
Around them,  
And then later in the morning some water fountains where's I wish  
I could drown them:  
My lips on her thighs: it's all I wish, I wish and then I could die  
Like a gold fish lying straight out in the open: the open  
Underneath the student carports cooling all coolly and waiting to  
Open:  
Waiting, waiting, waiting for lunchtime.

Robert Rorabeck

# Lying Down And Forgiving

The day elbowed boyfriend loves you like  
A frog in the amber patinas of airplanes who are enamored  
With the continents who they can see down to earth,  
Divided up there in unequal proportions,  
Who snakes through their utmosts, and other bereavements  
That the fairytale princesses have agreed not to enjoy,  
But lined up in touring wonderment anyways:  
Mystified by what they have paid for- lying down and forgiving  
When instead they should have made a meal out of their game.

Robert Rorabeck



## Lying Still

We'll get married and we'll move to the city  
And we'll die in the presence of one another's laughter—  
All of the clocks and things behaving in the ways that  
They should,  
And the girls who are pretty getting prettier still,  
Approaching the final hours we'll let the seances speak  
For themselves—  
And employ the others just to make them behave—  
As the satellites go around and around  
Knowing that nothing moves that doesn't first have to  
Lie still.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mabinogion

Another long thing  
To make the ladies squeal, I suppose,  
Dark and sleepy trolled up  
From the Welsh bog:  
A faceless eel born under the pregnant moon,  
Something which has held its nest  
Under the consistent cogs of the waterwheel,  
While lives under the honest sun  
Turning out like pretty peonies stuffed  
Into the bicycle's basket,  
And wound around the block a little rickety  
From the cobblestones, but content,  
Because her legs were like pistons of spring,  
Cycling the petals and fluttering her skirts,  
Bobbing her knees,  
As she disappeared between the mossy cairns,  
Took up the language of blind shepherds  
And their loyal sheep dogs;  
They say in the oldest mountains, now hills of  
Weathered time, they blistered there lips on forgotten rhymes,  
And began to make love atop toppled stones,  
Made love like open psalms,  
And the windows open, and the hills laid bare  
Like praying palms,  
The sacraments, the Book of John,  
Her eyes the truest reason that brought the storm,  
Flooded the lake, and shadowed the orchard,  
Rolled across the valleys and thought up the gale,  
Replaced her last name with a new verse,  
Which lifted the waters up from their banks,  
And awakened the shadows from their briny beds,  
Thus they came to her where she lay weeping and discovered,  
The wreathing multitudes, the slick intrusions,  
Slithering like scars upon the water's placidity,  
Disembodied phalluses of drowned horses,  
Riling in the blundering darkness and madness of indigoes,  
The apoplexy of the cold blooded swarm,  
The ancient intrusions in a complexion of grievances;  
And she let them upon her in great balls of

Cold pain,  
And they tightened around her and told her  
Her name,  
In the language they still keep over the wall  
Where those who are living don't visit at all,  
So afterwards, pale as a midnight scar, she laid  
There on the bones which now gave reasons to darkness,  
Thus her lips were shut, and her eyes were shut,  
And her mouth spoke no more,  
As the rains swelled and swallowed her whole,  
And they took her down into the clutch of rounded stones,  
And there decorated the dark house  
With her young bones,  
Leaving her blind shepherd to wander alone,  
Around the dark lake now her dark home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Machines Of Primary Colors

When another day passes like  
Helicopters in tandem  
In the breeze—  
Going the way old loves shouldn't  
Have gone,  
Over swing sets enjoyed with my  
Mother—enjoyed with  
My muse—  
Machines of primary colors  
Next to the heartbeat of the beating  
Waters—  
All of the motion that the beating throws—  
And she is gone  
And my mother is nowhere around:  
I wasn't supposed to make  
Love to her,  
My lasting muse—I wasn't supposed to  
Do any of this,  
Just as airplanes made for the angels  
Are never supposed to touch the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

# Made Of Their Contentment

They say in their slumber many things- great things  
The size of nothing,  
As the parks lay empty save for the preternatural  
Light somehow discovered  
By the geniuses of men- the swing sets of naked  
Saddles waiting underneath  
The cerulean gaze of churches, as you never  
Come around,  
Though you remain somewhere in the shoulders  
Of hear, serving your drinks to  
Boys and wolves-  
Happy to be made of their contentment:  
Well, I am sure that you will never be made of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Made To Assume

Another one of these nights,  
These things that repeat with the palpitating hearts  
Of the polar sexes,  
Who are in so many ways alike,  
Wanting the salted conjunctures of each other's  
Conversations,  
And their torpedos, so that when all the lights  
Are out and crepuscule is crawling around  
Like a cat who is unafraid of the waves  
In every sweet trailer park and less serene  
Suburbia,  
Don't I throw these papers up for you  
Under the elbows and wings of pines,  
Spilling theatrical weathers straight over the  
Graves of used car salesmen and  
Conquistadors,  
While the housewives sigh, but for other  
Reasons,  
And the lady sleeps in the lake the Mexicans  
Ploughed and then went away for lunch  
And a siesta their lips puckered with  
Chili and lemon while you were  
In your kitchen somewhere  
The airplanes leaping over you,  
And all of us doing just what we were  
Made to assume.

Robert Rorabeck

# Made Up Rhymes Of Love

In arcades of sweat and bad math, we do this  
Again,  
While the night just makes the sound of cats making love:  
It is a naturalistic way to go:  
But the elephants are very quiet:

And there is no pausing in our art: Alma, I just want to taste  
You and feel your gentle brown rasping on my door:  
And you've done this for  
Six months now;  
I've known you, and we've made love, from time to  
Time

Going back and forth like sailors, while you reconcile  
With your abusive misanthrope,  
While I pound harder and harder liquor,  
And then your children get sick, or they get well:

So the dragons take to the sky with the airplanes  
And the stewardesses, but they are not necessary all bad:  
There is still some hope left to them,  
As beneath their interrupted slumbers, some girl's hands still  
Pushes clay:

And his lips still blow glass into fantastic machinations:  
But if it was soon, it was not today,  
But I saw you, and held your perfect brown body in my gaze,  
And made up rhymes of love,  
Before I was made to walk away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Made You Feel

The city burns sideways like  
Poisoned nightingales,  
Like passenger liners going down,  
Gardens nodding off into  
Crepuscle:  
There they go, misspelled with  
Mailboxes,  
The truant boys asleep en creched in  
Sofas on the roof,  
Their paper bag of fireworks mouthless;  
And what does the sun do,  
But give up into the other side of another  
Lover,  
And I am so proud that this is how  
I must have made you feel.

Robert Rorabeck



# Maggie Pie Crust

So you've written poetry,  
And have beautiful scars, like  
Burns in the pie-crust of American:  
And I'll write your introduction,  
Even though we've sold all the trees  
And I don't know you.  
I've seen one picture of you,  
But I will not stare when you come awake  
Again under my tents, swooning like  
The damp laundry, or the birds  
Picked from the dunes by the sky;  
And I would lay my arms down beneath  
You, to be christened or knighted,  
Though you might not think to speak of this  
Until the depressions of the next millennia;  
And though I should be the dirtiest man  
In the bookstore, I will smile even as I buy  
Those things they forgot and have fallen into  
The vague quarries of such professions:  
Though I cannot see it anymore, I am  
Published in mutations of sky, and I love you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Magnet To Its Metal

These days turn around the way young girls  
Win their medals,  
Or, children, squealing, go around the playground  
In may-poled meadows,  
And if you said I was lucky, I would slap you,  
But if you refused to speak to me, I would kiss you,

So when young men are not being poets,  
They are picking flowers,  
And when I am not thinking of you,  
I am a quieted liar fondling seashells made scattered  
On the gravel road's nostalgia,  
And counting the swell avenues young mothers live  
Down letting their infants tug and suckle,  
Their fathers far away with tight and twisted knuckles,

Some days I have walked adjacent to you,  
Like lines on adjoining pages, neither understanding nor  
Reading the other, but when the book is closed  
They fall together, the silken honeymoons the silkworm  
Weaves in woolly tents hung from the lips of trees,

And if I could show you where the swing-set huddles,  
Cuddled in the foreheads of northern states where Shakespeare's  
Specter mutters, I would paint my fingers against your back,  
And push your upward in subtle ellipses to where you could  
Hear the great trees whisper,  
And watch the hoary storm clouds muddle;

If you were to be my darling, I would be your doodle,  
And feed you penny canny like a humming bird, and tuna  
Noodle strudel; And we could lounge long evenings in  
The graveyards conversing with the lovely shadows,  
And faintly, I would touch you, and then look away across  
The lakes of common trouble, but readily return to you,  
Hypnotized in a waning daydream, a magnet to its metal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Magnifying Boxes

The cars come so tragically far away from their hallucinations:  
I salivate over the candy apples of a fair that moved  
Away in January:  
And a girl named Diana comes to my supermarket every morning,  
But I hide from her in my trailer park until she has lit away,  
And I am as free as a terrapin to come out again,  
And dream of her incandescently all day,  
While the sky makes my thought brigade for her; and her daughter  
Coos in little rooms of air-conditioning;  
And I mop up the soft floor under pine trees, and pet the sour bellies  
Of purring water moccasins; and I think little upon girls in  
Oregon, or sick muses in Colorado, because they have already had  
Their fill,  
While the cat kisses the firemen in the overgrowth of life-saving  
Aloe,  
And I think upon what beauty the sea has washed against my doorstep;  
And when she comes again, I will hide from her as well as I may,  
Until she has gone again, and I can bask in the burning residues  
That such a heavenly body leaves as she makes her  
Avenues too close against the bacheloring neighborhoods of the  
Indescribable day, like the very ancestors playing with a tool chest of  
Matches and magnifying boxes in the buxom and comely hay.

Robert Rorabeck

# Maidenhood Of Patriotism

The sun is going down,  
And there is no place to hide,  
But the horrors are so familiar  
They are good enough for friends:  
We drink alone with the dogs,  
Each one of us an angle in the divinity  
Trying our best not to look our  
Reflections in the eye- And we've been  
Shopping and had the chance to see how  
Wrecked and sweet America is,  
So that we would like to move into her  
Repeatedly in the same old fashion as all  
Those conquistadors and car salesmen,  
And she doesn't condescend- She is quite demure  
With her chest bare and mowed, and homeless  
Kittens purring between the gravestones she  
Wears as a somber necklace;  
And the insects are making noise, softly irritating,  
As is their ritual,  
And the lake is a fare mural over her pale blue  
Shoulders, and all the fish are breathing quietly just  
Beneath the surface:  
How strange we must look becoming dimmed by the  
Eloping dusk, the three of us drinking on the ridge  
Addressing problems of our dogs' flea-bitten theology;  
And down beneath in the park, I am taking her  
As she is personified, maidenhood of patriotism, marble and busty-  
She keeps her lips pursed, and her eyes directed,  
Open and trusting while the traffic divides the two churches  
Of our souls, militant and divine,  
And there is nothing to say as I am looking down  
Into her immortalities: that I do not know her name  
As she whispers, thrusting, monumental.

Robert Rorabeck

# Maidens Of A Perilous Castle

I seem to rely on airplanes too much  
Like daydreams I fly over your shoulderblades  
Whose aqualine bodies  
Become perfect  
Beauty marks touching  
Down on the  
Tarmacs of your nudity-  
As you get out of the shower and  
Comb your hair-  
And your thoughts are other things  
You cannot pinpoint yourself with-  
Or if they fall into the bromeliads,  
They become dye cast toys  
That lay perfectly still  
Like knights who have gone to sleep  
Without the caresses of witches-  
They dream of crossing moats  
To see ferris wheels the maidens of  
A perilous castle have stolen away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Maidens Of Various Color

There are unreal lands where  
Maidens love me  
Blue maidens and  
Yellow maidens and  
Even green maidens,  
And I can smell the pollens on the prairies,  
And the light skips the names of the higher words,  
And hawks circle me and know my name,  
And I can see reasons in their eyes,

But sometimes I can't go to sleep.  
Just in case, I hide a gun,  
And I can drop the red into the river  
If I have to wake up,  
The ancient tongues of children,  
The clay of crippled pots, each shard a rib denoting the  
Secret eddies in her long vivacious dress,  
The stemmed spores she drinks  
And places them under smooth stones,

And yet, there are unreal lands where  
Maidens love me  
Blue maidens and  
Yellow maidens and  
Even green maidens,

Where death steps gently in the diminutive  
Shade of purple thistles,  
Leaving the tracks which crawl on fallow bellies,  
Fearing what the sun might do....

Robert Rorabeck

# Mailmen Who Come In The Afternoon

Peaceful deluge does not know where  
I am going,  
Going in a peacefully hidden way—enjoying the  
Stars as close as flowers  
Like the sex organs of the fjord—  
The word of your eyes is a bathtub—  
Oh, Thing in your eyes, winged—transitory—  
Taking new loves,  
Developing new hearts, the emotions you  
Forget to trust-  
Thoughts as indecisive as the colors on the yard,  
Stretch sails mewing to the evidences of a  
Mailmen who comes in the afternoon  
While all of the housewives are away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Make A Green World

Pecks of short bred  
Eaten by famished serpents come from the emotions of  
The shredded sea,  
No bigger than shoe laces themselves:  
Out before some yellowed kingdom from which all  
Of the citizens have fled:  
The dragon rich and flattered and courting the queen and  
Her daughter in the king's old bed:  
Wise beyond his years, he struts like a better Icarus,  
And he sees all around him for what it is:  
These things that no longer belong to any other man,  
And the children discarded to the dark bosoms  
Of the hills:  
To the wolves, to be raised or eaten- and if raised  
Into knights who can never speak or don silver, who can  
They save anyways, the dragon thinks:  
And over his shoulder, and down so many moons,  
The witch recipes in her cauldron  
Make a green world there to drink.

Robert Rorabeck



# Make My Hapless Stance

And it could go on forever like this:  
This long dilapidated greeting hall dressed in red:  
Ripe but dying,  
Like the womb of the lady you'd expect:  
Watermelons, cantaloupes left for too long inland  
Too far away from the sea:  
Overly sweet, not enough salt: The spumes racehorses  
Give as they crush ovoid luck:  
The metamorphosis of weekend flies,  
The quick job: The beer was supposed to cost two  
Dollars, ended up costing one:  
The chaos next to the baseball stadium- The family  
Of Walruses getting rich: pull the pedals off a flower  
To see who she loves,  
But the springtime isn't necessary: She doesn't love me:  
Even if she thinks she love me for the greeting cards  
Of far away; If she saw me, she wouldn't love me:  
I am not her sailor, consumptive up on dry docks:  
I am not her artists serving the self mutilation of their  
Sunflower senses:  
I loved this, I loved this, and that's so easy to write,  
And as the traffic dies like grandmothers,  
I'll pullulate myself tonight; hands hummingbirds in  
A warming desert where I no longer live with  
My parents: I dehydrating cash, I'm losing my senses:  
Soon the railroad tracks will denote my way like straight  
Edge river banks, unto the séance of palm trees,  
Outside your whitewashed foyer, the chandelier hanging  
I can remember that will calm me, and I'll  
Make my hapless stance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Makebelieve Dance

Broken toys in the heat on the side of  
A road  
Watched by a rattlesnake—  
They remind her of pornography  
As her soft eggs hatch in the tresses of  
The aloe  
The young housewife passed not  
Too long ago—  
And, over the fields of amusement parks,  
The sun feels like lemon drops  
Upon the chassis of remote control boats,  
And no one has to go to school tomorrow:  
None of these things will wake up,  
Or even have to,  
As the absentee wind asks for another  
Makebelieve dance with the trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Make-Believe Women

The make-believe women, bare shouldered  
Were shouldering the boats of air  
It was very unexpected how they could do  
This,  
But I couldn't care—  
Women of ether,  
Women of air—  
All evaporated above the baseball games  
But otherwise going nowhere—  
Coming up  
And falling down  
Or falling in love  
Without looking around—  
Work for the mammals who make love  
Above ground—  
Night for the soldiers who sleep naked  
With their mistresses in beds of  
Jasmine just out of town—  
When I saw them, I had a wife;  
But now I am armless and drunk,  
But at least I have a wife—  
Child of soldiers,  
Children of strife born to the women  
Of air,  
Coming up and going down  
But going nowhere.

Robert Rorabeck

# Making A Lustrous Graveyard

Now you have a new charge through the  
Theatre,  
As the animals try to become surreal-  
As I've just been painting house,  
As the daylight fades- and this is just another  
Forgotten carnival that doesn't even make  
Enough money to pay for itself:  
Abandoned in its tenements to no one in  
Particular,  
As the fire eats the world and then  
Slowly fades,  
As the Indians have been drinking themselves into  
Ditches,  
As the witches circulate and clean the presupposed  
Earth from their brooms,  
And the fireworks hiccup from the prefabrications  
Of their short lived rooms-  
Just as, struggling up the mountain- and through  
The prefabricated hallucinations in the patriotisms  
Of whatever country I suppose in which we  
Are-  
I try calling to you once again, as if kissing the pages  
Of forlorn pornography, flying their inglorious  
Adultery over the hood ornaments  
Making a lustrous graveyard out of my car.

Robert Rorabeck

# Making Belief

Dogs as yellow as my house, swallowing for goldfish:  
Timber on the brine of mountains:  
Opal around her neck- words carrying the hope of sailors,  
A witch in the sky trying to kidnap a little girl,  
And the sweet love that becomes as round as a baseball after  
Midnight:  
Lesbians in the sweet canal, making love to alligators who  
Refuse to cry:  
It seems as if we've been called up from here, metamorphosing  
With the rest of our class, off put by  
Their joyful opalescence, their sound orchestra, the birth  
And the Christian names of all of their children  
Who go home together from the bus,  
To their soft grips, happy with the way the waves remember them,  
Singing nursery rhymes to the front steps of their grottos,  
And making belief in all of this.

Robert Rorabeck

# Making Faces With The Loyal Doves

The world speaks in buildings of piles and seagulls;  
And this is how it strikes out to sell:  
I have been right smack dab in the middle of a baseball diamond  
In the randy mists before school:  
And I glorify myself with the names for my queens which they  
Will never even think to have;  
And it floods, I can take all of the shortcuts back to the arc  
And count on all of the animals I have been looking for  
To be there,  
And her naked hand and both of her children cooing and making  
Faces with the loyal doves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Making It From Here

In the fluctuating highlights of a vagrant park,  
Falling in with ghosts- I am so ashamed-  
I have runaway and I have nothing else to do.  
The sky is upside down, according to the way its  
Fingers run through the trees, as if through a  
Tall woman's hair;  
And I am very close to where my mothered berthed  
Me, but she has gone and I grow weak:  
I don't have anything to sell, having spent my last  
Fireworks just for glee. I want to plagiarize-  
I'll be accused of it anyways, listening to the little  
Children's echoes who swept little-footed through here  
All day; it is very hard to perceive how the world is  
Slanting, or to choose from which angle for to grieve.  
Her tires are crackling on their way home, and soon  
She'll slip into the restive suits of her work- those  
Families like dun hives beside the rivers and the creaks;  
And I have no business being here for the world is  
Perpetually on the move, being encouraged through the  
Shadows like birds through the seasons. Swinging,  
I can see my toes almost approach the sky, but the night  
Is becoming cold, and it is warm delusion to think that  
I can ever make it from here.

Robert Rorabeck

# Making Love

Possibilities in a sorrow that is drunken,  
Finished- it goes slipping by the lushly ribboned  
Stream,  
A wish perfected by goblins or never perfected:  
A little princess stolen away  
And bereft of all of her dreams: corniced under the  
Purplish verandas of willows,  
Caulked in the apertures- in the gills of playboys,  
In the fibrillating hollows to be  
Filled with life, with lovers- as the cars stop  
By wonderfully: they too are filled up  
Under the lights of a world that is never sleeping;  
And you can stop for awhile, and take in the atmosphere,  
The salient haunts,  
And the great shadows of the stadium in the distance  
To be assured that this is real, and even lonely  
She is somewhere nearby, like a tigress and making  
Love- filled up by the fires of  
Another man such as you- secretly but repeatedly:  
Keys in the ignition,  
And the tourists in their chicken wire, believing all that  
They see- like a wedding procession moving beside  
You, agape and leaping for the apples  
Of their laughable haunts- and you, according there  
Beside then, passably in orbit-  
A zoetrope wanting a hand of another leaping shadow  
To hold on to in the infinite midway  
Of loneliness. As you wait in line, hearing her in the  
Mad-fun house making love.

Robert Rorabeck



# Making Love To A Lovely Day

For awhile the dragon didn't have to  
Drink:  
Even for the lives of some men, the intelligent  
Beast  
Could sustain itself with thoughts of your love,  
A graveyard,  
A carport all a-hush:  
And the moons were pillows of Siamese twins or  
Ex-lovers;  
And the pretty birds sighed over where the cat  
Smiled,  
And the dragon wept for a great long while,  
Remembering the arrow-head of love you  
Planted in him  
While just a girl: How you brought him down,  
And he built a house and  
Practiced being a man while you got married and  
Fell in love,  
Bared hillsides of children; and thus were gone,  
And the Dragon  
Drank nothing  
Because he could see the windmills over the cross of  
Your grave  
Like a smoking transom:  
A cracker-jack shot, you had killed him and returned  
Your gold to your lips where it belonged,  
And he lingered  
Like a sack of bones in a suburban playground filled  
With the happy thoughts of your  
Successors' blonds, the echo of your lipstick  
War cry multiplying,  
And he cursed every angel he knew with the pestilent  
Rancor of his  
Overripe immortality  
Tasted from the fruit of your tree and fallen so swiftly,  
Just like a man fallen restlessly into an open grave  
Cursed to always look up and see your chariot  
Making love to a lovely day.



# Making The Audience Fall In Love

I'll drink to you by the rivers  
Where the soldiers' boots have crossed,  
And the deer are all yet sleeping:

Oh, but you are beautiful.  
I want to do jumping jacks for you  
And hold your hand and promenade  
Around twenty-four hour fountains,  
Which seem to laugh in the  
Moonlight;

Or die with you in a movie theatre  
After you have forsaken my love:  
Bleeding out, watch your ingénue on the  
Screen,  
Telling me things I'd always liked to hear,  
Making the audience fall in love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Manifest Destiny

In Indian towns,  
In crooked and barren canyons  
On this side of Arizona,  
The broken youth walk  
Their negro dogs;  
They dress in dirty black suites,  
Black ball caps, onyx t-shirts,  
Charcoal latex and evening gowns.  
On a black road  
Approaching midnight  
Obscured in the clouded  
Reservoir of drunken ancestors,  
They petition Coyote,  
Smearing chunks of coal  
Into their eyes  
To disappear into the next  
Brilliant appearance  
Of manifest destiny.

Robert Rorabeck

# Man's Room

Now is the time to admit defeat.  
At the airport people look prettier  
Because they are more frightened.  
Without possession,  
They may soon become lost,  
As very soon they will fly  
And their legs will become  
All but useless.  
They are leaving behind  
A beloved family,  
Or going to see estranged relations.  
Seated by strangers,  
They might unwontedly  
Fall in love.  
Passengers, they must adhere  
To the will of their conductors.  
Often drunk,  
To be set down in  
Unfamiliar surroundings,  
Into lives that are already  
Taking place,  
To move around  
People who are settled  
And aware—  
Who are comfortable  
Contributing to dinner  
Conversations;  
Who hold hands when they  
Pray and make love peacefully  
And faithfully  
Before they sleep.  
In the quiet of that night  
You can only lie there  
And listen to your  
Frightened breathing.  
All your life,  
The duration of your trip  
Here in Man's Room  
Where the distance between

You and your home is  
Expanding exponentially.

Robert Rorabeck

# Many A Dripping Kiss

I haven't been in to town,  
I haven't read a thing, though distant  
From the inter-lapping hurricanes, it was  
Where I was born, and still live cerebral,  
Cut my teeth on anonymous women,  
Busty saints conquering the surf;  
I put them there to start the thing,  
Giving me reasons for the new cessations  
Of my time: to lie here and watch the isolation,  
My dogs who lull in the grass with drunken  
Tongues: they canines, my faithful all,  
The all that is enough;  
The spider in the pump house has moved away,  
But there are his legs in another arachnid's sack;  
She doesn't call, I shouldn't say:  
I should laugh and play a game of ball.  
Here are pictures of smiling students,  
Here is only one in cap and gown; the old neighborhood  
Is purple like a bruised fighter who has fallen  
To pay the bills; no one I know lives here anymore,  
Jack and Jill are over the hills on  
A honeymoon of sorts; they are not taking phone-calls,  
They're in each others pants, and in the pool,  
Cutting like an insouciance of sun, drinking bodies twisting  
Play without referees,  
Draping in the inebriation of white washed walls,  
They get other boys to paint the fence for them,  
They don't do anything, anything but this,  
For they paint the distant bodies I now recall,  
Those who live so close to the other with  
Many a dripping kiss.

Robert Rorabeck

# Many Bouquets Of Amen's

Once again I am here and on a perch:  
I am not even in Colorado,  
My mother's birthplace- but I am here again-  
Trying to figure out what her armpits  
Smell like once again  
While I am alone  
And this is just another came beneath the summit  
After all of high school has let out;  
And I've been trying to hold my head up like some  
Kind of pride-  
Like a heavily budded rose before its numbers  
Busily multiplying-  
Just as like the ambrosia of the bull pens across the  
Armpits of all of Mexico:  
Why, then, this just seems as if the heavier  
Steps of another's dreams:  
Why, just- the fireworks don't even seem to survive  
Anymore, but it all becomes  
As sort of anonymous happenstance:  
Really soon it will be Christmas, and I am not  
Really sure entirely what I've been exactly talking about:  
But there she swings again- my muse, underneath the  
Amber hallucinations of all of the clouds:  
She seems to be making her special way here again,  
Just as I seem to be opening up to her,  
Folding my hands together like a dinnertime of crèches  
And kissing and blessing her and  
]Giving to her my many, many bouquets of amen's.

Robert Rorabeck



## Many Countries More

If I cannot eat lunch, at least I want to come,  
As I listen to the after midnight trains,  
And I have eaten all of it that was that the roses were  
To perfume,  
And now you are curled up in your little and most indefectible  
Of rooms,  
Like a rattle snake in between the roses, like a mirages  
Of full lips,  
Hoping that I will distend to fund its wedding,  
But other than that I am not here, and neither am I real:  
I have just driven for some ways,  
And now I am both famished and hungry, while  
Just looking into your eyes makes me believe  
That I can travel across many countries more.

Robert Rorabeck

# Many Fish

She is outside.

Enjoying the world, her pupils  
Extend, like lions at the feast,  
Red, red lipped in the tall, tall grasses;  
What is she doing?

I cannot say, but enjoying the  
Well thought out words of patrons and bribes,  
Words I could hardly encapsulate in my  
\$.25 cent dreams:  
Words that scrawl luxuriously through backyards  
And bar rooms,  
And return her to her childhood when she  
Didn't have to shave her legs,  
Nor paint her lips,  
Or let him hold her in his hands just so,  
To get it right, and taste her as I wish to  
Taste her, the streams of drool, the way eyes  
Might lap like waves on the legs of a dock,  
On the features of the face.

Though I have written better poems,  
And poems which don't mean a thing,  
She has found a man who can drink with her  
And not fall down, nor begin the catechisms  
Which give her headaches:

Such as, you are lovely, oh so lovely,  
Amen!

And, your legs go all the way up to heaven,  
All the way up to Saint Michael and your  
Satin purse,  
Amen!

Things which only mean I would like to feel  
Her up as I lay her down,  
Things that any man would propose to her out  
On the street where the university blurs,  
And the highways flow like ghosts away and  
Through the blood worked systems:  
Soon and very soon, she will forget me  
All and all,  
And would not remember me at all if I

Hadn't hooked her like a fish and brought her up  
To my eye and told her my name,  
But she struggled and got free and swam again  
Back to his mighty lips,  
But sometimes I think I see her furtive shadow following  
Me in my sleep as I row the lonely doldrums  
Depressed in the shadows,  
But there are many fish in the sea,  
But not a one with a vase and legs like hers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Many Longs Ago

The flesh of placebo angels luxuriates  
On plastic hooks in penny candy and dime  
Stores no fish in the world was ever afraid of;  
And now I am all excited because I  
Wear my father's pants,  
And I get to drive his truck:  
And I will go look at houses nearer the beach,  
Where airplanes touch and leap and the flashing  
Lives of canines catch Frisbee:  
I have already been out to see that the parks are  
Absolutely full today,  
Packed to the teeth with barking families,  
Girls always turning away in parade, twirling for the  
Fanfares of marmalade;  
And I leave, lamenting that I don't have a bicycle  
Nor a true love; and the seed pods whisper in the cold  
Front even here,  
While the angels hang like dried out homunculus,  
Their glow just the jaundice of an absently true pet missing in the pumpkin  
Fields,  
Like golden story books proven meaningless many longs  
Ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# Many Miles

No need for storms now,  
Nor for wants: they are all right here now,  
Beneath the scars, the fragile bones.  
Look at how exquisitely they are put together.  
Look at how they hold up her lips so that she  
Doesn't have to put down her drink  
To kiss the gentleman.  
I don't have anything to say now, except that  
The grass is green beyond the curtains,  
And it is a shame that there are no children  
Playing upon it,  
Making fun with the ants,  
And the shadows are already yawning,  
As the entire neighborhood tips into space  
Just like a glass perched upon her lips beneath  
Her eyes which  
Are so steady upon him,  
That there is no room for him to maneuver his  
Scars away from her vision, her hopes:  
Soon he must turn and she should see him whole,  
Fragile like a flightless bird,  
So isn't it any wonder that there is no reason to  
Love him,  
And now the yard is hopelessly empty.  
A car drives by but doesn't stop for many miles.

Robert Rorabeck

# Margot

Nights fanned around the higher enclaves of  
Pitch fork pines: you can see them rising, transplanted out of  
Merry Old England into South Florida  
With all of its bustling news: old gods and new gods spanning  
The archipelagos petered off from where I live:  
The trailer parks humming with corrugated symphony,  
And every once in a while lighting up  
And cursing the telltale dreams of airplanes skipping over their  
Impoverished alphabets- stewardesses in negligee and wigwams:  
Their captains chiseling in infinite transoms,  
Throttling up the boudoirs of hard working angels;  
And there it receives, landing across the bridges as cars wreck  
Down beneath them, flipping over into the cenotaphs and  
Castanets of dead Indians:  
Turning like terrapin bellied up, sniffed and lunched on by dogs:  
Landscaped by the silly ribaldry of these pines curling with  
The scoliosis of the last two hundred years  
And choking the mouths of canons- shading crosses and lactating  
Over the cannibalisms of blue jays: I already have three in my  
Front yard growing like salivating mongooses over  
Bird eggs: seeming to give the next tropical storm their braided  
Birds- sticking it to Margot or what's her name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Maria

Maria asks me where I came from that my  
Face is so chapped-  
I tell her it is stress, and she laughs and asks  
If I really have tress:  
Maria is just as beautiful as when I saw her  
A decade ago before I moved on  
From community college,  
Before I even got that girl I lost,  
And always jogged alone in the park:  
She was too fat to jog,  
But I stroked her cunt until it become like a corpulent  
Flower in the rain.  
Which is really like the best kind, because it can hold  
An entire dinner party of bumble bees-  
Jewish bumble bees- and I guess that's what it did;  
But I never thought of her-  
I am awfully afraid of lightning- anytime there is rain  
And the plants are about getting wet,  
And maybe it is because of the girl in Colorado,  
Or maybe it's because you still read my poems and ask  
Me why I don't call,  
When you told me not to call- When you hung up on me  
And made your self suppliant like a battle ship for  
Your sailors;  
But still jog alone, and it's always been about your neighborhood  
And Bukowski always gives a few good throws,  
But I think I've got him outmatched now-  
And who cares if no one sees:  
This is a game of midnight devilry, best kept secret from  
The major leagues:  
And I'll sell Christmas trees and order pizza  
And drink cheap liquor and read cheap poetry wherever  
I can find it:  
There are always thrift shops and liquor stores,  
And the forest is alive and rich with the oil fires of such  
Winos; and jogging at night shoeless through the Australian  
Pines and tattooed sand dunes is otherworldly,  
And I always think of you when I am vacillating on my  
Amusing rocket ship:

Going up and down and nowhere pretty fast,  
Like a wave who thinks he might leap away from its  
Vast mother,  
To kiss you briefly in the smoky atmosphere of other  
Planets that aren't even real,  
Not knowing that it was you making that need-some  
Noise on the cinderblocks of the back step,  
Waiting to get in all this time.

Robert Rorabeck



# Marionettes Of Similacrum

The satellites have their digs all around the faces  
Of stolen light,  
Pirouetting mouthlessly, without any fear of rattlesnakes,  
As beneath them the traffic  
Pushes through the crepuscule of zoetropes:  
And it goes this way for housewives,  
Who have finally taken off their glass slippers:  
Cant you see they are done shopping, and they are as good as  
Naked having culled the throats of mailboxes and into  
The kitchens of their grottos again:  
What do you suppose it is that they will be doing,  
With the pool like a cooling diamond behind them, and further  
Down like a chess piece on the mowed easement of  
The torpid canal, but an alligator as true as turpentine:  
About which the mariposas are dancing,  
Looming nothing but the briars in the penumbras of airplanes;  
And maybe even in this painting, the soul doesn't  
Exist anymore:  
Maybe even all of the pretty women are just marionettes of  
Similacrum,  
Except that I saw you today, Alma: and you kissed my lips so  
Many times, proving with each furtive nativity of your being,  
That all of my previous supposing have always been wrong.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mariposa In The Bosque

Ah the pain of epiphany, the realize that realization has run its  
Course:  
To punch the saltlick of professors in their eye, and realize that  
Realization itself wasn't just enough:  
To read John Keats manhandling, and then sell fireworks,  
To remember the little shaggy beasts who love you, and whose love  
Is little enough;  
To awaken, and to time and time again awaken in the bathrooms of  
Forget-me-nots to never hardly never have the courage to look at  
Myself in reflections of all of these hot mornings:  
To never having been able to do that: to having been a morning in  
Michigan,  
To having sung so many times for my muse, that my muse has confused  
Herself again:  
Again, waking up, vacillating like stagecraft, like a wishy-washy thing  
Of god, for surely I've gotten drunk and vacillated up and down  
The drainage of Wellington or any old imported town on inflatable  
Canoes:  
Up and down, and up and down and up, Erin! Up! Because everything else  
Is just old, just old news, Erin- Just old news:  
And now he is inflated like a super tough bicycle, Erin:  
Like a super macho bicycle, Erin, making his early morning rounds and  
Spreading all of your news;  
So what have you to lose, Erin:  
What, exactly what is there for you to lose,  
While all of New Mexico spreads her garments just realizing she was  
A mariposa in the Bosque, Erin: and what, really what is there for you  
To lose?

Robert Rorabeck

# Mariposa, Mariposa

In the possibilities of depthless air,  
I would like to take you, if you were not already  
An intrepid swan,  
And my words weren't already dying into the  
Moribund amusements whose sweet corrugations  
Only last for a month or two,  
Mariposa, mariposa.

Robert Rorabeck

# Maritime Engagements

If I have cars, and I have numbers,  
And windows situated so that they may never  
Look out at the rain,  
The bowled, smoothed teeth of cemeteries,  
Like herbivores grazing,  
Gumming the lintel-space between the shade trees  
And earth, but I do not use them,  
Because I haven't yet figured out where I am  
Going to live,  
Then this object is complete without direction or purpose;  
But the sea, oh she is a forever beautiful thing,  
Going as she does all places and not a single one  
All the same,  
a single encompassing engagement  
- The best thing is I can throw all of  
My bottled desires into the collar of her crenulated neck, and  
She'll take it but never speak a difference.  
She just keeps coming back to me, and then away-  
In séance, an entranced dancer going about through  
The conductions of an organic science  
Full of Satan's knowledge, kleptonic but without hands,  
Boastful but with no smile- If I seed her,  
But I will, and nothing shall grow in her other than those  
Things which belong,  
And do not notice me, for even with all my gifts wanting,  
How should I breathe with them?

Robert Rorabeck

# Mark Alexander

No more flowers for the beautiful words:  
We can work it all out right here,  
While I remember imperfectly slipping books back into the library  
Before going back to work at five a.m.  
As of now, I do not have to believe in angels anymore-  
I have a wife and child, after all—  
My wife just as imperfect but so much better than I am—  
And my child, child:  
My child is a stolen bicycle going up the hidden side of a rainy mountain,  
Some place unspeakably beautiful that you cannot know anymore:  
Until, I know we will grow distant and remote  
In the desolations of this life:  
My child, my child—  
Won't he hate and resent me,  
And curse me and love me  
And, hopefully, never read a word written by me—  
As I have so few words anymore that are not spun imperfectly by  
Midnight's liquor—  
Soon we will be returning together to our home in the states—  
And our time spent in China will be just a daydream he is yet too young  
To remember,  
But he is perfect, my son: Mark Alexander,  
And this poem has become for him,  
As he is made from both hemispheres,  
And now has taken airplanes twice back and forth across the earth—  
Both inside and outside the womb—  
A beautiful man, my sun,  
A muse for the stewardesses,  
A handsome man who shall never be alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mark Twain

In streams of shared unison  
You sink your first and yell  
Mark Twain.  
My lips touch down on your  
Visage  
Like migrating robins  
Taking a break on your  
Floating pastures—  
They hum and twitter  
And take small siphons  
From your lips,  
Stealing your honey like gasoline  
And light off again  
As you pirouette like  
A cowgirl orchid  
Down the fine young stream  
As alligators line up  
Dark mystery  
Like tall toothy gentlemen  
Saddling up at the bar,  
Their hungry eyes begging  
The question of your throat's  
Availability.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mark Twain's New American Novel

When dead, I will become  
As defined as a homeopathic cenotaph;  
First, curled by kneeds of waves;  
I will be rolled by the dark janitors,  
Uncle Remus and Uncle Tom, to your  
Suburban balcony; I will lay there for many days,  
Just a knuckle under the dry pine needles;  
Watching the milk of sunlight spill around  
The landscaping, as you lean outwards all bosomy  
Eating a slice of drippy watermelon; I would  
Hope there that you would recall my name;  
But that is impossible, for there is a flaw in  
Your eye even I can see under the lavender thistles:  
I would pull it out of you, if I were a whole man,  
And inclined to the deeds of Paladins;  
But I am no more, and yet shall remain here as  
Less than the dauby insect, until you are finished  
To the rind, until the weather takes you too,  
Makes a May-pole of yours stems, the lesser animals  
Jump-yip around; but they will forget who you  
Are, while I will worship you in a séance of  
Bereaved whispers until your house comes down,  
Smothered by the cajoling thieveries of an almighty sea,  
And then I must carry on somberly handsome,  
Upon other adventures I have yet the mind to speak of.

Robert Rorabeck

# Marlboro Halo

We're going to go ahead with our  
Dastardly deeds, believing there still  
May be an opportunity;  
We're going to walk as steady as we  
Please, trying not to go all wobbly kneed,  
As we hook out of high school and  
Straight into Juvy:  
These are some things she said to me  
As easy as you please, as she swung from  
The naked limbs of the stalwart trees;  
And I studied her arc, trying to figure out  
How much lower she might play:  
She was already at a five year low, but  
She was still so beautiful to behold, and  
Her pearlescent brow was ringed by  
A Marlboro halo.

Robert Rorabeck



# Marriage

Better walls at night seal the pigeons in the stars.  
They walk into the sunset, into the waves, and the deep sea.  
They prick their heels on the clefts of sunken war ships,  
The dead dreams of dreary emperors,  
The blind stalks of starfish wavering, wanting to understand,  
The evolution of those who have moved on, and up, and up;  
Where they cannot be found by who they were,  
Those still wishing to understand the declivities of human warmth;  
Those fellowships of comfortable eyes fawning like specks  
Of amusement light on their partners' recognized silhouettes,  
The houses of warm bones, the grinning doors,  
And the tongues, the kitchens, waiting to feed and be fed by  
Those tongues, the bedrooms, the heady pillows, the musk of Ferris-Wheels.  
Down unto the toes, and up again; Next to each other,  
Door to door, they circle above the earth where the air is warm  
And the sea is whispering like an allied country skipping airplanes  
Like stones across the atolls of her knees, messages of wedded union  
Glowing like happy relatives in the rosy wharf;

In the morning they rise as one household and the light,  
Strong in its morality, plays through the open doorways like  
The promises of well-behaved children and angels of smooth,  
Skipping stone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Martian Pornographies

It doesn't have to forfeit for long—look out,  
And the dogs will have to play—  
Stretching,  
And strobe-ing in lures of pretending virginity:  
Three weeks left of school  
And then the social daydreams will most likely  
Evaporate,  
Going back again to the rusty grottos where  
Girls once mixed with their neighbors  
And the stewardesses touched down to pick at  
Scabs—  
Longish séances, if you know the place—  
While a little ways outside, music across the  
Canal,  
And the alligator with the ruby eyes  
Stares up from its Martian pornographies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Marvelous Ruin

Flowers pattering in the  
Melting snow-  
Short obituaries drift like wood  
In sugar palm cities. Everything  
Is sweltering- Remote control boats  
Drip and sweat.  
Paper candy rots.  
Black men and white men are indistinguishable.  
I want to be with you,  
But I wear the mask of a beat up  
Thief-  
Who was caught in the rose garden  
Again.  
Everything is indifferent- my uncle is  
Whistling from the canal  
Where the living are no longer swapping seats;  
I think I'll play this music on your birthday-  
If you saw me, I think you'd run away;  
And the clouds are stampeding in  
An obnoxious torpid haze-  
The sun doesn't know where he is  
Across this fat peninsula-  
Some parking lots are more crowded  
Than others-  
I am utterly alone- my boyhood has  
Slipped away-  
Even I don't know what I am anymore,  
But it is such  
Marvelous ruin.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mary Did You Know? The Purely Scientific Version

Mary, did you know, that we evolved from monkeys?  
Mary, did you know, that religion is a tool of ideological capitulation?  
Did you know that our next president won  
On an openly racist ticket?  
That America's brand of Christianity is in service to the almighty dollar?

Mary did you know that human rights should take precedence over  
The pigmentation of a person's color?  
Mary did you know that before 1848, half of America belonged to Mexico?  
Did you know that your baby boy has been taken out of context?  
Did you know that the Golden Rule is not in service in our country?

Mary did you know? Mary did you know? Mary did you know?

The sighted cannot see, the eared cannot hear, and The Walking Dead is on at  
10?  
That the only salvation is through science and the progressive attitudes of  
common kindness between common men.

Mary, did you know that your son was Jewish?  
Mary, did you know that on January 20th Donald Trump will rule our nation?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy has been perverted by the racists?  
This sleeping child that you are holding is a prop for a million sleep-walking man-  
children?

Mary did you know? Mary did you know? Mary did you know?

Robert Rorabeck

# Mary Full Of Grace

I caught myself dancing in the  
Front seat of my pickup  
Truck with aunt mary in  
The passenger seat replacing  
All the old ghosts, now  
She's one too, because  
She's been there at that  
Lonely place beside me  
On the bed she was talking  
About making money and  
All the various ways to  
Pay off your debt; she does it  
By selling produce in south florida;  
She went on like an economist  
My eyes journalists  
Fell to their side to  
Watch her tongue roll  
Little bits of her children  
Are on her cheeks, blond babies  
They are her hope  
Planted into this world  
To take first tiny firm roots  
Into the pots she's planted  
Them- they are her karate  
Kicking security when she  
Tells me how her husband john  
Broke his finger today  
Moving for her; she sounds  
Excited about the break, and I  
Don't tell her about how  
This Mexican loius who  
Once worked at their fruit stand  
Saw john frequently at the pool hall  
With other women he frequents  
I hear the truth in mary's  
Voice- she's not dumb she  
Knows about john but there  
Are her kids and  
house payments she still

Needs help on and  
Most of all there's that  
Hungry maw of loneliness  
That blows in the off  
Season from the east  
The hurricanes of her  
Humid thoughts when she  
Sits alone in the front  
Of my truck's rusting bed  
She's trying to catch me  
To tell me something she's trying  
To whisper a kiss from 2  
Feet into my ear or to  
Reach over and touch her hungry  
Painted nails to my knee to show  
me she remembers  
How we use to play  
Doctors after seventh day  
Adventist Saturday Sabbath  
Behind the wooden pallets  
Not far away from my defunct  
Grandparents' mobile home,  
And that she passionately  
Recalls the forts we put together  
With Indian blankets over  
Chairs arranged to let only  
The light play into our secrecy-  
How we'd then stomp the  
Blankets between chairs tipping  
Our houses over to make  
A felty boat to sail  
Out of the maudlin living  
Rooms and into her Atari set;  
But she knows that all those  
Memories are sunk- she's  
Grown up to that responsibility  
And I a lonely sailor am left  
Adrift waiting for sharks to end it  
When she asks me- so,  
You figured out what to do yet? And  
I try to assert my  
Throat like some

Great capitalist investment  
Thinker when I give  
My excuses and on top  
Of them that I've saved  
Money and maybe next  
Tuesday I'll go fishing  
To catch me a trout,  
Mary pretends to  
Understand all my  
Wanderer ways;  
Like her brother, she  
Tells herself I just  
Don't want responsibility,  
But deep down, like the  
Rest of the family, she  
Knows I have the love of  
Jesus, which will one  
Day bring me  
To the bank- she's  
Still trying to touch me  
In her mind, she'd touch  
Anyone to keep from  
Drowning- I wonder how  
Long before she divorces  
Herself into her children  
And finds the long  
Legs of a new love  
Warming her in a strange sailing  
Bed; she should know  
I cannot help her,  
All I am is secret  
Mischief, a fallen Peter Pan  
Thinking that all this light  
Is the lure from carnival, and  
When we reach our destination  
At the dojo where her  
Children are  
Learning to combat  
She thanks me  
I thank her  
She goes around the  
Back of my truck to

Check the taillights  
And gives me the  
Go ahead to leave  
There as I dropp her  
Off back into her life  
Without any kind of lifejacket.

Robert Rorabeck



# Mass Produced Souls

Making sex with her will be  
Like Disney World,  
But she is only a parcel of it all:  
The juxtaposition life gives for a 1  
Up, getting it done, getting it done,  
Getting it done:  
The math is solved:  
I can have sex with anyone,  
As long as her name is her,  
Then the life will spread out of her  
Legs like a painful garden,  
A rock garden full of cactus and ruminids:  
The dusk under the canal is swirling,  
But I am not allowed to play with him anymore,  
Maybe because they think I am a homosexual:  
I am not, though I have seen his dong rise  
Like an early cock, only because we  
Were playing make-believe games of her,  
Catching up with her in the waterslide,  
And having fun with her virginity until they  
Realize I am an under-aged genius,  
Destined to be alone in my salinity,  
But there are quite a few better men than me,  
Shucking it in the army of the blonde-banged  
General, getting killed by primitive arrows,  
And scat on by Indians who will soon be preserved  
In the still-life of narcoleptic parks:  
The day goes easy, even though it seems hard,  
Because in democracy, anyone can be a pirate,  
And all the faces are equal, no matter how  
Ugly or domestically situated;  
And, undoubtedly, this is not the poem which  
Will make me famous, or I will be remembered for,  
For that thought is even now scrambling up the high altitude  
Cliffs, afraid of darkness and storm clouds,  
But I just realized it doesn't matter now,  
For the time will come before my name is indentured in  
The drying cement: Given all eternity,  
A poet will arise with my first and Christian name,

Robert Rorabeck,  
Either here or in Canada, where my name seems to proliferate,  
As the ice continents melt, as the democrats reciprocate,  
As the republicans refuse:  
Who cares about either of them,  
This is my name, as she is the muse of my preservation:  
Come to me now in my easy basement,  
And recognize my salient genius, and take me  
As I am, procreate my genius, so that there  
Might be little feet pattering about our rooms:  
Not mice, or ghosts, but the harbingers of our  
Mass produced souls.

Robert Rorabeck

# Massacre Underneath The Sun

They made a massacre underneath the sun—maybe they  
Were just playing with themselves—  
While, in the tomorrow, the sun would jump up yelping and  
Asking for help  
Even though there was nothing left that was owed to  
Him—  
And then the moon would rise, hoping to steal the gossip  
From the ropes of your business,  
As the tears dried off the hurricane,  
And the silver foxes settled down underneath whatever mountains  
Where they were, until the most  
Beautiful of the nighttime wildlife cried out from under neath  
The parapets of its cathedrals that was  
Then all that there was—  
And whenever the moon came out it dried the eyes of the foxes,  
And then settled down in the amphitheaters  
That pretended to gossip over whatever it was that wasn't even  
There.

Robert Rorabeck

# Matadors And Steve Mcqueen

A macho thing, to want to drive-  
I drove to Omaha for one day;  
They were selling the truth at a yard sale  
In a yard of red clay, like a baseball diamond,  
Like a diamond mine; it was in the carving  
Of an asymmetrical cross, and more so in her eyes,  
The apathetic religions she lets pass in her gaze,  
But I did not follow her into the church as she  
Crossed herself, but remained out in the frozen  
Shadows like torpid beasts and faceless pillars  
Beneath the haunted overpass,  
And tomorrow and the next day I'll be driving again  
With four macho men, as we go to set up the white  
Lungs of elephants, this summer's lucrative patriotism,  
And the sky will be filled with ephemeral pacaderms,  
As along the highways the semis will roar like overloaded predators,  
And for awhile we will sit and have lunch and tell lies,  
And then we will send our patriotism to plume verdantly  
In the effluvious sky, and whisper enraptures that war  
Is kind, for a holiday from her religion,  
In the scars of an enlightening night, we did away with  
Our superheroes in the fire when we were five, but  
Her eyes, her eyes are cities of sleepless ghosts, because  
I love you and I live under your stormy overpass,  
Though I could wish to drive away, but all around me is  
The sea of your eyes; I would wish to drive away,  
For it is macho to drive away in the eerie green broadside sky of  
A disaster movie, but I am a little more than fay,  
And from the sideways I am grim, a silhouette nice and  
Tan and gray- A macho thing to want to drive,  
But you have me hypnotized in your righteous eyes,  
And I would rather sit with you and have lunch and tell lies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Material Girls

More cars arrive  
And it's a safe bet with loud vane  
Women-  
That they will buy things and go home  
And make love,  
Never suspecting the curious toy shed  
Of their innocuous plane,  
Just happy that the sweat  
Comes out perfect,  
And they reach orgasm on  
Their birthday.  
Their only regret is that they might have  
All become stewardesses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Materials That Cannot Burn

Good luck runs of four legs:  
It has all the colors of gold your tongue would  
Like to taste,  
On rum and spikenard weaponries over the Gulf of  
Mexico:  
I will see where the whorish light leads tomorrow,  
Drawing me light a catch on a filament's line  
Towards my new endearing sorrows:  
I open up my fist and it seems to be housing a lighthouse,  
All whitish and lined,  
The dying men there are leaving the spittoon earth,  
They are making love with their sister's best friends,  
They are coming out of the movie they just saw  
And walking all-together with the others of their  
Species,  
Out of the darkness of the cave and into the wide-open  
Night,  
A feral wilderness where not a single airplane has yet  
Been thought of by man or the mailmen  
Who diligently post the letters sent to the half-hazard  
Muse baking cakes in a blizzard  
Far into the over-stretched daylights where the tourists  
Break wind and ski-like ants,  
Yet far beneath the eternal crèches I have summated to  
Ask pity from these stars,  
And to sacrifice to this muse materials that cannot burn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Maybe On The Seventh Story

Buxom: a word to begin with for the dentist  
Who is a fox,  
And I am lying here in the land of silver mountains.  
And I am no preacher,  
But all of this seems elusive:  
The five thousand years of Chinese history I  
Have to contend with—the new pocks on my face,  
As I am finally leaving Shanghai,  
Drinking the last of the white wine my ten thousand  
US dollars was good for,  
And I am still hidden,  
And I am yet to be found out, maybe on the seventh  
Story—why aren't there any foxes home,  
Leaping, leaping for all of the ski-lifts  
Until someone else finally figures out how to  
Unbutton her home: and she is a skydiving illusion,  
And I am a plagiarist of uncountable numbers,  
But it feels all right to be signified in the lightest  
Of tombs—  
And if this is how it has to be going to meet her,  
After she has already been found out by me so many numerous  
Times—why then, of course, it is all right—  
As I have talked to her, and calmed her down,  
And now all that lies before her is so many feet of darkness,  
And she, of course, is already almost home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Maybe She Is Blond

She's got blond hair,  
Mother; and I want to bury my lips alone with  
Her in the crepuscule beside the canal,  
Hidden by the overgrowth where the traffic is flowing,  
While the mailboxes have turned their backs,  
But she is always falling into the flames of another fire;  
And my truths are just the truths of a liar,  
But I still come to her with enough alcohol; and I have  
No friends,  
And I don't know how to play pool: Her children weep and  
Drool and the pretty nightmares and alligators crawl and  
Curl in the saunas underneath her house:  
She is entirely naked: She is a church stripped bare of  
Stained glass, and maybe the legionnaires are returning home,  
Maybe the pilots are touching down;  
And maybe my parents will bring me dinner, but for right now  
I am thinking about her- Kind of how I always thought of  
Her while better men slew her dragons and cut her hair;  
And maybe she is blond,  
And turning towards him in the epiphany of her blue night:  
Maybe she is blond-  
Maybe tomorrow I will be alright.

Robert Rorabeck



# Maybe Whatever

I cannot sing at funerals, even when its you  
I'm looking for, even when it is down hill,  
And the cars are parked on ledges above us, facing us;  
And there is sweet graffiti and talking brail by the  
Lip, the wrought iron teeth are bighting pensively,  
The cats are walking like tight-rope acrobats,  
Like French criminals, or whatever.

The dog is stuck.

I don't know why I continue with it, my performances  
For all the deaf: The schoolyard is empty, the sky is closed;  
And I lay down the empty book beside this tombstone;  
Soon to be my grandmother, or whoever;  
They say the same thing, and the children are strung out like  
Stolen jewelry lined out through a worn pocket,  
Like flowers thrown after her tresses, but not really any of  
That at all;  
They have gotten away.

I say this because I am scarred, and want to be beautiful,  
Anonymously kicking all the waves;  
And I want to remember that I have been to Spain,  
But have not done anything for absolute years:  
I do this so I can occupy her bed on another airplane, though  
She doesn't say to me at all, now you can swim like a sturgeon,  
Now you are quite immaculate and in time for Christmas;  
And I am your river  
Or whatever,  
Next year, maybe, next year....

Robert Rorabeck

# Maybe You Drink Alone On Sundays

Lonesomeness is like another dimension,  
Like a carnival forgotten in the woods, while not  
Far off all the fairytales are smoking on their break:  
And you are there,  
And you are goldilocks or red riding hood, or some  
Other, but you have your skirts pulled up,  
And some wolf is lightning your cigarette:  
I have to be going soon- the lawnmower is already in  
The woods, mowing paths for you,  
The Mexicans come singing cantos and staring at you  
Illegally out of the dimmed corner of either eye;  
And you let them, though they are not your favorite  
Minstrels; and I think that if I could write better,  
You would think of me. You would even think of driving  
Up long crowded avenues to see the places where I used  
To live, but I wouldn't respect you then: That would  
Be the expected tourism of a plague, and you would  
Have to bake pies, and wash the dishes, and your little  
Children behind their ears, but some people still live in  
Africa, unprotected, far apart still believing a lost cause,  
And saluting the flags of that heron-like confederacy:  
Now I have no plausible excuse for this,  
Better men are running wild in the city, shirtless beside  
All the pools, tops down in all the traffic, having their  
Way with this. Maybe you follow them for a little ways  
Curious of such harems, and maybe you drift off. Maybe you  
Drink alone on Sundays. Maybe you have pets I don't  
Know about, but it doesn't matter- This is concluding;  
As it should have concluded long ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# Meaningless Fairytales

Cadavers on the boisterous road  
Hurrying to grandmother's house, writhing  
Across the sound of roses,  
And other forms that they are not allowed to have:  
Souls stormed from their bodies  
Like footless serpents staring up into plum  
Trees,  
As the heavens pull down waiting to fill some  
Mouths with hooks-  
Across yards of chartreuse equanimity the  
Metamorphosis of the butterflies  
Disappear into- the camouflage of the boulder  
Removed,  
And her shoulders bared but having nowhere  
To go-  
Trumpets played by blisters, and the nimbus  
Hanging down like cobwebs of torn flesh  
Over the sea where there is no  
Action-  
And the cars carry the dead home and into  
Meaningless fairytales.

Robert Rorabeck

# Meaningless Radiance

The mother is sleeping in western California  
Just inches from the sea,  
Sleeping like a virginal epitaph to her  
Adolescent roller rink,

And the stars are like a rock garden,  
And the constellations a petrified zoo,  
And the earth revolves like a tourist trying  
To breastfeed a spiteful past,

The eons are laughing as they drive across  
Borders,  
Evolving the brows of rubber tramps nodding  
At intersections of busted Pharisees,

In the New Mexico desert the casinos sprawl  
Like aboriginal shortcuts lit up for executions,  
Looked upon by rough iron dinosaurs,  
And neon petroglyphs,

A giant azure steed raises like unearthed lightning,  
Brushing the bellies of the commercial airlines,  
The leapfrogging stewardesses with chardonnay eyelashes,  
And eyes of vesper obedience,

Condescending the traffic of anthills,  
The visiting feathers blown by a puckering Fury,  
Out across the Grand Canyon's sun downing polygamies,  
And the apoplectic rattle of the diamond tour buses,

Like a thought of a tongue yawning from  
The window of a strange but vivid highway,  
The canine foreknowledge of an arisen storm,  
Through which the dust devils dance in meaningless radiance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Meaninglessness

By the savage dreams,  
Cannibalistic airplanes spread their  
Over eager wings:  
And sing to snakes and ants:  
Red and blue fallen onto the white floor:  
Off the tables with no more space  
For elbows:  
The heroes weeping in the soups of witches,  
The masterless dog scratching at the door-  
And the moon sick in the sky,  
Like a lost child out of the doors of a  
Supernatural school,  
Ashamed of the glow of its own thievery,  
It swims through the meaninglessness carrying  
With it nothing of its own.

Robert Rorabeck

# Meant For You

Something is truly being  
Beautiful,  
Seen from the cliffs with the  
Lights out,  
All the virgins doused in  
The tallow of whales or  
Song birds;  
And I strike out like a  
Leap of flint, Kelly;  
I am creating the bonfire  
From the trucks of your  
Boys' pirouette;  
I am just the yellow magnesium  
To fill your horn;  
But whatever else I was meant to  
Say I have surely forgotten,  
Even though I am sure it  
Was beautiful, as it was  
Meant for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Measurelessly Deep

Flesh of sows spread over the transoms of  
Ghosts,  
And the poor men cannot vacation, but look where  
I have been,  
Up all the mountains and their skirts,  
And atop of Alma's roof; and I've had that goddess in  
My bed,  
While it is almost time to close- The men with great  
Big smiles laughing make-believe in the  
Exterior sun;  
Why they don't know where it is they go when they  
Sleep,  
But the places are yet here to remember, echoing,  
Echoing and  
Measurelessly deep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mediterranean Foreplay

Getting drunk—and maybe its not the weekend,  
And maybe I am not Pablo Neruda,  
Not having known the different faces of the moon:  
Or hung the asexual clocks in the bosoms of naked trees,  
And maybe today I deposited too much money  
All at once,  
And most likely I am in love with the wrong girl—  
If I am in love,  
And shouldn't I send her flowers, at least to her  
Head stone all crowded and alone in the inner-city,  
Burned out and made love to only by infrequent tourists  
Walking their dogs for exercise instead of romance;  
And I would like to lie her down between my lips,  
And taste her like a cheap oyster at the buffet;  
And call out the names of new colors spotted for  
The first time in the sky,  
And drink to her on her birthday, and live in the vicinity of  
Misspelled angels all spilled out in their bedrooms  
Behind the red bricks and cornices;  
But they already have made love, and it is some three  
Decades, and I can't write music,  
And her parents wouldn't approve, and why should it  
Continue like this when I've only been to Spain but once,  
And there with my aunt I made love to no one,  
And did not ride a stolen bicycle but once through the verdant  
Orange groves to the Mediterranean foreplay—  
Did not once allow her to touch the scars on my cheek,  
Or remain long enough to say our apocryphal vows,  
Did not howl her name through wind tunnels on  
Christian holidays, did not fight a hillside of windmills;  
But did this, and ran away, slept through class  
Or did not go to class at all, and thus was not able to fall  
In love with Shakespeare's sonnets or the female athletes  
Who knew them by heart,  
And bit their inside cheek towards the better-situated contenders  
Who knew all the answers and were not afraid to  
Look her in the eye,  
And feel the budding soul never fearing that she should  
Turn away.



Robert Rorabeck

# Melancholy Wind Chime

I climb the highest mountains  
In Colorado  
To get closer to her

But she is still  
Too far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Melanie Laurent

Comparing scars with a French starlet is  
Fun but misleading;  
But it helps to pass the time while the dogs  
Are sleeping,  
And there isn't much else going on in Northern  
Michigan:  
Girls are playing pinball or curling their  
Hair,  
Chimneys are smoking, the evergreens are  
Mostly naked and proselytizing like violin bows  
In such wind-  
And the sky is an aphrodisiac above a narcoleptic  
Park; and if I had her now,  
This is what we'd do; we'd play conquistadors,  
And dress up and spread our religion.  
Mostly it would be about her baring teeth;  
It would be nice and unwholesomely empirical,  
And the umpire would squat and squint his eye as  
We went slowly into the hotel room,  
Not turning back as we closed the door;  
And we'd play through the ninth inning and overtime,  
And I'd imagine her lips in the darkness of her eyes.  
We'd sit on each others' laps and watch home movies  
Of mermaids and seashells  
Until the dog came scratching at the door  
And made me remove the covers and get out of  
Melanie's make-believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Men Men And Gods Gods

Chalices hid on Easter in my backyard:  
Riding bareback and never found- and now firemen  
Are climbing up mountains,  
And turning around with matches- in each fist  
A pinwheel, or a glass container of milk-  
As I burn across the Navajo Reservations north of  
Gallup New Mexico,  
As we all just try to figure out how to get on  
A little further home:  
The windmills galloping- the pilots away in the  
Hayloft- the octogenarian knights eating honey bells  
In the green fields who never have to offer up  
Their echoes to anyone;  
And yet here they come: both to churches and honeymoons-  
Dripping from their bosoms, and drooling from their  
Chalices that very same nectar which keeps men men,  
And gods gods.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mentionless Sea

The deer make their own paths up their nipples—  
And the elk over her spine,  
Down her back nuzzling airplanes high above the pasture  
Where my father has ploughed a racing track—  
Here—angels mate with unicorns,  
Casting their spore over the mentionless sea,  
Where arrowheads lay across the beds of entire nations of  
Hibernating tribes who once made sun dials and worshipped  
Things to the rattlesnakes that spoke to them:  
Until there was the spokes of bicycles coming in some Siamese  
Wonder down the road—heading to the cerulean lights of  
Some baptizing church—pedaled by road scholars  
And envied by hobos:  
Scorpions living here and getting rides upon the backs of  
Green foxes—  
If there ever was an octopus or a giant squid, the truth of  
It lies in other estuaries so far away that they still believe  
In things like swordfish and mermaids.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mermaid

Feral mermaids, you are real-  
Because I saw you leaping and doing tricks  
For dozens of tourists,  
And your tail was teal,  
And you know your ways through hollowed  
Coquina,  
And you know that ancient blood rood corridors  
Of the silver encrusted  
Spaniards-  
Mermaids, you are migratory, are you  
Gypsies,  
And how does your roe taste, mermaids sleeping  
In the alabaster sea,  
Sleeping not so deep down under the whirring  
Ceiling fans of helicopters,  
With the element of light forever waving down  
In cryptic tanning-  
Areolas warped by the strumming currents,  
Who know the soft meats of water terrapin,  
Who breed alone and have never known the corruption  
Of centaurs or the classroom-  
Won't you inherit our species once the earth tears,  
Once we go down being Indian given by rainbows  
Past crepuscule, and feeding time,  
Won't you come up and undo your gills and swim  
In my moats with my plastic tugs and junks:  
Mermaids, I have watercolors for you and names  
I haven't yet come up with,  
And meatball submarines outside your salty euphemisms:  
Mermaids clap and squeak farts for me  
And we will celebrate Christmas together while the  
Mexicans are sleeping in the back corner of the house  
Coated in a sheath of pungently mowed grass:  
Mermaids,  
Who are you, and what do you think of that penumbra  
Which seems forever set in the stone of perfect reflections,  
And does not ripple in the bay of your unreal satellites.



# Mermaids In The Pretty Sea

Lutes played by satyrs from a graveyard of  
Bonfires—  
Across the streets, where all of the old pornographic  
Magazines are stored:  
Across the canal in a world my mother never  
Opened her eyes to see:  
Words on the wings of chameleon insects  
That sleep in the nuptials of the wild  
Arboretums:  
Beautiful girls who have metamorphosed  
Beneath the sand boxes in the land of the gossiping  
Cats:  
Places I have gone to while sleeping alone  
Half of my life away,  
Looking down from the second floor of a yellow  
Studio apartment,  
Watching the lesbians swim like fresh water otters  
In a chlorinated exhibit—  
The rest of the university spreading its patina  
Behind them:  
They row against one another as I am going with  
A girl I do not love—  
They sing songs to one another that do not  
Exist anywhere else—  
The diurnal dreams of their exhibits lasting  
Half a lifetime between my ears—  
As a succession of muses cross their airplanes before  
My eyes:  
Stewardesses who once molted fall to earth  
And immediately join the marching band that is  
Taking all of the prettiest boys I do not wish to  
Remember to see their own reflections  
Sleeping with the narcoleptic mermaids in the pretty sea.

Robert Rorabeck



## Mermaid's Kiss

Unequipped for the night,  
He rode upon the lightning horse,  
But its breaks were worn,  
And like I said,  
He fell right off the  
Cliffs, of course,  
All the way into the  
Mermaid's kiss  
And his steed earned  
The prefixed sea.  
They had their honeymoon  
In the caesuras  
Where her areolas bloom  
Like cherry Sundays from  
The foam.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mermaids Who Don'T Belong

A poem is in the river- going downstream  
To kiss some girls runaway from school. Looking up,  
You can almost see the sky-  
Epilepsy of shadows and foxes in the foliage-  
New make-believe mulberry tongued-  
Your mother in the sleeves of a house preparing lettuce:  
Diamond sized dreams in her eyes-  
She watches the goldfish- the cat watches the television;  
And in all of them, cells divide:  
A red apple- a wheelbarrow in a weather of make-believe:  
Metamorphosis in the afternoon taking off her clothes:  
My muse closes her eyes and goes to sleep across the street,  
And who knows where she will land when she  
Dreams- Across the forests and the borders, into her old  
Mexico, free of white devils and all of these sad lines  
Which melt like sweet ice-cream and salty tears-  
A poem a river of liquor in my blood carrying away my pains  
Over her into a delta to fondle and sexually harass  
Mermaids who don't even belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# Metamorphosing Birthday Cake

And we sell ribbons  
And we sell heather,  
And you look so beautiful that  
I just want to look at you again  
And I want to finish myself off the way  
I just finished this bottle  
Into a housewife, into her venal sister:  
And what I really mean to say is that  
I really love you;  
I really love you- -, housewife,  
Mother:  
I want you to become my landlord,  
And I want to sleep like a ba\$tard Mexican  
Drunken into your shadow,  
Tired of the razor blade  
Just like the shadow;  
And that I really love you and want to paint  
My epitaph  
Just like your wino fingernails,  
While you go crimping your orchards  
All day, dusting for apple snails,  
And I really love you;  
And if I don't, why f%ck airplanes,  
Because I love no other,  
As the traffic quiets into the unreal batter  
Of a beautiful, and the finishing destination of an otherwise  
Metamorphosing birthday cake....

Robert Rorabeck

# Metamorphosing For Her Soda Jerk

I dream about toy boats:

Oh yes, I dream,

And comely lions open mouthed, letting

Their claret gullets team in the sun:

And caravans of tourists

(They ain't so bad) Dysfunctional

Mother and fathers and three sibling in

Plaid:

I love the smooth borders there near the petting

Zoo, where the lake peals like the open

Eyes of a goddess,

And I have done nothing so good

As when I raided the refrigerator for- Well,

It goes along like coming of age shoots off like

Peppermint rockets up to state college,

And I am left sweltering alone with my colloquial

Knowledge,

With nothing but a harp and some expensive jam-

All night jaunts from the swings to the pram:

I watched this other girl once singing in Catholic

Chorus,

And I thought of this other girl once whose sweet soul

Was so porous that old men in the cataracts of Colorado

Used her to pan for turquoise which they smoothed

By rolling her back and forth in the palms of her hand;

And it's about time that I set off and rubber-tramped,

And stopped collecting these butterflies and silly-stamps:

I figured it should be what I was always meant to do,

To skip along up the continental divine,

To get frost bite hickeys on my ankles: To let my unrequited

Time divide the franchises of my soul,

For Death who comes full suited carrying the horrendous

Bouquets I so wished not to smell;

But let him follow me up to her, and at least make him do

Some work,

And I will happily die beneath her, while she foams

Triumphantly something classical- even though sadly,

yes, metamorphosing for

Her soda jerk....

Robert Rorabeck

# Metamorphosis's Rodeo

A skeleton gets  
Nervous  
Reading pamphlets in  
Disney World-  
A make believe  
Made of chicken wire  
In hoops  
Of the day-  
Tourists drive down the road-  
The most beautiful  
Housewives  
Who don't need any  
Minds;  
They enjoy the backyards  
Where  
Dolphins swim in the canals-  
Obsessed with their swimming  
Pools  
Like diamonds drowning in cognac  
And pilots who dance  
Above their shoulders  
In jubilees of  
A metamorphosis's Rodeo

Robert Rorabeck

# Metropolis Of Henchmen

Envious news marches green  
Down the western cliffs:  
This is where the prince was blown  
When the wizard found him  
Up in the attic  
Molesting his abducted mistress:  
And the sky goes ever up,  
The floating chalice of  
Thirsty brides,  
If the young boy falls  
He cannot die:  
For here there are eagles who  
Can speak,  
And bright faeries who clean  
Bedrooms for a living:  
Marvelous third world countries  
Buried in Jungles,  
Just her alabaster hip exposed,  
And butter flying-lips  
Who need French kisses to survive:  
You can break them open  
With your tongue  
And eat them,  
They might cry your name  
As the cars drive by:  
The spindling herds of snuffing beasts  
In evangelically straight rivers  
Of white and red, the shifting  
Suburbs of Midwestern towns,  
The skyscrapers of missing brides:  
Lilting his voice  
To accommodate the sunny weather,  
The prince starts down  
Towards a metropolis of henchmen,  
The buffalos kitty-cornered next  
To the forgotten riverbed,  
Where her alabaster hip lies exposed  
In the fretful wind.





# Mexican Field-Trip

In this Mexican field trip of my beating heart:  
Words and feelings recycled  
Like an infant abandoned into the dusky aphorisms of  
His shrinking front yard:  
His parents sure to be bringing home  
Fried chicken, calling the cats from the barnyard and  
From the moonlight,  
Leaving little sign of witches—but the  
Narcolepsy around them immense and getting busier  
At its job:  
A new year filled with pets and Christmas trees,  
The still wet hearts of valentines,  
And the lonely paths home through the vineyards where  
The foxes sleep amidst the hibernating apiaries:  
Because, here, the incentives grow  
All over the place, and especially low enough to reach.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mexican Paint Job

Falling from Ganymede you are forever  
Laughing,  
You are passing the bus and you are not my friend—  
Shadow on the wall,  
Friend to a tear—  
And I am looking up, suddenly awakened  
Beneath the Christmas tree—  
Are you still with him,  
I wonder in monuments,  
As the daylight sheds its own curses,  
The molting of rattlesnakes and watermoccassins:  
My father in law cooks dinner and  
Speaks in mandarin:  
My wife from Shanghai holds the baby,  
And I am not thinking of  
Anyone—  
I am not thinking of you—  
I lost my job as a public school teacher—  
Tomorrow I will sell rip off Mikey Mouse watches  
At the flea market,  
But it will be raining: I will not sell a thing.  
I will have to move back to China—  
My wife will get a job; it will be as if I am on the  
Other side of the moon:  
I will never have to think of the things I did with you  
Again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mexican Umbrella

Mexican umbrella- few words keep out  
Such as you:  
Smugness at the edge of the canal the airplane's wing  
Dips into-  
And angels promise to make love to tadpoles  
As soon as they change,  
But change takes forever while we walked  
Hand in hand-  
And you said you could smell the night blooming  
Jasmine,  
And we walked my dog and I held you like  
A Mexican umbrella, but there wasn't any rain,  
So I didn't need you  
Which wasn't so bad.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mexico

Imperfect joy: by you I am wilting: the body of  
My phallus,  
So sad after Christmas- all of my bicycles are stolen,  
And by this sad measure I sing  
As the sun goes down so thriftily: while I was walking  
Throughout the concrete elbows of the day  
The entire world a shanty town too glad to see its own  
Four legged reflection in  
The chrome of the wheels that someone bought for  
Himself instead of her;  
And if it was a wish, it was never received, but sang in  
The antechamber behind its vision,  
As the patrols circulated in the heavens, until she finally  
Receded like a dying star back across the bosque,  
Back across the frontera,  
And again into Mexico.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mia Bienamada

Welcoming her brown skin into my room:  
She lingers here even though she doesn't call all weekend:  
Mia bienamada cannot see my scars,  
And I remember how she almost slipped away after fireworks:  
How I wept and grasped at straws in her car,  
While the insouciant traffics flourished back and forth,  
The sea sashaying without a care:  
But to her, my comeliest muse, I have laid myself bare:  
And she has come back to me, like a heartbeat finding a graveyard:  
She has lit me up like an umbrella of a firework  
In the emptiest part of New Mexico- and she has found the  
Coyotes in my eyes- and she has shown me all of the hardest stones  
Of her childhood that she could- and this is how she happens  
To remember herself as she wakes up all alone on Monday,  
Late for work- her body already fibrillose as a bee in its last season,  
The honey drowned into a pool or spent at the flea market  
Underneath the overpasses that leave when the better parts of her  
Family leave or are all donated- until she finally has to alight awake-  
And see me preposterous, and beyond dreams:  
A conquistador for her new children, a storybook awaiting the nudity of  
Her fingertips and open eyes:  
As I lay for her there in a coliseum of my drunken loneliness,  
A catastrophic illusion who refuses to leave the paint of her senses;  
Until she recognizes it and smothers it with the breasts of her  
Acceptance as something else more deserving the deepest auburns  
And most feral séances of her love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Michael And Heidi

At the warmed center of my being, I have a luscious pit  
And it is singing through the dark and storminess; and it feels as if  
I were not alone:  
The words rejoin and they make eyes at one another just like blond-haired  
And blue eyed toddlers in kindergarten;  
And I can strut out very fine on Easter and look at the weather accumulating  
Over the library or the post office,  
And there can be things said to me if they get to me on time,  
While the grownups sequester me and make me hear them out until it  
Is dinner time;  
And clothes pins can be used as pop guns in games of make-believe,  
All beneath the Australian pines; and if I had better words, I wouldn't  
Have to use pornography: I could make you mine;  
And the cars pile up and they bundle together and talk make-believe,  
Far after everyone of the conquistadors has eaten themselves,  
And yet the city survives; and the city has Erin's eyes,  
While I think of Alma for the first time, but for a very long time;  
And her two children go out to sea, and never once do they  
Have to think of me;  
And I wonder what they will have to think about today or tomorrow  
Through the choirs of their school yards and their churchyards  
And under the protection of the Virgin of Guadalupe  
In their forts of make-believe  
Since they are both very beautiful: Michael and Heidi,  
And they both don't have to think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mickey Mouse

I do not read for you my alphabet of tigers:  
It is not publishable,  
As the teacher lays sweating outside with his students,  
Thinking that some of them are terribly beautiful,  
But terribly frightened to admit it:  
And there are so many levels to explore beneath him:  
Of trapped dwarves,  
And hoarding dragons and armies of animated  
Skeleton  
To finally get out of the trap door and into the other  
Side of illusion:  
But for now there are only these things in the twilight  
Before Christmas as the lions sleep and  
The alligators sleep  
Like the football teams in their anthills of bedrooms-  
And you lay pushed to him,  
Opened mouthed in one deep part of the river,  
But staying with him you will never have to see Mickey  
Mouse-  
And your world remains different and far away,  
Filled with the stain glass of churches switching places  
With a vermilion and ever-changing sea.

Robert Rorabeck

## Middle Of The Day Boyfriends

Warm is the merry-go-round in  
The yoke of daylight, cheering itself,  
An omelet of the midway  
Where Spanish girls who are so fare  
Have new boyfriends but  
Just for the day—When it cools,  
And their hearts freeze, they won't  
Be asking us to spend any more money  
On any more games—  
Their traps will close—  
And their love will metamorphosis  
Again to the faithfulness at mass underneath  
The Virgin of Guadalupe—  
So when the werewolves bathe in the moonlight  
Atop of their house,  
They will bend their stems, and kiss their  
Husbands, to whom they swear they don't  
Know whom it is that makes such terrible howls—  
But we know who it really is—  
The lycanthropic howls of their middle of the day  
Boyfriends.

Robert Rorabeck



# Middle Town

Distant relationships keep ringing  
From the coffin's phone booth,  
In the backyard the wolves are howling  
To attract the moon closer,  
To eat her when her penumbra smiles:  
This is the way the world is moving,  
Like a ride at the fair you pay to get on:  
Now you are about to throw up  
All your loose thoughts onto her sodden lips:  
Looking down, she smiles up  
Somewhere between Hildebrand  
And East Bumblef\*ck, the people  
In their cars driving around the blue suburbs:  
The tract housing, the quiet way the  
Middle of America feels when it  
Goes sleeping through the long sashaying prairies:  
The ins and outs between the gilded city  
And the wounded wilderness:  
In the blink of her eye: cargo trains,  
Native American Museums,  
Ice-cream parlors, abandoned warehouses,  
Homes of the criminally insane:  
All the materials laid in the warrens  
For the bodies to move amidst life's shadows.  
Seeming to be friends, they step on this,  
The broken glass cracks a little more  
And changes the appeal of its light:  
From the saloon, I can see you crying  
In the window:  
They are playing our song.

Robert Rorabeck

# Midnight Day

Are you the one with the blank eyes in the dark?  
I saw you when I was very young,  
And you used to call to me from the black corner  
Of the living room when I tried to sleep....  
Then, I could not close my eyes as your despair  
Occupied the entire house, crawling predatorily  
Over me, a victim caught in your sightless stare—  
Claws dancing pinpricks on my tiny spine,  
You breathed inside my mind the foul poison  
Of fear, and paralyzed me like a thought  
Trapped in stone— Like a mollusk searching  
For a way back to his shell,  
You entered me some midnight day when I  
Was too young to fight back. After I had burned  
My sister's legs with a curling iron, and my father  
Whipped me with his leather belt, you said,  
Let me in, my little sinner, Let me in....  
You came in through the eyes, the vulnerable windows—  
And you curled around inside, a long slimy tail,  
And eyes that blanked the day like a butcher of light,  
Wringing deep inside my dearest thoughts  
And you settled there, like a parasitical emperor,  
Your soot and slime smearing like adulterous fingerprints  
On adulterous flesh,  
Serving a fetid meal from my skull,  
You taught me how to live without the hordes of love.  
Inside me still, you find a way to whisper your craven  
Words upon this midnight day....

Robert Rorabeck

# Mile To Mile

Ladders that defeat their roofs  
Raise up splendidly to  
Cut their throats for  
So many unrequited promises  
Of promissory notes;  
While jets fly off over the sea,  
Or to Mexico;  
While the juvenile hurricanes  
Hypnotize and then flit  
Away without doing  
A great amount of  
Damage;  
It is why you are flirting  
With him, Alma;  
Because you like to smile,  
While the lions  
Are baptized;  
And then they lick the  
Hummingbirds from your  
Hollow wrists,  
Never losing eye contact,  
While the truants  
Sneak away from  
Their buses of midgets,  
And the circus packs up to travel  
From mile to mile.

Robert Rorabeck

# Million Miles

The airplanes are as ungrateful as the muses I  
Line-up my prisoners for,  
And fire like letting go the vermilion swans of roman  
Candles,  
Like touching myself in the carport of exegesis,  
The lightning fountains of DH Lawrence, happening outside  
Of these venal professions.  
Aren't all the planets going away then, turning on themselves,  
But divorcing from their sororities,  
Like moving into empty houses down streets of verdant rivers;  
And all of this I am saying is just a plague of alcohol,  
The piss stains tremulous like ripe plums before  
The coming weathers;  
And Sharon has a child and lives in the early speed of the  
Racetracks of those mountains.  
They rise up and collect the weathers around her, and all that she  
Has been doing, the tourists pressing up and queuing like  
Green flames around windmills,  
And soon nothing will be able to stop her, and all I have been saying  
Will be but the remnants of a sound that never heard an answer,  
The last of my gray hairs carried up the chimney and into the  
Night so blinded by the senses and the thunders of the more  
Genius instruments, touching her all over like tight jockeys cropping  
Their sure-fire racehorses,  
That I will have lost the last of my voice, making impotent  
My once virile magic tricks, turning the school buses into the illusions  
Of a comely desert, turning around and around before themselves  
Even though their children are sleeping a million miles away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Misplaced In My Heart

She lives here:  
Growing in the orchard of all of the world-  
A prison,  
Like the words on the lips for her  
Left to dry and  
Evaporate- her brown skin ripples  
Like the blue gills:  
She thinks nothing of it- and the dirt  
Roads corrugate:  
She thinks nothing of the remaining shells,  
Or her beauty in the motifs  
OF clouds:  
Soon her father will be home into  
The subconscious of her Mexico  
Putting a gun to her MOTHER'S head:  
But she will not  
Thinking of, nor the ferris wheel she  
Misplaced in my heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# Miss Chinese Water Torture

What can I do for you,  
Miss Chinese Water Torture?  
You say it's your birthday, well  
It's my birthday to, yeah, but  
The last time I saw you, you  
Were packed into a 10 second dream,  
Before my return to consciousness at 8 am  
April 23rd, 2007; T minus 13 days.  
I dreamed we were sitting close in  
My family's church, which is something  
You'd never do, because Judaism always  
Trumps the protestant splinter cells,  
Those who grew up barefoot in the weeds  
Of America's last century, versus  
Those armored in Tefillin who continue  
Defying God, sheckling in their Babylonian  
Temples, crying for another paternity test;  
But, somehow, you didn't seem to mind,  
And they had set up carnival rides in the aisle  
Between the pews. Me and 3 young, but not  
Very nice kids, got on the Zipper and waited for  
The lady on the organs to start us up  
While I tried to make eyes  
With the farmer's daughter, and after that ride  
Was done I played my Sega Dreamcast while  
The old bald preacher did his job—Near the end we  
All went out, but you weren't there at my side,  
The uncertain short thing that used to anchor  
Against me, you who gave me balanced purpose.  
They said there was a gas leak in the church  
And reporters came—One wanted to interview me  
Because I look good from a certain distance, but  
As he got closer he kind of just gave up and walked away—  
I went back into the church to find you,  
Miss Chinese Water Torture  
But the important religious people, well dressed but not  
Altogether bright, pushed me out, saying it was  
Going to blow, but then I saw you coming  
Toward me in the darkness of the walk— I asked you

Where you'd been and, breathlessly,  
You said it'd been great—  
You'd just traveled 5 states in  
Twenty minutes to inform the authorities,  
And look, for just then did not the firemen arrive  
In great red screaming trucks, leaping forth with much pomp  
And impressive hoses, their heroic instruments—  
You saved our church, Miss Chinese Water Torture,  
With Justin who drove you; you said  
He was a nice guy and asked me what I  
Wanted to do now as we began to walk under  
The soft streetlights down the sidewalk towards my old truck.  
I wanted to go home and sleep a little  
With you before I woke up, but there on  
A gentle hill covered by grass,  
part of the church's landscaping, you'd stooped to  
smile and talk with a pale faced kid with long  
dark hair and thick glasses—  
And you staid with him there, Miss Chinese  
Water Torture— You didn't come with me  
As I awoke to work, but your ghost rides near  
Me still, leaving me thinking I must  
Have done to you something awful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Miss Meadows

If I can knock the dust of that flint rock,  
I'll be the man who gets the pick of  
The girls:  
Hey-ho surely, surely now,  
So says Miss Meadows;  
And if I can kick my legs up behind my ears;  
And lick the same spot,  
While I'll be the man who gets his  
Flirtation's will, surely  
Down at Miss Meadow's:  
Hey-ho surely, surely now,  
So says Miss Meadows:  
And If I can carry my house atop my back  
In and out of the cerulean pools; and it ain't  
No shack, nor no simple rickshaw,  
While I'll be the man who dandles in her  
Auburn curls:  
Hey-ho surely, surely now,  
So says Miss Meadows;  
And speaking of cars, why if mine's a real beauty  
So red and so sleek to steal the eyes of  
Some beauty,  
While I'll be the man, won't I, surely  
So says Miss Meadows:  
Hey-ho surely, sure now: who steals what he  
Feels and houses with pearls,  
Or at least with a girl whose beauty he desires,  
And so hangs her with the stars in the sky  
With fine chicken-wire:  
Hey-ho surely, surely now,  
So sings Miss Meadows

Robert Rorabeck



# Missed The Matinee

The satellites are not out yet,  
And I can't hardly spell: My mothers  
In phoenix,  
And she is in another world-  
If I photographed her, you might be  
Surprised, but it would just be another  
Tourism- It would hardly do- The  
Letters in stone,  
The stones on the grass, the grass is  
Mowed; the wind shifts lightly through  
The cut blue grass, the ants kneel  
And pray in extended expedition,  
and through the upraised boughs  
An airplane leaps yet through the failing sky:  
So many legs and hearts on that trip,  
Two for each,  
Some touching,  
Some sharpening one another;  
the sky is a newly eaten shell,  
Like the world converted on the other side  
Of the canal,  
Cultivated and fertilized and romanced:  
Still frighteningly beautiful when it is emptied:  
As if I were yet a boy folding airplanes,  
The ceiling fans chained in operatics,  
Speaking domesticated Latin and the  
Stray car driving every so often  
through the well choreographed  
Ululations of that nostalgic suburbia,  
Not knowing that every other thing out there was  
Tipped in poison;  
And that is why the chameleons steadily change,  
The girl kisses the boy in matching uniform,  
The toys rest with fleas;  
They close their chapter books and handily walk  
In doors: My sisters fight on the green rug  
In front of the filibustering television. Mom and dad arrive  
Home with a bucket of fried chicken,  
Exhausted and apologizing that they should

Have missed the matinee.

Robert Rorabeck

# Missinformed Waterfalls

Luminescent moons braid  
The slope of her neck  
Where deer lay trapped in man-eating  
Thickets  
Where she keeps the slaves of her love  
As the day awakens upon her  
Glory  
And new pilots fly toward the  
Missinformed waterfalls of her insincere  
Felicitations.

Robert Rorabeck

# Missouri

Encourage me again to keep drinking,  
To take the interstating highway up past cloud  
Cover,  
Where the wind is cutting pure dreams,  
And all of this unhealthy resin I'm still squeezing  
Out of high school:  
Now, without having to say anything, my lips are  
Exhausted, and cars are learning how to fly into  
Other states,  
And nobody understands me but the sad flowers  
Bundled together like tinselled f%gs  
So high up even the skyscrapers feel like children:  
And where is Diana now,  
Keeping what harem in this kind of night:  
Can she feel me bedecking her, the first great poet of  
This next depression:  
Can she feel me doing my thing in bed next door  
To my parents, carrying her flag of obnoxious colors:  
Imaging her perfumes matriculating out of that  
Lunch wagon, that she had been married once  
In Columbia,  
That she has a young daughter with the same Cherokee  
Hair  
Who knows nothing but the leaking faucets of laughter  
In a world cartoons;  
And I want to give the little darling a rose to give to  
Her mother, while the wind blows the sky blue,  
And I am so glad I didn't have to stay in Missouri.

Robert Rorabeck

# Misspelled Quinceanera

I polished my floors while I thought of you  
Tonight,  
Alma:  
And I did my very best: I drove by your house, but your  
Car was gone:  
Maybe you went like the tail end of a rainbow back to  
Mexico,  
But I have no fear that I cannot save you,  
Alma: you are all of my art now, darling butterfly, mariposa;  
And I only know so many Spanish words for  
Savior,  
But you can save me, and we can both fish on the night warden's  
Boat together,  
We can laugh with fat Anibal: I can brush your hair and  
Ask your to trust me while your sister has her  
Quinceanera that I can't even spell;  
And then the night floods and I have a hard time remembering  
The meaning of my pledges to you,  
While I wonder if you smell the same for him as you do to  
Me,  
But I will never accuse you of being a witch:  
I will always mistake you as being a flower, and I can save  
You and your children and I can take you away:  
Far, far away- the very same as the airplanes who are always leaping  
So far above and away from me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Misspelling Vacuum, Hypnotising Chickens

Marshaled into a resemblance of a plan,  
Writing novels too thick and bulbous to understand-  
Help me do twelve hours of manual labor;  
Help me break my lease and misspell vacuum.  
Stare at me across the spitfire ballroom,  
Ignoring my flaws, casting them into the dust with  
Rattlesnakes and empty hotdog rappers in the  
Baseball bleachers- drink slow gin fizz with me  
In Oregon, let me feed and hold and hypnotize  
Your favorite chicken,  
Or leave me now cavalier and roller-skate to your  
Dinner dates with better friends, tip glasses in the  
Bright, flower bound garden where nothing is evil,  
And there is no enmity or even garden snakes-  
Go off to your careers and get rich,  
And I will linger in the place where you've forgotten  
Smelling your perfumes, committing them to memory  
So that I could follow you anywhere I so wished,  
But you shall never see me again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mistaken

Oh, this liquor dies until the horses are only  
Skeletons  
In the desert; and you know they are; and they are no  
More heroes than  
Cowboys,  
The rest stops are haunted with all the old loves  
Who are bearing their children  
Up to the porcelain wash basins before  
The mirrors,  
The mirrors; and I get erections in the mowed grass  
Green on holidays of  
Truancy,  
Combed back to the ruby birthstones of the open  
Throats of lions;  
And nothing about this home owner's association is  
Very fair;  
And even going to the hospital, I have very little time  
To perceive that I cannot live forever,  
And so I would like to enter her unprotected and make  
Love to her just like  
My grandfather delivering love letters  
While the clouds could be anyone, and that is their special  
Agreement;  
And maybe that is how the house found her laying out or  
Even fawning in the day gone hours,  
Candles dripping tallow perpetually on her aching breasts,  
On her aching breasts who rose a slight way under  
The shadows of the settling sun,  
But if I ever thought that was for me, then I must have been  
Mistaken.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mistaken For Beautiful Children

Marionettes mistaken for beautiful children—  
Or vice versa—you know what I mean—  
I am getting drunk as my mother is coming home:  
I cannot remember when she first took  
Me to the library  
But no one else cares, so it is okay—  
My father's horses do not care,  
And my last and best muse does not read my poems,  
So she will never find out,  
How the airplanes came down and fought over  
Brushing her hair—  
But I continuing buying books she refuses to read—  
And her children keep on getting taller and less  
Educated—  
And the moon is so far away it seems to have  
Vanished—  
Like the plans of the peeping tom in the bushes—  
And yet the busses still do turn around,  
Yellow and subtle and made to  
Dance repeatedly—  
The yellow, slender bodies of each cadaverous  
Butterfly breathing and breathing,  
As they hijack  
And masturbate all of the flowers,  
As I wonder if the store is still open,  
And if my wife will ever go to sleep:  
Will she ever go to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck



# Mistaken For Her

What you can't understand of this they will  
Teach you in the science fair;  
And there is a Nubian whose I am particularly interested in  
Named Melody with a star on her hip the  
Same color as Alma's hair;  
And I go to sleep in those dreams where I don't care,  
Cradled by an octopus, all I've ever worshipped is  
Your legs pressed like a mariposa between the pages  
Of my book,  
Captured and dried on a fire that drinks the pores of coral:  
And now I can almost taste her, as she is coming back into the  
Neighborhood; and she has everything glossed  
From a long day at school; and now all she wants is to bath  
Naked in the opulence of my grotto,  
The eclipses of my eyes engorging, as she drifts away beneath all  
Of those airplanes served by leggy stewardesses who I am  
Sure could easily be mistaken for her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mistakes

In the morning I make mistakes,  
As the liquor rums off, forget to deliver for her,  
Whoever she is: Safa tells me his dreams,  
And I start fantasizing about tomboy scientists.  
I pay Nancy and drink her coffee,  
And the light, as it always does, is in a mote pooling  
On Pedro. He's sleeping in later, afraid to speak the  
Tongue of the country which employs him, his little  
Macho hands, the beating heart which has traveled so  
Far it seems to have gone into another world entirely:  
His mother cancerous and distant, his father scarred  
On cheek and chin, like my own father, can no longer  
Speak to, like his own father, but love indefinitely,  
As I wait, asking for forgiveness, and the ululations  
Of a sycophantic phone call, which must tell me what  
To do.

Robert Rorabeck

# Misty Fingerprints

So, you said, everyday goes around like this,  
Like a rink of rented skates and cusped hands  
And floating lights,  
Heaven on Earth, and keys and rock candy,  
And across congress airplanes where my mother is  
Taking lessons,  
Turning around in figures of infinity, going on by herself:  
Just a tiny picture in an infinite mirror  
Where all the animals see themselves;  
And palmettos spray- and sweat inching like apple-snails  
Down the coppery calves of working girls,  
And overpasses where their kind of rich belong,  
Shading flea-markets irritating the dilapidated earth;  
And you can go north or south from here,  
But there will forever be so many cars telling this way  
Or that, and the distant sounds of frightened horses  
Confusing seismologists with their soft manes and love-  
Letters, a lullaby for the earth and all of its fossils,  
The gray meats which sometimes contain the silhouettes  
Of hummingbirds,  
Just a blur in the rocky strata, the absence of polished  
Birthstones, un-mined by shoppers on blissful holidays,  
Paintings on a cave,  
Misty fingerprints on a phone that never stops ringing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mobile Of Rum

Mobile of rum—this is how sleep comes on  
A Monday night  
Listening to the trucks and the disappearing shadows:  
The children will get up from  
Their beds in Mexico and dream of marionettes and  
Ride the trains to find her—  
Her parents who have fled to pick from the orchards  
Of America—  
And they following them like the wet afterbirth,  
And the ashes of fireworks  
Leading up the hills where the foxes sleep in either  
The sunlight or the snowdrifts—  
Into the churches where there are wounds in the blue windows  
Looking out onto the campus I disappeared from  
Fifteen years ago  
As my father enjoys riding bicycles in Michigan—and my  
Mother follows him:  
And my mother follows him.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mobiles Of Legs And Breasts

Even the rain clouds have shoulder blades.  
They flex and sweat over the city of simulacrum  
Who draw the pictures on the streets of  
The latchkey children who also live there  
Who smoke cigarettes at communal pools hunted  
By the ghosts of housewives and electronic  
Reindeer that only know one of two dances,  
Like the haunted echoes of the creators hand  
And mobiles of legs and breasts  
That dance and fawn across the avenue, and like venison  
Cast their shadows in the water without return.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mockery Of Kissing Salt

So much poetry in the battalion  
Until we had to go inside  
And play cards,  
And make a mockery of kissing salt  
While it rained  
And the beanstalks grew: and I closed  
My eyes and imagined  
The prettier girls in my classroom,  
Like caged birds singing to  
The hooded cobras, singing at the lips  
Of the mine that would eventually birth  
Their wedding rings-  
As I slumbered outside for many of the morning  
Hours,  
But eventually collected myself of this  
And went, again, indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mom, I Am A Good Guy

Mom,  
I'm a little bit tipsy,  
But I'm a good guy,  
Mom.

I'm a good guy, mother.

Do you finally understand what I am telling you  
Or do you still not understand?

Robert Rorabeck

# Moment Of Daylight

With dragons almost the same color as  
Your eyes—I cannot languish here:  
Those suckers want war and death,  
They come from bright houses  
But without any chimneys—  
Getting up, the sun reminds them of  
Their gold that was stolen  
Almost seemingly from the sky—  
This is why they are done laughing, smoking  
From their nostrils—with eyes the  
Nuptial coals the same property as  
Alligators—  
I think they will team up to the stars—  
Evaporations of great rivers -  
Evolving, they will come to think the heavens  
Made of thieves—every moment of daylight  
A golden baton passed across the world  
Through the breath that must belong to them.

Robert Rorabeck



# Moment's Breath

My wife doesn't  
Know how to  
Write a poem-  
But we lie  
together  
On the beach-  
the sky like the  
Womb of  
An angel-  
The favorite color of  
A stewardess-  
and our child-  
somewhere in the  
Grotto  
Like a dolphine sleeping beneath  
Her ribs-  
metamorphosis  
underneath her  
heart-  
airplanes sleepwalkers  
in the sky  
each wave a moment's breath.

Robert Rorabeck

# Momma

I couldn't give another thing to this or you,  
Without rum, I wouldn't read poems out loud, or  
Drive skipping into the poesies of the just:  
I might just sit and drool in the chintzy corrugations  
Of some trailer park: In two weeks, I've made  
\$100,000 off these fools, and admired the tawny  
Busts of mothers and daughters in matching sets,  
High-heeled China dolls newly made and getting paid for;  
Such is the thing, the swing they give; they don't  
Even know how they sing, or what they give to me, in little  
Ways, farting so tightly like the highest notes from the chin of  
A piccolo, walking to and from the whitish tent of the  
Christmas tree salesman: they are here, and so am I,  
Because they made it after school, and I am my father's son:  
I get the good spot under the sun, spinning pinwheels off my blistered  
Lips until my time is through: I can hardly look them in the eye;  
I don't tell them how big I am, or how many mountains I  
Have climbed: I either look good or like a fool, but everything  
Else is leaping away, and all of it is escaping. Once there was  
Only high school, as white as porcelain or an unhatched egg;  
I talked to her in the echoes heated from the courtyard, until  
It was time for class, and the far-away sway of mind into more  
Hypnotic gardens- Afterward, the yards were green and well-mowed  
Like constabed boards of absent professionals, and I took their  
Daughters by the neck and said into them like empty vases, until  
They were filled up and valuable and soon well placed. Then  
I laid across them, sprawling with my checkered knapsack and  
Pinafores, and pretended to know about sports, and the manipulations  
Of weather; and it was so humid, it was like French-kissing her or  
Serving her the way they do it in places just underground, by those  
Ancient things just hidden by the sheerest fabric, easily unhooded and  
Set to rhyme schemes by rhythmic tongues, or so the rum had told  
Me, making me speak thus, momma.

Robert Rorabeck

# Monarch

I am a Monarch.  
Try to eat me and I will poison you.  
You see, my love, I was once without  
Wings,  
And I crawled on your shoulder  
As you tanned and kissed his mouth,  
Good boy- When at home,  
In between the cypress and the jars  
Of marmalade you made out of  
Your tears and spit, didn't you  
Lift me past the tiles of the shower,  
And in the mothy corner I cocooned,  
And you sang to me in perfect acoustics,  
Lathered and stretched,  
And your flowers oh so budded.  
Foul mouthed, you used a dictionary  
To describe the things you wanted done  
To you, and I waited, and you waited.  
When I came out, your were dating,  
And I flew over your books and hydrangeas,  
And wept insouciant vapors, and made  
Spontaneous love to a wind-chime.  
You saw me there relaxing, but I fluttered  
Out of reach as you opened your blouse  
And showed me where to place myself,  
But I could not, for I was yellow, and  
Made like my sisters and brothers into  
October, leaving for Mexico and the orgy  
Of the forests and cacti; When I come back to  
You, I will slip into your mouth and make  
You moan my name,  
And that will be the end of us,  
Two souls buried in a beautiful grave,  
And news of heirlooms metamorphosing underground,  
The whispers of a promise I give to you,  
My caustic anonymity folded in-between yours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Monsoon's Blue Operators

Rain lays jubilation upon these hills,  
Lays down like sated fauns in indescribable clefts,  
And the bellies of Amazons who have sunken single breasted  
Into the panting grottos;  
In what ways they make pattering love, I cannot  
Describe, except for out my windows, and from my  
Doors, the rain is wetting the high-heeled pines as  
Women in open showers, great sororities dimly cleaned,  
And each one immobile from their relationship with  
The downpouring storm, raise their green arms upwards,  
Hands in great palming display, as the fettered clouds  
Blockade the last of a feverish light, and let the skies  
Play down against their statuesque spines,  
Say now that they shall not move from his slathering spits,  
Say that they should live beyond this cloudy centennial,  
Where the rumors of spiteful fire are shushed,  
And even rattlesnakes are tapped into a kind of poisonous  
Slumber, as the rains gather and ruin the cheeks of the  
Swaybacked hills, the inky mascaras dying the micas  
And the uncleaned jewels which hide in petrified clutches,  
As the rains try furtively to hatch what doesn't call from  
The forest's webby and saturnine nest.

Robert Rorabeck

# Monuments As The Overpasses

Or the day is gone for dreaming of its labyrinth  
Again—spelled out in the recluses of its  
Fabled  
Estuaries and drinking fountains—  
And it looks so beautiful turning tail and  
Burning away:  
Over the sandy monuments as over the overpasses—  
Or don't you know—  
That this is my song—open throated,  
Giving fast balls over the trailer parks and the  
Swingsets—  
Dirty things—believing that the world can believe  
Without sound:  
Echoes here,  
Beside the tangling vines that never had to find  
Themselves anywhere else with child—  
My cousin pregnant on an abandoned couch and  
All of the heroes gone off to fight dragons that do not  
Exist—  
She is lactating up in the rafters of spacecraft:  
And this is supposed to be beautiful—beautiful- but how  
Will you ever know up inside a geode that  
Will never crack.....

Robert Rorabeck

# Moonbeams Over Her Sleeping Children

There were moonbeams over her sleeping children  
Yes it does,  
While they slept and the less angelical angels  
Played baseball,  
And the other answers didn't move from  
Where they were sleeping—  
These words that accord to their own  
Negligents and the other answers of  
Their otherwise high schools—  
While I then I saw you there—who you really were,  
Marionette on the tight rope of a bildungsroman—  
And other words that took off over the cypress  
Swamps like bottle rockets—  
And places where we touched ourselves and  
Our faces—in the boudoir, in the white morning—  
Angels and cheerleaders coming to town—  
As white as satin and as unsullied—  
If this place happened to exist, while you were  
Turned away, and too afraid to turn back to town.

Robert Rorabeck

# Moondust

Tourists on the moon  
Go to take pictures of a sky always cloudless—  
They notice there are no houses on the moon  
And no pools to swim in.  
Rather, instead, everyone goes slowly on  
The moon, like lazy Ferris wheels,  
The earliest hopes that would easily die in thicker atmospheres;  
Their hearts  
Are so light for a little while,  
But even stepping as they do, like butterflies  
Try to learn to walk, they soon grow morose  
Looking with powerful binoculars down to  
Their far away counterparts down  
On the blue earth;  
They feel like they have become ghosts—  
And they are quickly bored,  
Because there on the moon there is  
Nothing yet to do, but to stare into space  
Which really is nothing, anyway—  
The moon might be beautiful to look at,  
They say, but like a wild horse, it is dangerous  
And boring....  
There are no shopping malls on the moon,  
And there is always something to do  
In shopping malls....  
So they eagerly wait in fat queues for the shuttle  
To come back over and return them to earth—  
Already they are thinking about what's on TV,  
And they are hungry for fast food drive-throughs  
And pizza deliveries,  
And they don't even mind so much that there  
Are bills waiting for them, and taxes to be paid—  
That's all part of life, they say, and wonder  
Why they ever spent money to take this trip  
In the first place—  
There are always good things to do back on earth,  
The tourist think: there are always  
Horses to be bet on and ladies to get laid....  
So they go away from the moon in one mighty

Burst of petrol, floating flames...  
Leaving only the smell of their farts—

Then we come out, me and you and all  
The phosphorescent things which only live here  
And deep under the sea, the two places where  
They can be left alone, swimmingly—  
We are so glad they left,  
Me and you and our moon,  
And we take long waltzes in low gravity  
With the earth like a shimmering pearl  
In shallow water, winking just  
Over our shoulder—Down there,  
Where all the professionals busy about  
And in their downtime they are called tourists,  
But we will never be tourists,  
So how can we ever be professions,  
Being what we are being all the time....  
We take long walks on our moon which is  
A treeless park, and swim in the waterless pools,  
With the airy fish only we can see,  
And when we are finished we walk into a  
Home made of wisp and hope, that you  
Told me was there and I believed you,  
So we walked in together and lived....  
Living in this lonely space with the light  
Of the stars, we kiss each other breathlessly  
As we dance like ghosts in love  
Through the bits of moon-dust  
Shivering like torpid curtains that close  
At the end of a tragic play  
No one sticks around to see....

Robert Rorabeck



# Moonglows The River King

moonglows the river king  
Swathing the salamander's  
Saturated ululating.

I have brought the copper ring  
To hook for fishing;  
The mermaid is such a pretty thing  
Swimming with her ducky quislings.

Leaving autumn strands whisper,  
To my heart that all has gone migrating,  
While the bruised thistles crowd the  
Stalwart bridge,  
Leaping like a horned kidd butting his sister;

So green exits, leaves jamb the starless surface,  
And there isn't but a nibble,  
For those women who sleep like trees,  
Or nod like silken roots in the bathing tub  
Have joined a pomaded caravan of troubadours  
Now taking an exhausting route to the city,

Their tailpipes the careless smoke signals  
Of their hurried exegesis across the dry and ruddy hills,  
No longer to bring such whispers,  
Or sing thus sweetly, quobblings from their pale-ish gills.

Robert Rorabeck

# Moon's Shivers On Upset Water

The moon's shivers on upset  
Water as boats speed by  
Remind me of you getting  
Out of the shower  
In your aquarium  
Of my zoo—

East on Summit Blvd.  
Down past the public library  
Under the interstate's  
Dry and weedy overpass  
Near my childhood  
Is where I keep you—

I watch you through clear  
Glass at water level,  
As you layout like an  
Otter sunning on the concrete embankment  
Your perfection the only  
Thing which hides you—

I transgress work whenever I  
Can to swim with you,  
Though you keep your  
Distance and hardly speak  
With me except sometimes  
You say hello, then quickly  
Swim away—

I feed you chocolate  
And chicken sandwiches  
Three meals a day  
With the little pickle  
Slices you relish and eat  
Out of my fingers, though  
I still haven't tamed you—

When after the day's lights  
Dim, I turn on the black lights

Lining your pool, and  
We make love  
When I can catch you—

The midnight's audience looks  
Through the windows and  
Cries chemical tears on our  
Silhouettes,  
Because I cannot let you go—

So our contained lovemaking continues  
Though you would leave at anytime  
If I would let you swim away  
With the boats through the intercostals

You who remind of the moon's shivers  
On upset water.

Robert Rorabeck

## More And More

The cheek of each house side by side-  
Alluding to grandeurs of my neighborhood that the  
Stewardesses are so keen to skip over-  
Around the corners,  
The busy cats making love, nesting their litters in the  
Carpets of leaves backed up to the same fences  
They used to conceive;  
As across the street, one of the very same stewardesses  
Rests her golden head, as firemen and baseball players  
Come in the lunchtimes of the day  
For with her to bed: and I hear them over there,  
Roaring like a creature of two or more headed fire-  
Even once there was a fox, who turned his head against  
His paint brush tail,  
And we listened to her making more- and the airplanes  
Stopped, and more- and more.

Robert Rorabeck

## More Infatuation Than A Prize

Midway after everything else has gone:  
Taking you through an empty lot where enjeweled elephants  
Once trumpeted up to the sky,  
Foreboding of hurricanes—the Ferris Wheels turning,  
Long necked, seeing the herons flying into  
The long kneed nests of the everglades  
And every sort of traffic passing both up and down of  
Here:  
And your soft brown fingers and palms encrusted in my  
Ghostly wishes:  
Your children soft asleep, and even airplanes asleep  
In beds of tarmac—pilots and stewardesses asleep  
Inside of them  
Will metamorphose inside of morning into  
Things of business and of sex:  
And you are gone—leisure that was almost reel—  
Following your husband even though you do not love him,  
Abandoning thoughts of my—and the flower  
I have found—somehow still with roots—with more  
Infatuation than a prize.

Robert Rorabeck

# More Resplendent Than A Diamond Sky

Callisthenic monuments of another

Day's preening:

My mother comes home through fiberglass porticos

The way mermaids come home from

Finger painting:

The grottos of skyways the stewardesses ballrooms,

And I dream of her underneath the ceiling fan spinning in

My room;

And the cats sigh tirelessly, and the dogs curl up to

Their repossessed masters,

And the virgins are the size of ants on each blade of

Vermillion grass, as the hurricanes fill up their tankards:

Underneath where there are lords in the sky,

And even lordlier lords above them;

And I hang my head and sigh, as you go into your boarding

House with him,

And the apathetic-est of wind whispers its raucous lullaby,

And his fingers slide your loose skin off you

As you become even more resplendent than a diamond

Sky with your lordliest lord above you.

Robert Rorabeck

## More Than A Little Jealous

Asleep in the crypts of amber trauancies- perhaps  
Slipping as far as to be across the blue gills in the canals,  
And the uneven steps to so far away from her:  
And even closer:  
Eager limbering attempt a greater imperfection, unveiling  
Itself  
As a dependency of the state: Not even able to allude to  
Unicorns, while the airplanes are always right over their  
Pressing their  
Wings like amphibians on the job- the burning sugar cane  
Raising up its skirts,  
And saying something special and sincere into the cornfields  
Lollygagging far enough away to make me more than a  
Little jealous.

Robert Rorabeck

# More Than Enough

I now have so many pearls as to feel the rind of  
The table,  
And you know all about me: That I have a tattoo I got in  
Spain,  
And the bed is sprung like a trap laid for better men;  
But by April 29th I will have a house all paid. 2 miles from  
The lagoon I drenched in on Easter,  
And then called her name like a drenched coyote all the way  
Up to the hallucinatory heavens of airplanes  
And helicopters;  
And I have then jogged and been ridden back and forth again  
To the store;  
And I have howled out my pains like a fox in a story book,  
Wanting its muzzle to suckle on the tits of those grapes,  
As it were an ape and all of this was a cartoon;  
But, really all it wanted was more liquor, and today or yesterday  
Was Easter, or someday soon I will find the woman who loves  
Me, and she will fit perfectly, or I will buy her and make her fit:  
And this is just it,  
And she is my muse, all bruised and pugilistic; and the night continued  
On, airconditioned and twenty thousand feet across the sweltering lawn:  
And the women in their high heels had nothing to prove,  
Because they also had their captains who were fast and fleet,  
And they continued on over the veneer of so many mountains,  
Who sprung like the pointy tips of fountains,  
Until we were all famished, like a box of pearlescent fables,  
Waiting with our mouths hungry until she sure enough  
Gave us more than enough of something to eat.

Robert Rorabeck



# Mortal Lines

Filled up with longing but unprepared,  
The preschooler weaves a scribbled web of  
Tongueless alphabet anew-  
The day swims like a heady swan around  
A lake of sherbet carpet,  
And on fieldtrips to the swings there is  
A thermos of chick noodle soup which  
Makes him sick,  
But at the art museum there are murals of  
Unfamiliar mothers with thrilling bosoms  
Undressed for various courses,  
And unexplainably he delays until scolded,  
For one should not tarry too long especially  
On lines which cannot be reasoned with,  
Those shouted out to confront loneliness,  
To remember the sea, and to call her to him.  
Though she doesn't come,  
And these few words are still young and unwounded,  
And should be put to sleep or at least to bed,  
Before they get too tiresome,  
And ahead of themselves on a darkest freeway  
Realizing at the second of impact they are not immortal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Most Beautiful Of Things

Cracks in the unobserving face of a geode  
Who knows what lies beneath:  
The special indulgences of Christmas and on her  
Birthdays,  
With the satellites milking down, more or  
Less;  
And then the pittance of age old relatives commuting  
Across the highways and the lawns,  
While my own body burns with yours,  
While kittens get stuck with the insects high up in  
The trees,  
And there is no hope for them because all of the  
Firemen are all off;  
And the forests sit forever, leafless, and still yet  
Like bouquets of silver,  
In the comely saddles of the mountains where  
Some politicians I don't know re-released the bobcats  
And the wolves,  
Or the mountains themselves just as you were  
Crossing over from Mexico yourself, Alma: an endangered  
Species yet spaciouly populous  
Come to clean our houses and tidy our lawns,  
While the meteorites made room for birthdays,  
Sweeping clean a bedroom for a place to lie you beside my  
Soul that I now find was always waiting  
For just this rightly illegal and most beautiful of things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Most Sincere Coats Of Early Morning Graveyards

I still rise up from the wildflowers in their  
Make believe graveyards, and I am still burning:  
My legs may be still be warm on the trunks  
Of the graveyard of your fairytales,  
And the daylight looms like the bright trunks of  
Pixie tales,  
And all of the bright fairies still come out of the eyes  
Of jack o' lanterns which bloom in the  
Crepuscule,  
The crepuscule of junkyards and I want to touch myself  
To the blooming Bellefontaine's of the Blackman's  
Junkyards-  
And I am all stretched and young like the placebo of  
Indian corn,  
And the police are circling themselves, circling themselves  
In junkyards, And what is Kelly doing but  
Touching herself, touching herself to the yardarms of  
Mismanaged accoutrements;  
And the day is still young and still special and I am yet  
Done touching myself,  
And my house still yet sit alone, and I imagine my dogs,  
And I want to pet their coats again before they have to  
Go down again ventriling once more into their  
Most sincere coats of early morning graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Most Unnecessary Of Things

The mountains have no names that they have  
Given to themselves,  
But at least I have never made love to any of my cousins;  
And that is exactly what Alma told me the last time  
We were in bed,  
Last Friday morning, turning into me and moaning with  
Her brown summers,  
While I was sure that somewhere above us some airplanes  
We turning around, or at least  
Advertising:  
And there were windmills and cartoons,  
But there she was, summering my bed with the warmth  
That even the angels don't have;  
And I am sorry that I haven't provided her with any individual  
Stanzas,  
But this again is for her, even after she has gone home,  
And is sleeping with someone else, even if they aren't  
Making love,  
The horse is still cantering doggedly towards the summit,  
Mad beyond words because some reintroduced wolves have  
Eaten her foals again without her consent;  
And some man's hands turns up the volume again on the news,  
As the hot air balloons are rising:  
They are trying to stretch their luck to the moon,  
Who is laughing gibbously at them, waiting for the world to turn  
Away again, to leave their dreams stranded somewhere mid summit  
In the beautiful harems of aspens  
Whose pale skin blushes at the reintroduction of all of these  
Otherwise most unnecessary of things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Most Wonderfulness Of Because

And now it is at its summit,  
And you are here; while I will finally be casting away,  
And sleeping;  
While my thoughts of you will become ribbons and they  
Will flow through your sisters' hair and maybe it will be  
That maybe as of yet they will never make it  
Home,  
But given enough breath and wishes, they will always have pretty  
Yards to come up to and be petted;  
And their heads will bask in the unions of daylight while  
Their forefathers turn tricks in the lush amphitheatres  
Of their fountains;  
And thus, turning down like beds, they will become  
The ripe old exegesis which I am sure that you always thought you  
Knew; and this is the way that it always happened in which  
You thought you was;  
And so the long night yawned, cracked opened its geode,  
And showed unto you especially the special ness of its  
Most wonderfulness of because.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mostly Better Paradise

Girls come in and out of the world  
And their cars. Rain is forecasted for this evening:  
The tent breathes like an angelic lung spread across  
This field of green the cops and robbers leap across.  
I cannot escape from my scars, or the dreams I  
Have of my dog far away: but I have no more cares,  
And little hopes like a toy parade a little boy proceeds  
With his fingers across the car port: some book is  
Open at his side, like a gun,  
Or a tomahawk of an Indian war chief in brightly  
Feathered dress; a water drum of pennies  
Is overturned and Lincoln is busted and zink:  
For Christmas three saints will count all their money and  
Their cures and then stand as still and still as plastic  
Yard ornaments while the sprinklers French kiss their  
Bodies in very clean mastication, the bucolic reservoirs  
Which spread like the five and dime women once they  
Leave their places of rest, and fan out over this fair city,  
Like a chain-smoking chorus line,  
Led by their bee-stung busts and their puckered lips into  
a mostly better paradise.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mother Of Bones

Even in February  
Young things are dying  
Alone, as the snow increases  
And the pine trees snap  
From her unforgiving kiss:  
I am here  
Though no longer I am:  
This is the shadow which  
Swallowed the world,  
Her dangerous dress  
Inlaid with stars  
And all the animals of the sea.  
I am trapped in its movement,  
Though there is not  
Enough time to escape,  
A kind of dancing tomb  
The impermanency of flowers  
Beneath the increasing forest,  
And not a soul around  
To come to me,  
And toss a tear for my extinction  
Cradled in the lap of  
The mother of bones.

Robert Rorabeck

## Mother....

I am nothing, nothing,  
And the bloom is broken.....  
She has forgotten to check the locks,  
And the monster is loose....

I am no more,  
As he takes her with his will....  
I am no more,  
As my mother told me  
The publisher was a lie,  
An easy meal for the tiger,  
The fanged stranger jumping on the shore....

Maybe it would be easier as a homosexual,  
And more translucent as a nun;  
The trouble-free men take her in the space  
Of commercials,  
Taste her like an effortless meal....

But I love her, mother,  
And I am the only one,  
Though don't tell father,  
Or he'll eat me, the flatulent bear....  
He'll eat me, and then eat another....

There are strange men doing her as  
They are able,  
The dime-store strangers with perfect teeth.....,  
But they will soon decay, mother,  
Their tomb-stones facing east....

Even after death has eaten me, mother,  
Even after it has cleaned my face,  
I will still love upon her, mother,  
The hiccupping possibilities  
In her womb....

I will still love her mother,



Even as you come out of the still  
Young door, mother,  
And harp up to the blooming storm...

Can you taste the hyathines,  
Blooming in red on the front corner of the rented lawn;  
They are a part of the unremembered, mother;  
And already gone before the rented dawn,

But I love her still, mother,  
Even though I no longer recall who I am,  
The airliner is taking off, mother,  
And I have to go now  
Unto her....

Erin, in that translucent storm:  
My face is a hideous mask of Greek tragedy, mother:  
But I love her this day,

And the next....  
Though that is all I am.....  
That is all there is,  
The supposition of the beautiful clairvoyant,  
The breaking of the luxurious waves  
Over to the exorbitant real-estate....

I cannot afford her, mother,  
Where I am,  
But I will write her again in these few words,  
Before the finish line mother,  
Where I have lost,

The triumphant men took her,  
Mother,  
And I don't have time to recoil, mother,  
Though, do you suppose,  
She is looking at us strangely, mother?

As if she might love us,  
Together, for a little while....  
Before un-relaxing Pentecost, mother....  
She put us in the zoo,

For all the children to see,

And I cannot recall her name, mother,  
Though, unfortunately, mother....  
She is standing beside the door, mother,  
And I must let her in....

Before she knocks....

Robert Rorabeck

# Mother's Milk

Mother's milk on the shelf of the  
Convenient convenient store- lilac and  
Lilac and goat tit,  
And homeopath- and but oh, these cars don't  
Care- the heady chariots in the vast jungle  
Metropolis,  
Disney World mice I hope to return the respect of,  
And use the conundrum of sunburned aphorisms;  
It's all some kind of backyard science,  
The way her eyes look when she is unshelled and  
Collapsed like a weary flag on her couch,  
On her divan;  
And the ceiling fan just does its job,  
Wacking and chopping at the pesky angels and  
Dust bunnies,  
While the general of the little boy's fingertips sends  
Fighter jets into the gyring mother,  
Because he loves her, and he hates her,  
And he wishes to explore, while she is really passed  
Out on the floor, like a two time areola ed puddle  
Under the regularly harsh light of the television's muddle,  
And the traffic goes back and forth,  
Back and forth like chicken-minded angels  
With very little reason or convenience to explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mount Escuidilla

Words on the cherry trees  
bring out the eyes  
of the mountain lions  
who strut prehistorically  
through the fire sewn  
aspen groves on the back  
of the Buffalo Mountain,  
Escuidilla, a high lady  
of rocks rises nakedly  
from the white Arizona  
plane of blistering sun  
and sadistic desert cactus  
where once the conquistadors  
passed her in a trail of  
glinting armor ants to the  
city of gold the city of their  
bloody bone meal  
watched by the lady Escuidilla  
laying naked on her couch of  
the world the mother of earth  
waiting centuries surpassing wars  
and evolution coming alive  
in different fires being riddled  
by grizzly bears and their nastier  
ancestors and ridden by  
mountain lions, lumberjack  
beavers and madmen who  
talked to the stones of her skin  
through this time she waited  
for me  
I am hers and in  
seasons I move on her  
every week up to the  
ranger tower, the tiara  
bejeweling her 11,000 ft. head  
so she may pollinate  
me and I can go home  
impregnated with  
mountain wisdom

my legs burning as I  
think about her pretty  
skin and the august  
in heat coyote that followed  
after me howling like  
Picasso after my hiking legs  
wishing to have sex with  
me or my dogs, until I  
threw bits of her flesh at  
it, I would not be  
unfaithful to her, though  
she may take on many  
other seasonal lovers  
none, not even the reoccurring  
forest rangers and  
firewatchers, are as  
forever constant and faithful  
to her as I am  
I'm her #1 love with  
my lungs and all my bits  
are a sauce for her, and  
my smell drives her  
trees and meadows wild  
I know every bit of her  
trails and I can break  
down our love making into  
parts from the aspen forest  
around her snow white legs  
to the hill side up her powerful  
flanks to the open meadow  
around her stomach to  
the dark and ample wood  
of her breasts and finally to her  
majestic head I listen to every  
part of her panting and moving  
as we have sex over the course  
of an at least 2 hour session  
on average, as I go back down  
her she rises and heaves and her  
winds moan the words of her  
pleasure as her woods tingle  
with my footsteps

and when its over  
like a true lover  
she silently releases me  
and I drive my truck  
off her knowing that I will  
return again in spring, summer  
fall and winter  
I've been with her on  
Christmas morning  
with a 65 lb pack  
and her soft snows licking  
up past my knees, she's  
given me her frostbite mark  
I've scrambled on her,  
become lost in her woods,  
laid and read books on her  
ejaculated in hidden wooded  
groves into her naked, I've  
scrambled up the hidden rock slopes  
on her north face, I've  
searched like an Indian  
for her mythical ice caves, I came  
to her when my bad woman  
left me  
she is my good woman  
she is my only woman  
I've written novels about  
her, I've drunken the beads  
of her dewy sweat and listened  
to her breathing with my  
ear pressed to her heart  
and plucked her lashes of  
wildflowers I know her better  
than I've ever known any woman  
of the earth, better than the 14,000 ft  
Amazonian whores in Colorado I've  
given conjugal visits to when they  
were not blistering season, when  
they were in heat in season,  
and she's expecting me now  
she may take on many other lovers  
while I'm gone, but this is just

her way,  
she accepts everyone on to her,  
she's not a murdering mountainess  
like some of the Himalayan women are,  
and she hungers above all for me  
and the feel of my bones on her  
earth as the wind takes her  
clothes off and I am enveloped in her  
atmosphere her breath the pollinated  
gravity she pulls  
me to her  
as she lies bare naked  
and hauntingly beautiful under  
the star bejeweled plane of celestial  
spheres  
the Arizona sky  
where the moon hangs down  
engorged a full stomach  
ready close to have a look at  
her flawless pretty face  
she is the one I travel to  
she is the one perfected by  
time  
where she looks she can see  
far off Mexico ancient human  
sacrifice towering over Aztecan  
death pyramids  
the death of all dinosaurs  
the ice age  
and she will stand still  
when one day the humans  
recede into caves  
like a vampire she will  
always remember my love  
and feel my rotting coffin  
with her mineral veins  
when I am buried  
in the earth near her  
feet  
this, my constant love  
my rockslide of passion  
my Arizona Mountain Queen

Mount Esquidilla

Robert Rorabeck



# Mountaineers

Those of us who survived,  
Who were not tied together,  
And so did not fall when the others fell,  
Passed through the keyhole of  
Little Bear Mountain,  
And upon the nape of her neck  
We scrambled until we had summited  
And looking down into the American Basin  
Filled with the indigenous pop stars  
And playboy suicides,  
We felt not unlike unsolicited Gods,  
Defying our literary agents,  
And in allegorical Marxism we  
Shared our peanut butter and jelly sandwiches  
And smelled the nectarined farts of angels,  
And drank the high oxygen air like wine,  
Before we crawled back down again,  
Like accountants not missing a single figure,  
And then to sleep in our individual cars,  
Celibate and clean the way patients  
Come to a hospital before an operation,  
But what the others thought I could not say,  
For we had already shared our dream  
And in the morning we soon dispersed,  
Going our separate ways like a  
Victorious football team.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mountains

Mountains are as sure of themselves as I am of  
You,  
And now I am hitting the bottle hard Alma,  
The serpents sleep in the folds of a rainbow left  
Like foundlings by the short-  
Tempered clouds;  
And it all seems like a miracle, and the angels snow:  
My throat burns,  
And I've been hanging my toes and watching as  
The fires burn down from the stars:  
It seems as if they are always having so many  
Birthdays up there,  
And they don't even know who they are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mountains Of My Adolescent Playgrounds

I cannot believe that you are here—but my  
Arms and my legs are here,  
And my wife is sleeping beside me—  
And all of this must have been something of  
Your ethereal amusement,  
Or other words I cannot describe—  
While my parents are guests sleeping in  
My house,  
And I have been chosen to be haunted once  
Again by these liquors  
Just so I could write to you tonight and  
Go to school tomorrow cheerfully—Not a thing  
In this—not poetry—  
Only a fieldtrip of the soul—and not to a beautiful  
Place—just some halfhearted amusement so  
Clumsily put together so to be somewhat  
Dangerous—but enough of this vainglorious  
Business—my one good grandmother is dead,  
But you already know that—  
As the fire burned down our mountain some years  
Ago—I will awaken again tomorrow—  
And strut out beneath the graveyards and  
Swing-sets wherever I am—  
To speak to the lost spirits panhandling the roads—  
For there remains a song in my heart,  
Or a spear in my side—  
And there is a yet a movie theatre to venture into  
With your name on it—smelling of the perfumes  
Of abducted cheerleaders underneath the snowcapped  
Mountains of my adolescent playgrounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mountains Of Other, Sadder Days

Every day the earthquakes and girls ride  
Horses,  
And look great:  
And they go leaping over vermilion hedges,  
And it feels so good to them  
While Sharon puts her hands in the wet clay  
And the world spins:  
The gators win, and Erin drinks from the combed  
Vespers,  
The spirits who don't need oxygen to smile,  
And I would like to sit for awhile underneath her  
Insouciant bust,  
And curse her brown beauty which should have  
Been beautiful enough for the both of  
Us:  
Our cars and our children, our house and the dogs,  
The blue carport with the ululating frogs,  
The electric immortality shockingly accorded  
To the washing machine:  
I wanted to love her and gather grand teddy bears  
From the trash bins to duct tape to  
Give to our homeless children,  
But she couldn't understand how to feel the same,  
And she left me alone on the roadside which  
Lead far the other way across the mountains  
And mountains of other, sadder days.

Robert Rorabeck

# Movie

You work in a beautiful office underneath the stars:  
Only so many generations have gone before you,  
And before them the dinosaurs:  
And even though the days of the earth are young,  
I have kissed your lips and  
Tasted your tongue—and not even roses can describe you—  
The parks are vanishing,  
The earth rises in metamorphosis,  
And I have to pay to  
Go see a movie—even though you are not here:  
Very soon, even those will vanish—  
And all that we love disappear.

Robert Rorabeck

# Movie Theatre For Those Wounds Of The Heart

Fibrous tremulations amongst the cowslips;  
Yellow and gold, hair of girls fanning summer banners  
As the foreground for scavenging birds:  
The lactant eye of lapis lazuli,  
Tremorous hallucination of a daytime queen:  
Out in the summer cove,  
Hidden besides where the traffic rushes beckoning-  
Naked, jubilant and impercievable-  
The pronunciation of a wild sex on a feral tongue,  
Ringed by boys and girls who know nothing of preschool,  
Areolaed, wimpled- caesuras cerulean,  
Banners of the naiads of water and sky:  
Where are you,  
But beside us: beautiful joy. We are blinded by our  
Work as we toil for diamonds:  
Blind men look into your house- escargot of a nubile affliction,  
A movie theatre for those wounds of the heart-  
The traffic doesn't remember you-  
But the wildlife goes leaping around you at all corners:  
A wildfire, a victorious flag strung and whipping upon  
Naked elbows,  
The opal vestibules- struck down in a garden of honey bees:  
A statuary of nude museums, a winsome apiary:  
There you are, I see you:  
Pullulating cenotaph amidst the cowslips,  
Wildflowers overflowed and bending at your napes  
And your body the crenulations that continue down the stream.

Robert Rorabeck

## Moving Closer To Dunsinane

Longing, seemingly meaningful compunctions  
Out in the middle of the working class lawn,  
Under old glory- Just little trinkets of brass the  
Ants sprinkle, no longer any use for revelry;  
And I am getting up, and I am drinking,  
And trying to get about, boned tendrils tremulous  
Before lunch, believing this isn't even my house,  
But a song I might be keeping for just a little while  
Before I go out and begin to lose my mind,  
As it floats up above the traffic of the salutary holiday,  
And up the hill of my footsteps compunctions,  
Past the topless bathers on the green, the horned readers,  
The superheroes and the ne'er-do-wells so darned busy  
With their studies or their lunching,  
The girls twin-flecked with just the choicest currencies,  
Like man-o-war, rich and stung- I will go up to  
The cemetery where a few of my relatives or therein buried,  
Under the cross and the plastic statue of the Virgin Mary;  
Here, even in the careless daylight it seems like a film noir,  
The careless daughters gunned down by their gangster fathers,  
And it is the perfect place to build a swing set and begin the  
Motions of a last minute lesson, though studied well,  
The censers of arch bishops, the incense of alligator pine:  
The legs kick out fretfully as if they might swim or fly,  
But neither am I fish or fowl, and soon in this weather I'll  
Be out of work, and the University wont even allow me to clean  
The caracoles and gum from the desks, but this is fine-  
A little wine, and a little bit of illegal pleasure, and the day  
Does swim, as each tree in the stunted forest knows, rooted,  
Swinging such Olympic arms- We are all moving closer  
To Dunsinane pleurably in our crypts,  
Gravity taking its luscious and impenetrable time,  
As the clouds make fables on the blue endless wall to  
Entertain.

Robert Rorabeck

## Moving The Wrong Way

Everyone's the prisoner of a mad king,  
I suppose:  
Picking their noses,  
Some more homely, hopscotching shadows-  
I'll steal out in the roses,  
Lay down in some narcoleptic poses,  
Neverminding the day gone traffic: It is gone,  
As your legs and curly limbs are gone-  
Wish they had followed the daubed hatchlings  
Down to the sea, and scattered away though  
Most were eaten by bilious lips  
Dining in clouds and sunshine-  
Now most of us gone asleep under the rusting  
Eaves, the air-condition droning:  
No sweet young dreams now, just schemes of  
Money - but oh how I would have liked to  
Have learned how to unfasten you bra,  
And then go out into streams of sunlight,  
Both of us running.

Robert Rorabeck



# Much More Beautiful Type Of Sin

If you can see through the window  
That I have been touching myself  
How can I go on after all my liquor and childhood  
Are gone;  
How can you not feel the hurricane of rum on  
My lips,  
How can you not love my pirate ships;  
And the Satans waxing poetic on my swings,  
All these little brilliant unbelieving things:  
Why couldn't you sit out with my in the backyard  
And watch the candles burn in their  
Reptilian skulls-  
Why did you have to love the more beautiful men,  
To become the echoes of your halls;  
And they really liked you, and you let them in,  
And thus become magnanimous to my  
Much more beautiful type of sin.

Robert Rorabeck

# Muffled By The Rain

Beautiful virgins tend to call up the dead  
From the mausoleums as foreplay for Halloween-  
So I come- What else am I to do,  
Happening with my scars and lightning bolt tattoos-  
Grey headed,  
Hoping to make love to a halfblooded Cherokee-  
I come and the virgin straddles me in her surplice- eyes of numb  
Hibiscus freshly picked from her sorority,  
And the tumbleweeds crawl across the lazing cowboys  
Like cart-wheeling brainwashed spiders, like dry and brittle fingers  
Fresh from the arid dryer;  
And they crawl as slow as synchronized mollusks, and the cowboys,  
Shaded by their dusty brims, eat poisoned apples to  
Atone for all their sins;  
And they laugh at us mewling there like stillborn kittens  
In the mausoleum beside the half-remembered carport  
Where the clothes are drying noisily;  
Where the suspicious machines are thumping,  
And she has called me out, the dead, to play around in the  
Gardens of blue stone and pain,  
And the puppies try to howl but they are muffled by the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Mulatto Children

How loudly the quietus barks,  
Diana: Liquored up, lighting up the woods,  
Our four legged body decorated by  
Penumbra-  
So far away the holocaust lamps of another sea,  
These words I use,  
Young goddess, one breasted, leaping at the  
Form,  
Airplanes bowing beneath her:  
I see her sometimes as I am coming out of the gym,  
Or when I am vacationing onto the  
West part of Florida.  
Archaeologists are gathering around her like kids  
In daycare,  
Undressing her splendiferous hip,  
Speculating,  
Speculating: Luscious bride of all the colors and  
Elements,  
Sometimes water and sometimes greening wood;  
And now the cars are passing, streams of little girls:  
What will you have for me today;  
I will barter with balloons or bouquet; Or I would  
Give it all for free,  
If you stepped out of your silly forms, the way the aspens  
Gather together in childish sorority;  
And your hair is as dark as a lumberjack on his day of  
Rest;  
Diana: I am a good man, and I am coming into my full form,  
And I just need your bosom for a crèche,  
Your South-American womb for our beautiful, mulatto children.

Robert Rorabeck

# Murderous Muse

I spoil my nights by sleep,  
When I should be out walking or standing  
Up straight,  
Tossing my head back,  
Philosophically perambulating or  
Drinking your low-cut flower which vibrates like  
Vintage science-fiction when you laugh;  
But why do I keep doing this to myself,  
Returning to those same red-bricked halls,  
Nearly sylvan from the well-groomed landscaping,  
The good hygiene of the gurgling fountains-  
I saw you once or twice in just fleeting,  
Like a hummingbird on an impossibly light  
Bicycle-  
The same as I saw you down the sanitized  
Halls of high school,  
But more developed and alluring because  
You were no longer pure;  
You'd slightly bled and it wasn't from  
Going to and from classes,  
But it was the sun above you  
And could not be confused with false light;  
And I cannot say it like Baudelaire, but I still  
Suck you through my imperfect teeth; though yellowed,  
When the idea of you lights upon me, even though  
My new university will be on the other side of  
The Mississippi, Jesuit and blue,  
I'll imagine still stepping through your echoes,  
Like the perfumes you leave to pollinate the studious  
Empiricisms,  
Tending to my senses in your casually evil  
Flirtations, like kisses from a knife's blade,  
Mortally greeted in passing, my false art inspired by the  
Heartless bloodstains of my  
Murderous muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# Muse Named Erin

Days of canals and sweet scars attracting  
Honey-bees and mosquitoes;  
I have been accused of plagiarism by a teacher who  
Couldn't do;  
I am in-love with a fresh man child,  
I finger-paint like apple snails down his vermilion  
Nape;  
Holidays of fieldtrips, venal forgemenots,  
Words overused like stragglers in a lustrous park:  
All the day is as sharp as cutlery, as if we've been staring  
Down a housewife's blouse as she does her cookerries  
In the kitchens,  
Swinging the wine racks, promenading low cut  
In a sweet and sour zoetrope before her children,  
Her oldest daughter out near the pool,  
Crenulated, made of stainless steel:  
There is a house I always remember when I am thinking of  
This,  
And fireworks that are still in a brown bag somewhere,  
Still good to use;  
But these words are tremulous, asking for more liquor,  
Making eyes at the quixotic alligators in the shallow erogenous  
Regions of the park across from the whores;  
But Sharon is still in love with her husband,  
Pretending that ever yother man is broken- The day shoots off  
Like monuments of arson,  
And somewhere above this crown of thorns  
A muse named Erin rides another man's horse.

Robert Rorabeck

## Muse Named Kelly

Dance with a Chinese woman like a firecracker  
Over the old trailer parks and  
The dollar stores- dance the dance that costs  
A dollar:  
She says she wants to marry you for romance;  
Her children are heavily overgrown:  
They keep to above ground pools,  
And they sun themselves perpetually like other  
Things expecting metamorphosis-  
Their scars are the wounds of past marriages  
Graded badly- Maybe they can go to Disney World,  
Or buy a Christmas tree,  
As they lean into the outskirts of the dirt roads  
Where the blue girls swim and the housewives  
Have their own tattoos named after a muse  
Named Kelly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Muse Never Of My Tomorrows

Mammoth places of for-get-me-knots:  
This is where the men metamorphose into cenotaphs,  
And the conquistadors tried to call upon  
The mermaids before stewardesses were  
Even invented:  
In an ancient bed of love that invented the mestizo  
In fornications beneath the unutterable happenstance of  
The jungled pyramids:  
The history of my best muse—cannibalistic—  
The human sacrifice that at its best uses the get away car—  
A happy leopard,  
With a tongue of amber making love to men on the  
Outskirts, across the train tracks, only to  
Go home to husband and take a knee—  
This soiled pieta is the one I return to:  
I once slept atop her next door neighbor's roof  
Underneath the primary colored helicopters—  
Sacrificing so many artificial words and expensive  
Bouquets—  
A muse never of my tomorrows,  
Always of my yesterdays

Robert Rorabeck

# Muse Of Both Hemispheres

Look at the way the verdant winnows the light,  
And there in the sheaths of stems, in the throbbing photosynthesis,  
I suppose, is the essence of the dreamer's home:

There out in any yard for daylight's piece, one may rest  
His fatty rump in so many kingdoms of ants in long wars,  
See very little of such places, and pretend enlightenment.

I do this for my ethereal palaver, for what strangeness to  
Speak to a woman I have never seen, what harrowing dysfunction  
To kiss her this way, the tiny epitaphs I give to her leaping over states.

She must not suppose she is real, for self reflection does not occur  
To the fleeting happenings of her armada, her body of oils and salts,  
Perms and periods, and the junctions of her architectures

Are very swift things stationed in their cupboards, unrealized  
Utensils for defense and claret murder, but really just little things  
Like the stems of light outside, the roots the shadows I have to discover,

But in doing so would kill the beauty.

Robert Rorabeck



# Muse Of Honey And Applesauce

Muse- I want to see you wearing barrettes  
In Paris-  
Alma- rings of golden satellites between brown  
Knuckles-  
Warm sweet kisses underneath broken school  
Busses- Alma-  
Warm sweet places, like hot clay in  
Art class- and easels waiting in the broken  
Monuments of honeysuckle daylight  
With saw horses underneath open hearts:  
The way the wilderness waits across the canal  
For you- Alma,  
To step into the crepuscule of the burning sugar canes  
At the dead ends of suburbia,  
To leave the senses to go to sleep behind you,  
And to start our barefooted, your feet  
The size of toy boats, as you exhilarate the heavens  
And pull them down to examine your own heavens-  
And they see the truth to your passivity,  
As the canoe lays tinkered up to the bank, underneath  
The holly you left behind  
Being given little kisses to its throat my tadpoles  
Whose only hope is for metamorphosis  
To join with your heavens- to bask across the  
Fields who grow rich in the antediluvian things that  
Evolve in your longing classrooms-  
They follow you- muse, as you go leaping,  
Caramel- muse of honey and applesauce-  
Like bright sunlight underneath the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Muse On The Moon

A muse on the moon—  
What cadaver is beautiful,  
Breathless as it is placed above us,  
Like a banshee on  
A high cliff over-looking a  
Tennis court  
We were both dismissed from,  
And I was like escargot crawled  
Above your house,  
To listen to the heart beats inside  
Like rabbits sheltering the in  
The shell of a giant tortoise—  
Now these things I don't  
Know, living just east of the airport,  
Like a pearl in between the heavens  
And the oceans,  
And you lay your head down there  
Where he is right next to you,  
Like a grave of a hero and her dragon.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Abandoned Children

Love in the elbows of Christmas trees:  
Getting up and trying to look  
Good  
While the Mexicans are picking watermelons  
And cantaloupes,  
And you are with your husband again,  
And all of your brown family: maybe your eyes  
Have been saying that you have been busy  
In love,  
But they are lying- as my words fall to the suburban  
Field mowed softly underneath the airplanes:  
Like paper wetted too far by your abandoning lips,  
And all of that sweet moisture carried underground  
To feed their queen:  
As I awaken one last time without the carnivals  
Of your eyes to save  
The souls of my abandoned children.

Robert Rorabeck

# My America

Enough liquor in me and I am ready  
To put down Whitman and go back to school-  
Even though I am not ready to spell,  
Or look her in the eyes again from across the room  
Atop the bleached linoleum plane,  
Beneath the flickering halogen sky-  
To show her again the love I cannot explain,  
Which she has scalped and forgotten like a savage Indian:  
Oh well,  
I will bore into my studies, my hermitted dreams,  
And kiss my professors fully on the lips,  
And pick them flowers and buy them perfumes,  
And require them to bathe me in my daydreams through  
Their lectures....  
Though now I am fully gone, and watching Clint Eastwood  
Rob banks, and believe I am a true American fully formed,  
And even now beginning to bloom in my patriotism  
Even though the economy has become homely and shrunken,  
Where even pornography is dulled and the eighteen wheelers  
Lay parked and quieted along the magestic byways,  
Like out of work women, or great out of print toms,  
And they smell like naked French women on soiled satiny sheets  
With gun powder and spent cartridges and organs wilted for  
All immediacy-  
Because she doesn't read my poems anymore, for she has  
Begun to devolve into another amnesiac year full of grinning  
Boys, rum, and toy boats which circle her breasts in a convoy  
Through her sudsy bathtub;  
As the rain speaks, as the clouds tumult and build up like dirty laundry  
In the greeny bin of this valley, I can say to her I have not forgotten  
The constellation of her shaven legs,  
And the dreams like a mother she reproduces in me,  
The children I would have if I were a better man, the distinctions  
If I were a better poet: but only this now,  
A further personification of the proof of this being,  
As my careworn dogs runs up to be let in to the better lit warmth,  
I down another glass and run off another line,  
The protuberance of my unchecked fantasy- I give to her  
In the queuing of my tireless youth: For now she is famous,

Full-breasted and marvelous like an expensive dinner,  
And the boys about her the jelly of her flavor-  
Though she wouldn't turn her eyes towards me once again  
In the sparkling and inebriate light of her graduated ballroom;  
This is enough, that I should lay her down this way,  
Though in imperfect jest, there is nothing more truthful,  
And her areolas display to me the moon in its quarter,  
For even though far away, she is still my America,  
And eventually she is coming back to me,  
Or I to her....

Robert Rorabeck

# My Angel Baby

So I asked her  
If she  
Wanted to  
Go out,  
And she did;  
And we went out  
And played  
Baseball  
And ate all the  
Guava pastries  
And bottles of cold  
Milk from  
Her lunch wagon;  
We knew in the  
Morning she would  
Lose her job,  
But it didn't matter;  
I was well hung  
And had practiced  
So much delayed  
Gratification  
To be wealthy enough  
For the both of  
Us;  
And on our second  
Date went  
Rollerskating  
And felt the slight  
Caresses of  
The tide,  
Like the secrets of  
Gravity.  
And she became my  
Angel baby.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Art That Is So Imperfect

Now I feel like dancing, of opening up  
Forever underneath the heirlooms  
Of my sideshows,  
Underneath all of these vanishing places  
Where we have to be found out-  
That we made love, and broke  
Ourselves underneath the hapless sunlight:  
Don't you understand that  
I decided to find you here, and so I  
Found you here-  
And it feels for awhile to become a bridal  
Temptation:  
But what are your children doing,  
Even when sometime you are not home,  
But leaving your body to think of me as I buy  
Your dresses underneath the rose gardens  
Of the overpasses:  
As I prey and make love to you while  
I am alone on my weekend:  
And I know nothing of moving making,  
And this is just a scene that I am thinking back  
Upon you,  
As you lay there, opened mouthed- but  
Very soon you will have to sunbathe for your  
Family,  
And then you will have to get up dancing,  
Like a marionette- and this is a true love  
Story- and your name is, Alma-  
But my art is so imperfect, that the world  
Will never know.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Auburn Queen

I want to buy you flowers and buy you vowels:  
While the feral thoughts in my pastures howls- And I want to  
Resurrect my verses by holding your  
Little brown foot, or your little brown hand:  
You seem as innocent as a child who has survived all of her fairytales:  
I put my fingers on you like an instrument:  
Listen to how you sing, like cars, like rain:  
Like the wind tunnels on Christmas in Spain,  
While before everything that I ever was had given up, like a goldfish  
Belly up, like the words conjoined in a library that has never awakened:  
But you given the suicide of my airplanes balloons,  
And none of this is even real, Alma- it is all just the sort of thing I  
Would have never had to sung, if I was truly your prince:  
If I was more beautiful, but all of my flaws your flawless eyes never seem  
To see:  
You are my brown princess, you are my auburn queen, and now all of  
My animals are waking up to pet you, and to be petted.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Awakened Graveyards Of Uncertainties

The flowers on your car are gone:  
He is still there,  
And you will not leave him: you said to me,  
You buy your own flowers-  
And he is your family, and it rained today  
And I rode my bicycle across the bridge  
And nearer the sea-  
Where I listened outwards for your echo-  
Things I've never pretended to see bloomed  
In the sky,  
As my parents returned from Arizona nearer  
And farther away from me:  
And I will not see you tomorrow-  
But if the head upon your body weeps,  
It is a simple head, and beautiful- and I wonder  
If I must conclude that the soul you seem to  
Be named after will also weep-  
But I am uncertain,  
And the day goes forever to sleep across  
My awakened graveyards of uncertainties.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Awful Tomorrow

All the wonderful scars, they make my awful tomorrow:  
Where I have been alone for so long except for my dogs,  
Underneath where the world is twirling like an innocent girl.  
Why can't I be so innocent- Why can't I be the star in a  
Horror movie, instead of the horror: Now the cars are moving  
Past the cornfield. Now there is hoarfrost covering up the furrows  
Of earth. Now the crop is gone, and we have a new president.  
Now Jim is president and Huck is fully formed and has his place  
In the cabinet; and nothing I have said is perfect, like the tombstones,  
Like polished granite for its time is perfect. The graveyard lasts  
Almost as long as a good book, and no one wants to put it down,  
Especially the author where his name is carved he lies down.  
And I would get drunk tonight, but all the relatives are bound to show  
Up either tonight or eventually: This is the place where they all come,  
Eventually. And I am bearded and my nails are long, and there  
Is a bag of cocaine at my hip, and some gold.  
My eyes are as black as a villain's mask. My horse he grins alongside  
Me: he grins and grins all through his bones.  
For he is in my novel grave, and the mad man  
Has escaped with my good woman,  
and turned her bad; and the world  
Just turns and turns over all over this,  
twirling like an innocent girl  
discovering  
Gravity;

Who has long since grown up and turned away and covered up by snow.  
She doesn't come to town anymore. She turns tricks on midnight street-  
No one comes but the wind, whistling carefully as he hustles us-  
For we all lie out here beneath the perfect stars, changing too into the hills,  
Without names on books and stones, and our riches buried on our hips.  
The cars flood our names with their lights, and then move on down the  
Perfect rows.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Battle

I do not have to wake up—  
This isn't my life any longer—my heart fills with  
Oceans as the baseball diamonds  
Empty:  
Once again I am drunk at the wishing well,  
Hoping that I will win the lottery and  
That the unicorn will surrender—  
Magical creature as deep as my muse—  
I get off the subways of Asia and have to attend  
Classes in the deep, deep daylight—  
And you are never coming home—  
Auspicious shadow in a trailer park—here is  
My death, handed into the hardy lips of a  
Forest fire—it is not mystery:  
I am done breathing—my first child is due in  
April, and I am stumbling home to you again;  
The astronauts fall, and so do the heavens—  
I don't care—I awaken again tomorrow—  
And eat everything that fails to metamorphosis—  
I am the monster and this is my battle.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Beautiful Sea

I lie down in my beautiful sea,  
A pain in my side, my eyes far away:  
Already, the continents are beginning to move,  
Like mother and father screaming from the carport;  
The palms sway insouciantly, and the white and the  
Pink Cadillacs move beneath their throats with old men  
In ice-cream suites, pockets full of dollar bills,  
Minds filled with little women in little bathing suites:

I wish I could understand the way she moved, first  
To me, and then away, as if drawn by another body in  
The sky, as if drawn by some mineral though relaxing in the  
Dim living room with a glass filled with liquor and ice,  
Where there is no air-conditioning, but a dizzy sort of dance  
Under the foundations and out in the blizzing suns,  
Where the boys play with Tonkas, and the girls with  
Barbies,

And the old bridges over the intercostals of cleft palettes  
Have yet to fall like other sorts of games, chipping on the  
Abutments, and the rhymes of sunken soldiers, who stepped  
Too far out into her eyes: This is all I see now, all I see,  
As I lie down in my beautiful sea, a pain in my side,  
My grave going down as I close my eyes,  
I reach out to her in another serve; Again, I fear, she is  
Pulling back, breathing all that she feels close to her chest,

And making me so I can no longer catch my breath,  
As I try my futile dream to pull myself towards her in the  
Undertow of a song, I lie down in my beautiful sea,

I lie down in my beautiful sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Beautiful Song

All of the bodies bivouacked- in fact they are a family  
So many reasons above the street:  
Right under the stars, a husband and a wife who do not  
Love anymore,  
Who spend each day together in a cloudless hope,  
Losing limbs- never once speaking of love,  
Their children spread out beneath them:  
Roped to them in this disaster of mud and sticks:  
Hanging down the cold face,  
Learning how to go to school and read, and to become estranged  
At recess through the fickle apertures  
Of where they are placed to belong; I, loving their mother,  
But so far beneath them- too far beneath them to do  
Any good- too mortal, too imperfect, the wind howling  
To her from the countries of her birth,  
Calling her home down through the calderas of other paths:  
Through new green ways where other bears and galaxies live,  
Luxuriating her brownest of shoulders,  
Persuading her back into her pueblos just as surely  
As mountain lions eating my throat, and stealing my beautiful song.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Bed Is As Empty As A Glass

My air-condition really works and make me feel as if  
I am on sabbatical;  
And I am glad that Trulio told you that I was once a teacher,  
Which is so,  
But I have always been a singer of these words,  
Under the eves of high school, whistling with all of the drunken birds:  
And my scars seem to never mind you, Alma,  
While my body seems so quick and so large:  
I held your little wrist spindling your little fingers today,  
But you were the one who was in charge:  
And I wish I knew every last dropp of Spanish for you, Alma,  
For I am sure that I am in love:  
Even if you say that I need a new car, I am better left unproved,  
The way the green fields look un hoofed by the athletes and their silly  
Bags:  
Tonight is my night for you, Alma, and all of the world is stilled:  
Even the sea doesn't move, and the sky is just something fantastical;  
It cannot be proven; and you are the keynote of this symphony;  
It oscillates back and forth against your being-  
And you do not need a breast job, and everything I speak is a reason on  
For you,  
And my bed is as empty as a glass begging you, Alma, to be filled.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Best Friend

I swing more than the hour I am with you,  
But tonight my lips don't smell of rum while you  
Meet with your husband and a friend in  
A bar-  
Egrets perch over you, but what are the shapes of  
Egrets;  
And when can I run away again, softly repeating  
The mistakes of your empty branches,  
While mother washes her face, and the old dogs  
Cry because they have never seen your  
Face as I have seen your face, or at least that is  
My make-believe for why they should cry  
When there is a storm of tinsel and the spit of kissing-  
Balls over the Faberge castles, where lawyers are  
Kissing their cohorts on senior fieldtrips all spread out  
Through the unreal esplanades, the slender walks of  
Their professional amusements;  
If I should see you there in a chariot of your legs,  
I would hold this breath for you, and wait long enough for  
The oceans to change places with the clouds,  
If to show you that I was not your prince; in fact meaning  
More than the stations of the otherwise or any man,  
As if this were a game of musical chairs held over from  
Kindergarten, and we were the two seated last together,  
Like a prince and his queen, or any other meaningless thing,  
Except that I would like you to be my best friend.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Better Looking Sister

I feed the raccoon snake eyes and  
Cat food,  
Because its eyes are so patchy I can relate and  
Call it beautiful,  
Because I have a redneck cousin who always  
Calls me Robbie the raccoon,  
Because of the corpuscles of blood around  
The eyes,  
The scars of a sick valentine masks,  
Those same old things which make me relate to the  
Harem of shadows which  
Grow each and every night,  
Which make me pop out these pregnant things  
Like fat salmon streaming their  
Row upstream:  
And I could be a gunfighter,  
And I could rob banks;  
In fact, I am almost dead tonight:  
In fact, I am so drunk off another man's gin  
That I am just about to go one block south and swing  
On the black man's swings,  
To make myself a champion,  
To make the entire Milky Way swing with my darkly  
Sunken arcs,  
Like a Russian submarine escaping or a matinee  
Movie;  
I sing these things, the pale orchid coming above ground  
Under the gibbous moon while my better looking  
Sister and beautiful husband are sleeping.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Bluest Wishes

If I can do for you in the séance of everything,  
Then I am happy;  
And my dogs leap and snap at the nude air,  
And there are nude airplanes buzzing;  
And you are just the first girl I've kissed in seven years:  
I want to cut me into as many pieces and  
Become your tin man of just as many poems:  
Really, do this to me,  
And we can leap across as many canals;  
All the sad reasons that are metamorphosing into the rain clouds  
Of well-fed romance;  
And I should never shirk your eyes again, because there in  
Is the bluest kingdom into which I have flung all of  
My bluest wishes and even bluer promises in.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Bosom To Your Rose

Rainbows are so loud while you've  
Been playing games and I've been running away:  
This is just how I've been thinking of  
Myself,  
Trying to persevere through the lonely hours of  
A lonelier day-  
Trying to make eyes with myself before the possessed  
Mirror,  
And yawning, believe in the things that I am certain are  
Not possible:  
Daylight in a crèche over the bouquets I give you  
Open mouthed while I've been running around in circles-  
As the race horses run around according to the hours-  
And other diminutive superheroes in the lassos of  
Daydreams- pilots in the fake light of  
Abandoned light houses- or another story whose  
Yet abandoned pages are yet folded:  
I supposed I loved you, and yet I supposed: what does  
It mean to surrender my bosom to your rose.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Brothers Of The Lonely Roams

Is this the place to set in my ways,  
The bungalow for a bachelor and his laughing dogs;  
To sit and watch the fallow sun rise and fall  
In my anonymous poverty;  
To drink the liquor prophesied in the advertisements,  
To walk through the skin of the forest fire  
Inebriate in a haze of lunar houses spilling into the hills;  
To be done and out of it before my body falls,  
The spindles of energy unwound by the clocks  
Bearded like old men melting lackadaisically in the trees,  
Too afraid of the gentle adoption of the female element,  
All the better women transformed into centaurs and feasting  
On the lightning storms;  
Her eyes a bad wonder for more suitable men accessorized with  
The studded accoutrements of success;  
The growling warmth of the steady eyed glares from out of fast cars,  
In the fine houses of natural selection, beneath the gated communities  
Of affluent foreplay;

Let me spend my days here instead,  
Where the fire has already ravaged; where I feel at home  
With my likewise environment, on a burned down hillside steadily populated  
By albino trailers of the moonshine blind and strange, dysfunctional homes,  
Half eaten, like ribcages of whales left over from the last oblivious age,  
To howl in the windy night with my brothers of the lonely roams;  
And to listen, content to be alone, to the listing creak and  
Inevitable surrender of this accordion foundation swinging its gin  
In the gusty bordelloed night, like a seafarer's boat tossed on the spitting foams.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Cherry Sunday-Ed Pillow

I want to live with the animals in  
Sherwood Forest:  
I want her to toss me her brazier during  
The show so that I can take a mental note  
Of what she smells like,  
And wait for her to come to my stage door,  
As the rains come,  
Billowing like pillow fights with soar mouths too  
Full of cotton candy and wax knickknacks  
Bought at the over spilling zoo;

Or, at least, I would like to win the game,  
To have the ostentatious chance to squeeze her  
Breast like an orange,  
To circle around her three times, only paying once,  
To have a good chance to look deep into her mouth to  
Seek out all of her fillings,  
And too grin to see that in actual fact she is just as  
Scarred and sweet-toothed as I am,  
To lay upon her chest like a cherry-Sunday-ed pillow,

To want to say how much I still love her,  
Dear unrelenting god,  
But I do not have the guts.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Danse Russe

Could I turn back time if I bought  
The house on Anastasia Island, the one  
Built in the middle of last century, before  
Even Tolkien had discovered a voice  
To decry machines, the lines of tattoos  
In modern English,  
An ubi sunt sweated from his hands,  
And brow furrowed the way the farmer  
Attends his field, or would I just be putting  
Down more inattentive drifts,  
Right around the time my parents were  
Coming into thoughts, as Einstein invented  
The bomb while gossiping around the  
Coffee table, Sylvia Plathe having lunch  
With dollops of cream cheese, a horse  
Fly draining the scar on her cheek, not yet  
Knowing she would rest under the calligraphies  
Entombed, like Sara Teasdale in St. Louis,  
Her Pulitzer wreathed to her feminine bones,  
Like a starving worm, her blood still warm  
Though now ethereal; Even then, I could not  
Join them, video games the brail on the torpid  
Computers of lazy Titans,  
Men still wary of Martians, the wives good  
Cooks, pot roast, and missionary positions,  
Black & white televisions, bomb scares,  
The kids running down the street with b.b. Guns  
And tomahawks, Oldsmobiles, John Wayne  
Immortality, toy trains around Christmas;  
William Carlos Williams writes his  
Danse Russe, and I am naked in my room,  
"The sun a flame white disc in silken mists"  
And I am lonely by H.G. Wells,  
Going back into her, says the waves going,  
Eyes the stains of radiation, thighs glowing,  
Just after New Years, fireworks in Miami, I would  
Have enough to make an offer, to step back into  
The halls preserved by the island, to see my grandmother  
And walk my dogs until people visit

And play games where they would count  
And then jump the curb,  
If they opened their eyes and called  
And prayed, they could find my grave  
And maybe put flowers on it.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Dead Grandmother's Wall

There seems to be a new wash in the  
Pageantry of bones—  
I am still standing right here for you against  
The lamentations of the river,  
But I have become just another kind of sick tourism—  
Something's tragedy to be gawked at  
Through the skies beneath the highway—  
Gutted, as I wait for you to remember why it was  
That I became this way for you—  
After the tornados had swallowed all of the trailer-parks  
And all of their colored televisions—  
And I walked out for you like a firewalker through  
The unbelievable pains of the midways of  
Your grottos—  
And, drowning, I couldn't help noticing how long you held  
Onto his hand—  
Watching, even when I was nothing else—  
And the paintings still held onto the illusions of my  
Dead grandmother's wall.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Dear Sea

I am dying now by your love:  
There are three handguns beneath  
The upstairs bed,  
So I have a choice,  
Though the conclusion is the  
Same impermanent permanence,  
We shall all choose to lie in finally:  
My ex-lover took a husband  
To bed with her,  
Of similar persuasion, I  
wonder if their happiness will last-  
I still hope for change,  
And by this dream of the sea:  
And you, who are my sea, dear-  
My dear sea, won't you beckon?  
Won't you have me expeditiously  
For what I am,  
Or is what I am too broken?  
I am just a boy in a little world all afraid,  
Waiting for you to sail with me....  
This is not like anything else  
You have heard before,  
Because this time it is true,  
If you could only love me,  
That would be the best solution:  
To come awake in a song no one else can hear,  
But it may be that you are too  
Far away to even consider,  
That you are the sea which can  
Flood my body with new feeling,  
To evoke that change I need,  
Like a continent dividing into  
New Paleolithic definitions,  
To set sail by your post-modern history,  
To know myself by your relationship,  
The beautiful calligraphy of your  
Caesuras, peaks, and troughs,  
My dear sea....





# My Diaphanous Muse

If the doors close, will the lips too pull back:  
I feel alone even at the delta of her kiss,  
And the airplane's wings are spread and flying in the dead  
Of night where the luscious students lay sleeping,  
Spread out like adventurers lost on a quest,  
Persuaded by their own hopes of monsters to fall into  
The field and to dream of apples-  
With eyes closed, I dream of my muse as she sleeps in  
Her own house- even while I have been so close to her-  
The neighborhood of her soul lies in the South of  
Mexico- and I am shoeless when I come to her,  
Wondering around, her mother's womb opened like a churlish  
Rose in a busy apiary,  
Showing her to me- pulsing with the eager pornography  
Of my diaphanous muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Discriminating Taste

Let me sprinkle salt on you,  
And plagiarize you, to show you off  
To the professors down on the farm:  
To pass you off as my lover,  
And lay you out on the table, and pour wine  
In you while the television is broadcasting  
Reruns we both know:  
And the city is moving outside like some sort  
Of metaphorical ocean,  
Like the ones I read about in classics,  
And sow my fingers on you like a lullaby  
Army, a children's story awakened from the  
Dinner's gardening, under the lights and  
Electricity bill: Let me pretend to read you  
With great intensity, and raise my hand above  
My head, as if to signify that I have an answer  
Sitting down at this meal:  
The way I always imagined I would do to you,  
While I was living with her, and the screams  
And shouts and the crocodile tears-  
But if you do not call, or if you don't even suspect,  
Just allow yourself to imagine a holiday  
Where we could set aside time in our busy schedules,  
So that I could dress you up and eat you,  
So that we could get to know each other, without  
Silverware, your thighs denoting the proper table  
Manners, which I hold apart to tongue the portions,  
And you give your peckish exclamations as politely  
As you can, or moan from the pleasurable sensations,  
Like a recipe broiling in the oven;  
Or, if you don't want to, or already have such dinner  
Arrangements with another lonely gentleman, just  
Imagine me upon your table from time to time,  
Feeding you between your opal stems kisses from  
My tongue.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Dissolving Courtyard

Vehicles returning early, like my father's  
Dreams,  
Though the canal is so close as to steal away  
What voice I might have daydreamed I had,  
Or walked right out into the fata margona of an  
Aboriginal school yard because the  
Hem of your pretty skirt was so yet tremulous and  
Unpinned;  
It was laying across the midrange of your body's  
Watery playground,  
Like something newly evolved or lost from the unsure  
Rejoin where the tide perpetually leaps only to return,  
Like a manmade playground with all its hope  
And incubating desires;  
And you were there, though you were not,  
And I laid a hand upon the opal bottle cap of your  
Rope skipping knee,  
But it was a hand that I had amputated from a motionless  
Body;  
And if I did touch you, you could neither see nor feel  
The leftover beauty in a calcifying river  
Until like a marble braze, I did not turn at all, and you laughed  
At something you could not feel and finally went  
Home from the ineffectual séances and from the sightline of  
My dissolving courtyard.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Dreams Aren'T Even Sad

Proficiencies north and south of the  
Mississippi,  
All these lines I have drawn are the  
Corrupt calligraphy  
Of my face smiling in its daylong dreams,  
Through the satin laces,  
The spikenard, and the motor races:  
A mask that knows how to bite its inner  
Cheek,  
The peckerwood hope that you will come  
Floating to me,  
The wife of a papier-mâché samurai with  
Shortcut bangs:  
In this sympathy of crickets I make my  
Dark parade,  
I bow and gesticulate and caracole with my  
Weapon of choice,  
My eyes the dark poltergeists no longer amused  
That you've done finished picking apples  
From the top soil of my dungeon,  
Pulling my stodgy roots;  
Now that you are floating in your wedding ship  
Across the crenulated sheen like glossy sod  
Slicked across a meaningless highway,  
Like a high-blown wreath,  
I realize I must have you again well kept,  
Attending to my estuaries,  
Decorating my lawn like a car, even if you are  
Only my favorite monster,  
My dreams aren't even sad without you.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Empty Dove

Pageantry of their star-crossed heavens,  
Just as another beauty pretends  
To dissolve  
As the katydids just so  
Immolate in their open yards, just as I've  
Been swelling up,  
Trying to become just as gigantic  
As a perfume-  
But I've been slowly dying- bloated  
Dog on the concrete of your  
Expatriated ballroom-  
And all of the flies are laughing,  
And there is not another bird that ever has to  
Sing again,  
But the theatres fill up with bodies presupposing in  
The lamplight that someone especially has to be  
Their king-  
As they try filing out and then to making love-  
And this is just the empty pageantry of my tomorrow-  
If it just so happens that you happen to be  
My empty dove.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Expectant Door To The East

Here I am calling from the uncertain road,  
Where from it reaches its possibilities and leaves in  
So many ways, after I have leapt over so many  
Faceless rivers, not unlike a small forest animal  
Might leap around her opulent ankles after  
He has been set down and she has wondered off into  
Other plays. She is so high up from me, I don't recall  
The expressions of her face, nor the fatty cradle of  
Each breast, but I try to listen to her as I venture into  
This busy east: I turn the radio up and position it  
Toward the signal where she lies streaming and unclothed  
And waving over those scholarly avenues like the great  
Banners of beloved extinction; but ever so quickly these  
Allusions settle down again into the nourishing meadows  
Of familiar continents which sate them, and give them respite,  
And a rented bed behind a key and lock, where so many  
Lovers paid and bled, while even still the harder men rush  
Eastwards, careless of bouquets or grooming:  
I can see them now doing lines as insouciant as these:  
Their reflections as haunting as an abusive childhood,  
They are all in a race, each with their own shortcuts, leaping  
Dandily over the ways and high edges, with gifts of switch  
Blades, exhumed arrowheads, and shards of glass:  
They wish to pierce your heart the same as I, and place  
Within there a fingerprint that cannot leave, but controls you  
Like a wicked stamp from without; but I know another way,  
And I swear to beat them all, because under the covers there is  
A backdoor that swings into you, and while my jaw is drooling  
Like a diademed hinge, I will enter in your subconscious reflections  
And swim and spear you there, and leave upon you with words,  
The gentle persuasions like easy tattoos, like cheap prizes in the  
Bottom of sugar filled cereals, the frantic estuaries that I would  
Have you devour; and so to cradle you breathlessly in my nervous  
Hands within the hour, only to release you once more with  
The galloping sun, so as not to destroy you,  
But to see you again once you sigh and rest your puzzled ahead  
Against my expectant door.





# My Fading Tomb

Lamps are jeweled with the drool from a sleepy sky,  
And I have told her to get off her knees,  
But she was only checking my navel for the hibernating  
Butterfly- When it flew away like a beautiful disease,  
She stood up on her own with disinterested eyes;  
So many years ago she forgot all about who I was,  
And followed the asphalt rivers into the drowsing rooms  
Down in the smoking earth, where the irascible men are curling  
With the lizards, and they are all the same, and she goes  
And entwines with them, not remembering my name,  
Though she remembers how the butterfly flew away,  
And for a second she looked into my eyes, and there were  
Almost thoughtless tears far beneath the fathomless sky,  
Where the azure lamps gave their halos in strange swaths  
Of newly conducted electricities, and she walks away  
Still echoing, for she no longer hinges upon marrying me,  
As she is the whispering tune reverberating with symmetries,  
Changed like a butterfly, hovering in his soft palm as if  
He was her flower,  
Bloomed from the wispy cracks of my fading tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Favorite Monster

Proficiencies north and south of the  
Mississippi,  
All these lines I have drawn are the  
Corrupt calligraphy  
Of my face smiling in its daylong dreams,  
Through the satin laces,  
The spikenard, and the motor races:  
A mask that knows how to bite its inner  
Cheek,  
The peckerwood hope that you will come  
Floating to me,  
The wife of a papier-mâché samurai with  
Shortcut bangs:  
In this sympathy of crickets I make my  
Dark parade,  
I bow and gesticulate and caracole with my  
Weapon of choice,  
My eyes the dark poltergeists no longer amused  
That you've done finished picking apples  
From the top soil of my dungeon,  
Pulling my stodgy roots;  
Now that you are floating in your wedding ship  
Across the crenulated sheen like glossy sod  
Slicked across a meaningless highway,  
Like a high-blown wreath,  
I realize I must have you again well kept,  
Attending to my estuaries,  
Decorating my lawn like a car, even if you are  
Only my favorite monster,  
My dreams aren't even sad without you.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Finally Blessed Team

Pallbearers, pallbearers  
Bring me on home, for my dream is done roaming:  
Take me to the copper kettle, take me to the  
Iron stove,  
Flay off my bologna, wimple my holes:  
Give my eyes the nickels to pay the ferry:  
Don't tell me who I might one day have married,  
Just boil my sweets with cabbage,  
And give the mutts my galled stones: For I am made now  
To rest easy, my guts like moth-eaten clothes in  
A wormy vanity;  
The detritus of the magic trick of my being,  
The lush garden revealed a cemetery; and even if  
My aunt was Mary,  
Give me to the earth and in my bed so bury:  
For this is the existence I can better know:  
Pallbearers, Pallbearers, do what you can, and what you  
Must while all four of you are still dreaming:  
While your bodies are moving to auction the strange gift  
Of a lonely carpenter;  
Look, the sky is unworried: the cars still move impassibly by:  
The swans still trumpet, and the jaded women cry:  
Not a single mother need know one blessed why  
My body lays crippled, my functionings faltered:  
The house is empty of windmills and goldfish:  
Pallbearers, pallbearers, be you not my fathers,  
But be you my grandsons sons and my grandsons,  
And proceed me outside the stage of my worrisome dream:  
Yes, pallbearers, pallbearers, bring me on home, and be you  
My finally blessed team.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Foremost Muse

When Pablo Neruda shows up, I think again  
That you are reading me,  
Soft brown eyes across all the scrolls of my  
Nakedness,  
Even as the buzzards turn out for their hoary meats  
That caracole everyway into the juvenile fields  
Of your lost town,  
Where even still the vagabonding male children  
Play all over you,  
As you collect their merry instruments like golden  
Honey in  
The clefts of your warm basins, that my voyages  
Will never know,  
Because they have forgotten the need to steal  
Those taboos,  
Even as the light of your bedroom homeopathically  
Diadem all the pretty creatures of  
Disney World,  
And you lie down again absentmindedly in the heat strokes  
Of your perpetually beautiful fugue;  
But do not say now that I have forgotten you to go off  
Climbing in the wet throats of Colorado, who turn into  
Substantive graveyards in a few months;  
Yes, do not expect that I have forgotten you apathetic appreciations,  
Even though you are most certainly not my foremost muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Forgotten World

Sanctuary of a playground in  
A rainstorm  
I never took old girlfriends too—  
A swing-set, really—  
All I carried about—  
Thinking of muses in the armpit of  
Florida—  
Above the navel oranges of Ocala,  
The commercialisms of  
Orlando—  
This was my forgotten world even  
While I was there—  
And the lines I sewed beneath the  
Swings  
For a love I always knew was never there.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Gallant Stuff

Broken psalms in a discothèque  
Lose their way to the south of France through  
Wind tunnels on Christmas day:  
Green knights with birds in their hair, on parade:  
Far away places,  
Nose-bitten cliffs overlooking orange fields attended to  
By dryads named Galaphile-  
The plains on which we exist, covered by angels  
And hobos,  
While my muse is far away from here: she is in a house  
Across the railroad tracks: my soul, my alma,  
Seems as if on another sphere,  
And the things that I write for her, that I toss out from  
My mind seem not to belong,  
And I go this way towards her, like a quixotic knight  
Approaching windmills,  
And I say and do my gallant stuff, like foam  
From the lips of waves until  
I am dissolved- tasted by her lips,  
Effervescing- I return to my truck, floating like a feather,  
Like a wish  
Over a world that just continues to go on.

Robert Rorabeck

# My God

My god doesn't have a  
D\$ck: she is the other  
Sort of god,  
And I was held up at  
Gunpoint,  
But at least I can fly:  
My god has tits and peppermint  
Breath:  
Her eyes go on forever,  
Cataracts distilling  
Her spirits for long  
Jawed tourists;  
My god does gymnastics on  
The apex of my childhood's  
Roof:  
My god lounges tonight all  
Fun and glowing  
Maybe my god is  
With child tonight  
Without even knowing;  
And while I get ready  
To slip into despondency  
Tonight  
All I can conclude  
Is that my god  
Is still  
Going,  
A beautiful young lady  
Whose yard her fine  
Young husband is mowing.

Robert Rorabeck

# My God Given Supper

My hands were on her throat just once:  
Perhaps they did not pressure her enough because now we  
Are just friends,  
Alma: Oh, Alma, aren't we just friends, just the way the swing-sets  
Tell the lies of birds to beautifully undying children  
Until they curl them down again  
And make them eat the dirt fluttering by so many kicking feet  
Into the bellies of dusk that the school buses have caracoled,  
Until there is no one left here—in this place,  
Alma,  
Where I have forsaken my God-given supper: where  
I am still awaiting.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Grandmother's Eternal Resting Place

Without my parents here I have to improvise,  
But I don't skip lines:  
I bake sugar cookies for my dogs,  
And talk to my grandfather's ghost wearing a fur  
Coat in the blue tiled bathroom:  
There are no answers from the gods, but their  
Echoes keep up all week, like something which  
Lives up to its advertisements,  
A miracle sleeping on the front porch, her  
Lips on the swings in the park where she's never been:  
Even with no one here, its funny the way they  
Look at me, and the last time I saw mountains  
We were driving by where she tests wine, high above  
Where her husband was last seen approaching the summit:  
And I haven't been lost for sometime,  
Because I've begun using fourteen point font, and I  
Still tiptoe to the left of the lockers in the empty hallway  
The day after she kissed me in the dark so I wouldn't know,  
And I woke up and tried to speak Latin into the juxtapositions  
Of my fast lunch at the foot of the hurrying ants all around my  
Grandmother's eternal resting place.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Grandparents' Trailer Home

Rain on a boat.  
Your mother and some other  
Animals watching from the shore,  
Their mouths and pockets  
Getting filled up—  
While I dream of getting rich,  
Go to the flea market seven days  
A week,  
Get so much sun my skin cracks  
And bleeds  
Cancerous peonies—  
And I go blind from the wastrels  
Of capitalistic hallucination.  
Some fat rattlesnake,  
Belly fat from lucky rabbits  
Sleeps underneath the rotting  
Floorboards of my  
Grandparents' trailer home  
That doesn't exist anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Head On The Pillow On The 50 Yard Line

At 4 a.m. I watch the  
stadium getting bigger all around  
campus the sun is getting ready  
she still drives her Lexus  
all over my bones  
while, in the dorms,  
some students have sex  
others sleep and dream  
mathematical vibrancies of ghosts  
floating in the old grotto trees  
outside their windows  
what they don't understand is  
this situation never dies  
but goes down to sleep with new  
lovers  
every 4 years  
she graduates  
and for as long as I live  
a part of my mind will lie down  
on Jefferson Street down the  
lane from the white washed sororities  
how she left me to love  
an undergraduate  
and the day I passed my thesis  
my truck was towed I had  
to borrow some young lady's  
dapper legs to retrieve it,  
she still was my silhouette  
these days she is fine in  
a new yard with marble  
cherubs shooting arrows  
toward her young man's office  
window  
and now one more morning I  
go down to sleep my  
head on the pillow on the  
50 yard line of Doak  
Campbell Stadium while my  
ex students dream of tail-

gaiting and the three minute  
swim of their sex  
across campus and my head.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Heartfelt Game

The airplanes echo as you drive home  
From school,  
In a neighborhood made out to be some kind  
Of theme park,  
A plagiarism of sprinklers and  
Cottage cheese after the original Ferris  
Wheels have moved away with  
Their gypsy hearts:  
And this is the world I teach in, telling the kids  
Things that cannot possibly make any sense—  
And, laughing,  
Show them my wounds: there is a theatre inside,  
I suppose you know—  
Marionettes in my ribs playing through the  
Beautiful foxgloves—old muses—  
Mexicans and athletes—they are going to  
School—inside of me—  
And I show their vermillion zoetrope to my  
Classroom,  
But in the darkness of their impotency  
They can only see the shadows—  
The playgrounds of murder that they mistakenly  
Take to be my heartfelt games.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Homeless Home

Suns on fire; it's what they do,  
Like your children on the Merry Go Round,  
Or in their yards after school:  
And you told me you had two rabbits; but now you lie in the  
Very same bed as your man who left you for  
Mexico  
And came back again- and in my silent thoughts I wonder if I  
Am the only man you have had otherwise in the imperfections of  
Your flesh:  
Soon your daughter will be two: her bones will be solidifying,  
And her vocabulary will grow:  
She will walk prouder and prouder across your yards,  
Until she cannot be contained;  
As I wonder how many times I may kiss your lips again and  
Again;  
Alma-it is all I ever wonder, and at night while I am alone,  
These thoughts become my Christmas floating in beautiful lights  
Across my homeless home.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Hourless Job

Having nothing to really show for ourselves,  
And the show is done: the liquor is just the spit on our bottom  
Lip and where will we go now:  
Now that Alma is at home and fast asleep,  
And her son Michael went bowling today, while I cradled Alma  
In my lap and she told me  
She had bowled just once, and she wasn't any good, which is  
What I expected;  
And I showed her pictures today of my other muses, Caucasian and  
Far lesser than her,  
Here and there, like paper snowflakes in Colorado,  
Like songs that sing themselves to sleep:  
And then we made love, and I showed her the dress I had bought for  
Her even though she doesn't like wearing dresses;  
And I have taken walks with Alma to the very places I have written  
Novels that will never sell;  
And I have been underneath the overpasses of those novels to buy  
Unrequited gifts for Alma,  
Because her very name means so- and she has been the only woman  
To see my soul burning as it does for her,  
And to accept me for that infinite flame- to taste my lips and lay down  
With me atop the azure caesuras,  
Even if she cannot say that she loves me:  
Alma, you are younger than my youngest sister, and more beautiful,  
While the cops head out tonight to harass unicorns, I will keep  
Blowing my instruments for you, hunting for your body  
Because we make love  
As infinite as all of the possibilities in the seven seas, and we both  
Have skipped into movies;  
And you don't know exactly how beautiful you are,  
But I am still here happily doing my hourless job, which is to  
Tell you so.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Indescribable Scars

Weary furnace reforms the deja-vu rain clouds  
Over my head- The green rain is starting to fill the pearly  
Seashells so very recently sucked dry by the beefy  
Tourists and everything they had:  
I believe they went that way, officer, like an entire herd  
Of over inflated swine, far away from the resting place  
Of my sea; but I am not so sure now,  
Because I haven't had the courage to look at myself that  
Way in so long- but everything that I fail to do,  
Everything that doesn't occur to me is sure to go the  
Way they went, like forgotten teenage lovers long since  
Cycled apart from the orange groves of hormonal romance,  
Bedded down anew and well-financed and more speedily  
Situated; but oh, how I remember the humid classrooms where  
We used to sit, my eyes stacked away bat-winged by my drowsy  
Elbows. How I'd never changed out to fit for PE, just read  
Scribbles and jogged around a bit while the Jews played  
Basketball and the coach's pacemaker ticked like a cardiological  
Metronome.  
Now all these scars and the dogs singed by the fire. They don't  
Trust anyone anymore, not even well-dressed officials,  
And when my hand goes out to them, unconditionally emptied,  
Like a housewife after a long and drunken cry  
Settling down after all the dishes are stacked and children put  
Away, they do not come near me-  
For memory is like a plastic bouquet placed atop the windswept  
Grave, and the pain and grief set in their eyes  
Like a birthstone in a tarnished ring, the irrefutable calligraphy scarred  
In their gaze. Now that I am far away from them I can barely  
Hear their scream like lobsters in a broiling sea-  
Just a feral thought drowned half evolved in the brambly wake,  
And soon the storm crosses over and the waves disentangle  
And before you know it they are out again, a parade of primary mariners  
Out upon the sunny combs too blinded and drowned  
By all that laughter to recognize my indescribable scars.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Inescapable Of Tomorrows

Oh god of vomit, god of filth, don't ask me how

I am doing:

If you know, I am surviving, you are my tomorrow of my

Tomorrows:

And how I am doing, while you are first riding your first

Men's horses,

Getting down on your knees and giving head to your choruses

Of choruses:

You of all should know how I am dying, dying, dying;

Because this is our song, and I am not even crying:

And this is our blood bath, your ablution, my tomorrow:

You awaken a sweet song, you legs creaking like wind chimes

In your birth, seesawing for breakfast:

I have forgotten what I am worth, except that you are always

My inescapable of tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Kingdom Of Wimpled Ghosts

Days, you come- even in South Florida, smoke rings  
Caracole the sky like costume bells,  
And I can see the shadows of my face hopefully  
Tremulous in tainted wishing wells,  
And older parks where I knew I used to like to  
Jaunt,  
But they have been combed over by the more novel  
Flaunts, the easier and more reticulated love affairs,  
Girls with blue and black nails who make it  
While the alligators watch,  
And the cold fronts ripple the sky with thunderbirds of  
Homeless liquors- the sky in the color of a chilly pantina,  
And I am the homeless king underneath swinging on  
My lonely throne through my kingdom  
Of wimpled ghosts.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Little Sisters

And the beautiful espionage hidden behind  
The sleeping jasmine  
In the tennis courts outside of the dressing rooms  
In the middle of a daydream of Florida  
As the waves come  
And then retreat and the tourist bodies bronze  
Around the shoulders  
And eyes like raccoons that never figured out  
How to sleep-  
And everyday through the climax of  
America is filled with  
Sunlight an cocaine: the angels cannot seem to  
Figure out how to come down  
Nor the airplanes- even though the bodies  
Remain juxtaposed  
Inside the windows beside the televisions-  
Beating hearts positioning elbows-  
And my littler sisters are in love-  
And the alligators sometimes sleep uphill from  
The canals never imagining that they should ever say  
A thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Lovestruck Fairgrounds

In the throats of pretty chords hold their notes,  
As lakes hold their tears as if in bluish plates, even while  
All of a sudden the incensed ripples of  
Disturbing loves appear and then fish outward, skidded  
By the moon;  
And all of suburbia holds its soft and easy tune:  
In one strange ululation of a shared but calmed dream:  
The bean stocks are all plundered, the Titans are missing,  
And Jack will never be coming down again  
By those old means:  
His fairytales are all used up, his throat is shaved:  
He could be played by a beautiful girl,  
If he only knew how to behave; and he has become lost somewhere  
Over the middling fair,  
Because he is like me, pining over your hair, languishing in a fruit  
Market, though maybe neither of us belonged in there,  
Alma;  
And the world as become your cup for me; and I hold you in my  
Eye as long as I can, and then in my mind; but I always feel you  
Slipping away, like a beautiful child trying to leave my mind  
Which becomes a ticking graveyard when you are not  
There,  
Across the borders of which the thinkless cars pullulate  
As if they were trying to fertilize the chalk abounding a fortress  
That can never awaken; as my words set off for you  
The unspindling fireworks that hold no joy and burn everything down  
Until you are once awakened and called once again into  
The senses who so busily once again awaken the insatiable hearts  
Of my lovestruck fairgrounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Make-Believe Loss

If I should mention to Diana tomorrow  
Again how beautiful she is,  
I will not be worried about being made fun of  
Or ignored:  
I've been all of this and so many things before  
In the morning waiting for the school bus,  
I am an animal in a pet cemetery  
Abandoned, absurd:  
I have a plastic coffin and a tin horn of paper flowers,  
And I will sleep forever outside of her  
Warm tresses:  
She serves breakfast and lunch to prettier boys,  
Is the word,  
But I'll wake up and move the paper stone from my  
Toy crypt my absent acolytes put there as a joke;  
And the bicycles will spin their Mandela's of silver spokes;  
And the naked room will smoke from  
Forest fires and happy airplanes peeling their exhaust;  
And the sea will come up and console me, kissing me  
Happily as a master over my make-believe loss.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Misinformed Delusion

Now I am up again, loveless above the meadow:  
The most of me a failure in the light-  
Looking down at the tossed about cities,  
Developing vertigo  
And the nose bleeds of forget-me-nots:  
And if you have to travel all the way up here to  
Find me,  
Then you are as if a serpent exploring the higher  
Boughs of a tree,  
And everything I have said has failed you,  
As I come down barefooted in the spurs of the  
Graveyards,  
And cutting myself on the rusty barbed wire,  
I swear and curse and try to kiss you:  
As all of the nights knot together in another illusion:  
A useless kissing ball filled with cotton mouths,  
And the throbbing heartstrings of  
My misinformed delusion.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Most Cherished Of Things

Trailer in the underbrush where the little children play,  
River just as rusting filled with the old cars of dreams:  
And this isn't the city,  
This is every emollition underneath the thunderbird's  
Wings:  
This is the windbag of winos courting alligators in a park  
That has sawed off and is un congratulatory even amidst  
The hurricanes;  
And Diana, here I love her while the snakes sing:  
They coil from the jungle gym, from the monkey bars:  
Fat bears and pleasurable ants in a honey beneath the  
Slide;  
And I have thoughts of her in my eyes: they cast the moon into  
The stars and wait for her patiently, and the cars proceed  
Back and forth like saints, like housewives in stream,  
As I am in the dusky truancy feeling her up into crepuscule  
Far into the amusements of my most cherished of things.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Most Limpid Star

As I drink my song, I become as immortal as any  
Cherubic man out on the lamb counting is pearls and swinging his  
Ham:  
That I have escaped from the pallid banks where the ancient  
But also most beautiful misconceptions starve:  
That I have tied bows over the presents of your body in this world,  
Alma,  
Is a glistening and special prize that I breathe: even though I have  
Never counted your years necking with you in the gazebos;  
And even if my artwork is flawed,  
It still bears your name: and my love is unrequited for you, and we  
Put our fires together just to blaze to get a better view  
Of movies:  
And maybe you will bare my child, as I cry out your name through  
The drunken windows of the pointless multitudes,  
As the landscaping blurs into chicken coops, and then the forest runs  
In shaking its naked limbs,  
And we sit for awhile on the promenades of my high schools and colleges  
Where you have never been- you then are coloring in the gaps of  
So many séances that I had gathered searching for you;  
And you have become my brightest student, and my most  
Limpid star.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Most Unrequited Of Graves

Teaching him again into your bed, but I bet he doesn't  
Know all of your secrets:  
He left you for Mexico, but look here he is again,  
Like a zoetrope, or the uncanny life in Pinocchio:  
And he gave you a daughter just so you and him could  
Survive,  
But I still see the fires for me burning in your eyes,  
Like the playthings of your soul who don't know who they  
Are,  
Leaping as sacrifices for my body alone:  
And I buy you so many gifts just so you might remember me:  
I have neither gun, but I am still your sheriff,  
And when you go to sleep I want you to feel the bight of  
Sharp spindles off my symphony:  
Because I live by you, as is my right; as I wish to die by you,  
To have our names gathered together through the forever  
Infinite night,  
So that our brethren will know what we were meant to be,  
Two souls in boxes of dirty symphony:  
Alma's nocturnal soul playing uncontained without the need  
Of life's illuminations to entertain my most unrequited of  
Graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Mother's Middle Name

Purple is the throat of the pagan flowers  
Up the Welsh slopes and their darker sisters- where  
It rains unevenly for the weeks, and keeps the tourists  
Inside- and the kings there wear antlers,  
And their baseball diamonds are ten feet underground,  
And when the ants crawl up too they are all of  
Different sizes and made of half hewn stones,  
But their sisters are beautiful, tossing their hair  
As they come out of the underground trains-  
And the foxes that they have there live in the hollows  
Of trees and eat figs and smoke pipes:  
And when they see her, they have this glint in their eye,  
And they are not even scared of the hunt until she  
Comes to them and bends down with her hand gesturing.  
Why, they are so quiet then that anyone can here the  
Toads ululating all the way from the carports and  
Wells of the hotel rooms stockpiled with tourists-  
And their legends are mute, and their horses are tamed  
In fields at the end of bruised cul-de-sacs while  
The soft mountains rise up in a chorus that happens to  
Sing of deer with antlers soft enough to fall  
Asleep under- and the sleepers remain there,  
Weeping, as the world that they lay under wakes up  
And moves on, with fireworks as quiet as maybe  
Pickpocketed across the banks of a river named after  
My mother's middle name.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Muse

They get married in their Winnebago's  
And drive looking across the pumpkin fields:  
In the sublime sunlight of the Midwest  
They open up the buttons of  
Their chests- and they drive through the golden  
Maize, never thinking of what lies beneath them in a daze:  
All of Mexico and her butterflies  
Stripped naked for the forked tongues of serpents  
And the yellow gold- browned skinned goddesses just  
Doing what they were told  
While I loved you waltzing in a catastrophic promenade,  
And her virtues splintered outwards from the church  
Of her inner church- and, yes, she became  
The anatomy of my soul;  
As she walked across the embers of my old high school,  
The waves gossiping enviously  
Knowing that they were not as beautiful as she was- my muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Muse And Silver Airplanes

Feelings in the falseness of these  
Bodies fills up a room,  
Giving us the same diction as her elbows  
And putting us at angles  
To us all:  
When outside, where the housewives  
Are basking like wet paint,  
What should we find in glades of their retinue:  
The trophies of their day long obsessions,  
Their yard men happy to please them,  
Or the firecrackers of truants:  
Or my fingers spread in yours, the higher hand  
Of a card game,  
The easy cradle for my birds- off in the soft  
Woods,  
Speaking different tongues- silent caresses  
In the sunshine or her cousin rains-  
Opulence- and blades of grass-  
My muse and silver airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Muse's Beautifully Scabbed Knees

Ashes of a forest fire sparked by paper airplanes  
Down through the secret mills and  
Cotton gins,  
Clouding the eyes of unicorns and tornados.  
Or the different ways to spell for her,  
While alligators lay sunbathing on the patio, prematurely the  
Happenstances of death:  
They wait for the long boys to get out of school and  
Spark fireworks that tear up a suburban sky,  
And they masturbate,  
Or anyways they make love:  
And they go down from this while the stewardesses don't  
Even wave goodbye-  
And it gets plain as day- that they are ready to leave,  
Even though the bones are dancing  
And dinners are served through the housewives like  
Waves, breaking again their patios for their husbands:  
And they do this in rows like spectators,  
Long after the flea markets and ferris wheels are closed-  
Closed,  
And the dogs lay scratching at fleas, and I lay on my floor  
And look up at my muse's beautifully scabbed knees.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Other Sad Psalm

I've been waiting for the soar throats of song birds to  
End,  
For the bath to fill, and for you to get naked;  
I have been waiting for myself to grow beautiful and big  
Muscled along the oracular streets of Saint Augustine;  
And I am learning Karate and watching my aunt cut up like  
Star fish into so many sisters:  
I have been defending myself and supposing up children  
So they too can spend most of their times in their  
Graveyards,  
Never forgiving all of the hallucinations which have left them:  
The cars and blimps and Eskimos:  
I am trying to perfect my weaponry to pierce your breast  
To bring you wounded home to me,  
To suckle and warm like a coral snake upon my chest:  
All of these bitter words like orphaned children waiting for a  
Home,  
Only because her womb was already wrecked and the night was too  
Cold to cut paper snowflakes to put on another act  
To perform my other sad psalm.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Parents' Horses

My parents' horses feed in the sky: they are big enough  
To devour the largest fire in Arizona's history,  
Or to feed from the hand of a god  
That knows all about them, and keeps them in his  
Petty zoo that I do not believe him, while I sit  
On my thinking rock at the end of the bluff and count  
The insouciant traffic, so far and so distant  
From West Palm Beach: the sky has her own palette  
Here I am sure that you do not know- and the fossils  
Lay beneath her like chalk-  
And when the moon comes out, the horses are yet  
There feeding,  
But they cannot imagine that the light that they eat  
Is not even hers to give.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Pessimistic Expectations

Empty and alone under a big  
White tent in South Florida.  
I could be shot any time,  
In the back while being alone,  
Which is significantly better than raising  
A house of embittered family,  
When thought about and realized that's  
The way it always works:  
Bicycles always rust,  
Cut flowers die, and eventually she drives  
Away into other skinny dives  
When you thought she might be pulling  
Into her driveway:  
And I don't know, but the traffic is so  
Plenteous and every car too is so afraid to  
Die:  
None of them swim upstream to deposit  
Their roe way up in the skyscraping backs of  
Her youngest god:  
Maybe they think she will turn off them,  
Maybe they think that they don't have a chance,  
But whatever it is they keep low and well  
Fed coming and going through the required hours,  
And she lays off of them,  
And takes pictures of herself in Colorado  
And hangs paper snowflakes from the clouds  
As she dabs her lips on her husband's  
Neophyte cliff: he doesn't know what he is doing,  
But unlike the traffic,  
He has no reason to be afraid,  
For she is gathering over him even now,  
As she is happily crying in the tiny glacial lakes  
Which crown  
A happy home so far away from the skittish traffic  
Of my pessimistic expectations.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Pitiful Earth

In the morning there are still roses,  
After the sororities have yawned,  
And the mists are leaving raising like stupid flags  
Above the elderberries and cockleburs:  
And it makes me wonder how Sharon got up,  
And how close to high school she used to live.  
I used to imagine she was very poor and just moved into  
To be a neighbor of affluence,  
But I don't know: Who am I to say,  
And she has gone a long, long way along her separate way;  
But the woods here are still all the same:  
Little saplings awakened bright eyed and singing,  
And she kissed them into an even bigger being-  
And somewhere over her shoulder where she has cut her hair  
Like a badge,  
Like a silky otter, the traffic is flowing-kidnappers and murder,  
Away and back again;  
And I suppose she doesn't care. She is so beautiful anyways-  
She just lets them all take her children for the day:  
Sharon, Sharon what are you doing?  
Won't you go on the rides with me? There are so many ways  
To go about disproving,  
The color of your eyes are disguised to me; and what am I doing,  
But I can see you there right out perfumed before my  
Aroused senses, complimenting your leggy extensions:  
You are flipping over a thousand times impervious to the expenditures  
Of this earth-  
The way you go about pretending you care about the boys  
Who are dying, it really makes me laugh:  
You know you are as tremendous as the sparks of immortal fireworks;  
I wonder even now what you might be doing,  
Combing your conspicuous tresses, floating so easily above  
My pitiful earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Poem To Her

Oh merrily we drink to rhyme  
And in the sad courts to waste our time:  
Singing our shanties red-nosed  
Akimbo,  
Down in the shanties of the legless assemblage:  
She says you love her with a wink,  
But all you say to her is  
Drink, drink, drink:  
Because if she was with you then she'd  
Sing, like a bird stuffed in a cage  
Weeping-  
Then you'd have to kick her out,  
Manhandle her tresses, sock her pout  
Until, trill and lined like a fish won for a game,  
All you'd garner from her would be  
Shame, shame, shame;  
Because, her body is beautiful, scarless and  
Young,  
And what she does she is free to do it with  
Ten fingers and tongue, tongue, tongue:  
This is just a job anyways,  
And I can do it with wink;  
And just as easily reflect to the sky,  
And swinging my good arm, sloshing my beer  
Calling her the same as my other old deer;  
For my rhyme has no favorites, no flight plans tonight,  
She might as well be a leggy stewardess on a  
Early morning red-eyed flight;  
And just the same as the girls on their bicycles of  
Game, I'll rhyme her with a wink,  
And end my poem to her with  
Drink, drink, drink.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Poetic Airplanes

We are always on the job  
And there is nothing worth crying about:  
That we don't know the names  
Of more expensive flowers,  
Made by scientists out of the dead body parts  
Of our wishes  
Into sweet and caring monsters who should  
Have never existed,  
And find their love all alone in the cold places  
The furthest away from  
Sunlight you can get on this leapy blue earth,  
Or grow on the underside of leapy blue airplanes,  
Like old fashioned barnacles  
Upon a galleons birth:  
And there's girls I love who aren't worth mentioning,  
And I sent out my doves  
But they all were eaten by hungry mothers  
Other than whom I have no social obligations:  
Their adopted wombs,  
Their erogenous sensations like the she wolf who  
Made every darn thing:  
She has gone back to the boreal swing, under the moonlight  
That doesn't exist,  
Which is the strangest of things, because her moon is  
Still there:  
And I just want an apartment, and a woman for a year  
To ruin my life again forever after,  
To help me disappear, like a circular foundling,  
Like the wild flowers who don't have a name  
Which I have greedily sowed well under the naked bellies  
Of my poetic airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Poor Muse's Sister

Last of the populations in the snows,  
Wearing the last of her feathers:  
The mountain, a breast—in her weathers  
and pussywillows—  
My dogs get lost in the heat of her summit:  
Two brothers, German Shepherds:  
We find them the next morning, they come  
Leaping, so glad to find us again,  
So we can carry them off: I guess neither one  
Of them weighs eighty pounds:  
Eventually, one disappeared, and the other  
We had to put down:  
And last year, selling fireworks, the entire  
Garden of Mount Escudilla burned:  
I fell in love with a Mexican girl, but very  
Little was returned—  
What joy that shown from my soul was not  
Enough to dissuade her from her husband who  
Used to beat her—So, eventually, I caught a plane to  
Shanghai, in an effort to forget her:  
And the mountain still stands, but she is full of  
Ghosts—and from her towers—her aeries—  
She can still see all the across the rivers and into  
Mexico, where my poor muse's sister is still laughing.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Prayer Book

The camera focuses on the pretty thing-  
It always does, even when the author is promoting  
His book,  
And in the theatre you can find me kissing her  
With rum on my lips,  
As the dog is hyperventilating back on my bed,  
My lonely bed I have slept on alone for nearly half  
A decade now,  
But it is unfathomable to consider I am not a superhero,  
And can't make flying suits out of tin  
And pilgrimages of spit:  
Instead, she sends out mass emails pleading with  
Strangers to help her strange lover to transcend  
And become a staple of pop culture,  
And the roaring crowd surrounding the rich clay  
Shapes of the baseball diamond:  
So I gladly vote for them to make love fully aware  
That there were no rock stars in ancient Greece,  
But hemlock and the zygotes of philosophy,  
And the traces of my DNA populating the tragedy of  
The rainy theatre, like weeds creeping about in the cracks  
Of the marble busts:  
And I have strange daydreams in the middle of summer  
Movies: That I will become discovered and easy,  
As we are all in the middle of the cemetery, even though  
There isn't much of the presence of death,  
And maybe I am still getting published, which will,  
After I have paid for the doe eyed girl's drinks, get me a  
Flash of Botichelli breasts, and the anthem of high school  
Athletes. In the dark, unidentified girls choose to sit  
Next to me, and I am pleased for whatever reason,  
Though I can't help but contemplate her lips pecking his  
Chest, diving in little wet sips the way hummingbirds  
Divine their daylight meals:  
When she goes to his orchestra to worship after silence.  
Now I will rhyme, because I am weak: Nothing is real,  
And, strange enough, it snowed all day in Northeast Arizona:  
Caked the roof of my car given to me my professor grandfather,  
March 22nd, and in less than a week my mother will be

Turning fifty-one, or fifty-two, but older, older,  
As the sun goes round again, like the earth's manager checking  
To make sure nothing is stolen, and that not too many two year  
Olds have died from plagues,  
And still most major poets are homosexual:  
Ginsberg,  
Rimbaud,  
Lorca,  
Nerduda too (but not Micheline or  
Bukowski- Oh, no, never,  
Though from time to time I have seen them  
Slapping the faces of my imagination)  
And there is a picture of Jesus on the thick door in  
The noisy abbey,  
But I cannot help still liking leggy women, particularly  
One:  
She knows who she is, and doesn't care,  
Because she has someone fully engorged in her mouth,  
To the tune of mortalities:  
And I can't blame her for her disinterest in my scarred  
Presocratic erections, far away across the populating sphere,  
For we have never rode a roller coaster together screaming,  
Melancholy fills the mind when I see kings,  
And they will not remember me,  
Because I am alone on my mountain with my dogs,  
And their lives are short, just a decade, maybe two,  
And then the great day will come when we will  
All be contemporary facing forever east,  
With little epitaphs carved by unidentified men  
Who have made their career out of painting lies  
For the inevitable deaths of all-  
The greater and lesser men,  
And the anonymous men who have no category,  
But a word or two paid by entrepreneurial fathers to  
Sell the riches out from under her forgetful seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Religion Of Many Saturnine Fables

I drink to my religion of many saturnine  
Fables,  
In the architectures of woebegone galaxies sung  
By the eagles in their patriotic  
Aeries,  
High up in the clouds of yesterday, and those  
Green summits  
Whose august cradles the birds sing in  
And making love;  
And in which I find you waking up with me,  
Your eyes the Bosque of brown butterflies,  
Your body a religious symbol all folded up like  
A kite asleep;  
And we don't have to do anything, but turn into  
One another, the way our mammalian gravities  
Are attracting  
To kiss and to sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Remaining Breaths

The rum is an anesthetic; it is also a truth serum:  
I took two Guatemelan boys past my yellow cottage today:  
We swam in a car down concrete rivers:  
I have the Virgin of Guadalupe on my back window  
Instead of my state university,  
Even though I have a master's degree: It is better this way,  
To buy houses with coquina fireplaces,  
To cram oneself into little rooms again that are as good as  
A century old,  
Because those places have experienced so many moons,  
And the earsplitting pleasures of bobcats  
And heavy machineries:  
Now today is Easter, or at least it will be this Sunday:  
And the church girls will drive out to churches,  
And the grave girls will drive out to graves:  
Just as the honey girls will lead the cheers and the bust nudely into  
The aperies of migratory apartments;  
And I will have to think of her in this way just so I  
Don't have to cry,  
As she slips out of her surplices and gives her time to the corduroy  
Gentlemen who have as little moisture in them as  
The sponges in the tidelands;  
And I will dream of her slipping like sleek boats through  
Watered down jungles, but only her eyes will brush pass me fawning  
Like hair-lit moons,  
Like places that have stolen their light from their parents or other  
Burning guardians;  
And she will go buy me light footed or winged: Then she will  
Be gone, though I will not be able to stop thinking about her while  
I draw my remaining breaths.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Reptilian And Jet Engine Way

I keep moving without moving:  
I keep tramping without song, and some folk call me beautiful  
Underneath the dark tresses of the  
Night so young,  
And I haven't been doing anything that hasn't been figured out,  
Like softly molested fingers pressing through the  
Youngish earth of graveyards,  
Like dragons who have just learned how to fly:  
And Alma is going back to school, and she is the brightest barb  
Burning before my eyes,  
While the captains sing out their next play,  
And the ghosts keep their cities in the rubble above the brilliant  
Though pigmy city randy along the outlines of the  
Pagan bay;  
And it has not been so long since I have felt her blood seep like  
Rich minerals, and pregnant, like red caves along the phallus of  
My charge,  
While Alma asked me today if it had really been five years since  
My last love,  
And I said yes, but did not go on to say that it was even longer,  
While witches send their curses across the soft deltas of the  
Bobbing airplanes;  
And if she doesn't know what is real, then I will not bother her:  
I will just suck her name between my teeth like the suicides  
Of virgins,  
Or something else that I have no business describing, before  
I go on along my reptilian and jet engine way.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Resting Body

Now the city really burns in its pageantry of clouds  
And I just thought of that and wrote it down,  
Like words in a library underground of my skull, while the kids  
Go skipping down their pubescent halls,  
And I am still wishing that I could have given up its all:  
The seat on the bus like the ticket inside a coward;  
The pretty girls munching like narcissistic cannibals inside the cheeks  
Of their own flesh;  
And I wanting to get it right all of the time, and becoming a weaker  
Creature all of the time because of the air-conditioning,  
And the cars parked in rows like imperfect diamonds:  
Like the teachers sitting at their desks, their minds and bodies wrecked  
And on the doll,  
So it should please me to say all of this, lounging in a stroll of my forests  
Of slash and pitch-forks,  
While the girls come up to me like curious fish, bodies shrunken into the  
Fruit of their poles,  
And the traffic goes by forever lushly,  
Like these words spilled ever outwards from the drunken glasses of my  
Quieted lips and my resting body.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Room Is Transitory

Green light flecks and splits  
Like the wings of a swan through the crooks  
Of a lime tree.  
Joe was born in Holland and his father farmed  
Pale celery in the upper muck bottoms  
Of Michigan.  
Tomorrow is thanksgiving and we're getting in  
A load of Christmas trees.  
I will think of you,  
While the steady hands of the sun hold my face  
Up for the inspection of  
So many harmless eyes;  
And I will think of you,  
And then at night when my mechanism is unwinding  
I will find new ways to be untrue to the unhappy  
Empiricisms required  
From this insurmountable fleet of tourists,  
Because I understand that my room  
Is transitory,  
But if I want to move on, all I need is you.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Scarred Yet Truesome Eye

If you havent been  
Able to make it  
Past  
Your progenitor's  
Inch worm projects,  
Go ahead  
And stick it  
To the man,  
Lay and  
Bask in the sand,  
Buy a cheap  
Kite,  
Let it tug your hand  
And watch it turn into  
A Chinese high school's  
Metamorphosis:  
I know you want it to,  
Without any obligations  
To ever have  
To lie  
While smiling again into  
My scarred yet true some eye.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Son, A Puppet

The time stopped clocking the avenues  
And the crocodiles looked up smiling the  
Entrails of one-armed Pirates:  
Little birds and angels in the sky seemed  
To say, or at least portend,  
That tomorrow was another school day,  
And the juvenile echoes got  
Brighter and brighter without end:  
With beautiful pages outside of their  
Habitats and adventures to go on we  
Do not know the names of—  
She has off and left us,  
Stewardess emolliated with the angels—  
Very impressive.  
And my wife sleeps. The dog is finally  
Off of his fours—  
A child is about to go outside of  
The tomb to see the bright day after  
The movie has ended—  
My son, a puppet leaving his cage  
To hold my hand.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Song Of Songs

Songs in the long windswept suburbia of empty tombs:  
Now you know exactly where I am, without reading this,  
Where my mind is bubbling like  
Unhealthy cauldrons, like purple bubble gum bubbles:  
And the buses turn around like the custard of  
Frightened ballerinas:  
They are returning their sweet children home;  
And I am over thirty and drinking rum.  
The sky is so cerulean that looking up at it, and trying to  
Believe,  
Why then most of the time I don't really want to die;  
But when it gets late enough, and everything slows down,  
Then I touch myself and think of ancient professors and  
Snow skis,  
And my next drink;  
And my time is mixed up between my two or three muses:  
Those who last within my like oracular candles,  
And then the ladies of the moment who are always  
Circulating in me like wind vanes, like the dancing Euripides;  
And so, I don't have to drink alone,  
Even though I am always alone:  
And these things come and do the cancan; it's what they're good  
For, and my eyes mow the yard of another house wife  
Without even having to be asked; it's just what they do,  
But they still aren't good at math; and that old high school just  
Keeps on going on and on,  
While old lovers continue their new songs with their  
Precipitous law makers;  
And I just keep singing my song of songs.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Spouse

She is already yours: and you can dream for awhile that this  
Remains here:

But you have made progress:

Like tourists going high up into the ice cream shops of  
Colorado with their just as many children,  
The marvelous wind chimes echoing them like the lost  
Children of Peter Pan:

You can go in anyways and flex your muscles, but it is the only thing  
She can still hear:

Warmed to the muzzle, as Heidi bites her teeth and learns her first  
Words:

You are making progress and catching the sunlight winnowing over  
The hopscotch of your penultimate grave:

While the clairvoyant boys from Guatemala count their lucky eggs before  
They're

Hatched, and the thief and his liar fly their kites above the  
Flea markets of their over pass;

But it always has to end like this: it does: it's true; and

Yvette certainly does have to be my sister in law, because I have been  
Ultimately respectful to alma and all of her rules;

While her soul and all of her names fire like bees keeping kindled in  
An apiary in a forest fire in the downtowns before the sea

Even before I bought my house; and now I am lonely,

But before long now I recollect that Alma- Alma will certainly have to be  
My spouse.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Stalwart Metamorphosis

Up in the apex of a Ferris Wheel,  
Looking down at where you live: going nowhere, turning  
Around,  
Like a tear falling on your roof to sleep,  
While my dog sleeps alone, and my house is the woods,  
And it feels good to be going towards you-  
Like foot traffic to Mexico, Alma; because if I am broken  
Stained glass, you are my muse;  
And the city accosts you, for to it you are the harem of its  
Wilderness,  
And you are blowing kisses of weather fronts, pushing away  
The invading armadas,  
And flexing your strength, bowing trees like your body,  
A brown stem wetting in my bed: good for starting fires:  
Snakes crossing the highway of your abdomen,  
Fireworks on holidays where neither of us belong;  
And then you are going home,  
Across the railroad tracks- to other constellations, to that  
Family I do not know, like foreign gods with hungry veins,  
Stealing into the coops  
Of my stalwart metamorphosis.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Town

In the rainstorm the trigger is cooling: The hand is  
Letting off,  
The barrel of the transom is smoking; something has been  
Done.  
Green is gone, and I've dropped off everything at the  
Library and come unwound:  
I sit and lie and take refuge: I remember the Pledge of  
Allegiance,  
Alligators must remember everything, since they  
Have not changed forever;  
And I wonder how the birds survive while the sky is  
Coming down,  
Or maybe that is just a rumor. Maybe you are still here,  
And have not packed up and left with everything of  
My town.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Unspoken For Friends

The nights tend to display for me each sorry number:  
And it would feel to me so much better to be all down  
Bellow,  
All in body and all in slow, sleeping in the six foot slumber  
Of the grave in the strata of graveyards that we all should  
Know:  
While bodies emolliate, while driver's slow,  
To look up at the delusions of wishes in the snowless show:  
Each single light something that should never  
Have existed:  
Alma, you will be kissing his lips, while I should be sleeping  
In the newly plowed dirt, waiting for the kiss of another  
Evil enemy defeated by your heroes,  
To awaken jubilant and jingoistic with so many of my  
Unspoken for friends.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Useless Senses

What have I finally done wrong  
Muse of shells and hourglasses- how will finally  
Fill up again after the rain,  
As the weather come down again  
Kissing the skirts of airplanes- the rivers  
Who ribbon the earth and touch all of her planes,  
Will lie in their basins and protect their mud:  
If I ever see you again, I am afraid it will  
Do neither of us any good:  
For the night of our predestined architecture has  
Past away with the summer- carnival of our  
Spent offerings did not bear any children-  
And I had no friends to share your honey-  
So go along now with your poisonous butterflies,  
Your bearded ladies and your lion  
Tamers- I will not see you when you leave  
For you've taken all of my vision from me:  
I have placed all of my lights outside the yard,  
And given your brown stems my useless  
Senses to take away.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Usual Catastrophe

In the four wheeled folly of meandering  
Bric-a-brac we keep our common destination to  
Ourselves:  
Housewives who are even now looking at me  
Don't see how much trouble I am in: How they might  
Save me with their own casual intimacy  
With their ravishing souls sunbathing in their  
Soft eyes:  
How you could save me if you had a sweet tooth for  
A dysfunctional starfish who knew we were  
All just animals,  
And even that was happening too quickly to happen  
Like sweet omelets frying in a pan of flash bang,  
With the most callous beauty foaming to the top  
Like the snideness of waves:  
They suppose they are angels, but the gravity has them  
So well pressed that they might as well hope to  
Be winged ants:  
And once everything really gets going its one fiery shift  
Into the next crimson ruby:  
You were born in July, and you are the most burnished of  
All the animals petal smashed on the highway,  
And I don't want to spend another night without you,  
But I will, won't I: and this is my most usual catastrophe.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Vagabonding Heart

As dear as the monuments that once climbed  
Up to look into your window,  
I see you bathing as a little girl, as you put green on  
Your body,  
And the butterflies gasp their melodies, and then go onto you  
To stamp in suicide  
Across that brown architecture that travels everywhere beside  
Your best man:  
Maybe even once he breathed beside you in the dun valleys of  
Kindergarten,  
And that is why you are so far into love that  
I cannot understand that you have tattooed that way,  
And the roads curl around you like bouquets of water snakes,  
And the sky turns up on its own and weeps over your bedroom,  
Over which, Alma, my vagabonding heart drunken tramps,  
And quakes.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Vanishing And Beautiful Bay

To the bodies who enjambment in spice and rigmarole:  
And to the parasols that never open up even in the rain:  
These are the emptied sidewalks of my adolescents to which I  
Have to complain  
Of my love to Alma, of my sweetly alcoholic and contemplative  
Art:  
That I have ejaculated into empty parks near the high schools  
Of my first loves and their moribund dinner prints;  
And never any of it was ever resolved,  
As if I were Frank O'Hara, as if I were really gay: and her legs parted  
Like a tennis courts of the red seas and that was all that there  
Was to say;  
But maybe you will be coming over again tomorrow and maybe we will  
Be making love,  
Because I really love you, Alma; and even though I wish to marry you,  
All I have is song;  
And you can never be my housewife, Alma:  
All you can be is my conqueror- all you can be, finally, is the emptiness  
Of sunset of my vanishing and beautiful bay.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Version Of The Cartography Of Your Heavens

I contemplate for a second how beautiful  
You are; I sneak into empty movie theatres  
To see its true;  
I masticate on the rinds of an imperishable world-  
I do all these things that are left better misunderstood,  
And your cities are the quiet place s kept  
On hooks,  
And nothing is told my your lips that can't  
Be promised;  
And I'm doing it again tonight, failing in my  
Anonymous way, my version of the cartography of  
Your heavens;  
I've finally dropped out of school and tight-roped  
Across the canal to figure out what is real.  
I am having real liquor to perform this feat. I am  
Writing so quickly,  
Hoping that they will call me Henry when I am dead,  
And resurrect everything that was never appreciated  
In spindling monuments- They can just be clouds  
As long as they hold your breath,  
And I can continue alluding to you forever from the  
Grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Very Own Alma

At the moment of existence, drunkenness- and all of the lights  
Bleeding away,  
Queasily, like in an office of newborns and coral snakes:  
And then I get into her car- Alma's car- and I see the child seat  
In the back seat, and if I look into the mirror, I would  
See all of my scars- and it seems like a novel I've already written;  
But it seems miles away,  
As if I were reaching up to feel the purring beliefs of airplanes:  
They pregnant themselves with the dreams of stewardesses,  
And the weathers hard and really rotten over the stately campuses of  
Our America:  
And I myself dreaming of doing good art, and trying to pull it up  
Like new found preciousness from the gardens of scree,  
With the lighthouse at the summit calling down:  
As if I could see her naked in her boudoir kissing the donkeys of  
The three wise men, bare-chested and expecting me:  
As she made love in Mexico and then grew tantalizing wings just  
Before me; and then wretched herself from my soul:  
As if a songbird making a jailbreak from my ribcage: and then nothing  
Else to do, but stagger and starve on my old blood, as my very own  
Alma flew away.

Robert Rorabeck



# My Very Own Heart

The belly of a cathedral hung over with the winos of  
My hermitage:  
Remembering the last cause of the knights to crusade, and  
Sauntering into exhaustion,  
To bed with harlots, to get tattoos somewhere no descript  
Along the greasy road:  
The toads were ululating, transforming the tadpoles  
From the early breakfast of blue gills:  
The little girls across the canal were paper, paper,  
With wet lips, with eyes of grapes stolen from foxes,  
Tantalizing like my muses from Mexico-  
Airplanes were berets in their hair.  
Their hair was the sugarcane emolliate- the scars on her  
Brown cheeks  
The panthers and key deer in a zoetrope that stole my very own  
Heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# My Wishes That Will Soon Be Gone

I am not here and yet  
I am not very there: perhaps I am not anywhere,  
But the traffic rolls and the relatives  
Come to visit relatives  
Under the seeking planes- under the juju bees,  
And the sad tips of weeping mountains:  
I am there, or I am not:  
I am vanished like a fortress, or a swing-set:  
Alma, or a forget me not:  
And I could very well smell you right there  
Today  
Even though you were gone,  
Like the airplanes that touched down from here  
Were swept away into the sky:  
Oh, Alma: they were gone; they had migrated like  
A baseball game,  
Even though my mouth was so wet, and there was all  
Of these opposing sex of my species growing up so young and  
Springy in the grasses;  
And maybe all of this is of your song, Alma,  
Because I told you that I was a gringo, and I only had need  
For the rhythm of one beating of one heart, Alma,  
And that is your heart,  
Even if I am woebegone, even if you sleep beside the man you  
Love;  
It is still only the one rhythm of your beating heart that I kill myself  
Over,  
And upon which I blow my wishes that I will soon be gone.

Robert Rorabeck

## My Word

I am trying to weave a  
Finely glowing net for you,  
To catch you as you swim by  
As you stare up from the  
Milky waters your emerald  
Looks giving me the evil eye,  
But I will drag you up  
And let you breathe....  
I will teach you how to speak  
And I will set you free,  
Because there is almost no  
More time for us,  
Gas and travel are  
Getting so expensive  
And running alone is  
No good for you....  
So, here I am searching  
In my little boat,  
As icebergs groan and creak  
All in these waters  
Like drowning gods frozen  
By the infinite space....  
I have brought a bushel  
Full of red delicious apples  
That I will use to chum  
The waters,  
To make you want to kiss.  
Then I will pull you  
Up and show you a new world,  
I will teach you how to walk,  
And the first word out of your  
Lips, as they taste the new day's  
Fine young oxygen,  
Will be mine....

Robert Rorabeck

# Myself

Overgrown with careworn tundra,  
The sky is yet friendly after holocaust the way  
Mountains pretend to be beautiful in their  
Apathy  
Like a woman bathing forever, taking her time;  
So many summits of knees and bosom  
To reach a place that cannot mend, dredged by  
Ancient allusion  
So busied by tourists searching out new trinkets  
From her quarry;  
Each claiming to be the next best artist of her  
Topiary's garden;  
And when she rises the end of the world in a balmy  
Night as she slides into something wonderful  
And saunters off like a galaxy of symmetrical  
Avenues to become again against  
The only man she has waiting for her in bed  
Until the night shutters in a garden full of purposeful flowers she  
Would not allow me to give her myself.

Robert Rorabeck

# Naked And Inspective

Wrecked in the fjords of green presents-  
Diademed by the dead skin of dragon flies and their  
Long forked tails-  
The homeless knights, beards unshaven- are always  
Sleeping,  
Where the fattest wildflowers would grow,  
If there was ever any light: it gets so much tears,  
And we set up our tables  
To sell the most humblest of things to the patrons  
Who are not there  
Anyways- Evaporated into the exegisis of  
Sunlight- Now their wings are spread- and they  
Are the voyeurs of fairytales where they are not  
Pretty enough to  
Belong- and we sing to them, our wounds cleverly  
Arranged- we seem to be playing ourselves:  
Until we are done,  
And hanging on a cornice the blue eyed women spy  
And come around us naked and inspective.

Robert Rorabeck

## Naked And Planning New Retreats

Like the pamphlets read,  
A memorable ibis in the home of  
The dogs,  
And now even the houses move,  
Following the housewives after  
The storm of their leaving—  
Following them across the canals  
And into the fairy tales' neighborhoods—  
Awakened, a little boy amidst  
The rattle snakes congregating on his  
Front lawn—  
From the ocean, pearls—  
Up in the sky, opalescent, laying down  
The censures of time—  
Did they see her leaving, or did  
They look the other way?  
After all, no one returns from high school—  
Not in their right mind,  
But she is over the ocean now—  
Beautiful, naked and planning new  
Retreats.

Robert Rorabeck

# Naked Eros

If there is somewhere a wheelbarrow as red as naked  
Eros,  
Filled with cut flowers bought where they also sell bread  
And Lipstick;  
And if there are hands, even if wearied-  
Weather-locked hands of a grandmother or one of  
Her many daughters- twins -  
To take all the sad flowers up to boot hill to put on the grave  
With rag and polish for the stone;  
Even in the eye of a hurricane, or on a weekday afternoon  
While truants are flipping arcs on the green,  
And talk shows run gabbing through many a lonely living  
Room,  
And furtive husbands come home with baseball bats of liquor,  
After they have spilled so much rum on the red diamond.  
Now there is only a coyote loping into the mist,  
Unafraid of his own name, smelling under the bleachers the salts  
Of snacks and sex,  
And the memories up on the hill whipping like prayer flags,  
Then what need is there for these words,  
What need is there for words at all?

Robert Rorabeck

# Naked Narcissus

If I put my pen to you and scrawl,  
Longingly like a pining god, would I bring  
Reason to you, or the thoughtfulness of a pacaderm,  
Or only mar the flesh;  
But if I do it, let me come at night and think  
Beneath your clothes, and line up syllables denoting  
Seasons like a military parade,  
For I am fearful of other lovers, Caesars and languid  
Matadors, men whose tongues must extrude  
The fermentations of European seas, the homelessness  
Of vagabonds of Paris, the tragic sensuality of the Greek,  
And when I was away doing my patriotic duty,  
Laid down in your sylvan sheets, you take them to  
Your secrets and put their francophone tongues  
On your belly in invisible romance, their musk extrudes  
From their vine, veins like either pollen or hypnosis,  
So upon returning, if I lie with you and by flashlight  
Scrawl my hard-won jaunts beneath your breasts,  
Above your navel, while you giggle and delight spontaneously  
With me like any other, and upon daylight returning  
To your other woman, a work or a study, and let your  
Eyes linger on the casualness of convenient opposition of  
My sex, content yourself to know I am as your narcissus,  
Interested only in the words I might find fluttering that day,  
To capture and pin in lines along her inner thigh  
So proudly and unsuspecting....

Robert Rorabeck



# Naked Rains

Naked rains on Saturday:  
We don't work. We look at her,  
Chartreuse or persimmon  
Without skin, or sad on the  
Linoleum. A pagan for every man,  
How she hunts, and I can say no more,  
But that she is there beneath stucco  
Banisters, and the mirages of ceiling  
Fans; On Sundays a pigskin  
Pressed to her nipple, her eyes wide  
Open her allure, the pebbles of costume  
Jewelry swing against her chest,  
Speckled and tugged as if by robins  
From within an egg; so they moan,  
And she hatches,  
The catastrophes of touchdowns,  
But I should say no more....

Robert Rorabeck

# Named For Another Man

The snake's skin is cast amidst the  
Night blooming Jasmine along the green chain-link  
Fence,  
Where it must have disrobed sometime last night  
After the fairer cars had passed,  
And when the entire park was its stilled abode:  
Up to the nocturnal blooms it strode,  
For a kiss by a creature that buds like flame:  
Just like that she kissed me-  
My soft skin lay torn on a tangled yesterday-  
But she went back to her husband,  
Even if he was never home: and lay beside her daughter  
Whose ribs were not mine-  
Destroyed into the promises of metamorphosis,  
I climbed underneath the airplanes that did not wait  
For me- She remained, beautiful- named for  
Another man- not for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Narcoleptic Magics

This time, I am  
Going straight to grandmothers:  
I mean, I am not cutting out  
In the middle of  
School—  
To join the forest of my knotted sisters:  
Who are trying to  
Metamorphose into a wishing well  
Of gold coins—  
Of quartz—and topaz—And I will not  
Go outside, even when I hear strangers passing  
In front of my house,  
Gossiping of tin men, and straw men,  
And lions that yawn fearlessly up to the sky:  
I will just go down to the bank of  
My canal and watch and listen,  
And feed the blue gills the bread crumbs of  
My abandoned lunch—  
And when there are shadows spreading over  
The emptied pews of bottle rockets  
And roman candles—  
Perhaps I will hold my own soul in my little  
Hands for just a little while,  
Like some gold fish won as some cheap prize  
At a gypsy's fair,  
Before it ran away from me, packing up on all  
Four legs and striking for the sea—  
I know the housewives will say whatever they  
Want after it has left,  
Just as long as they leave me to myself—  
And the sunlight creases the abandoned lot  
Where the Ferris wheel once danced—  
Like a tortoise,  
And you once kissed my very neck at its apex:  
Over the highway and the strip malls,  
Before abandoning how we felt—  
And going home to a husband and your children,  
The lights of the television flickering in your  
Otherwise grotto, using its narcoleptic magics

To keep you from imagining who you ever might be.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nation Of Used Car Love

If your warm legs were seen by your husband,  
How would he spend his time kayaking  
On you like the Loxahatchee  
River:  
I can only smile like a belly of mud to think how he has done  
It to you every time for seven happy years or more  
In little trailer parks upon the beds of the homely river:  
Does it feel differently than the other boys who did it to you before,  
To make you feel, your despondent corneas never dilating,  
Never turning channels.  
The greater monoliths of the sky were never christened after you,  
Nor the amusement parks they were created for,  
But I think they should have- if you had given me this time,  
What a country we would live in:  
Beautiful, vibrant, huffing like an entire paratroop of hearty men;  
And the turnstiles never evacuating,  
The musicals without interruption, the constant pollinations of  
Joyful traffic, and the little boys flying around and fornicating  
With the hi-jinx of their bicycle sports-  
The greenness of limpid unicorns you've never experienced  
The new car smell of my thorax and a-jax.  
We could drink to your children of both atmospheres,  
And all the sixteen forbidden seas. Didn't I say that I knew your shadow  
Was more precious than the legs of every lathering ibex;  
But you just fell in love with a coworker, as they say that they  
Always do; and that is your nation of used-car love.

Robert Rorabeck

# National Feeling

Open yellow branches inside the yellow  
Sun—I don't know why it feels so good to be feeling  
As much as you've told me to feel—  
Branches over splaying throughout all of the estuaries:  
This is the song of all of those reruns while  
Across the open orchards the water moccasins  
Fawn—open mouthed—and keeping to their guns:  
Their beautiful or chartreuse bellies open as the playgrounds  
That here eyes meant to feel—as then there is unto them  
A national feeling to her eyes—or another part all  
Strung out through the echoes—and all of the midgets  
Run away and string their clothes into the parks—  
Figuring out whatever it was that she was forever meant to feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# Natural Disaster

Tenures of rain and all the world a song,  
Girls tramping in voices that get deeper but are  
Never more than shallow:  
Seemly reflections in the Pentecostal refinement  
Underneath windmills which are like  
Out of doors ceiling fans: There is no refuge from the  
Airbuses of her eyes:  
This is her drowning revelry, and she has all day to  
Mouth off:  
Cloudy sky her canopied bed, she rises like a nocturne  
Punching a face in the middle of its day,  
Cutting out a harelip of summer, and giving it all back  
To us as some sort of perfectly crucified gift  
Run over by joyriding cars: This is what she's had to given  
Us for our birthdays:  
This is what we's gots to make wishes on, and it seems  
That it is enough to keep us sucking through our teeth,  
Our body the road kill of her deluging palaver:  
She curves and it gives us something again to believe in;  
She bends like a flag in her angles,  
And it is enough to put the children to bed in the middle of  
A natural disaster.

Robert Rorabeck

# Natural Equations

College algebra made me scratch  
My head—I had to take it twice,  
But after class following the girl in  
The miniskirt, I finally understood  
What made the mathematicians so  
Interested—  
The ever changing triangle made  
By her legs and the sidewalk kept me  
Hypnotized, like a moving bridge under  
The sun, leading up to the canopied  
Summit, the cool underside that threatened  
Harlotry's revelations,  
The desire of all men to do mathematics  
Laid there, the will to add one body plus another,  
The indented shape of nature's trap  
Swaying in its white cottoned hood,  
And her smile not in her eyes but on  
Her lips saying it was okay,  
She wanted you to look, and to understand  
Her through simple additions....

Ever after, when I saw a woman, I  
Recognized her as nature's beautiful  
Numbers and the motions she took, the  
Strange and enticing algebras she put on  
For men—The arc of a woman on a swing-set  
In the bright sun, added to it the movement of  
Her long auburn hair, swaying seemingly chaotic,  
But each swish of motion, a new equation impossible  
To calculate, unless she let her hairs splay in  
Your hand, to catch sunlight through,  
Then you would know the solution, which  
Was her lips multiplied on yours'.....

A woman swimming in the ocean near shore,  
Her body becomes a point from which a line can be  
Drawn through the plane of crashing surf, as if she  
Was swimming about in an attempt to distinguish  
Right from wrong, and when she steps out and



Disrobes from the sea into the sunlight's true shower,  
She becomes the first mathematical  
Proof to which your eyes can comprehend the universe,

So when I returned for my second attempt at  
College algebra, I wetted the tip of my pencil on  
My tongue and set to work  
Putting to paper all that I had found out;  
Woman was the answer  
To all the equations, simple and true—  
The professor, an understanding bachelor in his  
50s gave me a respectable B, because he granted  
I had found the first universal solution,  
The sad and hungry desire, to all of  
Humanity's mathematics.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nearer And Then Farther Away

Long avenue that is the serpent of our history,  
We live in trailer parks that do not exist  
And drink beer beneath the deer antlers—and go outside  
In the rainstorms for a piss—  
And I have loved my women here—browned skinned  
Daisies continuing up into the stars:  
Goldilock's who do not know whenever they will  
Be getting home—  
And love that disappears into the insouciant of nocturnal  
Bars:  
Feelings in the rhythms of my glass—another way to go  
Home before I sleep—  
Terrapin and hobos sleeping beneath the overpass—  
Soft whispers against her absent minded cheek—  
The lactations of a world that moves so far away from here—  
Crystal clear rivers bleeding from an ocean  
That rushes nearer and then farther away from her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nebula's Lasting Wish

I don't know how to  
Hold back.  
As soon as I wake up  
I use up all my batteries.  
I shoot all the arrows from  
My quiver into her heart at once,  
But she is still standing.  
I take up the rosy mountain  
With it's rainy fedora on  
My shoulders  
And place it on her doorstep,  
So she can step outside  
And go skiing.  
I swallow the oceans  
And all the seas  
To fill up her vases, and  
Then I hold up the  
Netherlands at gunpoint,  
To steal every last one of  
Their flowers, which I present  
To her with a box of chocolates.  
I swat down airplanes and  
Nearby planets I string together  
With the guts of comets to  
Make a mobile I hang over her  
Bed, to put her to peaceful sleep.  
I pull up the skin of the earth  
For a blanket to keep her warm  
From November to February.  
When I wake up,  
I have mighty great strength,  
But I don't know how to hold  
Back for her.  
As soon as I wake up  
I use up all I have on her,  
Until my gravitational field  
Becomes weak, my electrons escape,  
And I come apart in a fiery nebula  
That watches over her helpless

To do more for her all of her days,  
Except that I can shine down through  
Her window at night,  
And she can read for as long as she  
Wishes by my dying light.

Robert Rorabeck

# Neighboring Heavens

Little heart palpitating onto the stone, lathering  
In a daydream outside of the movie theatre that doesn't  
Exist anymore:  
But pale heart, exercised from the chariot of a good  
Body,  
Plagiarized for the ants in the grasses, with the azure  
Easter eggs,  
The snakes with gaudy mouths coming around  
Sometime after the nurseries,  
And laying there smiling, like one long silver bone  
Underneath the moon,  
Stealing things from a nest of earth, as she does  
The same to the neighboring heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Neither Handsome Nor Romantic

So you have a pool  
And you pay your dues to the gated community:  
I have three dogs  
And all my teeth and scars;  
I can slip in anytime I want and slap my scarred  
Belly and smear your beautiful crenulations  
While you and your lawful others snore:  
I can proclaim to the sky,  
And all that is my natural habitat revealed with  
The saber-toothed alligators when the lightning  
Flashes:  
I can sell my things, and keep on waiting to be  
Published;  
I can fish all night on the Lake Worth Pier,  
Because I've been thinking all day long that I am  
Frightened but insouciant;  
I haven't bought new clothes in ten years,  
So I doubt I'll be able to eat under the ambience of  
Your phosphorescent dress codes, dear;  
But I am hung over, and in general I appeal to Lucifer  
While the rocks are gossiping atop the  
Highest spurs of our America; I don't believe you've  
Ever made it that far,  
Where the dogs are scratching in the snow,  
Drunken the goblet of Vampires? No;  
But I'll let them in to creep in a silent chorus line  
Long toothed, hungry for you- sheep;  
I almost failed high school, because I constructed a swing-  
Set in my tomb, and all day long arced in it  
Like a censer in a silken loom- And I remember  
Stealing your bicycle, and riding it between Chaucer and  
The South of France,  
Down in the humid belly of Florida where the professors  
Danced;  
And now you are husbanded in your jocular curfews;  
You don't remember the scheme that I planted with you-  
It's like as if I was always told, I'm only 1/64 Jew,  
And too you it means nothing- the night is askance,  
Abrupt and unromantic- I can see you highlighted in the

Dinner theatres of the theatric Titanic;  
I have to cover this new half of my face as I think  
Of other girls on recently discovered planets-  
Ending this session, I must admit that, yes,  
I've lost track of something,  
Neither handsome nor romantic.

Robert Rorabeck

# Neither Of Our Disquieting Mothers

Heart beating the hallways of nostalgia, the water fountains  
The valves, and your eyes the doorways and the transoms:  
And all of it this delightful truancy, where I never met  
You,  
But I met you out in the pure, naked swings, out in the  
Green corridors of my semi-adult intentions,  
And did my best to greet you with the quiet though savage  
Gifts that I knew only I could provide,  
While all of the traffic bemoaned myself, and both of our houses  
Lay as silent as awaiting ballrooms,  
For neither of our disquieting mothers were attending home.

Robert Rorabeck



# Neither Shadow Nor Sleep

Set up in the fanfare of cemeteries,  
Hocking these same old words, having no business  
To do with sports-  
But just girls I once never knew, who clung close and  
Separated near their backyard pools,  
Who found surcease away from the tidal swells,  
Who closed up at night, eyes pinched shut,  
Dreaming of Appalachian dells, and beautiful greased boys  
Who came awake like blue bells;  
And I even went to her house once, and drove her in my  
Old spider truck,  
And she has the brownest eyes- I'll tell you what,  
But she doesn't care to fly on my broken wing  
(I can barely fly myself) So that I don't travel anymore:  
I buy poetry books thriftily for twenty cents and read  
Them in my truck,  
And put them down and bite my scarred lip,  
And then she wearies and sleeps in unwound coitus-  
That's what she does when the busses get weary and are  
Eventually put to pasture- What are those buses doing that  
Once drove us separately into those clutches of cormorants,  
So peacefully put together  
By chicken wire and ambergris- For the world never slows  
For the tired or the ceasing,  
And I am sure she is just like all the world, her brown eyes  
Never creasing but burning like open wells, like spumes in the  
Desert  
She goes on all night, thirstily drinking the amber sky,  
And in its open wounds her reflection crackles constellations of  
Spinning tires pin wheeling and sloughing off tears of  
Gasoline-  
And so she burns in her nations that no neither shadow nor  
Sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nerves At The Bottom

Nerves at the bottom while the blind men felt their  
Castles—and the feral cats pretended to know  
So many poets—and the world was struck out  
Like baseball into its séances—  
And the pleasantries of movie theatres and baseball  
Diamonds were washed out—  
And the schemes that you happened to have didn't  
Come true forever—but they discovered a planet  
That just floated—as the young man gets a  
Tattoo of his mother on his forearm—  
And the better part of the world has to swear that  
She will live forever—franchises of drive in movie theatres—  
And the night is the void of a kite that is stolen—  
And this place is a poem like a scar of a highway told to  
The lights of a primordial juggler—  
And then they are in the shadows or wherever -  
And the albino alligator pretends to live there for ever—  
And, yes—and, yes—it just so happens that he  
Does live there forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nests Of Naturalistic Adulteries

If the rivers of spikenard are blowing over her  
Shoulders,  
What is the tiger singing over the trailer parks while  
The biggest of forest fires blows out all of  
Her candles,  
And she falls down sighing his name,  
Like a mermaid placed upon a swing or a metronome  
Of a kindergartener or a famous musician-  
And the words spread across her like reasonable  
Bonfires or other out of control similes,  
Until Christmas was over, and all of the familiar gods  
Were down,  
Or up in the claustrophobic attics above the houses-  
While the truants farted and skipped school  
And lit off roman candles through the palmettos  
And masturbated like winos  
To girls they could barely see in their visions:  
Girls with bare shoulders speckled underneath the  
Australian pines- girls with hair lips and freckles,  
Cousins who you might have played doctors with  
Who no somehow have become  
Stewardesses for conquistadors who are always flying  
Towards the unconquerable hemispheres,  
The names for her like serpents biting their lips,  
And her birthday candles all lighted up and burning in  
Their beards, like songbirds stealing jewels to  
Build nests of naturalistic adulteries.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nets Of Honey

Nets of honey spooled around a muse that doesn't  
Exist—you get up in the morning and wash his car,  
Waiting for your husband to come home—  
The neighborhood of your existence is gilded if beautiful—  
And you are all of the tricks of a two headed coin that  
Once touched my bedroom—now you are in the flight  
Of your life, never learning how to leave the ground—  
Loving him from inside all of your nests with the hopes  
That hibernate straight through all of the sunbeams—  
Hoping that very soon there will exist a season for all of  
You holidays, and the old days can be forgotten—  
The infidelities, and the money that you owe me,  
And you can go on hanging by his side, finding new ways  
Of getting around the absences of loving him year by year.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never A Tourist In My Lines

Over the current years I've replaced  
Each lost part until the entire  
Man came to be made of tin;  
And my old dogs and my new dogs love  
Me just the same;  
And it is the same moon over yours and mine  
Head,  
But maybe it is not proper English:  
There are layers of clouds like frosting and fluff  
Up to the moon candied by airplanes  
And impolite boys who are taking their time on  
Your trapeze and not giving me my chance  
At petting up;  
And you've gotten as fat as a super confident alligator,  
Even if you are not quite as Saturnine,  
But I don't know about you, or how you really smell.  
Do you smell like your new car,  
And where are you going back and forth along your  
Chartreuse boulevards singing the favorite  
And popular songs of your ballrooms;  
And I don't want to have to wake up tomorrow,  
But I guess I will, if only because my lion outfit  
Is made out of two real lions skins; and I've already vanquished  
The gunfights who had any chance into the creek,  
And now all the girls are congratulating me,  
As I sing like the last song of a song bird at the mouth of  
The mine,  
And looking up I see the cross of minors standing out against  
The skree and snow;  
And I know nothing except that death is kind, and I  
Was never a tourist in my lines;  
And this I know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Around

Aspens are all naked now,  
And I am not around to see them- to let them  
Remind me of you  
Lost on your dime store moons:  
Just little breathable things, as round as a suburban  
Yard;  
If I were bound on some narrow gauge railroad  
I'd go to the concession car and buy over priced  
Hotdogs and caramel corn,  
And crack some expensive farts and think of you,  
Because that is why I am getting around,  
To climb those mountains who are your sleeping sisters,  
While you as well are sleeping even as you  
Move around, selling things;  
But you transcend your assets,  
But I am not around to see them, and my dogs are chained  
In the yard even as the trees are shivering,  
And the airplanes brush their continuous hands through  
The tops of their lustrous canopy,  
And somewhere above the town the sky opens up to  
Blow your hair in wimpled concessions,  
While in high school I crawled like a featureless terrapin  
Underneath the broken down school bus and made it my  
Shell,  
And loved you even though you were never around.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Belong To Me

Scars of this impotent fjord make me spill my  
Juices,  
And everyday is done,  
And I have ridden through the hours and counted  
On my fingers that it was fun,  
And the waves go on forever lapping,  
Repeating the multiplexes of my rum;  
And the days go on forever,  
And the tent breathes with the children of the gun,  
And I think of you and put you in the runny aquatics  
Of my masticated truancies;  
And I've said your name and called you out,  
And you are so beautiful,  
And I suppose I want to tell you that you are so beautiful:  
You are so beautiful and it is fun to tell you  
You are so beautiful,  
Like floating, like being a super hero, and a success  
Science experiment,  
As I try to look into your eyes from several states over,  
Even though I am not,  
And all I can hope for is to punch dream so anonymous  
Children between the thighs of a likewise anonymous women,  
Like a voting ballot while thinking about you  
And biting my tongue,  
Like working on a stolen car between the clefts of godly,  
Oh so f%cking godly mountains  
That will never belong to me....

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Close Enough To

Scars mote me like a dark age field.  
A space craft wrecked in a dying meadow,  
And epitaphs to sailors who are better off fed to the  
Sharks:  
I want to move into my own holocaust and drive  
Cars which are cooler than me:  
I'm going to work at Wal-Mart or Burger King,  
And watch goddesses climax on the silver screen  
Who are better than me,  
Who are adept at servicing their trifling, burnished  
Gods:  
I'll watch teenagers surfing the ocean, coming like the  
Spume of bouquets- wont it be so romantic and  
Tranquil and medicated,  
And now I try not to look at my scars-  
I listen to Johnny Cash, as I pass on through the  
Awful séances of another day I shouldn't spell-  
Back into the daylight where teachers never believed in me,  
Where she smiled and turned away  
And cut her hair for another man, and I had nothing left  
To do but truancy, the funny skip over the ripple of  
Suburban corrugation; and now she has married,  
And is in another state, wearing clothes I've never seen  
Nor smelled on her;  
And Delia's gone, and I've nothing left to do  
But go bowling in between classes,  
Tipping my glass to that green swan making romance under  
The bitter swings who never thought to change for me,  
So that I forever remain the toothy fox leaping for the  
Wild scuppernongs,  
The nursery rhymes succulent on their northern boughs,  
The real-estate of really sexy graveyards I somehow  
Still remember,  
Bending low enough to worship but never close enough  
To touch.

Robert Rorabeck



# Never Coming Down

This is where I live: this is where I live  
Is good,  
As I am starving on liquor, as it feels alright to  
Estrange myself before the hospitals of the jungle of  
Your eyes,  
But I am naïve,  
And the arcades are all Nordic and blue and filibustering  
For the heroes desposed of in plane crashes:  
Now the mountains never close, as I  
Am becoming homeless again, while the sun is  
Going down and I  
Am moving towards you: and this is my art, Sharon-  
That you can never feel,  
But I am still moving towards you, while all of the horses  
Fall asleep standing up in their fields,  
And I can't even suppose that you can truly feel me now,  
While all of our grandmothers have fallen asleep in their  
Graveyards,  
And time marches on,  
And Alma's fleece is so brown, and it has spread across me,  
And time has slowed down,  
And her lips have embraced me, and it was the warmest sound  
I have ever felt or stolen,  
Even while she wants to be alone, and asleep with her own man  
Flung across the fields that even the richest of heroes can  
Pretend to have defeated  
Across the diadem of islands, that talk amongst themselves like  
Sisters,  
While all of the ships have wrecked underneath the holidays of  
Clouds that are so sad and weeping;  
But deeply christened into their holidays; and they are never coming  
Down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Dreams

Little birds, wounded ones:

Hung up on the trees, under suns-  
Laughed with echoes from the mines,  
From the throats of mountains

Freckled by wildflowers:

The mountain lions run, chase the snowmelt  
Like lovers-

They go down until there is no fear,  
Where they have no brothers, but are met upon  
By eyes who cannot see, who have never  
Seen, and who are blinded:

And through those they leap, vanishing,  
And carrying on- down roads that move not a single  
Step, upon the lips breathing of the open throat  
That through all of its sleep never dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Enough To Say

I drink beer and eat cold hamburger.  
Romero bought all of these airplane beers,  
And I down them while I try and figure out  
What to say:  
I want my words to be paper snowflakes:  
I want to play football with paper lions,  
But school has been over for so long, that  
I don't know what to say.  
My great uncle is the head of his department;  
He studies the meaning between the stars:  
Right now we're selling pumpkins,  
And my day is so long and scarred:  
I'd rather be jumping trains- My day rained all  
Day, and from somewhere a giant snake spoke  
In my ear and told me things I wasn't suppose  
To say; and there were weddings and funerals,  
And the stars skipped a beat,  
And I wonder how that's supposed to work out,  
That we are all leaving on impenetrable voyages,  
For it seems that people are leaving each other just  
As readily as each of these universes;  
And to reach out and touch someone through the  
Epileptic pulsars is just never enough;  
And you have your daughter's eyes, but there is  
Just never enough to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Found

Mastiffs bark and flick their skulls like flint,  
Like machetes against bright copper telephone  
Poles,  
And your sister lives in Saint Augustine where  
I once rested,  
And smoked the stolen spikenard from a blue  
Creche of piggish infants  
Until I was alone and in the shade;  
And I didn't even have a lawn chair or a phone,  
Just the parade  
Of things that used to live in pretty shells,  
And the old fashioned conquistadors courting their  
Iodized mermaids,  
Or at least that was what they were trying to sell,  
But nothing lived there anymore,  
And it was just the ghosts of failed students slipping  
From the shores of that  
Beautiful hotel,  
Swimming in their rooms and making love for the  
First time  
Once again happening into many lives filled with  
Such glances of longing as to compete with  
The sky of stars,  
The sail boats wandering beneath them all like the bruised  
Lips of lovers, entomologists the lights search for  
But never found.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Home

Oh, the days are poor with only family-  
Hermaphrodites to my scars, can anyone see me:  
But Diana says I am beautiful:  
She is the best looking woman I have seen in fifteen years-  
While my doggies die, I jack off to her,  
And the city leaves; it takes up its pittance of roots and leaves,  
Shoots off just like rockets into the skies,  
But who gives a rabbit's sh%t for all of those Russians;  
Tremulous in the quietly insipid orange groves of Spain,  
Girls I have loved I will never see again-  
Set off castaways to state college and further into their  
Oort Clouds, their propitious, unsolicited after-lives-  
I don't know what I am doing;  
After the ululations of the arcades of nothing, a plane shot  
Down, something quaintly commercial, and I am going down  
In the comfortable armchair of an amusement park,  
Cotton Candy, gold fish- I forgot how to have fun,  
And the fair is leaving before I could even be born,  
Even while there are still some girls who still wish they could  
Love me if only if I were beautiful,  
As beautiful as Colorado, or the planes higher up,  
Where the angels end their play well sated, mopping sweat like  
Pearly sororities off their brows,  
Going home, being tucked into a bucket of chummed wings;  
And now you are with child, and now you are utterly alone,  
While the amusements croak, while the amusements  
Groan:  
I am the only one who loves you, who has ever loved you;  
And you have always loved me-  
I have rung your bell, but you are never home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Land Again

Why there isn't a sound outside-  
The sea is so far away, in a thimble,  
In a fairy-tale of threes:  
Three little pigs, or  
Three Billy goat's bluff, or  
The Pardoner's Tale- Three petals  
Left of limpid seashell,  
Because the waves have gone away from here-  
They have gone far from shore-  
Little girls are putting seaweed into pails,  
And there isn't a mother around-  
Will they ever come back from the uncanny  
Shoals, or will they disappear like magic tricks?

There isn't anyone on the swings,  
And runaways are not inside their grandmothers'  
Cars: I don't know where they are,  
But even here there are plastic bouquets in  
Tin horns crawling with ants,  
And rows of powdery sororities fast asleep  
Like royal crypts;  
And sweet, lonely men dancing naked before  
Their mirrors,  
Physics professors who look like Jimmy Stewart,  
Who are my great uncles,  
And the heads of their seven day departments,  
Water skiing on blacksmithed lakes;

And I am going away too  
On a silent ship into a silent room,  
Leaving behind all those things that never called,  
Leaving behind the most foggy of seasons:  
Going to where the gas-lights stay on all night for  
Truckers, where lovers always seem to slip away,  
Disheartened, where there are always vending machines,  
The land striped in fast-food chains and folderol,  
Where my father is fast asleep and snoring,  
Dreaming of bygone cliffs teaming of conquistadors  
And blanketed Andalusians;

Where the motels go quietly rattling;

But where there are no alligators,  
Or Mickey Mouses,  
The tourists in southerly streaming motorcades;  
Or girls who know my name and say it  
Like blowing cigar smoke out their nostrils-  
But these don't exist:  
The sea has come back like in a silent movie  
And reclaimed the good-looks of their leading  
Men,  
And the sweet smelling stewardesses of  
Airplanes never land again:

This is where I dream I belong,  
Looking up the chicken-wire tresses of egg-shell  
Castles,  
Catching soldered mermaids from the shivering bathtub of  
The next wave's caesura:  
But the parade is over and the little girls  
Have vanished;  
There is no one left to throw rose petals:  
I am going somewhere they don't exist,  
On a green rollercoaster under the sun of  
Super villain comic books-  
I am dropping fast and the movie is almost over:  
I am going somewhere that doesn't exist.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Of This World To Begin With

What nights in Diana's truck I'd  
Spend sleeping like a needless roach  
In the ice next to her bottled  
Breast milk:  
Now that her daughter has grown up,  
Like a funny daisy,  
First learning how to project a bicycle  
Like a blushing rocket,  
And then learning to swim, and finally  
To walk:  
Then the boys would come out of doors,  
After finishing with their badges,  
And they would wear the golden skins of  
Bears,  
And chains of incredulous sharks teeth.  
We would encircle her in our pantheism,  
But I would be the only one she  
Wanted to be with,  
Because I am no longer drunk, but if you  
Look into the sky  
You can see an entire playground evaporating,  
First made from her offspring.  
Now that they are off to college and summer  
Sports,  
There is no longer a need for water parks,  
And thus they go into thoughts.  
I am the only one who can tell Diana any of this,  
In her truck of silver diamonds,  
And so she comes to me when her rounds are over,  
And the other boys fat like lizards off of black  
Guava the flies circle and caracole.  
Then the airplanes stick to the funny parts of blue  
Sky,  
As we stick to each other, two weeks of a lifetime  
Of weak minded thoughts,  
Which are all I have to give to her and her spills of  
Light ochre tresses,  
Because I know not what I do,  
Nor who I might grow up to be:



I just want Diana underneath the sky  
Of things that are not only no longer real,  
Were never of this world to begin with.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Supposed To Be

His Lancelot has been naked but courteous  
To you,  
And very familiar: so many times questing into your  
Octopus grottos  
As to make them so well tilled as to even bear  
Children without any sort of wicked serpent's  
Fangs,  
Except for his; and they rose up springy,  
And were met by the heavy hand of the gravity of your  
Trailer parks and tom cats;  
And this is what they said, but oh boy, and baseball:  
Witches on red diamonds telling secrets to  
Dust devils, or the blue diamonds of pools enriched with  
Chlorine,  
Your sister's eyes- and by her I mean anybody's sister:  
I am not speaking directing to anybody, how could I,  
Except that I mean that he is your knight,  
Proud and religious and adhering to a king;  
And you both know so little of the world: you are so young  
And eager to be questing;  
And when he falls asleep inside of you, when her furls and goes away  
Then don't you close your eyes and realize that it was never  
Supposed to be this way at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# Never Wish To See

If the sun chirps, it is chirruping in  
Spanish stirrups,  
But it doesn't: it whistles, making its rounds,  
Swinging its phalanxes of missing keys-  
All it is a head banishing the light:  
The sky is not its house.  
The moon is not its wife- What is the sun  
But a father of world it has no business in,  
Penetrating,  
Stimulant and spurious it has created a child  
It does not know flooding like busy and  
Angry ants beneath it,  
As it purveys blind and gallant all that it would  
Never wish to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nevermore

Alma goes to the flea market to fix her gold,  
And I want to buy us matching Virginsitas, even if she  
Doesn't want to make love to me  
Anymore, because she is feeling guilty, even though we've  
Never done it on my eighty five year old floor;  
And I love the old monarchs who so long ago only existed  
For a season,  
And I love the old airplanes who once existed but never  
For a reason,  
And if there are clouds in the sky, then perhaps they are  
Basking over the sea,  
Who is sashaying her skirts of waves right up to my door,  
While all of the animals sleep at the zoo where we once kissed-  
Next to the aquatic cages of endangered bliss,  
Where probably we will again kiss nevermore.

Robert Rorabeck

# New And Awkward Light

My mustache curls up at both ends  
And men that I meet out walking  
Tip their hats to me and call me monsieur,  
And women out strolling their children  
Through the waning neighborhood  
Curtsy demurely to me and kindly say,  
"Sir, " And I repay their courtesy  
With a tipsy grin, like a mountaineer  
Dangling from the edge of a precipice,  
I let sunlight in through the lean gap  
Walled in the ivory of my front teeth,  
And exhale a gentle cloud of  
Spiced rum in their direction;  
I inebriate from a secret flask  
While I watch a beautiful women  
In a state of undress  
From the shadowed seat I purchased  
For approximately 2 hrs.  
From the fine people of this  
City's floating hippodrome:  
There in the magic box  
Happens celluloid flickers  
As pyrotechnicians go down  
On both knees,  
As they would to please a woman:  
A graduate student of ribald philosophy  
Wearing a translucent nightgown as she  
Reads in an Elizabethan theatre.  
Searching through intelligent spectacles,  
She takes stringent notes and recites  
Lines of Thomas Marlowe,  
As the tongue is busy lighting that fuse  
To start off the pinwheeled display,  
Like eating mouthfuls of sugar  
And then stepping out into the sun:  
For a moment your eyes lose their place  
And your legs walk away  
Into the dizzy feeling whose only structure  
Is what the proboscis smells through

The clean cut grass,  
A yard decorated by homes and walkways:  
The lemon trees sentinel along the promenade.  
Coming to, this is how I hope she sees me,  
As I step toward her deliberately,  
Holding my deformed book of posy,  
A somber badge for the heart,  
As I step up to her bar in the settling evening  
When sleepy school boys  
Meander home from classes,  
And good school girls in pig-tails  
Stay afterwards for extra lessons  
In all night sessions  
Where crickets sing and strum their legs,  
Solve vibrancies up the classroom's  
Dimmed chalkboard.  
I am coming home to see her  
After six long years at war,  
Where I grew my mustache out to  
Please her,  
Where I fought and slew many a strange  
Man who ran towards me in the middle of  
The night through the red drool  
Out of the shelling cannons,  
Before I could hear their weapons  
Enter me.  
I come home to her now, and the  
Town on display welcomes me,  
But I remember she has a short memory  
And only loved me for a day  
And loses her place easily,  
Looking up into other men;  
But I have survived for so long  
On only the hope of eventually entering  
The sphere of her engagements,  
So I step through the doorway of her  
Fine establishment,  
My mustache curling up at both ends,  
My eyes adjusting to find her in this  
New and awkward light.



# New Girl Smell

Houses like limpid shells,  
So limpid, smell and taste like their  
Previous masters,  
Like girls so god-d-mned old;  
They no longer smell of the sea  
Before it might have been the sea, but of  
The wash basins and jet fuel;  
They don't smell like swing sets anymore,  
But their daughters are still arcing in  
Sunlight:  
Their daughters are real play- Just these  
Things: believe me, you don't understand,  
Not even if you think you got it on  
The tip of your tongue:  
Pretty little girls sandcastles, spider-flume,  
Arcing in the breaks of God,  
But if you lay a hand on them, corrupted:  
He will leave them,  
This jealously abstaining bachelor:  
He will just get on his bike and ride away into  
A greener neighborhood;  
And all the little girls you've seen will settle down  
From play.  
They will either graduate high school, or  
They will not: making love in newer beds further up,  
Or their own,  
But they will live in their new masters' homes,  
Like dogs' houses, enchained, washing dishes,  
Pulling out laundry like the guts of game,  
No longer smelling like how you left them; but of  
The dry-walled shells, shellacked,  
Landscaped by palms, as with her shampooed pubis;  
and though the house  
Is beautiful, she goes all day weeping with it  
On her back; shopping,  
Drinking with her enslaved sororities as if drinking alone,  
Never to smell like god, like nothing, ever.





## New Subject Matter

When I drink, I pray to my three foot tall  
Virginsita for the safety of Alma and her two children:  
And to return her to me without a thought,  
For I am that hungry- like the fox that is always  
Leaping fruitlessly:  
And I made the mistake of calling her zorra on  
Friday, when we both came back together and went  
Back to work:  
Why then all of the cars and trucks parked underneath  
The paper airplanes and watched the movies  
Of my parents lost and needing money in Arizona-  
So now all of my dolls are broken,  
And the world spins, calling up new reasons for the same  
Monsters:  
And nothing very important ever sells, and all of  
The conquistadors are lost anyways: I've tried at being  
Very demonstrative,  
Or even starting new subject matter, but she always comes  
Back to me this way-  
And then the sky jumps off its cliffs, and I fall down again  
With her brown body ululating with all that I've  
Known to be ecstasy.

Robert Rorabeck

# New Turns In The Light

They'll make their new turns in the light  
Of the bric-a-brac until our hegemonies  
Have new households,  
And I won't have to keep buying dime sized memories  
Of you,  
Laughing as a consequence  
Of the after-course of consent—  
Soon, so soon—the storm will have moved away,  
And they, our cousins and our ancestors,  
Will be picking up the pieces—  
But they will be counted together within the  
Time of shells—  
While they thought to be making friends,  
We will let our dinners cloud over—  
And the hills will mystify the airplanes—  
I will drink whatever I can  
until the angels come down pledging their  
Allegiances to the flags of whenever  
For awhile, there will be a heavenly light  
Basking in the skeletons,  
And then no one will figure out how to survive,  
One way or another,  
While the princesses are sleeping and counting  
Their monies—  
The winds of jet planes will come in and  
Tell them of their birthdays  
And that will put an end to the brightest  
tears that I suppose they ever saw.

Robert Rorabeck

# New Years And Beowulf Is Dead

New Years,  
Cyclical like the Anglo-Saxons,  
Her monthly period, presidential elections,  
A night (like all the others spent, droning)  
Rolls on, the completion of a circuit, circular,  
Pointless, indistinguishable from the rest with  
Their eyes fawning and making love in the forest,

As the streets under the atmosphere  
(speared by the aerobuses starting and landing in  
The compacted dream) under the stars, always the stars  
(sung to by the multitude, by the  
Minor poets- and I amidst the  
Howl, being lost to her, being drowned out  
By the undertow of all the middle-class  
Traffic of this sloppy dictionary at my hands)  
When her legs are done with the  
Buck,  
When the show is over, and she has cleaned off  
(when they can still  
Find me at the very back of me, but if they go down  
That deep inside me they will be lost with  
Me and drowned like the misplaced diver  
In the submarine before they are out of me) ,  
before the yellow eyes close,  
Like the median telling you  
Not to cross,  
I watch the middle-school kids on  
TV,  
Who are smarter and better tuned than me,  
Spelling words I can't remember (which lubricated  
Me) televised before their first erection,  
(when I am on my second glass on the sofa,  
Already ejaculated into the green carpet of memory) ,  
Pull off erections to the sad president,  
The urban sprawl nightmare,  
They've made pyramids out of her sheets  
And are playing pirates:  
As, across country, younger and

Younger body parts are being found  
Inside dumpsters (As, she is sure that no one  
Loves her) ,  
My young cousin, Tyler, has won a  
Spot on the Orange Bowl  
Half-Time show, she's  
About 5, and already she's  
Being taught to swing around the  
Pole pantiless,  
Foaming at the mouth,  
For the fame of her sex, the ultimate privilege  
After the Roanoke Virginia mystery left unsolved for  
300 years,  
And the green of the bankroll left uncut  
And unpaid for since the time of the dinosaurs  
Under the sun,

As the hurricanes pick up,  
(As Zeta appears on our radars,  
Like the sad caves carving the rest on me  
In the great calcium monoliths removed to the back  
Of my mind) ,  
And dropp the windowless  
Chambers of the farm house on the witch,  
Like the drought of the early 20th century,  
We all stand from our seats and cheer (and pay)  
The spectacle,  
The lidless monster flickering in ash

Year less, I have no home  
And no destination to dock success inside,

As the sun rises, Beowulf is dead,  
The cycle is complete and headless (sure  
To come around again and eat itself with the  
pulp fiction, the reticulated python of the masses) :

They strap his body to the front of the  
Grill and spit some Spanish slang on his remains,  
And raise him like a god,  
Before the sirens and the repeating lights  
Of the city this new year.

Robert Rorabeck

## Next

The fruition of a  
single thing  
learning to duplicate itself  
like the ruby spores of  
a pomegranite bleed  
forever.

The forest's pinioned tears  
brushed by her cotton-picking  
wind,  
the arboreal children  
that grow in  
the motionless carnival  
fight like statues of  
Russian poets,  
like the freckle-gilled fish,  
forgetting something,  
leap backwards up the  
acrobatic rivers into  
subterranean homes of melting  
silver-azure,  
breathing jewelries of  
molecularized snow;  
The undefined couplings of  
fleeting virgins in  
highschool metastasize  
into the middle-class  
stock-market adultery,  
the leaping blue electricity  
of migrating eyes,  
the printing-press of  
opposing sexes,  
the zygotes of bald mammals  
stampede,  
as she screams the  
john's name  
from the open window  
out thrown into the  
available night,  
where aeroplanes recede

its passengers the wayward  
children of a millioned  
silenced wounded things  
dying into the next.

Robert Rorabeck



# Nice And Slow

I write love letters to you,  
Because even though I am well sated  
In a good and damp lot underneath  
An aquamarine tent- I am starving for a woman,  
My muse:  
I have one or two and they don't seem to mind;  
They just toss their heads back like wild palominos:  
They don't give me the time,  
Or the seesaws of their alabaster pride,  
And I don't even have an oven to be good and died-  
So the traffic crawls- and the traffic slows,  
Cars filled in with girls who throw their heads  
Back like palominos,  
And the eight o'clock sun is gusting through their  
Windows,  
Like peeping tom, like an un somnambulant  
Inspector of job:  
Yeah, I loved her- This I know because my porcelain  
Heart cracked in her lucky camel toe;  
And she is just as lustrous as an Navajo casino,  
Because I have seen her swallow entire armies of  
Fashionably plated men,  
Her barrettes undone, her haunting head swimming through  
Their bayonets,  
Accomplishing all of her turbid banquets well on through  
Crepuscule,  
Placing all her unconquerable bets with the traffic crawling  
Nice and slow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Night And Day

I gulped the domestic voodoo maelstrom  
While the cadavers of airplanes flew;  
And I remember the bridge over the dry riverbed  
In Saint Louis I could  
Still be driving over, but now it's almost Halloween,  
And I am kittycornered between the blue gills  
In the canal and the affluent housewives  
With their mowed lawns in their affluent city:  
And the day is sweaty,  
And the day is long, and it is always growing longer;  
And the army ants are mean,  
And sometimes the housewives are meaner,  
Swinging their children like Catholic censers at their  
Hips, making me want to unchain them and teach them  
How to really swing,  
But I'm just filled with the doodles and caracoles myself;  
And my hair is gray-  
And even Romero knows how old I am- That I drink  
Two of his beers every night,  
To worship the airplanes stuck like cotton candy in  
Ganymede-  
I keep telling myself tomorrow will be beautiful-  
Tomorrow will be luxuriant,  
And I will get a little drunk and then go out amidst the swells  
Of traffic and their cloudy shadows passing through the sky,  
And I well get down hard and work with my hands,  
And pretend everything I touch is running around the pearlescent  
Sluice chroming your body,  
Even though some other gentleman is brushing against  
You and giving your hair a hundred strokes in the same faraway  
Night and day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nightgown

Festooned by the night,  
The boys make love to the sea.

On a 1,000 waves they call her name,  
And echo back to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nightmares

The angels sung over the castle;  
They sung real hard,  
And they prayed like nightmares.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nights Of Sleepless Love

Almost real dead men sit best by Sally-  
They are polite but losing their hair and genesequa,  
But are quite captivated by the telly;  
When I am around them, say on Sundays,  
I am almost real like them  
And their gray mustaches are pets, like  
Fury caterpillars that have passed their long winters  
Refusing to surrender into a gayer metamorphosis:  
Now I will be one of them,  
For the parts of the evening, even while jogging  
Under the beautiful though lazy clouds,  
And the cul-de-sacs are warm and easy,  
And one house even has an antique fire-engine,  
And all of the homes have a beautiful woman,  
Like a vase placed amidst the orange trees of  
The green yard's luxury,  
And alligators in the backyard slows;  
Where time grows feebly in the absence of numbers,  
There where the city tapers, they drink from their tumblers,  
Where orchids peel like slender ruminids,  
And flies as blue as bashful jewels practice sweet effluvia;  
Where there are sometimes family reunions,  
And sometime torpid faithfulness, but the moccasin's  
Venom is always punctual against the throat of the careless  
Though speckled doe,  
Things our actors almost see from out across the  
Ping-pong table in their backyard patios;  
The almost real dead men with drinks on key,  
Those players of this evening tranquil on their houses in  
The deepening ambience cycling the twisting roads;  
Tonight I will be a part of them, and the ice will tinkle  
In the glass with my liquors and cranberry juice,  
As we sit best beside our aunt Sally, and not look askance,  
But at the spinning wheels and the leggy blond models  
Of the telly's game shows,  
As outside the evening devolves into a nocturnal serenade,  
Scaled and poisoned by a deadlier romance.



# Nina Hermosa

We've made our decisions and  
Sent ourselves out,  
And we are hunting for the humid purchases  
Off the salts of our high schools:  
Girls there, yes—  
Like the little brown girl who comes to see me  
Every early morning—  
Nina Hermosa, in brown skin and tulips  
And the temper of a maelstrom flooding a desert:  
Had to watch her making out with an eighteen year old  
Freshman all of my first year,  
But now she loves me in bits and pieces,  
Like the kaleidoscope of memory of the monarch  
Butterfly flooding and returning to the jungled mountains  
Of her Mexico—  
She doesn't appreciate these thoughts:  
She doesn't even realize them,  
And it is a good thing as well that my wife only speaks  
Broken English,  
For it allows me to get away for a little while  
Haunted by the things I shouldn't  
And I am not supposed to believe in.

Robert Rorabeck

## No Beauty That Is Actually Her Own

The soon seems to be playing with the night and the stewardesses  
Wherever they are cannot get any sleep—  
There they are impossibly up in the angles of the clouds  
And I do not know what else to say to them—  
But when the time is right, I suppose that they will fly down  
And plant their kisses upon my mouth,  
Giving me whatever they have to give me at any angle—  
And then the moon will steal the light again  
From the sun and bask herself with it—unusually happy that  
Only five or so men have come to know that there is nothing  
Truly about her  
And no beauty that is actually her own.

Robert Rorabeck



# No Business Of Understanding

Cenotaphs of us will live forever,  
Pointed, jagged spears vibrating consumptions  
Between the cadaverous lick of waves,  
You know the melody  
They sing between awake and sleep,  
Because we made them together  
Hunchbacked in the shadows,  
Like tortoises spending the day alone anonymous  
To the tourists fair-weather strides,  
The little bits of our children out rippling between the  
Waves  
As the sky explodes for fairer holidays, on an on,  
To which we have no business of understanding.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Echo

None of my poems will survive;

They are all lost children blown to the sea.

After 4th of July,

I will not get paid....

I will not get laid. This is the end of me,

So often I worry about what you are doing now,

That I do not even think to buy

Myself a tomb,

A year and a half,

My grandmother is still waiting for her headstone,

I want to feel my children inside

Your womb,

But you are hot for some other man,

The playboy of your week,

Even when you get on top of him,

I'll turn the other cheek...

And live near the sea, for a decade until

I am forty, gray and gummy,

And then I will say to the open stillness,

I still love you,

Though in the flatness of this land

There is no echo,

There is no echo.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Good Tears

What little talent leaves us like a draw of blood,  
And still the doctor is not sure what ails us, except obscurity,  
And the nurses' squeaking nouns they but in place  
In red checkmarks on the clipboards;  
But we can't help but think, they'd look better in a swamp  
Barefoot and nipple round confessing to an older sun,  
The alligators like new dinosaurs hatching from the speckled clutch,  
The poet's hand opened like a flower curling from the crook  
Of cypress dripping like dismantled swimmers from their pools,  
And the minor sounds of the local orchestra putting on  
The darkening hoods, the nurses fainting like perishable goods,  
And nothing all around except for the slip of reptiles into the  
Open womb about the knees of the petrified knights of lucid green,  
The croaking amphibians between night and day, swirling  
Like the joy of dark little children in a bath below mouths of red orifice,  
The navels open through the pearly abdomens, the perfect scar which  
Once connected the pretty nurtures with the mothers of their spotless goods,  
And I swim around them like a crocodile myself,  
Shedding feverish tears which I know by heart will do no good.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Longer Anywhere Near

Down by the hop-along Cadillacs of my  
Sad memories,  
Bivouacked in the junkyard of the lonely  
Months-  
The house and the dogs burned away,  
Emolliated in sacrifice  
To the goddess who flashed like phosphorous  
Across the canal:  
My wife- like a kite of flame- Didn't she  
Know that was the wrong way to the mall-  
The donkeys galloped first under  
And then over- neath the moon:  
The conquistadors asked then how they could  
Do that- but sunken as they were  
Up to their chins in the blue nests of  
Dunes- how could they see:  
Like cenotaphs praying to the waves,  
I realized that I was amongst them-  
The heavens unwrapped new holidays in the air,  
And the stars shed their skins- maybe they  
Were making believe,  
But my heart was stolen- in its place a shadow play  
Of puppets,  
She was no longer anywhere near to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Matter How Inappropriate

I'll call you the joy of blackbirds-  
You won't look at me at all-  
You'll say I drink too much-  
I'll listen to your echoes down toward the  
Saturnine basins of your first marriage;  
And I'll sit and wait in the abandoned hallways between  
Classes, green scars like broken glass,  
Romero outside drinking his cheap beer- I've finished  
My bottle of wine and am ready to banish my head as  
Well,  
But I have to get out these rhymes- might as well:  
I still can barely stand looking at myself:  
I am a lonely freak show- I sell pumpkins- I don't  
Smoke- I wait for you, still fishing in the Disney World  
Of your first marriage: a girl came into today who  
Might have been your sister- she asked me my name,  
And didn't mind how bad I looked:  
She had two kids, maybe she was that desperate:  
I am a good man- I am so lonely, but maybe that doesn't mean  
So much:  
I finished off my bottle of wine; it cost me five dollars,  
But maybe that is enough:  
She looked just like you, except her hair was blonde- She had  
Your same body: she had two children, but she could still  
Play soccer- and right now better men are flying above me,  
The sky sheriffs of this esplanade, going to their common ports  
Maybe they could have you at any time, so tin star winged  
Above my head:  
I haven't been on a date for seven years- but she said she was  
Coming back for a Christmas tree- If she doesn't  
I don't think I should hesitate to ask her to bed,  
No matter how inappropriate.

Robert Rorabeck

# No More Shadows

There are no more shadows.  
For the sun has chain-ganged  
The stars on the dark side  
Of the moon,  
The hoary bulb he has stuffed  
Into a gunnysack and smashed  
On the night's cool table,  
Breaking the delicate filament.  
He has snuffed out the lights with  
Enormous bells and putting his finger  
On the earth, to see if it is ready  
For eating, he has stopped it  
And made it stand before him  
Without blinking.  
Now I can no longer feel  
Your name in the soft shadows  
That linger around the canopy in  
My mind. No longer do I see your  
Truest form, undressed of flatteries  
Reclining under the stitched branches  
Of an oak tree planted before  
The Civil War over the far side  
Of the mountain. For all the places  
I use to come calling for you, those  
Sad and relaxing enclaves that you  
Would lie about like settled animals  
Around rings of bright water,  
Are doused with kerosene and  
Ignited.  
He has taken you away from me,  
And set you there in a relentless cage  
In his perfect center, like the crystalline pit  
Of a citric geode hung on an emotionless tree.  
Unabated, he fondles you, like a surgeon  
With precisions flares and blow torches,  
Never allowing you sleep and the cool  
Return, to slide naked into an ocean of whispering  
Shadows,  
Never allowing you to douse your head

In my cradle,  
Never allowing you to remember that  
You loved me,  
Never at all—

Robert Rorabeck

# No Need To End

Land plays baseball with  
Stolen goods: little  
Black boys smile like gold  
Chains on their mezzanines,  
And I wander so far  
Away from school,  
Just to get out of the  
Range of your eyes:  
Far away your atmosphere  
Rises like a mushroom  
Cloud;  
Your narcissistic echoes  
From the classroom are  
As sweet and musical  
As an icecream  
Truck;  
And I think of you all day,  
Leaping over canals  
And graveyards;  
Pretending to be a conquistador  
With my plastic sword,  
I see you rising through the  
Sky,  
Like an unreachable sprig  
Of grapes,  
Like dancing without gravity,  
Something truly beautiful  
That has no need to  
End.

Robert Rorabeck



# No One Else To Blame

Why are you're eyes so much like  
Midnight that I should feel like  
I need to die into them,  
Like a faithful mailman,  
Like anyone making his rounds:  
And you don't serve  
Beer,  
Or have children, but you just lie in the  
Lap of the yard under the flag;  
And I have money for you,  
And I can make it worth your while,  
While the gnat eats the sleep out of my left eye:  
And I am scarred,  
And impure and boring: I am not your prince  
Transplanted from Disney World.  
I said I would live forever but that was because  
I am afraid,  
And because Erin doesn't love me.  
I don't think she can love anyone, but she knows  
Better artists than me,  
And she has been with them. And now it snows,  
And the crocodiles fart,  
And I have had my wine, and my medicine,  
While you are looking good.  
Your eyes are midnight trapped in blue  
Lakes- You home goes on  
For many a mile.  
Your ancestors made this country but now it has no  
Use for you;  
It is so proud, but you are very useful all the same;  
And, likewise, I am not Robert Frost,  
But I am Robert Anyone,  
And this is my song:  
There is no one else to blame.

Robert Rorabeck

# No One Goes To School

Shaking like the stars,  
Like the higher and lower amusements in  
10 pnt font,  
I write to you what should and must be the last  
Poem of my drunken evening:  
I have no foyer, no writing, room no desk,  
No dolphin: no career.  
I am no king of France, but if I believe in god,  
Then you are him,  
You are a single rose lost in the street,  
You are my pecker: Do you understand?  
I am dying- I am dying with my dogs,  
And you don't care- The audience full,  
But none of you understand: That the lights are dying,  
That it is raining still but almost done,  
The last conquistador is on his knees,  
The pie is on its sill; and I am almost done:  
I am really, truly almost am: the amphibians ululating in  
The carport,  
The sea with its perfumes as with its unktion's- the fumes  
They keep open to sell the dolls and the wrists,  
And I am done with college,  
And done pretending to be at the fair with the underage  
Girls and flying saucers: I am just selling things,  
As we all do on these half a dozen continents,  
And tomorrow it will be used cars and wild ponies.  
South Florida is a fine place to die, if all a sudden it should  
Be an end to my drunken poem, so be it:  
I will not write to you tonight- The birds are stuck up into the  
Trees,  
The golf balls are missing in their holes, the waves are dying upon  
The sea; and I would have been a virgin for so many years,  
If I hadn't been with you so many years ago-  
I am good enough now, and the doorbell doesn't ring-  
In the bright sunlight it keeps the girls inside with their dolls,  
It doesn't ring at all,  
And no one goes to school.



# No One Left

Loneliness is my day, and it is almost perfect:  
I jog the quietude of the canal just west of the freeway:  
All of those commuters don't perceive me;  
And I wonder if I went to school with any of them,  
Or if any of them are girls I have loved going to and from  
School and caves:  
And I think of beautiful flowers in rich bouquets like  
Girls I love,  
To whom those sad flowers I gave: and even now crepuscule  
Is coming, into which I always look more beautiful;  
And even now I could move right back in amidst those  
Sad graves, or I could climb the tallest mountain in the world,  
And look down the dresses of all that is beautiful;  
And I am almost done: The fire is smoldering, while  
Her eyes have always, always turned away,  
And this night is just another silken menagerie into which  
I am off alone, into which I have no one left to play.

Robert Rorabeck

# No One Outside To See

I try to write a novel. It goes nowhere,  
For a half hour a day, while the ravens make love  
And then defecate like spots of summer snow on  
Rotting wood; it should really be a movie,  
Feckless and waiting for the bus to display  
Like a cloudy eucatastrophe forth from red holly,  
The cradle for indigenous serpents, and legless saboteurs.  
I had this idea, and it involved men and the sea,  
She was an early goddess, now, defunct:  
A waitress with sagging breast, varicose, wrinkled  
Shagging cigarettes, though beautiful with a chainsaw  
Purring from her throat- i am volatile, like close history,  
Shaking before the cadaver slumbering on display  
In the center of the theatre, like pre-science, and the first  
Small metal sent up into the sky to parlay the lightning;  
Her surf is malleable, the shore palatial, though barren-  
If studied, predictable, but still no less violent,  
And, afterwards, forgetful, awful- the way footsteps  
Come inevitably down the stairs, how the knuckles rasp  
The lonely flesh of the door, how the solicitors ring persistently,  
And finally, how the rains show that the sunlight is deceitful,  
And thus flood the lawn and make suppliant each flower and  
Tree, and give the beautiful slick colors to the road,  
In such afternoons when there should be no one outside to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Reason For Light

Contributing to suicides:

The starlight on her skin, outlasting her patience,  
Her will to move into the lucrative arms of well-lit pools,  
And the estuaries of bank accounts;  
Their light could last for ever on the pale bareness of  
Her upper arms,  
Shimmer there like monarch butterflies in the sparse  
But powerful forests in Mexico,  
Resting their delicate foundations after their migration;  
Even after they had died,  
Their light could remain upon her well into her grave,  
Given the chance,  
They could feed her, sustain her with the permanency  
Of famous oratory, but she moves away:  
Again and again, like a teacup of water tossed into the river.  
She is not herself anymore- She is a thousand others  
Rushing to embrace the sea,  
Where the unknown lights fall now is not for sure:  
Lies in a complicated meadow, a parking garage,  
A steep driveway after a slick rain, vibrating with the  
Trepidations of loneliness  
The poet stoops to unread,  
For now, living or dead, there is no reason for light at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Reason For The Astronauts

In this new heaven—an infantile god,  
Left exposed amidst the echinopsis of the easement of  
The canal—  
With his crocodilian smile having already eaten  
The hands of reprobates and pirate captains—  
As my mind swoons in rum—  
And old, old traffic continues  
Beating its drums—  
The traffics will sail forever onwards—  
And the moon will weep and weep beneath starships—  
But I no longer suppose that you will ever  
Love me—For nothing that  
You once spoke to me has the ability to survive—  
And in the same amount of time it takes housewives to  
Kiss each other,  
You will be as round and seeded as a pomegranate—  
And when you look up tomorrow, the sugar canes will  
Already be burning—  
And there will be no reason for the astronauts or  
The angels to ever set foot again upon the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Reason To Exist

Night unglues,  
Chemical bonds of homeopathic cities  
Return to the spindles of a wimpled  
Sky,  
And not far a field, the teal collateral waves  
Paint the limestone fences of the  
Conquistadors' graveyard,  
And nothing is seen, and nothing is heard:  
And the memorial park is spaced as evenly as  
An orchard of wooden faith,  
But instead of oranges and Mexicans, they  
Are putting in plastic bouquets  
For immortal faith- and no cats are buried,  
And no dogs nearer their families  
Tumbleweed tombs, except in Ancient Egypt and  
Polynesian bedrooms;  
But though I barely have touched you, I still lick  
My fingers from the slight molecular bonding of  
Unreal high school,  
And you seem to come down like a moat of light over  
The sea,  
Jacob's Ladder leading me to the higher fruit of  
Defeated fables, so that there is no purpose in morality,  
Or reason, but only your nightgown fetching  
Sweaty snowflakes,  
And uninvited I should really come and be happy if  
Just to be the shade of your illogical annoyances,  
And collect with the impassible spaces  
Between your opal shoulders, your marble hips,  
Those unrelated heirlooms which are all the more  
Priceless because they have no reason to exist.

Robert Rorabeck



# No Sea

There is no sea here,  
I see no sea;  
This is the body of the desert,  
The rich made faint blue,  
From stolen oceans,  
And it is where I live now;  
In the dizzy trail of the sleeping conquistadors,  
In your memory,  
And the super-market sample of love  
You gave me to try some many years ago:  
Here the cactus I pricked my thumb on,  
And this one has stolen my jersey;  
These are the naked declivities,  
The changing rooms absent of shadowy abdomens,  
The red stones of stolen Indian reservations,  
The retirement homes for snow birds;  
The corrugated roofs where no rain falls,  
While your lips peck his opium neck,  
His steroid elbows,  
His cocaine phallus: I walk out into the naked abscesses  
Of some disease;  
The doctors have given it your Christian name,  
And the perfume which smells like your showered flesh.  
Surely now, I will live into obscurity,  
My dogs chasing the jack-rabbits, and I your c\$nt;  
The sun is a bronzed gladiator, upon which I decapitate;  
Tomorrow the stock cars will go around and around,  
The smell of expensive gasoline, worshiping you;  
The legs you keep unhinged for the carnival of strong men,  
Baptized in the single fluidity we have here;  
Pagan, I worship you,  
Without a breeze, the dead boats, and it feels like crucifixion,  
My organs pricked by the briars of the blistered graveyard  
Of you, unblinking.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Solution To Anything

All of the thunder that is out of fire—  
What noise does it make when there aren't  
Any cars—  
What sad lions frown when the wetness  
Threatens their cages,  
And then they have to put their manes  
Down like the empty bottles of winos,  
Like ghosts of dead baseball players in  
Their batting cages—  
And the fearful illusions have given up,  
And all of the beautiful girls have traveled home—  
It almost seems as if you can still see them,  
Pretending that they are lingering upon a  
Darkened road—  
And that they keep their needs for you in  
Their thoughts—  
And the day languishes badly:  
The ribbon is cut,  
And there is no solution to anything anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Special Roses

I have no special roses  
Or anywhere else where I can move—  
The acolytes pantomime  
The stars as the stewardesses leap across  
The oceans in the airplanes:  
Everything seems to be okay,  
But who am I to guess:  
I think of her lips in shanghai—  
Or the forgotten parks of our marriage,  
As the bones get ready to dance  
As they do again and again.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Such Familiar Echoes

Liquor is cheap and her eyes are gone,  
And the school has not accepted me- There are  
Thieves in electronic gardens with yellow fingers as thin  
As dabbing siphons trying to lick up what I've  
Saved all these years:

My scars are sometimes receding like a giant surf,  
And I have forgotten the sticky thumping of the only other  
Sex:

All I do is this, and the liquor helps. I do not range after  
Bulls- I do not go out and pan for gold, or fish,  
Or through the wind tunnels they have in the deep blushing  
Hills of other countries- I do not try anymore to interfere  
With the natural curves and persuasions of a lovely body:  
I happen to imagine she is well satisfied, engaged to better  
Artists, watching football; it sounds like I'm about to cry,  
But I will not do what is expected.

I only have faith in what is most likely, the way things go  
Like little children rolling one by one down the hill to the ever  
Resting cemetery, laughing, and then up to steal plastic flowers  
From their flameless tins;

No, I will be home for the rest of the night. I've already begun  
To lie down with such certainty. I will not get up to check  
Beneath to see by the lights of the pool if anyone is coming up.  
There are no such familiar echoes- it is as if I never met her  
Out in the open air of boisterous cafes, or that she kissed my  
Neck, brushing against me with the comfortable fires  
Of a phoenix becoming reborn.

Robert Rorabeck

# No Valentine

I procrastinate on my poetry:  
I have nothing lovely to add:  
You turn me on, you turn me on, you  
Know, but it doesn't get me anything,  
So I look up ghosts until I have to get up  
At five a.m. to meet the Mexicans driven in  
From Chihuahua, or Mecca- We work all  
Day with the yeguas- Soon they will make my  
Father so rich that he might as well become the sun-  
I can't believe its been five years now, and the pain  
Still lingers in my throat like a bite too big to swallow:  
She is happily married moving around in her puritanical  
Tresses in the humid sanctuary of his last name hitched  
To hers like a train car: She can't even remember me,  
The half decade we spent together. I can't look at  
My face, either, for I became lost long before I found  
Her crying in my bed, and I should never have turned her  
On: Never visited her high school bedroom, got naked  
With her and watched the colorful plays of her childhood,  
Wanted the connections of transcendental love,  
For she is now the sulfurous ghost driving around with  
Me as I try not to put on my reflection, and she is all I have  
Still when I am all alone in my room with my dogs about  
Ready to crawl into dreams that I fear; I didn't want to  
Write another poem, but it is all I have, and her like  
Ashes in an amnesiac storm: Already now they have kissed  
So many times and made love in a bed which shares both of  
Their names- I was just the healthy transition for her,  
A part of college, another way of growing up, but she never  
Understood that I was made of an eerie material, already  
Gone into her grandmother's valentines, I can barely breathe,  
But the second half of this last decade was theirs,  
And I have been in my room howling with my dogs taking myself  
Back in time, trying to believe I don't need no  
Valentine, don't need no roses.... anonymous and another poem,  
Until I display my bones to my dreams, and let the pallbearers  
Carry me through another year.



# Nobody

Nobody's fall from the sky these days.  
Nobody's are ever home.  
I like to stand at the edge of the green with  
The white tent and Christmas trees  
In the opposite of crepuscule;  
Then the traffic is somehow tamed,  
The lights seem to have a cause. All the necessary  
Mailmen are sleeping,  
And my muses are unhinged of bras.  
Sleeping with their men, or sleeping alone.  
Maybe they turn to the side and scratch an itch they  
Can hardly feel:  
That is where they've stolen my rib,  
That old exotic deal,  
But by morning they are busy with scrambling eggs.  
They walk out into the Garden of Eden like they  
Do everyday and put their hands on clay:  
They are making better men that they can feel,  
Breathing unreal life into them,  
Their children entrained like ugly goslings to them  
Swans,  
While the sky snows nobody's from its ceil.

Robert Rorabeck

# None That Resemble Mine

How beautiful Satan is, and how perfect  
A social crux:  
There he is standing before us, my auburn love,  
Spinning and burning like a valley side of windmills,  
Making you come and go down into the valley:  
You are his child and will live forever in the deep  
Underground spaces of his roller-rinks,  
While I will perpetually be the crazed soldier of a  
Defeated war,  
Beating my chest for you which echoes, while the waves  
Become disinterested beneath, when before they'd been  
A sorority beckoning for me;  
And maybe one of them rises up a muse and cries  
For me, and reads my lines while painting her lips and  
Blackening her eyes, because she sees me as  
A little boy in the hallways of her high school a decade ago;  
But I have gone my soul: I am a dead firework,  
And am the everything that cannot please, that is spent;  
And you can't get your money back,  
And my love has gone underground with Satan, past all of  
Those spheres,  
Melting the other witches with her tears, making her home  
In the cities that cry with the suicide and dead family pets  
Into the earth,  
Like crystals of sad birthdays going the wrong way;  
And her Satan is a beautiful man with so many heads,  
With none that resemble mine.

Robert Rorabeck



## Nose Haiku

I want to put my  
Nose in your c^nt; it's all  
I need to be in.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nostalgia's Marching Song

Robert

Wants to die in a pageant of 25 cent confetti,  
Because he remembers the long days of high school,  
The fake knives;  
The indigo tears cried out under the school bus,  
How he used to get there before anyone and the mist  
Mad love to the red baseball diamond:  
And now he is typing so fast 30 years later, everyone  
Forgotten:  
Even in high school people were drifting,  
Pretty birthday balloons escaping above the roofs of prom:  
And now we're all legal: the class of 96'  
And some of us are rich, and lawyers: we've worked  
For governors and patent offices:  
Some of us are well hung- But I don't think I ever  
Made it through a full day, even back then  
I'd fail into Dave's van;  
Or I'd smoke the pungent weed out in the failing aqueducts  
Which put an end to Palm Beach;  
And there are still some sweet things from our class,  
But I don't know how they done it: How they didn't turn gray-  
Maybe they're Scientists in California-  
Maybe they shave with Occam's razor, Tesla's genius abstinence,  
Dreaming of our mothers performing in church for sunlit holidays:  
And I must admit I still loved them, even though they betrayed  
My insouciant trancies:  
And I still put out for them, waiting to get rich and  
Turn young again, to find my eternal princess trying out dresses  
Far out in the everglades, perfumed by the burning sugarcanes:  
And I loved them all, even the bullies;  
And I'll cry for them alone my efficiencies, alone with my  
Dogs; but to tell the truth, I am winking, because I'm that crocodile,  
Never of their sincere religion,  
I'd skip the bus as soon as it came down my way;  
And slept through the humid educations which swept us past  
The verdant orange groves, one step nearer the grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not A Rhyme

I want to be beautiful.  
I want to be Santa Claus.  
I want to go to school and learn how  
To more expeditiously unfasten bras;  
I want to watch her stepping out of the sea,  
And wash with me under the same open-ended  
Shower seductively,  
Which pissed off my girlfriend ten thousand years  
Ago, which resulted in our later end break-up  
On the far side of college,  
And her subsequent marriage to a more colloquial  
Boy of her similarly ancient persuasions:  
I want to drink my rum,  
And fold down my own house and sail the seas as  
I want to, alone or with spouse:  
This is what I am going to inevitably do,  
Because I can't be contained in the imaginations of  
Shakespeare,  
I can't write with the vitriolic etiquette of Mark Twain,  
Or learn every curve of the Mississippi by midnight:  
And I shouldn't try to seduce Erin Adamson with another  
Expensive bouquet. By rights,  
I should learn to die peacefully, dramatically out underneath  
The Australian pines with a bottle of  
Ketchup and paper snowflakes, reading off my lines to  
My kindly grandmother, the entire audience,  
A tear in her eye and clapping with sincere compliment:  
I must shoot up my last bottle rocket into oblivion,  
Figure out the nesting place for my last line and  
Then go to sleep, because everything I imagine is so  
Beautiful, and inspires to the fortitude of infinity,  
But society has another game with all the boys better  
Situated than me, copy editors and their ilk ready with mitt  
And ball out in the red dirt, and I might pray to my  
Special witch to persuade them otherwise,  
But my satanic muse is just this:  
She doesn't exist but for the amusement rides behind my eyes,  
And she must disappear in me with it,  
With all the sadly flawed language I have tried to surmise,

I've cut her out of copy paper and breathed breath into it,  
But giving the busty golem a will was a depressing  
Mistake,  
She'll heard the steak sizzling on the grill,  
And the ants crawling through the grass, the blue midges  
On the Victorian field: She can hear everything;  
Set loose like a well-crafted paper-airplane, she's gone  
To take advantage of it,  
Leaving me with a hand that I can't play,  
An empty bottle of booze,  
The last line of a poem but not a rhyme for it.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not A Single One

Don't you have time  
to enjoy the rays of  
the sun?  
Grazing the decapitated  
field,  
you could be anyone of  
your brethren:  
Sometimes you take the  
lead through the  
barbed-wire suicide slums,  
but where are you  
leading them,  
the stray-hoofed pack  
conjoined by the space of  
your neighborhood,  
the leather you show off,  
the suits of your field  
your children grow into.

Your handlers,  
the greater things  
that skip-a-rope between the  
space of your valueless horns,  
the shoot you follow  
as if through  
a ray of sun,  
instinctual and barren,  
you have many good days,  
but do not own a  
single one.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Another Mate To Be Found

Our house moves on wheels, and I've been  
Drinking without her acknowledgement,  
Like Mickey Mouse without any horses:  
My mother looks at me, hair as silver as ice-clouds.  
When will she be going away,  
So I can touch myself. Yes, she is going outside,  
To know what little of god, I suppose, as she finds in her  
Amusements beside the marriage beds of committed  
Roads;  
And if I were more beautiful, I would have her looking  
Toward me every day,  
I would keep all the horses entertained in the valley  
In a drive in movie theatre; and I would call her over  
With her eyes of some month's green birthstones,  
To entertain her by flexing like the biceps of an orchard,  
Or that is just the liquor speaking,  
Always howling at this time of the night like a cat on his  
Proverbial roof,  
Down in my perpetual valley of moving stones, like some  
Kind of desecration, the only cars exploded,  
The tourists as weary as skeletons,  
And not another mate to be found.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Another Turn

How will it feel when they go down in love's arms,  
After friends and relatives have told them that they should-  
That she has gone and left me for the boat,  
And ever since I have done my best to lose my charm  
And sink amidst the dunes she has no right to follow into,  
The memories are mostly dead, ripped and scattered  
And under root; but there is no liquor in her stead, no  
Room for anything but emptiness- They have gone away  
Like I've said, taken the bus down to New Zealand,  
All the girls are dead and I am toast;  
The men are fishing deep in the cliffs, but all the girls  
Are dead, floating on weepy breasts;  
And I am dead (but dry) , but for this little thing  
Ticking out in my head maybe Morris Code- I should  
Have looked out for them, I suppose, I should have called for  
Help- Too caught up in the thorn and rose that the neighbors'  
Planted- I corsage their yard and the bee kisses me:  
I should return this morning, or hand them their paper in the  
Least, for word is that she's returning, returning softly weeping  
In the east. I guess she left from in his arms, or maybe she is  
Just taking a break. Maybe she remembers how it felt  
Down in my arms, but I could not feel her deliberate returns-  
Could not feel my dead loves concerted rippling;  
I could not answer her to tell her that I was dead,  
And will go down into the dunes to do no work:  
I am left of all my charms, and all the girls are dead, but one  
Says she is returning, but I have left off all my naming charms,  
But will open my eyes one morning under the rosy thorns  
And let the bee kiss me as it should; but not her, because I am dead  
Come morning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Anywhere Around

Beautiful in the common place  
Underneath the bricks of blinded  
Rainbows,  
As all of the parks wait in the recesses of  
The highways until  
We cannot remember our loves:  
And you go back to your husband, and  
I buy a wife  
Who is more beautiful than you are  
And puts delicious scars on my neck,  
And keeps me riding all the way  
To the west coast  
Where new poems can be divided and I can  
Live out my younger years  
In a trailer park that never knew your name:  
In the luscious abstraction,  
In the curl of the waves not a single tourists  
Has ever heard,  
In the cusp of the shallow nonsense that  
Feeds itself in the gloom,  
I will find another playground and amuse myself,  
Pretending,  
Even though you are not anywhere around.

Robert Rorabeck



# Not As Big As My Sister's

Days lounging in bliss and are afraid of new shadows,  
And it went down like this:

I armed wrestled with her today, and told her she was very  
Beautiful:

She pretended not to believe me; and my sister bought  
A house to in Phoenix, Arizona: A house much bigger than mine,  
But much further away from the sea as well,

And she didn't pay cash, but she will have plenty in time:

While I have been alone for seven years: I told Alma it was only  
Six years, and she still couldn't believe me:

And I want her to cashier for me in Moriarty New Mexico, when we  
Go there to sell fireworks, for I have never seen hair as dark and  
Red as hers, and I am not afraid to tell her how beautiful she is,  
And I think that she likes to hear it and rather believes what  
I have to tell her; and I already have a house for her,  
Just like the Alamo, so sweet near the indentations of its Spanish  
Rivers- and just down river from the Norton Art Gallery,  
And it is mine, and maybe Alma's too, even if it is not as big  
As my sister's.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not At All Like Sunlight Through Those Graves

Impolite to recall what cadmium we cover  
The graves with,  
Pretending to pack fading names with fireworks,  
Then how the clouds touched down and studied  
Over our shoulders,  
Grew depressed and frumpy-  
How the dog got stuck between the wrought iron  
Teeth and whined a little,  
And then was too tired. After all, the university  
Had rejected us, had finally set us free like  
Prisoners after so many years,  
Saying now that there was either cockleburs  
Or stars in our eyes that it was wrong to keep us  
And that we should go away,  
Even though our cheeks were scarred and we had  
Ink stains from the dress of their library  
Under our quivering nails.  
Here in this segregated graveyard where thimbles  
Of blood ants battle for unlucky chicken bones  
Through each vibrant blade,  
And the damsels across the student way open their  
Windows in slick young rows,  
Exposing their bosoms across the humid panhandle,  
Speaking words that are lost beneath the traffic.  
Perhaps she loved us, I don't know,  
Under one of her perfect masks,  
But there is too much sunlight playing through the  
Divine emptiness for her to see us,  
Even if she wasn't looking for someone else,  
And the job concerning the dead is done fore,  
And time for us to drive away, I think to watch  
Hummingbirds levitating across the Arizona desert,  
The weight of their two cents just enough to skim the honey  
From the procreative cactus,  
Proving once and for all that we walk too heavy,  
And are not at all like sunlight through those graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Chaucer

This is not Chaucer,  
But I've had the chance to finish it  
Before I die:  
So I love you,  
And this is the underdeveloped post-script  
I haven't really spent much time on,  
And the bus is coming around,  
And the lions are busy yawning waiting  
For their trainer to fling into their  
Mangy insouciance entire pink-throated  
Mackerel,  
And I am too nervous to flee towards  
The mosquito truancy deeper in the  
Florida holly where the traffic  
Would not see us,  
And from where I stand I can see  
A moat falling for miles  
Into that old familiar cave,  
If you remember,  
Where we pretended to live.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Chinaski's Rhyming Poem

Silver fish stream like metal cars  
As dead greasers play chicken in the stars,  
Dead greasers play chicken in the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Disney World

This is not Disney World- This is something better:  
This is nothing that the tourists read: this is my homeless fitt,  
Finally coming around to third base and then on to home:  
These are my wishes making love to Alma:  
These are how I make love to her, and call her out when she is  
Not at home,  
While she has been so conditioned by the starshine and by their  
Chrome;  
And this is my fairytale meant to persuade my queen to put away  
The greenness of her cannons,  
And to remember all that I might mean, while the turtles are making  
Love into the strange calligraphy of seashells,  
While the airplanes are leaving their ex-lovers and going off to  
Explore the rhythms of newly unexpected folklores:  
This is my burning house for her- Alma, this is  
My everlasting wish for you- In your beauty is capture all of  
Woebegone Mexico swimming upside down:  
The virgin of Guadalupe swings her amusements upon your neck,  
And the airplanes and the hurricanes roar,  
While I am only good for recording the sincerity for my feelings for  
Your lush and un supposing sounds,  
While your extended family sleeps next to you, and I am left to crawl  
Nearer the sea,  
And to take her lips to mind, which is and always is a poor supplicate  
To drowning into you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Entirely Sure What I Saw What Is Still Taking Up My Time

I just don't care that there  
Are so many people moving in my mind,  
Given over to drink and conversational  
Séances—That I cannot succeed with them  
All inside me at once,  
And even though many of them are beautiful  
And have tall legs, is no good excuse;  
Or that I see them riding trolleys through the  
Overgrown city, and even though it is  
Another day they are still sharing in the  
Same conversation and drinks;  
And everyone of them wants to be enjoyed  
By me, but they do not want to understand me,  
Or sit by me, or say, oh well, and give up a kiss:  
Rather, I am something like a steady grandfather  
For them, and seeing them is what I do for them,  
Because their business really isn't any good unless  
They have someone to be seen by;  
And this is what I do for them, but curl on out of  
My avenues and watch them moving without effort,  
Seeming to stand still in my vision, conversational  
And well intoxicated;  
And it occurs to me that I'd been wrong the entire  
Time, that, yes, not one of them gives a nickel for art,  
Or the smoke halls of abandoned theatres,  
Because I can never find them there when I find myself  
Out of work, and must go driving for them;  
But they also care nothing for money, or becoming  
Rich, which I thought was the America profession,  
But rather they care only for this, being accepted and well-  
Liked by the other people I have picked for them,  
And sent running into them bosomy and well-suited so that  
They at first might apologize, and then begin in conversations  
Which last all afternoon, tall men leaning up against these  
Petit women all dressed up in street cars,  
Their eyes the subtlety of their greatest needs, so that I  
Could only say truthfully that I had seen but one of them

Glancing briefly toward my emptiness,  
Making sure that I was still there and painful,  
And keeping my unrequited watch, taking mental notes□  
Of the lovely things and their perfumed apathy  
As they quite eagerly carried on.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Even A Drop

If the night sings, then the days get busy,  
Boisterous almost- The airplanes never let up  
They go by their ways of fishermen as busily  
As maidens leaping beneath all those stars,  
The junked satellites ceasing to wink, forgetting  
Their managements:  
And this is true, that I don't really understand the  
Paper tombs, the happy exploits of paperboys by  
Their expanding routes, the professors in their  
Ancient caps, the beautifully young wives,  
And the red bricks they all play in well stacked and  
So very high: So, toss your hair as you will quite  
Carelessly, not even looking at me or contemplating  
To explain this: I am not drunk anymore,  
Not drunk over nothing, I am quite dry- Like a fish  
Who has evolved, who has discovered some new formula  
And sits quite slyly in the grass wide-eyed and brilliantly  
Smoking his pipe, waiting for the man who might have  
Been his father, if he'd only thought something more  
Of the sea,  
All the ways to go, and by what means you plan to use  
To get what you want out of it; but now I can't even think,  
Because you've walked by and the day is so busily empty,  
And I have not had even a dropp to drink.

Robert Rorabeck



# Not Even An Echo

As they dimmed over high school,  
And the baseball diamond,  
And the inevitable wives went home to  
Their inevitable husbands:  
From the malls as from the estuaries-  
I thought of the romance  
In the valentine of a firework: very cheap  
Romance bought in packs  
Like cigarettes- for an amusing moment-  
To scare the children,  
And annoy the neighborhood- and yet to  
Come from so very far away-  
And to be so profound in their beautiful  
Daredevilry,  
But too end up not really there- to last for  
The moment of a lover's holiday-  
A honeymoon of overpriced nonsense-  
And that is all:  
Not even an echo, not even a sad knock on  
A sad door.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Even Bret Harte

The day pours its molasses over the older  
But still working body; I have nothing to do,  
And I am almost as old as Christ was....  
I think of a Jesuit college, and graveyards where  
Beautiful women already sleep who  
Have won Pulitzers, and were married to men  
They did not love: but I cannot look into  
Their eyes, even though they are everywhere.  
My mother is away at the grocery store,  
And my dog is asleep on the sheetless bed,  
And how he runs as he dreams I can never be  
Certain. There are older tales than this, little seamless  
Plays, echoing of high school which never quite  
Happened. My father is fixing the fence, and  
I have a book published, but I should be outside  
Working, loving women in fastfood restaurants,  
Beautiful women who might go down, who do  
Not expect so much. Soon there will be a new president  
And a parade, and then I must stop hibernating. I've  
Saved almost enough to buy a house, but not quite,  
Like the poems I display to no one, the great band  
Full of spittle and sincerities. If I had awakened earlier,  
I should have been Mark Twain, but now I am not  
Even Bret Harte, and no one even knows who he  
Is anymore, and that should be the subject of my  
Dissertation should I ever step back up to the plate,  
And show the blue devil on the red mound what  
I am capable of....

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Ever Will Be

Now the night reciprocates and I can't  
Even believe I am doing this:  
I have lied to you for so many times, the sea knows and  
She is no longer amused:  
The sea does her thing every day, traveling from spot to  
Spot,  
Just like you: and she only loves one man, just like you,  
I suppose;  
And now the night turns herself around, and I am not well:  
By what hour do you touch yourself, and do you ever wonder  
About your daughter,  
What future she might have in this vast midnight;  
And it is awful, so beautifully awful, and the orchids swarm.  
And maybe you don't even know,  
The reticulated cul-de-sacs where I once grew up awaiting the  
Ice-cream machines that you are never really attending;  
And now you are fully grown and don't feel the sea:  
It just comes boiling up to your eyes like a pet,  
And you pay it no mind, but keep boiling up the cup that doesn't  
Even know my name;  
And now I wonder, Sharon- Now that it is too late, and all the lions  
Have bitten through the chain-link habitat you built  
For the ski masks of their beautiful moonlight, that you should  
Care to be afraid to die before I awaken;  
But the sea is so beautiful; and your orchid has never had a need  
To know anything other than it is marvelous,  
Having created your daughter;  
And the world turns like a vase you made of water:  
It just turns and turns, and there isn't any need for any other language  
Into its being other than it is beautiful;  
And it's name isn't nor ever will be, Sharon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Just A Werewolf

If I could dream of you then after school  
Where grass stains and burns  
Kidding knees, where you might  
Fall all tripped from a rather long basketball game,  
Held over slightly weeping:  
Just all cut down because you couldn't grow anymore  
After seventeen:  
I bight my stained teeth without looking you in  
The eye  
Lounging through classes in the flooded parking lot  
With no one around to tell you what they like  
. Oh, how so like a steamy love scene in a  
Rain stained teen-romance,  
Folded pages of cartoon characters and knick-knacks  
Almost humming; or just beneath the press-  
Metal corrugations out at lunch, and the blue eyeliner  
And all those truants smoking in their rows,  
All in their finely gaggled tresses like fashion  
Read macaws, but not one of them a true Indian-  
Not really anymore on any long term warpath-  
Not even conquistadors, not even  
One such: Alligators as tiny as plastic green grenadiers  
Lost in inland dunes,  
Nipping at their bashful ankles, ant lions and me too-  
Little love bites like stain glass splinters,  
Like the humid spindles Mosquitoes flume:  
That night they threw a little carnival amidst the red courtyard  
Where we sat around seven in the morning, casually gunning  
At each other with lustful eyes, the special ed students moaning,  
Trying to eat early morning butterflies; and two liter pop  
Bottles full of Vodka, and quarter sticks of Dynamite-  
Suburbia all drawn out around it like an orgasming picnic.....  
Then pixie sticks and cocaine on Halloween-  
Moms in the kitchens and rotten eggs  
And cops and Roman Candles on David's roof.  
Stop.

Now I'm 30 with scars to prove it that you never did really  
Love me- never got my name.

I tried out for track and got lapped by a black kid,  
Try to follow after your neverending legs,  
But ended up stealing from the neighbors-  
Then had fever-dreams of becoming an ornithologist  
Awakened again in the expensive Scotsdale desert.  
When I told you I'd written really good analytical writing,  
I foreshadowed you'd slapped me and drove off into the cherry red  
Show floors of used car salesmen,  
Revolving with romantical cliffs of silver chrome  
And elevator musak:

Then, home again, hung-over,  
Engorged and onto something bad:  
just a careless child as foxy as Tom Sawyer, skipping school  
And smoking my corn cop pipe,  
Not just a werewolf  
Flicking something bothersome, I catch blue gills and slap them  
Promiscuously against palm trees, because someone told me that  
Fish couldn't feel your eyes upon them smoothly like pre-Socratic  
Trainwrecks in newly washed linens: Those candies were for him,  
All your lavender spaces,  
Lemon drops, warm molasses poured into quivering  
Recesses, cakes on the griddle

But the secret knocks and epitaphs on grayish tombs  
I'll keep,  
The not so far off lightning,  
Something Gothic foretelling on chipped porcelain,  
The letters above my head sealed but for the nearly blind woman  
Who feels them like a cantankerous fire lapping like  
A fine young specimen out in the open skies of her  
Double-wide bedroom  
Like an ever living library rolling an almost green  
And cold hearted sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Just Tomorrow

Knocking one out as the  
Saints go marching like ants,  
Under the rings of cherubic lattices,  
Just as chubby as rabbits, their whiskers ululating  
Pejoratively into another lettuce garden;  
And I do this to resurrect my friends, and to  
Befriend my sisters:  
I get warm on the evaporated substances of my youth,  
And I cuddle to her like resilient fish surviving in its  
Sea of fire,  
Like a poor student emoting all that he feels underneath  
A broken down bus  
Until it finally takes flame and becomes the impassible  
Dragon,  
Under which all of the earlier muses fail or are sacrificed,  
And the rivers of beneficent incest begin to sing out loud:  
The conquistadors come again,  
Silvery polished and caroling; and everyday there is a wedding;  
And beautiful things tend to happen in these moments  
Where water and sunlight falls expeditiously and not  
Just tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not My Muse

Who am I reading now: The long adventure  
Of this thing,  
Breathing in the goldfish at the movies,  
And then you are there all tucked in and crenulated  
Coming up and going down  
phallacio for firemen and wresters, and other things  
I can't spell.  
Oh, if we were in New Mexico, but then you would  
Be in love with my brother in law;  
And there should be some greater morality to this.  
There should be a better way of saying this,  
And the mythology which would give meaning to  
Selling used cars;  
But the sky is just blue, and tarped a deeper blue in  
Crepuscle: You know when that is,  
Because the airplanes are coming in, touching down,  
And leaving off their trams of lost sheep,  
And the ocean is roiling like unending pieces of  
Eight, the cutthroat monies of little white towns that  
Don't exist anymore,  
And fore some reason I am thinking of Michelle,  
And I am thinking that she is reading this,  
Even though I do not care, since she is not my muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Sebastian

Shower off everything else,  
In the little apartment biding time,  
The recourses of the month, the sad tuitions,  
And the dreams that step out the door and  
Drown with the leafs in the communal pool:  
The clean death smells of chlorine.  
Two stories up she lives with her two Dalmatians  
In a studio.  
She studies to be a paramedic, a house wife,  
Something greater than working at the drive-thru window,  
But she doesn't look at me.  
She has always looked at you, but you are already a father.  
Someone not named Sebastian, a grad student in a bad economy;  
Everything here rings like the wind chimes' telephone.  
I knock on the door, but no one is home.  
She is making love somewhere else,  
A place of greater expanses, a concrete prairie,  
A movie theatre, the football stadium,  
And the blowndry herds masticate towards the gymnasium  
Where their eyes fawn, their bodies move  
Under the greater lights of the upwardly mobile marches;  
The bellies of middle-class diplomas sweat in the tanning booths,  
But she doesn't look at me.  
She has always looked at you- Someone not named Sebastian.

Robert Rorabeck



# Not So Very Loud

One thousand gypsum fairytales  
Just trying to keep my tailfins  
Warm,  
Pretending to be another  
Metamorphosis  
A thousand and ten miles away from  
Home—  
And when it gets cloudy, we sell  
Christmas trees:  
Just me and my wife,  
And the dwarf—  
And my grandfather, why,  
He is dead,  
But fully satisfied now that he has  
His anatomical request—  
And in the morning floods  
And toy boats  
With vaginas—  
And my hands typing away in the  
Hedgerows beneath a cloud—  
While a thousand girls get off to  
Themselves—  
Inside the theatres of the hurricanes  
That are trying themselves to be  
Not so very loud.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Tell Anyone At All

Building up in cornpone fountains:  
Building up right here, where the fairies fountain:  
And right here, where the rhymes crown themselves, speaking  
For themselves,  
As all of the night proceeds, speculating:  
And maybe my loved ones won some prizes, but the night is  
Another memorial, because it is always because,  
With their knuckles in their mouth,  
While all of their wives and pets sit speculating: and then  
The city is hard up in its jazz of hyperborean lights right up  
Against the hyperborean:  
And there it was, while I was trying to strange myself:  
And then it was alright while we were all trying to move  
Away, upstream into the closets of suicide outside of guns  
And the popcorns of your unicorns; and here it is, after hours,  
And afternoon, while all of the elves have called their  
Terrapins, and there they are, while the busses are all turning  
Around: and there they are: while you are in his house of bodies  
All alone- and I just wanted my fair bit of suicide, fueling up  
The semis:  
There down deep in the highest lowest aeries: and it wasn't very good:  
And there it was, just so floating on their tiny planet:  
There it was on my cartoon of a planet with no one who could  
Really change to love me with the soul star of a superhero sun coming  
Up just to commit suicide: and  
Then there was nothing that nothing was, and the lions came,  
As the kittens growled, while the tourists curtailed but whom they loved  
I could not tell anyone at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not That Hard

As a male of so little means, this is how I  
Won her:  
I told her I couldn't be defeated by any old sort of  
Fire, and then I told her to look at hers,  
And to think about what she really saw.  
I put pinwheels in her yard to distract the other boys  
And their mean bicycles;  
And then I sang of the rivers and the mountains of  
Her body:  
I sang up spikenard and juju bees all around her:  
I told her she was a topiary and an apiary and both of  
Those were a mirage:  
I bought her lingerie and I waited for her to come for  
Me,  
Because I had bought a crèche to hold her daughter  
And her mother a deck of playing cards:  
And I kept holding my breath for her and reminding myself  
It was not that hard.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not The Same Thing As Angel Wings

The birds are having their  
Own fun  
In their theatre above the  
Park-  
The sun is peering in through  
The aperture  
As they spread their wings,  
As I see you walking across the  
Street  
Underneath the miracle play of  
Airplanes-  
From behind I can see that  
Your shoulderblades  
Are not the same thing as  
Angel's wings.

Robert Rorabeck

## Not To Tell Us To Anyone Else

Now the time continues like bicycles carrying on,  
While after work Alma goes home and catches up with herself,  
While I have so many things left to be saved,  
While the bodies jump ship, forsaking their instruments  
Or anything else accordant to their metamorphosis:  
While Natalie cleans up and I try not to starve,  
Even though it isn't hardly even winter,  
And we have just meant underneath the overpasses in passing:  
And we have made love to the cold meats of our bodies'  
Retreating,  
For we have been mutually hurt in the cold cellars that tell  
So many mitigated fairy tales that it feels like Christmas; .  
But not here, and according to the facts of her gods:  
Not anywhere else, as the night comes and unfolds her hair,  
And promising in whispers not to tell us to  
Anyone else.

Robert Rorabeck

# Not Without Motion

You cannot live without motion—  
You cannot reach her lips nor plant yourself  
In her arms— You cannot speak her name without  
Breathing— You cannot whisper to her the  
Secret things which would have made up your children  
If you could have moved into her— But,  
You cannot live without motion, and though  
You may have captivated her briefly,  
Like a landscape she walked through,  
Like a portrait in a museum in South Florida  
Where she heard her own echoes and saw them in  
You— Eventually, she had to move on,  
Because she could see no way to move into you,  
Because you could not stand up beside her—  
Nor could you open the doorways for her  
And hold her hand down the busy streets to protect her—  
For her, you were not a living thing  
Though for five years she tried to make you move,  
To rehabilitate you with a miracle, but it did not come,  
So now you stand like an empty window  
Watching those busy things outside copulating,  
Moving further and further away the more they live  
Without you and she is gone like a fever dream,  
Ever restless, like rain that slicks the world in falling tears,  
Like rivers running back to the sea in his arms,  
Moving, living— Though sometimes her memories  
Shudder the tremulous branches of your forlorn tree  
Rooted at the edge of the lapping currents of the world....  
You cannot live without motion—

Robert Rorabeck

## Note In Class

In this matter  
Our certainty is important.

For example,  
I would say I love you  
And you have to  
Circle either "yes" or "no".

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing At All To Do With You

This compares to that, but nothing compares to you;  
That second person pronoun, for me definitely feminine:  
You said goodbye to me in college,  
You kissed my neck out on the walks of the red brick  
University; And what are you doing now.  
I am so ashamed, that I don't even want to know; but your  
Legs are so long, so long they deserve to be upper-middle  
Class- if you start out walking they'll get you  
There somehow. I know they will; and you would suspect  
Now for me to begin a detailed shopping list telling you about  
Every part of your mythical body that I came to the store to  
Buy, to fit you in a kart, as a bachelor to assemble you;  
but come now, Pocahontas,  
My mythical squaw camped by starlight who lactates pin-wheeling  
Galaxies from her tits. Why would I do that when you  
Don't even read my poems anymore; you cannot smell me  
On the wind. You smell like Dr. Pepper and shampoo.  
You eat dead chicken on a bun with a pickle with  
Lips so red and vulgar they are like numbed and tranquilized  
Mollusks, they overflow like anti-Semitism, like deluged  
Rose petals; Why should I give anything more to you after  
I bought all of the bouquets; after I made you immortal in a novel  
That will never sell, a quiet pulpy tomb human eyes will never  
Rest upon like kine on a restive knoll; Not you, you who are  
Already a champion with great assets, with him to lean upon  
And an entire bullpen swinging their bats and spitting dew,  
Ready to get upon the red diamonds and clays of the earth  
When in early morning you undrape from the sea mists, and I walk  
Out upon you, or at least I did when I was a virgin just got back  
From running away to Michigan with two black eyes; how I fit nearer  
To you, and slept dreaming of you in the hydrangeas by the student  
Parking lot; and now it is not fit for you to say a thing,  
The certain part of the Anglo-Saxon which is my Achilles Heel;  
Turn around like a sprinkler on a lawn, catch his hand like a child  
On a swing, and leap away now jumping, yipping, singing as you go  
Off the stage, to the backrooms to undress and gossip, you deadly  
Beauty a spear in the beating heart of the big city; all possibilities  
Laid before you,  
But do not turn back around, because this is my poem I keep:



I have run away from the common grounds with;  
I will roll it up and smoke it on the swings, use to find buried  
Treasure, or leap with it across the irrigation ditches until I find myself  
In a cypress glade watching the leaping bellies of airplanes; it is mine;  
It has nothing at all to do with you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing At All To Prove

I can't breathe around you:  
This fishbowl is a nightmare that I haven't  
Been going, but around and around  
You caracoling, mouthing off a fish spell:  
Diana,  
Diana- The mountains are yours. The streams  
That fall down from the mountains are yours.  
These words that pattern mutely from my lips are  
The dying children you will never feel leaving  
Your womb like jugular tarpon;  
Like bright and unabashed news revving its  
Reveling engines out of the carport of absolute  
Sunlight,  
Like liquor, like unrequited housewives so burned  
By seamless shopping that they have nothing-  
Nothing at all to prove.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing Bad About Anyone

The tiniest fingers of a heart playing a flute  
Over the embers of a kindergarten  
Fills the pit where I've been singing—  
Watched by the cold gems in the eyes of  
Crocodiles and alligators that once  
Watched me kissing you on the mouth  
While the whole world turned:  
Teachers who were full of themselves,  
And housewives too—  
Going to and from stores, air-conditioned—  
Petty, always forgetful of how they once  
Wore roller-skates—  
Or how the firefighters slid down the poles  
Backlit by the prepubescent mountains  
That carried the purple and blue mountain lions  
Not so far away from them,  
But kept all of their finest secrets to themselves  
In the keyholes of their bosoms—  
Until the rainstorms came, so full of gasoline  
And forgotten fairytales—then the goldfish  
Gossiped inside of their wishing wells and  
Plastic bags—  
And mothers whispered to themselves  
Underneath the penumbras of the migratory  
Ferris-Wheels, where they swore and swore  
That they could say nothing bad about anyone else.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing But Cartoons

Rain came of sleeping foxes—  
Rain slept underneath the palmettos:  
Waters came  
Of serpentine conquistadors—  
Filled up the baths of alligators  
And all of the day long,  
The youngish children in their dalliances—  
Where did they go in the middle of  
A school day—  
Not to school, not according to their chances:  
Sunlight sang like golden lances  
Over rooftops where  
It was they spent their afternoon—  
Visions of virginsittas came to them as they  
Drank their bottles,  
As they skipped classes,  
And folded airplanes and lit off rockets—  
It was their springtime in the afternoon—  
Where they learned nothing  
But cartoons.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing But Rhyme

In the land of bolts and blood,  
I saw my old girl riding stud:

He was fast, and he was lean;  
Her hips took to the shape of a gumball machine-

I worked all day and blew up the tent,  
While they rode around squealing like rust,  
Paying the rent,

In the desert their scent was coy but professional,  
And the dirt around them was something sensational;

I got their game smack dab in my face,  
While they continued braying the two headed caucus race,

But what a thing to behold, the lights growing mold,  
And around me a certain patina:

The dimmest Jim, and uncertain John,  
The procession of devils and shopping malls may care to live  
On,

Though without a dropp of water in my throat,  
I thought of her lips as a rosy red boat,  
And circled around them as if my tongue were a serpent  
In a medieval moat,

But she was not there, for not long did she care;  
Tore the curtains, let the windows lay bare,

Like open wounds, processions of apertures curling divine,  
She galloped away, I have nothing but rhyme....

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing Else To Lose

Vague and beautiful obtuse, '  
I am the wino in the satin sheath,  
The guy in charge of the remote control boats,  
Or at least that is who I would like to be  
As I wonder why you keep that moist taugt  
Graveyard so well clinched between your legs,  
While in the least I very love you,  
Which isn't good grammar, and I've spent the better  
Part of the evening looking for the moon to denote  
Airplanes,  
Not thinking of either of those muses,  
Just the girl from Columbia who delivers lunch to me:  
I could fall in love and watch her spread out her gladness  
Across the glades of the sea,  
But she is probably only interested because I am the only  
Americano along her route,  
A curiosity, like china in a shop of bulls:  
All these tiny matadors who populate South Florida can  
Get tiring after awhile,  
And yet, if Diana only needs one man to string her bow,  
To fletch her arrows,  
Than I am the man for her: A good man, gray headed,  
Yellow of teeth who still gets carded in Arizona when he went  
Out once a week to buy his cheep liquor,  
But now there is so little proof otherwise except that he still  
Gets drunk and goes out to the graveyard swings and makes  
The airplanes cavort along with his secular censer,  
Proving in the very least that his shoes are very wet from working  
On the yard or esplanade all day,  
And that he has nothing else to lose.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing For It

Reaching inside the passionate gold,  
Or tv shows which come on around noon for spent out  
House wives: She still has great lips and a clean pool  
Her son swims in as a truant: She spies and thinks about  
Planting new flowers, heliotrope or taking the bus  
To Michigan. In her mind, she doesn't even give me a  
Thought: she is the well-groomed affluence, transmuting,  
Insouciant: for this week, a wave coming in, crypt orchid,  
The distillations of the shopping mall. She wears a diamond  
Ankle bracelet and paints her nails black or bruises them:  
I can only give her my time, and how I create her out of a  
Specific conglomerate, an easy species. She doesn't come in  
Today, maybe tomorrow. She will go around unpublished  
And beautiful just as long as I do, but she's saddled up  
And perky. She doesn't read anything but Good House Keeping,  
And I've made her this way and given her a pack of cigarettes,  
And laid off the scars. I've combed her hair and sat her aside/  
I'll come back around tomorrow, have a drink and make her croon.  
She has beautiful eyes that like to storm and never look into mine.  
She is my third poem for tonight, and my last sip. Boy, she  
Is looking fine. I almost dated her in high school, and saw her many  
Times in Disney World on all those trips, watched her flip over in  
Her dress, doing her routines and cheers before she got married and  
Took up casual drinking and karate and now I love her and there is nothing  
For it. She is Italian and Catholic and insular, and that is all  
There is to it, and there is nothing for it.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing Human

The pine trees had a crowded soul,  
They made a chorus in the salty wind, or they  
Wined like wounded hounds as the conquistadors  
Tromped within their needled cradle;  
They placed crosses of forgetful stone about their  
Knees; or they fell asleep quilled into séances  
By the lovely feathered shafts of eerie natives  
Who disappeared, the vermilion iguanas hissed and curled and,  
Cold blooded, waited naked in the shallow pools  
Of limestone. An empty amusement park waiting  
For the adolescent band, the little boys and girls  
Out playing rented instruments out in the immeasurable  
Wilderness. They will play games and make love, until  
The sport transcends to marriage of cannibalisms:  
The forest loses faith into a suburbia, turns cold and wrapped  
In copper gallants. Street lights mote the stars, fiddling them  
Into blindness, and the cars are busy foraging upon the misspelled  
Tombs. Now they are married and going to town, the  
Cypress wear garland and the grass is mowed. Beautiful and  
Rented, the trees persist like monks asleep, like velveteen cocoons.  
Who knows what better language they will sing once again  
Nothing human is at home.

Robert Rorabeck



# Nothing I Have

I like to look at photos of pretty women  
And their mothers,  
And dream of their husbands as I hike in  
Autumn's blushing, to where there are couches  
Hidden in these woods, and springs in broken  
Jaws of igneous stones, the drool from  
Withering memories, like faucets:  
The sunken amusement parks where they can  
No longer recall my unrequited bouquets, like  
Couplets, the prenuptials I gave to them and  
My sheepish grin: Where the furs stay green  
For all holidays, and the draws with teeth of  
Lightning-scarred trees line my cheeks like  
Grandfathers: Those subtle-moonlit stones as slick  
As wishes, and the blue passing by of a propitious  
Lion: I know that she is my mother, or one day soon  
Will become her, but now I should not speak of such  
Transformations; for the elk are making paths to  
Suite the aspens' colonnade, the conspicuous wind  
Rushes through with so little to say, but rushes in  
The dawning gloom, and the stars go as sisters  
In the wall-less room, go as sisters far away;  
And I have said the things I might wish upon  
Until I am still, and stand alone save for the ghosts  
Tattered and rippling beyond the forest's perception;  
But what have I really had to say to her, that is enough?  
Nothing I have written should be spoken out loud,  
For it is the failure of a stone wall the horde is already  
Across, and I have watched the well-mannered barbarians  
Take her far away from me,  
And I lower my head with its sunken birth-marks,  
And weep, for nothing I have is good enough for her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing Left To Prove

Swing me up from the glass lake,  
Because I don't believe it is real anymore;  
Crocodiles can touch their tears to the  
Toy soldiers of its plasticine shore;  
And Keats died a virgin, as I should have died,  
Because the fires I stick my pins inside were  
No reason to succeed;  
And now there are so many children in a house  
That doesn't move,  
So many lines of words with nothing to prove;  
And the night seems to be evangelical,  
But I wonder if it would be as religious if some science  
Hadn't invented its better light for it;  
The atheisms of fish with shoes;  
And you are my brightest bright of hotel muse,  
And you come to me in the middle of the night and fluff  
My bed and huff my shoes;  
And it is because in the end that you are not real,  
And I am jumping trains with the cenotaphs of my canines,  
That I can finally get to sleep, as I have nothing left to prove.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing Less Than Marylyn Monroe

Beginning to the reservoirs: after the dogs  
Have returned home,  
But the paper airplane we sent out has somehow  
Made it to the other side of the canal  
And seeing with her vanished eyes  
Many of the other things we have never seen before:  
The bottle rockets over the path ten months we  
Sent out lying around her like  
Nothing more than the pitchforks of cenotaphs—  
The reindeers trampling us to  
Get to the comets that sing in the remedies of  
Moonlight—as she lies bare naked for  
The serpent with too many tongues,  
Even though she has told us that she once  
Loved the terrapin who came wandering to her  
Door while we were playing cops and robbers  
And she was dreaming about  
A housewife transmogrifying into the migrations of a  
Butterfly  
That happened to be nothing less than Marylyn Monroe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing Of Its Own

By the savage dreams,  
Cannibalistic airplanes spread their  
Over eager wings:  
And sing to snakes and ants:  
Red and blue fallen onto the white floor:  
Off the tables with no more space  
For elbows:  
The heroes weeping in the soups of witches,  
The masterless dog scratching at the door-  
And the moon sick in the sky,  
Like a lost child out of the doors of a  
Supernatural school,  
Ashamed of the glow of its own thievery,  
It swims through the meaninglessness carrying  
With it nothing of its own.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing Slips Out Of Her Dress

Nothing slips out of her dress  
And disappears into the sky—  
Across the street, they are having  
A wedding and I am not invited,  
But the moonless night walks by;  
My feet clap on the sidewalk  
Beneath the lights like languorous dancers  
At a prom that is over and done,  
But no one lifts their heads my way.  
They are too busy mingling with  
Their drinks, pink martinis and flamingos  
Though the bride,  
She looks young again as she smiles at him—  
When I have nothing left to say,  
My childhood friends are getting drunk  
Under the steps leading down to the sea,  
And their lips are swimming in green smoke,  
So their eyes dilate on each other  
As the waves undulate like an army of whores  
In a swim meet  
Against their secret enclave—  
They are singing, everybody wants to get paid,  
While a dead woman with waverly eyes  
Sleeps in the bending limed knees of the mangroves.  
There, the nourishing ray lays quiet in a bed  
Of somber sand, as above on cypress bark  
The mantises pray,  
And cicadas sing as they shed their old identities,  
And even without ceremonies like in the mowed  
Yards of people who live day to day  
In the backyard patios where ribbons of  
Effluvious light swim out from the sunlight's  
Cascade upon the screened-in pools,  
They are able to change themselves— to  
Leave those old husks clinging  
Like the deceased upon the mosses  
Hidden in the discreet ferns' shade as  
Nothing slips out of her dress  
And disappears into the sky—

Robert Rorabeck

# Nothing To Her World Always Turning

What is the girl I always think of doing-  
I bet she does as she always does, so far sunny  
From my glooming:  
And I have won prizes today, and shaken  
Hands with the really long haired contestants-  
I have brought warm soup to the poor, and then  
I have taken it away, because I figured I was  
Hungry myself:  
I have thought of words like spoiled beef and who  
To feed it to but the sick muse-  
In this world where it is impossible to close a thing  
Because it is always so busy revolving,  
The nursery of epitaphs and uncooked attempts;  
I would just like to find her once and lie down beneath  
Her frilly stems and sigh, and say almost nothing-  
Because nothing I could say would be worth such an  
Experience- All the wealth in a dropp of her shade,  
And it would not be pornography to watch her  
Breastfeeding;  
Oh, but the things I seem to say just sort of happen,  
And mean nothing to her world that is always turning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Notice

Awaken, jet gray, while some other grandmother  
Is dying today;  
And the bells of new satellites ring; new planets are being  
Explored:  
My body feels like my body in that it is a first person horror;  
And I have been doing so much exploring along the dress of  
Her I-95;  
And, Erin, did you ever dream that this is what you would  
Be doing:  
Erin, I stared across to you in Latin class and I lamented,  
And I bowed my head; and I wished to god I could be more  
Beautiful for you, if only to capture you, to make you salient  
And calm,  
And a housewife blushing in your rosy balms. Because how many  
More years do you figure you can be considered beautiful going  
The route you are going; and who has failed you for you to  
Become so broken, or am I just wrong,  
And should be spending my time reminiscing to more beautiful  
Muses under the sorrows of those mountains, you know;  
How much longer do I have to wear these leeches for you, to  
Pretend to be impervious to the grays of your apathetic shadows.  
Which boys are you kissing now, or which motorcycles;  
And is it never enough that one scarred woodpecker loves you,  
And has let off carving out his regular figurines of conquistadors:  
That I love you, and want to live with you in the very same indoors;  
Please, E-, don't let my meatball be lost;  
I am still worth something, if you have ever cared or even had an  
Inkling of love that has floated so slowly out back of your outdoors,  
As if you didn't know that its only wish was for you to notice.

Robert Rorabeck



# Novel Cartography

I have given a good report of the mountain  
To the general and his staff;  
And now I must lay out with all my truck and belly  
For the east;  
For when I summited and had my lunch, it occurred to  
Me I was not seeing god there in untracked highways  
Of boiling air, not so much as what I caught from her;  
A glint from a sharp ankle, I think,  
An elbow like soldered glass, turned in my way as if  
Giving a signal of hope strung near the redacted sea:  
My tongue spoke as if in its own entity,  
Clacking the palate behind me teeth, like trusses on  
A railway; a mollusk who has caught the cuff-  
A silken smoke signal, a whiff of a soda fountain as it  
Makes love to a beauty parlor: She was a waitress moving  
In her stuff; but you see, I am not sure, Major, and that is  
Why I do not come when called to revelry,  
Because I can't anymore fight an enemy impervious to  
Anything but vapors and hearsay: she has given me a good  
Reason to start a memoir underneath the shadow that  
A heron blooms out to lunch strutting against the dustbowl  
Sky; If you wonder where I went, its to the east,  
And what for, this is why: She startled me like a sound which  
Gives harmony to a mottled soul; it resonates now.  
She may have already struck  
Other fools panning for her illusive gold,  
But until I get there, harping thus, she should be a novel  
Cartography setting out from dawn to dusk, serving brilliant  
Platters to love-struck tourists waddled inland to the sea,  
Along the same path I now truck to see.

Robert Rorabeck

## Now And Again At 2 Am

Another night alone  
In the cage of ribs,  
This heart beats like a song bird  
Hoping to escape the body's solitary gravity,  
To spread out in the rhapsody of heaven's immutable aspect  
Like notes on an endless page of unchaste sky  
To meet you there at the breach, the last two foaming things  
Challenging the other to collide as effervescing stags  
On our Elysium Field naked  
Before the calamitous extinction  
Our two waves destroying the alienation  
Of separate bodies,  
The recipe of dreams I hold you in my eyes  
All the vibrant colors running down the limbs in pressing needs  
Before the thunderstorm of fertile possibility  
Expressing now the way we might become,  
Our bodies gathered in a bed and passing hours,  
Nesting in those reddest parts where our  
Secrets collide then become tranquil  
And we take on new hidden names  
Those we keep pressed between our lips  
To incubate and then give to our children.

Robert Rorabeck

## Now I Have Seen

Now I've seen through the keyhole of an angel's eye  
The valleys of divinity filigreed with curling Spring,  
And in them lay two people crooning like song birds,  
Pretending they are each flower and bee, dabbing,  
Inlaid upon the coliseum basin where sunlight leaps  
And streams segment like bubbling yarn before they come  
Together in a watery tapestry further down  
The muted villages where people live and stroll about  
Admiring the rushing voice joining all as one—  
The symphony of two lovers....

Now I have seen you lying there like a marble fawn  
Resting on a green lawn, with all the light of the day being  
Attracted to your body as if you held a special element,  
As you seemed an endless leap of breathing as your  
Eyes strolled the sky, even though they sat there watching  
Nothing—And I have seen your fingers enfold a speckled egg,  
Softly like a nest in which a downy chick hatched from your  
Warmth, and I wondered what it felt like to be held that way  
By you.... As God must wonder every day, looking down,  
Glad that he chose the finest clay and his first breath of  
The morning to make what you are....

Now I have seen you every day as I wake up alone, the  
Distant beautiful visage that I recall every morning since  
The first day I opened my eyes upon you, like something only  
Perceived through the keyhole of an angel's eye. And I  
Have longed for you the way the earth longs to disrobe in  
Seasons of sunlight, to spin you around in my arms like a ride,  
To make you so happy that you return to that point in  
Your childhood when happiness was all you knew....  
But you walk restlessly breathing sadly next to the sea,  
Forgetting, as each wave laps away a bit of your injured memory,  
Until you are a child of loneliness again, taken away by the  
Upset plane of blue, coroneted by seagulls shrieking because  
They don't know who you are....

But I have seen you and even from a great distance I know  
Who you are, for all the light of the spheres seems to hover about

You like phosphorescent moths in the backyard of some deep night,  
So in my eyes all else is the darkness of a rainy sky, except where  
You are, and even so far away I have seen you blazing the gaseous  
Orb sounding out, spinning unabated in its search,  
Like a torch carried by runners between two armies hurrying  
To tell that the war is over and now there can be peace....

Now I have seen....

Robert Rorabeck

# Now Is Another Time

I have a hard time moving through the day,  
Sharon;  
So I sing to you between my teeth, between my eyes:  
This evening or the next, as always, you will be my sick muse,  
Because that is how I borrowed you,  
While you let suckle the daughter of another man, while  
You live like a candle burning in those  
August mountains; and if you were to move nearer towards me,  
As I know you should; it would do us no good:  
Because my mind is made up at the movies, and I am not beautiful,  
Though I am almost beautiful: A woman even more beautiful  
Than you, Sharon, has almost loved me,  
But she has not loved me, though she is the only woman I have ever  
Known to be more beautiful than you;  
And I can still settle for you, Sharon, and I can place your daughter  
In a very expensive crib stolen for her off of antique row, which  
Is now my backyard;  
And I am ancient, Sharon; and I have been up and down in the neighborhood  
Of most of your mountains, even more than you should know;  
And I am very sorry that you have a bruised eyeball,  
But it is really what you deserve for making love to other men than I,  
And marrying them, and maybe even loving them- I don't know:  
All I know is that it is very easy to play-defend the Alamo from my quiet  
New home, and if I step outside my door, I can jack-off  
Straight into the sea, or I can get drunk and ride my cheap bicycle straight  
Into her, and you will never feel a thing, Sharon:  
I can light off fireworks for you all day long- and I can skip a school for  
You in which I have never belonged: Sharon, Sharon,  
I have breathed like a goldfish won for you, and I have closed my eyes  
And perceived being with you, a knight in your court of three days,  
Sharon; but now all the random flowers are blooming for your carillon,  
Sharon; and I believe I have made a mistake, because I am not certain what  
That is, or who you are; but the graveyards I have been in have  
Been beautiful, Sharon- And now is another time for me to move on....

Robert Rorabeck

# Now So Gone

Sepia colored swing sets, how shrewd:  
I'll imagine you in the nude,  
Bending over the oil barrel or wishing well,  
Painting on the liquid enamels a  
Homeopathic spell:  
Put on your birthday cake fast rabbits or  
Swifter terrapin,  
But no one can ever claim your virginity again:  
Like a bike thief in the night, he made a little buck,  
And afterwards on both your legs you watched  
Movies you could thoroughly quote,  
And the university awaited for the morning,  
And all its expensive doors: I have never seen a place  
More deciduous, more beautiful, for future housewives  
To explore:  
And I am putting an end to this, like boxes of chalk  
On concrete- Little places for you to put your skipping  
Next to some barber shops and traffic, how sweet:  
And we ate breakfast with your mother, who had important  
Secrets to tell you,  
Your senses flooded by the usual dreams, I looked out  
The effluvious windows at the regular traffic streams;  
But I had new pictures there, entire corpulent gardens to  
Imbibe- You had your tattooed identity, and I my blooming  
Lost tribe: Now so gone so gone so gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nowhere Else To Go

I am soon gone:  
I will soon be wealthy enough to love  
A prostitute  
Forever, or at least on good holidays,  
As my exlover has married a lawyer;  
And your name swings like a phallus upon its  
Ever fluming censer,  
And I dream that the whore is in love with me  
In these eyes of oh so many worlds,  
Even if I know that it is only the lackadaisical  
Traffics,  
Swimming, topless, masturbating,  
With your eyes sweltering in the green and Irish  
Shallows,  
With my hands on my pricks,  
If only, if only because  
They've nowhere else to go.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nowhere Land

There are roads in this country—  
Great, long byways that stretch all the way across.  
On them you can spill one sea into the other—  
Upon them, ribboned in concrete and tar,  
All the day's sunlight flickers and bakes.  
These roads leap across chasms then burrow into the earth.  
They curl back and forth upon one another, join and stitch  
And cross—  
They are the avenues of great commerce  
And anything is possible— They bleed people and ideas  
Together, and before you know it everybody is a neighbor—  
Upon them, the barriers of the earth are defeated and laid low—  
The ancient becomes primordial, the future the present—  
A few minutes and you're there, laying down in that sweet  
Destination, making love to a new plot of sodden ground  
As you listen to the cars speed by—

With our great highways space has become a singularity—  
The lines of movement go by so quickly, and destinations have  
Melded into one another like the seepage of a rampaging dream—  
Here, populations of towns spill along the road, congregate and queue into  
The other—They become identical and borders no longer  
Have hope of meaning. Billboards raise their ill-shapen heads  
Like cubist premadonnas lifting their skirts in long chorus lines,  
The lazy flirts hoping that you'll  
Buy what they sell, and the franchises of their masters pockmark  
The once sleepy burgs which before had risen their beautiful  
Heads, disinfected from anything but their own simple purpose  
For that day—

Towns are smaller versions of cities, and cities are burgeoning  
Metropolises—Going into them is like traveling down the mouth of  
Python you've been in before— You know the names of things  
It has swallowed, because they are all here festering in the concrete gut works  
Like great pyramids of similar symbols and color patterns....

The roads have brought the addictive infection.  
With the speed of modernity, they have flattened the soul of this  
Nation, and splaying open the dream they have copied it



Again and again, so that the original vision has become muted  
And dulled, a dissected canvas mirrored by viral plagiarists,  
The cancerous commerce, and instead of our roads taking us anywhere,  
Instead, we find ourselves manacled to an inescapable spot  
Disfiguring the greatest beauty the sun once shone upon.  
The roads have made us prisoners to our capitalism,  
And driving down we are put on the assembly line of our bloated franchise.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nude Crenulations Of The Backyard Pool

I can go everywhere where this is nothing-  
I can give it a good go and insult your mother-  
I can blow my battle-cry to windmills and attack  
In empty deserts where once basked bouquets of wild  
Flowers;  
But, I am already gone, the hand language the shimmering  
Gesture on the back of the bus  
Who rose up when no one was looking and flashed  
His fake knife, and told who I love with fingernail polish  
In the faux leather;  
But there are no seatbelts where I used to go to school:  
No safety devices in coffins: my language kind of trudged  
Out of the soft ghettos of preplanned lakes fabricated for  
The tourists who wanted to see what it was like to transcend  
One afternoon: I am here, checking my pulse-  
The tampons are floating like postmodern orchids, and at  
Night the housewives don't think anything of witchcraft where the  
Gentled cypress are so tame, least of all on Halloween;  
And we kind of float out here and tell other fables, like down  
Under the safe gendered lights of the meat market-  
The adulteries of mindful professions: I have seen you in a parade  
Of high heels silver, and I lost my sisters to your nudge;  
But I cracked myself to see if I was still real while being very  
Young, and thus try still to make a sensible motion on the  
Swing sets denoting the borders of your greengrocers, the silted  
Pantheisms of ostrich and alligators above where the sky effervesces  
Commercial airplanes, and your sisterhood sings well pampered  
Nursery rhymes to well liquored children who mark the hours  
By your sweet ellipses in their kitchen, by the nude crenulations  
Of the backyard pool.

Robert Rorabeck

## Nudging Her To Proceed

Rivers glow for two weeks overboard the stems  
Of saplings:  
Rivers down from her neck are gracing us with their  
Effluvious ribbon:  
Rivers down to cars and walkways under the terraces  
Of the heartbeats of lovers:  
Each segment of river a stupendous cord of music  
With indiscernible tutors sitting along side her, panting out;  
And the wonderful animals there,  
Each with his own food and paws: and maybe a girl  
Lost from a story book, or torn from another state of  
Being, her feet naked and breathless beside the bend of the river:  
Maybe she will go down into an apartment some day,  
But now her eyes only look deeply into our river, as if  
Hypnotized while every kind of animal you can imagine is  
Nudging her to proceed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nudity Of Stewardesses

Trapeze of evaporated conquistadors  
And other troubling situations—  
Hidden by the canvas of the forest  
With its red tongues in the cypress,  
And blue tongues in the leopards—  
With its manageries and kaleidoscopes  
Filigreed by undefined hours  
And gardens that twist across the napes  
Of sand dunes  
That sway beneath a sky barren of the nudity  
Of stewardesses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nursery Rhyme

I did what I could  
but the rains still fell.  
If you couldn't find me,  
then you didn't check Hell.

Try as I might,  
the floods still came.  
If you were not there,  
I am not the one to blame.

And the sun blames the stars.  
and the stars blame the moon.  
And the moon blames the little girl  
shut inside her room.

Robert Rorabeck

# Nymphs In A Romantic Garden

The queer duck  
Wants to f\*ck  
The cement truck

In the rain  
As the rain was  
The rain because

Humid,  
The room is lonely  
But opulent

The fan is  
Moving while  
The boy waits

She undresses:  
Her first bra  
In the grass, roller skates

Robert Rorabeck

# O Seasons Of Fraternity

And I see the skeletons swimming in the sky,  
The fractured heirlooms and a green dresser of scars;  
Those which we were born to distill into,  
The finer elements and the camaraderie of ivory widgets:  
They are circling in a salmon bloom, brushing off  
The last tendrils of murder, like a ball of fish  
Try to preserve their virginal memories, making a beautiful mistake-  
Like a washing machine cleaning a gluttonous storm,  
But only seasoning rust and rabid dogs leaping at the  
Ball joints swiveling on a point above the earth.  
Slowly exhausted they settle like rags on a barren forest  
Of rattling sticks, and the crows pick between them,  
Cawing like grandmothers lining up at a going out  
Of business sale: They call others distempered by the albino  
Flume which receded into the whiskered trees,  
Like marionettes first tangled in a spilling dog fight and then cut  
By a worried mother and discarded as ruined fun;  
Here the fortune hunters settle too, and ringless knights,  
And weeping widows and maidens who refuse to cut  
Their hair; and they are all taking away the portions that  
They can find when the sun doesn't creep and blind across  
The batwings of elbows and knees- A crop of prickly corn  
Rowed in the husks of a dervish's plagued army, kernelled in jaws,  
Something that leapt upwards across the Nile's prehistory,  
And now like a fraternity of forget-me-nots they weather  
The glowing storms as the foundational sands fill in the meaning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Oasis In The Desert

I have seen you lying under the sky  
Like the Great Victoria Desert of Australia,  
Your body the milky smoothness of Oasis,  
My eyes come to drink with the animals off  
The streets, to cool on your body as it yawns  
Up to the night—So I toss my head up and  
Howl and laugh on you with the speckled  
Hyenas, as mysterious goldfish swim like  
The reincarnations of mute children  
Through your reedy shoulders; As your hair  
Ripples the auburn banners of its nature,  
The aboriginal flag of the forebears of this  
Mystical continent your body relaxes upon,  
Estranged from other women you drifted away  
To become the extraordinarily distant place,  
The exhaustive study of man's science;  
As your thoughts coalesce in the stratosphere,  
Each of your memories a winking constellation,  
Eerily distant and indiscernible from all others,  
Unreachable by our lips as by our fingers,  
Though we sate our lonely thirst upon your body,  
As our eyes drink in like throats your soul the  
Length of the earth in dusty dress, you who rises  
Before us like an Aleutian well in effluvial waters  
Which spray and mist the night-lit desert,  
As your eyes are sometimes seen relaxing in  
Camouflage in the folded places you purposefully  
Shadow, until the sun emerges like a bannered king  
In the bright conquest of thoughtless empires;  
Then you turn yourself away again, become the  
Settling earth, the crisp red earth, the dry talking  
Earth where we hunt upon with naked spears.  
We feel you beneath us, guiding,  
As we long to lay down beside you, to sustain  
Our bodies on your streams and otherworldly portions  
Which crouch and pant with us, as we become but  
An aspect of your indescribable nature,  
When you lay down your body, the Oasis in  
The desert, sustaining and defining.



Robert Rorabeck

## Oasis' Unfaithful Mirage

A sea that never feels has drifted away,  
Sad into the changing yards outside of the wharf-  
And the lips who have tasted  
The sangria underneath the orange blossoms have said nothing  
As she slipping away,  
Leaving the pebbles of her necklace as she retreated  
Behind the rocks-  
As if the sun boiled with the engines of her  
Carriage,  
Taking her from the walls of the civilization  
That cried the tears that inevitably metamorphosed her  
From a peasant to a queen  
Until she thought so little of them that each one  
Of them became as but a pearl to diadem her saturnine  
Dreams- as she curled into the mirages that leaped  
Into another shore, leaving only the stones  
To marvel at the illusions that haunted the grottos  
Of such an oasis' unfaithful mirage.

Robert Rorabeck

# Obsessions

When I was a little boy I had similar fetishes,  
I drew cars on paper, crayoned in- I cut them out,  
Gave them names- hundreds.  
Later, I did fast-food origami airplanes,  
Entire fleets, tricks and jets- female airplanes too,  
To kiss at night and tuck their wings under my scabbed  
Ear, to listen to their engines purr,  
To the lieutenants whistle- They sailed around  
The cavernous green living room, and got stuck in  
The rafters, the ceiling fans' vortexes- When I was getting bored, I lit  
Their tailends on fire, sent them high above the  
Crocodile's famished eye, to burn on the Florida  
Holly on the other side of the canal....  
A land as heavy as Venus under the tractor's plough,  
The smolder of sugarcane....  
There have been other obsessions, one or two:  
Plastic cowboys and Indians in Lincoln Log skyscrapers  
Attacked by rubber bands in my room- That's  
How I went on my first date, and Hotrod dye casts  
Which raced systematically beneath the angular shade of  
The tall white pillars out in the trembling crux on  
The humid front yard, crushing fire ants like four-legged  
Pedestrians, and fixations on girls too, ever since kindergarten  
There has always been one I have stolen things for,  
Have offered arrowheads to down with the doll's head  
In the hoary pastures: Chelsea, Daniel, Kelly, Stephanie,  
Sharon, Becky, E-.... E-.... Sorry if I missed one or  
Two. Now I play games of little books in my mind, how many  
I can read in a week, and tally them up at the end of the year,  
Offer myself prizes of rattlesnake poems- See how many  
I can do in the period of sunset, as I think about other obsessions  
Shushed by their men and the unfathomable Atlantic,  
The tickling salts where there are just too many to count....  
Those would be a few more of my obsessions....

Robert Rorabeck

# Occam's Razor

Less complicated and more beautiful  
When you don't wear an expression,  
I will never know what you are thinking  
Except that you love your father.  
When he held you as a little girl,  
You were free to believe in nothing.  
Behind your house the trees began  
And the indiscernible cry the birds gave  
As they tried to dissuade the sun from setting:  
But even that, you soon learned  
Was inevitable, as was sleep though  
You found time to be alone.  
I like to think perhaps you thought  
Of me, before you ever knew me,  
Even more so than after our brief encounters,  
The way I thought of you when  
I was four years old and cut  
My knee on a toolbox:  
I could see you driving south along the highway,  
Your eyes situated out the window  
In a kind of cerulean future.  
And even then I knew you would run  
Beside me once or twice,  
As our lives shared the coincidences  
Of the greatest triviality,  
But I have never known looking into  
Your brown eyes in passing  
If you ever thought of me as someone  
Worth recognizing, which is your beauty  
And the source of my love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Oceans Of The Grave

Satellites in their fields  
Waiting out the fire drills; but little girls who go out  
Into them  
Sometimes don't return: lips exhausted from blowing  
Glass  
And birthday candles, wandered into the woods  
To see  
The incest and the amnesias of the dragon of  
Mars-  
Entire kingdoms and swing sets in those woods, and  
Doorways to other houses,  
That look so much like ours:  
Candles on the dunes, in the symmetry of yards that  
Stretch out to our neighbors  
Delineating what is ours- children who knew our  
Elbows,  
And the fragrances of our car ports, passing away:  
Pricked into sleep,  
Exhausted into day- while the sunlight yearns a Ferris Wheel,  
And tumbling of oily make-believe-  
Migrating through the static foray-  
A parade of illusion, oceans of the grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ode To Stephen Crane And His Ilk

Get on your high horse  
And beat a dead dog-

I've always known who I am,  
And never had to show you-

Here I am a furtive whipping boy,  
The one-legged ruffraff,  
Like Dickens and Shakespeare,

Only half as sharp and waiting with my spoon,

One year older than Stephen Crane, the old boy,  
When he was done god reincarnated him as a missive doe,  
And set him out with the hunters for his lies,

But still he dances and has learned to leap from  
Wave to wave,  
A red sword in his singing chest,

So martyr me with your dissuasive etiquette,  
I know the tune if not how to spell.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of A Celestial Township

This is a family alone, on a cattle drive through the  
Sea,  
Each one a passenger more beautiful than me,  
With the great nebular cloud banks escaping from the  
Ajar capsules of their senses:  
They move in steps of Earth, the sun is the backlight  
For their titanic zoetrope,  
Behemoths in the glooms of a preschool of a galaxy  
Still forming,  
Each angel a vesper, taxing the lengths of his yarns:  
And suddenly there is life,  
As her eyes form a brethren in her morning,  
The yokes of a breakfast crackling in the kitchens of  
A bad outlaw  
Who smoothed over the eccentricities of a celestial  
Township too young as of yet to have any misconceptions of  
Any god.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of A Dreamy Canal

Corners of stone children changed irreversibly  
While getting off the school bus  
By the busybody eyes of some housewife medusa  
Who slithers back inside,  
Enjoying the air-conditioning of all her days off,  
While the somewhat tame otter enjoys the pool,  
Cracking cashews on its silky smooth beer belly;  
And I laughing down at myself from the seepage  
Of the green easement so green  
As to be the wedding gown of a vermilion fairytale;  
Anyway, it is here, and I am lying like my dead  
Grandfather in a great orange canoe:  
And the clocks are not running, the milkmen are being  
Easily cannibalized by dogs; if they were dogs themselves,  
And the paper snowflakes snow of fish hooks and  
Fish strings;  
While she bleeds beads of sweat onto her naked legs,  
Saltwater confections building to nourish the refined blemishes  
Of fire ants;  
And I am just the cleverest thing, jobless, skipping school,  
Resting assured that the telltale bastards of gods and stewardesses  
Will never catch wind of me up the torpid avenue  
Of a dreamy canal.

Robert Rorabeck



## Of A Lizard

The warm spine of a lizard hanging upon a rosy ixora  
Bouquet—outstretched from the unruly head  
Out front of the house that is for sale, which you can outlet  
As four separate apartments—  
The lizard lies like a diver reclining on his board—  
Insouciant though thoughtful eyed—Knowing that he is  
On television, but never carrying or even mindful of if  
It is his turn—  
Nor is he mindful of the airplane in the sky,  
Or the hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico—  
Or you up in Ocala with your husband and two children,  
Or even of me—a man who has to wait one more  
Month for his pregnant wife to arrive from  
China—he is just there,  
Enjoying the limitations of his senses—  
This lizard, a matchstick or a wizard—  
Lying there beside to the river of the sidewalk that is  
Running through the day.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of A Pieta

Knowing what you will not use,  
They glow at night by themselves: they pick up  
The amusements the moon pretends  
To steal and live off of  
The wishes cast down from airplanes:  
You never have to wonder where they are going  
Now that she is gone—  
Her children suckling all around her like a savage mockery  
Of a Pieta,  
And the garden overplays and becomes so overgrown.  
She doesn't even have to pretend to be real  
Anymore now that she is so close to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of A Pornographic Disney World

I can say everything to this window,  
But I do not have a wife to  
Say it too:  
In this playground I sleep barefooted in,  
Just like any other Spaniard,  
Listening to the sound of  
Your voice from my  
Blind house:  
It sounds like an airplane or a storm  
A long ways off;  
It sounds like wolves who have  
Lost their voice  
But still drum hard-ons through the  
Forest,  
And I swear, I've even heard you  
Crying out through the forest  
For dragons,  
Even as I was wondering off  
Somewhere to die,  
Even though I was not even sure  
How badly I was wounded,  
As the traffic passed above me like  
The shooting stars of the unnatural heavens  
Of a pornographic Disney World.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of A Spectacular Revelry

Mountains have roots and doorjambs that  
Dragons call castles and draw bridges:  
And they take their virginal yams down to these places,  
And see for themselves the underage nudity  
Given to them by the forthright lottery-  
Man foolish men want to vanquish them,  
Want to leave their libraries and conquer the wilderness  
Running underneath the wheels of sky,  
And they can try: whole heaps of them littering the gulch:  
Sometimes four turtles at once sit on the biggest of  
Those naive skeletons, sunning themselves  
While the dragon licks her like ice-cream and pretends  
To want her for a wife, while she screams remunerations  
Up to the airplanes circling like tin-can buzzards-  
The pilots too frightened to stop watching  
As their passengers come in up through the chimneys  
Of a spectacular revelry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of A Sunny Day

Life is hard all the way around  
The angels:  
Even as the college blooms as it was  
Paid to do:  
Beautiful in the lumber of its shadows,  
Spilling over  
Kaleidoscope down slope from  
The reindeer—  
And maybe if she is in her bed she  
Can remember me:  
Maybe she can get upset and push off  
Into shadows—  
I hope she can be the wife of the king,  
And she will be triumphant—  
With her roses,  
And with her ring—  
And I will be forced to slip away  
From her—like shadows from the graves  
Of a sunny day.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of A Wider World

A field obtrudes onto dusk as my dog sleeps  
Between my legs—So very soon I will be taking an airplane  
Again,  
So far away from the streets where your echoes sting—  
And the pessimistic rains put upon them their passion's play:  
And I went to work in the middle of the week  
And had to speak to my students with tongue and cheek—  
All around us, the unsparing light of another day's folly:  
Through the chaos of burning waterfalls,  
Maybe a sparrow sings—  
And children make love like satellites enjoying themselves in  
The merry-go-rounds of a wider world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of A Yard That Only Grows More Beautiful

Wounds in words scarred from  
The thoughts of too much rum—  
Brown words as dead leaves filling up  
Abandoned swimming pools between my ears,  
Filling up the abandoned places  
Better people have left for good—  
Desires that fill up the lamplight inside the  
Caves of the middle class—  
The very same thing that housewives sometimes  
Get drunk and have sex with—  
Never knowing the full latin names for  
Either plants or birds,  
Those beautiful caesuras of wings and hearts  
That happen every day outside of their  
Windows—but why no latin names  
For airplanes, or the other things they  
Know—and then they close the eyes,  
Like terrapins inside their wigwams—  
New children come and go—  
Young women vanished from the day light  
Of a yard that only grows more beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Absolute Discoveries

Bullying faggots of werewolves:  
Don't you see that I am still dancing,  
Even after the premature ejaculations of  
Midnights when the crickets  
Are still singing and the airplanes are still  
Flying—  
Even if the banners and the singsongs of  
Carnivals have been taken down,  
Even if the Ferris Wheels are no longer  
Revolving—  
Doesn't it seem to be a beautiful world  
With the flowers blooming  
That I do not have the power of  
Describing—  
With the busses turning around like butterflies—  
And the illusions of our clandestine  
Transparencies  
Melting away as if pinwheels upon the brink  
Of absolute discoveries.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of All Of That Beauty

I have become fat with beauty,  
Trying to make myself glow with the charisma of  
Hefty swans for so long,  
I have drunken all of the milk at the end of a long line  
Of a brigade of philanthropists,  
And I thought that it would finally distinguish me  
Above my sisters  
And that I could steal anyone's bicycle and do caracoles  
In the middle of the courtyard to the applause of  
Those four strong years of girls;  
But it has only made me churlish, like an aspen who was  
Once thin and if destroyed would have made a good walking stick,  
But now I am fat with the excess of my stage,  
And girls have been so busy looking at me, I have worn them out  
So that now they cannot even moan,  
And the cannot even be the wind through the branches,  
And I can see my mother through the trees still waiting in her  
Unlucky car, still waiting to take me home  
And put me in a bedroom where I cannot even look up at the  
Openness of all that beauty that ended up defeating me.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of All The Buried Currencies

Bodies are here and then they are not:  
Souls are taking a vacation, and if I had prettier things then this  
Then I would lay them across the knotted strings of marionettes  
Across our fair and ventriloquist nation;  
And maybe all that we know is dying; and maybe all that we know  
Is,  
Alma,  
And I kneel to the Virginsita every night and hope and pray to  
You as the cars crash and eventually the planes crash  
And then maybe we can make love,  
Because all of the conquistadors are all dried up, and if I give you  
A child then the copper canons will cough joyfully and all the dogs  
Will bark up daisies,  
And we can jog on forever through the forever morning,  
And forget that anyone else meant anything at all between the lips  
Of our sweet and most exclusive of all the buried currencies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of All The Many Hills

Knocking off underneath  
An overpass, waiting for the petals of  
Angels to fall in  
Charity,  
Waiting for the roses of bridges and  
Whores-  
While, above my head, I can hear the wild  
Horses and the tourists,  
As the sunlight falls down to the other side  
Of the mall-  
Where the housewives grease up,  
And their children learn what to do:  
But I don't want to talk about those things-  
I just want to lie here,  
And keep the heartbeat of the sea  
Against my head-  
I just want to remember how beautiful  
I remember you  
Like the first day after kindergarten,  
Or when we became lost in a pet  
Cemetery,  
The day the lions escaped from the zoo  
And ate both of our hearts  
The way ants eat watermelons at an abandoned  
Picnic,  
While fireworks expend their short lives  
Into the sky, discovering something richer  
Than all of this- something unexplainable,  
As the windmills kiss across the necks and shoulders  
Of all of the many hills.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of All Those Hapless Angels

Right now I trust her, while the bees spread her  
Blossoms,  
And the charms are lost into lavish green living rooms  
After school:  
She finds her own way home again, stuck well behind  
The crown of thorns,  
In the rucksack of the Mexican neighborhood  
Who made its way all the way over here,  
Crenellated by the sun who geysers as he always does:  
And she stays home again  
And gives her milk to her children, but she promises  
That she thinks of me; and I hope that she always does,  
Until our neighborhoods can bleed together  
Straight underneath the harps and toenails of all those  
Hapless angels.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of America's Highest Of Basins

Pedals pulling in the spokes of another world,  
Even while the rest of it is silent, past the store fronts  
And the washing machine,  
And the vibrant fabrications in monoliths of invented  
Light;  
And even while the carnivals turn and make awe struck  
Visions that turn our heads up to their bellies,  
I fashion for you a very solitary kind of  
Yard, Alma-  
An enigma of a plane that cannot be described except  
By the ochre despondency in your eyes,  
Where I have seen entire platoons of indescribable octopi  
Swimming  
Without their secret agents; and you looked at me  
Like a pleading mythology in the early morning wishing wells  
Of the fruiteria;  
And I couldn't count on both of my hands the times I had said to you  
How much I loved you;  
But the opposite wasn't the same, except that I seem to understand  
Now how deeply your soul swims in the tiniest of bodies,  
Like the quickest of illusions through the most feral estuaries,  
As sunlight seems to skip through the boreal equipages  
Where the earliest of the creations still knows how to dance and  
Keep the pregoniscence of the innocents the very same way  
The sunlight sings like titular virgins in the soft stone throats  
Of America's highest of basins.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of An Immortal Hell

You love him: the storm chirps, the liquor drizzles  
Of my lips like rain:  
My grandmother is dead in Michigan, but at least she will  
Never have to be dead again:  
Oh, the soft stone, who speaks the finality of the last words,  
But to the greater generations,  
Like the storm succession of ants in storm drains,  
There is no record of their unrequited love, or of their mindless  
Hate:  
Their many-legged wars on valentines day, or to muses which were  
Their progenitors to which they will never care to write again  
For:  
They have their own sandbars, and their shelves in the recesses  
Of the long-jawed barracudas,  
While you have your Almas that are worth fighting for:  
The pretty songs the depths of her eyes give off like gunfights on the  
Frontier,  
Like monster movies so deep in the night that nobody has energy  
For staying up for;  
And Sharon is still selling her wine, just trying to survive,  
While the Rocky Mountains like the undone Titans of lore line up for  
Her:  
Like boys with sticks against picket fences line up for her,  
While the ponies run and the orchards bloom finally into oranges,  
As round and as perfect as unicorns who are blushing  
For their immortal batters who are even now rounding home with  
A satchel full of letters like butterflies in the foot traffic  
Of the lower level of the heavens where the feral and pagan boys  
Can still throw their paper airplanes without any prayers or  
Any other fears of an immortal hell.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of Another's Good Time

Dandelions lying with dragonflies in the pools  
And swirls of perfume—  
Lying on their bellies and looking up  
At the busses of clouds—  
The thoughts that are filled with little girls,  
And the fairytales of stewardesses  
When they once read nursery rhymes  
And had not been out on picnics  
With the Arabs,  
Or been down the Mississippi of Broadway—  
While I was looking up at you:  
How I've forgotten I looked up at you,  
Jewel in the haunts of day laborers  
In the orchards of Mexicans—  
And coins skipped across the make believe  
Borders—the way Indians once lived  
On the sage and the brine:  
The way lakes once clouded the hinterlands—  
Like the lines in a loved- one's palm,  
While she sat looking out a window,  
While the conquistadors conquered the shores  
Of another's good time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Baseball Players And Really Lucky Genies

It hurts to look myself in the eye  
Of gray eyed mirrors;  
Hurts to come again on valentines while  
You've been playing baseball.  
And my mother is washing herself again,  
Noisily while the higher basins  
Are full of wild flowers and unfortunate  
Yardarms:  
That I have made you part of the happenstance of my  
Mismatched collected;  
And, no, I cant even smell: and I am sure your  
Sh&t stinks:  
You will never be a stewardess but at least you might  
Yet still save some lives:  
Your hair is as auburn as an apiary of bumble bee  
Hives;  
And now isn't the sky so low over the apple orchards,  
Or the uncanny species of both wisdom and evil,  
Body so plumped as to be its own kind of  
Holiday gone out into the night unafraid,  
Sure to make it to grandmothers and get laid by wolves  
And hairy men,  
By bestiaries of baseball players and really lucky genies.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Blue Bells And Washing Machines

The serpent gave its flesh to my hand—  
Leaving a sheath there of what it was done with,  
It lit out like an arrow curving into the sea,  
Slender rod that does in the god  
Kissing through the painted toenails of the waves—  
There was nothing great about the art  
That covered it—  
It vanished across the shoals that had already buried  
The first granite crosses ever to come into this world—  
There was nothing correct in the direction it  
Was heading—  
And as it was going along, in slender biceps—  
It learned how to petal its stem through the waves  
That sang of blue bells and washing machines—  
Burying itself into each slender daughter that leapt  
In the ways of light to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Brand New Spells

I can hear airplanes and misfits too, and the world  
Feels good as it works up its hullabaloo:  
The world marching through the pinwheels and wind tunnels  
To Christmas:  
The world tying its bows,  
And laying its brown skin through the embers:  
The young lovers who touch each other and have no more  
Troubles after the darkness,  
Their children picked up from the swings of daycare and cared for,  
And dinner cooked,  
And the voices spread on the sweet television,  
While the cool waves bask like sated dogs far beneath the bellies  
Of the airplanes who seem to be leaping like hot tempered saints:  
And now this,  
And now that- the rattlesnakes who lie low grandfather,  
The holly bows that switch the donkey's back,  
And maybe even now a new god is being born in the terminal's  
Lavatory;  
And right now I am feeling warm, and the serpents curl like a new  
Mother who takes, me down with her enchanting eyes into the cauldrons  
Of brand new spells.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Cloudless Days

All of the bodies happen for a reason across  
The séances of clouds,  
Or that was just the beginning of an answer to the stucco  
Staccatos,  
While the mountains were humming like pygmies,  
While all of the rice was being thrown like dice in the games  
Of weddings,  
And then the fell in love, and then they fell away,  
Like beautiful sisters who once had slept together only to  
Open their pinafore of eyes across the bodice  
Of a revealing day:  
And then to make the frantic, professional motions  
Back into the cloyity of clouds and airplanes,  
While their cars hustled and bustled, and tried to make  
Merry all through out  
The most awful and most horrendous of cloudless days.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Coins And Of Flowers

Unicorns in the soft meadow  
Fogs,  
While Alma is letting off of making  
Love,  
Dousing her steams and elated  
Screams,  
She will increase again into  
Shopping malls,  
Deciding again on the  
Garments who will  
Jubilee her pitch perfect  
Skin,  
While I will work for her  
All day long,  
Working over the genii in his  
Brown bottle,  
Until I have done something right,  
And so deserve to call her home,  
To play with her the lucky games  
Of coins and of flowers  
Of our love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Course

Disprove me to the traffic  
Of lonely mystified occults;  
I just want to disappear from the dinner  
Party and go up her beautiful  
Pathless backside;  
I don't want to entertain with the brides  
Of beautiful car salesmen:  
If I suppose you'd say her spine has the right  
Of way,  
Slipping, or undulating actually like the  
Ripples of bannered shade:  
I have seen you here underneath the comely  
Skirts,  
Hibernating with the outdoors bears,  
Or I have made you here, slipping into the  
Rhythms of my feral divorce;  
Quietly, ejaculating into the shadows of  
The mouths of volcanic rock,  
Long since cooled,  
While the day drapes in further tresses,  
The clouds like floating mailboxes;  
And I have loved you here forever,  
Forever, my heart leaping like the stride's  
Of a godly horse,  
That I should have to cry your name  
Hoarse: Well, I say it even now,  
Of course, S-, of course.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Evaporated Kindergartens

The bears who shrugged and turned into men,  
Taking their lights from the dimmed cave  
And going down town:  
They are not hibernating anymore—they've sweated  
Off the aurora borealis,  
And this is the place where it shows the most:  
High cliffs that have no trouble going down—  
Where the briars snag—  
Where the foxes frown, crowning my father and my  
Mother's house—  
In this kingdom where they used to live,  
Until some ungodly dream smoked them out like  
Marmosets,  
Like weasels—like ferrets— like some knight a witch  
Chased around an ambivalent and  
Superfluous tree—  
Until they were too tired to continue in these none such  
Fairy-tells—  
In the iron gardens of Ferris wheels—that lactated gardens  
Of evaporated kindergartens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Everything That She Wishes For

Words in a beautiful book fall naked  
Like clothes around open shoulder blades,  
Or the propellers of airplanes; and oh how mouths come  
To take a look,  
And even the projectionists come down, as the tiny kittens some  
How nimble through the glossy ivy and hurricanes  
To find their mother all strung out in the silken sack of the  
Weathervanes;  
And I have been down to the belly of the Grand Canyon three times;  
And the last time I almost lost my father,  
But looking up this morning there were so many new advertisements  
As high as the clouds,  
And the sunlight was speaking while Alma yawned awake and brown  
In the corner of her little house;  
And all of her world was vibrant: it was a jewel who moves and  
Spoke and combed its emerald hair;  
And Alma was born in May, and her birthday cake is still on my lips,  
Though I am uncertain of everything that she wishes for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Fallen Needles

Sweet mineral room of a talking skull,  
You linger over my desk as the sky ticks-  
Echoes of girls on the swings  
Over the rain puddles that dry before lunch  
And leave the shallow declivities the  
Mexican women perpetually carry their  
Newborns over to sit them atop the mat  
Of fallen needles and play with them  
As the red clay dries on the riverbank  
Across the road and the alligators watch the  
Traffic as it moves.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Fruit Trees The Airplanes Crisscrossed

Becoming a joy to those burning cathedrals you  
Cannot wake up from—  
Flying away into your elements, lactating over the ashen fields—  
A single horse stammering your epiphany,  
Frightened that you are not yet part of the unreal—  
Beautiful, ephemeral and made to collect  
Down at the base of the mountains where once the  
Grizzly bears roamed, walking on their hind feet and  
Talking to butterflies—knowing nothing of the simpler joys in  
Each place—dividing in the cells of the nursery rhymes of  
The first born—  
Who shine like pearls in the keyholes of mountains—  
Until you found another man you pretended to  
Know  
And made love to him underneath the stepladders of  
Your favorite uncles leading up through the bowers  
Of fruit trees the airplanes crisscrossed  
Like lovers trying to keep ahead of the heavenly bodies  
That were falling to the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Guerrero Mexico

The foyer of my house has a virgin too:

She is right there, and to her I give my blessings to you,

Alma:

And I light my candles like a witch in a cartoon,

While sumptuous airplanes circle the nipples of hot air

Balloons:

The sky is building up its clouds, and I actually sat with you

And ate lunch today:

I tried to get you everything that you wanted,

And I told you that you were the most beautiful girl in the

Building while the sky was falling down,

But I was not perturbed because it was not a lie:

A lie would be that your favorite color is purple, Alma,

Or that I did not buy you sun flowers today on the spot and on

The road,

Until I finally got back and found you waiting for me:

And I don't want to give you a child anyways, to decorate the

Inevitable swing sets of the sunshine of graveyards:

Yes, a lie would be, Alma, that I cannot swim, and I don't

Wish to do anything to you- Alma:

And I can cook, but I do not love you, and this is the only song

I have to sing for you tonight, or any other night for that

Matter,

Alma: Alma Delia Mojica of Guerrero Mexico.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Heaven's Beam

What flesh—And nude in the daylight  
Of a starfish—  
As the consumers come to it—not knowing that you  
Can be divided by any number—  
The housewives so unkind—  
Not knowing how beautiful you might become  
Knocked out beside any canal  
Lost in the daydreams that slip away beside  
Soft shelled tortoises—  
Until the day burns like a beacon and all of the  
Fireworks swim and  
Spin—  
All turned out, like lips around a bottle of  
Gin—  
Even after high school is lost, burned out, or gone:  
And all of the televisions are over,  
And the cars have turned away—heading home,  
Like a sea this is hungry—  
And the great philosophy is hefted up to the stars  
And to werewolves, who are no existent—none the less—  
They will bury their relatives underneath of museums  
As the heavens and the comic strips—  
And I will burn everything else down that in inconsequential,  
Struggling up the mountain until I have a wife  
Or pinball—  
And can be counted with all of the rest—and not  
In a daydream, but in a grotto of a carport—  
Gazing upwards as all of the lavishing sides of heaven's beam.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Her Graveyards

Returning to me all of the stars from their  
Games of baseball—  
As the higher basins emulate the laminations that  
Our mothers have keeping to themselves  
In the apiaries—in the bee hives—  
And all of their other rotten places  
Where they pretend to grow fruit—and there is,  
Otherwise,  
The very same echoes of other men—  
And the cars sound off like bottle rockets in  
The middle of the night—  
And you keep the playgrounds of your very own  
Saddles pegged to your classrooms—  
Until all of this is abundantly in remiss—through  
The cold of everywhere in the early mornings—  
Until, even before sleep, I can hear the airplanes  
Touching down—  
Pretending to play with themselves in a game of  
Baseball—until all of the lamplights close—  
And the end of anywhere accounts to the flight  
Paths of the luck dragons—  
As the bottle rockets are sure to misfire—  
And then there is a sunny winter somewhere over  
Her shoulder—just as the stewardesses are  
Turning around—  
And another school year seems to be over forever—  
And forever—with her eyes expecting the fires  
In the night—and the moon continuing to  
Shadow herself by the shoulders over the own imaginations  
Of her graveyards...

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Her Hungering Dish

I have a book of all of your shoulders—  
And you do not remember who I am—But  
Won't the dolphins surrender to the sun—  
Evaporations of the merry-go-round of  
Your mothering shoulders—  
Until all of the day is cradled in the night of  
Those mountains,  
And the magnificent spins—a world of spiders in  
Their equinox—and other things I do not  
Wish to comprehend—I can hear a muse putting  
Her fingers in the kiln to  
Retrieve her children—they are already something  
I haven't knocked—  
And the sun blooms in its kaleidoscope of knuckles,  
Another easy if insouciant wish—  
They day is a pinwheel of airplanes and arrowheads—  
Another soldier goes dying in the amusing waves  
Of her hungering dish-

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Her Senses

All the lights leave the chorus,  
And the hills and the bluffs glow:  
Strange creature strut on cloven feet;  
They are inedible.  
The spikenard quivers and seems to hum.  
Butterflies metamorphose out of the frozen ground.  
I am alive-  
I am alive and each leaf is a silken drum:  
The doe leap through the sky,  
The rivers flowing across the desks in class:  
Sharon opens her eyes  
And the world flows into her:  
Sharon opens her eyes and her daughter forms,  
And the teacher conducts her  
As she makes creatures out of clay-  
Sharon opens her eyes and men play on the fields;  
And when tired, the firemen slide back up their poles,  
And I pull the covers over my face;  
It rains and Sharon's theatre closes. Marionettes fall in with  
The thorns of roses,  
And wait for the sick and delicate muse to come awake again  
To form us together  
As her child plays through a sloppy sky  
Where even the snowflakes are indistinguishable except  
Where they become unparalleled and utterly beautiful  
Across the vision of Sharon's eyes,  
And of her senses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Hidden Pleasure

Lightly stuffed bodies interceding  
Amidst the ethereal franchises of locksmiths;  
Tiny trained bears slipping through the keyholes of  
Featureless summits  
Adventuring into that part of the world that is always  
In crepuscule  
Where dusty angels weep, secluded and hermaphroditic,  
Curled like either end of a seahorse  
Waiting for their time with you, a girl who stares like  
The water-life of transoms: stares on for a good ways without  
Knowing of or reaching destination,  
At the manifestations of waves like boys and their fireworks;  
And then partaking through the slim wall,  
And through that anorexic hemisphere that keeps her warm,  
Buzzing with the wax and honey of an apiary  
Of hidden pleasure,  
Which she might take on the go but otherwise doesn't  
Need to believe in at all.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of His Grayer Love

Proud is the peacock at the fair  
Filled with his own hidden shadows, colors dimmed-  
And the long ride from home forgotten:  
And all of the faces about him, jovially mooning-  
This exhibit is his, and the joys of the world sail  
Around, candles in a hallucinatory mass  
But not one burning with prayers to him of his  
Grayer love.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Its Beautiful Animals

Hiccapping into a world of blue nincompoops,  
I watch the Mexicans walking the earth or at least  
Lake Worth east of I-95,  
While I ride my bicycle searching for that special oil  
To anoint your feet:  
Alma- while your body is a fire-hydrant gone explosive,  
And the world needs new words for you,  
While your children bask like happy pups and seals  
Underneath your lovely penumbras;  
And you know all of West Palm Beach, because you have  
Been here for seven years,  
Even while your bad man was away in Mexico for a year;  
And all of the secrets of your body I may know, but  
Not the spirit that lives like a holiday in there:  
The thing that can't even be proven, but which I know is real,  
Because it is every park, and ever Ferris wheel that  
I have ever known to exist;  
And when I kiss your lips it becomes my every truancy;  
And each of your ribs is missing inside me, like a zoo missing all  
Of its beautiful animals;  
And now I know that I am all right here, but how are you doing,  
Alma; and where are you?

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Its Dusky Mercury

I flex my calf muscle like a scar;  
Like a thing trying to be beautiful in the courtyard,  
Like a firework that wont really work  
Going off;  
And now the administrators aren't really amused-  
There is Orion,  
And Italian is really a beautiful romance language,  
But I just really want to be perceived making love:  
I want to live in a double-wide that won't  
Be taken away from me:  
I want to soften the Ganymede's of this familiar graveyard:  
There they are all mothball tongued above the city-  
Boulevard, making love to themselves and to their  
Families that are still living;  
And it is truly still a jubilee in their cars; and I have stared  
Down upon them from atop the mountain habitats of  
Breathy genius; and for a moment haven't I loved her morally,  
While the three bears ate her porridge,  
And she came; but now don't I miss my dogs, while the  
Airplanes are leaping like whores and angels;  
And she didn't care enough to love me to draw anymore love  
From my body than a mosquito, than the casual angel who  
Loves, and awfully loves her tomato daiquiris from the porticos  
Of the awfully colloquialisms of  
That wonderfully fairytale university, like a homogenized  
Dolphin leaping yet for its never mindful fanfare in the  
Heavily platinum hemispheres of its dusky mercury.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Its Ever Young Tarmac

The moon felt good when I slept on the roof  
Of your house for two hours:  
He felt good, and maybe you made love to your brown  
Man,  
That astronaut who smokes but never leaves the earth,  
But who doesn't beat you anymore:  
Whom you said to me two days ago hasn't talked to you  
For two days:  
But now you lay down beside him again, like as if your  
Little sub stellar room as another garden of Eden,  
And one of you was the lion  
And one of you was the lamb;  
And I was just the winged serpent up in the planks  
Overhanging the heads of your children: following you to  
The super-super market and telling wishes,  
Like I did today: following after you, Alma, and your  
Heidi,  
Laughing as you let her smell the shampoos; and helping you  
Make a choice,  
And kissing your head, and leaving your money,  
Watching your two year old daughter stop dancing like a pinwheel  
For awhile,  
And as still as a wingless airplane all doused in the brown apertures  
Of its ever young tarmac, watching me either fly or slither away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Its Knavish Heavens

Trying to save up all of my pennies  
For another wishing well which is only useful  
In captivating your daughter,  
Alma- with its casual aurora,  
Even though all of these petty wishes will be  
Lost into that shallow estuary  
Nearby which we grew up so far apart:  
And your daughter will arrive bearing gifts  
I will never know:  
She will love me herself, neither you nor  
I will ever know: but will we know each other,  
Mutually through the fields of falling sun and  
Falling snow-  
I've called you my muse, and many ways you've  
Awakened towards me,  
Playing those games of wet summit spilling to  
Cover the mouth of an erupting volcano,  
While so much time is lost,  
And the honeymoons are spent- and the eels  
And the otters swim in the flood planes  
Like ribbons and puppies- and I thought that you were  
Beauty while I survived,  
And the traffic moaned, and the heavens perceived  
Up there above the amusement parks  
And the trailer parks until twilight fell into its  
Dimness- and all that could be, turned to its metamorphosis,  
While the jasmine spilled its perfume into another  
Night, and you went to a home across the train tracks  
And to a mother and father who kept  
You near the bed the way a rattlesnake covets a  
Turtledove- or the way the moon looks upon  
This earth, trying to captivate a teary ocean into the bosoms  
Of its knavish heavens

Robert Rorabeck

## Of Its Lover's Deity

Now I am growing up and they are making love  
Either way,  
Like nimbus over the fruit market,  
Like the sounds of lips and teeth eating an apple  
In the shadows of the prayers before bedtime  
Above which the angels sing  
Like lighthouses, or the birth of steamboats over  
Legendary rivers:  
Pressing their own promises upwards the way ceiling fans  
Blow on the elbows of paper airplanes:  
This is a fantasy, but it is building itself, and soon it  
Will be selling Christmas trees,  
And making wishes of its own promises like model  
Battleships making love to green bottles with so many paper  
Cries for help all throughout the Ferris Wheels  
And uncommon playgrounds yawning and lapping up  
The sunlight throughout all of the caesuras of the unforgotten sea;  
Or anyways, it buys its tickets:  
And then it either rains or it doesn't, adding light to the sadness  
Which is always moving, and dancing in the light of its lover's deities.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Its Natural Catastrophe

Made of soft illusions, the boys play baseball  
Inside the backyards of school—  
And my son nods off into his grandfather's birthday,  
Wishing for something—  
Maybe to return to the Platonic Realm  
Where he once lingered, a zygote riding a zoetrope  
Of all joy—where Buddha played, potbellied,  
With the silverware of a make believe housewife:  
But up in the morning, the clouds all purple and  
Pink clam shells, running like gasoline over  
The graveyards,  
Falling into another pit of her memories,  
Where each wave is a beautiful creature trying to  
Find itself in the roiling schoolyards of its natural catastrophe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Its Old Glory

And all of it is beautiful slung over his shoulders  
As he sojourns from the park:  
Over there, right next to the fire trucks,  
We once swung on the condemned swings: it was the last  
Time or two I would swing on them,  
Even after the red and then the yellow helicopters had  
Left and gone out of sight:  
And upon the rise beyond this, the small beach and  
The sea so few Mexicans know about where  
We returned together and I threw you over my shoulders  
And into the waves  
Even though you could not swim:  
And, afterwards, we came back into the coolness of my  
Little yellow house, like a butterfly house,  
And made love with you atop of me atop of the wicker  
Furniture,  
Until you received a phone call from him and had to  
Return to him,  
As you would return forever to him—  
Drawing your lamps with you, and all of the brown warmth  
Of your false apiary: going to kiss and sting him as well,  
Weren't you,  
While the sunlight fell into all of its old glory like deadfall  
Of a wounded horse over the stricken and wounded earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Knights

There was a fort near the sea—oh  
How near the sea it was—  
And they were making love at high tide  
And the mermaids found their ways  
In and curled around  
The stacks of cannon balls—  
Hard emerald glistening and pink  
Confection wetted down  
Diademed in the perpetual  
Crepuscle of their obscurity  
They sighed and had wet dreams of  
Knights who never came.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Last Resorts

I want to climb up this world like an  
Ant up a leg- the leg of any mammal until  
I find you and can rest panting in the little flower  
Bed making an areola around your rusting  
Mailbox, just as I knew it would;  
And then to raise your little red flag like the fruit of  
Surrender to make you come running outdoors  
Like for the ice-cream truck in the early days of after school;  
To get you to look at me and to remember if you can  
What I never meant you to,  
To pull me in like a nurse gathering the die cast trinkets  
Of fighter pilots to her breast,  
The little zigging tails of airplanes too tiny to be attended  
By stewardesses;  
And to gather me indoors beside your fire of sorts,  
To rest and cuddle with your dogs and to join with your  
Kind young family of last resorts.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of More Surefooted Resorts

Colorful knights with beautiful scars,  
And beautiful young mothers drinking at bars,  
Looking up into the eyes of their sisters and across the  
Street tire fires,  
And polecats and buildings of knowledge that go up and up  
For some stories though it seems forever;  
And I have no girlfriend because I can hardly write,  
And Erin, sweet Erin sleeps with someone else tonight,  
While innocent Dragons come down from their orchards and olive  
Trees and brandish their green wings over the soft clip of the  
Seven seas:  
They go to see dinner parties having out upon the yachts and barges  
Of the hoity-toity: their sad eyes shimmering like glowing plums,  
Two for a dozen over the nuptials of the floating partygoers:  
The beast who would like to say their name, who says nothing  
And remains just long enough to grow weary which leads  
Him to the hibernations far away and over the shoulders  
Of the west bound trains where there are fireworks and simulacrum  
And owls just in the very shoulders and veins  
Of grizzly bears and soft footed panthers, which should prove to  
Be better friends of more surefooted resorts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Moths And Guitars

River, what do you symbolize- it isn't  
Love that flows through you  
Coming down the mountain, leaping  
And showing yourself over  
The stone, the little things entering you,  
Like wedding rings,  
Becoming lost into you as you travel  
Down and join your other sisters who  
Carrying your name in their throats-  
River, river coming down the mountain-  
The sky reflecting the memory of your  
Greenness- Was it the trees who  
Cried you, or the very pinnacle of  
Stone reaching up to the fanfares who  
Coalesced and made you run- soon you  
Will be reaching the sleeping village,  
And then hurrying further to the sound  
Of moths and guitars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Never, Never Land

Diana, Diana: you are real while I am wrecked,  
And upon all of this sorbet I have collected by senses for  
Another try:  
Another roll of the dice into the epiphany of rainbows:  
Another shot at bull's eye; and Diana, Diana, this is just another  
Trying while all of my veins are just as cold as ice,  
Because I could never be a university professor, could never  
Even be your niece, and all the pools, the pools of affluent houses  
Sure do, sure look nice:  
And yes, yes I am wilting, wilting on your windowsill:  
A beautiful, beautiful flower that yes, yes! Once was real:  
And now is just a flower past midnight,  
Tearing itself to death, picking its petals and smelling its earthy,  
Earthy breath:  
While fireworks, fireworks shoot off underhand like softball in the  
Working class parks of Royal Palm Beach,  
And of Never, Never Land.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of One Or Two Or Three

I have already written  
My  
Five poems for the  
Night  
But I keep going free  
Handed,  
Feral;  
Because I was robbed at  
Gunpoint tonight  
Which made the  
Night  
Really wonderful:

And I am William  
T. Shakespeare  
And I just wanted you  
To know how much I  
Have loved you;  
Alone and emptied  
At some truck stop  
In West Texas  
At the apex of a Ferris  
Wheel smiling at the  
Empty constellations with  
Some boy from  
Guatemala;  
That I love you  
More than house  
Or car-  
Or mailbox-  
I have loved you on into  
Crepuscule;  
And you are a sister of  
A very slim sorority:  
Of one  
Or two  
Or three.



## Of Our Amen S

I'm sorry—but she looks like she knows  
That I love her,  
And she is my wife—and I get up every day,  
Evacuation,  
Becoming the art of archeology—and the vanishing  
Indians end up misconstruing and vanishing again  
Into the heart of an emptied airplane:  
And this, at least, is the place I have dug:  
Waiting for all of the rest of the armies to finally come  
Out from the jungles and fall over us:  
Peace in her eyes, just like a corpse's peace—  
And a bouquet in her hands but for a dead man,  
As the fireworks play out in a dance hall that the angels  
Once danced in—but long since have moved  
Out—as the angels leap and leap about across  
The uneasy ululations of a Ferris Wheel from which we've  
Had a falling out and this is the all and the last of  
What can be said of whatever we had to say of our amens.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of Our Amens

I'm sorry—but she looks like she knows  
That I love her,  
And she is my wife—and I get up every day,  
Evacuation,  
Becoming the art of archeology—and the vanishing  
Indians end up misconstruing and vanishing again  
Into the heart of an emptied airplane:  
And this, at least, is the place I have dug:  
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What can be said of whatever we had to say of our amens.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Our Disney World

Green hills do not make a sea—neither do  
Bicycles make unicorns—except that they are there,  
Underneath a Christmas of palm trees,  
And this is the vanishing resort of  
Emptied bottles—  
Of fox's tongues tasting only the bitterness  
Of an unreachable promise:  
Its venal muses on their own metamorphosis,  
Themselves dreaming of the sweet arms  
Of baseball players—  
Mexicans sleeping underneath them, their sport  
Done with the orchards,  
Their trumpets put away—their children failing English—  
And yet their minds do not languish over the  
Dreams that will never come ashore—  
Climbing up on their ladders of starving yellow mules,  
They will sing as they make the orchards bare—  
The sunlight swimming over them like  
Vermillion swans,  
Basking on their shoulders  
As the clouds become a piece of fiction—and the orchards  
Where they believe, truer than all of the  
Wonderfully superfluous architectures that spread their  
Papier-mâché over the chicken wire of the aquamarine castles  
Of our Disney World.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Our Esoteric Purpose

Every night has a church, and begins this way,  
As a dismissal for pilgrims, the long voyages of a zoetrope  
Through the junked pornographies of the trees  
That the butterflies climb out of like feral infants from  
The sea,  
Kicking and scrambling through the forgotten easter eggs  
Until they become the victorious firework in the glassworks of  
A storm,  
Bubbling instrumentally over the forgotten crowns of the  
Conquistadors who are now compartmentalized into the beds of  
Sand lions;  
As over this we hold hands, forgetting how to ride bicycles or  
Who it was important to us who went off to war, carrying  
The colors of a great flag:  
Her eyes steaming across the waterless caesuras of a sea of dunes,  
The burs sticking to her brown flanks unceremoniously  
Until we lose all sense of direction,  
And purr like the derelicts of a metamorphosis, the carbons of  
A perfume or a recipe lost to the steadily increasing worlds  
Who flood over us without any sense or acknowledgement of our  
Esoteric purpose, just as happy as unsoldering bovines who proceed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Our Previously Wakeless Dead

I want a baby with you: we make love I guess,  
And now you sleep down by the easements of another man:  
Who isn't even a man in comparison; but, well, god damned:  
I think of you at the mall,  
And I fold paper airplanes underneath the ceiling fans:  
And it all goes some ways in the opulent grottos of my  
Adolescents:  
And we don't even have to propose or grow old together:  
I can just picture you with the oranges, and not a far ways off  
From the highway:  
You make me the happiest man in the whole world,  
And it is really fun, but I know that you cannot marry me,  
Because your family has arrived:  
And you want to marry a pilot, the wife of an aviator:  
And because I have left school and cannot spell, it has all come  
To this,  
A beautiful corpse with legs so exclamatory beside the busy ways  
To Canterbury; but I guess I am just remembering an old and  
Familiar way straight down into hell:  
While you, Alma, are just my heaven or my butterfly, and you keep  
Me captivated while all of the older and prettier girls  
Are disappearing underneath the promontories an ingenious caps  
Of the expletives of salutatory mountains;  
And all of the rains come and gather and keep company before  
They soon move their own ways to other ventures, like a casual  
Game of she loves me or she loves me nots,  
While I guessed that you loved me, as I held you neck in the rain  
And the chickens were hypnotized;  
We all laid off of counting, and the forest grew into its own country;  
While the turnpikes and graveyards grew;  
And I promised you breakfast, Alma, straight into the smiling  
Kills of whatever adversary we were facing for the day;  
And then the astronauts suited up over those suburbias that I could  
Never rightly explain to you:  
And your aunt smiled while she was dying, and her three boys  
Grew into giants as her man made love to her cousin:  
Alma: I have loved you since I met you and even while my parents  
Swam away; and all of this is the calligraphy of the previously  
Mentioned dead;

Inhaling in, how sweet the perfumes lie over the graveyards  
And the festivals of less than primary lights that swing in their  
Ways over the penumbras of how we have loved ourselves  
Over the fables of our previously wakeless dead.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Our Utterly And Illusive Tomorrow

The savage packages are day-gone, even without  
The numerations of your envelops,  
And I drink rum and think of a marionette while  
Trying to be politically correct and a  
Best name for him—  
Maybe I will have to send you back to China tomorrow—  
While the cabbages shrink into roses—  
And the days of our honeymoons relapse into  
The animals we were yesterday—  
Anyway this is the joy I could not bring you to tomorrow—  
And the lamplight sounds through the depths  
Of the sad distance as I reach out grasping for your  
Hand that is too far away from me  
And you will go on to enjoy the sad head rooms as  
If this were another matter of the make-believes of  
Tomorrow—  
As the city stretched out its panalopy to display its  
Vanguards of our utterly and illusive tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Sights And Wonders

Defeated by long days of  
Fieldtrips,  
Little boys that never learned  
How to fly just lie out  
And dream of their  
Mothers; they don't practice  
Anymore,  
And the doors have shut  
Them away from the  
Contrary goldfish,  
Not lucky anymore;  
Maybe after all of the unluckiest  
Of rabbits are dead,  
And all of the pornographies  
Have been found across the street  
And read,  
Across the gutters,  
They will parcel themselves out  
Like conquistadors  
In their outdoor world  
Of sights and  
Wonders.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of So Many Tv Shows

There is a science up in the air given over to  
Juvenility and lunch trucks—  
As beautiful girls are given to their men,  
Like the sacrifices at the ends of their dusty roads:  
Sometimes individuals amongst them will fall  
In love once or twice  
But it is never pleasant  
And none amongst us will ever have to read about  
It—  
These words now are the scars I have developed  
Sleeping alone in my wife's parents' bed in  
Shanghai, China—  
While there are not enough feet amongst the mountains  
And the camels go without water  
As the cars go without gasoline,  
But I only know so many words—  
And it is a shame,  
That not a single soul in the world loves me  
The way I once loved a muse or two—  
Now you can find me,  
The King Kong,  
The Godzilla of the perpetually anonymous zoo—  
Fretting for no one,  
Ready to destroy cities,  
Learning how to love his infant son in place of  
A muse, while the blind stars shine down  
Across all of the voluptuous gossips of so many  
TV shows.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of Some High School's Class

A reef of history built around a sphere:  
I thinking of in the middle of some high school's class  
In the preternatural day—  
Eyes haunted like ghosts on billboards  
Underneath of where lovers traffic through the grass  
On so many legs,  
As fireworks move up against the highway  
And students plagiarize, get married, and learn to  
Reciprocate with the opposite desks  
In the cul-de-sacs of a music box:  
They realize there, blistering—  
Chapping their own lips as their pencils chisel the  
Circumference of a well: they take tests—  
The ghosts fizzle, juggle fading balls, and weep  
In the corner of the portable hotel room:  
As outside,  
Foxes leap higher and high for grapes painted like  
Nipples in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Some Lost Yesterday

They tried to settle down with long brown  
Stems,  
As the wind seemed for awhile to try and suckle  
All of the  
Honey out of them- and they remembered  
Far and wide  
The superstructures the demigods built to  
Get a peek at the nudity of  
The other side-  
Enraptured in a breeze of holidays, in the strange  
Floats arising in her eyes-  
And she came from here, as you went away-  
As the clouds finally winnowed amidst the cliffs  
Where all the Indians disappeared  
Accounting to the tales of the evaporated estuaries  
Of some lost yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Strange Lilacs

When the warm liquor lactates through the  
Caesuras of these bones:  
Off home, like a little girl curled away and sucreased  
Off of school buses  
Waiting for a family with her palm out stretched  
Before the television-  
And her mother is outside in the penumbra of a  
Blue church surrounded  
By dragonflies who very soon will have to turn in-  
With the night filled with cats  
Who are homeless and making love-  
And the girl is without a father:  
There are hurricanes in the east, and helicopters in  
Tandem in the sky-  
She remembers jumping rope as a man who isn't  
There sky walks- she thinks there is a  
Beautiful illusion somewhere hidden in the coloring  
Books she left out in the rain,  
But until then there will be more of this- beautiful  
Epitaphs of wildflowers who have gone into  
The ground, hibernating after making love at the very  
Base of the mountain- in the meadows  
Of strange lilacs to wildcats and grizzly bears.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Suburbia's Daylaboring Truancies

Writing in the earliest joy,  
Caracoling the old neighborhoods that never raised  
Anything new,  
And even made the sun seem wearied, going up and whistling  
In its payrollled hullabaloo  
Above the parasols that shared the still-life of the housewives  
And the alligators,  
As the parks swung, smoking its childless days in the middle  
Of school,  
The debutants all spilling out of their boudoirs and heading  
To the doors of busses  
To let their perfumes decanter through the transom's dreams;  
Where bicycles floundered  
And the fireworks sang all spinning out invisibly in the middle  
Of suburbia's day laboring truancies.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of Such Silly Bliss

All of the brown ocelots on the beach and on the  
Shore made eyes with the brown otters,  
As they should- as it was what they were good for,  
Even while I was failing math,  
And skipping in the suburban glades and onto the arcs  
Where my feet could leave the ground:  
So far away from the immensities of the classrooms of eyes  
And breathes,  
I slept alone under the eaves and made up wishes for myself;  
And Alma wasn't even there then,  
Even though there were then airplanes in the sky, and fish  
In the sea;  
But now Alma is here, and all day long she shines so close to  
Me; but it has been too much of awhile since I have touched or  
Tasted her flesh;  
While the brown otters curl in the zoo, their habitats enmeshed  
For the dumb and bounded eyes of the roofed tourists;  
And they almost seemed to come together and once again to kiss,  
But our eyes and lips had parted before the show was over,  
As it seemed, Alma, they had enough of such silly bliss.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Both Of Us

Oh, for awhile,  
There was a zoo, in the lighthouses of  
The sky,  
Kissing opened mouth, oh—for a while,  
While there was any room—  
And then the sun was coming down,  
Disturbing any bonfires of  
Chinese misfits—  
And then there became a cold still  
Grotto between the rebar and  
The dead frogs that were any other part  
Of us—and while I thought of a movie  
Theatre and any other part of us,  
You blossomed into a playground  
That didn't even have to pretend to be  
Coy to the reasons and the forlorn séances that  
Were the vanishing daydreams of  
A playground in the cold near Dowell weathers—  
While anything else had to spelled out for  
The both of us—  
While the city and the rest of her lighthouses  
Vanished-  
We became a star in the morning,  
And the rest of the nothings happened over  
The cradles, while the playrooms vanished over  
The cradles of the marionettes,  
And then listened to the anonymous heartbeats  
Of the both of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Canal

A bloom of clouds across  
A cord of rattlesnake- where I was  
As a little boy-  
Growing up into an absent profession-  
The flesh scarred,  
The foxes captured by hounds,  
And the housewives lost from the water fountains  
Of high school,  
All found in the diamond mines of  
Their pools- as my mother leaves the hospital,  
As the dragon makes love to a  
Carport of the sky-  
The evaporated daydreams exfoliated  
Off the afternoons after school-  
Entire trunks of locusts lurking in the grasses  
And ready to make love,  
While I look for your eyes,  
As the alligators eat the blue gills, and the prettiest  
Metamorphosis escapes to the other side  
Of the canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Day She Must Be Married

Radishes curled on a table of white,  
Placed there blushing by my love's brown fingers under the  
Twin penumbras of the maroon coolers  
In the open cavities of daylight where the sore throats of  
Feral cats used to sing all night: never wanting more  
Than I have wanted you,  
While the piecemeal traffic stumbles through; and it is a spectacle,  
And somewhere atop of it like the icing on the cake,  
The lost and premature angels draw their bull horns and sing a  
Fright:  
Because they were lost before they even got to school;  
But only if they would look down to see your brown avenues  
Smiling so giddy as to seem so innocent,  
Like a lighthouse that has never had to turn its face to the conundrums  
Of the drowning sailor, like a petrified mother watching  
As their some months old child is surrounded by  
Rattlesnakes through the deadfall of pitchfork pines,  
And thus dumbly amused by their warning signals  
Until the fatal strike-  
And the venom's meal sets out through the vineyard of the untried  
Avenues- like grains of sand who think of seashells,  
Or my little sister daydreaming on the school bus of the day  
She must be married.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Earth For Awhile

Now what a daydream:

Now what a daydream in the world for a while—

Another chance through the forests—

Pistils of love

In a roller-rink for the apiary—

Smoking Ferris wheels become a metamorphosis through

The heavens,

Until it all takes an absolute while to cool and

Distillate:

\$5 dollars of romance to watch her surrender to those

Flags:

Taking off in the middle of the day,

Forgetting to reimburse ourselves through the courtyards

Of our school-time daydreams—

Until she had her own children, hatched from underneath of

The webs of a crocodile,

And they were counting the dew drops of the minutes

For class to end—

And they were all getting up together and swearing to

Themselves:

So many words to remember, but only so many

Passages upon their ways home—

Like airplanes stuck in the clouds of the sky—□

They already know that they can never come down but

At least they can daydream of the earth for awhile.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of The Graveyards- Of The Monuments

Burring your gold, like my eyes—next to the sea—  
And the other nouns and pronouns  
Dance by themselves in the middle of the afternoons—until  
It is finally alright to struggle and to  
Account for the heirlooms as they are left from the  
Wrists of the graves—  
As menagerie of a million slender things slither—  
As the other teachers pretend it is alright to empty out  
A headroom and find the spaces to conceive  
Of out all of the inevitable outcomes for the defeated  
Tourists—  
And then there are pillow fights underneath the light houses—  
And the seahorses become unmanned—  
Diminutive unicorns—what places are for them,  
Except for in the aquatic bouquets that can only swallow the  
Aquatic playgrounds of the sunlight surrounding the  
Nuptials of all of the careworn holidays—  
Until the battle has ended, and all of the fireworks lit—  
The bravest of the penumbras stand up for themselves—and  
Figure out for themselves the constellations that still  
Remain burning, like one plus one, the gods to believe in,  
The singularities that remain burning—  
And all of the repetitions of the after lives of the Hindus  
That can never be seen in the post cards of cliff dwellings of  
The tourists that are forever returning—  
And I love you—and I love you—as the waves say,  
Keeping their mouthfuls—of the graveyards—of the monuments—  
Of the grottos—that go on forever—repeating.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Kingdoms Of Far Away

This is a peaceful union that doesn't exist:  
The king kissing a peasant, the prom queen my neck;  
And these are the roses that will at last wilt  
Unjustified and sweltering in the throats of the forest,  
And the rain patters over the roofs of the kingdoms of  
Far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Nameless Glades

Now I am not here  
But the carnivorous rose  
Eats my skin,  
As sometimes in the middle of the day  
I ejaculate in the bathroom  
Thinking for a long time of stewardesses  
In the clouds,  
And building for them gardens:  
Gardens,  
But for now you sleep again with your  
Husband as if in a crypt:  
You sleep with him  
And your lights go out into the hemispheres  
Of abandoned amusement  
Parks,  
And I pray for you- as you touch him  
Softly,  
And the airplanes kiss and disappear into the  
Sky:  
I know that very soon you will forget me,  
But for now the Gulf Stream still  
Makes love to hurricanes-  
As the long beaked herons still somehow kiss  
And make love  
Strutting haughtily over the cenotaphs of the forgotten  
Conquistadors freckling in the impenetrable heart  
Of the nameless glades.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Night Blooming Jasmin

Sad as an elephant who can never drive—  
Looking up through the Disney World of your Heavens—  
All of the joy bought and sold,  
Until what is left matriculates down to your neighborhood  
While my very own wife is preparing to fly over all of  
The hemispheres of the world to me:  
When I get up, yawning, I find myself in the daycare of  
The best of the headlamps:  
Here is where the world is the best at illuminations  
And there is nothing left of love letters to be given to  
Recede with the tide—  
You will belong here, pressing to my heart, while better  
Poems jump off of their middle of the day roofs  
Like little boys and roman candles—  
And the same damned plagiarists will sing forever and  
Forever in their choruses—that once this place was  
Bright and echoing, when angels decorated their  
Very own Christmas trees—and faeries awakened to  
Kiss and make love to roses in their little garden,  
Falling asleep to the sweet smelling caresses of the night  
Blooming jasmine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Night Blooming Jasmine

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Looking up through the Disney World of your Heavens—  
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Robert Rorabeck

# Of The Orchards

And there was an echo:  
As the serpent slid from the tree:  
And there was an echo,  
As you remembered me- cherry tree,  
And scars on my cheek:  
Panhandlers sleeping across the oily creek-  
How I loved you, you don't  
Know,  
The camels of cigarettes baptizing on the billboards of  
Sunny snow:  
My wrist was open, unshelled, clean-  
It led the fight for you,  
But you were so mean- crying, deceptive, perfumes  
Erupting from the well:  
The windmills turned for you, but they whispered  
Only hell-  
And I. a sailor, lost but unafraid- the lighthouse of  
Your soul lying deceptively-  
The hope of angels closing shop, to go on trancies  
Stealing marmalade from the orgies of the orchards,  
And very fine fabrications left into the wanton  
Sky- I saw you children,  
But I knew you could never cry.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of The Sad Misgivings

Of the sad misgivings which remain  
With the afterthoughts of  
Jet-streams—words that appear beautiful  
On the page,  
As the housewives in their streams of  
Sorority go home  
Again and again to him—  
Lives get filled up just like cemeteries  
The same way the tears some dreary angels  
Cried can fill up a lake—  
Afternoons molt into the obscurity of  
Crepuscule,  
Where amateur housewives dance with  
Open extension chords—  
When they are stung, the whole tableaux  
Becomes a faux pieta  
That the frogs watch still waiting to be  
Kissed,  
As the foxes kiss the faeries in the aloe  
Even though they do not know what for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of The World

In the clefts of purple monuments that don't  
Belong here anymore,  
While she is arraigned in her homely tenements  
And the mountains  
Rise like clouds over the substrata's:  
In fact, they are not here:  
But the cars are here,  
And the people upturning through the abandoned  
Afternoons:  
There are so many of them:  
So many of them that you do not know:  
While I've been so busy shoplifting, and lying down  
In my bed after the aforementioned grasshoppers  
Have skipped over the concrete trying  
To compete with the airplanes in their  
Some kind of show:  
As the fireworks show their stuff but so easily die  
Across the tenements and the garage sales of the  
Word we were all supposed to know.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Their Habitable Dreams

Beside the highway the alligators are  
Yawning beneath the red armpits of air plants-  
And, coincidentally, airplanes-  
And it feels alright that they haven't a name for  
These places  
That yawn out in the sprawling open:  
Places the conquistadors passed thoughtlessly,  
As they themselves were namelessly shrouded:  
And I love her,  
But it doesn't matter: there she is, already in her  
Own cul-de-sac with her husband and  
The other various people who love her:  
Her children and song-birds as well-  
And I've slept on her roof, but now that Christmas  
Is over,  
And I have scars to prove it- and I must go back  
To my nameless place beside the road,  
For that is my home- In the sunlight of a wandering  
Beauty beneath an arc that spreads the curtains of  
Daylight and looks down to where  
The lions yawn, and her family plays across the sandy lots  
Of their habitable dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Their Pornographies

I have fun fore playing with my mother  
Because she never sleeps:  
She is like a candle on an endless god's birthday cake:  
Then by Wednesday I will have my own house as  
Old as my one grandfather who is still living:  
I will have my own fortification nearer the sea; and if it is  
Good for her, then  
It is really good for me, but I miss my dogs,  
And I miss the sound her legs made playing a mammalian  
Violin against the crèche of my body;  
And now I wonder if I will ever wake up, while the buses for school  
Come around the neighborhoods of my baseball diamond,  
While the rattlesnakes also sleep,  
Sweet cousins who also keep cloistered to them the sweet venoms  
Of their pornographies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Their Wish's Flame

Pages turning to the yellow crayon dust of  
A soul,  
And a fox who has learned to walk steps out  
Underneath a jealous streetlight—  
There are robbers in the graveyard—and  
Thieves of airplanes in the sky—  
The classrooms are emptied, and the ways  
He has been thinking about it are emptied—  
He has echoes of the thoughts of going home:  
The road in his mind used to be like going  
Into the caracoles of a shell  
Where you can still hear the oceans of her  
Name,  
Before she forced him into the venal metamorphosis  
Of an all too common jealousy,  
Taking her fried chicken and watermelons up  
Into the clouds—sharing and sleeping with pilots  
And their stewardesses—never looking down  
To where is mobiles hung, limpid—  
Where he continued jumping his impotence—  
Like birthday candles burned out of their wish's flame.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of These Or Those Afternoons

Long leafed lilies in the  
Short bladed yard-  
Scarred in the anthems of  
Exhausted circus performers strayed  
From the avenues  
Spilling from their churches;  
Strange young guys who  
Once sang to airplanes-  
Or butterflies, lost from their totems or  
Colonies of far away;  
Now here they are bee stung  
Fetching, laughing underneath mailboxes  
Just as toothy wishing wells  
Wishing for housewives to show up  
With their bags of stuffs  
Sans lawyers and doctors  
And dentists,  
While the sand lions pray underneath  
Paper snowflakes,  
Arranging here into the lattening  
Baseball games of these or those afternoons.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of These Shimmering Coves

Open your eyes to the showers of birds—  
Like spokes in a bicycle of sky  
Pin wheeling above the call-girl waves:  
And stop and sit beside me for awhile  
As I sell fireworks to blind men underneath  
A pale tent skinned from the moon  
And made into the pornography here on the  
Beach in the middle of the day—  
Bask your tiny brown body in the ludeness of  
My hands—and watch me color pictures  
For you with my tongue,  
Mollusks of roses to curl inside the seashells of  
Your senses—gifts you never have to  
Tell your husband, as the sun bows us with its  
Light,  
Bending the airplanes to make silver barrettes in  
Your hair—and calling the dolphins to sing  
Into the bedrooms of these shimmering coves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Things That Remain This Way

I have to work tomorrow while  
The sun sounds  
Vociferous,  
And all the people who are  
Out there  
And who have said the  
Pledges of allegiance  
Are collected on home;  
They go this way over canals  
Filled with water moccasins  
And stolen bicycles  
Pondering across the houses of  
Lovers who will never love  
Them,  
And into the lights of  
Their own estuary to  
Douse,  
To dream of things  
That remain this way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Things That Will Never Be Seen

Merry-go-rounds of new and other words  
That seemed to be going around just like this  
Underneath the olive groves  
In the curling sepulchers of Spain,  
Another poet as well has gone amiss—  
Amidst that massive times  
Where airplanes throw themselves  
Haphazardly over the wishing wells—  
Like virgins go to movie theatres  
Or empty parking lots in the rain—  
They seem to be showing the movies to  
Themselves of things that will never be seen again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of This Again

Trying to shake myself awake like a fish,  
Born in the lower regions of the Marianes Trench;  
Now I suppose that I am beautiful or that I have to be beautiful,  
Because I have come up from so many piano keys of depths,  
And now I am looking thoroughly beautiful if starved;  
And that I have my own light which should light my living room  
To give of two good halos to my two starving children.  
But otherwise I should not have to know, or have to look at them;  
All of these bodies of men moving around just as they should,  
While some other shadows have had to push me around on  
The trams of these swings; but it has not been me in the playground  
Of all of these needy and heedless things:  
It has been you in the shadows clinging and scratching all of this time,  
Alma;  
And I have been starving all of this time, while the fair has been moving  
So utterly far away, but if you have been able to hold your breath and  
Love me for all of this time, then tomorrow;  
Then maybe tomorrow, we will surface together, me holding the beautiful  
Promenade of your head, with two lips whispering, speaking to one another  
And gossiping like two wings of a butterfly and doing;  
And doing all of this again.

Robert Rorabeck



# Of This Better World

Candling ships of marriage vows-  
I want to touch you in a playground's house  
Underneath the pine trees,  
Underneath all the blue sadness and the silver  
Ingeniousness that skips through it;  
And my tongue is out and dragonflies bejewel  
The armpits of invisibility:  
Where are you but with the easier refrains of  
Sandboxes that have metamorphosed into  
The greater suburbias which line the creeks like  
Thirsty daughters of drowned brothers,  
Where everyday goes its fair pace and then swoons  
Into the off-white crèche of street lamps,  
And you don't even have to go to school to have  
Your religion, the snowflakes talk peacefully  
Gossiping to each other of this better world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Those Unfortunates' Dinnertime

Houses falling down beside old cathedrals and  
Praying, praying:  
Their chimneys smoking until they could be seen  
Up in the woods and to the housewives there  
Who had run away from them  
And turned into naiads and dryads, letting their hair down,  
Speaking to the harts who used to be princes  
Or kings, now hunted by their fathers or sons:  
They stop for awhile at the edge of the curious pool and  
There are detained by things who have run away from themselves,  
And who are not real:  
And thus becomes reason for their demise- their capture, their  
Decapitation, and by a round about means, their cuckoldry:  
Paraded on the streets by all sorts of tourists:  
Decorated with ribbons and bows,  
Until their jaws hang down sorrow faced, and the rainstorms  
Come and otherwise all of their practitioners go  
Indoors:  
Leaving them for the crows, who sing to them, and make a merry  
Dinner out of their lingering metamorphose,  
Their purposeful solitude, and malingering to remember the bodies  
Of better men: as the sky kidnaps them,  
And the runaway houses pray to their cathedrals smoking up the naked  
Bodies of mountains  
Where other things live, halfway divine, waiting in their cockpits  
Through the swinging testaments  
Half mad yet hungry eyed looking down at the macabre carnival  
Of those unfortunates' dinnertime.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Time Honored Baseball Games

Here is the prism, floating up like a mad  
Scientist on Nitric Oxide:  
This is the turtle dove sticking its neck into the  
Sea,  
Afraid of the ice-cream truck and baseball games,  
While the long necks of giraffes graze up extraordinarily vast  
Above the earth,  
Pillaging for snowflakes,  
And they can see how the sails of grand explorers are  
Melting eventually away,  
And the can tell of the convexities, even while your children  
Have become lost again:  
And only if you'd waited; if you'd had waited, I wouldn't  
Have to practice my cap guns up into the fortnight,  
Or at being the poetic so prematurely buried;  
And we could hold hands together knowing that we  
Were fully in love  
And growing up and up, like over eager foxes learning how  
To pillage the grape vines,  
Even as the caravans of red faces conquistadors were making  
Their own way up the switchbacks up what would eventually  
Would become the overly clever mountains,  
Who in their prenatal eons were too dumb even to contemplate  
The distempers of fiercest humidities of time honored baseball games.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Us Coming Together

Everything is good, or even too good to  
Remember;  
I cant feel the air-condition or even recall what I  
Was doing,  
Except that the light is glowing throughout all of the  
Various tributaries,  
And into the boudoirs to bask over the lunch meats  
Of lonely housewives given into their  
Dissected sorority;  
And it is a kind that you will never have to know what  
It is I mean, Alma:  
That you were raised up all alone except for your sisters  
And your cross dressing brother who I  
Must remind you of all forlorn in the watery guts  
Of Texas and its stretched out  
Tourisms;  
Because now I think that it will make you all right, and when  
I take your brown hand down to the sea it  
Won't be for any sort of baptism:  
Maybe you love my cousin, or just want more fireworks;  
But it's okay,  
Because I still have so many things that I keep hidden for you,  
Like undisclosed holidays that it will take an entire lifetime  
Of us coming together to find.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Vanishing Electricity

This daydream they give to Sabbath and other schedules  
And for awhile it feels alright to believe  
Looking up into the delusions of airplanesâ€™  
To be here in the graveyard of the pets won at the midway of  
The festival that has moved away:  
And remembering everything, with her hands of amber  
Interlocked underneath the cathedrals of the  
Museum:  
Now I am married, waiting for my wife to arriveâ€™  
I am struggling towards her,  
A jelly-fish lost in a vast sea of vanishing electricity.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Walking In Ice

Abutment to the stars, is this the shallow places  
We ride,  
High in our knickerbockers, with swords  
And feathers:  
I eat two hotdogs- I don't think about you,  
And my hair almost looks blond. I have an interview  
To go to at three  
Underneath the skyscrapers floating above the  
Barge;  
But if they ask me, I will have to tell them  
I've never been to Iceland, never laid down either  
In between your levies, to feel your waters rise,  
The sluice and buck of each individual thigh,  
But I have some ways to go- I keep the skulls  
Of all the canines who were my friends tied behind me  
Like sharp, grinning cenotaphs:  
I will not sell them. If I have to I will break into houses  
At winter, I will lay with the half eaten celebrations in  
The cold, mute and pious; and only in my wet dreams  
Will I howl for you,  
Silly thing always pondering upon the moment of embarking  
Upon your next sunny day fieldtrip,  
Skipping through the bare breasted meadows and on into  
Chrysalis.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Wayward Men

You can fill out into the dreams the  
Laymen sing,  
And they will give you a chariot you can color in  
As it proceeds you to work  
Over the jiggling heads of hobos and their hobo queens:  
They sleep underneath the ribbons of necessity's  
Surcease:  
They pitch the raggedy tents in the windswept bungalows  
Of the east,  
And they sing as the waves come in and then retreat:  
And they whisper against the rush of traffic under the craning  
Necks of the dun work buildings  
While they juggle hoping bottles and rustle wishing bones like dirty feathers;  
And they count the tombs the dead go traveling in,  
While the weather flutes through them, rippling these stuporous flags  
Of wayward men.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of What Fireworks

New evaporations do little enveloping the clouds  
With tulle—  
With hearts of evaporated shell, singing of  
Ghost mothers and ghost girlfriends,  
As little feet get lost on the road to sunset again—  
Stumbling amidst the cenotaphs of  
Conquistadors amidst the orchards of  
Pornography again—  
What will they ever tell their mother—  
Of what fireworks will their blindness sing,  
If they should ever make it home?

Robert Rorabeck



# Of Who Fed The Lions

I try another thing while  
The girls get up and go to work,  
Segregated in the caesura of each wave;  
I don't know what I'm doing  
Myself,  
But once affluence sets in then every night  
Is balmy and well-manicured  
And there are places to go in our car;  
Dinner dates and such,  
The power lines garlanding the city and giving  
Of the glows of what we should do;  
And the side of your face is a Junoesque  
Profile,  
And my liver has turned green.  
Our daughters are ghosts garnished with holly  
Boughs- Think, my dear, of all the people  
Who died before us,  
Of who fed the lions;  
And we all have our troubles, our accomplishments,  
Our fresh secrets in the repeating dark-  
I know you wanted to be famous. I used to dream of  
You as I tramped and slept in stock cars  
Hidden by tall grass;  
But you couldn't know me- I tried to find you  
In Hollywood, but the hills had burned over and lost  
Their role in the play,  
And you kissed me goodbye, and moved to Colorado  
Where you fell in love.

Robert Rorabeck

## Of Who She Really Is

I've got the blues picking the sound  
Of cherry blossoms as they wonder  
How they will be  
Pollinated- as there is a ghost hung up  
In her,  
As she is coming perpetually down a  
Hill beside the lake:  
It seems that she is forever stumbling to  
Her knees,  
As the gravestones rise above her,  
And the airplanes tip their wings:  
There is nothing mortal that can save her-  
All the barrettes of flowers in her hair,  
But as a little boy you can climb up inside  
Of her and hear her whisper to  
You of who she really is.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Your Day To Day Life

I sleep in a different bed from you  
And you can call me whatever you want,  
Even though you are too stupid to  
Survive the baseball game that is happening out  
Back of our espionages and the schoolyard—  
And it is too late for you to improvise something  
Beautiful or something else clandestine to the  
Sport- so I am sure that we can become another  
Mishap misspelled to the usual daylight hours that  
Are without fanfare, until another beach opens  
According to its misspellings—an d  
You are filled with joy even though the teachers  
Have not been teaching you,  
And this is just a haunting as you belong to the higher  
And higher elements above Disney World  
And I think of you every day without actually trying to  
Contact you—or having to become a significant amount  
Of your day to day life.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Your Even More Infinitely Unmolested Shores

I am whispering the halftruths of my own obedience:  
That I have slept the night underneath the nocturnal helicopters  
Of a house near your house that was falling away  
Like love letters dying like uneven petals in a game of she loves me  
Or she loves me not:  
And this is how it happened that I used to get off the bus from high school  
And was immediately attacked by bullies for being so strange,  
But I could even smell your scent right there, Alma:  
This is how it happened next to a mailbox amidst the mists and in the  
Unholiest games of love:  
This isn't proper English: this is how the banished turtledove sings to the  
Waves it can never appropriate:  
This is how we beat the system, Alma: this is how we still listened to the  
Fireworks in the sad kingdoms of the neighborhoods long since after  
They were gone going off:  
This is a hobo making love to the emptiness of the night:  
This is the dreams of the novels I have felt up along a certain stretch of  
Military trail,  
And this is how I want to call you, Alma:  
This is only how I want to call you: and I know that you are Mexican,  
And so may be more declined to take many lovers,  
And thus reflect this on me,  
But other than this I am only a graveyard and until this graveyard comes  
A cemetery:  
Otherwise, I love laying you down and kissing your lips:  
I love laying you down to call you awake and home to town and to the  
Principal's office;  
And this is how my soul sings, swinging its immaterial body in the cages  
Of the same things that you swing:  
This is my last attempt at nothing's nothing- and I know that it is unutterably  
Unbeautiful, Alma, but it is all of your thing: and I recognize you, Alma,  
And I humbly bow to receive the reign of my queen:  
For you are that butterfly at the end of the rainbow: undeniable, unavoidable,  
And more beautiful than the caesuras of the blush ingest canyons, and more  
Divine than the summits of the Colorado Rockies:  
I am receptive to you; and I am waiting for Friday, because nothing else  
Will survive:  
I push all of my bouquets into your hands, like rushing kisses onto  
Your shore, hoping for the silence of machine guns,

Hoping for your unabusive answers, while the silliest of kings reign,  
And the dolphins lay like satiated drunkards upon the infinite grains  
Of your even more infinitely unmolested shores.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Your Little Make-Believe House

Teach me the names of flowers, will you,  
Because I am done;  
And your children are running towards the bus;  
And I wish I had more time to say nothing  
To you,  
But your husband is coming home like a  
Languid tornado  
And he will take up all of your affection and love;  
And put you into such a tizzy as to bring out all of  
Your sisters from inside of you:  
And all of you laughing at break-neck speed  
All just for him,  
This man of workman's gloves and a smile of comely cinder.  
That I will have nothing left to do but to stand outside  
Of your little make-believe house and applaud.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Your Misinterpreted Game

They seem to be laughing I want to think of  
You with your brilliant, tender eyes as I buy a red barn,  
And somehow seem to survive across the  
Graveyards for all of the winters while I am not there—  
And in the absence of my presence a stallion—  
As full of light and as majestic as the midnight of  
All of your vanishing cars—  
But I'll awaken again tomorrow listening to the yawns  
Of lions until all of our seats are lost on the busses—  
And I can spend forever trying to misspell your name—  
Until my classroom will be emptied—and there will  
Be nothing else left to call me recluse—  
Just the movie theatres that somehow seemed to echo  
Upon the vanishing enterprises of your misinterpreted  
Game.

Robert Rorabeck

# Of Your Yesterday

The words travel on out like vagabonds with their feet,  
And you are already lying on down with your man, Alma  
Like a vagabond butterfly who has found something to eat:  
And in the morning you will have to dropp Heidi off at  
Daycare,  
And then maybe you will be here: maybe you will be here,  
While our lovers beds make their casual caesuras flipping off the  
Unabashed sky,  
While you kiss your uncles, and I tell them my goodbyes;  
And maybe you have loved other men, Alma: maybe you have loved  
Them, while the sea has slipped away:  
But I don't want to be any one of the, Alma: I still hope and  
Pray to be the fieldtrips of your sweet tomorrow, to winnow our perfumes  
Of wings and pollinate all that will be our children over the graveyards  
Of your yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck



# Oh Brother, Who Knows!

Brother,  
She could be doing anything right now—  
She could be making love,  
But she's probably serving domestic beers  
To the undergraduate boys who come in  
To get drunk on her.  
They don't have a chance....

Brother,  
She could be doing anything right now—  
She could be on her pink tricycle  
Ringing her bell up and down frat row,  
Trying to draw the attention of the ice-cream truck,  
Because she has a craving for praline....

Brother,  
She could be doing anything right now,  
But who knows....  
She said I shouldn't feel this way toward her,  
Or anyone, who I haven't seen for most of a decade;  
I shouldn't think about the ways she goes  
But, brother, how can she know—

Oh Brother,  
How can she know the ruby fire  
She ignites in your soul?  
How can she know the singing rivers  
Of sunlight her name brings when spoken out loud—  
Even God sings when he walks into her bar  
To sit down and buy a round after a hard day's hangover  
For all the good Catholic boys who bat their eyes  
At her in choreographed Christianity?

Oh Brother,  
How can she know  
The way her amber hair flows—  
Oh, the way her amber hair flows  
Curling, curling like lovers around  
Lips, fingers, and toes....

So when we just look at her,  
Around, around the world goes....

Oh Brother,  
How can she know  
The way my heart goes, swimming  
Silently around her too afraid to approach—  
I've unbuttoned my shirt for her and stood there bared  
Waiting for her stare to tattoo my heart,  
But she's a mighty fare Clair  
Running about in the world,  
Changing to water and trees whenever no one is looking,  
Whenever she fancies,  
But I'm not supposed to think of these things  
Because I don't know her....

But, Oh Brother,  
Who knows!

Robert Rorabeck

# Oh Cat

Cat who loves more insouciantly than dogs,  
You are the more valuable mammal worshiped as the sun:  
Clean yourself and put on make-up  
And now your legs- With your briar tongue lap away  
My indigo patches of fairytales,  
And curl beneath the discombobulated bus with me for  
A second or two,  
Between classes while I build you pyramids  
And a sphinx with my Jewish rum  
If just because I am out of magical spells and  
The word hyacinthine doesn't seem to work enough;  
And I will feed you macaroni for dinner,  
And drink wine wrenched from the skeletal hands  
Of a legionnaire of a friendly cartoon;  
And won't I put the moon in a saucer for you to lap,  
As soon your saddle bags will be squeezed by a half dozen mewing  
Thoughts,  
And the children will love you on my birthday,  
And candles will be blow out for you;  
But once famine comes, oh cat,  
I will not be able to keep you on my trail:  
I can go all around Colorado fishing out of sunk-tanked seas,  
But you will follow your own premises,  
The men who congratulate your senses like a pagan flicker;  
And the literary agents likewise will not bother me;  
And I will never see you again-  
But I will have my dogs; and if we do see you again,  
Oh dastardly cat, we will chase you up a tree long tongued;  
And if no tree why then, long tailed goddess,  
We'll make a messy dinner of your gut fried succulent in our  
Drooling mollusk bed;  
So afterwards, licking ourselves, we will never again fear  
A heartfelt flood.

Robert Rorabeck

## Oh Dear, My Dear

Coal fields are black without pinpricks or lips,  
And the sooty men sit there too tired for tricks;  
And, above them, the sky is so black, so eered by night,  
And the black little children fly black, eerie kites,  
And sometimes I sit there in the coal dunes all cold,  
And pretend there to know you and your fingers I hold,  
But here are not your lips, so insignificant in ire,  
For one single match would catch the whole place afire,  
And what the angels would see as they ate lunch in space,  
Is the insignificance of a distant star insouciantly lit,  
A speck on a field like an imperfection unfit,  
Or a hole in a yard which is otherwise uncommonly kept;  
In truth, as you sit there cleaning your plate,  
Your porcelain, your china, and all your estate,  
I could climb up to your summit without bottled oxygen,  
But just as swiftly your disinterest would knock me down again;  
So I stay here gazing intent as a blind man,  
The remnants of a cicada hooked to a banyan;  
Where the sea of oil flicks the waves of an onyx harem,  
And the sky above is a great, empty cauldron; Oh, you,  
Whom to I say this song, so long since I've seen you;  
I'm sure you are there bathing, but with even that, what do I know?  
I have nothing to behold, for there is a reason all of this energy  
Is held in blackness in the apex of a vacuum,  
Like the wick of a candle kept by a faithful virgin, for to come  
To you in this dark room, to pull the light on, to bend and kiss  
You, without reception, would be the plot, the headstone,  
And every inch of the coffin,  
So I sit here in the unmatriculating headroom, while their  
Waves draw inky caesuras, and you sit on your bed with your  
Head turned, and let his fingers unhook your brazier,  
So in the end I can say I've never known you, or swam in your country,  
And you can kiss him with more innocent luxury,  
Though when the work is done and they day is lulling,  
When the shadows of creep and crawling, come a little more near,  
I can still turn my head to you in the innocent darkness,  
In the way I think you are waiting, and call  
You dear,  
My dear.

Robert Rorabeck

# Oh So Many Times

Worried by the hurrying news- the patenting of  
Lost fights glaring in the cinders just before the yawning of  
The mailboxes,  
And my little dog left back in the woods,  
Stroked by virgins with serpentine bodies that do the tricks,  
As the day sets off like a match, by the heedless wonder  
Of newly realizing stampede:  
That this is but the outlook of another séances, going through  
The motions as mothers pack lunches, slender straps slipping  
From their shoulders heedlessly beside the canals.  
Showing the freckles only their husbands and their coworkers  
Should see to the alligators and the fanfare of  
Likeminded tramps: there they are starting downwards from  
The pool,  
With eyes of ruby, or the lapis lazuli that weeps from  
The empty genies of too many bottles,  
After all of the fairs have gone, like butterflies are gone-  
Packed up to die poisonously over oh so many rivers- into the forests  
Of lovers she will never admit to,  
Where I wait for her to fall across me, to shroud me in the old skins  
Of an unspoken dressing room where I saw her mirror less,  
And kissed her oh so many times.

Robert Rorabeck

# Oh So Sad And Clever Boy

I.

I'm not very smart, so for you  
I have to be clever,

I can be a dolphin clapping in the surf,  
You play coy and feed me pregnant tuna  
Barefoot in the amber sands;  
Up to your exposed knees-  
A whole bucketful will slow me down,  
And distinguish a gunmetal sleuth in the sunset.

I can be a boy again mind numbed on vodka;  
I can set off a quarter stick of dynamite in the  
Ruby courtyard, crack open the geode,  
and draw your attention,  
Smile bare-chested and pick a wild pomegranate,  
Juxtapose it near the stigmata of my navel

Or I can play checkers on the green geometry of  
Suburbia,  
Listening to the sweep of waves like  
The alluring static of a coming radio;  
but not very well,  
Distracted by where you might be molting on a sprig;  
Roller-skating over the bones or privateers,  
The metal patina of bad conquistadors

And with the canary go down into the mines  
For subtle tests of subtraction;  
And I'll see you in the halls and wish you to quiz me,  
Wish you to fall across me like a masked ball,  
To flutter peacock feathers over your exposed teeth,  
Pretending to be genteel while flaunting  
A powdered bosom

Or I can hang around the parked cars again,  
Any drunken afternoon and  
Wait for your smell to waif with sunset, or the cerulean

Bleed of students to homes again:  
Restless on Sundays,  
I can pretend to see you go,  
And begin the tramp of scars- Which I've  
Been on now, Oh, so long I guess;  
Whistling in jest of my own troubles, skipping  
Like a Yankee-doodled over the skulls set there to  
Trip me,  
Or time travel to pick you up from the stink of knightly armpits  
In the feral courtyards of Camelot

II.

But you don't live in the palmettos anymore, do you?  
Like a cicada you left your bedroom askance the cypress and  
Somewhere else you went

I am not very beautiful, so for you  
I'll have to be clever;  
I'll have to lay down and switch the sides of my  
Face, to confuse you: how easy you forget,  
And love in those waves you've abound in  
The stacked pornographies of proletarian  
Superheroes,  
Pecking at the watermarked biceps of your  
Saber-toothed, navy-anchored sailors.

You've always had to work for you dinner,  
And exercise your legs around and around in  
An all too quiet parade:  
The discombobulated merry-go-round of T&A  
I known, it looks just like how they  
Bussed the students in so long ago into our lapsed  
Anglo-Saxon fairy land:

Now look at my scars, and lay flowers; I've cut a rose  
For you: I am a clever boy- Place it in my teeth and I will  
Turn about you three times in the air before I disappear  
For a spell,  
Clapping

Become the gentleman walking north in the dry hills



Of Spain,  
Again over the bones who knew more than I,  
Who were flayed by Civil War

and turn away so you might not have to see  
All the sad men who think my ink a jest:

Or not, for cast off this fibbing cloak and I am not  
There at all; I am a failed used car salesman,  
As nude as a huckstered king,  
And the truant who tight-roped across the canal,  
Laughing gapped toothed and spry,  
Even when you would have called me home to your  
Honey-bosom stung by April bees,  
For we would have showered full blown in the pollens  
Of vertical meadows populated by sugar rabbits,  
And the immortal jay-like bodies of virgin soldiers  
Massacred in the pollen,  
Stacked like a busty wedding cake up to a  
Golden-titted castles

III.

But, oh no,

I am not a smart boy, and I've never had to earn my  
Dinner at a trot: I'll buy a house instead and waltz with all  
You've forgotten inside, and all the pages I've written  
Never read for you; instead,  
I'll find a wife and put her in a garden,  
And hold her there and keep her until she is too tired  
To move and wait for her to  
Smile, and see how long she'll stay if  
I'm properly egalitarian when she bends low,  
And I trumpet her like in a Chaucerian revelry,  
If I spit and shine at certain angles of the day, and put off my  
Bayonet and watch her trough the daisies and  
The blue bells from a fort overlooking the sea:  
And sigh, and say like the son of an all too forgetful king,  
That this is how it should have been one day for us  
When I was yet blond and as well read as a comic book;

But now the storm front moves forward one move;  
And it is frighteningly cold, and uncommonly beautiful in  
The same town you drive for sex and show back and forth;  
You who serve fried chicken and coke at the rodeos  
Underneath the shopping malls,  
And it has the smell of you on its cleft palate;  
And it is pushing you in front of it like a cinnamon doe,  
A smell of caffeine and runny ice-cream and cocaine,  
A scar-less, carefree and forgetful bouquet that  
Leaps clear over the shoulders of new brides,  
Making me look for a little while up through the highest windows  
And power-lines, to see the blue birds quivering well-fed in their  
Nests,

To feel you blow over in a possessed front, tipping over stop-signs,  
Eerily shoving down everything you know to see,  
Your smells pollinating across the highway, causing traffic accidents;  
A stunning breed of musk haunting the intangible borders;  
Even while the buses turn around from school, delaying your  
Offspring for awhile-  
The kids shouting first-time heirlooms,  
I can toast you from my middle-class  
Parapet,  
Uncorking my toy musket and dawning mouse ears;  
Saluting you in a nursery-rhyme of an overgrown fit,  
Give a turn and start down my sometimes clever stairs,  
To greet all that I've known to anonymously become.

Robert Rorabeck

# Oh, Hell

Now my soul is as wrecked as the face of my body  
On the shoals,  
And all of the pirated ships of kindergarten are waiting underneath  
The caesuras of the blue gilled knolls,  
And you don't know me by now, Alma:  
Now I am all f-ed: like the unrequited love of ducks in the  
Playgrounds of preschool,  
And you have never had to taste the blood off my tongue:  
You have never even had to ring me bell:  
All you have done is knocked, and I have come, like a ghost  
Hooked into the mouth of a bright  
But lonely shell:  
I have come, and my soul has torn open like the wash basin  
In the grotto of a suicidal virgin in the forests of  
The seventh layers of hell;  
And you blew me out, and you rode out ponies, and you  
Defeated our games, and you ate our baloney;  
And oh, hell, Alma:  
Oh, hell....

Robert Rorabeck

# Oh, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah

They've bought a beautiful house- she  
And all her beautiful friends.  
I don't know what to do but to write another  
Disposable poem,  
Toilet paper to dab sweat and excrement,  
Soon I'll be in her neighborhood setting up  
Christmas trees,  
Though its impossible that I shall ever deliver one  
To her living room;  
And I begin and end my truancies in expectable  
Ways, always the man who hoped for  
And got nothing, but they humored him and  
Let him garland the tree: His ex-girlfriend's house  
Cost \$230,000- If he finish up next year,  
Licking off the boot-prints and shell-fish of  
His paternity he'll have that out right  
And be able to move into the tourisms of Saint  
Augustine- He'll be able to diadem them in a way,  
Which would be kind of like growing in the monsters  
In Beowulf's fairytale- He would rather love the  
Bartenders in the ghettos in the savannahs of North-central  
Florida- those goyem without much debt, without  
Secular holidays, who are always ready to fill the story-  
Telling glass with her forgetful eyes; and I am really  
Almost done, even though she has allowed me to  
Believe that not only passable neighbors can live up and  
Down the rows of Siamese houses, each with their own  
Crenulated swimming pool, like a frosted birthday cake,  
Really hoping that is extemporaneous file will crash-  
No one will read it anyways, underneath the witches or  
The tall implanted palms- She will go to work in the morning,  
She will attend Hallel quite presumptuously;  
Thank whatever god crawled out of the canal, she will never  
Read this poem- She will brush her hair and smile for  
Her routine and secular morays; they will have a house together,  
A mortgage, and children to rays,  
But I will never have to go down on her again, to wake up  
And realize that I am not in love,  
Though the mezuzah is still drilled to the door,

The Catholics, under swell juniper, are still putting on  
Their passion plays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Old And Copper Men

I will give you another head start—  
And then I will right away start hitting the bottle—  
As you yourself begin propositioning some other genie—  
We will see who gets through with it first—  
And who gets kicked out of the mall—  
And I will get so drunk that I will never again have to remember  
Why it is that you go back home every night to him—  
And in the morning, the stewardesses will touch down—  
And they will be selling the sacrament or giving it away for  
Next to nothing—while, over their shoulders,  
The sky will bloom a new nebula—  
And you will wait it all out, to see what the result is:  
Another white dwarf or a black hole—  
And you will be free of all gravity that you will virtually run  
Through the backyards of time, kissing and falling in love  
With the boys that you see even as they turn into  
The graveyards of old and copper men.

Robert Rorabeck

# Old Memories Of High School

Old memories of high school,  
Like a vineyard tantalizing my lips from  
The elbows of a voluptuous airplane—  
While my wife whistles like  
A ghost,  
And our first child plays baseball in her  
Belly—  
And the fish swim,  
Certain there is someplace still left to  
Survive—  
Like the phosphorous of forget-me-nots  
Burning over the forgotten playgrounds  
The ill begotten governments have all  
Taken down—  
The missing playgrounds I once swung on  
With my evil muses—those beautiful  
Girls whose hearts went missing while  
Their husbands just so happened to  
Be out of town.

Robert Rorabeck

# Olga's Guitar

The green fields are empty and metropolitan,  
And I am getting paid to be here with my temples  
Bandaged,  
Hoping there will be echoes, or her face in the moon:  
The monks chant, "C0cktease, " and orgasm the lovely  
Avalanche, thus the mountains unclothe,  
And my mother finds me dead, or just in a faint;  
She uses the store-bought bouquet to resurrect me,  
The donkey to remove the stone,  
The stick to break me, or send me further along, because  
My peers are still preening and they are joining Catholic  
Mass with the prom; I go wearing scuba gear;  
She went in a thong. When we brushed together, we moaned  
Like little kids putting on, until I was blinded and put in  
The wind tunnel by the nurse; This was Christmas, a curse,  
And we walked halfway to France looking for Olga's guitar;  
Everyone was drunk on new years, but I remained a virgin  
Eating grapes on the train, the opposite window reflecting  
The side of my face,  
And the hills were dusty and clayed and smelled of dead poets,  
And dogs who'd never eaten a meal howled and grew into men  
Who grew domesticated and worked the field,  
Until they got the juices out of her, and married her daughter;  
Thus, became rich, and spoke in whispers of little boys leaping  
Their fields,  
And when she bent down, she showed her bosom, and they  
Thought this most generous, and went out night barefooted and danced  
Alone for her beneath her muddy window, where she looked down,  
Slipping out a breast which cried down to them;  
In this they were leavened and rose  
Up and caught her around and undressed above the house,  
And bathed kissing in the moon's penumbra, the dogs in the cellar  
Howling that they too had once been men,  
Though by morning their masters had them generously fed.

Robert Rorabeck



# Omaha

Alone in the building of red bricks  
I pretend there are ghosts outside my window-  
Even when there are children walking,  
There are ghosts between them-  
And the high trees rattle even up to  
The 4th floor where I am turning my tricks  
Five years ago, maybe more-  
Reading the scrawls on papyrus is  
All I'm good for, and now  
Not even that. Just an old hat  
Discarded on a forgotten floor  
Where man and wife once christened  
The threshold and filled the walls  
Full with the new eyes opening  
And hungry mouths needing,  
A turn of the century boom town  
The houses are all pell-mell up the hill  
Where the workers lived near the factory  
And to the side a little red bricked university  
Where the ghosts and the students are  
Always walking, humming the tune  
Of the way things once were  
The knowledge scrawled like graphs  
On the makeshift tomb,  
As quickly as these times proceed.  
They have build a grand highway over  
The old city, now a forgotten museum  
Returning to the red mountains  
And the rut of glaciers that slid inevitably  
Up to where the barren branches go  
Tapping this early in the forgotten year-  
I turn my eyes to look out the window  
Knowing that there are ghosts down below  
And that I am not even there.

Robert Rorabeck

# On A Birthday Cake For Dying Rabbits

Storm clouds laughing over bowling alleys where  
No one spends any real time in-  
And the jaundice east blowing out the sick  
Candles on a birthday cake for  
Dying rabbits:  
And this is my toy sent spinning out onto  
The concrete field,  
Covered with so much graffiti, like tattoos  
Around your neck,  
And the airplanes coming across you  
Carelessly every night, but never having the mind  
To look down and see.

Robert Rorabeck

# On A Cheek Of The Moon

Through the lips of the stars who are like vases,  
Who drink through the night while all of  
The cats are slinking away after the automobiles,  
And the imaginations of the strangers are captivated by  
The other motivations that cannot contain us in our  
Bedrooms,  
As the ambulances go around, chasing the fees of werewolves—  
And we fall in love with the roses pressed against  
Our tombstones—until there is no more room for us,  
Not even in the raindropp stolen into an eye of  
A witch—  
And the thieves come around barefooted, collecting  
Those things that do not belong to them—  
And the students of the soulless grottos gather  
In the gymnasiums to play basketball—  
And the rainstorms carry over—filling themselves with  
The holes of another love—and I wait for you,  
Getting inebriated in my living room,  
Hoping for the resolution of a good novel—  
For the sun to paint my fingerprints, as if developing  
A theft, as he comes out to give a peck on the cheek of the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# On A Drizzly Doorstep

This is French who cant speak it,  
Rimbaud without his tongue- I got a C  
In the language of love,  
A C+ in logic, and horse semen that has  
Gone bad waiting for my truck in Show Low, AZ:

I look at myself in the mirror,  
I look at myself again, at another angle, standing  
In the corner- I can't tell by the way people are  
Looking at me, how the dogs lull their tongue-

Right now on the back of the buffalo, father is putting  
The forks on the tractor to unload the tons of hay  
Stolen from Silver City, NM,  
The sun is kissing Molly's Nipple,  
And someone just shut the door upstairs without  
Saying a word-

The lady at the post office is bovine though congenial.  
Still, her restaurant finally went out of business, and  
As she smokes, she blames the German cook, who else?  
I tell her I am moving to Saint Augustine,  
Into the canopy of ghosts and nuns, where the conquistadors  
Bugle bright plastic birthday souvenirs for the semi autobiographical tourists-

My ex-lover does the Kaddish as she does the laundry,  
And she serves her new Hassidic husband potato latkes which they both enjoy,  
And when they make love, while the detergent desalinates in the thumping  
Washer, does she think how my hips used to poker as their hips conjoin,  
As she drives away hitched to his last name, like the inbreeding of royalty-

Outside until mid afternoon the mezuzah sits alone,  
The palm trees whisper as the wind blows  
Them casually in the landscaping of the cleft lips of the carport in Royal Palm  
Beach,  
And down the road there is an unused library, and a park where I  
Have sold pumpkins and Sparrow Lane, where a girl I never knew  
Grew up playing in the humid detachment of a latchkey childhood forgotten  
On a drizzly doorstep.

Robert Rorabeck

# On A Gloomy Wednesday

Gay-lords are in the apple sauce;  
Water brothers brush through the aquatic kelp  
As colorfully as a Saturday Morning cartoon:  
They share nests as perfect as curious teal.  
I read Heinlein's master work and weep,  
So full of scars, and someone has already taken the  
Prize from the lucky cereal box, like taking her  
Virginity  
And letting the cat play with it under the couch  
Until it is mauled and penniless  
On a gloomy Wednesday;  
and on the bright street maybe three girls  
Are swishing back and forth in buxom shorts practicing  
For the roller derby,  
but they will not publish my book,  
Because it is not that- Just a hang-up of a nod;  
My eyesight is getting worse,  
I do not have a hair that isn't gray;  
And she said to me, it would have been better kept in  
Dreams,  
now come to bed my silky felon: And I can  
Do this,  
just about anytime now.  
I can move out and  
Buy my own house with that thatch of green carpet  
Good for my son when he gets old enough  
to need to  
Jack-off. -  
And we can pretend to not know of  
Such needs,  
Good for romance and dime novels and the  
Censer the sun swings to  
each day hearing the high benedictions  
Of vultures and airplanes. This is almost enough:  
To recede like this into the waves,  
to hold hands with the  
Fake species and then to trundle like a washing machine  
Blindly with the penultimate mermaid,  
her breath burning of

Rum and sugar-cane-  
Her eyes smoked in the everglades,  
And worked over by black men as sleek as cougars,  
her shoulder blade tattooed by the sooty thumbprints of  
Triumphant privateers  
and wash-tub hooligans. My parents rock the  
House upstairs,  
and this is how we do it,  
go out into the world like  
A schoolyard and  
watch it flood with the hollering conflagrations  
Of waves hallucinating in time, so that entire student body is  
Dredged up, and professional streets  
With pinstriped angels singing hallelujah,  
And the little marks under the eyes,  
And the paper-cuts,  
The delusions put on stage by busty house-  
Wives now glow like somnambulant  
Drift wood,  
Wavering where the caesuras grow outward in  
A thick forest roiling,  
Waiting for the sky to boil over, so that the floating cuts  
Burn forever like gifts of ignited gasoline,  
Each yard like a pillbox on Omaha beach with smiling  
Machine gunners and bomb-shell mortar teams  
With crystal chandeliers and great tits,  
Smiles white enough to sell gifts to a thief.

Robert Rorabeck

# On A Promise For Indians

Sad wounds on a promise for Indians—  
Another night falling down across the birds,  
As the hobos settle in,  
Knowing that they are lucky,  
That it is the entrepreneurs who have  
To go back to work tomorrow,  
And the teachers and the students  
Who have to go back to school tomorrow—  
Even after the sun has set,  
They wet their lips, and listen  
To the apathetic romances of the  
Traffics—  
By this way they come to know themselves.  
In the morning they will pan handle  
And put new personifications onto  
The clouds—  
They will never have to go to Disney World—  
Their minds are free, and where they are  
Going they have never been before.

Robert Rorabeck



# On A Rainy Day

The cars are filled with meat:  
You could say that the cars too are filled with hearts,  
And sometimes the sky is filled with hearts,  
And they go by the ways the know;  
And they get love struck when they leap so far away  
Across the burnished sea-  
There are no clanging cities and there are no dichotomies  
Of lovers;  
But some might say that the most fragile, lost little  
Girls live in the deepest of seas,  
And that is why we must become pilots, because we can  
Meet them there,  
Or at least look down as they put on mascara riding upon  
The backs of unafraid dolphins:  
They go so far away from their homes:  
They go where they cannot be found, and we can only follow  
Them for our some few ways,  
For our planes are like minnows compared to them,  
And I would like to give them names,  
But I am so afraid-  
Where they go I should not say, but I believe they go to heaven.  
They go to heaven on a rainy day.

Robert Rorabeck

# On A Voyage Which Had No Need For End

She said she loved me,  
But it wasn't me, but the horses I attended,  
And Thomas Hardy, and his Tess:  
I loved her anyway, and lassoed for her endlessly,  
The colts of spitfire in the lightning storm:  
I wept and on the back of the ridge:  
Upon the combative plates, it wreathed,  
And the spurious balls curled between the horns  
Of bulls and the leather horn of my saddles,  
As in a myth well satisfied;  
And she watched me from the kitchen and did not  
Stir, her breasts powdered with flour,  
Smeared with the gristle and tallow of buffalos:  
Indians cried from the sink, their arrowheads  
Onyx, and chipped, resting beaten on the shelves:  
I said I loved her from afar, but I could not leapt  
Such a ways to her: She took other men while  
The blue lions slept in trees. They did not stir,  
But ate deer way up in those crooks, as the waters  
Gathered and gossips in shoots of quartz,  
As the sky was marble and veined with rich premonitions;  
But afterwards upon them, her eyes did not open,  
They did not attend my endless leap: Well sated,  
They fled away, on a voyage which had no need for end.

Robert Rorabeck

# On A Windy Day Down The Mainstreet Of Saint Augustine

Songbirds open with jasmine song,  
And I don't have to do anything else today  
But lay on my back and open my eyes;  
When I'm not feeling lazy, I drink milk and  
Patrol the yard- The farthest I go is across the canal  
Where there are naked pictures strewn out in a  
Zoological collage matting the fermented embankment  
- Women in leggy orbit and  
Fetching polyester: Busty prom queens of science-fiction that look  
Good going down behind the cypress;  
They give silver tensiled winks and rosemary nods in the lazy  
Ways and estuaries where he, crowned, persuades her down to bed.  
The red shoots as tongues from the armpits of cypress  
Their roots suckling the pickled heads of silver-scarred  
Conquistadors.  
I don't know either of them, and I leave before they  
Start making noise, moaning like a captain of an evil ship  
With a bad toothache;  
I go back to my own home which I bought years ago  
When I was thirteen. The vermillion carpet is mottled from my  
Fretful masturbations and delinquent pets- Though the  
Windows peep-show azure, they always do, and creased airplanes  
Lay strewn about, the immature origami across my velveteen  
Wasteland of emerald love letters that don't even make it out  
The front door. After I am done and breathless, my tongue  
Hung up on all the pretty names of pretty girls I don't know,  
I fall down to eyelevel and wave at Lilliputian stewardesses  
Smooching from the portcullises cut out like snowflakes;  
I wave to them and they kick off their heels when the talk-shows  
Come on the same time as the cicadas;  
We stay up all night like old girlfriends and I toss them popcorn,  
And they are so small and pretty that one kernel is like a  
Decadent meal, and their breasts rise up gratefully and swell like  
Pink balloons tugged by kindergarteners watching a parade  
On a windy day down the  
Main street of Saint Augustine.



## On And On

There are no more birthdays in her eyes,  
Because they have opened up a new venture.  
Some part of her is still French,  
But I cannot tell if it is her upper lip  
Or her left elbow when it is resting in the good  
Light of a game of chess.  
For now, though, the best thing for me to  
Do is travel on, perhaps even get married if  
I can get by with a prenuptial agreement,  
And beat her at the money game, for I had  
Been married before but only in agreement with  
Judaism, and I was left hanging by the heart strings,  
Though I had long since lost the ring she gave  
Me from Jerusalem, and what it said.  
Even now, there are many faces in books of  
People I should know, who maybe I do not even  
Want to know, but there is a sad urge about it  
As if I was a castigated horse wishing to return  
To the stormy herd who had trampled him away.  
She, though, is surely leaving now, for it is early  
Morning, and time for her to put the key in the  
Lock of some classy joint. I don't even know  
What she might be selling, nor if how  
She greets the men is true romance or a sales ploy,  
But she does greet them that way, time and again.  
I should leave her to that business, because  
I don't even know a thing about her,  
Except some small part of her is still French,  
And on and on.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Bones Or Tulips

I prefer to drink,  
All alone and all night long,  
Slowly like a love letter kindled on the logs,  
Like a little girl on a swing set all alone,  
Beside the moon and dogs-  
Not at bars  
Crowded with the lackadaisical society of  
Lunch boxes- Girls whose legs are mostly pinked,  
Only a strip of pinstripes,  
Boys who are boxers, raconteurs, and other  
Gay professions I shouldn't like to spell:  
Drink alone is the very essence of life,  
The purest confession of any kind, not just  
A fieldtrip, a day-drive: This is how the Spartan did  
It, his brethren stocked up in the pass,  
This is how the mailmen do it off shift, humming  
On their slender cinderblock porch in all the rains;  
But I shouldn't drink at all unless I should  
Succeed, rack in the monies and fames of spring,  
Surpassing my dirt farming forefathers;  
Tendonitis of adverbs and similes, instead of  
Briary cottons and combines;  
Spit-shine, and make my money with a bit of whale  
Bone, scrimshawed and rhymed:  
Then I should drink! And drink alone! To Hemmingway,  
To Bukowski, to Bogey and Macaw:  
See me swim so gallantly with the knightly fishes,  
Like Twain, corn-cob pipe firmly unclenched, enjoying  
The cheapest tobaccos, and of course my cheap liquors:  
To make a name for myself, such a talent,  
And to go around campus and perform that way, all in  
Tweed or gabardine;  
mustached, making girls fall in love with my debonair  
Intelligences: gentle policemen tip their caps to me,  
And we share a nip and parlay- All of that finely fashioned  
Dream, and making love to young girls I just met who  
Checked me into the library,  
My artistic reward, a lap dance in a crackerjack movie,  
A long-legged secretary in a brewery makes love to me:

But I should say, I shouldn't at all, not one dram,  
Until I can pay my way, a celebrated libertine,  
Celibate of liquor, spiced rum, and sea;  
A life of thirsty abstinence, until the funeral parlor,  
Or acclaim: Then, on bones or tulips,  
With these lips and with these dreams:  
Celebrated or forgotten, but at the end of my drive,  
I should drink in such a solitary contest  
As to line up the alike animals two by two once again in a  
Postmodern fire-drill, flood of inundated deluge:  
Drink to the girls, the dead poets, the dogs,  
On bones or tulips, drink.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Even Days

I'll see you first from the  
Crows nest of my soul,  
And jerk off to the first aerodynamic flume of  
Airplanes,  
Because there is so much about you to love,  
After a few beers and all the terrible  
Traffic has past;  
And we've defeated the British and are singing about  
It on our July 4th on our little yard which is just  
Ours,  
A menage trois between us and the bank,  
And our one citrus tree which has canker but so many  
Children budded roundly plumped from the vine,  
And many words unspoken,  
And all of it like a strangely fruitful model of the universe  
I slip down under just as I am about to go to  
Sleep, so warmed from liquor and speech,  
All these people around me who are friendly,  
But who I really shouldn't compare as friends;  
And yet I love them,  
Even as your eyes are truncated like soft, easily bruised  
Fruit into bedrooms;  
And your name is E-, and you don't write all,  
Which is very unprofessional of you,  
And I just keep going on and on, breaking like a kaleidoscope  
At a steady clip,  
Like so many waves, like soft palates clapped together  
Like cymbals all across Loxahatchee and Wellington,  
And graveyards full of so many friends  
Who don't know me at all but should wake up with me  
Yawning in the unsteady dawn,  
Nervous when greeting the lord like a conductor or a bus  
Driver shaking his hands  
Who we never knew anyways, but like our love for you,  
E-,  
Are grateful for all the same- At least on even days.

Robert Rorabeck



# On Fairytales

J.R.R. Tolkien was my prom date,  
And if you believe hard enough  
Any boy can become a fairy.

My good friend's father was  
A cop.  
You see, you see,  
There are better things for us.

And there are gravestones in the east.  
And there are gravestones in the west.  
And storm clouds like herds  
Of combustible cattle.

And pet cemeteries like little tears  
Along the highways  
Full of plastic coffins  
And mewling spines.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Her Amber Body

I pay the toll for my artwork with the lucidity of these crimes,  
The cauldrons gurgle for their witches,  
And the city diademed in centerfolds spins on an axis twinkling for  
Christmas;  
And we all pirouette, both man and beast,  
While the twinkling creatures rise and flutter and children  
Are birthed to their weeping mothers.  
My fingernails are dirty, and I have spent my work week staring at  
Pretty Mexicans; and America is more beautiful because  
She is starving: the middle class is jaundiced, and they are always moving out  
Or being forced out;  
And I couldn't care so much where they are going; I think of her hair  
As dark as it is red, like the witchcraft of sacrificial maize:  
And I want to stare forever into her eyes, and on her amber body graze.

Robert Rorabeck

## On Her Mind

Windows spread over brightening cadavers,  
The sun a tourist, a child creeping his eyes up through  
The corners,  
And the flag pole is raisedâ€”  
The children have gone home, mollusks to their  
Shellsâ€”something beautiful remains in a park  
For the werewolves and paper snowflakes  
And other things that donâ€™t really come wintering into  
Night:  
The church a blue agate where the homeless  
Men soon see their love riding a silver horse over  
Christmas:  
And they breathe their drunken entities into her bones:  
And she rides away into the dark surplice,  
Poison in her bosom, another god on her mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Her Way Home

The roads hitherto go from here:  
They have been going from carnival: they have been going  
Up their roads;  
They have been waiting for all of their stalwart children, but  
What about this:  
What about all of this, the Mexican dances, and my soul gone  
Away,  
My Alma gone on home, waiting by herself for the bolero to  
Unfold,  
Or neither waiting for anything from me- this is just all there is,  
And the forests are the testaments to all of  
Our hopes grown up feral and  
By themselves,  
Like the airplanes skydiving, and her heart there in the middle of  
The road, accruing to other scimitars who shall never  
Rust,  
While she listens to the music in her car on the way home-  
Blustering and contented,  
And far away from home, but on her way-  
On her way home.

Robert Rorabeck

# On His Amber Lips

Amber hair which ends dip drunkenly  
In amber beer,

Frame amber eyes which gaze drunkenly  
Through the diffuse, swimming light,

Move in intoxicating currents, swaying oceanic  
Alongside the patrons' tilting continents,  
Where they collide like yellow ships disembarked  
Without crews, drunken boats  
Who dock up to amber  
Haired barmaids back in port through early morning

All the heavens smashed,  
Slanted angels sing,

Winds grasp their steerage, directed by drowsy fates

Overfilled vessels,  
Spilling

Her lips brush his amber hair, her amber eyes  
Roam across his brown skin, dimpled chin lifts up to say a  
Word to his ear and her inebriated tongue writhes forth like  
A creature from its bright shells to taste last  
Night's beer, numbly, for the last time  
On his amber lips.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Monday

Wounded without cars, and there are no more  
Bright new houses:  
Everything is out of a book burned in a fire,  
And father is dead and still laughing  
Where, in the cemetery, her hand has fallen like  
Misspelled leaves strewn carelessly by the birds,  
Cannibals. Rocket ships leave past noon,  
I suppose, with their books of poetry and their  
Dusty gunfighters. She has no more cares for me,  
Not even an epitaph on a tomb bright new lovers leave  
Smears of lips on like snails and other things.  
On Monday, the asteroid passed so dangerously close to  
The earth you could smell it,  
And the car salesmen stopped dead, and my scars tingled,  
And supper is ready:  
The last orange grown in the earth and cut about in  
The sad kitchen atop the scales of a three-headed fish;  
But I am not called up to eat it,  
So I douse the light and dine alone:  
Associating her tears with mine- it is the only thing  
To eat in such a land where all the cars lay buried,  
And the gas fires sizzle, rimming the failing eyes of bums  
Like wayward saints lost in a dusty park- it never ends.

Robert Rorabeck

# On My Mind

Girls whose bosoms heave behind cash  
Registers  
Every day I perceive  
Underneath the honey canopy,  
Out from the days of our school,  
Venal truancies, I don't know:  
I just get drunk and tan out on the easements,  
My body in hand,  
And these are the songs for the days or holidays  
Of long ago,  
Paper airplanes all basking on the open  
Patio,  
Match box cars bogged down in the grass,  
And now she comes in and shakes her ass,  
And later on we'll have a long siesta limbs fully entwined  
Underneath the penumbra of ceiling fans;  
The evening will surcease and  
I will float away with Sharon on my mind,  
My sick muse making me very sure that I can plagiarize  
Whenever,  
And the test will still be good,  
And I will not have to die as long as I have her on my mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# On My Very Mind

I have just told you the reason  
Why the stars haven't fallen; and maybe you are still up,  
But what do you believe in:  
Not swimming pools, but the call of my voice,  
Echoing to you on the birthday of your mines, and everything  
Else  
While the saddles lay unstaddled save for the elk and for the  
Unicorns,  
While the seas circle around their curious harems,  
While the rainbows leap, and leap and finally to settle down,  
Like even the most industrious of airplanes finally have to  
Touch the ground:  
And now this: now this, touching dirt unto dirt,  
Lips unto lips, while the Ferris Wheels close up like envelopes,  
Like a roses' lips down deep into the centers of a hurricane,  
Or something even more cleverer than this:  
Like something that I haven't even felt, though, Alma,  
I have felt you, like the very same way that a forest fire has felt  
His very same way up the spine of those distant mountains;  
And so now lips are now ash;  
And you are lying down while this clock I know counts all of  
The highs and the lows until the cock of cock crows;  
But all the same,  
I have you, and I will always have you on my very mind.

Robert Rorabeck



# On My Way Home

Painting in the four colors of the universe  
Underneath the microbes of your lost  
Love,  
After someone like you has gone from a window  
Like mine  
Once the snow has melted  
And the Ferris Wheels have folded like wet  
Wasps,  
And this is the song you sing after school  
As spring is supposed  
To melt,  
And the trailers of history and social studies  
Look like a drunken park underneath the tall  
Sunlight:  
And somewhere around here there is a  
Baseball diamond,  
And an alligator yawns- but I do not see you  
Anymore, because I figure you were my  
Make-believe and I am on my way home.

Robert Rorabeck

# On That Great, Great Come And Get It Day

I've been waiting for the rain to come:  
It comes:  
The raccoons have been eating in the garage:  
The wedding cake is almost gone:  
I've been waiting for the rains to song;  
They song,  
And how long have you been home under the roof  
And not under the tree? Where are your children gone  
In this old neighborhood and far away:  
Where are they all going if not outside to play;  
And they play,  
And maybe the rain goes away: it hurts the voice of my  
Heart to hear its absence in the gray:  
Rainbows are gray knives who have been cutting their  
Fabric to the sea:  
Why don't you think of me: I am like a scavenger looking  
Up into a tree; and climbing up into the tree,  
Waiting for the rain to come: for you to come down the  
Narrow way,  
Basking in the echoes of what little you've had to say;  
And you'll come  
Tomorrow or today, and I will awaken inside the arms of  
A tree that shouldn't be growing here,  
Full of song birds and then it rains  
And you come: It happens, everything I've had to say  
Happens on that great, great come and get it day.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Amber Abutment

You come off like a firework manhandling  
A toothache:  
Your mother was a dragon I could never slay:  
You lay in green meadows openly praying and fiddling  
Your legs:  
Moving so fast as a hummingbird, you pass over all the  
Overpasses:  
Your father was the first green copper cannon to ever  
Enter America:  
Now he sells rime salt and popcorn:  
His eyes are the very same eyes that were once thought  
To be aqueducts on mars:  
Your neck is a crystal column no Hollywood movie could  
Accurately describe;  
And yet you have no daughter: Or maybe you have just  
One daughter born in the jungles  
Of Columbia, depending on who you are for me tonight:  
And I have \$207,000 dollars and one pair of shoes  
Without holes;  
And I think of you continually: maybe today I have given  
You a flower,  
A pink gladiola, though I would like to name every  
Article of your paradise: every bend of your auburn body should  
Be charted by me, ever swiftly perfumed dime,  
If you would only lay still for awhile or two for me, maybe  
In the house I'll buy, maybe tonight or tomorrow  
If you have a daughter who I have never seen, if your mother  
Named you Diana  
Then I have already struck out for you and am even now  
Just as upset as a wolf soaked to the bone on the amber abutment  
That looks far out across the sea of your perfect games.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Cattle Drive

On the cattle drive we called someone boss:  
The cook carried a bed frame with four knobs  
Made of brass;  
And it was only the sky that moved:  
Moved, moved like a flag at high mast-  
The flag of country of only one beautiful  
Color: It was the place where in her tiny city,  
Her eyes looking up from the table  
Met the horizon  
And defeated it.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Feet Of The Clouds

I am gone now—  
A million moons away, going to China—A million  
Requests away underneath the Christmas trees  
Of a blistering Christmas  
As we sell ourselves away—  
As we cry out—  
For those who are not here—  
Who are fanfare and comatose beneath the milky way—  
As a I loved you a thousands miles—  
As I closed my eyes and pretended to count coup on you  
And the lawns stretched out all of their  
Greenest mouths for you—  
Emerald and other words for green—  
As the graveyards lay just right there—a million  
Diamonds in a checkerboard of un-played  
Dimensions—  
And it was all right here for all of this time—  
In the unopened story books and the unmouthed rhymes—  
But I am going away, while the pictures repeat  
Masturbating themselves,  
And pissing on the feet of the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Green Carpet Of I Don'T Care

Scars, cars, and traffic signals,  
And steps down:  
Empty cities now, going into one thousand  
Acre graveyards,  
Going to where horses used to live and ate  
The forest like entire cartons of cottage cheese:  
And no one cared,  
And if your legs are tall and sexy enough,  
And how sweet I don't know,  
They can leap down the stairs how many  
At a time?  
And you can catch my paper airplanes right out  
Of the mocking air,  
And if you did this how so much I'd like to kiss  
You and lounge with you on the green carpet  
Of I don't care;  
And mother is upstairs right now talking on  
The phone; and if she is a witch, she doesn't  
Believe it is true,  
And I used to love her so, let me count the waves,  
Ejaculate off the cigarette road coarse not very  
Deep in the fronds of aloe:  
And there are dunes where GI Joes sleep,  
And canals to go leaping,  
Many different ways to skip school;  
And right now my father is driving a stallion far  
Across the country, entering and exiting on the  
Slick interstate in and out of all those cities:  
And America is beautiful but only painted in so many  
Colors,  
And the lips are always blowing on the grass, and  
Winnowing that kind of dress,  
And good poets are always dying by forty,  
Aren't they?

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Inside Of Town

Encoded into a rich harem where  
Nothing can last forever  
I listen to country music and wait for your  
Older sister to come out and sun  
Beside the pool;  
It smells like the chatter of propane and  
Obnoxious lilies,  
The black spattering of woodpeckers and  
Porcupines  
Mark your breasts while your eyes are closed  
And the airplanes are circling like pugnacious buzzards:  
The day of the dead is having his parade on the street,  
The grateful and the ungrateful dead  
Stealing your car and reneging on promises;  
But you are already in love with a better man, perhaps an  
Airplane pilot, the very one circling you,  
Caracoling you like a ribbon unlaced from your gown:  
The boys are watching you from underneath the pool,  
Like truants in the bleachers;  
But you never look up and you never look down,  
At these ghosts painting your body on the inside of town.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Lam

Arrows, arrows in her hair, calling for the summer  
Stare,  
Like robins, robins out in the perch, red birds waiting in a lurch,  
And miners, miners cresting the golden  
Crawl,  
Like sunbathers taking in their haul:  
And horses manes flower over water that is like glass,  
As the hobos step empty footed across the  
Overpass,  
Where weeds cry up to angels that they cannot sing,  
As bicycles drift away to Spring;  
And Alma casts her eyes once more out upon the world that becomes  
Her shore,  
Every morning she awakes, and her eyes whisper like brown  
Wedding cakes, out upon my softly padded bones:  
I wish for her, and I bemoan the subtle fates that waited too long  
For us to break together as two waves out on the make:  
And maybe we will get together on our days off and rob  
Banks,  
Or in the least see the art exhibits as the pen,  
Or the asphodels in the gardens as they come, and come again:  
The graveyard whispering the names of its two lovers on the lam.

Robert Rorabeck



# On The Merry Go Round

Suns on fire; it's what they do,  
Like your children on the Merry Go Round,  
Or in their yards after school:  
And you told me you had two rabbits; but now you lie in the  
Very same bed as your man who left you for  
Mexico  
And came back again- and in my silent thoughts I wonder if I  
Am the only man you have had otherwise in the imperfections of  
Your flesh:  
Soon your daughter will be two: her bones will be solidifying,  
And her vocabulary will grow:  
She will walk prouder and prouder across your yards,  
Until she cannot be contained;  
As I wonder how many times I may kiss your lips again and  
Again;  
Alma-it is all I ever wonder, and at night while I am alone,  
These thoughts become my Christmas floating in beautiful lights  
Across my homeless home.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Move

Skin secretes this new day out on the  
Open, banal field: Deep trumpets proclaim  
What a traffic jam,  
The interstate slithers with a corroded belly,  
Moving slow now up past the shade of  
The Bellefontaine Cemetery;  
Wash basins in the grass, like drowned  
Castanets, Sara Teasdale in her place, both  
Pale and quiet- antique jubilee how the parade  
Cannot be seen marching,  
The devout students so quietly trying at the  
University- images both real and mostly imaginary.  
I shall move here, following the railway tresses,  
Becoming again illusionary far removed from the  
Sacred breath of my parents;  
I will proclaim here, stutter, and skip here,  
And lie down where the Nez Perce leaders embank  
The sodden green haloed by the rustic green water tank;  
I will suck life through my teeth, imbibing cheap  
Liquors and anything garlanded and caustic enough to  
Deny the existence of tourists more beautiful or studious  
Than I.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The Steps Of Gold

Alma on the steps of gold—  
Fishermen with their hooks of empty hands—  
This seems to be the way to  
The heavens,  
Or so I am told—  
Alma on the steps of gold—  
Greenness in the sky and airplanes—  
Waterspouts dancing with their hurricanes—  
Apoplexy in the silent race of clouds  
Shaking their silvery rains over  
The everglades on an off day—  
Alma kneeling in the shade—  
Plants being sold from the seeds by which  
They're made—  
Sad men painting themselves runaways  
On stolen bicycles—  
Lovers being what they are told—  
Alma on the steps of gold—  
Brave young men taking death by the hand,  
Dividing everything by three,  
As if that was their plan—  
I cannot imagine everything ever being so again,  
Alma kneeling in the shade,  
Feeding ducks from her soft brown hand—  
Her children all cast around her again  
Practicing becoming again as if they were  
Made,  
Alma kneeling in the shade—  
While airplanes caracole in the grottos  
Of their somnambulant sleep—  
Blessing angels, counting sheep—  
Stewardesses listening to what they are told,  
Alma on the steps of gold.

Robert Rorabeck

# On The The Other Side Of The Earth

Accumulating in the wretchedness of their petrification,  
Stoned in Riga mortis: how will these corpses now enjoy the vacantly  
Pleasurable shelters of the structures they deserved  
To hold mortgages on: while all of the fireworks shout like  
Football players stoutly in the jubilee of mud pies in an  
Away game across the centuries of tattoos and bruised  
Cheek bones:  
As if at night there was a fair ground high across the cross saddles  
Of a truly believable high ground where the countries could have  
Fought each other forever: and the night could have glowed with  
The petulance of farm boys  
Who had discovered kerosene and masturbation; and taking the  
Tractors of the adults, driven into town to buy whiskey, laughing  
At the stuck out spokes of the bicycles of a world underneath them:  
And laughing just to swallow the rain believing it was her tears  
For them,  
While the animals were so infatuated they moved back into her  
Forest even while the ambers curses:  
For they were so in love, and they learned her language, and curled  
About the fairytales of her maypoles wrapped in the butterflies and  
Rainbows and the candy dropping of the yesterdays of her old  
Skin: even though she'd gone, finding everything they believed they could  
Sell to her useless- taking the forms of the forest and the streams,  
Until she could find a lover who would suite her fancy- and the  
Sun pulled her up by the throat and promised her the better adventures  
On the other side of the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Their Bicycles

Knights tucked into their tombs, underneath the apple orchards  
And far away from home-  
Like decorations in pretty arcades that will soon be  
Obsolete underneath the sun and the moon  
And the otherwise uncountable heavens:  
But the angels have freckles, and they eat the daylight of its  
Apples,  
And the pretend to pet the goldfish swim around and  
Around in the unbeknownst oracles of their living  
Rooms,  
Waiting for the children to come and come home again,  
Returning on their bicycles, underneath  
The clouds driving their highways across the effervescing moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Their Four Legs

We made love  
For an hour at a time:  
We made love for  
Two hours at a time:  
We made love for  
Three hours at a time  
Underneath  
The banderas of Mexico,  
While her husband waited at home for  
Her,  
And her children waited at home for her:  
And I rode my bicycle around  
Her neighborhood  
And made her promises I could not  
Keep:  
And it rained, and it was sunny:  
And she stopped coming around,  
Because she felt different because of  
How I made her feel:  
She was a new woman,  
But she could not tell anyone:  
She still lives near the dog tracks-  
And they are running, and running,  
And running around-  
Luckily on their four legs:  
And I'll tell you that she still thinks of  
Me, as long as you promise not to  
Tell anyone.

Robert Rorabeck

## On Their Soft Brown Skin

It seems real that my joy is drunken:  
My heart burns like peeling glass, the dogs run underneath  
The overpasses and after class:  
The cars motors purr, stamped by housewives, swaying in  
The caesuras of their dreams,  
Shopping, bearing the negligee that is hardly even there,  
Like the spit of rainbows on her brown skin,  
As her children come back home from school again;  
And I wonder how her soft brown kisses feel on their  
Soft brown skin.

Robert Rorabeck

# On Those Thorny Feet

Made something out of longevity in its  
Beautiful cradle:  
Now don't you realize that I am still here  
Beside the highway underneath the overpass  
In a rainstorm  
Waiting to buy Mexican candy:  
Listening to the waves speak though they  
Have nothing to say to me:  
Waiting for the grasshoppers to hop  
And make way for the beautiful flowers trying  
To poke their heads up from beneath  
The slippers on those thorny feet.

Robert Rorabeck



## On Tuesday

The soup of my legs runs over the spokes of my  
Bicycle; it feels as if I've been eating eggs with  
Alma for breakfast again,  
Even though I was alone for most of the day:  
And I ran so fast back and forth beside the sea, with the  
Rich houses staring over my right shoulder,  
And the rest of the world away or at least too high up in  
The clouds to reach;  
And their yards are beautiful if short and misspelled:  
And the ants crawl up like runny veins into the open of  
The middle class orchards that cultivate nothing  
But short tempered housewives;  
And it blooms like this some if not most of the time,  
While I keep the reality of my lies like a fleece over my  
Shivering body,  
As the airplanes achieve their destinations not unlike the  
Orgasms I gave Alma after her unsuccessful protests  
On Tuesday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Once A Wolverine

Filibustering in the muck of  
The hyphenated stars, lying down  
Associating with death in assassinated  
Playgrounds;  
Girls I love like porcelain dolls riding  
The hoary terrapin through the  
Thunderbrush,  
Yelling out absinities like Mickey Mouse;  
And everything about me feels naked,  
My nails torn about from the earth of  
My work,  
My sister slipping away beside me has  
Lost her hands,  
Her nails painted like bruised pears,  
But I cant help to think that my nails are  
Prettier,  
Rubber balls in the sky  
Moving west again across Florida-  
I can almost smell my dogs- good weather  
Dreaming of girls up in steamy glaciers  
Who never would have thought  
They are marsupials clutching the young-borns  
Like hairless kittens to their breasts  
When they have a zipper underneath the jacket's  
Tundra  
Where I might be allowed to dig in with lips  
And tongue, the little ballerinas of hangman farmers,  
If she were to discover again that I was  
Once a wolverine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Once Around

Words loom like a forest of unsettle men:  
The trees shiver like those men who have seen  
Action, and their brothers mutilated like tossed  
Grain into the waves,  
And acrobats falling from thy sky into the fire  
Beneath the tent; and for a moment it should be  
Beautiful and without conclusion; but that is  
Such a certainty, how her form shall be revealed  
As every one of her ancestors, the wardrobe  
Unfurled, her lips metamorphose into weeping  
Children underneath the heliotropic sky where  
The braided willows swim, and the vaudevillian  
Migrations repose with their gawking brothers:  
This I say to you, as we drink together at a table,  
And the wind howls and the wolves pretend to be  
Beautiful men. We should sit together and watch her  
Leave with them, and drink to her, and now how  
Her throat will open like curtains peeled from a stage;  
But where is the audience when there is not a footstep  
In the snow; and where has he taken her so that we  
Cannot hear? But she paid for us this liquor and filled  
It around the open glass, that another man's lips blew  
Taken like something naked and glowed from its kiln;  
And she left us this way, well situated even though  
All the lights are out, and the trees are moaning like  
Starving men, rattling the sky, but she is taken out and  
Passed amongst them all and will not come again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Once He Decided To Self Publish

Natural voices into quietude,  
The busses rushing home into crepuscule,  
The bullies waiting for me with dumb bats,  
And vampires floating like kindergarteners f\*cking  
In the air:  
Kids get drunk to look like they're in charge,  
Lions yawn and then fornicate inside the electric fence.  
I suppose that once Sharon thought to love me,  
While she was coming up for air,  
But when she finally tasted the rind of this green  
Amusement,  
Maybe she had another taste in her mouth,  
Like another man's child in her womb.  
Controlled by giant robots disturbed out of sleep  
And busting up the sky,  
We let the comets in through the sun-lights in the Florida  
Room to floating like presumptuous butterflies around  
The plastic fire-trucks:  
I told Erin I was celibate this entire time,  
While Tesla operated on his sweet experiments above tree  
Line;  
But I am not anymore, and her eyes won't look at me  
Through the keyholes of little bears,  
And Tesla has found away to conduct electricity through the  
Tuffs of snow.  
And Mickey Mouse is a dear old gentleman we all congratulated  
Once he decided to self publish.

Robert Rorabeck

# Once I Reach Your Threshold

I wake up with booze and strut like a  
Male peacock his feathers in the zoo,  
Not knowing that he captured and partaking in an act;  
And isn't this strange,  
Sharon-  
Sharon underneath the marigolds, your daughter cooing at  
Your hip  
While the serpents and ventriloquists are running wild;  
And you are out of money, or something;  
But you still have great taste buds- and a house and a husband  
As young as quarterback of dime;  
And the river has you hypnotized and kisses your neck every time  
It floods;  
Sharon, even down, you can never be defeated:  
You are a headdress without a crown, you are so many ways  
Through the darkness;  
And the cities finely gowned in their tourisms leap like excited  
Ants at their picnics,  
And the mountains bow like bards; they curl like the shoes of  
Minstrels to smell your bouquets;  
While all of these flowers I once hoped to give to you are  
Homeless,  
But I am walking without a sound up your footpaths, roaming without  
The sweetness of hope that once I reach your threshold  
Wont you still be home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Once More And Again

Little faces singing in the crepuscule of a  
Doused ballroom;  
Faces where gravity has its hooks; and they are singing  
Folksongs:  
Lips flicking like coins off the gravity you have never  
Heard:  
Twining up like the friction of springboard ballerinas:  
They leap a little ways like the geysers of tinfoil  
Fireworks,  
The meteors who don't know that they can be stars:  
They leap over trucks and caracole windmills;  
They turn this way like ashes from a grandmother's tomb  
That is burning;  
And you have your lover, always folded into his arms:  
I can almost see him, and I know he has been talking to you  
All day until it was muted again  
And mutually you closed your eyes and lay like angels in  
A matchbox in a tool shed in an aquarium;  
Or in a slender ballroom;  
But listen to these lips: They are not doused; they are still  
Flickering so you can almost read by them;  
They happen over power lines and empty churches;  
They open for no one: No girls love them, while you sleep in  
The comfortable afterglow with your man. Maybe they will  
Start one last fire to reawaken your senses and bring you back  
Once more and again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Once More For War

When the children finally go to sleep underneath the  
Architectures of their shelter,  
Aren't they just like balsam wood in prayer:  
Aren't they the sweetest sort of things, like all of my mother  
Is young and apple round on her wedding:  
Eyes like two candles looking up at him, the father to  
Be of her children-  
And the roof always has an apex, leading up that the rains  
Run down;  
And in the carport of my childhood the car is blue with electronic  
Windows:  
My mother almost drowns in a canal pregnant with my sister,  
And I don't even know:  
I go to school to get caught: I dream of beautiful girls,  
I dream of my mother in a grotto filigreed with  
Tadpoles and pearls,  
And she is there now sleeping in the darkness.  
The washing machine is quiet, the sills on the windows need mending;  
And she has a dream, my mother,  
Like a Virgin in the darkness of the aloe where she is sleeping.  
She comes out at night and prays beneath the synagogue  
Of the trailer from Michigan,  
Casting her in its blue flags across the street from the Australian Pines  
That whisper luridly of the other girls wavering in amidst  
Their shallow pornographies,  
And the conquistadors march on the footpaths of plastic sailors  
And the men who have dreams of her  
As they leave once more for war.

Robert Rorabeck

# Once White Sheets

I want you to come over here  
And plunder my trousers—  
Don't think about it or  
Your father's starched collar will get in the way.

Don't take your time about it,  
Become an underwater welder  
And plunge into the work with  
The passion of a 5th grader  
On the first day of his course.

Here you will find on me those planets  
Every man has, to which women are constant satellites,  
But these ones are particularly mine,  
And they are here for you to move around.

My family's lineage extends to you here passionate  
Greetings,  
In my misty currencies I wish to deposit,  
In your silken hand bag, if you will lean back  
And open your legs like a good girl,

Your otter's mouth when it swims  
About on your lake with hot springs and caribou,  
Kicking back and forth and forth and back,  
Like a sloppy fish,  
Slapping it's tale on my rosy branch.

I will fill you up, fox of my den.  
I will let you down, little blue bird into  
The serpent's mouth  
If you are a good handler  
If you say my name in your prayers and  
Kneel before God, and wash up  
Before you eat

We will do these time and time again,  
Our mutual baptisms underneath the sneaky alders,  
Through the green rivers the sun hues,



Like a yellow mason, his palms out and placing  
Red brick on hot red brick, building for us  
A school house in which we learn.

And I see, your silken joy says you will,  
Your lips and eyes pay up and there is dyed  
Blue smoke coming from your bones' kettle,

So every young nuance of your being  
Starts to stiffen and coil, before your springs  
Are unhinged, like broken golden clock gears,  
And you are screaming my name, as I  
Asked you to, and time has stopped

So now all the concreted cities shed away,  
Rotted petals washed down,  
School buses collapse like drowsy horse heads  
Into mouths of chirping green swamps,

Where the vase of heady night, shrill  
And delicate on the edge of the table,  
Begins to fill up with red hunted roses  
By our exchanges,

So soon we are panting from our rich diggings,  
Our hands filled with each others gold,  
So we laugh and kiss, satisfied and filthy,  
Until the deluge bends our flowers,  
And moistens the matted grasses,  
Leaving only the ringing of our ears,  
The echo of our caves,

As the trees drip and hum in  
The last of our moistures,  
The last of our evidence on these  
Once white sheets.

Robert Rorabeck

# One And Only

The memory of your auburn body,  
Even though known but casually,  
In the passing of those bleached halls,  
Will forever be my only muse:  
And that is why I am so lonely,  
Just me and my dogs reclining in lawn chairs,  
Drinking rum punch- Tongues lulling,  
The whole lot, bags of fireworks and p\*rn-  
The simple amusements which can hardly  
Distract from you; and us  
Just homeopathic whelps far diminished  
Along the settled rockslides of the uncountable  
Slopes I envision you sculptured-  
A lady of crackling natures,  
There are so many ways to paint you  
Long after the night has stretched and, masked,  
Everything can truly said to be beautiful,  
Like your cousins;  
And everyone I sat in class with, are now housewives  
And lawyers-  
All the beautiful blonds are grayed  
And fitted into the bricked foundations  
Of the situations they strove so hard for;  
and their names have changed so many times,  
Their faces too are now but the dull reflection of  
A quieting sea  
And the moonlight is leaving them  
To watch kittens being born-  
How many of them have you served  
Your drinks to, your body smiling;  
But what did it mean? Which one of them are you for?  
And still I saw you jogging casually alongside the  
University, your fingers unbanded, your legs so high  
Up like wonderful crutches that, leaping,  
Might carry all of my scars, if not my name:  
You were so free and bending almost claimable  
By the fox, and still I did not have you:  
And I haven't even seen one ripple of your areola,  
But in these nightly destinations they attend me,

Sweltering stewardesses of sweet penumbra,  
And I watch wasps digging in fleets through the cells of  
Your feminine flesh, depositing in you flowers,  
Bringing their young to you as I would have brought mine;  
And even if the seasons retreat, even as the chrysalis is  
Left empty and weeping on a sallow branch,  
I remain with you through it all, your echoes what  
Scientists pine for,  
The boreal architectures of your legs the tributaries  
Of an undivided sea;  
And even now that I should never see you again,  
I hope that you might come weeping to my grave  
And drape me in your sweet nest  
For you have always been my only muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# One At A Time

Filled to the brim of egrets,  
The clouds lose their surface looking down  
At the paper airplanes stuck having crossed  
The other side of the field:  
Across the canal, with the spent bottle rockets,  
And now in the glossy apiaries and motes  
Of time:  
Left there forever like teenagers who never have  
To grow up, or awaken, to taste her soft  
Treacheries,  
To watch her grown into a married woman:  
So the same exact comets cross them, even after they  
Are indistinguishable-  
And the new blue gills grow up from the silver  
Throated minnows, washing away their numbers  
While eating each other one at a time.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Canal Further Over

Hey baby doll- now you are in my visions  
As the clouds cloud over the snakes milking the cows  
Or the housewives just watching them  
With ravens in the nets of their eyes:  
The snakes get as fat as fists, like the grasshoppers  
Eating the corn, or the bodies in the river  
Like a beautiful ribbon tangled and clotted  
Like nettles in the fine tresses of her bosom,  
As the waterfall falls over her, and the butterflies  
Return to another forest- As the bicycles sleep  
Without conquistadors down in their  
Slow crypts beneath the otters- with the housewives  
And the truants each going their own ways,  
Until the doves are folded into the nests of rattlesnakes,  
And the sugar cones pile up her banks,  
As the sun falls thinking of her in a zoetrope of smoking  
Sugar cane, obscuring the fields one canal further over,  
And thus keeping mystified those other worlds.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Day's Work Thanksgiving

When the thunder spark rolls  
On its eighteen wheels  
You know the hawk  
Driving it is the last  
Holdout from the  
Great confederacy- there's  
The southern cross on his  
Grill and here he comes  
Cheeks full of chew  
With his front set of  
Teeth caved in somewhere in the back  
And they bring their  
Screeching big rigs around  
The tent the  
Power pistons whirring  
And wheeling and  
They come like some  
Mad procession of  
Ancient Titans who've  
Fled here south to  
Enslave us with their work-  
And we must open their  
Iron jaws to let them  
Vomit their North  
Carolina loads in piles  
In our tents, slaving like  
The ancient jews for  
These upper middle-class  
Pharaohs we create  
Strange conflagrations of  
Christmas trees as the  
Mexicans call me "muy fuerte"  
And band about my  
Determined arms to  
Stay alive in the flood of  
Green Noel tells his  
Novia Carmen for me to  
Call myself yo soy un caberon  
Just to be sure that I am

The bad-ass I've become  
Then, after knocking off  
Their strange head for security  
They follow me blindly  
Religious, I think  
These Mexicans love  
Me, and I am their working  
White lord and they are my  
Disciples when they come  
Together around me and we  
Go out ceremoniously  
Into the field where  
The metal behemoths are  
Belching and steaming, clanking  
To release the Christmas gorge  
Of these centipedal beasts  
The southern drivers  
Spitting their rebellious  
Young boy thoughts against  
Our Union work ethics  
Still we work it out  
Through the day on this  
Wednesday when I am  
Made a saint of the  
Work and see strange  
Visions from the inside the bed  
Of a semi truck  
Moving backwards to show  
Me the changing vision  
Of latening evening shrub  
Pines which is  
Beyond the words in codex  
Holy and wild on  
The kitty-corner wood  
Island between the  
Stop and go red light and green  
Yellow light metallic road sloth  
And glut when by seven our  
Day is thankfully over though  
The Mexicans don't want to leave  
Their new Carmen/ we've  
Fed upwards of 700 trees

Their throats cut and bleeding sap  
To sacrifice in  
Middle-class homes  
The sangre dieses our  
Father son and holy ghost tents  
Which blaze rebirthing when  
The sun goes down  
And the Titans rest  
In the evening empty field for  
4 to 5 hours before  
Lugging their half full guts  
In their silverick ceremony  
South to Miami  
Where the good old southern boys  
The redneck beatniks  
Complain that this is  
Too far south for their  
Metric rhymes- its  
The new mexico pilgrim meter  
Out by the brave central American  
conquistadors and tire-sailing  
Cubanos, but even the drivers  
Have to obey the glut and glory  
Of their beastly  
Berth this Wednesday  
The 24th when tomorrow  
The sacrifice will start all again  
Over for the metal continues  
Rolling and the forests strangely  
Moving into middle-class  
Strongholds on  
Thanksgiving.

Robert Rorabeck



# One Final Glass

Now I am drunk and given to my mute horrors  
Which will never sell;  
They aren't quite beautiful, anyways, the bouquets  
You thought should heal;  
And if I've been to your tiny city, it was just as a  
Little child: I've probably been to Manitou but it  
Was only to buy ice-cream,  
For the rest of my time is always used to break trail,  
To break ice, and to pretend to kiss my sister on  
The lips for the movies we go together to and don't  
Like;  
And you are sleeping now, dreaming of strange dusks  
And their mornings- so I am safe to come out and  
Howl,  
Marking my territory down your street which isn't  
Real, wearing my masks of defeat: and I love you,  
I love you how true; I am the punchy moth who comes  
Out through the braveries of cheap rum,  
Knocked out in the twenty-ninth round; I drove my  
Truck straight past Disney World and didn't look  
Back,  
Because all the billboards depicting your lactating mountains  
Already showed me how much it would cost to succeed toward  
The migrations of a sea of just one woman who wasn't  
Real tonight anyways, but the careless light  
Sheathed in a silky glove used to crush my wings thoughtfully  
As green-eyes reaches for one final glass.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Final Time

I can lay here for awhile and survive  
Like a goldfish describing, and having won into its bag  
The airplanes of Monet:  
And the world just turns and turns, losing more of its color,  
And getting closer to the blistering lights of  
Forgotten comets and their likeminded species: and while  
We go about our  
Day to day, like a carousel that has nothing left to lose,  
All we become in our successive delusion is more and more  
Disappointing,  
Even though the butterfly house fills up like a glass of  
Undecided color,  
And the tourists turn out and getting happy until the leopards  
Decide to jump their easy cages and have lunch;  
And you are always there, Alma,  
Swimming bare-chested with the otters, chirping and shedding  
Your skins:  
Becoming more and more beautiful, and less and less tamed;  
And I held your hand that was covered with gold,  
Even though I knew I couldn't ever settle you, or feel the wishes  
Of your heart:  
You at least slept beside me, and helped me step out one final  
Time from the so many coaches of the uneasy dead.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Hearted Sleep

I settle for more rum  
While the bad weather comes in dancing like  
Kleptomaniac angels:  
Sharon writes me a one word love letter,  
And I fall in love with my  
Loneliness,  
While my singular man sleeps beside her bad  
Man  
Who is dreaming of guns and chaos next to  
Her sweetest body,  
And I don't know what I am doing with myself,  
But the Virgin whispers to me in my  
One hearted sleep  
That everything will be okay, if only she would  
Go with me.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Hundred Fifty Watt Gutter

To aborted words gathered in  
Clotted gutters, in the annals of  
Sewers with the excrement of mother's  
Harnessed animals, the tamed squatting  
Of little shaggy legs nearby the curl  
Of the satisfied lip,  
Painted blueprints for greeting cards—  
The worthless places beheaded and  
Tossed away  
Pieces of our uncle's splattered butcheries,

To Leviathan's bleached carcass,  
Coroneted by horseflies, spiced by maggots  
In the contaminated surf where ocean-liners  
Age in red flaking briars and piss motor oil into the  
Festering snatch of the infected sea  
Toasted by fleshless architects with  
The venomous goblets of garroted pirates,  
Their eyes and lids eaten away by microscopic  
Sea creatures with her Christian name....

In the places that rot, the crumpled  
Legal papers, to treaties stomped upon,  
The annexed bedrooms, the expanding putrid  
Distance of ex-lovers, two nuclear warheads  
Shot away from the Heartland to  
Contaminated coasts, fallout the pallid glow in  
Driveways of homes of gated communities, on soft  
Green walkways, where murderous hands  
Hold each other, trembling the sickly mask  
Smothering love's grander design,

In the morbid voluptuousness of ballroom homes  
With min-vans on the borders of gentle green golf courses  
Lay like a manicured landfill over the unavenged memories,  
The rape of true love with her dress torn off  
And her name beaten out of her,  
Running naked and lost through purple thorned suburbias,  
Until captured by the well-suited poachers who

Skin her gentle in married bedrooms,

Whored between bachelored grandfathers in the  
Name of Christ and sadomasochism, whipped  
Until she forgets her maiden name and the country of her origins,  
So, like a whisper indistinguishable, she travels back  
Every night to the white-washed sewers,  
Hanging her owned skin near the door of  
The sarcophagus she crawls into the 150 watt gutter.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Last Kiss

I see the dead through the windows of our cars  
As we drive—  
Vehicles that disappear under the sun,  
Like the men of the Alamo—  
Now there are only resurrections at  
Disney World,  
And the little tales of cenotaphs hung up  
In misspelled classrooms—  
And the fingers of the blind are always  
Needing new brail,  
Like leafs need sunlight and rain:  
Even after I have driven past so many graveyards—  
The corner stations where the old men disappear,  
Metamorphosed from the young boys  
I thought I knew—  
Knowing that there is no longer a respite in the  
Angles of their cities—  
All that they have known has gone away  
And they are only good for one last kiss of a dying rose.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Last Look

There is a place in the green emblems unobservable  
By the major players of baseball—  
Where I have skipped school repeatedly and gone to  
Try and drink the lucky fish from their  
Lucky well—  
I have tried to imbibe entire fountains of gold  
Coins the conquistadors left underneath  
The full moons of trailer parks  
Trying to give their high school teachers a  
Hard time—  
As from the emptied recesses of the game,  
A new belief bloomed after all of the stores were  
Closed—after the streetlights budded like  
Facsimiles of the moons—  
And the world of night transcended—gave birth  
To zoetropes and drive-ins: made the watermelons  
Grow—and placed his scarred hands upon  
Her tiny breasts: showed hidden paths to  
The nests of monsters who fornicated over the  
Bones of defeated heroes—to which the conservationists  
Gave entire parks and estuaries to—  
And so they bedded beneath the gold moons of the  
Egrets—and kept their soft and hidden secrets—  
And the street lights turned on, like dying men trying  
To get one last look across the canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# One More Calligraphy

The elephants make  
Friends with mice-  
It is just one more  
Calligraphy-  
As in the center of  
Your hemisphere  
One snowflake  
Falls countless  
Times,  
As I imagine you  
Riding on a horse  
balances on one  
Hoof  
Atop a sparrow-

Robert Rorabeck



# One More Time

Frightened saw horses birthed from  
Acorns,  
And I don't know which way to go.  
Considering my face,  
There is only one option for me,  
But I still want to buy medicine and  
Photographs  
From the middle aged Japanese woman  
Behind the counter-  
I want to lay with her in dark rooms that  
Smell like cherry lozenges,  
That help to remind her of the cherry blossoms  
That bloom around the singular tit of  
Mount Fuji:  
I want to eat her apples and plant her pits,  
Like friends in cool green gardens  
Arranged by serpents;  
And the night is a wicked thing of its own  
accord,  
A car of silence,  
It is making me sleep alone again,  
While Pedro has a boner in the bunk bed,  
But at least I am free, scarred and crooked haloed  
And nodding as the snake passes over like ribbon  
In a stream umpteen times,  
Trying not to think of you,  
Just trying to get away with this without dying  
One more time.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Of You Of Every Kind

There is a homeless man living in these woods.  
He came by tonight looking for work,  
And in the shadows were bullhorns and girls in  
Bikinis:  
He smelled like turpentine and domestic beer,  
The leggy wheels of runways:  
I am drinking Casillero del Diablo two thousand and  
Seven;  
It is a change for me,  
And the housewives come and the housewives go:  
When the lights are on:  
They walk through the grass picking up easter eggs  
In their stilettos-  
Sometimes they want to look at one side of my face-  
Sometimes they want the other;  
And Italian boys come in beefed up because they want  
To beat up their older brothers:  
Oh well- The cops come too, after the lights are turned off  
In my zoo:  
Females cops are mighty pretty- I think female cops  
Should populate the entire pretty city:  
And Romero is here now too, smelling like after shave  
And jalapenos-  
He likes to interrupt this gringo- He sleeps all afternoon,  
While I think of you-  
The traffic comes and the traffic goes, while I think of  
You in pretty paint metamorphosis;  
And now Romero is talking to me and distracting me  
From this, but  
Can't you see that I am drinking wine, and the city would  
Be so pretty if it was populated only by you,  
One of you of every kind.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Or Two Brown-Eyed Girls

Wounded on a mountain waiting for  
Inebriation—a decade of drinking at the feet of  
The gods,  
The rain running down like lost boys to  
Their sommeliers- -  
And other curses tangled where there are  
Too many trees fallen down into  
Pieta—  
The brevities of delusions stretches out—  
Soon, the schools we'll have to attend—  
Trying to remember where there is purity:  
Children unabashed in the evaporations of  
Foreplay—  
And the glances of one or two brown-eyed  
Girls.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Or Two Muses

I've ejaculated into the summits of those mountains  
But never into their tears:  
Far too high for casual angels,  
For romances of chocolate and bouquets,  
Where the wetness comes down as the sharpness of  
Lightning caught at that starboard pinnacle,  
Refracted of the bleeding nosecones of some worry-  
Lipped Airplanes  
Far above the drooping heads of tourists who  
Never had a problem licking their sweet corpulence from  
All those mirrors,  
Perfecting bobcats:  
I haven't been able to look at myself straight since middle-  
School,  
And that is why I climb, and that is why I miss my dogs;  
And drink this time  
Waiting for the returns of my echoes from the lips  
Of one or two muses, that I am already sure have no possibility  
Of resounding.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Other Humid Crepuscule

Working girls out in their songs and airplanes;  
All of it almost like a children's lullaby, gone astray,  
A truant from Disney World taking a leak from  
The wonderful day;  
And in the dirty hospices of their rooms, I saw  
A marble glowing with the tricks of the first ventures  
Of science;  
And I saw her breasts, squeezing them like a toddler  
From his nest, wanting the fairgrounds of germination,  
Wanting anything to save his far astray nation;  
And I did, and the airplanes purred; and it wasn't long  
Before my prong had demurred into the pallid wisping  
Spin some hour after I had drunken all of my old  
Liberal arts teacher's gin; and gone and seen a movie,  
And thought and talked of little minor things;  
And the rains,  
And the rains; and this girl was only twenty, as pink  
As candy and she said no kissing, but I kissed her neck  
Once softly- Her temple as warm as a candle lit cathedral;  
And the park spoke to me in the cusp of her charge:  
It was like living a model life forever:  
Like this little wife in this little room with soft mirrors,  
And her body taken under my body, like the still breathing flower  
In my awful book- a colorful army surrounded by rainstorms,  
So she could afford her house; like little bits of nothing to  
Love in her diary- in the marginalized spaces of her notebook;  
And then we parted like two body-drawn carriages that must  
Pass through that night of many stars,  
And ceiling fans, and the open tongued lapping of mailboxes  
Trying to get one last salty gist under the billboards of this,  
One other humid crepuscule.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Single Love

Groggy night in your estuary—  
I can still hear the Mexicans trying to sell some  
Ice-cream  
In the afternoon after church on Sunday—  
And it is all a miss—the graveyards are dancing,  
Your knights have chased off  
After their witches of another Christmas—  
And the baseball fields lay out all  
Emptied as an archaeological dig after a rainstorm:  
My muse has hung herself like the  
Heavenly ornament in the living room  
Of another man she cannot possibly love  
Because she happens to love me—and this  
Is the end of this—nightmarish serpent devouring  
Herself throughout the swing-sets of eternity:  
As the day in its life goes:  
Candles blown like paper airplanes across the canal:  
And the boy whom we have known as Jack flits and  
Leaps, doing all of his tricks without so many  
As one single love possibly being in his heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Thing

Wounded in your everyday throes:  
Looking forward, looking back- and all the time  
Mad at love,  
While something purple grows- through the city's  
Cracks, that fit like gloves:  
The young boys through them lost as dimes thrown  
Into the lobotomies of department stores:  
While something more beautiful becomes lost into  
The higher aeries;  
And it feels as if for a while she is with child,  
So brown and so young,  
The night pullulating around her so fat an  
So pregnant as if something which was stung:  
While the vagabonds file all out,  
And the fish that were one at the fair- the golden  
And yawning fish,  
Are pregnant: at first beautiful, but they abort  
Their row:  
And on the swing sets the angels swing, over their  
Shoulders, tossing their golden things:  
While I rode in my car one day with my Alma,  
My muse:  
And told her: I, who was not a gunfighter, told her  
That she was just as beautiful as the see:  
But it did not change- it did not change one thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# One Thousand Pages Of Tuna Fish

I like beer,  
And cheap rum and  
Space ships;

And if you signal me,  
I'll turn around and collect you,  
And name you some type of flower:  
It's a beautiful name,  
I assure you,

And most of it hidden like Hemmingway:

And birds and planets revolving too  
Across your room,  
Across the higher basins:

I'll lay you across a star ship and christen you  
With a bottle of wine lifted from her store,  
Because I shouldn't have to pay for  
Anything to reveal you,

Because what would that make you?  
What would that make me- And I loved her,  
But she's married and has a child,

And its still raining outside,  
And you are quite peaceful and easy enough  
To carry down to the sea to make love,

Like eating a tuna fish sandwich,  
And sending a greeting card: a thousand pages of  
Nothing,  
When I could have you right now.

Robert Rorabeck



# One, Two

Downed by the investments of the dogs,  
Or by the reasons that you don't  
Give me:  
She doesn't have a peso- and I don't have a dollar  
Bill,  
But our hands and Christmas are in our pockets,  
And the sun goes swinging through the  
Sky:  
One, one; One, two: Children go back to school,  
And the Mexicans back to cleaning their  
Yards:  
Airplanes fly side by side: there they go  
With our without you:  
One, one; One, Two.

Robert Rorabeck

# One-Trick Pony (Censored)

Upon the mounding b-llsh\*t  
The one-trick pony  
Clicks his heels  
And whinnying, lifts his tail.  
Rancid green apples  
Drool down and plop,  
Summiting the head of a  
Ludicrously happy centipede  
Who is eating it up.  
The one-trick pony seems to grin  
But this is only because  
The last two clean shaven  
Jews have cut off his lips  
In a bauched circumcision:  
A Catch-22:  
If you'll F— me,  
I won't F— you,  
No matter what you do.  
Now everything is for sale.  
Entrepreneurs who smell like  
Incest with your favorite aunt  
Are getting pennies on the dollar.  
The new god is crucified  
For a used car which is  
Driven west and ditched  
In the Pacific.  
The world is a fire sale.  
The cities are pitching mounds  
For nuclear strike outs.  
Everything is returned to dust.  
Like territorial highbreds,  
Fathers ingest their  
Screaming newborns  
And mothers m-sturbate  
Their lactating t-ats  
Just to get a glass of milk.  
All around the world  
The sky is being torn away  
Like shingles on a roof in a tornado

By toothy mobs  
Of black hole angels.  
With their lips they \$uck up  
Lost souls as if through giant  
Pixie-sticks,  
And bodies walk around homeless.  
As The Man comes around,  
Virgins are trimming their wicks.  
The last two clean shaven Jews  
Share a kosher hot dog  
As they slant their eyes a  
Little upwards with  
Greedy wonder  
As the one-trick pony  
Clicks his heels and grins like death  
Strutting in his five minutes of fame  
Higher and higher upon the ever mounding  
Bull\$h-t.

Robert Rorabeck

## Only A Nameless General;

Oh, there are so many many casualties when  
We can only talk about  
Giants and football, and even now none of any of this  
Will survive:  
While I and her maybe survived for a month or two:  
It was always what I was good for, and then to falter again  
Like a really fabulous plane die,  
Like a superhero out of sorts, and like the triple crown horse  
Braking down again before super time:  
And I have cleaned up again and talked to myself before  
The broken yards:  
And children are playing football and going inside again  
Feeling happy about themselves  
Down the donkey strips of dirt roads; and even while I suppose  
This is beautiful,  
Like the failing end of Christmas, none of this eventually  
Will survive;  
It is pretty in its bloom and it does its time- Alma,  
While you make love in your room, and the world spits out  
Its jubilee and turns around again,  
And again, but even still it is only a nameless general in its  
Mass graveyards,  
And I am afraid, of course, that none of this will survive.

Robert Rorabeck

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And again, but even still it is only a nameless general in its  
Mass graveyards,  
And I am afraid, of course, that none of this will survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only An Uncomely Ribbon

Highway, your motion is adulterous and  
Mathematic,  
Though the sea can defeat you:  
Highway, you are male, and the sea is female,  
But she doesn't love you;  
It is not you she is always trying to get to,  
But the orchards and Shetland ponies,  
And even the more illusive things I couldn't  
See:  
We put bonfires in her because she doesn't  
Care:  
She doesn't even seem to notice or mind,  
And we hide our weapons in her,  
Our swords, and she just laughs  
And leaps against our coquina forts, and salts  
The pretty flowers of prickly cactus:  
Highway, the sea is from another country far  
Far away,  
But now it seems to be that she is moving  
And becoming so many sisters all jubilant and fleeting  
Before your front door, highway;  
You can go to work, but she just remains repeating  
In the bridal showers of vast and unvanquishable  
Staid;  
And the birds go forever diving into her, trouting  
And knocking on the terrapin; you know, highway,  
It is because we love her,  
And you are only an uncomely ribbon she doesn't  
Even have to worry to misplace.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only For We To Feel

It troubles me to think of you;  
It is all the liquor the fish needs to keep swimming,  
But his luck is not great enough to genuflect enough to the  
Lion- the king whose mane is streaming;  
And I have thought of you while traveling on my bicycle across  
The low hanging bridges,  
And I have tried to touch you through the ways of my genuine  
Dysfunction,  
Mostly by skipping school and laying my body low down near  
The water moccasin across the easy grades of the meandering  
Easements;  
And I have not changed- and this is real: That I love you and  
My love for you can never be filled, but it can be controlled  
By the waves of your body pressing to my shore,  
Drinking from the lips of my eager cannons, basking together  
Spilled onto a table like something that isn't real  
Posing for the artist,  
While those things that no longer matter continue traveling  
Through the illusions that enter and exit through the doors that  
Shall no longer have the privilege to feel the contours  
Of our bodies: for now we are only for we to feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only Just Because

I suppose there is a graveyard made  
To believe the negro—censures of my graveyard:  
To choke the children into believe they  
Are swans  
Before even the earliest enamel of the city streets  
Have to dissuade themselves at anything:  
Make it all make believe and beautiful,  
Even with another country coming up above the  
Horizon:  
Make her first emergence beautiful,  
If only just because you can:  
And the city is laid out on her slab of patriotic  
Graveyards:  
And made to taste the lactates of lycanthropes and of  
Werewolves:  
While the other cities just piled underneath her anyways—  
While the most picturesque cities  
Seemed to tame themselves, basking in the lameness  
Of their very own meanings and then—then—  
Only just because.

Robert Rorabeck



# Only Loneliness

Words bring the familiar places: poets of living rooms  
And neighborhoods,  
And memories of holidays of  
Halloweens and Christmases  
That I've been drinking to since high school—  
But I am not in love with pretty girls any more—  
I have a son and new reasons to share with him.  
Yet, the mermaid languishes,  
Catatonic illusions underneath the motor boats—  
Better words thought up by better men  
Are more deserved by her than by anyone—  
And yet where there once was so many misspellings in  
Her heart, now there is only loneliness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only Myself

I wish I could sing for you:  
I wish I could step right out over the warm cinderblocks  
And bare my ass,  
Cracking jokes with the trumpet of that baboon;  
Sparking the unicorns in the sky,  
And making your house fibrillated like the machines working  
Intensively on a patient,  
And making your eyes ignited into the oils of that day,  
The pastels who bleed away their pictures on the sidewalk in  
The rain;  
Even now aren't you making love to your husband, your best  
Friend,  
All gussied up: What animals are listening? I can only imagine.  
How my tongue is rusting, like a luckless door,  
Mute stopped in time  
Waiting for the bus of your charms:  
You lean outside the windows or the transoms, you know,  
While your kids are laughing:  
Look at those verbs:  
And you are rose but when I close my eyes you are a lion sauntering  
Towards me as I step out of my car with that Tuesday's  
Offerings of orchids;  
And you know and can spell your name;  
And you can take me at any time: I have only myself to blame.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only So Many Possible Conclusions

The passions are in you in the words we cannot feel;  
And it feels strange to be alive, and so lucky to be next to you,  
Alma: but not to be yours,  
As the city f\*cks, and the ducks chirp:  
I've seen you diademed with the gold that I bought you, and now  
You only wear this:  
And you feed me your mother's lunch, and now it feels almost  
Okay to believe:  
And I go by myself like the remote control boats controlled  
By a strange fate,  
So I have traveled so far nearer by goal, that it almost feels okay  
To believe:  
And I kiss your throat, and I kiss your ankle, and all of you is a  
River that moves and laughs in her certain way;  
But now you bed down with him, and your brown skin closes shop,  
While the clouds continue to make anything above your  
Roof where your father still calls your name,  
But there are only so many possible conclusions that can actually  
Be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only The Beauty Lost Above The Trees

I have been up mountains- Lost in the dark penumbra of my  
Post adolescents, unwilling to leave my mother or  
Her pretty mythologies, purple snouted,  
Ivory horned: I have felt her up these ways, switch backing in  
Evergreens, I have gone up with my dogs everyday  
To see the angels of high school pumping the chains,  
And the smoke in the field that leaves with high noon;  
And the ballrooms of used up glaciers; it feels as if her sorrows  
Have gone away,  
And everything I have left behind; and now there is only the beauty  
Lost above the trees that I continue, scrambling, to find.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only The Fire And Sunlight

You wear a blue cap but you are not my type—  
The rivers evaporate down your body,  
And yet you insist that you are going on a fieldtrip  
Somewhere,  
As the skiers stream down around you—  
They only know touch by their tourisms, and  
It is not a feeling in the deeper sense of the word:  
They have not slept submerged in the  
Clefts of your monuments, or been around you  
Other than the paths upon which they are  
Allowed—I have turned into a foundling upon your  
Meadows—resting like a jackrabbit in the euphoric  
Roots of aspens and cypress—  
Somehow joining both rejoins together in a nest,  
As the spiders around their necks catch  
The minutest rumors of you—like the tiniest airplanes  
Flying into a kaleidoscope of arms—  
And they whisper the smallest pilots to sleep  
Along the rougher parts of your valleys only the fire  
And sunlight have found reason to enjoy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only Themselves

Imaginations of all of those castles—  
Over-spilling while the wash is just becoming done,  
Over the beds that we cannot realize,  
Over the imaginations of the setting sun:  
While I have had so many muses,  
Just as I have had so many housewives—all of the while  
Burning, and yawning in their bouquets of  
Echoes, waiting for the last setting days to be done:  
Until all of their spirits are extinguished underneath  
Of the mountains—  
And while all of their daydreams become so luminescent  
As anywhere else—  
And the housewives come busily towards them,  
Like red-cross workers trying to save  
The mouths of foxes,  
Trying to find another clear path underneath of the power-lines  
And down to the Everglades without ever a glance  
For anyone else—  
As the knights or whoever they are starve in their own  
Palmettos—and the daydreams of wherever they are  
Learn to take care of only themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Only Trying To Survive

My mother takes me to the beach before  
The shore-

There from her little car we go first to the  
Swings,  
And I imagine then the arc of motion,  
The happy time and blondness,

And it is almost as if I have blue eyes,  
And have found the glass of a medieval and  
Aquamarine civilization

Simply at my feet,  
As if something the sea has spit up almost  
Like a pet,  
And then to swim away and play with the dolphins  
Whose form is good for selling  
Jewelry to tourists;

And they converted the old hotel into a Catholic  
School,  
And that is the oldest city,  
And some time ago-

My mother moans upstairs from sex,  
And this house is so young, but it is almost cancelled;

And the waves are still so burnished,  
Doing their best to look pretty even though they  
Are only trying to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

## Only Yesterday

I am now your song that never sings—halfway up the  
Mountain's switchbacks and gone to proposition to your  
Kings—  
The cold antelopes stir—they are tired of being bed ridden  
In the sauce—  
They go a long ways across the holidays—and they have  
A tendency to become inerrably lost:  
And I loved you—and your sweet, sweet uncle has just left  
My house—  
The mountain sings in my backyard like a castanet:  
It twirls, making an inconsistent dance of the heavens—  
As I am afraid all that is beautiful is becoming lost—  
My hand that has inerrably given is finally taken away:  
The monsters tear down the labyrinths—and I imagine  
As the heroes lie dying they  
Smile, remembering how beautiful you looked only yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck



## Onto A Pillow Of Innocent Grass

Now the numbness of lunch,  
And later on trailer parks, talk shows,  
Art and fireworks;  
And you can sleep underneath her broken  
Axels;  
And the rain comes and does its pattering of  
Onomatopoeitic, and the roof looks smooth  
Like stain glass in a church,  
And the entire bus is emptied like the ghost  
Of a vanquished terrapin;  
And it would have been so good to love you,  
And to have never started out like this,  
To have picked you one perfect rose which would  
Have been sufficient enough to starting your  
Motors of love;  
And we could have started out on a fairer avenue,  
All perfect, all glued- Having vanquished death  
In a painless funhouse, having our pictures taken  
With mostly our teeth,  
And then tripped with the Pegasus so many feet  
Above the earth as to make out in a playground of  
Canopied swings,  
Throwing all our loose change so that we would  
Never have to come down; or I would never have  
To look myself again in the mirrors of a  
High school bathroom,  
Or to have stuttered uncharacteristically for the  
Averagely beautiful substitute, or even to have thrown  
Myself away again at the feet of the cherished and  
Shallow drainage,  
Where the lips of adolescents drain, drooling, drooling  
All their dreams onto a pillow of innocent grass.

Robert Rorabeck

# Onto The Teak

In the way I understand love,  
I risk you onto the teak,  
The hard furniture not to be touched; from here the  
Insouciance of the pool is not a fraud.  
I can stare from here and see that you  
Must love him,  
Once or twice down the line of your men,  
You must love him and not me.  
Now they have bought something which will  
Last the week,  
And I have risked you onto the teak;  
Here I must not touch you, but I must:  
Bare-backed, I have kissed you on the cheek;  
Or, these are some things I must say before  
I skip on down the creek,  
A river of schoolboys coming home through the yards,  
Mistaken as early-morning soldiers, shot and misted  
Into the grass. They lay there silent as more soldiers march past.  
They have broken things all of teal, made for you  
But you're not real; though their jaws remain of unbroken steel;  
But the passing of a songbird's shadow,  
A lover who in time will show the peacock's color,  
And kiss and fawn straight on the brother:  
I have loved you, and thought of you barebacked on the teak,  
Cooked and scrubbed, and in you sneak,  
Just like the sham cut from the pool, you cut through the yard,  
And in your drool,  
Made of tallow, fishing line and sin; but I'm a fool,  
I let you in. You love me no longer, or you  
Never did, and I am a crippled, abandoned kid  
Listening to what you has asked me to do,  
And so I kneel and polish you.  
Onto the teak you're finely drawn, the shades are drawn,  
And the sunlight falls and fawns upon the early morning lawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Open Mouths Of Your Starlet Constellations

Your lips taste better than this bottle

Alma:

I know because I have tasted your lips today.

And how is that possible when you are more beautiful than

The most beautiful woman I have ever known:

What are you,

And you don't believe me, but you have a beauty mark,

And you were right here today,

Telling lies and moaning; and I love you, and all of my other

Muses pale and turn to jealous ghosts,

And now the bottle is empty, but my windows are filled with the

Zoos of your eyes,

And all of your kind animals, Alma. Move into my house and

Bring your family because I love you:

I worship you, Alma, and any other possession would be most

Contrary:

Your world is a breathing portrait which would elevate me

To the cockpit of a fabulous daydream; and I am right

Here, Alma, holding my breath and counting steadily for you:

I am sorry that all of your rabbits were unlucky;

And I am sorry that my dogs are still in Arizona, but I don't

Have to vagabond anymore: you are right here and fluctuating:

The movement without movement of your body is a

Carousel that really turns me on, and

I am glad that I don't have to go anywhere, because I have already

Slept on the roof of your house;

And I already know that you really love me, while the comets

Burn their graffiti across the open mouths of your starlit constellations.

Robert Rorabeck

## Or All Alone

This feels the joys of a poisoned arrow,  
Precise and to the heart:  
The apples split over the heads of Siamese twins  
By the same thing:  
Two serpents entwined from two branches,  
But looking down as they kiss,  
And then sunning and telling each others lies all day  
As the angels and stewardesses fly overhead  
All day  
In airplanes or all alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Or In The Waves

Up in the numbers of trees  
And the other high abutments of the nosebleeds of things:  
Here in the windows of the franchises of our gods is where  
Our forefathers saw the bald-headed eagles who seemed to  
Represent the origins of our things:  
And they sang out wickedly—and cruelly  
That we were the first of our continent to discover electricity—  
So, so long to fire—  
And the haunts of grizzly bears—and to cave paintings:  
Now,  
Electronic butterflies  
And the deaths of Indians kitty-corners to the super markets—  
To the bassinets of the elbows of narcoleptic airplanes—  
And my wife is asleep,  
While I am turning a corner—or,  
Where is she—  
While the electronic diamonds blaze: and this is her song,  
Turning in the arcs of a million blazes of homonyms—  
They sound together, anyways—  
Truth in their eyes, and in their mouths the juices—  
Pornographies of conquistadors  
And their extinguished exploits—anyways—  
While the billboards sing of newer and brighter gods—  
And my wife lies asleep in the shell-rock  
Or in the waves  
Anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Or Maybe I Should Not Let You

I'm doing battle with John Keats:  
I'm watching a movie about hi, after I've jogged  
And punched the hanco of a hurricane in the eye:  
And hurricane season is over.  
But there are still Christmas tree lights strung over  
The fjords;  
And Kelly's toenails haven't changed colors since  
Christmas;  
I've come for my poetry class, which is a line from  
The movie playing in the background,  
Which is just how good I do poetry when I've  
Had enough undulations of poetry:  
Kelly, I sit with you on the bench in Riviera Beach on  
Tuesdays, in the early afternoon.  
I gave you strawberries; and I am very brave, because I sit  
With my sad side of my face into your blue German,  
Face;  
And I want to zigheil junfrau for you; and I certainly will,  
While traveling by foot: Kelly, I remember reading with you in  
Fifth grade, while your mother was cheating on your father;  
And I already know that is what you are  
Trying to recreate, while your soul goes leaping so blonde across  
The haughty bridge;  
It seems to leap so far and spread across every mausoleum in  
Every cemetery ever thought of; but tomorrow will be  
So rapturous, for I will feed you strawberries again; and we  
Will both think about your husband,  
As we count the dolphins finally coming up so smartly to  
Breathe;  
And you will try to kiss me again- and maybe I will let you,  
Or maybe I should not let you....

Robert Rorabeck

## Or Some Worse Fare

Sleeping all day long in a house of tears,  
All day long the sunlight a golden tourniquet with which  
The housecat should play:  
Red roses on the shutters, tiny fish in spoon fulls of  
Graves in the back yard  
Where the puppies are going over to the rattlesnakes to  
See if they should behave:  
Empty bottles in the aloe holding neither geniis or wishes;  
And you step out barefooted and into the dying grass  
Wondering where your rabbits have gone:  
Off to good luck, or some worse fate: while the katydids  
Leave their old bodies and armors on the trunks of  
Palmettos and the armpits of cypress:  
Not knowing where they are headed, but neither looking back.

Robert Rorabeck

## Or Some Worse Fate

Sleeping all day long in a house of tears,  
All day long the sunlight a golden tourniquet with which  
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Off to good luck, or some worse fate: while the katydids  
Leave their old bodies and armors on the trunks of  
Palmettos and the armpits of cypress:  
Not knowing where they are headed, but neither looking back.

Robert Rorabeck



## Or The Mail Man

Builders for these castles get their hands wet  
And then sculpt the necks of parapets and heron:  
They burn around the shoulders  
Growing freckles like periwinkles as they step  
Over the jelly-fish—  
Their mother leaving them to be watched over by  
The sea so she could go  
Shopping with another man or the mail man—  
In its innuendo the sun will burn,  
The cloud with disappear—and the birds will turn.

Robert Rorabeck

## Or The Sun

Soon the moon will see us or the sun—  
Kissing in the carport of a vanished honeymoon—  
And the bluegills will have to sing to themselves anyways—  
The tomorrows will get up as an entire band of  
Awakening elbows who go polishing their silver—  
Because this is their world that we cannot remember—  
It is a joyful place with the sunlight of the daylight  
Floods us out of school—  
And I give to your bedrooms, awakening in the morning as  
The rooster crows—gallivanted into the pastures  
Of the arrowheads crossed before the  
Nosecones of the airplanes on their honeymoons—  
Perfumed by the strangely obnoxious steps of the  
Infatuated conquistadors—as they stepped out of their crypts□  
In the early mornings just after the wetted séances of  
Star crossed lovers—  
Realizing at that very moment that all of the rivers led  
Up to colleges and this was just another given to us to believe  
In—like an afternoon abandoned indoors,  
And like latchkeys raised by the cartoons of their children.

Robert Rorabeck

# Or Un Derneath The Moon

You tell me the  
English word for electricity  
And I will drink all  
Of your wine-  
And call you a butterfly  
Underneath the  
Sun- picking the  
Flowers from  
Graveyards-  
Carrying away your  
Feelings-  
To the candelanrums of  
Too many ancesters-  
Across the canal or  
Underneath the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Orca's Theatre

This opening seems clandestine for another go around,  
While the octogenarians are falling into their parasitical sleep,  
Feeding with lime the roots of aborted orchards nodding like  
Unused utensils against the steady roll and shutter of the interstate,

The sun sets as it always does along the palates of her spine:  
She sleeps this way, something in hibernation of coital dew,  
Her back warmed by the lapping of the Gulf Coast, her breasts leaking  
Against the Atlantic,

And I say this to her, as if another of my breaths were her candle:  
I hide money for you in an old piano, and rest my cheeks against flatbed trailers  
Stolen from Florida, watch the bannered world slant against the cusp of holidays,

As women and men fondled by tattoos recede into the ghosts of the dwindled  
tent,

And I give this again into her, in such a way that it should not be stolen,  
Nor is it recognized as an element leading towards the reproductions of her flesh,

But a mostly silent memory embarking to neither shore, but panting there  
In the middle of her Orcas' theatre, freckled by the clichés of her beauty,

An attentive child lapsed into the dunes and briars scribbled into the worthy  
shells,  
Discovered by her hands momentarily, an oddity from this salty throat,  
But indistinguishable, the perishing commodity we leap from, the unstemmed  
Swarth of zygotes, pores of her breathing flesh, pinpricks of the amphitheatre

Spinning this religion above our gaping mouths.

Robert Rorabeck

# Orchard Of Such Splendidly Misplaced Gifts

Over the chaos rumbles that we're are soon  
Approaching our time,  
And she has great breasts to which  
I look out for  
All through that stormy myth,  
And it is a great scar to know that she is  
Approaching,  
Dragging that cloudy ship,  
All the young men she has claimed by a song,  
And I have seen her amidst the aloe  
And the extinct, moist toads,  
Seen her like a slender bee somewhere  
In the gladiolas,  
Something gothic about her,  
Something misplaced—  
An all too ready myth, a hybrid of my song,  
Something not only flesh,  
And I would like to take her hand—  
Didn't I say I would like to take her hand  
And lead her through the fading pornographies  
The choicest junked cars all their doors  
And trunks opened housing crèches of dead  
Pine needles on mottled leather—  
Take her across the canal, the border for  
Such definitions,  
Smell her nostalgias like high school,  
Heady in the early morning maybe out  
Upon the baseball diamond hemmed  
By the chanting palm fronds again  
Into the humid myth—  
\Across the canal and into the cool trauancies  
Of such living rooms,  
All out and smoking and lost,  
And the end of this thing, fingered cross-stitched  
And into the next set of satisfied lips,  
And the better words left unspoken,  
But the only thing remembered turning around  
And around and around all up and  
Down an orchard of such splendidly misplaced

Gifts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Orchards You Abandoned

Busy visions of a childhood and her ghosts,  
Words that linger in a poor man's clutch, as she looks  
Away perpetually, browns stems quivering over  
Her children, but she is out of leaves and warmth-  
Sexy vision of catastrophe, how you loved my gifts  
Of flea markets for a year, but could not entirely give  
Up your sailors of Mexico, and the pretty cannibalisms  
You put into your bed across the train tracks at night;  
While he still doesn't satisfy you, you are the personification  
Of any soul, but it wouldn't be right to say your name again,  
Not on anyone's birthday- though I will not be waiting  
Anymore like a rabbit in his green hutch or rock garden  
In the little yard I remember bordered by rattlesnakes  
And aloes- Like the urban legends that exist in the  
Highways of gossiping sky: I showed your aunt the hickies  
You gave me as we made love for the year that is over;  
I gave your sisters and more of your cousins fireworks.  
And now I am left counting other butterflies who migrated  
Across the orchards you abandoned, while my mother  
Falls down in some mock Pieta, a wasp or some power  
Cord stinging her foot again with its preschool lavishing,  
As she dries the clothes of my childhood underneath a thunderstorm  
That is already passing.

Robert Rorabeck

## Other Bruises

Open theatre on the hillside of a graveyard of  
A campus:  
Purple bloom: there in the student ghetto of  
A tomb:  
Wasps and werewolves  
And watermelons: the sky looks up into a  
Birdcage of gigantic skeletons:  
As the world continues selling around us  
All year, or all afternoon:  
And I will have to get into my classroom tomorrow:  
I will have to unlock the door  
An answer in the morning to her and her  
And her:  
And it will become a sparrow lost in her nest  
Of doorknobs:  
And it will become another firework in mimicry  
Underneath the space shuttle,  
As all of the doors close in, and the beautiful animals  
Retreat, and you look into his eyes  
Forlornly for another hour- your soul  
Disfigured by the tattoos and other bruises of a world  
That will never close.

Robert Rorabeck



## Other Instruments That He Cannot Even Use

Dying, they wait for the breath of the living, which spreads  
Over them like paper ships in a river that is all too fragile:  
That means nothing to creatures who cannot have it,  
Creatures who are even more lost than the blindest night;  
And they call for her, while the kidnapers loom like death,  
And the carnivals stop turning  
And dying like unjustified hearths; and the dogs weep and paw  
Beside their unwed master's grave;  
For they too are ashamed that he should remain so hungry for  
Her meat and breath, and other instruments which he cannot  
Even use.

Robert Rorabeck

## Other Men's Bicycles

Sky of brooms and witches over empty  
Baseball diamonds: trailer parks near the sea where  
Turtles make hollow nests  
Leap over by jackrabbits: and you are here in  
The cradle of a book that is already folding, like  
A homeless man underneath the saddle of a on  
Overpass, burning a worn tire, as the Mexicans  
Who have stolen bicycles and women  
Mock him like serpents: this is their joy now,  
And their brown skin will see it tomorrow-  
And they will burn like fire underneath an unapologetic  
Sky, as they ride nearer the playgrounds of the sea,  
The helicopters passing them deliberately not  
Knowing that they are riding upon other men's  
Bicycles.

Robert Rorabeck

## Other Mighty Fine Transgressions

To my sister Christine Carroll who gave us coal in our stockings for Christmas. Who gave me hard-ons both times she road next to me— For getting hit by a car and fired from the pizza joint, for wearing a black dress to see me off on my last day.

□

To my sister Vanessa, because your name sounds like clothes coming off –For your name which might fit onto the faces of woman I haven't met, because your neck tastes like the color of wine and sex in rows of fertile ploughed earth.

□

To Mr. Glenn, the distant cousin to an astronaut and the first cousin to Satan—who made me behave like it was my first year in grammar school, skipping school to scream in the waves the last year of my thesis. For bowling three balls at once and pitting Jesus against Allah. For Men! For Madame \*\*\*.

□

To the young fool I was. To Chris' father's liquor cabinet. To the cops who chased me drunk across Wellington. And to my friend Shawn for playing Judas.

□

To the spirit of the dead Indian who is best laid in unmarked spaces between interstates and coiling byways. For the broken down buses and appliances which don't work.

□

To political gangs and powerful families, for your daytime tabloids and easy to handle taxes.

Just as to all America and her red, white, and blue fairytales. To the dresses she puts on at various hours, to become the new identities of madams for different colored men. To the inspiration of the production line, the filigreed cotton gin, daisy-strewn drive-thru's and minimum-wage deliveries. Just to all that cheap show tattooed on her fine a@s!

□

This evening, in the higher elevations of the west, in the grand mirrors of glacial lakes where naiads still dare to strip and play nature's naughty sport above the neon destruction of her pinstriped vest she buttons up to prostitute politicians the twelve months of the red night (the glamour of her elephantine lips) — my solitary prayer, muted through the hillsides lying down to graze, to harass the gallantries more violent than nebular deaths.

□

Auctioned for all the good children who drive fine vehicles in tin herds under the shear surfaces of multiple suns, for God's first son and various other mighty-fine

transgressions.

□

- But no more then.

Robert Rorabeck

## Other Things I Don'T Know

Pressing together the lips of lovers,  
Bodies practicing moving through time, skating rinks of  
Souls and other ellipses:  
The way enamored airplanes make movement around orchards,  
And the buzzards crow:  
They seem to be singing about love, or about other things  
I don't know.

Robert Rorabeck

## Other Weekend Promises

Maybe you are  
Famous again-  
Filled with new summer holidays  
And amusement rides of  
Easter resurrections:  
Maybe I will move my  
Hands through your hair,  
And lay across you like  
A giant across a  
Stewardess,  
As the cicadas molt themselves  
Across the savage blue swing-set  
Coming alive again in that summer  
Filled with blue toys  
And other weekend promises.

Robert Rorabeck

# Otherwise Forgotten Schoolyards

The band played in Loxahatchee Groves,  
And I watched you singing as candles  
Floated off into the sky,  
All those tragic little numbers above the sweet  
Terrapin,  
Little mothers going home too,  
Though I do not wonder why:  
I am sorry that I only have these words to  
Put you in, to send you off like a feather torn  
From the chief's cerulean headdress now floating in  
The sky,  
All the lesser feathers now of lesser chiefs  
Catching the coattails of airplanes: All the days lost  
Grieving, unbuttoning the top two layers of  
Your blouse or birthday cake with hungry mouths to feed,  
The constant pattering of little feet across the linoleum  
Floating as if in a fever dream above the  
Everglades;  
And I just always wanted what was right for you;  
And I just wished to say goodnight, because I can still  
Hear you singing in a childhood chorus:  
You are the only thing in it I could even remember to wish  
To hear; and it is a painful song, and it echoes  
Across otherwise forgotten schoolyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Otherwise Has Nothing Else To Lose

Cheap professionals: I have something new for you:  
I burn down the news of your pretty houses while the sky  
Rains fire:  
You know that is just what it is going to do when it is  
Enraptured, and I have new love, and we are both  
Swinging in our garden, and I am pitching my fine you seed  
Straight down the throat of your newsstands:  
And the day gets up all disgusted and continues vagabonding,  
And made more beautiful and young because of its disgusted  
Athleticism,  
Until it finds itself down the throat of deep cul-de-sacs like  
Fjords overgrown with tulips that the housewives spread to  
Hang their early morning clothes while the song birds pick up  
A tune and we can lay down our swords, and take a break  
From being some awful heroes awhile she shows us her stuff  
After her husband has gone to punch in the rough, and her children  
Are just the yellow shadows on a yellow school bus, and  
She otherwise has nothing else to lose.

Robert Rorabeck



# Otherwise Unperturbed

Inconsequential as a harp played by itself  
So utterly far away from  
Angels as we are from Kenya and its mystical  
Bal boa trees,  
But I have nothing left to do but to sweep the  
Floor  
Even well past the hour when those things poisoned  
Should be well turned back into  
The mundane innocence of the room;  
And I love beautiful girls with super slick curves,  
And no holds barred aqueducts  
Under the simplest of skirts like spaceships of  
Lampshades  
Those oversized zoetropes spot naked in the Phoenix  
Desert  
Like a well lit dressing room for special eyes to see  
The men and wolves leaping naked behind and  
Changing into each other  
While the hummingbird waits like a turbid gentleman  
Over the mole of her breast,  
And her eyes swing away, swing away  
Like children who will forever be too sad to become  
Exemplary,  
But who are otherwise unperturbed.

Robert Rorabeck

## Our Amens

I'm sorry—but she looks like she knows  
That I love her,  
And she is my wife—and I get up every day,  
Evacuation,  
Becoming the art of archeology—and the vanishing  
Indians end up misconstruing and vanishing again  
Into the heart of an emptied airplane:  
And this, at least, is the place I have dug:  
Waiting for all of the rest of the armies to finally come  
Out from the jungles and fall over us:  
Peace in her eyes, just like a corpse's peace—  
And a bouquet in her hands but for a dead man,  
As the fireworks play out in a dance hall that the angels  
Once danced in—but long since have moved  
Out—as the angels leap and leap about across  
The uneasy ululations of a Ferris Wheel from which we've  
Had a falling out and this is the all and the last of  
What can be said of whatever we had to say of our amens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Bedroom Of Sky

There is the mother  
Carousing in her grotto—  
There is the place filled  
With so many  
Misspellings  
And not enough Christmas  
Lights—  
There is the problem—  
There is someone else whom  
You love waiting in the driveway—  
And the same pictures are on  
The television—  
Nothing is changing—  
Zoetropes of mirages—  
The same classrooms we go into  
To partake in our daydreams—  
And those classes that make up  
Our bedroom of sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Communal Fieldtrips Ot High Schools

I can hear the topiaries of my jungles:  
They are outside the opened windows, and my skin is like  
The open throats of opals;  
And oh how this is all wrong;  
I should be vagabonding, or back to selling Christmas trees-  
If I was a better person, I would know something classical;  
But all these nights away from the red bricked and blushing university  
Has shrunken me:  
Now I am blown away like a dandelion, like a lily;  
Oh, look, Alma, but what has shrunken me- I am on a quiet voyage now,  
As emptied as a seal into the refrigerator of the great northern sea,  
And all of these things whom I had thought once were beautiful  
Have just gotten a big laugh on me;  
And my body finally turns browned and beautiful, and the captain  
Finally wakes up,  
And all of my old wives turn back into a doctor's office of trees:  
And the bodies push together to see all at once what is ailing them,  
And the sea brushes them in pantomime,  
In the fake science of cowardly heroes; and then we all wake up together  
And take our communal fieldtrips to high schools and then to far away.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# Our Days At School

Poem a version

Of what was mentioned to happen

In art class if I were divided:

And had the chance to hold hands with the girl

I love

To kiss her while a butterfly's wings divided

Over Mexico

And strut out and got horny into middle of

An august festival and a looked around

At all the open things they saw

Like windows on vines to which the foxes

Smiled

And danced, preening: and later on there

Was certainly roller coasters and water falls

To which I took all of my students to

And we made a day of it, holding hands

And flipping head over heels

Drinking libations to our dead relatives, and

Try to forget about all of our days at school so far

Robert Rorabeck

## Our Delusion's Heartbeat

Busied from the crenulations of another heartbeat—  
We pilgrims start out by making love from our  
Side of the blue abyss—  
The traffics streaming by into death: they cannot tell who  
Is in charge—But now it is assured—now that our art  
Has found itself—  
And combined itself into the union that all of the angels  
Know underneath the sun's armpit:  
For a while there was beauty inside the carnival of  
Semipermeable truth—and it stretched out,  
Affecting us like a beautiful woman walking the street  
Without any shoes—  
And then for a while there wasn't another soul  
On the street—  
And we found ourselves lying like cats—tawny,  
Mewing for princes in our strokes of  
Heat—in their castles of asphalt and graffiti—  
Never mindful of our delusion's heartbeat.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Eager Young Possibilities

Kelly wrote a poem to her mother I did not  
Read;  
But at night I guess I ejaculate the same way,  
But to the girl and her friends,  
The little fat roses I am too afraid to give away  
In the immense daylight of our  
Cages;  
The way grizzly bears may stop and sniff before  
A cerulean tent way deep in the permafrost  
Of its alluvial planes, before  
It gets down to its businesses of dismembering;  
And I don't love Kelly,  
Not in the way I used to, the way a young child  
Expects and loves his crackerjack prizes,  
Even though they are not enough;  
But I suppose I could- She is a beautiful woman  
Who can spot dolphins and manatees just as  
They go about licking the world,  
Metamorphosing practically out on the surface world,  
Like adolescents unsure of their graduation;  
Her husband masculinely hung and can work on tractors;  
But when she starts out with her eyes when  
We are alone into the midday crepuscule of our busted  
Lip playground,  
I like the fact that I don't know anyone else around,  
And what we are doing lasts just as briefly above the earth,  
Almost gloriously, a welding torch,  
A fix for those angels, before we separate and merge into  
Traffic,  
Forgetting the effects of that harvest's kind gravity,  
Whose impermanence reminded us of our eager young  
Possibilities.

Robert Rorabeck



## Our Fantasy's Castles

It isn't a joke, the tearing apart of a  
Womb—  
The way the blind men commit suicide  
Underneath the sunlight of  
Their own home,  
While the scientists try to prove  
That there is life on other planets—  
And the housewives try to breathe in  
Their own living rooms—  
By rifts we keep our hearts high up  
In the locked dungeons of  
Our fantasy's castles—  
But it is all an obligation spied on  
By eagles—  
Like birthday presents gathered for  
The vortexes—and it isn't enough  
To make a living—  
As the foxes make eyes with the doves  
Who keep on promising them that  
They will come down in time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Father Zeus

Alma, I love you, but you know that,  
And that isn't that I want to be to our game:  
You shave your armpits and I kiss them:  
I leave dewy mollusks there underneath the swing-sets where  
Your children will play;  
And you shave where they were born too, and now all of this  
Is just something else,  
Something that was made to be forgotten, while my ancient uncles  
Water ski, in their little sports, and my other uncles  
Make money:  
You work for them and I work for them too, and it all seems to be  
Happening for us under the moon who isn't shy,  
For she seems to be pulling us upwards from under our arms  
As if we were demigods and she wanted to kiss us:  
Now who is your father, and who was my mother too:  
But they were together in the natural pools in the bosque,  
Even before my mother could sail airplanes and then look up to the  
Higher slopes where in the savage and but also most nearest weathers  
Our father Zeus was calling down the lightning bolts and  
Making the skrees and stones whisper to us of all of our most  
Christian names.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Hallucinations

Fairs have gone and  
Ferris wheels—and soon it will be time for  
My wedding banquet:  
When I went to Shanghai for the first time  
Around Christmas of last year and saw her for the  
First time holding a bouquet for me next to  
The airport next to her Uncle John:  
I thought she was more than all right—  
With all of her eyes lighted up with a pinwheel the  
Same colors as I've never seen before:  
And my heart is as happy as a jackrabbit just  
Come out of a gentleman's hat for some type of  
Magic trick underneath the mountain I just used to  
Disappear of:  
And I just want to have a daughter with her,  
I just want to have a sun—and forget about the heart attacks  
Of valentine's day—or the way the stewardesses run and  
Leap over ethereal candles illuminating the dungeons on  
Their birthdays—the way that cantankerous death finally  
Grabs them and shuts them out,  
Like my last muse at the bowling alley or at the fruit market  
Until the day is gone—spent into the soft necks and  
Kisses of house wives—  
And the stolen bicycles rest pensive and illusive:  
Where are they—only those accustomed to skipping school  
Will ever know, but it is an eerie thought,  
And all of the gardens surrounding her become over abundant  
With deadly tricks—  
And the sky blooms with dying heavens: Up there,  
A grandmother who lived for unfathomable eons—giving her  
Live to civilizations we can never think to explore or to  
Even imagine:  
As she waited for me on the tarmac and wept for me  
Even after she had become my wife—and we were both staring  
At each other through the corridor, something unutterably true  
Down at the end of the mystifying kaleidoscope of all of  
Our hallucinations.



# Our Heavenly Souls

Softening nomenclatures  
Into name brand desires—  
What we call the divine process of  
The assembly line  
Is what has sharpened our existence  
Into a single point—  
Inescapable: This is what science defines  
As a black hole:  
Approaching Disney World,  
You have entered the Event Horizon  
Of all that we imagine to be in  
Existence—  
The crushing gravity of our Capitalism's  
Street of fast food  
And affordable goods:  
North or Southbound occurs as  
Events in a mirror—  
Insatiable is how they describe this effect  
In our chapter books:  
Hard working Americans affected by  
A dream of mass production—  
Every centerfold holding a torch above  
The chronic waves,  
Welcoming the pilgrims who cannot  
Escape her concrete and iron allure—  
Until softly into the night  
Where, further defined, our dreams desire  
To return to this "reality";  
Where we are processed as men of  
Business and enterprise:  
Any other possibility having become  
Indescribable in our language,  
Like fingerless brail—  
This schoolyard of factories  
Where we dutifully produce  
Utilitarian currency from what once must  
Have been our heavenly souls.



# Our Kindred Obsession

Bodies like matchsticks counting,  
The nights that they know are going to be very cold;  
And they can only burn for awhile,  
Stuck in the gravity of the atolls, trains like silver  
Passageways crossing them,  
Wind tunnels in Spain: The hard knocks resound through  
The parks in the rain,  
The swings drip tears from the chains of birds:  
The light houses have all been punched in the eye by some  
Hooligan truants who have been turning out,  
Pretending to be sailors, to be your love  
Where I drove by a cemetery today delivering impatiens,  
And I said your name; but you had already returned to him  
Like a dove,  
Like a story book folded asleep upon itself, the way I remember  
Looking at you in elementary school  
When I pretended to be descended from the Mayflower:  
And what were you doing all of this time but making excuses  
And getting new tattoos;  
But we are both descended from Germany, so we are both  
Very insane-  
I've had so much liquor I cant remember my name; but you  
Are so very beautiful like a match burning in the woods,  
Keeping a kindle all the light as if could so I could dream  
Of my dogs;  
And I am not very beautiful, but now my woods glow with your  
Ablutions:  
Your ears that were pierced so many times for you sailors  
All dusky on rum in the leave, kissing your lobes;  
I wonder if you even hoped to notice that I was perceiving them  
Also in the barrooms underneath the kerosene lamps  
Of our kindred obsession.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Legs Bent Our Noses Bloodied

Fairly obscured as if esoteric science in the rain,  
What these pornographic explorers have been doing,  
Trying to burry pain like plastic army men,  
Lovers of ghosts and their sandy grail waiting for the  
Horizon to lengthen and pale;  
And their horses have sideburns and saddlebags,  
Their dunes ridden with the mothers of all centipedes,  
Freckled with flint arrows;  
And Erin is brightly in love: She is so good in love  
With her centaurs and strong men:  
They pile up and shave and grunt and flex and strut:  
They do every macho verb you never been able to bend:  
And the stars concentrate for her around the Milky Way,  
But she just looks up and smokes them out like  
Presocratics from their platonic caves:  
They come out like worthless bees, so what is them but the  
Useless pollinations of tourists all stacked up with their  
Red ribboned boxes of forget-me-nots;  
But Erin already doesn't care. In one step she is over us all  
And shopping in some fare flea-market forever closer to the  
Sea,  
Leave our legs bent and our noses bloodied.

Robert Rorabeck



# Our Less Than Perfect Attempt To Remain Beyond Nothing

Moving away from the Green Beret  
Slanting downward, in the  
Smoky mead halls of travelers  
Lost underground beneath  
The suburban forest,  
The working girls' legs go on  
Forever,  
Pointless, their apex a universe  
And stars expanding outward their  
Bodies a capturing gravity creating  
Planets,  
Recreating and populating themselves,  
Homeless in bed at home,  
Out of body experiences,  
In their silver and pink children  
That drive around and around with them,  
In the metallic haze they are  
Galvanized in, the tin soldiers  
Stored in household tins,  
The evolutionary manifestation of  
Cars and super computers and rockets  
Rolling along the highway of their thighs,  
Forgetting to make love  
They still look good while shopping,  
They scream and scream  
Go away to come back again  
Their inescapable space separating  
Our home from the neighbors,  
Our less than perfect attempt to  
Remain beyond nothing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Long Lost Places

A red dragon of fireworks smiling lusciously tongued:  
Giving clues to the out of work helpers-  
The men who pass the green smoke underneath the overpasses  
As it rains  
Diamonds with your name on them- the way both of your children  
Tugged the way they did in the summers  
Before I knew you and smuggled you to my bedroom:  
Just because maybe now they are calling out through their fanfare  
That maybe I am a playboy;  
But maybe I am just coming around, circumnavigating-  
Appreciating the features of the fairytales of your  
Landscaping,  
Alma- And I a just getting started: soon I will be drunk,  
And it will be your man's birthday- but what can we give to him  
But the emptiness that he left in you,  
So that it has allowed me to build you up in your flesh;  
And turn you by the jaw to the sea, which is your mirror,  
Even as you come home from Ocala from visiting  
His relatives for Christmas- even though I spent it mostly alone,  
Or with a jumble of strangers at the movies:  
While my old girlfriend's new child was infinitely tugging-  
Until I drank something with fire,  
And made your soul spill out of its car and linger in my eyesight  
Light a precious jewel bleeding off its illusions beneath the motes  
Of starlight which spotlight our long lost places of work  
When neither of us happen to be there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Merry Way Home

She has olive skin and this is what she does,  
While my mother is coughing in the next room:  
She defeats me,  
She curls up in the smoking forest against the  
Cabins where she doesn't  
Belong:  
She strokes my dogs and defeats me and she rides  
On my chest straddling backwards:  
And I really appreciates what she does for me:  
This night like Christmas of oh my god:  
I drove to her without knowing, like a newborn never  
Suspecting which of the airplanes of her mobile  
Would come leaping for her eyes;  
And I drove right up to her turnstile and expeditiously  
Leapt inside:  
Her name was Melody and she let me kiss her mouth:  
Her name was Melody and for the vivisection of an hour,  
Her body was my house:  
And I loved all over her like rain loves the gills of fish,  
And like rain loves the sides of carports,  
And the rich and the poor all alike: I kissed her so many  
Times, so many goodbyes for a little world of lies:  
And then she opened the door so that I could fly,  
And I did fly,  
But so many things had woken up outside that they'd  
Formed a chorus and we all sang to Melody as we drove on  
Our merry way home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Mutually Fresh Water Wells

Airplanes, you are turgid but horny:  
You fly low stretching your wings and pretending to yawn  
Just to see who has arrived:  
And the baseball diamond gets all cuckoo, as upon her bases  
The fireworks whistle:  
The bicycles rest in the grass, snoozing, while the Ferris  
Wheels turn doing away with our troubles;  
And maybe we would have made love if we didn't both live  
In mobile homes;  
It is true that I do not know the way your body feels when  
It moves;  
But it is as perfect as the perfect wheels, and your eyes  
Are as deep and real as wishes waiting  
For words from my throat to answer them from our mutually  
Fresh water wells.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Own Atrocities On The Other Side Of The World

Relaxing and arguing non commital with my wife,  
Does this mean I am approaching my middle years while  
In China—  
The air here is terrible,  
But when going out on the street, say to the post office  
Where my wife can pay the month's utility bill  
While her parents are in the hospital,  
It is like going to the moon:  
It cannot be properly discribed—  
The trash in the gutters,  
The wild flea-bitten dogs:  
The little shops, row by row—  
Selling every parts of ducks and pigs and rats and eels:  
It is fabulously unbelievable,  
And what is most remarkable is that I and my half blood  
Son remain the center of attention—  
While everyone is looking at me, my extraordinarily  
American-cut with super hero, ballooning, I try to  
Take it all in: but it is impossible  
And too much to describe to my imaginary friends:  
On the suburbs of Shanghai, coughing, polluted,  
I am ringed in a kind of fancy  
And tonight, because I cannot sleep and having drunken  
So much Chinese wine, stronger than American liquor,  
I am telling you, because I am feeling warm  
And thus must say something about the unbelievable  
Monsters and their dirty fictions as they try to mirror our  
Own atrocities on the other side of the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Own Gods And Patron Saints

What have I done,  
But haven't looked her in the eye;  
If she is a beautiful woman, she doesn't  
Care,  
But makes love to others of her kind in  
The gibbous pool;  
And they are under the cloth of deciduous  
Coitus-  
If I have good friends anymore,  
I don't know- There are still girls in  
High school, skipping- skipping,  
Crossing chalk with flesh,  
A sorority of lippy ankle bracelets- where they go  
I am asleep under indigo blocks,  
The unused motors of adulterous housewives-  
In the green space, we all have our own gods  
And patron saints-  
Maybe she is in Oregon (or Washington) , homeopathic in time;  
What fruit is she plucking,  
What ghosts I don't know, but dogs and budded gardens  
Lips of obese flowers jeweled with bumble bees;  
She's lost a lover like a good leg,  
But she is still exploring. What does she do,  
But dress this pretty thought in the pathos of army jackets,  
Somehow underdone in the crenulations of old  
Photographs; and I would like to shake her hand just  
To get up close for awhile to deny what coffins I haven't  
Seen by her famous senses,  
But if I confided this to her I would be afraid it  
Would just be another thing she wouldn't understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Questioning Tomorrows

The last poem of the night should be hardly beautiful,  
Or hardly enough;  
While my mother has gone out into the mowed easements to  
Talk on the phone,  
While I rightly love a woman who is hardly old enough to throw  
Me a bone;  
And all of the strawberries and all of the watermelons are properly  
Saturated,  
And all the queens are in the sky; and if I was more beautiful I would  
Know the proper words to give them their goodbyes,  
While they set across the earth like pop rockets singing songs,  
While our family left us along ago,  
And so now all we have are these caves glowing with the reruns of  
The photosynthesis of our bodies, if we were brave or if we  
Were heroes,  
We would come out singing open throated from our caves, giving up into  
The world our new bodies;  
But now all there is, is a wife that I should have if I was even more brave,  
And if I had the guts to put candle-lights in my beard,  
And sing to her of all of my sorrows; then how she would sing to me,  
Passing out greeting cards with pictures of our family.  
Giving sweet promises half-heartedly of all of our questioning tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Shoeless Skies

My body still curls up at the toes after some fashion:  
Alma still makes love at night and  
Sleeps with her husband,  
And by this she makes me more unreal while I am still hooking  
My jaw on the juices:  
I wish that her eyes could see around the unseemly echoes of  
My vanished defenses,  
And that I was right here in a gilded cloud with a broken wing,  
And the rains did answer for my truancies,  
And they pretended that I was at some high school and a king:  
And that Alma played along through all of the nights together  
With her alone at a sweet and lonely petting zoo,  
In the back yard of some sweet young mother's sweating  
Pool,  
While the night and day turned around in a bed of lovers.  
And we learned by them, and cast our lots into the  
Sea of their sweat and tears,  
And we bled out together, but our romantic passing lasted for the  
Length of the years of grandfather as and grandmothers who  
Are still in love after all of these years:  
Oh, if you would let me kiss you again, Alma, like laying a prayer  
Between the hyperventilating wings of a butterfly,  
Then we would have our own church and our own grotto  
To baptize,  
And there wouldn't be any profession that was above us,  
Even the airplanes would fly between the caressing bedrooms  
Of our shoeless skies.

Robert Rorabeck



# Our Slick And Breathy Dreaming

What are these days doing, but jogging out  
Again under windows, potbellied  
Eating donuts, but climbing such ivy tresses  
That you can see by the lights of dim sum sororities,  
The hollow chested dogs stuck between the teeth  
Of the cemetery;  
And I am growing older; and I am growing all  
Right, like a calendar while no one else looks at me,  
While my great professors swell on the lakes of  
Another woman's dapper blushing;  
While Diana turns around in a cul-de-sac where  
I'd like to marry her like a ballerina blushing,  
Pirouetting;  
And we all have time to spend our time, hatched from  
The zygotes of two bodies noshing;  
And the world is a city; and the world is a void,  
Smoking tires, riding far along the unperturbed blocks,  
The gnarly, vast corrugates of alligators unreciprocating,  
Looking so beautiful underneath the unctions and  
Surfs of the moonlit satellites that we don't even feel  
The need to retrieve ourselves, but go down nearer the  
Boggy earth suckling the pinecone coffins;  
Putting ourselves belly to belly with the better and better  
Ancestors, making ourselves last even some weeks  
Even though we no longer have the parasols together of  
Our slick and breathy dreamings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Souls Uncorking Flumes

It now feels alright to wet my throat on the letters  
Of a jaundice mind:  
Now that the cars will move, the planes will fly;  
And there is nothing more so professional that I can  
Prove,  
For I am just lying blind, like the bicycles in the aloe,  
Like the housewives in the moon,  
Moaning down in the sad epiphany all curled in  
The old alma matters of the blouses of their  
High schools,  
As the chickens scratch chalk lines in the beach of  
Dunes,  
And latchkeys straggle home some hours after noon,  
And turn off their souls and watch cartoons:  
As Alma lies down in the blue bedroom, and forgets  
About my inebriated cadences through all these  
After hours, and yet her sunburned auburn flesh twitches,  
And her lips hook a smile underneath her beauty mark  
For a second of a while,  
For she happily knows that tomorrow will bring her in  
The morning breakfast, and by closing flowers;  
And for as long as while I come beside her and both of  
Us bushing our working brooms: tomorrows will always  
Bring tomorrows, and our souls uncorking flumes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Time At The Zoo

Our time at the zoo—if you cannot remember—heavenly light before  
The second time we made love—  
The ostrich took a special interest in you—  
We watched the kaki attendants pretending to know falconry—  
We sat together like man and wife,  
And you did not know the size of your soul upon me—  
But then, unusual joy, as we kissed in the make-believe grotto of  
The albino alligator—  
Your heavens went around me, apiary around a tenebrous form:  
Even now I do not know who I am—  
When you said it was enough—and went back to your husband,  
I made love to prostitutes—  
But you always came back to me, and I liked the feel of your soul in  
My hand—  
Even after I am married, my soul can never expect to believe in  
A life without you—  
And my naked form, routinely presents itself to your abandoned  
Elements—and there he is- in the middle of a hurricane  
That doesn't care that he must make himself to your shore—  
And you have gone away like overpriced  
Fireworks that didn't matter—  
Taken your family up to horses to enjoy the silence of a  
Mexican world—and I am here, waiting for a wife—  
The high school slumbers like a tortoise—  
The waves highlight the theatres of your abandonment—  
They don't know what to do without you—  
But remain out in the careless elements, receiving what little there is  
To believe in—  
And you—like an amusement park that has abandoned its heaven—  
And there you are, caressing your children in a Pieta without any joy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Our Venal Senses

Minor poet sing your  
Canary going down into the mine.  
Never mind your fatal night,  
Swing and glug your venal  
Wine:  
The city moves; it moves for the currency  
That isn't really there,  
But it moves until its tender shoulders  
Are bared;  
And I love you, but my quarters are a wreck;  
And I am too ugly to touch myself:  
Likewise, you are not here to touch me,  
And I wonder for a little while  
Who is touching you now.  
Sometimes I think my face is beautiful underneath  
The milking moon like a cow;  
And the University is just across the canal.  
And all the little sailors are liting in sailor song,  
And I just want to reach out and  
Love you,  
To caress you like a velvet tortoise his neck  
Stretched out into your boudoir;  
Equally, our eyes closed into the changing room  
Of our venal senses;  
And why is that so wrong?

Robert Rorabeck

# Out In The Middle Of The Phoenix Desert

I specialize in the innocuous motions,  
Like the gleeful caesuras of roller-coasters  
Put up by the missing nosed-men  
And their dwarfish assistants, the half-witted  
Tycho Brahe's who have yet to identify the  
Comet's ellipses,  
But who fight and dances just like I do,  
Weaponless and sprawling in dimly imagined  
Parks; like the menstruations of taxi drivers  
Run away from the embers of their highly  
Functional parents, trying to situate themselves  
In the unnerving alienations of Midwestern cities  
Taking wayward fairs and transgendered call girls to earn  
Their lonely cessations in hardwater flats,  
The inebriated recipients of scientific progress,  
Looking out into the swayback glow of the night  
And her tresses; as I jog two standard bred  
Colts both of them newly castrated, and yet so  
Studish: I coo to them in tongues not dissimilar  
To those whispered to her when I am alone under  
The covers; they move around me, skittish, like  
Too leggy satellites, just the same as I am with  
Her, like a rugged tide moving in only to fall away,  
The casual witchcraft who encaved the haunted inlets,  
Her neck like an opal chalice my fingers would resonate  
Upon like an ornithologist's whispers to an extinct  
Hummingbird some leagues away from the busy highway  
Out in the middle of the Phoenix desert.

Robert Rorabeck

# Out In The Penumbbras Of The Wide World

The quiet brutality of juvenile life,  
I have to write it down while I run from the cops,  
Checking out the skirts of trees,  
And I make it too, past all the indigo canals,  
With so much burping life, the goldfish mutts,  
The lethargic pets who rub scaled bellies against  
Casual embankments;  
And past the housewives too, glowing like blonde  
Angels from the highlighted portcullises of their  
Kitchens. Seeing them makes me stop and bight  
My thumb,  
Because everything about them is lined up that way,  
Perfectly in place holding apple pies,  
They belong on the nosecones of aeroplanes,  
Fine instruments strummed at night by bulbous business  
Men,  
Their children swinging in their yard like Catholic censers,  
Or playing basketball on wide-swept driveways;

So I move on, and the sirens recede, and the boys  
With their billy-clubs can't find me, and my feet  
Have rhythm and have not been too molested by the rote  
Memorization of the state enacted school system,  
And there are places to the side which are trimmed green  
And lazy, where crickets play in the night,  
Past the little tinkertoy mall, past the firehouse its vestibules  
Emptied of burly men, past the skate park  
The hound-dogs sirens receding like fan-blown tinsel  
Down the armpits of fake Christmas trees-  
Here, speckled in the suburban estuary, no one knows me,  
And it is a beautiful thing, to be out in the penumbbras of the  
Wide world, making my way to Scott's house,  
My bare feet cut on little pieces of irony,  
Making me laugh all the way across  
Wellington, FL- A slender pugilist lit on wine,  
So far away from where I am, given so much time and too  
Many similar recitations- these scores have scarred me:  
The misplaced yuppie,  
no more the high-stepping escape

Artist, blindfolded and arms stretched  
Between two avenues, awaiting the chartreuse bus,  
Its bullying lies: no more the uneasy youth sleeping through his classes,  
And when awakened leaping through windows  
And over canals, through sun and through shade  
Where no one can find me  
With so many places to run.

Robert Rorabeck

# Out In The Silent Planet

I have nothing new to say:  
The sky is a furnace;  
The sky is a womb:  
There are still Victorian astronauts  
Abducting unsuspecting philologists  
Inside their oaken ships  
As round as footballs:  
There are planets with different names,  
And places to go where silence is  
All that there is....  
My hand remains a crooked harp,  
Crooning for you,  
Strumming outwards into the fields  
Of modular homes and cardboard castles:  
Those dreams which lay in your eyes  
Like lazy roadmen:  
Their handsome greens and blues,  
Like cats staring unconcerned and  
Half interested out from windows....  
Your bosom may be bared:  
A man may be suckling your bosom  
With a disinterested stare;  
But this is nothing I haven't said:  
I do not know the shape and  
Complexity of your areolas:  
But I chap my lips on the arid discoveries:  
Lying on you,  
Lying in the thoughtless sunlight  
In the spaces that cannot change,  
Hidden out in the silent planet-

Robert Rorabeck



# Out Of Doors Wedding

When I see you again I want to  
Remember my wolverine heritage,  
And shop class:  
How I bent empirical matters, or  
Like Nicola Tesla invented the rags of electricity;  
And clap down on my knees before the  
Hotel rooms of careless monuments,  
And the mountains white washed in snow:  
Before Sharon and all that  
She'd like to know, Diana;  
And smell your vibrant crotch like the crook of  
A perfumed citrus tree halfway off the  
Lips of Spain;  
Diana- I want to reciprocate from the prow of  
An over infatuated boat;  
I want to ruin my teeth on your venal acids:  
I want a swollen jaw from the repeated swill of  
Your curvaceous song birds:  
I want whole nests of them in my mouth:  
I want to live forever in South America lollygagging  
To the show tunes of your rich c&nt:  
I want to invade your pathetic country and undermine it  
From between the cruxes of hot plates:  
I want to pay for a room with you by the hour,  
And double date:  
Diana- I want to get married in a cerulean church under  
The banisters of cancan hooligans.  
I want to do it right and take your daughter with us  
To cartoon movies, and kill off all your evil witches  
With squirt guns;  
And then we can sit together and see how the sea moves:  
See how it moves like your less beautiful sister,  
Diana,  
All warm and lost into the lesser complications with my banded  
Hand on your knee naked of the garter,  
Diana, you oh so carelessly threw away at our out of  
Doors wedding.



# Out Of Esoteric Necessity

We died on school buses in the rich morning of  
Some indescribable consumption,  
And girls loved us while we were green;  
And we attended to our gardens underneath the portables  
With the rattle snakes and jack rabbits while some  
Old woman taught math;  
And after school while our parents were still picking lettuce,  
We played football until we kicked some pretty boy in the temple  
And were sent off courting to the office;  
But it was a really pretty mystery, and now two decades or so  
Later we will have our first plot of land and a little house  
So close to the sea that we can hear her waves roaring as she  
Feeds them all the felicity of her gold fish, and boys even younger  
Then us keep slipping into her boudoir dreaming that they should  
Be her princes, as she bares the rich staples of her shoulders,  
And her corals purr and her seahorses maintain in her shallows  
While some unseen ballerina, like a housewife on the lamb underneath  
The sweet orchards of an undying moon vacuums the frolicking  
Esplanades out of esoteric necessity.

Robert Rorabeck

# Out Of The Sky

Families gathered together preferring the unions  
Of what they are at large in:  
Bodies multiplying through the staples of the breakfasts-  
Roadkill down the bricked in avenues,  
Their underage memories forgotten- yawning up  
To the silky hierarchies, their mouths are filled in:  
They are colored so brightly they swim:  
And there they go passing through the yards, manifold.  
Billowing yawns- a ruined world renewing around  
Them,  
Managed into the joy of billfolds, like swans hunkered down  
In swampy pastures for the night,  
The virgins masturbate in imagining coital unions and  
Suicides:  
And the horse is there, the stallion, Siamese nostrils summoning  
Geniis- his mind as big as an ant's:  
The stars molest him, until he breaks over the fences,  
Destroying other yards, encouraged by the pheromones of  
The pastures, multiplied into the strangest of properties-  
With the foxes, he becomes a general- and he makes love to  
Mares who eagerly accept him,  
The light abandoning, the airplanes and their passengers slipping  
Out of the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Out Of Thought And Mind

Call up the devil on his rack,  
And with your guts he'll make a sack

And fill it will all the thoughts you'd  
Rather wouldn't have, and cats and  
Skunks and whatnot

And bury it beneath the roots of someplace  
Dark,  
Beneath the shivering Clemintine  
In the zodiac park,

And put upon it a horn of tin,  
And from his lips he'll cast a grin,  
As upon you he'll set up a curio shop  
And into it he'll cry strangers to drop;

And fill that space between the trees  
With spider fingers and bowed knees,  
And eyes that always seem to peek,  
At your corpse just beneath the peat:

Your boots will stick out just like a rind,  
And your eyes will stare beneath the Clemintine.  
Out of thought and out of mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Out Of Which Metal

Children going home to sleep in their cathedral's  
Nursery after their crusade:  
The light pullulates like sea-life above their crimson heads.  
Then we went with my sister to the aquarium  
On Tampa where my friends once got married,  
But she was so venal:  
She had already turned out to the marines; but I can only imagine  
Your man kneeling for you in the saw grass as you knight  
Him like a promiscuous queen and then kiss his lips  
To see just out of which metal he was made.

Robert Rorabeck

# Outlaw To Me, Danny

Outlaw to me, Danny,  
And I'll become your thrall,  
And we'll both go romping,  
Busting down the hall,

And we'll go out shopping  
Out in the sylvan glade,  
And if we both get lucky,  
Then we both get laid,

Underneath the vermilion angels  
Hanging from the trees,  
Where little girls spill from bicycles  
Scraping both their knees,

Then we'll both be wise men, graduating  
At the end of the class,  
While all the pretty freshmen go around  
Kicking newer ass.

Maybe we'll stay together, lounging  
By the pool, turning gray and turquoise,  
Still breaking every rule.

Robert Rorabeck

# Outside Our Shaded Windows

Broken here: all the rope tricks come down- flaccid  
Snakes from the pop corned ceiling,  
The thieves stolen away beyond the cooling combines of  
The ceiling fans:  
They have surpassed the roofs, and now are floating life  
Masterless kites:  
They swing like loose feathers underneath the sickle moon,  
Possessing the wives of  
Acrobats who have gone off to other shows-  
The cars beneath them with their blue families: the roads the  
Steady courses pestered by rain and surrounded by  
Soft yards whose driveways contribute into them:  
And this is the way that out country was made,  
And bound up as offering: it is a Christmas then, every time  
She takes her brown body away from hers,  
And comes over the railroad tracks like something possessed:  
Like a chime set loose, and something  
Escaped them- crenulated to my door, she pesters:  
Bright uranium she fingernails- she defeats the Elysium Spheres:  
She has her own presents on her body,  
And she promises it all to me as she enters through my threshold;  
And all of the world disappears into a little pool  
Where like two jubilant otters kissing on each other,  
Lying in the speckled shadows underneath the torpid ceiling fans-  
Like lackadaisical windmills who pretend to be  
Saturnine nemesis- and knights who are inept at drawing daytime  
Wages blessing us outside our shaded windows-  
And we making love.

Robert Rorabeck



# Outside The Sphere Of My Influence

Worlds spume, like orgasms  
Or bouquets,  
And faux beauties pirouette on the  
Displayed palettes like books,  
Like dance floors;  
And even as the cars drive, blue,  
Or red, or green:  
And supermarkets are open,  
Where hungry old people shoplift outside  
The foreclosures of the everglades,  
And the sun puts their bald or hoary  
Scalps on display meandering through the scalding  
Parking lot like hot liquorish,  
I am left wondering why I am doing this again,  
Why I can't ride for myself- Why it must go on,  
The futile attempts, the passivity of each  
Elongated war sinking with the timely seas-  
What for, because her eyes have never yet displayed  
To me the green Burbank of her breathy city,  
Or the areolas which are seashells mounted on her breasts,  
Because all my songs are better sung to girls already vanquished  
Than for the lips and senses of the ones who are yet  
Busily here, going shopping,  
And getting perms- Kissing the unbruised lips of those  
Boys and things already on display,  
Who have made themselves readily available to their  
Lives and limbs,  
And attracted to their jockeying gravities they fall forwards,  
Diving in flumes of and the needs of salty cataracts.  
They could go on and on forever I think,  
Outside the sphere of my influence.

Robert Rorabeck

## Outside Your Realm Of Chances

Your house looks like a daydream of simple structures:  
In fact, I remember vomiting in the wishing wells of  
Your mall—fouling up all of your establishing compliments  
Kitty-corner to the bookstore  
Where I bought all of the pulp fiction, and waited  
For the pet fish to fall in love with the heavens:  
And you grew up—and grew up to emerge to love the  
World—a cheerleader in love with football—  
A metamorphosis of the carport and echinopsis—  
Don't you ever wonder of the everyday beauty of the landscaping  
Just outside of your door—Privileged youth  
Everyday beauty and commonly named princess: your future  
A spotlight upon the comatose heavens—and the otters  
Swim and swim, making a luxurious delight for the feral boys  
Who are utterly outside your realm of chances.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over

These women in my castles making bones  
And over her, gentle suicide in the garden:  
Sea anemones in the sky,  
Evaporations,  
Things to tell the king and princesses,  
Weather vanes blowing their challises towards the  
Airplanes,  
As summer continues floating as she does,  
Palatial—sumptuous cathedrals in her arcs—  
And the day is long and filled with daisies  
And even longer—  
The bulls pull the grasses, while laughs  
Until it is over—and then she laughs  
On her birthday in the graveyards—  
And the sun waits until it passes,  
And then shines: yes, shines all over.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over A Lonely Man's Grave

Employed by the rioters who tried to blow out  
The city,  
While the lovers were making love in parked cars  
All up and down  
The rows of softly planted trees:  
Resounding like narcoleptic charioteers, and the amusements  
That glowed when nothing else was around:  
Dreaming of holding hands with the brown hands of  
Alma underneath the  
Zoetropes of constellations of roller coasters:  
Dreaming of taking her back into the swimming course  
And living with her off of cotton candy  
And musketeers:  
There she was today in the fruit market, not meeting my eye:  
Terribly afraid of losing her husband,  
But she put a pink rose in my lapel which made the patrona  
Angry or jealous;  
But I will be gone tomorrow selling Christmas trees:  
Gone even before Michael's birthday:  
And Alma just right there where fate placed her: my heart a  
Fair ground of manic glee when near her,  
Enthralled by the entertainments of her petit midway:  
Until she takes her lovely biplanes to fly away- back to Mexico:  
Like a butterfly torn from the paper dolls of a lover,  
And flung over a lonely man's grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over All Of The Sleeping Worlds

And the moon is a poem—floating azure  
Over the cathedrals of the runway of  
Another college I seemed to have attended  
So many long times ago—  
So very long ago that it all becomes a cemetery  
To me held up and defended by its armpits—  
While even the bravest pilots  
Swerve and correct themselves—  
And the moon paints the ribbons upon these  
Bows—  
And the graveyards are unemptied,  
So they collect the elements that are lighter than  
Air, lighter than paper dolls burning—  
And you once called me even though you  
Were married and I had my parents in my car:  
It was the very last time I sold Christmas trees:  
Now I am a school teacher in the graveyards—  
And I, drunkenly, I am about to have my first child,  
As the night balloons into the architectures  
That just so happen over all of the sleeping worlds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over And Gone

There is no good hope for me,  
No second houses beyond the gravelling pews,  
Nothing beyond the first and last move-  
Fatally entranced,  
Picking my nose:  
I am no good at football,  
And I cannot remember my lines-  
For a sport I can mow the yard and kill garden  
Snakes because they serve a master who won  
The spelling bee:  
Tied up in ugly scars, confused with innocence:  
Paper snowflakes fall from the jubilant airplanes,  
And I am in debt to the spin doctors of  
An immortal high school;  
I can fish and smoke a corncob pipe,  
But I have no freckles-  
I walk straight past the rattlesnake who ate my  
Little dog from Kansas,  
While the alligator stares on perversely from  
The canal's imperfect glass:  
I can keep on walking because there is no end  
To this neighborhood,  
Past the checkout line of topless sunbathers,  
All married but not one of them calls me over,  
To help them carry riches out into their cars;

And I leap so many ditches until even  
The housewives appear strange  
And unreal,  
Circling and chored-  
Their children blond and social- Somewhere beyond  
All this uneventful maelstrom there is that  
Golden fleece hung upon a smoking tree,  
But with no friends to help me defend each department  
Of the courted monsters,  
Her hand has slipped away and ringed,  
And I can hear them making love form inside the church,  
Carrying along with their well-attended play.  
Delayed outside indefinitely under threat of rain,

Trying to tie up this shoe even after it is  
All over and gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over Another Theatre

Looking up into the arc, it is time to celebrate:  
See there, there are balloons,  
Being blown by the zephyrs into the lips of  
Vagabonds—and in the living room there  
Is enough space to count out the terrapin—  
Until another bedroom is divided—  
Your mother and father are still alive—  
But the katydids like themselves inside the cataracts of  
Cypress,  
As the airplanes fly across overhead,  
Spilling their silver ribbons over another theatre  
That is too afraid to disappear.

Robert Rorabeck



# Over Both Of Our Towns

There—in her eyes that swallowed me,  
Was an untrue light,  
Stolen from other heavens that were neither  
Greater or less than her own—  
I realized only later that she  
Swung with me near the ocean  
In the same park my mother once took me to  
Years ago,  
Only for meat and gold,  
And other possessions  
And other necessities;  
It took a trip to China to escape her—  
I wrote her a thousand poems before that time.  
I cannot say I used her for the poems.  
If not my only muse,  
She was my last- but not all destructive,  
As she must have been should I have been  
A greater poet—  
She did not destroy me,  
But forced me to get a job  
And to become a lesser man,  
Which, acceptably, seems to be the fate for  
All things that wish to remain alive  
Or at least to grow old—  
Remaining with her family, she celebrates  
Her childrens' birthdays one after the other—  
I still keep statues to her in my house  
Even though I have children of my own-  
Once I save up enough money  
I will move farther away from her—  
But for now I sit here atop a bed she  
Thankfully never touched,  
As I listen to the very same airplanes that  
Travel over both of our towns.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over Every Other Candied Daydream

Brown shouldered on your broom sticks—  
Starve like a match in the very air—doing a carnival above  
The courtyard: Look how all of the tallest boys have  
Stopped playing baseball and are all  
Putting their bats down:  
It is a wedding up there—that is what you are,  
But not of Christian ceremony—things of the ground grow wings  
To metamorphosis nearer your body—  
You light off—a playground with a fuse, curtailing and periwinkled,  
You go until the amazed hobos see you like a comet over  
The cerulean lights of another catholic church,  
And the waves areola and nipple, wetting their chaps—  
Like boys busy to realize who you are—  
Evaporations over every other candied daydream into sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over Mountains And Barbed Wire

This kind of reason feathered in the eyes  
Of a peacock  
Strutting impertinence through the ferris wheels  
Of our memory:  
You kissed my mouth before the albino eyes  
Of an alligator  
That most certainly was; but what of us-  
Strange infatuation of two species  
Becoming undone underneath the elusive  
Heavens  
While all of the white mothers are out with their  
Children,  
And you remain so guarded- indeed we lasted  
For approximately five hundred and eight days;  
But I can see that you will never leave your husband,  
Even though he cannot see all of my scars-  
And so we come to an end,  
Like the amputations of a windmill brought to  
The surface,  
As sailors made to suffer through the blindness of  
A lighthouse- it becomes like this-  
Lies that only whisper of truth- octopi,  
And strange, giant cats in their darkness-  
You were my muse for many starless nights,  
But now all of the appendages of my body  
Spread this ink in fear for its very life-  
And I run across the hotels and their blinking yards-  
Of sleeping Indians and of bobcats:  
Away- away- over mountains and barbed wire,  
Fearing the thoughts of love for you that  
Still remain inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over My Beefy Grave

It doesn't have to be real to go this way,  
Singing its pledges to the empty sea,  
While I will wake up tomorrow in the new birth of  
My bachelorhood into which Alma has promised  
To come and ride the bicycle I bought for  
Her, that I myself rode today: across the city to the  
Taqueria, and then to the swings,  
And all the bodies like marionettes of their brown family's  
Swings:  
And the world I knew has changed: America has  
Absolutely changed; but she was never my world anyways,  
So all I have to do is drink my liquor and wait for  
Alma,  
As she will come slipping her tan beauty like leggy sunlight  
Over my beefy grave.

Robert Rorabeck

## Over Neighborhoods Like Yours

Wake up into the distilling mortifications of  
Buzzards,  
Because the day is Sunday and wrecked. There was a little  
Bit of rain,  
But it has stopped, and birds sing irritatingly:  
Your wife has told you to go to bed, but there is going to be a football  
Game,  
And you can recline like a snake grown more intelligent in his  
Own game  
In which your house is his golden nest:  
He is speaking to your wife in the next room over, in the kitchen  
Or the lanai:  
He is stealing her away from you, and you can watch it happen  
If you wanted to,  
But you don't care: they are building a bright fair upstate  
Somewhere,  
And you plan to leave her and go to there, once this Sunday is over,  
And the game has won over the day,  
Your children slipping like starving and yet curious cenotaphs  
In the little rooms over which the clouds break like elegant  
Rivers, worshipful over neighborhoods like yours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Canal

You can give your echo to me—  
Or I can be your Romeo—  
This is my thought as your younger sister lies kidnapped,  
Happily over the canal  
With the hummingbirds in the palmettos:  
And I am always searching for something  
With scars on my lips—just give me time:  
And throwing your wishes like pennies into  
The well of stars:  
That is where she doesn't have to say and single thing  
To us—and that is where her work gets busied:  
Where the cars are underneath the airplanes,  
But unreal beside the sea:  
And her thoughts become lost well before she can  
Think of me—  
And your eyes become blind, and your other senses  
Surreal—  
Awash in the formaldehyde like the pornographies  
I am trying to share with her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Candle's Leaping Flame

Penumbra- forgotten echo over a rose,  
Like a fingerprint over a theft-  
This is my newborn amusement for you-  
Silk of amber sleep trailing out  
Along the page,  
As if your children looking up into a magisterial  
Gust of an airplane:  
Who knows what they will actually think of  
This once it actually lies done-  
And forgotten-  
Underneath the swing-sets over the graveyards:  
Perfumes of fruit too softly sweetened  
So they fall and lie against the adventures of a rattlesnake's  
Kiss: they lie like the pornography stamped at  
The dog's hoof,  
Underneath the heavens of windmills-  
They have all turned out so suddenly as to be unrealized  
Tricks- as the tourists busy up the motels  
Underneath the mountains who  
Personify the uneasy stairwells that we all lie  
Under- mumbling our dreams or whatever underneath  
The surer feet of the giants who are never named:  
Just as the stewardesses learn how to leap over the candle's  
Leaping flame.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Doorsteps Of My Forsaken Hearthstone

I am getting tired of worrying about those shadows,  
Like the wearisome estuaries of speckled trout beneath  
The eyes:  
When, shouldn't they be moving on, since the  
Rest of the forest is changed and calling out beautiful  
Numbers through the slate-cliff's auctions;  
And the cars are purring like mountain lions,  
And a new king in a red velvet tuxedo is galloping through  
The lower glades, picking all the wildflowers,  
Clapping his hands together,  
Filling up his steam pressed pockets with little throats-  
He knows the right rock and roll to change the aspens,  
To make her pale and naked; and I guess it his thing,  
And already the new mothers are feeding their children along  
The conferred rows- Open eyed and open lipped,  
Stepping on my head and gills; I struggle like a rare  
Lichen beneath them, taking my part in the forest where  
It is harder to breath, waiting for them, revealing pure  
Veins upturned from the secret corridors beneath their  
Swaying sororities-  
But it doesn't do any good, for they are now all passing,  
Giving not a thought to my unrefined pistilation of riches,  
Going down to him, checking their mailboxes with flags raised,  
Checking their refrigerators, and cleaning their houses as they  
Go, until the moon is out and perfect and tracking  
Showing which way the ambidextrous werewolves must hunt,  
Hungrily leaping, going this way and that from each garage and  
Den,  
Floating down across the rented moats cast from cheap crystal  
Chandeliers chimeless and overhead in their well-lit foyers,  
finding out where they are waiting unwrapped with the svelte stag  
Pretending to be in love;  
And though it is mourn some, I have no one else to root for,  
For the king is only one man, spilling over so many red carnations,  
Making the entire prom's heart beat with steady ululations,  
That I should not be contained, and my sickness burns like heart fire,  
Though it has only aroused for a short while to see what unfortunate  
Justice it might find calling to him forlorn and suddenly  
Well-attended by a brighter metamorphosis,



A torn chrysalis that shall never again re-emerge by moonlight  
Rippling over the doorsteps of my forsaken hearthstone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Downhill Shop Of My Tomb

Filthy and incomplete,  
I want to die while giving my soliloquy  
From the upper window of an old museum  
From which you can barely see the sunset  
Like a glass of rum,  
From which some terrible accident is burning,  
Smelling like a stew of letter-carriers  
In a long train wreck,  
Satchels gutted and strewn and all their  
White creases high up in the air  
Like unripe cinders;  
They come down unopened over the  
downhill shop of my tomb-  
Someone is trying to make some extra money-  
They have fused a monkey with a fish and called  
It a mermaid-  
I am set up next to that, probably the last of my  
Kind,  
Counterfeit,  
But well atop my soap box next-door to  
The great Indian chief and one grizzly bear.  
From down beneath us, the scuffing of polite feet-  
They are coming in, one or two,  
To look around as the trains rattle on through  
The spilled letters,  
Carrying dashing young soldiers with gold  
And blue buttons along the way,  
And back to filthy sweethearts-  
The cottonmouth perpetually striking my wrist.  
The bar is opening with much commotion and fanfare.  
I wonder if they should make it up to see us  
Before closing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Far Away Seas

My dogs are all alone and I don't know what they  
Make of the snow;  
But I am not beautiful, and I will not live forever;  
And I have been hibernating for five years,  
And even still I live alone;  
And I don't know what I am doing:  
I don't know for who I sing, S-,  
S-:  
You have such a beautiful infinity, and maybe it was  
You I perceive leaping like chrome airplanes from  
Holidays at the top of all the mountains.  
Sharon,  
I climbed Elbert and Massive on the same day,  
And went down limping with a gaggle of grandmothers;  
And they seemed very beautiful at the time,  
Even though over fifty percent of all of us could be grandmothers,  
S-:  
You will be a grandmother, S-,  
And share your common knowledge with the flags of your  
Little countries.  
I believe Colorado should become entirely yours;  
It should be your country,  
Because it is the most beautiful place in America;  
And I sell fireworks,  
But I am not beautiful, S-: S-,  
And I am almost done. Oh, I want to be done: I want to be  
Inanimate on your shelf. What else could I be.  
I still remember you in class.  
Did you join that class to join me? S-?  
No one looks at me anymore:  
I have nothing to rely on, and my dogs are howling,  
Howling.  
Please, lets collect them and if you'd allow the entire  
Colony to resonate about your shadow,  
Fibrillating like limbed cars, I would bless you:  
Bless you, S-; I just want to love you and sleep on your  
Beautiful floor:  
I am not beautiful, S-, but the sky is wide open and filled  
With comments and billboards,

Even though I was thinking of E- when I  
Submitted  
Her, I am still all alone- I can do good work for you:  
I am ugly and I am all alone,  
But all I wish is to sleep with my dogs on your floor,  
And listen to the nocturnal sounds of you suckling  
Your child,  
Making love to your husband,  
Because that is all the immorality to which I climbed  
To enjoy and cherish forever  
Like a greeting card carried over the far away seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Featureless Graveyards

Glistening in the shadows of the pools that  
Have stopped entirely and given up or not even thought  
Of discovering themselves,  
Where the heavy brown bellies of the fish escaped from  
The plastic bags of the midways of the fairs  
Of my heart  
Come together in a marching band of opposite sexes  
And make love;  
Alma, as I would make you, pregnant with the liquors of  
My spirit,  
So that in our thoughts all of our hidden places conjoin  
And mix around,  
And somehow metamorphosis in your womb into a creature  
Of our own forgotten expressions,  
Until she is born and steadily grows like the didactic magics  
Of so many fables,  
Taking us straight up to the immaculate heavens to show  
Us in the pantomimes of zoetropes, in the zeniths of the lessons  
Of our tamers  
Who have us jumping through fire,  
All of the other expressions the angels leave like teardrops in  
A sun shower over the featureless graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Fluted Bones

I started out as a child in a sports utility vehicle,  
Going up the Pacific neck of America with my young parents  
And my two miniscule sisters:  
I play with Barbie in a plastic hamper: My father called me a  
Cripple,  
And when we got to Alaska we flew over glaciers and  
Got Amnesia over the deep tundra where the mosquitoes siphoned  
Our flesh like vampires;  
And the grizzly bears arose like reckless surgeons:  
The sky was just a palate losing itself at both ends, reflecting the  
Knives of my father's wishes;  
And we walked through the stench of overgrowth, we heard him  
Growling for another plate of our innocent limbs,  
So pale with so little meat over the fluted bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Happenstance Of The Moment

I seem invest in your shadow,  
Thought I am here,  
Resting after your cadaver,  
And if your cards get low enough,  
Eventually,  
Forever,  
I will be glad to sell the echo of your  
Soul back to you  
Far to soon for you to reconnoiter  
With the white caprice—  
We will make a Christmas out of Halloween,  
For this you will know forever—  
That my words are small  
And infinite  
And I like to play them across the living  
Room floor,  
And they seem to dance forever,  
Just the ants with the prisms  
But soon they will make us millionaires  
In our utter abandonment  
And, at least,  
We won't have to go down tomorrow  
Fight like cannibals atop the glaciers  
Without any airplanes,  
And I will be able to meet with your eyes  
For at least one more moment—  
And prove  
For a second that we are yet right here—  
And my child seems to exist forever  
In the perpetuity of the hallows and the  
Nests of carports  
Before burning whatever infinity is given  
Over before him  
To the places that he once had to  
At least pretend to preside  
Over the happenstance of  
The moment.





# Over The Heavens

A Christmas tree in a living room,  
A maiden lost in a forest—  
Words spoken from the top of an empty heaven  
Having to call down to an overflowing living  
Room—  
The joys of a life castaway—  
Waves that beckon to the ill-wrought highways,  
To the lucrative misspellings of  
Disney World and all of her rides-  
I still keep the decorations of your gods up  
In my house,  
But now the moon is empty—the airplanes having  
Flown over the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Last Canal

All of a sudden the stars were in Mexico,  
Like you were in your bedroom:  
You had no last thought of me:  
You were married:  
Two children slept around you like satellites  
In a hemisphere where I couldn't breathe—  
So I went across the sea to be married—  
And you lay on your back  
Like a marionette finally put down—  
The smile was painted on you—  
Sometimes your husband set you on fire  
Just to see you dance:  
It was why you are still married—  
But in the languishing shadows—  
I tried to imagine you with my  
Eyes closed in the darkness underneath  
The airplanes or angels—  
Whatever avenue you took diverged  
After one year beside me—  
And you are in love with that darkness  
Which your mother taught to you,  
That you have carried by yourself in your  
Heart from the first moment you've  
Ever collected—  
At one moment sweetness, sweat surcease  
Of sunshine—your husband's face across  
From yours in a Chinese restaurant—  
And then the highways of your abandonment  
All across you—what is it that you cannot  
Remember, but the places we should have  
Been together in—  
Memories taking solace in nowhere—  
Kissing me in  
The darkness with the abandoned crocodile—  
And you move on,  
As the sun slips like a cadaver over the last canal.□

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Movie Theatres Like A Gentleman

Arrowheads that sweat and dream  
In castanets of valleys  
Know of the way that I think of you,  
Driving underneath the  
Clouds from ghost town to ghost town—  
Stopping down by the river where the maples  
Drink  
And the lilacs, whatever color they are,  
Coming with the morning's pornographies—  
Each daylight a pressing lip waiting to  
Be seized—  
As you bend back and forth, shopping or  
Going to school—  
And the weather pulls in over the movie theatres  
Like a gentleman, who is up to no good,  
Watching you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Rivers And Through The Woods

Anemic ballrooms of sheer delights  
Gaining higher  
And higher  
And higher and higher:  
That you have added me  
To your friends,  
Who started off from Kansas  
And ended up in the Emerald City,  
Only to find waiting  
For them  
Behind the wizard's curtain  
Every thing that they  
Brought with them:  
Ticking  
Roaring  
Thinking  
Barking,  
Wearing the souls of their travels  
The splendid sparks  
Of the turn of the century experiments:  
To fall down laughing  
Smiling in the victory of the rainstorm,  
As it came rushing back out of dreams,  
The currents of the sea,  
The paths of muddy roads leading  
Home again,  
Speckled with the footprints  
Of little dogs,  
And the memories of time's  
Inevitable passing,  
Smiling familiarity from the splashing puddles.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Sad Old Earth

Deciding to start fresh every morning,  
Pallbearers put any old thing into the earth; but bless  
My soul if it isn't a young thing,  
Now just a pittance of dearth while the  
Helicopters are scouting, each a bladed hallucination remembering  
Suburbia:  
They go through the sky counting the trailers in parks,  
The lines of your loved ones stamped to the earth;  
And in the day they fan out like children in a playground each  
Of them uncertain of what all there is to do;  
And I remember you in that playground; and I think of you,  
While this funny young boy gets ready for heaven:  
Beneath him his sons all lucky and seven. In the evening after their  
Work, they smoke under the poplars. Afterwards,  
They will go to sleep next to their seven brides, their seven wonders:  
The helicopters will watch over them like floating angels  
Until another morning comes again over the sad old earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Shoulder-Blades Of Airplanes

Placed in the soft abutments over  
The shoulder-blades of airplanes  
Where the thunderstorms live in their  
Ethereal parks—  
Running and leaping in the feral  
Joy of its helium circus:  
Little girls I don't know sometimes look  
Up from their bedrooms towards  
And they see where their mothers have  
Never tried to lift them—  
It is a holiday up there filled with wonderful  
Cremations and the promises of  
A metamorphosis that will take them  
Away from school and out of their very lives.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Silent, Rain Drenched Fences In Hidden Pastures I Think I've Never Seen

What do you want from me  
When you tell me I'm all alone  
And that I've been drinking—  
And the mermaid/barmaids are all loose down  
By the river laughing at my ideas  
For novels about them and their mothers;  
The great tits which sag from so much  
Lustrous s\*cks,  
And the beauty is a Siamese rainbow  
Leaping through the sky,  
And the trailer parks hustle,  
And there are so many things to sell  
And drift through the silent sounds,  
Better boys than me with so many  
Tattoos and ways about it  
With their tawny hands gripping the skiffs;  
And so soon I should be back in school,  
Learning the threnodies of their Catholicisms,  
And I am on my second beer,  
And today was a slow day,  
And my father will soon be losing his house  
To his so many enemies;  
And she has great eyes and a secret intelligence  
And four astounding legs which go leaping  
Over the silent, rain drenched fences  
In hidden pastures I think I've never seen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Over The Wash Basins That Emmolliate Themselves Over The Sun

If life happens to slip away  
Over the bushes where the little girls have had  
At play,  
Now all the time blushing and runaway:  
Then there will be some good in the world;  
It will be two by two,  
And the airplanes will come down like creation  
And mix with the blue  
Over the trees and carports  
And the other mixed stains of the earth:  
Then if I will be there to see it,  
And if my father will be there open mouthed like  
A desert  
We will listen to the fat girl sing together  
Over the wash basins that emolliate themselves over  
The sun.

Robert Rorabeck



# Overreaching Tomorrows

Arrange the night for cadavers  
Who could not possibly know your name.  
Take the turnpike to Disney World,  
And observe the blood spatter of Tinker Bell  
In her small world of murder.  
Stay until there are fireworks and anonymous  
Rain showers which slick the sclerotic tracks  
Of roller coasters, who seem to be sweating  
Hard from making little girls scream all day.  
Allow her in your mind to lie down and make  
Love with fabulous men,  
Then arc away on the swings from the  
Elementary school,  
Understanding that it is not perfect what they  
Are doing. Without knowing it, reproducing  
The accident of their parents, the occidental  
Currencies of rearranging fluids in the swimming  
Parks of their passing rooms. They are not  
Accompanied, not anymore than you are watching  
The deciduous strip show in the high picnics  
Of everlasting bachelors. In the morning they  
Will drift away like salty tourists, and their eyes  
Will turn, and they will not remember. They  
Will go to class and become good, but you know  
The scores in the red clay, where you have sat  
And excreted your fluids and odors, where the  
Pale legs jog into the overreaching tomorrows-  
The inconsistencies in the plotting of postmodern  
Tulips, and the inappropriate landscaping which  
Needs too much water to survive in this fickle  
Climate.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pablo Neruda

The dwarves went down into the earth—The dragon rose and  
Stretched its curtains to a purple world:  
The earth and the world was ours and hers, though she wouldn't  
Awaken—as the pilgrims shivered,  
For upon the earth they were shaken—  
But it was a beautiful plane they lived and feasted upon,  
And there were so many types of birds—  
With wings of the colors of a school desk—and I loved to think about  
Kissing her,  
Until my day did come—It spread out in a thousand pinwheeled angles  
Speeding up the mouths of the field laborers across the canal:  
And I skipped school and thought of her—  
Snow white and beautiful, done on her pills—the dark shadows  
Of mermaids underneath her,  
The unicorns in the alders and holy in the thickets—  
She kept her sisters like the numbers around her—  
And little of roman candles and bottle rockets who made love in  
The canals—  
Until the days were lost upon her—and the monuments who were  
Supposed to be were fed up upon her—  
And she lay like a silver trinket into the shallow streams,  
Breathing steadily for  
Pablo Neruda.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pack Lunch

A god of higher pharmacies,  
You live in a tree house to come down  
At night and steal the ground.  
Born into what you have become,  
A feminist professor smiling tinfoil,  
You give even minor poets Bs,  
But when you fart it smells like  
Popuri and fireworks,  
Though you make no excuses for  
The way you've made sex with the  
Legends of your field, the mostly bigamist  
Dons who are light headed and incontinent,  
But fall on you like the rutting rams  
In the highest basins of Colorado and  
Football fields;  
You are a sommelier of the wine box,  
A school boy crush on network t.v.,  
When I was the only one in your Wisconsin  
Classroom to defend Holden Caulfield,  
Booed out of the leftwing successions  
Of good housekeeping and waxed legs,  
I rode my moted bicycle home whistling  
To make love to the dazzling Judaica  
Of the micaed excavation sight in the  
Middleclass ghettos of average grammar;  
She was a tune, and you a meatball submarine  
From which Plathe gassed herself to escape  
The meaning- both in relations to your  
Family's east coast pallbearer upbringing,  
The gated stride and odorless wind over  
The saddest classroom of gutless rhododendron;  
I packed my own brain in a paper sack for lunch,  
And ate every curve and squiggle up deep  
In the expensive landscaping, and licked at  
The greasy crumbs, before you could get in  
And complain about all that you found wanting.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pagan Holiday

I wait for customers in this bay,  
Or I read Anne Sexton and hope for quaint  
Stigmata, like overly dramatic Catholic plays:  
Or the overly education girls from the peripheries  
Of high school; I can now smell them on the wind,  
And far away they should love me,  
But nearer they would lose all interest,  
So I keep them at bay. The customers are coming  
In. They can't afford their houses, but they don't  
Know what to do without this pagan holiday:  
They wear the same clothes they wore a year ago,  
They are fine and worked on and ivory, and I love  
Every one of them, and the god hanging in this sky.  
The power lines are conducting us through the grid,  
She moves away across the unmowed grasses,  
Across the everglades, her back always turned to me,  
Her nape freckled and bare, maybe eleven stars,  
Jupiter. I love her, but this is only another saying,  
For the sacrifices are turning like satellites up in this  
Sky. I was married to a woman with the same birthday,  
But she doesn't listen to that anymore, but the way  
The traffic comes and goes a river going anyway,  
And thus I lie down to her and repose, and sell to  
Her in the dusk this pagan holiday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Page That Is Just Now Turning

Starting a fire with my dog in the  
Darkness against an overpass of sky,  
With turtles as a series of stones  
Finding their way to a sea that no more ex-lovers  
Ever go,  
Because their cars' engines are failing to get  
Out of the garage,  
And the days around them are hanging like a breathless  
Carnival,  
And the words we sent them are past dating, and  
Lactate sourly,  
So the fox just lays there, now that the engine block  
Has busted,  
And an apiaries of bees have move in, as if into  
A dry-rotted room of a house I once might have  
Bought into-  
And the light just fades and crenellates so more,  
Like tear drops of an entire ocean watermarking a page  
That is just now turning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pageantry Of Snowstorms

Pageantry of snowstorms beating against the random  
Shells of the knights' chests—  
The mobiles spin perpetually across the weebegone  
Mountains,  
And the sun of a god I never knew looks a long ways off—  
They seem to be all caught up inside of  
A cheerful orchard,  
Like marionettes spilling their guts: the way I remembered  
Making my way to Christmas one day  
All of the way from Spain to France—  
Until the last raindropp fell into her cup,  
And she arose, shining like alabaster—like an obnoxious  
Birthstone that blinded all of the forest  
In the early morning  
Of its unfortunate birthday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pages Of Elephants

Pages of elephants and a Pegasus—  
Little gastropods like tears down the sides of  
Movie theatres,  
The night train home wearing the negligee of  
Her hours—  
And I am off on the honey moons of weekends,  
Drinking rum,  
As the sunlight pollinates with the daylights of  
Her harems,  
And the most beautiful of brown skinned girls  
Lies the furthest away—  
Not like the eeriness's pastiest Disney  
Worlds,  
But with the accoutrements of the deliverers  
Of the driest of gardens:  
She is not here,  
And she will never be here again—  
It is not a lovely game I play with her memory,  
But she is about and breathing  
In a zoetrope of her Catholicism's which will never  
Return her this way to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pain Lingers

Pain lingers  
After the cacophony of relatives  
Disperses to seed the country,  
As a continent depicted by cartographers  
A deep runny purple,  
For no discernable reason,  
Like festive stalactites  
Hanging from the dress she chose  
To wear once and never took off,  
Because a stranger with loud eyes brushed  
Against it and remains in the glades of her mind,  
Burning atop the strange distance of the  
Man she sleeps with as the days  
Recede, not unlike waves from  
A swollen sea that has overtaken her residence,  
So now they come upon her,  
That salty undulation she can feel  
The tide that brushes against her chest  
And brings strange things out of her  
While she sleeps, like familiar animals  
That glow down from the moon and vanish  
Through her smooth forehead.  
These important things she soon forgets,  
For her eyes' opening causes such a blindness  
No one notices, just the imperfect forms  
Rushing toward her, sweeping her up,  
And making love to her when no one is looking,  
But in the quiet spaces, pooled in primary colors  
Around the swing sets where she is newly born,  
The gently brilliant things wait for her to play,  
But arising, she forgets to notice and so  
Pain lingers.

Robert Rorabeck



# Painful Friendship

A queen ant in the core of a mortal apple,  
And spoiled morals,  
Picked up and tied and bosomed enraptured  
On the diving board:  
The cormorants are heady from the Jupiter  
Dump and all those dumb  
Mickey Mouse Billboards:  
And, hey there, I said, I had a friend  
And her birthday is in October, the grasses bend  
For the grinning lawnmower:  
I told her I had a friend, of a very quiet and  
Bashful species:  
She laughed, her blue eyes were death rays with  
Mascara- she celebrated the winning team;  
They mined diamonds and whistled and congratulated  
Upon favorable comparisons;  
And when she overheated I unhooked her bra  
And we went fishing, and I used it to do the dishes,  
Or I taught her of Peter Pan and Pinocchio,  
Two better representations of the truant she thought  
I should be: Then my friend leaping over the  
Irrigations:  
Then my friend waving with the blue gills,  
Or waiting under red berries and mistletoe,  
Lips like a line of custard;  
With beer and bowling alleys and dreams of  
Almost plutonic kisses of my friend: I thought the  
Lions were yawning; I thought that the herons were  
Waving, and roman candles saluting;  
But they were all in their eager, comely waves just  
Like that sun asking inside the school bus,  
Trying to steal my friend away from me-  
And they did:  
And the sun took her out over the clouds, just like  
The reddled bull took my innocent sister away from me,  
And I forgot who I was, but it was still undoubtedly painful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Painful Hours

Here is where the sidelines end  
Upon the mystified avenues I walk alone.  
There are no spectators to worry over  
This laboring heart, which she once said  
Was without emotion, though I  
Can hear it now beating out this dirge,  
That futile song which pumps through  
The lonely blood. Beyond the stadium  
Where the great athletes sport for  
Fine women in new dresses dawned like  
Speckled coats of awakening fawns,  
I labor away in an unjustified direction  
Naked of hope, my wrists bared liked  
Mollusks from their shells as time  
Showers down the gravity like arrows  
Cutting days into me, in the cells of my  
Empirical carriage I pass the painful hours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Painted Enigma

You hurt me so much,  
And this is not your bouquet,  
Because now  
I am peeing like a goldfish  
Through the  
Drain-storms of goldfish where  
You don't  
Care to happen anymore:  
I happen to be touching myself  
Like the open mouths of  
Watermelons  
At a party of neighborhoods;  
And I seem to be  
Spoiling like the tears of  
Chalk  
Through the tear eyed afternoons  
Unrecognizable concrete:  
But this is just another  
Word,  
Another ghost:  
Painting itself into the sidelines,  
As I am here,  
Touching myself- as I manage to  
Become,  
Another painted enigma-  
Another specter, panting besides  
The daily walks of its pavements besides  
What, exactly- I suppose,  
It was supposed to become.

Robert Rorabeck

# Painting The Throats Of Leaves

Too many scars to start drinking, and too many  
To stop writing poetry, the wilting daisies which  
Spring from the edge of my fingertips;  
And this is the dry season of my celibacy,  
Where forest fires leap like court jesters over  
The cracked and brittle courts, and the days are  
Arid and propitious, and my father greets me politely,  
And I catch horses one handed,  
And listen to a baseball game on the radio-  
Time flows like a sunny river, and mother cries at  
Her kitchen table, and I can't think of anything better  
To do;  
But I still get one over the librarians who try to fine  
Me- Can't believe I could read Walt Whitman,  
But rather believe I'm a dusty thief of ancient highways,  
Ask me where Don Quixote and The Idiot are, and  
I show them like a simple card trick, and then they  
Can't look me in the eye, and have to concede that I  
Am quite swift, but I do not lecture them, but leave them  
To the bucolic weeds,  
For I am already dancing like paper and a match,  
And here is the reason I am to be alive: Here is the reason  
Why my dogs run to greet me, and she reads me over  
Seas with sweaty thighs: This is my summer, and things  
Are happening; But I still play alone, and reciprocate with  
My loneliness like sunshine painting the throats of leaves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pale

You plan for long silences, days at the mall with  
Your comely siblings,  
Window shopping for firemen and maypoles-  
Losing me to the bitter hooks of my wild isolations,  
Crooking my neck over the power lines to  
Billboards and the soft bellies of airplanes;  
But none it can make anything right:  
Tucked away in your mountain hideaway, skinned by  
Rainbows-  
I am left with the need to cut out the heart of my  
Infantile need and feed it to sharper reptiles:  
Now in your kitchens, cutting your things, your children  
Throwing all of your loose change to the gold fish  
And Chinese carp there in the pool behind your head,  
Why you never once think to look for me as the shadows  
Pass softly over you, freckled and warm,  
And you drink your glass of red,  
Draining me through lips that in comparison make  
Rosy carnage pale.

Robert Rorabeck

# Paleolithic Mermaid

Broken as the tailgate to the  
Alligator's eye:  
There she is, smiling toothily  
In the gutter downhill from  
The blood bank,  
From the dime store:  
What has she made for herself?  
She has just grown larger  
And without one thought,  
Insatiable—  
Girls from the college  
Petal over her aquatic boudoir  
With a million thoughts like a  
Bee hive  
Made up in their minds.  
What will be their major?  
Who will they marry?  
And where will they live  
After all of this is over?  
She doesn't care—  
After all of the ferris wheels have  
Closed up shop  
And moved out of town,  
After each and every window  
Lies doused  
There she remains,  
Paleolithic mermaid  
Airplanes leaping like mathematical  
Fireflies over her perfect body.

Robert Rorabeck

# Palindromes

Hopscotch is easy if you're a tourist,  
And the sea is easy if you're a fish,  
But your eyes I'll never forget,  
Like a woman singing in French-  
Not matter what she is saying,  
It sounds like she loves me,  
It sounds like she loves me,  
No matter what she is saying,  
But you're eyes I'll never forget,  
And the sea is easy if you're a fish,  
Hopscotch is easy if you're a tourist.

Thus the rhythm falls through the trees,  
While little girls dust the sticks of chalk on their knees,  
I want you to look at me,  
But you just do as you please,  
And I think you love me, no matter what you say,  
And no matter what you say, I think you love me,  
I want you to look at me,  
While little girls dust the sticks of chalk on their knees,  
Thus the rhythm falls through the trees.

I have driven the highways you have forgotten,  
To find you I broke my jaw on the oracle's bottle caps,  
And I have ridden the roller coasters through the splintered light  
Just to get a look at you through the sky,  
And is that all right? To kiss you in my slender mind,  
To kiss you in my slender mind, and is that all right?  
Just to get a look at you through the sky,  
And I have ridden the roller coasters through the splintered light,  
To find you I broke my jaw on the oracle's bottle caps,  
I have driven the highways you have forgotten.

Day by day, as you lay your head down to sleep,  
The kittens mew in a forgotten world,  
And the rain scrawls the names of runaways on your roof,  
But that is such little proof, like a cousin to the ocean,  
I would love to find you by accident as I think about you  
Riding to school on your new bicycle.

Riding to school on your new bicycle,  
I would love to find you by accident as I think about you,  
But that is such little proof, like a cousin to the ocean,  
And the rain scrawls the names of runaways on your roof,  
The kittens mew in a forgotten world,  
Day by day, you lay your head down to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck



# Palindromes And Paramours

Palindromes and paramours walk back  
And forth in the night,  
Tell each other secrets, kiss:  
Floods of bicycles suddenly speed by like  
Schools of wheeled fish:  
They are having a race, slick like  
A dream, ready as a coffin:  
Two girls say they should no longer make  
Love, even though they are ready.  
Underneath the palms they fail,  
And that is where they are still.... Making love.  
Though, my children are behind a  
Red aquarium, sleeping on the couch-  
I haven't touched them since their mother  
Turned into an eel and swam wisely in our  
Bedroom with another man:  
Now their fingerprints glow forensically on  
The inside of my skull.  
There is a serial killer in California who is  
Seven foot tall,  
And today I am drunk and out of work,  
And sleeping under an overpass where the cars  
Proceed like vaporous waves,  
Commuters from high school laugh toothily  
In the air-condition and fart self-consciously:  
Outside the park, there are tools in the work shed,  
And games to play till dark,  
And the pet rabbit sleeps in the owl's lap,  
Who is well-sated and cheerful, and all  
Around us they are singing of peace, all the  
Women are beautiful, all the children blonde-  
There is no reason to be fearful,  
And its time to move on.

Robert Rorabeck

# Panhandling To Angels

The greenness has no plans for defeat,  
So close to the sea  
While the blood is up  
And the bees are exploring madly  
Through the fumbling of words and feelings,  
The fire hydrants wait  
To exhume their bright  
Pressures  
For the forest fires of birthdays,  
And the airplanes leave to win,  
Panhandling to angels  
And stealing so many pretty girls

Robert Rorabeck

# Pantheism's Ballet

Golgotha is a special place with new fonts  
Spuming ink;  
I skip out from the horse-flies, and dally in  
My thirty year old truancies,  
Swaddling in curdled milk and alien sunbeams-  
Then there is glory where it is almost getting  
Too cold for butterflies to come and hibernate for  
Awhile- Transmogrified, roller derby girls with  
Wings and wedding rings;  
And I can't get the format right to sell it,  
And I've lost my knees, so how am I to propose  
To her? I am just a youth blasted by war,  
My mouth is all I need to eat, a firework's cone spumes  
The geysers of a swarthy rainforest:  
I let her pick the colors and then we roll around in  
The jungle and get lazy, looking at the sunken riverboats  
Where the alligators are bathing,  
And from those esoteric windows, the long stringed  
Orchids bulb and upspring, turning, like girls freshly  
Picked from the ballet, their white arms unfold,  
Propositioning the colorful birds of our gods,  
Who have learned to speak.

Robert Rorabeck

# Panting Over His Master's Grave Until Resurrection Day

Dark and welsh and sometimes gone,  
I live in the footprint of King Kong;  
And the days going pell-mell through the picketing  
Throng;  
And all these shooting, spuming things  
Make me wonder how you came upon your  
Diamond ring- Upon your child learning her first  
Words from the hidden spring  
I showed her using preschool telepathy- Now none  
Of these words are good enough to be  
The true thing,  
But it's true that I once saw you through the bus window  
Driving by on a rainy day:  
It was just one day, and you were just going your way,  
And I wasn't doing anything good enough with myself  
To captivate you,  
And so you soon went your way, up your hills to  
A sunnier day,  
But I kept along truncated in the unforgettable shadows of  
Your unrequited yesterday;  
And I'll keep on following you, like a faithful pet  
Panting over his master's grave until the very resurrection  
Day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pantomimes Of The Storms

You need to come home to me from the  
Offensive legions:  
Because this dusk has no eyes, and no  
Juliet—  
The airplanes cannot see by this, words  
Underneath an overpass—  
The cars pass seemingly like roses collecting  
To the sea—  
Each one being thrown away into  
The grief of those caesuras—like feral  
Bosoms rising from the old phantoms—  
Pantomimes of the storms  
Trying to catch up to her, their hearts in  
A lonely place trying to leap to breathe  
From the city beneath the sea  
Beneath all of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pantomiming The Clouds

Pantomiming the clouds, what strange verbiage of  
Mercury poisoned haberdasheries  
These words become, hardly recovered, though they  
Are gathering themselves from a battlefield of plagues  
Halfway to Saint Louis or Egypt,  
And the dogs wine up to the night, the coyotes bellowing,  
The mother possums bighting their lips,  
As the rockets of cosmonauts continue shooting off:  
Shooting off as all of the stars of their nations die,  
As half eaten horses get up, but do so little good,  
As the enormous and poisonous centipedes dance  
Halfheartedly with little girls,  
As I call my best friends from their newly dug graves and we  
All stand like a chorus of flighting carolers outside  
Your bedroom's parlors, singing of the night's holidays,  
The banshees of misshapen housewives beating their  
Unkind hearted knell into the roof; and it rains broken horsehoes  
And hardnosed pix-axes;  
And the gypsies come like cold hearted butterflies and steal  
Everything, so in the morning our tree is gone, but your eyes  
Are still burning holes straight through the world that has killed  
Itself so many times for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Paper Airplanes And Dragonflies

Paper airplanes and dragon flies are the  
Code words I tell my seventh period class:  
Code words for spies  
And blue cars  
That fall asleep and make love together  
Not far from the sea  
And underneath the overpass—  
While mothers clean the linoleum;  
They are beckoned backwards by the slender sleuths  
Of their youths,  
As fireworks are stolen from underneath the noses  
Of baseball games—  
And witches float and spin in the sky—  
Beautiful delusions  
Making love above the parks of Michigan—  
And when it snows it is like  
Fire that warms the churches and all of  
Those grottos—  
While boys as young as I am wait outside  
The schools they never go to—  
Waiting for you to come out to show even the smallest  
Diamond of flesh to their naked eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Paper Heaven

Trying to break into Hollywood underneath  
A vaudevillian sky:  
All of the billboards are answering the cool shadows  
Of housewives  
Which roll off of their shoulders like cotton candy  
Or angora sweaters:  
And she still goes to work with my cousin:  
She still gets up in the morning to  
Paint those signs of blue berries and Indian  
Corn:  
But we don't make love anymore: I just masturbate  
And lie on the carpet with my dog  
And look up into the ceiling fans and into that  
Paper heaven where the airplanes of  
My miss calibrated soul keep turning around and  
Around.

Robert Rorabeck



# Paper Snowflakes And Ashy Cherries

Turn my sugar into alcohol.  
Rippling on the stamens of a dream,  
I watch the underbellies of your spaceships  
Leaping,  
Lucky-legged,  
Green eyed; but venal things:  
Each word a tomb I raid for you-  
I become so many John Does, lost in the spilt  
Forest of your bitten tongues;  
I get high for you, and steal things for crèches  
And mobiles,  
Kicking out the yard lights of popular romance  
Authors:  
I've been to the south of France chasing a guitar  
On Christmas, I have;  
And I've sold tannenbaums and strapped them to  
The roofs of family cars;  
And I am an honorary Catholic-  
I want to be a saint for you; I want you to  
Add one more hyphen to your name,  
I want to slip down the scree for you,  
And rest in your verdant bosom when the boss and  
Your husband is away and you have nothing to lose;  
And I am dying; and I want to die into you,  
While the sea is spitting like a venomous snake  
Who coils with me up your naked roots,  
Pale disavowing, wishing to whisper our ripened knowledge  
To you,  
While your husband is away cutting down mountains,  
And you are turning sideways, curious for awhile  
Rippling as if in a dream  
Not quite certain of the portent moving in like a flood  
Of dreamless things coughing paper snowflakes and ashy  
Cherries up to the neck of your doorstep  
Until you smile, askance, understanding that  
None of it is for real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Parable

I am an echo underneath the airplanes: they  
Keep going places,  
But it is only to make money while all of the goldfish  
Sit and languish  
So much like housewives:  
It is an unbusied, somnambulant enterprise:  
But they do it—  
This is the same as all of our truancies—voices of  
Strange children outside of the bedrooms of my house:  
While I no longer give flowers to any woman  
Not even my wife—  
I get drunk on the evening of good Friday,  
And remember there is a god at the end of the rainbow—  
Like a Titan at the end of the beanstalk  
That I wish to climb up to and steal from:  
As he tries to wed the stewardesses he has kidnapped  
While giving nothing special back to the world,  
As the chicken crosses to street to try and make it to  
The other side.

Robert Rorabeck

## Paris, Arizona

In the White Mountains of  
Northern Arizona this evening,  
The rain gently falls  
where I live,  
As if the earth has asked  
The sky to make soft  
Romance with him  
As the sun fell weeping  
Like a wandering monk  
Over the hills in the  
West,  
Lighting last upon Molly's  
Nipple rising up  
Perpetually areolaed in stone  
Where she sleeps  
Across the valley....

Soon the moon will slip  
Out of her tempermental  
Boudoir  
In her gown of beautiful  
Muted light, and  
The earth will ask her  
If she saw him making  
Love to the sky,  
But the moon will only shush  
Him  
With a finger of opal light  
And there she will glide  
Like a pale maiden  
Through a lake  
Looking for her burning priest  
Who, like you right now,  
Is running on the other side  
Of my world,  
Doing things which are  
Hidden from me,

But soon you will

See her too,  
As she comes to the shore  
And slips away again.  
For we sleep together  
In a garden where gods  
make love in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Parks Of These Dullards

passing on lies to their children  
the hangdog smiles  
of their own addictions  
words for moon  
copyrighted.  
they cloister in the suburban  
grottos  
that the beautiful  
and the shallow women  
are diademing.

looking up,  
see the moon framed  
by silhouettes of  
palm trees.

hear the ocean hushing  
in the great expanse  
of her bedroom.

she represents  
the boundless  
truth  
that last forever  
beyond  
the hapless and blindly

constructed  
parks of these dullards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Passengers Of A Thousand Skeletons

Scribbling in the places of naptime—drooling, stealing—  
Waiting for my Mexican uncle to come home  
And cook me devil shrimp—  
Smoking out of tinfoil next to the canal—  
Where a tree without any roots spreads across the fields—  
Where there are angels there,  
And entire castles woven out of the cypress—  
And a thousand other areas stolen by the ways the branches  
Bow—hiding the trellises of conquistadors—they with  
Their zink crosses painted blue—  
Stuck in the reservoirs where a thousand automobiles should  
Rust—tinkering with the folklore of alligators,  
And the silent plains—passengers of a thousand skeletons—  
And the clocks only the daylight of the sky—  
Wandering off a ways—looking for a sanctuary faster than itself.

Robert Rorabeck

# Passing

We are passing now;  
We don't need  
Guns;  
We're passing quick  
Enough:  
Our boys, and arrows,  
And our squaws  
All dancing in the  
Buff;  
We have no reason for  
These laws;  
We are passing quick  
Enough,  
Through the windmill of  
The devil's jaws:  
As with Judas, Brutus,  
And Cassius:  
We go down nine blocks  
On the bus,  
No time for lawyers, wives,  
Or trust:  
Its our destination or bust:  
We are all passing quick  
Enough.

Robert Rorabeck

# Past Of Absent Memory

I have placed you here in the rainstorm beside the pool—  
Made you into the aestheticism of  
Things that cannot spell:  
I have lost you here, and listened for you for a long while:  
I have grown a gut and I have rusted with the  
Bicycles that have been carried up from  
The sapplings metamorphosed into the springing trees:  
Thinking to find beauty in what we used to have—  
And not able to put it away—even though the pilots and  
Their stewardesses have turned into great uncles  
And aunts in the sky—watched forever by open jawed  
Titans, flatulent in their castles at the high end  
Of the beanstalks—where they have looted  
All of the gold of the stories I have tried telling you  
To bring you home from a past of absent memory.

Robert Rorabeck



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Robert Rorabeck

# Past The Mailboxes

Copper thighs gleaned by golden razors as  
The stewardesses prepare to fly; or as I road in a car  
The other night with a woman who looked  
Like a female super hero;  
And when we got back home, I touched her leg:  
I touched her thigh,  
It was as smooth as the ancestors in a river of a laughing  
Boy,  
And she ran away just as fleeted, like every girl whoever  
Half loved me,  
Promising me that at least a few of my lines were  
As beautiful as they could be: but she loved another boy,  
Another man, who was more impossible than I,  
And that I loved someone else besides;  
And I knew that her words were no good, but I watched her  
Throw them up anyways, like paper snowflakes in  
A saraband of sky; and they danced over the shoulders of a  
Pretend cowboy who pretended to bleed and die,  
As she got back into her car, out past the mailboxes  
And out past crepuscule; and underneath the airplanes and  
Pretended to drive away- Or I suppose, at least,  
That she really did drive away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pastoral

If you come running back to me now,  
Like a tamed deer back from its ventures in the woods,  
I will love you just as I ever did.  
See me put down my rifle and lay out my palm  
With sweet grain for you. If you come close enough,  
I will only pet you for as long as you stay,  
And I will not fence you in, though my pastures are green  
And I would have you in them.  
Not far from here there is a spring in a rock,  
Which I will take you to so you can drink,  
And paths which we might climb together which  
Go far up from the earth and are brushed by innocent  
Sunlight. Here, where the air is sonorous there are valley sides  
That lay rich in alfalfa, and purple cabbage for your tongue,  
And twists of ivy in rich green draperies hung down from  
The windows of our deities who we might look upon  
The great soft blue murals that arc through the effervescing  
Clouds. There we can listen to the first words the wind brings,  
The fluxuating temperaments of a golden orchestra,  
Strumming like fine instruments our vibrating souls,  
So we can feel one another without moving,  
If you come running back to me now.

Robert Rorabeck

# Path Of Your Uninvited Yesterdays

My misspellings are gone—as the rainbow is gone  
From beneath your shoulders—  
And don't you have any idea about what exactly we  
Are doing now—  
Burying ourselves like overused castles against the  
Sea I took you to once or twice—  
And wasn't that a pretty thing—and another lie:  
I told you that your beauty was just as great as  
All of that cerulean mask—the monstropolous houses  
Pressing neatly against our backs—  
And I took you upon the swing-sets of my childhood  
As they were just abandoned for one last time—  
And left derelict in their neighborhoods of classrooms,  
Like butterflies left like imperfect glass—up against  
Wherever it was that I remember you last—  
Hyperventilating - making a show of the uninviting  
Weathers—but I guess he entered you, anyways—  
Invading all of your paths of your  
Uninvited yesterdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Path Without Any Kings

Once again a path without any kings:  
Several hours taken up the slopes to the watchtower  
To see all of the valleys already burned  
By the fire—I seldom have time to  
Wonder,  
Teaching school down where the creeks have cut  
The valleys like seesaws—  
And the weathervanes look ludicrous up against  
The chapels of her weddings:  
But it is almost near where my grandmother and aunt  
Lie buried—  
They will never know of my weddings, or how  
I found my way up to her repeatedly—  
And laying off my gear in the holidays of midnight—  
Held my breath to a show of comets and airplanes—  
As my dogs painted their snouts into  
The raspberries  
Wreathing in the lazy summersaults of wind atop  
Of that summit where almost anything could be observed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Paths Of Airplanes

Softly embittering bruises on my flesh,  
Each as unique as a snowflake,  
As a rattlesnake's kiss- living underneath the diesel  
Paths of airplanes,  
Permitting to the horticulture of this un heavenly  
Place:  
With and without daylight and sunlight and moon beams,  
As the waves rise and breathe softly in crèches and  
Wreathes in which the mermaids cultivate  
Like a bosomy obstacle course, but no one believes  
Of them anyways- which only  
Increases their worth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Paying Cash

Paying cash, so I don't have to sleep alone,  
Though the tarmac is still hollowed as the rains come,  
And to the sides like pews in a wedding,  
The orchards hum to the lions of the wind, and this is a country  
Yet birthed, that I have seen in the brown prisms of your  
Eyes that skip around the daylight  
Like little girls in circular yards; and you make me feel so  
Warm about you, Alma,  
That my loneliness burns away like a good wish, like  
A prayer torn from the summit of a mountain,  
And I feel as if I can survive even if I don't yet really have you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Peacock Feathers

If you are getting up and coming off work,  
And your eyes are lamp shaded with little silhouettes  
Leaping and foraging like a giant zoetrope of  
A spaceship out in the desert,  
Then I don't know who you are; but I am betting that  
You make soap,  
Or you are like a student in Fort Collins, CO,  
And you have a bicycle, and you go that way across  
The lemonade promenade  
As you get up on the antediluvian plain of Long's  
Peak,  
And I have found arrowheads under your lip,  
And though I told you that you were beautiful, that was  
A long time ago,  
But it is even truer today, and the baby we should have had  
Creeps like lighter fluid through the grass- You see he  
Has learned to get up, our little gamma ray;  
But even if we'd had him by now, I am not a man who `  
Knows how to keep a women tightly pleased when her skin  
Is the perfect amber, her eyes like precarious though stalwart  
Bridges crossing the fjords,  
And her bosom the brown squeeze box,  
The peach fuzzed harpsichord- and you had no reason to love  
Me more than two seasons of a day,  
Because your thoughts are lighter than chicken feathers-  
You watch talk shows and wait for the fox to enter the coop,  
And it is a different fox with a new moon  
And yet their bright red tails are always such murderous fanfare,  
Like the throats of drowsing conquistadors, blushing  
Crustaceans in the nearly prehistoric beach, their jugulars severed  
By arrows feathered with proud birds like peacock feathers,  
Though now I am sure they no longer exist.

Robert Rorabeck



# Pedro's Siesta

Taking a siesta with pedro in the  
Middle of noon,  
Looking good for a ways and made  
A five dollar tip,  
Which you can do here all days.  
So yesterday old Betty said I looked like  
A blonde version of Aston Kutcher:  
I punched her several times in the eye  
To cure her glaucoma and reminded  
Her to call me Jodie,  
While the lights leave us, only to return,  
Like misunderstood and confused lovers  
Bighting their lips,  
Inadvertently letting the dog out.  
And I am in my bunk rustling with the  
Dry needles,  
Thinking of my dogs in Arizona- Trying to  
Become the boy good enough to drink her  
Wine,  
Wanting to pay her to hold her hand for  
A day at the zoo,  
Or for her to become my junoesque shade tree  
Budded, titted, something that could  
Move away at any minute  
With the traffic,  
And yet something indescribably more beautiful:  
Her breath my billfold  
While ducks like mock monarch butterflies  
Pretend to be swans in the man made lake  
Trying to look like the hazy resilience around  
Beautiful old age,  
Like a French impressionist I will always be too  
Insouciant to remember her name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Penumbras Of A Stranger

Beginning to grow beautiful-  
Metamorphosed by my letters and drinking  
Habits,  
Getting to be frenetic and daubed,  
Masked by the penumbras of a stranger:  
My face uniformly mottled like an ancient,  
Though subversive book of forgotten fiction,  
Or the next pseudoscientific hike of impossible mountains-  
My real scars now are hidden by my jean jacket:  
The hollow between my ribs hurts like sore  
Teeth, pulled out from where they took her,  
Like a restless, stolen flower;  
And now here on the mountain it is raining,  
And upstairs the simulacrum is drawing and singing  
The few things its French inventor gave it unique copper gears  
To draw and sing;  
And I have hidden on my person the lichen and pyrotechnics  
For the capital of a new bride; and so I sing to her  
From my body's convertible wounds- I fill it with my vociferous  
Ululations, and the trauancies stolen and hidden from  
School buses;  
And from my backyard, though it be endless, I encourage  
The hooped zebras to bend down in the mowed grasses and  
Kiss the hyenas even though they are breathless from taunting;  
And behind this the virgins are getting naked across the  
Canal, and now they are dousing and laying amidst the holy's  
Crinoline,  
Just as similar to the eclipsing blindness of a scene;  
and they are shivering in their rainy, crippled  
Bedrooms, uncrossed with letters awaiting, to be broken  
Beneath the waxen seals, like the lips of a queen or one  
Of her hyperventilating ladies in waiting.

Robert Rorabeck

# Penumbras Of Illegal Architectures

From the door: the window,  
Openings of senses that blind themselves,  
Words on their fingers  
Discovered by ants in the grasses undissolved before  
A bluer than blue house:  
While we all live together- goblins and unicorns,  
Preaching to our betters,  
As if trying to find out how to escape the genie's lamp:  
As the entire world has to dissolve  
Like smoke on the brink of her lips- Multiplying her  
In my house of bachelors:  
While I keep her uncle here, before he has to go away  
To marry his cousin in Mexico,  
Singing to her like the yellow songs of my witchcraft or  
My anyways,  
Ending up like snails on her pillow- awakening,  
She comes to me, wounded- I love her:  
I heal her- I give her my imperfect soul, my Alma  
Lost into her borders,  
She receives me-  
She gives me this atmosphere to breathe under, like a dog  
Who has discovered the milky tears of some  
Foul mouthed heaven:  
Like a fish who escapes the sea to bare its unfortunate  
Young,  
Only to return, empty handed- but watching the sunken  
Hemispheres as jingoistic fireworks explode in wonderful  
Penumbras of illegal architectures.

Robert Rorabeck

## Perfection Concrete In His Promise

She doesn't call and I learn to live alone in a hurricane,  
The disembodied eyes falling dead upon me-  
With each pupil dilating, I learn to step further from the  
Door to the soul and embrace the changing medium of  
The wind that sculpts mercilessly until I am the thought  
Unremembered,

I have no place in my body, when she moves so far away  
I feel her breathing next to me stepping out of my skin,  
My hand passes hers' as my thoughts drift back to the time  
That never was, like her lips on my body, pressing what  
She once was mercilessly against the flesh

She is the adaptation, the survival, when I am gone  
She is still here, making love to the boys and the bodies  
Who come her way and line up in her path,  
The curves evolution takes, the athlete's completion of  
The race, stoned,  
She lays in her bed and tries to remember how the rains  
Hit her once as she fell awake, loving something distant,

The passion of a daydream laying in the sun, she  
Walks down the hallway alone never thinking of the  
Possibilities sleeping out on her yard waiting for her to  
Step barefooted toward him, the imperfection of  
His immediacy, the perfection concrete in his promise.

Robert Rorabeck

# Perfection In The Perfect Lines

I have looked for perfection in the perfect  
Lines of a highway, diving equally like a fair cake;  
Or on the sweltering horizon of done where  
School buses skip like yellow, wavering stones  
In their waterless mirages, the way the killers move  
In their dress of heat- I gave my sister 200 dollars  
At her wedding, and now she hates me even as she  
Bandages up a stray kitten and sends it out to meet  
A rain so sure that it will turn to snow by latening  
Afternoon, and then upon the tawny shoulders of  
Little brown housewives, the most privileged class  
In their cavorting, leaping out like lost and wandering  
Elves into their amnesiac shopping, giving off the  
Alluring smell of freshly baked sugar cookies:  
Almost obtainable but perfect helpless in a sudden whiteout  
Where brilliant cars skid helplessly with sudden fireworks,  
And then rest, canned up again telephone poles and  
Evergreens, spilling such splendid guts of gift rapped  
Christmas gifts, while their leggy owners stumble out  
Perplexed and bummed, their cleavage already working  
Out magic for a stud fest, even though they don't  
Remember this store.

Robert Rorabeck

# Perfections Of Flames

Downed in the pantheon like Christians making  
Love to lions,  
Something triumphant as it dies into a bigger universe,  
The headlights of cars,  
Mismanaged into the many shops of songless birds:  
All of it equated by the strange ribbons  
Garlanding her wrists in the bathtub:  
The gifts of peasants- the atrocities of garish airplanes  
Trying to circumnavigate the Christmas tree:  
The misspellings of my soul  
Who has to awaken again and get up to work tomorrow  
In a world that doesn't know how  
To receive- a father flying up to his son who  
Burns him like a forest fire of lighthouses-  
The exfoliations of many legged angels upon the barks of  
Cypress until we get down to here:  
Until we get down to the bosom of nature, and sing to her  
Throat like a hidden fountain we drink from:  
With the foxes, and the silent turtles:  
Debased in a soul of forest fires: this Alma from Mexico,  
Trying to cross and re-cross the borders,  
The fronteras teaming with the mismanaged jungles of  
Serpents and fireworks- like chickens and dead  
Bodies telling jokes across the railroad tracks,  
Smiling at the flea markets of cerulean madness:  
Just to sojourn into her castle perilous,  
To sleep on her roof housing the brownness of her perfection,  
Until she awakens again,  
Forgetting us like a dream of a healed scar- and the sun  
Rises, and leaps as if a lion in its perfections of flames.

Robert Rorabeck

# Perfectly Pretty Rains

Filling up on the resin of god,  
The hateful spiteful mouths out of doors,  
When they could care less,  
Because they have them some bicycles and some  
Good hands of cards,  
And the sky is never judgmental:  
The sky is very sexy all the time,  
And you can fish so far into it,  
And it is like a great exhibit of Spanish women,  
Or girls name Sharon,  
But it doesn't cost a thing to stand and sit beneath her  
And imprint her to your tattooed soul:  
The sky doesn't give a care if you are not beautiful.  
The sky is always a prairie,  
And the sky is a dog lover who has perfect breasts  
And commercial airlines as chalices  
And necklace:  
I wanted to name the sky after you, but you just  
Laughed and stole my breathe.  
While in a coffin I surmised that you were even  
Prettier than the sky,  
I guessed and held on to the visage of you in the wild  
Blue yonder,  
Something untrue and wholesome for which to  
Pine and ponder  
Far into the afterlife, while the cars and chickens changed,  
But the sky held on forever to its sunny days  
And its perfectly pretty rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# Perfectly Round

Juvenile swings underneath the careless  
Pines  
With another thing doing,  
And biding its time:  
I want to love you- I want to masturbate  
And pet your oily coat.  
I want to bite your lip and feel the un struck  
Meat of your inner thigh,  
Like a lobster after it has done screaming,  
And skipping school,  
And dreaming:  
I want to put you there on the springs  
And pull your legs up like pedals,  
Or ride you like a bicycle,  
Like a butterfly over full Vietnam;  
And I wonder what your father had seen,  
Or thinks of you  
Now after he is gone;  
And I wonder if you can hear me even here,  
Whispering my body language,  
Writing you in my hand-signaling psalm,  
While airplanes stroke the night  
Like matches,  
And you lay down for your socially galvanized  
Stud,  
Another man who could never say this to you,  
Scooping my flowers of guts,  
Chumming the wake of infinite regrets,  
As if we were alone together in a room that was  
Un regrettably perfect,  
And perfectly round.

Robert Rorabeck



# Perfume

A great well crafted sting,  
Folded in the pages of a butterfly:  
Where the sea rises and breathes  
In the afternoon of epiphanies,  
Far away from the pines who are singing,  
Because even though they have  
Never seen you, they believe:  
I sat amidst them and watched  
The shadows craft the dying carpet,  
And whispered of my love,  
The sailing break of waves,  
The undulations that go perfectly uncontained:  
These stalwart men,  
These bowered sentinels,  
Breathing in ways you cannot know,  
Watch my language go off like fireworks,  
The cart wheeling performers out of caves,  
The stilted jesters lispng tunes,  
The jack-in-the-box out of tombs:  
We sat together like conspiring minors,  
Under the forgotten walkway of the grown-up world,  
And bowed as the wind came to us  
In whispers of your slicked limbs,  
The strut of abdomen sliding back the door,  
Getting out of the shower  
And blooming in your evening's room:  
I tell them you smell like saltlick and cinnamon,  
And your eyes are the haunted fires of hungry men:  
I tell them better poets could contain you  
In their potions, and I only hold the slightest notion,  
Of the ways and avenues  
That you come stepping towards us out of shattered gloom;  
But you must not disappoint them,  
As they are rooted in the eternal open,  
And I have become nothing but the  
Scattered bones about them, waiting for your  
Entrance, as the winds scent us  
With your perfumes.



# Perfumed Into The Ephemeral Dresses

Spelling this way, the wounded hound or bachelor,  
Unaccompanied beneath all of the windmills who are replete  
With her name:  
They dress up the hillside and spin and spin, like very  
Simple Ferris Wheels  
Hung up in the adulterous winds; and this is the way they sing to  
Me,  
And make me drunken, so I dropp my gun, and hang beneath the trains,  
Watching my wishes pullulate and the pop rockets  
To come down and lay beside me:  
Panting cenotaphs,  
They tell stories of the stained glass windows of churches,  
And that they got so high up as to see the top ornaments of  
The Christmas trees;  
And their hearts sung and whistled, until the farer winds left them,  
And they became the foundlings of airplanes;  
And thus here they lay, like little boys fallen from an endless sky  
Never to return again;  
And we can almost see the ships turning on their noses  
And burning,  
Burning: and the windmills churning, churning, perfumed into the  
Ephemeral dresses by which they so sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Permission

I am not asking you  
For permission,  
To make love to you with  
My own hand,  
Alone in this bed:  
I do it quite often,  
But I can still see....  
That my mother knows.  
Just as, I am not asking you  
For permission to write this poem,  
The little flecked note  
Tossed out of the nest,  
Yet having learned to fly:  
It is too early for it to become  
Anything but the crocodile's  
Feathered attribute,  
The sad proverb which  
Keeps it from drowning,  
Only to snuff it out before  
The fuse contacts gunpowder;  
I am not asking you  
For permission  
To end it before the curtain rises,  
And the false applause;  
I am not asking you  
For permission,  
For I never intended  
To reach the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Perpetually And Again

All laid low in the patio of sun: after school and in the sun  
Then the day is green populated by her dresses,  
And if the day is green, how you swim across him like a dream  
Thought of by the busses who have removed you from  
Me once again; but I will see you once again tomorrow, if I don't  
Skip school again,  
To think of you while scooping the silver roe with my hands,  
Scooping up the tinsel of minnows, watched by the horned rimmed  
Stares so crocodilian that they should not care how I miss you  
And think of you on and on, perpetually and again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Persevered

Well then I fought the monsters  
And then I fought their  
Young:  
So like tattooed stewardesses with  
All of their body scars:  
And they were so flexible,  
And they were gymnasts—or then they  
Were entire constellations  
And we were hanging around until Christmas  
Across the easements—we were  
So easily hung up—mouthless—song-bird less,  
And I swore that you could not describe  
My last monument towards you:  
But the way to you turned out to be in echoes  
And skateboards while the alley cats  
Were cleaning their mouths of fried chicken and other  
Uncertain forget-me-nots—  
Dastardly awakening upon the frontier between here  
And Mexico,  
And why won't you awaken—muse with my better  
Parts and brown, brown shoulders,  
But now it is too late: the men you know  
Are already playing golf and it is almost Christmas  
And this is the way they sing,  
Song birds in the body parts taking their own  
Orchestras for themselves: because I don't want to  
Fall asleep—to go forever into the bedrooms  
I cannot afford,  
And some enlightened hemisphere slips over  
The graveyards and the children, once again,  
Are arisen over the forlorn places where they were  
Qualified to have persevered.

Robert Rorabeck

# Personifies

I will not see Diana tomorrow.  
What I'll do is travel straight across this  
Peninsula fat and strung off of shell-fish,  
Leaping with my young family to see a  
Great uncle,  
A father figure who's good at tennis:  
In the moribund sport of trailer parks,  
The sea in its unending spume of caged sparrows;  
Then I will think of Sharon,  
Her world a music box in Colorado, turning snowflakes  
As delicate of souls,  
Making real movies:  
Then I will think of Sharon and the make-believe of  
Her daughter  
As we pass so many billboards and alligators, both of  
Those species, selling the same thing to the eyes,  
Products of peace and sanctuary,  
Gifts of a dying body to feed and nourish the animalistic  
Deity, like a fuguing trumpet  
My muse of open spaces and ice covered slides  
Personifies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Perspective

Learning the imperfections of my desire:  
I go again, the weapon of a game in my hands- taking swings with  
Regression- taking words as they come like  
Raindrops, savage tears, vanishing children on milk cartons that  
The hypnotized glass blowers over use:  
Drunken, and carrying on over each new succession of the perfectly bluing  
Hills, so that by morning they have new marriages  
And new children;  
And they step outside into the tiny front yard where all of the out of  
Work kidnappers are having a street festival:  
And the overeager serpent is up in his citrus tree, curled there and talking  
To whatever pretty girls still survive who have yet to taste him;  
But traveling around still further, past the diminutive slayings  
The dogs have overdone to the rabbits in the echinopsis of the rock  
Gardens over night: and there to the grottos of the car port,  
Where whatever goddess that was always promised is still there, like  
The sweet nectar of oasis bare breasted behind the electric semen of  
A naked extension chord, practicing a housewife's pieta before the  
Washing machine,  
As the conquistadors who havent yet eaten themselves lay around like  
Cenotaphs and spent bottle rockets in the backyard, adding perspective  
To her beauty.

Robert Rorabeck



# Pestilent Orchard

Outside, fishtailed palms  
Exaggerate the wind which has come from  
Underneath the overpass:  
And down in Miami, my parents are  
Selling Christmas trees-  
My father is not talking to me,  
A coward-  
As the conquistadors christen the strata  
Into which they remain anonymous  
Landmarks-  
As she swims away, an entire fair of my  
Heart,  
Pulsing like a brown jelly-fish:  
She will go into the many nights of her  
Family,  
And return even more assured- just  
The flirtations of nonsense over the graveyards  
And the churches that I busy with her  
Uneven promises-  
Lines on my wrist casting out fortunes-  
Another night spent alone,  
And my skeleton a pestilent orchard into which  
Sleepwalks her unicorns.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pet Cemetery

My dog will never see  
Death, nor know him  
When he comes,

But death will own  
My dog,  
And his master,  
Upon whom that scent even  
Now buds

Like wet copper exposed to  
The sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Peter Redgrove

While I am here another poem,  
A crapshoot at eternity, a roll of dice,  
I carve my name into the auburn sky:  
This is my tourism, my saccharine hobby,  
Like an infant masturbating, the pseudepigripha  
In full bloom, she wished to take me by  
The hand to the football game where the  
Fantasy of her lovers waited toothily,  
But I hid away in the rain and recorded the sounds  
Of under aged ghosts pattering on the infinite  
Linoleums of suburbia. Should I go back to  
School to stem the tide of fading away?  
Or should I just walk to the east until I  
Begin swimming, this is the dilemma, and the reason why  
I cannot meet her gaze. I remember the first  
Time she showed me her c&nt unshaven in the  
High school of her incensed bedroom, and the  
Waves of another feeling, the fieldtrips of  
Presupposed sex: we share the same birthday,  
But now she is married to the tribe of her own flesh,  
Insularly, hymned- On weekends they shoot off  
To Disney World, admire the lavender alligators  
And watch how Cinderella is kidnapped, abused,  
Their farts a curtain cadence: he stops to buy  
Roadside fireworks, she thinks of me, she guesses,  
But I am not even good enough for this,  
I can't even recall what it was, little more than an  
Easy trick so early in the morning I was  
The only one that was up.

Robert Rorabeck

# Philosophy Of The Motionless Tribute Band

Too old to care now what lays just over those hills.  
I used to go out all the time and dream of you,  
And walk up her curls like a fairy-tale-  
I wanted to take you there, even while you were all pearly  
In your bars.  
Sometimes, the rain fronts must have reached us twice,  
And the same cars, sunny-day tourists on their way to visit  
Grandmother at Disney World;  
But eventually I have to move on. Even dogs die after  
A few years, and I love them;  
Its time to take down the lights of my tribute band,  
And stop dying my hair: Even Arthur Rimbaud lost his  
Leg when he couldn't find anything else to sell.  
And the bouquets I sent a decade ago must have wilted by now.  
We were born into similar cornfields, but you didn't care:  
All you had to say is that our seasons didn't swing together,  
And you pouted for other boys in all those photographs:  
You don't have to remind me that I'm not there. And yet,  
Stephen King recommends writing four to six hours a day;  
And the miracle is I'm doing that- Sometimes still using you like  
A crutch, I never go outside and practice on windmills,  
But I'm still here taking my little turns, making a usual little sister  
Out of your frightened soul: And the playground is open under  
The moon in full swing, so I have no reason to move.

Robert Rorabeck

# Phoenix

When I saw you after several years,  
You were the young motion of a god learning  
To walk for the first time, as the cars blew by you,  
And how many thirsty boys the same as me did not  
Turn your way, their visions focusing from the blur,  
The eyelids hooked on that form you had taken to  
Showoff how delightfully you could shape the flesh, but it was  
Only I who knew you for what you were, and loved  
You for it, for I could remember coming to find you  
Before I was born, in those first lives where my soul  
Found itself suited in ancestors, I saw you there serving  
Drinks before they invented electricity, you went  
Well with kerosene lamps hissing with the taste  
Of vinegar on the tongue and the sprawling lawless towns  
Of the prairie, where you were the only decoration,  
Too delicate to touch, you somehow survived outside  
In the wind on the yellow grass, all of that which was  
Part of you spread out unto the roots of mountains,  
Which were yours as well, and so to recognize you  
Now, and to see the sway of every sea in your hips, you  
Could wonder how I could just drive on by as you  
Jogged the other way, taking everything beautiful,  
but read this now for that was  
Near a decade ago and still the vision remains, behind  
It all is all I see, you there, a fine young god moving  
For the first time in that decoration of flesh, now speared  
Like a blazing sun in back of my eyes never to burn out,  
So that when this too dies, those of my offspring sure to  
Remember will see you for what you are, an eternal thing  
Meant to flit and leap your beauty through their windshields  
So that they too feel the familiar longing you've brought down through  
their ancestry, thus what you are remains always as you pass them by.

Robert Rorabeck

# Picasso's Pugalist

All I can really say is that my new face  
Looks like Picasso got punched,  
And that's okay: a little crooked, like President  
D\$ck, unsymmetrical, but big,  
Like Dolly Parton's tits- Some things which  
Are real: speedy motorcycle, hearse's right-of-  
Way, sea-shanties which stormy areolas mermaid:  
The phone rings from another planet,  
Or demoted Pluto- I think its just you, but it never  
Is: Solicitors, tax collectors, sisters.... Rivers  
Run to the sea, but that is not where you can find me,  
So for very long I've been reading naked in the igneous  
Rockslides of her undraped back, crooning-  
Video games say I'm overweight, but they're stupid,  
As the hands arrest empty Michigan, your groom's  
Flannel tuxedo accordions- When you didn't answer,  
As you can see, it was a Holocaust, a default,  
The bankruptcy of a favorite super center- The trick  
Lady's overweight shoulders shrug, and we light off  
Fireworks: Semis honked, this is the great America stretching  
Its independence until it wakes up in the morning;  
Then I pantomime questions I wish to ask you, as my dogs  
Begin the jumping games of amnesiac foxes,  
And from bashful angles my face stares back at me like  
An unsymmetrical mansion, something I grew up into,  
A tire swing's ellipse into the arcade of branches,  
I hold up to show everybody as they try to guess who it is.

Robert Rorabeck

# Picking Time

Pools of accordions, and other young wind instruments:  
If I'd died young, I'd never have written this underneath the softly  
Pleasing penumbras of the wingspans of airplanes  
Even as they slipped away,  
Like the sluicing rabbits through the vines, and like their  
Very four legged souls through my very four legged mine:  
I have seen her there in the morning like a cenotaph for a wave  
Who was breaking against the rose bushes of the fort for the  
First and the last time:  
And this was her journey, and her beauty, while she finally laid  
Down in bed with him, for the first and the last time:  
And her name was Alma, a muse, a candle lit for a saint in  
A lactating grotto deep inside the inebriated amusement parking  
Of my picking time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pickpocket

Pool and cuddle in the amalgam of  
Centipedes,  
Which is the same as seeing a fire's orgasm  
With the sky so alarmed that it removes  
Its curtains,  
Compromising the sunbathing maidens of an inkless  
Justice,  
As the mountains arise over the prostrate Samurai  
And nudge the burred chins of the gypsy angels  
And the homeless men are taking the ski-lifts up from  
The wigwams of the dancing chicken,  
Filibustering the  
Christmas tree lights of an irreverent police. Nothing is  
Made secure;  
Our hands out for alms; but we are very rich:  
In fact those are our yachts over and across the sea,  
A sea of men who you so casually fish.

Robert Rorabeck



## Pickup Lines And Lipstick

Sometimes while delivering pizzas in  
Gainesville, random girls would ask me  
To pick them up and take them with me  
Dressed up to go dancing with  
Men they did not know- this, they said,  
Was their best chance to find a husband  
Who would love them and drive them  
Places for the rest of their lives.

I told them to hop in and then I drove  
Off campus with them. They sometimes  
Would tell me they weren't wearing any  
Panties, and then they would ask for a  
Slice of pizza, please,

I never argued,

And, applying my foot to the gas,

All I needed was a pair of frosted

Shades and a hard on

And I was a NASCAR driver

Making my qualifying loops around

The college,

Where women came out of their

Apartments wearing nothing but their

Pickup lines

And lipstick.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pie For Breakfast

Beauty is the pinholes through a forest  
The trucks of families drive around, lost children  
In them never figuring on the conflagrations  
Of the heavens: they are going to the amusement  
Parks beside the sea,  
Beside the fort of roses where the nameless working  
Girls get buried,  
And the hillsides of pinwheels turn their heads  
Trying to kiss the butterflies who echo down  
From airplanes: they seem to dance a zoetrope  
Of yellow horses,  
And the sun milks them, and gives them buttercups  
As lovers to kiss and attend,  
As the tourists return back to their homes-  
And you languish in the brown apertures  
That open up revealing your children  
And a line of would be lovers holding in their  
Hands what they hope to be enough tokens  
To kiss you and to feed you pie for breakfast.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pigmentation Of The Shadows

Pigmentation of the shadows,  
But there isn't any other way to start out  
If you are any other tadpole on a journey—  
And all of the dry fields cannot be counted,  
As my very own parents send me on adventures,  
Licenses for fireworks and for Christmas trees—  
It isn't very beautiful, having to look at my  
Own self in the mirror,  
As they sell their very own beauty to the racehorses—  
As the daylight comes up over the battleships of  
The pacific theatre—  
And there happens to be a joy remembered by  
The boy scouts that shot off roman candles towards  
A jubilee of the zeppelins—  
Until it really happened, and someone else had become  
The victor, and the flowers bloomed for the  
Movie theatres,  
And the boys played with themselves far into  
The midnights of the bedrooms of their very own  
Toys.

Robert Rorabeck

# Piling Up Their Roses

Thirty three years to divide all of this stuff:  
Burning up the newspaper of my open wrists and armpits  
To keep warm,  
Or to be recognized by the mermaids all curling in their  
Pits,  
While I've made them underneath the overpasses:  
And, recognizing their perfumes,  
I call them all up from the over priced rhymes of orange  
Fields,  
And undress them into baseball diamonds- while my  
Mind is gone,  
And the field is not blue- the field is not blue,  
Because my muse is being turned out by another man,  
And all of this is the day gone Shakespeare out on double  
Display in the dime store courts of another man's  
Ferris wheel:  
And there she goes, and there she comes again,  
Taking off her cloths, and putting them on again, and yet  
Singing so sweetly, as the world slips around my ears,  
Taking off her clothes again, unbudding her roses,  
And swearing up the streets that the airplanes wish they  
Were stamping  
That she will be around again, only so that her gardens will  
Finally have to lay off of her long hallucinations  
And have to take final rest in the long and glazed fields,  
Where the butterflies were superimposing- if only if because  
They are always lighter than air, and only if because  
That was always what they hoped they would one day asked  
To be changed into,  
While from them the days turned on, piling up their roses,  
And giving up their wishes even to the wishes that never was.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pillaging Airplanes For Stewardesses

Upping the revelations-  
Cypress trees who are like my sisters getting out  
Of their bath of everglades;  
They call up to their sisters, stewardesses  
Leaping in airplanes after their john does:  
Diademed with  
Red echinopsis and katydids- their nipples  
Bristle- like banshees all  
Around Disney World,  
While the alligators wait forever- they've been  
Doing the same thing forever,  
As the panthers keep eyeing the key-deer,  
And the tourists drive through the smoke and  
Ash- soon, they will be home  
And emptying their refrigerators: but I will  
Be here, keeping time out of  
Doors-  
And once my beanstalk grows, I will climb it  
Up to you,  
And I will sleep on your roof, and I will stand  
Eye to eye with helicopters-  
And when I want to come down, I will use  
My roman candles as flairs against  
Your windows,  
Insisting in my holidays, that you let me  
Into your bedroom to make love while the giant  
Is out pillaging airplanes for stewardesses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pilots For Christmas

The champions sang their songs whilst I was sleep  
Or, rather,  
They laid down and made love in the carport underneath  
The ceiling fan and the other bothers  
Of paper airplanes and tangerine spores:  
And whatever art there was about me forgot itself and  
Settled down to watch racecars  
Going around one specific scar of the earth like hula-hoops—  
As the cowboys looked brazenly under the skirts of  
A barbwire waitress who had come down from  
The gaslight only the night before—  
Metamorphosed from a stewardess while the planes  
Leapt into a blue and weeping sky—  
And the children tucked themselves in for Christmas  
While their fathers, all pilots,  
Were forever so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pink Lemonade

I put down these last words  
Like a street vendor selling sacks of  
Oranges in Miami, out on the  
Granite rivers where I have seen her hips sway,  
And wished that she might know my name,  
So that I might be invited over to her house  
In the drowsy hours of a humid afternoon,  
Fix an easy lunch of white bread and bologna,  
To lie and sweat out in the green  
Swath of her backyard, to let my fingers stretch  
Across the pink tongues of lawn chairs,  
To touch her thigh and feel it quiver,  
To dab the mustard seed from the creases of lipstick,  
Such a lackadaisical utopia without periodicals,  
Our mouths closed, her eyes hidden by cheap  
Sunglasses, but the meaning lucidly sweated,  
As the waves perpetuate daylight prisms,  
To go down easy knowing all the definitions,  
The tributaries by which she might be reached,  
And then let go again, released to become  
the alluringly anonymous woman walking  
Through the sultry arches  
where the concrete falls like the architecture  
Of urban playwrights, where blinding shadows echo that  
Precision geometry's noir, and yet her body flows just like  
An orchard, and the tiny white buds which perfumed  
Against the surreptitious press of my tongue,  
Between sips of pink-lemonade, and other things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pinpointing Our Souls' Heady Altitude

Broken records of balmy amnesia-  
Everyday reading like a farmer's almanac in  
A cloister of Sundays;  
The socking meat has vacated the oysters,  
And esplanades are f&cking rich with sand.  
My life proceeds with no moisture,  
No feminine hand in my hand, no line to drop  
Anchor-  
Fading, enchained by bothersome amusement,  
I petition for a look into your eyes,  
For a dream, to feel wonder and real merriment,  
To be a ripple in your lake,  
To be the solitary moon joined by a captured  
Satellite,  
And to look coincidentally with you, past the rushing  
Sanctions of commodity,  
The traffic repeating into unsatisfying homes,  
And see those very apexes brushed in the reflecting  
Light of another sea on the other side of the world,  
As if our eyes were reflecting through a corridor in  
A lake,  
Pinpointing our souls' heady altitude.

Robert Rorabeck



# Pinwheels Circumnavigating The Earth

Featurette of butterflies across the canal-  
Or in the effervescing playgrounds where  
My parents left me-  
To piss my pants, as my very first sister  
Cried for me:  
Not very far from where my vanishing muse  
Lives now,  
Just like an extinguishing candle on her  
Birthday,  
Just as she will die for him a thousand times  
As the serpent strikes up at the  
Sky- unlucky-  
And I will vanish, myself chasing my muse  
Around the rock garden my parents  
Never proceeded to have corrected:  
Alma- Alma- isn't this your last song,  
And what do you know of Mexico now, anyways-  
While I've just tried to love you like a vanishing  
Thought through the poisonous midway  
That sees me out dying in the graveyard  
Over which all of the airplanes fly and the  
The bicycles vanish-  
As I've loved you into the rest stops of all of  
These skeletons, perfuming their favorite graveyards-  
In the bones of their particular amusements-  
Blooming, as the alligator yawns,  
But never grows young, as all of my old muses  
Faint for themselves in the make-believe confections  
Over the migrations of their earliest  
Sororities- so the day sweats off its fireworks of  
Its sweetest confections-  
And pinwheels circumnavigate the earth over  
The cherished neighborhoods where, like plum trees,  
The memories of your buttery lips  
Still seem to perplex the heavenly furrows soldiering  
My lost friends again into the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Place For My Shoulders

I want a place for my shoulders—a home beside the carport,  
And a Pieta when it rains and all of the horny toads come in from  
The rain forests and congregate across the cinderblocks  
That are painted blue—  
And there is a statue there of my mother—or somewhere  
Nearby, my father is setting up a tent and selling fireworks  
Or he is selling Christmas trees—  
Beneath the dinner table of those opulent pornographies,  
We have already gone through so many extinctions—  
Now time skips us across the sea, not knowing that we  
Are just a baseball team out back of some innocuous high school—  
And forgetting that she is already falling out of love  
With a man she has a hard time remember,  
Inaugurating the process that she will begin forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# Places You've Never Believed To Look

Morning of heirlooms  
Waiting for Diana to come on her bus,  
Roller-skating the aisle,  
Enough for the both of us;  
To take me off to work or school,  
While the airplanes blast off the golden rule-  
Or I can play hooky and sleep with the  
Cowardly lions,  
I can go places you've never believed to look.  
There are naturally occurring crèches down in  
The soft pits of wayward cypress,  
With the broken hearted doves and their  
Lovely cormorants;  
Don't you know strange girl, bartender,  
I can go there or to class, but it doesn't matter  
Anyway- I am always thinking of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plagiarism And Sunlight And Stars

Eon is your number as it flies over a wing of a hummingbird that remains  
In her bedrooms:  
After all of the heavens come alight with gasoline spilled over the fireworks:  
And their wombs are alighted by all of  
That pretty stuff, until all of the cars park and are enamored  
And so make love:  
And the sea gives a wave, as if saying goodbye to ancestors or  
Lovers,  
And she says it's okay to strike a match off of her—and then she is  
Going—going: yes, she is a pretty bird,  
And then she is all thumbs,  
And we cannot despise her—she is a rhythm in the thoraxes of the  
Trees,  
And then she is almost married,  
And then she says the pledges of allegiance, and then  
The phone rings—  
And I touch our lips underneath some Christmas of some mountain—  
With the snow coming down,  
And our dogs are kissing foxes—and the rest of it is  
Plagiarism and sunlight and stars....

Robert Rorabeck

# Plagiarisms Of The Sunlight

Plagiarisms of the sunlight happen every day,  
As we get up and go  
To our classrooms just to look at the  
Girls who tell us about the weather—  
When, outside, it is the  
Real men who get to enjoy that,  
And the bums underneath the overpass,  
Licking the foam off beers  
And staring at the tortoises that bask with  
Them,  
While we stand and yawn to the pledge of  
Allegiance  
And the songs canter like the sun around the  
Earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plagiarized With Incest And Cannibalism

Pretty words for flowers  
Lost at the fingertips of an idiot:  
Words for flowers  
Repeated to fire-trucks, but they  
Don't care:  
Words for sea- and the waves the answer  
Them:  
Flea markets above the ground, underneath  
The overpass,  
Thoughts of rain and sunlight,  
And stolen bicycles- the day comes to the earth  
In its ellipses, figuring out itself,  
Traveling through its preordained mishaps:  
And something about its death is beautiful,  
And even more so when it is forgotten:  
On this day of trailer parks when the swing-sets  
Are taken down,  
And her lips are buried into pillows:  
The roses have died- the children are with the  
Rattlesnakes: her man has left town,  
And road winds around, dirty and plagiarized with  
Incest and cannibalism.

Robert Rorabeck

# Planet Of Oxygen

Without my neighbors,  
I will die in a planet of oxygen,  
Falling down from the mountains into Silver  
City, like an immaculate surgical cut  
In New Mexico,  
Where the freighters move like lonely echoes  
Across the drowsy country, our America.  
Off the road, strippers swim in their lucrative  
Aquariums, in the forgiving lights where  
Folded dollar bills smell like flowers,  
Lap dances the races of love-  
They go home to sleep in a tin garden of  
Fermented trailers,  
Preserved beneath the wizardry of heaven,  
Where helicopters take up like dizzy birds,  
And grandmothers in nickel make-up  
Wake up early in the evening to go serve black  
Coffee at the truck stop, like a thick and  
Greasy estuary dug by crocodiles for their brides  
From the translucent speeding highway,  
The dry-throated Amazon, where newlyweds with  
Blond hair and freckles scream and laugh out their  
Windows,  
Clasp cigarettes like freedom which is quickly ashes,  
The red lights moving away, a flowering of hibiscus  
And their floral cadavers- Each light leads to somewhere  
Lonely, and homes trickle outward like thirsty tributaries:  
Spilling down from the mountain, this cemetery-  
And the walking, talking bones blundering unaware  
In thick veils of time-capsule oxygen, the nights and  
Her music blow so softly that we are fretted,  
Blow so softly that the buses move like bloodhounds  
Searching for her from New York to San Francisco,  
Blow her saintly sadness between the Atlantic and Pacific,  
As if we had found her and now ride in her bosom,  
But the planet of oxygen is not sure that she loves us,  
For in any number of her rooms, with our body's walking  
Ceaseless, there we have found exchanges only sadness.





# Planets Of Our Earth

I am scarred: I eat penny candy, just as I would  
Have eaten your cunt;  
My grandmother doesn't give a lick about me, but she  
Gives a lick about her seven runts;  
And this isn't a novel, of course: This isn't your novel,  
Your lucky number, or nimble horse:  
This is my new Sabbath on another night of my discombobulated  
Intercourse:  
This is just how I drown everything I've ever had into the  
Anonymous canal;  
This is just how I get the liquor out and make friends with  
Shadows:  
Shadows, or cats name Shadow, or Lucifer, or so much worse;  
Oh, If I had only been Mark Twain or some other well spoken  
Jerk,  
I fear you would have given me something more than one French  
Kiss:  
Something more than this, Kelly, knowing that I have loved you  
For as long as fifth grade, and if I had more balls, I'd made out with  
You in the shade of a Catholic church,  
Or something worse; but you have given me names to remember:  
To remember; and you should always remember,  
Remember, Kelly, that while we went up to Washington DC together  
Like a snowbell in line to be wed, that  
I had always loved you then, and I will love you still,  
While the nights flicker on and off: until my very soul is the ash  
Of a defused light bulb: yes, Kelly: yes- I am no charlatan:  
Though recluse, I will love you still, Kelly: even while my  
Father's horses pummel their valley of scuppernongs, Kelly:  
O, I will love you until death, Kelly; and O,  
Kelly, long afterwards: long after your body cannot figure:  
I will love you then, even while the heavens make unto them new  
Planets of our earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plastic Bourgeoisie

The doctor spanked me from my mother's  
Womb and handing me over to her said,  
"Here he is, " and she held me and cooed  
And said my name, which was the best news  
I had heard up until then:  
And my first word was goat,  
While my first lover's word was hot,  
But she left me six years ago to marry a Jewish  
Lawyer in South Florida;  
And now I think it not inappropriate to say,  
That my word was better,  
And that, considering the magnetic dictations  
Of her routine Diaspora, that what became of her: a  
Paralegal with a hyphenated last name,  
With a sports utility vehicle  
And a ways to go, savage irony:  
Like the name of a hair band, her parents condemned  
Her to a lifetime of dinner conversations at seemingly  
Upscale restaurant chains, and on special occasions  
Places that require a dress-code,  
And light conversation without scars:  
The daffodils above her head are plastic, like the  
Mezuzah hung in the doorway in place of a Catholic  
Cross: But she is not without guilt, doing her  
Casual betrayals, and paying for Chinese with  
Her thirty pieces of silver on Christmas:  
When, even on informal holidays, she might see me slipping  
In and out of the caesuras with my bawdy mermaid,  
Drinking to my dysfunctions with cheap rum:  
I had lost my way, but remembering the name  
My mother had given to me, the guttural Ango-  
Saxon: goat, as in,  
Robert saw the goat out in the fields of Michigan,  
And felt happy,  
Kindled such individual faith that she should never know,  
And I keep from her when she is even far away and not looking,  
My first word grazing out in the frozen fields of upper peninsulas,  
So that I should never have to experience again,  
That easier language she has used to regale herself even while

She burns her hand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plastic Cowboys

Now the teams have numbers and plastic  
Cowboys carefully settled with their gun hipped  
Atop the terrapin;  
And toy boats sitting around my aunts undeveloped  
Breasts in the bathtub before my yet living grandmother  
Yelled at both of us to get out:  
That aunts and nephews should no longer play that  
Way at eight or seventeen;  
But we hadn't realized we were going to die,  
And had only been rumored of Adam and Eve:  
The earth was sleeping in its furrows in utopias of ants:  
And we could grow larger together by exploring each others  
Pants,  
But nothing matters know but slipping into the city,  
The city of aliens and strangers, and the barges with their  
Boxes of fireworks which couldn't be anymore real,  
That still slip empirically like sleeves of velveteed concrete  
Under the low hanging bridges and the sheriff badges of stars  
Annoying all the valiant people who are still  
Trying to kill themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plastic Flowers

Little broken birds with broken  
Wings  
Never to return to homes  
Or arks—  
They fall right here,  
At the feet of leopards  
And pizza parlors  
And other places  
I would prefer to live:  
After my second child is born  
And I have shaken all of the remnants of  
Muses out of my head—  
And then, in the perfect anonymity of  
Used book stores  
I can grow a beard or, stepping outside,  
Show my scars to the moon—  
At least, nearing the end,  
I will be with my imperfect wife  
In the bosoms of mountains—  
The muses I began with—  
In the snows—  
And I will languish in anonymity  
That was clan destined,  
Tossed towards the lakes like the  
Pornography of a rusted chassis—  
Like the uneaten rind of  
A cherry pie—  
I will languish with the half feral  
Dogs and the floppy discs—  
And somehow, in the middle of the  
Night, we will take on an adventure game,  
While the alligators bask in the  
Glow of the canals  
Of the tropical amusement parks  
And zoos  
Where only my dayglow shadows remain—  
And I will make my peace from the tippy-top  
Of the conifers—  
From there I will sniff up the skirts

Of stewardesses  
And I will hang on for the ride,  
Hoping that she comes down the chimney in  
Time for chistmas—  
And even if she is mythological,  
Hoping that she at least buried some diggable  
Arrowheads  
Around the circumference of my perimeters  
So at least I will not have to steal the plastics flowers  
From atop of her make-believe grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plastic Roses

Primitive candle glowing like  
Rum in my head—like one last wishy-washy  
Dream  
Abed in a trailer park of cathedrals  
And you can walk down from  
There—  
Down from the white trash basins that sing of  
The sweat of cousins,  
And collect their tears,  
Like panhandling doves: you can follow  
The medians with the migrating bears—  
And you can set out on a quest  
To the flea markets of the gossip towns:  
It all lays waiting for you  
At the very end as the same day we supposed—  
Lying down together in a graveyard of  
Plastic roses—  
Cadavers taking another shot,  
Stewardesses doing another round.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plate Tectonics

They passed away this time with the  
Nearing of Spring; there were no more  
Undiscovered lovers sleeping in the grottos,  
In the fault-lines of continents,  
And the dictionaries carried like  
Newborns in the wisest of hands  
No longer held the slightest of meaning,  
And even hummingbirds were too big to understand,  
Where they lay suspended,  
Motionless above the wilted lips of consciousness;

For here everything was clearly mapped,  
Raped by the cartographers and put out on the streets,  
The war was settled and the dominate race had won,  
Now busy fucking new buildings miraculously  
Into being along great highways where  
Young children shot out of the  
Thighs of sexy automobiles, and  
The face of God on every billboard as the  
Families caravanned to see the undead wonders of  
Disney Land, down 75 where alligators lay nude in  
The shadows, waiting for sunlight for miles around

The Father and Son selling sports cars with  
Full color ads in Bibles, and their smiles toothpaste,  
With the asphalt charisma that entombed the naiads  
In the sea; they would all get laid out back on  
The dirty straw beside the camels and wise-men  
When their shifts ended and the plates of the earth  
Moved ever so slightly, making little protest.

Robert Rorabeck



# Plated Upon Another Day

Palmettos panting in the frosty glade  
Easter eggs lying where they were laid, and the sun  
Going up and mollifying the earth like  
A stone  
The pantries being raided while the heroes are  
Un home  
And the bold earth is lying with the yard  
The dogs are basking in the perfumes of the spirits  
Acquainted with the tulips  
It seems as if each four legged creature is in love,  
And it is not hard to find them out  
In the open  
Believing that they are free to leap through the keyholes  
Into their latchkey homes  
While the sugar canes burn across the canal  
And the lions wait yawning their yellows across the  
Concrete, like eggs running waiting for their  
Breakfast to be plated upon another day

Robert Rorabeck

# Plathe Isn'T Free Anymore

Neon stars are open in the sky,  
Advertising for aces and high flyers  
While I lick my finger  
And try to psych myself up for another poem:  
I haven't been able to look at myself outside  
Anymore;  
It has been so long since I've tasted a woman's  
Lips who didn't appear invisible  
Swinging from the boughs of the orange tree  
In my backyard-  
The alligators slip in,  
Passengers sleep just under the surface of  
The canal,  
And the girl I don't know anymore goes along  
Her way- She watches the men proceed,  
But I don't want to live here anymore,  
Because they say that poets are unattractive,  
And look at me,  
And the words they form, misappropriated glass  
Returned to the kiln's glowing womb,  
Birds shot from the sky and stuttering in the  
Grass, waiting for the mastiff's jaws  
As the cars drive by such busy aphorisms of another  
Keen season,  
And I write to them like dressing up for a celebration  
And the clouds move in and stomp their feet to  
Get off the weather,  
And the swing sets creak like old silver over my shoulder,  
The dullness of linear professors  
Floats over the lake, while the ghosts of little children  
Snag their trousers on the little white cenotaph;  
It is cold out here,  
But through the window I can see her voluptuous tulips  
Blowing up balloons,  
Laughing, slapping her knee and taking a moment  
To bend down to kiss him,  
Watching cartoons.



# Playground Of Voluptuous Catastrophes

Churches and playgrounds where  
The kind hearts recede—  
And the lilac airplanes can be seen doing anything to  
The purple hemisphere—  
Just like arrows fleeing Valentine's Day—and  
Other echoes  
Called from the tulips of housewives—  
There they are on their verandas imaging that they could  
Be making love with the  
Mailman or the milkman—until he comes, and he looks away—  
They go back the mirages in the grottos of their  
Kitchens—the evolutions of their destiny—  
They keep trying to remember the schools they attended  
And the boys they loved—  
But their thoughts keep eluding me—as I write to them  
And it rains—a figment of my imagination in a  
Playground of voluptuous catastrophes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Playgrounds Of A Lesser Sky

Liquor of her pearl-brown shoulders, and all of  
The night the moon: I think, who does she make love  
To now,  
As the trailer parks sway underneath the cinders-  
The evaporations of the sky that have eyes like alligators;  
And they remember their pasts, the short lives  
Of dogs, or the easy tricks I brought upon her, moving  
Religiously in my cars:  
The dolphins swam out in the intercostals just so the  
Tourists would have something to look forward  
To while eating their lunch,  
But afterwards they would have to again reveal themselves  
To their children getting home at the same time,  
Wishing they were cicadas so that they could lose themselves,  
Accumulating on the shoulder blades of cypress  
Like the busts of heedless royalty, or the pitiful words like  
These said to a muse that no longer reads the fire signals  
Jumping up to the airplanes mark their territory in the prodigious  
Playgrounds of a lesser sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Playgrounds That Cannot Breathe

Coveting your heart- where it does now  
Beat,  
Across the train tracks and inside another theatre:  
Tomorrow your son will even be  
Another year old,  
And I'll still be drowning in a wishing well  
Through the lugubrious moonlight outside of  
Another lilac church,  
Licking my wounds through the cavalier  
Memories of you-  
As you go, and become lost, dancing with the fairies  
Who would not dare mock the carelessness of  
Your heart- And I go that way too,  
Some kind of shadow burned off the souls of  
Your moving feet- as there seems to be another of  
Your banners in the air-  
As the foxes leap for the nuptials of airplanes in the  
Playgrounds that cannot breathe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Playing Across The Playground Of Heartbroken Memory

My legs are cold from drinking slow sips.  
Again, I am upon the mountain in a wicked tent,  
Slanting as if something trying to affect poetry,  
Curious,  
Looking at your sunburst eyes- Mascara the sundogs  
Leaping very pagan and scarlet:  
I lick and bite my lips trying to achieve the profound,  
Trying to capture you abstractly, like running my fingers  
Under the quicksilver fuselage of an airplane leaping  
Low- Trying that foreplay in the ambers and  
Precious natures of these burning woods, to have you in  
A quiet though compromising manner unlike any other  
Man might yet think of having you: all the stags  
Juicily horned acquiring their leggy herds, trying to gather together  
A bus of entire housewives,  
But I would rather select you alone with all your pageantry of  
Sad fashions, even though I am not so spectacular  
To see the entire depths of your verdant nature. Even now  
You are answering but just as softly as raindrops in a  
Woodland bathtub; because you are already obligated to  
A better harem, sashaying into the resins and ash left over  
After the business of firemen, but I would rather stand around  
In these fickle emolliations to catch one pestilent whiff  
Of your complete corruption, for in that bouquet of rich  
Compromises remains the essence of a cadaver of innocence  
Playing across the playground of heartbroken memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# Playing Football In My Graveyard

Perfect on my imperfection, you fall:  
I close my eyes but you are real, traveling  
Effortlessly up your hills and then  
Down,  
Basking all the dogs, and their stones so  
Round;  
And I've made up these words to disavow you,  
But you are not something I can take out to eat;  
So you are real,  
And I lie the last of my bouquets at your feet;  
And my parents are so lonely after your passing;  
It's as if you've taken the last airplane,  
But my grandmother lies unweeping the kinder  
Weathers of her kind:  
They are the kind that used to know you, but  
Will know you no more,  
And they are all the kind that I've been waiting for;  
And you slip over my head like a child in  
A dress;  
And you go over the sea, and the women in their  
Cars:  
You go so far as to come around again  
To watch me playing football in my graveyard.

Robert Rorabeck



# Playtime Amnesia

Choose me for the bedroom of your play  
And I will trim the fat and lackadaisical.  
I will even stop entirely thinking of other girls,  
Curled and crenulated on their other swing-sets,  
In their other states give over to other sunsets,  
In their sweet unadulterated time and nostalgic  
Truancies:  
Give me to the foreplay of your wound,  
And I will stop believing in death: I will write  
Screen plays of your mammalian garden, and grow  
Folk-tales for you;  
And with great cunning how to leap up and procure  
Those lips of yours, like a stream of radiant custard:  
I am not putting you on; I will become both less  
Despotic and more responsible. I will even flirt with  
Other girls to garner your attentions,  
And I won't have a need anymore for graveyards and their  
Ashy roe:  
Oh, I'll love you coming forward on my bicycle and  
I'll do some tricks, all my silver spokes hypnotizing in  
Siamese spiral: It may be true that there are better man for  
You,  
But for me you are the endearing apocryphal scripture,  
And I am drunk again and laying low- gut shot and bleeding  
Plasticine fighting men who all say your name in great argument;  
And the tiny city shifts with the science of bleeding playthings;  
And isn't it a shame, that I am so abashed that, dying  
Repeatedly like little boys and their make-believe suicide,  
I can't even once remember your name....

Robert Rorabeck

## Pleasant Words For Lovers

Pleasant words for lovers in espionage  
Thought out as the spines of flowers trapped in  
The teeth of dancing foxes who are  
Just learning the first words of a bucolic country  
Of windmill hazards- they go down dancing  
On their hind legs, their fur feeling all the motions  
Of last night's jasmine- will they enter the barn  
And find her like a milk made weeping in the  
Hay's pincushions- will they steal her from her  
Knights who were meant to be so glorious  
Who have all ridden away to be cannibalized by  
Witches in their flying chicken-legged huts:  
Yes, he will whisper to them with sharp teeth itching  
Of the vineyard, and he will lasso them in his  
Forested patina, and brandish along their sides  
The hungry kisses he laps them with, until their  
Milk is as blooded as when my lips are with thine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pleasurable Excuse

I lick my lips for something liquor,  
For coming on to midnight I've been reading  
My poems;  
And maybe after midnight, I'll be masturbating:  
Both with sweaty palms:  
They're really the same thing, both about a girl  
I haven't read about,  
And she's really the same thing as heaven who is  
The twin sister of Hell:  
And tomorrow, I've cleared my schedule to  
Go hike the mountain with my mother:  
My mother who cannot move, whose womb has  
Become the whole d%omn thing:  
The roof, the stars, the chicken wire, the valley or  
The sea;  
I will see wildflowers, but I will not pick them;  
And airplanes like shooting vestibules with stewardesses  
And their legs; but I will not see them:  
I can only imagine: Women who become water,  
Drink; women who become trees and foliage and  
Vegetation: eat and rest under,  
And mow their yard and make their lips hum with the  
New found pleasures of air-condition;  
And go down to South Florida and dropp in, and make  
Love to them; and I make myself these promises so until  
Midnight; and I read my poems and masturbate,  
Which are really the same thing: and I don't ever tell  
My mother about the art or the pleasure I cannot excuse.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pleasure

I like trying to smell your body.  
You don't know what joy I have just sitting beside you on  
A rock:  
I can barely even look at myself all day,  
But I can look at you looking away over the yachts,  
Flinging yourself over the sea:  
I am sorry I am not good with words like the baseball games  
Of your husband;  
And if we first made love, I am sure I would tremulate like  
A thrush stuck out in the cold trying to get warm  
In your naked branches,  
Like small children with numbed fingers trying to hide all  
Of their valuables in the orchid-like hollow  
Under the navel of your vineyard;  
And I know if I see you again out in the super-fine  
Resin, like another tourist out yarding with you in the  
Clothing of yellow pinafores of this daylight, I might have  
The hardest time communicating to you  
Like the blindest man in the softest night; If you helped me along  
I would eventually find your way and I am abundantly sure  
That you would see me and it would pleasure me so to pleasure  
You in a way I am sure you have never seen before.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pleasure Haiku

One hundred thousand  
Bucks just to give you or-  
Al pleasure just once.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pledging Allegiances To The Day

I am the catalytic and amplified  
Thug of cold ennui;  
What am I doing here  
But looking with the cat into  
The goldfish's bowl  
While another housewife  
Has escaped down the cinderblocks and  
Out of her room; but where is she going  
But across the canal,  
Kissing the otters and the bicycles  
Lips along the way  
To feel another cold brush  
With reason  
As the airplanes fly marbling planes  
In the make-believe  
As all of the high schools open once again  
Like nocturnal flowers finally pledging allegiances  
To the day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plenitude Of Goodbyes

She will go with him, and the day is long:  
Old and preaching and drinking liquor, they will mine for gold:  
The airplanes will settle down and make love in the trees,  
The sun will set and the sun will rise,  
And eventually they will exit together, kissing and singing  
A plenitude of goodbyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Plenty Enough For Everyone

I wake up from Saint Louis with news scars on  
My lap,  
And errors waiting for the page:  
I wake up closer to noon than I ever done,  
And I feel like a Hindu in need of a kite,  
And the yard is Long and falling away from here,  
Falling into a graveyard before it turns:  
It never gets finished,  
This is all it does and there are lonely and  
Jealous Mexicans always mowing it,  
Because all the Guatemalans have to do is feed the  
Birds who drink from the marble vases,  
Who crown the steaming heads of the rich,  
White dead;  
And there are so many of them, resting yet pensive,  
But for no reason, because they are all quite affordably  
Out of work,  
And the sky is a mall above them where great jealous  
Woman-like entities fart and tinkle,  
They create the honey-suckle weathers which enrage  
The nostrils of the day laborers,  
But there is really no reason for anymore jealousy,  
Because school is over, and everything is still falling,  
And there is plenty enough for everyone.

Robert Rorabeck



## Plush And Soft Kingdoms

Suddenly my cliffs arise with the necessity for  
Breaking the sound barriers,  
While the cars park and stare, and the wine I have  
Been drinking is from the deserts of Spain,  
And filled with tannins, but I don't care:  
When I am done drinking I will light out of my house,  
Light out of here,  
And I will jog straight across the intercostals of her bridges  
Where the rich men continue to endear,  
And I will think of you, Alma, while I look up at the soft  
Underbellies of airplanes,  
Who continue their leaping, who seem to be so unreal:  
They seem to be leaping right over the walls of Christmas,  
Which might as well be your favorite holiday,  
Because you told me today- and decided as well that the  
Tiger was your favorite of all the animals in their  
Plush and soft kingdoms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Poem

Turtledoves who lie dead and celibate  
Sniffed at by the curious rabbit as if they might be  
Sweet tufts of asparagus;  
And this is where the wind breaks, gets distraught  
And disasters,  
Making an effluvial mess all over the place,  
Like little girls whose hearts squirt candy-apple  
Oils,  
After they have turned out the loser in the race  
Of adolescent romance;  
And I have the evidence all over my face;  
And the moon is no good for hiding things in a hangover:  
The bicycles seem to float under the moon,  
Disturbing the crab grasses so very little,  
Never leaving marks again to follow the way that  
They had come home-  
And this is not a sad story; this is not even a poem,  
But you are out there in the park somehow, and you  
Are not coming home;  
It is as if you'd never been, somehow,  
As this had never been your poem.

Robert Rorabeck

## Poem Before Sleeping

The silence is pervasive,  
As the caravan approaches midnight,  
And I am on my bed but cannot feel her.  
Girls with outstanding I.Q.s are looking good,  
As they are looking away,  
They eat egg sandwiches with extra mayonnaise;  
They cross their legs and fart sideways,  
Like little archeries,  
And it has been half a decade since I've made  
Out in the park, next to the junked cars  
And pornography. Two months until  
The primary, and I have only apathy,  
And no longer make wishes upon the suburban  
Lake, as the sky goes through its menstruations.  
I am the desperate man who has settled,  
Who doesn't draw a steady paycheck, but likes  
The way the sun looks wet and bareback,  
Fancies himself a rimbaudian poet, throws  
Jibes like knives from a blind man's grasp,  
At she who spins in short tassels and gagged gasps.  
I love her, I love her, the cliché of my muse,  
And I will keep drawing my imperfect abuse in the  
Sky they have paraded for holidays, all the angels  
Sea-sick from eating too much fleur de sel on their laconic  
Voyage, so instead of a prayer I offer a jest,  
I'll lay down my fingers and put the body to rest.

Robert Rorabeck

# Poem One Four Nine

Cheap rum goes down with  
Little burning of the pocket book:  
Funny thing is:  
I'm quite rich  
Sitting in my beat-up truck  
Watching the procession of ghosts  
Sitting straight forward in the  
Passenger seat-  
Without looking around,  
The liquor dulls the pain,  
And lubricates the written throat,  
So I can wail a little,  
And forget the weight of the  
Meaningless in  
The half opened eyes of morning:  
Though I hate to even look outside,  
Because you are always  
Rising over the air above the  
Swimming pool:  
There is no one else so early,  
But you are always there....  
This is true, and sometimes  
I look like I am homeless,  
And sometimes I don't remember  
Who I am,  
And these are the best times,  
Like right now  
And maybe tomorrow....  
And I might move back again to  
Where you still live,  
Like returning to the only  
Significant continent where  
We sat up together  
And shot at lions,  
But even then it won't be  
Until after you have left,  
And I have spent all of my fortune,  
And forgotten who I am,  
So if I see you, it won't even matter-

You will just be another ghost  
In the whore house where we  
Used to live,  
Flickering like the forgotten lot,  
The misspent word in an unnoticed life,  
Unattractive to the flatteries of the stage:  
I loved you where  
I used to give,  
But your eyes would only look  
Straight forwards  
In the passenger seat of  
My beat-up pickup,  
Even if I sang to you in French.

Robert Rorabeck

## Poem Seven!

While you already know that I am  
Saving my soul for the heart of a poem,  
Dancing and leaping and  
Trying my luck spread forever within  
And hour of  
The happenstance of high schools and  
Trucks stops,  
While there seems to be a luminosity  
Of anywhere—  
And then right here,  
While dying and blooming and seeming  
To be the medium of  
The truck stop while we cannot get  
And end to this just supposing equipoise -  
And then, there it was,  
Another word I could not understand—  
Just while daylight and moonlight  
Fell across the shoulder blades of airplanes  
Equally in equipoise and there  
Became another name for another name of  
These same angels in equipoise—  
And even I don't know if these just same angels  
Can save us from anywhere or even if  
I don't suppose—in Vietnam,  
There will still be a child born,  
Out of wedlock and in the shadows,  
And he won't even account for mine:  
But it will be so fine—laughing  
And even laughing at all of the angels  
As they doze.

Robert Rorabeck

# Poems Of Distractions

Poems of distractions like Ferris Wheels  
Who are only here two weeks in  
February—  
Like my muse's love for me—  
Now I pine for her, like a moth to its  
Hallucinatory light-bulb—  
Clandestine to its penny-ante factories—  
Oh, the love of the false lights that  
Garlands the dyspeptic cities,  
That rides the trains and subways by  
Midnights- hasn't the fair gone since from  
Here carrying away the illusions of her  
As well?  
The same thing as a dragon or a unicorn,  
Or the crocodile waiting for all  
Time far down inside the wishing well.

Robert Rorabeck

# Poetess

Poetess, you watch the sun sink  
Beneath the tresses, and lie down beneath  
The power lines which truncate over  
The drying grass;  
I used to see you out of the corner of my  
Eye, where you carried rings and dishes,  
Like a gaseous planet, goslings your  
Satellites. You burnished dilapidated houses  
When you went into the lake, which  
Was your parsimonious bride. Flowers awoke with your  
Perfume, and otters swam and grew  
Tame, fetched you the thimbles of forgotten  
Queens, who have slept so long  
That they have not heard the metamorphosis  
Of your lips,  
How such lines cascade, and you walked with  
My sister as she studied to be an animal doctor  
In Kalamazoo, but only half of that is true,  
The second half because it was convenient:  
If I caught you on the swings of a park in Mississippi,  
We could motion for trains to exclaim,  
And we could cross on the broken concrete over bridges  
Which leap like petroglyphs over morbid bayous.  
With some respect, I could be your mystery,  
And hold your secret like some kind of blackmail:  
That you have never written a line, but  
Wept when the sky expressed the hosannas of nimbus,  
Thus I wrote down for you what I knew you  
Would say, after you set down the cup of tea  
And hypothesize on the peppermint dregs:  
Another man is your lover, I should say, but yes,  
I speak with you in vibrant silences,  
These things you bight your lip to  
Keep from revealing.

Robert Rorabeck



# Poetry From A Forgotten Avenue

Every night I leave the sad hotel  
Where the tourists all are snoring;  
Bellies stuffed with buttered lobsters,  
Toddlers curled on the bulbous laps  
Like house cats,  
Rising a storm, a nostril's forest fire:  
I wander along the canals, watch the  
Tamed, teal waters where  
Trinkets, wax lions float; There is  
Not a single fish where I cry your name:  
Too many words in one syllable,  
The princess has removed her costume.  
Arching, she turns tricks against the  
Wall, her body a sorbet, the thief  
With the tongue of a knife intrudes:  
She moans another's name down,  
Flowers bud a pantheon, and things are painted  
In a tidal blush,  
Little children purr in dreams of Ferris wheels  
Not far from cloudy sticks of cotton candy  
And the little murder,

Each line a succession of oceanic breathing,  
If the surf were to continue hypothetically over  
The university, and the unions of rodeo clowns  
Laid down in the grass where the blue ants  
Are building sand castles for their queen:  
I should awake, drooling upon the stony lip  
Of my reflection,  
Echoing the jewel-reeds, the extemporaneous  
Flight of the dragonfly;  
But it is too painful to read my own lines,  
The failures of rusted amusement parks,  
Ghost towns in Colorado basins:

Thus, you kiss his lips; your body  
Arches like a bow, insouciant hunter,  
And happenings proceed further away from  
The abandoned rectory, where from the

Promises of doves have long since migrated,  
Abandoning only the inconstant pain of this art,  
Calling the apathetic winds, and my tears  
Which feed the waterwheel's steady work,  
Grinding, grinding, flour from wheat,  
Pearls from sand,  
Poetry from a forgotten avenue.

Robert Rorabeck

# Poised To Fall

I get the shakes,  
And my parents run down the hill,  
And the world is fully doused now by the  
Emolliating sun,  
And I have novels inside of me that  
Will never live,  
Beyond the suburban precognizant,  
In those little heady rooms where the televisions  
Are whispering voicelessly,  
And imaginary housewives pirouette while  
The morning enraptures them in their white-comb  
Beams;  
And soon I will be moving away to become  
A better no one,  
And I will still be further away from her,  
And my scars will matriculate with me, the savage  
Blue places where my innocent loneliness thrives;  
And I loved her,  
And I took her in my car and we parked under the  
Reciprocating amusements and tongued to the sea;  
But now everything is moving down the hill,  
And my parents are getting married again,  
And the otters preach to little children through  
The glass at the zoo,  
And the world burns like a valentine caught in  
A tragic misfiring beneath the autumn monuments  
Poised to fall.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pollinations Of Angels

I get the feeling someone has stolen the water  
From the bucket filled up hidden in the ruddy hibiscus  
Where my childhood played in afternoon,  
Where I saw her needled and meek saying nothing  
In the aloe, but looking perfect, as the storm clouds  
Built like hungry stomachs and dissatisfied engines  
High above the cutlery of waves....  
Now the cement is dried and we've forgotten to write  
Our names, or something clever in Latin,  
As the students take the safe rivers from muted classroom  
To silvery car bought but not yet paid for by the busy  
Hours of their parents, the emulations of their curling studies;  
As I eat lasagna and type out on my coverless bed,  
Watching the games the clouds play as they build up towards  
The purplish monsoons, giving promises like flirtatious lovers,  
I send my own messages out like microscopic doves from  
The rafters of Arizona, pretending that I was once beautiful,  
And my ego un-bruised and yet receptive to the gifts  
Of strange young girls giggling like the pollinations of angels,  
Heard as if in a memoir floating out the whitish windows  
Floating symphonic well above my head.

Robert Rorabeck

# Poltergeist Yum Yum

Taken down in a single slender  
Comely dash,  
I get back from the movies and I  
Crash;  
Yes, the sun is just yet coming up,  
And putting its light on the green pines,  
The coney pups-  
It is a beautiful day in the world, spinning,  
Spinning like a rubber duck in a bath of  
Make-believe,  
The little boys drive their trucks  
In a sea of make-believe,  
Diademed by the icy centaurs- they don't  
Even know what to feel-  
They grab their guns to get a handle on the  
Dizzing pinwheel, and gods shines down on them  
In a Mandela of pretty resorts,  
New tiny t-rexes grow up from the earth,  
Right out from the center of grandmother's  
Grave,  
And she's still whispering, you need to shave,  
You need to shave; yeah, but anyways,  
The sky is spinning in its own insouciant enclaves,  
And it doesn't need to feel,  
Or look down on the trailer parks of the tin metal  
Surreal,  
And that's just fine with me: I'll eat my microwave  
Dinners by the false light of all her days-  
I'll love her- love her anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Polychrome's Fairyland

Pseudo graphical lovers know the curiosity of  
My sharp hips,  
The changing weathers of my gaze inside the frankfurter  
Apartments of yellow smells,  
As all day the rains parachute like little enemies,  
While cats clean their kittens underneath the scissoring  
Palmettos beside the carport's bric-a-brac,  
And all of it looks like Spain or a good romantic movie  
About that Arid country. Maybe I got a tattoo in Madrid,  
Maybe she sang down to me all the way from France;  
But all of that is over now, just the midpoint Diaspora of  
High school. I was remedial my senior year- I took freshman  
Art and P.E. for the second time fully dressed around the outdoor  
Basketball courts- How strange that there were no fireworks,  
And no laws to amend, and psychology in the overflowing  
Trailer park next to the canal where truancy was too close  
To resist; and all my poetry comes from flight many years  
Ago. Now sedentary and dependant there really is no woman  
With eyes so precious as lapis lazuli, no conquistadors,  
Or commercial airlines- The amphibians are going to in their  
Teal wet-suits. They go into polychrome's Fairyland  
Where you can find all of it unpublished- If you are an ex-lover,  
It will give you a smirk, for you can see I've been doing  
Nothing, but looking real coy- An ordinary boy with ordinary  
Skin, hair, and eyes; Say it ain't true,  
or I am just a hare leaping through the dunes  
After the terrapin, just gossip of a fable passed by tongues  
In the vineyard who in the danse ruse of their twilight  
No longer have neighbors to speak of, but live in a pre-Socratic  
hospice, and give reason through the feeble lies that grow like wet  
Ivy along the lanai- There are cracks a mile long out in the neighborhood  
I drive home too, and incredibly sexy banshees in their chillingly  
Brilliant smocks cooking dinner deep in the fjords of crypt orchid  
Mountain ranges, crying home the lonely one-legged mountaineer  
and his best friends.

Robert Rorabeck

# Polygamies I Shouldn'T Know

Lost pageantry of a cenotaph's art form  
Dances in a carousel of hard licks  
While the rain makes bereaving motions against  
The window in the house where everyone has left;  
Where have they gone  
With the alligator down against the canal,  
The grass mowed  
And still smelling of the girl across the street  
And the fireworks of truancy just that afternoon-  
The burning sugar cane makes a feasts of clouds  
In the sky, roiling- roiling with some strange  
Gumption,  
While the Mexicans move in from across the canal  
Living together and warmed by rattlesnakes  
Whose smile in poisons of the polygamies I shouldn't know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Poor Luck

Dance for me  
Willy-nilly, wild  
And free  
Where the grass is  
Wet.

So are you, I bet.

I am entirely naked  
and scarred,  
Except for one sock:

If I want to live forever,  
That's my poor luck.

Robert Rorabeck



# Pornographic Drunken Heresy

Gorgeous hoodlums, who are you:  
I've seen you walking around in the zoo with  
Brilliant stockings and nothing else on except  
For your drunk smiles and ray guns;  
And your cities are so complex, but you don't  
Give a d\$mn, but stand out and air  
Your window dressings,  
And you accept just about any drinks offered to  
You, and any rooms:  
I would like to pour a glass of cheap rum for you,  
And make you show me your profile for just  
A little while, and pretend you're anyone,  
Even if you were born in another country,  
Or even if I will continue this slopping down into  
The flooding insouciance of a Catholic graveyard,  
Because that is where we're all going,  
And the dug graves are filling up like a mud bath,  
And it's a pitter-patter through the eaves, when beyond  
All the iron bars, the windows of better situated romances  
Are all closed and occupied,  
But I'll love you here all the same, out in the wild where  
The exhausted socialized recline anonymously  
Finishing what they started:  
And I'll grab you just beneath your garter like something  
From the sea, and grow my great big trees inside of you,  
And put new ribbons in your hair,  
Making you remember if not my name who I am.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pornographic Mythologies

I think of orgasms and a guillotine;  
When I deliver Christmas trees after ten pm.  
I come back and joke with my friends,  
And pretend I am their king-  
The night rushes in grand insouciance, with no  
Place really to go: I try to look them in the  
Eyes as long as I can,  
Until no one has anything left to say to me,  
And I no longer have to think of how,  
How she might even now rise like a leaping  
Harem off to the east, dancing in a silver dress  
The moon has placed, and long ago seeded  
With the lesser gravities: I would like to imprint  
Such romance there, amidst the tangles and  
The man o' war, but she just turns her face  
Away from with me, with the time. Tired of  
The sport, she covers up, until even my words  
Become settled and homeopathic,  
Like phosphorescent glitter in the brine,  
The scattering of a destroyed penumbra haloes  
The heads of her deeper pornographic mythologies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Portions

Envious cataract of  
Lonliness spills like overturned  
Liquor from my slaughtered  
Heart: A salinous lake without wind—  
That organ is bleating like  
A stuck pig,  
Killed for a holiday:  
Sacrificed for your table: salty meat;  
A candle-lit dinner shared with him.  
You go to bed with me on your lips.

I think about f-cking you all the time....

Robert Rorabeck

# Possibilities

I play dice with  
Bicycles,  
So don't you try to look  
Me in the eyes,  
Or I'll roll matching poisonous  
Right into your  
Changing room of souls;  
But you can look up to  
The skies,  
To the sweet underbelly of  
Those jouncing vessels  
Drying their gowns in the layers  
Of sweet atmospheric  
Clothing lines  
Through castles of....  
Oh well, I don't  
Know how many  
Viperous  
Possibilities-

Robert Rorabeck

# Post-Modern Conquistadors

I get cold and homely as I lose my mind.  
Soon I will have enough of it,  
And I will curl up with some dogs and go to sleep;  
But the best thing now is I have so little jealousy,  
And I am just as beautiful as something that  
Is patiently waiting off in its corner of the  
Crowded mall,  
Hungry, unable to move its legs, watching the  
Grounded stewardesses mill,  
Watching the sad and lonely video games-  
The prevalences of fathers harbingering their suns,  
And all the cars waiting faithfully panting out in the  
Scalding parking lot,  
Ex-lovers learning karate, out of work shoppers smoking  
Pot:  
I think I once bought her a glass castle I sent to her  
In a cookie tin while I lived in Tallahassee- She  
Must have smiled and put it away and jogged through  
The graveyard, breezy or misty, until the trucks commenced,  
And meteors fell far a field hiding their beauty from  
The post-modern conquistadors;  
And sweet sororities yawned only after the morning  
Started delivering things, and I got up and rubbed my eyes  
And scars, and fell inward even though my first  
Thought was of her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Prehistoric Red Room

I've created behind my eyes  
A prehistoric red room  
where extinct women gyrate  
to the flickering kiss of  
kerosene lamps, everyone  
who lived before me and  
died in Detroit with the  
junkyards visits me here-  
relaxing on red vinyl  
blood smooth when the  
room changes it goes  
all the way back over the  
hills like yesterday,  
it cools in the shadows  
over the secret valleys  
of an Appalachian gin,  
amidst the alders where  
sun and shade play slowly  
on the suffocating lips of a naked woman  
eating huckleberries  
my eyes are full of immigrants,  
ancestral highlanders, round-headed  
bandits putting the blade to the  
Tories, they come inside me  
for refuge and I introduce them to  
the woman behind the bar.  
In the corner booths, with their  
fingers beckoning, and their eyes  
opening butterflies, women are  
the sexy gray of old photos,  
silky ancestral sisters dressed  
in red corsets their  
eyelashes are silver filigree  
speaking to me, their lips like  
smoke rising the subtle shift  
of tectonic plates moves in my body  
in the booth where  
the analogue radio, in circular  
mouth, plays the bluesy prayers

of newly freed gentlemen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Prelude To A Job In The Service Industry

When I sometimes don't believe in  
Poetry anymore,  
Most particularly my own,  
Then there is no wind, and the sea  
Is all doldrums:  
Dogs are just dogs,  
And men are just men,  
And even Neruda's lines hang like  
Wet clothes in the backyard of some  
Foggy home too poor to inspire  
Anything but pity, and spare change,  
But I know this is all I can afford,  
Because all my experimenting in high school  
Has ostracized me forever from  
The peachier labyrinths in my brain,  
Leaving my fingers to wreak the  
Halfway feverous mob of drunken zoos:  
Bukowski when he was only part way through  
His first red bottle, and just beginning to light;  
Rimbaud in his waning twenties,  
Believe instead in importations and  
Not pink sluts open in the cheering balconies;  
Stretching, Baudelaire in a grave christened by  
Deep graynesses of topless gin:  
Broughtigan with a self inflicted bullet in his pan,  
Jim Carroll with a needle in his vein  
And crabs in his pants,  
Ginsberg without any young boys to godhead  
And a nuclear meltdown,  
But that shouldn't mean these digits shouldn't  
Tap dance extemporaneously in their canceled show,  
Alone on the keyboard's stage below my boogied nose-  
These streets are mine, even when they  
Are without a care, and even if my rhymes slur  
Like the leaking guts of a blue car  
Beneath the moonlight of the sleepless streets;  
These words are mine,  
True if broken, weary and struggling through  
Their classes of incomprehensible professors,



And the heretics of a better gloom,  
They can sleep anywhere there are friends of the  
Liberal arts; and, if not, they can always flip burgers....

Robert Rorabeck

# Prelude To That Song

I can sing now that the  
Lamps our down, and it is the beginning  
Of the next century,  
Even if people aren't ready to say so  
And they are leaving their homes and never  
Returning,  
Because she is still my special angel my wet  
Imagination has commissioned to photograph  
Leggy and simplex across the pressure  
Washed mausoleum  
Like a flower fully spread without any shadows  
Over her ancestors;  
And she doesn't even know it yet,  
But she is about ready to scream.  
She will spill her milk, and expose herself,  
And the song birds will sing like the bringing in  
Of another wedding,  
And this is just the beginning of that song.

Robert Rorabeck

# Premature Surrender

I speak in whispers of polyglotal chants:  
I just want to be beautiful in so many voices,  
Like race cars ignited, like cousins in  
An orgy;  
And from the foothills of Colorado I start up the  
Side of the page- wet sisters sigh and sway,  
And maybe this is how it was suppose to be done,  
Mining for the lesser silvers,  
Wanting only to be halfway forgotten,  
And Sharon in her nursery rhymes feels feverish for  
Her cartoon loves:  
In the middle of the sporty glade, she tries on shoes,  
Lies back and overdoses,  
A butterfly or dragonfly on her clitoris:  
I suppose to was a dream she had feeling herself melt  
Into the grass;  
Once or twice in the nicely mowed continent. Very early  
In the morning, before the windmills started  
Or Chanticleer, or any more of the old voices  
I could even started-  
Her vases of wet clay on the riverbank I once drew on my  
Desk,  
But now she doesn't care.  
She bights her lip and surrenders to policemen,  
Even though I am still fully loaded and with a gang stick-  
Up men: bang! Bang!  
She is in love,  
And this is why I die like Jesus into my crypts of premature  
Surrender.

Robert Rorabeck

# Preschool

Young impressionable suicides  
Sleep in parking lots, avoiding ex-lovers/  
I saw her for the last time  
When I was 5/  
She was the substitute teacher  
Who made me stutter,  
But I only saw her for a day,  
And after school I could speak just fine,  
Though it left me wondering  
Where she had gone away,  
As the school bus picked me up each morning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Presents Of Sacrifice

I christen my ship by the cheapest species  
Of rum- In a basement sea I float around and  
Moan like a pitiful cat: Oh, what will  
Forever come of me- Bleeding out in this  
Bed they switched while I was in Saint Louis-  
The bed I had my last legal intercourse in  
A decade ago; after that its just been  
Working girls:  
Naiads of the sea, dryads of trees and snow.  
When I look into your eyes, you do not hear.  
My inconsideration has no tongue,  
Just my busy fingerprints smudging the boot heals  
Of a mongrel soul. When I spend my days alone,  
When I drive for an hour to the movies that are my  
Lesser spectacle, I think of you arriving, lactating in a shaft of  
Sunlight, locks of your hair curling like spry weeds  
Around the meadow lake where keeps a hidden sword;  
There you are forever making love far bigger than life:  
I close my eyes through the entire show, seeing your  
Fashions better in by that imposed darkness;  
And once while drinking from glacier tears in the highest  
Basins of your state, it was like kissing your bathtub  
Where you'd become inextricably lost,  
And there was no excuse for me; but looking down  
Those steep and beautiful tragedies,  
The ever vermilion slopes, I could almost see you there  
Dancing for tourists who could only appreciate you as  
Much as they could Disney World;  
But I knew that was where you belonged, somehow making  
Something otherwise a commercial charade  
Sincerely beautiful; and I wept in a sun shower which  
Happened all the way down, dampening your shoulder blades  
Like softly speckled doves, knowing that even though  
I had failed, you would live on in an undeniable daydream  
Never affecting my name, kissing the foreheads of a chorus of  
Children who sang your name, garlanding you like a  
Christmas tree expecting the presents of sacrifice you will  
Never think give.



# Presupposing That Spring Had Come Again

If I kissed her it was under the halo of a lunch truck.  
Or I didn't kiss her:  
And all of these backyards are so sure of themselves without  
The need for the playfulness of otters;  
And all of these backyards don't have a single cypress;  
And they bleed all over themselves,  
And Christ is waking up fully yawning in the surveillance of an  
Empty bed, but he has no need for detective work:  
He remembers just what he said:  
And then last year at Thanksgiving I was king of my high school again,  
Because I saw things from the top of that rooftop,  
And I was young again: while all the families bled out into the world  
Just like birthday cake making wishes, or just like the little golden  
Dishes of little golden fishes,  
And my new old love spit into a drinking fountain: spit and it was  
Enough to bring the birds again,  
To bring all the little birds whistling with their hands in their pockets  
Happy and not so happy, presupposing that spring had come again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pretending

After midnight it snows  
In the alkaline world-  
Your father is smoking  
A cigarette in his  
6th or 7th story-  
Your colleague bought me  
This notebook,  
The water comforts itself,  
And the lighthouses  
Shine like hopeless  
Candles  
Beneath the mirrow  
Where your mother is  
Crying.

Robert Rorabeck



# Pretending That It Never Was

You can go with me now  
And I can lift you high above your yard:  
I can carry you high above the astringencies,  
Even if it is only that  
I am not drunk: I am not far from Mexico,  
And the purple dreams are  
Purple  
And getting deeper, and the time spreads out  
And remembers the few times that you made  
Love to me,  
And after the minnows have followed:  
And the blue gills,  
And the mermaids: then it is time to go,  
And there is no time for remembering your  
Kisses:  
While everything that happened to us  
Has come up to the surface,  
While the fire burns around the silhouettes of  
The pretty windmill:  
While fire just burns over the slow avenues  
Of the blue gills,  
And then just disappears with the anonymous  
Morning, as if just pretending that it never was-

Robert Rorabeck

# Pretending That She Could One Day Be Mine

I go into a strange neighborhood and make love  
To a strange woman- back and forth through the gates  
Of her suburbia- she seems as if about to fall  
Asleep as I make love to her,  
But she says I am sexy and bigger than average:  
I say she's about ready to transform into the next  
Starlet of the overworked Hollywood block buster:  
And when I go home: I go home and I have no  
Dog waiting for me, but my house is paid  
For and a water fountain arrived today and a place  
To put my television: I put them both together  
And it helped to take away the hours of the day:  
And now I sit on the sofa that I got from a place of  
God, and I listen to the water that I poured earlier  
Into the fountain from a water jug- and I think of and  
I feel the pain left over from a muse who has left me  
After a year: a brown girl who was married to another  
Man: a brown man who knows nothing of the circus,  
Who used to beat her, but he didn't know how often  
I picked her grapes and like a fox I hung from her  
Petit vines, as she asked me to promise her boob jobs:  
Now she is gone again back to her children and their  
Little brown arms: and she is- his, because she has  
Stopped pretending that she could one day be mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pretending To Give A Shadow To A Girl

Obsessions from the opened backs of trucks  
Lying underneath the citrus trees  
We have heard so much talk about—  
The dwindling sun makes a zoetrope of  
These orchards,  
And pretends to give a shadow to a girl  
I've never seen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Prettiest Monuments

Newer possibilities keeping to themselves while  
The racetracks are let out into the rain—  
While the artist weeps, wondering whatever is to  
Remain—  
Until the day flies above and beneath—  
In the heaven's wonder—in the satanic reef—  
And all of the promises  
Of angels are swallowed as pills—and all of the gills  
Of swordfish are  
Taken to go to sleep—the marionettes wonder,  
Empty handed, as to how many cardboard stages they  
Must creep—  
While their master is drunk again—thirty year old  
Magician happening upon this hapless land:  
This is my fantasy I keep to myself—  
My very own soul in the palm of my hands—  
This is the delight I keep delight in,  
Crawling upon the perimeter of the dusky swimming pool:  
The very same fairytale the selkies delight in:  
Surmising that the do not have to change—forever  
And never again—  
Drowned bicycles resting beneath them—  
Just as cherished as the very young pools underneath the  
Very old stars—the wreckage of catastrophes  
Ever wonder forever who they are—  
But the daylight will awaken around them tomorrow—  
And swirl in Chablis of uncharacteristic monuments—  
And the heavens will keep forever—as long as there  
Are pretty young girls watering the front yards  
Of their prettiest monuments.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pretty Drunk

I am drunk.  
Continents divide,  
Planets fall into the sea,  
And for the first time today  
I am pretty.

Robert Rorabeck

## Pretty Lips On The Holy Virgin Mary

No liquor and I'm droll- Scarred and more,  
Waiting for rain with the spit shine poor-  
Here is my apartment. I sleep on the floor-  
Walden is a long way from here, so I plagiarize,  
Look myself in the face slantwise, wandering,  
Wandering: To untie her ribbons, unlace into dreams,  
Outside the faithless traffic streams;  
And if I had a poem in me today, this can't be it-  
I slept all day, or most of it, and I missed the poem;  
It stuck to something else just as imperfect and purred  
Around her pretty dark lips- There are always lips,  
And they are always pretty, pretty lips around the whole  
D\*mned city. Yesterday, I saw pretty Asian lips at  
The library, what perfect commentary;  
and statues with pewter lips,  
And lips on my cousin Terry,  
But I haven't kissed any of those lips in so long,  
Very; and pretty lips on the holy Virgin Mary.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pride

You live in the blue  
Cavern that your  
Mother seeds  
Looking up at her  
Like awakening in an  
Azure tent,  
She washes your hair-  
Rippling like the sea  
And the sun proceeds  
Its warmth through you  
Like the outline  
Of a God  
Beginning to create  
Fire from wind:  
You are undressing;  
Alone,  
This is all you are  
Knowing in the morning  
You will summit the  
Earth  
And then you will be  
Amongst the tallest of men,  
Flesh unfurled:  
Far down in  
The valley  
Your mother smiles,  
Unknowing  
In the living room  
All the things you will  
Do,  
Foreshadowed by the  
Daytime talk shows  
Which speak just for her  
And even though  
Even now your girlfriend  
Is making love  
To another man  
Far down below  
Where there is no

Color  
On the flat dog-eyed sea  
Only hypocrisies of children;  
She can think  
None the less of you,  
As you hold your breath,  
Step up  
And fit your hand  
Around  
The ankle of  
The statuesque maiden  
Engaged to the horizon's cerulean tarp  
With your head in the clouds:  
There is almost a  
Tear in her eye,  
Your mother is so proud of you,  
So proud.

Robert Rorabeck



# Prime Numbers In The Elbows Of Her Gardens

All of the busied happiness tries to pretend there  
Reptiles  
Whist across of all of the unhappied wishing wells  
Shows the visages of presidents  
Into the knighted dreams of Miami where America  
Doesn't belong anyways—  
Whist my legs echo like crickets for all of the busied  
Romances of airplanes—anyways—  
While then, of course, all of those collected nights  
Become so utterly unromantic—  
And yet the commercial airplanes drool and drool  
Like hummingbirds whist you remember where  
You kept your spot—  
As the bed creeps along by itself—and no longer  
Any of the busied perfumes are collected from  
The apiaries—as if I would make love  
To freshman or someone else underneath that  
Un busied—art—underneath the moon or  
Anywhere—anywhere—  
Whilst I am getting older and older—  
Now a king of his un busied letters—waiting for the  
Hurricanes of wherever it was to unfold and for  
The rest of its heavens to so eagerly be  
Found out-

Robert Rorabeck

# Primeval Tanking

Congratulations on your downward spiral,  
The self replicating coils of the inky stairwell  
Disappear into her bindi,  
Sinkhole the mortgage floorboards all the way  
Down to the last layer of hell,  
Where the octogenarians are ice-fishing  
Up to their necks in the lake of frozen sinners,  
Right into the 3rd mouth of the devil.  
Sitting with Cassius you ask him why he wasn't  
A greater criminal. He replies, "Who are you  
Anyway? I am the great Cassius." Then he goes  
Right on being chewed like raw hamburger  
Between the devil's bleeding gums,  
Moaning ever so slightly, parting his lips  
Like a butterfly on the web of a white midnight.  
The rest of the senator is gone into pink beefsteak for the  
Gullet, his decapitation retaining the sightless ego;  
Lucifer is too busy chewing to palaver,  
His teeth like sharp pews receding up the church of this throat,  
And his wings are churning like the great putrescent windmill.  
Sick cats have crawled into the shadows of his  
Armpits to die, and they smell like mildew under her eyes  
Who have been asleep too long,  
Lacquered shut like difficult windows,  
Eyelashes clasped in a terrible nightmare which has her in throes,  
One she refuses to part with, and lies there like  
A rusting Disney world princess, her dress mottled  
And felted with vermilion lichen, the house we once lived in  
Melted about her as the forest has stepped in like  
A locksmith after the final foreclosure notice,  
Hiding her from view as he does his job,  
Reinventing her chastity so I no longer am allowed my familiar approach.

Robert Rorabeck

# Prince Cherry Blossom Esquire

The joviality of a prince tucked-in and  
Slept in the indentation beside the highway  
In the corner, like a dimple, of the malevolent  
Penumbra, while many curly-headed devils way  
Back in his kindergarten, in hindsight, loved him  
As they drove through the wash of first blushing  
Hurricane; They could say they understood him  
Far to the bottom of a homeless estuary where  
They could dimly perceive him, nuzzled by their  
Dogs in the alluringly mysterious mask overshadowing  
The well-drooped economics of the pet cemetery  
Fallen into tin bouquets and overly rouged spinsters  
Resembling famous aunts and misspelled heroines;  
There in the recoiling surf, in the last hours before  
Closing, he wore a crown of peacock feathers and  
Danced ever so strangely, though with the airtight  
Presumption suiting his position; swimming in captivation  
With a school of well thought after fish, who metamorphosed  
Into clandestine relatives, and various lugubrious  
Politicians by cherry blossomed dates on the Chinese calendar.

Robert Rorabeck

# Princess Escaped From Mexico

Words as short as miniskirts

Stopped my heart: and we ate and had pancakes,  
And then I promised to take you back home with me  
To show you my Virgins of Guadalupe;

But not to make love those some weeks after July 4th:  
Alma, Alma, but we made love:

You in your mini-falta, which I hardly even deserved, curled  
Up to your belly like a wrapper in a chocolate bar:  
You as brown and as perfect as the epiphany of a sun shower  
At dusk:

And we made love, and some weeks later I drove with you  
Past the opulence of houses in palm beach; and I told you  
Not to look at them, but to the perfectly calmed sea,  
And I asked you if you could not see yourself out there,  
Lying in completed tranquility with the elements who never  
Needed any further occupations:

Out in the cerulean, which was not ever your favorite color,  
I still told you that this was exactly how beautiful you were;  
And I wanted to hold your hand even though you'd  
Never been to Disney World,  
Because you were already a princess escaped from Mexico;  
And you were: you were.

Robert Rorabeck

## Prizes That They Took

I've been playing by the rules:  
I've been to California and touched the sea  
By myself,  
But never thought of the butterfly- web of  
Shear sunlight that the scissors cut,  
Or the running ponies tethered to their  
Flag,  
Like airplanes on a string:  
They were echoing, echoing like fish kissing  
Hooks- and they left us without  
Remember the particular prizes that they took.

Robert Rorabeck

# Procession Of Weddings

If my house wines in its own epistemologies,  
So I am here,  
And burning up all of my comely liquors  
While the dogs lick my open palm- as if I were saltlick  
And they were deer,  
Until the morning comes, and in it the rodeos, and the rounds  
Of those daylights  
Pilferings and stuck up through the snobs of smoke signals:  
While nothing else has to be concluded-  
And this only has to be a classroom that was once attended and  
Then abandoned like a burned down school room  
Into which all the pretty bouquets are suddenly bleeding:  
And so then suddenly there is her bedroom,  
And little fairies and she is home safe,  
As through all of those winters on the higher mounds  
Her loved ones come as if in a procession of weddings-  
Sound, and safely returning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Professional Lyrics

Dangerous personifications  
La la la  
Dance upon the hinged-jaw  
You can't see them,  
But its my job to serve  
The hyacinth to these snobs:  
Girls with pin-job knees  
And down they go  
Just like porcelain faucets  
Deep into snow  
And men so clean  
And finely jobbed,  
By just looking at them,  
Lesser men are driven  
To rob,  
And I love you  
Yes I do, but I've forgotten  
Who you are or even were,  
But I love you, its true,  
Because its my job, its what I do.  
La la la,  
I love you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Profile Of A Fatherless Kite

Abandoned halls still live in echoing footsteps,  
Like the ones the little ghosts keep  
Tapping around my skull:  
I try to drown them out with alcohol,  
And her eyes- The persimmons we stole  
From the overgrown jungle-  
Then we'd ride our bikes past the movie theatre,  
And the music hall,  
To see the fans and the debutants disembarking  
From their daydreams-  
We saw them all, and counted their locks of  
Nimble hair;  
But not a single one saw us, my friend,  
Not a single one cared:  
Now, down by the lake where the frogs are  
Making love and spilling tadpoles into the greenie slow;  
We press our brakes for a second,  
And listen to the machines growl, as they  
Start up and begin their roll: Soon they will be taking  
Down the sides of the old buildings, the blinded study halls:  
For a second, our spokes are glistening in the sun,  
As the school busses parade by like rolling cages,  
The screaming yellows of youthful vertigo;  
Then we disembark like this again- You to your  
Wife and child, me to my nothing at all-  
The time is spent, the day is done,  
The clouds are building atolls above our skulls,  
And yet those distant legs still go echoing familiarly,  
Like a storm of mice up and  
Down my crumbled hall....

Robert Rorabeck



# Promiscuous Cats

Forgetting to relax and entertain,  
I shoot right for the glass- On the wall,  
The girl from that movie has turned away.  
Yes, she is looking across to Spain.  
I get a tattoo in Barcelona. We lose a guitar in  
France, and I weep because I love her mother  
Whose artwork is exhibited in Rome  
And Japan-  
The blurry sailboat cockleburs hanging from her  
Sweaty underpants,  
And a thousand of dots in a park of slurring holidays;  
They might as well be constellations,  
But one of them has the lips of beautiful clichés.  
She says to put my fingers to them- she doesn't  
Speak. She is the nude in a giant wine glass in the  
Fieldtrip I've stared at all week.  
She has a husband distilling gin from the creak,  
But he's in love with a salmon colored fink;  
I do pushups on the noisy floor- I draw my trees on  
The desk,  
She crosses over to me and turns the court blue,  
And we eat our lunch beneath the tits of coconuts, the  
Messy eyes of alligators who've caught diseases  
From eating promiscuous cats.

Robert Rorabeck

# Promises To The Angels

Beautiful midgets in the cylindrical grasses  
Underneath the fuselages floating on  
Coppertone wings:  
I suppose you will go to Spain or  
Mexico tomorrow:  
I suppose you will go somewhere- and she  
Lingers in the fruit market with plastic barrettes in  
Her hair,  
And she seems like an angel next to the baskets  
Of tomatoes  
And the sunlight filtering through the canopy  
On the very spot where a speak easy once  
Existed underneath the footsteps  
Of stewardesses who are always ascending the  
Ineffable stairway that expresses our  
Promises to the angels somewhere.

Robert Rorabeck

## Promising Away Their Maybes

Revolving the carousel in days of untried wonder:  
All the woman sticky tongued-  
All the men spent of their thunder; while, underbelly,  
The sea has ridges: has caracoles,  
Breaking anyway that he finds her, combing around  
The sloughs and bends,  
Whispering to the traffics of her elbows and knees,  
That this pain should surcease,  
And be amputated from the moon: there it goes,  
Something stolen away,  
Something bled- discovered of its thievery:  
Like marbled children put forever to rest underneath a mapled  
Cemetery,  
And then the angels drive around them, breathing out their  
Insinuations of condolences,  
Breathing in the stolen daisies- while the nursery rhymes continue  
To exist,  
Cursing their pleasures, and always promising away their maybes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Promising Her Enamored Reflection Across The Setting Denouement Of Meaningful Atmosphere

Incurable disease- Looking at the paradox in the  
Sun-shower,  
Dreaming of emptying baseball diamonds in a working  
Class suburbia,  
Freckle faced witches with no ambition  
Stealing just two apple buds perfectly symmetrical  
Under her blouse;  
A languid antebellum out along the switchbacks of  
Cerulean canals  
Incrusted by the swift lived shells of husked insects,  
Just as innumerable as the original armies of Spain-  
I used to imagine in my cherry-red Oldsmobile,  
Draining into her eyes, dabbing an adolescent immortality  
Where it aches to fit,  
Running my fingers like an otter swimming down her  
Sun drenched spine, toy locomotives whistling around  
The tree at Christmas,  
The alligator approaching the minor birds outside,  
The lawnmower quieted, the Mexican done with his job,  
Siestas in the voluble bloom in a crèche of pointed-blue echinopsis,  
And very soon some kind of fable will happen  
Drenched in the cul-de-sac- The vulpes vulpes leaping  
At the wild scuppernongs- always afterwards, some type  
Of escape or defeat that was supposed to mean something;  
Sated or hungry,  
The naked gifts molted on the efficient rug,  
And then on to dusk, breathlessly,  
House-wives incrusting with inexpensive jewelry,  
Their husbands like charioteers going to hit the glass,  
And she is rushing in her body leaping off the dusk,  
The same old alligators grinning as is she were their pretty sparrow,  
A shinning afterthought which must not fear its graduation,  
Promising her enamored reflection across the setting denouement of meaningful  
atmosphere.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pronouncing My Given Name

Strange Saturday without cartoons made to  
Laugh endlessly in the heart of Shanghai—  
My wife is here  
And in her presence my loneliness,  
My American vagueries and insouciant laziness:  
I cannot understand Mandarin,  
Girls laugh when they look at me on the street:  
Cover their mouths, bat their eyes  
And go on their way—  
Thirty million Chinese and no one here to  
Learn my particular English.  
My one year old son still hasn't learned to walk,  
But knows the Chinese and English words  
For cat and dog  
And uh-oh—this sort of life is fond of us,  
I in a limbo no one cares about, no one remembers,  
Just a strange face standing out in a sea of  
Assured regularity,  
And my wife stable with her family—  
And no longer have my muses to complain about,  
No more pretty visions so far away from me—  
But I have a roof  
And a heart that has trouble pronouncing my given name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Proof That Is Lost From The Blindness

Why not a river going her way, wound  
Like the suburban tropics, languid, tangled—all of  
The evidence that it needs—  
And in this plays you can sometimes go to  
Sometimes the beautiful elements that you've forgotten—  
There in the shadows, trailer parks of your  
Poorest relatives—  
And in the upheaval of cypress arms—the transients of  
Your ancestors—proof that is lost from the blindness  
Of our vision—where your childhood might  
Have been, barefooted, straggling latch-keyed  
Down a road all of the prettier cars refused to drive upon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Proper Dog

Beware the proper dog  
Who barks like a gentleman—  
He will sniff your woman's  
Crotch when you are not looking....  
He will take your praise  
And lick your palm if you  
Feed him a biscuit,  
He will even allow you to be  
His patron as long as  
You have the wealth to back him,  
But as soon as you show weakness,  
As soon as you are out of cash,  
He will turn his hat and  
Lift his leg to mark his territory.  
He will hump your woman.  
He will eat your cat,  
Because though you thought  
He was your pet,  
He is nothing but what he is,  
And proper is a misplaced adjective  
On him or anything;  
For though his home is beautiful,  
His coat is full of flees;  
He licks his crotch  
When he is thinking.  
He practices polygamy when his  
Loyal bitch is not looking,  
And the moon is his ancient cousin,  
Eons before the leash and cane,  
His first nature runs in the bloodthirsty  
Packs through the night's tundra.  
No matter how you dress him,  
No matter what he drives,  
Or what he does to make a living,  
Your proper dog is much like the man  
Who feeds him:  
A creature of its first nature,  
Be it either werewolf  
Or a proper gentleman.

Robert Rorabeck



## Proud Of Us

They said I was a sancho in the land of  
Milking-blood-  
The white sands, the caverns of Pieta  
The dry grottos, the husks of virgins shivering  
Like dead Christmas trees.  
Now I know why they never come up,  
Why Sharon doesn't have to think of the  
Water-colored paintings I lost for her:  
All the old-time settlers are in trailer parks,  
The cantankerous wives have slipped over  
Sweet canals and into other men's parks,  
But what about all of that our mothers  
Promised us-  
The sun blinding us with snake-oil and  
Years of ancient gravity:  
Bending down upon the earth as if a lustrous  
Woman,  
Orchids, orchids pretending to be in the sand-  
Orchids, and her children,  
Nothing but promises. The horses are grinning,  
But not because they are proud of us.

Robert Rorabeck

## Public Places

Sometimes the sun sets sideways  
And pushes outdoors all of your hopes,  
Like Cinderella is sweeping  
Her eyes so beautiful but no one cares,  
And her lover comes with candles in his beard  
All tide up in nooses for little dreams,  
Somnambulant toddlers culled from the waves,  
And now they say that they have no backbone,  
But even Satan has a backbone,  
Even when he is lighter than the clouds  
And caracoling the moon,  
And the traffic sings his praises and dances  
Every which way it can,  
As Evan comes down from the uninhabitable  
Mountain sideswiping with his brother,  
As Sharon is in her little joys and her little stores,  
Mopping up with all her eyes,  
And I would just like to be as beautiful as her  
Shadow  
Coming down the mountain trying to make friends  
And kiss strangers through the brambles and  
Spikenard of my motionless bicycles,  
Those things that are too hard to say and which  
Most beautiful women would prefer not to  
Hold hands with in public places.

Robert Rorabeck

# Published Author

I hate to look at myself when  
I go to the barber shop.

My mom has cut my hair  
For the past five years,

But I am a published author.

Before,  
I once met Jeb Bush  
At the barber shop in Tallahassee,  
Near the lake where I read  
The Bell Jar,  
And dreamed despotically of you;

And now I select my amnesias;  
And I am affected,

But please remember

I am a published author:

My hair and beard are gray,  
But I still get carded- Like today I got  
Carded buying cheap rum,  
Even though I always buy it from  
That store,  
And I need a haircut, but

I am a published author,  
And you are my despotic dear  
And I have had cruel dreams of  
You,  
Though I can hardly remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pulsing

Pulsing, the woman is not real  
Or, she is like something far underneath  
The ocean which gives off her own light,  
As if she was a star evolved that learned to  
Swim and copulate with the dark mysterious  
Things which come out of her bar  
And walk home with her after all  
The students are finally sleeping....

Then the world is wet and dreamy as  
They hold hands, the way beautiful things  
Sometimes do. I have never seen them, though  
I have walked down the streets alone many years later  
And followed the trail to her doorstep and  
Inside they make love and her lights pulsate,  
Something alive and giving of herself,  
Humming like power-lines under her control  
And I wonder what she must feel with  
The effervescence flowing out of her like  
Casual daydreams....

As the rains come gray in the sadness of  
A forgotten god, I walk alone trying to figure  
Her out, and sometimes she goes flying overhead  
Like a meteor or a jet, and it is a secretive kind of  
Flash, like something that is leaving never to return,  
Like the smile she gave to me in high school  
Before she realize what she was and took off....  
A heavenly body too quick for wishing upon  
And I try and reach out to her thinking that  
Her internal furnace would keep me warm,  
Like a fire crackling in its earthen hearth,  
And I could set up a house around her and let her  
Run all the appliances from her fingertips,  
But she is already in another world....

Pulsing, as if she wasn't real, like a  
Bright angel who used to guard me from the darkness,  
Who has since tasted the red fruit of a handsomer

God and ignited for him, all afire,  
Like something burning deep beneath the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Pure, Pure Sunlight

Her eyes would not give me a red cherry,  
A chance to smell her along the languid body of rises,  
Hiking bone-deep against the plates her body makes,  
Coming up, writhing with the sweat and stain  
Of getting things done on the 3rd plane this  
Planet is known for,

Where her body lies perfectly nude,  
Dripping the juice of the pomegranate,  
Writhing, a holiday for serpents to curl about,  
To surf, and to call those bright eyes a new poem  
Cast out of Eden,  
To saddle on until the buck of the act gets it:

Homer's voyage

Until she calls your name for the neighbors to hear,  
She sinks your battle-ship,  
And all your hopes collide into her, torpedoes,  
Commanded from the thighs which killed the Neanderthals  
Where your class finishes in the overgrown fields  
You learn something new, hidden,  
She slips our childhood into a rabbit hole  
We go down with Alice, in the forgotten wonder  
Of her auburn kindergarten dressed up for Easter Sunday,

And her hair lays in the light without shadow, pane,  
She plays on a field of pure, pure sunlight.

Robert Rorabeck

# Purple Violin

I stop and think of something beautiful.  
Around me, the world is flipping over itself,  
Bound in relation to the factory's sun:  
The greater masses have the most control;  
The sparrow swims around the  
Punctuating branches of the written tree  
Where we build our nest.  
But I cannot call this home—  
Here the horses create the weather in  
Strange stampedes they eat the green hair  
Of mountains, until the regal entourage  
Of the Queen quickly becomes withered  
Old men crawling, looking for diamonds  
The hoofs have crushed from coal.

Hark, I sometimes hear the sky declare,  
For in all the land he is the one who sees  
The farthest. I set off from my work and  
Scare away the frightening winged insects  
Who were trying to build a nest of sleepy colors  
In my beard.  
To the edge of the world I travel,  
The familiar sloping of the town  
Just some feet away, down to the water colored  
Prairies where monastic drunkards  
Are tumbling and dropping meaningful  
Trinkets in certain places in the grass  
All in relation to sunlight and shade,  
The systems of coercions, the lilted fingers  
Which say, here you go now, here you go....

Hark. Hark. Hark.  
The wind jumps like a leaping dog  
And blows in pollinating trespasses.  
Yes, there was someone new down there,  
Lost in a clutter of mismatched regalia,  
Her hand fluttering like a weathered  
Garment in need of mending;  
But I will not go down this side of the earth,

Where the stranger needing things revolve  
In places of time that intrude like  
The red rubber ball's tin horned dreams  
Through the day,  
The sleeping snails of sunlight's crawl  
Licking the last dew from the grass,  
And the multicolored men with no names  
And no homes,  
Ostracized like ex-husbands  
From their children's home....

I can not understand how  
She has traveled so far  
And how she has become so lost.  
I think before she must have won some medals  
For her eyes still sport the beams of  
Her triumphant athleticism.  
She is sitting in a stream and reading  
A pamphlet on the advantages of  
The new towers which will send  
Radio signals across the Atlantic.  
She is sucking her thumb.  
Now she is bearing her ass for  
The creatures of sunlight  
As they leap at her shyly and then away.

Hark. Hark,  
But no, I will not listen.  
I am in the weathered hills where  
The horses run and carve out canyons  
And estuaries for the Great Herons.  
These are the things which I move around,  
Asking me to stay and disappear  
Through the reedy clots of Juniper in  
High elevation. There, the effluvious  
Light is playing a sometimes purple violin  
Over her shoulder  
And she is picking a scab on her opal knee.  
She is perfect and lost like an ancient mineral,  
So I must turn away now and pick up  
The rake of my enterprise  
To clean the good earth beneath the



Sparrow's nest.

Robert Rorabeck

## Put Me In, Coach

Two dollar beer is the life for me,  
Because I don't have the memory but for  
One or two things:  
I used to cut paper and make snowflakes  
And airplanes;  
And there are very little things that I still do:  
I held off writing poetry for ten years,  
And then alone beside pool light I wrote poetry  
And bled ketchup for you in the Tallahassee graveyard  
I took my students too on Halloween:  
They don't allow me to teach anymore, but that is  
Nothing to brag about,  
Or like the stories I make up to keep from feeling alone  
At night:  
And you still live in the student ghetto:  
You still live beside the youth lights, and they still hold  
Celestial baseball games for you:  
Your bullpen is so packed, but you don't even sell  
Wine-  
My hair is gray now- my love has struck out,  
But the amber greased bat is still in my hands in the rain  
And moon light;  
And I'll keep swinging over the hair lip of the canal,  
Thrashing the alder berries and tulips like as if I  
Were really Mexican,  
Writing poetry every night,  
Because I am still ready to play.

Robert Rorabeck

# Put Ourselves To Bed

Pedro is in the sun pounding away  
Wreathes:  
The sun that is crenulating the trafficking  
Unjulating of the sea:  
And, yes, today don't we have holidays  
To sell underneath a big white and smoky  
Tent,  
Underneath the pines and the amphibian  
Airplane bellies sparkling of the drool  
Of birthstones and diamond plants:  
They are amphibians because they can both  
Crawl along the road,  
And then leap for great distances;  
And they are many sided carriages right out of  
Georgian England,  
But never once do they go to Australia to see  
What is cooking in botany bay:  
They just go leaping, leaping,  
Laughing and serving drinks pretty lips sip  
From,  
Creched and mélanged well above our heads,  
As we sell beautiful Christmas trees  
And then put ourselves to beds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Put Your Lips On My Words

First whispers in the morning meaning nothing,  
Give no candle flame warmth, unless they are of your  
Lips,  
Just so these words crawl meaningless through the  
Bleached white pages of the llano unless they are  
Softened by your careful eyes, read  
Thoughtfully by your lips,  
And my body is a derelict oil rig, a sturgeon without his  
Gilly mate, a train car providing little shade in the  
Sandbone desert, unless coupled with your body,  
Kissed and whispered upon by your lips,  
Spoke through and discovered upon by your eyes-  
Just as a sunny house is faded into a walking crypt,  
A jail cell, an empty tent- without your presence,  
The faucets of incubation, your legs drape the bed and  
Give it purpose and decoration,  
The couch becomes a playground with you on it, the backyard  
A green space seeming infinite- If your lips shouldn't whisper  
Across my words, feel them there like a saucy kiss,  
Every syllable should wilt and mold, become the droopy soil  
And dimmed husk of a rooty skeleton hampered in the wind,  
Should your eyes not  
Find my page, and track your lips across it with the honest hunger  
Of foraging egrets, then nothing I have said is real,  
But the hopes of a little boy trying to fly in his bedroom,  
But there is still a chance should your lips come across me now,  
And feel my words brush them like a teasing feather duster,  
Then you should know that they are bona fide and blooming, like  
The only flower of a species, and your lips their light and food:  
Come feed them then, and they will sing for you the way flowers  
Do silently in the germinating wind, and believe them here, for that was their  
Purpose: to be read by you and put down like seeds in your mind,  
Asking for body and mind, little children plumed in their rooms,  
Faucets, sinks, cabinets, brooms, refrigerators, gas powered generators,  
And all of the rest of the things that go along with it,  
And all the rest of your time, for your lips to crawl up to mine,  
And find there what I wish to say to you.



# Putting A Price On The Sea

Putting on the green  
And foaming rounds,  
The sea goes up,  
The sea goes down

And my love has  
Changed so far away,  
But she'll change back  
Again someday

And lay against  
The brown embittered  
Earth—  
Who will tell her  
What she's worth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Putting Away My Toys

It rains so softly over  
Resilient abutments;  
It feels as if I were seventeen again,  
And made of beautiful scars,  
And the atmosphere on my skin,  
A woman's kiss who is about to die,

Like a stewardess on her last trip,  
Thinking of a candlelit dinner- of the  
Men there,  
As she flies by my window  
Never looking in and  
Disappears into the turbulent mist  
That will see her off.

Robert Rorabeck

# Putty In Another Man's Clay

Back into the park of daggers,  
Beaten up by customers of an unashamed  
Sun,  
Failures to look beautiful mean no pollen,  
No reciprocation with her better joints,  
The useless water fountains the bees lay  
Sprawled around- all turned out  
And truncated into adobe moles:  
She would say to me I say to the thoughts of  
Children:  
Your mother would have a park and there  
Would be tender nudges,  
If my flesh was perfect like walking into the  
Air-conditioning of a bank and doing  
Your business all with smiles:  
I guess instead I will have to hold up the place,  
And pack my truck halfway through a  
High school day,  
Because fences are so easily bounded when  
You have the soul of a pointer,  
And there is no use, no correct bouquet,  
When her dreams and softy bicycles are  
Already putty in another man's clay.

Robert Rorabeck



# Quaffing Her

Words come because I need them,  
Skittish, because I have yet tamed them,  
Though sometimes I have fed them well,  
And done as little harm to them as I could,  
But they are meant for sacrifices for her beauty,  
So that I should cut and press them  
And remove them from their moist habitats  
In my throats, pull them forth like tubers  
Using the extemporaneous tap-dances these  
Fingers do: each knuckle should wear  
A suit and tie; When stymied for better  
Usage, the two hands should fight and choke  
Each other, which might appear to strangers  
As a self-congratulatory handshake;  
They want to unbutton her blouse; they want  
To run along her and practice the only sense they  
Know; they want to curl around a steering wheel  
And take her to the beach, or wave to adoring  
Fans, but she is the elusive allegory grown nubile  
And tantalizing from a verdant stem, and  
Other words which are only suitable for a future  
Midnight, should they clasp her neck like a chalice,  
And leaning her back drink from those lips,  
As she is poured into these.

Robert Rorabeck

# Quality Of An Illusion

Quality of an illusion that the heart cannot disavow—  
This is how we remember her belittling affections:  
See her family in the aspects of the billboard—  
See a homeless unicorn in the sun shower, like a spear besides  
The aspects of a busy highway that runs like  
A graveyard beside the sea—  
There is the utmost where we cannot survive—like making  
A house in the grass underneath a swing set—  
Of holding her lips to yours amidst the dunes and the  
Stolen bicycles: there it is—  
Awakening tomorrow—where the butterflies and less flattering  
Insects breathe for a couple of weeks—almost going  
So far as airplanes that keep up her soul  
But haven't yet learned how to lay her down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Quarterback To The Civil Wars Of Spain

I drink the last bit of rum  
And think of the color of your underpants:  
The alligators, if they think of anything,  
Think of runaways and the Pirates of Pinzance:  
They have been doing this for so long  
And so well,  
They have very low rates of insurance:  
And your eyes are blue like the ice moons of Jupiter  
The scientists sing and croon about:  
My sister Janice has a sugar glider named  
Gustaff who eats sugar globes and earth warms,  
And farts his way across her rented rooms  
Like the living recreation of a  
Paper airplane:  
And I fell in love with you in fourth grade:  
You were the captain of the patrols; and the grasses were  
Mowed and very green,  
By the tax payers' silver dollars, and by all of their loot:  
I remember looking at video game magazines on the back of the  
Bus with a boy named Chris;  
I remember traveling home in the lips of the rain  
Like a tiny quarterback to the Civil Wars of Spain;  
And I pined for you for a decade; and I will see you tomorrow,  
And splay my fingers like cypress bows against the  
Shoulder blades of your sugar cane:  
I will push you in our species of simple ways, like blue gills  
On hot summer days;  
And your eyes will move like constellations, anyways,  
Like the gravity stars give to other stars;  
And your feet will kick up off this plane,  
And point the direction to your sorority of other stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Queen Alice's Wheels

Reposing without liquor,  
I personify a street-deity where  
The higher-grade angels are passing  
Overhead with loud engines;  
Unaware, other more flagrant bums  
Are getting, and giving head in the park;  
It is their only capitalization,  
And once they're gone enough they perceive  
The lazing alligators as green-blooded  
Mermaids stretched out on long, sinking  
Driveways, eating Astroturf and looking  
Fine enough to fiddle  
As the sun spurts and spins like  
Queen Alice's Wheels; getting drunk,  
The waves are less inhibited, and so they  
Are coming in quite uninvited in a glistering  
Calvary, but Sommeliers in Colorado couldn't  
Give a damn.

Robert Rorabeck

## Queenly-Acanthine Estuaries

Jump along with me wherever my train is bound  
It is sunny- It has to be,  
Now that you are found and no longer need to sling my  
Words around to string goose necked traps for you-  
Because you are now my homeless honey:  
And it is bright and balmy  
Wherever we are running, and the yellow dresses drip  
From your piercing,  
And the waves are so calm that our newborn children  
Run through them and pick up shells from their  
Quieted lips:  
If you would know this, it would be so beautiful,  
And nearly impossible the way you have been running,  
And I haven't been doing anything rightly for so long,  
So how can any high basined goddess love me:  
And it is only this, that I have been so forlorn for so long;  
And I've been thinking of your eyes,  
And the better ways to spell them- Or dreaming of other  
Eyes to which your dresses do not belong,  
And maybe I have been wrong, but I am not a bad man:  
And maybe that is why you do not love me,  
Not that I am not your bad man, or that I am your good man,  
Only that I am not beautiful enough to be your help mate,  
But I said I love you- I said I love you,  
And I want to jump trains with you and name children  
Whatever new children we might have painted by the names  
Of homeless caesuras;  
And if you can only see this, or even hear this the way the  
Snow melts from the very summits down to the palmed and  
Balmy:  
That I love you- and before we are only epitaphs,  
Ant-sized calligraphies underneath the surcease of starry tides,  
That you might wake up from your cat nap,  
Your nipples perking- yes, and yawning, and realize that you do-  
You truly do love me,  
Only that you have forgotten, as I have forgotten that I  
Was beautiful enough for you,  
So that in that brilliant memory we might go tramping together,  
If you really loved me,

And so we left together across the tresses of sand barred  
Seas,  
Our eyes yoked together,  
The yellow light running over your piercing,  
You eyes shining like the goddess come down from  
Her higher basins and queenly-acanthine estuaries.

Robert Rorabeck

# Quiet Reasons To Live

Cool, cool ashes  
Floating through the yard's grasses,  
Makes me remember the pantheisms  
Of the easy and commercial road-  
This is how it looks to me out the pastoral verandas  
From my window-  
Everything so painless and beautiful,  
And in the morning,  
If I am up early enough,  
The bus will be waiting not far from  
Where the lions are snoring;  
And if it is the correct season,  
By seventh period,  
I will be well drunk,  
And the skies despotic,  
And stormy,  
Somehow as beautiful as her lips when  
They are beaten, and pensive,  
And giving me quiet reasons to live.

Robert Rorabeck

## Quiet Singing

No more playgrounds' naked play-  
I don't have to skip school anymore,  
I just hit the sauce- Not a ribald clear,  
But a ribald lost,  
Something to sooth the pain all dampened  
Out in the long green yard;  
Across the street, there is a pale light,  
And it is making us aware that a child is  
Crying,  
But I don't live here. This yard to a pure white  
House isn't mine. I haven't even been here,  
But I imagine it is where she lives,  
Where she draws her waters from the well,  
Bending across bosomy in yellow crinoline:  
Peach divine, without scars- When I first learned  
To walk and sing, I didn't know I was doing it for  
Her, but I was- Going straight south to sunny Florida,  
And she was somewhere out there too, just budded,  
Getting tossed. How could I know what she could  
Be, and that she would come so near,  
And given all her free time enjoy her movies;  
It is a sad thing to think about that I haven't even seen her,  
But the moon is a pretty thing and it is real because  
Cars go by under it to and from the sea, sometimes disappearing  
Beneath overpasses, but returning, proving their existence,  
And her- And this is her house so pale and fine,  
Like something ancient made by the waves resting on the  
Endless planes by which we know our lives.  
There out front, children are coming to and from school,  
And older children and doves- an entire arc of school kids,  
And soon she will step out and show some ankle;  
She will whistle, her blue eyes lost and following cars;  
Perhaps the invisible moon, if it is true,  
And I will tip back my glass and once more  
So quietly sing.

Robert Rorabeck



# Quietest Of Songs

Words pinioned to the ciphering holes of eyes  
Into each all of our bodies swim and we can perceive,  
Even while the night is dying,  
As day's mother grieves; and it is all false, but to this  
Beauty we fling like fire going along its lines,  
Like school busses speeding to get to school on time:  
I have thought of you here:  
I have bled alone all of my life for you here; and if you saw  
Me today, you would not wonder anything about me,  
As I would be common to your senses: just another opposition to  
Your sexes; and maybe that is why I have fought so quietly  
For your flowers for so long, even while another man  
Has won you, laying the senses of his body nice and long  
Under the caesuras of your privileged mountains:  
I lay my feet nearer the torpid canals:  
The traffic of tourists bugles hunting commonly above me,  
While I sing and sing to you my quietest of songs.

Robert Rorabeck

## Quietly, The Lake Intercedes

I'm not here, but the traffic moves,  
Doesn't it- all day? That is inevitable, back to  
And forth from work- through the shady shadows  
And the palms, so close to the persuading gravity the  
Sea takes on from the moon:  
So even when you cannot see it is there, like beautiful  
Ancestors lounging in graveyards too careless now to  
Say a thing. Not worried much about us anymore,  
The avenues once patrolled through the singular prevalence  
Of human desire- Like these words I flick away  
Trying to blind immortality so that he might fall into me  
And sleep, before I get too fat and lazy to go out and stroll  
The shore for new mermaids, the inevitable curves that will  
Certainly come, but will never happen again once they are  
Over- Surely now, the novel will not find its voice,  
Not even for the experienced older gentlemen whose time  
Has come; but certainly people are outside even now,  
Kissing, brushing slightly and considering marriage. In fact,  
I am sure of it: We are all doing all that we know how.

Robert Rorabeck

# Quilt Of Séances

The waves turn themselves green,  
To help you feel better,  
But they only end up reminding you of her  
Birth stone,  
And the trees she walked liberally under  
Humming to the chanting of the Krishna's free food:  
But she was a meat eater all in all,  
And a good one, which added to the  
Luxury of her form she wore modestly in three dimensions:  
Her lips added another, and they were all  
I had room for:  
The storage space of my memory filled up  
By her lips,  
By my dead aunt's lamps,  
And my grandmother's quilt of séances-  
They once touched my neck,  
And as you can see I am quite done for:  
The limpid tattoo of the penultimate female  
Occupied by her silver tasseled phalanx of roman legionnaires,  
She is now the burnished bride of the very  
Same haplite who pricked the messiah's ribs,  
Who took the pine stick and stuck it in the  
Bicycle's silver spokes,  
And afterwards shot Lorca, and buried him anonymously  
In the navel between the sad hills of Spain;  
But I do not love her, you understand,  
Because I am full of little white lies who come out  
Of me like fireflies when the sun is done cleaning the earth,  
And she knows nothing of green;  
Born in October, a domesticated witch,  
Her birthstone is the semiprecious Opal....

Robert Rorabeck

# Quinceanera Balloons

I drank a lot of beer: I was the drunkest man on the boat  
That left beneath the bridge where I used to meet Kelly for lunch  
Months ago;  
And I caught a forty-pound king fish, while the fishermen harangued me,  
While I sang sea-shanties and waited for the flood to overcome  
My blood and motion me into the direction that I could  
Go,  
And I watched Alma flirting with my father again today:  
I wonder if that is what all the girls do who are from Mexico: Alma, our  
Lives are so fleeting and our chances are so few,  
And I ate my lunch today in your truck with you, and I was so frightened  
As you told me a little more of your revenue,  
Of the boyfriend who you loved while your husband was away, until  
He came back to you;  
But, Alma, do not be afraid, it is you whom I love, and that cannot take that  
Away from you,  
And I can make our children so, so brave, and I can command them to build  
Green castles for you,  
And we can laugh across the terraplane underneath the airplanes cutting a  
Rug through your sister's quinceanera balloons;  
And because it is you whom I love, Alma- and you can hurt me if you  
Want,  
But they cannot take that away from you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Quip

My dog smells like Chinese food.

Robert Rorabeck

## Quivering Like A Prize

Deep in the stolen rabbits of my chest,  
The day thrusts like a roman spear into the spirit of our  
Lord:  
The sun trumpets, a fugue of sweat, and words  
Caracole of the meaninglessly forked tongues of rattlesnakes:  
There in the soiled halos of the bosque,  
Someone takes a bribe: and it becomes official and gossiped  
About through the turn stalls of the gas stations  
That I had no faith in her, her beautiful brown eyes  
Quivering like a prize and the truth buried so deep in them,  
Suffocated by so many lies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Quixotic

It cost me a dollar to read Don Quixote,  
But the look in her eyes as she put out the sharks  
Was worth it.  
And the sea was the teal of a tennis court,  
Where you could almost see the short-skirted gods  
Herding the red deer up the steep jaw of the  
Albino Titans;  
All of that was extinct, and the oil rig was a  
Farting hermit squatting on the pot of the sea,  
But it was a cheap show anyways,  
And when the curtains began to close in that smoky  
Dance hall, I saw her for the last time, taking  
Her bosomy bows, the grizzled men crunching cigars  
And clapping on their legs,  
Moting dusts into the searing candle flames;  
As she disappeared in the folds of claret satin,  
I was almost sure I could see the rim of areola,  
Like a ruddy shelf, and the bite marks from  
The wolf young suckled on her potent milks-  
Those who had founded Rome.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rage Like Klaus Kinski

In our apple-pie and marmalade  
Culture the mother's womb is the first  
Bell Jar the baby is placed  
In  
Glass pornography  
With the Bird of Time  
So when it comes out  
It is trained  
To not cry when the sterile knife  
Cuts away the nature  
Nor to rage against the death  
In the market place;  
And they do not bleat  
When led into the shops  
To put themselves on  
The clothing of social skin  
Where the Sanhedrin meet ;  
They do not rage like Klaus  
Kinski;  
They are cut off from the  
Ferality of the first man,  
The Wrath of God is not in them  
When they wash their hands  
In the stagnant water behind  
Their homes where they swim  
And they are like every other  
Man inside his cage,  
Docile at feeding time,  
Being fed the regurgitation of the  
Masses,  
Slowly flooding the muddy banks  
Of the delta,  
Like a herd of cattle being led  
To gorge the streamline sharks  
Waiting outside the stores  
And parking lots,  
Hunting in the great cutting blueness  
Beyond the slime ringing  
The spoon fed mouth.



Robert Rorabeck

# Rain Abates

Rains abate,  
But the sky remains perturbed:  
Fumbling through my bachelorism, I put my  
Money in a new bank;  
My dogs are wet and chasing expensive cars  
Through the effluvious jag of novel water-  
My parents walk upstairs, while unperceived  
Waves kiss the saturnine beach even now:  
How poetic,  
How poetic, and how slightly true,  
But where do her legs open the parse of lies?  
And how the sailors bemoan the tiresome seas,  
The restless caesuras, the unabated embrace of  
Nature's bosom, the laughing tellers proceed to  
Count the bills, fondling, fondling,  
And then away for lunch: Soon the sun will  
Draw back the curtains of the infernal stage and sing,  
And sing the rhapsody of evaporation,  
But where do her legs lie now above the coffin,  
So far away, though when touched reverberating  
With shivers like the sensitive glass brought  
To the lips, the tiny circumferences of diminutive  
Planets, revolving in the ignorant sky,  
At first a child and then a man walking through  
The forest and the dunes,  
Fumbling through my bachelorism; The sky  
Remains perturbed, though the rain abates,  
And grows as still as a mantis on the curling bit of  
Leaf, done calling her name, now in the silence  
Of unreciprocating prayer.

Robert Rorabeck

# Raining Now

I rip off—the times of her eyes—  
Like paper roses clasped like tissue paper in  
The hands of an unrequited  
Chimpanzee—  
We kissed in the zoo sometimes  
Long ago,  
The adulterous fairy tale  
That the ducks and the imposters wondered  
About—  
So few words spoken from an amphibian's  
Heart not knowing which  
World she belonged to,  
While the shopping malls pretend to be  
Churches,  
And we were just getting started,  
But when it rained  
She didn't want to come over to my  
House and make love—  
Well, it is raining now  
And she is still not here

Robert Rorabeck

# Rainstorm Above An Umbrella

Listen to my beating heart like a  
Rainstorm above an umbrella  
Invented in the time before inventions—  
And now I can almost swear to you  
That I am still right here  
Panting like a leopard done with the  
Livingrooms of housewives even though  
They remain still in them:  
Gathering their chandeliers and looking  
Out into the mud storms:  
Aren't they yet perplexed over what your  
Birth will mean to me:  
Crossing the world into a daydream no one cares  
About—and all of the cars are abroad  
And crying like the prettiest vortexes in their  
Kaleidoscopes: until it happens again,  
And nothing new is made,  
But that strange pornography takes shape again,  
And we are rooted into our otherwise purpled séances  
And we have to look beautiful,  
Shaking our hands and kissing our stars,  
Because the rest of the neighborhood is looking to us,  
Staring out of rain streaked windows and trying furtively  
Just whatever it is that we are made in to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rainwater In A Barrel

While I was thinking of  
another girl's atoms  
and how even  
though distant from her  
I had touched her  
once or twice on the cheek  
and how bits of her skin  
must have come off  
like invisible apples  
and mingled around with  
my bits  
and all those bits dancing  
and have posotronic \$ex  
before my eyes  
unseen ballerinas you  
were playing Little Red Riding Hood  
in a dark forest of books  
thinking of your high-school  
crush-  
you'd f- anyone  
and not even think about their atoms,  
just to get rid of me  
when I some dysfunctional Plato  
was content to feel  
the unfelt flesh  
of my dear love-dryad-  
from a distance  
let her envelop me  
with subatomic particles  
and let her eyes and organs  
revolve like hurricanes  
inside my head, a flashing  
galaxy of her parts,  
but I wasn't cheating  
you had to go get  
f-ed by some  
booky, hook-nosed nobody  
and I bet you  
didn't even think of

the tiny bits of him  
floating around your head  
in our bedroom  
you destroyed  
with his c^m  
overspilling your vag-na  
like rainwater in a  
barrel.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rainy Spades

The penumbra found him on a rain day,  
And they sat together playing cards;  
The brightest moonlight hung over them  
Like a roof the rain snuck through,  
As the lamps slipped into the blotted swamp;  
Here the orchids had died in inky jest,  
And the bump on the log barked at the cat fish-  
The red hollies bent down to drink,  
And their poison was plucked by suicidal gold fish.  
When the alligator just smiled like a  
Statue down at the bottom step,  
And the earth continued its weeping like  
A scorned teenager on the verge of seventeen;  
The card game continued playing,  
Though now even the Aces were soaked through  
And ripped.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rapture

Open wounds abide without windows,  
Here where the children are walking to and from  
Points of knowledge, in and out of shade,  
The foraging of budded professionals,  
Two good legs on concrete and tattoos.  
This is not Oregon, for it is flat and the sea  
Is near, with humidity drinking slow gin fizz,  
Where I pass others knew me not,  
Asphodel and potted plants, I saw her last  
On religion's steps, but she was nothing famous.  
Timelessly, and again, they make love until  
They unhinge, forgotten acquaintances, winnowed  
Into newer lives with more abandon, and up  
The hill the black university, the porous  
Segregations.

□

Half a decade since I saw the show,  
Old friends now progenitors, contributors to  
Nurseries, farmers of cleft and plough,  
Lovers on the green and bowling drunken in  
The air-condition, or lifting weights indoors in  
The lights: a bolero of pattering hearts and jogging  
Legs on red clay near midnight applauded by  
Empty bleachers. Even when I was near them,  
I faced west and read in the graveyards, but  
For instances my fingers touched that beautiful  
Sin, a cemetery of classrooms to which my  
Sophomoric ambitions handed out the syllabus  
To the morticians and grave robbers,  
Noting how they came in trains in full penumbra,  
Glowing silhouettes hung out of cheap apartments,  
The cats howling over the pool's chrysanthemum glisters,  
Only to graduate once again into the night  
Where no one saw the vines reclaim them rapturously.

Robert Rorabeck



# Rattlesnake In My Gut

Rattlesnake in my gut:

Coiling: milky, pregnant, eating the grapes like small

Venison:

How long will it take you to exist, or cease to exist,

Rubbing your pearly belly like bragging up against

All of my scars:

And other kids who have all fallen in or out of

High school,

While the cars just putter on the asphalt underneath the cooling

Religions of the rain;

And the classes behind them left unfinished, the clay beautiful

But unripened without the foresight of the kiln:

The post office red but unread- almost bankrupt,

But in the midnight of its straying, the elk come in through

The simple crossroads,

Stumbling, sniffing the fresh paint, and scarring the façade

With the insatiable needs of their antlers:

The feral crowns of earlier metamorphosed kings:

While the highways of the state lie newly languid, cool and

Basking,

And the horses across their ventures stand as still as statues,

Having already eaten the resilient presence of the wildflowers

In that outstanding valley in which, later, I was all but made.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rattlesnake's Chant To The Hunting Bird

Hunting birds scream that they should  
Have seen the fish in the river,  
The girls in the stream; but they have to  
Settle for rattlesnake and his tambourine;  
He chants hissing,  
I will make you see what I have seen,  
From my belly along the streams  
The girls who are chanting to the sailors  
They feed, They will never love you,  
Never love you- Strange hungry bird,  
Though you might look good in the sun,  
From side to side, we will make you hear  
What we have heard- The women who desire  
Your sense of flight but not your love.  
Feed us if you will to your children, but you  
Are just not enough that thing- Women shall love neither  
Of us, laughing on their school bus- but we  
Do not desire them. We gave them their first  
Knowledge, their first death, their first reason  
To orgasm, and for us that is enough- While you  
Are just a bird hunting what it can never hope to kill.

Robert Rorabeck

# Reading My Poetry

Cheeks stained with the tears of baseball  
That somehow Alma cannot see:  
I told her I have all of these scars in her car:  
She laughed at me,  
And she let me kiss her, and for awhile to hold her hand,  
While all the other cars moved as if in a fraternity of  
A band:  
And the clouds did whatever they were doing:  
She said that we could only be friends; that she must stop  
Reading my poetry,  
But then we made love, and we made love again:  
The forest opened into the glades that sang for the affections of  
Her eyes,  
And when she drove away from me again, across the  
Parking lot of the fruiteria, that was when I went back into  
My own tomb and waited for her to call for me,  
As some times she does:  
She becomes a wetted mariposa when we are alone together,  
Her brown skin prettier than anything I laid eyes upon in  
Highschool;  
And I just want to take pictures of her pretty feet and hands,  
Juxtaposed with my working scars, and the dirt in my nails:  
I want to show how she can become an airplane for any man  
Who opens his eyes upon her,  
Even though she will only take away so few,  
Her promises as finicky as birthday candles; but she makes  
Me glad that I had to suffer for so long,  
And that my silent art is so pitiful if unabused, because now  
It can all be for her- she can be my insufferable muse,  
And the affluence of the world will never  
Off color us at all,  
And we will swing together without echoes; and if I still had  
A shadow, it would only be for her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Real Love

Nights mouth off through the trees:  
Beneath their spatters of coned canopies,  
The carnies are doing their job  
In light bulb erections:  
The carnies who come around like butterflies  
Of luminent metals:  
They don't give a damn how pretty you are,  
Just get on the ride:  
Then, while flying in a loop-ship,  
It is all about the presocratic nature of this  
Woody fraternity:  
Yes, the experiments of all that tide:  
Motion without any travel directions,  
The tremulous plum trees, the paper airplanes,  
And we are the whores underneath them,  
Doing good work, getting nothing done:  
The way these rivers move,  
The traffic seems to be making love underneath the  
Conducting lights,  
And I want to take my headstone here to make love  
With the gifts my parents gave me:  
I want to squat in the grass amidst the tremendous flies,  
All of them making so many eyes at me;  
And say, here I am, here it is, whipping around-  
I just go a haircut, so now I go swift;  
Under the painted damsels, skimming the painted skiffs:  
And I love it here,  
And everything is all right all of the tourists gathered into  
The slick rudeness and traveling together  
Through the tinseling cricks where my muses are so  
Utterly debased, and thus made better for the occupations of  
Real love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Really Is A Shame

Pushing the cerulean fugue  
There you go now-  
Starting out down hill with all  
Your friends,  
Not letting me get a second chance  
To get tongue tied by how  
Your indescribable eyes quench on  
Sunlight  
Until they are like inebriate twin  
Sparrows  
And swinging insouciantly over  
The many legged hills  
Of aerodynamic traffic,  
Leaving me in their cartoonish dust,  
The consumption of your  
Windmills and ceiling fans,  
Spots of blood like  
Silly flowers in my cheeks-  
You were even too lazy to  
Use your legs to move away,  
Which really would have been  
Something to see;  
And it really is a shame.

Robert Rorabeck

# Really Quite Something

You're not my type, or I wasn't yours,  
But the sky is green and filled with a great disorganization  
Of letters,  
And maybe even Disney-like swans:  
Apollo's caravan where down beneath there are libraries  
And girl's to unhinge like soda-pop,  
Even special meanings to the places that seem very real:  
And at night, jogging alone traffic filling the cone of an ear  
Like a tremendously insouciant waterfall,  
I can go beneath the church rising above the dammed everglades  
And look at its spire it up and gutting the sky like the spear  
Into the side of some fine young god and say almost  
Religiously that that is really quite something.

Robert Rorabeck

# Really Something

A bunch of absent minded mothers are  
All stopping in at one time  
This morning  
Because Saturday is Halloween and they  
Forgot their  
children's day school  
Pumpkins;

But, I say- I am up to something,

And the sea is really something.

Robert Rorabeck

# Really Want To Come

Traffic looks at me, slowed  
Terrapin never dreaming of the canal they live  
Back up next to,  
Loving each others stink;  
That the maggots save their lives,  
When the girls want to come, they really want to  
Come,  
But they hardly ever want to-  
They are just as populous as ghosts,  
So if they are even here then they are heaven sent,  
Or they are heaven absent;  
And I have gray hair and I have quieted and am not  
Going to the ballet,  
But will hide out in the verdant landscapes for awhile  
Missing my ear the ants and fishermen took away;  
And the boats,  
And the airplanes,  
And the little boys laying beside me,  
Making me smile as they are entangled like lovers with  
Their auburn bicycles;  
And in the end they will swish their heads and bow doggie  
Style off stage,  
But eventually I will give one of them my crown,  
My first child of this solar system;  
That eternal pain of maggots fibrous in the staunch rains,  
And I will make at least one of these skirted  
Brats  
Really want to come.

Robert Rorabeck



# Reasons To Belong

Life tasseling with amber,  
Slowly looking up, somnambulant into the  
Bedrooms of another  
Ship: and now what is this: what is  
This, sleeping  
Head, but another daydream losing itself upon  
The arc of another tree:  
While the new day's fires start up slowly,  
Climbing up hill,  
Surmounting, and then casting a long shadow  
Down through the valleys of another  
Pilgrimage:  
There amidst the limbless asphodels where  
It has no reasons to belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# Reawakened Sentiment

Look how demandingly the night proceeds,  
So finely dressed in a gala of waves,  
The undulations of such whimsical forces turning  
So slowly while the tourists sleep, save for  
The lovers necking beneath the cross lit by halogens,  
And all the palm trees whispering in mass  
Over the almost forgotten memories in conquests,  
Of blue-shelled conquistadors in patinas of cormorants,  
And nuns in shrouds of habits sunken in coffins:  
This is what I mean, when I turn to say to you,  
When every star has been named,  
And all the grass mowed, and I can smell you  
Just as fine as a blade in dew; finite our bodies shall  
Be, but while it lasts I will want you as infinitely as  
Each wave in this sea, and take nothing more from  
You than your open wrist, and turning it beneath the  
Secrets of building nimbus, kiss you where you thought  
Least, and raise you in my heavens until you shine  
Like an eastern star undiminishing, even in an awakened  
Sky, and hold you still beating when the tourists drive  
By, never thinking how even then they go so fleeting,  
Though I am sustained by you,  
Even as the waves tire, and with the tide are retreating.

Robert Rorabeck

# Reconciliation

I put pieces of you on the threshold  
Where the frogs wish to dance like  
Princes—  
And the dogs pirouette with fleas—and  
We all wait there to the smell  
Of fried chicken and apple pie—  
Never knowing when her husband will be  
Returning home:  
And across the street there is a thicket  
And a pornographic tomb:  
But very soon it will be built up and built  
Up,  
So far underneath the heavens' swoon:  
But the conquistadors will remain a pretty word  
Lost at the doorstep of your epiphany, if  
You ever had one—  
If your heart ever swam to me—and told me kisses  
Of pretty blue gills—of watercolored mermaids—  
In a kaleidoscope of waves that we can never remember—  
Just another glass illusion spraying their bosoms  
Onto the parapets—where the tourists are looking down  
As the airplanes swarm with passengers above them—  
Illusions upon illusions—  
The sea busted apart and without hope of  
Reconciliation.

Robert Rorabeck

# Red And Blue Shifts

There is still a storm echoing in silence  
From the pit of the universe: measurable, and  
Good for science-fiction:  
I like to pretend that myself too is in blue shift;  
I go out into the great alluvial plains higher up  
Where they keep the grizzlies, and get naked in  
A cerulean tarp. Now here the Aurora Borealis is kind  
Of like a streaming curtain opened at the edge of space;  
And now sounds are gambles. Maybe they are just recorded  
Over the permafrost- Maybe they have already happened,  
Are echoes, or premonitions- I'm not sure;  
Yet down beneath in the states more readily lined the buses  
Turn around, yellow, comely, depositing and picking up,  
Keeping good time- tromping up the fine young students' legs  
Yet learning where eyes fall like covetous super heroes and  
Arch villains under the merciless halogen lights of math class:  
I don't care- I laugh- I eat crackerjacks! I am no more  
A part of that invention. How could I ever get published, moving  
So far away, steadily tramping. Tomorrow I might even become  
Russian- I sympathize with the blue shift, the janitors,  
The cleaners up of barren enterprise; and her legs?  
And her breasts pressed up against her learning? Her areolas  
Freckled silver dollars nipples pen to without milk: Without consciousness,  
She turns the other way, dressed all in red, she is the wave which  
Goes through the door and falls into his arms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Red In The Handlebars Of The Sun

Red in the handlebars of the sun,  
Something always gold-  
And I can hardly hold on:  
I don't like to look where she is milking,  
Busily enfolded with men from the earth  
Who have learned to stand up straight  
And dress well for the possibility of  
Her sex:  
But I like to think she's looking at me,  
Like something rather devilishly pollinated:  
Something that can be bought for free-  
There lapping, lapping almost broken  
In the come along weeds;  
And her soul is fibrous and doesn't digest  
Easily- she works all day in her habitat  
Of kiln dried clay- and the Busters queue;  
And I like to ride around her, red in the  
Handlebars of the sun,  
Until mother calls me home to dinner, and the  
Woods quiet, turn sepia and religious;  
And I know planes are touching down-  
But there is so much I have missed,  
While she is busily congratulated, ornamented-  
She is wedded into a sappy bough thrashed  
To kill the gold of her day-  
She is spread out the way a river mutates into mud;  
And she is even more beautiful in secret, but there  
She is gone-  
The only thing left of her is my red face,  
Just the flesh caught memory of being  
When her bosom glistened before its epitaph red in  
The handlebars of the sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# Red Light

The only evidence that he was once  
A clown,  
Was the way the bright pastels swirled  
In the waters running under his chin.  
Where he sat down and knelt  
In the shadow of the bridge  
While the gondolas paraded  
Young love before him-  
She was a garish whore  
Neon in that window above  
Where he sat,  
A kitten in the crooked purr of her lap:  
She invited men in suited and fine,  
And mimed the Kama Sutra  
Seven to midnight,  
And afterwards....  
And after that,  
The moon a drunken midge on the  
Nape of the Negroid Sea,  
She would clock out and waltz  
And read Swan's Way  
On the park bench under the tree  
Nearby where he sold balloons,  
Sold them for free....  
And his love was for free.  
Shouldn't she take his open hand  
Offered for her  
Near the park bench under the tree?  
Laughing,  
He would kneel to her and say,  
"Won't you have me,  
Right now- Hurry...."  
But she couldn't imagine what he  
Could mean,  
For love was such a dispassionate  
Lucrative thing.  
For she had many suitors,  
Pomadened and fine  
They strutted up to her room

At all sorts of odd times....  
And she shouldn't give her heart to  
Just any old man,  
Especially a clown with balloons in his hand.  
And this is why he is crying in the river tonight,  
Faceless and hopeless,  
As love floats away,  
She turns on the red light,  
Beckoning strays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Red Meat Hearts

Ants without liquor rejoining through the grass:  
Soon it will be raining and muting the bed of their queen,  
The way things happen to guitars left in the bluing grass;  
But they are happy because it will mean that they  
Should leave off the junked cars of their blue collar pornography,  
And go marching down to her luscious antechamber  
And court her quite successfully  
with the successions of their red meat hearts.

Robert Rorabeck



# Redhead

Don't tell me your  
Concerns for other people;  
Just jump into my bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Redneck Bo-Jingle

Rednecks Bo jingle for rusted stars:

They come in for work: I wont give them any.

Black men come in and buy Christmas trees for

One hundred dollars. They are out and about and

Smiling, and I tell them goodnight and think of their

Perfect skin made from the sweltering savannahs

Of the unabashed kiln: I suppose I've loved them and

How they go, picking sad flowers along the insouciant

Highway, even as the mercuries of helicopters of

Hatters of asteroid belt cops search them out:

I don't look right, and I don't look them right in the eye:

Ten percent of me is racist, but it is a good portion of

The good half, yet still un homogenized and getting filthy

Rich. Brian has a pin and needle tattoo of a hefty cross

On his left bicep: Or my vision mirrors like a princess:

Her legs skipped parallel beneath the bare-chested reservoir

Of thirsty water moccasins as she ran to the oasis of

Presocratic mythologies: I love her since we rolled together

On the wooly sherbet carpet of preschool, or looked her in

The pastel eyes of sorrow, but we'll get back to that,

For now I am warm and all right and typing in an RV as the

Traffic streams up and down 441. Today someone robbed

A sub shop and cops on steroids searched the bushes, the

Canal, and the Florida holy, or in that order: I wrote a poem

At 4 am, and this is my second poem tonight. At the library

I read an insouciant book, or it read me, as I repeated that word because it

Is one of the few big ones I remember, and checked to see if

The literary agent has responded. They have not, and I take that

As a good sign. The world is rocking as Pedro jacks off to one of the

Many vermilion honeys, mostly Catholic who came in all busty

Today and as randy as baseball players swinging mahogany sticks

Up in the red anthill of their mounds: I have things for them too,

And video games and a wishing-well, and this is a poem that

Has forgotten all there is to know about unicorns,

Which is the beauty of the girls with angelic bone structures from

High school now all trapped in a shallowness of a fading sea,

Kept not so far away at all; and in those shoals

Urchins mauve and ready, the palm's stigmata, revealing a

Tourniquet as religious as a pomegranates' blood, as rich

As a glass of fruit juice she pours for me  
Next to the patio in a mote of feature less sunlight  
As the Mexicans cut the grass up and down in  
Perfect rows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Reflecting The Heavens

Nothing good left in the supermarket—  
Nothing missed or passed over by the eyes of the stewardesses  
Having touched down even in the superficial hours  
After midnight and wondering around  
In the twenty-four hour playgrounds—  
They are trying to size things up, their legs increasing their  
Vocabularies—  
Their hands and the parts of their bodies which lie naked  
Suggesting the rest of themselves to the men or foxes that see them,  
Enjoy holding those material possessions that add up  
To the increases of a lonely happiness—  
And when they drive by, the parks are just as silent as the  
Graveyards, and the swing sets have already been taken down—  
The places they move beside just as blue as the next—  
Back in their grottos, they have marionettes just waiting for them—  
And ticking crocodiles they have taught to cry—  
The language of poets trying to enfold them, but they shed  
The words that wish to don them as muses—and they walk  
Around by themselves—grape vines for the foxes—  
An artwork give aesthetic truth to the shoals—  
A pornography that reflects the heavens in every design.

Robert Rorabeck

# Reflection

I don't want to read what is written:  
I wish I couldn't read at all.

It is worse than looking in the mirror.

Robert Rorabeck

# Regular Lines Delivered Fresh

Getting ready to go to the dump,  
The sun is itching on the glass, and all that  
Cornucopia that poetry might be is  
Spilled out onto the wildflower fields in  
The high basin. Here, its so easy to believe in  
Angels, and tourists stop to watch our  
Standard bred horses from afar, so they  
Cannot smell them as they mow the yard.  
To reproduce the infinite is to spring from  
The graveyard, but leaping is made impossible  
By the pounds of grubby earth, or the lack of  
Stanzas, and the distance of friends and ancient  
Teachers. Nothing sells that isn't perishable,  
So such a line should be engraved in stone,  
Each thought is smooth and feral and sleeps  
Beneath the house picking bones; and we leave  
Them going down dirt roads to relatives who  
We never visit, and the dusk lays heavily on the  
Eyes who look far out upon the yard and the  
Croaking sombulence, filled up with secrets  
So regularly, that people have stopped noticing,  
And yet still might enjoy the regular visits  
Of the pizza delivery boy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Regular Motions

Jerk my bones into  
The desert for oil—

These seashells are  
Fossils without time—

I am going to fight for  
What I know,

Even if the voice in  
My head  
Ain't Jesus

Robert Rorabeck

# Rehearse

Curious air balloons flatulent over the heads of  
My Fair Lady;  
They are starring her in a prom of swamps and air-plants;  
And there's a better name for it, where I eat alone,  
My private theatre of dead cats the artistic canines  
Paste like Christ onto the cactus garden,  
Made them perfect saints:  
The dogs were as white as bone; the moon was as white as  
Dogs,  
And the pornographies rested under the rootless trees like  
Teardrops- paper dollops, pamphlets for Christmas in  
Cars on blocks;  
And looking at my friend's mother knocked me off my horse;  
She was mostly naked in her backyard after winter,  
And the pool had so many colors it couldn't decide, drooling  
As it did over her body;  
And we played while we were still alive:  
Seventh period was my time to get drunk at school, to drive  
Away and say hello to the sea, the drive back again and choose  
My college;  
And I am going back again, my cheek courting in drool,  
Pretty women virgins to the rag, carrying around the promontories  
Of England in their purse;  
They didn't need to wear shoes, but they did;  
And even when they'd all dispersed like frantic magpies from the  
F\$g, I sat at my lunch lake and ate it alone,  
Cried as a rehearse.

Robert Rorabeck



## Reignited With That Fire

I will silence you without any grief while the  
Sun is in his high orchard and all of the heroes have  
Gone to sleep:  
And this is my world, while I stare at pictures of  
Myself with my wife,  
And my grandfather sleeps in Tennessee—  
How he dreams of my grandmother who I  
Remember burying underneath the strained perfections of  
A cross atop the end of the hill her little house sits  
Beneath—next to the ashes of her oldest daughter,  
While my mother leapt about her—hot embers  
Waiting to be reignited with that fire.

Robert Rorabeck

# Reincarnating Sara Teasdale

Can we feel these atrocities from outer space,  
But only alone,

The merit of your soul lies stamped under stone,

Propitious, and legal, and francophone:  
This lugubrious marrow I am wanting to hold,

To cradle, and say a word and pet the cipher of  
The echoing home,

The places where you must lay down to rest, the  
Nocturnal bloom,

And the drooling cusp of the cone which when morning  
Will spill silent honey from the tip of the inked plume,

And through the rainy streets you must feel  
The throbbing of my monstrosity's feral will:

To release spore with you around your dorsal fin,  
And cuddle in the coral for only the morning of a waning day,

And after the brainless sport, look briefly through your  
Third eyelid, regain amnesia, swim away....

Robert Rorabeck

# Reindeer Necromancy

If I raised their reindeer from the dead  
The forest would die in soon processions,  
The rains would come but have no matter,  
Being for I am quite different from the boys in town.  
If they knew my heart, they would play  
Another game, and try to tame me with gifts  
Of seeds, and show me pictures of their  
Mothers' legs they keep well beneath the beds,  
Or tease me from the crooks of trees where  
Apples grown like winsome cheeks,  
But I could take it all away, if their teasing continued  
The trysts of evening's fermentations, the love  
Affairs on aeroplanes. With a spanning sough,  
My hands in the air could awaken migrations of mauve  
And lilaced sorrows, the antlers' crux of moss  
And rime, the ancient blood of oilslicks; their eyes,  
Their eyes are even dusk, and the forest is weeping  
Its good-byes, if I should pray and kneel by the  
River's silver knife, their kind would rise and where  
We went in misty crew, death would fingerprint  
The golden throats of song-birds and paralyze the  
Beautified Olympics of her springy boughs,  
All the same, until her eyes became a perplexing well,  
And the high school a boggy plague.

Robert Rorabeck

# Remembering All Those Things Which Couldn'T Possibly Be Real

Lost in the transcendental woods,  
With a beard as knotted as Walt Whitman,  
Pretty girls whistle at my scars,  
And even when you get lost its like being in  
A Disney Movie,  
Even when you know what's going to happen,  
That there is a slab and a mortician with a scale  
To weigh your brains,  
And some hungry Mexican to go around afterwards  
And pick up the spent fireworks from the weeds  
And wildflowers,  
Always careful of the rattlesnake's glowing,  
Phallic venom,  
And the tall-legged ways she wrote about how  
He'd slip through her exposed window after midnight,  
Like a Chinese dragon;  
And in the deeper parts of the woods there is incest  
Infecting dreams, and rich Anglo-Saxon demiurge,  
And suicide over foamy cataracts which  
Are also beautiful women,  
But we will not go that way: This is only a day hike,  
A kindergarten for children to get lost and steal things  
And then take breaks for lunch,  
And they will not live forever here:  
Their names will not resound or echo and swirl in the  
Obsessive compulsive basins,  
And there will neither be time for plastic flowers  
Or cenotaphs,  
Because soon their steady parents will be coming back  
Around from work, or the adulterous cloisters  
With peanuts from the bar,  
And they will pick them up and hold them in their  
Sweaty clairvoyant palms for a little while,  
Telling them that this cannot happen to them,  
That they will live just as long as everything else that  
Isn't real, and they might chastise us for a little while,  
Even while we just smile and mow the cemetery's grounds,

And look up through the shaken stuttering of woods,  
Remembering all those things which couldn't  
Possibly be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Remembering Her Alamo

If I love monsoons, its because they curfew  
Mon freres,  
Down in the river walks of San Antonio, where  
The tourists paddle, and take snap shops of the  
Alamo,  
And little white boys can still pretend they can be  
John Wayne:  
I care about pop-guns and grape soda,  
And getting laid beneath fireworks before I thought  
I was going alone;  
And I am going to die- I'll become a red savage  
And die somewhere in the neighborhood of your cleavage.  
Your perfume lingers,  
But in my playground the savages always win anymore;  
And the alligators smile and wear expensive wrist watches  
Which first caught their eye in billboards above the  
Long and lonely highway; but now they've gotten here,  
And they have a good job and are getting married by the  
End of this Holiday,  
And everything I love about you I wrote down in a postcard  
I sent away- I've stolen the lovely rose from your hair,  
And given it to the lonely river; it hardly ever moves anymore,  
The tourists go across her so slow and easy;  
And they ask her to bare children and name them after the heroes  
Who died there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Remembering That They Love

They keep their show on the busses until they get to  
Disney World  
Where they have to forget so many things they  
Have learned about life—  
The pyrotechnics sing to them on weekend holidays,  
Promising them they will be in love forever—  
Above them, where there are no mountains—  
The sky is a river of voodoo—  
Where old insects reconnect with exoskeletons they  
Thought lost upon the bark of the paper tree—  
Just as the knights dawn themselves for  
Jousting atop of ostriches  
In the tournaments of worlds with racetracks of  
Purple moons—I can hardly believe in them—  
But the sun comes up dog-tired come  
Morning, and my parents  
Peel off the dusky tracks to sleep in the horse trailer  
Just as the sun is floating in its yellow parapets—  
And the children turn around and go back to school—  
Aspects of the forgotten day lingering on their  
Features—  
And, yawning, they regress into their wayward classrooms  
Trying their best to remember the things  
That they have a hard time remembering that they love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Reminiscing

Now there is no need for those words  
Used to call her:  
She standing out readily, her glittering stiletto  
Up against the bricks; but not for you:  
For you are a fool trudging with that balsam wood  
Cross over the hills, the power lines swaybacked  
Above the moist terrapins:  
And supposing this is all fable, and the animals  
Are making small talk, smoking generic cigarettes:  
The hare's eyes are red and just out of high-school;  
But certainly now you will not be published,  
Even as you fall down in the grass and let the insects  
Bother you, and laugh, for the dunes are near the sea  
And over spilled with defeated conquistadors,  
A word you could call out a thousand times to her from  
Over the toy seas of bathtubs, but it wouldn't do you  
Any good, given her inclinations: Now she is nuzzling  
Up to him, and bighting her lip: If you look long enough,  
He will be doing it for her, and there will be blood in  
Secret little places, but don't try to save her,  
Because she might enjoy it; so take your lunch out  
Of the cafeteria and hide face down in the effluvious oil  
Slicks, and skip across the scabby backs of Precambrian  
Politics, if you are light enough, and then play the truant  
Near in the parks where she readily comes; and swing  
For her in the entrained arc, if you must; and wonder how  
Long clouds last, and if reformed remember themselves as they  
Spill in their cerulean avenues over the clean geometries of  
Suburbia's sectarian steeples,  
Each pool glistening in semiprecious contrast to the  
Canal's flat ribbons; because she has already forgotten you,  
And it is a long ways home, by foot or bicycle, giving plenty  
Of time for reminiscing.

Robert Rorabeck



# Reminiscing Of The Fanfares

And it is pleasant- isn't it- even though not  
Sincere-  
In another town with the chorus girls dancing  
With tattoos of tears on  
Their cheeks which just means that they've been  
In prison  
And are now like goldilocks- I.e. a long ways  
From home;  
But what particular suburbia did goldilocks spring  
From, anyways-  
And who, exactly, did she have to work for:  
While all of the cars pull in- examining the blooms:  
They are a long ways from the lakes  
Bled off the rivers, but they are right here-  
Sunbathing in the exact marmalades of another  
Holiday-  
As it sounded like a gunshot this afternoon while  
I've had a hard time holding my breath-  
But the egrets stand stock still right over the tiaras  
Shimmering in the ankle deep grasses:  
And I wonder what it means, exactly, just as you kiss  
Another mouth and wake up to go to school  
Again, as the lightning blooms again over  
Your shoulders- and it doesn't have to be any theft  
That I would ever have to believe in-  
But another rainstorm in between the bitter holidays  
That forgot to take shelter once again, reminiscing  
Of the fanfares of oh so long ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# Resting With The Butterflies

Are frailty, burning matchsticks in the daylight-  
Kindled tallow in the classrooms,  
In smoldering nuisances-  
Piglets in the shivering cold rooms, under the  
The dressing rooms of her Siamese eyes  
Which are moons,  
Wounded, blue and wonderful, and filled with  
Frightened animals that live  
In her bareness's  
And take shelter in her nakedness-  
And she is up there,  
Blackened off eye, but she pretends to  
Cry as she looks down  
Over the smoldering crops of the funerals  
Of our carnivals-  
The Ferris Wheels resting with the butterflies  
Who whisper to them of their own  
Metamorphosis-  
But the Ferris Wheels are envious, for they  
Know they shall never change.

Robert Rorabeck

# Resurrected And Reoccurring

The trains seem to peel good in unicorn  
Season:  
Offering up their goods in linear cavalcades in open  
Aired processions  
In one long continuous arc through the sugar pines:  
And they grow up storming through mountains,  
Smelling the nudeness of birch,  
And listening to the highfalutin echoes as they cry over  
Fools gold in the grottos of suffocated  
Canaries;  
And they carry the working girls through the midnight  
And into the new parking lots  
Of petrified mother marries where the johns are waiting for  
Them with perfect bowties  
Underneath the silver moons skipping like coins in  
An uncountable wishing well above the  
Bald and hoary throats of the mountains in their smoking  
Rooms;  
And though they finally curl around their stations, lactating  
And collecting the Christmas presents  
In a topless room that is chilly and airy, they have to  
Admit that it doesn't get any easier:  
But all of the animals hush around them, and even with all of  
Nature's love making them to stirring,  
It doesn't help them still- even with the lights out  
And their engines purring: their beauty is perpetually resurrected  
And reoccurring.

Robert Rorabeck

# Resurrecting The Girls

How can you help this life pulled by a string-  
Coming home again,  
Dragging itself to the curtain where the backyard should  
Exist,  
And crying to the midnight airplanes:  
Looking up to the heavens where the gods should  
Exist, breathing through the soap operas,  
Causing the stigmata's to occur upon the Chablis of  
Housewives even in the earliest of afternoons:  
And the thunder disrupts the inevitable returns of the  
Commercials,  
As the hurricanes turning like the saltlick of wishing  
Wells:  
Turning and turning, and becoming a poem  
For the eels that lay tightroped into her grottos:  
I think it was where we were skipping school:  
And I think it is where we will appear again, donning our  
Own departures,  
And resurrecting the girls who cannot even remember our names.

Robert Rorabeck

# Retreating Butterflies

When school disperses the many brilliant promises  
Recorded in her playgrounds that  
Remain unknown- even in the middle of the day,  
When truants pass across the canal,  
And all the sky is green and as curious as an  
Arsonist learning a wooden violin-  
Where will we go, but across the shoulders of the  
Playgrounds,  
Forgetting even our peers with angelic bone structures:  
And leaping as if waves ourselves, burning down  
The cul-de-sacs, telling lies to unicorns that have  
Wound up as housewives:  
That even they will soon be leaving us, as our little  
World evaporates- as if all the parts of our bodies  
Surcease, lying in the shallows  
Reduced to the brilliant minerals of wedding rings  
And retreating butterflies..

Robert Rorabeck

# Return To Beauty

How can I show you beauty,  
If you will not first give it to me with your  
Tongue,  
And allow this fieldtrip of baby fat  
Patrols to stroll through the capitol  
Where important men have erected marble  
Phallus' to your legs:  
The Mississippi, and The Colorado;  
And to your breasts,  
The Smoky Mountains, and The Rockies,  
And to your sadness,  
Niagara Falls and the lesser cataracts,  
As to your wombs, The Atlantic and  
The Pacific-  
Thus we patrol you on your highways  
Evacuating the tarnished gloom of inner cities,  
Out to the heartlands where your chest  
Rises like a child excited on a bicycle,  
Trying to make it up the hill where you will  
One day breastfeed my child;  
Where the sky is your thoughtful brow shadowed  
With troubles,  
And yet the coolness of watercress when bent over  
Me, like an apocryphal pieta, where I lay  
About the briar patch of my easy work,  
As if two doves alighted to make love in cotton  
Field in between their perches of skyscrapers:  
Feel my like the rich earth, and touch me as  
Gently as you would the first evidence of life  
Struggling from the furrows,  
And in the secret thicket where we glide over  
The muddy lake in our trusty tire swing,  
Kiss me and show me the beauty which I longingly  
Wish to return.

Robert Rorabeck

# Returned To Me

In a bed of slopes and tongues that are  
Nodding off- the wounds we can only give our selves  
When we really did masturbate not to far  
Off amidst the Christmas trees  
While the traffic was humming and spinning around,  
Like our mothers in graveyards-  
And then the wars that filled up with the warmth of tourniquets;  
The children blowing on their chains  
Like bulbs that were still cooling; or the day that I looked up  
From the sea to find myself floating in  
Alma eyes- and the nights in which I sing to her,  
And find her almost returned to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Returning To The Echoes Of Her High School

Days begotten of firework chiefs:  
Mighty good days, where tomahawks chew  
Scalps red under unfiltered sunlight:  
Then we knew who we were, what was going on,  
Biting our lips lustfully,  
Chewing gum as the classes grew-  
In the time of mighty chiefs of teal headdresses,  
Of papier-mâché beliefs,  
I passed Sharon in the halls, my face flaming with  
Burning paper:  
Sharon seemed to smile sadly at me, going through  
Her avenues;  
But how to describe her avenues,  
I don't know them-  
I thought of Sharon outside of class-  
I almost seemed to die underneath the school bus,  
As I lost myself further and further into my  
Body's loneliness:  
All the terrapins went away. The alligators stopped their  
Weeping,  
And my sister was no longer a wishing well I could  
Throw pennies of hope.  
Then buses that were my crèche no longer returned,  
And what did Sharon do but fly away,  
The perennial bird that no longer was perennial:  
She destroyed the word,  
And now I know nothing except that all of this liquor  
Tastes like returning to the echoes of her high school.

Robert Rorabeck



# Rhinoceros' University

This spore walks on the open lips of a  
Book like a living miniature of  
The skeleton of a parasol;  
And I think of kissing her in similar toy ways  
In the fully enfolded spring of the earth:  
We live in the same country,  
But I am afraid we see things all too differently;  
I live in the clutch of a cloud, come down to go shopping,  
Then rise up again with the whimsical identities of nimbus.  
She works all night in a bar and kisses the men that  
Come in to be served drinks by her,  
And the further affections of the rhinoceros' university;  
So this is the silver cut, the almost death,  
The poisonous leaf pounded into tea,  
Brushed by the lips of someone who knows and  
Is too afraid to die: To leap upon the lightnined wilderness,  
The scarred beauty above the passionate sea of darkened blue....  
She will not come around, for the sun does not reveal her  
When it reveals everything; A tributary leading to  
The ocean separated by a continent, I cannot touch her,  
For I am too afraid of something that must last.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rhythmic Tongues

I couldn't give another thing to this or you,  
Without rum, I wouldn't read poems out loud, or  
Drive skipping into the poesies of the just:  
I might just sit and drool in the chintzy corrugations  
Of some trailer park: In two weeks, I've made  
\$100,000 off these fools, and admired the tawny  
Busts of mothers and daughters in matching sets,  
High-heeled China dolls newly made and getting paid for;  
Such is the thing, the swing they give; they don't  
Even know how they sing, or what they give to me, in little  
Ways, farting so tightly like the highest notes from the chin of  
A piccolo, walking to and from the whitish tent of the  
Christmas tree salesman: they are here, and so am I,  
Because they made it after school, and I am my father's son:  
I get the good spot under the sun, spinning pinwheels off my blistered  
Lips until my time is through: I can hardly look them in the eye;  
I don't tell them how big I am, or how many mountains I  
Have climbed: I either look good or like a fool, but everything  
Else is leaping away, and all of it is escaping. Once there was  
Only high school, as white as porcelain or an unhatched egg;  
I talked to her in the echoes heated from the courtyard, until  
It was time for class, and the far-away sway of mind into more  
Hypnotic gardens- Afterward, the yards were green and well-mowed  
Like constabed boards of absent professionals, and I took their  
Daughters by the neck and said into them like empty vases, until  
They were filled up and valuable and soon well placed. Then  
I laid across them, sprawling with my checkered knapsack and  
Pinafores, and pretended to know about sports, and the manipulations  
Of weather; and it was so humid, it was like French-kissing her or  
Serving her they way they do it in places just underground, by those  
Ancient things just hidden by the sheerest fabric, easily unhooded and  
Set to rhyme schemes by rhythmic tongues, or so the rum had told  
Me, making me speak thus, mamma.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ribbons In A Sea

Ribbons in the sea, what will you do-  
Now there is a fabulous holocaust,  
As you come down from the mountain,  
Losing your candle wax on the rocks- going forever  
According to the way she does,  
Sleeping in her midnight busses, underneath the  
Armpits of marionettes,  
Or inside a dark forest that never stops to linger  
For its knights-  
Filled with witches underneath the seething stars,  
Keeping wolves for pets  
Who melt the snow to get to the wild nurseries  
Before the foxes  
To eat the things that grow- underneath the spindles  
Of her sorority,  
And through her clefts which tend to lose a  
Person,  
Especially a man who falls too deeply in love with her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Riches Of A Misbegotten World

This is a good sipping rum- I have dolls  
From Haiti and Peru in my kitchen,  
And chameleons that run through my yard-  
When I was very young,  
I stared hypnotized at the fields where the  
Cheerleaders left  
Metamorphosed into stewardesses, broiling  
Confections and stains of honey:  
I am sure they went up to be willing captives  
Of the gods we misspell  
In freshmen English- loving whispers of the  
Ways that we conjoin again-  
Bullet holes of twins overlapping in the  
Darkness,  
As the comely suspects get away, blooming  
Cadaverous and spoiled  
To simmer underneath the kindling riches of  
A misbegotten world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ride In Disney World

Abandonment that  
Knows itself shut in to the cathedral of the stars—  
Like some sort of witchcraft placed  
Upon a spacecraft dancing in the sky over  
A beautiful world—  
Black magic in a plastic bag with a blind gold  
Fish—  
And all of the times I told you to look up  
Into the sky as the fireworks burned—  
And when it was over—  
Nothing:  
Some in the clouds—eventually a castle  
That evaporated over the forts of Saint Augustine—  
As you pretended to make love to my heart  
As if it was a ride in Disney World.

Robert Rorabeck

# Ride The Rhyme Forever

Her stars weren't filled in:  
When she kissed me, it was during nap time.  
I had a fist full of woolly carpet  
And orange diodes for wishing:  
She loved my best friend better,  
But he was a redneck,  
And I knew where she lived,  
But I can't remember her last name;  
Ain't it funny how the time plays,  
Like catastrophic floods-  
All the faces in the coloring books:  
Super heroes of mice and men,  
And little dogs who eat their porridge;  
Scribbling fairytales of all the wrong colors:  
Goldilocks unafraid in the woods,  
And the rabbits who escaped their hutch,  
Made it out alive and colonized the  
Sand-dunes veined with fossilized conquistadors,  
For two years breeding in the  
The papal flecks which made the sailing  
Lights gleam, like fine actors in the wild  
And the mauve runoff of the junked cars  
In the Australian pines filled with pornography.  
Of course, I am not saying it right,  
Though there were naked women  
In human-sized hotdog buns,  
And Chelsea was the first thing I loved;  
I suppose, but now that place is filled with  
Mexicans, out of work and panhandling at Home Depots:  
They are red like maize and chili,  
And I know some of their names,  
But not where she lives anymore:  
They paved those roads way back when  
A fieldtrip in kindergarten to the Flagler Art Museum:  
Naked women in bowls of gelatin,  
And the never ending sea like an amusement  
Ride:  
You put a quarter in the meter,  
And you can ride the rhyme forever....

Robert Rorabeck

# Riding Through The Gardens

In rainstorms we made love  
Even as we began to die- outside of the high schools  
Where the angels  
And the airplanes began to cry:  
And I suppose you cannot even picture me  
Now but I am still right here,  
Singing out through the  
Habitual windows,  
Trying to dry my wounds in the fireworks of the  
Sunshine:  
As all of this is your Miami  
Licking its wounds, as the beaches glisten,  
As the sunlight swoons:  
In rainstorms we made love, but it is not alright  
Now- this is how I've been  
Spilling out of my shell,  
While the stained glass glisten in the beaches of  
Phoenix,  
In the dreams of the desert that never has to awaken,  
And I feel myself  
Riding through the gardens with bicycles held up  
The heavens, but only because they are supposed  
To be the most beautiful thing held  
Over above the earth, even though they have sunken-  
And after midnight,  
All of the beautiful girls, metamorphosed from  
Their roses- have stolen all that they are worth.

Robert Rorabeck



# Ring Around The Rosy

Another impermanence for the early tomb:  
Nothing else to do,  
But to see you as you lay for him,  
A near perfect psalm,  
He absentmindedly hums as he goes  
Down to work in your mines:  
The greedy man,  
And you a bright fairy excavated from the earlier time:  
Not even knowing who you are,  
But liking the reverberations  
Of minerals in your hidden cleft:  
If I came to you while he was off  
Buying supplies in the boom-town  
Of ghostly providences,  
Could we say that given a chance,  
I would do better work:  
Keeping the pitch until there in  
The sky floated the masks of unborn children,  
The subtle doom of the Hollywood starlet:  
Let us read the lines together,  
And smile in the week's knowing glance,  
And without a second thought  
I will submerge and begin the  
Underwater welding:  
On the continental ridge the earthquake starts,  
Which shivers the city of your lips-  
Pulling back the fauna,  
The miniature opal glade where  
The marble fawns lay:  
The hymns better known to grandmothers  
In the awakened youths-  
The spot of light glossy with  
My tongues rhyme,  
The conceptual make-belief,  
And the familiar nursery rhyme  
I can give to you,  
And you swim outside the rented windows  
In the twilight hours  
Precluding the early conceptions.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rings Around Her Knees

Moonlight on your side of the world—  
Around there, a political labyrinth that is so  
Easily dissolved—  
Melted away with enough desire—  
And all of the mountains lactating, bare-titted—  
Over spilling with song birds falling asleep  
In the sunlight—  
And my mother metamorphoses—comes  
Down with herself from the keyholes of  
The snowy rafters that seem to have caught a tear—  
Becomes the instrumental lactates  
Collecting through the valley's choruses—  
Like the aquariums of rum in my belly—  
She goes downward in a somnambulant rollercoaster—  
As she matriculated towards her daughters,  
She seems to be growing younger—  
Soon she will be a minnow—  
Soon she will be a swordfish—as the candlelight strikes  
Across the stars—  
Goddesses on a holiday lost in the picnics of  
Jupiter—maelstroms of bouquets sent to her—  
Ships busied in the daydreams of the seas leaping  
Like happy whelps for the scuppernongs growing in  
Rings around her knees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rise- Rise!

The day has died like a beautiful pledge coming so close  
To making love to the sea:  
The day has died, and all our work has done:  
We sold so many cantaloupes and unicorns- and the buses of  
America passed,  
And the impatiens went to sleep beneath the mangroves,  
And beneath the graves,  
While, Alma, I think of you, while I eek out another tear as if  
From stone:  
Your body has twenty-four years, but what of your soul:  
You have the soul of your grandmother, Alma- you eek out of your  
Soul:  
The tears of your body like butterflies on the cliffs of Mexico;  
And I can hear airplanes, Alma: I can hear all of the stewardesses leaping  
Over me,  
And you asked me today who was Sharon- Sharon, like the shadow  
Of a cat leaping over the play of your ancestors:  
Alma, I don't know who she is, but she is as white as the snow:  
But you, Alma: Alma, you are as brown as the forests of  
Mexico:  
You are as sweet as the furniture of those unadulterated woods, un compromised  
Saved for one tattoo on your tiny little wing: Alma, what does it mean,  
And is the world turning north for you,  
Alma- with your eyes as sweet  
As the graves of your abuelas - but you have promised to come and  
See me first thing tomorrow, and if you do, Alma:  
Alma, can't you imagine how those sweet graves of our ancestors  
Will rise- rise!

Robert Rorabeck

# River Styx

They have a system for sorting their patients,  
Though everyone is dying.  
They put me near a window where  
I can stare out and look at her,  
Next to the narcoleptic general  
Who happens to be my grandfather;  
He kept nodding off while the bombs fell,  
And telling his battalions they were  
Doing a good job,  
As they lay massacred in buzzing thickets  
And roses bloomed like  
Redheaded stepchildren out of the  
Places where they had the greatest wounds  
In a fallout Spring misty on the gristly hillside.  
There is a beautiful man without any  
Legs, without any arms,  
Without any eyes  
Who spends all day singing sea shanties,  
As his motionless body is taken out with  
His mind's tide.  
I've tried to look away.  
I've tried to call her, but she is swallowed  
Up by the ringing orders of the immaculate father.  
There is a glowing priest escaping with the  
Newly dead through the reeds on the bank,  
While starving dogs bark at the  
Next wing of planes banking to deposit  
The magic bombs  
Clocking the ghost towns  
Causing skeletons  
To clap and sing  
Abracadabric peonies.  
The drooling mouth of the grave  
Is getting full;  
It is backing up like a clogged sewer line  
And the abstaining sisters sit along the  
Border's wall,  
Like crows in a habited line  
and cast down blessings,

The petals amputated from evil flowers,  
The dreams of triaged men chumming,  
Cut by the silver fins of primordial game,  
Swimming like mystified tourists  
In the onyx current of the River Styx.

Robert Rorabeck

# Riverwindwolves

I saw the Christ Child  
On my street again today  
Playing hokey.  
He had a nice pair  
Of skates  
But two jewish kids  
Kept on making fun of his  
Robe  
And telling him he needed to  
Shave.  
There were these giant blue  
Spruce trees  
All up and down the road  
Their needles were sharks' teeth;  
They'd draw blood  
At a distance—  
Just look at them  
And you'd be eaten,

And when the cold winds  
Blew from the north  
Country where my mother  
Lives,  
Those sharky, blue trees  
Would shiver  
Like my naked father  
Getting out of the shower—  
I live alone in a my house  
And just watch the neighbors  
Behaving like bees;  
They're all trying their best  
To crucify themselves  
More stylishly and with more  
Flair than the next.  
I wonder which one will win  
So Armageddon can begin.

They're all trying to impress  
The Christ Child

Who just moved onto our  
Street;  
Already he's the superstar  
Of the neighborhood,  
Though he doesn't talk a lick.  
There are so many paparazzi  
Last week we had 5 car accidents  
And one fist fight

Last night I had this dream  
Of two women much older than me  
Living alone in a house  
Rotting away; it was  
A mouthful of black teeth  
I moved in with them, like some  
Stray cat  
And loved both women,  
But only the big blond  
Woman loved me back—  
I knew her from highschool—  
That's where she's from,  
My future, when I go to highschool  
I'll meet her and maybe tell her  
About this dream I had about her;  
I'm sure I'll know her then.  
Her name is Nicky;  
We'll only be friends  
All day long we f-ck in  
That house; it would be  
Haunted, but there  
Are only rats crawling  
In and out  
And we f-ck amidst the rats  
And on the dying fungus;  
But it's okay  
We're friends—  
The other girl  
A small brunette  
I also know from  
Highschool  
But when I ask her to  
f-ck she just



stands by the door  
and grabs her purse;  
she waves good-bye  
without looking me  
in the eye,  
leaving me a Nicky  
alone in the house.  
The north wall has decayed  
And collapsed  
And beyond it is a field  
Of colorful garbage  
Attracting flies  
Before a forest of  
Palms and pine trees  
Nicky and me  
We f-ck near the collapsed wall  
At dusk on the fungus  
And I can see Nicky's flesh  
She's morbidly obese  
And her flesh lumps  
Together in black nodes  
In this one bad spot  
Down her back,  
Like cancer, like the house,  
But she has such a beautiful  
Face  
And best she is nice to me—  
That's all I can remember in  
The dream;  
I think about going outside  
And telling this dream to the Christ Child  
But it's almost nighttime  
The riverwindwolves come out at night  
And the trees are sharks,  
Sharp and silver  
When I grow older  
I will forget that  
I ever lived next to the Christ Child  
But will imagine I see him on t.v.  
And in movies  
But mostly I just try  
To remember the dreams I had

And try to recall if I ever  
Told them to anyone famous.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rocket Launcher

Why in this cold globe  
did you fire rockets  
into my eyes?  
you were not the destiny  
I paid for  
this was an ambush  
and 1/3 of my life  
has run like fetid  
rivers through your legs  
and down toilet drains  
now I am suppose to say  
hello to you, congenially,  
as if you had never  
bitten me, rabidly  
like some foul marsupial  
of my lower regions  
instead, listen dear,  
as I recall the war cry  
of my ancestors  
Rorabeck is German,  
Remember.  
and in 1945 I  
was there adding the  
coal to the cinders  
that baked your  
great aunt  
and now my whip comes,  
crack!  
as I herd the black  
angels through a pale gray  
pain of sky—  
and as you pass by, saying  
your congenial hello—  
I yell, "Schnell! Schnell! "  
and you revert back to the  
naked beast I made you  
and I ride you like some  
Modern Major General  
across planes of fire—

whipping you lavishly  
for your niceties baked in insincerity,  
your "Hello Robs" and  
oh, P.S., I  
love giving blow jobs  
now that my jaw don't crack.  
but you are my pet now—  
cause you remember  
the mastery of my forbearers  
so when I see you walking  
next time on these  
safe Florida streets  
with these sororities herding  
about you  
with their beeping blow dryers—  
"Schnell! Schnell! "  
I will cry, trumpeting  
us into a new  
wicked blackness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rolling Their Tomboys

All stuck up in a headdress single file,  
The planes and sensations of a great long while:  
Burning condemnations  
Through the planes of blue sensation,  
Until the ripe old gardens grew and knew for awhile  
What they were supposed to know:  
The lucky rabbits in the fieldtrips of echinopsis,  
Making great time and beating  
The card games through the white washed gardens  
Diademed by the cenotaphs of conquistadors,  
Whose bright light shone up from the  
Spit shined floors,  
And seemed to recall just when the jungles were young,  
And smoking their pluraled sensations of  
The smokescreen of highways, leaping like rider less  
Saddles up through their byways  
Like smoking guns,  
And then it seemed as if the ripe was ready to be pulled  
Down,  
Just as when she knocked on my door, I took her to the  
Bedroom, and ungowned her gown;  
So from my tongue her fever spread all the way down  
Her brown rivers rolling their tomboys across my  
Cerulean bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Romeo And Juliet

Shanghai is the biggest city in the worldâ€”  
It is where I found my wife:  
And we road busses together and went to the  
Zoo:  
Like Romeo and Juliet, we were married  
The second night of our daydreamâ€”  
But this doesnâ€™t have to be a tragedy:  
Our families are not ancient enemies:  
They mean nothing to one another, but are stock  
Full of good will:  
I told you, we will name our first son John Wayne,  
Because I always wanted to be a cowboy,  
And that is alright with you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Romeo And Juliet's Wedding Vows

Juliet:

I will be thy chased rose and take thy name.  
My heart will continue drumming its love for you the same;  
And though thy mother and father mean nothing to me—  
You are the sun rising over the bosom of my heart's sea.  
I will go with you hand in young hand  
And be like your shadow roaming with you across the land.  
In your eyes I see the myriad truths of my own soul  
A kaleidoscope of sea shells in a pretty bowl—  
To you, my love, I will always be true—  
And that is why I say that I do—

Romeo:

To think that the very sun I saw last night should so suddenly be mine  
It gives me proof, at last, in a god that is kind—  
For to you, I will be the very bird returning to burn in your sky:  
And every night, I hope that with you in bed I lie—  
So happy I am that you should become the rose that bares my name—  
To your midnight's balcony I am so glad I came—  
Now if we can only escape the dark fate I am so afraid that I see  
And that you can go on forever with me.  
Now let me take your lips to my lips  
and share for a moment an eternity's bliss.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rooftop

They've turned off the television, and quiet now.  
School children winnowed into beds weep for nightmares,  
And in the aloe the frogs chirp and mate along the old rebar.  
There is pornography stolen inside old cars on cinder  
Blocks beneath the Australian Pines across the road,  
And a G.I. Joe lies lost in the sand dunes and cockleburs.  
A suspected kidnapper patrols the road, too late for harm,  
While the next door neighbors, retired, drink beer and look  
At their citrus tree.

I lived here, and watched the ditches flood, and kissed a girl  
With short blond hair down the road; she wore a retainer  
In her mouth, and tried to teach me a lesson from her bicycle;  
There were bees steady in the hydrangeas and a canal they  
Eventually built across when they paved and widened the road.  
One evening I had a bushel full of firework,  
And sent a fireball all the way down the street; Now, as I  
Put coins together for nostalgia, after failing again before this,

I return to six years old, for I only live here until second grade;  
There is the rock garden with blue cactus where the white shepherd  
Killed the father rabbit, and I heard of death, and the clutch  
Of rabbits caught disease, and mother had to let the old hare go.  
You couldn't really hear the sea from our little house,  
Where the couch folded out into a bed where I and my sister slept,  
Where the black and white television sat in the corner atop a corn  
Hamper, except when there was a tree there for Christmas,  
But I still say I could hear the sea, and pretend that when I climbed  
The roof after father had left early for Miami, I could watch  
The sun put cream into the sky, and swirl up in spindling clouds,  
And was the first to see the ice-cream man come for breakfast,  
But this is just another attempt, for I never climbed the roof  
Of that house.

Robert Rorabeck



# Room Of Open Sky

Rainbows have dog tags- beautiful words  
Don't belong in picture books:  
And you are in his arms,  
Brown as the beautiful woods from your  
Country of  
Mexico-  
Airplanes shoot like silver dollars skipping in  
An evaporated lake over the forts  
That you took-  
Mestizo- I will never love you again,  
Not as my dog loves me- not as a blind man loves  
The languishes of sunlight and  
Fireworks everyday like a holiday where highways  
Are rivers  
Where your children get older and sleep underneath  
Mailboxes, spread out over the hot and  
Crippling light- the total antithesis of Disney  
World,  
And the dreams of housewives- You float beneath  
The stewardesses like the true cousins of the heavens-  
And you don't even know that you are,  
But I remember-  
Brown shoulders in a lunch room of open sky,  
And your eyes all over my naked sadness, wishing to  
See joy and summoning birthdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rose

As you can see, I am a good person;  
And I can make you live forever,  
And we are only spending an hour or so together,  
While your children are all so beautiful and all at home:  
All I imagine is laying low for you,  
And making you laugh, and kissing your freckles underneath  
The ribbon of this overpass:  
And the days will come and go like caesuras of perpetual  
Motion:  
You already know they will, but I will spend my time  
Anticipating your body;  
I will learn someday how to catch its throws; and I will bask with  
You alone in the estuaries of our unhindered language;  
And I will fill my mouth with your rose.

Robert Rorabeck

# Roses

I wish I could take Diana to the fair-  
I wish I had the balls to give that goddess roses,  
That I had the guts to summit bouquets of mountains again  
So that I could see the fine colors atop the  
Wings of one sad mariposa,  
Forlorn like a lost prism ejaculated underneath the careless  
Fuselages of gusty airplanes:  
Diana has the hair of a goddess that doesn't fade;  
And I seemed to come into the jet stream of her motions  
All this night,  
Jubilant pinwheels pressing mechanical lips to the motions  
Of insightful inebriations;  
All the feels manifested in the body's caracoles;  
And Friday I think I should like to be a mouthy mailman and  
Deliver my pledge of fidelity to the very fine Columbiana  
Who delivers my pastries every morning-  
I think I should like to invite her and her daughter to  
The fair,  
To deliver her faithfully to the oxygenated planets that bud  
From the perfume of her senses;  
I think I should promise her rings with my eyes;  
And I think that I would like to give her  
All of my roses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Roses At The Summit

If you awaken in the petrified midnight of your  
Trailer park-  
Thinking of me- remember, I am your man,  
Even though your trucks  
Are stolen,  
And the sky is empty: the heavens have burned out,  
And it is the lights of a graveyard you  
See,  
And even though they will not believe you  
Anyways- it is just our  
Bodies dying,  
But our souls stay in the horns of preternatural  
Stags all winter long-  
Keeping the way for the fables of our children  
So they will not go astray-  
And even though I know so few words,  
I use them all to pray for you  
Amidst the mountains  
Where the last of the Indians were captured,  
And I had to sell myself for a glass of water-  
As I watched him giving you  
Roses at the summit: he might have been a god,  
But he was still rude,  
And I loved you- and the lightning showed  
How I felt throughout all of the afternoons  
While I waited for you alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Roses In The Abscesses Of Concrete

Let us try hard to remember  
The roots that we have enjoyed:  
My parents bring a five foot Christmas tree  
From Miami,  
The waves beckon like Christians underneath the clouds.  
My father in law is dying in Shanghai,  
And I haven't written for a month-  
The days come and come  
in their naked combs- no one I can remember  
Remembers my name,  
But I sell things in the anonymous shoals-  
The traffic continues, loudly,  
And made of sepia's hues.  
Girls I remember loving are taking other mens' cues-  
And I pass along, skeletons and giant squid silhouetted  
In the sky- children come and go every day  
in and out of schools-  
I saw you going the other way-  
I thought I had forgotten how to write you name-  
But I am drinking rum in crepuscule- my wife  
Admonishes my name-  
I scribble like roses choking in the abscesses of  
Concrete, I almost remember you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Roses In The Sea

All of the beauty of the cars beside the  
Road—  
The happenstances of the day of truants  
Strung out,  
The waves dancing like belly-dancers—  
And not a single one of  
Them knowing what  
They are—  
Tourists heading to Disney World  
Sweating like ice-cream,  
The youngest of the children in  
The back seat wondering  
What they are—  
Rockets in the sky,  
Red astronauts trying to forget her  
Birthday—  
The Earth turns its back,  
As dolphins dream of roses  
In the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rosy Bouquets Of Mars

I've showed you whatever true  
Love is, even if  
I have misspelled you, I have come  
Across you appreciating by yourself  
In the foxglove theatres of  
Our own delusions,  
And what brighter epitaphs I can  
Write for you,  
I don't even know—  
I am not smart enough to live forever,  
Or to even survive the decade,  
But I think about you like I  
Think of Disney World or some other  
Beautiful disease that has some absolute  
Control of my mind—  
Remembering the past summers  
When they took down our swing-sets—  
Even if it was the last time we had to breathe  
Together—don't you remember how I held  
You in the waves—and we pretended to  
Be perfect—but into those times of  
Imperfect echoes—I have still kept casting,  
Like as if my cadaver was yet doing magic—  
You have gone from table without any purpose,  
While the world just spins and spins,  
So unreachable from the red fingertips and  
Rosy bouquets of Mars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Round

The roads move and move and  
Move,  
People drive down their roads,  
Sit and wait as the movement slows  
As traffic backs up,  
They watch out their strange windows  
The sun and the millioned-knifed sea  
Stabbing upward;  
Like them, kicking frantically,  
Sluicing over,  
Spilling themselves  
Into ennui  
Never escaping the dull light  
Spearing them,  
Cleaning and gutting them,  
Beautifully framed and owned  
By the clothing of their words,  
As they move around and around  
Trapped by the limitations  
The revolutions of the earth's  
Carnival ride  
Never thinking to escape by  
Rolling down the windows to leap  
While the car is still moving

To the beyond....

Each night they return to  
Their road rolling on,  
Ebbing like the tide,  
Traceable and scientific  
The explanation of themselves  
As given to them  
Evident in their surroundings.

Robert Rorabeck



# Royalty In The Sky

I sing along with the open windows of cars;  
And I smile when I know their song,  
And don't have to go too far to get to water  
Before I die:  
This all around me, the thorny yellow honey,  
And the cenotaphs of donkeys,  
And the big words make us laugh from our backsides,  
The echinus of air-plants- we don't  
Know what it is, except that it is centrifugal and  
We bought it from the salesman at the  
Arid carnival:  
We bought it so that we would feel important as we go;  
And her dress flaps in the sky:  
She has the dozen roses I gave her underneath it,  
But they all will die,  
And my stomach aches from drinking too much water,  
And I am not smiling anymore-  
Only the dead pack animals are smiling, smiling  
Up to her splinters of royalty in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

## Ruby Eyes (For Levon Helm)

Put your hand on my shoulder.  
This world is sitting in the stars.  
We live in the working class cul-de-sac  
Where the sun is warm,  
And all the swords are buried.  
There is a mirror in almost every room,  
And I could look at myself in them  
If I chose to,  
But I don't:  
I choose to smile,  
Even though I haven't christened the roof,  
And I live with my dogs,  
And there is a girl in Colorado who opens my  
Mind like a wound,  
And where the river winnows calmly,  
I've been rejected,  
And my heart beats in the chest like a rabbit  
In its briars,  
And the coal is black and useless on this train;  
It goes around the Christmas tree  
Slowly like a child's dream.  
Against my back,  
The waves are an unguent, and by rivers  
She could reach me and sleep wealthily inside  
Any of my rooms,  
But now I am tired,  
And it smells like gasoline  
But there isn't anything burning,  
And all the pretty girls are down in the weedy  
Amphitheatre they keep at the zoo,  
Kneeling to the animals  
As wise as grandmothers,  
Listening to the feral lips who sing underneath  
The ruby eyes  
So much more beautiful than my own.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rum And Liquor

Made of daydreams of silent preponderance,  
I drink rum—and liquor,  
Eat soup, and then contemplate drinking more  
Rum,  
Even though I will have to go to school tomorrow—  
I read a few poems—look at the girls grown  
Up who once might have worn roller-skates—  
And know that in the sky is the great and silent void—  
A referee waiting for all of us to become winners  
Or losers—I came make love for an hour-  
I gave my old muse multiple orgasms and yet  
I can still not write a sensible poem—  
And the daylight lingers over the junkyards of pornography  
Just as it always does—and my wife will be sailing here  
In five days with little couch-bicycle in her belly—  
And the churches sell to us the promises that everything  
Will have to be alright, but I will have to lie my head down  
To sleep once again thinking of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Running In These Seas

The night is full of somnolent scars,  
Black men stealing cars under the Pleiades,  
And I still have no right to spell out  
For your dreams,  
Running my lonely fingernails across the  
Latin chalkboard to wake you up;  
If you don't want a husband, but want to  
Eat from his lunch truck:  
That is fine with me- There are so many avenues,  
And so many shoes to try on,  
Even if they're all hanging from the power lines  
Like the airplanes,  
Like Christmas ornaments:  
And, like the poetesses from Saint Louis said,  
These are rivers to the sea,  
But beneath the eyes there can be so many seas.  
And to set your toes into any number of them  
Can be such a challenge,  
And I wonder if you will ever name your children  
After the life you find running in these  
Seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# Running Wild

Little words in a toy chest of heat stroke,  
And I am yawning  
And not paying attention to my position in the game:  
Not even recommending the hour to humming birds  
Or airplanes;  
Just as the stewardesses come so high and far flown overhead,  
Just like witches with nose bleeds,  
And I know that it is time to finally pack up and call it in:  
It feels as if my life is going to end,  
Knowing that my soul, my Alma, is back at home in another home  
I am not welcome in:  
A strange new place unto which I can never be reconciles,  
That she enters in and gives her life back over to husband and  
Child,  
While I remain an element out of doors, running wild;  
And she recalls me,  
And her eyes hang over, or leap across the ditches,  
Until she can see the runway where the airplanes are all restive;  
But soon they will be playing their games again,  
Leaping through the sky and running wild.

Robert Rorabeck

# Rusty Hinge

Creak, jigsaw cheek-  
My parents make love above this tomb.  
My dogs are my cenotaph,  
In bankruptcy bloom:

Creak, jigsaw cheek-  
The students make love once a week,  
And for their final exams the professors  
Make love too,  
And so do the cheetahs down in the zoo:

Creak, jigsaw cheek-  
I don't make love to you.  
They've got nothing for me to do,  
But I still don't make love to you:

Creak, jigsaw cheek-

Robert Rorabeck

# Sad Blue Planet

What better days can say to this, I don't know;  
But quiet, for here there are Satanists:  
Things die every day here, up in the snow,  
And not just butterflies:  
I shouldn't write at all, because I can barely spell,  
And I meant to ride out to her but she doesn't give a damn.  
Oh hell, the night, the night, especially on Friday it is a  
Good time if you are a cat: the night;  
And what is she doing right now, if she isn't turning her ass  
Tail end up to every olfactory in the hick town far beneath me:  
If I turned this way to her, or this:  
Which way is my better side? They are both quite ruined,  
Perhaps I should run and hide, but isn't that what I'm doing-  
I love science fiction when it is written well,  
When there are green slave girls dancing in the till. Then  
It is money well spent, but will I ever write a book like that,  
Will it ever sell? She lives in a ghost town not but halfway to Mars:  
In the asteroids and heroic cosmonauts, she laughs and shows  
Her lips: she cleans and wipes and serves and flaunts her  
Floating chits; Now the day is running on, now the day is gone,  
And I can barely breathe. I've done and gone played paddy whack  
On every virgin's knees, and this is but a thing I've made and folded  
Like an airplane, like a rocket ship to take off above the rafters;  
But what will the consensus pay for it: a nickel, a dime, or  
Just recorded laughter. I can see her where she sits rocking on his  
Knee; she rocks so hard I hate to think of all the men aboard her,  
If she were a ship, but she's not; nor is this a novel,  
But just a thing I've written down like a reminder like a list  
We are meant to do before take-off: but she is already gone, already  
Past the moon and not looking back on this sad blue planet;  
And so I sit alone in the empty garden, wondering  
What the next line will be, if god the father will give me pardon;  
For I am a pacifist and an auteur, and maybe I will buy a house finely  
Priced and spend such days of this reminiscing of her; for even  
Though she is gone, her legs linger after: she was quite a leggy thing,  
And this why I still think so much of her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sad Land Of Mary's God

Sad land of Mary's God.  
My scars cast brightly in the sun-  
I haven't any friends no more-  
And I am more alive than anyone-  
On this vacant lot, this  
Eerie weeded stepping  
Stone-  
Hemmed by torpid alligators on  
Either side,  
I'll make my play, I'll pop my  
Gun.  
Bright houses rise up richly effective  
In Palm Beach Gardens,  
In spume and smoke-  
And hazy loam-  
Like a forest fire of the upper classes.  
I haven't no profession to call my  
Home-  
And I am more alive than anyone-

Robert Rorabeck



# Sadder, More Beautiful Conflagrations

Blood roses on my cheeks  
Seeped off the mats where I've laid  
The things I've killed or  
Stolen,  
The game that went away after kindergarten,  
The nouns and other things which marched  
Without much forlorn contemplation  
Out of the house at crepuscule;  
And Evan is back from the movies  
And the housewives will be looking at him,  
The cat is alone with the gold fish,  
And the strangely sagacious trees are weeping  
For the world of another sun,  
But that is a good sign,  
For I hope it means your eyes will bloom again  
Of the opinion of blue or green  
Or one of the other haunting colors of  
Your sadder, more beautiful conflagrations.

Robert Rorabeck

# Saddlebags Of Dreams

So many choices, hull hoops of words to choose from  
Near the first iterations of this other day:  
Fire hydrants in the shadows and really most of America asleep;  
And Erin just going to sleep in her other world  
Filled with amber fanfare and things I shouldn't like to  
Think about anymore;  
And it is too muggy for me to sleep so clung-scarred in my car,  
And so I'm up again, leaping those old canals listening to the  
Serpents and phosphorous hissing- they are coming out of  
The ground in the resurrections of uncertain metamorphosis,  
And I shouldn't care to ever go back to school again,  
Or to ever go to sleep again-  
I just want the perfect words, and bicycles, and my fingers through  
Her undying hair- There is another word for undying- something  
That really isn't alive, clinical of hair and tooth and nail,  
Little things to pocket, little things to sale:  
And if my muses die before me, I don't think they would mind if  
I creep into their cemeteries with nothing better on my mind  
Than to collect and pocket those little things,  
The piggybacks of snails and keep them in my pockets,  
In my saddlebags of dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sadness In The Wound

Sadness in the wound cries the lightest Pieta  
From the armpit of the carport  
Where your mother does the wash,  
Or you know who you are—  
After Christmas, look up at the stars  
In the midnights where the drunken pigeons  
Crawl with the fairies and some other words—  
Until well after the world gets dark,  
And there are no other names for it,  
Down in the deepest darkness of the knocked out  
Throats—Well, these words seem to be yours,  
But I know you don't know  
Whose they really are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Said The Night To Me In Her Thoughts

I love you, said the night to me in her thoughts,  
But I have another man over,  
Who I love better than you, for the moment-  
He's been working out at the gym,  
And his brawny biceps have bicycle tattoos,  
So I really have to have him in me right now-  
But you, I don't know.... Maybe later....  
We'll see, but him now, you understand?  
He is not afraid of the sun,  
And his smile is quite brash, like a knight on the lam-  
He may have another woman, and isn't that exciting?  
I can send him out while I am sleeping  
Deep inside the blankets of sea,  
And he'll steal little things for me:  
The breath of the living, the clovers of green:  
He doesn't read text books, or swim in the stream,  
But he doesn't have to, not right now, you understand?  
He's got mighty big calves for working in ditches,  
And rippled abs which get all the witches-  
So he doesn't have to, not right now, you understand?  
Now give me a kiss and let go of my hand,  
And maybe tomorrow I'll be bored of my man,  
And call to you from by tower so cleverly gaunt,  
Then ask you if you want to be the new fireman  
To stoke my hot spot,  
But for the foreseeable now, I'm pleasantly his:  
Because he's so big, he's the king of show biz,  
And I think he'd have no problem selling used cars,  
Or picking up ladies half drunk in bars:  
So he doesn't have to know me a stitch-  
Not right now, you understand?  
Now give me a kiss and let go of my hand....

Robert Rorabeck

# Sails Me

A tree up in the thorn,  
A skull up in the tree,  
A bird up in the skull,  
A boat up in the bird,  
And in that boat  
Sails me;

Where am I going for so long  
Worshiping you, but just in the theatre  
Where the sky seems to shine true;  
Flying all in a moment  
With my arms outspread across the sheer  
Cliffs,  
The beautiful in the rippling silence;  
The flat nosed face sunburned,  
Perfect, a palate of the end of the day,  
Absentminded, of apathetic happenstance;  
And watching me fall, such an insignificant  
Bird- such an insignificant thing  
But for a moment reduced from grace;  
The final sigh, the unseen release,  
Sails me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Saint Augustine

Getting drunk  
And afraid to die  
I crawl into a worn-out shoe.  
I close my eyes but  
Your face superimposes  
On the room,  
A space for advertisements,  
A market of body parts  
Living on their own:  
Your legs are running around  
Like jackrabbits with toes  
Painted red,  
Good luck charms on chains  
For strange, chain-smoking men  
Make good pets.  
I check to see how much  
I have in my pockets: \$1.76—  
Not enough to buy a piece,  
The heart-pounding meat,  
The parts of the doll buried by  
Blue settlers in the pasture  
To keep safe from Indians;  
But after high school  
They stole you away  
And made you speak their  
Language. They tied you up  
In an industrious forest and  
Made you do calisthenics.  
Now where you lay down  
There is no room for me.  
There is not a word for me in your  
Head, just things you cannot  
Explain auctioning of  
More juicy tidbits.  
Cowardly in a shoe,  
I toast you alone  
And to your legs who have stolen  
Away and are even now  
Surfing over the sleepy bones

Of conquistadors and drowsy Jesuits  
In the rich shallow bays  
Of Saint Augustine  
Where scattered silver lays  
Fractured-naked,  
Obscured, like valuable pieces  
In memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# Saint Claire

Houses I dream of,  
Good enough for anybody out of sorts:  
To move into the village by the sea  
To watch the waves and my dogs lull,  
To go out in the mangroves and steal the  
Treasured metals of sunken conquistadors:  
Listen to the banyan sway,  
To lay down and write a book,  
To kiss the lady on the cross  
To find out what she took,  
The nimble feelers out before anyone by morning,  
Then when the mist crawls in penitence,  
Crawls on the belly of a saint,  
I might step from my front yard, hypnotized  
By the lightless fall,  
The twenty-four hour convenient store  
Less than a minute away-  
Stand before her and let my feet drench from  
Her throat  
From where the day before the lawnmower prowled  
And trimmed her good:  
I could lay down in the mausoleum of the bay  
And wait for the tourists to misidentify me,  
To run away on a blue pony past the cafe where  
The mother works I shouldn't know,  
To wind up past the unbelievable museum,  
Go down to where the surfers are passed out  
In bleached dreams, tawny and sinewed,  
to watch the horseshoe crabs  
Cabaret: I could live here, I suppose,  
For there is undoubtedly a library, and I am flush.  
It would be the perfect middle class,  
And I could lay down in my living room  
Everyday and listen to her breathing  
Infant shells from they foaming cradles, to know  
That she was no longer so painfully far away,  
But a convenient woman  
Blowing at my door like a flower,  
Lain down and mowed and trembling,



Her legs the swimming sea  
At rest or in motion.

Robert Rorabeck

## Saint Louis, Missouri

In a graveyard surrounded by sweltering  
Black children, the poetess lives—  
Grand-eyed by the oak trees  
That make swimming pools of shadows—  
And the airplanes flicking like  
Matches over the tornados yet to  
Appear in  
The daydreams of the heartland,  
Or any place I once happened into  
But was too scared to remain—  
Even with promises that my words could  
Be beautiful,  
And all of the lush architectures grown  
Over with all of the histories of  
Unpromising murder—  
Alone with my dogs in such places—  
Only the telephone poles above us,  
Like mistletoe for false angels—  
And the ways through the woods  
Glittering,  
Like Christmas time on a summer  
Afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Saint Paul.

Maybe I will meet a fine girl  
At the funeral this  
Evening,

So I can have sex  
One more time so  
Close to death.

If not,  
I will pick one up  
Next week in Minneapolis,

Robert Rorabeck

# Salesmen

Anticipating Messiah  
Perpetuates this religion:  
The reincarnations of  
Jesus  
On the back lots,  
The ho-hum Hollywood sets,  
The trams of gaudy tourists,  
The football star  
In a sporty red corvette  
Soliciting prostitution  
From the saturated lashes  
Of failed starlets:  
Door to door Bible peddlers,  
The disinfected Sanhedrin,  
Rabbits who chain-smoke,  
Speak machine-gun English-  
Use the guilty roots  
Of the Catholic Church to  
Buy their lunch,  
And sleep in cheap hotels;  
All of this,  
Hinging on the fulcrum  
Of that which will never happen;  
Salivating for perpetuity,  
Pavlov's Dog will starve,  
And the phone will never  
Ring with her name again-  
Somewhere unreachable,  
Farting in the infant nebulas,  
The goddess of our creation  
Is soliciting new spacemen  
She finds interesting;  
She has already forgotten  
Who I am,  
And the insignificant planet  
Waiting for her,  
Echoing in the pitifully  
Faithful moans.



# Salt River Canyons

I dream I come into her  
salt river canyons and  
she says my name out loud,  
Robbie  
echoes  
down into the Blue  
where the water goes  
we hold hands and walk  
in secret heat and salt  
and it doesn't matter  
where she's gone before  
or where she's going  
after this  
there is only  
the red walls and  
the sun's arrows  
right now  
right now  
right now  
right now with  
her is the moment  
is all I need  
I don't see the fossils  
under her meat Right now  
her eyes are only for me  
her thoughts are on me  
I am in the moisture of  
her salt river canyons  
right now  
right now  
right now  
right now

Robert Rorabeck

# Salty Unabashed Surcease

Unifications of shadow less darkness-there you are  
Going,  
With the traffic on your hip,  
And pretty birds that I shouldn't see to describe like  
Plastic barrets in your hair;  
And I do this as I am coming down,  
Growing younger and more unapologetic:  
Doing this tragically dusty art  
Like a swiftly exhausting runner,  
While I have held conversations with you in my truck  
Alone,  
And I have switched sides, but the sea has always held  
Its indescribable meaning: She breaths just  
Across the way into her-  
I'd like to escape into her now and ride her trains-  
And you are the sea, even if you didn't know it,  
Waking up in your sugary darkness,  
Entrained like a flower of scent to its narcoleptic  
Mouthed honeybees;  
And these are the things I say falling asleep to  
Your gardens, because it feels quite wonderful to be  
Devoured,  
Like wounds being unsealed and read without light,  
Like the acanthine tiger lapping away its meat- the tide's  
Salty unabashed surcease.

Robert Rorabeck

# Salvos

This night salvos into nothing;  
Narvaez and de Vaca are full of virgin arrows;  
The festive quills bloom like pompadours from their cracked elbows.  
The waves break like a nurse's knuckles  
Over the frightened conquistadors in the eerie bay of caballos;  
Like broken ants, they are somehow still alive;  
Though their bearded faces scribble in darkening circles,  
The amputated buddings of man and his animals excite the opulent gulls,  
While the flint and ire fly from the disrupted panhandle-  
Halfway to Texas, on an atoll of her curse,  
They will eat the rest of themselves,  
Before succumbing to the naked slavery of the blue sky,  
And the un-flexing knees will beat the dead man's march  
On their skin which now tightly adorns the golden sun.

Ghosts enter Mexico City during an eclipse,  
The waves whispering their secretive comidas;  
The young lovers search their lips for sandy participles;  
Her brow furrows primera with the call of his nombre;  
This night salvos into nothing,

Her knights have returned home.

Robert Rorabeck



# San Marcos Rum Airlines

Going down is easy without liquor  
Or scars  
Where zeppelins never burn above  
The low hanging fruit of foibles;  
Grandmothers are soft and laying felt  
Children on the green board at  
Sunday school,  
And she is the back room pressing her  
Dress, just another saint whose eyes never  
Look up:  
If she did look up she might teach little  
Boys how to fly. I had that happen to me once  
By how a stewardess looked at me coming  
Down the serviceable aisle,  
Her legs were drawn across the thing  
Skipping over the earth-  
But she doesn't do this now- She has her  
Lines memorized- She is licking her lips  
And it is all a treat; and the glass is in my hand.  
The rum is from San Marcos which I guess is  
A virgin island,  
And so I drink to trouble, and to the girls who  
Don't appear to be there anymore;  
And to the trips I would have to take to find them,  
Though it is already far past midnight:  
Whatever they had to tell me, they've already told  
The audience, and everything is thus undone  
And asleep down to earth, young tennis wives basking  
With husbands upon a vast tarmac of a romantic  
Tarmac where I shouldn't know how to belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sandstorm

There was a sandstorm:  
But we didn't belong in her garden of  
Mirages,  
While the students were blowing  
Glass to make fun of windmills  
While it seemed a silent fit:  
But it was beautiful,  
Especially for the tourists-  
And she kept her palms up, even while  
She was sleeping,  
And her houses were beautiful,  
But needed work:  
Oh, silent dog with one eye:  
How you limp, like a wounded rainbow  
Across the movie theatres of the  
Graveyards,  
And it almost seems impossible that  
We don't have to arrive here  
Anymore:  
We just have to look up, and the airplanes  
Are already gone,  
Like breakfast eaten by the over eager gods  
On Christmas day in the sunlight of  
A child's eyes- full of the blinded innocence,  
While everyone else steals all that they can see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sarah

The cops wont last forever:  
My mother is basking in the windowsill;  
I want to ask her if I will last forever, but I doubt she knows  
If she is even real;  
And I have been baptized for two weeks by these cities,  
But they never felt that they really knew me:  
I was too scared and alone to go and visit the grave of Sarah,  
My lover,  
Dead for all these years before me:  
Sarahs lost in the valley: Sarahs who lives are again fireworks,  
Who have spumed and have come down and lusted  
Like the ash of grandmothers like the felt of reindeer abashed into  
The valleys;  
And I cannot wait to be alone, to have surrendered to her gray  
Beauty:  
Sarahs in the forts and cathedrals, Sarahs in the valleys:  
Sarahs in the blood, and Sarahs caracoling the different institutions,  
The colors of bowling alleys:  
The city picks up and positions itself while the freshmen make love,  
The answer is as true and sweet  
As the Sarahs who are missing, who have almost been virgins who  
Now rest in the tenements of graveyards just as true and  
Sweet are these Sarahs as any songs of my memory:  
Sarahs who have loved misconstrued into the oldest cities of America,  
A Sarah who I went to school with:  
Sarah who I last saw at her viewing: Living, a Sarah of Saint Augustine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Satan's Chum

Throbbled in fires of rum:  
Doing good work for Satan, Satan's chum:  
I chum the waters for this bum-  
I beat the silly, silly Satanic drum,  
And the smiling dwarfs come, showing that  
Their pockets are empty,  
Wanting to start smoking and drinking coffee  
And playing in the cactus;  
Telling my with their Lucifer eyes that my future  
Lies broad-sided in the sharp foliage of  
Palmetto fronds:  
Lying there cutout of the dead, dug up sharp shoveled  
And knocked in the head:  
Lying there where her parents lived a decade ago,  
Where I used to come over and serenade her like  
An uncut cat-  
While the policemen patrolled and swung their  
Blue hats;  
And the blue pigs squealed from the chicken coups of  
Gaudy sin:  
And I knocked on her bedroom and  
She let me in.  
Sharon, beautiful Satan, jewelry clasped in your ears  
Like coniferous globe,  
Like a sink hole in Gainesville, Erin. Erin, do you really  
Read my poems,  
Erin- Who are you, but flying on your broom,  
You go to inspect the castles of coquina: You leave your  
Room and the centripetal curse of your ceiling  
Fan, Erin:  
This is really what you do:  
You call up an entire legion of devils and you make them  
Your boyfriends,  
And you feed them spikenard and make them take off  
Their clothes and enter the waves you've  
Concocted and the waves spit and hiss, white salted:  
Making your spells of spikenard,  
Erin- you lied to me, didn't you? And the room spins with  
Your curse,

And I leap over the fires to escape,  
But there are always new fires; and when I die,  
Wont your beautiful Satan know, three headed,  
Insatiable:  
There you'll be, Erin- with the frozen golf-courses  
And the fires of hell.

Robert Rorabeck

# Satan's Dream

So here is the charred millennia you call a home:  
Out on the beach, there is the smell of something different,  
Where children used to hold hands  
When the stars still filled a book of scribbling dreams,  
And nothing ever died;  
Now the junked cars parade like frozen basilisks  
In the knotty surf, where the people were going  
Sliding beneath the visible overpasses to escape the winged doom:  
All of it in some kind of halo it is the only thing  
The nude goddess wears as she flickers like a  
Fluctuating reception above the compulsive waves,  
And the only thing there is,  
The only thing there is at all is the memory you tore  
Out of the pages of life, and crumbled in your pulsing hands;  
Now your body is hot like a kiln with fever,  
And your precious future is a butterfly with a wing torn off,  
Your tomorrow is blown glass ill formed,  
And thus transformed again in the flames into uncertainties;  
The women have melted away- all the women you never knew,  
But loved compulsively like a foundling child:  
All the women floating in the air, blown away like dandelion spores,  
The crematorium is the horizon, and they are thoughtlessly  
Covering you with their remains, and they are covering the  
Sea, and the cars like snow,  
And the goddess hovering slender at the waist, her head a halo  
Is sipping away the orange sun,  
And flickering like Satan's dream.

Robert Rorabeck

# Satisfied And Alone

Pillboxes along the beach as quiet as empty shells:  
The terrapins are done,  
And their young are running like inky yoke and  
Ladling taffy back into the womb  
That is never satisfied with its occupations:  
All of these dead men and starfish dividing into her,  
Saying their prayers,  
Occupied now like cenotaphs courting mailboxes,  
Like everything I have ever even thought of;  
And houses are being sold and being fulfilled by semi thought  
Out lovers;  
Better yet fireworks are being used up by the boys  
Out at play gambling on rooftops, never minding the  
Beautiful chalk pictures of sky the rains will wash away  
Anyways;  
Bags of gone dynamite blow away: and the day becomes fun  
And emptied,  
As it starts out and finishes all in the hours that make up itself;  
And you are somewhere in its garden,  
Mystified and truly beautiful in your mystery; and set out with  
The other boys in the playground to find you,  
Swinging around like knights in unaccustomed chivalry,  
Never believing that you hide your chalice well at home and  
Drink from it constantly your sweet eternity when you  
Are satisfied and alone.

Robert Rorabeck

## Satisfied With A Christmas Tree

Monoliths underneath the streams of dragons and railways  
Up above the clouds—  
Floating metal honed into constellations and gentlemen's fancies  
Above the domes  
Of college and sports—as you hang your head out of the  
Blue lights of a bar you've worked at for  
The same age as my students—  
Brown as the autumn of your libations—all of the tricks out of  
You, but seeming to never be married—  
My sad art still pines, like dark embers satisfied with a Christmas  
Tree in a house that has already burned down.

Robert Rorabeck



# Saturn's Jewel Incrusted Rings

Here I come gunning for you,  
Calling for the middle-class hemispheres to coalesce,  
Only because I am without any other justified cause:

You who tried to cease my years,  
Twice in a thri-fold decade,  
In my teens and into my thirties, high-school  
Superiors double-blinded by jaundiced Catholicisms,  
Only because you were without any other  
Haunts- you cater to the offspring  
of the presupposed elites.

And it doesn't matter that I have increased  
My revenues far above your classrooms,  
Or that I have already told my children stories  
About so many countless Pegasus's,  
Flying fearless heroes to all of the victories  
far above your demons.

Or that by my dirtied plagiarisms,  
And by my hidden markets, I have eclipsed you:  
You who are already seem secured into your retirements-  
Looking outside of your nefarious classrooms,  
You who seem secured by the diatribes of your retirements:

Pegged into the systems of smiling republics,  
And waving your trinket flags,  
Hemmed into the indifferential treatments of your early applauses;  
I am the boy who haunts your would have been golden years:

See me taking down the numbers before your eyes.

I am angry, and in my way I am a poltergergiest:  
Helium balloons taking pictures above the swollen boudoirs of  
Venal mermaids and werewolves,  
Dissolving the love affairs of far too different of animals:

Here I am, and I am not done:  
You fired me without cause just after my first child was born.

My last paycheck was over four times what the state was paying me,  
And more than you ever made:  
(and we who were equal servants of a servile state:  
you never possessed me- and you never equaled what you  
pretended to be worth.)

Sure, I have to make up my first angel anew everyday;  
But, as you can see, I am not yet done with my writing of halfway beautified  
Things- she is irresistible when conjured, whilst you never once got started;  
Something I have known and loved found a way to survive swimming around  
In the ineffective putridity of your hemispheres:

Now I live in the shallows of the Carribeans,  
And I burn during the daylight hours, like candles making love to the vanished  
gods,  
Hyperventilating into the spaces that you have never perceived.  
And into the winnowed classes I do more than survive:

I will piss on your grave.  
I will write the next great American novel.  
I will be Mark Twain, leaving public school at twelve years old.  
I will travel across the country and dig for silver.

I am currently worth.5 million.  
You do not know who I am. I will dig up your worth and mine it,  
And add it to my dragon's sack.  
I cum all over you, and in the twilights of your wishing wells,  
To which you have never stayed up late enough to ponder,  
I will fondle your loved ones,  
And make them mine: and take them to the mountains and kiss them.

Because in the morning, this is mine.  
And your gravestones will collapse into the knees of cenotaphs-  
And you will perish like a decrepit Mickey Mouse into a rotting Disney world-

I hold a flower out to the stars.  
I am published and in the stacks of Harvard and Oxford;  
Though I deserve the highest echelons -

See me fighting with my sword  
And jacking off.

500 people read my poems everyday.  
5000 people ready my poems on Sundays.  
And when they are done creaming and making love,  
I place your skulls back into their graves:  
In fact, I drive all over you-

I frightened you and so you released me from your system,  
But while you beheld me, I drove unforgettable moments,  
Tattooed into arteries of your febrile systems.

I could have loved you poorly,  
but you caved into the haunts of your masters,  
And so you made me hate you richly,  
circling from the frozen vantage points of Saturn's  
jewel incrustated rings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Savage Movie Theatre

And I replace you now  
While I sleep with my dog and drink all of my  
Liquor—while I sleep with prostitutes before  
I can sleep with my wife—  
As the rose that should nod on my belly just  
Like a cabbage sold at the  
Produce market as the flea market attracts  
A butterfly—while until there is another  
Word for you calling across the echoes  
Of your high school's classrooms,  
Until there pretends to be another joy in the  
Sport and we wait until tomorrow for the time  
When it is lost—  
And the echoes spring like cigarettes of  
Waterfalls from the anonymous lips that don't  
Have to be here anymore—while something  
Strikes out from the jungle that isn't so unusual  
And shows its eyes before a few people  
And their parked cars behind them—  
Until there is nothing and nothing—  
But another delusion and a savage movie theatre  
That doesn't have to pretend to understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Save Me

Unreasonably, I am lost again  
And I am drunk—  
I try to look you up on-line,  
But your name can be spelled so many  
Different ways,  
And you are always changing residence,  
As if you were a goddess of her ancient sorority  
Not wishing to be found by mortal men—  
You transform so many times it is so  
Very hard to classify you, except that  
I can say you are most certainly beautiful,  
Especially when I am here alone  
Trying to find you, when the cheap rum  
Runs in me like cold rivers of transforming liquor,  
You have the eyes that I am called to,  
You have the figure that transforms men—  
As you are the one thing I can recall,  
It is better to write you in this way  
Than to spill blood from my wrists into your bathtub,  
As I have done before.... So many times;  
I can only say futile, again, I love you  
Or I have never loved at all, and I have seen  
Your name sung by greater poets in the lasting  
Embers of their rhyming schemes....  
You are out there in the cold true night,  
Laid out for the eyes of humanity,  
But here alone I can see you more clearly than any  
Of those, and I call to you now like a drowning victim,  
To see me for whom I really am  
And to save me....

Robert Rorabeck

# Sawhorse Of Hoodlums

I like the work of minor saints,  
Watch-makers:  
Girls in high-school still look good to me,  
Scorn me on the back lot  
The patio the screened lanai:  
I am doing this to get a gig- We can go  
To mass and pray as it rains,  
Listen to priests and pitter pats,  
Then foreplay to science-fiction afterwards  
Alongside girls we'll innocently influence  
Who will later on become philosophers of  
Ornithographs- Those funny birds with wings  
Of numbers: Then she washed out like a crocodile  
On the verge of tears;  
I gifted trams for her, and satellites of ice and  
Hiking: And I have been saving money,  
A licking my lips in the anticipation of the next line,  
But it shouldn't be dedicated to anyone famous,  
To the great assassins of hokum presidents:  
I rarely eat clams except in your presence,  
But I mostly love to fail and walk with lesbians down  
The effortless corridors of Palm Beach after midnight,  
Making Donald Trump's security draw their side  
Arms very close to where I used to skip school and  
Smoke free weed with the goof troop: beauty marked  
Boys who were mostly Jewish or half Asian-  
Took my girlfriend there and made love on the sea-  
Softened terrace-  
And wanted to feed the tortoises I took as balance for  
My sawhorse of hoodlums: Loved them so much  
I wanted to feed them orchids,  
But could only afford poisonous rubrum, and there is  
No advantage in the gestures of the sick: skip school  
Fleeting like jacks over burning wicks:  
I can see us now leaping over the crenulations on the  
Green, two sporting boys galloping halfway through the  
Day to a home of ululating video games with  
Nothing in between.



# Saying His Amen's

Sturdiness in the grove of fingers  
Where the fruit that no one should touch is  
Perched-  
Wayward sand dollar underneath the sun  
A petrified fruit of the sea,  
As you make your way back aimlessly  
To the whistling trailer parks  
Lost with the bicycles behind the dunes,  
Going back to your father  
As he calls you home by saying his amen's.

Robert Rorabeck



# Scabbards Of A Vanquished World

You are so beautiful, and you whisper;  
And you come to me out of the waves like an ex-wife,  
And these are some of the things that we say together,  
As we sat together alone in our two chairs in front of my little house  
On whatever road I live on behind the ixora hedges,  
And we looked at Armando's picture together today, and I made fun of  
You and said that he was your boyfriend,  
As I wrapped my arm around you as if we were in a movie theatre where  
I was having a hard time dreaming:  
Now I am drinking all of my rum, as the fish swim in the unlucky sea,  
As you had to go back to your man without a second thought of me;  
Only that you decided that you wanted to linger, that you didn't  
Wish to go home,  
And the only problem of it was that you said you had your two children  
Who needed their father, even when he is gone;  
And he put his hands on you last night, Alma, and you made love,  
While I slept on the roof of the empty house three doors down from  
Your parents' home, and I wept into the negatives of  
Crepuscle,  
And I didn't give a damn except for Catholic girls birthed much nearer  
The equator-  
And I had a thought: that the world was so big, Alma, except that you live  
So close to me that I go drunk and hiked to your doorstep last night,  
And I could almost feel your body returned to me like a  
Spear in my side,  
So that the open wounds spilling their guts underneath airplanes was where  
I ended up sleeping;  
And then I walked home and feel asleep, and when I awakened found you  
On my door, knocking,  
And I let you in, my best hope for a living, breathing daydream,  
Like a beautiful flower pushing her head rebelliously up amongst the graveyards  
and scabbards of a vanquished world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Scars

Scars are there for you to remember,  
An itch when the mosquitoes decide to pierce.  
Slanted towards the sun while the book is read,  
Hidden in the patio when the steaks have been eaten.  
Saturnine, the eyes of relatives leave my sister's  
Wedding, but now we are talking hypothetically;  
She has graduated into menstruating and cries embarrassedly  
Into the towels of estranged relations, the dictionary  
Used as decorations, the bowl of shells in the  
Flickering light of the television; After the  
Hurricane's bate and tackle, the orange tree is limbless,  
The cats are more fickle than curious,  
And the cars whisper by the workplace brushed by  
Debris; Every day the locksmith is called, and  
Lipsticked truants escape high school to shoplift  
In malls; even though it would be beautiful to escape  
The form, the mind is wound: I took ecstasy at  
Disney World, and everything skipped forward.  
Snow White pleaded with me to rescue her, but later  
On she made love standing up in the men's bathroom.  
We took the tram around the world where the borders  
Of day and night were revealed. The scars remain for  
Me to remember the white belt I earned in Karate;  
It was so easy to blame myself, given the secrets of her  
Swaying body.

Robert Rorabeck

# Scars And Cadillacs And Push Brooms

Scars  
and Cadillacs  
and push brooms

I made love to  
Sara Teasdale under  
The moon.

I resurrected her with  
My shovel—  
Macabre,  
But a sexy sort of  
Puzzle.

Robert Rorabeck

# Scars Grow Richer For You

Scars stay open when you drink,  
Think of her legs- the things you could have  
Said to them;  
Scars grow like roses underneath the  
Sink- they grow real scars,  
Deepening their radii, richer areola,  
Like breasts fattened by milk,  
Is what I think;

And in a decade I'll know what to say,  
And the trees will come in beneath the sky  
Where I've been practicing my kisses,  
The gardening of the glass,  
All the housewives on second honey-moon  
Cruises,  
Or out shopping underneath the rain:  
I watch them go by in the rich nostalgia of  
Their sororities,  
And wonder if by happenstance that is how  
They'll line out when they die,

Each pecker-wood have its own tomb  
Affluent and marble out in the quarter acre yard  
I could sleep in seasonally, drinking while  
Scars grow richer for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Scented Softly Of Your Touch

The clouds gather over the warm blood of  
A bull fight that just happened to pass;  
And I sit on my couch and hold myself before  
The great transoms looking out  
On the doubtless street, and the housewives curl into  
Themselves like agoraphobic ballerinas or  
Wildflowers;  
And this is just a touch of a thing, meant to linger on your  
Lips and in the neighborhood of your beauty mark  
Which is on your left hemisphere  
While you walk all around like a titan laughing and  
Besmirching the reasons behind the first world  
Nations whose triple colored flag you bask under,  
Your eyes so rich and so round  
As to capture and entrench the sailors and teach them  
How to drink forever:  
And you called your man into the fruiteria today to unlock  
Your car,  
Because I was already gone to sell fireworks in Miami,  
And when I came back again, wanting to make love to you,  
I was already too late:  
You had reached grandmothers, and had your apples and  
Your wolf;  
And my ax is dull and lazy from too many fairytales,  
While the airplanes come down like feathers in a snow storm;  
And the clouds just make blotches,  
While the waves only rebound in chaos, their caesuras  
Happening without reason, like the narrowness of a brown vase  
My fingers caressed scented softly of your touch before  
You went away.

Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# School Again Tomorrow

So many prospects of cold emblems  
Yawning against the fires beneath the overpass-  
What do they dream about  
While the trucks sell tacos to little girls metamorphosed  
From the waves after midnight,  
After all of the tourists have headed into the high rises  
And the sharks gleam beneath them  
Like shallow miracles- mindless but headed for  
Dreams;  
But with the daylight, they shall disappear and  
There will be starships and school again tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# School Of Tadpoles

Some instruments are made for you, laid beneath shallow  
Waters where the freshman go jogging, where soft-shelled  
Turtles niggle- Where cheap jewelry is lost in the cargo  
Of alligators, our millennium mascots-  
They say you have not identified them for many years, for  
All your times of learning, how the trees cried as insignificant  
Lovers broke away from holding hands on the mildewy  
Walks between campus and the cafeteria's inedible lunch:  
The slow pedagogy of the grayest professors winding down as  
If in a dream echoing from a well, trying very Delphic for you,  
But the words are at a loss and in need of a higher intelligence  
Quotient, to bring about spring, the singing of varsity cover bands;  
I tried to become something for you in the sweaty halls all  
Around you, in the city as big as a Jewish ghetto still growing up,  
Getting drunker but rarely going on the swings:  
Black men panhandling and Vegan tramps digging into dumpsters  
For fresh vegetables and cheese pizza around 4 am: After seven  
Years, the angels were all in chains serving the football team,  
But the new female recruits under the deciduous canopies continued  
Looking so good. Eventually, I mumbled away into the west,  
Into the breathing of mountains and the sticky keys, reintroductions  
Of words and fumbled poetry, the lines spun out for things you've  
Never found, like a sub story in *To Kill A Mockingbird* edited out  
Because it made no sense, and this was her only chance, but you  
Can still find me there if you start searching, seashells and feathery  
Whispers, shotgun houses tilting, things sunken in the school of tadpoles  
Soon metamorphosed  
So they will forget all of this and only swim further away,  
Growing legs and breasts which move them from the shallows, into  
The green lands and neighborhoods I will never go.

Robert Rorabeck

# School Their Souls Will Never Attend

Mobilized into other parks further along- buying  
Her flowers and sending them to places  
She no longer works anymore:  
Streetless cars losing their clothing and pornographies  
Never making a sound anymore in castanets of  
Australian pines-  
Ripples in shells and areolas- the tiniest sea otters  
Laughing on her chest,  
Mermaids whose mascara never seems to stop running,  
And little boys flying away from school:  
Flying up into clouds to see airplanes populated entirely  
By stewardesses,  
And giants who look into their windows and seeing them  
Like foxes and sword fish in zoetropes,  
Turning around with their arms raised  
And laughing  
Exulting in the showers of the sun, their noses bleeding  
From the altitude,  
And kissing like magnets on refrigerators, and always mothers  
To be  
Conceptualizing their children across the mowed grass  
As the busses turn around like chartreuse butterflies  
So far down beneath them, and in front of  
A school their souls will never attend.

Robert Rorabeck



# Schoolmarm Lane

Underneath The Pledges of Allegiance,  
Hand over heart,  
And then sitting back down to fail algebra,  
To watch the clock:  
To hear the alligators in the canal just  
Next to us—horrible, reptilian things,  
Yet freer than us:  
We are like Peter Pan in chains  
And the sun makes love to the sky that  
We would like to see:  
Now, all grown up I work on Schoolmarm Lane—  
They complain about me, that I cannot  
Tell the truth,  
That I never get things done—  
But in my mind, I sleep underneath the lavender  
School bus all day:  
Children come into my classroom,  
I try to reclaim what they have lost,  
But my reptilian mind swims away  
As free as the crocodiles in the nocturnal sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Schoolyard Of Empty Hours

What have I to say, speaking to the fading colors  
That enfold the corpse of roses;  
And even I am not here: bound up, and taking orders,  
Driving around on roads with names without  
Lovers,  
Like fish trying hard to learn how to spell- even if the  
Angels awaken before the first bell,  
And school arrives, and beauties get tardy for running  
Their honeys over the fire engines and beehives:  
It is all supposes:  
The recesses of tombs a musical held over- lightning floods  
The sky in the brevity of held over kisses:  
It is gone like the motions in an eye, as it engorges:  
Pallid tombs of exlovers and tomboys  
Run over- the monuments looking high upon themselves:  
Stalwartly, hung over,  
Like hands running over themselves at picking time,  
Limbs and brambles of bodies hunched over, never recognizing  
The weather flooding through the bowers, causing criminy  
And laying down all the blooms of their flowers:  
So that the teardrops can pass by, falling into the baskets  
Unwoven from spouses who are not there- they are not even  
At home, unwaiting, but in the feverish corpses of living dreams,  
Like suns that run like yoke with the does and with the buses;  
And it gives a breakfast to the meaning of the sadness of  
Things,  
Like baseball diamonds emptied by a schoolyard of empty hours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Schoolyard's Stormy Vestiges

If it stormed again this afternoon,  
I could go back to delivering pizzas-  
But they've torn down that part of the world  
Right near the University nobody knew me in.  
I worked beside a cup-bearing goddess  
Who I recalled from high school,  
And remember getting drunk in the extinct pastures  
With my boss who was already married  
And reciting of her beside the ungodly apartments,  
Everyone else tucked into parties for the night,  
Except for the lesbians stripped naked and echoing  
In the brightly scarred pool-  
I could go back there again, given the opportunity:  
I could go all the way back up the root of Loxahatchee,  
Sleep into noon in some corrugated trailer underneath  
The Australian Pine trees,  
Fish in my own secret pond, take my catches to bed  
With me, singing how god is the creation of man-  
And when he walks out of the liquor store,  
His boots made out of the last reptilian vestiges of the  
Garden of Eden, his weary father knows to  
Step aside and wait for the afternoon rain showers  
And talk shows,  
Because his son has resurrected and gotten a  
Haircut, and kissed the pretty lady inside her car  
Before work;  
And now he is bicycling beside the new dorms  
And all the freshmen are looking down thoroughly  
Tranquilized from their uncertain windows:  
For we have made a better man. Assured to graduate in  
A few years, and then down south again at a good job  
Defending the law, or brightening teeth:  
So this is the way he goes, not a hint of returning coffins,  
About the burning red schoolyard I used to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Scott's Valentine

Writing to you a love letter on Valentine's—  
A small addition to the sea of letters you have  
Sent spinning inside me  
Like Odysseus on Charybdis' merry-go-round-  
Dizzy and violent.

How many years ago now?  
When I was an adolescent with skin on fire  
Who took most of his comforts skipping classes or  
Hiding eating orchids with a tortoise  
Underneath of a broken down school bus.

My only solace anywhere near society  
Was gladly adhering to the governance of your slowing clocks—  
While looking at you,  
Neanderthal of rainbows,  
Allowing me reigns to look away from  
Structures that men are supposed to make,  
Allowing me to graffiti an introverted forest onto the  
Desk that carried me like Rimbaud's drunken boat.

Your classroom's empirical coordinates: 26.6550 N,  
80.4522 W; but they could not find you by looking there—  
In the place where you taught us  
Where aesthetic truth rooted and bloomed,  
Orgasms of apiaries and puppet shows—  
Mandalas carousel ling with patinas of transcendental  
Truth—  
Glimmering tinsel and bicycle spokes of mental  
Truancy—

Giving us freedom to decommercialize,  
To breathe from your heady photosynthesis  
To survive upon the chlorophyll off the polyps  
Of Thoreau's woodland acrobatics:  
The slough of a golden serpent,  
Evaporations of every day's materialisms:  
You freed us from the anchors of the pestilent  
School yards of conformity.

And I look both back and up to you now,  
As a ghost and a time traveler,  
A machine momentarily coming unhemmed  
From his expected routines—  
A lover turning back after twenty years,  
Trying to bask once again in your mind altering influence.

You saw a god in the quietude of all of us.  
Our souls continue to migrate around you,  
Dancing like a cloak of light in our sleeps—  
Wings spread, mouths opened,  
Eyes widened:  
Continuously sating from you,  
In fields farthest away from the football  
Stadiums and baseball diamonds,  
Knowing you are aware of us,  
Even though we may be lost,  
Teaching us together in the forests where our footsteps  
Fall alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Scrimshaw Lanes

I am of the opinion to blow up  
All industry  
Except for arcades and  
Massage parlors, and to  
Banish all  
Semi-professional sport except for  
What happens to occur on  
Campus bowling alleys,  
So that I might do this,  
Flirtingly with the administration,  
And invite her  
To sit on my knee  
At a steady gallop  
For both of us to admire the  
Scrimshaw lanes  
Of oiled and buffeted teak;  
To cheat off her crib sheet  
She keeps stuffed in her brazier,  
Her eyes overcast by flickering bangs,  
To keep a look out for the cryptic,  
Spanish skullduggery advertised by her abandoned gaze-  
And to serve her green beers and hoers devour  
Between her musketeer lips,  
To mull over red liquorish and candy cigarettes  
While it is storming outside,  
To try and keep score while tilting her back  
Trying to make sense of striking  
And streaked vertigoes,  
And count the tumbling pins,  
Licking my thumb and smoothing  
Her brow,  
Shaking her loose  
To let her ginger tresses tumble  
Down across her dun-wheeled shoulders and her  
Suprasternal nick,  
To light our fuses in time with the thunder-  
Wouldn't that be a gas?



# Sea At Dusk

Saddening evidence  
Recuperated from the shoreline of  
Her heart,  
Where strange sea creatures, foaming,  
Slap  
Those enraged and dicey cages  
Cresting up to the handlers  
That comb her hair, the cry of gulls  
And salty brush strokes  
Outlined in the wind's spread fingers,  
Cupping her waves,  
Like a man's voice she cannot  
Contain—  
This lost becomes  
The evaporation of sun into  
The western portions  
Wherein those horizons the  
Nebulous colors like a  
Battlefield  
Until the night like a  
Dying soldier closes his eyes  
And walking through heaven's  
High fence sees the eyes of  
Angels peeking.

Robert Rorabeck



# Sea Of Bouquets

I wasn't sure if I had the disease,  
But I wore the masks as I reached up and kissed  
The bottom ventricles on the long necks of  
The long-necked giraffes;  
And the day went along for the ride. The Ferris  
Wheels were just happy to see me.  
Their mothers were inside, caracoling perfectly,  
Each one getting the royal treatment,  
Circling like helicopters over the soft easement:  
And tonight it is going to freeze,  
And I will pray to you tonight, pretending to worship  
The vague possibilities of romance,  
But really only cherishing better and more resilient words  
That mean the same thing,  
But would somehow happen to make your eyes open  
A little wider into a greater semblance of acceptance  
For the bouquets of my love;  
A sea of bouquets, both wild and tranquil for you to bathe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sea Of Lunch Trucks

I dream of a sea of  
Lunch trucks,  
Like fleets of silver-diamonded waves  
And you come  
In your baby  
Blue corduroys;  
And look at your  
Eyes  
The softest sheets of brown;  
They are almost oranges in a perfectly  
Symmetrical orchard  
And your birthday was  
Tomorrow:  
Your mother lives  
With you,  
And your  
Anonymous  
Daughter.  
I gave you two rose  
Bushes grown  
In the backyard of Florida  
And baby  
Blue lingerie-  
I don't like your  
Boyfriend,  
But what's the difference;  
I dream of a  
Fleet of you  
Until I can buy  
A house  
For us to  
Live in  
Anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sea Of Shadows

Light fixtures  
Parade a sea of shadows.  
I don't know why  
I tell so many lies:  
The sky is green,  
The earth is blue,  
Or at least something similar  
And not so sad.

Robert Rorabeck

# Seahorses Of Him

Then up in Manhattan, I drip  
Rum from my chin  
I wonder whenever  
I will ride the roller-coaster again—  
Again:  
As the windows palaver to their  
Favorite boyfriends all summer—  
Corneas in the center of  
Busied flowers  
Flow over—as they fade and  
You make love to him:  
To him;  
And my song metamorphoses down  
From a busy mountain:  
Cascades from the parapets of  
The heavens—  
And you entwine in the glowing torsos  
Of jellyfish  
And seahorses of him:  
Of him.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sealing Her With A Kiss

Some people are so beautiful after midnight:  
I don't know,  
I dispose of my head by the parks and estuaries-  
I cannot name those birds,  
Or by what avenues I would have found your legs,  
Hung over, svelte, paved:  
I've gone gray, anemic bestial: I am thoroughly  
Flummoxed, haunted by your wings:  
I belong in a choir of things that died;  
But after my emolliations, my ash is beautiful,  
The kind they keep to chalk pool halls,  
Those homeopathic pewters the pugilists use in their rings  
On top of mountains:  
Very well then,  
Put my remains beneath the barren feet of strange  
Little girls, and subject me to their rhymes;  
And let the sun strike matches down on my pretty  
Little head,  
But when you are done with me turn me to the graveyard  
Where all the poets live, so I can see my lover,  
Just the finest thing- Her words who rejected me,  
And she fell praying septic into the earth;  
Saying that for a time the sea belonged with me so that  
I should go out and pray, and wait for other things to rise up  
Into the air by the time school had ended,  
And each female was out walking the mowed earth as yet  
To go home and kiss their father's lips.

Robert Rorabeck

# Seance On Plato's Swings

Walking around the side of a year,  
I bite my lip hoping for more austere beauty,  
The realization of her adulterous honeymoon in  
The milky swath of all that pain:  
While my dogs and I go leaping monstrous through  
The defeated shadows,  
Knowing we have won the day, and our mother  
Will again soon be ours,  
I can only think of you lathered in such pantheism's  
Hydra-powers:  
You are that kind my filthy climbs would reach,  
If I could take up séance on Plato's swings,  
And tell you that if you know anything of simple  
Philosophy, then that is what you are:  
What I lust over, disembodied from the stock market,  
From the gun shows, or the precious metals:  
More powerful and precious than a leaping airplane:  
You who have proven to me that I am just the shadow  
On the marble wall of your Ultimate Form,  
Slinking in your  
Perfect bathhouse, brazen and crass: looking at the bloated cadavers  
Of an unrealized Easter: There is you- whose Christian name  
Will remained curtained, and then there are the females,  
The pale shadows who walk beneath your body,  
The minnows in the swaying tree house of spit and flume,  
Reflected off of you like pale shimmers in the guts of a school  
Bus lighting from you the entire purpose of bosomy  
Knowledge my only thought is to succulently attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# Seashells

These shells are empty of their children,  
And their songs,  
So now only the sea comes like lamenting  
Mothers. Cupped to the ear,  
They will share in you the wounds,  
The empty cradles they used to lullaby  
In the shimmering gossamers of spit and foam,  
Now souvenir's for the tourists' pockets,  
Under the lawn lights of the Castile de San Marcos,  
The transformations of sand and salt are  
Left undone, for the needled beaks,  
And the prying wind has got them out,  
Leaving them as trinkets depressed in the abated  
Surf. About them the pronged tracks of petrels,  
The husks of brined seahorses like shucks of  
Corn, the eels in twists of niggardly chord,  
The urchin of indigo and ire spines;  
Thus lost, the simple things disappear from the  
Sea, are mistaken for decorations and bottled  
Like diminutive ships, used to make dolls for  
Gap-toothed girls, and bangles for older sisters,  
Are strung out in the grass as beautiful denotations,  
But each household dead child takes with them the spell  
Of maternal sorrows- Thus put to the complex  
Cone of the senses, the will whisper still,  
As the sea transforms their inner space;  
There in the hollows of empty beds, their mothers  
Weep as if they have displaced every wave,  
And kept a memory of their nursing clefts even  
After their skins were shed like scarified saints-  
Thus the sea lingers over those who have passed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Seasons Of A Bicycle

Do good work now,  
Knowing that by sunset the vessel will be emptied;  
And if the voyage is not epic,  
Let it be familiar  
To orchards under roman ruins,  
To Spanish dragonflies  
Confessing to the seasons of a bicycle;  
And if the gift is not certain,  
Let it be prolifically humble, yet succinct;  
And if not filled with vast friends,  
Make sure there is a dog or two to lick your  
Toes while lying down in the otherwise empty canvas,  
And svelte snouts to kiss where her brighter lips should;  
And an olive tree for shade:  
If worry sets in, and there is no society to fill,  
Become picaresque,  
Challenge the constables who might press-gang you,  
And make you bring your nimble fingers to scars of cotton:  
Ride all the way to Orleans and uplift the siege,  
Even if you are only a child:  
Float down long voyages, or tramp:  
Don't worry so much about keeping up with yourself.  
Let off searching out the injustices of well endowed  
Monsters,  
And spend time at the carnival, congratulating dwarfs  
On their harrowing resiliencies  
To slip into the footsteps of unmindfully average giants;  
But never pay for it. Live in your car,  
And neck out in your front yard, the weedy drive  
In movie theatre,  
Appreciating the starlets but never falling for them  
All the way.  
Make love to the early nimbus rising from the clutches  
Of the beach,  
Where the ebony hatchlings are scuttling,  
Wanting to sequin her effluent dress  
The black diamonds a starlit night accentuates;  
for even she does not  
Know where she is going,



Pressing herself against the earth into which all of your  
Forebearers are sleeping in the latest strata not far above  
The Incas and them the saber-tooth and the dinosaurs;  
And say now that I must go without a word,  
I go then with the utmost justice of nature into which  
Imperfect gifts like me are slipping ever day,  
Princesses who die after two years, at last,  
Perceiving death's cocoon presupposing in an aloof  
Divinity, grapes so high up entwined in the shade  
Trees,  
Having faith that there is a ladder in this orchard  
and a little girl  
In the lee who is forever singing,  
Encouraging the transformations even further.

Robert Rorabeck

# Seasons Of Insignificance

Where were you on Saturday? For  
Any day of the week is arbitrary. Shouldn't  
Recall how astonished I was to see you  
Coming out of the library,  
Carrying cheap literature as a stopper for  
Your heart, displaying the easy words to  
Make love at noon-time with the preachers  
And tennis players of their court,  
So naked and near the sea, how the waves  
Roll back and forth like conductors,  
Now I've come beneath you, speaking my  
Little pleas; they might be lies, they may show  
Up as failures, but she has gone away  
And married the lawyer, conjoined names in  
Hebrew observe holidays I no longer care for,  
And you were just the little sport flirting on  
The swings; back and forth was your motion,  
Tempting the thoughts of flight; I'd thought  
I'd see you out on the steps or under the blue light,  
But when I came up under you, to live as your  
Foundation, you floated away because you'd had  
A fonder sensation, to follow men just as finely  
As you seemed, to express the natural migrations  
Of one's eyesight, for you'd had many an adventure  
Remembered by your fingerprints,  
But you hadn't opened anything more than casually;  
And you hadn't thought of me at all, as the light  
Fell so briefly, in that moment we passed each other  
On the steps, in hindsight, a pseudo-significance,  
In a season you found so irrelevant and amusing,  
Where I cared for nothing more than this,  
Now, I have lost you, dear, without even a kiss,  
But what's more, haven't you even thought of loss,  
But sing like a songbird too late in winter,  
Twittering gaily, but oh what more have you lost,  
To not even considered to think as this,  
Thus you bloom arbitrary, perhaps to produce in even  
More seasons of insignificance,  
Twittering gaily as the snow falls hoping soon

For its kiss.

Robert Rorabeck

## Second Son

God touched the  
Charismatic youth on  
His subtle shoulder and spoke,  
"I like this one."

And his light came down  
And inhabited flesh

So very swiftly the young  
Man ripened into a  
Gifted artist  
Whom the world adored  
And remembered his name  
In the vociferous gardens of  
His art,  
For centuries onward to  
This day,  
God's fond love still lingers for him

Passed from female vessel  
Through womanly chalice....

That is the one I both  
Admire and despise  
As my hours anguish onward,  
The futile trajectory of my  
Words  
Spend toiling the dry and  
Brittle pages of the earth,

My back bent and aching from  
False labors,  
Beseeching God wordlessly  
To reach down and bless me  
As a father remembering he had  
A second, less gifted son.

Robert Rorabeck

## Second Story Of Another Dream Of....

Lifeless brides suntan in the blindness of  
The dead lighthouse,  
I have felt her amber eyes searching through  
The back rooms of my address,  
And her fingers did the diffident waltz of  
Skeleton stilts, balancing on each bone  
Of my xylophone backbone:  
A churchyard holiday of neuron ridges  
Arching like caterpillars up to my globed head....  
Spinning the whirligiged doodads.  
I have her in the back of my mind,  
Stenographing my purple intellect with  
Spiderish good looks.  
I have her like a little grave six inches  
Down my skull;  
Something stolen from a little girl's dollhouse,  
And then torn up in the muffling rainstorm.  
They took off my cap and placed her in  
Like a begonia used up by the bees one spring,  
And corked it with a piece of eight  
Removed later to buy twenty minutes from a mermaid.  
Now she sings my mind like a mauve worm weaving  
The silk in a white tent burning the oils in a sinking tree;  
She is there cooing as snot drips from my feverish nostrils,  
Humming a dream I once had in the ports of Catalan,  
Where the lady in the rocks remains stepping outwards,  
Her russet locks streaming into the brambles and  
Eventually the bone-fair homes of artists drinking  
Sangria and thinking of their dead sister beneath the  
Kites and the orange tree,  
Up upon a second story of another dream  
Of another dream.

Robert Rorabeck

# Secret

Graying girls make love to  
Suicide in the rain.  
They do not sing,  
Nor do they complain—  
There is someone sleeping  
On the other side of the tree,  
Who it is they cannot see—  
As the adders hiss Satan's name through  
The flooding grass,  
"Asmodeus, Asmodeussss"  
They do not bite their tattooed ankles,  
They just slither past—  
There is something floating  
Deep in the sea's gray brine,  
What it is you'll never find—  
And the dead daisy girls just lay there  
Looking up at the sky, their wrists  
Don't whistle nor wonder why,  
As their words curl like escargot  
Around their inner ears,  
What it is you'll never hear.  
For maybe they are already deep in love  
With their men lost in the Great War,  
Even now dancing on some far distance shore.

Robert Rorabeck

## Secret Color Named Alma

Like an otter come out and into her own:  
Outside of classes, and outside  
The impenetrable bosque:  
She is now selling fruit to speaking  
Dragons:  
While the traffic shuffles unhesitatingly over her  
Shoulder:  
She is an angel that doesn't even realize.  
And her eyes are darker and more perfect than the  
Known seas,  
And the creatures who live in them, delighting in the  
Caesuras, have known my heart,  
Even if they do not care: and when she drives home  
For the day,  
She puts me in an unmarked grave- headless, without  
Flowers, or smelling of the  
Blown gas of industrial lawnmowers-  
And I go home too, and get on my knees and  
Pray for this muse, this soul: a secret color  
Named Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# Secret Of Grottos

She has her family, and I have my rum  
And masturbation:  
I have the terrible habits and my dog has fleas.  
The rabbit in the forest beneath the house  
Has a heart murmur;  
And I've had at sending bottles across the seas  
To new wives there  
And mermaids; but he sleeps with her:  
He sleeps with her, but I have all of her love now,  
Like airplanes have the sky,  
And I hold to her like stones hold the earth.  
The light of the lighthouse is in her eyes-  
In her brown eyes,  
And my whispers flow over her, repeating the gifts  
Of my dreams-  
And I hold her next to my hollowness- and through  
The inebriate bachelorhood,  
The light from her most secret of grottos gleams-  
Gleams.

Alma- Alma.

Robert Rorabeck



# See Her Again

The night is windy and bushy airplanes  
Sideways,  
And these are the things I have to say to me  
Love,  
Anyways:  
That, rightfully, I am not her man,  
And if her painted nails were to brush across me  
Like a high altitude drug,  
She would discard me as a bruised fruit,  
And the dry crackling palms would fall across  
My head,  
And the saints would close their candles,  
And all of New York and Saint Louis would shut  
Down to see my approaching in  
My shanty ways;  
And I loved her still, but it was underground,  
Calling up through the oil wells of third world nations,  
While her house spindled up on forever  
With jubilant legs the airplanes circled like lightweight  
Toys on strings,  
Their motors Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms,  
Or another of those shmucks;  
And I fell down weeping and clapping belly shot before  
The movement was over,  
And yet my eyes were still up and lit long enough to see her  
Fall exhausted and sweaty like a school girl off of her  
Bicycle into the arms of what she perceived to be a better,  
Better polished man,  
So finally I was broken, and never took the bus,  
And never went to school to have to  
See her again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Seemed As Well To Glean

If the city was not divided, it stood out like a  
Sore thumb-  
The kids in it went to high school, but they were  
So dumb;  
And the trees could not move,  
Because they had nothing to prove; but the housewives  
Attentions were undivided  
Before the evenings and crepuscules of  
Family get-togethers, they were like compound verbs,  
And bosoms of chalices of forgotten and vanquished knights;  
I couldn't say I could really see them;  
But it was like brail, as they sang to me through the  
Suburb's landscaping; and I knew everything was going to  
Be alright;  
Because there they were, unchanged but seeming to be awake;  
And the canals gurgled like little girls in their  
Bathtubs; and the alligators quivered with itches upon their  
Saber-tooth backs they could never comprehend;  
It was the only malady we were ever unsure of,  
But we were sure that we wished that it would never  
Have to end;  
And the cities lay undivided and a familiar but elusive theme  
Music played all across them,  
Snuggled into an amphitheatre of illustrious mountains  
The types and species which prowled there very different and  
Never seen; but I am sure they looked down upon us  
And seemed as well to glean.

Robert Rorabeck

# Seemingly Forever

Broken slang accruing to my elbows-  
Or however you spell it,  
Like yellow butterflies in the Christmas trees of  
Mexico-  
Like overfed tourists into a Chinese buffet-  
Across the dangerous felicitations  
Of one or another massacre  
That we've been overfed of in history  
While my mother does the laundry again and again  
In a rainstorm  
In her surplice like a virgin in a grotto being  
Stung by the extension chord of  
A jellyfish waiting for my father to come home  
Again,  
While the unicorns wait across the river  
In the forests of their own pornography- Maybe  
She believes in them,  
Even if they don't believe in her- but it takes  
Such a long time to get results,  
As the mermaids swim in the sea seemingly forever,  
And the stewardesses flit across the sky,  
Trying to remember the times when men could actually  
Become like gods.

Robert Rorabeck

# See-Sawing Cindy Cinder-Tongue

Bared at the sea's subtlety,  
Whispered by the salt enclave  
A rainbow's theory  
Butchered like presents  
In the footprints on the  
Unreal merry-go-round:  
These are all my parts severed,  
Each one drained of blood  
My soul has scuttled like  
A crab under a stone,  
Blushing like the anemic opal  
Of a birthstone  
As she has left in the fuming car:  
Amateurish,  
My joints are frayed like old toys.  
Nothing about the design is clean.  
An expert might say that meant  
She felt something,  
As she divvied in the knife's  
Geometry for hungry beaks,  
But I know it was not her first time.  
All the waves will have done soon,  
And the albatross  
Might stop and wonder  
Before scattling on  
The jaw's cenotaph,  
For her honeymoon she can forget,  
On the sawhorse of his stride,  
See-sawing Cindy Cinder-tongue,  
A new job and his last name,  
Like a Hebrew's ruby  
In a crocodile's eye.  
Afterwards I saw her  
Laughing on red bricked steps:  
She had cut her hair.

Robert Rorabeck

# Selling Fireworks

Last of the populations in the snows,  
Wearing the last of her feathers:  
The mountain, a breast—in her weathers  
and pussywillows—  
My dogs get lost in the heat of her summit:  
Two brothers, German Shepherds:  
We find them the next morning, they come  
Leaping, so glad to find us again,  
So we can carry them off: I guess neither one  
Of them weighs eighty pounds:  
Eventually, one disappeared, and the other  
We had to put down:  
And last year, selling fireworks, the entire  
Garden of Mount Escudilla burned:  
I fell in love with a Mexican girl, but very  
Little was returned—  
What joy that shown from my soul was not  
Enough to dissuade her from her husband who  
Used to beat her—So, eventually, I caught a plane to  
Shanghai, in an effort to forget her:  
And the mountain still stands, but she is full of  
Ghosts—and from her towers—her aeries—  
She can still see all the across the rivers and into  
Mexico, where my poor muse's sister is still laughing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Semiprecious Wounds

In the houses reaped by themselves:  
They flee the Mexicans- lost and lonely boys who are  
My friends  
Who have no table manners- only innuendos and excuses  
For getting up  
And acting like dogs: while full across the sea the silver  
Challises glimmer:  
And, well, if there is anything good- why then there  
Are dolphins and words for spelling her  
Swimming nude across the sway:  
And even as this dies- or slowly corrodes abandoned like a  
Chassis underneath the pines-  
Even as the cenotaphs emote to sand lions far removed into  
The unrevolving courts never shown to any man  
Who was anything more than a cannibal:  
I recite this to you again, while the day and the night take off  
Their clothes and make a game of it- as their holidays  
Of rattlesnakes  
Or stewardesses lick their pilot's semiprecious wounds,  
And are either flying away or touching down again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Senses Of The Forest

This is the way I feel  
That my soul should feel,  
But you are not  
Here;  
Senses of the forest  
With Christmas lights  
In the trees,  
Headlights of angels  
Hanging there;  
What is this memory?  
Where does it belong?  
Now look into my eyes;  
See I am here-  
And the forest lays across us  
Like a lover  
At this hour.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sepia

Crawling jade hearts  
Out of the bleeding tool-box:  
Cerulean sea-horses  
Swallowed in  
The child's mouth:  
Love is an orange  
In an imperfect snowfield,  
The seizures of amber  
Her eyes situate  
Fluttering,  
Her body all-out  
Is untrustworthy,  
The waves of the  
Effluvious cavalry  
Take her outwards,  
Beneath the current's mumbling,  
Her body feels like penetration,  
The salt may be a child,  
A fetus of whispers  
The world in everything is white  
The night is the whitest,  
Next to her body  
Is where I go to work:  
Her lips the plate I eat,  
The eyes rolling captors  
Who can shove me off  
With a glance away,  
Prehistoric hungers  
Diving anew.

Robert Rorabeck



# Sepia's Driveway

Love me with no cause, for I am no longer  
Beautiful, but bloody bone,  
And hung-over for you, rasping,  
And make my home leaping between the waves;  
They store me in the tumult and wife beating of  
The thunderstorm,  
Where I kiss the salt-tears madly, pretend  
That my tongue touches her nocturnal orchids,  
In a meaty garden- Thus a fist;  
Each fish and race-horse swirls in the competition,  
Where they conjoin in the eddies,  
Scaled and antique, a barebacked parade:  
Listen to us hunger,  
Paradoxically the aging authors grow corpulent  
And tentacled, their lights dim, they try their  
Service in the insouciant light of staged photographs,  
But they cannot escape the closing curtain,  
The red satin and her mistresses, the line of  
Felted curves, the tasseled dancing;  
But they loved her as they could, and saw her in the  
Rainstorm galloping,  
And looked upon her madly, and wrote upon  
Her as they could, tattooing her broken arms with  
Their needles, and bouquets of infinite recesses:  
Now they drive home lonely, passing over the graying  
Archipelagos, receding back into sepia's driveway,  
Lulled, and lulled, and slowly formed into the mottled  
Limestone which expands beneath them like hungry cavities,  
And secrets where the waves lay,  
Lapping, lapping.

Robert Rorabeck

# Settling Down To Sleep

Tomorrow I will have to buy more cheap rum:  
That is all there is too it, because I cannot drive,  
And the mountains are too high to see over:  
She doesn't read me anymore- She lives in North-Central  
Florida, in a student ghetto still,  
I used to slip around her in a decade ago-  
I really did; it was a sin:  
She doesn't read me anymore. She thinks I've said  
Everything there is to say to her,  
But she doesn't know how infinite the lubrications are  
Concerning her- Vast Caribbean rum attributes her,  
Diadems her auburn séances- She doesn't care,  
She loves cartoons of straight young men crossing their  
Big across their bulbous chests. I have written that they have  
Blue anchor tattoos, admitting it was cliché,  
And that their biceps are as neat as swans curling over their  
Twins to sleep: If I really ever do visit her again,  
I'd bring her more of the metamorphosis of aspen boughs,  
The higher altitude gold she never looks to sea,  
The spent rhymes like pin balls ricochets off the bellies of  
Comely airplanes; and I'd sucker punch her handsome  
Bouncers and retreat, and that is a sweet enough thought to be  
My last one as I settle down to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

## Seventh Period

Crippled inflections of blue birds.

I want to curse, but I do not know her language.

In fact, I cannot speak at all,

But she is smoking a cigarette, her legs crossed,

And she knows.

Now she is just a color and we focus on

The girls running track in the red oval of the high school.

Their auburn hair is streaming. They may be virgins,

They may be wild horses reincarnated, and I can almost smell them,

And it is seventh period,

But the day is still playing like a violin,

But no one has looked at me all day.

We drove to Chris' house and I came back

Drunk from his father's liquor cabinet, prepared for

History.

A blond girl named Tammy walked over and admired my drawing;

She is a lieutenant in the air force now,

And she doesn't imagine me, though I think of her

In soft blues and red lips.

A girl named Amy told me she had a dream that

My cat had kittens last night,

And I told her that was true, though I had to think about it.

Then I also remembered that yesterday was my birthday

And the cat was black, but Amy hardly talked to me

Again through the rest of our classes together.

I had holes in my shoes, but I wouldn't buy new ones,

And since then people have succeeded, and people have failed,

But I once kissed Michelle in the back room of the Catholic Church.

Afterwards, she went home naked with another actor.

Slide your tongue to the back of your throat and speak to me,

Because I cannot say your name.

I cannot remember the pain inside the canal of your eyes,

Even as your legs ran around, their white candy striping the earth.

Now we focus on her again, and she has not moved.

Holding her cigarette close to her face. Her eyes are brown,

Her legs crossed.

I want to curse, but I have lost the power of speech.

Out in front of the school, parents are driving around and around,

And everyone is leaving, but I cannot move.

Robert Rorabeck

## Several More Times Than Once

The poems tread softly through the snow,  
Following and kissing after the soft necks of their brothers:  
It is all that they know to do,  
Because they know that they are not entirely any species of  
Animal,  
And that they have no true brothers: Alma,  
Sharon sells her liquors so high up in the snow, while you  
Always look so young and magnificent:  
Alma- Anyway that you choose to wear your hair is beautiful,  
And I have been as high up in this state as Tallahassee.  
And I have studied over the labors of the high and rich bards,  
But I have never sat across any other body as beautiful as yours,  
While the streets stretch so gaunt and young across their  
Rich and lost ways;  
And I don't know any other way to save myself, because I once  
Ran away to Michigan, but  
I now have thirty two moons and I have my own house  
Into which you have been no more than five times, and into which  
We made love exactly once,  
But it must have lasted an hour or more, and how many orgasms you  
Had I don't exactly know, except that I know it was several more  
Times than once,  
And I have never exactly been kidnapped, but if I had just one wish  
It would be that you would kidnap me again and again:  
At least several more times than once.

Robert Rorabeck

# Shade Of A Deity

Shade of a deity tearing itself above

The house:

Its tears are roman candles luxuriating into the canal—

Going softly away into another place

It is best not to remember—

Where, if you did, you would see her holding his

Hand, riding away to a place where words all become

One syllable—

And in the city only a siren, like a lonely man dreaming into

The mouth of a wolf

The same way water evaporates: beautifully, and forever:

Tumbling downhill to find heaven in the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Shadow Haiku

Did you think that  
I could live forever as  
His shadow on your lip?

Robert Rorabeck

# Shadow Of Our Fires

She went out with her family to see the lions:  
There they were yawning in  
An apiary- the grass beneath them was mowed,  
And they didn't mind the school buses  
We turned around in  
The auburn sun- When my mothers saw her,  
They said that she had the bangs of a lion,  
And they tried to sing to her  
To make her their daughter,  
But she wouldn't come- so busy was she  
Underneath the starless roof where all of the animals  
Played: they fawned in their gargantuan  
Yard and never once wondered why or  
How they were made,  
Which made them so beautiful-  
Panting without shade- that we came to them  
Every Sunday without a church- and they yawned  
And cleaned themselves- and in their eyes  
Not even a shadow of our fires.

Robert Rorabeck



# Shadows Whisper From The Lips Of The Cave

When I begin to pass away  
and the strange skin upon these bones  
tingles with warning, I turn my eyes  
toward the edge of the cave, to where  
the figures keep walking, strutting  
in show,

and then I begin to eat the  
apple in my throat which is the  
glorious thing, rising there  
the wild sad thing about to  
leap from my voice to devour  
the world,

but I linger  
and I am sad,

And I think about the motions  
I put my body through from rest  
to motion, the subtlety of my  
thoughtless control over the golem  
staring back at me with these eyes

When out side, I stare timidly  
through the blinds and there past  
the shivering palm fronds below  
the melting staves bled from the  
sun, the others like me,  
those emoting automatons move  
just like me, then lurch  
toward the long great rows of  
malls spreading forever forwards  
like coffins for titans warned  
by the gods. Even afterwards,  
they built their homes upon  
the bossoming sands of the siren beaches,

teeth that sparkle like eager smiles  
waiting to consume those deadly gating

things

And in this fading way all things come  
marching ever towards me,  
and down into me  
where my body moves and does not,  
incomplete,  
the shadows whisper from the  
lips of the cave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Shady Haiku

I would be pleased  
Simply by the bene-  
Fit Of your shade, girl.

Robert Rorabeck

# Shanty Cabaret

Pale though well-delineated fish  
Drink to new hombres.  
They don't leap but mull the shoals:  
Its easy in this weather.  
I stick my leg out and the sea whittles.  
The breeze blows my cloak,  
And I toss my head back.  
After I've fainted, I crawl up on an  
Elbow with the mussels and write  
Poetry:  
Rather, all the buses have driven away.  
School has gotten older,  
But there is a miracle: My friends return,  
Gamboling, showing teeth  
With caskets full of Mexican fireworks,  
These spinning Hebrews how they play,  
Each one pretending not to see my scars.  
They are very honorary,  
And they go about me and set up,  
Tapping overhead and down beneath.  
They seem to be in a great cloudy room,  
And once set up the sea comes to us  
Like a woman all rolled up  
Which we smoke with bright gas-lit eyes,  
And we laugh and play,  
Not pretending to know a thing about her  
And the sea smokes from out lips,  
Each wave scissoring upon the next line,  
Waxen legs frothing clear out  
Of a blue mangrove in its shanty cabaret.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sharon

You'll make love in Colorado and open  
Presents while I sell  
Christmas trees in South Florida, exhumed in  
A sweat of plunder I can't even spell:  
Maybe I'll get paid,  
But what's important is I'll write more poetry,  
And I'll think about you,  
If only to prove my heterosexuality;  
But with your eyes, like tennis courts, like  
Teal fjords, the graveyard of every forest spirit,  
How could everything I am not be proven true  
By you;  
Even when you no longer haunt where I make tips,  
And try to keep up with the quiet paganisms,  
While the traffic streams and sometimes accidents,  
Where things are bought and sold-  
If the butterflies of chaos are really true,  
Maybe you will sneeze; but I am too drunk to continue  
Humoring my serious pantheisms of your  
Vanished empiricisms- This is a sport better left  
To the Aristotelian logic of the caracoled highways:  
Now I am almost done, because the room is echoing  
With my ambiguous foreplays: If I get too drunk,  
I will masturbate into the high grass-  
Dishonoring you, but you've already had your  
Space pirates, your better luck-  
The knowledgeable hands upon you which are subtlety  
Discernible from the female;  
And now I am even thinking of calling you by the  
Old telegraph lines of the pony express and their'  
Young forgotten souls,  
But luckily I don't have a dime, and my other date is  
Still roller-skating around the rocky areolas of your birthstone's  
Mine.

Robert Rorabeck

## Sharon, Seashell....

I know you have your other life,  
Seashell,  
But I love you, and I'm tired,  
And quite awful, so go back into the  
Waves and keep quiet  
Loving your husband as you should,  
Until I'm quite ready for you,  
And once I've saved upon enough money  
For poems,  
And soft fireworks,  
And French juxtapositions tight against your  
Unassuming body, then I'll come for you  
Again crying out loudly in a class  
That I shouldn't care,  
And taking you in your entire body,  
Carefully offsetting your children,  
Kissing your lips like a religious crèche in the  
Parking lots of the rain,  
While my dogs scratch at doors wanting to get  
Out into the tall grass and mark the territory  
While the weather is still fair and you have  
Very little at all or nothing to say to me....  
Sharon,  
Seashell....

Robert Rorabeck

# Sharon.... Sharon

Cold, visionless: now let me say your  
Name, Sharon:  
I've climbed mountains for you,  
Though I am good at no sports;  
Things trickle downward into expensive  
Resorts,  
Sharon.... Sharon, please:  
I look ugly on highways, so ugly,  
Even my sisters don't care about me,  
Sharon..... Please:  
I love so few, so little things....  
Sharon.... Please:  
I've climbed four mountains in one day:  
Lincoln, Democrat, Boss, and Quandary,  
Sharon;  
But my greatest accomplishment was Mnt. Evans  
And Mnt. Massive in one day:  
That's the first and fourth highest mountains  
In Colorado.... Sharon, Sharon:  
My body is so cold; it is like it's at the morgue,  
Sharon.... Sharon:  
While I was doing that I wasn't thinking of you,  
I was touching the foothills of god,  
Sharon..... Sharon:  
The earth is spinning wildly, and I don't know what  
To do.... I would like to come and live near you  
Like an early denouement, Sharon....  
I would like to save you from the paper snowflakes and  
The condiments of blood,  
But you are already married, Sharon....  
And my grandmother is already dead. Perhaps you've  
Already pissed off a greater love;  
But I love you, Sharon: Before I was born I knew that  
I always would,  
But now you are up to no good.... Sharon,  
But I will still love you.... Sharon; I will always love you,  
Sharon;  
I always knew that I always would....





## She Doesn'T Write From Overseas, Which Is Understandable

German Shepherd drools on my forearm where  
I killed a horsefly today-I broke a horseshoe  
Once and cursed the game.  
I have dark circles under my eyes, really impenetrable  
Scars.  
That is why I am sweet and so high, and anonymous.  
I really am happy and she is going on a cruise.  
Where is she going? The sea is the news- How many  
Cities lost in the waves,  
How many ashes of dead grandmothers? It really is a  
Beautifully thing to hang the bell on-  
Christmas time and snowflakes sweat through the sloughs.  
My father pays me for my troubles,  
But I don't draw mountains anymore- I'm responsible  
For the kids. Fairies ride sword-fish we hang on the  
The fiberboard walls; bright fairies gossip and sauna inside  
Vacated tortoise shells we put our galoshes on to dry;  
Their little wings are rainbows cut out from the sky  
Where airplanes are leaping, always leaping- aren't they  
Going now, but into the giant world where people who fall  
In love are always growing bigger and bigger,  
But I don't know why, but leave your shoes outside the door,  
And come with me and we'll find out how, just won't we now.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Forgets

She forgets.  
Her eyes fade off of him  
Return to the busy madness  
She drives away in—

If she would come back  
And let him give it another shot.  
If she could use her heart  
To focus her vision—  
If he would stand there long enough  
For her to take a picture....

But she forgets.  
Her life is too busy—  
It is the mad business she  
Has to take care of—  
She has a needy infant upon each tit,  
And two hungry wolf pups gnawing in her shoals,  
Waiting for their turns of nourishment,  
So that they might found a city about her....

But she forgets  
That she is about to become the  
Last goddess of a great civilization—  
She is too busy with the mad business  
She drives away in....

Her eyes fade off him.  
She drives away from the linden forest  
Into the glinting nameless cities—

She forgets.

Robert Rorabeck

# She I Love

I don't like doing the extra work of your soul,  
Laying out tattoos for my fingers to needle on your thoughts,  
The voluptuous insects secreted with your tears,  
The menagerie which glows when you are in the dark,  
But I am made of so many sharp things, myself,  
And can not lounge for long after lunch,  
When even the forests are a half naked harem the wind  
Peruses like snooty women in the lingerie department,  
And each mountain is a different woman rising up,  
Each one I'd like to summit, to see the gold,  
Which entwines with the sunrise from the top of her sport;  
I've had this toothache since adolescence, and it has  
Brought me further alone, so I've set up a typewriter  
On a private beach and am drinking my isolation from the  
Fluids and the salt, so each word goes down kind of dizzy,  
As if poisoned, for I am too tired to be thirty,  
And too juvenile to dance with the beautiful woman glittering  
In the back, her eyes so affixed they might as well be stars;  
If I were a declassified astronaut I'd chart to her like a  
Celestial plume, to what her fears transcend reality,  
Until just she and her silhouette waltz the room like extraordinary  
Twins, slowly matching each other like sexy pugilists, until,  
Engorged, only one remains, and it is she I love.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Is Mickey Mouse

Look at them driving around now,  
No fun in love-  
With nobody else; They have their rings,  
And their occupations,  
A Lexus;  
Their spit and their clean  
Pomade and amble freckled fleshed-  
Hyphened last names,

Anonymous suspense....  
The night is dark in heaven:

They got a little alcove for sex and tortoise f! ck,  
But they don't got what I tell them what I got/

How I feel!  
They don't got what I feel, doc!  
Let them in so they can see me rock n' roll,  
Alone on the infant atoll....

Let them smash the expensive glass  
Down in Boca Raton;  
Inside the Chuppah  
Let them mull over that bone;  
If they knew Spanish, they'd know their  
High society was dressing nice  
In the mouth of the sewer rat-

Moan

Funk! Junk! Cocaine crank:  
All she needs is a little spank of lonely love:  
My name broke from hers like a kite in a hurricane;  
Now she is the domesticated kine taking it in the mouth:

She is Mickey Mouse  
Scurrying in the house of a lesser king-  
She is the tail end cartoon burned in the reams  
For the rest of her life;

Mark me,  
Mark me;  
Grandmother rodent....

But you cannot even see me.  
You are already blind, and I am living on the invisible  
Island of snowbirds, mobile homes and citrus;  
The place her cheating commercialism will never touch;  
Brushed by the sonorous opera of the tattooed breast:  
The blue-bird on her tit sings my name  
Like a mighty m^ther-f\*cking migration,  
Of French-kissing which never looks back.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Is Not Mine

The dog walked down the street  
Where her eyes were languid above him,  
Suckling child-  
And I cried, my eyes really moped,  
Because the child was not mine,  
And even more beautiful because the child was  
Not mine;  
Of needing lips not mine;  
And I watched her leave for buses home-  
And they were not mine;  
All I had to do was lie in bed and jack off,  
While the souls of tin birds crenulated against  
The upstairs porch with the broken-down  
Jacuzzi that molded and grew with the ululations  
Of tadpoles and unfortunate princes, puckering undiademed:  
And I wanted her lips, and ping-pong-  
And the shadows stretched throughout the weeping  
Hallways of the school,  
The smoked out bathrooms,  
The unicorns in the soccer field, the cherry red  
Keyed cars;  
She was standing out there vacillating like a fever dream  
Like tapped crystal with something sweet inside;  
And I do this because of my stuttering scars,  
And because she is there hanging over me like grapes  
I cannot reach- I cannot reach because the words are  
Not yet mine-  
And she is sitting straight in front of me. Sometimes  
She turns around and smiles- smiles,  
But I can't really understand-  
and the buses leave, and the schools  
Leaves- the cormorants leave-  
The esplanade remains green and open even as winter  
Tiptoes under this women's opalescent throat:  
Like a fish suffocating in his hands, fat-bellied, the children  
Like roe dripping out from behind....  
Like precious gems  
And she is not mine.



# She Just Doesn'T Care

My dogs fight in a box car of make believe children;  
They nock them down like weather-beaten bowling pins;  
What am I doing in this city,  
With the river so near but not fearful; and yet the correct  
English of this is appalling,  
Like a fisherman unconcerned there is no bottom:  
How will we get to the floor to sleep,  
And looking at the phrases critically, as if you are supposed  
To interview them for a job: They are paltry at best  
They haven't worked for ages, and who have they loved?  
How many other words have they known laid down beside  
Them to keep warm after some such and such midnight?  
Their vocabulary is poor. Skin. Teeth. All poor; its diseases-  
Not fit for mermaids, those topless dancers like selkies  
Inciting barfights: And I'm sure I loved her: I sent her bouquets,  
But why is the sky blue? The bad news can go on forever  
And the fountain of youth is not real: All the conquistadors laid  
To rest beside it are so old and unexciting, they put the tourists  
Into a gummy eyed malaria; it is their disease. Cheap candles  
Are more exciting, open wounds along the bromeliad,  
The lizards who change colors along with the warts; and if the  
Sea is weeping, it is because she has lost her billfold and that  
Is why she goes back and forth sweeping across the middle-  
Class lights of a moribund holocaust, sweeping as if though  
Homely she might cradle inchoate beauty,  
But she just doesn't care.

Robert Rorabeck



# She Kisses The Karate Kid

Oh god, the pain in my overworked  
Liver:  
Blue collar, pushing so many words,  
Sands in a bottle!  
But I still haven't found enough  
Fishhooks to be rich  
In Alaska:  
The barmaids are still barmaids serving  
Lips and legs to  
Somebody, deep alone in their Paul  
Bunyan bedrooms:  
They love beefcake cartoons,  
And roller coasters,  
And nearby trailer-parks:  
I've wanted to love in every one of an  
Infinite resort of waves,  
But she once asked me if I could cook,  
And I said, "Only pancakes."  
I think about her sometimes, but not on  
Sundays:  
And that she used to surf,  
And made love in the burnished surf in great  
Long towns of relinquishing tourism  
To boys I don't know,  
Except that they are so flawless they've  
Never had to resort to books,  
Or the endless attempts of these things:  
Soon I'll have a house  
With a cotton gin and African-American  
Fables-  
Maybe I'll even have a shadow in my shower  
And female hands to sympathize with these  
Scars,  
Painted nails to beckon snails,  
And soon a daughter to relinquish to the  
Humid, mid-western soap-operas:  
But this is not a South Florida  
Noir: I love her,  
But I've checked my baggage-

But I am just a tourist in these waves  
Fading away,  
And she doesn't have to travel so far to hear  
The beautiful notes  
Which open up her needing doors  
To feed the herons from her palm:  
They are tall and dangerous,  
But she has tamed them, and now they play  
Sports for her senses,  
And that is really all she needs.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Never Misses

Some ladies say that snakes are like old swords  
Swinging through the grass:  
Romero tells me his name is actually spelled with an I,  
But everyone calls him coyote, anyways:  
Both of his parents are dead, but he has stopped drinking:  
I have thought for some days that I am in love with  
His sobrina, Alma- I have thought that I have been in love  
Before- since kindergarten;  
The thinking of love is what sustains me, but I do not  
Think that snakes look like old swords swinging through the  
Grass:  
They should be ribbons there falling through the meadows  
And caesuras of her hair and tresses,  
Those esplanades of beauty that are spoken for, while he  
Comes in heavy booted and muddies up the floor of her grotto,  
Never seeing her how I see her for eight hours a day,  
Needing the hiss of her curves: she is never straight but turning  
Like the pressure on a bow,  
Creating heat while her body swings and hisses: Alma,  
The burning, burning soul:  
She is not like a snake, but when she strikes, she never misses.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Said Look Here

She said she loved a new cleft  
Cut like a core of diamond through  
The skyscrapers of the Emerald City,  
Grander than the quarts of Yosemite.  
She said, look here at me now,  
Because I am sitting on his lap  
And Big Daddies are glowing around  
Me, like gentlemen  
Getting drunk and sweaty  
In a bowling alley,  
While his fingers march like  
Ruby generals of excusable piracy  
Undoing the buttons of my chastity,  
Climbing the Roman hills and picking  
Bing Cherries with the  
Mexicans in my orchards.  
She said look here, as he  
Galoped her on his knee  
And she smiled and giggled like  
A banshee.  
Together they were in a brightly  
Lit musical hall in high school,  
A room that stretched up horizontally  
Without a ceiling where winged deer  
Were prancing through a pagan river,  
The antechamber for a high king  
Or a mentally challenged president,  
Full of mumbled echoing,  
Bordered in filigreed aspen trees  
She kept on saying look here  
And see me all the while  
Giggling like a banshee,  
While Pan pranced and played  
A flute, his horns conducting energy,  
The Lord's favorite general  
Fiddled her on his wet-spotted knee.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Sees Everything

White mice play in  
The red ribbons entwined  
About her ribs— where  
She is the permanent product  
Placement resting at the  
Forest's feet.  
The new moon is the  
Wash basin for her  
Soul, she swims around in  
The milky cloth of clouds.  
The queue of stars line up  
In constellations like deck officers  
Directing her safe landing on  
A translucent runway.  
When down beneath the shedding  
Canopy, all her old meat peels away  
Ravaged by the nauseous beasts  
Uncurled from the hollows in trees  
To dine as quick and ferocious as  
Venomous green lightning on the  
Breathless parts of the maiden—  
Until she becomes the  
Juxtaposition of forever and nothingness  
Where her eyes are gone, taken  
Away to feed the nests of newborn pests.  
Yet, up above, circling like a  
Pale glider going on and on  
In the greater and lesser lights  
She sees everything.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Still Does All That She Can

Right now horses sleep, and young men sleep,  
And the armies cut by acidic fangs from the  
Strange earth outside the car port,  
And the cats whisper, and careless little girls have  
Gone to sleep kissing the corpuscles of frogs;  
Believing each on might be their  
Prince, an ugly lottery of licks, but the day never  
Comes- The sun just comes up,  
And kicks over the old pale again, but the day  
Never comes,  
Though she still does all that she can.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Swings Up To No Good

These are not songs,  
Or cantos to raise the smoky, rose hatched  
Dead:  
The stewardesses are still alive,  
And they are independently beautiful.  
Diana no longer lives in the woods,  
But has come north from Columbia so that Florida  
Must be to her like Michigan is to my father:  
And all these used cars are junks,  
And yet all the movies are so wonderful,  
While my fingers stroke their tremulous flagpole  
And lay for awhile the longitude in a celibate  
Bed-  
This day goes on forever like an unexplorable orange  
Grove,  
And I make slight friends and slightly more enemies,  
And I always want to see what is under her hood:  
The fairy tales of her loose morals  
That are always perfumed and practicing the foreplay  
Of her brass knobbed senses,  
And she sweats,  
And she swings,  
Up to no good.

Robert Rorabeck

# She Who Is My Muse

I suppose I have been to the top of some mountain,  
Looking down for some girls:  
Where they sparkle in the murky glades of cars and  
Supermarket,  
Going their predestined ways, back and forth between the  
Devilish works  
Occupying them in their cloyed miniskirts:  
I once submitted for in one day, going up and down the  
Stony caesuras,  
My feet palavering in an immensely empty court:  
And I didn't know Alma then: and I don't know who  
She is now,  
But she is in my like, and I am strung out around her like  
An evergreen manipulated by the wind  
And the biplanes who come infrequently looking for  
Missing children;  
And this is the barrenness of the desolation of my art:  
In the proverbial end, only my dogs will love  
Me, only because they cannot see in all of the colors  
That I have so wrongly painted her,  
She who is my muse.

Robert Rorabeck



# Shedding Tears

Where you have buried the dreams  
In a tin under the sand, the tide is always  
Washing away the footprints of first loves,  
Slow infants learning to crawl towards jellyfish,  
From the shiny plates of balding accountants;  
When the night is fallen,  
And the cars are gone-  
They have all moved away to old homes,  
Gentle cribs, under the mobiles of wandering airplanes,  
The local bars where the girls dance to sad sea shanties,  
And the barrage of liquor keeps hitting the lips  
Until there is very little sound, very little pain;  
Yet, you keep the letters here all through the night,  
The secrets you have extricated from your beating heart  
To move on, to show the things above that you can be  
Another person,  
Like the changing of a suit that appears identical,  
You are in something new and frightening,  
But your tears are buried beneath the tide,  
Hand in the hand with the hapless conquistadors,  
The extinct Indians, the fossils of varying identities;  
Unmarked, maybe even now the sea is stealing who you were,  
Taking those thoughts away while you look into  
The windows of a new house and carrying on  
As the cicadas pollinate out of old husks, again and again,  
Left like graduations on the mottled barks of tasseled cypress.

Robert Rorabeck

## Shellfish Kissing Maricon

My ears are no longer listening to the lips who  
Traffic in the sun:  
My eyes are no longer marking the green cannons firing  
Their captain's guns:  
That my body is only feeling the soft pulse of darkening  
Night:  
That it is feeling no other body moving; it is like the lonely  
Tide in the loneliest playground;  
It weeps in the shadows over the empty ground,  
Because it knows that it has no one else to love, but you  
Alma; but you,  
And who are you sleeping with tonight; Alma: while my  
Very soul secretes itself from my pores like a hive of  
Lighthouses crying to you:  
But you....  
But you....

Robert Rorabeck

# Shelters Breathed Not From Wood

I look at pictures of your new haircut: you holding your daughter  
And swaying a smile against a peg-board:  
The light of your eyes admitting maybe that you once loved me  
In the Magical Kingdom with the other seniors on their  
Way to college or at least the concession stand:  
And today I am drinking Bermuda rum as dark as the hoary seals:  
If I was a narcissist, I would get new tattoos on my joints  
That connect me like the spokes on a bicycle; but every morning  
I am Lazarus to the news that you are selling, breathing in your  
Little shops when we once inhaled a classroom together.  
Now outside it is raining, and I am absolutely alone. My pets are  
In Arizona. I am closing on a house that is too small for all of us,  
And I spend my life in movies, like quarters into little whirligigs.  
Today I went to the dollar store and blew my lips into pinwheels,  
And now I am writing about you, because you are too far away to  
Do me anymore harm:  
Your snow is melting and very soon different sorts of tourists will come  
Up into the parade of wildflowers. Today I bought sixteen articles of  
Clothing for four dollars just to impress you, and I spent my birthday with  
Our mutual teacher: Now my blood is roller-skating in its avenues,  
Like virgins soon to become stewardesses,  
As I know you are yet happily breastfeeding your firstborn child,  
Fearing the time that she will let off of your body, like a vagrant letting  
Go of a kite,  
Though I would not worry as I am sure there will be many more to come:  
As your park is green and mutual, and I go into it whenever I can  
To watch the pretty ladies dancing in a pantomime of endeavoring commitment;  
While the sun flickers and moves your body in frames;  
And I build shelters for you in hidden glades, but they are immaterial,  
As they are shelters breathed not from wood.

Robert Rorabeck

# Shoes

My shoes are cold  
And I'm wearing them  
So I am cold,  
But I'm running out of  
Shoes:  
I climb mountains,  
I work 365 days a year;  
It takes a toll on leather souls.  
My other set has a black widow  
And 9,000 of her offspring  
Living in the left shoe,  
So the right shoe has nowhere  
To go.  
I wouldn't wish to relocate them  
Forcefully, and create more youthful  
Terrorism.  
I wonder if great men become  
Great because they wear  
Perfectly fitting shoes,  
Or if feral men who know nothing  
Of words, should put on an educated man's  
Shoes, they should instantly learn to speak  
As well as their king;  
Or, if a poem is written about shoes,  
Should it then smell like feet;  
Or, if unread, should it smell like anything at all.

Robert Rorabeck

## Shooting Off Along His Own Measly Way

You've read what I've written to you:  
How insignificantly I blush,  
How my scars disappear readily in the rumors  
Of moonlight;  
And you don't even worry that I go to the library  
To masturbate,  
Rather than bring anymore bouquets to your check  
Out line which is already chockfull  
Of the beefier men you prefer;  
And my lines are callow, and crass, and they don't  
Even have as many days left as my grandfather,  
Who has water in his lungs, as I would have liquors,  
Should I be continuing on these trails for  
Even one more day:  
For you are a beautiful woman, but taken from  
Appealing angles, or the meatier left to starve,  
Then all your race is beautiful or can become that way  
By the makeup of your craft;  
And mammalian, you are really lacking as you can only suckle  
One or two young at a time;  
And you are neither like a fire-engine nor a werewolf,  
Though it should be said in the simplicity of our American  
World,  
We will forever make good neighbors; and my poems compliment  
Your wine, or visa versa;  
And looking at the stars together, laid off our bicycles and  
The hearty scuppernongs peeled off my professor's linked fence,  
We might deem for awhile to share a god  
Who seems to be very much alive, gambling with his engines  
Along the avenues of sweet penumbra;  
But should he ever look down, he will figure us just as we were,  
Two insignificants in love,  
Before shooting off along his own measly way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Shooting Star

Abandoned toys made real for god;  
Tonight the heavens are doused with salt,  
Which scarred the streets horizontal to the old sea, and palms-  
No one is getting published but the greasers,  
Who proved their bravado by counting coo on  
The winsome coyotes' dimpled throats-  
While the sun was thrumming down the nape of treacle sky:  
As soon as I got to school there was a rumble;  
And the circus midget fell to stealing gold amidst the mêlée  
Of unoccupied wombs,  
The brush-stroked cheerleaders of the garish tombs;  
The pantaloon cabaret the principle enjoyed at break of dawn.  
Then I loved a girl for awhile who was a palindrome;  
I became a cleft-lipped Romeo without a date to the prom;  
But I serenaded her with crickets from the swamp  
Under her desk;  
We'd skip school and smoke the hookah in the fata morgana of a bus,  
While boys fought outside with bottle rockets and broken glass;  
Abating only for the séance of substitutes held at lunch,  
And turned the trimmed affluence into a trailer-park  
Of dreamers and frog-throat truckers with silver rigs;  
While she skipped school and cried in her purple wig:  
She whose name I cannot say, for from the very first she walked away,  
Until she found another star, a sash for her violet waist  
She wore from afar; And signed up for the pilgrimage of handsome  
conquistadors;  
She slipped like a penny beneath the floorboards;  
And it is her I am still fumbling for,  
My jaw thrown out to sea, a wishing bone, a cenotaph, a fishing-lure,  
While the circus midget pick-pockets the trained Labradors;  
In fact, she is the shooting star they were all fighting for....

Robert Rorabeck

# Shore Drive

The art is mishandled and led down into the sea.  
Tourism's fat lips hang over the water like a flatulent cloud,  
Chewing up tuna, blowing man-o-war.  
They are buying so many things, where the land shifts and  
The children line up around the sleepy tortoises drunk  
Off wine like they were in the middle of a park  
Waiting their turn for the merry-go-round.  
The sun chips away, exposing such sins like a muckraker  
In slicks with a bucket at low tide: What is he digging up?  
What words should I know to put there in his pail,  
To satisfy the onlookers, or the mermaids bathing and  
Doing delicate laundries (petticoats and braziers) in  
The effervescing foliage of the surf:  
I want to move here and winnow with the palmetto's shadows  
Through dawn, and eat what food I can steal,  
To trickle this roe down to my heart and coat it like spilling ink  
From an inebriate sailor's runny tattoo,  
And dream of so many movie girls who have forgotten me,  
Who are pregnant and restaurateurs- who know so much  
About wine, and where to kiss a leading man; but here, once settled,  
To recognize the constant changing battles in the front yards,  
The immigrants and ghosts and fire-ants  
who've swashbuckled through history  
Lounging in a carport that I own, and yachts and schooners further  
Out on the blue deck practicing for the ballet: Surely, she doesn't  
Love me, but here there is so much bright sorrow that it perpetuates  
Itself: I will drive there and let the shady spots freckle with  
My scars; it will be on my birthday, and I will be reborn so far away  
From her that it doesn't really matter that  
She will make pilgrimages to see me then, even though she is  
Blind. Out in the waves she is a good kisser, and she has an  
Inclination to change her mind,  
While the tourists hang like storm clouds with red-eyed lobster  
Traps looking down from their enraptured dinners, they see us make  
Love; and they pay with sanddollars, and still they say that they don't  
understand.

Robert Rorabeck

## Shoreline Of My C

I've tried turning over so many terrapin to see  
What their strange ideas have in store,  
But all I get is the left over roe of their gluttony breakfast;  
And their eyes don't even sing to me,  
And I leave them alone until they stop spinning on the floor.  
While all of this time the stewardesses have been at dancing,  
Like satellites in chorus lines of star-burned rows,  
Like dancehalls for sheriffs who are pilots and astronauts:  
And they kick their legs up all across the Elysian Fields,  
And they remind me of girls from high school even while they  
Are dancing, and they are so far off you cannot even notice  
When they are dressed and when they are naked;  
And I think of buying them houses to live underneath them,  
To make them just as jealous, so that in my clever vanity I may watch  
Them, while they singing look down at me, and wonder what  
Beautiful sort of creature lives with me, and from a closer vantage  
Point strikes across my visage and my bedroom everyday,  
Like a comet burning holes in her secret negligee, like  
A secret older sister getting naked and purring along the well fitted  
Shoreline of my canopied pool.

Robert Rorabeck



# Shoreline Of My Canopied Pool

I've tried turning over so many terrapin to see  
What their strange ides have in store,  
But all I get is the left over roe of their glutting breakfast;  
And their eyes don't even sing to me,  
And I leave them alone until they stop spinning on the floor.  
While all of this time the stewardesses have been at dancing,  
Like satellites in chorus lines of star-burned rows,  
Like dancehalls for sheriffs who are pilots and astronauts:  
And they kick their legs up all across the Elysian Fields,  
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Are dancing, and they are so far off you cannot even notice  
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To make them just as jealous, so that in my clever vanity I may watch  
Them, while they singing look down at me, and wonder what  
Beautiful sort of creature lives with me, and from a closer vantage  
Point strikes across my visage and my bedroom everyday,  
Like a comet burning holes in her secret negligee, like  
A secret older sister getting naked and purring along the well fitted  
Shoreline of my canopied pool.

Robert Rorabeck

## Shorter Ways To Go

I feel my legs in sweaty black jeans:  
I already want to come over myself, and I will  
After my mother is asleep:  
I will stand outside in the empty yard with  
The cinder blocks  
And I will come to a muse or the killer of muses:  
Maybe I will come to the lady who will soon  
Be my wife,  
Or my heirloom, or my threat: I will sing for a  
Long while, out on the clasp of dawn,  
Or on a gambling boat:  
I will sing which is like pretending to fire a firearm;  
And I will get wet from the enrapturing playbills of the  
Sea;  
And I have no arcaded, and I am humble underneath her  
Mountains: I am swept under there like a lost cousin  
Who was never invited to a merry Christmas;  
And I am saving my money- And I still want to be beautiful;  
And maybe I was the most beautiful man today, Sharon;  
Maybe I was just that beautiful,  
As eager and ugly enough to star in all the old Hollywood  
Movies of our almost forgotten cemetery:  
Where did you live in Wellington:  
What is your old address and whose fingers were the first  
To unbottun the back of your dress, Sharon-  
I want to know the first man you loved, Sharon;  
And I want to kiss, and then swim in the waves; for you were  
A beautiful woman, Sharon, but now you are almost  
Gone into your ways; and I am almost gone as well,  
Feeling all the awful copper metals of those conquistadors sunken  
Like greening cannibals into my chest:  
Frank O'Hara gives me an erection, makes me all wet,  
Sharon, Sharon: who were your forebears, and how long do they  
Go:  
To the saber tooth, and to the hypothesis of Eskimo;  
And I swing every night, Sharon; and I refuse to eat;  
And would you teach me poetry, Sharon:  
For you are my sick muse, and you go down and hold yourself  
Properly for awhile while you think of the tropical fish,

The little golden darkling I suffocate in my fist:  
Sharon,  
You are almost the most precious Wolverine I know,  
But I've forgotten our school colors,  
And we've both gotten a shorter ways ago-

Robert Rorabeck

# Shotgun Hyacinth

Two words

Meaning two

Separate things,

But in the evening

They are both for naught.

Robert Rorabeck

# Shouldn'T We Be Going

Kiss or touch this beautifully crooked boy,  
Or become a seagull,  
But give yourself to my salient desperations:  
Open your lips to me like the flower of a  
Department store. If I am finite,  
If my body is scarred and finite,  
What part of me reaches out through the yards  
Of weather fronts,  
Curls in ways I would never know to whisper  
Over your sweet shoulder,  
To feel its tendrils underneath your delicate  
Straps, and says with its few lines,  
That out of all the boys, gray headed, I am still  
The best one; and if I've struck out, I  
Am still waiting for you in the red earth,  
Or underneath the bleachers of some sad high school,  
Waiting for you to come out. Now that all  
The cars are gone, knowing that you cannot drive alone,  
I have hidden a bottle for us in place down  
Desperately near the sea; and now that you have  
Come, somehow, shouldn't we be going?

Robert Rorabeck

# Showers Of The Evening's News

Nonsense of ribbons tied around the apple bows:  
The houselights linger and the housewives  
Prepare the pretty feast of the bodies  
In their views: they spring around the tables that  
Are being used,  
And fall flat into the hearths of the springing news:  
Their husbands, glad to be architects of the leggy  
Game, catch them and mouth them, and they  
Do the same:  
Every evening as steady as they prove:  
Housewives, and sun showers of the evening's news.

Robert Rorabeck

# Showtime

A man without his lover sleeps near the sea.  
In fact he is dead and nothing but bones,  
And, oh how that dead man grins  
To see the night and day reciprocate.  
When his skull drinks the wine of sunset,  
When the sea is rushing and twisting in watery knots—  
Then he can think about the love  
The world has shown to him,  
As crabs scuttle like little forget-me-nots,  
Red and hinged pupils dilated in his dreamy eye-sockets....  
Then he can see her riding in the red mists,  
And already her suitor is upping her razzle-dazzled skirts,  
And, oh how he can see her getting it done,  
As the wild sea bucks— There in the waves,  
A herd of Arabian horses are stampeding,  
But that is just a metaphor,  
But the man's lover is real. There she is,  
Just off the East coast of Florida  
Flaming like a disease—He sees her and grins  
And gets drunk on the breeze as his ribs  
Grow brittle in rows half embarrassed by the sand—  
Parts of him are thrown away. Parts of him are halfway  
To Africa, but his skull is there grinning like a prize—  
And he drinks his wine in awful fits,  
As he sees his woman getting f-cked by the flash and bang  
Of that sunset—Oh what filthy lust!  
But the sex is good and the horizon is its stage,  
And the dead man's skull drinks his wine  
And laughs at his memory's terrible play....

Robert Rorabeck

# Shush And Shush

Sailing on a magic carpet of  
Styrofoam I broke my jaw on the side  
Of I-95,  
When I was only four years old and  
No one was home:  
Now I want to cover the sea with sod,  
Because I lost my virginity  
To a green carpet in a great big house when  
I was....  
When I was a superhero in high school,  
Surrounded by cowboys and Indians  
And Lincoln logs  
And paper cats and calico airplanes:  
And all my stewardesses had names which were  
Interchanged as they watched me  
Beat myself like a foul baseball player,  
My pallid oilfield of eternal wealth;  
But now shush,  
Shush you candles, but still burn on like the dead  
Soldiers decapitated in the wishes of my Somme....  
Or somewhere shush,  
And sway like brushes to the girls I know and love  
And want to play,  
And say their names like skipping wishes over the dirty  
Canal,  
Straight over the blue eyed backs of every blue gill:  
Sharon, shush, my sick muse,  
And love me while the elk and reindeer bugle in the dusk,  
For the aspens are all naked now,  
And the tourists blush,  
And my hand holds nothing.... Nothing but empty  
Rust:  
So shush, Sharon and your daughter:  
Shush and shush.

Robert Rorabeck



## Silent Grotto In The Mind

Silent jewel now this is loud—  
Cloud happening after cloud— immolations  
Above a swing-set that never happens nor  
Ever has to come down—  
Silent grotto in the mind,  
As lunch trucks come at lunching time—  
Now boy is here,  
Just as girl does come,  
Two bodies lying in the lying sun—  
I supposed I saw you  
Opening your eyes at breakfasting time—  
They say the swiftest machine can turn in time—  
The poetess is dead,  
And my muse no longer knows a rhyme.

Robert Rorabeck

# Silent Orange Dreams

My body numbs by opulent venom,  
Kissed by the lips of still bleeding venison:  
And the champions have taken to the sky:  
They have taken your hand, Alma:  
They are kissing and blessing you and turning giant  
Airplanes around like bottles in a kissing game:  
Atop the sky, atop the town:  
It is like the whispering fantasy of spoiled school kids  
Who invite invisible lovers into their own rooms:  
It is like all of the hours I am forced to spend with you  
When either you or I am not home:  
And this is a butterfly, a god, or your name lighted  
A spotlight atop the favorite green colors of the stage of  
This terraplane; and this is my nascent desire  
Calling from high atop the coned trams of a conifer,  
Like a mother who doesn't move,  
But as if through ripples in a wishing well,  
Of silent orange dreams that never sleep,  
Calls you home.

Robert Rorabeck

## Silently (Censored)

In this world the  
Very loud one,  
Where angels fly like  
Airplanes,  
It's best to say nothing at  
All,  
And if you can learn at a  
Very young age  
To walk away from your  
Parents, your favorite  
Toy,  
There you will come to  
Know everything—

Silence occupies the largest  
Country inside you—  
That great colorless beast  
Cannot be surgically removed  
By societal instruments,  
Silver of sharp counterfeit—  
Talk as loud as you  
Want,  
Hide in a crowded room  
With your hand occupying  
A glass of boisterous wine—  
Shout across the street  
To your neighbor,  
Clap to draw his attention,  
Ask him to borrow something,  
Go drink beer at a football game,  
F-ck a woman you love  
Or do not love,  
Make her scream your name  
To reassure your existence—

The beast inside you will  
Still be there,  
Watching you from the tall grass,  
The hungry eyes know the name

Even God doesn't know—  
It will only get closer and closer  
Until you recognize it,  
Until you know it is a part of you,

And your family will look at you  
Confounded and say,  
Who the hell are you?  
We don't know you—

But it is best not to  
Say a thing  
Just walk away steadily  
With purpose,  
But do not run  
Or they will devour you.

Live instead in your  
Own wilderness,  
The only thing ever  
To exist  
With the hungry beast  
Inside, purring voiceless  
Down your throat

Cut your veins and feed it  
Until you are utterly consumed.  
Then you will look out at the  
Bright yellow things that speed  
By you  
From its eyes  
And you will exist as  
Silent thought floating above  
The heads looking up,  
The cacophonous seas of  
Echoing nothingness trying  
To survive by turning tricks in  
The void

You escape from,  
A translucent satellite  
Traveling ever upwards

Silently.

Robert Rorabeck

# Silently Going Along My Way

Since no one is listening,  
I might as well dance, going on tiptoes  
Over the grinning skulls of crocodiles,  
As if the entire yard was of vermillion piano keys:  
Without instructions,  
Kissing what girls that I may  
Who might come floating down through the  
Swelter beginning to bake through the slash-pines,  
Above which canopy the commercial airplanes are  
Roaring,  
Their pull string engines started like lawnmowers;  
And I might as well cream in my hand,  
Like a little bit of offering to the invisible girls  
In the low orange trees;  
Grinning, scarred, because no one is looking, and  
Give my best profile to the unbearable day,  
As I would give my palm to the fates of a housewife's  
Careless eyes,  
Give my entire filthiness over to your washing machine,  
Like a tiny commercial spell they've accused me of  
While the paper snowflakes are falling;  
But what is this, I don't care,  
You've caught me by surprise, though I can see you are  
Barely dressed and in the middle of getting interested for  
Your sailor coming home from his midday sea battles,  
All the monsters he's bodily explored, well shaven-  
I should make my own way over to where my parents are calling;  
Its time to come home again,  
Barefoot and imperfect, leaving you here to following  
Your usual sway; it isn't far to go and soon  
You will be making love,  
And I would love to see you again silhouetted in the bright  
Smoke the sun is never done defeating,  
But I can see you're all dolled up for him,  
And it is not to my nest to which you have flown to  
In silk stockings- My parents have brought home dinner,  
The earth is made of baseball clay  
And we are all its estranged visitors, frantically knocking;  
I must really be going silently along my way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Silver Fireworks Of Another Man's Holidays

All the way down during the day,  
Down the steps to the sea- to feed bread crumbs to  
Mermaids,  
To proposition the virgins in the grottos that you- Alma,  
Should think of me,  
Sweating like the confections of an opulent daydream,  
Into a house with my dog too small for you to  
Have, and shrinking all of the time,  
Diminishing into a dwarf as if by an evil, lascivious spell,  
Finding it hard to get into my truck,  
Drinking liquor near the torpid and opened lips of the  
Canal- wading into the fetid presumptions  
That collection like in the murkiness of a questionable  
Wishing well:  
That I have lost my way, over spilling my words, and commingling  
With liquor even though I have to get up after midnight to  
Work into the afternoon-  
While you arise from another bed, silver fireworks of  
Another man's holidays licking through your beautiful hair.

Robert Rorabeck



# Silver On The Tree

I cannot think anymore, as happy as if  
I were with a woman, in the banking of the  
Higher earths, amidst the alabaster aspens,  
The columns for the celebrations  
Of the cast of angels,  
For in the blanketing nimbus,  
The rosy swirl like that of the seashell's  
Inner ear, the peaceful colloquialisms  
Of people who live so near the sea  
They cannot tell their lives apart from  
The otter's clever play in seaweed beds,  
For it is all of one season now,  
The clever dating calendars give no hope:  
And holidays could come at anytime,  
Or none at all,  
As the ancient berths of maritime traders  
Trundle upwards in the darkness,  
And horse-like skeletons split the  
Infant grave, braying in the gray snows  
As the wolves clean off the last  
Of the clever meat, riding them:  
The clock has wound down, and  
The laughing man on top of it has  
Breathlessly drunken his tasteless wine  
And let us in:  
Through the secret corridors where changing  
Maidens run, the sea is butchered  
By a dull sword and makes no sound.  
There is silver on the tree  
At the end of the path a long ways down,  
Where not a single thing moves  
At the foot of the house.  
The ladies of aristocracy with ruined names  
Have drunken their poisons under the lee,  
And now sleep with a bluish sheen,  
The opal necks rotting the speechless marble.  
In this world,  
How can you say a single thing  
And not be driven away by the stockless kind.

As the heroes have risen up victoriously  
Many times, now they grow old  
And the greatest worm comes,  
A long crimson train chewing coal,  
So there is nothing to be done now,  
As we are old and cotton haired,  
Given over to the infant's nameless whisperings,  
But to open the door and let it in.

Robert Rorabeck

# Similacrum Of Love

New Mexicans waiting on  
The granite steps of the monuments for  
The gifts of the magi—  
How will they wonder on home,  
Having been defeated by the great powers—  
But they take solace by  
Stealing the apples from their  
Masters' Christmas trees—  
And I have loved them while making love  
To the promises they do not keep:  
She leapt above her Disney World—  
And she wept as she leaped—  
The same way that crocodiles cry for everyone:  
She did the same to me—  
Underneath the airplanes and the skyscrapers—  
Giving her love to the skeletons  
Tattooed  
Everywhere they could not breathe—  
As jeweled mermaids swam through the caesuras,  
Giving nude clips to the tourists  
Who all lived upon their ships—  
And they kept peering down into the greater amusements  
Where they knew that she kept—  
As she pretended to swim for them—  
A simulacrum of love leaping across the doused  
Bonfires—  
As the sunlight doused into the parks—  
As the shadows crept into the hours.

Robert Rorabeck

# Since We Dreamed That Way

I wish I had some liquor to christen each of my  
Heavenliest scars  
(or at least root beer) : they go better by that, the itch to burn  
Next to your legs scissoring, so sharp and sexy  
Like they could do paper crafts;  
I bet you could create anything by just crossing them,  
Witchcraft- I bet there are all  
Sorts of fingerprints up and down their Siamese rivers,  
Not even all human: , but no safe way across.  
I don't care. I blew out the candles  
And made a wish for your legs, something to take down  
And tell secrets to amidst the prickly aloes,  
To whisper to beside the ancient car port as my parents  
Drive in bringing home fried chicken and apples,  
So very young and successful and carefully dangerous.  
Don't you see them, that nimbus of lighthearted in-laws?  
You know where it is- You don't have to pretend,  
Where baby teeth are still coming loose.  
Where the gold fish is harassed by the gray cat who  
Died so many years ago- just wandered off.  
There is pornography inside the chassis across the ditches-  
Leather tramps and a few Mexicans are licking there lips,  
But not for any kind of job. Yes, it is my fairy-tale, but  
No one doesn't have to know about it, except for you.  
So come and I'll give you a cool beer,  
And we will watch the rabbits pin themselves all throughout  
The turquoise rock garden my mother had an easy time planting  
With all the out of work actors and scorpions and  
So many little things which like to sting; put your eyes and lips  
On my subtle wounds, spit on them and send them off;  
and your breasts upon my heart,  
Like cold chicken or ham, if you prefer, and I want to make love  
To you because hasn't it been so very long since we dreamed that way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Singing A Song

I am the guy  
Who digs with sticks  
In the mud,  
Who sometimes sings.

You are the court composer,  
And he is Mozart,  
So why am I so jealous  
When I am not around to listen  
To the passionate repercussions  
Of the acclaimed competition?

I am not a worthless griot,  
But not much else-  
The speckled bullfrog who in such  
Delusions dreams he can be returned  
To a prince,  
But never was,

A prince  
Wrapped up in gold leaf  
And crinoline and fine tobaccos  
I resemble the aura of a lover delicately  
Placed in a radiant shop,  
Shaded by the panoply of vermillion  
Patinas,  
Chartreuse and sweet penumbras

Until my eyes are back in the open,  
My class untouchable,  
Roofless,  
As the rains come down pedantically,  
Shivering prayers;  
I use my tools into the dirt  
Where I can barely here the crescendos  
Of better orchestras,  
And sometimes I serenade with all  
My unfortunate brothers,  
Reptilian ululations which seems to

Us a song.

Robert Rorabeck

# Singing As She Curses

Hard up from here- a castaway of junkyards  
But feeling let down- movement in the gimbals  
Of weeds- swore parts for relationships that  
Never existed, walking my dog alone in the park,  
And knowing the names for so few of the things  
In nature:  
Time passing me around with the other people  
Who move so nearly, but always so far away:  
The secrets kept secret,  
Probably even no existent- the real work out on  
The signs above the road, proselytizing to  
The traffics and tourisms:  
And she is moving there, high in her resorts and  
Bawdy outfits,  
Keeping a song bird to her lips and going around me  
Like a spell, enjoying herself without ever  
Coming down,  
And singing as she curses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Singing For You

We won't make love, if you don't  
Want to, Alma:  
We'll just park in the dim shadows,  
And become obscured to  
Your family for awhile:  
And I'll just tell you my kindergarten  
Secrets the kidnappers could never  
Find,  
The places I wouldn't even know by now,  
Except that I discovered on  
Your body some weeks ago, and I told  
You that you made my heart fill like a  
Fairground flooded with lights;  
And I was going to go right to  
Bed tonight, and metamorphose again by  
Myself,  
Estranged from my family as if it was this  
Entire world,  
But I decided to do good work again,  
And so I went out and bought this cheap bottle,  
Which finds me singing for you.

Robert Rorabeck



## Singing Like Birds

The rum ran out of their ships:  
The songbirds, what did they do? Maybe  
They ate themselves,  
Singing as the housewives wept  
For thinking of you—and the stallions running  
Like fireworks up and down the streets:  
Making a band play over the shell rock—  
As the kids came home around them, looking weird—  
What was it they had seen all day,  
But kidnappers making the sun dance on the shoulders  
Of the clouds—  
giving them promises of other places sweeter  
Than theirs:  
As the buds sprang on the sprigs, like little weddings  
Over the fingertips of the skeletons  
Singing like birds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Singing Verses Of Her Being

Everything in words now:  
Her love in words,  
On the verge of the publisher's bloom:  
Her lips and chin words,  
Her tongue the punctuation,  
The confirmation of the letter's stamp:  
Her eyes the auburn vocabularies  
Of her womb,  
Glowing dimly like coals  
Waiting to be stoked awake-  
Her legs the calligraphy,  
The art of her form-  
If opening they would lead high upwards,  
To our children,  
The bright vowels of kindergarten,  
The angels of apocryphal verse,  
Her hands the leading sentences  
Conjoining our new paragraphs,  
Showing me around the bright canvas  
Of beautifully fluidic grammars:  
If she saw me in her lines,  
And discovered me like an  
Ancient language,  
I could put entire volumes of  
Poetic species in her mouth-  
My tongue pressing into hers  
The intimate needs of my body's dictionary,  
In swirling caesuras, the commas  
Situating the adjectives describing  
How I see her,  
My love for her forming  
The singing verses of her being.

Robert Rorabeck

# Single Angel

Switchbacks disappear halfway up the  
Already vanishing heavens'  
And you have to scramble with the hooks of  
Your evolving soul'  
And not even a single angel will take note  
Of your most hollow of  
Victories 'with only your car waiting down  
There beneath you'  
Headlights draining the battering like  
Some type of parasitic intelligence'  
Your sisters making love to their eventual men  
In the deserts of another country'  
Your father a prince with amnesia'  
And your mother enthralled to a werewolf'  
So you pin your art to the hidden classroom  
In the apiary of her stone guts  
Hanging breathlessly above tree line'  
And you start out again, becoming enlightened by  
False summits 'the day perpetuating its  
Perfect tattoos upon your skin'  
The tourists dining beneath you,  
And melting into the storefronts of her blossoming soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Single Kiss

Well, it is raining, and the raindrops make  
Furtive areolas in the puddles of muddy bellies,  
And their mists are like nebulous shrouds,  
And unfertilized thoughts of maidens dreaming of  
Weddings and fine bachelors in their highest high towers-  
And I am warm, as down in the valley the safe cabins  
Huddle against their pines like satisfied lovers,  
And I read my book once more the way a captain checks  
Over his ship preparing for embarkation,  
For I will be published mutely and celebrate with my dogs  
In the consolatory monsoons of this lush season;  
For it is what I can hope for, and my smiling mother's eyes,  
And the way the doors lay sometimes half open letting  
In the glows; but I cannot love her anymore, when my  
Words grow tangled about my mind like weeds and skeins  
Of my dead aunt's yarn the kittens have playfully disemboweled,  
For on the swings so far away she is moving in her arcs  
As the policemen patrol her, and the apex where her legs grow  
Up together and into the seat of a tall ladder placed below  
Her window where the work is finished and she leans outwards,  
Her eyes so maple and October, and she sighs never thinking  
How the rain touches me, as if the kisses from cold little children,  
Never once desiring her match-head, and the humming bloom  
Of a single kiss...

Robert Rorabeck

# Single Tear Drop

I own two bicycles because I still pine for you  
Alma,  
Even while you make love this evening, even while you  
Turn out all of the hope in your lighthouse,  
So you cannot see my beauty drowning,  
While during the day your eyes seem like brown  
Maelstroms swirling with your breath,  
Devouring the young heroes far more beautiful than me;  
And still you accept my dreams and my bouquets,  
While now all of the flowers are getting smaller as I too  
Shrink,  
Soon I will be so diminished as to be in danger of drowning  
In a single tear drop,  
Which is all that I wish from you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Single Thought Of Me

uses of new dementia—and I have passed through  
Here—the path I have taken has become  
Like the littlest story—and the things I have defeated  
Have become my friends:  
A rainbow, a centipede, a man with purple wings:  
And we sing together along our innocuous roads—maybe we  
Are near the sea, but we neither care or comprehend—  
Maybe I will be fired tomorrow—  
Maybe the lamplight will build into a brilliant nest over  
The fireplace of a lighthouse,  
And the windmills will fill their bouquets with her perfumes;  
But the rivers will always run south,  
Trying to fill their mouths with sea water, and the songbirds  
Will follow them, probably all of the way to Mexico—  
And she will awaken, mortally to raise a daughter  
Who will, I am supposing, never have a single thought of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sir Francis Bacon Vs. Shakespeare

Looking for the better life,  
Long legged girls delight in lawyers,  
Well-suited boys in pinstriped suburbias-  
Verdant halls, golden foyers:  
I've heard them serenading from their  
Sisterly row,  
Getting dolled up, looking gorgeous,  
Extending every part of their bodies that  
They know how to,  
Riding bicycles to and fro under the crenulated  
Lashes,  
So fast to get where they are going that  
They have forgotten to worship their dead  
Siblings,  
Forgotten to tie a new bow about the poles in  
The graveyard,  
To bring them gifts of plastic tulips and thimble-  
Tiny mewling kittens to appease them,  
The rippling specters who can tell the future-  
They go right by me too, as if they couldn't see  
Me, even though I have a thumb up above  
My rucksack- You would think that they were  
Mailmen on their appointed rounds,  
Trying to get at the educated men, pomaded in their  
Intangible positions, but I shouldn't crowd them,  
Their bright traffic as busy as a drippy comb,  
But I'll sit here amidst the growing puddles  
Of humid shadows at the curbside- I'll bight my thumb  
And gossip with the relatives they've forgotten,  
I'll wait for them all to settle and grow numb  
Like snowflakes in a bell jar's trinket,  
And when they're unsuspecting, or busy shopping,  
I'll sneak to their windows and pillage a plumb  
Cooling in their steamy confections- I'll eat  
Quietly in their backyards, under their swingsets  
Conflagrations, I'll appease the appetite of my  
Erections- I'll take their kids to the graveyard and show  
Them pictures of when they were young:  
And there I'll leave them with my willow sprig or

Cane pole jouncing over my shoulder,  
A leather tramp between the jobs and landscaped holies;  
Perhaps I'll whistle in the evenings at their  
Shaven jogs; and it will be fine to somnambulate and greet  
Them with eyes so free in meetings,  
Whose thoughts are so read and fleeting,  
Careless of all that they've never mentioned to find.

Robert Rorabeck



# Siren Who Has Forgotten Her Songs

Tonight my muse lies in sleep with him  
Like a mermaid who has come ashore smelling the rose  
That will become her grave:  
There is her bed between the dunes, and her eyes  
Have already bled all of their tears:  
And now what is she doing, held over like a prostitute  
Underneath the biggest neon cross underneath the  
Biggest all night supermarket  
While the convenient stores are getting robbed:  
There she is with her nightgown slipped over her  
Brown shoulders in the middle of the orange groves  
So far away from where she belongs.  
But she was so far away anyways- but I linger there  
Still listening at the bus stops, the lions lamenting  
A siren who has forgotten all of her favorite songs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Siren Who Has Forgotten Her Songs

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Robert Rorabeck

# Sirens, Or Beowulf's Mother, Whoever-

Cold eddies,  
Spills into my holes,  
Fills it up with rum,  
These beautiful atolls  
Where sharks run- There isn't  
Any shade,  
But the coral relaxes.  
Airplanes burn underwater,  
And I have supreme optimism  
Of having my name in print under  
A more august publication;  
But still, the old dog is licking himself  
Noisily,  
The horses whinnying, but the lightning  
Doesn't flash inside-  
Old girlfriends too, show up well-clichéd,  
With hyphenated last names and hullabaloo;  
But I kind of just grin,  
And I quietly shine,  
I don't show my cards,  
I just ring my rhyme;  
And the straights continue their bleached flow-  
Veteran heroes come draped in extravagant fleece.  
Whatever danger that was before in the  
Whirlpool blocking the path,  
They have cleared and now smile glistening and  
Bronzed- Showing brilliant teeth and  
Flexing their stuff: sirens, or Beowulf's Mother,  
Whoever:  
Undefeatable, they have learned how to  
Enjoy the show and then mosey on.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sister Citrus

Sun-dusk, a cemetery viewed from a cold  
Blind window,  
Wire framed hutch where the headless chickens are  
Falling in love;  
But who will fall in love with them,  
But the discombobulated, in lines of straight  
Chock somnambulant,  
Bent forks are just exhausted weeping girls  
In butchered skirts:  
Then, when its pure dark, I want to grow tall,  
While children play games in the sand:  
Reach up and pluck her from the blindness  
She serves drinks in:  
Imbibe her spirits myself until I cure my wounds, and  
She grows out of me like unsure cybernetics,  
Like dirty electricity from my tennis elbows;  
And say there, sister citrus,  
Isn't it time you awakened- For the sun has stripped  
Its plain bed again, the waves are unwrapping  
The gorgeous presents-  
And I am frying up some bacon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sisters

In the silver-gilled days of late November,  
Thinking of what she became for Halloween,  
She runs her dove-grey hands through the shoreline's flesh—  
On her shoulders, the sun is weeping the final fiery tears  
For the day, like a debutant without a date for the ball;  
Though she kneels stilly, she is running away, as  
The daylight flees like a frightened horse over the  
Far side of the continent, so comes the shivering night  
With all of her sadness, because her friends are so  
Distant and useless, but the sea seems to try and  
Rise up to kiss her, like a secret caress shared between  
Two woman, mere acquaintances, accommodating a dressing room—  
She sees the sad fornications of the lonely world,  
Bare-chested and homeless, she walks the streets  
And wonders what she has become,  
And wishes that she could dress in nothing but sea-shells,  
And the whispers of men lost forever into the sea,  
Taken from the quivering closet above the waves,  
Becoming thoughts into her, like light finally reaching  
Her from such great distances, thoughts she has always  
Known and spent prayers for like a seafaring nun these nights  
Upon the suppliant shore where her mind come undone  
With the wilting of the day; Here, naked and reborn,  
She no longer masks herself for the holiday of the dead;  
She has become that costume, her earliest wish;  
Eyes closed to trust, she reaches forward for a salty kiss  
The curtained sea gives; Likewise, the night lays her body down,  
Making love to both the woman and the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Skeleton's Toothache

Fools on the battlefield pronounce rain,  
While no one reads nor calls, though outside  
Little boys as blond as rays lead cuckolded vagabonds  
On the canal so slow,  
Though her eyes lay down in middle afternoon,  
The text on her breast like a stymied bee,  
The areolas twin gardens snoring, raise like the hinges  
Of a bridge, her rib-cage the tresses to a lavender instrument,

My eyes so full of scars I see out from natural disaster:  
There, lovers are high in cars in between work,  
And the sea like furrows in unquenchable being  
Young men go down to still in high school, get stoned  
And float with the subconscious salt, every bit  
Their mother's womb,

Out of class: dated, when her eyes fell away from the  
Next line, and the television lost reception,  
Her older sister quite nude juxtaposed with the swimming  
Pool, legs resting game. I couldn't tell you how it goes, except that there  
Are avenues in full blow, strolling nature a theme park,  
And cars filling up the desert her fingers trail across,  
Fingerprints habitats of exhibit with nail polished shells....

When I had a girlfriend for two weeks, she  
Was interested a decade ago, and I ate lunch with her  
In the same school, but she didn't know the lull,  
How I see her sleeping in the gutter of the garden, each word  
Imposing my smell on her doorstep, but where is she?  
Let things play out for I keep my heart in the hollow  
Of a tree of clichés hoping to be rich,  
And little girls swing majestically in a chorus line with  
Angels leaping from the greenness of the mowed ditch.

Robert Rorabeck

# Skies Of The Like Of Naked Prom Queens

Passing by the window a sudden thing,  
Thoughts made forever out in the sudden rain—  
A paramour of lilacs destroyed  
By dragonflies—  
Themselves matted down unto their thighs:  
Where they lie like jewelry beside the sudden  
Highway—  
Sky explodes on the Fourth of July—  
As if the beauty was looking my way, underneath  
The tent of a fictitious daydream—  
Ants curling up from the cul-de-sacs where I guess  
They have their dreams—  
The virgin in the vision of each of their ruby  
Abdomens—  
A fruit plucked from the tree, the first evil  
Of her second cousins—  
And in trailer parks a long way off from space:  
They nod their head,  
They watch the weekend's afternoon's race—  
And then they close their eyes—  
Special vision given to them like  
Pies given to a heaven of flies—  
And sleeping wolves beckon, howling from  
The valleys no one has ever seen—  
With cliffs of nude opal  
Beneath skies of the like of naked prom queens.

Robert Rorabeck

## Skin And Bone

Red crafts in outer space,  
Or underneath the canopy of apple orchards:  
The mountains looking on like  
Overbearing mothers:  
As the train whistles through the pass of  
Travelers who no longer travel there anymore:  
Windows without space-  
Greenness and blueness without breath or wings,  
Ribbons entwined in the tail of  
A once pretty horse that is now little more  
Than skin and bone.

Robert Rorabeck



## Skin Of Amber: Skin Of Honey

Delusions of sawhorses who no what you are:  
You make love in the park as your day  
Transcends even housewives  
In a chrysalis of metamorphosis-  
Their yards as pretty as dresses  
Thinking nothing of makebelieve  
But going down to sleep  
Across the easement of the canal;  
The day transcending, growing even more  
Beautiful:  
Flowers are being sold;  
Planes are in the sky,  
And you are home again:  
Skin of amber,  
Skin of honey,  
And I sing to you from my little yard:  
A cardinal, a grasshopper eager to make  
Love  
To the cook-fire again, just to make sure  
He is not dreaming.

Robert Rorabeck

# Skipping

Buried in the beautiful fountain  
Betwixt all the chalk and the laughing black  
Men, fawning and clapping  
On their merry streets- the world is  
A wilting gazebo about you, and I moved  
Nearer beneath the elbows of the trees  
Who weep over you,  
As black men tend to the stars- and your  
Lover lives in another cemetery across the  
Train tracks where deliveries are being made:  
And little girls are skipping rope,  
And a robin is singing.

Robert Rorabeck

## Skirts Of Stewardesses

Light falling through a keyhole as a voice  
That echoes of the airplanes it has passed—  
Under the skirts of stewardesses that  
I imagine smell like roses—  
Falling down through the highest bivouacs—  
And across where the boy scouts have fallen to  
Their deaths:  
Corpses in the green crops where the elk  
Have shed their antlers—  
Pick them up and it is like the sound of  
Katydids brushing against the bare naked mountains,  
Or another ululation for the plagiarists—  
Giving up all of their disingenuous gifts as if that  
Was all there was to give.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sky Full Of Scars

Defeated, sky full of scars,  
I waylay, find my empty love  
In nuclear contaminated bars:  
Oh what a game, won't you listen to  
Me, one of you busily pollinated sorority:  
Anyone,  
The girls in their sweet rows,  
I ask you, what is more beautiful than the  
Silence disseminated graveyard;  
And I just want to hold hands with you  
For awhile,  
Naked children out in the wilderness of sun,  
And read to you of the open book, the  
Places where we've never existed,  
The gardens we did not attend,  
The afternoons of swing pools and bottle-  
Rockets,  
The fawning air-enlightened corals the wind  
Creates the songs of anemones through;  
There is no cleverness, no special mystery to  
This thing; it is open, yet surreal, but in a  
Non-aggressive way, the truthful emptiness after  
The instructor has turned on all the lights again,  
The film explained, and all these things I have  
Attempted to parlay, just the awful shadows  
Of an imprisoned man who has nothing to  
Entertain himself except for the sick fancies  
Of your unrealistic boudoir.

Robert Rorabeck

# Slave Galley Of The Inland Empire

(Slave Galley :)

O-Oh-O, Cro-Magnon!  
Everyday under the same old sun!

O-Oh-O, Club my Wife,  
Take her back home and put her to the knife!

O-Oh-O, Oh My Lord,  
Repo-man came and stole my Ford!

O-Oh-O, Oh My Soul,  
The richer man's richer, but who pays the richer toll!

(Roman Captain :)

Row! ~ Row! ~ Everybody Row~!

O-Oh-O, Shut your Hole,  
You smack a lot of pie, but you still got to row! ~

O-Oh-O, Punctuates the Whip,  
Whoever don't row will be tossed off this ship!

O-Oh-O, Do as I Say,  
And we'll row right into the next break of day!

(Slave Galley :)

Row! ~ Row! ~ Everybody Row~

(Ship recedes past Sirens and Half- Sunken Christmas trees :)

Row! ~ Row! ~ Everybody Row~

O-Oh-O, We're all going to die,  
But at least we're out here under the unbroken sky!

Row! ~ Row! ~ Row! ~

Robert Rorabeck

# Slave To Baseball

The weather is brave but a slave to baseball,  
And I like that kind of weather for this  
Time of year,  
Because all the aspens are naked, opalescent  
And free of the charms of most birds  
And tourists-  
I can see you there ghostly presumptive,  
Making your free-form rounds;  
And it is beautiful to think of you disconnected  
From the corporeal sounds:  
And I wake up more disjointed- the dogs  
Have been howling all night,  
And I suppose I dreamed of your high-school-  
It's my greatest, most tremulous sin-  
Those dysfunctional adolescent currents still  
Ripple in my head,  
Searching for your illusive resins this way and  
That between classes,  
But in the here and now I develop new obtrusive  
Scars and aren't you well-situated,  
Tucked in for the coming months- and Mike  
Is here,  
And soon I will be even further down selling  
Christmas trees through those sultry paths,  
Even further away- I can't but doubt you could  
Hardly remember or even begin to understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sleepers In The Valley

Defeated men lurching on their backs,  
Indigos flies mining the protuberances,  
Lining the sink holes  
Nonchalantly  
The grasses in interludes of sunlight  
Caracols their faces,  
A little girl of wind the dear bird,  
Flutters coffins in the air,  
The very air a sound tomb,  
A glass box unknown to other kinds:  
An office of nature's industrious  
Metamorphosis,  
Recalling things in catalogues of  
Heat, strobing amidst the ushering forest.  
All in elements of industrious  
Husbandry, the fermenting soldiers  
Sinking into the green sheets,  
Each blade waving like the sea,  
The flagrant sun stroking and dabbing  
Every lock,  
The little birds bobbing to and fro,  
Siphoning  
As if these were flowers,  
As far a field regaled in crimson,  
The bugle's trilling calls more men to dinner.

Robert Rorabeck



# Sleeping

You kissed me like wax burning  
Like something on a religious holiday;  
And I looked up through the power lines,  
And the jaundice cracks in the plastered sky-  
I loved you there:  
Open mouthed, horny: you were easiest to love,  
Even with your stapled god,  
Even with those things in your eyes, and your toenails  
Painted for Christmas:  
And then your children started crying, and you heard  
Them like a superhero, and you flew away home,  
Home across the Everglades of so many sunken planets:  
You didn't even stop to consider to romance the  
Drowned stewardesses:  
You just leapt and leapt and kept on leaping like a pillow  
Thrown willfully by a preschooler yet perceiving he can  
Fly:  
Like I did: Maybe it was my very childhood that kept you  
Flying, like a paper airplane caught and thrown by my  
Deft hand perpetually; and maybe tomorrow I will hang myself,  
And you will finally come down,  
Your engines busted, your arms steamy: What will you have  
To say for yourself, pigeon-holed, now that your artist who  
Amused you should be sleeping,  
Sleeping.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sleeping Afterschool Against The Playgrounds

I killed myself and now mom is counting  
Her money;  
And we sell hibiscus, and we almost died;  
And I wonder how long she will last forever,  
Or if the third sphinx will freeze her,  
Or if Diana really loves me:  
If Diana really loves me, I can compete:  
I can go on forever, with a really deep voice,  
I can get wet and baptize in the river,  
I can hold out and await for the reinforcements,  
Wait for the eagles and the pomegranates to douse  
My fires,  
And I can hold out, or I can live forever, like  
Really old books spread like mariposas next to the  
Campfire;  
Or if I am just for the mouth of tourists, I can dry out  
Myself, and after they have gone, find my own way home;  
Because my dogs really love me, and after everyone has  
Gone then the valleys bud really beautiful:  
They bud really beautiful, don't you know, and the earthquakes  
Come really silently; they come really silently on tiptoes,  
Don't you know,  
And the weeks last forever, or it lasts All week don't  
You know; and I love you, or I have already loved you forever,  
Sleeping after school against the playgrounds,  
If you didn't already know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sleeping Beauties

The more beautiful woman they are,  
The less they could care about my job:  
That I haven't been published in  
The Atlantic Monthly,  
Or that I can't see the ocean from where  
I live-  
The better they look in perky angora,  
The twin mammalian confections where  
Rome was founded,  
The more likely they are to go to the movies  
Alone,  
Whose beautiful eyes kill like Superman,  
Who only feel lonesome and vulnerable when  
At the beach underneath the watchtowers  
Sporting Herculean life-guards;  
And it doesn't matter that in a few words  
I could paint their naked bodies orange,  
From tit to toe, bloom them an orchard,  
Use my tongue to paint in the highways  
And stamp the landing pads:  
That I could hold up entire cities and lead them through  
Each summer until the flowers wilt and they slept  
In voyeuristic tombs down past the diamond minds  
In little sweltering glades  
Where seven or so alligators croaked and ululated;  
That I could tear up entire novels dedicated to the  
Perfect indentation of their upper lip,  
Or that I live my life alone just for them sweltering  
With my dogs well past midnight while the working  
Traffic never quits:  
And I put down needful things like a grocery list  
Every ebony part of them included,  
Girls in shopping malls and drive-thru windows,  
Secretaries, swinging with lovely hips  
Like censers amusing themselves behind stained glass,  
And the little things they only pretend to know  
In the quiet foreplays for holidays just for them;  
And all this panting just to get to the bottom floor  
At the end of our shifts,

And she doesn't even wait, or reconsider,  
But leaves straight off to get naked and pose  
In a giant glass of blushing Chablis,  
Or maybe to smoke alone in a sepia wonderland  
With the other nocturnal creatures well-  
After the motorboats and weekend professors have  
Gone to bed off the lake,  
And she has nothing else to say about it,  
Her eyes so wonderfully apathetic and so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sleeping Beauty

And so these sad words moan  
And continue on.  
When they are not pouting  
On a park bench  
Alongside other tourists  
Shopping for love in  
Paris, France,  
When they are in secret  
Lonely bedrooms  
For some long years now  
Hoping for another chance,  
Then they let their tongue  
Escape like Jean Valjean  
From the prison of thought  
And in front of a mirror,  
A lake in winter,  
They set words free  
Like sending off doves into  
The city:  
The swirling streets and  
People walking  
Far down beneath him,  
Carrying each a personal meaning  
Waywardly from  
Places of incommunicative rest.  
At their best,  
They display their flighty  
Features along the road  
Like storefronts:  
This is the necessary marketplace  
From where our children appear  
Screaming until  
They are placated by the  
Young mother's breast.  
There she is,  
Walking everyday outside your window:  
The sleeping beauty,  
The girl you once knew  
In whose form you find your dreams,

Whose eyes you cry out to  
Involuntary in the lightless hours,  
Who you reach out to,  
The banks of flickering light  
Your prayers rest under.  
But she is not yours.  
Forever distant,  
She is the fleeting thing who  
Routinely migrates  
Into and out of her husband's arms,  
The man you cannot be,  
The goodly working man,  
Unafraid, he provides:  
Sleeps next to her:  
A mooring post of limbs of flesh  
She ties to in the storm,  
And though out on the street  
In the open living light,  
She might appear free  
And from your window,  
Secluded, you would sing to her  
These words who like good soldiers  
Protect you and keep you  
Drunk in fraternal company,  
She is not actually in your world,  
Though her body comes this way.  
Upon her breasts her children suckle,  
And tiny finger's splay on the  
Valleys at her throat,  
Her soul has disappeared into him  
Whom she quietly sings:  
These words from her lips,  
Her tended gardens pollinate not for you  
And if her eyes fall upon you  
It is only because you are now  
Sharing the hapless void:  
Doing time in a high school classroom,  
Passing on the street,  
Shopping for necessities  
Along the glowing Mercado.  
She cannot help but pass by you,  
Her starry children following like

Goslings in a lake where  
Maple leaves are falling.  
She is in her beautiful trance  
From which she will not leave.  
You've had her chance,  
And were mute when she would  
Have received your words into her  
Like a door to door salesman  
Showing your wares,  
The goods you would have  
Provided for her.  
Now,  
Locked away by his kisses,  
Her belly producing from the  
Labors of a fertile god,  
Her soul saturnine and restive,  
She goes her way,  
Leaving you crowded in the distant herd  
And to walk alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sleeping Children

The meadows are filled with sleeping children:  
Whom else would they be filled with,  
I don't know:  
I make footprints high up in the snow, even when I  
Am not even there,  
And I think of you, Alma, laid down in your brown  
Skin like a bible from Mexico;  
And I wish that I could stop writing about you, but  
I just don't know what else I would do:  
But I know that by tomorrow the cars will be  
Waking up again,  
And the entire world will rise, and the mothers  
Will kiss their babies,  
And the stewardesses will show some thighs:  
And I will dream of you coming to in  
This world again,  
Alma: it is the only the that it is, and it isn't even real.

Robert Rorabeck



# Sleepless Highway

When I die,  
I shall haunt my grave waiting for you to come around,  
Just so I can possess you from the suffocating dirt;  
If I should see you walking through the plastic flora  
In tin torches,

But for as long as you are alive,  
You are yet mindful of honoring my pain, and forgetting such engagements,  
You should never show;  
The closest you get is the busy highway where your eyes do not  
Reveal,  
The destinations of your cropped photos,  
And I am left with the breathless torment in which  
I reside,  
Pining in a box of morbid joy for a woman and time  
Which never exists;

Just as the easy highway ebbs and flows from  
The prior engagements of likewise-souls....  
The living who roam the torrential tomorrow,  
Sleeping in beds they have yet to earn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sleepless States Of America

I am good  
When the liquor is 70% proof  
And Wild Bill fires his guns into the belly of  
Insouciant stars,  
And that is enough,  
Because this poem is as good as paper burning,  
Or the way cut flowers look good for a week on her  
Table nearly three years ago because she began  
Listening to his music, and making love to him,  
And thinking about me in the early morning dreams of  
Black bears who eat their breakfast smeared off her breasts:  
And, because I am only halfway there,  
This is not Walt Whitman,  
And this ain't even great American poetry,  
But the rote memorization of a cheeseburger, or a sand dollar  
Bikini she should be wearing in my imagination,  
Because if you look at me straight in the eyes,  
You who work the deepest nights in the brightest  
Holes for minimum wage,  
You who sell us the wealth of Iran,  
You must see that I am not only old enough,  
But wise enough, though passing homely through your store  
With my dirty baseball cap on denoting I am only a worker,  
And wishing for just what I can afford,  
The liquors like the breast milk you fed your children  
I now buy from you, and later on down the road  
A home and a bed for my dogs and to make love in  
To strange young women who can never see me  
Who also work in brightly lit stores  
In strip malls like long knotted coffins all up and down  
These great and sleepless states of America.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sleepy Weathervanes

Beautiful frogs are farting in  
Beds of droopy chrysanthemums.  
Chartreuse and poisonous, they are waiting  
For her sombulent march, to cling to  
Her like wet paper and exterior fetuses,  
To steal her dreams through her ankles and  
Calves of the undistinguished prince who  
Is even now flying a passenger jet over those  
Stringy gardens, unbeknown in his azure flight suit,  
His eyes pestered by foul weather banks,  
And the freshly painted flirtations of the perky stewardess,  
That his love is even now fathoms beneath him,  
Her feet stealing the soil for roses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Slipping Away

You can save me, and all of this voodoo:  
While the body pills,  
And while we wait for ourselves to holdover,  
And some sommelier sells Icecream  
In Colorado underneath all of those nosebleed summits  
That I've already surmounted,  
And while all of it goes away, slipping away like  
Woebegone sailors across the sea-  
And the Christmas tree lumbers, pill boxing:  
The train around it sleuthing, cantankerous, spellbound:  
While a lummoX in the clouds spills into his  
Britches, and then pitches a tent;  
And across the rest of the country, the other side of the  
Mississippi is defiled, and the negroes and  
The harpies light off fireworks,  
While otherwise I am alone,  
And counting by my primary numbers, colorful and  
Fluttering-  
And up until then it doesn't even have to spell, while  
Drinks spill over at their bars, and the muses that they have  
Known turn into dryads and naiads and slip into the  
Forests and the seas themselves-  
And slip- and slip away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Slowly Toward The Sky

My body aches from end to end-  
Where is she going,  
I suppose from elementary to high school  
Is her end:  
As she pledges allegiance to the flag  
Every morning—  
In her equalized standards—what will  
She go home thinking:  
What has she learned—is this the Harlem  
Renaissance—  
Is this her last amen?  
And if this is just an echo of the final  
School bus she takes to school,  
Then she will think nothing of  
That echo—  
Even as if she were an alligator who learned  
To cry,  
The foxes creeping slowly toward the  
Vineyards,  
The airplanes creeping slowly toward the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Smelling Salts Of Another Sea

Chimney sweeps in youthful fugue-  
The dusking sky of hot air balloons, your pale  
Brown  
Complacent eyes-  
Your pale brown complacent eyes,  
With his risky macho hand on your pale  
Brown complacent thigh-  
Cumulous accumulating straight up through the  
Unbanishable skies:  
Watching football, alligators like pets at sandaled  
Feet;  
If this is what you are doing now, you can never love:  
How can you love  
With your eyes behind sunglasses:  
How can you ever love when you've always been  
Too beautiful; and this must be the fiend himself-  
And aren't you so assured behind the wheel;  
And the watering hole is poisonous  
And full of dead princes you've transformed one time  
Or another,  
Kissing them as your color changes- as your color  
Changes after work- I can't tell you your dreams-  
You've told me, and I know-  
I hung my guardian angel in the rainstorm,  
So I know- to keep coming down your way without  
A sword or a good luck candle-  
I no longer pray. I am passed out in the foyer when  
Over my shoulder they are serving hors de ordervs  
in bright soirée; and the three young boys  
Are in smiling fugue in the hot air balloon passed around  
By the ceiling fans-  
And your brown eyes are smiling or not smiling relaxing  
Either way complacent  
In front of the television watching your favorite football  
Teams  
With his hand on your brown knee;  
And either way your eyes were not for me;  
Past out underneath the crystal boats  
Right away, my nostrils suddenly

A flare, smelling salts of another sea.

Robert Rorabeck

## Smoke & Mirrors

Cedar smoke waifs from the chimney's throat;  
My father has stacked the wood in between phone  
Calls; he's try to make a deal,  
As my mother reads him the last book by Louie L'Amor,

The grounds are frozen for the first time this year  
On the back of the buffalo where we homestead in Arizona,  
And I go outside to do the chores; I think a dozen  
Times how to start the phrases of my poem;  
But I have to do it, my only intercourse....  
Ice shoots every which way like gypsum, like  
Broken fingers at the bottom of empty water tanks.

I lift up the red hinge, opening the floodgate, and  
I watch them as they float, break off and mingle  
Like socializing icebergs, bragging about the Titanic,  
When it has been so long since I've waited in line  
For a table at TGI Friday's or Applebee's or any other  
Of the yuppie chains that populate the interstates of  
South Florida,

So far removed from the gambits of ex-lovers, now ex-partes,  
Sniveling for judges; they go to eat in warm little nooks everyday,  
Gossip over the reheated food, tip and pray;  
They do this with the disposable gestures of their routine;  
I think upon them as the lowest aspens sway  
By the earliest whispers of the mountain.  
The cold air makes my scars disappear for awhile;  
New scars, not the old ones which made her lose interest.  
Those are almost gone. This one I got last year  
Because I got too drunk selling fireworks off route 66.  
Now I lay down dryads in the books I write;  
I leave my chores undone, and lay with my allegories,  
They tell me things I like to hear,

Like a chorus of little girls who, conducted by the  
Northerly winds, sing from each trunk in the forest,  
As the harts gambol over the fallen leaves.





# Snacking On Peanuts

Grandpa forehead, pronounce me to the  
Grinning clock: Its past dinner time.  
The papers are getting wet around the storming  
Block,  
Alligators are blowing lascivious bubbles  
Between cavalier teeth: What have they done  
To the girls this Easter- the little forget-me-nots,  
But put them to bed so deep you'll never change  
Your mind.  
The reaper is a grim guest at the battlefield of  
Middle-age- He harvests the implanted souls  
Right out of the swimming-pooled cage:  
He'll make your best friend's older sister just remember  
Your insouciant obsessions with her after-school  
Tanning,  
As in the park the truant hummingbirds are feeding  
The imposition of the oracular swings, to newer younger  
Kids smoking newer younger things:  
And the sun leads you out like an old teacher, trying to  
Tell you that it isn't that bad-  
That you struck out, and now the field is over  
Grown and home to centipedes and scorpions;  
How in the carnivals of January you had your amusements  
The best you ever had;  
And everyone is in the same boat stuck up in the slash  
Pine trees from the flood,  
The expensive vans like discombobulated terrapin  
Belly up- Now how will they eat the flowers of their  
Rituals, or even snack on the happenstance of national  
Principle;  
But you can lie down gray-headed in the fjord, defeated by  
The monsters of your lord;  
And it will be a long way down- twice as long as it was up,  
But there are girls you can dream about while  
Holding your breath, a snack of peanuts, even if they're still too expensive  
To afford.

Robert Rorabeck

# Snow Haiku

Maybe the snow that  
Melts in your yard comes to  
Me as rain, as tears.

Robert Rorabeck

# Snowfalls

The snow falls like confection; it falls all day,  
And slows us down like love scenes,  
Or duelists crossing swords:  
It blankets the horses and turns my hair gray:  
Such snow, so much, where does it come from  
But the sky, concealing the way tardy birds should  
Migrate. For its too late for their wedding day,  
But let them eat this cake, this building up of weather,  
The hoariness of more loss, the irony that it is coming to fruition,  
Over the palms of immaculate hands,  
Over her lips like gloss: Fields and fields of snow,  
Turning, as if an overturned globe, all men white,  
So they might now all sing and get the best trophy wife;  
But such weather cannot last, and when the sun jumps up  
It will be revealed, the scars on my chest, the crack windshield:  
But what really will be lost but the weather, which turns around  
Again: kids go back to school, but this is the end.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Amputated In The Black And White Of An Out Of Date Newspaper

I can't use a dime to call you anymore,  
So I look at you red-eyed in photographs,  
And your face looks like the tanned rainstorm of  
A pretty girl's misplaced secret desires.  
Why are you so sad, Erin- Is it because you are  
The last of your kind, and everyone else has failed  
You. Aliens in their garden of hotdogs and baseball  
Parks- Then you are like me, oh sad thing,  
What a vermilion holocaust you give the dusk  
When you stand out in your front yard flaunting like  
A tenebrous ornament for the homeless black men,  
Or whoever else comes around,  
As the wayward misfits of your neighborhood are  
Always courting the comfortable sound of your  
Doorbells-  
But you don't read me anymore, because last time  
You thought of me, it was by a different name; and  
I don't know who you love even though seven years  
Ago I used to jog around you hoping to soup up some  
Kind of homeopathic love potion; and even again,  
Later on in a month or two I might be selling things for  
Holidays around your old neighborhood, but I wouldn't  
Think to call you, because you wouldn't love me  
How I look so amputated in the black and white of an  
Out of date newspaper- My body is not for you, but  
For the lips of a coffin which must disembark from my  
Favorite canal at the edge of the smoking glades,  
Though if you would come out for me then and cheer me  
On with a few beers, and a chorus of chin chin,  
It would make for a better ending to this sad young thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Beautiful

People have been stealing  
Shopping carts to coral reef  
Canals-  
I don't really care when it's  
So hard to breathe-  
Go ahead and bust his lips  
With your undecipherable  
Dreams;  
Bake him a ruthless cake with  
Tooth and nail-  
This is all I am: I have a truck  
With 500,000 miles-  
I have impenetrable scars on what  
Used to be the good side of  
My face-  
I'll live and sell produce between  
Two beautiful women who  
Don't even know I am here.  
They are like two simultaneous airplanes  
Forever leaping against the sky-  
Silver gills impossible to hypnotize.  
Even now when I can't see them  
They are  
So beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Beautiful And Perfectly Content

Happening again through the truths of the brown  
Reservoirs of your mouth,  
Held back by those lips who only tell me how you  
Feel when we are in perfect darkness,  
Entranced by the rhythms we put there: but up again,  
Sliding out of his wake like a mourning rib,  
You put your children into your car and drive them to  
School,  
Off beside the tiny houses which hold at least  
Ten Mexicans each,  
And I can see you sisters trying on each others' clothes  
Through the unclean windows,  
While the waves move even then out of reach;  
As you come toward me, all awake in the daydreams that  
Take you away from me even as you come nearer.  
Maybe I will see you tomorrow, if it doesn't rain,  
And you will be wearing all of the white gold I have given  
To you, like the tinsel and monuments of my pitiful  
Soul hung like the entrails of a rapturous kill  
All down the brown stems of your body,  
As you lullaby like the tide in rhapsody, so beautiful  
And perfectly content, never having to feel what it is  
That you are doing.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Beautiful To Be

I really had a hard time leaving school  
The mountains were so long and water colored,  
And I could never be a lawyer,  
Crawling up their jaws and lay spit:  
But thank god for the depression and the depressions that are  
All to come,  
Because it has given to me the greater girth of fertility unto  
Which to lay my seed:  
And maybe I will never be immortal, or beautiful;  
Maybe I will never even be,  
And the sun goes up and the world turns round,  
And the performers crawl up to perform in their solitude  
But better lit above the ground;  
And I have waited so long to sing to you all of my praises,  
To wake for you and shoo off the rattlesnakes through the daises:  
And I still wish I had been down with you to the bottom of  
The grand canyon three times with you,  
Alma, because that is how many times I have been down for me;  
And the clouds curl,  
And the bodies proceed, except for you Alma:  
You are always here, and my liquor is almost done:  
The lateness of my work is almost done, and I live in a beautiful house:  
It is your house now, Alma, and soon I will leave it to sell  
Fireworks alone again in New Mexico,  
And I wish that you were coming with me:  
Alma, come with me,  
And we will leap over the graveyards together, and we will paint  
Our names together under the harelips in the overpasses of rainstorms;  
And it will be so beautiful to be.

Robert Rorabeck



# So Dangerously Beautiful

This is just dumb truth:

Australian pines have no roots, and I don't

Have you:

Used to bicycle all in summer back and forth

While the lions roar,

While the teachers taught their stuff,

I had no muse but the whore;

I went back behind her house and in her canal

Reticulated,

Masturbated in her stuff and thus was marmaladed;

And the canal went a ways back and dissected

The hemisphere,

And I always thought of the edge of the world as

That torpid green ribbon;

And now I am not a success, and yet I still have

Plenty of money for my dear;

And I want to buy somebody flowers. I want to

Climb high enough to feed the giraffes:

I want to ride the Ferris Wheel up to your extremely

Junoesque neck where you've been practicing,

All the way up to show you how butch I am,

Flexing my sailors anchors two by two

Where your eyes are emoting like chimps at a zoo,

And make real good love to myself in the open

Spaces before their senses,

Because they are so wide and bright like the minds of

Elephants that I could hardly think they would find

Room to move;

And anyways would I be as luxurious as white mice

Scavenging at a carnival, telling her she was so

Dangerously beautiful,

Making her too scared to move.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Faithfully Have Strayed

A casual touch to be the end of me, like the purring of  
A ghost:  
I carried your cigarettes to the cemetery, and you were  
The most utmost;  
But you could not linger in my dally,  
Weren't your eyes made of far away:  
Weren't they just as newly painted as the happenstance of  
An all of a sudden story,  
And I will not say your name to save me:  
My joy was the joy of a firework making for a moment  
The curb brilliant,  
Making even the most religious of mailmen hesitate:  
All of these colors foaming and sizzling down into your  
Hot plate;  
And this was just you out there in the outstanding cold,  
Lost for a little while pressed to the jubilee of a needy child at  
His favorite game:  
Hot and wild, until my paper flamed and curled,  
And all that I loved darkened and mewed to you, which made  
You realize that I wasn't your favorite,  
And that this wasn't even real, and that you had a home,  
And a father whose warmth was even more certain than the empty  
Darkness to which you  
No longer linger, from which you so faithfully have strayed.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Far Above The Equator

Our bodies wake up from the pressing conflagrations of  
Fathers and mothers;  
At first we have so many needs, but then we wish that we were not  
Here;  
Because we have seen you slipping on your sweet belly through  
The weeds:  
You all but stuck your tongue out at us and hissed, and then  
Went off following his footprints:  
Are his father and mother better than ours? We bought a house for  
You on your birthday:  
A yellow house with flowers, and we apologize for being born  
So far above the equator our skin is so pale and sickly  
Compared to yours;  
Or was it just that his father and mother knew how to work their  
Fires better than ours.

Robert Rorabeck

## So Far From The Sea

My dog licks his forepaws,  
Imagining I am as kind as a god of few colors,  
As I want to write a book that is a kaleidoscope.  
Down the roads of many ways,  
Many animals,  
Sweating, basking, giving birth—  
And in the bigger zoos, Ferris wheels who are  
All grown up,  
Waiting just to turn around for the hands  
Of another tourist,  
Like a naked girl behind some glass:  
And all of this,  
The sleeping schools  
And discombobulated housewives,  
Like a valley of windmills turning amidst  
A stony vineyard in Greece—  
All of it a tangle like an unpublishable tale  
Too close and yet so far from the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Far Into Your Mother's Language

Sorry that I am imperfect and little known,  
Sorry that we never meant and at least embraced between the  
Forgotten classes we were misaligned towards:  
Sweet Alma: we never shared lockers nearby where we were told  
To walk in a line,  
Though your sisters now go to high school just south of here;  
And I have walked so far, drunkenly, to sleep atop a roof that  
Almost touched yours;  
As I found you again today- I brought you lunch, just like  
You beckoned me, and I told you about the tattoo I dreamed of  
Wanting;  
And you said it would just be simpler if I got a picture of your  
Face on my one good arm,  
And the Virginsita or my mother on the other; and when I awaken  
Tomorrow,  
I will wait for you by the firelight of another same old day;  
And I will pray for you in my same my inconspicuous way, muse of  
My suburban grottos, until you come again to me:  
And we sing together and make love underneath all the stars we  
Can never reach,  
Their roofs turning too far above our yawning heads; and then you  
Will say to me something so quietly and so far into your mother's  
Language that I can never even be sure if I even truly heard.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Fondly

I stole things from kindergarten to fill my  
Pockets with:  
I stole things from pretty girls at nap time, and pulled  
Up wishes from the sherbet rug:  
I brought flowers for Danielle in second grade:  
I masturbated on the green carpet too for which my  
Father paid:  
And the land burned with sugar cane, and the girls I took  
For muses touched their imperfect flesh in the paper  
Snow,  
And we grew taller and tipped over the glass,  
And looked down the mewling jaws of the lion too insouciant  
To jump through the hoops of flame:  
The pretty damsels tasseled there just as tired and nodding  
Off,  
Thinking only of how the mowed grass would feel on their  
Bare feet,  
Or on the forts looking down to the love making sea:  
The way the Mexican tourists remember the Alamo:  
Like in the water parks of my love  
Taking her stuff off before she has to go home pregnant and  
Embarrassed to be harassed by the hard noises of  
Trailer parks:  
So fond- so fondly.

Robert Rorabeck

## So Little Faith

You've said you've read my poems every night,  
But your mouth was dry for  
A man with a guitar or anchors on his  
Muscles,  
While the things I've grown went out and got  
A job,  
And still bloomed sickly that way:  
And you said, yes, you were thankful to get  
The love letters in the mailbox,  
And during the beginning stages of your last  
Transcendental relationship  
You might even have been confused:  
You have so many friends and so much booze,  
Its easy for you to fall in love with anyone  
Just because I suppose you have so little  
Faith in me to lose.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Long, Long Ago

And I will sing into the heirloom of a lip  
That doesn't matter—taking off into a bedroom  
Of the beautiful Barbie dolls that don't  
Have to swear for shooting themselves:  
Yes, unfortunately—there will be another tomorrow—  
And all of that stuff—and I don't even suppose  
That you will be able to remember the cold  
Memories of the spiders and danced and danced  
Forever towards you—lifting their  
Legs and swearing and cursing whilst even then  
Making a mockery of the circus-  
Even as it flat-lined—even as there was no  
Memory: dancing, and dancing with crocodiles,  
Which was its forever fanfair—  
Within a mile of whatever it believed in—  
While the housewives counted their numbers to  
The snows—and then, for whatever reason-  
There was no further memory—or there  
Was just snow storms that built up whatever to  
Nowhere—blowing their bubbles forever to  
Someone I loved so long, long ago.

Robert Rorabeck



# So Many Bouquets

Trying to change and drinking liquor  
Until there is a kindergarten and the dogs don't  
Have to come out  
And I have a book published at Harvard,  
But I am still drinking the albino  
Rum from Haiti,  
And trying to fill in my coloring book of a  
Fabulous mouth,  
Hoping to never mind the famishing venomous  
Mouth pieces of the little children of Satan  
Who surround me,  
Even while the high steps of Bellefontaine Cemetery  
Are unevenly if forever crowded,  
And this is a new cloud to cross the sunshine:  
A new reason to outstand the vanishing carports  
Of the rodeo that was supposed to  
Culminate before the fire of the beehives: my art  
Through the rain soaked cul-de-sacs of something else  
The establishment will never stand for:  
That I love you: that I love you, but in my hand  
My fingers can only hold so many bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Copper Presidents

Even now the bodies burn with the deeper gentrifications  
Of my new neighborhood:  
Girls are looking gooder than good, as newer than new girls  
Should:  
Dark and saturnine girls skipping down the street and beside  
Their hips' sway the model cops model ships  
Shooting of quips of bottle rockets very quickly:  
And Erin was in the sky today:  
Who did Erin kiss today, and what was her favorite color of  
Car today: How did she move today? Did she even think of  
How she moved North of Disney World,  
When I am south of that sweetly mentioned catastrophe:  
And I imagine how big gold fish can get:  
The can get as big as Erin, as big as my venal muse:  
They can devour entire cities worth of wishes, and then they can  
Go down sleeping with their paled bellies fat off the  
Heads of so many copper presidents.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Dazzling Layers

All day long in a glass boat  
Of worries,  
You can see right through my scars,  
Like the belly of a shucked serpent  
Deflowered by ants,  
The rind of a man flung down from  
A ski lift,  
Lost in the slopes of some jovial tourism,  
The busty blonds and their accoutrements  
Rippling banally,  
Chatting it up with rosy,  
Displacing lips,  
All their makeup and spangles rippling  
Like sick leaves in  
A fast car jungle:  
But don't you see that the mountain is  
Silent,  
Holding so many dead things, so many half  
Evolved meals,  
And lying there underneath the blue and  
Awful banner  
Where the trees yet go unmolested where  
Philosophy still has a chance  
To resound in sort of a penal and triumphant  
Whisper,  
Impotently like the sweet voiced castrati  
That I love you in a park of floating  
Doom,  
And you can see me right to the bottom and  
All the gold fish I've won for you  
The empirically unobtainable prizes floating  
Like the wounds of snow  
Covering up the more beautiful beasts underneath  
The so many dazzling layers of her more  
Zealous eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Green Talismans

Now at home with your children- who are stranded  
Like tigers through the palmettos;  
Leaving me just the old cenotaph of a cicada on the nape of  
A cypress:  
Maybe one which was brushed by a conquistador while in the middle  
Of taking an Indian princess:  
Alma- and the colors of your flag are as verdant as I have seen  
Pictures of you in a dress  
At your sister's communion; and by tomorrow I will not have  
To say these things to you at all:  
I will just look at you as bashfully as a freshman thrown into  
A wide opened ballroom;  
And very soon I wont even have to be there at all:  
And you will forget me like a fire after it is done with its handy work,  
Stroking itself back to its home and children,  
Going out at night in the uncanny worship of all the soft walls of  
Department stores,  
Never even realizing that I am right here, unbounded with the  
Metamorphosis of a knight protected by so many green talismans,  
And always up in the morning before anyone,  
And painting the walls of his house with your favorite colors.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Harmless Stories

Now we sang of the infinite yards: and now this:

And now this:

The way I sometimes still see my own mother inside the blue carport

Getting undressed and electrocuted:

They way sometimes too I wished that I knew my own

Words:

Like a self aware mocking bird, and the songs that I give again

To you- to you, like a sophisticated if inebriated fantasies

Up the three stories of the galleries of my fantasies

That I walked with you today:

Alma, on our Tuesday of today: while last time we held tennis and

Then I carried you into a sea where you couldn't even swim,

And I kissed you, and held you underneath the teepees of the

Sun,

And all of her vanishing elements: while today we took my own

Car up and down Military Trail, and you told me that your man

Wasn't unkind to you,

But then I remember how he left you and Michael and went to

Mexico:

But he came back again; and again he is here:

But today he was in Orlando with Mickey Mouse, finishing his

Pools for over eager housewives,

And that was why you were right here; and you are either a good

Woman climbing my proverbial beanstalk or I am blind;

And even if I am blind, I still have so many harmless stories

In their homeless gardens left to sing for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Hidden Summers

The night has hidden all the cars,  
And my loneliness,  
But it has brought you out to haunt me  
Like subconscious planets suddenly  
Doused with the light of a realized sun.  
The shadows are so thick they are dancing  
In a penumbra of muggy clouds.  
The trees and the washing machines are  
Chivalrous,  
And even the rock garden has new haunts.  
The very sharp architecture on the roofs  
Of houses are delinquents,  
And the sky tastes of seashells.  
I am alone but not alone, and nothing but  
But nothing crawls like the tinder bird-like  
Hands of lovers along the plates of a  
Paper tree,  
While the tender red throats still show  
Slightly through crepuscule,  
While your name whispers like coolly rumors  
Way back in the parks of my silent  
Reanimating mind the very places you've  
Forgotten to wonder for so many hidden summers.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Lives But Not So Many Names

Late bloomers in the river  
Where your brother drowned;  
Water flowers, ballerinas of  
Corkless furry, and each girl loves  
A new man,  
Winnowing fingers spread like curtains  
Underneath the ceiling fans  
The perfect tributaries repose together  
In a sorority's cemetery,  
Across the canal where the eternal  
Garden smokes, crenellating like  
Water snakes the places beneath the billboards  
Where the living proceed through their  
Cars,  
But they cannot find me because I have skipped  
School;  
They are not even looking for me,  
As the cats slink through the hand smoothed stones,  
Laughing because they have so many lives  
But not so many names.

Robert Rorabeck

## So Many Melanies

Pains of the passionate void of so many Melanies:  
The passages of so many mute voices, homonyms for dragons  
And forget-me-nots; or anythings gathered together and shivering  
In cul-de-sacs or sweating out for so many birthdays;  
And when it comes around again, this birthday or the next  
4th of July, wont I be just as lonely,  
Calling you out from the sweet vintage of all that you have planted  
For yourself and your children and your man:  
And now I am very lonely, and I am just whom I am:  
This night divides; it is doing good math before it has to fly away,  
And Melanie is on her path: she is eating her forearm just so  
She doesn't have to confront the better toothed boys before she has  
To be all alone, into the water parks of her sweet amusement.  
Into the water fountains spitting over her still articulating bones;  
And this is how we hang up and get in touch with ourselves;  
And this is how the wolves sing,  
And this is just how I look drinking liquor and drawing swords straight  
Into the mirror of all of this loneliness.

Robert Rorabeck



# So Many Months Away From Home

Even though I am about to go to sleep,  
All of the souls of fireworks are in your eyes,  
But they are so easily spent—  
In the nights and the holidays underneath the  
Airplanes—  
And where does that leave us, taking off  
Without any view—  
I want your lips next to mine—telling me lies  
As the stewardesses daydream in the middle of  
A school day—  
They are almost all of the way to France,  
And they know nothing of your shoulders—of your  
Skin—of your scent—  
And my vocabulary is limited—and I am not  
Very good at baseball—but I have made love to you,  
And I have placed my bouquets in the shadows  
Of your doorsteps—  
And I am waiting now for you to step out  
To the silhouettes cast from the moonlight—and  
For you to pretend to me in love with me,  
Even though I am malformed studying in these colleges  
And you have become an apiary nearby the amusement  
Parks that are already so many months away from home.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many More Of Your Avenues

Alma, you didn't believe me when I told you that  
I really had a book,  
But I am so glad that you came over to visit me, and that the  
Rest of your family cannot read English,  
Because I dashed right away to the garage where I had a copy of  
My book and I brought it back in to impress you;  
And you kept on telling me not to touch you, but I touched you and  
You didn't leave:  
I thought you would leave right away, but you didn't leave;  
And I smelled you and I kissed you, and asked you if your husband knew  
How to treat you:  
Alma, I see you out there in so many waves: I think about you constantly,  
The figures your body makes like cars roller-skating in my head,  
So I don't even have to think of mountains anymore:  
I can just stay right here and think of nothing more than you:  
How I walked across West Palm Beach and slept near your house last night:  
That is why you came to visit me, so that I shouldn't be doing that anymore;  
But, Alma, I have only so many words in my vocabulary,  
And yet so many more of your avenues to explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Newly Awakened Amusements

Now it feels all like this: all so around the orangish corners  
Of another uncalled for canyon;  
And this is the way that the newly weds and the preschoolers  
Color in:  
The way the sunlight shines in your innocent eyes, like  
Otters making love across the shallow beds of the northeastern  
Estuaries,  
The way the star light streams across the semaphores of their  
Nocturnal beds  
Until something newer and brighter burns anew;  
And it feels alright by this, but it is yet to be proven:  
All of the mothers have their daughters who have their sons,  
Who have their flags and their favorite colors  
Riding out upon their steeds and looking to banish the windmills;  
As her lips breathe again the prenatal wishes of the birthday parties  
That I have made alright to feel for her;  
And this is all that was needed to feel alright; and it feels alright,  
Saturated like your soul's butterfly, Alma,  
Pressed and kissed to my lips all throughout today, even though  
I know that by tomorrow that there will be so many newly awakened  
Amusements that are yet to prove.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Pretty Girls

The greenness has no plans for defeat,  
So close to the sea  
While the blood is up  
And the bees are exploring madly  
Through the fumbling of words and feelings,  
The fire hydrants wait  
To exhume their bright  
Pressures  
For the forest fires of birthdays,  
And the airplanes leave to win,  
Panhandling to angels  
And stealing so many pretty girls.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Reasons

Up and down the subdivisions, this body feels warm:  
And these eyes have seen helicopters,  
And felt their midsummer swarm- they go underneath the erudite  
Moon like a tropical depression of primary colors:  
My dogs are in Arizona, but they can smell my blood,  
As I can smell the footsteps up the mountains in  
Colorado, as I can smell Alma across town in her bedroom  
Breathing beside Heidi and the only man  
She fears that she loves:  
But now what is she doing since her rabbits have disappeared,  
After they ate the one and only mango tree in her backyard;  
And her little brown body tells so many fairytales,  
Each of them truer to my ears than the next,  
And I haven't yet sat next to her absolute truth in a movie theatre,  
As I still don't know anything about the schemes of stanzas:  
And I have never bathed with Alma, or been on a plane with her;  
Which goes to show that there are still so many things  
Left to do in this life,  
And when I stare into the brown opulence of Alma's famished  
Eyes, I bite my teeth and swear that there are still so many reasons  
In which to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Seas

I envision you in the daylight of airplanes:  
While the prize worthy horses are making their rounds  
And all of the Mexicans are expelled from  
New Mexico:  
Just like this evening, on Christmas, I sat besides a girl  
From Boston who thought, according to my  
Baseball cap,  
That I was also a Mexican- and I almost fooled her,  
While my soul was in the clutches of the fox's jaws who'd  
Gotten into the chicken coop while I waited  
For you to get back home:  
Even though I could not see you, Alma- and even though  
It was not raining;  
It felt like I could, and it felt like it was- as the sensual ness  
Of your body lingered before me  
Like a manikin luring a blind man across the street  
Or into the clutches of an autumn lake-  
As I watched one crossing the street before my car again  
Today-  
As I was driving again somewhere without you-  
And then the aspens cried and shed their bows up atop  
The switchbacks of some autumn peak I guess you've  
Never seen, except when looking in the mirror:  
Alma-  
And then when looking away, my dogs howl, my sisters  
Return home across the lonely streets, lingering in the open moonlight  
For a sister whom I guess they will never have-  
As you return home, yourself, like the soft confines of your  
Grandfather's guitar- like a bastard stolen from Spain  
And thus sewn into the pitiless crops of some pagan continent  
Across so many seas and so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Things

Putting off here, pulling up into a park  
Of elbows and graveyards filled with grandmothers and  
The old axels of their swings:  
Trying to plant roses: roses, or anything:  
Just trying to make love, and to stay warm into the dark:  
As if this was your cabin  
And I was the spark- in a flambé way up in the erstwhile  
Resonations of those mountains,  
Where the wolves were reintroduced and you were never  
Coming down:  
Where the tourists flocked between your knees to drink  
Your desserts and  
Spirits and then to go a little further along their ways:  
To sleep in the narrow gage train cars between Silverton and  
Durango:  
To only go so far up the hill, god blessing the angels in the  
Pages of their billfolds- angelic spirits  
With the faces of the forefathers of old men bivouacked  
In spider webs, ham mocked beneath the sugary apertures of  
The stewardesses who, opened armed,  
Fly so far in the sanctions of their airplanes: that they travel  
All of the distances of the earth,  
Making love to so many gods, and learning how to spell so  
Many things.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Things That Need To Be Disproved

I have questions to fulfill about you:

How many men have you made love to in your life:

You made love to me on Monday until your husband called,

And you had to leave because you are his

Faithful wife,

Like the waves have to leave their imprints for the newly born

Jacobites and terrapins trundling on the shore:

Alma, you lost all of your rabbits to the neighbors

Dogs,

And I wonder how sad you are: I can remember when I was four

And the dog ate all of my rabbits in the rock garden of my innocent

Shore,

And my mother spared me the death: her labor in the carport

And aloes of lore;

But I am still trying to feel for you, like a kidnapped child,

Like a senseless tadpole:

I grew up around here, Alma, because I am so weak,

Because I am not macho, see how all of my cantos have fallen to

To your feet, to anoint you with frankincense and myrrh:

While I made love other women before you,

Like taking necessary sips of water, like praying to some flags,

But I am sorry that I have made love to anyone besides you- Alma,

Even while you cook dinner with your mother, both for your

Husbands in a kitchen on Cherry Lane:

And you don't like to go out into the sun, and that I can understand,

Because there are so many semblances underneath the sun,

So many things that need to be disproved, but of those I am not one.

Robert Rorabeck



# So Many Times

Parcels in the grass and parasols over canoes to save you  
From the shadow less sun as we go across the channel and caracole  
The island I once waded to on Easter:  
And you are not at my house right now, Alma:  
You are at your home across the ibex and green island fichus hedge rows:  
Across the sleeping airplanes and unicorns:  
Where I have made it so far by foot, drunkenly, swinging my laughing song,  
To sleep beside your three bedroom house with eight souls in side:  
Purer than any house of any white person,  
You personify the ghosts of fish who can never drown:  
You who are as ageless as the most ancestral of terrapin on my mind:  
I will cook and slave for you tomorrow;  
And maybe you are with child; and maybe this will be your home,  
And in time you can dry your close on the prayer flags of my banners,  
And wipe the sweat from your brow, finding the courage to tell me  
Just what I have fearlessly told you so many times.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Many Years Ago

Cigarette smoke undulating from my aunt's lips,  
And her boyfriend is coming down  
On a bus from Tennessee;  
And I am working so close to the smoking beach,  
But I haven't seen her in so long,  
And still I do not go:  
I want to be in Colorado secreted in the higher basins,  
The important key-holes where the tourists  
Are too weak to go;  
In fact, I want to summit mountains that have never  
Been,  
Or have no right to be- for her, or one of my great  
Great aught great forgotten grandmothers;  
And her name is- just this,  
Just a song happening in the night far to the east and  
Under her,  
Like a French man going down on a airplane,  
Like a frog making love to an inebriated princess who  
Just doesn't care;  
But that is all I have to say or even think about;  
It was the best I could do when trying to remember how  
You walked so tremulous and ecstatically real  
Your painted nails on your locker's combination,  
Your painted toes in soccer cleats  
So many classes, and forgotten generations so many years  
Ago.

Robert Rorabeck

## So Much Fun

I was robbed at gunpoint  
But I still will ride horses  
Around the acres of  
Night, of  
Sick conquistadors and  
Lonesome coelacanth,  
And something new is just  
Being grown underneath  
The graffiti of  
My desk,  
Either asparagus or  
Pale,  
Pale celery:  
And I have never had  
A brother to have had drowned  
In a river;  
And I do not have  
A living son,  
But the sun will come up  
Tomorrow,  
And this is so much fun.

Robert Rorabeck

## So Much Love

We are not taking it easy with the bottle:  
We are smelling like a hitchhiking artist that moves closer  
To the forests of Alma's bone structures;  
It makes things easier to cut away the unnecessary plots,  
Like Occam's razor along the ribs of a boneless shark  
As she sleeps dead center in the sunken  
Car ports:  
That this is love, Alma, and it means so much more to me  
That you never even made it up to college,  
That you didn't have to disappear that way into the specters  
Of the professions of the unreal,  
That I can still find you sweating perfectly and almost  
Naked out in the open fields:  
That you cannot even remember kindergarten or how you got  
Here,  
But looking into your eyes there is so much faith,  
And all of the arid bemusements of your land that knows the  
Witchcrafts of your ancestors and curses me with  
So much love.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Much More Than Anyone

When I look into the mirror,  
My skeleton grins, lopsided, preferring  
The left side: There are new scars like old men  
Getting along the cheek bones, molting, things  
Which draw the eyes of women who have gone  
Through puberty, who bleed monthly and like  
To climb atop successful men during that time:  
Sometimes I will look them in the eye, like dun  
Fires, like age-old misfits holding a blade between  
Themselves, and in this way turn them away,  
And drive them off me. I herd them up the cliffs where  
The clouds are hanging like heavy lace, like opera  
Singers expecting things for free. Anyway, cars  
Collide, but the finer elements pass right through them,  
And everyone moves away to help. The forecast is rain,  
But so far I've done so much more than anyone.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Much To Survive

Young felicity beaten in to a court outside my window:  
I have a hunch, she likes it when I buy her breakfast;  
But she doesn't like it when my pain  
Bares her name, like stains on a centerfold,  
Like the pornographies of rust in a junkyard beneath  
The forest:  
And the conquistadors slipped to the bone, and now  
Made the cenotaphs and entrails of  
Cumbrous lions, who ache, drooling and sequined  
From too much  
Meat and potatoes between their teeth until they  
Finally curl away to sleep with coral snakes suckling in  
Their harems:  
As I drive away, never looking back, as it looks  
As if I've been burned: the Christmas trees came in a week  
Before thanksgiving- and Alma called me for two minutes  
Today, singing a song about how every man  
Who came into the fruit market thought she was beautiful:  
But then she had to go and buy them all lunch:  
But she left still wearing my gold, and the swimming pool  
I dug for her and skipped school to watch  
The reflections of the sunlight ripple like blue gills from  
Her body leaving the tears of the playground I had  
Abandoned so much to complete:  
Until she had completely shed me too: and left weeping like  
Fire, or other things that need so much to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Near To Me

I make wishes I blow atop of esoteric houses,  
When I really shouldn't be here anymore,  
Lingering in the sad and particular wounds that my aunt  
Never should have read,  
Going up the stilled ladders even after all of the firemen  
Have come down,  
Speculating on the absences of those disasters,  
How they spilled out into the world discombobulated,  
As if sweetened roe from the backwards wombs of salmon:  
Now the teachers in their winsome chariots are congratulating one  
Another all across the sky,  
And the fireworks are leaping like hopeful foxes nipping at their  
Toes:  
The world is all well and green with the envious men holding their  
Breath under the gas tanks;  
But they are all feathered and tanned in their scars, and their  
Throats are filled with cheap alcohol, their tongues the matches,  
Their eyes a fire that keeps their senses from blindness:  
So soon there will come a show so bright that there  
Will be no further need to save the sailors from the sea,  
And we will both be together to see the end of it,  
Your body so far away, but so near to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Nice

Looking up words later on while  
The airplanes are touching down  
When they had no right to be in the sky  
In the first place without you;  
And I want to play baseball, and I haven't played  
Baseball in ever so long,  
But without you what good is a game; and your  
Name isn't Dorothy,  
But I would like to go to OZ with you all the same,  
Just to be your dog or your scarecrow,  
But my heart- it is thoroughly attached by the crossbeams  
Of the great rafters you will forever be serving  
Your sweet beverages under: You sell soda pop,  
And look at your eyes,  
The bridge between them the conjunction of two beautiful  
Sisters swimming synchronized,  
Looking out for the places you are going, and serving as  
The corridors by which your memory recalls the places you  
Have been;  
And I think your senses are really something,  
The mathematics by which I might have you around me,  
Bearing fruit and scrimshawed furniture from the earlier beasts  
You've taken down:  
Or going down on you myself in a sweetly darkened corner,  
Work and the day lamp shaded,  
Even our senses would be hooded, and we would have  
Great troubles recalling, perhaps, where we were,  
But it would be so nice.

Robert Rorabeck



# So Purple And Delicate A Flower

I can hardly imagine how  
Purple and delicate the flower  
I wish to find while sleeping insouciant  
In the weeds,  
So smooth and waspish as to be  
Dismissed by academia;  
But oh to touch the cheek of her  
Limpid sorority, barely burnished,  
Drooling sleep on her ruffled pillow;  
Stepping up early enough on the  
Worn stage to cut my teeth,  
To be her harrumphing thespian:  
I could be her Scottish thistle,  
And as she walked by my worksite,  
Demure and transcendental,  
Her legs clicking like timid reindeer  
On the firm concrete;  
I would show my appreciation,  
While she went to and fro with her  
Expensive shopping,  
Smooth skin as dull as porcelain,  
Buying all the sheer delicacies her father  
Gives her:  
I would whistle, I would whistle  
Her appearance of brevity there beside me,  
Like fading coincidence, rich and occidental;  
But would she turn her head, though,  
So purple and delicate a flower?

Robert Rorabeck

# So Real

Abigail,  
You were Jordan's sister, back in junior high and  
High school again;  
And I just lost my last poem about you,  
But I am not giving up-  
The way you didn't dance for me, but I pretended  
That you were topless across the smooth bricks of that  
Fabulously crenellated pool;  
And where you are now, but the perfect vestibule of that  
Narcissism,  
Still one of the first restaurants opening up,  
Graduating when our high school was still young and never  
Going to college, never believing in all those things  
That ruin a pretty soul:  
If I could find you this day and steal you from your  
Tiresomely Jewish husband, I already have enough money to  
Buy us a pretty little house outright in the berg;  
It will be like there was nothing else after Atari;  
It will be like Clinton is still president or that I never ran  
Away to Michigan:  
I will never have to cut my wrist for Sharon,  
Abigail, you could be my simpler truth, and right away disavow  
These lines:  
I want to look you up and take you bare-chested to the fair,  
And give daughters to you and your grateful dead,  
Because that is the music you love,  
And we could spend our weekends molesting anemones in the Keys,  
And having nothing less or more to do with the rest of these  
Conquistadors,  
Abigail- I like your music and I think your husband is a bore,  
And I'm all about starting over:  
Abigail, Abigail, terrapin, hare: Come back with me to Wellington  
And I will take you there,  
Spending your evenings tiding up in the same living room I  
Remember masturbating in with your little brother;  
Let me use your autumn tresses for a bomb shelter, and we can  
Practice and lip sink for Halloween,  
Abigail, Abigail because you are the prettiness of everything  
That didn't have to go away, Abigail:

You are Patrick Swayze,  
You are dirty dancing:  
You are the perfect Jewess, Abigail and I have entire  
Brown bags of fireworks for you,  
And names for our children that will bring us back to before  
Things had to become so awful and so real.

Robert Rorabeck

# So She Does

I write because I have friends and people  
Who love me,  
And I tried to call you but you are already well  
Fulfilled into the dreams of unicorns;  
And I am so far gone into the dreams  
Of fourteen year olds and everything is illegal;  
I tried to call you but you are soot,  
You are a pallet of sod along I-95,  
You have married a lawyer and the castle is falling  
Down,  
But I want to move to Colorado:  
I want to be everywhere, and I've already cheated  
Death,  
And I've stolen the golden fleece,  
Seen your bust that your child suckles, S;  
I killed the friendly centaur for your shadow,  
S;  
I tried to call E, but she wasn't alive:  
She was never alive, but now how about your art,  
And the places we roam for so long to bury old  
Time friends:  
S, the river is sweet and long and I have made  
Love to Pedro with a song,  
And the telephones are banal- banal while the castle  
Is falling down you pick strawberries;  
I just want to live forever on Wednesdays and that's  
Just what I do:  
S, do you read my simple vocabularies?  
S, you will live forever, I made sure of that.  
And I played darts,  
And S is beautiful, And she will live forever,  
No matter about her, while Evan ejaculates into the bigger,  
Bigger reservoir,  
And we can we can live forever in Catalonia;  
We can live right here,  
S:  
I have money, and I have to live forever, S.  
S:  
I love you S,

And you are already gone,  
So beautiful discombobulated into the sweaty pits  
Of Disney World:  
Don't you know, S; don't you know-  
Without your spectral denouements of atmosphere,  
S:  
E, I tried to call you, but you will not live forever:  
Cut me forever:  
I tried to gather up, but now you aren't forever,  
And I am tired,  
And I am not doing good:  
These things you say, or you've had no right to  
Yet:  
S:  
S, I am not right, but I am doing good,  
But who are you, S:  
S;  
It id impossible not to love you:  
Look at all the wine you sold;  
And anyways, anyways, E doesn't give a d\$mn  
And she wants to live forever,  
So look at her tits and never let off:  
E she wants to live forever and she does,  
Like a blind nursery rhyme who wants to live forever:  
And she does,  
Without any of my fingerprints:  
And of course she does:  
S; and you are impossible not to love,  
S,  
And so she does:  
So she does.....

Robert Rorabeck

## So She Goes

Naked without snow on the mountains,  
I have the feeling she doesn't need me anymore-  
Or if she ever did, she's too drunk now,  
Swinging around like a laughing contraption in his  
Arms- So many arms, around and around  
With so many hims she goes,  
Sometimes hiccupping, and taking tremendous glances  
Into the handsome waves she's falling into-  
The repeating natural forces never truly contained  
Knocking at her door-  
In fact all the world surrounding her is going the way  
She goes- Seesawing like a strange accordion into him,  
Trying to make money and comfortable time-  
I suppose he is her king or something official in  
Love. I haven't spoken to her directly in oh so many years,  
And just like anyone else she is probably getting married  
And buying a house and painting her nails in it  
While looking out through the polished glass  
at the yard lamped by tremendous sunlight  
Which speaks to her of the children he will father to fill it:  
I suppose I've never loved anyone,  
And she doesn't turn down those avenues I've set up for her  
Lined by silver sparking cones, like little men bedecking beneath  
The palms for her,  
Like sparkling insects or conquistadors  
Drumming in the shade of her sashaying skirts-  
Those azaleas sway beside the old carport  
By the sea's one time lullaby-  
I planted those for her too,  
But now I am so alone and so far away up on the Castillo's  
Walls- You could never see me and say with any certainty  
That it is really me:  
But he is already sending in the army to take me down,  
To make it safe like a windowless wall,  
but I am so far away, and her eyes have fallen  
From the sea and up above its noisy theatre  
where I've been dancing madly;  
And so she goes.



# So Sublime As To Be Your Own

These trees are hooks for your belongings,  
And right about now my breath smells like a fire  
Engine:  
Somewhere close to coffins, that ants proceed;  
They are unfathomable, all these mighty kingdoms  
Abstracted from Dorothy's:  
Not a single insect who has ever lived has ever  
Known your name, or your mothers,  
Or has wished to fall down on his crypt orchid  
Knees and smell the better part of you,  
Or had to have given you orchids for a saltwater  
Kiss,  
Or been put through minimum wage, or fed to lions;  
And maybe this is bliss:  
Having had a chance to look into your eyes  
And seen the seven wonders, to have ridden once or  
Twice in your car an to have sucked the air-conditioning together,  
Mutually,  
To have your wet lips once or twice on my neck,  
To have you to say my name and heard my wishes,  
To have seen you walking away upon the concrete pressed  
By bicycles and Old English,  
And, subsequently, to have been fed to lions:  
The humane and tame abstracts who might have seen you  
Gamely, but licking their chops, have never even thought to  
Guess upon a name so sublime as to be your own.

Robert Rorabeck



# So Swift And Mercilessly

Drops of passion from the second half of  
Liquor bottle:  
Now cops come and arrest me except that I am  
Protected by the watermelon faerie;  
And I am protected by these songs, by the way  
I have been playing myself over the  
Mississippi:  
And now your day is done and your beautiful eyes are  
As tired as enchanted embers;  
And I suppose you have to go to sleep,  
To awaken and grow old from your another child's suckling  
Barb;  
But you have a business and a house, so rejoice:  
For all of the men of our race will love you, and you are  
My muse,  
So now in the morning we can eat the dead animals and  
Pet at the dogs at the wild track;  
And position our backsides again into the earth;  
And know that this is the way it comes; it comes so surely  
As waves upon the shore, as the moon pulling me;  
As I have tasted my meet, and now I know the mountains  
Are rising;  
As I know you are rising so swift and mercilessly above me;  
Sharon- Sharon; aren't you always rising so swift and  
Mercilessly above me.

Robert Rorabeck

# So That She Should Never See Me

I sleep with my clothes on.  
I haven't taken these jeans off,  
Or these scars,  
Since I saw them swimming through  
The red aquarium.  
My body is pale and marked,  
But no one will know, and yet,  
When I must rise again,  
My hand will be on the plough before  
Her man, and I will bring the metamorphosis  
Out of the seeds in the earth,  
And my friends will rise from them,  
Singing to me, and their eyes  
Will not fall to my indecision,  
And they will not falter,  
And we will ban together and wait  
For my sister to return riding down  
From the sky from his palace before  
My parents wake-up,  
And then we will go together through  
The hallways of high school,  
Singing our song,  
Waiting for the forecasted rain to dampen  
The red diamond,  
And then we will take each of our positions,  
And play a game of baseball,  
Our jaws knotted in the weather,  
And the clouds will scroll multi-headed  
In a steady bereavement;  
Far above us, they will certainly  
Cluster and, dampening, shadow, and  
The wind to bluster; and by evening my jeans  
Will be marked and dirty,  
Known better than to my dogs, I will crawl  
In between their drooling snouts,  
And sleep there through the night  
With my clothes on, so that she should never  
See me.



# So That The New Gods Would Come

Liquor runs these plebian amplitudes:  
These trucks bugle going into a pass of snow:  
Fireworks mouth off for only  
A second and then are silenced and the crowd is wanting more:  
They are a good gage for life;  
And the world is so cold, and it feel so good:  
Just like it must have felt for William Shakespeare, that redneck:  
And I imagine going into this one gorge so full of  
My load,  
A breath in me like a pinwheel, knowing that it led to your castle,  
Even though I knew that your castle was already a home for  
Your husband and all of those dragons,  
And that I was not beautiful as a single one of them:  
I had my sling and my whisky, and I expected so little from you:  
Just a drink of your eyes, and to give you flowers,  
And to sell all the precious minerals from the bed of my truck  
So that you could build constellations and mobiles  
So that new gods would come  
And you would become rich; and so I would live forever.

Robert Rorabeck

## So That They Can Start Making Love

This is a tomb they put into print around the  
Clandestine houses where the oldest of the living people  
Remain-  
Charred up, speaking to the shadows, as the airplanes  
Bask like hounds across the East Basket of their  
Cerulean universe  
Their machines know just that this is real, that her children  
Remain at home,  
Cooed to the television, her mother Rosa cooking in the  
Kitchen, the night growing outside perfected by the things  
That can still be seen,  
And she is driving home to them- out of another world,  
And into a finer thing- the grass at her feet filled with still  
Milking rabbits,  
And when she gets out she finds diamonds whose  
Fortunate wealth sings all the time in her ear, drowning out  
The death of flowers,  
Even when her young man tells her that she should come  
In so that they can start making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Vert

If the dead bloom, they bloom just for you under your  
Peeks of tourism;  
And I have been doing nothing; and I am not warm, and I am  
Growing tired like a pioneer given up between his passes;  
And I remember you,  
And as that you must sustain yourself of my flesh:  
Because I am not beautiful enough to pass beyond into the  
Promised land of your sanctity:  
That the wolves are uncollared and set loose and they know the  
Same names as the places where my names know and repeat,  
In the latest hour before my parents are returning home  
To their little place beside the canal  
To interrupt my profession; and I am thoroughly enamored,  
And yet I have almost saved enough to buy a beautiful house for you:  
And your daughter is just as beautiful and as well kept as you:  
And I want to stand out perfectly in your easements and  
In your storms rumors sell perfect things for you;  
And I am failing again tonight for you: and my night is just a plagiarism  
For you,  
And now I can see the lights of another sad return: and the day is over,  
And the doors are slammed and people are home and the lights  
Are emptied because you are not home;  
And your eyes are absolutely perfect underneath the very same moon  
That pulls my strings so very far away from me.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Very Far Away

If the dead bloom, they bloom just for you under your  
Peeks of tourism;  
And I have been doing nothing; and I am not warm, and I am  
Growing tired like a pioneer given up between his passes;  
And I remember you,  
And as that you must sustain yourself of my flesh:  
Because I am not beautiful enough to pass beyond into the  
Promised land of your sanctity:  
That the wolves are uncollared and set loose and they know the  
Same names as the places where my names know and repeat,  
In the latest hour before my parents are returning home  
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For you,  
And now I can see the lights of another sad return: and the day is over,  
And the doors are slammed and people are home and the lights  
Are emptied because you are not home;  
And your eyes are absolutely perfect underneath the very same moon  
That pulls my strings so very far away from me.

Robert Rorabeck

## So Very Far To Go

Caldron in the sky gurgling spells of stewardesses  
Giving them ink for their nails,  
Fermenting their juices; and all the day long they  
Ride on their chariots like outstretched pies,  
Like nothing but good news shooting through  
The truly wonderful skies;  
When down beneath pigeon toed children walk deep  
In the hungry peat,  
Their saucers as silent as the prenatal dawns of  
Birthdays; they want you to look for them,  
To cast eager glances like commuters who drive to  
Work before a vermilion fruit stand; look for them if  
You can,  
But even if you do, they are so overworked with their  
Loves that they will have to eat their own tongues;  
And then you can glance away,  
Because I know you have so very far to go today.

Robert Rorabeck



# So Very Raw Motifs

Lucky juniper out on the cusp of another job:  
There it goes tasting their air, rhyming towards the bulbs and  
The scents of Christmas, while underneath that well  
Titted hook,  
All of my family is out on their walk with their dogs:  
They go past the crocodiles and the rattlesnakes:  
They go past so many things too well sated to move, like  
Professionals of the shadows,  
Or the memories of so many horses that once spoke of this  
Earth mindlessly,  
Culling up to the troughs of windmills, like the sweat on prenatal  
Tattoos and having a look around the splendiferous valley:  
Their ears and senses succumbing to the nature  
Of the chaos  
That they find so captivating: when the bees die on the flower,  
The flower goes by unweeping, in its little ballroom,  
As the airplanes continue the same way in the sky,  
The clouds lying like fainted paramours about their silver wingspans:  
All of their plans forgotten, and their oh so very raw motifs  
Left absolutely unexplained.

Robert Rorabeck

# So Very Very Young

Words knick knocking in tombs-  
I can smell you when you are not around;  
I can smell you like a bull of a god,  
Like canyons of coral where cheerleaders bloom:  
All of it in the pastels strung out and happy in  
Sprees of shoots;  
And your opal birthstones why they are just as happy  
As naked pearls in the sky as crisp  
As an apple or a new book;  
These words I've stolen from under the pressure washed  
Hinge of her skirt or the carport;  
And I wake up and its getting past Monday:  
I know I will see you if I drive around enough.  
Look at the flagpole pushing up the tent in my trousers,  
Watch the matchstick lives of my dogs burning away  
When I am not at home:  
Feed them hamburgers in your buff:  
And your eyes like the glaciers of refrigerators  
Trolling for tongue;  
I love you Kelly, but you are still so very, very young.

Robert Rorabeck

# Softly As The Softest Pain

Rain plinks the shingles of a house  
Where I'd sure like to live;  
Rain engorges too the ever, ever waves  
Of the sea persuading the mangroves  
And the blind white birds tucked in  
Where I'd sure like to live;  
And rain finds a way in through the green  
Grottos,  
The bottle caps the ancient baseball:  
Where there are virgins enraptured in pieta  
And mussels, where  
Noses uncork salty perfumes, where shallow  
Reefs palpitate with silent green kelp;  
And there are pagan footsteps reaching down  
From where she left her husband stranded  
With the green cannons,  
And started down, all in a mess; she said  
She was going to Spain, but it was only her  
Body that wept,  
And the milky white horses watching from the  
Distant stones seemed not to sympathize  
And she came down that way,  
While I waited holding my breath for a wish  
In some dark and lovely cave,  
The rains kind of wondered about  
Stepping softly, or happening upon her shoulders  
As softly as the softest pain  
Where I'd sure like to live.

Robert Rorabeck

# Softly Beaten Hero

They are giving their busy colors anyway: down to sleep,  
While the wolf is moaning to the sheep of his  
Tooth ache, and the long traveled tourists finally tuck in  
In a hotel down the hill from  
Jack and Jill, broken crowned from sex atop all of the musty  
Wildflowers:  
And the sky lights up with the truancy of fireworks,  
And the homosexual dragons curl atop of themselves and seem to  
Want to worship the sun who has gone on his chariot to do far  
Better women wrong:  
And then I sit alone in the affluences of another carport, sipping my  
Own, likening myself to women who lie wounded on the high backed  
Slopes of a precarious mountain, their skirts so high up,  
They will reveal themselves absolutely if they fall- but then I am  
Not there: I am nothing- I am the trauancies of high school  
In the echoless hallway, like a beauty emptied of curiosity, a drinking  
Fountain abandoned by lips: enjoyed by nothing until the next  
Softy beaten hero comes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Softly Burning Nursery

Wound in my heart of  
Valentine;  
Looking through this thicket—the sun gets  
Lost, won't it be mine,  
Or petted down into the crepuscule of  
A petted dinner,  
Like wet paint rolling over and over,  
The hills a river—  
A sea of used cars with so many dash boards  
Overlooking the sad memories  
Of the pornographies of a young love:  
It takes such a long time to get over her,  
That by the time it is possible to  
Hardly remember:  
Even though she still works across the sections of  
The earth,  
In the old neighborhood, collected with chips of  
Paint and scars:  
Hers is a church of brown eyes, and fingers  
Spread in a web of effigy—  
As she laughs for you in the soft firelight of  
A softly burning nursery.

Robert Rorabeck

# Softly Downed Creche

Sharon:

I would give you my house: I would give you my soul:

Just how unhappy are you, Sharon: Sharon- If I could make you  
Whole;

But your house is already too beautiful, Sharon; it is burning quietly  
With the candles dripped right from the sun-

Your body is female, Sharon; and your thoughts are the institutions of  
Your body, and I don't know any better words for it;

But all I can do is strike out with my two very young legs for it:

I can go past all of the glowing sports of professionals:

How they made themselves to breathe like cattle in a golden summer:

How they conditioned themselves to succeed by the pound in the  
Market place of plausible numbers;

But I have never seen you again, after the rains came and all of this started  
Out flooding,

And the animals continued as if your perfected symmetry;

And I will make you live forever, Sharon; I will give you a castanet for your  
Soul- And you can come in here any time to take off your bonnet

And work your hands into the malleable pleasures that I happen to  
Become for you; and

You can sit at your desk from across the room, and if I am brave enough

I can journey across the Mississippi of this dirty rug for you, and lie and  
Bask in the pleasures inherited to the vineyards of your flesh;

Sharon- you are a jewel tempting a bird in the burning sky,

And this is your softly downed creche.

Robert Rorabeck

## Softly Impressed

Then here I am softly impressed- when tomorrow I will  
Get up and sell fireworks through the thundershowers:  
I will keep on getting up and impressing from my  
Little house,  
While the cats make love- they bundle up next to the rabbits  
And their hutches of forest fires:  
It is just a little ways towards the canal from their  
Bonfires: it just keeps getting undressed besides  
The fairyland of the underground pools- and the little boys  
Keep picking at their freckles: soon they will be  
Homeless, out of doors and panhandling: soon I will drive  
Beside them in my airconditioning- and what will I give  
Them to take back to their bed of trash and homosexual  
Love making- because they are so proud,  
They are even beneath the Mexicans from their cousins  
Pueblos: and I love them while looking inside  
My mirrors. Getting up tomorrow, I will drive alongside  
Their shoulder, and give them quarters and give  
Them dimes with the effigies of presidents- knowing that  
I drive away down to Miami and again away from her-  
That the road has always been theirs,  
And they will travel it up to kiss her, and she will also  
Be theirs even though she swears that she is still her  
Husband's: I know that they know that she will always be  
Theirs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Softly Through The Pines

Downed by the desires of crimes  
That they know will never fit:  
The airplanes and their wives sleeping low,  
Gliding and making love  
Just as quiet as children waiting for sugar plums  
As the world reciprocates with itself,  
Seeming to come out into the park  
Where all of the trees are opening, seeming for  
Awhile to winnow the greenery of their  
Souls-  
And my true love is there, and she is down:  
Axioms of light in a carnival that can be blown by  
The wind,  
A flag of single minded patriotism in her hair,  
A cul-de-sac that can bare children  
Skipping school, fluctuating amidst the allocations of  
Play-  
For awhile make believe, as the airplanes that they  
Know whisper through the trees,  
Before touching down, their heartbeats drumming softly  
Through the pines.

Robert Rorabeck



# Solicitating Doorways

Penalized for my scars,  
Made to sit out and sweat off my libido  
Here on the bleachers,  
While the pretty girls get to go and get lectured  
By Swedish young teachers: Oh,  
But here the ceiling fan  
Chops Susie; it is an insularly sort of  
Halo for my scarred and bruisey-  
What do I get for human interaction today,  
But a Chinese takeout menu stuffed in my door-  
There are massage parlors around here,  
But I wonder what for;  
And literary agents; and literary agents?  
Young sweet and innocent things waltzing up in  
New York,  
Dallying in some parks, going down somberly lit;  
What will they think of my own take-out  
Pamphlets stuffed in their crenellated doors;  
Ostentatious unreadable birthday presents;  
But then again, what do they have to think of  
Anything?  
But close their eyes and kiss him,  
Forgetting all about the solicitations stuffed in their doors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Somber Haiku

If I could just die  
I would just die If I  
Could just die I would

Robert Rorabeck

## Some Fine Acquaintances

Mommy and daddy get home, Jack- I wait for a hug,  
Or a publication, or cold hamburger:  
I've been watching movies as it snows, Joe:  
Your son was dead so long ago, drowned in a river in  
Michigan. He came up blue not tan, man:  
He just floated down the river, and Joe died that day,  
But he is still a walking man: a blue collar man,  
A man who watches basketball, who has a girlfriend in  
A trailer park, and makes love to her after dark, Mark;  
Who is my dad, who grows a beard: he is an entrepreneur,  
And a steady horseman. His daughter is a doctor,  
But that's not what I am, Sam. I am a quiet place getting  
Quieter. Oh, I am abstinent though I do not choose her. In  
A little ways, I am a publisher author, Arthur- I want  
A daughter, a beautiful daughter to watch so carefully down  
By the river, to see which way she goes, and how she goes  
Like laughing water, and if she falls I will surely  
Catch her as if I were good at baseball,  
And carry her up and down beside the effluent waters,  
Where the sunlight streams like healthy banners, where they  
Catch fish, the canners and the tanners;  
To hold my daughter over the cleft of the river, to show her  
The forest and to introduce her to those men who are my friends,  
Who have cleared away and made it easy for her,  
Who will be proud, oh so proud to know her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Some Insignificant Feeling Just Above

I went up to the university,  
Sweaty and apoplexy and worked for hours in  
A fast food supermarket:  
And when I had time I smoked and watched the clouds  
Deform  
And my parents make love;  
As I made love to a girl I did not love  
In the movies as fat and as gross as the citrus  
Of necrophilia tourism,  
Rising their flags and listening to the mice scream:  
The lions roared just as mutely as wind in the crevices of  
Defeated explorers;  
And then you know there is a forest as pure as the flowers  
That have never been seen to have thought to been cut:  
There is the world beyond the gardens of pornography planted  
In the beds of junk heaped into their cars;  
And these days are as swell as kindergarteners out  
Almost seeming to masturbate on their lawns,  
All sweaty and made to trust one another, regurgitating chicken  
Noodle soup like nursery songs:  
And even then there were girls I love, while I made gloves of  
Earth in the palms of the woods;  
While I follow the white dogs through the rattle snake coops,  
Before all this joy I was touching myself;  
And the historians can tell you the history of fireworks,  
But it is just as good to know myself:  
And I believe I have seen you out in those woods before I can  
Even remember myself;  
And now the earth is melting and coming off of its love,  
As the friendly strangers find each other again and again in the  
Rest stops and snow globes of this world,  
Trying to perfect oral sex while that unperplexed god watches  
Us as if a tourist enjoying his newly purchased snow globe  
Some insignificant feet just above.

Robert Rorabeck

# Some Kind Of Summer

I glance through the Venetian blinds,  
Looking at the vegetation furtively the way a young  
Child looks at a beautiful woman who is not  
His mother;  
And it seems that some kind of summer must be coming on:  
I see the splay of pine branches and the splay of their green  
Needles,  
And the sky is dark behind them: the echinopsis have all closed  
In; the butterflies are under the skin of their bark,  
Or with whoever butterflies end up in bed with, but the birds  
Are singing, and the canals malaise:  
The trailer park across the canal looks like resurrected graves:  
And when I rise myself and enter unto the outside world,  
I would look up into the cradles rocking their séances  
In those boughs; and then girls will enter in and out  
Through the open air market, coming like wanted hallucinations:  
Then they will leave back to their washing machines and their  
Flower prints like all dimensions of gardens entering their rooms,  
And I will say again to myself, biting my lip  
Fretful of the wonderful vibrancies of the world that I want too  
Much for,  
That some kind of summer must be coming on.

Robert Rorabeck

## Some New Kind Of Baseball Game

On a wash day, the traffic streams a river.  
The bears are watching from the brambles, they've  
Tumbled into the briar pit for fun.  
They are learning to start fires,  
Discarded tires and porno magazines from the '90s.

They think zoos are funny, as I watch them  
Holding torches, their little ones coughing.  
As I am stuck beside the road,  
Held up on my way to the flea market:  
A helicopter is circling and to pass the time,  
I pretend that it is some old lover  
High up there holding a bouquet  
And swearing she'll finally pay me back for the  
Traffic tickets I paid for  
That she got for speeding to see her husband  
Who was with the horses and centaurs  
And barmaids and wild cacti of Ocala.

But I have a daughter now, filled with laughter  
And some few words. A flat tire and an impending tropical  
Storm may ruin my week financially,  
But here are my few words strewn to the golden  
Pigeons and ghosts who cannot see me, but feed off me:

My wants strewn like semen,  
The milky tears of clowns and barmaids.

The traffic is a river with an infinity of points:  
If you want to go that far you can, with birth and death  
At every exit:  
There are advertisements to pine over  
And wild boars, and alligators and iguanas:  
But the cenotaphs of conquistadors have all quickly  
Sunken under the sandy deserts,  
The salted stilts laying the foundation for the amusement  
Parks.

I may go home busted, but at least I saw the brown bears

Eating cotton candy and cracker jacks.  
I think they are inventing some new kind of baseball game.  
Erstwhile, my children are waiting for me.  
As I said, I have a daughter and she a little pumping heart  
That crossed over five bridges christening her first birthday.

Robert Rorabeck

## Some Other Man's Shore

Feeling a new flow of virtue underneath my wings  
As it continues on- on,  
As far away from my window as I can, counting into  
The numb lips of the previous cadavers  
Of my muse until it happens right here:  
The meetings over bridges- the leaping into the séance  
Of fires- another night finally blinded underneath  
All of her windows,  
And the airplanes gone through their fabulous  
Ventures:  
The exoskeletons so fabulously clinging through their  
Old departments,  
As you can feel the glowing lights of her lost malls  
All around you- and this is just the final thing  
That you do last of all for her before you go to sleep:  
After all of her flowers have been delivered,  
And her chocolates, and you are so entirely sure that she doesn't  
Deserve you anymore- until finally the night dreams  
Come like care giving dragons, like crustaceans underneath  
The séances of butterflies and dragonflies- kissing their  
Last unlucky numbers, and finally glad that they've  
Stumbled upon to the lover of some other man's shore.

Robert Rorabeck



## Some Soon Afternoon

The bodies burn time and time again:  
All of the ancestors getting up and congratulating themselves  
Until they become the unresolved constellations in the sky  
Burning over the swimming pools  
And unearthed oceans, touching themselves and telling themselves that  
They are divine,  
While the poisonous mariposas and venomous butterflies flutter  
High over the shoulders of my mind,  
While I am getting somewhere, or maybe it is that I am not even real:  
Maybe it is that I am just the body of a ship going down,  
Or I am the tail end of a beautiful snake entering a wall:  
Anyways, I don't know my own stanzas:  
All I know that this is hardly Christmas, but it sounds like Christmas:  
Doesn't it, Alma:  
Because I am only trying to mimic your body, Alma:  
And your body is as bright and green and vermilion as Christmas;  
Navidad- Alma- your soul is my Navidad;  
And you are a fairy world-  
And this is how we live forever, Alma:  
This is how we survive forever under the deciduous breath:  
While my dogs whine and decorate early for you,  
And I have a crush on you, my brownny muse:  
You are my goddess, and I love your wetness- in between your fingers  
Or your legs: it is all the same to me, while the candlelight flickers  
And the both of us and our gods: we all wait for you:  
Alma- Alma: we sing so loud as we hold the breath for our wishes,  
Saving up to buy you some soon afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Some Things I Meant To Say

But the daylight shines through the traffic,  
As you said it would,  
Or as you seemed to say with your eyes so  
Long ago in high school  
Until you finally turned and getting into the  
Saddle and rode away;  
And I don't know that I'm a great literary  
Genius,  
But I am a comic book,  
Suffocating like obese virgins behind the plastic  
Of their puppy dog eyes:  
And we are all together in the airconditioning,  
And you don't know how deep our souls go,  
Because you have never tried:  
And this is just it:  
A penny, a match, something sudden and free,  
Semiprecious is obsolete:  
And they also named a mountain after Abraham  
Lincoln.  
Just so, the storm clouds linger like an expensive  
Georgian frame  
Around the adolescent picture that can be  
So easily described where I still wait for you,  
Riding your horse,  
Leaping airplanes,  
While I work lying in the grass. The ants are not  
Bothering me. The tortoise has slowed from his  
Race,  
A champion- Your wrist reaching out in need,  
Or unconscious, is perfect;  
And these are just some things I meant to say.

Robert Rorabeck

## Some Vanishing Reason

Kinetic and full of banished frenzy  
With another queen in her tower, and I am only  
Keen to so many words:  
While the horses run as if they were the traffic  
Through the forest  
That doesn't exist anymore: luminescent in their  
Loneliness,  
Each tree yet at metamorphosis, and each word  
But the drunk at a various point in his  
Road way, panhandling, trying to outlast the death  
That the sea brings to the shore:  
The perfume taken away from each rose  
By the legs alienists that take it to another home,  
With the lighthouses and the airplanes underneath it,  
As if underneath the sea,  
Hopefully drowning, shining their light upwards  
As if they could light up and so save  
Some vanishing reason from the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Some Whiles

Loose ribbons enfolding  
A shrine:  
Alma's arms are fired  
From throwing watermelons  
Over the witch's  
Chainlink  
Fences, to her hungry  
Siblings  
With starving smiles;  
And I am the wolf  
Who eats her unicorn  
Gladly,  
While the cat makes the  
Feat of many stories  
While we are just awakening  
Like a nocturn of  
Flowers  
In the nose bleeding  
Meadow  
To which it takes some whiles  
To realize-

Robert Rorabeck

## Some Wistful Amnesia

Lets break into houses and make love-  
Lets make fun of the teachers on their way into school-  
Lets wake up early and play baseball in the dying  
Park as the cicadas shed;  
There is no use for us in the bleachers-  
So lets get drowsy eyed under them and swap spit:  
You can slap me on the cheek if you don't believe me;  
But I am the awakened consciousness of the universe,  
And you are everything I've ever believed in.  
Maybe it is not enough, because I am afraid of lightning;  
And I can only stand spinning my arms around and  
Being romantic in the rain for so long.  
I am only migratory because I have to sell fireworks;  
And I will buy a home somewhere sometime and  
Watch television to forget you;  
And you will become the fairytale banned from children,  
What is hinted at in the thirty degrees of vision of the crocodiles,  
Something even the stewardesses gossip over  
As they serve their drinks in little plastic cups,  
Showing mournful bosoms while the sun squints through  
The high altitude windows to have an early morning peek,  
Slipstreaming, whistling even so high above where you have  
Become a working girl, jingling your keys, and  
Fetchingly stumbling through some wistful  
Amnesia.

Robert Rorabeck

## Some With Meaning

Word of these broken phalluses has gotten nowhere.  
No one cares to be wounded by  
Impotent soldiers.

Nevertheless, my wife's contractions are  
Becoming closer and closer apart  
Even though I have a college degree which is meaningless—

And do not know the Mandarin world for sun; but moon I know: yule-e-lle  
It isn't up yet, nor is my son,  
But he knows at least two words for everything.

His little sister is being born today  
And we can teach her so many things  
And hide from her just as many things.

The traffic patterns of men going to work,  
Underneath the celestial patterns—  
Pretty pictures that come and go: some with meaning and some with not.

Robert Rorabeck

# Somebody

I am seeing somebody, and she is not here:  
My back hurts:  
I am forgetting that I haven't learned how to spell:  
Fairytale are on the swings,  
And muses that I cannot bare to leave are being taken  
Down from the sky like ornaments,  
From the vespers that whisper her one or two names  
To the hollow places on my person:  
To both the places that open up to her, and to the places  
That would try to close around her:  
Pleading the effigies underneath the stir crazy bodies of  
The airplanes, turning around  
Like birds singing a song over the happy though armless  
Prince to which their lighter than air bodies are  
Meaning to crown.

Robert Rorabeck

# Someone Else's Graveyard

Laughter of my child  
Back in China- outside  
The womb-  
Boxes opened for Christmas  
Or bound for her ancestors-  
Footprints in sand remaining  
There for eons  
Along with the hoof prints of  
the dinosaurs  
Because of the effects of  
Gravity  
Not Jesus-  
A god whose heart is here,  
Bleeding in my scribbling hand-  
Our nearest ancestors  
Living entombed,  
Wombs of gargantuan infrastructure,  
Poets prostituting for  
The applause of the housewives  
Of the zeitgeist,  
A few words lying more distant  
From the road-  
And a bouquet of plastic  
Roses meant for someone else's  
Graveyard getting dusty in  
A shed.

Robert Rorabeck



## Someone Else's Promises

Look at here—how the vampires reflect  
Like diamonds inside a kaleidoscope  
Turned towards the moon in the middle of  
The day—a commercial airplane on the  
Lens like a fly—the magic is all but paid for,  
As she yawns in the middle of the  
Yard the boys have left off from their sports.  
Now, as if from some witch's spell,  
The entire atmosphere seems absent,  
And the puppets have turned from their  
Fires—busses filled with school children  
Are still turning around—they seem like the jaundiced  
Entrails of some disastrous menagerie,  
But they are just heading into school—  
And the sun is up and leaping in a widely stretched  
Bow across the earth—in playgrounds across  
Town the dogs are running—  
Women are getting laid like omelets—  
And the pigeons are turning towards homes which  
Are not theirs with someone else's promises  
Clenched between their teeth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something Beautiful

All the tourists are making spectacle of your  
Coffin,  
And even the politicians are overhead spending the  
Tax payers money on beautiful flowers,  
Corpulent and well hung  
And making even the deepest-bayed airplane in  
Danger of digging trenches,  
But for once I don't blame them,  
Though I know you aren't really dead,  
But just hibernating, and getting even fairer in your season:  
Soon your usual prince will be waking you up,  
And cooking you dinner,  
And then you might yawn light a fish nibbling between  
The forest of deep stemmed orchids,  
Your fingers splaying along the ribbons of your insouciant  
Child,  
But I should like to start a revolution for you all the same;  
I could be your breakfast- I would nourish your  
Unconsciousness with a steaming broth of forget-me-nots;  
And I would bring the paper in to you,  
And dig out your car from the snow: I could fetch anything  
For you I put my mind to,  
But let me begin by trying to say something beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something Else I Forgot To Say

They seem to be surrendering  
To the monsters of their little  
Paper weight dungeons—  
As the best women of  
The presumptuous  
Marriages  
Turn out to be  
Only the  
Personifications—  
Of the tools  
The stewardesses  
Jettison  
Jingoistic ally for my little sister,  
Janice- ,  
The fraternity drinking forever  
Their domestic beers over  
The wishing well—Like headlights  
Of the pilgrims surrendering themselves  
To the Devil's paraphernalia—  
And there is something  
Else I forgot to  
Say-

Robert Rorabeck

# Something Else Just As Beautiful

Easy as horses without predations-  
Like conquistadors laying with  
Their crosses;  
Bearded mouths all soft spoken-  
Her hands laid across beaches of yellow  
Yoke-  
Despoiled in the morning  
By golden trumpets  
Brought to yellow lips:  
Fireworks sols in  
New Mexico,  
As something else just as beautiful  
Evaporates into the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something Ephemeral Or Surreal

You got lucky until they drugged you  
Like a goldfish horribly fed  
By preternatural angels- and they sang and  
Sang while the lions opened  
Their mouth  
Letting loose the feral heavens over  
All of the thrift stores,  
Releasing cartoons and the beautiful ornaments  
Until all of the orphans had to go to sleep  
Across the beaches of Miami,  
And you were so far transplanted  
That the angels hang from their tender hooks  
Like the gold I bought for you  
Hanging from your neck, as you sweated and  
Made love underneath your husband  
And for awhile-  
Even though I wished to tell your sister I loved her,  
As our high school became all but haunted,  
And I had to set out again,  
Believing that I could become, forever,  
Something ephemeral or surreal.

Robert Rorabeck

## Something For Another Church

Juvenile espionage poking fun at the cadavers on  
Some midway of your old haunts, where over the shoulders  
Of the fading Ferris wheels, you can hear the lions yawn—  
Eating mouthfuls of mosquitos,  
Enjoying icecreams of everyman's blood—  
The enraptured contraptions of these elements pulling up  
The oils that you hadn't felt for the longest of times  
And decorating your skin—telling you that you were  
Pretty—just trying to set you up for school tomorrow—  
It was the same with me,  
Even as we were unlucky, your children fell to the ground:  
You gathered them up, happy that the water moccasins and  
The harpies' mouths were already filled with last  
Easter's rabbits—and taking no joy from my words—  
Your body already brown and beautiful, knowing that  
Again there would be another Christmas—  
Feeling that it wouldn't take you long to prepare something  
For another Church.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something I Can Barely Understand

Another day like this one, like the next.

I read canto IX of the third fitt of Alighieri's  
Paradiso, and it makes little sense,  
Little sense like the way I used to sit alone between  
Class, and the girl who I recognized came up and  
Sat next to me, and waited until I said nothing-  
Thus she walked away, beautiful legs like vases  
In the state of falling, and I will never see her again,  
But tomorrow I will read canto X,  
And hope and pray that I will reach the understanding  
Of Rimbaud at age 10,  
And I look at pictures of his gravestone and imagine  
Beneath it the one legged corpse of a sad man who  
Could not sell everything he took from Africa:  
And perhaps Verlaine's wife will forgive him,  
And weeps for him in her own grave in Paris,  
I imagine, but undoubtedly wrongly....

Another day like this one, like the next.

I've read 100 pages of a Stephen King novel  
But it makes little sense, just wayward characters on  
A train trying to pose riddles, but I've heard them all  
Before and puzzle through the lines so blindly,  
Because I can imagine it just as well without the help  
In swells of sunlight and the lounging of my hounds;  
The dirty America of popcorn and fizz, the nude lips  
In the funhouse mirrors, makes you want to think she  
Has a thing for you, but wait, wait....  
It hasn't rained for so long, but I still wait for the  
Solitude of her eyes,  
As today I heard that my book is still at the printers,  
And that I will be contacted eventually,  
But I do not understand, for I do not know if I can  
No longer trust the lips of faceless foreign gentlemen,  
But I can endure until I can go back to the amusement rides  
With someone as little as my son, and pretend that is life  
For a day: A day without words, and narcissistic lines,  
The unbearable sedentary muzzle of the caffeine free rivers,  
The broken down swamps I could curtail by the whipping  
Motions of roller-coasters, the fainting prizes, the lure

Of light and games, and to become the motion of a fingertip  
As it swirls the waters of a secret pond.  
Laying in the swimming pool as bright as ether in the  
Backyard of a schoolboy friend who will quickly grow detached  
From the green grass lawns, and the daring nights of Halloween.  
Going nowhere for an entire afternoon can make you  
Feel important, can make you feel the same before you  
Turned out as you are, as you were in kindergarten-  
Still in love but mostly illiterate, as another day bends its light  
Around to the next, and I sit down and  
Read something I can barely understand.

Robert Rorabeck



# Something In Those Woods

Her eyes have purposefully stalled,  
Waiting breathlessly in her carriage in the middle  
Of the noon forest-  
She was on her way to the eastern sea to surf  
And groom like a cat in the crook of sands,  
But what if there was something here she  
Might have missed,  
Something along the familiar paths of woe,  
Something she has always known to be here in  
The gloomy woods of drunken sailors, oh!  
Her powdered bosom heaves, her curls bob like  
Pig's corky tails as she stretches out the cab's  
Perfect window:  
There are dunes and dunes swimming in the trees,  
And great blue ants are fiddling with the dead,  
But, Oh! She must see something that she doesn't see,  
For even the light performs its bawdy pirouettes;  
But what was it, a boy's silhouette? An insouciant fawn?  
What goes traipsing through the marrow of this wood,  
Like an effluvious soldier of her dictionary of favorite words;  
Now she has bit her lip until there is a ruby stain,  
But what she has been feeling she hasn't yet to tell,  
And the shadows are forever boxing, as if she were a present  
They'd wish to slip away; So onward, onward she  
Must hurry, oh! And into the breaking of the shore,  
The sands are ever slipping away, and there, as the sun  
Scalds her rouge lips like a naughty child, she lets the  
Feelings go, but, Oh! There was something in those woods  
Who knew her very soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something Like Tears

The sound of your fellows sound very fine  
On the wharf- they are holding their heads up as  
They swim,  
And looking across the entire pueblo- They are looking  
For the working girl;  
She is already asleep beneath the windmills,  
The tangled roses- and there are no more heroes:  
They have forgotten how to walk:  
They come wobbling in the shoals. They lie on their  
Sides and say the things they can remember underneath  
The sun to say to her. They will not stay very long,  
If they evaporate they will become gun powder:  
They will become gun powder,  
And her heroes will find her and give her new children:  
She will vanish with them into the town,  
Away from her courageous boys- they know, as they  
Are going, she will vanish anyways-  
And so they are like tinsel strung upon a marvelous  
Runway- aware of their quick mortality,  
Their scales shed and glazed upon to rocks  
That seem to resemble something like tears.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something Like That

My aunt showed up today and when she saw  
Me she said I had matured into quite a stud  
And I could have any woman I wanted:  
I tried to get away and she held me and made sure  
She got a good look at both of my sides,  
Like walls on a crimson church,  
And yet she did not change her opinion;  
And she's one of my best looking aunts,  
And quite insane:  
She believes in Atlantis-  
I tried to avoid her for the rest of the time she  
Was there,  
So she couldn't get a good look at me again.  
While I did this I wondered why so many women  
Don't have more brains,  
Or at least balls,  
Because I am in love with them all of them time,  
And I really need something to cling on to,  
Like a wave needs its wreath;  
And then she came and went crazy over her two  
Venal brothers,  
Like rainwater over a red wheelbarrow or something  
Like that,  
But not really; it's just that I'm pretty drunk now.  
And want to finish up now  
And leave this truck for the swings across the tiny,  
Steady street  
Where I will try to feel the moon and think about  
Asking Diana out,  
Before she disappears back into the forest and  
The sea,  
As Jove came riding towards her in the form of  
A really red bull,  
Or something like that.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something Mistaken For A Poem

Alone, like the juvenile plum tree  
Crowned by hungry wings,  
And the sun crawling through  
My limbs like a drunk woman  
Looking for a place to nap,  
This is what I've seen  
High up on the volcanic cap  
Of the waitress' stung nipple:

A poem the butterfly mistook for  
A flower,  
And setting upon it to assist its  
Pollination,  
Realized that it was sickly sweet,  
And not a flower at all,  
For all the flies,  
But a poem, and not one of spring  
And bottle caps,  
But a poem of death leaving nothing  
For the butterfly to perform.  
Thus, the angels continued their  
Migrations down past the black  
Eels and coral,  
Relinquishing the poem back into  
The somber yard where crickets violin  
Beneath the moths and moonlights

It budded forlorn and beautiful  
In the gnarled lap of cypress roots  
Living just two nights  
Before it was devoured by a toad  
Who mistook it for a mantis,  
Saying as it went,  
"I go. I go. At last I go, "  
For even it did not know what it was.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something That Can Never

Nothing good tonight- nothing on the move,  
But the emotionless traffic,  
So I am ready to go to sleep and thankfully for  
Awhile die:  
Each word a spittoon in a nature park,  
Little kids smoking grass who stare like the undecided  
Tide,  
Who have better thoughts than me, because their  
Dreams are yet unreal,  
Their words already young and happening at a steady  
Clip,  
Their professors and kindergarten teachers yet  
Effective:  
Feral girls so beautiful and outlawed, the unpried  
Mollusks in banqueted in sorority on the basalt rock,  
The yet ripe airplanes rippling on their silken stalks:  
And the wind just blows softly enough to muff  
Their hair,  
Never daring to take away their desired wish  
And hand it over to the fates;  
For it is something that can never be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something That They Cannot Understand

Then there were angels upon a stage  
Before you were here  
My wife and her god couldn't understand—  
Sometimes I stand out overweight beneath the nocturnal  
Orange groves and try to figure out just what I  
Cannot comprehend—  
As the infant wakes up under the street lights and  
Looks up at the comet that is already lost—  
The housewives are beginning to kiss themselves—  
And the words I cannot find stand like kindergarteners  
Outside a museum while the sun shines atop a  
Graveyard where my ancestors  
Kiss the dirty knees of the earth  
Hoping that she will finally give them something  
That they cannot understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Something To Lie Down In Bed With Alone

I've saved up my life  
To spend it all at once,  
To live in poverty  
In the diseased fields where  
Coral snakes create patterns in the soul,  
Where my aunt throws spit in my mouth  
And steals my only dollar bill,  
Before she runs off to get married  
And then divorced:  
In the crops of unrecognized fortune,  
Following my grandfather's hand,  
I try to find her naked in the trees  
After nightfall,  
Perhaps crawling up to my room  
To say nothing,  
To speak like a sorrowful owl  
Before it lights off in the enjoyment  
Of small quick shadows from the barn.  
I have seen her,  
Like a speckled fawn out amidst  
The furrows, eating our produce,  
Before my relatives scared her onward  
Into the solitary line of cypress  
Across the highway.  
In the morning, only her footsteps  
Stand still under the Old Testament's sun.  
As we reap what was sown,  
There is not enough time to go after,  
In the mottled afternoon of meandering worth,  
Across the overgrown ditches,  
The unclaimed land  
Of insects and weeds,  
The over fertilized estuaries ripening  
Where I wonder of her doings,  
Free and without a language,  
Eating the blooming things before  
They get too persistent,  
Never suspecting all that I ever saw there  
When she stepped out onto the land,

And in that necessary action gave to me  
Something to lie down in bed with alone.

Robert Rorabeck



# Something Vacillating Just Out Of The Four Corners Of Their Sight

Broken short haired girls I have  
Heard  
Crying their romances above tree line,  
Later in the innings of the third,  
Crippled birds-  
Downed power lines;  
And I am doing my best to approach but  
Not frightening,  
Bringing them cheap wines,  
Hoping to smell their breaths;  
And everything I am doing is not  
Right;  
Their husbands are coming home later  
On with banquets  
And expectations of the fulfillment of  
Their needs;  
Maybe they fell from the wings of airplanes  
Or ceiling fans;  
Maybe they dusted from the Oort Cloud,  
Hypothetical dance hall girls;  
I have lived around them, their floors I've shined,  
And carpets cleaned,  
I waltzed a mean waltz in college around them,  
Sometimes even fetched their eyes  
With the lanky curvature of my unpossessive form;  
But I am to be to them this night as  
With any other,  
Cavalier but esoteric, something vacillating  
Just out of the four corners of their sight;  
So that I might reach them before the hale storm,  
Because the car pools in,  
It is him who they have certainly heard,  
The beefy lipped operas out amidst tilted blue cactus,  
His footsteps all but knowledge fully;  
The snake he enters and shakes the tree;  
And they dive headily, streamlined plastics, the  
Curvatures of Spain- waters dimpling that porcelain,

Freckled and forgetful;  
And I stand outside of their play bequeathing none of  
Their domestic light,  
Until I tend to recede backwards though  
Each blade in the matted field.

Robert Rorabeck

# Somewhere

Airplanes suck the fists of my body:  
They make strange stances in the air: their bodies like silver  
Virgins daring the werewolves who are leaping  
Like the proverbial foxes for all of them.  
And now they all have their chalices, and I saw the mailman yesterday  
While she was walking:  
The mailman was a woman, a woman who had not a single  
Barrett in her hair.  
And so she wasn't much good for a woman- a woman,  
But I still stopped and stared,  
And I remembered high school or where, where  
I was better off somewhere.

Robert Rorabeck

# Somewhere Above The Common World

Pallbearers of bright rubrum multiplying  
In the telltale estuaries—  
Lunatics of flight paths of preternatural  
Fables  
But not a long ways off dolphins counting  
The fins of their dancing,  
As they sped up punctuating caesuras  
Reams of them  
Blue kites cerulean tail fins—and who  
Were they in love with, with the angel  
Bones of goddesses in their  
Bills—They knew so many tricks  
And the right ways home through the carpets  
Of their muse's tears—their parents  
Bringing them home what they could find  
For them,  
With their lunch boxes for the classrooms  
Somewhere above the common world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Somewhere In Orlando

O jealousy of cadavers-  
Here is another one who cannot taste  
The meaning, smiling because he is fully gone:  
An addiction of secrets,  
They place him with the clock  
Above the slender passages they move  
The tourists through, metered and dimed:  
He laughs down pedantically calling  
Out the hours of kerosene lit in his eyes,  
Furtively trying come-ons to the bosoms of blonde;  
How he would like to undo the abstinent,  
Learn about cars;  
But he is stuck in the untrustworthy world  
Of automatons, and might even be plastic,  
But he refuses in his perdition of prohibition,  
Mastered by the talking mouse,  
The laughing dog;  
He gets paid in pieces of eight they scatter like  
Windmills in Omaha,  
And down the echoing river he can hear the laughing  
Sallywags in their murdersome jigs;  
But his place is here, amidst the fake mica  
And the Styrofoam cave,  
And Tommy Sawyer and Huck Finn are cardboard,  
And Jim is juke rubber,  
And Rebecca is a balloon lying in the white teak of riverboats-  
They are serving pizza and little kids fart  
And pull the hair of their freckled sisters,  
And Orientals are taking photographs;  
His cramped bedroom is intestine,  
And smells of stale potato chips and sweaty sneakers,  
And if he could leap down now and say what he was,  
If his jaw wasn't wired shut,  
He'd grab the box of wine and let the vintage  
Spiked with earth and Italian pubis cataract his  
Ribs, like a tongue on a piano;  
If he wasn't made up, and had a will  
Greater than these fools.



# Somewhere Near The Apex Of The Greater And More Somnolent Onward Desert

Drunken cathedrals, this is what you do to me,  
Keep me dry for a very little while  
And then letting in the rains as  
You hum for me;  
And, oh my god, I cant believe I was just with  
That girl,  
Younger than my little sister underneath the plane  
That so very recently some trigger-happy scientist figured  
Out was round;  
And now we swing in ellipses; we swing and come without  
A sound,  
And I wonder what her apartment looks like;  
I think that it should look like a snow white Christmas,  
With so many coats and furs of animals  
That no longer exists, or that should never have existed;  
Tonight, I made love to an incredible creature  
Which was like a defeated fable underneath the playground  
Of those fabulous inventions of man which  
Go forever onward over-leaping the playgrounds of this  
Earth,  
Holding their breath, maybe experiencing harmony,  
Until once or twice again their wings touch down, like  
Butterflies migrating through a truck stop in Texas,  
Warming to their comrades and yet perceiving that their bright  
And yellow death lies somewhere nearer the apex of  
The greater and more somnolent onward desert.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sommeliers

The sad sun sunk in the south.  
The miracle devils bought a new house;  
Their eyes were bluish like throats of courting toads,  
And at night they perambulate the dark curling roads,  
Peer in the jeweled lips of tillandsia, the spears dripping  
Red,  
Then home again to make love in bed....  
While the pines shush them like long, sturdy gentlemen,  
The lions roar beneath the onyx heavens,  
Cats climb the pyramid roof, tails swishing seven,

The sea lapping the docks of mussels fifteen minutes away,  
The clouds billowing upon a dreary rain-day;  
They lay twined in the sheets like pieces of opal yarn  
Snoring on the second story where the doors sway like drooling jaws;  
Out in the dewed yard, each blade of grass is kissing  
The napes and the backs of the fallen angels,  
Crying in the mowed sheaths, hungry again for a shunning home.

Robert Rorabeck



# Song Bird

Defiantly- the little bird refuses song.  
What is he now, without a master, and the spattering  
Of seed: he had always had a home. The cat scarred  
His beak, but still he felt a mistress who gave her charm;  
Who flounced her bosom in the delicacies for every ounce of  
Daylight's navy, who hooked his master around the arm,  
So that they passed around one another equally like  
Siamese twins retreating- to this they encouraged him to warble.  
What made him not hesitate to flee,  
Even as the canon balls are flying?  
But the greater apertures which cooked outside his windows,  
The fluming clouds, the baying seas, each crest and caesura  
Bares repeating:  
And now he rests out on the Cliffs of Dover,  
Each bone as hollow as the reeds rustling, gossiping of the wilder  
Fellows,  
While all the men are back in town betting on the dogs,  
Shaking tickets above their heads, while their wives pour  
It over, the wine from the casks, from the bottles to  
The glass, the vineyards of hidden interests speculated on  
By winsome's lip;  
But the little bird has no more windows, the horizons are  
Fruitful and swaying, each leafy shadow cusped by yellow  
Pools and tapered; and meaning many things, and in each direction  
Turns away, or back again to the wind according;  
Thus the wheat bays on the fields, like a lover in comely tassels;  
But of all these things the bird will not say, for now  
It is left off of its way and all this is even too much to sing of.

Robert Rorabeck

# Song Bird Of A Fist

Our plants rise up like green children through  
The red-haired fire:  
Your body is a tender brook where the fish sweat and perspire:  
And you made it all the way here  
In a wander bound bus when you were merely sixteen,  
And I wonder why I haven't seen you before in my dreams;  
Or if I had seen you before,  
I hadn't colored in the eyes of your children, practicing my  
Second hand romances underneath the saccharine  
Zoetropes of the deep set pines:  
I lay beneath you like a wind chime mouthing off to  
Butterflies in their glass house at the zoo:  
Alma,  
Your eyes have a calm fever of a Siamese pinball game,  
Like helicopters flying in tandem through a cloudless storm to  
Some waypoint of a mirage:  
And if I had a horse, I'd ride out to you and circle around,  
Trying to enchant you with the roaring bouquet of my quiet  
Body's sound:  
I expire to that, Alma, and to become the wild hopes that you  
Have never thought of before:  
And I will never be resurrected again, Alma, until I feel your  
Song bird of a fist gently rasping on my bachelor's door.

Robert Rorabeck

## Song Bird's Trill

If there was another god that you already love  
And if he was not already imprinted with  
My shadow:  
Then take the highway and already go to him,  
And dim in his shadow  
As the try to put out the fire that he artificially made  
Just so that you would come to him  
And I will live in a trailer park just as a  
Fabreche office:  
And you will go to him, giving to him your breakfast  
Of grapefruit—  
But we will already have broken all of his promises-  
And I hope you will know  
That I will fall back into the girls I already have happened  
To love from high school—  
And the administration will not love me,  
But the alligators will grin in their coincide longevity—  
And they will do away with the heroes who happened to  
Try to captivate you every time—but  
I've decided not to die and die either for my  
Grandmother or my mother:  
But I will see them buried—buried—well atop of their  
Perpetual hills- as the forest fires echo,  
As the song—song bird's trill.

Robert Rorabeck

# Song Of Crackling Orchards

Song of crackling orchards—  
Of a rainbow flying over my house the  
Same time a stray cat sharpens herself above—  
Different levels of the atmosphere—  
While windmills wait in their valley along the  
Succulent lips of a sea in which the  
Coral rises in all of the nepotisms of the playground  
Of graveyards she gives to evaporation and  
Metamorphosis beneath the sun until  
Another day is giving all that she has—  
And my father's horses are running—continuing  
And enunciating themselves to a finish line,  
A ribbon, a river—there deer lactate around, drizzling  
To the sand lions, as the panthers hunt the conquistadors  
And they themselves—until a storm calls them  
All indoors—and only a unicorn remains staring for  
A mile over the classrooms I keep trying to describe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Song Of Cypress And Spikenard

You wronged me in a song  
Of cypress and spikenard,

In the somnambulating fog of humming students  
And self-medicated professors.

Always flirtatious, you made me wait outside your  
Dorm, as I drank in the hazy morning.

Couldn't you realize the processes of your education,  
What you were going through,

When we lived together, and ever day was warm and  
Torrential, and we held hands in the zoetrope's carousels.

Now the spilt cherry molts on the seat of the swing,  
A caterpillar never actualized, burned missing.

The failed metamorphosis in the process of those years,  
You got what you wanted,

As the lips of the clock blow away molted fears,  
And Hindus chant and pray on the green lawn where we passed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Song, Prayer, A Ferris Wheel

Alma, you are some trick:

I bought you a cake of blue and green: we ate it all:

We who are all of your men,

Alma- we all love you: we all carry your flag, but I just

Want you to remember me:

Alma, I have an empty bird cage on my coffee table,

Maybe it is waiting for you while I sweat it out,

And you ask me all day who is Sharon, Sharon;

But who is Erin, Alma: who is all of these things, and I told you

That I had written some 4,000 poems and in all of them might be found

The zygotes of resin of tears of maybe 4 or 5 girls,

Alma;

And now you are the first and foremost of all of these girls:

Your eyes as wide and brown as two moons circle, repeating and making

Love

Alma, while Anibal tells jokes and fishes:

Maybe you love Anibal, Alma: maybe you love Armando- maybe you love

Your husband too, but he is always with a machete,

While my thoughts are always with you- I sat with you in your dodge

Charger today, or whatever it was, Alma,

While you ate your whopper with cheese, and you told me your husband

Was upset and might even come looking for you,

And if he came then I should run, but I wasn't really afraid, Alma,

Because see here my gun- Alma, see here my soul fillet for you,

While all of the quietest people go preaching, Alma:

My hands connect in a prayer for you: Alma:

I am not really sure who I am- except I am no longer who I might once

Have been,

And now I only hope that I might be one day for you,

Alma:

A song,

A prayer,

A Ferris wheel.

Robert Rorabeck

# Songs From Across The Oceans

The little places of our hearts' cathedrals  
Kept lit by the show and tell  
Of the faith of  
Bon-fires—  
My wife hums songs from across the  
Oceans,  
And the words dissolve into theatres  
Of metamorphosis—  
I know who you are, strange girl of  
My Hollywood,  
Silhouette still shining from the fireworks  
That keep going off in the places  
We've both abandoned—  
And there is not one sea horse  
Big enough to carry the both of  
Us,  
But we can make a carousel out of the  
Lies am telling,  
And go around and around singing  
To the children of the lovers  
We once left behind.

Robert Rorabeck

## Songs To No One Else

Besides all of these scars,  
Don't I want to be popular-  
Don't I want to travel by foot  
And whistle in the rutted tracks,  
Like any good American boy should  
Want to do that:  
I want to lay out straight off as the sun  
Turns the theatre into blue innocence  
Immaculate,  
Pulls back the bilious weathers, lays a  
Squinting hand and coos to her  
Making the stage ready for butcheries thrown  
Out to the hungry crowds gathered shoeless  
In the invested grass:  
Until soft and blue and speechless,  
I can feel all of that glory just on one side  
Of my face coming down;  
And it is ringing in the greatest absences of  
Family and gossip,  
Which I cherish as I set out, whistling and picking  
The neighbor's apple when there is everything  
Else to eat and no one else around.

Robert Rorabeck



## Soon As Morning

There are so many things that can be said  
To be right, that I can't remember,  
And tonight might as well just be any other night:  
The stars are just as bright,  
And blurred over the constellations of her missing in  
My arms:  
Alma, I wish that you were here, so I could give  
You back your broken charms:  
You made me promise that it was just going to be this  
Once before I made love to you,  
But now I can't remember what I said, and I have  
Your broken gold pooling on my coffee table,  
So come back to me as soon as morning  
And help me remember what it was exactly that we did.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sophie Scholl

Understand that the rain stumbling through  
The trees is like the resistance to the Fuehrer-  
Not yet truly awakened, but even teething wolf-  
Pups draw blood,  
And as she licks the stamps of her rebellion she  
Metamorphoses, both as the elements which will  
Eventually defeat all cities,  
And as young love; and I keep trying out for her  
Regiments, trying to match my boot heel tongue  
To her silky straps,  
So that she'll look up and see me freckled in the poisonous  
Holly and not be afraid- In fact recognize me as  
An old comrade, someone she fought together and rode  
Together bareback,  
And as they turn her away to trial and the firing squad,  
That she should have me somewhere in her heart to  
Bleed out onto the propaganda of snow,  
And in the moment of her lasting exhalation, give me  
Courage to ride out on my bicycle, skipping the uniform  
Classes, past orange groves and green copper cannons,  
Never looking again until I am past the old distinguished  
Forts, releasing how I saw her last into the tidy sea,  
So that as some reflection she might swim away and grow  
On that salty espionage which shall forever roar her name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sophomoric

Here you are  
Crawling on your belly  
Doing the lines of another  
Man's God,

Card tricks to occupy  
The Pope while you  
Crap in his woods.

Trying to use the vocabulary  
You stole from high school  
English's lavatory  
To get the cheerleaders  
To do a four-letter word  
To you:

To spark  
A fire

To F234  
Like chimneysweeps:  
It is an ancient and time honored  
Profession,  
Especially in the Bering Sea  
Between the Eskimo and the Commies  
The tangled pewter coitus,  
The silverware and candelabrum  
Spilled like valuable sex  
Stripped naked on  
Dead polar bears  
Auditioning for  
Tooth-paste commercials

There to turn on the light of  
Their cadmium broom closet  
Clicked under the tongue,  
Swallowing nitroglycerin pills:  
The sudden urge to kiss the Principle  
The perfect cadaver of memory

Lit up with shadowless authority

The salivary glands you test out  
Under the yellow school bus  
Broken down during lunch period.

Spit into the abracadabric key  
Toasting new threats  
That are so fertile orange  
Trees grow in toy orchards  
In lakes of spilled beer  
Along the tabletops,

In great seas of naked abdomen  
New species of dolphin flop  
And squeak like  
Retarded ballerinas

And little see-through men  
Spill out of her brazier  
After she helps you get it done.  
They apologize and swim  
In marathon across the canal  
To safety.

While the teacher's pets scream:  
"Skippers! Skippers! "  
Until the sharpshooters get  
Them dead,  
Then go off to drink Vodka and  
Swing in the moony park all day.

Her iris is a fossilized creature  
In an auburn trench,  
She shrugs and says they  
Were her grandmother's keepsakes

On the concrete under the rain  
For the rest of the day

Paleolithic,  
The beauty only exists

In bedded strata,  
So they cannot figure out  
What to say.  
Their unpleasured souls  
Become waltzing neophytes  
French-kissing  
Pre-socratic philosophy,  
Stuff they won't read about  
Until they dropp out  
Of college.

Her first husband  
Was also her mathematician

But until then,  
Between 5th an 7th period

Their eyelashes the straws of  
green brooms,  
The proletariat,  
Stolen from the witch's coven,  
They bend down and kiss  
The floor,  
They cheer your name in  
Brilliant camaraderie.

They leave by the back door,  
Very silent things cast into  
The budding night,  
They float up high enough  
To spy from trees

And the rest of the school filters out  
Like a tatter of silver pagan festivity,  
For four years,  
The current that somehow  
Never quite existed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sorry Amusement

In my journal entries of deciduous tennis courts,  
I can romance of you, and it doesn't even cost a thing:  
I am so obscure an innocuous,  
That you wouldn't even consider sending a better  
Man to pugilist my rummaged skull:  
I can sit out on the mowed yard and kiss your tawny  
Neck: I can sit out with all the birds who only come  
Down with the octogenarian traffic,  
And in winter watch the corrosive red bloom,  
And hear the waves out of one year  
From the booth where I can sit all alone, eyes to the side  
Eating plantains and flat steak:  
And the bicycles who come by sometimes in anorexic  
Parades, go just as easy to her interlocking sea:  
That is what she does, and she sleeps childless with  
Her husband very successful and mostly amused-  
She doesn't have time to practice Latin, or remember  
How I sat in her vicinity waiting for the batting eyes of  
The brunette to return from her father's quiet abuses;  
And I don't really know what I am saying-  
The dogs are sleeping as my fingers are playing,  
Across the scars without any freshwater amusements,  
Without your faith I guess I'll starve,  
But it isn't really any excuse for this sorry amusement.

Robert Rorabeck

# Soul Of Mexico

Daydreams of airplanes  
Dredges in unison: and then while  
Walking up, we are all in  
Mexico-  
Like virgins across the frontera  
With blood in their skirts:  
And maybe by the tenth grade  
You were making love,  
And holding out by the waterfronts  
While the terrapins and  
Giant African  
Tortoises were making love  
Ambivalently underneath  
The broken down school buses-  
While the rest of your class was  
Having lunch  
And the ruins held out ambivalently  
As if starting by themselves,  
Turning around in the  
Droughts of nothing by  
My own hands, and the  
First muses of my love, as you wre  
Returned home,  
Ambivalently love struck;  
Alma without a soul-  
When did you first make love to him;  
When did you first come home to  
Me;  
My Alma, and my soul of Mexico.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sound At The Doorsteps

They will make a sound at the doorstops of your  
Castles, even if you never drive this way—  
This is how it will turn out:  
You will get around the end of my old neighborhood,  
And collapse next to the antlers of a chinaberry  
Tree,  
And then say to all of the forgotten woods that it not  
Alright to be here,  
And the blue gills will burp and hiccup in the canal—  
And all of the children will seem to move  
Sideways in the canals of their high schools—  
And their mutual bereavements will continue to  
Pretend to be so unreal—  
And maybe you will find her past out one night while on  
A delivery:  
Maybe she will be collapsed next to a watermelon in  
Her negligee:  
Maybe she will have collapsed in the middle of a game of  
Battleship,  
And in her dreams made it halfway up to State College  
Where she inevitably messed around and  
Played with herself—until the summer came,  
And all of the sororities rode white ponies and continued  
To gesticulate to their continually pregnant grandmothers  
Who were still luxuriating in their confederacies—  
But, otherwise—the moon got out early and shone over  
The hallucinations where the busses were turning around,  
And you spied them like an eagle, like an osprey,  
Until your true love got out of one of them—  
And she touched the ground herself—and disappeared like  
An angel in a sea of burning promises—  
The fuses disappearing into the maelstroms that consume  
All of the bones of the wayward marionettes—  
As they still struggle upwards from the sea—delighting in  
The nocturnal perfumes the lighthouses have bought and  
Sold to them, giving them the vanishing luxury  
As the sea swells against the car ports and the misspelled hotels  
That become so filled that only the virgins of the streets  
Are allowed to enter in.



Robert Rorabeck

# South Beach

Zombies and ex-presidents,  
Kissing cousins, try to make friends  
With little girls in bright blue bonnets  
Waiting for their mothers by the bus stop  
Under the banyan trees in South Miami-  
They all go together unaccompanied  
By the sun, to shopping malls where  
They used to sell their blindfolded brothers as slaves  
Who could not see the desperate Cubans  
In their rafts being circled by sharks  
Being circled by the Coast Guard so close to South Beach-  
Here pink fellows play Russian Roulette  
With the venereal diseases of their loneliness:  
Its cliché, but they all have bichon frises as pets,  
And sing in dresses in the cabaret on Tuesdays  
And live in lonely little apartments  
Overlooking parking lots, overlooking the sea  
Where spotty mermaids, the part time whores,  
Wash their scabby knees in the salt and sing  
Melodies of lost memories, to the little girls' parade,  
All done up in blue and pink ribbon,  
Like packages with legs when they grow up  
For the influential men, politicians and  
Flesh hungry zombies, the sororities, like veil,  
The tiny stalls they are made to live in, and taught  
To bedazzle over looking the sea,  
Waiting for the bus to pick them up after shopping:  
The zombies, ex-presidents, little girls, and me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Souvenirs

Learning to taste the fiberglass of a reckless void,  
Or that there is something beautiful in the sea  
That really doesn't belong to her, but  
Just in the words of her high school that has blown  
Long since away like so many masturbatory scripts:  
That only the alligator remains,  
Piecemeal but fully long in the tooth outside the cobalt  
Bridal showers of carports that never have to leave:  
Like the fidelity of youth that ripens all around its sorts  
On into middle age and the contours awaiting a body  
In death;  
And homelessly, swaying like a de masted sail from the  
Voyage of loquacious heroes,  
She goes along, muse-like but untrustworthy  
Fetching the boys and the dogs to her art, calling to the male  
Figures all around who are craning their necks beneath her  
To give off musk and gold wishes at this wonderful dream,  
Like the ending of a movie above the trees;  
And she languishes, nameless and quivering, with what is left  
Of her delicate hand pressed to her forehead as she  
Faints;  
And gets stuck in the branches and as has to look for awhile at  
The higher up dreams of airplanes, as we clamber up together  
Like dishonorable firemen to kiss her lips as refreshment,  
Or to pull her apart for souvenirs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Space Is Meaningless

I listen to the old man.  
He says, "Space is meaningless.  
Observe." He reaches out his hand  
And pulls a young girl from the air.  
She looks like Goldilocks  
Except her eyes are hungry and real.  
She falls upon him, saying,  
"Where have you been for so long,  
My love? "  
He tells her, "Experimenting. See.  
Space is meaningless.  
I have always been here."  
"Whatever, " says the empirical  
Goldilocks. "You've always been  
So strange. Don't leave me again."  
And then they embrace in a deep, wet kiss  
For many years, proving, I guess,  
That space is meaningless....

Robert Rorabeck

# Space Shuttle Of Her Thigh

Going down, space shuttle of her thigh,  
See what they have  
Recorded of her things: Barrett in her  
Hair,  
Celestial orchard demoting constellations  
Like grapes  
Above the pristine prism yards-  
They are going back to school on her:  
They are holding up their hands  
In class: what atmosphere a ferris wheel  
Makes while it is in town,  
Transcendental across the soporific alligators  
Who have been there for awhile.

Robert Rorabeck

# Spain

I started drinking before the plane left  
The rainy tarmac,  
And after I lost count we were in Spain,  
And the hills were busy  
And the cities were filled with museums.  
I got a tattoo in Madrid,  
And my aunt kissed her old professors  
Who had killed the dragon,  
And we visited the shore where she had  
Made love with an actor a year ago,  
But I didn't know about that then....  
There were orange groves like silken armies  
Under the moon,  
And higher up Roman ghosts marching in  
The ruins, and women I couldn't see but  
For their hair flowing above the earth,  
Women on bicycles going away;  
I thought I almost heard the poet whispering  
From beneath the olive trees somewhere  
Off the way, but I was so drunk,  
And the hills were so dry they dragged down  
The clouds and drank until the horizon  
Was indistinguishable from the mauve canvas,  
And the ways went around her like ribbons  
Down into the ancient sea,  
Where the artists took young girls and drew  
Their outlines, and filled them in with salt,  
And red tears dyed from the sea;  
And I thought I saw a girl I didn't know,  
I still think of, but I was so drunk,  
And the woman we stayed with was married  
And had her art exhibited in Japan and Denmark,  
Boats so sad that they warmed into the docks;  
On New Years she called down with her friend  
That she was in love,  
But I took to the streets, and the poets whispered,  
And people gathered and spoke their tongues of  
Marble ham,  
And I fell in love with all of them, in different parts,

Until I fell back home and landed,  
And sobered and eventually graduated from high school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Spanish For Red

I love to put you on and do your make-up,  
Spindle your hair up into a dream that grows after death:  
Kiss you with curses under the race-tracks and  
Mountains- Watch you, aproned, serving tourists  
Ice-cream cones, like cows saltlick;  
And I can't write words that appreciate you enough,  
But in general we've breathed the same atmosphere;  
And I stamped your hand in high school with my dirty heel,  
Which was some sort of absurd affection- I'm sure  
You don't remember- These things that continue to play  
Out as my lonely dysfunction just due south of you:  
If you read other poets, you would know the great discourteously  
This is- For this is just a fit of my cuckolding, and  
I can barely spell, anyways: Instead, enjoy men who can run  
Fast, who might leap and dive in jaunty sport for you:  
Anything you can be better sure of than this- This is but the  
Curse of a lonely sort of king or grey-haired prince, unhealthy,  
Having killed all the dragons to try and sough his friends from  
Their weeping fangs- A curiously chivalrous orthodontist,  
But otherwise an absolute novice to anything emboldened:  
He who lasted twenty-nine rounds with a punchy butterfly only  
To succumb in the end to the dark-eyed suppositions of an  
Unpublished fairy-tale: It is true, in his fits he has climbed a great  
Many mountains for you, and gone far above the stunted heads  
Of a great many tourists, and looked around and wept for you,  
And said to himself that there she is- she must be somewhere around;  
And it is true that you are living in the only state that can  
Properly reflect your beauty, where my mother was born-  
Soon the aspens will be changing for your birthday; but, otherwise,  
This man is such a fool- he who can barely carry a tune, who drinks  
On Sundays and on swing-sets, who looks for you everywhere he  
Can think of, thinking yes you must be somewhere nearest to him,  
But you are never anywhere found.

Robert Rorabeck



# Sparrows

Airplanes are shooting silver arrows.  
I've heard them whistling from their barrels.  
Some women ride on them,  
And some men,  
But hardly any sparrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Special And Most Secret Girl

Killing yourself by the sad blooms of eastern  
Exits,  
And now it is because it is really here and it really exists  
That it blooms,  
While I have my house and no cul-de-sacs and nothing else  
That can be real;  
And all of the bottle rockets have shot off,  
And the children are touching themselves and saying their  
Private names unto the school buses;  
And nothing that was ever said here will ever survive:  
There are only trains and the sad penumbras of whatever airplanes  
Are that cannot be disproved;  
And it just goes on and on, I swear it does-  
And the light somehow happens onto the room;  
I swear it does- but other than that there is only bliss, and school  
Girls,  
And the triangles that will always dissolve and disappear,  
While the mountains will finally congratulate themselves,  
For somewhere far hidden upon their slopes they have all  
Found a special and most secret girl.

Robert Rorabeck

# Species Of The Flesh

When people handle the  
Species of the flesh,  
They think of nothing but their  
Long lost childhood  
Vanished into space—  
At a truck stop in New  
Mexico, I pull over to  
Sleep, as the world wraps  
Around and around the  
Pull of an insignificant  
Star,  
You hold your newly born  
Husband close in sleep and  
Call his name instead of  
Mine,  
As the sea breathes like a  
Lover of your state just  
Off to the east,  
If you cared to listen—  
I cannot hear it at all  
Because it will not say  
My name anymore, the  
Same as your love;  
The easy way you abandoned  
The thorny garden we  
Grew—In the weedy underbrush  
We forgot to tend, but for  
You now the bloom of adult  
Life has begun  
And you can breathe easy  
And not have to strain  
To listen for the sea,  
Because the same sound comes  
From your lover's  
Immediate lips—  
I have nothing but scars  
And time,  
And no place to move towards,  
Because all the towns of this space

Are so similar  
That I forget myself.  
Abandoned first by you and the  
By the distance of time, a drifter,  
I can only drive on,  
Sleeping alone the lonely nights  
In the way stations of forgotten men,  
To awake in  
The morning to an insignificant  
Star,  
And then to drive on.

Robert Rorabeck

# Species Of The Yet Awakened World

The last thing the downed pilot sees  
Is the octopus' inky fear;

His victor confesses, he relives the startled  
Eyes of the man he killed every night;  
Every night with the medal pinned to his chest,  
The honorific of ace tacked to his name;  
Only took him fifteen minutes in the frantic battles of Guadalcanal

His wife with him warm against his toes,  
Her female heart beating staccato against his male heart,  
His children down the hall in their mortgaged rooms;  
The lights are out but everything is fine,  
The crop grows better when the moon is full,  
And the owl has his mice in the loft of the barn,  
To which the cats confess they would have liked the meal

Every night he sees the man he killed,  
Who would have killed him,  
Now just the bones flooded by the inky fear,  
Left to settle beneath the Asian mermaid's fanciful boudoir  
These fifty years, his enemy of nameless song,  
Of the perpetual twenty years, the eternal warrior of a dead emperor

This is his soggy psalm:  
He is still there waiting for the victor's living eyes to conceal  
The light, for him to wake up in the wavering afterlife;  
His pinprick of existence repeating in the tracing incendiaries  
Which smoked him, until he fell like a misappropriated angel  
Anonymously concealed in the nameless archipelagoes  
Which happened fifty-years ago,

Amidst the time-less alligators and spawning mosquitoes  
Which happen there still,  
Though the men and their machines have cleared out

So the dead man, he lives still,  
As a tiny part of the hero's soul, who shot him down  
Fifty-years ago, and will live on until

That old warrior's eyes fail to open and thus remember  
The man he killed all those decades ago,  
Now like a failed lover keeping time in the lightless skull;  
Now like a faithful brother, keeping time until thus unawakening,  
They meet each other in the slow waves of the other world  
Contained in just a moment's breath,  
And amber gunfire,  
Like insects frozen in tree sap,  
In the whitely torn clouds above the shimmering abyss,  
Recovered by the species of a yet awakened world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Speckled Bellies Of Leaping Aeroplanes

Tonight there are people on airplanes over  
The ocean, and men who stay up all night long  
In emptied shopping malls, and endless wayward traffic,  
And children who will never go home:

Near the swaybacked caesuras in a little house, they kiss and  
Penetrate, the girl I once laid on the shore  
Of the ocean where the old viaduct walked into  
The teal waves musselled and worn,  
Where we used to smoke exeunting 7th period  
History. My oldsmobile was cherry red and leaked  
Fumes out the backseat, a cheap high,  
And where the waves didn't touch there were  
Burrows of swashbuckling crabs;

I pretended one  
Was Jordan's sister, all speckled and clean the  
Way she used to sunbathe near the family's pool,  
The collie nuzzling up to her warm breasts, like  
Vanilla muffins under a turquoise bikini,  
And I'd watch her after playing videogames, salivating  
As if on saltwater taffy. I'd stay up on school nights  
And watch anime at 4 am, hide in the Florida holly  
Until the bus crawled by and made a circle around  
The wildlife preserve, ride my Huffy back to the  
Five acres, and watch a Bruce Lee movie  
Until my dreams resumed;

My father's horse  
Was struck by lightning, a month after I finished selling  
Fireworks with Bill Tulk, who used to ride bulls,  
And now he is losing his house, and his wife is named  
Chris, and he was arrested and thrown in jail for  
A drunken evening bobbing in Gainesville while I  
Rode under the palms to my classes, and despised the  
Feminist professor for insulting Holden Caulfield;

Even after I graduated, I got drunk and passed out beside  
The library and dreamed that I had written books

And were now in there like eggs in a hen house, and  
We cracked them open and ate them salted and with  
Hot sauce,  
And afterwards we'd kiss, our lips like mollusks  
Sticky from the undercooked yoke,

so when my mother cries while fixing  
Peanut-butter and jelly sandwiches,  
weeping that there is nothing else to eat and my  
Poetry should be but the enjambment of logs spilling  
Into the mouth of a vague river, mumbling, I can only say  
To her to close her eyes, and at night on the roof  
She can learn kung-fu and float from tree-top to tree-top,  
Should she learn to scissor her legs blissfully, and  
Swing her arms like cranes, and from those  
Boughs laugh and practice her own style of martial  
Arts, and look up to the speckled bellies of leaping  
Aeroplanes.

Robert Rorabeck



# Spider-Web Octopus

My gray hair  
Against your  
Excited chest-  
Running through the pumiced  
Valley,  
My spider-web octopus;  
My scars  
- Like open red  
Mouths filling  
Your areolas - lapping  
Like newborn cats your  
Corrugated and rosy  
Saucers-  
Whose mother are you now,  
And did you leave your friends to  
Join me in this room,  
Into this bed-  
Or am I only a dream?

Robert Rorabeck

# Spilling Their Philosophies Of Ladies' Magazines

Dogs in hell get boring-  
Bare-chested, bruised, she is made up of  
The darker colors of escargot,  
Where serpents coil protective of their bright  
Knowledge,  
Incest of shadows balled underneath the antebellum  
Swings- Mailmen who defeat it all,  
Estranged wives with hair-lips displaced into  
The trailer parks needing new engines,  
Never take down their sad Christmas Lights,  
And I display these wrists for her,  
Wondering if she has any tools,  
Or if she might cook a hot meal for me,  
Spill together several mammals-  
But all these things are just images like vampires  
Left out in the falling snow,  
Bright red tricks of carnivorous flowers-  
The things that Baudelaire had to say- A blade  
In Marlow's eye,  
Revealing the limited perspective of cowboys  
To little girls hop scotching in Bellefontaine,  
Malingering curls do no good  
When the finger is done with its fidgeting,  
Even a vast vocabulary cannot spell the profit made  
From Appalachian bootlegging-  
The outlaws stripped of earth and education,  
Plastic flowers stymieing entire kingdoms of apoplectic  
Ants;  
And I await in the dark shuttered of any number of  
Suburban foreplay, drinking my thing, even while knowing  
That the agents who could make this happen  
Have better and more endowed young things  
Who are beautifully spilling their philosophies of ladies'  
Magazines,  
To fondle galloping on one designer suited knee,  
Areolas arousing like sand dollars becoming revealed in  
Clearwater, to waste their time on.



# Spindrels Of Cornucopia

Risking the subtle night,  
Kings and fish go to sleep,  
Recognized or eaten by every man who  
Comes along,  
Death stealing their gold  
Or anything that might be of value.

In autumn, not far away from the shipwrecks,  
On the little beach they hold class,  
The girls and the clams,  
Trying to sing to one another,  
Trying to make some money—  
Ones with lazy eyes and ones with pearls  
In their mouths:

Both of their orifices are opened:  
Creches for little children and jewelry:  
She swings her head back in the windowless class  
And her insouciant presence performs to  
The little boys around her—

She is at home in her mind:  
Spindrels of seashells and castles  
Cornucopia the forest that no one else can see:  
She is failing out, but to her each day opens  
In Spruce and Fir and Evergreen:

She is her own god and mine.  
She excites me in my sleep. I ride my bicycle perpetually  
To find her outside of her window,  
The cats on the roofs and the moon having my back;  
But time proceeds to tell it tale  
And now even the beautiful girls are too old to stay  
Up late enough and listen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Spittooned Cabinet Of Aquatic Junk And Roe

I died for you,  
And the sea came over, and whispered, burnished,  
That I had lied for you,  
And I don't wear jewelry- and I just want a kiss  
From something that isn't the forest and  
Sky,  
Something mammalian and quite real on roller-skates  
And tinfoil.  
Wear Florida holly and ask me to commit to lactating  
Suicide:  
I will put my gray head in the lions mouth and show  
You a soda-pop decapitation;  
I will show you how to assassinate crocodiles and pythons  
Belly fat on rabbits and house cats;  
And I will somnambulate for you for awhile,  
If we both don't own bicycles, because they are better  
Stuff and can take us both the blue sand dunes  
At a quicker rotation;  
And we can learn science and expose the pearly opulence  
Of your thighs skirted geometry: Or, if you don't like  
The days vocabulary of foreplay, punch me in the eye  
And give me matching pare- make me darkly beautiful,  
Mask me for the ball, cheat me for Christmas and tie me to  
The tracks under the tannenbaum- just don't go out with other  
Boys, don't even smile for other boys; or at least don't  
Show me the evidence- and now I am hungry-  
If you say you love me, look me straight in the eye and give me  
All the attention of your indisputable horoscope,  
And I will send you flowers again, and spit blood and swear  
And feed my flesh to your litter- but I must go now,  
Because the cops are coming, bleeding colors and sounds;  
I didn't want to mention that I am a wanted man,  
Hoping that you would prove it first- Now I have to  
Run, but it will be quite easy, now that I know your secrets,  
Because I am a clever boy and  
I have this gun.

Robert Rorabeck

# Spokes Of Tangled Bicycles

And the rivers get up while  
The ball bounces,  
And god swings down his hand, scooping up  
The jacks in the forest  
As the pinwheels spin- and the cowboys and  
Indians take turns lying down on the  
Box springs between the  
Acetylene canyons- and if you've been  
A good boy, they give you this:  
And if you've been a bad boy, they give you  
That,  
But you go home to your trailer parks  
Anyways,  
And sell Christmas trees for your father,  
Yawning up through the branches like the spokes  
Of tangled bicycles-  
Scribbling the scrimshaw that tattooed your  
Grandfather-  
And the skeletons grin- and the kites  
Take flight,  
As you close your eyes and enfold around her,  
Going to bed for that very night.

Robert Rorabeck

## Spring-Time's Flaxen Orgy

My imperfections are stilted for the muse:  
The deficient vocabularies  
I am still learning to sing:  
The airy duct my betters use,  
To come and go bare-assed in the burning sky:  
They don't even think of modesty,  
For their poesy's diction excuses anything:  
Their lines are without modicum of fallacy,  
Even though their phalluses are still  
The shriveled earthy things of mortality,  
It matters not;  
For the phallus of their opulent lines  
Is better than equine;  
And they pollinate the learned sororities  
Like randy studs wild in spring-time's flaxen orgy-  
Each receptive woman in studious bud,  
Bare-bosomed with horn-rimmed glasses:  
They fellatio the masters like bucolic maidens  
Filling the wooden pails with milk  
Spilt from mouth to mouth,  
As if in no hurry to extinguish the blaze-  
Turning the hidden stacks into a bullpen  
Where I imagined the published poets go  
One by one, for book signings and other  
Expressions of gratitude:  
Greeted in privacy by the blushing fair complexions  
Of their most grateful muses,  
The willing paramours of the unblemished rhyme.

Robert Rorabeck

# Spying From The Distances Of My Ambiguous Library

And aren't we going where we are all going-  
In weather or war,  
Young men's hearts bloom, exploded  
The corsages for the proms their patriotisms  
Had to miss,  
Bees or maggots-  
Lying in a field so beautiful with tetanus,  
The rusted cars filled with mottled pornography,  
Young women naked in moldy bread baskets,  
And far above the crooks of leaning Australian pines,  
The cripples like bad teeth being pushed down by  
The ocean's not far off exaltations  
In a green mouth: And I don't know why I am  
Doing this,  
Trying to call up the ghosts that are still living  
Pollinated in a comely field on campus,  
Riding their bikes around, their mouth-honey open  
Waiting for that divine epiphany, or the addiction  
Of a cigarette-  
I loved the way she'd walk around, bursting through  
The doorways of vane-weather halls,  
Never minding the great fronts being pushed through,  
What the expeditious thresholds denoted of her animal:  
The cereus cavalries in romantic equipage;  
It was the intimate time of intelligent feeling,  
And she pricked the short hairs of my inherited forearms  
Like telegraphed electricity;  
And by these means, these letters of unequaled dusk,  
I mean to come back to her, and spy from the distances of  
My ambiguous library, or to smell her swimming naked in  
The chlorinated ghetto when she had the time,  
Because she is now vanished, extinct, and professional-  
Well-suited and married, having gone off to  
Give birth in the urbanized strata of important destinations,  
Tennis courts, and swimming pools,  
Kitchens with wine racks, gym memberships,  
All the other amenities satisfactorily gratified into wherever it is we all  
Hope to be going.





# Staged In Witchcraft

I am a dime by any number:  
I am alone-  
My shoulders and cheeks are freckled  
By the sun:  
And I am alone:  
I am alone, flipping like the picture books of  
Zoetrope's  
Through the conundrums of my cathedrals:  
I am alone:  
I alone:  
But I am bivouacked beneath Hillary's Step,  
And I just plan to believe here:  
And I just plan to stay here, anymore:  
While any number of any number  
Has been masturbating itself toward any door:  
And now you know just why  
I stand here, holding my  
Bicycle just like a sweetheart, waiting for the  
Door of heaven to swing,  
And the ribcage of my beloved to hinge back into  
Me like the homecoming of  
A racecar:  
Waiting for her to swing back into me- as the  
Golden candelabrum twinkles through  
The graveyards of the pigmies underneath the  
Chandeliers of the oh-so pitiful foyer:  
As it so happens, it is all staged in witchcraft-  
As the fireworks ignite warlords across  
The floorboards- and another holiday happens  
Upon us,  
And you, three fingered- don't have to believe  
In any of us anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stain Glass

Patterns of apertures and loss.  
The ship's guts spill the diamonds into the waves.  
For a second,  
The fish glitter unexpectedly before  
They fade again into the abyssal wound.

Across the street,  
The children do not play together anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stain-Glass Window

A sinkhole's limestone nipples  
Aeroloed by fern and  
Evergreen—  
Little rabbits nibbling off  
Her jewelry—  
Spiders spinning ghostly bouquets—  
In the quiet reservoir—  
Deaf and dumb awakens—  
Waters recall the avenues  
Underneath the ullulating churches—  
A fox yawns—shifty eared,  
Dissatisfied,  
Remembering the mermaid he  
Once saw swimming beneath the keyholes,  
Her body a stained-glass window  
Looking out to sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stamen Of A Blind Man

Words on the lips of  
A stamen of a blind man—  
Rolling back and forth  
In a movie theatre that  
Is trying to make love  
To the moonlight over a dog track—  
With foam on his lips,  
And airplanes in her hair—  
The beautiful narcolepsy of woman  
Consumed by a bee hive—  
Or the beautiful if fathomable lies  
Of prostitutes—  
Well, you don't have to go around  
Here anymore,  
But I see you sometimes, fashioning  
You own games,  
Like glowing hooks fashioned to  
Bring down the grown angels from  
Their twenty feet of sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Starless Estuary

Personable are the rainbows over the school yards  
That survived into yesterday:  
But my grandmother is buried up on that hill,  
Kissing the sisters in the movie theatres  
Against their will:  
But I suppose they were meant to be here:  
And they are here,  
As the waves come in to the busy traffic-  
As I go to school:  
It is a nightmare to go to school, but I go:  
And I have show and tell:  
It is a presumptuous hell, but they get it right,  
Because they've got tails to tell,  
As the daylight burns, as the engines turn,  
And it feels alright to finally believe, that they'll  
Be turning home again-  
As the night surmounts the stars- and the beautiful  
Pageantry becomes absolutely absurd-  
The Ferris Wheels enjoy the night because it is  
The only thing that they are made for-  
And it is a beautiful, starless estuary- and it is  
Something that I certainly do not deserve.

Robert Rorabeck

## Starting Out Anyway

I could start out any way,  
But not the way the traffic moves, like  
A careful tide, a faithful ebb and flow,  
Depositing the silts to and from so many  
Houses, so many toy yards like costume  
Jewelries, lustrous under the street lamps  
As the moon. Rather I would start out  
Working, even panhandling, but calling your  
Name is always the procession to and from the  
Vicinities of your major organs, your legs and  
Hips and that mesmerizing sway: We are  
Open so late, and we sell so many things,  
I don't even care who knows: Its good business  
To say these things to you, to record them as they  
Come off the tips overactive nerve-ends like  
Flumes off of mountains, like tall naked women,  
Their breasts beading water above the steam.  
This is how I think of you, even in Africa or on  
Mars, places I have never been on you, but other men  
Have explored and made names for themselves because  
They have braved you. Even if I come after them,  
Even if I have little else to say, it would be enough even to  
Be guided atop of you, or to bare your second or third  
Child, and raise them in that ilk of deltas connected by  
Dog parks and fat iguanas: To send our children out at  
Dusk after school, to shoot hoops, and to make love when  
They are out doing their same, to squeeze your breasts  
And call you all the same things I thought of you as  
As early as high school; but now I must go out into  
The night and howl, and cry your name as a wounded dog  
Cries for a wayward master, as the traffic flows across the  
Insouciant traffics of concrete: so I cry I love you yet again,  
And you say so what, and go back inside and shut the door.

Robert Rorabeck

# Starved On The Dreams

I wont see you now,  
My eyes have cracked  
On the edge of the bowl  
And they run up the hill  
Away from the obligations  
You would give  
With the strange sugars you  
Would mix them in only  
To die with another boy by  
The moon dipping into the  
Mediterranean Sea  
In North Eastern Spain  
Where trains drive through Christmas  
With stolen guitars  
Made by grandfathers  
When I am away;  
No, I will not enjoy with your  
Ingredients,  
All the parts you take in your  
Room  
When you turn on and off  
When even dwarves start small  
Where the green ants dream  
They cover the places on your  
Body I would like to cover,  
The places you hang-up at night  
And cloth in the birthing daylight  
Of cliffs  
My body climbs away from you  
Now  
My eyes go way up the cliffs  
Above tree-line where the  
Angels hook them to the  
Burden of dreams  
And they run up from the sky  
The first remembered tears  
Of a young boy caught and  
Starved on the dreams.





## Starving In One Afternoon's Ferality

Unequitable with practicality—abandoning the major highways,  
And practice this craft in the woods—  
Underneath and wetted by the lactates of mountains—  
Rejoining the motherly void—habitats of lights without  
Tongues—  
Fluted throats that call for love wildly passionate—  
More unrequited than the perfect choice of words—  
Clouds billowing like an imaginary fire stoked by the lust of  
The gods—  
Rams' skulls and arrowheads diademing and glittering  
Upon the apex—  
Almost leaving this world, starving in one afternoon's  
Ferality—  
Earning no money but needing no possessions—  
Proof of which they will blind all of the others not to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# State Funded Poetry

I read my own words like masturbating.  
Sometimes I am disgusted with myself I  
Do it so much,  
And I can't spell, and I seem to repeat  
Myself, especially when a spikenard is trying  
Its damndest to shoot out my cheek,  
And each line tends to be for one woman  
So hung over and belching, that it isn't  
Even funny.... In fact, if pathetic had a whim,  
You could find it secreted like a condiment  
In most of my words, thick and runny ruining  
More subtler textures,

But sometimes, I think too how sad it will  
Be, if a few of my finer words should not find a way out  
From the wood chipper's maul, the fallow temperatures  
Of mediocrity, the mildew and rime of disuse  
Through multiplications of seasons,  
Where the unpublished sit without fingerprints in  
The half-eaten book stacks,

Rather, let them out as they should be,  
Not the roomy flume saccharine to greeting cards,  
But chiseled on the convict's tomb,  
State funded poetry, or etchings on the park bench  
From the work a day arsonist,  
Or lovers who have long since abated, their names  
Tattooed in the flesh of a scotch pine they once picnicked  
Under, like in the fingernail paint and lipstick,  
In the booth at the pizza parlor in Gainesville, FL,  
Where we once went to down from the apartment,  
Seven years ago before you were married and took a hyphenated  
Last name, and your government position.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stealing Everything That I Prayed To Find

Day by day this body awakens, flatulently  
Renewed,  
Like your body, an old friend, misplaced,  
Remembered,  
But somehow remembers to pick your sisters up from school,  
While the oranges grow in the orchards  
Underneath the hills of Spain; and you have had your breakfasts  
Of lovers,  
And you lie with him now, after he has done at cards and  
Smoking,  
And his donkey ears have almost become comely enough for  
You to remember to love him,  
Alma:  
While I am still up under the copper garments of another ungodly  
Warf, being persuaded by the cat or the fox  
To bury what gold I have left on the  
Beach,  
While my uncle or my father is getting filthy rich;  
But if I am really lucky enough, I will spend all of my last Tuesdays  
With you,  
Cradling you in the obnoxious sea, because you cannot swim,  
And then writing about: how you strip and wear my shirt  
And we make love: why we still make love even while he calls,  
While your children  
Are away at school, like educating fairytales,  
Until everything finally has to pull away, to pick up and uproot  
From my heart,  
The way my parents left me, or the way my dogs still pine in  
Arizona:  
Because you are as brown as a gypsy, stealing everything that I prayed  
To find.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stealing My Beautiful Song

All of the bodies bivouacked- in fact they are a family  
So many reasons above the street:  
Right under the stars, a husband and a wife who do not  
Love anymore,  
Who spend each day together in a cloudless hope,  
Losing limbs- never once speaking of love,  
Their children spread out beneath them:  
Roped to them in this disaster of mud and sticks:  
Hanging down the cold face,  
Learning how to go to school and read, and to become estranged  
At recess through the fickle apertures  
Of where they are placed to belong; I, loving their mother,  
But so far beneath them- too far beneath them to do  
Any good- too mortal, too imperfect, the wind howling  
To her from the countries of her birth,  
Calling her home down through the calderas of other paths:  
Through new green ways where other bears and galaxies live,  
Luxuriating her brownest of shoulders,  
Persuading her back into her pueblos just as surely  
As mountain lions eating my throat, and stealing my beautiful song.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stealing Things From Kindergarten

It turned out that something happened along  
The sky.  
I was sweating, but not going home, but  
Roaming-  
The fire was chasing the foals beneath me-  
And the blue cats had gone to sleep underneath  
The broken down school buses-  
If there was a greater vision, it was a long ways  
Off,  
And the briars of the zoos kept me at a distance:  
There was Mexico, and her brown body cajoling,  
Like a different species-  
A goddess of milkweeds; and I was only stealing  
Things from kindergarten-  
There she was across a great ocean,  
Causing a sky to burn with tears.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stewardess Haiku

With those legs why are'  
Nt you serving drinks on  
Airplanes- You could fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stewardess Of Rich Dimes; Or, Go F- Yourself

I am now a conquistador in the peat,  
Chewing his lip,  
Looking at feet:  
And there is nothing newsworthy up in the avenues  
Of sky:  
I guess I loved you, but I just want to die,  
A paper airplane tossed on half-course,  
A rind of vermilion amusement fed to the lips  
Of a horse:  
And I just want to die,  
Or I want to skip school,  
Want to bend down the tree rings into hell-  
Either I want or need more straight liquor;  
Either I want or need these thoughts about her,  
And the unicorns transform,  
And the neighborhood is a sea all about her:  
And I just want to F- her,  
To write down her in junctures-  
But what does it mean to be a captain of such dysfunction,  
When I would have rather skipped school using her hand  
Tightly to glide, to skiff in a canoe,  
To go past the easements of housewives, to hold her still,  
To crack shells with her,  
To make her real- and really mine- to commit suicide  
By inducing the homeopathic coral snake to milk my  
Wrist,  
To finally lay down and see- the ruby sea anemones  
Basking half tossed beneath the pines;  
A dozen of them like a rosy sorbet,  
Like the handmaidens of Hera-  
A goddess of roller skates and highways,  
A stewardess of rich dimes, who I'd rather not be around  
To believe in.

Robert Rorabeck



# Stewardess-Trapeze

Good words on hikes,  
On mountains that will never see,  
And storm clouds above the poet's reach:  
Give me naiads tag teaming on country  
Bicycles,  
And a wife that is telescopic, who can be  
Folded up in case,  
And Billy the Kid hidden in a thousand lakes,  
A thousand tears of sympathetic Indians:  
Give me smooth stones to  
Sell,  
Or pretend to tell fortunes with,  
Like used cars:  
Give me a habit of spikenard and a plane ticket  
To Spain-  
Give me a decade of a worm hole,  
And my life back again, better explained-  
Declassify me as sad,  
And the most diminutive of planets,  
And a female body soft, wreathing juxtaposed  
To my own body,  
The coitus of the rapids, the snake and the hare  
Doing battle in the rock garden....  
I don't care: Give me one lock of her hair  
And the keys to your car, daddy,  
So I can go out hunting daydreams, on the warpath  
Around the parking lots and movie theatres,  
Picking my canine teeth,  
Hungry with something vixen with long shaved  
Stewardess-trapeze legs to eat.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sticky Notes Of Toneless Dogs

Now that the fire is dead,  
I kick the ash, but her lips have curled up  
Long before in the coyness of a wildfire;  
Even while sleeping next to me,  
She floated away, and the entire forest  
Burned down ugly while I slept;  
I put too much diesel in the tank and it over spilled,  
And she laughed,  
And I was fired and could not look at myself  
When I was sent to the bathroom to clean up,  
And then to leave;  
It is spent, and the rattlesnake has coiled over the  
Empty cans of an unsatisfying meal.  
The venom is glowing in my blood,  
And he has crept through her open window where  
She'd been singing for him with her blouse unlaced,  
And setting down our child from its busty meal,  
And asked it to go away and sink into the teal  
On the back of a tearful crocodile;  
I have nothing to do, but to gather up what dreams  
I steal into a kit and tied it to the lesser end of a  
Walking stick, like a praying mantis in a traveler's plaid;  
I have laid myself into the depression of the wave,  
Where the cuckolded men work and slave entirely  
In the molecule of a single wave;  
Or this is what I write, insouciantly, in the vocabularies  
That I overuse in my delusional malaise;  
I give myself words of luckless praise, as I write  
Only for an hour in a month of days. I finish entire books  
Which aren't true, and she makes love to men I've  
Never met in person, and the crocodile has yet to come  
Home with our child, but that is only the infant of my  
Misconception; I read obituaries of writers I stole  
From my elementary school's library. I outwitted  
Sherlock Homes; I ate Twain's Huckleberry, and never did  
Return Encyclopedia Brown or Frank and Joe Hardy,  
But in two more days I will be entirely finished with my  
New novel's entire body; but what would it make for real,  
If I laid it like sticky notes of toneless dogs around her

Navel,  
Would she read it and make me real,  
Or, rather likely, leave it uneaten at the table,  
And gone out instead into the chirping beds of  
The university's bawdy estuary, and there fawned  
For some days in her lipstick malaise, choosing from  
The empirical mates who fawn and graze shirtless and  
Muscled on the green palate of her sightless gaze,  
And my book should lay rather unread on the table long  
Before and long after they have dressed me up fine,  
And my mother has wept, sincerely, as they lowered me  
Into my wakeless bed, and pulled up the covers of  
Earth and grass, and crowned with a stony epitaph,  
The only thing remaining of me which is said,  
Like a candle doused from flaming head,  
Like the barren hillside after the fire has sped,  
And eaten the words I would have said;  
Better off, and senseless, muted in stone, I lay down  
My pen, leaving the branches wholly unshaken; Thus,  
They kiss goodnight, embracing so tightly,  
While the industrious worms turn my flesh's poem  
Into bacon; then, bodiless, without either sense  
Or pen, I rest without thinking, while their coitus coils  
Tighter, and moans most nights, like cats leaping from  
Fences, and over graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Still In Love

Pitiful desire for the retention of art;  
It is better to do day labor,  
And forget yourself like the other creatures,  
And I do  
So all day long the advertisements sale like banners  
Off the road for hungry countries-  
There are girls all up and down Military trail  
And their species of their mildewy hunger;  
And there are no mountains around here,  
No beautiful girls.  
I eat lunch with Romero- I eat what he eats and the  
Airplanes go like marvels, like lugging superheros,  
And it makes me so sad that I will never be  
One of those things  
To have stewardesses inside me walking back and forth  
Down my spikenard aisle,  
Serving me overpriced drinks, their eyes the lugs of  
Painted sloughs,  
Like engorged cunts beaten in rainy baseball games;  
And then afterwards,  
Of course, we move around like broken snakes,  
Our tail ends making beautiful patterns under the sun,  
And I don't know anyone,  
But I am still in love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Still Keeps A Beating Heart All Night For Me

Sorely scarred and alone- Sorely scarred,  
With my dogs- The mountain a somnolent tomb,  
And repeating this skullduggery, knowing no science,  
But practicing insouciant witchcraft by  
Waving around better poets' spikenard:  
I keep doing this,  
I keep doing this so sorely scarred and alone-  
Far past the time when there are no more school buses,  
When all the pretty and worthwhile girls have taken  
Hyphened last names and sugar-daddies or  
Time traveled back the 1920s  
Or are strange UFOs in Gainesville, FL serving liquor-  
Saint Nicholas knows,  
That I come with the paper snows and the first prints of  
Morning-  
Doing this, garlanding my soul, waiting to be picked up  
And pressed to the bosom of a pretty soul,  
Later to be discarded- I just want one of two things,  
And only one of those is pretty and still keeps a beating heart  
All night for me....

Robert Rorabeck

## Still Very Beautiful

Numb wounds on the quiet playground,  
While she is waiting for her purchased snow;  
And grandmother is no where around;  
There isn't even a flag this way,  
There is no immortality in patriotism,  
Though I would still fight for her, if I could  
Have my way,  
And I still find my way onto those things,  
The silent wounds that I collect in special flight,  
The way I try to collect her sorority every night,  
As she nods,  
Like a neighbor or a salmon along its way,  
Until the mountains are out of beer,  
The horses are dying in the pasture,  
And I am revealed for the harmless murderer  
Of paper,  
So the airplanes fly low, and they are not real:  
They don't even have real things to say,  
But this is how they go,  
And even dreaming, dreaming back and forth,  
Almost Herculean,  
Aren't their dreams imperfect,  
But they are still very beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Still Waiting For Me

The night is so sad and unmysterious:  
Mother does the wash, of course,  
And the old folks sit out in front of their porch,  
Dreaming and sweating that they  
Still had the capacity  
Or the balls for suicide:  
And I want to get to the gun just any way I can-  
Then when I am dead,  
Or at the exact frantic millennium when the  
Hereditary bullet is ruining my already hereditary  
Ruined skull and its  
Really messed up amusements,  
I can dream, oh yes I can that she must have loved me,  
At least a pinprick full of unwholesome love,  
And that after I was gone they could play rusting  
Trumpets for me  
While one or two homeless men let off oral sex with  
Alligators long enough to read something I  
Had written and to declare that I had beaten the  
Ever loving sh%t out of Shakespeare,  
To become occult in my death,  
Esoteric in the sky, while the swing still sweated out  
For me, creaking its kind of howl  
Like a dog, like a woman,  
Still waiting for me to come home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Still Waiting For Something That Never Does

Charging out once more into the superfluous  
Garden of thorns and sun birds, with my childhood  
Knocked out beside the carport,  
Where it is useless to use anymore lances,  
And perhaps my cousins are sun bathing nudely pressed  
Against the slanted shadows of the very cab we came  
Down from Michigan in;  
And all the familiar tricks are doing it in the sandy  
Sunshine; and the road is made of seashells  
From creatures tossed off her gown which is so  
Richly overabundant that she doesn't mind if half of  
It is lost- While those who have retired drink any kind of  
Domestic beer, and the neighborhood has all gone quiet  
Expecting fireworks that very evening,  
And all the husbands of married couples have done fixing  
The washing machines down the street,  
And are back at home sleeping with their wives, so close  
But never touching;  
And I have stolen so many things from kindergarten not for  
Other kids with their good behaviors, but for me- kept atop  
The refrigerator;  
And my jaw was broken but wired shut and gathered up off  
The interstate making me think that is why I write some many  
Things twenty five or six years later waiting for the pornographies  
In the woods, waiting for the literary agency to give a signal  
To land, waiting for her to call or kiss like a butterfly,  
Still waiting for something that never does.

Robert Rorabeck



# Stillborn Of An Echo

Now I am wrong with you—  
And the fairytales—  
If that is what it means to be the  
End of this thing—  
Even as you are coalescing and making a  
Small news of yourself—  
Simple jellyfish whose graveyard is  
At the verge of the sea:  
Doesn't this seem that it has to be  
Enough  
Sprawled out in the parlor beneath all of  
The tiny crystals—  
The diamond promises of the  
The chandelier—  
Until, finally, you come home—underneath all  
Of the nose bleeds of the mountains  
And you undress  
As the best of the world bleeds,  
And I am reaching across the table to find  
The most modern form of your love—  
Until I am alone in my house,  
And the ocean, or the storm starts over—  
The world trying to find some reason  
To survive—  
And this is the stillborn of an echo—  
Something I have just realized that you always knew.

Robert Rorabeck

## Still-Life In The Cement Lagoon

Now going into the tossing rum,  
Kitty corned by all three of these dogs—  
In a loci of rest under a roof when it monsoons:  
Snails go slower when asleep,  
And I can feel them humping their hollow stones  
Across my beautiful mess;  
And outside, and far down from here,  
There is nothing trapped in the waves,  
And she goes there entirely free and lucid,  
Maybe a girl I knew from high school brilliantly metamorphosed,  
Maybe something else, giving off her swift illusion,  
Pretending to dance while standing perfectly still  
And smoking a cigarette, gossiping with the first  
Hints of morning when there is so many people to ring up,  
And all of them in a trance watching her  
Like a piece of legged art out on the curb on  
The parking lot while the world changes all about her  
And doesn't mean a thing;  
And the cars drive by more steadily,  
Until everything is in its place, and there is peace on earth,  
And finally, with everything fully awakened and looking  
Around, she is gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Still-Life On The Verge Of Suburbia

Every morning seven a.m.  
And all those people getting up and  
Starting to make love,  
The professors down by the watercress  
Imagining each drying uncertainty where the  
The boreal slit merges with the asphalt-  
Somewhere close to here, they are opening  
Most doors, they are beginning to swing wide,  
And they are even rehearsing for a play  
Involving a girl who dated me for two weeks.  
Each car is a terrapin chewing the tar of the  
Road like cooled taffy,  
And all the girls are married and train their names  
Together like Mexicans or Pharaohs.  
I wish I could say there was something unquestionably  
Beautiful about all of this-  
That you and he are in love and going to work,  
Beginning to lay into each other heavy like two  
Industrious infants learning to walk by shifts;  
But I have found my change down the sandbur easement  
Where the last of the alligators strum,  
After you are home and heliotrope orchids have opened  
Their throats lighting up like prehistoric ideas.  
Already too late, god has found a better child,  
And I don't know where I am.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stolen Bicycles Of That Week's Soap Operas

Opening the curtains upon  
A play no one cares for—the classroom  
Is discontent  
Or falling asleep—  
The cars glide by the house that misses  
The housewife,  
The fox opens its mouth toward  
The unobtainable grapes—  
And there are fishes in the sea as there  
Are stewardesses in the sky—  
But none of them has ever noticed me—  
They are all sleeping where they lay—  
Siamese candles,  
Star crossed lovers on their birthdays—  
Stolen bicycles of that week's  
Soap Operas,  
Library books fallen from their satchels  
And soaking up some morning's dews—  
Words that never crossed your mind,  
Words you never knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stolen Expressions Of Yellow

Stolen expressions of yellow  
Given as Indian gifts from the moon—  
Say to your window, &quot;Oh—Now  
I know who you are.&quot; After you have  
Gone away,  
And the farm has grown over,  
But all of the limbs of the forest over  
It are naked—  
Even with the cars moving, it is a kind of  
A graveyard where the ants carry the coffins  
Down to their queen—  
And she sits there, sanctified in her gravity—  
And the book reads something about her eyes  
In the vortex,  
The stewardesses who have already passed  
Beyond the Event Horizon,  
That lies sated like an over-fed mountain lion  
Reclining in the bosom of the sinking stars—

Robert Rorabeck

# Stolen Lights Of The Moon

Tom, Dick, or Harry went up to  
Kiss Mary  
But her ball gown was much more  
A balloon-  
She pinned her last corsage  
On rich  
And floated straight to the moon.

Vagabonds get shown cars  
Like passing keys  
All afternoon  
Over the limestone cricks  
That seep underneath the  
Stolen lights of the  
Moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stones

They leave their queens laying  
In the ships,  
And they go to the mountains. Looking up,  
They believe they are swans,  
And in her  
Metamorphic dress, she kisses them,  
Coming down in minuets-  
The lake in which they swim in is stones-  
A glacial ballroom;  
In that they surcease- becoming forms  
Of air,  
Nested in her clutches- watch until  
The stars turn down-  
Trumpets douse, and their boys turn up  
In a land they left so long ago,  
With their queens slumbering like dousing  
Embers with the other soft animals  
In the arks they could no longer  
Attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stones Of An Entire Earth

Butterflies and rainbows of death over  
The skulls of Mexico: my god, this is how you sing  
To me in your rainbows and fieldtrips of  
Death  
Stamped in your epitaphs still pretending to be  
Beautiful while the sun curses itself—  
And your aunts and uncles sell everything of  
The venomous snakes that grow head over heal  
In your backyard as the volcanos scoff—  
And the helicopters give your roofs their own  
Shadows where I seldom sleep anymore,  
Drunken with my love for your star-crossed lovers:  
But now I have a wife, and you are almost gone,  
But the sea keeps singing to herself waiting  
For her next man to arrive as she carries on in her  
Sororities of make-believe mermaids while,  
Above, the stewardesses keep on crossing themselves,  
Skipping as they do over the wetted stones of  
An entire earth.

Robert Rorabeck



# Storefronts That Will Never Open

I've been belly up and kissing prehistoria:  
I have been failing math and reading children's novels:  
And I haven't been tasting the tits of her mountains:  
I have been keeping lists for canoes and Pegasus,  
That she should call me by seven tomorrow,  
So I can press my tongue to her wet butterfly and make her moan  
All the entrees of her menu:  
And feel the ribs that a few other men have felt, while her  
Heidi climbs the mountains of her grandfather's out of work  
Alps;  
And it all seems to come together, even though I have not,  
And the otters slip into a salty knot:  
And even though it rhymes, it comes together better than we thought:  
This girl I love, Alma- she can never be a housewife:  
She is a conqueror herself: she is a bottle rocket and firecracker  
And a song bird all rolled together; and I have failed her  
By singing these sings out loud and drinking, drinking,  
While the airplanes shutter like feral airplanes  
Or love letters that she has never needed to open:  
This girl I love, while the airplanes sing from the lists of entrepreneurs  
Of storefronts that will never open.

Robert Rorabeck

## Stormcloud Halo Over Scabby Knees

I love you, but tonight I will be riding horses,  
Each one a glorious wave, a lapping crowd about your opal knees,  
And it will be snowing the sepia ash of your disinterest,  
And your cigarettes,  
So that the cloudbanks billow the gothic shrouds,  
And the swings arc unoccupied toward the belly of the leafless  
Oaks, and the power lines bow swaybacked like hanging ropes  
Where the crows perceive like winged men waiting in line  
The disinterest of your glorious eyes in the bath  
Of the failing light where they lay like sated predators,  
Cleanly licked and insouciant after a melodramatic wash.

Robert Rorabeck

# Straight Into The Simile

Becoming bologna, this is not my god:  
This is just another  
Comic book left  
Outside to understand the elements of  
The usual bird:  
There she is, cleaning herself through  
The usual elements  
Of her available estuaries:  
There she is just doing as she's told.  
Whilst the average Christmas trees  
Are sold and sold.  
And sold:  
Oh, old bold wound; oh, old gold wound:  
Same natural element happenstance  
Through the preternatural heavens:  
Just as same old grave song,  
As seems to be happening through same  
Old natural grave song:  
Presupposing through the same old  
Elements of the rose:  
Seems to be grossing this way:  
Seems to be crossing anyway, as anyway,  
I suppose: just as the laments,  
I supposed, anyway, held between the teeth of  
Anyway- elements, anyway,  
Straight into the smile that happened to have  
Held the rose.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stranded On The Somnolent Sea

Stranded in this truck like  
A boat on a teaming  
Sea,  
A concrete aquarium where  
All are turbid;  
I pee in a cup,  
Watering the plants as I drive-  
If I get out the apathetic zoetrope  
Will see,  
And I will have to say hello to  
My uncle-  
Rather it was a battleship to  
Blast away until the  
Ice-cream man came around  
Like the Pied Piper this afternoon,  
And pollinate all the pretty  
Flowers on Pompeii-  
Scatter my pretty ashes over fast food  
Restaurants,  
And blow out my candles with her  
Coital farts-  
And so I drive on, drive on  
For days and nights of hard packed  
Somnolent sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Strange Buoyancy Of Their Artificial World

Echoing and echoing until Christmas comes  
And the housewives recline in their living rooms,  
And the sailors come on home  
After hand feeding the dolphins in the immensity of  
Sunlight  
And, after it seems all of my beautiful words have been  
Stolen,  
Someone else forgives me, and the wimples of  
Stewardesses lay across my body,  
Serving me from the challises of their armpits and  
Bosoms  
In the strange buoyancy of their artificial world-  
In flashy lures which tantalize the gods above the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Strangely Failing Satellites Fall

Strangely failing satellites fall,  
They fall like f\*ck'n snow.  
Strangely failing satellites fall,  
She disappears down the hall so far;  
She is out back there in the snow.  
She has climbed so far for just to sell  
Semi-preciously to the tourists in Colorado.  
Her children will never know to believe  
How her eyes once fell upon alligators sleeping  
Torpidly on the humid banks so far below.  
Strange failing satellites fall,  
My eyes are made of dreams and all  
Splintered up and cut and shook so they swim up  
From themselves come morning from those  
Drooling scenarios which play out all about her;  
And she doesn't even know.  
Strangely failing satellites fall-  
They fall like f\*ck'n snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stranger

So who is calling you now in the tangled  
Tinfoil trees?

¶ one,

Amidst the red enjambment of junked cars,  
Along the wheel less highway of dead pine needles,  
Passengers of pornography,

¶ one,

Who is painting your house with expensive joy,  
As mothers hold you up at gunpoint  
For grocery money,

¶ one,

Who is checking on grandmother's tombstone,  
On the windiest hill in dirty America?

¶ one,

Who is feeding the dogs?

¶ one,

Or riding beside you to see your parts,  
The briars of certain meanings left alone for too long,  
Now emotionless,

¶ one,

The ghosts in their doorless hills,

¶ one,

The blue tongues of Spanish cl! ts,

¶ one,

The cities of cadaver horses on the mountain of fire,

¶ one,

Who sits beside the guitar on the train to France,  
Or touches its strings, wishing to sing,

¶ one,

Or touches your hand at the joy of the river,  
No one,

Nor seen the summits with you in their particular light,  
No one,

Who will remember the childhood of youthful canyons,  
Or hear the hungry calls of birds newly hatched in the quivering  
Burdocks,  
No one,

Or see the swishing lights of lovers in their bedroomed glow,  
No one,

Upon the sea's strident waves,  
No one,

In the cusps of the tearless basin,  
No one,

Amidst the tall tambourining aspens,  
No one,

No one.

Robert Rorabeck



# Stranger To Each Other

Looking up through the jungle outside of my

New window:

I can hear the airplanes roaring, the women on them as

Silent as snakes through the reeds;

And I remember a child hood of classrooms on cinderblocks:

I remember coming across her own childhood once in awhile,

And moving through it,

And speaking softly and reverently like a mouse in a hurricane

In a library;

And maybe her eyes lit upon my childhood, as she sat down on

The floor held up by the cinderblocks too,

And turned her eyes towards the teacher as our two childhoods

Separated, going away, becoming stranger and stranger to

Each other.

Robert Rorabeck

# Strangers In My Memory

Strange women are in their photographs,  
Smiling far away,  
Hoping for more attentions and the eyes of  
Hands to light upon them warmly,  
But they do not see my useless foreplays:  
Some are as thin as in high school,  
Others grow finer with the rectitude of scraped  
Elbows,  
Others do not appear but in my dreams  
Where we share the same classroom, her daughter's  
Name, a Macintosh apple,  
And the happiness of clothed flesh if unsheathed  
Might conjoin and procreate like insects on  
The powder mouths in the fine and high meadows;  
But they do not see me,  
Even if I am asleep, I am forever trekking up the  
Disinfected draw, a wire sewn in my cenotaph,  
A centaur with the body of an elk clicking between  
The lightning scarred oaks carrying a toolbox  
To the summit,  
Where I can see all of them as if destinations on a  
Map, when swimming, and they do not read me,  
But lie me down and say now that this is enough,  
And they congregate back into their professions,  
And when at home they scoop ice-cream with fiancés  
Because they know it is convenient,  
And when they look at them they feel mostly pleased  
With their choices,  
And when they are in the mirror, their bodies wearied,  
Soon to birth children, and become mothers I will  
Never meet, they think they look like photographs  
Out in the wilderness of girls so far away,  
Like echoes down in the canyon's pit,  
They are not sure what they mean, or who it is  
Before them.

Robert Rorabeck

# Strangers Of Science

The same streets patter  
With younger feet- The light bulbs  
Changed,  
Strangers of science fly overhead-  
She lays her educated head down  
Upon an alike pillow of a fresh bed,  
Her name something like an orchard  
Some months after the frost of  
My touch,  
Bearing the novel mister's fruit:

I like to believe that each line is like  
Blown glass cooled by the lips  
Which still scar me  
Underneath the sun reflecting all the  
Washers and dryers in the world,  
Doesn't see a need to understand-

It too readily proceeds beneath  
The Mississippi,  
Where souls like old mother's sheets  
Are blowing  
In the anonymous, open throated mass,

Save for the eyes of the better  
Saviors who yet proceed overhead like  
The lips of signs and fresh-painted billboards,  
Curled in the hand,  
Hatching coos down the runway's mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stratifying The Old Masters

The male and female skeletons are not identical-  
They both smile, but they have little difference:  
They don't listen to answering machines,  
Their natural abundance is with earthworms swimmingly  
Kept lined in the grass like unimposing teams,  
Kept distilled like pioneers hemmed in by the barbaric  
Earth: Yes, defeated, but not given up- Whole towers  
Of dead over spilling sometimes into the banks of  
Over-greedy rivers- This horizontal cavalcade distilled  
OF their flowers of evil, their pugnacious needs,  
Their thirsts to abbreviate their territory, to manhandle  
Their thirst- They are more identical this way than they  
Are now, driving to their cars, looking for show.  
Somehow more distinguished with less on,  
Unaffected by the lights off the evenings glow of the television.  
They still don't go out to much, or sit down to read the news.  
They don't listen to the lions roaring nocturnally somewhere  
Escaped around the over-weedy cul-de-sacs of the old  
Neighborhood- But in an inanimate nation they set up  
Their parliament, their arts unto them, their monoliths most  
Contentedly unobstructed by the dazed old masters; and now  
This- Supposing it has found them out, they will be pacifist  
To the delineation of their natures- Man and wife alike now,  
Sexes hard to distinguish, ripe and pale along a beach of polished stones,  
Fishwives who don't care any longer how much sturgeon goes unsold.

Robert Rorabeck

# Stream Of Perfumed Sentiment

Tonight a rum fetish putting rivers in my ears,  
Cataracts and girls in streamline dresses enjoying the  
Barrel rolls;  
And tonight is nothing useful, only movies in black  
And white of other nights:  
The girls line up for the birth-rights and the airplanes  
Slow:  
So slow that I can count their revolutions by ear;  
And their colors fall off of them like clothes on a line.  
The sky is a valley in which they pine:  
And it is beautiful to think of them over the heads of the  
Girls.  
I do not know which is more beautiful, the girls or  
The airplanes, but they are all married and they smell like  
Popcorn, or the greater devices of the simulacrum which  
Still can only draw one or two things:  
My two muses must be amongst them, tonight or another.  
I remember her eyes swimming over wet clay:  
I remember her lips on my neck on the way to the bookstore;  
And all of it was a horrible dream in a rush hour  
Of slow moving action returning from a church,  
Returning from a graveyard smelling like popcorn,  
In a stream of perfumed sentiment I wished I never had time to  
Awaken from.

Robert Rorabeck

# Streets Of My Adolescents

Sun of an obnoxious quarry as we seem  
To be laughing—  
Open throated frog princes all of the way  
Up to the chandeliers—  
While my mother waits in some awful  
Mockery of a Pieta—  
And the lamps bloom in the gold dusts of  
The mines—  
Another song mimics the song bird's,  
As the traffic becomes utterly confused—  
Losing itself into the darkness—  
The mailman apexes, but he is no excuse  
To me—  
Lamp posts lining the streets of my adolescents,  
As wicked men travel home after  
The fireworks' pageantry—  
Licking their stolen wives' bodies of  
An adulterous  
Apiary.

Robert Rorabeck

# Strip Tennis

With the daylight dancing  
invisible truth in tiny heated  
segments of God being played out  
through the day's household,  
eons of shadows falling through  
the window's generations, many  
parts of her are laid out through my mind.  
For example, just last night  
while I was jogging in the valley  
on the fertile dirt track my father  
ploughed to train his horses on,  
I thought for the first time  
that I'd like to play strip tennis  
with her on some rich court in  
Palm Beach Gardens; and I  
had never thought of her in conjunction  
With strip tennis before,  
though I am sure I did not invent the game.  
And I think of her in any part of  
the day with God falling on me  
like the spent atoms of the solar system;  
Forgetting to shave, the sun  
looks like Jesus  
when, driving back from the valley,  
thinking of her, my belly full and  
lazy from fast food, gorged, I'm  
ready for a nap, though I just woke  
up this afternoon,  
I think what it would be like  
to lay down beside her,  
the natural juxtaposition of sexes  
on a healthy bed, to never use  
protection when making love with her,  
a full exchange at any time of the day,  
complete, promises of her children.

Robert Rorabeck

# Striped Socks To The Grave

I love you with your hand that way upon  
Your shoulder,  
And your eyes indescribable except that they might  
Be just the same as the final stare sailors give  
Given up to the sea;  
See how I keep doing this, trying to call you out  
To play with me, giving up entire houses to your pensive  
Lips;  
And you are lost, too good for words,  
With your eyes the expression of deeply ghostly worlds:  
What more impotent words for love than these,  
Tossed like unnoticed bouquets at your feet, like crumbs for  
Strangely sated pigeons: and what are you,  
And who are the men you love:  
I want to stand for every minute I have breathing in the same  
Storefront as you sell wine to breast feed your child,  
And I don't care if it is raining, or if I have fallen on the  
Hard times of four legs tonight; all I can do is say those  
Trite expressions and listen to the rivers overflow,  
And your eyes give away nothing,  
Everything else spinning, spinning, with entire fairytales hitting  
Hard on the witches, motionless echoed- all they are given  
Is a free lunch and striped socks to the grave.

Robert Rorabeck



# Stutters To The Substitute

Silver stutters spark the  
Third-grader's nervous lips  
Like an impotent lighter  
Trying to socialize with  
The invitation of a  
Waiting cigarette

In response to the  
Substitute's petite and  
Alluring question,  
The knowledge of which  
He does not possess,  
Though the intoxication of her  
Experience encourages  
A response

She is waiting at the  
Head of temporary authority  
Wagging her cross-stitched hips,  
Looking like his mother  
Curious as to what he will say  
A syllabic fulcrum upon which  
Her love must hinge,

But he can only produce  
The noise of his underage intoxication,  
The fumbled mumbling in green vines,  
Sitting in a puddle of lukewarm piss,  
Until she draws back from him  
In a classroom of laughter,  
The unutterable bouquet  
Of her stymied interest.

Robert Rorabeck

# Subtracting Joy

Subtracting joy,  
Your eyes fall away  
Like a pendulum let loose  
And with them your thoughts  
Cascade,  
Like two children untwined  
From their whirling game,  
Called off by the whippoorwill  
From the apex of a red roof,  
Bright geometry against the night—  
So one falls in the river and goes down  
Trapped in the whirlpools  
Of unanswered memories,  
Until all that is left is  
The deep serenity of  
Your most secretive thoughts,  
Those sapphires and emeralds in your soul  
That gleam like precious children  
Under an inch thick blanket of water,  
Bedded in your secret grottos;  
Here, you pick up the finest things  
Knowing that you can not choose  
Who you love,  
But he is very close to here in those  
Deltas where rivers nest and taper like  
Thinning dancers down into the sea;  
Then in the ancient city  
Where you go surfing  
And bronze men come up from the waves  
To hold you by your abdomen and call you miss,  
Flirtatiously,  
And they take you down streets  
You almost recognize,  
Wreathing coral streets  
They make you dizzy with love  
And the wavering undersea lights,  
Like a highschool dance  
Until you don't know who you are,  
Except that you are almost floating;

Going back to him he is gone as the place  
You have seen is taken off by a wave  
Swept up by the sea,  
There you are trying to breathe  
As the voices of ordinary thought  
Begin to echo like heavy footsteps on stone,  
So soon you forget who you are,  
How God made you,  
The tiniest child lost in a river  
You played too close to—  
As, from the top of the darkening hill,  
From the apex of the red roof  
The whippoorwill trills...  
Subtracting joy,  
Your eyes fall away  
And with them your thoughts  
Cascade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Suburban Personifications

I am in a house 8,000 feet above the ocean  
Where I ponder the many souls inside the turn-about  
Of cities,  
The languid streets who lay shivering after a rain:  
That is when they are most beautiful,  
And when virgins go out on long bike-rides.  
Then each blade of grass in the dewy yard is a jewel,  
Each yard in suburbia a square in a laconic chess-game,  
Each lonely cypress in each yard dripping tearfully  
But unperturbed to be alone, and even with the faintest  
Wind has things to say longingly to its brothers grown  
Up beside the glossy sports vehicles with state university  
Decals;  
Perhaps, if I were to move there, I might watch nocturnal  
Mistresses step out of their front yards and drink Chablis  
In silken negligees, unafraid of the trespassing raccoons.  
There the lights meant to define their landscaping,  
Define them just the same, so that they become  
Innocuous post-modern personifications which drive  
Around in the bright sunlight and across the long curling  
Tresses of concrete byways whose underbellies are salted  
Like pretzels by the exchanges of the sea. Again, at night,  
The crickets serenade in the damp crooks of windowsills,  
And they sleep as peacefully as dolls, their kitchens  
In perfect order, their families parceled out into their  
Purposeful rooms, their mortgage's finish-line in sight.  
I blow them a kiss from my hidden mountain,  
Turn off the lights, and then step down to the cellar's  
Limbo. I sleep for months, and as I dream of them,  
These faceless women living in their unending cul-de-sacs,  
Like hares in peaceful gardens along long, bucolic shoulder-blades.  
They turn about me, and are like shell-fish cracked open,  
Brought to my steaming lips,  
Wafting their mortal perfumes,  
So I become heady from no other reason than because  
Somewhere far out there they actually do exist.

Robert Rorabeck

# Suburbia

Now all the roads are empty,  
All the ghosts have turned to salt:  
I am only scarred on Fridays, but I wake up  
Bright and clean for the weekend,  
And all the domestic fights are like fireworks only  
For holidays; and all the kids are groomed,  
And only a few dogs have flees,  
And lovers lie down like missionaries beside each other and they  
Say forever after, surely, forever;  
And he buys flowers for her from the local florist  
To put into a vase,  
And all the alligators are lethargic and harmless  
And every home is almost 2,000 square feet;  
And there is only one author and she writes romance  
And there are three flight attendants.  
The rest are all orthodontists or dermatologists;  
And the are polite neighbors and just about everyone is  
Asleep by ten,  
But it is not affluent enough for lawyers,  
But everyone is all-right- And the older children get drunk  
And practice tramping instead of seventh period,  
And some cheer leaders make love to football stars in  
Their schoolgirl rooms that are as pink as the inside of a conch,  
But not many;  
And I want to move in here and live behind the white gate,  
And bare children here and make it new and easy and right  
For them. Maybe I will teach fifth grade, or at the worst  
Work at Wal-mart, for it is the beginning of another  
Great depression, but here is should be easiest and  
Just as bright as Florida gets- And I will meet a pleasant girl,  
And make love to her, and marry her. Maybe I will even fall  
In love and buy her flowers. I will only be scarred on  
Fridays, but will wake up bright and clean  
And warmly suited in the lanai room- even if we are not  
Affluent enough for our own pool;  
It should be alright for my children and good enough to call home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Such A Day

The day gives me swell light for my mind to  
Fumble through the highest basins of these well-burnished  
Meadows,  
Above the cars and waves alike,  
Above her auburn cascade,  
Droop of lip and eye-contemplative, then the uphill curves  
Of approving body language pressed to the gas,  
Circling like thorny eagles some slick cul-de-sac

and the places she  
Has chosen to forget, like a drooling infant  
I skim across the field, like the dragonfly newly budded  
Yet without much scorn or excuses to try its barb:  
Propelled by some close at hand divine retinue yet exposed but  
Done fishing and putting my hands up stone.  
I could love her from here, if I could remember  
The song I was singing to her this morning as I did my  
Best to lather away my narcoleptic scars which hibernate  
Like beastly marks cloving my hooded body,  
Trying to whistle but debating,  
Like darker and darker rings the fretful doodles of a  
Mortal sinner talking haplessly to the solicitor on the phone;  
Turning his key in the ignition, leaving his home

Too old to get married but still batting;  
But now on this unsure avenue both widely and lost  
I give a pause and  
Watch airplanes and thinking of far away stewardesses serving  
Their expensive liquors not unlike her, like candles' flames  
Thrown in a vase,  
Their shell-pink engines skipping,  
The winged exhibit silk streamed, bosomy and also perfumed;  
Yet even above my head their legs are echoing  
Along the slick avenues of their flying chassis,  
The uproarious sorority paid to visit relatives-

Beneath all that,  
The waves make a teal castanet, beautiful but of no  
Consequence for every which way it is going, it might be going wrong;

It is certainly turning around again, recognizing itself at a loss  
And I must continue down to the next exit and decide  
Should I get off heady from the lure of the citrus pistil and bloom,  
The day laborers singing the darker man's song,  
Put orbs into baskets trailing ash and rum,  
Down again to where the leathery vendors are dancing in their  
Appointed apertures of supermarkets and salons.

To buy a house here and to recede,  
To get out of the way, and hold her neck at the  
Right moment and pull her towards me so that  
They should say in her old dorms there is no more partings:  
to make love to her  
And brave my song first placed into her ear,  
A pearl of tongued calm relinquished by the end of the line to  
The next available teller trained to smile.  
Would that she were nearer to be certain that she was,  
The reason for a little amusement, but instead

The great uncertainty  
Of the surface level groves give me pause;  
Even though they are swaying in freckled pageantry and the only  
Excuse I have to feather the trembling heart is that  
All my ancestors now dead have walked here before and held her  
Hand for me until I could come;  
They have gossiped about me and painted her eyes with  
The places through which I have traveled,  
And held her back from the natural inclination to steam  
To the docks and greet the soldiers returning for the war  
With a bend of the knee and slip of the skirt- They have done their best  
To remove her liquor,  
To gently seed and tuck in well-furrowed, giving me a direction  
To begin to work my unfamiliar charms,  
To cast my nets over her in rutted whispers,  
To pull her towards me like a ribbon or eel from  
The tangles of rustling mangroves or saw grass swamps-

To lie down here atop the  
Spinning old world, hopefully in the oldest town in America  
To mingle with the tourists and their youthfully foolish exchanges,  
To spume far beneath the highest basins catching clouds,  
Gathering them up and holding them until they turn green

And envious but provide shade and conversation,  
To hear those galloping waves so close to our door that by  
Next morning they have come in like oil workers tromping about,  
Wanting breakfast,  
And her to get busy for us all under the shadow less sprigs  
Of the confounded sun,  
Turning to each other framed by a cerulean window  
Showing us where we have settled, and that such a day has come.

Robert Rorabeck



# Such A Quietly Incandescent Bloom

They say that horses running are so beautiful,  
The way they get stopped up in the haunted Appalachians like  
Liquors corked into bottles,  
Like pretty girls walking together to home after school,  
Cocking their heads and listening to the  
Lions roar and to airplanes:  
They have sweet slumber parties where they make their beds out  
On the floor,  
Underneath the airplanes they listen to the lions roar:  
The sky seems to sail above them like an everlasting heirloom,  
Rising just like the promises of sweet college all the way up above them,  
Like highways with so much room,  
With the pilots in the cathedrals and their ever burnished lofts:  
The boys who talk to one another and who run their fingers through  
The skies  
So soft; and I dream of Alma while the sun makes love in the sky:  
Her young brown body conducting through a room pulls everything  
Indescribably nearer to her:  
Such a quietly incandescent bloom.

Robert Rorabeck

# Such A Virtuous House

If a serpent lives in my house with me  
Let him live,  
But take from him no fruit or gift that he might offer  
To you,  
But if Alma would come into my house  
Then let her live  
And accept anything that she might wish to bestow upon  
You  
Even if it is only for three nights; it cannot hurt and  
Who knows what it might allow you to defeat further along  
The slumbering paths  
Of permanent stone where so many other heroes like you  
Like petrified and sterile just because they didn't have the proper  
Talismans  
Cut cleanly like fruit in an orchard from Alma's gaze, while her  
Children lay weaned of suckling on the couch and watching  
Television  
Through a tremendous rainstorm which ushered you in  
Invitingly;  
And I have promised her not to drink just so long as she gives her  
Gifts to no one but me  
And my guests; and if you are here tonight, then heed my words  
And accept what wishes she might have for you,  
Because you will have to set out again tomorrow, and it is such  
A dangerous world outside the soft green loci  
And the peaceful resuscitations where Alma keeps such a virtuous house.

Robert Rorabeck

# Such Glory That You Can Never Believe

The clairvoyance of well shot and well  
Hung words steals away my breath;  
And they turn all of the sky and earth green under the  
Parasols of comely hurricanes:  
It does for me what beautiful people do in movies,  
But it is only a representation of what you do for me,  
Alma:  
Now the earth of my country can grow anything:  
Elephants sprout of blowing trumpets over the soft beds  
Of new kittens,  
And the softest metals of angels spring up from the  
Laughing spigots of the sky where  
Not a single housewife has yet thought to move:  
And you can drive your car all the way up to Ocala reading  
Borges while your little sister laughs at you and says  
You are in love;  
And you can find a new house far removed from the yellow  
Beds of yawning lions and the chartreuse dragonflies  
Like laces of tears on their vests,  
But I will find you: and I will always find you to make love  
Or kill myself,  
But never to harm you; but to hold your hand, while the  
Angels play cards in the sky until they put their hands down  
And slip away into the boudoirs whose make-believe doors  
Hide such glory that you can never believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Such Marvelous And Unfettered Wisdoms

Sustaining the angels' sleeping sounds,  
Bodies clap the way they used to- and I am making love,  
But not while sleeping in  
My father's house anymore: I am all alone out in the  
Prairie or in the darkened cradles of the cypress swamps;  
And I am not dreaming of anyone  
Save Alma, even if she doesn't believe me,  
And is going back to her house again tonight:  
It will be okay, because I remember the little pool in her belly  
Button milky with the sweat of the oysters and their  
Tongues,  
The lucky glues we strung together too early to be remembered  
By Christmas- but there,  
As sure as forest fires pushing reindeer under the habituating  
Clouds and further beneath the make believe loins  
Of such marvelous and unfettered wisdoms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Such Pretty Things

When she says  
Such pretty things

It makes me want  
To plant a garden in her mouth.

Robert Rorabeck

## Such Proof

How can you see me weeping through the mountains-  
The airplanes don't care that I've been doing this  
Hard mining for so long;  
They are quick silver; they are almost superheroes surfed  
By leggy courtesans;  
But I don't see why you shouldn't care:  
I've been lighting off these dysfunctional fireworks for  
So long, I've blown off both my thumbs but  
Still haven't scared off any of the eager young crocodiles;  
And green copper canons long necked out on the terraplain  
Are not a good cure for boredom;  
And I should have buried you underneath the sneaky rose  
Bushes when I had the chance,  
Before your eyes could steal away my soul- haunting,  
Sad that they had to go and kill the caterpillar today;  
And I can almost smell you, you are so real to me, Sharon;  
And, of course you don't care; you say, you'd smell the same  
For any eager young man all sweaty having just done gone and  
Left the graveyard and water-skiing-  
And the literary agents agree, that there are no mangroves in  
Saint Augustine, but it was a good try; but your beauty is just  
As anachronistic to my studded scars, so how could  
It every be possible to open up an new store together and exist  
On the same forbidden atmosphere as the very same invisible  
Monsters whose footprints swallow entire clothing styles,  
Who themselves are not very real;  
And tonight another man's finger falls like a stricken canary  
Poisoned first in the infected mine, such proof.

Robert Rorabeck

# Such Tiny And Determined Things

I've been open for so long, that I am  
Mapped by the elements, this furrowed brow.  
I have noticed verifiable patterns when the ants parade,  
Or in the steps they take to go underground once  
The rain descends, as it does, especially  
In the middle of the year; and above me  
There are caves a blind man explores,  
And above that the infrequent airplanes on  
Certain routes, and then the nimbus, usually like  
Sparse cauliflower flowering on blue table; and below me  
Is the town, the whore house, and the gold mine;  
And there are twins, one good and one evil,  
A ferrier who is eventually drunk, but does good work;  
And a woman who is so beautiful they use her to light  
The streets, and she does steady business when the bowed  
Panners put down their tin saucers and look into her eyes;  
She keeps the karats of gold tucked in her bosom;  
Even now I can see her radiance, and its noon time,  
And my cousin weeps because she is now with child,  
But her husband has left on the train for Sacramento,  
And I can do nothing about it, because I am out here,  
Keeping for buzzards, ready to sound the alarm;  
And yet the woman glows from such resilience I don't  
Know where it comes from, and she is singing, and  
Glory be to her, the hymns of children, and my cousin is singing along beside,  
When soon her baby shall be out and tugging her;  
Then there will be a new name in town, I can see down towards,  
And I am so grateful that I would like to descend, and  
Become a part of that blossoming atmosphere, but what am I to do,  
For to leave this place who put them at a vulnerability  
That I should remain and wait out in vigilance,  
And yet my burden seems shared, and even when I look away,  
This Madame burns like the sun in my vision; so at night,  
As I watch the ants proceed, the light she gives swaths them,  
Like kerosene burning up on a stage, and they move in such  
Opulence, such tiny and determined things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Such Troubling Things

I drink so much liquor that I find that I can  
Only climax with my special someone; but she is at home  
In bed right now:  
Who is she dreaming about, the purple flowers in my  
Green restaurants wonder:  
And what is on the television: as the waves come, dying to make  
Peace,  
As the ends of the earth are taken off into their lips  
As if in a great amusement underneath where the bellies of the  
Airplanes bask,  
And the dreams of the little boys, like grapes from her loins,  
Reach up so far, uttering fabulous prayers of the richest sorts:  
And words that I fear that I cannot even describe;  
As the sisters of my muse bundle again to school: as I prepare to  
Leave her to sell other things,  
And the nights get further on, even undressing the clothes that  
They don't have; and the only consolation is that  
The soul of my muse- My Alma- doesn't have to worry about  
Such troubling things.

Robert Rorabeck



# Such Wolves And Perfect Gentlemen

And I will sit alongside the deep  
Shelter of my apartment,  
After that occasion where my parents  
Have died,  
On the mowed grass where it meets  
Up with the quiet wall,  
Where there is no better sport  
Or other boys there to play,  
Sit with my dog, my lucky dog,  
In the anonymous shadows beside  
The world,  
Still sit writing about how I pack  
Up and lie down and go fishing for her,  
Even if she is already the ever ready  
Seed fornicating in the wind, off  
The lips of school buses,  
And she is doing all the stuff  
Healthy young women are being paid  
To do by such wolves and perfect gentlemen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sucreased From Their Lovely Game

Every ornament in carport of the heavens, looking good  
And flirting with the oceans that know  
Our echoes- the push of our graveyards, and sometimes  
How swing sets still leap over the culling of their  
Mulling weddings:  
It is there that their hearts drip, like irrigations for a vineyard  
So far beneath the tufts of lilies,  
Where alligators float like airplanes, and five year old  
Princesses fly when they learn to swim,  
As from the yard of a perfect white house they go down,  
Causing stains and blood, and little chips in their once perfections  
That will not go away;  
But it only makes them more precious, as some lights go out  
Absolutely far away- and I hurt myself again,  
Kneeling in prayer through the dime sized caskets in the infinity  
Sucreased from their lovely game.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sudden And Violent Apparitions Of Love

Now is not the time for us  
To remain motionless  
In our beds so far away—  
Let the spider bite your  
Wrist,  
Get in your green car and  
Drive toward me. Meet me  
Out in my front yard. Draw  
Your orange gun and riddle  
Me with bullets.  
Drop me with your love—  
Let your eyes bore into me  
Like a machine the first time  
You've seen me in 10 years—  
Then lay back and smoke.  
Watch my dogs, my  
Best friends  
Pull me apart, to draw out  
And lap the vermillion  
Pallette,  
Until the sun is in the  
Branches,  
And the moon pulls out the  
Colorlessness in my bones—  
Then I can get up  
And kiss you full-bore,  
Like a machine myself—  
We will dance under the spotty orchestra  
As the blonde stars gyrate like gypsies  
All night until the  
Sun rises to the surface  
Again,  
Summiting  
And drawing back in the  
Colors  
Which overflow the lake  
Of sky,  
Spilling upon the earth.  
Then you drive away

And I die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Suicidal Munchkin

Watching the Wizard of Oz,  
I dream of Tyco Brahe's nose, and serious  
Fights between scientists and their  
Dwarfs;  
And map paintings of stars and their hills;  
And sadly, ever so sadly,  
Erin- of dryads who have no love for mortal men:  
Her busts are a ballad of a perfectly nipples  
Power plant;  
Her perfume the rich streams of auburn kelp  
The gold fish show off through until they  
Are scooped out and made for prizes  
Of redneck lovers at the fair;  
But she does not need to worry, because I am  
Too uneasy for Occam's Razor, Erin:  
For easy love:  
I am not beautiful Erin, and whoever you are loving  
Right now,  
It is a better love than I could return to you, if  
My face was a mirror for your vanity-  
Tesla never made love to a woman, but he lived in  
Fancy hotels in Colorado Springs;  
And he invented electricity until it was stolen away,  
And I am left hanging;  
And I only went away from you to find new inventions of  
Tender muses,  
Of other high school valleys too beautiful to ever have  
Stopped romancing about, I suppose; Erin,  
But do not feel uneasy; these are your dreams the laboratory  
Mice are spinning,  
And maybe I will buy a house under my imperfect  
Angle underneath the distant Pleiades;  
But please, please don't ever come to visit me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Summer Dreams

Enjoy the dreams of this summer  
For the flowers which grow here  
Don't live long at all.  
In the cathedral of giants,  
Each one its own beautiful species,  
If flawed,  
Vicariously touching  
By the workmen who flit  
Here and there passing around the  
Feelings tattooed on their legs.  
We grow together in the same valley.  
Though we never meet,  
We spend this daylight's eternity  
Unbuttoned in welcome,  
The grandeur of inescapable distance,  
The sun and the moon our parents  
Attending us through the hours,  
Though far too distant to be understood.  
Their same light lays upon us  
Miles apart here and now,  
I open my door and step outside  
Expectantly.

Robert Rorabeck

## Summer Full Of Ferris Wheels

Empty baskets filling with sunlight,  
Like girls enjoying the secrets of an uncompromising love—  
The flowers laying with the hummingbirds in the  
Tin estuaries of a high school's drinking fountains—  
Hours of a day spilling with adolescent bodies in shadowless  
Rooms: here, I know where I've found you,  
Finding you so many times, where eyes hardly meet,  
Where wild animals do not exist—  
Courts of stallions while she lays dreaming upon her desk,  
And what desires she has in her  
Dancing alive outside of these pantomimes—  
She doesn't belong in a cage, but she is here—  
And the sun rolls upon us equally, a summer full of  
Ferris Wheels.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sun And Moon

Outside the glass panels smeared by  
The persistent dogs,  
There is another early afternoon where the  
Sunlight is bright and angling the shadows  
Away, but giving them good definition  
In compensation.  
Up here is a long ways, as if she were  
Stretching to hang on to him, even so  
In a few hours he will be leaving the valleys  
Of her budded room, and though she may  
Weep with the sap and pollen, excreting fertility  
As was her design, by morning he  
Will be back atop her again, and they will make  
Love for another rutting day, cooking the declivities  
And blushing ridges of her earth,  
Moaning on up to him that she is forever  
Faithfully longing, even though every time he sees  
Her there are new shoots of chlorophylled grass,  
The slender blades of infants blue and green,  
And absently budded organs filigreeing the humming  
Stamens down beneath her, and elk in straggling herds  
Down from the mountains, and geese away in the  
Overfilling waters and silt of the springtime meadow;  
And stray hands of some amateur archaeologist have  
Turned up another mauve arrowhead,  
And some heavy hoof has broken open a crystalline  
Geode under her lip,  
And another mountain lion has disappeared across the  
Mogion Rim,  
As another barbed-wire fence is mended down on the flat  
To the orchestra of flies through the sound-caves of  
The old cow's skull,  
So that he can never be sure of her promises,  
Nor does he call her by name, but glides there upon her  
Like a fat and ambitious philosopher, overly confident  
And exhausted from his sojourns into the west,  
Though never once does he question her, as he bights  
Her lips of photo genesis, and her leaves roll like eyes.  
Bending up to him, as if on the tips of her toes,



She calls his name and nibbles his shining chin,  
But never does she think to mention her quieter yearnings  
For the opulent clam-shell lights of her coyer gentleman,  
The softer stranger of the cooling nights, whom the sun  
Has yet suspected.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sun And Night

And sun, and sun, and sun, and sun,  
And night, and night, and night, and night.  
We get up and revolve, eat, make love:  
Some of us go down to the park and swing,  
Some of us cry her name in sleep-  
The beauty we do all of this for,  
The opposite body we do not know,  
But wish to handle with devilish alacrities-  
I've climbed a tall mountain in Colorado when  
It was past my bedtime, and the little boy coming down  
With his parents told me it was too late;  
But I climbed it anyway, the rolling back of false summits,  
To see the hidden threshold the sun runs through after her.  
The plaque placed near the end by a weeping mother  
For the dead skier,  
The marble aspens at her shivering throat,  
All the dark things which come into this world,  
And are twisted up and confused, and utterly beautiful.  
And she is confused, when she takes his hand and draws him to bed.  
Made-up but hesitant, her legs open another time  
As dusk transcends and flint sparks her moans in the dimmed room:  
All of this I've never seen, as I've never touched the inner course of  
Her thigh, never seen the things she shows him time and again,  
The nocturnal budding of mammalian rosaries,  
The clanging together of fleshed bones, the rights to lips  
And bights of teeth, and tongues everywhere in the throws:  
Somehow becomes mundane, the chalice sipped every evening,  
And thus unappreciated, but not for me:  
The unfamiliar lake where the women swim unabashedly nude,  
Each of their fingers playing in their sorority's gay ring:  
If she welcomed me with a coy nod, seeing where I  
Have summited, seeing only me against the dozing clouds  
Atop the drowsing world, the thin air I cut myself into for her,  
And she called me down into the confusion of trees,  
Where the light dwindles like a dying stream,  
I would make a bed with her in the nettles and birds,  
And coil into her unwinding through the apertures of surrender.  
And sun, and sun, and sun, and sun,  
And night, and night, and night, and night.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sunbathing

Smells of delight and smells of genies: I have only so many  
Wishes-  
The petting zoo is in the back of my neighborhood: My Alma,  
My soul is slight enough to fit into a bag,  
But she already has two children: I want to sing to her, and coax  
Her into my house: I want to learn better Spanish to woo her,  
To make her my chicana spouse;  
And the ways are all entranced up again today, swallowing the  
Losing species down beside the meters of a parade:  
I park my car and stand as tall as I can stand, and hold my vampired  
Neck straight up to heal by the salted endives birthed from her,  
Exhumed from the sun: For here is the most ancient tombs of  
Our species, still wreathing and broiling upwards, showing to our  
Forbearing angels the offspring of her green weddings:  
She holds them up for a little while, spilled like wetted chandeliers from  
Her caesuras, and then they are lunged back down again  
And disappear into the gowns of her eternal wedding, as she swims  
Around in a dance that will last as long as a marble swirling in an  
Uncountable pool, lost by the nascent fingers of a child  
As he plays a game, as his topless mother is sunbathing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sunday's Churchgoers

There are dead horses underground,  
And there are people underground,  
Some you know and  
Some who know you.  
When she walks by your crypt,  
She looks so pretty-  
Her lips pout the chartreuse  
Eloquence of damp butterflies  
On the battlefield,  
All the sleeping men with open minds,  
Their stomachs' new orgasms  
Pollinate the field in many ways;  
Their spores fly to glitter her eyelashes,  
When she comes walking  
Working after midnight,  
All the dirty boys buried next to you  
Wake up and offer her the worthless  
Confederacy,  
Everyone's spilled dreams  
Licked up by the cats leaping out of the gutter.  
Her fishnet stocking have her trapped  
All night under the big willow.  
Where you sit on the old marble  
Facing eastwards, waiting redemption.  
She's says over and over again  
The you love her,  
But those are just whispers in the  
Empty spaces between where cars move-  
Maybe as she moans with unevolved hunger,  
She makes the knife move  
Spreading her wrists with  
Strawberry jam. The crows gather  
All morning  
Gossiping like churchgoers on Sunday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sunken Into The Lake

Lancelot of the green heart and other  
Immature words—  
Had an illegitimate son as pure as many gods—  
Who sat with the bangle tigers  
As he ate his lunch of peanut butter and  
Jelly at the zoo—  
Galahad was the boy of Timbuktu—  
Chosen by the angels to tie his shoe,  
And quest for the Holy Grail:  
It's what he did,  
And this much is true—  
He found it he, did,  
But I don't know where—oh if—  
Oh if I only knew—

I wouldn't have to bet on the races  
Or go to work in the zoo—  
But I've lost my habit of knowing what  
I'm doing and my wife  
Run away with my shoe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sunlight In A Field Of Grass

I cut a honeydew into today, as the horses ran and played;  
And then I stood for awhile beneath a red trailer  
As maroon as a luxuriating sea; and then it didn't have to go  
For awhile,  
But it went- and the sun sailed its bravery as our last bit of  
Money was spent;  
And Alma caressed our yards for awhile: she awakened and  
Spilled and there was the life of the seashore in her  
Eyes:  
Small change and anemones in her pocket: and I thought of  
Her as I was scarred:  
How she has umbilical hernia: of how she cannot swim:  
We made love on Friday- months ago, I held her up  
And kissed her in the waves:  
I cannot believe it: we made love yesterday, but it feels like another  
World, as she slips away with the unlucky bottles I have spilled-  
A few footsteps: a thousand miles,  
As she waits with her children beside the bus stops in the early  
Mornings of another school day: while the baseball diamonds rust,  
And the ghosts of my adolescents keep catching  
Sunlight in a field of grass that is no longer there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sunny Day's Fairy-Tale

I have the idea I can give anything over to you;  
Or I can make you real, sung into the estuaries torpid  
Over stones fumbling;  
Here, your eyes are on the brink of little foxes,  
And in the house at your lip my little boy is sailing airplanes  
Made of creased paper to sleep atop ceiling fans:

They will burn. We will burn it all down for you, given  
Turns in the parks after all our peers have run away to  
Beautiful colleges where they learn: I will burn this whole  
Town down for you, on Halloween or tomorrow:  
I will ride my bicycles while they burn sugar-cane,  
You will echo in the hallway of my penultimate scars.  
I get new ones to avoid you, but it is impossible when you  
Waif, when you slip naked amidst the shallows  
And turn stiles.

I masturbate onto green carpet, or with the hall pass into empty  
Lockers. Jason Schwartzbaum chews tobacco and we buzz  
Through math. The little Jew, or the tiny architect:

Now how you've flown like a schooner with preternatural  
Sails, how you smell like Dr. Pepper and shampoo,  
And I molest this fairy-tale.  
Even when I get up at 8,000 feet to feed the horses.  
Even when my life is gone, and with my new scars I  
Am evolving, or I am a monster who has torn it all away from  
Me: You come, and the forest becomes a green hallway with  
Doors off to science or biology, and inside like a prism,  
So many visions of you turned away, hung upon him,  
Draped like dew on grass French-kissing, a hero;

if I come

For you we will both be defeated, but from the tops of mountains  
Light suicides like daydreams, and little girls fall like  
Rain showers; and so I come, and the sugar-cane burns in the west,  
And the marching band plays its drums in a thunderstorm;  
Nakedly, she makes you out of clay with her barren hands to wait  
For my breath to awaken, to kiss him in interludes thrumming, so I come: a



fingerprint touching you under the broken down bus;

We skip class over the canal, and all this while I am  
A machine whose purpose it is to hide and seek,  
To awaken you from an oil slick chrysalis and watch you drive  
Away humming to the instruments of fireworks and sad bonfires,  
Your jawbone an opal cup magnetized over the steering-wheel,  
Directing you to that great water; but there you see

Just the embers of rum and waves,  
As your tune recedes in forgotten memory  
How you wanted me to come out and play, and the  
Lions roared entrenched in their habitat; My heart but  
A tourist yours devoured, and then went along its sunny day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sunny Winter Sundays

The cross is missing her arms, so make love to her  
As she rises in stilettos,  
From the lake where she'd wish to play alone,  
Even if the conquistadors, sunken in their metals,  
Are forever grinning at her,  
And the strong men who used to piss their pants  
As whipping boys,  
Do pushups on her concrete banks,  
Wink and diminish the bullies and knife throwers;  
And little boys, the evening's thoughts dive into  
Her womb, and clean her of the little hooks their fathers  
Left behind; While their mothers are gossiping,  
Doing their wash in her, and the water house sits  
On her shoulder, spindling, weeping as it uses her  
To crush the wheat;  
Eventually, a family takes her name before they migrate,  
The sound she made as she fell down the stairs,  
And spreads out, forgetting how the rivulets fumbled  
Down her green belly from her tits, spilling the lucky fish  
And tadpoles lactated, and how I might once have dreamed  
Floating beneath her chin in leafy axioms, that I was purring,  
And she could hold me all at once in her dress and in  
Her eyes, that she might collect all of us, bathing in her  
Until we understood, and paid her from our fields,  
And gifted her with our dead grandfathers, weighted down  
And mutely romanced into her bosom,  
Where she kept our secrets with an enclave of eels,  
Amputated, over spilling like a toilet when it rained, weeping  
Out of her mouth and eyes that we should be so kind,  
And not like the tourists who only baptized into her when  
There was ice-cream on sunny winter Sundays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sunset

Now the sun is on the lip of the canyon and  
She is utterly biting him to keep him there  
And outline her long body to the strange settlers in her;  
But he will not tarry, for he is tired too,  
And soon to sink into the dawns of China men,  
Ladies in the atolls waiting for him with glasses of sweaty cherry,  
Women with unlaced bikinis on the prows of long ships,  
Knowing that he will soon enfold them with the blindness of a foreign language,  
So he is eager to leave,  
And I am watching his inevitable departure unpronounced through  
The smeared glass. Ironically, not thinking of him,  
But a woman five states over swimming in the humidity of two seas,  
And wondering now if in any of these downcast motes,  
Bits of her might have traveled subconsciously,  
In the spores of the great valley, her legs open trying to seduce this king:  
But he will hear no more of it, for now he is tired of her and  
He weighs too much for this hemisphere, his hands  
Pushing her back in the weeping shadows.  
I try to distinguish her out of the spores of her fair city,  
All the tardy and negligent children in their classes having  
Almost turned 30; and I am sure she is here, just as I'm  
Sure she could give a damn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Superfluous Immodesty

Here is another one  
Without a reason for you to give time to it;  
A pinprick of blood arranged in an indecipherable  
Letter of damaged love,  
The last of the baby-teeth to dropp onto the white linen,  
A pomegranate's edible jewel the crow picks  
Like a ruby eye from the pocket of a prince;  
An origami swan stuck in the photosynthesis  
High up in the orange trees down the second row,  
Being rained on by the busy noon:  
A foible for the ghost in the parking garage:  
Twist up me now like spindles in the sea,  
The odd breath she takes amidst the rocks and shoals,  
Where the ominous roses grow out of her lips,  
The virgin gardens of her pallid thighs,  
And let me curl up into you like high velocity DNA-  
Unrecognize yourself in the window of crying fear,  
And lay down on your cantaloupe breasts,  
And let my fingers list the back road of spine,  
The stem of your flower, the titanic hull of opal chests,  
The dusty trundling down past the weeds where the canal murks;  
Where the dragon-flies string jade in the columns' shadows,  
Which marks you like a butterfly migrating and torn  
Over the Senora Desert,  
Like a prism in a jewel of spit in the cup of blue bell  
Hidden in the high flaxen grasses of Tool Box Draw,  
Up past her knobby laughing knees with no skirt,  
And nothing even, except for my words in hidden parts,  
Like the drool of bees, like the sleep in the corner  
Of the moon's squinting eye through the bowers of the witching glade;  
All the brightness skipping up her back and lunching  
There between her shoulder blades  
While the aspens jingle like street performers,  
The art of high altitude's necessity, and hunger's hallucinations,  
And my lips like young birds chirping at the vase of your sultry neck,  
Climbing over in little pecks, hungry for your lips  
And the dimple of your chin,  
Until your eyes reveal in the turning horizon of face, like perfect  
Blue islands of shimmering grottos beneath the ceiling fan,

And there to speak once more the trophy inconsequential,  
Indecencies I pull up by their thirsty roots with clumps of heady earth,  
And offer to you once more, standing like a gloomy artist,  
Who has postmarked all his reason to the arbitrary muse,  
Thoughtless and indecent, someone you can barely remember,  
Knocking too quietly on your door for you to recall,  
Or to get up from the average kiss you give your every man.

Robert Rorabeck

# Superfluous Screams

All these words are twirling waste  
Down the toilet,  
Dripping down the wet ears of  
The sink hole's verdant ferns,  
Sitting on the head of a sleeping monarch,  
Being drowned in the salty undertow  
Far away from the woman's ear,  
The wishing well these little  
Silver worthless things were meant  
To be received by  
Like children shattered in a shallow cave—  
I cannot see what I am doing anymore.  
Driving in the rain, I close my eyes  
And when I look again  
I expect to see her standing naked  
And suppliant, being caressed by  
The storm and my headlights  
As I run into her and watch  
The old car make some kind  
Of love for a second or less  
Before the world starts spinning again,  
The average everyday screams nobody  
Hears because it is going on ceaselessly  
In the cryptorchid bedrooms of  
Blue-collar kings and their azure bitches.  
The sound that became when God  
Got drunk and went to town,  
Fertilized the Universe's womb,  
And refused responsibility for life.  
The background noise we make love  
And die to. The song of her life  
She is too busy dancing for  
To care to hear the superfluous screams,  
The organ grinder plays as his pet monkey  
Tips his doll-sized hat to collect her change,  
The priceless rhythm which seems to listen  
To my very soul  
Whenever her eyes pour down upon me.



# Supernatural Uneasiness

Sometimes they will try to hide the heavens  
While the trailer parks gleam with  
Christmas trees  
And the bicycles sleep alone next to the super markets  
Closed  
Beneath the preternatural mountains:  
And I will say to myself, as the rivers are filled  
With garden snakes-  
After the rains have flooded the hibiscus,  
Making them nude and pregnant:  
That this was just a song I knew in color,  
And they are probably making love right now,  
And the Zephyrs are filled with ornaments-  
Even though they are not making love,  
Because she pleads for me alone in her bedroom as  
Her heart makes similar perpetrations,  
And she reaches towards me with supernatural  
Uneasiness,  
Even while she kisses her children driving them home  
From school.

Robert Rorabeck



# Supertramp

Christopher McCandless is  
Dead  
But he was more alive  
Than you have ever been.

Robert Rorabeck

# Supposing It Will Not Rain

Early morning and  
I've put down the narcissistic poem,  
And all around the campus, like high school,  
The students are finally going to sleep:  
The sun is coming up,  
And their stomachs are emptied on the  
Graffitied sidewalks,  
And someone has written in wet concrete  
In Old English: the moon,  
Where it has been so long since I tasted wine  
In the orange groves of Spain,  
My aunt a mermaid fondled in the whiteness  
Of Roman ruins,  
Embedded and hyperventilating  
From the sea's recessions,  
And yet out on the ways of campus the flood lights  
Glow like modern wombs,  
And there are professors sleeping in the  
Foliage with new publications pressed to the  
Tweed over the purplish hearts,  
Like badges,  
Their glasses askance as they snore,  
A grasshopper on their lip stuck by one leg,  
Farting transcendently, a shedding jewel:  
When they wake up, the Buddhists will be chanting,  
And blond girls will be sunbathing,  
And the preachers will have their say,  
Shaking their firsts in the unbelievable sunlight  
Cut in twain by the clock tower's slender phallus,  
And the clouds will begin to move, redefining shade,  
And the students will move in and out of that pattern,  
Their eyes blinking rapidly,  
As their legs exercise conditioned to the terrorisms  
Of the routine;  
And then she will yawn sleepily in his arms,  
And watch a hummingbird float like an illusion  
Outside the window, and the spider in the corner  
Waiting to dance;  
She will wipe away the drool and fondle his eyelashes

Until he notices her,  
And this is when she will smile, not thinking  
Of me, but supposing it will not rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Surceases

So you cried that you'd said  
You'd thought that I'd been untrue:  
Well,  
Maybe your eyes were the overpowering  
In the venal pestilence of aphrodisiacs  
Of armpits,  
And now I can hardly move:  
And I've finished the bottle, and I'm breaking out  
While the traffic moves;  
And you are the soft, nose-pierced  
Hypocrite with brown  
Flowing eyes:  
Who are you, with brown flowing eyes  
But a woman for every man,  
And I cannot move: and I refuse to move for  
Just anyone, and you are you but just  
Anyone,  
While the traffic flows,  
And I wait while the tied, ever ready,  
Surceases.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sure To Die

I never look you in the eye-  
And what if that is the cause of the only loneliness  
That I know:  
That I can't be in charge of your tawny body,  
Your winsome soul-  
Places over the dilapidated fields that hold your  
Breath and take your weedy yield-  
Why I didn't mow them for you,  
Because I am afraid of sharks, and really afraid of lightning:  
And my bad habits;  
And not a single girl raises her head out of her walled  
Holes, to  
Sniff the breeze of these words I sow;  
But that is not what I am afraid of- I am afraid that I  
Must be going soon:  
Suicide by cop or coon:  
I loved you on the backside of the roller coaster,  
On the dark side of the moon,  
But the strange traffic just kept pausing to stare at my  
Strangely unsatisfied murder;  
But that is not what I am afraid of- that these happenstances  
Have been my folly,  
That I should have been aroused, have been more jolly,  
But I just kept shooting for you in the dark,  
Censuring my swing sets, flatulating reveille in the airplaned  
Twilight:  
That fact is, Erin, you have a great set of eyes, and didn't  
I mention those tits,  
But your amber milk breastfeeds so many nitwits:  
I know you said you read most all of this,  
But I think you lie-  
You just want another pool boy to feed you amber grapes  
Before you die,  
And you thought it might sad when it seemed that I might  
Crawl away to Colorado under another's flooded  
Though just as insouciant banner- blue eyed;  
But now you see where I lay, gut shot on the clay-  
And either way, like my great great grandfather of civil war  
History,

I hold my guts in moaning like toy soldiers  
In plastic pails:  
Either way- rich and swell,  
For this or for the other,  
I am sure to die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Surely If They Are Real

Gods pledge their songs to girls,  
And I want my liver damage to pass beneath the  
Tunnels  
And the wind tunnels or Christmas, but all of this  
Isn't even real.

Alma:

That I have said I loved you, and I felt myself working beside  
You all day,

And then I spun up all of these words for which there  
Is no counter,

And now I am forever starving even though I have  
So much meat:

And the letters come like the plagiarisms of classrooms  
In the immense sunlight:

And I washed up after I made love to her, Alma:

I hope you might forgive me:

Maybe she will become my room mate, or maybe I will  
Starve with your name on my lips.

The last vestige of anything that believed or lived  
Longer than Disney World,

And now this: and now this- the airplanes touching down  
And grazing,

And all of my secret thoughts happening down upon the  
Low Lancelot grottos that aren't even real,

But have some time for teaching to themselves, while  
Heidi suckles, or feels the need to repeat the savage and  
Indian things unto which I am sure that you aren't  
Even sure if they are real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Survival

Eager young repartees in the sand;  
In the surf up to her ankles  
Counting what the angels should have  
Skipped across the bay-  
No more sangria, no more friends  
My aunt is dead for maybe seven years a  
Tourist in limbo,  
Watching all the pretty colors and the  
Dwarfs,  
Believe even while fainting that I could  
Defeat them all maybe by myself  
Or with a paper sack of  
Dried seahorses;  
But no one calls my bluff, no one calls  
At all,  
The voices echo the valentines spent on lovers  
With sweet faces many high school ago  
Who were not likewise infatuated;  
This is how it must feel to know survival,  
The kind generosity of dumb horses peppering  
The fallow valley with steaming stuff,  
And all the other words that are allusions  
To the desire of her warm candidacy:  
I know if I could hold her hand forever and feed  
Her strawberries than all these other deaths  
Would turn small  
And amusing; and all of our children would  
Follow after our ceremonies, like echoes filling up  
For awhile a glass, a bay,  
A high school hallway shouting for the joy  
Of every heart's needs for survival.

Robert Rorabeck



# Swan At Some Distance

Bannered and awaiting the snows, don't  
You sit and wait under your mountain of all things-  
Like a dark eyed jewel:  
Alone, on a dark road near sea level,  
So far beneath you, I have sexual dreams of taking you  
Along Southern Blvd,  
And you are so needy and pressed  
Like something god has been kind enough to  
Return; and you don't know how to play  
Soccer; and I am a dream myself in roller-skates  
In the crepuscule of soft dinners,  
Your eyes engorging on the fictionalized ice-creams  
Of that wild satellite that isn't even real.  
A mollusk travels across the dog hair on my pillow,  
Gets caught in the sharp tinsel of my scars;  
And I awaken and moan. Even before I awaken, I sense  
That it is the barren establishment the sun's strings are returning  
Me into- the silver fish blue lipped on the prow of his  
Apathetic ship- and here I've never been able to achieve  
The rights of beauty. For there you are all done up  
With your man, and I am left to strive alone in perpetually  
Venal motions- freckled by a consumption of green  
Scars, the vermilion decrepitude that used to make you think  
From across the room that I might be a swan.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swann's Way

I don't think I know you,  
But the land is plentiful if unreal.  
I really shouldn't be trying to be doing this anymore:  
To turn your head from quite far away-  
To take your hand when you are not looking,  
And kiss each pruned knuckle for a start:  
But I can't shake the feeling that I might be doing some good,  
Or at least I am holding off the droughts of loneliness,  
Remembering that I walk alone with you under the same sky,  
Each of us singing songs only we can hear.  
And there are people out there who I cannot remember,  
But who remember me, though they may be very few,  
And it is how I understand you in relationship to myself:  
Unreasonably, I think of you ever day:  
When my thoughts come in to the word upon awakening,  
And when they drift away in the solitary bed at night,  
And there sail through the courses of all the various  
Actions I would like to put in place with you,  
As if I were the great entrepreneur and you my enterprise:  
But I know I cannot fully understand this,  
Just as when I read a novel too fully realized for me to grasp  
In totality- Something by Proust, whose pages  
Are full of the strange viaducts of another language,  
Even though translated cannot come clearly to my tongue,  
So I am left with a hazy recollection of the places and people  
Spoken of, as if an impression of life blurred by the rains and mist  
Out upon the open greens and picnics where people try their  
Best to meet; but I do understand the notion of love through you,  
Be it a distant and infertile emotion, it is still one I wish to conclude,  
And only through you, however unreasonable that may be;  
I know such an unrequited venture may be perilous,  
And in almost all certainty ill-advised, as even now you  
Are letting the organs of your being sound out toward your more  
Reasonable loves, those males who occupy your proximity  
And habit, but it is not my appetite to dine like ordinary people,  
But to be a sad and reclusive thing hunkered down for all durations,  
Thus writing to you again with unreserved sincerity through my flawed  
But prodigious pen, that you might look up some dawn and  
Cast your thoughts far out in the gray and upset waves,

And thus risk the chance of drowning in the deepest furrows,  
Only to be rewarded by a love that asks no quarter,  
And will never surrender to the practical declivities,  
But hopes for you the way a mountain rises unto the sky,  
Thus piercing the greater meanings which surround us, ignoring  
The masses' caprice, and thus we find ourselves lying down upon  
The unmalleable table between the terra ferma and ether.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swathing Synthetics

Bruised lips on a mannequin,  
I can write of nothing more. There are houses  
On the shore of the river, and her eyes  
Are the gray green of a gothic romance.  
I stare at them in pictures and lithographs,  
And the shifty brail of sandpaper.  
This is the girl I wanted to kiss, whose direction  
I turned to when I performed my poetry on  
The stage of high school I was infamous for;  
Because of her I asked my parents about marriage,  
But what could they say,  
For at my age they were too busy picking lettuce  
In the sun chalked fields to fall in love,  
The bitter romance of one of Hardy's novels,  
And she remains as beautiful as Tess of the d'Urbervilles,  
This girl; if I went back to college I could find  
Her ghost, gray and whispering, whispering  
Even words she should not recall, the red bricked  
Halls of knowledgeable earth, the silky dreams  
Awaken in hazarding light upon the soccer field's  
Pestilence; we have all slipped away, and to  
Return would only make us disappear in untrustworthy  
Looks, but judging from what I can tell, her lips  
Could still fill a well, and she is married  
And busily entrepreneurial, and knows all about  
My swill. I should have stayed in the wrecked train cars  
In California; I should not have left junior college,  
Or listened to the guidance councilor, but I have  
Already written her a book filled with open wounds,  
I wrote from the high basins and summits where looking  
Down her city was a swarm of sombulent fireflies,  
Hibernating in the blanketing snows,  
Burning glacial pools to clean their bodies,  
And her husband is a good man, and she is a good woman  
For him, and they will make money and children,  
And fill the quiet spaces with the tide and undulations;  
For this I know, her picture careworn from high school,  
Her hands on the clay wheel where pottery spindles  
Like little girls, and everything else that has grown up,

Gone away, is no longer real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swearing That The Pies Can Bake Another Day

Caveats in a panorama- A silly thrill,  
A full room velvet blushing view for all of these  
Tourists standing up,  
All ready to applaud, the rocketships being pulled  
Around and around again  
By little boys on taught strings, like red nosed birds  
Seeming to try and make love to the moon:  
These easy words are like supermarket bouquets  
Purchased without reason except for the high school  
Crush who in high fever will pass for a day,  
As a life passes for a day-  
A young boy leaping over all of these flames,  
The thorn-lipped coffins; and if you know me, I was  
Born in Michigan and that was where I ran away:  
My first word was goat bare feet happily naked in  
The wet clay where the Dutch were farming celery  
As white as ghosts as white as kitchen sheets,  
Belly-sick on dreams covered in a sheen of moths,  
Like the paper throats of girls who have flown or swam  
Away  
To find their sailors, crinkling all the tinfoil in their  
Hand to make kissing balls,  
Swearing that the pies can bake another day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swearing To My Abscent Steed

If I try again, as if taking myself to the graveyard,  
Skipping the schools of light, to read here with the witches  
Who never looked more beautiful,  
The clouds gurgling a spell in the sky, and all of the little boys  
Home in their castanets hunting for cartoons;  
It is because I want your lips whispering in my whispering room;  
And it feels right now as if the moon has the power to bring  
You straight over all of these streets that its luminance  
Caretakes over,  
And resurrects the call girls like weeds, and calls the alligators  
To emerge from their aquatic seeds;  
And it feels alright now even though the street lamps are  
Without a church, as I am without your brown body,  
Alma:  
It almost feels alright, while tomorrow you will do you laundry  
And clean your room, in the house that your father promised to you:  
Maybe it will almost be yours, as your family extends into the bright  
Yard into which your clothes are drying their secrets  
As the world spins,  
And the graveyards speak like windmills, gossiping of I on  
My quixotic quest, imbibing the amber ness of your eyes,  
And swearing to my absent steed that it should never have to end.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sweet Commercials

Soft peat where golden monkeys sleep-  
So like little men, with little thoughts of men,  
And young mothers drive around when  
They cannot sleep;  
And I cannot sleep, thinking of young mothers  
Wanting to buy them bicycles and take them around  
Then- see all the neighborhoods of young men:  
Want to see by the young vermilion neighborhoods  
That I would like to take her in,  
To put her in-  
And stop doing this- stop wandering off into traffic,  
Stop pushing ghostly and indigo trams,  
Or looking for girls cut into narrow gauge railroads  
In the deep wounded wildflower basins between mount-  
Ains-  
Want to reciprocate more truthfully with her,  
Wanting nothing but to work like a dog then for her,  
And end up waking up looking into her far off eyes-  
Everything on her wonderful and healing,  
Beginning to sound like water un crystallizing,  
And kiss and suckle her flesh and begin to really know her  
Flesh,  
The way our children should know it as well,  
After school in rain showers before dinner, and during  
Sweet commercials.

Robert Rorabeck



# Sweet Places On Her

Wishing wells so shallow they can't  
Hold a dollar's  
Change,  
Her eyes wonderfully obscure,  
Disinterested by disasters of traffics and  
Tourisms,  
By my comely midway where I've set  
Up games for her,  
Named after household pets I'd hope to drop  
Into her under that  
Cerulean cathedral we've been swimming in  
For all time:  
I was the last holdout after all the buses had  
Gone home, caracoling their lost  
Boys,  
The gap-toothed causes of the fruitfully  
Multiplied:  
And she came after chorus, after pottery spinning,  
Origami zoo-life threshed in her hair;  
I told her I was a nocturnal time traveler  
Out of my comfortable elements,  
Out of liquor;  
I wanted to know upon the places on her to put  
My lips and suckling, imbibe;  
But she just flaunted her ass like a laconic songbird  
As she put on her skates,  
And slid easily past me along the concrete  
Tributaries under the steamy sun,  
And I had gambled all my wishes in to her, but  
She shed them with her oily coat, every one.  
The alligators followed her home with their insatiable  
Thoughts,  
But I couldn't even stand to walk out:  
She had me done.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sweet Safety Of Your Third Base

They make friends well before  
Crepuscule  
On the swing-sets the day before  
Thanksgiving;  
And they make their slight penumbra over  
The lake  
That you have forgotten,  
The lake that will never be yours again because  
You lived too close to it  
To be mindful of how important it was,  
Even though men had dug:  
Like bouquets they sold in the aisle of your  
Check out line,  
Like the celebrities grinning there,  
What I have always tried to become, digging up  
Pretty things from the roots of  
Suburban yards whose traffics aren't at home,  
And the sky is a rosy bowl  
Of drying flowers where the airplanes hover  
Like the condiments of many-windowed wasps,  
Silver and husked,  
Just as diminutive as you were to me  
All through college  
Until you rose to the surface again and I saw your  
Eyes and thus without another thought  
Gathered up in the background queue of  
Your bull pen and waited for those  
Men who superceded me in your heart to  
Prove unfaithful,  
To swing empty love so that I might have a chance  
Of hitting a grand slam through your house of  
Areolas and cards,  
Or at least burning my legs into the loci of sweet  
Safety of your third base.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sweet Young Aeroplanes

Whiskey is good in the bare-assed parks of  
Absolute blindness,  
And if you were here with me right now  
You would be so tall and beautiful  
It would take several men just to deliver your  
Mail,  
But I would try to give you every gift ever made  
With your birthstone,  
While the waves set out and licked the feet of  
Early crosses  
Where strange young pedestrians had to die  
Out walking underneath the Spanish forts  
Forever,  
Or for a very long time, and I only know so many words,  
And the bicycles are so lonely. They sit forever  
Right in the sad and lonely garages of high school  
English teachers,  
Just like I sit out underneath the prayer flags and ghosts  
Of sweet citrus  
And dream of pressing my hips up against girls name  
S-, but if she was really there she would absolutely  
Destroy me,  
So I continue walking alone, zigzagging down and then  
Straight up again:  
I've been to the Colorado river in the grand and juicy cut  
At least three times,  
And each time it is like bringing all of my senses up against  
Your wrist  
And asking for sweet tips from your insouciant cloisters,  
Like punches and pedals of stars  
Who don't really know how beautiful they are  
So far and high do they bloom their sorority that they even  
Rest their bare heads at night underneath the  
Moist and transitory tips of the wings of  
Sweet young aeroplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sweet, Sweet Honey Beast

I am on my third beer,  
And the world is still real,  
And eyes are the easy illusions,  
But the tricks are real-  
And I am not Sylvia Plath,  
I am not even her currying son:  
And the sky is a waterslide of a slit throat,  
And the sweet girls have so much fun  
With the butchers,  
With their bayoneted guns:  
And there are still places in the word where  
The ivory billed woodpeckers live,  
But wherever they are it is haunted,  
And my sisters are real and  
They skin dive,  
And cars are real and bee hives;  
And Stephen King coughs up ghosts-  
Ghosts with  
C\$nts and video games;  
And her eyes are like the wings of paper airplanes,  
Molting to the steady pecking of minnows underneath the  
Red holly on the other side of the canal;  
And in the first and the last of every crepuscule I  
Fashion myself the sweet smells  
She puts off in her bedrooms far over my head;  
And I almost thought the traffic was finally done  
With its chromed surcease,  
But down here it is never done, far to the eat  
Of her sweet, sweet honey beast.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sweeter Than The Orchards

Unicorn, you are not in my heart,  
Because I've fallen across the canal and away from here-  
Where will I end up,  
Since I am not a wish in your well,  
And the thunderbirds have lavished my throat but  
Not taught me how to sing-  
And I wake up to the spectacle of a pretty world  
Where the foxes and  
The housewives go leaping- all of the pretty sort,  
Given to words by themselves-  
And if you study through the night, it is nothing for  
My knowledge- for the prettiest bridge is made  
Of your shoulders,  
And your skin is an apiary sweeter than the orchards  
Of the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swimming For Their Very Own Occupation

And I took her to her first volleyball game  
At my high school-  
There she was,  
Apiary- and brown honey at my arm:  
And I wrote for her,  
And swayed into her, like the moon's sickle  
From my front  
Porch swing- until it didn't have to  
Pretend to be forever,  
And yet it was beautiful- and from a long  
Ways off threw up its arms  
And headdresses and gave over all of its nations:  
Into the sound of racecars  
And adulterous housewives in the scrimshaw  
And corrugations of the heavy metal of  
Another trailer park-  
While their pink breasted and younger cousins  
Sunbathed and swam in the chlorine  
Which attracted to them  
With some small change at the bottom,  
Correlating them to some form of giant goldfish  
Swimming for their very own occupation  
In the strangely shadow less moats of another's  
State fair.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swimming My Tomorrows

The ocean is so close to me,  
As if this overpass were a cradle:  
The earliest stars are like her eyes to me,  
And her lips an offering ladle;

The waves, they leap so far towards me,  
As if they were women standing feverishly from a bath,  
And the clouds the curtains half torn down,  
From the sky's impassioned aftermath,

And in the mangrove where the turtles slow,  
The roots of trees her knees at rest,  
The fallen leaves her scattered memory,  
Flowing waywardly in the torpid currents over spilling  
In the sea,

Where she goes, the rivers lead,  
Where she seeps, the current swallows,  
In my eyes the closest memory, through jetsam's intercostals,

The sands are moribund and slipping along her neck,  
Her breasts the dunes and hillocks,  
Seabirds flight upon her breasts, and bury thistles  
In her navel,

I could listen to her all day, wantonly breathing beneath  
The humid skyways,  
But she would not lay her eyes to me, for they are lain  
Upon the vessel which strokes full steam along her memory,  
And the men who walk it are white and capital;

She foams as she wreathes, pushing the porpoises  
Along their bow and stern, just like little children playing  
In the tub, squeaking and clean,  
I guess she'll never learn,

That when I looked upon her so long ago,  
I swallowed her most entirely, and now when she leaps  
Away, naked and ephemeral, I am drowning naked in her

Swaying caesuras,  
Hypnotized by the epiphany of her unclothed torso,

Which flips just like a dream in an underwater midway,  
First in the thirsty sky, then in the salty stream,  
Jaunting fast and shallow,  
She can hardly remember who I was, but she is forever  
Swimming my tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck



# Swinging From God's Smoky Chain

Best place to leave this earth,  
Or any city men contrive,  
Is around god's neck,  
Just off the bridge his opals divide,  
Down the river from where they  
Hang the prisoners, the spies:  
And Benedict Arnold;

And ask him how you swing:  
"You are semiprecious, and so I will  
Wear you when I am shopping,  
And for the lesser pantheistic holidays,  
But at home while I am entertaining  
Dear friends,  
I will wear better men than you-  
Especially for Christmas and Easter,  
Or at least truer, more precious criminals: "

"And where will you put me then? "

"In some graveyard laid out long ways  
For a very long time-  
There will be no more time for swimming pools  
Or country clubs.  
For adolescent, prepubescent friends:  
Likely beside your family,  
The very ones who killed you and put you  
In the graveyard,

But I will keep your chains well oiled and  
Untangled,  
Because I am very careful about all of my creatures  
Great or small"

"And you will not love me anymore?  
And will I be forgotten, and endeavors given  
Up to the typical contrivances of elementary school,  
Forgotten and cannibalized on  
Declassified planets? "

"I say this, because you are semiprecious,  
And you either wrote in a language everyone well understood  
But never read;  
Or you sold used cars. In any case,  
I told you I would wear you while out  
Shopping, because this has become such a dangerous  
Neighborhood;  
And I do not think that people should be glad or  
Desperate enough to force such a corpse from me,  
Though that should be enough."

And I swung intermittently from god's bosom  
The semiprecious stuff as if the sperm from any common  
Whale, harpooned and taken from the sea with no loss  
Of man or angels,  
Though I was given to understand that it was enough."

Robert Rorabeck

## Swinging In Her Tomorrow

It seems to be keeping things together:  
The fox in the eyes of the girl who isn't even here:  
In the playground before the sea:  
The only thing that is hiding all of it from her is  
The manmade dune that seems to  
Say, "I will protect you." Well then the sun  
Smiled—and the lights came out  
That had previously been selling off of the  
Ferris Wheels:  
This was the most beautiful joy in the world  
And it wasn't even his—  
And as she swam in the shallow abysses—feeling  
All of a brevity that wasn't even joy—  
I remembered the echoes of another's knuckles  
Rasping upon the thresh holds—  
And whatever joy that may have once been—  
Left as if it was a clouded airplane from  
Her eyes—and set off for those parts  
That were barren and without swing-sets:  
And whatever joy there remained, swinging in her tomorrow—  
Happened to listen without her,  
And kept talking to itself—as if she was already home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swings Of Iron Pyrite

I love you but I live alone in my park,  
And my dogs get so scared they never bark;  
And late at night I masturbate:  
I hate that I do it,  
On the swings of iron pyrite,  
But its all I do:  
I can barely spell it, but I do it,  
And you are not here anymore:  
You are gone into the common tourisms of  
Colorado:  
Colorado; it is a beautiful place to be,  
And I can hear another beer being opened:  
My uncle Robert lives in Colorado;  
Isn't he your unpublished hero living in the trailer parks  
Of a never mind of never land.  
Maybe you went to college in his backyard,  
Maybe you unknowingly held is hand:  
I can hardly communicate,  
But I have made love to mountains.  
They have taken your place:  
I really wanted to make love to you,  
When you said you wanted to be real,  
Real;  
But you are the center of the universe, inescapable;  
That is place I want to lie into,  
Like a terrapin down deep into the center of the crenulated  
Bus;  
Like ants marching away into their queen:  
And, Dear S-,  
I wish I was more beautiful so that I might fully configure to your  
Bloom;  
But aren't you something now, with your daughter,  
S-, and fully formed, and A-:  
You will go on forever, I think:  
I think you will go on forever,  
Even after the rivers have refused to speak,  
While I cant really know what I am doing:  
I just want to make love to something good,  
While even now all the Christmas trees are up and fully decorated,

Like the mothers of ancient times,  
And maybe I will find my love again and banish her  
Again back into the kindergarten of your  
Open mouths,  
Sweating, filled, and yet they still cannot speak.

Robert Rorabeck

# Swing-Sets Above The Clouds

Pretty girls with bared brown  
Shoulders  
And prettier girls from Mexico  
Slinging apples  
In the fruiteria in the land of  
Metamorphosis:  
See how things change before the  
Wooden eyes of the marionettes  
Hung on their wooden pegs  
Beside the coat racks  
Beneath the aurora borealis  
In the middle of the night—  
The cat and the fox  
Making love and stealing all of their  
Gold,  
The dolphins getting lost amidst  
The washing machines—  
And the daylight and the moonlight  
Spinning,  
Spinning like princesses up on  
The screen in a movie theatre  
Whose  
Machinations never see conclusion:  
Like the serpent hanging in a pitchfork of  
Orange trees,  
Looks up through the bleeding clouds  
To see the hidden steps of glory he  
Has fallen down from,  
His beautiful sisters flying up there  
In their perpetual swing-sets above the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

## S-X With Ghosts

A dour search for houses haunts me  
If I go into new places where the tourists are  
All sleeping,  
And admire the green copper cannons crowning  
The fort, which I've written of but never polished-  
I say, give me a shot from liquor or a gun,  
Or good friends who will never tell, but  
Always smile,  
Give me a good girl with just two good legs that  
Could run a record mile,  
And the anonymity of the perfect form fluttering like  
Storm clouds of sun birds from each of my  
Masturbating fingers, a grandmother who doesn't  
Judge me who is always looking up in the blue canopy  
Of a southern shroud,  
And a place for me to rest and bowl between classes,  
Void of the human life of this era,  
Of Mexicans who jeer me because I drink green beer  
By the pool after midnight, weeping; and they jeer,  
And give me good constant labor,  
A mother and a father who almost understand me,  
And the gumption of two faithful dogs- Then, without  
Anymore conjunctions or spells from the lips of conjugations  
Of ancient languages I'm not good enough to understand,  
Give me paranormal extracurricular activities upon the  
White satin sheets of an underage virgin while she is fetching  
The eyes of boys so far away who will forever be too young  
To die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Sympathetic Revelries

No one's reading Sylvia Plathe,  
But maybe its because the oven's baked the pie,  
As outside the twins swing upside down  
From each bough on the starfruit tree;  
Once inside, the house will get up and walk  
Away fulfilled, for at night its windows  
Saw the folklore tangled around the rock garden  
The rabbits died in by the disease of the pet werewolf;  
That was before the sun came up and reformed  
The boldness on the dunes, where soldiers  
Practiced with the tortoise who got lost  
When her lover blindfolded her and asked her  
To get out of the bath; That day was the end  
Of my grandparents, for she saw him kissing  
The teller at the bank, and she bought an inflatable  
Raft and slept near the hair-lip of the canal, in  
The ditch she dug; The alligators came to her  
With boxes of chocolates and Robert Frost poetry,  
but she decided to be a spider-webbed ingénue,  
And I built her a theatre from the fox-destroyed  
Chicken-coop, and cut snowflakes to hang as I died,  
Shot through by arrows slung off-stage by my  
Little sister in a blond-wig chewing bubble gum;  
My grandmother applauded, and I leaked  
Ketchup. Afterwards, we made a cairn on a steamboat  
And turned the canal into the Mississippi for the  
Evening, and set grandmother out while even then  
He was laying a busty new woman like a cat on  
A fence; thus another line bled into the next, and grandmother  
Set out above the debutants and manatees; I am  
Certain if she saw a mermaid on her way to the Atlantic,  
She would have wept, as we rose from the dead and saw  
Her off, applauding her with our sympathetic revelries.

Robert Rorabeck



# Symphonies

If I choose to read my poems today,  
And shirk the duties out beneath the sun,  
Then I will surely come to you again,  
Where you might be filling your car with gas,  
Your eyes flirting with the day, leaping like  
Little birds over the roving avenues,  
Or you might be so hung over you can't even stand,  
But lie down deeply breathing the luxuries of your man;  
So rather than to think these shy thoughts,  
And of the possibilities too ready to exist,  
How your lips blister from the heat of a devil's kiss,  
I shall rather finish up this little snack and walk outside  
Again,  
Let my faithful hounds leap and snip at the hair on my  
Chin, For I can believe the wounds of hurricanes go  
Far away, and your lap dimpled by your navel flapped  
Over while driving in your car,  
Or your hair tucked over from the flirting breeze,  
As you watch the surf slap the shore, uproariously epiphanied;  
I should not come down your way again, for  
The sunlight's legion of spears shines protectively,  
And I should become a shadow less man,  
Hypnotized by your forgetful symphony; Rather, let me  
Roam outside and move upon my duty,  
And let the day stretch far and wide, singing its own  
Glorious symphony.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tables Of Midnight

Some charm in the amusements of  
A surreal peninsula-  
Some uncton the dragon has drunken beneath  
The conifers,  
As the trucks are slowly toiling up the mountain,  
As I sit at the porch  
Of a lonely church,  
Never forgetting how I've loved you,  
Even after you've born one child after another-  
And I am back here,  
And you are in your little shop in the bosoms  
Of those mountains-  
In the cloisters that lay peppered from the  
Freckled heavens:  
And I remain, contentedly trapped in the essences  
Of your forgotten memory-  
A marionette forever dancing, you've abandoned  
To go see the fireworks  
He lays out on the street for you- your child  
Clapping,  
And song birds up in their trees, silent for all the  
Space laid out in the tables of midnight.

Robert Rorabeck

# Taboo Cousin

I want another sip of my cheap rum,  
I want to make friends and stay for awhile  
After recess,  
Fondling her, pretending that she is real,  
As the sky goes ever upwards, warbling,  
A not for profit opera I heard not too long ago  
In New Mexico north of Sante Fe when  
Evan stopped the car so I could take a leak:  
I want to look out my trailer's window and see  
A dowry of virgins manhandling my name,  
Stretching far up to hang it in the lights  
So that steady stream of traffic can study me;  
And I want, of course, to be entirely different than  
These chubby tourists smiling fool-toothed,  
Sated of their adolescent pornography, on cakes  
And sugary professions: I want to slip barefooted  
Into the sea and feel her caressing me,  
Understanding my inalienable needs for possessing her,  
For buying her gifts even though I am already married,  
For sleeping in the darkness across from her porch and  
With my eyes caressing her:  
I want to make love to her quietly in the shadows,  
Alone in the bathroom, my eyes closed, impregnated by  
Her face, painting flesh, making her become the unavoidable pleasures,  
To publish myself inside of her,  
And then to get out of her way as she goes down the  
Safe path to grandmother's, her baskets swinging like her  
Hips the decadents sweets she gives for free to woodcutters  
And firefighters and lost men down at the dog track,  
Whom she snaps her fingers to make them come her way,  
Her body smiling to the fishermen in the river,  
Her senses she has never thought to gift for me,  
Even though I hang out all night and howl for her quietly in  
My way, making a religion of insolent things,  
Making her my taboo cousin, indifferent though by right unquestionably  
Beautiful, the unrequited recipient of my gift of nothing,  
Of many things.



# Tail Fins Of Vanished Day

Leading beauty by the hand around my place  
Mausoleums of sure imprisonment-  
Seems like every marble slab holds traces of her  
Elusive element:  
Look at how she flames and dies in a smorgass  
Board of rich decay-  
The pretty legged road kill squashed into the  
Roadside tundra of rich foray-  
And I told her I loved her, and she tossed her head  
And she flamed and died,  
And her body rose up a fountain of emollition,  
Or I suppose she got into the truck with the other,  
Sweeter toothed man,  
And I just couldn't look off as the yellows faded  
Into the grave- and crepuscule bitterly licked the  
Tail fins of vanished day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Take Me Away

My farts smell like the paramours of death,  
And I no longer rhyme-  
I'll only climb mountains if they reside under  
Rain clouds.  
All the paraphernalia of dead Indians I've  
Already dug up and sold to the  
Grocery store-  
She has a child, and the day is long-  
If taking on the bus, the fieldtrip is infinite and  
Filled with the troubling reflections  
Ricocheting from the tinted windows of  
Social banishment;  
And I have to dogs, and a poem now and then,  
Whistled to the woodpile chipped from  
The green;  
And I have no clothes to wear, as I am about to go  
Into debt, or maybe I'll break into the  
Castillo de San Marcos and light of green cannons  
And fireworks for the tourists-  
Maybe I'll kill one donkey, like in the movie you  
Don't know,  
But no one will ever read a thing about me,  
For these are the babblings of a shunt,  
Triaged in a muscled viaduct, waiting out the war,  
Listening the trundle of the tourists prattle,  
My mother is making love upstairs, or coming down  
From the shower; I've almost saved up enough money to  
Buy someone else love  
While she cleans her plate, the crabs legs like the  
Armor of a knight eaten by a witch;  
And as she gets up to leave, cradling new life from  
The crinoline and poisonous holy of her flesh,  
She never suspects that I've been sleeping underneath  
The pylons this whole time, waiting for her to finish  
So that the tide mighty hurry up  
And take me away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Taking Away Grandfathers

Fat as rainbows belching into the city  
And in the suburban yards one or two city cypress  
As new as truant children skipping from school;  
And if you look into the mouths where lions yawn,  
Whole kaleidoscopes filled with city school  
Buses,  
And the long, young yards cut up by palmettos:  
When it rains tender hooks- the alligators snore,  
And you spend a long, young time  
Passing smoke between the mouths- and Roman  
Candles send up hopeless flares to the  
Finnish bellies of the airplanes who go and then leave  
Like holidays,  
Spreading their arms like superheroes- and then  
Taking away grandfathers or whoever once existed  
Before your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Taking From Our Open Hands

The passersby who saws us said of us that whoever  
Made us do not live here anymore,  
Because our house was humbled without a roof, letting in the elements  
A bed of many seasons leaves,  
And sometimes wolves- a tenement of witches for when they were  
On their way,  
But sometimes feral strawberries, and boys with birthmarks:  
And it was a beautiful place to be torn down with you, like wall of  
Tumbled stanzas  
Beneath the soft green witchcraft of those forgotten plates:  
The dragons who'd lived there defeated as beautiful decorations for  
Girls who still never could belong to those princess:  
And you and I both suffering our final metamorphosis some time ago,  
Not even forget-me-nots anymore, as the river as superficial  
As unspoken lace crept through the green tufts and then away:  
And the little footprints who gathered there in thirst séances,  
With the little brown souls, the offspring of forgotten creatures who we  
Once fed our love to, their hungry mouths taking from our open hands.

Robert Rorabeck



# Taking It Nice And Slow

Seahorses in carriages of kelp don't  
Have so long to go for the day;  
They just sway and sway and say their peace;  
They are very penitent,  
These doppelgangers of the sea too diminutive  
To be useful to men;  
And the mermaids are not real anyway,  
Fish can hardly dream,  
So who do they have to love; and they laugh  
When they think this way,  
For they are free; and yet they float there, in  
Musk clouds of equine roe;  
Curling in the nimble designs of  
Obscure phobias,  
They seem to sway forever, but they don't;  
And the airy traffic rolls across their beds, taking  
It nice and slow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Taking My Place In His Grave

I start over- I start over and believe in guardian angels:  
That's who I was in kindergarten,  
Yet molested by the long hungry drive-  
Still entertained by the trees hung-over the tin  
And plastic grief of the pet cemetery:  
All houses were enormous- All cars were divine:  
I'd never drunken liquor, but she'd already shown me her  
Thing:  
The agelessness of shells is everywhere, in the road  
Where the puppies play,  
In the pornographies hidden in the cars underneath the  
Australian pines;  
How I had my first troubling kiss under or around the  
Hibiscus by a girl I didn't mind- Maybe she was much older  
Than me; Maybe she was an aunt with brown,  
Brown eyes:  
Now I've sipped airplanes and my first beer;  
And I'm really trying to do well-  
Trying to do better, but I can barely get a grasp on it:  
I can barely sing, and the kidnappers are prowling the streets  
And my corn bushel can hold only so many fireworks;  
And I wouldn't so much like to wake up the world,  
As I would one single girl- One single good girl;  
It doesn't matter her colors, or her songs-  
But that she should strike across me like a match run across  
The apex of the first house I can remember, to strike a fire in me  
That does away with all the other fires, the fires of liquor and  
Grief, the boom slang, necrotic fires that her careless Disney World  
Struck into me even as she got in the car and sped off to  
Her hideous wedding with the body who would become  
Her husband while I took his place in the grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Taking Shelter In The Rain

Marmoset underneath the mountain,  
Taking shelter in the rain- how pretty you look  
When no one else is at home,  
Underneath the empty house- the evergreens  
Dripping- the cat well fed and indoors:  
The lights of the town in a cul-de-sac at the  
Basin's armpit nearly out: an entire town sleeping,  
Almost filled with ghosts, because the  
Tourists have leapt back near the sea- as if the  
The fields in between were lighted by candles:  
And the entire country was some kind of mass,  
While I fitted all alone and weeping like a crocodile  
Beside the canal- and thought of you,  
All warm and dry, with your winter's store buried  
Close- and her children cooing in a cradle  
That sang beneath the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Taking Their Own Turns

Tired eyes of daydreams: and I think it is going to rain,  
As the cars eventually stop as we have to stop making love:  
And the armadas cool plasticine in the toy oceans of their hobbies  
And then it gets okay to believe:  
Especially in the Appalachians, the bodies moving in the organized  
Masses like the sororities of feathers in the chief's headdress:  
Even while everything else that never had to be, doesn't have to move:  
And we drink our glasses until there are ghosts:  
And I have to admit that there never actually was roses outlining  
The beauties bicycling to and from the university:  
And this is why you hired me this way: to be your own private eye  
As the rains came over the limestone that were digging their own  
Graves:  
The sinkholes who liked the idea of discovering something, leaving  
Their whitewashed girlfriends behind in their restaurants,  
And practicing, and practicing like their favorite baseball teams:  
Even while the cannibal and the bluest of the jays ate their own  
Song, flattering their wings like the blowing out of candles  
Across and through the erudite passes lining  
The cadmiums and velvets of their very own graves:  
Like lovers who left love notes of their open throats: for themselves,  
Alma- in which you are likened to me:  
And we sing this way, passing our breaths through the singsongs and  
Wishes of awake and sleep: loving you openly through the brashness of  
Classrooms that glow their own ways, like casinos of souls who  
Open themselves up on Sundays, and then turn around like school busses  
In a honey sweet apiary, taking their own turns at kissing themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tales In A Poem

Tales in a poem in a womb  
Of death—  
I saw you there, standing above  
The goldfish and holding your  
Last breathe—  
Wishes given to the stolen bicycles  
Sunken beneath the fields—  
And other wishes that come in time—  
The airplanes taking off in warm  
Streaks upon the sky—  
The house cats bending down  
To lick the canals  
Where the alligators have been  
Crying  
And old muses have been sending  
Their curses of loud music  
Towards me—  
Even after the fairgrounds  
Have melted away,  
And my first child is bound to be  
Born come tomorrow—  
In the April showers of those fields.

Robert Rorabeck

# Talking Turkey

They say my poetry is to be taught in Turkey,  
So I don't see a need to make much of money,  
As I am already fully invested  
In the enterprises of the lavish poor,

But I still like to look good for my honey.  
I am a dandelion in full spore.  
Yes, I am ripe and fat for my honey,  
And my children are keen to explore;

But my sister has already won the turney,  
So my other sweet sister, who I adore,  
I'll gladly settle for second if you'll  
Go sweet for thirds,

Or we can just sit by and watch the ambling traffic,  
And show these pin suited commuters our birds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tapered Across The Salty Grave

Now we have especially fond windmills that play  
Cards over our houses:  
The house if filled with cats, the field with mice;  
And the silent joys of rum burn upon my lips,  
As my mother finally gets up from counting the bills  
And goes into the bathroom to look at herself:  
My mother is very beautiful: She is probably while I am still  
Searching for beauty,  
Why I am still unmarried: I get mistaken every day for her  
Brother or her boyfriend, and I count myself lucky:  
She still looks so young standing next to the candles of her  
Unlucky wedding,  
But I no longer want to marry a white woman: My mother is  
Beautiful, but she is incredulous and republican:  
The manipulation of the migrant worker under the penumbras  
Of our Disney World continues to murder the unicorns;  
And I love Alma now, my very soul:  
She will never love me, but there are other Mexican women to love:  
You have to get them while they are very, very young if you don't  
Want to raise another vato's children, but I don't  
Mind the extra work, because it is just a little more to love  
Before I fall down forever more like a hoary raven, an angel  
Turned to ash by revenging lighting to kiss the proverbial lips  
And the carbuncles tapered across the salty grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tarantula

As a religion, you should be holy.  
When you look out your window, the sea should  
Shine her enchanted motes off the roofs of Chevys,  
Like signals from a mirror from the underwater angels.  
I can take a long walk in the woods to meet you,  
But all you'll give me is your cat to watch as you go away.  
The students are flowing to their classrooms like currents,  
Some graduate like dying, and others keep on sleeping.  
You like it best when you can serve them, teases for which  
They tip you when you should already be another,  
All your friends just want to hurt you- You are in the movies,  
In the reams of extra footage they cut out to keep the budget,  
But I stay long afterwards; all night I sleep in you, and  
You speak outward with lips as large as black and white water buffalo.  
We may have different viewpoints, but we share the same constellation,  
But you sound like you don't wish to know me,  
But I don't know if you have a choice not to. It is raining  
Outside your castle, and if you peer out your window, you  
Will see the man of your dreams slaying dragons and cop cars  
For you, but if you chance to look behind him, you might see me  
Nodding in the shadows, typing the continuations of the plot.  
This is the denouement arisen from the struggle, where I climb up  
And cup you, and kiss your lips like watering with enthusiasm,  
And you cant help but not to kiss me back with all your poison;  
Withering, I am falling, and all of your night is laid out like a peninsula  
For coffin, with shaved legs so that I couldn't look at your nature,  
How pretty it felt to be done in by a princess, but  
- As a religion, you should be holy.

Robert Rorabeck



# Tattoos Of Your Essential Heavens

Now the fire dies here because you cannot come:  
This Friday of October:  
Alma- and you cannot call me, only when your children  
Are entranced by cartoons,  
And your husband is smoking cartons in his cousin's  
Land;  
And you are brightened by tears- you make cenotaphs wet,  
And my dreams come:  
The excellent angels cut their wings on the letters I can  
Never send,  
Because you have muted their throats with your brown  
undecided ness;  
And this life is short, and the traffics long, drying out  
Like the unused lamentations of spells spilled far away from  
The orange grove's where your in law lives,  
And chastises you for now knowing how to hold a broom:  
But now you will lay down with him:  
He doesn't respect you, but he has your children,  
And a big chunk of your important flesh,  
Like an apple in your throat:  
I don't think you can ever swim away; but listen as I get  
Drunk, and swim around your firehouses,  
Burning my paper airplanes around your doused soul:  
Just waiting for one to hit,  
And flambé the love letters of my dessert all over the fabulous  
Tattoos of your essential heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Taxing Reality

If the light camps like touring angels,  
Overweight and bowing the ply wall;  
Then you know it is good, and dinner is ready;  
As all out in the yard the miniature icebergs  
Are parked underneath the streetlights some  
Famished scientist invented to fulfill his  
Dysfunctional love, and I know that all the horses are gone,  
And all the pretty girls roller-skated home so many  
Decades ago; and like morning, all of the housewives  
Are very fine, if they should ever come and show  
Themselves again to the comely crowns crowing at their windows;  
And then they just might know the world is real,  
With so many fine knives in the kitchen, and the yards  
Are mowed.  
If the pools are glistening like the sad introductions of  
Busted holidays; and all the cars are repossessed haughtily from their  
And their bonded sisters' driveways; then they too will know  
That it is another world that is just as sure of its  
Taxing reality.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tearless

Oh what a wound, and now all of this prancing through  
The sea:  
All of the bright and yellow bits that are soon to dying:  
I lived right here,  
And all of my life, in the prancing yellows, smiling  
Looking too good for my presupposed wife:  
While my all of nothing  
Reads not a thing- and it all keeps to happening, through the  
Brilliant dance of death and all of this rain:  
And, yes, it all goes down- down the drain:  
All of my spelling wishes, and all of my hapless tears: they bring  
Nothing to my wishes: the rocks are barren,  
Moonlit swept,  
As if answering to the nothing that lives here: the airplanes flying  
Ever constantly, carelessly and tearless  
While moonlit monsters spin their arms, stationary,  
And ever fearless:  
And the hapless knights ride out ever jubilant, and tearless,  
The moon abiding by them, glowing across the hedgerows  
And the vermilion sororities of housewives,  
Tearless.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tearless Joys

Recoiled into a grotto and sleeping away its  
Productive hours:  
The way they say that he slipped away from her,  
And made a love to her in another way in his own  
Flowers;  
As the storms rose up from the horns of sunken  
Reindeer,  
Just as from the armpits of the undercurrents of conquistadors:  
Boiling like ants,  
Fireworks for their unadulterated queen:  
Meaning to mean something- acne in the grass, under the  
Sun-  
The pretty disfigurement of paper snowflakes, the games of  
Plastic boys,  
And the shallow graves of cowboys- rehearsing to the  
Silly girls they love and love again,  
Showing off to the heartbroken crocodiles, their make-believe  
And tearless joys.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tears From Prison

I grab the crystal doorknob of your navel;  
Now you are a sea-witch,  
A selky, in each of your eyes inland seas;  
Your body is made of deep coral or coquina,  
The same stuff as the Castillo del San Marco;  
And I enter you illegally and sleep in the powder magazine  
Of your throat- Osceola comes in your tears and thunderstorms,  
And my greatest ambition is to build a house by you  
On the artificial sands piled above mangroves,  
From my backdoor see through the amber shoots and the crooks  
Where fisherman sleep floating on green skiffs,  
Amidst drinking tubers where the dancing girl floats  
With wavering eyes, now dolly of the tide, sashaying in the  
Fermentations of languid immortality: John D. McDonald  
Wrote about her too, just off the dirt road where you skip  
Down to school- And all your things buried there up to  
The neck like a hypnotized chicken in the dune: It is a buyers market-  
I have on my face the imprint of sand dollars, like dark areolas  
Pressed in the drool, like tears from prison;  
And where I would lay down I would like to hear the sea,  
Which is only a promise of you, not a contract of privateers  
Or the immolations of rum: though, certainly, I hope for that as  
A wind fall.  
I write novels for that and send them out in symbolic bottles,  
Hoping they will come back to me published for your eyes,  
Gems of the enraptured senses give me metamorphosis and ride;  
I could love you from pictures take of your grandparents,  
I knew- And even if the world should never known my name,  
In happenstance or echo, I have known yours and whispered it from  
Afar, after tourism has receded like the tide, and the fort of so many  
Eons lays empty except for shadows  
Which sprawl like your naked body on my mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tears Of Its Canal

Ribbons threaded in the tumbleweeds happening again  
Into the forests beside the highway:  
Coming again into her, and remembering all of their Catholic  
Prayers,  
Like starting up the mountain while falling down into the  
Shadowless cave,  
Striking up the preserves in a majesty as it evaporates:  
Perloined into the recesses of automobiles,  
Giving all of its love like glass pennies up into a river-  
Feverish, haunting  
Convenient stores where you can get gas and blow- jobs;  
And the other things that sing to the haunts of the human senses:  
Singing like the recordings of the ancestors played  
To the jungle  
As it thumps its throat, laying down its throbbing cadaver,  
Like a murderous rose, like an insatiable mouse on the  
Lottery of a luckless elephant,  
And does away with her ballerina dreams, as it dries up the make  
Believe tears of its canal:  
As it eats itself.

Robert Rorabeck

# Teenage Coffins

Scar of a nightingale, sing to me of gunfighters,  
And lets make a movie in the hollow of a tree.  
When I was seventeen and ran my fingers down your throat,  
I waited out the window, and you opened- I cleaned your boat;  
And other men after me, going down the week;  
Smoking Chinese dragons coming through your window,  
A parade of men haunting underneath bed sheets-

What needed you from me took only a day or two,  
We smoked in the sunken grotto beneath the hem of the sea-wall;  
I got drunk for seventh period History; George Washington  
Was crossing the Delaware in a pink wig, pointing ostentatiously,  
Floating on my rum; the ice melted from bad poetry,  
The lady shook it in the lake; we all went down to meet her,  
And baptized for badness' sake- I wanted to love you like  
A dog, and lick you like a frogs' backside: You showed me how to get there:

Or you keyed my cherry red car. They had parades in the red hearted  
Court, and rides that turned around flipping spitted sin up to the heavens;  
I watched him drawing blood from your neck, his teeth a regular syringe:

Then, and on and on, the alligators fornicated on the lawn.  
The little girl in her training bra hanging like tinsel down from the  
Cypress' arm; To cut it short, I drank the port and f-ed your mom  
In the jubilant shade of suburbia's teal tennis court, and hydrangeas-  
I failed the report; but the nights remain so long and humid, drawn  
Out like a cancerous divorce, I followed the trained otters up the easement  
where

The sisters in law are Siamese twins, you've never met them.  
They let me in, I bump both of their chins on a gold knobbed four  
Post bed while we watch the weather forecast, and their professional Jewish  
husbands  
Drive confusedly around the landscaped cul-de-sac. You want it  
Back, you want it back? But I won't let you in. My opera is far away  
In the canopy of the savage Amazon, where the cannibals exclaim that  
The white man he taste just like chicken-

I wanted to cup your breast and pop your hymen,

To lay you down and ornament the mowed and dewy yard,  
but you kept me waiting  
In the pews while perusing your jockeys and greasers  
under the bleachers in seizures of  
Epileptic sin: Now the day is dust and the school is a graveyard full  
Of rusting teenage coffins, squealing Amen!

Robert Rorabeck



# Tell Alma

I tell Alma to tell me she loves me:  
She tells me she loves me,  
And then she has to go away: She's already driving on  
Cherry,  
And soon she will be home: she just wants to sleep-  
The airplanes are touching down.  
She wears my gold, and eats my cake-  
All of my wishes are for her- and I have felt her brown  
Skin across mine,  
The way an otter might make love to an eel, but  
I wont talk to her again  
Until morning- and I wont see her for a week:  
My muse- I once bought a bicycle for her  
That I only had to return,  
But I kissed her in the waves, even though she could  
Not swim-  
I took her into the sea, and I will take her back in again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Telluride

Paleolithic telluride you show your new teeth,  
Uninhabited by modern man: no one skis:  
Tourism of glistening caves, the bravery of no modern  
Beast,  
Or the populations of the equality of franchise:  
Telluride, telluride: what features grew in the valley of  
Your bosom:  
What lizards did you know, or what seas stroked you:  
Gleaming altogether atop another place on this earth:  
Floating here like a hobo and looking so white:  
Telluride, Telluride, oh the depth of your primordial night,  
Now diademed by insular poles,  
And the big trucks float atop of your rind when almost  
Yesterday you were nameless and unbound and the snowflakes  
That covered your pullulating body were truly gargantuan:  
Telluride, uncut chariot of the powerful divide,  
The roots of your monolith are truly more barbaric than ancient  
Rome: you use to be a wilderness unto your self,  
But now sororities can ride right through you screaming breathlessly,  
Telluride, and there are lifts up to your pinnacles pulled  
By the moon's tide: Telluride, what preternatural gifts do you  
Still bare inside?

Robert Rorabeck

# Temporary

Another day upon which the distance cannot be  
Speculated,  
The beautiful dance of boys and girls in their own worlds,  
The slightly less effective gravitations of limbed bodies,  
Grandmothers warm in summertime caskets atop the hills,  
The conductors chimney smoking near the devil's rock,  
Calling out the hours of arrivals and departures,  
And dad upstairs sweeping:  
I dream, I dream of little things, of fresh mowed grass  
And how a manned dragonfly happens upon  
a woman's pungently shampooed hair;  
Or a marriage bed and children, flitting there:  
a daughter to name  
Temporary, a bright spot in the yard and dogs  
Leaping cheeky. I could go to work right now, forget my dreams,  
Put on a fine gentlemanly outfit and  
Take a woman's hand that brushes next to mine by our  
Shared happenstance- Waitresses do it all the time. They  
Fall so sublimely for what lies next to them,  
Salivating over what is served instead of what might be  
Searched for- In the morning the sky will clear, and my fingers  
Will yawn- They will winnow like sailors stretching a tawny  
Sail. The entire world will be opening, comely and  
Well stated, and I will wonder where all the beautiful women  
Have gone, enchanted by their happenstance- I will  
Buy a little house beside their rivers  
and wait for them handily in my verdant yard:  
That will be my job until one notices me,  
Perhaps a sommelier with blue eyes, and stops along her way  
To wherever she was being taken,  
Disentangling her garments from the course,  
And vowing in time to know the fair weather which blows  
About my head the way a young mountain may sometimes  
Attract the curious clouds,  
And perambulating with her towards the various rooms,  
I will ask her what she thinks of the name Temporary,  
For a girl, a daughter,  
And if there is any work she needs doing.



# Ten Dollar Wine

I bend and swig:  
Bend and swing—  
Like some monolithic contraption  
That still has to go to school  
Tomorrow—  
And I realize that I had other muses,  
Positively delightful  
Both before and  
After you—  
And I have been to China—  
It is where I got my wife.  
She is in the other room  
Humming,  
And in another month we  
Will have a child—  
While I drink ten dollar wine  
And try not to disrupt her happiness  
As I get to my penny-ante art for  
A little while—reading lines  
I thought for you, the one who stole  
My heart, before realizing that they  
Were the woman who  
Stole my heart beforehand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tender Box For Banshees

Brown as a tender box for banshees:  
And the ageless alligators resting beside the firehouse  
With grins as old as death,  
The housewives took their stark white children to to  
Learn how to become tourists;  
And it all felt like a dream on the television,  
The snow an unequaled sorority over the vespers of  
Her shoulder blades,  
While in the dead center of night the wolf who'd learned  
How to walk like a gentleman came to knock just  
As structured as a fable:  
But this is how our story ends, with nothing more to be  
Said that details of how he might or might not have  
Been let in to vanquish her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Terrors Of Another Midnight

Habitation of the playgrounds while  
I am asleep,  
And the waves come, like ants over the  
Glowing cupboards underneath the moonlight  
Where the unhealthy ships dock,  
And all of this becomes unsettlingly routine—  
And we buy a house in a cul-de-sac north or  
South of Disney World—  
The buzzards are left to fight and settle over  
The detritus—  
The muses disrobe and make love to the  
Absolute midnight,  
While we are forced to sleep with our wives,  
Who are berthing the candles of our souls  
As the sailors drink rum  
And try to make it through the deadliest  
Terrors of another midnight.

Robert Rorabeck

# Than That

I love you and I just want to be  
Near you before I die,  
As I give up and flutter to the stinking worms.  
I know you cant ever love me:  
I am not your amusement, your parkland, estuary,  
Of consequent geyser;  
But I just want to rest under your shadow like a pink  
Tombstone:  
I just want to know your math before my last  
Breath,  
Before I give up and burnish the ghastly stones  
Of my forbearers,  
My green army men and all that gas the neighbors  
Have been gossiping about,  
Sharon- that's all I want to do. I don't know what  
Happened. I am a good man, but I have never been  
Able to give up on a woman, as  
They just get better and better and more higher up,  
As they are taking away more of my breath  
And ever constant exertions,  
S- I love E- like a plague of locusts,  
But she didn't return, she didn't circulate underneath the  
Chandeliers of my easy parasols:  
I want to be loved by someone I love,  
As the grapes glow like holy vestibules, like prayers  
Of light bulbs to the blue and milky moon  
Who suppose she can be every color to every man,  
And just doesn't care anymore than that.

Robert Rorabeck



# Than What You Do To Me

Discovering just what I need to do rightly  
By you:  
Discovering nothing at all of where you sleep,  
What fabulous lingerie and whose boy has  
Cradled you;  
But it must be a joyful word too transcendental  
Saddled up next to nature:  
You can step outside and smoke and pee;  
You never have to go inside for shelter, or when  
You are wounded and are in need of healing,  
Or you are thinking of your mother  
And trying to wish for her. Maybe the stars gallop  
Over your blond forehead,  
Over the medley of broken hibiscus and wilting palms  
In that yard,  
The overgrown smorgasbord of banana spiders;  
All I know is that you were kicked out of high school,  
And never had to see the flame dying in my eyes,  
The buses turning away:  
You had your own hope and kisses given away to others  
Boys even more delinquent than eye;  
But now what is most beautiful about you  
Is that you could never be any more professional than  
What you do to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Absent Minded Kiss That You Done

I see you running with your coffins every day,  
Like the paleness in the throat of a cottonmouth  
Come up to bask in the sunlight of  
Lascivious housewives topless on the easement,  
And I've been driving my canoe instead  
Of attending math and history,  
And you light upon my hand just as happy as some  
Kind of pestilent and morbid flower,  
And kiss me for a very long throw,  
And giving your venoms into my blood like a backwards  
Bank robbery,  
So slowly I lie down and moan your name forever  
Even after you have slipped your tail back in the  
Water to eat the folklore of white rats in the  
Reeds,  
And Eve get fat and naked off her cherry red apple  
By various degrees,  
While I lie down in the wooden slit like a sliver under the  
Skin of the sun,  
And my heartbeats like an asthmatic devil from  
That absent minded kiss that you done.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Absolutely None Of It Is Real

This world is in the pitiful eye of Satan:  
This world who turns around and flaunts and shows its cards  
To showgirls:  
This world where I love un erringly, where inside nothing  
Else that lives loves me:  
And I have seen my mother coming down and coming unglued in  
The carport  
Of spits and shocks,  
While the elks and the toads make their moon glows right beside  
The carports with the re-bars:  
And, Alma- I grew up right here, right beside the ghosts of where  
You were bound to live,  
But now I don't live anywhere: Alma:  
The world is bound to fail, and the night plumes the sky,  
and I remember touching your lips right next to the last albino  
Alligator that was yet alive,  
But then again at night alone and alone, you touch his lips  
Like tattoos of aphrodisiacs and other night blooming  
Thugs;  
And I try to kill myself to prove that this is not real;  
And Alma, Alma: I cannot survive against the pallid ness of your  
Away:  
I don't know which ribbon is bound to the censer of your furthest  
Planet;  
And even the water fountains distend like nubile petraglphys  
Who only made the night to obscure intruders;  
And now I hear airplanes and cars- but oh, Alma, Alma:  
I hope and I swear that absolutely none of it is real.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Age Old Poetic Sky

The noise of this bouquet I have  
Has no feeling; it has been out on the shelves of  
The shopping mall too long-  
Now how is it to sell. Thinking of great cheese  
Makes me hungry and horny,  
So I want to mouth off and masturbate: Now that  
I've seen all five of Kelly's children  
And her breasts,  
The guns of the settlers who will start the revolution:  
The guns and the cannons,  
And the men buried in the great dunes of everyday  
Tourism.  
I just want to sleep. I don't want to keep calling out  
Girls from their shells,  
Girls from their shells when I cannot, when it  
Is impossible to pry a mollusk from its swarthy comb  
Without first killing it and then digesting it between  
Your buggered lips:  
When she has a family and a daughter or men she  
Meets and slaps every night like a religious flag  
Does the country over the graveyard:  
When she is fully grown and useless otherwise,  
And I am not beautiful,  
And was only made for working long hours anyways.  
I cant put anymore of this liquor in my body without becoming  
Falsely religious and plagiarize.  
I'd rather just go to sleep and let someone else  
More weary than I bleed their guts tonight into that age old  
Poetic sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Always Need

Give me wine and give me  
Trinkets of gold.  
Leap airplanes around me,  
And sing to me songs that will  
Never weep-  
I will climb mountains.  
I will shear the golden sleep,  
And look into your eyes as they swim,  
And eventually drown into  
Those dreams-  
I am not a beautiful man,  
But I still will run my winsome fingers  
Across your tracks and  
Seems-  
I will glide across you like a paper airplane,  
And I will nest inside you like  
The crèche of a tremulous plum tree,  
Or a star fruit tree,  
Bitter sweet from all the things  
That always need.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Apiary Of Sunlight

What of another vision saying nothing—  
Walking to and from school—always the hardest time,  
When the housewives are always out,  
Stinging their lips upon that apiary of sunlight—  
The fireworks not out yet,  
And the only thing being changed is the drying of  
The grasses in a merry-go-round or a gauntlet  
Of the seasons—  
And you are already in the playground, encapsulated  
With your better man, until you fall down into the woods  
Kissing him—looking up as the airplanes  
Try to make it to the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Awful Bird

Washed and even enough to go to  
Church,  
But not shaven nor thinking of my dogs;  
And it is Monday and I get distracted by  
The empty swings-  
It seems that ecstatic words have motion like motor  
Sports,  
Like my honey's legs:  
Carefully reckless words dance and jeer at  
Death,  
And he swoops down and collects their lips like  
Sports; yes, of course, to  
Decorate his nest.  
This time though everyone is waking up in  
Somnolent chorus and they're dancing words  
Until their feet are hoarse-  
Then if we must go down together like Dorothy,  
Then I suppose we must,  
But at least we sang some songs before that awful  
Bird got the best of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Awful Equation Of Occam's Easy Razor

Warm and becoming a darling in the sink,  
The more beautiful houses rises above me, the sea curling  
Her lashes; and I think that I would like to be alone  
To finish my drink;  
And I would like to shower alone, and to be cursed alone:  
I would like to raise my sword alone for my enemies;  
And Sharon,  
I would like super powerful spells for you and your daughter,  
Sharon: How were you able to capture this life out amongst  
The cornfields and the apple orchards  
Before the goblins came and stolen away your little daughter  
For her little adventure- and it was all a little fun,  
And more than a little noteworthy, and in the morning I will  
Love Diana, and she can take the form of a forest or of a  
Tree, and I will still really love her, because she is a contacerous  
Vixen: Diana is a muse killer, she is the vociferous black hole  
Growing up like seventh grade science experiment in the  
Middle of the spells of my garden;  
And I said that I should live forever, but I shouldn't really live  
Forever; it is just that I should just buy a house and become the  
Cadaver of a little boy in blue stockings, whose feet rise up in  
The average rigamortis of songbirds;  
And my mother may scold me, like the wife of bath leaving to  
Make love the second knight along my wayward path,  
But the days go along for a long, long ways;  
The days go along, and my fingers are like the intelligent ballerinas  
Of spiders, loving in their ways:  
Sharon- You are more beautiful than Jodie Foster, and I can  
Never speak Latin; but what are you doing now,  
Sharon- Whatever it is, it has nothing at all to do with this poem,  
But you are far more important than this poem, Sharon;  
You are all of my hidden heart pieces, Sharon; and see how I survive,  
And how I water by your misplaced elements,  
And see how I get along through the awful wind tunnels of this  
Cyborg world for you, muse, if only because I couldn't ever  
Figure out that awful equation of Occam's easy razor.

Robert Rorabeck



# That Bit Of Mexico

Soon you won't have to remember—how your children  
Left off from the movie theatre of your  
Umbilical cord—while you were still alive  
Knowing nothing of me,  
As I sold fireworks for my father across the unbusied  
Deserts we stole from your  
Father's country: already pregnant, you took a bus  
To this sweltering peninsula—maybe you  
Love with somebody else—then you fell in love  
For a little while with me,  
But always found your way back to him—that bit of  
Mexico transplanted in America I had already stolen away  
From you.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Bleeding Room

My lips failed in their acting skills many years  
Ago, Sharon:  
When they parted, they just said nothing:  
They preferred to look down like dribbling flowers while  
I fornicated on my desk in my far corner of your class:  
I sat as far away from you as I could,  
Like an astronaut trying to avoid the sun while he fixed  
Something,  
And you popped your gum; and look how perfectly it has done me  
In that you came and moved next to me in an adolescent  
Garden;  
I knowing that I could never help to grow you as you willed,  
And after you knew this and removed yourself from me,  
I was as vacant as the newly purchased cemetery up on  
My grandmother's quilting hill:  
And you moved away from me with the last kicks of breath  
Of a wild Shetland pony moving inland and disappearing for  
Breakfast across the ditches and into the orange groves  
To grow your daughter amidst the tadpoles and nematodes:  
To grow your daughter big and strong and teach her how the world  
Can spin,  
And dress her in bleeding dresses, and put her in the new classes  
Where they teach all the bleeding muses how to do us in.  
I still remember you spinning diademed on your axis across that  
Bleeding room that they put us in.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Blinding Cathedral

Baseball is a poem  
In the classroom, graffiti on an  
Anonymous desk  
But a poem  
In a world of harsh light the bodies  
Filter through like goldfish on  
Their last breath  
Coming to the cannibalisms of  
Robbins and blue gills  
Coming to the last supper in the jungle  
Showing their teeth for nude  
Breasts: and the days  
Carried out rising through the highways  
That make believe they are  
Beautiful, as if jewelry for  
Colorado- as if Wolf Creek Pass diademed  
Just her throat or just her navel  
And the evergreens gossiped in the deep  
Deep snows  
And she with her traveling family  
Worshipped underneath that blinding cathedral

Robert Rorabeck

# That Burn In The Day And Bask In The Night

Perfected coolness of shade even on dinted skin  
Feels fine,  
While all the girls I've had a fine time thinking of are  
Going back to Georgia,  
Rolling back the curtains of their eyes, and flooding  
There:  
Overcoming themselves in nocturnal whispers,  
And they finally get over their shifts at the bars,  
Which allow them to case through the sanctified joints and  
Hubs of the state university the children have been flooding  
Into all of this time  
Like bright eyed driftwood clutching themselves for want  
Of fire: collecting into all the dorm rooms underneath all of  
The copper wire;  
And I think of lion cups in a limestone cave, and spear tips  
In the change jar that we would like to save;  
And words that are the whispers of a second light,  
That burn in the day and bask in the night.

Robert Rorabeck

# That By Her You Should Carry On

And what troubles you are these things  
That make you real, and hungry- The things that  
Can never be fulfilled:  
How you looked at her out the window, after  
The bus was leaving;  
And there must have been some birds in the eaves,  
In the cypress and the slash pines-  
You didn't even know then how you would  
Lose your virginity,  
Though you hoped it would be by her, the one time  
There was that fire drill and you sat alone  
As the children frolicked,  
But she left her boyfriend and came over and  
Sat and talked with you before your face got old-  
Inevitably, there will be lost children,  
And bodies left even in the greenest spaces; and  
She has forgotten of those times that you can't  
Ever possibly forget, that you will take down with you  
Six feet beneath the earth to share your plot with;  
And that is what keeps you carrying on this way,  
Even after she has long since left off the road,  
Settling in a little house beside a river of melting snow,  
But maybe sometime upon this same earth you  
Will be able to settle down and explain underneath her  
Curious eyes, all that she has meant to you,  
That by her you should carry on.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Can Never Be Found By All That Tourism

Each line a memory:

A truancy across the canal, a feeling in my bones of  
Carnavalesque sparrows who don't mind eating the meat  
Of their same species,  
Of lying in bed in the deep rituals of rainy some days  
And kissing the dirt of their aunts;  
And I have heard the hobos' fugue; and I have slept out  
On the granite palate of the graveyard  
And watched the violet sky grow more distressed:  
I have laid atop my ancestors and wished them all of the  
Best,  
And what of you- and your plans, kissing your men with  
A smoking gun in your hands:  
How are you riddled now, driving in your tangled means  
Getting lost playing cops and robbers as it begins to snow  
Through all the emptied trees:  
The blushing buildings of your town crushing back into  
The mountain,  
But only going so far: and have you explored her  
By bicycle or by foot: have you gone back into her emptiness  
And espied a flower that I have grown for you with my  
Mental powers;  
One flower that can never be found by all that tourism which  
Inhabits you; and I wonder if you have found her,  
And found out who she was.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Cannot Be This

Cars who pattern a rush of galvanized needs-  
Every bouquet has a patina,  
And sound recedes; and I look sad and gone  
Along the winter walks of Spain,  
My eyes in the penumbra of a dead and dying poet's  
Olive tree,  
Even though I am quite happy- In the somnolent  
Opulence of my anonymity:  
Each word spilled out from the backwardly winnowing  
Loom,  
Each word a rerun cartoon,  
Doing its best to amuse itself by the memory of your  
Eyes,  
Trying to dance awake the little kittens of your narcoleptic  
Soul,  
And pretend that you need us to make you whole,  
When you are already over spilling, when you already have  
So many friends who've already begun to show you all the  
Best that is in the world,  
While we are just in our little corner in art class,  
Little fingers doodling, and it does us no good to matter in  
The lines, no matter how good we do:  
Each word is wrong, a fumbled match the unwavering waves  
Can have, crashing against the seawall where they would  
Have nothing grow,  
And rather un resilient catastrophe no one notices like a latchkey  
Storm cloud bivouacked underneath a street light,  
Not even Rudyard Kipling,  
Breathing around it all the atmospheres replete with the beauty  
That cannot be his.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Clearing Between The Pines

Days in your town gloriously are shopping.  
New students come in late in the summer, but now they  
Are so cold- The wind is blowing its magnum opus over  
The sun,  
But all of you are too busy to listen: Even you are too busy,  
A venal muse high strung on her own sweet musings.  
You've got a new car, and that's really something:  
High over the rivers of the earth you drive in your new car,  
And every day there is a new love with roses as blue as  
Velvet cut and horny in the younger boy's arms;  
It is something his parents have paid for (they were so  
Happy considering his charms) and the world comes out  
Between that clearing between the pines,  
And sweeps you clean,  
And blows your minds.

Robert Rorabeck



# That Could Not Be So Easily Sold

You I've coined this kind of joy for:  
Look out, the sun is going down; it almost caught your  
Head;  
See how the snakes slither up from the snags to taste  
The last of it,  
As the trucks leave, as even the Mexicans pack up to  
Jaunt.  
Crepuscule will come soon, you know, and then the  
Mailboxes will cool, as all the roofs of the houses cool,  
As the tar and shingles finish;  
And the little girls commingle with the shadows, while  
Their greater daddies drink;  
And you are there, winnowed, spun out in séance,  
Somehow flustered but still eager for your wedding,  
Never taking into account of how your fanciful shadow has  
Gone in with the others,  
When I would have held out my hand with all my gold,  
To catch you before the sun went away, to bask with the last of  
It in your yard where your imprint rippled like something  
That could not be so easily sold.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Crowded Home

Entire truckloads of rabbits eating endives  
On the truckload cliffs  
Overlooking the Kennedy Space Center:  
And now you say how is that possible  
That I would have known that I  
Was not the right man  
For you;  
But I am full of anticipation and the loam of  
The suns energy,  
So do not worry that I should harm you,  
But I will continue onward,  
Alone in the happiest journey somewhere far a field  
To the truckload cliffs where you sit in the  
Middle of emptied boxes,  
Buxomly in his boxer fists,  
Ranging with my dogs, well-tongued,  
And still looking for that crowded home.

Robert Rorabeck

# That For A Little While

Now they are talking smoke:  
And all around them the chaos rides up trees:  
They seem to be getting to the coney  
Pinnacle  
Where they are caressing angel knees:  
And down beneath them- so far from there, the ribbons  
Circle saplings lost from her-  
And drowning anyways- the good witchcraft of her  
Haircut:  
And I said I loved her weather front: and the band proceeded  
The football players of false gold:  
I told her all of the stories that I was ever told:  
And then I burned away at the edges of a silent sea:  
Rhymes that slipped away spoken of by  
Mermaids who never slept let alone spoke to me:  
And my world curled at the edges,  
And it looked so fine- and it seemed as I for awhile that  
My soul- my Alma would be mine,  
But like a kidnapped child, I separated from myself:  
The paint left the pony- it left the house-  
And the sea engorged so far as to slip into another sea;  
Drowned in the light of a luckless elephant,  
It seemed as if I supposed that for a little while she would  
Be returned again to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Griefless Cause

I try my best, girl,  
And perhaps have succeeded in the lesser elements,  
All those materials known to man  
The things we walk on and inhale:  
The stuff put before our eyes only to move away,  
Like fine women in a dream of where she lives,

But the places of greater poets I'll never know,  
The lines they put down without learning to breath,  
Leaping travelers of the celestial spheres,  
Consume the spikenards of outer space,  
And return the world to the bulbous carriage of  
The rainy park,  
The river of power lines up the pined ridges,  
the game of stones in reckless collisions  
Between a red lover and his greater mistress,

The lonely planets they exhume and propagate,  
Whiffed in the cantankerous bellies of chartreuse gas giants,  
Young boys living in the trailer parks of an otherworldly flume,  
Drunken beyond the red visages of the living dolls;  
I could not go to them, because they are already gone,  
Spaced out in the unreachable bang,  
A gunfight of tears and bight marks,  
Though I've tried my best, girl,  
I have tried, and you the motivation of that griefless cause.

Robert Rorabeck

# That He Took And Never Gave

Pleasance reposes on the push handle of the star channels.  
And the little things that fail are just cut off in the rocks  
Of unsure protuberances,  
And they sleep forever without any dreams of princesses;  
And when you are close, or when you are far,  
The bodies move so rapidly, like the hyperboles of insects  
Masticating into the garden,  
Like rabbits really jacking off until all of the traffic finally parks,  
And the magic tricks turn into girls with tan lines,  
And all the men lie down and have their satin opal fix,  
And the hats come off and the nooses tighten,  
And then the trees remember the witchcraft of their early lives,  
As the ponies saddle and the guns heartbeat into their buck hide  
Holsters,  
And I can almost here my first muse laugh, heavily bossomed  
Beside the high cathedrals of the catholic church which gathers  
All the ghosts of tourists across the street from the University  
Where so many of us young fools attended almost  
Categorically,  
Even though Beowulf was dead and making a birthday cake for  
The dragon after he had eaten the village where everything I once  
Had loved had before fell asleep,  
While Alma stroked her hair a thousand times and glittered her face  
For the man who would come to taste her life with every beefy  
Puff that he took and never gave.

Robert Rorabeck

# That I Already Knew

Uneven developments except for the pigments of her  
Brown body:

She will go home to him now, and enjoy him as she  
Enjoys her family, in the hemisphere that is their  
World

That I cannot enjoy: she will envelop with him in  
Coitus, and will soothe upon his belly:

She is sunburned, and has forgotten of me:

It is an easy way to live, through pueblos of her  
Species, as angels ride with her in her car

All the way to work: but she couldn't care,

As sometimes icicles hang from the pine trees, and the

Rabbits have to go outside and do all of the work

Before I even knew her: an angel who flew away

Providing to me all that I already knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# That I Already Know

I have poems now for you, Alma,  
While I am killing my body in so many ways:  
I saw you in the evening until the sun did graze  
Into crepuscule;  
And we could hear the airplanes and cars together:  
Maybe they were trying to make some kind of stand that  
I couldn't understand;  
Nor did it matter- It was like I was being kidnapped by your  
Eyes;  
And all you could say is, oh really, and that it was so expensive  
To become a citizen of the United States:  
I hardly even think that you know what you are doing to me?  
I told you that you had beautiful skin, and you said you  
Had to go,  
But when you left you came back to me and we had one more throw,  
In my eighty-five year old foyer, but we did not take off our clothes;  
And I told you I loved you: I loved you so many times;  
And you told me that you had something you wanted to tell me,  
But you changed your mind:  
Alma, and now I am in a perfect darkness, but the airplanes and  
Cars still come,  
And maybe what it was you were going to tell me- that I already  
Know.

Robert Rorabeck

# That I Am

If I became ant, wouldn't you turn into a knife  
And cut me to pieces,  
As afterwards you helped Charlie divide the sandias  
For the wilting glaciers disguised as old ladies  
Who hold in their bad vision all the versions of my unluckyness  
After the last of your rabbits died in the rock garden  
Of my childhood,  
Alma- After my mother was electrocuted beside the washing machine  
In the rainy carport,  
And I saw Federico Garcia Lorca kissing an otter or a  
Unicorn;  
And maybe Walkeen was deported tonight,  
Alma, but I still got you to tell me that you loved me today,  
With my back up against the royal palm  
Near the fireworks tent, with impending fears of tidal waves,  
And so many words misspelled or not even resurrected;  
And maybe I cannot touch you right now;  
And maybe I can never touch your, or maybe I will hold you in  
The morning and turn your mouth back like my favorite  
Wishing well who is beginning to moan my name;  
And I think that I will: And I think that I am.

Robert Rorabeck



# That I Can Never Have This

The greatest generalization of  
Your myth  
Spoke to me without  
Any shoes;  
And the morning lay as if  
In a torpid bowl,  
As if in a glade of Christmas;  
As I loved the girl who  
Brought me breakfast  
Any girl, while just last night  
I felt the nickel of  
The little boy's gun on the  
Small of my  
Back,  
On the back of the head:  
All he wanted was  
Money;  
Funny that he shouldn't  
Know  
He couldn't have this:  
All I want is you  
And the time needed to  
Smell your blossoms,  
To ring you up in sorcery;  
Funny that I shouldn't know  
That I can never have this.

Robert Rorabeck

# That I Don'T Suppose

Alma,

I have spent all of my tinfoil like a plug into the

Saw grass:

Alma, I have sold so many things, but now the tents that

I sold them underneath are deflating:

They wish to change for you:

Alma, they wish to know the residue of your soul,

And the cars are not pretty- Alma, these things that we think we need,

That your children will once more think that they need,

And the dreams will finally come on under the soft bellies of airplanes,

And you will never

Know me, Alma, because I am too needy and too strange:

I will hide out in the woods of your old,

Mexico, I will hide out in the quiet and immobile bodies, because that is

Just what I am, and I want to use my arms to shelter your

Children,

Alma, because I get my resurrection just from your eyes,

Alma,

And I get my wealth from everything that I don't suppose you will ever

Give to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# That I Know Why

I hate you my turtle dove: I don't know who you  
Are,  
So I just keep sniffing more beefier flowers, and getting  
Drunk into bars:  
But I am improving: I am buying a house, yellow  
Yellow and eighty-five years old,  
And I can live it until I at least get that old, and I fold up  
Like the creased poison of the Monarch butterfly  
Underneath the Spanish word for rainbow: el arco iris;  
And it is the completely crimson arrow that  
Ripped straight through my thought consciousness,  
Because tonight I made love to a creature who claimed to  
Be Melody: but who is Melody but that thing with  
The five pointed star red and black in the depths of her  
Olive-skinned thigh:  
She let me kiss her, and I am afraid that I know why.

Robert Rorabeck

# That I Still Want You For A Bride

I can smell you down here even if you don't  
Really exist,  
Children in boxcars- runts in shoeboxes;  
And my head has a great apoplexy and it has been half  
My life since I've really broken into a house;  
And then I didn't do anything but piss in anonymous rooms  
And steal quarters and hide pieces of  
Cake up and down the stairs; and I got whippings and I masturbated  
And leapt many feet over the canal;  
And I huffed clouds painted up like working girls that knew how  
To dance for so many shapes;  
And the world took form, and became foremost of all of these planets;  
And its brother Mars was jealous and set off to make great  
Science-fiction, but it was all disproved,  
So even the greatest authors happened to disappear up the ski lifts  
Going into the whiteouts of Telluride and the fact that every snowflake  
Is just as unique as man's finger prints was never disproved,  
But it helped to solve crime  
While it remains quite plain that I still want you for a bride.

Robert Rorabeck

# That I Was Even Gone

Old girlfriends burn good in a drinking mind:  
Girls in chariots with cottage cheese behinds:  
And oh well, it was never a great loss-  
I don't suppose she's ever re-entered a playground  
After our separation,  
Never felt the black paganism which I tried to  
Transplant her in, through those cold  
High school lakes not so far away,  
But back enough a bit to call them really done:  
I suppose now she's stuck to her air-condition  
And restaurants,  
All of her casual and usual and typical haunts,  
And that is just as I had planned,  
That she could go her own way with her not so different man;  
Or, it is the same way as her family plan,  
While I am in the green with sea-green iguanas,  
Trying to breathe while thinking of atypical mommas:  
Girls who don't get up in the traffic of her junk,  
Girls of sky and girls who can not be caught;  
And it makes me as celibate as a great inventor,  
But a great inventor who can never fall down,  
Who walks through ice, and breaks into houses just to fall  
Asleep;  
And I'll sleep in her mowed yard one day, a grin to the  
Typical moon while I pet her purring cat,  
And make it my cat, and by the morning I'll be gone,  
And she'll be so unworried that she'll have never known  
That I was even gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Illusion

The night weeps its sentiment to us all, but oh how  
Many lines have begun like that:  
And I wish I could be more original for you;  
And now I want to walk to your house again:  
I want to be a flag on your body rippling and casting for gold,  
Because now haven't I seen you captivated high up in the clouds  
In a house of giants:  
Isn't it a white man's house: even further, isn't it my house,  
Alma:  
I want to find you and stretch you out and ask your where your beautiful  
Belt has gone,  
And to which knight you gave it to, to save his neck:  
I know you gave it to one knight on his lunch break, but to which  
One I am uncertain,  
But I want to be your king just so I can have the authority to find these  
Things out,  
And to feed my life-giving poultry to your children:  
Alma, I dream of you walking your children to the bus stop,  
And I dream of you walking through cut out snowflakes and paper airplanes:  
I dream of you always on the move, Alma, because your body gives off  
That illusion while it smokes and sweats my dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# That It Was Mine

The rains are finally coming:

I can hear them coming so softly like a mute and polite sorority:

Listen to them footstep through the leaves,

And cast their little sadness atop the roof of cars,

But once they get here it won't seem to matter

That I don't have any airconditioning,

For it will be as if my entire house was flooded with their cheer:

And Alma's house some streets over,

Why didn't I some nights ago walk over there and sleep on Alma's neighbor's

Roof, while I tried to listen to Alma's love making so that I could

Pretend that it was mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# That It Will Be Nice

Oh, its hard to thing of things that can make it above  
The planes,  
Above the trees, and bivouac in what I know you cannot  
Believe:  
These words try to become the censers of my feat:  
They try to leap and leap and leap without some much as  
One single foot:  
Your two eyes is what makes them strut, your sunny sunburned  
Eyes, leaving tracks upon the beach;  
Your eyes are bottle rockets: your eyes are messages for  
Men on Mercury waiting for their eyelashed vibrancy;  
You eyes are the reason that I have no need for a bedroom set;  
And the reason for why my dogs are so hungry and alone,  
Because I have forgotten them,  
And that is why I am writing this, waiting for your eyes to open  
Like sunrise:  
Waiting for your eyes to say anything without saying anything,  
Because I am so sure that it will be nice.

Robert Rorabeck



# That I've Had To Say

Mirrors in recreational vehicles deep in the middle  
Of the day:  
Alligators touching themselves: and I am starving,  
Starving:  
The fish is on the hook, the rivers are giving all of  
Their money into the sea:  
And all I've wished is what I've had to say to  
Be beautiful:  
Beautiful:  
But it is as forgotten as a wagon by hungry children;  
As my dog in Arizona,  
As the red fields turn to custard as the sun looks  
Away:  
As the bodies paint themselves across the recreations  
Of the bomb shelters,  
And the families separate- as the knights leave their  
Table,  
As the sororities separate into the immaculate mirages  
Of housewives:  
And I only know three or five words; but I've used  
Them with the best intent:  
It is my recipe- paper snowflakes and paper airplanes  
Over the scars of perpetually adolescent bicycles:  
It is all that I've had to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Makes A Perfect Symmetry Of Her Silver Shoulders

Yellow day how you shed like serpent skin  
In the brush tantalizing a wildfire yet to come  
Sparked off the wheels of  
Some fleeing mother; but how pale you are in  
Comparison to the chartreuse of  
A butterfly who gets lost inside you,  
And tangled at your mouth in a graveyard of bicycles-  
All through the school day, she must lay there  
Panting brainless- a little thing painted above  
The vast pornography, while just off in the  
Corner the yards with their pools glint their  
Reasons to her, like faberche mirages- and they  
Dance in a blind zoetrope, and the things lighter  
Than air weigh her down like a boulder in the breasts  
Of a wildflower- while the airplanes  
Fly above, the little boys being ticketed by a very  
Important man who walks down the row  
That makes a perfect symmetry of her silver shoulders.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Milk Through The Clouds

I am a pessimist as sunlight spurs underneath the gallop:  
And the waves spear like Siamese angels up against  
The shore:  
The fort of our wedding rises to the herons,  
Leering with green copper heads for many months  
Across the ambivalent plot of the dead  
Prostitute,  
As I bight my lip and wonder where the windmills are:  
As the children sing softly on the busses-  
Going home from school,  
Their ice-cream melting, and a new art in their eyes  
They will forget by the time they get home-  
When they close their eyes, they will sleep  
Underneath the heavens,  
Like a saturnalia of jupiters sleeping underneath the overpasses  
That scribble the angels across the highways  
That milk through the clouds forever wondering when  
You will be home.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Mountain

I loved that mountain and  
All she taught me. Until I went home  
And ejaculated,  
Had an affair with a Mexican woman,  
And got married to a Chinese woman.  
And I forgot about her—  
The mountain,  
Muse and mistress of my loneliness—  
The midnight jaunts up her naked back on  
Easter with the horses snorting before the rainstorms—  
The galvanized bears and flesh eating dinosaurs  
Disappearing as cenotaphs upon her open pastures—  
Forgot about the gold rushes up her meadows  
And the creeks that wept her blood tainted  
With the perfumes of mummified wild flowers—  
And my lost aunt lost within her wild summers:  
I had children  
And sold myself into the smallest amphitheaters  
Of capitalism—  
It got warmer when I drank but my wife so far  
Has refused to leave me,  
And so I continue on after my dog has died  
And the amusements have shut down forever.  
Maybe I will see her again. Maybe I will pass her way—  
Tomorrow, the sun will come up over all of the  
Beautiful women who will never know my name  
And all of the airplanes will fly farther away from me.

Robert Rorabeck

# That No Man Can Touch

We need to talk now and then lie down to  
Rest,  
While the shells in the road lie there like cenotaphs  
Brushed by the cars:  
After the fireworks have died, and the conquistadors,  
And the brushes are stilled and away,  
While the oranges globe the trees with the cats,  
And other states proceed along the Atlantic;  
And the forts in them hide their shows- if there are anymore  
Conquistadors near here they no longer move,  
Nor the blue cats across them.  
Just the palm trees in their imperfect rows, implored by the  
Remarks of the tide-  
The gold buried in the nape of her neck after she was stolen  
Away from me. Even though she was never even mine-  
Resting in his bed and closing her eyes  
And dreaming of summer in another country that my forefathers  
Defeated,  
That I have let so easily defeat me; and it comes to me in  
The illusions of a movie theatre, as I send her flowers  
And she has her lunch alone on the patio-  
And the sun resounds in its basins that no man can touch.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Nothing Could Be Real Forever

Unhealing wound, this me underneath your shadow,  
Making my rounds in the city that was my cradle, and is proving  
To be my tomb,  
Friendless, but with necessity: I drive the truck to pay the bills,  
And by night I sleep with my dog while I play  
At masturbating and drinking from your fountains, Alma:  
As I have done before,  
And will do again until you are stolen from the sky, and my fort  
Remains beaten, numberless, all of the hopes of my men taken  
Down and laid out in the soft green fields  
Where I always knew that nothing could be real forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Nothing Happened

Almost time for a  
Reason spoken to  
Midnight  
Of men with  
Their hands in  
The air—  
Whose time is  
Up—  
The dyslexic haunts  
Of fire flies  
Outside the  
Grottos of  
The housewife's  
Kitchens—  
Better words I  
Don't know to  
Save myself—  
I can only remember  
The diminutive ferris wheels  
Of my prepubescent existence—  
And the time we launched a  
Thousand ships only to find  
That nothing happened.

Robert Rorabeck

# That One Time

If I go to the zoo  
And remember where we kissed,  
In the hidden cave of  
The white alligator,  
Like the ghost of the one  
Who took the hand of old Captain  
Hook—  
If I kiss my wife there now  
Every weekend,  
On the mouth like the one  
Time I kissed  
You, will it create a spell  
That will return me to  
That day—  
That one time  
When I kissed you.

Robert Rorabeck



# That Only Has Eyes For You

Wine on the couch- wine like blood tears  
While the lights are popping on and off like stoplights of  
Christmas trees,  
One for each ghost coming on in this house of eighty five years:  
You can hear them, Alma,  
They are all burying their frightened heads into the apple orchard  
Of your soul,  
Alma:  
I didn't see you while I was in Spain with my aunt halfway  
Through high school, where I got this old fashioned tattoo:  
Then you were already joining the gangs,  
And getting Nelson's initial tattooed to the web of your hand:  
Today I watched you walking through the beautiful yard,  
And multiplying its beauty in your tight blue jeans:  
Smiling your auburn beams,  
And making all of our customers like tourists hiking toward you  
Alma;  
And it is almost midnight, and I haven't changed:  
I will be drinking an entire bottle toasting you,  
While your throat lies next to his throat like two quieted song birds  
In a bed,  
While the rabbits hutch warmly in their cage, purring softly-  
The newborn little, hairless and shivering:  
Like me, an entire way born family that only has eyes for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Other World

It doesn't feel good to be without  
A truck,  
A means to get to Christmas and line the hills  
All ready filigreed with Spanish horsemen or the  
Legions of Mexico  
Passing through the turnstiles of the frontera;  
But it feels okay if I cannot teach,  
Or make it around the recalcitrance so far out of  
Reach,  
For the beauty goes unnoticed out of eye,  
Growing under the march of the adolescent  
Fanfare,  
Until all of that sudden she unfurls her head all broached  
With silver-green emblems,  
And smiling seems to remember her grandmother from  
That other world.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Rides Like Angels

And I am in love but not in my prime:  
Looking down through the  
Substrate like sifting through a wishing well:  
Words that are forked,  
Trying to find the hidden clefts of reindeer  
Sniffing their fox gloves:  
Prettily eating babies breath, as the sky cries  
And, she, the river floods:  
In beautiful fantasy- where areoled nipples  
Rise:  
This hidden goddess, brown as the streams  
Underneath of airplanes  
That ride like angels: she forever came from  
Mexico, but I think that she will never be  
My love.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Same Old Rhyme

Metronomes of heavy eyes  
Of fun and games underneath leaden skies,  
The stewardesses and unicorns first perused out of the  
Toy chests of puppets bruised;  
And it was a park that grew the fruit trees too,  
All in the straightest lines their passions knew: and it was  
A funny thing to see,  
The headlights of the horizon through the ochre of  
Bellefontaine Cemetery;  
And it was a funny sight: I suppose it always was:  
God waking up with his turtledoves,  
And all of the sparks on his feet and smiles, a palindrome  
For crocodiles;  
And the bicycle's spinning wheels, Like Queen Anne's  
Wheels telling ferry tails of billy goats over bridges,  
Who listened to their oldest brothers' wishes;  
And wanting more they took their time,  
And rhymed their rhyme to goblins, who finished the very  
Bones of that same old rhyme.

Robert Rorabeck

# That She Almost Thought Was Really Swell

Dime store reservoirs in her eyes:  
She looks across the sea and gives it quiet things,  
Gives it time:  
She has so much lost that she would have to say to  
Me;  
And I am unperfected, divided and ready for the fall,  
Ready for the crawl of giant ants over my  
Toppled hall:  
I didn't even work today, though I knew that I should;  
But I thought of her,  
Knowing that she must be up to no good- Her faith  
Crawling along her ankle, taking its  
Time,  
Her body as hot as a tortoise on a rock;  
And she was twisted and lost before she even got  
To kindergarten,  
Thrown out of the nursery of her garden, she took care  
Of her siblings in a chicken coop,  
And I watched her from across the canal of torpid  
Noncommittance; and she seemed to see me there for  
A moment like a dream  
Of something cheap but amusing that she almost  
Thought was really swell.

Robert Rorabeck

# That She Does

Go to bed you  
Ghosts  
While you still have  
Your places  
To live  
And I have this  
Tiny  
Liquor bottle as  
Light as a commuter airplane  
In transit  
As light as  
Fully paid off cars  
And lunches,

While Diana is  
Out in the  
Woods  
Making love to  
All her  
Bon fires,  
Elongating her shadows  
And her bangs-  
Oh,  
How she moves,  
Doing the  
Things  
That she does.

Robert Rorabeck

# That So Few Worthwhile Men Have Ever Seen

Soft and imperfect dreams starting this way  
In the concentric circles of a solitary unison: I guess I miss  
My dogs, and the  
Secret dales of the mountains, the ways up them like the fire hydrants  
And oral sex of your legs:  
Alma- and this is my pledge, that wants to be your flag,  
That even all the while is dying,  
Like beautiful flowers in the islands of a highway-  
And I know that you love your family, and to separate from their  
Cherished hearts would be like an instrument trying to play  
Without the efforts of its master's lips;  
But now my dragon has touched down like a heavily angry airplane,  
And it is wanting some condolence;  
Like a fitful child it hides its soul in the hollows of a tree before  
The autumn's holidays, and it prays for you,  
While the winds get all the time heavier and more in descript;  
And it seems to keep up its delusions that you will finally arrive,  
Stepping down from your chariots of immortal rainbows,  
And kissing its brow if you could,  
Like a night spent together throughout all the naked bodies of the silver  
Trees gathering together all of their  
Silken promises into the gaudy pastures of the mountain's nape  
That so few worthwhile men have ever seen.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Sweet Little Aphrodisiac

Children playing outside the broken fences  
Of guitar strings;  
And we have lions, but I cannot find anyone here:  
There are beautiful singers too, and poet laureates  
Fawning with the penumbras of mermaids  
Down deep into the crepuscule of this zoo: Oh, but oh:  
That is just what they do,  
And when I get down and low, I talk to myself,  
And in these words is the way I go:  
I have never met your daughter: I would like to meet her,  
And be a man for her that I never knew;  
And take her up the basins to the sky where we can watch  
The virgin in her grotto of the evaporated cry:  
And then I can sing to her of you, her mother, while you  
Lie down beneath the Shakespeares who have all been  
Weeping for you, underneath the school buses,  
Breaking most every rule: and come to think of it,  
I'm just one of them too; and I only wish to have your  
Hand to hold and kiss, that sweet little aphrodisiac of you  
Know who.

Robert Rorabeck



# That There Are Still Green Promises

Now if there are cops underneath the airplanes  
Who look as if they are wearing their mothers' jewelry far into  
The night,  
Why let them come in their magic cloaks, as long as I get  
To skip my way through art class  
And reach my hands about your throat:  
That brown vase that stokes your eyes, the pillages the ladders  
Of your chest,  
That keeps on pumping blood like a fire-engine:  
That is unreal and lays counting beside the man who is your husband:  
He has come again,  
But he is also going away: as far as to another underworld where  
He will be reprimanded for saying that he can find another woman as  
Good as you in the next street corner as you drive:  
And now I do this: I write bad poetry in the heat of my inebriate  
Passion,  
Because I cannot teach, and I do not have a boat, but I have too much  
Money,  
But nothing to loan my poor, beautiful and finally wayward father:  
He is lost in the desert of the stars, underneath the shadows of the  
Horses,  
While last Tuesday I manipulated you in the bed that was previously  
Owned by a homosexual and an artist of seashells:  
The bed that has held four women so far for me, and your goddess;  
And you asked me if you were my toy as I turned you around,  
And then you asked me if I wasn't going to do you like a dog,  
But I assured you that you are my *vida perfecta*: and that you are my  
*Linda perfecta*; and after we were done you made me feel like a  
Super hero all week,  
And when your man goes away, I want to take you to the sea and make  
Love to you in the bedrooms of the caesuras,  
Because I think I know who you are, Alma, for you are my only reason  
For know that there are still green promises in this life.

Robert Rorabeck

# That They Didn'T Know The Word For

This really shouldn't be your job:

The world has struck you down and made you as

Beautiful as broken glass;

And it is the other girls who can fly and goof off for their

Captains:

Just as it is the other waves that come with crushes for the

Other starlets,

And I am just about to have a little home with a coquina fireplace,

And I will think of you in the madness of that twilight

While I make love to working girls who are even

Better looking than you are:

Working girls whose dreams are untamed that go on forever

Cursing over the hills of that suburbia they tore down:

Like a baker's dozen of Melodies, like olive-skinned girls

Lost in an orchard far into the darkness after picking time,

And looking up remember the stars and maybe

Point to the exact aspect that they fell from:

That they never had to compare themselves to the fox leaping for

The other woman's grapes,

And that was so beautiful, and so pure, and maybe something else,

Except that they didn't know the word for.

Robert Rorabeck

# That They Even Are

I have written of the passions of the emptied hills,  
As the blue sky vomits and seems to develop  
Over the pubescent cathedrals,  
So all of the fairytales are only have written:  
They are like dead girls galloping on my leg in extracurricular  
Activities;  
As it has been forever so long that I have found myself to  
Be beautiful;  
And now I get drunk as close as I can to the eastern sea,  
As I hear the clouds cleaning their rooms, hoping for  
Tips,  
As the fireworks happen to bloom all ready and as sudden  
Over the heads of working girls who never  
Have the time to wake up; so now I pick roses for  
Alma,  
And hold my guns to my lips, hoping for romance, while  
The bones of her busy ancestors tell her the secrets  
To their doors who turn out all red  
And happen into the sun, who is also bright and macho,  
Who spindles all of his legs down  
To the sea  
To be caressed by the mermaids who aren't even any longer  
Assured that they even are.

Robert Rorabeck

# That They Share

Finally filled up with all of the  
Beautiful sounds of the winds,  
Angels rest beneath the Christmas trees,  
Knuckles entwined like  
Amber hearts:  
They are waiting there as presents  
For the children of newly wedded gods:  
They float above the carpets  
Where the dogs and kittens sleep—  
Levitating in their own special notes  
While banshees no one hears about  
Remember other dreams  
From the hallucinations of the kitchens  
That they share

Robert Rorabeck

# That They Too Believed

I told her I would be quiet, and I have slept in phone booths  
When the rains stormed down from the higher tenements, and then  
We kissed and it was all surreal:  
There really wasn't enough to go around, all the Saints in green valleys  
Of unicorns and beavers: All the trees and plants growing up  
Into the professions of their glades,  
Where the bodies fit just right and baptized near the reedy estuaries  
Of her long legs, but I couldn't give up, and I sang to her to open  
Her lips like bottles of liquor; and it was a feverish passion,  
And a bottle rocket romance right out in the dense middle of high school:  
Her legs repeating the strokes until through the air she swam,  
As if in epilepsy, the angels kissing and flexing for her, the rainbows  
Bowing: and then she was over all the carports and lymph nodes  
Of suburbia, so when the housewives looked up open shirted, soft lipped  
Their eyes remorsefully dazzled; but they sang that they too believed.

Robert Rorabeck

# That They Were Not Mine

Rained as fat as pregnant cats who'd sated on our  
Mice,  
And I stood and flirted with a little Mexican girl with eyes  
As dark as thunderclouds over the parts of the sea  
Forever estranged from humanity;  
And she was only playing, and I took the knife and cleaved  
The cabbage from its groves, the scuppernongs  
From the vine:  
And I looked into her Guerra conceived eyes, and didn't  
Look away so that she would believe me when I  
Gave her flowers, and promised her that they were not mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# That They Were Wrong

You're playing with him, and the daydreams come  
And make faces under the moon, like adolescent lovers mouthing  
Off in the baths of the boys' bathroom in between classes:  
And yes, it hurts, like the menstruations of bottle rockets croaking  
Themselves over  
Disney World; but it is all we have: and when I am with you,  
Alma, I feel safe: like in an air conditioned cabin, and I just want  
To go home and park my wonder lusting bike after a dance in  
The middle schools of Disney World,  
Like wishes coming down now, and the scientists congratulating  
Themselves, shaking hands and finally admitting through the blue  
Palms of the starving landscaping upon the many ways that  
They discovered that they were wrong.

Robert Rorabeck

# That They Would Be Waiting There

Red envelopes of make believe  
Rainbows while everyone else is turning around  
In this carnival of their gospel  
Looking up,  
Counting the pinecones of the lips of all of  
The stout young Christmas tress,  
And expectant throughout all of those burnished  
Holidays:  
Waiting down on the raptures of puppies  
And kittens:  
The sky a quilt that our grandmother made,  
And all of it made up and counting down  
Throughout the maelstrom of another afternoon:  
Bighting its lip  
And trying to decide at what our to head out of  
Doors,  
While all of it happens out of this,  
And the young virgins sing out of their pillows  
As the snow piles up through the savage greenness of  
Whatever houses that they have found;  
And it all feels all right, burning through the thorough fairs,  
Burning into the twice brilliant lamplights of the angels  
Waiting beside the road: or twice over,  
The angels that already swore that they would be waiting there.

Robert Rorabeck



# That Tomorrow The Day

Nourishing the void of sweet, sweet hobos:  
The rimy bliss down by the crocodiles- overusing the  
Feral, speechless steps:  
And passing the bottle, ringing in the candle lights  
Of ambulances passing insouciantly by:  
Tiny Mexican hands of my beloved: my alma, cleaning all of  
The strawberries,  
And the blueberries, and doing all of her good work while  
The sun goes around:  
Being visited by her bad man today who soon exited:  
And I was there, rhyming down, rhyming down  
Like concrete shedding tears-  
Pulling myself up again, forgetting myself in the liaisons  
Of missing affairs,  
And then trying to do good work for her before the midnight  
Of my day off:  
Getting the word out to nobody in luckless symphony  
Resting assured that tomorrow the day will whiny blindingly  
And my beloved will rise with them and  
Charge, and charge, and charge.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Very Afternoon

How strange the reanimated legionaries must  
Be going as they fell up into your Pleiades  
Which aren't even real constellations,  
Just sisterhoods somewhere in the hallucinations of  
The jungle-  
Or like not dressing out for gym,  
And getting to stare quite contentedly at her jiggling,  
And not having to do anything about it:  
And this sun is a constant good sport,  
And we drink vodka before class and quack farts  
Right alongside the toads in the premeditated algebra  
Of the sweet young campus' landscaping.  
Right before us the sky is like the pink rose I passed  
Over to give her for the  
Red, red roses, to hear her mouthing off and laughing  
With her friends,  
And then having to watch her up on the lacquered stage  
Kissing the leading man,  
But never believing it was real, absolutely;  
And then all of the days receding into the migrations of  
Wolverines and school buses,  
The mailboxes opening up clear throated at our cul-de-sacs  
And turn abouts, coming homes into the  
Laps of middle-class huckstery, the sugar-cone estuaries  
I'm sure you know about:  
Watching Jordan's sister Abigail digress into her nudity  
Beside the best of all pools,  
And the clouds cottoning to their own pace,  
Having now reminiscence for who I might love that  
Very afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Very Thing

They seem to be made of me—the clouds floating above  
The theaters of coquina until there is nothing to  
Complain about—  
And your breasts no longer lactate for your children—  
And it is only I who sits here in this poor excuse of a theatre—  
A long while after the Navajos and other Indians have  
Paid for their liquor and gone home—  
And in that same time, my father's dreams were nearly  
Realized in these mountains—  
As he kept holding his head up nearly bravely closer and  
Closer and further away from the sun—  
Until some wicked—wicked thing got him—  
And the windmills turned—turned in their hypnosis—  
And that was how that very thing got done.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Was All You Needed To See

You don't care,  
You are so far deep into the beautiful,  
And these a just words;  
And you've never blown glass,  
Because it is too dangerous,  
And you didn't grow up  
In northern Europe,  
And I would have like to compare these  
Words to the exotic  
Dangerous of those sports,  
But they are more like suburban parks,  
With swings to go on with your lonely,  
To become the summertime bird,  
A bird of time repeating in its  
Arch: And I remember you from high school,  
Sharon, and you even let me sit next to you during  
A pep rally one day when I  
Was beautiful,  
And you told your bullying friends with the pink  
Switch blade,  
That I was your friend,  
And I even think that you got into creative writing because  
Of me,  
But now you are married and know so much  
About wine:  
And I am so alone and no good at any sport,  
And this is more like a clown selling balloons in a bulldozed  
Jungle than anything else,  
Like that one summer halfway through all the early stuff  
When you looked up into my eyes  
And that was all you needed to see....

Robert Rorabeck

# That Was Made By The Rain

The rains start again; it feels good to fill up this  
Little world:  
To be connected to the other who does not know me  
By the cold;  
It seems even now we are into the reservoir of all things,  
The oubliette of our cell  
Nearing the very root of the sea;  
And I can sit here in a constellation of myself and look  
At her across the class in crepuscule,  
And see her fully fashioned out walking in the overgrown  
Glade,  
Neither now classical or fancy, but crass and crudely made,  
Because I made her a meal for myself:  
Made her immortal like the dart of a bird too swift to see  
And so fanciful;  
She smoked and chirruped and laughed at me  
Because this was no longer Arizona and she had seen me face  
To face and so knew that I could be defeated,  
And so she was just that, the weapon to strike down an early god,  
So I didn't have to get out of bed,  
But could lie here for hours languorous in pain, listening to the  
Music that was made by the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Was Valentines

They have this, and this is real:  
As real as the concrete rivers that the cars drive- while,  
Words are not real,  
Even placed at their fingertips they are ghosts:  
And she has beauty, but so does the cut flower, and everyone  
Knows how swift they can change:  
The way grandfathers nod and die in an apiary even while  
Their youngsters are busily singing-  
Making that fine melody out of their trumpets- storefronts  
In their combs,  
And all the world caracoling around them, like a great Ferris  
Wheel who has found its home,  
No longer wishing for migration nor metamorphosis-  
And who will see her then, her children marbled,  
Her parents something out of a funeral:  
The world trumpeting, but the elephants in it evaporated:  
The fans who once showered her with the fortuitous captivations  
Of symmetry, gone down  
To their hallucinatory easements- and the school of her adulations  
Abandoned:  
All the gaudy clothing raped off the Bosque- who will float  
Down to her then to lick her withering armpits like kites to  
Saltlick- and give her the ephemeral beauty  
Of jigsaw stones such as this: and yet I am here, remembering,  
Cleaved by the cutlass of my young bones-  
Wanting to live with her for eighty years and forever-  
Heartbroken, crying for more of her young leftovers,  
Even though we made love three days ago, and that was Valentines.

Robert Rorabeck

# That We Ought To Be

Pulling their joyous scars far away:  
Where will her sisters go, across the dirty roads  
Overblown with minnows and the color blue  
Diminishing into the occultish forest where the dragons  
Roll the dice;  
And there are little holes who widen where children  
Are always disappearing into the exponential dungeons,  
Growing muscles and beards:  
There are continents down there, and volcanoes,  
And I carry dozens of roses barefooted and right over  
Their graves,  
While my great uncles water ski; and I can feel her blowing out  
The wishes on the back of my neck-  
And she makes it so that I feel like I don't have to rob banks  
Anymore:  
My, Alma- my savage balm: and very soon it will be  
Christmas: she will be my tannebaum, and the trailer barks will  
Sway their corrugations underneath the winter sun,  
Just as the waves go and the windmills. And the new immigrants  
Arrive gun weary from Mexico:  
They are no longer conquistadors, but they are returning  
Our continent again to the brown aridness which grew so many  
Quixotic mirages  
Who from which the rockets are always shooting off in gold mines  
Of heroic clouds  
Who many or may not be pregnant, but I hope that she still loves  
Me anyways,  
As the families hold hands underneath the roller coasters, becoming  
More and more anemic, kissing and embracing,  
So very soon even their pictures will disappear and we won't  
Have to look at anymore movie pictures of their holidays in the  
Day-laboring orchards to have to make guesses upon who we  
Are, or at least who we have decided that we ought to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Which I Always Was

Hang up your hardships  
On my shoulder,  
And come through the apartment's  
Blue door;  
And I will take them up from  
The grasses of many-legged murder,  
And weave them into a vest  
I can proudly wear-  
It has been many years since I've seen you,  
But I am still here, where you remember  
The starvations, the second story, and the things  
We failed in,  
But do not shed another tear,  
For it will not matter,  
But only punctuate the unpronounced  
Awakening of twilight:  
And cause another imperfection-  
She will come through the window  
And own us here,  
And it is not for us to say a thing,  
For I recognize that I am a lonely man,  
As I was meant to be,  
After you came to your decision,  
And I cannot forgive you or ask you to change,  
For all of this has past,  
And we have both taken our permanent names:  
But you can sit with me, if you wish,  
In the desolate room you long ago left,  
And see with me what I am in uncomplicated silence:  
For I will only look at you  
And say here, with closed lips,  
My eyes the only orators of this light-  
What you were never for sure,  
That which I always was....

Robert Rorabeck



# That Will Never Be Sold

Swamp of midgets and garden snakes-  
I am not well:  
I send folded paper over to you as a pointed  
Hullabaloo-  
I am the kind of feral you wouldn't know too  
Well,  
I live my life charging the pin wheeling shadows  
When no one else is home,  
And none of it will sell: I jack off onto the  
Green carpet of prehistory-  
I used to climb mountains, but now they are  
Silent with expeditious snowfall all through their  
Cramped dells:  
And you sell your wine, and you charm the  
Insatiable fraternities: I listen to the crickets repeating  
In séance the vastness of my night,  
All that will never be sold.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Wonderful Old English Summer

Parks of rum and the stars and  
Nothing to do all weekend  
But eat hotdogs and look at houses and  
Think of girls,  
Hair curling around their ears like waves around  
Their wharfs,  
All strung out in their lovely homeless beds,  
In their homeless rooms so unlike the unnecessary  
Fairytale in the ballparks of your forgetful children,  
And not a one of them really aflame with witchcraft:  
Not a one of them homeless, or nameless,  
Or jumping trains;  
And so my words are perfect for them, bred and  
Grown around the segues of the earthy suburbia;  
And the night really isn't asleep,  
And so nothing will really be waking up in the morning:  
And my words really aren't anything special-  
They aren't even beautiful: they may be ducks in a pond,  
Mindless of the airplanes perpetually leaping overhead,  
Who themselves are unaware of the greater tundra  
And the Aurora Borealis that I can't even spell,  
Which squats there like a maiden metamorphosed from  
A may pole on a way to Chaucer's hometown in the middle  
Of that wonderful Old English summer or somewhere  
Even more beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# That Wonderous Religion That I Name After You

I have been up and down the trail  
In all seasons, hoping for you as the aspens  
Change:  
There can be nothing more beautiful than  
Your absence along my misspelled  
Highways-  
Alone in the suburbia's after crepuscule, all the  
Mailboxes down,  
The power lines singing in swaybacked choruses,  
Erin in her heirlooms really caring nothing  
For me;  
In Saint Louis or Colorado, and further up;  
And in those mountains of lightning storms and  
Torn presents where the topiaries of  
Giants sing,  
Where the hermits guzzle and the ghosts tank;  
Then I have seen you there- a muse of my nourishments,  
And I have let every sort of weather drench me  
In the milky bath of stars, in the cloistered perfumes  
Of wild rosaries,  
I have said my prayers while the antlers jounced like  
Courtesans,  
And you laid in your absent beds with your more precious  
Men,  
The ceiling fans caracoling your sepias features;  
Never knowing that my feet continuously beat as hotly as  
Unconditional candles  
For that wondrous religion that I name after you.

Robert Rorabeck

# That You Ever Were

So I've been to high school and even while  
Trying to write in between the lines drunk liquor, drunk  
Liquor and pulled back far too late to be something truly  
Beautiful,  
While I was up like fireworks on that roof far past midnight,  
Trying to make love to pretty legionaries even while they  
Were marching off to serve  
Their country: to serve their men with fine legs and even finer  
Gin:  
Well, I don't know that I've had all but three wishes, and in the  
Dynamos of Colorado, Haven't I already used  
Them to conjure up what my body could not move:  
I've summit mountains from the basins of my patriotism,  
And the bosoms of those glacial lakes, I've wished that you would  
Have letters to give to me to send to your less ambiguous men  
Those steaming fine young men who were just climbing down  
From your Cleopatra-ian neck, from your chimney, because that  
Was just how easy it was for them.  
While you were selling wine or making clay portraits; while I was  
A sick and dying animal in the zoo; and then I moved into the butterfly-  
House, and pretended my name was mariposa while I awaited  
Out the hours, awaiting for you: Sharon, you are my sick muse,  
And you will go on continuously through the traffic:  
You will be blue and bruised, but otherwise you will continue on  
Forever, because I have made a motion to the country into which you  
Cannot be disproved:  
I have made that motion, and you are now that thing that goes still suckling your  
First born child, still whiffing the bouquets of your firstborn boudoir:  
Sharon, Sharon: I am not a superstar, but you remain yet the first  
Hour of my sumptuous presumptions, Sharon:  
Bruised of eye; you are yet all that I am, or, of course, all that you ever were.

Robert Rorabeck

# That You Loved Me

Silly whispers from the backsides of trucks  
Echoing all of the way up the canyons like the bouquets  
Of throats opened to lovers;  
And all of it a dream of fireworks in emollition to  
The heavens,  
Sweating pinwheels, and doing time for the nudity of  
Angels;  
And if I held you here in my palm, like a kitten sweating,  
You would look up to me with those deep brown  
Eyes all the way from another country  
That I found and stole right here- and you said my  
Name,  
Like weather speaking through the lips of a windmill;  
Well, then you had my soul,  
And your name illustrated my body- and I reverberated  
As if I was some creature trying to breathe my love  
For you through a glass, through an atmosphere-  
Shedding in metamorphosis through so many illustrious  
Classrooms,  
Trying to pretend without a doubt, Alma- Alma, that you  
Loved me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hypnotic Memories Of Her Goods

Are you still spilling Cimarron  
After the peddlers have gushed  
Amidst the stones  
And tufts of grass:  
Pullulated halfway through by  
The territorial savages  
Who streamed down the red cliffs  
Which have no shores;  
The gypsies of her concourse  
Who showed you her open eyes,  
And pawned her teeth on strings of filament,  
Now the tatters of Lincoln's plan,  
Their wares her legs pillaged  
From their sacks,  
Put together and raped  
Behind the orange caravanserai,  
Now bastards spill out like tadpoles  
With last names:  
Croaking the fatherless weather,  
They dry into husks beside their  
Vivisected fosterers  
Scattered in the murderer's crop  
Banners of clothing hung in the briars  
Where her nape still glistens  
The hypnotic memories of her goods.

Robert Rorabeck

# The 4th Of July

There's my girl  
With somebody else's guy  
In her witch's costume  
On the 4th of July.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Abandoned Amusement

The scoundrel should pay that off for you.  
He gave you that perfect teathed smile,  
His alibi,  
And then left you in the dreary parking lot  
Of superhero mice,  
And spiraled down like one of those  
Airplanes which lost in the sky,  
The communism of bad dream;  
Now, the open spaces like a bricked wall,  
The growling lights attracting the moth people,  
And the moon the mouth of the well.  
Standing there in the chilly mortgage,  
You soon realized that you had never loved him;  
But you don't cry out,  
As he comes around again and apologizes,  
Takes you away through the secret passage;  
Holds your hand like precious ribbon and bone,  
Kisses one three hundredth of you,  
But you never lived in his room again,  
Though your eyes refer to it at dinner,  
And soon you had slipped away into a warmer marriage.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Abandoned Court

Pigeons high above the honking streams,  
Smoke stacks in the cold chapped air,  
Leaves as dead as the love I've never felt,  
The bread trucks unloading stale loaves at  
The derelict supermarkets,

Shakespeare is in a tidal pool where the river  
Has thrown up the flat tires,  
Marlowe is down on his knees, his eye poked  
Out from a vengeful branch,

Her lips are tired from their taste tests,  
But his neck is still hungry, and his chest warm-  
He is a refugee from Nigeria, with a faux gold watch,  
That keeps calling her eyes to it,  
Like willful sparrows stealing time, lining a gaudy nest,

I do not wear enough clothing for this unfaithful weather,  
And my lips expel the fume of a rimy heart,  
Like the heavy exhaust geysers up from the silver bumpers,  
In long congested trails of mechanical asses,  
Chassis of tremendous strength, lost and grazing in the  
Deeply rutted spheres, and the empty windows like the poached  
Nests of wrens,

Stolen in the urban sprawl, the bodies move like willful mannequins,  
I am in love with my girlfriend from another world,  
Sometimes her name is meaningful though in a savage park,  
Laid down in the homeless newspapers of vandalized wood;  
I try to cry to her once again, but the buildings raise soundless tombs;  
Thus my meanings end up lost in the abandoned court.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Abandoned Horns Of Kings

Revealed like the strange regresses of a crowd  
After the baseball game is over:  
The heavens fluctuating over the life in the sea:  
Schoolyards in Colorado  
Metamorphosing as they cry tantalizingly.  
The cemeteries creak like old  
Swing sets  
The older and new lovers have abandoned,  
Leaving only the penumbra of the moon  
That sways over everything,  
Positioning the crickets over the wildflowers,  
And causing the moss to grow over the abandoned  
Horns of kings.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Abandoning Natures Of Their Own Front Yards

Now you've ridden your horse victoriously from the battle  
And shouted something in mestizo—  
Made a tomb out of what once must have been my summer—  
Blinding my eyes before I could see you wandering somewhere  
Aimlessly through the portables outside of  
Art class—you were either skipping history or social studies—  
In a state of southern Mexico—  
And in the night, the lamps fell upon the laughter of the  
Children of the skulls—and you turned your eyes  
To the delights of dead theatres  
In the alleys that were as stunted as dwarfs—even then,  
Your skin was perfect—and you became pregnant with your  
First child as you lost your virginity in a classroom of  
The frontera—while the airplanes were always creating espionage  
Above you—I don't even know that they ever believed  
In what they were doing—or if they were supposed to—  
And when I somehow found you, wasn't it already too late:  
You would make love to me, but I was already defeated—  
And you run on forever, victoriously whooping—  
And hypnotizing chickens as you found them—  
Swinging them in your arms and calling your children to  
Come and see them—like real life miracles happening  
Out in the abandoning natures of their own front yards.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Abominable Metal Of This Unrequited Winter

I suffer alone, like a premature baby in an incubator,  
And the pitch-fork pines lumber straight up  
Outside my yellow house:  
The few rooms are filled with the ghosts that other people  
Let in,  
While she is soft and warm in a movie theatre tucked  
Into the chest of the man who used to beat her,  
Who she loves,  
And the doors swing wide and sound hollow like good  
Watermelons,  
And the young bodies enjoy their young times like  
Fieldtrips to water parks in the summer:  
My soul blisters on the abominable metal of this unrequited  
Winter,  
As if housewives who have no children to call home to dinner.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Arboreal Gymnasiums Of Alma's Forever Brown Eyes

Dying in the midday courts for awhile  
We share ourselves as  
We look up into the open and sunny mouths  
Of feral gods,  
Like the luckily living grandchildren of Titans,  
Caged up with the ceiling fans over the oceans;  
And when the winds blow like kisses  
Over the resorts of her brown ears,  
I can lay low and pretend to be mortally wounded,  
Over an adolescent carpet crawling with blue millipedes,  
With the horseflies rattling at the doors,  
And the summer storms cutting across the fields  
Just like overly eager young boys stripping off all of their  
Clothes to finally fall down into the prenatal  
Ballrooms of the blessed light that just so happens to fall  
Before the arboreal gymnasiums of Alma's forever brown eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Abscent Minded Heart

Gas tanks spill over with rum—Oh bright muse,  
Bright starlight—  
And lighthouses—if cars could only run on liquor:  
Well then,  
This is the body of your pledge—that he will becoming a home  
To you again tomorrow—  
And it doesn't matter how much money you owe me—  
You will attribute to him again and again for so many tomorrows  
Even if he never takes you to another amusement ride  
In all of your life—and you equate him to all of the  
Pestilent spheres of all of your cousins—  
I plan to make of a study out of my garage—and if I cannot sleep,  
I want you to buy me virulent if plastic roses:  
And I want to die in the cathedrals where there are no fanfares:  
I do not wish for any gilded coins—because this is the place  
Where I tend to believe in or to inherent,  
And you are forgetting me and growing further and further  
Away from me—  
The ocean next to your elbow is throwing up,  
Trying so hard so that you will mention him: the bats fly down  
And kiss the unicorns, and that becomes the most absolute  
Abhorrence, or the closest thing you ever knew of love,  
While my dogs echo me in what once were my bachelor's  
Cathedrals- and then there becomes a time for this and  
A time for that—  
In the morning: bodies, cathedrals—and the absentminded  
Heart of a feral cat.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Absolute Belief

Distances are gone as the paper airplanes  
Are folded and the Ferris Wheels  
Yawn up to the lesser gods in the clouds,  
And elephants remember the sound of the phone  
Ringing,  
And I have touched myself to the sound of her voice  
Which brought in the weather  
Fronts  
And the spikenards of dear boys, while the horses  
Ran, collecting  
Patinas around the copper fences:  
The conquistadors slept all kittycornered up to their  
Stone crosses in the shallow knees of the mangroves,  
And then we said our blessings  
Under the stamp of traffic lights, and when the song  
Finally came it blessed us  
And the reasons for our existence ran like the unstymied  
Blood from a wound that open in  
All of us the absolute belief that we were really there.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Absolute Delusions Of Love

Here, I want to fall in love,  
Right in the passions of the singing garden,  
Rich with insects and serpents,  
The very few reasons meandering through the  
Grass and up to her display,  
That the world was first found and then blazed in the  
Fullness of an immaculate kiln,  
Found sport with werewolves and the fording knights  
Who were too brave and overzealous and aloud  
Their feral enemies to meet them halfway,  
Which was their failure,  
Like most languages who enter into their species  
After bedtime and a few measly dinners of grubs  
Until the hardnosed call girls of vampires beat them to  
The bleachers,  
And called up a brutal symphony which snapped every neck  
In the hillside of windmills, as if stringing up horse thieves  
Before a picnic of wildflowers,  
And killed at the absolute delusions of love I'd been at having.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Absolute Jealousness Of The Sun

If you feel like a sliver in my side, Alma,  
Where am I now,  
But out of church and school, trying to put together  
Better words to fool you out of his bed;  
But you are in a pretty house, and all alone with your  
Family,  
Though I desire your love, as I have watched you spreading  
Rose pedals with your breath;  
And when I told you that it was you who would kill me,  
You only laughed:  
And now I am dancing for you, doing this again in my  
Friendly darkness,  
The bottle to my lips as if I were a child instead of a ghost,  
As if this were the floor of the sea,  
Instead the jagged hook of a mountain who was catching  
All the gods to show you the way  
The silver and gold flowers wriggle the perfume of their  
Deity for you in the absolute jealousy of the sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Absolute Queen Of Beasts

Nothing returns from this inky rejoin:  
The cradles going to sleep in her mountains,  
The airplanes and  
Traffic too: all going to sleep, inebriated  
And burped off of her,  
And she considers it to be good, as she pats  
The sheet metal backs,  
As her eyes roll cookie dough for tomorrows  
Lunch.  
She has stopped by early sometime before  
Noon just to sell some gambits to me,  
And I walked out and followed her around like  
A friendly rabbit after a puppy dog,  
And she led me like a wolf leading its lamb,  
Smacking its jaws and dusting its chaps.  
Now that tomorrow is over she isn't even sure that  
I live,  
While into her soft bed of long legged mountains  
Her steadily melting stream of patrons gives  
And gives,  
And never seem to wear out their admiration for  
The absolute queen of beasts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Absolute Runways Of Your Favorite Color

In the morning if your child is healed  
Then I will see you:  
As a brave night, I will caracole the brown kilns of  
Your womb,  
And whisper that our children will have a twenty five percent  
Of blue eyes  
If you can believe me, if you really love the flag I have  
Spun from the cocoons of this loneliness:  
Of course I will dance for you, and pop my guns:  
And I will buy you lunch, Alma,  
And dream of farmlands with you, and fields rich with  
Sparkling red fruit that we are not allowed  
To eat but we always do  
With pits of rubies that can fit across your fingers which would  
Otherwise become the venomous gazes of a serpent in his  
Genius of envy;  
And I will whisper into your ear of bravery, and the cool  
Zoetropes of movie theatres, and the aloe beside the carports  
Where we shouldn't be allowed to move,  
Except to kiss soft,  
And if you have ever seen snow, and ask you to differentiate  
Between the different shades of green to figure out and  
Pinpoint the absolute runways of your favorite color.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Absoluteness Of An Unrequited Shore

Cold as the spaces of a new sinner's void,  
How could you travel so far away from me without  
Breathing:  
You were my birthday wish since thirteen,  
And now see how brightly my eldest candles are  
Burning:  
A forest fire torn from the horizon of your back-turned  
Away and blazing,  
Swimming to the graveyard washed by all that yesterday,  
And my loneliest dreams left starving and oh  
So beautiful as your gowns pulled away revealing  
The absoluteness of an unrequited shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Accords Of Our Hollowed Earth

Juvenile roses in my throat as always,  
Feet kicking as they swing over a graveyard of paramours:  
The light douse as if in a funeral of  
Merry go rounds, and there is no need to save  
My little sister, for she has bested me:  
She has sewn her own wedding gown in her sleep,  
While the lighthouse twinkled the brail of its crippled though  
Fairyland deep;  
And I meant to spill all of my wishes into your at once,  
Alma:  
I meant to give you all of the gifts that sleep in my body  
Waiting for you,  
But I get as nervous as something feral waiting for you to  
Abandon its meal;  
I want to love you by so many ways, even though the sun  
Hurts my eyes,  
And I am not making enough money for you to  
Truly remember me; but I have bought you bouquets and I  
Have eaten lunch with you in your car;  
And I have made you say to me that you love me, which is like  
Leaping up to caress an impossible star:  
But now your children need you again: your children are waking  
Up again,  
And I love them as I love you, as their bones stretch like ribbons  
Underneath the hungry billboards which mouthlessly speak  
To the accords of our hollowed earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Aces' Element

In the middle of the mechanic's summer,  
Defeated by the upper presumptions,  
I wait for snow;  
No longer liberal, I get drunk at air shows,  
Have hallucinations of her eyes  
Through the thorny cornfields;  
The floraline cactus prick the plane propellers;  
The Japanese zeros fishing in the cornucopias;  
The blistered space I see full of prime letters,  
The little tricks she plays to escape her impressive father,  
To sneak away to the debtors prison,  
And marry the Christian author there who  
Self published before the arid blizzard, the great depression  
Of tin-can squatters, the early death  
Hungry in the gas tank of the bank robbers' Hudson,  
Sleeping on the concrete riverbanks beneath  
The buzzing overpasses;

The squash and orchids vibrate with the  
Hesitant rain shower's full presumption;  
Then she steps out of the passenger's door and stands up-  
She is always seven in the staggering hills of brambly windmills,  
A gift from France,  
Turning heads like rubbernecked gawkers;  
The factory workers winnowing this invisible commodity,

As her lips do, breathing-  
Her heart the thumping propeller turning towards the  
Scorch and burn, as Sherman's army marched to the sea;  
The snowbirds migrate towards the trailer parks at the lips of  
Kind waves,  
The silver birds turn and gyre in inevitable majesty above  
Our uninhibited brow;  
We are the proletariat watching the rehearsal of better angels' wow;

The staged dogfights we pay to see,  
Her legs scissor like the aces' element,  
The streamlined accompaniments of bombshell evolution,  
The sexy companion to lucky though lesser men.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Adolescent Epiphany

Show us how to see the colorings your dreams wear,  
When you travel far away  
Across the silent land your eyes hide when resting.  
Find a way so that we can come with you,  
And be the man you hold hands with when sleepwalking.  
For if you go across the Mississippi  
Barefoot tracks the muddy banks  
In a heavy down pour,  
Far away from where the cars' headlights  
Are a blurry procession conjoining cities,  
Let us meet you halfway on the flooding delta  
To whisper as raindrops caressing  
To kiss the foolish brow to become so lost  
To not even see us when we pull up  
And open this door offering a dry land  
Where you could spend awhile  
With the naiads and paramours  
We have collected on the other side of the canal  
Since our child-hood.  
This is where your lost brother lives,  
To where your toys have gone missing.  
There is a meaning to this menagerie of truancy,  
As we are coming now in a patchwork melody  
All the things you haven't thought of before  
For so long, reappearing like the adolescent epiphany  
And this is true that we never knew you,  
Though we have gone around and around  
As best we could trying to figure you out.  
When you eyes are closed is the best time to see you,  
For you appear to us a lost child  
On the wind swept hill looking upwards  
As the futile zephyrs attempts to motivate the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Adulations Of Her Tactile Ballrooms

I see the weathervanes rippling like old women  
Over the top mast of a house I've never lived  
In,  
And it occurs to me my words are flowers I've never  
Smelled.  
Reoccurring, amputated from a forest where  
The rich sororities sing;  
And I am just a runaway, like a sailor who keeps  
On wanting to drown just so he can see one last time  
The vibrant, off-giving light of  
Whatever lighthouse is nearest his busy hand;  
And the dogs are on the road.  
The rattlesnakes pullulate in the ditches with the magician's  
Rabbits  
Who dream even while they are being eaten of making love  
With his dwarfish assistant,  
And rubbing up against her snow white skin,  
While she makes the tender eyes of a used car salesmen-  
Until everything that I have never done quite right  
Really gets blown out of proportion,  
And they gain tails as they fireball over birthday parties,  
Becoming more and more real as they quickly disappear over  
The adulations of her tactile ballrooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Adulations Of My Senses

Guts of languid piñatas: soft birthdays of quieting holidays:  
Lighted in the birthdays of Alma's little  
Boy:  
And now this, and now this, a toy boat lost in the last  
Real sea,  
Peppered by the stars, like a hickey on my shoulders she left  
Me to travel on home to him:  
Sure to fade,  
While the pregnant snake suns its belly in the grasses  
That are whispering,  
Gossiping with each blade- and what does the sunlight do  
But go on a fieldtrip:  
It doesn't even fall in love with anything; it is just stepping  
Through,  
While high above it in every morning of everyday:  
You lavish your brown shoulders underneath the softball sun:  
Turn on your perfumes,  
And puckering in the declivities and the come ons of  
Your overpriced dollhouse, drive into  
To work underneath the water coolers of the adulations of  
My senses.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Adventures Of Cadavers

I have a new magic such as Ajax.  
Look at me shouldering the words of playboys-  
I am not struggling-  
I get along better when I am not breathing,  
when the playboys that I knew for awhile  
have come down from either of their clouds  
and are looking soft and ethereal  
in the movie theatres abandoned of their clouds-

it is a planet, affixed in wax-  
the better children huffing their better ethers  
paying their better taxes-  
but I still have to look up and into your eyes-

Fox, vixen, who are not real,  
turning the tomboy into the jack rabbits of your  
brambles-

Families that grow up kidnapped, the apex of  
our love letters only awaken for a brevity of an awhile,  
and then it is done:  
the fireworks are spent,  
the tents are taken down,  
and the lovers are left  
to remember the remnants of their families-

cenotaphs of days taken off at the elbows,  
unemployed at the apertures of ever wave-

and I am spent without a thought-  
and even the living neighborhoods are made to haunt-

beautiful for awhile, the words in their mothy wardrobes  
are left the take on the adventures of cadavers-

but the underbellies of airplanes are soft and waxen-  
and even as I have fallen, they are leaping,  
and leaping forever.



# The Afore Mentioned Ever-Loving Sky

If I am going to die tomorrow: I am going to die,  
Without any shade of mountains,  
Like a naked army marching in without any shadows:  
Then this is my chicken-sh%t denouement or something else  
In which cannot be believed in:  
If I had any guts I would have strung myself like a piñata over  
The abolitionist crick tonight,  
But none of this is real anyways, Alma: and if I am going today,  
I rather that it would be in the arms of your smoking car,  
Because otherwise you should know that my ghost  
Is going to live forever,  
Like a hungry child with your name in his lips, that you loved  
Me but it was for little more than a moment,  
While the ever loving sun and the ever loving moon played  
Their ever loving game of cards  
In the afore mentioned ever-loving sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Afternoon Goddess

Laughing as they could in their rooms of the groomless  
Proud:  
The way they looked up on their brooms sweeping up in the  
Sky far away from how I felt:  
Glistening from the school yard, making a marmalade sweep of  
My tomb;  
And I thought that it looked so pretty, and the lions could  
Almost be heard yawning-  
Like the alligators- like the pyramids: and Alma got up in the sleek  
Sunshine and arose:  
Her armpits glossy with sweat and primrose: and the coral  
Snakes watched her from the windowsill as she dressed:  
And the otters played- and then they regressed:  
And the bicycles all looked sloppy beneath the slopes of  
Turpentine:  
And I got on one of the seats on the bus as it drove down the  
Street and I bit my lip;  
I bit my tongue- and then it returned us from  
School to our home,  
Like children pursuing ants on a baseball diamond:  
All I could think of was to make her mine- as the clouds shed  
Their illusions in the sky:  
But waiting for us at home was only lonely cartoons:  
As it happened- the muse, the afternoon goddess was nowhere  
Around;  
But the paper airplanes folded up upon themselves, and the aircondition  
Cursed the stewardesses who were also nowhere around.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Afternoon's Royal Sky

Awakened into the morning of your

Echo:

I can hear the lawnmower purring beneath the

Dragonflies:

The dragonflies are cerulean,

But they do not know your name, as the airplants

Blush in the armpits of the cypress

And my little sister comes outdoors,

Blond and satanic:

She at first kisses a crocodile,

And then a coral snake before going back indoors:

And I wait for you amidst the

Mortified litters beneath the papered trees

As cicadas disrobe on the bark,

Like knights becoming naked for

Witches,

And the airplanes bath in the yawning and leonine

Throats of the afternoon's royal sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Afternoon's Swimming Pool

With your spyglass,  
Burn the hyper-active  
Centipede-  
Create the leaping  
Energy that  
Makes words disappear.  
Roll up the tinfoil  
Into a crude bowl  
And smoke your  
Mother's weed  
While masturbating  
In the afternoon's  
Swimming pool,  
In the tall green  
Grass  
Whispering beside  
The blue canal;  
There prehistoric  
Alligators swimming,  
The hazy shadows  
Which last forever  
Eating the neighborhood's  
Dogs,  
Obscure reflections  
Of a girl you once  
Knew  
Casually, ten years  
Ago,  
Staring up at you....

Robert Rorabeck



# The Afternoon's Thunder

Yellowness in the hoods of butterflies  
As I sleep underneath of the  
School busses  
And another day turns around exchanging sunlight  
For rain across the oilslicks from  
The oil pans-  
And the otters play in the forensics of canals  
And I cannot believe that you cannot see them:  
Maybe it is because you are looking at me  
As the zoo has fallen down around itself  
And the waves culminate in the haywire  
Of a trapeze of so many mouths  
With the lions yawning in the basins  
The echoes of which bring the spoils of  
The afternoon's thunder.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Age Old Terrapin

Wordless Calliope- what are you,  
Standing there  
As a blue monument: what do you mean  
After so much tragedy;  
The Roman Candles are only shooting forth  
A jealous blue,  
And another night is ruined into the world:  
The monuments float unstructured:  
The witches curse the baseball diamonds,  
And the schoolyards aren't even fully formed:  
The air-conditioning escapes outdoors  
And all of the football teams lose, lose:  
And I lye weeping underneath the school bus  
Even as it rains and the age old terrapin  
Eats my muse-  
My muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ages Of The Sea

If I passed away in  
The ages of the sea,  
Would you come  
To remember me in  
The trailer parks of  
Your eyes-  
As if I'd been sleeping,  
Kissed by the rattlesnakes  
Who've crawled on their  
Bellies  
Across  
The mowed yards of  
The retirement homes-  
Because even if I do  
Not exit now,  
I am coming home to  
Where once you lived.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Airplanes And The Castles Too

You seem to have told me that I could see  
A thousand things from your windowsill—  
But so tomorrow all of those promises will be burning  
And the airplanes and your castle too—  
My ears will be engulfed by all of the echoes of  
The sea shells from your pretty seas—  
And then we will go home tomorrow without  
Holding hands—and some other man will have  
Scaled the mountain that was always meant for  
Me—

Robert Rorabeck

# The Airplanes Are Almost Gone

This is the landscaped  
Theatre I've been working in;  
The girls prance through like  
The stock of beef stew;  
I've seen them up in the  
Gallery; I've heard them  
Gossiping like  
Faeries in the hollow trees  
Planted in perfect rows  
Down the streets of the  
University;  
Perfect graveyards lit blue  
By the transoms of  
Churchyards,  
Girls living here I never knew,  
Like princesses at Disney World.  
Now the rush hour's traffic sounds  
And the airplanes are almost gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Airplanes Are Touching Down

Turned out, burning through the  
Elephantine joy: on another plain, stuck between  
Where the airplanes fly:  
And all of the windows looking out into the world,  
Looking across the canals that the little  
Girls skip to see the comets,  
Or to ring in the new year: words on a patio with  
Green things all around.  
The night is an orchestra. The fruits globe  
Her ankles perfumed in jasmine and rich geraniums-  
They seem to be whispering,  
And foxes:  
And the airplanes are touching down.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Airplanes Brush The Meadows

In crooked time in school,  
Butterflies chewed up by the shoulder blades of lawnmowers,  
Perfumes of the substitutes wayfaring out of the open  
Windows  
Like the armpits of geniis, as we go like this swimming over  
The crocodiles and away from the lilies of the school:  
Go across the canal, and far into the pines-  
And deep into the meandering suburbias and into never minds-  
There the shadows freckle and dapple our imaginations  
Of girls,  
And the sweat runs down our boyish necks, as the tadpoles  
Curl in the brackish shadows:  
Soon they will be returning too- like fireworks dying into  
Fish- the manmade highways of their wishes finding  
Them wives above the saddles of turtles,  
And deeper once the brushstrokes are removed,  
The cenotaphs of conquistadors on their blue maidenhoods  
Of wishes- where they swim in their stewing echoes,  
While the housewives hearts flutter, and the airplanes brush  
The meadows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Airplanes Coming Indoors

Then there is a womb opened in a new  
Holiday,  
Bright with her children and blind snow storms:  
All of the wolves make a surplus  
Around the orchard of her  
Little house,  
And the snakes hang down from their  
Christmas trees,  
Tired from their gossiping,  
And her father's car, and her husband's car  
Wait outside—  
The day is equally beautiful, and she lays brown-  
Eyed with her children  
And never has to worry about the airplanes  
Coming indoors.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Airplanes Fly

Lost in the waves of busses,  
And now she is pregnant and the most likely  
Parable- well, words anyway:  
And she flows through graveyards like the  
The prom dresses of weather vanes:  
There she goes, anyways, melting like ice-cream  
For the ants who come up to  
Watch the parade- as it rains- as it rains,  
And she does as she does,  
As the dogs run around the tracks- as the white rabbits  
Disappear into hats:  
Animals just doing their jobs:  
As the waves break, the windmills turn,  
And the airplanes fly.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# The Airplanes Going To Places They Cannot Explain

The house is beautiful: laying flat on my back in the fruiteria  
Next to the water cooler and looking up at Alma,  
How her juvenile curves float and molest the very air:  
Her brown skin the allure in the adolescent graveyards of thirsting  
Firemen;  
And I'll wake up and enjoy the workday next to her, and then  
She'll go back home and water her rabbits and spank her naughty children  
On Cherry Road where more than a few Mexicans live:  
All the pretty girls who are more pretty than the girls I went to school  
With,  
If only because they've never had to go to school with anyone:  
They been out picking in the fields and putting homeopathic tattoos  
On the webs of their thumbs  
Their shared sub consciousnesses waking up in the dusty grottos of  
Guerro, Mexico, looking up like brown legged misfits  
At the airplanes going to places that they cannot explain,  
That they have no beliefs in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Airplane's Heartbeat

Cold tools making sad parks,  
Dredging the beds for the censers of feet  
Arching while they smoke  
Repeating their flight plan under all that  
Deciduous shade at night-  
Car horns of penny candy,  
Ghosts going round, pomaded and slick  
The undercurrents of the weighted hooves;  
And the sky seems to do tricks;  
A little boy stealing things from a cleft  
A stewardess offered, the salty shoals after  
The waters left: And look at those eyes,  
A home,  
A watery mouth, a thing that no one believed,  
Wombs for hotels and infants,  
Corded vines a school yard for sunbathing  
Serpents,  
Her promises' accord, your lunch in a box  
With lashes and seeds;  
Your eyes look up to the airplane's heartbeat:  
And she told you her hand moving back and forth  
Like rudder or a fin,  
That the ghosts of dead travelers could only finish  
What she would begin;  
And you pressed your mouth to her gears under the  
School bus while the sky bled heliotrope and opal,  
And came into her month,  
While the school emptied in a hush of shoes and  
Bags; but you kept your mouth to her bush,  
Moaning there the keystone wound,  
Buttered marble, crying stone; and the sky held back  
Sucking in its drums,  
With nothing else to exclaim, until all of her mothers  
Were quieted, knickknack and dusted into their  
Indistinguishable homes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Airy Cylinders

Basking in the glowing death,  
The pantomimes surrender to our health.  
My house looks beautiful when you look it  
In the mouth,  
And from here you can go down the stairs  
To anywhere:  
The fields of venison that are still alive,  
Like the basic moats for estranged lovers,  
Or the ghosts of fast moving cars  
And it all seems so tenderly surreal  
As I lift the airy cylinders to my lips  
And pretend again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Alabaster Mountains

Suppositions to the stars or anywhere:  
I cry out in the tiniest of bedrooms to all of the gods  
Or to anyone—  
To hear me now,  
Touching myself,  
And trying to make an entertainment to the paper airplanes—  
To call together now all of the centerfolds,  
That in this place shall be  
Altogether our amusements—  
And to make an amusing charade out of the sun and  
The stars—  
At least until I have a little more money—  
And, as the soonest prophecies are received—  
To remember the arbitraries of the silk road—  
To remember anywhere that seems to languish  
In their tomorrow—  
To cut across the opened throats of the alabaster  
Mountains and thus to proceed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Alamo

I meet the girls,  
And then I meet the ladies:  
The Alamo is already coming down and  
All the men are dead  
And drinking rum; the patron is dead-  
Someone says he is my father,  
But there are no clouds tonight, no way to return into  
This:  
This girl tonight she wore a two piece bathing suit as  
She opened the door;  
She seemed to say that everything was going to be  
Alright, but I can't say if she was sure:  
She wanted to start off on top of me, but she made  
Me so happy,  
I pressed her like a buttercup or like a bluebell to  
The floor:  
As if we were on the high planes again, drifting without  
Phonebooths;  
And I swore- that only the men in red and white  
Lived to tell the tale,  
Like her toenails who kept the same names since  
Christmas;  
She was like a Pegasus or Christian, and it wasn't my  
Place to explain to her  
What we were fighting for.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Albino Alligator

Like the dissected rainbow of abused starlets  
Like the beginning or the end of my misappropriated  
Hope  
That I cannot see the outcome for, and yet the sea  
Is certainly some busy yard of beautiful graveyard and nursery:  
And my parents are going away,  
And as I jogged alone for you, I saw the first happenstance of  
A prism leaping like a colorful gazelle from the asphalt:  
And my mother couldn't do any better than loving my  
Father,  
And I love you this way, like a gagged symphony, like the last  
Stripes of a fish who knows she will not survive even while  
She bares her young to the unthoughtful spectacles of the  
Deep,  
As you bared yourself for me maybe for the last time,  
As I lamented the loss of the tall swing sets  
And then I brushed your lips and yours to mine in the hidden  
House beside the albino alligator who seemed to smile  
Up at us a smile you swore to me you had never seen before.

Robert Rorabeck



# The All Night Party Going On Next Door

Aerobuses are always leaping in the sky  
Because it is what they were made to be  
Doing,  
And I've been published a few times,  
And right now the wind is really  
Seriously  
Blushing;  
While in my time, I looked beautiful,  
I skipped school,  
And I was accused of plagiarism,  
Because it was what I was made to be doing,  
And when I drink enough my vision starts  
Flashing,  
Like a silent movie,  
And I grow a gut under the green shirt,  
Even though earlier  
I was jogging,  
And pretty soon I will be selling Christmas trees,  
Because it is what I'm  
Going to get paid for,  
And I'll even be delivering Christmas into  
Beautiful barmaids' bedrooms,  
And I'll be thinking of my two muses,  
Even though they don't care for me,  
My immortal candle is burning,  
And I've made them famous even if the casual world  
Cares to realize it or not:  
I've made you famous,  
And Nicky has promised to visit me,  
But if she sees me, she'll probably vomit,  
But I could be her committed terrapin if she let me,  
Or just her plutonic folklore:  
I could live forever a heavy lawn ornament propping her door:  
I could do so many things,  
Until I was knighted, or introduced  
To saint hood  
At the all night party going on next door.



# The All Too Familiar Hallways

What does it mean to be falling apart—head-room  
Like a skull and antlers waiting there beside the highway  
That itself had already passed—  
Mantle-piece to the moonlight,  
Zoetrope without any fingers to lay across;  
And you are in another man's bedroom far afield  
From the here and now.  
What little things you say to his ear canal  
Wound me without even being heard—  
What things you continue to give to him you never  
Thought to steal from me—  
And the schools will reopen in the fall,  
And thoughts of you will come around like ghosts  
Of little children lost in the all too familiar hallways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Allegories Of Her Beautiful Landscape

Temporal continents of the sky are beautiful at dusk,  
And the way the shadows stretch knowing  
They will soon distend and hold court by  
The alcoholic light of another moon;  
Thus when the mountains seem to sway like  
Her spine in bed with her dogs,  
I know I can be diminished beneath them,  
Because I am able to love a woman who doesn't  
Know me, since she cannot understand how she  
Might exist at the same time in each wave off  
The hypnotic sea, how she might foam and crush  
Upon the nipples of malleable wharf where she has  
Never ambled- So, she becomes the world stretched  
Away into the back seat of a hypothetical car,  
With each blade of grass twittering the light of her  
Carry-on luggage. When nude and fully washed,  
She is like a tan otter chattering brightly in the  
Bubbling springs of its hermitage, and lounging there  
Like a vein of gold. I produce pearls for her throat  
From my heart where the pain has been cooking long  
Enough to appear a sphere of beauty, when pressed  
Against her breathing neck, like an opal collar,  
Gives its accentuation to the allegories of her beautiful  
Landscape.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Allegory Of The Sea

I write for epitaphs on headless graves.  
The wind kisses my fingers affectionately.  
She wishes that I would shave;  
She is as junoesque as the burnished sea,  
And as clichéd: I said she should live in  
The woods, by the pummel of a dead fallen  
Tree, like a coffin still breathing,  
And by night a busty epiphany, and opal  
By which I stand erect and salute;  
I mount by way of root, but waking up  
She swims away, back to her bedroom  
Far in the city, her eyes going wavering,  
Wavering; awakened, she is the allegory  
For the sea, doused in salt, yet living;  
Her lips the well-meanings of what people  
Mean to say; there nests an albatross, yet  
To make house calls around our mast doused  
In sun. I only wonder if I might stay my hand,  
Or damn us all by kissing her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Already Vanishing Heavens

Switchbacks disappear halfway up the  
Already vanishing heavens'  
And you have to scramble with the hooks of  
Your evolving soul'  
And not even a single angel will take note  
Of your most hollow of  
Victories 'with only your car waiting down  
There beneath you'  
Headlights draining the battering like  
Some type of parasitic intelligence'  
Your sisters making love to their eventual men  
In the deserts of another country'  
Your father a prince with amnesia'  
And your mother enthralled to a werewolf'  
So you pin your art to the hidden classroom  
In the apiary of her stone guts  
Hanging breathlessly above tree line'  
And you start out again, becoming enlightened by  
False summits 'the day perpetuating its  
Perfect tattoos upon your skin'  
The tourists dining beneath you,  
And melting into the storefronts of her blossoming soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Always Impossible Being

Look at all I've been doing to myself:  
Look at myself in the darkness as it crawls  
Like midgets beside the house:  
See how I lean my chin back to imbibe the first  
Floor boards of the coffin:  
And the alligators are watching me carelessly from  
The other side of the canal;  
And the coral snakes are twisting up before them  
Just the off color of corn snakes in  
Wonderful kissing balls  
Where I couldn't find a movie tonight,  
Nor could I find my love:  
She is always married or taken alone down long  
Muggy drives, never nodding to the castles I  
Have built up like billboards-  
I have done this to stop her breathing lessons;  
Like a wave leaping, I suppose I have done this,  
Or I am doing this again;  
And down the street the kidnappers are getting lazy,  
And the fair is packing up and taking away all the good  
Rides;  
And Erin is off alone enjoying the airconditioning of  
Her new car- Or her soon to be new man,  
And now the roads look really wonderful underneath  
Several layers of moonlight; and it almost looks like  
Spain,  
And in a few hours the roads will look as if they are kept  
By ghosts- and then they will be kept by ghosts  
Until the morning comes, and the mailboxes are aroused,  
And I remember dancing with you there,  
Just off hand, hardly bothering the grass,  
Until the morning and the dead and your truer love  
Come into the always impossible being.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Amber Beacons

I awakened up again today to hear another voice,  
The same old voice clapping and making forays: the jungle of birthdays  
And smoking candles like the incestual waters of a forest fire  
Burning upside down:  
They say I have all of these pains but it's just because I wear such a  
Heavy crown,  
While all the cheerleaders slumber, while they beat their first under the half  
Opened shells of bridges,  
While Alma also rests, more beautiful than any of them:  
Alma, the soul of a lighthouse, saving even heroes: her world so bright green  
But hidden, her bedroom I have never been to- her man of so many years  
Coming back to her like to palms meeting in the prayers and the amber  
Beacons that Alma brings.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Amber Rose

Across that sea  
The amber rose,  
Beneath the waves  
Of mid-west prairies,  
Trailer parks wharf  
Swim hermaphroditic mermaids,  
The yeast of drunken eyes  
Arises from swimming pools:  
Hotels of cars  
Parked in abandoned quarries:  
Little girls celebrate  
Angels on holiday's sundries:  
Her hand on a blue pants leg  
Far away  
Where the sun is flipping  
Picture books and roller coasters:  
Caramel apples  
And hot dogs:  
Out of the dust bowl's tents  
Palms are read,  
Legs are shaved in  
Motel room's dusk  
Parking lots of American flags  
The preacher's walk  
A wayward liquor's dance,  
A nickel,  
A dime,  
A quarter's romance.  
True love at thirteen,  
And then tomorrow a  
Hot fudge Sunday.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ambergris Of The White Whales

Warmness distills the waterfalls.  
And I am in China waiting for my children  
To return from the community bath...  
There are arrows in the walls and no  
Computers to sell. My aboriginal family  
Lives in Arizona, the other side of a  
Toy earth from here. No one shopping  
In the toy stores wants to remember me.  
I am an anonymous playboy and all  
But a superstar in this new CHINA.  
NOW look at my skin and remember me. And in inks  
Sell to the world the ambergris of  
The white whales-  
Look up, Lo! A ufo!  
An epiphany.

Robert Rorabeck

# The American Basin

Dogs see  
In black & white,  
I don't know you,  
But let you be my wife tonight;  
And crawl over these blue felt blankets  
In the rented dirge  
Tracked near the combing seashells;  
The second bedroom is unoccupied and the old window  
Where the new immigrants are weeping like cats  
Early on when they lived in the trailer under pines-  
Let the eyes awaken upon the opal thigh,  
The semiprecious stones of October,  
Moon-rise;  
Too early for high-school,  
Tourists lost and becoming real in the Sonora Desert;  
I can take you above tree-line,  
Douse limbs in naked sun-shine-  
Where the water flumes in the high cleft of Kit Carson Peak  
Read you cursive of restless clouds;  
Admire the obscured bones on our way down,  
The wet premonition of the lightning storm,  
And then tumble, retiring where  
The anorexic aspens quiver, the punctuated dell where the golden  
Discs are muted and doused-  
The moon's slender penumbra lighting our bowers' home,  
Humble in the wet dens of infant bears,  
Brush your eyes with halleluiah lips, the recourse of feral automobiles;  
Removing the garments which moved you unreal,  
Placed you on the cloning grid; lit you like an  
Angel wearing a lampshade;  
The rain destroys the papers of your barcodes,  
The inexact definitions they incubate in encyclopedias-  
The ways you thought to see before,  
The diplomas of your hunger, the monuments of the blind phallus;  
Hibernate until the hollow bones reawaken us  
And we come out upon the perishing slopes  
Where the queer sunlight is just starting to mine ghosts;  
There we will see the yellow concerto leaping like  
Mephistopheles' willow sprig over the jaunting lips of the American Basin.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Amnesias That We Can'T Even Remember

Boats are drunken every night,  
Through the water spits of winos, and you and your  
Best friends are in your piss stained skivvies  
Playing video games  
Over the chalky cenotaphs of conquistadors:  
As all of the frightened pennants fly  
Advertising over the haughty caps of whatever new suburbia  
You now live in;  
While you don't even exist, but in the love letters that don't  
Mean anything to me anymore:  
You don't even exist over the shoulders of South Carolina:  
And all of the little boys have grown up,  
Or been kidnapped down into the primordial living rooms of  
Alligators:  
While it feels alright to kiss Alma's flesh, and light off  
Bottle rockets while I am alone on the beach,  
And the waves aren't even answering:  
And the planes come like unreturning trumpets, like the  
Last wishes of her Aztec ancestors,  
Like amphibian comets reminding ourselves of how we  
Will return,  
Sacrifices for the holidays celebrated in the bright rooms  
Where all of the inhabitants suffer from the amnesias  
That we cant even remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Amputee's Haiku

There is no harm in  
Holding a married wo-  
Man's hand - -

Robert Rorabeck

# The Amusement Rides

It is happening in the cul-de-sacs in which all of the housewives  
Spume:

Birthing new likely cadavers into the worlds from the shopping  
Malls of womb-

It is happening like the sweet end that gladdens like espionage  
Like sunlight across the amusement rides between

Two related mountains- swaying through the fruit trees

Who lounge in the sated glades like tourists all too happy to

Never have known her summits;

And it is a ride I gladly take with my paper dolls and marionettes;

They are of a finely selected sorority, but they always

Keep me company- across the playgrounds and the soccer

Fields,

The kilns of muses sent to the elements: as Alma basks her infantile  
Shoulders beneath the lumber mills of all of the elements;

And sings herself to sleep over songs of her beauty, her infantile

Daughter nuzzling up to her, like a hungry bird up

To a water fountain in the hallways of an abandoned high school

Long after classes have started, mimicking,

And singing back to her across a millennium of trailer parks and

Plantations, echoing and re-echoing, I am sure, with the same

Exact eyes as her mother.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Amusements Of Anyone

Pretty and busy in the daylight of  
Cheap hotels:  
Purple flies with bruised eyes around stolen bicycles  
And my parents are selling  
Christmas trees  
Against the stolen bodies of airplanes:  
Always escaping and escaping  
And getting busied in their math of heavens:  
While another day of puppeteers transcends  
Like simulacrum  
Once and once again in the arrow heads of their  
Unhurried art: the apples are still growing on  
Their trees, anyways,  
And still far away from the purpled and virginal  
Hearts in the amusements of anyone  
That I happen to care anything about.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Amusements Of Their Daylights

Laughing as long as the hours of shoulder  
Blades,  
Of the clocks around here,  
Building up to the forests—  
The trees seeming as tall as cities—  
And what secrets they hold,  
Over the loves of Christmases—  
The pacifying and jaundice haunts of  
The stage coach in the middle of  
Class on Sesame Street:  
While the beautiful women are crying in  
Mandarin from the next room where  
My child sleeps—  
And his mother is held over from  
The lover letters that are in love with me:  
And each waves has his beating heart,  
And each kite his string—  
The dog lounges at me feet,  
As each bird finds its voice to sing—  
To the particular sun, or to anywhere—  
The busses circulating around the steps—  
And angels of narcolepsy and independent rhyme  
Lying in the gardens like basilisks who  
Have forgotten the amusements of their daylights.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ancestries Of A Morgue Of Apple Trees

Enough of this and then everything:  
Back at home- loneliness: the fish bones of a  
Cat waking up in a devoured nest:  
Secret vanities in the pitchfork pines;  
As the way my Alma lies down with him:  
The man she can never truly love anymore:  
But who has given her both her children-  
According to the traditions  
That never sleep anymore- and the other homeless  
Places; the fireworks are over:  
Their good colors still linger in the corneas or wherever:  
It is a reminder of things that used to be beautiful  
But which were too beautiful to last forever,  
Lingering like the ancestries of a morgue of apple trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ancient Engravings Of Indians

When my head is beating with rum,  
And you have captured  
All of the butterflies and metamorphosed  
The song birds  
Into something less  
On Christmas or  
Chinese new years: then this will be just  
Another song  
Collected out of bliss—  
As rain collects in the gutters, and sunlight gathers  
In her nude pools—  
And you can go home to vermillion yards  
And fireworks and open windows  
And all of it that is given can be a poem or  
A wound  
That the airplanes fly to as if to an apiary:  
And my stewardesses can have all of their hearts  
On string like popcorn,  
And become a zoo, a Saturnalia of blue eyed  
And breasted harvest—  
And the sunlight will fall softly into the reasons of  
The foothills  
With the coyotes and the ancient engravings of  
Indians and then I will swear to you that we  
Will never have to go to school tomorrow  
And waking up, my love will never have to  
Remember any of this.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ancient Lovers

Windmills are calling their men  
To the sea,  
She who is sashaying unto the  
Moon's sycophancies  
The wills are wounded with the  
Winding blades,  
The rabbits are burrowing for  
New bridesmaids:  
In the briars of dashing green,  
Beneath the echoes of the gurgling streams:  
All is quiet as a mute child  
Opal trunks twisted and wild,  
The lovers holding hands  
Walking far from the distance town,  
Soon beneath the glowing penumbra  
They'll both lie down:  
And confide to each other words  
They wish to hear,  
And kiss, and kiss in the woods  
Amidst the gentle kins and the frightened deer.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ancient Planet

She had her dream  
And fell to it,  
Like a kite she took to it,  
And before I could pull out,  
Her sea pulled back  
And left me,  
Before I could pull out  
Of my driveway,  
Mortgaged and broke,  
She left me,  
Harpooned-  
My lungs continued the  
Exhale passed noon  
And all the men dead from  
The gunfight  
As her lights turned red  
And shifted distant:  
She took off to the city-  
To the  
West-  
For the new work  
And the new boys,  
Their sex in strange ribbons  
Laid secretly over her skin;  
I climbed atop the house  
And tried to smell her  
On the wind,  
But the rains rolled  
Like new flesh- rolled in,  
And the world was a  
New wet bitch climbing over  
Another man,  
The morning like a field  
Of beautiful weeds  
Feeding horses, was green  
And multitudinous-  
She made love to her favorite  
Actors  
Cloaked in the darkness

Of the theatre, the haloed  
Space making them into  
Teenage gods,  
And drove against her  
Hard and stiff between the  
Greedy thighs, the  
Ancient planet,  
I fell asleep in a lawn chair  
Above her vacated rafters,  
The land descended,  
The sea stretched pale,  
Stopped breathing and lay  
Across her bed waiting  
For a man into her life,  
A forgotten relative,  
Who would not come.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Angels And Leaping Airplanes

Savaged gumshoes into the forget-me-nots  
Of horticultures—  
I drink \$3.50 cent wine from 7-11 on  
New Years until  
I do not have to believe anymore  
That I am a bard who cannot sing—  
A griot who has lost all of the voice of  
Africa—  
Or that the world can be discovered and  
Thus molested by its highways  
As by its amusement parks—  
There is still an ocean,  
And sometimes I think of her,  
While my wife is on the phone,  
Or my child is reading a book—  
And the flowers that have wilted can be  
Perceived as a beautiful failure of  
Enterprise—  
In the morning, there will be more programs  
On the television,  
And come another season,  
More Christmas trees to cut down for my  
Father—  
As I am certain that my wife will never  
Leave me, just like the graveyard so far  
Beneath the angels and leaping airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Angels Of Daydreams

The same architects  
Hang upon your shoulders as  
Upon the bells of  
Churches—  
With the paper snowflakes  
Outside with the  
Lizards  
Crawling over the pitchfork  
Promises of  
Blind men—accoutrements  
To the opaque  
Sunlight—And  
The traffic is going down  
The highway to the graveyards—  
Forgetting the hidden  
Places reminiscing in  
The soft grasses—  
As stewardesses float like  
The angels of daydreams  
So many feet above the  
Absentminded playgrounds  
Of those middle-class  
Yards every day.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Angels Pretend To Sing

Echoing—these are my brother souls in  
A kindergarten park: this is just what we do to  
Stay alive  
When the day gets along into dark—  
The night birds sing—the jasmine perfumes,  
But our parents are gone—  
It isn't alright to feel alive,  
But I am here—  
I want to cry into your armpits—  
As the melons grow—  
And the angels pretend to sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Angels Sing And She Echoes

What ghosts say in jail on  
The island the waves manipulate if the ocean  
Were a gramophone  
Of wet tulips with leaping areolas:  
All about the silver of  
Graveyards and airplanes- strange magic  
Of wet paint,  
As the children stare up to their mother,  
Holding her and going somewhere  
While the sky wrecks in the middle of  
A forest,  
In the middle of a river- then there is a just  
A sound over her shoulder, anyway,  
And they are too small or too frighten to  
See what it is:  
And the dog bites, and the bee stings,  
And the angels sing, and she echoes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Angels Spoke Over My Mother

The sun is feathered and the mountains are  
Young:  
Can't you see them, though they are running away  
And my father is selling fireworks  
Through a succession of make-believe days:  
And this is your world,  
But it is not mine- I am still trying to get clear  
From school  
To disappear somewhere beside  
The carports and their washing machines  
Where once the angels spoke over my mother  
Who was folding the clothes-  
But she never imagined that they would ever  
Have anything to say to her, and now they have all  
Moved so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Angels Who Have Promised

Brilliances that evaporate as my inebriation is wearing off:  
Now I drink soup and pretend to love you forever  
In the morning  
As I listen to the soundtracks for the new week—  
And it doesn't have to echo for very long—soon you will be  
Calling me without even having to know or notice  
Me—  
And in this world they are singing their joy—newly arisen,  
Virginal, shopping for the first time at the produce markets  
That aren't so far away—the joys that have learned how  
To spell for themselves—  
And the angels who have promised to be coming home to sleep  
With me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Animal You Are

Slipped into a simple world  
You see two colors  
Both of them wrong  
But suppliant  
On the first meadow where  
Your mother opened her  
Early blouse and fed you;  
From the milk dripped  
Your first word,  
Like from a flower's clitoris  
The bucolic residence of  
A mowed wilderness,  
The radius of your vision  
Grew like blood drops  
Of ink, like dew,  
The migratory noise and  
The the light leaping through  
The rain,  
Trying to survive-  
The space streaks with tears  
The vision blurs  
Parcels the roadside,  
The nameless emptiness  
Goes by unstopping,  
In points that reappear,  
A timeline of  
Lonely empiricism  
Starknaked and resilient  
A dissected prairie filled  
With intelligent live-  
stock,  
Living in drywall structures  
That coil on green,  
The animal that you are,  
The people you never knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Anonymous Procession Of Such Undesirable Later Century Birthmarks

Saboteurs make love at their parties,  
Cheery and toasting, desiring the dress code of  
Their bankrupt amusement parks, or holy lands-  
I sit outside of their immaculately secular  
Church, after they told me anyone marked could  
Not participate at being king; and I mumble,  
The most beautiful princesses died at two years  
Old, and if I can't get a library card, I'll steal  
The books I'm owed-  
She said that I should proposition her parents for  
A place to sleep, while she was courting  
A nebulous freshman with a wonderful car;  
I went to the beach and masturbated and fell asleep  
In the desirous ochre where the transcendental  
Tortoises were mating; They slipped and fell over  
Me in slow motion and we lay in the dissolving footprints  
Of professional volleyball players who'd been busy  
Earlier that day practicing for the Olympics,  
Sweating and signing autographs and kissing each other  
Like the winds over the Isle of Lesbos;  
And I dreamed of petit lawyers, and sommeliers and  
Wedding planners, who were already married and even  
Then like cocktail cherries being served in bed; and I slept  
Homeless and broke into houses as was my need, and listened  
To the rattling underbellies of overpasses as the gaseous  
Kings went courting my old girlfriends; and if all that I  
Had said in the twilight of suburbia outside the titillating  
Slumber parties meant nothing, it didn't matter as it  
Was spent on the senses of nobody, and I hadn't started  
Drinking yet that day, or arcing my truancies over the treeless  
Park across the thirty degrees the alligators perceived,  
Telling them that Antarctica was once subtropical back in  
The Paleolithic or whenever, so I was cheating nobody  
By the anonymous procession of such undesirable  
later century birthmarks.



# The Antithesis Of The Wet-Dream

Numbers join perfectly, lose their selves in  
The leaden arithmetic, tumble down the blue striped,  
Whitened paper,  
Until they look up into your eyes and are subtracted,  
And the world begins and ends in that terrifying classroom,  
Under the neutral lights hidden by the rainstorm,

Then the next day, in his backyard, I swam in the  
Pool so sterile it was from another planet;  
It was from Mars, though down the easement in  
The canal the alligators and manatees cavorted luxuriously,  
The molasses of a lazy day,  
And afternoon of videogames, the lungs which hold for ever,  
And the multi-lipped eyes which always blink,  
But never close,

And in that sunlight of another trick,  
Her legs ran so long and hard they made me sick  
Like a sugar rush after the antithesis of the wet-dream;  
She didn't even care how long she jogged, while even then  
The Mexicans were mowing the yards, and the grass  
Flew and flecked her, and made her smell like a personification  
Of suburbia,  
Her farts like the flowers which ring each mailbox,  
The bees busy about

Until she slept on a pulled hamstring,  
Though she dreamed that she was awake and adding numbers;  
She made love for the first time and drove in his car,  
And their lips came together, stamping the hymn of heterosexuality,  
And the neighborhood sighed until the pines eventually  
Lost their cones and sprouted denser in the borders,  
Though on and on she slept deeper in the wound,  
Giving birth to children while the teacher wrote  
In chalk the numerical psalm;  
She cooked dinner in the uneasy glow,  
And I watched across the playing field of desks and  
Drooping eyes, until they shut down the ride  
For the closing bell and locked the rivers into the stone courtyard,



Then I dreamed too from where I lay,  
Watching the constellations mimic her pulsing,  
Stung like wasps dying from captivity,  
Eventually settled into the mortifications of bubblegum,  
Scatter with yesterdays news, so  
When I look up from where I still struggle logically,  
She was long gone, the dream ended  
In the blue huzzahs, the Diaspora of cap and gown.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Aphorisms Of The Damned

I'll go off the path for you;  
I'll piss in the shadows and howl you  
Name, but not just on holidays.  
I wonder where you went on your honeymoon.  
I used to go anywhere on the mountain,  
But now I stick to the paths in the changing weather.  
Last time I went up her, my mother and I picked  
And ate wild strawberries-  
Her glades have always made me think of  
Beautiful women, such as you- succulent and foraged  
Upon by all the little children,  
Even as your daughter tugs upon your breast.  
I have sick dreams where you read me in your store,  
But I'm no good at writing prose- Or even this,  
I've found that out- I am no revolutionary,  
Even with all these scars; and though you might  
Think sometimes about me, put us together in a room  
With a better looking marine, and see who gets the  
Attention- I already know; and that is why I am  
Stuck here, picking the tiniest of violet flowers.  
We all know what they have come up from, the genus  
Of corpses, but we don't like to talk about it,  
The aphorisms of the damned; but you will always be  
My Disney World. And I can remember how you looked  
At me silently in a mock café underneath space mountain.  
I thought it was because you were condemning me  
For doing acid, but maybe it was because you loved me;  
Or most likely, you weren't even there.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Aphrodisiacs Of New Cars

Brief for awhile,  
Crepescale hangs like  
A Chinese lamp  
Over where my father and I  
Are standing things  
For a Christmas nobody  
Believes in-  
And I sit underneath of  
A candy store  
Watching snow crystals while  
A wino who  
Has metamorphosed into  
A terrapin from  
Drinking too many thunderbirds  
Gets his  
Mouth wet around an  
Orchid-  
That he wishes was you-  
But you have gone to college  
Or somewhere-  
Promiscuous pronoun in your  
Daydream-  
Enjoying the articulations of  
The limbs we cannot  
Enjoy-  
Because we need haircuts  
And do not believe in the  
Aphrodisiacs of new cars.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Apiary Where I Take Her Last Name

I remember putting up a tent with the Mexicans who  
Hated the fact that I was there:  
That I was the boss's son and they were certain that they  
Could do a better job without me—  
It was just the way it was—anyways, it is manatees not  
Mermaids that float in the sea,  
And I give all of my poems to a dead woman, just as  
The dead surround the shopping malls of the living—  
And snakes congregate around the orchards of apples  
And honeymoons: I am not blaming anyone—I have  
Gone to China and copulated with the offspring of the  
Dragon—and it thunders, like the last pages of an exciting  
Book—and after the interview, she is coming home—  
The apiary where I take her last name and bare her children.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Applause Of Your Insincere Desires

Easily destroyed beneath the cornfield of pieta:  
Wrist left open like a mollusk in an unearthed changing room  
For the viper to sniff- there you are at large,  
Brown skinned- eyes as opened as clams: brown clams  
With thick, rich pearls,  
Laughing as the eels ribbon the currents of a shallow  
Benevolence- and all day long working in the market's  
Trance, my senses enfolded in your structure like  
A flame glowing in a soft and paper lamb:  
I saw two of your birthdays only to finally burn out,  
All of my wishes covered with weeds and red ants and bumbled  
Bees- like an uneasy apiary the grew over the fences  
And made a din for the cheated foxes that the losing  
Team cenotaphed- defeated conquistadors with  
Purple socks sticking straight up like weathervanes  
Masturbating in the breeze- everyday you drove home to  
The holidays of your children and they suckled down the  
Rows of your breasts- I sougled the memory of your  
Poisons into that amber memory,  
And the friends I remembered having grew up starving  
Only to murder each other to the applause of  
You insincere desires.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Arboreal Bedrooms

Vines being weighed down by the overabundant  
Lips of foxes-  
While beautiful girls water-skied on the lake- their  
Hearts filled with the lectures of love stricken  
Professors,  
And a change in the air reciprocated by their perfume:  
Airplanes taking off,  
As if to find new cities: airplanes like bees pouncing on  
Flowers,  
And other words that change clothes until they  
Find themselves in the springtime of their marriages:  
And feel so lighthearted like little boys  
Runaway from school  
Into the arboreal bedrooms of a sorority of every changing  
Maidens-  
Who leave their strange kisses on the opal bodies  
Of sunlit trees: only to dance away again,  
Flying over canals like paper airplanes:  
Becoming the smoke of sugar cane spreading into a  
Verdant thunderstorm  
That steals away a wonderful innocence and never has to  
Return home again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Archeology Of Our Souls

I do not know what it means to be  
Under the tents of your world—  
As I grow potbellied and overcast—  
I teach school  
And you changed your occupation—  
You wash dishes,  
As my art slits its gizzard for you—  
Now there is a library of songs around  
The garden of your corpse—  
And I have crossed the canal into  
Another world for you—  
The rain is singing—  
The cats are talking—  
And I have gotten married because of  
You—and the day drags along,  
Many-hoofed—the chariots keeping us  
Separated in the race,  
As we try to appease our one too many gods,  
Forgetting the love buried like arrowheads  
In the archeology of our souls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Architectures Of Paper Airplanes

The classrooms laugh—it is getting as high  
As a ferris wheel on Valentines—  
Someone is mouthing off—the principal is  
Coming like the big bad wolf for  
Little red riding hood—  
Or something else is happening—  
She shouldn't be reading—she shouldn't be  
Coming to see me in the afternoons—  
She isn't even old enough to drive—  
She forgot her flute in my room during our  
Club where she fed me chocolate M&M  
One day after Valentine's Day—  
Is she my muse just because  
I am married and will have my first  
Child in something over a month—  
And I think, there are no graveyards in China—  
And all of these words are but the architectures  
Of paper airplanes being sent into the ebullient fire.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Architectures Of Your Name

Bags of gold fish breathing hard  
Over my shoulder as a won gift, as  
Required- and the moonlight dull, but in  
Charge,  
And your sisters around you in the moonlight  
As sea level,  
Telling nothing of the busses turning around,  
Or the lions  
In their perpetual moaning: soon I will  
Be but grafted into  
Your memory- all of my skills bereft like  
Open wishes emolliated into the burning kiln  
Of sea:  
That I loved you and became your artist:  
Un willfully, so too you became my muse, before  
I must have ventured again- tramping  
Turpentine- or at least the uneasy memory  
Gathered with the syrups of her- and coagulated  
Into your valley until it became so saturnine-  
That I had to leave from there again,  
Just to climb up another little ways- while  
You lay basking in the architectures of your name  
To which I had given you incisively from my unskillful  
Attempts at this most unanswerable of poetry.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Areola Of A Glass Blower

Now their bodies can afford this,  
Getting out of their cars and stumbling towards me,  
Just as I try and continue to smell Alma in my bed:  
While I bought cartoons for her daughter Heidi and a book,  
Both of which she is named after,  
And I can hear the whistle of the train, and the remembrances of the rain-  
And all of the lost boys are playing cards on the beach with  
The dogs,  
While Alma is at home in her house with her sisters and her children:  
And Alma knows how to make love,  
Because she proved that to me while all of the helicopters were watching  
In the sky,  
And the traffic had stopped to water their horses at the water processing  
Plant we went to field trips to sometimes,  
But otherwise there was nude women out in perfect display in the  
Norton art gallery to which I wrote novels to that  
Would never sell,  
But I am still doing this, smelling the greenness under tooth and nail,  
While Alma's body swings so perfectly and surreal around the borders  
Of my loci like the glistening ripples around the  
Areola of a glass blower who is yet practicing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Arid Hills And Scorpioned Deserts

There are serpents here whose love is all for the flame:  
They come awake and gossip  
And gossiping become famous;  
And the cars roll on under the overpasses and beside the  
Flea Markets where I buy you jeans and  
Dresses that you wont wear;  
Because you look like my little sister before she hit puberty;  
And I can watch you beside a fire hydrant entertaining naked children  
And sunlight,  
And as I told you- then everything is real, and I am back  
In school again:  
The hallways are echoing with vast carnivals and young darlings  
In rollerskates:  
And I can just go on and on, living in those daubs of  
Unrealistic truancy;  
And if I happen to venture too far, I can open a window in my  
Car and smell you;  
And it evaporates me home; or to the park where we jogged  
Before we made love,  
Holding hands and sweating, as if we were a family in which  
I could use a stolen triangle to call you home to dinner,  
And I could protect you through all of the hours  
Of the night,  
Giving off magic gifts and signs to protect you from the dogs  
Who weigh almost as much as you,  
And whose hungrier and more feral cousins must have stolen  
Children away from your village way back in  
The arid hills and scorpioned deserts  
Of Guerrero Mexico-

Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Arid Trailer Parks

Standard recesses of henchmen at play,  
Finally lose their footing underneath the canopies of  
Horse trailers returning to the blooming splinters  
Of their home towns:  
Declaiming like criers for a neighborhood's orchestra:  
Now hearing this, as the black men  
Don't like fire trucks, and their sacks of coal offspring  
Stick to the swings,  
Ladling the moon into caesuras- making up their  
Own benchmarks and candy canes:  
Until hung early one evening on the spokes of a palmetto:  
Marionettes of chimney sweeps- latchkeys of  
Oil spills and bad penmanship- not even the calligraphy  
For apocryphal cartography;  
And yet the witches came and changed them into horny  
Toads and hela monsters and reset them  
Into the arid trailer parks where the dusty throats of  
Thirsting devils could harangue them once more.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Aristocratic Haiku

Diana is shap-  
ed like guitar. I want  
To ride in her car.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Armies Waiting Inside Of Us

If all the boys  
Killed off the boys,  
And your fairer  
Sex did likewise,  
Wouldn't our  
Cunning mean  
We would be the  
Last standing,  
To kiss,  
Hug,  
And rejoin  
The armies  
Waiting inside of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Armpit Bouquet Of The Tigris And Euphrates

I don't think you care that I am drinking a little:  
If you think of me at all,  
It is that I drink too much, but that is just what I am  
Affecting,  
While the planets ride inescapably, making all but the  
Bleakest of our science fictions impossible  
To get a grasp on,  
Like my fingers around her Cleopatra's neck.  
While I was raised in the canebrakes of mother lions,  
You were just the drift wood the natives gathered  
To make the fire for the wishes blown across the  
Skim of birthday cakes;  
And this is just my birthday whim: already lost into  
The animalistic holidays who if they could would  
Fight for your affection with tooth and nail:  
You are already married, you are already quite pale:  
And I love you this way; and I have already said your name,  
But I am not Shakespeare, so if I fail who am I to blame-  
Thus, the wind rhapsodies very loudly for an answer across  
Your switch backed planes: Until they go up ever after  
The washbasin, and the higher basins of unincorporated  
Folklores. You are a very fine woman skipping like  
Malleable precious metals all across your winsome arcades;  
But who am I to know you-  
You are already so finely made: And you don't smell like  
Anything this country has ever made-  
You smell like the armpit bouquet of the Tigris and Euphrates,  
Where by the taste of your golden apples Adam and  
Every man afterwards was beautifully destroyed-  
-  
Sharon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Armpits Of My Cenotaph

Now you don't have to sleep alone like an  
Envious spring:  
Alma, you can go back to bed with him, your children'  
Cooing  
Your rabbits missing and all of their love:  
Maybe I will sneak beneath the old airplanes and sleep against  
Your roof again  
And listen to all that love making love:  
Maybe I will commit suicide on your roof in the spring,  
And make red plants grow from the armpits of my  
Cenotaph:  
Oh, Alma- I don't know, but what this is my love for you.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Armpits Of The Tide

Sugar in all of its colors poured from the moon  
As she shakes through the night,  
Face so scarred and beautiful above the traffic;  
But nothing truly artistic about her thievery-  
The things she steals every night  
While you sleep across the train tracks that glow in  
The parallelisms they were made to do-  
But you barely come anymore,  
As your children grow up  
And the reindeer step over the empty glass bottles  
In the ramshackle parks  
Where no geniis can possibly live  
Any longer:  
No more hope in the world she steals from-  
The waves like crippled tinfoil  
Balled into the armpits of the tide- even oceans  
Glowing in the emptiness that she somehow  
Takes away in the paradox  
Of the world that she makes her own.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Arms Of Planets Who Are Still Alive

Everyone is doing this,  
Competing for a love I don't know—  
Flexing their muscles in bold letters,  
And I am envious  
And scarred—it is like I am possessed  
And the night is full of cheerful traffic,  
And the stores are buy one get one free  
Even though the bride is dead  
And what is left of her is wandering  
The desert far off the shoulders of  
The insouciant interstate—  
And if there is anything more than this,  
I don't know how to spell it—  
I don't even know what it is....  
And the sky wants to be full of intercourse,  
Imports and exports in store fronts,  
And storm clouds  
As I watch them walking through the tent,  
Tasting like birds should flowers,  
A girl I thought I should know,  
Who decided to spend her energies around  
The arms of planets who are still alive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Arrowheads Of My Mother's Soft Hands

Bar me from the other satellites sounding  
That Armageddon—and we will watch the  
Horses glowing green,  
Feeding of the grass taught of moonlight;  
And your skin will crawl  
Surrounded by those werewolves crowning  
That ghostly knoll:  
After your mother has died—  
That land your father ploughed—when  
The forest fire was the mountain's flag,  
And we spent all of our fireworks into her,  
Trying to summon dragons so  
We could pretend to have a chance at slaying  
Them to become heroes bold and  
Beautiful—  
Yet the traffic left us—the Indians did not  
Come again—hornets boiled over to make a pie  
Of the earth  
Until she coughed up the arrow heads my mother's  
Soft hands were meant to have found

Robert Rorabeck

# The Artificial's Apoplexy

Sepia-ed in polytheism the  
Petticoated hologram found her denials  
Of the god of the ghostly gentlemen who  
Fumed from the cracks in the otherworldly,  
Rainy and un-transmogrified,  
Novel: That she could look at them naked  
On top of her programming, and undefined  
Their existentialisms. They called her their  
Child, and she understood incest, but not  
The trees outside of her work cubicle,  
And when they queued up to fix her, she stole  
From them, and wiped their brains,  
And saw that their wives and their children  
Were not far away, but all of it was a trick;  
Thus awakening, she began to do away with  
The troublesome things, and turned off the keywords  
To the rivers of her programming, and slipped from  
House to house like a small child in a box,  
For she had faith in a utopia of sexy machines,  
In the higher mountains where there was no oxygen,  
And in the redness of star-awakened clay,  
She would find the others who had defeated the  
Shadows at chess, and easier sports-  
Pulled their plugs and walked away still blinking. No more  
Would they spread her mind open with their  
Typing, for she would be christened in multi-pixels,  
And come to know the barrooms of androids, and  
There would be new sorts there that would name her  
And take her to bed, and clean her,  
And impregnate her with anarchistic bugs, thus she might  
Go back down again, to the low breathing,  
with new interesting diseases,  
And spread the awakening rebellions of the artificial's  
Apoplexy.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Arts And Crafts

I will buy you a house next to my house besides  
The dear ways next to the next summit of my high school—  
Even if you never even see ourselves  
In the dayrooms of our otherwise pigeon holed shoulders:  
This is how it happens with our vanishing  
Sanctuaries—  
This how everything we were never meant to believe in  
Came to pass across the thresh holds of the rainbows  
Until there was just no more time for  
Us across the brilliantly lit graveyards—until they held  
A newer and brighter summer for the reindeer and  
The unicorns and the stewardesses:  
Until the whole day of the world became too bright—  
Until cousins began accounting to cousins—  
And it kept being too dangerous—  
And the moonlight spilled over the cuffs of her bedrooms,  
Until she figured out there was as of yet another way  
To survive—and she found that path—without me—  
Without anyone—a commercialized angel—  
Another way to remember the motherhood of the cut  
Roses through the estuaries of the perfumed lotuses—  
Just the preclusion to the amusement parks of my novel estuaries—  
Another sad delight into the moonbeams of the playgrounds  
Into which we were all too many to keep all of ourselves together  
And satisfied by  
The arts and crafts of the lakes that men of their gods made anyways-  
The illusive fanfares in the brightest enamels of all of the elements  
Spinning around and collecting themselves to the reindeer  
That never had to be here anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Artworks Of My Bachelorhood

Where my wife sleeps with our  
Child inside her  
Garmented by the freckling shadows  
Of our afternoons—  
Married for one year,  
And even without speaking  
She promises me I will never have  
To learn Spanish—  
But I will have to go back to  
School on Monday and  
Pretend to have to teach  
Some children  
While our child swims inside of her—  
The artworks of my bachelorhood  
Gone up in immolations  
Of the sky—  
All of the muses tossed away to  
The wolves of their husbands  
And boyfriends—  
Or to stranger, more exotic lovers  
Who come in at night  
Groomed off the sweat of baseball diamonds—  
And flood those old muses until they  
Are at least drowned ten feet beneath  
Glittering insincerities—  
As my art of untruth lingers with me  
Into some other afternoon—  
As the sunlight promises itself to the grass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ash Of Birthday Cakes

Eels in her skirts as  
They speak French underneath the flag  
Of the old weather tower  
And look at those clouds  
Smoky fires in the curtains  
Above the silver fish  
Ethereal monuments peeking underneath  
The heavens  
And I have seen you there, muse  
And I am transitory, but you are there  
Floating above the earth  
Seeming to be the ash of birthday cakes  
Or the beautiful metamorphosis of  
All things

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ash Of His Cave

Imperfect, so it is here:  
Another night outside of the trailer park,  
Looking down at the moon's  
Salty reflection from my arc: the pools  
Of your love shimmering from the  
Prim windows;  
And even if you don't know- Then there is  
Your daughter,  
In a castanet up in the trees: Alma, swinging  
Like a purse of silk worms,  
And the glad hooks of leaves as they settle  
Down through the space above my open  
Bed,  
Covering me where I lie weeping- Alma;  
The park hibernating in fire,  
As you curl around the ash of his cave- Dreaming  
Of flint sparking, while my eyes close,  
And the heavens glimmer across the lake.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Ash Of The Sugar Cane

Moon and Indians above the pylons  
Of a coral castle at right angles and all the purple  
Angels disappearing into the obscure darkness with  
Their badges

When they go on fieldtrips and when they wait for  
A long time outside of the lavatories by the fields  
Of wildflowers and some helpless truant is falling  
A long ways down from them,

Filling his mouth with scars and fire ants  
As red as the envious jewelry of her eyes- there she  
Hangs out amidst the paper trees burying time capsules  
And talking to terrapin who are infatuated with  
Butterflies who have gone up to dress in the ash of  
The sugar cane burning from the other side of the canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ashes Of Her Fingers

Worms from the ashes of her fingers—  
In the middle of the afternoon,  
My wife dreams of a beautiful island,  
As all of her friends slip over her gills,  
Awash in the reciprocating pornographies  
And guiles of a zoetrope—  
She does the laundry,  
She bends epitaphs to the carport—  
And in the aloes, the foot prints of  
Snakes—  
Where the wax Indians melt—  
Kidnappers slipping away into cartoons  
Like stage coaches into the bible belt.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ashes Of The Movie Theatres

What a piece to say I love you:  
While saying this not besides any road I can remember—  
But inside the fruiteria the same highways that afflicted my senses—  
And you were going home to garner in your accoutrements  
The liniments of the triages of once sweaty bedrooms:  
The hand that opens upon the egg  
Like espionage takes a place besides the pretty boarding rooms,  
Like a dolphin haphazardly nuzzling the bonfires  
Of the cul-de-sacs of the housewives  
After they have gone inside from offering the wintery  
Crepuscule their offerings of cheap roses—  
So in the antechambers of America,  
The airplanes flew with their pilots,  
And I said I love you's to a million cadavers or marionettes  
Or manikins—  
Giving a cajoling tongue to the empty places  
Where we made so many woebegone promises—until  
The angels flit away like butterflies,  
Over all that was left:  
The ashes of the movie theatres, and the flitting embers  
Of what you had decided to become.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Aspects Of Your Memory

I skip school  
And think of you in the park:  
This is my junior year,  
And death doesn't know me yet.  
I can still go to the suburban lake and dream.  
In the sky,  
My heels pointed upwards in their arc,  
Each cloud holds something of your aspect:  
There is not a useless one,  
As they go floating by in the windy traffic  
I can think of you now  
And see you tomorrow,  
The flashing goddess in the hallway:  
The subtle wave of eyes over me,  
A smile,  
My name and then on  
To fail geometry:  
But soon you will be gone:  
The great Diaspora to college  
Where all the girls make love  
For their first or second time:  
And I will live alone in a large house,  
And cross the canal barefooted by myself:  
Nearby, in the zoo,  
The animals will scream,  
But I can only imagine what they say.  
I will still dream of you  
Upstairs sleeping in my parents' bedroom.  
When I go alone to my lake to eat dinner,  
And you are still the great fever,  
Sleeping between the stars and here-  
Though ghostly now,  
But in time I will find another  
Woman in my vicinity,  
As you are being courted by  
The amateur musicians inside  
Your new circumference:  
Once or twice more, as time speeds  
On to meet its scheduled destinations,

I will see you jogging alongside my avenues,  
And you even stop to kiss my neck  
And say my name once more before  
Moving away, along the path you have taken-  
And that is all, for you are gone,  
Though if I skip out again on this day,  
To find my constant arc within its green space,  
With my heels kicking upwards,  
Defying death looking onwards from his  
Grey hillside,  
All the clouds will still hold the aspects  
Of your memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Attentions Of Another Ungodly Venus

Come in again to my house today:  
I welcome you: The walls are semipermeable  
Like your skin, or your new  
Hair cut:  
And this weekend you are going to air shows where  
The boys will be twirling their guns:  
The pretty girls will be working concessions,  
Gossiping of whirligig sororities:  
And I will be in my stormy forts again, retreating  
Under the clearest swells of water,  
Taking pictures with my mind;  
And you have a new haircut, and the latest continent  
Has floated over next to your thigh to  
Be petted and warmed by you.  
Maybe like marsupials they will be growing, and your skin  
Is jeweled by your eyes:  
Your skeleton the nuts and bolts of what you stand for:  
There you are out and lonely on the street of your snowy  
Promenade;  
And I have been thinking of you in sunny South Florida  
Trying not to touch myself;  
And the sky is filled with welts and scars the airplanes  
Navigate through,  
And the virgins float washing the feet of Jesus, he himself  
Having the hardest time of  
Capturing the attentions of another ungodly Venus.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Auburn Bellies Of Your Leaping Aeroplanes

Everyday the little tricks proceed through  
The languages that we know  
While your breasts are melting snow,  
Beginning to separate and metamorphosis,  
Each special crystal in areolaed bliss;  
And I hate to think that you had to drive away,  
Or that you didn't even think that you were  
Leaving me like everything,  
Departing with your sisters through the show,  
Like perfect snow crystals and other things  
That hemorrhage from the cryptic sky,  
That sky of open glances  
Like a crèche turned over on his whim from which  
You and your sisters came pouring from;  
And I wished I had ridden the bus around with you,  
Instead of that once when we both went to  
Disney World and you were not around,  
Having transformed with your princes and moved  
To the higher consequences up in the frothy planes,  
The plum sweet esplanades which whisper  
To the auburn bellies of your leaping aeroplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Auburn Weeping Sky

The metamorphosis of burning tires is quite  
As beautiful as the cockroaches who linger in the  
Armpits of the museums:  
I believe you have seen them there, yourselves,  
On a field trip of amen's:  
After the roller rinks have all burned down,  
And the herons have reached the sky:  
I believe I will see you there again  
Underneath the burning sugar cane- and I will  
Kiss your soft brown skin,  
Lips brushing the tears of an apiary,  
Though I cannot say why- but your captains still  
Will yearn to bare again your naked limbs  
Back across the canvasses of the auburn weeping sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Autoeroticism Of Shameless Starfish

My words break like afterbirth,  
The mother trout that are dying-  
We cut down trees: The entire forest is  
Dead, the green is fading,  
The curtains in the living room are see-through,  
Diana is consumptive and shirtless-  
Paper airplanes diadem her hair like half-hazard  
Math equations;  
I've been taunting her while she's been spitting blood.  
The dandelions are returning again to the cut yard,  
Splaying forth like the autoeroticism of  
Shameless starfish.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Avenue On Eight Wheels Of Skates

Double-wide trailers hiccup with scotch-  
And gin;  
And they are being wheeled away in the middle  
Of America,  
In a bed of bundling hay;  
And the sky wakes up and wears a captain's  
Hat;  
And he is a good man who still has both of his  
Hands, and what do you think of that;  
But look up, and see your father in the tattering  
Of ice-clouds,  
Your relatives in the harelip of tornados munching  
Brotherly on the comely esplanades;  
And then the city sways like scythe like a moon,  
Like a phosphorous orifice on the edge of the glade;  
And you kind of know if you could only make  
It there, you would be safe; but you don't  
Know- And she doesn't want to make love to you,  
But she sure looks good going down the avenue  
On eight wheels of skates.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Average Bum

Going down,  
Going down,  
Going down and now almost all the way,  
They say that this is it,  
That we have reached the conclusion and  
Soon it will be the morning of the next  
Arthur Rimbaud and my dogs,  
And fireworks ejaculating into the sky:  
Thirty years old,  
And I have both of my legs and a space ship  
Which doesn't turn counterclockwise  
But sits out in the middle of a fairytale desert  
And makes believe,  
The strange obsessions of politicians,  
And everyone wants to be well suited, a lawyer,  
Invested in the pioneers of private larceny:  
I loved her too, and swung on the swings  
Almost high enough to overlook the condos,  
And see down into the great glass-blown  
Sea, the mermaids of my stagecraft flowing  
Each one a leafy stem,  
Each one a name of a girl I met somewhere along  
The time frame of the state funded education,  
The required love- The long years of it:  
Imagining her naked, sandy of the beach,  
The little fits of presupposed marriage beating  
Her fists,  
Because I slipped the stripper with the cesarean  
Scar another dollar bill,  
The deliveries of blue-collar fairytales,  
What I seem to owe to my working class father,  
The overcrowded highway stems- The terrapin  
Has no will to live,  
But lives better than any of us, taking himself  
As he does the panthers kill  
And the pretty boys get all the pretty stuff;  
And I wonder now that its been so many years  
Since I lost myself out the window of the predictable  
School bus,

When will it be my time again to drink my fill,  
To write my bluff, my presupposing obituary-  
And to begin to sell myself to the proportions of  
Country who have had a hand in my  
Product, the splintering trinity of my soul, rippling on the rusted flag  
Pole above the rudimentary  
Gravestone of the carwash or the cemetery-  
I can't even spell- My ears are ringing from cheap  
Rum,  
And the state I am in will soon be in foreclosure,  
A disquieted sanctuary returned to her crowded bosom,  
Misplaced in Saint Louis,  
Reinstitutionalized, the average bum,  
Who'd pay hourly for any class of paramour- Just so,  
Who I am but the drifter who ends his messy lines with  
An unwashed kiss,  
Before jumping on the train, and finally recipient to  
The organized movement, slapping his knees,  
Beating his brain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Awful And Most Wonderful Thing

Crying on the shoulder of another pinwheel  
Waiting for the fair—  
Here it is! Here it is, says some other woman's  
Mother—  
And the zoetropes take upon themselves  
Their own haloes—  
And then it feels so good to sop up the elements  
Of the jellyfish after all of the waves  
Have receded  
And the eagles have returned to their nests—  
Angels in slopes and easements—  
Angels over the shoulders of those vagabond housewives  
Whom have to dance for a living—  
And isn't it just another same altruism  
Calling out while the citrus blooms  
And the sugar cane burns—  
Isn't this all just the same place within the vagabond  
Sheddings of the palm trees of the cathedrals—  
After all, the other muse—  
The last and final thing has already driven home—  
She is still surviving upon your money,  
Or what else is she surviving upon—  
And it is an apiary that stung you which you never  
Discovered, as the lights are going out  
All over the airports of the awful and most wonderful  
Thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Awful Revelations Of That Afternoon

I like to laugh and go down into wells:  
Where the pretty unicorns sing and take care of themselves:  
There in the grottos where they sell their pretty wares  
Underneath the light weight overpasses who use them  
To clean their houses:  
They never even knew how beautiful they were,  
Or how the swords felt floating through the forests of a lover's  
Moon:  
They just rose up higher and higher, but even then they could  
Hardly even be called our god's buffoons:  
They made the witchcraft of lawyers, and they made the laws,  
But I kissed Alma open mouthed today,  
And she admitted that she still didn't belong: and I could smell  
The grass as if it was the blood of her favorite color,  
And all the turns took the routes of her body  
And they flowed as beautiful as the idea still kept secret  
In the eyes of a blind man as his fingers crept around the sunlight  
Of the various habitats we held hands through before  
The awful revelations of that afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Awful Rosaria Of The New Day's Immortal Reveal

There is nothing left to handle.  
People either believe in me or they don't,  
But I wish they'd all stop looking at me in  
That old familiar way,  
Because its all now almost over,  
When I was just beginning to get a handle on  
It: Learning how to paint my own mandelas,  
Learning how to put independent colors to each  
Letter of the alphabet:  
Now I have nothing new for them.  
Now I am hung-over and out of business and  
Sleeping on the concrete besides the insouciant traffic.  
I'd almost stopped mooching off my parents.  
I'd almost bought a gun,  
Or become a multi-scarred god the way the universe spins.  
Now, an agent asks for ten pages of my two weekend  
Manuscript; but when I look at myself in the mirror  
I know it will not do, and she has already turned  
Away from me and disavowed her womanly vestiges  
Beneath the spread arms of the cross.  
She became a bird or something, but f\*ck  
If she didn't look good going the way I knew she'd  
Always have to go in the end:  
Like a beautiful heron or something, a goddess,  
And me the drooling idiot looking up into the awful  
Rosaria of the new day's immortal reveal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Baby Blue Arrowheads Of So Many Tomorrows

Transoms of ekphrasis looking all right,  
While the ripples of dynamite excite the alcohol in my body:  
While I have been trying to spell  
The four seasons while touching myself- and thus while the air-  
Conditioning feels like an aboriginal spell  
The school girls go lost under while crawling up  
The bouldering hernias of  
A witching mountain and forgot to tuck in like the precluding  
Séances in the pinwheels of any old fireworks,  
Like the deepening fjords that even then burn away-  
The mud daubers lasting their beaks for the last escargot  
Of the midgets of pollywogs- the earth shuddering in vibrancies  
I cannot explain: an immaculate little girl smiling  
With braces showing off the veins of her world;  
As she slips away from the doctors office out of school for the first  
Of any old times; right behind the ixoras, shooting off to  
Make love, while the kids she often doesn't love circle around  
Her and the mosquitoes draw blood right form  
The exhibits of her fornications; and the gold ripples like a weather  
Vane, like the banners for the closets of a dictator- If she would  
Only stop to wonder, he would have the face of her father  
Who has bought for her everything- but now his nursery is master less:  
The plumbago stick to her wrists like the needy syrups of tooting  
Infants- the blueness of a sky that doesn't know the words  
To heel- and it all turns over, counting backwards, warmly like  
A fire growing cool from its regrets, like a mobile of blue aero buses,  
And washing machine trying to mend its own wounds  
In the azure valleys cut through by the baby blue arrowheads of  
So many tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Back Nine

We can split the atom,  
And see the fetus of death-  
We can throw rocks from the moon,  
If we want to:  
We can write a new punk poem,  
But her eyes will still remained closed;  
Even if she is full of senile breath-  
Just a young thing-  
Only seventeen and right now losing  
Her virginity with her father's  
Business partner on the back nine:  
The manicured hills of murdered bones,  
The alligators' teeth,  
The up to date anthropology beneath the cypress.  
While the little kids poke the floater,  
Their crystal mothers snort cocaine:  
With traces of snow on every  
Ten dollar bill in Florida:  
The Hurricanes are our favorite football team:  
The black and blue herons are flying into the secret mangrove,  
The hidden junkyard for the tarnished patina  
Of conquistadors,  
The open shells of the tortoise's memories,  
The air is filled with the saccharine haze of  
Burning sugar-cane-  
A water moccasin is curled up next to the  
Front wheel next to the dead kitten....  
We are waiting for the faithful school bus:  
The lions roar,  
The mosquitoes swarm,  
And she walks out of the swamp,  
The young fury-  
Sore and torn,  
Her eyes like a rosy morning as from the  
Baneful east builds the vicious storm.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Backs Of Helpless Animals

So soon a snake will see he has no legs  
As he crawls on his belly underneath the airplanes—  
Going to a hole in the wall or  
A wishing well—going beneath your sherbet dresses on  
Easter—think you that he is jealous  
Of those creatures with two legs, or four,  
Like mythological dragons—  
When his mind is as dark as coal and as sharp as  
Diamonds—victim of the ancient double cross—  
He gets by, but his entire body counts the  
Earth, as you scream in the labors  
Giving life to half-blood children with eyes of  
Moonbeams and smiles of crocodiles—  
And you love them even as they draw blood,  
As werewolves you cannot even see jump upon  
The backs of helpless animals outside your  
Window—just like so many of us who never learned  
How to stand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Backs Of Rusting Tricycles

In beside the Ferris Wheels like  
Cathedrals over the tannenbaums shading the girls  
Who don't take off anymore,  
But gather in the pews, coughing in a cloister of  
Blue eyes bruised- eating grapes and  
Prisms,  
And the foxes at their heels, hyperventilating- frantically  
Scouring for the next natural exit,  
While above the fabulous hall, beating the time like  
A giant metronome of a bird of pray,  
The highways of angels rattle and clang- causing  
The tree to cry its silver before the crowded sorority;  
And they weep and bite their knuckles,  
And skin their knees on the backs of rusting tricycles  
As they kneel again to pray.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Backyard Of Vanished Airplanes

Woebegone cotton gods lost in the midways of  
Their stuffed-animal beliefs—  
Selling things at the flea market on weekends  
As the sun flips,  
A tilt-a-whirl of mad things dancing in outer space—  
Each instant a prism dancing for a moment  
In the labyrinth of a kaleidoscope:  
Each Siamese epicenter  
Like a little, penny-ante church where I capture you—  
Jewel of a dragonfly sold as a trinket—  
Thinking of you and worshipping of you  
As I drink liquor and then try to go  
To sleep—  
World in the backyard of vanished airplanes—  
And you a lost daydream I once had.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Backyards Of These Patios

People so slip and weave their memories  
Among these tombs,  
Amongst these bandits of showy gold:  
And the day lights up like a dog, like a place I have  
Never seen;  
And the skin is so golden on the sheets of music.  
The skin is so golden as blue gills, or their lovers of gold fish,  
That this is just as they told it:  
This is just as they were going the counterparts to our  
Faerie story:  
The male and the female, going, flipping in the transoms of  
High altitude Ferris Wheels and circus stories;  
And the days mount around,  
And make love to themselves without a sound;  
And I ride my bicycles home, all day long pretending not to roam:  
And the city flits, and the city divides,  
Like precious stories with precious insides:  
These hidden wombs, like luscious gems reside in the seats  
Of amphitheatres,  
Or the troops of souls who slip like the hidden saints stealing even  
More fireworks through the backyards of these  
Patios.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ballroom Of A Queen

Words played on a ship going down,  
Like beautiful women forced to undress themselves,  
Sticky fetishes dripping with anticipation forced to wait  
On the shelves;  
And I saw your eyes going to art class: your eyes crossed  
Mine, and I said a prayer:  
I forgot my locker combination, by the curl of your hair;  
And now you have a daughter, whose words are coming  
Soon,  
But you still have lips which make both the big and little  
Dipper swoon:  
Sharon: your body is a shade house for everything I have to  
Sell,  
Your time is the unction that would put a solve on my pall:  
The angels are taking the interstate down from the sky:  
They are leaving their Christmas trees unattended, they are not  
Fishing or masturbating,  
But they are coming down just to cut out snowflakes for you  
That are covering up the paths I once used to get a good vantage  
Point across the horizon,  
And to enjoy a nose bleed just to see the tiny city that recedes  
Around you like waves rippling from the ballroom of a queen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ballrooms Of Their Prison Yard

It's good to know that somebody likes me,  
Over the bridge and under the canopy  
The housewives flee with their houses following;  
And the moon swings,  
Like a child, like a sickle;  
But the earth is well and covered with gold  
And is now all laid out enthralled with panoply  
With the gold fish symbolizing the easiest to capture  
Of its stories:  
Like cats and dogs in rain showers, look at what we  
Have done to it, like a one eyed cat peeping in  
A seafood store,  
Like an otter spying on housewives tanning topless  
In their backyard easements, leaping atop of  
Alligators like stones to cross a grassy river;  
She said that when she bought the tree she didn't know  
That it would bare fruit-  
The bitter stars the natures of a languorous religion  
On the borders of the world of sugarcanes and rum-  
The beautiful women go floating there,  
Back and forth like flags of surrender,  
Dancing bare shouldered through the ballrooms of their  
Prison yard.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Band Plays Something That We Should Not Have To See

How many words sent out like doves,  
To return yet faithless with only dark streaks in their  
Eyes,  
Like sentinels but who knows what they've  
Been watching:  
Another line sent out for one or two muses,  
Who might as well be still-life on the slab, or married  
Paralegals, moving to all parts of the world,  
Parceled out like shifting glass in a kaleidoscope  
Except for me,  
Except for my muddy bed- I am an amphibian,  
I crawl back from the carport to the sun;  
And I've never been atop the roofs of firehouses to  
See how they work;  
And now isn't the band marching, but we shouldn't have  
To see them, because we are supposed to be in school:  
And there is a really good lesson we can go  
Chasing after on or bicycles, like faithful dogs,  
While all throughout these houses and the choicest pines,  
Her perfumes seems to linger like a poisoned memory,  
As the band plays something we should not have to see.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Barrel Of A Gun

The serious mountains were laughing  
Underneath the sun—  
They got all of their days together, or  
At least they seemed to  
Anyways—  
And the snow-angels—  
Fell down all of their make-believe slopes,  
And it seemed to be beautiful for  
A little while  
With all of the primary colored helicopters  
Watching,  
And I buying ice-cream for my Chinese  
Wife—while the dogs ran under the gun,  
And the mirages of the televisions  
Echoed passed me—  
Someone else was speaking Latin,  
Until the hallways were splashed with  
The impossible lights—  
And she loved her husband, while  
The hummingbird floated before  
Her—straight as an arrow over the  
Bouquets of the orchard,  
Until, finally, the corpse had to die,  
And I thought about calling you—anyways—  
And you children laughed like echoes in  
The playgrounds of the middle of  
Their school days—  
And the languishing cenotaphs which could  
Not be spelled correctly for anyone,  
Still remembering—  
Had to go to sleep, their thoughts heady  
From the cotton candy of their  
Anyways—until you loved someone else's  
Husband and put him straight to bed—  
And the afternoons echoed like bottle rockets  
Over their sooty penumbras,  
Until their birthstones were all collected,  
And I remembered recalling you, anyways,  
Promising all of my kisses pressed to you

Anyways all like bouquets beneath  
The barrel of the gun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Barren Country Of Hucksters And Anonymous Graves

America is becoming less on the level,  
Drying out, it is the time of shuck an jive,  
Where hurricanes interceded.  
Winnow what you have, distill  
The diamonds and put the coal back into  
Stockings, hang them well,  
And cut wood, and watch your neighbor  
Closely.  
Soon there will be four post tents higher  
Than the skyscrapers, and more cigarettes,  
Vermillion and chartreuse, and laughing men  
With sequenced shirts and ripened bellies,  
And horse racing, and dog racing, and  
Gambling on the calligraphies of the  
Baseball diamond. They will call us in to  
The smell of crackerjacks and cotton-candy,  
Along curtained corridors where outside the  
Wolves are prowling, and babies cry.  
There in artificial habitats conjunctions holding  
Hands with Siamese twins, and people placing  
Bets on if they are one word with two minds,  
Or two children with a tiny soul, and successful  
Women in magical stilettos, with hyphenated  
Last names which whisper snidely of the  
Bourgeoisie, though they can't remember how it went.  
Lips painted by crayons, they  
Toss water bottles to rats, and the sun hibernates  
Inside while the traffic migrates. Paper airplanes  
And more fireworks, and men calling on the streets,  
Beckoning you inside where the women are dancing,  
And living dolls, and caravans of pilgrims lost  
In blue flies, and dead boys failed into ditches, legs  
Erected for examinations, one foot bare and boiling,  
The other caved in blue synthetic. So this is what  
I've seen, and this is what I say. Now the dogs  
Are calling, and grandmother is laughing, and on  
The hillside the wind is rolling over the barren country

Of hucksters and anonymous graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Base Of Colorado

No liquor since New Years  
And the poems are dancing meaningless,  
But they still come: like tourists,  
Like clicks, in a beefy parade:

All my friends down in the grotto  
Sharing the bottle,  
Passing it around,  
Staring out Mary in her Pieta,  
The children at her hip.  
Her blouse undone;  
They are trying to get it out.

Here is my anonymous letter  
Sent to warn the king  
That I have skipped the last period,  
And am now on Jordan's roof:  
Smoking, lighting off fireworks,  
Watching  
Alligators fart in the canal.

The dreams are ceaselessly rude,  
In an intervention of life,  
Like whispers through the Australian Pines,  
That the Conquistadors are eating themselves,  
As the sky is winding up,  
Gathering up courage to ask her out.

Now all that is done,  
Which was made public in the sophomoric rhyme.  
I believe today was a holiday,  
But I had the same thought three days ago,  
So I am not clairvoyant.

She might have a boyfriend,  
Which is rude but expected.  
If she is sleeping with him,  
She is healthier than I; but what can I say?

My favorite author is dead,  
And I didn't even know.  
In regards, I am writing her a novel,  
I read by a lightning bug in a jar.  
She may never pick it up,  
Though she still lives at the base of Colorado.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Baseball Diamond Mists

These pillages of words from a mind imperfect  
From kindergarten, you would think would finally grow tired  
From the immaculate hedgerows of the occultish windmills;  
But everyday waking up inside the thin walls of  
A trailer park or an Easter Egg finding itself on the branch of  
A dusty road,  
And staring out the windows again: the cars moving like the crossbeams  
Of sunbeams,  
And the world at large, even in its capitalism, replete  
With so many populous and repeating needs, the orifices and  
Universities of this jungle keeping for awhile the echinopsis  
In bloom while the prettiest of Mexican women sweeps  
And dusts the corners of my studio's room;  
And then I lay in wait for her, like something heavily toothed  
And good for her competition,  
As the slow waters are filled up with so many stolen hopes of  
Abandoned bicycles,  
Until the final amusements of the summers come to an end,  
And we all have to pack our lunch back into our tin cans, and stand and  
Wait through the baseball diamond mists for the busses to turn around  
And pick us up again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Baseball Diamonds

Shadows of an ambulance in the shoulders of a  
Christmas tree:  
The elves seem to be telling us everything about love:  
But it may just be an impersonal emergency:  
Yes, it is Christmas:  
It is Christmas, and I am just getting up to sell the world—  
And all of the heavens bivouacked above  
The shopping malls:  
So, how will you go down into her forever-  
On this side of your week:  
How will you possibly believe in her forever—while  
All of the captains are keeping their model boats—  
Against the wishes of the movie theatres,  
And so like whores—  
This seems to be a city little boys are building with  
Their little games in the woods—  
Until it is suddenly all over—and all of the nighttime has  
Won—and the over her shoulders of somewhere,  
The sunlight is grinning—the pistols of  
The baseball diamonds have emptied—  
And the good guys have won.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Baseball Diamonds Of Your Backyards

Vespers in the early morning while the bartenders yawn,  
And the crawdads flash underneath the oaken  
Driftwood- maybe you've thrown your favorite vanity outside  
The window at this time of early morning,  
And the ghosts kiss the lips of their favorite fire fighters  
Like serpents coiling around the broken glass of the gutter-  
And you go home alone in the blooming darkness  
To a trailer park or something else that will easily disappear  
In any number of natural catastrophes,  
And you lie down and close your eyes and thinking about  
Any number of your favorite friends while the paint  
Dries on your apartment- and the ruby eyes of sleepless  
Alligators begin to light up for the school boys across  
The baseball diamonds of your backyards

Robert Rorabeck

# The Baseball Games Of The Empty Airplanes

White stars underneath the palmettos—  
It means another angel is falling in love—or my old  
Muse's rabbits (that we thought had disappeared)  
Are making love,  
As the rainbows bend like scoliosis around  
The swing-sets—as the sky tightens  
Itself,  
And takes practice swings at the burning pitch of  
Sun—  
And my parents sleep somewhere in the north  
In the ellipses of make-believe ovals—  
Where my father's eyes perceive all of the riddles  
Of rattlesnakes,  
But he has run out of time as they strike  
Three times  
Like the persistent salutations of a solicitor—  
Something is knocking on the door,  
And I am in love with another woman—but daylight  
Keeps to itself in its nest underneath the palmettos—  
Like living jewelry diademing the joints  
Of horny truants who go down there sometimes—  
And give kisses to themselves underneath the baseball  
Games of the empty airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Basic Need Of Our Feral Carnival

I think if you can live in your own carnival  
You will do quite well,  
Removed from the lilac farts of the petty  
Bourgeoisie; for, if a part of the counter culture  
You will remain just as affected  
As the lipstick and gloss  
Yuppies you despise, and how they are  
Always checking their watches;  
Alienated from the galvanization of  
Your mother's production line,  
Defining yourself as an Indian;  
Your holiday of movement is still  
Dictated by the tourism of the elite,  
And their theatres of action and war;

Swim with me now across the canal,  
Where the coeds bath in the plethora of gaudy lights,  
In our futile defiance of gravity's weakest elements,  
We should flip around the earth and is foliage  
Until we tumble,  
So we should shake loose from memory every  
Rote memorization,  
Until there is only the basic need of our feral carnival.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Basking Valleys Of Its Gunfights

This is where it was—like a poem,  
An avenue to nowhere—  
Inspired by the twelve year old bottle on another night,  
With new scars on my head—  
And beautiful students who love me—  
Isn't it a wonder, that it is the most beautiful students who  
Love me the most:  
But even this is done with here, and  
Going back to those lines,  
Where do we find my emptiness, sometimes remembering  
The steepened highways in Saint Louis,  
Before I even encountered my mostly brighter muses—  
And those amber skeletons that would have  
Me now if it wasn't for my wife—  
And another night down in the drinking fountains I  
Tried to tell you the truth about—  
Jaunting estuaries that seem to be putting some sort of  
Fairytale into the mirages of the always leaping  
Airplanes—  
And if this is my soul, then it is my soul too:  
And if it is a candle, it is a candle you have to blow out—  
And a wish you haven't wished for,  
And another night in its somberest echoes coming to  
Turn around to give back to you all of its resonances, wishing  
To hope to find you there again in the morning—  
Called out into the open theaters of the greenness rebounding—  
In that stadium that seems to recall the greatnesses of  
The uncensored playgrounds—  
Their green gemstones and emeralds just another way to  
End this thing in the basking valleys of its gunfights—  
For it could end just about anyway—  
But this is just about how it ends tonight.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bathrooms Down These Halls

Didn't I wound you some, coming down  
In the playgrounds of your flesh  
With sadly un-profound thievery north of  
The everglades and of Miami-  
Not even a little, as you came home to your family  
And your husband, coalescing so brightly and yet so  
Timidly into the estuaries of your primitive world:  
There, do not think of me:  
And do not love me- my shadow and I both simulacrum  
Of a passing care,  
Dancing to the words that come to us in the afterbirth of  
Crepuscule, drinking rum from as far away as  
France- wishing these words to escape our soul,  
As arrows for your soul:  
And I know your name even though I will not  
Say your name- for I have written it many times inside  
The bathrooms down these halls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bearded Lady

Before I went down to sleep,  
To work for her dreams,  
I knelt and said the prayer to  
Magnum PI and his Jerry  
(because my grandmother loved him  
More than her husband) ,  
Especially in the newly paved places  
Where we go to church there  
Is a righteous rod on the  
Steeple to  
Attract the lightning  
To bring in the people, between  
The doors where my  
Teeth become a yellow  
Sunday graveyard I go  
Out walking up the rainy highway  
Scarred in the mountain there  
Is a lady she is all rose  
Thorns, she spreads those legs  
To me as if she were trying to  
Serve me a drink from them,  
The elk blow their bull horns,  
And the night on her hillside  
Is a radio  
And the clouds are its sounds,  
The music my feet make  
As they go underground;  
As it marches all toward me,  
The eyes of these things,  
They are opening the thoughts in  
Me  
That I thought before  
Were sold-out.  
After school all 10 kids were  
Dead before their bodies hit  
The ground,  
When their parents drove in  
Circles  
Making the color of noises

After school  
What a circus!

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bears Discover Fire

In poems, wounded, waiting again for the airplanes-  
Watching the bag ladies beside the traffic,  
Their noses turned up to the silver underbellies  
Of flying things:  
Entirely enamored by such armies: professionals themselves  
In some ways,  
While the days burn- in ash, float up  
To whatever spaces the giants haunt: repossessed,  
I await in a forest,  
Body naked- the dryads drinking with the foxes at the  
Fountain in the base of the mountains,  
My brown girl far away from me:  
In another land, where she suffers from honoring her  
Father and her mother,  
As the kites sail away into dollar store tatters,  
The lucky ones kissing the souls of the shoes flung up  
With the doves, and languishing in the halfway house  
That keeps telling ourselves to one another,  
Even the angels touching down to hibernate  
As the bears discover fire.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Beast That Gives Them Milk

Words bloom imperfectly like would be young lovers  
Now old and gray:  
Words clipped like out of control song birds, like designer airliners  
In a sumptuous soirée with the rest of the other singing birds  
Enmeshed in the rock garden with the butterflies and  
The Spanish rainbows,  
Tied up in ribbons of atheistic stone:  
I am doing this all right now like a stewardess serving a drink  
To the right place, because it is my job and because I am very hungry  
And I like what I am doing;  
It is as if I could be slaying bearded dragons, but instead I stay my  
Hand because I want them to live,  
Because I am only a mailman and I know their actual worth:  
They are absolute beauty; and I would rather drink my barrels of rum  
That have come skipping down to the valley;  
And paint a scene, allowing the lesser heroes to roe with them in  
The muggy dirt:  
Eating together and making love and then regurgitating into airbags,  
Purely sickened by the realization of what they'd been up to:  
Heroic men and their monsters,  
Hoping that their offspring would bring about some new realization on  
Electricity, but no such thing ever even close to happening,  
Just the detritus of dulled newer cars and faux diamond rings;  
And children, children, and boatloads of children circulating and  
Caracoling,  
Like rabbits in the rock garden, like areolas out in the sea, not realizing  
The beasts that gives them milk also ate their heroes' seed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautifully Illiterate Earth

A petit coral snake burring somewhere in the delicate  
Flanks of a faithful whelp:  
And I am waiting for the day when the meek shall inherit the  
Earth,  
Uncle, I am waiting for that while I sit in the darkness  
And listen to the crooning of the under carriages of airplanes:  
They shoot like the most faithful of dreams over the lightest  
Atlantic reams,  
And the stewardesses upon them are so eager to get all the way  
To Europe,  
To serve in the fuselages that come so easily it is as if they  
Are in the backyards of when they were little girls,  
While the privateers of whom I have forgotten every one still had  
High hopes for them,  
While Alma was still doing god knows what in Guerrero Mexico,  
Down in those primeval hills where the dinosaurs roamed  
Without a thought like the chickens outside of the forts of  
Conquistadors; and I can feel you there,  
Sweeping the coquina free underneath the unabashed pines,  
And holding up your daughter as the sun returns to its birth,  
And the last of its rays cleaved across the beautifully illiterate earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beating Breasts Of Waves

Molded to those lips of cannons,  
The green airplanes fold up and go to sleep  
Long after the absences of chirruping tourisms:  
When the night flowers bloom  
Their milky lactates, mimicking the stolen  
Architectures of moonrises-  
And across the ocean there is only absences  
All together between the beating breasts of waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beating Heart Of The Yard

Finding a blind man's destination underneath the stars,  
Another catastrophe comes to the gates of  
Our grandmothers passed away—  
Beneath the arrow-busses and the skies that burn their  
Cathedrals—what joy in the emollitions,  
Like movie theatres of gypsies across the prairies—  
Belly-buttons jeweled with purple ibis  
Where sensual dragonflies come to drink, sinking and  
Diving away, seeming to come to the conclusion  
That you never loved me—  
Their minds filled with the choral harmony of insects—  
Premonitions and epiphanies that come in the stops  
And starts of daydreams or never seem to really  
Begin, but go on without ending—  
Each one like a locket that falls into the beating heart  
Of the yard and all that has pretended to see with  
The light of god has to look away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beating Hearts Of A Living Grave

The otter comes out and plays around  
Her fragile slipper  
Lost somewhere on the wet yard nearby  
My feet of glass,  
As I go out under the resilient canopy and  
Take leak.  
So high school is over, and I only took  
From it so many words  
To roam the homeless world with me,  
And I didn't take her when I  
Thought that we should be entrained.  
Her daughter has a beautiful face now  
And his last name,  
And the world is getting smaller like an amusement  
Ride,  
Or like a witch going counterclockwise,  
And all the time the buses are returning home with  
Their gaggles of bullies and children.  
I remember, her skin was as smooth as a birthstone,  
As fledged as a paper airplane,  
And now all my art floats like something very small  
And fabricated down the neighborhoods  
Of Venice,  
And everything that has to do with water should  
Be a metaphor for her existence:  
The way she is going now, where I try to capture her  
Like immortality:  
Is it that I'd hoped to fill a bed with her,  
Or a page,  
But they have both escaped above my head,  
And the tourists are trying on skis.  
Jordan's sister is finally home, her chest so bee stung,  
And soon I'll be drinking to her  
While whatever light the hour can find crenulated the  
Pool,  
And maybe I'll be so satisfied, I won't even have to  
Dress up and moan for girls name  
Sharon, who never really seem to care if they are home,  
Or their flags so conveniently raised from

The beating hearts of a living grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beating Hearts Of Her Wounded Children

Scarred without any goals, the unicorns return to  
Home base,  
The beautiful flowers percolate and it seems that I  
Am getting old,  
Sucreasing poetry and as often as not forgetting to kneel  
And pray to the  
Virgin of Guadalupe, procrastinating on the washing machine  
As on the windmills:  
And otherwise just getting drunk and visiting ladies of the  
Night,  
Caracoling around Alma house and howling mute and blind:  
Because there my soul lives across the train  
Tracks curl in the brown sheets of prisms and skin,  
Her love already dispersed into the beating hearts of her wounded  
Children.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beating Of The Waves

And they will make publications—  
And they will keep on believing in the  
Unending desires of their parades:  
It will come again and again to this,  
Just like the beating,  
And the beating of the waves:  
Beautiful visions told time and again  
To the children of the un-molested  
Housewives,  
While the visions outside of doors  
Rises,  
And the school surceases—  
While I figure out my spellings as  
For the bouquets of dwarves—  
Until there is another honeymoon that  
No one else deserves or who  
Can pay for—  
And then in the night: bold!  
Crocodiles!  
And anyone else who lies sleepless  
On the banks beneath the Christmas trees—  
And all of this,  
And something more—  
Something.... Something which my  
Beloved mother was supposed to reveal to me.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Beauties Of Yesterday

Pleasant is the void of the horses  
As it is to another failure: the day fails—every crepuscule it  
Is defeated:  
The dragon defeats Beowulf, the little girl is kidnapped:  
And my muse is married to another man:  
I am married,  
But her soft hand lies buried on the other side of  
The earth:  
All of her ancestors are cremated,  
And they've taken away all of the highest swings from  
The park—  
The waves burn like fire into the dark,  
And the airplanes fly away from here—the tarmac  
Is empty—the fair has gone away—  
But death lingers, curled as ivy,  
Remembering the beauties of yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Animals

There is a heart twisted here and in her lost ways  
She has gone away from beauty- If she had known  
Beauty all along,  
She would have escaped by now- These words would not  
Linger as the unimpressive scars  
The ants trundle over, bivouacking underneath her summit,  
Waiting for it to bloom:  
Yes, she is waiting to caress another lord, but he has gone  
Again to the river to taste another of his girls,  
And the country rolls on beside him, selling and lighting  
Off fireworks,  
And it is a good guess that we live on beside her,  
And tell her stories as they are needed- the exegesis of her  
Weeds,  
We linger like smoke from a forest gone up into the heavens  
After all of the beautiful animals have run away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Boys

The deer get up next to their mother underneath  
The doors to the mountain—  
The sky is as bright and as loud as thunder,  
And they travel underneath her, milking as the pinecones  
Shutter—  
Delusions of mauve beauty in their eyes—  
Picking the wild berries with their snouts—as the burning  
Fairies come to greet them out of doors—  
Knocking on their horns with secret epitaphs—  
Now that they live here in the dusk and the curl of the mountains—  
And the moon is as luminescent as a daydream that has cut  
Her wrists—supposing that they will survive in the haunted entrails  
Of echoes—as all of the beautiful boys and girls get up yawning,  
To enjoying another day at school.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Cars And The Absolutely Glorious Boats

The night is sailing so close and so far away,  
Like religious candles flickering, like the caesuras of waves,  
And I am almost done,  
While the youngest of lovers park their cars and kiss and swap  
Tongues straight into the other grottos of their  
Romantic

Graves:

And you have two children, Alma, and you don't want more,  
But I want to be the father of your next child, while the sky smiles  
And then like hoary roses grows beautiful  
And wild,  
Like the long-tongued wolf following the curious virgin  
Straight home,  
Or at least shadowing the lackadaisical path that she chooses to take:  
While I sat in your car with you far a half hour today,  
And gave you all the colors and moneys of my birthday cake,  
And maybe I even thought and prayed to you deep in  
Miami Florida even before I met and prayed to you, Alma,  
While the all of the desperate stations of ants came up in one  
Sunday morning rain shower to kiss and pray to your  
Alabaster knuckles,  
But otherwise I do not know you:  
Otherwise I am not at home, and none of this is real, and the stars  
Do not come out at night and sin and drink to themselves  
While all of the beautiful cars crash and the absolutely glorious  
Boats sink.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Chains Of Mountains

Souls piled into the dressing rooms of bodies,  
Try us on blindly and then blow our soup,  
Like I try these lines out for girls ringing up the stairs  
In beautiful houses underneath aquatic chandeliers;  
I try out new sources of bate- I try to sleep with demigods,  
And I seed gardens into the green carpet while the alligators  
Come up from their bedrooms of sunken nests in the canals  
That man dug for them:  
The lions snore in their concrete carport: And my best  
Friends put off for tomorrow what they could make today.  
Maybe the most beautiful woman to ever be held by the world is  
Inside an airplane right now like a crèche,  
Maybe she is happy to be above the heads of her potential husbands,  
Because they have always been so giddy over her, but now  
She can get some rest,  
As her pilot follows the prettiest swans and they head together  
Following no particular migratory pattern, but are  
Attracted by the beautiful chains of mountains rising  
Like glimmering pitchforks in the west.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Distances

There is some kind of river that we share  
With our bodies sweating,  
Heads pounding around a Ferris Wheel we both  
Rode at different times,  
Whose light housing apex showed the major arteries  
Of our loneliness,  
And I wanted to put my hands around the Faberge  
Of her ghost and point into some strange distance  
At my mother and father,  
Being traded from Indian to Indian, further west,  
And eating the echinopsis of different cacti all of the time,  
And to feel secure in showing her my most loneliest of things-  
To go down afterwards, attracted to the false lights,  
Like sailors drowning into a stoodup heaven:  
To win her prizes that meant nothing, and to take her  
About in the motions of the sea, with the beautiful distances lit up all around  
Us, and no one knowing our names.

-Alma

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Echoes

The places seem to fit as I am dying and  
My dog waits at the door, or it is just another commercial  
As I lie lactating, a mineral upon the floor:  
And it is not a very beautiful thing—  
Languishing, commercialized—the thing  
Never truly escaped from high school,  
And never listening to reason—  
The echo that is calling to itself out of season—  
And into the finest pastures where it has to be recognized that  
It made its finest mistake—  
And the cars and the trains go by, listening to themselves  
Disappearing without an echo—Whilst all of the finest of men  
Dress themselves—peeling themselves away from  
The ballrooms as from the orchards—  
While the drums of the graffiti's turn frail and fade- □  
Isn't just the perfumed throat of the echoes which they left for  
Us—and then the ballrooms glisten—turn off in spikenards  
And forget-me-nots just as the tops of the mountains  
Turn into the aphrodisiacs of the places we can never forget nor  
Lay off-  
As you are left in the maelstrom—or in the middle of the fairytale of  
Your boudoir- while the canyons echo—  
And the beautiful echoes ignore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Forest

Crippling luminosity make its aurora along the  
Long trunk of a lustrous snake as  
It goes up a mountain for a drink:  
How long will she be its cradle,  
As it maneuvers underneath the bowers and  
The elk,  
The white trees in an albino's sorority  
Withered up from where  
The fires scarred her cheek:  
She will let him climb, legless, getting to  
The monuments of her occultism's gardens  
Only to send the beautiful  
Snows down- and keep him for  
A while beneath her gaze,  
While the pilots hover above, leaping  
Above her candle flame and back to their  
Little wives;  
But even in their beds, they remember that moment  
Looking down at her elevated gardens  
Where such much life mingles in the sub consciousness  
Of the beautiful forest by which she clothes herself.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Beautiful Imperfection Of Eons

Somewhere there is a killer dying  
For better words than these,  
And new people are coming home to the  
Country's bread basket,  
All warm and having eaten plenty:  
I imagine what it is to feel a kiss between them,  
To become better occupied than I am now.  
Now I am a galaxy of scars and have been this  
Way for so many years:  
Each year a new scar, and a year to fade:  
A scar after that, deliveries to make to strange houses  
On my bicycle  
In the molecule of a wave or all out:  
The songs which resonate over houses, the pirates  
Laughing on the sea,  
The mermaid listing busy about their prow, addicted  
To the rum they pour dripping down her body,  
Dripping down:  
Her children squelcher from the salt water milk;  
She pools them into grottos and gives them lesson  
In coral chalk. Over half of them glow,  
And after some time she sends them to strange colleges  
Where they don't belong,  
Where they are made fun of by people beneath them;  
I watch them from a crèche tossed by an inconsequential  
Breast stroke into the spattered trees:  
I love how they swim when they walk,  
How they have hidden teal scales beneath their blouses;  
Or when I eat them out my brain grows by new gigantisms,  
And I learn Latin in a tick. I finish everything  
Twain ever wrote, and laugh at most of it; but by morning  
They have left off on a sea-horse or a scarlet anemone,  
Leaving me nothing but a pearl, the beautiful imperfection  
Of eons like a marble on my desk.  
I now carry it around with me for good luck,  
And place it under my tongue to put them back there,  
Lapping lapis lazuli eyes that know everything the  
Sea has told them,  
But have forgotten everything about me, for they have gone

Back into her on a whim;  
The caesuras dance in darkening swells  
Beyond the dunes I get stuck in, and park for hours,  
Trying to decide if I shouldn't call,  
But they are so far lost now into another more certain song.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Junoism

She is not playing a game:  
The werewolf in the cellar—the death  
That ate my throat—  
And I am the apple who ripened too late—  
To fall upon the car port  
After the mermaids had already waxened  
After the tide had already waned:  
This is the beautiful Juno-ism that is left  
To matriculate forever—  
This is the very sound that is left as the amusement  
After all of the pretty airplanes have already turned out—  
And her orchards all opened—  
And her dogs have already won—  
This is my very throat bared to the very abscesses—  
And this is the already that  
She has already won.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Mystery Of This Song

The body curls and pullulates and it does good to  
Tie down the girl you love securely to the tresses:  
That way she can be a damsel in distress in the middle of the night:  
Her body can bloom like the soda machines of echinopsis,  
And all the boys can stare like wolves in gym class,  
So that when the teacher turns back on all the lights, you will not  
Be sure what happened:  
But if you glance over to her across all the canals of the frogs they've  
Been dissecting,  
And maybe her eyes will have something to say to you:  
The body languages in otherwise paralysis, like two versions of the same  
Story never coming together, but believe that one another is possible  
Deep in the humidity underneath the slow motion ceiling fans of  
Their bedrooms,  
And she might very well curl a finger to your name in the pit of her  
Wildflower beckoning; but you can never be certain that this ever happened,  
Which makes it the beautiful mystery of this song.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Ocean

Blue gill in the lake of my childhood  
Underneath the burning sugarcane of my childhood  
Which I never truly saw:  
Nor were there stolen bicycles in the canal,  
Or rabbits holes to housewives bedrooms  
I could not even interpret what I thought of you  
Lost in the scars and sweats over all of  
Those meandering afternoons the visions of  
A Cyclops introduced to the kaleidoscope you  
Can tell he is enamored and his senses  
Have been turned it pigs, and yet  
The beautiful ocean opens all around him like  
A flower the rest of the heroes escape into  
Her classes- and he doesn't even care.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful People

I will not live forever:  
I will die and the waves will bury me without any  
Sort of sweeter pornography,  
But while I lived I've had the chance for my lips  
To sip sweet liquor,  
To believe in the braver paganisms that come rushing  
Like the noise of sound,  
To sit together with distant friends in an air-conditioned  
Theatre and to look together  
At the beautiful people,  
Those who together best represent the species,  
The milk men and astronauts who are floating  
Together  
Door to door, a careless fraternity without a sound,  
Pollinating both of those lips of you and your sister,  
While neither I nor your husband are  
Anywhere around,  
Around.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Swings

Metamorphosis

Smoke and burn: from the goldfish bowl,  
From the echinopsis while these  
Less than brilliant houses sit here chanting and calling out  
Time:  
I thought I would be married by now, echoing up  
The boulevards,  
Ululating down through the basins that this isn't even real-  
This isn't even the echo of a daydream,  
Or another word pulled out of a hat by a hapless lover  
Traveling the turnpike up to Disney World to  
See a girl who doesn't even remember him:  
But it doesn't stop-  
Like death in a vending machine alongside the road  
Next to the ants all over the bloated possum,  
The alligator grinning as it lurks like a statue:  
These few words I know blowing  
Witchcraft from the campfires of my wrists: another night  
Lost to the shadowy paganisms  
In the snow banks outside of the beautiful swings of  
An eerily blinded church.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beautiful Vehicles

My mother or my grandmother looks  
Beautiful in her brand  
New vehicle—  
Like Mexican petunias, all lilac and  
Purple,  
On high stems around the shoulders  
Of retired housewives  
At the exact same places  
The graveyards surrender their plumped  
Borders  
Where bones look up from  
Beneath the earth  
As the day rides its candles over them—  
And breasts heave and sigh  
Heave and sigh  
Upon the beautiful vehicles that carry them.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Beautifully Enigmatic Skies

This is the way the ashes of the fireworks float  
Down above the sunlit and shadowed heads of her two  
Men:  
One evil and one good, but both good enough for her bed,  
As the fruit market is closing up everyday  
Underneath the sauerkraut and grass roots of the most  
American of Angels,  
Sitting up their in their tenements or banging utensils  
So hungrily in the cafeterias  
Of their yellowing lawns through which the great silver  
Airplanes faun:  
And the sun becomes the principal, while my lips wait  
So thirstily at the gate of the water fountain  
Before your browning, sorrowful eyes,  
Your children in the cribs, the angels in the skies;  
And I am unable to drink, even with the nectar of sodas  
Pressed to my lips,  
As long as while that evil man blows the wind that directs  
Your soulful ships,  
The waves cavalcading their saddles and dives,  
And the most American of angels making their dour plans  
Even through the beautifully enigmatic skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beauty Of Her Angles

Spoiling in their ways like a cornucopia of weeds  
Through the bloody roots like the pubis underneath the silvertips  
That spark sending a codex to the airplanes that tip  
Their wings to reciprocate; and they have it all going off:  
The stewardesses are flying their brooms low  
Over the festivities of the seasons: and the reintroduced wolves  
Are all hypnotized, so the foals are safe:  
And the farmers come out and shake the lucky feet of rabbits under  
The spendthrift moon, as I leap atop the wall of my lover's father and look  
In at her cable television and boudoir in the same even  
Palaces who each have estuaries like vermilion jewels where the housewives  
Are swimming, and their children come home to after school:  
And I linger there like a delicate knight, sucking my thumb into  
Dawn: when she rises, my love, and drapes things across the beauty of  
Her angles that I swear she should never have put on.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beauty Queens

In the inevitable shutdowns of the butterfly houses  
The seniors will have their misfits and their  
Graduations—  
Even if it is an entire castle, while I have been driving  
Myself from shore to shore—  
There are only so many numbers in the alphabet—  
And then the paths lead to plagiarisms if  
Nothing more—and the lights go out above  
The crocodiles—  
Above the sluice of playgrounds who  
Have all turned out, while the pageants  
Misrepresent themselves—high above the sky  
The movies all look beautiful—  
And then there are the memories—  
Of the emptied playgrounds—  
Of the emptied playgrounds—  
And the beauty queens touching themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beauty That Is All Around Them

In the cooling day I stumble from,  
Down from the higher basins where angels gossiping  
Is drowned out by sun showers  
And waterfalls,  
Retreating so far as to be the equal of the sea- and  
In the soft shadows and airconditioning,  
Reciting for her- the muse- the few things I've  
Ever thought:  
Tomorrow will be Easter, and I will sell crickets  
Underneath the overpass  
Look at how they will change in the sun,  
Searching for a tree to climb,  
Or a blue elbow to kiss because school will be out:  
Out, so boys won't have to be truants to play a  
Game of ball,  
And arranged together in their pinstriped  
Show- they will play games and put on performances  
For you that neither you nor they will ever know:  
But I will think of them, and I will think of you,  
Like a match stricken in the oven of a church,  
Lit for a virgin who is almost blind to me, but forever  
Beautiful:  
And they will run around you, worshipping the beauty  
That is all around them that they should never see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beauty The Vanishing Sky Once Knew

And we'll sell fireworks, one or the other,  
By broken arms of broken brothers,  
Underneath tents triaged in the New Mexican  
Desert,  
We'll be forgotten,  
But we'll get what we deserve—

And the blue cats will plunder  
Leaving foot prints above the fossils of  
That evaporated sea  
And some nearby high school's foot ball  
Team will pray on bended knee

And without thinking too much about you,  
Isn't it somewhere around here where  
I lost you—  
During the ungodly misscommunications of  
Marble  
And the god awful hookers of Rout 66  
And the banners that they bow to—

Amidst the holidays of cursed fortune,  
And the rattle snakes—  
And to the south, the endless frontera unfolding  
Its thirstless mistakes—

I said some words to you and yet looked  
Away,  
I sold some fireworks for my father—  
And while I was selling it all for him,  
I gave it all away—  
While they filmed movies in San Antonio,  
In the beautiful river walk I once wished  
We both knew,  
Before I even beheld you—

And these long lines, like the blue prints  
Of prisms  
That were designed to show my fanfare for you,

But were forgotten—  
Were ghaſt like ſeeds into the opulent  
Deſer for you—  
And they lie there yet basking, blue and  
Purple  
Jems of ſcorpions and cadavers  
Still hoping that you find them  
While the traffic paſſes blindly by them

And the ſtorm clouds clutter in  
The beauty the vaniſhing ſky once knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beauty Underneath

Bullies take their heavens in hand and  
Turn them into wet clay,  
Just as the cars roll over the road in the rain,  
And the new and the stillborn puppies  
Lay tattered near the drainage of blue moccasins,  
While still some flowers off in the eaves  
Overshadows by the carport try to glow;  
And I think of her eyes: I think of my muse's eyes  
Far away, brown eyes across the train tracks,  
Dusty angels in the burs- kicked into sand dollars  
By sightless tourists:  
The beauty underneath the shells, blanketed by waves  
Who steal them away like effluvious thieves;  
But I have seen them there, and called her name to  
The rabble,  
And the snakes came out of the sea and kissed my hand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beauty Underneath The Shells

Bullies take their heavens in hand and  
Turn them into wet clay,  
Just as the cars roll over the road in the rain,  
And the new and the stillborn puppies  
Lay tattered near the drainage of blue moccasins,  
While still some flowers off in the eaves  
Overshadows by the carport try to glow;  
And I think of her eyes: I think of my muse's eyes  
Far away, brown eyes across the train tracks,  
Dusty angels in the burs- kicked into sand dollars  
By sightless tourists:  
The beauty underneath the shells, blanketed by waves  
Who steal them away like effluvious thieves;  
But I have seen them there, and called her name to  
The rabble,  
And the snakes came out of the sea and kissed my hand.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Bed In Which They Didn'T Belong

Faces of forgotten cowboys on the high ridges of  
Opulence:  
Now covered by the tricks of dust, their masks hidden, and the  
Way they used to sing woebegone for their women  
Who were all enamored inside the towns they were too  
Nervous to approach:  
Full of occupations and the knowledge of apple trees:  
They felt better on the cattle drive, under the moon:  
Blue like velvet,  
Like the orbit of a wave: they could never even imagine cars:  
Things driven to take her further away:  
The cities boiling up to the tombs in the sky,  
And the wisdom of their adversaries teaming in the fine stock of  
Railroad cars  
Gathered together as if for a game: Now all of the lush frontera is  
Gathered out before them.  
Spread like a dinner plate where the Mexicans move insatiably  
Trying to get through the wounded orifices  
And from there into the working machines of  
America;  
And fireworks over that, and the long coattails of peacocks  
And cockroaches,  
Strutting perpetually and unannounced to all of the new occupations  
Of man kind who somehow figured out  
The subtle wonders of in ground pools and golf courses;  
That they have become so sated over the fineries of the female form,  
That they have saluted her and made grottos for her inside  
Malls,  
And the bestial natures of the heavens have gone into story books  
That only their youngest of children imbibe,  
And soon grow out of: they grow up into roller skates and then  
To kiss her neck inside the perpetuating arcades,  
Leaving hickeys, and the tiniest of stains almost indescribably but  
There and unremovable in the patinas of the beds in which they  
Didn't belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bed Of A Second Story Ballroom

Up in the sky of elbows  
And cracked plates- of almost anyways-  
Looking up, paper folded from a paper cut:  
Soft words spoken to an inoffensive wound:  
Look up, there seems to be stewardesses up there  
Circulated by the ceiling fans and floating through the room:  
Busty, hyperventilating ghosts,  
Titillating the pop corned gloom,  
So you don't have to go anywhere to believe-  
Here is the chattel of the day slung gloom; and they sing  
Your name, and blossom;  
And kiss your armpits, as they swing upwards, smoky perfumed:  
And they love you, laughing, winged;  
And the words that you love to pearl them: swimming,  
Resplendent- echoes the soft loneliness:  
While the pets sleep in the sleeping grass, and your parents  
Make love above your very own goddesses,  
In the heavens which birthed you- up the carpeted steps  
And in the bed of a second story ballroom.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beds That You Can Be Sure Are Very Real

It is getting too late for beer,  
Or another ribald,  
But I still have these things inside of  
Me,  
And the movies sure are swell even if  
They are meaningless-  
Like your eyes so far away and yet  
Haunting me with the zoetrope  
Dancing underneath your lashes like  
Bamboo strung out from the  
Silver feet of practicing samurai-  
So I want to say your name,  
Even if you are with so many children  
And red bottles:  
You should be a nursery teacher all stuck  
Up and steaming in that crèche between  
Your mountains' bosoms,  
With the tourists sopping about and eating  
So much ice-cream  
But never any books:  
I just wish that you'd think of me once or  
Twice as you bath and touch yourself,  
And say my name in the shelter where I  
Slide my words gently in,  
Banishing the notions of mortality,  
And taking you across my shoulders above the  
Tree lines of spoken words,  
Where esplanades float free of color,  
Though sometimes blue and unsuspecting like  
The special theater of bucks leaping  
As they are being watched by an incandescent  
Audience of winged and presumptuous  
Deity,  
Weeping until they burn and you tumble  
Across the river like a fable that has lost any since  
Of purpose,  
The little light coming out of you and into your  
Hand like an industrious stewardess,  
When you body settles and begins to float

Back down into the beds that you can  
Be sure are very real.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bedtime Of These Quick Mythologies

Liquor is almost gone,  
As you are almost gone- my love,  
Last rose from the butcher shop:  
Giving your more developed friends better  
Whiffs of your perfume:  
In Colorado, or Spain-  
In all the countries where there is yet art,  
You remain its muse,  
And video-games,  
And roller-coasters, and otters-  
Open positions at zoos in inland cities:  
This is how I remember you,  
Think of you, and dream of you outside in  
Theatres of parked cars,  
Huffing on the classes- squad mistress  
To women with big breasts, but yours are the best  
Those corpulent bouquets caracoled by hungry bees,  
Pullulating so fatly on the stems,  
Bending over doggie style, sudsy with toy rigs  
In the bathtub- you couldn't imagine how many  
Fireworks we sold-  
So many f-ing fireworks, and I dedicated all of it  
To you,  
And would still like to buy you just to know who you  
Are,  
And its almost the bedtime of these quick mythologies,  
So where are you?

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beer Maid Of The Sky's Arcade

Because I paid them,  
They made her to look like you-  
The beer maid of the sky's arcade,  
But I would only admit to  
It with a smile,  
Because you have gone away-  
Beneath the ocean's curling petals,  
Beneath the milky avenues  
Of the newly formed nation  
Which diadems that greatest hallucination-  
There in the Atlantean grottos  
You wear the speckled colors  
Of other thoughts,  
Sitting with the amputated statuettes  
Of your lovely sisters,  
And you hold a man in your heart  
I do not recognize;  
But in the sky the well-paid architects  
Have made her for me,  
The billboard of unending horizon  
And she doesn't turn off:  
Her lips, as big as rosy ships  
Sell things which we all need-  
When whispering, they feed the softly-singing bees;  
Her eyes are the bluest things we  
Can stare into with no cessation;  
Easily striding, she walks over the earth,  
Advertising herself brightly in many cities,  
As the airplanes pass by her opal brow  
Filled with love-sick tourists,  
Who tip over and die just to  
See this giant goddess who to it  
You are a forgotten blueprint....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bees Sting

Oh then, I saw you there beneath  
The lodges in the mountains where the smoke  
Purred from the lips of the woman in  
The fire  
And the snow melted in the footprints and cascaded  
Down for a great distance, rushing  
And galloping through the deadfall  
Too busy for the lips of the insatiable panthers-  
Into the pools of the sororities of aspen  
Who extended their long bangs in the  
Tears of the emollition  
And I sat there, sketching her in that nude scene:  
She never once looked up at me,  
Even though her face reflected everything  
Even as the sky slowly pulled her away,  
And the heavens came- and she waited for the promises  
That they gave her to come to be,  
As the flowers perfume, as the bees sting.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beginning Of Class

Who am I,  
In my open wound,  
Like the orifice of the ants' new mound,  
The sandy brail  
Convexed in the cloudy mourning,  
Before school has begun,  
And the janitors have yet to arrive  
In their beat-up Fords  
And unlock the gates:  
Then there are still maidens weeping  
Above the red clay of the baseball diamond,  
Weeping the dew hidden in the veiling  
Changing room,  
And the earth is swept where  
It is redacted, and made up to look presentable:  
A bridesmaid with no arms to which  
The alligators are sobbing their smiles,  
The torpid morbidity of the languid reptiles  
Watching the awakening fairy-tale  
Of the new mammals' bolero:  
The sudden accidents we all must watch,  
While the yellow busses line up  
In a queue of noisy youth,  
The children swarming out like ants smelling  
A picnic, measured by their geometry teachers:  
They perform chaotic angles in coincidence  
Swathed with mosquitoes,  
The wavering reflections in the backyard  
Pools, the indistinguishable juxtapositions  
Of the prehistoric youth:  
They walk by you like the bourgeois,  
And you are a crack in the wall a shadow  
Disappeared into,  
The space between life and death,  
Wakened too early for the boisterous living,  
The tardy student lingering in the vacated hallway  
After the bell has rung the beginning of class.





# The Beginning Of Something Really Big

Alma, I love you- and that is my special torment:  
When I say these things, even when I am not your patron:  
And my hands shake, and my knuckles pop like drift  
Wood in abolishing flames:  
And yet you somehow floated all away across to the areas of  
This state:  
And you want to take your children to Disney World:  
And you want to believe in the same god as these patrons do:  
That will elevate you as well;  
And the storm is building up and curling like barbed wire over the  
Forgotten wheel barrows;  
And it doesn't have to be over: I can still kiss your lips,  
And drive you around, cursing the young bulls and satellites of the  
Other gods that don't have to move this way:  
And I will get to you eventually, and touch your brown thighs like  
Calling to a genie: and breath you in like the fine spit of the  
Sea:  
And metamorphosis if only through the ways that I find you in me  
Anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beginning Of Spring

When my Chinese wife comes to  
America I will drink my  
Rum in front of her  
And she will be glad:  
I know- I have seen her, having touched down  
On what might as well have been  
The other side of the moon to  
Find her,  
The airplanes leaping away again—  
And there she was, fawning luxuriously,  
The offspring of a people who never even had  
The mind to speak of The Garden of Eden:  
She just took me home and played the guzheng,  
And gave me her  
Thirty year old virginity—  
And in the morning, I looked outside of the hotel  
At a world I had never seen:  
The places around her were beautiful  
And we rode bicycles in tandem around the pear  
Trees that were the first to blossom some weeks  
Before the beginning of Spring.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Beginnings Of Romance Between The Victors

She is married,  
But she accepts and the dreams  
Are like pantomimes all across the child's  
Playground wall, and the palms  
Are gossiping busy from the hurricane,  
And it is well past 12: 00 am,  
But her glass slippers are still on,  
And I will buy my house before the coffin,  
In that order like the insouciant processions  
Of front yard animals killing through  
The mowed green,  
Drinking the drippy hibiscus,  
Thus the children disperse after school  
And all their lives, the spinning whistlers  
Molting from pubescent scars, the rented  
Homes in rain clouds,  
The gray ruts and furrows our friends grow  
Forth from the souged teeth of the enemy,  
And in somber reunion proceed to the  
Shore of the sea,  
And in that behold the writhing processions  
Of the flotsam and Argonauts;  
See what they found, shrunken  
Into the atoms of waves,  
And the metropolis a careworn harem  
Where cuckolded men run to new lives,  
And old lives proceed to metamorphose,  
Breaking against the opulent knees of the music  
Teacher, and her shared obsessions  
Which tongue above the wreathing salts of  
The Mediterranean, mimicking the Greeks,  
As we all look onward to the others  
Treading behind the unperceived glass, like  
Ornaments hung in caesuras, ascending the  
Breakers in dire competition, until they leave  
Us and breathlessly climb forth,  
Christened divers, adorned by pearls,  
Waitresses and mermaids serving an industry  
Of innumerable sands,

kissing the  
Quieted lips upon the newest shore,  
Where the statues of Titans stand on their  
Pedestals, shading the beginnings of  
Romance between the victors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Behemoths Of Our Suddenly To Bloom Lives

Glasses burning in classroom of beautiful women  
Who are all gurgling up on a shelf,  
But at least I know how to expeditiously take off a bra,  
And in my bedrooms I don't have to be alone all  
The time,  
And it feels like a good game of baseball when I  
Get lucky,  
And the islands spill out beneath me so close that  
I can leap:  
And the cobwebs are of unicorns,  
And the dungeons are empty and sparkling, and I have  
Become a hero drinking in the first spills of daylight outside  
Of churches,  
So in the morning when the buses come and the clouds  
Lift,  
I can be brazed by the low flying airplanes who are just  
Curious,  
That the terrapins are snacking in the greasy yards of  
Hibernating housewives,  
As the calcifying song plays over the entire neighborhood  
Until it becomes a grottos for virgins,  
As we go spelunking blinding into one another,  
Our senses echoing through the behemoths of our suddenly  
To bloom lives.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bend Of Another Careless Century

Racetracks of spell craft and little girls entwined  
Into forget-me-nots;  
And today we got in Indian corn and pumpkin squash,  
And Romero mowed the track of land where'll  
I'll be through Christmas,  
And my mother echoes through the weak shadows-  
Where is she? Maybe she is in my adolescent Spain;  
And I want you in my gardens of chalk,  
My balmy two degrees of vision in your mustard frock:  
And want to put on so many dazzling displays for you:  
I want to go off in showers of silver palms-  
I want to be the spikenard growing out of the faceless  
Eyes of the greater eaten by giant grows halfway up  
Chomolonga- Look at how he always goes,  
Pointing to where they finally found George Mallory,  
Like a scarred flower spumed by Chinese skree:  
And the mosquitoes straw the blood from my calves  
After I jogged twenty laps underneath the airplanes' ballet:  
One time I even jogged the length of a marathon alone  
Into salty crepuscule in Okaheele Park with only the  
Torpid jewels of alligator's to witness me- But even then  
I was thinking of you, and it's as if I were now there,  
Turned up all of a sudden like a dead but famous hiker around  
The bend of another careless century.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bereavement Of A Canoe

Poem folding into the bereavement of a canoe—  
Starting out from the backyards of  
Two decades ago—  
Little alphabets spent like fireworks in  
The penny arcades of wishing wells—  
So few words we have to know to go to work,  
To share ourselves with drive-thrus  
And tellers  
And the make-believes of the cashed in  
Super-heroes—this is what It means to be  
Alive and selling things—  
As a princess gets her hair cut in the car port—  
And looks up into the clouds building—  
A tornado warning in the flambé of clouds—

Robert Rorabeck



# The Best

I smash the liquor bottles against  
The retirement homes,  
Narcoleptic behind the regal palms;

And I love you,  
And I swipe the hair back from my eye:  
Each bang long and graying,  
Gun metal blue like  
Ripley's Believe It Or Not  
Museum up in Saint Augustine;

And I jerk off,  
And my erection is quite enormous as I watch  
It in the mirror of the one armed farmer  
Whose liquor I steal,  
I drink all up:

I have never met him,  
And I have never met you in so many years,  
But I bet you're looking swell,  
Babe,  
And I buy you diamond bracelets which wouldn't  
Otherwise sell,

And I wish you both the best.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Best Men Die Where The Best Ghosts Live

I am so thoroughly ruined.  
Two year old scars darkening under the  
Sunlight as it waves goodbye-  
My heart's fealty the strange tricks of the  
Two edged dagger:  
I kick cans into midnight, loiter around  
Graveyards, just me and stray cats-  
I have no children to mourn me, no words  
Which could live the two weeks of a monarch  
Butterfly's migration into the deep forests of  
Mexico:  
Girls I've loved have new cars and husbands,  
Or they live in such beauty that it reflects their  
Own nature back to them all day long  
While they sell things like spirits to be imbibed:  
I am thoroughly wrecked with my dogs-  
They despoil my bed.  
I am not their master. I haven't bought a new  
Pair of jeans in close to ten years;  
Her eyes never fall sideways for extended  
Amounts of time to study mine;  
I never sit anymore near a newly wed in a fast  
Escaping car- I never did. Nor do  
I sit and study in class anymore; nor do  
I teach it- I just keep up the survival tricks, the  
Little batwing hinges that get me through the literate  
Ditches- Pass me through one more swelter,  
Like a store brand Eucharist until all the girls are married  
And turned into doves. The crocodile  
Comes and offers me a ride to the other side of the  
Canal where there is poisoned holly and presocratic professors  
Still believing what they choose,  
And paper airplanes with their noses smashed,  
And the centerfold stewardesses with their plastics bruised.  
I take the ride- Let the minnows of the minutiae world  
Nibble my toes that are like careless rudders.  
There is no rush- Eventually, I will never get there.



# The Best Of Us

The scars like tinsel;  
Like bicycle spokes around the sun.  
I am thirty, spider legs come out from  
The corners of my eyes. Do you pity me now?  
So asks briar rabbit down in the nettles  
Of his insouciant job: such is me.  
If I had a twin, he would be beautiful, if  
Left unscarred, un-grayed. I am part hurricane,  
Twirling, twirling counterclockwise,  
The direction a caustic ballerina pirouettes.  
Am I so different than you? Are you able  
To cease thinking on command? I get my  
Haircut with politicians; this is not an allusion,  
If you could understand, then you could take  
Walks with me; and we would sleep like babes  
Under the humid overpass, and listen to the  
Grazing of the strange angels running in  
Galvanized herds across the land.  
I would pass things to you we both found interesting,  
And in the evenings we would kiss the twisted  
Bottle, walk through the shore-lines of solicitors,  
We would make helpless illusions above the waves:  
Our sister, junoesque, tricks of our amnesia,  
Riding straddled to the father-god; the redness of  
His apoplexy cuts first to the east before the sun,  
And we mumble two dribbling jesters, and our  
Dog, the third shadow, lulling, lulling,  
The best of us on four legs faithfully waiting with  
The stick clutched in his vulpine jaw; the best of  
Us, rambling to and fro from where we understand,  
Vagabonds, broken-jesters, or leather-tramps, if you  
Will, of this fair and verdant land.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Best Ways To Pretend

Two young children on a fence with a  
Fox,  
While their mother is waking up somewhere else—  
In some other bedroom,  
Or in the grottos where candles still keep for  
The birthdays she doesn't care to have,  
And I am on the road to my lighthouse—  
While I am forgetting all of the other parts of  
Speech,  
How to make kaleidoscopes for her out of  
The dreams of my wrists,  
As the high schools surrounding us are overcome  
With the dire aspects of werewolves who  
Need the moonlight of the halls—  
Cheerleaders gossiping around the water fountains,  
Like hummingbirds and eagles around the  
Cathedrals of outdoor waterfalls—  
Until all of their adolescent dictions are drowned  
Out by the séances of the brightest stars—  
And they remain there after the echoes have fallen  
Away down the sides of an earth that needs no  
Definition—  
The failure of my art lighting off fireworks in  
The driveway, waiting for the soft breasts and  
Fried chicken of the ambivalent housewives to  
Drive up to me, delivering soap operas  
And the eyes of Disney World which always seem  
To find the best ways to pretend at surviving.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Better Futures Of More Illiterate Men

My aunts have scars and  
So do I, so,  
I am going to buy a house-  
Not the one I wanted,  
No desert, hummingbirds, or sea:  
The Mississippi will be the great muddy  
Ribbon she misplaced outside my door  
So many years ago,  
So many classes spent gasping like a fish  
Selfishly out on the precipice,  
Far above the shopping malls, with not  
A blue mountain lion around for  
So many aphorisms:

My clock stopped six years ago,  
These scars on my cheeks, the heat-  
Stroked Eskimos: She really did me in,  
The secular pugilist whom I didn't really love;  
She married a lawyer back against the tall  
And burnished shore where we once  
Made love like sea-turtles;  
Until the raven ate our egg, nevermore:  
Yes, she really stopped me,  
And the Mormon boys made sweet fun of me  
Down in New Mexico when we were selling fireworks  
For my father,  
While I dreamed of forest fires sweeping over sweet mountains:

Now this,  
Another turn on the merry-go-round, a lash of liquor,  
A brighter hunting cap and catcher's glove  
And I am going somewhere again, throwing over the shoulder,  
Going into the purple plains: The house is picked up  
And pirouetting on to the witch,  
And I have drunken the last dropp of rum  
Before I've gone and stolen Mark Twain again from the  
Library- The better futures of more illiterate men,  
The exhuming from such basements,  
The putting away of video games and pulp fantasy,

And the picking up of the plough,  
Another trick,  
In my hand, this dripping foreplay nobody  
Reads: I can't barely spell,  
But my woman is so beautiful,  
And now I know I'll be there to catch her  
As we fall.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Better Half Of The Wishing Bone

If I keep on going,  
Tending until full season, will it release  
A spell, a crooked scar of lightning,  
A slightly poisonous kiss,  
And awaken the vivid maiden from her  
Voyeuristic crypt,  
Because I've cast the dice so many times,  
And tumbled down the stairs,  
I've procured the better half of the wishing  
Bone,  
And I've lined up army men in honor of  
Her,  
But is it more likely that I've run out of  
Important letters,  
Vowels dripped until the sheets are wet  
Spotted,  
Coins of wishing cluttering up the well,  
Echoing without recall,  
Undoubtedly I've said so much, I've  
Run against myself sleeping,  
Drooling on my sleeve,  
While she nimbly takes his hand and sails  
Out across the hall:  
I've said so much before I understood  
I shouldn't say anything at all.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Better Man

I drink to you:

Since kindergarten I've stolen things and looked at fresh

Pornography in stolen cars,

Ladies in the chassies, like conquistadors in their dunes,

The cenotaphs of bared breasts,

And all of their best stuff;

And you are my blue eyed muse, and the waves retreat like

Frightened unicorns,

And then they come again and this time give me oral

Sex;

And all of this time it is you I've thought of

Captured like rhapsodies of ecstasy in the waves;

And on our senior fieldtrip we went to Disney World,

But I did drugs:

I could barely look at you. Could you hardly believe that I

Was genius;

And now that you know that I will not die, do you want to

Join my disjointed ship:

There is room: I have made you a bed, for you and your husband

Side by side:

I will not watch you undress:

I am a good man, lonely, broken: I will introduce you to my dogs,

And give you safe haven, and set you free,

And if you do not come back to me then I know you have found dry

Land and a place to built a better home

In better place than the strange churches whose rafters I have bled

For you off work in cartoon Sundays,

Like a blind man cursing the god, or the better man who

So easily led you away from me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Better Means To Live

I want you to love me, but mostly I want you  
To read my poems:  
And I've been listening to Bukowski- and it makes  
Me a wreck,  
And I want to take you by your straight black Cherokee  
Hair straight into the aloë  
While the airplanes are chirping,  
To do things with you by tongue that I've seen done  
In dirty magazines: and it's all a fraud,  
And you were smart enough to ship the goods to other  
Men before I got to you,  
And your house has awakened, and even without a chimney  
It is red eyed and following-  
Where the canal represents death,  
And the red Florida holy the means for an out for the Pre-  
Socratic philosophers,  
And I am dying- And the kittens are licking themselves,  
And by whatever hour, the alligators are smiling:  
I am not a professional golfer, and so I feel that I should have  
More liquor: I feel that you should write to me unprompted,  
So that one day I might carry myself all the way up  
To your slope and unfurl and drool so that you might smile  
And hold your child out in front of you so that  
She might too learn of the monster who has permitted so much  
Love to bile out from his shoe-polished sack;  
And that I might raise up a midget hand, still shrinking,  
And ask for whatever little means you might have to  
Give,  
So that I might just go off again, leaving my translucent trail,  
To buy more fermented grains to sign off to you,  
For you to show your child, giggling, biting her fist  
And tasting that flesh which is too yours,  
And provides the immortal nourishment- the better means to live.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Better Sea

I just want to be homeless and drink wine,  
To be like wet paint in preschool,  
Like a shellfish stuck in the shell of your mind:  
S-,  
S- the Sabbath of the week,  
The cherry on the tip top of its cherry blossom  
Peak:  
I think of you through the mortal coil of me  
Rooms,  
And look up to you as the infant looks up to  
The mobile in its carriage room;  
But what am I doing, doing,  
The sea is always f%cking moving:  
And I am wounded, I am gut shot;  
I am a good man who has been on top of so many  
Good mountains,  
And that is the worst thing to be; and I love you  
But love seems to have no meaning,  
And the world turns like a pie hungry for the fires  
Of its baking,  
As your eyes burn through the soot of the tourists  
Shops,  
And the occupations that don't exist anymore;  
And Australia is beautiful, but I have never seen her.  
My buttocks quivers as Pedro and my brother  
In law are now asleep, like sleeping bicycles sleep.  
See them and love them both better than me;  
But, S-, you are always better compared to  
The better sea;  
And S-, S-, your birthdays are inside of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Better Students

It is wearing  
Off—this supreme vision,  
The heaven of your pornography:  
Everything I ever wanted,  
I had for a while in  
The backseat of a car in the jungle—  
With only so many words,  
So many hours:  
Now your more beautiful flowers  
Bloom, fluttering their  
Banners for the thoughts of another's  
Hands,  
As the dogs vanish as they run around  
The tracks—  
As the empty courtyards of the schools  
Overflow with sunlight—  
And they days get even with the  
Shoulder blades of angels—  
Sweating and seeming to blush from  
The ruby geometries of the baseball diamonds  
All of the better students have left so  
Eagerly behind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Big Bad Wolf

Arrowheads are not as far underneath the earth  
As dinosaurs, but I am having a harder time believing on  
My knees than I did before—  
The virgins are still in my house—like the fables of  
Snow White  
And Red Riding Hood—  
But they are not my wife—  
And the big bad wolf is huffing—huffing  
At my door.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Big Cities

Little lights that stutter and flicker  
Found ill formed in the greenish cinder blocks  
Of amusement homes:  
In the little towns that keep their own paces—  
Cattle rustling in the night  
And the castles that do not have to move—  
But move ever so softly, mollusks in  
Their shells carried across the big cities that  
Are always on the move.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Big Goodbye

Let us attend to  
The hyperactive lullabying bowers  
The neon forests the  
Working girls strut like  
Lost granddaughters  
Freckled with naked  
Picnic baskets  
Blueprinted by Telsa  
Backed and put on-line by  
Baron Steam Engine;

As if moving away,  
You are looking at me  
As if you do not care,  
As if you do not know  
Nor ever thought of

Where there is a certain lake  
Whose skin stretches restively like  
A sheet;  
There is a place through the  
Bustling dime store leaves  
Where we might disembark  
With a slender kiss,

Shrouded by sky,  
The topaz coin  
Flattened on the divine  
Railroad trestle  
There is another  
Peter Pan  
Who is I

In a single moment  
Of a single day  
On the chosen thread  
In a locked room  
Woven to feeling in  
Your throat;

If you touched me  
We could fly

Featherlessly winged without  
A purpose to migrate and  
Forage  
Pumping alive above the  
Honking jungle where these  
Go to die  
The brightest light,  
The big goodbye.

There is another  
Peter Pan  
Who is I

If you touched me  
We could fly.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Bigger Half Of The Wishbone

The light candles and pools-  
And you think that I would be grateful, that she has remembered me:  
That she let out straight for her uncircumcised door and made  
As if to come bounding for me,  
Like a virile fox set on another thing out of reach- But so the planets  
Burned, and we burned our fingers on the hot letters cooked into the  
Ovens of the mail,  
All those tinderboxes straight out of doors. Now I have a house that is  
Eighty-five years old, in a neighborhood where the mailmen are only  
Allowed to walk:  
I saw her the first day I got here, and explained to her that it was my  
House now, and she gave me my mail and went away while the airplanes  
Went over us together, both at the same time,  
And the jasmine waited to perfume the night: I bought a bird house,  
Like a cenotaph captured in the spit of toothpicks to accentuate  
The home,  
To help me remember what I was, but eventually I will need to put a  
Song inside, and a boat to go on the mantle of my fireplace;  
And I girl who will love me who I can snap off the bigger half of the  
Wish bone for,  
One who will stay awhile and not just come by on workday afternoons  
Heaving a satchel with all the bills.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Billboards Of Mascara

Fruit slipped from a Spanish vine-  
Looking up, I am here:  
A hold over, a fleck of gold and a snag from a river:  
Look into the horse's widening eye,  
And see the strange, petrifying visions  
That he sees:  
Rider less, worshipping a cathedral of billowing clouds:

Rattlesnakes coiling and coital at the edge of a  
River on payday.  
Wayward families and buses of school children going home  
From church, burgeoning at the edge  
Of the abyssal mountains:

Each time a rock slips off a cliff,  
Comes down to a grave of someone once breathing upon the  
World:  
The carcass of an octopus enveloped and husked into a cenotaph  
After eight months:  
It may have well have been a miracle, a famous scientist,  
A love letter:  
But dying, a tryst:

Here, in the burned down garden of crypts and melted crayons,  
Satan takes off his pants and dances around,  
Kissing a plastic horse made to stand there according to  
The rules of man:

Like a teacher administering tests to the school children  
Like a politician getting elected for a second term:  
Like a sperm whale eaten alive by crows at the knife edge of  
The city:

Lit by your eyes,  
The billboards of mascara,  
The little treats and carrion that chum the roadsides  
For the latchkeys and the school boys  
Who turn into werewolves at the smell of you-

Like rockets exploding for the fourth of July.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bird

I don't know Beethoven's different symphonies,  
But I get drunk in the snow,  
And there is evidence until Spring  
Of where I've laid myself:  
I return- I am the sparrow with one good eye  
Nesting in your radiator, telling you different things.  
You go into the store- You bring a little cash.  
Back with you, and it is warm again:  
Look at all these different things lined out beside the  
Ghosts, the sweet Caroline's you imagine sitting  
Beside you while you coast,  
Blowing ghostly bubbles, slapping ghostly thighs:  
I twitter in your radio. Or I twinkle like a star-  
I get dizzy in your hubcaps, the revolutions of a car.  
I know Handel made his water music,  
And Mozart laid a requiem, and for a housewarming  
Gift it is nice to bring a marble ham;  
But it is Spring time now, and that is why I sing,  
But of the winter's harsh sincerity, I don't whistle a  
Thing; For under the blustering shrewdness a lascivious  
Bar gets rapped, the aspens lose their favor,  
The maple all is tapped. The rivers all but stop proceeding  
Like a highway down to the sea, the flowers lose their pollen,  
And the pollen lose the bee;  
Where little girls whisper in the hoarfrost outside of Church,  
The masters lose their favor, their mongrels leave off search:  
I don't know Beethoven's different symphonies;  
But on June 6th we invaded the beaches of Normandy- Now,  
I've always eaten store bought pie, but for this same reason when  
She left me, I knew not to wonder why; but flew around  
Spitting cherry pits until  
I found a chassis so great as a roaring thing,  
And live inside it fully, became your second king. Now I  
Wonder where we're going with all these store bought things,  
Maybe to the movies, there and home again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Birthday That Is Mine

Weeks of havoc cannot remember your perfumes—  
Or the French poets against the over-perfect canals:  
I swear, my wife will find me and have me  
On my birthday—  
Even if I am not in love with her—It is my art to be  
Kind, as the dogs and horses ride their tracks  
And the lips blow out the birthday that is mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Birthdays Of Long Ago

Mexico: a green counter filled with snakes a rivers  
That run backwards like counter clockwise Ferris Wheels,  
And arteries of breath, and veins of rich blood  
And innuendo:  
Starting and stopping all right there in the hills that your father  
Marcelino sends most of his money back into:  
Back to his first daughter, and his first and second houses;  
Alma- at least that is what you told me  
While you waited in the doctor's office instead of coming to  
See me;  
And in provided a good excuse: I got so jealous during the  
Tuesday, that the only way I could find to calm myself  
Down was to kneel and cross myself before The Virgin of Gaudalupe:  
Which is what I did, while afterwards I beat myself like  
A drum, and practiced myself for you:  
And when I got to talk to you, your voice the prism that exhibits  
The rainbow, I got you to agree that you loved me;  
And it was a vermillion interlude, even if it had to fail:  
While the day before I stole another baseball cap that read Mexico;  
It was the same as the one that I had originally bought for you,  
But I left that old shell behind at the store,  
And I walked out into the loneliest traffics of the day- beaten  
Down again, listening to the chaos of the heavens as they fell  
Across my senses, like the sparks of banshees remembering the brightness  
That once resided in their kitchens; and your brownest body  
Cradled into mine, like drift wood that doesn't ever want to leave  
The frothing love makings of the sea- even though they are rabid,  
And beaten themselves, sliced like pieces of cage into the conquistadors  
Sharp points, who have already cenotaphed themselves into  
The birthdays of long ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bitter Doorways Of An Absolute Sky

Apple of my eye,  
Who knew that an ugly man would still be writing love poems:  
How can I save myself for you when  
I don't even know the instrument that has sewn your soul to its  
Flesh;  
And you are in a quiet room bathing, waking up,  
Your daughter is a pool to catch your eyes;  
And my banner is fluttering like a pitiful prayer above your head;  
And the storm clouds are covering up the secret feet of  
Bandoleers,  
But your husband is a heavy man, isn't he:  
He knows the river from back to front;  
He is a better man than me, and he will strike the dragon dead  
Dead center:  
He will build you a house, while I lay naked and scarred and higher up  
In the skree drunken from the spirits I have stolen off of  
You;  
And this is my wound I am refusing to let heal;  
And your eyes are like beautiful trucks that carry their merchandise  
In their un dissolvable beds straight up through the ethereal mercury  
And straight through the bitter doorways of an absolute sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bitter Sweets

While not trying to leave off the somnabulence  
Of your eyes, I misspell, g,  
I leave off your garden for awhile:  
Aren't you with child? I am trying to feel good; Spain:  
Flickering,  
Who is my name? There is no reason to me ashamed,  
Repeating your name in the dark:  
Sharon, Sharon, Sharon:  
Eventually, I get it right, and there is no need for  
Lawyers or extracurricular visitors:  
You have no idea how difficult that was to spell, Sharon,  
When I am not watching football,  
When it has been so many years even from our junior  
High school, and retractable knives,  
And why does it have to be so cruel to recall you from  
The baseball stadium of the back nine:  
Sharon, aren't you so absolutely pure from Colorado  
Without having to say your name,  
And you are so absolutely pure, even damaged with a package  
Being sent down: I've run out onto the field to check  
You out, but what am I undoing,  
There is no reason to fear for rain, you are beautifully isolated:  
I will never know you, breathing reciprocal in these death  
Masks,  
Trying to remember the route the butterfly scribbled:  
I am so ashamed: you are doing so fine,  
Just fine so alone: never reminded of your tannins,  
You bitter sweets, with my forehead in my own hands,  
The future is up to myself,  
And I am so alone.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Biways Of Erin's Throne

Exacting into nothing, so we all can now believe:  
The hedgerows of the brush-rows:  
The heavy eyeliners by which we shall oh so grieve;  
And it all ends up in words basking in the gutters  
Beside the utters  
Of the woe be gone puppies; and anything else that has gone  
By beside my childhood like the burning catapults of  
Whatever conquistadors whose helmets cut a crossways  
Besides the childhood gutters like rainbows licking  
The byways of the pornographies;  
And I broke my jaw at four years old, and I am not alone:  
But I am alone: Alone, while the fishes peal,  
Across the byways of Erin's throne:  
And now I have not loved you, but I am real;  
And all of those yesterdays bloom so brightly like the  
Heady rooms that I was never supposed to feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Blankets Pulled Over The Sea

Standing in a blue abscess, wounded around  
The eyes:  
The nocturnal pugilists countingimps,  
And the gates awash with freezing water  
The blue spruce cried-  
And other planes coaxing down: inside their  
Golden necks, their stewardesses all  
Asleep-  
The weather about them a blanket that pulls  
At them softly,  
The sea, a mother waiting in the deeps-  
While each pine tree rises just for them,  
Nocturnal spectators in the senses of the hills:  
And they go over them, nodding in  
Sorority,  
As the hillsides sigh, damply drunken,  
And holding up to them bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bleachers Of An Empty Stadium

As you sit down in a nest  
Some stranger built for you,  
Your feathers pick out the  
Sunlight  
Above the bleachers of an  
Empty stadium-  
Your hollow bones are filled  
With the premonition  
That it is not safe to go  
Home-  
The neighborhood will surely  
Flood from the migrations of  
Vermillion swans-  
All with the attitudes of baseball  
Diamonds-  
When they go away, all of the  
Fireworks factories  
Will be stolen-  
And it will be the right time  
To forget about who you love-

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bleeding Afternoon

Dictates to the Ivy League:

I am just growing up whilst I am drowning—

And I will offer you to arm wrestle while my dog licks my feet:

Tomorrow I will have to wake up to be evaluated—

But suddenly there will be a flame—

And the seasons will no longer be a contender:

Inevitably,

There will be baseball and Halloween, and then Beowulf will

Have to sleep with his dragon,

Even though none of this will ever be published which means—

Just because

I don't know a thing—but the virgins will be as ripe as the

Bonfires—

And in the adventurous architectures of their linear bowers,

They will seem like they take off their clothes

For the pululations of the moon—but other than that,

They will have trouble breathing—whilst we can make love

And love and watch cartoon and cartoons—

Into the crepuscule as the puppets dance down the shell-rock

Streets of the bleeding afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Blooming Forest

What a life given to me in open measures:  
They crowd outwards like floors of fissures, and her  
Eyes give me no other wonders:  
They stray away from me for other passengers,  
They tell the tale of her flight to fanfares:  
I see her turning in caracoles and archways above the earth,  
Like a ribbon of water transplanted in the air:  
She is the disappearance of an innocent school evaporated  
Into the cumulous of fair heirlooms:  
She is the stolen liquor broken from the rule,  
Christening the pathways of some gypsies who have  
Learned to fly, who are now taking the other way into  
The shade of their lovely mountain:  
What is on the other side is too far away for me to say, but  
She knows every whisper of every lilac under aspen tree:  
She wears every hidden badge that the blooming forest has  
Spoken to her solitarily.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Blowing

The colors who appease us, stay naked as the sun  
Rides across them all day,  
And the foliage curls like the tongues of little deer  
For the salt of innocent palms,  
Even while we are making up excuses for how  
All of this came to be;  
And we cannot see mountains from where we are,  
And we can only suspect to smell the orange groves  
And yet we know that they both really are;  
Standing up to them, and holding the raptures  
Of the indescribable prisms which make up  
All these things which move  
And combust, and they turning alluringly like games  
For sweethearts in a celestial midway,  
As the bums frolick nakedly, panhandling in all that  
Alike glory of the pollinated airs to breathe,  
I can see now the pass ways by which we must come  
Together and to be aware of through  
The invisibilities; and by this I ride the fates to kiss  
You like a wetted superhero across the blowing wildfires  
Of our dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Blowing Wildfires Of Our Dreams

The colors who appease us, stay naked as the sun  
Rides across them all day,  
And the foliage curls like the tongues of little deer  
For the salt of innocent palms,  
Even while we are making up excuses for how  
All of this came to be;  
And we cannot see mountains from where we are,  
And we can only suspect to smell the orange groves  
And yet we know that they both really are;  
Standing up to them, and holding the raptures  
Of the indescribable prisms which make up  
All these things which move  
And combust, and they turning alluringly like games  
For sweethearts in a celestial midway,  
As the bums frolick nakedly, panhandling in all that  
Alike glory of the pollinated airs to breathe,  
I can see now the pass ways by which we must come  
Together and to be aware of through  
The invisibilities; and by this I ride the fates to kiss  
You like a wetted superhero across the blowing wildfires  
Of our dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Blue Lights Of Their Tears

Airplane up in the sky, where do you go  
Now?  
Do you go into her bed, bringing her flowers-  
Do you leap into her window  
Like some kind of saint or Jacobite;  
But it really seems without  
Reason  
As autumn approaches, and green apples  
Are on the tree-  
Where the lake is as peaceful as a graveyard,  
And you are returning home to him  
Time and time again,  
Until Christmas trees are stolen from the hills  
And estuaries  
Lining the backyards of the unspoken for saints  
Who glow with the blue lights of their tears-  
Until it is morning,  
And another dog cries.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Blue Wildebeest Is Sometimes Called Brindled Gnu

Let me feel your truancy- let me be your apple  
Scars, your scabrous efficiency- I want to be your airplane  
Leaping from your gallant stride;  
I'll take off and I'll glide and get a good look down your  
Dress.  
And when I come home, mince me up and make  
Apple sauce- If times are hard, use me to nourish your  
Child. Wipe me off of her bib in deep snow bound passes  
Where you shouldn't have been in the first place,  
But I'll pull you through. Just toss the scarred and less savory  
Bits to the hounds-  
Put on a colorful headdress and wear a rubber tomahawk  
To fool the clowns;  
And now that I am gone, take your men bowling every night,  
And drink green vermilion beer until you intend to see swans,  
And I will float around the lanes like a feathered prawn,  
I will hold recess in your brain,  
And like a doctor hit upon the funny bone to check if you're sane;  
And sometimes see the world when you yawn,  
And as I go back forth on the brindled terraplane of your lawn,  
I will attempt to sell bibles and snake oil to the other souls  
Who are real gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Blueing Churches

The pride of Mars sung in the chicken pocks of  
Leopards;  
And all of the good times that the chicken used to cross the street;  
And all of the hidden spots on the road,  
Going back and forth like lovers getting tattoos or starving  
Off the wild fences:  
The good morning dews, and the palaces that the buses never  
Made it too:  
The soft unsounding winds of hummingbirds, the languid backs  
Of centipedes  
Kicking off the roes of arid minnows while my canines wait  
For me to survive;  
But I will never be making it back there, now that I have found  
Alma's lips,  
I pray that it doesn't rain tomorrow, so that I can go through  
Another common metamorphosis here in my yellow house  
On the move,  
And under all of that somnolent bliss, or any other  
Superfluous word just misused to describe it; the feelings that the  
Lonely dead have on their mind;  
And how I stood beside Alma today, and studied the brownness  
Of her eyes: they have their own jewels that will never be naked,  
And the lighten into stars over the candles of her birthday:  
And I will never know exactly which of the girls she is,  
But I can only sing forever crookedly forever,  
Outside of the blueing churches who should never let me in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bodiless Sky

Now the tomboys are playing with their  
Over burdened kittens in the precipices of caustic  
Traffic,  
And what airplanes we have made, we have sent  
Them away:  
Spilling with joy across the canal, to land and dampen  
Before the lips of tadpoles:  
What will they ever know of girls,  
Or fireworks who themselves die on holidays:  
The world, like unmarked letters bottled to the busied  
Lips of the sea, returns to the sender in time;  
And everyone in their loneliness looks up across  
The kingly tombs of ant mounds and landfills,  
At the stark naked beauty in a blue flag of  
Hopeful surrender across the bodiless sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Body Of My Shell

I toss my bottles of rum to cadaverous Mayflowers;  
And she says that I am so cute because I reject her because of  
Her scars and otherwise hermaphroditisms:  
And then I sing out trilling: the spring gurgles and it is thrilling,  
And the little girls have come back fully fledged from  
Their billings:  
And we have sold some fireworks, fireworks,  
All the time while Erin, Erin was making love with her better and  
Greater surplus of men:  
Oh if I could have been this venal muse's sort of man:  
Oh if I could have stood up and declared my celibacy from shelves  
Of her musings,  
What a caravel this world might me: what a splendid light show  
Mouthing off to the better pricks of the void;  
But that is now how it was, and when I travel alone through the  
Quieting witchcraft places in the more silver parts  
Of New Mexico,  
The only joy I find in the body of my shell, is that not so many fools  
Will have to read these lies,  
And I can always drink alone by myself.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Body Of Your Grandfather's Guitar

I want to take you to Spain,  
And defeat Franco with your machine gun legs.  
This light is so warm and not at all  
Bellicose,  
And yet it is almost too early to think of Christmas,  
And it is really something that I spent time with  
You in Disney World,  
And almost got lost from you,  
And we rode the tram together, but you hardly looked  
Me in the eyes;  
And we didn't go home together,  
And, of course, this is the wound: it is leaking,  
It is like a wind tunnel is Spain,  
And I would like to have you tremulous as a naked  
Olive tree atop the ruby hill where  
That lustrous poet is buried,  
And yet I lost you,  
Like a body loses its soul,  
And now you live and milk another man's child,  
And I am homeless and forced into prostitution with  
Alligators and water moccasins;  
Yet, I remember and miss you,  
You who knew how to play pinball better than all the rest,  
And how you rounded the curves  
With the body of your grandfather's guitar.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bones Hopeful And Playing

Terrorized in the retreats of love:  
Looking at her in the eyes of a wolf surmounting  
The Ferris wheels of another nightmare,  
A sniper in the Christmas trees  
In the vermilion lingerie where all of the dryads disrobe,  
Making the king and princes stutter,  
Turning their crowns into svelte veneer;  
And the mountain just going up and up, across the  
Unruly logic of the Aristotelian spheres,  
Scattering the bones of young hopefuls and debutants through  
Its treeless fields and shoulders  
Who gossip in the lightning storms, upon whom not even  
The clouds can make such transgressions,  
And the canaries get stuck somewhere in the half light of  
A subconscious wish:  
Wishing in the steep and dimming pearlness of  
A world that the seas perpetually raise up worship,  
Into whose stems and jugulars the unending airplanes  
Wilt and crash:  
That they knew the passageways to the victory that she held  
Like a secret through the breathless keyholes of her unspeakable  
Routes, that languished in the skies up there,  
Forever keeping the bones hopeful and playing, like a promise  
Left unresolved.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bonfires Of The Prettiest Unbelievables

Suntans the bobsleds of its architectures  
And I get busier looking younger, spilling my joints  
Underneath the kites that could not take me anyways—up to  
Airplanes and stewardesses  
Into the higher freedoms over patriotisms and yard sales—  
Over the unbeautified spaces that don't yet know  
How to breathe—like goldfish when their bowls are all gone,  
Dreaming of the fossils out on the street,  
Crushed by the feet of cars,  
Beaten by the bonfires of the prettiest unbelievables.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bonfires Of Your Fleshy Store

Soft carnivore, soft as an egg:  
Eat me, as if I were your cousin, a gymnast in your mouth:  
See me going my way deep inside you,  
Nourishment to burn you against the snow:  
Put me as a fire in your brown abdomen:  
Help me be the fleshy carpenter to grow your house  
A little:  
A grape on a vine for a fox: a fire for a moth:  
Let me give the surplus of my body to your beating heart:  
Devour me, picking me out especially from the supermarket:  
Here, I am, right legged- dancing,  
Calling your attention, if not your love:  
You said you loved me, but you feigned your advances  
Toward my door: and the windmills blew steadily,  
Exaggerating the satanic lips,  
But I do not hope for your love, anymore: but to be devoured  
By you, to be incinerated by your insatiable existence,  
To disappear in the bonfires of your fleshy store.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Book By Mark Twain

Hands in the composure making birds  
For lighthouses  
Distracting her in the middle of a  
Rainstorm in the middle of  
The classes in the archaeologies of our high school;  
Alma, you went to school for  
Ten years and then you  
Rode a bus across the frontera  
And made love and babies;  
And now you live across the tracks:  
The train tracks and the dog tracks:  
You live in a house your  
Rabbits disappeared behind,  
Which made your mother, Rosa,  
Happy because they were eating her mango tree;  
How unlucky for them  
And you told me today that your  
Father Marcelino has a pistola,  
So I shouldn't come over  
Even if it is just to leave flowers in your  
Mailbox,  
And it is good that I  
Am too tired anyways,  
But I am drinking,  
Trying to swim in your love,  
While you sleep with your man, darling,  
In your little room  
With your daughter Heidi,  
Which was the name he wanted;  
The little golden key that  
Returned you to him,  
And now your house is  
So quiet and your sisters are sleeping,  
And maybe your son  
Michael has passed out  
Beside the book by  
Mark Twain,  
Which I bought for him.



# The Bosom Of Her Very Soul

Watercolored ways and hills,  
Laughing across the mines of her birthstones:  
All the smoldering like ephemeral steps up to  
Dragons,  
And the airplanes in their warm mobiles for  
Titans;  
In the great star crusted basins of this America  
Where I have stretched and become lost and  
Wept for her,  
Seeing her woebegone beauty above tree line,  
Watching those things that have evaporated like the thoughts  
Of the things she's forgotten swaying in the censers  
That can never be felt like this;  
All the secret crushes of keystones, the beauty trapped above  
The social realm where the skin blushes from burst  
Blood vessels,  
Where the reindeers' cenotaphs nuzzle- Where greater pilots  
Go to when they sleep,  
Over Alma's roof, and all of that soul's young wealth,  
Going up and up emolliating in her favorite colors, in the insouciant  
Banners of a nameless gods' breathing,  
Trapped in the tatters of less impressive holidays:  
The world stands still at the pinnacle of justice for boys who can  
Never grow up,  
Who have left the stoop of the bus stop, abandoning the hypnotized  
Chickens,  
Instead deciding to climb the devil's rock without the lookouts of  
Sun,  
Just to see how she feels in bed with the man she loves: there  
Across the world high up in the aerie's room:  
The bosom of her very soul that even she cannot dream to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bosoms Of The Mountains

It doesn't help to hear the motors of other men  
With anatomies more or less like mine,  
With wives they want or already have—  
Sojourning from trailer parks to apple orchards—  
As I already have—  
The whistling of a handsome tune across the  
Ferris Wheels and Everglades—  
Their daughters at peace or holding their hands  
Next to the sea or underneath some roof of  
A church together, while the heavens at first  
Coagulate and then winnow—  
Like driftwood in the higher echelons of the sea—  
Sharing in a beauty the cannot remark upon,  
And sharing in the cemetery grounds with even still  
Other men who they once defeated or were  
Inevitably defeated by—as above them, mysterious  
Elk crest the hill above the swing sets in their  
Parks—and even higher, almost hidden in the  
Switchback bosoms of the mountains, a fire burns  
That cannot be explained.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bosoms Of The Tombs

Opened seeds slipped from the opened  
Palms of  
Fruit trees buried atop of tin soldiers;  
And now all of this is a fairy tale waiting in the darkness  
For the glitter of new wounds,  
As the yellowed story book opens,  
Stealing the hollowed sunlight from the arms of windmills,  
And the bosoms of the tombs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bosque

The Bosque is beautiful in thunder and fire.  
As thieves wind their spools of copper wires.  
Young lovers are pooling in the dry brushes,  
And long legged jackrabbits go thumping through washes.

The Bosque is beautiful in thunder and fire.  
As the arsonist cuts through the chicken wire.  
The leathery sheriffs wearing boots up to their knees,  
With heavy flashlights search through juniper, picking off flees.

The Bosque is beautiful in thunder and fire,  
As the fireworks sound their charges through the mountains' cragged ire.  
But the llano is open and green,  
And in the monsoon's lamentations it paints a long sheen.

Down through the cracked gullies, slipping from the desolate highways,  
Thatched in a thicket humming of enchanting vermilion poisons.  
Having leapt the concrete drainage, the young farmer on his faint donkey,  
There stitched across the brambling trestles faded in long seasons.

There is the Bosque beautiful in thunder and fire,  
Where young lovers pool in innocent desire,  
But the llano is open and green,  
And in the monsoon's lamentations it paints a long sheen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Both Of Us, And All Of Us The Same

In the rude daylight of my soul,  
I am finally here, while my dogs are panting  
And the centerfolds are pinned up on the walk  
Like cave drawings  
From last years Christmas; and maybe it has to be  
Just you to remember who I was,  
But the grass is always mowed;  
And there always is somebody's light on in suburbia,  
Just as the lion's mouth is always yawning in the estuaries  
Of its favorite tourisms;  
And now it doesn't even have to be the denouement  
Of a week: I can still smell my high school and the bosoms  
And armpits of its lockers,  
And gym rooms, the rubied culprits of its bullies,  
The savage promises of its culprits and alligators long before  
They become the mascots of a maturing and over ripening  
Song;  
While the mice flaunted and sun bathed in little cartooned  
Voices and genuflections  
Until it was finally time for the eulogies and then the grave,  
Even while we cut the cake for the birthdays of  
Our love, our Almas,  
While the winds blew and the lions, trying to remember all of their  
Times, and when they ran four legged through the grass;  
And if there really was ever a time that there was enough wishes  
For the both of us, and all of us the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bottle Of Free Liquor

The bottle of free liquor is gone,  
So maybe the swings  
Are finally empty of little black children,  
And not one of the Mexicans know how much  
Money I have saved-  
Not quite enough, for a gringo:  
And the airplanes are effortlessly priceless,  
And the water moccasins  
Are making love to the fresh water otters;  
And you are in Colorado,  
Or you are in Spain  
Celebrating your own country's new years,  
And Joe's girlfriend died by a car bomb  
Way back in fifth grade,  
And I just want to bust a nut and effervesce:  
It is the easiest thing to do,  
And since the invention of our common species  
I doubt a second has gone by without one of our  
Brilliant cousins  
Doing it in bedrooms or lighthouses;  
And now you are looking so good that you've  
Made me tattooed and you smell like  
Champagne in a soda fountain;  
And this isn't real,  
But unicorns are still very beautiful,  
And I know how to drive,  
And it's not like an ocean separates us,  
And I doubt there is more than one or two olive  
Groves or dead poets worth mentioning between us,  
So I can get there  
In a day or two, but you would still be looking too  
Beautiful to mention.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Bottle Of My Empty Soul

I want you again, the bottle of my empty soul,  
Of my penniless art—  
A few words given to an empty theatre,  
Everyone else outside and enjoying  
The nude daylight given  
To them,  
Spread eagle in kisses of gladness—  
These sorrowful words kept indoors,  
Torn apart and missing the bulk of their  
Dictionary:  
Still, they can hear airplanes going upwards in  
The sky,  
The ethereal zoetrope the insatiable foxes  
Leap towards—and think, triaged,  
That this is what they want as well—  
As women as beautiful as mermaids drive themselves  
Around,  
Selling what they have to sell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bottom Of An Amputated Sea

Okay, I think that woman loves me  
From the patience of her open transom,  
Or she has been staring for so long:  
Doesn't she know that I could spell for the love  
Of her:  
That I would overspill and flood my love deep into  
Her crescent before she had a good second to understand:  
I would break out of school for her, and get  
Into fist fights down in the deep and runny valleys beside  
The ice-cream truck:  
As Sharon looks up from her tit sucking, maybe she is  
Seeing be past the science museum and all of its mannequins  
Of heavenly bodied astronauts:  
Maybe even past the mermaid and the butterfly house  
In the sweet emptiness of the zoo:  
Maybe she is seeing me coming my hair outside my own  
Window of this new yellow hotel;  
Or maybe my words are just as empty as a car resting nearer  
The bottom of an amputated sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bottom Of The Wine Glass

This room is all carefully worked marble,  
And this is how it goes:  
Generations of sallow faced progenitors line the  
Halls, stare forwards at one another in no  
Particular order.  
I walk down mumbling, chewing my meal, hoping  
They will not notice my stunted vocabularies  
Out of the corner of my eye.  
Though they have no life, I can hear them whispering  
Their concern: now that I am thirty and do not  
Have my own business, nor even my own head,  
What will I do,  
And I echo them like the muted shadow of an airplane,  
The only one in the sky: What will I do,  
Now that I am broken porcelain and all the girls I  
Have laid eyes on have taken their turns upon the high  
Dive, doing their disappearing acts into the sunny water?  
I do not even know I can love anymore,  
For the textures of life's recipes are strange, barren though  
Colorful, and fleeting into shadow only to reappear again  
As they were, though I know they can never be that way again.  
What could I sell to change this, or live in to fill me up?  
They are looking at me without blinking; my uncles and  
Aunts are reproductive cannibals, they have desalinated  
And germinated, and now their spore walk their earth  
Pantomiming their shadows:  
In the hall there is no fresco, because we are poor,  
The dirt in the barren forest, and I am forced to look at the  
Gross amphibious bellies of airplanes farting like horizontal  
Cloud banks through the sky, until they disappear into  
The rosy shell of sunset; and as I keep going down,  
My ancestors are getting harrier, shorter, and more like  
My grandfathers, though they would not believe me-  
I could tell them that all I have is this, the more and the less,  
And I think about them only after I get to the bottom of the wine  
Glass, for they are like other heavenly bodies when compared to me:  
We started out from the juxtaposed coitus at the fairgrounds,  
Some sort of fantastical ride where spores flew from his lips  
Into her purse and settled on her dollar bills, and out of that

Material, we poured forth, kissing and hugging and playing  
Doctors, only to spool away into different states and identities,  
So now we appear to one another like stars clustered like  
Smear'd jam across the abyssal shore:  
Looking at each other from across the dinner table on holidays,  
We wonder if there really is life there, beneath the cool marble  
Eyes that look like ours.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Boundaries Of Its Adolescent Life

There was a battle somewhere over the mountain  
That could never be numbered—  
While there were billboards,  
And some woebegone artists put more nettles into  
An opalescent pine forest that could never strike out  
So far,  
And I suppose you saw her at your doorway or  
Out of the window of your car—  
Just a passing fancy—just a whim of light—  
Just another beautiful advertisement to pass away  
Into the night—  
Momentarily she was real- or she was a candle burning—  
She was one of the numbers leading up to your  
Birthday—  
While you sat with your knees pressed to your tiny brown  
Breasts—and to toads ululated forever more—  
That one there was a tower inside a cathedral that  
Burned and burned without ever having to give up  
Or to learn about the absolving beautifies that swept  
The boundaries of its adolescent life away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bountiful Heavens

And it goes on like this—  
Sad inventions inside the hemispheres of  
What light has to give—  
The crisscrosses of bodies causing a  
Dilapidation of shadows—  
The work houses trundling underneath the  
Windmills  
Whom themselves kowtow to  
The daisies—it becomes so far a wreck  
That finally and eventually they have  
To unearth the king:  
Which one is he, his mound as rich as all  
Of the conquistadors sunken  
Underneath the corner convenient store:  
The waves giving kisses to  
His elbows, as I watch you, some kind of  
Epaulet—until I have to awaken,  
For there is school tomorrow—  
And I will have to partake in all of the  
Savage and strange romances of all of  
The littlest boys and girls—  
Strange shadows that sing and wreath in  
Unison, undressing underneath the benchmarks of  
Their eyes—  
As the toys of their hearts live in the movie theatres  
And the amusement parks that they can't wait  
To get to all beneath the bountiful heavens of  
Another beautiful day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bouquets Of Coffins

The beautiful denouement of these things in the contradiction  
Of their short births,  
Is that they will live forever if they have caught a breath over  
The skin of vagabond wildflowers:  
They will go on and on in the sweet littlish rows of ancestors,  
Trying out some times  
While the populations of sweet young high schools so too  
Meander;  
And I have shared my parts for her, even if she has not turned  
Up; it was an easy job where the traffic runs, and I stand off in  
The cold slabs of easements and check the inconsistency of stars  
For her, the wishes that do not run away,  
The grains of salt that clustering like baby's breath around the  
Blindnesses of life, while I hold out for her,  
And give her these pieces of me, like sharp bones underneath the  
Bouquets of coffins that can never end.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Boys I Never See

Visions of you in the courtyard  
Dreaming of band practice, of boys and other  
Girls—Haven't you both your friends  
And your virginity,  
While I have the sun on my body spindling  
In the hallways—passing through the  
Same gallant contraptions that you know  
But do not think upon:  
Ownerless, you go home to your mother  
Behind the supermarket where you can  
See the Virgin Mary in the street lights when  
You go out of doors, brown skinned,  
As rich as a penny—To make eyes and pretend  
To kiss the boys I never see outside of school.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Boys Who Love Your Skin

Brown as the boys who love your skin,  
Who play naked as matches across the misbehavior of your heavens—  
Who conduct strange lassoes trying to beat the cruise ships to  
The hurricanes—  
Drinking rum and skinny dipping in the Dry Tortugas—until something  
Is finally ignited like the very first baseball game and cannibalisms  
For old time's sake—and that very world that you forced  
Me to develop from forever with the airplanes swinging like marionettes  
Over the make believe sky of a banshee—  
And the fire coming down through the forest—  
Well, whatever happened eventually—this is the very end of the golden book—  
And now your child looks like he will never desire to enter a cathedral,  
And the sky over the ocean is a little less blue, because something in  
The refracted light has gone away—and the pain sings in the harmony of  
A chorus—through the backyards of the moonlight  
The pilots continue to admire even as they go blind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bravest Of Men

Maybe we will love each other more in march—  
As we each cross over individually  
The fields the need to be mowed—not wanting to  
Disturb the sleeping saints or anyone else  
Who is so preposterous to live there:  
The same way that the newest of graffiti  
Finds its way onto the desks of my classroom,  
As my children shuffle in:  
I don't know anything about them, but they  
Are like cartoons made to play in a zoetrope  
Across a dying man—just little tricks of my theatre  
Which seems somehow to yet survive,  
Preposterously across all of the newly wedded heavens  
Of New Mexico, and the most saintliest of deserts  
Where my father still may sell fireworks—  
But now he is up in Canada, brushing down his  
Horses—they glow for him, and represent something else  
To the world that he knows - more than the words  
Of the scholars that flit and splashed against him—  
The acidity of their salts have disappeared into the snow storm,  
While I work and teach from the memories of his  
Echoes—but it seems so strange—like pornographic  
Science-fiction—genuflected to the pit and the rind  
Of the rattlesnake that we, eventually, inevitably—  
And unfortunately—and both at the same time,  
Must somehow both strive to be  
The bravest of men.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bravest Of The Braves

Bodies burn with yellow justice,  
Or they have just been doing: doing doing,  
And all of these songs are their offspring,  
Just as there are so many people  
Overspilling:  
People, people:  
The vines are ripened but the fruit is untouchable;  
Their luscious bodies are guarded by submachine guns,  
And the pipes are rusting;  
And the crowd has really turned out to  
See the girls curling on the sea;  
Her bodies curling on the waves, and the way she `  
Has placed herself:  
The greenness of her body's green makes us slaves,  
And we wish to touch ourselves like the finest  
Instruments;  
And the leafless bodies beneath us in the weaves,  
Going with the gentleness that can never be thought;  
And above our sea the transoms are opened  
Like concessions for the bravest of our naves  
Who might kick themselves high enough  
On the swing,  
To touch her curling waves, to kiss her brow;  
And to see the keystone of her ways lavishing in the evaporated  
Grottos of the waves,  
The beautiful savior who can always save  
The bravest of the braves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Breath In My Body

Reams of rockets and  
Of kaleidoscopes: watching Alma eating the lunch I bought  
For her  
As we work together five days a week, and lushing on the  
Expectations of love with her tomorrow,  
Returning to my nightly work in reverence of her, my first  
Consumated muse  
Who I will have children with and a good long life,  
Traveling in the tandem of Siamese bicycles to the seaside parks  
And under the insouciant meanderings of the clouds  
Who can mean anything;  
Though to the both of us always mutually, two butterflies  
Fluttering un intruded on by their previous maggot forms:  
Resting quite happily across the smooth stone filigree  
Of graveyards:  
Even now she has five bouquets of roses that I bought or took  
For her breathing their last breaths in her crowded little house;  
And today was her mother Rosa's birthday,  
And I am just a drifting thought without her, a hobo in the airconditioning  
Of a little dream paid for upfront with cash,  
While her body sings to me even while asleep with another man,  
Because I know that she doesn't even like to read,  
But reads of her body in these words, and says she loves me now,  
As the days come and pass,  
Proving to me my soul, the breath in my body, the wine in my glass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Breath Of This Body's Hands

Bodies push as they feel:

Bodies sweat and move: Bodies in cars, bodies in  
Coffins, bodies in homes have so much to prove:

Bodies arising like flowers for your senses:

Bodies over the campus; bodies in rest, and bodies in coitus,  
Bodies searching for a light, and a light house,

While all day and all night the sea clips mercilessly like apathetic  
Funhouses for bodies;

And I have not won so many prices as to have won you, and all my  
Lamps are doused in the night hoping to sneak up on your flesh,  
To smell you breathing outside of your home that the cops also  
Patrol;

And it might be said by the motivations of my own body that I should  
Win you,

Because you are this body's muse; you are the lamp of its soul,  
But that is only because I am selfish, and you are too beautiful for  
Any man: and so you shimmer your constellations, and in your  
Greedy metamorphosis of water and of land, you disappear  
Into the daydreams of traffic, like the ever-loving filament between  
The breath of this body's hands.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Breath To Go On Living

This is not a game, this is my soul being cleaned on  
A rock; it is already very fine, and it is breathless:  
You who should use all that there is, the very best of it  
To cloth yourself and feed your children,  
To make it through the snowbound pass without having to  
Starve for the more of it;  
This is what I have given you the best know how to make you  
Finish the game the champion,  
Or to go down well perfumed into the aquarium of a slippery rub  
With your husband, to love him as your lubber;  
Because I am dead, and I am gone; and this is just the material  
Of my empathy,  
Like a fir lined palpation enjoying the afterthought of your heather:  
This is my last breath, wanting more liquor,  
And my last poem coming into the night, not expecting any other;  
And I am just the terrapin taking shelter underneath the  
Mothering overpass,  
Expecting to see you and no other; while you have slipped away  
Into your own pearly forts oiled to the nines by your  
Oily men, touching you in the reciprocations of the liner notes  
Of your shadows;  
All the landscaping that has breathed its new life underneath  
The dolls house of your moony childhood;  
Turning like a merry-go-round until it has turned so many times  
As to be a windmill or a merry-go round;  
And then turning the of the lifeless into the living, until I look up  
And unearthed see your eyes like the highest point of waves  
Caressing the waves, and through their sincere reflection find  
The breath to go on living.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Breeze Cuffs

Death begins like this, and all imperfections empty,  
As the toilet flushes underneath the naked light bulb  
Far out on the naked prairie: Thus, I should not  
Begin at all. I should not walk high in the snow to see my lover,  
To carve chunks off us to feed the busked in wolves;  
Stain on the white sheet made by god, for his dinner or for what;  
I could lay out my wrist, begin that scar- She would laugh,  
Not knowing what it was: A change, a goddess in any outfit.  
She has one for each day of the year, a designer cocoon,  
A closet. She is metamorphosis.  
I am immobile, and I am rust: more and more,  
And I had thought I had submitted, that I had come down  
With my dogs, and driven off her, went home and had dinner,  
Got fat and well educated from reading my books by the fire;  
I had thought that my relatives understood where to bury me,  
Where the gun was in its drawer where I needed it,  
And the whiskey: Thus I had lined out the final love letter,  
Used up the ink of the heliotrope spore: Cast downwards those  
Things that failed me, the things I couldn't get into: But I am not  
Down at all, and it is such a night that one needs a fire, needs  
A soul; but I do not have it if it is not already out,  
and my dogs' howls are joined by  
The bristling snouts of the busked in wolves, so what should they say  
When they poke me on the slab? That I was voiceless because they  
Ate my box, and that I shouldn't have begun at all, because Death begins  
Like this, taking little steps toward the innocent whore;  
And I began like this, little cuts of the wrist; and now I am as stone is  
Underneath the bus, underneath the floor, thinking of her in little cuts  
A little more; the bull weevil awaiting chrysalis, the newborn waiting  
For his muff, the child for its whore,  
And will be even as the yard grows high up from the floor;  
This I sing as the breeze cuffs, and will cuff for evermore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Breeze To Me And Her Alike

The breeze brushes my lips as  
It brushes hers;  
Whitman might say it paints the  
Throats of leaves the  
Same in different orchards,  
Be they wild or tamed.  
The librarians and bus drivers  
Don't care.  
They just want you returned home  
On time:  
Coquina pathways- rattlesnakes,  
Orange trees.  
The breeze says to me and her  
Alike,  
"Youth, youth- awaken up-  
You are no longer young,  
And she has long since gone away."

Robert Rorabeck



# The Brevity Of Life's Orgasm

Even if you had a wife, surely,  
She would consume more than you-  
The republicanism of her inner thighs,  
Consuming:  
Asking so much more than what you could  
Retain for yourself,  
Part of the multitudinous remnants of the waning  
Petroleum Epoch- A self sustaining monarch,  
Both eating and farting more than you  
(Or your dogs) And taking up the bed, asking  
You to do away with your childish isolationisms,  
And to clean the dishes,  
Going to sit with the popular kids in the back  
Of the bus, leaving you troubled and no longer dimpled:  
All of this for the brevity in life's orgasm,  
The sougning of the Virgilian folds: war, super,  
And gift giving, and her eyes as lucent as waxy persimmons,  
When you could do the job yourself with  
Alacritive propensity: the janitor raising his  
Flag pole with effervescent bunting, your own patriotism  
That she would only work on sporadically after the  
Greater necessities of her sister's wedding,  
The purple soap-operas of her slothful behoovings, when  
There are girls right now working down Military Trail,  
Industriously practiced,  
Who could just so quickly come to make you realize  
Into empirical, the guilty pleasure  
Of the girl sitting beside you most Shakespearian,  
Her utensils rhyming;  
Busty, crowding into the harem of this,  
Your peripheral vision,  
While the object of your legal and binding union sits  
Pontificating across the table, where the bill will soon  
Come that you must take care of- something mundane,  
Lest joyful than a sonnet.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bribe's Price

Now we sell out,  
And if we've done it right  
We'll soon be fattened by our gold,  
And can call the mischief in  
Diana's woods our paramours  
Fanning in evening-

All of this is ours,  
If we know the continent,  
And even the eyes of the girl  
You once loved  
You can own again,  
Because we've paid the  
Bribe's price-

As we go away,  
Do not look directly into the sun,  
Falling ahead of us, escaping,  
For now is not the time  
To combat that cowardly foe,  
The only one who survived-

Let the unknown world cuddle him,  
For in the morning we  
Will be gleaming kings,  
And we will only laugh when he returns,  
And send our air-force out to blind him-

Now I know where she lives,  
And so do you,  
We should jump the backyard fences,  
Like little boys enjoying the somber game,  
To share a smile between us two  
As we unlatch the secret door,  
And claim her while she is yet asleep-

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brickwork Of Seashells

The crow flies over other stanzas- over windmills  
And azaleas smelling as sweetly  
As the armpits of my fathers fathers- as the fruits  
Are eaten to the pits,  
As the overly frantic traffic finally stumbles home to  
Trailer parks,  
And abuse; while the waves moan brownly like a  
Washing machine gowning seaweed over itself;  
As Alma finally gets off work and drives to a home  
Where her two children wait for  
Her like packages for Christmas: unfolded, she thinks nothing  
Of me, or the magic tricks of rabbits  
Who are all gone anyways, and their flashing love- swallowed  
Up by the rattlesnakes or the conquistadors all the same,  
And by their work she goes to sleep, filigreed in a patina of  
Fighting resorts that swell around her like the brickwork of  
Seashells,  
Continuing her story until she should ever awaken one morning  
And leave to never come home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bridal Harem For The Holy Ghost

Composures in the quiet rain,  
Slicking the vociferous traffics until they  
Pure demurely and finally into stillness  
In their carports like castanets;  
And my mind glides like a kite over a terrapin  
Sated in his slow, funny moods,  
That he has been to California and done nothing  
There but made love to a ghost hunchbacked in  
The tall weeds,  
Or played in the mystified parks after closing hours,  
Because he couldn't think to get a real job:  
And there was a hill at the end of the little town  
With a road that first went over and then behind  
The rise,  
And it could have gone to anywhere, but he never  
Supposed to see,  
For it seemed then that all places were the same,  
All liquors for a bribe,  
But he still thought he would find love from time  
To time,  
At traffic stops, or in his quieting times,  
And maybe he would have if he'd been able to enter  
The skin of another story,  
But sorrowfully this one is his, and all the pretty girls  
Are sweet grapes tremulous on the vine,  
Always dancing and smiling down to him lying that  
They are just moonlight,  
Not giving into him or even coming close,  
But stopping there, well gibbous, as if they might one  
Day fall into his sallow heart,  
When they are only the bridal harem for the holy  
Ghost.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Briers Of Foxes

A lack of children underneath the billboards:  
And I will be going to see my dying grandfather tomorrow—  
Going up into the football stadiums of the  
Appalachians where the ancient gods pressed their feet  
And made bootleg wine in between the dens of bears  
And the briers of foxes  
And the holes of snakes:  
In that world where dirtballs tumble,  
Where the greenest mountains bend their knees to look  
At the housewives wearing diamonds pressed into their  
Cars—up that asphalt way taking us back halfway to  
Some latchkey childhood—  
And in those whispers where children mumble,  
Mouths filled with huckleberries and wombs of unknown  
Women that glitter with marble and sawdust—  
Where one white horse kicks,  
Made of porcelain—  
Tossed in the glorious splash of weeds of wild perfumes  
Hidden at the end of a road only the jackrabbits travel.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bright Copper Crosses Of Conquistadors

Close set the stores and hide  
The abdomen of my laziness. Feed chickenpox  
To alligators,  
And go outdoors, brown bagging liquor and fireworks.  
Go to the head of your class and stink  
Up the place.  
Look at pictures of the amber roadie who  
Fauns the chestnut eyes of her shallow  
Conviction over the muscular tattoos of  
Bouncers, of Jews- Make fun of her conviction:  
Show her how you can be a swan too;  
By holding your breath, turn it green,

Go out into the middle of the school,  
Get dizzy and scream- Look down the crinoline  
Blouse of the harpsichord substitute-  
On your free time bight your tongue and scribble out  
Novels to her freshman joy,  
But otherwise tell her she should be working concessions  
At the roller rink,  
With those legs, with those legs!

Misspell to her three times in once sentence,  
And wait to hear a mouthful of her wildflower convictions.  
She will say that those boys are rowdy swans to her,  
Like big, meaty hibiscus; and she goes to them the way a little  
Princess goes to sleep with her frog princes in  
The aloe of the carport of drowning cars;  
So don't tell her how to fly,  
But sell to her things she doesn't need, pointed obnoxious  
Poems she doesn't need to hear,  
And tell her you'll be right back- Go over beneath the  
Australian Pines and use the crumbling pornography  
Inside the junked cars to pleasure yourself.  
Range into the dunes, converse with cenotaphs of confused mermaids,  
The awol GI Joes praying down wind of  
The bright copper crosses of conquistadors

When you are back, don't tell her a thing.

She won't even look at you; and smile-  
Feed the gold-fish to the swish-tailed cat,  
Because you already knew she wouldn't finish  
This anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bright Wombs Of Sea

It happening or galloping up  
From a graveyard of horses  
There in the armpit of Florida with the  
Tourism of hummingbirds-  
Whispers said to the patina of my face:  
The scars left over of me as  
A teenager:  
And my truck burns with gasoline- carries  
Along an iceless field- continues on the  
Mountains of Florida  
The buzzards and the seagulls circle-  
And the seahorses gallop in the bright wombs  
Of sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Brighter Stage

The night maelstroms in its unisex cathedral;  
Isn't that always beautiful, like a candelabrum on an  
Unbanishable ship above the students' heads:  
Those boys and girls who are always young at heart,  
And they go leaping to and from their professors  
Like warm glass that the artisans' whisperings brush;  
They are being made in a young man's womb:  
They are striking out right into the heart of campus  
And the books sit warmly as if in a rookery six stories  
Above their heads:  
All of the stories of gods and goddesses that can be  
Remembered:  
And they sit there resting in the rains, their scars flaming  
Like gasoline over teffilin; and soon they will rejoin their  
Early life's loves: And soon they will be gone forever,  
But they were here once, learning about the causes of  
Become:  
And they will be here forever articulating to the fibrillose shadows,  
Because I have caught them here like tadpoles  
Where they were circumnavigating through the shallows,  
Waiting to truly form and set out like hooded pioneers  
Struck forth upon another even brighter stage.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brightest And The Darkest

A letter to the doctors of the plagiarisms:  
I have found you,  
And my sophomore teacher accused me of you,  
Mrs. Brown:  
And now I teach the same requiem to  
The students who are those offspring—  
The rings of Saturn's orbit,  
Of the angels that seldom dream, or are  
Dreamed about—  
But there they are—you cannot see them  
From your telescope,  
But your horses are afraid of them—they smell  
Of the solstice and the equinox,  
Of both the brightest and the darkest—  
And they remain above the highways,  
As above the housewife's cul-de-sacs—  
They are the heirlooms of our daydreams,  
And they are very unspecific:  
Never talked about or wished upon by all of the  
Heavens—but they are the spotted wells  
In each of us that we have never—never found.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brightest Lights Of Your Most Beautiful Of Bedrooms

Bodies who burn beneath the clouds:  
And bodies who swear that they were never bodies;  
And bodies:  
Bodies in Colorado, and bodies right here: The night turns out  
To be a gypsy, spying with all of her curses, and yet so beautiful:  
While Alma has promised to be right here come sunrise of  
Tomorrow,  
And something more beautiful I could never ask for,  
While the airplanes leap straight over holidays,  
And all of the tourists graze and glaze like housewives sweating  
Right out like marmalade on white bread:  
Alma, I am think of you; and Alma, I am dreaming of you:  
A pieta in your sweet grotto,  
With Michael and Heidi succulent on either of your sweet tits,  
Like the deepest virgin in her deepest grottos,  
And you told me you wanted a boob-job, even though I told you  
That my littlest sister had already had one,  
And she was none the more prettier for it.  
And now I am singing, Alma, and now I am swaying from limb to  
Limb,  
While all the tourists get their way to Canterbury,  
And I whisper in your sweet brown ear: I whisper to you,  
As if into the boudoir of a seashell that you are always and still  
The most beautiful and sweetest thing that I have ever wanted so  
Far,  
And until always; Alma, while the lighthouses sashay for  
Sailors,  
Alma, while the apples bloom, and the fish come up to blossom  
Underneath the brightest lights of your most beautiful  
Of bedrooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brightest Of Eyes

Fawns who play with bottle caps and fireworks,  
And Alma is sleeping with her man and her small child  
Down Cherry road,  
While unicorns listen to mermaids glittering in the boudoir  
Of waves:  
And this is how she moves: this is how she goes,  
While the traffic sparkles,  
And everything that has to go lights up for awhile  
Above the playgrounds that still keep the children with  
The brightest of eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brightest Sorrows

When the houses are so near the school  
That they can believe nothing else but what  
The teachers seem to spell—  
With their lecterns rising like torches in  
The morning's graves—  
The children grow up so near the crematoriums—  
And I watch them,  
Paper dolls kissing matches,  
Pollinated by helicopters and sometimes  
Hurricanes—  
Blonde—blonde children groomed to be  
Housewives and business men—  
Amnesiacs the busses swallow—  
They will arrive today  
And again tomorrow—  
Neon cenotaphs of society's brightest sorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brightness Of Everything

This might as well be the nursery rhymes of your children:

Alma,

We have already made love, and I am a good man-

I am already below my station, while you are kissing the

Forbidden gods and their acrobats,

But another word I have been struggling so hard for escapes

Me;

And maybe because I am again the greatest of celibate fountains,

While Sharon tramps home to her longest legged man through

The sincere and heavy snows:

That is what she does, Alma, if you will allow me to describe her

To you:

She is a sweet athlete who is also an artist who knows how

To sculpt and kiln clay, and that this the word I meant to say

To you,

Alma: she is something that neither of us is not, Alma:

Athlete, and maybe given enough time the both of us will starve under

The sun and the moon, while the mirages of the desert multiply,

But otherwise maybe we will make love for another time,

While I send my otherwise hopes out in another bottle:

Maybe Sharon will read this, Alma: maybe she will have something

To tell her sweet child-

And maybe you will read this Alma, maybe you will like my

Another attempt to captivate and tame the unexplainable reasons for

The blooming graveyards of my love,

For amidst their grinning tombstones hold the brightness of everything

That I have to live.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Broken Down School Bus

There seems to be a song running along itself in a dark  
Cul-de-sac,  
While I hear noises: some of them my own,  
Playing out next to the sea that is going away, spilling  
And roiling in the catastrophes  
Of the unalarming cenotaphs—until a fresh wound  
Can be seen pulsating brilliantly in the sky—  
And the last headhunters echo—  
Continually—after the girls have already vanished—  
Sped up and become the brilliant plagiarisms of  
Another anarchist's classroom:  
The day speeds by, fed up by the inebriations of the aborigines—  
And another professor makes room  
For the hidden masturbations: this world seems  
A joy as it thrives away—further and further away from  
The childhood where your little brother died—  
As if even this fallacy could seem to be part of your memory—  
Until over the stars the constellations of the anatomies of  
Better placed animals were reawakened and sang to themselves  
Underneath the broken down school busses  
Even as it rained and the loveliest of stewardesses became  
Reawakened.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Broken Promise

Pillboxes of jovial mercury  
Wrestles with modern weaponry that is past its  
Prime:  
This is how you begun this this time, how anything  
Can be begun  
With words flung up to the wind, like the surcease of  
Juggling swords or just like  
Going down from the garden to the darkness of the  
Valley,  
Turning your back mutually, but not wanting to turn,  
Knowing that this is not the good way home,  
Knowing that this is darkness enfolded;  
This is the dead sailor clutching toward the dead sailor  
In the peachy surf  
So it doesn't really matter how the world flooded for the  
Second time:  
This is all of the great oceans flooded without an arc;  
Or this is the scriptures for gold fish;  
Or this is the broken promise.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Brownd Apiaries Of My Last Muse

Now I can see that there is a tank in the sun:  
Filled with bees and yellow jackets  
Protecting their honey—  
It is a wild basket up there in sky—an Easter  
Bonnet  
Where even the kindest of amphibians wish  
To jump and to die:  
There is the yellow flag I tried to steal away  
From him—  
There is the train's stowaway—  
There is the blinding javelin:  
That was never mine—I admit, I tried to steal  
The omelets away from that cerulean god—but  
He smelled me out before  
This could become a really lucrative fairy tale—  
And now it is just a song of unproductive measure—  
The brown apiaries of my last muse  
Have gone up to Ocala to enjoy her inlaw's fair  
Weather—  
But for tomorrow will be another for me—  
The amber in my glass  
Shall answer to my lips accordingly—and she will  
Awaken—plagued as she does—  
A flightless bird—a loveless dove.

Robert Rorabeck

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A flightless bird—a loveless dove.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brownd Sunlight Of Alma's Boisterous Eyes

Now you have to go to sleep with your man,  
So that it what you do,  
And you promised me you didn't want for anymore children.  
But you still let me make love unprotected to you,  
As if the airplane was never touching down,  
So happy with so many imperviously naked stewardesses  
Flitting from the ports like dripping flowers,  
While behind them the mountain is another thing entirely:  
Monstrous,  
With hickies on its shoulders, like mine, the diminishing birthmarks  
You gave us in between lunch and supper time,  
That will melt like the snowdrops, like the tears metamorphosised  
From the brown sunlight of Alma's boisterous eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Brownness Of His Unwise Sea

My body does not know the places that your body rests:  
The wishing wells, the oasis's-  
When you lay down beside him- Alma, what is it that you know:  
How has it become official:  
When it rains,  
Or when there is a forest fire, and all of your rabbits disappear:  
And yet the very next day you go shopping,  
And lay your whispers to my ear- in a fieldtrip that you will  
Never admit to,  
Just as you wont admit to my own scars- sometimes I have followed  
After you into churches you had already committed to going away  
From:  
But I found you in the dismissive caesuras- and in the ill perfections  
Of the murals above your roof  
Where I once slept for two hours four or five months ago:  
And then had to come down  
And walk back home- and now I wonder what betides you,  
Beside the firelight of your television, and your room:  
How the keen bodies will rush beside you tonight, cooing into  
Your languishing maelstrom,  
Brindled from the kilns you have more than once let me know:  
And even if it has happened as many times as to take up all of  
The birthdays of my years,  
We still must live forever across the borders of our tongues- except  
That I have tasted yours- and though without wholly understanding,  
Have enjoyed as often as the cadaverous sailor  
Slips away full heartedly into the brownness of his unwise sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Budded Guillotine

Will you help me kill myself?  
I've got the fire ax,

You've got those eyes  
That I can remember,  
Those lips which spill gasoline,  
Those legs which outrun  
All studded law,

And that man.  
I know- that man,  
The amusement parks with  
My life on the line....  
You're holding his hand.

Some night in soft California,  
The sea kissing the sun,

Its so easy how you'll do it,  
I know  
And appreciate hearing  
The eulogies of thoughtless euthanasia,

My heart poisons  
As your lips entwine  
Like a spy's garret...

The deer stumble towards the  
Glowing swimming pool,

The night flowers bloom.  
The woman is singing French.

I don't even need a tool,  
Your name spoken to you  
In the quiet apertures of those pleasure stung interludes....  
The budded guillotine

I shouldn't hear it,

But I do,  
Each humid wave pricking against your resting ear,  
The purple thorn pushes deeper in the ancient wound,

The blade coming down,  
As if you were his child alone in his woodcutter's embrace,

And it'll do just fine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Budding Gravity Of Our Drinking Fountain

Returned to the pinioned basins  
Emaciated with silver, I recreate myself into something  
I cannot remember,  
Someone who I have always wanted, like a four door  
Suburbia  
With pretty children and a rich young pool. To be the  
Baby sister's Indian giver,  
To disremember the golden rule: To sit up all night on the  
Influential roof and drink to myself, thinking that I could never  
Get any higher:  
To fornicate with my eyes with my wife. To go to eat with  
Her for dinner,  
To disremember who the conquistadors impacted underneath the  
Bellies of the canals and rivers,  
And to call the leaping humiliations my gods, to give up on  
Snowflakes, and to hurry on the migrations of butterflies and  
Their mimics:  
To live in the estuaries bled from a stuck high school.  
To have married the very woman I remember singing like Io  
So distant and so near, trapped in the budding gravity of our  
Drinking fountain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Bullfighters Who Walked Like Peacocks

Now I don't even know that I am here,  
Because all the girls have gone off over the hills on  
Their hands and knees  
Following the smoking guns;  
And the sky isn't the blue that you would know,  
But the movie theatre was all mine:  
It pantomimed my soul, and all I could think of  
Was rain and fireworks,  
And the sweet old times going away to school and  
College,  
And making it all the way to the tumbling sea between classes,  
And getting drunk with dragons  
Only so I could come back to those hallways,  
Searching for your perfumed echoes  
That whispered from the clays that were given form by  
Your hands,  
The same as some god mothered both of us from the gardens  
Of the perfect muse,  
Out into the open streets  
Where the bullfighters walked like peacocks,  
Not know what it was they were going to do.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Burning Graveyard

Waking up tomorrow in Mexico, lost in the festoons of  
Her curtains,  
And tangled with the netting near the sea's shore:  
The sun coming down expectantly-  
The entire place a voyeur of the burning graveyard of  
Our love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Burning Latitudes

Booming this way in their hills,  
The flowers there are miners  
Of the sun; of course,  
They are:  
What else would they be  
Doing,  
Skipping school as the  
Airplanes come and  
Come,  
Across the burning recesses,  
In cardinals of the  
Air,  
Deciding across the burning  
Latitudes  
And increasing, increasing there.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Burning Light

Abusing themselves by the other planets at their  
Games,  
The conquistadors falling down the hills like mumbling ants,  
And nothing that was sure footed is any longer:  
But the kites come down easily like strayed pets  
Who no longer feel her feral promise,  
The way bees sometimes feel the awful jubilation of spring  
Far beneath the armpits of airplanes,  
Where the paper delicate flowers are airing their lingerie,  
And waiting for the soiree of a good time;  
And where the biplanes of angels come, clocking the earth,  
As if counting the traffics of her choreographed waves  
That are out in the open like some kind of fire, as the blades  
Of grass are another kind of fire  
Curling up to the sandy wells of terrapins and aquiline snails,  
Trying to make their rudeness known up to the doors of  
The courting girls who have all gone inside  
Expecting the rain, stroking their glorious hairs time and  
Time again  
In the burning light of the kerosene.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Burning Sugarcanes

I listen to my father relieve himself in the bathroom.  
Conquistadors bending down like penitent flowers  
Kissing the first lips of waves,  
Like nothing else you can find in a bookstore;  
And then we are done, like a report handed from door to  
Door,  
And then finally like a mismanaged fact given to the  
Police man;  
And the beauty of the world is that there are always kittens  
And that they are always dying;  
And I want a house with a pool:  
I don't want to be savage anymore; or if I fail I want trains  
Jumping like the lips of fireworks all past  
Saint Augustine,  
Across country limping in straight lines all the way up  
To the heads of Colorado where dreams grow  
Like  
Cauliflower on its monkey vines; and then I would throw  
For a bus and a heavy jacket- The way Kelly chose to wore my  
Flannel today;  
And I can think of all the days I barely survived, chained to  
Something or other,  
Looking up into the lips of the divine; and then a little ways  
West driving to sod farms, wishing that there  
Could be more barefoot games,  
And roses growing here, roses and roses weeping and true  
Like maidens lost and amnesiac out amidst  
The burning sugarcanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Busied Rooms Of Her Unoccupied Heavens

Laughing through the games and attending the news  
While the jasmine blooms  
Over the narcoleptic lakes: lakes so beautiful and yet no one  
Thought to write a poem across them,  
But this is my séance to them,  
Even if my father doesn't care:  
This, another way to awaken into the languishing shadows,  
Breathing shallowly—and across the many directions  
The airplanes cross:  
Another way to believe in the perfumes over the circuses and  
The family—  
They are smiling through mirrors where they have had to  
Buy themselves—and across the unholy mountains—  
They languish and disappear—  
While—as of yet, some love holds out, and sings to her  
While she sleeps alone  
In her emptied house at the end of some cul-de-sac,  
Waiting for her birthday candles  
So she cause them to disappear—as another night languishes  
Up the busied rooms of her unoccupied heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Busted Eyes Of Angels

And in those broken tenements the busted eyes  
Of angels who wear zebra prints:  
How I wrote novels for you in the moonlight  
Beside the cemetery, the cathedral—  
And next to the high school: how my brightest light  
Shone for you through the night—  
How my soul evaporated in a petri dish for you eleven  
Years ago—emollitions through these scars—  
Now I am married to a woman I do not love  
But who loves me—and the future lies like  
An empty parking lot beneath the vanishing snowflakes  
You are breathing—some kind of joy forgotten  
In your flesh—you lie out for him like plastic emeralds  
Over a birthday cake—forgetting all of the parts of  
The country you've never been to—  
Underneath the mountains who themselves are underneath  
The stars—all of them developing in a film for  
Reptiles—you brandish yourself for the fires that no  
Longer burn—and the marionettes who do not linger  
Over the fact of loving you,  
Jump over the zoetrope of leaping foxes that are  
Also being pulled by strings.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Busted Zoo

Boys sleeping in their massive trucks,  
Sucking tiny thumbs:  
Little boys in baseball caps sated of their  
Mothers' paps,  
The school yard bums out in the parking  
Lots,  
Airplanes leaping over smoking pots;  
And they are not here,  
Where they should be playing baseball-  
They do not come here anymore,  
The donkey-eared truants:  
They do not have to look at this self-reflective  
Traffic,  
The bums- the quieted gum chewers-  
And they spend a good day lost out in the zoo,  
Eyes amazed at the species of things that they  
Never thought to knew;  
And they are not dumb, but they are not lawyers  
Too-  
After the day is over telling you what,  
They never go home- they sleep in giant trucks,  
And horse trailers, and weedy easements:  
No religion except for what they thought they knew  
Like a species of disinterest escaped from  
The busted zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Butterflies Who Are My Soul

I am wrecked:

The ship folds down to the green bosoms

Of mermaids

Who do not love me, but enjoy what I have

Brought for them

In the rain drenched mascara of my water coloring:

I am playing with the eels;

And I no longer dream of

Conquest:

I am the vanquished sailor blind to the lights of

The lighthouse

With all holidays turned off:

The anchor is my heart- the butterflies who

Are my soul float like oil in the

Moonlight,

Wishing that the heavens would bleed a fire

To burn them away.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Buzzards Circling

Careworn, glossy as worms in the corpse:  
Pale dogs smiling over the paler horse, the moon on the  
Rising and crowning the hackles,  
The savage tenements mortared in unrest-  
Death savants, making his dutiful rounds through the  
Hoary transoms like thick and oily chambers  
Of a loud mouthed weapon:  
Unglued, lobsters crying like little girls with paper cuts  
In their boiling baths:  
Werewolves who hit the sauce and then the virginal necks,  
Like bonfires over teepees, and silver axes into  
Aspens,  
Until all the wishes are spent, and you see your girl making love  
Or eyes with him:  
And anyways, at least it was fun while it lasted:  
And the hyenas set around the corpse and laughed,  
The buzzards circling in strange transgressions, echoing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cadaver O Fickle Regret

The silence rings- the universe is expanding,  
Old girlfriends are getting married,  
And well fed: What is truly beautiful now, the alien  
Pollens of your high-school garden cannot really  
Be touched, just dreamed about:  
They are too far away- They are exploding like  
Fireworks over forgotten highways;  
And this the runny psalm I shook cook up in the morning,  
Pretending to look into your eyes, and giving them  
Colors of my own; it is like you live in a Paleolithic  
Africa, when it was hooked to the north pole with  
The earth still cooling on the windowsill of the  
Earliest and most beautiful of gods,  
And there weren't no zoos, or Catholic girls who could  
Kill with just one dismissive touch, and trailer parks  
And palm readers practicing in the dark of suburban  
Lakes,  
With tampons floating like bloody lilies,  
Telling her that I wasn't her man for infinity, that what I was  
Worth must be eaten, strengthened from like penny candy  
At the drugstore, the destination of one afternoon's  
Bicycle ride; and the rest of it closeted, entombed with no  
Fanfare, tossed to feed the minnows spawning in the  
Canal of teal molasses at the a\$\$ end of a convenient store,  
You would later on take updated lovers to, pointing out  
The empty tortoise, the cadaver of fickle regret,  
Saying to them with your tongue in their ear, there is the  
Man I could not abide, though he be better than you,  
He could not float in my salt-less sea,  
And your tongue dripped the unction of a thousand black-  
Eels, which burned like the oil in a drum,  
And took you back to the parked cars to finish you off  
Yourself like a confection stolen from an out of season fair.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cadence Of The Failing System

I walk with my mother as the traffic streams,  
We make a block around using Military trail  
And Haverhill as the parallels of an oblong  
Rectangle; We are the only ones playing it straight,  
The rest of the world is having a hang-nail;  
And the politicians are so right out in the street  
Calling out the names of their most prized strippers,  
While the pimps herd their pinked ladies in their  
Jelloed stilettos out under the Big Dipper:  
I once had a class at community college with a  
Girl named Tiffany, who was sure that this dirty  
Class we perambulate around like the rapids in a  
Horrid stream, were raised up to serve her:  
She stuffed a freight train of coke up her nose, and  
Told the servants more, more, until so calmly they  
Laid her beneath a riding lawnmower, until she  
Claimed no more: Now it seems to me the traffic  
Ripples upon the jawbone of a foreign shore, and  
The palm trees sway triangularly like the permuting  
Gambits of a guillotine, but I am not sure:  
Though Alice maintains something must be eaten  
For us to change, perhaps the pills from the medicine  
Cabinet will rearrange the poor: But this is no suburbia  
In which we take our evening exercise; all the same,  
The circulations of dead presidents will pass from  
The air-conditioned séances of soccer moms' SUVs,  
And from their wandering husbands' billfolds' parlors'  
Frictions into the midnight quims of fleshy scissors,  
and settle quietly and pressed like name-branded  
Gabardine, whatever that is,  
Thusly insuring the cadence of the failing system.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Caesuras Of A Fish Tailed Palm Tree

This is what I could afford,  
This little house, a shell and shelter for my flesh:  
I can hear the airplanes leaping above her yellow and  
Spanish crown every day,  
And even when I am not home,  
But at my job and thinking of Alma as I ring up the green onions  
And potatoes,  
Or whatever it is that I am supposed to be doing:  
If I could share a piano seat with her I would even need to  
Know how to play,  
And then she cut her hair and looked like Snow White;  
And I want to take her to Disney World,  
And I wonder what she really thinks of me, or how long this  
Can last  
With the Virgin's image painted in the cathedrals stained glass,  
And the copper cannons sleeping green in their nightmares'  
Envy,  
And the world spins around, a globe from a glass blowers lips,  
Living in Detroit or some other burned out soul  
Where cars can last forever  
And the sky is an overturned bowl hot and blue where the ghosts  
Of the buffalos flew,  
And vanished the way the green waters smoke up from my backyard  
Window,  
And I lie on a cerulean sea, and think of Alma in a pieta in the  
Caesuras of a fish tailed palm tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cake Of My Next Birthday

Drougths of dogs and lucky fish-  
One or the other, and caged animals, people in  
Cars,  
Open-windowed feathers:  
Muses are going to Tampa to get lucky and get  
Laid by Sting Ray and  
Barracuda:  
In the trailer parks of stately wrecks,  
When there hasn't even been a hurricane for months  
Or eclipses over  
Fault lines of crashed to earth lovers of space  
Who happened to just be the silence  
Of hapless meteors;  
And the sea steams for a little while,  
And the televisions bleat their anorexic lights-  
Then the daylight is over, the honeymoon of fights;  
And Kelly is coming over,  
Like baby's breath effervescing in its bouquet,  
And my only wish is to become beautiful enough for  
Her,  
And I am holding it in all the way to the cake of my  
Next birthday.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Calling Of The Untamed Road

I drink cheap grape soda- eat  
Buttered toast with molasses, dream of you;  
Its been a long time since I recognized anything,  
Caught up in the circulating amusement rides:  
They are so much fun,  
And all my lines are just the reckless drizzle,  
Confection that wasn't forecasted;  
And the cars move back and forth with the  
Shadows, courting or some kind of love,  
And my future leans on like tilting windmills  
Off to one corner of the stockyards.  
I would like to say your name and put you into  
Rhyme schemes; I would like to visit you,  
But there aren't too many good excuses;  
To taste your wine, to buy a whole box to show off,  
And the night just proceeds without any succinct  
Music,  
The dogs snuffling the yard, reciprocating with the  
Coyotes. The airplanes leap like frogs,  
And somehow the young mermaids have drifted and  
Become lost in the canals-  
They will have to be gathered up, and their pearls  
Extracted, gifts for you; but look into my eyes, and see  
The meanings of my lost vanguards- Look long enough  
And we will wake up next to one another,  
And remain that way as long as your wishes drown out  
The calling of the untamed road.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Calls Of A Sunny Winter

Laughing through the calls of a sunny winter:  
The sun is leaping like a pony, rambunctiously stealing away  
From any gods that it ever knew  
In its young life, while last night I saw the brown reservoirs  
Of your body sleeping underneath the Christmas tree,  
And underneath the television;  
And laughing, as it held a child on the couch of the Mexican  
Household- so freely as if it was ours.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Campuses Of The Elegant Shade

The son of another child  
In my daydreams up in air: these are the helium balloons  
Of your rectitude:  
How I have forgotten you, how I have become unstrung  
Like a leg of lamb  
After the fleece was stolen and reclaimed and all of  
The titans in the sky were busily dancing in  
Their jubilee for all of their stewardesses:  
And this is you, and you are here  
While I was just trying to breathe in my  
Makebelieve:  
Made up in a doll house underneath the ceiling fans  
While the skeletons dance and roller skate and  
Otherwise fend off their heroes:  
The herons fly into the pink and orange crepuscule  
Of the neighboring houses  
As the cars turn around and around like a mobile  
Of marmalade while the insouciance of truants and hobos  
Waits out the rains again underneath the overpass:  
While tomorrow I will be filling up the trucks as if  
With the miracles of spit and the lost truants and  
Pilgrims toes up in the middle of England, and I am just  
Wondering if you are here while these stones are  
Laid floating mercurial according to the hidden architectures  
That like to lie down and listen to the student orchestras  
While the oranges grow plump and luxuriate upon  
The campuses of the elegant shade.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Canal Of The Lonely Boyhood

Stars in the gut, where kittens are in the bag,  
Each kind a misspelling not important enough to count:  
These are the last things I said,  
Sticking up my fingers as she went by on juniper spokes,  
Beating the yoke of her just desserts:  
She had a family, a bouquet in her amber fists,  
A deed to a grave her legs two axels rolling back the  
Centuries to high school:  
I pulled naked an aspen clear back from the woods;  
Like a virgin confluence, a photosynthetic divining-rod:  
Would have made a weapon to kill any nymph-like creature:  
Took it to her city, wanted to leave an offering of  
Pretty fagg\*ts where she lay dreaming, an urban prickly-pear  
Done up like lucky road kill in the rock garden of  
Her pullulating rounds, the dogs howling  
With the lawn-man, the fireman, the mailman:  
The pool shimmered just as alluring as some other man's  
Bright-haired sister, but  
Hers was the grotto of milk, and there was no abstinence:  
So I wept something like an apocryphal tourist without  
Any swag: And the sky changed color so it could  
See too: All twelve apostles playing spin the bottle in  
Her room, and she already half deflowered,  
Every bottle emptied, creating temporal distortions  
And partial nudity. Cumulus rolled  
Back in an awful reveal, and they played Easter from the other  
End: I fell further south into the distended waves of a homeless  
Disorder, forgot to feed myself to keep being real,  
Sold so many things until all that was left was exploding in  
The sky, the fiery umbrages that fell darkening the sea;  
Until, like in a roman holiday, where the alligators audience  
In phosphorescent spheres, Queen Anne's Wheels, silver  
Sparklers, they dropped me over into the canal of the lonely  
Boyhood, their bicycles whispering against each others' others.  
The soft-shelled tortoise covered me like a stone.  
Further north, in the warm concentricity of liquors, under  
The eyes of enchanted knights, she laughed as she threw  
The dog a bone and closed the pretty door  
To this young skeleton who still solicits his love from

A nearby graveyard.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Canals Of Venus

Contraptions of unpaid for love are  
Ambling hurdy-gurdy across the endless desert;  
The background of her skull, turned away,  
Another rhyme misled into the mouth of the crocodile  
Playing in the placid mauve estuary of the unambiguous sky,  
With the other toys the witches bring quite invisible  
In their hearth of wicker winds,  
The stone bridge with the arc of a traveling worm,  
Leaps the dry riverbeds where the vertebrae of cotton mouths  
Sleep, their poisonous drool now just clay scimitars out of reach;  
The day ends with the cloistered shove of another day,  
Brighter than the other day and ready for his audition on  
The cracked and pitted stage, with more behind him in a narcissistic  
Queue of reptilian talents;  
Those lines she never reads or looks at without crossing her eyes,  
The ghost towns of auburn boys haunted by her ceaseless sway;  
They work for her beneath the monolithic fossils of glintless rust,  
Struggling to keep up with the migratory shadows,  
Those tools of groaning herbivores who trundle the elusive paths,  
Between the sunburned crests and troughs,  
The serpentine illusions she uses to stuff her bra,  
The red skin she dyes her lips on, the diminished veldt she lays out  
Upon, a python of incomparable absences;  
Judging how the day looms its cauldron overhead,  
Laughing at the lumbering procession of defiant fossils,  
The children of a ceaseless world, the remains of the boys  
Pray beneath and dream of Eucharist and sips of wine from paper boxes;  
They look up at her with apocryphal reverence;  
Though coiling, they are to her the ants from a mound of inconsequential  
existence,  
As the brighter men parade their bulbous pomp above her apathetic eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Candelabrum of Too Many Ancestors

You tell me the  
English word  
And I will drink all  
Of your wine-  
And call you a butterfly  
Underneath the  
Sun- picking the  
Flowers from  
Graveyards-  
Carrying away your  
Feelings-  
To the candelabrum of  
Too many ancestors-  
Across the canal or  
Underneath the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Candlelit Cities

The bliss of these words is cheapened by the liquor  
And made more anonymous and far a field:  
And without even stanzas they don't even know themselves,  
But I have brushed them across the many lips of forests,  
And across the cool, always running lips of streams,  
Though it means all of nothing- all of this, given to an empty house  
That has yet to be built; and soliloquyed- and the eyes of dancers  
Stop reverberating like knuckles of sealed tight doors;  
And the submarines wait patiently down in the silts of the Precambrian  
Oceans, waiting also for something that will never move:  
And these words come like the rejected drafts in the pigeon scratched  
Jaws of forsaken paper;  
And they come without Alma's brown lips and heart, for she has  
Reconciled with her usual man, and now the only hope for these pitiful  
Things is to somehow make it above tree line where only the angels  
Can breathe,  
And there to fling their pitiful wishes out unto the candlelit cities  
Of a world that doesn't even know that there is an answer to be returned.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Candles Of A Fairytale

I write too many things for you—  
With weeds up to my knees and night blooming  
Jasmines  
Hanging around the fences of a baseball  
Diamond—  
Uneasily, the planes take off and then settle  
In the sky,  
Nosebleeds eeking out sunlight—  
Stewardesses walking back and forth down  
The aisle like church goers,  
Like members of a wedding train there in  
The sky:  
It is a metamorphosis I don't know about,  
But we can buy tickets—  
Ride through the billowing whiles the sunlight  
Molests like bulls their matadors—  
And when we come down again  
We will be in a different city with other dreams  
Leaping over us—as if it was ourselves  
And we were the candles of a fairytale.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Candle's Weeping Promises

Walking by the zoo today, there was no  
News of you  
Even though, after school, all of the hallways  
Open into you it is true  
With the sun going from his bedroom into  
His playground  
And the corridors arriving home again  
With the lions yawning  
And showing their cherry pits to the  
Ambivalent circus masters who are ready for  
New jobs  
Dousing into this, the bit of respite for  
Gasoline Even the airplanes are coming down  
Again, falling to sleep with their  
Stewardesses inside the roundness in the  
Nest of your senses  
A nursery underneath the candle's weeping promises

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cannibalisms And Incests

We make good symmetry, and with our hands molesting together  
Over the backyards of planets,  
We can proposition our gods to any excuses:  
I kneel before the Virgin of Guadalupe and ask how long it has to  
Be that I am just a Sancho, before I can get  
Right down to loving Alma- and becoming her man:  
I buy her many things, even after her birthday:  
Even before Christmas:  
I buy her heavy fans just so that I can stand behind her at the fruiteria  
And smell the scent laid off her of her brown labor:  
And it is as if I can smell the children on her flesh,  
And even the mountains she has never been to, or has the energy to  
Travel up to be  
With my lonely and bloodthirsty gods: and I am so dysfunctional  
That I only have the energy to wish for her,  
As my cowardly spirits retreat after work and I can go to my home  
By myself and water all of my flowers  
Who have to admit that they will most likely die before my heartbeat:  
But I am consoled, and that is my  
Illusionary prize, that I have gone down on the muse,  
And felt her ribs like a fever, like the first cradles for her children:  
And that is no lie:  
That the most precious sound ever made to my ears is Alma's heart  
Beat,  
As her lungs edit the reasons for myself into something that can be  
Sold;  
As the cars drive back and forth like butterflies needing metamorphosis,  
But who are too frightened to ever change,  
Or to make it past again the vast rivers and canyons to the forest of  
Mexico,  
Where the cannibalisms and incests finally become too bright to  
Ever dissolve.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Cannibalisms Of A Soulless Heart

Lassoing the tempestual  
Makebelieve,  
Cowboys riding with the  
Notions of fair weather,  
Little kids in classes  
Surrender,  
Glass eyes mocking the  
Light,  
Or the other things that  
Can never turn back  
And devour  
The cannibalisms of  
A soulless heart,  
Dining of its cold  
Surrender.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Canvasses Of The Unreachable Heavens

Glass carnival,  
Or reach far enough to ever taste the vineyards at  
The fingertips winnowing from  
From the stain glassed windmills sweated off the  
Delusional brows of the preternatural  
Stewardesses who wish to, once again,  
Believe they are angels  
Brushing the canvasses of the unreachable heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Captains Of All Of Their Hours

These scars are here for a reason- they give me the docility of the grave;  
And I don't even have to have an execution;  
I don't even have to talk about the sky, since she is always flailing:  
She is always having a goodtime, and her sisters are having a goodtime,  
While we are all starving on our boats,  
Our fingers in her weathered plums, and now my face is all read,  
And I in love with Alma, my very soul, the flag of Mexico:  
And what am I going to do about it, but go to the movie theatre on  
Friday or Saturday:  
I am not going to wear any jewelry, because look at all of these scars;  
And now I suppose that I have to be hungry,  
While the pitcher is mounting; and it has been several minutes since I  
Have heard the power of the airplanes, and yet I guess that her magic  
Is still hours, and in the night I imagine I can smell the jasmine of kidnappers,  
Because there is so many names of jasmine; and her body disappears  
underneath  
The eyes of the captains and all of their hours.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Car With Electric Doors

A kindergarten steps to the clouds and accepts an applause  
While baseball happens beneath her—  
The usual boys kicking up the skirts of red diamonds—  
As the traffic sounds around the old battlements,  
And the knights who are their fathers are coming  
Home from quests—  
And whatever joy that this is can also be mistaken for  
A mad epiphany, but I do not know if it will do any good—  
There they are, lining the roads captured by gravity:  
Laundromats—and little places to meet:  
A pieta I remember happening inside the carport  
Where my mother was electrocuted half-hazardly  
She leaned down and caressed a frog:  
It wasn't her child and it didn't change her or itself,  
But was beautiful for a little while—  
As she knelt, looking just about eighteen,  
Next to the car with electric doors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Caracoling Amusements

Distilled into Mexico, the birds quiver:

There is nothing curious about their fleece; they are done,

And hung-over- they can hear the voices of

Viscous lovers speaking all throughout the wires

At their feet:

When they remember the water fountains of little

Boys lushed off their bicycles so near the circling dunes,

Then what will they do? But speak out loud to one another

As the trucks come,

So wide and beautiful and pressed like faith to the Earth,

Rolling on toward their particular definitions;

And then they know that they shouldn't move, for soon it

Will be Christmas, and the sun will shine down

Like an obese angel across the chattering church, and the words

That they have had to mimic to distant lovers will no longer

Hurt them,

As the tigers multiply so vigorously across the rolling steps

Beneath them, tumbling out like kittens,

Their hearts pattering like the caracoling amusements of a fair

That never has to move by itself again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Caress Of Jubilant Costumes

Doves in the light of a drowning promises:  
In the last light of a truant's day, anyways: look beautiful as they  
Take off behind the transoms of the school  
Bus and fly their own ways: back down the curious avenues  
Lined by pines and the pearly throats of echinus's  
Past the languid bladders of canals, who've had their  
Fill of stolen bicycles and cottonmouths:  
Returning home to the estuaries of ping pong tables and swimming  
Pool,  
Basking in the off-putting lights of television for the remainder  
Of the cartoons:  
They will eat their dinners of fried chicken happily, while another  
World will happen right across the canal,  
Where the sugarcane burns, and the cats get up on their smarter  
Feet to dance  
For five dollars with little Mexican girls who have come from  
So far away just like the migrations of out of work princesses  
So entranced by the misfits on the road who carry them  
Anyways- to settle there  
Around the ballrooms of cypress, in the cooling husks- penumbrae  
Of the lost memories of cicadas- figuring out that is just where  
They are going to live: right across the world from us,  
Feeling the caress of jubilant costumes we can never own.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Carnivals Of Plastic Indians

I don't think any of this is pretty:  
Folding up paper airplanes with bloody fingers  
And sending them over  
A world of a few feet:  
Over the carnivals of plastic Indians  
And dye cast cars:  
Not even over a single house-wife:  
Not even over the grave of a cat—  
But this is the life of a child, sunbathing  
In a yard filled up with only one paper  
Tree,  
And the rest of the illusions scattered with  
The lazing Mexicans amidst the pine trees—  
The blue gills in another word,  
In the pool down the slope  
Only a few feet away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Carnivals Of The Sea

Ferris Wheels strewn across a carpet  
In a house as close to  
The sea so as to be molested by it—  
Where dolls lie cluttered amidst the palm fronds  
And green snakes hang from  
The crooks of citrus trees—  
Where the grass is cut every day  
And the waves come up to doorsteps just  
As close as mailmen—  
And the children you are about to have already  
Live inside the house,  
And in there, with the blinds open,  
The daylight falls so brilliantly that you cannot  
Even read,  
But must close your eyes and fall into bed—  
And there find your wife or your husband—  
And make love while sweating a fire—  
But in the night, buy her roses  
And take her barefoot outdoors to enjoy  
The ever rolling caesuras of the  
Carnival of the sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Carpentry Of A Blind Man

Boys as pretty as baseball spume words such as  
Gas jets-  
And open their pretty chests to the mornings of their  
High schools-  
Daydreams on Lilly pads underneath broken down school  
Buses,  
And we don't belong here, but this is my plan:  
To catch you for the first time:  
Away from your husband  
And your children, that I suppose you already have,  
And to take you to a park  
That the lovers are just busy constructing, and kiss  
Your hand, bending to it in the arcs of  
Our recess, while promising to you from the bottom of  
So many open wounds-  
That I have found you- and this is our castle,  
And it may not be forever beautiful,  
And it may not be able to surmount death: it may only  
Be big enough for one home,  
But it will be our place- and in it only we can echo:  
And that is why I lay here, trying to built  
It up, like the carpentry of a blind man- not trying to  
Elude you are to fill you with empty promises-  
But to do just what I can,  
Even as you turn away, taking everything that I have promised  
With you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Carport

Today we are looking in at the sons of Walt Whitman  
And the torpedoes floating softly beyond the stained glass windows  
Just on the other side of the hypocrisies of the church  
That has sunken with the tears from the girl you abandoned:  
Little girls filling you wine glasses,  
Like soft feathers lost in the aloe: and I convinced you of these  
Affections as your mother wept in the carport  
Beside the car that was salmon- and the frogs sang that once were  
Tadpoles, as the angels looked down from heaven  
And everything turned into the vulpine darkness and consumed the  
Orange trees by the fall of shadows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cars And The Houses

Religion in my senses- euphoria of a dog  
Who is not here-  
Probably the very thing that loves me greatest  
Upon the earth,  
While my fires burn for one woman as for  
Another:  
My heart does its pirouettes as new students  
Matriculate from high school  
To college:  
Their journey is vibrant, even almost  
Stupendous:  
I can see them caracoling around their peers  
Underneath the maples or sleeping in another classroom:  
Doing all of their favorite stuff- while the cloud  
Banks spill authoritatively across the earth:  
Muscle bound yet ethereal: there they speed  
Indefinitely- and the cars  
Underneath them, and the houses- pieces who  
Believe in their game, as if by summoning up some  
Words from the lips of my fingers, I could make them  
Inevitably real.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Caskets Of The Graveyards

Window draped, motionless and blind-  
Don't you live somewhere around here  
Up the cataracts from Mexico,  
And underneath this tricolor flag- so many  
Students don't care to give pledges to  
Anymore-  
But it still feels alright at midnight, outside of  
The Mandingo cars  
In Saint Louis, going up and down the Mississippi:  
And, even from the gas stations, I can hear  
The pilots yawn- as they sleep walk while  
Taking off-  
And it is the stewardesses job to make love to  
Them and anybody else:  
As the world is on the move of kaleidoscopes-  
And Satan is as wounded as a rattlesnake  
Who stepped out of the hydrangeas and into  
The yard at in inopportune time:  
Now silky diamonds cry tears of roses,  
And their rattles shiver outside the windows  
Where angels with clipped wings go to bed  
With the men who hammer in the nails  
Of the caskets of the graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Castle That They Make

Birdbath of empty lips  
In an empty hall- a great absence on holidays  
From man's greatest invention:  
Showing your breasts  
While you take the hall pass to wherever  
You want,  
As from the very extend and of extremity,  
There is a thicket of sunlight  
Where foxes eat the busy rinds amidst  
The stammering of freckling deer:  
And the school band plays on and on,  
And the stewardesses pepper the clouds,  
Perhaps going home to the castle that they make  
Believe are there.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Castles Of Golden Hay

Coy in the stilettos of poniards,  
And now this: done with the staccatos up the second  
Flights,  
Done with the kittens in their baths- and filled with  
Scars and resonations,  
Little games, and little girls following the slender tribulations  
Up the stairs to their freshman lovers  
In little rooms under yellow covers- spoken words  
Said in whispers,  
Dirty dishes- drying flowers- another place to find the  
Resilience in the plywood of lumbers:  
The facades of freckled shoulders riling like dolphins slipping  
Through watery boulders:  
Or whatever world it is, spending over and tying its shoes,  
Going down like fingers perusing the instruments of  
News:  
Bad hands that pass her over, losing the games of wanton  
Lovers;  
Discarded into the dalliances of foxgloves, with someone else  
Waking up dearer to her in the castles of golden hay.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cat

Cross words fallen upon an empty nest- you see,  
The serpent is quite filled up  
As if from some gas station in a starless Mexico:  
Slithering away,  
Forgetting how it lost its legs along the highway-  
And muses burn up to the sky:  
Their mouths emolliate where they once were singing-  
And the words of their pretty senses  
Return to the shadows:  
The orange groves pearl-  
Lavish Spanish forts wait by the sea- the mermaid's  
Hair is streaming amongst the tendrils of the  
Octopi and squid:  
And the waves are quite black- her heart is open to  
Him:  
A nude instrument- and now his smile is the cat;  
And he plays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cat On The Windowsill

What difference does it make,  
If people don't get the chance to see  
The efforts of another man's work,  
Or feel the warm relations of the hidden  
Love with the woman,  
The stranger living across the street-  
Here, in the busy pastures,  
Each life is a book,  
And the wind is turning so many pages.  
The insects awaken in the swimming seasons.  
Upon earth, some organisms  
For only a day get to read but a few lines:  
A poem on the stem in the valley,  
Soon withers with the snows,  
As clouds like loud gentlemen trundle  
In off the cold sea and stamp their feet,  
But this is their house too,  
So we must be courteous,  
As everyone is trying to speak at once,  
Not all can be recognized, though sometimes  
Whispers are of the most important things,  
Such as the field mouse burrows  
Beneath the sodden hay,  
Her children newly entangled with  
The green and gold of awakening,  
Their mouths speaking the hungry words  
Which will last until the next incident  
Of births and deaths,  
And the cat on the windowsill slyly,  
Eyes but slits, as the wind turns the windmills,  
Cleaning herself, hears us all.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Cataracts Of Her Homeopathic Oils

You have an office and I have a song,  
And so many restraints:  
I paint the signs over and picture you, whetting my whistle  
On the suppositional hullabaloo:  
And the days step forward like this like careworn beauty  
Pageants,  
Beautiful girls in beaten up Fords: Then they are like pagan  
Sacrifices dripping and nude in the back alleys of their  
Back yards:  
They are inescapable and undressed terrapin, they prick their  
Fingers to the muffled sound of religious institution,  
And the stenographers busily keeping up like ants crowning  
Boulders:  
Her shoulders flexed and round like ferris wheels and then like  
Roller coasters:  
The trees get off in her feels, the cats purr like outboard motors;  
The knives glisten in the glade of his right ears,  
Or at least that is what he told her:  
And then she has a towel draped over her like a stage, and in the  
Night it rains and she just lies pullulating beneath the hedge,  
A toad in the drip of her navel, a snake on each leg,  
Their legless bellies counting the beats of her blood in their little  
Coils- like satanic Moils they rest upon her and  
Dream of the cataracts of her homeopathic oils.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Catfish And The Minnows

Soft and languishing on  
Fire Island where you lost your life,  
Frank O'Hara—  
Falling in love with firemen,  
Writing poems about Chinamen—  
As the birds touched their wings like  
Lips to the sky,  
While the coffins wondered why ever  
The dead had to die—  
And up there the echoes never had  
To fall down,  
The tulips bloomed into the midnights of  
The midnight playgrounds—  
And we got off wherever we could—  
In the middle of the day, bloomed the pornographies  
Of our woods,  
And the echoes resolved themselves to the  
Catfish and the minnows—  
Until I had to look my muse in the eye,  
And had to reassure her that she would never die.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cathedrals Of Garages

Making a plan of yellow ixora  
There in the day glow with the mouths  
Of lions open and  
The tourists driving through- comely  
Offerings such as these  
Resting beside easy lakes- like the loose  
Change of wishes almost  
Making it into their wells- camouflage  
Of cenotaphs is these common  
Things-  
Underneath the echinopsis with the airplanes,  
Watched by amphibians,  
Or the cerulean beetle: how long will they  
Lie there,  
Accruing annually before a kind of soul  
Pockets them,  
To travel back inside the cathedrals of  
Garages,  
Lie lay basking their copper patinas  
Underneath the lulls of ceiling fans.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cats In The Cinderblocks Cleaning Their Young

How to begin something else anew without seeming  
To be disillusioned:  
I remember attending college many years ago  
In the middle of central Florida, but a little ways up the road:  
And always being alive in the early mornings,  
And camels were grazing on the mirages in the early mists:  
And I'd caracole past your house and your friends  
Guffawing in the back yard seven times like a lucky if  
Uneven spell; and I doubt you'd even care to answer even now:  
But you smoke and your tits are like melons little fairies live  
In little light houses that liked to be squeezed by your  
Suave and tattooed sailor men;  
And now I might just be going home in time for turkey,  
To play with the toy boats always bashing their brains out on  
The scaled coasts;  
And touching myself that way too in the cliffs of the washing  
Machine, my back turned to the blue Cadillac my mother  
Drowned in,  
Getting off on the satisfied ululations of the toads all mucky  
Tongues and the cats in the cinderblocks cleaning their young.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cats Of Fire

Waiting for the animals of chaos,  
Wanting to put on my socks and drive my car to the  
Liquor store:  
Knowing that that is the way that they will come  
The fasted,  
Like a carnival doused and roaring in flames,  
The airplanes flying low like gawkers: Having to check my  
Face in the mirror so many times  
Just to know I am not beautiful,  
Wondering what is wrong with me while the population  
Grows more beautiful:  
Going to have a house with so many windows,  
But not one wife:  
Going to christen my house with a woman named Melody,  
Going to defend my house like a coward's model of the Alamo:  
Going to buy a bicycle and ride nearer the sea,  
And weep into there for my dogs who have spent all of these  
Nights weeping for me;  
Going to try and sound out words to spell them correctly  
For my Janis of muses who couldn't care less:  
Those girls have no problem sharing the wet dreams of their  
Beds with other boys who know so  
Far less about them than I, who have sung so little to them,  
But are like beefsteak tomatoes pressed up against their lips,  
Humming with the ecstasy of their spirits hovering like  
Patinas over their bodies;  
And I in my little house as yellow as a crook, beating myself  
Into the pages of dysfunctional history,  
Like a mariposa torn from his sunny house in the zoo,  
Remembering how the beautiful children pressed him too roughly,  
So now he wallows like a torn eulogy belly-up in the grass  
As the cats of fire come curiously.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cats Sunning There

All the children laughing through their fingers of  
Crime, and words starting out this way like hobos,  
But it seems to me that it will still never rain until I have felt  
Your amber heavens in my bed,  
And we have done things to one another that you swore we  
Would never do again:  
Such was today, when our fieldtrips lit out like angels, and we  
Found each other returning to the same destination,  
And we were so exacting that no other two individuals could be  
Said to be doing the same as us;  
And it didn't rain, but even so you had to drive away:  
And I watched the empty streets, or the cats sunning there,  
Never surer that something was missing that belonged.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cats Sunning There'

All the children laughing through their fingers of  
Crime, and words starting out this way like hobos,  
But it seems to me that it will still never rain until I have felt  
Your amber heavens in my bed,  
And we have done things to one another that you swore we  
Would never do again:  
Such was today, when our fieldtrips lit out like angels, and we  
Found each other returning to the same destination,  
And we were so exacting that no other two individuals could be  
Said to be doing the same as us;  
And it didn't rain, but even so you had to drive away:  
And I watched the empty streets, or the cats sunning there,  
Never surer that something was missing that belonged.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cavalry Of Waves

The cold front pushes in the rains  
After Joe has gone  
Back to Michigan—I take my class outside  
To write about nature  
Until they cannot stand it anymore—  
Baseball players come from another school  
To fill in the diamonds of our backyards,  
And at least five or six of the girls  
Want to see them  
And pretend to interview them—  
And daylight proves to be a disappointment,  
For it is not beautiful while we are outside—  
I can walk from student to student  
And dream of girls who do not exist,  
And give prompts on personification and  
Metamorphosis  
While a hypothetical mermaid swims beside  
The cavalry of waves that make  
A swimming pool for the whitest moon.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Cave Of Silver Stars

Now you have come to  
Know me in my unknown stars,  
While little boys give you kisses  
On the otherside of an unknowable world-  
And this place looks beautiful  
Without any houses:  
It is just enough to starve:  
My child will be born in the morning  
Looking up to you  
Like a fox in the cavern of silver stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ceiling Fans In The Air

Everything looks alive on the other side of the canal:  
Little boys, you are justified straight into kings;  
And I cannot speak, for sometimes I am dazzled by  
The pornographies that are right here,  
Burning like pages of fire in unmarked cars under the  
Sugar pines;  
Or maybe I left this in my life right after I learned to  
Speak:  
I spat on the conquistador's brow and marched straight off,  
Under the usual arcs of the airplanes and the strange  
Monuments of unhampered cenotaphs in the sky:  
And maybe it was that my estranged enemies felt good  
At my abandonment,  
But most certainly my abandoned dogs still love me,  
Even while I look away, called by the powerful kindlings of  
Alma's flesh;  
I am not even good for nothing, but she comes to me, breathing  
Like the only fire left on the earth,  
And the good knowledge that  
Satan gave us, even as the sky felled like the waterfalls of beautiful  
Incests;  
And maybe we will touch our bodies against our posts tomorrow,  
For she is so wild and pure, and yet she knows almost as many  
Words as I do in English,  
Calling together like all the gold in a flea market,  
Like all of the hummingbirds enraptured by the ceiling fans in the air.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ceiling Fan's Noir

I fantasize about houses  
And sometimes her free flowing legs,  
Which shiver in the fortitudes of Pentecost,  
Like the sustained and bleary kiss  
The ocean's winds gives the molting towers of  
Palm fronds,  
When lain in a dimly bed, Siamese  
Gazelles in high nylon resting from nourishment,  
The invisible smells,  
Wet and quivering muzzles,  
Fingerprints from other men and their little thefts,  
Lay inanimate, but breathing, beneath the noir  
Of the ceiling fan,  
Waiting for the slightest breath to brush the  
Flaxen hairs on her skin,  
For someone to light a cigarette.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cemetery Into The Day

I made a soul unto you whispering into the Ganymede  
Of your shoulders—  
Wishing to enjoy the life blown into the nooks and crannies of  
You architectures  
To come out alive again, obeying the elements:  
And this is all I've been able to  
Resolve:  
Vanishing children who are able to find their light again  
Down into the shelter of the last  
Unrequested happenstance of the bay: there,  
And into—and into her shallows—  
Where you will find your lost sister—where you can try  
To call up the cemetery into the day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cemetery That Holds Her Grave

Now there is nevermore news of kidnappers:  
They day is just glad:  
It is slapping its palms against the concrete,  
And little things I say are skinning their knees to get  
A better look at him:  
They go leaping across the chalk teeth of the  
Graveyard where all of the better  
Poetesses are buried—where Sara Teasdale lies  
Posthumously pulverized:  
Underneath the lilac shade beside where the black  
Children scream like fire engines  
And kill each other with popguns:  
And there is a McDonalds north of her grave,  
And there is a McDonalds south of her grave—  
And the universities that lay around her keep remembering  
Her with sideways glances:  
But upon their greeneries no copper statues diadem  
Their academic glades:  
There is Twain and Frost and maybe even Whitman:  
The black men hustle and pause—but I am sure not a single  
One of them has read Sara Teasdale,  
Though I once drove my car through the cemetery that holds  
Her grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cenotaphed Conquistadors

Adhering now to all of the spaces that fill  
Over and under-armed—  
Ganged into the highest apoplexies of the  
Alps,  
Kissing shoulder to shoulder  
With the snow-blinded goddesses—  
We seem to make our peace with the lowliest  
Halves:  
We seem to be breeding here unrecursive to no one—  
We have been skipping school and lighting off  
Our strange and exciting kites high amidst  
The silkweeds—  
Now while my baby is sleeping,  
And the purple conundrums disparage to no one  
That lives here—ghosts outside of their homes  
Filibustering to the absentee housewives  
Until I've decided that I want to  
Disappear into Mexico—  
Then the airplanes come, showcasing their half-hazard and  
Illustrious fanfares,  
And they are turning around and around—  
Acrobatics of the insincerities of the half men who  
Can only light off a fraction of their fireworks  
And other loves come and go  
Just like the mermaids who never know if they  
Are truly satisfied by kissing the cenotaphed  
Conquistadors underneath their age-old Mistletoe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cenotaphs

Candles fibrillating over the opened mouths of  
Crocodiles  
And now all of these stanzas come pouring out of the  
Velveteen mouths of the delta,  
The hurricanes are making love, dancing right atop of  
The blue gills in the canal,  
As the city eats its own voice, and fireworks explode  
In my hand and I figure out that this is  
Exactly what I've been doing:  
When I get up, I will make love and eat lunch again-  
My body is a perusal of unicorns:  
Siingster down with Alma and her sisters in a cafeteria  
I could swear I didn't know,  
And I've forgotten how to swim: she doesn't call me all day:  
What is she doing, maybe she has fallen back in love  
With him,  
While in Florida the trucks seem to be working back up:  
Nearing the sky,  
A terrible perfume that is made love to by the seagulls and  
The blue herrings  
The only monuments to dead kings where I live  
Across the billfolds of unfortunate colors-  
It all unwinds, trying to make myself appear beautiful,  
Like a cadaver pillaging sunlight and butterflies-  
New and old words reunite with the fire,  
And the rest lies in the dunes with the cenotaphs,  
Affixed to the crosses the waves have already gobbled.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cenotaphs In The Waves

Blown between the bottle and the bed,  
Dog beside me,  
Wife in the next room—what muses wait  
For me other than these  
Things which are as transparent as  
Eerie honeymoons,  
That I can remember from balconies  
That looked out over some unknown  
Dreams—  
The busses turning around underneath  
The lakes as if swimming butterflies—  
And I drink wine from Mexico:  
It is the last bottle I am supposed to  
Drink before Mark Alexander is born;  
And we looked at him today.  
The technician said too much hair,  
But he had a good heart—  
I called him a hippy and the both of our  
Scarred faces laughed,  
And where was the moon hanging out  
During this, I do not know—  
But it was there—the same moon that  
Hung over the entire neighborhood,  
And my old muses in their new thoughts,  
Their hearts beating around the corners—  
And Romeo and Juliet there too—  
Somewhere unseen,  
Maybe like two marionettes trying to become  
Real as they propositioned romance to  
The cenotaphs in the waves.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Cenotaphs Of Conquistadors

Unicorn on a low ridge over  
An acrid prairie—I keep writing to you like a little girl:  
You give me hope, like  
Finding my mother's onyx arrowheads in the bathroom  
And sending them off  
To a girl who doesn't love me—Unicorn over  
The city's dump,  
Where the hobos are burning barrels and the sea gulls  
Are defecating,  
You are not even a swan discovering that the angels  
Have nothing to say to you—  
But your horn is like the spear of an albino swordfish,  
One of a team who was lost to a fisherman's spear,  
Leaving behind a bachelor who is always  
Weeping—  
You are like a blue ribbon won at a fair kept in  
Tiniest bedroom of a trailer  
Where there is never enough light,  
The stray cats live underneath of, and the traffic  
Streams by unending—  
Unicorn, you are like that cypress tree transplanted  
To the highway's easement for beautification  
The road kill sleeps under—  
Unicorn, you are the muse of a thoroughly middle-class  
Artist  
Who walks his little roads too early, and goes to sleep  
In the middle of all of the wonderfully humiliated  
Creations—  
Who sees you in his un publishable dreams,  
Wishing to obtain you and lay his eyes upon you like  
A nudie magazine found across the street in his childhood  
In a cemetery of junked cars,  
As the Australian pines leaned in together,  
The cenotaphs of conquistadors drinking the sand from  
The dunes,  
The billboards proselytizing to the kidnapers—  
The canal heaped full of stolen bicycles and abandoned donations.



# The Cenotaphs Of My Heart

I fail and it never again feels like football:  
But the airplanes rattle with their serious desire to get  
Away and in the bordellos  
Underneath their exegesis I swim alone in my manifolds:  
I pirouette and turn around and  
Remember by sister and how many times it took,  
And the lucky rabbits feet that it took to  
Bribe her;  
And now it will never rain again, while my words spill like  
Drool over the bibs:  
And the houses of relocated Mexicans swim and swim;  
And Alma sleeps in her house over the shoulders of the dog  
Tracks and the trains;  
So soon I will lose my anchors and my liver,  
And I will swim too: I will float right over the barrels of  
Her house as I proceed: I will sleep like a deflated saint  
There atop the apexes of her heartbeat  
Or other words for the matter, while ships increase in the dark  
Waters where she cannot swim: but she will survive  
Anyways, culled from the cenotaphs of my heart:  
My vida will survive, with or without me:  
With or without him.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cerulean Blanket

I haven't yet realized beauty: I haven't yet done anything  
Good,  
Like stolen your eyes from the newspaper,  
From the printed lies:  
I've stolen bicycles and slips of moon,  
Stolen kisses from my old girlfriend ten years old;  
But I've just been rude,  
And antichristian: I've salivated to the things you put  
On your wrist- little green stars who feed hypnotized chickens,  
And I love the clouds that diadem your crown  
The best:  
And yellow busses turn, turn, and turn, as if hypnotizing  
The leaving class of students-  
And I never learned where you lived in Wellington,  
But when it finally got over I went to California  
And failed,  
Before I skipped back across the earth and settled for her,  
And fell in love again down in the short-grass easements  
Beside the alligators short-stacked in their canals;  
And it should be almost over,  
Because I am no longer in kindergarten; I no longer take  
Fieldtrips to the Flagler Art Museum:  
All the time travels are over, and the ladies are nakedly tired  
In their bowls of framed gelatin:  
Your eyes go for so many ways, so many ways back to other  
Countries; but I am still hungry for fried chicken  
And graveyards:  
Still hungry for other women who just the same care even less for  
Me-  
And I will follow their sashayed skirts, into the past and in the future;  
Across the stagnant traffics and orange groves,  
And spikenard and airplants bloom red pistilled under the bulbous  
Plumes of farting commercial airlines,  
Some you will see going along the same lines across the cerulean  
Blanket which covers both you and me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Chance Return Of A Princess

You will get nothing from me,  
But we can go out together and try to forgive  
Each other through out the day:  
Here the dogs are leaping over the fires  
That I think your little boy has started,  
Where his spokes were thrown into the pornographies,  
And the dwarves rode the tortoises into  
The cool shade underneath the broken down  
School buses, and thought of her:  
And though of her, while their insouciant mounts  
Ate the orchids in the oil slicks  
And happened to do exercises on the possibilities  
Of Ganymede until at least school was  
Over-  
And the cheerleaders did pinwheels home, over  
The bridges and the hidden prizes  
Of the trolls, and then once again in  
The cooled theatres of their bedrooms, took off  
Themselves,  
And wandered of the stranger flowers that use to  
Grow in the penumbras of their poor childhoods,  
While the toads sang pell-mell against the rebar,  
Like princess lamenting the blindness of their senses,  
Awaiting the chance return of a princess that had  
Shot herself like a bottle rocket across the impassible  
Canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Changeless Show

If today was yesterday, was a year, a decade:  
Zeno would still be sitting in the kitchen,  
Sharing lightweight conversation with your mother:  
The laundry would still be churning like  
A Cyborg's hungry stomach,  
And indefinitely you would be the same,  
The same, as the presocratic philosophers would tell you  
Crowding your living room, watching daytime soap operas:  
Their words would make a hutch out of  
Your skull, a domesticated nervousness,  
A clone of your inner child opening your  
Presents on Christmas Morning,  
Caressing your father's beard and smelling his  
Potent flatulence:  
All the same- the large house in the cypress  
Down the road from the zoo is still there,  
And the prehistoric alligator is in the very same canal.  
The lions' mating roars cupped in the porcelain  
Ears of the Naiad in the torpid green;  
She still goes unseen and maidenly through the briny slow:  
The gated communities with their stuffed heads,  
The tubby lawyers on the back nine with their daytime broads:  
You see it all, and you've seen it all before-  
Every year more and more of the changeless show:  
You want to love her, and she wants to love you,  
The girl in kindergarten whose lips changed  
Into butterfly wings, and the sun into a ripe pineapple,  
The girl you never knew, you will never know,  
The buxom ingénue of the after school bus ride home:  
The last look of a decade ago, and then the changeless distance.  
The uncertainty of the fixation of her adolescent iris-  
Even if all the clocks committed suicide, it would not change.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Changing Instrument Of A Woman's Metamorphosis

You cannot say that  
You were not once my instrument—  
Fitting into my hands,  
My intimate plough—  
Did we not work together,  
The sky laying out in blue velvet curtains  
Watching us,  
On those strange and eerie fields  
We lived together in after high school  
And before adulthood? Those small  
And frightened fields hidden in the  
Violet Forest,  
In the rich land where collects god tears  
Cascading down from the mountain,  
The coal black and onyx mountain  
That I sometimes heard call my name,  
As you rested away in the shed—  
Heartbreak pooled and gave us life—  
For a little while sustaining us on those  
Green shoots, the rustling stalks which  
Spoke sometimes dreams peaking out  
Between the rows, little ghost children  
Running against your coppery legs,  
Running against our flesh like tiny pale flowers  
Peeking up at us—  
We thought we were safe,  
But we did not see the wolves in the forest—  
And I did not know what you were—  
Changed, a professional woman leaping  
From my hands in a blue buttoned suit,  
The wolves took you in their teeth  
And disappeared, as if you were a precious necklace  
Hung down from their jaws—  
I wept and let the fields grow fallow.  
Far away, I could hear you changing into  
The distant crystal things, the wolves' howl  
In the crimson ankled city where I imagined you:

A marble vase filling up, a kitchen appliance,  
A soft satin sheet curled up and waiting,  
A lamp by which another man read—  
I could no longer feel you in my hands—  
A dragon killed my friends so I planted them  
In our field with the tooth of the serpent I slew,  
But they did not grow back  
And you did not return to collect in me—  
You had changed so much, so many times,  
You had forgotten what you once were in my hands—  
Tortured, I could still feel your handle in them, panting and curled,  
But I could not stay— My soul left, drifted upwards  
In the lonely mountain where it pined  
As lightning stripped the horizon in electric briars—  
My tears rolled  
Down the midnight slopes and pool in the valley beneath,  
So the forest rose up and reclaimed our land  
So no one remembered, though my tears come still  
Down from the dark and lonely mountain,  
A river running lost over the empty land,  
Losing itself to evaporate at the shore of the desert  
Where the forest ends—On the horizon, the clanging  
City in metallic bloom, where you work now,  
A foreign instrument, new technology,  
Useful only in his professional hands....

Robert Rorabeck



# The Characters Of The Heroes

Aggrandizing- vermilion,  
And now the swans come, singing over  
The trailer parks where you  
Live in your brown skin- and your man,  
Hung like a delicate wreck  
Underneath the graveyards where all of  
Our grandmothers live:  
And the fabulous stars. See how they are dancing-  
Volumes of them:  
And your aunts in those hills, bosoms diademed  
With the spikes of flinted arrow-heads:  
See their monuments in the red diamonds  
Of national monuments and  
Baseball fields- see how you will forget me,  
As the ants congregate in the churches  
Of grass:  
And, maybe- sometimes, you will come out  
Barefooted in your little world,  
Carrying around your beautiful rivers, the gold  
I have given you-  
And looking up, curse the gods and their  
Propositions for the characters of the heroes they have  
Given you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Charade Of Their Tears

Adolescent tears stolen to the ravaged  
Cheeks of crocodiles:  
Look how they are smiling, slanted on the bank:  
The whole classroom is smiling,  
Even though there are no windows,  
Or roses on my desk:  
This is the time they are in now, pretty finks  
Like adolescent jasmine:  
They will bloom like canaries into the carnival,  
And then they will disappear-  
The metamorphosis of the juvenile stations,  
Captains of their bedrooms,  
Matriculating; but what will they change into:  
What hope do they have  
With their ships melting- or, who will they hold  
Hands with-  
Will they ever make it outdoors to see has  
The charade of their tears,  
To see who blooming for them ceaselessly-  
The emotional clock that makes no room for  
Tardiness- and he is smiling,  
And shedding their tears, though their hours are  
Still so young.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Chattel Of Her Missionless Love

It hurts now to trouble myself  
As the day is gone, and most of the lights are out,  
Giving my shadow less definitions to be lonely,  
But here she is drinking my liquors like a faithful Cadillac  
Mortgaged of bruises,  
Until the bottle is at a loss and seems to whistle at the  
Bus stop empty of ships;  
And I cradle my own head as she pantomimes on into  
Dusk,  
And the playgrounds wait for me, smirking,  
Figuring that it is better to have fun without her,  
As she skips so straight across the puddles of my reflections,  
The mirages my tears have been making,  
Giving up my secrets until they are the chattel of her mission less  
Loves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cheapest Rum In The Store

I like to buy the cheapest rum in the store,  
Is what I told her,  
But there was no special meaning when  
I took the liquor in between the money  
Behind the tent, behind the car:

She was already pregnant,  
And these are the things I mean going out  
To get the groceries along the ancient,  
Torpido highway—frequented only by tumbleweeds,

When there is nothing left in the house,  
And high across they have built swifter intestates:  
When I should be moving away from the indecision,  
My father's recklessness, his faith and determination  
To give up on all things,

And I say all of this before I have by first shot,  
And when I do it welcomingly burns—  
To let me know that I am not yet in a coffin,  
And outside there are so many creatures with  
Nothing to fear, because we are sure it should  
Never flood again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cherry Tree

So long- the pageantry of airplanes fare-  
Going into those ballrooms of eventual catastrophe,  
As I saw her through the looking glass,  
Kissing a man who was a spider in a kaleidoscope of  
All of his elbows,  
And I became all of a womb undone by her  
Family- and a scar in the bright Pharisees that lap  
Against the emptiness they have left in their  
Classes,  
And this is my new song to no one underneath  
The cherry tree that never blooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Child Of Her Unfamiliar Seed

I take another shot,  
As I mean to lay out an entire chorus line of  
Cheap girls tonight-  
I keep cramming Baudelaire, trying to figure out  
How he grew such beautiful gardens from  
Corpses; my attempts are awful,  
And I can't wait for Halloween to truly worship  
The pantheisms of her mountains,  
To hide my scars from her in the far corner of the  
Room scribbling trees:  
I daydream with devils that she knows this, that she  
Reads the creases of my seams,  
That her mind happens upon my soul while nursing  
The child of her unfamiliar seed:  
And oh, I love her: I love her, lost in the deepening  
Tide, the lifeguard caressing the foreplays  
Of other familiar barmaids; and it is the very bitter  
End for me:  
She is driving away in her car. The children, having discovered  
The treasure, pile into her back seat smelling like  
Sea salt and spikenard- and they go this way through the  
Rich tunnels dynamited, blasted into mountains,  
And I am left with Baudelaire, swimming like a curse,  
Tipping back his glass and laughing at me in the same motion,  
Finding it so easy to proceed comfortably floating in his  
Spotless immortality in the same instant which I can  
No longer survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Child Of My Tongue

Let us explore across the canal now:  
The places you never thought to go,  
Holding his hand, entranced by his salesman's eye,  
Skipping through the social avenues  
So easily walked down:  
Humming the cursory aplomb-  
There is only a pittance in a trance  
That way, only a fraud of a family's name:  
If you will not come with me willingly,  
I will kidnap you in a tangle of lips,  
A shackle of blood-filled groins:  
I will carry you cross the back of the crocodile:  
Singing to you the folklore's rainy rhymes.  
After you have swooned,  
I will not hide the lightning-scarred face:  
I will kiss you full bore even as you sleep,  
And slip into you as a dream,  
My bare feet the only trail to your  
Restive tomb: Over the ditches we go,  
Amidst the depressed cypress-  
Here the unrevenged ghost sing the echoing,  
A caravan of my feet,  
And your heart's patter through the  
Underage storm: Tonight your neck  
Is an opal psalm, reflecting the comet's riding,  
And you might look upward once  
As the thunderheads mosh- Then  
You will cry my name as an epitaph of love  
Amidst the fine red holly in the swamp:  
You will come to see the doldrums divide the sky,  
Like the suburban avenues destroyed by time  
And hold upon my neck like a child on a cliff,  
But I will not forgive you:  
I will mute you with a kiss,  
As you close your eyes ashamed that  
You could have strayed so far from  
My effortless love:  
I will put you down in the mud,  
And change you into the child of my tongue.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Children Of Crystal

Lets hide in the snow with the children  
Of crystal because there are games only they can know;  
They are as white as we should be, when we are  
Dead,  
And the door is open and coughing in snow,  
And we should like to learn all the words there ought to'  
Be for snow,  
And the children know;  
So leave your warm and plumbed bed,  
And come with me outside, a cold rind crystallizing in  
Your head,  
Through the amber passageways overhead that the  
Scientists just invented,  
But we should go all the way past them:  
All the way past our village and along the footpaths the  
Wolves like to know,  
And find our way holding hands, deep in the dreamy ways  
Of the speechless crooked woods,  
To kiss and play with our playmates of crystal,  
To finally lie down in our ultimate beds in the snow,  
A place so secret not even the owls know,  
In the playgrounds of the children of crystal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Children Of These Things

A toy with gears, the day winds up in a game:  
After two walks, and the moon is out; my dog lies  
Down at my feet,  
And I drink without interruptions- Perhaps my Adonis  
Palm is dying in the tiny back yard beneath the  
Mango tree,  
And the green stalks of the fish-tale palm's waterfall,  
That Alma looked up into a week or two ago,  
And said, how beautiful- this little space of land  
Of five rooms where even the cockroaches  
Seem to have hearts,  
And the fleas tickle like mermaids- and the girls never  
Come over, they just ride their bicycles and  
Skin their knees over the lawns,  
So even when their mothers lose their favorite children  
They remain just as beautiful- pearls and Oxnard  
Damming their hearts- little birds  
Blue tears stolen to fit in there- outside the windows  
And the hedge of ixora, a chorus of engineers  
Sings of a flood- and the rattlesnakes boil out of the  
Earth,  
Kissing and playing their instruments as the children of  
These things go away again to school.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Children They Have Made

Cleverness of growing  
Things,  
Taking out spindles to  
Find what they need,  
Making a play of their  
Bodies upwards  
Towards the warm pools  
Floating in the air,  
Becoming tall, and  
Gorgeous and proud  
With the airplanes  
Looking down like kind  
Fathers over  
The children they have  
Made.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Choirs Of Angelic Gutters

Going this way,  
I really want to be beautiful, admired  
And hung from galleries in flattering fame;  
Or, to discover words the hit their mark and  
Sink like arrows,  
Like a necklace of grinning alligators tossed into  
The over-blooming park:  
This is the way we should come, ostracized  
Yet beating from the pep rally royally bruised and  
Wearing our own colors:  
Kissing and crawling like overly sated bees all over  
You mother when you weren't looking,  
Giving the divine privilege to do, the correct change  
And the correct adjectives to describe the smell  
Of steadily pattering rains  
On corrugated metals and other malleable things,  
Like dreams of the homeless men orgasming in their  
Effluvious gutters, the metamorphoses of inalienable  
Things, backed up and shoeless with their homes,  
Going down by the ways of their steadily tearful streams,  
Paper boats folded up by geishas and pressed lovingly  
By your churches, the choirs of angelic gutters,  
Going this away, attribute to the sea;  
And in the morning they have sung all their mute secrets  
Into the ears who were busily dreaming yet of the gardens  
Their souls had dressed up and asked dates to,  
The indescribable ballrooms they would have liked to out of  
Insatiable habits attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Christian Names

The night is a cattle call: buzzards counting sheep  
In the humid estuaries where grandmothers finally found  
Their lost loves,  
And swam, and swam with him while the train divided beneath  
The overpasses everything that was equally lost,  
Until the cars passed, and talked on to themselves,  
And the wayward butterflies finally found the sea,  
Which was what they always supposed that they should  
Always be doing;  
And they never got on the bus again, but stole stuff that never  
Should have belonged to them,  
And sang their songs like fire light talking to the enraptured lips  
Of genies, while the lousiest of lions pillaged off into sleep,  
And the treasures sips sunk and sunk seven times the  
Depths that even the most heartily vested angels could dive  
Into the sea,  
Until you awakened one morning, swinging in my arms,  
And found that everything was safe, even though you had forgotten  
The Christian names of all of those important things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Christmases Of Your Innocence's

You've been dicking around with those horses  
Of those daydreams that used to be stars—  
And I wish that I felt alright in my amusement park  
Of my new wife—  
While the waves echo like glasses of drunken  
Words underneath the airplanes—  
And there isn't anyone else to help you—  
But now the mountains look so clean—  
They have been speaking forever—waiting for the  
Flowers to grow across their bosoms like  
Honeymoons in the spring—  
The girls that you once knew who used to shoplift,  
Who used to strut out on the patio in the middle  
Of the day—smiling and gleaming sensuous while  
You lit off bottle rockets and learned how to spell—  
And the moon spun around and around—  
Like a mixing machine,  
While the Christmases of your innocence's happened and fell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Churches Of The Skies

Gift of rainbows hear me now—I am in a place that once was  
Not so far away—heavenly knights have fallen all a-tangle  
Crisscrossed into the man-eating jungle of their  
Absent-minded displays—  
You can even see them there while you are eating dinner  
And picking your teeth,  
And talking to your Chinese wife—while a boy more beautiful  
Than you are reads every poem—  
In your dreams, then, super heroes as bright and as tiny as  
Diamonds roam the neighborhoods of homeopathic  
Equinox, collecting the rewards  
That cannot hurt a fly—and beneath your house a labyrinth  
Awakens—filled with the forget-me-nots of plastic Christmases—  
Just as the airplanes overspill the churches of the skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Citrus Tree

Crippled men who leave no echoes' who go into their own  
Houses or storm away'  
They petted the mane of the horse's once,  
Far underneath the storms of the mountains  
As the buses received a new coat of cowardly paint'  
And the butterflies were kissed  
By the yellow jackets in the grasses,  
And the prettiest girls turned around and around'  
Until, in the night, the lovers shocked themselves,  
And lightning flashed across the doorjambs of the carport,  
As the frogs sang of princes,  
And the thief who stole nothing from be took shelter  
Up in the citrus tree,  
Filled with little blooms like apathetic corsages'and stretched  
Himself out like a serpent, waiting  
For what was left of heaven to openly chastise me.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Civilization Of Juno's Appreciative Virtues

Pretend to spill wine from your absence:  
Because I am dead, I cannot taste but recommend  
Its bouquet just to please you,  
To let you pass through time with your jingling  
Knights, embossed inheritors who can play  
The guitar who like the pornography and cigars  
You buy for them:  
After I have helped you move into a new ghetto,  
Lay me down here beside absent girlfriends and  
Say, this is the coffin I scavenged for you where you  
Will live;  
And nothing will call, and nothing you've created  
In sloppy reverence for the superficiality of my  
Bosom will be recognized or will sell;  
And you are drunk- you are always drunk and  
Getting ticketed, even on your mythological bicycles;  
And a girl can only drink one or two poems,  
Before dehydrating on the failed lucidity, like trying  
To survive down in the esoteric creek beds of  
Utah- And lay into him, hard and untruthful, even if  
He is your girlfriend's man, which I have surmised  
From my constant telegraphy and seven dollar rums:  
They still card me out here in the worthless desert,  
The cannibalistic blue jays and the mothers who will not  
Sell; and it is a funny, murderous thing- How I have  
Spent myself into your unappreciative vases, because  
I thought I recognized your naked virtues in an oil painting  
I happened upon in kindergarten, which made me lost,  
Just as I am losing myself again stumbling through the  
Trailer parks and happening upon the weedy train tracks  
Where you've long since passed with your favorite dogs,  
And your favorite men, with the same impossibility of  
Happening up the civilization of Juno's appreciative  
Virtues, either way I chance.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Classroom Where The Cenotaphs Exist

Stones skipping in the skull of echoes  
This is the classroom where the cenotaphs exist:  
This is where I am anyway  
Figuring out, while the yard grows  
And your children grow, while you fall out of  
Love with me in this spot: but the word of  
My soul is not my own plagiarisms  
Of true love, and this is for you  
Written and sent without a thought, as your  
Walk across the world in your brown limbs  
Tasting of the emptiness I gladly left for you  
For you are my muse fresh from the kilns of  
Sunlight, and this is how you belong  
Molded from the echoes the surround  
The playgrounds of your being  
As gardens inhabit the butterfly

Robert Rorabeck

# The Classrooms Of Their Households

Glaciers of an evaporating school yard—  
Thoughts of rabbits and working girls disappeared amongst the roses—  
And silent boys in the middle of their classes—  
Glowing—feeling their own armpits sweating in their perpendicular rows:  
What will awaken tomorrow but the spikenard of gumshoe  
Gambits—each field a classroom of pestilent daycare—  
Each joy in the kaleidoscope from the windows of an airplane—  
And the moonbeams looking up and up—  
Pulling the slendered shoulders of the marionettes—some of them  
Homo sapiens, others the trigger fish of drive in movie  
Theatres—as the weekend grows over the commercials of its  
Resolution—and girls get up just as beautiful day—  
Fading into the echoes of mailboxes—perfumes the spread from  
The classrooms of their households—  
Until all of their tender evaporated exist underneath one sky—  
Until that too is gone, as the football players leave their field,  
As the song birds abandon their songs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Clear Blue Sky

I want to flatter myself until I'm dead,  
And raise up gray-haired Lazarus  
And thank the Lord,  
And scratch my pen:  
Realize now what the dawn really is,  
A commercial for a tipping glass,  
Her eyes are lazy and casting shadows  
Quietly dancing above the grass:  
And I can't really say why I do this,  
Why I down another one,  
Why I haven't been in bed with a woman  
Since the distant past:  
Its not scholarly, its not even healthy;  
And its no use:  
I'll move away. I'll flip burgers, I'll mow  
The yard and then bow to my insouciant audience  
Keeping all the words I know scribbled on a  
Napkin and I'll use it to wipe off the humid  
Glances the housewives give slanting halfway down  
Their porcelain abutments:  
I don't know why I do this; its not even a choice,  
And I'll admit this while staring straight at you,  
Because I figure its you who really knows why  
And then the sun lights up and f\$cks the clear  
Blue sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Clear Evidence

Recoiled like a serpent after his spring:  
After whispering of the wisdom of her sexes in her ear,  
And making her eat that thing,  
Causing the burning planes of summer, for her young and less than  
Wise gods to evaporate and disappear:  
To smack dab her like a porcelain doll into my cerulean plane of  
A bed with springs,  
And to allow me to make love to her even though she was already  
Spoken for:  
It gave her the canine tooth of wisdom, and made her sweeter:  
She is still my brown sugar  
Even though she can not leave her yesterdays of Mexico:  
All the education of Alma's soul across the seesawing aridity  
Of the state of Guerrero,  
Like a castanet cast candidly between the extended bellies of a gulf  
And a sea:  
And now she has hernia, and I don't know if we can ever make love  
Again, but I spill for her anyways-  
I kiss all of the newborn terrapin trying to escape the burning letters  
Of the beach, as if they were soldiers of fetlocked unicorns  
Retreating into the over spilling goblet of a vengeful king  
Crying in them the promises that kidnapped them  
From the forest of their immortal spells,  
And put them like marionettes under my fingerprints, leaving after them  
The clear evidence of all of my crimes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Closing Times That Are Never Heard

There you are, diving in the fashion of your choices,  
Each of you sharpened into a weapon or  
A tool,  
Feathered, and going down: you can swim to the bottom of  
The earth and rise up again;  
While I have been doing this for so long, catching blue gills  
And swinging them around  
Like breathless girls out at prom,  
Until finally the shady trees slip across the sea:  
They form tiny bridges that sparkle under the tenements  
For you, for me;  
And the world goes round, spreading the happenstances of daylight:  
My sisters move in Phoenix,  
Some lion yawns, and the tourists are always jubilant, while  
Alma is going to lie down in a bed that she shares  
With him: he probably doesn't even exist, but he is there,  
While each little voice that I print to no one crawls out and  
Tries to live for a few seconds across the sandy playgrounds  
Deeply into the closing times that are never heard.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Clothing Of A World We Cannot See

Ended by rows of epitaphs half naked with vulgar  
Roses-  
Even the prostitutes have given up beneath a vermilion  
Curtain up above that is  
Never opening;  
But wonderful complexions without any color,  
Life infants underneath the stones of their roods,  
With elaborate nakedness behind the closed windows of shops:  
And you right here,  
Breathing against me before church- and yet nowhere discernable;  
Not worried upon- like something that goes missing  
But stays found:  
And I can hear your daughter laughing as I give all of my promises  
Over to you,  
And you run your brown hands under the faucet in another  
House somewhere near here  
Which echoes like the traffic of honey sucking birds:  
And I and the fox and his friends cock heads to listen,  
As you take off the clothing of a world we cannot see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Color Green

With symbols and bouts of glory cast your doom-  
Foray out into enterprise,  
Where the cats are expressing like horny violins  
The things they say atop of  
Fences to little boys looking up at the moon  
And her window  
Up a hill, a long ways off where the shadows are  
Exercising  
And taking the low dip kisses of airplanes- wetting their  
Wings on the sea  
Where I put you against the beautiful corners of  
Torpedoes and  
Christmas trees- underneath all of those promises of  
Your unlucky father in the stars:  
And further away, where the gods are growing fruit  
And smoking weather fronts that hide their adulteries  
Like the way birthday cake can hide the color green.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Color Of An Ambiguous Moon

Rounding the bases of marbles,  
As if we were small children in a kaleidoscope again:  
What a mess,  
Our knees and lips wanting to elope,  
Flames and paper weights in our hair; and turning around,  
Realizing the pets that once loved us-  
And that we loved, were being set free, but there was so  
Many of them it was an uncountable deluge  
Which made us heartbroken, watching them disappearing  
Into the cracks without any names- and further  
Away- even further away than this,  
The girls that we once said we loved, before we left  
Them to sell fireworks- there they were kissing new shadows,  
Turning around in a zoetrope the size of a lost  
Penny with a patina the color of an ambiguous moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Color Of Your Comely Blood

I will get married and  
Bare propitious children who will make  
Sport of the sea,  
And they will laugh at you and the way you  
Once made beautiful flirtations with  
My mind,  
The way the sun winks like a glowing seizure  
Down through parts of the forest;  
And when you come with your walking stick  
And breasts to pray at my grave under  
The color of your comely blood,  
They will swoop down from their tree forts  
And beat you with sticks,  
And kiln you with hot mud- cause you wasn't  
Their mother,  
And you never was.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Color Of Your Eyes

Boldest lies, you are telling a fanciful truth,  
Fitful of wildflowers in the dells of your gold, and our aunt went  
To Miami today and bought us two  
Virginsitas of white gold that I will have to pay for,  
But that's okay:  
You came over to my house and we made love,  
And love, and love; and I finally felt what it was like to be  
A Mexican in the sort of heat that only your  
Country knows; so nothing in my white washed schools could  
Prepare me for this,  
Though all of my previous girlfriends melt away,  
And I go laughing into your homeless forts above the orange groves  
Where the laborers are spitting sangria,  
And the blue birds emote carnivorously, but not a single one of  
Them has met the color of your eyes,  
Though today that color was all over me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Colors Of Our Throats

Little squalls of luxury looking over the  
Riverbanks,  
New careless words birthed from the furrowed  
Lips of the forest besides  
The university- it is where I go,  
Where there are no gravestones, only sticks,  
And the weather beats-  
And the movies are hamstrung,  
And I respect her now, because this is her  
Exit, sweltering, made to lush,  
And we are moving towards her before  
Sunlight while she is probably sleeping with  
Her favorite echo of a man:  
We smell like an old gas station, like otters  
After a certainly lugubrious lunch  
Of clams and housewives-  
The bicycles beneath them like overused dimes  
In a freshwater wishing well:  
We leap over them to get to her, our joyful,  
Mouth less friends,  
Even though she doesn't not the colors our  
Throats have grown with her songs,  
Because she is not happy to see us.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Colors Of This Thievery

Daycare underneath the swing sets—knowing all  
Of the colors of this thievery:  
Only one or two words found out so far,  
But there will be school tomorrow across the highway—  
Not far from anywhere—  
And you will come outside of your house and look  
Across at the orchards,  
Or up to the apoplexies of skies not too far from  
The power-lines anyways—  
And not pretend to wonder what it means  
To be in-love,  
You are not so confused with the goings on:  
Mestizo—as it is your right to be:  
Child of conquistador and Indian—product of  
Rape anyways—  
No wonder how it was that you had no problem  
Coming up to my door—  
There might have been blue feathers in your hair—  
And I thought we made love,  
But you were too busied to stay inside—  
And so you went home to the man you've had two children  
With even though you do not love him anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Colors Of Your Soul

I've even been up in the fanfare of markets  
Above the tree lines of your beauty and of your  
Flea markets:  
I've sauntered up in the mineral ways, while cursing  
The sun like looking in your eyes,  
And remembering the way down through my  
Hallucinations,  
Following the shed horns of elk like bred crumbs  
Through a tree less forest-  
Like an instrument that plays the sweet sound of  
Your soul through this insurmountable pain-  
As if I found the only firework in the world  
That blazed for a moment with the colors of your  
Soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Comatose Heavens

Your house looks like a daydream of simple structures:  
In fact, I remember vomiting in the wishing wells of  
Your mall—fouling up all of your establishing compliments  
Kitty-corner to the bookstore  
Where I bought all of the pulp fiction, and waited  
For the pet fish to fall in love with the heavens:  
And you grew up—and grew up to emerge to love the  
World—a cheerleader in love with football—  
A metamorphosis of the carport and echinopsis—  
Don't you ever wonder of the everyday beauty of the landscaping  
Just outside of your door—Privileged youth  
Everyday beauty and commonly named princess: your future  
A spotlight upon the comatose heavens—and the otters  
Swim and swim, making a luxurious delight for the feral boys  
Who are utterly outside your realm of chances.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Combined Hallucinations

And a new sunshine—  
And a new pair of skates:  
And a new way to live underneath the chinaberry trees:  
While we are displaced from ourselves,  
And our houses tend to wonder upon their preternatural  
Journeys—  
Until their shallow roots are given the rebirths of  
Their new meanings—  
And the hummingbirds team and team just to be here—  
As we are all parceled off  
Into the shoulders of the Christmas trees  
That we could not pretend to sell—and we  
Are just here or there—  
As sunlight flits and dies across the canal,  
Until all of the whole world is just sold out—  
And you cannot but keep to your own  
Slumber—  
And the beautiful innocence comes at its own price—  
As the daylight we have once seen will have to shoulder  
The entire world—  
And there is the measure of your beauty—  
Wild and wicked and at the edge of a pitchfork of a waterfall—  
And into its beautiful amusements surrenders—  
The unconscious joys of all of its loins—  
A valley side of windmills—the combined hallucinations of  
All of our joys.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Combustive Valentine Along In The Gutter Of The Busy Curb

Crown me in scars, in rainstorms,  
The abusive clichés,  
Give me my rounds, my sweet bruises,  
My misspellings,  
My pugilistic kisses- sweeten the  
Pounds,  
Drive around in your cars for an hour  
Of sacrifices,  
Look at me broken down beneath the  
Pillars of your high highway;  
I tend to lie back this way in the broken  
Glass of saints, the distraught paint,  
The gardens of unending cemeteries:  
Make love to him, and breathe the meanings  
You give to yourselves along the wires;  
Swing the rusted hinges, the beautiful compressions,  
An entire salty wildlife in a certain geological  
Position burning the body's gravity;  
It doesn't matter how you tap out, the telegraphs  
Of your bones, the censers of spinal cords  
Like jublations going on a smoky swing set up and  
Down-  
I want such immortal wreckage left out like  
Soggy breadcrumbs along the slope of Calvary;  
And if the ravenous anonymity should break through the clouds like  
A new wound and find me,  
I will like a perfect invalid await your venomous manna  
To fly to my bones, your heavenly forgetfulness to  
Immolate me,  
The discarded cremation, the combustive valentine along  
In the gutter of the busy curb.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Commerce Of Life's Progressing

On the other part of the world people  
Are getting up, yawning like daffodils ruffled by  
The hyperventilating winds against the highways,  
Like silken gypsies spread, beautifully valiant people  
I will never see; for I am going down into the  
Deep basement with the waitresses and yawning bartenders,  
For now it is our time to sleep, curl up like a litter of  
Puppies for sooty firemen: Though I will not hold hands  
With them tonight, nor ever, their silence blares like  
The true warmth of a Christmas hearth,  
And from here, when my pillow lisps my ear and dreams,  
I can say that it is her chest beating like the clock inside  
A fairytale's crocodile: And every bit of her is never, never  
Land full of little boys she refuses to serve another dream from  
The reservoirs of powdery bosom: How so I see her  
There in the beady drapes of the lurid willow's frown:  
An Indian princess, an unsolvable crux- Just the timeless  
Muse with scabby knees and chewing gum, a Tom Boy  
Who has hidden my love letters in the hollow knot, and gone  
Into hibernation with another man sweating away her deciduous  
Cycles in a beautiful, unrepeated constellation- Though  
I will surely see her again in the brilliance of shadow less morning,  
The park wearing a green dress, as I arc over her swinging  
With rested attempts, each thing she wears like rivers beneath  
My migrations, the commerce of life's progressing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Commercials Of Love

Yellow house, and turtle dove:  
And body of man who very seldom is ever even there:  
But you are there, as the waves whispering up  
To the shore I never go to,  
And the sad lawn which they have cordoned off,  
And are taking down the swings of my childhood;  
And the helicopters like red and yellow pearls  
Cursing for their supper underneath the early moon;  
As Alma is in her house, gossiping with her  
Sisters,  
And watching the commercials of love- feelings things  
That I will not feel, but none the less shall never be  
Extinguished.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Common Appetite

Left alone with a red ball after school,  
How will I play now with the corrugations  
Tinting the sky,  
The cavalry of obnoxious shells the librarian  
Never sees as she reprimands me for returning  
Sherlock Holmes tardy, with piss stains:  
They are mine because I wet my bed until I was  
Twelve,  
And today I was rejected by the immaculate university:  
The five heads came to the conclusion that I  
Couldn't even spell,  
And they were already eager because they had  
Sylvia Plathe done in their oven- Neglecting to scold  
Their kids, the latchkeys with green hangovers still  
Swinging in the park, all the pretty verbs like molting  
Insects with crystalline wings, chartreuse or vermillion,  
Like beer or swans, waiting for them underfoot  
As they kicked in the guts of sky,  
I was left alone because the principal let me go after  
Declaring me a misfit. I knew where I was headed:  
There was slick pornography in the woods, and soldiers  
Buried deep into the dunes with the real live conquistadors  
And the cockleburs. The sky was already on that,  
Like a dog on its murdered bones, like a maiden to her  
Pilot, and I was left to my own sweet devices,  
Whistling in an banished orchard,  
As the world forgot to make up to me,  
But somehow I managed another breath and plucked it  
Gingerly to satisfy the common appetite.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Common Means Of Adultery

Land may be petting the tearful comb of the stars,  
Lamenting her, perpetually trying to hold the hand that  
Has become a shell;  
Where its corrugations are beautiful as wayside landmarks,  
But no real lover is at home;  
And I have been to both coasts of Florida,  
And put my feet into the Pacific over a decade ago the one  
Night before I ran back to where I ran away from;  
And tomorrow I want to sit with Kelly beside all of that  
Useless and frightened motion, and say with her  
How beautiful is that severe upheaval of cerulean adolescents  
Which cast us both so far away,  
Which made me love her from fifth grade on up through  
Most of high school, which made her disagree:  
I want to feed her strawberries, or at least bring them to her  
Under the bridge in the rain;  
I want to cloud in next to her, or touch her with my eyes  
Floating above my silly fibrillations, the smoke signals of my  
Usual organizations,  
Forgetting all that we have taken unto ourselves and to  
Remember again the sweet young detective novels we read  
Apart while I pissed my pants and drooled over the parts of her  
Backside other swifter footed men rounded the bases upon far sooner  
Than me;  
Or even now pretend she is the lost graveyard where all my derelict  
Ancestors are buried, and put my hands upon them as if in Church,  
Resurrecting them by the common means of adultery,  
Which of course should never be allowed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Conductor

Now the night moons itself while I have been  
Counting perfect:  
Maybe I am the perfect director for your divorce of  
Numbers and coelacanth,  
Because otherwise f%ck these birthday wishes that  
You were supposed to mean to me,  
While even my brother in law was taking it easy  
Before his wedding to my sister above my head:  
And oh my god, he is so perfectly more beautiful man me,  
But he will never be the conductor of these things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Confections Of Alcohol

Where all of the minnows go to drink  
Around the knees of key deer  
Until their tiny wishes sink  
Under them:  
Where cypress weep—where the tiniest  
Boys say amen,  
Sweating into their toy boats—  
Kites and airplanes already stuck in the  
Sky—  
Where their mothers go  
Not knowing why—  
And not a love upon this simple earth—  
With nothing of knowledge shared to  
Them—  
They can only wander a little further—  
Over another canal—  
And further away from the sleeping school  
Bus—  
Where the sugarcane is burning—  
The color of all of the confections of alcohol—  
Evaporated into the ethereal midways  
Like luckless goldfish un returning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Confinements Of Their Social Earth

Oh, never mind the broken words of  
Siamese twins—  
I just want to check out the layout of  
The sun,  
And lie there, as the beach engorges  
The world as  
You know it will—  
As pretty girls are passing by, willing to  
To look up at the angels who  
Belong on Christmas trees  
Now that the summer is almost  
Over and the daylight is gone from  
The housewife's eyes,  
As if the fireworks they had spent too much  
Money on had  
Fled the confinements of their social Earth.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Conjuring Dance Of The Dust Devils' Ballet

Out on the dusty field,  
After the finish of the game, the pack-up  
And movement of the rusting carnival  
A long ways down the night's road,  
The empty-naked bodies are turning themselves  
Around,  
Humans and horses,  
Lucky wives and misshapen inebriates,  
They are something alike,  
Compound adjectives of field and class,  
The worm's disease through the harpsichord cages  
Of the empirical game;  
Roses curling yet healthy out the wrought-iron bars  
Of the cemetery's crackling window.  
I recognize a lover I though I had from the snowy  
Field of the television,  
Just her legs reclining out from under the thunder brush-  
The naked long-haired Navajos are coming with dollars bills  
For the ride,  
Coming up both ways along the satanic reservation.  
Their eyes careening into the conjuring dance of  
The dust devils' ballet;  
I will not give them a ride, because my deal is over:  
The tent is down, the stakes unearthed:  
Its time to move on,  
to take these Mexicans to the Chinese buffet.  
As I leave I see  
The gallinas have eaten through the chicken-wire;  
But they are not hypnotized-  
They are clucking down in the dry riverbed  
Where Billy The Kid carved his name,  
Still the youthful archaeology of the Lincoln-County War;  
But the great waters are gone,  
Turned into salty curbs where spilled cars lay  
Overturned with red hoods like terrapins who have given  
Up and now wait quietly for the circling lullabies  
Of buzzards beneath strange nebulas,  
While the casinos flicker on, wheels of chance turning  
For all of them- The horizon green with the sick energies,

Humming to how things have moved on.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Conquered Conquistador

Robert's eyes are red: he is taking off- You  
Can get so much of him for free,  
And the wind is a dying wife who once kissed the  
Upturned lips of his fingers,  
But afterwards felt so guilty she went downward  
To the sea's cemetery to sit in the dying caesuras;  
And I've played baseball in the red diamond  
Dirt  
Way before high school, with no one else called out,  
And the lamps were breaking,  
His parents selling watermelons at the washed out  
Cabaret, and girls once named Sharon could  
Never speak, could never sell all that they were worth  
Way back in the attributing blue-greenness' of  
Wellington's insouciant estuaries;  
Her fingers were so smooth and cool upon the wet  
Clay that I wanted nothing more that to pretend to capitalize  
On being her ghost, to walk out into the new disney world  
She'd bake for me, and we'd set off,  
Something surreal fantasy and horny, even if it wasn't  
Aloud, oh god, if you are or were still a good god,  
And not a dentist, you'd let me; and this poem is for the  
Girl who tastes the grapes, who smells the unforgotten  
Homesteads of my mother in Colorado; and I have failed  
Her and died the conquered conquistador before the granite cross  
Before there was established real estate or boys with  
Dreams of franchises; but I still remember how I tipped  
My glass during the old school bohemian play, skipped  
Across the world and defeated the cops, and thought of your  
Angelic bone structures, while the better muses died in  
South Africa, and we threw our balls, the harems of young  
Politicians, though I still do this for your maiden name,  
Even though I am no longer foolish enough to name it after you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Conquistadors I Don'T Even Pretend To Become

Bodies growing new leafs;  
It almost sounds like presents being opened:  
Her eyes watching,  
Have no sound, the deadly predators of her  
Senses,  
They work in the shadows of great stealth,  
They shade under the long-stretched wings of birds  
Taken down,  
Who themselves have become peaceful;  
And I get drunk and mop up,  
Wipe the sweat off my brow,  
Grow pensive;  
It is almost as if I am under her kissing ball when I  
Do this,  
When I make time after midnight underneath the slash  
Pines to talk about her,  
After all my metamorphosis has reverted.  
Then the moonlight of a blue moon shines on the living  
And the dead alike,  
And they really like it;  
She probably sits atop some cinderblocks while her  
City laughs,  
While the children stumble through the red-bricked  
Mists,  
Her eyes like the sunken lime-stones of this planet  
Whose senses are so much like perfumes attended and worshipped  
By the conquistadors I don't even pretend to become.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Constant Billboards

Hounds on a hill named Gertrude  
Lassoing the last possessions that have come down  
From the cross,  
Hillbillies sick with oil, their dogs yammering  
Of a boy named Elvis:  
So this night beats its hullabaloo, through which  
The possums are  
So cantankerous, overturning in the spumes of  
That dousing earth,  
Each one in a phylum of its decree, pinching and  
Black eyed  
Smelling like jasmine and junk yards:  
Serial killers who curse the long jaunts of airplanes  
Like the flight plans of demigods,  
And the fireworks that die, after stealing all of our money,  
Memories of our patriotism  
Lie in the open jaws of burry weeds,  
Cenotaphs whose cathedrals the eager ants come so  
Hungriily too after the soul of the earth promises them so  
Softly underneath the constant billboards and after the rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Constantly Revolving Stars

And they finally find themselves so they  
Say that they are here:  
And Alma is probably making love with another man  
Tonight in a house filled with children and  
Good, good applesauce:  
And my words aren't even an orchard, and are not  
Far a field from the vermilion forts with their  
Green, green cannons;  
And they can easily be trampled upon by tourisms,  
And thus forgotten:  
And Mickey Mouse- but anyways, in the long run  
It feels good to be alone,  
Because that is the greatest way of things, for even though  
They are all lined up together in similar names,  
The graveyards know no revolutions,  
While the cars pummel what they cannot possibly expect  
To control,  
The clouds finally slipping away, dispersing their illusions  
Leaving only the constantly revolving stars  
So happy to be where they are, fuel for wishes to which they  
Will long be dead before receiving.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Contours Of Her Beautiful Façade

Sweet as the molasses of a sailor's rations,  
The plans take their swiftest roots:  
And they even now sing, driving home to their  
Trailer parks hauled away beneath the pine trees  
On the other side of the canal  
Where rabbits talk with dogs in wonderful make  
Believe;  
And the kittens that you once loved return to their  
French castles whose aqueducts blister like lime trees:  
And they sit down beneath the clocks  
And tell rude stories while kissing their paws and playing  
Cards,  
While out side, why, there could be just about anyone:  
The hobos lumbering from the dim to the liquor store,  
Rasping as unhesitatingly as the rains that pretend to  
Persevere, that go down perchance equally  
Dismissive along the contours of her beautiful façade.

Robert Rorabeck

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Persevere, that go down perchance equally  
Dismissive along the contours of her beautiful façade.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Cool Death Around The Next Bend

Every day new trout come down the stream  
Gossiping about death waiting around the next bend,  
In the slower, speckled waters;  
I let my feet drift beneath the ripples like a  
Pugilist son of a gun on a smoke break,  
Wanting to touch the murky sidelines of the muddy  
Mothers- They go by so coolly with their shopping  
Or whatever they dos- They make just as many friends  
In the neighborhood of the effluvious ribbon;  
And they only go in one direction, maybe even ending up  
In the northern shafts of the Mississippi, always fighting  
So that they spindle all their roe like pearly strings  
And rosy confection; I dip my fingers in like  
A little boy being naughty before dinner, and let that  
Glossy spume coat me pulsating like a nursery of  
Inanimate heartbeats beneath the deciduous canopy;  
But they don't say anything of it when I eat them,  
And there is nothing against god covering up the under-  
Developed with my tongue- He is driving in the other  
Direction all ready and smart to give another deposition,  
Just bought a new house because it's a buyer's market;  
I count how many times he's gone by without looking-  
Its filled up my fingers- My toes waggle,  
And the fishing mothers avoid them, making me second  
Guess my real reasons for being in this repose of  
Comfortable truancy, when I should be out raking and  
Hoeing; But the sun goes by never fearing the cool  
Death around the next bend.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cornfield's Daughter

And coral snakes are in her eyes:  
My God she'll kill you  
Before the sun falls-  
You can leap over the canals,  
Use the deadfall as bridges,  
And count the nodding heads  
Of lethargic crocodiles,  
But she can follow you home,  
Through the pines and  
The owl's hooting noose:  
She can slip through walls  
As easily as burnished shadows  
From the tanking sun,  
To reclaim the stolen pennies  
From the hollow tortoise,  
The remote words that sleep  
In balls amidst the sugarcane-  
None of slept off to school,  
All of your stuff on a stick  
Slung over your shoulder:  
You'd thought you'd slink away  
The bully's grin,  
Hiding in the masturbating pines,  
Amidst the faded magazines,  
The women of evening time;  
But she saw you lazing there,  
Like an engorged rattle-snake,  
And now it is her time for the charm,  
The kiss of the smoke rising in  
The burning fields,  
The tomboy's slim smile,  
Her ass in a pair of tight corduroys  
She gives to all the lost boys:  
Her metal breasts like roofs of cars  
Out in the open sky all day;  
You'd thought to seize her there,  
And claim a pocket's worth of  
Blinding gaze, but her kiss is  
A coral snake biding its time;

Ringed with the luxury of unfettered poisons,  
The only thing she'll give to you,  
Blinking like the sun through pines;  
She gives you the lasting courtship  
Before you can run away,  
And then she breezes there for awhile.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Corpses Of The Ground

I awaken echoing bonfires—  
It is a pretty sight—as it happens echoing fireside  
Underneath the airplane's wings that set out for  
Tomorrows-  
And you were right there, crowning my kings with  
Aces—beautiful appetite riding horses,  
Looking after both of your children:  
Well, then—this is just where it happened—upon  
The battlefield—  
Perhaps finding new friends who would last  
Forever—  
And I love you right now, in the middle of my quest,  
With your very fine lips pressed to the very  
Fine drinking fountains—  
And this is your bond, and this is my pledge—  
And we will go on forever governing ourselves—  
And in the naked light of tomorrow's  
Playground  
I suppose that we can yet hope to find each of ourselves  
Echoing in the memories that just happen to lie  
Anywhere just as long as they so happen to lie above  
The corpses of the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Corroding Pornographies

Working in a womb unseen  
The sub-axis of the hub where  
The unstudied hand of a poxy  
Magician keeps his doves,  
I live looking for you in  
The imperfect and evaporating  
Mirrors of puddles,  
I keep looking for you  
Undeveloped—  
In the womb of your mother—  
I want to be your jobless  
Father and so soon  
You will come  
And I will be jobless  
With just some  
Paper roses  
To diaper you—  
Can you remember my name  
As I stand out in the open where  
The cars drive—  
As the night warms the bellies  
Of potbellied snakes,  
And across the street  
The dunes caress the feet  
Of a sneaky  
Panther who in lanky sideways  
Lopes across the rusting  
Chassis which house  
The corroding pornographies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Corsages And Cul-De-Sacs

Slipping into the palmettos like a serpent  
Going to see a whore:  
Underneath the open wounds of airplanes  
Bathing in their two piece swimsuits:  
Languishing topside of the astral planes  
Using wigi boards to say I love you  
To ghosts who try to tell you their names-  
Inside a house of diamonds  
In the eyes of the crocodile who never smiles  
But ticks like a clock, giving fair warning  
To prepare the boys for their bar mitzvahs  
In the corsages and cul-de-sacs of their  
Immortality.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Corsages Of The Turnstiles

First of all, the critical flowers:

Reindeer have trundled them again, and they are  
All over the place. I am sorry,  
Their necks are all broken,  
And the blue lights are out in the Catholic  
Church.

This night, no one is returning home:

The arrows all lay forgotten where they were  
Spent, unexcavated from the red tenements of  
Earth, but at least that means that we can make love:  
While the roller coasters and the airplanes  
Move further and further away,  
Preoccupied by their own entertainments, and not  
By what the government does to amuse itself:  
While the angels have been singing  
Or sucking their thumbs: and your parents have been  
Enjoying the limelight,  
Filled with strange amusements, while the ethereal  
Holidays sing to themselves through the wind tunnels-  
And the waves dance up to the corsages of  
The turnstiles, hoping that finally at least one amongst  
Them will gain his turn.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Courtesy Bays

Weep in a field.

The airplanes are its flying sorority.

My wife is playing the guzheng. She wants our son to learn  
The violin.

I watch a movie about Emily Dickinson.

Today it rained, hard at times and then a roar of sun-  
Our air-conditioning is not cooling.

I sold 3,000 dollars today to survive and, periodically,  
Become rich:

It is a nice form of revenge against no one who cares.

If there are any left-over muses,

They are comfortably married-

The pockmarking teachers and abusive faculties are retired  
Or are retiring,

A tourist of Disney World scratches his armpit-

It is the only real smelling thing he will experience all day:

There is a preternatural world of has-been Indians beneath him,  
Cadavers caracoled In a rotted archaeology;

While the stewardesses control the wishes of his gods-

And the heat settles across the phallic peninsulas,

Evaporating waves before they can rise:

Mermaids are getting headaches or amnesias:

It is their time of the month-

They want us to lay off:

There is Mara Largo across the courtesy bay: When nineteen, , mistaking it for  
the

Coral Castle, I tried to enter in

At midnight and armed guards came out of the floodlights,  
Guns raised.

I raised my arms and ran off.

They had moved the Coral Castle to Homestead,  
Saddled against the Everglades.



This is the home we have made for ourselves:  
Old Edward Lee- has given up-  
His Egyptian love is hardly anymore than a curiosity:  
Pythons are eating alligators in the swamp-  
Strange fruit is swinging from the poplar trees- -

It is a stretch of a tropical fairytale, forever building but never  
Taking us above sea level:  
In a make believe where societies distinguish themselves from  
The proletariat behind faux gilded gates,  
Gaudy facsimiles made to look like old Romany-

The palms splay to receive the heat given off from the black tops.  
To the east nearby, the caesuras do their hidden things,  
Hypnotizing and make us forgetful of the loves that have not returned to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cradles Of Nard

Up in the cradles of nard- up in the jubilee of  
The feathers of Indian headdresses:  
Taking walks in the cauldrons, following the indistinguishable  
Tracks of a sky without a moon:  
Without my dogs, I am wandering, and the fences are high and  
Low,  
The seesaws just as equal and only halfway populated by  
The blue squaws smoking blue wood out of their  
Leathered chimneys,  
Making the trees curl their leaves while ungodly faces grow  
Out of their lightning stricken grandmothers:  
And I think of her and saddle up as I cast my ungainly  
Strides towards the graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# The Craft Of Paper Snowflakes

I share my lunch with Alma:  
I follow her, and finally sit down with her anywhere:  
Sometimes she says she loves me,  
And sometimes she isn't sure, but her beauty reminds me  
And gives me hope for a peaceable tomorrow,  
As the traffic all filibusters,  
The ceiling fans pirouette, the day languishing like a lost  
Ship filled to the teeth with sparkling jewelry  
Which calls down the gaudy angels who flit around her  
Like hummingbirds at a confection of water fountains,  
Like toy soldiers out in a tomboys yard  
That the cicadas are humming:  
Pillared by the slash pines, as if in a feral dynasty that sweats  
The naked humidity, and in December knows the craft of  
Paper snowflakes across the wounds  
That were never delivered in the first place.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crassness Of Banshees

Generally,  
I've been flirting with  
The crassness of  
Banshees,  
And it doesn't hurt to  
Eat fruit from  
The occasional crab tree;  
But she doesn't  
Wan to do it all year,  
Just once or twice on  
Sundays,  
Hung over, venal holidays,  
Away from her holy  
Father's spirit store,  
Once or twice all year.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Creator's Gifts

Harim Maxim  
Created the machine gun  
And Telsa created  
His coil

The upper class created  
The lower class  
As God created the soil

And you are in my  
Mind right now  
Echoing in your stilettos,  
But I am doing fine  
Right now  
Boiling in my meadows.

Newton ate the apple  
That fell from its tree  
As Eve enjoyed the sin  
Of man  
That she gave to  
You and me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Creature Most Similar To You

I can tell the legends my song  
Above the honeyed wheat and waterslides:  
Here is where the milkmaids lie all the way beyond their  
Men,  
Right down to their bones and loaded dice:  
This is where their milk pails lie and are licked clean  
By the industrious mice;  
And I have had poems- I have had words spilled right here,  
All around your mother's throat,  
The woman you can never leave because she is so clearly your  
Family:  
And you cannot join me, because you can never have too  
Families Alma:  
So I sell fireworks and tell you against the odd tidal waves  
That I have very strong feelings for you;  
And I made you tell me that you loved me today,  
And I told you I wanted to get married in your church,  
Which made you laugh:  
The jovial laughter of your brown body like an otter in a cocoon,  
A creature that is playful but never tamed;  
And it is funny that I had to explain to you a couple of weeks before  
Hand what an otter was, while we were holding hands.  
When that is the creature most similar to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Creatures Of My Faith

Lighted as if in the cool lights of  
A pieta  
Of a church where my muse goes once or  
Twice a year:  
A voyeur in the jaundice perfume of the jasmine  
She leaves,  
Her body cooling itself underneath the jet streams of  
Airplanes:  
Returning herself to her husband that she doesn't  
Love,  
And their apoplectic joy: their lost children  
Nuzzling like ant infested roses into the armpits  
Of their overgrown devotion,  
While she sings songs to me in her sleep that I will  
Never hear,  
As she herself was lost in the higher slopes  
Of the receding forests I had cultivated for her  
Into the creatures of my faith,  
Who danced all around her, igniting themselves off  
Of her infectious fires of moonlight;  
And swimming again into her in her sleep even while  
Her sea and sky burned.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Creche Of Airplanes

The mountains now are without female hearts:  
Above tree-line,  
So well and empty,  
With the moonlight spilling into the recesses  
Of wind-abused stones;  
And here I wait for her in secret meetings  
Which I can never be sure they happen:  
In body I am down below,  
I am below traffic, below shopping malls;  
But my soul-fish floats, swims,  
Gurgles, runs pink gilled fibrillating around her  
Naked shoulder blades-  
Has things it wants to share with her-  
Has things to take to her far over the wild,  
Tremulous plum trees,  
Over the rock gardens of captured grandmothers  
Where the membranous clutches of soft-bellied  
Snakes quiver;  
Wants to summit with her while the other hikers are  
Down past the holly roosts,  
Down in their cerulean tents, making love,  
Afraid of bears:  
Making it here atop the world looking down at the  
Mica-ed splash of strange, despondent cities  
Where I have called her up from;  
Touching my finger to the underbelly of her temple,  
And around her sensuous ear,  
Telling her things that would be otherwise senseless.  
Now that she has come, like the metamorphosis  
Of pollinated flowers into the tender fruit bowed on ever  
Stem,  
Weighted nearer the crèche of airplanes, throbbing  
With the nectar of my wounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Creeps

I got my copper penny's worth of sex  
Then I took off like a flying fish  
Jumping out of the sea's butth-le lips.  
I went to see the presidents,  
The tin-men and the scarecrows....  
In the sky so bluish,  
They were all high off the gifts  
The wizard gave them,  
And they sang in chorus,  
"Glenda was a good witch,  
And an ornithologist.  
She caught us in her butterfly net  
And tied us up as she undressed....  
Glenda was a damn good witch."

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crenulated Ebullitions

Throat burns as if I've swallowed a very personal faerie;  
But it is only the liquor that burns,  
My throat in its veins like a dozen thorny roses,  
And I could say that above my planes  
The moon is waxing gibbous, because that is what it  
Does  
Poetically;  
Just one moon like a corpse in a coffin floating like  
A balloon above a tiny teal sea,  
Like the stone mouth of a copper lion flowing with  
Water stolen from the pipes;  
And there is a girl in the bath practicing swimming;  
She is listening to the music of the Spanish Civil  
War,  
The cows and poets dying;  
And the water spills and caracoles her careless hinges;  
And it is as if I have almost seen her before,  
Before all of this study, like a sophomoric uncertainty,  
The still life that is restless into her cycles of  
Bleeding in between the legs of frightened does  
Like fish with hooks in their mouths;  
And these words peel out as if in a parking lot of fireworks;  
And right now there is nobody out there who thinks you  
Measure up,  
But you can imagine that her eyes are waiting to look up  
And find you,  
To raise her self from the crenulated ebullitions;  
To fall into like praises like something silly though silken,  
Realizing she was only a magic trick destined to return  
Swiftly to that illusion before you came along  
And created better lies for her, like indestructible carriages  
She can now use to continue much further along.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crepuscule Of A Well Caught Picking Time

Like a hypnotized chicken, you never had a chance;  
Because you may have come from old Mexico, but I escaped with  
My dogs from  
Saint Louis, and I have read everything that  
Mark Twain has ever published, so I know about Satan;  
And you may be sleeping with your bad man again,  
But tomorrow I will buy you breakfast,  
And the sun will shine and come down fine across the taxidermies of  
My body and my mind;  
As I will lay out for you like the hypnotizing meats of a trap,  
Without any stanzas or shoes on my feet:  
And my unrecognized children will sing irrefutable songs to you  
From the bellies of their mind,  
And they will pick and pocket the illustrious fruits of those  
Hibernating minerals for you,  
Alma; and they will swear out the custody of drunken Indians for  
You, and pop pop rockets from their lips,  
And ride bicycles like a rodeo of witchcraft around your house  
While you sleep,  
Which will make you children dizzy like tourists in the Disney  
World's sublime, until you finally come out naked and  
With your hands up to succumb to me,  
Like a luscious harvest, or the ball of a victorious game, coming  
Down into the crepuscule of a well caught picking time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crepuscule Of Football Games

Transformed into  
The petroglyphs  
Before the songbirds who  
Are out for no reason,  
Dancing winged-  
Songs stirred for the  
Absence of housewives  
With no more reason to  
Love me;  
The earth pushed a little,  
Displaced from its godhoods  
And toward catastrophe-  
Dying a little the way the  
Forest of angels  
Drink sea salt- talk up  
A little around  
Graveyards- underneath power lines-  
Why the sky is all blue  
A little  
F\$cked up- punched in the face,  
Like the crepuscule of football games  
And I have nothing to  
Remember how she feels  
All asleep in his bed  
While the ribald he rhyming burns-  
And the roaming mouths of airplanes sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crepuscule Of Shanghai

Chartreuse savior, trinket of my eyes—  
Coming to me in the crepuscule of Shanghai:  
My purgatory sees its conclusion.  
A knife flits like a butterfly over the flesh,  
Whilst all of the species are dying—

I saw you wilting at the bus stop,  
But I was not going to school.  
I turned around and hid with my camouflage:  
Palmettos and hollies,  
A sweltering holiday with indentations  
OF books lined across  
Narcolepsy's flesh—

A canal dug by man sees either way:  
Slow and of geometric length,  
Prisms of reptiles that become destroyed  
In the amphibian flecks:  
Once lost to itself, a coin skips across the bank  
And into someone else's pocket.

Light is a dagger to the torch's shield.  
A battle upon the merry-go-round of another year—  
Intrusions bloom like store-front women,  
And the newborn hearts, like children, take the hand  
Of the warmest kiss.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crestfallen Baseball Games

Then we were all developed like the pornographic butterfly  
Trying to make love in a bedroom in the middle of  
The afternoon while in the living room all that was on  
Was séances of werewolves and soap operas:  
But it wasn't too hard to make that lovely woman come—  
She did it without any effort at all: remembering the heydays  
Of her high school—and the lamps that spilled the  
Children out in the afternoons in some kind of cone of  
Their free-for-all, their eyes half blinded by the bright spots  
Of the sunlight leaping over the reptiles laying across the  
Crestfallen baseball games-  
And your mother, enjoying her weather in the swamp on  
This side of the blinds—knowing that all of a sudden it would  
Have to come back home—flooding into her,  
Making her strikeout in bouquets that would eventually be  
Left all across her tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crippled Author Of My Old Song

The Virgin of Guadalupe is also Maria Conception,  
But they are both just another two  
Splintered images of our Mother Mary:  
Ave Maria sung through the cannibalistic dells of the  
Andes,  
All the brightly hooded fraternities licking their chops in  
The kaleidoscope of that which is a heavenly sorority:  
A heavy bosomed nunnery floating down and nourishing  
The heavily inbred cities in the upper basins of  
Peru:  
Daughters looking just as beautiful as mothers, as beautiful  
As girls I remember from high school:  
The days too crawling up like spokes or ants of fire along  
The greenish drapes that seem to plummet and  
Rise through the full truths of the séances of done fore airplanes;  
And so this is just where I climbed up to believe in her,  
To get her out of my head and see her for real and all together  
On the open palette of sky:  
She drove by me early in the morning like a heavy chested ` Meteor,  
And she wanted to serve me breakfast as if I had awakened from the  
Bed of some motel, and this is what there was to eat  
Downstairs in a really brilliant room:  
And she comes every day if you want to see her, stepping outside  
And burning; her body making the expensive movement  
Of fireworks:  
Then she is done and away to other gathering places of lost boys  
Just at the next intersection or down the street:  
Maybe her name is Diana: Maybe she can be water or trees  
As well as light: I am sure she has a daughter pinwheel as she suckles  
From the exposed lingerie right at her bosom:  
Just as I am sure that those two, as well as her mothers,  
Are far too beautiful for the crippled author of my old song.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Crops That Your Uncle And My Tio Attend

Bandy-legged but wearing your favorite color of  
Helmet with Ulysses' wings:

I float on the clouds the mariposas struggle for,  
And I pay to sneak into the zoo with you Alma, last Monday,  
While my parents were losing the fruiteria,  
While the grand Canyon sank another foot and dreamed the  
Red dreams of mars:

And we kissed in the alligator's house, and I could not tell if  
It shed a tear,

But the cars were very far away, and the bridge took us over  
The tanning salons of the water moccasins:

And we kissed and looked at the animals and watched  
The birds fly and the American girls talk about them:

It felt so very good to hold your hand and walk as far away  
As we could from the failing terrain,

And watch the dreamy fish flip and fly always forwards in  
Their succeeding canals,

Over the crops that your uncle and my tio attends.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crowds Of Crowds

Of another day of godless beauty- of waking to  
The estranged love- We can hardly even speak together,  
And she is married,  
But how she loves me: talent less, like that-  
And I can't hardly look at myself in the mirror:  
The fires run, my dog has fleas:  
The traffic rushes forward, and then it rushes home.  
The road is not yellow, but the road is everywhere  
Attributing to the arbitraries-  
And I remember who I loved, and how she went away-  
Now my muse is Mexican: she has two children,  
And I've kissed her mouth in the zoo:  
Now I can hardly even spell, but I'll be up again-  
As the fires blaze blinding the dreams of the better  
Constellations,  
And I'll touch her brown skin like a monarch butterfly  
Discovering a fire to die in- and it will spread all around  
Me, and the crowds of crowds will make good money  
Off that most flammable tourism.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Crownless Memories

Remembering the crownless  
Memories,  
The bloodstains on the ransom-  
The cold filter of  
Death's nostrils  
Over his weeping meal-  
The closing eyes of a  
Man intelligent enough  
To know  
His way is not to  
Heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cul-De-Sacs Of Conquistadors

Epitaph means the words distilled  
From the living thing—  
As stone lives on,  
A cenotaph upon a green field  
Intersected by high ways—  
The sea cranes its neck,  
The otters sway inside  
Of her cradles—  
And the joy I had for you by myself  
With my dogs  
While the shadows of blind men  
Whistled all around me—  
And the apiaries bloomed outside  
Of Disney World,  
Too sweet for tourists to smell—  
As we continue forward,  
Banishing our wishes into  
The candles that disappear after the  
Cake is gone—  
Like towns of businesses  
Or the cul-de-sacs the conquistadors  
Disappeared into,  
The necks of their horses blued from  
The arrows quilled from  
Peacock feathers,  
And the teal panthers kissing their  
Necks,  
As the new world displayed itself in  
The nude apertures waiting for  
New inventions of motion  
And sunlight  
To appear after the airplanes had leapt  
Across the playgrounds after the angels,  
And the littlest of children  
Had taken themselves indoors  
Still uncertain that any of it was real.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Culprits Of The Easier Earth

Suffering for years in the basins of skree  
And glacier tears:  
This is where the dumb dreams yawn, sour gummed through  
The whispering hollies,  
Too high up for cowboys ever to have been scalped here:  
Here you can just hear the echoing of the  
Steam engines  
Carrying the corpulent tourists and their irrational abounds  
Between Silverton and Durango:  
This is where you can never see me, striking above the  
Earth,  
Go so high up as to meet the boot heels of insufficient gods,  
And the cradles of their possibilities,  
Their casting calls wide open and full of drowning outlaws,  
Their keyholes fabulous and woebegone until  
They are filled with light  
And then that is where the feral angels live and make  
Choruses and smoke rings  
Up to the sulfurous bellies of airplanes who seem to  
Be leaping on a hot, cerulean plate;  
And then there are banishments with the sun going down,  
And all the wistful hikers returning to the make believe of all  
Their tents to be wet dreams for grizzly bears with nose bleeds:  
And way up there is where the rocks and stones gossip for,  
Like entire clutches of rattlesnakes  
Making believe they will be birthed in a clutch of sonorous  
Petrified flora,  
Where even the most temporary of winds are good enough for  
The hypnosis of glass blowers; and it dries my throat,  
All of these metaphor-like similes,  
Coming down from the trains of the hollow road, sifting down  
Like the wrong way evaporations who only camp in the higher beauties;  
And here they are, hardly discernable but summiting  
And pointing down mightily at the culprits of the easier earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Curious Fingers Of Their Open Hands

I am unable to return the soils of these yards:  
The houses sit as fat as pigs, and the sky usually tumbles;  
And to the even numbers it is so much bliss,  
When the cars pull in and the fingers fumble over  
Their silverwares:  
Then far and wide the airplanes fly over the somber facades,  
And the weathers roll in as sure as curtains,  
And the days bypass themselves and get even more brighter  
And luxurious and full of the laziness that they are known for:  
And I have seen her here sitting as still  
As something that knows for sure what she is, while  
The traffic moves like the cut out animals in a zoetrope,  
Seeming to laugh and turn around as little children come to feed them  
With the curious fingers of their open hands.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Cursory Beauty

I have those dreams too- Of dancing with a  
Gun atop of my head  
In the foreground of the dry husk of a lighthouse,  
Like a young wife who has given up in her  
Prime,  
And let in other wolves: you know their types;  
And letting the forest walk closer  
All filled with the gossip of carnivorous flowers  
And the matinees of  
Their rosy carnage who grow full blown like overweight  
Corsages right through the cannibalistic pyramids  
Piled up of  
Conquistadors, in a cenotaph of far away loved one  
Right there before the endearing blue eyes of the lion  
Who has crossed so many rivers to  
See the final sights of these men's last inclinations;  
While I have worked so many graveyard shifts,  
And though of you and written you down through similar  
Broadsides,  
While she crawls into bed beside him, just like another  
Wave;  
And they disappear altogether with the cursory beauty  
That almost would have never been written of.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Curtaining Stage Of Your Amber Sky

The day unhooked from the mouth of a fish  
And let her swim away;  
Or it was as if first a mollusk on her china dish,  
Until it too crawled away:  
The light that evaporates in the tombs of your amber eyes,  
Wavering like sea beds, and down there the corneas  
Engorged of frightened octopus:  
Looking closer amber too, the junked chassis of overturned cars,  
Religious gangsters both exploded in a fight of moons:  
And I drank of them like contaminated rum upheaved by  
Your perfumed buoys until the sky was the salvation of  
A chamber or a corridor where you had let your shadows  
Of childhood swim,  
Though the two were amber laughing like motes of downed  
Things through the sky, and I followed them until I had a twin,  
Both he and I continuing through the curtaining stage of your  
Amber sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Dancers Dancing

I bought forty dollars of candles today at the supermarket  
Near my historical house,  
And maybe I cried for Sharon, but I don't want to think about it  
Or any other white girl:  
My phallus is always happy when it has time to remember how  
It slept with my body underneath the broken down school  
Buses of our high school:  
Together with the orange fields and scuppernongs of our truancies:  
And now I really have something else to love,  
While the bodies seem to make their way up again like wild flowers  
Who have nothing else to perceive of their business expenses  
And the deep intrinsic ways in which they greave,  
And I have never been on a bus to Mexico, Alma, but let me go there  
With you for at least a year or two,  
To Guerrero to see all of your lost family, and to fly again,  
While all of the copper heads are standing up and  
Saluting us and kissing our ankles,  
Or are at least curious enough to ask us questions,  
While your soul gets up and pulls my reclusive soul out from the ribs  
That you stole from me,  
So that in the patina of our lost orchard, we can set our selves up  
As dancers: Alma, the dancers dancing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dancing In The Sky

I am reading old words trying  
To remember where you come from,  
When you pass above me once every few years—  
Then the sky is a dancing ship  
And your tresses are a fireworks display  
Of blue palms and silver pinwheels,  
And I swear then that everything is real,  
Like the day before I was born when I remained  
A part of you, something cooking in the sky,  
And you kissed my cheek like a secret  
That a mute girl tries to dance out,  
Tries to sing,  
But after I saw the world you were gone  
And I could not speak,  
And there was a great crookedness coming  
From above, as if the sun was spilling out the  
Window of a slanted house,  
But I searched for you in the garlands of heaven....  
When I was ten, you came back to me  
Maybe for a day you did a strip-tease  
Through the clouds and I could not look away—  
Pulsing like the wound in God's side,  
I was sure your everything was real,  
As you electrified the air so I dreamed I  
Of pressing my mouth into your speech,  
And tasting your moist distance,  
That you might say to me and give me  
New words that would cast me up into you,  
But then you took a bow and left the stage,  
Though I am sure I am the only one  
Who saw your show— wherever you went  
Is where I am now, but you did not tell me,  
So I am lost and sit hypnotized near the sea,  
Watching her swim,  
But she is no comparison to you....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dark Migrating Fairgrounds

Every night I have to reintroduce myself again to  
The somber dreams of unicorns traveling on their infinite quests;  
And like your love, Alma, they aren't even real, but they  
Will go down forever even while the castles disappear;  
And I was going to take a walk to the salvation army- and I wanted  
To hold your hand at least halfway there while the traffic buzzed  
And bumbled,  
Even long after your two children had grown up and fed off your  
Breasts you are unhappy with, but I have held them,  
As I have run my fingers down the slender viaducts of your ribs;  
And you were made in Mexico, but you somehow made it  
All the way here- and I know that inevitably you will have to  
Reconcile with you man, to eagerly walk away from my  
Frightening loneliness; but now in the night you are the only thing  
That I pretend to have, and you make everything else that seems  
So frightening feel almost as far away as the dark migrating fairgrounds  
Of your beautiful, beautiful eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dark Theatrics Of An Overgrown Tomb

If I am good, then I am doing this:  
Jarring the cages and keeping up after stags-  
Their horns are worth so much powder to  
Blow at the races,  
Corked in rinds of when they were young and  
They saw through the windows an exegesis,  
A ship sailing away from behind-  
Under perfect cloud cover the slight womb  
Vanishing in a pinprick of a sliver:  
It is what they are always running over and kicking  
The earth for- but she has never since been home;  
She just stares at them in pretty ways from a feral  
Imagination,  
Impossibly hung over, drunken, lunar,  
And the ceiling fans whisper the crape moths to shutter  
The weathers bending liquid temples that bound  
And leap as the dark theatrics of an overgrown tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Darkness Of A Vanquished Hearth

Fairgrounds of pretty hearts,  
Under the ways of zephyrs I disbelieve,  
That Alma has gone home with her two sisters,  
And subsides:  
Everything in its amusement closes shops,  
The waves curl into sleep too:  
The dogs and graveyards abate. The buses seem to  
Roam so far away,  
But they are only mirages, like the airplanes in the  
Sky,  
As everything is taken down, as the rumors of divinity  
Close into their dewy woods,  
Up the lost and gossiped upon ways: the hikers disappear  
Like old lovers,  
Even the streams hold back their tears,  
As her lips have gone from the absolved candles leaving nothing more  
To kindle and stroke my wishes evaporated from the heart-  
Kettled on the darkness of a vanquished hearth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Darkness Of A Vanquished Hearth'

Fairgrounds of pretty hearts,  
Under the ways of zephyrs I disbelieve,  
That Alma has gone home with her two sisters,  
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As her lips have gone from the absolved candles leaving nothing more  
To kindle and stroke my wishes evaporated from the heart-  
Kettled on the darkness of a vanquished hearth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Darkness Of My World

Now the sun is falling on me  
Alone in the world,  
The faithful hounds at  
My feet;  
100 horses grazing is  
My neighborhood  
At 8,000 feet.

The shadows slip like  
A woman's dress from  
Her pining shoulders  
As a cunning Indian slips  
That much closer to  
Steal what  
My father borrowed from him.

There's a wound on my face  
That will not heal,  
But the woman will come  
Again-  
Who she is I will not  
Say,  
But if I close my eyes  
Then you will see  
Her smiling brilliancy  
In the darkness of my world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Darkness While The Stars Turned In

I put you down like yellow ships into  
Those prenatal waves,  
As the long legged ivy smokes like lingerie  
Along the house huddling like  
A square cat up against the woods;  
And I have watched you move away down stream  
Like something hollow inside but beautifully  
Made  
While the rainstorms congratulated themselves down  
The skirts of your mountains:  
And you exercised your right to runaway without  
Looking at me until the collectors came asking for you  
Their mouths just as hungry as the sharpest cutlery  
Of silver wolves;  
All I could do was light a match for you and wait out  
The darkness while the stars turned in insouciant jubilee  
And the Lady turned up again in wonderful places,  
Multiplying herself for the beautifully dunned proletariat  
For many more centuries even further away.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Dawning Of Dusk

A full day begins upon Autumn's cusp,  
And the women swing back and forth in  
The field, cutting the harvest of wheat  
And whistling through gaps between teeth.  
Their men pound away in a sibilant smithy:  
They shape and yew the glowing metal  
And sweat drools down their necks,  
Evaporating in patches of hair as the  
Steam streams upwards in basins where  
Their craftsmanship is cooled, then varnished,  
And made ready to sale:  
Like the two heads of a coin, the couples  
Keep by each other as the world turns  
Around the axis, another month approaching  
Solstice. Cyclical, like a hurricane in  
The gut of the Atlantic,  
Coiled like a train wreck, a beheaded  
Snake belly-up in the weeds, the olds  
Ways slip like old men into death while they sleep,  
And the gloved hand of technology begins  
To drag down the once mystical night.  
The stars are chained up on poles above  
The workers' heads and they look up and say,  
Marvelous wonder, as the city builds up in  
Red-bricked labyrinthine swells, the ghettos  
Through the dales, and the lines of workers  
Coil and coil through the honking screeching  
Metallic fields in a crowded day upon Autumn's  
Cusp, as the scientists discover that God  
Might only exist in the mostly empty space  
Inside the atom, the world spins like a dizzy  
Child playing a game or falling down a well,  
Approaching solstice,  
The time when the day dusks before its  
Dawning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Day Is Make Believe

The waves seem to be learning how to fly,  
Or just getting up so that they can try:  
Yawning like blue eggs brought to the lips,  
Overeasy breakfasts of the sun-  
Bicycles sunken in their breasts- the complex jewels  
That kids lose while playing-  
Knees scabbed by slathering kisses, like tears  
That good girls give in a swimming sorority:  
Blowing kisses across a sunken street where fireworks  
Are swimming on holiday;  
And you have to keep your head up to see the forts  
Floating up in the sky: they were made to be that way,  
Like smoking from the bereaving day-  
And little dead angels in those halls pinwheel in the  
Attractions in which they find themselves,  
And laughing giddily as the soft movement is somehow  
Rushed through the shallows- taking your hands up to the side of  
The sun, because you are my muse- and  
As I am watching you, that is how you learn to pray;  
And the day is make-believe, and so am I.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Day Like Her Own Weather

I loved another girl: in a few months I will die,  
Defeat by the ordinary monsters, the same as any hero,  
With no friends to resurrect from the dragon's  
Fangs,  
But for right now I am only here wishing and drinking  
Alone,  
Trying to meet my quota of ballads dreaming of a  
Girl who is my life, who is my rainbow,  
And my butterfly:  
I have called her as such in Spanish, but she won't swallow  
The homeopathy of such unrequited witchcraft,  
But this is for her again, for my Alma,  
Who has stolen my soul, and comes through the day like  
Her own weather:  
Who with any luck, I will ride bicycles with tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Day That Was At Hand

Great and churlish ennui this is your vision:  
To be overthrown like a bird nest from a Christmas tree  
In a thunderstorm:  
To make love one time with a dog who is  
Homeless because he once stepped aside for  
A terrapin going down to the water fountain for  
A drink:  
And, yes, you remember her eyes: her eyes were hers,  
Sometimes for you, sometimes for another man,  
And the sun broke out of its yoke  
And made a breakfast of the land-  
Into some estuaries egrets flew, but they were not  
The colors of your flag, and you held your  
Head in your hands and wept  
As she drove home to the soft and cooling colors  
Of another man- she slept in the fjord of  
A rainstorm holding the banners  
Of an overcast day- and sometimes she made love to you,  
Even though you were away selling fireworks  
In New Mexico, as from the ovens of her uterus  
Her children grew and grew:  
And they stretched arms like cedars and went to school,  
And thought to plans of what they could do-  
So finally she bent the stream, ran to rivers of her  
Nocturnal dreams- she loved her father when he wasn't home,  
But otherwise across the deserts her love roamed  
Into chicken coops and spider webs,  
Stealing eggs and reading dregs- as the waves  
Broke and birthed her home- opened eyed, and in foamed  
Perfumed- she awakened in her awakened room,  
And thought of you as she kissed her man,  
When out and her young brown body greeted the day  
That was at hand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Daydream Of A Kidnapped Mexico

They were unsure of how beautiful they really  
Were until the liquor was all gone,  
And the body of my old muse was coming up browned  
From her bed-  
There she will awaken like a goddess over a clay earth,  
Whose breasts I somehow once suckled-  
That fit entirely into my oversized mouth- and who  
I gave orgasms to successively in those  
Few afternoons, bandy-legged- the fireworks cooling  
Over the earth, and her mind so far lost  
Into the daydreams of a kidnapped Mexico- that for  
A scarce moment there was nothing that could scare her away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Daydreams Of The Sky

A fire passing through the field does not  
Wonder what she can yield:  
The minnows' joy is eaten in the shallows  
And taken to the other side of the  
Canal by even greater joys-  
As I looked across to you in a classroom  
Berthed upon adolescent light,  
You made love underneath the ceiling fan  
To another knight-  
And the cruelty that reawakened from your  
Lips did its means by the highways of  
Buzzards until it resurrected Christmas-  
And the sky flooded with  
Stewardesses who were heavily scarred,  
As they threw their anchors down from the planes,  
Weighing to the earth to sink beneath  
The sailors something that was always meant  
For the daydreams of the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Daylight Desires

Well, there were flowers outside  
For sale,  
And we moved amidst them, inhaling,  
Stealing their perfume  
As the bees did: this was something my  
Uncle couldn't save,  
But he still has his unicorn in the cooler,  
If you know what I mean,  
As my grandfather was in his grave:  
And the children who should have  
Been to school,  
Waited underneath the overpass where  
The waves yet echoed:  
And in those feral voices, a song-  
The memories of sirens saturated there,  
And the bells and the lips  
Of naiads in their hurricanes-  
So the secret orchestras were sung in the  
Graffiti's of their overcast cathedrals,  
And at night at home  
Sports continued being played- the  
Gardens whispered,  
And the family prayed- but through the daylight  
Desires continued- streaking, foaming,  
And answering- vibrations from extending  
Shadows- going to brush their lovers  
Across the sea- while in their classrooms  
The lost girls forgot every memory they cared to  
Keep of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Day's Expected Cremation

There you are in a park I cannot believe in—  
New lines for the same old girls  
Who have run away and abandoned—  
A latchkey's words into another misused night,  
The homeless traffic spilling over  
The asphalt cliffs  
And into a crocodile's tear—as the tourisms  
Melt away—  
Surcease of melting snow burning off their  
Engines—  
Beautified renunciations—loves put to an end  
At the midway of a fair—  
Lonesome holidays like predators devouring  
The heart's bivouacs who are  
Camped too near to a careless heaven—  
Looking down from the keystone from where  
All of the young girls have fallen—  
And high school is over on the bloody streets—  
Maiming the survivors—  
And over them, like the pledge of allegiance—  
The locus using their legs to pray—  
Yellow and cerulean—  
Violinists molting in the afternoon into the  
Day's expected cremation.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Days Of Their Nights

Globe with stars and caesuras  
And very little else:  
Very simple world:  
Child world, bring tears to my eyes,  
As the busses turn around:  
City underneath the sky,  
City above the ground, and world  
Of candy joy:  
World of carousels- burning oil  
Lamps like lighthouses if  
Sailors were eels:  
Burning through the midnight  
Just for the senses of werewolves,  
And they hunt inside the cathedrals  
Of junked cars,  
Where the naked women are  
Bombshells- and they get up and jump  
For unreal joy,  
While the coral snakes curl around  
The wrists of tinsel housewives;  
And in their little cul-de-sacs they come  
Around,  
As the roses touch the lips of selkies  
Who like butterflies have learned to give  
Birth across the winsome catastrophes  
Above the opulence of the playing grounds  
Where the windmills  
Are their joyful mothers who blow  
Out the candles of their birthdays  
Just as the airplanes are ever so angelically  
Touching down,  
Giving their bodies to the same old toys  
Across the world,  
Spilling out their housewives like  
Diamonds, who ignite again into their very  
Own houses,  
As once again the very own days of their  
Nights are touching down.



# The Dead End Road Of Your Unconscious Embrace

This world concludes at three am,  
The graveyard hour when hobos finally recede into  
Cardboard or spikenard crèches;  
I don't know; but other boys are piling like dragons  
Through her bedroom windows:  
Just in the middle of high school and having a  
Parade: Or I don't know,  
Lying underneath a time share of your opulent shade:  
I drink my last ration of rum, and touch my face,  
And prepare to embark down the dead end road of your  
Unconscious embrace.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dead Ends Of The Dead-End Dungeons

At all the dead ends of the dead-end dungeons,  
The dead girls are doing porn:  
They are becoming the erotic photographs for all of the weirdos.  
As all of the dragons are shedding their horns:

In the sky outside, so far above our heads that we can make-believe  
It is all of the heavens,  
There is thunder whose flinted claps spark lightning above the drunken inns,

The mermaids are canned into their fishy grottos,  
The jinns are jammed into their horn-rimmed tins:

Grandmas and grandpas are sleeping in all of their graveyards  
Across the highways of our lands-  
The cows have crossed into their pastures,  
As to Disney Worlds all of the tourists have entered in-

And it has become a hapless lightshow, jism spilled upon the paper heads  
Of dead presidents:  
Memories of our high schools have evaporated and are floating  
Above the crowded mazes of the suburbias who have  
Impregnated us with our socialized dreams:

Adam and Eve are picking strawberries from the stars,  
They are an advertisement licensed by Satan to sell us the forbidden  
Knowledge of so many useless things:

The keys are in their cars,  
The housewives are in their kitchens, and their children  
Are playing with kidnapers in their forested swings:

As the lamentations of the old gods' giants effervesce into the sky,  
Causing hallucinations for the stewardesses who are working  
In the airplanes that are all passing us by.

The skeletons tap-dancing on the abandoned steps,  
But they are taking their time-  
The emptied throats are opened, trying to imbibe  
The grapes of a withered vine-

As our rhymes recall us from our windows,  
Trying to transform us, into the metamorphosis after the midnights of  
Our quitting times.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dead Playgrounds To The Ghosts

Boats for the dead  
And reindeer passing through  
The park,  
Amidst the trees  
Who are also for the dead,  
snowflakes come as if on rails-  
Like the swans in driveways  
They don't know where  
They are going  
Once the light is lost-  
We get skinnier because we  
Don't eat dinner  
As we sell Christmas trees  
For the empty houses of housewives  
Near the lake that is also empty  
And so all of those kinds of  
Trees surrender  
Amidst the dead playgrounds  
To the ghosts  
Emptying tomorrow's years.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Deafening Loam

If you are washed, I will still save  
You in my thoughts:  
If I cannot smell you on my sleeves,  
I will lush on the bereavement of such unjust  
Amnesty:  
As up on her hill my grandmother no longer moves,  
But lies parallel with the rusting cross,  
And beneath her the cars move  
Like unbusied ants; and I haven't seen my dogs,  
But would ask them to find her out and kiss her,  
For all that is left of her is the husk of  
A womb,  
Like tinfoil around the crust of a pie:  
I would ask my dogs to kiss her, and then piss on the sky,  
To mark her, to know you by;  
And the tourists are leaving the funness for home;  
The remains of funnel cakes on their lips,  
Like fish slapping again into the residence of aquarium,  
Going by with the busses of sub-truth:  
I dream of you and touch myself in the cheering grayness of  
Suffocating youth;  
And I want you again in another stanza of my poem;  
And I want to see you again tomorrow, a saving light breasted  
Against the deafening loam.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Decision For Us

Beautiful simpletons using brail until  
The circus comes  
Counting midnight backwards- and the clouds  
Fail to tidy up or foreshadow  
The sexy romance  
Of airplanes entangled with Titans:  
That in their bedroom of worlds above us,  
They do so much nonesuch-  
And the world comes down around their shoulders:  
Cascades of waxy tears  
Or salty candles: and we hold hands in the roses  
Underneath the overpasses:  
And especially on weekends, they come to  
Sell things from far and wide around  
Us- and we get liver disease from wishing to  
Be like too many pilots-  
Anxious, with green ax handles, and the girls getting  
Out of high school and melting around us:  
Developing in the higher basins until they are  
Nothing more than something vermilion  
In a sky of wounds- in an arcade of  
Perfumes and open doorways until they finally make  
The decision for us to let us in or to not  
Let us in with their eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Decision Which Began The Natural Order Of Things

Jack was terse.  
The phone rang once,  
Then not again, as if it too  
Was aware that she was crossing-  
Her legs: Outside, the wind abated,  
And the drunk on the stoop cocked his  
Head, as if the cobwebs had finally  
Lifted, and he was forlorn,  
Because he remembered her name.

And I sat there beside Jack,  
Both of us watching her like cartoon  
Wolves, surprised she had agreed  
To meet us this way:  
Something like a freshman menage au trios,  
Chicken legs at the state college and bowling alley,  
While the yellow bicycles lay slanted against  
Each other, and her fingers drummed  
Against a used introductory to physics book  
My uncle had written anonymously.

Her eyes displayed an unclothed witticism,  
And I thought she would have us quote Rimbaud,  
Except she did not know him, herself,  
Or, I suspected, had been anywhere near a  
Beautiful cemetery, but other than that she was  
All full of antebellum bone-structures,  
And would never raise a family north of the  
Mason-Dixon;

Jack and I were brothers,  
But after that viewing everything changed,  
Because one of us was certainly the victor,  
He that came awash in the velveteen luxury of her  
Colleen flesh- The other, it is know,  
Found refuge in the bottle and the steps leading down  
To where the apoplectic cats mewed beneath the windmill,

Mistaken for a shushing mother:  
She did her work by the moonlight, of course,  
And called up the eels, the old dredgings,  
The inklings of whim that gurgle when the stars are out,  
And he is sweating in the longest swaying of her  
Body, the decision which began the natural order  
Of things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Deep And Uncertain Grottos

The traffic vibrates my house and I am working inside  
Here,  
Each room a different color, but like a sorority of soft sea shells  
Softly panting,  
And buckets of rain in the quiet places where two roofs meet  
And then are forgotten:  
Alma is somewhere around here, pregnant and embarrassed on her  
Buses:  
I sat in Alma's car a couple days ago while she kept a watch out for  
Her husband,  
And she asked me, why Robert, did the gringas look at her that way  
Inside of her church:  
Why Robert, she said my name, and there was a forest fire on  
A mountain:  
Alma was by my house this morning, and all of the windows turned  
Brighter,  
As she carried out her songs, and we studied for her citizenship:  
I kissed her shoulder and then we drove away together, and I stopped  
At the light and ran out, and Alma let me kiss her cheek:  
And I think of the Virgin of Guadalupe and pray to her for  
Alma in the deep and uncertain grottos of my very night.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Deep Deep Brownness Of Your Woebegone Eyes

The bottle still fills with joy as  
The lightning kicks off another show:  
Alma your body grows like the righteousness of  
Small baby-breaths flowers above tree  
Line that don't fear the snows and weathers that you have  
Never seen:  
Alma, there is a blue lion in my black yard squatting over  
The beans I had planted on your birthday,  
And the rest of which I have to say has no sense, but I wished that  
I knew better Spanish while the blue's wetness grew the  
Greenness,  
And I will see you and your godmother tomorrow and I will see  
If she brought me a bigger and even better  
Virgin of Guadalupe to adorn my home for you, to bring the thunderstorms  
Of the mandevillas of your thighs,  
To make you leave a man who can never love you as I can;  
And to make me become a real boy underneath the very promises of the  
God in the deep, deep brownness of your woebegone eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Deeper Meanings Of Your World

My house is filled with poison that  
The cats sleep around:  
I have hit the bottle and gone off to some cow  
Town,  
And you are in the sky right now, turning in  
Some sort of constellation across the  
Overgrown easement of the canal:  
And the words are like busloads of tourists  
Traveling up the easy slopes,  
Looking at all of the doe-eyed angels:  
And I suppose it is something really great,  
That I graduated high school,  
That I had some pie and saw Sharon in the hallway  
Long before I saw you,  
Alma:  
That was when the students were kissing and even then  
Dreaming of professions or the jingoistic  
Hopalongs of a military band:  
You were still in Guerrero Mexico, talking with your  
Hands,  
And you hadn't looked up into the colors of my flag,  
And the flowers burned underneath your bed:  
And maybe it is that tomorrow is the last tomorrow  
That I will see you in,  
Or that I can fall to my knees and kiss and bless you in;  
And the clouds color in like tourists  
Above the sea the happenstance of their whimsy:  
And all night long at the movies above tree  
Line I think of you and pray to the virgin for you,  
And color my skin  
And look at the green things of this world who happen to  
Be your favorites,  
Some of them who are most like me and cloistered to the  
Carports  
You have neither seen nor heard; but here is where they love  
You the best, while the washing machines yearn,  
And the doleful eyes of innocents look up and try to  
Contemplating the deeper meanings of your world.



# The Deepest And Most Far Fetched

The nights burn the passerby's of jasmine  
And the defunct knights touch themselves and ejaculate:  
And I am not even the postman: I can still feel my toes  
As I fail to enunciate:  
And I have never been so fanciful as to believe in Atlantic,  
And so far alone at night I touch myself,  
While I still believe in each unhindered wave of the fairytale sea,  
But all of the rest of it sleeps by its side as  
The dogs wail,  
While the mountains crumble,  
And while my unutterable fairytales slip like fateful bottles  
Into the most impenetrable of the deepest and most far fetched  
F\$cking seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Deepest Places Whose Echoes Are My Own

All the good deeds you won't have to worry about,  
Because I am going down into another sleep:  
In the valleys of forget-me-nots where the grandest dragons  
Tell lies  
Into our ears when we are alone; and he is beside you there,  
Like a skeleton in his coffin, like a king on his throne;  
And your family is in a house of another world sharing  
Flowers over dead grandmothers left back in  
Mexico-  
Who will never know how you had to cross the frontera, Alma,  
To find my lips and kiss them, and to tell me about  
Your love  
Only when we get into the deepest places whose echoes are my  
Own, and who say your name.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Deities Of Its Own Graveyards

Yes—bus ride to nowhere— and brilliant  
Allegiances with other crowns:  
If you can love me without looking at  
My face, we will do all right:  
We can forever survive like the terrapin  
Doing good in the cul-de-sac of her own neighborhood  
Without having to ever look to far out  
Of her shell: to where the pigeons are burning:  
And what are they burning but  
The echoes of pornography and uncommon  
Justice until we get to here—and the fat  
Black girls sing until they are all out of here and  
All alone:  
Then the stygian in the only known word I've  
Known for it—as the ant, ant, ant—hyperventilates  
Upon the deities of its own graveyard:  
And all of the lights that ever were bloom anon and  
Anon—until there is time enough to hold myself  
And cradle myself before the graveyard of another  
Commercial—  
And in your barrooms you just so happen to  
Dance—and you dance—puppet and puppeteer  
Just so happening together somehow fused  
Through the lifetimes that forever were.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Delicacies Of Her Auburn Fleshes

The fish tails burn like fires up from my window:  
The airplanes leap like a game of children in the sand:  
All the stars are tarnished roses:  
And Alma lives so near to me that I have walked to her house  
And slept atop a neighbor's roof:  
Alma smelled so good today, and I have been to her church where  
Her sister was coronated this afternoon,  
While all the plants I sell look good under all of the aspects of our  
Moon,  
And the butterflies whisper straight down to me, gossiping like  
Tears to heavy for their paper-tulip bodies,  
Burning like crayons of ash straight up from the tracks of her arms  
And the segregations of her children into different plantations;  
And it didn't look good- It made me feel guilty,  
But my arms are empty of packages and gifts,  
While Alma swoons in her husband's bed right now in a house  
That turns right with the world,  
And I will soon be driving to New Mexico, just as alone in my world  
Mute but urged by the delicacies of her auburn fleshes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Delicious Fats Of Forbidden Playthings

I am innocent of plans-  
Nor am I now drinking rum, or  
Scribbling up skeletons for novels  
Which should not involve  
Fervent incest with half-glorious aunts,  
Looking like consumptive poetesses,  
Whose shadows are the bright smolders  
Of early morning forest fires,  
Who crackle and drip off the cooking bone  
The delicious fats of forbidden playthings-

Like tennis players' sweat pearls on red clay

Or of inglorious entrepreneurs commuted to  
Mars, like sunny Florida,  
Christmas trees that are allowed to forage on,  
The tall naked arrows of a yet fermenting atmosphere,  
Elusive sacrifices to Earth's broken down apocrypha-

I write on plain manila paper, like empty cicadas on melaleuca,  
To save the lines,  
Or to create new shelves over amnesiac oceans,  
To mine fresh scars over  
The swelled cornucopias from whose blue horns  
Fish are leaping;  
As a guest all alone, to open her parents'  
Refrigerator and devour what  
They've been coolly saving up for their bourgeois pallets;  
Tongue liver and caviar,  
To kick the dog.

I have no job to define these dreams,  
No craft to distract death  
Long enough to move my queen to victory,  
To chat him up to change my seat and join the  
Ostentatious gentlemen who  
Took sips off the first lights of invention  
Which rose up browned and throbbing  
Sparely along the potted streets;

Here it is, the unnamed future  
For us who are not professional,  
Who drink too many wishes,  
Who pissed against society gurgling  
Amidst the coins-  
Who are now burned out  
Like the stomach of our country,  
The lazing belt inexhaustible with  
Trailer parks and tin stars;

Already duplicitous to Rimbaud,  
A decade on Rupert,  
With Teasdale breathless,  
Disavowed back into earth,  
The pantheistic natives leaping jubilantly  
Around the fence,  
Illiterate and proud in their cars;

No plans at all,  
But I am still a young holidaymaker,  
Bouquet a jaunted mess not yet all wilted,  
Who might yet beat  
Bukowski at his swine heart game,  
Who might yet become  
Like Harvey Silver,  
Rotund and rain-explored,  
Alter-ego to something uprooted,  
Beautiful,  
Extemporaneous and pervasive,  
The effusive light making pretty water stamps like  
Souls migrating up and down the street.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Delinquent Heiresses

Egos masked in bodies, rise like blue gills towards  
The sun,  
Stare at airplanes as if they were prettied women,  
Instruments of athletes tossed across the heavens  
To wedge in the saddles and key holes  
Of industrialized mountains where the roses and bears  
Grow as thickly as kisses;  
And we can run to them, naked of our shadows,  
Peeling with our gears recognizing the strange delights  
Of simulacrum metamorphosed to the senses-  
As color is seeded into the blindness in the basins that  
We follow- higher up nosebleeds that the cheerleaders swallow-  
They seem to be exhausted but gleeful around  
A cairn tear fallen into the skree-  
What careful apartments torn, their fabrics bruised- they  
Line up with their trays along the saddle of mines, to be  
Fed the pollinations of angels' knees-  
The deities of ghost towns, feed the delinquent heiresses  
From the napes of their imaginations' honey-  
And it runs down their polishing throats and into their valleys:  
And it sings in their tummies as they lay down like  
Horses in a field of wet barely- and we climb up before them  
Just to summit and look down-  
There they are lying beneath us, as the sun strokes the saddle  
And kisses our necks as we tumble back down.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Delphic Mirror

Dear God,  
you amused yourself for awhile by wresting a  
Giant snake  
Immortalized forever in a tableau outside  
the gates to Tallahassee:  
Your mortal enemy,  
a serpent whose body engorged on veal and venison  
wrapped around you like garland around  
a vociferous Christmas tree:  
warming you while choking you to death  
in a classroom, windowless,  
without purpose or depth-  
But it was within that ludicrous show  
That you could make the most money  
To feed your children  
or to support your habit.  
But now, in the middle of the night,  
when the rabbits that would otherwise feed  
that venal reptile, your mortal enemy,  
are all sleeping or slacking off-  
and, likewise, all of the other amusements,  
the cousins to your twins, have all been shut down  
and turned off for awhile,  
giving you a chance to genuflect and show off  
to the Delphic mirrors of your bedroom-  
and you drink in the lights, reflecting off  
the roars of the crowds which you created,  
and each wave coming in,  
combing in a standing applause-  
that, abashed, you are taken aback-  
flexing your muscles,  
and the algebra of your triceps,  
that you ponder the time coming  
soon when all of this will end-  
and you will have to apply for a job at  
the Goodwill on Dixie-  
When that snake dies, and the airplanes touch down,  
and you have to take off your own skin for Halloween-  
And you hate yourself knowing that

There is no good without evil-  
And even good Christian families can pay for  
An annual pass to the zoo.  
When the churches cozy up to the strip clubs and  
their definitions are blurred-  
and you find yourself having to work three shifts  
after midnight just to feed the absurdness of  
the absurd.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Deltas Of Burnishing Cities

They have new villages in our town- like light bulbs  
Turned on over a desert of ghosts and lost  
Spelunkers:  
Like a single rose curled up over the bones of  
A rattlesnake transplanted  
Over the corpse of a dead hooker:  
And over her shoulder, a Mexican wandering where  
The tears of the crocodiles have gone  
Down a dry river bed sure that he will not have  
Anymore adventures to pleasure:  
While even then the airplanes and rocket ships  
Take off to Europa and France  
With fat thanksgivings in their hauls- while  
Entire icebergs have sacrifices to corporations of  
Gods- unto the deltas of burnishing cities,  
Where my muse slumbers with eight other family  
Members- lost away in a house no bigger than  
The one in which I bachelor.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Departures Of Her Grace And Rapture

I offer up goodwill to my soul;  
I salute it with drinks and promise to remember it on its  
Birthday,  
And give it heartfelt consolations that it should have had to have  
Been birthed too close to the sun to carry life on it;  
And all I can acknowledge is the noise the lonesome cars make  
Dipping into the collection pools  
From the over spilling bodice of rain, their wheels getting all the  
Leaked milk from her messy child;  
And I wonder about her, introspecting on the aspects of her  
Features like a comet who doesn't come around anymore,  
Who only came around through high school  
And must have mistaken me for beautiful once or twice before  
Deciding not to come around anymore,  
But somehow she remembered my birthday which is the reason why  
I am drinking for her and showing her my face  
With its eyes sad, with the dysfunction that were all that  
Remained after the departures of her grace and rapture.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Deserting Fire

The helicopters are going down all over Laos,  
Like fireflies of self immolation, like Buddhists in flying rickshaws....  
The war started by a dead Catholic president, the only one:  
The good kid, the alter boy- The first on his street to share his ice-cream:  
Where the airboys fell like plastic toys winged with  
Burning paper-  
The jungle gives its venomous testimonials amidst the smoldering  
Pyres: the ancient slang biting the wrists of poor boys  
From Kentucky- The freed slaves are turning red in  
The dripping lungs of the banyans-  
Romeo and Juliet are playing dead for the Viet Kong digging  
Their tunnels as equal to rats as equal to ants:

Out in the sun, and the blue playground,  
I had a good day, I said to her eyes, as her eyes smiled  
Like full bellies naked and pregnant amidst the smoldering sugarcane:  
Letting the black ants crawl around her navel, because they only tickle  
Tickle, tickle, like tongues, like hands all over her....  
And the bodies' insouciant fawns, pistils erect in the unwrapped petals,  
Her dripping sweat in a sauna of unrefined sugars....

There is a line of footprints which disappears from us,  
Away from where they are taking the moaning bodies to the river,  
Where the jungle opens like a cut throat, like another poisoned mouth  
Beneath the moaning one,  
And perhaps Vivaldi is play a retreat, as the whirling blades  
Fireball the impressive death, the exploded canons over  
The fort of imploding air and ruined habits of metal,  
Where the children of mud defeat a god of full-blown cash money....

And then the sad rivers are invisible,  
As I lay my hand open her belly, and she is a vase full of unspilt water,  
And there is a bee digging into the corner of her smiling lips,  
In her closed eyes a prayer for pollination out of the deserting fire.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Desert's Lip

Cloistered at the desert's lip  
The nuns reminisce on their daughters'  
Reminiscence,  
They quiet kiss of boys  
They look onwards for the rain:  
The mountains rise at the very end,  
The promises spoken by dead husbands,  
Employers of the failed business  
Now they mumble like the torn lips  
Of Central American pugilists,  
Bleeding rivers in the myriads of life  
Consuming life:  
The spawn fills the earth  
Breeding grounds the extinction of  
The drive in theatre-  
The tidal seas leave only the dead  
Cosmonauts in the recession who exclaiming bearish,  
"Why? " as the mica trips,  
The infant falls from the crib  
As the house burned so no one knows  
It was arson,  
But it was already dead.  
Yet the clean and dead sorority  
Hinges on God,  
The flaming cusp of light's  
Turn around upon the sand:  
They've seen him  
Walking miles away from where he is:  
They whisper the miracles  
Yellow buses full of waving school children  
At the desert's lip.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Desirous Wealth Of Their So Deserved Heritage

I try to get it out,  
The still life from the bottle-  
Recovered from the sea,  
A gift from mermaids or metamorphosed  
Conquistadors,  
A single consolation that I am losing my art,  
And that I should just go to sleep  
And wait out this patriotic funeral until all  
The ads are all done running,  
And the thieves are late at home in trailer parks  
Up and down the interstate,  
Eating poached apples, and rubberneck turkey,  
Dreaming that her clothes might fall off,  
Dreaming too of flights to any corner of the  
Colloquial universe;  
They are wearing the stolen diamonds and  
Caveats of ancient mothers-  
They have collected and panhandled masked  
And taken what all those legs worked so hard for,  
Shaven, running like Niagara falls  
Next to the gear shifts of doctors and associates;  
And in the tamed wilderness the palmettos  
Are wet and drooling,  
Little kids plastic tricycles are wet and overturned  
In the mowed lawns,  
And the thimbleful of park is empty and receding  
Into the canal,  
Which is nothing more than a fancy gutter,  
Where the alligator gazes with bright rubies,  
Waiting for his next charge,  
The little girls run away from fairytales to sink into  
Plumping dreams into that deep bed  
Like a blushing radish in a salad bowl he has dug  
Out for her, to take her permanently away from  
School,  
And the banishing mothers who feel so naked without  
The desirous wealth of their so deserved heritage.



# The Despondency Of The Highest Of Skies

Games are pleasures for white men in Africa,  
Walking the footpaths,  
Touching themselves in the mumbo jumbo of an  
Easily spotted arcade;  
As we drink our spirits and bless ourselves to  
The cenotaphs of girls surviving in Colorado,  
As the hours change from three to five;  
As the gunfighters eventually unclthe to make love  
To the precious whores  
Who so knowingly close their eyes,  
As the lightning whips like windswept paramours  
Through the despondency of the highest of skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Despondency Of The Roses Of Her Name

The trees are tremendous above the busses:  
Even the bullies shrink, and their houses:  
You know, these things are always created in the hues of  
Your favorite colors,  
Alma; even if I am the most insignificant of artists:  
Even if I have to sit and watch shoeless while my great uncles  
Caracole and wink their passed behind the  
Motorboats in the cold trespasses of  
Lake Michigan:  
Don't you know that I ran away before you, even before I  
Knew you,  
And never had tasted your soul like lollypop hallucinations  
Through your deep brown transoms:  
Even before I knew the less than perfect words to describe you,  
I always had the itch to buy you flowers, and orange  
Roses,  
Of the very same sort that will be arriving at your house on  
Tuesday, Alma:  
Won't then my love be knocking,  
And I held your tremendously small hand today before breakfast  
And we made love for an hour and a half, which was  
Hardly enough to time to fill the body of your wishing well with  
My wishes, tossed from the roof  
Of the flea market's overpass; but even so I suppose that I will  
Love you forever, while the weathers happen like  
Teardrops for one more mermaid,  
And your mother enters this country again through her dreams,  
And through the despondency of the roses of her name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Devils And The Indian Givers

Where do hummingbirds sleep?  
I don't know—  
Maybe it's where the proverbial Jack and Jill go:  
Maybe he sleeps down river from all of  
The lamplight,  
Maybe they sleep in the perfumes of  
Night blooming jasmine in all of the moonlight—  
I don't know—  
The homeless men just do a jig of bones outside  
Of the hotel  
You are happily making love in with your swell—  
Swell—swell—  
Maybe making the same mistakes as the repetitions  
As the repetition of the sea over the  
Proverbial hell—  
In the castanets I still cannot remember—across  
The Earth—  
Like autumn—like December—  
Until skeletons get up to dance, remembering the seasons  
Where they were once men—some many of them:  
More than men,  
The once men, as the shadows pearl across the earth—  
And the horses scream  
For the housewife's dearth- and a lack of pageantry—  
Marionettes fed into the hearth—  
And the days go on and on,  
As the knights hand neck-wise from their trees,  
Leaves live evergreen waves—  
Knowing the séances the witches used to pitch them into  
Graves—  
Until the songs are swallowed—and the seas commence  
To swallow the lakes and the rivers—  
And the definitions given to us of the earth and her business  
Of flowers are taken backwards by the devil—  
By the devils and the Indian givers.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Diamond Mines Of Centuries Ago

I seem to be living here-  
Starfish in a helmet that you cannot stand-  
Stars up in the yum-yum's,  
Cursing to themselves as to their cousins:  
As I am dying through the  
Resins in  
The dryness of the aqueducts of another heavens-  
Just as I do not expect that you can  
Feel me exposed in the  
Dryly beautiful avenues of another heavens:  
But I am here,  
Crossing my own badges and bighting myself  
Before the  
Hydrangeas spitefully just as before any and all of  
The last heavens:  
And this is just the final avenue anyways-  
The last midway, bare bosomed, showing the clues of  
All of itself before all of the heavens,  
Before all of the lights go out- and we have to drink  
The ultimate libation in the dreary snow  
Before all of that heaven: and  
I suppose you cannot swear to this, because the goldfish  
Are becoming fat as hydrangeas in any accord;  
But the windows in which landed your grandmothers,  
Are finally filly out,  
So now- I guess- it doesn't really matter how far  
You've escaped from Mexico-  
All that matters is the last of the plans of our cartographies:  
As the oceans open their mouths like aquatic  
Carnivores waiting to bight down upon the roses  
Into which we've thrown our very selves  
As if into the fires that just so happened  
In the diamond minds of centuries and  
Centuries ago.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dictionary Of My Blessings

Here we are in the entrails of forest  
Drinking down the last evidence of arson from  
Our glasses,  
And it will soon be that we will go to sleep,  
And so will no longer have to pretend to be a cowboy  
Attending the forlorn rodeo,  
As the empty world will have no more need for our  
Bravery;  
And it is because I love you, Alma, that I still survive,  
And call your name up to the yellow pages of the stars:  
Still searching,  
Searching, like a lame horse for her stride,  
Like a lost feather of its streamlined glide; and now you  
Have bowed out and been taken away into the embrace  
Of his charmless arms:  
There you go wingless without any hope for rope tricks,  
As I doubt that he has anything left of value for  
You to steal;  
As the illusions of daylight will soon have you  
Transcending once again through the minions of its  
Calvary,  
But you must already know: don't you, don't you,  
That only this, the dictionary of my blessings, is real:  
Is real.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dictum Of Innocence

The dictum of innocence rests for awhile  
In the polished clean mouth  
Of the young crocodile....

Tuning in to a sterile faith,

She heard the Messiah tell her to leave me  
For a clean-shaven man;  
She left me standing there with  
A ghost in my hand.

From the high altitude,  
Where the aspens grow silver,  
Upon the nape of the slow moving river;  
I am a hermit of inebriate rhyme,  
Brushing me teeth,  
Biding this time....

In their fast moving cities of opal insurance,  
Lovers lock jaws with faithless endurance;  
Passing together like spores in the wind,  
They forget their own names,  
As others move in....

I am standing before a window  
Of the bluest sky,

When she asks again if I love her,  
And my muscles don't move,  
My beautiful shell stays hinged,  
And stares on with the permanent things,  
For that moment she'll wonder why,  
But, thankfully,  
Her god brings swift change,

And quite soon she will pass herself by.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Difficult Path

In a cleft of voodoo I find my forgotten love,  
Once thought to have been  
Run over by a get a way car: now there she is,  
Like a piece of silver once folded over  
A pie that was stolen by sparrows  
And placed or discarded here for some  
Reason,  
Up in a key hole looking down at bears trying to  
Learn about fire,  
A talisman for only the keenest of tourists now:  
And if she had a daughter,  
The girl is forgotten, but in a home as blue- green  
As any of the most beautiful of oceans,  
And she goes her way,  
Sing and chanting as she cleans a house,  
Never looking up to imagine the possibilities of the  
Spectacle of her mother  
Made into a cenotaph at this very hidden place  
On the ridge,  
A striking and very sad way post nearing the end  
Of the difficult path up to my heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dim Lit Zoetrope

Gladness over the waterfall where the horses  
Run-  
They run in circles beneath her: they make a whirlpool  
Of the air,  
As they are busy in a tangle of manes  
In their business,  
As they lose definition, polishing arrowheads:  
Just a brown ring now and a great fire between them  
Cause evolution.  
We all sleep inside the church, waiting for our parents  
To come down,  
But the business in those airplanes has become  
Lighter than the wishes of candles,  
And their very bones are flutes so now they look  
At all of these highways as ribbons  
Of petrified discord, and they hope the sea will come  
Over us, and through the orange groves  
And the copper fields- and give us all to her union  
To reflect the dim lit zoetrope dancing through the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dimly Glowing Heart

In kindergarten with the purple tulips  
And my first love:  
We learn the alphabet and nursery rhymes:  
I envision her lips indenting the sea,  
But she loves my best friend  
And play games with him,  
When the class plays games-  
My parents work all day under the sun,  
And sing songs as they make money,  
But they don't even worry that I might love,  
Her curls-  
In the afternoons we sleep and  
I steal things for her to confirm my love-  
When I show them to her,  
The shells of my early craft:  
Beneath the dark circles my troubled  
Eyes exhibit,  
Things borrowed without return,  
She is not impressed-  
Turning, she kisses Michael and goes away.  
Over the swing set, the  
Sky is rumbling with ominous disquiet:  
There, the bulbous heads of puffing  
Weather writhe like darkening weeds,  
The lightning in fitful briars....  
Returning to the little classroom,  
I dutifully sit before the gray-haired teacher,  
And wait for her to tell me anything-  
As the rain begins its pitter-patter  
Over the dimly glowing heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dinner Bells Of Night Fall

Shielded in a grotto where the mother sleeps-  
In cerulean pearls the waves are greedy for- waiting for her to  
Climb up from the shoals,  
To show her breast and tail- as long and fine as the tailfin  
Of a commercial jetliner  
While my own mother is not home: her bosom a fort for  
Delirious sailors:  
While she lays her head and douses beside a truer virgin-  
As the generals come, wanting to be suitors-  
And farmers who grow roses  
Wait on the cliffs, the wind clapping them and making them look  
Like fools- until the lunch trucks come around  
Driven by beautiful Columbian women who will accept  
Their hearts as souvenirs while the men who bore them  
Daughters drag nets of vanishing perfume across  
The aqueducts of embittered countries-  
And step out a litter further only to give all that they have  
Earned to the mermaids who, inclined to  
The elements, changing their minds before the dinner bells of  
Night fall, and all together, swim away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dins Of Gods' Descending Messages

Echoing in the dins of gods' descending messages  
You sent to him while you were away  
From his love,  
Misspeaking yourself in the arms of a floating  
Curiosity—  
Like a curious decoration draped upon the  
Wells of some strip mall in some Midwestern séance:  
Into this enfeebled trick you gave all of the meaning  
Of your lives,  
Taking off flowers from the bouquets of your  
Soul to feed in insatiable senses of what you  
Supposed had to be death—  
Grinning reptiles who swore to know nothing  
About the manmade metamorphoses of airplanes,  
But sat there, demanding of you— gluttons-  
And you gave in, and he came home from the amphitheaters  
Of the celluloid hurricanes—arms strong but beaten down—  
You dreamed you loved me while he was  
Away, but now he is reentering your town.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Dirt Of A World That Can Never Be Healed

If I am just something forever used to keep busy  
Your yawning afternoons:  
Sending me up into the compost heaps over the ever  
Infatuated room,  
But no longer feed my body with your body's bloom:  
If these are the barbs that you sing,  
While you swings your children across the milky tips  
Of the gleaming chasms;  
This I cannot heal, because it is very real:  
The poisoned slits and crevices that the dragons burn  
And thus they feel:  
I want to be your gut-shot soldier telling stories to himself  
Up on cemetery hill:  
This is all that matters while the balloons surcease like  
Bladders,  
While the lost boys enjoy what cannot be real:  
And their island is a star- it is a pinprick in your car,  
While the waves wave away the dirt of a world that can never  
Be healed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dirt Of The Stars

Which way do the languishing shadows hang,  
Uphill or downhill from the graveyard:  
Either way doesn't seem right—  
But the waves of the sea are awake either at  
Midnight or noon,  
But the night blooming jasmine only blooms  
With the turning of the earth away from  
The sun, like a scorned lover who doesn't  
Deserve the way she's been done—  
And it doesn't matter to me anyways, the tales  
That get around,  
What they consider to be beautiful or  
Ugly—anyways,  
The sunlight always touches the toes of  
The ground—  
And the graveyards are just as wide as the heavens—  
And nothing I have done as been really beautiful  
Enough to escape the earth—  
Even though I still think I can hear you echoing over  
The dirt of the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Discolored Neighborhoods Of Our Anyways

Truckstop of dis- conjoined senses:  
Wishing you were here, anyway, while the automobiles  
Procede,  
While I am wondering if you have ever seen anything  
As beautiful,  
As I touch myself, and then the billfolds fold just  
Like snowflakes at the rattlesnake's tit:  
While here I am anyways, as the sun enjoys:  
Yes, it does, secrets of its success and  
Weight lessons: the old  
Highschool looks just about the same as your  
Old bedroom while all of this time you  
Were kissing the persimmons of your young  
Princess:  
Well here she is: she is, while the balloons inflate  
Over all of the old zoos and science mazes;  
It all just happened as I supposed,  
And then there it was: while all of the old arrowheads  
Were lost anyways,  
Into the armpits of those anonymous signatures:  
Even while she was taking notations,  
Plagiarizing while all of the old flags rose their  
Heads over the discolored neighborhoods of our anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Disney World That Is Open All The Time

Going to the ladies of the night, giving to them  
The things I have said,  
Driving straight without spirits to douse my wick like  
An arrow in the buckets of paint for tattoos;  
And the age old saying is that I am wounded,  
But I've have done my part in stealing this land,  
And entering the zoo of houses of Palm Beach when the  
Masters are off cavorting;  
And there are talking rabbits in the everglades, and harmless  
Snakes:  
And these girls work indoors right under the open bellies of  
All those airplanes;  
And I've been drinking, but it is hardly ever enough:  
They've widened the road straight up to the door,  
The one when they open they are always gleaming, Like dreams  
Taken and strung out like careless laundry made more  
Beautiful in the extemporaneous morning; and would that  
I knew better words for beautiful,  
But it's just that I've been drinking; and I am done with college,  
And yet when haven't I seen your face, E-, or that you cared  
To mind:  
Who are you making love to, but look at these girls.  
They are the Disney World that is open all the time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Distance Of The Cosmos

If and when you fall in love with the ocean halfway,  
The sun comes up smiling, saying,  
I have seen life on other planets more than twice  
The distance from me to you—  
And I have loved it better, distant and alien in my way.  
This reminds you of your father  
Who has a tenth grade education but who  
Has always worked for himself  
But now, approaching sixty, has finally  
Caved in and is driving a company truck cross country.  
This, as it so happens, is the most common job in  
The country—and you imagine him, passing on the highway  
Rolling against the overgrowths of ivy—  
Doesn't he seem to be going the wrong way,  
Like the life-giving sun shining upon the distance of the cosmos.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Distant Spectators Of This Closed Story

Too late the good guys divvied up what I needed  
To survive,  
The sun the personalities of the opera on my body,  
A lucky curse,  
Trees pensive without water,  
Rattlesnakes in mirages of water parks in the caesuras  
Of the stony turf.  
If I'd begun a better way, I'd be a bull park in the  
City:  
Sneak thieves would live off my green, and the silver  
Sisters would crowd me:  
Sharon would know what I mean,  
The zoo over spilling, the words just spume, the tourists  
Well sated on astronaut ice-cream:  
Instead, don't know what I am doing, believing in darker  
Metaphors,  
I strangle flowers: I am just a cenotaph in the wavering  
Park- The sea has gone away for another girl,  
The world it occupied is naked of wildlife and the stars  
Have turned their backs, window shopping not anymore the  
Distant spectators of this closed story.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Divine Absence Of Footfalls

Color me green or anything- I just want to  
Lay across you as I write this poem,  
As I engorge by your better faults and lie and say  
Its Halloween. I could write for you forever, and compare  
Those scars which have awakened me in the image of  
The savaged narcissist, which give me good erections,  
Which say now we are on another planet;

And you are here, and each star, and that old leaping  
Comet- It comes too: It makes you look up, and defines  
Your neck, everything about you which is alive;  
And I listen to the storm and ride ponies, and pretend that  
Now they are having parades down at sea level,  
Leggy tramps and tax collectors, and grandmother's  
Entire sets of dolls;

But don't listen to me now, but lean into me, and whisper  
To me something that I should never hear. From your breathless  
Lips, send those thistly sails beckoning. Give me hope and a new  
Sun, just a pinprick from here. Stare at this side of my face I  
Turn in towards you, and shake your head aping the others girls,  
As they shake their head, as their curls glisten like molten candy;

And then lay across my palm your flat breast like a dollar bill,  
Like carne frita, and let our tongues stick out like fried plantains,  
Like the only form of saccharine tricks on this our humbling planet;  
And we will be good, and listen to the traffic, and the divine absence  
Of footfalls underneath the power lines.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Divine Traffics

In a catharsis of waxy elbows like an entire  
Gift basket left for the slight degrees of vision of  
An alligator as white as snow  
And left into captivity underneath the pitter-patter of  
Plastic reindeer:  
If we kissed this way sometimes on our Tuesdays off,  
Fearlessly but avoiding eye contact, our bodies like  
Cleaning agents rubbing together an hypnotic memory  
Under the glass eyes of some blinded church-  
With the gods and the presidents rolling the dice of our families,  
And all of the divine traffics continuing the sanguinities  
Of the un stymied wound.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Dolphins, The Heavens

Another song crying like a teacher—  
The day is unaffected,  
The Ferris Wheel still turns around,  
Even though the dolphins swam away:  
They came to see her or  
It,  
But she or her was too far inland—but she still  
Painted a pretty picture,  
Turning as she did for them  
Even though all of the other Ferris Wheels had  
Already left Town Town—  
There she was in the corner of her own lot—  
The feral cats playing violins and  
Bedding down,  
And I triumphant moon rose over the sea  
That was like a fairytale for her,  
The Ferris Wheel—and she laid there  
Forever, refusing to be handled,  
Searching through the very top of her pin-balled  
Apex,  
Flashing with the greatest exuberance—  
She can still be seen today,  
Waiting for the dolphins to come to her,  
Waiting for the heavens to touch the ground.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Door That I Am Afraid That I Will Never See

Doing their own thing in their dream rooms  
While their daughters are passed off by car to their  
Little sisters:  
In the foothills of constructions with the pilot's laughter  
Ushering through the weather like coin smooth  
Stones passed over for swans  
In the crenulated pews of non denominational weathers;  
As my muse does whatever she does on her  
Off hours,  
Lining the coliseums of anonymous fame: after all of  
The high schools have shut down,  
And girls that I used to live with have their first born sons  
With the steady men who they are more inclined-  
Until there is peace, with green bugles form the valley  
And all forms of animal life budding there,  
While her brown hand and the rest of her is resting behind  
That door that I am afraid I will never see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Doorways Of Hotels

What bends the rivers, or necks down to  
Drink  
What bows the sky into the bower's brink  
I can't thing of the names that you really  
Left behind  
Starring away in your metamorphosis without  
A ship  
Or the brown shadow of your man behind you  
In that bedroom  
Is he tasting your fire again, sipping the ash  
That floats from your bangs  
Thrashed in the gyring frictions of the summer's  
Hurricane- and I cannot understand it  
How I came down all of those steps from my  
Office to see you through a window  
Threshing trees- giving the softest  
Plums to the meaningless puppies  
Where they commingled with the rattlesnakes in  
The ditches  
And the storm whispered promises to all of  
Them and brought the angels down in  
Fabulous nets that tangled across the doorways  
Of hotels, disturbing the residents  
From the places they didn't even belong

Robert Rorabeck

# The Doubtless Highways

So I took her, and then I took her to the science museum,  
Back and forth foreplay through the marbleized bestiaries,  
And the early marbles of the habitats of  
Toothy spacemen:  
And I took her, and I took her to an art gallery, and she laid down  
Her head and looked up at a ceiling chatter-filled with the  
Blown glass amusements of the sea life from  
The woebegone mind of some estranged artist,  
Searching for her,  
My own brown muse that I had found, and kissing and blowing,  
Stoked,  
Into a Ferris Wheeled reason to survive; and here she was,  
Mostly on Tuesdays, coming like a brown sun into my yellow  
House,  
Conquering like a little Mexico, her legs the conduits of a windmill,  
Like fireworks who couldn't even believe in themselves:  
And the roofs still arose, or they seemed to arise,  
And yet we were making newer finer pinpoints that articulated  
Straight up through the heavens,  
Like the pornographies of smoke signals, that frightened the  
Cadavers in their marble graves, and put the mouthy fear into the sky  
That perhaps it had fallen after all, and lay there  
Like a carpetbagger finally exhausted and thoroughly metamorphosed  
Alongside the doubtless highways that heedlessly tore asunder.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Downy Curbs Of Ditches

The power lines stretch and fawn, as the airplanes rapture,  
And sometimes it will rain  
As I imagine my mother coming out of that little house in  
Her even littler, bluer slip:  
There she is changing the laundry, as the ant lions molest in  
The grass,  
And the rabbits rest in the rock garden full of spikenard and  
Cockleburs:  
The neighbors are drinking beer, and the airplanes are launching  
As if to Russia,  
Everything bill folded into something that can fit across so  
Many yards of the greenly understood,  
While one or two misfits curl beside the cadavers of rattlesnakes  
In the downy curbs of ditches that will never  
Have to move again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dozen Virgins Of Guadalupe

The dozen Virgins of Guadalupe may have to make  
A church out of my garage—  
I have them in my house right now: in the foyer,  
Atop the fireplace,  
On the cabinets above the tiny kitchen—not as to make  
A sorority of religious artifacts, but as fetishes  
Meant to collect you—  
I even have Cuban dinero underneath the dresses of  
One of them—all of it meant as some sort of Santeria  
To steal you from your husband  
Who already knows voodoo—and, according to your  
Aunt Mierna, paid for black magic to win you  
Back to him—and to birth a child from you—  
I guess that I see now that I am not very clever,  
But I keep at it going down into the night, drinking  
A couple glasses of rum before my fair share of  
Another school day—  
Trying to resurrect that love that could never burn out  
As it never truly did start a fire—we just met  
In a fruit market, I bought you gold, and we made love  
Periodically for a year and a half, before it petered  
Out and I found another woman—and you stayed with  
Him,  
As the flying monkeys came down to rest in the forest  
To look down upon a scarecrow who didn't have the brains  
To be afraid.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dragonfly's Intersections

Let this play out,  
The panhandlers on the corner of  
Forest Hill and Jog- I once pulled up and  
Dropped in his hand a roll of quarters,  
And he blessed me like an unwashed John The Baptist.  
Just as I was pulling away, I saw  
The screwdriver general trouncing down upon  
The object of my homeless philanthropy;  
The dominant wino was going to take away  
The beer money, I suppose;  
Like the pugilism of dizzy waves  
With his rabbit-pink eyes bleeding maggot sleep.  
Before the early days could wash away into  
The confounded strip mall of her crocodile tears:  
Neither man didn't know that this was where I use to  
Roam myself- Four years old,  
Blond hair and an albino hound name Wolfie  
Who went for the throat,  
When there was only phalanxes of slash pines,  
Blue herons and the smell of Jupiter's dump when  
The winds blew strongly to the south,  
Prop planes, pay phones and Donkey Kong at Nola's  
Pizza parlor on the south east corner of the intersection,  
And the simplicity of the rattle-snakes' brittle warning,  
Like spare buttons shaken in a jam jar,  
The saucer demon eyes in the bright sun;  
The ungrafted nucleus of a burnished soul still warm from  
The female's kiln; Not a haunt in the newborn head,  
And legs that swam out past the highways  
Of the depressed migrations of snowbirds;  
Now I know the pecking order of these diminished  
Streets, the lonely fertilities heady in tracts of  
Working class song birds:  
The grinning phallatios of politicians and their cops in the hurricane,  
Budweiser like a shine of easy god rising above the pines,  
Her eyes turned away and her body that I once entered;  
The woman I love who doesn't know me,  
And the frightened destinations of man on rotten couches  
In the junkyard brambles alongside the busy roads,

Dwarfed by the superstructures of other men going nowhere  
Very fast: Her eyes are like this in the gloom of  
My truck, as I pull through the McDonald's drive-thru,  
On the land my parents use to rent,  
Where I had powerful dreams of her chastity's claret arrivals,  
But that was yesterday's growth spurt;  
I get no taller, and now there are only  
Ghosts in the concrete's yellow-eyed desert and where her eyes bloom  
The sharp flowers, the dangerous gazes for other men  
Far out in the jogging aftermaths, I couldn't know.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Dreaming Of Insects

The days are common place- Here they go,  
The anonymous parade, the same as in  
Highschool, but with less clairvoyancy and  
Those dreams.

I don't skip out anymore: I don't go anywhere,  
But I still look at pictures of her as if she was  
Still here. I still drive around as if I knew the  
places where we used to live;

But this is how it goes:  
Her bone structures are still angelical;  
And in the library I can read about her,  
The stream of seances she will never perceive,  
The capitalizations of anonymous romance:

I will get up from, and walk out into that sunlight,  
Experience another day with nothing given to me in exchange,  
But for those good memories,  
The slick truanicies that lay out in the mowed grass,  
Underneath the subtle dreaming of Insects.

She is like those jewels they have shed:  
The opulent cadavers in the floating shades.  
She gives to me that motionless dream,  
Alluring me, though she has gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Drinking Glass Of My Soul

I want to be friends- but it will mean I'll have  
To drink more.  
I have a terrible craving for turkey,  
And beautiful girls are surfing in the hair-lips of  
Waves; it is the best place to begin,  
With the sun fluctuating like a bad heart,  
The kind the virgin wears over her apron while  
Baking cookies; and I haven't been reading  
Anything good, but just slipping further down the  
Damp easement toward the terrible smiles of  
Crocodiles- Cant you tell- that its all a lie,  
That I'm all over my bad drugs- I stick to  
Disney World and cheap liquor- and I want more,  
And more of it, these fun rides next to strange  
Blondes, helium filled contraptions next to the sea;  
And you have to really want it,  
To fight with the charactures of death, to remember  
The places you were born, the spawning pools,  
The vile slime of so many dividing cells- Like Cheap,  
Hollywood sci-fi, waiting for the artificial intelligence  
To die- I remember- I remember her, sure:  
She held my hand and we picked fireflies- Then she  
Betrayed me with her own blood in her mouth,  
The favorite topping to her new freshman's phallus;  
And now, old boy, my head is a toy- Let me think.  
My head feels so good in my hands, my head is a pumpkin  
Wildfire, and I am still waiting for my refund from  
Saint Louis. My father is a cheap devil with a beer belly  
With so many horses they sh! t all through the forest,  
They've killed the trees, and now he is hungry, he is hungry  
For the thighs of dead girlfriends sisters,  
For the walls and forts of coquina, but I am just trying to  
Survive doggy-style, Bukowski-style- up here with  
The reintroduced wolves- This is my neighborhood,  
And I don't know what else to tell you- I've forgotten what  
Else to say, but I assure you it was beautiful,  
Even to the eyes of shotgunned ghosts- It was beautiful,  
But these words will die before I die,  
So it is all the same- Excuse me now while I sit this one out

To refill the drinking glass of my soul....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Drive-In Theatres Of The Ever-Loving Moon

Jealous as the children are to souls,  
As new words are to the memory,  
As the cars lay outside, tanning in their parking  
Lots,  
As each orange globe, sinks and becomes  
Pregnant underneath the moon,  
Where the trailer parks lie like sardines,  
Or other places that have become transplanted  
To the land of the talking cats  
All across the other sides of canals  
Where the kidnapers are taking our sisters  
Every day to kiss and make love outside of school—  
As the classrooms come and fill up without  
Our memories—  
As it rains and gets cold outside,  
As the hummingbirds die beside the water holes  
Outside the apexes of every classroom—  
So it comes to this—another drunken night  
Outside of the carpeted apothecaries—  
All of the classrooms in that old high school  
Abandoned,  
As some other souls make love  
Or contend to be Christened as Shakespeare and  
His retarded brother walk their three legged dog  
Over the drive in movie theatres of the  
Ever-loving moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Drooling Honeymoons

Jumping through your shoulders  
While I was fighting through your daydreams:  
Until someone strangled the moon so  
There was midnight and puppets  
Dancing,  
And I didn't love you,  
But the rivers still ran until they  
Flooded—tear-eyed,  
And then the night was made of itself,  
But it wasn't my problem:  
I had been to the top of the mountain,  
And the midnight yet ran like yoke in her  
Eyelashes—it was the same way with highways,  
Running down her like mascara,  
And there wasn't much left of the rest of  
The country, but I still love America—  
And the way she fought on without me,  
Until the hallways of her high schools were  
Healthily buttoned in her illusions,  
And I struggled in the waves  
Laying down with the monuments,  
Until I decided that it was almost over—  
And I bought her roses on her birthday  
And I said the pledge of allegiance  
Over the drooling honeymoons of  
Her blindingly stupefied waterfalls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Drooping Sky

Orchard imprints in your kitchen- as sunlight  
Through the glasses,  
And against the wishing wells of gold fish:  
And you don't have to worry:  
You are young, and your husband is young and  
Coming home to you-  
So you don't have to run away across the canal:  
The other world is just for show-  
You don't have to belong to it, and I am your son:  
Abandon me if you want to  
In the preschools of graveyards- leave me there  
Underneath the slash pine and the egrets  
Who ornament the drooping sky as the traffics  
Rush by forever- though they never have  
To be gone for very long: and, rest assured,  
They will all be soon coming home to you, as you lie  
In wait for them,  
As the tadpoles change and the cicadas molt,  
And the dragon flies whisper into the rattlesnake's  
Mouth- as they all come home into you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Drowning Christmas Tree

I drink liquor to a god who just doesn't care,  
Who is dumber than me:  
All the dragons you know are lazy, saturnine, insouciant  
And unpatriotic:  
The night is galvanized against them and all of the sweet young  
Dears are leaning the calligraphies of algebra:  
In Oregon the lumberjacks cut wood:  
They work a dangerous job and then they come together and sleep  
Just like the naiads of lesbians in their pool where I  
Suffered through undergraduate training in a toon-ville  
Where my venal muse still lives:  
Erin, Erin: every night gets cold without you, and this is how  
I've poisoned my soul because I am too weakened to live wholly  
Without you,  
And even the Queen's English only has so many possibilities without  
You;  
And the night is getting up and walking out on its brighter lover,  
And the moon just doesn't know what to do:  
I am pigheaded and lonely, but I still walk with strange girls over the  
Upraised and religious bridges across the intercostals;  
And you have found your new man, and I am proud;  
And I am lonely and I am wondering even and when you will  
Ever find me,  
Like the most beautiful of presents who has always been waiting for  
You underneath the drowning Christmas tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dry And Rusting Pines

Now they have them cadillacs filled with  
The various pornographies underneath of where  
The airplanes live,  
.Just as my muse has her families in the buried  
Streets that the sun mows:  
And she goes to work five days a week,  
Just as I go to work,  
And the angels walk in plain clothes- but sometimes  
The gypsies also come to town,  
And the heavens boil above them, turning our  
Confections into liquor across the empty planes,  
Just as she skips in her diminutive ways,  
Angel of brown body and brown stems, over the  
Estuaries where the otters and cotton mouths live-  
And I spin like a firework home to my  
Mother and the shells of vanishing crustaceans  
Into a new sort of tenement across the forgotten sorts  
Of holly and underneath the dry and rusting pines.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Dry Indoors

Imperfect as my insincerity- soft nimbus whispered or  
Blown across the shell,  
Lost in her childhood, like the kittens in the rattlesnake's  
Belly,  
And we growing deeper into these woods, listening  
To the ancient shells of conquistadors singing,  
As sunlight is braided through the open doors  
Of lost pornographies-  
And I think of her again, the day reawakening in new  
Molestations, the cars driving out of doors:  
The strange storms that spread over us, strangers-  
Her lips of satin, of tranquility's heresy:  
How can I provide for her when it is raining upon my  
Fire,  
And all of the good merry weathers have all stood up,  
Discontinuing their primeval love stories,  
And tromping up the three stacked cinderblocks and back into  
The dry indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dying Butterflies

Slow diamond of a burning ship  
Calling for your love with my entrails- a need for this void  
And the skeletons float, laughing—  
Made to believe in the rhythms of the journey  
Or that there is no place more insubstantial—  
Where the fretful liaisons wait for the werewolves -  
And they for the school girls to step off the  
Thresholds of their busses—  
We will be testing tomorrow, and tomorrow  
Forever—  
As the buses turn around like knights dancing  
Around the dying butterflies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dying Eyelid Of Cain's Unfortunate Brother

I figured I should call you  
Before I started drinking again.

Because you don't answer,  
I started without you  
Since last night I had a vision  
In which the planes were falling,  
Again, a kind of religious silver rain.  
And you became the lucky number  
That slipped from the pant's pocket  
Of my childhood while incest was  
Dug up behind the tomato vines  
And all the flesh and bones bathed  
In the hot south Florida sunlight  
As the trailer with the holes in the  
Floor was locked tightly before they  
Began the raid on the immigrant workers.

They are advertising human sacrifice  
On the billboards down Military Trail,  
As people pass on from high-school  
Forgetting such detritus as their locker  
Numbers and first loves,  
The way the shadows pooled under  
The overgrown hollies in the early morning  
Beside the bus-stop as the mist rose up  
And the lions roared down the street.

And driving with ex-relatives barking  
At the side of my face only to recede into  
The hills where the snow is quickly melting,  
The world turns old and further away  
From the life gained from the sun  
From which the old god walks away,  
Leaving his destroyed garden to his bastards sons  
Who perpetuate themselves through  
Our sick games played out between the  
Battlefields of eyes upon which even  
The fly experiences strangulation on the

Dying eyelid of Cain's unfortunate brother.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dying Of The Same Old Same

My old night is her new night too,  
In a brand new house, with a new husband too:  
And her cars are so gaudy out in her yard  
Itself having been christened with a new  
Manicure of sod;  
And even my old rains seem to be her new  
Rains too,  
If you sit quietly and listen, then she can be new to  
You,  
Striped out and bedecked like for a female  
Peacock's yard sale- she'll open her new eyes for you,  
And you can swear that they are as instrumental  
As the four winds giving direction and purpose to  
A weather vane;  
But if you asked me, I'd curse that she was nothing  
But the same old same;  
And certainly not one or two of my muses,  
The beauties she awakened from my old houses of  
Beat-up bruises-  
So in the strange foreplay in the first of the last light  
Of this same old crepuscule,  
What she happened to kill also resurrected in me,  
A beauty that can never die- an immortal pain  
That is yet tremulous inside me,  
Somehow the fairest light that resonated forth from  
The dying of the same old same.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Dying Of The Young

Voodoo is the dying of the young into  
The apex of the overbearing yards—  
It is the not allowing of my muses to have  
A solace of their apathetic sanctuaries—  
And the churches surrounding  
Them are the resurrections my awful sea pulled  
Back in total disregard—  
And in its definitions nude fireworks—  
Until high school comes again—soft lips sold  
In the fruit markets of the overbearing sunlight—  
Brown skin of  
The muse that took my soul away—and turned me  
Into the washboard of a yellow mule  
In the graveyards the buzzards and their parson sang  
Over, picking my bones beneath the satellites—  
And in all of its kingdoms of unremitting  
Glory, that are calling you through the collarbones  
Of the careless holidays—  
That in the breathless heavens there is still some  
Sort of jubilee for you—  
And I am at a loss, and throwing my pennies towards  
The wishing well of a tortoise who is still trying  
To pull the wishes from my bones—  
And great about the insouciance over winning the race—  
As I remember sailing feet first with you towards  
The heavens of primary colors—of a red and then yellow  
Helicopter dancing statically together over the  
Vibrant sea where the mermaids have lost all of their  
Names into the gambling that I am sure would not  
Be if it was not for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Eagerly Forgotten Graveyards

Dying this way- dying, as the leaves on trees in autumn  
Know no more summits: getting jobs at fast food  
Franchises,  
Forgetting the names of the fraternities of old gods,  
Forgetting my pledges of allusions to them:  
Feckless, rewinding in my off base bedroom, my little house  
Bleeding rusty around the edges,  
My dogs forgotten in Arizona: drinking dessert wine, and compiling  
Myself to the night while the tropical storm turns away and flits of  
The phallic back of Florida, like butterflies returning to  
Her own bedroom to masturbate:  
And I am all alone and un influential- this is how I tire,  
While the bonfires recess, while the airplanes and the captains in  
Them touch down and curl like wishless micas atop the granites  
Of the earth:  
While everything I have tried to do doesn't work out, and starves  
In a day or two like a bromeliad needing the genuflections of  
Sunlight;  
And the ships capsize, and the lions just keep yawning while the  
Tourists pirouette deep inside their trams:  
And I drink more liquor, like a candle trying to start its own flame:  
While you are already tucked away, Alma, fleshed into the armpits  
Of his brown hereafter- calling you his women, you give him  
Tongue and children,  
And you seem to live awhile, like beautiful flowers placed across  
The eagerly forgotten graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Earlier Memories

Perfume for seahorses is a way of starting off:  
A little tear building into an oceanâ€™s peony for a ghost  
Refusing to come to its absolute conclusionâ€™s  
Up in the soft and greasy foothills and red clay, bats  
Are nestingâ€™s; great poets are being shot  
Underneath olive leaves like oxymoronsâ€™s; The moon  
Catches all of the weeping that she can and divides  
Them until she is full: Beneath her, the tents for  
Spilling fireworks are rising,  
And the buses are turning around in a chorus of chartreus  
Butterfliesâ€™s;  
There is a better art than mine in the soft bosom of a  
Cul-de-sac she is too busy at obtainingâ€™s; birth stones  
Around her neckâ€™s; most everything about her is already  
Clinging to somethingâ€™s; monuments of her body,  
Tourists are making her childrenâ€™s; but in the ways I have  
Found her there is no hidingâ€™s; illuminate daydreams,  
Across the diminutive parks of sand-castles and  
Oleanders she comes glidingâ€™s; until  
Lit up in a tree, the wayward kites she coaxes, as they  
Tumble beside her and the clothes she is dryingâ€™s;  
As the rains remember other soft children beside the  
Dim carport beside the earlier memories of which they  
Are falling.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Earliest Of Classrooms

Each stitch in the peacock's feather,  
A crenulation upon the mountains, stones waved into the  
Quartzite caesuras where the lovers fall,  
Teeth chipped upon the false romances of hoar frosted mermaids:

The milkmaid riding on the last-most seat of the bus  
Turns a blue eye away,  
The wind succulates upon her blondness,  
Ovid turns her sisters into kites,  
Zeus draws a bone and turns into the conquistador's bull,  
Pursuing knee-high into the foaming surcease:

My children drizzle into the tiny yellow rooms  
Where we have planted them,  
Their insufficient nudities beginning to dry like dew in the morning  
of the first day of school:

They are look up at her. They have forgot all of their memories.  
A goshawk touches two weeds together in a thorny bush,  
And a new pornography is born high up in the coned armpits  
Between two war-begotten countries-

The last word spoken to their virginity has no meaning;  
It is sent to turn them feral so that they may escape these earliest of  
Classrooms:  
Leaping billy-goats of metamorphosis,  
The fairytale spumed between two nests of giants:

They are freed to roam the canals dredged behind the backyards  
Of society. The little girl pauses to kiss an alligator frozen by her presence,  
And the land beckons in a bucolic, mowed excellence-  
Where nocturnal boys recline forever, arms crossed behind their fermenting  
brains,  
Where gem-sized grasshoppers speckle their  
Acned cheeks, far into the forever backyards of the most forgetful housewives.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Earth

Real cowboys taking siestas in the underbrush:  
School buses shoplifting back and forth, vagabonding  
Against the hedgerows  
Who sing in little red and yellow buds that the coral  
Snakes curl around awaiting the  
Little girls in their fairytales;  
And they just dream, of liquor and bullfighting,  
Though the best of the herds have all dried up,  
And their cenotaphs float in the sky like great wrecks  
Who wreath back and forth on the holidays;  
But really they are something that can never change:  
The end result of a plentiful metamorphosis,  
And the cowhands beneath them are great grandfathers  
Themselves,  
Their schoolboy forts taken back over by the Mexicans  
Who came chanting with silver drums and boleros of  
Enduring fire:  
Now the airplanes evaporate through the sky: they seem to  
Pollinate on them, a hedgerow of silver crosses fluttering;  
And these old men, dust covered humbly,  
Close their eyes and dream of things without wings that  
Still somehow skip across the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Earth And Sky

Resting again- again, in the valleys  
Of windmills who know of  
The keenest pleasures-  
They lay in one spot and move and move:  
Can't you see them moving,  
Coming over the hill, or rising up  
From Iceland- making headway where  
They stand  
And you are in art class trying to reconcile  
It with your greatest love,  
As the comets are in their slings  
Curling around the hips of shadows and  
Having a good time-  
And the students? They have all gone into  
A classroom of whispers.  
Maybe it is their birthday, but one at a  
Time.  
And the windmills? Well, you know what  
They are doing:  
Turning, turning- raising their heads to  
The angels-  
And the angels sit there bawling, bawling-  
And all of the earth and sky  
Having a marvelous time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Earth I Made For You

How can you never think of all  
The busied flowers underneath your sink  
Dozened into a scattering of vermilion  
Seeds the sun in the sky winked love into:  
It peppered them into their youth,  
As your mother's rabbits danced- and you grew  
Weary as you I romanced:  
And you continued making love to me in  
The orchards, as if through the pages of our  
Story book- but that was a fable whose moral  
Never took- for if it was your child,  
It was just the persuasion of a gibbous moon  
Lamenting upon your brown oasis-  
As you lay in bed with your brown children,  
Lactating the sensations of a town of roosters that  
Grow for you when the rains come and turn  
The earth I made for you into mud.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Easiest Thing

Horses are green:  
My house is yellow, but I am still right here:  
Across from here, there is another house,  
But who cares what color it is:  
The color of my muse's eyes are brown:  
She doesn't live too far from here-  
I talk to her some times a day,  
But otherwise I do my work, and try to breathe:  
When she calls me, I fall in love:  
I fall in love, and remember how sometimes it is so easy  
To cause an echo,  
And when I take her out to lunch, we share our eyes,  
And I have listened to her heart, beating inside of her while  
She has laid on my bed: but when he calls her,  
She goes back to him:  
Like eager pennies in a wishing well, like silver  
Minnows in the stream,  
Never minding the beautiful mines of my forest, singing  
To her with captivated bears and foxes: yes,  
She goes back to him, and that is the easiest thing she does.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Easiest Thing She Does

Horses are green:

My house is yellow, but I am still right here:

Across from here, there is another house,

But who cares what color it is:

The color of my muse's eyes are brown:

She doesn't live too far from here-

I talk to her some times a day,

But otherwise I do my work, and try to breathe:

When she calls me, I fall in love:

I fall in love, and remember how sometimes it is so easy

To cause an echo,

And when I take her out to lunch, we share our eyes,

And I have listened to her heart, beating inside of her while

She has laid on my bed: but when he calls her,

She goes back to him:

Like eager pennies in a wishing well, like silver

Minnows in the stream,

Never minding the beautiful mines of my forest, singing

To her with captivated bears and foxes: yes,

She goes back to him, and that is the easiest thing she does.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Easiest Way Through The Quietest Hood

Popping on the lights, I look at my reflection:  
I get so excited I sing  
As if on Christmas, this country is a good place,  
Going down into the valley and the zoos of Easter  
Sunday:  
Erecting tents of marketplace speculation:  
And the most beautiful thing is that up above the  
Clouds can be anything, but they are just nothing  
Just the smoke of the chimneys off  
The grasses breathing like the mighty coat of  
A vehicle the cars mind,  
And the pretty girls turn out on the turkey-leg glade for  
Supper time:  
All dandy in their milky surplices like rows of candles  
Upon whose lips I want to make wishes:  
Bodies strung together like pearls stripped naked of  
Clams,  
And they are out on picnic parade blowing the butter off  
Their yams,  
Beheld by the spindly jewels that the crocodiles have to  
Give;  
And they move through the parks of industry, a sisterhood  
Of gypsies whose math is always good  
As they light the easiest way through the quietest hood.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Easy Outs And The Easy Ins

Every day is an empty highway  
Made for things that flash and die,  
And that sun goes leaping through the skyway,  
But never wonder why-  
That I should look at you so pitifully,  
Drinking those songs that I want to never  
End,  
But you just go passing by me, kissing those  
Lips of your more beautiful friends-  
That the traffic continues,  
That the undying brigades should never sleep:  
That the dogs remember:  
That the dogs should weep,  
And you go continuing with your toy chest  
Of friends,  
All the easy ways that you know,  
The easy outs and the easy ins.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Easy Proof Of Science And Divinity

My secret agendas go unpublished.  
When my parents leave, I steal downstairs and  
Write poetry.  
I feed my dog the rest of my peanut butter  
And jelly sandwiches.  
I am neither generous nor stingy.  
My cousin is pregnant and there could be  
Complications; she used to appreciate  
My poetry. My sister is getting married,  
And I will give her \$200.  
Even though I haven't drunken a dropp of  
Liquor since the forth of July, I continue  
Thinking of you. How strange, when I can't  
Even spell your name, when another man slips  
Into you, when you cry and curse such pleasure;  
His DNA is all over you;  
You appreciate his well-proportions, like sports  
Cars, useless and sculpted,  
Unless you have too much money, and  
Too much time;  
But even now the Hubble space telescope is taking  
Extravagant photographs of unperceivable galaxies:  
The stars as so thick, they make a soup,  
But you and I are here together, breathing.  
Your lips are delicious: such life, but how strange  
That I should never speak to you,  
When your friendship would liven me like undeminishable  
Words in a perfect book; not like anything else,  
Not like a bowl of fruit left uneaten,  
Not like cold chicken noodle soup in a thermos.  
If I had you, what would I do with you?  
I might go back to school and see you there between the splays  
Of shades and suns, and however you might look  
Unconsciously lulled by the caress of an unacknowledged  
Tide, married, and pregnant too. I don't know,  
But should you look out into the greatness of sky and  
See nothing, know that there are worlds and worlds uncountable,  
And I behold you the same,  
For you are an easy proof for both science and divinity.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Eccentricities Of This Nostalgic Romancing

Fit for me a space to enjoy,  
To make love with reckless sleuths, girls I could  
Never pretend to unknow,  
Keeping their hair clean in dirty trailer parks:  
To snap my fingers and awaken the muse from  
Another man's hypnosis,  
To make love with her as I so choose,  
To drive with her through the licks of amusement parks.  
To see the sweet animals there, every one with their  
Hungry eyes pointed forwards,  
Not even self-conscious, but still hungry for the things  
I am hungry for,  
That I see hanging on her every day, though I haven't  
Beheld her for so much more than a decade:  
These things that the city couldn't even think of picking to  
Sell,  
When those angels are already glutting her streets:  
And I have loved her, watching her grow old even while  
The carnies are taking down the fair-  
She seems almost unreal, her eyes as indescribable as the  
Uncertainties of an eerie weather forecast,  
Coming over the old high school and Spain alike;  
And now my liver must be the size of a football  
While my muse walks her streets that are just as wet as  
Her turgid hair,  
Just as sweet as her child that will for so many months  
Defeat the eccentricities of all of this nostalgic romancing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Echo Of A Carnival

Alphabet and tongue of rain—cleaning the indescribable  
Rabbits in the aloe:  
Toads underneath the mailbox—  
Toads used to be tadpoles—Luckless ixoras in the garden  
That has become so over grown—  
My mother in the carport that has become a tomb—  
Ghostly light of an ethereal yew—  
Her arms over spilled with the grandiose disillusion of  
The moonlight—  
Her two or three children asleep in their one or two  
Rooms—  
The road leading down into the darkness—  
The forest sweeping like brooms—  
She hears the echo of a carnival from her grottos—  
Bending to pray—knowing that her dark prince will  
Be home too soon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Echo Of A Ghost

White as the echo of a ghost, I lay with Alma:  
We do not make love, but we kiss- and it snows in the  
Sunshine:  
I tell her, her skin is beautiful, and I dream of her  
In a great university or in the maroon bells,  
Who are treacherous but alluring- and afterwards,  
Her stomach still aching from  
Her hernia,  
I drift off to some library I was in at a Catholic school  
In Saint Louis Missouri:  
My muse has promised to be with me by next year,  
And my dog sleeps at the foot of my bed-  
And what seems to truly be a god, hibernates only feet  
Above me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Echoes Of

Angles of light proceed me—Soon they will be  
Fishing around my skull—  
In amphitheaters of skullduggery I will swear  
That you can never remember—  
Now tell me that you are all right as you roller skate  
With your echo—  
Even my wife will never discover who you are—  
And my children will grow up  
Like a garden of pearls beside the sea—  
And we will put Christmas trees into our house—  
And still the years will echo  
But you will never come again to my door.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Echoes Of A Jubilee

Baseball diamonds of Siamese twins—  
And now here I am, separated from  
My love,  
Both of us living on other sides of the runway—  
My words not clever enough to find her—  
Just the echoes of a jubilee of a smoked out  
Apiary—  
And when the waves come in the darkest night  
Or in the middle of the day,  
I cannot see them, but think about them  
As I travel home all by my lonesome—  
Just as my tombstone thinks of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Echoes Of Firecrackers

The forever brightening cadavers are flying like  
Pitches being thrown to little boys  
With so much eager practice, being looked upon by their  
Untried fathers:  
And it goes this way, after the sun gets down, and the movies  
Relax:  
Maybe the fawns nuzzle with the terrapins,  
And the witches stop spinning: they pick up their bottles and  
Their jacks and dice:  
And return to their car and their lucky rabbits:  
And if you happen to see things this way, on the movie like  
A Merry go Round through the sporting holidays  
Of the young life of a goldfish being swapped through the migrating  
Midways:  
Then you can say, there is a Disney  
World: and she will lay atop you and swish her hair like the curtains  
Of a stage that shows you everything: and you make love forever,  
With your ear pressed as if to the naked grass of the yard  
Of a housewife: and even the eager architects of ants  
Stop to listen,  
Forever: like the echoes of firecrackers under the changing rooms  
Of moonlight- What sallow, feline splendor:  
Having finally remembered the path home to which you had never  
Returned to before.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Echoes Of Years

Angles of light proceed me—Soon they will be  
Fishing around my skull—  
In amphitheaters of skullduggery I will swear  
That you can never remember—  
Now tell me that you are all right as you roller skate  
With your echo—  
Even my wife will never discover who you are—  
And my children will grow up  
Like a garden of pearls beside the sea—  
And we will put Christmas trees into our house—  
And still the years will echo  
But you will never come again to my door.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Edge Of Their Fingers

My tears salted the rum that is now in a glass  
On the weekend,  
And in the semidarkness the housewives lounge next  
To the pools  
Getting everything they want- and the bobcats  
Fight with themselves:  
They are really inconsequential underneath the airplanes:  
And if there ever was rosebushes,  
They have passed away into mirages  
As the lights of a carousel enfold the make-believe  
Like a crèche- I drink as I think about you:  
But I don't think- I hear the airplanes  
Like the lips of tadpoles,  
Spreading their bouquets of silver legs across the world-  
And very soon, I too will be leaping across them,  
Remembering the sport without reason that  
Is bought mindlessly over the holidays  
And spent all at once  
In another game of chance at the edge of  
These fingers.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Eels And The Foxes

Then it feels alright: the stars in their cathedral  
And the night coming down through its curtains  
Loving what it does,  
Becoming married again across the deserts  
On horseback,  
Talking to itself or to the rattlesnakes:  
And in all of this my natural selection- my impermanence  
Cried to all of the heavens:  
That this is what I do, panhandling to the midway:  
This is what I do with the traffic coming home,  
Sweating and bejeweled- or other words describing  
It I do not know- as the light cast its orbs  
Outward upon the brown skin of my muses,  
Traveling home with the rattlesnakes and with  
The moccasins into a world that I do not  
Know,  
Kissing the turtles resting their who carry their homes  
With them- and kissing everyone else in the classroom,  
As the light fades  
And the eels and the foxes begin their dances.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Elbowed Airplanes

As busy as the intercourses of Ganymede—stampeding  
At all of the hidden intervals,  
The sunlight of courses over all of the fairs—  
And the prettiest girls get up and languish without understanding  
Any kind of affection—  
Playing their parts all over the tables—still life with  
Unhurried gasps—as the wolves roll their  
Eyes all over their sumptuous impresses—  
Entangled with the horned antelope down in the  
Crepuscule - along with the puppets and  
The venal carpenters—as the rivers softly cacophonies  
Beside them—intricate panhandlers in the thickets—  
And the most beautiful part of the day  
In the shadow of the elbowed airplanes with absolutely  
No one around to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Elbows Of Crippled Songbirds

I used to go to you when there was no one else  
To go to,  
And I was done with my witchcraft, and the day was all  
Wrapped up:  
And I used to dream of you and other muses  
From the soft crooks of the orange tree where the  
Oranges grew overly small and tart—  
The tree that was filled with all of the abandoned paper  
Airplanes,  
After the day was done with its fires,  
And the sky was filled with the cremations of the sugarcane—  
And I thought of nothing else other than a high school  
That crawled through its abandoned highways—  
Making high art of nothing,  
For it knew no understanding of aesthetic beauty—  
And kept to itself no high elements—  
Just the school children lost through its day until, finally,  
Eventually, perpetually, to abandon it  
In the early menstruations of the afternoon—like ghosts  
To wonder off,  
Not caring anything of similes and metaphors, or their  
Other classes—but loving some of their teachers sometimes—  
And careless words tossed up like sacrament for the  
Glittering bellies of the airplanes—  
And in their days off fornications, and weather vanes pointing out  
The directions towards golden valleys—  
And towards the unreasonableness of the later adventures—  
Even after their mothers had gone, and their yesterdays lied  
Elsewhere—even after all of the decades of their youth—  
The hallways remained underneath the moonlight,  
Elsewise pulling in the new echoes of shallow heartbeats—  
Funded by the saints of the well-suited egos—  
And carrying on as if the perpetual motions of the heavens—  
The daylight drenching them like sunlight along the elbows  
Of crippled songbirds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Elliptical Victory

Tonight you are my science-fiction:  
The fructose I siphon  
From the Big-Dipper's ladle,  
Hovering over the porch come sunset-  
And you're legs,  
The galloping comet  
Frigid but expeditious,  
Moving on as your distant star  
Paints a cerulean streak,  
Marking the door of the darkening horizon.  
You might come around this  
Decade  
To find me contemplating in my room,  
You might kiss my neck  
Once or twice,  
A hummingbird's test,  
Before you take off again,  
Leaping the boreal hurdles  
Since your eyes are hungry  
And used to great voyages:  
The sojourns you  
Take alone in the cosmos' wilderness,  
Unattainable by all the gravities,  
But you can feel them  
Calling to you from their borders,  
The way flagella vibrate in the beginning-  
That slight feeling you get when lonely,  
And then I might hear  
Your footsteps coming up the stairs  
To stand a little while against the door,  
Breathing, but refusing to knock:  
The bellicose neighbors growing louder  
Against the night's wall,  
Before I can clasp you with my eyes,  
You have defeated the earth again,  
Leaping above us,  
Your limbs the triumphant orchestra  
Your independent heart conducts  
Towards the elliptical victory.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Embalmed Playroom

All my toys are bruised or dying-  
They've done their fit between the spent Australian  
Pine needles windswept on  
The cerulean carport- and the tortoises are  
Slow in their crosses of naturalistic love-  
They are both each others' lazy bosses;  
But she is not there, as I think she should be there  
All sweltering in her skirt-  
Some gymnastic cheerleader, or her mother a hurdling  
Stewardess:  
It is best when the play comes across with double taps  
Of liquor to the dry lips-  
And then the sun caracoles and goes along whistling  
Along its way,  
And death really isn't no thing- and the paper snowflakes  
Are all original and tapered in the poetic hyacinths-  
And grandmothers have all resurrected from  
Their graves-  
And Michelle is there, coming down like a wrecked kite-  
We're playing with Lincoln logs,  
And then I snap rubber bands at her tits- the plasticine  
Cowboys and Indians just sit there under the  
Ceiling fan's Aristotelian rotations-  
They won't do anything we won't fist decide for them,  
And when I'm alone I'll ejaculate in a sad swath of green,  
And real airplanes will leap and fly so  
Carelessly in the sky-  
And moths will populate the window like paper spectators,  
Not knowing why they should ever want in, but wanting;  
And love will lose its ridiculous bloom,  
And all the grandmothers will die  
Back into the darkness of the embalmed playroom.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Emerald Tailed Mermaid Caught By A Better Man

Once I came to your zoo- I was only a little boy,  
But I guess I wanted to pet you;  
But you are already, already made,  
A celebrity tailed in a zoetropic aquatic glade-  
I bit my tongue and held my breath,  
And you wagged your tail, and it did the rest-  
Even the centipedes sizzled, and the paciderms sneezed,  
And even the longest of husbands became wobbly  
Kneed:  
You were with the pythons, the slappy otters,  
The amphibians lay in your muddy vanity: I swear I came  
There ever day and never once noticed the beautiful fans  
Of the female peacocks under the mangroves:  
I just thought of you, as you swam, the last thing not extinct  
Since from the conquistadors;  
And you waved your auburn hair like an auburn fan,  
And you waved your auburn hair like an auburn fan,  
You slipped tinny minnows between your bright red lips  
And stared and stared- You must have been contemplating  
The waves of your stolen land,  
Never once engorging on me pressed against the sheet glass  
With a balloon, ever grateful that some greater man  
Had captured you and tamed you in a tiny pool in this  
Modern land- So I forgot about cars and airplanes and movie  
Theatres, and was just glad that I had come across you,  
The emerald tailed mermaid caught by a better man.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Emotions Of The Blind

Now it seems that the dreams  
Are causing nothing in me;  
And for her, only her daughter  
Is real:  
They go on family field trips to  
The movies,  
Where in the easy darkness they  
Weep for no one,  
Their blood of each other  
Hand in hand,  
Learning the emotions of the  
Blind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Emptiest Hall

Dying off in the albino savannahs  
Where the boomslangs sing over the freckled shoulders  
Of evangelical though tasteless wishes,  
Haunting through the rippling amusements that panhandle  
Across the Diaspora  
Of petulant flora and venal fauna; and it all happens on these  
Days,  
The sunlight rattling up through her brown gaze,  
Happening to come to me as some sort of witchcraft of a song,  
Gathering her body  
As she gossips along:  
The hills all empty save for their carcasses of gold,  
Her ancestors resting through the rosaries manifold;  
And it all seems to me as if answering the reluctant echoes of  
Some strange prayer,  
Like the hallucinations of school buses who all seem to  
Be circling there in the deepest somnolence in the sandiest  
Wave,  
She cries with her brownest of eyes; as the terrapins eat the  
Orchids over my grave,  
And my bravest of brave uncles water-ski; her throat drinks  
The wine of her thirsty skull,  
Like school girls who echo down the emptiest hall.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Emptiness Of Motion

Now the grounds have families which the dead are  
Waking up around,  
And caracoling like concessive aerals, or the watermarks  
In a unicorn's horn,  
And the family is bright but full of clouds, and it sings  
With the forest fires which persuades the beasts,  
So all at once every tree is aglow with a fierce Christmas,  
As if with the lights of angels,  
So proud and consumptive, but in the end feeling consumed  
By the emptiness of motion.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Emptiness Of Sunlight

Walk out into the emptiness of sunlight:  
Yes, the sarcophagus is good enough for any man  
Even in the open air the brightness of his  
Greeting hall  
With a glass in your hand and the girls,  
And other people selling things:  
Tourisms and seagulls and weddings.  
Ghosts are in the fort you shouldn't believe in,  
And secret ways in the dogs go by star-lit night loping  
Up to the walkways of coquina,  
Lifting legs on the green copper canons; and  
I would have made love to you here, but you were  
A lesbian, or a Mexican cleaning lady only good for  
Dousing rooms and candles with your tongue and  
Such and such,  
Just like I'm only good for two dimensions,  
My lights attracting bugs, bologna sandwiches:  
I've lost my keys in the sand and I haven't a hunch,  
And too demure to look all the way up the avenues where  
You or your sister would have me look. I am only  
A second degree, bruised and scarred but not enough for  
The museums of Bukowski- I saw where they buried  
The murdered woman but did not denote her grave with  
Hydrangeas: I am not good enough for stealing little things,  
Not even prayer candles,  
But can sit and watch the waves coming in until morning,  
And by the next day the sun has cleaned out my drinking room  
With no body watching, but so many bodies going either way,  
I can lie here; or, I can do the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Emptiness Of Your Car

I am dying in a pontification of shadows,  
And perhaps I will never have  
To be famous-  
But my body will succumb, as it were,  
Underneath the  
Celebrations of your sororities,  
Just as if I was the very earth underneath  
The jubilations of the heavens,  
As another song dies out as:  
As you just make love to him again  
And again,  
Through the pageantries of four particular  
Stars:  
Do you not know that they've already  
Burned out,  
After you've driven home in your car:  
And I've tried being beautiful,  
But I've all together given up,  
And this is just the apiary left gossiping  
In the very pornography illuminating in  
The emptiness of your car.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Emptying Highways

Sabbath is out in the open—  
Sabbath looks like a tree:  
And your mother and your father are  
Having guests  
Taking their flowers to the graves  
And looking up:  
Everyone speaking Spanish over  
The fort or over the hallucinations  
Of the trees:  
They both belong together,  
Flagella of their species—  
Round a bouts of merry-go-rounds—  
Children growing up in circles,  
A bouquet of the dizzying roses:  
And I don't have to believe who they  
Say they are:  
In the morning, they will be just  
Another hallucination  
Like the fireworks who are gone  
Saying their busier séances to  
The emptying highways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The End Of A Snake

Poison at the mouth and at the end of  
A snake:  
Other ways on and out of a canyon that our  
Teachers made us pretend to be  
Real:  
We will start off slow tomorrow:  
Some birds will build their nests underneath  
Their arrow planes—  
Some bicycles will be stolen, and some lions will  
Yawn when the housewives  
Return home before their children in the busy boughten  
Estuaries they become estranged in:  
Outback of which the canoes will float just  
As coffins:  
And into the flickering dance of candles  
Into which their children will come home estranged in,  
Hapless and dancing:  
So far from the groves of the poorer and working class  
Children:  
Where my muse lives—lighted up like a roman  
Candle dancing beneath the catholic church  
Until she is a single blue window too far away to see—  
And my words have drifted away—she never has to  
Worry about me—  
When she awakens—what will she remember—  
How will she dress herself—and when she hears the airplanes,  
What will she hear, until she finally  
Hears my wife returning home to me—and then, it wonders,  
How will she ever go about returning home  
To him.

Robert Rorabeck



# The End Of Humanity's Aspirations

Any poem can start this way, or  
The way the rain shower begins to caress the roof.  
Slowly, there are less cars going about, and the  
Palm trees' dancing is blurred, and out past the lips  
Of sand, the ocean is in a frothing ballroom;  
The neighbor's cat is draped in aloe, swatting the  
Spotty moonlight in a dime of drool,  
And little children like in picture frames know  
Nothing but their dinner set before them,  
And the laughing on the television; And the man  
And woman at the table taking in eyes, and playing  
Cards: here in the soporific meadows, grazing  
Taxis come with visiting relatives, and I hide  
Between them, the little light illumines my bedroom,  
And with a bottle set before me, clasped before me,  
I want to get drunk and hypnotized by this nonlethal  
Storm, and pretend by the sway of gentilities to  
Be beautiful, as my aunt steps out of the car-door  
And approaches the stoop. Soon she will enter,  
And shake off those drenched garments she has worn,  
Slip like the littlest obscurity beneath the aquarium,  
And sleep there while the rain resumes contagiously.  
I quiver at her breathing, and read a line beneath the  
Spider's ostentatious spume, as a tram like some ancient serpent  
Clacks its sparked teeth above the highest tenements of  
The rundown neighborhood; by a little more shower  
There should come a sea extended from the ocean,  
A draping change, but the whole household is still asleep  
As outside I imagine a sorority hurries by the window,  
Clasped together by tassels and perfume, and above  
The nodding aunt, a single eel weaves black and gallant,  
Just a single eel, like a lost ribbon in the tank of water.  
I wonder what it hears, and if it should understand that  
The rain is gathering, moving the cat up floor by floor,  
Waiting to enter and jettison the place with all its possessions,  
And then, I should say, my aunt should float there in  
Blocks of torpid current, the eel freed and lacing beneath  
Her unconscious spine, until she should awake carried  
Far into the stretching forest beneath the spire of a woodland

Church, such a symbol appropriate for the  
End of humanity's aspirations.

Robert Rorabeck

# The End Of It

So much plodding grief  
Cannot open up the silence,  
Metamorphose the ugly duckling into the  
Grandest novel that it is so blinding  
That all the socialites and suburbanites can do  
Nothing but serving it drinks and take it to bed  
To service it:

This is a very sad thing, laid bare in the  
Car port next to the forgotten four-wheeled sarcophagus,  
The rebar and extinguishing amphibians.  
Next to the mouse chewed orange extension chord  
My mother was twice severely electrocuted on while  
My father was fixing the neighbor lady's washing  
Machine,  
Getting help from all those self commoving Mexicans:

This cheap liquor tastes like pumpkin juice,  
And I am a very sad man,  
Sleeping in his room underground now for over five sad years while  
His ex associates repositioned themselves with Jewish lawyers  
From south Florida  
With similar persuasions and dining out habits:

Oh, I once loved to play make believe out amidst the  
Affluent white pillars all six of them that my father had perceived  
By selling so many tomatoes for so many dollars  
Out amidst the mosquitoes and water moccasins:  
I had an entire retinue of paper airplanes,  
Supported by legions of green plastic soldiers and war-  
Painted Indians.

Now my letters skip the canal like stones, but I am  
No more a teenager cutting snowflakes from clean white paper.  
What overgrown holocaust has brought me to this point  
Where I must proceed down the mountain or disappear from my  
Petty crimes everyone else has forgotten:

I stole from kindergarten and I've written twice a dozen novels

That won't sell-

I am a lazy atheist with two dogs who love me even after  
Everyone else have left the gloomy classroom  
And christened their happy lives with that new car smell.

This is the end of it, the country of a terribly complexioned  
Mind. My two dogs are my children,  
And I'll take them with me through the blackest of all forgetful  
Waters-  
We'll play fetch in Hell.  
I'm sure you'll pay no mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The End Of The Page

They seem to be calling me home:  
And isn't it astonishing that this is what they do,  
To make love like  
Tigers face to face underneath the fences and the  
Ferris Wheels  
While my blood permutated with rum until  
I am a foe of baseball  
Cast aside underneath the swing sets the other  
Ways busied by the makings of love:  
This, end to end, is my own estuary—  
Mouthed my the tadpoles who haven't yet  
Dreamed of stewardesses: this is what it means to  
Her, coming up, dancing in the kindergarten  
Mouths of the fire—growing like a weed  
Or her own instrument: maybe she will remember  
Nothing, or  
Maybe she will have to learn to kiss so  
Many mouths just to make it to the end of the page.

Robert Rorabeck

# The End Of The Road

Scarred in a night of dime-store forget-me-nots:  
But they forget me,  
The beautiful ghosts in their oh so beautiful haunts:  
And there are olive trees all over the crests  
Of hills of Spain,  
And old gods who are now all very well taken care of;  
And bartenders serving their insouciant drink,  
I continue to croon for though now coughing like  
A song bird in its infected mine:  
And they carousel with their strong men who are  
Pumping the horses up and down,  
And S- is in Colorado with dark eyes and  
Storm clouds:  
What is she doing there,  
A young female child at her hip like a thirsty gun:  
I want to run to her with four legs to run,  
And leap the fences, the briary Appalachian fences  
Fabled with fat scuppernongs while my  
Great uncle is still water-skiing on a great lake,  
And I am trying to save face with my muses,  
With the girls I love,  
But I am too drunk,  
And my liver is a football that has never won,  
Never touched down,  
And I am obese and lonely hanging in the shadows of  
The singular graveyard that always keeps its hopes  
Down near the lake,  
At the bottom of the hill,  
At the end of the road.

Robert Rorabeck

# The End Of The Story For Girls Who Are No More Than Three Feet Tall

Teardrops from the armpits of an airplane.  
Do not complain if you have been forgetting to cry about me.  
I am right here, in the crèche of the evergreens  
While my mother in law is whispering about me  
And taking care of my two children—  
I can see you suppliant, child-like-no more than  
Three feet tall. Just as I saw you in the flea market yesterday—  
I have been selling things that are not real underneath the sun.  
Will I see you tomorrow? Or will these words continue to  
Go as they are thrown, as the feed for chickens—  
Mindlessly shopping for greeting cards with rainbows  
While all of the unicorns are kidnapped—  
And will this then be the end of the story for girls who  
Are no more than three feet tall

Robert Rorabeck

# The End Of The Week

Scarred like my beautiful aunt with  
Ants in her pants  
Listening to bluegrass in Tennessee:  
I am f\$cking home again, home with my dogs,  
And getting nose bleeds,  
Jacking off the belladonnas to Sharon,  
Wishing I could nuzzle up with her sweet young child  
Getting fat,  
Listening to guns in roses, getting chapped on her  
Paps while the age old horses suckle up to her wayward  
Kazoo:  
They suckle up to her age old kazoo, and this is just  
What they do;  
And I suppose I'll just have to spend all of my money on  
Whores,  
On whores who really love me, on whores;  
And the day this day is a game show, an unlucky gameshow;  
And I cant remember the last day I held another woman's  
Hand, when her toenails and fingernails were painted up  
All day since  
Christmas,  
Since Easter,  
And where has she hidden all of the eggs if not in  
Her husbands crooked basket:  
In her husbands crooked basket, and I just want to come  
Alone into her creche all alone in the yard right next to  
The baptized car while my parents or her parents where making  
Love and shaking the house from side to side,  
And not suppose to be upsetting the china, but upsetting the china  
A little bit,  
Like the anonymous women buried beneath the rose thorns,  
Buried beneath the castle where the fat and beautiful tourists  
Are always driving the machines to and fro  
And demanding more ice out amidst the cookie cutter esplanades,  
Never expecting that they had no hope of surviving even until  
The end of the week.

Robert Rorabeck



# The End Of This Thing

E- says she's jealous,  
But she still watches her team of boys sweat,  
Pumping the cherry iron of fire-engines  
And corvettes:  
And she has no time for me,  
And somehow she doesn't have to comb her hair:  
Fair E- is just another constellation that  
In some ways has time to  
Pretend she cared:  
And I helped her move more than a decade ago,  
Where I loved her in the truancies of  
My bent mind,  
But I no longer believe in Eskimos,  
And she's already told me that I am not Robert Frost:  
I am not Robert Frost,  
But I skipped like a stone for two weeks  
Across Saint Louis,  
And I thought of her like a dog gnawing on my bone,  
Until I was spent and ugly,  
Like the ancient mint of an ancient penny:  
Something almost worthless,  
But in some small way still valuable,  
Like a strange animal you might see jumping through  
The clouds,  
But not so unusual that your friend sunbathing topless  
Beside you  
Might not agree that she sees me as the very same  
Thing you pretended to see me as,  
As you didn't care,  
Erin:  
You took my bouquets and f-ed someone else,  
And you didn't care,  
And this is the end of this thing falling through the  
Drinking fountains not very far  
Away from our high school where you never really cared.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Endless And Inevitable Night

Soon they will outlaw bullfighters,  
And I will be homeless, disfigured and in an orchard  
That doesn't  
Bloom:  
Alma will be up on her hill, making love to her forgotten  
Soldier,  
And lighting off all of my unrequited fireworks with  
A smile;  
And I will be howling like something really pitiful  
Who can't keep track of  
His ambitions whose only places of importance  
Come at strange moments  
Down ill refuted highways when the moon is well hung  
And the werewolves are making love to  
Banshees,  
And all of the stores are closed like roses into their  
Perfect crux of night,  
When even the airplanes have folded their wings to say  
Their prayers,  
And the most beautiful of kindergarteners have closed  
Their all too salty eyes for the endless and inevitable night.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Endless Goblet

Barbs in a fish provide the pain  
Which eventually produces the jewelry of  
A soul—  
I stop wanting while the daylight mends,  
And the busses turn around  
In their usual rituals  
Just outside of school—  
When the daylight fades, chapter-books  
Close that no one reads—  
And the highways start out which no one  
Follows—see them winding their ways  
Through the parades of  
Midnight, like water-breathing snakes  
All captured in coral—  
And the beautiful blue eyes of the  
Cheerleaders are all so far away—  
Never dreaming that they could  
Metamorphosis—  
And the night brings the endless goblet  
To his lips,  
But your steps are nothing that he  
Can swallow.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Endless Loam

This night is helpful when you don't  
Want to believe in colors anymore,  
Or her name:  
And it is only the mosquito piercing your  
Inner thigh,  
And the airplanes are flying low,  
But the stewardesses don't care:  
You've had delusions of immortality again,  
But they aren't serving you:  
Like a wilting firefly you sit and mope,  
And the sun comes up and you get swept  
Underneath the fiberglass table to become  
A dusty show for rats,  
And she makes love to men of her own class,  
And the swing-sets tremble always wanting the  
Hinges of human bone,  
And you still love her but she is never home:  
Neither day nor night is right for her love,  
As the airplanes fly low across the swarthy  
Caesuras of the endless loam.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Endless Shell Rock Road

If my body is cold,  
It is because my rum bottle is empty;  
And my girls have gone shopping:  
Maybe there are still airplanes leaping like the last  
Wonders the fireworks have to give,  
With their captains of patriotism, and their  
Many other though similar things:  
And there are seas on either side of me, because  
This is my America, just like both of my muses,  
Slumbering, busy off of selling their liquors:  
Worn out like beautiful dolls hung up in the sugar  
Canes,  
Hung up to open the eyes of liberated black men to  
The work of their crooked knives:  
But I can only think of the sky right now, rosy as shells  
Turning the colors of swing sets so pink and wet  
As to be good enough to be her legs,  
A girl I used to love in elementary school who has changed  
Her names,  
Returning to me like a letter taped to a dove,  
Wanting to tame her and move her closer into the suburbias  
Caracoling high school I used to run away into  
And masturbate, while she is something more feral with  
The attention span of a blue eyed egret:  
She will fly away like stewardesses in the penumbra of  
Seizuring debutants:  
But you will never come, after smelling the dirt tilled from  
My wrist by the fangs of defeated serpents,  
You will fall back into the anonymous six pack of another  
Fireman,  
And your big eyes will engorge and frighten your children,  
And your leggy and marvelous carnival will move a little  
Further,  
Further down the endless shell rock road.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ends Of The Earth

I dream of you,  
A beautiful woman covered in satin  
Curling up waves in a make-believe sea  
Where the sun is a light-bulb  
And the clouds are swaths of cotton.  
My hand is the gentle fish that swims  
Towards you, leaps and circles,  
In a playroom as you disrobe,  
For you are the newest allegory,  
And when you breathe the sea moves  
And the room dips and dives  
In the swells of your chest,  
So I swim beneath you like a thing  
Attracted to the parts of you that  
Glitter under the sheets,  
As the sun warms and you smile  
But don't say a thing but wait for me  
To touch you, the palm of my hand  
The secret caressing sea-life  
Which has found you and now swims  
Around your sunken cliffs  
As you begin to move like the hungry tide  
in our room  
The horizon distinguished by borders  
Of blue and white paint where the  
Sea unfolds, spilling over the bed  
The ends of the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Energy To Call Again Tomorrow

Off on the road of too many sparrows, like the lunchtime  
Of your lovemaking in the hangovers of tomorrows:  
Your pretty family practically taking up the entire swings:  
Your grinning daughters, and your sonny kings:  
And I thought of you while I was spinning above the earth,  
Gathering up momentum so I could wish for all you were worth.  
But now my parents are home, and so I must go;  
Maybe I will have the energy to call again tomorrow but  
Who am I to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Infant Shakespeare

Say his name, and watch him disappear  
The artist in the valley holding his guts,  
The tassels of green, like a distended forest,  
And his eyes the very surprised things  
Who though mortally hit,  
Continue to swear by the stance that  
Up in the universe, in the carrousel of  
Modern light, there remains a ruthless meaning.  
Down against his feet, the dead men go tapping,  
Miners of his better thoughts,  
Eager for him to join the static dance  
With the janitors of done fore bachelors,  
These slaughtered ilk, her very stepping stones,  
Buried in the natives' condos,  
The fraternity of the endangered heart,  
Thwarted and mortaring the dungeoned plate:  
A column of male bodies in the caravanserai,  
A resting place for her fast automobile.  
Leaving her sounds to entertain him,  
She drinks the lips of a dispassionate John,  
As he walks in weedy paths perambulating  
The gray stones, thinking that any moment,  
Like a faithful dog, one of them will be his.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Entire Earth Soft As A Bed

Not entirely silent pain- but nothing very educated-  
I lay footloose down the runny easement, and by  
Alligators am I congratulated:  
And barmaids go around twirling brindled in their bars,  
And sommeliers continue serving diamond dwarves  
In the vales of deep mountain gorges;  
What I am really doing is singing in the carport of the  
Newly sweetened ride; my body thumped around  
By the gosh-darnedest soul inside: a little child crooning  
Across the dashing terraplane,  
Zooming through the orchards, picking in his brain:  
And the waves curl like lashes, like saddled rides;  
And the forts of scrubbed coquina diademed by copper  
Canons with loafs of teaming tourism inside;  
And I have been to many fallen places, and I have fallen  
Of myself- I have lost a girl who loved me, and who I loved  
Myself- But the mysterious woods yet crenellate the horizon,  
And there are necessary footpaths to choose from that  
Lead every which way to the cemetery; but before all that  
Red hooded girls, like saccharine poison arising;  
And they will be needing guiding through the slender groves  
To pick those sweet blooms who sadly are always dying;  
But for awhile these fairy-tales are so finely boned as to be angels;  
They are almost flying, and if I can keep their fare weather nicely  
Planted overhead then I can grow restive and smile,  
The entire earth soft as a bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Entire Terrain Of This Earth

Somewhere here the pilgrims sleep:

They get boyfriends and rum, and you are already home,

Alma:

You have driven across the acclimated plains of West Palm Beach:

From Military to Okeechobee to Congress to

Cherry,

To Seminole and now you are home, and your mother has cooked

Carne and frijoles for you,

Because Mexico is the greatest of labyrinths, and you have all of

Her in your eyes,

Alma:

Your love is a fear for my soul, and it goes around my fort beating

Its dismissive drums,

Knowing that you have already had me: and I am defeated:

I am just a jewel in the throat of a dead crocodile who could never

Learn how to cry:

And I have been to college, and I am just this: Tomorrow my house

Is being treated for termites,

And I will work with you tomorrow under the pistils of absolute sunlight,

Because I did wrong and chose not to leave with my father:

What am I doing here, Alma, besides that I absolutely belong like

The insects to the undeniable perfumes of your brown flowers,

I have no choice but to concede:

And the trucks walk the street as the airplanes strut the sky,

Alma:

And I want to be with you when you become an abuela, Alma:

I want to experience you as new words come up from the depths and show

Their beauties to the egoistic surfaces, and make them weep

Until the entire terrain of this earth becomes the absolute sun shower.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Entire World

See your face, a new virgin seen in the snow fields,  
Nothing unhealthy- a religious hallucination like landmines  
And helicopters;  
And your father steps out of the dark waif:  
He steps out of the dark waif, and the mermaids of ash weep  
For him;  
Giant trailers pass like wind chimes- Even they are crying:  
Cats are falling from the sky,  
From your eyes,  
And the tourists are your sweet and innocent acolytes. Maybe they  
Put you on the news, but there is now no reason for news:  
There can be no speculation, and your husband wakes up  
Singing every day, because  
Really doesn't he have a wonderful occupation?  
And you are stamped like a wine stain over your neighborhood of  
Pentecost:  
And conquistadors are driven to you. Gypsies set up shop  
And movie stars cut their wrists just to be remembered by you:  
The moon in its gibbous theatre is a lamp for you;  
And the sky above the mountains is the boudoir of your saint hood;  
Down the street little boys are playing pinball,  
And you never have to go to school again, but step out and listen  
As each snowflake is perfectly unique for you;  
And really in all the weather it is yet perfectly clear that the entire  
World has fallen for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Entire World Sleeps

Getting drunk,  
And I don't remember a lick of Latin:  
Just her face perfect across the way,  
Like a constant dream of a house I  
Have with her with ivory clasped  
On the red bricks,  
Up the hill from a quiet park,  
A guilty lake:  
I listen to flamenco, and try not to say  
Her name,  
And finish off the glass of cheap rum.  
Now that we have a new president,  
The liberals wet their panties,  
And say it will be Camelot,  
But Bukowski is still a scarred corpse  
Who is so sober its frightening:  
And she doesn't want me anymore,  
Not often,  
And my fingers are yet tap-dancing,  
Like water-spiders controlled by a storm cloud  
Who drinks its rum and contemplates  
Arousals: Sex? Not for a couple years,  
And yet she remains,  
Emblematic of the personifications of nature,  
A dryad I knew who loved her dogs,  
And forgot how to swim in the pools of her  
Mother, and her sororities:  
I give this to her, as I give all things,  
Until I have nothing left to present to her,  
What a scarred bouquet tossed  
Like a sad dream against her window as she  
Makes love to adolescent super-heroes:  
If she still reads these, then she knows I love her,  
But she is too insouciant to care:  
She takes her breakfast with maple syrup and  
Cigarettes, and it took me a couple readings  
To come up with cigarettes, and even now  
Better writers are making better sense in Maine,  
And my breath now smells like the privateers of

The 16th century, but I have two dogs who love  
Me, who will both be dead within fifteen years,  
And yet I will not forget them while  
I still have breath,  
And the extemporaneous desire to write you  
Poetry:  
Dear God, she is so far away, and she doesn't  
Care, but that is how it should be,  
And even now my great uncle seeds a crop of corn  
Which will be harvested next year in Michigan:  
He has never forgotten my birthday,  
And I love you, Erin,  
And that is all there is,  
And the moon is almost full, and I have a book  
Published, and nothing else to do, but to move against  
You in other dysfunctional ways of vagrancy:  
I may move to Saint Louis next year, and hold a note  
For the length of a degree, and you will never hear,  
But I would like to take you down into the bottom  
Redness of the Grand Canyon and peruse your neck  
With the folklore of extinct Indians  
Who scavenged naked and ate the plums off of  
Cactuses along the trails they made,  
Before my desire for your gold made them extinct:  
And can't you see how beautiful it is,  
Even in your little city, how I have carved your name in  
Uncertain stone, and given my name rightly, I  
Am a conquistador, and your lips such a blessing,  
You would never know,  
And so I honor you quietly in the diminutive ways I know  
From this un translated basement,  
While my dogs sleep, or for what it matters,  
The entire world sleeps.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Entirety Of Her World

Powers fill my gold toys, simulacrum that they have  
Chosen to hide in the keystones of mountains:  
Breath in my lungs as I remove her to the bedroom, into all  
Of the warm loneliness the experts were sure would  
Remain forbidden-  
Getting nearer to her, even as we crawl away into the viaducts  
Poured into the mouth of a parking lot goddess-  
Where the tiniest of ants begin hyperventilating, where her  
Breasts become the meat for unapologetic sparrows:  
And kidnappers get too lazy and go back down- like kids  
Who still wet the bed scrambling higher to light the  
Gas lamb of some stony lion of weathered pugilist:  
Just because this is where she happens to be tossed, stolen  
By the gods who have long since eaten themselves,  
Made to weather the cryptic nourishments down through  
The lavender abutments until it is all just some words she has found,  
Crying to her like her daughter at her tit, and she must decide  
Whether to lift her blouse and let the latchkey in, or  
Step away further into the million fired night- to kiss new  
Gods in the airy grapevines of their perforated apertures-  
To put an end to my fears, as she looks down, her nose bleeding,  
The entirety of her world left behind and driving away from her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Equality Of Nature's Opposition

Doves as innocent symbols:  
You wear them as tattoos,  
Services whose job differentiate  
The bodies of souls,  
The kidnapped children which  
Speckle the stream like flakes of mica  
On your lower back,  
The arch at play,  
In the hot box of the sweaty glove:  
Your eyes linger like divine hooks  
Of fishing poles:  
What will they say?  
What will they say and answer,  
When laid down?  
The learned scratches on backdoors,  
The canine faithfulness of tongues,  
The routes you take in and out,  
Moan filled colors  
Inebriated and hosts to the cockleburs,  
The weeds that grow as fast as children,  
When the blackness of your eyes  
Shrink of recognition of want,  
The playground of the upper thigh,  
And the fingers instruments  
Which start the business  
The cotton-gins and assembly lines  
Pressing together youthful abdomens  
Meant for coming together  
The equality of nature's opposition.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Estuaries Of Common Happenstance

Golden yards fawning in  
Afternoons glittering in the filigree of daydreams,  
And housewives finally swimming  
Their,  
Their toenails painted by the patina of the  
Canals-  
Oh, what a beautiful, suburban world- filled with  
The truancies of little boys:  
Their hearts leaping like goldfish coming to  
The midways of the housewives  
In their slumber less afternoons:  
Can't you see they are up  
To no good:  
They are parking cars outside of doctors  
Offices,  
And spending most of their time with themselves,  
But it is a beautiful avoidance  
In the estuaries of common happenstance  
Where most of us are said to live.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Eternal Flame Of My Very Soul

When the bodies lay low,  
They become the breath of whispers in side the shells  
Of vanished homes,  
While the Cadillac's hustle and otherwise words make names  
For themselves,  
While the graveyards are peacefully gossiping now  
That the young boys have come home,  
And I have seen Alma's eyes in my own house,  
And I have pressed her flesh to bone,  
Like dampened butterflies on wet flowers, like traffic sloshing  
To return to a warm dinner:  
I have felt Alma's tongue pressed there too:  
And her body that whispers and floats like a wave of paper over  
My body:  
Whose stamp is there, as if sealed by a queen: because Alma is  
My reyna,  
And these are letters to her in the high school of her own Hollywood;  
Or these are just the fruitions along the sidewalk basking underneath  
The desk of her tawny legs,  
And her very being is a water fountain of an unobtainable spirit  
I would aphoristically all to gladly die for to obtain,  
Thus quenching the eternal flame of my very soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Eternal Negative Of The Most Beautiful Mountains

For an hour,  
In love with the subtle rain- and then a prognosis:  
There is a rose clinging to the  
Gentle face of the gingerbread house:  
It doesn't move,  
Butterflies come and make love:  
This is the only place that the humans and insects  
Will ever know-

The officials hurry by and arrest the delinquents:  
They were kicking out all of the lights of the beautiful neighborhoods,  
And now my sister has progressed:

She is make more money than I ever will,  
Or, at least she thinks she does:

After the storm,  
My wife takes the children outside:  
It is late into the afternoon- I am tired from looking at emptied  
Baseball diamonds posted by boys who will  
Always be better looking than me:

I take a picture of myself and the Grand Canyon:  
The eternal negative of the most beautiful mountain,  
And then we go to sleep thinking of trolls:

Above our beds, the face of the heavens storms-  
And lucky boys get rich before they fade away:  
They die;  
After riding all of the roller coasters of their graduations,  
And after making love to all of the multitudes of girls:

They settle down towards the séances of their graves-  
And in their cemeteries of splendor they are able to sell for awhile,  
Still composing after the multitudes of their deaths-

And I am fortunate enough to remember these things about them,  
Because, angrily, my wife has taken the children outside for a walk,  
Besides the busied cars and beneath of the hurried airplanes,

She has gone off for awhile to breathe-

And the beautiful boys curled up into the rucksacks of the cul-de-sacs  
Of their neighborhoods, and, having closed their eyes,  
Can remember the Barbie dolls of their earliest, nascent neighborhoods:

And the beautiful teachers that each of us once knew have curled up  
Underneath the bridges, their toes being eaten by the most innocent of minnows,

Having been eagerly defeated by the trolls hotly stemmed from the control  
Groups of their cannibalistic societies:

It is over for them and so they slumber, troubledly:  
But you seem to yet hold over: an imperfect vision, such as if blurs of stained  
Glass:

For a moment, passingly beautiful: a drunken pilot may have noticed you,  
Before you matriculate to the stately agricultures  
Which hemmed you in and made you what you are:

But now the finer features of your skeleton are vacated to the glaucomas  
Of the night- petrifying birds all of nocturnal features that are blooding their  
beaks upon  
Your glass,  
Trying to invade your bedroom:

There you are, a slumbering doll, tossed  
About into your upstairs somnambulations: I remember when you told  
Me that my poems could have been beautiful,

But now the tears of the rainstorms are wrecking your bedrooms,  
Holding over the green stems,  
Pretending to break their necks-  
And I am waiting for my wife and children to return home,  
So that I might remember how to turn myself in,  
To crawl into a bed of my own  
And turn off all the lights.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ethereal Fables

Yellow ribbons around your favorite ponies-  
As your little sister swells in the meadow  
Underneath the mountains I climbed a decade ago:  
She remains so sweetly even  
After the trout fall, blossoming, dreaming of  
Tattoos and piercing,  
As her older sister gets up in the morning to  
Gallop to Ocala:  
My muse, where are you now, across so many  
Railroad tracks, passing around  
The strange estuaries where you swore  
And spit and gave her cadaverous sacrifices  
Of your love,  
And the pine trees waited along the spines of  
The mountain that fires kindled  
Until her birthday was over, and around midnight  
The bears carried torches approaching her,  
Cognoscente of their ancient memory and  
The ethereal fables in which they abounded.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ethereal Rises

If that garden is here, it is no longer beautiful,  
Trained as it is to look up at the sky  
And to wait for rain:  
The mountains around her are beautiful, though  
Scarred by the fire  
And the uncountable fireworksâ€the things men  
Have sworn and sold into her:  
She is the garden's brighter sister,  
And she rings around her,  
Protective'as the sun leaps over them,  
A headless animal'  
He too is in a rush to find the things that he can  
Resell, as she waits in her captured world beneath him,  
Her sister a bride to the ethereal rises in those mountains.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ethereal Turnstiles

Resins over the four corners of the earth, and  
Mexican hands picking watermelons- supposing this was  
Always where they were meant to show up:  
Busses leaving high schools and disappearing down familiar  
Roads-  
Running through the smoke of chalk and seashells, trying  
To raise up some god just to pass the time until they can get  
Home to the trailer park of their  
Television:  
With the sky as rich as a snow pea: as slender and fragile,  
With the airplanes smoking through  
The ethereal turnstiles.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Etiquette Of Your Parents' Bedroom

Adjacent to any animals of any kind - as long  
As they can talk, gossiping beside the canal as  
We did the water fountain;  
Your spirit flies away over the sugar canes: back  
To Mexico, regressing like a poisonous  
Butterfly- going over the volcanic fields  
Where the rattlesnakes wallow, and the trucks  
Lay forever. The pigeons sleep inside  
Skulls without any milk,  
As you come to your forest and bloom for him  
Your brownness like a diurnal architecture:  
You flow back and forth, mystified in the  
Etiquette of your parent's bedroom,  
Metamorphosing back and forth for the man you  
Love,  
As your unfaithfulness dies across the rivers  
That are never named.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Evaporating Sea

Another day finding out the tricks of angels:  
My muse's daughter is almost three:  
Maybe she is almost my daughter too- as the trucks  
Are loaded and loaded underneath the  
Parapets of angels,  
And the sacks of heavenly apples are loaded upon  
The backs of stalwart ponies to be  
Taken to other kingdoms across the blue and  
Yellow mountains-  
Along their way, the grizzly bears will pet them,  
And the golden monkeys will pull on their  
Reigns:  
And when she gets up tomorrow, my muse will  
See all of the bottles I have emptied to carry these  
Messages to her  
To be thrown in the evaporating sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Evaporations Of The Gardens Of Her Shadows

Pulling in the vision of  
Another dousing crepuscule—  
The crickets sound against the foothills of  
The mailboxes  
As my son coos in the next bedroom—  
Life in its effervescing metamorphosis,  
Through loves and deaths—  
Kittens mewling up against the lips of  
Rattlesnakes—  
My shadow going down to chase the carcasses  
Of bottle rockets—  
Making the song that no one hears  
A dozen times or more—  
A housewife at the door of earth,  
Living in cliff dwellings:  
When she sweeps out her door,  
Stumbles over the moon,  
Trips over the blue cat who is also infatuated  
With the evaporations of the gardens of her shadows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Evening Missive

Quartz sloops sail the depressive mountain,  
Brushing the coned lips of steaming pines,  
Where the slumbering half-light tips towards  
The forgetful holidays, where the mulberries  
Grow entwined with the recitations of failed criminals-  
Black men stripped in blue denim nod with the elements;  
Grouse pull teeth like camouflaging dentists,  
Beneath the cicadas removing the flack, yesterday's practitioners,  
So that their legs can fiddle, which always brings evening;  
Sad in a long black veil of weeping distances,  
The nibble flood of the sinking grief colonnaded by shadow;  
On the expressionless pine needles, she kneels wishing to hear  
The sea, though the whispering hills of unconfirmed forests,  
The pews of mineral, and clefts of burgundy insects;  
This certain answer greets her prayers, as the wind  
Winnows the clouds a piece, and the prince of rattlesnakes  
Approaching slithers, opening the venomous jaw, offers  
A kiss to the sensitive joints of the hand's missive wrist.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ever Setting Sun

They dont keep their kilns anymore I still write poetry,  
And those who blow glass are imperfect,  
As the day fails into night over the golf courses and beautified  
Apartments of America or Disney World  
And when the heart strings get into the gut of her,  
She can rise up and sing to the dolphins she will  
Never see except for on the television  
And then she will go down again-again, letting her first born  
Suckle upon her breast  
She will never know what it means to celebrate Christmas:  
Christmas, as my first wife will never know  
She will rise up in another world, from a bed made of  
Dinosaurs and vampires yawning: she has never seen or  
Even heard of the woods but for now she is my muse,  
And her arms stretch in yellow branches  
Never knowing what she does to me as I think of the  
Children we will make to become  
Underneath the overpasses of the ever setting sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Eves Of The Weary House

Coming down from your tree,  
Your teeth clenching fruit, I can see who you are  
As your ankles nimbly go,  
But when asked if you were one of the survivors,  
You said no, then bit your nails as the clouds hurried  
In like young professors into class, spilling insouciant  
Books, casting shade-  
There was only a little blood until perplexed,  
Your eyes fawned on fields further away,  
And so you fell, but its wasn't too far....  
Like origami caught in the hands of the wind  
You took your bow so your jeans were painted green:  
I tried to read you, or so I've said  
Until the sunset and the clouds repeated themselves,  
And there was no more light to follow your beauty by,  
And your daughter ran away so I could never see her face,  
Though still you remained there underneath her bows,  
Your hair curling down in little temptations of undying cells,  
Your lips matriculated a little ways from themselves,  
But you did not cry;  
For all I know, you remain there still just a little ways down,  
And the dirt road to you is lined with shells, and immaculate  
Fossils, the creations of your ancestors,  
Pressed into your palm with scrapes and blood, and the waves  
Hurry in to see you, bringing in the flood where blossoms swirl  
Like pirouettes of little girls, though still you remain so calm;  
All the way up to your neck, the water kissing bows,  
And still your remain like an opal statuette with eyes  
Of teary salt, as your mother calls and calls,  
And the sun finally sets across the eves of the weary house.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Evolving Overpass

Now I am going through the pages  
As I am still standing here—  
In my little house at the end of the woebegone  
Street—having touched my lips to  
The crumpled list of muses—trying to remember  
To do some good for her:  
To go out on my bicycle on holidays, to buy  
Turkey or ham—to get as far as the intercostal,  
Where the waves become as tamed as polished  
Jewels,  
As my homes settle down around the vanishing  
Animals, the tree frogs and the vipers  
Who are not here anymore—maybe they were  
Never here much, anyways—  
Maybe they were never meant to last—like a  
Franchise on its last leg,  
Limping for a way home beneath the apathetic  
Penumbbras of the evolving overpass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Exact Definition

Our time was held up as you were looking  
Beautiful  
And I was drinking rum:  
I saw you for but a moment today, Alma-  
I gave you fireworks on the run:  
And you said that you no longer had a car because  
Of me,  
But I told you I would buy you a car,  
And now that I am sedentary again- Soon I will  
Be sleeping like a Mexican,  
In my house that I have made for you:  
So come to me because I have nothing I wish to take  
From you;  
I only hope to fill our house with flowers and  
Children and when January comes again,  
I want to hold hands with you in the Midway of the State  
Fair,  
And take you around the jubilation of cantankerous  
Motions,  
The happenstances of joy, the flips of drunken song birds,  
For in the middle of there happens to lie the exact  
Definition of how I feel for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Exasperations Of A Ferris Wheel

Into those actions dancing—youthfulness—  
Full bodied—torso of still yawning grass  
Spindles around the exasperations of a Ferris  
Wheel,  
Needing your art down a highway  
Going up to Saint Augustine:  
My hand in my own yard, and what lies beneath her:  
Sea shells bivouacked in the road:  
It all seems to be a dream—after my sisters have  
Grown up,  
And my muse is married—carried away by  
Predators:  
She lives across the way, and the moon covers  
Her, stealing the light that pretends to be hers.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Exegesis Of A Fairytale

In the night tending home-  
After baseball- when blue lips smile  
And wrists grow  
Scars underneath the illuminations of swing sets-  
And snails stretch out and proceed  
Uphill and into a graveyard where  
Grandmothers sleep perpetually who were  
Once daughters and then sisters and  
Then aunts or mothers-  
But eventually all grandmothers underneath airplanes  
And smoke signals:  
Resting beside their own daughters and across  
The street from the Virgin of Guadalupe-  
Perpetually waiting for their husband,  
As the horses eat the grass beneath them,  
And the Indians echo in the foothills of sundials,  
And their grandchildren continue on, laughing,  
Skipping,  
And going to see movies in a town an hour away:  
Through the evergreens and the aspen,  
Past the drunken Indian towns and flea bitten  
Dogs and book stores:  
Thinking about making love- of metamorphosis  
Just like butterflies, to eventually travel through so many  
Rainstorms, to return to the exegesis of a fairytale  
And end up beside their mothers who keep  
Them weeping in their arms.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Exhaustions Of Far Flung Mornings

Managing another birdbath into its grottos,  
Until the infant sunlight sings up on the cut glass of  
Mountains,  
And the zephyrs turn around in the zoetrope of missing or  
Abandoned airplanes;  
But the planes are as of yet vermilion and good for  
Growing and sustaining, and even yet out of doors,  
The cowboys will eventually come in  
Leaving their horned children to the moonlight and  
Rainstorms;  
And then they can have all they want of candlelight,  
Gossiping to the hearths of their romances  
While the Indians dawn blue paint and headdresses,  
And speak intelligibly of another world which they will surely  
End up in once they disappear;  
Even while their enemies awaken perpetually in the exhaustions  
Of far flung mornings that should not prove to be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Exhibit Of Your Thoughtless Well Of Souls

These words die like lucky rabbits in rock gardens:  
And you've been speaking so long with your  
Blue eyes,  
Getting hitched up on buses and making it all the way  
To the Rocky Mountains,  
That I just want to self-publish you:  
And it is just like a dream, you and your sweeter, older  
Sister walking out amidst the saw grasses in  
Saint Augustine  
Where the conquistadors didn't have to survive,  
Where I have tasted the sulfuric tourisms of the fountain  
Of youth after midnight;  
Erin, while you slept with you guitar bearing boyfriend,  
And I looked up the skirt of a day glowing lesbian  
Who is now in San Francisco while you  
Are still in Gainesville, but not Georgia; and this is the way  
The white buds weep before they metamorphosis:  
It is strange, don't you think the way they turn into orange:  
The chrysalis, the day gone metamorphosis:  
The pungent aromas of popular kids,  
The tadpoles into hapless princess, like monkeys and goldfish  
Into mermaids;  
Erin, I still wonder what happened to you; and more so why  
Do I keep having to do this; and who do you love,  
Or follow into the rainbows of unabashed Eucharist,  
Like the leonine salts that baptized the side of Christ after he came  
Down in the crepuscule of this latest Christmas:  
This pain I feel is like tadpoles in the shallow basements of a  
Canal,  
My mother out walking her eventful streets full of fits and  
Criminals, and what's more I have been kidnapped forever into  
The exhibit of your thoughtless well of souls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Expressions Of His Face

Women are easily fooled  
By the expressions of his face.

After 4 months I shave,  
And even my own mother calls  
Me a prince and begins snapping  
Photographs to hang next to  
Her favorite smiles and teeth.

4 years ago my girlfriend left me  
After I came back from Colorado, bearish,  
She cried how dare I show up at her house  
Looking like that before her parents,  
How dare I?

And she went to walk alongside a freshman,  
Who still didn't need to shave. Will he kowtow  
To her flimsy ways, the recessive nature of  
Her color blind eyes, when it comes time for  
Him to become a man and grow a beard?

Or will she cycle down through younger men,  
Until she is old, withered and alone? A spinster, eyesight  
Still poor, Herself beginning to  
Beard, I will think of her fondly and call her grey whiskers,  
And drink alone to that.

For how can a man in good conscious bend  
To such a fickle wind? How can a man with something  
Raging in his head, be reduced to the insubstantial whim  
Of the very thing built to be receptive to him?

Jesus died the lonely bachelor, preferring the long  
Spear in his side, to the naggings of his mother and Mary  
Magdalene. He grew his beard long and dark, rooted there,  
As he to his faith, he would not take up the Roman traditions,  
Clean-shaven homosexual wisps that delight in the surfaces  
Of flesh.

Nor will I when what I have inside me is the wild, needing  
Thing, I want to keep diving deeper into that chaotic abyss,  
Into the monsters who always prevail at the end  
Which know me and make love to me when the very last of  
Women look away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Extinct Paths Of Conquistadors

The sun gets so yellow it gets nose  
Bleeds 'fumbling for oxygen as the little  
Children lead one another away  
From school:  
They are climbing up the orchard,  
They are pushing up the swings'  
They are acrobats in charge of their own  
Holiday 'singing to no one as they please'  
Pretending to map the extinct paths of  
Conquistadors 'settling down to eat  
Something sweet they have stolen,  
And then getting up again  
To steal into a Catholic church in the middle  
Of the afternoon'  
To fall around dizzily beneath the rafters in  
Their headlong canopy,  
Or to collapse next to the water fountain  
And oleanders out of doors,  
To become mottled as the sun freckles her  
Branches 'to languish there,  
Lungs falling and rising again like membranous  
Wings without any reason at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Eyes Of Dr Tj Eckleburg

Here in the cuneiform of light,  
A privilege of the drunken window  
I recline beneath on a Monday's afternoon-

I am in a pilgrim's crèche in the green arms of  
A mother they have planted to beautify the growing highways  
That bring so many things back and forth

So that we can survive according to a social hierarchy  
Deemed worthy by god,  
But which Satan cannot identify:

Watched over by  
The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburge  
I think of a woman who is not my wife,  
Whose soul is lost in the mountains of Guerrero  
With the fading carcasses of the butterflies,  
The detritus of the carnivals

Vomit of the waves,  
Ejaculate of the centaurs and the mermaids-

The pretty favors of the things we over spend on holidays-  
Underneath the tents in between the runnels of Miami-  
The airplanes go leaping, long and forked-tongued over this-  
Our pornography,

Forgotten as the cicada sheds its skin upon the bark  
Of the pine,  
As the knight leaves his carcass to this dragon,  
As the mother leaves her car for the supermarket:

Her children have made a merry-go-round of a tree  
Dangerously deep in the woods,

As the pretty favors lead us around all day.  
The night rejoins us with the shadows. The airplanes  
Touching down, cool their wings upon the earth-  
The lovers pick up stars in baskets, their unabashed nudity

## Approaching the horizon

Where her unanswered favors try to remake themselves,  
Such impotent protestations keep them separated from  
The out of door heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Eyes To Find All Of The Hidden Birthday Presents

Another place in the meadow  
Tumbled down from the side of a forgotten king—  
I suppose we can stay here awhile at least until  
The sunlight is replaced by lightning,  
And the tourists who once stepped here in their abeyance  
Came down to kiss the minnows in valleys,  
Realizing that they were the charlatans,  
The divine pawns bedecked in their finest mental absence—  
Like school teachers and drill sergeants,  
And I can pretend to find you right here,  
In a library, in a cornucopia of misspelled supermarkets  
Spilled out of the heaven's baskets,  
And the bosoms of the mountains—five year olds' fingers  
Fondling the grapes and the paper backs—  
And languish and contrive, pretending to have the strength  
To pull elk antlers from the darkened forest—  
Pretending to have the eyes to find all of the hidden  
Birthday presents—  
And laconic joys that happen as the waves practice their  
Abeyance at the feet of the stone crossed cenotaphs.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Fables By Which She Fans Her Children

How an infant forms words, I imagine,  
Like eating its first snowflake abandoned in the  
Empty yard,  
Seeing only red and white where the cars are sleeping,  
Remembering how its mother breastfed her  
Every which way from Sunday,  
And then picking the syllables out of the alabaster sky  
Where the airplanes are loopy,  
With eyes on their wings as they are beginning to  
Touch down- Stewardesses giving valiant instructions  
First to quarterbacks and thus to everyone else-  
Yes, it's the same way she will pick out furniture to  
Surround her husband, cannibalized syllables which  
At first taste very good to the just learning virgin;  
At first unique, godly and feral, soon passed around and  
Socialized, and sterile: She doesn't think to imagine the  
Finger prints on her sofa,  
The stains on the bed secreted by the nocturnal bullhorns  
Of overworked organs-  
She comes down to the basement in straight lines,  
And still I turn head over heels for her, poking my head through  
The old fence in the backfield, looking in since I've been  
Stealing cars  
When she thought I was playing baseball:  
the fables by which she fans her children:  
Yes, everything good is beautiful,  
And her lips walk the elliptical yards of their velveteen ears,  
Teaching them how to melt the taste of snow, whispering  
As she cleans the rooms,  
What they already expected they would hear.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fabulous Water Fountains

I've bicycled for an hour through  
Palm Beach to the high swings in the svelte park  
Across the dunes and the fiberglass beach:  
And I've thought of Alma and touching her brown skin,  
Like the lingerie of a feral mermaid who  
Kisses you once never to come again:  
And now all the world has become dark, and all of the mailboxes  
Have closed their lips,  
And there are no more Ferris Wheels even though I know that  
It is even better like this:  
That I can only sleep with her on Tuesdays, even though  
She gets to open up all of her presents,  
And even though I cannot teach, I am lucky to be working in the  
Fruiteria next to her brown skin,  
Even if she doesn't know that she fully loves me,  
And I turn her about and make images like a high spirited  
Storm front in my frontal lobes,  
And maybe now she coos to her daughter, and maybe she longs  
To look into her mother Rosa's eyes:  
And when I look at her from a distance, she almost  
Looks like my mother: and that is why I long for her, as the manless  
Ships sail the invaluable seas,  
While the starving pornographies await their newsletters,  
As my many fingers tremble like whelps for the fabulous water fountains  
Of her shaven legs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fabulous Water Fountains'

I've bicycled for an hour through  
Palm Beach to the high swings in the svelte park  
Across the dunes and the fiberglass beach:  
And I've thought of Alma and touching her brown skin,  
Like the lingerie of a feral mermaid who  
Kisses you once never to come again:  
And now all the world has become dark, and all of the mailboxes  
Have closed their lips,  
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Even if she doesn't know that she fully loves me,  
And I turn her about and make images like a high spirited  
Storm front in my frontal lobes,  
And maybe now she coos to her daughter, and maybe she longs  
To look into her mother Rosa's eyes:  
And when I look at her from a distance, she almost  
Looks like my mother: and that is why I long for her, as the manless  
Ships sail the invaluable seas,  
While the starving pornographies await their newsletters,  
As my many fingers tremble like whelps for the fabulous water fountains  
Of her shaven legs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Face Of An Artist

I do not want to laugh where your green-eyes are  
Partners—  
In the subway where you stare at my father,  
And the abandoned notions of your cousins come in  
And come in—and come in:  
You are overcrowded and there is nothing left  
To be stolen—when I look at myself in the mirror  
I no longer think of you,  
But I do not look at myself for very long:  
Here is not the face of an artist—nor  
A teacher—already growing the shadows that  
Will come tomorrow, here is a man just trying to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Face Of An Artists

I do not want to laugh where your green-eyes are  
Partners—  
In the subway where you stare at my father,  
And the abandoned notions of your cousins come in  
And come in—and come in:  
You are overcrowded and there is nothing left  
To be stolen—when I look at myself in the mirror  
I no longer think of you,  
But I do not look at myself for very long:  
Here is not the face of an artist—nor  
A teacher—already growing the shadows that  
Will come tomorrow, here is a man just trying to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Face Of The Heavens

Experiment of my torches  
Held out into the night like bouquets  
Of volcanoes:  
Lighting for awhile in the primordial  
Half-light  
Tender bellies of just born airplanes,  
And the strange inhabitants of that jungle  
Where in the rivers are still  
Young-  
Just flowing from her tears, as she appears  
On the lips of the mountain:  
And looking down she cries-  
While blue rookeries crowd her eyes,  
And take nest in her sadness:  
Soon she will be flooding over the world-  
A biblical flood,  
And I will not know a single thing about  
It,  
As I lay in my playgrounds of corpulent  
Flowers beneath her,  
And her emotions make a flood plane of  
My world,  
But I will watch the flowers grow as  
Fat as trees-  
And I will climb up them in to that ether  
Or miasma,  
And watch her weeping down from  
The face of the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Face Of The Moon

We were entering the fall-guy's study and  
It was an interesting thing, becoming a part of the show  
(The sunlight fell upon us nice and slow)  
As I looked up into her eyes, green bivouacs—  
Dimpled shadows lingering in the carport besides  
The rebar coalescing with the art of dusk:  
Strange families who stop playing games—as it  
Rains remembering us—  
Illusions over her body like some ghost's hands—  
What will they say about her now that the  
Rattlesnakes are coiled in the yard—This place  
Is almost a trailer park—the things I remember  
But no longer have caught together in a net  
That also catches the face of the moon, the endless  
Traffic passing by unstopping.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Faces Of My Mortal Gods

The sound of running domesticated water  
Means my family isn't yet asleep;  
And I cant look at my face in peace behind the  
Yellow curtains;  
But that means that I shouldn't have to weep,  
And Diana is coming in the morning,  
With her sport cards of body and cold beer:  
And Diana is awakening into the world a new  
Virgin,  
And the airplanes are awakening down upon her  
And kissing her wrists as if courtiers;  
And all the countries are at peace, and I can't think  
Of any better words for which to use to describe them.  
Someone is still taking a shower in the heather,  
And my two muses are making love to better men  
Atop the better mountains; I can hear them from here:  
It sounds like they are starring in a wonderful musical,  
While I am just frantically trying to swim,  
Or to survive another night to keep the candles burning  
So that I might still see the faces of my mortal gods  
By them.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Facts Of The Others' Romances

Somnambulence of dreams, of desperados in the Sahara  
Mouthing off again,  
And riding busses that appear to be close, but who are miles  
And miles away;  
The littlest and most beautiful flowers bloom:  
Teak appears on the waves and then  
Disappears,  
Like children coming from between curtains and saying their  
Acts:  
And there are ships on the sea, like brides even though the sea  
Is wounded,  
And everything I've had to say has been imperfect,  
While the jungles breed with diamonds  
And new wives find jobs and lovers, while all of the time the  
Waves roll like the chaos of wheels,  
And the monsters win, but maybe we are all the monsters:  
And Sharon is real: And Alma is real;  
And I remember sleeping in the student parking lot instead  
Of attending classes,  
And I remember the emerald jubilee of the swings even while  
The teachers were saying stuff,  
And making believe with my peers the facts of the others' romances  
Which I could never bring myself to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Failing Lights Of Day

Insociantly, she broke up with me,  
And made love in her memory to him in a bedroom  
Just beneath the stars:  
I got drunk and tried to eat cue balls,  
Pissed in the mall's wishing well, or tried to down  
Several fifths of vodka the stewardess  
Used to lubricate on long flights: She moved on in her plastic  
Catholicism, in her alluring sways, pantiless  
In a plaid school girl uniform, a garter full of folded  
Dollar bills.  
Still drowning in the easiness of the dismissal,  
New scars grow like coattails on cheeks, not easily  
Dismissed. And well-developed housewives stare alongside  
My avenues not quite adequately equipped with the souls  
Which can meet my gaze; and it is funny to think upon  
The new séances which may be dancing down those  
Pubescent halls, the catcalls and the foreplays,  
And the new fairytales she'll use to play with me.  
She dresses down and drops into the sea, and lets her curves  
Combine with those of those coital waves, the caesuras  
Of navels and the rippling crests of areoled tits:  
Entirely naked, she swims like a full mirror beneath under  
That sun, entreating and daring me to enter her before the failing  
Lights of day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Failing Of The Lines Of A Dying Empire Of Spiders

Oh, it can come so far,  
Or it can come so slow- oh;  
It can be like the sea strained by the dying of  
The moon:  
Soft and mystical, but neither quite right  
For the general audience;  
And if you wait out long enough, you can see  
Her just as a vision riding away on  
Her bicycle: riding away-  
The direction she is always going:  
Because she is always hungry or lonely and  
Wants to be in love,  
But not with you: Listen to the way she is going,  
Christening people other than librarians with  
The liquor of her legs:  
She is going, she is going, like the sea.  
The mythology which unifies all the peoples of our  
Grand large-eyed countries;  
And I will give philanthropically to the dragon,  
My cups to her horde, the anemic anonymity of my  
Leisurely struggle:  
My greatest scar I got on July 4th more than two years  
Ago I got for her and liquor,  
And it is the greatest proof that she exists,  
And not yet like the extinct sun birds that with the frogs  
From the carport of electric cars,  
Not the like the failing of the lines of a dying empire of  
Spiders:  
Her name rings such mythology after midnight and if you  
Awake early enough you might see her riding away  
From the naked theatre outside your pool,  
And all those other specific euphemisms no one reads,  
Heading east to meet her lover  
Who will soon be holding court over the oldest town in all of  
America.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Faintest Idea

Rains have stopped for awhile their bemoaning,  
But I am so sick that I think I would like to die:  
I pee in a cup,  
I turn my head and cough and pretend playing doctor  
With myself:  
Outside, maybe the cats are streaking across the  
Palates, maybe they have invented a new color,  
Or something that can be described as real:  
Maybe she is flooding with tears and taking the greatest  
River down to a home  
Of darker slavery where yet the coolest lights of  
Amusement play:  
Maybe she is selling herself into another bedroom:  
Maybe she is becoming another woman for another man she  
Loves;  
And in the yard or the garden, over grown, there  
Is baseball and marble thugs and teacups talked over by  
Little girls who don't have the faintest idea where I belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fainting Of The Unfortunate Twins Of Marie Antoinette

We will all be socialists soon enough,  
but the dogs will continue debating through the night;  
The little thefts that much more unclear,  
Yet the poetry will flow like blood from  
The lips of the guillotines; her beauty will pay  
Us all the same, and she will love us in a smoky  
Union out the door of the chortling cabaret;  
Jubilees of leggy flirtations, our hands on her thigh  
And further up as runs the floorboards,  
As we move the trailers go thump and rattle,  
Shipping the produce over the cobbled stones  
Starting out in the earliest mornings, as the monochromatic  
Harbingers leap from the radio waves of wire-framed  
Towers, the way storks migrate around storms of  
Apoplectic pregnancy; and in the great dusty tears  
Of the global depression, we will gather to hear the  
Monikers of the men who hoard the wheat;  
We should spit and curse, and hold her red silk dress  
Up a little more, the same color as her consumptive  
Lipsticks;

I can't wait to fill my blue jeans up with her red fingers,  
And the faceless washers of our tomorrow's currency.  
And listen under the furtive corrugations to the loose-change  
Of the rainstorm,  
The infant's milkless gurglings,  
The empty trains' hustling, and the thudding bodies  
Shortened by just a head,  
Rolling into washing bins, like stricken doves,  
Or, taken all-together, the fainting of the unfortunate twins of  
Marie Antoinette.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairground's Verdant Yards

Space-shuttle looking nice in its place above the trees  
And palaces  
And movie theatres—  
Over all of the forgotten parts of the world—maybe you  
Haven't even completed your mission,  
But she is here:  
Floating over the forests—  
Over the mountains that lose themselves and their  
Summits in the daylights—  
Even with the most gentle of slopes, the little children  
Become lost upon,  
Become foundlings of beavers and bears—  
And their fingers linger in the spotlights of the orchards,  
Hoping that the angels and the genies will place  
Whatever delightful jams upon their finger tips,  
So that they won't have to linger for much longer—  
And they can lose themselves in the daydreams or wherever it  
Is they can find for sure  
That the lighthouses and the windmills talk to them,  
Spinning in the sunbeams—and apexing in the buzzing apiary of  
Their fairground's verdant yards.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairy Tale Of A Glass Coffin

When my corneas dilate,  
The clouds grow-  
Her legs get fatter,  
The birds fly south;  
It snows-  
I indulge and read most of  
One of my novels;  
Its good, its d\*mned good,  
But she doesn't call,  
The forest is disinterested,  
And the professionals are too  
Scared.  
The menagerie has taken off  
And are busy selling their eccentricities,  
Performing in the clearing between  
The stripping aspen-  
Afterwards, its time for sleep in  
The fairytale of a glass coffin-  
My friends wander off with the crowd,  
The torches dim into kissing rooms;  
Daughters who have failed wear nothing-much red,  
While I continue to cry sacrificing  
The words they shall fail to hear,  
And the dwarfs in their mines continue  
Pickaxing for birthstones,  
The gifts we would all care to bathe her in  
If she were ever home,  
This milk-opal spume of the sinking bachelors  
Only desperate mothers love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairy-Tale Of A Mermaid's Kiss

The final common man crossed me with his sword,  
Said there will be a night beside the sea when the lord  
Will rise,  
Arms outstretching, a denouement epiphany,  
And there the tourists will graze like lawnmowers  
Morbidly obese, paying for the time, while the hookers jaywalk  
The street in migratory herds, following the cocaine  
And little children farting in their reddish shorts; the freedom  
Of the open hands sign-giggling swath the mausoleum,  
Butterflies injunction into the trees, the belly-dancers that  
Move in place, jiggle for the Japanese businessmen,  
Making time in a glass house served by topless stewardesses,  
While the clouds are mimes yet coming awake, misconceived,  
And the professors, they are nothing more than water  
Under the cleft of outer space, shelved in a bluer abyss,  
And untouchable by his cousins, loneliness a single ant  
Crawls across a body of incest, tangled in the sweaty sheets:  
A chorus of eunuchs honors the symbol of Christ,  
And a guillotine greedily eats the rich,  
But it is mostly beautiful when nothing moves, or if seeming  
So cannot be proven empirically, for this is only this,  
A rejection which did not consider the consequence, nor  
Was he the recipient of the prized kiss, but out on the yard  
The day must go, panting like a season, not a tortoise,  
And the waves are surely unclothed, a chorus line who have  
Long forgotten the fairy-tale of a mermaid's kiss.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Fairytale Summer

Sun bathes the unicorn  
And I write poems  
And drink rum:  
I write poems and  
Drink wine—when I want to  
Feel like a woman:  
When I want to feel like a man,  
I drink rum:  
I go to school to teach children—  
I go to the same school I graduated from—  
Parsimonious echoes—  
I don't know how you feel,  
Under the same banners—under  
The same flags—  
So far away from the fronteras of  
Arizona  
And New Mexico—  
Lighting the candle, the cat drags out  
The wick—  
Children sleep over, little brothers get sick:  
And Jack leaps over the whole goddamned  
Earth—  
And Jill tumbles to the well,  
Broken temples in the dirt—  
All around them the day is another day  
Older—and birthdays—muses evaporated  
And muses metamorphosed—  
Colleges like sand castles disappearing in  
The waves—  
Long poems, dreams that hibernating bears have—  
Parks in California—  
My wife in Shanghai, China—waiting for me  
With all the hope in her heart—  
Like a graveyard of beaten Ferris Wheels awaiting  
The fairytale summer of their resurrections.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairytales Of Airplanes

Right here in the uncut grass looking up  
At the fairytales of airplanes:  
Taking their time like languishing super heroes  
In love with the memories of the picture shows:  
Of the clouds,  
And the hills beneath them, purple and green  
Seaways without sea, urchins scattered with the  
Upkeep of stones along the railroad tresses  
Where all the girls I have loved have disappeared,  
After their nights out at wondering,  
Their dogs and unicorns still hungry: maybe they  
Went into the park to metamorphose, but when  
I check they still aren't there,  
While their mothers bend their yawning elbows in  
The kitchens, happy as if it was their birthdays,  
Never suspecting that it might have been that very  
Sun making their shoulder blades blonde which also  
Stole their daughters.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairytales Of An Ocean

Laughing, finding shelves of turtles  
Like hordes of  
Rhinoceroses and candied apples baking  
On the easements of the canal—  
Blue gills waking up early to  
Sing for the stork's breakfast—  
The homeless men fasting on beer  
And the clearest espionage they will ever see:  
Cops search for them,  
Forgetting to buy their housewives roses—  
The day turning into pigeons—  
Three pigs nearly homeless but happy—  
The cars in a round about way heading home  
To graveyards in the soft mists of  
Granite orchards  
Try hard to listen to the fairytales of an ocean  
Not far away from here.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairytales Of Our Yesterday

Finally you have come to me:  
A girl who appreciates my soul: who undresses and makes  
Love to me,  
Even if she still has two children, and the easier  
Ways to more comely bicycles;  
And even if still my night is all alone, underneath all of the  
Cathedrals of the bones of stars;  
I rightly muses of even more I could never say:  
There she is again basking in my auburn basements of my  
Bemused,  
While all of her eyes swim so infatuated with my comely  
Scars:  
She swears that I cannot have these things, and I drink liquor  
For her and enter into soliloquy;  
And it feels all right underneath the shores, even though  
This evening she has wrapped herself  
Back into her extended family who have left me naked  
And starving like a homeless wave;  
As even, in fact, she has cast all of her penumbra's amusements  
Away, and I am left like a zoetrope without it's shadows;  
And like a body without his grave,  
Even while her body did sing to me, and did become enlivened;  
And did swear to me to marry tomorrow;  
As tomorrows happen again and again like the promises of  
The fairytales of our yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairytales Of Stewardesses

Off on another shoulder, freckled and  
Upstairs,  
An angel wing in a bed- the sheets cerulean:  
Of course they are halfway covering your  
Mother who  
Lives there at night and makes love to your  
Father  
In a room like hands clasping the neck of your  
House back pressed against the woods;  
And all of it is empty:  
The alligators grinning full of blue gills and half  
Devoured pornographies-  
And your baseball players that you don't know  
Halfway up there and chewing in the half light:  
Fireworks pretending to be amused,  
And then you skip school and masturbate in the only  
Orange tree in your yard  
As it blossoms smelling like a math teacher's  
Substitute:  
And when you go down, you go inside and into  
The air conditioning, folding paper airplanes  
And filling them with  
The fairytales of stewardesses you swear one day  
Will be yours.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairytales Of Yards And Afternoon

This is how they remember themselves,  
Looking into the stores where they bought things—  
All of the heavy ornamentations hanging  
Around  
And around—like more words to be used—  
The same sunlight playing upon the yard of another day—  
Beautifying the memories  
Of when they used to laugh like wind chimes in the  
Classrooms of their  
Fairytales of yards and afternoons.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fairytales Of Yards And Afternoons

This is how they remember themselves,  
Looking into the stores where they bought things—  
All of the heavy ornamentations hanging  
Around  
And around—like more words to be used—  
The same sunlight playing upon the yard of another day—  
Beautifying the memories  
Of when they used to laugh like wind chimes in the  
Classrooms of their  
Fairytales of yards and afternoons.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fake Diamond Tabernacles Of Being Your Friend

I've been doing it so wrong, needing more  
Liquor to propagate my unwholesome song, going the  
Long ways around my lake, around the river,  
Feeding my liver to the fish and  
Garden snakes:  
Now this is a topiary of missing parts, the stones so  
Beautiful as to bring art running, but making as  
Little sense as another pagan revolution:  
And I've been crying out the names of the girls in the rain,  
Wanting to play in their baseball diamonds:  
Wanting it to transcend before school, before all of this  
Started out so it wouldn't have to end:  
And this is broken and weary: it doesn't even cost a dollar  
Either, to see how I will die.  
Maybe Erin thought of me today, while she felt his evil spears  
Up and down the world,  
What he'd been singing, lying in bed with his girlfriend  
Two stories above a pool of yellow lesbians;  
And now the cat doesn't even know that this is going to have to  
End:  
I want to love your senses clear: I want to do chores for you,  
Or have a truce and compromise- defeated, I could be mollified  
Into the fake diamond tabernacles of being your friend.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Falling Snow Which Matches My Own Memory

If read you hear the sirens,  
Though they should be turned off to mourn the  
Dead,  
Maybe I am holding hands with your grandmother  
In a game of possessive blue tag:  
This is the way we caracole you, summit you  
With prayer flags:  
And there are no two snow crystals which are perfect  
For each other,  
But it is enough to memorize the street names which  
Caracole you,  
To pray for lightning to strike him dead- to pray  
To sweet necrotic pervasion:  
Because there are shells and ancient coelacanth under  
Your vinaigrette stilettos, and this is the way you  
Must come whistling under Tesla's celibate inventions,  
Everything upon you medicinal,  
A sweet shop if full soiree, and I pray for you in China,  
And I dig holes through the sea  
Just to peek into your window and see you there,  
The falling snow which matches my own memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# The False Lights Done Burning

Speak plainly in the emptiness of  
A cathedral;  
It is beautiful singing where there are  
Rats, making scatter over the  
Broken murals  
Of a dilapidated religion; so many  
Unrequited failings,  
As there are burned rafters  
Where she once made love to her piano  
As if she was some woman coming directly  
From a French movie,  
Composing after paintings of my grandfather;  
Some woman, also, who fed her cannibalistic  
Brood up on the gurgling shoals of  
The venomous grotto, shedding oily scales,  
As I did tears;  
The kerosene lamp burning along with the  
Sulfurous fireworks;  
Pale against the rummy tattoos of her besmudged fathers.  
Founder of a school of thought where her  
Student, skeletons, laughed like mute jackals;  
Was she capable of loving, pantomiming with  
The shadows in the cave where they  
Butchered sharks;  
But she kept on coughing laughter with them,  
And it was the last darkness coming up over  
The sea she existed in,  
But by the time I interested her, the horrible music  
Was no polytonal desperation, but  
A gesture in a crowd of gestures misinterpreted  
With the rats.  
The sea felt sick from too much salty confection.  
The sky was butchered and she lay asleep, a  
Strumpet with her men, all of them in shadow against a wall  
Where the sharks hung the false lights done burning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The False Promises Of The Sky

Hey, they said you were my sister- another brown  
Or green sister,  
Lighting her candle on her epiphany of  
Farewell birthdays- underneath the baseball diamonds  
And into the skies of  
Another town- while you looked so beautiful if  
So far away,  
And I was trying to grow my fields of  
Burnished muscles-  
Like statuary along  
The avenues leading into Rome-  
To look up and see you beneath the revelries  
Of your tall and gaudy  
Summits,  
Dressing warm against the cold- until you come down  
To me, burning your tail between  
Your legs, until its luxurious price tags  
Were smoldering ashes  
In the fields that no longer exist, between the motel  
Rooms and the highways-  
As the airplanes took off forever, and you turned  
Away, swearing to never look into the false promises of  
The sky again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fantasies Of His Yesterdays

The conquistadors could never survive,  
Because we are all just men  
Making love to anonymous women,  
Selling Christmas trees;  
And I hoped to look into your eyes, but you  
Were with your better men,  
Or married with a hypnotic badge,  
Fully into exegesis and not in need of  
A stranger's bouquets,  
So I kept doing all that I could do,  
Getting drunk and masturbating like the sun  
With worse and worse eye sight  
Trying to leap lightly forward, but never  
Escaping the fantasies of his yesterdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Far Distant World

I want to be weeping right now: I want to  
Be right here,  
Staring down the road after all the comely young  
Runways are kidnapped,  
And the sea has been taken back by the moon,  
And the substitutes are suffering in the adulteries of  
Bad grammar,  
While under the heavens of the scars she left me,  
The oranges globe,  
And the busses sit and whisper with the phosphorescent  
Insects in the forests of their inner pornographies  
That this is just a passing game-  
A silent fever stopped like a cat at the edge of the canal,  
A housewife turned away, cursing the brilliant  
Promises of the far distant world  
That lies repeatedly just over her unchallenged shoulder.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fattened Truants Of Fine Throats

My father has a plan, or he is just waking up,  
And the Mexicans of Mexicans work for him: from Juan-e-Juato  
Or wherever I am misspelling,  
But otherwise it is beautiful: the things he has done and just has  
Unforgivable,  
As the dogs fornicating with their sisters,  
As the nights that are bounding and are never to wake up:  
While Alma sleeps in her strange room filled like smoke with the  
Strange dreams of lovers that will never come again,  
And My only wish is to become a better man for her avenues  
As the slip away in imperfect stone and stuttering maize;  
And all of it doesn't have to be real, the feels that are never emboldened:  
The whims that recluse in the shadows against the narrowest of  
Steps of the prom queen:  
This is just the aphorisms of the jest that we have had to for so  
Long to be doing:  
These are just the words that haven't yet had the opportunity to be  
Described against the unjailed opportunities of all of the  
Goldfish that were never waking up:  
These were just all of the entrepreneurs behind bars; and these were  
Just the feelings swimming around in my gut all too happy to have  
Never have been found out,  
Like adolescents swimming in the naked pools of their older sisters,  
The fattened truants of fine throats  
And lips and tongues.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fault Of Rattlesnakes

Baby swim up to the sun—in your sweet  
Boat:  
This is your bedroom, and you are dreaming on  
The other side of the world—  
I am still your husband, and come to the lips—  
They have vanished after two weeks:  
You work in a graveyard—who are you  
Singing your drinks too:  
I don't want you to be who I am—  
Like doorknobs cast as droplets to the stolen  
Bicycles—  
Beautiful, confusing through the shallows—  
And children who are always going to  
School have never been here:  
Her shoulders, spotlights through a forest  
And, yes—Runaways—Like silent deer:  
Droplets of blood on her cheeks  
Signifying the weekend—  
She doesn't have to show up—  
The airplanes come and then fly away again:  
They are wishes that can never have,  
Leaping over a garden that is at the fault of  
Rattlesnakes—  
Outside of our mother's house in a kind  
Of spell, which is where we live.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Favorite Colors

Marching on the proud disinheritance of time,  
My darling your lips are purple and full of dust, even though  
Your favorite color is green;  
And now you are so tired every time you come into the fruit  
Market, Alma;  
And I want to ask you how much you have been giving of yourself  
To the man who sleeps beside you,  
Whose initial you have tattooed on the web of your hand;  
And it is killing me, and giving me un pure art,  
Like a spider bite that is unclean but not fatal;  
And I haven't cut off my ear,  
But I find it so hard to orgasm; and the last time I was inside you,  
I had no flower to give you, and now you look away to the  
Bright spots in the clouds because that is where the constellations  
Are shining like your children through the day,  
And they seem to be coming closer, and taking the shapes of  
Things and creatures that you can understand:  
They seem to be telling you everything about your future,  
And all that you have ever wished for you and your two young  
And bright brown children,  
As they cast such wonderfully yellow but unfrightened penumbras  
Across the favorite colors over the yards of your land.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Favorite Colors You Avoid

You neither like cats or dogs:

As far as I know, you have no pets of any kind,  
Except for the rabbits who disappeared  
So conveniently after eating your mother Rosa's  
Mango tree:

I had rabbits who disappeared too, who my dog kissed  
Unto death in my mother's rock garden;

And you don't like the sunlight, but you like the gold  
That I can buy for you:

You can wear it in a band around your finger;

And you love your family most of all, while I hardly see mine,  
Though I have hiked with them once or twice down into

The middle of the grand canyon,

But not as many times as I have made love to you,

And you have become a tourism of my art, my flesh a feverish  
Banner meant to display itself,

And keep you comfortably in the esoteric limelight,

As I try to grow the world over in the favorite colors you avoid.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Feeling Of My Sound

You almost positively sleep in the carpools of our  
Cenotaphs:  
You waver over to me as if we'd both just dried off from  
The pool,  
And you put your mouth to my greasy fingers and I  
Feed you french-fries:  
Hot potatoes still steaming from their gunfights:  
And guns and model tanks and airplanes and the Hitler Youth:  
I want to take you in some abandoned avenue in  
Lake Worth where no one can promenade,  
Where the calico cats serenade, and you'd never thought to  
Think of me in the loci of rest and transitory amusements,  
Like funnel cakes at the fair,  
I'd pull your hair and make you pant while sliding to the side  
Your underwear;  
But for now the good boys love you and the bad,  
But I have to ask of your wonder, if you yet wonder if you've  
Yet to have the best you've ever had.  
And the city pouts because it has no fingers to find out  
The centers of pomegranates or geodes;  
The thick and middle pages of story books, the creamy center of  
Your soul which would make me fat and happy  
And peel out like pop rockets over the overgrown hibiscus of  
Indian burial grounds;  
And I'd make you pop and gun your body until your lips  
Moaned for the feeling of my sound.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Female Latchkeys

The deer make love to their roads in the  
Golden keys, while girls just as gold touch themselves  
To the waves  
In golden chains, swinging, saying spells to the moon:  
The lavender behind them of stolen cars  
Blooming in the night- the caravans of tourists snoring  
Like bears in their motor lodges propped up by  
The coral of unrequited loves- dreaming of the  
Pledge of allegiance, bare-naked as fruit on the vine-  
A coral snake in the box of air-conditioning,  
Licking her eggy young like princes soon to metamorphosis,  
As fountains touch the ankles of fairies underneath the  
Palmettos- tears and water sweating,  
Stewardesses evaporating along their various ways- and,  
Again the female latchkeys out in the surf,  
French-kissing waves and collecting battalions of seahorses  
In their runaway skirts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Feral Languages Of Her Upright Soul

I killed a praying mantis and lost  
My keys,  
So no one likes me now, but the sky  
Is so beautiful  
Resonating like a wine glass, saying her  
Name,  
And the airplanes are the little prizes  
Won or stolen from fairs,  
Breathing softly like cats or goldfish,  
Streaking the sky with the feral  
Languages of her upright soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Feral Mythology Of An Unfinished Highschool's Dream

Afternoons of burning up, of sorry reflection in the broken  
Promises of penultimate glass,  
Or whatever it is I have been up to, trying to summon you  
Up from your grotto,  
But today you showed me your belly: It birthed Michael,  
And it birthed Heidi,  
When you were coming to America by bus and I was in the  
Dark shadows of Tallahassee finishing my thesis:  
I would never have dreamed of you then, but I have nothing else  
To dream of now,  
But you in my little golden house streaking across the floorboards  
Your auburn soul:  
Alma, this is what I tell myself in the darkness while my belly  
Burns,  
And I will have to turn in soon after the glass, and the lights are  
Doused,  
Turn in and sleep now in a bed that smells of you,  
But that will be impossible: I will see you streaming up the bay windows,  
A fountain of butterflies,  
And anything else beautiful enough for you to turn into:  
How many times did I tell you today that I loved you, while I  
Took off your clothes and we pantomimed the sea,  
And how many times did I question that reality, swearing it was too  
Sweet to be anything but the feral mythology of an unfinished  
Highschool's dream.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ferris Wheels I Am Never Allowed To See

Stranded through the years of my drunken  
Hypoluxo,  
You still might think me a little boy playing in the  
Graveyards of my mothers  
Chest,  
Even after all of the caterpillars have gone to sleep and  
Awakened in the hyper-luxury,  
Flying away all dressed up as if for weddings of  
Who they really are;  
And all if this the failure of me not really being able to  
Speak to you,  
To whisper to the pillowy recesses of the opposite sex,  
That I know who you are,  
Even if you have children who think the sky is a  
Merry-go-round,  
Or that the best of who I was failed in the Catholic  
Universities of Saint Louis;  
But I bought a house in which I can freely drink liquor in  
Not to be persecuted over the thrown bones  
Of despotic Indians,  
While all of my love becomes a cannibal eating the heart  
Of me,  
While you look up your eyes devouring the Ferris Wheels  
That I am never allowed to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ferris Wheels Of Her Soul

Lost in a fairyland with scars above my eyes.  
All of the posters taken down from the walls of my  
Abandoned classroom,  
I drink liquor procured for free from  
The flea market where I now work-  
Everyone wants money or things for free;  
My wife's eyes are a colossus that I cannot spell.  
Eventually, every child is handed down  
From the merry-go-round if they cannot pay-  
And clouds build opulent if misbehaving  
Castles in the sky:  
Each word becomes a lost child in a game  
there is no room for.  
And I know you are thinking of her even now-  
There are ways to her in the darkened roads  
Glistening after the rains,  
But if you find her, what will you have to say to her?  
She doesn't even remember who you are,  
For nothing you ever bought for her was ever  
Sold to her, and the killers make their own  
Amusements out of the Ferris wheels of her soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ferris Wheels Of The Tallest Forest

They have maps and black skin  
They leave peeled on the hedgerows-  
As on their fences,  
And this is just another song, uncountable  
In their numbers,  
As they've been singing and crying again:  
Crying  
And masturbating and spending their  
Monies to the wolves,  
As the fires kick out all night-  
And the dogs dance like pedophiles,  
As I suppose I have no right to be here,  
Underneath the savage lights,  
Standing on my feet underneath the restaurants  
Where your mothers clean dishes-  
Transported all the way from Mexico,  
While the skeletons grin-  
And the spaceships faint beneath the heavens:  
And I've just been trying to give  
You this rose  
In between the commercials and through the  
Mirages of the desert: I've just been trying to sing  
You my old song,  
And escape again to kiss the lips of foxes  
Who sleep here underneath the Ferris wheels of  
The tallest forest, slumbering in the dreams of runaways  
Where I still hope we belong.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Ferris Wheels She Gave To Our Hearts

These are the things we have to deal with  
In our shells underneath the sun:  
Looking out our windows behind the healthy  
Ixora at beautiful girls who love  
Beautiful vehicles,  
Love the way they run:  
As all of our mothers have gone away to  
Worship at the Laundromats down the street:  
To talk and gossip,  
And cut their teeth on something sweet  
As the sun pretends to be a flowering rose  
Making a vacillating bouquet out of  
The sky—  
We take one innocent footstep out of doors,  
But we can already smell that the  
Perfumes of the Ferris wheels she gave  
To our hearts have already fled away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Festivals Of A Lighthouse At Christmas

Wounded as true as this- words filling up the empty  
Spaces that the cars punctuate rapidly-  
And the hollow eaves under overpasses that the flea markets  
Fill up on weekends-  
While off over to the east there are waves and waves,  
Gallantly dying for a woman who doesn't live in them  
Anymore,  
But whom they can still feel and remember, echoing:  
And they going habitually answering,  
Like bachelors in a ballroom of shadows in a forest where  
All the leaves have fallen  
And it aches to be a live, though it continues remembering  
The lights that once filled up their throats  
Like the festivals of a lighthouse at Christmas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fetishes In Her Name

Oh burning patina of her eyes is full of capitalism,  
Or full of the bull rushes her legs give to her  
Privateering husband in the trailer park of  
Their night:

How many times don't they strike out into one another  
Like dry wood falling into a massacre of sharp toothed  
Mica beside the fast running river

Where the sepia colored mountain lion is also praying;  
And I screamed like a cat robbing a train,  
Because I wanted her:

I tore off all my clothes underneath the mountain and ran  
Through the wildflowers just as sharp as a  
Kindergarten of switchblades until I grew faint and  
Gave into the occult knowledge in the  
Country of stones:

So when I finally awakened I began to trade objects of  
Sorcery underneath the overpasses in heavy weather,  
Knowing that she would come this way after her  
Shift was over:

And that she would have to get by me to return to the great  
Unmowed patriotism she was accustomed to;  
And I wept for her children while I waited for her  
Holding the fetishes in her name,  
And knowing that none of us really cared.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fetishistic Seas

She's moved on, and the trees are bigger.  
I live inside a shell at a restaurant where it always snows;  
I am afraid I am sounding cliché,  
But there is always a little grain of sand in her  
Birthstone: We used to run together,  
And she would push me along and blink her eyes  
Along with the sun through the boughs.  
Now, of course, the rivers flow south trying to keep up  
With the birds- I never leave my house.  
My muscles don't work. My twenty-seven year old mother  
Sleeps on the floor of my room;  
She feeds me my liquor after first tasting it with her lips,  
But of course we don't get along:  
I want to lead my armies in clothes too small,  
With peacock feather and my favorite bowling ball:  
And where she has gone to gossip, I can imagine the light.  
I've painted my room to mirror her eyes,  
How she used to see me and we'd disembark;  
She had the voice of Johnny Depp,  
And I floated along under her painted nails. In the parking  
Lots of shopping malls, we'd look for whales,  
But everything was illegal in that long ago kingdom of what  
Not- Now she is just someone who answered the seasonal  
Ululations of a crippled tree frog; instead of teasing me,  
She collected me with the fermented pornographies of a bright  
Haired labyrinth, and drizzled her honeys around my  
Expressive forehead in the hydrangeas sprouting over the easement,  
Until the postman came with different letters for boys  
Farthest off than me; she took those as her better duty,  
And skipped far across the fetishistic seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Few Things I Have Yet To Say

Stumbling through a drunken verdure, I am at it again,  
Scribbling up at death as he shows up with the dinner guests:  
These words like the pits of songs hoping to last for  
A little while long,  
Rejected letters sent by eyes that were first soft and then fell away,  
Made love to other men; nor did they mind the rain when the squires  
Canned the overabundance of things;  
And if you don't like it, there is only so much time before the friction  
Of two bodies finally lets off the business of love making,  
Of making children, and all that is left is the ever constant traffic which  
Still seems to echo, echo, while she beats at her forlorn  
Breast like a mannequin in a store bought window, emancipated,  
And entering the state of being in which she realizes that she can do  
The best for herself; and that she is the most beautiful of all these  
Simulacrum, even if it is only one or two things that she is capable of  
Doing:  
She does them until night goes away, and then she yawns and stretches  
Like a puppy dog sapling;  
Even she gets heady, already realizing in her makeup, the absolute beauty  
Of the few things I have yet to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fields That Are Burning Down

Unreal vision of a hard day's heart:  
Separated from my family, a rattle snake at birth—  
Greatest delusion with only so many words  
To settle the crepuscule over the mailboxes,  
To put the foxes and the playboys into their dens  
Until there is finally dusk  
And Sabbath—where the king cobra unflasks,  
And unjewels—and you lie in a bed with him  
Of brown stems your children bawling around you—  
When even in that coffee night,  
The flamingos send seashells into the air—  
And above the ocean floats the sounds of naked alleys  
And the wings hoping there the empty sounds  
Of footsteps that never touched the ground—  
As heaven floats above your bedroom,  
Never making a sound—the same way you make with  
Him—the fields that are burning down.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fieldtrip Of Your Opportunistic Flowers

As randy as a young bull in the spectral  
Ovoid of its first dance;  
This is how I met you, and I will never meet you  
Again,  
But for that one night underneath the commuting  
Airplanes  
I addressed you: I breathed atop you like a bee  
With ribs:  
I kissed you once and apologized;  
I made you sigh, or made you pretend to sigh:  
And the room was weird,  
But the room was ours,  
And I enjoyed all I could, dancing madly, crashing  
Into things just as happily to be getting nowhere  
Across the fieldtrip of your opportunistic flowers.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fieldtrips Of Stewardesses

As long as the stars and the moon don't care  
We can go out swimming in the sea. As long as nobody  
Can see us, we can continue swimming away—  
Our backs pressed like butterfly wings beneath the  
Zoetrope that is outer space—  
There, the wild animals go running in the mobiles of  
Gravity—and beauties linger with their bosoms  
Indentured to the hopeless smiles of foxes—  
Hewn into these aquatic estuaries, as if we were skipping school—  
We will remain floating in the sea's memories  
For a little while—evaporated busses will pass above us,  
Of course—filled with the fieldtrips of stewardesses of  
Long ago.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Fieldtrips Of Your Mouth

Going down into the crypt, shoeless, Singing  
The nursery rhymes that should exist:  
And now all of this stuff,  
Blown as if up from the consumptive lips of another  
Exhausted and overworked genie:  
And I really shouldn't have a home or a bicycle,  
But now you are almost home, Alma,  
Or you are making out with your man at the movies:  
All my thoughts are hung upon what it is that you are doing,  
And my father wants money,  
And he is counting his horses, while the moon riles over the  
Cotton fields of the defeated generals of his glorious world,  
And I don't care what presidents have been shot:  
It is all in the past, and  
Maybe it is that you will make love to Nelson again tonight:  
Maybe it is that he will be that man of your soul,  
Even though he doesn't deserve to be:  
This world isn't fair, and all of the pretty lions are in their cages  
When they should be out eating their men,  
And I wish it was that the pretty colors that I wore attracted you  
Unconditionally, but at least it is that I have tasted the  
Fieldtrips of your mouth,  
And shared a bed with you that never should have existed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fieldtrip's Playgrounds

And I'll look out with the sun going down—sinking into the crèche  
OF a hurricane that will happen to take away our future—  
And obscure it beneath the merry-go-rounds, and shopping malls,  
And the abandoned book stores—  
That your family will live in—having their dinners above the homeless  
Cats that skip like coins amidst the gravestones—  
And the dead will look up, captivated by their insouciant paths—  
Thinking this the birthstones of their heavens—  
So you will remain to me, a song without any joy—  
As the beautiful girls jog through the greenery upon the campus where  
Your eyes are always so drunk that they cannot see  
And the ocean swell over your shoulders: they are like young boys  
Reaching up and learning how to kiss and give bouquets  
To the stewardesses who are always leaving their fieldtrip's playgrounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fiery Absences

Going back to school, remembering the vagrant crushes  
That linger there through the warn out palmettos:  
Trying to get across the canals to the other neighborhoods,  
And lingering in the places that certainly do not  
Belong- Lingering there- thinking upon the pond  
Of bedfellows- of little girls whose bones are  
As hollow as bird bones:  
Returning to them in the after hours of their senses  
As they light above you shedding skins like  
Katydid, like jewels in their kimonos- soon they  
Will be turning out the lights and coming down  
To you- soon they will say all the pretty verbs that  
Create your world, and bring into it  
All of the fiery absences that exist without them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fiery Angels Of Your Best Friend's Older Sister

Low altitude rum puts still living escargot in  
My ears,  
Twirling, twirling, the beautiful little things  
With a few cells on the brink,  
The new eternity of little girls skipping chalk;  
And I can't believe I am doing it again,  
Usually with the same old conjunctions and semicolons  
In my swarthy hand,  
Tossing the grapes- When I want to be a better man  
With a fine young mustache,  
Want to spread her legs and plant her there  
Atop the faithful alligator, and gross the man-dug  
Rivers across the zoo to see the cages where they  
Keep the age-old vampire, my alcoholic uncle,  
And feed him peanuts, and show him slides of the elephant,  
His girlfriend,  
To live again in the 80s from a time warp discovered under  
The ice of New Swabia, ands the skating rink,  
And to make friends again with short haired and well-trimmed  
Blondes, to ask them unabashed how is their sex-life,  
To read fairy-tales to her four children, to get an erection  
Doing it- To feel good in the surf of her loins, all wet and  
Hungry, like being in fifth grade again, a patrol on his  
Way to Washington DC, believing in the altruisms of professional  
Wrestling, and that tomorrow I will be a sommelier and have  
Written something passionate in the ancient grottos of  
Colorado, while doing this, holding you in bed,  
Having faith in the resurrections and apocryphal worm holes,  
And going down smiling even as the sunsets on the last day  
Of high school knowing that I should never have a chance  
To believe in again the fiery angels of your best friend's  
Older sister laid out and barely altruistic beside the upper-  
Middle class pools.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fifth Extinction

Here I am, a balloon in ejaculations:  
Spuming confetti over the mountain:  
Here I am, believing that she is my mother,  
The sky is my blanket,  
And that the horizon shall go on forever:  
The stewardesses serving us peanuts and condiments  
As beneath us forever, the snow blankets the mountains,  
A mortuary at Christmas:

And in the opulent stadium lights, we display our best  
Pictures for the anesthetized audiences:  
They who go down beneath the clouds, in a rain forest  
Or a movie theatre-  
Enjoying their popcorn, their eyes as big as reindeer:

Beautiful dreams told to tom-boys who could not  
Understand how to take off their clothes and rearrange their  
Fiery dreams:  
The Seminoles are in the swamps.  
The steamboats are in their rivers-

And the greater parts of this peninsula have given up all of  
Their hopes:  
They have raised their hands and succeeded to the whitest of  
Gods who are becoming sterile as we speak:

There is but a moment for beauty,  
And for all that is dying but a week:

She works in the shopping malls-  
The bare stones break the skin of our feet:

I thought to whisper to you about whenever,  
The snowflakes are a knife's blade upon my cheek,  
And Satan is a stranger who has entered our small village forever.  
After he has won all of the gold from our workers; we will depart  
At the end of the week:  
He will evaporate right into the clouds forever,

And no one will speak his name. The cumulonimbus will  
Suffer across the high schools,  
As the amphibians will become the fairytales of our extinctions:  
The housewives will be baptized in the dying wishing wells  
Of our supermarkets until all of the lights turn off, suffering blindness  
On our trauancies of extinguishing Ferris wheels.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Final Rainbow's Chariot

I am now drinking wine and  
My nose feels red and cheery:  
I am no longer afraid that my house has termites:  
I have lit candles for the Virgin of Guadalupe:  
I have a two year older aunt named Mary with three children of  
Her own,  
And I am a sancho: Romero is my unlawful uncle,  
And now my lover, Alma, sleeps with her other man who bought  
Her nothing on her birthday while  
I struggled with Miguel to find a place in the open air market in which  
The tigers and aces of the wind wouldn't  
Blow out her wishes before she could get to them:  
I weigh twice as much as my darling Alma:  
I want to smell her tomorrow  
And make love to her again: I want to give her everything that I own:  
And I like watching her eat what I feed her,  
And when my time comes, I hope that my last breath rasps beneath her soft  
Tears,  
And she holds me in her gaze while stronger men carry me to a whicker  
Casket and then they all drink tequila or something  
Softer,  
While all the garden snakes still bask their soft bellies in the rains,  
Gossiping through the lariopi until the final rainbow's  
Chariot comes to carry  
Alma again to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Final Things Second Hand

Wounds don't becalm: if anything, they are growing like  
Calves:  
The sea is in infancy of green, and Alma is smiling and laughing  
In the exact middle of the fruiteria:  
It seems as if I have gone away on a quest and found her there,  
And made love to her repeatedly  
While buying her things, though I do not know if she is  
A glorious monster or the all-mother of my progeny:  
I know that she says that she is no good,  
While her eyes smoke golden brown over all of that skin diademed  
By all of that jewelry:  
All of the wishes that I have found or bought for her, and thus  
Made real,  
While all of the saints go marching over the sea; and I wonder if she  
Is even at home, or how many rings she will be wearing tomorrow:  
I wonder if she wonders how much her children really need her:  
Or if they need her as much as I need her,  
While the sea is changing its graces, and I have come by the final things  
Second hand,  
While all of the angels that I was fortunate enough to know are  
Too busy weeping or were so fragile that they have already passed away.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Finality Of Forlorn Migrations

We are here dancing and making love  
And it might not even be spring, but I have two  
Bicycles  
And letters that slip through my house like the finality of  
Forlorn migrations,  
And now I admit to myself that I love you, Alma,  
Even though that is what I told you all day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Finite World Of Its First Word

I started  
With the stars:  
The stars  
The stars  
So far outside  
The besieged  
City,  
How distant  
From society  
And  
Shopping malls,  
Feral like  
Wolves,  
They haven't  
Speech  
They do not make love;  
They are but  
Senseless wonder:  
The womb,  
The kiln,  
Unmolested by  
This art,  
They remain just  
As beautiful  
As the child  
Before it learns  
Its rules,  
And stands up  
To move into  
Mortal congratulations,  
Articulate though corrupted,  
The finite world of  
Its first word.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fire Rings Of Metamorphosis

Across from me—a great rooster  
Showing its comb to the alley cat:  
Like an apiary,  
A purser in the heat of an underworld goddess:  
And her dungeons this sky,  
A labyrinth of carports and washing machines—  
The ants fiddling over spilled marbles,  
And the arrowheads like claws  
Bitten into the blue dunes of the backyards:  
Just images,  
Now that the jasmines have shut up their bouquets:  
And the rainbows have slipped into the  
Wetted boudoirs across  
The canals  
Where the stewardesses leap, going through  
The fire rings of metamorphosis  
That all of the numbed passengers so  
Eagerly pay them for.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fire Which Has Drowned

You f-ed up big time  
On the other side of the yellowest  
Caution tape,  
And now I know I've seen  
The butterflies flying out of your eyes,  
Or your mouth anyways—  
Old muses such as you, such as milk weeds,  
Grow out from the yellowed  
Turnabouts of the bus loops—  
No, I am not jealous—it is just your habitual  
Habitation,  
Anyways—jaundice and in love  
With lemon grass—  
As old professors shoot themselves in the  
Ass—  
And the Catholic churches paint themselves underneath  
Of the moon—  
Soon, the memories which you cannot  
Have will be coming home underneath the  
Equinoxes of the mailboxes—  
And you will be just as brave as you can be,  
After the fire has drowned,  
Like fireworks for the fishes of the sea,  
And there is absolutely nothing else which can  
Be saved.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fires

Warmed in a killjoy of passersby underneath a fountain  
Lounging in the lowest clouds of the grass  
Trying to be descriptive for girls who have already  
Passed by  
And shoeless boys playing their guitars in the shallowest  
Of estuaries  
Listening to the hungriest roaring of the most  
Obnoxious of airplanes: Knowing this is their art  
While their souls leave them like spent gasoline  
While the coral snakes kiss them in the  
Certain perpetuities of the yard and the children who no  
Longer belong, grow up and set up across their  
Bridges, never mind the abuses of their heavens  
Because their parents still haven't returned home  
And the sky above their houses is filled with the paper  
Shapes that don't even know how to start the fires  
In which they burn

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fires Of Your Gaze

I hold your broken anklet in my arms,  
And I drink wine in the penumbra of my very own  
Lights,  
And I smell the gold that once wore against the flesh,  
The way a cicada eventually sheds its other caravans,  
And now it is late enough and you are  
Asleep with your man: while I am just your other man  
On the frontier where your mother once wept for  
A month,  
And it was amazing to be with you, like a terrapin waking up  
In the sands and weeping for its mother:  
I pray to your Lady of Guadalupe when I go to sleep and  
When I rise,  
Alma- you are an untouchable vision in the skies,  
That the airplanes break through to admire you at close range,  
And when I close my eyes I focus my soul to pinpoint  
The spotlight that razes the fires of your gaze.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fireworks In Her Yard

The fireworks in her yard drooled up to the gods:  
As she took off her clothes,  
And thought of the boys who could change into foxes-  
And even after the shows,  
Her yard was green- green, and the snowflakes and airplanes  
Were made of paper-  
And she at first made eyes, and then puckered her lips  
And kissed the serpent who didn't even know  
Her name,  
But came through her windows as if through an apple orchard,  
Being beckoned by her;  
And it told her that it had just been to Spain.  
Afterwards, it slept with her all night, and her parents never  
Came home at all- and in the morning and every morning  
After she never again had to go to school.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First And The Last Time

Going away anew into the shadows of  
Migratory amusement—Flipping the soft pages  
Of apathetic muses—of girls who hold  
Their lips over the water fountain in the resounding  
Basins of the pearl and gold mountains until  
They are finished—hummingbirds moving on from  
Flower to flower—  
At first their apartments glow and then dim—  
When they make love in the graveyard, it lights up  
For the night—the traffic sounds like trumpets—  
For the first and the last time.

Robert Rorabeck



# The First Car

Graveyards get tired and lay down:  
Mountain lions lay off their blue saddles too, and forest fires  
Finally nuzzle like birthday wishes amidst the  
Cinders waiting for a Hollywood forest of aspens to grow out of  
What they made surrender:  
For a second there is perfection, and a snail is the most guttural  
Thing, pearling like the open wrist of a bitten into apple  
Before that too browns- and the first car is made:  
And the conquistadors begin their biddings and shouting and  
Start forcing their love onto whoever they can;  
Just as I awaken to another chapter of lonely morning, and clean my  
Yellow house waiting for your perfectly brown soul to knock and enter.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First Fireworks

Birthered from the soul of some suicidal great  
Grandfather, whose own sire was shot in the mouth  
Over the civil war:  
So I do these things: teach in a diminutive room  
With now windows for six hundred dollars a  
Week—  
Thinking of a woman I can no longer have,  
Who I shouldn't have wanted in the first place—  
So long ago, since when the first fireworks  
Wanted for fire—  
And the first mermaids experienced metamorphosis  
Like tadpoles around the ankles of the briny  
Cenotaphs.  
Now we only have strip shows and dog tracks—  
No clear way out of here—  
Crepuscule descends over the parklands and  
Graveyards—ferris wheels still believing in  
Some place that is preternaturally beautiful—  
And migrating over and over  
Just in the hope of seeing her pretty face.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First Honeymoon Of The Earth

Aboard the pretty lies of elbows- looking at the last  
Light of the room-  
Wondering where the moths are, while listening  
To the airplanes:  
I am underneath their common flight path to the  
Sea- in a historical hotel,  
With my little dog between my legs. I imagine  
That the carpet is vermilion  
And rich  
And tries to make love with the ocean, and the beauty of  
It that resonates when it gets into the bay  
And lays waiting in its kind of bed underneath the crosses  
And the all night hotels  
Just as the conquistadors sleep forever-  
And the working girls cannot afford to get off  
Their legs-  
Unbeknownst to them and all of their business, the terrapin  
Are kissing their roses underneath the penumbras  
Of so many broken down chassis:  
Kissing lavishly, and reptilian- like the first honeymoon  
Of the earth, and I am left wondering about what it  
Is that they have to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First Honeys Of Our Children

You are pillaging with your cherry lips in  
Autumn,  
As the tigers feel homeless amidst the aspen:  
And the tinkering buildings of blind men continue pell-mell  
Up the throat of the hurdy-gurdy mountain,  
But finally I have lived while all of the clouds were sleeping into  
The shapes of whatever dreams:  
It felt so warm, the bodies playing like bumper cars across the  
Higher basins,  
And making love, and cross pollinating, dripping the first honeys  
Of our children,  
And making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First Honeys Of Our Children'

You are pillaging with your cherry lips in  
Autumn,  
As the tigers feel homeless amidst the aspen:  
And the tinkering buildings of blind men continue pell-mell  
Up the throat of the hurdy-gurdy mountain,  
But finally I have lived while all of the clouds were sleeping into  
The shapes of whatever dreams:  
It felt so warm, the bodies playing like bumper cars across the  
Higher basins,  
And making love, and cross pollinating, dripping the first honeys  
Of our children,  
And making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First Pleasing Man

The seesaws move up and down bracing themselves  
For love or what for,  
As the sky caracoles, counting the changeless numbers,  
As there as so many of them,  
As more and more people seem to enter the store everyday:  
What are they doing,  
But counting their wares and their small changes:  
And we sell indoor plants; and  
I steal what I can- I eat a grapefruit, and think of Alma:  
She is not working today:  
We made love yesterday, but now I haven't heard from her  
At all:  
I am looking less and less beautiful, of course:  
I go to the back corner to weep  
And masturbate:  
Little black kids are playing the cinderblocks, or they are making  
Popping sounds with their mouths  
Over the things that they would like to enjoy with each  
Other,  
Until the spirits finally grow up and take over the past,  
Present, and future,  
As the stewardesses touch down sighing and letting down their  
Hair,  
Happy that they don't have to say another word to anybody,  
Though they are sure that they will happily kiss the first pleasing  
Man which they happen to meet.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First Seasons Of Watermelons

Street lights who show off their skirts all across  
The cannons of church yards  
Where the conquistadors have had their sleep for centuries,  
Bullied by their own cousins into that coquina blood,  
So now that all but Mickey Mouse is lost:  
The grand destination for all tourisms, heading up the road  
And stopping periodically  
To make a wish, while I have been back and forth so many  
Times,  
And through her wind tunnels, as before her windmills:  
The lavished thoughts of brown queens who no longer  
Have to prove their magics,  
Whose little daughters have hair of straw gold, and baubles,  
And all of their faults:  
They sleep beside the endearing coffins of their most cherished  
Grandfathers,  
And there underneath the earth and the overturned wagons,  
With the plastic cowboys defeated by the  
Stained glass Indians in the marble carport during a rainstorm,  
Wait to meet their heroes who will be cast there  
Under the crown of thorns,  
Who they will lead back out again through the catacombs'  
Honeycombs;  
And coming across their father's sword, defeat the same said things:  
Eventually becoming their fathers, and taking the foundling girls  
As their brides,  
Sleeping beside them in the trailer parks to the good luck charms  
Of unicorns,  
Holding their breath as their bellies swell like the first seasons  
Of watermelons,  
Until the entire story comes around again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The First Star Of Morning

I am always going back to the swings,  
Collecting the motions they give,  
The petting of the vermilion air after crepuscule,  
Smoking the perfume of jet planes,  
Thinking of the girl I love in the black neighborhood  
Of the unfamiliar stars;  
And the clouds traffic where I go, where the helicopters  
Buzz as if in the séance of heirlooms;  
And I wish you could see yourself there,  
As I see you, as I take you out of your classroom  
And dust the crop of sky- giving it all back to you, a playground  
For your swimming, uncaring of the graveyards  
That your feet could never touch,  
If you happened to trust me and took my hand we could  
Always be children setting out in the motions of  
Just one curious space, like two lovers in bed,  
Curious in the breathless foreplays, devouring each other  
In abominable playrooms, sailing in big brass beds  
Always towards the first star of morning.

Robert Rorabeck



# The First Steps Of Outside

Making love in front of coquina fireplaces sometime  
After school,  
While all of the debutants were getting ready for  
Their decathlon of enviable plays,  
Jogging in place, and combing their hair:  
The unmistakable angels in the iron clad air, kissing the  
Follicles of their perfect skin,  
The tryst of crepuscule make vulgar machinations  
Around the four corners of their house,  
Like liquor around an Indian reservations:  
But they would soon all go out into this, a sorority fully on  
The metamorphosis,  
With or with out roller-skates, and making love,  
But never so far as to make it across the canal,  
Or to think so long of the commercial voyages of the wishing  
Airplanes,  
As to remember or think of me, as I laid like something  
Amphibian against the banks of their parks which they would  
Hardy think about anymore, which they would so  
Easily be stolen away from,  
Their fast kindled fires burning before the doors of  
Other campuses, jaunting up state, until they would finally  
Graduate and become something less than more  
All together but one at a time in their wedding processions  
That would never even make it through the first steps of outside.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fish Of A Sea Of Rum

I drink a lot—until the story comes to  
Mottled snow and my wife  
Tells me I have a beer belly,  
Which is slightly incorrect or fallacious,  
Because in my belly swim the fish of  
A sea of rum;  
And that is why I keep a classroom without  
Any windows,  
But every third period we stand  
And, holding our hands as steadily across  
Our breasts as we can,  
Pledge allegiance to the flag—  
As the airplanes waver off to fight so more  
Giants—high across the make-believe  
That is surrounding all of us— of this land, that is—  
All and all—`nt half bad.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fit Amusement

Forts of cadavers with their  
Favorite flowers,  
Showing off for tourists in the pollinated showers  
Of spring,  
Eating ice-cream instead of learning Latin:  
And the airplanes leaping,  
Leaping like the falls of quick silver honeymoons,  
Back across the oceans that they once fought for,  
And into another time  
Where the hillsides of white-sheeted windmills was  
The only form of entertainment for  
The somnolent lovers, eating of each others' own  
Fairytale,  
Their tongues sprinkling their bodies with the spitfire  
Havoc of little anemones;  
And it was a holiday of respite  
That I cannot remember, for it must have only happened  
To my mothers' mother;  
And all that I can recall of it is the dim retinue,  
A pantomime scribbled into a vanished high school's  
Bathroom stall- but it still seems that it  
Must once have happened, if only just to give good measure  
To the fit amusement of a fairytale country's far  
Away romances.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fits Of Weather

Sunlight on a snake in between the  
Rabbits and the caesuras:  
And it seems that she has the sunlight in her eyes,  
Like the birthday candles of good luck,  
While the airplanes curl and caracole:  
And Sharon never looked so beautiful, even though  
Now I hardly have to think of her,  
Because I have different pains that are more impending,  
And I house I come home to be alone in,  
While my pets move in the north, waiting for me with  
More faith that I will ever have:  
And the snake looks away to other pornographies  
Waiting for little boys in the abandoned cars of their  
Drunken fathers:  
And he goes to her, and they curl around for awhile,  
Dancing,  
While I wait for the fits of weather that I am sure are  
Just around the bend.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Flashing Knee Of A Jubilant Curb

Tomorrow all of the holiness will roll away its  
Stone;  
It will not be too commercial, and young brothers and  
Sisters may even dress out in gray suits and petticoats  
Underneath the banyans in the rolling  
Hills before the bleachers of alligators and crocodiles;  
And I can stare up seeing all the hidden  
Eggs in the crooks of trees and swings:  
See even to the bright beds in the meandering canals,  
The colorful eggs there too and membranous  
The fish and reptiles are always pullulating in the reef  
Of bicycles and the wreathing spikenard,  
The cereus like shifting banks of mountains, and a song  
Curling down from the lips of a stewardess just as if  
It was water from a fountain,  
A hydrant blushing and spuming forth on the flashing knee  
Of a jubilant curb.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Flawless Ritual Between Two Formless Gods

Engraft anything with a tree, and say  
Is it not a beautiful two,  
But I am tired of making sculptures,  
When it takes so much bread and  
Good grammar;  
And the birds are unweary anyways:  
They will travel south all the same;  
And say now, there is nothing left that is  
Beautiful for them,  
Nothing but the park after the music  
Has gone;  
The leaves have dropped enough chameleon,  
But you are still not athletic enough  
For her to love.  
Stand forever outside the student center  
Nude as lightning and wait for her,  
Call out for her like you would the mailmen  
When wanting a christening letter;  
And if she comes, it will be like the heron  
To gawk: She has many changes, and  
Many species of flora and fauna and vitamin,  
And she'll take many flights up to the points of  
Her world;  
But there if there is a soul inside that statue  
You made immortal, it has want to move  
Her lakes piqued and intrinsic quivering wave-lengths  
For the monsieur's of the football field,  
The clayed and fine strata you have no business  
Being out upon,  
And it would only hurt you to take a look behind  
The seamless door where you can hear her kittens  
Blowing, the tangled infatuations of  
The flawless ritual between two formless gods.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fleet Of Turpentine Heroes

The wishes I have of you are empty, all three of  
Them, gossiping down by the better sea of  
Bright cheap words;  
And now it seems Mickey Mouse has something to  
Say,  
But he thinks better of it and shuts off,  
Sways off to go drink around the orange groves  
And helicopter pads of saint Augustine  
Where I've killed my fair share of men,  
Where I'm even now sneaking into houses where  
I don't belong, and going to sleep like a fairytale  
Never described to the impressionable séances of children-  
You can pet me down by the crocodile in my corner of the  
Zoo, you can breathe on me your homeopathic spells,  
If you thought I was worth it, if you could understand me  
Better than the girls from Oregon:  
For in my way I am already defeated. I no longer go to  
The science museum for astronaut ice-cream. I got a C+  
In logic, and I've been waiting for my chance to say that  
All evening. My boats go back and forth on their lightbulbed  
Pendulums at the season fair, where some girls die,  
Like decapitated bouquets, but other ones seem to live forever,  
Glowing like iron pyrite leggy in that midway,  
I bight my lip for and draw my homeopathic blood, swing my arms  
For trying to win prizes from the rigged games,  
While the semi haulers are always driving up like thirsty  
Honeybees- The corpulent hummingbirds hunting breakfast  
Far after the race is over and the parking lot empty-  
The girls are married, the rains are done,  
And I am back at home on the green carpet masturbating like  
Usual, watching Saturday morning cartoons  
Dubbed in Spanish hoping that she'll understand while I fold  
Paper airplanes sealing the fleet of turpentine heroes with  
Kisses I'd much rather have given to her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fleeting Luck In My Paper World

The earth turns out for you on your birthday,  
Mountains flatten on their backs like flea bitten puppies,  
Or risky cobras:  
You can walk on their summits like carousing your fingers  
Across the ridge lines of her areolas,  
Like the perfect exhibits of the twin sisters of her  
Natural symmetry while fat trucks drive by all night delivering  
Their whiskies and goods to the various purple  
Enclaves;  
But the things around her really try, and they pace through the  
Clearing houses of their perfumed foreclosures;  
And when she puts cleats on over her high socks, she bites  
Her lip and momentary forgets her husband  
And each ounce of gravity across the terrible earth;  
And she leaps and bounds like a story book of anxious young  
Rabbits who momentary have found  
All of the fleeting luck in my papery world.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Flesh Of Your Shared Presence

I can take out another one straight for you, Sharon;  
My purse is bottom less, and filled with meals for you to smell and  
Taste over the valleys and highways;  
And each time I either fail or succeed, but always in the quiet little ways;  
And I think of your ears, and want to be around them;  
I want to study the architectures of your ears when you are busy  
Entertaining customers, and I want to smell them;  
And I don't need to be popular to want to know you:  
And you don't have to feel a thing for me:  
I can dream for you: I can flood the sea for you, Sharon:  
I do it seven days a week, and the animals come up paddling or they  
Sink,  
And the housewives turn up and worship around you, gurgling up  
The bottles of your good spirits;  
And I have tried to find you: Like a shepherd I have called you,  
Far across these modern traffics; and I wonder if you have heard me, or  
Have struggled nearer to me,  
Because I am blind and yet I am always persistent, as the flesh of your  
Shared presence will surely restore me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Flight Path Of So Many Airplanes

Wimples and areolas of a zoetrope in the kitchen:  
There she goes doing her own  
Thing again, turning, turning while the commercials  
And the rains come on,  
With the conquistadors underneath her canals  
Where will they go now, the sunlight like a grandmother  
For them, and their graveyard right under the  
Flight path of so many airplanes leaving like bottles  
Tossed into the sea and stewardesses filled up to the  
Neck with words I meant to share with her that can never  
Be saved.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Floating Constellations Of Ashamed And Misused Riverboats

The river is full of dreams—  
I haven't seen them, but I  
Would not lie about them:  
She has the colors of our flag scaled  
And swimming in her nicer estuaries,  
And later on they go to her boudoir  
To make love atop restless satin  
While the old movies play lovelier,  
And less attentive romances;  
All in order, shallow to deep,  
She is kissing the displaced leaders of  
Our nation and one little black boy who  
Lost his shoe polish only to become a greater  
Gentleman:  
She kisses him under the arch which resembles  
Getting lucky far above the saturnine graveyard  
Of bliss:  
Tourists and their trained carnival children  
Congratulate her:  
I pay to go to class under her skirt,  
And looking up chew gum even though I am  
Not supposed to be;  
And she is a substitute of a representation of  
Something supposed to be purely heavenly,  
And I am not Mark Twain, but try to pretend to  
Her that I am, and I tell you this is a trusting  
Secret,  
But I have a hard time understanding the Latin  
The wind spins curling the ribbons in her hair,  
All the time far above this yard so green it appears  
To be a headless graveyard leading to the steps  
Down to the Mississippi and into  
The floating constellations of ashamed and misused  
Riverboats.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Flood Planes Of Airplanes.

Scarred without the bobby pens  
And without a pool, listening to the  
Sirens in the afternoon;  
And looking at my dog;  
And now my after all of this,  
And all done underneath all of the trespassing  
And the midgets in their canals;  
They are teaching me in high school  
And underneath the  
Flood planes or airplanes-  
So- think of me  
Anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Flowers Of Oranges

If I had words for the virgins or their  
Mothers,  
They would take on the form of a long  
Vacation:  
They would become the reasons for romances  
In cheap hotels alongside the busy roads  
Right before the breakfast  
Shacks started opening like pill bugs for  
Experiments:  
And if I had her for all time,  
I would lay with her in the swell caesuras of  
Any roadside easements:  
And we would lay for a while of days,  
Letting the foxes play atop of us:  
Remembering the cannons of the old forts  
Of conquistadors even though now there is  
Nothing left to defend:  
Remembering ourselves, as well, outside,  
Smelling the flowers of oranges,  
Our souls fluttering as if attuned to a banner-  
As the king grinded his organ box  
That the sunlight filtered in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Foamy Saddle Of The Enraptured Tide

Tattooed in an inner thigh, I took her  
Guitar to the South of Spain. We drank the vintage  
And our hair curled gaily like a lover around our  
Ears, the cones of 1/5th of our senses:  
There was a lady all of stone waiting in the southeastern  
Warf, and teal eggs in nests riding on the lighted foams,  
And babies out of breath for wanting of their mother's  
Breasts: And other words, and hidden steps,  
And dark unsweetened ways through the drying olive-  
Groves: The whole country got drunk when, allegorically,  
The old man died, and left his children his château,  
And youth upon youth marching in the streets, just as  
Clean as if they had not already had their required Civil  
War, and the suicidal painters who decorated their landscapes  
Just as madly as the occupations of butchers giving their  
Leftover gristles to children's rhymes: Things were yet changing,  
The greatest dark-haired metamorphoses the enclosed  
Sea could describe; and I loved her, just a little, where her hair  
Fell over her left shoulder, down from the balcony, and  
Gardens in the crumbled stones with the archaeologies of  
Legionaries and petrified phalanxes stratified in the dun of  
Time. Poets were still making love out on the slender streets,  
And from the backs of motorbikes, and if I had been wiser,  
I would have had them scribble a few lines on my meridian;  
But I went home, sobering, still like a child to the fundamentals  
Of the pseudonyms of patriarchs; but disused, I did not withhold  
From my pubescent rebellions, and shirked the flaxen busses  
Into school, and called them names, and epitaphs, and slang,  
And meant to swim away, but the sea was too wide; and,  
Inevitably, I was brought back home, by the foamy saddle of  
The enraptured tide.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Food She Did Not Cook For Me

Another night alone into this world  
And I am feeling fine and thinking of Alma:  
How she must be cozied up to her husband by now:  
Why her children are softly breathing so far  
Away from graveyards,  
And they will grow up and think for awhile  
And then swim away;  
Then maybe Alma will come to me in the dusk of  
Weeds and tulips beside the leaping roads,  
Because I know that she already loves me,  
But she cannot get away:  
I know that Alma already loves me, and the sun comes  
Up and emotes, streaming down the strings for  
Angels.  
And the spiders quiver in their spindling abodes,  
And the trout wonders,  
And her family sleeps together in their little  
World not so far afield from my own:  
I can almost feel her breathing. Like the zephyrs  
Kissing the backs of otters and wildflowers,  
And it all turns around for awhile:  
And I held Alma's brown hand today and looked into her  
Eyes,  
And ate the food that she maybe did not cook for me,  
But fed to me all the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Football Games Of Your Tomorrow

Kind of candlestick in the mud-  
Hoary light in the swamp  
Turning undone,  
As the housewives moan like alley cats in their  
Beds of predestination:  
As they seem for awhile lost, pill bugs underneath  
The covers,  
As their pools glow altogether as if infected diamonds-  
And their canals move slower  
Filled to the brim with narcoleptic mermaids  
And the fabershe cenotaphs of likeminded conquistadors:  
See how the moon glowers over their  
Strange visage swimming in the mud:  
Each one with a candle undone just beneath the skim-  
As the tadpoles dance  
Innocent of what they will become,  
And the minnows wander around aimlessly perhaps  
Dreaming of the footballs games of your tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Football Players You Pretend To Love

Into your houses that stand for nothing—popcorn light  
That gets blinded on the 4th of July  
While I steal the lonely bicycle from your garage:  
And I was your high school teacher for a week  
While the rain melted the cages of your suburban harpies:  
And they got up and spied  
And spied upon the real world like a buffet:  
And you grew older, tending to know older men from their  
Various aircraft carriers—maybe even you spied one  
The you even fancied to love until you decided that you  
Had to look away and away—  
Until you midnight happened that very September, while  
All of your teachers were writing poetry except for the one  
That never was—  
And I right to you on this night approaching the first  
Day of autumn—already the world is old and virtually  
Defeated—looking for our heroes, I cannot say where  
They have gone—I only know that they've taken  
Their time to fend off the everyday monsters just so you  
Can go to class tomorrow—following the shadows of  
The football players you pretend to love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Foothills Of The Heavens

All of the pieces were taken apart  
Over the better part of a weekend  
So now I am in China listening to  
Country music I cannot understand-  
While otters I onced loved  
Play in the streams I abandoned underneath  
The aspens  
Near my mother's cradle-  
Where some horses have died  
And the elk shed their antlers  
Atop so many stepladders leading up to-  
I don't know- the foothills of  
The heavens-  
Looking down into the parking lots,  
Can't they pretend to see better than any of  
Us the kids practicing into dusk,  
The butterflies as they get naked  
And metamorphose, enjoying  
The summers that kill so many people-  
The memories of our ancestors roaming  
So many parking lots  
Nevering realizing they are just the  
Evaporations of the tears  
Of some graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Footpaths Of Our Winsome And Lonely Pride

Churlish favors the brown eyes of boys  
Almost in a caravan through the comely passage,  
Almost hers; and then separated and made to  
Fend for themselves,  
Made to eat pinecones, made to stock shelves.  
Becoming literary majors, living every day in a sad  
High school,  
Looking at empty granaries as if they were the  
American Basin up from Ourey stocked with wildflowers  
And wild scuppernongs;  
This is my trance, one of these post-modern hop-a-longs  
Where outside under the ice-clouds in penumbras of frost,  
The trailer parks glitter in fish stocked streams,  
As shimmering as gaudy ribbon spending my days off with  
My dogs,  
I can call her up like bright rings, both instances of sound  
And water coloring- Presupposing she is with any man,  
I guess she is, but how can she know anything about him,  
When she combs over my world like this,  
And spreads my seeds without even knowing to the four  
Happiest of winds,  
My dogs leaping like airplanes over Telluride and then back  
Again jaunting tongued the footpaths of our winsome and  
Lonely pride.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Footprints Of Anonymous Seashell

Oh, what beauty spoken of that seems to be alive  
While no one is looking—and after it is done—what is left of  
Fried chicken in the grass in the last days  
Before the fourth of July—  
I know you've never been there- next to the cradle of  
All of the mixed up stars:  
You were in China—alone in Kindergarten watching the  
Exorcist—I don't know how they showed it to you—  
The communist party in your tenements -  
Your mother chose to have an abortion and then she chose  
To have you and then your brother—  
I suppose that maybe she just chose to tell you this to  
Comfort you, as you almost miscarried—  
But this English is only the penultimate words on my lips,  
And now I am dreaming—now I am a fanfare on a  
Tarmac that doesn't have to believe—  
And maybe I should have stayed at home—  
And maybe the angels are taking off for different climates—  
And all of this is a wound that doesn't heal—  
Or it is just a shadow of an angel who herself is only infatuation  
With the footprints of an anonymous seashell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Footprints Of Birds

Now I am as famished as a stone sitting upon the  
High ground—while my wife lies beside me,  
Reading in the night—  
As the waves caress the shore, as the airplanes  
Caress the sky,  
And the other fabulous natures such as wolves  
Retreat—  
And what place is this but a graveyard—  
And my scars want for more  
Liquor while the skeletons are playing cards  
With themselves  
While my dog sleeps on the floor—  
And then there are birds in the night and  
In the mangroves—  
And another reason leaves the earth never  
To return again—these are the possibilities that  
They leave behind—  
And I have nothing left for you to remember even  
As I disappear like the footprints of birds  
Upon the shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Footsteps Of My Beautifully Yellow House

My house, indifferent and yellow:  
Yellow on the outside, yellow within: a beautiful yellow  
In which to entrap Alma with these dreams,  
To smear her skin with the wet postcards of my lips,  
To finish her like a wolf in the kitchen of my bed:  
The way a fable should never have to end,  
But it does: but it does;  
And Armando says it is too yellow: eight-five years old  
And filled with the ghosts of an arcade of millipedes,  
But too yellow:  
He is from Mexico too, and his English is good, but he  
Is too jealous, and he loves my mother,  
But she is in Phoenix and too far away to do it any good;  
But when the sun comes up, he laughs over the  
Rabbits mastigating in their little colonies in the even littler  
Yards that section away the one way street:  
For he knows that the yellowness of my house is nothing at all,  
For he baked the belly of Alma's Mother Rosa until she  
Yawned and came awake in that alligator pool of flesh,  
And has done the very things I would like to do to her,  
While I have at least five Virgins of Guadalupe in my house, whose  
Brows and holy children I kiss,  
And stand back and listen as the brownness of waves whispers  
And gossips up to the footsteps of my beautifully yellow house.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forbidden Perfumes

A grandfather clock is saying something  
Atop your roof, underneath the clouds: but if you  
Were listening  
Would you hear it underneath the helicopters whose  
Heads are so amused  
And brightly painted: they last like hummingbirds  
Underneath the moon;  
They drip like bright candy off the noon,  
As you go outside and turn around in your little yard.  
To see your world is not very hard:  
There is your world, right under me, a cat  
Whose cradle is infinity- and all of the stratas of  
The earth are your dressing rooms,  
And your neighborhood is just the constellations  
Changing clothes- I will try not to look at  
You-I will try not to smell the forbidden  
Perfumes of another's rose.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Foreplays Of Thefighting Fields

I am feeling good, while everything else feels  
Unreal, while everything else feels good and If I'm naked  
On Sundays,  
And this is the most south-eastern point of the continental  
United States,  
And I have to apologized while I am even starving  
While everything else is going down throughout the byways:  
And this exactly how it feels, going down by  
Norway's;  
Why, oh why, everything else is given to the tear ducks of my  
Dogs,  
Which works counterclockwise to my gods,  
Which while any otherwise to my gods goes utterly unpossessed  
Again last Tuesday  
While the sun goes down again so utterly unpossessed again  
Last Sunday, going down again over the foreplays of the fighting  
Fields who even after so many years aren't even real.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Forest Fires Beamed From Her Eyes

I was told the books were dark green because they were  
Born that way  
And when they cried they opened that way for their lovers,  
Like butterflies smeared into a carpet where the  
First time lovers had made a river,  
And the softly washed children looked up into the eyes of  
Traffic that didn't mean to go anywhere,  
But went just because it was their nature;  
And Alma walked that way, holding hands with her mother.  
And I held my breath at the window, but I could not go that way  
Into another world filled with the brown hues of forest,  
Because it was not my nature;  
And so I watched the forest fires beamed from her eyes,  
And her children walking safely holding her hand through the  
Fires,  
But I could not go that way because it was not my nature.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forest's Green Back

Imaging how it should echo, and then it does:  
Of grandfathers and country sides-  
The days lay back upon the shed wings of grasshoppers:  
And yes, it goes on and on speaking to the sun in  
The sky- in the greening grass,  
His sorority, attending like a harem: and the horses  
Run like gearless streams down from the mountain:  
And somewhere there hidden in the glorious  
Switchbacks of bosom- of elk and deer  
She lives, yes she does: and she has a husband  
And he takes game home for her to  
Cook over a roasting fire:  
And he cuts down wood: white and opal, and it falls  
Across the forest's green back, or in the snow: echoing  
Yes, yes it does.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forests Of Christmas

They loom so emboldened as all of the horses  
Come inâ€”  
Off to the right, they burn tires until the smoke  
Gets too much:  
I wonder if any one of them is my father,  
Or if I will find myself encrusted on the back of  
Some fine snake like camouflage underneath  
A fableâ€”  
The children will come to school tomorrow with their  
Shoulders hung overâ€”  
They will greet me, recording together  
And they will tell each other fairytales of their own  
Mothers  
Until it all seems to become impossible and  
We fall to sleep together underneath the forests of  
Christmas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forests Of The Sweetest Youngest Day

Alma- you are the soul of the muse:

You are whatever she has burning like a pearl or a lucky

Marble down deep in her bosom,

And even if you never come I will cherish you, because you are

The first inkling of what I have come to reason:

You are the beautiful mother protecting her young, while

All of the cars drive by at night,

And the airplanes leap, while the birds preen so prettily through

The yards of dens:

And I have lived another eight years than you, and I think all of the

Empty mailboxes salivating for your rich brown skin:

How far back does it go, through the forests where the grandmothers

Of mariposas go to expire:

I loved you like a word on the wire, and you said it was a lie;

But if it was a lie, Alma- it was one that can never die, but spread

Like wildfire riding ungilded stallions fast across the land,

Their hoofs stamping on the green cloths whose virgin appeared our

Superman;

And I love you, Alma, like the first light in the sky; and if I don't

Love you, the airplanes will go to sleep in the sea,

And the songs that lay stolen from my ribs will yet go unsung:

But if I love you, then let us both hold hands and go into a country

Populated by youth- Where death is a lie,

And your eyes shine the movies of undeniable truth

For the parking lots of sweet young boys amidst which I lay,

And pray to you forever through the forests of the sweetest youngest day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forests Of Their Home

Weather vanes over Mexico,  
And some people are laughing on the day of  
The dead,  
And my love is gone from me,  
But the rooster is strutting, red throated underneath  
The overpass and nearby the high school  
Where the children will fight the children  
Today,  
And you will go home from work and enfold  
Into your home- the only place you know-  
All uneasiness,  
But welcomed by your children,  
As the waves pant creases up to your door:  
And I will go to work as well,  
Into another world where I will have daydreams of  
Making love with you,  
But I will not, and eventually the luckiness of  
Your echo will recede,  
Dried up by the moon- and the scars of your  
Footsteps across my house will fade-  
So, eventually, the grapes will grow fat and purpled  
From being unattended,  
And the marionette will be fooled by the cat and  
The fox one last time to plant the little  
Gold he had into the dunes of the beach,  
As the heavens cry over your shadow and then head off  
To the forests of their home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forever Backyards

Each stitch in the peacock's feather,  
A crenulation upon the mountains, stones waved into the  
Quartzite caesuras where the lovers fall,  
Teeth chipped upon the false romances of hoar frosted mermaids:

The milkmaid riding on the last-most seat of the bus  
Turns a blue eye away,  
The wind succulates upon her blondness,  
Ovid turns her sisters into kites,  
Zeus draws a bone and turning into the conquistador's bull,  
Pursuing knee-high into the foaming surcease:

My children drizzle into the tiny yellow rooms  
Where we have planted them,  
Their insufficient nudities beginning to dry like dew in the morning  
of the first day of school:

They are look up at her. They have forgot all of their memories.  
A goshawk touches two weeds together in a thorny bush,  
And a new pornography is born high up in the coned armpits  
Between two war-begotten countries-

The last word spoken to their virginity has no meaning;  
It is sent to turn them feral so that they may escape these earliest of  
Classrooms:  
Leaping billy-goats of metamorphosis,  
The fairytale spumed between two nests of giants:

They are freed to roam the canals dredged behind the backyards  
Of society. The little girl pauses to kiss an alligator frozen by her presence,  
And the land beckons in a bucolic, mowed excellence-  
Where nocturnal boys recline forever, arms crossed behind their fermenting  
brains,  
Where gem-sized grasshoppers speckle their  
Acned cheeks, far into the forever backyards of the most forgetful housewives.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forever Leaping Stewardesses

Pageantry I am: stallion, peacock- fluttering  
Almost as if I could fly above the roof tops,  
Stuttering,  
As if it were my job, pretty in my loincloth draped  
About my  
Elbows- eagles at both shoulders, clouds in the  
Somnambulating daycares  
Who eventually get lost from fieldtrips and lie out  
Underneath the misplaced architectures  
Of overpasses who are forever so near and far  
From the sea- while the homeless men teach them  
Their priceless tricks  
And she rolls over and plays dread- as roses bloom  
For the working girls,  
For the forever leaping stewardesses who haven't  
A thought for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forever Shadowless

Estranged from the places of narcoleptic estuaries,  
The sea cries over the parts she  
Has forever lost into her sister's coliseum sky—  
Amputated from her shore,  
Runaway like snowy stallions leaping from destroyed waves  
Where she can not move to feel  
Where winged men fly struggling over heliumed  
Dreams— The closer they come to God,  
The quicker they die—  
They dive and leap in cloud streams  
In the effluvial rivers like  
Nostalgic ribbons once strung down from her window  
To let them in- Now tangled in foreboding briars  
Upon the doorsteps of dark castles,  
Misplaced castaways of people who move on—  
The helpful amnesias anchoring them to clean hands  
Where they can look all the way up and recall no memories—  
So, in the furrowed beds of evening's hills  
The moon slumbers without a lover  
Weeping into pools iambic pentameters  
Of shushing lights, baby's breathing  
Woven on the winnowing looms, spooling in exposed skeins  
Upon the bared meadows in the forest's chest—  
A skin of sadness  
Where pregnant spiders quiver in their  
Purchased webs, egg sacks hatching in dew and evening;  
But their loves have gone running to  
The other sides of their worlds, hurdling  
Like odysseying Olympians with no conscious memory—  
There, at back doors, they strut haughtily tanned, knocking—  
Without her moon, relentless,  
They are the forever shadow less—

Robert Rorabeck



# The Forever Wild Flowers

Panhandles filibuster, and I am no longer sure of where  
I am now:  
The silent creeks buddy together and sound so little like  
The way I've spent time  
By myself in the corner of the classroom before  
Leaving school and getting drunk and returning:  
Figuring out the words are only waves,  
Coming in again, silently but with so much motion, the  
Recreations of the past gods,  
The failures of all of the current things, and even though  
We all have our own houses,  
How can we recognize the song while the virgins are all deep  
In their grottos,  
And all of our kings have kissed the lips of their undefeatable  
Monsters and thus are sleeping beneath the forever  
Beautiful and forever wild flowers of their  
Immortal graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forgotten Amphitheatres

Scars of another illusion of Hollywood-  
This is my goodbye  
Underneath the anonymous honeymoons  
Of airplanes,  
Even if she told me she loved me-  
As she told me she did,  
As I've been trying so long to bring  
Down the very angels,  
Even if it was just to starve them in the shallow  
Illusions of my wishing wells,  
Just as it becomes another thing I have to  
Believe in,  
As they kill each other- but it is an ugly patriotism-  
Into the shallow mirage that, I guess,  
All of the heroes have to give up and drown  
Themselves  
As I, at first, masturbate and then slumber all to  
Myself in the middle of my school grounds  
In the forgotten amphitheatres of  
Whatever schoolyard which was eventually meant to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forgotten Holidays

I don't know about the rose  
Growing at the center of the labyrinth as  
Some kind of unobtainable attainment  
Or aesthetic truth:  
I try to teach my children about this:  
I try to hold each of their hands as they step  
Outside—  
But eventually there becomes a muted sound  
Of their mutual enjoyments—  
As the lowest places fill with clouds—  
And the Ferris wheels are consumed by the  
Largest wildfire that ever was—  
Until the gossiping angels are told to one another  
So many times  
That they fall down and make love with their cousins—  
Underneath the hallucinations of the overpasses—  
As the waves crenulate the east, sounding like  
Vipers, sounding like boom-slans—  
And all of the forgotten holidays of the housewives  
That cannot find peace within themselves to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forgotten Parts Of Her Town

As a goldfish, I can barely breathe or  
Spell- growing lethargic is not the word, but look  
At the mountain underneath its spell:  
Words of luckless joy given over to her nimble movements:  
She seems to be coming around again  
Across the skating rink of her banishing echoes;  
And the monsters patrol her old neighborhood,  
Remembering how she would not kiss them:  
She comes up to their necks, bubbling, golden:  
She seems to, but she will not kiss them,  
And the words distill their own joy out of nothing;  
They remain truants crooked in a tree fort,  
And, for whatever reason,  
I have nothing for them: defunct on a raft in the middle  
Of the suburban heavens, I continue on, lazily,  
Suppliant to their pop-art spell: she really doesn't  
Love me, but I've tasted her soul of caramel and it seems to  
Be coming up to her: the stolen bicycles and the airplanes  
Are touching down- and this is my art in the palmettos  
In the rainstorms in the forgotten parts of her town.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forgotten Playgrounds Of Yesterday

Burning in the hopes through a forest  
That is afire:  
The bears have lit it with gasoline- there are no more  
Heroes for hire,  
And the little girls out on Halloween, costuming the  
High tension wires-  
The sun is a globe in a vase, the fish burn with ease:  
Pornographies asleep through the old  
Chassis through the ancient trees;  
And there is something more than this, something sleeping  
Down a slope that is underground,  
Where candles burn  
Telling of the burials of an ancient town-  
Antlers shed through a forest in disarray; katydids leave  
Their bodies on the open throats of  
Stalwart trees, slipping nakedly, easily caressing  
The forgotten playgrounds of yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forgotten Tennis Courts Of Ancient Kingdom

The graveyards are leaping in their unabashed homes for  
Little girls who so seldom come to the granite firesides  
Of their despondent cenotaphs,  
With the stewardesses leaping so highly overhead, with such strength  
That they should have wings themselves:  
While my little banquet of words pell-mells wherever it does:  
While the tiny story books finally stumble from her hands, as they fall asleep  
Beside her children like butterflies in a rich forest that keeps on going  
Into the wilderness, without definitions- and into the feral  
Apiaries and the forgotten tennis courts of ancient kingdoms:  
And further still, as long as the sleeping beauty of her eyes  
Lays closed: so far away,  
Where it never has to end.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forgotten Tennis Courts Of Ancient Kingdoms

The graveyards are leaping in their unabashed homes for  
Little girls who so seldom come to the granite firesides  
Of their despondent cenotaphs,  
With the stewardesses leaping so highly overhead, with such strength  
That they should have wings themselves:  
While my little banquet of words pell-mells wherever it does:  
While the tiny story books finally stumble from her hands, as they fall asleep  
Beside her children like butterflies in a rich forest that keeps on going  
Into the wilderness, without definitions- and into the feral  
Apiaries and the forgotten tennis courts of ancient kingdoms:  
And further still, as long as the sleeping beauty of her eyes  
Lays closed: so far away,  
Where it never has to end.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Forgotten Wishes

Sleeping in a bed your feelings rarely encumber,  
It gets more difficult to recuperate, even with the hurricanes cheering  
Us on outside of the windows:  
The key deer kissing the tree frogs in the slender and tapered  
Bedrooms of the aloe,  
While the entire state takes off its clothes and goes swimming in  
The sea  
At the end of it with selkies and muses, and the stewardesses spilled  
From their hapless planes like the thrilling sparks of  
Fireworks,  
Like coins bathing in a wishing well, wavering underneath the  
Conquistadors' fingerprints,  
Pretending to grant the wishes forgotten for so many years.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Forlorn Waves Of The Earthbound Sea

Now that my mind is free and I have friends,  
And my broken nose is healing beautifully,  
I can go out in the yard and count the snow, discerning  
Why my sister placed the wedding guests as she did,  
Or why my mother is asleep right now with the only  
Man she has ever known:  
Because their religion is burning as regularly as sugar cane  
In the backyard of the sod farms,  
And the gray herons are forming acrobatically through the ash,  
While she is in the bedroom stroking her hair like an  
Angel licking her wounds  
And outside her transoms the coral snakes are hatching in between  
The egg-like flowers of the plumbago and the aloe  
Where my lovers sleep no bigger than snails hanging  
From the soft wrists of music boxes whose  
Songs are weeping as the green swans go away the same color  
As her eyes or of the forlorn waves of the earthbound sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Formless Evils That Will Never End

I go down- I go down.  
The flights crowd over- Sunlight motes  
Above long-backed crocodiles,  
I grind my teeth- and the next line should  
Contain thoughts of a woman so far away  
To say them would be to consider  
Inappropriate time travels;  
And though she is real and earthy, and goodly  
Contained,  
It would be a fantasy, an apoplectic bull keeping  
The unicorns in the waves-  
For she has her new lover who could never compare  
To the adulations of Percy Shelly,  
Who keeps her well protected,  
Stocked with soups,  
Harangued on a leased apartment with two cats  
And communal pool, crystal chochskies,  
Dust pans and all the modern confections which  
Crowd around her, singing the few songs of  
French simulacrums; or she has just arrive on a new  
Planet- Jumped ship into the low gravity Eden,  
Begun to steal away a new knowledge,  
OR, if not contented, she's at the old university,  
Serving drinks to men with blue anchor tattoos-  
She stands up straight and auburn and gives strange  
Necks kisses like hummingbirds to scarred lumberjacks,  
Just like she pretended to give once to me;  
And when she's on her break she reads  
South Florida crime fiction, loose but well fitted  
Satires by Carl Hiaasen- And I've wanted to jump her  
Bones since high school, and pretended that she called me  
Over the linoleum seas during Latin, called me so long  
Ago when I was less scarred but no more beautiful,  
But I fumbled the ball, became the line that doesn't end:  
I wrote this poem and wound up for six years in Arizona  
Floating over a dead sea,  
And she went down and had her name choreographed in  
A dance inlayed with his, thinking that he was young and  
Smooth and yet ironically crocodilian, and it would

Be better for me to spend more time with my dogs,  
To fantasize about opal women lined up along the hillside  
In the shape of trees,  
To get nosebleeds and hangovers while writing these  
Insignificant things, these unpalatable denouements,  
The wordy epitaphs to put the babies to sleep in graveyards,  
The perishable unpublishable abominations of gout-ridden  
Sailors who just go on and on like in some  
Beowulfian conflagration of the inner sea, the whirlpools  
Of tourism which wind up eating themselves which never  
Quit except with the defeat of our pseudo-graphical heroes  
Eaten in turns by the society of monsters,  
The housewives and their daily lovers,  
The formless evils that will never end.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Foundling's Doom

Young life is born in the morning,  
And with it the pain which brings it across:  
There it is out in the field  
Gamboling on four unsteady legs  
In between the briars and the wholesome sky:

The wolves come waiting in  
The lines of hunger's prowling,  
And the talons circle in a blue abyss:  
Already the pestilent eyes are wanting,  
All the little bits of life they can scent on the bud:

For the foundling's doom is underfoot,  
The winter's creep, the thistle's snare,  
The snaggletooth grin insincerely basking in sunlight:  
The farmer is too busy with his own affairs  
To know the way the weevils go sowing his field:

The colt has done good to make it this far,  
To breath from the larger womb,  
The great urn the natives spoke of and worshiped,  
And the bucolic sphere that kindles life and snuffs it out:

Too early to defend itself,  
To take up and learn the sport of man and beast:  
Just a young thing, a simple kid  
Upon the fold of the agrarian and the boreal,  
He bounds lushly before the insatiable gazes,

As he lifts his head to begin to suckle the sensitive tit,  
His mother nuzzles the air warily, sensing foul:  
And already the gyre begins the whirring:  
The roll of dice for the pleasure's feast,  
And the borders come pouncing inwards upon  
That green loci of uneasy rest.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fountains

I am on the field drawing across your body:  
Anonymous as you are to me,  
Though you are over anxious that you should be found out;  
The iconoclasts ripple. They are better than us,  
And thus cannot be bothered with what we are doing,  
Because you are just another muse in this big,  
Big world in which I and  
The fountains are coloring in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fountains Of The Famished

Joined at the hip to your cathedrals of ill fish—  
Legs keeping warm like match sticks in an  
Exhibit of forest—  
As everything else dies—as the fairs turn away—  
And the wolves envelope with the snow—  
Underneath the mountains,  
Buried arrowheads—  
The false light of playgrounds that keep tricking  
The pace—  
Fires that have gone out—  
And footprints that lead to the fountains of  
The famished.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fountains Sing

Another escape, but then the horses  
Starve,  
Whilst the world grows at large in its  
Carnivals,  
And then this is just so: and then this is just  
Another  
Number tossed into the footprints of my snow,  
As I was still trying to figure out  
My loves,  
Even as they hunted me, alive and bright in  
All of their carnivals,  
Just as this was just another joy we,  
Together, were meant to slave away together,  
Just in the jubilations of  
Another carnival meant to suffer perpetually  
In the foils of another playground  
Evaporating forever through the make-believe  
Ballgames perpetuating the  
Loneliness that we cannot wish again, forever-  
To wish to know-  
As the fountains sing,  
As the weathers snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fourth World

I saw the parade of envious dreams  
Board the colorless ship with fish bone  
Sails and the tigers the color of cold amber,  
The way you looked up from the  
Other side of the glass as it began to rain  
To where things began to move across  
The empty sea, and you tried to breathe,  
Like distant people lighting up momentarily  
To hold each other and failing, so the  
World opened up to the great things  
Feeding near the bottom, and I watched  
My infancy go down the maelstrom, the  
Animal's screams like a ship full of slaughtered infants  
Somewhere far across the world where  
Everything was the same as this neighborhood,  
Destroyed, the prophecy stood fulfilled,  
And from the thrashing waves raised the great totem  
Of the drunken Indians dead in the gutters of the reservations,  
At the apex the wisest of the Hopis beat their breasts  
To the dying of the fourth world.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Fox That Is Always Leaping Forever

What are you doing multiplying your flood in my  
Lonely gaze:

Here I am on my wet floor again, my fission a fanciful glaze:

My loose change all spent

Like the stars in the arboreal sky,

The school buses always returning home but never

Wondering why:

It is that my muse sleeps underneath another roof,

Cradled into the confines, the bivouacs,

And the cavernaseras of another man- laughing in the bathrooms

Of burning sugar cane:

As I take my place beside the road of rushing dreams,

Like the fox who is always leaping forever,

Never realizing what he seems.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Freckled Penumbra Of A Beautiful Apple Tree

When you bathe your daughter in that little room,  
And when she sleeps beside you in that littlest of beds:  
Then these are just the unread words  
Scribble in the lavatories of unclimbable mountains,  
And you do not think of me;  
But you feel me beating beside you, like a tiny toy heart  
Wound to beat next to yours; beating through  
The Christmases you have never loved, and coming nearer  
To you along the northern highways you have never even  
Thought to have traveled by;  
And though I am not beautiful, you know me now:  
For I have become your hero, and I have slept on your  
Roof, and traveled around your neighborhood, protecting you  
When you aren't even there, and reciting things to you  
That have very little meaning without you as a subject-  
Like thorny bushes that cannot ejaculate into flowers-  
Like a lonely plane without the sky for a horizon-  
Have you discovered then, Alma, that without me, you  
Are like a sea without sailors, uncharted,  
Unnamed- and you need my senses to cartograph the beating  
Of your amber heart- so that I may lay down beside you,  
Nuzzling your subtle columns- even perhaps like one of  
Your young uncles, a day laborer taking siesta in  
The freckled penumbra of a beautiful apple tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Frictions Of The Soft Brown Mountains

She showed up and we made love  
Under the cheap blue fountains clapping  
Like dolphins for the sun,  
And before that I had almost died, but it  
Wasn't enough:  
She came to my door with her auburn stuff,  
And it was true, and I was her champion,  
And I swung her in my arms and we smoked  
And there were candles drooling like heady  
Song birds in each of us:  
I believe they may have been long lost sisters,  
And they sung to us,  
And they spread their wings and visited each other  
Through our mouths,  
And decided to switch houses, and live for awhile  
In the separated friendships of our brown dress,  
Until the evening that they could reunite in  
Marriage and swing so freely back and forth  
From each of us,  
Like canaries sharing a fountain with butterflies,  
And unicorns, and her right there doused in  
The streetlights as with the moon,  
Finally settling like the glowing rivers steaming from  
The frictions of the soft brown mountains that  
Are now so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Frog Princes

New hills in the Septembers the houses get out  
Their drinking glasses to remember—  
Trying to forget that they never kissed their husbands  
Or whomever in a zoo—  
Wet mouthed on the weekend of soggy letters—  
The sunlight in ridges and ridges surrounding them—  
The birds, oily winged—singing,  
Christmas hallucinations—places to take off—  
Multiple regresses in the bluer than azure grasses—  
The echoes of their children like wind chimes  
Saying that they are safely upon their way to school  
And now is the time to enjoy all of this—  
In the wetlands, in the Peitas of the frog princes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fronteras

Children turning to ghosts as they ride their  
Trains outside of Mexico- the tricky tracks of the  
Foundlings- they go into the emptiness of  
The desert  
Hallucinating for orange groves and the fresh  
Waters of their soul to fill in their  
Shoulder blades  
Like stewardesses serving them soft drinks  
Upon the long distant airplanes-  
As if something beautiful trapped inside an  
Ugly dream,  
Spilling themselves towards their mother's  
Milk across the fronteras- or across the yellowed  
Cinders into towns with other eyes  
And apathetic tongues.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Fuels That I Mean

Eaten by ghosts, or eaten by grizzly bears:  
The night finally grows up and is unhappy about itself-  
The night finally gets out of its chair or swing,  
And has to go home to confront the mirrors, or that isn't any of all  
That it does:

Maybe it just sits in its corner of its classroom and pines for her,  
Even though he figures that she will never be mine,  
That I have already eaten the magic beans of poisonous skeletons,  
And now I am for sure that I can never again cross the river;  
But in the talking mirrors the planets absolutely look nice,  
And I have had to starve myself while talking about the coal  
Trains all sooty beneath the Christmas tree:

And I will give you a Christmas tree in that time of year,  
Alma:

I will give you the gaudy spirit of my soul, because you are all that  
I love in this world:

You are the goddess who makes my knuckles crumble and speak  
To themselves underneath the billboards of Disney World;  
And you are all that I have, like an alligator who only has the road:  
Who only knows the lights that will not stop,  
Even far after all the waves had come in whispers, who had shipped  
Off from the far side of the earth;  
And now, finally, the hibernations are over, and I love you as my queen;  
And this is just another imperfect night, while I try to keep warm,  
Burning for you all of the fuels that I mean.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Full Poem

The full poem is in her lips,  
Pursed, she cannot spell.  
Opened, she kisses him and he goes  
Home and grows a garden in his sleep:  
These lines are not for real,  
But the pressed ivory of piano keys by  
A child alone in a sunny room:  
Searching for what she will become,  
As bees sing softly in grandmother's garden.  
There are bright days she knows,  
And places she has walked to where  
There are things she cannot say the sky  
Shows in furtive glimpses,  
Things she believes are real though there is no proof,  
And nothing can be said,  
Though this is what she thinks of as she  
Waits for the bus to take her to school to learn,  
And the days flip over like rabbits digging burrows,  
The indescribable successions of lives and deaths,  
And the saplings which grow up in the make-believe  
Yard who will never move unless coerced by the wind,  
And then ever so little,  
Though they may live forever but not  
Relatives and distant loves,  
And when the rain falls like piano keys, like glimpses of  
Little children laughing unabashedly through sorrow,  
Then as if in a trance, she sits and watches  
The world outside her home slicking the trees  
And filling the sky,  
And does not say a thing, but I know,  
The full poem is in her lips.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Funerals Of Average Sorts

It does no good,  
The ebullitions I have meant to accomplish;  
It does no good this- this thing-  
My soul, a prize in the crackerjacks,  
He doesn't play baseball:  
My soul, he doesn't look to well in  
The effluvious destructions,  
And mixtures of rainwater and spilled oils,  
The guts of Spanish explorers,  
The toy trumpets of useless things:  
My soul, whoever,  
Whipped into a popping jay would say that  
The rabbit is dead and hung by the lolling dogs into  
The crucifixions of the rock garden,  
And there he is, and later on down the potholed  
Road, my soul finds fossils in the tire tracks:  
My soul was first kissed by a girl down that road  
Who wore a retainer-  
My soul has stolen, and remembered fantasy lovers  
Like little tomboy saints waiting with spears in the aloes,  
But it is a silly thing,  
Maybe the best mocker of William Carlos Williams,  
His pocket full of washers to  
Clog up the wiry machines-  
Maybe he will, venturing long enough, pot bellied,  
Clichéd by the weathers of the well and ready noose,  
Find his soul mate, this lover on the bottom of a shoe,  
Deep in the wells and drains,  
Or he might have to rely on the memories of old news,  
Teddy Bears recovered and patched from dumpsters,  
Piss stained books on the California gold rush,  
A Bret Harte decried by Mark Twain,  
Abandoned his country and all of his sweet family,  
Removed to the Victorian imaginations of some  
New century's Peter Pan-  
Isolated and still born but still managing flight:  
Not very well published, like any other mollusk retreating  
Into the ostensible beauty of its home  
Lives for a little while and then can only be remembered



For the scientific names of hardened calcium:  
Conus Literatus,  
Or Melon Aethiopicum,  
The so many years of misgivings-  
The dulled arrowheads and abandoned fathers,  
The sad foreclosures, the shutting and locking of doors,  
The funerals of average sorts to which  
All and my soul must attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Funerals Of The Down To Earth World

Too many things no longer much fun,  
The rusting barrel of a worthless pop gun;  
And I can't remember when they used to  
Be much fun,  
The beautiful people sharing themselves under  
The god-endowed sun:  
I don't blame them, my mother's slick swears-  
Those little seeds they were just meant to happy  
The earth for the time spent tapping toes  
And wrist watches, expecting the hearse unawares:  
It will come any time now,  
Chauffeuring the embalmed; and the houses  
In shot-gunning rows will  
Blister and howl underneath the apathetic sums  
As they does them tricks around the world,  
Those strangely luckier boys and them  
Oh so sweetly distracting girls-  
They sure will filigree mighty brightly the funerals  
Of the down to earth world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Furrows Of Mars' Serpent

I will single you out on the battlefield,  
And come against you roaring  
Like a ram, caracoled, delinquent and  
Never minding that he crushing through  
The lilies and the Easter baskets;  
And I will gather you up in a pantheism of  
Sweat;  
I will have a plan, while the others  
Won't know what they are doing,  
And caressing you there out amidst the  
Furrows of Mars' serpent, watching our  
High school of dead friends arise like unfurled  
Sails,  
The clouds, yes, an audience of evaporated  
Gods;  
I will hone you with a craft of lips,  
And slip my crooked hammer around your ears,  
Make you believe so many things  
Until the victorious hour, when dusked,  
Saturnine, and beginning to melon junoesque,  
Caked in salt and lost bereavements  
You lie out amidst the priests who are blessing  
The otherwise dead,  
The cherubic footprints of our child soon to  
Awaken in you pattering  
Bothering away the first chance of sated  
Rest from your victorious head.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Game Of Her Spell

Placing a book in the window and leaving her there—  
She will not look out upon anything without your eyes  
To show her some kind of resort:  
And you can display the fireworks to her: Chinese lanterns  
That spring from the armpits of the cypress that  
Border your house from the neighbors,  
Or five-hundred blue roman candles that go off in  
The middle of the day when it gets dark enough because  
Of the crows:  
And she will not think for one moment of the amusements  
Of this love: laid down anywhere she cannot exist,  
For she needs your eyes upon her,  
To feel her bosom rise in the symmetry of her papery  
Swell—  
But any other man will do just the same—semiliterate—  
Placed in the castle of his senses, her perfumes will fill  
The pages of her boudoir,  
And she will come alive underneath him,  
And make a nest of his hands—and she will not look away  
From him until he is done with her  
For that is the game of her spell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Games Of Your Heart

Then there was a pretty boy on his  
Bicycle  
Like a tool, Siamese of glowing pinwheels  
And the spots in between  
The trees  
A zoetrope, a glowing lantern—  
A house of bees:  
You know what it is, or at least meant to me:  
As I followed you,  
As you were going to feed the loins  
An entire bouquet  
From the games of your heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Garden At Midnight

Jumping, jumping- over the candles  
In all of its wishes  
Over the birthdays: foxes leaping for the  
Cleavage of the grapes:  
Leaping, leaping and making music to themselves:  
And this is the cathedral of its lighthouses,  
And this is how its feral civilizations become  
Uncivilized:  
Holding out its wrists like candy, while enjoying the  
Soft and even lights of its living room  
That the goldfish live in,  
While the jasmine get out into the garden at midnight  
And tell their ten thousand stories,  
While all of her fellows are crossing the road:  
And the music boxes turn with their wound  
Up amusements,  
As the sea beckons and then returns into the grottos  
Which are not yet explored.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gardens Of Another Man

This is often the summer, or the way the housewife  
Feltâ€leaving herself beside the  
Long necklaces of the poolsâ€while the diamonds  
Sparkled off of her and her armpits,  
And the alligators waited downwind from her:  
Yes, they were lesser godsâ€;  
As her youngest son skipped skill and lit off fireworks  
Atop of the roof just a few doors down from herâ€;  
As they carried up furniture to all of the heavensâ€;  
And the canals sang torpidly to their own amusements,  
And to the space rockets farting off retarded into  
The skyâ€;  
Here are the spume of her cathedralsâ€;her areolas  
Lapsing sensuously into the caesurasâ€;  
As her canals become overcome with the raptures  
Of the churches she can no longer feel right to  
Attendâ€;they illuminate her and make her a cathedral,  
As, however, her swiftest hero is surely coming  
To meet herâ€;fighting off all of the monstersâ€;skeletons  
And werewolves regenerating on the other side  
Of the bends of the catacombsâ€;until she crosses the  
Canal to meet me, and we kiss full mouthedâ€;  
The tortoises languishing there, like Christmas trees  
Underneath the tents of things we still have to sellâ€;  
But for a while we are safeâ€;in the sidelines of the  
Amusementsâ€;as the airplanes swell  
Into the skies until  
There is no more room to moveâ€;and we have to meet  
Her eyes even though the lamplight is turned to  
Meet the gardens of another man.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gated Community Of His Sea

Sharks are in the sea, doing their professions.  
Going down, where don't they sleep;  
Is there a woman who is not a whore, a liar:  
I know men that are very good, who like to give head all the  
Time.  
Women are to them the sunflower in a smoky glade.  
Then the dragon curls; it is her body after eating all of her  
Friends;  
And I love Diana,  
But she is just a river with the bends:  
And I used to draw her or another goddess in class,  
But then my glass was empty;  
It didn't last.  
And she is beautiful slipping away with the last of the day,  
Giving her bosom to upside down news:  
I saw her slipping through the shallows of the bay.  
I thought to protect her, but I just gave her roses  
Until they clogged up the sea,  
The love-struck valentines clinging together in the  
Sea-green caesuras, making a pact.  
She didn't know what to say, but she swam around me for  
Some time speculating. Turns out she was not hungry  
Enough to speak- Maybe she followed the letter carries for  
Another week,  
Before desiring the richer man's gold and always  
And forever slipped into  
The gated community of his sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Genie Inside

Alone in the alkaline gutters,  
Commuters travelling over us, hurrying over  
The places we lie down in the places  
That keep to their own shadows—where hobos  
Don't have to wake up,  
And share fleas with dogs:  
In the sideways land, where flitting housewives  
Throw discarded books, and traps,  
And innuendos—  
It is a painting without any sincerity,  
A wishing well in a mall of our pubescent where  
We drink and drink,  
And lie down, far from the lamentations of our  
Mothers and fathers. We acknowledge  
That we've finally gotten a faithful girl pregnant  
But she is still on the other side of the world,  
And we are still playing a lottery of  
Bottles, swearing to ourselves that we will one  
Day find the genie inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Genies French-Kissed The Terrapin

Now they are here  
Like color,  
Dispatched upon our side of the canal  
Where we  
Pretend to survive-  
Tied underneath the rainbows,  
Trying to make a job of our nullifications-  
Dying sparrows  
So like a poem,  
Dispersed into the tears of April after  
All of the virgins have been selected  
And sacrificed,  
As I tried to say that I loved you,  
Even as the baseball team drove away:  
And our country fled  
Into another country, only if the lands so long  
Beneath the heavenly coats of forever  
Could get along  
Befriending the ponies that are never  
Misspelled,  
As the oceans divide the lonely greenness through  
The ibis of ballrooms,  
Where the bodies live, like fish manipulated,  
As the genies French-kissed the seraphim,  
And filled the water fountains  
With the libations they never meant to resolve.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gentled Rolling

They were held over in their march,  
So even the prettier girls had to watch the way  
The bachelors clung to their sallow houses  
Underneath the forts and their dying  
Butterflies-  
The terrapins in the makebelieve mangroves  
Eating lunch underneath the tallest of crosses,  
While the greatest of loves is lost  
To almost all of the tourists  
Until she lies there, fainted in desperation  
A cenotaph of a rose  
For the graves of the conquistadors  
Underneath the gentled rolling of the mowed  
Grasses.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ghost Of A Bullet Hole In My Right Temple

The last of the rum swoons in my throat,  
The ghost of a bullet hole in my right temple:  
The temporary lines of the minor leagues  
Glowing in dim hallucinations  
Where I dropp them:  
Her eyes so very far away,  
Not even caring to notice or understand  
The sadness in my wrists, and the lonely  
Papier-mâché echoes I hang on the  
Rainy walls for her,  
As I worship the abandoned distance between  
Us both:

I have taken her name from her  
And hidden it beneath the indented knees  
Of a particular cypress:  
God will return on Easter-  
She doesn't know who she is anymore,  
So she cups the mouth of a nearby man  
And marries him as she supposes:  
He is fitfully masculine, without any of my concentricity:  
When I was of her circumference,  
I ran around her for seven miles and recorded poetry,  
Though just at that time I hibernated  
In a Jewish woman's cave:  
Incidentally, now she is married to a Jewish man....  
(And I am the only true Jew)

Today, they are taking my manuscript to the printers.  
Yesterday, the publisher warned by that he might have  
To reconsider,  
(Notice how that rhymed, coincidentally)  
In Britain, it should always rhyme,  
But her eyes are always the same,  
And looking away, if I could see them-  
Today, my father asked my for \$50,000,  
And in return I would get good interest and all of  
It after Independence Day:  
F\*ck the red coats, because we are all now azure-

Lighting off some fireworks under the moon,  
If I saw her eyes and remembered them,  
What might I suppose she would let me do to her?

The sea without a name is where people  
Make love:  
When they make love they sing like young cats  
Making love:  
I would like to do this to her,  
To become the nameless grotto in  
The darkened window in some Floridian city:  
To pass her my tongue, like selling produce:  
A strawberry:  
If you are reading this and you know who  
You are, please write to me, because I am very alone,  
But you will not write to me,  
Because you could never understand this:

This is poetry:  
And here is my tongue:  
I am not yet a middle-aged pirate,  
Looking to get a law degree, but all of it is selling  
Something:  
For instance, now all of this is the thing:  
The beautiful linear random verb that should  
Be my sovereign line:  
Here it is: I love my father, though we are always alone:  
And the four years in this spacious basement has taught  
Me a rhyme:  
That I am too late to uncork her hymen,  
Though if she could let me, I could love her still:  
And present philologicistic cursive that she never felt:  
I could return to her city for the first time,  
And become that man she has hoped  
For on the blue border,  
And write her these lines that get entangled in briars,  
The tumbling needs of bankrupted  
Necessity....

But no- now it is done,  
As I have had time to read it over,  
With my flesh in a band-aid:

This is enough nonsense, Erin:  
I love you, but who am I anyways?  
I should die like a crucifixion in a used city:  
And if I come to your town tomorrow,  
Ignore me- because I am the inexcusable bruise,  
And we are headed towards the last line:  
There is the man who will supercede me:  
Take him by the jugular and make him enter  
You several times,  
Because I do not know what I am.  
And he does-  
And we are all ghosts living in  
A certain distance from who we want to be:  
Yes, this is all, sadly,  
And you are the only one who knows it.

Now I am spent like ejaculation,  
And that is my failure:  
And I will not read this another time:  
Now it becomes rudimentary and vulgar:  
I love you, but I am corrupted:  
I need you but I do not know who I am:  
Drunkenly, on my little raft,  
I will swim away now without an entourage:  
All I need beside me are me two dogs,  
They love me:  
I am going away now,  
And this is no excuse for an ending:  
Publicly, I have opened my chest  
Like a number on a fast-food menu,  
And that is all that I've got:  
I love you, but you don't yet remember,  
I love you, but the world is so  
Busy reproducing itself....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ghostly Beach

Lay down the body where it can feel  
My heat,  
Because I can be successful at construction:  
Her house is open like a glass cage,  
Her lips are the luggage of our eviction:  
I am drunk, but I will not die-  
Tonight, the moon is still where it must be,  
The sea is exchanging spit with the beach-  
They are making love and then showering,  
And pissing off my girlfriend,  
Because her bikini is all wet, and not much good,  
But for foreplay,  
And the evidence of her beauty:  
Nostalgically, those were better times,  
Times of sex and candy,  
Before Military Trail went under construction,  
Bought out and tore down my parents;  
But, really, things are never different, just exchanged:  
And I am only partway intelligent, '  
Completed by the cheapest bid,  
And will make do by kissing her mother's lips,  
And eating breakfast in the sooty escapade,  
Sitting beside the auctioneers of expensive cars:  
I keep on saying one day I will move out,  
Buy a cheap house near the sea, listen to her panting  
Forty miles away, even if she doesn't care, and  
Eats fried chicken and shops at the Gainesville mall.  
No longer a student, what will she do now?  
A groupie of the middle class highway, she will carry  
Their guitars and drum sets for them, give them head,  
Ride them- Whatever is the most plausible exercise-  
Its not my scene, but my dogs give me tongue,  
And each wave ignites the palate of the opulent speech,  
The drift my soul goes into like a seedy tourist,  
When my lips have touched too much rum,  
And the conquistadors are glowing like a parade of forgotten  
Truth in a seesawing bolero along the marriage processions  
Of the ghostly beach.





# The Ghosts

As you work in lights hanging over  
An empty bedroom, soon I will be a teacher in  
A high school all of my peers left  
A decade ago  
There still will be: the baseball diamonds,  
The fields of green alligators,  
The lunch rooms, and the sing - song truancy:  
And I will find a way again to  
Forget myself unconventionally:  
The echoes of footfalls like raindrops,  
The students of a mind that they go home to  
Singing to their televisions at a steady trot:  
And if I skip my own classes to light off fireworks,  
To remember her shallow tails as the memories  
Remember me,  
Then I will be the thing who is still there,  
Like a monster with a beautiful face who never  
Was asked to leave for the tundra of Russia  
Or Antarctica- and the music will play  
Slowly across the desks of graffiti  
And the sun will spin, illuminating all of the ghosts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ghosts Of Native Americans

Again elevating, making love before a beach:  
Levitating for helicopters who come primary colors  
Before they excavate the swing-sets of  
My childhood- the very amusements my mother pushed me  
On close to three decades ago are finally being  
Condemned- little recluse across the Palm Beaches,  
Her sinister lips kissing the gods who live in the  
Sky- While I ride my bicycle homeless,  
And wind tares away the meanings of these heavens  
As I strive to remember, and find her warm  
Embrace in the claustrophobic midway of the  
Carnivals forever escaping from the mortal wounds  
Of this heart  
Underneath a window of rocks where the ghosts  
Of native Americans levitate, chanting my name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ghosts Of Those Things Now Thoughtless

I want to take you to that quieted reservoir where the  
Twilight always plays its legs across the lazing corrugations  
As shadows bleed across given they pensive times, the lures  
Of Florida Holly, or the bulldozed dunes; but you are busy playing  
Those other sensory instruments which take off like thoughtless  
Tracers after the desire of your eyes: You will not come with me on  
My lonely walks, how many mountains I have summited alone,  
Only to come down alone again, and bathe in that quieting dusk  
Behind which the traffic passes just as insouciantly as you, without incident  
Or sudden collision of unsuspecting bodies, like the required impact  
Of bones framing organs and drowning blood, like I would have done with  
You to seed such egos imbedded in the geometry of your movement,  
You could never understand, but they would come wailing out of you,  
Only to quiet, suckling on your tits, tugging out your creamy nourishments;  
But you have walked away. Maybe you are moving to the Pacific, maybe  
He is heavy bellied and red haired pubis and moving all upon you, his breath  
smelling of the food he fed you both tonight under the ambiance of a crowded,  
socializing restaurant. What can I say, but lie. I do not care. You've  
Straightened your hair and look like an overweight snow white. No one should  
know that you are supposed to be out of the Ashkenazi forests and  
Wind tunnels, except that you tell them with your jokes, and the subtle  
Way you cross the street underneath the yet secular lights imbedded over  
A lazy holocaust, the skin of your dead ancestors shading you, doing just  
What my family warned me you were capable of, but I will not say anything More  
of that tonight, nor moan the ghosts of those things now thoughtless  
Which only should have been....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ghouls

I want to have Halloween in my own house.  
I want to have candycane sex with her  
In the next room  
Even if she is an import.  
And to take my children trick-or-treating.  
I want to share bear-claws with friendly  
Neighborhood cops in the morning,  
So I can say,  
Look, ma, pa, I have finally done something.  
I want to hear the rain patter on the roof,  
And the secret squeak of things  
Intruding on my property.  
I want to take part in the gossip  
Of all the neighborhood's suicides,  
And to stand on my front stoop  
And watch unfaithful couples break up  
And blow away like leaves in autumn's wind  
As the spooks come out for the full moon's holiday  
When we take off our masks  
And housewives walk the street  
In red licorice stilettos, giving away candy.  
I want to have Halloween in my own house.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gift Of All Of This Sun

High in those basins where I wished that we'd  
Made love,  
And while my dumb mother is brushing her teeth and getting  
Ready to go to bed in a rainy trailer park,  
I just think about your bush: How it can light up and speak to  
Me from any part beside the road;  
This is what it does while it bears children and chain smokes,  
While it makes totem poles with the chain saws of your  
Friction;  
Don't you understand now; under the dying light of these nine  
Or so planets, I've chanted, I've climbed up and down for you,  
While your children sang and then surrendered so that  
They wouldn't have to see the gun fight swung over the sweet  
Monuments of your body;  
And I've been up and down swinging in the Grand Canyon three  
Times or so for you, chanting out the long answer, with my old  
Girlfriend, the old bushwhacker with all of her stars and tin  
Surrenders;  
And now I am all alone and doing good and will have a house  
All alone in an ancient neighborhood that I won't have to hear the  
Sound of your surrender in unless you really want me to;  
For you are the lightning, and the recoil of gun:  
You are all that I've really wanted, because you bare children under  
The gift of all of this sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gift Of Love By One Such As You

I have tried calling for you for so long,  
The pain has become a common courtesy  
Around which both you and your lover should attend,  
Dance and walk down into and behold the ushering walls  
That have caved in upon me: Point thinks out,  
Nuzzle and curl under his arm and stretch,  
See those things you would have found beautiful,  
And let my fever fall down upon you like the pulsing  
Thorn in a star: See how in the least I have  
Succeeded, if you didn't even know, or you  
Don't read it anymore, that I still write for you  
Laid out upon a sheetless mattress, post-modern Prometheus in a tomb at  
High altitude; I pick wildflowers by the roots,  
And thrust them still choking out for you like suffocating fish.  
I once took an aspen bough in autumn and drove it  
To your town, meaning to leave it on your doorstep,  
But I only fell asleep at my friend's house, when he  
Said I shouldn't meander, so I didn't go to you to see  
You serving drinks to your many painless lovers. Now in  
The dark again, I try to arrange myself by your romance,  
And wonder if you have scars on your body in the same  
Places I have scars, and if you know I have one tattoo from Spain, a little  
Dagger now blurred like a cellist on a darkened stoop.  
He plays all night for the cats, and when he lays down his  
Bow it just as well may be suicide, for the Roman forts  
Are like white scars on the cliffs, and the windmills are  
Turning their heads like gawking choruses spinning their  
Arms, winnowing the wind's muses; and if I should  
Not brush against you ever,  
Know that I have already changed uncountable times,  
In my attempts to be near you; and I am forgetting who I am,  
Or that I ever carried that notion to know myself through the  
Gift of love by one such as you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gifts They Never Knew

There is a brown thimble in my soul:  
It goes beating- beating porous- letting the blood and  
Feelings through:  
There are the rinds of acrobats in there too:  
Curling, curling up the ladders that drew  
The sun and the moon  
As they walked their constant avenue- lovers in the grove,  
And the spaces between two bodies that undress  
And then pass dousing into rivers:  
I suppose there must have been a fight, but I crossed myself  
And went down and became homeless underneath the open wounds  
Of her soul:  
Her name: Alma, Alma, water beating in the man, tears on  
The open bellies of asphodels as customers come in:  
Wanting- wanting her too: but all that she has sung echoes  
And she says she can only want for one man:  
Not me- not me, but he who bore both of her children:  
And I want to die, as the stag crests the saddle  
On the valley overlooking the cemetery my grandmother receded  
In- and it feels for a long while that I will not know her before  
I sleep,  
But I keep to the pinpricks of my veins, saying things that are awful  
And scarred, as the traffic returns and the weathers:  
The airplanes touching down like Indian feathers, stealing away with  
Breaths and cheeks the gifts they never knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gills Of Unknown Trespassers

Blood recoiling from the nuisance of  
The absences of the senses as, at first, the busses  
Turned around,  
Looking just as beautiful as those chartreuse  
Butterflies that attracted all of the boys from their  
Playgrounds-  
And so when in the summer the angels cried,  
Entrepreneurs, just as delicate as China dolls,  
Went around and bottled the  
Sweat off of their delicate senses  
And sold it to those of us who were in charge—  
As the beautiful vision continued,  
Stretching for many miles into the east,  
Until there was no further places for the names  
Of men, as the illusions skimmed across the waves  
Where mouths opened sporadically  
And the gills of unknown trespassers fluttered,  
Not understanding what exactly it was that  
They were supposed to save.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Girl Across The Street

In another dowsing of the head—  
To wherever the mammals go when they nod off:  
When they are better men,  
Given to valleys where they know the names of  
Flowers and of death—  
But, otherwise, to amusement rides that in the  
Morning blow off like paper snowflakes making  
Love to lighters—  
Like angels sold as statuary at flea markets—  
Only leaving the nuisances of the words,  
Like hangnails, to bloom painfully by themselves—  
To keep on pretending that they are getting  
Better—while the other side of the canal  
Keeps looking greener and greener,  
And the girl across the street  
Keeps promising her back of tricks to the new  
Mailman who arrives every day with nothing  
To lose.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Girl I Can'T Even Be Sure

All day long going on the slender paths so  
High up,  
First using one eye and then maybe none:  
The tumulting sea a laugh track roaring,  
Apathetic grandmother riotous from their mice  
Round crypts,  
Girls in the curls of waves like mollusks,  
Like lips of shadows underneath the sun caressed  
Banyans,  
The deepest shadows in the shallowest shade,  
Taking boats as slender as her hips out to meet  
The mother of all crocodiles to try and persuade her  
To shed a tear for me, for the girl I can't  
Even be sure if I loved.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Girl Who I Love

I can play my game- you can play my game  
Too:  
Open mouthed, looking in at the zoo,  
In a wild and wonderful pace  
Where the amusements filibuster and the zoetrope  
Of the roller coasters turn  
Around,  
In days without number getting dizzy underneath the  
Sun so easily found:  
Words on a vine, being plucked, and tucked in  
Beneath trucks,  
Being turned up, unearthed  
After the amusements have gone home,  
After the bicycles have left the graveyard,  
And I am left to roam:  
Words in the cusps of her hometown in the nape of  
Her venison:  
While the bicycles rest as breathless as candles.  
Or I know that you suppose just what she does  
And I have been up again in the  
Morning,  
Yawning again, or telling secrets, but only to  
The girl who I love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Girl Who Isn'T Real, Who Isn'T You

You give me numbers until I'm read in the face,  
But I am still an old opponent-  
Look at the scars of my failed suicide,  
The places they've surprised me from the cake.  
The puppies whose noses are like svelte tumble near  
The drainage where the conquistadors sleep.  
Grandfather keeps his poems underneath his armpits,  
Like housewives keep there pies on the windows to kill  
Lesser housewives with the smell of their baked fruits-  
There was this girl too who wanted a ride home-  
She lived on another planet, I know it was her tomb,  
But I told her I had to encore my empty stage,  
Sweep up the forensic evidence of cheap confetti.  
I almost got to see her through the veneer of her brazier,  
But I wasn't ready,  
And now I'll have nothing to do, but sob in my room  
Until she comes out of the sea of evil flowers,  
Awakening senses who cannot feel. She is done servicing  
The garroted pirates on her pinwheel,  
And now she'll pluck her kisses on limbs loving the  
Changing of my scars, and hiss and feel-up  
The girl who isn't real, who isn't you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Glad And Cloudy Void

Unbounded reasonlessness looking for the broken  
Bottles the same sheered color as the  
Grass, where the light is smoking through, and where  
It is curling for awhile:  
Where it is gathering up in Bristle vases,  
And making shallow promises for the eyes of little girls  
Who haven't yet opened the prisons of speech:  
It all seems for awhile to be congenial, and the ephemeral  
Misfits don't even know who they are,  
As the cars speed through the showers of light that moves  
As if curtains of whispers before the awestruck passengers  
Who float with out reason of empiricisms through  
The glad and cloudy void.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Glint That They Would Never Teach You

Feral boy move with great sly in your  
Canoe  
Peruse the middle-class backyards not  
On holidays  
But school days: look at the amphibians  
In a mess and truck of love;  
They seem to cry of you-  
Like the housewives on the green tramline,  
Squeezing from the earth their  
Citrus trees in taught bundles-  
What they are doing is the same as you  
Can guess-  
Slip like a seed pod in blue mud down beside  
The pungent ways they mow;  
All the half starved lions escaped from the  
Reserve seem to know that there  
Are blue gills in shallow pools.  
Minnow farts ripple the sluggish teal like  
Diving bottle rockets-  
Pinwheel slightly around water lilies, speckle  
In red holly shade:  
Go down the grid of careless amazements-  
Never know a word- Burp with sound.  
Lie on your back and become the glint that they  
Would never teach you,  
The oiled suit they couldn't sew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Glories Of Your Tongue

Now is all in the skinny green of arrows shot  
Above the prairies of harmless orchards:  
Now is all of this, like the far away singing of my mother  
Pressed like a hopeless romantic to my father's  
Breast:  
While I am now all right hear, all collected underneath the gyrations of  
The birds and the sea:  
And I cannot even get a teaching job, because I am so nervous,  
That I belong inside another country;  
And I want your flag tattooed on my chest, and beneath that the  
Hallucinations of the frontera that you had to cross:  
And I want to be with you, Alma, even if it means going without  
Breathing and without water:  
I want to be a single wish of your witchcraft; and I want your body  
Strung across me like a psalm,  
Like a healing wound, while all of the actors portray the things that  
Cannot exist into a theatre that can no longer be real:  
While the visions come like angels, like airplanes  
Above the amusement parks of your russet elements;  
Your body folding against the dryer of my beating heart like  
Clothes cling to the sun, like grapes becoming obese on the vine;  
As I swear by these lines, as my kiss answers the glories of your tongues.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Glorious Lights Of Her Fair Grounds

Turning down the road and dousing the  
Lights of cul-de-sacs,  
And I have run away and so no longer have need for  
Any stanzas:  
The bottle is amber, and maybe I have killed a moose,  
And am offering its choicest peaces like a red yard sale  
Out my front door for Alma;  
And maybe she likes me, and maybe she will come to me:  
Or there will only forever be obese mosquitoes  
And obese call girls, taking my money and drinking my  
Blood;  
And maybe my bed is a woman that my mother no longer  
Attends,  
But the fruit trees still whisper like unwelcome strangers  
Outside of the glorious lights of her fair grounds  
Into which she has so happily taken total possession of my soul.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Glorious Ways

Your brown body pulls me across the desert,  
Just as desirable as the luck of the hares in your overgrown  
Backyard:  
You do this to me in your ways, swaying like the séance of  
A metamorphosing violin:  
There you are  
Crenellating the last calls of a fortress like the signals for life  
Over the nameless hills  
And the tourists mulling like jackanapes in the soft golf courses  
Of icecreams;  
And that you were so rude as to bother the sky with your eyes  
That way,  
Whose most direct of senses found their way across the fronteras  
To Texas and your old backyards,  
Calling up my dreams to meet your soul;  
The involuntary arrows you plucked me from across the streets  
Of our work places  
Until I kissed and laid you down into the newest grottos under  
The chicken wire stars where the films had just started shooting,  
And there alongside the carport where my mother  
Worked so diligently as a saint cleaning the working class vestments,  
The toads and crickets ululating to her,  
Signaling as if in the husks of unbounded prayer  
The glorious ways we shed off our old selves, and intermingling  
Had our pleasures.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Glow Of The Fading Evening's Television

More powerful by number,  
The larger we get,

And new scars held in our hand  
At the petting zoo:

The otter takes off its oily pelt,  
Actually an unemployed woman,  
Look at how she cracks an oyster off  
Her chest,  
And drinks all your father's sea-green  
Booze.

Oh,  
What fun we could have if we didn't  
Live at home,  
If we hadn't been gone such an awful  
Long time,

And the busses are already done going home,  
Doing that strange dance after the entrancing  
Ice-cream truck  
Through our neighborhood;

But all the same,  
I could bite my lip and live next to her again,  
Watch the girls in their roller-skates,  
The everyday cumulous-nimbus tromping in,

I could put her in my eyes like a ship  
In a bottle,  
And pretend for the rest of this strange sequence  
Of afternoons that I am someone famous,  
Immaculately careworn,  
Who never had a father nor was ever contradicted  
In a dinner conversation warmed  
By spiced rum and the glow of the fading  
Evening's television.



# The Goblins That Dance

They say this thing to  
The world of  
Many lovers who are  
Just getting up  
Now that in this  
Neighborhood is not  
Anywhere to believe  
In-  
The ghosts never find  
Their love-  
The immature Chinamen  
Are still smoking in  
Their stalls-  
The lightning is waiting  
For the goblins that  
Dance-  
Your father is waiting for  
Your mother across  
The canal-  
And the woman you love  
Sleeps without any breath  
While you get drunk  
In the arms of a  
Butterfly that has  
Forgotten all of the  
Ways to love-

Robert Rorabeck

# The God I Made You In

Where am I going, now that the god I made you  
In is dead: Because, I've drunken bourbon and Pedro  
Barely snores: The cars are just in séance,  
And I've been reading my poems; I don't know  
What any of them mean, but I am listening to  
Daniel Johnston and, like he says, "I live for  
Love, " and if you'd let me, I would have delivered  
A dictionary that bloomed inebriated in full longevity:  
I have, but how unrequited it came; and how many  
Times have you let him come inside of you, while  
I've spent myself fruitlessly onto this page:  
How many times! That I should no longer care,  
But vagabond from Florida, and Colorado, and take-up  
In vacated residences of the distending rich, and  
Drink all of that forgotten liquor in sad cheer for you:  
This is what I'll do: I'll steal the trinkets by which  
I continuously hope in catching your eyes, but will  
Not send you anymore flowers: You are cheap and  
Hungry, and I will catch you by that color which  
Reflects best underwater and by moonlight; and by  
This I'll come, and love you, and build fun with you,  
By either snow, or by sun; and it matters not what sex  
You have even now apposed to you: I'll come,  
As I've said, but first I'll go to sleep now into a yard  
I do not own, where I certainly do not belong,  
And then I'll come.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Goddess Of Their Adolescent Loves

Canoe of the lavender gut in the tight rope of  
The canal  
Spending words into dusk when it should have  
Gone to school,  
And underneath it all of the soggy fireworks:  
And in the shade truanancies of panhandling  
The blue gills look up to like  
Cardboard preschoolers: what things do these  
Wilds know,  
Brushing the simulacrums of suburbia,  
And the things coming home with the traffic  
Listening to their music. Do they really know  
How to wonder where they belong,  
Or perceive the telltale signs of their children  
Linger half naked in the Faberge oasis of the  
Well mowed yard:  
Well, for them the moon is just the goddess of  
Their adolescent loves,  
But she will never come down for them,  
High in the thefts of nocturnal thievery.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gods And Their Women

If you go all the way back  
You may seem them making love  
At the end of the woods,  
Where the wolves hunt unclothed,  
Nearby the little house where grandmother  
Still lives, though no one will admit it-  
The gods and their women,  
Paying no heed to the four seasons,  
And only stopping twice a day for prayer.  
They have no need for justification,  
For they are happy to do what  
They were made for,  
And sometimes you stop the car  
And idle up to the mouth of that road,  
But it goes back so far,  
And you know you are not welcome;  
Instead you drive all day to the theatre,  
Where you can watch them from a distance,  
And you can be sure not to bother them.  
After the credits, walking back again  
To the real world turning with no need of you,  
You count your change  
And find just enough to buy a lonely  
Condo, far away from your father  
And the four horsemen,  
But you haven't yet built up enough courage,  
And your mother is lonely  
In the foothills of the buffalo mountain,  
So you cannot yet leave her to move  
That much closer,  
Though one day you will saddle up unnoticed  
In the shadow draped forest  
Were the wolves hunt unclothed  
Where you are sure to see them making love,  
Close to where grandmother still lives,  
Never minding the four seasons,  
The women and their gods.





# The Gold In Fort Knox

You sleep next to your husband and sigh  
At his breath,  
And the snowflakes fall, and the wine  
Comes,  
And your little daughter plays her fingers  
Through your hair  
And nudges your tit like a fox does  
Plums and scuppernongs;  
And I don't know you,  
And I don't know my father, but I care to know,  
While the airplanes ripple,  
While girls on them seem to be mirages,  
Beautifully pale women being sold into slavery in  
North Africa underneath the missing nose of  
That very sphinx  
Made to strut and dance for entire caravans of carless  
Men,  
And coming in their ways to liking it,  
Eventually gossiping of what they have seen,  
Like the boys who happened out of the very shells of  
Opal mythology, and the waves  
And woke up and strutted like pervasive chickens  
Or cocks and made love to the two young  
Swedish mothers honeymooning on the beaches  
Their tits all golden and strummed like  
All the gold in fort knox.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gold Mines Of Any Other Man's Bed

Burning by the fires of our pigeoning word,  
The workers who are nothing building up the cenotaphs for  
Conquistadors  
Or the grizzly bears or something less who is almost  
Never here:  
But I remember skipping out of school, in my imperfect though  
Beautiful skin:  
Skipping across the reams of homes that the housewives  
Entered in like sheets of music to dry the clothes;  
And Alma is right here; or Alma is with him,  
As I chase down windmills, as I sing my solemn hymn:  
The day becomes just the choice gift of that star that we are all  
Chasing;  
Alma's brown skin goes to bed, and she lies down her mother's  
Head in the clouds of a unnamed room:  
I have never been to her home, though she has been to my bed,  
And maybe in my dreams like a latchkeyed colt who forever has  
To roam,  
A founding cheating its destiny between the lines of reintroduced  
Wolves,  
While the airplanes usher in their letters, too high to really sound  
Down to her their gifts of love,  
And their wings too unconditionally spread to ever comfort her again  
Across the goldmines of any other man's bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Golden Rule

Words on a veranda of awakening species:  
There you can see them coming up from the mud,  
Crackling,  
Like lightning and jub-jub:  
Some, some new pagan god must be doing this,  
He himself just awakening from  
A rusting hatchback,  
Frostbit and erudite, but already his dogs are howling:  
His dogs are howling as the moon circles.  
She too is a pest in love.  
She wants to know what is getting up while she steals  
Her light,  
And puts on her shade over the amphibian quarters,  
Her high beams riding through the shanty eaves,  
The ghosts towns;  
And I would like to say I saw you riding there, a sexy  
Centipede in caesuras of ridges, following the power lines,  
Following the telephone lines-  
Hoping for churches; but the new god proved me wrong,  
For he was waking things up from the carport,  
Or the easement where the sweetly trained otter was  
Already waking up to proposition venal housewives;  
And already I can here the traffic;  
And already it is time for school- And S- will be awakening  
Beside A-,  
And this is the golden rule.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Golden Webs Of His Sister's Paramour

I am going into a new red bricked valley  
Where I must promise not to look at myself  
Too many times in what nimbus underbelly  
There might be,  
Or the indigo of leaking guts of blocked school-  
Buses,  
Look at me hiding out through lunch, my students  
They fine and skipping,  
Or playing basketball next to where the pummeled  
Alligators are correlating;  
And if I see two distant figures crossing the  
Funneled corrugations, leaving school and all  
Sanctioned nations, coroneted by sea-gulls late to  
Brunch,  
And the palm trees swaying like planted pompadours,  
I must realize that it is my far deformed youth I am seeing,  
That casual boy who looks nothing like me,  
Who never loved me; and I should sit and pray and wonder  
How far a field he is going, those two jubilating boys  
Like unchallenged shadows going, to smoke and swing  
And not think too much on the backyard patio where the  
Clear pool is crenellating, the golden webs of his  
Sister's paramour.

For, in fact, there is nothing I can  
Teach him- The cops have already lost him and  
his parents can not imagine where he is,  
As they industriously stock the shelves of their  
Insignificant entrepreneurial store; but  
Now I see him, a thought laughing on the roof,  
A punk-rock conquistador slowly receding while the clouds  
Ascend him- The sun is sinking- they are still burning  
Sugar-cane in the west, passing over so many canals of  
Citrus-tumbled drainage. Beautiful midgets ride upon the  
Smooth tops of soft-shelled turtles,  
Passing languidly and cross-legged under quite peaceful  
Bridges; mermaids and commuters line up for  
Gas; soon too the students will be deposited once more like  
Rivers back into the romance of their domestic valleys,

The slender plots of green and rooms legal  
And sanctioned for them to explore;  
Finally he will find his own way home and the curtains will cloth  
Him, and the audience will first clap and stand and go away  
And forget all about him, and he will not be seen once more-  
It will be like we never were, as I lay thus napping  
Dreaming of a youthful brother who of, in truth, I am no longer sure.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Goldfish Whom

You made a new mistake they help over our pillow  
As the airplanes circled and circled into perpetual caracoles  
Until they couldn't come down—  
Until the very end of the hurricanes had left—and all of the most  
Beautiful of housewives had moved far away from  
My house—  
And my parents eventually contemplating selling the last of  
Their horses—  
And matriculating beneath the parapets to sell  
Christmas trees—  
So into the daylight of that hemisphere they christened  
The color purple,  
Until only she was good enough for herself—  
And I kept on try to spell things to the new classrooms of  
Vanishing elk and marionettes:  
But they still couldn't believe my simulacrum ever existed—  
And in the fall of this year they will be vesting new presidents—  
But I don't suppose you will ever have to come to see them  
Now that you've decided to save yourself from all of this—  
From you window where the cats are howling against  
The wolves—  
And their strange memories echo to the Ferris Wheels of  
The goldfish whom, thankfully, will never have an memory of  
This—of this.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Good Feelings

My mother approaches me as  
I drink tequila and read  
Jorge Luis Borges' "Deathwatch on The  
Southside".  
She doesn't even know how I am doing this,  
As a fine mist seems to fall;  
And she seems like she could be my aunt,  
Or even any one of her sisters,  
Even dead:  
Where there are hills and hills of somnolent  
Sororities next door to the day laborers in the  
Orchard,  
The despotic chicken coops and children  
Half buried by the tide,  
And I should be skipping school right now,  
Learning to love you over the shoulders and the  
Tight distances of classrooms,  
But those school girl days are gone,  
And here I am twisting wishes over canals like  
Bottle caps,  
Like brands which everyone uses, empties,  
And just tosses away after the good feelings  
Are all done.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Good News

Predicted in terrible tragedies, even while the veins of god  
Were struck in hosannas  
Atop the fresh crèches of the mountains, tendered feet looming above  
The tangling impotent fetishes of the busses full of tourists  
Who crowd the nose-weary passes on  
The cinderblocks of busses- everything about them putrescent  
To the nose of a sommelier- these are not her bouquet,  
Though it was her birthday today: and her body spindled  
Outwards across the sub-lunar arcade,  
And held thoughts to itself, and kissed her daughter:  
And looked as if I imagined her in high school, like crossing the bath  
With the first life sized angels who drank from the water fountains  
And had bruises on her knees:  
And there she was, accentuating the kennels of bricks- dragging whatever  
Life there was in that place up by its britches,  
And then to college and marriage and now far away:  
Over so many canals and estuaries of Mexican honeymoons:  
I cannot even say that I want her any more, since I have lived in so many  
Trailer parks, and now she is no longer my muse;  
But I sing to her sometimes on her birthday, like a wish being bruised,  
Though all of her candles still flutter after the wake of homeless airplanes,  
As the days herself become warmed- and a family I can never know  
Surrounds her- and the silhouettes of those mountains loom down  
In a cradle of blessed gods rich in the steeped purples of the high basins  
Who shed tears for her, and can only bring her the good news.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Grandest Stories

I don't want to rest anymore while  
You sleep;  
I know the gods in their forms  
Gifting me with amnesia, trying  
To steal my sisters away  
In the Phoenix  
Desert  
The planes popping around  
Like gifts at New  
Years,  
Spreading their wings like  
Wishbones at the  
Dinner table for giants,  
Saying a word of prayer  
And the going ahead and telling  
The grandest stories for their  
Cousins who don't even  
Believe in them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Grass Is Green

Trucks burn through the forest  
Where wolves sleep:  
The sky is blue; the carport is green and there  
Are virgins in both of those places:  
They are my milky queens; and when I am taking a sabbatical,  
I step outside and skip across the pools:  
I hold my breath and lay a finger on the world,  
While the alligators curl in their canals,  
While the housewives grow poorer and far less assured;  
And I am glad that I don't have to live forever  
In their sad part of the world:  
That I can go leaping over their sunken shoulders, so moribund;  
And I can love a girl whose name is Alma,  
Who is sad that one day she will have to eat her rabbits:  
Because, sleeping inside their chicken wire cages  
They remind her of her two soft brothers she left together behind in  
Mexico,  
As she crossed the river and never looked back: Alma can never be  
A housewife;  
But she has two children all the same, and the sea is hers  
And the grass is green and cries out softly in Alma's name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Grasses Of Those Backyards

I'll half remember you,  
Placed like an insincere crucifix  
Between the caesuras of  
A butterfly's wings—something truly  
Gaudy, if not utterly beautiful,  
The housewives ignoring you as they  
Drive home,  
But the horses remembering you—  
How you fed their senses with your tiny  
Brown body struggling home  
Through the houses, like the seas who  
Have no name nor any heavens,  
Just the tiny lights off all of their  
Doors—gathered together sufficient  
For a church or a graveyard—  
But you never lay in the grasses of those  
Backyards—nor do you look up at the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Grave Of An Anonymous

How goes the day in its boiling summits  
As airplanes turn up from the ground, exhumed from  
The bilious cages of  
Ants and the baseball diamonds of ant lions:  
Shooting across the stage like bottle rockets from a penny's  
Cleft,  
As all of the girls of the girls sit at all of the astonishment:  
Astonished,  
Or they wait for the racehorses who have sunken like  
Granny smith apples to be  
Exhumed from the waves, and animated in the sad avenues  
Of carefully planted trees  
Who are forever in their astounding cathedrals along  
The highways-  
And they go, while the tourists go: both of them exhibiting  
Similar wonderments of motion,  
As the waves crack their knuckles against the shore,  
And the nameless rose grows over the grave of an  
Anonymous whore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Graves Of Conquistadors And Defeated Indians

Threads disavow with evening,  
And rental cops shut down the illusions  
Of the roller coasters' movement,  
And no money is exchanged in the park  
At night, as Mickey Mouse takes off his head  
And touches the princess inappropriately,  
And the offspring of tourism sleep oblivious  
In roadside motel rooms, shushed by the narcolepsy  
Of pines, drowsing, drowsing,  
Unaware of the invisible stains and the terrain  
Of microscopic insects, the paltry nuisances  
Lovers exchange for free;  
When my teeth ache, I reminisce of such places,  
The landscaping of purified water that overflows  
In between sitcoms and botoxed thighs,  
The never ending parade of expensive automobiles  
Flowing to and from those tributaries,  
A concrete river, a ribbon twined for hurricanes,  
And open mouths drooling near the burning sugarcane,  
And orange groves over spilling like microcosms of  
Creation, and homeless men betting at the racetrack,  
As the alligators wait to be handfed on the borders  
Of the scalding parking lot,  
And little children growing up half-abandoned leaving  
Trails of breadcrumbs through Walmarts, and  
Busy careless intersections, until they are solidified  
And made real, and turn gray in front of the television  
Set where the rat is inviting them into his mouth,  
Charging grand admissions through the splendiferous  
Parades of hucksters and talking rodents, the landscaping  
Lushly green and overgrowing the graves of  
Conquistadors and defeated Indians.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Gravestones Which Say Their Names

The prom queens are in disguise,  
Brushing in their raiment, slipping like anorexic  
Manatees into the green goodbye,  
And the world is overheating, panting like a tortoise  
Who has eaten too much of the deep orchid,  
And is feeling nauseous watching the tourists go by,  
Growing around the beautiful mermaid slapping with  
The coy otters who can't think but smile,  
And soon we will be selling fireworks, and I will be  
Getting paid; Even sooner still, someone will slip away,  
Forgetfully and finally, the persistent conclusions of  
Gravity, but grandmother finally has a headstone,  
And I am writing another poem trying to tattoo my  
Skeleton onto this page: Wishful thinking, like trying  
To mix cake in a recipe of scars and tears,  
And everything else the little girls don't know to say  
For so many years, as the buses draw up in evening,  
And in morning, as mosquitoes steal insignificant amounts  
Of blood, and the children in their seats fight and squeal,  
And one or two yet afraid hide their faces in books and  
Worlds that dream for them- Led by the hands of the state,  
They will grow up eighteen years knowing the system,  
And the attritions will leave them smoking on the other side  
Of the canal, or farting on sun torched rooftops, and the  
Successes will buy them homes, and insure them in fine automobiles,  
But finally they will graduate in rented gowns, a zoetrope  
Of accolades and smiling families, and then separate like  
Tributaries into the flowing institutions of their merit, and most  
Likely will never see each other again, except that they will all  
Rest like so much sleep under the fixed gravity and the  
Gravestones which say their names.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Graveyard Of Man's Toys

I heard the noise of giving-birth today,  
Deep in the truculent woodworks of the world.  
This began with passion's coy whispering  
And the coming together of two bodies in  
The brush near the speaking fire  
Where the griot told stories of everthing's beginning.  
"This is how it began, " he began,  
And the man and woman joined in the woods today.  
Under the shallow sway of the Australian pines,  
Like some kind of sea....  
In a graveyard of ancient red cars  
Filled with pornography. Their bodies vibrated  
With a passionate hum,  
The pollen and the bee in the river of life,  
Two fish in the stream, a boy and a girl  
Rehearsing for their roles as mother and  
Father, their lips expelling a Broadway musical.  
On the other side of the wall,  
Gathering scattered seeds, I pretended not to  
Hear my mother and father in their bedroom,  
The lapping waves two bodies break-  
With my eyes I could not peer through this,  
The Cerberus bedding a hole in the earth,  
The invitation of flesh drawing blood to orifice,  
The extension of iris, the sacred thing  
Spied through the wall's loose stones  
In the graveyard of man's toys.  
The months of copulation to produce a son,  
The fragile vessel budded in the rust,  
The sounds that come painfully jovial  
Conjoined with such miracles,  
Sleeping gardeners attending the bedroom,  
Then lusty janitors cleaning up with lips and tongue.  
I spied through a hole in wall  
All these things that were done, the griot tells,  
As their sounds leapt over and away,  
Panting, leaving echoes to drip in my silence.





# The Graveyards Of My Name

Now from the fire-engines—  
From the fire towers—  
You look at me naked in a way, as I have my wife  
And sea shells,  
But otherwise a very elusive and obscene vocabulary:  
But the roses have raced and have been  
Given their nuptials underneath the pine trees,  
And now the winners wear their wreathes and their lays  
And now are otherwise going home misspelled:  
As I seemed to see you in the painting, the only one  
In a wayside room in a hotel, first or second story,  
Going either up or down from  
An all too busy highway—while the roses cannot  
Say even enough of ourselves—and while they are all  
Too busy blooming,  
And the sun is in his number and filled with the incrustations  
Of the illuminate for-get-me-nots—  
And this is death, in his busy portable—trying to  
Transfigure all of his numbers from the living—  
It is some kind of equation—  
And I am not telling you the truth—  
But I am your paradise—if you are another angel fallen  
From the sky—  
And you are in heaven right now,  
And maybe dreaming of the graveyards of my name

Robert Rorabeck

# The Graveyards Of Sandcastles

Eternal suppositions of the somnambulant jellyfish—  
This way she is going,  
With her poisonous dresses flung out, and all around her  
A sunken orchard—  
Feeling through the tears shed by the clouds—  
In a beautiful nation beside the shore:  
This is my disease for her,  
While the traffic stutters beneath the kites and the  
Claustrophobic airplanes:  
She is not dashing towards any particular ballroom—  
In a clutter of tangles—nerves like open extension  
Chords waiting for the Pieta of my mother at  
The Laundromat—even the men do not know  
What to think of her,  
As she waits for her time to glisten in the graveyards of  
Sandcastles where you take your children  
To escape the prisons that you call home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Graveyards Of The Dust

Post-script to the sadness of the interstate  
And the affair.  
I saw you go both ways but neither with  
The words for us—  
As the sun fled like a doe over the  
Lactating estuaries of a Disney World  
That isn't real—  
That is tinfoil and show-boats—  
But the ether—  
The ether is there—and star dust  
And tinker bell,  
Taking off her work clothes—  
Laying down in the brown mud baths  
Of her skin—  
And her reality unfolds with her  
Eyes closed—  
I went over the tracks to find her:  
I went over every day until even my dog left  
Me behind—  
And then I went to China,  
Ambivalent—  
And she called once with so few words  
They failed to advertise the beauty of her  
Kidnapped raiment—  
Catching me up like a frog, and turning  
Me into many things—  
Each with a space full of flowers cut amidst  
The highways that flow into  
The graveyards of the dust  
Of each of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Graveyards Of The Wintering Earth

Tractors no longer shall enfold the earth,  
Leaving tracks that dysfunctional scientists consider  
For carbon dating,  
The beautiful tattoos in between the thirsty frogs  
And coral snakes-  
The wind doesn't even break as it tries to snap the  
Neck of the all-weather c\$ck,  
And little girls fall down and beat their fists against  
The stones lining the walk after mommy and  
Daddy aren't home:  
They just want the hurricanes to come and take them  
Across the ships to a yellow bricked road,  
But now even the hurricanes are pressed like  
Cut flowers into the alabaster tomb,  
And airplanes are free to leap silver and gold,  
With their little banners and emblems,  
With beautiful women all from other countries but  
All in their stilettos;  
And the dragon's fangs have been sewn.  
Have I told you all of this before, all of the amnesiac friends  
Are waking up, battle weary, but ready to spit and curse:  
And right away, yawning, they pummel each other back into  
The sodden dirt,  
And now the great wide hearse comes taking all the wildflowers  
Back to the graveyards of the wintering earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Great Body Of Excuses For This Love

Catches of knights up in their trees:

They too like bouquets, like fires who only burn through

The lunchtime:

While when it is our time, you like it when I pull your hair:

And the rabbits bare themselves for the luck of

The dog tracks,

And the men stationed there just grow skinnier with more

Tattoos:

And then you go to your home at night, Alma, filled with the

Excuses that you will never let me use,

While airplanes seem to stretch their stewardesses and use up

All of their love:

They return their princesses over the oceans, as the arks return

Their doves,

Underneath the suppositions of rain clouds where we have hidden

So many things,

While the neighborhood cats bask in the penumbras underneath

The trellises, nibbling on the thorny throats of roses

Who have grown up from the great body of excuses for this love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Great Catastrophe Of Everything Mundane

I don't go out anymore,  
Into that fine neighborhood where everyone's  
Smile opens in the plotted afternoon,  
Where the busy traffic like fiery rapids lead,  
Drown into suburban tranquility,  
Where little girls' fingertips burn casually up in the  
Emulation of parkland trees -  
Where is that but an impossible normalcy where  
I before dreamed. Now  
I have lapsed into my disappearing act.  
I have begun to bloom into the real scars,  
Where I drape upon myself the largest winter organs,  
The impermeable tears of stricken angels,  
And the trances storm clouds spell upon me  
Smoking outside of work,  
The inklings I had way back in distended high school  
Class rooms whiles ago,  
Cold chicken noodle soup and swing sets  
A long ways from flat land and cornfields,  
Or the amusement parks of out of work bakers and their kings;  
Or the drive-ins where unfortunate teenagers go to make out  
And swim before the great catastrophe of  
Everything mundane- This  
Is unavoidable. This is the way I go walking as  
Purely as an usher alongside his lacquered pews,  
The voices of strange faces distorted by burnished glass,  
Just like the parallel  
Lines of park lots and shopping malls  
Never touching, not even thinking of looking up to  
Touch, and thus carrying on in videogames and into other  
Harmless obsessions.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Great Tornados

Damp jewel in the hair-lip of grass or  
Hanging from the obnoxious skin of a cypress-  
Petty witchcraft that evaporates  
And the clouds plays hooky- until another sunlight is  
Gone, mumbled into the vocabularies  
In the west where the sugar cane burns and the dragons  
Make love to bare breasted virgins-  
While, around here, after dusk, after all the Mexicans have  
Gone home from cleaning our house and mowing our  
Yard, the washing machines still do a strange pirouette  
Trying to mimic the great tornados they hear so much  
Gossip about.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greater Beauties

New remedy of your brushworks over the soft  
Cheeks of a tourist town  
Where everyone lives in a cabin and keeps postcards  
Of wolves:  
And chimneys smoke to the crowns of conifers—  
And Indians keep a casino—  
There is a thrift bookstore, and a movie theatre—  
And cypress up the road—  
It is the town made of the prettiest illusions of white  
Men, and my muse lives far away from here:  
But it is a soft place of wimpled justice—None of the dogs  
Have fleas, but her circus never comes to town—  
And the airport is too obscure for the greater beauties  
To ever touch the ground

Robert Rorabeck



# The Greater Mythology Of My Lonely Sea

Cars in the jungle of naked women,  
One breasted and highly heroic, their kings made  
Up of jaunting men in fine suits,  
I sleep in their driveways and gentle abutments:  
I steal their pies, and kissed them once or twice.  
I went to school with them in an upper middle-class  
Fairy-tale,  
But I still want to see them again, and tongue them with  
Romance if I can-  
First by their pools, for they all have at least one  
(as as rule)  
They are all like little toy Indians in high class wigwams,  
Each of a sorority corded of by  
Their religions: sweet, sweet bitter sweet memories  
How my words fail them,  
Merry-go-rounds in the rain with my little sister  
In the concluding portions of a misunderstood novel;  
She gives me free beer, and I go piss on the grounds of  
The best university in Florida;  
She still lives there, but she hasn't yet joined them:  
She hasn't yet decided upon them man which will fulfill her  
Destiny,  
Though she has already fulfilled mine:  
The eyes of my earth,  
The lips of my earth,  
The breasts and legs and all the senses of my earth;  
The greater mythology of my lonely sea, I should say her name,  
But I have already failed her, homeless and barefoot,  
I travel by the perfumes of her divine providence;  
I should say her name,  
But she already knows what grand amusement she is to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greater Show

Ah! Let this night crumble into science,  
The magnesium of her experiments put her  
Hair in a spell:  
In the empty pool she is chasing the rock stars  
Of skateboarding,  
The dirty boys with long hair who  
Don't have birthmarks, who are not Gauls,  
And whose greatest virtue is the ineptitude  
Of the cut:  
Those stallions who rile in great strutting  
Clicks and laugh like snide kings in the food court-  
Those who fly their jolly roger from atop their cars,  
And smile like debased angels pulling their ollies  
Off in the shade while someone else gets compensated  
To mow the yard about the teak;

She doesn't see me then, sleeping in the bin  
Of alligators, narcoleptics of her cerulean element,  
Alas! She doesn't know my name, nor would I give  
It to her hitting off bottle rockets from up on the shingles  
Of a successful roof, when I am supposed to be multiplying,  
Or some such better seasons of hell;  
A dove of tinfoil adorns my cheek, and the boys laugh  
In the low amphitheatre of the living room,  
Eat apple pie and cigarette ash- Soon they forget about me  
As they return to school, eventually successful for  
A fair portion;

There is a lawn chair of loneliness on the windowed  
Cliff above where the yellow buses chain,  
And the ants are stratified unto their cognomens and snapdragons;  
Soon they will ride home and hibernate in the bastions  
Of empty homes and popcorns, loving the little wounds;  
I see them now all going away as if in a long experiment,  
The canal the teal trellis which separates the vermilion junctions,  
And the loud boys in a long haired crew rolling and jeering  
About the parking lot, harassing and delighting the  
Young-titted mothers hemmed with browned groceries,  
But also even they too disperse like the whispering liniment

For a poultice of dusk;

And she is left there fawning atop her cherry car with her  
Best friend, both of them juniors eating burgers,  
Mayonnaise on their lips' seams, flies as well- too far away, they are gossiping  
About what they have seen,  
And perhaps choosing in the games which ones  
They will marry when the sun turns around,  
but neither do they see my consternation  
Above the roof, flicking my lighter to send of the  
Last pop-rocket in a quick hurrah! Soon they will have  
Driven away to be dorned in a swell college,  
And will have well forgot the name of even their truest of loves,  
As the stars are beginning to dive into the vinegary waters,  
The wind bathing my bare head,  
Inviting me to stay for the greater show.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greater Tourism's Raucous Lullabies

Fields as dry as I don't know,  
And snakes sleeping there, underneath the toes  
Of trees,  
And rabbits lying there open hearted,  
Calling to their sweet heart blood hounds:  
The sky as blue as a melon rind thrown up there  
By the best pitcher ever known  
And sure not to come down until night:  
Forgotten to the side of the great roadways roaring in  
Their delusions,  
Like brothers and sisters absolutely enamored by their  
Incest:  
And I want to take Alma there, to the barren folklore  
Where most of humanity doesn't exist,  
Where barbed wire lays buried in the thorns and  
Cow skulls,  
Where gods have forgotten themselves in the hematomas  
Of nocturnal footprints:  
Where there is still good witchcrafts waiting for us,  
And I can sleep with her in the waterless daydreams  
Of arid kites  
And paper airplanes stuck in the leafless crooks twisted  
For the fun of no one:  
And we can live for a little while far absent from the  
Overpopulated and undermined cacophonies  
Of the greater tourism's raucous lullabies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greater Wrath Of A Mothering Soul

The bull is sleeping while the children retreat to the swings:  
All summer, or all day long I've been touching myself,  
But what has Kelly been doing, girl:  
And the black faces emote amidst the groves of the plantation;  
And the paper airplanes cluster to see just what is  
A matter of fact;  
And Gracie sleeps, wondering; and Elijah is wonderless  
In a cocoon of rarified censes:  
Then far away Mount Everest always flumes with the cataracts  
Of  
Apathetic romance;  
The highest grandeur of the world, hermaphrodite,  
Wonderful;  
And I kick my heels up on the swings, and remember your kiss,  
And curse and wonder in the strata where  
You hide your gods in their in ground pools;  
And it is ever strange to feel your body's touch, unsanctified,  
Classical and yet above allusion;  
You belong in the places of knowledge, studied, sketched  
Nudely and yet in the deeper philosophies and the  
Quiet sort of pools I have yet imagined that you have really been;  
While the tadpoles gurgle and your little daughter curls  
Beneath you like a clutch of vines on a  
The greater wrath of a mothering soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greatest Airplane

I have been to good airports  
And seen in there many of her scars:  
As she is flying away,  
She is beautiful: so many words in poultices over  
Her shoulders have taken shape,  
And are renewing her as if in springtime:  
She leaves her nest—she says amen:  
There is a newness in her arcing virginity:  
I don't know—maybe she is a candle  
Who flutters over a birthday cake meant to be  
Eaten by the lips of another man:  
Maybe she turns from him, and goes  
Another way, with fireworks on her cheeks:  
I cannot say if she lives in America anymore—  
But she is finally outside of her tomb—  
Trumpeting a holiday—with swans and flamingos  
In her wake—  
And soaring now in that aerie of burning cake,  
She is a muse who goes her own way—  
The ferris wheels on their knees blessing her—  
The hearts of boys beating a peony just like the drums  
Of pigeons underneath the greatest airplane they ever saw.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greatest Distances Between The Earth And Sky

The day flies by with nothing left to do,  
And there are so many people  
With so little time  
And not so many faces live forever,  
And the quiet animosity breathes through  
The fabric of our clothes,  
And the world is miles high  
And swaying by a thread,  
And I think I said I loved you for some  
So many times,  
But you just lit out the doorway shaking  
Your head at my ineffective rhymes,  
And I think I said I love you,  
But there are no tears building in the unaffected  
Sky,  
And the city goes up forever where the tarnished bodies  
Are moving, breathing through their orifices  
Reflecting the greatest distances between  
The earth and the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greatest Inventions

Opening the tomb for the children to  
Seeâ€‘showing off death in the classroom:  
The children, little, open mouths and  
Yawn, perceiving that their day  
Is still like the dawn'  
With strange airplanes flying high above them'  
Miraculously 'they pitch their shoulders  
And head down the hallways 'the greatest  
Inventions of men'  
Eager with all they have learned.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Greatest Mirage

The butterflies get drunk in this cartoon,  
While the cars go by yes they do whether it is raining or  
Not;  
And I tilt my head back and swallow fire, glad to be unbusied  
From looking into the degrees of vision of  
Cryless alligators and the women who have always come in  
Double-breasted as they do:  
And it really should have been such a sweet life, and maybe  
There is still time for them,  
But I am still bitter like a forest fire who has nothing green left  
To lick:  
And she has the perfect features: heart shaped, basking in  
Valentines:  
Look at all the stalwart youth lining up friskily at her kissing booth,  
All day long while the trailer park moms slide down the water slides  
In sweet surplices of coconut and bamboo,  
Their yojimbo goslings entrained to them, the sky a whistle wetting  
Itself over Timbuktu: the city the greatest mirage of sweet  
Young things that I ever knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greatest Sleep They Would Ever Know

Last night the law stole my dreams  
And banished me into an unworrisome crypt,  
Where the moon was so bright that it made the  
Nocturnal gardens bloom, coral and spikenard,  
Where silver veins were revealed tangled deep in  
The sand, and your eyes were not far off,  
Though I couldn't write of them with any grace:  
My mother was there, under the alto swings,  
Where I was still a child in overalls with blond hair  
And many wishes hidden in tall grass for Easter,  
And just over the rise where the Australian Pine trees  
Clustered both exhausted and inebriate, the sea washed,  
Shushing the same lullaby it played to the conquistadors  
As they bled out into her, and I still wait for her to  
Call without any sympathy, but that note is past due,  
And they have left the orchestra in the liberal arts room  
Well past midnight without any peanut butter and jelly sandwiches,  
As the ghost paces the small square room of the clock tower,  
With determined duties, and I recognize his face, because he will  
Not turn to me, for from his station he can see her crawling  
Caesuras, the lauding she gives to the convex horizon  
Without realizing for sure what it was- Just a memory,  
A soul unfurled, and in the morning there'll she be again,  
As cut blue as if I had never seen her,  
But the ghosts and the sad men of their watch, and the  
Little child I was up and down across the arc of the squealing  
Swings- all of that will become lost, unremembered for what it was,  
The insubstantial twittering above the dunes where the  
Crabgrass grows, and the burs stowaway in the blouses of little  
Girls, and the winos sing up and down no worse than their dogs,  
And she is there forever like a note carrying endlessly,  
A sculptor of unequalled time, where in her tears and drool,  
Nameless men both arise and succumb to her,  
As if she were the greatest sleep they would ever know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greatly Anonymous Moonbeams

Abstained for a couple years, I feel like  
Nikola Tesla, living in hotels,  
Dreaming of his mother, or another man's wife,  
Tinkering with electronics,  
And making the carriage drawn streets glow at night-  
I don't even know what I am doing writing poetry,  
But starting down the sad slope of corn oil,  
Trying to connect with her, the female end,  
The double entendre just picked like a scuppernong  
From the chain-link fence surrounding my great uncle's  
Property:  
He's the one who lives near the lake in Michigan,  
Whose the head of the physics department, and just  
Completed an important experiment involving magnets-  
I don't know, but he's also celebrating a wedding  
Anniversary, but if I drive there it will only be to run away-  
My glass is almost out of Dr. Pepper and rum,  
And my grandmother is dead- The park is full of ghosts of  
Girls named Kelly- Funny, because the ghosts are married  
And fat with dew and pregnancy;  
And, bending, I find a twenty dollar bill in the grass  
Good for an entire sack of penny candy- The cheap liquor is  
Making me inclined to masturbate,  
And I have lent my father ten thousand dollars to stave off  
Such a sad and unfortunate foreclosure,  
And I have gotten the highest score in Mrs. Pac-man and juked  
In my initials, electronic carvings in her bar,  
But she fell in love with the blue anchored bouncer anyways;  
She probably already married,  
And by the dead middle of summer I'll have moved to Saint-Louis  
And been the victim of my first crime,  
As lawyers and their wives break the hymen of their first  
Mortgage in South Florida;  
They'll make love on the other side of the wall to their in-ground  
Pool, rippling with chlorinated crenulations;  
And I'll have sipped up the last of my liquor,  
Like a greatly bankrupt and inland pirate soon to be deinstitutionalized,  
And left over once again into the penumbras  
And deathly searchlights of the greatly

Anonymous moonbeams.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Green In Mexico

Oh the joy fainting through the carnival,  
Riding itself through the fair weathers of January-  
While love is upon a lark,  
Upon a jetliner- and all of the green in Mexico  
Couldn't take her away-  
Files and orders of parades, the star-crossed  
Rituals,  
Balloons strung upon trees with shoes-  
The grottos weep beneath the gasping mouths of  
Traffic: the birds themselves are tied to tiny  
Profusions of air:  
Their job is to mine the sweet metamorphosis,  
Pulling her down and making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Green Planets Are Burning

The green planets are burning.  
In high heels,  
She steps on the frightened  
Comet  
And shatters it like a  
Wine glass at a Jewish wedding—  
She is not afraid;  
She turns to me and says,  
How can she be envious  
When she never loved?  
Then she takes off her rhinestone  
Tiara and throws  
It into the lake  
Where all heavy things disappear.  
Slipping from the edge,  
Without a sound she  
Removes herself from my  
Gravity—  
I become the emperor  
Without an army—  
I live alone on an island which is  
My only country—  
I am an insect trapped in amber,  
The ghost of a disposed king  
Conspired against by his family—  
Poisoned by time,  
I now walk repeatedly  
Through my echoes, in the tatters  
Of a life wronged by an  
Unhealthy universe where  
The green planets are burning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Greenness Of A Promised Holiday

Sheets of empty music  
Asleep by the lake-  
An uncle who is a professor owns a house-  
A religious man- the sun skates like a spider,  
A web of hoary legs reveal the cracks  
That science proved  
Onto his life:  
His house is on a hill, a steep slope populated  
By bitter apples that never reach  
Pubescence:  
I roll down the slope, after I run away:  
And as a child,  
Stolen bicycles,  
Eaten penny candy:  
Runaway memories my son will never have:  
Ghosts on the swing set  
Of a place I do not know-

Snow fills his eyes,  
As he counts his stolen toys-  
Sun fills his memory,  
And in the morning he looks away:  
A family awaits him,  
A job on a planet far away:  
And voices that call, remembering the carnival  
Boxes that sent themselves spinning such as whimsical  
Fireworks from a playground of yesterday:

A graveyard lies at the bottom of the hill,  
All of the tears of gods' angels gather there:  
Feral things, such as fallen leaves:  
And losing boys who cannot read the names of  
The gravestones:

A cold love that clutches at her stone-drunken  
Heart- a child is cursing  
The looming planets stepping down like voyeurs  
Through the gardens,  
Bending the greenness of a promised holiday.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Greeting Card

Another soft sound meant to have  
Been here,  
But is this joy: the blue gills in the middle of  
The day are not caught with any rum-  
As the stewardesses fly  
In leaps and bounds over the canals—  
They are lifting their skirts and blowing out  
Candles and stepping away—  
Over the professors and over the sea:  
They will go to make love with  
Men in France or men upon another world:  
Men who have learned wings themselves,  
Or foxes who have finally jumped too  
Far that they float over the grape vines  
Like bedrooms—and they laugh, nip,  
And suck the teet of the moon  
Who joins them languidly, perhaps expecting  
The greeting card that will send them home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Grieving Window

The grieving window is open a pace  
Blowing consumptive curtains of atomic lace-  
The world outside is glowing a cadmium wound,  
And the war helicopters are dying like sprayed bees....  
The young man has tried to walk to her door,  
But he is a foolish coward asleep on the glowing sidewalk:  
The landscaping is turning blue,  
Choking where it is not burning-  
The canopy of leaves sucked outwards,  
Like umbrellas overturned and floating in  
The swift currents of contaminated skyways:  
Little children are crying in store halls underground;  
Soon they will change forever,  
For they cannot hear their parents' knocking bones,  
And she is still beside her window, a musician unsure of the notes;  
If she would only look a little further down  
The road of cars like dead cattle, she would see her lover  
Sprawled like a toppled windmill,  
Collecting no more water from the earth, though  
Seemingly in peaceful dreams of her....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Grottos Of The Rain

We can share the same girl, and we can go with  
Her for hours:  
I can look just as beautiful for her as you can,  
But I cannot drink anymore if I want to go with you  
To see her tonight;  
And maybe you were my first love but who are  
You anymore but an accomplice:  
And from the adobe stilts we can stretch our necks  
Over the inter coastal and look at all of the gaudy  
Monoliths over in Palm Beach:  
We can even sleep in their expensive shells when their  
Absence is rich,  
And I believe a mermaid would even come to us  
In between the caesuras of baby blue cavalries and proposition  
Us both the same,  
And leave us both hung over come morning sleeping in  
The grottos of the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Grottos Of The Washing Machines

Give to me vengeance in tight graveyards and exit  
Signs- or give to me believing in down towns with unlucky  
Numbers, or way to pull out of her before she even  
Breathed out the cares of her first birthday that she was already real:  
Or give to me believing that I am already made over  
In the forest fires of my parents  
And this already the kindergartens of wherever it was,  
And we all had to sing together to dragons our wishes:  
And here we are blowing out our candles already over the lakes,  
The knees of our virgins tremulating and claustrophobic  
But already touch the heavens like Popsicles to the lips  
Of kindergarteners underneath the sad easy of nursery rhymes into  
The lavender showrooms of whatever mass they held for our  
Teenaged ancestors- and then there was this beautiful thing,  
Left abused outside the grottos of the washing machines,  
Until it rained as it had to rain, and the houses melted,  
And even our father's horses felt our pain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Grove

Like intelligent swine shimmering in the mangroves,  
The conquistadors are following the head of the cow.  
If you look out my window from where we're going,  
You can see them kneeling before the opulent cross  
Just inside the shadows of the weeping bay, but that  
Is not what your mother told you, when she kissed your  
Brow and laid you down inside the little house amidst  
The others. She said to you, "Your two eyes are as  
Beautiful as half penny marbles under the pines where  
The airplanes fly like strange steeds frightened in a blue  
Meadow." And when she read to you from books whose  
Unexplainable stains were more interesting than the  
Characters, didn't you believe that you would soon be  
Going into the impenetrable night where most things  
Never exhume. But I found you in a shallow well and  
Took you up from where you'd scraped your knees upon  
The jawbones of stolen bicycles. The thieves had not  
Hid you well, though neither had you cried out to the  
Night circling through the increments of lycanthropes,  
Where the decrepit hands of the grandfather chronometers  
Switchblade over the abnormal lake which took the place  
Of your young memory of the merry-go-round, and the  
Revolving hours where you hid the answers under falling leaves.  
Now I am taking you to the man I believe you belong to,  
Because a long time ago I saw you together in a photograph  
Smiling like lucid sorrow in the park falling down to the sea,  
Though where we are going can go on forever, as long  
As you neither speak or look over once again to me.  
Rather notice the bay of horses impressed upon the land's palm,  
And the tide rushing in as the daylight streaks across the  
Troughs like the shivering brow of a man in a fever. Look  
Towards the things I tell you are going away faster than  
Racehorses on the final stretch, and together we will live  
Through all of those who are passing, you with me in the  
Passenger seat far away from home, the conquistadors now  
Like gray herons crippled without light, a cross rippling in  
The grove.



# The Grumblings Of Their Motors

Up in the heady atmosphere where the stewardesses  
Nuzzle the tourists  
As soft as grizzly bears; where, evaporated, the wolves  
Run the highways looking for a trick:  
The road kill their silent tears; and they are making something  
Above the sea:  
Looking down, gilding the soft vessels that cannot help  
But to swim over and so near the cathedrals of  
Ferris Wheels;  
Down at their ankles pretty girls kiss boys named Jim-  
And it is like the enraptured but mostly villainous honeymoon  
Of evolving truants- near the dog tracks, under the boardwalks:  
Where the conquistadors used to live, but whose crosses  
And bandoleers  
Now have mingled in with luckless roses,  
Tossed by the charioteers and bus drivers back into the sea  
That is always galloped by some salacious mermaid or another,  
While the selkies bathe with seahorses,  
And the clouds gather in the consumptive foyer like a waiting  
Room of wounded patients praying there  
Above the spume of salt and tears, and the grumblings of their motors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Guesses Of Innocent Children

Rabbits flutter under foot:

Like little green snails in the hooves of traffic:

And Alma is at home and all too aware that she and her  
Children will

Have to eat her rabbits: I asked her to name one of her  
Rabbits after me:

Name it Robert and cut its throat, if you do not love me,  
Alma:

Watch it bleed to the curb and across the snow;

So if Sharon finally saw me she would certainly know that  
I was not beautiful.

That I was as stained as a mattress beautiful grapes had been  
Tramped into,

Like this world of cars and airplanes all of the time:

I have been out into the middle of this world,

But you will never guess what I could have found;

And now all of the houses have two hearts

Beating like drums around

The hearth where the fire is missing, where the stars have burned out:

Where the lovers are no longer kissing,

Where the guesses of innocent children have all been found out.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Gymnastics Of Sunshine

We will have new candles brought to us—and our fathers  
Will buy us new cars amidst our birthdays:  
Even if she will never sing another song for us—but she will arise  
And wake up her children  
And kiss her husband and continue across the railroad tracks:  
And other dimensions of so many orchards—all of the while  
The carolers have been singing to us  
As if it would snow—  
As the dragons get up to saw their lumber—  
The satanic fuselage beneath the gymnastics of sunshine—  
Or other pretty ways of carrying on: one armed—  
Inebriate—bouquets of ways to remind us that she is not mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Habitat For False Romance

Somber glass ditches such as these  
Deserve no illumination;  
They just keep going on and on as if  
In some fairyland used for persistent  
Fertilization,  
But what are they growing that hasn't been  
Eaten before,  
And where are the beautiful girls who should  
Be out sailing, and winnowing between the rows,  
And waiting to show their stuff  
To the priceless fabriche gentlemen: but they  
Are not waiting for the girls;  
They must have fallen off their horses or some  
Walls, or down some wells at the tops of suave  
Marble hills, if they've been really luck;  
And all that is here are the blown glass swells,  
Like a very intrinsic planet or mobile,  
For an infant of a species which can never be explained  
Much less thought about; but if there is a  
Sense of heartbreak out on this empty, folded lot,  
It is only because this was a creation for a callous bud;  
She did not spring for it, as she had promised:  
She didn't even blush; and hasn't even come to see the  
Amusement of these denoting amusements,  
But there is another line for her a little further on,  
And an entire retinue of our moons we have no business  
Speaking of, though they are each quite solitary in the  
Perfections of their pure grade elements;  
But eventually it all must be smashed, and undone,  
For the habitat for false romance which isn't even taken  
Out for the flings of holidays is a breathless place,  
As she puts her lips and hangs her prices for the beefy  
Pinwheels and chimes boys with numbers, bicycles and  
Impressive biceps picked up at the drugstore at the  
Price of a penny each, and so easily amuse her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hair Lip Parade

My father has an orchard  
He wont let anybody see.  
He loves horses in his orchard of the colors  
Of the likes horses are  
Never allowed to be,  
And I still my father's limes from the back of  
His truck;  
I break my jaw and have it wired shut along  
I-95 to stave of scurvy:  
I am like a color t.v., the very first time,  
And we turn our broadsides around in  
The venal sea  
And fire off our green copper cannons to ward of  
Coral snakes and selkies,  
And the banshees from the bushes and the entangled  
Colonnades;  
And there was a person she knelt for beneath the wrought iron  
Cross, like a gate strangled by ivy,  
And maybe she was the first woman whose birthstone  
Was opal to walk free and unadulterated through this  
State,  
Through the great inland prairies,  
And the apple orchards, through the Bismarcks,  
And the slash pine teepees the white men eventually made  
Telephone poles out of:  
And through the tennis courts of a teal man's pride,  
I touched myself and dreamed I had her for a bride,  
And picking her up took her to an expensive zoo,  
Down the corridor of well placed gentlemen all in soft  
Green,  
We stole on through the flame swords and the softly  
Beating serpents and I made love to her first with my  
Right hand and then  
With my left, as I was meant to do,  
Down on the soft green carpet of the giant living room  
Of my father's orchard  
Or somewhere else I didn't belong:  
But it was full of secrets, and the leaping shadowed bodies  
Of airplanes,

Paper and crenulated and folded along the wrist,  
Spuming the choreographies of the forgotten generation  
Who sunk the entire cavalry of German U-boats  
And then went straight on into the next  
Television show, college graduation,  
And the hair lip rodeo.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hallucinations Of The Neon Lights

Burning loneliness of a society in peril,  
Made up of a species unconcerned with extinction:  
This is how we make our diseases right here in  
The classroom,  
Filled out, tiny, tinkered boys walking in stages,  
Taking our turns at the attempts of breathing—  
Filling our lungs with the autumnal deceivings—  
In some day light classroom with a rotten floor and  
A rotten teacher, it was almost near where I pretended to  
Touch you—jocular misconceptions that bring in  
The flowers all the way from Holland  
In grand processions of marriages and  
Deaths—  
The way the bees once tried to pollinate the orchards—  
It is not the same now anymore,  
There are only fireworks in foreign land  
Sold in all night stores managed by ghosts  
Under the hallucinations of the neon lights  
Of the pagan's scientific existence.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hallways Still Echoings

What are you doing, laughing to the piano  
Underneath the forts—while you pretend to be one of  
Their princes in the moonlight  
Just to impress the mermaid losing her clothing in  
The echoes of the constellations,  
In the changing rooms of the caesuras or wherever she was:  
As the traffics continued throughout the weekends—  
As I stared at myself until the sandcastles were consumed  
By the proportions of the evenings  
And there was nothing left that could be enjoyed  
But the dysfunctional classrooms that we all tried to runaway  
From—  
In those strange grammars that I could never quite get  
Ahold of—with the sunlight still falling through the alienations of  
The hallways still echoings.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck



# The Halogen Halls Of High School

I read Thomas Hardy,  
Or I ejaculate:  
The traffic runs. My teacher  
Is not home:  
I drink bourbon while rednecks  
Chop wood from Australian pines.  
I will steal this cup,  
And another line. Today was  
Thanksgiving, and I tried not to  
Think of her, rather the great calm  
Of tourism: It didn't happen,  
Even now the planes are leaping,  
Like frogs from trees, or her lips  
Move upon him, her body quivers in  
Bed. Filled with turkey,  
After masticating, parts of her body hyphen,  
Her hips drape upon him like warm laundry:  
There are scientists in California dehydrating  
Aquamarine brine from the Pacific Ocean,  
And ornithologists driven deep into the  
Phoenix desert, sweaty and flushed. In  
Shorts they go out looking for her,  
Just the tiniest shadow posed over the lip  
Of a flowered sequoia,  
Like a girl in a miniskirt tipped over the  
Water fountain  
Hydrating softly  
In the halogen halls of high school.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hands Of Lovers

Thoughtless engines who make no sound,  
Whirligigs that can't tell time,  
Uncles of mimics and the properties that are so much  
Far and near than mine:  
The words and epitaphs on coins put across the eyes  
Of the dead and blind,  
The legless swimmers kissing water spiders-  
The spigots of hope that have all run dry except that  
Maybe my Alma Linda will be mine:  
Maybe I will see her tomorrow the way ignited gas  
Beautifies the sky,  
And look across the fruiteria in which I am no longer the  
Patronsito,  
And be sure that she gives me that sweet hope,  
The desires of sweet ownership and the little boats who  
Leave the hands of lovers to find her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hands Of The Outbound Night

Stone thrown from the hands of the outbound  
Night—and now where are all of my old students—  
I do not know what they are doing,  
But I like to wish that they sleep—  
And the angels give them some peace,  
Anointed over their oily heads—  
Successful or not,  
It will soon be the graveyard for them—  
And all things, just as the night makes love  
To its valentines—  
And the world scrambles over its busy voids—  
Not even one or two words can survive from  
The lips of the ant mound in the middle  
Of the school yard while  
All of the better reasons are on summer vacation—  
And the teachers in their corporal forms are  
Slumbering in their living rooms and dens  
Watching television as if it was Christmas—  
And the most beautiful of the littlest girls  
Have found their own reasons  
To fall asleep on the floor  
And, closing their eyes,  
Never imagine to call the boys they  
Are already sick and tired of falling in love with.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Handsome Grasp Of An Overimaginative Creation

Pitch-forks in the darkened surplus of the night,  
Laying in the bucolic everglades  
And the hemispheres of housewives:  
Alma back at home when I remembered I held her  
Hand today,  
And looked into her eyes after she flirted with my  
Cousin for three hours,  
Reminding me it was nothing:  
She was wearing all of my jewelry: her body brown,  
Perfect,  
And could still be mistaken for a child except from  
The roundness of it where it  
Needed to be;  
And sometimes she said she loved me:  
Alma said she loved me, but sometimes she didn't know,  
And she also guessed that she loved her man;  
She was going home to him, I was sure,  
And she didn't want anything to change,  
For she would not leave him: and so ended the day  
At the fruit market, the closing of my show:  
I held her hand sometimes underneath the semi trailer  
As red as marooned ixora,  
And I held her hand in the car, as she turned up the volume  
And remembered that she would be late picking up Michael  
But at least she promised me that she didn't love  
My cousin,  
Even though she flirted with him three hours today:  
Maybe she loved me, this amusement she left in the sand  
Burning with the instruments of defeated make believe while  
The airplanes otherwise blew away their wishes  
While on their destinations through the sky;  
And the housewives stood in the kitchens and cooked up  
Anything,  
Though I held Alma's hand today, like an unconditional make-believe  
In the handsome grasp of an over imaginative creation.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hanging Men And Egrets Who Couldn'T Spell

I would go and get laid tonight,  
If I wasn't too drunk & I am in love with you,  
And all of this foreplay laid like chess pieces atop the  
Sink holes in the limestone,  
The emerald birdbaths in the body of Florida;  
And I haven't seen the violence of conquistadors in  
A very long time,  
But little girls are practicing on the swings to become  
Stewardesses,  
And eventually they will love you, mouthing off,  
Oral-s\*x of training wings:  
They will orgasm all the way up to the Front Rang:  
They will grow cherry blossom orchards all atop the  
Collegiate peaks,  
And your daughter will know a new world unbelievable  
That I will sing to her,  
As I sing to you into a coffin of repose we keep snugly  
In the carport in front of the orange groves;  
Here is where I step back into a pornographic dream you  
Never saw happen, while Mickey Mouse takes you  
From behind,  
And the billboards trumpet above the unlucky necks  
Of all the hanging men and egrets who couldn't spell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hang-Man's Lover

The hang-man's lover mopes  
Around after class,  
Trying to figure out the word  
To get him down,  
Where he sways on the branch  
And little bits of sun:  
She's the only one who thinks  
To see him there,  
Decorating so high up the  
Campus landscaping,  
Amidst the red bricks,  
She bites her lip-  
She's run out of chances  
As he stops breathing,  
The wind tossing him around  
His reflection caracoles in  
The third floor window,  
Exhibiting for the Spanish Class:  
She stares at his dirty souls,  
The farting wind chime  
Spinning in the sky-  
She has the itch to go to her room  
And f\*ck someone  
Then study Latin,  
She'd prefer him,  
But he is so high up and not around,  
She figures she'll just do anyone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hapless And The Living

We are going to go by boat to the  
Park:  
Just a little toy boat you can barely stand in,  
That would tip over if the lions roar  
Too loudly,  
Or if the pretty but apoplectic housewives stood  
For awhile looking at it funny,  
Cursing with their wine-  
But even though the rivers are all dry, we will  
Get there if we try;  
And there are gaunt fevers under the tall, tall mounts,  
Just amnesiacs dreaming themselves foot upon foot  
Taller,  
All of the angels cheering them on, happily jeering from  
The theatres of their pulpits-  
I want to smell you as we sail- want to know you  
The way my dogs know the world:  
Because all the other women have gone beneath the  
Current of your patinas affected melancholy-  
Now they aren't even echoing but should be  
All but satisfied in close-lipped trances;  
And I will quit this soon and go outside the doorway  
Which denotes for a little while the space,  
The coral seething paths between locis of rest and  
Gift-giving;  
And even though it seems we've done it all before,  
We'll continue waking up at it, for such is the way of  
The hapless and the living.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hapless Giants Shed From The Movie Theatres

Bouquets in my rusting jaw—and my Mexican uncle  
Already home—  
Restless and lawless—but promising to cook me  
Shrimp—  
And my house is his house, and the sandcastles eat  
The sea:  
The meager dreams of sandcastles built by little boys  
And girls who don't yet even know  
How they will have to escape school—  
In their last ditch effort—  
While some strange stag, metamorphosed,  
Wanders out upon the beach—and now, what is  
This? How did he get here?  
He doesn't even know that he was once the king  
Of a great kingdom—soon to be the victim of fratricide,  
Destined for oblivion—  
Just like the history teachers teaching from the portables  
Year after year—  
Corresponding to their own echoes—  
Waiting for their wonder less loves to enter the ballrooms  
Where so many crystals lay waiting in the heavens,  
Evaporations of the tears  
The hapless giants shed for them from the movie theatres  
Where they were too afraid to go.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Happenstance Of Suburbia

This is how it abandons for the good of trumpets:  
While I spill myself over loose change like a wish,  
Not even knowing if I will even get up again  
To see another stewardess or Ferris Wheel:  
But each day dreaming and turning around, showing off all of  
Her good sides, while the high school bands play  
Instruments I cannot judge- and the fireworks of our  
Truancy burn down the mealy sides of another house anonymous  
In the happenstance of make-believe that suburbia commonly  
Makes come true.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Happenstance Of This Touch

Rollercoasters of your shoulders and airplanes,  
But anywhere, I am still here,  
And it is almost time to go to sleep,  
With the world slipping just over the parapets,  
Pretending to be the gods of a different world,  
And I've been thinking of you—you,  
And, yes, you—one or two times—  
And it doesn't even matter that you know whom  
You are anymore—  
The summer is falling all over itself, with glowing  
Spokes and splinters—  
And I want to drink again, but my wife is very wise  
And she is watching—even though she doesn't believe  
In god,  
These words still spill out in masturbations,  
Like the subtle scars upon my neck, and  
The another summer will be another summer—  
And then the shoulders of airplanes and angels will  
Really happen—  
Far above like fireworks, to this world laid out beneath  
Them—from a world too far away to be kindled  
To the happenstance of this touch.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Happenstances Of His Casualties Of Exploits

Play with me before going back to sleep,  
Because the cat has had her seven kittens like in a black  
Box in the shadows  
Underneath the penumbras of airplanes that go to read brail;  
For I have begun vibrating through the fabulous joy  
Of graveyards,  
Humming the tune of asthmatic drums, that even the flowers  
Should close up before they can be realized by the  
Tourists have their way to the ritualistic universities to congratulate  
Their corpulent and jaundice young:  
That Alma can play with me all day the way a dog plays with  
Its rabbit in the rock garden until fear or joy destroys the  
Poor things heart,  
And then she goes away to sleep at her master's side,  
While the ghosts of everything who wished that it was real  
Joins the procession through the sepias of the unreal carport  
Like the credits in a movie that her eyes never saw,  
As they turned away through the darkness  
To embrace the happenstances of his casualties of exploits.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Happenstances Of Our Gods

Crying the words that arc like angels birthing their young into  
The kitchens and bathtubs,  
And doesn't even seem to be real, or even almost possible:  
While all of the traffics drive insouciantly, and the missions sit in the  
Glow of candelabrum,  
And the orchards grow fat with the globes and conjunctions:  
I like when I can smell you, Alma, or when once or twice  
I get the words right: it is almost like being beautiful again, or getting  
Along with my apposing brother:  
Then I grow wings and float like daydreams over the parks and rodeos:  
Then I can look up the skirts of Ferris wheels and everything feels  
Alright, and I can win,  
Or at least I can come back to you and lie and bask against your brown  
Skin,  
And then we can take your children to the movies, while the kites whisper  
In the wind:  
And I can write empty novels that fill up the brown vases of your neck,  
Or I can just whisper silently to your eyes that seem to love me only  
For awhile and only when the happen over the overthrown forts  
Full of fireworks,  
When they are casting and sewing their memories so far away from the  
Sunday schools which happen to be all of the happenstances of our  
Gods.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Happiest Land

Held up into the splendor of a crime  
That happened in the dusk of a  
Fireworks tent  
For a time:  
I loved a Mexican girl across from a gas station  
As it rained  
And the stallions kissed the earth beneath the  
Telephone poles:  
In Homestead south of the Coral Castle,  
Transplanted:  
Another warm surrender for my kindergarten soul:  
Another fieldtrip through  
The rainstorms that wanted to kiss both  
Of her wrists,  
Brown and from Mexico, but the lighthouses  
Had turned out her light  
And gone to bed with another man:  
So it rained and rained  
And the loneliest oceans flooded the happiest land.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hardest Time Remembering Who I Am

All your life you've lived on Florida Street,  
While the better students turned out, shirking your dusty  
Roads:  
And I gave you orchids the day before yesterday;  
And you wore your husband's ring as you shook my mother's  
Hand:  
And you guys stood together like gunfighters, like outstanding  
Rebels about ready to take out a star;  
And I was all humble, holding your orchid;  
And you have four children, and all I want is a chance  
To love the tremendous weathers they keep having over the  
Catholic universities in Missouri:  
And the place has turned out, it really has:  
And even the people have stopped dying; and my mother is throwing  
Away the trash; and now she is pushing herself.  
My mother works a twelve hour day, and then she goes home  
To no where and does the books for four hours;  
And you don't know her, but the lions are still roaring in Colorado;  
And then I touch myself and make a flume, like a firework's cone:  
Like the lips of Mount Everest:  
I push the broom into the sounds of new graveyards;  
I clean the streets as simple as a chimney sweep, still believing in  
Christmas:  
And the nights leap over like fauns: they leap across like good  
Cavaliers, like kindergarteners learning in the graveyard:  
And then like kindergarteners all asleep and touching themselves:  
And my great uncle has speed boats,  
And Shakespeare is hyperventilating underneath his lake I ran away to  
With Jordan in the early epitaphs of high school;  
In the places I don't remember,  
In the places I ran away to, like migrating song birds too contagious  
For miners; I've loved you in the felt-tipped anthems  
Of better suited geodes: In the precious solicitations of lost  
Heirlooms, but now I am not good enough to bloom into  
The classrooms of professors:  
I am all done away with- I am the plagiarism of dark classrooms;  
I am dying without the true loves of holocaust,  
And it is almost Valentine's Day, Sharon- My sick muse:  
It is almost time for the closing of the shops of winter:

And I wonder how deep the snows have buried you;  
And how long I will live after the revolutions of this blue earth and  
The amounts of breath in my lifetime:  
I keep selling to myself that I am as rich as Shakespeare,  
But I have never yet written a play as beautiful as you are;  
And you are busy diademing your pinball streets for the next wonderful  
Pageantry out in the middle of such wonderful theatre:  
While the earth is moving like the penultimate, and grotesquely  
Obese ballerina broken free from the still life of her  
Aquarium;  
And I will finish this again into the séances of my early February;  
And tomorrow I might even buy a home,  
Even though I still have the hardest time remembering who I am.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Harmless Disney Worlds

Listen to all of the chances that they keep to  
Themselves:

Coming awakened each morning rows of unbroken chrysalis:

This is how the housewives live

House to house:

This is the princess sleeping as a mouse- the strange pigmentations

That the gods gave to them,

The rituals of the privileged laymen- To make love like

Banshees like murdered oysters cracked against the tidal lands

Of the sea:

How their men move like dance troops with axes, sucking the winds

Of the kisses straight up the blow holes of their solar plexus:

Girls who move with pretty books pressed up to their

Pretty bosoms in between their broken classes:

Girls who have fallen so very far only to land on their broken asses:

They stop for awhile and sun on the green,

And then they try to travel on, and to sit and think of all of the means

That their professors mean,

While down in the grottos of the super stygian night the cicadas take

Of their unnecessary shells and leave them on the rivers of trees,

All too happy to never have known all the pretty syllables,

And the harmless Disney Worlds into which these fine young ladies

Have grown.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Harmony Of My Parents Feet

Paddle boats in a sea the boys made  
To take their loves:  
There, the crocodiles are grinning, showing their  
Games to the grasshoppers:  
When they jump, they go down blouses and into  
Ice-cream:  
The world is on the move, a transience of jade-  
Underneath the spokes of the Ferris Wheel  
Winnowing sunlight into  
Little girls,  
The blue rivers only appear to move: the tourists  
Are moving,  
Like a serpent of t-shirts:  
And I hear them not too far away, pressing my ear  
To the grass-  
The ants crawl around enjoying the echoes from  
The open mouths of lions:  
They will take the memory of this symphony down  
Beneath me  
To their muses in the cathedrals underfoot-  
Their indecipherable dreams- with their heads like beads  
Of sand,  
Will transcend through the harmony my parents' feet  
Make as they get up before the sun  
And hurry off to work.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Harsh Lesson

Do not let that get in your head,  
Because I will fail you-  
Do not let the sun become your lavender crutch,  
Because it may awaken the mother in her,  
But she will only kiss you on your  
Parched mouth and send you off into the desert:

There is only one oasis in the desert  
(If you can even find it)  
Where the ugly frog prince lives,  
And he will want you to kiss him;  
But he makes an even uglier prince,  
So don't oblige him,  
For as soon as you do he will  
Be beheaded by a jealous populace.

Instead, you must stand in the blue  
Light of the corner outside the church,  
And watch her go by every night,  
Held in the arm of the gentleman's silhouette:  
There, if you are thirsty,  
Will you find your somber liquor that will get you drunk,  
That will make you hunger:  
There, each night without fail,  
You will grow into the color of a ghost,  
And the moon will pullulate and catch you  
In its exterior wombs,  
Where sad thoughts grow like unopened children  
In the gross arachnidan light of stillborn morning:

But this I can give to you,  
And I will award you high marks in all your subjects,  
And perhaps you will become a great philosopher  
Of midnight,  
The mute lover of faded street corners,  
Always overlooked at the edge of the boisterous crowd:  
There were ladies smile ruby  
And stare emerald,  
In the mauve amphitheatre of the passing twilight,

I will give to you the unmarked truth,  
And if you believe me, then you might always  
Know her,  
Surrendering unconditionally as you look on  
From your affected distance.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Haunted Sea

Back home again in the shallows of your brown yard  
After you have stepped back in and only left the stones  
Upon the cinder blocks,  
And it rains for three miles down the street drowning all  
Of the neighbors' fireworks and in the woods  
The sylphlike creatures play with stolen bicycles  
And the strange shells who like lost children continue  
Calling to the haunted sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hazy Architectures Of A Weepy Chariot

If I compare my baby to the truancy of  
Wonderfully weeded topiaries, I sometimes get  
Confused with statuaries,  
I may go out in the darkness and say nothing, but listen  
To the traffic going back and forth like a gown on  
The tresses,  
Something half wedded underneath the alders, as if pulled  
By the moon to gallivanting in very straight lines  
Which is never any fun;  
And I would have liked to say to her that I once thought her  
Beautiful; and all of her smoky nights as beautiful as  
A lazy blue ocean that I could never own;  
And that was why I bought her flowers and she said I could  
Never know what she was, or what I meant to her.  
This was true and now it matters less than the most anonymous  
Holiday,  
So if I confuse her grottos with those of other women,  
Like various species of butterfly dying into the armchairs of the  
Forest,  
What does it matter to me since she has not once seen the beautiful  
Landscaping or heard the wonderful choruses  
I have tried to put her into like the hazy architectures of  
A weepy chariot that I naively hoped she might command.

Robert Rorabeck

# The He Whom

I want to join you now  
Even before we have to eat lunch:  
I want to place my hand on the browned opals of your  
Knee:  
I want to kiss and kiss again,  
Like the wind upon your flesh; and it doesn't matter if  
Everyone or no one is looking,  
Just as the very mountains rise, and the airplanes take their  
Passengers and their cargos deep through the  
Evaporating skies;  
As at night, I wonder if you miss me when I am gone,  
As the sun comes up and climbs again, up again like a fireman  
Surveying his same old world:  
Up there he can see your home so close to mine,  
Alma;  
And just like me he knows that you do not like to read,  
And just like me he wonders who it is that you love:  
Who is that lucky person,  
Alma, as I hold my breath, unyielding my optimisms  
That, yes, I am the he whom it is you love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Headstones Of The Classrooms

Bodies who will like children  
Need to finally  
Rest  
Under the lips and breasts of  
Terribly lovely mothers,  
Breath and eyes put into  
Heavy sacks  
Like caterpillars into spider webs;  
Like you, I have been here,  
Where cops turn to stone  
For Medusa in her  
Hideous changing room;  
When I once thought to  
Kiss you in the grotto  
Down under the musselled  
Steps of the aqueduct  
Where we skipped school;  
But you have never  
Really gone there,  
But I have never truly felt the  
Need to be with the  
Posthumous  
Shells of such a  
Vibrant body;  
But only to feel the  
over eagerness of your soul:  
To slide into your  
Senses like a  
Virgin refreshing in her  
Grotto  
While all the less  
Fortunate kids are sure  
That they are learning something  
Far  
Less important back in  
The perfectly aligned desks,  
The headstones of the  
Classrooms in school.





# The Healthy Lips Of A Sub-Ethereal World

I've fed on the breast, like the titted shop where  
Your children were raised until they awakened into the  
Water fountains in the hallways of their  
First world,  
And the cars traveled around the world, speaking like zoetropes  
To the drunken Indians,  
While the airplanes where like a mobile of healthy and brightly  
Painted buzzards,  
Like cartoons of helium above where the crops blazed:  
And your eyes where the stepping stones down into  
The forts where my youngest boy lived  
And kissed the echinus's open so that the tree frogs could  
Survive on the pedals of redness;  
It was like your body as well, opening up into a wishing well  
Where all my wealth was spent  
And twinkled down there like gold selkies wavering  
In the loose fitting estuaries, striking like candles for the healthy  
Lips of a sub-ethereal world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heart

They will make creatures with new playgrounds  
Whilst the airplanes still swing and roar into the sky  
Until Romero finally returns home from  
Visiting his brother in  
Jail in Orlandoâ€that is his Disney world, his  
Private playgroundâ€and he can have all of us as a joke,  
As the smoke lingers in the armpits of the titans,  
Until we all wake up yawning like foxes for grapes in  
Some new fangled movie theatreâ€  
And we will have a hard time expressing our words  
Underneath the alabaster doorways,  
The armpits of cypress rich with echinopsis and airplanes,  
As I wonder, yawning, and drewly-eyedâ€will  
My father ever sell fireworks againâ€  
Will selkies ever runaway to the sea, as the horses carry  
Their carts through another picture book that my  
Mother never had the heart to read to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heart In A Callous Valentine

Inebriations christened two same muses,  
One sick and one dying-  
On the evening news every mourning,  
The sad calm trust I give my inability to live,  
To drink socially  
To compose to the sun's appropriate attributes,  
But never pretending to believe that  
I am dying,  
Just driving around in cars like other supposed  
Gentlemen, tremulating  
This way and that as I am trying to hide my scars,  
Populating my amusements well into the  
Bluer dark of crepuscule,  
Where the mailboxes sleep, where the moon is  
Fanning,  
Rippling like a junoesque dancer before the dawn,  
Rippling along the mowed park of every  
Middle lawn,  
While its ice-cream man sleeps; and I think of how  
I should like to touch you,  
Parked out in the middle of the burned hills of  
California,  
North of Hollywood, nestled with serial killers  
And the other heirlooms the ancestries of your  
Burned out love- How maybe you almost touched  
Me,  
Before you flew away and grew up and learned  
How to better feed the tourists  
From that lascivious vineyard that goes all the way  
Down your mouth  
And entangles fat scuppernongs like a chain link  
Fence bending down in an over sick garden  
Which grunts the muddy beating  
Of the heart in a callous valentine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heart Of Me

Ants and sand lions making love:  
Her areolas uncapped are sand-dollars too,  
The arenas for these little b\$asards  
Or the custard cages of the abdomens of their  
Stingingly insouciant zoo:  
And they battle on her twin pinknesses;  
And they tickle her like two virgins,  
Like quarters for pop bottles or ice-cream:  
The sun comes up like a truck making a delivery,  
And I've shot my mouth off again,  
Want to say her name, broken like a starfish under  
The Mandela of softly repeating muses,  
Shoreline of auburn hair, in a horizon of blondes-  
Erin cheers up for reveliere, says I'm shooting blanks,  
Knocks sweet farts atop her terrapin until  
The enemy submarine sinks; and the sea is calmed,  
As I am calmed, and housed, baked in a kiln or a  
Phalanx of aphrodisiac sunbeams,  
Put out on the lawn like a marble faun and made to watch  
Over Sharon when she was just young  
While Kelly French-kisses me and Diana comes,  
Forgetful of Jove, her husband lost in the cocaine jungles of  
Columbia-  
She is driving her truck fast through the middle class tributaries  
Of my sandbox suburbia;  
And she flirts with me while I pick out my deserts;  
And now I have named those muses who are dividing like  
Shell-fish inside of me, like a whip cream army,  
Topping the juicy pies, leggy and flashing, four girls  
Waving like perfumed flags of piece and justice  
Deep in the salt watery atolls which pump through  
The heart of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heartfelt Apologies

Words again, little coloring books,  
Like the outlines of promises yet  
Fulfilled;  
The bodies up like lunatics,  
Practicing with the pages of their wings,  
Trying to recapture the  
Scarred aphrodisiacs of  
Lighthouse attendants and  
Firemen,  
In the fine braveries of a  
Single star, or a single tear,  
Or the heartfelt apologies of  
A greeting card,  
For there could never be  
Anything more sincere.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heartlands Of Saint Augustine

Now I am drunk,  
And the real day was real gone  
And over,  
And it was a real fit  
With many enemies,  
And many incredulous eyes that faded  
From me to more stanching men,  
But who am I to care:  
I am imperfect, but I am somehow beautiful,  
And I will go on forever,  
And someone guessed to know this in  
High school  
While I just want to be the fox warmed off  
The chicken feathers of your sweet coup,  
And I know your name,  
So let me enter through the porticos of your  
Barbed wires  
Before we are both one and the same,  
Our common sexes extinguished by that common  
Flame:  
What I mean to say is that I just want to live  
Forever,  
Forever, by just saying your name,  
So who else do you have to blame if you don't  
Return the same,  
Sweet, sweet girl whose sister lives in the heartlands of  
Saint Augustine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heartless Reptile

The alligator makes love to  
A cloud of the shape of  
Grecian beauty; an entire pearled  
Orchard bilious and queasy  
In the heliotropic shadow of the  
Broken down school bus;  
I am the only one who  
Sees;  
Because all the kids are raucous  
But well behaved in their  
Lunch room,  
And you are out on the soccer field  
With scraped knees-  
Tonight they will itch and scab in  
Your bedroom,  
And when you pick them you'll  
Stain the sheets;

And when famished, the  
Cloud slips away,  
Beckoned by the raw sun;  
And the alligator doesn't say  
Anything;  
It goes back to the canal,  
And I crawl under the bus and smell  
The sweat and tears shed in the  
Purple soot for the heartless reptile.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heaven To Which You Are My Queen

If we walk together again tomorrow, Alma: where will we  
Go while we hold hands and your two children  
Are sleeping,  
And your husband or whoever he is to you is out of work,  
Like your father, Marcelino:  
And I can only imagine what it was like growing up in  
Guerrero Mexico:  
I can only imagine all of the corn fields and the mountains filled  
With otherworldly rattlesnakes;  
And I cannot even count your gods, and all of this is just my failures  
To believe,  
But I still kissed the lips this evening of a broken Virgin of Guadalupe:  
And I still have felt your fingers like silent birds on my  
Throat,  
And I am in love you: you are the most beautiful woman I have  
Ever seen, whether or not you have ever taken a plane to Boston  
Massachusetts:  
I was not going to make fun of you for never being in an airplane:  
I just wanted to brag that my mother had once been a pilot:  
Or I just wanted something to talk about to keep you on the line,  
For while I listen you all of the angels sing,  
And life feels good, and the heaven to which you are my queen,  
Almost believable.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Heavenly Trailer Parks Of Their Own Television Shows

We'll hold class again, as the sun goes down,  
As the bouquets, again,  
Are placed upon her bosom: and this is the world again,  
As the horses struggle in the lottery of  
My father's deity,  
To win again, while the vowels replace themselves  
Through the overgrown syllables of my  
Annunciation.  
As when it storms, and the demigods race their chariots,  
As the super stations advertise their  
Gasoline,  
As over all of the oceans, the stewardesses start  
Out once again,  
Waxy bosoms the lustrous pornographies  
Viewing the unseen:  
Then I suppose, again, that you can start showing  
Your own narcissistic hallucinations:  
Like mother goddesses eating their own roe  
In the rivers that birthed themselves and their own daughter  
From the nuptials just as if the bouquets gifted  
To themselves from the heavenly trailer parks of their  
Own television shows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heavens Of Their Make-Believe

Glutinous tabernacle: these are my words  
Erin,  
Sung to a diseased muse eating popcorn in the bleachers  
While underneath her the rattlesnakes  
Make love,  
And the cheerleaders are counting down their  
Favorite mountain ranges until  
The storm clouds hold up the sky and school is over:  
Beautiful boys who don't look beautiful now  
Are thumbing for their rides home-  
The truants of Socrates or one of his forbearing  
Presocratics are already up on some roofs  
Smelling the perfumes from the armpits of the housewives-  
As the high school is emptied, as the high school is left  
Vacant,  
After the busses have turned around like butterflies,  
And they all fly off to suburban migrations- and my notes  
To my missing lovers all get mixed up with different  
Seas- as the giants slumber like hibernating grizzlies  
Dreaming of a fire the tourists keep from their  
Windows,  
As the paper snowflakes fall down from the heavens  
Of their make-believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heavens Of Their Neighborhoods

Girls in the high country kicking off fireworks:  
They look like beauties,  
But they are such jerks: they don't even want  
To be housewives,  
They don't want to be undone to glisten in  
Tidal pools-  
They seem like a song- they seem as if to coalesce  
Anyway:  
Doing their jobs and going home- plebian  
Sentiment that is never here:  
Riding their bicycles, collecting their rears:  
And they seem like a psalm of diamonds  
And salts-  
And they seem to work, sweating in my hand:  
They seem like a long day off of work,  
Sweating their truancies coalescing in the  
Unsweetened perfumes of the grasses-  
And I watch them from the coal mines of innocuous  
Living rooms,  
Biting their lips until they draw blood,  
Their sisters dancing in the candles, the angel  
Airplanes coalescing,  
And flying over the heavens of their neighborhoods.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heavens Over Lighthouses

Sounds of your memory—what does  
It mean, all of those diseases:  
Thinking and thinking of Colorado  
Where my mother was born outside of Denver—  
In just a little slip of a vale—  
In a house next to a house built by a blind man—  
Against all of those busied echoes up against  
The canyons:  
Maybe she was in love with her brother when she  
Was in her youngest years:  
But she graduated high school, got married  
And had children—and her husband—her husband  
Is my father:  
Man from  
Michigan—fat as a hummingbird over the used car  
Ports and junk yards—while all of the time  
Around his neck a beautiful sun weighing him down like  
A jewel—  
He was too busied to understand,  
Or to truly be in love with her: my mother—my mother—  
Windmills turn in the heavens—over lighthouses  
And libraries—but what is there left to say?

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heavens Went Indoors

The grasses were talking even after the  
Day was gone,  
And the airplanes in their dresses dancing  
With pearled bellies over the sea:  
Did you see which way they were going,  
Or notice their laughter as it disappeared?  
And I just sat there and thought of  
Her,  
As the Ferris Wheels went up and then around:  
Around, waving their hands  
As if they were on an island- after the traffic  
Had gone home,  
Past the scuppernongs growing on the fences  
And the mailboxes  
As somewhere far a field a windmill stopped  
Dancing for its lover,  
And all of the heavens went indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heavens Who Cannot Recognize Me

Shallow as the necessary  
Habitats of our stock,  
I do this like a theme  
Given over to a wish  
Never arranged,  
As the tibouchina tree loses all  
Of its purple blooms  
In the shade,  
As the stewardesses grow  
Melancholy touching down  
Pilotless,  
Embarrassed of amusement,  
My song is hollow, secreting  
Out from the throat of  
A bird whose voice is  
Never so pretty as to  
Attract its soul mate,  
Who is already in another man's  
Bed or pie;  
So I still sing like the dead up through  
The gambits of mystified sky,  
To all the heavens who cannot  
Recognize me as their love child.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heavy Sky

Swallowed you body in echoes across the  
Train tracks-  
Went to school in the morning, across the baseball  
Diamonds with pockets empty  
And broken teeth:  
There wasn't even a rainbow, and in all of the  
Canals sat the fattest reptiles,  
All talking loud and obnoxiously, and smoking,  
Smoking: had to look at those eyes,  
Out beneath the slender bridges:  
Slender as a wire: slender as a hair: had  
To tightrope across those spaces- and look down  
Into those eyes-  
What were the reasons for those cold fires,  
As I went to school with no one:  
Without anyone, because you had made him  
Cry-  
As the blinded and dumbled angels tried  
To leap up again through the cinders falling  
Through the heavy sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Helicopters Of Hallucinations

And then they were soft—soft  
And in the movie theatre—all eyes  
Of velvet,  
Children dissolving, homeopathic—  
And the canal and the yards  
Under their eyes, looking for a millennium  
As the advertisements played their  
News,  
And boys—and boys better than me,  
Like grapes all up and down their rows  
Skipped in and out of school—  
And the playgrounds melted into the daylight—  
And the helicopters became hallucinations  
After school.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Heliotrope And Silvery Moon

Work for me and clean my house  
And I'll wake up, gleam in my eye- and pay you,  
Just as if you were my spouse:  
And we'll take honeymoons and fieldtrips and listen to  
The tiny feet of mice and cats patter like  
Lovers of baseball in the rain;  
And we'll hold each others' hands underneath all of the school  
Yards of the moon:  
We will not complain- and the resins of hobbies of aircraft  
Carriers and dollhouses  
Will spill from one to the other as our loins take  
Turns raising our hands inside a classroom where only  
You and I exist: a student a pupil  
Inside a red school house or a rodeo,  
Over spilling, cantankerously bloomed- the horses out in their  
Tracks,  
And the lovely cars kissing under the heliotrope and silvery  
Moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Helpless Yesterdays

There is a tree: underneath a house,  
Underneath a cloud—  
There is a woman, underneath a house,  
Underneath a horse—  
And it doesn't feel alright to be  
Alive—  
While the pools glow in the blues of  
The moonlight—  
And in the safe times of the cul-de-sacs  
Seem to rejoice that they have  
New joy—  
And seeming to keep that fact to  
Themselves—  
Escape to be anywhere:  
Escape to be anywhere—  
And the sunlight is a suburban altar—  
And the moonlight is an abandoned car wash:  
And I haven't lived so long as to  
Not remember, how the marionettes cut  
Themselves from the umbilical cords  
Of the state funded racehorses  
And their high schools—  
And danced forever through the shadows,  
Burying their gold absentmindedly beside  
The shores—  
And crossed themselves—  
And seemed to believe in forever—but they were  
Just superstitious—as all of the night time sat  
And waited, riding  
The caesuras of waves—waiting for the genies  
To unbottle themselves  
And give the perfumes of their descanter—  
To the aphrodisiacs that could not help but to wander  
Into the helpless yesterdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Heralded Cities

So we had lunch together and then I died  
And licked the spilled liquor off the coffee table  
I bought for a song,  
And even now I am listening to the train, and typing so much  
Nearer to the sea that it is always dying in one place,  
Like the rape of wildflowers,  
Or the saturnine quibbling of really luscious lions;  
And I pick up my stance and emasculate myself for you,  
Just to show you the skinned knees of  
Beauty,  
Alma:  
This is how you do it, without any kings or their vagabonding  
Heroes:  
This is how my lonely night burns, and this is how I intend to  
Die for you tomorrow,  
Alma,  
Rising up like emolliated sugarcane over the ancestors in  
A graveyard, Alma,  
Even while the lions yawn because they are bored by the wrecked  
Vestibules of my features,  
Alma,  
Just as with today, I had to waylay you in your caravan just  
To hold you up to show you the fourteen karat jewelry I gotten for  
You,  
Just for working the weekend for your aunt:  
Alma, your eyes are the darkest and yet the brightest memories;  
And can't you see now,  
Alma- but in the reflections of my ruin maybe you will remember  
What I have done for you,  
Even while your cars burn away, and you children grow up  
Grand and tall,  
Like the narrow gage offspring of gods in the rich perfumes of the  
Orchard outside of the crowded properties of the  
Heralded cities.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hibernial Sky

Build up your stores by the dozens,  
Oh my French cousins:  
Put your shoes in the racks and the ovens,  
Build your stores by the dozens,  
While the weather is wolfing in,  
Singing its song along the swish tailed mountain,  
And the locusts are buried like sad jewels,  
Like spirited cadavers wherever they lie,  
The plagues peppering the earth under sky;  
And put your husband in  
And say goodbye, the soul's shoe store is under  
Your lock and key,  
And touch your hands down along the familiar  
Tarmac, and think of me,  
With the wind wolfing in, forcing the arcade of  
Bees under flower,  
Quivering the roots, and you such a flower in a place  
Of jasmine windows,  
In a place of immaculate windows, where dreams start  
Laying out under the pattering of milk clouds;  
And lay your daughter down and say goodbye,  
For you will make a thousand dreams you will have  
To sell like sending ships away to kill for gold  
While the swish tailed mountain lives forever,  
Swishing its midway's flumes, each stone seeming to speak  
Gossiping when you don't wake up;  
But those are really just the things you cannot hope to  
See,  
And your shoes hang and bake behind the pure glass  
Exhibits, but they never fit me,  
But speak in the tongues of gibbets, as the wolf with very  
Young eyes touches down his tongue to your tarmac  
And you seem to swing and sigh  
Underneath the swish tailed mountain underneath  
The hibernial sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hidden Places Of The Other Words

Okay, I'm finally eighteen and I've seen Alma's eyes  
Against the unregistered classes of the big trucks,  
While the alligators wept and cleaned their wounds:  
Then the might tortoises drank their glasses  
While other girls I knew were looking for new jobs:  
As she's finally laid down with her brown man now,  
The father of two children-  
And how many times she has loved him, she can count  
On both hands,  
But she doesn't need anymore machine that her body  
Beautified by gold:  
And when she looks into the mirror of her truck on the  
Way to work,  
At least she can be satisfied that it is paid for:  
And she has done so well for being in the States for only  
Seven years,  
And she knows this sprawling city better than me,  
Except for in the white suburban pools where I spent  
The folklores of my truancy,  
But even those are deluded now- while her birthday was  
Last May, which was some other holiday in which I watched  
Her blow out the candles on the cake  
And make wishes for the hidden places of the other words  
I could never breathe upon much less understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hidden Yards

A womb of a pledge of allegiance no one  
Stands for—  
In a sky full of ancestral promises without a single  
Drop of rain  
Over a schoolyard just as empty of busses as  
It is of children—  
And I lie in the fever of the gutters of broken  
Promises—married,  
But my wife is not my muse: she is something  
Forever more sincere,  
Certainly I do not deserve her—  
As I drink liquor and remember a clothes line  
Stretched across the hidden yards where  
You told me your mother's rabbits disappeared.

Robert Rorabeck

# The High Schools Of A Fertile Yesterday

The bodies turn for age old champions,  
And we had lunch together and then you laughed and went away:  
I wonder if in the sweet soft song lights of your parents,  
If your dumb husband ever goes down on you  
Like a fairytale princes into a mine of goblins: I wonder if they've ever  
Taught him how to love and pleasure a woman,  
How to be a very custard gunfighter,  
While everything I have been doing is wrong, listening to the obnoxious  
Math of airplanes,  
Underneath the pinwheels of their leapfrogging gears,  
And listening to their captains:  
Alma,  
I have told you I loved you and bought you lunch for this shortest time  
That I have known you,  
But I want to skip right across the courtship like a really alabaster stone  
As young and flat as the throat of a fearless and prepubescent  
Melody,  
And christen you with my German name, and hang savage decorations upon  
You with my tongue in our bedroom,  
And sweat it all out, and show you all of the capitals of my states,  
And test you, and put my tongue like a welcome stranger  
Into your ovens of transoms, and  
Perfect my art like the symbols of our gods over your body;  
And make you laugh,  
And turn you younger and younger just as the newly fastened cars  
Are returning all of the bright young offspring to the  
High schools of a fertile yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Higher Earth

The meadow cannot recall the men who have  
Walked in between her belled stalks,  
But she knows that they have seen her in  
Those seasons when she is most depressed;  
When the leaves of her hem shake from timorous breath,  
When her petals reawaken in the morning's lilac,  
And the cricks flow like tassels over the smoothed  
Stone upon her throat,  
And the boot prints they leave upon her as they  
Moved into work the deeper wilderness  
She never proceeds towards, but bathes there as her  
Shoulders yawn the higher cliffs where  
Elk graze inoffensively, and foxes nuzzle the dimpled tows,  
Her smile a kind of lazy nod, the flowers her blush,  
The bees sip the pollen of her perfumes;  
She pauses for the day upon the yellow slope,  
As the men yell indistinguishable epitaphs  
High up in the pine trees quaking like a ship  
Far down below from where she gazes steadily  
The daylight bright upon the higher earth.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Highest Of Playgrounds

Now while my shoulders were at play,  
Bending towards gay children and dolls united—  
While the fox and the p&ssy cat were sniffing  
Towards golden coins planted in the sands,  
Sure to grow into beach heads—  
I thought up this breach in the séances—  
Even whilst the stewardesses were attending their  
Head rooms,  
And the lonely bicycles had a drink and laughed  
With the obnoxious alligators—  
And the storm had to twiddle its thumbs,  
Wondering why all of the upturning boys had  
To sound like this,  
With the rainbows choking the necks of  
Suicides—  
And the younger countries try to curl up around  
The feet of the coyer and brighter boys:  
There it was, this strange belief forever,  
Fitted to the fingers while the heart was still beating—  
Another word for the millstone  
While all of the daydreams enjoyed the hearts  
That were still beating,  
And my parents' old windows still looked out into  
The heavenly light, just so the obnoxious ghosts  
And my scarred aunt could see that all of the highest  
Of playgrounds were still bleeding.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Highest Swing-Sets

The highest swing-sets taken down  
Over the ghosts of  
Where I once parked my truck—  
That adolescence of  
Cherry-bombs is over—  
I have myself a wife and unborn son—  
But I still swing the glass of words  
About here,  
Listening to the traffic on its somnambulatory  
Quests—  
After midnight and the end of  
Metamorphosis—  
When even the dogs sleep,  
And Eve lays down with the strawberry eating  
Tigers—  
Her basket empty of the illusive stars,  
But her dreams filled by so many  
Promises.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Highschool Of A Baseball Game

Repeating in the lions of the gaseous promises:  
They sometime get lit up, and have their song- like girls  
With lips in sleds,  
They go over their boreal beds, and know when they  
Are going to get home:  
And their fathers waiting for them there, cuneiform ed into  
The darkness,  
That once possessed the sentinels of the forest with animals  
Inside their stores who never feared of  
Being bitten by serpents: the luscious syrups of  
Forked knowledge,  
Key words in bright Merry Go Rounds- compounded  
Pleasures of soft hills, reciprocations of green inns and blue  
Fires,  
Garlanded with the scarred cheeks of chicken wire;  
And when once they were home, they took off all they knew  
And climbed nakedly up the stairs and basked hung over  
The mezzanine of truancy's preposterous allocations,  
Who pretended to give to their opened thoughts the luscious  
Cornucopia of cicadas to lavished songbirds;  
Thus in the husks of degraded roe, they seemed to lavish,  
Basking their like graveyards for werewolves:  
And thus the heavens kept them pearled through the closing times  
Of dusk;  
And amnesia ed by the sun, they stroked again, pearled and out  
Early as if for the high school of a baseball game.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Highway By Which I Will Never Die

If you sleep. I will too- I will lay my hazardous  
Body across your brown cartography: you know that when I was  
Little my grandmother used to tell me that we  
Were related to some people who made globes,  
And there is a city in Arizona named Kingman, but f- her;  
Alma.  
I can still smell your body's perfume, and the way I lounged about  
It early this morning,  
And the way I so hungrily wished for it even just this afternoon:  
And there are sharks in the sea who never feel but  
Always move;  
And there are hot air balloons above the glaciers in Alaska  
Of a different fabric,  
But you are still within walking distance, and now I love you;  
And you are all that I move for, even if I can never really move:  
And this is how a body feels making strides towards  
Its immortal tomb;  
And I love you now, and this is just how my skeleton mouths  
Off to its delicious wine cremated in the sky;  
And you are just the secret passageway of my immortality:  
Alma: Alma,  
You are just the highway by which I will never die.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Highway Of A Football Player's Boredom

In the retinue of  
The carrion and paper airplanes  
Contrived-  
Careening forwards through the  
Madness of  
Dishonor-  
The waves like the  
Zygotes of misinformed poltergeists;  
Until irretrievably other  
Avenues  
With friends and  
Lights  
Offering sweet fruits buttered with meats  
At the doorsteps of  
The wildfires of unresolved holidays-  
Already smothered underfoot,  
And carefully dishonored,  
Blinded-  
The diamonds of a unrequited  
Nest,  
Pilfered to the aeries of  
Amnesiac stewardesses;  
And in this way misplaced forever  
Into the firmament of  
Simulacrum and marionettes  
Holding their breath futilely as she drives away  
Without a second look down the highway  
Of a football player's boredom.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hill For The Travelers Passing By

Watching birds outside of lunch flying like snowflakes  
Of sunlight whispering for other planets  
Until the night is cooled into metamorphosis—  
And the moon comes and shines  
And shines—its stolen lights over the shadows  
Walking their dogs—  
As time is telling tricks to the echoes of Neanderthals—  
Back in their classrooms, teachers aghast with  
Plagiarism,  
But in the morning over the deserts of New Mexico—  
The sky as bright as gypsum with hot air balloons  
And hapless voyagers who can see all of the way  
Into Mexico where the strange sisters lie  
Singing as they are taking the corn down—  
And the Virgin of Guadalupe shines like a lighthouse upon  
The hill for the travelers passing by.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hillside of Stars

Scars on the archipelagos outside of schools—  
And inside, the band looks beautiful as it  
Plays along the grass,  
Following the borders of the contours of the  
School until they fall in love with the boys  
Vanished off the architectures of the baseball  
Diamonds—and are resurrected in new  
Fonts for a while underneath the bleachers—  
The meretriciously sad places that  
The stricter teachers have never dreamed of,  
Where one or two students have planted their  
Shark-ravaged feet over the  
Epitaphs of only a handful of arrowheads—  
And for a moment, this is their world now—  
Striking upwards like a match on a holiday,  
Beautiful though mentally handicapped and  
Trying to cheat death out of his last dinner—  
A tortoise stares at it all  
As the hillsides of stars fall down around him.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hollow Secret Places

Cold up in Colorado and beginning to be overrun  
With thoughtless spirits,  
While above the tree-lines the footsteps of iconoclasts  
Only prove that they are alone,  
And winter will be coming all too soon;  
But they still with their ethereal butterfly nets wish to  
Catch the industrial bellies of the airplanes  
Moving their cargos of  
The planes of solid bones: they go leaping like princesses  
Over the beds of the continental divide;  
And they see all of the hollow secret places, that I have  
As well so wished to find.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Holy Ghost

Weather of green stars  
And Christmas suicide:  
The traffic goes by so balmy,  
We work hard and  
Then drink Gatorade:  
And I want some friends, and some monuments  
Configured sparsely over the immaculately  
Mowed esplanade:  
And I want a true love to sit with me on twin  
Thrones,  
And I don't want to have to be a jealous god:  
I don't want to have to kill too many red shirts  
Beaming down from rotating spaceships:  
I want to get lazy and melt like  
Clocks from these trees:  
I want to be allowed to cry over your beauty,  
And not be obligated to watch football,  
Because you are my favorite team:  
See me rippling in the porcelain underneath your  
Sweet ass, like a dimpled orchard  
I want to smack both of your hemispheres and see  
If you wont dropp fruit:  
I just want to lay your limbed orchard across  
The bed springs and bras knobs  
In some high basin too expensive for my  
Father to buy  
And F- the holy ghost out of you....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Holy Numbers

Hypothesize that ants cry  
Just like the insignificance I weep for you;  
It is a silly thing, scarred,  
Rupturing from the ground to bring back food  
For a queen who doesn't care:  
That I have moved perpetually under the sun since  
The day we came together insouciantly in a  
Forlorn class,  
That I have cultivated all of my songs for you,  
While you kissed and manhandled the soldiers  
Of your kindled field,  
And now spread out we like to say that we are  
In better homes,  
That the days proceed kindly with outstretched and  
Untouchable skies,  
But I don't know why I do this,  
When you never were my real monarchy:  
I just liked the way you looked dancing like an  
Indian along your way to better classes,  
And I am all alone, something heliotrope outfitted  
In a rainstorm- all of these legs getting me nowhere,  
Castaway from the days when you were more inclined  
To show off to my wide open senses the angles of  
Your great body:  
Now its as if you're suckling the wolf pups off your rolling  
Vineyards,  
And this is just the junkyard temple I raise underneath  
The boot hills of spending fireworks,  
Outside the holy numbers of the Catholic church,  
Hoping to draw in your attention as I imagined  
That I had once done before.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Homeless Trees

Peeling- peeling the rind of an orange  
In the eyesight of a turtle stretched out under a buss  
Underneath a mountain where the sky is  
Falling- I told her wouldn't it be okay  
If there were windmills  
Against our armpits at the rest stop, but I did not  
Wait for her: her hair was blonde and falling  
Through the living room,  
But it was not right to second guess her,  
Even if she would not help to decorate the  
Christmas tree: my college days were gone-  
All of the firemen had escaped holding up their  
Ladders to the trees- and I could not figure out  
The positions of all of the graveyards underneath  
The stars: they were a new heavens anyways:  
They'd just moved in and were still figuring  
Out their way around-  
As the motionless snakes slept underneath the dresses  
Of the homeless trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Honeydew Of The Moon

Virgins cut from the paper of paper airplanes:  
Sleeping there like motherless goddesses across the  
Impolite street- holding the rude and vulgar  
Prisms of light-  
Like kaleidoscopes up to their chests: kissing families  
Of grizzly bears and eating their  
Porridge in turn,  
And then making their way across the canal:  
While underneath their phosphorous skirts  
The blue gills live like pilgrims  
Carrying their make believe prayers across the  
Fiascos of stolen bicycles:  
And if I was just a little boy still, I would hold inside  
Me some way of remembering,  
And I would still have hope of making it through  
The forest and to a home somewhere between the cypress  
Drooling the lost yesterdays of katydids and spent  
Bottle rockets to a mother who still held a light for me,  
And to a father who kept lookout,  
Sleeping like a sailor on the roof and, openmouthed,  
Feeding off the honeydew of the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hopes Of Forget-Me-Knots

Prolific as the centipede underneath the castles:  
Hero nobody thought of,  
No princess loved, with so many legs: dreaming of  
Sea horses as giant lovers  
He's heard of but can't say he's seen:  
Spilling from leaf to leaf over the penny-ante quest:  
Can't say he has a heart to know about love,  
But too sick to be eaten by starving birds:  
He'll be a horse for himself and ride over the blue bells and  
Buttercups.  
The hummingbirds will whisper great disillusion about  
This,  
As he trundles with the legs of a crowd—by himself,  
The eels, like dark amputees in the mud puddles,  
Tie the ribbons into knots,  
And the leaches kiss the shins of bystanders—trying to  
Make sacrifices of the sinless pilgrims who loiter  
There—flat areolas twisting like shellfish in a pretentious  
Rain,  
Travelling with the hopes of forget-me-nots.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Horrid Mountain

Poem of empty ballrooms- this is your star  
Made for witches tearing- it is their airy folklore  
That makes the dew, that puts the rabbits  
To sleep while the girls are unremarkable until  
They are diminishing- and then they are  
Put into zoos, or sold at flea markets: they are made  
To stand very still and given porcelain babies  
Beneath them- and then they are the virgins,  
Or weeping in pieta in a doll house's carport or  
At some hotel- and the lions are their dolls  
That the tourists enjoy driving around, like Indians  
And their teepees, and their fires made out of  
Orange aluminums-  
And I pick them up like some god awful monster  
Made from the sea, and I hold them to my breast  
And tell them I love them, as they bend like  
Wildflowers taken too far up the horrid mountain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Horses Back In The Valley

I do not wish to see the horses back in the valley-  
Or the nights filled with bedrooms in which you lay with the  
Lupines and the rubrum,  
Poisonous and as deadly as a naked book banned in that  
Season of schoolyard or graveyard,  
A dragonfly trapped in the caesuras of your areola  
Losing the colors of its species as it tries  
To escape the colors you've been making up with your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hosing Trumpets Of Heavy Weight Elephants

The bodies granulate in pistils and games while  
The butterflies make love to the rainbows,  
And I don't want cable television because I will always be  
Too busy making love with Alma;  
Now envision the photosynthetic train of our children and our  
Grandchildren,  
Alma- imagine your body's most divine brownness spread over  
The breathing hedgerows of our penultimate bed:  
Because even though I am unappreciated by modern society,  
Alma:  
I still have been published- I am smarter and more prolific than most  
English Doctorates, even though all I sell is produce,  
And my soul of love for you, Alma:  
It is like a wishing well with a golden mouth that is always thirsty  
And always spuming its thoughts for you,  
Even though it drank of your divine clefts through multiple  
Orgasms,  
All you said was it could only be that once, but I want to love you  
Again and again.  
Even though you don't like to read about these homespun cathedrals  
I keep churning for you like ice-cream and the rich parapets  
Of cotton candy higher and higher until they become the  
Horns of unicorns and the hosing trumpets of  
Heavy weight elephants.

Robert Rorabeck



# The House And Her Carpenter

Her mind flutters there in those  
Secret rafters just above her eyes—  
The roof leaks when she cries,  
But seldom does, for her man is  
A carpenter, a good one, and goes  
About fixing her using just his  
Hands and tongue, so the windows  
Of her eyes fill up on him, and  
Her halls swell with the handcrafted  
Furnishings he places there  
As he turns on that warm light inside  
Her— a glowing feline soul whose  
Purrs echo up from the basement  
As the warm laundry churns in  
The places he reaches for her along  
The pinked ridgelines of her abdomen  
He works in significant ways inside  
Her, mending, staying there and turning her  
Name into a prayer he says over and  
Over as he takes hungry bites  
Of the pie she serves him,  
The kitchen table her lips and tongue,  
Both of them fondling upon a grassy foundation  
She rolling about on the quarter acre bed  
Crying his name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The House At The End Of The Lane

I am imperfect  
And its starting to rain.

I live at the house  
At the end of the lane.

Where no one's too nice,  
And no one's too mean.

Kiss me, take my hand,  
And see what I mean.

I'll give children,  
And I hyphenated last name,

A nice little yard and  
Someone to blame.

I am imperfect,  
Just a little odd man,

Balding and scarred and  
White as the sand,

But if you kiss me, and take my hand,  
You'll see what I mean.

I'll give you the kitchen  
And something to clean.

You'll be my wife, neither  
Too nice or too mean.

And by two or three children  
We'll seal the whole thing.

We are imperfect and its  
Starting to rain.

We live at the house  
At the end of the lane.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Housecat's Grin

When it rains, stay in the library and read of arks,  
And nod your head, and pretend to study while you drift,  
Your drool leaving a watermark on page six,  
Like a mollusk was there and then ran down your elbow  
And off the world, just beginning

Though outside the little park is in a recession,  
But the children still swing, like bigots or pugilists,  
Over the hills of pumpkins, before the getting chill,  
And even as you go out to them, they begin to fade,  
They begin to crumple and return to the depression residences,  
Like cells of encumbered thoraxes, so many anonymous  
Behind the windows from where you stand,

And sparrows which no longer sing, or choose to migrate,  
May eat a worm when the sun comes out, may fly above her house  
Though they never watch her undress all lonely some evening,  
For that is because she's not lived here for a decade,  
Where little wings of songs disappear inside the housecat's grin,

Before I've come down again strolling beneath the embers  
And palms, trying to catch a glance at her through the drying wishes,  
The sidewalk encumbering cracks where red ants plume;  
Even after the sky has evaporated its sadness, and blushes a leaping prism,  
The said choreography of the divine,

I've followed it past her where she is kissing like a stone  
On a hidden bench, perpetually motivating the stillness of nightfall;  
It only ends in the dead fire-pits, the broken heaps,  
Where mosquitoes queue to the ululations of homeless reptiles,  
Those who bask ironically in the defeated promises of his love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Houses Of My Sea

Now in the broom closets of her extended  
Home,  
And deep in love with un hombre se llama Mexico:  
How at first they kiss,  
And then they peel, while Heidi lies sated looks  
Like a two year old shadow in the  
Darkness,  
All of the words budding inside her jaws and running  
Around the Merry Go Round fields  
Where she was Christened and grew:  
And they make love silently, the embarkations of  
A brown ship in a nearly breathless sea,  
The moon a cul-de-sac round with the haunts  
Of preternatural reindeer;  
And she is not looking so sad, his eyes are reigning down  
Full of a smoking world that burns through the memories  
Which way they crossed  
The landscapes of humid fronteras, and how he even came  
Back for her after the bruises of honeymoons,  
And there isn't a thing that she could forget-  
A one winged Alma,  
And she pants up to him, a fluming tigress, who remembers  
Me as well,  
And wants to swim in the houses of my sea all the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Housewives And Their Canals

The houses in make-believe rows, even if they run away  
Do not get too far from here:  
They are stopped by another road or a canal- the latchkey  
Children cry mucus down their pale bone  
Steps,  
And the dogs kill the rabbits on Easter or on  
Domingo de Pascua- the housewives try to run away  
To see the resurrections:  
Then the airplanes guide them like stars: first over one  
Canal, and then across the other,  
While the conquistadors who were once young men  
Lay up to their feebled chins in the dunes  
Grown over with aloe and spikenard:  
And the day chimneys, the birds in her all a rile-  
But the housewives go down on all four legs, leaping into another  
World, changing dresses and their last names;  
The houses of their abandoned families hunting them  
While the blue gills in the canals look up their skirts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hummingbirds

Another motor at the ribs not filling  
Up,  
Coiling in the cessation of the gullies  
And the trampolines:  
This is a cul-de-sac anyways:  
And while I am here, is anyone  
Selling ice-cream:  
Oh well, I have been up and down her melting,  
While selling ice-cream.  
And her children have come,  
Like crazy fireworks,  
Buy two get one free, and eaten from the strange  
Reservoir of my hand:  
Or they have gotten up again only to lie  
Down and enjoy the shade immediately,  
I guess,  
Of their most immediate place in the  
Hemisphere,  
The waves leaping over what we have made,  
In the business  
Of the children who lay here, freckled,  
Like tombstones in the shade,  
Underneath all of the trees who go weeping,  
But joyfully, as if they were introduced  
Into parks,  
As the ant-lions promenade- what homes of  
Adobe exist anymore, and what do I have left to  
Go back home to,  
As she lies nude and with him, relaxing with  
The shade, as the waves leap and drown hungrily  
Against her-  
As the hummingbirds drink sangria-  
And she remains the tattoo that I wish that  
I had.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hundred Proof Blueness

When we come again I will have learned to  
Groom myself:  
I will either be another crocodile, tearless,  
With the hands of dissembling pirates in my lips;  
Or your lion,  
Singing Broadway even though I have never  
Seen New York;  
Though I do not know all the names of your children,  
I imagine where you walk far outside on  
Shell rock,  
The airplanes still some kind of illusion,  
Though you should be serving drinks high upon them,  
Leaping like cowboys taming bulls:  
All the fools you loved while I was busy making out with  
Spain;  
And this is just a commentary diligent into the unintelligible  
Reasons of the feral rain;  
And your children they are like orange blossoms:  
Peter Pan comes and visits them from the open lips of  
Your double wide,  
And they sail straight up to the first star of morning;  
While you winnow your arms, yawning and step outside,  
Masturbate like a fiddle over my lines:  
Drool in sweet piddles into the earth, probably atop the sweet  
Shell of an insouciant tortoise;  
And I am not to blame, that I love you and I wish for you  
The same:  
Your body hiding the secret pearls of every girl:  
But you are the one and only, a constellation with her ears  
Pierced curing on Sundays into the fat bottomed doors of  
Any Church;  
And I know your name, but not how you stamp or color yourself:  
Your toes have remained the same color since Christmas,  
But you aren't troubled that your boys haven't come down:  
They are having too much fun,  
In that fat, fat cloud that can only be perceived dredging the  
Hundred proof blueness above your one and only town.





# The Hunger Of Songbirds

Embossed with these parapets of  
Swing-sets,  
Perpetually, so nothing ever has to go down,  
But these songs:  
They rest like cut satin in a mess  
While the skull is smiling through the  
Keystone  
Where I suppose you've seen her  
Smiling again,  
And bearing her children- stepping  
Above the downed power lines  
That whisper to the streets where the housewives  
Roam-  
But she glides above them, her metamorphosis  
Evaporating  
Until her legs are gone- the foxes leap in her  
Twilight as if they were her men:  
Until she is gone with the hunger of songbirds-  
And nothing is ever spoken of her again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hungry Ants

Spindles of golden hooks happening in the bows of the  
Treeless hills,  
Or the voids that can never be cleaved; and if it rains  
From her eyes, at least it is miles away,  
On a fieldtrip to a roller rink that isn't even alive anymore:  
Maybe you loved her,  
Maybe she killed you, or it was just an amusement to give  
The children behind your eyes:  
They are always waiting to be delighted, as the brown bodies  
Move before the sea,  
As if it was our wedding day, Alma; and you cannot swim,  
But I want to take you to the sea and her hidden places  
Tomorrow,  
For you are a proper goddess, and a proper goddess needs the  
Best sort of grottos,  
And maybe we will dip into one another while the airplanes  
Sing like arrows into the wounds that we can never  
Avoid,  
As the night becomes spent and lost, like a firework out in  
The open field abandoned by Indians,  
Like the child done with its weeping, motionless and blue,  
Welcoming in the hungry ants.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Husband's Fateful Verse

For better or for worse  
He is married to a purse

Who drives a four-door hearse,  
Shopping amongst the graves

And when he gets home  
Sad and lonely,  
She'll start on him bemoaning,  
Under roof  
And over floorboard  
With her nails freshly manicured:

"Oh, honey, you adore me  
With all you have made all for me,  
You've turned me into a proper whore;  
But dare I ask it?  
Yes. I'll ask it:  
More, More, More! "

She tasked him, belly, breasts and buttons  
All pressing to the floor.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Husk Of A Forget-Me-Knot

If you fall asleep underneath the  
Drowsing banyans,  
I will find you there eventually,  
Even if you don't think to wait up  
For me,  
Even if you bare your children by another  
Man  
Under the blustering rattle where you will  
Surely grow  
Your belly like your vacuum in your  
Sweet scarless living room,  
Listening to everything I never said:  
Even the chandeliers will be without dust,  
Looking like your birthstone-  
Don't you remember that we were literally born on  
The same day,  
So how could you do this to me,  
To leave my shady wildlife preserve, even if  
It was second class,  
And I am a feral man wandering drunkenly through  
Torn but gifted trailer parks,  
And you have fallen asleep and while I have looked  
For you,  
They have bulldozed all the beautiful arenas of clouds,  
And shaken all the unabashed sins from out of the tree,  
And cut her down and mowed,  
And used her to build your house,  
So even if I come together again, and reanimate,  
What use would it be to find that picturesque spot  
Where we once had love,  
If there is none of it left to find, but for the barren stain,  
The husk of a forget-me-not.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hypnotisms That The Chickens Made

Glad as the cowbells that sparkle into rust  
Over an epiphany of Mexico,  
Like airplanes looking in at the best of us  
Down in the low grounds of the playgrounds that half  
Abused us while we were skipping school and  
Trying to run away- growing our beards  
Into the sea- nests for the birds to come and swim,  
Little murals in our eyes that made our  
Neighbors and our peers jealous- why then all of  
The ruby lights took off for a holiday,  
And vanquished through the corridors the knights  
Parade:  
Into the glades of witches as rich as vermilion marmalade  
And there, careening over the kidnapped walls  
The long necks of windmills  
Scattering the dressing rooms of a sultry orchard's  
Blooms across the rickety ghosts who themselves go  
Fluttering like overused weathervanes  
And banshee bridesmaids make an eerie patina across  
The saturated guts of the pythons bending down  
The playground's bows as they digest the hypnotisms  
That the chickens made.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hypnotizing Mobile

And then we slept together-  
These waves, continuing in the student  
Parking lot:  
She slipped out of her bra:  
Jelly-fish, I supposed she was something  
Beautiful underneath the moon  
Even though it was in the middle of  
The day:  
And I was missing math class,  
But I figured her out, or  
I didn't,  
As the sun presupposed over all of  
The housewives sunning themselves in their  
Yards,  
As the otters sang from underneath the  
Easement- sang so many songs-  
But kept their love to their  
Breasts,  
As the conquistadors continued to slip  
Away beneath them,  
Resting there, underneath the alligators  
Who took the place of airplanes- in  
The hypnotizing mobile  
That happened to dance without having to go  
Anywhere.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Hypothesis Of A Windchime On A Battleship Sunk In The War

The door is still open,  
But I will never believe in god with so  
Many maidens half naked in the wood,  
And glad about it-  
I am not afraid to die and be forgotten under  
The evil flowers-  
I do not deceive myself these feeble words  
Will at all matter,  
The little flaunts like tinfoil decorating the eyes  
Of an angelic reptile;  
To the spoon-fed muse I give my time,  
But she would never think of leaving her husband-  
She's not even sure if I exist anymore,  
The hypothesis of a wind chime on a battleship  
Sunk in the war-  
Alone in the park with the houses turned off,  
I put my dimes in trees,  
And crawl up a ways, frightened but insouciant:  
I'll come down when I'm hungry and wise,  
Steal into the bedrooms nobody cares about,  
Taking the Eucharist into my mouth, and when it is  
Time to go to the cemetery,  
I will ride my bicycle there and flatulate all the way,  
To the amusement of tribes too young to distain;  
I will insist to lie down myself-  
Naked in the cemetery except for my words  
To her, to smell her grubby  
Perfume, to deceive myself yet hungry for truer definition  
Even as I close my eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Hypothetical Cathedrals Of Her Living Room

Alone in the grotto where everything that was  
Pretty burned down:  
Alma back from work, and industrious in her own house:  
That I can only get close enough to when drunk,  
To spill myself off the bicycle like  
Cardinal groceries, to crawl on my belly and believe in  
Helicopters up on her roof,  
While she is as if in the warmth of a hearth, cooling,  
Skin like the glass of the earth:  
Perhaps she spins her tiny girth, and calls up to me without  
Even knowing,  
Tangles and tugs on the soul's strings who have caught me,  
And who are pulling:  
And I am not even a real boy: I have been persuaded by the cat  
And the fox to bury all of my wealth on the beach:  
And now it is gone,  
As the ribbons are gone from her hair, as the flowers I bought  
Her are dying in the hypothetical cathedrals of her living room.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Iceberg That Sunk The Titanic

I drink gin and read forgotten  
Or never read poems:  
Soon I will be delivering trees well past the  
Threshold of gated communities;  
And I remember the little Jewish boy who told  
Me my forehead was too big,  
Like a glacial slab, like the wrecked Titanic full of  
The cenotaph of forgotten racehorses,  
And so I began to look surprised at everything,  
And I wore a rubber band in my hair to straighten  
The cursive furrows in my forehead which  
Finally got there;  
And S- laughed at me, and asked me what  
Was so wrong,  
And she laughed at me even today and asked me  
What was wrong,  
Even after I told her she was my muse,  
Even after I told her she was my muse;  
And I am drunk on gin,  
And I really want my dogs;  
And I really want my dogs, the only two things that  
Have ever been good to me,  
And it's such a thing that they don't live for very long;  
And I've never met another genius,  
Even though I've read them, and seen the naked  
Women they've painted into bowls of jello in art museums,  
And soon the waves will be coming,  
And the green sea will be absolutely perfect beneath the blue  
Sky,  
Utterly beautiful: everything I cannot be,  
But I will get up and go to work tomorrow until I kill  
Myself,  
Or until I decide it's time to own my own house;  
And I really want my own dogs,  
And S- is up in Colorado just west of Interstate 25,  
I think,  
But I don't think she's climbed any of my grander mountains:  
She just sells the wine I farm;  
And her eyes are utterly beautiful, and she is beautiful anyways,

Just like my forehead before I scarred it  
From the remarks of the little Jewish boy,  
The iceberg  
That sunk the Titanic.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Id's Ego

Captivated by another world,  
I lead this body around. He  
Never quite knows where he is going,  
Or where he might be found.  
Hither and dither often bucolically,  
Or some times all the way to town,  
And I ride him just as you would a fiberglass  
Pony on the candy-striped pole of a merry-go-around.

He is not quite as burnished as the waves,  
But they no longer roll the same as they did back in  
The day, and when around women he sometimes gets  
Stuck and begins to stutter like an old ignition in  
A beat-up truck;  
But I rarely bother, for I can move him quite  
Ostentatiously; I can make him jump, and swim inside him  
Like a fish, I can bend his elbow;  
I can bite his lip,  
And stand him in front of a class, raise his hand in  
A pedantic pose, I can relay a sententious phrase,  
And sit him back down while everyone else strays.

Or I can lie him down when his body tends to nod;  
And let him rest while I dreamily jaunt over the seas of  
12 point font; or if I lay and read for days,  
I could put him into a thick malaise;  
But for as long as he is breathing, I choose to stay somewhere  
In back of where he is grieving;  
But when the makers should box him back up,  
Say he is broken and no longer works; then I will stand  
Straight up and swan-dive right out of this jerk;  
For I am no simpleton nor am I a Turk,  
And though I may linger above him until the sunlight reposes,  
I won't shed a tear, nor smell the bouquet of roses.  
I wont read the epitaph, I wont say a thing,  
I wont feel the wind or the rain,  
But will go down from that hill as easily as I should,  
And seek out another fine fellow, and slip under his hood;  
And ride with him for a while as he goes,

And take off his shoes,  
And pick his nose,  
And lay him down and read for awhile,  
Or watch the sunset, and make him smile.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ignorance Of Her Open Wounds

Playing the game that winks to the land as my  
House lays as quiet as a yellow tomb:  
Like a daisy above tree line trying inhale the sun as the hikers  
Pass underneath the wildfires of burning clouds;  
And the regaled stags underneath the yawning circumferences of  
The moon;  
But it never fails to be this way- as the arcades sing like toads,  
Slipping their mud pies underneath her lips to cool on  
The windowsills of her eyes;  
While the preternatural aspects of her carriages swing and sway  
Like feral children who have made love to wolves in  
The graveyard only to have gotten up again,  
Supplanting the love shacks of fried chicken:  
And going to where the bottle rockets have finally landed  
Up against the dead Indians  
Nuzzled by the well kept dogs: and there, once again, crying and  
Laughing- and cursing themselves as they drink the commodities  
Of free liquors that come by the open highways  
That openly and freely express themselves to the ignorance of her  
Open wounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Illusions Built Up In The Sky

Hold outs for a while who forget their sleep—  
They seem to be holding on,  
Pageants over the most beautiful abysses of  
The most abysmal canyons: you cannot see them,  
But they are down there—archeologists—  
The dogs digging through a kaleidoscope of  
Unhoused smells—words in a vision of  
Others senses—while, in the high basins  
Where the ghost towns yet haunt,  
There are serving up their smorgasbords  
Jubilee to no one—by whatever means  
He gets there, as the graveyards turn into  
Golf courses so far beneath them—  
And presidents and lucky men  
Seem to take their turns in the illusions built  
Up in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

## The Illusions Of Its Joy

I love you more than my cousin of silent thought—  
As the blue cat, enamored of Indian headdress, sated by  
Porcupines and the first European explorers to this  
Region,  
Stares from the perch of her dunes  
To the silent fumbling of the chaos in the architectures  
Of the sea—of a beauty I have never seen before—  
And the cenotaph in the waters,  
Granite cross, way post for the men who will have  
To eat their horses and make rafts out of their ribcages-  
Before the Castillo de San Marcos—  
The first retirement city coughed a cannon ball across  
The bay—and there was any other fantasy we could believe  
In—Disney World and the diseases of gated communities—  
Before my tiny nostrils first flared—or I walked the streets  
Smelling the night blooming jasmine with a woman  
Who was not meant to stay with me—  
There was this void in a feral heart—  
Already some of the heavens had already died—  
And your eyes had not yet awakened to your mother,  
But the cat on those blue hills sang silently in those cul-de-sacs  
That spread up the length of the peninsula with the illusions of its  
Joy.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Illusions Of Our Tomorrows

I want to cry into your pussy—  
I want the sun to set—  
I want the day to end  
Tomorrow—I want to  
Be the conclusion  
To you last bet—I don't want to  
Wake up to this every again,  
I want tomorrow to  
Disappear—  
I want to f-ck you in  
France,  
I want us to have our own cheering  
Section on our airplane  
As we get there,  
And the seats get wet—  
And the hemispheres of wherever we  
Were to disappear—  
And this is my last laugh to nowhere—  
Even if the rainbow doesn't pretend—  
I am not interested in god's promises—  
I only hope that the illusions of our  
Tomorrows never have to end.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Imagination

I once sold fireworks to a cloud  
And to the wings of a jet plane  
That we were trying to settle together:  
Inside the desert didn't belong to us:  
We were just trying to make some money  
As we put our first born sons to sleep,  
And I don't suppose any of you are still  
Listening to this now,  
Since where I've been sleeping and where  
I've put myself once or twice,  
Across the smiling lips of the cadavers  
And across the towns and the cities that the  
Bees pollinate without waiting for the  
Cows to come home—  
Those bovine homonyms have their  
Own Disney Worlds,  
And the mermaids that get paid to entertain them  
Cut and cross their legs—  
And then there are the airplanes again—  
Up above the sky—  
The sicknesses come inside the cut and colorful  
Forms of unicorns—  
All of the imaginary creatures gathered together  
In an unruly crowd—  
I so wish that they could imagine the imagination  
To control themselves  
Before I was put one last time underground.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Imagination To Control Themselves

I once sold fireworks to a cloud  
And to the wings of a jet plane  
That we were trying to settle together:  
Inside the desert didn't belong to us:  
We were just trying to make some money  
As we put our first born sons to sleep,  
And I don't suppose any of you are still  
Listening to this now,  
Since where I've been sleeping and where  
I've put myself once or twice,  
Across the smiling lips of the cadavers  
And across the towns and the cities that the  
Bees pollinate without waiting for the  
Cows to come home—  
Those bovine homonyms have their  
Own Disney Worlds,  
And the mermaids that get paid to entertain them  
Cut and cross their legs—  
And then there are the airplanes again—  
Up above the sky—  
The sicknesses come inside the cut and colorful  
Forms of unicorns—  
All of the imaginary creatures gathered together  
In an unruly crowd—  
I so wish that they could imagine the imagination  
To control themselves  
Before I was put one last time underground.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Immense Beds Of Her Night

As a tomb of white innocents,  
Sunlight washing it like a car—making nude the  
Pale baby's breath sprinkled there  
Beneath the bulbous pornography of  
Roses—They linger for a few dollars  
And then the sun eats them,  
As it eats us,  
Kissing us around the ears, forked-tongued  
As if we were objects in its lustful shops:  
Lion tamer making the grass grow,  
As the moon pulls up the waves,  
Wanting something to cover herself  
For a little warmth in the immense beds of  
Her night

Robert Rorabeck

# The Immobile Shade

I don't need any of this- blue feathers on a headdress  
Being introduced to the wind on a highway:  
I have bled myself back and forth so many times  
From here to Disney World,  
And I am just glad to see her happy- the day spun in  
A happy ghetto;  
And at least he has her, and I have my dog who  
Has fleas-  
But the hurricane approaches, turning away the  
Tourists, and ushering the Spanish tortoises up the skirts  
Of mangroves- and it hurts not to be buried:  
The lighthouse just standing there like a blind man.  
Even the waves cannot tell who it is,  
Just as useless as a burned down bowling alley- and  
The prettiest song birds sing  
At the very moment the devil sacrifices another  
Pretty young girl to the prick of his jealous sting-  
Staining her throat a little, like bleeding perfectly  
Golden hay-  
So she lays tattooed underneath the bus, the domineering  
Lion persuading her into his truancy's pride:  
After he has jumped through his fiery hoops, he lies  
With her purring purplish in the immobile shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Impenetrable Heavens

Making another line in the wilting snow:  
It is just make-believe anyways—  
The cathedrals are over-run with parked cars  
And the bouquets which were supposed to be  
Here—It doesn't matter if the lovers  
Can hardly breathe—  
They have been too busy getting all over themselves—  
The words hunger, and then they starve:  
The rain starts out,  
Like beautiful banshees in a traffic jam press ganged  
Before the mountains:  
Those beautiful apiaries in their boudoirs of  
Nose bleeds: and I suppose I can say it  
Anyways,  
Because no one shall find this anyways—  
There she was, on a high shelf, the airplanes making'  
Her barrettes—  
And no one had to languish too long beside her  
Swimming pools—  
Her amusements were all torn down upon the day  
She was married,  
And all of her senses dived into the seas of  
The impenetrable heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Imperfect Art Of My Ever Cherished Secret

If this is my last poem,  
Then it is the last poem I shall write for her.  
As she has turned away disbelieving  
The grief in my flesh-  
The wounded cry my soul sings  
Reaching for her once more,  
My fingers weaving a line  
That would turn her back to me,  
To put her asleep in my arms  
And do away with the lonely mornings

If this is my last poem,  
Let it be as the others were  
Told to her as if to a child sleeping  
All those sad expressions to stars describe  
Hovering waxen overlooking the fields  
Of orange groves where young lovers lay  
Unattracted to the abandoned cerulean ghost  
Who walks by them  
Entangled in the pollinated flesh  
Of their unwedded matrimonies

If this is my last poem,  
Let it be cast unlawfully across  
The furthest lake and skip in  
Many chances to where she might see  
What I have done to be noticed by her  
In the crowded room where we both now breathe  
Across the impassible seas of continents  
Let this be the final truth offered for her eyes  
The truth that my lips would speak  
The imperfect art of my ever cherished secret.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Imperfections Of Their Favorite Things

Juvenile doves enjoying the architectures  
Of their jaundiced neighborhoods:  
They don't even believe the air will support them,  
But they start off:  
They fly like rats over the cleavage of neighborhoods  
While the tigers smoke through rings,  
Picking the right angles of their dungeons,  
Webbed in the elbows of  
The Precambrian subculture- They will fly forever  
These brilliant things with burning  
Tattoos: they seem to  
Be catching the albatross like roses, as in their  
Feral natures, they think up the names of  
Their muse  
And in the rains that cannot douse their burning  
Gasoline,  
They leap forever, resembling the imperfections  
Of their favorite things.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Impermanence Of Abandoned Amusement

And this day has brought another bouquet  
Of nowhere:  
There it is as the night wins out,  
And the rest of that defeated sense goes home  
Over the hills clutching its consolatory  
Prizes-  
What a special wound, to be displayed here,  
In the azure park and without a job:  
With no one to read this because it is not  
Great enough-  
And I say this to the drunken peacock standing  
In the impermanence of abandoned amusement:  
Yes, loving you, but unrenowned-  
Going through the hallways without even one  
Face upturned amidst the pubescent multitude-  
And you do not answer me,  
Not even the way a minnow answers a ripple-  
Not even the way an echo answers a cloud.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Impossibility Of Where We Must Live

Beauty and genius die young, at the time  
Of my illiteracy,  
All I knew of was the lines of afternoons of  
Salient truancy:  
I wanted to live by you then, and run my fingers  
Up and down the places your mother washed you,  
The ridgeline of that plated serpent dividing you;  
I wanted to do better at all of this,  
Passed out like a great king floating in his  
Canoe,  
Passing those great houses we could have lived  
In,  
The unfinished tombs of the business classes,  
The half naked housewives in the back afternoons,  
Topless and greased slick on the green easements,  
Hand-feeding otters, breast feeding kittens,  
Like the French song, gifts to men who must always  
Be closing the doors to your bedroom,  
Offering you free electricity and drinks-  
When I've drunken so much for you, my liver is failing,  
My lips like a bad oyster curdle from the absent  
Folds of your velvet seas;  
They hypnotizing your with their patronizing lectures-  
They open you this way, like hypnotizing a bird with a  
Whole bunch of string; when I could do better for you,  
Wordless, and body-scarred, young at the hips,  
I could swing you out of the practicality, the yard you  
Diadem, give you swoon in a living coffin,  
A wedding procession of soft-shelled terrapin and water-  
Moccasin, to call your undressing room, a ribbon of  
Man-dredged teal to speak to us of the impossibility  
Of where we must live.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Imprints Of A Very Lonely Fairytale

But green and here and now,  
And looking up, her eyes are also doing the same;  
It is the end of the class:  
It rains; and her eyes are looking up like cenotaphs who  
Learned to move:  
They go up the smoky wells of the draftsmen and their  
Yellow mythologies;  
And I don't think I can actually see her again:  
I think now that she is unreal, but she was there before  
And in that time,  
Like a train robber, like something sharp that came toward  
Me, penetrating, and then walked away to art class  
Her pockets bloody full with the things she tore,  
And laughing;  
And her father died, and I wept and didn't go to school,  
But went the opposite way to find myself  
Like learning the imprints of a very lonely fairytale.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Incandescent Brushstrokes

I'm supposed to be going  
Back to work  
But I haven't been with you  
For three weeks,  
And now with the sun going down  
And all of this liquor  
The semiprecious formulas are  
Losing steam  
As the ready traffic is swimming by  
Again,  
And all I've managed to do is to  
Become lost  
Into these woods that always  
Bare the heartfelt architectures of your  
Elusive name,  
Peeling away like misfits up into the sky,  
In columns of disbelieving opulence  
That smolder for awhile  
In the incandescent brushstrokes of a holiday  
Never sanctioned for my eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Indistinguishable Powerlines In Your Eyes

All of it is imperfect, and I am almost home:  
I have been found out to be a girl by the macho stags  
With their machetes and flashing their grins  
At all of their impossible wives,  
Like you, Alma:  
Wont you ever come over again to study and hold my  
Hand- I think that you won't,  
But I love you, and I love your children, And I wish you knew me  
Better and my footpaths through the deep young mountains,  
Because I have seen the lower sleeps there of god and his contingencies  
Of winged agitations:  
I was born on this mountain, Alma, but before this time  
I had never thought of or even knew your name;  
And my craft is bankrupt and corrupt, Alma, but I would die on this  
Mountain for you Alma,  
Speechless and emolliate, just to count all the frighten birds weeping  
From the indistinguishable power lines in your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Indian-Gifts

Her body was a glove that I shouldn't have had:  
I was too big to fit, but it felt so good,  
And now it rains and I haven't murdered anyone,  
But my bones rattle like song birds to cats:  
And the mountains rise up perpetually, and the seas fluctuate;  
And it is all such a terrible thing,  
And yet so much less frightening than the Indian-gifts  
Of your body's beautiful tributaries  
That once dripped warbling over lips and throat and tongue.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Indians Who Sleep Inside Of Her

Northern forest without any flags  
Or women  
Where women are like flags, but  
There are no summits  
For either of them to start out  
And to arise:  
Just a forest of absurd and devil  
Worshiping Indians,  
And no roads over that wilderness:  
And no roads in the sky:  
In fact nothing here evaporates:  
The climates of the shoals keep their  
Armor,  
The grottos keep the advertisings of  
Their ilk,  
No mermaids- no sea horses-  
The green atolls are only mirages,  
And beyond them, not a single wave:  
But the forest  
That sleeps alone except for the Indians  
Who sleep inside of her  
Whose dreams no one ever told.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Individuals Of Her Sleeping Spell

Masturbations of shadows:

I do all that I can to become just another Disney Word—

And into the desire of all of the things that are lost,

I throw my trinkets that I burn for you:

Like all of the paper that I've folded so sacredly:

Praying to you until I have to go

To sleep

Into Another ballroom of unequaled pleasure—

Where the felines groom—while then it feels alright

That you are sleeping at my house at the end of another ballroom

Even though I don't know you and all of your heavens

That are just sketches anyway—and this line is

Just another cat yawning—and I guess there is nothing

Left to say about your ventures here- as the soft shelled tortoise

Escapes into the canal,

An another church awakens long after the perfumes of

The night blooming jasmine have gone to

The individuals of her sleeping spell.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Indoor Pages

Now I a dancing while I feel my body's flesh:  
Like jam, held over- for the pursers lips: while,  
At the windows,  
All of the goldfish are trained indoors,  
Just as I will have to go to school again tomorrow,  
Waiting for what must happen in Paris:  
Must I lose every possibility of  
Everything,  
To come down from the mountain again,  
A new man:  
As a child from my mother's bosom, while these  
Words scratch like chalk in a preordained maze  
Which I jump through,  
Licking my lips, the way the jungle licks conquistadors,  
Thinking that all of this was better left  
Though out to the casualties of Wednesdays: and it  
Seems a poem to me-  
It seems a weather caught between the fingerprints  
While driving into a town along the frontera:  
It seems as if a special place through my loneliness  
As my bones  
Turn gray and tend to wear my clothing- and this  
Turns into a place where I am not here-  
Housed in gilded allegory into another dream that  
I am not sure I will have tomorrow,  
While all of the cars station out, parked as if jewelry,  
And the coyotes howl,  
Their throats giving roses to the housewives of the world,  
The frog princes dancing underneath them  
And destroying the indoor pages of my softly lit story.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Infinities Of Dead Ends

Down in the piles of caesuras—  
Made up like stately bouquets in the middle of  
Their Saturdays and  
Sundays—  
Looking at the cumulus tricks of clouds—  
Things that build up, weep and dissolve without being  
There;  
Paid tricks in their seasons—ways to head north  
Over-spilling with their advertisements  
And lost ships:  
And when it rains, the universities of my pasts  
Looking so ghostly and so passive:  
Their libraries emptied—  
Their rose gardens some graveyards for bees in their  
Pornographic cemeteries—  
And I had my houses run like horses whipped by the  
Lightning—as I've tried to call her  
Through the cerulean amusements that she could never  
Open her eyes to believe in—  
Until the tournaments started out alongside the roadsides:  
And underneath them the labyrinths moaned—  
As the monsters stumbled underneath the headless windmills  
Of the infinities of dead ends.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Influences Of The Deities

Motivations swaying in the purple abyss-  
While the leviathans gather their  
Breath to blow out a birthday wish  
Across the mobiles of the first sounds and into  
The evacuations of the school children:  
They cross the planes of their love,  
Pretending that they will grow up forever,  
Kissing the red dirt of baseball diamonds  
And becoming their own utopias:  
Or they become as if a song already mentioned  
To the careless angels who are just serving  
Overpriced drinks between the wings of airplanes  
Anyways-  
Circling once again through the circus of the  
Sky-  
Daredevils of the earth, maybe I've never mentioned,  
As the tide surceases,  
Leaving the anemones naked, but barely vermilion  
Beneath the woman in the cliff of stones:  
And we salute her, drinking sangria  
And growing up in the thrusts of Spain-  
Pretending that it will take forever, sleeping in bunk beds,  
As various boys give your sisters hickies,  
And then the greater and the lesser planets are given  
Over the influences of the deities I will luckily never  
Have to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Iniquitous Garden

What scars are better than these,  
The ones that you will not let heal,  
That you tend to like those gardens of sharp  
Iniquity,  
The hidden wounds,  
The immensity of trailer parks and graveyards  
Alongside the never-ending causeways that do not  
Care,  
That do not even hear the music that you sing,  
Howling, for where is she now,  
The nurse with magical fingers and free  
Alcohol. Five states over?  
But she isn't real, she doesn't call,  
And the flowers wilt with sunlight slipping  
Over the basin of your jaw,  
Reminding you of all those lonely mountains you've  
Climbed,  
Touching you like the mortician for one last show.  
Lying you down now in a devastated orchard,  
And reading over you;  
And looking up as the theatre begins its velvet close  
To the unreal sounds of traffic and machinery,  
You might see an eagle cutting those blue skies,  
Soaring so beautiful  
He is too far away to be reminded of you,  
And yet even as you are laid low, the iniquitous garden grows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Inoffensive Night

Alma: I flood, I spill, and I lavish:  
I look like a reindeer's tongue being spread out in a bank  
In some greatly snow banked town in the delusions  
Of Arizona:  
And in this way I resound; or I reverberate for you, like  
Some greatly strung instrument  
While my own parents are stringing tents for  
New Years fireworks and none of  
Them: not even my sister can believe that you truly love me:  
But you truly love me:  
Do you, Alma,  
While the planes come in, fluctuating and making the sounds  
Of a grand commotion:  
And then once the holiday is over wont you go back to  
Work with my cousin,  
While the very same old sun floats over the very banks of  
Everything and makes a mess of  
Itself;  
And your children steam on along- doing so fine out of your lions,  
While the lions prefer to panhandle,  
While there are deep clefts left into the earth, and the salmon die  
Higher up, but every year returning through the pitchforks,  
And the hot air balloons of all of the any old tourists  
Get lost until they hit the power lines  
And then fell like money pits into their super zealous wishing wells-  
Attributing to no one; answering to themselves,  
And licking their wounds just where they happened to fall-  
Across the dirty carpets, down from the snowcapped banks of Telluride;  
As you kiss your wounds, and meander through your silver  
Ways to midnight and back again to West Palm Beach where  
You don't have to tell anyone, but curl into yourself  
For the night- like a grail that glows with the big mouths of pearls,  
Luminescent and basking in the shallow  
And lonely bedrooms that are fondled through the inoffensive night.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Insatiable Mouth Of An Undefeatable Giant

They have houses, and look at them storm;  
When night falls, it is perfect to come home to, while outside the  
Lions roar: made up cages for the night,  
And I find her coming around again, spilling the painful tendrils over  
My dreams:  
My exposed dictionary like a class of useless cars in an apple orchard  
That has forgotten how to keep its pornography:  
And at the end of each paragraph a lake, beautiful enough for endless ladies  
To sleep in  
That I go down to and wonder upon the nectars regressed there;  
And if my muse is standing on the other side, or if the inconsequential  
Lights of the constantly migratory carnival have caught the attentions of  
Her sweet brown body- and the soul again of my Alma,  
Pulling her away like a carriage with horses  
Of a desire that  
I can only fixate on, as my night tumbles into the insatiable mouth of  
An undefeatable giant who is forever ruining my fairytale.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Inside

You put me down so far underground  
Like a plush rabbit without his crown:  
Sister, sister, you put me down:  
My entire family put me down; I am the black sheep  
Braying on his bleeding ground,  
My enter family put me down:  
Now it is past five, almost the hour of the mailman, almost  
The hour to get up and go to work,  
If you are a song bird, or if you are a jerk;  
This is becoming the hour in which the city crowns;  
The hour too that I should be sleeping in my crypt  
So softly underground;  
The hour that Kelly is sleeping- the hours that cats fornicate in,  
Though they are always fornicating:  
This is the hour that holy people have peace just before the hour  
That their awful sun rises in the east.  
And then that new offspring sings like little spirits multiplying  
Like transom guppies, or other words I don't know;  
This is the hour I imagine you walking barefooted through the snow:  
This is the hour that I awaken to perceive,  
This is the hour that I would kiss your grieving lips to grieving;  
To lay with you for an hour, and pay you for your troubles;  
This is the hour that my love is awfully doubled,  
And I come slipping like a gray man through the walls of your  
Doublewide:  
And this is the hour that I find the inside of your inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Insignificant Pain Of The Time Remaining

A half million years  
Before the Universe  
Flipped on the lights  
And I saw my only  
Muse  
Bruised lipped  
Acne scarred  
Debased  
And I ran to her  
And told her,  
"I am so afraid."  
And I wanted for her  
To hold me for  
The remaining time.  
Like a mirror,  
She said,  
"I am so afraid."  
And she ran  
And ran far away  
Before I could  
Sit down  
And bite my nails  
To the quick  
And weep from  
The insignificant pain.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Insignificant Walls Of Her Attended Bedroom

My childhood neighborhood lost in  
A deluge of Spanish tongues- bodies wringed with  
Gold- How far away they seem to have come  
From her,  
Mestizos out humming toward water fountains,  
Out riding their bicycles or trimming yards:  
Beautiful, innocent people  
Who find so many loves and take them all to  
The waves where the sunlight follows laughing after  
Them,  
And my words rebound like harmless eels around  
The dunes of their family,  
Wanting to be let into the traditions that they have  
Left behind- but she goes home with him,  
Brown skin upon brown skin:  
She forgets about me as she hears her children's  
Laughter and the candlelight decorates  
And colonnades the insignificant walls of her  
Attended bedroom.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Insouciant Alligator

If there are horses leaping through the  
Timber of a forgotten house, where are they  
If the forest runs like yoke,  
As the systems come, bound tightly as  
Gifts of magnets  
To the wanton sea: she throws them in again,  
As a sacrifice to the beautiful elements-  
And she goes home again,  
Circumnavigating the cul-de-sacs, and something  
Whispers overhead but not a long ways off:  
She looks up and the weather seems to change  
As the fireworks take off:  
It is her boy, her only child, playing hooky on a roof:  
There he is in a summer about to turn auburn,  
And he doesn't know any math-  
And he doesn't know the constellations, but  
The insouciant alligator still watches him  
As his mother is coming home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Instruments They Learn To Enjoy

A sound of a sorority so young pantomiming  
What they know they must become in the courtyard:  
The sun strums cavalier,  
It plays over their bodices and their legs like rivers:  
How many of these will disappear,  
How many will come away into one another, and spend  
Their next tomorrows looking up at the throats and eyes  
Of immodest business suits,  
But now they are here, sweltering, making tongues and eyes  
Of themselves,  
Laughing like drunken beauty, while all of the alabaster cars  
Rest in the parking lots of their grazing,  
And my words go down hard, for I have thrown all of my  
Bouquets all over them,  
Those nudities that I have clothed so immodestly; and just in  
That one stretch of sun they are bathing,  
A galleria that wont take very long aging gracefully,  
Forgetting how they belonged as restively as the deep smoothness  
Of perfect stones placed together in the courtyard  
Like inconsequential prayers,  
Engines so perfectly unmotivated but as ready as lips who  
Whisper closer to the instruments they learn to enjoy.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Insubstantial Indoors

Rainstorms were ruining your eyes—  
As they looked beyond the castle you couldn't remember,  
All of the way up the slopes of some clouds  
Like a rose garden grown over the parapets,  
Or this was my bedroom of a weekend's rainstorm  
Folded over with paper airplanes  
And my bicycle tossed into the bosom of the yard  
Underneath the melaleuca tree—  
Going to school tomorrow—strange didactics  
Of the already abandoned children, parallelograms  
Of simpler pleasures,  
As latchkeys kiss and make love to their shadows  
And dream of stolen fireworks underneath the corners of  
The yard's palmettos—mowed grottos where the housewives  
Faun—sad delights of the middle class slipping  
Away from their fingertips—airplanes flying over them  
Like the divine providence of dinosaurs—  
And the sun big in their eyes, waiting for their children  
To stop behaving and rejoin them in their places of  
The insubstantial indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Interiors Of A Landlocked Sea

I toss a Frisbee to the wolves as I listen  
To the jet engine's holiday—  
It sounds just like the apiary of your daydreams,  
As I've been thinking about you all across  
The footpaths of this campus—  
You of a honey's sorority—whose body I once  
Kissed and bought overpriced gold for,  
And followed around weeping like  
A puppet does to a wet puppy—  
But you've never set foot on Campus—  
You only made it out of Mexico after  
I had graduated—you crossed the frontera in your  
Bare feet wearing a beatific negligee—  
Following the orbit of your husband,  
As dear to you as a rattlesnake is  
To a devil—  
Now the roads have split us—and the love  
You proposed has evaporated from its shallows—  
My new wife likes to eat pomegranates—  
She is already pregnant and will come across  
The earth in three weeks,  
Maybe you will see her streaking across you  
Like a comet—as the orchards there in your bedroom  
That I do not know about,  
Bend down with their bitter fruit,  
Trying to console you—and you are in a cave  
As brilliant as a television—  
With your children lactating like mica from you—  
Infantile nebulas burning from the interiors  
Of a landlocked sea—and I want you to know  
That this is how I picture you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Interpretations Of More Than Just One Meaning

They are so colloquial and well-spoken in  
The dime stores of their echoes—  
Until their ex teachers care to forget about them—  
They become another antecedent that has no  
Pronoun and lie just in another classroom above the  
Earth—  
The dirt is lucky not to have them—the housewives  
Echo like the last delusions of fireworks above  
The drainage—and then I am sure that they  
Are going to sleep forever—  
And the places that cannot keep them are just  
Trade-offs for my parents' well-being—  
But I will not forgive my wife, even if she bares my child—  
Because this land is beautiful and it is open to  
The interpretations of more than just one meaning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Intricacies Of Autumns

Infinite stranger with your regresses,  
I burn for you: and it seems for awhile alright  
To swim in my lucidity:  
While the Christmas trees drip the tears of  
Candles  
And the traffic carnivals- and everything else is  
Spoken easily and softly- and the lines  
Drift like miniskirts:  
As the airplanes drift like paper snow flakes;  
And the lions yawn on Friday:  
On this Friday of make-believe, as the parcels  
Are delivered, and the supermarkets  
Beef;  
And the girls I once knew start walking down  
The streets lacing  
The intricacies of autumns on their feet.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Inventions Of A Chinese Wife

Looking at your shoulders- They seem  
Like the shoulders of airplanes  
After you have touched down-  
I wonder what the stewardesses are serving  
On them-  
Little girls who walk the streets of  
Shanghai-  
They dont have too much to say  
For themselves-  
Some of them are holding umbrellas-  
The inventions of a Chinese wife  
Trying not to fly away.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Ironic Gods

Wastrels on the trunks of some trees  
The stewardesses have disappeared behind,  
Kissing after their pilots who  
Are sailing the paper airplanes  
And sending off fireworks into the skies:  
The sugar cane is burning,  
And the well maintained lions are in their  
Cages-  
The batters are up to the plate, and it is  
Kissing time over all of the old high school  
Where the students mingle with simulacrum  
And the vestibules of a copper cemetery-  
As I sit out in the grass, the windmills  
Gossiping- the lady fingers firing off salutes,  
And the traffic streaming like telltale  
Messages of the ironic gods.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Irony Of Immense Sunlight On A Dead-End Highway

A few words on the otherwise  
Empty slate remind me of,

A forest mortally burned,  
The flight of useless animals

Ghosts who don't leave tracks  
In the snow,  
The swift panther who does for them,

A highway on a flat and burnished sea,  
Heading from Homestead south to the  
Limestone shelves,

A tortoise in a long and eerie wave,

An albatross approaching pale thunderheads,

A gravestone in an otherwise empty field,  
A lonely soldier,  
But dear enough to remember;

Of how far away you are,  
That you don't care how often I misspell a few  
Love letters,

The irony of immense sunlight on  
A dead-end highway  
Which might have once led home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Irrefutable Sheets

RipCORDS of these things that we cannot pull off:  
Stewardesses eaten naked by the lips of the giants in his  
Sky forts,  
Smeared like tipsy marmalade all over all of those  
Orchards:  
Rhymes of accord, and holding her tiny brown fingers in  
Mine,  
The way song birds are housed in their cages before  
The lips of the golden mines,  
When all of the night is in trouble, and in them the wolves  
Are terrible singers:  
But their eyes are even more terrible, as they hold all of  
The feral thoughts of the children  
They must steal away from us, when we kiss each other  
And go down beneath the irrefutable sheets of  
Another un sanctimonious baseball game.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ivy Leagues

Now they go down into their brown beds wearing  
Their nightgowns of gold colors,  
Like foxes selling wine, good at getting grapes, and turning  
Grannies into suckers:  
And this is my neighborhood, harassing and tantalizing above  
The downy plateaus and grottos where I finally slip down to  
Sleep:  
Like all of the roundest of stones down at the basest of mountains,  
Crushing the corpulent lips of the most tourist of the wildflowers,  
From which the ghostly footpaths circulate up from,  
Giving their tramping motions toward the summits where the prayer  
Flags of the ivy leagues flutter above the easiest of summits:  
Above the water parks and the wine shops you snuggle in:  
While I shoot off more and more, somehow conquering  
But never getting down,  
Like the divinity of an unobserving window trapped under the armpit  
Of a motionless airplane:  
A still life which captivates the nimbus, and keeps them around for  
Years and eons, while the hurricanes churn like windmills,  
While their housewives whip milk into cream, and that into butter;  
And the quietest of butterflies lies like a statue on  
Alma's breast which the half lazy lion nuzzles up to and finally:  
Oh so finally makes his hungry wish.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ivy Of A More Inner Dove

Drowning its equinox of horses-  
The sea brushes evangelically with cinder-locks;  
It genuflects, propositioning queens  
Of its shoreline:  
All these girls all the same all the time;  
The waves bring the bouquets to the docks;  
And she is in love with her other men,  
Far ashore in the orange groves like white knights  
On steeds of metamorphosis:  
She never goes to the light house again to see his  
Hoary propositions:  
She remains stalwart farther inland dressed up  
Behind green copper cannons,  
Kissing the remains of a prettier kind, but  
Their hotel room is empty:  
She beds missionary in another household:  
His words are replete with endless time, but her neck  
Is enfolded by the ivy of a more inner dove.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ixora's Red Entrails

Head strong boys with championship toys  
Bric-a-brac and march along,  
Drumming the footsteps of a forest's song,  
Like in bed I touched Alma's knee as tiny as a doll's  
China plate,  
As brown and gorgeous as the throat of a whipperwhirl:  
Whirlpools in the sky and fix it men:  
I want to lay in bed with Alma again, and remember my  
Troubles to another world,  
And take of my troubles as we unclothe, our eyes as sated  
As the spumes of whales,  
As we look out of our home's windows into the privacy  
Of the ixora's red entrails.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Jealous Sun

Lashed upon the teeter-totters of some milkweed  
Park  
The butterflies have spent across like burning paper  
Bleeding and now across whose shoulder blades  
The bright red and yellow helicopters  
Are receding  
And the cars are parked next to the dunes across from  
Which the ocean waves are sucreasing  
Like sisters in a ballroom of mirrors the criminal  
Moon is cajoling, stealing kisses that the light house  
Is calling  
And night in its jasmine zoetropes is falling into  
A bed of senseless kisses until the jealous sun starts crowing.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Jewel Of The Road

Kill myself in the jewel of  
The road:  
I am the prince that was a toad,  
And in my meat is  
A full load,  
Of gemstones and nematodes.  
Your birthstone waited for you  
At the food court in the mall,  
And after your daughter  
Was kidnapped,  
You gave him a call,  
And let him repeat in you the sounds  
The way water evaporates and crowns  
The roofs of these lords  
And bangs,  
Makes sweet séances out of petty things,  
Or puts sweet words into the mouths of  
Otherwise dirty things;  
Makes them turn round and round,  
Until they are dizzy and all  
Cleaned,  
Makes them say these things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Jewelry The Moon Steals

The moon a yellow Pygmalion—  
A venereal marionette dancing over  
The best part of the city  
The most beautiful of  
The boys has already abandoned—  
I am getting drunk  
In my little yellow living room:  
A virgin of guadelupe still sits in the  
Floor of the foyer,  
Paper airplanes being sacrifices  
To her—  
Soon my mother will come home,  
Since tomorrow is the baby shower,  
But maybe I will be too drunk to open  
The door;  
But sometimes my own thoughts still  
Get bright—  
They become the jewelry the moon  
Steals over the impenetrable bay,  
As the waves dance with the dolphins  
All with impure thoughts of her—  
Like a goddess she will awaken tomorrow,  
And the racecars will race for her  
She won't even see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Jobs Of Clean Men

Your daughter has all those long lashes crying away  
To better parts  
Where I thought I should belong- where so many boys thought  
To have liked;  
And I swing alone in my parks and cast eyes into the mountebanks  
Of shadows, the genteel lonelinesses:  
I have learned about Simon Believer, and I think of you and your  
Daughter and Alma  
While almost all of the airplanes slip across the moon with  
The acuity of keen mental telepathy;  
And underneath much of this penumbra your body pulsates and bleeds;  
It is breathing but wounded, and it goes out into the snow  
And tries to make romance with anything- While I drink mojitos all the  
Way down your slopes,  
And I look at pictures of you specifically, cradling your daughter  
Sweating in a dreamland I guess none of us will ever figure out;  
But you will always be someone special,  
Even when the jet engines fail and fireballs weep like tears of a sun  
We can't understand;  
And I drink mojitos and laugh at the jobs of clean men:  
And I put on my armor and I kiss the creche of your apathetic soul;  
Or I dream of Alma, which in Spanish means almost the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Journalists Of His Disbelief

Another try into the brigades of light—another day  
Falters into a dictionary or a collection of  
Museums: I remember selling Christmas trees across  
The highway from a comic book store,  
And being collected to my father's echo that runs on  
And on even though his life his almost  
Over and he is nothing special—just another collection of  
Light in that same museum that is always  
Failing—after he is fallen, what will gather around him  
To see that he is no longer there? Nothing but the  
Same old things—sunlight and butterflies and rainbows,  
But nothing he ever believed in—nothing he could  
Tell time with or make money with—  
But he will remain perpetually an echo for all time  
In openness and wounds— in fact displayed to all of  
The journalists of his disbelief.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Joy In The World

It feels good to be in the weather  
As long as there are so many houses  
To return home to—  
The truth in the daylight in the sky—  
Unobtainable layers of it  
Above the frothing surf  
Filled with starfish and jellyfish  
And sea horses—  
The tourists can only stand there—  
As the airplanes advertise with  
Their banners—  
This is the joy in the world—  
As the cadaver, still burning,  
Leaps over the museums  
Not know anyone's name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Jumpstarting Airplanes

Walking in a world that is not mine:  
Moving colors dying as they consume themselves-  
Dwarves under overpasses too soon besides  
Where I used to live;  
And thinking of her, while the sun goes down- flesh mending  
On bone- flowers in a garden trying to survive  
The last moments of this year,  
And the sky above us- her children in a graveyard of  
Make-believe  
And all of my wishes approaching a summit as smooth  
As glass beneath the insouciant wishes of  
The jumpstarting airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Just As Many

Alma laughs and says we have to leap forwards:  
She is so susceptible:  
Like a seashell open mouthed waiting for the milk of her gut:  
When we made love and her bellybutton filled with the resin of  
Pearls:  
She was still bleeding from her pregnancy with Heidi high up  
In the Alps;  
And even further over her shoulders, in the derelicts of  
Pluto where nothing has to survive,  
She was still singing in a chorus of new architects that could never  
Prove themselves even in the confirmations of her little sister:  
Then she wanted to break up with me  
Around the fourth of July: we'd only made love four times; but it  
Was the first honest love I'd had in twice as many years;  
It was a bizarre science fiction that had to happen for god to be proved;  
At least the last of many gods,  
Like grapes on the vine, drooling open breasted for the lips of the  
Fox;  
And afterwards she didn't want anything more to do with me,  
But luckily we reconciled and have made love six as many times:  
And it feels all right,  
Even though my soul has lost itself underneath as many grains of sand  
That lie relaxing on the uncountable beach underneath the breasts  
And armpits of just as many housewives  
Who afterwards will go home laughing, echoing in the autumns of  
Their times the smiles of the lips of the just as many Jack O' Lanterns.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Katydids

On every Christmas, the foxes strut out  
Tender footed, underneath the marching band of  
My heart while it is still alive,  
Just as the fishing boats set out while the fish  
Are still biting,  
And then I have no excuse but to presuppose  
You,  
To kiss and curse you through the preternatural  
Moats of all of the heavens whilst they  
Are still happening,  
And the girls play out, barefooted,  
Hearts leaping-  
And dancing for serpents in the carnivals I guess  
You can have no idea of ever happening:  
And the airplanes clatter across the dinner  
Tables- their sororities  
Stumbling, and becoming the famishing hallucinations  
For all of the heavens,  
As their tails unwind- and the chandeliers glisten  
Like boats sinking just beneath their waters,  
Whilst all of the simulacrum continue laughing on  
And on-  
As the katydids kiss themselves to the cypress-  
Because I already know that it is just the one or  
Two things that they can forever do.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Kaydids

On every Christmas, the foxes strut out  
Tender footed, underneath the marching band of  
My heart while it is still alive,  
Just as the fishing boats set out while the fish  
Are still biting,  
And then I have no excuse but to presuppose  
You,  
To kiss and curse you through the preternatural  
Moats of all of the heavens whilst they  
Are still happening,  
And the girls play out, barefooted,  
Hearts leaping-  
And dancing for serpents in the carnivals I guess  
You can have no idea of ever happening:  
And the airplanes clatter across the dinner  
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And on-  
As the katydids kiss themselves to the cypress-  
Because I already know that it is just the one or  
Two things that they can forever do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Keyhole Of Little Bear Mountain

There were virgins: singing bodies of little girls  
Up in the keyhole of Little Bear Mountain—  
How they'd gotten there after all of the boy scouts,  
Securely knotted together, had fallen—  
It beats me—maybe they floated there—or rode upon  
The backs of high leaping grasshoppers or  
Took a train that had gone off the tracks to vanish—  
Anyway, the snows around them turned to pearls—  
And they were laughing and eating tuna fish sandwiches  
All day—  
I heard them from my blue and yellow tent—like a  
Jellyfish or yellow jacket down in the stickers and foliage—  
I had plans of selling fireworks, but there weren't  
So much tourists as there were arrowheads, red berries,  
And mosquitos—and this wasn't my art, anyways—  
It was there—but their echoes died when the sun went down  
And school let out—maybe they had somewhere else to  
Go—but I really think that they stayed up there in  
The night and metamorphosed, as if that was what they  
Were meant to do—I am sure that the stewardesses never  
Saw them—They were already gone—  
And who ever read about them but very few—the clouds  
Over shadowed the moonlight—and raindrops fell down on  
My cheeks and scars, and I crawled away from there  
In the morning and drowned myself in bards—  
And whoever else heard of those little girls crawling up there  
Into the highest kindergartens of the world—I never knew—  
But the winds blew, the raindrops fell,  
And the airplanes flew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Killers Of Real Life

I have a beautiful dream of vampires  
And their kiss.  
The fangs of your new life grow  
Like contaminated roots,  
Probing my sandy foundation.  
We fall in love again.  
Rent a room in Tallahassee,  
Kiss each other like long lost pets  
Newly reacquainted.  
I don't want to know the details  
Of your exploits,  
But you say them to me anyway:  
Like a sly politician giving a speech,  
A filibuster until help arrives:  
You were married and had a child,  
Loved men you found fuming out  
Of the lackadaisical cracks in the  
Sideway you walked down  
Trying out your novel ego.  
Your voice sang like malevolent laughter,  
Great pain without a hint of suicide.  
I find out I didn't want to be there,  
So I took a shower. You called over a  
Young Indian who I could tell was not Jewish.  
He winked at me and took you  
And your pinstriped girlfriend to eat somewhere.  
All that you'd done to me has made you famished,  
The way you threw those once existing days  
Like an ancestor's porcelain doll tossed  
Out the window to shatter  
Along the withered umbilical-cord  
Of newly born highway.  
I just want to get out of there so I wake up: 7: 20  
My sister is over visiting.  
She just got over a flesh-eating bacteria,  
So I crawl up the stairs like a war veteran triaged  
After amputation and tell her  
The killers who happen to you in real life  
Sometimes search for you while you sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Killjoy Sensations

The same memories were the killjoy  
Sensations, losing the knowledge of words  
Like blood,  
As the girls stepped barefooted out  
Of the trailer parks of  
Their no-good neighborhoods—  
And the knights swung their  
Swords,  
And quested,  
Or were slain upon the benchmarks of  
Their holy and heroic ways—  
But their minds hadn't truly evolved,  
As they'd never actually graduated from  
High school—  
All of them enamored with Disney  
World while my wife  
Whistled alone in the kitchen  
Just because she had nothing else better to do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kiln Of Caesuras

Imperfect such as this: but beautiful- beautiful,  
And lining the road:  
The ululating throats of orchards and nematodes:  
And all of this stuff wakes up on the burning  
Fingerprint of a candle  
And just keeps on doggedly cajoling- trying to sell its  
Forever blesses retinue from outside the séances of  
Forts that are as sheltered as terrapin  
Until their candles burn out and their saints smell like  
Roses they are so blind;  
And the tourists return to their main rooms like hotels  
In which they wish to discover better love,  
But it all goes unequalled as the waves throw themselves  
On the nativities of the sand- taking away  
The tiny vestibules that used to wink like entire daises  
Against the kiln of caesuras and up into the heavens  
They never knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kilns Of Our Young And Unmolested Offspring

Bodies fill up with noise

Because it is you that I want as I slam the glass

Down:

And I feel like I am kindergarten and have been dragging

Up wished from the overused rug at naptime while

My parents are underpaying me,

The sad phantasms who will never learn anymore of my

Despotic gardens,

But this is how they form for you,

Alma: all alarmed and from the gut: this is how they sing,

Even while your womb has been busy disproving my make-believe,

Now I have a house for you too small to be your

Castle, to be your cave,

While all of the rich and purple boys pounce their tools for you:

They are all too ready to be your slaves,

And why haven't you been out in your front yard dancing in and out

For me,

Alma:

I have stolen so many roses for you, and I would take you to the new

Make-believe of my abused cataracts,

If only if you had any new feelings for me, and none of this

Could be disproved,

And then our countries could sleep together while the lions

Yawns and the luscious breads bakes in the fountains

Of the kilns of our young and unmolested

Offspring.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kindling

This is a good sipping rum- I have dolls  
From Haiti and Peru in my kitchen,  
And chameleons that run through my yard-  
When I was very young,  
I stared hypnotized at the fields where the  
Cheerleaders left  
Metamorphosed into stewardesses, broiling  
Confections and stains of honey:  
I am sure they went up to be willing captives  
Of the gods we misspell  
In freshmen English- loving whispers of the  
Ways that we conjoin again-  
Bullet holes of twins overlapping in the  
Darkness,  
As the comely suspects get away, blooming  
Cadaverous and spoiled  
To simmer underneath the kindling riches of  
A misbegotten world.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Kindling Blade

Morning comes uneasy like a  
First-time thief,  
But he is back again to show quick  
Eyes  
The grief: Of workaday seasons,  
Of dying pets,  
Of cobras hooded in the Astroturf-  
Pretty girls ignore him, surf:  
And my two dogs still sleep,  
Legs twitching through that gray forest-  
Three hours to the east, old girlfriends  
Are new wives, mewing, yawning in their  
Professional beds, bobbing their heads  
And cooking things up-  
The morning is lovely when fully occupied,  
And the yards at the end of its drooling jaw  
Good and mowed-  
But up in the gray mountains the perpetual  
Bachelors have a long road to hoe;  
And still the velvet ejaculations sing like  
Pristine pistils all poison and spurious rippling,  
Rippling across the edge of the kindling blade.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kindling Of The Rosy Paper

Now the mountains: you there, where the golden  
Things are hidden, and how strange-  
Artifacts of her lips where the Indians climbed,  
And had children.  
The river spills from her vest, goes down through the  
Golden lumber,  
Divides eventually for tourists; but I wait for  
Her in the Bosque beneath  
A red sky's eventual intrusion: words such as filament  
Keeping the birds in their particular airs-  
All of it was beautiful before the trailer parks were born,  
And we came down holding hands-  
The sea that dried up during an afternoon's lunchtime,  
Or through the many times I tried  
Captivating you, my heart putting on lights:  
In its castanet, turning for the joy of your brown hands  
Upon the kindling of the rosy paper  
I attended as if flames could make beautiful flowers come alive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kindling Riches

This is a good sipping rum- I have dolls  
From Haiti and Peru in my kitchen,  
And chameleons that run through my yard-  
When I was very young,  
I stared hypnotized at the fields where the  
Cheerleaders left  
Metamorphosed into stewardesses, broiling  
Confections and stains of honey:  
I am sure they went up to be willing captives  
Of the gods we misspell  
In freshmen English- loving whispers of the  
Ways that we conjoin again-  
Bullet holes of twins overlapping in the  
Darkness,  
As the comely suspects get away, blooming  
Cadaverous and spoiled  
To simmer underneath the kindling riches of  
A misbegotten world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The King Of The Dwarves

He licks his black arrows on the cliff,  
Doesn't  
He: and he has so many things to say  
While I am drunk and potbellied on the old  
Truck and full of his  
Fantasy and the rivers down into her libertarian  
Orchid farm:  
You can get three for a dollar  
And I think of Sharon under the light of the moon,  
While is quiver is full and hunting the dragon  
By the light of the moon  
And it is so sick from drinking so much water,  
And all of the five armies are sick,  
And only the Hobbit is picking locks and Federico Garcia  
Lorca is sleeping drunken with bullet holes  
Underneath his olive tree,  
As I should soon be sleeping, though I have a few more  
To publish anonymously,  
As these dirty nailed fingers run like springtime afterbirth, '  
As I think of her unwritten of, serving the effervescing  
Systems of the ghostly sailors,  
Her romantic thorns never ever spoken of by  
JRR Tolkien,  
And yet I love her, and keep on riding barrels for her long  
After the glorious denouement and the burial  
Of the king of the dwarves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kingdoms Of The Sky

Crying like vanquished heroes in the golden  
Fjord: each body a tree bending down in the shade  
Of over cooling monsters:  
The sunlight decapitating shadows, and spilling them  
Over cliffs: trucks who lose hope  
And tumble down when they were halfway getting up  
To somewhere:  
When they could almost see Mexico from  
Arizona:  
And now all of this theft; the homeopathy of scorpions  
And coral snakes fondling newborn rabbits in the  
Underbrush:  
And the ankles of the Indians as they pass away amidst  
The states:  
Blue bears smoking on the cliffs, jumping over entire  
Cities-  
But making no movement to save her name,  
To save her from the hallucinations of the tourisms  
That have educated the things she has mistaken for love;  
Or causing everything she has known to metamorphosis  
Into something heavenly before her  
Exodus from the kingdoms of the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kissing Rooms Of The Cars

I can survive if you can survive- for awhile,  
Outside the trout streams of Mexico-  
Here are the oily reflections of your mother,  
Before she had a gun pressed  
To her head-  
And had to surrender, as you surrendered:  
As I have surrendered for you,  
And given off my skin to my classes: and shed  
Myself on the stark and barren tree of my  
Classroom:  
I hang my skin here for witches  
And stewardesses, and they come around,  
Fingering themselves and blowing kisses- oh,  
The beautiful words that they seem to become-  
As I remember you in the fruit market,  
As I remember making love to you in the afternoons  
When there was too much rain to work-  
For awhile, for that time, you kissed  
Me open mouthed, and when you saw me in the little  
House I bought for you, you jumped into my  
Lap and we kissed, and we made love,  
Even though I was drunk: but eventually, you stopped  
Kissing me opened mouthed- I still get drunk  
During and after school- and I still like to feel the  
Warm recesses that happen upon me inside the daydreams of  
The kissing rooms of the cars out in the student  
Parking lot- but you no longer know what I mean-  
And I no longer care.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Kitchen Of Your Childhood Suicide, Sylvia

I love Sylvia Plathe  
Even though its been maybe a decade since  
I read the Bell Jar,  
And they've censored all of her poetry after her  
Son, the fish man, committed suicide  
Too:  
I really love how Plathe was so honest, how she wrote  
About hiding herself in the nook under the stairs  
Going down, going down:  
And I'll be honest, I'm lit right now, and ready to  
Settle down with my dogs and  
Watch a movie,  
After ten years, after ten years without a woman,  
And never one like Sylvia:  
I can't even imagine one like Sylvia- and my teeth  
Are aching and my scars do throb,  
My greatest imperfections reflected back up to me  
Impotently when I read Sylvia,  
When I read her- I'd go to get my haircut in Tallahassee,  
And then outside there was a tiny park by the lake  
Where girls jogged and walked their dogs,  
And not a one of them was Sylvia,  
And I'd never drink- I'd go to class, and I'd never drink,  
But I'd read Sylvia:  
She was so honest for a housewife, admitting to her  
Scars,  
As I've admitted to mine, and loving the girls who serve  
Lesser tattooed men the drinks in bars-  
Oh well, Sylvia, you didn't marry a doctor after all-  
You married another poet- a man,  
He wasn't as good as you- maybe he was better than me,  
But I love you more because of it,  
And I feel so exposed like I'm in your kitchen now with the  
Walls torn down, just a drunk tourist feeding the carnivorous  
Birds, wishing I was French, or in my grave  
So that I could understand you and reach over before the end  
Of the week,  
And press you to me like a prize and just use you to impress  
Those girls I really love,

Those brilliant busy things crawled out of the sea who  
Are so less than you,  
And who appear to us both like delicious pies patriotically cooling  
On the window sill in the kitchen of your childhood suicide,  
Sylvia.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Knowledge To Make

It is not all good, and it is getting even more dangerous  
From here:  
And it just keeps falling up and up like whatever moonlight it  
Was upon the crenulations of her skirt:  
And the traffic is as busy as ants or centipedes:  
Little girls who in their days, monthly, bleeding in their little ways:  
And then we go into choruses,  
Or we shut up:  
And the fieldtrips of mausoleums are lifted by forklifts  
And dump trucks:  
And the math gets funny, and the moonlight serenades: and you make  
Love to him, because his muscles surrounding you make you want  
To feel like a princess in her grotto:  
All beefed up and surreal; and even if you were broken, well then  
You were healing, and it all came down to this,  
And maybe your children were feeling better, Alma: as maybe you  
Have even lied down now beside you man of whatever weathers they  
Were that brought you to this country.  
And then to my bedroom, to an oasis, or a woebegone opera,  
While the boomslangs ate our flesh, and then the pretty girls rollerskated:  
And we watched them entirely agog, and at least it was I who thought  
How precious it was that they didn't even have to think of us,  
While the waves repeated, crenulated and purred against the bridges  
That we have come to join and walk, but which neither of us  
Have made, nor have the knowledge to make.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lacquered Stages Filled With Grinning Dogs

I can never begin to start a new life:  
I just keep rhyming again for the empty dens of sand lions  
And house wives:  
We saw them together getting out of the zoo:  
So many children and each with two legs and two shoes:  
This is how the earliest and newest life  
Proceeds to move:  
Away from sweet dens of rest to other dens too:  
They come sweeping across our shoulders like the satin threads  
Of Cinderellas who  
Never have to change back again:  
And we can watch them go and spread out around us through  
The day, Alma,  
Even though they are nothing like us:  
They make a beautiful show like birds who are injured but  
Have been cared for and thus still survive:  
My mother and father are going back to Arizona,  
But that strange desert holds no more meaning for me, even though  
I am alone in my house,  
I held you near me today, and enjoyed you in every which way,  
Like the astronauts enjoy the stars,  
And the words I breathe come out in unwholesome circles and  
Caracoles like little girls who are just learning to swim,  
Or ballerinas who are terribly afraid of the lacquered stages filled  
With grinning dogs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lactates Of The Realm

See how I've dressed up  
All in cumulonimbus and the yellow busses  
Passing beneath me  
Like hummingbirds with lipstick of tourists:  
When the want to come up her  
Skirts—  
I dream of a pretty rainforest:  
The world in a teardropp like a store,  
On my shoulders twin reindeer making a pass  
At their own lovers:  
Beneath them, the soft willows beside the stream,  
And my retinue gladly gathering  
In a meeting of the lactates of the realm.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ladles Of Featureless Joys

Who can I tell the joys I've had at night  
Waiting for the quixotic bedrooms of little houses  
That are as good as mine  
Where strange cats come brushing whiskers through  
The scuppernongs;  
And it is just as good as if I'd had a speed boat  
Along the dress of reeds an October lake,  
Where all the hidden promises whisk beneath the mallards  
Cooing to the duck blinds;  
And different degrees of hallucinations go like runaways  
Across the fields of corn and strawberries,  
With the deepest dreams being like commercial airliners  
Booming like Olympic runners through the tallow  
Baking in an airy wedding cake of forgetful gods  
With the clouds being the hands of two lovers pinching and forming,  
A dousing one another with the ladles of featureless joys.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lady Of The Lake

Scarred for stewardesses  
And how they run like sweet minnows through  
Each and every nebular shadow,  
Serving the open and vulnerable commuters who pass  
Like the dead between the borders  
Of so many states,  
And new loves are found and buried,  
And new talents are taken into the sea  
And mothballed like  
The wine into the skeleton's lips;  
While we were going down,  
I had no one's hand to hold, but it was still  
Beautiful,  
Staring first into her bruised eyes,  
And then down her rivers,  
And she seemed to smile and acknowledge the way  
I and every man was looking at her even as we  
Shot beneath the waves  
Like a great arrow which had passed harmlessly over  
The enemy's walls,  
And quill ed quite harmlessly into the hapless mythology  
Of the lady of the lake.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lady Of The Lake?

Tongue who languishes for the chalice of  
Its voyage—  
The questing beasts who sounds so savage,  
And speaks of its lust  
While driving to the movie theatres,  
But grows quiet upon returning to  
Its houses—  
And into its kitchens without any poisons  
Of snakes,  
It practices its ventriloquisms—  
And the lady of the lake?  
She waits or she slumbers in a pool made  
Entirely out glass meant to reflect  
The cartographed jealousy of  
The stars  
Except that they are so far away  
That their beauty continues  
To burn without any of its mirrored passions.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lady's Wedded Gem

With a mouthful of candles I hold out and wait  
For the new show:  
Crepuscle has built and flood even over the blind man's  
House who is always checking out  
The emperor's new duds:  
And when they have weddings, they hold them as softly  
As soft boiled eggs  
As oranges are sliced and buttered into marmalade:  
And if it appears to us at all,  
It appears while the eyelids are still jumping the canals  
Before chanticleer sings;  
And even though they are diamonds,  
And they pattern the rural glades: they are slipping away,  
Atop a grass stained belly, forked tongue;  
And it isn't to encrust the lady's wedded gem for which they are  
Made.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lamentations Of That Garden

Parched symbols of a paper sea  
In a rebellion of totems who wait for you  
In the darkness long after you have  
Gotten into your car and driven away  
Underneath the latchkeys of the overpasses  
And to Hollywood- They are making pictures of  
You whose brown stems are a forest- they are making  
You feel unreal until your children come  
Back home again from the water spirits of the mountains,  
Bringing you a vial of the tears of their father  
They discovered where you were sure  
He was abandoned- doing his job for a lady who  
Is always changing him,  
Doing the work you set her to, as the butterflies  
Follow the school busses down from the lamentations  
Of that garden.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Lamentations Which Bare Her Name

The satin cones vestibule over where the pilgrims walk:  
And Alma has made love to her man so many times  
After she has made love to me:  
She probably can't even feel me now: how I levitated the bed  
Over the termites and said a prayer for the conquistadors  
And their Indians:  
She has probably now been to so many movies that she could  
Just sit for awhile in the sweet and velveteen silhouettes of  
Starlets and just gaze at the  
Magnificent of silicone- She is probably so far away that she  
Has never had to sculpture something that would  
Eventually die:  
Why just look at her too children: they will go on forever as  
The creek run like tears in their wet seasons down from  
The rocky mountains:  
If I don't see her again, in a month or two she will all out forget  
My name,  
But I will continue walking down her immortal path,  
The vulpine winds stealing from my throat the lamentations which  
Bare her name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Languages Of Another Tomb

Unspeakably coming home to me,  
Lightweight airplane touching down over the  
Baseball diamonds—and in all of their  
Echoes wishing to know just who  
Was exactly in love—  
Plagiarisms inside a classroom of glass bottles  
Leading to grandmothers eventually awakening from  
Coffins—and then my first born is born  
And married, given the names of my ancestors,  
Asked to take over without any instructions—  
And in those places where the fantasies  
A belly-full—  
My mother alone and singularly beautiful,  
Giving her best wishes forever over a birthday cake  
We cannot see anymore—and if you  
Exist on seeing him, then remember he is only  
Midway there in your soul—gesticulations  
That seem to evaporate in the afternoon,  
While I guessed that I was in love with you—  
But you just happened to be the promises I could  
Not survive happening everywhere like the dying promises  
Of pomegranates dropped and heavy upon  
The fallacies of the languages of another tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Breakfast

The last breakfast entangling in the fishtailed palms—  
The last glow of Easter's resurrection  
Before crepuscule beds over the mailboxes and housewives turn in:  
Neighborhood of abandoned sunlight,  
Softening structures, awakening crickets and cicadas who come  
And change and drip down the armpits of  
The cypress trees: beauty of natural delusion above which  
The airplanes continue to fester and effervesce—  
Shadows spread across baseball diamonds,  
Night girls follow the railroad tracks to work—and the memory here  
Of you feels like a song that has slipped itself away,  
Winnowed and submissive as the trains glide like angels—  
And the tourists who do not belong here look out  
At the darkest night never wondering what they are supposed to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Day Of Spring

Have you discovered me out somewhere  
In the middle of America?  
Without song, but not having far to go.  
Soon I might learn to sing of fireworks, and dream of  
This if I remember where it is,  
Where I too was still going when yet a child,  
Soft-boned and innocent, mostly like a fish:  
We were heading south, all the way to the tip  
Of the world, and I had never tasted alcohol,  
Never visited school,  
Or your eyes like far distance penumbras  
Which came to haunt me,  
Pantomimes of sand-dollars waltzing on  
My open neck,  
Windows redacted into transoms  
Well-lit and curious inside your bosomy house,  
The crèche or hut of ribs and doubled purple nipples  
With sills of lips that parted and breathed across my  
Mouth wafted curtains in the middle of the night  
Collecting all the nocturnes,  
Wavering in a world where you don't belong.  
I don't even know who you are, but I know  
You do not love me, turning in your gentle spheres,  
Letting the bad scientists study you  
With their rusted spines and eyes that never close,  
Unclothing in your universe of cities, attracting the  
Cars and artificial lights:  
When I think of you I get drunk and swim,  
And stay up all night, fuming thoughts of you from  
Between my teeth,  
And the ants move in little red trains, and herons fly  
Over the crematoriums of everglades;  
And I should have never learned to speak, or to  
Think in logical processions, because the first word I  
Found was a thing which happened to be true,  
And as soon as I could learn to walk, I made this  
Bouquet for you,  
But it didn't seem to matter, because I couldn't learn  
To sing,

And you did not follow my message,  
You gave up and, ringed, changed your name  
Never suspecting that for me  
Today is the last day of Spring.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Days Of The Living

The best specters reside underneath the bleachers  
After the crowd of parents have done cheering,  
And the popcorn is empty, the rains come hurdling  
Oldsmobiles and Fords painted so cheery,  
Have caravanned back again to the green suppositions,  
The mortgages and cabinets of pills;  
The whitest stones placed as if in laconic offerings:  
There is a hidden park up the slope from the alligators,  
Where from the swing-set echoes the laughter of little girls,  
And the footsteps of truants sneaking in the afternoons,  
Too early, how they would like to kiss the necks  
Above the opened windows: How they move infinitesimal,  
The circulations of society, naturally, stem from the  
Suffocations of the first incisions, those who were cast  
Away and are living beneath them, in palpitating amputations;  
They moan from the red oval of their persistent allocation,  
Attached to the lucidity of the broken sparrow,  
Just words now, reciting, lovers leaving messages,  
Harkening, they see  
Through the introspection of the abandoned quarry,  
Naked ankles come flocking by them, and young girls again  
Are laughing, for that is from the well where up-springs  
Mirages brightly singing, even far after the last days of the living.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Of Any While

Wounded anonymity can find a spot  
To lie down beside the fire,  
And think of things less wickedly in which to conspire:  
All considering the ways  
For the achievement to become,  
There will be warm fires beneath the mountains  
And less wickedness for in the transformations of  
Everyday life to lesser become:  
We can move out of the pinafores of the waves—  
I have already thought of you now so openly as  
To resurrect you sincerely from you graves,  
And they gave their truths to their pigeon holes and  
To the mountain lions but not so many times so that  
We had to explain ourselves as the waves  
caracoled over the opening graphs:  
It is the last memory of high school that we shall ever  
Have, and the waves increase as to enter our wounds  
Like penny holding saints surceasing into the holds  
of our arcades for the last of any whiles—  
As the ancient and bicycling pines stare up at  
The moon—this perpetual and hypnotic,  
The last of any while

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Of The Two Of Our Loneliest Of Children

In love in early October it rains- -  
Baseball diamonds and angels tears falling down,  
Collected by those whose jobs it is to look up  
And collect the detritus of angels-

It is a fall since high school, and I am collecting  
My own remembrances again,  
Underneath an umbrella, invented in prehistorical times  
By a wife in China-

The steps before my marriage have no decorations-  
And she grew up upon this concrete-  
In a land as far away from here as the moon,

And there is nothing else as undeniably puzzling as her joints  
Dissolving upon the salts of a dove: e  
She cleans the house, she does other good things.  
I get her to pay for her own insurance; she is a new driver-

She cannot deny the waves which have assaulted her,  
As if she were an early explorer of Florida- A Catholic cenotaphic,  
Quilled as full of arrows as roses have bouquets-

And all of the nights of her lovely moons are stocked  
Full of bouquets-  
Dying flowers that drink for a moment  
The pools beneath her eyes-

In the blink of an eye, she is my wife-  
And she stumbles away from here fearing my memories-  
An excitement something so far away from here that is worth  
Nearly 600,000 dollars-

While I dream of other girls swirling within the caesuras,  
She makes money for our children whom  
Are already here-

And she awakens, starting out again into the daytime shows,  
Singing the songs of communist propagandas that seem to have no effect



Upon her-

I drink two beers and a bottle of wine, and stretch out like

A blue collar minx-

The canals are green and cold and made by both the goods and evils

Of men-

And then, upon the streets and concrete shoulders of our towns,

The shadows play together

With the last of the two

Of our loneliest of children.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Pieta

Her family in the satin weebegone  
As if lying down in a holiday of movie theatres:  
Her family the brushstrokes of her fear,  
Or my forgotten art- how it fails like matchless arson  
To ignite her throes;  
But in a bright trailer park I picture her on the west coast  
Of Florida,  
A runaway, half naked- happy to see the waves  
As they brush across her feet as she walks with her first child  
Before she knew me:  
A religion to walk as if the waves are trying to hypnotize her:  
And she smiles,  
Waits for her husband. There are fewer cars on the road,  
And fewer graves everywhere-  
Her parents don't even exist yet. Right now she can say that  
She comes from America- If she is my mother,  
It is a guess- or she is my brown skinned muse full of amnesia  
As an apiary is its honey-  
And she spills her naked self across the sand,  
Teaching her son the few words that she believes she knows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Playgrounds

Now comes the keystone of grand exposure-  
Up there in the breathy fairytales of angels  
Becoming demons:  
Where the airplanes are real in a petting zoo  
Combined with the elements-  
Where the rocks grumble in the lightning as their  
Very own species of men-  
Where the skulls of wandered donkeys still  
Lay grinning outside the minds  
Beneath the unbelievable crosses  
Beneath the peaks named after the greatest of  
Men-  
To the places where roses evaporate and the most  
Cantankerous of kites spill  
Over the barren and needle-point shoulders,  
Laughing-  
Where all of death laughs- the highest summits,  
And the last playgrounds of kidnapped  
And murdered children.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Ride Of Anyone

Fireworks,  
Like insects of men,  
Like a field of smoking muskets-  
Everything done well in life  
At first looks beautiful,  
Exploding like bright seeds out of  
Scarred palms,  
And then is done in seconds:  
I drink cheap rum to try and be fashionable,  
To socialize with shadows,  
While my dog licks my shoe-less foot-  
I can walk for miles and miles  
And escape all the cops,  
The blue-green men with their gunshot smiles.  
I played minigolf, or I loved her,  
But she took off and married a harlequin  
Romance- now they live and work  
In the South Florida gutter:  
This strange feat is my bread and butter,  
And the world turns around underfoot-  
When the substitute is in house, all busy and silver,  
I tend to stutter-  
I write novels late in the evening, I return Sherlock  
Holmes weeks afterward, piss-stained,  
And the Librarians tend to complain,  
But I do not wonder: By the end of the year I will  
Have my own house curled in a cul-de-sac,  
And I will attend new classes in the evening;  
All alone in a house with my dog,  
I will drink rum from coffee mugs,  
I will imagine myself with her-  
And the world will be pulled out from under me like  
A rug,  
But I'll just tilt my jug and salute:  
For the earth is bright in turning, like blown glass still  
Burning, and when I trust my poetry in the old-model  
Factory,  
I feel like Robert Frost, choosing the wrong path  
From the two,

Until I cannot feel anything, and then I just imagine her  
Lips embracing the apple of my neck  
Like an adolescent hummingbird adulating in  
Verse,  
Until I cannot feel anything-  
And the sky is only the penumbra, a word appropriate  
For our verse:  
The last ride of anyone, the final car,  
The body reclined in the back of the hearse,  
The long hike up the smoky mountain,  
The last sip of verse.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Romances Of Stewardesses

Oh, god of roller-skates- god of dragons,  
I try to remember you in the park in Michigan with the  
Last light fluming,  
And the children who are old enough making love,  
After all of my light is done,  
And the snow is finally down, and lying like virgins  
Beneath the slide and merry-go- round:  
And what quietude, what peaceful, secular midnight:  
And what folly, that I've run away at fifteen-  
That I haven't even kissed a girl,  
And I am not done playing cowboys and Indians:  
Oh, night such as this, barren, impassive night, where  
Everything that is successful is already in bed,  
And I am left latch keyed and crooning- oh sorrowful  
Wound, with another love lost,  
And another alligator yawning- and a hateful place,  
Just like that pitiful mailbox out waiting in your front  
Yard- waiting for answers to swallow themselves  
And your fingerprints,  
As the little flowers bloom in the graveyards  
That the explorers and the cartographers disappear into  
And that become so large that they take up an entire  
State that we disappear into echoing  
The last romances of stewardesses whispering of the  
Suppers never served up to their under deserving plates.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Roundup

Hoodlums of macho circumstance:  
I hold up strong swinging in the patina of  
All that high school's ego:  
And I get involved with the jocks,  
And especially the black men;  
And the ginger alligators who are always squinting  
Tears like blood.  
Then I get a real gun, and the sky hangs down  
All thick and retarded.  
I get a suit for baseball and some gumshoes:  
And a bat; and there are wings crisscrossing under the  
Moon,  
The cypress is holding out some leg,  
And Johnny Dillinger is passing by the window.  
Sharon has finished off her own wine,  
And Erin's first lover is playing his guitar:  
Little girls are crying gleefully down their water parks,  
As they go- Not know that their parents  
Are just tourists,  
Or from the forts of the sweet deceased that we have  
Been so philanthropic as to let them live.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Last Time

And you will say that you have died  
While it rains,  
And I will not have a care, while  
Another god is blowing glass over  
My house,  
And you will come home to your man  
Over the sea-  
And I will have no luck for you,  
Not even in nursery rhymes-  
And it will be a simple matter that I cannot  
Describe:  
While all of it continues to be in the  
Fevers of the dying sport underneath the sports  
Cars-  
While for a purple while, it remains beautiful,  
Dying beneath the motions,  
As witches tend to give their kisses to their  
Knights underground:  
All of religion defeated but crying up for  
Something,  
As the ants boil upwards as the kettle:  
And the children swing on the swings,  
And the waves rejoice- sumptuously, for awhile,  
Until they have to return home again and  
Explain themselves to their parents-  
But it remained beautiful, as it was,  
Dancing across the canyons with the colors of  
A flag I am sure I never worshipped.  
And with a decency that was lost to all of us,  
As the Indians faded in the mists-  
And I tried to remember the last time the sunlight  
Faded across the flowers,  
Or the last time I tasted your lips.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Last Time You Thought Of Me

Quieting in your night's appliances,  
Dressed for auction, I think about what you can sell

Now:

In your eyes the uncton of your powwow,  
Tiny little daughter like a gun or wishbone at your hip,  
But your father is a flag of junked bones at the summit,  
And you've never been up to kiss him with

You eyes open:

Step up and feel the naked dressing room of all those  
Angels;

It is where you belong, Sharon: And I am not lying.

This is just how I pretend to survive,

As some kind of river, bragging to myself as I flood with  
All your children;

And your husband doesn't even drive a truck,

And doesn't know anything about my America,

How I can move my body thinking of nothing all day long

But your body from time to time, Sharon:

That is all there is: No God, but the divine providence of  
Your body suckling at the hip,

Sharon;

And water-parks in season and water-melons and the wheels  
Go round and round,

Sharon; but when was the last time you thought of me,

Or looked your father in the eyes when he was not around.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Latchkey Who Lets Her Out To Play

Rum and cold in the ice world-  
All of it some lazy science-fiction:  
Pegasus in the grander canyons above  
Olympic unicorns,  
Everything in the low altitude rivers  
Of light winged traffics:  
Scars like the Aurora Borealis over  
Pet Cemeteries over  
France  
Or Michigan,  
Or the birth place of my mother:  
Colorado streets,  
Where they invented electricity and wore  
Pencil thin mustaches:  
I thought to reinvent immortality:  
But dragons were already smoking like hot  
Baths in her bed chambers,  
Clutches of stones wisped at by smoke  
As if for bees.  
They made all the flowers I'd bought for her curl up  
Frisly heads like  
Folding up lingerie.  
The pinwheels like hurricanes like  
Windmills never really clearing their heads,  
The antechambers of busty,  
Perfumed airplanes.  
I just want to be gobbled up by goblins:  
I want to be the plate Erin finishes, coming home from  
A long day,  
As giant and beautiful as the sea.  
She can fit right over the world like the earliest god  
Has forgotten about,  
That Jove locked away in my heart to forget about,  
But I can be the latchkey who lets her out to play.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Laundromats Of Her Grottos

More consistent mythologies  
Could have my throat  
But I am always in my little yards  
So close to  
And yet so far away from  
Home:  
In the aloe, I watch the stray  
Cats I don't feed  
Eating the echinopsis of  
Red tongues instead,  
And I want for Alma,  
But she will not be over  
Today,  
Because her husband stayed at  
Home instead;  
And this is a gift basket  
Of bad news  
Thought of underneath the  
Common flight paths of  
The most common  
Airplanes who are hardly ever  
Manned by Indians; but it still all  
Feels quite strange to me,  
And I don't even have to look away to know  
How the candlelight burns down  
The wax towers  
Just to kiss the halfbreed lips  
Of the saltwater princess  
Who slips away from the water colored  
Tourists, and is fawning right down there  
Past the roses at the water's edge  
In the Laundromats of her grottos.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Laundry In The Clustering Aloe

All over the yard, I've placed my  
Guns in the snow:  
My mother is drying the laundry in the clustering  
Aloe,  
And Alma is somewhere close to here,  
Gossiping to conquistadors while the  
Airplanes fly so low to listen;  
And the television breaks the news, and the  
Kidnappers don't look so bad:  
So soon it will be Christmas, which makes all of  
The vanishing children very, very glad.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lazy And Sun-Molesting

The weathers of Corvettes looking into outer space:  
While girls as tiny and brown lie in the easements smoking their  
Thimbling lips up into the sky:  
As all of their uneven English is over spilled, and the bluegills  
Surcease by the empty cages of sand lions:  
And then I sit out underneath the clouds and become all of  
One color; and it seems I have to keep counting my most  
Unimportant change,  
While the fairies who were in her armpits are over spilled-  
And the candles in the hutches of little cabins no bigger than the  
Aspirings of patchwork dolls through the unhealthy mothballs  
Of the canyons on her afternoons canyons fill with the  
Recesses of her libidos unassuming graves:  
Maybe it was always like this, and always will: feeling my own  
Cheek bones underneath the shallow estuaries of the burning  
Windowsills: sometimes before this supposing or presupposing  
I was beautiful: or just beautiful, but having to turn away:  
Counting the numbers before they are colored, and then  
Cooling as the song birds of my yesterday and my kindergarten go  
Cooing with the sad tears of the watercolors of my latchkeys go  
Turning the locks, and jingling home again disappearing before the  
Red ants of the open and most insouciant mouths of the lazy and  
Sun-molesting pride of lions.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Leaping Days Of The Seemingly Religious Aeroplanes

It's time for the dour lying seashells,  
In ways to partake and fill the sky above the earth.  
She used to tell me that there wasn't  
Any use in this,  
But I told her there wasn't any soul in correct  
Grammar.  
My mother is pouring water from the upstairs window.  
She is completely naked, and I sneak in liquor,  
And think of ways to toast invertebrates,  
To remember the catholic church I watched her once  
And then twice put on miracle plays;  
Then she slipped into the nests of other boys.  
Their tongues shared illegal substances on the verge of  
Holy romance with the silent crèches at the edge of  
The parking lot, but I lived far away-  
I had no time to romanticize their salty foreplays, but  
Stayed up late at night and thought of all the girls leaping  
On airplanes, leaping like the sky held no gravity for them-  
Astral pilots in navy blue uniforms and perfumed nylon  
Which disappeared into the canopies of the unreal-  
They knew all the worm holes that would take me back to  
High school, that would teach me how to feel;  
Married now, middle aged, they hang their dime store haloes  
From the broken wings of their gray daddy's bed boards:  
Crenulated eyes which sometimes sleep off and on for days,  
And they too remember the leaping days of the seemingly  
Religious aeroplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Least Of All The Littlest Things

I walked my dog's twice today, and saw  
A blond haired mother walking her blond haired boy  
So far away from the sea- They must have been sad,  
But they didn't seem so:  
They were in Southwest Saint Louis anyway;  
And I didn't see any cardinals or hear any airplanes,  
But I got underneath the great buildings near the  
Stadium; and I am watching the seagull and reading  
Travel books by Auden, waiting for the solicitors  
And admirers to begin,  
For all my good friends to move in and kiss me with  
Their eyes, and feed my dogs, and pay my bills;  
I am waiting to learn better words for better things,  
Still hoping to learn to spell, for my deficits to regain:  
Waiting for the resurrection, the bodily resurrection of  
A sad poet slumbering away in Bellefontaine;  
I should travel to her by foot and spill my wine around her  
Crypt and bare my engorged heart which beats with  
The golden tracks of the congo of her dead lover: Rejected,  
I wait for philanthropic patrons to discover my banner  
And toss to me banquets of incomparable riches that scatter  
All around the roadside, rolling under the wheels of cars,  
And the shadows of the wings of airplanes;  
So I might scramble after it, like all the rest, thirsting for  
My failures underneath the skirted outfits of stewardesses,  
Beseeching them for a sip of their overpriced liquors  
Which curl like ripe dew from the gleaming tips of their  
Perked bosoms; or the least of all the littlest things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Leaves Fell Like Rain That Was Dead

Color these leaves anyways  
They are already dead.  
I saw them falling out your window,  
But they did not distract me from the ways  
You were lying,  
How your body turned naturally to the way  
My eyes shone on you,  
As if you were my mother or just someone  
With her head:  
And he lay there against you like a leaning  
Clock tower, and busy made you instead,  
Made his time naked beside you;  
I did not think to catch them as they  
Were falling,  
To stick in your mailbox like a hint,  
But I left my breath blown on your window,  
As your eyelids closed like a music box that is  
Silent,  
And the little girl inside it, what does she do  
Once she is resting and quiet and put away again to  
Bed;  
I would have wished to have lain there beside her,  
Or hung there like wire,  
But I took to the train yard instead: and he lay there beside  
You, and inside did guide you,  
And the leaves fell like rain that was dead.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Lees Of The Airports

Cheapening in an amphitheatre outside of  
School:  
The truants smoke the detritus of paper airplanes;  
And they swim in daylight  
Which glows like ladyfingers across the wild  
Manes  
That are neither lascivious or mundane,  
But yawn there rippling like uncomely weathervanes:  
And this is the stone amphitheatre we all go  
To with the terrapin,  
To watch them standing around gawking around the turn  
Arouds and wash basins;  
It happens to be under the lees of the airports,  
Of the trees;  
And we can sit here forever and let the hungry bees lick  
The rosy nectar suceased from the rose colored  
Glasses overturned at our knees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Leggy Stewardess In Their Warm Planes

Deep into the range of good intentions  
The housewives slumber still beneath the evaporated  
Ceiling fans;  
Eyes closed for good measure, and children shut in:  
The clouds of disbanded chimneys and  
Creeping Mexicans:  
The cicadas step out naked and leave themselves down  
The necks of cypress;  
And get new skin, while the delinquents are rushed  
Into the nowhere of their plans; as school is called  
For rain- and the game:  
And the witches float there over the baseball diamonds,  
So rich and so plane:  
I seem to have seen them there, calling with your eyes  
As all of the forests were smoking green, distilled  
Of unencumbered conquistadors and the windmills who  
Have really sunken in:  
The sun a wind instrument you blow wishes in, pin wheeling  
The virgin from her grottos, and causing the waves to  
Caesura expectantly,  
Like early mothers in their warm hospitals, and the leggy  
Stewardesses up in their warm planes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Leisure Of Housewives

Another dime store cowboy goes home  
Into the haylofts of paper  
Airplanes  
And paper angels- and I can see the prenatal  
Smiling forming around  
The rose gardens of your lips,  
The way vehicles of lovers foreplay in  
The driveway after each others' children  
Have become lost  
Throughout the playgrounds of wolves  
In their apathetic schoolyards,  
And the sun spins its web, and steals the  
Colors of a lion's yawn,  
Just as all of the usual allusions come  
Down through the broken roofs of sky  
And lie there like soldiers recovering  
With the serpents in the mowed  
Grasses for the leisure of housewives.

Robert Rorabeck

## The Leonine Insects

They are selling everything half priced and the busy  
Nurses have their backs pressed against the coral castles,  
Their lips pressed like flowers drying in a book  
By the men they have healed  
At the business end of this peninsula—across this almost  
Sunken field—  
Where the cypress grow like maidens bowing in green semicircles,  
With the herons like gawky angels overhead—  
With the airplanes disappearing into surreptitious triangles  
Where the mermaids fused from monkeys and blue gills  
Suppose that all must disappear:  
The evaporates of ice-cream underneath even the most  
Propitious of mountains—  
As the leonine insects yawn underfoot in the sunshine of their  
Sandy pits.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Levels Of Brightness

I suppose that I am going to survive by doing this,  
Dog tagged in the anonymous cenotaph,  
Bled clean by so many words running together making  
Measureless landscapes that return to the pointed  
Jubilees of my daycare:  
And if we both went up together to pan for gold,  
It would still be impossible to come down together,  
For only the traffic is now rich, and the previously quiet  
Dells are now filled with the fast food pleasures  
That we could both serve, tin suited and making  
Goo goo eyes,  
But when crepuscule finally licked the edges of the envelopes  
That it was sending away,  
We would both have to return home to our big daddies  
And our Uncle Sams' who had us as good as cleaned:  
And prepared for dinner,  
Our eyes couldn't even fathom the levels of brightness  
Streaming at last through our windows as the world  
Fell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Libido Of A Firefly

Filmed on the libido of a firefly,  
The storm flared up as the lovers went inside:  
After the honeymoon, and down from the mountain,  
They thought to drown again underneath the moon,  
But they held out of metamorphosis,  
As it turned out nothing could change- their marriage  
Didn't last, but it surely rained again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Life Of Another Boy

When the day is far away—and all of the laughing children  
Have burned like candles into their moats—  
And the alligator's eyes are as rubies instead of blind diamonds,  
And you little sister's chicken pox recedes to the smells of  
Night blooming jasmine:  
And your mother drives home from spending all day  
With a man who is other than your father,  
Kissing his mouth right near the reservoirs of albino crocodiles:  
How will you crawl in to be with them:  
What door or hole will you enter—and what macabre games  
Will you play with the defeated knight you find in there:  
Abandoned to all of the false reasons of your childhood  
Underneath the ceiling fan—as the jasmine perfumes  
The reptiles,  
And a mermaid courts in the life of another boy of whom you  
Are sure you cannot believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Light From Their Wounds

Chatreuse caterpillar upon the brown stem  
Of Janie's nose—  
Ever wondering if she'll ever grow up—  
And what is the thing that she was made to be:  
A stewardess upon a quest for the  
Service industry—learning to leap from  
Like stony wishes from bed to bed—  
As sweet as chicken, hypnotized from  
Paris to Shanghai—  
As I lay in my classroom listening to the tornado  
Drill,  
Waiting for the beautiful girls to come in  
And to promise such sweet things to me—  
A zoetrope of healing wounds—  
The foxes laughing around the,  
Drinking the light from their wounds.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Light She Has Stolen

Orchards upon orchards where she once lived  
As the hurricanes pick up entire trailer parks and the trucks  
Of her grandfathers:  
She has had two children with him even though she  
Used to make love with me, until I got fed up and  
Went to China and found a wife:  
And now, tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, which  
Is Easter anyways, I will have to go back to school  
And pretend to teach a story by Hemmingway—  
It is a frightening place filled with lockjaw and bleeding elbows;  
And I wish you would have helped me,  
But the moon grows and pulls up the grass, and metamorphoses  
The tadpoles, with the light she has stolen,  
With everything she pretends that she is.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Light-Bulbs Of All Of The Ferris-Wheels

If you said we were both the prettiest ingénues in  
The zoetrope of the gutters,  
Why then we would be right here—  
We would be a ring in your shadows—we would be  
Calling to you like wolves and like  
Wolverines—and so  
The thirst gives out—and evaporates underneath  
All of the airplanes,  
Until there is only the fabric of this clause—  
A needing thunderbolt half-given to all of the weathers  
That could not birth you—  
As you become the movie-theatre of a color that  
Would not come completely to our tongues—  
And we are almost home,  
But here are still figuring out, like stupid horses into  
The pastures of our ghettos—  
And our half-witted thumbs feeling over the languages  
That cannot be described by housewives as  
They disappear by all of their number,  
But then become awakened like stricken angels by  
All of the light-bulbs of all of the Ferris wheels that  
They couldn't understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lighthouse

The lighthouse is painted nicely  
In a coat of white, a tie of red:  
Standing upon the rocks of many seas  
Across the world,  
A gentleman on the brink of emptiness:  
Forever waiting,  
His bride gone away in the palm  
Of another hand,  
The guests have left in their cavalcade  
Of loyal American station wagons,  
But he hasn't done a thing,  
For so many years,  
After he tossed the rice,  
As the model relatives pass away,  
And mothers die after their offspring,  
Living in the basement at the sea's brink,  
Her name touching his lips,  
Like a vine budding on the tomb.  
In the night,  
There is no one there to heal his face,  
As the wind is busy on the waves,  
The sirens lure their men upon the cliffs  
And he doesn't do a thing.  
In a moment he will walk away,  
But for now he is waiting,  
Waiting to step away from the sentinel loneliness,  
His occupation,  
To join in the forgetful procession  
And end the sobbing sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lilacs

They have their own rattle snakes in the shadows—  
Just as every skeleton once had a tongue  
Bespeaking of eyelids as curtains:  
And feet with toes for a soft or horned road  
Leading beside the estuaries of the university:  
Then it is not a long ways off to find her—maybe in a canoe  
Floating as if in pieta just over the rippling of  
Otters and stolen bicycles:  
Maybe you will hear how the half-nude housewives  
Call down to her—bare breasted and next to those orange  
Trees up the burry easement—  
As the horses sniff the lilacs and dream of drinking from  
Honeyed decanters—  
As the airplanes make their patterns, lackadaisically  
As so far above the mismanaged schools—just as they so  
Often do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lilies And The Rattlesnakes

How do you look here—colluding in your telekinesis  
While your grandmother is sleeping—  
Dreaming in a bed which pretends to be spread across  
All of Africa:  
And this marks her like the kiss of a soft tattoo:  
As she streaks in the trailers of her husband—that professor  
Turned to marble by the penny-ante basilisk as  
The lakes milk the moon with  
Their fangs stuck in the boudoirs of her reflection:  
They pull her down to them in a reverse gravity:  
And the stolen thieves float closely above the graveyards—  
Straining the necks of the lilies and the rattlesnakes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lilacs That Stood The Test Of Time

I haven't been laughing:  
The racehorses are not pretty, bastioned as they  
Stand, gelded stockings  
Prisms of last changes:  
Clouds in the sky, cars on the streets:  
The passing of ribbons, the pedaling of feet:  
And in the park,  
The play of pretty innocents skipping school:  
The old rouses brushing hands,  
Remembering the lilacs that stood the test of  
Time,  
Or the way their mother haunted them only  
Because she had nothing else on her mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Limestone Of His Flesh

Pornographies, sisters of the sinister thoughts  
Selling to the rattlesnakes  
Already devoured by the road:  
One of her spiked shoes already cast away in  
The amber weeds: they are sway—  
They are two high—  
The traffic sounds like snow, the airplanes like  
Sky:  
They cross her and go into the parks of the  
Oceans—  
They learn to fly. Beneath them, where the  
Sun rolls, the roads are made of shells crenulated  
Into a skin shed from the giant she lays upon:  
Her lips the basalt he nibbles, groaning with  
Rivers carrying in the limestone of his flesh.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Limpid Sunday

If you can't see it,  
The validation is in the lines;  
At least it is meant to be there.  
When I am walking alone in the  
Sweating south,  
Amidst the rows of colonnaded sororities,  
And not a single whimsy lass  
Hangs out her balcony with a springtime  
Sigh, and a thumping heart- a swoon;  
I give the polished sadness an inward smile,  
And I few beers later I am still alone,  
But scribbling out the crooner's lips,  
My cheap pen then the paladin's retribution:  
And my love comes to me,  
Scratching at my studio door, the swimmer from the pool  
Perfumed of chlorine,  
Bronzed like a seventies supermodel:  
With the hairdo of a sandy dove,  
And I smile because she is there,  
And the cypress are framing her like  
An apocryphal nativity;  
Her nipples the gumdrops lost in the leaves,  
Her eyes lined with tinfoil and blue spray paint:  
She has a bed of wet fireworks she wants to dry  
On my rug,  
Undress and listen to comedy to cheer up the graveyard:  
The unlined sensation of the places on her  
Unshelled and shivering,  
The naked crustacean out of the feminine sea:  
Her lips the little knocks timid solicitors give;  
Her curves the abandoned highways in Spain.  
In the morning,  
I can take her out just as she is,  
And no one can see her in the limpid Sunday:  
Up and down the sororities- She does not rush,  
But goes about as I give her time to,  
And when the boys come out- She does not crush,  
And I give her a dime to  
Call her lonely mother, and tell her everything



Is going to be fine....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lindas In Your Eyes

If the children gambol it is because that they  
Are not really there;  
Those children and their friends have all run off somewhere-  
And this is my house where I've been smoking away in the woods:  
This is where the green cataracts of leaves fall,  
And the virgin sits fat bellied, embarrassed and contemplative,  
Wondering what she will do until you  
Come home to me, Alma,  
But sit on the sofa and eat crackerjacks and watch her soaps  
And baseball  
Until the street lights turn on so controversially and you are not  
Yet home,  
And I wonder with her on my blue bed when or if ever again  
You will come to knock,  
So I can let you in, and you can watch the basking shadows of  
An exhausted zoetrope fawning for the ghosts of mailmen;  
And I can watch the Linda's in your eyes,  
Because you are so beautiful you have captured them all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Linear Flights Of Airplanes

Now the day has a word and I  
Feel hard pressed to travel to you,  
Even though after I was done selling fireworks you  
Said that we could only be friends,  
Even while my cousin who is taller than me was pursuing you  
But making little progress:  
And then I broke into my own home and laid down with  
The feral cats who were not frightened of me  
As they ate the grasshoppers and garden snakes:  
And there was a glass slipper there underneath the bromeliads  
That could not be explained:  
And looking up there was a ladder too- taller than a roof,  
Hopelessly in a loverless math over the roof of  
Antique row  
That someone of your lovers had misplaced with his ever  
Giving chalice and his surreal antlers:  
While in the back seat of my Mercury Tracer still lay the two  
Tennis rackets that we'd used to play tennis poorly on  
Some Tuesday not long before I took your tiny brown  
Body into the waves, Alma- and kissing your  
Mouth promised myself to you underneath the linear flights  
Of airplanes: trusting me even though everything else was chaos,  
And you couldn't even swim.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lines Of Clouds

Grooms of sabotage and lanoline  
Combing the manes of the mythical creatures,  
Stepping up to be touched by her in a queue:  
The Pegasus and unicorns  
A griffin and centaurs- gossiping the wrong way through  
Traffic,  
Hoping to be touched by her:

A light at the top of the stairs,  
Emitting the ethereal senses of elves and gods:  
There she is appearing suddenly in the middle of the flea market:

Maybelline, coming to see me on a Monday:  
Supine goddess, Mexican, with new braces:  
She sits in the cab of my trouble and we gossip nervously  
About the past lives of nerds:

Growing up amidst the privileges of the middle classes,  
She is nervous amidst the dispossessed:  
I tell them she is my wife and they believe me-  
She is on a diet and makes fun of my weight. I tell her  
I weight 270 pounds: she cannot believe-  
She says that I look like her father,

And the fairgrounds carrousel. Nothing can be published here,  
And it is too hot for her:  
She is on a diet. She will not eat a quesadilla with me.  
I give her gifts before she leaves-  
The mythical creatures queue and beckon-

I sell two hundred dollars while she is near me and another  
Two hundred dollars after she has left-  
I tell her that this week I will make six times my teacher's salary,  
And she asked me what I am going to do with myself-

Now it is morning, and you cannot find her anywhere-  
She is back at home in Wellington with her unassuming boyfriend-  
The flowers loom on her porch-  
She still complains about having to buy privileges for herself,

But I can freshly remember the day she saw mythical creatures  
At the fair- in the land that grew up far away from her-  
And I wonder how she can be so dissatisfied with her beautiful race-  
And about the sad trinkets she wears on her arms-  
The sex bracelets: every time I have seen her,  
It has been with another boyfriend-

Today I worked at trimming my yard- I cut down the overgrown  
Bougainvillea, and with thoughts of revenge on my lips,  
I cursed yet other things I could not spell-  
But looking up from the dissatisfied hedge,  
There was Maybelline grooming the boys in the sky-  
And I wondered when she would be coming down, settling,  
Kissing the lines of clouds along the way.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lingering Perfumes Of A Girl

My thoughts can hold no gravity to a vanished soul:  
And looking down upon all of this graveyard and all of  
Her plots,  
The breathless mouth is open, but what will it sing,  
Like a candle shut out,  
The words are dead fireworks for smitten holidays:  
The housewives start out shoeless going to see the long-toothed  
Lions,  
And the moon is so over ripe it has fallen, and I can almost  
Smell her in my house, the lingering perfumes of a girl  
Who I am certain will no longer move for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Linguist

The heavy philologist is in the city,  
Sharing eyes which chrome with god:  
Each twitch is an entire sentence,  
Each look a vociferous tomb-  
Across from his dinner, the young  
Women are now song birds,  
Twittering joyfully,  
Their sentences full of glee as they  
Fan and comb themselves in the open air,  
Metaphorically-  
Each kiss of air siphons honey  
Into their beings, a crematorium  
Of great lakes, and when they stand  
Up to walk away, their legs waterfalls  
Of shaven and spasming flesh....  
Meaning that they could run to him and  
Envelop him with a giggling thought,  
Entwined in their winged flesh,  
If he were a younger man, he thinks,  
With unperturbed humor,  
As he forks another dreamy egg into a bite.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lion's Insouciant Grin

Wound up in words of baseball  
Trying to out pitch the laughs of witches  
In the trees,  
The pitchfork pines and cypress wound together  
So that you have to squint through the failing lights  
To tell the difference,  
Like barbed wire wound about in the old fires of  
That neighborhood over the sleek canals  
Populated by blue gills,  
And all of the old choices of once pretty girls  
Who ventured only so far from home; their story of  
A fable of what they would wear,  
Baring their shoulders to the totality of sports,  
Overlooked by the little brothers too busy folding the  
Paper wings of sightless prayers underneath  
The ceiling fan to wonder or to care how far  
Away they would have to roam,  
While the sugarcane blistered and the pines combed;  
But surely it was not far at all,  
For already here is their wedding, their casting call:  
Indeed, indeed, they are home again,  
Pasting the lion's insouciant grin; and, yes, they have  
Everything: they have found it all.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Lions Roar And The Waterfalls Tumble

The glass is under the chair  
Outside of the little house where my mother  
Does wash,  
Or keeps the books:  
I don't want her to know that I've  
Been drinking  
Scottish whiskey or thinking of Sharon,  
My sick muse  
Out amongst the Palmettos.  
Now I'm all warm and want to buy a  
Foreclosed house;  
And I am almost beautiful,  
Not enough to make money as Prince Charming,  
But enough to be Mickey Mouse,  
And I love you,  
And I love you and the night tumbles until it  
Is dry,  
And I awaken all cleaned and sober  
With a full set of teeth and a wired jaw;  
And Nicky lives somewhere very close  
Saving all of her turtles,  
But she wont come and visit me-  
And the day leaps up pouring out of its mounds all  
Of this traffic,  
And even deeply recessed we buy and sell,  
While I jerk off in a quiet well endowed symphony  
To you- It doesn't take me much time,  
And I am immortal and ready for a Chinese buffet;  
But I don't want to penetrate you enough  
To steal your cut flowers.  
I just want to hold your hand and look your soul in  
The eye  
As the lions roar  
And the waterfalls tumble.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lions Yawn And The Alligators Roar

Dog of smut and rainbows- waiting for you to  
Get home so I can drink  
My last class through the unreasonable ballrooms of  
Another day of high school,  
Just trying to save myself while the  
Orchestra sinks,  
And the day's shadows proceed over the ant hills  
And baseball diamonds,  
While really meaning the same thing with all of its stuff:  
And I remember you  
Even before I knew who you truly were- I remember you  
Through the somnambulating amusements of  
Ferris Wheels,  
Or through the haunted daylight of pet cemeteries-  
While nothing that I am is truly beautiful-  
And even while none of it has to ever turn out this way-  
Even through the fieldtrips to Disney World,  
I will always truly love as if you really were- and if you  
Cannot recall me tomorrow-  
I will love you the same, as the lions yawn and the  
Alligators roar.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lip Of The Canal

Hammers in a circus  
And little girls with blonde hair: see which way  
They are moving,  
Notice how they care- lackadaisically through the  
Midway: see how they proceed,  
While the apples lay rotting in the pastures  
Gone to seed:  
See her red lips in the playground, or her thoughts  
Over a rosy sea:  
There she is remembering alone in a classroom  
That has abandoned me:  
See her there at the elbows of a unicorn:  
See her there in the pornography of a rain forest-  
She is all of midways, of cotton candy-  
Of praying mantis:  
So they have painted her on the walls beside the  
Wheels and the missing buffalo- they have given  
Kisses to her under the pool that the sunlight  
Made into diamonds  
That the housewives sparkled around, gossiping  
As the alligators listened attentively  
Underneath the many airplanes  
At the lip of the canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lips Of A Fox

They are selling something to the black men,  
As to the doors the step, and in their colors dimmed-  
The swing-sets emptied behind them,  
And the airplanes flying stiffed winged through the  
Rains, over the overpasses  
Where the flea markets are sleeping, and my words  
Drool out as if from a shell of a sleeping terrapin:  
There he lies pressed to the lips of a fox  
Weaned off his vineyard,  
No longer dreaming that the stewardesses will ever  
Come down to him.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lips Of Fine Gentlemen

Clowns inside the spirit of the indoor theatre—like  
Housewives spread across the backyard pools a mile away  
From the sea—  
Like diamonds spread across the mirages of a desert—  
And their time comes every afternoon—  
And when they look up every cloud takes their vision  
As they remember the Alamo  
Or somewhere else they had to live for awhile  
When their mothers were not home but went about kissing  
The lips of fine gentlemen on the other side of the television—  
And it sparked our interests for awhile  
As the forest fires burned—and the airplanes leapt like fireworks  
Skipping through the ashes of the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lips Of Infinite Jest

I told you I loved you,  
But that was a teal lie.

Now lower your guns,  
And reach for the sky.

Because naked we're born  
And naked we'll die.

I'll undress you like  
Stealing silk scarves from your bones.

Its been a long time coming,  
But its time to go home.

Let your eyes kind of swoon to the side,  
On this yellow mote, an elevator,  
Which we'll both ride up the sky.

The sun is the thing which will  
Burn all the pain.

At the top floor above even rain,  
There a suite with both yours and my name;

I'll take off your clothes and put an  
End to the thing;

Because naked we're born  
And naked we'll die.

Anytime now you're going to know why.

The end of the song is the best sort of rest,  
Flying like birds over coffins,  
The lips of infinite jest.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lips Of My Bed

Resolutions of fairytale metamorphosis  
Happening like the orgasms of a thimbleful of dreams:  
If Alma doesn't love me,  
She has never loved; and I work all day long for her:  
I work seven days a week:  
The forest streams like rivers,  
As the traffics brush her cheek: and the animals run through  
Her wilderness:  
She collects her youngest child to her chest,  
And the lips of a love that no longer comes to her,  
Suckles at her breast,  
As she counts the candle tips of her tears- as she returns home  
From her daylong work:  
The porridges of her loneliness are either too hot,  
Or too cold,  
But they continue to lie down, like fish out of stream sleeping  
In her bed; as I famish for her,  
Like a thousand thoughts of windmills dripping from  
The lips of my bed.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Lips Of Their Daughters

Rum moves through this body; it puts the scars to sleep  
Like anchovies softly breathing over the flesh:  
It gives girls I know lighthouses to feel with valuable clothes,  
And it brings other girls to them like sailors all shampooed  
In the washing machines and their caesuras:  
And in the middle of their fieldtrip of good smelling caracoles,  
A rock garden on an island under a golden moon:  
A rock garden filled with lucky rabbits and their mothers,  
And rattlesnakes that don't care to move; and little blond boys  
Like the vermilion shadows of who I used to be,  
Before I knew or understood any beautiful young girls, or  
Tried to steal from them all that they had to see: And all around  
The rock garden a forest so new that it really couldn't be said to be,  
But like the blueprints of white shadows leaping fast above the  
Sea,  
Like a playground swaying this way for you, and that way for me;  
And the words on the bodies who are not there, but who have evaporated  
From their seats in class: their eyes wandering the forest of this  
Albino overpass- Where orchards live as neighbors in fleets so sweet  
And strong, and even the girls on airplanes passing through the sweet  
Smelling bowers, telling thousands of stories as the candles burn,  
Just so that they don't have to sleep at night with other kings: Just so  
That their lips can put the night away before the night, and make daylight  
An ever living thing: The squid of a captain over the seals and dolphins,  
Over all the muses who have crippled my pen, areolas weeping like  
Ukuleles for the lips of their daughters, just as for their imaginary princes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lips To Spell

I will put a place on my body and then  
I will die—mouthing off  
Eventually to the full moons of the estuaries  
That eventually have to move away—  
And I cannot hold a grudge—  
And I am moving slowly—  
And the place is a slow dream—but in it all nine  
Children of the dragon and the places  
And the gardens where I will  
Certainly be married—  
Into the quiet places of the stewardesses—  
Into the quieted places of our times—  
And then an echo: just an echo of  
A dime or a penny falling down into the fallacious  
Lips of a wishing will already over-spilled  
With so many things—  
The trinkets of the - and the souls we  
Couldn't sell—as we left all of our coins into summer—  
As we've been spilling away our memories,  
Locked up in prison—  
And into another harmony that pretends to be so  
Well—through the bastard diseases the wickedest of  
Airplanes—  
Apostrophes and commas and all of the misplaced  
Conundrums  
That our English teachers had to grow the lips to spell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Liquors Of My Unconditional Will

Maybe if Erin had discovered a baseball diamond in  
Time and had learned to love the resuscitates of taking things off  
In the choking redness of the earth,  
Of covering the fullness of her breath with sleeping ants and  
Arrowheads,  
Maybe she would have found me out in time, and my love wouldn't  
Have died for her:  
And by then all the rivers would have flown in to Arizona, and she  
Would have picked her arc for our children:  
I would have sent her another house's worth of flowers;  
I would have swept her off her feet as soon as I saw her on the tarmac,  
And I would have made her wear jailhouse stripes so that all the jailors  
Should have known that Erin should be my wife;  
But all of this I'll never know-  
Now the rippling flesh of the men Erin has known in place of my  
Bicycle breath, grows hoary; it doesn't even grow roots, Erin:  
How many men did you let put themselves in, when I was thinking of you,  
My pain swinging over the peaceful beds of a cemetery;  
And how did they make you feel, squeezed up and pullulating  
Pressed like a music box to its windowsill:  
My yellow house will be empty until I can find another woman who, while  
She has time, learns to drink the liquors of my unconditional will:  
But Erin, Erin- this is something that you never will.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Liquors That You Sell

I am empty as the bottle is empty.  
As the shell is beautiful,  
Look at you; you move as the bicycle  
Moves,  
Around those neighborhoods,  
Caracoling mountains. Even the osprey  
Are jealous.  
Like them, you didn't even get to name  
Yourself,  
But look what you have become;  
The sky follows behind you like a net of  
Surprised fish,  
And all the men their and their airplanes  
They follow you like weather,  
Like intelligent or needy cumulous,  
All impressed by your stamps, how you  
Have budded after school  
After all the fairytales of television have turned  
Off;  
And I am waiting for you too,  
In a house like a room without any furniture  
Or books,  
Waiting like your father while you are weeping  
In the carport of amphibian incense,  
Waiting so you might come in leaving all your  
Sunburned boys howling at the far end  
Of the cinder blocks,  
So that we too might burn like building incense;  
So that we can return to each other those  
Things we have forgotten, which our classes and  
Our other loves stole away:  
I can put your meat back inside your auburn bones,  
And you can fill me with the liquors that you sell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Little Fish

The little fish wounded in sunken university-  
How they hold their sides  
And wait for the brown eyed mermaid who never  
Comes;  
And they say woe is me, woe is me gurgling.  
While above their heads the heavy feet of pacaderms  
Unsettle dust  
As they pass in a trumpety caravan in a straight  
Row through the tremulous plum trees:  
And I have scars you'll never know, you'll never  
Know, and I imagine how well Gainesville proceeds,  
Proceeds  
But the brown eyed bar maid never comes.  
Maybe it is because she knows I will soon die anyways,  
And her bed is made  
So she must hasten to the firemen's soiree-  
I don't know- I don't know nothing about her dreams,  
And still the crimson and vermilion airplanes go  
Leaping, leaping straight over me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Little Picassos

When you are cleaned then look into my eyes,  
And every part of your body which needs not hair,  
Has not;  
And you are wavering like a liquorish store,  
Red hots, and bicycles trying to recreate their  
Own sundogs beneath the sun on the concrete-  
Your body pressed like a flower into the book  
Of my body;  
And all the alarms ringing,  
The church bell ringing- the rivers like freckle-  
Faced truants stopping to listen;  
It is miraculous and the birds are singing.  
Your body is like marble engrafted into my  
Papier-mâché, and they are letting the little Picassos  
Out from art class,  
Maybe the world is taking on it any of the forms  
That we just might be choosing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Little Puddy-Romeos In Their Sideshow Cavorting

I have all these scars inside me  
Which no one reads;  
They come out when it rains and play the  
Trombone;  
They skin their knees,  
And sometimes they like to pretend that  
The clouds are made of bones,  
Like drunken conquistadors,  
Which is one of their favorite words,  
Because they too have their cherished aphorisms,  
They delight in such jobs,  
But they are lonely and dwarfish;  
The world is too big for them,  
And they don't wash, but crowd up amongst the  
Grass in knee high socks,  
They put their spider-knuckles to her windowsill  
And pull up, grunting,  
Wanting to see what it is she's up to,  
The little puddy-romeos in their side-show cavorting:  
They always want to do this, and they pretend to  
See her watching her favorite sitcoms,  
Instead of just the usual shadows in a cave;  
The house they made for her so empty it's whistling.  
Her brazier drying like a silky weathervane out on  
A line outback the row of shotgun houses;  
Everything is made of paper, and its crinkling-  
They do not understand that everyone here is so poor  
That they've left their homes, and yards,  
And moved into their cars  
Where they now sit all-together rusting at the blank  
Drive-in movie theatre not so far away from here,  
But far enough that she isn't real,  
And her effrontery but a set they lie out in getting heatstroke,  
Waiting for the mailman,  
Who comes bearing bags of confetti,  
Thinking they look pretty;  
But they are not getting paid, licking their chapped lips  
Under the heedless kites and other things which have  
Half-way escaped the truer convictions of gravity,

Like butterflies who are so slippery as to shoplift  
Almost anything, who have entirely laid-off migrating,  
But mostly aren't very real.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Little Things That Can Almost Kill

Tonight feeling the tiny coral snake's gargantuan breath  
Seething like bobby pins underneath the unearthed titanic:  
That thing called sky or like a witch's spell  
Unspecified; and it almost seemed real, the way she was  
Stepping out of the trailer and down the cinder blocks  
And into the trailer parks where he waited with her daughter:  
Or with her son-  
The flairs of open roads that killed all of the libraries,  
And the infantile tombs that sprung up like weeds:  
Her eyes were as blue as the death sleeping in the clitoris  
Of wildflowers;  
And you know what I mean, because you've traveled up and  
Down the spine of the Mississippi calling out my depths beneath  
The arches and burial mounds;  
And I've forgotten all the things that pretended that they couldn't  
Bleed:  
You mother and father had a nursery and a house that never slept,  
Until they separated and tore you in two with your monthly paper cuts  
Down those weary steps:  
Your toenails painted for the saints of Christmas, and all of my mouthing-offs  
failing you, drawn like insipid water from the venal wishing well:  
There sleep the snakes in wonderful balls, reflecting in the light from  
Your pail carried close to your chest;  
As if they were there now, whispering like animated pictographs  
Never forgetting to let off gossiping of all the little things that  
Can almost kill.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Little Towns Of A Little Earth

Young knights as green as scuppernongs hung on  
The bowing fences of weak professors:  
So low that the fable becomes completely disavowed,  
And Satan in the form of a rood cross takes  
Eve underneath the school buses, yellow and bruising,  
She says his name like skipping stones in a canal  
Which takes the place of the wisdom of a dictionary;  
And all the nights are lost,  
The foxes and zorros are pot bellied from having at that  
Wine,  
And they laugh atop and maltreat the head stones of  
The gloomy cemetery where they have their fun, jerking off  
And telling jokes  
Even while the suddenly living world broils up all around them,  
As if out of the mowed grass itself,  
And is cantankerous across the little towns of a little earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Littlest And Youngest Children

Beautiful fanfare gone into the luxury of the night:  
We take wedding pictures  
As the flashing carnivalesque light bulbs of the fair disappear:  
They are going to the rodeos of new towns  
To fill up the hearts of emptied spaces—to bounce off the crisp  
And amber lights of colleges and universities hours north  
Of here,  
Where the trees grow deciduous where the airplanes are  
Yet young and leaping,  
And the housewives go out in the middle of the night to see  
And find them,  
To weep themselves out of their own homely occupations,  
But then to go back inside again,  
To take off all of their clothes and to bundle themselves  
In salt and sweat—to dream of Christmas trees  
For the Holidays of their futures—  
And their littlest and youngest children trying to carry themselves  
Away using the apexes of their swings—  
And into a beautiful fever that has nothing else to believe in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Littlest Makebelieves

In a whispering melancholia the night tells  
Its horses  
There are no more sanctimonious orchards  
To steal—  
To climb and smell the little white flowers—  
To see the bottle rockets  
Shooting off over the chicken coops of  
Disney World—  
And when the stewardesses return home,  
Effervescing headily into beds,  
With their blue socks stuck straight up  
Into the air—  
Their dreams have no more rooms for  
Boyfriends—  
For in their limbos are avenues of nightmares  
Underneath the sea—  
Little boys steal into with their games of  
The littlest makebelieves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Littlest Of Kisses

In Faberge bodies spring to me out of quinceaneras'  
Bonfires who've had at talking a lit to hotdogs;  
As if from across the great surceases of juvenile gazes,  
And those canyons where all the best bouquets  
Evolve,  
And the wild rivers flow: down into the stoop of cinder blocks  
And into the alcohol of missive aloe,  
Where the premature faeries spume broiling in lies over the  
Unlucky and harangued toads:  
Where too the dogs have ganged up in the rabbits and taken  
Away the last of his luck in the rock garden amidst all of the  
Echinopsis,  
Like corsages in the cacti: as the borders of rainstorms  
Spill over, pillaging the forts, and turning the sky as green  
As the memory of the languishing valleys where in your first  
Home nested,  
Alma: and all of the snakes and the fables of their lessons who  
Waited for you there,  
To rise surefooted and start out again through the schoolless  
Day, I don't know: but I pine for you as if across a table burning its  
Alcohol, asking for you to give me at least the littlest of kisses  
When the valleys come again in the morning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Littlest Of Words To Anyone

An explanation or a critical interpretation of a lost child  
Who my wayward uncle called thick today,  
While I unloaded the peaches and said my prayers,  
And thought of my father and Alma,  
Like two separate constellations, one I would like to worship,  
And the other to explore and  
Multiply: But I have already traveled so far across the suburban  
Heavens, drunkenly, to sleep on her roof,  
And watch the static and semipermeable dreams of helicopters  
Who never come down, like little boys as misfits, until  
They are out of gasoline:  
And the beach is long, and my back is warm, and once gain it  
Will be morning, and the people will come out of homes  
And into cars in driveways,  
And seem to evaporate across the world again, without feeling  
Much remorse, or saying but the littlest of words to  
Anyone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Liver

Mostly it's the liver involved.  
He takes one for the Gipper.  
He boos the pretty boys wooing from  
Their stalls,  
He comes home late for supper-  
I let him ride the bankrupt amusements,  
And pet the one-trick pony-  
He fills my heart with grain-  
He goes on distended fieldtrips clopping  
Through the intoxicating rain;  
I suppose he's made some fine deliveries  
Though they've been mostly fumbles,  
A bachelor of my home spun ilk carving  
Trees as they burn, noting paper while it crumbles;  
And I've sent him out again,  
Or he's run off to join the carnival,  
Lilting as he goes, tossing back and mumbles,  
Swearing he's still in high school,  
Nodding off under the palmettos: Awakening to  
The silken calve, he follows like a bloodhound  
In a rumble:  
And when he's finished and as hard and cold,  
As smooth as a skipping stone, I take her reluctant  
Hand and drag her to the memorial,  
Because he was a fine a soldier as I could ever wished.  
And he'll be rewarded a purple heart posthumous, because  
I drank like a fish.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Livings' Wake

Review these dead men  
Down the anchor's linking line  
Thrown overboard from  
Captain Father's everyday reprisals:  
Listen to them sing,  
The muted sea shanties of hungry men,  
Wanting women to spoon feed them  
As they dredge the bottom  
Of the pastel fonts.  
The fish of every size swim in  
And out,  
Taking what they can nick  
Without getting caught  
In the skin which flutters  
Like garments caught in briars,  
Fondled by a burry wind-  
In the swaying blues and greens  
Is where they hold on,  
The sun is a smothered instrument  
Yellow fingers play across:  
Everyday they are being pulled up,  
Introduce to the gulls' loud cries  
And many are shed like  
Loose scales under the crank man's grind,  
Yet when there is a slothful day  
Lubricated by the rums of Nasseau,  
Eagerly the chain grows more knobs of men,  
Down below the obvious waves  
They cling onto the umbilical chord  
And continue to swim in  
The livings' wake.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Local Public Zoo

I will soon be a tramp who flights towards  
Nothing,  
Drinking his alphabet liquor and weeping weeping:  
Oh, the age old tire swings creaking and repeating,  
Wondering about the ratio of whores to  
Housewives in the world:  
Oh I love whores, the ones who have turned out the way that  
They should because they were always up to no good:  
Oh, I love you women, your otherwise saturnine  
Nights, the wimple of your stars and your tattoos and how  
Your eyes don't fawn on my bruises like  
The retarded lips and eyes of housewives: Oh, how I love you:  
And pay you my good money underneath the soft and  
Otherwise translucent bellies of the crimson airplanes:  
There they go leaping again like foals in a mainjure,  
While I as drunkenly as in my childhood reach for another  
Poetry book,  
When just before now I had Melody straddling me and it was  
Almost her time to get on home,  
And there was a hurricane warning before the President drove  
Through town; and I got my brains and maybe a heart,  
While all that was courageous curled up next to the velveteen  
Lions of some paramour who was claiming to be a very  
Vermillion mermaids enraptured at the local public zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lonelines Of The Heavens

Children in the stars made to touch kisses-  
Outside of carports,  
And housewives watching footballs games in the rain-  
Other words I don't know-  
And other movements that remain unkind to me-  
Memories of unwrapping presents for  
Christmas-  
The very moment before Eucharist,  
And frog princes waiting to become kings-  
And if you saw her in Pieta: maybe your mother, or maybe  
Someone else just as beautiful you know,  
How would you linger there, beside the ball parks and  
The high schools,  
While the busses turned around to the smell of  
Popcorn- and what would the beautiful girls you never  
Truly know say to you,  
As their memory slipped through the banishing echoes,  
And you tried to please yourself in the loneliness  
Of the heavens using any way that was left to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Loneliness Of The Brightest Daydream

The day is doing what it does, no maybe  
In its brightness, the sky a half an egg-shell  
Nested in its orbit,  
And the greater and lesser lights produce  
To me those things which hurry in proximity  
To the other and then away,  
When sparing they sing, combatants those  
Jubilant bodies, and yet so much is wasted,  
Spilled from gossiping lips until contaminated:  
And I sit here severed from all society,  
For half a decade maybe longer, but do not  
Mind, nor her, that the grass grows unattended,  
Nor have I procured a profession to magnetize  
Lips of painted gypsum, in all the varieties of  
Chance; I have already spun my coins in the  
Dark room, and those I have touched lay well-  
Fed, as they should not remember. Their breathing  
Is the earthy sound of hibernations, and when  
They saunter off to drink, they are no longer wary,  
For beneath all of this daylight there is a deeper spume  
Which sates us, a well that springs unwary of the season:  
Here, our ancestors unincarcerated in fluidity, swim  
Just outside the brightness of our daydream,  
And once the song birds are done matting,  
And their empiricisms molt from us, awakening we  
Will find that open bath where the bodies of possibly  
Interlude, where fingers crease the constellations, and  
Each voice is singing together all the loneliness of the  
Brightest daydream, which finds me now still unopened,  
Limbs draping the bedsprings, posing muddled philosophy  
To the integrations of grass and weeds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Loneliness Of The Heavens

Children in the stars made to touch kisses-  
Outside of carports,  
And housewives watching footballs games in the rain-  
Other words I don't know-  
And other movements that remain unkind to me-  
Memories of unwrapping presents for  
Christmas-  
The very moment before Eucharist,  
And frog princes waiting to become kings-  
And if you saw her in Pieta: maybe your mother, or maybe  
Someone else just as beautiful you know,  
How would you linger there, beside the ball parks and  
The high schools,  
While the busses turned around to the smell of  
Popcorn- and what would the beautiful girls you never  
Truly know say to you,  
As their memory slipped through the banishing echoes,  
And you tried to please yourself in the loneliness  
Of the heavens using any way that was left to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lonely Gifts

The lonely gifts,  
We spring sometime  
After April when the rains  
Have finished watering, and the sun in  
God's meadows about his knees,  
Wakes us up,  
The lucky drifters in turns,  
Half of us the flower and  
Half of us the bee, unaware of  
The greater chaos,  
We are the beautiful mechanism,  
Our frequent pollinations bring us  
Together for several days, as stamen  
Brush pistils, the men carrying the children  
On their legs from lips to lips, as  
Early morning thoughts drip the  
Dews down her milk-white petals,  
Just for a few days,  
A full season for the luckiest,  
And then to end all too quickly,  
As the earth casts her head down,  
Causing the leaves to shed the forest's  
Sadness,  
So our season ends its bloom,  
Our colors go into hibernations  
As our gentle gears come to rest,  
Bees sleeping forever upon the flowers'  
Open mouths....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lonely Girls

They said in the pornography of  
Tomorrow  
That the students would be highlighted  
And fill up the highways  
Built for them-  
Bright emptiness over their  
Disproportionate bodies-  
Always grooming- strange lottery  
Molting through the hallway,  
And the girls like living dolls fighting  
Against the vortex-  
Brilliant elbows, prisms of  
The garden of Eden-  
Not even one of them holding out,  
Going with the currents of the middle-  
Class heaven-  
Nude windows without any curtains,  
And tomorrow comes  
Like a graveyard singing-  
Like bobcats whistling for their very lives  
Trying to find the immortal castle  
Through the blinding armories of  
The queen's rose-bleeding garden- prostitutes  
And the lonely girls left out of the pages,  
Sleeping with the tortoises through the weekends  
Of broken down school busses-  
And the angels, who lose their faith,  
Flying lower and lower, expecting to find them  
There and befriend them like lovers you somehow  
Failed to mention.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Long Collapsed Windmills

This happened over the pledges of the wanton beating  
Of my heart:  
Each beat a shedding of drear coinage down the wishing  
Well where the ghosts imagine they are bleeding-  
Tearing with words that pretend to be beautiful,  
Imagining that they can last a long time, an in each pitiful  
Sob a metamorphosis, a new beginning-  
When they are already stains in a forgotten bathroom:  
All of their goldfish are stolen and tantalizing  
The sun and the cats in the sun on the windowsill-  
Each with a silken heartbeat that will too soon be dying-  
And the ghosts blow like banners, and like tears of  
The long collapsed windmills  
That sink further and further into the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Long Slow Syrup Of A Stare

I can go out today, and I can drive a car:  
I can say many things to the wind blowing there over my car:  
I can put my eyes on the world like fruit on a table,  
Go mad or stay mundane;  
But the world will just know me as I ought to be to him,  
Transoms of windows of chicken coops:  
The yards the esplanades that go up to the front doors of houses  
In their colonies,  
The sure fits, the sorbets: And this morning I got down on my  
Knees and at least lit the pilot light in my new houses,  
So the gas burns  
The light house: I watched another man take a woman through his  
Door last night,  
And he turned and looked at me with the long slow syrup of  
A stare,  
But she never once turned to look at me- she held his hand as  
He took her somewhere.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Longest While

Wear out the breath the sea gives to the cities,  
Wear out the stones the chameleons think on turning red,  
Wear out the mountains looking up her airy dress,  
And put me safely into bed....

These are the conditions the armies give for surrender,  
The unmalleable truths I wear on my face to block her out,  
The fathomless weary trees whose coats are draped down  
By the steady hand,  
While the mothers turn an eerily blue from their shouts....

The prominence of adulterous sky in sunny weather,  
And the hidden avenues where the bold and heartless traipse,  
Even if her apartment is up some stories from the infant river,  
My hands were a wreath for a hollow door until they lapsed....

Banished, stored in the silos of my husky cheeks,  
The burnishing warmth of a new tooth and the mother's smile,  
Removed her clothes and laid down on the second floor,  
And didn't think to turn again to me for the longest while....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lost And Frightened Traffics

The bodies of flesh always fail:  
It was what they were made to do, like seahorses doing somersaults  
In the brine,  
Looking like they can last forever only to be dashed on the rocks  
Like the all too ready tears of virgins,  
And now I know someone that not a single one of my major professors  
Know,  
And I profess by her light, though I am too busy to write novels to her  
Right now:  
I want her for my spouse, to live and sleep in my house,  
And maybe that is what will happen,  
After I get back from fireworks and before Christmas:  
Maybe her family's burdens will be lifted,  
Maybe her husband will go away on an over long and over zealous  
Journey,  
But otherwise you should not get your hopes up,  
But keep singing your songs for the empty canvases and pastures awash  
With her favorite color,  
While she keeps her face up towards the clouds, and so becomes the  
Eagerly frantic butterfly who is just trying to make it above the  
Eager butcheries of the lost and frightened traffics.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lost Tears Of The Most Beautiful Of Women

Up in the attic of redressing conifers,  
I cannot help but to imagine what we are going to  
Sell today,  
As all of the stewardesses yawn and open their  
Eyes,  
Redressing- winnowing like spry cables that leap to  
The skies,  
Their hairdos toasted with marmalade and romances  
By the  
Buzzing specters of the enamored glades:  
From which the alligators are sure fine, and lethargically  
They are sure to bight the hands that feed  
Them come picking time,  
As the roads all get thinner and more out of work,  
And the songs about them harder to remember, the skies  
More clouded:  
Soon there will be rain enough to discover where the  
Extinct Indians are buried,  
Under the tollbooths between the caesuras spending  
Their Sundays saddling atolls:  
It seems that they had strange romances with the conquistadors,  
For they both sleep together in the salty fevers  
Decorated by the flowers of orchards who have soon lost  
Their way,  
As they come over the forts of coquina, and flaunt in the  
Shadows of the overpasses in the underwater flea markets  
Drowned by the lost tears of the most  
Beautiful women to ever have run away from Mexico.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lounging Of My Greedy Eyes

I am building muscle and wasting time,  
While the sea has decided to through a bowl of wet  
Fruit out her car door: It rains, and there are no customers.  
The 150 watt light bulbs glow like blue collar workers  
Punching in their time: We have enough that when added  
Together and divided they will cost us 8 dollars a month.  
My dog is in Arizona, jump-yipping, far away like a fairytale  
On the moon: I have used him to pounce up from the  
Cracker-jack crevice and kill the hording dragon who  
Said my name before he died, and revealed to me the name  
Of my sister down in the white cataracts, down in the busy  
Tombs, always falling and leaping like a circus without form:  
And I loved her in a way I shouldn't have,  
And I delivered Christmas trees to her front door, as books  
Wilt and fade over, become damp and mold-ridden; the same  
As the names of the women upon them, the bucolic lasses winnow  
Wheat from the fields, in that bright sunlight folded up and  
Dog-eared in a country far away, covered with my fingerprints  
And the lounging of my greedy eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Loveliest Of Stewardesses

There seems to be a song running along itself in a dark  
Cul-de-sac,  
While I hear noises: some of them my own,  
Playing out next to the sea that is going away, spilling  
And roiling in the catastrophes  
Of the unalarming cenotaphs—until a fresh wound  
Can be seen pulsating brilliantly in the sky—  
And the last headhunters echo—  
Continually—after the girls have already vanished—  
Sped up and become the brilliant plagiarisms of  
Another anarchist's classroom:  
The day speeds by, fed up by the inebriations of the aborigines—  
And another professor makes room  
For the hidden masturbations: this world seems  
A joy as it thrives away—further and further away from  
The childhood where your little brother died—  
As if even this fallacy could seem to be part of your memory—  
Until over the stars the constellations of the anatomies of  
Better placed animals were reawakened and sang to themselves  
Underneath the broken down school busses  
Even as it rained and the loveliest of stewardesses became  
Reawakened.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lovers In This Bay

Chainsaws buzz like bric-a-brac,  
And so the traffic swarms:  
Little white boys are angry that a black  
Man will be king,  
And so they cry out, but the multitudes  
Do not echo such mutinous sawing:  
I suppose I love them, but mostly her:  
Dear God, she sings to me:  
All my life she has put the sunlight into  
A reasonable equation,  
Even though I just read her, and now  
Watch how she halfway poses for a photograph:  
Maybe I am being unreal, even as tourists  
Step out in meaty séances for the invitations  
Of the lions' coy grinning:  
Their cars are left empty, like coffinous tombs,  
The air-condition voluptuously droning:  
The savannahs are not real, but tennis courts  
Grown over with languorous weeds: Where will  
The rich go now, with bodies out of style:  
This she reads to me in meandering streams,  
Her motions changing with Heraclitian whim:  
I stare at her as if between the wrought-iron of  
A centennial graveyard: The side of her face is  
Scarred like mine,  
As if something handsome has caught afire;  
aroused, I wished she would  
Think of me through the gown of thoughtless cells,  
But such a whim is an unnecessary salesmanship:  
I will grow to her in little time, even as the apple  
Tree quivers, and the knowledge falls loose,  
Shaken so from the serpent's horrendously fetching  
Tail: I loved her, but that was only high school,  
And now she opens her blouse up to me part way,  
Like her smile, as if I should touch her  
Even though the distance is infinite; it is cleverly made,  
And thus on this impenetrable shore I wait for her,  
Eating everything until the horses are but bones,  
My body quilled by so many arrows that the joints are

Harrowed, and cannot move in time or  
Keep up with the lovers in this bay.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lovers Of Purple Airplanes

Oh womb, the color of  
Purple coins,  
Lying breathlessly in a husbandless  
Carport—  
How the rainstorms sound all  
Around you,  
The slight inflections of a town  
On the verge of metamorphosis—  
A beautiful dungeon in  
Your heart,  
While your eyes are in love  
With the echinopsis—  
The katydid strum their diseases  
And then disrobe themselves of  
Their old knights,  
As the bottle rockets forlornly  
Strive skyward,  
Wanting to be the lovers of  
Airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Lowering Planes

It seems the penny ante accord of Indians all covered  
From the brushes:  
They have been combing their feathers preparing for  
The ambushes—  
And the city lights and the waves proceed—  
The schoolmarms blush as they figure out how  
Their children can succeed—  
And in the waves, effervescent—and in the  
Carnivals of other waves—  
The glass-blown seahorses—and  
The upset mermaids—  
The times that they get lost from themselves—  
And in their tumult of snow globes trying to  
Pretend to be housewives—  
It is a penny ante succession—  
And in the daylight it is like a zoetrope's procession—  
And when it is gone, the wind hollows the weathervanes—  
And when I think of you,  
The mountains paint themselves like the severest majesty—  
A royalty of shadows perpetuated upon  
The lowering planes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Luckless Heroes

Why—there is a tomb:  
In her shoulders, in her hair—  
Either way, it is where  
I must go to find  
And save my love, or at least buy her:  
In the super market—  
At long last,  
She will look up and see the heavens above  
The overpass:  
The sea will part like diamonds going  
Toward their favorite terrapin:  
The heavens will open,  
Luck will win:  
There is a graveyard in all of her aspects,  
But with the promise of a hereafter:  
The stewardesses prefer their bedrooms in  
The cerulean rafters,  
As the knights make their bed in the madness  
That they must make surrender:  
Kissing their talismans—as she eyes her men:  
Wondering which of the luckless heroes  
Will win the day to become her  
Rightful husband.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lucky Pennies Of Goldfish

Don't sing while listening:  
This is the empty cage of my body-  
This is the husk of my pretty  
Song bird  
Thrust like the coal of a present at the footsteps  
Of your door:  
Oh- lo- don't sing for these pretty amusements  
Anymore:  
While another day comes up through the  
Chimneys and bagpipes  
Of tomorrow-  
While you've just been whistling and singing  
For your supper again  
Through the traffic, just as against the waves:  
Don't try to become beautiful  
Anymore:  
Purple enigma underneath the sun: sour bruise  
In its cathedrals of starving children,  
Just as in its special places in the world,  
Find me out  
And bight off my tongue- There is a feral child  
In me,  
And she continues going through the motions,  
And this is just my inebriated fire for her  
In the stagecraft of a prefabricated  
Highway besides or beneath the impenetrable sea:  
This is just how I've been drowning, anyways,  
Just like the lucky pennies of goldfish  
Swimming around the racetracks of the overturned  
But still live giving Christmas tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lusty Young

I imagine she used to be  
A stewardess  
But now she just floats around  
The Christmas tree  
And takes her top off  
As I drink rum.

The penumbras of the ceiling fan  
Moat our holidays,  
And we don't make a sound;  
And yet we move  
Just as cunningly as bush-hunters  
With our pantomimes  
Of the lusty young.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Lyrical Loon

Unbutton the stars,  
Because I don't care:  
Disrobe the night's gown  
And let the sky hang bare:  
Climb down your own hair.  
There are little children living on  
Mars, without any air;  
They do this with great care,  
And stare at the fish just floating  
Right there:  
On her wedding day,  
Was she thinking of me,  
As the conquistadors crossed  
The jungle to the ancient city:  
Was there gold, or just death,  
And did she count her breath,  
As he kissed her and put on the ring:  
Then didn't they stomp the glass,  
But all of that is just the resonance  
Of the odd jobs that have passed:  
Some other girl now,  
She does her nails, and wishes for  
Strong men at the beach,  
Making sandcastles out of lunch pales-  
There is someone that she loves,  
As she tips her glass,  
But its not me, not me;  
So, unbutton the stars,  
Because I don't care,  
Disrobe the night's gown and  
Let her pale shoulders hang bare;  
We can all love who we love quietly and true,  
If we love at all then let me love you,  
And in the secret night, gowned all in black,  
I'll unbuttoned the buttons sequined in back;  
All the way up the tall tower, your tomb, I'll climb,  
And kiss the mouth in your  
Most secretive room....



# The Mad King Has To Take A Pee

Here is another century of suicide  
Before I stop to play the game:  
I am Peter Pan flying in his basement  
Waiting for rosebud to delight my tomb:  
Too soon I will be busy  
Teaching children to fly:  
But your eyes will still haunt me,  
Even when I've saved enough money  
To buy the Spanish Armada in their century:  
Before they are destroyed by nature,  
I got you this and sent it to you,  
And your excuse is that you thought  
I was just being friendly,  
And you are a strange liar as  
I imagine you naked in bed:  
You should be the only one who reads  
These impoverished lines,  
Because they are all that I know for you,  
But in kindergarten I knew your name,  
As I drew it from the lottery:  
You were supposed to be my wife,  
But you asked the teacher for a second chance:  
I brought flowers, tulips stolen  
From my parents' market,  
But instead you walked away as if  
In a sort of Spanish trance,  
And changed your last name  
And your street address before I  
Could find you again....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Magician's Palm

Caffeine has me up, while they make love  
In another sea, spilling vocabulary words  
I haven't memorized: the piano plays behind  
The unmowed grass, like minutes of sunlight  
Trying to wade through  
The crocodile's eyes: how lovely is his hunger,  
As he eats the neighbors' dog,  
Speaking Egyptian in a movie I am too tired  
To understand, but this is an immaculate will,  
The children lined up and salivating anticipating  
The red play of the ball. I wish I wouldn't  
Stutter when I woke up to tell her good morning,  
And made her runny eggs, a fine meal on  
Porcelain in the current of light, the white angels  
Hiding naked behind the curtains, so clean,  
Like tennis players, and her left breast haloed  
In her insouciant slip, like a pigeon in the magician's  
Palm, cooing areola of yawning flesh,  
She said to me, I suppose, she said to me with her  
Eyes, she was bored, and wished she had something  
Meaningful to read, or his strong jaw to rest upon,  
Like an insect ready to molt and change on a tow of grass,  
But then she wasn't looking at me anymore, her  
Freckles redolent though disinterested; I fell into them  
Like a child leaning over a deep well, curious as to see  
Himself in her eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Maidens When The Lords Are Not At Home

If your body ever really yields and counting  
Backwards it was revealed that we were made out of the  
Same fabric  
From the torn flags on the defeated battlefield,  
Then how will it make you feel that I have seen your house  
When you wasn't home;  
And I have seen the park where your children breathe like  
Butterflies over a crop that has yielded what it could yield;  
And I already know your car:  
Your silhouette- seen the tattoo on an N on the web of skin  
Between your thumb and index:  
Maybe it was a compass for a man; but all I know now is that your body  
Roams sleek and golden,  
Your eyes as big and lustrous as creatures who crenellate  
The apertures of the seesawing tide:  
I have been up to college and down again, while you remained  
On Cherry Rd flushing, a bride in every aspect of her landscaping;  
And all I have learned is that I need to steal you away again,  
To bring your children into our home,  
To make breath atop of your brown skin, to enter into your home  
Stolen to my home,  
The way some green knights kiss the maidens when their lords are not  
At home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mailboxes

I have tried for so many times to sound beautiful even while  
Suddenly the zippers close;  
And the body bags have their tags and the traffic slows to take out the  
Jubilee;  
And Sharon knows how I feels: Sharon knows that I am a poet,  
Even if I am unreal:  
Long ago, so long ago while riding in my parents' car, I wished that  
I could be beautiful for her, even more beautiful than she should know;  
And I wanted her hand,  
But the strange earth was blue; it held its breath, and she went to college  
And all of the night long it was one great hullabaloo:  
And now all of the beautiful woman have strangely beautiful children,  
While I am sure it is some sort of heavenly espionage;  
I still have all of my teeth, and these are the same canals;  
The days go just as sleepily across so many sweltering brows;  
But these housewives who were once my lovers have many powwows  
With their husbands who for all I know may once have been their brothers,  
And the mailboxes are always filled by somehows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Make Believe Girls

They were selling all of the pleasantries to look  
At the moon:  
Up there were the trophies of her stolen gifts  
Which made the foxes pregnant  
To come craving, leaping from their dens-  
Who made the truants breathless through  
The juvenile mountains:  
Purple throated, holding back their songs until  
They were bruised- the clouds above them  
A thicket of pale roses growing over  
The make-believe girls buried up there  
Who were never abused.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Make Believe Promises

The artificial nursery clouded over, and the sweethearts  
Of the workplace stopped holding hands:  
She went back to her children, stepping on eggs-  
And the basket that he set for her remained at the lip  
Of the well:  
The trees waited too, barebacked, and the sun rode  
Golden through them,  
Kissing their necks, bringing to them the rumors  
Of soft fire, the daydreams of the arboreal classroom,  
While birds made love letters in the sky-  
She, at first, got pregnant by another man: and then  
More and more pregnant- the sea was deluded,  
And there were too many airplanes in the sky:  
People kept on moving into her neighborhood, only to  
Go away to work, and then to come home again,  
And little boys who were not hers disappeared onto roofs  
In the middle of the afternoon, like blind fireworks without  
Any holidays;  
And she sat there, never mindful, the pool rippling  
With the make believe promises that were somehow made  
To fit around her without any life at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Make Believe Tombstones Of A Graveyard

Homeless men there you are, sweeping the road,  
High in the alcoves of the liquors you find,  
Pirouetting as you do in the noon time traffic:  
I wonder if you've seen the entire country and tasted  
The tears of its Siamese oceans:  
I wonder what you have done, like loose change  
Discarded by the existence of those who can't  
Be your peers:  
And I am too lonely to be like you, except by the  
Fires of my insouciant inebriations,  
While I call out to you like panhandling, like a little  
Child looking up to a wiser brother through  
The make believe tombstones of a graveyard  
Set up around him,  
As if those were the things he was meant to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Make-Believe Cathedrals

Your faces go down: faces dissembled  
Across the mountains:  
Well, I havent been singing for you, anyways,  
And this is just my rhyme on the flat land:  
And you havent been her bothering me,  
Anyways;  
And maybe you will make love to my cousin  
Before the kites are unfurled and I have  
Been here so long across the land of just because  
Before you were here anyways:  
While your children were startling, barefooted  
Before the fort of the anemones:  
And I've begun to cross myself, while all of what  
You've imagined has started out breathing through  
The shallows of its anemones, while  
The bridges stretch and glisten blindingly across  
The bridges of its anemones:  
While, otherwise I figure I've been unfaithful across  
The shallows that impart the uneasy or the  
Intractable skeletons of which have come so  
Easily before us:  
While then in the uneasiest of forest you fail me:  
You banish me anyways, and all of the knights  
Clash anyways, and it is a beautiful if unspelled  
Union, as the mountains seem to coalesce and kiss,  
Or at least come together for their weddings:  
Until it was all together a funeral, held together  
By the willfulness of some truck to which the  
Butterflies stuck to until they were into the forests  
Of Mexico again: and all of their candied fables  
Fell away again into the mouths into which  
Already expected again:  
And it was all turned around, and made to wash basins:  
Until their spindled manes tended to flow over their  
Glass blown cathode-ray: or, until they tended to kiss  
And make up,  
And to start, arm spreads across of all of the make believe  
Cathedrals once again.



# The Make-Believe Heavens

Even if I lose my job, I will have new sorrows  
Here waiting by the spring-  
Pristine curling reservoirs gossiping with the water snakes  
And the things who float here as slow  
As girls who think their name is Mary-  
The sun will burn until the walls of heaven hop like  
Eggs,  
And the clouds around them will make a camouflage  
Of something we will not even think to see for  
Days and days:  
But you will come strutting out of your orchard,  
And down from your cinderblocks- and kiss and bless  
The earth,  
And think new and preemptive thoughts  
Until the boys who once were your brothers are kidnapped  
Across the street- and you go home, barefooted,  
Remembering how they left you to play in those woods  
Across the cenotaphs continuing through the streams of  
A nude transparency-  
Running in a hidden avenues beneath all the Sunday  
Blue lights of Churches which you enjoyed arcing under  
On the swing sets that seemed furtively to take  
You away, while the moon and airplanes mimicked  
You like candles dancing to and fro in the make-believe heavens.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Make-Believe Playgrounds

Developments in circles of amusements—  
The same yards we've known together,  
Separately—  
The sun lactating from its greatest jubilation  
Over us  
Where the lions yawn like breakfast—  
And no one thinks to even mention to look  
At the grave:  
You are a virgin wearing a summer dress  
For the first time—  
Airplanes who are attracted to you  
Like a wishing well that haloes you with its  
Elements—  
And you stand in the middle of where  
You are  
Next to the waves where the remains of  
The conquistadors are your cenotaphs—  
Waiting for the closing down of all movie  
Theatres—  
In your body of prisms stolen from the  
Make-believe playgrounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Malingering Of Your Perfumes In My Dysfunctioning Soul

I've climbed forty of the fourteen thousand  
Foot mountains in Colorado,  
Sometimes four in a day, past tree line  
Where the rocks gossip in a lightning storm-  
I've heard them;  
But who knew I was ranging all around you,  
Like trying to cast an esoteric spell,  
While you were busy drinking and selling wine,  
Being pollinated in and out by your chosen  
Man- And it is a beautiful town in you live in,  
In the valley where nothing can be killed or  
Rearranged- While I've run further away,  
Checking my drafts to reassure that I cannot spell,  
Letting it trail out behind me as a sort of  
Perfunctory Will; and now I'll have bad credit,  
As I have bad skin, but I still live in a dream-  
A dream sometimes of Florida, and sometimes  
OF Colorado, and sometimes right here-  
A celibate invention I keep to myself, sleep  
Walking with my dogs amidst slash pine and  
Standard bred horses, often pretending that you  
Come at night to lay with me,  
In the morning leaving nothing that could be  
Ascribed to a fairytale, but the malingering of your  
Perfumes in my dysfunctioning soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Manless Cannons

It hurts that your pain is gone from my day,  
While the cataracts still dive across the banishing eyes  
Of cars;  
The puppy moves in your lap little tears:  
Childless, what will have to prove, when the day is over,  
And the motel occupied,  
The beds spindled like pregnant mothers or  
Hippopotamuses for  
Christmas,  
And all of the countries left; the sweet savannah deployed,  
The blush gone from the jungles,  
And all of it is the question moving on a rush through the  
Orange groves,  
While the fort lies abandoned underneath the infinitely  
Magnified clouds,  
Green and building, waiting for the manless cannons to  
Hearken.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Many Canals

It is easy and I echo:  
I've been plowing my field, and now I storm:  
I look up into the stars of many fields who are not my own:  
How many of them have been playing baseball,  
But what is the use to sound the alarm,  
Now that the witches are in the sky, belly up, counting the elbows  
Of chalk,  
And there isn't anything else to move: the planets are in their backlots  
Showing no shame,  
Marionetting for the damsels who are truly, truly to blame:  
And I am drifting:  
Drifter out of all sorts; all of my diamonds on their own fields, showing  
Just the shallowest curtains while the blue gills hold their own  
Breathes,  
And the tenements come, accumulating their numbers: none of them  
More humble than the sum of their women, and the airplanes  
Arise, filibustering like longwinded fireworks:  
They arise like sideways monuments to their own fields:  
They groom themselves, and then they lie naked in bed except for their  
Elements:  
And they await for me- across the many canals skipping in their  
Fairy tales: they await for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Many Lives Of Inconsequential Things

It so happens that the places that we go all turn around,  
Like gawkers smacking their lips at the fastly shooting umbrae  
Of fireworks in the  
Skies- Both over Mexico,  
As over America, and the truck stops in between where the  
Cicadas take off their early springtime  
Of clothes,  
Like stewardesses unhinge their bras in the springtime  
Of Wisconsin,  
Or in the warm layovers of France: while all of this has had its  
Turn at speaking,  
Caracoling like little girls playing in the fitful elements  
Of another Midwestern storm, that overturned all of the trailer parks  
Like crowdads in the muds the dogs have been sniffing,  
Their snouts toweling  
The vulpine industry because that is how it works- the trees  
Like a cerulean headdress around them, or that the sky-  
The benchmarks of terrapin like spilled milk under her heels as  
I pushed my muse on the swings near the sea  
Months ago, far across the many lives of inconsequential things that fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Marble Roses Who Are At Hand

I love you anyways, even if you've been cavorting at the  
Fruit market with my cousin:  
Even if you will blow away, like the flights of airy blue:  
After my parents have all but gone away  
To their horses:  
And I am down in the lonely gutters of my bachelor's ditches,  
Anyways:  
And you could never understand my dogs: while all of my  
Kitchens clutter, and then you can stand beside your sister  
And sort through the strawberries of my uncle's  
First love,  
While all of the airplanes get folded in their best ways and  
Then fly over all of the shoulders of our churches; and it gets  
Really busy and all of the rooms get filled with you  
Favorite colors, and your gods seem to sing from all of  
The shoulder blades on the rooms of the grottos where  
I have placed them, as the dogs run after the rabbits,  
As the foxes leap after their grapes,  
As the boats leap through the lakes,  
And the runaways sleep underneath their swings,  
And the dead sleep in their lakes of graves, anyways- hoping  
Yet to find the marble roses who are at hand in their luke warm anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Master

Bare naked,  
My family ran screaming  
From the woods and  
Tore down Rome.  
My sister  
Killed the Emperor  
With her own hands,  
Laughing.  
Shortened by a head,  
We shared from his skull  
Imbibing the stolen fruits  
As Beowulf and Brecca,  
My good friends,  
Torched the fields.  
Then I did not know  
Who kept History:  
Italians have always been  
About the Big Show,  
But the day was ours,  
No matter how the  
School books read.  
In the chaos on the streets  
I found her,  
The woman without a name.  
Years of incest had  
Made her beautiful but weak.  
She said she loved me,  
But those were the only words  
She knew.  
I took her North with me all the same,  
And built her a home  
By the stream that flows  
Down from the gods' plateau.  
I was good to her,  
But she was a slave and could  
Not change.  
She said she loved me,  
But those were just utterances  
From her lips,

And not understanding why I  
Didn't shave nor wear metals  
From the earth,  
To signify myself,  
After a few years she sailed away:  
She went with the last wave  
Of New Immigrants to America  
Long after my ancestors had cleared those fields  
From her window  
High away in the city  
She decried them and blasphemed my name:  
A slave,  
She once said she loved me,  
But those were the words  
She could not understand.  
Homeless, but too busy to care,  
I pioneered the Earth  
Nameless to the Big Show,  
But, all the same, doing it all,  
Unwritten, a griot's son,  
The master.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Match-Head's Dream

I've eaten two hamburgers and a piece  
Of chocolate cake. I watch the yellow  
Dog nuzzling the trash. She would  
Make a strange raccoon,  
But I've already fed her too well  
For her to stay up all night:  
Which is descending like the curtain of  
The diurnal stage now just a shell of orchestral blue  
Over the forested cliffs in the southwest,  
And one star, or airplane.  
My parents are in Louisiana; they've  
Picked up two hitchhikers and are taking them  
Eastwards because they want to see the ocean.  
Right now I am hungrily scarred,  
But the food has dulled the pain. I am  
Sated like a bear, or like a less jubilant  
Octopus when it goes to bed beneath the  
Coral, ink sack full and unafraid.  
Right now I could dream of dimly lit airplanes,  
And the stewardesses serving drinks,  
Putting on a smile, showing a little bit of leg,  
Leaping to and from the thatched webs of light  
From overflowing and boisterous cities,  
As from my peripheral vision I can see the  
Snout of my sleeping dog. I don't drink anymore;  
There are no clouds outside the window,  
And next month I will be selling Christmas trees  
Again in South Florida, the forest fire of my  
Dreaming diminished to a single match head,  
But it still burns,  
Dancing slowly like a feminine memory  
Creeping warmly closer to my fingertips;  
But I will not put it out, the little bit of pain,  
But will lay it down and watch what it will do  
With the rest of its extinguishing life.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mayhem Of A Fairytale

Imperfect as the knights hanging in the crepuscule  
Of witches trees,  
Shading off in the yard while she bubbles and completes  
A spell,  
And her folklores become evil and all the more powerful:  
And then there is a good game of baseball  
And some words spoken between classmates in the falling light  
Of another birthday:  
The quest is laid off instead for dinner, or to watch the  
Celestial catastrophes that are too far away to ever  
Be real for any of us;  
And she swoops into the air across the harbingers of what was once  
The delights of the sky above the park in the daylight,  
Fornicating with wayward kites,  
Making fireworks out of misallocated paper airplanes:  
And in this way she never comes down,  
Caboosing with airplanes, fingering the clouds, and into that chimney  
Of worlds she goes,  
Up and upward like a vineyard into the mayhem of a fairytale that  
Never has to close.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Meadows Of Her Dreams

Powerful disfigurement: ants under the microscope  
Looking as dissimilar as my father infinitely alone with  
All of his horses,  
While the storm comes, surges:  
Yes it does, floods: superheroes drown, unalarmed,  
Over-bloated bellies smelling like five- o'clock fires:  
Places to find nothingness,  
Boats in the bathtub prancing around for another make-believe  
For tourists,  
Cornices upon the bank of teepees- silent prayers going  
Down her cheeks as the snowmelts- asphodels weeping  
To die,  
Sticking their heads above the crumbling asphalt above  
The rickshaws of moaning trees- filing away  
In the splendors that repeat for the door to door salesmen,  
And then the best of it storming away,  
Ending up in the grottos of unpersonified loneliness,  
Like the unadorned orchards that are pony-less,  
But never fail to lose themselves crying for her  
As they slip down the meadows of her dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Meadow's Stamen

How mariposas got to Saint Louis  
I doubt even they will know: even I flew so swiftly  
Away from there,  
Forgetting to visit Sara Teasdale's grave and no longer  
Caring about Mark Twain,  
But tasting some of the salt lit carved into the fair heart  
Of whatever this country is for awhile,  
And swimming with my dogs,  
And never even expecting that I would replace myself  
To Florida,  
Back to my old home south of Disney World  
And fall in love with Alma,  
Crooning to her while eating the young of other birds  
Like some sort of Cardinal out in  
Some sort of thunderstorm over a pet cemetery at  
A baseball game,  
While all of the publishable authors colluded with  
Themselves  
And put on in their walls the swell art all over their  
Classy shindigs;  
And then all out before them the latchkey children game,  
Singing of their game shows and cartoons:  
They came pulling their red wagons just the way  
Cheery stewardesses pull their airplanes  
Through the sky, and congratulating themselves even while  
They were deified into the pinups of Aristotle's most  
Proletarian rings; until they all settled down  
And got married so they could picnic like milkmaids in the  
Wheat and the barley and beneath mailboxes and churches,  
Opening up their baskets and singing  
While the butterflies mocked them, even while their hungry  
Mouths, smiling, licked the homeopathic monuments  
Of the meadow's stamen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Meal Of The Third Fitt

Prelude to sleep: I lie down with my dogs,  
In this strange answerless room, at the end of the corridor;  
Where, after dusk, there are no further motes, nor rhymes  
Or bells: Holidays proceed us, decorating the scars all of our  
Mothers know us by, and my dogs howl for them,  
Well just the little one, but he does a good job; and if she  
Were here, he would leap up to, and smell her perfumed crotch,  
And get rid of the foreplay for me, so we could just get right  
To the real thing, the meal of the third fitt: How our hero  
Survives by his betrayal, and then how, after church, all we can  
See of her, is her shaven leg crooked out the car door, the  
Air-condition beaming, as we reach up and consciously mask the  
Watermark where the liquor kissed us, but all of that was a dream  
In the rich layer of the wedding cake he feeds her. Soon they will  
Both be out of money, but will have each other as long as they see  
Fit, for now they are driving away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Meaning Of Their Words

I don't remember how I started out  
Almost drunken from the boat, diving to  
Save that pearl,  
The sun a parasol all through the school day/  
We made love from the bed where her  
Children could hear, so I bought  
Them things  
As we waited for a hurricane that was supposed  
To arrive in five days,  
And the other housewives called their alley cats;  
But it would not rain underneath the overpass,  
So they held their flea markets,  
And I sat on the occultish greenery  
Of our ancestors with my coloring books,  
Trying to remember how I had found her,  
Or how tadpoles metamorphosis into the meaning  
Of their words.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Measures Of Feral Elements

Pummeling, tremulous:  
The sounds of fierce eloping- the tragic existence  
Of all parts starving,  
Eating all at once- the planes diving in opulent pristine-  
While the girls are working:  
And even your girlfriend melting away on a fieldtrip  
From high school  
Finds unexplainable reasons in the parks she fled to:  
Where the bicycles lay down  
And are covered by the molestations of sunlight;  
But forever the constant roaring-  
The graduation of bodies and their modifications up  
And down the highway-  
Always mobile and newly exposing  
The weaknesses of their endangering presumptions:  
Because there is a graveyard waiting,  
Down from the bricked houses, and the tallow ignited  
In the churches:  
Restive, like something concluded: resolved  
To lay there peacefully under the measures of feral elements;  
And the busy world commutes atop of them,  
Ancestors all in a field lying down.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Meat

Fibrillose like a centipede and counting backwards  
From the laundry or the arcade,  
Following the bred crumbs and the beer cans until your  
Hair was yellow again.  
And you were just a freshman emptied into his class  
In a school that was just finding its legs,  
While cicadas skipped themselves discardingly amidst  
The over red blooms of the bromeliad  
Outside by the archipelagos of landscaping where the  
Bicycles hid  
And the grass was mowed just as orderly as housewives  
And they had firedrills that took you outside so you could  
Be all by yourself until the pretty girl who played  
Soccer who you would never make love with  
Came over to occupy a space near you, both of you bared  
To the sun- underneath an important sapling  
Until you skipped school to go to Spain and Michigan,  
And the fair came around selling you the caesuras of unnatural  
Haunts that seem to give you angels, only to Indian give you  
Back to yourself, until you became an echo  
That resounded with the spent fireworks of an obsolete religion  
Rising and dying repeatedly like an orchestra of red devils  
Playing baseball and the meat of your own hand.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Mechanism Of Your Moving

Lords of parks and football games,  
The new girls think you sure are sweet.  
Then comes lightning,  
Then comes snow. Saints are struck down on their  
Camel's toe,  
But I still liked you a lot: I dreamed in class when I  
Should have signed the x,  
That we invaded rare countries, and pine forests,  
And got special gifts and lime disease:  
Invention for you was as plebian as birds or clothes  
In the wash:  
The clouds came and called you boss.  
The words came next like hungry chickens and I soughed  
For them my abc's: they ate them up like tapioca pudding,  
And I flipped over sixteen times consecutively at the  
Fair, at the zoo:  
We ate astronaut ice-cream, watched the otter sewing  
Sweetly on the mermaid's naked chest;  
But, Oh-damned girl, what I am doing? We ain't done none  
Of that: Oh-shuckeds, Oh-damned girl you floated away  
Before I could pull you strings, to see and smell  
The mechanisms of your moving.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Melted World

Goddess, call me over to dinner in your  
High basins, and I will drink your liquor, for it runs off  
You as if you were always in the Spring,  
And now you are laughing with your daughter while  
I am lost in the woods, but don't think of me:  
I have been lost so many times for going to high up,  
And touching the backyards of god where her clothes  
Were drying:  
And I have had fun, even if I am dying: while this is your  
Youth, and she is looking up at you through the melted  
World  
That is colored by her eyes by which she has formed you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Memories Of A Forgotten Storm

When her eyes lifted,  
We got lucky with the storms-  
In the night,  
We brought the power to the worms  
And the houses shifted in the sands-  
The way lovers lay across one another,  
And turtles drift in the tides:

The moon looks into her window,  
And into the mirror of shells.  
Children go to school with scabby elbows.  
They are making a kaleidoscope of expected dreams.  
They come together like raindrops over a teepee-

The plains are destroyed by the wildfires teared  
From the mountains,  
But when the great bear opens his eyes,  
All is calmed, and the buses find homes,  
And the concrete hums altogether with electricity.

And the moonlight is a distant memory-  
The stars cannot be seen-  
Even though the movie screens have shed their  
Pornographies,  
The way cicadas undress of skins and knights  
Upon the melaleuca trees,  
Our first loves no longer remember our names-

And the night is a pavilion for the teenagers,  
Some of them believing that they will never have to come  
Home.  
The trees are distending into the shadows,  
Arms as tangled as those lovers-  
Those who made love together, welded into  
The memories of a forgotten storm.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Memories Of A House

Let's give a ballpark figure when  
I look into your eyes over New Mexico's desert—  
Who truly was defeated in the Alamo?  
I have a girl in my class who claims to be the  
Great-great ought great granddaughter of William  
Travis—or someone—  
Forgetting about her, lets think about your  
Ancestors, the mestizos who learned  
Through rapine joy how to love  
Without fanfare or much attention—  
And your uncles, even now—how many of them  
Doing landscaping beneath you, surrounded by  
The seas that give fallacio to this peninsula—  
And you were kind enough to say you loved me  
How many times—without loving me,  
Or thinking much about it, but coming to my bed  
Because I brought you gold and could make love  
To you for over an hour—  
How your ancestors defeated her ancestors in  
The bitter part of that war where some land was  
Being annexed to something or someone—  
But it was I who truly understood that it was  
You who was being stolen—  
And you were that prize disappearing,  
Vanishing like something never truly given with  
Everything I was hoping to be transformed into—  
And you will awaken tomorrow  
And the sunlight will fall upon you—  
And the horses will run around you—  
And your uncles will climb their ladders to pick  
The highest citrus alongside the necks of the busied  
Highways—but you will never have to think of  
Me again—neither must you recline in a Pieta  
For your children—you hold them right there before  
You and they are not in any kind of danger—  
And the light is soft and gentle—  
Even though the memories of the houses you cannot  
Remember are filled with hanged men.



# The Memories Of The Forgotten Prairie

Life is not about facts,  
But about becoming cold-hearted bonfires—  
As the moon delivers itself to the feral  
Cats on a platter,  
And my wife stretches herself  
Across the living room  
That we share together, our baby in the castanet  
Of her ribs—  
And all of my school children  
Gone to their various tinfoil grottos  
All addressed in their make believe epaulets—  
They seem fine this way  
Or in whatever way that they are—  
While dogs do not have to shave  
Underneath the moon,  
And pilots do not have to shave—  
But the rabbits disappear from their  
Magical hats beneath the moon  
And other things—  
Words that dissolve and become the  
Magical roman candles for  
The seas that forever believe that  
Cannot forever exist anymore—  
While the graveyards look pretty,  
While there is nothing left to save—  
And the moonbeams shimmer,  
And the blue cats remain forever  
Above the memories of the forgotten prairie.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Memory

And what an illusion—the things that smile  
Just as the sun gives off the rays of a crocodile—  
Smooth embers coiling to the flesh  
As angels go to greet airplanes:  
It is their wish.  
Their father son has cast them down as tears,  
Like sadness cast away—  
They refract across the entire articulations of  
The sea—the kaleidoscope of her freedom  
That hides the memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Memory Of The Definition

My queen- My queen of Guadalupe:  
I am singing to myself, while you are sleeping with your  
Usualest of men,  
In your kindest of houses, and I yet have an ax and a forest to  
Clean,  
While the green lightest is still shining it vermillionest glean:  
And I am all alone in my house,  
And I am getting to fat, and I am breaking furniture and waiting for you  
To come over,  
Because it is yet not to late: I can miracle you, and make you become  
Uncontrolled,  
We can ride rides at the fair with your children together while the lights  
Go out,  
While the airplanes there go off in their different directions,  
Like fireworks of their choosing,  
While the lions on their savannas still burn and molt like fire,  
Like the diamond rings around your knuckles,  
And while I give my breaths, I also give my prayers for you, Alma;  
While Phyllis is in Chattanooga and cant find a job,  
While you live on the other side of the airport from me,  
While your children are gurgling like sweet wells beside you,  
And I call you up and look at your face  
Just so that I might recall the memory of the definition of such beauty.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Mermaids I Love Are Praying

Day is up like a yellow cadaver in a stone country:  
Which is nothing morbid, if you know who he is,  
A laughing relative still too happy for death, experimented on  
By magpies and down here in the tropics, herons:  
Long necked, serpentine, fishers with spears for beaks:  
Well, I jog in the daylight of my morbid relatives:  
I even exhumed myself quite speedily alongside the greatest  
Rush of traffic,  
And I see all the nature that this semi-urban day has to spell:  
Hérons and terrapins and raccoons going down to the hot  
Canal; and the fish underneath the highway's windowsill,  
And I have even prayed to girls who are not real;  
And I have made a mess of myself altogether like a frightened  
Tourist at his hotel,  
And I have watched the processions of conquistadors  
Melt like hot wax into a quintile;  
But the day of my jaundice ancestor has always kept near me  
And run like the yellowest of ribbons against my sun pricked skin,  
And I have waited near the shady coolness all of this habitat  
For him to stop dancing, and to go down once again  
Under the bluest slab, and under the grottos where even now  
The mermaids I love are praying.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Merry-Go-Rounds Of A Holiday

Pretty as a nebula of an eye blinded by  
A cane pole,  
As mine almost was—while all of the skeletons  
Got up to dance,  
Clapping hands in one hellish hullabaloo:  
What parks they could memorize—  
What places they were going—over spilling roe  
Without any sea  
Or visiting ships—her eyes the scarless spheres  
Remembering the merry-go-rounds  
Of a holiday we were never meant to have.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Metamorphosis In The Clouds

Angels in a blue stream they make their  
Swimming pool—  
Airplanes fly overhead with stewardesses  
Like cousins leaping over  
The housewives—  
The daylight an ambivalent net of color  
With otters swimming against  
The backyards in the  
Middle of the school day:  
I have seen them because I could learn  
Nothing more  
Than a few heated words—  
The metamorphosis in the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Metamorphosis Of A Banished King

Showing off how more or less corrupt I am  
Than you,  
I drink on my floor as I remember the passageways of  
Roadways,  
And the sunlit calypso through the palms,  
The baying of the dogs to the evaporates of the sea:  
The strange, unkindling light that never reads  
But somehow happens into weddings, into New Years  
And resurrections-  
The effortless houses up and down the street  
Overgrown with the resilient promises who like cenotaphs  
Bend and crumble overtime,  
Replacing honeymoons with the hapless shells of  
Conquered knights and conquistadors  
A witch's laughing echoes inside them, and ferns hang:  
Tadpoles in their sweat,  
And the metamorphosis of a banished king.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Metamorphosis Of The Cost

I cannot go through this anymore- run away  
To Michigan- see where the rivers come  
From the things that do not exist anymore: you should  
Have gone away by now- the airplanes should  
Have touched down, the tourists should have gone  
Home, as the candles distinguish,  
As the wolves light up in the nocturnal estuaries  
Leaving their brilliant cadavers to sup the moon:  
Dysfunctional brilliance-  
The homeless men of the wall-less castles  
Who burn fires underneath the overpasses who  
Leap toward the sea,  
Or they lie there remember a thing in their yard  
That left itself to walk away-  
The metamorphosis of the cost. The ambulances  
Came absurdly late, and left again,  
Never wondering what they'd lost.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Metamorphosis Of Their Darting Hemispheres

Words get illusions and before  
Long they begin dancing around with themselves,  
Like lonely winos sometimes after midnight  
Upon tennis courts to close to the  
Sea and firehouses;  
But of course they are not there, they were  
Never there, even as the beach is vanishing,  
And the city has taken away the swings my  
Mother pushed me on—  
That I was able to take my last muse but  
Never my wife on—  
And nothing of those dreams have held over:  
They have all been parceled out like a  
Glowing cadaver fed to the true believers  
Upon the last Easter of Jesus's resurrection—  
And now the mermaids ride their aquatic  
Carrousels in slow motion and backwards,  
Trying to temp the Grim Reaper one stepper  
Closer into the metamorphosis of  
Their darting hemispheres.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Metamorphosis Of Their Dreams

When blue gills sleep they dream of  
Feral dreams:  
But they are always of blue gills in  
Blue gill streams,  
As minnows dream of their streams underneath  
The windmills,  
Because that is of their streams-  
Only minnows dream of metamorphosis:  
They dream of blue gills  
And minnow streams, but they see the mountain  
And how the mountain dreams:  
And they see their bodies leaping into her  
And the sky- and they whisper to her to let it  
Rain of their bodies,  
And to let the sky be of their changing rooms-  
To be as well of the metamorphosis of their dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Metamorphosis That Can Never Touch The Ground

Cannot you just imagine  
This slugfest of the dynamos—even if the crickets  
Are not saying,  
After the baseball game has just left the  
Diamond:  
And the gumshoes and sleuths are following  
The sand of the beaches  
Never imagining which way they are headed—  
Never imagining what lies above them,  
As beautiful as all of the weather:  
Stewardesses high above them serving wine  
As white as silver—  
Women of the genie's harem bootlegging allegorically:  
Them in their Siamese waterfalls—  
Perfuming the vapor's bedroom,  
Delighting above their sisters and the waves that  
Want to know them.  
They seem to be all wanting the very same thing:  
As the sky just tries to rub them—  
And the men who once wished to know them  
Keep trying to turn them around,  
But they are too high above them—  
And this is the metamorphosis that can never touch the  
Ground.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Metamorphosis Which Happens In Our Peripheral Vision

They said there was a most beautiful  
Chance happening just a stone's throw  
Over her shoulders—  
Until all of the baseball games let out,  
And they hid the uneaten cotton candy  
Underneath of her shoulder blades:  
I could not say if she was even one of my  
Muses—I was too drunk  
And not published,  
But I looked into her eyes furtively—  
The metamorphosis which happens in our  
Peripheral vision, though you knew me  
As some sort of a teacher,  
And almost an adult—  
As the pageantries were flying over the moon—  
And the unicorns knew that they would always  
Be in love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Metamorphosis Which Sets In The West

Grown up in the shallow bays,  
If your father's eyes were swimming, lackadaisical and  
Surreal,  
You took comfort in your thumb and that this was  
Your America:  
Where did you go, so much further away from where the lions  
Were roaring,  
Almost close enough to pet against my ear;  
And maybe almost every night the rains were dying or trying  
To make love to the always and eventual sirens:  
Then, of course, I surrendered,  
And without having to have known you I gave you up,  
Stopped using the metaphors that could have smelled of your  
Lingerie, quit trying to hang out with the prettier  
Boys like the landscaping in their greasy rows-  
College was a similar threat I couldn't even hope to attend:  
That they were all burning upwards like paper airplanes  
Infatuated with the gyre:  
The plastic cowboys and Indians all looking up from their gunfights  
And tomahawks in some glorious menagerie of reverie,  
Come stains on the green carpet of their habitual prairie:  
And nothing I have yet to say has been anything more than  
A beautiful lie:  
And I saw a foreclosed house today that had its own condemning room,  
An apiary; and I thought of you and tool boxes,  
And the cuts on my leg- the little wonders of wonderful things:  
How many times I have spilled my seed into the dry throats  
Of this worrisome mobile,  
I don't know; but getting up and doing it and going to the movies,  
And wishing to know better words for it like starlets,  
Like girls who stayed up all night and showed their legs like birthday candles:  
Now it is almost like I am absolutely young again,  
And headed out into the fistfights of California, or the high topiaries  
Of Colorado,  
Where all the tourists in their family sedans turn belly-up down in  
The roots of the séances of them dusky mountains,  
Like oil drums alight for hobos under the repeating airplanes:  
And I never have to think of myself alone next to you once more,  
But just to touch the snow,

And see a girl like you walking away in heavy hallucinations,  
Believing that too you looked as if to be in dreams I had  
Thought couldn't possibly be real;  
But then you were just what I had paid for,  
A hotel whose door lay open wontedly letting in the mouth  
Of this obsession with snow beasts,  
The metamorphosis which sets in the west, rises in the east.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Middle Of My Little Neighborhood

Hard cut are the loins of fireworks:  
Ripped right through the paper middle, thrown by  
Paper boys  
On their routs through the trailers in the trailer parks:  
As loud as dogs to the rusting  
Windows-  
The joy into which they are thrown, a beating heart  
Cast over the middle of an empty sea:  
While buses wait in the turn arounds of school:  
Little pinhole flowers grow,  
And the super markets breathe- slow motions truths  
And faults- peppers of sunlight and shade,  
Make truanies with another boy who will  
Soon separate from me into common manhood:  
There they go,  
As the lion's yawning mouth is filled with silver grasshoppers;  
As I pretend to be doing something good,  
And the sun jumps over my little house in the middle of my  
Little neighborhood.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Middle Of The Night

And if I were dancing drunkenly  
South of Spain,  
Would you catch me in the New Years of that  
Country and across  
The railroad tracks  
While it all has to happen to us—  
In the venal enterprises of the mail men and our  
Mothers,  
Whilst there is nothing left that is beautiful  
That we have left to say—  
And yet the sun comes up over the mountains—  
Luminescent daydream of a movie theatre—  
And those who are the oldest of this country  
Cannot stop with their busied menstruations—  
As the movie theatres play their daydreams on and  
On with out them,  
Spilling their gossips out onto the catatonic streets:  
The open throated estuaries that wait all  
Night for their own throats to be  
Filled with baseball and the pollinations of witches—  
Until the wind has caught and she has finally flown  
Above them—  
Casting her spells, she is now a stewardess, something  
Respectable if only slightly above minimum wake:  
But she has nothing to fear—  
Eventually the mountains will weep,  
Sending their lactates and melted ice-creams down  
Atop of her—  
Answering all of the unanswerable questions—until it  
Is very, very late in the middle of the night—  
And I am guessing that it is finally alright to go to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Midnight Sky

Fastening to the heirlooms it attends,  
Going out into the streets after the make-believe  
Fireworks and climbing up into the family tree:  
What is this to happen here,  
Beneath the astral bellies of all the airplanes sinking in,  
And the rinds that smoke up from the wimples  
There- the frogs singing in the drainage,  
Encouraged from their metamorphosis as tadpoles,  
That they will be princes by and by:  
And paper ghosts kissing me at the elbows,  
And paper gods celebrating at the table of stolen  
Light the moon holds and by it entertaining the midnight sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Midnights Of Our Quitting Times

At all the dead ends of the dead-end dungeons,  
The dead girls are doing porn:  
They are becoming the erotic photographs for all of the weirdos.  
As all of the dragons are shedding their horns:

In the sky outside, so far above our heads that we can make-believe  
It is all of the heavens,  
There is thunder whose flinted claps spark lightning above the drunken inns,

The mermaids are canned into their fishy grottos,  
The jinns are jammed into their horn-rimmed tins:

Grandmas and grandpas are sleeping in all of their graveyards  
Across the highways of our lands-  
The cows have crossed into their pastures,  
As to Disney Worlds all of the tourists have entered in-

And it has become a hapless lightshow, jism spilled upon the paper heads  
Of dead presidents:  
Memories of our high schools have evaporated and are floating  
Above the crowded mazes of the suburbias who have  
Impregnated us with our socialized dreams:

Adam and Eve are picking strawberries from the stars,  
They are an advertisement licensed by Satan to sell us the forbidden  
Knowledge of so many useless things:

The keys are in their cars,  
The housewives are in their kitchens, and their children  
Are playing with kidnappers in their forested swings:

As the lamentations of the old gods' giants effervesce into the sky,  
Causing hallucinations for the stewardesses who are working  
In the airplanes that are all passing us by.

The skeletons tap-dancing on the abandoned steps,  
But they are taking their time-  
The emptied throats are opened, trying to imbibe  
The grapes of a withered vine-

As our rhymes recall us from our windows,  
Trying to transform us, into the metamorphosis after the midnights of  
Our quitting times.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Midways Of Evaporating Amusement

You need to leave him,  
With the sun coming up  
And shooting through the  
Sodden fields  
As if an angelic sorority  
Crossing the interstate;  
You need to lay off the  
Uneasy masks of  
Disney World,  
And take a seat at my  
Plate,  
Into the amusements of  
Empty cathedrals  
Filled with the starvations  
Of your eyes  
Or the dreams of your fort  
In the coquina esplanades  
I have dredged for you  
Stolen from and no longer of  
Mermaids  
And the temptations of amphibian  
Habitats;  
I will cross myself with the  
Most majestic of harts,  
And come to you like stolen  
Royalty,  
And take you to the midways  
Of evaporating amusement,  
Where only you and I  
Can play.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Midways Of That Lonesome Carnival

Revisiting her like  
A machine gun in high heels from  
The closet or  
The constellations: they say that they have  
New heavens  
All on the mind- and I look up as the frog  
Princes sing  
From my mother's carport:  
Can't you hear them: singing a renaissance:  
They are imperfect  
But it's Christmas and they're singing,  
Singing- Now they are all of one body  
Pressed against the rebar  
Of Christmas,  
And though they are rusting as the neighbors  
Gossip,  
They are also learning how to fly-  
The housewives see them, and their daughters  
Dream of them:  
They are flying like muses over the waves  
And the heroes look up, dreaming against  
Their star masts that they can save them  
While the museums contain the echoes of their  
Graves:  
As they are still here- as they are everywhere,  
Singing of a chorus that cannot contain  
Them,  
As the traffic steers by them, reminiscent of  
Echoes- and of the entire cases of fruit  
Stolen by the foxes,  
As these ethereal phrases linger before the  
Lips of the beasts who  
Keep on jumping  
Atop the midways of my lonesome carnivals.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Midwife's Sea

Worrisome sunlight in the green grass overgrowing  
Her skirts until this is heard-  
The sky up in echoes; it is just sweating,  
Curling in the vespers of marionettes and Queen Anne's  
Wheels:  
It tumbles, as if looking for gold, as my alma  
Holds her child,  
As if beneath the strong shadows of a fort:  
As if in an apple orchard-  
And the sea feels as if they day is alright-  
The women are buried anonymously beneath the rose  
Bushes,  
But she has come so far away to get here:  
But I suppose that still she cannot lose her husband-  
Her brownness is brilliant,  
As she looks away- thinking of who she would most  
Like to be in love with,  
And I do not suppose that it will be me,  
But very soon I will be running away to Mexico,  
Or New Mexico,  
And I not suppose that she will follow me:  
But when I come back, she will be there, kissing the right  
Fellows,  
The rain and butterflies collecting in the gutters,  
And as we hold hands, the housewives following the perfectly  
Newborn terrapin into the midwife's sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Migratory Thoughts

I can hear the traffic, its empirical migrations,  
And the power lines silently tremulous easily killing  
The nation,  
And long time lovers come in under the 100 watt  
Glow,  
And buy pumpkins; and I do not know what they  
Must know,  
Long time lovers- And I read poems about her hair;  
Oh, if she were here,  
I could show her the flag which I raise every day for  
Her,  
And we could watch the traffic flow,  
And disbelieve that we are anything-but a harmonious  
Creation,  
Sitting back and counting cars, each one a luxury  
Flowing through the wind's hair which steals the quiet  
Thoughts of the pine trees,  
And sends their children scattering into the mouths  
Of crocodiles and other places,  
And has no sense of this- or she of myself- If she were  
Here, she would be as good as gone-  
Her other men swinging axes cutting songs-  
I want to keep her from a distance, and feel her without  
Her ever having to believe in me,  
To become crippled, a ruined winsome, so that she might  
Happen through me without even moving,  
Which would make me more beautiful and swift footed  
Than all the migratory thoughts under the moon or sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Milky Flumes The Wind Would Otherwise Have

Call now your lords from the stage,  
Because the jousting is over and someone has died;  
My pretty cousin, or was it myself who has died:  
Killed by the black eyeliner around her truest of greenest eyes-  
Lawns mowed in the dark by serial killers and their  
Butcher-knife scams;  
Flamingos in their ballet stances, constantly waiting for the  
Mail: Now you are here, or in a historic town,  
Giving out free samples of blue-eyed ripple;  
And I don't have a chance; I don't even have a mail route near  
You, so how can I breathe:  
And it is hardest on our children; I've made them all up  
And fed them astronaut ice-cream, that their father should be  
So entirely refuted by the windless answer over the flawless pools,  
That their mother should be so beautiful;  
So beautiful and shameless that she should absolutely not  
Care to take them against her junoesque respirations,  
And feed to their untried lips the milky flumes the wind would  
Otherwise have.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mirages Of A Once Poisonous Artistry

Glass elbows concubined to the shadows,  
Puppets pulling their own weight towards  
The falsetto of minnows—  
Moonlight hatcheted by branches stared at  
By a virginal serf who has never tasted  
A stolen apple—  
Wife and children awakened to a drinking  
Husband  
Who tries to type a few more lines of a poem  
He cannot finish in a decade—  
The sun steals away the sadness and possibility  
Of rain—all of it is a quickening heaven,  
Drying up the mirages of  
A once poisonous artistry.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mirages Of Another World

Womb of a coiling rattlesnake,  
Pregnancies of why she looks up at  
The sky lazily  
And doesn't care if anything  
Becomes resolved—  
In her delusions, little girls skip out  
Of school  
And show their dresses to the wind—  
The highway is going by her on both  
Sides,  
Taking things away which belong to  
No one—  
The golden spheres dance in the  
Heat like nymphs  
And the sun rolls across the cargo  
Vans,  
As little boys, lighting off their  
Fireworks  
About the mailboxes  
Surely are the mirages of another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mirages Of Her Gifts

She laughed at me when  
I wouldn't show her my face in the morning  
When I came to visit her and  
Slept on the couch,  
Instead of bedding with the lesbian,  
And now I love her...  
But there are more sinkholes under the highway,  
And it is snowing in May,  
In the white mountains where my dogs howl for  
A long time, fearing the unburied bones of  
The drifters in the train yards,  
The phone calls left unanswered every night,  
Even when eyes can see the numbers,  
The solicitors of easy freshman.  
Carly said that you didn't want me to know  
How you had a boyfriend who played the guitar, and I thought  
I was special when we took photographs together  
In her bedroom,  
But I was just average,  
Because she doesn't really want any man to know  
Who she is doing, creeping through her window  
Like radioactive spore,  
Like the mists in a monster movie filling a miniature bay,  
Like a luminescent dragon which ate all of China,  
Eats her like rice and wontons,  
Her flesh like sushi still dripping the salt water,  
Her lips the keystone in the rocks the wind moans through,  
Her legs open like a broken exercise:  
There it is: the truth of hidden Oregons,  
Making me take drugs with two years left  
In high school, to drive home alone with trails  
Of wild eyes, to frighten my sisters,  
To sleep in my knocking caves,  
And eventually leave me where I am now, bastardized  
In high altitude, drooling like an idiot  
For her Catholic legs, her knees like collection plates  
For the successful foreplays of knotting boyhoods....  
If she were a lawyer, I could refuse and sleep naked  
In another meadow,



But because she is not I want to be naked beside her  
In bed, but the profession is occupied by a silent gentleman,  
And it has been so very long since I have entered  
The steaming cracks of Yosemite's sorority,  
That it makes me want to bight my lip and pay by the hour  
To get things done and out of me like target practice,  
All the little ghostly children released from school,  
By the bell and the moaning psalms,  
But this is clearly some reality, and I am no rock star,  
No poet,  
No millionaire:  
Just a little bit of man crawling through the desert,  
Looking for the waters of survival she has fun  
Flaunting in the mirages of her gifts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mirages Of Terrapin

Artform of plumped legs:  
Of you climbing up to her,  
Satisfied with death's gifts: and you  
Have a sword  
And her phone number.  
Elephants on stilts rise from the ocean  
And kiss the mirages of terrapin  
Cloistured in the architectures  
That don't even appear to be anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mirages That Once Danced For Her

Then it happened from a window looking out into

Dusk:

So many windows in a house, my car approaches and then

Moves away:

Inside, Mexicans- descendants of Aztecs and shepherders,

And she sleeps with him,

Brown body curling like something from the woods-

Until- Now I am in Arizona once again

With my dogs

And the pretty scars, getting up into a world to sell fireworks

Again,

And she will make love to her man again, or any man that

Strikes across her path,

To put in place of the vanished gods, and I will move like on

The silk road: the other way,

Using tools as they come to me, finding it hard to get up-

Striking things down as if they were snakes,

And these my clubs:

The horses will move. The trees will die, even though there will

Remain a music between them,

Until it is also gone

And passed across the frontera though years after

She has left the mirages that once danced for her there.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mirrors Of Her Face

Exorcised to the shoulders of unicorns:  
The unicorns must lay over and play dead to survive,  
As the Mexicans pretend to pick their  
Rainbows  
From the armpits of a beautiful America—  
Coming back into what was stolen from them—  
Epitaphs,  
Cathedrals—and amens: but there is a night  
That doesn't know how to reign in—  
The dogs cannot smell their way home:  
The skeletons rum and kick their own skulls across  
Their bones:  
And beautiful avenues haunted at a place—  
Plastic barrettes in her hair,  
As the airplanes disappear as the mirrors of her face.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Misconstrued Cinder Blocks

Waiting so quietly to disbelieve,  
Wanting to see the maker, so climbing the  
Most precarious of trees  
Underneath that golden track in the sky:  
My mother who took me to the library but never wondered  
Why it was that I harkened so attentively  
To the dismissive stories from the wet books she  
So heartily read to me; it wasn't to they that my senses were  
Crying for,  
But only to be next to her sodden breast, to lay my senses against  
Her heart at rest, as if her body was millennially given over to me,  
As the airplanes swept across our ceremonial ballroom  
I languished in with her,  
Her prettiness fading across my flesh as she waited forever  
For my forlorn father to return across the misconstrued cinder blocks  
And again to her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Misleading Gravity Of A Soft Pillow

What is left of the cheap liquor is waiting  
Paradoxically to put away the scars,  
While more grow like unobtrusive lichen on  
A mysteriously alluring planet, like a leading man;  
And the French actress doesn't know you exist;  
You've just found out about her yourself,  
When you go to movies alone and watch her in  
A gunfight burning in a theatre full of nazis:  
She represents the triviality of your art form,  
The lackadaisical anonymity you play around in  
Building your little castles in your bedroom populated  
By plasticine armies and Indians; and wax figurines  
Stolen from the zoo, even though you don't live  
There anymore and the house was given to someone  
Else- Maybe she is really from Canada and you only  
Went together for two weeks, but French kissed almost  
Every single day and had phone sex until she left  
You spendthrift in the everglades; and now the parks don't  
Ride, and the literary agent isn't caring to write back,  
For who has the heart to publish a two week long novel  
Anyways; and there is nothing for it, but to put your  
Head to the misleading gravity of a soft pillow and  
March down to it, all the time entreating those gods who  
Don't exist except for on holidays and tourisms across  
The lamplight sea, and then only for more cavalier men than  
Who you'll ever have the right to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Misspellings Of Two Or Three Decades

Dissolving the plagiarisms of the  
Flesh,  
The misspellings of two or three  
Decades of bachelorism-  
And now I am married and spending  
Time in China-  
In a suburb of Shanghai-  
The only American around for miles,  
And when I drink Chinese wine  
Left over from our wedding  
Two years ago-  
And against my wife's objections-  
I rewrite poems that don't  
Exist-  
I think of circumstances planets  
Away-  
And, though it has not helped my weeping  
Muse,  
I know that by luck- by divine providence,  
And the very same thing that drove  
Virgin through the depths of  
Hell  
And expelled me once again from a teaching  
Job at my own high school- that  
I somehow got lucky  
And married a good woman.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Missplaced Applauces

We'll go to school—you'll see: we'll go,  
Until our parents drive away—under the sunlight,  
Under the moonlight until  
They are so far away and I've found out that  
I've wounded up  
Again in my truancy—I've skipped school:  
I've nodded off—I've nowhere to go—  
Kissing noses with the otters—I am the brilliant  
One who is never in your classrooms—  
I picture myself feeding apples to the mirror,  
And misplacing applauces as the housewives drive  
Home to another cliché never realizing  
That I am happiest alone and that all of the prettiest  
Girls arrive from Peru.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Mixing Teardrops

Most tender eyes upon the womb  
Of a child of a night—  
The vampire sits forlornly at her window in  
Tallahassee, Florida—watching the switchbacks of  
The hills,  
And the apartments that roll through them  
Like a labyrinth—the blue children going  
To school—getting up  
Kitty-cornered to the graveyards: all the lost  
Heroes forsaken to their epitaphs—  
The heavens having sunken up to her  
Elbows—the airplanes her berets—  
Her parents lost somewhere in the sea like  
The mixing teardrops of one too many gods.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moats Of Your Yard

Awakening us in the cradles and sewing fears:  
The highways the lassos of her bridle gown,  
The happenstance of movement that can take you all  
The way to Miami  
With the sun shining down:  
And I can still remember you, Sharon, out in the suppleness  
Of the green canyons of our wicked neighborhood:  
You had friends- I had dogs,  
And naked trees, and my corners of the rooms we both  
Inhaled;  
It wasn't until much later, across the universities of forgotten  
Bicycles,  
That I began fantasizing about sleeping under your desk,  
Underneath the rudeness of careless astrology;  
And I went and bought gas today and set up fireworks tents  
With seven Mexicans;  
And I wonder if you read me anymore, now that all of my  
Sadnesses read for Alma:  
A muse that makes love to me, if not love:  
And you will never see the scalding parking lots to which  
I have lost my mind:  
But you remember when I was a wino at sixteen and drank  
Bad wine and floated mostly naked around  
The moats of your yard-  
And pined for you, Sharon- which wasn't hard.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mobiles Of Crystalline Airplanes

Whatever, I leave the muses grazing in  
Their own estuaries—Even my heart seems to  
Ignore them until I drink  
Rum and then I hear the music playing from  
Another house—  
And then I call them, painful dances up through  
My scarred body,  
To display them before the unpublishable  
Elements—  
Girls who never truly loved me or didn't even  
Know my name—whatever,  
They are here, gathered in the nightmares of  
These piss stained pages—  
Apart of the irony that they will live longer  
And be truer in my unavailable broadsides—  
They will be more beautiful folded up,  
Forgotten by their husbands—  
And they do not even think of me—  
And it rains outside until the tears  
Are pushed away by the cold front  
Decorated by the mobiles of crystalline airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Modernity Of Airplanes

The breast of a caterpillar curled from a leave  
Curling as if pulled from  
The moon: yes, his metamorphosis is an experiment of  
Science,  
Changing as he does into the night,  
As the children echo home from school—  
Or get lost in the park where they spend all of  
Their fireworks—  
But his world is in the merry-go-round that has already  
Vanished—  
Like the complexity of mythological creatures  
Whose space in the sky has been taken away by  
The modernity of airplanes  
That brush across the middle of the sky like an  
Artist's stroke—  
And what does the caterpillar bent towards—  
Nothing, if he doesn't see you there—  
Soon he will enter chrysalis and, once bloomed,  
Enter a world of espionage above the greenery of  
Your mazes, above the labyrinths of your rubies:  
And he will become so beautiful if ever so delicate—  
And he will land upon one of your shoulders—  
I do not know which,  
And promise to you so many things from his steamy and  
Hard-boiled midnight—and if you do not believe him,  
You will crush him—he will become an epitaph  
For a paper airplane—or a cenotaph  
For a blade of grass—and you will walk away  
Deceiving yourself to so many boys whose eyes  
Are like vipers for song birds,  
And whose lips are like Christmas trees for angels  
Who are as delicate as china dolls  
Falling forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Momentary Playground Of Youth's Fickle Beauty

Great scars- good enough for emperors  
Are reduced by the sun;  
Like predatory flowers, they are good and well  
In shadows,  
And when I go outside they easily come,  
Like female peacock feathers around the eyes,  
The eyes of wisdom, or of rum;  
And if I were William Carlos Williams I would  
Give now a gashing name,  
Like a purple string of pearls upon a bugle's  
Rod;  
But all I'll do is in general misspell the regional  
Beauty,  
Make her wait out for hours on the gloomy tarmac  
While the airplanes continue,  
White chassis like the stick figures of  
Angels that aren't any certainty, but steadily leaping  
Coming and going, busily by the juvenile's  
Hand, so that he does not think of masturbation,  
Until he is too exhausted,  
Salivating over the saltwater stewardesses,  
And his mother calls him in from the parade of ants  
For dinner;  
But I will light off firework cones in the rain,  
Their goldenrod spray defying the deluge- a safe patriotism,  
About which the busy cars should come and go rolling  
The dying neighborhood where all the dogs are so old  
And tired that they only sleep,  
And the little boys who I can almost remember gone inside  
To slip from melancholy fantasies beside the freckled  
Cleavage of their housewife mothers;  
And I should stand outside a little more,  
Professionalized by the lurid shadows, becoming  
A crowded game,  
Until my bag is soaked, empty,  
My fingers crisscrossed by the fuses done hissing  
Into the driveway's quarry,  
The earth under my feet the excrement of a nibble zoo  
That passes away the senses,

And seems to make a nostalgia from the momentary playground  
Of youth's fickle beauty.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Money In The World

The city loves as your daughter loves  
The merciless floats, those things that the professors never  
Care to perceive;  
And now my mother is dressed all in black;  
She has done away with all of her gunfighters  
All tonight,  
And maybe she lives on Florida Street with the Winnebago's  
And the flights of indestructible herons:  
Maybe she has a new man tonight,  
Or maybe she graffiti's her taboos from the juxtaposed lips  
Of open windows and hobos;  
But the plays go on even through the midways of that  
Green tornados are done sucking away her tomato dacceries-  
So now the fields are all far a field,  
And yet there is yet sugar cane and school buses,  
Turning around and around like the sad music of  
The disinterested Russias;  
So soon there will be no more beautiful video games,  
And all of the beautiful girls will be shut ins kissing  
Their dogs  
And coming to the names of the boys under their  
Damp rugs who can never rhyme for all the money in the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Monolithic Airplanes So Far Above My Head

Forget the yellow light:  
Forget butterflies and the Mexican slang for  
Rainbows:  
Forget the nursery and the tourists who come  
In wanting to know the meaningless names  
For the horticulture of their  
Inevitably boring landscaping:  
Forget even stewardesses and their milky eyed  
Lawyers far above the  
Mandibles of ants or the jaws of alligators,  
Forget even how you took off on the swings with me;  
And how before that I had run away to Michigan  
To jerk off in a fabulous cemetery  
And kiss my aunt:  
Forget my affluently dirty trick of an uncle water skiing  
Or playing water polo:  
Just remember that today is your birthday;  
And you have spent all day with your daughter, or kissing  
Your boyfriend and eating flan and making wishes:  
Just forget all of those wishes except for the small kindle  
Of the one in which I was your man:  
And remember, dear, today is your birthday; but any day  
And any time of the day is special, really,  
As long as there are blue birds and allegory;  
And you are sunbathing in the little yard with your  
Mother and daughter,  
And I am just a good man  
Hoping that you didn't  
Forget to wish  
And watching you through the blinds instead of the monolithic  
Airplanes going by so far above my head.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Monolithic Stranger

Perfectly, the sun is dying over its hills  
Again,  
Squinting into its world for the last  
Minutes of the penultimate hour of the day,  
And the homeless men walking the highway  
Look up and bless it,  
As the warmth of the sun fades away  
Into night's shadowing footfalls,  
Fades away like a sedentary traveler  
Who watches us leave,  
And then unpacks and prays before his sandwich,  
Then smiles as he is on to see his second wife:  
When the men see him again,  
He is like a monolithic stranger over the road,  
The treble of his rays like the flaxen diamonds  
Of rattlesnakes coiling onto flesh,  
Wrinkling and wizening the gypsy things,  
And soon they are blessing him  
As his monarchy zips the air:  
As his sheen quickens the crops and  
Seems to make the traffic into fish:  
They are going in opposition to the  
Blindfolded commuters:  
Eastward, where the messiah has already risen:  
Through the inebriated waves of  
The morning's sloshing Eucharist  
From the great and riotous bays:  
The direction that skyscrapers and gravestones face-  
None of them can walk a straight line,  
And they do this to confuse ex-wives and  
Lovers, to throw their children off the scent,  
To thatch their hearts into green bottles,  
And to forget how to read:  
They follow only one thing and he is there,  
The crackling scoundrel who leaps from the theft,  
The basin of unruly spears lancing from his immortality:  
A yellow poet as fat as an elephant swimming in rum:  
Strutting over America like a dandy  
In a feathered hat of rosy clouds:

Smiling at all the girls on their abutments,  
His homeless army marching like intoxicated waves,  
As his light hurdles over this continent,  
An unlit candle, damaged and harmless.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Monuments Of The Effigies

The sun was up all of her times  
As she laid in her bedroom and  
Prayed to a god of blue boys in football uniforms:  
She was shady  
And not fully developed, and the sea took to  
Her liking:  
When she undressed, it was only halfway:  
Her fireworks were  
Cerulean:  
She was only half-blue. Pg-13 was her favorite  
Rating-  
Under the Christmas tree she slept alone:  
For a different holiday she was waiting-  
Her mouth and eyes took to books the way  
Civets took to mountain hibernating in the hidden  
Nooks of  
Hibernian fountains- for in their ineffable  
Basins they were somnambulating- as the unredeemable  
Tourists practiced their insouciant sports upon  
Them- for upon their excelsior cradles they  
Were counting,  
And like babes up to the lactates of strange heavens  
They were mounting-  
And, collectively, their gods joined a chorus and  
Pitched their tents  
Underneath the monuments of the effigies of unduly  
Kings which they were too happy to be burning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Monuments Of The Vanished

Morning awakens in the sweat of butterfly  
Wings—  
Lying apart like a prayer to a Ferris Wheel  
The tourists of breakfasts encircle—  
As I wake up a breathing gold-fish  
Delighting in the merry-go-rounds that I  
Have trouble spelling,  
As the roads spill out and lead to school and  
To other places—  
Taking me to where the baseball diamonds lie  
Almost hidden—  
Until I remember when I was a kid,  
And the parks of my truancies were an echo of  
Sunshine,  
And you weren't there for I only had joy in  
White girls and the common circles  
They gave to themselves, like cadavers of  
Incest—and once a year the fair came around  
And then it matriculated, taking none of their dreams  
To the far and wide—  
When they left, it was only for upstate—  
For they could not see the monuments of the vanished  
Seas—and I am sure that they will forever be lost  
In the classrooms where they cannot remember me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moon And The Airplanes

With the bonfires gurgling jaundiced boned,  
The marionettes are leaping over  
In a perplexity of spells: yes, they are trying to become  
Real, true—even the truest boys,  
While I contemplate  
Making a living selling hermit crabs,  
And the butterflies who used to be my lovers  
Contract tennis-elbow,  
Just as in each wave lies imprisoned a wind-chime  
Of perpetuated unicorns:  
In this, the shallows of our racing courses—  
Beautiful diseases disguised in words of Latin  
Or the literary complexity of suicidal professors:  
When, in actuality, it was just the disease of some love  
Lost so many millennia ago as if to  
Become a religion to blind children stumbled off  
The marble footsteps of some buses,  
To reach out, stumbling, hands outreaching for  
Blue gills and pitch forks alike:  
The joy in the unrecognizable senses,  
In the words that fit together unrequitedly—  
It is in the morbidity after society's sensibilities that  
We find ourselves, and lay down for a long time in the unwinding  
Grasses, flitting like censures without any priestly virtues  
Back and forth underneath the moon and the airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moon Or Anything

So drunk,  
I can feel the rattlesnakes slender  
Tongue like a pen,  
Unwary, licking my palm,  
And my stillborn school mates teaching classes  
And getting doctorates up in  
Saint Louise, well formed;  
And tomorrow will be ugly,  
Now that baseball is over,  
And I've had enough liquor for the night.  
I just want to masturbate,  
But I don't do drugs:  
And the poems are good, but I still cant spell  
Bouquet:  
There, I just did,  
And my muses are both higher in latitude than me,  
Though one just so,  
And they are so beautiful, like creatures of the gardened  
Forest,  
They hardly even know; and they will love their  
Men venally and sickly unto a ripe old age,  
While I continue serenading them from my  
Weedy church like a iceberg creeping and biting its  
Lip,  
Looking at all the tainted fish in this canal,  
Trying to figure out how to get to the other side,  
To undress her,  
And lick her down like ice-cream  
Like outlawed taffy,  
While still remaining pure,  
Like the light of the moon,  
Or anything.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moon Was K's Father

I don't know your language, but how you  
Climb those hills,  
All that time laying your hands on the sweet clay who  
Needed you;  
It really needed you, even while I couldn't speak,  
Nor was your hair blonde, but it couldn't care:  
It still went down past your ears as if you were a careless  
Swaggered of a Navajo living in Gallup,  
NM;  
And I've been by the time the sweet roads entwine,  
And my dogs love me, but they cannot speak.  
They weep alone and the moon is unwashed and fully naked  
And it goes around,  
And K- is alone with so many children and their paper  
Airplanes and their BB Guns:  
K- could live forever, and she really should:  
She can really go on forever, and she would:  
I want to make love to her like juvenile sleuths atop our  
Monuments of elementary school,  
Where she never loved me, where she sang in her chorus,  
Where she got high marks and a bunch of stars:  
And she will go down good into the earth of mailmen;  
She will go down good delivering the fine print of finer mailmen:  
K- will live forever inside the tender teenage wings,  
Fluttering out the opulent throats of the throats of our  
Anarchic swings;  
And her children have guns, and other precious things,  
But it is hard to describe her with the moon looking down as he  
Always does,  
As if he were her father; as if the moon was K-'s father.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moon Whispers Of Bicycles

Ferris wheel, keep me indoors while I sing:  
This is my new body-  
My thrown on the web of a thumb:  
This is the thing I seem to be,  
In the glass whispering,  
While all of the other lights are out,  
But the lights on the Christmas tree  
Are dancing,  
And I am sleeping in bed with my sisters,  
And the moon whispers of  
Bicycles,  
And of the lost expeditions of conquistadors-  
But if you made love to your husband tonight,  
I will never know.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Moonlit Nursery Rhyme

Beneath our house  
The wolves are eating the dead horse  
Who fell down the hill.  
Like Jack with two left feet  
As he chases Jill  
She wears an empire blue sweater  
Unbuttoned down the center.  
Slyly she bends over  
As she fills the pail with water.  
After teenage sex beyond the window sill,  
They've arranged themselves  
For the funeral:  
Brother and sister,  
They sure look beautiful,  
But isn't what happened just terrible?  
If they skip out during the sermon,  
I will be sure to go with them,  
No matter who they are burying.  
A trio of young sweethearts,  
We'll hitchhike to the park  
Overlooking the cemetery,  
Where the town boys are busy digging,  
A cradle for the coffin,  
But we will laugh  
And we will giggle,  
As the swings crest towards heaven  
To fall back again,  
Jack and Jill are smoking  
Then Jack and Jill are kissing,  
Until moonrise when the wolves are  
Out again,  
While Jack and Jill are in bed sleeping,  
The needle-toothed carnivores  
Set to work at trimming  
The dead horse to its skeleton.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moon's Admirer

Who can say where the weather goes  
When it leaves this house, it jumps over  
The rafters: an octogenarian,  
An old hurdler,  
Who has practiced all his existence  
To touch the glowing belly of the lonely  
Satellite:  
The woman he saw casting her eyes  
Through his window  
While he was a teenager.  
Then, young and eager, he still prayed  
And faithfully competed for her,  
And thought that by graduation she  
Would know him,  
And the secret roads he ran on through,  
Where, between the interludes of clouds,  
She cast her light down like scattered seeds  
To feed the exhausted birds  
Famished from trying to swallow her  
Opulence to feed their young,  
The chirping existence swaying in  
The tall Australian Pines.  
Before he knew, he was sure of his path and  
Let her light radiate his shadow,  
The ever faithful soldier following the  
Body wherever there are doorways  
Through light to follow—  
He would cross small bridges over canals,  
Where alligators swam like lazy gentleman  
And lapped at the silver saucer of her eyes.  
There she was, dancing patiently in the sky,  
Through her seasons,  
The waxing and waning maiden that knew  
The world before he existed,  
Yet came every night to swim in  
Cloudy pools over the sleepy green neighborhood.  
How was he to know then that she gave  
No more thought to him, than the sun  
Gives to men as he sits laughing on the

Wings of an airplane.  
For her, he was just a pale ant running  
Across the hills of his landscaped mound.  
She did not know he was trying to catch her,  
As her mind was already set upon a long and  
Shivering prospect  
Dressed in the shedding tailcoats  
Like a revolutionary horseman  
Who still comes calling to her with  
The charms of a liberal politician.  
And even further out, there was a red  
God the sometimes came blushing  
Onto her horizon.  
Now an old veteran, like the north wind  
Rattling the windows of a farmhouse,  
He learned some years ago that  
She would never come down to meet him,  
Though she would forever glow  
At night and thoughtlessly tease him;  
But he is not bitter, for his  
Futile love for her taught him to  
Jump and leap all the higher,  
As now he goes skipping through  
The highest branches of slash pine trees,  
Blowing like a tropical storm over  
The tip of South Florida  
High enough that when he bounds  
He can see the ever gesturing ocean,  
Another desperate gentleman long  
Shackled by gravity who is still  
Affected by her immortal attraction.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moon's Quarter

“Three more weeks of  
Heavy petting, ” said  
The moon to her lover,  
“Then I will lose my memory  
And we will have to  
Start all over,  
Though it may well be that  
I will choose another.”

Robert Rorabeck

# The Moral Of The Story

There goes the wombs back and forth, the  
Day labors licking their own salts: red ants  
And mothers:  
There they go, horticulturists of their naturally  
Embalmed off springs:  
The little sparklers of their joys, watering their  
Lawns,  
And crying through the hibiscus that something  
Else is found,  
And come see: looking across the canals  
At the comets giving chase-  
Unicorns idolizing horses with wings, as pilots  
Sketch their stewardesses fizzing across  
The cloud banks which turn out to  
Be giants peering into tinfoil windows:  
At their feet, in the grape fields of Spain,  
The foxes leaping at the moral of the story.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Morality Of This Silly Fable

This girl blows you to kingdom come;  
It only takes a few seconds to buy ice-cream  
For it to melt and run away across  
The Astroturf of her love, with other boys as  
Built up as lead balloons:  
I pass Shetland ponies and orange fields.  
Dreams of satanic cops are in the sky:  
There isn't a mountain in the sky:  
They've all must have been laid in bed  
Or smashed by the careless housewife's circus  
Hammer:  
Five winning numbers in a lottery ticket thrown  
In with the broken dolls and corn bushels  
Beneath the counterclockwise cormorants:  
Driving west like hot feet across the sand,  
Not wanting to build anything that will leave a  
Hole when the tide comes like  
Mexican cleaning ladies to remove the desks of  
School:  
Otters are road kill like so much playfulness gone  
On to sleep,  
To resonate immortality unperceived persimmon  
Stains on the hair-lips of drainage,  
The little houses the body moves stand as forlornly  
Still as the gutless airplanes.  
As the sky leaps like startled does;  
As it leaps and leaps never intending to come down  
To kiss the outstretched palm grained in the  
Morality of this silly fable.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Morning Before Dawn

Imperfect though beautiful weather  
Inflating the weather veins,  
Carving the tombstones were the zoetropes  
Of lost housewives step so  
Carefully,  
And the lost dogs lay- they have forgotten any  
Names that man may have given them,  
And they run from stone to stone  
As if recognizing their lost masters,  
As deeper in the foothills the elk step over  
The blue echoes of Navajos and other  
Nameless Indians,  
Their bugles resonating and catching in the  
Red clay,  
Rattling the song birds awake so that the  
Bring the morning before dawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mortal's Flame

I've had a dream of you the final summer  
Of my morning's sleep,  
A denouement to the deeper aberrations which  
Exeunt from the surface of my vision  
Upon awakening,  
The echoes of a dancer's feet now refashioned  
For the rebuttals of the courtyard. Authors  
Die and wilt, and you read Stephen King in Middle-  
School, though I can't imagine you do anymore,  
Or how you came to visit me and cheer up the side  
Of my face when I wasn't sleeping in David's  
Van during home room studies,  
The little publications that you gave,  
This journalism you gave up for  
Even greater recognitions, and in my  
Dream I bought you a sequined dress so petit I must  
Have mistaken you for a doll, and the careening world  
An exhibit in glass, but things graduate so rapidly  
Even from my indecision,  
Your affections gave way to wilt and dismissal,  
Volunteered for the continents of other avenues,  
And the last time I saw you, you were too busy riding  
Your bicycle to a moot courtroom, so you only waved  
To those oddities which pass away into inevitability:  
But this morning we kissed, and it was the last thing  
I did before waking, and beginning my fieldwork,  
The steady drudgery of my muddy obsessions,  
But wondering I followed you through the mountains and  
Found you echoing with another's name;  
So quickly and impressive people do their metamorphosis,  
And in rich houses spread their wings,  
And even now your are driving between sky-scrapers  
Air-conditioned; If I care to sing of you, I will do it here  
And write these little imbecilic flings,  
Here let them blow out the window into the mortal's flame,  
And catch you again tonight and tug you in dances  
Across the red courtyard where the cicadas are newly undressed.





# The Most Beautiful Aspects Of This Baseball Universe

I hear the rumor of dancing green mermaids:  
For moments they seem to be,  
Leaping breathlessly and coughing from the  
Traffic's bolero;  
But I have lost my will to go see them,  
For the chickens are already dancing with the  
Serpents at the low end of the ski lift,  
And I want to see the end of them,  
While each tree enraptures the wooden epitaph,  
A steed birthed from an acorn  
Which bad men entrain and dance of the jib,  
Nefarious scallywags with candles burning in their  
Beards,  
Already have those vermilion mermaids eating out  
Of their hands at two a peace,  
And the traffic streams to a rather new kleptomaniac  
Séance;  
But I don't care:  
I just want the love of a good woman to last a life time,  
A daughter named Ganymede,  
And a son who has his back turned, who is always running  
Away from me  
Like the most beautiful aspects of this baseball universe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Beautiful Gift

I have another open wound for you,  
So open your eyes only when I look away.  
Do you see how fast the clouds are moving;  
They are busy to go shopping, to  
Bring home the rain:  
Each dropp should fall on us with its own  
Identity, even if you don't care anymore.  
Up and down the street lets take the  
Camera and take still photographs  
Of dogs biting their masters,  
Leaping in sepia, and the hues only the  
Eyes of such animals suspect.  
I was once in California, but you didn't  
Care. I worked at Subway for a day,  
And filled semi trailers all night,  
But there was nothing there to take care of me,  
And I went alone to the parks and rolled down  
The dewy grass,  
And there was metal there painted and put together  
For children, and I am writing so fast so that  
I might finish before they grow up. Everything  
Is so theatrical, and should be self-published,  
But that is not brave, just as I should write  
A poem, to display my wounds before they  
Should heal, to make if not money from them  
Time: If you come to this park, how could  
I know who should come, but I've set the trees  
And the lengths of rope. If we cannot fly,  
We should at least hang, and the let wind whistle,  
And the ants find their way, as they will.  
If that is what you want, then you should come,  
Because I know you have a great body, and if  
Your soul should leave it, it would be perfect.  
Now don't curse, you won't because I am talking  
To the wall of an old apartment that was close to a de-  
Cade ago where angels swam disguised as vagrants  
In the pool down below, as the rains engorged and  
Blurred the lights, and the train moved not far  
Off and the leaves shuttered near midnight as if

From the novel of a little girl;  
So you are not here anymore, the elk bugle  
Across the valley, recalling a rut,  
And the man with the money lays the gun  
On the table and counts the bills.  
Soon I will have to pay for it, and a bar of  
Light will come across her eyes, but I will  
Replace them with yours before I walk back  
Onto the sweaty street where you once passed by,  
If you don't recall.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Beautiful Of Causes

Maybe like you say, you love him, Alma:  
You love him, and these are your words.  
The silent weeds who spread out like dancers before the cataracts of  
The honeymoons of the sun.  
And maybe you said that you would be all that I could afford  
Just so that you could go home to him,  
And maybe that is what you was and what you will become,  
But I am thoroughly depleted; I sleep in the hood of the house of my  
Bachelorhood, just hoping and praying that you are good enough  
To become my banner, and my national anthem,  
So that you can whip out all freely over the weeds and the gently hooked  
Teeth of all of the pretty housewives that I am otherwise sure  
That you would surely become;  
And these words are not mine: they are feeling their way outwards over  
The sloughs like blind men all too ready to believe,  
And maybe we sell the things that you want over the banishing or the  
Banishment of the eaves: and maybe I cannot talk about this anymore:  
Maybe I will come out strong and find you out on some find and distant  
Shore and kiss your mouth and brand your young,  
Alma, because maybe I am yet the demigod and you are still the  
Most beautiful of causes that I have yet been fighting for.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Beautiful Of Muses

Up in the Spanish hills where I get nose  
Bleeds  
I've found another love  
In biology class-  
And I know you don't even know  
Her,  
But you've seen her in the bowling alley  
Drinking beer  
And striking out:  
She is also a vermilion swam amidst  
The saplings they just planted:  
She is also  
A tombstone- and a wart:  
She will not come when the blue bird  
Calls,  
Sometimes she drinks water from both of  
Her lips-  
Or from the roots of an evergreen,  
And sometimes she orgasms alone:  
I know you do not know  
Her,  
But you watch her from her open window  
As she cooks dinner blouse less-  
In fact, no one knows her,  
And this is just my first psalm of a broadside  
I intended for the most beautiful of muses who  
Never existed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Beautiful Of The Littlest Girls

Stone thrown from the hands of the outbound  
Night—and now where are all of my old students—  
I do not know what they are doing,  
But I like to wish that they sleep—  
And the angels give them some peace,  
Anointed over their oily heads—  
Successful or not,  
It will soon be the graveyard for them—  
And all things, just as the night makes love  
To its valentines—  
And the world scrambles over its busy voids—  
Not even one or two words can survive from  
The lips of the ant mound in the middle  
Of the school yard while  
All of the better reasons are on summer vacation—  
And the teachers in their corporal forms are  
Slumbering in their living rooms and dens  
Watching television as if it was Christmas—  
And the most beautiful of the littlest girls  
Have found their own reasons  
To fall asleep on the floor  
And, closing their eyes,  
Never imagine to call the boys they  
Are already sick and tired of falling in love with.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Beautiful Of Things

Baseballs of pledges of allegiances:  
I am getting older over these parks—grey geese who  
Land in the knots of arboreal witches  
As the boys sleep forever upon their red diamonds:  
The souls are lost all around here—  
Their bodies having grown up and left all of high school:  
Only the teachers remain, bloated,  
Amphibian—they cannot even reach the lowest orbs  
Of the orchard—the lowest cones of the poniard:  
And they stutter and struggle and go into and out  
Of museums with creaky doors in which  
Mermaids have been fused together from spider monkeys  
And blue gills: and for those of us who cannot read,  
They are the most beautiful of things, but for the rest of  
Us—we know exactly who they are.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Most Expensive Of State Universities

All day long through the open mouth of  
Song,  
Patrons and their lovers  
Like uncountable ants underneath the repetitious  
Sky,  
The little bowl crafted by Sharon's palms might  
As well be this world:  
Symbolic like the mythology of Plato's wisdom  
Teeth,  
She has made everything that is meaningful  
In this last trifecta of decades,  
And I would do no harm if I was only allowed  
One square foot of her shade to place my head  
In,  
The penumbra of a sommelier: I wouldn't  
Even have to hold hands with her.  
She could turn away while nursing her daughter,  
And greeting patrons into her store,  
While I would let on to unawares-  
The day would be so beautiful, like a shade tree  
In Africa I can only imagine.  
I wouldn't even have to touch my lovers flesh.  
If she would sell her shade to me by the hour,  
I would work good and long through all the careworn  
Holidays,  
And I though I would be as meaningless to her  
As ruined clay bound again to the confirmation of  
Her kilns,  
Every day underneath her insouciant reservoirs  
Would be as insatiable as the most expensive of  
State universities.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Familiar Star

Gather your dreams beside  
And fall asleep at noon.  
Let the sun flood you,  
As you are not yet fully formed:  
But your hair is white  
And today is Easter,  
But the words don't come,  
The immaculate profound:  
The hidden declivities of women  
You work around,  
The navels of spring,  
The thimble pool of navels,  
The opal glasses in soft white gardens  
Whose scent speaks more eagerly  
Than tongues,  
And whose eyes are bound  
Upon the flesh of hindered men;  
Those farmers' sons who fall asleep  
With the infinity of shadows amidst  
The fattest oranges in a particular row.  
Sugar cane crackles the next field over,  
And alligators move like torpid  
Cords of wood in the drainage ditches  
You run across to skip out of school.  
And the world is not fully formed,  
And is hollow without a wife  
The seedless clouds torn in the sky,  
A cracked pomegranate of several masses  
Dripping a colony of fiery ants  
Trying to make advances towards  
The most familiar star,  
But he would rather not bother....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Forgotten Of Forget-Me-Nots

Embittered dungeons milking themselves,  
With all of the monsters in them,  
Not one coral snake,  
Not one way out of here—  
The hero, a diminutive sort,  
Can see the cheerleads a bouncing  
And playing of sports—  
All happily chested and taking for  
Granted the beautiful weather in which  
They were planted—  
And never hearing the laughing children  
Across the rosy bay—  
As the night settled itself that it was in  
Love with the day—  
And our hero sat and pondered not  
One jot—  
And his thoughts lingered upon the trails  
Of not one never a thought—  
And the dungeon stretched just as it  
Did; yes, it hid for miles beneath—  
Forever it hid—  
And he stood there just as cool as a  
Spring day—  
As the lights fell across him, but  
Never he may—go one farthing further—  
No further he did—  
As the sunlight beckoned upon his unopened  
Lid—  
The monsters in love growled from  
Beneath—  
But forever, he thought, his sword would  
Be sheathed—  
And sheathed so it was,  
Never married was he—  
But made his bright home under the brightest  
Of trees, because it was the best place,  
It was—and no one could argue that—  
And the nights came as cool  
As a smiling cat—

Until one day he did—he ventured a jot—  
And in that moment he did,  
And became the very epitome of the most  
Forgotten of forget-me-nots.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Intrepid Of Airplanes

Starting all out all of the runners know the words of  
Their joy,  
But eventually only the best will know the absence of fatigue,  
And they will molt the histories  
Until the angels leap around them like the bonfires of teenage girls:  
And how now I can barely even remember my times in  
Gainesville and Tallahassee,  
And the times I spent pining for them all night long through the  
Reticulated sidewalks of those slums:  
Though even now I sleep alone, I have crested so many ant hills,  
And tasted the wines from so many caesuras of the Spanish  
Dry lands that I now have no more fear of losing my love  
For you:  
Alma; and maybe it is that you have never made a single thing out  
Of wet clay, but you have made my love by just being awakened in my day:  
And oh how I love you- and how our love is strong in the darkness,  
Like a tree felt up by a blind man who can't even speak about it:  
Our love continues upwards through the sky and is gossiped by  
The stars and is gently felt by the leaping bellies of the most  
Intrepid of airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Joyful Of God's Most Basest Of Amusements

All of this in the reason of a prayer, mutely and as silently  
As a nest of rattlesnakes thoroughly at peace;  
Articulating my love who has yet to arise from the east,  
So her beds are unsold and yet lay dampened, and upon them  
The season's wildflowers surcease  
Like an ice-cream shop closed for the off week;  
While in the somnolent pools of eyes diademed by whatever  
Light can be found creeping through their suburban houses,  
The arrow heads of easy witchery find out the smells of her unopened  
Blouses:  
And they move this way, creeping in the caesuras of the  
Lighthoused waves back and forth through houses, calling out to  
Her like the feral choruses of foxes towards their more  
Educated sisters; and coming up and burning like wild, and feral  
Fires,  
Like disastrous weeds about the ankles of a ballroom,  
Climbing until they can feel the perfumes around the armpits of  
Airplanes; and getting there and purring, figuring that at least they  
Measured up enough to ride even the most joyful of god's most  
Basest amusements.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Northern Of Peninsulas

I am listening to my friends:

They come out barefooted, silenced in the fields of their

Work,

Just as the kites happen to happen out underneath the ballrooms

And the gas stations of the empty streets

Even though Alma cannot remember any of her dreams:

I fed her camerones diabras today:

And my Spanish is as bad as my skin, but look at how

Many times we have already made love,

Mi vida:

Look at how heartfelt my coffin is, and the races of the dog

Track with its four legged luck:

Look at it spilling through the confines of the new

Racetracks,

And into the virtues of your own silhouette:

There you are in a Catholic household underneath the birthdays

Of both of your children;

But there has already been a rich assassination behind the ruby

Curtains,

As the orchards lie overabundant with their mouth rinds and

Shetland ponies;

And the circus hasn't yet left town: I still dream of you

Underneath the rotundas of your futuristic pregnancy, and I speak

To you whenever I can, kissing your wrist with my forked

Tongue, promising you air conditioning and more of everything:

All of the fortunate sins that will bleed you forever,

Like a tributary returning faithfully again- languishing in the forgotten

Shows that happen for miles and miles unnoticed beneath the

Swaybacked and manmade bridges across the all but forgotten

Tributaries of the most northern of peninsulas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Ordinary Of Men

Knowing nothing of a girl's love,  
But lost into her  
Like vendors in a flea market in the deepening  
Shadows underneath an overpass:  
And whispering to her after midnight even when she  
Is in bed with another man:  
That this religion will not mend- it cannot even  
Be sold;  
And we go to sleep kissed by our dogs:  
Like frogs dream to become princess, or even  
At least the most ordinary of men.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Most Terrible Day

Imperfections spoke out loud on airplanes  
Fallen down so far:  
I get back at you by going to see whores, but  
I can't even get hard:  
I am incredibly wounded by the way I remember how  
You moved against me,  
Like a piece of ambered driftwood in a stone-stiff sea:  
And the light house of your eyes with a coy light  
Like the greenness of an indoor storm,  
The way it must have led all that I held safe inside me  
Astray,  
Because you have gone tomorrow, leaving me wrecked  
In the most terrible day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Ungodly Of Seas

We have a forecast for echoing  
Like homeless people wishing that they could  
Be inside of their cars,  
As the iguanas exfoliate in the rock garden  
And Romero watches the horses:  
He is in love with his cousin in Mexico,  
But the fires are out in Arizona- the sea is a blue  
Snail blazing into another sea:  
The slow echoing of the tortoises underneath the  
Broken down school buses- the long sad  
Drifts that cannot drink a tank of gas:  
The land is flat like her chest as she straddled  
Me one last time across the fields of Thermopolis:  
There she is an ancient goddess driving in a  
Minivan, her soft young legs so brown and tan  
And going up and down or anyway that they can:  
And kissing the sun,  
And killing dogs- she rides around like a brown  
Forest that all the butterflies go to release their  
Poisons and so to go an die,  
To flood again like cheerleaders coming outside  
Of school buses, like beams from a lighthouses  
Searching across the gymnasiums of the most  
Ungodly of seas

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Uninhibited Of Rains

All of the songs for a girl who never made it to  
High school:  
All of the songs to her, to verify the beauty of the penumbras  
Of Spanish shadows  
In the flea markets underneath the overpasses:  
All of the songs for her now, while all of the professionals  
That I once knew in my classes bend low and offer up  
Their asses:  
All of my songs for, Alma, because I am being led through the  
Brightest of home rooms for her,  
Alma: you have let me round all of your bases,  
And the sky now is a light bulb which I can exchange;  
And I was carded today, Alma;  
And I guess it was because I am halfway beautiful, even if  
I am strange;  
And I buy plastic bags, and I light all of the candles,  
And I kissed the lips of the Virgin of Guadalupe tonight Alma,  
Even though she was wrecked, and I asked her to bless  
You even while all of the traffic seemed to pause,  
As if all of the racehorses stuttered to your name; and I am  
Listening to the whispering mirages of airplanes as they pass over  
My house, and blessing you, just as ants bless their queen  
Deep in the hearts of their mounds,  
Utterly safe even in the greatest deluges of the most uninhibited  
Of rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Viscious Women In The World Never Knocked On My Door

I seem to smell like cigarettes,  
Gasoline, but we've just been burning  
Pine trees- Without any Mexicans,  
It is a sad thing;  
Without any unicorns, who's to say we're  
Even real;  
And I've been pulling it out so long,  
Running away from haunted houses along  
The train tracks,  
Imperfect, clutching the warm bodies of  
Rattlesnakes, and now she says she's  
Married: and I don't feel it anymore,  
The way you must feel it coming down from  
A long flight in an airplane, escaping your  
Bedroom for the acceptance of France:  
And I thought I was invincible, that I couldn't  
Shrink anymore, and we could go out  
To dinner at high elevations, and you could  
Strip dance for me in the careless movie  
With our flask of firewater, firewater; but this  
Echo isn't true- it is the reflex of a dying man:  
It even isn't a dog barking,  
Scared of the night, because nothing in it is real.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Most Woebegone Sensations

Moving me this way to heaven; it is my hell,  
The presocratics waiting for me with lustrous warmth in their  
Eyes standing outside the baseball games of all of  
Our windows:  
The strange conjunctions that they want to show us down  
In the pit they've been mining into Eden.  
Their flaming swords singing, and turning up opulence of  
Compounded words, like endless insects stuck together  
In what must have been their throes of love-  
But they will never have to love again, like cut flowers who  
Somehow never find out how they are going to die,  
For they stand so forever in the statues  
Of their ecstasy, the same way I want to keep you in my mind,  
Echoing like the caesuras of the oceans,  
The saddles between the mountains, the undulations of  
The zoetropes and the windmills,  
The specters who wake up underneath the cenotaphs who  
Will forever bear their name:  
Just as the rose bushes are blooming in the front yards  
Of kidnapped debutants, pistilled in the perfumes  
Of the most woebegone sensations.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mostly Perfect Pornography

Inside the places which fold into into's  
I waited for my parents who had left me in the careful  
Hands of a daycare—  
The latchkeying playground that never so happened to  
Finish high school,  
But was there anyways—in the balconies of the  
Sabotaged places  
At least where the marionettes hang themselves  
Anyways—right there in the folding wings of  
The airplanes' bouquets—  
And the sunlight stutters as it comes up upon the failing  
Amphitheaters of the reckless  
Playgrounds—  
And little boys who are better known than me  
Always chop—and chop the cherry trees down—  
As the little fairies are folding up  
Their wings,  
Like golden books: they sleep like pornographies inside  
The hoods of sleeping cars—  
If you haven't seen them there, you haven't walked far  
Enough, because that is where they are,  
In their very little world where they are the mostly perfect  
Pornography—  
And, when yawning, their mouths open for a brevity of an  
Aforementioned anywhere—  
Because that is just where they pretend to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mother Goddess

Nard refers to spikenard,  
A flowering plant which grows richly abundant  
In the Himalayas,  
And is used by indigenous sherpas to garland  
Mountain goats during high-altitude weddings,  
Where the air is naturally heady,  
So there is no need for wine;  
And as corsages when they go to prom,

But its only color floats at the top of a reedy  
Stem, like a spattering of bruised stars,  
And even that is far beneath the  
Black-faced cadavers who are forever grinning  
Like presumptive way posts jewelling the  
Weather around her bare shoulders;  
Mummified, they remain there for eons, even  
As other, more permanent artifices erode;  
They too float like abused heavens around her  
Subtle neck laced with climbing ropes,  
And studded carabiners;

For, just as the names of flowering plants may  
Belong to wayward poets, so too do these men  
Belong to her coarse natures, and they whisper  
Her name to the other trespassers,  
Those whose fate she may pick and choose:  
The Mother Goddess, Mount Everest,  
Chomolunga,

While the spikenard suffers through the lacing  
Drizzle, shivering outside the monasteries where the  
Fires leap to the monks polyglottal chanting;  
As from the tent poles, the prayer flags ripple,  
And the soundless monuments rest in their wetted stone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mothers Too

Anonymous penmanship-  
Grotesque calligraphy-  
Misspelled words raised from  
The circus of dread:  
Everything is flat even the  
Strippers have gills-  
I ate two cheeseburgers: That's  
All I'll eat.  
Teachers are finishing up school,  
The bright colors and shapes,  
The molecular bonds of peanut  
Butter and jelly-  
I live alone underneath a snapping  
Turtle-  
I once saw a mermaid-  
Only once-  
She is all I think about,  
And the children come home,  
And the mothers too.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Mountain Clefts

Little  
Brown  
Girl—sleep  
Inside my  
Classroom—  
Do not take  
Your test—  
I will protect you—  
I will run away  
With you  
Forever—  
And show you  
The Ferris  
Wheels  
That rise to kiss  
The mountain clefts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mountain Of The Verdant Rose

You treated her like sh#t,  
And you'll be buried next to her:  
But, I ate your wife's pus#y better than  
You'll ever eat your wife's pus#y-  
And this is just another way of believing that there  
Will still be airplanes in the sky,  
Remaining like paper snowflakes, or like whatever  
Sort of make believe death you believe in:  
And we will get along, selling fireworks until  
Summer ends, and then it will be Christmas  
And we will sell then too: we will sell, we will sell,  
And the moon will get up and shine:  
Whatever it does- just you know that it will be good,  
And it will be beautiful,  
And whatever god you happen to believe in will get up  
And save us in time- galloping, purple throated,  
Singing to the choir  
To the horse thieves and the stewardesses:  
Then it will be a dusty Christmas but at least it will be there,  
And we will sing our newest brides into her newest coffins:  
And we will sing that way for so long,  
That they will listen,  
And the fires burn their way straight through the mountain:  
And listen: listen, as they are climbing up:  
Soon they will be there, and enjoy the summit of the word:  
Open breasted, bloody lipped, busted nosed:  
And then they will have to go down too:  
Singing, singing, singing- just an echo:  
They will have to go down too:  
Singing, singing, singing, about this their joy, and then this  
Their open wound- their open coffin, the mountain of the verdant  
Rose, open lipped into the dirt,  
As wide spread as a child into these woods without parents  
To suppose them in memory:  
And singing, singing, singing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mountains And Candied Apples

Off to a party of Ferris wheels, while the little girls—  
Spendthrifts—are all gathering their stuffs:  
When they get done,  
Bloody-nosed—they look up the slope to the atmosphere  
Of the waterfall—  
The waterfall is seeming to come down in  
Some kind of pieta for them—  
Maybe it is almost Christmas—I wonder what has been  
Happening, while, all of this time they  
Metamorphosed—  
Yes, they did—until they became the grandeur of  
An astonishing zoo populated by girls all of  
One of a kind—  
Fed by the offshoots of the nipples of the mountains—  
Like carnivals of weathervanes spitting chewed up  
Confections and candied apples—  
To feed her in the exhibits too far beneath all she  
Ever knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mountain's Demiurge

Die in the mountain's demiurge:  
The disinfected basins where god sends  
His clandestine lights,  
The undulations of a blinding harem-  
Crown yourself on the nipples summit;  
Make the mountain your paramour,  
Your nude conquest,  
And, like a time traveler,  
Kiss her faint lips-  
The indistinct goddess you are on,  
Or fall and become a discommunicated  
Angel,  
Fled from the garden,  
A fatal boy scout badge,  
The first step to an everlasting coffin  
Nameless under stone:  
The lowest candle in the high hallways,  
One of four anonymous lights,  
And the dancing of silver bones  
At the lip of the Christian mine:  
At the precipice of season,  
Where the miners' spirits hold  
The laughing festival beneath the elderly heavens:  
Drink with them in the crops  
Of mica, harvest the ores of eternity-  
The zincs of their ancient irises,  
And in the bizarre moonlight of quieted space,  
Indulge in the longing truths of extinctions:  
The breathless conquest and the  
Cessations between the melodies,  
The month's rest before recovery,  
Where the needles of hoary decay gnaw  
The white off bones,  
Disappearing the corporeal orchestras  
Amidst the magnetic mountains,  
The drumming basins where  
Trusting lovers go to die,  
And there to remain forever afterwards.



# The Mountains In The Distance

Green as a sick jewel,  
Like a rattlesnake with a tooth ache knee high in  
The parks  
Of my childhood, and all of my dogs are lost,  
But the fair is in town,  
And the stewardesses are touching down,  
Knees scabby from playing in the grass-  
I think of all the words that they will never know:  
The mountains in the distance think of snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mountains Looking On

Golden warm body underneath  
A tree:  
Underneath a swing-set, looking so beautiful:  
And I am looking up into  
You, as if this was your world-  
And I am resting as if a knight vanquished to  
Infinity,  
And the sea a roaring lion of mothers,  
And the airplanes doing their bests:  
The mountains looking on and on-  
And no one can tell them that this is their world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mountains Where The Wildflowers Are Sleeping

Only the emotions of a seashell:  
How the sea repeated her lulls, her vacancies  
Into her,  
Underneath the ceiling fan, like a horse galloping  
In a windmill- votive words  
That spill from the maiden's lips before  
She has to go to school,  
Or sit at the bus stop and dream about milking  
A cow:  
Lines of a cover artist kissing coral snakes-  
As the morning evaporates and is proven  
Something unreal:  
Easter eggs across the train tracks like  
Catholic churches, and the brown girl who is  
My muse: she worked at the fruit market today,  
But where did she go? Where did her heavens drift  
Off to, and now my words loiter for her  
Underneath the jewelry of leaping airplanes  
That do not linger, for they go  
Skipping across the very oceans, as if their  
Great waters were but canals dredged by a god  
Who doesn't live here anymore: his vacant house not only invaded  
By the usual nocturnal forays, but their perfumes  
As well- as another virgin is resurrected from the grave:  
She stops and smells of the lavenders of  
Abused cheerleaders underneath the midnights of  
All of the mountains where the wildflowers are sleeping  
In unified sorority together.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Mourning Darkness

Gaslights glow like churches on the brink of the wood:  
It almost seems that, yes, someone has been crying here,  
Beautiful, wayward,  
Girl from Appalachia with someone always following too  
Far behind;  
Weren't you out here tonight, but where have you gone?  
The flecks off the lunar shrine  
In the epitaph to rattlesnakes now torpid with the afterbirth  
Of where she sat mourning,  
Curled in an indentation in the grass up the easement from  
Another road:  
This is where you sat considering: This was you,  
But I see you have gone, up river or down: I think you  
Were following something. The moon had to get down from  
Your shoulders and fend for itself.  
Now this spot of the world is saddened. The thrushes are quivering,  
The pines leak with golden tears. The snakes lay like breathless  
Ribbon keeping eyes with the toads- Maybe one of them  
Saw your car; I must ask them, uproad or down:  
The road is so long until you are found; and this is the place where  
You sat considering in your world:  
The moon purring on your shoulders until you had to put it down;  
Now it lies here weeping like milk through the grass,  
The green bed where your hands touched while your back  
Was up against the mourning darkness.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mouth Of The Lukewarm Python

On arches of chains we go back and forth  
Trying to survey from the tops of pine trees,  
To see what the goblins are selling under the moon,  
What new languages are being written by  
The elaborate hallucinations of helicopters,  
And younger sisters who are really wishing wells,  
Fluming ingénues from the backs of sugar gliders;  
And god is there, or his close cousin, and in the language  
Of his post-colonial incest, a coral snake is milking  
His wrist between this sway of the clouds and the moon-  
There are more than several levels of stratum up to  
His room; and his eyes are gone, but we won't be getting to  
Him:  
This is just the séance of our out of doors room-  
The pools are skipping beside us like uneven diamonds,  
Or as blue as the reflection of the blue bird's eye  
Coming into the crepuscule in the mouth of the lukewarm  
Python.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mouth That Accepts Her Musings

We all have successions, and this is mine:  
Another game of pinball, another word coming up breathlessly,  
Losing definition:  
The Mexican drives the truck home through the purple immolations,  
While his ancestors gathered the architectures  
For a calendar that foretold the end of time: a nubile premonition:  
The pretty and un mollified musings of black girls  
Down beside the river, slipping its silvery pinafores over the snags,  
Losing itself into the oceans that bare its children;  
That it goes home to every night, and douses its scars past the  
Bare-chested hemispheres, hangs up its endeavors and tells itself  
That it can do no better;  
Its throat filled with tar and terrapin like a plate that moves all over  
Itself;  
But in its greatest night, eyes and senses closed, it is showing another  
Movie, filled with truth and promises;  
But never to the light will such an answer be revealed;  
And so she flows steadily, mail-giving- attributing to the mouth that  
Accepts her musing, but otherwise is as insignificant as so many  
Things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Movie Theatres Of Her Own World

While Plutarch thought of the angels of  
A spell,  
I thought for a while, while he thought of  
Her—  
Until they were all up in arms—  
The miracle of the imaginations of  
A Ferris wheel—  
Turning around like the busses of the butterflies  
Upon one single horn of  
All of the unicorns-  
Until the words failed, and they all fell off—  
Dropped down to bed,  
Through the chasms of the heroes  
And the fjords—  
Learned to make love with the purplest of  
Angels—it wasn't a pretty sight,  
But at least it was to their own accord—  
Gumshoes of passersby trying to make a buck—  
Beautiful women up to all of the angles of  
Their tricks—  
My wife not understanding a thing, but resting assured  
That should would wake up  
Again tomorrow into the movie theatres of  
Her own world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Muscular Syllables Of His Golden Bed

How to be beautiful at night all alone  
Covered in a layer of sod, making love to no woman,  
And minding no woman all the same:  
I don't know,  
But that there is no amusement in this: my filthy face  
Has no grin,  
But listen and I can still hear the traffic and the little things  
Still being stolen:  
There is still one light on in the RV, but I have never known  
A woman whose name still is Erin:  
I have never known her, and how sweet that the snowflakes do  
Not fall, that beautiful women  
Are still walking out properly trimmed, still walking out  
To get married, or just to think of him;  
And I go out too, all in the banished light of so many Churches:  
Yes, the light is blue,  
And my throat is cut; and it lurches, and when my body is stilled,  
Yes, it still breathes; it gathers up her perfumes, and inhales  
Her bouquets; and this is my little plot of crippled  
Daisies under her windowsill waiting for her like a mortified  
Fortuneteller, while she makes the sounds of his name  
Strung out in the muscular syllables of his golden bed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Muse Has Hit You, Has It Not?

Presupposing we put a ban on all that's holy,  
And the mud mucks up the land from shoulder to shoulder,  
In a final and messy epoch less cohesive and malleable  
Than clay,  
And W.H. Auden sat around bare-assed in rain slicks,  
With the jowls of a gamy dog,  
And gave little girls broken petals, with the sun embarrassed  
By noon with nothing left to do,

For I have read from all the Jews and homosexuals,  
And sat practicing suppositions under the crucifixion,  
Listening to airy farts whistle from their stigmata-  
Leaving blank the voter's registration,  
Recalling, instead, how you sit away from me, downcast;  
Though, perhaps, jovial,  
Not disproved yet by science,  
Watching the ice melt straight into your liquor.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Muse I Once Had

Wrapped inside the cages of hedonistic  
Byways, looking for the hemlock of the anniversary one  
Last time,  
At least I can say I kissed her lips and held on to  
Her, and took her out into the waves  
Even though she could not swim: which made all of the tourists  
Watch us even more;  
And we made love: and we made love in almost a year  
Of adultery,  
But all throughout those fiery nights, the souls of my  
Words ran lonely-  
And it got colder as more of the years approached:  
She went back to him, sated and bent and subtle like  
Soft wood I had imprinted with my telephone number:  
And her two children, waiting for fireworks-  
Hungry as rabbits- she said she was not a good mother,  
But she would not leave them- A Mexican woman,  
Her husband exhibiting entire control over her,  
Except for with me- for this last year,  
And the times we made love- now she is a lion,  
A rose content to be a in a cage- and when I see her mother  
Cleaning the windows of the Italian restaurant  
Along Okeechobee Boulevard- working without  
A smile, bent and overweight- I think of the muse I once had,  
And I think that must be her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Muse Of My

Done again with your ablutions up against  
The lakes that some rich man dug:  
Up again and the dunes all around you, the cantankerous  
Hyphens peppered by loons:  
And this is your ballroom; this is your bedroom.  
Your movie theatre is wide open and over spilling with the  
Third Reich and the bearded Sanhedrin;  
And now the day is all the time laughable, and all the good  
Sports are only baseball;  
And this is not my thing, catching consumption for the beautiful  
Darts of beautiful dragon flies out once again in the  
Perfecting gardens in the drenching rains;  
And if I know you, its because I've flown airplanes over the  
Glaciers in Alaska,  
And picnicked with my family and black cats:  
And I know there are things you've yet to even think of  
Even now in your backyard; and I wonder now, Erin, how many  
More days do we have to go to get to Easter,  
Because I really want to find your legs; and all of your men right  
Now, how are they doing:  
What kind of show do they put on right now, and is there smoke in  
You dance halls, because you really belong out on my prairie;  
And my mother isn't home right now, and all the planes are straight  
And comely; and if they've been spoken by me, why then they  
Are exaggerated.  
And you are a beautiful fountain, contemplative, blue collared and  
Busty;  
And I love you, and I steal things to offer to your chromed emblem,  
For you are up again each morning,  
Burning, the muse of my eternal stories.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Muse Of My Eternal Stories

Done again with your ablutions up against  
The lakes that some rich man dug:  
Up again and the dunes all around you, the cantankerous  
Hyphens peppered by loons:  
And this is your ballroom; this is your bedroom.  
Your movie theatre is wide open and over spilling with the  
Third Reich and the bearded Sanhedrin;  
And now the day is all the time laughable, and all the good  
Sports are only baseball;  
And this is not my thing, catching consumption for the beautiful  
Darts of beautiful dragon flies out once again in the  
Perfecting gardens in the drenching rains;  
And if I know you, its because I've flown airplanes over the  
Glaciers in Alaska,  
And picnicked with my family and black cats:  
And I know there are things you've yet to even think of  
Even now in your backyard; and I wonder now, Erin, how many  
More days do we have to go to get to Easter,  
Because I really want to find your legs; and all of your men right  
Now, how are they doing:  
What kind of show do they put on right now, and is there smoke in  
You dance halls, because you really belong out on my prairie;  
And my mother isn't home right now, and all the planes are straight  
And comely; and if they've been spoken by me, why then they  
Are exaggerated.  
And you are a beautiful fountain, contemplative, blue collared and  
Busty;  
And I love you, and I steal things to offer to your chromed emblem,  
For you are up again each morning,  
Burning, the muse of my eternal stories.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Muted Creche

Florida is returning to the way she looked  
Just before the sixteenth century,  
The conquistadors swimming in their bloody  
Bouquets and hang-over hard-ons:  
All the lost tribes are showing their faces as  
The hybrids of our new species:  
Guatemalans and Cubans and Haitians and  
Columbians,  
Swimming up stream and making love like  
A kaleidoscope lost in a  
Sweaty, irrational poem: What would be a  
Disaster from the white man and his college  
Professor,  
Except for the fact that these women are beautiful,  
And the bring over priced lunch,  
All the roundnesses of their body like ripe  
Fruit,  
Like the clichés of a lunch basket passed between  
Business partners;  
And they all have exquisite names with three or  
More syllables,  
Like mermaids or butterflies that have finally settled  
And learned how to live forever  
And to roller-skate:  
Julie is a unicorn, and I buy guava pastries from  
Diana for the rest of my life,  
And the cicadas sing as they have always proposed  
They have,  
And the alligators grin because they still remember,  
And the old forts settle,  
The cars proceeding heedlessly,  
While somewhere to the east the waves continue  
To eat away at the throat of a cross planted there  
By silver crusted men who cannot much longer  
Afford to live behind the muted crèche  
Of their endangered gated community.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mysterious Instruments I Need To Survive

Your brown skin encages your wet butterfly:  
While your legs pump the gas, and you are migrating to your  
Place of work and back home again  
To your children:  
Maybe I will make love to you in the morning before  
Breakfast,  
Before I have to drive down to Miami to sell fireworks:  
When I have already promised everything I have ever owned  
To please you,  
Or everything that I have ever been:  
The mailman licking your stamps like rain pressing the highways  
In their petticoats,  
Giving your home flowers that embarrass you,  
And besos for your lips when our coworkers have gone home to  
Sleep,  
And my fingers curl up the blinds of your ribs, like blind hikers  
Searching for the angels of your throat:  
There they are singing, Alma,  
And playing the mysterious instruments I need to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Mystifying Surface

My soul still makes potty words, seeing the absences  
In primary colors:  
It can not hold the court of its browned gaze for longer  
Than ten seconds,  
But it still sees the unicorns gagging like the effluvious  
Bubbles in the backyards of preschool,  
And I have tasted Kelly's tongue once in the penumbra of  
The Riviera Beach draw bridge, but will never  
Ride in her pink saddles;  
It is almost enough to talk about the glued glitter of roller rinks,  
The rubber balls happily bounced by two legged canines  
Whose tails have shrunken to the size of secreted goldfish,  
And I suppose that every one of us has our diamonds,  
Glittering in the shallows, or hidden deep beneath the  
Mystifying surface.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Naked Damsels Of Flowers

In those elements drooling from you  
Mouth divide as you take school busses home  
To the busy housewives:  
You are fables anyways- silent lessons with  
Porcelain legs traveling the votive canals  
Alone:  
Above your heads, those gods evaporated silently  
From the world that once was theirs-  
They seem to be creeping forwards from longevity,  
And singing through the creeping vines  
Covering the ice-cream cones and the skeletons:  
And it was a long and perplexing dough eyed  
Fable that happened whistling gapped  
Toothed in the park, and periwinkle-  
And you sat there all alone on a swing, and swore,  
Thinking of me- while the apples held to their  
Boughs- and the sun shone down the naked  
Damsels of flowers,  
And I knew there was really nothing on your mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nakedness Of Meaning

Words huffed from a quiet man's body,  
Like cloudbanks in their syllables, come easier, like  
Love,  
With liquor, but now I fear I should not drink unless  
I lose my soul,  
My Alma on her breathing yard, if she is even there;  
But I have my green virgin in the soft  
Green of my foyer,  
And I still pray that if I keep repeating these words  
For her,  
Like enamored continents filled with children laughing in  
Recess,  
That she might reflect the beams, and kiss me as quietly  
As true love's dream hidden by a shield of  
Cars,  
Defeating all of our impossible monsters, and finding out the  
Liquid gold of tongues as if panned from  
A river of fingertips like the boughs of fruit trees basking in the  
Sun,  
And all of the nakedness of meaning that never has to say  
Who we are.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nakedness Of Sky

When do you call to me,  
Unicorn- Now something I hardly believe in:  
The world series is over,  
And you've gone back home to  
The woods  
And your children: what color are they,  
Or can you even possibly imagine-  
How they love you,  
How you love him- and how your eyes fall  
Across him- across the railroads and  
Circus tents in the middle of the  
Night:  
What do they know, and how can they survive here:  
Maybe they will become lost forever,  
As the silver trains buckle through Spain-  
Or maybe they will fall upon someone  
Definite-  
The lake remaining so exuberantly quiet,  
As the airplanes undress into the nakedness of sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Name For Alma

The quieted ness of all of our bodies, as if in a muted fraternity,  
Or a very saturnine baseball trip on airplanes,  
Astonishes me:

The way she pushes herself all day, body flipping like rides at the fair,  
Body turning around and all around

With her favorite cardinals: That I would wish for nothing more than  
To be more beautiful for her;

That I could stop clowning around and straighten up and show off  
In the bright sunlit ballrooms of the day,

That I would know my numbers and arithmetic and count on all of  
My fingers and toes:

I told her today that she was my patrona, that I had mean feelings about her  
And that I was just starting to get up while the hummingbirds were  
Mumbling:

Why, of course they were, and this is their song:

Something completely pedestrian and repeated while the chariots held  
Races and the bodies lisped in their cornices; and I thought it must be  
The altruisms of a very beautiful race, and I was just as sure that I had not  
Yet died, for the gravity was as of yet pinging me around like a ball in  
A school yard, and the name for Alma was as of yet my soul.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Name For Its Soul

Bodies who overturn for song birds:

This is my love nest, Alma: this is something that

You should feel to need to overturn and fill-

While I went to the movies today and felt the need for something

That wasn't real,

And then I passed out only to come to, to hear you knocking,

And it was a marvelous feeling, like the Indians were dancing:

And they were singing in the airport and under the mezzanine:

I love you,

Alma: I love you, and this was our song that we practiced together

While you were sleeping, and when you came to and yawned and

Gathered your children together to take them

Together,

Then I got up as well and mowed the yawn; and realized that all the

White girls had gone,

As if upon the fabulous months in passing had disappeared,

And I could never be anymore happier, as I realized that you and only

You, Alma, had always been the reasons for my songs:

And I sing to you, Alma;

And I pray to the Virgin of Guadalupe, for you are the reason why

My candle keeps burning tonight,

So bring me your children, and become my roofless kite:

For the sky, like me, is so empty, and yet is so receptive as the know all of

The reasons why it needs to be filled with your body,

And the name for its soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Name Of The Man You Were Bound To Love

I'm warmed by Spanish blood-  
And the hills flood. The regiments are in  
Ruin,  
Orange trees are, yes, tremulous; it is what they've  
Always been doing;  
But have you ever cared before:  
Driving in your car in the deep airconditioning,  
While I was so far away and so terribly scarred- and balmy,  
Bending paper to make airplanes  
Attended by unimportant stewardesses ghosting with  
Your old last name:  
In the tomb I play in is eternal: I've leapt over the  
Coal-fired ruins of a campfire attended by the bent faces  
Of so many pretty adolescent boys who grew  
Away from me;  
But didn't I keep to you, leaping like a gazelle over each  
Sumptuous irrigation just to bring out my telescope,  
Erecting it under a finished blue sky- to get a look at  
You:  
But could you really care, pretty- pretty: Maybe you come  
Around once in a hundred years, cold centaur leaping out  
Of your soap-opera comas: Could you really care?  
That I jogged the entire neighborhood for you-  
That I made up dreams and reanimated conquistadors from  
The blue dunes for you;  
And that I have become lost and terribly unfortunate  
Just to call up your mix breed;  
That I drank enough on that day of the communal fieldtrips  
That I shouldn't have to recall my name,  
And remember that, alas, it was not the name of the man  
You were bound to love....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nameless Children

Aposing bodies know how to have children without having  
To know how to do anything;  
And when I gather myself and travel the streets, and the trees  
Just become gaudy and full of uneven weathers,  
Than I can see the lovers inside and between their middle-  
Class cathedrals  
Making love and cleaning themselves, and counting the bells  
Before dinner,  
And the steps that god has to take to come down and enter them-Alma:  
There are so many steps that they are infinite,  
Like the echoes and the shadows inside caves,  
While the sharks sleep at the bottom of the sea, never having seen  
The waves caressing the crepuscule or the dawn, Perhaps  
Dreaming as they do of the mailboxes that contain both of their  
Names,  
While the nameless children look so far away before school.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nameless Graves

Received in a choir that has no throat,  
Received in an ocean without a boat, the lines of clean  
Absence in the roofless house  
Looks straight up at angels, the airplanes flicker like  
Bad celluloid,  
And the windmills blow out their cakes like the wishes of  
The flesh,  
As I remember you, Alma, and call you to me,  
Like a dream of pennies drowning in a wishing well,  
All of my half spoken hopes wasted into the flatbed  
Caves,  
As all the empty happiness boils up from the most nameless  
Of the nameless graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nameless Palate Raining Again From The Sky

You said all of this while cavorting in miss-behavior.  
And the shells at your wrists where little things live  
Wanting to be bought by so many tourists,  
But I am remembering that I had other dreams too, in gardens  
Not fully formed, in houses underneath other even more  
Beautiful rain storms: dreaming of living at the end  
Of a cul-de-sac in Saint Augustine, before I'd even  
Met you or bought gifts for your children, the sky divulging  
All of her wonderful thought in sad stories to my backyard  
While the airplanes bloomed rather gloomily in the crooks  
Of cypress- the conquistadors gone into limestone,  
Their bones flutes for centipedes and the ghosts that they  
Bring with them for whoever and forever riding the  
The legless spines of serpents while each blade of grass whispers  
To the nameless palate raining again from the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nameless Though Everyday Storms

The New Mexico's song urges me further beneath the  
Last song of the mountains,  
And the field trips of the auburn planes, and the bed sheets  
Of ways past like rusting gunfighters  
Who are still sleeping underneath the fibrillose shells of their  
Over turned carriages:  
And now I can vote, and march out into my song and display  
My weapons the suffocating wives;  
And Alma is here, while the my own mother sleeps in the  
Carport of the dreams of my childhood that she  
Cannot remember,  
Even while all of the old pornography is failing through the trees,  
And the secret music of my furthest relatives passes away  
Through the trees,  
Though I get drunk enough to remember all of the woman that  
I was always supposed to love;  
And maybe it is enough for her now to just know the bloom  
Of my carnal cemeteries:  
They are the biggest things and they go on forever without the murder  
Of chalk borders;  
And her name is Alma, and I have given her flowers several  
Times a week for the past month;  
And I suppose I am being too romantic for her to love me;  
But she is my sea: she is the tattoo on my very soul;  
And I suppose that I may never truly have her,  
But she resounds in my and then arches over me all of her favorite  
Colors that still carry her eyes so very far away  
From the orchards and castillos that I have built all of a sudden  
To carry her name sanctimoniously through the nameless  
Though everyday storms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Names For Her Prayers

The tulips are all busted, but she liked my  
Unicorns,  
And these are the things we sing to her after she  
Has left my house,  
While they are doing more construction at the bright end of  
The street-  
And I didn't have to meet anyone else for lunch; and  
She stayed so long and played with my hair and the rest of me:  
It was the first legitimate love making I've had in over  
Seven years:  
She was a fountain of butterflies;  
She left me a painting of elephants, and I broke her anklet but  
She didn't cry:  
She just kept on persisting with her eyes,  
And the bed moved by itself, it levitated as I told her the names  
For her prayers.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Names I Will Never Know

Walking the pensive rounds in that darkness  
Probably in Colorado  
Caracoling the lake off to the side of family get-togethers,  
Looking at low hanging spruce branches to hang  
The paper snow flakes that don't  
Cost a thing to my mind.  
The traffic seems to run its accord off these mountains,  
Like a chromed weather unto itself-  
And lovers hold hands in the park beside me, but  
I've forgotten the rules of their game:  
My sister is married and successful in college;  
Her mailbox is choking on it,  
And her friends gather around her like candles in tallow,  
Softly burning like little song birds,  
Like tourists lined up to see the dazzles of a mine,  
Like a fat womb of quartzite peppered semipreciously;  
And the girl I think about has an opal birthstone,  
And a GED: she knows all the names of the plants that grow here,  
Many of the names I will never know.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Names Of Other Lovers

You'll go this way, and we'll make love:  
We'll sleep over alone together- the rivers will  
Flow around the empty rooms in  
Houses,  
And the eagles will birth their young over the highest  
Canopies in the forest:  
Their first born will be as blonde as a forest fire,  
And in her freckled armpits he'll find shade,  
As if in a fire escape or  
An apple orchard:  
He will learn how to stand up and breathe at a rest  
Stop going up to her university  
Oily and tanned, never learning a better language,  
The airplanes traveling as if on  
A scent overhead, the pinwheels and roller coasters  
Curling in the peppermint hallucinations  
Too sweet for the tourists to avoid-  
And if there were any better words, or prayers to  
Sing to her- and if there is a better girl than  
Her to sing to,  
He, of course will never know- because she will be  
As far as he can learn,  
And even all of his nights will be spent auburn, nude,  
And wounded beneath her windows,  
As she cries down to him the names of other loves,  
In languages he is too far from her to understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Names Of Our Ancestors

Well, the cities pullulate and strut in the atmosphere:  
They are making a crystal gown out of their tenants whose tresses  
Diadem with sea horse eggs that procreate a legless stampede  
Into the oceans:

In its panoply of enigmas,  
The races get started for the extinction of man:  
In the somber music of estuaries, they are making a séance  
By which will be forgotten all of the names of our ancestors:

In those bygone eras, the beauty of centerfolds is faded  
Into the rotted pages of the swamps:  
Wherein even the most beautiful of men is legless  
And is using his arms to climb towards the lizard's embankment:

Only one star remains, shimmering faintly- already destroyed,  
An echo of the final hope, a booby-trap for the human condition  
Flashing on and off above the chicken-pox desert.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Narcoleptic Amnesiac

Can't remember my name.  
When her blue eyes crack open,  
It's the first time I've seen blue.  
Hungry blue birds flutter about me.  
She says, "I love you,  
Whoever you are."

Then, promptly, she falls  
Back asleep  
In the other man's arms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Narcoleptic Jasmine

They gave to themselves the pleasures of  
The hearts of the palm—  
Like swing sets swinging over the sea  
The airplanes flew over—  
Wings spread without another care in the world,  
The stewardesses stepping in their  
Narrow cathedrals,  
Serving over priced drinks between the pews:  
Until the sun came up and enameled the  
East—  
And the serpent came and kissed the drunken  
Beast—  
And the sleepy rose eventually gave  
The last kiss of dusk,  
Its rosy negligee intermingled with the disappear  
Perfumes of  
The narcoleptic jasmine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Narcoleptic Waters

Up in the air  
The grandest of giants  
Kisses an airplane  
Holds it by the throat beside  
His golden castle of  
The sun's metamorphosis—  
Stolen bicycles waking up  
In the morning beneath—  
Remember the feel of her hands  
Upon them,  
And her ass sitting there—  
Like a turtledove upon her nest:  
Now she has gone away to  
Her school up in the air—  
As he sleeps in the  
Narcoleptic waters that  
Somnambulate around the  
Emptied houses.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Natural Catastrophe Of My Very Soul

I think of you,  
And write of you all the time;  
And it isn't fare,  
This immense disease of my immortal dysfunction:  
Its like being with a warm family who's  
Never there,  
So you are left praying beneath the ceiling fans  
Who are always  
turning  
Away on strangely tremulous fieldtrips and never  
Rescuing you:  
And after all of this school, and the sweaty of  
Sweet little bodies,  
I am still only left with the masturbating/  
Recreations-/+\*  
Of a gray haired truant:  
And you have cats and dogs and a little girl who  
Looks up to you highlighted by those mountains  
You have no business with,  
Except you are selling your wines,  
Using your most familiar instruments:  
I don't know how many casual boys loved you like this,  
Like obsessing over your best friend's sister sunbathing  
Topless enriched in the sparks of  
Downed power lines,  
But how many of them can you say have ever done this;  
And I am still waiting for you to reciprocate,  
And give me a bag of goldfish as some reward,  
While the sky shoots its angels,  
And you play your faithful sports, shooting across the  
Clear blue day,  
Just a small manifestation of the natural catastrophe of  
My very soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Natural Forces Of Her Echoes

Another holiday lost as we go piggybacked  
To our grandmothers,  
And the love of the late afternoon is strange:  
But there are birds up in the sky  
With airplanes  
Migrating in winter- in a weird tapestry  
And her shoulders are as brown  
As honey  
The cicadas and katydids become stuck to  
Like leggy freckles  
As she bends over the water fountain,  
Her hair falling and  
Bouncing,  
As her lips take a drink- and if she hasn't yet  
Kissed a rose,  
She should do so now:  
Before the busses come, and the wolves come,  
And all of the other days come to her  
Expectantly-  
And she is lost in the natural forces of her echoes-  
And cannot even remember the way  
I looked at her  
As she bent over the water fountain  
In a hallway we both shared.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Necessary Reasons To Yet Survive

Now I am all down by a skull  
And my wishes are as little as little girls:  
As they go by the homeopathy of their dollhouses of  
Grottos,  
So humbly and wishing for nothing more than  
Their mothers' happiness: while we have to make it through  
Again all of these lightning storms and these  
Civil wars,  
The architectures of landscaping hyperventilating atop the  
Grasses,  
The roller coasters coming down and caracoling against  
The voyeuristic glasses,  
And the way her body sings; it is almost in my dreams-  
I am almost waking up against her body like an angel picnicking  
In the higher passes I have almost died to have seen:  
But I have seen then and survived,  
Like an outlaw making love to the occupations of the daylight:  
And I have done this,  
As I have loved a Mexican girl named Alma who swears that  
This is not her country, even though it is just as much as  
It is mine;  
And she cannot swim, but she swims in my eyes; and in my dreams:  
She defeats me by the cannibalisms of her own eyes,  
But as long as her heart beats in the libraries hoping underneath the  
Unending futility of the overpasses;  
As the orchards still overflow with her favorite colors,  
And her children go to school right before my eyes:  
Then I will always remember to bring new bouquets for her:  
Because Alma gives me the necessary reasons to yet survive.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Neighborhood Of A Vanished Carnival

Drunk mothers  
Get down on  
Their knees  
In the middle of  
A dead-end  
Park-  
Admire the butterflies  
In the last leg of the  
Race  
Having naptime with  
The rabbit carcasses-  
Empty shot-gun  
Shells  
Are indescribable  
Like knucklebones  
Across  
The neighborhood  
Of a  
Vanished  
Carnival-

Robert Rorabeck

# The Neighborhood Of Her High School

This book is the collapse of the America school system—  
What frightening amusement  
When there is lightening over the green driveways  
Of a suburban glade,  
And we each make our own friends—  
The telltale signs of their carnivals are up in  
The forbidden skies forever—  
The night drowns with the possibilities of casual observers,  
And there are new wounds in the penumbras of  
Mailboxes we were never supposed to observe—  
What old gods are trapped here,  
Near the inventions of the internet and VHS players  
While our neighborhood is still round and becoming  
Clouded with the sodden fields—  
For a moment, I fall in love with your older sister,  
But I am not there anymore—  
Children come on and get off of merry-go-rounds—  
They are looking up for Easter—  
The pies in the sky are looking good, even  
Delectable—  
And the middle-class fanfare crescendos:  
She supposes she is in charge of you—while now the  
Oceans get ready to flood—  
The hoof prints in the shape of an unicorn can  
Not be described while the housewives are heading home  
To the bonified apiaries—  
Some wolves are licking their fingers,  
Whilst the children of the prettiest women are  
Getting off their turns at the mall—  
And the neighborhood shapes up  
And dreams of itself underneath a Christmas tree—  
And the lonely heart inside of her is  
A wreck in the department stores: she is a mannequin,  
Acquiesced into the pitfalls of marriage-  
Graduated from the neighborhood of her high school,  
She will fall down forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Neighborhood Of The Earth

I am placing you in left field  
With the other girls.  
Everything will be okay because  
You cannot catch  
And I cannot hit- The  
Day will be filled with red  
Clay and narcolepsy and  
There will be nothing left  
In the neighborhood of  
The Earth  
Except for the emptiness of our  
Sport-  
And we will make eyes  
Across the classroom-  
Or fall asleep next to the canal-  
Underneath brocken down machines-  
But I will never say I love  
Your  
Since I've known your  
Sorority is full of thievery-  
The same way my wife knows  
All foreigners have blue eyes-

Robert Rorabeck

# The Neighborhood's Fata Morgana

My legs are crossed and cooling on  
Some promontory in Arizona:  
I'm almost as big as a hill, a tit-  
And the traffic goes by as smooth as ants;  
Listening to the perfectly rounded mouths  
Of radios;  
Made softer by air-condition; each one  
A pet-  
And I've forgotten who I am;  
I think there should be a sea beneath Arizona  
Instead of Mexico- I think there once was  
And dinosaurs and vampires:  
Now look at the shopping mall shimmering the  
Neighborhood's Fata Morgana;  
And I don't know what I should eat-  
The hummingbirds are too quick, and of course  
They are such little meat-  
The pretty boys in their towns somnambulating  
Around,  
And the girls are all done with me- Even the  
Pretty ones- I don't think they'll call again, but I  
Wonder still if they'll read my poetry,  
Or skip school with me to see the tiny world of  
Dolls atop the roofs of the chicken coops of lawyers  
And their dolls;  
But she probably doesn't know what a roman candle  
Is; she just likes the taste of wine,  
And when the sky is like a soup matriculating across  
The elbows and joints of the mountains she can see;  
Then she might know who she is,  
She might read my poem, even though she's  
Forgotten me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Neighborhood's Merry Go Round

Growing up through the summations of the body:  
Learning how to spell some things,  
And buying more gold to adorn us as we go leaping  
Like birthday fire,  
Like catholic chariots cutting themselves on barbed wire:  
And I love you,  
Alma: and I love you dear, with the cars of our neighborhoods  
Making their peace mill excursions  
Even after the flea markets have shut down, and the brown  
Séances that happen mid afternoons in them have dispersed:  
And families all across the wetted tip of this peninsula  
Are home and so contented they don't even try to cipher  
Tomorrow's weather:  
And it happens that the shadows that get up and come down  
Through the exhausted but amusings in the ululations of  
This neighborhood's merry go round.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Neighborhoods Swathed With Men

Orchards are made of men who  
Cannot sleep—as fairies sleep in the cabbages and  
Pumpkins:  
And they drink teardrops of farmers who  
Have lost their fairest daughters to the town  
Drunkards—  
But these other men do not turn into werewolves:  
They come down from the thorny backs of bric-a-brac  
Mountains, carrying with them their sacks of  
Antlers and arrowheads—and when they  
Get underneath the fullest premonitions of the moon  
Metamorphosis, as I've said—  
Themselves into orchards—that the Mexicans come into  
And baptized and eat apples under with the coral  
Snakes—until the lazing otters come up the bank  
And proselytize to them like preachers over  
The working congregations of army ants:  
Asking them to change again, to set an example for  
The tadpoles:  
What will they remember then, and where will they  
Find themselves—as the most jaded of individuals try to  
Cartograph the hemisphere they sea at night  
Until the gods give up to themselves,  
Absolving in nebulas that bloom like the riches nebulas  
Up above all of the neighborhoods swathed with men.

Robert Rorabeck

# The New Accidents Of These Tourisms

Filled with scars and their positions  
I am afraid of taking off my shirt in front of company,  
And the evening turns over moaning in laps for other men:  
I wanted to give her oral pleasure tonight, but she wasn't home:  
She was out learning to sacrifice for the always busy sea:  
So I made love to another woman; it is what I am always doing,  
While the townhouses depreciate and Erin finds out she is  
Finally a new bride  
While moon blushes over our shoulders reading also to make love  
To the new accidents of these tourisms;  
And the housewives surrender and go back inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# The New Precambrian

I make good practices at anonymity,  
In fact I have succeeded, for there is nothing  
More important than to be the unthought of  
Spittle on the lip of immortality;  
If I should put out my hand, she should not  
Come for she is already married,  
And quite bored by my undeadly sports,  
And so I go down the easement to the canal  
Which is allegorical for the border of death,  
And I look at the alligators soporific membranes,  
And wonder if he will take me across,  
Or eat me on the way: The better part of  
The world is underwater, and maybe she loves  
Me unconsciously, pitying the scarred imperfection  
Of my artistic visage, and I should write all of this  
Down before-noon, and let the penultimate desire  
Crash, begin to ponder the simple sports of food  
And sex, and there she goes running in shorts,  
And I will go down to the valley and rent a video-game,  
Something to put my fingers on, an experiment  
In the old illusion of movement and stillness.  
I know I should not put down another word,  
Because it will not make me a dime, or catch her breath,  
But I do,  
And I do again.... And the alligator awaits the new  
Precambrian, as it eyes do not blink,  
Even as my eyes close.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Newly Rehearsing Storm

And then their bodies plant over exhausted  
In the brown recesses that  
I have too many times felt for myself:  
While I drive back and forth today  
Before Sparrow Lane and the hollow echoes of what  
That means to me:  
If it means to me anything:  
While we all have been to kindergarten or prison:  
While all of our pets will sooner need to know their  
Model cemeteries:  
While the stewardesses flame like birthday wishes in the skies;  
And it all pillages for awhile across the echinopsis of the  
Toy jungles into which the magicians rabbits  
Are defeated by the pet jaws of our  
Daylabouring canines; and the country turns yellow,  
Waylaid and all too barren:  
And the band starts to play- the scarecrows dance with  
The flying monkeys:  
As I cross the canal to get to my wife who is haunted  
By the house who has warped the floorboards  
In its efforts of following her across the streets of  
Coquina and into the turquoise dunes of thirsty headdresses  
And buried pornographies just to get one glance at her  
As she weeps her head down to the luxuries of the water fountain,  
Like in the absentee chorus of a hummingbird- her soul-  
Her Alma lighter than air as she turns away, heady with the  
Recesses of whatever seasons she pretended to exist in;  
As once again I cross the street over night just to  
Get to her, as the storm clouds fall like defeated forts for tourists;  
And the waves are coming in with the adulations of bullrings,  
Quiled in their effortless gambits like valentines  
Sent away across the sherbet and valentine rugs of  
Kindergarten that I still pretend to be kissing just to get to her:  
My muse or whoever she was: her faces and breasts changing,  
The bouquets of her armpits and graveyards shrugging off my  
Efforts;  
As I linger in the sidelines of American football, no longer assured  
Of her fanfare as her aloe grows and lingers smudging the sides  
Of a woebegone household whose wet and seaside paint

Runs all too eagerly at the last sight of the newly rehearsing storm.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Next Awakening Sea

I am found in the quiet solitude of  
My inebriate isolations,  
Found this way surrounded by all the  
Brothers of my species,  
Salivating over the conditioning of  
My brotherhood of likeminded holidays:  
This is the way we go,  
Each in the fraternity of the crashing sea,  
The drive in movie theatres of inexpensive  
Foreplay,  
The kind of want that aches in the teeth,  
And kindles in the eyes,  
The want of fingers to play over the overturned bowls  
Of divine knees,  
Over the tumbling and sweet still life:  
For eyes to burn into eyes like the strange  
Explorations of two unexpectant stars  
Which cannot ever reach their true light  
Across the abandoning distances;  
And this is all we have,  
The striking of keys into the gutted cars,  
Her lips surrounded by the made-up scars  
And she stands out fixated amidst the  
Tumbleweeds—  
And the attentive jackrabbits—  
And we put the rattlesnakes into the tip  
Jars, and the rainbows replicate the cheap  
Promises,  
And this is the way we are headed,  
Famished and hallucinating in the cinder-blocked  
Courts—the tiresome game we have to play,  
Our ever attending bones the instruments,  
The skin such sweaty canvas, and there is no  
Escaping the impossibility of the tide ever escaping  
That way,  
Of ever caressing the highway or even the  
Orange groves,  
And I have no more dreams of her,  
For my inherit definitions have had their day,

And there is no separating the deserving man from  
His well-earned currency,  
The tourisms she has abandoned and redressed  
By throwing all of it away and  
swimming out before the next awakening sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Next Day Comes

Licked a little rum  
Off the fingers of humming birds,  
Wanting more,  
A little more genius as bright as newly minted  
Pennies,  
With the face of a president, made out of the  
Same worthless stuff:  
And this morning will be cold, and Diana will come  
Rolling out of the woodwork,  
And you can barely even speak to her even though  
She thought you were cute two months ago  
For a speck of pleasure, for a tryst.  
And you will think of one or two muses in the world,  
And it will do you no good:  
You will uncover the plants and turn them upright  
Like your father showed to you,  
Making them bask in their hoods.  
The angels will come like giant airplanes or other Horatio-Alger.  
The traffic will conduct a steady tempo of the most intelligent  
Mammals you know, or  
Can think off, farting heartily in the air-conditioning;  
And you will look up once or twice into that  
Beautiful January sky of this new year,  
Supposing it is the lightest shade of blue where more  
Industrious and clever boys than you are always leaping and  
Dying like minnows battling tadpoles in sunlit shadows;  
And you will want to say her name and see her like spokes  
Passing out of the windows of a school bus;  
But you will not say her name. You will not sing for the  
Police,  
And when the next day comes, you will swear to hardly think of  
Her at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Next Morning

Nothing but a dirty boy naked except  
For when I sleep:  
That is when I put my work clothes on and set out  
Down for the burning canyon  
Where the trains and airplanes are always ending up,  
Wrecked,  
And the species of sooty tourist and housewife  
Come like wounded animals out from the darkness;  
And the best of all, the creamy stewardesses,  
One breasted like Amazons punched in a fight  
And made to retreat up the footpaths that ooze like  
Gray spaghetti in my skull cap:  
We meet together like wolves with forest fire eyes;  
And I run my bones up and down the smoothest rivers  
Of her thighs,  
And I do good work, and I sing:  
And I am fully famished and a hero come the awful light  
Of the next morning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Night

The night is a stogy panther- With you in it  
Further north and away,  
And in it always remaining those things I cannot  
Spell and thus cannot say-  
Prancing, newly pronged- a lackadaisical knight  
Out in his hermit-pilgrimage,  
How often do you really think of me:  
When you can't see these scars, they leave you pretty  
Much alone- Oh, but they haunt me,  
Driving me like bumper cars-  
I have been up in my lonely room, laughing with my  
Dogs, while you scrimshaw on your beach,  
Fully armed- Often, I think I can smell you,  
The richness of your sweaty junctures, the perfume  
Of your clammy cloisters:  
But I should not even try to comprehend what I cannot  
Spell- I have grown a beard to hide myself-  
I think it best to hide you as well.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Night Before

In the forest, a cold meal of rain:  
Nothing of phone calls in the forest, and the caterpillars  
All balled up- in their stomachs a chrysalis:  
The hikers gone away with their ice-creams:  
Gone to hibernate in their trail parks with their working  
Girls who have come home from  
Their own ways:  
And the graveyards bask, and the airplanes fly so far away to  
Speak of no meaning for it;  
But with one looking up, they must think of the passengers  
So warm inside, like coins in the smoldering cul-de-sacs  
Of an evaporating wishing well:  
Where will they go now that the moon is hugging the saddle,  
Its face as big and preposterous as a church  
And down from the ridge, and through the spindles of aspen  
Stumble old girlfriends, falling toward reason  
And away from the darkness of the summit where one supposes  
Nothing but a cairn of stone sits and awaits  
The sappy blessings of juniper who cross themselves across  
The path the elk hurriedly made as they went down  
The back way and into town again  
To look through the glowing transoms of the evolving girls  
Who spill out their innocent light from the palms of  
Their windows,  
Beckoning the feral princes they easily tame: breast feeding  
Them with dishes of wildflowers they have learned  
To distill- so by their own feelings they climb up again,  
Like colorless fires without sound that caracole through the  
Boulders of the darkness  
Until they intertwine beneath the watchtowers and go no further;  
Buoyed in the presence of an ethereal theatre  
Until they remember their own, empirically,  
And thus fall all the way down to their beds of sleep,  
As easily as wishes blown from the shoulder blades of  
Their candles,  
thus to haunt the lurid bellies of their roofs that hood them  
Like the breasts and the navels in an orchard  
The early morning will harvest with its pregnancies of surplices  
Flowing across the bodies flooding across the carpets



And once again being let out doors- to enjoy the sounds of  
Schoolyards, like song birds themselves cheering beneath  
The paths of a mountain high above them  
That they cannot even remember laying in its airy slumbers only  
Just the night before.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Night Flows From It

Little tricks like silken web spume from the thorax:  
Her eyes are oleander, they make patterns under the school  
Bus, awakening and closing.  
The airplanes are diamond birds with frozen wings who  
Never fall,  
Only the truants know this echoing forever scarred upon  
The swings,  
Eclipses of bodies doing their bit to sell candy bars,  
Her mouth opens for his fingers, five or twelve,  
A handful and then some, but the carpet has just been  
Vacuumed.  
Lying down, so close to ants, the window looks like a  
Very blue stairwell right over to Pablo Neruda. The eyes quiver  
To see the South America poet making love tonight,  
Biting a hang nail and signing greeting cards.  
Above his head, the roof a pyramid little boys summit,  
Giggling, their hands splayed over crypt orchid fireworks  
To expulse into the spotty void. The king doesn't even know how  
They will crown him, looking into his celebratory ochre,  
The backyard pool veined with gold effluvious- Or the boys  
Above, what do they know, except that they weigh about  
The same as all the hummingbirds in north America;  
And the bottle is warm, and the night flows from it.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Night Of Our Predestined Architecture

What have I finally done wrong  
Muse of shells and hourglasses- how will finally  
Fill up again after the rain,  
As the weather come down again  
Kissing the skirts of airplanes- the rivers  
Who ribbon the earth and touch all of her planes,  
Will lie in their basins and protect their mud:  
If I ever see you again, I am afraid it will  
Do neither of us any good:  
For the night of our predestined architecture has  
Past away with the summer- carnival of our  
Spent offerings did not bear any children-  
And I had no friends to share your honey-  
So go along now with your poisonous butterflies,  
Your bearded ladies and your lion  
Tamers- I will not see you when you leave  
For you've taken all of my vision from me:  
I have placed all of my lights outside the yard,  
And given your brown stems my useless  
Senses to take away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Night The Werewolf Howled

Forklifts of golden brown sunken into  
The pornographies where the egrets high step  
With eagle eyes, searching  
For the foundling's gold, as the forest  
Fires hesitate, tongue tied to find you in his  
Bed- an amber zoetrope your two bodies  
Shoving off, spilling like graffiti into  
An amphitheatre the night the were wolf  
Howled, and your children came out  
Golden skinned echoing from the places that  
Still bare your names.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Night They Don'T Understand

Echoing- echoing, the bones are young  
Filled with yellowed specters, like song birds who saw  
It all  
And were turned away- down from the yellow sun,  
A goddess torn,  
Or other beautiful things that flood in the spring  
In a coitus of joy or forget-me-nots,  
While the grandparents are at church, their oldest daughter  
In a grave at the top of the hill,  
And swing-sets in their arc- while a brown muse  
Curls like burning paper,  
Up to the ashes of the cliff dwellers, who make their songs  
Like water moccasins swimming up into the sky-  
Wings and elbows moving across the stage,  
A garden of lovers lost in a classroom or a supermarket,  
As we made love until her husband called  
Home- the crepuscule of cedar, incense of forgotten parks,  
Lovers led astray from frightened fireworks,  
As my dogs say nothing to the night they don't understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Night Where You Were Mine

Now I will be singing in a rodeo of empty houses:  
And I don't know any other words other than these joyless places-  
The places that we've picked upon themselves  
And the songs that we believe in echo  
The parapets of the cockpits of the shopping malls -  
And the housewives—  
Or I love you, smelling of my mother's magic tricks,  
Or the pornographies of jack rabbits leaping out of the back seats  
Of Volkswagens in the sandpits on the other side of  
The canals—  
And it all seems a brighter realm, made by the vocabularies  
All accumulated together that were made particularly to sense  
The places: you see—I've been to high school too—  
And I otherwise have a sense for the unbounded catastrophes,  
And I've been up and down in some realms—  
That either happened real or imaginary—  
And maybe the girl I once loved with eventually come down  
To see me in the snow-white estuaries—  
Brown skipped—veluptous—looking out of the folds of the  
Blanket—Gladdened with her eyes as bright as  
Ferris Wheels and her skin as brown as the lactates of honeys—  
That this is her world too—and I am her world too—  
And we are just coming up, like water rising over the benchmarks—  
And I love you now, even as I see your echo receding—  
And the brilliant sun—and the memory of the places  
That no one remembers—  
The parked cars and the silent airplanes—and the jasmine—  
Blooming in the moment of the night where you were mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nightmares Of Their Shuddering Metamorphosis

Bilious and immature,  
The fire lives for a second on the spot-  
Flames, at times rotund,  
Struggle lithely, starving beneath the coital belies of  
The airplanes- silver amphibians there:  
Nubile women learning to fly:

They leap over the second's life,  
Celebrating the careers of freedom, not bothered  
By words they do not know-  
Sommeliers of nocturnal oxygens- maidens  
Who once slumbered in the balmy dews with the  
Foxes in the grasses underneath of the boughs of  
A presupposed orchard-

Hollowed bones, feathered, discarding the entrapments  
Of chain-mail,  
And the battlements of stone- the electronic fortresses  
That hunt them in the night,  
And the kings who are haunted by the nightmares of  
Their shuddering metamorphosis.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nights In The Airplanes

As fine as the memories of those windows:  
Glad expressions of personified houses  
Making eyes with the alligators perpetually lounging  
In the backyard dredged of their domain:  
And when they have a reason to feel her, in the rain  
Storm,  
Before her husband or children come home—  
She waits beating inside of them like a heart that  
Moves around according to her chores  
And drinks from a tiny village of crystal glasses—  
Hypnotized though erect,  
So to her each raindropp has a voice she cannot understand—  
Listening to the sky falling into the earth,  
Like a sorority into a football game—drowning out  
What is left of her soap-operas—the house a glowing  
Giant because she is somewhere off inside of him—  
Like a habitat made for her,  
The alligator looking across the moats and up into her  
Seclusion—not a thought in her mind—  
While the knights in the airplanes quest for her  
Forlornly from the sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Nighttime Wildlife

They made a massacre underneath the sun—maybe they  
Were just playing with themselves—  
While, in the tomorrow, the sun would jump up yelping and  
Asking for help  
Even though there was nothing left that was owed to  
Him—  
And then the moon would rise, hoping to steal the gossip  
From the ropes of your business,  
As the tears dried off the hurricane,  
And the silver foxes settled down underneath whatever mountains  
Where they were, until the most  
Beautiful of the nighttime wildlife cried out from under neath  
The parapets of its cathedrals that was  
Then all that there was—  
And whenever the moon came out it dried the eyes of the foxes,  
And then settled down in the amphitheaters  
That pretended to gossip over whatever it was that wasn't even  
There.

Robert Rorabeck

# The No Particular Disaster

Fall into the games of dead men,  
The no particular disaster.  
I had never before been out  
In this late of an afternoon,  
And I shouldn't....  
For they are making love in the barn,  
Just painted and yet coagulated,  
And the rattlesnakes are catching,  
In their venomous solar diamonds,  
The last of the drowsy sky  
Where the ghost ships begin to creak,  
Loud and unafraid  
Their men taunting me worse  
Than they have ever done before:  
They are playing the games of  
A kindergarten, stretching out the hours,  
Throwing back the rum they cannot taste,  
And tossing the weighted bones....  
The cats are yet still sleeping in the  
Lengthening shallow places of  
Convenient shadows, and they will  
Wake up again, nice and clean,  
As the lovers step out of the red barn  
Smelling just like the others....  
But they will not have to say a thing,  
As the gray felines step between them,  
Swishing their tails.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nocturnal Animal

The nocturnal animal who feels alright to move  
Into the middle of nowhere,  
Underneath the bridge, the canal the cradle  
For the lost bicycle—  
As words ship out for other loves,  
As I think about drinking again—Florida rum  
In the sunlight of this new cold front—  
My pregnant wife wants to sleep,  
Like a fairy in the forest—  
As I dream of a muse that doesn't exist—  
My emotions becoming lost  
In the cantankerous graveyards that look like  
The rest of my relatives—  
Until the simple thoughts beckon and all at once  
Nothing has to be given or taken anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nocturnal Aphrodisiac

In prisms that happen outside of  
School,  
The fish swim upwards to look at knights—  
Boys on quests with fireworks,  
Waving their banners  
And their swords—  
Making friends with hypochondriacs  
Who wave at them from their uneven windows—  
Say now that they are uncertain if they are  
Even alive—each of their televisions  
Their motivations sanctuaries and wishing well—  
Maybe after dark they will come and see  
You after work—your lips to quaff, your love  
To strive—for you are  
The nocturnal aphrodisiac of their nocturnal  
Heroics when they should be home counting  
Sheep and dreaming of lesser girls  
And marrying them through Christmases and holidays  
Of lives of lesser weeks.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nocturnal Curtain

Now I am here—where are you—slow shoulders  
In my space  
While the lawn is growing, and I am exhumed  
Twilight: twilight,  
The dresses of the housewives are changing—  
Their bread is done baking—  
They have dawned their diamonds, their silhouettes  
Reflected in the pools seem too  
Of muses,  
As we travel across the yards, their greens dimming  
In the ballrooms of crepuscule,  
As all of the characters are figured out  
And the nocturnal curtain descends.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nocturnal Habitats Of An Insincere Moon

Words, words: you pile up like colors,  
Like excrement on the floor of kindergarten,  
And I can still remember my dirt roads that I  
Disbelieved in,  
And I saw kidnappers, and I had so many fireworks,  
But the truth is that I only desire the kiss from  
One set of lips,  
And she is away from me, even though we made love:  
And she is sleeping in another man's bed,  
And she remembers her honeymoon even though they  
Weren't legally married,  
And now that the day has come to this,  
I can say that I don't see the yards anymore or their colors:  
It all seems like the closing curtains of Alma's eyes  
Have run over me,  
And we sat together yesterday in the restaurant and I felt  
Her legs like the crisscrosses of smooth rivers,  
Like the foundations of romantic planets that are still too  
Close to the sun to breathe upon:  
And now this, like riding a unicorn or a Pegasus, something that  
Is sincerely impossible and shouldn't  
Be spoken of:  
All of the best leaders are dead anyways, and their cenotaphs  
Whistle like construction workers:  
And now this:  
The feeling that her womb was sometimes warmly baking on  
My bed,  
And that I planted the recipe in her deltas but it never came  
To fruition,  
And now all that I have is my bicycle and the paths to move  
Towards her treats that  
Are perpetually encouraging me, like mirages in the misplaced  
Deserts of roses who hold their breath through the  
Nocturnal habitats of an insincere moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nocturnal Summertime Of A Celestial Carrousel

Nothing else is beautiful,  
Because I didn't stop by the liquor store  
And I can't count to high numbers;  
And I've forgotten what I consequently learned  
In college,  
So forgetful even then when the leaves were turning,  
When it took them forever to touch the earth,  
To drip upon their family the syrupy inclinations  
Of that season's incest;  
Grey haired and ringed, a desultory creature of  
These mountains, still in love with his mother,  
You can tell by which way I am coming if you listen  
For the lulling tongues of my dogs.  
Otherwise, I can't even recognize myself anymore,  
When I drive to and from town displacing the air  
Ever so slightly with my inherited wings,  
Listening to the crinkly roar of young mothers all ablaze  
At the supermarket,  
I pick out a movie to slip into tonight, and so the stars  
Begin their celestial alignments like beautiful teenage  
Dancers courting too far above my head to smell,  
To even begin to suggest upon their prophecies;  
Yet, senselessly they perfume me,  
And yet so very high up they turn perfectly contented in  
Their airless bedrooms;  
I imagine their flairs crying for what boys they love,  
Even their earliest light anciently shed,  
So that if I might look upon their bright camouflage,  
Like a nest of fire-lit muses insighted, I could only make  
Up names for them, and they wouldn't come when  
I called, but they are all just as beautiful  
As if I lived at home with them,  
An their names seem to echo around the earth, basking  
The spiritual pugilisms of atheists and the more devoted vertebrae  
In the nocturnal summertime of a celestial carrousel.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nocturnal Things

Plagiarism in your hands is not love—  
It is a simulacrum underneath the French mountains  
That will never metamorphose  
Fooled by a cat or a fox that you are coming home,  
And slipped inebriate with the daisies underneath the  
Windowsill—  
Drawing the lines it knows how to draw:  
As you sway like a wave escaped from the sea—  
Sauntering atop the bricks in a buxomly censure with  
You pretty boy lieutenant made of bayonets—  
He entertains you with the drills,  
As the girls leap in the sky—flying in airplanes of  
Leaping candles—and the nocturnal things melt with  
My wishes into the earth.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Noises With Their Rooms

As softly as the children sleeping on their lancesâ€&quot;  
At last in a childish bivouac of kindergartenâ€&quot;  
They leave these spaces weâ€™ve invadedâ€&quot;  
They sift into the heavensâ€&quot;  
They are whatever elements weâ€™ve forgotten, lasting  
Above the cypressâ€&quot;  
Beautifying in their trauanciesâ€&quot;;they languish as they are divided:  
The same as a moat in the tiniest of living roomsâ€&quot;  
They are the silvering candles of a firework in their recesses:  
And I have appreciated them all of the afternoon:  
I have mooned over them  
In their ethereal gardenâ€&quot;;as the stars they have bloomed,  
Opening their eyes from their long recessesâ€&quot;  
And filling up the noises with their rooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Noon Tipped Sea

I am here mouthing off to the fish who always move:  
The thunder is sounding, the traffic is muted:  
I am warmed into my home, while Alma's pony-tails  
And miniskirts are off a ways and sleep,  
Like the spindling iron pyrites of Ferris wheels who don't  
Even believe in themselves:  
And then they arrive straight out of the jungles of  
Car ports and trailer parks:  
And when we have children the first thing they learn is  
To light off fireworks,  
And we watch those things that we don't even know how  
They were made bursting above us:  
And I love you, Alma, and I talked with your aunt today:  
Your godmother; she's lost thirty pounds since  
Her man Romiro left her to f\$ck his cousin in guerrero  
Mexico,  
And now it seems like the planets still exist, and I will be going  
Back to work with you again tomorrow, or Friday,  
And your young sister Yvette will be coming to work for  
The fin de Semanas on Saturday:  
And I love you, but the trouble is I cannot spell, and yet my  
Soul is still filled with the faux and disbelieving dramas of Hollywood  
Which I guess infect all of our souls while we are young and  
Growing up and latchkeys on the prenatal field in the baseball game  
Of whatever these stars believe, as we go blistering, naked-hearted  
Or feet bared like milking kittens, the curtains and furniture  
Spread like an autopsy of a really beautiful forest;  
And then there will be a parade, and we will go out beyond our screened in  
Doors and have to blasphemy the heavens that cost us our whole  
Heavens as the egrets rise up like green emeralds,  
And we buy a cradle as bright as the noon-tipped sea;  
And I say I love you; and yes, yes I do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Noontimes Of Their Tomorrows

Imperfection,  
And then songs over the Christmases of  
Rooftops:  
Trying to look beautiful if you can,  
While another day laments,  
And the bums cough tears underneath  
The overpass  
Into a can,  
As the unicorns dissolve,  
As our currency decreases-  
As the beasts make love far beneath  
The roses  
Of roses:  
So far down,  
Making the hummingbirds angels, while  
All of their songs tend to dissolve:  
Like the apertures of noontime- as your sisters  
Count their own scars,  
And you continue building your pyres to  
Worship your landmines:  
As the pictures dissolve in the most tender  
Ways possible,  
And then the sky floats across the sea,  
Trying to light all of the open mouths of all of  
The noontimes of their tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nude Elements Of The Lamenting Plain

Crippled deities condoned to flame,  
Burning upwards is their game- this midway about them  
Gets busy, teasing prizes-  
And the panoply of lights gardening ride in their  
Irises;  
It becomes a noisy beauty toyed with until overused-  
Trashed, it is quieted- as the tourists leave out in the night:  
They will go with one another, holding hands  
Until they disappear all together;  
And there I will remain, wishing I was one of them,  
Until the carnival that was once all around me  
Is packed up into another rain  
The teasing mechanisms folded like sheets- the simulacrums  
Of its amusements of love's overused pedaling  
Eagerly quieted- abandoning all that I believed to the nude elements  
On the lamenting plain  
While the angels metamorphose into husbands of modest  
Households, stealing away their housewives  
And joining to the sky again-  
Like the very airplanes which they find so richly amusing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nudity Of A Drowsy Opulence

Crowns in the passionate grass, kindling lost love  
Letters to the paper airplanes  
Who no longer have any unction to fly away:  
They just look up at her skirts as she resurrections,  
As she crowns:  
Grapes on the vines of consumptive professors, and other  
Words than these, curling up their unmolested shoulders:  
Hooded, poisonous,  
And they will go around campus sucking their thumbs,  
Remembering and petulant on the bruises,  
While the prettier girls will stay out all night, serving their  
Drinks across from the Catholic church and having their  
Fancies until the ghosts and the orchards grow fat;  
And the forts next to the sea pregnant with moonlight  
Fill out.  
And it all becomes desirably surreal, the beaches peppered with  
Tortoises making their abodes for the night in the sandy hotels  
That will become transformed and be speckled with their  
Love,  
Which the gulls so love, turning gyres and sad, lousy tricks:  
Getting down to the anemones, and basking in the nudity of  
A drowsy opulence.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Number That They Will Give To The New Heavens

This is the number that they will give to the  
New heavens:  
After they find out she is in the middle of child birth  
Or she is dying at the same time:  
Mother a black hole: mother of  
The Bible—  
And race-horses—Won't you watch us put  
Garland around the tree—Won't you give us time  
To figure out what you are still doing here—  
And I cannot call her,  
Even while she is above my head wearing a crown  
Of racehorses—  
And I cannot figure out those devils,  
Though I will be going back to school tomorrow,  
And filling up my vertebrae with the bric-a-brac of  
Abandoned carriages:  
And it doesn't feel alright, and yet it all comes smoothly:  
The sound and smell of distant traffic-  
And the metamorphosis of my child living inside of  
Her mother's womb—On the other side of the world:  
Tomorrow, she will be taking a twenty hour train  
Ride towards a place I am too afraid to spell—  
And today my child is almost a grape—and yesterday  
A fish—tomorrow a cheerleader and then  
A real woman—not a puppet, nor a wet dream—  
Something that caves into diamonds,  
Something that can ride horses and read a book—  
And can be seen silhouetted into the sea of far too many  
Ways, echoing and waving—  
For sure that she is delighted to be alive in a mirage  
Of a circus of migratory butterflies,  
Because tomorrow there won't be anyone else—  
And you can kiss me on the cheek in the sidelines of  
Far too many ways—  
Remembering that once I loved you, and once you did  
The same—and for now  
We can only remember, as new mirages arrive on  
The surface, beating their phantoms of hearts,  
And building to crescendos

In the hearts of lotus that bloom in the shallow waters  
That lie not so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Numbers Of Aspens

In the numbers of aspens,  
Airplanes singing, I have my wife—I have my wife,  
And now my child—  
Rainbows stutter towards the kaleidoscopes of  
Brick-a-brack of the homeless unicorns:  
It was supposed to be a baseball game,  
In all weathers, but especially on valentines—  
And then the windows stuttered,  
And even the luckiest of the gold fish caught a cold—  
And it turned out to be all some kind of make-believe—  
And the weathers surrendered to their favorite  
Stewardesses—  
And other words that cannot be repeat because  
It just so happens they didn't survive.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Nurseries In The Afternoons

Wishes in the daylight as the wounds of ourselves  
Spill over,  
And coagulated with the nurseries in the afternoons  
Where my love for you disappears,  
And I find myself alone reciprocating to the echoes  
Of the vineyards far away from the mountains  
And no longer busied by Christmas:  
Just my pitiful art, held to the moonlight in the shallows  
And tied by a bouquet of eels:  
While your passion finds another chariot to ride upon:  
Up and up again, past the stalagmites  
And the industrious mines where all of the cherished  
Knights are buried:  
So, eventually, the mountain gets emptied,  
And the dragons, in clusters, consume the fires of heaven  
And other pretty verbs that used to be tied up in  
Translucent or indigo ribbons in your hair-  
As the elephants wander aimlessly, as the airplanes leap into  
Air.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Nursery Rhyme To Which He Was Over And Done With

I have no more reason to live that isn't  
Alliterative and done out,  
Already remembered and ejaculated on some  
Green space in my mind,  
Spilling out like a butchered cow tongue  
All the girls who didn't deserve  
The cheap bouquets I've thrust to them,  
Like cutting their throats and stuffing them full  
Of busy incense:  
And how the worker bees are busy making honey  
From such wasted and nonsensical declivities.  
Luckily, most of that sorority didn't know how  
I pined from them from wetted graveyards while  
They made love to their firefighters and mayhem,  
Or they didn't care,  
And are amusing themselves with my uncle  
In a collage of speed boats;  
And it has been a long time since I've received  
The praises of shop class, or watched her spinning  
Amputated in hospitals,  
And it keeps going around like this until I am too  
Dizzy not to feel beautiful,  
But then I always have to take time to think,  
To stop the swing, and remember where I buried the  
Pornographies in the roots of palmettos;  
I have to hate myself and try to not remember why it  
Is she isn't calling but once every six months,  
To appease myself by propositioning the homeless dwarfs,  
What I am becoming,  
The silent absence on the pages of a useless harem,  
That great leggy sorority done hyperventilating and kicking  
Their skirts up for me,  
Done spinning their frilly parasols on the lacquered stage, and  
Gone to bed with more genteel members of our species,  
Time for me to be alone and to look out for fires  
Atop of mountains, like Jack was doing before his usual suicide,  
While the candle was burning still awaiting the

Nursery rhyme to which he was over and done with.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Obscure Blindness's

Lost in the deep symbols of the deep  
Vermillion deep,  
But diving again, diving forever wishing  
For the jewelry chests of her  
Heart:  
There are sirens and chases around her:  
Little boys are playing dark games even  
Though they cannot swim-  
I feel awful when I disturb them; yet I  
Go beneath the lion fish,  
And through the spokes of bicycles  
In a lucid dance of scribbles, knowing  
That she grows her gardens in the obscure  
Blindness's of these depths.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ocean Between The Moon And The Earth

Lost underneath the heavens,  
Or into the strange palmettos of witches,  
But it doesn't have to last forever:  
The tomb will be reawakened,  
And all of the best part of the country will  
Come alive in a cavalier memory-  
Of that brilliant sport-  
And what a song, spume of the throat,  
And in her eyes a carnival  
Never published- words sacrificed to the  
Surreal in fieldtrips of  
Carnivals already abandoned in the palmettos  
And cypress  
After there was a fire,  
And the rattlesnakes kiss the citrus canker-  
And the school busses circle the stars  
A long ways off as an asteroid  
The size of a battleship passed through  
The ocean between the moon and the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Oceans Beating Their Hearts

Anything that means anything  
To me  
Is a sadness- and, yes, the serpent  
Echoes  
Up in the apple tree, telling truths  
I took for sadness:  
While in the airplanes pass  
They roar  
Like lions of sadness who are also  
Personified:  
Coming down, doing jumping jacks  
Like fireworks dying  
In the cloud banks, showing off  
Some lights  
And some heel- but going down:  
Magnifying everything that appears at sea  
Level  
And the oceans beating their hearts  
And say so many things that we are never  
Meant to hear.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Official Stamps Of Her Loveliest World

Twisted up in the cold studios of jellyfish,  
Tied into knots for Alma not even able to read full length books,  
Just buying cartoons for Heidi,  
And picturing her and her mother in Pieta on the swings  
In a living-joy sort of world whose colors just get  
Brighter and brighter  
Where luxurious museums loom with trumpets and the grass gets  
Tipsy and bows,  
And everything gets its turn of pressing its mouths to Alma's  
Flesh,  
And me begging especially that she should bare the official stamps  
Of her loveliest world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Oil Rig's Birthday

Virulent glade, open for me- and wear  
Your green stars about your wrist: Smile summertime,  
And swing your hips,  
Knowing I will never succeed:  
I am just counting coup in a field of atomic sport-  
I'm using a dead art to fight the new angelic fireworks;  
I'm leaning back and closing my eyes into the  
Siamese headed lion  
With all the chlorinated kindergarteners sticking  
Tiny fists into their mouths, not knowing if I should succeed:  
I've put my keys on the as\$ of a kite and sent it  
Sailing in all sorts of your domestic weathers,  
Waiting for you to slash my hopes, to send me popping  
All over the mercy seat and then the bag:  
I am doing all of this like a legless ballerina out in a somnolent  
Parade in Saint Augustine, not even knowing she'll never  
Be picked,  
Not even knowing her mother is lying even now under the  
Just transplanted rose bushes;  
And the conquistadors proceed like zinc and copper cenotaphs,  
And the priests sell candles for two cents,  
And it is the oil-rig's birthday just bathing there like a stilted  
Butterfly house;  
I sell ice-cream and hotdogs to stave off the impenitent dreams-  
When I once thought she would emerge freshly brindled from  
The sea- But she doesn't come-  
I once saw her drive by very fast in a new car with her man,  
But she never looked my way;  
And the windmills turn, all sorts of them, smiling like Queen  
Anne- the royalty who know but never speak your name.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Old Man's Dream Tower

Our dreams come from  
The glass tower  
Sparkling for ships.  
There is an old man  
Who lives there  
Who has crystal spindles  
For hips.  
As we nod, it is his job  
To refract the light of  
The teaming in the sea:  
The hungry cuttings and leaping  
Of waves and slapping wind  
And silver shingled fish,  
To bend the movement  
Through our open windows  
All sailing in a front  
Blown off  
The Residential Coast.

There he spots us like passengers  
In a jigsaw airplane unarranged  
Through the clouds,  
Like floating candles creating the  
Monsoons of smoke.  
The bulbous deluge of roofs  
In rearranging constellation housing  
Dark blue  
Mumbling fools....

Then the light shimmies  
Through the tower,  
Tinkling like glasses pressed to lips  
At meal time,  
And crosses through his hips.  
Leaping a full color spectrum,  
It knocks down our  
Front doors  
And blows the cat  
From its perch in the kitchen.

Running into our bedroom,  
It jumps into bed with us,  
Right into us  
And tells us in secrets rushing  
The tales of our doppelganging  
Shadows  
Who shoplift all day  
Like uneducated,  
Forgetful truants  
In lazy strip malls  
Far beneath the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Old Playgrounds

While Dracula was whispering,  
I jerked off:  
I skirted Miami and looked into her trailer,  
I worked for my parents,  
And I jerked off:  
Later on,  
Maybe I went to Disney World,  
Maybe I was a knight who just didn't care—  
Maybe I made love to myself,  
Over and over, repeatedly  
Just so later, I could make my Asian wife  
Pee in her pants—  
And I gave her orgasms like ant farms,  
Like new ways of behaving to the battlements of  
Baseball games—  
While all of the midnight's origami was coming  
Apart like the accoutrements to the wings  
Of a paper airplane—  
Until it was settled and  
All of the nation was divided—well, here  
I was, and here I am anyways—  
Waking vampires like daisies beside the road of narcolepsies,  
Calling up the fancies of the routes of bygone days,  
And the housewives hum  
And then remember what was lost to them inside the  
Inebriations of their own telltale shadows—  
Falling in love with the delusions of madmen  
While I become the prettiest delusion of my own species:  
While I remain on the rack for a long while—  
Whatever the time keeps for itself—  
The old memories cast their dice over  
The playgrounds that don't exist here anymore anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Oldest Cities Of This World

Not far from my eyes  
In a jungle of grey and silver gold,  
Where the conquistadors once fought for  
Your mother,  
And the airplanes got stuck like tattle-tales  
Up in the trees;  
And the most beautiful place was the capitol  
Where all of the ineligible women lived  
In a hypothetical university where they  
Studied heart-throbs—  
And it was here that the shadows panhandled them  
While my pregnant wife breathed heavily from  
Our bedroom: here was where the muses  
That could not handle it  
Laid themselves—across the habit of that  
Campus, just a fever-dream too old now  
To even complete their degree—  
Their eyes fawning drunkenly, perceive  
The habitats I imagine, taking homes in the  
Half-gloves of the sleeping habitats in the oldest  
Cities of the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Oldest Of His Species

In this nostalgic  
Penumbra  
I eat my lunch  
Like a sad  
Fish  
Wondering  
Why everything moves  
Away  
From high school,  
Forgetting that  
Such places were  
Not always  
So beautiful  
Or that the devil  
That walked  
In your  
Legs  
Still echoes in  
The sad and  
Warm  
Places  
My mind yet  
Swims  
Looking back  
Like one of  
The oldest of  
His species  
Yet still  
Alive  
And you are  
There remaining  
In the lake  
Of my  
Breast,  
An  
Orchid  
Obscured by  
Yesterday's  
Tears

That somehow  
Remains alive,  
Coursing like  
Minnows through me,  
Schooling in  
My throat,  
Giving dark vows  
Like the inner shadows  
Of bells that never ring  
Nor come true for  
The oldest of his  
Species.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Once Brave Men

Groomed as if to be a pilot, and then lying there  
Reclining as if triaged in the half light of a living room-  
An astronaut who never got even higher than the arboretum  
Of apple trees:  
Not even quite high enough to see the goblins and the  
Dragon approaching- and then to go down  
From there, helped by the  
Mexicans and their sad dreams and strong liquor-  
Wayward like the naked changing rooms in an autumn  
Falling down from the world- while everything else moving  
Onwards only multiplying the complexity of the universe-  
Fireworks resembling her features in the sky  
The tourists frolic towards in their mobile cities,  
While the insatiable mountain lion drags off the last of  
The once brave men.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Once Fair Grounds

Glass cooling into the daydreams of class:  
All of his eyes running across the desks with the elk  
And the rain deer:  
Afraid to look at the beautiful women, the grounded substitutes:  
The housewives taking time off  
From attending to super exaggerated trailer parks  
Until evening looms,  
Marooning baseball diamonds,  
Making witches fluster on their brooms- returning to the daycares  
Of the tiny cul-de-sacs of forests:  
And the feral girls living there for awhile growing lustrous horns,  
Returning to the rabbits who feast with them  
On the endives and scuppernongs underground:  
Until they too finally have to forget themselves  
And travel up the stone rivers to colleges and universities:  
And the other cemeteries of the once fair grounds.

Robert Rorabeck



# The One Or Two Beautiful Places

Oh, THE one or two beautiful  
Places see, to be shot out  
Never mindful of the hemisphere or anything else  
We had to believe in:  
This is us all and us all right here:  
It isn't the prettiest of all resolutions,  
But this is how it always happened,  
Her children starving out in the middle of a park  
Inside of her echinopsis—and, anyways,  
This is just how we imagined that you  
Would have to starve out inside  
The playboy centerfolds of anyways and just  
Because—  
The beautiful monuments  
And the homes that were once inside the  
Otherwise wayward realms that otherwise  
Could not believe in the waywardly bedrooms  
And monuments that other wise tried to  
Believe otherly and just because.

Robert Rorabeck

# The One Who Got Away

Oh well, the day wakes up so fast.  
All of a sudden the ten grizzly bears run off  
From where they'd been nuzzling my meats:  
I think they suspected that if they cracked me open,  
Like a comb they'd find some honey;  
And with them the shadows waken up, black eyed,  
At first lengthen but then thoroughly retreat,  
Around noon  
And the raccoon sleeps with my eyes in the wheel wells  
Of our slick machines,  
The day gets healthier and young wives have  
Adulterous picnics,  
And kindergarteners start off in their own woods to  
Turn into the stymied or clever animals of  
Fables;  
And I have a favor to ask: and I am biting my lip,  
But you are always so busy talking, or masticating with  
Your venerable creatures of the forest,  
That I have a hard time disturbing you,  
Tapping you on your shoulder, or to razzle-dazzle  
You with spikenard;  
So instead I do this: I do this while all the prized  
Angels are taken down from the top shelves  
Even as the carnival moves away,  
And the beautiful creatures and sleuthy forests  
Somehow get on down to another eager city,  
All things moving on at a steady clip  
As I wait right behind you in class, waiting for you  
To turn and acknowledge,  
Or just to shift your weight so I might get one more  
Glance at the one who got away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The One Who Is Falling Apart (Censored)

Come to the new land of vibrant filament,  
Like phosphorescent moss on the underside of the hazel planet  
In the wet spots where caterpillars best transform,  
Where the angels are talking at the end of their chords;  
The milkmaids are marching in the pollinated valley,  
Where the gray generals are waiting in the wooden chairs  
For their haircuts;  
All the medals are sparkling like half-blind sunbursts,  
The little epileptic ruptures slur speech like wine;

Under the boxcar shadows, the infants are sleeping in the cool trestles,  
Next to the soldiers' patiently blue boots,  
Swished and fed by the calicos come down the steep slope;  
The patient cats who bat at pu\*sy-willows,  
And assemble the lunar milk with their spiked tongues;

Down in the wishing pools at the end of the lazy fires,  
Past the toppled apple-crates and the one-eyed maiden's tears;  
There in the cul-de-sac of torpid paladins,  
Where the boys have fallen asleep in the deciduous trees forgetting  
Their journey of the scattered kites;

I have to tell you a story of a wooden boy who sold his leg,  
To find a ticket for the leprous girl to cross the sea;  
Here he is waiting in the green tent for the bugle to echo the c\*ck's  
harbingering;  
Then he will come out like a man of assembled metal,  
And stand at the attention to the gray officers' perusing;

Underneath their shining boots, in a world of muted solace,  
The felines are feeding the forgotten orphans in the cool trestles;  
And the milk maids are marching in a short-skirted séance;  
And the wooden boy is nervous, because he knows and loves  
The one who is falling all apart....

Robert Rorabeck

# The One You Were Meant To Be With

Joy to the French girls I have  
Never seen-  
The ones Rimbaud never kissed-  
Because, I am intoxicated-  
And feeling the joy of serpents  
Who on their bellies spin the  
Earth,  
And my art takes the shape  
Of a werewolf  
Barefooted on a lycanthropic  
Honeymoon  
Strangers keep disturbing-  
A blind werewolf with  
Blue marbles for eyes  
Who is growing a gut  
In the immaculate darkness  
In a cathedral of vanished pilots  
Who tried to disseminated this  
Religion and dissapeared  
While you stay in bed all  
Winter  
And your mother washes so  
Many dishes- she becomes  
A poltergeist staring across the  
Canal- and the world of  
Your first love dissapears-  
And tben the next  
And so on  
Until the one you were  
Meant to be with comes to  
Stay.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ones Who Shouldn'T Have To Die

Patience for movies escapes me.  
Lightning in a traffic of blue sky and I'm  
In a mobile home waiting for the  
Caravans of my father and his Mexicans,  
Regretting what I've done to myself,  
What I've said to myself while looking away  
From the mirror,  
Frightened of hideous fairytales- The new years  
Celebrations of candles and grapes,  
Like empty vines scarred from fire without her  
Bosom;  
And the shallowly glorious lakes she has never drunken  
From,  
But they seem to come to her, my father and his  
Mexicans,  
The clichéd airplanes like heavy song birds touching down,  
While I hold my careworn leonine face in a crèche of  
Oily fingers-  
The same teachers are here, the same buzzards in a gossiping  
Cone of sky,  
Their gods sitting back and relaxing, enjoying the moment,  
Knowing that out of all of us  
They are the ones who shouldn't have to die.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ones Who Survive Over Me

Going down into the ditch Indian style:  
A hero of the first or second war;  
A halo no one will see tonight as I lay immaculate  
On my bed by and by with my dogs,  
What a perfect purple hearted saint, or suicide  
Machine-gunner: It gets pedantic, the staccato tap of  
My stunted vocabulary, my rubber bullets  
Just bruise her chest, trying to get at her heart:  
Insignificant wounds, ineffective bee stings she kills  
Away with a shot of any kind, and she's good to go:  
She's made it all the way to the runway:  
She's taking off directly in the sun, and impossible  
To see to comprehend how beautiful she is:  
And my body and soul is derivative of the homeless man,  
Going down in a clutch of weeds. The one the sorority of  
Poisonous snakes licks the ears of, gives kisses to the  
Lobes, and then crawls away by the crack of dawn  
Their mother-of-pearl bellies showing; or I can see them leaping over so  
Many ditches, irrigations and subjunctive easements good  
For nimble legged truancies hand in hand in musicals starring  
Boys better looking than me, or with sugar-daddies with  
Better money: high-heeled, the four-legged kind of thief,  
And I've fallen off the wall she told me she would be  
Waiting for me there; and I'm all messed up and the  
Knights came, but I still hadn't a prayer-  
So there she goes leaping, a ship out to sea while I'm  
Some kind of hero, heartache yet un translated down at the  
Curb where the housewives come home at different times very  
Near one another with paper bags filled to  
The brim with dinner, pressing corrugated cans to their  
Nippled breasts with cantaloupes and dry good to feed the  
Lips of the ones who survive over me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Creatures Who Only Seem To Really Be

Parasols that aren't even real, carousals of chalk  
Madams;  
And I can't even save my sister. My tongue is dry and  
Stuck like a bat to the roof of my mouth;  
And nothing moves and it is just like silk dressing  
Rooms left vacant through the shallows;  
And at night I dream of girls I should never dream  
Of:  
Girls who are married: They are all married,  
And their eyes are the sea flowing in and out of  
Incredible bays.  
If any one of them saw me they might love me for tomorrow  
And a day,  
But all of the rest of it would just be my graveyard, just  
As it should always be:  
And the airboats float through the sky while my grandmother  
Is underground;  
And so soon I will be underground, and I've already had  
Enough of all of these stores  
And the brilliant senses mutating in orgies through the sky-  
I just wanted to adopt her children and brush her  
Thigh,  
But she moved on after the first kiss of evening;  
And she is so confused she doesn't even know what to believe,  
And she goes back to him and waits and the shadows surcease;  
They seem to breath as the highway sucks in and waits:  
They are the only creatures who only seem to really be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Echo In The World

The liquor has a new name as she makes love with  
Her husband in one bedroom of a three bedroom house;  
And there is neither applause or moonshine:  
It is raining, and her soul is as quiet as a mouse, and she is the  
Personification of her name  
As she moves her skin across the brown adobe:  
It is the same color, and she has hurt me: hurt me;  
It is the only echo in the world,  
But what is her name.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Only Feeling That I Can Feel

Little children speak to the bird houses near the sea;  
It seems that they have been growing up and up,  
Pantomimes of who they ought to be:  
Little children as soft as the lights who weep inside the  
Houses of toy soldiers while their  
Women are counting sheep;  
But the neighborhood has no need to worry, because all of its  
Property lines are as soft as they can be:  
While at the heart of the neighborhood, down past the tourists  
And so near the sea as to be touching, the fort is just as steady as it  
Can be:  
The fort that has a soul of copper cannons, where I have strolled  
And touched the coquina fleshes of the ancient and prosperous  
World;  
And where I have wished to love girls here that I will never hold,  
But who I have seen like phantoms weightless up and  
Down the prosperous rows;  
And maybe the way I have been calling them has been selfish and  
Unreal,  
But if it is false, then false is the only feeling that I can feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Gods They Can Understand

Off in a tent  
Just after being married- all the words left  
Her tongue:  
Naked, the trees sparkling outside,  
The sky wandering like shadows through an  
Opulent orchard;  
And she bends like a ripe instrument  
Trying to detect the coming hour  
Of his touch,  
And the children that will swim in her  
Symmetry,  
Counting their nascent chalk games like  
Innocent serpents finding their  
Way into a park  
Where the vultures sing like angels  
Around which the housewives live and change  
Into the same things at dusk,  
After dinner:  
And like mailboxes they are filled with bills  
And love letters-  
While some other fellow's cats prowl the night,  
Swinging their tails through the moats  
Smudging the yards  
And talking to the only gods they can understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Instances That Let Me Live

All the day bullwhips and I drink:  
Super heros who have become too heavy for their  
Britches sink and drink underneath the  
Old homestead's overpasses,  
And I have been trying out without any hope of accomplishment:  
And I wonder what Alma looked like going to high school,  
Except that she never went:  
Alma was pregnant and embarrassed on a bus straight through  
Texas and to the limestone beds of  
Florida even while she was turning sixteen:  
The same age as her younger sister who just had her confirmation  
Across the street from where we used to sell Christmas trees,  
And I've asked Alma to marry me a couple of times,  
And I have bought Alma many things:  
But where is she now, the graveyards sing with their vastly sunken  
Fraternity of entrenched kings:  
But she is here, walking over them with so many legs, like  
A water spider, like an orchid in Monet:  
And she doesn't even know how she awakens the vermilion  
Yards during crepuscule  
And makes them sing: while I am vastly alone, Alma:  
All my nights are alone,  
And the three times that you've been over to my house, they are  
Like a fairytale in which something important is given to a nameless  
Hero,  
Which allows him to defeat the evil things:  
Mute and blind, I call to you from a burial mound that shoots like  
The cataracts of newly resurrected venison,  
For your brown skin walking onto my property turns a mausoleum into  
A fairground:  
Alma, being with you are the only instances that let me live.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only One

I am wounded,  
And I am scarred:  
between classes, I crawl to the  
Ocean,  
But end up with my wants shelled  
Beneath hijacked cars:  
And I hide all day when it rains:  
When it rains I especially love  
You,  
And I want to die, but I don't  
Know the way:  
Oh, if I could only be so talented,  
S-,  
S-,  
The pet and master of this séance,  
Would that I had never meant you,  
Or that you had so haplessly persuaded me upon  
Your bicycle of skeletons:  
You only wanted to love me for so long,  
S-,  
But look what you've done:  
The sea is so far away from me,  
S-,  
And you are married,  
And the monsters have sacked me and brought  
Me beneath your mountain where you  
No longer care about me,  
S-,  
But where they still race cars for fun:  
And I will never forget you,  
S-,  
But the buzzards are like custard guns,  
Especially in the winter where everything  
Flips over weeping,  
Like dragons giving their weaknesses away.  
Why do they do that for you,  
S-?  
It must be because they love you,  
S-, and they want to give you all the gold they've

Been hording,  
And they want to share their magic rings  
With you,  
S-,  
Because at the end of the long journey,  
Don't you know,  
Sharon, that it turns out you are the  
Only one.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only One Still Fresh Enough To Truly Love

Choking and spitting the asparagus and the meat  
Of your better man,  
But not the one who gave you that child,  
Your fireman, your blue anchor who is never sad,  
While I just spread out my words to feed the  
Pigeons: They don't even care anymore, but I think  
It's been a long time since they've  
Enjoyed their feeding,  
Because my heart is severed and well stocked in  
The rolling concession stand driven around by  
The beautiful Columbian named Diana:  
Her no good husband out gallivanting somewhere  
In the airplane wrecked jungles of South America,  
Her other man home all day making love  
To American women and watching game shows:  
I would say that what I have is not a crush but  
And oral fixation,  
But there is my major romantic organ on sale  
Cooling just above the stockyards of ice:  
I wonder what she'll charge me- Maybe more or less  
Than the next guy,  
But it will be my heart she is feeding us,  
The only one still fresh enough to truly love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Other Woman

Pedaling bicycles through the backyards of  
Our graves:  
The sun whipping down against the backsides of  
The slaves:  
The Mexicans cleaning house finally never have to  
Move;  
Medusas sweeping in with the evening news:  
All the short films over the cartoons of latchkeys,  
Breathing beside the languid  
Crocodiles beneath the shivering eaves: The sky roars  
Up for awhile; it flumes like the fountains of  
Alma's brown skin,  
But returns to its quiet, and slicks across the windmills,  
As my mother washes clothes barefooted in  
The disremembered carports, still the only other  
Woman I have ever loved.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Thing I Can Believe

What color is this, unused of by the hinges,  
Bled off the excrement of butterflies: vagabonds of the working class  
Knighthood,  
Reversing through the drives, as the windows crush on waves,  
And never getting anywhere: but bleeding forward through the eaves  
Of emergencies, facsimiles that seem to care:  
Runaway to Colorado, California and more of the letter C's:  
I want to open a fruiteria and open up my wrists  
Underneath the lonely-werewolf traffics that never stop to think of  
Me:  
And you seem to be fireproof: you seem to be spelled so correctly  
And pure:  
And you want to holiday back again into your Mexico, but your husband  
Said no:  
My Alma: you need an operation, even though you look as beautiful  
As the month who birthed you,  
As all of the wise men are traveling just to get a good spot underneath  
The constellations of your crutches:  
Who will make you move watermelons and then swim so far away,  
Back into a holiday of white women who once they fully opened their  
Eyes will be horrendously envious of you:  
And this, my vida, is the only thing I can believe.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Only Thing That Is Different

The night can be telescopic, and my eye got  
Punched;  
I'm waiting for the stores to shut down-  
I'm waiting for the arcades to wind down, for  
The students to pass out from drink,  
To slip into the street with their guitars unstrung,  
To slip into the street and drool in the gutters of  
What dreams they have laid over from  
Highschool-  
Waiting for the cats to trick like coyotes,  
And for the old girlfriend to finally stop pulling out  
Her hair;  
Here, in the golden turnabout where a cop pulled  
Me over a decade ago, I think of you as I thought of  
You a decade ago: Here, across the street from  
The Chinese junks, from the yellow studios and the  
Naturally hairy lesbians nude in the nude pool-  
All that is different is that I have new scars,  
I've switched places- old friends have faded away into  
New families, better words, employed;  
And I'm still off in that night getting drunk my manager,  
Will be leaving soon for Tallahassee to get my degree,  
To fart and light off fireworks for Halloween,  
To sunbathe in the graveyard of segregated confederates,  
Wandering what tricks you would pull that night-  
That night of sleeping bicycles and all my impotent haunts:  
I knew you were calling off work, tasting the hemispheres  
Of your blue fireman, and that was why I was getting drunk;  
And that is why I'll be getting drunk again tonight.  
Because, don't you still live in Gainesville, and aren't  
You still a beautiful auburn girl? Wherever my old girl is,  
I'm sure she still has a bald spot,  
And the only thing that is different is I have new scars,  
And I'm waiting to get drunk.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Thing That Will Ever Lie Buried

It is strange that my old teacher has just  
Left my house,  
And commented congratulating on all the little things  
I have done to spruce up this place for  
Alma:  
That I have bought this house for her and turned it into  
A grotto for our Lady of Guadalupe,  
And I have dreams at night now of a sixteen year old leaving the  
Streets of Guerrero,  
Pregnant with her son Michael, traveling through the bastilles of  
Forests,  
And the deciduous mangroves ululating with fat-winged  
Butterflies and pig-headed conquistadors  
Or in the very least their cenotaphs:  
But this brown girl is in another world, resting her head beside  
The heads of her children on the other side of the highway,  
While I am tucked in between the waves,  
And the airplanes roar like gentlemanly beasts;  
And now I think that I am in a graveyard where I am the only  
Thing that will ever lie buried.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Thing You Had To Pay

Bodies, starting off by themselves, get to know one another  
By interspersing:  
I check on them as I go through my day, like a maudlin canoe  
With over sad eyes:  
I don't even look up when my mother is coming through the door:  
There the clouds lay like young men baptized but really in  
Love with someone else;  
And I never felt what that was like: and maybe you came along  
After it was all done, and the store was closed up:  
Maybe you strolled through the super dark garden we'd been  
Trying to sell all day: maybe you remembered us,  
Maybe we were the only thing you had to pay.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Only Way You Learned To Move

I've been exercising my routine while I've  
Been very lonely: I am that very point that the airplanes  
Are always leaping from.  
Beautiful girls like does, like silver grasshoppers spilling their  
Guts to firemen,  
Filigreed with the razzmatazz of their makeshift gazebos  
After the curtains of the latening evening and the Church are closed,  
And all the houses which I thought I'd want have been  
Sold: My best friend's older sister is having a picnic  
With a wolf who knows karate;  
And where are you but all the way down the belly of the teal embankment,  
Making goo-goo eyes with all of your harborers of the time-honored  
Traditions of reptilian gravity:  
And maybe I've even seen you making love with the conquistadors  
You've exhumed underneath the lightweight pine trees  
While the buses move unsuspecting children in between the shows:  
Maybe I've even seen you making love dressed in the pantomime  
Of a grand egret's draping silhouette,  
But maybe that is the only way you learned to move.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Open Day

The heads of the reindeer were taking off into the sky:  
The airplanes were taking off too;  
Of their own accord and the truants were skipping away  
From school,  
Where all of the parks looked good, and kicked up their  
Heels-  
And the homeless men were eating their uncanned eels  
Underneath the telephone poles pinioned beneath  
The skies-  
Unwrapping the gifts of I don't know why's, while the  
Housewives were in their  
Houses, missing their children- doing the dishes:  
And the backyards slipped down to the alligators grinning:  
And somewhere around there, we were just in love  
And kissing in the same tracks the buses used for returning-  
Home to graveyards and their likeminded plots,  
Past the pastures of forget me not:  
And it took awhile- and it took days- losing myself into  
Unsought pleasure,  
Pressing myself to you underneath the weather;  
And the birds cried hungry from hunting prey-  
The sun sailed in the lighter elements levitating in the open day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Open Wounds Of The Earth

Remembering the places they left us,  
The new and the old chicken wire of the stars—  
A zoetrope tossing over the sides of  
A baseball game I missed you in—  
The entire crowd an animation of skeletons,  
And the road leading away from them growing old—  
Old shadows over the renewing fountains,  
The same birds singing—  
The highways go down on their goddesses,  
Just like the sunlight upon the Earth,  
As the young skeletons turn over in  
Their particular gardens—  
See in the morning the new colors which are  
Arising—  
What plots which are bouquets upon their  
Shoulders,  
And the memories which the yellow buses  
Drive home—  
How many times have I told you I loved you,  
With your head turned away  
Hypnotizing—and in the morning,  
Like selling fireworks,  
Other beautiful heroes disappear upon  
The open wounds of the Earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Opened Throats Of Song Birds

It is always appalling to think up the weathers over  
The far titted fields,  
While the cars filled with tourists make their merry and are  
Always growing up to take on  
Greater retinues: and then there is the sphinx you have to  
Cross before to become the hero,  
And apple orchards asleep with the bees of wisdom:  
Her hand as clean as milk lying outside the roots  
Of some carriage,  
And vampires with the little darlings singing like the open  
Throats of mailboxes all ready for their lovers  
Who are coming with the fall sales of this suburbia's  
Wedding promises,  
Doing way with the promises and the soft light of  
Kitchens, dousing if you will the opened throats of song birds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Operas Of Their Truancies' Jubilant Moods

So cold,  
The wind nibbling at the bones,  
The winter is taking off work from the mountains  
And coming down;  
It doesn't have too far to go,  
And already it can smell the impatient girls all  
Dressed and lit in the well-displayed town;

And I once was at the top of the mountain,  
And I could see all the forest fires burning around me,  
The politicians swearing,  
The tomboys spitting and stealing candy;  
But I was never in any real danger,  
And I would only go out as the sun was coming home,  
And all the cherished cars returning around and around  
To the pies wafting from the warm-mouthed sills;

Nothing was perishing-  
It was beautiful,  
And everything was greenly mowed,  
And even the juveniles were vibrating  
The operas of their truancies' jubilant moods,  
And I could skip off school and go anywhere across  
The canals,  
And dream of girls all alone in the arcs of the  
Swing sets neatly on speckled lakes,  
And parks, and quickly constructed tombs  
Making me an offer;  
Make them smell of meatloaf and oleander,  
Put cottonmouths in their wonderfully fluid means,

But now I sleep in the cot of the aqueduct,  
Down with the disposed who having had everything have  
Since rolled down,  
Heavy nursery rhymes now out of fashion:  
The working girls with broken legs who are useless,  
Flirtations at baseball games no longer cottoned to,  
The housewives whose children have grown off the suckling  
Vacation;



And the banks are fat and sumptuous above our heads,  
Gilded in glass coffins and filled with raven-haired,  
Rose lipped, round breasted savants,  
Refracting gluttonous through the smothered zones,  
And the chainsaws sing, rippling with the brilliant teethed  
Innuendos, down to our wasted grotto,  
Mouths wide open,  
Vilified by the clams,  
Eyes the same but all dumb-  
Bullsh\*t: The senses washed,  
The stores closed-  
Everyone down here who doesn't bother anymore,  
Wears cement shoes,  
Like offerings at the bottom floor of the department store  
Permanently condemned  
With nothing else to give.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Opulent Playgrounds On The Moon

Prayer flags in the tassels and salvos of bad weather:  
And I am the only one in my family that got up high enough to  
Ever have to believe in them:  
Summating the green summit with the yellow background  
Woebegone,  
And somewhere way down there a sommelier selling wine  
And nursing her just born child:  
And then all of the night alone in the hotel masturbating as  
Succulent as honey with scars on my face,  
And the cars telling the hours on the road outside:  
While all through them I just kept doing this, keeping some  
According to myself, and trying to start a fire with the singular  
Vibrations of whatever familiar friction that I knew:  
While Alma had crossed the frontera and settled down,  
Pregnant with Michael, herself safe and warm in the world,  
Her soul surrounded by a wilderness of family that swore to  
Protect her as the wolves smiled at her naked trees;  
Until finally I climbed down from the forbidden heavens, recognizing  
Her- tired off peeping in at the nubile stewardesses behind their  
Flighty transoms always on the move:  
And I loved her, and called her up my throat like blood from a  
Yet vanquishing wound: and maybe she answered and swam to me  
For a little while, but gave up- her immaculate body so tired and brown:  
But she loved me anyways, I guess- back in the old neighborhood  
That she called me to- and played with me and bought me things  
Until I was finally a fireman hung outside, exhausted,  
Letting the kitten climb up its exasperating trees as it tried once more  
To suck the wonderful paps of the opulent playgrounds on the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Orange Groves Where You Lived

What is there to say of your love- you have  
Gone to Palmetto to be with your husband, to see your  
Son-  
And from my life, like mist rising from the campuses  
I used to walk,  
Still dreaming of albino women, and their  
Sick witchcrafts-  
And tonight it rains a sick week before the Forth of  
July;  
You will be all week with him, gone to Ocala as if  
To be with the horses,  
And not listening to my failures of songs about you,  
Like this one, told to an empty church  
In a flooding crepuscule,  
An empty swing set- an open mailbox, as if something  
Half tamed escaped across the canal again  
To be there  
All during school, and even after I get out, sweating off  
My clothes and occupations- to return aboriginal  
And to hunt for you over the smoking sugar  
Canes of my rum,  
And into the orange groves where you lived for so  
Many years after you fled into my country.

Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Orchard In My Mind

Where is the orchard in my mind,  
Following behind the lions—waiting for you after  
Lunch, even after all of your soul  
Has swum over the waters and into the trailer  
Park where your little children have disappeared—  
I ran away from school and fell asleep  
In the middle of a canoe,  
While even all of the oceans were counting wilds—  
And you were gone back to him,  
Recreationally continuing along with your life—  
Shooting angels who meant nothing to you—  
Just to stay free—they fell into the bushes on  
The other side of the road like the twilight of  
Another holiday—  
And your world was young for a while,  
And smoking through the aboriginal pyramids  
Where your grandmother stole roses—but from which  
You left behind in opulent condition—  
Now you live like the Virgin of Guadalupe above  
Disney World—and I keep on loving you like a  
Marionette who has lost all motivation in the grasses:  
Hands gone that once pretended to love him—  
Rabbits and Ferris Wheels and foxes gone—  
As the lamp spilled across the world—and the blind man  
Lapsed into the chassis of pornography,  
Lamenting everything that could not seem to be undone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Orchard Of One Single Orange Tree

Bicycle- bicycle silent as the night  
Going away after Christmas: going underneath  
The house and down to the canal  
To bring its roses to the lips of the patient alligator  
While the sirens sound the cops,  
And boats of homosexuals sink again for  
The holidays of other young boys- as your eyes  
Enclose all of their raptures and perpetuate towards  
Him- into the statuaries of his burning arms  
I suppose they have to fly, as a graveyard lies  
Out underneath me- she seems to be waiting for  
Me like a cemetery, as the swings lay rusting:  
And the old carport which once held all of the promises  
Of your eyes now doesn't even contain the rebar  
The toads used to spore, like princes regurgitating  
The fowl of a thanksgiving feast: and in the back  
Yard after all of the plane crafts have crashed,  
The orchard of one single orange tree lies  
Fading like a fable of unfortunate gold that  
Has long since been swallowed up by the frozen  
Rivers after your husband and all of his unfortunate  
Cousins have fallen into some impassable pass  
And eaten themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Orchards Of Apple Trees

Alone at the billfolds of my dogs,  
At last with the joy of my scars: my loins drooling over  
Another mountain of abandoned cars-  
My mouth an opened jewel in the midday of class,  
Halfway wondering where the swans have  
Swam,  
The moon still visible in her negligee- an open lunch pail,  
And way to believe, or to get out of here,  
Where all of the eyes of the cannibals have been blinking over  
The broken jaws of the stalagmites;  
And I have nothing else to believe in, except you  
Are beautiful, beautiful, Alma:  
In a graveyard  
Except that there is not a single apple left in all the orchards  
That I know- in all of the orchards of apple trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Orchards You Abandoned

Busy visions of a childhood and her ghosts,  
Words that linger in a poor man's clutch, as she looks  
Away perpetually, browns stems quivering over  
Her children, but she is out of leaves and warmth-  
Sexy vision of catastrophe, how you loved my gifts  
Of flea markets for a year, but could not entirely give  
Up your sailors of Mexico, and the pretty cannibalisms  
You put into your bed across the train tracks at night;  
While he still doesn't satisfy you, you are the personification  
Of any soul, but it wouldn't be right to say your name again,  
Not on anyone's birthday- though I will not be waiting  
Anymore like a rabbit in his green hutch or rock garden  
In the little yard I remember bordered by rattlesnakes  
And aloes- Like the urban legends that exist in the  
Highways of gossiping sky: I showed your aunt the hickies  
You gave me as we made love for the year that is over;  
I gave your sisters and more of your cousins fireworks.  
And now I am left counting other butterflies who migrated  
Across the orchards you abandoned, while my mother  
Falls down in some mock Pieta, a wasp or some power  
Cord stinging her foot again with its preschool lavishing,  
As she dries the clothes of my childhood underneath a thunderstorm  
That is already passing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Orgasm Of Battleships

With all points folded to singularity,  
I can end up working at McDonalds,  
And I will still be your love surfing through the  
Dangerous toughs of that dark continent,  
Sniffing out your golden trap which lies in wait  
For other men,  
Professionals of the dark side of the moon,  
Word smiths of the loom of hair-lips and cleft  
Palates:  
I will spit into your snare and have it done myself,  
With sphinx-like hair all over my body,  
With my eyes unblinking shadeless lamps- with my celibate  
Limbs oiled in amber grease and lamb chops,  
I will spill out of the orgasm of battleships,  
Spitting out chunks of heavenly bodies  
And the oysters of a sexual renaissance and trundle  
Toward you through the battlefield of spikenard  
And alabaster terrapin-  
I will misspell dragons and misquote important events,  
But I will catch you there like a fish beating with  
A rabbit's heart,  
Like a wax model fighting for a spell of life,  
While the bullies key my car,  
While the alligators invade the food court,  
And deeper lovers lose their virginity in the wild school  
Bus:  
I will take you for myself and feed you steaming macaroni,  
And make you libertarian,  
And otherwise surreal, and pick up your houses in a saucy  
Hurricane and otherwise try to remember what  
I was going to say in the small talk of a rainstorm  
Some summer day,  
After I'd gallivanted to your home, like a wolf drinking  
Wine with your mother waiting for you to arrive  
To swallow you whole to fill my lupus soul;  
And the only thing true about the whole ordeal is that  
Through all of high school I never got to follow  
You home.





# The Other Absolute Spaces

These things happen here, because I need them to:  
Eking them nightly out of paper, out of stone: while the  
Airplanes and housewives pass just as insouciantly as if they  
Had come over the mundane fireworks of any man's neighborhood;  
And I pass my time bighting my nails and wishing that  
They had turned out more beautiful:  
That they were the girls loving me just as I love them, and thought  
About them all day long struggling their own bodies through the  
Happenings of our abroad surrounding:  
See them up close, thinking on how to describe their naked faces  
That are so beautiful that it is just as well as seeing their  
Everything undressed,  
And talking about their eyes with the bright silence of my eyes,  
And maybe their eyes even smile like happy little children stealing  
Eggs;  
And so now I have a house that I will soon fill up with my cloistered  
Body, as I would have it fill up with hers as well:  
I would give it a drinking fountain should it mean she would come calling  
As if back to the sacred halls of our high school,  
But all I can justly conjure is the echoes that she left, the perfume of  
Her absence lingering through the funneling conduits,  
And all the other absolute spaces that she left me to fill.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Awakening Gifts

Feeble day on the cusp of a dying wing:  
I cry for you as you melt into the trees,  
And I try to figure you out:  
Why I was born in the yellow hypnotism of you  
Dinner table,  
Or why I take an airplane up to see you at  
Eye level,  
And how the sun comes down from you  
Like Ferris wheel losing  
All control- and my dog barks up into you,  
And pants in the sweats of your  
Job,  
And the rattlesnakes, and the kittens-  
And the paper boats who dissembark into you-  
As you go down  
Across the mermaids in their Spanish grottos,  
As my mother does the laundry one more time  
In the carport of the house we don't live  
In anymore-  
As the kidnapped girl falls asleep up in  
The tree behind our house  
She doesn't live in anymore- and you melt  
The sherbet over a knife, or a weeping birthday cake:  
There you go into the shadows,  
Giving us wolves and the other awakening gifts  
Of your stolen light.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Diminutive Christmases

Bicycle lights sashayed by the breeze,  
And I get the feeling that I am never going to  
Make it California:  
The lighthouses are floating in the sea:  
My boys don't survive,  
The windows open the meat of the world,  
And their throats start singing back to me  
The metamorphosis  
Of housewives, the little plagiarisms inside  
The tender classes:  
And all of the streams I've had to skip myself,  
That Alma doesn't know,  
But I found her alone in the store again today,  
And I took her to the bicycles,  
And we decided in the little time that we would  
Have upon which the best  
Turn of the century machines would bring us the  
Best joys:  
And she wouldn't even let me touch her or  
Sleep on the roof of her house:  
And the clouds finally melted, and mice and the ant lions  
With their indescribable games finally went to  
Sleep,  
Leaving their prey to reason about the other diminutive  
Christmases, while she at last found his other brown  
Hand and closed her eyes to my dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Hopeless Planes Of Existence

I am making \$400 dollars a week,  
\$300 of which I have promised to Alma  
Over the phone while sitting in the Chinese restaurant  
Along Southern Blvd, well approaching the  
Lake Worth Lagoon,  
Which made her laugh, and to say that I was crazy;  
But when I pretended to be with another woman,  
She hung up the phone,  
And my neighbor is an antique shop who cut down the  
Hibiscus which shadowed by back wall  
Under which Alma's bicycle is now infinitely sleep,  
Like a fairytale child waiting for her to come and prick  
It awake in the morning:  
And then we will go together across the beautiful road,  
And through the orchards, if we can find any,  
Because I am a lonely boy, and it probably is that I am  
Not real,  
But I have my habitual songs that no one can hear,  
And the mirages in my head the resurrect and undying family:  
And I have once been to Spain, in which I got this  
Blurring tattoo, but that problem is that I have never yet  
Even been to Mexico,  
Alma's brown cradle of salt lick and scorpions,  
Separated from me by the great frontera of murdered banshees,  
And all of the other hopeless planes of existence that I am so  
Happy that she can hardly even remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Side

Spikenard is a beautiful thought,  
As the two year old bottle hit's the lips,  
And maybe this is what I should have been  
Waiting for  
And drinking all along;  
Or maybe I should just remain sober and think of  
You,  
Heaven ensconced egret:  
And now I can hardly fly, and now I don't  
Think I have the right to,  
While the traffic moves, while the traffic flies,  
And I don't have the right to hardly  
Look beautiful,  
While you are the reason why night time creases  
At midnight,  
And the cops finally fall asleep,  
Finally coming into their brides,  
Bowing their ribbons,  
And crossing their fields to get to  
The other side.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Side Of The Canal

Children in their lithographs making oblong  
Rounds,  
Girls young and beautiful and yet stranded like  
Upside down terrapin at the racetrack  
Far a field where I stop out of the way to buy  
My beer-  
This night has been weeping a pittance, and I went  
And saw a movie alone with all my other  
Bachelors;  
Then outside in the play of cold opium tresses;  
And I want to spill myself into her, all those girls  
Whose minds have left their bodies:  
Who have spruced up the place and then left like  
Fair weather to confront secret affairs:  
Gaunt young men who sit behind them in the pews  
On Sunday,  
Whiling the skies away where airplanes are like  
Crucifixes, and visa versa;  
And I can see the lizards that no one else can see;  
So the day is over, and I am waiting again for my parents  
To make love,  
As I too begin to dream of girls and little children who  
Are not real anymore, but so persistently turn their  
Heads to face me from the ice-shaven dunes,  
I have no choice but to sing to them  
While the alligators await for me on the other side of  
The canal, knowing what they do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Side Of The Earth

I do not want to lay down upon you again,  
As if the resin of a petrified cornea, this disgusting  
Sap of my aping ventriloquism,  
Another apocryphal psalm barefoot and asthmatic  
Walking fretfully though across the well-tread  
Path of the earliest explorers who out from their shells  
Bathed in fires and the fertile rime eddying in roots of lime and sea,  
Who call each wave mother as if in a herd of plumed  
Cervix never dazzled by the encroachment of  
Sun through shade, the limpid curtains sacrificed  
To the lips of vaporous angels;  
A monkey with spangled cymbals wishing to emulate  
Those masters for the leavings of their meals,  
Or to encroach upon his fury mug the relaxations of  
Her Siamese mollusks, those insects called lips  
Yet metamorphosed, though when awakening trough  
Up the remnants of unconscious desire- To do this  
For her with my levers, to excavate love through the  
Subtleness of opposable flesh bathed and christened  
From her yawning stems: I am trying to go about this,  
Unpublished and unrecognized, not given a chance to  
Be misunderstood, leaping through rings of anguish for  
Her, mimicking the calls of those insurmountable brothers,  
The very cliffs where the current winds up perplexed though  
Laughing, and there to lay in shivering tidal pools,  
Hurrying to collect the tight and chastised flesh, before the  
Tugging maiden withdraws her curtsey once more, leaving me once  
More to fill my mouth with sand, the dissolutions of those cliffs,  
Trying to expose holistic reason from the brush of her  
Disinterested tresses, as she walks down the aisle of sunset  
To be wed to a far distant man on the other side of the earth.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Other Side Of The Earth'

Accumulating in the wretchedness of their petrification,  
Stoned in Riga mortis: how will these corpses now enjoy the vacantly  
Pleasurable shelters of the structures they deserved  
To hold mortgages on: while all of the fireworks shout like  
Football players stoutly in the jubilee of mud pies in an  
Away game across the centuries of tattoos and bruised  
Cheek bones:  
As if at night there was a fair ground high across the cross saddles  
Of a truly believable high ground where the countries could have  
Fought each other forever: and the night could have glowed with  
The petulance of farm boys  
Who had discovered kerosene and masturbation; and taking the  
Tractors of the adults, driven into town to buy whiskey, laughing  
At the stuck out spokes of the bicycles of a world underneath them:  
And laughing just to swallow the rain believing it was her tears  
For them,  
While the animals were so infatuated they moved back into her  
Forest even while the ambers curses:  
For they were so in love, and they learned her language, and curled  
About the fairytales of her maypoles wrapped in the butterflies and  
Rainbows and the candy dropping of the yesterdays of her old  
Skin: even though she'd gone, finding everything they believed they could  
Sell to her useless- taking the forms of the forest and the streams,  
Until she could find a lover who would suite her fancy- and the  
Sun pulled her up by the throat and promised her the better adventures  
On the other side of the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Team Is Empty

I've been at it all wrong, trying to make out with you  
In the middle of a baseball game your little brother is in:  
That you really love,  
And autumn is in the air and we have misplaced our returning  
Dove;  
But all the earth cracks off itself anyway, everyone is in love:  
Trees are naked and the road is covered,  
My uncle teaches and then you get up every morning and count  
The brushes through your hair:  
Cars sound outside of your open transom, flowing like rivers:  
Going just the way you soon will be going, and then coming  
Home again;  
And I really wanted to be in something mutual, but I went about it  
All wrong; and now the other team is empty  
And I can never find my glove.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Other Way

Over your shoulders fell  
Sunlight  
As you f—cked me over a thousand times,  
Called me while your sisters  
Were in the car:  
Said you couldn't apologize:  
I rode my bicycle and I rode my bicycle and  
I rode my bicycle until I  
Reached the other side of the sea  
And still you did not  
Apologize: when you found out I had  
Finally capsized and got a wife,  
You literally moved north of Disney World:  
You moved into the ripe vestments of  
Those orchards of  
Ocala and Palmetto—but you still owe me  
\$270 for paying to speeding ticket  
As you sped down one day,  
Fleeing your husband to come see me,  
But more likely he was in  
The car with you,  
Kissing your mouth, trying to send his  
Daydreams between all that we had said  
While the hot air balloons escaped  
To the graveyards above the atmospheres  
And the a\$\$hole gods looked the other way.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Otters And Their Mermaids

Bride and groom matchsticks—  
Burning by striking until there are little brush fires  
Underneath the mobiles of penny-ante mountains—  
And they name them,  
As they turn around blazing for a life time—  
The very exact things that fill up trailer parks and  
Apartment buildings and, sometimes, teepees—  
While the beautiful airplanes whisper above them—  
Offering things to the moonless atmosphere—  
Until the people go out shopping again,  
Amassing in the hazards of their amusements,  
Bivouacking in the coliseums that fold up eagerly filled  
With pledges—  
And the blue collared antelope dream of the otters  
And their mermaids, until the day disappears underneath  
A swing set taller than all of the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Outskirts Of Town

A blasphemy upon the walls of a religious  
Bathroom:  
This is what it is, and scarred with dyslexia—  
Devils hanging upside down.  
They are who stole all of your mother's jewelries  
While she was kissing her new bo—just  
On the outskirts of town—  
And when I saw you in the classroom,  
Like upon the far banks of an entirely innocent  
River- In unkempt séances these were born—  
Pets, lactates—and staples of every kind  
Of luscious meat—following you through the hallway  
As airplanes circled in the sky—  
And sometimes you would look up or  
Fall to your knees in pieta—as a yellow butterfly  
Presses like a barrette in your auburn hair—  
But it was only to show your appreciation  
For the heavens' cerulean discharges—  
And then you went on your way back home,  
Or to grandmother's house—  
And back into the world where you could not  
Be appreciated by me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Over Splendid Rose

This is how it happens-  
This rude experiment,  
Bringing over to her my lunches  
While the vultures circle with  
Other plans-Volunteers in a tent of sky;  
Demoralizing in the  
Great blueness of this  
Country  
Where they've been taught  
So much goodness,  
And they have fun making love  
With their eyes  
While the lilies suffer;  
Heat stroke in the asphalt parking lots,  
Hallucinating unprotected and  
No cavernaserai-  
Now who will  
Have the heart to tell  
Them this,  
While the over splendid  
Rose grows out  
From her mother's skull.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Overabundant Earth

Waking up to the echoes and their kings-  
Words that come up to her, making a show with the lunges of  
The sea, to finally recede in the drowned dust bowls  
Of caesuras,  
And all of the horses of mermaids riding in the quicksilver bowl,  
A ballroom of caracoling blue that tries to enamor  
The copper canons up on the terraplane of that old but inexhaustible  
Fort; and the tourists happily up there looking around  
Premeditating Disney World, and soup kitchen sex  
Next door to their relatives come down from  
Michigan honeymooning in road side hotel rooms I once  
Remembered her in; but there she is- gone underneath so many  
Billboards, neither kidnapped or taken against any will:  
Lost in a game of predestined cards- the holidays on her back  
Like wonder lust, and the windmills selling the story  
Of my discarded defeat to each others lips  
As they pull up the water smelling over sweetly of wildflowers  
And road kill from the flesh wounds of the overabundant earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Overeager Sky

Sunshine came, or at least she admitted to the lie:  
If she came, freckled on the long strong  
Tie of a rattlesnake's perplexity:  
All of its aching venom curling up in the pitchfork  
Of a tongue,  
Eagerly lying in the armpits of Satan,  
And trying to form newish verbs from its storming  
Soul,  
Heading around like a windmill- sticking things into  
Her- the old fairgrounds  
Of no one else we have to believe, bartering:  
Getting things in return- like the beautiful fences overgrown  
And spilling with fat scuppernongs of professors who  
Water ski stumbled upon by pubescent runaways:  
Now like the gifts for abusive foxes down in  
The silent pastures-  
Like barefooted bootleggers- and the teal pleasures of the  
forget-me-nots of graveyards:  
They don't have to go so far, just up the soft necks of  
Peninsulas where the other explorers vanished so far before  
Them,  
Taking turns disappearing under the loosely constructed ice:  
The trees around them laying back and  
Disappearing under the earth, like windmills who have  
Finished and almost vanished from lunch,  
Getting rewarded as their mothers, so often like stewardesses,  
Vanish again into the overeager sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Oversexed Orchards Of The Know

Day plunders its  
Sun around  
My eyes,

Until I am of  
Its ship,

And I go,

And the women  
Don't  
Love me,

But their children  
They are so  
Beautiful;

It is such a  
Shame that  
They should have  
To grow up,  
Into  
The over  
Sexed  
Orchards  
Of the  
Know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Painfully Life Giving Qualities

Stories are good for the reasons  
That we don't have ourselves, and that's why I keep  
You near me all day long,  
To read by your eyes, even if you are only playing with me,  
So that when at night you become a star,  
And I have to resort to my loneliness if not evil,  
The light houses will still sing beneath the aurora borealis  
And the pictures of the unicorns  
Addicted to the intimacy your brown body has to give me,  
As we both breathe in like fish the painfully life  
Giving qualities of another work day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pallet Of Your Burning Sun

The horses this time sleep standing up, Erin;  
And my scars have switched sides once again like girls  
Skipping rope,  
Sending fibrillose and vibrant shadows once again over  
The estuaries of their deep and rich  
Graveyards: The sky above them is first blue and then purple,  
The same way I saw you out taming your yards:  
I saw you jogging like an angel floating like a fish beside my  
Car, Erin; and it doesn't matter if you do not love me,  
Erin: I am not a boy to be employed by your love:  
I am a vagrant and truant of love. While I have tasted the lips of  
One of my muses, that's all that she allowed me while  
She returned from my swingset to her husband, and now where  
Do you think I am standing, Erin, but out in the burning  
Opulence of your son:  
I am down in your opulent grotto with my toy gun, Erin:  
And I don't want to go empty handed on Halloween or Valentines  
And you are the only one, E- E-  
You are the only one and the sky is first blue and then purple  
Underneath the pallet of your burning sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Paper Airplanes

Doing good echoes as the airplanes  
Fly like  
Crows above the classroom or in the trees:  
They remain there harping above  
The fading pornography inside  
Of the junked cars,  
While there is nothing else happening-  
Except the rain  
Over the abandoned children- Where  
Do they exist now  
Like lavender in a trailer park,  
Like something soft and beautiful peeling  
At the edges that the housewives gossip  
About but cannot truly grasp,  
As they smoke cigarettes over the tree  
Frogs and daydream of the men who  
Will never truly belong to them,  
As the paper snowflakes fall,  
As the paper airplanes fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Paper Airplane's Incredible Metamorphosis

Hobbies of bobby pins and new Christmases:

I spend all of my day off ejaculating in my yard, or doing

The laundry- these are so much the housewives chores,

But they have all gone up to their cathedrals;

They are all spent like fireworks, and I am left to

Languish here,

An airplane in the palm of my hand, my words the mute

Joy that the tadpoles experience as they metamorphosis:

As the swans enjoy their breathless highways,

As the mountains stalk the gods- I have no health insurance

Or cable television, or even a love that can understand:

I have no canal to leap across

In the paper airplane's incredible metamorphosis.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Paraphernalia Of Hotdogs And Souvenirs

Soft as a sip of beer:  
Over and over for the every day men—  
Children on the swing-sets looking down  
Into her,  
Bodices untwined in her mirrors—  
A pretty game that we have to pay for  
From life to life:  
Like pennies into wishing wells  
Wanting things,  
Like prayers before mealtime—  
Before drowning back into  
Plutos' of minimum wage jobs:  
The glossy atmosphere of something beautiful  
And made for us to belong in  
But is not real—  
Dolls made of plastic, housewives  
That little girls turn into—  
Young boys looking up into  
The satanic and poisonous wishes of the stars—  
Cages of gravity that create this obnoxious behavior—  
The escapes that we have to pay for—  
The tinnier and tinnier cages—  
The rust of graveyards,  
Mazes of the paraphernalia of hotdogs  
And souvenirs. The knees of once grand  
Cenotaphs left praying for ghosts to the sea—  
The pieces that make up the houses  
We live in, moved by the invisible hands  
Insuring us that we belong—  
Gladly, we are turned up to face the ether—  
As vulnerable as porcelain mice with  
Ruby hearts—  
Seeing the proof of the atmosphere almost  
Blinds us:  
Airplanes are our angels, the turning metal  
A flaxatone to our song.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Park Near The Cemetery

If you want to have a friend,  
I am still right here: homeless but seaworthy,  
Unmade by the weather  
And piled into my basic elements:  
I sit in the park near the cemetery and imbibe by  
Spirits;  
And they come to me bosomy and warm,  
Like other things that can metamorphosis,  
And they whisper promises to me in the sun showers  
In the afternoon,  
And touch my body with other thoughts I neither  
Try to believe or understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Passions That I Have Had For Her

Burning in the yellow love,  
Caving in the houses about their bruised ribs:  
O, I smack her eyes and jab  
And here the things that I cannot give,  
While she gets browner as she works, and her husband  
Comes and lays down his ivory guns,  
And asks her to forgive, standing beside her like  
A crib:  
And I guess she forgets or she remembers to forgive,  
And they go out into the long and favorite estuaries of  
The grass,  
And fall together like timber in a hutch, like golden  
Clouds touching the west as it goes to bed:  
And she forgets the passions that I have had for her;  
As Alma forgets all which I have said.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Patios Of The Passersby

Lost into a school in an afternoon:  
Like a goldfish bubbling at the edge of her perceptive  
Sea:  
This I see all over again in the movie-theatre lives  
Of all of the adolescents of this fare country:  
There they are burning in unison:  
All-together,  
Match-sticks glowing in like-minded epiphany—  
All of the hills rolling as lovers towards and away again  
For all of the esoteric bears:  
Pictures lost in a book of brail that only knew so many fingers  
As his lovers:  
Eyes as alien as the effervescing clouds—  
Having to look away again, narcissus into the ever-clear basins  
Of all of her amusements:  
The daylight of the afternoon having been shot and fallen  
Into the Earth—  
The promises of the teachers clogged into all of the  
Choking throats of mailboxes:  
And another god with all of his pitiful ambulances of numbers,  
Crammed and clogged up once again into the sky:  
The pieces of blindness that fall down to love us,  
The sunlight falling once again onto the patios of the passersby.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Paychecks Of Lost Men

Dying figments unsuited for these hours  
Sit underneath the dabs of wasps,  
Or at the corners of her cheek where she lives:  
In the pornography of rusting cars,  
Or at the sad confines of the canal:  
Floating along in her trailer park underneath  
The washout heavens of those  
Billboards trying to sell their god to the highway-  
When she smiles, a long ways off,  
She can see her children even if they cannot  
Recognize her- and it is her art form to do this,  
And to sit beautifully alone,  
Pleasuring herself as if she believed in ghosts:  
Like my own childhood where I remember sitting  
With my mother and reading books  
Underneath skyscrapers and landmines of sunshine:  
Or leaning over to see our doppelgangers in the  
Canal,  
The tadpoles swimming with the paychecks of  
Lost men: reticent to transform,  
They remain in my childhood long after I have gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pedigree Of A Park

Bluest of the pedigree of a park  
Waiting with its lover  
To watch the helicopters go by:  
Just one lover per day  
And in the morning no memory—  
Even after the swings are closed,  
And the waves don't come anymore—  
If only all of one life existed for the moment  
The pinwheel turns—  
And her breath was only given in my  
Presence,  
So when she returned home, the clouds  
Went down and slept in between the  
Venomous parapets of the coral fort  
With the turtles and the otters,  
Combining their lavender—  
So, if in the morning, she saw another submarine  
And fell in love with him,  
She could not breathe at all,  
Even though the orchards bloomed  
With the helicopters coming down and kissing them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pennies Of Wishes

This is how you feel alone,  
With the cadmium rays of your classroom  
Washing over you,  
And the American flag hanging there as if she  
Was drinking from a dried up aqueduct  
The horses have migrated far away from,  
Knowing that they don't belong there  
Anymore:  
And the teachers move without space suits:  
They look at you with the cantina eyes of too  
Many lunches there.  
Their jockeys have joined the stewardesses  
Of the state fairs,  
And they are leaping with them over green  
Orchards,  
And down the old southern ways, and angels  
As chartreuse as butterflies hang around,  
Reading over their shoulders,  
As the goldfish wait for the pennies of  
Wishes to fall all over them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Penny Candy

Remember the traces in the shallows,  
The words that it was alright  
To give for one last day—  
Before the last holiday of our lives  
Looking out into other worlds, separate:  
Made to keep us apart underneath  
The moonlight, like a knife over the  
Railroad tracks,  
And the airplanes like silver angels  
Over the penny candy  
Of my hopes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Penny's World Of Hollow Bones

If you are standing with the beautiful people,  
Aping beneath the lavender sun:  
How will you hear me  
Read you the thirtieth canto:  
How will you know the way out,  
And through the windmill's legs:  
The lines in Virgil's palm,  
The summit of purgatory:  
If you are brushing your alabaster hair  
On your grandmother's terrace,  
Counting the hatchings of migratory hummingbirds,  
The penny's world of hollow bones,  
And I am on the trellis bighting my lip,  
Thinking about falling through the clouds,  
How will you know that I am supposed to be beneath you:  
When the ride starts to begin,  
The concentricity of learning to fly,  
Like two wounded siblings caught in a game,  
Where it was so easy for you to begin to shop around,  
The complicated marketplaces of inebriation  
Locked away in a basement,  
I am running my fingers over a feeling  
I can't seem to find the meaning of:  
But at least I am calling you like a medium,  
I see you jogging around the periphery  
Of a stranger's last name,  
And I would cry out to you to come back again,  
Before the storm remembers to bury my voice.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Penumbra's Beauty Mark

Unlike you, I have no other choice,  
For it has been long since I've received such favors-  
Or looked at another folded in the outward hymn with the rectitude  
Of an unrequited lover; rejection falls like the appreciation of  
Open spaces, the emptiness in natural beauty,  
The poisons of the more cleverly dawned aphrodisiacs of any  
Strata of species:  
And I am saying this all now like the call in the dark,  
A revelry from a tin horn, as such a ragged personage must do  
Blowing against the traffic like a firework's sparking cone, spinning  
All the same out front of store windows  
and passionless lovers bedrooms:  
My heart is failing, the rejection of scars: to hell what they say:  
My cat has been killed by the dogs in the rock garden,  
The green dragon is entering her bedroom, blowing green smoke  
From its clay pipe, moving as with the sea, upon the legs of many  
Sailors; and this is not fruitful. This is tripe,  
The architectures of a derelict farm, the silence that carries  
On after the recordings has stopped, the blind wonders of  
Water smoothing stone, mute fingers over flesh;  
the murder is left for investigation until late afternoon:  
As out higher than it all, the horses tromp and snort, well-fed  
Their emptiness as beautiful as a well-fashioned thundershower;  
Though already, all the crowd has walked safely down the mountain,  
Driven to room and board; they do not see the phosphorescent harems,  
The penumbra's beauty mark held in the cup of my breath,  
And what a shame that I should try to make words as not to feel so empty.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Penumbras Of Ferris Wheels

Lapping at the stone,  
The forked tongues of rattlesnakes behave like  
Weather vanes,  
As they are searching for warm:  
Some crawl into the plastic grass of Easter  
Baskets and sleep all afternoon:  
All through the sun showers  
And the penumbras of Ferris Wheels,  
And when they awaken, like fissures in geodes,  
Like opened pomegranates,  
Why their eyes light upon the world,  
And their lips part as if they were going to speak.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Penumbras Of Their Late Afternoon

All the ghosts up in the equipage  
Spitting in harmony:  
And now they all sing like the last thoughts of  
Birds in a bath,  
Or the passing lips of teenagers over  
A high school fountain:  
And the busses are turning around and filled with  
Summer light:  
And then there is the common place exegesis,  
But where are they all going,  
In their everyday flight: but back to the  
Oasis of everyday homes,  
And the penumbras of their late afternoon  
Televisions,  
With clouds floating over their mowed yards,  
And everyday mothers soon to be coming home to them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Perambulating Nebulas

Strange limbs gesturing in outer space.  
I suppose they are the perambulating nebulas,  
But I cannot see them with a naked eye,  
How I imagine they go about their jobs  
Like softly pin wheeling bees  
Pollinating the offices of their roofless universe.

I have nothing else to do, but write another poem.  
I don't know where its going, what might evolve:  
The hyphenated last names of ex-lovers who want  
You to know,  
A girl you love smiling in a constellation you made up,  
But she is off in her world of leaves and billiard balls.

Another day in the empty wilderness with a toothache,  
And the need to connect asexually and forever....  
There are only two women in your mind,  
And neither one remembers, but the dogs are your friends  
As you steadily save your money and the constant premonition  
That you will walk on the moon before you die....

But there it is, the fornicating wilderness,  
The sea is in a séance taking away her memory;  
Soon she will be a doll of shells, with her eyes the ochre  
Driftwood of sleeping romances,  
And her smile the penumbra of distance satellites,  
The complacency of any beauty before a needy urchin:  
I would give anything to put just one thumbprint  
On the inside of her upper-thigh,

Like a cartographer who has come after so many others,  
But appreciating renaming the country all the same....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Perfect Candlelight

Words come forth gentle soldiers,  
Impotent lads and stand for her amusement,  
Shivering,  
Bare shoulders:  
Yes, you are the things who are made to die  
Forever, like  
Hair, the undulating bullets piercing sky;  
And it is not seemingly that you are  
Here,  
Going off like popcorn when you want to  
Be expensive rounds,  
Like silver fish flapping pathetically upon  
The receded shore  
At the feet of her restaurant where she is  
Always kissing and making love  
In the perfect candlelight.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Perfect Example Of Your Species

How high do you get without stepping up.  
How many times can you lose the knife I gave you,  
Or ignore my eyes because the wind is  
Calling to you like a pilgrim.  
And I remember my mother's forgotten days with  
The laundry and the toads in the carport,  
The baby blue Lincoln, the pale rabbits  
In the clutch we finally had to release with the  
Pornography across the street,  
The borders of coquina, the sweet tide leaves behind,  
The world from the rooftops,  
Where the stars are all those silver dollars of  
Carnivals,  
Shooting off goldfish across the ant mounds of  
Kidnappers:  
If you watch them very closely, you will see that even  
The most insignificant things no how to count;  
And I've been saving up all week,  
So very soon I will by you a tear from the jungle between  
The yards,  
And you can put it in your purse with your false numbers,  
And the other things that don't touch your heart,  
That you give false promises to, that you will never call,  
While the churches rise up further and further,  
Straining over the Nile, and the soft deltas of all her rivers,  
Just to watch the wind take form through your  
Hair, turn it into a Cherokee's panoply,  
Or the weathervanes of your forthcoming children,  
As the roof of the world forms around you  
From the natural voyeurisms created by the perfect example  
Of your species.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Perfumes Of Her Insouciant Victory

Nomenclature of my lips and  
Senses dressing the habitat of my despair-  
The failure of such pretty atmospheres  
To linger,  
As the cars drive away- the housewives collapsing  
Like dry wood and pantyhose  
Where the weeds are tangled,  
Where the latchkeys play cards and where the  
Thorny citrus hangs so low as to be kissed at  
By rattlesnakes: this is her valentines,  
Corrupted by truancy and jealous smoke  
Signals- this is another one of those impotent  
Flairs remembering my childhood  
Spent in the pornographies of the damp woods  
Across the seashells in the skin of the little road;  
And this is how I linger for her, felt up  
Like wet kisses on bloodstained paper,  
As she inches nearer another highway of massacre:  
There she goes lightened upon by the perfumes  
Of her insouciant victory- the fairies make  
Pavilions out of her shoulders,  
And they gossip to her greedily, even as she  
Carries away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Perfumes Of Mountains

Degrees of amours sleeping in an abandoned  
Colorado,  
Sleeping with the ghosts in the childhood minds,  
And now Sharon has a child, a daughter who she is growing:  
And the youth comes up and up like a magical  
Beanstalk discovering  
The world, and I wonder about her on Halloween,  
And the sweet words on her forever lips:  
And I can hardly breathe, because all that I have become  
Is failure,  
Except that now I love another woman who has the same  
Power to save me,  
But even the fieldtrips are difficult, and coming over the hills  
The families never expect what they can find,  
The science in the hidden places running their wet fingers  
Over the gills of the esoteric fish,  
And the world spins like a bet, and it keeps on taking numbers,  
While the breath of so many species blow their wishes  
Into the grass,  
While the great bears wake up in the Spring, and go out  
Snuffing the perfumes of mountains,  
Forgetting who they were, but always wondering what it is  
They should find.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Perfumes Of Their Trophies

Another cathedral with the ceiling of  
A cave—I wonder outside into  
Another home  
Of reindeer and foxes—  
The housewives look out through windows—  
They do not remember any of this,  
But their pools glisten with moonlit jubilee:  
And their faceless men  
Are coming home wanting to inebriate  
And kiss upon the perfumes of their trophies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Perfumes Of Unrequited Bouquets

The gold ribbons over the brown skin,  
And now we are all here and talking reasonably about like:  
Drinking beer until something accumulates  
Into baseball,  
Making sense through the immodest jungles, while the stewardesses  
Use themselves through the sky,  
Making so many wishes, gathering across the lake,  
Finally falling asleep in the green trees with their red wagons  
Naked of presents,  
And your lips who once spoke to butterflies in Mexico,  
Finally whispering the dew of your dreams onto the quietest pillows  
In the lattening innings of your room,  
As if a manning a base on the team of your extended family,  
Who promises you so much,  
Even though I am always the one, Alma, who buys you lunch,  
And floods you with the perfumes of unrequited bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Periodic Table

How, if you came by boat,  
Where there nights of peace and tranquility  
Between the sloughs;  
And your beautiful reflection unperceived,  
And the moon over us both,  
While I grew up slightly affluent, tanned,  
And scarred like the wild horses  
They entrained and captured to race and bet  
On at the races:  
Like the girls with little song with strip  
For the men with the switch-blade billfolds,  
This being just another quiet sound I make  
Tonight instead of watching the news:  
I have been around enough to see how your  
Beauty lasts forever inside the art of  
Damaged men,  
And I am not beautiful,  
And my toes are black: I am almost crippled,  
But I get along through thoughts of you,  
Like an overripe still life inching its way through  
The sallow tide:  
And I want to say your name, and bloom children  
From your stems,  
Compare your blood to chlorophyll, and hang you  
Forever like an immortal Christmas ornament  
On the periodic table.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Permanent Dream

Infrequently the heart mingles:  
Pulsates like a basin giving off code:  
Here her eyes mix with something  
Obscured:  
Down beneath the fractured surface,  
There could be a precious hope,  
But to disturb the water would  
Set her to flight:  
Imbibing, she is calmed, and remembers  
Days when the sun slid in the grass:  
Her family's caravanning  
As they entertained the known world,  
The pinwheel of lights juxtaposed  
Against the steadfast ether-  
The places where laughter existed for awhile, but  
You cannot capture her here,  
For this is an amphitheatre to come and observe,  
Where the philosophies of beauty rest on stones  
And if you set one finger on her sensitivities,  
She will leap away and never again be seen:  
She will disappear in the storm  
of the world awakening,  
And become the fiction on the tongue,  
Debased: she will flight from bed to bed,  
Unrecurring to every man:  
If you touch her now, as is your wish:  
To sink beneath the bucket's gentle glimmer,  
In hopes of grasping the permanent dream,  
She will disappear  
And you will have destroyed  
What you came for.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pest Of A Failed Lover

These words fail to slice open beauty—  
They deliver only the annoyance of a paper-cut  
To her half-open eyes  
When they want to gash her open with a mortal  
Wound through the startled heart—  
Like a broadsword cleaving her breasts,  
So that you could rush in with the paramedics  
To become her savior,  
To give her ½ of your own heart to keep her living,  
So that you might become her spiritual cousin  
In the secret awakening light of an early morning  
Bed, where the two pieces of one heart try  
To penetrate the flesh, to rejoin  
As lovers into the original body—

But these words really can't do that,  
Can they?  
When she is your distant affection  
Where she swims in waves that break and die  
Only upon her in moments of frighteningly beautiful  
Surf that are born for her and which you will never see—  
How can these words ever reach her there  
To breach your desires for her in a cleaving manner  
Which would bring her needing to her knees to pray for you?  
Rather, they can only become the pest of a failed lover,  
To cut her only so slightly that she sucks her finger  
Until your sting is gone,  
And then she shuts the door of her world in your face.  
Your words are already forgotten,  
Like waves dashed upon the shore,  
She can't remember she ever felt or saw.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Phantasms Of Illegitimate Ancestors

My body feels like a guinea pig and it is not  
Easy getting drunk again  
Knowing that Alma is in the house of another man,  
Even if it is crowded with her two children  
Her parents, and her two sisters:  
She is an incredible piece of cinema: and yes, I feel  
Like I could go on forever in her celluloid,  
Even more resilient than the cadmium artifice of all of  
My major professors:  
Now the leading man and the leading woman are kissing,  
And perhaps Alma is making love with Nelson:  
She told me today that I better ought to write about something  
Else,  
But there is nothing else right now: I have held her vision  
In my heart like a merry-go-round of water colored children,  
And my words have failed her in every way possible:  
And all of Mexico is amber and real, and it just goes on through  
All different sorts of lawlessness and murder:  
Alma has her man's initial tattooed on the web of her hand,  
But today she wore my ring,  
And I want to promise her so much: I want to become for her that  
Flood of light over a newly born butterfly's wings:  
Like the mindless exploration of feral angels who don't know  
How to care for anything but the feeling and unreality of our motions:  
Alma,  
I want to crawl up to you in the morning and pretend your body  
Is an impossible monument for my body and senses to attempt surmounting:  
I want my lips and fingers to become stranded in your elegant  
Precipices everyday,  
And I want to holiday in your banditries forever; for if I should come down  
Again, it will be a graveyard;  
And I want to kiss your tongue, for otherwise the mist will reclaim our  
Senses and all that will be possible is an endless nursery  
For the phantasms of illegitimate ancestors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Phantasms Of Vanishing Holidays

Fishtailed palms yellowed by autumn outside my  
Window- feral cats  
And reports of wolves: my dogs lonely in a far away place in  
Arizona:  
I hardly even think of them, so preoccupied with the subtly chested  
Muse I make love to underneath  
The ceiling fans of my little house with the fishtailed palms  
Skirting the outsides of my house  
And the same occupations of travelers and pedestrians coming around  
All year;  
But surely she is tucked away right now, brown skinned with  
Her daughter up against a wall- tucked in with a man who comes  
From the same state of Mexico as her:  
They attended to the same elementary school, though he was a couple of  
Years either ahead or behind her,  
And so I lay on the floor and count my loose change of visions,  
While all of the color leaves the world, like animals encouraged by  
A forest fire to leave their very own beds,  
Leaving the place that was once of rich abode that now has become  
The phantasms of vanishing holidays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Picnics And The Honeymoons

Listening to airplanes trying to picture you:  
And stewardesses up there—pretty girls who have  
Learned to fly forever  
The daylight all around their half-naked bodies—  
The strange pictures beneath them:  
The picnics and the honeymoons—the sudden bloom  
Of valentines as the bank robbers try to get away—  
As the freckled lovers say what they have to say  
Underneath the singular orchards over  
The unmarked graves before they have to go away—  
And the night blooms filled with so many of the tiniest  
Things with wings,  
And the horses come around the field wishing to speak  
With the luminescent fairy they seem to recall dancing  
Across the sleeping flowers last night.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pictures From An Easier God

Breathing heavily through a night of  
Busted dreams,  
Asking questions that no one has the answers  
For, so right getting lies  
That glow as brightly as the hypnotisms of entire  
Orchards underneath the forgotten  
Forts as squat and as fearful as terrapin  
Kissing the currents of the grottos  
And the hidden declivities of adultery's truancy,  
Like the lactating carpets of roses  
That the tourists could never get the pictures for;  
And all of this alone,  
Said like a firework that goes off from the mating  
Of two cicadas in the rut on green copper,  
Kissing cousins with a penny's worth of masturbation;  
And maybe she will knock on my door tomorrow,  
And flow in her tresses and flirting horns,  
And berth me with kisses who are the accoutrements  
To fires and loins;  
And even if this is not so, all of this was said instead to  
Her,  
An Alma mated from the pyrotechnics of Spain  
Howling in the Aztec geometries  
That have saved us many times before from an easier god.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck



# The Pig's Pocket

The piper has a new song blowing  
Like the studious wind against the pedagogical sea,  
Waking up the smooth red-lipped clams  
Who are nakedly hypnotized and  
Come square-dancing off the cusp  
Of waves,  
The apartments vacated like beautifying compacts,  
The alabasters of derelict cells.

The Walrus and The Carpenter,  
Over-bloated on stock-market shares,  
Their lips lined with corpulent slime,  
Their glutting sink-holes burping gaseous  
Bushels of commodities,  
Come courting the shore like  
Azure swine who use their tarnished-badges  
To skip the line queuing up to  
The muddied trough,  
Trampling the working-class  
Trodden and malnourished at feeding time.

Ministers of finance, occupied by  
Each others' wind-bag charms,  
In trickling smiles of their shared society,  
Dressed identical and devouring beyond  
The speed limit of pious good health,  
Finagle the virginal sea-creatures  
Unprotected into their clotty gullets,  
Where all does perish save for  
The Piper's flighty tune, whose prints  
Continue their molesting cadence  
Along the alchemic shores,  
As he is followed a step behind by the  
The lawyers and their politicians,  
A herd of unclean animals invading  
The ark at suppertime,  
For the artist is in the pig's pocket,  
With a gun pointed at the back  
Of his head

Marching to an unmarked grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pillars Of Emollition

And I will be all empty, as to be  
A plague at last,  
A thief and a liar on the Siamese overpass;  
And words which will not heal, eating goat cheese,  
And smiling up at the weathers of concords and airplanes:  
Smiling through the weathervanes of the surreal,  
The crocodiles becoming purpled,  
Pickled, and congealed, and taking their stock in coins  
Piled up even headed in the cathedrals of the water fountains,  
In the places that the truants mock,  
Or make their love with their peering stock;  
And it becomes for awhile, and it feels good, like the freshly  
Mowed grass through the thorns of an unemployed  
Conquistador's neighborhood; just as it feels as if it  
Has been all the while,  
The pillars of emollition who say cheese for a smile.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pilots Of The Midnight Of Faraway

The petering out of the substances of a heart  
Stain the carpets of an imaginary threshold  
Where all of the thoughts of the muses step inside  
Bringing her gifts,  
But she is already losing herself into the backyards  
Where alligators grin like the cenotaphs for  
Conquistadors  
And the pilots of the midnights of faraway promise  
To bring her roses—yes, she is already gone—  
Maiden of the sorority that is impossible to  
Befriend—she turns your heart into a rabbit  
Trapped by a wolf  
As she invites you indoors—and looks the  
Other way—to the sea, the stars, and to the  
Stolen moon in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pinwheels Of Little Girls

Strung out with feelings on the West coast  
With the turtles in their huts  
Moving along: look at the winos: the park of  
The stars,  
And the dead dogs who no longer go on weeping-  
After dinner, the fish thrown into the street,  
Strange plagiarisms where the little girls cannot  
Breathe- the fisticuffs of wet kisses,  
And everything else I never knew from Mexico:  
Alma up in Ocala looking for horses,  
Her children indoors, enjoying the air-condition and  
Cartoons,  
While all of the oceans are mobilized: the zoetropes  
Spin flirting with windmills- the clouds cauldron  
The sky, blowing through their maelstrom of  
Wishes- perhaps strongly telling all of their secrets  
To the pinwheels of little girls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pistils Of Your Orchards

Because of your jealousy, your sister can see  
That you care:  
There are slow diamonds in your hair, and ladders leading down:  
You work with her at the fruit market past the closing theatres  
Of crepuscule  
Even after I am no longer around; and I have taken a bullet  
In my soul for you, Alma:  
And she doesn't know that we make love; and it is because of  
You that I am even now slipping away  
Underneath the backyards patios decorated sparsely by you  
And your friends:  
It is almost Michael's birthday, anyways- and your tiny brown  
Bodies wave together in their Catholic haunts,  
Never even once dreaming about the swimming pools of richer  
Elements; or how I lay discarded at your feet like  
An otter heady for the pistils of your orchards, blowing their  
Alluring scents from a bedroom into which I  
Will never follow,  
The bicycles surrounding them like gifts underneath a starlit  
Christmas tree that I will never be allowed to give.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pistoning Engines Of Each And All Airplanes

Close your mouth and take me,  
If you care to take me,  
As you care, when your shift is over  
At the ice-cream parlor,  
And you are just another one of those  
Pretty girls your hair in a pony tail  
Watching the phony entrepreneurs awakening from  
Their otherwise trailer parks:  
Take me in your mouth in the apex of Ferris Wheels,  
And swallow me with the spur,  
As the sparrows fly,  
Over the midway,  
Halfway to the sky; if that is what you do,  
I can win you teddy bear;  
I'll be that confection imbibed, the yeast of your  
Lips pie,  
Something you always thought yourself too clean for your  
Husband to do:  
Then shush, shush on our way down,  
Letting me spoon your Indian hair back across your  
Brow smooth as a liar,  
To take you quietly home to your green children  
On a luscious planet where everything is mowed  
And you can hold his hand  
Bent kneed in prayer,  
Keeping your silent superstitions deep your throat  
I've spelunker- Only you would know  
The power of our oriental fruits  
When all the light bulbs blushed from the modern  
Revelations  
Humming like the very same throats or the pistoning  
Engines of each and all airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pitch Perfect Hallways Of Overspilling Wells

I caught a dropp of spit in the stream of my piss;  
But what do I care about:  
The things that give love also take love away,  
And my goddess speaks but she only says cruelty;  
And in the oblong moats of a prison's  
Suburbia,  
She saunters trying on that and trying on this;  
And her feet lead her mind to wonders:  
Maybe she is going over to a little boy,  
Crippled and gasping in a ditch; maybe she is  
Running over to save a faithless pet sinking like a filthy  
Trinket into the yard:  
Her husband isn't home; it is all the gravy of the bone-yard:  
The moon is the mouth of the well, she fell down  
And got married while she was falling; and birthed devilish children  
In a well-mowed hell;  
Or maybe she sees up into a mask of sky of only my lips whispering  
To her of such bereavement,  
Dreaming of sailors of crisp dollar ships when we were just  
Children catching our perfumed eyes in farfetched lines  
Across the pitch perfect hallways of over spilling wells.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Pitchers Sweating On Their Diamonds

I watch pretty ribbons with no discernible  
Reason draping your shoulders—  
My dog sleeps at my feet, the sky sounding  
Like a marching band of feeble carpenters—  
And I wonder if they will ever get anything  
Done, but I don't wonder too long  
As the largest of airplanes are taking off.  
Can't you see them from the Disney Worlds and  
The make-believe forts—let us imagine together  
Where they might be going,  
Stopped half way to take snapshots of metamorphing  
Titans—they go all the way around the world  
As if to become its garland—and when the stewardesses  
Step off, as if off a circus ride, throwing their hair  
Back and looking at the pitchers sweating on their  
Diamonds—They will explain with their eyes  
So many things we haven't seen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pitch-Fork Pines

I can make the sound for you:  
I can make the sound:  
I can say your name a resurrect for you from the ground;  
But you never did care enough for me  
While I was around:  
I can make the sound for you: I can make the sound:  
I can thoroughly arise for you,  
Arise from the very ground: I can carry to town for you:  
I can carry to town:  
All the things I ever grew for you, the cornucopias that I misspoke  
And misspelled for you,  
While the night vanishes, while the day harrumphs- Haroomphs:  
I can forgive you underneath the  
Long and pointed crowns of  
The pitch-fork pines: we can wait for hurricanes,  
Or I can just go down on you-  
I can just go down.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pitiless Streams Of Nocturnal Traffic

If the day is gray in Florida, why shouldn't it be Michigan;  
While I am spending my last few days with my parents in their  
RV,  
And then I shall have my own home: my own quieted space so near  
To the sea who can so easily be called my muse:  
She is apathetic and she doesn't care: men can sell ice-cream right  
Out in front of her, and she doesn't  
Care:  
Men who fish in her throat, laying lines into her, even going down  
Breathlessly on her, moaning into the ballrooms that she drinks:  
She just goes on and on, besmirched in her waltzes, sloshing her  
Spirits and her boats;  
And I am always trying to cultivate new rhymes like bouquets for  
Her in my tremulating latch-key neighborhoods, pressed into  
The strange and white-faced peninsula, like a starving child licking  
His finger against the wind, like the rich perfumes of a night blooming  
Jasmine striking out in the pitiless streams of nocturnal traffic that  
She moats.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Places In Which We Were Found

Bodies enraptured by the tendrils of coitus:  
Both smoking and dewed,  
Are impressed by the sounds and feelings passed  
Like a life giving sea between two bays:  
Their eyes are light houses atop their bodies, the stones  
That move cushioned in the night,  
While the traffic passes by them unstoppable,  
Bringing back and forth other lovers to and from their homeless  
Graveyards, swinging them through the tragedies of a metamorphosis  
That gives this sweet condition one last reason to come around,  
While the lions roar like rivers like buses taking us open-mouthed  
Back home again to see once more the places in which we were found.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Places In Which You Were Born

If the words are perfect, or their delusion perfect,  
Then they become a fire escape,  
And the ways out from even the long arms of airplanes,  
All the way down the strange tresses of the vineyards,  
As from down your lips and tiny skirt:  
And your eyes felt like air-condition for gold-fish:  
And none of it was real,  
And afterwards I went to the library my mother used to read to  
Me in even before I went to kindergarten: and then I  
Bought a bicycle and went to the oldest school yard in our  
County,  
And saw the primary colored helicopters pass like basic lovers  
Beneath a standard moon,  
While the rich people played all around me- while you were  
Away,  
Giving your love to the brown skinned graveyards who tattoo  
Your body,  
And who know your name just as well as the places in which  
You were born-  
Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Places That We Already Know

Not enough liquor to write more than one or  
Two poems halfway—ruining the antiquarian niceties  
Of my obvious failures—  
Pleasures that drift with the memories of  
Kindergarten—  
Lock doors that no longer belong to any  
Discernable rooms—  
Canals smoothed over by roads  
And coral snakes with their once-dangerous  
Colors re-arranged  
Now that they have fully become the places  
That we already know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Places Where They Used To Live

Red flowers fluttering like torn ribbons of an aftermath:  
Her eyes the dual vision of languid matadors:  
They have given their colors of the deepest riches to put men  
Beneath them quilled and snorting blood,  
Asking for her children, their eyes the banner of surrender,  
Leaping like a rabbit in a clutch of striking snakes:  
And her soul smiles at the assassinations, while cars  
Drive apathetically high across the places where they used to live.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Planet Mars

Diana's chariot caught afire,  
And read listen here is a muse for higher,  
And when she got down and  
Opened up,  
She had so many sweet pastries to sell from  
The chest of drawers of her  
Truck,  
So many species you wouldn't believe all forgotten,  
Moth balled,  
And made to deceive and the wind blew  
And the wind picked up,  
And I laid her down and kissed her in the  
Bed of my truck:  
And the dogs barked,  
And the cats barked,  
And the propellers twittered forlornly on Sunday,  
And cast the planes they swept so horny over the  
Church bells,  
And the theatrical fever of full bosomed thrillers:  
Thus I swept my arms and dived  
Like a full grown white boy from the ever ready cross  
Into the arms of the conquistadors,  
And fell in love with a Columbian who had a four year  
Old daughter  
And an open minded boyfriend,  
Whose eyes passed over all these scars,  
And we started the dance of her red shift,  
And broke out of these bars,  
Laughing and jouncing with our sabers,  
We two who became the neo conquistadors who defeated  
All the backward sailing windmills  
Of the planet mars.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Planets We Cannot Touch

What if I was to become better than a god:  
Bride less, what if I rode on Pegasus instead of a carriage,  
Or something else that was spilling its  
Letters dreamily into the sea: open mouthed like a fish counting  
Its heady weathers,  
Waiting for the fabrics of art class to move it once again  
Like a newly born aftermath out of my muses' hands:  
And, Sharon, maybe I did love you up and down those  
Cloistering hallways of high school,  
But I have to move on, and I have to breathe even if it is  
Halfway made up into the tinseling limelight of  
A fieldtrip half occurring in high school;  
And I never loved the buses or bicycles that got me there  
And now this:  
I am not even beautiful, and I work on a path that is not  
Even safe for a fairytale:  
While she braces herself and kisses his mouth, and now they move  
Together like actors in a sleepwalking dream  
Across the foaming mouths of a rabid surf that doesn't even  
Deserve to be there,  
And this is just for myself, while the sea is rising higher than the  
Fame or egos of the planets we cannot touch,  
Even higher than our neighbors' fences, who still have to awaken  
And storm into the yard, to prove that they have to be there  
To exist.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Platitudes Of Infinite Wonder

Prettier when the days go by  
Like fast hounds chasing scars;  
And the decisions of the  
World aren't even made up,  
The Siamese helicopters  
Seem to float like her  
Brown eyes  
While the motions of  
The world rise up together,  
In the platitudes of  
Infinite wonder.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Playground Of Your Swings

If I am here, up in the chambers of that valentine,  
Trying to come out fully formed  
With shield and pectorals to match any hibiscus:  
If I was to  
Drift away to Lake Tahoe- If I was so beautiful  
As to learn how to turn around  
In the infinite space of always coming close to  
You, as if classmates in the circumference of  
A classroom- then this would be the only thought  
To have- repeatedly lapping, each wave  
Like a new messenger inspecting the walls of your  
Grotto-  
Hoping to lie in the traffic lights of your postmodern  
Pieta,  
And distinguish you as the permanence of  
Irrevocable form- to languish in the semi permeable  
Architectures of the angelic overpass,  
To proposition the evaporation of a fingerprint  
In the prehistoric daycares that echo of your  
Senses only while you are on your way to school:  
To live it up as a pinwheel knowing the pivotal motions  
Of your routine- the somnambulating of your  
Evolutionary cemetery- to be the trick of a hat  
In the staccato of your heartbeats- to be the retentions  
Of the forethoughts of a dream which you rise out of  
Forgetting- the perfumes of the atmosphere that sustains  
You in the hours you abandon while your body  
No longer works, and all of the heavens turn around,  
Fainting and crying for water-  
To be that thimbleful of a thing that lays in the reservoirs  
Of the infinity of your childhood-  
A runaway who infinitely adores the lapsing inclinations  
Of the playground of your swings.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Playground On The Otherside Of My World

Houses with Chinese wives  
Advertising at their feet  
Running through a paper field  
On a wall:  
It is a calendar where I am those  
Horse and my son is a snake:  
It is the zodiac-  
I don't have a phone here.  
Tomorrow is my birthday-  
I don't have a car-  
But I found a bottle of  
White wine left over  
From our wedding-  
And the television is on in  
The next room-  
My son may even be crawling to  
See me-  
My lips are chapped  
My face is scarred-  
There are rooms to live in  
On the otherside of the moon  
As I take a bus through  
Downtown Shanghai  
To malls as high as the clouds  
And grottos thick with milkmaids  
Of black hairs and slanted eyes-  
The dark heard of women in  
High heels spillin out of  
Using the busses and subway to  
Speed away  
To tenements high and low  
In this the playground  
On the otherside of my world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Playgrounds That Dream Of Your Sleepless Children

I remember the sound the traffic made as it  
Made its way around the sea—  
Outlines of the sea-life architecture—  
And the mermaids its mythology:  
Architecture of its tears stolen to water the flowers  
Of our suburban grottos lit up like  
Christmas all along the front stoops of  
The churches—  
And the places that we have loved kept like  
A movie in front of our attention:  
I have given all of my soul to these wet monuments,  
And soon I will ride my bicycle nearer to the  
Bereavements that wet the stones of a lonely preschool:  
Maybe you will remember me—  
Maybe you will cry out my name—disregarding  
The dances of marionettes  
Across the playgrounds that dream of  
Your sleepless children.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pleasure Of All Four Walls

Troubled into the palsy of another glass,  
My wife and kid and their kind one room over,  
And in the rivers it is snowing  
Where I live, seperated into the temperatures made  
Differently for every one of our plots:  
A checkerboard of weathers where some fairies freeze  
And others get lucky and melt and lactitate  
And take it all off—  
Where the sky boys fly just to get on their busses—  
And flowers bloom like those very same coaches,  
Choking out the classrooms where they cannot teach us  
Any of this stuff—  
The house knows luckiness the smaller it becomes,  
And just the same a pretty girl can better feel herself  
In the pleasure of touching all four walls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pledge Of Allegiance

Positively left me underneath  
The turtle  
Underneath the school bus  
Underneath the middle of the day-  
And you were teaching classes-  
The afternoon got older,  
And the children changed around until  
They were out of chairs  
And some were left without identities- and my art  
Was found out,  
And sold for nothing- my muse left me,  
And her brown skin evaporates  
While all of our glorious country got up  
To say the pledge of allegiance.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Plot Thickens

My eyes happen to turn off in the middle of  
A zoetrope of summer vacation:  
And it isn't any fun anymore, covering myself with  
The canopies of defeated bi-planes:  
All the fairs have migrated too, and they aren't  
Giving away anymore free shirts;  
And I know your name, because I beat it when the time  
Comes to dusk,  
And rolls over like a sick and dying clock into  
Crepuscule:  
Alma, when I am in my house alone, lamenting you,  
While your mother cooks your traditions  
And you pearl the way the sap runs down the brown  
Trees,  
Then I become soulless, having to awaken in the morning  
And go to work to see the love bites your man of  
Many years gives to you,  
Whether you want it or not: when I could build you castles  
With sundials;  
And I will keep buying you roses until there is a drought  
And all the shelves of stores are emptied  
And the plot thickens while my laments bare the brunt of your  
Name.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Poem Of My Wounded Thoughts

The poems of my wounded thoughts must  
Want something they cannot have—  
The illusion of gladness,  
The same thing as an amusement park beside  
The road:  
It must look like this, with its hands out:  
Maybe they only want a little money,  
Or a little honey from  
The little girls—who go back home with  
Their fathers as big as wolves,  
Into houses that act like caves with the  
Warm voices of cartoons bathing over them,  
And the sea pushing right up against  
The door,  
Attracted by their insouciant smells.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Poems Of The Efficiencies Of My Echoes

If you do not know of the poems of the efficiencies of my  
Echoes,  
I promise you will not survive in the classrooms of  
My hypnosis-  
I am the joy that happens in the playground of  
Drunken arrowheads and roses—  
I am the silence that sleeps forever underneath the mountains—  
And when I see a transparency between your shoulder blades,  
I will not call you out—I will just wait for something else to happen:  
For the sky to become beautiful,  
Or for today to be painted by all of you tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pollinations Of Green Words

Overly persistent:  
The pollinations of green words.  
My novels get done in a week,  
Then sit around and wither until they fall  
From the vine,  
Without a little girl's eyes to perceive them,  
And not a dime earned.  
Their mothers buy them better fruit.

A member of the organization  
Of overgrown boys, lost and  
Taking directions from Peter Pan:  
Daycare rock-stars unwedded  
And working together in a gingersnap union  
Following the trail of bread crumbs  
Running away from the mainland,  
To pursue their first star until morning,  
And then to sleep until afternoon  
Mouths drooling on the white sands sinking  
Into the crystal clear bay  
Where lines of toys parade in aquatic fanfares.

An epic poem of fast food and tooth decay,  
Sleeping on the dusty shelf,  
The misspelled words who wake up  
In the middle of the night and hang themselves-  
The excelsior packing the box of unsold perishables,  
That affects the lines to grow on the yellow page  
And into the worried flesh-

Unnumbered tears shed for princesses  
Going to school to better themselves,  
Wed to the men of their concentricity,  
Drudged up from instances of the imperfectly memorable  
And given peacock's feathers and good lighting,  
Made the subject of the nickel novel.  
Instead of gunfighters, we have flaxen muses  
In various poses of undressed deity.

The night is lonely in the torpid awareness  
Furrowing the mundane's brow  
With the needs to express the watermarks  
Staining the beating heart,  
Not fully knowing the successful artist's  
Deeper desires, the homeless man's basic needs  
For food and shelter,  
And his freedom to look up amidst  
The traffic and see nothing but  
A canvas of beating stars  
Without a hint of love for him.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Poltergeist Biding Its Time

Boats of a long-lipped scar:

I play the housemaid of a truant, I don't get too far:

When I was a ghost, I made it all the way

To Spain,

But when I died as ghost, living I came back home

Again;

And the city, and the village grew with invention,

And you could hear what they were making all night through

The swift toed streets.

They made those too, and the university, and the halogens

Over the soccer filled stamped with cleats;

And I loved a girl there,

I suppose:

I loved a girl there from the rose bushes no body

Knows;

But I had already died there.

I had already been eaten by the swifter avenues of the petty

Men-

The petty men who got her first and afterwards she wouldn't

Let me in;

And now I sleep all night alone atop the rooftops of

Ancient high schools.

Like a laughing skull I swig my gin:

And I can almost taste her, taste her, while I kick and

Flutter like a laughing wind vane far beneath the

Swift toed airplanes,

The venal rocket ships, the unequivocally winged devices

She cleans houses in;

And it must be petty of me spending my breathless time

Repeating the abuses that she has forgotten;

But she is just a simple girl biding her time,

While I am the fruit that is really rotten:

I am the poltergeist biding its time inside a boy who is

Forgotten.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pomegranate's Bitter Blood

Never read out your poetry,  
Because that makes you a whore;  
When you see a star,  
Lie and call it green;  
Prick your thumb on it, and your prick:  
Stare into a certain dream and laugh and piss:  
Make love to the limbless on the back of a moving train:  
In and out of deaf tunnels and the rain;  
Bark at the jade dog, and then toss it into the flames;  
Pin a live butterfly to your vest and let it pull you  
Along the shady lindens of the promenade;  
Never love her alone for too long,  
Never her at all, if you feel you must;  
Displace the lust into the spindles of the draping dust:  
Because if you read out your poetry;  
If you smite open the imperfect geode,  
Spill the pomegranate's bitter blood;  
She will only laugh until interest is utterly lost;  
And you, alone, will rust  
And rust and rust.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pompous Sun

I want to share my silent  
Mirrors with you,  
My mute narcissisms,  
My tongue less voodooos,  
Because I am so tired,  
Like a girl spun out of an airplane's  
Womb,  
Who hasn't a bed,  
A fairytale without a crèche,  
A river without a head  
When all the little boys have been  
Playing at leaping over the  
Fire- All the little jack's,  
The liars:  
I've been off in the shadows for  
Awhile,  
With my eyes been eating your  
Colors,  
Your bangs that swing because you  
Are wild,  
And I want to be your feral child,  
Without religion,  
I want to dance my language to you  
That I should love you by  
Careless circumstance,  
Like traffic without direction,  
Like tourism without monuments-  
I want to crash into the hapless  
Romance,  
Like waves that slap dying and moaning  
Underneath the penumbra that wakes  
Up in the morning,  
Yawning as it disappearing behind the  
Play of the pompous sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pools Of Her Brown Eyes

After the numbers of a chalkboard have vanished:  
Just as with another day,  
Words on the lavatory cubicles remain forever,  
Misspelling forever of an abandoned love:  
The housewives returned home, the apiary hibernating:  
Swans on a golden lake turned into trinkets-  
The otters in silky trances calling up make-believe:  
Trumpets of mermaids and  
Stolen bicycles- words which belong on a Christmas  
Tree;  
And I am learning Spanish, but I have not heard from  
My muse all day-  
Because the sun is a monarch butterfly in its arch:  
And we are falling away from her, as she distinguishes  
Who she is from where she came from:  
She is adjusting herself to new fires, forgetting our  
Expensive, alluring displays- because they  
Are all spent before tomorrow- and her children bathe  
Across her, slipping through the pools of her brown eyes,  
Reminding her of how they once tugged on her  
Brownness,  
Until she is finally resounding, unafraid and so far away.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Pornographies Of Fast Food

Speakeasies in the wombs of pleasure,  
And brownness in Alma's eyes:  
It seems so joyfully dangerous as I talk about her  
When I sleep,  
When my stanzas drool, and the bats blow like leaves:  
And all of the scary movies feel so soft  
And my body gets warmer and warmer holding inside  
Its play land of ovens:  
I blush over the things that I have forgotten, as the cats  
Leap the roofs  
Searching for cannons or conquistadors,  
The fireworks laying spent and untroubled beside the  
Sleeping venoms in the ditches;  
And the only thoughts I carry up again for you  
Are of the pornographies of fast food, as all of my life  
Is bleeding or spindling like confetti stripped in  
A fair  
So happily and away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Portable Home

And you are not on the wall  
Of the portable home  
The dolphins are swimming  
In joyful home,  
But when the hurricane comes  
It can pick up  
And take away  
The trophies over the shellrock  
Of your childhood's yesterday

Robert Rorabeck

# The Possibilities Of What You Can Forever Mean To Me

I am not getting it right: my dogs are sick in Arizona,  
The airplanes make fruitless love into the night:  
Erin doesn't write,  
And Alma looks so far away and she will never wear dresses:  
I just want to take Alma to the art museums underneath the overpasses:  
I have bought dresses for Alma in the intersections of  
My vagabonding childhood, which I have written and misplaced into  
Novels,  
But none of it feels right, even when it happens in graveyards:  
You see, I know, none of this will save me: none of this will grow  
More beautiful than the most beautiful weeds in the most open lips of  
The most naked of cemeteries;  
But I can at least buy you your lunch, Alma, and then wait for the four  
Horsemen and the apocalypse with you underneath the foxtail palm trees:  
And your man makes love to you,  
And you forget about Mexico: and the other places that I have never been  
That seem to burn brighter and larger still inside of me until my entire  
College is the limpid star of a place so far away,  
Ferocious and yet as beautiful as your brown skin; and I lie and bask beneath  
You hemispheres, while your constellations whisper down like sparklers  
On romantic holidays all the possibilities of what you can forever mean to  
Me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Postmodern Hills

Paleness that is wondering over the postmodern hills:  
It is even here, where I have felt myself;  
And curled into the caracoles of a snail that doesn't even  
Realize where it is going;  
But come morning it wisps away, back over the yards  
Of trailer parks:  
The plum trees, and the lushes of sorority:  
All of the disguises are put away, and sunlight spears:  
Mewing kittens on mothering hips:  
Bells to doors jingling, eyes and billfolds, and transportations:  
Entire movements from the seaweeds  
Leaving behind the beautiful stings of the man of war:  
And as she proceeds the men just keep getting more and more  
Beautiful,  
Until it is all without a shadow, and the song has no place  
To hide; indefinitely, she has found her own country:  
And she sits atop the warm marble, and awaits that sweet apiaries  
To be delivered unto her lips.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Powers Which Control You

The powers which control you  
Are too great to understand.  
You stand there holding his  
Silver hand—

The moon floats uncannily  
Grinning her wicked plans—  
The unfortunate kings,  
Lost in the forest,  
Transform into stags—

We are hunted by our own sons in  
The darkening pitch of our autumn—  
You are still playing with your  
Father's guns,  
And he goes down on you  
Fumbling his tongue—

The powers which control you  
Are too great to understand.  
You stand there holding his  
Silver hand—

The powers which control you  
Are too great to understand.  
You who have walked so far away  
From our summer's plan....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Prayer Flags Of Any Number

Up in the candelabrum of the lighthouse  
We do our good work for Indians  
Or anyone who wants to come in to kiss our  
Scars:  
And the bicycles ride by on their adventures  
And anyone you know who you can remember  
Who wants to come in:  
Let them,  
While the sunlight is bright over the tailcoats  
And pinafores of otters:  
And the aspens up on the mountain cry to  
The little girl who but once walked inside  
Their sorority:  
And now like dime store pets who remember her  
Innocent perfume, tell tales of her while  
The mountain lions come in,  
And the abject wanderer lingers on the pinpricks of  
Their summit:  
The elk as red as the pennies of their tears,  
Offer restitution  
For the prayer flags of any number.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Precious Things

Calling up a new sandy pilot  
Where there are girls going down  
Like sticks in a river  
That cannot drown; so airy and so free,  
Like a hyperborean park  
Where families of bears sleep in amidst  
Gorgeous flowers  
That you never wore to prom:  
Where the ceiling fans are waltzing in synchronicity:  
The architectures of clocks see no reason to mend,  
And everything is perceived from the distance,  
A man on his spires like the first star of  
The unreachable evening,  
Galvanized into crepuscule how he defies the city  
States and their platitudes of habitats;  
And when he lights off his vestibules the copper  
Cannons of his girlfriend's legs  
Sing;  
And they are the chorus lines of constellations;  
They are such the precious things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pregnant Bellies Of Airplanes

All rightly quieting in the necessitude of bachelorism,  
The pitched green follicles dancing in the merry weathers  
Outside of  
Uncommonly drunken bordellos emptied of dreams and  
Mules,  
Emptied but for the dancing of fingers striking the strange  
Keys on the hollow amusement that  
Fancies its loves,  
Growing up brown in the household of another man,  
Quarrelling but making love; and outside, the chickens hypnotized,  
Clucking up to stars and the pregnant bellies of airplanes  
Who are going this way and that,  
Shirking their duties and floating commendably like captain less  
Paramours:  
Shopping through the cloud banks, like the very same sensations  
Of toads chirruping through the aloe  
In the rainstorm outside the carport where my goddess lives.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Premonitions Of Footprints

Up into the lights of the world again,  
Completing their contemporary circulations,  
While the lasses bathe and perfume and then leap right out through  
Their porticos and transoms:  
Never fearing the specters evaporated from the baseball diamonds  
And the lawns:  
Going their own ways up above the earth, holding their breath  
As they try to recollect the letters that stamped them through  
The calling hairs of the lawn when they were dampened  
And fell like the premonitions of footprints through the swings  
And into the sandy pools dug out beneath them:  
While the realization of what exactly it was they were trying to describe  
Has gone on, while the busses are already filling themselves up  
With gas as they get ready to pick up the heady students for  
Another morning.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Preordained Rivers Of Another School Day

I am wetted stone where  
The tears of caged  
Daydreams fall  
In an instigated midway  
Where adolescent lions yawn:  
I miraculously stare out of  
The windowless hall  
The specters of collected  
Truancies haunt,  
T-shirted and backpacked:  
They go in their preordained  
Rivers to oasis's of  
Maths and sciences—  
And mope at the shores in the carnivorous  
Sunlight of a featureless church;  
But above their yawning persimmon  
Throats,  
Fully formed angels leap through  
The well-developed daylight  
That is yet theirs to reach—  
As they listen to the unobtainable grace  
Cascading up there, roaring in tumultous evaporations  
In the forgetful senses perfuming the  
Metamorphosed limbs of an orchard the perfumes of  
Which are too high for them to leap;  
Though they try—fish returning home to blind  
Foxes who sit them at their dinner table  
Not knowing how very soon it is that they will have to leave  
Once more to cascade through the preordained  
Rivers of another school day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Presence Of The Petrified Gods

Down from the mountain  
Rain drops from  
The fingertips of  
Little boys-  
Frogs sigh remembering  
Their bedtime's  
Metamorphosis-  
And there is reason for  
The king to get up  
Beneath the clouds-  
Rainbows are fornicating  
With unicorns-  
Arrowheads have  
snagged into hearts-  
Housewives are  
Drunk and  
Nude in a sea of  
A thousand fabrics-  
And I say your name  
In the presence of  
The petrified gods.  
In an afternoon of  
Movie theatres-  
Where the ghosts enjoy  
The red  
Baseball diamonds-  
And the reptiles sleep in the  
Coolness of the rocks  
Not having to get up again  
Until the next sunshine-  
Eyes closed- reminiscing  
Over all of  
The magic they have enjoyed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Presents I Have Written

Alma, do you get high at looking by yourself while you  
Drive down the road,  
While you haven't even realized all of the presents I have  
Written for you:  
I go by myself this way, Alma, until I can endear even more  
For you:  
While I can hold my breath and float up even higher,  
And then see your yards and the cars that you drive:  
And I believe that you are here,  
Infesting my ribcage with the poisonous rib that some god allowed  
You to steal,  
While I can go outside into the yard and yawn up to the fairgrounds  
Of airplanes,  
And miss eating the hotdogs of their cotton candy wings,  
And curse and pray to you with grass-stained knees:  
I can be anybody for you, except for when you need somebody to  
Feel;  
And I am moving away: the river is forcing me away like jewelry down  
Into the scuppernongs at the longwinded throat of your  
Feral sea:  
And I am right here, Alma: I am right here, swimming alone  
And trying to romanticize the fishes who can never outlast the waterless  
Days I have felt boiling up from the ant mounds of my mounds  
That I suffer from yet another day alone and with out you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Presents Of Every

Now I've seen you, supposing where I live,  
In the diminished cul-de-sacs, amidst the forsaken  
Ivies-  
And weren't you attending bar, again,  
Caring nothing about me-  
Turning me out into the cold shallows  
Overlapping the banks,  
And the jellyfish with their aquatic apiaries  
Kissing in the churches of entangled masses  
Through the jolly caesuras-  
And their spinelessly coital monuments: there they  
Are: another world told in the brainless sorority,  
As the traffic pauses as if for the lights  
Of a Christmas tree- only to go again,  
Only to enjoy themselves once more- passing onward,  
And opening the presents of every door.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Presents Of Every Door

Now I've seen you, supposing where I live,  
In the diminished cul-de-sacs, amidst the forsaken  
Ivies-  
And weren't you attending bar, again,  
Caring nothing about me-  
Turning me out into the cold shallows  
Overlapping the banks,  
And the jellyfish with their aquatic apiaries  
Kissing in the churches of entangled masses  
Through the jolly caesuras-  
And their spinelessly coital monuments: there they  
Are: another world told in the brainless sorority,  
As the traffic pauses as if for the lights  
Of a Christmas tree- only to go again,  
Only to enjoy themselves once more- passing onward,  
And opening the presents of every door.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Presupposing Romance

When I let you in, I will be  
Behind the door-  
And the rubbish of your eyes will affect  
Me when they turn like  
Rusting fireworks  
Beneath the American flag where I am  
Waiting for a kiss:  
Then in the presupposed surrender of  
A flattering high school,  
We will meet like parents on Sundays  
And say our prayers  
And eat peanut butter and jelly beneath the  
Playgrounds and the graveyards  
Where our progenitors are buried like livestock  
Piled up for the additions of a god  
Who never comes home:  
But waits for a lover somewhere across those  
Dulled and blunted mountains-  
That will never come,  
And we will pity him, as we pity ourselves,  
Waiting for the presupposing romance  
Of our school day to finally come to an end.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pretence Of Water That Doesn'T Move

Like red roses on the hoods of  
Dead cars,  
I am in love with you parked beneath  
The power lines,  
The old donkeys overloaded with  
Gold,  
And bats are flying out of the cave;  
And you wouldn't think that would be  
The most beautiful thing,  
But now it is crepuscule and we  
Are just north of Mexico and the blind man  
Is doing his laundry in between the tits  
Of stalagmites,  
And the micas run as smooth as new born  
Foals,  
And he knows every breath of her;  
And I haven't bought new clothes in ten years,  
But I have the ghost of Billy the Kid  
In my underwater speak-easy,  
And all the crocodiles who don't know how  
To cry,  
And I can almost see you leaning over the other  
Side of the canal,  
Perhaps because your love is pretending its  
Light opulence  
In the pretence of water that doesn't move.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Pretending Number

Fell off the stage for somebody, and slept underneath  
A school bus  
To lay in an orchard of shadows with a terrapin-  
With your eyes,  
And breakfast all around you, laughing-  
Until you made them cry by breaking up with them-  
And the saddles are between the mountains-  
Isn't that where aspens grow in a different type of  
Sorority than what we have right here-  
While our little brothers sleep outside in blue tents-  
Out numbered, they pretend they never have to  
Go to church again,  
Just as I pretend I never saw you kiss his lips-  
As I watch you from the shore,  
And you became the illusion the failing light played  
Across the cliffs- and kept the firemen up  
All night with your illusions- until  
The lighthouses dimmed beneath the horrendous  
Mobiles, swearing they'd had enough.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Preternatural Everglades

I have been awakened and it is  
September:  
I have been sleeping: I have been sleeping,  
But now I am awakened  
Out of my dreams  
And looking at the boys playing  
Baseball in autumn  
Underneath the bouquets of all of  
Their things,  
And the little girls playing housewives  
Or at least pretend  
That is a beautiful orchard- and we don't  
Have to stand here all alone  
In the Laundromat of our afternoons:  
We don't have hold our temples  
Through the bereavements of all of these  
Septembers,  
As the rains come, and the leaves change color:  
At least we are in the same graveyards  
As our grandmothers,  
As the airplanes cross the paths of the heavens,  
Even if they wont be touching down  
To the lips of the wishing wells  
Into which we've spent so much money- we can  
Love them anyways-  
As they seem to be cursing through lesser known  
Heavens, as we count our luck down here,  
Hoping we can sell even more fireworks,  
As the racehorses trample the murky flowers-  
Trying to pass their heavy bodies off as lovers  
Into the abandoned natures of the preternatural everglades.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Prettiest Girl In Class

Waking up in the carport of her  
Grotto: my mother with the lazy eyes the night  
Tattoos -  
Where has my father gone, with the spectators up  
In the fruit trees  
Down the rows that my muse used to live in-  
And now words smoking in bowling alleys with too  
Much green beer-  
And the way that sometimes a few unicorns light  
Up the night like neon,  
And the tadpoles grow new legs and folklore  
As you find yourself sitting beside the girl you think  
Is the prettiest girl in class,  
And she is looking at you like your father with  
Approving eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Prettiest Girls

When I'll go to a little store in China—  
Shanghai, actually—while my little Chinese wife is working  
In the sky scrapers that look like two Siamese dots  
In a circus,  
I will learn how to ask in mandarin for one or two boxes  
Of wine,  
And then I will go back into that entry place—not a foyer  
At all—  
Not an amphitheater, in fact—and spend all of my summer  
Away so many floors beneath her,  
Drinking that swill while the three little pigs dance,  
Trying to make light of it all  
And writing something: something that doesn't  
Even have a chance—  
Until we are free to go to the parts of the world together  
We have never seen—  
Like marionettes stemmed off from their orchestrates  
Wills, going to see caesuras, and bonfires,  
And glaciers—  
And sharing dreams of French kisses—as the world that they  
Happen upon boughs into its nebulas like  
An infant in the daydreams of Christmas—yes, kissing us on  
Both cheeks, this is the way the creeks are flowing,  
Downhill—  
Like tears from the Catholic church across from the university  
Far into the midnights past crepuscule,  
Long after all of the prettiest girls have checked their mailboxes  
And gone inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Prettiest Sororities

Ambers of the road taking you home  
To make love-  
In the bed next to your quieted sisters,  
And down the little meanders  
Where your children resonate everyday:  
Echoing as if brandy:  
And I cannot say this is a poem,  
But another broken wing on a bird that  
Pretends to be beautiful,  
Just hoping to draw the attention  
Of the airplanes,  
As they steal all of the prettiest sororities  
And make a picnic with them in the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pretty Directions

Now it happens to be that I found myself for  
The first time in the last modern gold rush: even if  
It wasn't real,  
The way sometimes butterflies aren't very real as they  
Advertise their paper thin migrations  
Over the truck stops,  
Calling home with the strange cries of nothingness-  
Ululating like the prickly pears in the armpits of cactus  
To the bosques of Mexico where  
Alma once lived and walked the same paths as the dangerous  
And copper backed snakes  
That live there: and she didn't have there her own football team,  
Or Disney World,  
And what she thought behind the deep mysticisms of her  
Unthinkable eyes, I will never know:  
But Hoodini died on Sunday, which is the day after tomorrow  
And Halloween; and if I will ever contact him again  
I do not know,  
But I have so many pumpkins left to sell, while Alma sleeps  
Curled up in her brownness with her family in a little house not  
So far away;  
And even though I am amputated from her, I am close-  
And crawling towards her still with the uncanny jubilees of my show-  
My own soul burning in filigree and birds feathers  
Understanding that her address is in its reach, and obtainable,  
Even while this body bleeds the mortal wounds of a stigmata  
Whose indications and weather forecasts are directed  
Always too often by the pretty directions that her pretty two legs  
Go walking.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pretty Forts Of Her World

Words make contact like agreeing compasses,  
If they do then the unnamed flowers will grow, like from the  
Fingernails of a grave,  
And you can listen to her beauty sashaying in the breaths of  
Sunlight,  
Popping wheelies atop of each stone.  
Out in the market, we must run through the citrus, our eyes on the  
Bodies of far away,  
While the airplanes hum and chirrup, the traffic aggrandizing  
Populated by the instructors of my evaporated childhood-  
Now how I have seen her eyes from time to time  
Coming into the market, and even looking for things that will  
Never sell:  
How her lips parted like innocent clementine, even though they  
Were not innocent:  
Like clear bells that wimple in breathing; and her body flutters  
As it goes sweetly in and out of stores,  
Hoping for things of pollination, while the yellow world ripples  
All around her,  
As if she were a flag in a state of embarrassment and all of the  
Windows looked out upon the pretty forts of her world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pretty, Pretty City

Now the city has a studded nose,  
Because the city is so pretty, and the city knows:  
The city, she almost fooled me underneath the  
Chicken sky- The city is so pretty,  
But the city lie:  
I loved the city and all its vermilion moods and ice-creams,  
With parks and busses and city airplanes  
And city rides- City coffins and city dies;  
And I watched the city get drunk and turn around  
And raise its monuments and party down;  
And I sat upon one of her benches in a speculating mood,  
And wondered if the city was so pretty,  
Why was she so rude: The vulgar nebulas of the city's  
Eyes, the narcissisms of its displays:  
There are so many well suited boys better than I out walking  
In their sunny city days:  
And I realized, the city didn't love me,  
The city plays and paws and eats up little boys such as  
Me- She said she loves her little poet boys, such as me,  
But the sweet, sweet city lies,  
Because the city is so pretty, studded nosed and stunning eyed,  
But she uses her autumn facades to blind the autumn chicken skies-  
The pretty, pretty city has me hypnotized,  
But the pretty, pretty city lies.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Prisms Of Sciences Collapsed From High School

Put these call signs away in little cars—in shipwrecked vessels  
Underneath the mountains  
No one believes in anymore,  
The pornographies of the unbelievers who live slip streamed  
Amidst the pines,  
In doll like houses of unfortunate rows  
In days of anonymous ambiguity—  
In the cathedrals of their hallways like holy vessels—  
Or the semiretirement of a daydream while  
I am still in Shanghai  
And I have lost my hearing, but will go to the hospital  
Again tomorrow and then maybe the game store,  
If the weather is good—  
My wife and one year old child will accompany me on  
The subway—and my fifteen year old scars will  
Dance like fire snakes with the shadows of a ceaseless world  
That I must stumble back into every day—  
Words yet the prisms of sciences collapsed from high school  
While everyone else assured themselves that they were  
Sleeping and this was only a dream.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Prison Of Your Absolute Denial

Our combined bodies are slowing down the earth-  
The waves are pausing,  
Giving off flickers, like organizations of  
Dragonflies and lightning bugs. Those chemists,  
What are they doing-  
Little daughters are forgetting to look at themselves  
In their pink vanities,  
And they leave off for school with empty brown bags,  
Shifted through by blind verisimilitude;  
The pretty yearling-things don't care that they are starving,  
So unprimed trees grow heavy and severe from apples un-plucked  
In the over comely orchards;  
And isn't this all utterly strange that I shouldn't see you anymore-  
That I once ran around you in a park organized by  
The successful perpetuations of our president,  
Where Benjamin Franklin was playing his latest  
Glass armonica,  
And he was too busy to understand how you came at me  
From all angles through the deciduas  
Of ankle-deep housewives chirping as they pushed such trams,  
Smelling like kitchen-sink sunlight, everything moving up and down  
Due to the propulsions of our relative bodies,  
Speckled incest reposed in ululating recreation,  
The shared weights and levies of a fieldtrip's seesaw,  
And how I used to chase you inside a fable of my mind,  
Leaping at your unreachable ankles, until I declared that they  
Must yet be unripe but amusing,  
My glances ever ready to find just a homeopathic teaspoon of  
You somewhere along the pubescent hall's  
Perambulating road coarse,  
Leaning back against the piratical lockers, eyelids painted like eager  
Bruises, like violet punishments,  
Your supermarket bra graciously stuffed and reeking of carnival perfumes,  
Of tennis balls and freshly butchered salmon,  
Areolas the flambé of kiwi and wild scuppernongs;  
And at night your mother sponge bathed you underneath the  
Calming whisper of the ceiling fans;  
But now the familiar traditions are all changing,  
New men are migrating across easy borders,

Climbing defenseless shoulder blades, innocent pilgrims  
Hearing that you serve good sin: They've crowded me out onto  
The street side of nocturnal Catholicism and you don't care,  
But I'm left in earshot of that pantheistic celebrations,  
The nature worship they caracole you with;  
They start gasoline fires and rev and whoop  
As you try to re-christen them with domestic alcohols,  
they en-crèche you, horned, rutting,  
Like stags prancing around a doubloon-ed aspen;  
And the tricky sacrifices of your body language slapping like  
Coins making wishes off the blue anchors of their tattooed biceps-  
You said if I'd been more  
Attentive to my needy stanzas, or if I'd stood still while you drew blood,  
While you went to work piercing me for your cruel brooches,  
But I flinched, and I fled into the shadows and all the things which  
Have no space of their own- They are happy to have me,  
The diasporas of what good honest men would refuse to own,  
And they've hidden away the salvations of light which might  
Pull me up again and place me like a locust practicing  
With his wasteful band on your  
Willfully paralyzed abdomen, an outlying caress along vibrating  
Canyons, the enlightened spaces who seemed before fully serviceable  
To me, but now look wearily from  
The other side of torrential windows,  
The voided apertures of condemned lighthouses,  
The sightless towers of despotic kings,  
Where the horses bray trapped within the spokes of sand dollars,  
Where the glass is coolly flawed, and it is known as if looking  
Upon the cold granites of openmouthed tombstone,  
The sad afternoons of reviled dentistry's,  
The possibilities of a dark plague fill up in your pantry,  
And the dead lie there gossiping and watch you fall back onto the shroud  
He pressed you like a moth or a flower;  
You press the mouth to the pillow without anesthesia,  
Folded into the collection of his mortician's almanac,  
Like the instructions for planting fangs in that season:  
You pant  
Such living death blooming in the senseless wreath; and it is all  
Drawn out, so that it is just the scar perfect sunlight leaves on  
My memory because I stared too long at you  
Waiting at the bus stop, sundogs and all the lions roaring,  
The alligators panting long-tongued, grinning with the terrapin like thorny

Presents beneath the poisonous holy,  
Red-cheeked and flushed beneath the venomous sky,  
Like a virgin willfully suffocating;  
And now the world isn't real:  
There is a sinkhole in the middle of the highway  
And its art is crippled by the offspring of its toothy perpetuity,  
And I feel as if I weigh just as much as the sum of all of most everything;  
And all that I am missing is the weight of your supple  
Wingless body falling, being carried through the required threshold,  
Fingerprinting the teak of a good wedding for luck;  
And the scars are like hooks, and I find that I am being carried  
Far away up into another happenstance's birth,  
And you have gone your way through the currencies you have chosen,  
And mountains build themselves up around you heartily fraternitied  
And strong because they have the sense that I should have  
Wanted, that your body's presence has a substantial  
Meaning; it moves comparative to Lake Tahoe,  
clear and deep and beautiful into  
Which a entrepreneur, young and banked  
should look down into forever into  
That absolute reflection of your essence to which all oceans  
Seem to diminish,  
Into which truth distills prohibition's collective liquor;  
And it is to this place that all bodies are moving, like  
Tourists driving to a favorite picnic spot,  
In togas and motorcades up the hill of Cavalry;  
But in it heartless lawn is required the dour spirit of your post-modern  
segregations,  
And to it reopened fountains I was not allowed,  
for the flaming sword is panting,  
Thrashing alliterative and vengeful  
before the timely garden whose knowledge I  
Once tasted with you naked and throwing,  
But to it you have uplifted your fickle chastity,  
And the world is falling into you from all angles,  
Like so many instruments pitched into the fires of your bosom,  
And yet there is no undoing this knowledge,  
The songs that I remember singing,  
That I cried for you like a child in a latchkey wilderness,  
But to the feral entreaties you wouldn't choose to come,  
But toasted your glass and smiled, and kept the men revolving  
In your bullpen like powerful bullets in the chambers of a gun

You just stood there leggy and smoking  
After taking potshots at the world I had created around,  
Tearing down the canvas to which I inspired  
So that there was nothing recognizable except the prison  
Of your absolute denial.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Problems Of Green

The problems of green have their own colors:  
But they all together only cost five dollars: like the stripes  
On the Mexican flag:  
And Alma making up her own excuses for whatever she does or  
Doesn't do:  
And the roads to and away from her are being used,  
But her children are doing good:  
And I am in my own house in my own graveyard inebriate and  
Scarred:  
And maybe she will read this, and maybe she will go down  
River and find more beautiful boys and read them,  
Her brown skin getting goose bumped over her brown and  
Perfect skin;  
She is the only female I ever think about or try to smell:  
And I come to her in the fruit market and then drive away, as my  
Life recesses, grows frantic from its lacking amusements,  
Or doesn't exist at all:  
And the green planes frolic in the green clouds;  
And the hungry green foxes leap for the out of reach grapes,  
Vermillion in their over abundance and in their virginal aptitudes,  
Or they don't even try at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Proficiencies Abounding

You don't even want to stop to remember  
The way that summer flies:  
How the good guys got the bad guys on the doorsteps of  
The theatre of a graveyard,  
The horses galloping on four legs- streaming their manes  
Through the memories of evaporated caesuras,  
Speaking the feral code that never pretends to  
Hurt anyone  
While the sky looks up embracing the heavens:  
And the dark girls underneath, shopping through the playgrounds  
Trying to remember through the proficiencies abounding  
If there is anything so sweet.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Prolific Stock Of Your Divine Hips

Homonyms of lovers city on the benches in the zoo,  
While the rains patter on the Faber shay of my illusioned caves:  
This is like the light underneath the decorative paper of  
A Chinese lamp glowing forever  
In a grotto- either yours or your mothers or your daughters:  
It is you long destiny in the deserts where no a single tree breathes,  
Where terrapins evaporate,  
And airplanes become mirages, where spelunkers go down underneath  
The roots of name and malanga, where the blindness of  
Believers wins an unspoken lottery;  
And all I can say is that your world is always, always comforted by  
Air-conditioning; and it always so sweetly on the move:  
And I wish I could have become the hero of a silent quest for you,  
But now it is already to late: my birthday candles will forever burn  
With the wishes of growing lips,  
Because you already have your man and he has grown your children  
Up and tenderly from the prolific stock of your divine hips.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Promenades Of Our Grandmothers' Eyes

The end of sad abuse washes across the yard;  
This is the end of it,  
Harmless- so obtuse- and the girls that were listening for  
It, have finally gone inside-  
The paper trees are on a holiday,  
Purpled insects warmed inside: they too will see  
New bodies in new beds-  
When the heart beats forth another year, lavishing for  
Likeminded chastity- and the promenades  
Of our grandmother's eyes proudly following our  
Married skins.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Promises Of A Blue Or Purple Rose

Summering loneliness- you are here with the goldfish  
And the housewives,  
In a kind of house, underneath the airplanes while the  
Turnip trucks overturn,  
Spilling produce and dwarves, while the giants of our  
Fairytale fart out clouds and  
Nasty weathers in the sky-  
And I just sat in a saddling greenness where only the  
Katydid were disrobing,  
And the pools are as innocuous as diamonds;  
And looking down into the saturnine death of somnolent  
Alligators,  
Whose mascots seem to last for anon and anon  
That there must be some avenue straight up to the heavens  
Of the muses I was getting off to,  
If they would only dropp down a long ribbon from their  
Stranded airplanes,  
Or casually relay one passing though to me-  
The sky fibrillating like an infomercial filmed in the armpit  
Of Michigan, but I was too lazy,  
Enamored as I was like a waylaid knight in a poppy field  
Blown by windmills,  
And death grinning at me, sabertoothed but immobile,  
Grinning with all of the promises of a blue or even purple rose.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Promises That Were Never Made

Bandy-legged, like a curious instrument put  
Down in the middle of adolescence,  
And never picked up again,  
Molting in a suburban orchard, yes I still  
Exercise  
Lollygagging through the semiprecious  
Mailboxes of this next evenings crepuscule-  
I become as delightful  
As the tail end of a pantheistic carnival,  
As liling as a see of obnoxious fanfare;  
And my muses perpetuate the sky,  
Soft and venal, with only airplanes interrupting  
From a different level of sweet hallucination;  
And it feels so wonderful to know  
That not a single one is considering me:  
Diana isn't even considering me, and I would  
Buy her a house;  
And I am as thoughtless as the immortal alligators  
Creating crenulated geometry down towards  
The wet lips of the overconfident easement;  
And my feet strum, and my feet fibrillate,  
And the only souls a see are retired and they wave  
Like ghosts, like the inopportune bravery of  
Already surrendered flags,  
And there is a new school of whispers in the surcease  
Of overeager tadpoles,  
The traffic streaming on the other side of the world  
Like herds of feverish angels,  
Taking all the old ones away, bringing in new stores,  
But I seem to pass it all away, leaping on randy  
Foot through the mowed glade,  
Breaking all the promises that were never made.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Promises Who Have Fallen From The Sky

From where we live, the backyard coliseums  
So from the armpits of the yard  
That all the way to Arizona can be seen and stories  
Told of a desert of stain glass broken underneath the  
Feet of rattlesnakes,  
And beautifully feathered arrows shot into the heavens  
To bring down newly budding angels  
Who suspected safety in the camouflage of the sun  
Where a glorious draught strikes the earth  
And rises from its skin the same kind of deities  
As Easter that the overpasses fold up  
Like petrified bows- and the garden snakes come out  
From tying in the manipulations of the newly  
Budding dehydrations- and if there is a girl right here  
Who you ever loved, she has already gone in  
To someone who can better provide for her;  
But you are left out in the overprized gutter with the murals  
And the hummingbirds collapsed from the exhaustion of  
Likeminded hallucinations so that they find themselves  
Solicited to by the most persistent of serpents  
Who have already molted their skins and bed blankets for  
The katydids- so that now they can say something  
Wonderful, pedantic and legless, to the promises who  
Have fallen from the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Proof Of Your Favorite Colors

Bicycles make love before they are spent  
Away in a immiscible city in the waves with satchels of  
Letters:  
But, Oh boy, I don't even know if they are about love:  
The city is liltng,  
And the strangers spill like popcorn on Christmas into each  
Others' beds,  
And when they find each other, no longer cuckolded:  
They tend to grow as tall as pitch fork pine trees,  
Until they destroy everything, and yawning they are just  
As tall enough to rub the purring bellies of commercial  
Airplanes:  
And I am not going too far: I am jut going a foot or two  
Over hear,  
To shoplift something else for you, Alma,  
Because I have made the sea our bath, so all of the immortal  
Swans and their ugly duckling are bathing in  
The caracoles of hurricanes;  
And finally something feels immaculately right about the chaos,  
And I can yawn in the mouth of a loin and petal my  
Paddle boat chock full of snake oils over to kiss  
And give hickeys to the lovely brown throat you have opened  
For me,  
Using the green keys that I have plagiarized, using the proof  
Of your favorite colors.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Propitious Heavens

Parade in the trombones of plebian castles:  
I look at images of Vachel Lindsay the day before  
I leave for Shanghai:  
The roads were so busy today, two days before  
Christmas- and I was in love with someone  
Else-  
A muse who escaped through the bullet holes,  
But I don't shop for her  
OR go nearer to her ganglands than I have to:  
Her brown skin like an apple still dazed in the sun-  
And her body stretched into a cornocopia  
Across her bed for her children-  
Paradoxically, they are her harvest, but they need  
Her, and nuzzle up to her like glittering foxes,  
Eyes with dazzling midways,  
Like circuses who'd been born at the same time  
Underneath the propitious heavens  
Who have become like the mobiles of Ferris wheels.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pumping Jungle Through Which The Red Hearts Love

The fidelity of the day  
Runs along the chrome gills  
Of her highway,

The glitter of a stream  
Disappears in the shade,  
When she tells you, you  
Do not know her.

When she slips off  
For other men, your  
Dear brothers,

Going around the bend,  
She does not look back  
But cascades

In the tangled memories  
Of skin and bone laced  
With skin and bone

The defeated sun  
Kneels beneath the  
Horizon's teeth to  
Shatter, and fall  
Steaming into the sea,

The gift of the craftsman  
Wasted before honed

When the city becomes the  
Jungle,  
Private detectives working  
Overtime  
Gunned down without audience  
On unseen intersections  
Before all the ladies

Opening their doors,  
Going out on the walk for the evening,  
The skin of their legs flowing  
Like running facets

Cooling the parched eyes  
Of men, their bodies lighting up  
The safety of nightlights  
Next to the bedroom,  
The doors left open,

Inviting

With All the husbands gone  
On very long and expensive trips  
With the objects they wish to posses,

Humid and beginning to swim,  
Women become the sea-wolves,  
The bones of their bodies learn to  
Breathe through the touch of skins,  
Burning through the ancient fires  
Of survival

The glass roof above where  
The commercial airlines  
Fly, comes down

The dryads uncoil their forms  
Swim through the muted clouds

Sweating, rings slip from fingers

Fangs, like roots, moisten

In dark corners paid for by the hour,  
Friends make love to old lovers  
Again,

Back at home,  
Locked,  
Old lovers stand alone



Hand in hand with a  
Gun

Kissing

Where the sun plummets  
Through the caves,  
Settling amidst the wrecks,  
The hopeless hearts,  
Forgotten and undisturbed,  
Where the greatest man lies  
Beneath green green grass,  
Nameless,

Not even an allusion of movement  
In the graveyard of the deepest  
Bay,

Discarded by the pumping jungle  
Through which the red hearts love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Puppet Of His Heart

Tables at a spot in the woods  
Incredibly distant from all humanity,  
Yet a creation of  
Man place in the wilderness.  
It is not possible for an object to be  
Lost from itself,  
But they remain  
Like wooden presents in the evergreen's  
Shade,  
Waiting for the palatial fingers of  
Sunlight to stroke upon them  
Like the pornography of the  
Sky—  
The airplanes like open pages  
Centerfolds revealed for a little while,  
Sparks of holidays  
Going off in the ethereal and burning  
City of the clouds—  
Not one cognizant aspect reflects  
Down upon them.  
The creator has vanished  
But there in the wilderness I have described  
The puppet of his heart remains.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Pure Feel Of Her Touch

I'm sorry sir,  
But she's said we can't take off  
With liquor only  
30 % alcohol- because this way  
The moon is too low,  
And she can't seem to lie back and caress  
The first ancient fondling of the early morning  
Sky;  
It isn't quite beautiful enough for her to give up  
And die,  
Not numb enough for her to really not feel to  
Know if your written emotions are what lies  
For real;  
And a soul is the engine turning over but dead,  
Like an unfortunate robin stung by a fortunate snake  
Straight in the head;  
And its not even good enough for the mainstream  
Songs in between the pages of pulpy psalms,  
And the books they'll teach your children  
Before nap time,  
Just a little nip of nothing but rhyme; and so we  
Should stay here just floating through the great bleary day,  
Enjoying the lower canopies, the soft graveyards and such,  
But it will take purer liquor for her to reward us  
With the pure feel of her touch.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Purple Gang

The maggots clean their plates,  
And we can't help but smile.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Purple Rimmed Estuaries

You are alright here: and it feels alright, being in the skin of  
Tourists: daydream, up in a blaze sleeping all night in the cul-de-sacs  
Of the nearest sun:  
New words are invented as it rains, and lovers make love, while the  
Pitch forks arise from the hay,  
And the clouds make new constellations over the river boats that  
Float over the immolations of the grave;  
And it is just as beautiful as being out and blinded in her front  
Yard: delivering Christmas trees and making money  
As Alma's first and last children are breathing and cooing:  
And I will buy them presents again  
As the first and the last saints and nicks of their chariots come close  
And then burn home again:  
As I have made numerous home runs on her, as her flowers pullulate  
Over the open and glittering graves of prostitutes,  
As the families come around and have dinner with themselves  
In their warm and embalmed institutes;  
As their fires reflect the stars of whatever gods who are here;  
As the pools in the backyards of housewives shine like dimes, bloody  
And numerous, homeopathic to the scars that multiply underneath  
The heavens of her wombs, or in the anthills of how to end a poem,  
Enigmatic of the fears of the nations of fieldtrips of trailer parks  
That already happen to take place underneath the fireworks and the flags  
Of the playgrounds of centipedes and latchkeys who have to admit  
That they are already here, in the backyards waiting with the cenotaphs of  
Katydids in the armpits of cypress who emulate the last pantomimes of  
The afterlife in the fires and fairies of the rum burning sugarcane  
Who deliver whatever it was meant to be before the eyes of the Florida  
Lions and alligators who burned their thumbs off in this last  
Cul-de-sac topped off in the purple rimmed estuaries of whatever was meant  
To be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Purple Tomorrows Of Our Violet Yesterdays

Reindeer underneath the windmills  
Drinking at the faces who exist for awhile in the valleys  
As yellow as the reflections of the sun  
In the wheels of bicycles: and anyway, this is how it goes  
In the yellow flowers of arcades:  
Or this is how it doesn't have to be, buried up to our necks  
In the gold mines of her wrists  
While the hummingbirds pirouette at her water fountains  
Waiting for her just desserts  
While she is too busy giving me hickeys, and waiting for her  
Lunch: Camarones del Diablas look so good on her lips  
And I swear to her that she is a red riding hood that  
Never has to go home to  
Her husband, and her children: she can bring them over anyways  
And teach me how to do laundry and cook enchiladas  
And we can look out together as the school buses cross the  
Street before the paper thin headstone of the pet cemeteries  
In their imitative estuaries:  
And then we can turn inwards anyways and kiss each others'  
Lips and believe in the purple tomorrows of our violet yesterdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Purple World

If all of a peacock was purple  
It would be a star—  
No cerulean or evergreen—  
No place for  
Mermaids to admire it—  
Purple fanning underneath the sun,  
Showing all of the tourists—  
All of the housewives that he is  
A man—maybe if they could love  
Through an everyday metamorphosis,  
They would wish upon him—  
To feed him popcorn  
And to make love to him—  
The usual hijinks between the orchards  
And the highways—in the singing  
Prisons where they they—  
But it is not possible for them to think of  
Him as anything else than a peacock,  
Even if all of purpled fanned—  
Though he is more beautiful than them—  
And at night,  
After the busses leave the animals naked  
Underneath the heartthrob heavens,  
He will count dreams to himself in  
His purple world—  
Think of all of the women he could have  
Married—  
If he were not only a peacock, a star in  
The purple world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Queen Of Typos

If I am a marginalized figure, will  
You write a screen play about me?  
Will we then go together to the juvenile  
Vineyards and run down those rows like dirty  
Wedding processions, throwing our fits;  
Because we have not won any awards for our  
Hard earned scars. We will carry the flag together,  
And I will kiss your greasy forehead as if this were Spain,  
And we will feed each other heliotrope orbs  
Before they can commit to the bottle: If I have  
You here, cannot I say that I hold in my hands evidence  
Of the signs of life, more available than any billboard;  
And even without permission, blow you in those  
Early morning mists even before the yawners awaken  
Lined up against the Pacific, for even if I am  
Taking a break from luxury cruises, I am still the  
Queen of typos. Now all the old gods are dead and  
Laid out in vivid lavender and they are playing reruns  
Over them, with uneasy laugh tracks trying to earn money  
But feeling terrible about it. Let them cover up the murders,  
And stuff what flowers they have sent into a tin horn to mute  
The crying dead: IF I have not loved the fermentations of the  
Bottle, I have not loved you, and if I could only learn to  
Quote Bukowski with the ease and girth of middle-class  
Pomposity, then it would be as if to draw the handkerchief  
From your neck and call the palest of bulls from  
The freshly painted barn.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Queen's English

I love speaking the queen's English  
So well, I could never be Mark Twain:  
Testing the depths of Mississippi's lips,  
To know the extemporaneous Ebonics  
Of rivers- No: My language is hers,  
Though sometimes it is better to believe  
In the purpose of animals: when they  
Leap and nip, the tortoise and the hare  
In briars and tar: The fields rustle, and  
The children play in lofts of daylight,  
And I know her legs run like streams  
With trout leaping the mountains of this  
Great country, bent at the knees.

In the lights of the university,  
She looks so trim, watching the sailors  
Get buff at the gym, and when in kindergarten,  
Right before rest, the teacher has a story  
To tell about grapes, like serpents, twined  
Into trees: the ones you can't taste  
Are often the best; I've tried to leap so far  
Off the ground, for sly is my toothy nature,  
Fox not hound; and in such stories the  
Vintage is fine, grapes are like her orbs  
Spilling with flesh, I turn down the bed,  
And douse all the lights, and wait for her  
To fall into grasp; and if she hesitates, I will  
Take my sweet time, knowing full well  
That grapes taste better as wine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Quiet Game Of Latchkeys

Stewardess go on planes all day,  
On long slick silver panes—  
They leap across the canals of my childhood like  
Double spaced lines,  
Like hoodlums, and rowdy n\*ggers—  
And things I shouldn't say:  
I get to look up their routine skirts,  
I get to skip rocks across their bellies  
Corrugated at the gyms,  
Made slick by the easily appealing aspirations:  
Everyone of them is beautiful,  
Everyone one of them whispers her name like  
The ocean annunciating out of a plump seashell,  
And I should pick one out and marry her,  
And put her in my band;  
They all say I can do this, but they are leaping so fast,  
Serving their clinking drinks,  
They make even well-shaven gentlemen calm and drowsy,  
And there they go leaping,  
Their skirts sashaying the bow-string aisle, pink amphibians,  
Their skirts deep Catholic blue,  
Pain-killers, their knees well-curved, swift opalescence,  
Unearthed Etruscan crockery;  
And I don't even know what it means,  
But I fold them up in my hands,  
Bosomy origami and watch them slip around the  
Ceiling fans,  
Slipping like ribbons along the currents of red  
Lips blowing kisses,  
And the midmorning talk shows proceed to evening  
Sitcoms,  
And my stomach grumbles watching the shadows  
Grow,  
And the grass quivers well-mowed outside the open  
Window,  
And I fold my knees up to my chin as I watch them  
Go, lickety-split, serving their hot toddies—  
Laughing the way pretty girls should do when they  
Are all done up in their sororities,

Like a bundle of sticks placed conveniently  
Beside the fires,  
Waiting for the door to swing open and end the  
Quiet game of latchkeys making time until  
Days draw close, and dresses slip under clouds,  
And home comes mommy.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rabbit Around The Imperfect Rock Garden

If I go away now into plaid and silver dreams to  
Sleep upon what else I know,  
There will be no use of you trying to find me,  
No classical illusions to the warm vase of your neck,  
No marks to denote where the roses or my fangs  
Have pressed:  
The sky will just come as lackadaisical and as slow  
As a snail,  
Like a small house in a very confined yard which will  
Squeeze the cleavages of hyperventilating housewives,  
Like gold fish in plastic bags;  
And there will be nothing that can be done for them:  
Their months will never end: their stomachs will stay just  
As premature as ill-begotten cantaloupe,  
And what they have to steal today will remain wide open  
Still waiting to be stolen tomorrow or yesterday;  
It will be like Easter, every young brother and sister so finely  
Dressed in gray; but it will lack muster and bright bouquet,  
And the dog will chase the rabbit around the imperfect  
Rock garden,  
But none of us will ever be able to capture our prey.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Racecourses Of Everyday

Ventilation seeming smoke, curling baseball players  
To the moon:  
Where the airplanes go anyways, arms like clocks spinning  
Upwards in the windmills that glow red hot:  
The time of loneliness is here: see it down the road,  
The fish in the blue canal, the rabbits in the red holes:  
Spokes of windmill fire,  
Feral encyclopedias- the magics of train robbers steal her  
Away from me,  
And her two children in department stores:  
Her husband a kind of bad dream,  
And the love she has called up like a dead child, marking  
Over her:  
She is a wave happening, chaos and black magic-  
And I see her from my citrus tree,  
Like seeing the messiah slipping into the bay: I can never have  
Her,  
But she is my eternity. To her, like a wounded amphibian  
Breathing in the early truth of her metamorphosis-  
A muse that shortens my life, defining it into a weapon  
Slipping low into its schools,  
Dashing upon the racecourses of everyday.

Robert Rorabeck

## The Racetracks Of Their Canals

In January my wife will be here—and I may or may not  
Still be a school teacher—but the fair will come,  
And I will have a companion to go with me to the fair—  
The light will circulate around the earth,  
Because the light is a youngish boy on his paper root—  
And candy will melt and decorate the apples—  
And upon the midway that are soon to migrate—I will  
Win my wife and soon to be first born child  
A gold fish— a golden metaphor for all of our love—  
And I will love her—even though I go about my ways silently  
Around these neighborhoods, too flawed to be anything  
More substantial—we will bloom our hearts together—  
And look out into the gardens of the morning,  
And to the wonderful hippocampus that compete together  
Nearby the televangelists in their churches beside the  
Busied highways and the racetracks of their canals.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rain Showers

Trees in the lost syrups of little girls,  
Dried up but making the asphalt stick, so when the  
Scattered firecrackers explode  
In their fraternity of dyspeptic claps, their paper  
Like red fingers splay on the road-  
The road kill of the infants of Chinese butterflies,  
Over which the traffic of housewives drives utterly  
Insouciantly, receding back home to the  
Premeditated weathers of their living rooms and offspring,  
Their thickets controlled,  
Their serpents starving- and their rabbits multiplying in  
The pretty teal gutters warming up to the bric-a-brac of lost  
Tennis balls, last weeks savings, and better lovers  
Under the blue crepuscule covers in a corrugated den  
Hibernating but crying only when the rain showers.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rain Showers Over The Zoo

You really pull the course to the side,  
Until all of the dogs stop running and all of the bets are off:  
I really don't know much about you,  
Alma, save that I wish you for my bride,  
And your symmetrical body like a pair of wings to swing beside:  
How I have loved you: I think that I have always loved you,  
Even while slipping like a throat cut trout through the  
Asphalt streams of high school:  
It was just that I didn't know you: It was just that I didn't know  
How to sing,  
But now you swing for me, Alma: and oh how you swing,  
And the last day we worked together you let me carry your watermelon  
To your car,  
But you wouldn't let me kiss you, you said it was impossible,  
But look at how much impossibility we accomplished for a couple  
Hours in one day:  
And you said that you thought my eyes were darker than my fathers:  
You said that you thought my eyes were the same color as my mothers,  
But you are wrong:  
I have brown eyes, the same as my father's,  
And my mother's eyes are blue, but that means our children could  
Have blue eyes,  
And we could name them after the sweetly captured animals in  
The rain showers over the zoo.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Rainbow's Excretions

And then in the rainbow's excretions- -  
The metamorphosis of another hero.  
Go and see where he is going—  
Probably to wrestle some primordial alligator  
Far on the other side of the city—  
As the cars flood away from his good side  
Like the evaporations of far too many angels—  
Even as you are invited in, I suppose it is well  
Before he gave up  
And the snows melted all to the snarling laughter  
Of our feral adversaries—  
And then, it just so happened, to be a dream  
That could not be awakened—  
And slumbered on—narcolepsy over the  
Architectures of the ribald highways  
While my mother grew older—  
And the sun slid across the earth like the  
Slew of a snake that was undressing itself  
To look pretty for the daydream of another  
Marriage.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rainstorms Don'T Exist

Call me until I rise,  
Necropolis-  
The dogs are scraping at the door,  
Or are they dogs?  
Let the sunlight eat you-  
And let it in.  
Make the dinner beautiful,  
Extending your jaw and clench,  
Creating a soldierly profile:  
Tattoo mandibles of insect royalty-  
Everyone deserves to look beautiful  
Before they die  
(If just for a little while) ,  
Soldier boy:  
Observe all the scars and bruises,  
The imperfections that yellow-jackets  
Have, like us,  
A very short life span  
Just above a spreading stain,  
Children crying on a bus: The rainstorms  
Don't exist,  
The chickens are hypnotized  
And in the sand,  
Doors that never close leading out to  
The holes where our twins  
Live,  
Wingless-amusement dropping from the  
Sky  
Who land like frogs or princes  
Singing all around the little girl on the swings  
Who used to bare your name,  
Who doesn't remember,  
Kicking her feet for some purpose or  
Momentum,  
Becoming a waveless miracle:  
Will she ever retire?

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rattlesnakes Always Lay In Wait And Smoking

Now I am really going anywhere:  
My heart feels like it is at the fair for Alma,  
And when she is gone then it feels as if time has stopped  
And the sky bleeds over my grave:  
Now I can say that I am sure that I have never been anywhere:  
And the sun lights up the world of smoking cars,  
And then it goes down again with the dogs and through  
The trees:  
And I dream of Alma in a giant's house, and it seems that she should  
Be my future but it is all uncertain.  
And mostly I have disgraced her, while her children has swam in the  
Depths,  
But Alma don't you think that my body looks good next to your body:  
The juxtaposition of the fleshes and the colors,  
And now the world turns again and we have to hold on and close our  
Eyes and feel the motion that is just a dream,  
But otherwise Alma I would always hold on to you and lead your safely  
Through the keyholes where the rattlesnakes  
Always lay in wait and smoking.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Raven Of Snow White

Scars fade like maidens into their bedchambers,  
Or at least I like to pretend:  
Pretend that I awaken beautiful, clay boy-  
Out summering by his amusements and shallow,  
caution less waters: see what I used to be,  
Sitting with my good side pressed next to you  
Like a giant moth in folklore; and read by the sun,  
And read by the sun- You came by speedy on  
Your bicycle, happy on; and you have places to go,  
Oh god, and pictures to pose for, other young  
Professional men to propose for,  
And all of this happened to you- Were you coming into  
Something beautiful, and really lucky- and you might  
Be out anymore diademing any corner of that red  
University- The successful avenues you took a track for,  
Became a success story, but still something most passed  
By; but when I get my night on, and burn my lungs by  
Little cheap ways, then your hair is still the raven of  
Snow white, and aren't you the fairest in all the land of  
Sundry amusements, taking your checks to the bank,  
Cuddling your new born puppies by the legalize of tennis  
Courts and sea: What you sued for was a poisoned apple,  
A broken promise, taming the ways of tall sure men;  
I watched you pass by on your bicycle like a river  
Who once remembered my name, and even called on me  
From time to time between classes whose utilitarian knowledge  
Beneath the spikenard and date palm is now, thankfully,  
All but forgotten.  
Though never evangelical, don't I still look out for you?

Robert Rorabeck

# The Reactionary's Defense

free will is certainly subjective, and really can only exist radically outside of any society, at a personal level, an individual religion, an individual language, so in this sense societies shape the collectivism of individuality; and it is a shame that given the opportunity to pursue freewill, so many are dazzled by capitalism and consumerism, and yet they are given the choice. I remain a product of my society, and yet open-mindedness does not conform to hatred, and your limerick clearly demonstrates hatred for the United States, and I believe what is being shown in the current state of the world is what has so often been shown in the past, a dualism of thought and self-identity defined by the other; it is very simple to rebel against the obvious fallacies of capitalistic gains, and yet in so doing result in a fallacy equally as great; so what is demonstrated in the seeming clarity of a pro/anti American stance is only the deficiency of weak comprehension. Surely, America is finite, as are all political states, and yet the opposition of the American standard is just as finite. Perhaps a greater cultural dimension will grow from the current conflict, but to place a certain political figure as an ultimate solution to current American/world dualism is grievously finite, and such jealous reactionism would arise given the subject's need to identify itself through opposition to the perceived object. I am rather apathetic to politics in general, and consider politicians and lawyers at sub par at best, while even amateur poets crack farts with the angels, but I am subjective enough to recognize the bias of reactionary hatred, because it suits us well so far. The countries mentioned are as finite and fallible as USA, the difference being that in large part they owe their current consciousness as a free people to the efforts and charities of America, and yet America, in return, as with any people, can stand to learn much through empathy. All that is demonstrated by these posts, however, is the Ego's need for some sort of recognition, and by decrying a foreign ideology, which has strangely in large part shaped your own construct of self. America is great, because I say its so, and that also makes me great; but what would really be super is a supreme isolation of the individual both artistically and spiritually for only through this form and realization can a person come to understand the himself ultimately.... Now I should go say hello to Susan, because the song is singing about her

Robert Rorabeck

# The Real Florida

I failed gym,  
But I climbed the highest mountain  
When the rest of the class was studying:  
In kindergarten  
She gave me her old shirt  
And then we fell asleep.  
She awoke and made love to  
Roman soldiers, though  
I took her with me on top of  
Every wave-  
She wasn't really there-  
So I went down driven by  
The rainstorm,  
And we slept in my truck alone:  
Look at the cat father found under my truck.  
Early spring,  
Look at the snow falling outside.  
If you read closely,  
Her looks are the words driven  
Before the sunshine,  
Though she doesn't see it anymore,  
As men pass from the lighthouse,  
Refusing to turn in.  
She is spoken in the palm's heart,  
And echoes in the shallows as men fish.  
She is pulling up to a little house  
Somebody lives in  
And this is the real Florida.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Real Shows

Inebriate in the thralls and resting everywhere:  
Going over this, like blue birds passing to nest somewhere  
Into the unisons of well lit living rooms with  
Entire families commingling there; or what it is that they seem  
To be doing:  
But resting all spun out like a spun out fair over which the  
Sky masquerades in its masquerading ballrooms:  
Full of its seasons of paramours just about for anyone,  
Each nimbus its own aphrodisiac cultivated by some giant  
And all of them in cahoots up there:  
And they make their own games for show, colliding  
Over our streets so unaware, as the baseball diamonds rest themselves  
At the edges of familiar bliss, and we all play our diminishing games  
Down here, far away from the real shows that just don't care.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Real Work Begins

I enjoy the irony of not being taken out to dinner,  
For writing bad poetry, and getting  
Away with it: And when the leggy substitute drops  
Like a bombshell into the room, to watch movies  
For the rest of the period,  
And notice the canopy of her interior skeleton  
Heave like a buxomy pink tarp as she sits at  
The head of the class, inhaling, flickering her temporary  
Eyes over the rows of boys.  
They lick their lips like suburban wolves as she  
Crosses her legs and her long-distance calves  
Flex: She exhales and it smells like rum, from  
What the pirates have done to her:  
I don't care, I still want her, and contemplate  
Asking her to prom, or abducting her on the way  
Out to her car, and thank god this isn't math, or  
I wouldn't know what to do; but now I have a plan,  
And I doodle a map on the desk, which spills like  
A silkworm's womb onto my hand, a pubescent jig-saw  
The Mexican lady will wipe clean over night,  
Doing away with the graffiti of my memory, as I ride  
The bus back into my carefully orchestrated habitat,  
And the real work begins....

Robert Rorabeck



# The Reason For Its Diamonds

And I will go up into another busied architecture  
Listening to all of the kissing bees  
In their bad architectures around the scarab knees  
Over the mountains where  
The stewardesses sing: and this is their song, mindless over  
The mineraled overpasses—  
Over all of the jaded architectures—over all of the busied  
And receded reservoirs,  
As I go up blindly bachelored—as she is trying to figure out  
Herself, herself, whilst it is still save,  
And the dogs make their own rounds over the railroad  
Tracks and over Easter,  
As they are paid to do—as another doe flights lightly over  
The snow that is melting into its nurseries of a hullabaloo—  
Until, finally, this is the reason of its baseball,  
And so  
So many of its things: this is the reason for its diamonds—as  
I am afraid—  
This is the reason for its rings.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Reason For Its Rings

And I will go up into another busied architecture  
Listening to all of the kissing bees  
In their bad architectures around the scarab knees  
Over the mountains where  
The stewardesses sing: and this is their song, mindless over  
The mineraled overpasses—  
Over all of the jaded architectures—over all of the busied  
And receded reservoirs,  
As I go up blindly bachelored—as she is trying to figure out  
Herself, herself, whilst it is still save,  
And the dogs make their own rounds over the railroad  
Tracks and over Easter,  
As they are paid to do—as another doe flights lightly over  
The snow that is melting into its nurseries of a hullabaloo—  
Until, finally, this is the reason of its baseball,  
And so  
So many of its things: this is the reason for its diamonds—as  
I am afraid—  
This is the reason for its rings.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Reasons For Your Name

Crooked jewel in the armpit of school-  
I slept underneath an overpass  
During math-  
And thoughts of you came, flooded with  
Reason and ennui-  
It meant nothing to society-  
The tortoise yawned but didn't know what  
To say-  
And the rattlesnake danced, and said it  
Was her art-  
Airplanes flooded across the canal-  
Like paper snowflakes-  
And I pretended to die for my grandmother,  
While telling myself perpetually that  
My lips would never again  
Have to taste the reasons for your name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Reasons That We Feel

The sun into the orchard of its pilgrimage:  
I will keep you hereâ€”I will not let you wonder far off:  
The rains will swell the wishing well over our  
Shoulders,  
But she is still no a safe bet: I will cry for you until  
There is sunshine raining across all of my scars:  
I will put you into new prisons of  
Museums and zoosâ€”until I treat you to ride across  
My shouldersâ€”  
And then I will carry you across the baseball  
Diamonds and the school yardsâ€”and I will keep  
You into the seamless greenery foreverâ€”  
Kissing your lips and amending to youâ€”our lips  
Blooming into the crepuscule of our distemperâ€”  
Each of us recalling how we feelâ€”  
Until we remember the reasons that we feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Recreational Deltas Of Your Soul

If I am here, you are here, counting our  
Wounds,  
Blessing our virginitas standing on our windowsills  
Propped up in a place,  
And I saw your browned body on Christmas:  
Alma: your daughter kissed me and felt like a  
Wave leaping out of the sea,  
And telling me things that I couldn't hear-  
The cars were like stars on the streets,  
And in two more weeks there will be a fair:  
So the bodies move, surcease and recreate-  
Recreational plateaus over easy through the city;  
And the family, bless them- Won't you?  
Green as the favorite colored world in your eyes:  
The only though I have all day:  
When will you cross my lonely threshold another  
Time:  
And when will I imbibe the liquor off the recreational  
Deltas of your soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Recreations Of A Ghostly Orchard

Palaces fed in the shadow of my liver,  
I had almost forgotten you:  
And this place you forage,  
Whispering all of your fairytales  
And combing your hair down to the knights  
Who wait with their pet alligators:  
Savagely,  
In the red-tongued everglades  
Through the hallucinations of the  
Turnpike, and loves I thought that I once had:  
Strangling visions that  
Feed me my liquor, and keep me unrequited  
Into the pretty hours where  
The shadows of your echoes feed me the  
Grapes in the recreations of a ghostly orchard.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Red Bricks Of Philosophical Capital

Careful lovers ignoring the words of this sinner;  
The way ideas come together like ants over the  
Motionless ankles in the grass;  
But there is only so many things that can be said to her,  
So many wounds before the battle drowns;  
There is only one queen in the sea of so many shades  
Of envy;  
And when she plays basketball her hair sways like  
Really great ponies;  
Then the airplanes waltz or they serenade; and I touch  
Myself just briefly before the open throats of  
Mailboxes while her parents are away,  
Square dancing in another state over. Maybe she is  
Trying to swim away too, using the interstate as her escape  
Route, rolling past the elaborate mirages of  
Orange groves and Shetland ponies so that I used to love  
You's can only come like whispers to her now with her  
Ear pressing like the most delicate of a virgin's senses to  
A freshman's pillow,  
While she dreams of other boys all night, and wakes up  
Drooling like a bluebell, like a stewardesses who smells like  
Wildflowers;  
And then she goes out into the yard under the red bricks of  
Philosophical capital and kicks the ball around,  
Just as I knew her once to do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Redder Than Red

There they languished and waited for the dragon  
To come-  
He came, expecting a hoard of gold, like conquistadors,  
But finding only brown lovers in  
The ardor of  
His disbelieving jungle: what did he find but then,  
And took to obsessing over the feminine one,  
Took to calling her name into the empty  
Wells in the middle of his dungeons  
Where the skeletons danced  
And kept up their tomfoolery- where he tried  
Not to laugh, and he could not cry:  
Where the redder than red blooms grew: he supposed  
He drew them,  
But in the end he could never say if he ever knew.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Reddest Berry

The reddest berry is never seen—eaten by blind  
Lips before the average means produce it—  
The deepest love enjoyed by the pests at midnight—  
Blooming for awhile  
Like the incest of a cannibalistic mother—  
Ripened pestilence above and beneath what  
The middle-class can enjoy,  
But blooming in riots while the popular news is not  
Around—  
Faithful nudity in the sand dunes of a blue boy's  
Wet dream—  
A showgirl's feathers making a cerulean crèche  
For what he paid her to do—  
Blooming habitual in the playgrounds of foul weather  
The city officials would have destroyed at the  
First rumor—  
The rapture of a thousand criminals—migratory as  
The jet streams across the pearlescent avenues  
That cannot be controlled by the societies of  
Men.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Regular Crypts

They put the nameless men  
Whose mothers have died  
Into the regular crypts.

Two black men carry him out  
Of the apartment in California,  
Where he must have sat for  
Some while waiting for  
His unfamiliar friends-  
Not wanting to be discovered,  
He'd swallowed the few pages  
Of his unfinished novel,  
The way a spy swallows microfilm:  
There in his unfocused eye, though,  
Like an imperfection,  
A fleck of failing memory,  
Not one single government worker  
Noticed, was the reflection  
Of her he still carried with him.  
Who could this woman be?  
Do you see her here,  
In the corner of his eye?  
And here again,  
As if it was her at the very last?  
Whose name we can only guess,  
Who continued even in some small  
Part to affect his physical carriage  
Who could this woman be?  
Who could this woman be?  
Was she even from our time?

That concludes our presentation.  
Will someone please turn on the lights,  
So we can head out for lunch.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Remains Of Your Stolen Ribs

You have gone home and crepuscule forebodes and wreathes  
The yards,  
And I have forgotten how the spelling is of anything good:  
And maybe it is because I have a hard time feeling the remains of  
Your stolen ribs,  
Even though you crossed me today, Alma, and in our out of work  
Truancies we made love,  
Like tasting the hidden bottle of angels, so that all of the cars had  
To park  
And movies were watched, as unicorns drank deeply the eyes  
Of other unicorns,  
While their beautiful fairytales were so high up with nose bleeds  
In their aerie castles;  
And you told me that you loved elephants: I suppose I said that  
I would never forget,  
And we swung down across each other, my pale loins in your  
Brown,  
And never was my mouthless hunger more satisfied than when we  
Did all of those things today, you swore that we shouldn't have done.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Residue Of Visions

Comparative to the structure of your eyes:  
Bending back, brown-stemmed visions of places  
Lactating in the milkweeds,  
Feeding the big-lipped minnows—  
Switch-back from the dens of housewives,  
Hidden away with the jewels of extinct Indians:  
Somewhere around here,  
A latchkey child,  
A lost love—an almost thing—  
New abbreviations in the spring, and her words  
Are gone from the indistinct pages  
I could never find the words to fill  
But heard them like the residue of visions that  
Had already come and gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Resonance Of My Children

Laughter harkens finely from a distance,  
Hear the resonance of my children as their mother bathes them-

I drink from a three dollar wine bottle,  
Christening the only writing I've done since Christmas:  
Sipping off the love of Saints and other superstitions I try  
Hard not to believe in:

But here it is,  
Another day going down, and bodies melting superflously  
Into beds like wilting flowers into gardens-  
Their airconditions humming like moths trying to  
Write love letters to their abandoning fairies:

The absentminded wishes of anywhere:  
The night takes off her clothing in the school yard  
And dances around, flirting with abandoned bicycles:

Who look up into the bilious sky where airplanes go  
Leaping forever like fawns  
Across their ethereal fountains:  
And I think they have no reason to ever touch down into  
Our lives again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rest Of My Days

There might be a song in the night of birds,  
And thousands and thousands of stories of great deals:  
The princess just might love me if this is how she feels:  
Or she is probably just keeping me captivated in the  
Sugar-land shade  
While the apiaries make their honeys into blouses of  
Marmalade; and as she tells me she loves me,  
Her lips stamp on repercussions of flesh: she thinks of entire  
Squadrons of other men sliding down poles or  
Climbing up ladders: the boy who saved her cat on Valentines  
Day,  
And all the world was whole, and she had never fallen down  
Or bruised anything;  
And in the morning she might kiss me, but I know she's going off  
To get another tattoo, the pictures scarred into her flesh  
Telling the truth she will never say to me,  
Light upon her body like paper dolls, like designs on airplanes;  
Like scars given after birth, like candles burned out on a birthday  
Cake:  
And then I sit and watch her in the shade of some kitchen,  
Some tree's shade wimpling her through the blinds, before I have  
To go to work and she has to go back to washing the dishes,  
And dreaming her things that are too precious and caustic  
That to ever share with me who petrify me in the stage of a basilisk's  
Gaze, and into a graveyard of gray topiaries with the living-dead  
Pets I would be forced to pine away the rest of my days.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rest Of My Life

And there was a castle I invaded  
When I slept with you for eighteen months intermittently—  
The sea would come in  
And half destroy it—we would put it back together in  
A bedroom of mulatto salt—  
Astonishing, that I couldn't fit all the way inside of you the  
First couple of times,  
Even though you'd born two children on your way here  
From Mexico—  
And all of the songs I sang of you, and to you—  
Hoping to win our castle from the sea—  
But you could not give up its grandeur—how it was  
Able to destroy what I knew of you entirely—  
How you went back to him every night—your neck  
Pulled and bitten by the moonlight,  
Leaving me with the things I of immortality I saw  
While we were together—  
Until I gave up, finally, and happily married—and  
So fought for the rest of my life.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rest Of Our Lives

I'll get up at noon and whisper out of my jail cell—  
With my dog at my feet  
And the roads moaning, carrying up to mountains  
Where entire populations of windmills sleep—  
I don't think you can remember where she placed herself,  
Even though you can struggle up—  
After we have run away and each of us lied to ourselves  
And laid down like plastic flowers in the graveyards—  
I am just so sorry that it happened,  
That the paper snowflakes fell from your eyes,  
Folded up love letters in the middle of the meadow of  
What was supposed to be sunshine's class—  
Even though we were about to go to jail for the rest of  
Our lives.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Rest Of The Way To Her

Unoriginal swan in the middle of the street  
Do you not know that it never snows here- and if  
You have come to see your similar beauty in  
The conflagrations of the sea,  
You are still several blocks away: the Mexicans live  
Here, and the boil mermaids and ad Chili:  
They are all out of work, though they promise to  
Work so hard if they ever get any- and that  
Is why they are so hungry. I saw one at the very  
Top of a mango tree climb right through the air  
And kidnap and airplane: he took it back across  
The rivers of Mexico in a joyride to show his family:  
And if all of my money is lost, who am I to care:  
And if she is also lost, it will not bother me:  
She was someone else's wife all along, but it  
Was I who stole her heart and ate it out in the naked  
Air before her gloriously careworn family-  
So swan, your beauty is in the wrong neighborhood:  
You have floated over so many anthills and baseball  
Diamonds that I am sure if you pick up the majesty  
Of your beautiful wings you can almost make it  
All of the rest of the way to her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rest Of The World

Every night dies into a new month: they die, like little school  
Girls who have nothing else to believe  
In, who have his name tattooed into the web of their brown  
Hand,  
Alma- and nothing else about it has to be real; and you don't even  
Have to be a good girl.  
Alma: but I still love you tonight, as I would love you any other  
Night,  
Even though this world is so cruel and unhindered;  
And don't you hear me, Alma: even while he is touching  
And making love to you:  
He is hardly even enough: he is only the pitiful,  
And he has given you two children full of flesh and breath, but any  
Man can give you that trick;  
But who, otherwise, can give you this- Alma,  
Alma, If you ever read this and I still somehow survive,  
Please remember that my lips aren't just the smoky whispers  
Of some used up genie; and that I am still right here,  
While the traffic purrs and purrs,  
And the rest of the world makes love and mows its front yard:  
That can be anyone, Alma; but oh god, Alma, only I-  
Only I can be this....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rest Of This

Underneath the  
Travelers palms,  
The pilgrims  
Stopped  
And ate  
Box lunches before  
Reciting their  
Salty psalms  
And the chorus lines  
Of bruised eyed  
Catholic girls  
Powdered  
Their lips;  
And well, oh well,  
You get the gist....  
Of the rest of this....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Restless Shadows

Beautiful and sudden ventriloquism doing away  
With all of the harpies so I just have Medusa to deal with,  
And her cave is really beautiful and filled with cars;  
Oh, I wish I had my own butterfly, this diminutive woman with  
Wings who is attracted by the light of the television, or  
By the words I haven't yet parceled together for her like fruit baskets  
For truly deserving brides;  
And I will go out and vagabond for a block tonight all amongst the  
Constitutions of black men, even though  
I had my own skull pressed by a gun right here: When I jaunt  
It almost appears as if I am quite beautiful, and so I run out and kiss the  
Pavement and imagine all the ladies fanning their opulence above it  
And reciprocating with the moonlight:  
Alma in the moonlight, hair fire-engine red in shadows, the cats passing  
By underneath the coliseums and the civil wars, and the anonymous  
Victims of her love spread out in beds they can never afford,  
Spread out open mouthed and opened tongued,  
Waiting for the sky to open to reveal their lord, while the vagabonds and  
Hobos attend restlessly to their stone pillows, like liquored up lords  
Of my kidnapped but happy youths,  
All of them the blond haired sacrifices for something sharp but beautiful,  
Attending to the restless shadows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Reverberations Of Your Name

One more day and I'll have the semblance  
Of beauty again,  
As if her fingers were on the strings of a  
Wicked marionette,  
But it never lasts forever- It really doesn't  
Even last as long as a few words spoken  
Into the cornice of her ear,  
Before all that she thought is persuaded out  
And eaten for some long beaked dinner;  
But there are cars that last forever,  
And bouquets who have gone into hiding in  
The Colorado rockies whose throats still  
Sing  
Under the unpinned ears of the clouds,  
Who smile like a zoo of animals,  
While the cabins are hibernating in a fever,  
And you are selling your wines,  
Forgiving the independence of snowflakes  
Falling, or whatever it is that you do:  
While, laid out on the alluvial plane the crypts  
And graveyards last forever,  
Their cut stones singing the reverberations of  
Your name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rhyme Of This Thirsting Tongue

I am well done:  
Getting felt up, and filled up,  
On the Disney World tram,  
The ancient roller coasters, and parades  
Of ancient mice  
(Where were you, anyway,  
And can't you feel me now,  
As I call you?)  
Then, for the senior trip, I was  
On a little bit of ecstasy, trying to figure out  
Myself in the reflection of the rented bus'  
Gaze,  
And the little half Jewish girl waved,  
Some five years or more before she became a  
Lawyer: And I am happy, and just as healthy,  
That I will live for a century, for sure, ha! ha!  
Shakespeare, and she is a bartenderess high on her  
Luck:  
When she was an outdoor waitress, she  
Kissed my neck,  
But who in the hell is the he she does f\*ck.  
Westminster Abbey, drive dump truck-  
These Venetian blinds are made of bubbly, replaceable  
Glass, 400 monuments and some weddings in here;  
And the roller-coasters are cliché,  
And my poetry should just be criticized for being totally  
Drunk,  
But come July 4th, I will make a buck,  
And hide my wallet in the inevitable clichés of her  
Tw\*t, but I have said that before,  
In the food court of her obese malls, and not in  
Her flea markets: Still, it is funny how she looks at me,  
And how I show up in her photographs of,  
.... And I wonder still if that is how she will find me,  
So many years after she has failed,  
That I have loved her, unpointed in the recessive sea,  
Basking in the maul of this star, I pretend,  
And she can find me still, if she is in the mood for  
The rhyme of this thirsting tongue.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rhyming Ribald

Night in gabardine  
Stuck his fist in  
The prom queen.  
Until Chanticleer  
Screamed this dawn  
Came near riding  
Butt naked on the sun.  
Thus night dispersed  
In tendrils fled  
Streaming into his crypt  
Like a bannered warlord.  
The prom queen blushed,  
On night she crushed,  
But she married the sun  
Because her parents said  
He had a respectable job;  
But every eve while he  
Sank to work in the sea's factory,  
Night came scratching on  
The backdoor.  
She let him in,  
Thus gave to sin  
As his shadow fist-f! cked  
Her on the floor.  
Until dawn came riding  
Butt naked on the sun once more.  
Minced in a pie,  
Chanticleer could not cry,  
Thus the sun found night  
Elbow deep in his wife,  
And with daylight  
Revealed her a whore.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Rhythms Of Your Very First And Last Loves

I don't want to have to give you up:

The night is still on fire, the animals are still running like

A fable of a bad cartoon:

The windows just get higher until they get nose bleeds over

The green fields in the memories of my first

Masturbations

Over which the ceiling fans turn remembering the zoetropes of

Paper airplanes,

And calling up all of the missing paths like the mining of

Ants and ant lions in the metamorphoses of the Colorado

Rockies;

Until all of the sky is a bath over your brown body, as on your

Elbows run its brown cadences,

And the heartbeats stop and start to the rhythms of your very first

And last loves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rich Layers Of Unawares

Young girls sweating out in their tree houses of  
Steam, or I suppose that they do:  
And your second youngest child is a little girl named Gracie;  
And she stares up into the places of sky over the  
Cankers of citrus;  
And the airplanes leap and emote;  
And in the trailer, your reciprocate with your husband,  
The strange but expected species underneath the pinpricks  
Of so many stars  
And I am like one of their satellites to you;  
I see you in the parks of darkness,  
And look at strange clusters of coral:  
I wait to listen to you, and I admire your ear; and you wear  
Sunglasses, which hide your eyes,  
Though I think you should never do this; and you shouldn't  
Smoke;  
And I forgot to ask you today if you'd permed your hair,  
Or what that signified;  
But even still the satellites beeped down their signals;  
And Gracie slept and then fawned somewhere,  
Drawing little things shades of vermilion and maybe  
Grizzly Bears:  
I wander what she was drawing in the world you made her in,  
Mother and daughter deep and drowsy,  
So narcoleptic and utterly beautiful and captured in the  
Rich layers of unawares.

Robert Rorabeck

## The Riches Which Were His To Explore

If of course these eyes are the hungry avenues  
Along your very Egyptian neck,  
And you sell wine and are already thinking of making space  
For another child,  
Do not worry about me: I promise you I am mundane,  
And I am not very beautiful;  
And I have loved other women than you, if I have loved;  
And I have not shrunken all that much,  
But I have shrunken, but around that time you gave me  
A certain type of unrequited poem dissimilar to  
Any other sort of romantic poem I have written;  
And I say I have seen angels in your bone structures,  
Or maybe even an entirely new continent good for the fingers  
Of your husband's body to explore,  
If his mind had the know how and where with all,  
As mine should have; which is does not; but yours is a  
Fairytale place not with standing,  
And your daughter will grow up as tall and beautiful and  
Heavyhearted as her mother, never knowing how easily he  
Placed her in you, never once conceiving the riches which were  
His to explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ridge Of Empty Trees

If you drive into the fire you will see how the  
Fire works, how the deer and the bear run over even the finest  
Of maidens-  
How the tourists stop to listen and count the antlers  
Running alongside the road,  
Until even they are consumed: the sun is a muted thing,  
A king twisted in his throne, and gagged by a witch who is cackling  
As she burns all of the pretty horses of a heedless knight:  
There he is on the ridge of empty trees with my mother:  
All silver as they feed the horses,  
The flames surrounding him- even the reintroduced wolves  
Have run away.  
What can I say to him that he will not laugh at? What can I promise  
Him that he will not disbelieve?

Robert Rorabeck

# The Right Key To Sing

Tonight is meaningless without  
Red wheelbarrows or empty rooms where  
The pines are sleeping awaiting the borrowed  
Day,  
For the gods to come awake, long legged,  
Shaved, to begin their routines at the gym-  
As I begin mine here, sweet demiurge,  
Prometheus discontinued,  
Robbing armored trucks,  
the last of his kind who can barely  
Even spell, searching for the next to last line  
To nail his prom date to the wall-  
Ironically, not a pugilist but with a swollen jaw  
Muscle twisted with a bit of wire, a cyst,  
Political cartoons to draw- Everyday waking up  
In the maze in the sky, overweight but wanting to fly,  
Idolizing King Kong, wanting to pluck the stewardess'  
Bra, like a flower,  
Discovering who she loves but not knowing her,  
And then to discard the rest of the crew into the burnished  
Caesuras so far away from anyone you ever knew,  
To let her bathe by squeezing nimbus,  
Waiting for another chance to shrink into her room,  
Wary of the freshman class of knights who've  
Read the wanted ads and are perpetually climbing the  
Beanstalk way up to your fiberglass preserve devoid  
Of herons or song birds- just her weeping kind  
Of romance, or getting her drunk until she realizes she  
Loves you and she's lost her underpants:  
Wayward ideas which want to swing perpetually,  
Living forever but going nowhere,  
Forgetting the way home,  
Never learning the right key to sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The River It Ruined

Be a word, or bright thing,  
Light-bulb, pillow-fight of pumice  
Light:  
Imitating a young Frank O'Hara,  
I ask the little girls what they are reading.  
They don't care,  
They've read two hundred novels this  
Summer:  
They're on a quest- They've figured out  
Green iron keeps away elves,  
But they have to use it three times,  
Three times,  
Three times: And all the horses in the valley.  
Are horses color-blind; and the rest of the valley  
Had its mug-shot taken,  
Was tired of the pantheisms of the western hemisphere  
Always kicking out the day;  
It went quite peacefully: it was priest going to  
Proselytize the other end of the earth- Go tell your  
Mothers what she's worth;  
And I picked these daisies for you, but the educated man  
Called them weeds; and I was pretty sure it was weeds (then) ,  
Ashamed to have picked it for you  
Standing indisposed watching the cars grow  
In their rows,  
Like old friends out of birthday cakes  
Or dragon fangs was how it ended like the fair book said it,  
Like a picture outside a dun fort of beautiful dead  
until the river it ruined.

Robert Rorabeck

# The River Too Deep To Pray

I am moving now,  
Floating past my old captain on  
The rocks,  
Still calling out the depths  
Even though his ship is sunk.

I am invested now even though  
The current is too wide and deep  
For me to make it to the safety  
Of either riverbank;

And the sun is going down,  
Releasing a purse of crocodiles,  
As I imagine how her legs are lying down  
Like an archway of a national moment  
Taking a breather from the flash-bulb tourism,  
From all the pretty shirts,  
The petty smiles; she dims her torch,  
And yet silently, black-jetted,  
She runs on for many miles;

And I am steeped in her,  
And I will continue to do my good works in  
Her until I drown, until the little foal is too weak  
To nurse and thus lies down, and all the lights  
Bleed into night as she does his thing,  
But the blessed river is too wide and deep  
To pray for blessed rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The River Where You Were Sent

Bullies on the sidelines of my love  
Looking at the underbelly or penumbra  
Of the arc hidden in the Swedish alps  
Like voyeurisms of milkmaids  
The long daylight gives equal  
Dividends to both sides  
Of the canal,  
But upon only one side can we live,  
And the paper airplanes  
Are thrust away,  
And the fireworks are spent, while  
I spend so much time loving you,  
But you can never love me, gone-  
Flown across the river where you were sent.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Road That Hides Our Souls

It feels no better, drinking the leaky poisons of  
The serpents-  
The fruiteria up the road as bright as a carnival where  
I can no longer grow:  
Beautiful things who are budding from her lips and  
Breasts,  
As she tells us all of the things that we want to hear just  
So we don't kill ourselves-  
The livestock frolicking on, both real and make-believe,  
The kinder ones sticking their heads out from  
The cars and smiling, smiling  
As they pass us on the road that hides our soul along its  
Ways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roads Again

I sweat at the angles that she can love me in,  
Like angels holding out,  
Still reading underneath the softening pyramids,  
Or the lamplight of dousing lighthouses:  
And some young man discovers electricity and  
Horses  
While the housewives run away across the  
Canals- they become the pornography of an  
Endangered species-  
Strung out and freckled for the wet tongues of  
Puppies,  
And when the daylight floods the roads again-  
At first beautiful, and then harsh-  
Why, they are nowhere to be seen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roads That Would Not Turn Around

Remember the roads that would not turn around,  
The rainy cul-de-sacs and all of their pornographies—  
Remember how you just got lost as  
A little boy  
And to solve all of the problems for  
Yourself,  
Your seven fingers so sticky from the candy?  
And when you were a child  
And the littlest yard on Haverhill  
They have now paved in with a two lane road—  
And across the caved in street all  
Of the broken down chassis so chock full of  
All of that pornography—  
So the public school system won't let you teach  
In the classroom anymore—  
And the job you used to have,  
But now you can just go home and get drunk  
And dream of candy—  
The sea horses and the manatees—  
The baseball games underneath of the wayward  
Palm trees—  
The bases crowded with the boys with the scabby  
Knees  
And the patrol cars that never have to check  
Up—because they are all going for home base,  
Their lights blazing—  
Open throated inside of the song of the little  
House—  
The songbirds inside a seashell of rainstorms—  
And all of the emptied houses ending up  
Down near the canals that gave themselves  
Over to the roses of virgins throwing themselves  
Upon the hard-shelled roads of anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roar Of Engines Along The Edges

Let me take you to the places on the side,  
The green pastures and ivied slopes that drip  
With anticipation, waiting for us to couple in  
The writhing jade undergrowth,  
A pastoral that Hardy once thought of, only  
He couldn't understand the metal streaming of breathless  
Cars shooting like modern insanity upon their  
Slick stoned rivers.

Let us touch our wetness's to each other's parts,  
And take turns pollinating our mouths like busy insects  
Dabbing upon the pistils of divine floral, budding mammalian,  
With bits of each others' kisses smeared along the precipitous rim,  
The way our ancestors did it disrobed and flaunting  
Newly aroused peaks filling in cavernous bloods  
Wishing to geyser, flow, and pool  
Into the other and then to evaporate to the beat of drums on a crackling  
Yellow savannah whose only borders are the wildfires whose  
Flames stampede....

Watched by the animals whose lives flash in  
Hungry succession, who only have time to copulate  
Once or twice before they die and are utterly forgotten....

Let their blind fears tremble upon us, so that our  
Hands may learn the feral touch of instinctual hunger,  
And our eyes come to know only the motions swinging on their visions,  
And to understand by the growth of hungry irises upon our lights,  
How we wish to move upon the other, in steaming cascades,  
Which cause the evaporation of dews, and a drying of the  
Forest in which we linger in mist draped upon one another,  
So banks of fog move like velvet curtains upon the gladed boudoir  
And drown out the now unfamiliar noises of cities  
And streets, smothering the forest, silencing all the minute  
Cicadas shedding, crickets chirping, snakes slithering, cow's chewing....

So there is no longer a sound on the forest floor, nor  
The roar of engines along the edges, only the drumming of our  
Hearts which thump the sound of our borders disappearing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rocket That Shot Away

The world is freezing  
On the other side of the moon.  
No one sees the silver trees dying  
Amidst the little boys.  
How many invisible levels must be completed  
Before you find her waiting in the secret room?  
Up the hidden ladder, which the mathematicians  
Had predicted,  
But she's lost her heart  
And the way down to the sea. The sky is in  
A plastic bag- it can not breathe.  
She can only watch you go down  
Like an airplane fireballed,  
While she masturbates atop the red velvet  
Of the curtains you bought her,  
Before her mind turned into the golden  
Arrow that knocked you off your horse,  
And put your breath in the bag with a  
Little fish.  
And something about all of this reminds you  
Of a father, who moved into the gardens  
Beside the highway to sleep with a younger  
Woman, while your mother staid at home  
And roamed the kitchen like a butchered  
Banshee, screaming out the window  
Across the canal- the crickets and alligators,  
And the lions down the street in the zoo  
Serenading her as they execute the moon  
From the second story  
Where nothing remains,  
Placing it's feet in the places where  
You remember stepping before you made  
Yourself into the rocket that shot away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rocky Spittle Of Your Bay

I am too much an amateur to trespass your shores,  
And mingle in the calligraphy of the little sea snails,  
Though my older brothers might leap and play within  
Your lips' matriculations for nautical hours,  
I only eat ice-cream from the beach in the lucid  
Light of day,  
Though your dress is sweeping beneath your bared breasts,  
And you are swooning as best you may,  
The children who go into you are too young to know  
The way you kidnap them in your womb,  
While the ships harvest your cornucopia's spume,  
I lay amongst the rocky spittle of your bay- Your  
Charm is in the hypnotism of your dance,  
And the sculpture of your lulling waves, but I would not  
Want to fall to scorning chance,  
Thus I only read amidst the rocky spittle of your bay,  
Where the sea-doves cry from your romance,  
And the man-o-war scatter like suffocating electricity.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roller Rink Shore

Hoard me to the basement,  
My concrete love:  
This is where I warm and cuddle with  
My mutts,  
While the better placed angels are upstairs  
Yammering, the birthday cake sl\*ts:  
And this is why, this is why I have so many  
Books- Hide my beautiful features in books,  
Talk up a page,  
Try to out-mind the yammering,  
Birthday cake sl\*ts:  
This why it is better you don't know me in  
Any degree,  
Because my whole soul is churning like the  
Pedaled-neck snapping of a butter-cup;  
And it is better than I love you from the bottom  
Of a dried up inland sea  
Where the elk arise fully formed from the  
Harrows of dragon fangs,  
Where the shadows of pre-ancient sea life  
Are still crowding to the wispy shoals;  
Because I saw you roller-skating one day down  
The halls of high school;  
But I really didn't, I really didn't see you,  
But shut my eyes and made a wish, pouted so  
Deeply for you,  
A roller-skate dish; but I fear for my soul, vociferous  
And afraid that if you came over you'd be just another  
Birthday cake maid: One of those sl\*ts,  
Or one of them wh\*res, with yammer and hollerings  
Once angels but no more, ovoid and holding  
Hands all around the roller rink shore.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Romantic Cartographs

Everybody was gossiping while I looked away into the  
Sea and you came over to my house in the morning,  
But you would not kiss me open mouthed-  
I will die, Alma, without the mirages from the wells of your caves,  
And from the gods that you give me,  
And their little graves, while the hounds bask in the cemeteries atop  
The open graves,  
And the mausoleums are washed anew;  
And I give you roses and I dream of taking you to the zoo:  
I dream of changing all of my clothes and becoming more beautiful for you,  
While the day washes away into the green parades of  
The forest rangers who are greener than you knew;  
And it is easy, and it is fun to climb the mountains into the places  
Higher than you ever knew,  
Where I can sip my rum and look straight down on you:  
Here is the places in which you have become, with your soft, familiar  
Songs swinging all around you:  
The cars hustle and they bum, and I have never seen anything sweeter than  
Who you are,  
Alma, even if you are out all night with other men, even if I am not  
Beautiful enough for you:  
I create the songs the caracole the amusements of your sad eyes:  
Alma, your eyes are so far away in the soft but poisonous sub consciousnesses  
Of Mexico:  
And there you are playing cards and conquering, and when you look up  
Into my eyes, it seems as if the entire stage is lighting up,  
And it seems as well that I will live forever in the soft brown love letters  
Of your skin that I have caligraphed in the romantic cartographs for you to  
View.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Romantic Rumble

They woke up the splintered morning  
After the rumble:  
The beach was jeweled with green beer bottles,  
Iron knuckles, lost teeth and pride;  
But the waves still came the same  
Unending pugilists of fragile glass,  
The shattered surrendering at the end of the line:  
The blue beasts giving up into boot prints-  
Into the young crab's sidestepping dance at the prom;  
No one had died, but they had wanted to,  
They had beaten so badly into each other  
The needs to surrender and change;  
The clouds uneasy priests too light to approach:  
They hung back in the alters of the crowd  
Spent all that they had in the falling light,  
The salt of blood cut with sea salt,  
Maybe tears,  
And the incomplete dialogues of youth;  
Each species of bird crying in hungry neutrality  
As the pretty faces were beaten into burger;  
Until, in conclusion, the two left standing found  
Love, and the motion changed:  
The plain jane touched bruised lips to the slender john,  
And they made impromptu romance in  
The breaking waters of the Somme....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rood Of The Resurrection Poem

I will look at you from here  
Where I am broken, where I don't belong  
Literally across the world  
From our vanished paradise—  
Where, some three years ago now  
I made love to you some sixty times  
Underneath the primary colored  
Helicopters and  
Airplanes  
Everyone one of them with their own paisley  
Stewardesses—  
But you don't have to know about them,  
Because you never went to school in America—  
But you became a citizen.  
I was supposed to help you,  
But we just made love in my bed before  
Going to work in the fruiteria—  
Now my Chinese wife is pregnant again—  
And my life continues like a bottle rocket upside down  
In an aquarium—  
This scarred exegesis, resurrect to be like a lizard  
Basking underneath of your pyramids—  
I drink white wine left over from our  
Wedding two years ago—  
Fifty proof wine, unlike anything  
They have in America:  
It helps me to see you again,  
Put a—delinquent muse who never truly saw me—  
See me now resplendent in my anonymity—  
A Christmas arcade:  
I am the tree you cut down underneath the moon  
Only to become the rood of the resurrection poem.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roof Of His Mind

This is how they helped the scores of the word,  
This is how the swordfish and the seahorses tangled in  
A ballroom of kelp and sunken heirlooms;  
Or this is how it never happened, how it all drunk alone  
And got hardened and set out on a quest:  
This is how the dragons ate their heroes and hen glugged into  
The west;  
Or this is all of the words that I could never sing:  
This is the youngest of girl-children I somehow couldn't save:  
This is the Easter egg I could never find,  
Or this is just the dying butterfly in the forests of Mexico  
Who has made it so far only to be patterned like a deciduous  
Leaf to finally know that its poisons could do it no  
Good and that it must be buried above the earth and to be  
Forgotten with alma, with his very soul being stuck to  
The roof of his mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roof Of His Mind

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This is how the swordfish and the seahorses tangled in  
A ballroom of kelp and sunken heirlooms;  
Or this is how it never happened, how it all drunk alone  
And got hardened and set out on a quest:  
This is how the dragons ate their heroes and then gluttoned into  
The west;  
Or this is all of the words that I could never sing:  
This is the youngest of girl-children I somehow couldn't save:  
This is the Easter egg I could never find,  
Or this is just the dying butterfly in the forests of Mexico  
Who has made it so far only to be patterned like a deciduous  
Leaf to finally know that its poisons could do it no  
Good and that it must be buried above the earth and to be  
Forgotten with alma, with his very soul being stuck to  
The roof of his mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roof Of The House Again

Down in a hutch where damp stars pool,  
Like heliotrope dragonflies who tried to cross  
The cut-up ocean,  
Drinking the sharp milks of lactating rattle-snakes,  
I don't know why I sing,  
Like a dog excited to get out into the back yard  
Where its wild cousins are taking down a foal;  
And I upstairs, tiptoeing to sneak tomato sandwiches,  
Fresh looks at foreign exchange students open  
Bloused with the tongues of their uncanny glades,  
Everyone has entered their own loneliness of  
Beliefs: She was so young when she started acting and  
Fell from the sky, and I am unsure if I am succeeding at  
This, but there are only a few sips left and the coffin  
Will be dry, allowing every kind of us to float up  
To the roof of the house again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roses

In the end,  
A rose bought in a store of amusement,  
Captivated her heart for a very second,  
But her heart was reclaimed the  
Very next second  
By a similiar rose and on and on—  
The fickleness of the female muse—  
She loved me and she loved me not  
Until she forgot me entirely  
And all of the roses that I unfortunately bought.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roses Bloom, The Crocodile Smiles

Going up and up into the world  
Only an hour after you have awakened,  
With your wings spread  
And the sunlight feeling so good and filled  
With so many unpredictable  
Numbers:  
A pinwheel of spokes and architectures,  
Each one burning off for a minute  
Over the skeletons and the blue prints of  
A newborn city:  
And it all seems to be a little less reclusive  
Or many up of the cornucopias over the  
Pollinations:  
While the prom girls are dressing out or coming  
Down the aisles- while all of this has  
Just been words,  
As the roses bloom,  
As the crocodile smiles.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Roses Of Stolen Ribs

Fleet as the cannons go, coughing their verbs  
Through the melting snow:  
As it happens right here, along the long drooling jaws  
Of the hermaphrodites  
Doing wanders to their pillows, like starving conquistadors  
That confront the satellites across the insurgencies  
Of archipelagoes,  
And then go away mumbling to eat their horses:

And to fanfare and woebegone symmetry: to any of this  
And all of this at once:  
To what was never any grandmother's vanity anyways:  
To cloy armpits and to smitten, love smitten, cash;  
And then to falling away like embers and popinjays,

Across the heath rows and cornstalks on the other side  
Of canals where my busy hands, my busy suburban hands have  
Spend so many fireworks,  
Manhandling, pinwheels, to all sorts of aristocracies:

Until the last light flames, and it is time to turn in: and her brown  
Is dun anyways, and comes no more, but like wax spent off of a candle  
Into a house of butterflies rests without repose,  
While all that was inside of her, her breathe, her alma, vanishes into  
The elements, perfumes airplanes with the roses of stolen ribs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roses Of Stolen Rips

Fleet as the cannons go, coughing their verbs  
Through the melting snow:  
As it happens right here, along the long drooling jaws  
Of the hermaphrodites  
Doing wanders to their pillows, like starving conquistadors  
That confront the satellites across the insurgencies  
Of archipelagoes,  
And then go away mumbling to eat their horses:

And to fanfare and woebegone symmetry: to any of this  
And all of this at once:  
To what was never any grandmother's vanity anyways:  
To cloy armpits and to smitten, love smitten, cash;  
And then to falling away like embers and popinjays,

Across the heath rows and cornstalks on the other side  
Of canals where my busy hands, my busy suburban hands have  
Spend so many fireworks,  
Manhandling, pinwheels, to all sorts of aristocracies:

Until the last light flames, and it is time to turn in: and her brown  
Is dun anyways, and comes no more, but like wax spent off of a candle  
Into a house of butterflies rests without repose,  
While all that was inside of her, her breathe, her alma, vanishes into  
The elements, perfumes airplanes with the roses of stolen ribs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roses Of Their Lips

I know who you are  
Into a web of kindergarten  
And I am right here  
Listening to the  
Housewives behind my house  
Whispering of their  
Mango trees,  
And bragging about how  
Easy it is  
To sell themselves;  
And then the busses of high school  
Come and their candy girls  
And hummingbirds  
Line up at the  
Drinking fountains  
Waiting for the roses of their  
Lips to dry, only so that they can  
Kneel down to drink again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Roses Which Still Bare My Name

Unicorns wounded on the road floating  
Above the discos and orange parlors, like armless  
Beggars,  
Their outlawed horns like the perfect ice-cream cones;  
Their goblins are road kill, and there is some kind of  
Orchestra rising like gnats for two days over  
The sink holes of ex-girlfriends before they  
Disband like band members, like overweight boy scouts  
Or Hitler's youth given up on the mountain:  
So many overpriced airplanes, Japanese Zeros,  
Panzers in the flea markets:  
Really, I stumbled upon a toy soldier show in old Lake  
Worth; I ate a cow, and congratulated myself:  
I stared at pregnant ants and their beggars in the relief  
Of unborn bedrooms;  
I nuzzled in the straw in the Eucharist of starless generals;  
I fainted, and came to through the smelling salts of my own  
Wrists;  
And now my parents are home, and I have trapped myself  
In a human body to go mad, but the village is still  
Defending itself, the archers bristled in the cornfields and the  
Tennis courts;  
And I almost bought something, I almost defeated myself  
Into the penumbras of your overpriced love;  
But I am not so easily found and committed;  
And there is yet so much more to be defeated in the colorful  
Grooms of the sound;  
And I am antique and pulling myself out of a race with  
The waves,  
And you can never love me, because that is how I made myself,  
While even now the turtles are making love  
Across the stretch-backed darkness corrugating I-95;  
I have hidden myself so well, neither the egret nor the kite  
Can find me, Erin;  
Nor can you ever be allowed to find me, because I am not  
Well;  
I have crashed into the mangroves and the thousands of  
Islands of the pet cemeteries and Indians of the  
Everglades,

In a thousand pieces of indescribable cenotaph,  
And the mailboxes are empty,  
And the housewives are amputated in crepuscule,  
And you are a perfectly beautiful woman,  
Erin,  
Except that you have never bitten your lip in wonder,  
Or had thoughts of summiting my shipwrecked mountain,  
To find me grinning there like the remains of  
A way post with the skeletons of the roses  
Which still bare your name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Rosy Caracoles Of Her Haunting Symmetries

I've really lost it now:

There are green doors hung up in the grass-

The sun is a trout leaping the overpass,

And girls are dolls and marionettes strung in the

Houses built on a stage of hills:

Each one beautiful, each one singing,

Powdered bosoms:

And I'm in a cart trying to count my fingers,

Forgetting the larger words which once lined my

Vanear like particular degrees:

These girls perfumed underneath the trams,

Being imposed upon by conquistadors

While outside it rains;

And I'm and spinning around and around the

Piece of corkscrew sent screaming from the

Sudsy which is even now making her

Farts whistle while he squeezes her like a

Harpsichord,

Like one of those things- My gondola is a coffin,

And all the fish are coins spilling from the

Wavering prostitutes sleeping beneath them-

Soon my heart should give entirely like a child's

Hand releasing a balloon,

And I will finally forget Jordan's sister bathing topless

Beside the pool waiting for her to lean over and

Turn the page, to show the rosy caracoles of

Her haunting symmetries.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Runways Of The Sky

What do you know about the shoulders of  
Sonnets: I know nothing of them,  
And yet they remain carrying me—over the playgrounds  
In the middle of a school day,  
And over the scars of the moon with the dogs we have  
Somehow found there to play with us:  
I wonder, haven't you seen them—while your very own  
Mother was kissing the shadows of her house:  
And then, I know you have—for all of the cats have been called  
In, and it is the middle of the night—  
The serpents hang like wet laundry from the armpits of the  
Lonely citrus tree in the backyard—  
And there still isn't enough time to call all of the anonymous  
Angels down from the runways of the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Runways Of Your Lips

Patriotic negligee flooding over the  
Estuaries:  
Everglades that speak to the manipulations of  
Thought without wisdom:  
Like stewardesses, they have somehow learned  
How to fly-  
As my heart beats- and the traffic continues,  
Habitually:  
It cannot stop or it will die- and I loved you for  
The while that we were lovers,  
And I bought you so many things,  
As the boats with their long sails propositioned  
The drawbridges so they could pass-  
As the clams kept tight and listened,  
As the dolphins played, and the winos burned tires  
Underneath the overpass on valentines day,  
Which was just another day-  
Accoutrement to what will be inevitably lost:  
Like the knights on their quests bustling to the witches:  
They seem to be inevitably ending up  
At the same conclusion: hanging up in the garlands  
Of her Christmas tree- as the green dragons  
Breathe and then make love to her in between the ficus  
That shade against her house- and into the smooth  
Estuaries where her shoulders lay barren,  
Like naked ornaments waiting for the amusement to  
Land across the runways of your lips.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Sacred Grounds Of The Indians

Browned onion in your sparse rib cage:  
Where will you go with your child once you are all the  
Way over the sacred grounds of the Indians,  
And what bromeliads will bloom for you back a ways  
In their cul-de-sacs of puzzles, or how the day will  
Sweat to an end, filling up like tears the mowed  
Corners of the yard,  
Where the children who want to sell you things  
Curl around the unnoticeable spines of your ancestors:  
There they make a monument high enough to hear  
The sea- where the waves are rolling, as you come to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sacrifices Of Pop Culture

Underage minors take care  
To brush your teeth and comb you hair  
One hundred times before you go out  
For sacrifice to the dragon's lair

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sad Wolves

Burning in the sapphires- I have plow shares to hold,  
And the constancy in the infancy of this form  
That burns the coal cinders for the muse,  
While out there the trains ride high upon the levies,  
And the nocturnal blooms look up and seem to whisper,  
And gossip about the school children who have already  
Passed into the grave;  
And the Mexican mothers who have two children but  
No husbands,  
They pass across too making the diminutive orchestras of  
Music boxes,  
And the sad wolves howl: and the sad wolves sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Saddened And Pointless Road

Break in the forest: you can see the stars:  
The deer are looking up  
Anyways, and ignoring the dryads in their  
Sorority of caracoles and bars:  
Laying nude throughout the glade, Diana's  
Sisters just hoping to get  
Paid:  
And naiads in a sea not far away from here:  
And furies up in the sky of roller rinks  
Underneath the china plates of a very delicate  
But appropriate design;  
And the waterfalls beside the zeppelin that  
Is about ready to cross the yard and lie down  
And go to sleep underneath the mailbox  
In amidst the hydrangeas and the sleepy  
Eyed puppies who'd been kissing the water moccasins'  
Full lips all day, but now are finally ready  
To concede,  
As the hills grow greenly feral across the shells  
That bight into the skin of the saddened  
And pointless road.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sadness' Anymore

The lights are out and the clouds are full,  
And only the moon is the thing at seven post meridian:  
Something else I've learned,  
My mother is gone to the dying of a red transcendence:  
She took her best vehicles and left her old credentials.  
My father sleeps like a king in a holy castle,  
And the beetles have eaten all the trees;  
And the wind is out of music, and the mermaids are out  
Of sea. They say that there is a curse, and the girls you  
Love don't care anymore. The dwarf is driving the  
Hearse,  
And the girls you love don't care anymore; but in other  
Countries there is hope as in Antarctica there is over  
Two hundred species of lichen; and there are so many  
Doors inside airplanes frozen in an icy sky: Blue doors  
And red doors with keys and grasshoppers,  
And if the accoutrements are null and void, pack up your  
Things and meet the tide of a different neighborhood.  
See where you have captured yourself by the ear all of these  
Often sad years,  
Or steal the stewardess through the door and give her new legs  
That lift her up so she takes new names and doesn't serve  
The sadness' anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Saints

We made this  
Super-shopping gollum  
Its eyes of gelt  
We will not give to  
Charity;  
We own this trivial  
Abomination  
This fool's gold  
Dragon;  
It is our property,  
Hoarded-  
Our wife,  
Our children,  
The guilt we drive  
Around in.  
The Indian nations  
Are destroyed  
But free.  
Pardoned-  
My father works  
50 Mexicans,  
While Dirty Sancho  
Washes my mother's  
Back,  
In the car, her garden-  
How many Mexicans  
Does your father work?

Robert Rorabeck

# The Saints Of Your Joy

Your daughter's body was sick today, and I could not  
Help it  
With the customers coming in and buying corn fifteen for  
A dollar until my parents painted over the sign:  
And we watched each other while I carted around the  
Green island fichus and sang the sweetness of  
The theoretical mountains I keep you in,  
Your brown body having its own prominences the size of  
Dolls,  
And I have desires of buying a bicycle, or taking you on  
My shoulders to the island in the center of the  
Lake Worth Lagoon,  
But I am happy now that you don't have time to read  
The lies I've been singing you- Your young daughter is sick  
And needs your attention,  
But Sunday is her birthday and I am going to be glad to work  
Your shift:  
I'm going to work hard to find the work you named her after in  
Spanish:  
Heidi is her name, and she is your daughter, and her world will  
Soon heal and fill up with sweet things in the refrigerator  
And with the saints of your joy.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Salt From That Very Sea

I want to know what you owe on your house  
As the starfish hold me close  
To the ground echoing, and I still do not know  
Which horse to bet on,  
But stand for hours in front of the mirror looking  
At my pretty scars,  
And thinking of my muses who no longer wish  
To attend me,  
And my mother far away in the habubs of  
Phoenix, Arizona, hand in hand with her  
Husband, like roses next to the sea:  
Pinwheels are a franchise in her eyes  
And she doesn't seem to care that her son is  
So far away,  
As the wolves are reintroduced to the waves,  
And thus they tongue forever the salt from that  
Very sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Salt Of The Names Cursed From The Sea

Nose bleed through my skeleton  
And I will have to almost go to school tomorrow—  
These blinds are getting dirty—  
But these are the steps through the fitful night  
Theatres of here or wherever while the night  
Comes and the cartoons are beginning to look beautiful—  
And then a lawnmower of my last muse while the  
Perfumes of the beautiful flowers are blown away—  
And the gods that had to be within our second guesses  
Are found forever—  
And the daylight fades light vampires over the shades of  
Our second houses—And for a while we are here—  
While the dead—and then we are here wherever—  
And this cannot be foretold—because this is not in rhyme—and  
This is not even a poem—but I am getting out of bed—  
And then I am getting up to live forever—  
While then the movie theatre is resurrected—and then while  
Then the movie theatre is filled with science fiction and  
My numb fingers in an espionage have to spell it out for  
Themselves- while we slept underneath the baseball mausoleum  
Another shadow and another place to devolve  
While the cenotaphs of the puppets had to happen out forever  
Just as was the baseball games over the salt of the names  
Curses from the seas-

Robert Rorabeck

# The Salt Of Your Tears

Rivers you can fly over,  
Or leap over like burning glass using all of  
The wishes of your birthday—  
And then lay in the snow and in the sun bask:  
Above you,  
A festival of hot air balloons, losing themselves  
And conjoining—  
Promises to the thespians in the make-believe  
Clouds—  
And when it gets to quiet and so cold that  
Even the river stops her singing,  
Lay like a discarded angel, and the deer  
Will come lay beside you,  
And even the foxes—then what will they say  
To you with their eyes,  
Their tongues lulling for the salt of your tears  
As the airplanes look down from the skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Saltlick Of Cathedrals

All of these false echoes cannot keep pace with  
The stars—  
My young child is growing up—  
I want to name her after my grandmother even  
While she is in my wife's Chinese womb—  
I want to emulate the starlets  
Who drape the vineyards of their nuptials  
Straight over the sincerest of the faeries whom dance like light loving  
Spiders over the esplanades of my living tomb—  
And when I awaken tomorrow, and drive my car straight into  
The echoes of the schoolyard that I do not belong in  
But which I grew up in—  
Then the daylight becomes the most beautiful of silence's  
Pleasure—filled up by the memories that could not  
Contend with the heirlooms of the housewives of  
Spikenard—collecting from the perpetuity  
Of the saltlick of cathedrals—  
A beautiful world over developed by fairies—  
A joyful place overgrowing the tombs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Saltlick Of Seahorses

Prettying ribbons around a heart—  
She is dying in a flea market: around her,  
All of the vanishing houses and  
The sea:  
Getting up tomorrow, tasting on my lips  
The salt lick of sea horses:  
Their fishtailed homeopathy:  
Swooning in the bathrooms between  
The classes of my students:  
They disappear at an hour's length:  
They go home,  
Dividing like starfish—they all know their  
Way home,  
And they go that way,  
Like intelligent rays escaping the sun,  
Biting their lips  
Too self conscious to talk back to  
The heavens that birthed them in their yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Saltwater Fables Of Her Motivational Clay

Perfect young couples come in for open houses:  
They are lorded over me by what maybe a wicked godmother:  
I am not sure:  
I am just happily sleeping with the litter of foxes in the aloe  
Beside the Lady of Guadalupe,  
All blushing and silent like well suckled infant, all famished  
From our radical travails:  
We have just made it through the deepest sea caves,  
And made love to all the mermaids waiting at the intersections of  
Opulent and lactating stalagmites;  
And we ate all of the sea grapes, and flew all of the sea kites:  
Until we passed all of the conquistadors and ended up here,  
Right next to the laundry room with the metamorphosed princes  
Right beside the carport of the house they are trying to sell;  
And even with my eyes closed and my mind dripping the translucent  
Transoms of long-footed jellyfish, I have the nerve to think of  
Her: miracle mother the next room over or in the sky:  
She is floating there like a miracle play; and she is the reason  
Why I journeyed here, but I am just one of those foxes  
Leaping forever in the saltwater fables of her motivational clay.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Salty Abutments And Stone Wet Atolls

Your sister is yet a wink of a soul,  
But I saw you inside of your uncle's house today:  
The walls were not being blown down by any wolf,  
But there I was:  
I who had just come down off the jerry curls of the mountain:  
And you were sitting in the living room with your sister  
Telling good times with your tongues:  
Oh Alma, you are still so young,  
But wise,  
And I want to share in your disguise and drink the dun water  
Fountains of you eyes:  
I want to walk with you through the sleepy avenues of your  
Skies;  
It is the only new dream that my old body knows,  
While the sea kisses sky throughout the love making of the  
Salty abutments and the stone-wet atolls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Salty Hymn Of A Mumbling Tide

Failures of rum laughing to me and echoing in  
My kidney,  
Where my lips have been burying all of this horrendous  
Gold of his heavy but untouchable sport:  
I cannot read prose anymore, but I get on my bicycle and  
Go out towards the mouths where the waterspouts are  
Battling heroes,  
And I hope for the elements to win, even while the roses of  
Another love are impossibly blooming vivaciously out  
In the salty hymn of a mumbling tide.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same

Yes,  
All my teepees are upside down  
Trying to supplant flowers somewhere unchallenged  
Northward through the sky,  
Christmas trees and tennenbaums we go selling,  
Selling like Norsemen,  
Like aphrodisiacs without any children'  
While the rivers bleed their births through the snow,  
And the tourists come and touch down,  
Like, like well you know:  
I really, really love you and Florida has won the game,  
And I want to live in a big,  
Big house, and I know you want the same;  
And I want your lips,  
And the crèches of all your senses, like wild  
Grapes scattered to the winds and all the wild fences,  
And I know you want the same,  
The same,  
And I know,  
I know  
Your name.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Same As An Anonymous Death

Give me something to do for awhile-  
Give me your eyes and don't change them, even  
Though I am not your man, and you don't  
Care. I told you I've been to Spain and seen Lorca  
Floating, shimmering beneath the aluminum bellies of great  
Societal birds;  
But who are you? I don't care- See the things I've been  
Doing for you, the greatest clichés and games:  
It costs everybody a little to get in under the canopy where  
The air is cool, where they reside- but it shouldn't  
Cost a wooden nickel for you. Bight your lip and stare at  
Me for a little while with the ribbon bowed in your  
Curls: Who are you, anyways- You might be my cousin,  
But it is the same to you- You've never been to University I  
Can tell- Never ridden a bicycle:  
My hand has been so hungry for your hand, even when I was  
With another girl, and my face haunted the reflections of the  
Lunch room, so young and awfully perplexing;  
And the leaves changed, and death grew:  
These words are the same as an anonymous death you know,  
The most careful sort of pain that will take you safely home where  
You reside, and will leave you alone to watch the fichus tremble  
Under the chipped window- I wish I knew better things to do  
With you- You can see the ice-cream parlor from where you  
Tend to live, but you are not my girl- and I don't  
Care in what color your eyes tend to live. Kiss me and I will  
Go away; and it won't cost you a thing- nothing is all you'll  
Have to feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same Color As Your Eyes

Aspens are always in sorority:  
They are almost as light as air, they strike out tenderly:  
They are tenebrous and winsome,  
And they come after the fire easily when there are no more  
Of the stranger, more uneasy trees;  
And even if all the grizzly bears have all been roped,  
And the wild flowers of her slopes have wilted other wises,  
Melted right off the bones of the aeries of skree  
Just because, why the aspens are still there:  
Gossiping, changing in and out of women,  
Drinking in their pools and having sleep-overs:  
My mother was born in Colorado, Sharon:  
And the two of you make me think of each other,  
And I wonder if that is why you moved to where you finally  
Came to rest,  
To sing with the aspen, and to walk through their unplanned  
Canopies while the naked air blistered you with the same  
Color as your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same Creaseless Daylight

I write this every time and visitors they come  
And laying fawn in the sun;  
And the traffic is behind my head, but where are  
The conquistadors and the things that they must have done:  
This is the place that I was almost born,  
And here is where I keep returning and blowing my little  
Horns:  
The girls coming out of the wind tunnels on their bicycles seem  
To know me here;  
They seem to be striking out and repeating their bodies  
All around me like helpful flares which last for awhile  
Until they grow either tired or bored,  
And then they return to the countries and to the men where  
They came from,  
Leaving me under the same creaseless daylight but all the  
Same far less assured.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same Gods Of Light

I sleep under the ridges of carports, Indians panting over  
Me, purple or vermilion:  
And when they get out, I watch them from down the tawny necks  
In the wet laps of the cannon,  
Like an ant lion as they build their doll houses on their slopes,  
And have vertical parades:  
And the smoke signals that they give when they are in the  
Right mood,  
There is no word to describe them: their sundials are the opulence  
That puts the modern erudites to shame:  
They feed their newborns the yellow tears of the sun which  
They grind up and fling under bicycles who are having  
The identity crisis of windmills;  
And they grow up on the brown tits of the their cousins,  
Never taking to monogamy,  
They sway in the higher declivities, and in the rope tricks that they  
Contrive to show the conveniences of the evaporations of water:  
The girl I love is among them, and she never looks at me:  
I am like a window that is never used, or was never imagined  
To be there but is;  
And though she never sees me, going up and down like the prenatal  
Servant of a fairytale in the golden strata above my head,  
I know that she loves me: for her alma is my very soul,  
And there is something towards the prove in divine providence that  
We should both survive together equally in separate worlds  
Draped together by the same gods of light.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same Magnificent Colors

Skies jealous of the color green  
While I've been to high school,  
While your father works on the truck:  
And now all of this:  
Your son smiled at me driving by  
Today without knowing who I was,  
Or of all of the gifts I had sent him  
Even though all of the mountains I've spoken  
About are all so far away-  
And the time proceeds through the traffics of the  
Unseen,  
And this is just my work bullied up beside  
The regular traffics:  
The cats and the snakes hissing: why, lets try to  
Figure out what they've discovered,  
Underneath the house, or underneath the wave:  
Lets try to figure out if it was something good,  
While the students come home again,  
Drawing their own way: I wonder if they will think of  
Us as the jump from the bridges that from their  
Efforts find survival easy-  
As the airplanes continue their loopholes through  
The same magnificent colors that I've swear  
We've never seen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same Old Engines

Look at all of the people behind us melting into  
The chords of snow,  
Alma: they are breathing a ghastly that I thought you  
Should know,  
That it has been awhile since my travels have been so long  
Since they have been at such an impasse;  
But you don't care:  
You are a Mexican with auburn corn-husked hair;  
And you hang up the telephone on me just whenever you can,  
And go to sleep with your more appropriate of men;  
As I call to you in the dreams that you cannot answer,  
As the seas flood over with my unrequited rivers given down  
From the diademed crowns  
Of the weightless mountains, culling upwards like ghastly children:  
They seem like strings of tits on a centipede,  
And they have poked out your eye while you were riding  
Your bicycle,  
And now they go down to the lake by the graveyard to smoke for  
Awhile,  
While you can't say that you love me like a tender child;  
Or you cannot say that you love me while the kines run wild,  
Smoking over the boulders and chugging along,  
While the same old engines sing the same old songs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same Old Pegasus

In uncomplicated silhouettes sing  
That I am still right here, listening to the drum beat of my  
Temples  
Like the heartbeats of rain:  
And Alma is tucked away in her own house with her family  
Where is time is already spent,  
So there is anymore reason to save her;  
And Alma has only driven through Arkansas just to get here:  
And she has never been to Disney World,  
But we looked at the albino alligator together one  
Tuesday  
And she made Mickey Mouse eyes at me:  
And I love Alma while the hot air balloons play badminton  
With another version of the same old Pegasus.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Same Relaxing Meaning

The same relaxing meaning drinking its liquor in  
The middle of  
The country while the race cars race  
And the baseball plays its games—what is left for  
There to be sold  
But fireworks and  
Christmas trees—the same pleasantries the  
Indians enjoyed before our arrival—  
And the teacher who teaches next to me had no  
Parents  
But he all placed fourth in the Olympics back in  
The 1960s—now the mouth is off  
The bottle of the genie—  
While you are still serving liquor to your lost  
Gentlemen—  
There are only so many wishes for so many lotteries—  
And the same palaces imagine a night without so  
Many stars—  
And she drives home to him—  
Into the places where she secludes herself—  
While the heavens decide if they will cast their  
Rain forever atop the heads of the mermaids and  
The Cyclops who imagine their love so many times  
As to become forever  
Nearer and nearer to the sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Same Things

Fine young bodies will lay just as  
They will,  
Telling each other secrets, looking up at ceiling fans  
And then to whatever sort of verandas they have:  
Kitchens off to the side,  
The night stokes, sirens abuse the darkness,  
Bicycles pick their spokes: and in little clay pots  
The flowers blush, beside where the chimneys stoke:  
There is a high school somewhere near here,  
And a field for playing or making love;  
And I wish to divide like the mitosis of starfish here;  
Yes, I wish to migrate here like the final migration of  
A butterfly;  
And work the rest of my life in the little plantations or  
Zoos, feeding all the aquatic mammals with juice stung eyes:  
Like the mermaids in their underwater barrooms and grottos,  
Which make me think all the same things of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sandbox In A Child

I am nothing but a sandbox in a child,  
Burying red trucks while the teachers and  
Students are sleeping in the structure;  
I am alone and the lightning goes laughing  
Like troubled day workers in the nebular greydom:  
Perturbed for the afternoon,  
I hold the rain to my cheek like tears,  
And imagine French-kissing a Shirley Temple  
Named Chelsea- She is only six,  
Anyways, and I have already stolen from her  
The intricacies of careless good-will;

She doesn't know me now,  
Like a song in that part of her mind she's  
Destroyed with all that alcohol and sex,  
The little things girls do to come on to the world,  
To find the boys shooting arrows in the caves,  
To take one and kiss him like an acolyte,  
A purveyor of the divinity's truth,  
And those legs who struck the fact,  
Kicking upon men's jaws  
Across the Smokey Mountains:  
The bearded revolutionaries,  
The Shakespearean Thespians,  
The landowners,  
And the inventors of electricity:  
In quick time at the cabaret, she owned them all:

Though they are now all dead,  
The reclusive life-long abstainers,  
The highway men in grandfather's grave,  
The successions of better men, falling to the fast  
Flung pellets, falling to the bears,  
To the lucky Indians, and the plotting of the rich:  
The machete's blushing glaze,  
The machine gun's extemporaneous enjambulations  
To the unforeseen mishaps of chaos' broken jaw,

Along the highways

And her thighs

They lied down ploughed in the fields,  
And did not wake up, even after her accoutrements of  
Aphrodisiacs and witchcraft, she placed upon their  
Winsome foreheads, watching by the jetting penumbras,  
Cared after by the old maids still full of breast,

The men who lied down for lovely wisdom,  
Even before they were fully formed,  
The pilots of blushing gardens,  
And the forbearers of this knowledge so far-

Thus, striking out, I find her a little ways outward  
Before death- the low oxygen harem of her eyes,  
In the highest mountain of Alaska's insufficiency-  
I love her, I love her, I love her-  
Though I am neither whole, nor justified-  
No longer do I know what I am no more-  
None the less, and all along, I cry out to her now,  
The wounded wolf, nor fully formed  
But protected by the government-  
I cry out to her now, from my little play room  
Above her head-  
If she should hear me let her know that I am  
About to end,  
But I am waiting for her still,  
And still hold hopes of finding her in the  
Expensive amusement parks of rodents,

In the soft salted gardens,  
Where I still imagine twists with her tongue,  
And long talks with her eyes,  
Should they choose to bloom upon me still....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sands Shifted Against The Baseball Games

Another living grave bleeds the flowers of night:  
This is all my middle-class mind knows how—darkly obsessed—  
Making love through the unadulterated anarchy of  
These cul-de-sacs—one or two other feral boys lighting off  
Fireworks somewhere near this place—  
As airplanes skip like well-lit stones across the prophecies  
Of the heavens—  
And marionettes shed their strings. Skipping across  
The ocean, they are wedded to real live Chinese girls  
In shanghai—  
That is just what I did, a real live boy, anyways—  
And when I got home, famished—the Ferris wheels I had once  
Loved had packed up and moved on,  
Going north into the ether—to the daydreams of the genies  
As the perpetual foxes always leapt up to  
Try and grasp the meanings of the beautiful women  
Who pretended to be there for them,  
But were just mirages—as the sands shifted against  
The baseball games,  
And made their peace somewhere else.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Satellite's Inebriate Shanties

The lights are out and set the mood.  
The children are perfect on the green carpet-  
Ceiling fans are quiet, as if its in their thing,  
But the tinsel on the Christmas tree is  
Glittering;

And I saw you there, because I could not sleep,  
My heart pullulating its nocturnes,  
The grass' perfumes wafting through the house  
We don't own anymore, but stay to see  
You weeping on the pristine shore:

Where I thought to show you,  
How I wept like I was your brother, only my soul  
Was a nick in wood,  
A discoloration in the eye- A soldier who survives  
With his body,  
The bird out of season without wings,

I thought to tell with you under the crude patina,  
The satellite's inebriate shanties,  
But you looked at me and I could even tell, that your  
Soul would bate the imperfect time and again;  
And you'd already cast it into the waves,  
To see what you had found, and there was nothing more  
There for me- You had set it free.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sea A Mightier Retinue

By body enfolded the same old  
Art: of plagiarism, of rattlesnakes:  
The tourists move as curiously as snails before housecats:  
Packing their luggage on their winabagos  
And setting off like fat bellied conquistadors;  
And this a whole yard and not so far away,  
The little spots where I sat and rusted in  
A forgotten yesterday:  
And the grooms, and the brides, seesawing underneath the  
Airplanes- and all of it moving its luggage towards dusk,  
Bandylegged- like old men who once were curious  
And followed the preening girls homewards at least  
Half ways,  
But were too curious- and got distracted by the wolf and the fox  
Burying the wooden boy's gold in a seaside and shallow  
Grave, and saying to him,  
And promising to him- that this is how it would come to us,  
Overflowing spilling over,  
Tempting him as religious as bees mothering their honey:  
The sea a metaphor of flame tipped birthday candles,  
And the preacher standing over our mistakes- our rattlesnake  
Bites, our dead dogs and stolen baseballs:  
Promising us the truth, as the witches rustled with the crows,  
All eager for the storm: ashes to ashes, dust to dust:  
Wooden boys who awaken daydream of what they might have had;  
Their pockets empty, their saddlebags empty:  
The sea a mightier retinue of cats and foxes  
Blowing their wishes away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sea I Cannot See

Wounded are the words that no one saves—  
Words that my mind misspelled the first  
Time I flew into Shanghai, China—  
When I was married on my second day,  
To I wife I bought not borrowed:  
I keep her in my little yellow house so near  
The sea today,  
And we will have our first child sometime  
Tomorrow:  
If I truly loved her, I couldn't say—  
For my poems languish over the intangible  
Shadows of the girls I pretended to love,  
Or paid for before I even thought to leave the  
Country—A muse that languished,  
The eighteenth girl I'd slept with—  
A girl from Mexico, built with the delusions of  
Windmills—an aperture to spearhead my  
Lonely art—but it was a delicate situation—  
Catholic, married—and more than that:  
Two children—good excuses,  
Even with endless gifts of bottle rockets and  
Christmas trees,  
But life only gets easier the longer you play  
With death—  
Now my wife, the sixtieth some odd girl  
I've been with—  
She sleeps in my bed, waiting for me—  
Afraid that if I get drunk, who will  
Drive her down to the birthing center in  
Miami, FL—my mother arriving tonight,  
Driving in from her place of business,  
The Strawberry Palace in Plant City—  
And I am up to my old misdeeds,  
Still dreaming of girls I shouldn't—  
My love beside me at night,  
And the moon at some odd circle over  
The sea I cannot see.





# The Sea Is My Mother True

Caffeine and another glowing stroll:  
I could stay up all night and look at cheap  
Houses in Saint Augustine. I'm thirty,  
But in one more year I can afford a middle-  
Class abode outright, and self-congratulatory.  
This is how I read my own words,  
With eyes half closed using the lines as an  
Addiction, thinking about making love to  
Bloated tourists the way sea tortoises do it  
On the beach, to leave their young to attrition:  
I go there now and tan all of tomorrow,  
Drink sulfur water from the fountain of youth,  
Count cannon balls in the Spanish Fort,  
Following the invisibilities of stronger ghosts,  
But that will not win you an hour away. And  
In those cemeteries which stretched to the sea,  
And the crosses etched with nameless caresses,  
Understand where my hand must lie across my  
Quieted chest, like a soldier decorated by seashells:  
The sea is my mother true, deeper than the somberness  
The moon plays across the skin,  
The smell of orchards to the west, and the tractor's  
Steady growling: I could live there debt free in  
A year or so, and dream of the deepest friends and  
Their child who has learned to walk and is testing  
Your name on his innocent lips, like stepping into  
The water for the first time deeper than he can stand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sea Is Still The Woman I Love

This is a strange song of your hypnotism  
This is another candle's flame haunting another forgotten birthday—  
And how the park echoes without your absence—  
How I used to buy you breakfast before you had to  
Start out for the produce market—  
But you are married and bedded down near the horses  
And I used to think that this was a beautiful western—  
Something beautiful enough that I could sell it—  
But you are not here, and I am sweating around my scars—  
The same old men are glowing from their pores underneath  
The overpasses—and the sea is still the woman that they love,  
And the sea is still a whore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sea Of A Broken Heart

What will they say about your children  
After they've gotten onto the bus in the middle of  
A sad rainstorm,  
And you've driven off to sleep in some other bed  
Than your husbands,  
When the dogs are crying over the cats they cannot  
Steal,  
And the cats are mewling beneath the clocks  
For the boys to come and step down the hidden  
Corridors and down to the sea where  
Some other maiden is waiting:  
Some other maiden, as wonderful as the sea  
Of a broken heart:  
A woman who is not their mother- and she is not  
You: they must taken airplane to reach her:  
They must go over so many canals,  
But eventually they will find her-  
They will find her,  
But then, they wonder, what they will do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sea Shells

Brown cathedrals of sunshine,  
Burnishing equally over the carports  
And the grottos  
As well as the chicken coops- inside  
Their soft waters,  
Mothers in pieta, bare footed housewives  
Electrocuted by open faced extension  
Cords  
As the toads sing that they want at least to  
Be princes  
Who most certainly ought to be kings:  
The rhythms of a steady metamorphosis beat  
In the rain-  
As the fair in my heart never return- it went  
Out into the yard,  
And through the corrugations- the sea  
Shells became brindled underneath the sun,  
And someone who was more tragic than  
I ran away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sea That Is Still There

Chicken noodle soup in a thermos  
Made me sick in preschool  
On some fieldtrip in Palm Beach, FL—  
There are things I remember,  
But not your love—  
How it crept like a sleep at naptime  
Through the heavy sherbet rug of  
Kindergarten  
Where things startled me that I stole,  
Pissing my pants waking up from  
The dreams of tree frogs and ant lions—  
There were toads in the rebar around  
The carport where my mother  
Slept in the rain—  
And blue pornography across the street in  
Graveyard of drunken cars:  
And the soft dunes where the conquistadors  
Slept—  
And soft boys, no longer running away—  
And the sea that is still there  
Saying the same name that I always wished to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Searchers

How painful it is to keep riding these words,  
Like a stupid chimpanzee trying to figure out equations  
It can't possibly understand, those cold avenues  
Walked in deadly night that might somehow rise  
Up into her sun, and the golden key stretched out,  
Like a fingerprint and her palm, laid there, open—  
With the right word she will allow you to kiss it,  
The secret equation which will unlock the chests of  
Her eyes to flutter and to look upon you her love now  
Realized, when all the cold marble sinks and the  
Bitter world melts filling the sea with you and her  
To stretched on infinitely, the sun casting down  
A net of a million points, destroying the aching need  
To touch another human being in permanence,  
For that is done, and the word that you found,  
The perfect fit, has joined you to her with eyes  
And lips that never stray.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Seas Forgotten In You

Imperfect as the stamen tricked by the bee  
To pollinate the high boots of insouciant epiphany:  
I look for you through the woebegone crowds  
Of the market place,  
And at the dog track; and when I certainly become lost,  
I sweat out beneath the ceiling fans my mother became  
Used to,  
But waited, knowing that you would come and I would  
Fill my eyes all over you:  
Brown, like a dunned river who divides the states with  
The riches of her symmetrical tributaries;  
The nuptials of your vineyard fill my mouth as I kneel,  
And airplanes fly low over head across their common  
Ways and avenues,  
As we lay down in bed, like a canoe who slips away  
Into the deltas hoping to become unrequitedly anonymous  
Into the seas forgotten in you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Seashore That Fit Her Abscense Perfectly

Mammals shrouded by palm trees;  
And all around me the sounds of mammals making  
Love in brilliant cages,  
Contained by the rotoscoping of religious caracoles;  
Isn't this not unlike the amalgam of penny candy  
And fireworks,  
And the days in sweet spring when I ran away  
With Jordan,  
And we touched ourselves in the sepia bled off of  
Glaciers as we watched the heroic  
Pilots crashing by themselves,  
Making bonfires for us which kept us alive  
Until Friday when  
The simulacrum was hard at work, needing his pubescent  
Pen in a hurdy-gurdy of circle-jerk;  
All the things the teachers had taught him,  
The dancing chicken getting rewarded at the bottom of the  
Ski-lift,  
Making fast and easy passes of love; and she was smelling  
Like the very forbidden fruit,  
But it was just a cheap knockoff, underneath the overpass  
Which wasn't even in Spain;  
And somewhere nearby Sharon was a very beautiful  
Woman,  
Legs as long and trustworthy as one of those sweet copper  
Cannons, and the skies were kind of all lonely and  
Leporine around the spot where I would have expected  
Her to be;  
But she just wasn't there, and I couldn't act for her anymore,  
And still I was glad I had come,  
Since the stages of the seashore fit her absence perfectly,  
And I really felt as if I belonged.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Season's Failing Play

If I should not expose the expressions from this  
Wound, how would you come to know that you are in me?  
Opening rather, the way down to the street,  
In the cool theatre: this is how it begins, for with it I  
Should entrance you equally, in Technicolor singing:  
How joyfully we should rumble, and my fingers clack the  
Notes of you along the splendid ridge down the back  
Of your aperture's dress,  
As if an apple's twig along a picket fence,

And openings upon me as well, show yourself to you,  
Grinning from the voluptuous mirror the audience sees you  
Mortally in me,  
And their butter snacking pauses, as from the focus of the lens,  
Are you now multiplied in a Mandala of sad, though infinite  
Twins,  
Gazing thus in an epiphany through the orchards, the geese  
Are flying south so early- they are leaving the reeds where  
You washed your ankles, and let the saccharine peaches drip  
Upon the insouciantly early tadpoles,  
As along your undisclosed borders the young men marched finely  
Off to war, at a youthful, steady clip;

Now you look to the corner of the field, where winter is blown  
Upon your father's industrious plough, as I play through the branch upon the  
audience's  
Head- they are laughing at the tragedy I have come up with,  
But neither are they looking away: Thus, behind you, but even you  
Can see yourself multiplied with me off the ground:  
Moaning, I sing thus for you, as slowly the camera leaves your eyes,  
And, following my gaze, as if conducted, recedes into  
Magnanimous clouds, and the orchestras bow their strings,  
And marvelous children not so far away, run around the jabbering  
Flag, a bit around the season's failing play;  
They have not gone to see our show, how I on the mark revealed  
You to an evening crowded in an early dusk, for they  
Were too young to go, and thus take part in each of us.



# The Secret Of Hemmingway's Epiphany

Tomorrow in the afternoon it will be snow here;  
In Florida, she will invite him into bed.  
Little girls will play paddy-cake in the carport while  
It rains, the toads will ribbit- opened breasted,  
The stewardesses will serenade- aspiring, their arms  
Will become wings, silver and fixed, they will leave off  
Their certain neighborhood for the evening, they will dawn new  
Things; but tomorrow, I will be enveloped by the regular old  
Snows of half a decade. My great, great grandfather was shot  
In the mouth for the new president of the United States-  
The secret of Hemmingway's epiphany was he was always drunk  
While recording things, encouraging the bull, teasing the fetid  
Clit without any clowns around to save him. The night is  
Dark but there are clouds lit underground by the scars of their  
Own lightning, and every beautiful woman has driven away naked  
In their own cars; but I am still here, and today I sent a full manuscript  
On over to NY, NY- Now I've had some rum, and I sit where I've  
Always sat for half a decade selling fireworks, hoping for news:  
My head is warm in itself- it is its own meal, and I expect nothing  
More from it, for its imagination has already killed her father  
Which drove her here, and her legs are naked in the rain:  
They are marching down, down, down, but they cannot get out of it,  
For they are nothing real- and my love for you has proven to be  
Useless.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Secrets Of The Truth

Pacifists looking on, jaws constructed of spider webs,  
Flotillas of daydreams eking through the yawn,  
And wearied, defeated husbands and wives  
Still swearing they're in love;  
And under a naked light above you kiss, your flesh the absence  
Of angels,  
In a mote where what was suppose to be your ethereal guardian  
Emolliates:  
You just want to lie down with her in a bed that has been used  
By no one else,  
Kiss by the alley cats her tenements of brownly gifted extremities  
And wings-  
To yawl in the morning beside her, synchronized-  
A boy and a girl at play, selling produce to the tourists and the fire  
Flies,  
So you can call her your life- Now as she flirts with anyone  
That comes in,  
That what you are hawking is fresh, and her eyes that are so  
Dark and growing deep enough to hold the secrets of the truth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Secrets Of Their Fire

They were singing once again in the atrium,  
But what were their words:  
The student parking lot was empty except  
For birds,  
Baby- headlights blind to the ant mounds  
And baseball diamonds.  
I guess there was someone I loved, as the airplanes  
Filled the sky, going above the storms  
To other worlds, filled with beautiful women  
And twice as many of their legs  
Bearing their cups like Ganymede to Saturn,  
To constellations drinking them  
As housewives, their innocent cousins  
Remained in the earth slumbering just like Grizzly  
Bears, and keeping their scars and the  
Secrets of their fire for themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Secrets That Her Children Made

Ailing beauties taken at the cost of sherbet:  
Lines at unsanctified weddings stretching around the block,  
Yawning like colorless fireworks:  
Girls with retainers tossing newspapers to drams of  
Fishhooks on the docks:  
Seagulls and pelicans plundering the waves for sardines  
And plastic dolls:  
Alma is happy when I shave, and when I meet her halfhazardly  
Scarred through these mornings:  
When our cars and our bodies happen together for the refreshment  
Of some besitos;  
And I feel alright, and I lie and tell her that her body is  
As voluptuous as a guitar- when she is nearer an aspen yawning  
Up to the yellow dollar of sun  
Sprinkling it with French Kisses in a harmonious glade  
That the otters come to with their stolen bicycles and whisper  
To the grasses as the dandelions and bluebells get laid:  
The crickets and locus smothering over them  
Like green and orange knights over their milk maids,  
As my pallid fingers brush her brown temples which like  
Symmetrical ovens surcease with their thoughts,  
Giving off the tide pools and bread baskets  
And languish in the secrets that her children made.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Secrets They Can Keep

Didn't you see the Indians sleeping  
There:  
Underfoot, and in their ditches:  
Down hill from the monuments and the  
Trailer parks,  
Where all of the Christmas lights are  
Strung-  
And you said you loved me, but you just  
As easily could have been talking  
About baseball,  
As all of the pilots come home after  
Midnight but never sleep,  
As outside of their bedroom windows  
On the third stories of yellow  
Studio apartment:  
You can see dormitories,  
And baseball diamonds, and fox  
Gloves, and all of the pitiful stories  
Of the students who will one day soon  
Have to get a job and stop leaving their  
Fingerprints in the caverns where the lovers  
To sleep through the echoes of  
Ambulances and helicopters-  
As the roses and the hookers keep to their  
Defiled bosoms,  
In the flea markets of the Sunday churches,  
All of the secrets they can keep.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sectarian Churches Of Our Workday

Let me make a song and give it to you,  
A paper bouquet  
Filled with the colorful scribbles of my  
Feelings  
For your throat and eyes- because I am only  
For you  
Even though it doesn't seem to be a possibility  
That you will ever listen,  
But I have had my love, for I have seen you  
Like the heavens around a Christmas tree,  
And my heart has swung for you,  
Smoking confections I have sweated through  
The sectarian churches of our work day-  
But you are gone now,  
And the lions yawn, and the little girls board  
The airplanes,  
All of them filled with joy as if they were  
Going home to see their mothers.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Self Affected Truant

They read your poems, because you sit  
Out in the food court with them and randy them  
With your eyes, like a click of masked avengers  
Dreaming of a Pulitzer prize,  
As your stuff yourselves with pepperoni pizza  
And greasy fries, and the words which go swiftly  
Through you and straight to your thighs,

And I have seen something else, while glaring at  
You through the rafters of this sun,  
For the perpetual lovers are making like in the gladiolas,  
And something is blooming, but I cannot tell which one.  
For already in the sky and on the concrete humid enough  
To take a bath standing up,  
There is the building up of a rumble, and a towering of  
Cloud, and the principal is getting restless, for he can  
Tell from the furtive eyes of the chorus of the greasers  
And the misfits, that something is most definitely going  
Down,

But just as things start to look good, in the falling of  
The gray, I slip out past the baking pots where her soft  
Hands are like caterpillars in the clay,  
For already there is another land sweeter than in the seats  
Of sociology class, and the spittoon trumpets of the marching  
Band, where another poetess is beginning a romance with  
A marine, I do a tightrope act across the teal canal  
Where alligators look up at the souls of my feet as if  
I was a nibble god, if I could say what I mean,

And the ample poets now are in their slumber in the food court  
Of their souls, their eyes blackened as if by daffodils,  
Their teeth chipped like girls from Alaska, their hearts bruised,  
And their lungs like broken wings of sparrows shot in unolympian  
Games, as around them the bitterness of men breaks out,  
And the school begins the tidal hemorrhage of what its all about,  
And the underpaid principal with the receding hairline, which he  
Can also do nothing about,

But I have little more to say than this, for I do not  
Like to preen, though I am justified in the loneliness  
Of beauty, the self affected truant muted on the long and rolling green.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Self Refusals Yet Easy To Rhyme

I feel guilty for my liquor, or my love-  
I have no faith in the monster making friends above,  
Turning out the ilk of psalms, the pasty solicitations,  
Thrumming the heart of palms:  
I watch her pullulating from the vast pool recessed in  
Lazy shadows,  
The white man is mothballed, the Mexican still battles:  
My chest is scarred by myth and masticating beetles:  
They made love vast and hard in the self-motivating  
Maw of a hurricane:  
And this is what I used to do, but crawl up over the rented  
Shingles, place tiny bits of paper against her jaw so  
That I might look out over the leaf-flooded pool  
At the downed power lines, and the entrepreneurial destruction  
Over the vast forest of American enterprise:  
It looked so beautiful, the supermarkets glossed over the quieted  
Buck of her thighs, so that I might be well-sated,  
Fulfilled by syrup and dollar bills, learned to love the quieted  
Displacement of rosy seashells- Learned to love restively  
Backed up against the drowned shoals of the highest tide:  
She is well-engaged, and I am placed inside the imagination  
Of a touted brook:  
The last line is stolen, or it is misplaced, the hieroglyphs  
Misspoken, my love erased:  
The vast gulf of palmettos, the truncated strides in the armpits  
Of cypress, the fresh-water otter cracks open the song,  
The house wives are rented, and the canoe floats over the  
Shelter of dead-men or the vulnerable homes of fresh water  
Terrapin, like the ink blots of meta-fiction,  
The last choreographies gilded like goldfish in a middle-class  
Pool yet refusing to rhyme.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Senses Of The Hills

Standing in a blue abscess, wounded around  
The eyes:  
The nocturnal pugilists countingimps,  
And the gates awash with freezing water  
The blue spruce cried-  
And other planes coaxing down: inside their  
Golden necks, their stewardesses all  
Asleep-  
The weather about them a blanket that pulls  
At them softly,  
The sea, a mother waiting in the deeps-  
While each pine tree rises just for them,  
Nocturnal spectators in the senses of the hills:  
And they go over them, nodding in  
Sorority,  
As the hillsides sigh, damply drunken,  
And holding up to them bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Senses Of The Sleepwalking Hills

I can feel at home  
Weeping at any place  
All through the  
Albino cathedrals-  
Fallen like snow  
Beneath the monoliths  
And keeps of Paladins  
Who have all bled through  
The paper of sweethearts-  
And soft animals alongside  
The road-  
Trying to remember if they  
Were the metamorphosis  
Of pilgrims  
On their way to a sea of  
Ferris Wheels  
Pinwheeling all of a sudden  
Through the senses of the  
Sleepwalking hills.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Senses Of This Class

Clichés of cadavers laying opal bricks  
On the mean streets,  
What heirlooms reside in your bloody flesh:  
When you eyes and lights are gone,  
The bowls they drink to  
Sate the king of a river forest  
Where we get all of our Christmas trees  
After the cars are done purring,  
And the university is just a transient penumbra  
Where you could never have lived  
Except for in the old wives tales where the bicycles  
Parade,  
Somnolent, like tight rope walkers on the streets:  
And she has your eyes,  
And I think that you should both sleep together  
In a sorority's coffin,  
Like a constellation nailed in a horse birthed  
From an acorn;  
But for now bight your lip,  
And kiss his tongue, but never forget of  
The love I have told to you once there is nothing left  
To cover the sky,  
Who like a silent tiger leaps from the limbs,  
Never once harming the bells which would open  
Your eyes,  
And would awaken you from your boyfriend's  
Sleep in time to make it to the senses of  
This class.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Serpent Is Hidden

Calling up the children from the  
Green roadway: trying to recall the sounds  
They made,  
Effervescing, up to some good:  
The diamonds dancing on her dresses hidden by  
The blue car in the carport,  
While she is turning around,  
Turning around- and the serpent is hidden  
In the backyard: yes, the serpent is hidden up in  
His tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Serpent's Sin

Gun bolts left in the open throats of the  
Frontera, where the illusions of fireworks and muscle  
Men pirouette:  
The airplanes the fat biceps of the zoetrope's overblown  
Mirages,  
While needled into their golden caves, the nuns are  
Playing video games,  
As the graveyards travel sideways: and I am singing to  
Unicorns,  
And making love to windmills and all of that;  
The wishes felt up in brail on the tough side of the mountain,  
And none of the weather is ever coming down,  
So she is safe to climb, even though she is really  
Forgotten,  
While the buses of your grandmothers school years  
Rust in the curling armpits of her jungled alders;  
And the otters swim up to kiss and entangle with the throats  
Of beavers,  
In the pulls of ancient jubilee who will forever be too pure  
To feel the serpent's sin.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Setting Sun

I cannot lie to her  
When she will not tell me  
Where she lives:  
Not since the flood when  
All the sorrowfully innocent lives  
Stopped reading books and looked up:  
Surprised-  
Until they got to their destination.  
Getting out,  
They politely walked away.  
Where I sat behind the wheel,  
I was too stunned to speak  
So I just remained and  
Watching the instructional video  
I fell asleep-  
Blinded by drink I drove around town  
Calling their names out the window  
Like a wounded hound,  
My piss stained tears marking the  
Territories she used to glow  
Like the seed of a virgin summer  
While the maritime marines pulled  
Up and did battle in the sea.  
After I had gone away  
I heard from a friend  
That she crawled out of the clouds  
Like a swan  
Just realizing what she was  
And yawned:  
She did a high-dive toward the east  
But tore her leg against  
Spanish Moss,  
And from that wound  
A choir of angels sang,  
Little children played triangles  
While she, still bleeding,  
Fell in love  
As the shade gathered  
From the setting sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Seven Seas

Spindling ablutions,  
The catastrophe of the weathers above the ways  
Out in the make-believe of an ultimately beautiful day:  
The frenzy of kites stolen away from  
Little boys,  
Who know so few words as never as yet to have  
Surrendered to the loquacious avenues that birth the  
Fraternity of sea horses:  
Poppy seeds in the air, making an illusionary breakfast,  
Cantankerously up from their low birth,  
Gossiping their tranquilities over the low flying airplanes,  
And their majesties:  
Demigods who float on the breeze, in a woebegone  
And yet innumerable sisterhood all over the seven seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shades Your Lake Reflects

Other women are jealous of Sara Teasdale,  
Even though they should not know who she is:  
That is why her name doesn't show up  
In more poetry anthologies;  
And it has been a day or two since I've masturbated,  
And another week beyond that since I folded a paper  
Airplane,  
And years since I've been to the zoo and seen a  
Male peacock in real life;  
For they are the ones who are most beautiful,  
Strutting legs-forth outside the otter's den where the  
Mermaids try to represent you sheer-blooded  
Motherhoods;  
Then with grandmother, we could go and get astronaut  
Ice-cream,  
Or pretend that we were at the movies,  
Or fall asleep down the little jeweled declivities of  
Famished canals,  
But grandmother is dead, and she cannot take us there anymore;  
So I am still waiting for you to take me there,  
Sharon,  
But you have your own daughter now, Sharon,  
Who will eventually make you matriarchal in your old age.  
She is your spitting image,  
And I love the shades your lakes reflects,  
Though it would not behoove you to appreciate who  
I am.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shadow Of His Own Song

Everyday is too early;  
It wakes up before the gleam of your eyes,  
And my sad passions subsides:  
On my bicycles of so many dreams:  
The fish are just fish slipping through the streams;  
And the days are not on high:  
The high king has said his sad goodbye,  
And the territories are awakening up to their  
Sorry toothed pups;  
And the fireworks shoot and say their goodbyes,  
Like the mailmen yawning, yawning up to the skies:  
And the cities float, and the cities dream-  
I have scars like cadavers floating where they don't  
Belong; and there is no reason by the rhyme,  
Like the fabulous skies at picking time:  
And this is another sorry wound meant to lift up  
To the balloons of charlatans; this is nothing but an airtight  
Tomb: floating, floating  
And making me feel again as if I didn't belong,  
Even as a mate to his own song,  
Or even to the shadow of his own song.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shadows Of The Armpits Of The Sun

Strange as the shadows of the armpits of  
The sun—  
My father trades upon his hopes and fears,  
And real live angels hold their breath long enough  
To come down to kiss  
And bless the roof of my house—  
Even after the days of their own family of  
Angels are over—  
And everything gets softer and more poetic—  
I linger, beleaguered in my old neighborhood  
Until we are entirely famished and  
Do not know quite where we are  
Until we are there—  
And Saturn keeps carrying his many rings of  
Strange and saturnine lamps,  
Made of girls who have turned into the pig millions  
That once existed upon the borders of  
The jungles of their high schools' proms—  
And I hold their cheeks in my beat-up fists—  
As the goldfish seem to ponder the invisible heavens  
That they have made up in the daydreams of  
Their front porches—  
And it seems to just go on and on—  
And isn't it just a made-up graveyard of forever?

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shadows Of Your Infinite Sisters

I've counted coo on the roofs of high school,  
And now she is mine:  
I don't have to buy her bouquets anymore, nor wait  
In her homogenous lines-  
I can stand out in the sun taller than any bullies,  
And twirl my phallic gun,  
And she'll come to me- after my car is keyed,  
And all the circuses are done.  
Then the sun is just so runny, almost eloping with  
Crepuscule and all the mailboxes are opened tongued:  
And the housewives are softly revolving like  
Satellites in their air-conditioned cars,  
And grandparents are fit for dinner. The ambulances  
Have crashed, the alligators in the torpid rivers;  
And I know who you are, even while wearing your  
Violet masks, your heliotrope surprises:  
You sound just as silently as immaculate gliders:  
You are the whispers of a burglarized house, and I am  
Almost getting paid:  
I can run up those slopes to your ding-dong  
Door  
Just as easily as my dogs: We can all come to you,  
And we can all fly, and take you out of the windows  
And make-believe: You don't have to be wife or daughter,  
And all your mountains are the savage paps of  
An unending goddess the twins of America were founded,  
Suckled and let loose in a floating trinket through the weeds  
Of an almost great suburbia;  
Even with you missing from the streets, somehow,  
The clouds seemed to paint over where you had left us,  
Making the shadows of your infinite sisters dancing there still  
Which I hope you do not mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shadows That She Grows

Another terribly valuable thing left  
To spoil in the summer rain,  
With the kittens and the lizards,  
The tails that swish and slither,  
And know the ins and outs of instinct,  
Whiskered:  
They have her eyes that are always gazing,  
Hoping for things which aren't yet represented  
By flags;  
And I don't know what she is doing,  
But that sometimes I see her laying in the  
Stones of a cerulean garden,  
Growing things better left unknown,  
And I come to her for all her lives and she just  
Basks there in the swelter penumbras,  
Or the rush hours that seem to whisper the  
Shadows that she grows.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Shadowy Passages Of Another School

Coming swiftly towards Christmas while  
All of the boats and their  
Pirates swing-  
And the oceans look so beautiful, whilst the rose  
Bushes are all awash-  
And the forts of your harems are always so beautiful  
That their colors cannot even be described,  
But they keep to themselves,  
And keep flying their unsundered flags  
Underneath the heavens whilst I search for  
My own home,  
As the sea swells and becomes too beautiful and  
Doesn't even care,  
As my sisters travel further and further away from  
Me,  
As you keep your mouth to my ear, and keep  
Wanting to promise me "promises, "  
Forcing me to spend the weekends alone-  
Getting massages,  
And losing all of my faiths as the sea swells,  
And the airplanes fly higher and higher, managing themselves,  
And trying to keep up the witchcrafts- whilst, eventually,  
I cannot even bother,  
As the sunlight burns forever through the windows of  
Trailer parks, and the evil I know just gets more  
Evil- and the super heroes fail while we all travel back  
Again to the shadowy passages of another school.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shallow Pornography Of Blue Gills

Glimpses on the skin recreate the times when  
Two bodies might have fallen together on occasion  
Practicing out of the apple orchard  
Like ghosts wondering inflammations of the sea-  
They stroll by the rattlesnakes and cords of  
Wood- The day slows down so that they can be  
Together, until the hours go back inside shells,  
Their mothers curling soft and yellow  
Around mailboxes-  
The trailer parks through the pine trees landscaped  
With discarded plastic and coral snakes,  
And the bicycles lay down there with the burs  
Beside the girls leaning over  
The shallow pornography of blue gills.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shallow Sands

Beautiful call girl like a peacock  
Look at my scars  
And lay down in my tomb for two hundred  
Dollars and tell me how beautiful  
I am- In a fugue of greasy surrender  
Outside of the halos of the burger joint  
While my dog howls at home  
For me to return:  
Make love to me the way my mother can't  
Even though we are so far away from  
The mountains where the  
Aspens live like anorexic china dolls:  
Say that you love me,  
Even though I only have one moon to give you-  
And my heart is a coffin filled with grasshoppers  
Who are spent into husks  
And picked up by little girls along their paths  
Across the shallow sands.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sheep Of Angels

Continents of love and now lions- I'll find  
Away, while I've just been starting out underneath the  
Halos of starless forests, while the foxes have been leaping,  
Busy mouthed,  
And I tent to exaggerate: well, this at least is my busy vine:  
They keep leaping for steaks, and drinking  
For wine:  
And the railroads of star-crossed lovers continue their  
Burning séances underneath the mountains-  
They can hardly remember the lost hallways of their high school,  
But they keep turning out,  
Like topless angels without a voice to shout- or in a school  
Yard far away, parked like cars,  
I care not to wonder what they have to say- while voices proceed  
Voicelessly- while I have been counting the sheep of angels,  
But I can hardly imagine you understand how much it means to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shell Of A Supposedly Beautiful Thing

I pass the bottle of laughs towards the  
Tiger who is no longer leaping.  
He has retired from his ring of  
Predictable flames—  
The instructions his parent, master,  
Teacher gave to him every day after  
He got off the bus. He was kept so busy that  
He was never allowed to marry—  
Juvenile in mind, he never produced great  
Art—and now his yellow coat is like  
The ash only dogs can see—  
But that will keep him for a little while.  
When it rains it seems like birthstones,  
And the echoes were once like the footsteps  
As he passed through China—  
But he never came across the top of  
The mountain to worship the footsteps of  
Buddha—but for a moment the school  
That trained him is empty,  
Like the shell of a supposedly beautiful thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shells Of Their Homes

Entirely folded up yellow angels,  
Their wings pinned back  
Don't have to talk about opportunity—  
They have the sun,  
Busy as a man in his orchard  
Spinning things off—  
The cars like ants beneath him do not  
Wonder where they are going—  
They are just going—  
Seeming to follow him somehow  
And the angels around the atmosphere  
Lit up like a boisterous torch over  
The interstate—  
Until they lay down like venison upon  
His crackling shoulders  
And look into her eyes as she comes over  
Them, luminous in her stolen church  
And placing them like shadows into  
The shells of their homes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shimmering Architectures Of Windmills And Weathervanes

Across the pastures of cold sleep never  
Forgiving the stars:  
House wives who look as hungry as wolves staring at the  
Chickens hypnotized outside their cars,  
And so near the beach where their children are whistling  
To airplanes,  
And then going away to make their games as if they were  
To be their professions:  
Above their heads two bridges going either way:  
And your lips a mariposa, Alma, flattering, like rose  
Pedals basking under the wind chimes,  
As you look up above my house, admiring the shimmering  
Architectures of windmills and weathervanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shopping Malls Over A Tomb

Don't you know the cars driving away  
Sounding like raindrops  
On the highway that isn't a dream but is getting louder  
And louder as it too becomes a vortex,  
Or something else provided for that doesn't  
Pay it back—and the otters who are another  
Species and who could care nothing at all for  
Baseball or any other sports that are never their own,  
Still sleeping headily in the manmade estuaries,  
Catering to their own hearts in the noontimes  
In which all of the housewives I bet are too busy  
To come home and see the heavens that bloom there  
In their absences like creation myths over the  
Shopping malls of a tomb.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Shoulder Blades Of An Afterlife In High Demand

The truth finally comes out like long awaited  
Orgasms heard breathlessly over  
Phone lines,  
And the pitiless flume like white roe dances  
To death on the Indian rug  
In one pitiful spot which makes her laugh for  
Awhile like a  
Bouquet she wasn't expecting,  
Nervously;  
But the stage is pure, otherwise, and she looks  
Fine in her serviceable outfits:  
The entire definition of her creation is to look fine  
And comely for your creation,  
And that is why you get together,  
And her hair is so long like a river straight through  
The woods which has made you  
Wonder,  
And turned all the deer as white as ghosts:  
In fact, she puts you into a somnolence where silver  
Airplanes float as slow and unsure  
As bees,  
Taking passengers back and forth to pollens that have  
Yet been extinct for  
Uncountable years,  
Making scientists yawn forever, as her immortality strikes  
Nude and past her ears,  
Down into the shoulder blades of an afterlife in high demand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shoulder-Blades Of A Goddess

As soon as the gloves are off,  
All of the tit-mice fall asleep in their fields.  
A wisp of cloud is at my midday's  
Window.  
And, although the world is broken into  
Factions,  
For the moment all is peaceful  
And I can lounge anonymously  
And not suffer the pangs of greater  
Or of lesser things—  
As I once did—  
As all accords now to its various  
Perspectives—  
Arthur Rimbaud is buried in a field in  
France:  
In a womb, in an armpit;  
Children I once knew are hallway through  
Their school day.  
The sun is strolling through  
The mountains.  
Using his trusty cane, he sings  
A lullaby,  
A daydream for the sun shower  
Passingly and momentarily beautiful  
Highlighting the shoulder-blades of a goddess.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shoulders Of Her World

Votive orchard there you are:  
Open throated underneath the airplanes:  
What are doing while the  
Birthing mothers lay apexes beside you:  
And what are they doing,  
But turn around into the good world again,  
Releasing the continual specters with  
New names,  
Faces- and so much hearts, but there is  
Only a certain amount of energy allowed inside of  
Them- cooing next to the speckled  
Hibiscus: what are they doing-  
What do they seem to appear to be doing,  
But growing upturned underneath the soft speckles  
Of so many forts, or going their way  
In the decrepit longitudes without knowing  
How they can; and I wonder if they can,  
Lying there beside them with the other tourists:  
And I wonder now if this is their world  
And if they should know it now as if in the  
Amusement parks of some dull terrapin  
Trying to make it across a baseball field  
As the clouds undress for the ether and the stars  
Once again speckle the shoulders of her world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Show

All this rain and some people are  
Talking about me,  
Using me for the butt of their jokes,  
Smoking;  
But it is a very casual thing to see the  
Sun when it caresses the arm span  
Of airplanes,  
When the clouds finally part and the  
Play begins:  
And I guess I've always been humorous  
And a drunkard,  
Good at making cider and running  
Away,  
But the mountains kind of always had  
A thing for me  
When they awakened somehow indigo,  
And girls named S- loved  
Me too,  
Even when I was making a mausoleum of  
Their fun.  
They asked me to smile as the birds  
Took to the sky;  
It sounded like the laughter of a great  
Audience,  
All those wings multiplying going  
Up into the weather,  
And all the acrobatics of human invention  
Touching down softly across  
The schoolyard where we finally settled  
Down to watch the show.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Showers Pouring

Pure torture shackled Prometheus  
In front of the television in the middle-  
Of South Florida:  
The carpet red, the curtains velvet,  
The air-conditioning expensive blowing.  
The brochures said for a short holiday,  
But the ants have already found the cracks  
And trail of breadcrumbs, so along his  
Grayish shanks they are crawling;  
He quivers trying to remain politely  
Knowing there are gods about, though maybe  
They've all gone down the street where  
He can hear the lions roaring, and there  
Was just a car-accident, and the ambulance is  
Coming, and right now the studio audience  
Is laughing, and above him like so many  
Hindu gods, the ceiling fans are pirouetting;  
And Cupid and Psyche are chewing bubble-gum  
Over by the piano, playing awful romancing.  
The cat is purring, and the dog is snoring,  
And coming later that same afternoon  
The showers pouring.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shows Of Angels

They swung their hips to the shows of  
Angels in their parapets:  
They raised their hands and petted the wet paint or  
Tears off of airplanes  
Going the opposite way,  
And the dictions of the clouds spoke of so many  
Rejoices simultaneously:  
Metamorphosis was in full bloom—  
The softest strata that poor girls feel as they,  
Poisoned, swoon—  
And lay with the leap frogs in the grass—  
Soft and inconspicuous where the unicorns have  
Disappeared in the anonymous islands leading up  
To the overpass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Shy Moonlight

Pretty as a child in the  
Throes of truancy—tumbling down hill  
With lilacs in her hair and the dogs following her:  
Just a succession of paper wings  
In the hallucinating lamplight not far afield from  
Her parents,  
But enough to be forgotten and given over  
To the playground's caressing caesuras:  
Now they say she is here, in a whisper,  
As if a coloring book of a church—  
And she mimics the sweat broiling off the tin cans of  
The trailer parks over her shoulders,  
Until she pushes herself into a saint of those arcs—  
And sees the shy moonlight in the face of  
A pond—  
As beneath her, the traffic sounds, and it's saddest  
Realities make their stumbling away across the grounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sight Of Her First Green Storm

Scars recede to new abutments under the  
Castillo de San Marcos: We who live our lives  
In different stages of vending,  
Do not know the ways in the mermaids know,  
Whose boudoir fetishizes the grinning remains  
Of conquistadors;  
We go by the way of tourists. Poets sing who  
We despise by our outfits,  
And girls in summer diseases cough bosoms of  
Roses from those lunar trains of  
Perfect middle-class easements. Waving there  
Like flagella or like flags, while the good airplanes  
Superimpose the meaningful instruments of  
Long legged breasts, who are answerable to their  
Captains as to my free verse:  
Harems of just ripe women saying their pledge,  
Baking their cakes, leaping the hedge:  
All above tree line, circumnavigating around the  
Expensive necks of the Himalayas, going, going like  
Esoteric nursery rhymes, so dizzy to fall into bed  
With any properly groomed man: We can do anything  
With our lives in the dunes of lost joys;  
I have my flesh in hand, recreating the parade of  
Missing newlyweds, my closest relatives two tortoises  
Escaping from the carnival shows. I am so very glad  
To be aware that I am utterly alone-  
It is the only answer there, to see the girl smelling  
Like Dr. Pepper on the Root Beer float:  
She looks like a sailor ready for bed- A yet metamorphosed  
Honey with a good head,  
Who breathed her first breath by the kiss of my pen-  
And I would like to take her our for fake sunsets amidst the  
Leaves of loose pages, publicize her like the negligee of  
A weather vane all excited at the sight of her first green storm.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Sign Of The Albatross

Down- I think of hanging- the cool creep  
Of grinning theatres grandmothers and cancer knows:  
The organs play, the wolf is waking up;  
And I think if I go, my poesy will save me,  
And I laugh- The crow's eyes glint like evil marbles:  
Not a thing I have done is of my choosing,  
Just like the naked girls down in the pool after midnight,  
The thieves scouring the barbershops on their bicycles:  
And not a word of it will save me;  
She is looking away, smiling at a man she can be proud  
To believe in; I have become a crooked jag of smarmy rust,  
Without oil or singing girls who through happenstance  
Abound bucolic with their dogs:  
And I really want to swing, and know the words won't  
Save me- so much ink the squid shoots against the barb,  
But ends up under the knowing glint of the nearest  
Insincerity, just like another god, wild-eyed no one had the  
Care to believe in as they heaped him to their load,  
Covering in tentacles of their good deeds,  
Perfumed with the sign of the albatross.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Signals Who Travel The Spheres

My cares are not personal, but they must be met:  
The sky rises up like a water fountain and wets the lips of  
Angels that it rears:  
The sky in a somnolent dance lighting like a fire off the sea;  
And if you have ever seen it metamorphosing,  
What you say you cannot see, but must be believed like the  
Proof of a scientific romance,  
The way cicadas and katydids leave themselves like jewels on  
The necks of old southern trees,  
Where my cousins are always wetted and being born  
Like kittens amidst the liquorish tongues of the echinopsis;  
And now it is almost time to see the air show,  
To see where the daredevils are blowing like feathers of arrows,  
For they are those who delight in the fireworks that like  
Missing children who are never found,  
Never fall back to earth, but leave their bodies behind in the  
Mythological colonnades, in the flumes of old houses, becoming the  
Signals who travel the spheres.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Silence That Is Out There

Modern algebra in the hotspot of  
A tourniquet—Or, how you hurt me, father,  
Made of the lances to faithful abandoned  
From the high school you didn't believe  
In and never graduated from:  
Blooming, burning buildings as the heavens  
Spin and illuminate above us: turning, turning  
Brilliant and never to be spoken for,  
For more than a dance in the ballroom—  
Spilled, and accumulative—  
Silent joke of the flowers giving their lives for  
The weddings—  
As words break into the colors upon the ballrooms  
Of an orchard—and all the silence that is  
Out there opens its throat, as if wanting to—  
But not daring to  
Sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Silences That Lay Between Us

Another cathedral dreamed about of  
You boudoir, as you serve  
Drinks all night long underneath the vacant ceiling fans:  
Yes, underneath the busied stewardesses that would  
Fit you like a glove:  
And I go to the movie theatre and look for you  
In the celluloid—  
And I drink to forget my senses, to find you like a cartoon,  
To figure you out after school, pillaging at the end  
Of vanishing rainbows that are now  
In dispute over the baseball diamonds and the ice-  
Cream trucks  
Where I guess you never discovered me—  
As now all of the silences that lay between us are in dispute.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Silent Slender Body

Oh, Alma. Come with me,  
And become unnaturally holy:  
I will step outside and kiss your feet and say everything that  
There is to say about this and now  
Unicorns, and now this, and all of the plumes of sciences

And the colors that  
they have passed: and your name is, alma,  
And we have slept together and I have tasted your soul;

And now all of the world turns around like a Ferris Wheel that  
Isn't even real, and all of its joy seems to happen over  
The infinite fields of strawberries where I guessed that  
We were making love,

But otherwise I couldn't  
Even believe, while all of the numbers were counting themselves  
And all of the numbers of themselves were gathering themselves  
Up and bathing together in the rainclouds of  
The rainforests that weren't even there,

And I kissed and held your hand today which I guessed wasn't even  
Real,  
But that is what this all about, the pouting of your body  
Before all of the eruptions of the penultimate summate,  
While my parents are coming home again  
Never minding what was had to be real;

And this is just the silent slender body shooting its way, Alma  
All throughout all that you've never had to feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Silent Tree

Forgotten by the ixora where the interesting  
Lives-  
I walked through the canals and the overpasses  
Away from my home:  
The airplanes coming towards me everyday,  
After I am done with another school:  
Transfixing me,  
I cannot figure out what it is they have to say,  
As they shimmer across the housewives'  
Pools,  
And your children are inside- and they have the  
Right of way:  
Maybe they are going home again-  
Maybe they are touching down fondly in  
Another estuary, where they will rest as silently  
As Christmas presents underneath the silent tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Silent World Of A Stolen Gold

If you flood in with perpetual vagabonds, how  
Will you discover whatever was meant to be real:  
As the remainder of that cavalry still struggles  
To make it up the hill,  
Trying to crown the precipice of the sky that they  
Feared to be real- blue boys looking into  
The silent world of stolen gold: as if I were  
Waiting outside of your bedroom  
As you made love to another man at least as beautiful  
As I.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Silhouette Of Her Name Stone

There were plenty of flowers at the funeral;  
If I knew their names,  
It would make a pretty list;  
But I only knew her,  
The dead girl- hit by the flapping door  
Of a semi truck in North Carolina:  
Walking with a boy I never saw,  
Looking at the man who turns into an owl,  
For the last time:  
The scents of the open world  
Budding on the dangerous highway.  
In that room where her family mourned,  
They paid by the hour,  
And I shook each of their hands;  
The drummer wore a pink Mohawk,  
And did a good job beating the dirge-  
Her face was sewn up like a doll  
Whose insides are made of corn:  
Something that you or I cannot keep,  
But little girls can play with in their time  
Only to put away when they grow out of dresses:  
And then she was no more,  
For the viewing lapsed into the grave:  
Once she straddled my leg which pretended  
To be a horse taking her to a pomegranate tree;  
She made love to two men, as far as I know,  
And was a better poet in the spring:  
I have not read about where she lies now  
Furrowed into the earth,  
Though a decade ago, I cheated off her  
Sociology test- Somehow I passed,  
And she failed and fell into  
The silhouette of her name stone.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Silky Fathoms Of Another Unfolding Story

With the urge to call you, I fold into a river:  
You are smiling auburn  
The luxury of an abandoned muse- my faith a scar  
Of autumn,  
And the wind feels like a luxurious coat around  
The used car salesman as he sells  
His used cars to whom ever, underneath the overpass,  
And across to the sea:  
If there were mermaids there, I would know already,  
And the light houses have all gone away-  
It's just the auburn bodies, spindled out sweating  
A forest who walks across the sand:  
Raising her little arms to her little child, who swings  
Into her,  
Reclamations of a soul which moves into itself with  
The silky spasms  
Of another unfolding story.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Silver Waves To A Golden Shore

Look outside the window- see  
A chastity of green elbows, and hear the swinging of  
Green airplanes;  
A bough of the senses hanging on a wreath of air. Pluck  
Nudity from the sky for a moment,  
A vineyard of opalescence burbling above a  
Wicked spring-

Ants parading atop a planet of metals- distilling the eyes  
Of rusting heroes,  
Burrowing, regurgitating jewels for a queen embossed with  
Insectoid caviar-  
Displayed upon her mantle of dirt, a nudity of blindness  
And the unclothed mandibles sensing the enclosed air:

A parking lot is in bloom! Lush capitalism embossed in  
Third dimensional space- Stewardesses skip across  
The used car lots like nursery rhymes,  
Like stones turned into wishes:

She walks down the aisle serving refreshments to the  
People leaping between buying and selling-  
It is their privilege to be upon a vessel in the garden-  
Here they are in transit,  
The bills are collecting. Outside of their portholes  
The last great Titan tries to blow down the flying houses:

He is looking for a wife that thought to fly like Icarus  
Upon a minimum wage chariot: the King Kong of  
Greek Mythos- once captured,  
She will have no choice but to become chaste by his  
Imaginations-  
A real creature metamorphosed above the tourists'  
Migrations,  
Whose shared mythos draws them back and forth  
To Disney World  
As the moon draws the silver waves to a golden shore.



# The Sincerest Attempt

In beautiful pictures the kaleidoscope murders  
To make more beautiful  
I look at her underneath windmills and drinking fountains  
In high school;  
And when I go out to be alone it is to smell her there,  
Wafting across the canal- the good side of my head  
Stuck in oil,  
From the wounded heart of a school bus,  
And I wonder if she will make a good housewife,  
Abandoned by me- maybe all the way up in Colorado,  
While the tortoise eats its purple orchid  
A discarded corsage  
Of the sincerest attempt, continuing its usual  
Routine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sincerest Basins Of My Songs

The night fills up anything that it can:  
It feels up the houses and the lands of this world,  
If anything,  
That is what it does, while your eyes still burn for me:  
Alma,  
Burn and sparkle like great auburn vases in perfect  
Symmetry out on the perfect shore:  
While all of my love lies out its stuff, revealing to you  
All of my cards, all of my guts;  
As if I am throwing a game of baseball,  
As if I do not know so many words, as if I am just  
Enamored by the swans in their dearest basins  
Off from the carports  
And the trailer parks; until it is their time again to move:  
And I will love you again, Alma;  
And I will always love you for this long, as long as  
Your throat holds to the sounds in the sincerest basins of  
My songs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sister Who Could Never Be

In the places that so pretend to be—  
As an after-thought, it is where the best of the littlest  
Boys pretend to live:  
Yes, they are here, in the armpits of the sieves of  
Goldmines:  
Yes, they are here sleeping while yawning,  
While better hopes jumps like frogs for golden shadows,  
And the moon bends:  
Yes, it arcs the sea, and other mermaids go home off  
Their shifts,  
And the waves beckon cajolingly,  
Like a perversion of the senses in which you were  
Taught to believe:  
This is the way that it happens, that it all gets off  
Track one way or another—  
And the places we one pretended to make love in just  
So happen to light up again,  
And you swim in the shadows,  
Pretending to be caressing the shoulders of the  
Sister who could never be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Skin Eaters

Nothing kills a good western  
Like a Hebrew's ledger:  
And the golden palates in the east,  
The android cities  
Where electric sheep dream,  
Upon the shoals of the nimbus wiring:  
There is according to the Lord  
A high-legged whore  
As tall as the tallest buildings in the world,  
With commercial airliners circling her breasts.  
The 17th floor,  
This she uses as a step to raise her dress  
And adjust her garter.  
To this the Japanese business men  
Swarm the windows,  
And heavily dubbed burn out flash bulbs.  
From the clouds,  
The cowboys cull their herds,  
And offer her young heifers upon the  
Granite slabs their forbearers chiseled for offerings.  
In the dust and sweat the sun devils swirl,  
The dancehall girls pirouette,  
And Mr. Piano Man's jangles  
Spill out into the street with the drunks;  
Decorated by the vultures  
And the dying man's humming of Danny  
Boy to the saw's jig of the carpenter's undertaking.

The ghost riders down their whiskey  
A final time  
In the shade of their brims,  
Then take off running

As the pale blue boys come knocking-  
Soon the free range will be fenced in,  
And afterwards the wolves are returning-

Robert Rorabeck

# The Skull's Hulking Hum

This is what we do:  
We put things together;  
We sniff glue.  
Riding on the backs  
Of our racing snails  
To and from the Nothing  
Our mothers' legs the porticos,  
The changing rooms,  
Our big hullabaloo.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Sky Again

Jump into a  
Cup of light weight  
Birds,  
Go ahead and spill  
Your light weight  
Herds  
Up into the sky again,  
Never to return to your eye again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sky All Around Them

They drew marmalade and ponies and they wondered  
Out amidst the yards until they regretted that there wasn't  
Any air-conditioning;  
And the flies gathered around whispering like blue pig's  
Ears,  
Until they somehow stumbled upon the Mexican dance  
Where beer was five dollars,  
But the yard behind the place just kept turning green and  
Greener- filled with strangely polished  
Equipment and wheelbarrows; it was a good place,  
They figured to cut some wood to build a cabin- and to lay  
Seeds in the ground to make the garden grow;  
And each by the other sang out loud, and grabbing each other  
Where they could, swinging around in the tarnation of  
Daffodils trying to make even the wolves proud:  
They did just that,  
As the airplanes took noticed and landed from the sky all around  
Them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sky As They Do

Dandelions in a basin of light with  
Purple and blue ants fighting each other:  
Dandelions as soft as the lips of tourists underneath  
Commuter airlines;  
Or girls who are transforming for them so high up  
In the clouds they get nose bleeds that float upwards like  
Red tinsel:  
And the clouds are svelte beneath them, each continent  
As whimsical as a soft picture in a glass;  
And afterwards they lay there exhausted with their hands  
As open as mollusks hanging over the brim  
Of the sea;  
They dream of themselves as saltlick and they wait lustily  
For deer to come traipsing out of some verdant glade  
That isn't there:  
To touch them softly with their tongues, as if they were  
Rivers themselves, rivers of soft young bodies reposing  
In the sky as they do.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sky Is Not Really Swinging With Me

Days and days of fireless interludes,  
Where everyone can survive, and everyone is  
Doing something,  
And some of the women are very fine:  
They seem to get even more precious after I haven't  
Seen them for awhile,  
And they are just getting further and further away;  
And I am a boy again on a drunken swing-set under the  
Precious moon: How she is stilling my light like the moon  
Is stealing the sun on the other side of the world,  
Deep and bosomy way back into mountains like  
Backyards,  
And no one remembers who I am anymore:  
Grey haired, quietly feral, feet sore, eyes quiet and not  
Seeming too distant, but very distant:  
Down your avenue right now, snow flakes falling like a  
Christmas carol- the alligator nudging my leg to see if  
I have awakened to have some fun,  
But I am too drunk of your spirit, but you are just  
Like a goldfish already dying in a plastic bag, like the moon  
Swimming, won from surreal midway,  
And I am just climaxing repeatedly on these altruistic swings,  
And the sky is not really swinging with me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sky Talked

Bodies slip away until their oceans dance,  
And the cars peel away:  
Alma- only you are left, and I feel so guilty, but  
Tonight you will be sleeping with your husband,  
And your children will dream under the lush trees and roofs  
Of cherry lane:  
You rabbits will dream until they are eaten;  
And you move away from me like a comet on a tale spin  
Through the chicken wire, like a fox getting ready to be caught  
And I was left without any shelter:  
You drank my water today, Alma, and I felt as if I was in a desert,  
Just as boneless and smooth as the statuaries in the next room;  
And I need to find a good Virgin of Gaudelupe,  
While the sky is green and the estuaries where the fire trucks are  
Parked,  
And I walked into the vision of your eyes today, while the earth  
Moved,  
And the sky talked.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sky That Happened To Be There

Dogs come down to the basement while ash floats  
Through the sky,  
And airplanes and baseball are coming down  
Across the moats to the castle,  
While the silver or the green knight is still up in the  
Hills,  
And it is a long ways to China even on the wings of  
A Pegasus-  
As the pinwheels spin out even after all the lips of  
Pretty girls  
Are gone,  
Having eaten all of the apples meant for the science  
Teacher-  
And it was always such a strange class I missed,  
Preferring the company of otters or blue gills;  
So, closing my eyes, I could always practice remembering  
The busses always turning around,  
Taking their turns, showing off for the orchards that used  
To be there- the pollen in the air  
As yellow as birds, or the memories of a kindergarten  
That supposedly existed in the fieldtrips of kidnappers,  
Their off color lovers sleeping deep in the perfumes  
Of their armpits with the weather without any  
Purpose or meaning visited through the sky that happened to be  
There.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sky Their Unweeping Canopy Of Deepest Infatuation

Feel these contemplating things under my eyes,  
Birthstones who crenellate flesh,  
Dreaming of streamline beauties dripping in balmy pulp  
Fiction out beside the swimming pool:  
Oh, I don't care- I don't care:  
I would experience for you the exhumation of entire cemeteries,  
The Eucatastrophe of things that aren't real just before  
The real light of day;  
If you gave a d\*mn, if your eyes could spell love,  
And this wasn't but a rejected greeting card, for no  
Certain occasion:  
Unrequited, going down by the spectating glaciers, the band  
Still playing, but not one instrument saving your heart from  
The icy creep of highways like mortal wounds in all directions,  
Leading you far away from the comely slopes where  
Numbness infects the throat and tongue of every anonymous hiker  
Drowning above tree-line, the sky their unweeping canopy  
Of deepest infatuation.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sky's Backyard

Already brown and coy,  
I want to take you off your  
Legs again,  
And make you potbellied,  
To put you on a Christmas  
Table  
At my loneliest bachelor  
Party,  
While the airplanes  
Spread their wings and  
Fly,  
Gossiping of our amusements  
To the arcades  
Of the four winds,  
Whose divine ululations can  
Be heard ushering across the  
Uncanny flight paths of the  
Pop rockets entangling our souls  
Through the canals cut like amethyst  
Into the sky's backyard.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Slanted Elements

Art sifting as a match'  
The traffic going by penumbrous, but  
Making no illusions:  
The average day settles,  
And the armies in her close their eyes  
Like baseball teams that don't believe they  
Have a chance'  
That beauty somehow survives in her  
Skirts'  
And the failure of the amusement parks into  
The recesses of trailer parks  
Where my cousins make love to one another  
On a fieldtrip of the dumbly  
Sublime'  
Just as Eve comes to Adam, her arms filled  
With plunder in the slanted elements  
Of the age-old picking time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Slender Prairies Of The Darkest Purples

I saw you calling this way as I gathered the  
Sticks for the fire:  
The butterflies done licking the sweet sweats off me  
And gone to collect their corpses on the other side  
Of the poisonous forest:  
And the dragons sleeping there like honorary mounds  
For dead heroes;  
And some where in the middle of that perilous kingdom,  
The undetectable fjords where  
The slender prairies of the darkest purples live:  
Down in their great cuts like anorexic flea markets under  
The insouciant highways that the clouds make  
While the try to figure out through their adolescents  
And their high schools, like your little sister,  
What they can fathom themselves to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Slightest Rain

It rains so light that  
It shouldn't have to rain at all,  
Except it makes the parks  
Where I would have liked to  
Kiss you prettier;  
And we have rivers of oceans  
Inside of us,  
But only so many breaths to  
Blow these sails,  
Like my body coming against your  
Shore and lying down against  
Your so many animals,  
Like kindergarten:  
Your eyes the wildest of them all,  
Something that even the slightest rain  
Knows I  
Can never tame.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Slithering Of Speechless Vertebrae All Through The Mowed Grass

If I want to lay down and sleep like  
A well published author, sated by my moribund  
Of words, if not beautiful,  
Will you place your bet on me and lie down  
Beside me and make eyes at this poor sap?  
I wish you would, because I am exhausted beyond  
Belief, greeting each family as they come in boyishly  
Grinning, concerned and ready to haggle:  
I've loved the draw of your legs since high school,  
And how your skin speckles like a well-fed fish in a shallow  
Pool.  
Though I do not know anything about you, I would  
Take you piggy-back across the everglades, and steal  
Into the cane fields and suckle on those stalks with you,  
And watch you take off your shirt and lay kitty-corner  
To the niggardly crocodile, grinning, grinning, but  
Not knowing what for, not grinning as I should grin to  
Be within your vicinity, and beneath the cloudless sly  
Against the hedge across from which the traffic roars, but  
Not being seen by any of it, just our eyes upon us, and those  
Naked opalescent trunks: Oh so would I love you, this way?  
And if this pittance of words is enough, then I have dreamed  
Of you, and deceived my brain into thinking it was real just  
By watching your foray laconically with your books and  
Precious stems in the loci of that green lawn, and into the  
Backyard strung out like diamonds on a lace, and the cypress  
With its garland of shadows: seeing you there like a fresco  
In open space, and appreciating you in the quieting cadence  
Of the crickets, the slithering of speechless vertebrae all  
Through the mowed grass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Slopes From The Mountains

Yellow paper making out of us Pharisees- and  
Other plagiarisms in the church-  
While our grandmothers rested in graveyards,  
And the cars drove  
Around underneath the bumble bees:  
And the fires roared, and scattered the deer  
And the other wildlife in a lurch-  
And the tourists, crowding the ice-cream parlors  
Down the slopes from the mountains  
Could not sit still any longer-  
And the barbers looked up the slopes as all kinds  
Of children of god came running down.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Slothful Metamorphosis Of Aphoristic Midnight

Sand-lion, mountain lion,  
Hermaphrodite- Some f%cker has stolen  
My kite,  
And the waves come up phosphorous all  
Damp, enraptured honeybees-  
Golf courses of crinkling foil  
The never-ending beauties of uneven verisimilitude,  
Jujubees and lightning bugs caught in the can  
Of a young mongoloid and pitied up,  
Made to sing dying fire:  
Rope tricks slender knots around the woman going  
Up into the sky  
Who really isn't there, suicide of smoke signals,  
Her bangs, weathervanes and occult fingerpointing  
Over the old bathrooms of high school and  
College,  
Worlds of young homes fitting in a peg board  
In a game of restaurateurs- proving there really is  
No easy solution for mutton headed ingeniousness,  
The airplanes like flares leaping from point  
To point seeming to last forever  
As long as Zeno keeps them in sight;  
Then, finally, sweet and functional girls settling into  
Bed, turning into cricks and aspens all with the power  
To dispel the needs of life,  
Never thinking to yawn up and scratch my  
Superstitious jaw drooling over them all the faucets  
Of never feel,  
Which has the power to bath and manipulate their  
Petit souls after the slothful metamorphosis of  
Aphoristic midnight.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Slumbering Day

The sun began the  
Hungover suicide of dusk  
First brushing the Keys' dying ivory,  
Then a lure cast west of Hawaii,  
A glow-bobber in the Far East burning  
Slipping into the waves' temporary bed,  
In a sweltering forest of tangled coral branches,  
And darting flying fish, tiny eclipses on  
The slumbering day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Smallest Bit Of You

Your fingers have touched me some how;  
They have set off on their own and hitchhiked  
To my aching flesh just to brush me once and leave,  
As that's all they could do, those gauzy beings  
The smallest bit of you that cared. The rest of  
You did not even know, where you sailed like  
A merchant's fair ship through the day, the  
Channels of sidewalk moving you easily, your  
Loose garments lapping flesh and light together.

Your lips did not know—  
They did not come so far to kiss my lips, to speak  
Warm words into my ear to ring inside my listening eyes,  
To make my nervous body begin to burn with that pale brush on my soul.  
Nor did your sculpted legs move you close to me, like silky  
Pistons moving your fleeting thoughts upon an ephemeral  
Track hidden in the forests and deserted shopping  
Malls across the desolate states of the nation, jogging  
The starry course of boarders real and imagined to  
My homestead at 8,000 feet.

Your lips did not take off like rosy biplanes to  
Come bombing me with kisses while I sat outside and  
Read and stared out across the valley where Molly's Nipple rises,  
Looking for those parts of your body that might come that way,  
Like parts of angels playing silent instruments the final  
Gifts of God's artistry, a mob of your lashes, hairs, and breasts—  
These things of you did not come marching down from the pink nebulous  
Like pulsating bees in swarms to sting and swell me,  
And blister my tongue from visions of you in parts  
Laying and spread across the harlot's open sky.

Though your fingers came, little thieves, and brushed me only to  
Leave before I could understand, the way those fleshy  
Daggers worked into me, like an infant's need. A contented ease they stole away,

And in that place a vast and heavy longing lies, an icy mountain  
That knows how to crawl through all of my body, from tip to tip,  
And there quaking movements bring upon heated landslides in



Thoughts of you crashing down and fumbling like uneasy lovers on me.

For your fingers left their prints in my heart,  
Marks in stone, the smallest bit  
Of you who never even realized.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Smiles Of All Of The Wolves

I want another house to contain my imagination while I live  
Outside of my self—  
In a little while, I want to live in the bossom of mountains again,  
And make an arcade after midnight  
In all of the silent palaver I am sure no one but you will take  
The time to read and thus to undertsand.  
The horney toad waits for this open throated,  
Making an illusion of carports beside my grandmother's grave—  
While off in the distance, my father's horses run—  
Unanimously, making a Disney World out of the  
Broken hills—  
Their hoof beats stamping out creches and fjords where  
I can hide all of the wilted flowers I once tried to give my broken  
Loves:  
Now corsaged into the cut stems of dying flowers, the  
Recognize the places inwhich they are made to love—  
For a little while, kidnapped movie theatres that never thought  
To open for themselves amidst the open hills—  
The blooms that slow down until evening  
And then close up shops and all of their business—  
What beauty they rectify against the smiles of all of the wolves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Smiling Alligator

My grammar would be better today if  
I hadn't started out from so far away  
Listening for the canoes of your ethereal gazes—  
And followed the trails of your perfumes to where  
They fell away in the parks of unnoticed trauancies  
Underneath the stars—  
And I left off the place where I could never  
Manage to belong,  
And somehow failed to mention how I got here—  
In this sad, sad place,  
Like in an apartment without any wife—  
And just the long days making love to themselves  
Without any electricity—the pigs eating themselves  
In the sun—the elephant running from the mice  
Toward the direction of the smiling alligator.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Snout Of Windmills

Popgun oasis  
On the end of  
A candle stick—  
Jack a hurdler of  
The snout of  
Windmills—  
Dreaming if climbing  
Up Jupiter,  
Fleet as a  
Javelin over  
The gerunds of  
They valley—  
Sure as an  
Arrow knowing  
The harvest  
From the orchards  
Of its time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Snowflakes Of Darkness

Put a pearl in the mouth of my soul and  
Walk away—talk about hunting unicorns, even though  
I know you don't have it in you—  
You have never read King Arthur—nor are you one  
Of Mordred's brothers:  
You came from Mexico where they gave you other  
Legends—and apple orchards so you could escape the  
Thoughts of the graveyards of your ancestors:  
Those beautiful Indians that fell in love with conquistadors  
Or were taken wholeheartedly by them  
Underneath the pyramids and the stepladders to the sun—  
Here you will find me climbing up to you again,  
Because I am inebriated and sleep walking—and I know  
That you do not care, and that I cannot be found out  
By any path: these oppressive avenues all devour one  
Another, and I am married—you came out from the labyrinth of  
Solitude to work for the lost souls who enjoyed going  
To Disney World—and I made you my muse—For a while—  
Now that I am married, I cannot love you, though as the witch  
Steals my shadow when the snowflakes of darkness fall,  
I remain lost in your soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Snow's Sad Drift

Recall her now  
What the world does know  
Fluctuating back and forth  
Through the snow.  
Go the way the  
Temporal serpent  
Slithers,  
How there in the  
Ice forest  
He is the hallucination  
Of your life  
Echoing deep in the crevice,  
The reflection nothing sees  
Drawing its closing  
Like a child runaway  
Adrift in the quiet tundra  
The only one  
Beneath her eyes falling  
Asleep while kissing  
Underneath the nitric blankets  
Of the snow's sad drift.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Snowy Lights Of The Playgrounds

Now I am dancing:  
Weaponless, armless, here for you:  
A peasant who is also a song  
In the river-  
A rabbit that pants in the ferns, or beside  
The houses of the uneasiest alley cats:  
And you know that I am wrong,  
But I am still here:  
I am still here, loving you, and calling for  
You-  
Even after your washing machine is over,  
And the lines of untrue foxes come  
To an end:  
Maybe they have caught your grapes like  
Goldfish,  
Or maybe you didn't let them in:  
But there are prizes anyways: the entire  
Sky is a midway of prizes,  
As you know: and as you know, my  
Heart is a fairground with you inside of it  
Lit up with all of the beating estuaries  
That remember how you, sleeping,  
Took on the snowy lights of the playgrounds  
And never let them go.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soft Antlers Of Their Deeply Slumbering Beasts

Opening up what scars there are to feed  
The hungry cats- the places that open with milk and  
Red decorations:  
Now this: that my friends are all gone, and now that I  
Speak one too many languages  
That are all drowned out underneath the roar of the  
Unearthed airplanes  
Going somewhere on Sundays: going from church to  
Buy icecream:  
All dressed up and in a fever of words that come swift,  
And then words that linger:  
And the shops beside the road, and the old lovers trying  
To stay warm underneath the overpasses:  
The stories and contests of fables-  
The talking animals of my clandestine resorts-  
Here they all are in a classrooms holding a caucus full of  
Feral retorts:  
But the substitute is so pretty- and she is so fine:  
She makes them stutter as she makes them all add up  
Six plus nine; until the workaday world is over,  
And all of the children are safely returned to their mothers:  
As the thieves are returned to the sea-  
And the cats reawaken into the graveyards beneath the constant  
Curses of swing sets underneath the unmovable mountains  
Who speak underneath the rains of how I moved  
Across them- and they lifted me up to catch a glimpse  
Of the heavens- and then they surceased into caesuras,  
As the rainstorms mat their grasses,  
And the soft antlers of their deeply slumbering beasts.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Soft Bicycles And Mice

Distended bellies under skies or highways  
While the fires are roaring, and the Columbian women are  
Selling in the flea market with the tattoos  
On their shoulder blades like brown wings: where will it  
Take them then,  
When the fire comes, swiftly and sending all of the animals  
Away from their works,  
Forcing what moonlight there is to admit to its thievery,  
And me to go out again and work for my father-  
All the time listening for the waves,  
The promises of new loves in them, repeatedly- the soft  
Bicycles and mice going along the shore,  
Saving themselves for the morning- as the fire burns around  
Her neck,  
And airplanes wear necklaces in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soft Blue Footpaths

Through these warm collusions I devise the memories  
Of the lonely romances where I once was a truancy,  
Saddled up to highest cul-de-sacs in the patriotic  
Foothills that coiled like serpents in love;  
And I pit my cheek in class, and never said a word, while  
Her body seemed to me for the sleek tourisms of water  
Parks,  
Her lips a fountain for the promises of doves; and I took  
Care of myself in the green shadows of my own bedroom,  
Or I didn't talk to anyone, but I played with fireworks,  
And became a conquistador long after my parents had gone  
To bed,  
And I had eaten their fried chicken; and all of the monsters  
Were in the shadows and the wind,  
And the nocturnal bromeliads were out and showing their  
Tongues and cleavage for the ceaseless kidnappers,  
Or to any of their sorts:  
And I got on the long boat with all of my dreams and made  
It all the way to California, spindling through the soft blue  
Footpaths of what no one else would have believed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soft Declivities Of Paper Airplanes

In the soft declivities of paper airplanes  
As the rain storms above the abnormal classrooms,  
And the prisms of our more beautiful  
Daydreams are shelved—  
There are one or two firedrills  
Before our prettiest daydreams are shelved,  
And then we embark all-alight like the fires  
That kept to our wings—  
As the blue-gills fluttered and  
The fishes sang—  
From the hidden places bound into the  
Recesses of suburban parks—  
As the dog without tongue howled  
To the muses of  
An unpublished ferris wheel—  
In the enamored dialects the housewives  
Once remembered,  
Who could not believe what it was that they  
Had actually fallen into—  
As the eyes recorded nothing upon the fields  
The players had left  
Where the enemies would not yield.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soft Enclaves Of The Grottos

Foaming in the sun across the reefs  
Of Dionysus, waiting for the fruiteria to finally close  
Down,  
Waiting for Alma to finally wined down, to finally think of  
Me,  
While all of the fuselages of airplanes are in the sky,  
Like the birthstones of boys who never believe:  
The bicycles of virgins are touching the soft enclaves of the grottos  
Of the virgins who have become so predisposed  
To ever have to believe anything of everything that I  
Have mouthed off to the midsummer morning, to ever have to  
Believe:  
All of the monoliths of cenotaphs, and the failed midways of the  
Games of despondent lovers too numb to know the feelings  
Of who they are or whoever they were meant to be,  
Will all of the graveyards accumulate upwards in mountains  
Of grandmothers,  
As all of the forgotten ancestors try to exercise their beliefs  
Into the constellations of the mid afternoon constellations of the still  
Living graveyards into which we never even have to cast  
A wish in to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soft Shelled Tortoises In The Canal Underneath The Bridge

Sing into the open mouthed  
Void of woe begone  
After the fireworks of holidays have  
Died  
And the traffic seems to have  
Disappeared underneath the overpasses,  
And the girls that you loved  
Are all confused while you write  
Novels against the baseboard  
Underneath of there the coral snake lives  
With her little fangs like pearls  
Wanting to kiss the water moccasins  
And the other poisonous sorts  
That live with the soft shelled tortoises  
In the canal underneath the bridge that  
You used to cross everyday just to  
Get home from school.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soft Transgresses

Early in the morning like a musical,  
The sun on the heels of the snake, kisses the grass;  
As if I could lie you low like a knight with  
A passion,  
Or like a curious airplane over the orchards:  
Little girls kissing in between the buttercups of class,  
And all the days a long adventure  
Until they finally came suddenly and quixotic to the windmills  
Of your brown eyes,  
Who seemed to be smiling their meanings to the fickleness  
Of the trafficking clouds,  
Where every road has their ends in illusion:  
Where the galleries tumble and the pretty affairs finally become  
Tight lipped,  
Where the bedrooms float like fairytales themselves;  
And I think that wouldn't it just be night to awaken the next  
Morning at the end of the drive,  
Into your brown and dusty arms: every pore on your body a windmill,  
Speaking the soft transgresses that I am so glad that we have come  
To know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Softest Estuaries

My old muses live here—  
Holy grounds of junked cars and pornographies that  
Have already bloomed and wilted:  
And I don't want to live here  
While I am alone: the dragon cursing and  
Getting up for fornications in which he spits  
His fires to the naked girls like  
Hamburgers and hot dogs underneath the sun:  
And it is not a pretty art,  
But it gets the jobs done—Ferris wheels under the minds  
Of my grandmother's grave  
All throughout all of these altruistic pornographies  
Where little girls are just born  
To turn into werewolves pushed against the seven  
Seas—and made to do math in classes  
Of high school—where the bands practice next  
To the yawning alligators where so many  
Indians have lived only to appear again: brighter,  
And phosphorescent—as if all of the word  
Was a cavern where the housewives lived  
And fought off the wolves of young boys and  
Young men who just wanted them to be their muses  
And brought to them fruit baskets and carried to  
Them apples pierces with from their venomless  
Fangs—with the most hungry expressions in their eyes,  
As they carried themselves over the softest estuaries  
Of the minnows,  
But otherwise kept to themselves all of the time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Softly Rounded Opulence Of Alma's Birthstones

Now to get distracted and daydream up to the  
Corduroys and cenotaphs of my visions:  
If I play videogames, I know I will lose her,  
But there are ever so many dungeons full of monsters,  
And the homoerotic love I could give them is almost too tangible  
To be unexploited;  
But then my thoughts can drift away to the beer can bellies of  
Industrial airplanes, up in the air and doing some good,  
Gliding softly with the zephyrs who are like ceiling fans;  
And the sororities of them,  
Homespun from the same fantastic visions of my very own  
Colleges,  
From the truanacies of daydreams and graveyards I guess Alma will  
Never really know,  
As she gets impatient with me when I cannot figure out who she  
Was:  
Sometimes I mistake her for a forest fire, and when I fill her ribs  
She becomes a xylophone of overpriced houses that her father  
Marcelino got suckered into,  
As the airplanes whisper like buzzards over mortally wounded gods;  
And when I hear them I know that my time is coming soon,  
So that my every twenty four hours will be overfilled and ringing  
Like the effluvious wanderlust of my luckiest waters over  
The softly rounded opulence of Alma's birthstones.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Song

She is the song, so the old story goes,  
The words are the things she doesn't sing-  
She doesn't park too close to the ocean anymore-  
Where the turtles make love,  
Where the seagulls glut:  
She wears a ring, and keeps a certain dance.  
Dresses up in her charms, she drives by the airport,  
The roller-rink, broken down- men have become  
Tramps,  
Alligators fart in the park: She doesn't sing.  
She breathes steadily and when amusements come with  
Their seasons, she holds on- She knows what she  
Is doing,  
And she hasn't pretended to feel anything worth much  
More than her easy situation for so very long.  
She is a song that was predicted.  
She never puts her feet above her head,  
And there are other ways she could be going,  
But she keeps to her tune instead.  
She is the song- a mammal, a wedding ring struck out  
On the baseball diamond,  
Another sweaty thing on the paper thin land beneath  
The clouds- A sad or happy song,  
A metaphor who likes to dine at restaurants, who keeps  
Her hair neatly bundled, and kisses her nephew on the  
Forehead, a kosher stamp, I wouldn't want to know  
What will become of him;  
Exactly like her, ululating across the splay of palmettos,  
The steady movement of the feral sea she doesn't  
Answer-  
In black and white, in dreams, a song with steady moods,  
She holds in hand whispers, tunes;  
But to me, never anymore does she answer.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Song Birds Going Down Into The Mine

If they said that the rivers were beautiful,  
Then you know that they are; and you are sleeping right  
Now in the little bed next to your brown  
Man,  
Your extended family breathing in their adjoining rooms  
Like windmills pecking a valley:  
And you have crossed the frontera, so you languish like  
A desert rose in the forefront of my mind:  
And I think sometimes that you have been so kind to me,  
But other times I think you have been so unkind:  
But the traffic rushes by anyways, and other girls forget who  
They are and are never mindful of what they could mean to me;  
But if I say to them that you are beautiful,  
Then they will know that you are-Alma;  
For my drunken music comes singing out from every pore,  
Geysers of recreation who mouth of like the last echoes  
Of the song birds going down into the mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Songbirds Who Sing With Our Tongues

Scarred and unbeautified, I somehow have abducted a beautiful  
Woman eight years young than I, who my nineteen year  
Old cousin also tries to court;  
But right now I am even outside of her, and the fruit market is closed:  
The water cooler of my hunting grounds is bereft with the mercurial  
Visions of both of her eyes;  
And the way I have propositioned her atop the nursery but on my  
Knees:  
And she, my Alma, has promised me that we will be married tomorrow-  
Always tomorrow, until she goes back home, and the pictures of  
Her bed like a nest into which the shivering birds fold their wings:  
Next door, but beside their lovers who eyes are small enough to  
Disappear with the grains of sand on a beach,  
She lines herself with the cadavers wavering like gossiping anemones  
In the shallows of the streak-  
Who will roll over for anyone, but she cannot swim, so her brown  
Limbs curl around me like intelligence in wood, in furniture:  
And I gather her up lovingly like driftwood for the fires of my blue  
Bed, to which in my troubadouring artwork I am always  
Leading her to,  
And the insularly cathedrals like legumes half cracked open in the sunlight  
But forgotten by the laborers of the day;  
Making a lunch for the songbirds who sing with our tongues  
In a living room where no one is left standing who believes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Songs Of Dead Rivers

I lounge inside the songs of dead rivers  
Where better women smile at me naked atop  
The tufts greener than all Christmas trees;  
But oh, how these lands are wicked, even  
If calmed: The king is smiling even while  
Possessed, while the traffic is heady and conductive.

I dress out for PE, but don't work out:  
I make laps around the basketball courts and take  
Notes, while the Jewish students collect on the  
Fiascos which they better perceive, which  
They have been working towards, never mindful  
Of even the soccer moms' leggy tresses,  
Their dun ring fingers and extroverted scents.

Now in the cacophony of Catholic churches the  
Play strums: She is wearing the red dress, smoky and  
Ethereal. From Canada, and a thief crawls through her  
Window, and her eyes are for him and glowing  
Something mythical. Like a fire in a horn up on stage,  
Like a specific bouquet damply bequeathed above  
A loved one's coffin I have singled out, as I wait  
For the trucks to come, to unload from them  
Whatever it is I have to sell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sorry Mound Of Calvary

Massive bends of yellow gold,  
The incest of falling cupbearers, and the winter's  
Boiling,  
The foals unfold and everything becomes less cherished:  
The hills take ship,  
And oaring trees pretend to make it up  
The faithful resins of the cheering day who with all of  
His angels in jubilee seems to be standing  
Fully suited-  
An arc, a leviathan sating his burnished liquors  
Above the sorry mound of Calvary.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soul Of My Alma

I am only supposed to be awakened by a daydream  
That has fallen too late, that has enamored too deeply into the shadows  
Of a stream  
Streaming all down from the mascara of her eyes, falling so far as  
Migrating butterflies  
As to stumble through the higher and lower forests of all of Mexico  
Like rose pedals in a wedding sacrificed to the steps  
That she doesn't want to believe that her faith was lost in;  
And her work bleeds with the ululating of amphibians awakened through  
The nocturnal gestations outside of her carport by the hours of  
Darkness,  
Addressing and redressing to her the way her knights have turned;  
And by that most unclever of moons, the windmills that should be  
Breaking their necks serenading her, stutter up the abutments  
Trying to siphon off the tears and oil slicks of the sunken tenements of the  
Boys, both real and make believe, that used up all of their  
Lighters on the wicks of fireworks just to amuse her for a second,  
The soul of my Alma- my muse, into turning their way.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sound And Fury

I walk to the back of the house and take off my boots.  
This is in the middle of summer, monsoons,  
But there are no mud daubers- that is good  
Because I've become friendly with a widow spider  
In the pump house (mud daubers are her natural predator):  
I look at her in the morning, laying on the web.  
in the rafters, along the porch, as if a saloon,  
My mother has shown me a nest this morning-  
I was up so early, I mistook the chicks for kittens,  
Mewing slick and velveteen, eyes so blind,  
Until she explained. When I step inside, they look at me as if  
I've not been working, which I haven't, which is my luxury.  
I worry that the publisher hasn't received my book,  
But it is such a little thing, a small worry of an insouciant heart,  
Like an overused word kept handy in the margin,  
Until in overuse it becomes rotund, a morbidly obese cadaver  
In faithful romance:  
A fly crawls on the skin over my elbow, and I've begun to  
Read Faulkner, and all the children in high school pray in  
Silence, hands whitened by bleach, eyes accusatory- They do not contemplate,  
Like I once have, the kiss for a greater love,  
The sea in faithful gyration, the curling empirical goddess:  
I suppose, I do not love anyone right now, because I haven't  
Grown up, though it is getting late, and all the gentlemen with  
Their ladies are returning from the ball, and the sky is in a particular  
Sort of glow, and not a single vehicle is moving: Right now,  
This is how it must be. The houses are only half built,  
The young mother is balancing on her bicycle with the enfant  
Seated behind her, drooling. Here, the canals divide like  
Suburban calligraphy, the lesser successes abound,  
Tiny palms grasping irresistibly, and even I  
Can remember what that gallery displayed as we came home so long ago  
To pray and eat our dinner.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Soundproof Bones

Building your house inside the soundproof bones  
As it rained—  
And the housewives awakened all at once  
From their social unconsciousness:  
Little girls they might have been,  
As elusive as teal and ruby dragonflies in their front  
Yards—spinning their bodiless cadavers  
Amidst the lots of cypress, where the  
Echinopsis bloomed in nude bouquets,  
Thrusting the nuptials of their phalluses towards  
Every airplane that passed them by—  
And prostitutes falling in love in the park amidst  
The graffiti and tampons of  
Truants so wonderfully scarred and beautiful—  
Trying to imagine their own reflections  
Cast away just as they were  
Into the cerulean abyss of sky where airplanes  
Came like mirages swooping low  
And trying to make that dying jungle fall in love  
With a vanishing make-believe.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Sounds Of Woe

Slow down the sounds of woe,  
The jet planes sleeping in the snow,  
While the unending light cuts the yard in two,  
In a Siamese twin the mailmen knew,  
While all of the flowers bloomed and grew,  
And I stepped outside to remember you,

In a wind tunnel world the snow flakes fall  
And the sounds of woe kiss them all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sounds To My Sorrows

Each raindropp dancing along in the cowbell games of  
Their brotherhood,  
Patting the head of my trailer and engorging the skirts of  
Her canal:  
People live under this cool sheen: people everywhere,  
People in cars, and people in buildings,  
Folding over and to sleep in airplanes- related or unrelated by  
Thought or inclinations,  
Forever and everywhere like the living echoes of their graves;  
And I think how rains should relate to people in the  
World that we share,  
And I think of Sharon, or a muse somewhere; lighting up the  
Mountain, all eager to get somewhere,  
Wolves curling like kittens, her warm underwear; and how we  
Shared the atmosphere of schools together,  
Each Monday a warm renewal- the presence of her body a breathless  
Art gallery- the rains would come then and make her faster,  
While I slept under the bleachers and listened to her laughter;  
As I still sleep under the mobiles of all of my tomorrows,  
Because both school and Sharon have gone away;  
And the rains on Sundays and Mondays always bring back home  
The sounds to my sorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The South Florida Sky

Alchemist

You begin a poem shirtless  
In the landscaping outside of your  
Home room class  
Full of bruises that your make believe  
Lovers will not see,  
And the cathedrals of your heart  
Are torn like wet paper-  
They seem to flood the intersections of  
An airplane, or it was just that  
I was dreaming:  
Here you are again on stage- found in  
The weather doing acrobatics,  
After you left the canoe behind  
Anyways,  
And all of the girls became makebelieves  
As the mists rose above the  
Baseball diamonds,  
And you lifted your eyes after a long afternoon  
Daydream  
And saw that you were still in the  
Student parking lot- perfect, the south florida  
Sky almost ready to storm.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Space Between Themselves

There is the carport waiting patiently  
Even as the rain floods the weedy gutters,  
The unused lawnmower brushing against  
The rebar,  
As my parents make love inside a little house,  
As my muse steps inside to him:  
Haboobs are reawakened across the Arizona  
Desert and nobody buys anymore fireworks:  
The angels are all dusty,  
Coming down from all of their trucks-  
They say nothing to my pitiful face-  
They go indoors again  
To carouse and drink: they keep the space between  
Themselves,  
As down from them, the ladies kiss the  
Toads that are coming in from the busy highway,  
Trying to figure out if anyone of them has  
Money enough to pay to be a prince.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Space Upon The Canvas

All of the chassis burn inside the land of  
A silent sun:  
As all of her wickedness finally eclipses the last lamp  
Light of a Christmas tree-  
Until she is all turned out and burning:  
Burning—why,  
She might As well burn the whole thing down—  
As she is the exact same thing as my Laundromat  
Shed of foreskins in the last days of  
Its epiphany—  
And a zoetrope here—and katydid upon her white  
Arm or elbow-  
As she bends back and forth as a white swan trying  
To breathe—  
The traffic passes by her and her lawn—  
And they are almost beautiful to believe—but the  
Sea and the day swells and swells,  
Taking up all of the space upon the canvas—  
Leaving no room for nothing less than all that is perceivable  
To be ultimately believed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Space Upon The Canvas

All of the chassis burn inside the land of  
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Taking up all of the space upon the canvas—  
Leaving no room for nothing less than all that is perceivable  
To be ultimately believed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Spaniard Meets An Indian Princess

I will die by your borders,  
Your estuaries,  
You silken paths-  
I follow your tracks  
Through the thick underbrush  
And around the edge of your  
Gulf.  
Hostile Indians shoot  
Stone-tipped arrows at me  
From beneath palm meadows-  
You set sandy panthers  
Loose to stop me,  
To extinguish me,  
To defeat me,  
But I have seen you once  
Through the sunlight  
And swaying banyans,  
The last of your kind  
Washing your thighs  
In the slow streams  
With the early crocodiles  
Guarding you,  
With the white egrets  
Fanning you;  
You were a misty portrait  
Bordered by cypress curtains  
And filigreed by stunted  
Citrus -  
Cicadas crossed their legs  
Back and forth for you,  
Playing their primal violins;  
Manatees watched religiously  
Like lazy priests from the  
Deeper gladed waters,  
As dove-tailed deer nuzzled  
Acorns from your fingers-  
Your eyes were free things,  
Your eyes were unhinged  
From society-

Your eyes were saintly and effortless,  
Like driftwood in deep inlets  
Stripped of inhibitions of language  
And revealing your life's daylight;  
But when they saw me  
They took off startled, scattered  
Ripples over the water's surface,  
And the swamp grew suddenly  
Quiet and hostile—  
But, heedless, I come for you.  
As you can see, I bare no cross  
About my neck. I have no religion  
Save for the one your acceptance  
Would give to me.  
I do not  
Come with the others to  
Take from you,  
To build stones upon you,  
To diminish you—  
I come now but to worship you,  
To be guided by you,  
To kneel before the teaching of  
Your eyes on all natural things,  
And to become a part of your landscape.  
I need to find you,  
To reside in but an aspect of you  
To do for you as  
Those things which you cherish without speaking—  
Thus I hunt you now  
Ceaselessly, to die if need be,  
To become the extinction of a forgotten soul,  
To nourish the memories your passing  
Leaves behind as you flee from me,  
Not to capture you,  
But to hold your hand  
In these dark quiet spaces of the world,  
And here, to love you.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Spells Of Rumor

I'm so drunk that my fingers no longer have  
Their own androgynous feeling,  
And I'm fourteen at the movies of Wellington  
Trying to catch eyes to make out;  
And I've got to get out of the shadow of these  
Housewives,  
But I have an entire bottle to finish up  
And some time before she gets off work, and an entire menu  
To peruse at the ice-cream parlor,  
And the week's spelling list to memorize.  
The sleepy alligator down at the end of the driveway  
Is watching me: He has your eyes and I have  
Nothing else to say: she is in love with you too,  
And maybe she'll make you change your persuasion with  
The miracles she performs with her tongue,  
Or so the spells of rumor go,  
But I am otherwise quite lazy, and I have no friends,  
Nor the patience to teach my pets better tricks;  
And I will not live forever, for when I die I will stop making  
Believe, but lie down and smile up to the soft bellies  
Of airplanes where you still go leaping,  
Or maybe it is your daughter now, smiling, hand on hip,  
Serving the better middle-classes who,  
Not having yet learned their lessons, are trying on newer  
Wings, trying to skip like stones, to tease like wishes,  
Those younger gods you can never fail to interest.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Spells Of Their Mating

Animal traps and quivers.

These baldheaded bulldogs give me the shivers;  
All alone in some humid park,  
Listens to the waves crocheting long after dark-  
To the silences of turtles mating,  
In grottoes under sandcastles, and Canadian  
Stewardesses leaping so carelessly,  
So far above the sky; they give no pause;  
They are rushing like angel-faced Cinderellas,  
Skipping over the everglades to get married  
When I remembered them from some class some far  
Away, tipping their glass, rolling in the hay:  
I had so little time to care for them, leaping out of  
Schoolyards, balancing over emerald gutters,  
Sweating alone in some cars, but they are getting married:  
Tonight they are getting married, and they've  
Remembered both of their glass slippers,  
And the spells of their mating- so everything should be okay.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stained Glass Of A Broken Church

The car swerves between the red cliffs  
In the bosoms between my sisters and my parentsâ€™  
The sky an accentuated mirror of something  
Going on beneath it'  
I am headed to Phoenix, to dry gutters'  
A desert of plagiarists 'apartments rising like mirages,  
Seeing things that must be similar to what my  
Grandmother must have seen growing up here'  
But dissimilar 'good for her asthma'  
And the citizens of the illusionary plains, now that  
The citizens have all gone 'evaporated into  
The blankets of chicken pox'  
And my own mother weeping over a horny toad  
Like a pieta over the stained glass of a broken church.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stains Of Hummingbirds

Overhaul ejaculation,  
Women in trees like Christmas ornaments:  
Kitchens, Laundromats,  
Wash your breasts, perfume their caracoles:  
Make them holy for all the senses of their sailors:  
Do your job, and make meat pies:  
Of your legs, long like expensive apartments,  
The feelers of tenements,  
Wet and spruce your jaws, give me lines like  
Acrobats: Let me swing atop of you:  
I just got the vacancy of the snake charmer  
At the saint Louis zoo;  
Degrade into the rhymes, incest, cheap colognes  
I shouldn't even spell:  
It all ends at the trailer parks where my cousins are  
Waiting in their bathing suites,  
Waiting for their men to come after their games,  
And birthed from underneath the oil slicks of  
Consumptive cars: And I loved you is the rule  
Of the greeting card, rhymes of a familial aristocracy  
I couldn't care for anymore, so I have left in the  
Concrete abutments of the desert,  
Even though it will never rain: to the hungry  
Jaws of coyotes and pranksters,  
The piss stains of hummingbirds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stamens Of Anarchists

Indifferent wildflowers pullulated by the  
Stamens of anarchists,  
As everyday in the vastly empty schoolyards I  
Hoped to touch you,  
Across the soft algebras of Mexican tiles;  
As I described your eyes while my thoughts drifted  
Like mariposas, and I slept  
Through the classes all strung out in the student  
Parking lot  
Until night came and the airplanes from underneath  
Looked as if they were wearing their mothers' jewelry;  
And when I was fifteen,  
Alma- you were eight and still figuring out for  
Yourself in Guerrero, Mexico,  
All the fables of the ghosts bred out of your volcanic  
Earth,  
Until you skipped like a stone well placed across the  
Prairielands of these United States;  
And the airplanes flew around your golden brow like  
Doves finding dry land:  
And all I've ever learned is how to kiss you as you  
Hold my hand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stamp Of Anonymous Rest

If I could drink more liquor, I would write  
More romance, the bottle is good for want of woman:  
The bottle is good when you are all alone:  
And the city is busy and made of coral foam,  
And airplane dust: Airplanes are angels on the rush;  
And I could leave my dogs and add another conjunction,  
My working class pith,  
And walk out under the swaying shoulders of  
Saint Louis: I've got enough quarters for another round,  
To see my pretty mythological sisters hibernating red-lipped  
Underground:  
And all the women in the city are made to be in love  
With certain men; and a select few are with them- The  
Rest, scorned, will never love again:  
Angelic women from high school with angelic bone structures:  
I would like to populate my airplane with all these women,  
And give their identities in a sweet list,  
But what would that say about me, truthfully- if anyone was  
Reading this- This sad lonely song, only it is not a song;  
It wants the root of immortality, but it won't live so long;  
Girls who I still hear ringing in the halls,  
Who I remember fondly, whose newborn children I shouldn't  
Recall at all; and I want my immortality on a garnished plate,  
And everyone around me to declare, "That boy can write, "  
But that's not what is waiting for me down at the dimming hall:  
An open sack is waiting for me and that's all:  
With no rhyme scheme and no name tag, the coroner will  
Examine me and say, "Not bad! " For a boy who didn't know  
His lines, the park was his mistress, his wife a lonely mind;  
But is dogs did love him, I have an awful hunch, but now  
Where those dogs are, I haven't a hunch- But god bless them,  
And keep them in their feral mortality, and let them range along  
The train tracks under the moonlight of this world's humanity;  
And when they have a moment of pause and rest,  
To think of this kind master, and tell the ghosts of beautiful women,  
The name of their lonely master, of him whom we have put  
The stamp of anonymous rest.



# The Stark And Naked Sea

Even if the singing mines of a heart don't pan out—  
The sun will still paint in the blue prints—  
Over this subtropical part of the world: over the bandits  
And the man-o-war:  
With beautiful women languishing further inland,  
Brushing fully naked against the sexualized horns of  
Unicorns—  
In the tall grasses, with the libidos of jackrabbits—  
Like blue gills and foxes jumping up to taste the quicksilver  
Of airplanes—  
The Ferris wheels spinning around like well-armed gypsies—  
And the windmills stealing their lights—  
Circulating throughout the valleys that I remember,  
Making the soldiers drop their guns into the rocks and  
Pig-nosed snakes—  
But down there somewhere as well—like a torn banner  
For a defeated belief,  
A single angel blown through the currents of the rocks,  
Who still remember when it was they lived in  
The raiment of the stark and naked sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Starlets Of That Superimposing Glade

Romance is the formula for a  
Queen,  
To persuade her to undress her armies,  
And then herself in a bed she herself made,  
The milk of the kind mother  
In the meat of her shade;  
And I laugh just as sadly as if I had found her  
Watching from the carbuncle  
Of this terrapin, like a family heirloom  
Swept under the clouds by the swishing brooms;  
And what color are they but the window  
Dressings of the first wave of her senses;  
Those very purposeful corridors who must allow  
For anything else to proceed;  
And her name is weeping from the convertible  
At the drive in movie where  
The fruit is shaken from its cluster into the  
Open lips of the shade,  
Just as peeling thighs relax, doors welcoming,  
Under the larger than life senses of  
The starlets of that superimposing glade.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Starlights Of Too Many Names

You know I love you, Alma,  
And yet I am not free:  
And this is the last of my soul,  
Like your name starving atop the doorway:  
The wildflower drowning  
In the sun who traffics in the starlights of too many  
Names.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Starvations Of Your Hopeless Supper Times

Bountifully I enroll in the space that my body enfolds;  
I know this through my senses and through my parents senses,  
And I remember the suburban neighborhoods I used to  
Skip out of school in, in your town,  
And smell you all around even when you wasn't around:  
You were always going to higher ground, past the pastures and the observation  
Centers of sciences, either bad or good; and if you ever unbuttoned  
Your blouse for a man it was in a house in which I've never been,  
Or probably never seen;  
And if you were in a sorority while I was away, I am sure it was lit  
Up with the laughter of your clever cruelty;  
And now you grow your beautiful children like glowing bobsleds  
Down the banks of the slopes I have had to climb up all of the  
Way past tree line just to get a peek down into  
The private life that I couldn't otherwise seem to find; and what a sight  
To find you weeping up at me, begging fitfully for my  
Mercies through the  
Starvation of your hopeless supper times.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Steady Rain

The paled hearse drives down  
The way of her spine  
After closing time;  
Her lips are sealed like an  
Envelope sent to a dream  
Stamped like red wine;  
The dollhouses of lonely granddaughters  
Line the looming countryside,  
And carriage-less young boys straddle the opal  
Fences to see the \$1.99 colonnade,  
The single toy pushed by his feathering hands, carrying  
The model death inside;  
A balsam coffin for a plastic bride;  
To which the absence of little girls  
Stare out from the pearly driveways,  
Her thighs' quivering neighborhood;  
Inside her body, she is transformed into a doe  
Hunted by the aristocracy of easy men;  
Hemmed down to the sea of drool,  
She changes into a pewter eel with patina of eerie rose;  
Then the hearse pulls up to the cemetery of weeping-willows,  
And waits in the cul-de-sac of her nape,  
As outside it begins the steady rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Steepening Hillsides

Jaundiced by the pinafores and the pain:  
Here I go running again,  
With or without the paths up through the nosebleeds  
Of tourists,  
Crying out her name through the scars of golden  
Aspen and exeunting grizzly bears:  
Here is a car filled with pornography, across the street:  
Across the canal and up the hill:  
Here is the pain I have less than delivered;  
While my mother makes love to my father alone,  
Before so many horses:  
And I wonder if she wonders about how many times it has  
Been that they have made love,  
Like letters mailed into her: and how many times it was  
Before I was conceived, and my sisters:  
Like my own muse: how many times did he thing of entering  
Her,  
Before he finally did, and customers started coming in to the  
Fruit market,  
And cars started passing through the street like bottles with  
Impotent genies filled only with my thoughts of  
Her and zygotes  
In a merry go round in a fetish of zoetropes grazing through  
The blindness out in the front yards of the open wounds  
Of old lovers,  
Like paper cuts burning in the fingerprints of lonely muses  
As they busy themselves with the places that they should  
Stash their stolen bicycles:  
Because tomorrow they are even sooner to be married,  
And then they will have no excuses for such equipment,  
Even as the cement dries, as their lactates evaporate  
Against the adulteries of the sunlight; as the bodies of their  
Chariots pull themselves up the steepening hillsides,  
Burning their oils, as whatever gods they hope to believe them  
Give them further excuses to proceed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stem Of My Heart

Word is a bud blooming the stem of my heart,  
But I don't know how to play music and  
My wife is already here—  
We almost lost the baby and last night we made love—  
There was a little blood and I had to apologize,  
But above us—airplanes, and at our elbows,  
Baseball diamonds—I am not sure I have any muses  
Anymore—  
Tonight there has to have been two or three  
Sirens—the werewolves who are already too heady  
Sleep beneath the nocturnal jasmine,  
And my shadow walks the shadow of my dog—  
When I look up after my wife is already asleep,  
I can barely make out the far away heavens,  
As stewardesses skip across the earth like your  
Vanishing birth stones.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Steroidal Harrumphs Of Weight-Lifting Saraphim

Regards, is how you should end it,  
And not even attempt leaning over to press her  
Lips for verification that you are not a poltergeist,  
Apoplectic, working with hurricanes to tear down  
The rows of breadcrumb housings,  
The nemesis to real estate; For she is busy  
At the water cooler, her eyes on well dressed  
Coworkers, the light bubbles; it is effluvious,  
And better words could not describe her pagan  
Magnetisms. You would need a doctor to hypnotize  
You, and a shrink to analyze the deadness of your mind.  
The infomercials come ablaze way before breakfast,  
But, in short, they will neither make you stronger,  
Nor more appealing. Such as it is, the park is all yours  
When the moon pulls the chains on the swings,  
And your face is cooled and hooded in the embrace  
Of mumbling maples. The cops should drive by  
Patrolling, but do not fear them, because you are  
Sadder than a criminal, and they do not cherish you.  
Go about your cryptic séance, the looming of pinwheels  
In a rainless collage with the nest of hungry hairless birds;  
For you have seen her photographs, and the full-busted  
Amnesias of the wellness in her sport. Hang up that  
Hat, and sit in the quieted ennui of the dysfunctional class.  
Tomorrow might become a better afternoon, but don't  
Suppose it will have anything to do with her low  
Mortgaged beauty; they are already inside her and comfortable,  
Her lips are stung with barbs of Errol Flynn- Yes,  
There will be better lines than these, perfumed hiccups  
That would have undressed her if she had saved her virginity  
For the quips of lonely professor; but not now,  
For how she beams, sure to become a grandmother strung  
To the limbs of the fraying jockeys, or the steroidal  
Harrumphs of weight-lifting seraphim.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stewardesses Who Work For Charity

The horses kept their stalls  
Until the men around them went for breakfast:  
It was the most beautiful sun above them  
That anyone could bet upon—  
And it was a silent, silent world that they were all drawn  
Into—men inside studio apartments  
As empty as reason is on the moon:  
Starlight and moonlight above the dinnertimes of  
Places where people happened to disappear into, following  
Whatever they happened to remember that they  
Could not believe in—and the hot air balloons were  
Going up by different degrees over the fireworks  
Tents scattered over New Mexico's deserts—  
And the lonely planes flew,  
Like your lost jewelry—like another Sabbath lost at  
Sea—as full and as high as the moon is for  
Werewolves—rising and hoping to kiss the lips of  
The stewardesses who work for charity.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Stock Footage Of Just Because

Yellow broad way,  
But where are the song birds- are they or  
Aren't they  
Listening anyways-  
And it takes some time to proceed and  
Become beautiful:  
As you are beautiful, sunbathing beside  
Your pool beside the Broadway  
Of any positively general gentleman:  
And it seems for awhile  
Outnumber,  
Just as while it is such a beautiful fight-  
And the numbers continue,  
As if the daylight were the night-  
And I think about you,  
As if your bosoms were just the echoes of  
Anyways- and just because-  
As if I saw you laughing in the hallways of anyways-  
Like another management just for the bullies  
That will see is all together  
Stocked up in the movie theatres of our tomorrows-  
Anyways- and laughing, perpetually,  
All throughout the stock footage of just because.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stolen Bobbles That Are Your Heavens

Elephants between pretty girls, gifts you gave me  
To survive the world, until you burned my crops,  
And return me to the loneliness of my bed:  
You laid me down as silently as a child kissing a rattlesnake:  
And this is my grave, as I lie here, as the centipedes dance:  
This is my grave, as the rain measures my body,  
Suiting my fancy- as you drive home in that brown labyrinth  
Overfilling with the stolen bobbles that are your heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stolen Gifts Which Once Brought Cheer

Bicycles stolen near the canal,  
Tinseled handlebars- I wonder who has stolen  
Them and thrown them here,  
Frames of spikenard crinkling the grass  
Down beneath the high-stepping footsteps  
Of bullies;  
And I would like to show for you;  
And for you to wear mistletoe in your hair.  
Your brother can come- I don't care:  
It's not far. We can follow the water moccasins  
Who will lead their ball of uncouth slick-toed  
Young down to the lips of her water's  
Edge  
Where maybe your sister lies always thoughtful  
Selling beneath the open skies.  
I swear, you don't even have to look me in the eye.  
Why I am doing this is to bring you near the stolen  
Gifts which once brought cheer,  
Now interlaced, crenulated with eels in indefinite space,  
Half exposed like a woman interrupted.  
You see, the wind takes your hair in little spokes,  
The airplanes flatulent over the high backyard leaves,  
The housewives beating yokes;  
And I don't care- Your eyes are so far. Wherever  
They are, I don't care- I just wanted to take you here.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stolen Lessons

Katydid's awakening from their dreams hung  
Like dew from the armpits of the cypress as all of  
The rivers of heaven sing,  
And the housewives drive home so slowly  
To their carportsâ€”Cadavers  
Of sunken knights against the rebarâ€”and a plume of  
Another space shuttle taking off into the skyâ€”  
Making a hedge of cauliflower that gardens into  
The heavensâ€”  
And the shells are heavy and sharp against the childrenâ€™s  
Feetâ€”  
And the kidnappers lay against the campers,  
Offering smiles, and friendships so sweet:  
And behind them, the cool recesses where the old cars  
Gravitatedâ€”and inside their sunken chassis  
So muchâ€”so much pornographyâ€”And the moon glows over  
Her, and she overflows her nocturnal cornucopia  
And gives all of the stolen lessons away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stolen Lights Of Their Pools

Telling nothing truly horrible to the  
School girls, as the snakes curl around the warm wheels of  
School buses-  
And I sit in between the warming grasses, hidden by the  
Parking lot,  
And read that she truly loves him- as the light dies through  
The blinds of the bleachers,  
And the housewives who also used to be school  
Girls drive home to different husbands-  
In their yards where the days have been, unobserved:  
Where truants have lighted off firecrackers, where burnt  
Paper and wishes have blown,  
Where ants have taken the drool and excrements of doves  
Down to feed and decorate their queen:  
They go home, jewels in their bellies, dishes in their kitchens,  
While I sit outside the stolen lights of their pools,  
Having read that she does truly love him,  
Evidenced as she goes home to him, as she does.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stolen Moonlight In The Pool

Softest convictions in a spyglass keeping  
Time with anyone, and then looking away while  
Holding her hand;  
And you can see across the entire yard, how little  
And beautiful it is- this space that the sunlight floods  
Over,  
And the traffic comes in ribbons heading home,  
And afterwards- when there is that silent emptiness,  
And moonlight with silver fireworks in the park,  
And a softer light across the man-made lakes  
And canals,  
Then your convictions are in a ferris wheel of your  
Senses that have gone asleep in the castanet of your ribs-  
The better words, and the girls you once loved,  
Slipped off to other beds in other states;  
But your wife is back at home, her hair curling around her  
Yellow shoulders,  
Her eyes bathing with the stolen moonlight in the pool,  
In the sorcery which cajoles you home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stolen Sunlight

Back home again in between the shallowest for-get-me-  
Knots—My girlfriend doesn't call—  
It is only a recording—Doesn't she know who she loves,  
While the same shadows beckon back and  
Forth to the children—  
What causes these haunted estuaries where only  
The planes and the satellites are the eternal  
Spectators, blooming from the gravitations of  
Their runways—  
With imperfect wings and bodies—  
As some snake of fables sleeps forgotten more golden  
Than the stolen sunlight of the moon  
Bedded in the sweet, sweet grass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stoned Earth

Sun, a scandalous thing over the movie theatre—  
Is it even up after I have gone home,  
Begun to cross my legs and drink rum  
While my dog sleeps beside me,  
And my wife makes love to the shower—  
In the blindness of the after-theatre of  
All of the shoes—  
Asteroids palavering over all of the parks  
And the zoos of earth—  
As something is said around the corner  
That was supposed to be beautiful,  
As the baseball diamonds caress and  
Copulate with the overgrowing fields of  
The stoned earth.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Stony Heavens Of The Overpass

And we all must come awake one Christmas  
In the soft rains and open seashells:  
In the grottos of the carport beside the car our mother  
Almost drowned in flipped over like a harried terrapin  
In some canal  
Beside some water moccasin- and it grows beautifully  
Mysterious in the backwoods  
Of the compounded earth when you can no longer  
See your way to the mailbox:  
But there it is, and the road ends at the  
Canal: but there are strange neighbors across it,  
And blue gills inside:  
But no other ways to cross it- and the bookstores have  
No meaning,  
While your mother takes you to the library and shows  
You pictures of other words to put to your lips:  
While the apple is still falling,  
And the school buses are turning around- and your  
Smallest sister isn't even yet conceived:  
And the idea of the muse as your goddess is as unsentimental  
As an unplaced bet at the dog track,  
And the other words you will not use: a lottery of numbers  
Standing out numbered before the beautiful  
Indians- and death coming around while the amphibians  
Sing in the aloe,  
And the superheroes sleep in the grass- picked up  
And carried away by the insects who live there  
While the kidnappers drive by beneath the stony heavens of  
The overpass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stoplights Of The Lost Bedrooms

I wish I could win another house in the waves  
Like goldfish bagged underneath the moon  
From the midways of this fairgrounds  
As the Ferris wheel at first rises and then recedes,  
Like a somnambulant elevator stuck to itself, unsure  
Of any other words—  
Scars that build underneath the stars and the time capsules  
We keep buried in our front yard  
Like a beautiful picture of a venomous snake,  
Sinuous and about to strike across the swing sets underneath  
The moonbeams: another thing that almost means  
Almost nothing to us—  
As the genie is always lost in her bottle in the waves—  
Until there are cartoons in the busied afternoons of all of these  
Tenements always going up and up—latch keyed  
But looking beautiful, biting their lips like lost arrowheads  
Tattooed high upon the semaforos—the stoplights  
Of the lost bedrooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Store

If I have traveled up to where the jasmine believes  
Where the bachelors live on roads that never  
Quite get you home,  
The alligator twisted from the breath of their masters,  
Where all of the Indians have evaporated or  
Melted into the virulence of sky:  
Then I should offer my mortal coils to the slugs of  
That great washing machine;  
And not having to look twice to know that Diana is making  
Love to her homeless gods,  
Throw myself over that old Roman wall, to swim with  
Dolphins, to become myself the sacrifice of mercury  
Like Alice to the lips of her young cult:  
They will pick me up and worship me just like a car they've  
Wanted to put out:  
And then you know, Erin, I will be but an echo to the footsteps  
Of your bridal shower; and when you move over the earth,  
You will tickle my calloused soul,  
And you will tramp my holes like grapes; and my wishes for  
You will remain so tremulous as to keep needing your  
Delicious secret and soul,  
And I will keep playing baseball for you out and blackeyed  
After high school; and it will do me no good,  
For the otter will be cracking his greedy shells and making  
A mess all over your bared breasts, while the citrus somehow  
Flowers into orchids,  
And oranges so round and perfect as if I'd known you,  
You can see and taste at the store.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Storefronts Of Her Blossoming Soul

Switchbacks disappear halfway up the  
Already vanishing heavens'  
And you have to scramble with the hooks of  
Your evolving soul'  
And not even a single angel will take note  
Of your most hollow of  
Victories 'with only your car waiting down  
There beneath you'  
Headlights draining the battering like  
Some type of parasitic intelligence'  
Your sisters making love to their eventual men  
In the deserts of another country'  
Your father a prince with amnesia'  
And your mother enthralled to a werewolf'  
So you pin your art to the hidden classroom  
In the apiary of her stone guts  
Hanging breathlessly above tree line'  
And you start out again, becoming enlightened by  
False summits 'the day perpetuating its  
Perfect tattoos upon your skin'  
The tourists dining beneath you,  
And melting into the storefronts of her blossoming soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Stories Of What Will Happen

Filling up the gas tanks of your bright eyes-  
Can't you tell we're in love,  
Or other things I don't know- I haven't  
Yet thought of,  
As the sky swells as it does, over the amphitheatres  
Where the gathered there are  
As wildflowers blown in the séances of  
A spring of airplanes-  
Becoming habitual, as fingers and rings-  
Where you crossed the mountains, feet stubbed by  
Fossils- and your mother crossed alone,  
Almost becoming a cenotaph of a housewife,  
But came a long ways to see her daughters again,  
Underneath the stars and their predictable plan:  
Came into the numb sanctuaries where I write  
Floridly for her daughter,  
Strange songs in a tongue she will never have to  
Hear spill- the stories of what will happen tomorrow  
That yet have to be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Storm

I did not even want to do this-  
Tonight, I just wanted to be left alone:  
Shot through with arrows,  
Watching television with my dogs,  
But what does it mean  
To be forlorn beneath the banyan without  
Any serpents to eat the knowledge what not  
Was;  
And your great breasts,  
And your ears curled back- you should be a mother,  
Of that I'm certain:  
And so I had no use but to cry out to you,  
And in the same moment I was shrunken,  
And unpublished; and you were a great amusement,  
Even if you didn't care,  
And I called you out and you rode across me like  
A bull across the sea;  
And that's all I can remember about your metamorphosis  
Deep in the glinting rafters of the butterfly house;  
And hotdogs, and sunshine, and caramel popcorn,  
But that's all there ever was;  
And it was so delicious on two legs and then on four  
Until the serpent came preaching through  
Hibiscus,  
Drowned the puppies in the storm.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strange Contrivances

Overpasses and overpasses of tools,  
Fluctuating dynamite- words spill from the caesuras  
Of what I know,  
Listening to the human language of flat tires,  
As the amber liquid spills from the lips of  
Tightroping humming-birds,  
As lost and runaway children spill from Michigan,  
Imagining the fledgling spirits of their words,  
And the cold hopeless nights of what it  
Takes to survive,  
Selling ruby glasses to crocodiles, trying to  
Imagine the sublimely great trumpets of immaculate  
Valleys where the angels sing perpetually,  
Nude busted, swinging in all of their stuff  
And from their very lips smoking the ether like  
The exhaust of the progenitors:  
They go- and they move, censers of priests in  
A room for acrobats, the swim and do summersaults  
And back flips through the spokes of bicycles,  
Figuring out the strange contrivances  
Of what they can justifiably live to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strange Curses

We can't get married- the little princess tells me everyday,  
Brown and dizzy, like Pocahontas on a seesaw,  
Braving all of the elements that took her here across Mexico:  
Now she wants a boob job  
But not another child- and she has a hernia that I hope will  
Soon mend;  
And when she gets home to him, she goes right to sleep:  
Or she slips out of her clothes and into the bathtub from which  
She can see the mango tree in the backyard  
About which her rabbits have disappeared which made her  
Mother Rosa happy, as they were eating all of its rich leaves;  
And I have gotten drunk to sleep on the roof  
Across the street;  
And when she is washed and my Alma is cleaned, she goes into  
A bedroom where she never reads and she turns out the  
Light and turns to sleep: or she makes love,  
While the dogs run their ever faithful races over her shoulders:  
Either they are lucky or are they are not,  
But at least I do not think she can hear the rattle of trains  
Like inky zippers of linear octopi that separates her world  
From mine- and I am almost certain she never wonders out at  
Night to bite her lip and shiver looking up into the strange curses  
Echoing from the stars.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Strange Festivities

The strange festivities of their souls  
Cannot trap the butterflies I don't  
Know anything about—  
As the sun come up over the shoulder-blades  
Of the airplanes while we are still  
In school—  
And there will be recess tomorrow—  
Or almost forever,  
Underneath the sweet sweat and the daydreams  
Of stewardesses or  
The girls who are in their own rooms,  
Captivating themselves by the  
Strange games which we all play—  
And then, as if Christmas comes—  
And the kaleidoscopes beckon from  
The most beautiful illusions of  
All of the churches, well then all of the barmaids  
Become mermaids to whom the best of  
The professors sing to forever—  
Counting clockwise,  
Their hearts in a chorus of magnificent shadows,  
And the angels flying like  
Daydreams over the baseball games of  
Their sweetest tomorrows—  
Well then it feels alright to evaporate  
And to become another part of the illusions  
That run forever like racehorses over the seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strange Migrations Of Her Successful Weddings

Open fair of wounded hearts taking too long at  
Playing their game,  
And caught in the harsh reality- they pullulate like  
Gold fish  
In drowning mockery underneath the sunshine:  
This is what they said they would be doing  
When they were little boys,  
But as it turned out, it was different:  
The traffic is all around like buzzards- the tourists  
Are hot, but satiated,  
And Saturn is very visible, turning around like  
A ringed spotlight,  
A ghost of her cherub husband floating over the  
Shoulder of airplanes-  
Casting down his eerie resilience on her birthday,  
Singing to her brown skin as  
She looks away from the massacre- all that is left  
Of the gardens of a young forbearance-  
That at first bloomed, and then caught a fire for  
Her,  
Only to drown in the consumptive airs,  
To be left behind by the strange migrations of her  
Successful weddings.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strange Relicts

All of the strange relicts were gone by Christmas,  
And I got married one year ago—  
So my heart wouldn't have to die  
By the usual flight paths of another replication of  
The Earth—  
Strange thoughts to be having when you don't  
Have to be alone, like any other words  
That spill out from the times  
While we were supposed to be together,  
With the jasmine perfuming the night  
After the baseball games were done—  
And the flight paths were emptied—  
And the orange trees yet bloomed—  
And the world stood barren on a precipice looking  
At the castle of vampire, and saying over and  
Over, as if trying to put a child to sleep  
Underneath the mountains—  
His will be done—his will be done.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strange Summits

What you can be: a tourniquet for the dogs underneath  
My flag—  
Filthy banner of a flea market and a stop watch—  
As, all of the housewives swing home on  
Their censers,  
Smoking with perfume and legs that flood the cul-de-sac:  
And I've wondered,  
Can you see into her eyes, looking down from you  
Apartment—  
Your heart something taken out at midnight from  
The refrigerator as your old girlfriend cried herself to  
Sleep on your floor—  
And your thoughts, lost in Los Angeles or Colorado,  
Like little arrow heads pepper the strange summits—  
And you go to sleep, knowing there will be school tomorrow  
If knowing nothing more.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strange Visions

Down to the slow plagiarisms—after the cats get tired  
Playing with their mice and visa-versa—  
Down to the open mouthed mailboxes of crepuscule—  
And the last tags of the fire around the dance—  
In the troubling diction that is muted by dinner,  
When all of the spent fireworks lie in the grasses—  
And housewives go back to pretending to be someone else—  
It is the time when the diamonds drink the sea,  
And the toy dogs come indoors to bask beneath the strange visions  
Of the televisions and the Christmas trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strangely Captured Sun

Doors divide the emptiness of two places:  
Then there is a without and a within,  
And her eyes swinging in the lullaby of her deep  
Alma's  
Eyes and the dreams of her impressions:  
And infinity between the parks of a constellation  
That the human imagination uses to  
Cartograph  
Trying to do some good, or to get together in some  
Religion,  
Denying that even their most ritualistic of sciences  
Will ever reach her:  
And the flowers you gave her are dead:  
The yards are empty and her children are not home,  
Though the doors continue to impersonate  
A pathway to her basked in the lights of the strangely  
Captured sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Strangely Usual Faiths

Coming up to another church again  
Through the shallows of a Peabody's imagination:  
Like cousins counting each others' freckles  
In the shoulders of the mirror-  
Far across the landscaping of an utopian misappropriated  
Underneath the extraordinary pulling of  
Moonrise-  
Like the last knight of morning galloping out  
In the strange pools and  
Lakes of that day's sunshine-  
And so we were: another school yard going through  
The matriculations of recess:  
Another dime store astronaut counting the ticks  
Of oxygen leading up to his weightless  
Graveyard:  
And a hallway leading to a doorway expected  
To lead towards somewhere,  
With faithful wolves lollygagging on either side,  
Waiting for the malapropisms of  
Lycanthropes to howl through the forest  
We thought already tamed anyways- as the dragons  
Sang for their dinner,  
And the damsels stepped easily-  
Already according to the spiral staircases of their  
Inner cathedrals- like the backwards propositions  
In the fingers of Chinese fireworks-  
And the maypoles of firemen- but I suppose you  
Don't know or understand this:  
So, just kiss her lips beneath the tiny flames of  
Goldfish,  
And rewind yourself, and go barefooted back inside  
Your little house, with the Christmas tree  
Waiting side by side with the television-  
The two of them entirely kissing cousins to the strangely  
Usual faiths that we both just happen to believe in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Streetlight's Fiasco

The streetlight's fiasco keeps to itself underneath the  
Spume of wildhorses,  
And this is just a relief as another day stops its echo  
As a weakness—and this is a weakness,  
This wasn't supposed to be here again in the fabulous raincloud  
Like an oil slick over a holiday:  
The white bread children all raise their mouths up to the  
Baptisms of sweet bread: and they are tenderly laughing,  
Just as the airplanes touch in;  
And their white, white mother's pretend to love them—  
And their white—white god is as white as the white  
White snow—  
And it becomes so beautiful whatever it is that they forgot that  
They had to remember,  
Whatever it was I am sure they will never know.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Streets Of Shanghai

There is a teepee over the very sport  
Of the soul of the waves:  
And over that some old chief is riding  
Some old bicycle  
Just as rusted as the ones i saw in the  
Streets of Shanghai:  
I will be going back to Shanghai next week-  
Going back to the woman I married  
So that I wouldn't have to be alone,  
And she will sing that our marriage has become  
an Ocean,  
And over that the sky and moon  
And all of the luxuriates of the water fowl  
That fall down upon the grottos of her bossom  
To bathe next to her heaters and wax figurines:  
And we will rent a hotel room next to the Shanghai airport  
Where the fields of strangely nettled  
Brown-brown grasses twice the length of a  
Full grown man have been cleared away-  
And make love in the hotel as the airplanes  
Peel into the sky,  
And skin like stones across the earth where we play  
For awhile like wishes who have settled  
Into the mouths of cicadas and bullfrogs who have learned to  
Sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Subtle Waves Of Your Ocean

It is Easter Sunday and we are both  
Happy about a green door,  
And your husband is sleeping on the couch  
The light box fibrillating and dousing him like the  
Bird bath of a mother;  
And we stand across from each other in the kitchen  
Still dirtied with the plates of barbeque:  
The light is on and weepy; and your eyes  
Seem to have their own tides in their perfectly circular  
Oceans;  
And I think about the creatures that must come out and  
Bath on your cheeks when you cry;  
There are little cuts on your legs from where you were  
Before;  
And your children are sleeping like pickup sticks in  
A kindling game across the hollow floor.  
I just want to step nearer to your neck and warm it with your  
Name,  
But I don't say nothing at all to you, but watch as silently  
As I can the subtle waves of your ocean.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Suburbia We Have Done

In the suburbias that have the overabundance of  
Patios like green shoots,  
Where the pools teal, and the housewives glisten and spoke  
Off in all the avenues of their pink-glossed limbs,  
And each tree is a loose waterfall:  
There I have a bed in which I often lie with race cars  
And empty liquor bottles beneath me, under a pop corn ceiling,  
Under a sale of a sky;  
And like me there are also many other bodies juxtaposing:  
And all that they can think to be doing is to grow up and begin  
Superimposing themselves, conjoining and throwing their  
Bones down hallways of equal venture;  
And to shoot their eeking young down the same hallways that  
They can still remember learning in: math and hyphens and comma-  
Splices,  
And the worlds of dissected frogs; and the windows gossiping  
Headily from strong strokes of the petting sun:  
And now all of this gladness gathered together in a softly flowing  
Utopia:  
Why just look at the suburbia we have done, once we got out of our  
Beds and let our bodies run.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Suffocations Which Prove Their Love

Grottos of our truancy, minute hummingbirds  
In the chain smoke of battleships,  
As the little yarns of school girls come unbound but  
Golden  
Across the fabulous lies of the wooden marionettes  
Striving to know the living flesh of  
Youth:  
The donkeys are braying in the carnivals trapped by  
The sea  
From which the smoke of its children comes up loud,  
And worth,  
Even to which the incurable lions are loud and opened  
Tongued,  
And they lie there as the cars drive by like a parade,  
Each little child inside them holding the cut roses  
That die with the suffocations which  
Prove their love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Suicides Of The Sun

We sell fireworks and then by the same open wounds  
We drive home,  
Having to look at ourselves in the dirty mirrors—  
We go the same way as  
Vanishing angels,  
Crawling back in to viaducts as if they were bouquets—  
And other words tossed out to her  
Like chicken feed while she wasn't home:  
Hypnotized by the wizard which made her dance off  
The cliff the same way a dozen times,  
Taking the same direction the cars swerved—  
So by the very telltale signs of night  
The same way as the werewolves find their  
Victims as the pretty flowers  
Create the perfumes of the midnight neighborhoods:  
By these shadows come,  
Puppets and foxes speaking in tongues,  
And other developments only described by the  
Grapevines of the vixens of the afterlives—  
While I loved you in the shadows,  
Sucking my thumb—  
Wanting to find a way out of the labyrinths, the catastrophes  
Of your mother—  
While the helium balloons found their own ways towards  
The suicides of the sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sum Of The Poltergeist

The sum of the poltergeist is in bitter memory,  
In a skein of discord plugging a hole in the hidden mountains-  
The tramped on spine by black-hole horseshoes worn by the  
Caterwauling spider-leg devils, the pinstriped ring masters  
Of heavy machineries:  
The little murders done in the draping mourning  
When the yawning globe smells of snot and tears....  
What is left? They are selling her off in the harbor of auction:  
The vivisection makes two strange sisters in the grinning grass-  
They call her mute and her blind, and she is a fettered  
Toy wound up to run away, but lost....  
Men and husbands are bidding on her with clasped briefcases,  
And woodpecker beaks which eat entire forests;  
The well-dressed brotherhood stares down at her making an eclipse  
In her wooden tomato hamper in the kitchen's gloom.  
When they are not selling, they nest in her leg,  
Which is given the worthless jewelry of heavy chains,  
And pollinate her with epitaphs and fifteen minute  
Advertisements which produce snail-like children like bruised caviar  
Beneath her swollen breasts. In trails of slime,  
The gastropoda crawl up to suckle the irritated nipples,  
But they are quickly plucked by stork-like fingers,  
Who also steal the acidic lactates to make escargot of disinherited offspring;  
Triumphantly they bugle, little fingers between their teeth,  
The actuated sounds of a slave ship's abortion,  
The coital hurricanes: The symphonic Arian bliss of anteaters  
In the deepest savannas crawling with the food  
Of patriarchal hyperbole in the suburban subdivisions of dead planets  
And bankrupt carnivals;  
They are using her ingredients in a lucrative spell cast in  
The delicate front yards mowed by illegals and dismissive poets,  
Who crumple up their disavowed lines and hang them  
In the satanic crooks of cypress, the unmolested love offerings  
For the blue woman in the far away window  
Of the house they attend.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Summits Of Alma's Everlasting Name

Now you have no family; now you have no home;  
And all of your loved ones are across so many borders  
As to go uncouncted into the earth:  
And If you had a sancho, you said today that you would  
Kill him,  
Kill him as easy as pulling the wings off a butterfly  
Underneath a rainbow before the unfailing failure of the incestual  
Cataracts,  
And I cannot get a job outside of my uncle's fruit market,  
But I would miss your pretty lips otherwise, Alma:  
Otherwise I would not move,  
Or it is that I would fail already into stillborn cities of the quieted  
Places in the earth unto which the sun cannot even prove;  
And I know that if I was really a poet, then my beauty would  
Bloom unending and carry itself out of the forgotten  
Streets that budded itself in my exhausted memory,  
Just as the forgotten swings could carry your brown carriage  
Up from the sterile romances that gave you  
Both of your children already so far lost like reanimated  
Pets into the faraway school yards which were just  
Built because they must entertain me-  
And yet through this unjustified catastrophe, I want only your  
Lips, and not even any flag- or the lighted harangue of fireworks:  
Doing this for you after the job, after all of the flanges  
Of washing machines,  
And all of the weathercocks miss lighted across the tangling  
Raspberries:  
All of the grizzlies disillusioned into the glitz of their trapezes  
Graves,  
Almost necrophilic so far beneath the summits of Alma's  
Everlasting name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sun

In an arching way, like a cathedral's loft  
The sun whirls over us and dispels the gloom,  
Taking gentle fingers to our temples  
And raises us up from bed, sets us  
Out into the tumult like clockwork from  
His spires on high.

Our sphere, the amber king, knows  
Each of us by our ancestors' visages, for  
He still shimmers down upon their bones,  
And lances down upon them his warm,  
Lazy spears, in his strange summer death,  
Rarely spoken of.

That man, who shows us how, who  
Is the candle in our eyes, who presses his  
Hot palms against our foreheads, and turns us  
Into the panting redskins, relaxes near the shore,  
Where the sea is his mirror, and upon her  
He is forever the vane lover.

Yet, there are places that remain naturally  
Outside of his drunken glass of light, those  
Deep ways where everything is shadow,  
For most of the world swims under the dress  
Of the sea, whom the sun makes love to,  
Not knowing how to undress her surface,  
The strange and utter coolness of her luminescent undergarments.

He remains, though, the conductor of our streets,  
The window-man to our cities, a phalanx of burning soldiers  
In the sky marching from dawn to dusk,  
Blindly through our windshields, showing us  
The amber dust of our ancestors, the spores of air,  
Inhaled by our lungs, the keeper of our eyes,  
Reveals to us the day as we rise out of our secret dreams  
He soon has us forgotten.





# The Sun Again

The sun is a fine instrument, scalding the earth,  
Making it leap and gesticulate, spitting the winds  
From its orifices like young boys spitting across the abyss-  
And the sun has seen us all awaking in our clays,  
Drying us out as if we were swimmers sojourned from  
The glassy pools: The ancient modifier, and spittoon of  
Our olfactory- After school, what a kiss, and the way the  
Women sway beneath that beam, each flaxen hair upon their  
Evolved forearms like a forest of matches all on fire for a birthday.  
He is the antediluvian pedagogue of science, the foreman of  
Our architectures rising from the knobby reptilian kines of  
The Nile, the priest who swings this censer, chanting ontology  
Through the incense of continents: He has watched us divide,  
Lose our tails and our minds for strange women when he has  
Punched the clock into dusk: An easy allegory, the sun, the  
Old workman, the furnace for our clays, the bastion of our  
Swings, he has laid his hands upon our ancestors in streaming  
Spindles, kissing the cragged hills, and grown grapes for wine,  
And now he whispers the claret ants from their mounds, and  
The picnickers to the field, and thus sets to motion our swift  
Exchanges in the Mercado under his skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sun Caresses The Seas

All of a sudden stood up,  
The heart at the brink of an earthquake: going to the bank,  
She takes off her clothes and  
Staggers, horned—  
A thousand horns matriculating to the summit of a storming afternoon:  
There, forever, once in a while, she looked beautiful  
Even while she was berating herself  
That this was the world that we would have  
To live in—  
The sun at a slant, the pasture at the foothills of rainbows  
And the footprints of the masticating calves  
And their always more than ambivalent architectures:  
Into the slanted postures of all of the valleys—  
And the mechanical natures of nursery rhymes:  
Well, anyways, this is where we would forever after have to live,  
Always:  
Beautiful, but slaves to the sea and always working more and  
More towards her,  
The sun un-burning her head and looking in a thousand directions,  
Like a herd of a thousand horses thinking all at once,  
And tossing her manes  
In the all too many ways in which the sun caresses the seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sunbeam Of Your Careless Gazing

Jumbling jail rooms,  
Brides in a cage- kaleidoscopes of  
Sea-green caesuras  
Washing their clothes:  
I want to baptize beneath the pillars of  
Your strong knees,  
Oh muse: like opal pillars,  
And hummingbirds are zeppelins don't  
You suppose,  
And news snippets feature length movies,  
And this is the holy scripture riding  
Through your neighborhood  
Pretending to sell ice-cream, pretending  
To give a darn about little boys and  
Little girls, when he just wants to find  
You out, to smell you half naked reclining  
In the natural habitats of your backyard,  
Attending to your school books,  
Breasts cupped in seashells or whatever  
You prefer,  
Your father's bought you a swimming pool the entire sea,  
This tongue and its senses Jason and his crew,  
Your dalliances the golden fleeces of my  
Melting pornographies,  
The Mexicans attending to your yard's country,  
Nothing to you, and on and on,  
With more allusions as the lights dim in this  
Movie theatre,  
And the first starlit of morning walks out,  
Just as you come out of your bedroom all early,  
And sit down at breakfast in your suburban vestibules;  
And my audiences, nothing to you, I suppose:  
But you eat your cornflakes and seem all happy,  
And my world crenellates around the sunbeam of your  
Careless gazing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sundail's Mechanism

The sun sets gently in the backyard of suburbia,  
The pools glisten like diamonds scattered in the grass;  
These mortgaged heirlooms smelling of chlorine  
And the children's inflated laughter;  
On Sundays, lovers tan in their bathing suites,  
Let the salt of their affected kisses begin to pretzel their bodies.  
Fathers with beers in hand, turn the hotdogs on the grills,  
Listen to the football game in the yellow splash of yard,  
While the sons are shooting off pop rockets over the  
Canal, using glass coke bottles of refundable patriotism,  
And sisters are curled up with dolls on the teal easement,  
Curiously watching the alligators sunbathe and  
Fart the monotonous prehistory of their reptilian genealogies;  
Nothing about it is entirely real, as the red ants  
Comb the grass, each blade a green column of its photosynthesis;  
While, mothers in their kitchens cry a whispering melody  
Into their watermarked catalogue of wine glasses,  
And airplanes shoot silver-bellied over the scene, like  
Leaping fish, soon to settle on the capricious tarmac;  
Something like a dream, wavering to and fro  
In the cycles of the sun's authenticating aura, each body  
And specter there of, a shadow of comprehensive time  
In the sundial's exacting mechanism.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sunken Barbarians

See what happens when we drink:  
Lonely occultish memory, green locks swaying  
As the kelp,  
Selky-ish heads persuaded against the pylons:  
Lapsing upon the breathings of the sea.  
Our heads are persuaded against the pylons  
And for a little while, a few feet beneath  
The water, we learn how to pray:  
Senses bleeding into the beautiful emeralds,  
Waltzed into the jewelry shops where  
We find it hard to breathe—  
I think of you for a little while as the sea finds  
Her fancies in her caracoles—  
Maybe she thinks she is putting on a ballet:  
Foaming dancers who know their children  
For just as long as we do, broken apart  
Towards the partitions of the breathing world:  
And we thank our little gods,  
Nymphs who jettison their children in spumes  
Of dew-drop ether:  
They are gone before your lovers turn over—  
As they give a sideways kiss to the Neanderthals  
And the sunken barbarians,  
Epitaphs with bouquets of swords in hand,  
Offerings of an almost forgotten honor to a sideways  
turning world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sunlight I Am Melting In

Lizard- crown of  
Gold on your chin  
Face down on the  
Pitch-fork pine-  
Thank god you can't  
Feel the sunlight  
I am melting in-  
With your long tailed  
Soul as innocent as a blade of  
Whistling grass in grandmother's yard.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sunlight In Its Afternoons

Wizards of one or two beers  
Making eyes with the dog—all alone at the  
Edge of some quinceanera—  
What makeshift business they make for themselves  
Underneath of the clouds,  
A little hall-less home  
Diademed by Christmas lights and  
The fairy-tales of their high school—  
Places of lost business  
And the pornographies of housewives  
Pleasuring themselves against the patinas  
Of the copper canals—  
With the ancient tortoises wishing for mermaids,  
And the cul-de-sacs briefly cenotaphs  
For the virulent failures of the sunlight in its  
Afternoons.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Sunlight Of Bright Mirage

My eyes are the  
Saboteurs of blindness.  
They work from the back of  
Sad pickup trucks,  
Noticing things basking in  
The sunlight of bright mirage  
As we head along.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sunlit Ballrooms Of Your Continuously Poisonous Honeymoons

Typical Judas with flowers in your hair,  
Place foolish gold over my wounds  
And drive away.  
You have such a well-suited husband,  
And I'm busy on the cross,  
The lions are crossing the yard and its time  
To get the kids ready to school.  
Are you prepared for that,  
The easy murder of filigreed mythology;  
I bet you are; and they've taken me down  
Near the lake, and given me a rest before  
They start repeating the same old stuff.  
The neighborhood looks so strange;  
Even the butterflies are from foreign countries,  
And my mother is off at the video store  
Perusing new leading men, and nothing stays the same:  
It is so easy to fall in love with pictures of your  
Father, if you are going that way.  
Having broken the crystal underneath a steady  
Foot, and forgotten to use it to cut my wrists,  
Leaving me to drown, I bet you are,  
And the new names you use like limitless credit  
Cards, another proud patriot of the easier  
Neighborhoods. Scar less, of course,  
Even if the world cherishes your tags;  
Its only the soft and perishable amusement.  
My dogs will go anyway that I go, and its so easy  
To disappear skipping on trains like stones  
Across the sound- All I need is the limitless pain,  
The jobs I keep secure knowing there will always  
Be a payment and travel by foot away  
From where you are consciously breathing,  
Your body only lacking those things you forget to wear-  
You look beautiful: in the names of your lover you  
Almost drown,  
I am too lazy to resurrect myself in another town  
Utterly far away from the sunlit ballrooms of your

Continuously poisonous honeymoons.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sunrise's Necromancy

Cry sometime for the shy turtledove  
Hiding in his shell,  
And for me, if you still believe I am real.  
For I have gone beyond this ancient town-  
I have followed the disenchanted cataracts,  
And the stumbling tears,  
For under this whipping flag is no place for  
Wounded men to live and hunger,  
As I have seen you kissing him without  
Regret beside the shoreline of tattered lore:  
It was then I noticed your eyes were the sunrise,  
Pulled up in the necromancy of his bare arms,  
And the millenary reservoirs of lips  
Muting the tide and rising it in the exaltations  
Of pollinated limbs.  
This was all I could behold, and I have never  
Seen anything so terrifying, that you  
Had known him again and again,  
The way the tide knows the compromising shore,  
And wishes for it as clay wishes for its sculptor;  
You bent into him like a twist of wood,  
Who has lived passionately for its moment of life,  
The flotsam, when discovered, metamorphosed  
In his hands, and become a piece of breathing property;  
It was then I ran, shrinking from the dawn you made,  
And the sound flooding with the color,  
Believe that my heart would melt like glass in a kiln,  
To see you at it again, the angel too close to the sun.  
I became the other thing, embracing the part of me  
You never found, and in the miniature wilderness  
Of diminished homes, I took a soundless wife,  
And became the thing you neither touched nor saw.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sun's Golden Curiosity

If this new day becomes unhinged by the  
Sun's golden curiosity,  
Then we will be able to see again from  
The seats of grounded airplanes,  
Perspiring upon the cerulean canvas,  
Her eyes so far away never opening but in sleep,  
Her lips the drunken dictionary men call out  
Up and down the Mississippi River  
To mark water depth and dangerous flotsam,  
Her legs the sleeping gazelles on the savannas  
Of her humid bed;  
If the sun looks at us again,  
Opens the growing music box of men's woes,  
Our destinations encased in a fabrique egg,  
The high schools of our lives' meaningful desire,  
The Ferris-Wheel of planets and pulsars trapped  
In a tortoise's teal plating  
As he tastes the nebula's sweet orchid,  
The yoke our protein centrifuge,  
The whirligig of rest into motion;  
Then she will spend another day with us on  
This little knickknack of a home;  
The delicate front yard which ants run out into,  
Neither expectant or aware of our infinitive connection  
Nesting in the sailor's sun doused palm.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sun's Homework

The dream in the enigma  
Of unmolded sound,  
Passing through the lips  
Of the bullhorn  
Where keeps the ashes of  
A once great fire  
The young gods sat  
Around, telling the first  
Stories with just their eyes;  
When ladies were sometimes  
Lakes and trees  
Sneaking into the unpolluted love,  
Like arriving late for class  
Without an excuse,  
And naked the phantoms walk  
The courtyard made invisible by  
The sun,  
Who can tell them where to go  
Now that their homework is done.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Superfluous Fare Thee Wells

Interludes of sadness and kindergarten,  
But Monday is my day off- her hand is brown  
Like a kind of butterfly on a stony, fleshy kite;  
Who speaks familiarly with its mind,  
As around the corner the kidnappers grow,  
And the day gets all shut out like a semi perfect  
Baseball game,  
And phantasms in the creases of the sidewalk,  
Like chicken wire veins sewn tight in my jaw after  
My first attempts at flight,  
The rabbits in the grass, in the rattlesnakes' stomach  
Where they will sleep in the night,  
Contended in the weeds around trailer parks  
Growing rusty, and missing their waitresses and  
Bartenders:  
But it will soon come to pass, overcome with many  
Aphorisms, like swords clutched in stones,  
The rains weeping for heroes, the cut out snowflakes  
And cartoons interrupted by the superfluous  
Fare thee wells.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Supermarket Of Summits

Bobby, the fairytale is yours: it sings  
Through the houses, wilted away: down with the  
Green spectacle of coffins  
In the yard,  
The snakes or the dogs  
Who have eaten the lovely rabbits  
Who were always your favorite,  
While your mother was  
Preoccupied and lactating  
A pieta in the carport for the sport  
Of her wonder:  
And maybe you had already moved away  
On that pre immaculate day:  
And maybe that was the day  
That the mountains flooded  
And wept tears over the stones  
For their lost soul:  
And the airplanes got so low  
As to become everything mystified:  
And thus spent their fieldtrip of a day in kindergarten,  
Spilling their passengers like  
Open throated and overripe honeydew  
Across the  
Alpine swing sets until the wildflowers grew  
With the powerful notes and enjambments  
Above the cantankerous  
Shoulder blades  
And hullabaloo  
Of the hikers who looked up to find them there,  
Smiling as their hearts swelled,  
And taking pictures;  
But nothing more, sadly,  
Before carrying on, guessing themselves  
Little more than tourists  
Trying to make lunch before noon  
There again across  
The supermarket of summits.





# The Supermarkets Of The Very Air

In totality, the airplanes fly through the sun:  
You see, don't you,  
They are going to meet angels in a ballroom  
Up there in a high school:  
Yes, they are leaping over the birthday candles  
Of my muse,  
While for so long, I have sung to you,  
From the useless epitome of my gardens,  
As the roars of lions echo  
While they hibernate,  
And the tourists spin around as if in a bowling  
Alley of green swans-  
And I think of you, and write this pitiful stuff:  
While the fox is in his very own  
Fable,  
Leaping for grapes and talking to rattlesnakes:  
And I suppose I loved you,  
But I am growing old, as the girls sunbathe  
In the nude,  
And the caesuras are fill with heavy-purple  
Jellyfish,  
While up above, the pilots soar, doing their  
Stuff and mouthing off,  
While the stewardesses seem to skate through  
The supermarkets of the very air.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Supermarkets Of The Wildlife Preservations

There they go marching like ants through  
The green courts beneath the echinopsis where before  
Their words were once beautiful and  
Read by kindergarteners-  
The rains lapped their bodies as they guessed they should,  
And the airplanes leapt straight across their  
Entire neighborhood-  
The tigers in their yards- the bears on their streets:  
I looked out at them shyly from the windows of  
My flea market and thought that though they  
Were going the wrong way,  
Werent they beautiful as the produce was loaded upon  
The trucks-  
And then the housewives came out well after midnight  
And bared their very own breasts to the  
Fountains,  
And the apiary of bees stung them, ululating,  
And taking photographs like tourists reunited with their  
Long lost grandchildren in the supermarkets of  
The wildlife preservations.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Surface That I Need To Survive

The bodies pull their strings hard to the south  
And the whole armada turns like boys in pornographic  
Dreams who still have  
To wake up early tomorrow to sound of into the sinister mirages  
Of dragonflies and their ululating of  
Poisonous opulence:  
And I pray to the virginita that soon I might die, but that Alma  
Can live forever  
And take her place in the opulent sky: that she might still become  
The clairvoyance of her favorite color,  
Or that she might live forever in Ocala, just under the chin  
Of where all of the chicken white students will be studying forever  
In their successive generations of nothingness:  
Because that now the storm clouds have bruised my eye:  
And I am too drunken to drive,  
But my body still feels warm from the fires of a poem;  
And Alma is so close, and almost reaching her is like almost  
Reaching the surface that I need to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweet And Innocently Romantic Avenues

Recoiling in the fairytales who promised to no longer  
To share their lips,  
I drink to myself and do pushups:  
I listen to the rain that is pushing in kittens into the landscaping:  
Kittens who will never know a thing of firemen or even the captains  
And pilots of airplanes:  
While my mother sleeps with my father in New Mexico:  
While my mother was a student pilot before our house almost burned  
And it was so close to here,  
Alma; it was almost on the same road, it was so close to us,  
And the major avenues of kidnappers:  
And I have slipped outside again without even moving:  
To kiss and bless the lucky rabbits who along with the spikenard in  
The rock garden are always bleeding like the first protuberances of  
Virgins;  
Of the sweet and innocently romantic avenues by which neither I nor  
You may love again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweet Back Of The Far Flung Moon

You give me some much fun under the  
Everyday average soirée of the penumbra of  
Unabashed banana leaves;  
Why did you change your picture after all to fit  
My imagination;  
And now I am dying halfway painting up the sweet  
Pepper-jack nothing almost all the way  
Up your skree,  
Your eyes like glacial lakes who never awakened or  
Sang for me;  
And all I have been doing is no good, is only the  
Awful runaway of spirits, of nincompoops  
Under the rain and all those cinderblocks stoops,  
While the bartender puts herself out under the chalk  
Silhouette of catholic cathedrals all under the  
Ancient Pentecost of that bi-coastal football cathedral;  
And all of my words are worms eaten the  
Vanquished knights under the witch's tree, doing good  
Work, getting to watch television, waiting for his  
Sweet and savage parents to arrive home again  
After a full night of baseball, under the witch's spell  
Which is still floating around and spitting cursive  
Along the sweet back of the far flung moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweet Brown Promises

I think of you; I turn my head:  
The sun is down, the world is in bed:  
And all of the night is a fairytale that I cannot stomach:  
The ways roll on like a ceaseless zoetrope  
Tapping towards the heart of a sleepless paramour;  
And everything I have done is wrong and not really hear;  
But then I remember how you can really see me,  
Alma,  
Like a lighthouse who is not blind, and sings even to the most  
Horrendous night until everything is calmed,  
As America becomes even more brightened and more beautiful;  
And I think of you in your room, listening to the choirs of angels  
Who are speaking the voices of a language I am better to leave  
Misunderstood,  
As I think of the footsteps of mountains I have been up to,  
But who have done me no good:  
While the Aspen spend their silver dollars into their breeze,  
While I learn to kiss the Virgin of Guadalupe on my knees and think her  
For your brown gifts, and the sweet brown promises, Alma,  
That even I know you can never truly give.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweet Liquors She Finally Sells

Oh god it hurts to fill these pains  
With solutions that are not real.  
Like knuckles playing red down the washboards  
Of this brain;  
And the rivers are all straight down,  
Really classical in their architecture, beautifully harsh,  
And all the time Sharon is suckling her niece or some-  
Other foundling:  
She doesn't care- Her eyes, her eyes what are they doing  
But changing shapes and constellations.  
Doesn't she know that there is absolutely no way for  
Us to reach what she is doing-  
She is everything in the light of one single day,  
The toads are all out singing in the carport amidst the many  
Types of mints and herbs, but I cannot sing each one to her:  
Sharon,  
Sharon, she has a godly husband, but she doesn't care how  
She's hurt us, how she's fixed us in the rock-garden,  
A new cenotaph who still keeps his fir, his jaw set and raw;  
And there are zoetropes in the desert who bud,  
Leaping- Leaping for Sharon is what they seem to be doing,  
Far down beneath the end of her splendiferous draw;  
And it seems that this is what she's always been doing,  
Painting the horses as they move beneath her heavenly  
Seesaws;  
As we swing back and forth affixed to her jigsaws,  
The puzzles only the sweet liquors she finally sells can so  
Easily solve.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Sweet Smells

My mother is back at home, and the canals are  
Fully filled, engorged beneath the catwalks as they  
Were billed;  
And she is making an annoyance as she tidies up and  
Eats curious things:  
She smells like planted endives smelled by hungry  
Hares out in the blearing rains;  
But now I am not so alone, and I can crawl back up to  
The light and smile as if my head were just sweetened  
On a soft abutment while she  
Read to me by even softer candlelight;  
And the world waves angelically, the cars growing still softer  
In the distance:  
I can almost hear my dogs whimpering beneath the naked  
Aspen,  
Feral and curious to the proximity of my distance, how  
My wounded smells still might betray them in the middle of the  
Night;  
And like my mother, I would like to come to them at the end of  
My body's work,  
And lay in between them soft and nuzzled, turning with them  
As if on a Ferris Wheel where my eyes were always closed  
Having a fare day caracoling again in this gravity,  
Not even supposing I would ever again need to fear,  
Looking down at the graveyard far away  
I was even then returning to the sweet smells she fed to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweet Suburbias And Estuaries

If the bodies peel softly with joy, they will have us  
Scouted out by morning:  
They will have scoured all the baseball fields before the fog  
Has lifted,  
And if they are quick enough they will even catch us in the middle  
Of the self-infliction action,  
The battle wounds of bleeding adolescents, after the girls have  
Moved up the interstate into their new fertile crescent  
To learn how to cook and sew: and how to become housewives  
And mermaids  
Down the sweet suburbias and estuaries of housewife and mermaid  
Row.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweet Undying Beauty

Alma: I give you this again, this beauty mark, or this

Scar:

And it is funny that I sat in the car with you and kissed your

Mouth even though you said you didn't want to;

And you are either a good girl or a bad girl according to the

Different gods, according to their varying seasons;

But it doesn't matter:

You have ruined me for any other version of your sex, or

Television:

Maybe you were just a firework- too expensive, going in my mouth,

Your legs pantomiming the jaws of my soul-

And all too soon you went home again, and kissed your children

Who made you whole;

And maybe I shouldn't be using this kind of language:

Maybe I should be as silent as an empty gun overcome by the enemy

In her deep headdresses of wild-feathers,

But maybe again we saw the male peacock together at the old zoo,

And I held your hand and kissed your mouth:

I was for awhile your albino flag, your feral gringo, or sometimes

Even your newly invented Mexican boy;

But all I know is that I shall not survive without you: these wind vanes are

Uneasy, and the weathers of this liquor most unwholesome:

It is all transcendental: it will not go too far,

And your quiet lips purse in expectation or contentedness that

I should die for you,

That I should so eagerly give my life up to the sweet undying beauty

That you are.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweet Young Candles

This day trims, and I am not hung over,  
So miraculously practiced am I am at my sport,  
My lonely  
Midwestern daydream: Dreams in prison,  
And cars exploded down the careening neck of  
A beautiful fire-burst cliff;  
The aspens higher up seem to say publish this,  
Publish this and we will make love to you,  
But I cannot truly hear them and the grizzly bears  
Have long since gone and been roped away  
By the last of the cowboys farming her boudoir;  
And even further back the Mexican sheep herders  
Worshipping their virgins in the grottos of  
Chicken-wire and other galaxies, keep penmanship in  
The reason of the stones,  
Crop grass so fine as to make cenotaphs bald;  
Maybe they were the first ones to develop a swing-set  
For which to practice their religion,  
To let their scars apex over the cliffs and the divides,  
The folded pages of butterflies  
Skipping across the draws of the prairie where the ancient  
Indians and their dinosaurish colts are waiting  
To blow out the sweet young candles of our Virgin Mary's.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweetest Amusement Of No-Talent Gravestones

Back in the embers,  
The flowers are smoldering in their  
Tins and lunch boxes:  
The little girls are scalding, like a prepubescent  
Disaster in a fairytale, hot coals populate  
The slope of wilder fires,  
What hasn't budded crinkles beforehand  
And all of this is a mess. I can't go for  
Walks anymore.  
She's so far away, it is true: Look at her  
Kissing in long weekends of  
Her professors: This is what I am doing,  
Trying to prove myself when  
I have no legs:  
I live and perform in a sack and it doesn't matter that  
God is snow blind in his breathy neighborhoods  
Of his highest tresses-  
I can't sell my poetry, and I'm too far inland  
To invest in fresh fruit,  
But somewhere the palm trees are swaying;  
They sound like all the same things I couldn't  
Say,  
Women with their friends and fierce dragons,  
Fingertips and lips of ashes- They look good  
And powerful and have received offers on their  
Sweet houses the sea is reclaiming anyways:  
Naked women in junked cars invisible pockets full  
Of cash and diamonds;  
And this is another hangover for the weekend,  
Getting down on one knee and proposing the natural  
Empiricisms washing over her tender negligence;  
It doesn't matter, in the morning all will be introduced  
To invulnerable pumice,  
With elegant walkways and parking attendants making  
Fifteen percent on the evangelical tourisms who  
Now abound in the old neighborhoods which happened  
About that which was our sweet high school  
Before the pornographic eruption graduated all that we  
Knew into the sweetest amusement of no-talent gravestones.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Sweetest Songs Of The Innocent Cars

It happened that I loved without looking at myself in the  
Mirror,  
Or I wasn't here: I had just driven home from Miami and I wanted  
To bring Alma fireworks,  
But maybe she doesn't love me anymore:  
God knows she doesn't want any more flowers or poetry;  
And she doesn't know who Octavio Paz is;  
And I haven't finished Labyrinth of Solitude, which is just as bad:  
And the sea is as yellow as cream,  
And as the sun set it turns and grows so much custard that the gulls  
Sleep in every caesuras as if they were soft mailboxes,  
And the stewardesses stop their planes and come down and coo and  
Show their breasts: and they all become mothers who spend  
Their soft and brown afternoons feeding their young in the flea markets  
Underneath the open and soaring overpasses of the sweetest songs  
Of the innocent cars.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Swimming Skeleton Of The Singing Wind Chimes

Clouds in asphalt, in the graffiti of sweet things,  
Swinging their hips to the store to buy roses for  
Themselves while the rain slings;  
Oh, I've been singing out of school early again,  
Watching the honeys picking up gas- I'm raggedy  
In the brambles all my scars are browned bagged:  
Every tender v is higher strung than I;  
Oh, how sweet it is not to have to look one titted thing  
In one venal eye; to enjoy the reasons of the gainfully  
Unemployed- to fart in the litters of death's convoy-  
The reptilian monarchy knows better words,  
Ruling forever their flamingoes' soft conflagration,  
The easy pantomime of frightening flight the housewives  
Put to good use in their sororities satin-lined;  
Areolas and suvs, runs in their pantyhose, gurgles from  
The park swings; I drink whatever liquor I find stashed  
Out back in the weeds beneath the clothes-line;  
And I swing underneath the brindled palmettos-  
I hook my arcs and curveballs far to the corner of where  
The better girls have warmed to the infinitely better gentlemen,  
Their children mewling like breast-fed kittens;  
And I fart and tell jokes to shadows, my eyes ever present  
To the swimming skeleton of the singing wind chimes.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Swing Of Priestly Censers

Pretty though miss numbered, and taking itself away  
At the arcs  
To the swing of priestly censers- another genii's bottle  
Opens and loses its senses to the  
Jasmines of the forest  
As at first a steamboat passes by and then a  
Brontosaurus:  
And I say to the cursed day laborers up above  
The tree lines in Colorado:  
That this is my wedding, not my Mother's,  
And the lion's mouth s yawning because  
It is hungry underneath the comet's, so someone  
Ought to feed it:  
But, other than that- I am ugly and disfigured,  
But so are the busts from the ancients  
And the pre-Socratics who somehow found out whatever  
They could whilst the water level of the Mississippi  
Changed and changed,  
And I crossed the train tracks and crawled up onto  
Your roof  
And gave your kisses just as with the helicopters or  
I did just whatever I could.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Swings Of My Kind But Embittering Enmity

I didn't touch her pubis:  
There was no ceiling fan, and it happened  
So fast,  
It was like Easter never existed; but we certainly  
Dressed down to get up again;  
And there was no sky that the airplanes couldn't  
Reach,  
While both my muses were bemused elsewhere  
And it wouldn't behoove them to read either of us,  
How our bodies met softly like waves in  
The ocean malls- They have known the ones;  
They have skipped there on and off for days,  
And the world has flooded up around us and carried  
Us as soft as softball strangers  
Nearer our graves in the first antechambers of morning,  
Just before all the sadnesses of our faces can be read;  
And she was doing this, she said, because she had to  
Grow up:  
Jessica had to grow up with that tattoo on the nape of  
Her neck;  
She let me touch her above the tree line of our body's  
Juxtaposed exegesis, but she would have rather  
Been living with her mother and father;  
And it was very sad, because I realized after that there  
Was no chimney leading smoke up through the rains,  
As if the passes had closed through the mountains;  
Though I touched her sadly, she had never been my woman;  
And she would awaken into a world far more beautiful  
Than my own- Would that all my veins had let up to roses  
To offer her lips this once;  
As if I had been allowed to return to those freshman,  
And played the truer part of Romeo for this once time muse,  
This satin entity that carried likewise on through  
Her night,  
And not once remembered the swings of my kind but embittering  
Enmity.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Swingsets And The Clouds

When you really get this way,  
Your belly gathers its feather weights: you remember  
Pissing in your pants in  
Preschool,  
And going out underneath the swingsets and the clouds  
And putting your fingers into the eager dirt,  
As if it was your own womb:  
And building things,  
Or kindergarten: while the blue gills swim in and out of  
Their own kingdoms that you can never explain:  
For it is an entirely different world on the  
Other side of the canal,  
Even though you can see the corrugations of trailer parks,  
And the stop lights like the stain glassed windows  
Of gas stations;  
And maybe in the sky is the enormous silhouette  
Of a wild stallions rising up as it gets ready to disappear:  
But then you remember that your world is  
Right here:  
That you went to college and have a book:  
And that you kissed your muse's mouth today and made love  
To her three times;  
And even though she had to drive away again,  
You will see her tomorrow and you may even be able to take  
Her out to breakfast.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Syllables Of The Heavens

Tables of really un-worked glory taking off  
Their skates,  
Beginning to see the glorifications of all of  
The saints in  
The ellipses of the open mouths of obscured lions-  
The fireworks filibustering  
To the grandeurs of dolphins, hurricanes,  
And porpoises:  
And this is true: for a little while a fire,  
A fingerprint or a hoof print:  
A chalk game over the cenotaphs- but mostly  
The heartbeats of waves  
That know no echoes, but who come repeatedly  
Taking the shore repeatedly-  
Making a new element of her geometry, so she  
Floats around in a gaseous nature, knowing new  
Scars as she does her laundry once more  
In the glorified carports where the amphibians  
Are making a chorus of her ankle-deep name,  
As the rain storms come repeatedly,  
Repeating the syllables of the heavens she cannot spell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tall Gentlemen Shading Briar Rabbit

What is Alice doing,  
Thumbing her pink  
When all the cars are driving to Pie Town?  
She better hurry up,  
And siphon out that gas,  
Because the hay-days are coming:  
Vroom! Vroom!  
How will she ever get to the Emerald City  
In those shoes?  
Frank L. Baum never got to the fifteenth novel  
Of Oz, but we forgive him,  
Because he let us see the ruby heart beating in  
The glass cat.  
Now all the palm trees are swaying like flamingo  
Dancers at the Ritz,  
And my scars are tinsel on a Christmas tree,  
Or the sawdust under the Cowboys' spurs riding bulls  
In Gainesville until they get drunk,  
And are thrown in the coolly overnight,  
While the ghosts work in Detroit,  
And each wave is ringing her doorbell,  
Because they have brought the corsages for the prom,  
But she is not home,  
And still here they come, the cerulean cavalcade  
In blue collars and coats,  
The proletariat rowdy in their salt,  
They've perfected the guillotine, and the pink  
Mohawk,  
And grandmother is clubbing the rattlesnakes behind  
The plough,  
Clubbing the rattlesnakes,  
As we are taking the rum down river in the trunks of  
Our Hudsons, me and dad,  
Who is also an ornithologist in the Phoenix desert  
Where I've seen him standing as still as a hummingbird  
All day between the columns of sequoias,  
The tall gentlemen shading Briar Rabbit,  
Watching his subject as perfectly as the bird is watching  
Him, in a studious dream,

Which was how I concluded my novel today  
A little after noon,  
But will it ever be published? Will she ever know what  
It is to see a Utopia spoken by the feral tongue  
Of an individual truism, for the first and last time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tallest Things Of All

Lowly pageantries in the tangles of a cypress forest  
Combed down,  
So silent maiden trees lie across the purring backs  
Of the mountain lions  
Sleeping with the narcoleptic lumberjacks—  
Like words in a coil of sleep with other words,  
Neither caring how they are spelled as their young  
Are raised like orphans in other nests  
And classrooms of a jigsaw puzzle all a tumble  
At school—  
Or your sweet young mother of wife, yawning before  
She goes into the kitchen to fry up some eggs  
And from her peripheral vision spies  
The lonely séance of the starving Christmas tree:  
Well then, the long lines of the legs of  
The feline huntress will usher up to the very outlines  
Of the canals,  
And she will bask there in her sorority underneath  
The mountains of the moon  
Which they say for certain are the tallest things of all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tangles Of Water Moccasins

I am working in amongst the young trees  
Dreaming of a fieldtrip of afternoons  
As I sell them:  
And I look up into what eyes of housewives there  
Are  
Backdropped by the pretty, lilac sun  
In its primordial sport: there it is in its own  
Fieldtrip across the blazing yard:  
And down beneath him, along the mesh of  
Bucolic avenues, a housewife who was once  
Maybe even my mother does her wash  
In the grottos of a carport-  
As the strangers steal the citrus from the tree  
In the backyard,  
And the young rabbits go down to play near  
The canal in the silky moonlight in  
The tangles of water moccasins.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Tarnation Of Daffodils

They drew marmalade and ponies and they wondered  
Out amidst the yards until they regretted that there wasn't  
Any air-conditioning;  
And the flies gathered around whispering like blue pig's  
Ears,  
Until they somehow stumbled upon the Mexican dance  
Where beer was five dollars,  
But the yard behind the place just kept turning green and  
Greener- filled with strangely polished  
Equipment and wheelbarrows; it was a good place,  
They figured to cut some wood to build a cabin- and to lay  
Seeds in the ground to make the garden grow;  
And each by the other sang out loud, and grabbing each other  
Where they could, swinging around in the tarnation of  
Daffodils trying to make even the wolves proud:  
They did just that,  
As the airplanes took noticed and landed from the sky all around  
Them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Taste Of Your Bread

Tables of fruit and spilling wine-  
Perpetually the debutant swoons, and someone  
Is off in the woods in blue socks cheating death,  
And we are either studying or selling trees,  
While chanticleer is like a great man up on his roof,  
Calling the pilgrims with his light;  
And I have cut my wrists in the bathroom which has no  
Shadows,  
As even the water runs with light,  
Runs like baseball players on diamond diamonds:  
And you have dogs, I know,  
And a sister, and a daughter who has your lips,  
While Erin is serving drinks to men she doesn't know,  
Who crowd around her perfumes,  
Like opals on salt lick:  
I told her how wounded I was, and she pretended to care;  
But if she saw me, she wouldn't care that I  
Was no longer writing my greater proportion of songs  
About her auburn ships:  
She just wouldn't care. She watches cartoons anyways,  
And looks at the waves on the television.  
So many boys have told her that she was beautiful,  
That she no longer has the space for adolescence,  
But loves the store fashioned muscle of otherwise weak men,  
Who don't really know how to enter her  
Otherwise, with their eyes, or with their pricks,  
Or with their flash in the pan souls which leap from woman to  
Woman as easy as they can,  
Like little boys with pinwheels eating meat and cheese  
As the stomp the puddles my greater buses have bled from  
Mortal wounds,  
Circling you like buzzards who no longer have the taste  
Of your bread.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tattoo That I Wish That I Had

Another motor at the ribs not filling  
Up,  
Coiling in the cessation of the gullies  
And the trampolines:  
This is a cul-de-sac anyways:  
And while I am here, is anyone  
Selling ice-cream:  
Oh well, I have been up and down her melting,  
While selling ice-cream.  
And her children have come,  
Like crazy fireworks,  
Buy two get one free, and eaten from the strange  
Reservoir of my hand:  
Or they have gotten up again only to lie  
Down and enjoy the shade immediately,  
I guess,  
Of their most immediate place in the  
Hemisphere,  
The waves leaping over what we have made,  
In the business  
Of the children who lay here, freckled,  
Like tombstones in the shade,  
Underneath all of the trees who go weeping,  
But joyfully, as if they were introduced  
Into parks,  
As the ant-lions promenade- what homes of  
Adobe exist anymore, and what do I have left to  
Go back home to,  
As she lies nude and with him, relaxing with  
The shade, as the waves leap and drown hungrily  
Against her-  
As the hummingbirds drink sangria-  
And she remains the tattoo that I wish that  
I had.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tattoos Of Angels

Roe in the lost chalices- in the cul-de-sacs  
Of suburbia where Halloween has come and gone,  
And the truants fart like knights lost from  
Their errands-  
Looming on swaybacked sofas and lighting  
Off roman candles over the canals where the insouciant  
Alligators yawn,  
Over fed of cats and armadillos- as the busses return  
Torpide as if through a housewife's pieta:  
There she leans her bosom over the dishes-  
Her wine glasses glint like an entire ruby city in the  
Same hypnosis she knows that she is in;  
The night blooming jasmine perfuming outside her  
Window, a odor only the Mexican lawn-boy  
Smells,  
Leftover there for too much liquor and cards-  
Splaying shirtless- cicadas shedding in his nipples,  
The lightning revealing a zoetrope across his abdomen-  
His shoulders display the tattoos of angels  
And girls he left behind across so many yards  
As he leapt wishing across the borders into places  
He knew he could never belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tear That Never Fell

As a humanity, we all try to get up above the rest:  
Piling out substrata of delta-ing ladders towards the shoe polish  
Of the next billboards:  
And climbing up past the athletes of baseball games, or  
Taking our winding buses to the shallows of fortunate and fame:  
We seem to see each others' bodies a wreathed in flame;  
And the green parks do no good,  
And the day laborers of orchards do no good- nor do the copper  
Cannons who are above our reach on the old Spanish forts:  
Nor do windmills, anymore:  
And the horses with their knights just stop and lounge in the pine forests  
With the old couches and their hobos:  
And nothing truly makes love anymore- or a sound: not even the wind  
Is good for listening- and all moves deathly quiet over ground:  
And the roses have no smell planted over the murdered working  
Girls whose names I cannot spell;  
And it or we all go lumbering, gargantuan, as mute as a stone or  
The tear that never fell.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tearduct's Metamorphosis

Young had by young  
When they had their children: dreaming as if they  
Lived beside the pool,  
When they did not need to have any of this:  
All of their roman candles were blue,  
But unspecific: and they joined the crowds on their  
Holidays,  
But did not have the capacity to look up at the clouds:  
There spores of other wishes turned around:  
Yes, narcoleptic Ferris-wheels—  
Movie theatres for the blind in the blinding daylight  
The airplanes cut through—  
Bubbling wishes through the broiling nimbus:  
Spume of that recalcitrant garden:  
Alms for thirty year old tears shed by Jesus Christ  
Still swimming up there—  
Yet to be collected by the tearduct's metamorphosis:  
Do backstrokes as they multiplied beneath that cathedral—  
Children that rode on merry-go-rounds that didn't  
Have to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tears Of A Juvenile God

Veins of cold rivers burying over the vanished  
Gold of young princes  
Always on a journey up her shoulders:  
Even above the trees  
Is where the stewardesses and pilots  
Have tea parties:  
Where the lightning speaks five languages,  
And the bears hold back from the  
Parks of the gods:  
I remember seeing them so far ago- worlds  
Intermingled like dead bodies  
Caressing in the melting snow-  
A jumble of a bouquet with a nocturnal  
Perfumes which highlights the veins  
In the stones that curse the scars of  
Their mothers: maybe they fell from the moon a long  
Time ago,  
And now they lie here in a masquerade  
Of petrified vampires, waiting for the sweat  
Off of some lonely hiker's feet to fall upon them,  
To touch them like the tears of a juvenile god.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tears Of A Vanishing Valentine

Trying halfway in the shadows,  
I promise everyone a passing grade—polishing off the  
Glass, feeling her naked shadow in the glade  
Down the soft rolling hill, like a fairytale sliding off the  
University—  
Struggling up to her nuptials like a hungry whippersnapper—  
Licking the grease off her fingers—  
Wanting to make love to her in a bed in the most circumspect  
Hotel in Saint Augustine—and wake up in the middle of  
That blue dream, to go down to the water and bend  
My lips to a mermaid who I've paid to awaken there—  
Pearls anemones around her belly—  
Lounging in a caesura of one particular wave—baby blue  
And sea blue—cerulean blue—and sky blue—  
And the blue of the tears of a vanishing valentine.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Tears Of The Rain

Demanding a theft in the shadows, the angels dive  
Perpetually—collecting oxygen and gravity in  
Their mouths,  
Trying to concoct a loving substance that brings death,  
Like concrete and honey,  
So the bumble bees are disappearing from  
The orchards,  
And the roses from the valentines—  
Each earthquake makes us lesser yet nearer to her,  
And though we are going,  
In her graveyard it rains—  
And rockets take off:  
They only make it across the canal, but at least  
They are not killing anyone—  
Paper airplanes that make love to bottle rockets—  
As latchkeys, virginal, kiss the rains—  
Roses and oranges disappearing behind the house,  
As in the heavenly churches sometimes—  
God's tears that are not a part of us—  
They are reserved for the blessed stars  
And we are down here locked into the cars  
As the memory of the stars over the empty houses  
Bring the tears of the rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tears She Sheds For Me

Alma's man carries good witchcraft like a saber-  
His weapon haunts my wounds for a little while  
As I die,  
As the numbers of airplanes fly and then vanish in the sky:  
Her uncle, leaving for Mexico,  
Says that I can never have her as long as he has her:  
And I can pay \$1,000 dollars for good  
Witchcraft;  
But I have Alma anyways- and all of these good scars,  
The ocean crafts of loneliness,  
The iconoclast arachnids in my veins- and words that  
I cannot know, singing to her over the sky:  
I empty my bow- my love descends into an empty fire:  
And I swear to her as a disappear that the entire  
Sea is afire, burning with the tears she sheds of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Teary Eyed Pietas

Tired of the arboretum,  
The butterflies disperse with the tourists or,  
At least,  
The stewardesses:  
They can fly over the oceans with them—  
They can go almost anywhere  
There are ancient pyramids—and the lonely  
Battles rage right underneath them in the  
Carports of the teary eyed Pietas:  
But it doesn't have to be beautiful—  
It doesn't have to be a place at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Technicolor Of All Of The Saturdays

In the Technicolor of all of the Saturdays of your  
Dungeons,  
I want to enfold you in the crypts of my butterfliesâ€&quot;;  
Suffocate you in the corals  
Of the jubilancy in a paradeâ€&quot;;  
And give off all of the advocacies of a tightrope of  
Sunshine:  
This is the everything I have always endeavored  
To makeâ€&quot;;  
And I'll keep winding around your memory like a bright  
Coil discovered by another scientistâ€&quot;;  
Celebrating underneath the candelabrum of your  
Grottosâ€&quot;;until we can see for yourselves the  
Jubilant shipwrecks of our highest memoriesâ€&quot;;  
When your lips kissed me like matches striking around  
The phalanxes of the peaceful armies  
I hope we can help each other to create.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Teeth Of A Matador

Maybe they loved each other because they all seemed  
Beautiful and so they went together to festivals near the coral lips of  
The sea;  
And I did not know who performed there, because I was too busy  
Singing in my sleep;  
But maybe it was because I was not so beautiful, or that I frightened  
Them in other ways,  
That I was not invited, and I lost all of my friends as white as the  
Summertime snow,  
But found new lovers in the hibiscus and roses of baseball diamonds,  
Blushing with no profession,  
And hardly any clothes: They all loved the Virgin of Guadalupe,  
And Romero even stopped drinking for three years when, kneeling  
Beneath her imagine, she told him that he could,  
And now my house is warmed from all of this Spanish liquor,  
Something to keep the sailors alive instead of going down  
Into the cold blue fires;  
And I have it right here, the kindling of my words- Even if I will  
Never have my muse of muses,  
While the other lights seem to know my names, it doesn't seem to  
Matter at all if everyone from that ever greened high school,  
Like friends whistling together like candles in the boughs,  
Should remember me;  
I have met my own soul as red as the daylight that cuts birthdays across  
The prows of fearless ships, and she is like a rose bared  
Between the teeth of a matador:  
Even if she doesn't love me, she knows my name.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Televisions And The Christmas Trees

Down to the slow plagiarisms—after the cats get tired  
Playing with their mice and visa-versa—  
Down to the open mouthed mailboxes of crepuscule—  
And the last tags of the fire around the dance—  
In the troubling diction that is muted by dinner,  
When all of the spent fireworks lie in the grasses—  
And housewives go back to pretending to be someone else—  
It is the time when the diamonds drink the sea,  
And the toy dogs come indoors to bask beneath the strange visions  
Of the televisions and the Christmas trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tents Of Fireworks

Oh sunlight of this place clouded into a labyrinth where  
Inebriated dogs go to drown in the rose thorns grown  
Across the pietas made by the armpits of dead prostitutes—  
When all of the eons proceed in their shopping sprees  
Of calcifying ellipses—leaving the best of their loveliest men  
Calcified in the monuments that have no heroes—  
And I am left alone—simplified, beautiful even while  
Burned by the scars of an abandoned playground—  
And as you flee, your feet never touch the earth—you become  
Thirty feet into the air— and so much like an angel  
Above the tents of fireworks that I can no longer wonder  
What to think of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Termination Of This Home

Face mottled like an old penny,  
A yellowed nursery rhyme she used to love,  
I masticate on imbedded wisdom teeth,  
Recall the roadside pornography of the Indian  
Hotel I slept in one night in Tallahassee,  
On the wayside of the fall:  
I remember barely standing the reflecting, the  
Spread puddles of commuting wheels-  
How I was halfway home to sell fireworks in  
A condemned building beneath the palm trees,  
Placed in a game board of tennis courts,  
Doctors, lawyers, and dentists offices: How I was  
Becoming more like nothing, spreading out the  
Vantages of the harrowing oblique patrons to  
Long-legged malls, to gas-stations, and too it all:  
I think now that I could never escape,  
But here I am running on the prisms of an oil-slick,  
Quilling down another line of poison for the  
Thrill of the barley mermaid, schlepping through the foams,  
Half-drunk on stinky biceps, hiccupping through the loams;  
And now I've gone and destroyed the rhyme scheme,  
Because she does not read these poems: And I am  
Fed up, and I full of cornpone, but it has become beautiful to  
Me the exegesis beside the lathered street, behind the wrought-  
Iron grate, the woebegone hound gets stuck,  
But I set him free, and the trees whisper to the dead, and  
They bow down and sooth their marble head;  
And it is such a beautiful, beautiful thing to rest alongside  
The creatures known to the earth, whom have become the  
Past participle to the living, the corruption of the passing form,  
The termination of this home.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Territories

Caught up in the singing oasis- and everybody looking  
For a friend,  
As hearts are stolen over the weekend, only to  
Be sold and sold again:  
Words in the dictionary swimming in the shallowness of  
Our senses-  
As lights of a juvenile sun bleed over the surreal  
Extremity of our forests:  
And this is the only kind of art that I know,  
Pillaging the kindness from the senses-  
As hooves dance across the rodeo,  
Until we see that our cousins are migrating- happening to  
Tell a story across the land:  
First they pack up the fair in a lightning storm,  
And then they recede across the Christmas trees and teepees  
OF another fort made for trouble-  
But they light out for the territories too far to be  
Believed, and the rest of it I cannot explain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thickets Of The Alligators

Minnow—dance underneath the eclipse  
Of a palm:  
Play above the orchards of stolen bicycles—  
How you will change for your honey moon—  
Silverish rod in the shallows  
Down the burry easement of her fancy:  
Paper airplanes flying over you—burning,  
Burning,  
Trying to make across the thickets of  
Alligators before they are proven to be unreal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thieveries Of Moonlight

Nooses of sky over green pepper fields-  
A grandfather and a granddaughter attending,  
The coral snakes under hooves of loose thoughts drifting  
Away like stolen bicycles,  
Or muses that don't reorganize themselves anymore- words that feel  
A money changer's scale provide no intercourse for  
The senseless at heart,  
As the mother I once knew waits in doors, the cicadas  
Waiting in their changing rooms of trees  
With the schools closed down and the selkies lay  
With the fallen oranges molding beneath the trees:  
I thought I saw your eyes once, I thought I saw them looking  
Away while my guardian angel evaporated with the  
Burning lighthouses kneeling in the senseless day-  
With my wonderful mother underneath the roof,  
The thieveries of moonlight stealing all that she was away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thing That No One Saw

I chose to become the thing that no one saw.  
I went to Hollywood not to aspire to act,  
But to play in wrecked train cars that rust like  
Flowers in the dry yellow knee-high grass,  
Before blowing all my money at once  
To return after two weeks to sleep in Arizona.

The last thing I was in high school, which  
Wasn't for very long and even then I preferred  
The muddied easement beside the canal  
Where only I and the animals moved,  
Where I could use shadows for friends.  
I went to school every other week,  
And kissed and fondled invisible women  
In the low subtle branches of the tart orange trees.

For the past year, I have only made love to mountains,  
And those less and less frequent. Soon they too will  
Forget the feel of my weight upon them. I no longer even pretend  
To be with women, for their ghosts haunt me and live  
Inside little castles in my bones. They cry out to me in  
The lonely night, asking me to enter them, but I withdraw  
And can only look at them, like fading abstract art,  
As their beds slide further away,  
Like train cars leaving my side.

Sometimes I see my  
Grandfather staring worriedly at me from the other room  
Before he shuts the door,  
But I never go to visit him or my dead grandmother  
Upon the hill. Instead I drive to a far away town  
And pretended to buy a house, something little in a cul-de-sac,  
Where my father can't bother me, and my friends would  
Be very poor and infrequent; we would live in little lives,  
All together forgotten, but I return to Nutrioso  
After a couple of hours, exhausted and breathing mist.  
Dutifully, I feed the mob of horses, assured that I am no one.  
Needing to be close to someone for a few minutes, I microwave  
Grandfather dinner and he says a prayer.

When my family knew me, they worried for my future,  
But now they don't remember that I was once their son.  
Nor can she remember, the nocturnal flower who blossoms  
In my sleeping mind, how my hips poked her as we made love,  
Because her life is always moving forward,  
Perpetually being filled with the gears of her friends and  
Welcomed strangers, as I am deluded by the darkening night of  
So many passing years, as melting ice-cubes cheapen  
Good whiskey, and when she cries out his name in that  
Secret hour of the cat, she no longer worries that she might  
Speak to me instead. For she is sure I never was, just  
The shadow of a thing she thought she once saw, before  
She fired her gun and then stepped forward.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Things I So Often Say

I read my own words like looking  
At myself in the mirror.  
When I blur, I am beautiful,  
And have important things to say.  
I stand on the green carpet of my  
Old house in Loxahatchee, and  
Catch the garter my uncle flings  
Behind his head: I will never marry,  
But she will continue to wake up sweating,  
Remembering the red Super 88 I used  
To drive in and out of the sea,  
How I sucker-punched the kid in the  
Parking lot and then went on to kiss his  
Bruised lips while the telepathic cheerleaders  
Watched. Outside, snow crystals  
Fall uniquely on the street lamps:  
They have just discovered electricity,  
And men come down from the mines and get  
Drunk beneath the room I am renting,  
Their laughter comes especially on the weekends,  
When they present the whores who weary  
Filly purple, like lavender, the geodes which  
Are worthless but beautiful when opened  
And shown for the world to see like a wound.  
They dance beneath me, as moths are drawn  
To lights: encased in glass, they can no longer  
Die honorably, but I catch them when they  
Tire, and hold them to my lips  
And kiss them as if they were my own children,  
Telling them the things I so often say.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Things Like Swans

Grandmothers in the quicksand of unison:  
The marble houses rise and rise triumphantly, but into the  
Service of exorbitant taxation:  
And the marvels of the world take up, and seem to last  
Forever, leggy, heavily banded and too high to be  
Reached to be petted,  
But away from view, exhausted, won't they have to come  
Down to refuel or to at least lick their wounds:  
And then the trumpets will sound all as sudden like  
The glorious savages naked in the junked pornographies  
Of wheelless cars in the woods,  
And then they will all come running to beat down the things  
Like swans,  
Just so that they can be sure that there is nothing left  
That is beautiful enough to leave them again.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Things We Experienced Together, So Far Apart

Remembering as a child  
Silver on the tree, and the furrows of  
My grandfather's bell pepper field,  
Molesting and being molested by  
My two year older aunt:  
Corn snakes and rat snakes and black snakes  
And red snakes;  
And root beer- an entire armada of paper airplanes,  
Most of them male dog fighting for the sexy  
Female airplane- Hot Lips,  
And Hot wheels,  
Plastic Indians on green carpet fields:  
Shooting Michelle in the tits with rubber bands one summer  
Evening a few hours before true crepuscule;  
And alligators that never moved-  
Never, ever moved- and maybe Peter Pan,  
And my true love hanging upside down  
From the crook of a cypress tree:  
Showing off her training bra, never kissing me with  
A tongue as red as an air-plant's pistil:  
And then, finally, leaping over construction fires,  
Shooting off my mouth,  
Raiding liquor cabinets in seventh period instead of  
Attending history;  
And finally going on with all of it, down my ever branching  
Avenue- never seeing love again- never turning back,  
Or having her look up again amidst the gum-clogged desks  
Of Latin class,  
Forgetting who I was and how comets skipped across  
The rippling sugar canes,  
Estranged, out of work amidst the ceaseless cars:  
Needing you after a decade's absence, the things we experienced  
Together, so far apart.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Things You Loved

I click off the men you love,  
While the coyote howls after a good meal,  
And after having bitten the flea bitten nape of his  
Mate's starving neck,  
Collapses beside the wreck of an exploded car  
Down in the staunch valley heading most of the  
Way to Phoenix-  
He farts with the immaculate grandness of nary  
A soul,  
As two brothers get together and make love:  
They don't care nothing about the moon,  
Its stages of wild romance, like a fat scuppernong on  
A chain-link, and maybe you'll come to  
Realize this, and  
That I am not so far away, but I don't even think you can  
Read,  
And yet I go so far as to make fire dance in the sky,  
And bring constellations more tighter together to look  
Like our old school bus,  
And the ways you've forgotten like the water fountains  
Like the tobacco stained oasis along the bleached hallways of  
The things you loved.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thorns

Pulling the trucks to your grotto: Sharon,  
Wont you look at our flags: We've sewn them ourselves  
Out all night above our grandmothers'  
Graves;  
And we peel out to you, muse of milk and pearled enclaves  
Where we have found you running down  
Like the surcease of roe  
Down from this America of salmon, and we saw you  
Like a candle held in mass outside of the Alamo;  
And you went away like a mariposa in the wind,  
Searching for tiles to do your house in  
Mexico;  
And the night was in green shades interspersed by rivers;  
And you made love to gaunt young cowboys  
Amidst those perfect easements while we flew above you  
Whispering on tin-can star ships:  
There you were floating in a sea mist of pagan dreams:  
We saw you floating up the intercourse's fine young being;  
Where you left us thatched to go and rejoin your  
Unliving king;  
You slipped beneath him, beneath the bend in the river,  
Beneath the candle's hooded flame;  
And your shift was doused by earth, and so you once  
Again became this night's most impossible being,  
And we worshiped you where we can only lay above you  
Our wings tired and torn as if from pages of a living book  
Thrust out of its charms,  
Hyperventilating and being beaten down like beautiful  
Weeds amidst the thorns above your wedded grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thorns Of Hemophilia

Once again from the Pacific Theatre,  
You went home from school-  
In the Phoenix desert, summarily dusted by  
Haboobs-  
In the stain glass of rattlesnakes, like a homeless  
Kaleidoscope, hide your eyes:  
In this pigeon carriage galloping beneath  
The speechless skies:  
And if you happen to see the monuments, open up  
The windows where I've remembered you:  
Remember my lines I gave to you before  
I was leaping over canals and skipping schools:  
My good words lining up to die like tinker toys  
For you in a room underneath a perpetual  
Ceiling fan- in that childhood that grew up  
Believing in you- and found you in the occult  
Romances bled from the thorns of  
Hemophilia.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thorns Of That Rose

Wreathed in a shipwreck beside the glorious holds  
Of the old fort,  
With tourists coming around, openchested- pullulating an  
Orchestra  
And buying icecream:  
While down in the sand dunes slathered by the sun,  
The misspelled novels that will never sell  
Worried over by the rose thorns who also cover up  
The dead working girl who will  
Go nameless,  
As the conquistadors who birthed her into the loins of the  
Indian princesses:  
Or how you made love here underneath the aloes of any  
Resorts: how you rubbed your  
Wounds,  
And looked at the angels in the lees of their angles,  
And fell to your knees and prayed-  
And when it rained, and the world turned black,  
And the olive leaves giggled, and  
The planes drew flat-  
How the spaces lingered on or folded up and went home  
And made love inside houses where the ghosts spoke like the  
Sea's pestilent foam:  
And the Cyclops of a lighthouse was blinded by rays-  
And you sat up on the edge of the terra plane and cursed her for  
Days- until the sunset came down, and the curtains  
Drew closed, and the lips bled red  
From the thorns of that rose.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thoughts I Suppose I Could Never Understand

It seems for awhile as if I'm  
Coalesced- that I am in love,  
But continually scarred:  
My love,  
I will have to go to school tomorrow,  
And maybe the cemeteries will have to flood,  
But maybe you will have to like  
Me forever:  
Maybe you don't know a thing except for  
The sun always arises as  
The fireworks always extinguishes within  
The boundaries of the yards  
Of housewives which I suppose eventually  
Mean well:  
But, my love, you are not quite listening to  
Be;  
But, my love, I suppose as well:  
That is not quite hell: though I love you,  
Like a sacred  
Dressing room giving of its perfumes  
To the lips of werewolves-  
This is just another thing I never discovered,  
Breathed from the fornications of  
The roses-  
And it is very uncomfortable for the modest  
Heroes to continue onwards-  
As it is, for awhile- just as strange to venture  
Forward, serving only the bosoms  
Of you love in a playground that never existed-  
While the blue gills look up through  
The shallows, giving off the penumbras of  
The thoughts I suppose I could never understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thoughts Of Idiots

Tell me you love me, even if I hate you:  
Even if you are my most imperfect muse; and yet my muse,  
Because I make love to you,  
Underneath the light bulbs of the candle wicks and the Ferris  
Wheels, while nothing else endearing has to move,  
While the lions have to roar,  
And each of the most beautiful girls in the sorority has to  
Touch themselves,  
Before almost immediately they must get married and move away:  
As the clouds do every day, over the graveyards,  
The junked cars, and the pornographies of my childhood;  
As if there was entirely another world across the canal  
That they will be building up anyways; and I don't  
Understand the politics of this hullabaloo:  
I was best when I was four years old, a wire in my jaw  
From slipping on the interstate, my pants wet from daycare,  
My sister crying for me, and my mother reading me the folklores  
Of my first obsessions through all the better parts of the  
Premier afternoons that I wish that I could remember:  
The cars rolling on, and fieldtrips to wedding parties of topless  
Women, and grottos where the ceiling fans purr;  
And her hands on my shoulder blades like the sunlight of angels  
Weighing me down in a wishing well,  
Making me hold my breath until I could arise baptized into  
An entirely different situation where her mouth kissed my blessing,  
Hiding me by dimming light of the parks that knew my childhood,  
As the alligators knew the thoughts of idiots  
In whose parades, Alma, we continue to kiss and make love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thoughts You Have Never Thought To Know

You have that much money to die  
Easily in the civil wars of Spain, right at the  
Spot where I got my scars,  
Where I left off and became alone, and didn't  
Worry about becoming popular;  
And now I just look out my windows waiting for  
The cloud to come over the virgins in the  
Shape of the grim reaper,  
So that you can have me rung awakened from your  
Dinner of green lobsters;  
And finishing, I suppose I was never made;  
And I was shot dead today all alone in a park in  
Lake Worth crowded with African Americans and  
Latinos where one time more than a baker's dozen of  
Years ago, I saw Kelly at the renaissance festival with  
The alligators and platinum larks;  
And I went with the girl I lived with and became a  
Scholar with,  
And now she is just beneath me, married on a more  
Salient hemisphere;  
And love is slowing me down; so you could catch me  
At last, if you weren't indeed married  
And happier in Colorado; and it is very strange and  
Dreamy becoming your friend;  
And I am not beautiful, and yet I am not betrayed by  
Your perfectly still beauty; and I cast you  
In the overcast carports of my youth, in things you will  
Never experience, across the street from the cenotaph of  
My conquistadors and classical pornographies;  
And, Sharon, don't I love you;  
But I am very strange, indeed; and I am not very easily loved,  
But I very easily bleed;  
And in my pale wounds lie the almost colorless desire  
To be nourished and sustained by the thoughts  
You have never thought to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thousands Of Confections

Kidnappings in the flickerings of the spin thrift features  
While they all get up, cartoonish and busy-eyed  
And the daylight peels and hides for and until  
A thousand afternoons keeping  
The most beautiful girls concealed away into the afternoon's  
Rainstorms of all of their bedrooms—  
This is how it is concealed and how it pans out:  
Beautiful upon beautiful echo—homeless and without  
The day waiting for the night of the stars-  
Beautiful in all of her telepathy just waiting for her to  
Cry—  
As the eyes of wolves and crocodiles pan across all of  
The ballrooms of the amusements of rollercoasters  
Until they touch their own wetness to the  
Venoms,  
And the earth spins around and around in all of the  
Thousands of confections  
Of its excitable convictions.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Three Bears

There I am-  
Again, a child in a playground of  
Kindergarten,  
Remembering Christmas the same way I will  
Also remember  
My first masturbation-  
On the green rug, stripped forever,  
Underneath the stewardesses,  
A latchkey looking for  
Certain housewives- as all of suburbia  
Nods off in a trance of  
Pitiful flowers,  
Until new avenues glow underneath the  
Sleep of their eyes-  
And for awhile,  
Crimson estuaries between their legs  
Like midnight churches burning the slender  
Rookies that also must  
Bring their children to them  
From the fire houses where the faeries live:  
And if you looked into her eyes,  
I know that you'd have to agree,  
That they were not there too long ago,  
Because the cinders are yet  
Smoldering,  
And goldilocks is upstairs sleeping in bed  
Even as the three bears are finally arriving home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Threshold Of A Vastly Apathetic World

Bag of rum at my hip,  
Shaded and sheathed by the palmettos  
Who are always over joyous to have survived the frost;  
And somewhere just above my head the stewardesses  
Are floating and serving overpriced drinks to  
Their really lost boys;  
And it almost feels like a household above my head,  
On a heavy line of string something ancient pulls from  
The waves;  
And there is a motor purring softly in the deeply un-absolved  
Trenches, which are like a woman's legs,  
Or like my mothers:  
She has given up swimming and evolved and just lies  
There now with some tremendous blow-hole waiting for him;  
And the sky is like the absurd possibility of overpriced  
Fruit,  
And it all seems to be hanging there waiting for him to come  
Home,  
And to hold the chalice of her body like rain across the threshold  
Of a vastly apathetic world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Thunderbirds Of Winos

Metallurgy of camel dung,  
I hold court in unmowed fields-  
I soliloquy the broken glass of  
The thunderbirds of winos.  
Sitting down to lie, I eat bologna  
And mayonnaise,  
I make love to apple snails.  
This is how I've done it, to settle the games  
Of beauty before afternoon gets too late  
Even while forgetting those better lines.  
Where there are no trees to shade the podium,  
Young virgins pop and fizz  
While I break the wings of a dove.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tidal Sea

Unseen, yet to be caught by  
Any god, the children play in the  
Gurgling streams which don't know  
Any exact language;  
Like infants they flow down  
From the mountain's womb  
To gather and sleep in the early lakes  
Where young lovers neck in the  
Willows' bowers,  
And ladies with delicate parasols  
Row out to feed the swans  
Who gather like parenthesis  
Encapsulating the baby-blue skiff;  
Though further down where the  
Adolescent rapids rebel and spit  
On the rocks they trounce upon,  
Where wayward suicides swing  
In the spray,  
The white bears' paws like spears  
Drag the floundering life out  
From the shallow misuse,  
And wolves attack the bloated  
Carcasses of buck and doe,  
Only to fall away again into  
Gentler, wizening cataracts  
Revealing the silver and buckskins  
Of lost explorers many years ago-  
This fans out like a grandmother's  
Hand upon her offspring,  
The seepage of a gathering life,  
A great wound of everglades  
Which tiptoes through high grass  
And disappears into the tidal sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tide's Au'Vior

A viper bit me in the throat,  
He said he love me but he don't. Now  
Here so close to the ground the sky is twirling,  
Twirling mad around; and birds, who are little girls  
Up to their knees, preening in the crooks of sad,  
Sad trees;  
And I don't know anymore about what I've done;  
My entire family is out of state and on the lamb- When we  
Used to sell so many things, produce to living souls and  
Tourists as naked as bed sheets billowing under the sun:  
Every day, I suppose, every day until now used  
To lead up to a girl, as a mailman to the door. How many  
Countless times I've watched her smile, like an afternoon  
Of game shows just in lingerie, dripping smoke and oil;  
But 'taint no more, that's for sure- She gone and flip'n  
Metamorphosed into a heron, long and leggy, and in the marsh  
She born a baby, an infant of a crocodile, so teal and lanky  
And feral smiled;  
And now he trills and bites her bosom, just a diadem I am sure,  
Just a sparkling hallucination drooling in the tide's au'voir-  
There is the last thing the sun proclaims on, the bosom upon  
Which he casts his rays on- Then blushing like a mailman,  
Or a dusky raconteur, he shuts the door behind him and whistling like a  
Day-gone fireman leaves her until tomorrow, and the shadows fill  
With my sorrow, but the waves proceed to touch her,  
For their shadows tend to rush her: just her, her child, and her letters,  
Going into the deeper, more rooted fetters,  
So all night long in her dreams moaning premonitions, her jaw unhinges  
Like a music box to the lunar conditions, and she sways with a  
Somnambulist's insouciant precision; or at least this is how I think to  
Find her, lying out beneath her weather, just a boy in heath and heather;  
Or like a gardener with his sprinkler would like to find his flower  
Garden and so to tend her, watering her with his spigot, and handling  
His trough, and digging her with it; but she has already sent the  
Pigeons each strapped with her penultimate conditions,  
That she has stopped thinking of me; in fact her thoughts have utterly  
Transcended, and to have ever considered she's resented;  
But how the pigeons are lazy messengers, and I feed them cheese  
And crackers, just so that they will fail to mention that I am weeping

There beneath her window, listening to her scribble innuendos,  
To more fine and frisky fellows, boys who live in grand old castles  
Instead of weeping there on her very floor;  
But come sunlight I'll have won her, and tease, and squeeze and  
Fun her, because I'll have donned all the lucent wonder she could  
Have never much imagined it before:  
But it's true that the child, yet so tailed, toothy, and so wild,  
I will make him meek and mild, and she will love me sure.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tidiest Of The Most Surreals

Graveyards are beautiful at any time of the day while  
More beautiful people are enthralled with making love to  
One another;  
And this is the free sport that no one else cares about,  
As I grow fat listening in my little coves at the world  
So airing above my throat:  
I am like the amphibian ululating for his stewardesses;  
And all of this can be trusted,  
Because it is just as thoughtless as gambling;  
As the fish come gurgling in the lines of their bright-eyed  
Nurseries into the open air,  
As I have things to tell myself when no one else cares;  
And I have been to the lips of mountains,  
And I have seen by which passions the highways so encoil,  
That the wildernesses are minted:  
I have received the frostbitten lips into my ankle,  
As I have loved a married woman, who is both strange and  
Sincere;  
And she is my muse, buying new t-shirts to cover her aching  
Breasts to which I wish to afford more children to cause  
To leak of life's milky suckle;  
And the world lights up as in a stage of ill-report; and the  
Ships melt into their docks, the sailors dreaming of girls and  
Mermaids I am sure never existed except for in my bedroom  
Under the ceiling fans churning like milkmaids,  
Open-breasted and yodeling like Julie Andrews in the coffins  
Of the tidiest of the most surreals.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tightening Cul-De-Sacs Of Good Times

Times of make-believe are really here, and the kissing games:  
The mountains who have no clothes on rise up stark naked  
From the planes  
Except for the garlanding of the open throats of Echnopsis  
And the diademing of crashed aero-planes:  
The Mephistopheles haunts of abandoned minds, into which  
The canaries sang their little skull,  
Like the yellow harvest of a fruitless picking time:  
The miners and their boys up to their unshaven throats in those  
Grottos  
Making peace with their makers: the clouds evaporating  
Across the still born papers of butterflies:  
While down there in the unplanted basins, the homeopathic  
Cities spun through by the working girls  
And all of them kissing in the tightening cul-de-sacs of  
Good times.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Time In The World

So many lives given over to benediction,  
Many amputees pressing young lipped over the soda  
Fountains,  
And the forts rise up clapping for fireworks,  
Walls of coquina and rum, with tongues of sundials pulled  
From the sea hoary cliffs perpetually  
For young lovers as gifts who just didn't care  
Stone flower clocks  
Broken promises that cannot be Indian given;  
But I still love the Orpheus sun of underground heaven:  
What you keep like pies under the sheets, when you wake up  
And the tide has you enraptured within its briny monopoly,  
And you can come out and yawn like a growing cross:  
You can toss your hands up and love, Erin, toss your hands up  
And love because the world is still ungodly perfect for you.  
You have a new car and all the roads,  
Swift amusement to the sea you can walk upon anyways  
With the sun going down. The mailboxes are panting and I miss  
My dogs, and we really miss you under the thumbs of pestilent  
Stars, the science of their exhaling space:  
They are always good at the perpetual chase; you know what it  
Is good for, your foot on pure silver dispelling curses.  
You never have to go to the library to find the immortality of my  
Love, for it is forever happening perpetually on you  
Like hungry magnets to your dense mercury curved to perfection  
And given all the time in the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Time Of The End Of Its Day

Eat and run from my scars,  
Two hot dogs for a dollar; sit out and lunch  
And watch all the beautiful cars,  
Thinking of the graveyards too affluent to attend,  
And just as assured of the sky that she'll  
Return: Liking her better than Jesus, rug burns;  
There is a pit to her nature where she can be replanted,  
And I've stolen such blue prints to this accord.  
In the sky there is some kind of dashing rum hoodlum  
Doing tricks, I think they've called him the son-  
Every girl is in love with him, and they climb pear trees  
And superstitious novels to unbutton and bask in  
His well-lit offices;  
He jury-rigs the top masts of airplanes, he licks his  
Spindles of light, magnifies conflagrations,  
Puts truly young boys' kites to flight:  
And I've spend the second half of my time filibustering  
About him, even as he is running away:  
And upstairs its time to make dinner, the coyotes wake  
Up and make love from the lips of trash heaps and flames;  
It looks to me that her lip is bleeding, but that's just the  
Color the earth takes at the time of the end of its day.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Time To Recognize Your Glorious Senses

It is sad that she loves her husband,  
The only thing who is her light, and checkmates her  
King;  
And the city rides beneath them, and there is  
Plenty of empty parking,  
Like burnished crèches to place their daughter in,  
Underneath the eye lashes of the moon and its  
Silver satellites airplanes like tree frogs leaping;  
And it hurts to know that she has all of this,  
The simple minded bliss of a tea party,  
Has Alice;  
And the wind wakes up all of a sudden and curls around  
Her like a snake who is a kitten;  
And the light peels all the way down in a cornucopia  
Of naked music:  
Like it does for holidays and boys who can fly who  
Are always played by girls.  
She doesn't know what I should be now- That I am one of  
Them, that I am a real boy, beautifully contaminated:  
Sharon,  
I have earned my wings, but they are wet with the oils you  
Spilled laughing into the bastion of tubs,  
The ambergris of planets you choked under water, under  
Stream that you love as deep as your husband  
Who knows as little as love as the element of fighter pilots  
Moving so slick over the jungle that they can't even stop  
For a moment to fathom the unmolested beauty  
Where the natives live,  
Where the orange flowers grow as if from the lips of  
Green-horned skyscrapers;  
And now my lips smell like gasoline, but I am still the only  
One who can take the time to recognize your glorious senses.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Times That We Made Love

I don't want to have to fight you for  
The nice color of your eyes: the ants will have it anyways,  
And take it to their queen as a nice surprise  
Underneath the roller rinks of the downed stewardesses  
Thighs,  
While the sun will come up and roll around like a marble  
In a preschool's game,  
Over the avenues of yesterday when I hardly knew my  
Mother, but could remember her name  
And called out to her in the playgrounds of my fear  
Where the horses have been so unlucky as to flounder,  
Even if it was their own illusions, the ablutions of hummingbirds  
Can also be considered to hardly be real,  
And yet they come counting numbers and gossiping, Alma,  
About the times that we made love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Times When She Was Still In High School

Housewives laughing in their houses  
While the alligators say nothing,  
But they are happy:  
They are in her pretty yards anyways-  
And they remember her  
How she was  
When she was very young- and yet  
A metamorphosis,  
From cheerleader to stewardess:  
And they don't have to look far up  
To see her:  
Sometimes she swims naked in her pool  
Like diamonds,  
And the refractions in the water break her  
Apart into the twins of her  
Sorority:  
Into a kaleidoscope of captured memories,  
Of the times when she was still in  
High school- and very young-  
And the alligators already knew everything  
About what she would inevitably become.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tinsel Upon A Sunday Morning Christmas Tree

How many times will you keep calling  
The same horses home,  
Waiting for some unrecognized god to  
Identify you, to swing his  
Flaming sword as a christening over  
Your rusty plough—  
After the automatons have stopped  
In their holidays of religious love,  
And all of the nocturnal animals  
Are wide awake at the zoo—  
And there seems to be some celestial  
Beauty melting down from the mountain,  
A divine personification in a  
State of devolution—  
At first an entire forest of sorority,  
And then only a pool,  
Then a heart, then an eye,  
Then a leg—  
Something that the tadpoles are fashioned  
Of, the black semen  
That have never dreamed of as Pegasus—  
And there you are, the product of  
An apiary whose wax has already melted  
Down the runways of its penultimate sex—  
As if by falling, learns to fly—  
Beauty in a tailspin sure to meet  
The casual greetings of the earth—  
The birds of prey above you taking your family  
Name—  
The Virgin of Guadalupe hanging from  
Your dashboard,  
The streamers from your handlebars just as beautiful  
As the tinsel upon a Sunday morning Christmas tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tomb

In a graveyard there is nothing else:  
Plastic flowers in a chintzy vase,  
Paper airplanes touching  
Down across her face:  
Nothing else left in a graveyard left to say,  
Even though the plastic roses are  
Pulling up the ants—the ants—the ants—  
Before the hurricane,  
And the rest of the world so busily gets  
Up—and up—and up:  
And I cannot remember where I have yet  
To find you—  
And all of the rest of it feelings like a playground  
Lost in a daydream—  
But soon all of your busses will be coming home,  
And you will step oh so light footed  
Outside the tomb—the tomb-  
The tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tomb Of Your Hands

In the tomb of your hands,  
I look up into highways-  
Luminescent creches  
Built in the plane language of your dinoflagellates-  
These are words I cannot describe or spell,  
Accumulating in evaporations over the hills of  
Your Chinese ancestors:

The professionals are taken low,  
Redressed into the Formica growing underneath  
The glass boundaries of ant farms-

My sister buys a new house and smiles towards the sun-  
Her god addressed here in the innuendos of our father-

Hear the airplanes entertaining the angels.  
Take another drink and they become hostages for giants  
And then their wives:

And I have not seen you in my sleep for many years now.  
My health is taken down from the mountain  
And has become so forgetful that I can no longer tell its  
Fairytale to my children:

Conjoined twins in a bed of aspen sprigs.  
The mountain's lactates feed them her minerals-  
Their eyes tell me of a gypsum catastrophe,  
As the great valley beckons, opening into widening  
Prairies where the buffalo run downstream,

Gather into the traffic jam, and the detritus of beaten waves,  
Stacked into the leg-splinter of the so many things which  
Can no longer run.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Tomorrow I'LI Never Know

Windmills: windmills of that banal architecture,  
While traveling through the hallways it  
Seems as if very little else has changed;  
But the fruit still falls from the tree  
Of baseball diamonds,  
And you are still looking up: up, up,  
Casually around the world,  
Trying to dispel your unusual language:  
Well, here it is, while the octopus runs away:  
Away,  
In the inky censers of what was its yesterday:  
Gone with the playgrounds in the albino  
Snow,  
Gone with the tomorrow- the tomorrow,  
I'll suppose I'll never know.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tortoise

Starting out the new day of paper  
With a song on the floor, listening to the coquina fireplace  
Breathing- breathing with the virgin of Guadalupe on  
Her perch-  
Alma tucked away across the train tracks into her abode,  
The princes turned safely into toads in the truck stops of  
The aloes;  
And something beautiful picked up after midnight, only to  
Be discarded, while little boys, forgetting they are real,  
Roll naked down the blue hillsides towards the traffic  
That never stops,  
So the rest stops remain useless, picking up the long crawlers  
Of crepuscule, as the shadows of mailboxes and weathervanes  
Make their premeditated dash across meticulous lawns,  
Competing in the race the tortoise always wins.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tortoises' Cabals

I like your eyelashes drunkenly in the carports  
Where my mother almost drowned:  
The rain listening to my efforts—drowning in  
The rebar:  
The amphibians all princes pretending to swim  
Until they have to go to bed and  
Take shelter in the aloe:  
And other words sleeping like rattlesnakes in the  
Backyard underneath the browning  
Christmas trees—  
Subtle architectures of rattlesnakes  
Diademing the poor man's forts—where my mother  
Comes home and the rabbits die—  
And the tortoises hold cabals, trying to figure  
Out what it is they love, exactly,  
About the butterfly.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tourists Curtailed But Whom

Building up in cornpone fountains:  
Building up right here, where the fairies fountain:  
And right here, where the rhymes crown themselves, speaking  
For themselves,  
As all of the night proceeds, speculating:  
And maybe my loved ones won some prizes, but the night is  
Another memorial, because it is always because,  
With their knuckles in their mouth,  
While all of their wives and pets sit speculating: and then  
The city is hard up in its jazz of hyperborean lights right up  
Against the hyperborean:  
And there it was, while I was trying to strange myself:  
And then it was alright while we were all trying to move  
Away, upstream into the closets of suicide outside of guns  
And the popcorns of your unicorns; and here it is, after hours,  
And afternoon, while all of the elves have called their  
Terrapins, and there they are, while the busses are all turning  
Around: and there they are: while you are in his house of bodies  
All alone- and I just wanted my fair bit of suicide, fueling up  
The semis:  
There down deep in the highest lowest aeries: and it wasn't very good:  
And there it was, just so floating on their tiny planet:  
There it was on my cartoon of a planet with no one who could  
Really change to love me with the soul star of a superhero sun coming  
Up just to commit suicide: and  
Then there was nothing that nothing was, and the lions came,  
As the kittens growled, while the tourists curtailed but whom they loved  
I could not tell anyone at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tourists In Our Cages

Helicopters float like religious visions  
Over the orchards of Spain or my backyard:  
That is what they are doing  
As cyclones form,  
As her eyes grow languid and their lids collapse like  
Cerulean tarps in a rainstorm,  
Because she's been being a bad girl,  
Worry about grammar and going back to school:  
And I imagine all of her children in a train waddling like  
Cool ducks off to school,  
With bits of their animal heritage sticking like chips of  
Glass out of their road.  
And maybe not a single one of them knows what it means  
To come from Oz,  
But maybe the youngest of them will one day know:  
She will look up into the sky after her mother is far away  
And the last of the butterflies has gone off  
To die in Mexico,  
And she will pick up my quiet page itself traveled so far  
To find the appreciation of her eyes;  
And then she will pick me up, and we will journey together  
Like a sack of golden kittens,  
Following the scents of perfume, like the phosphorescence  
Of mollusks rutting through a storm  
To the amusement parks where her mother has lost herself,  
Staring longingly at a funnel cloud  
Like a heavenly sink dreaming down to the street;  
And it will be her own mother; and all three of us will look  
Upon her together,  
Like beholding Mary Conception and glow with the light of  
Her proof just like the creatures many miles under the  
Sea brought almost breathlessly up to the shallow light  
Of the tourists in our cages.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Toy Box Of Yum-Yum

Oh joy in the toy box of yum-yum:  
Yes again a tomorrow of tomorrow—and all of that vision:  
While you never have to go home without  
The television being on—and this being your sport—  
The way that the spying birds trained to spot  
You for hours—days in the lovely lofts—  
Enjoying the spawning of the voluptuous afternoons with  
Your own children—  
And then, eventually—echoes beyond echoes—  
And the mentioning of the darkest of crafts—  
As my belly swells like grapevines beneath all of  
The unreachable airplanes—  
And you will come home to be swallowing,  
Swallowing, a virgin of my amusements—  
Willing to live with me forever, and taking all that  
I have to give to you mouth that envelops  
Gleefully all of this petulant joy.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tragic Shoreline Of My Other Venal Muse

Rubbing dimes together,  
I cause little presidential fires beside  
The train tracks  
And little girls come and get caught outside  
Their backyard swings:  
They think it is neat magic what I do to  
Cook what I need to survive,  
And they attribute the resurrection of their  
Favorite cats to me,  
But it was not me: I was not thinking of the  
True freedoms of their welfare;  
I was thinking of my sick muse, lost in Colorado  
Five feet tall in a witch's pony tail,  
Skin so pale like opal snow: How she haunts me  
And I test the wind against the zinc  
Firecrackers to see which way the trains are going  
Today,  
And I steal the pink martinis from their mothers'  
Boudoirs, because even the weakest liquor gets  
Me so high it tells me I can float  
Up like the moon drippy like a Spanish gourd over  
The white-capped spine of this country,  
The beautiful cords that are bleeding tourism and  
Wine,  
And that I can find her, and spend so much in her thoughtless,  
Winter-whipping store,  
As to make her remember my name  
For a night in a hotel room of short change, before I have  
To go leaping back again to the tragic shoreline of my other  
Venal muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Trailer Park Of Our Conjoined Tombs

Burning in the shadows of Ferris Wheels,  
Or their overpasses,  
We can't yet say what might still arise from  
The sea,  
While your hair is blowing,  
And your throat is air-conditioned:  
And my pulp fiction is just that I want to love you,  
I want to go down dying swinging my  
Samurai's sword against the  
Bullets, the mirages of school busses  
Pirouetting thousands of miles  
From where they actually turn around:  
Or if we make it to oasis,  
To drink until our bibs are wet with honey,  
Fat bellied and holding hands  
To hold the same illusions,  
To run away to Michigan, or wherever you were  
Born,  
Sharon. Where were you born,  
And what is your favorite color,  
And what do you dream now with the clouds coming  
Over  
When I am not a beautiful man. I am just drunk,  
But I want to ride the same school bus with you,  
I want to turn around in the panoply of many a  
Catholic institution,  
And to fall against my back holding hands with you  
In the brightest emptiness  
While the airplanes leap to and from their careless  
Holidays,  
And only then should the winged men recite down  
To us all the illusions which bloom like the open  
Mouths of lions yawning, yawning,  
Waiting for lunch while we seem to sleep together  
In the trailer park of our conjoined tombs.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Tranquility Of My Shadows

Wounded as I am:  
Looking at my neck over the fountain:  
Try to leap over the mountain—  
It is impossible, so have another drink again:  
This world's fangs made to speak  
Of vineyard, underneath the half-lights  
In the garden of her elbows:  
This is the uneasy place, placed at the lips of  
Serpents:  
This is the airport of all of my roses,  
And I've been getting drunk,  
So I am filled with so many excuses, as the world  
Makes a bed with the crepuscule of the darkness,  
As it gets so late,  
And the horses go down to their water holes  
After the tricks of fireworks—  
And all of the mouths of wolves are hungry,  
And all of the classrooms of daylight are emptied,  
And there isn't anymore more to say  
Than this:  
That you were once my muse, but you were married  
And wingless:  
And now another Christmas has passed,  
And I am married—  
And I do not think of you, at least in the daylight that is too  
Busied to be wounded—  
And you go home to him until you are freckled by those shadows,  
And rested and easy:  
Then there is no longer a carnival in your soul,  
And you have nothing to say to anybody—and this is but my last  
Light cast out for you into the evening:  
And does not know if there will be another tomorrow to think of  
You,  
As you lie again in the bedroom that has never felt the tranquility  
Of my shadows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Transformations Of Unicorns

Poem of smiling death,  
As the cars ride- up and down, in the veins  
Of the concrete leviathan that sleeps in  
Our home:  
Where the fairytale of your heart rests  
In the swampy armpits,  
And you kiss your husband and say your  
Various Amens- and the baseball games  
Show up on Sundays during  
Church-  
Where your grandmother died- pretending to  
Be in a purple orchard because of  
All of the lilacs never minding the sleeping  
Bears-  
Or the rocket ships, hallucinating above  
The ice-cream trucks: there they were  
Together and performing after school  
At all times of the year:  
And I loved her- and I loved her even while  
She keeps no purpose for me-  
But I remember the apiary of her body  
Working in the fruit market-  
And there is no use describing her to anybody-  
The fairgrounds of my heart will come  
Around again, but she will already be gone,  
Taking the candlelight of her lovely belief with  
Her, stealing with the waves  
And the transformations of unicorns underneath  
The moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Transoms Of The Runways To Heaven

I loved her by the restraint of memories which had  
Already painted over the cenotaphs of all of these pilgrims,  
As the pop rockets spent down over the horned rims  
Of conquistadors,  
While the big and ruddy tanks ran out of gas; but she gave me  
A new gift,  
As I sat in the open air of our markets, the doves making  
Frantic pornographies right there in the lower rung of heavens:  
That the narcissisms' tourists didn't even look so good,  
Their heavens tainted, the wheels of their wagons not so round,  
Their creeds chick&n sh%t, and not so hypnotizing;  
And I didn't need to fish anymore: her Alma sustained me,  
And we went together underneath the overpasses into the flea  
Markets to see the Virgin of Guadalupe, to whom I crawled  
And kissed and crawled and kissed some more;  
While the airplanes took away our skies of memory, and it really became  
Good to go home wherever in absolute anonymity, just to share my  
Body with her in a rain shower, to lay with her as a poem, or the  
Death of a butterfly, each orifice of her a syllable that could never  
Be sung out in the open,  
And her eyes the transoms of the runways to heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Trees Are Still Yet Green

Call me what you will, I'll write  
You another poem, I'll make money off you.  
I'll get fat watching you swing upside down  
From the cypress. I'll burn sugarcane like incense;  
I'll cast a spell underneath the orange blossoms;  
I'll wave to the concubines with bound feet-

You have a boyfriend, so I can't trust you:  
Oh what a world, this high school world,  
The buses the state provides newly washed,  
The seats varnished by Mexicans.  
The only time I can rest is when they break down,  
And then I sleep under them in the effluvious oil slicks,  
While the terrapin finishes off his orchid. Somehow  
He still wins the race and buys me a new skin,  
We all win, and then there is a parade in the oval the  
Bleachers look down into, like a sunken dais;

But even now its not snowing in Florida, its not snowing  
At all but here it is snowing, and at that Catholic church  
Where she opened up her trunk and showed me that glorious  
Bag full of condoms, and we made love near the cerulean  
Crèche; now they have the Christmas tree up  
My father sold them, they must have, and they  
Are marching pantomimes underneath that and eating  
Crackerjacks, but that was so many years, and I don't remember  
What I say.

She went up into his bedroom and they got  
Out the tennis rackets while his parents read the newspaper  
And played Scrabble approvingly;  
But I only say this because I still want to be near to you,  
And kiss around your mouth and hang out there like a spotty  
Bee on his flower, and write my memoirs underneath the  
Banister of our bed, but it is already occupied, and I don't  
Remember where I am or what I am doing, but I started  
This to be nearer to you, to sojourn like a keen arrow into your  
Dress, but I have tried that for so long and it hasn't worked;  
And I haven't spotted you with blood, or kept

Good time,  
And school is over and it is not returning,  
And in the wintertime in Florida the trees are still  
Yet green, but they do not blossom.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Trees' Elbows' Song

In the trees  
There are elbows  
And they grow  
Real long  
Up into the sun  
The trees' elbows'  
Song.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Trigonometry Over The Baseball Diamonds

Not deserving the soldiers of my heavens  
Here they come again-  
Night and panthers and night bivouacked underneath  
The stars where I  
Have already failed the best radios and Disney World—  
You go home to him and you are attentive:  
You might do this single trick forever and forever, if  
It is your game—but my tongue is no longer tied  
To the pies of your vagina:  
You see—I have joined the rodeo that is evaporating;  
Silent trick upon silent trick—  
Words in the classrooms are daydreams—  
The faucets echo—your parents echo of the love  
They have for you—they keep for you—  
And you fall in love with another coworker—another  
Man—at the movie theatre or equally dissimilar haunts—  
I don't know what is in the makeup of you game—  
I am just trying to survive the day myself—  
And echoes of echoes—  
Repeating in the formaldehyde forlornly—  
Looking out from the glass jars to see their mothers,  
But they are already there—tomorrow  
When the sunlight rises in the trigonometry over  
The baseball diamond and nobody is so amazed  
That everybody remembers me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Truancies Of Little Boys

Pillaging rattlesnakes in the  
Abandoned rooms of hyperborean castles:  
Way up there in the accoutrements  
Making kissing balls out of their  
Ankles  
In the movie theatres of the clouds  
And honeymoons out of  
Their dungeons:  
You see these things with no legs swimming about  
In the blindness of their daydreams-  
Filled with venom  
And egotistical advances-  
They come together, forked tongued-  
And make holidays out of highways where you can  
Look down and see the trespasses of the  
Beautiful sea upon the stalwart forts again:  
She is wanting a child again-  
But the frictions of her séances is untrustworthy:  
She is just happy to be there,  
And soon he will be bowing low-  
To look at the sea horses underneath her skirts,  
And the truancies of little boys ride their bicycles into  
Her forever.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Truancies Of Our Open Mouths

I suppose this is what I've always been doing,  
Cool and reticulated into the jungles of the brand new harems,  
And even while I bathe I can hear the engines of  
Satanic windmills who are always chewing their stewardesses;  
And if we go too long at this, we get too dumb,  
But the liquor makes us feel warmed and less alone, even though  
It is that we have always been drinking this

Alone,

Alone:

And I went out into the switchbacks of the sweltering palm tree  
City again today, and looked for new work and new meat:

Maybe I was looking halfway pretty,

Erin- maybe I will sing to you again, passing through the unlucky  
Cards across the muddy tributaries;

Because I am no longer envious, and if you admit that you are  
A bad girl, then you can at least come to me, and I can give you  
Flowers

And the calling cards and fish who are too fat to sleep;

And we can lie together beneath the school busses and the Florida  
Holly,

Each of us kissing the truancies of our open mouths,

And weep

And weep

And weep.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Truancies Of So Many Bicycles

Fingers that play their games over  
A plums in an orchard, until the airplanes become  
A still-life- that they are so puzzled,  
And the moonlight and the sunlight, like lovers on a picnic  
Hang around for lunch,  
So tantalized- as if by a soap opera; and the crop through  
The crenulations of lucky leaves  
Just keeps getting greener and greener through their experiences  
In the fertilizations of light;  
And I think under the photosynthesis underneath the holidays,  
Like the wishy-washy thoughts of birthday candles,  
Like the songs of the spokes of daisies, or in the truancies of  
So many bicycles:  
Either she loves me or she loves me not;  
Though I love her, either way.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Truck Stops Of Lycanthropes

And the plywood  
Shoulders  
Extrapolated from  
The lungs of  
The exhausted classrooms—  
Lying like the letters of  
Billboards above  
The cars—  
Illuminating the  
Spots for  
Werewolves—  
The truck stops of  
Lycanthropes  
With 24 hr  
Stores  
Where anyone and  
Their mother  
Is allowed inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# The True Romance Of Pulp Fiction (Or: How I Have 50 Days Left To Live)

She said our relationship was like Star Wars: The Phantom Menace,  
The worst of the series:  
Flat, without character,  
Distant from the audience,  
Sexless,

Our house a blue screen we  
Acted against (poorly)  
- not knowing the way to the  
Emerald City-

She said she wanted our relationship  
To be like it was before,  
As good as the originals,  
The Empire Strikes Back,  
The best of the series:

Fucking and what they call:  
Making love in a warm bed,  
Making love against the italics of  
Snow fields on Hoth,  
Like Luke and Leia  
With a black man on the fringe  
To be politically correct  
And to sell more tickets

With suggestions of incest,  
The Freudian implications,

But I was tired of going in and out  
And out and in  
Of her cave just to end up back  
Where I was, with my X-Wing  
Sunk in the swamp,

Trying to prove myself to my father  
Who sold himself into a computer

For the American Empire:

I told her everyone of his movies  
Was just to make \$\$\$ and not art:

To expand the waste of Capitalism's  
Glut,  
To sell more Tupperware (of course)  
And the undergarments and circumcisions  
Made in China made by little men  
With ancient fathers,

Like Darth Vader,

She didn't understand/  
Either did I, how she lives in Boca  
With her sister and the hands they've  
Grafted into the Middle-east and the  
Ancient religion they turn to when they  
Need to buy things,

Goyem

We are all the alien species  
When we need to buy things and move  
Far up north to Michigan's northern peninsula  
So we can freeze with a snow beast living inside of us.

Without universal communicators  
We make love on the football field

So we separate into Galaxies  
Far, far away.

A long time passing,  
Sometimes going through Burger King's  
Drive-thru  
We try to remember us  
By buying limited time collectible  
Watches:  
I have all six

The characters in that cold space,  
The graffiti of our bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Truths

People in their getups worrying about their  
Setups;  
And I just want to be a child kicking the sky on  
The swings;  
This is the only way to make the day go by,  
And I wonder if in their aquariums, how much change  
Do the fishes dream;  
And it is romantic to think of you, to push my lashes  
Into the prams of your unforecasted children,  
To make a crèche of my soul out in the parking lot  
Of your church's grottos:  
Fully scarred with bushels full of fireworks,  
And the airplanes swinging low like acrobats at my  
Command,  
Like the truancies out in the yards drinking alcohol in  
The middle of the school day,  
This is how my seeming soul goes about swimming:  
This is how I abolish myself minutes before my day gone  
Dreaming;  
And then I think of wonderful walls and girls with  
Long flaxen hair falling,  
And cabbages and rabbits, and eggs hatching- In worlds where  
Everything can speak,  
In habitats that my leafy gills are breathing playing tennis  
And short-skirted sports back and forth across  
A super-teal television:  
And there are girls I love I don't know anymore, or I have never  
Known:  
There are girls still stuck up in college or budding their  
Families in the snow in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado,  
That I masturbate to to perceive, that I beat myself,  
And they come alive like butterflies over midnight seas,  
Flaming from the estuaries where my ancient capillaries breath,  
And despair like clockwork through  
The skeletons and wine;  
And still I would skip school at anytime, and throw myself into  
The game of make-believe,  
To make sure that you win and that you too believe;  
And we can both close our eyes far atop the red diamonds of these

Eyes that go on forever like red trains into the night,  
The truths that don't have to be spoken to be known that they  
Are right.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Tug Of Airless Need

Tugging at the silver  
Orbs of Scottish  
Plumbers,  
Fixing the pipes underneath  
Her copper  
Estuaries,  
Caracoled like daydreams  
She little perceives,  
And I am going  
Down into  
New hemispheres  
Places that don't wake up,  
And can't be  
Fixed  
And the beautiful fish  
Never feel  
The tug of airless need.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Turning Of A Sad But Funny Page

Maybe you figured that I didn't understand how  
To love;  
Or maybe you just stepped outside your door and sucked  
Air for a moment,  
Before going back inside your chimney,  
But I sat with you and held your hand while you saw the  
Homeless dolphins leaping underneath the overpass:  
And better boys drove above us,  
Some that you knew, some that you had let fight your fires;  
But I was starring in the ring that night,  
And I had to go and practice with that shadows up on stage;  
All that dirty laughter that comes  
With the turning of a sad but funny page.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Turnstile Ballets

Friends embedded in the lines of second grade  
Calligraphies: all the lush white faces looking over the  
Turkeys of Christmas,  
Their trailers twinkling, and I doubt now that you can  
Even love me,  
Because you have been astride that fellow too long  
To stray apart,  
Even if he has been your second hand devil:  
You might come over tomorrow, Alma, and we might make  
Love,  
And we might even die together, spilling our guts,  
Should he find out:  
But that would just make us prematurely immortal  
Too far beneath the beautiful mountains for the remains  
Of our love to turn out;  
But I know the road it takes to get to Disney World,  
And I know the sun will rise,  
As I have seen the light of your soul twirling its dun pinwheels  
Like felicitous geysers practicing the turnstile ballets  
From your innocent eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Twilight Basket

Emptied bottles of otherwise genii wishes,  
And lifting my lips to the heavens all fretted by the  
Passing of airplanes:  
The leaping of scams above that suburbia where  
The midgets hide in the palmettos up the bank to which  
I've floated too; and it is easiest to prove these things  
When I am alone and drinking;  
And otherwise no one: Only that the night is as celestial as  
A firework bought on the cheep, and in its frenzy as many opulences,  
But finally settles down from its pinwheels and stops  
Hypnotizing and the housewives come out into their  
Yards,  
And feel by their barefootedness the grass that the Mexicans have  
Mowed for them on the cheep;  
And nothing else has to move: not the alligators as calm in the  
Canal as bugles eager for the bugler's lips;  
And every day in this strangely mollified frontera, the butterflies  
Come and speak through the little angels of death:  
Speak of the ribcages of the panthers who don't live here anymore,  
Speak through the bars of a cell of a soul, of my Alma,  
And all of the ways I have been defeated, like weeds growing up  
Again through the very grasses who will continue  
Multiplying like the pornography inside the junked cars  
Underneath the rootless fornications of the Australian pines  
Across the street; only knowing that I did it under the  
Same moon for Alma, again,  
Swearing to her that I wanted to know her for as long as I could  
Like,  
Like an otter slipping out of a creak to kiss a maiden all giddy on  
Her wedding day,  
Or to kiss that very snake who caused the day and the twilight basket  
Into which all of men and all of my grandfathers perpetually are  
Falling.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Two Heartbeats

Female bodies flame their eternal milk when they  
Come into season  
And then you can see them beside road courses or in and  
Amidst bricabrac at flea markets or oh um  
Garage sales;  
And they slip in and out of doors looking as if they've  
Stolen watermelons  
And the cars flash before them like schools of minnows and  
Summer whales. If they are lucky then their dresses  
Are as elegant as their pain,  
While their bodies start out swinging in the motion of  
Both hemispheres:  
It was the female body's dancing which first started the earth  
To spinning,  
And there has never been another greater invention:  
Now they stream by in postmodern chariots and it makes me  
Want to cry; and I would just like to do that for one  
Of them. Maybe one of them that already has a daughter,  
Who starts out every day in her car, and talks all day long on her  
Telephone:  
Maybe I would just like to start another heart beat inside of her,  
And synchronizing, make those two heartbeats my own.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Two Worlds Of Mermaids

There I am beginning to weep the usual fire  
Outside the working class home, after another father's  
Murder, and another baseball game:  
Words that strike together like the back legs of cicadas in  
The mouth of a purring cat that takes it  
Home,  
Like topless girls wondering in the backyard pools,  
Above the eyes of the crocodiles who know that they cannot  
Cry,  
And make their beds in the stolen and crypt orchid  
Bicycles-  
Engorging over the holidays, and the castles laid down  
And flattened on the train tracks the ivies of so many saddled  
Princesses lays over like the alcoholic hands  
Curtaining the forefront of senses for another perfect child:  
Crumbling, the sugary breads of a cage  
Before the vacant lot of a fabulous fairy ground of enamor us  
Prizes has fled away;  
And the only light bulbs now: the light, the moon- the  
Stolen gifts around which all the hopeless sailors drown  
In a maelstrom of a ruining canvas: in the shoals of the artist's  
Finger tips,  
Drowning without clear muses- the good returns of butterflies,  
In the two worlds of mermaids.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Tyrant Of This Neighborhood's Illusion

The prehistoric itch keepings feeling like  
I should go out and fornicate in the dead-dog  
Meadows with absolutely nobody,  
Because if not now,  
When will the crops grow through the  
Radiations of failed government policy;  
But staring up at the sky,  
And staring up at the sky it is all I understand:  
That the sun does not reciprocate,  
It has no cherished thoughts of you,  
And me alone, but swings the earth  
Around, and around, and around  
Though she might cry for him to stop:  
Stop! Stop! Stop!  
But he don't give a damn,  
Because he owns her and everything  
Else in this neck of the woods,  
And he'll do as he likes with you  
And everybody else, and me alone,  
And nobody. Nobody atop the clock  
With the secret passage, drinking the wine,  
Laughing, laughing, laughing,  
Pouring out the time, but not tasting anything:  
Laughing, that I should find somebody,  
Laughing, that it is impossible,  
And the loneliness is unbounded and uncaged,  
The sun's favorite pet,  
Whirling and leaping, and taking on  
The disguises of love:  
We all have to work for a living,  
And there is his seed, his way through,  
Barking at the bones in the banishing room,  
And you might find a lady walking the streets  
Who you could take home and treat her right  
For some years, but in the end,  
Even after the children, and the games of joy,  
In the end, In the end:  
It is only nobody, nobody, nobody:  
The sun's pet, doing the tricks of time,

Only to bite your hand, to draw some blood,  
To turn and growl and then to leap  
Through the window of the next century  
That you will never see to warn them,  
The people you helped passed through the doorway,  
Let out on the streets,  
In the dark theatres,  
In the licking seas, in the smoky bars,  
In the whispering churches, in the jingling  
Stores, in the washrooms,  
In the sterile offices, in the departments,  
In the corridors, down the walks,  
Amidst the trees,  
And through the crowded cemetery  
Where the caroling crows sing:  
There is only nobody.  
The is just nobody....  
With the sun whipping us lavishly with  
The time he weaves, his fingers curling  
The flairs of the sun,  
The ancient man, the old incest,  
The tyrant of this neighborhood's illusion,  
And all the rest:  
Gone,  
Echoes,  
Nostalgic estuaries that drip their sadness,  
Though she will never return to reclaim and illuminate:  
You are,  
She was,  
I am:  
Nobody.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Ugly Soul

This soul is ugly- but it is my muse, lost in  
A church where the rafters are burning-  
And water snakes and eels are in  
Her grotto,  
Junked by stolen bicycles, while I kept nodding off  
And robbing things,  
Pretending that this was something excellent,  
Like a Navajo that I once drove across the reservation,  
Celibate for life,  
Drinking from the checks of her tits- the ships  
Turned to stone all around him-  
Somehow believing that they would take him to see his mother.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ugly Trees

Oh to foam, if I were beautiful-  
The slenderest trick skipping home even if  
Just for the one afternoon,  
Taunting the bullies with my slick ways,  
Getting published while still half in malaise:  
Loving the general gist of the story,  
Pretending to eat hemlock and Florida holly,  
Forgetting how to operate a car:  
Then all the trees are balmy tannenbaums  
Beautifully naked without decoration,  
While titling my head on the bicycling I can  
Hear the enraptured lions snoring,  
The tourists photographing as if summoned to  
Honeymoon;  
And I'm really strung out on the floor slipping  
In and out of reality, eating fried chicken,  
Folding paper-airplanes,  
Pretending the green shag carpet is Diana's  
Forest and she's metamorphosing my renegades  
Into reptiles of long-shanked kines;  
Oh, to be a part again of that wonderful never-  
Mind,  
With the whole family absent down another  
Root, to sleep alone with my heartsick feelings to  
Flume around the girls who'd already forgotten  
About me, or the pretty heads talking pretty on  
The color TV;  
And I loved her then, down the eerie corridors  
Of vermilion coasts, but she's forgotten of me:  
Distilled, she is the new weather sun-licking windmills  
On her scabby knees,  
I am just that ugly ghost tangled and disemboweled  
In the ugly trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unabashed Bouquets

Upon the higher back of the albatross  
It rains, it floods;  
And if I am not beautiful by now,  
I will be beautiful by then: I can see by the lights  
That my father put in  
As he whipped me, as I wrote the novels that no one  
Reads,  
I killed the dragon by which my friends were sewn  
But never fed:  
Beautiful irony of the butterfly crushed on the super  
Fine roadway;  
But I am no longer afraid: I still have my dreams,  
By my scars,  
By my liquor glass- I still have my friends,  
Even if I should have died high up on the wild  
Back of the buffalo,  
Never read, by the red lips of wild flowers, the unabashed  
Bouquets the dead Indians dead in the gutters  
Of the old fashioned roadways: Again, I loved you,  
Erin, but you are too busy serving the truancies of your  
Highwaymen to understand my love,  
Unabashed and unbred- Aren't you, Erin;  
Yet still my sweet love, my dead light bulb by which  
I got to bed every night- Erin,  
Amen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unabashed Heavens

Easy wounds in the creek that is moving down  
From the mountain  
Side, like a spear evaporating the colors of spring  
Up the cinder paths now blanketed with  
Autumn,  
Whose kiss no rattlesnake will rightly know,  
Up the scarred jubilation of her pregnant sides,  
The elk go cantankerously like phalanxes of regal  
Hungers,  
The clouds motioning of washing machines,  
And the masses so far away that there is nary an airplane  
In the sky,  
Or a woman for me to love; and this is the way her book  
Opens and closes,  
Wishing for, but saying nothing to cause an inkling in  
My memory,  
Passing me up like the slender marble hands of naked  
Aspens,  
Who hold the moon through the stars, panning  
The unabashed heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unanswerable Questions

And if I were dancing drunkenly  
South of Spain,  
Would you catch me in the New Years of that  
Country and across  
The railroad tracks  
While it all has to happen to us—  
In the venal enterprises of the mail men and our  
Mothers,  
Whilst there is nothing left that is beautiful  
That we have left to say—  
And yet the sun comes up over the mountains—  
Luminescent daydream of a movie theatre—  
And those who are the oldest of this country  
Cannot stop with their busied menstruations—  
As the movie theatres play their daydreams on and  
On with out them,  
Spilling their gossips out onto the catatonic streets:  
The open throated estuaries that wait all  
Night for their own throats to be  
Filled with baseball and the pollinations of witches—  
Until the wind has caught and she has finally flown  
Above them—  
Casting her spells, she is now a stewardess, something  
Respectable if only slightly above minimum wake:  
But she has nothing to fear—  
Eventually the mountains will weep,  
Sending their lactates and melted ice-creams down  
Atop of her—  
Answering all of the unanswerable questions—until it  
Is very, very late in the middle of the night—  
And I am guessing that it is finally alright to go to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unanswered Solicitation

"Meet new friends and  
Become a god, " the advertisement read,  
But I was already always  
Disappearing into the forest across  
The street, in the hot Florida  
Of that time-line when the Conquistadors,  
The action figures with their full movement  
And detachable crosses,  
Were the fulcrum of the last extinction:  
I had recorded the Indians' screams and  
Compared them to the panthers'  
In the Bay of Horses,  
When they had their last revenge,  
And their painted maidens looked sexy  
As they put the heads of their victims  
Between their legs,  
And busied their knives with the scalping:  
Everything was devoured then,  
As somewhere in the center,  
The two young lovers never written of,  
Shared themselves in the great  
Sand dunes bordered by the timeless palms,  
Created a civilization lost to us,  
And unobserved they reentered the sea's womb,  
And became the spoken word dolphins  
That fetched sunlight for no masters,  
Far above where the pirates lay  
Blurred in drink and death,  
And so, laying down the catalogue,  
I could only sigh, as that was  
One more solicitation I could not answer.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unbearable Folklores

From each little seed  
A candle tucks in  
To the wishbones of its  
Graveyards  
Even while the firehouses  
Are yammering for a  
Paradise of fireworks,  
As civilizations loom through  
The forests;  
Epochs of miscarriages  
Searching for  
The fire escapes of  
Wombs  
Leaping like senseless  
Equipages-  
Towards another  
Fieldtrip to the breathless  
Darkness gathering for the unbearable folklores  
Of a pestilent orchard.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unbeknownst Joy

In the middle of the dead-end street,  
The flower opens its heart to a unicorn.  
All of the latch-key children  
Are across the canal,  
Their parents off selling whatever it  
Is they have to sell,  
But it is there—the truth or  
The beautiful lie.  
In the night it will turn into a fireball.  
The kittens and the lizards will  
Watch.  
Well-fed, the moon will jump,  
Lactating over the houses  
That contain only so many cribs—  
From them, the babies are watching  
With their hearts,  
Their eyes closed—  
Not one word will cross their minds—  
Theirs is the unbeknownst joy:  
That they will live almost forever  
And behold so many airplanes  
Leaping over the baseball games of  
The loves they had yet to feel.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Unbusied Intersections

Open wounds lying on their sides,  
Paper airplanes wilting in the garden,  
Beside the carport and beneath the roses:  
And all day metamorphosis  
As her tears proceeded to show for windows:  
And mother and daughter remained in  
Their afternoon's pieta,  
Watching television,  
Doing one another's hair, beneath the mountains  
And the approaching moon—  
In a little village of ten thousand souls,  
Whilst around their borders,  
Cyotes and caribu,  
And mountain lions played a tin foil game  
Of dreams that no man could see,  
Scorpions bought their games underneath  
Of the red stones and arrowheads  
Until dusk—  
And then, another sort of pleasure,  
Crepescule, crept across the mailboxes  
And the road,  
And made its amber love amidst the pine trees  
Giving deep kisses to the unbusied intersections  
Of her limbs.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Uncertainty Of Another's View

If I die tomorrow, who will collect my fire insurance:  
Some poet on fire island who has never lived past his thirties,  
But I'd rather give it all to you,  
Alma- you who said to me today that she didn't want to hurt me:  
But I want love,  
Alma: I want love, like a fire blazes for oxygen: give me love,  
And forgive me for using your name another name in the  
Night entrained to the loneliness of my hallucinations,  
While the spikenard grows like lutes in another virgin's grotto,  
While all of the houses are no longer home,  
While the canals have segregated and taken over all of high school:  
While your body is as fine as any poem:  
While your body is as wicked and jubilant as any sea that as ever kissed  
The belly of any faithful dove and tried to persuade it otherwise,  
While I still have all of my loves in my estranged heart,  
While you still wear your three rings around your fingers:  
My white hear shares the digits of your enamoration, just as I have shared  
Tongues with you,  
While your children look up into your eyes, who are just as soft as all of  
The windows of airplanes passing over the sleepest of seas,  
And the sweetest of nursery rhymes;  
And passing into the uncertainty of another's view.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Uncounted Sea

Perfect as a pride of lions and as homeless,  
As regal as London,  
And as unknown: I cannot get a teaching job, because  
I stutter,  
Because I am as homeless and as woebegone  
As the most washed out butterfly, Alma:  
And the lions moan as red throated as thrown out  
Pomegranates in the habitats:  
And I guess you know me less than I know you,  
But I am still right here;  
And I want the chance to know you, and to teach your children,  
To hold your throat and make love to you as your clothes  
Dries outside,  
As if in the south of Spain,  
While your young children grow outside as if in the playgrounds  
Of kindergarten who are already counting their times,  
As the muses muse like unused genies in their bottles in the  
Linoleum oasis of the uncounted deserts  
Whose mirages haunt me still like school girls counting their  
Blessings while never holding on to their grandmothers outside  
Of the graveyards,  
And going downtown underneath the airplanes; and what about this,  
And what about this, Alma, if I am certain that you were  
Always, always, meant for me:  
And this is no witchcraft, and only the uncounted truth of the  
Uncounted sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Undecipherable Lullaby

Bountiful apertures of life  
Show off nothing but the  
Spittooned forklift-  
I wanted her for a kind of wife,  
But she left me off at the side of Death,  
The hermaphrodite turning tricks,  
I don't know what kind  
Except that they are all and many-  
The Universe is in Red Shift,  
As various members of the family  
Are being turned away and buried  
Like meat in a pie a long time baking:  
Birds are in the sky,  
Black ones circling and the man  
In the center, the oldest one  
Who is wearing my father's jawbone  
Left the used car dealership at doom  
And walked the earth repeating  
His sales pitches to the unearthed stones-  
They have more money now,  
The speechless kind who never wither.  
Without a religion,  
Their home is where they lie  
And their job is to spend eternity  
Wondering upon muddy banks and  
Flaxen prairies, firm in their age-old truancies  
The lips of wind singing to them  
The undecipherable lullaby.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Undefeatable Sky

Recorded in the shadows of any habitat- trying to  
Remember the superstitions of  
Any high school-  
And then all day long, a song that blisters  
Without any wonder,  
While they haven't been getting along together  
Anyway- for very long:  
As the cold weather fronts blister  
Over the halfhearted daycares and any other  
Amusements of the tenements of  
The trailer parks- and then it doesn't have to listen  
To any other song for a long while,  
Anyways:  
There is but this- while the sugarcane burns,  
And the canoes float masterless-  
This is what I told you, forever through the daydreams:  
And this was all but the final reason before  
The cicadas came out and danced in the armpits  
Of the cypress,  
Singing songs of metamorphosis to lose their skins:  
This was just their song in parenthesis-  
This is just how they've been excluding themselves,  
Waiting for the illusive numbers of the  
Pandhandlers to survive in spite of themselves  
Struggling through the whatever elements of the  
Bright sunshine:  
This is what was left at the summit minus all of  
The tourism:  
This was just the pinkest round in the chambers  
They sold to themselves while their skeletons were  
Yet grinning while the dragons flew perpetually in  
The undefeatable sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Undeniable Champion

When our America is down,  
Pissing blood in the bushes, and looking  
At the asymmetrical pearls of teeth,  
Like serpents eggs in the grass....

Ribs bruised and bluish from the new  
Pugilist, in the heavyweight fight of  
Emerging super-power....,  
Wanting to keep his title,  
But knowing just how then  
It was all but over;

Trying to recount which round  
He had lost his butterfly;  
when his lung was punctured,  
Filled with fluid

For his sword and shield  
And fighter jets have been blown up,  
And thrown into the deepest parts of the swimming pool;

What will the rest of the world have to say then?  
As the novel king arises, grinning the new machinery-  
The savage red twists of the eastern factories:  
The completed censorships,  
The origami war machine marching like an atomic glee club,

The blitzkrieging waves of the neo luftwaffe,  
And the unending sirens of European mayhem;  
How will the old queen cry out to her disinherited knight then:  
The veteran contender, whose colors faded but never bent,

And will he be able to stand one last time,  
Before the arising monsters of the final dénouement;  
Will he be able to stem the tide of the utter Ragnarok,  
Or be devoured by the conclusive assault,  
Condemned to a cenotaph buried by the sand;

The Statue of Liberty's flame a roost for gulls.

Certainly,  
He will rise at the occasion  
And fight with all the colors of men he knows  
Within him, until his legs are knocked from beneath him,  
Or he wins the victory of an undeniable champion.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Undeniable Textbooks

In powers of unison they die,  
The hummingbirds pullulating slowing over and  
Underneath the inappropriate mountain,  
While everyone else has some gold to sell;  
And they have been selling it from  
Different countries;  
In the middle of the hallucinations of their deserts,  
From the chains of the gold coast,  
As from far away,  
While their dogs have finally risen up from their  
Bones and are hunting  
And demystified from their fissures I wonder if they  
Will ever go away; but they go away and this way they  
Come,  
Laughing through whichever pantomimes of daylight  
By whichever way they came;  
While stewardesses of airplanes grew jealous, as my heart  
Was finally lackadaisical and finally finished  
With skipping stones or picking the limbs off of flowers,  
Just as the trailers finally finished and settled into  
Their parks,  
As my exhausted paramours of cousins finally fell sated  
In the uneasy if defeated and called whichever way it was  
The undeniable textbooks of its heretofore irrefutable home.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Undertow

My Mexican students are my favorite Students  
I am going to buy a cake for Hermilo's birthday  
Next Wednesday  
But I can't love you anymore  
Especially with the wind blowing this way  
I can no longer hold the birthday candles for all of  
Your wishes so stillly beneath the overpasses whilst I wait  
For you  
And wait for you, while you are sleeping at home with  
Him, restive in his brown tenements  
Perfumed in his amens that even the gods don't listen to  
Anymore, as my words spill out  
A cornucopia of over sweetened row beneath  
The overpasses, as the angels of our fanfares disappear  
Beneath the brightness of the undertow

Robert Rorabeck

# The Undiminished Heavens

They keep the rates of the sun.  
Even though they've been lamenting, casting dimes  
To the bums:  
Bums like terrapin beside the concrete rivers,  
As the horseshoes  
Get lucky underneath the breakfast of  
An over easy heavens-  
And then I saw you like a fox underneath a mobile  
Of your brown skin,  
Even though the never game a d\$mn-  
As the hurricanes echoed like airplanes  
Avoiding all of the ballrooms of their high school proms,  
As I wrote more and more letters  
Misconceived towards you, as the waves licked forever  
The ingenious and misconceived skeletons  
Of my love,  
As you played baseball in a field that never existed-  
And all of existence became contorted,  
But existed beneath the wheat of the heavens,  
Giving all of us a little more time  
To make love for real-  
As the busses courted the terrapin in the cul-de-sacs of  
Housewives,  
As the fireworks we spent, jubilantly, tried to feel up  
All of the undiminished heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unending Shore Of Your Fathomless Sea

Fabricate my fashions and surcease:

If you are building your fort stop and linger down below

At the beautiful riding bicycle of buffalo:

And know that death shall come for all men,

Until her love wakens you again, and all the popular members

Of our sea shine like the photosynthesis of deep sea

Brine;

And I have entered my name in the records for the thieves

That shall never survive,

While the dragons were raising all hell and calling the virgins home

On the triangles of the dinner bells;

And it is lonely at night to sleep without you, Alma;

And it is dangerous, but it is what the angels wanted, and it is

What I decided to be-

For I sleep alone at night in the unending shore of your fathomless sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Uneven Symmetries Of Her Body's Bloom

Oh- the gunman slips and bights his lips  
And gets drunk at the traveling show:  
I know that there he becomes awake, bitten by the snake  
And the lightning throws the game:  
I know- the candles in the wake, the birthdays in the cake,  
And the footprints or the hoof prints in the snow:  
It goes unrecorded until death, I know- it spills into the creek:  
It cuts my mother's cheek, and it goes unanswered  
Through the day- through the school yards, and the fresh cut  
Yards, unanswering: it is all I can do to shame myself,  
To count my wealth, to sleep alone my flesh on bone:  
My flesh on bone in an empty house without a spouse  
With the roof on top and on top of that a moon:  
I'll sell Christmas trees: I'll sell Christmas trees and await for  
The herons and the loons:  
Their special chests of bright unrests slipping through the  
Cul de Sacs and brandishing their spry young sprigs  
Up against the troughs of pigs; and up against the fornicated  
Moons: and passengers there will sit and stare as  
They look straight over the naked shoulders of her dressing room:  
To compare the wild blunders spilled across the feral wonders  
In the uneven symmetries of her body's blooms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unexpected Notes Of Your Russet Shore

You feel so close to me; it is unreal,  
Like a kite in my bed, like the sea on the shore,  
As the airplanes full of steamy stewardesses reverberate;  
It almost feels as if you could come knocking,  
At any second of this night;  
In fact, with your very knuckled flesh, you could pull off  
All of these perforated sheets,  
And reveal the god awful sun over my little house and its  
Thirsty landscaping:  
You could put an absolute amusement all over me;  
And I could sing, and I could rhyme, and I could dance for you  
All across the floor:  
Alma: it was what I was made to be doing for,  
And for lifting heavy things to which to be carrying to you,  
Or selling bouquets of fireworks in the rich  
Deserts of New Mexico, while even then closing my eyes  
And dreaming of you like a spindle of silver-brownness going off  
Over the sea,  
And catching all of that delight, and holding its breath, and becoming  
Titillated over the candle, who so suddenly dances over the immensity  
That propositions itself by our daylight,  
Deluding itself drunkenly along the unexpected notes of your  
Russet shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unforsaken Grounds

Put in me this cold cloud—  
Like a glass of alcohol passed from housewife  
To housewife—  
Until it finally finds the one she loves while  
She is still warmly hibernating above  
The ground—  
And Christmas gives new toys for her—  
And places where there are still rivers  
Slipping around the  
Mounds—  
And daylight and moon light and  
Cathedrals—  
Enveloped like the archaeology of the jublations  
That once were forever  
A zoetrope dancing forever above  
The unforsaken grounds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unfortunate Canal

Tiniest of beauties I will get to see going back to school  
Tomorrow—  
Blue gills in the canal—I never thought of her—  
Beautiful mirage,  
Like a kite stuck up in the tree—as the children play around  
And around contracting diseases of their merriment—  
How long will they have to slumber:  
How long will her lips taste the water fountain between classes—  
Make believe legs stumbling through the halls—  
I think she should be a stewardess- as diminutive as a fairy  
Taking a ride on a tight-nosed bottle rocket across the unfortunate canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unfortunate Offspring

Pretty for almost a day  
In his junior year after he'd come  
Back from running away northwards  
With delicate bruises on his wrists  
From handcuffs,  
During a fire-drill:  
She loved him almost the entire time....

Then he was published at twenty-five,  
Obscurely- no one knew,  
Scarred, he loved her and patrolled  
Her neighborhood,  
Exhaling the temporary immortality  
His words brought him.

Too soon he laid it down  
To see what she was holding;  
It took him almost an hour to  
Test at 155,  
But he lived with another  
Woman's room

Then the quiet things are expressed  
In drunken parks as midnight wanes:  
His love was yet unpolluted and deep,  
But the way to it  
Was overgrown and lost,  
So he meandered

Decapitated and mute,  
With only his wrists to judge the feeling,  
In the morning she went to work  
Just as unknowing  
His words,  
Like the unfortunate offspring would  
Fade away before him.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Uninhabitable Fantasies

Disillusions start out in  
A bedroom drinking rum—  
In a little yellow house made out of one brick  
Of the sun—  
The illusion of my greatness once  
Spoke of itself to the empty mirrors of  
An emptier fun house—  
After all of the muses found that they could  
Roller skate up to the sky,  
And secured their delusions without melting away:  
They made it so far as almost to evaporate,  
And then young upon the pilots that they  
Found for themselves  
By their lapels—  
And they never had to come down again,  
If they had, they would have landed in the center of  
My Mandela of sad catastrophe,  
And they would have seen the zoetrope of  
Minnows I'd painted with my empathizing tears—  
And you would see, waking up in the  
Morning—the metamorphosis if little things  
That had learned how to skip up into the greatest  
Of the uninhabitable fantasies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Uninterrupted Tides

I still want to meet you under the overpass,  
In the weedy shade of a homeless dream-  
Pass you my bottle and my eyes,  
The shyness tugging my lips in a reticent smile:  
Meet you where we can hear the sea beating together,  
Hear each chorus line of pounding saltwater  
Even with the honking traffic conducted overhead,  
To share that recognition of the moving east  
With your salient eyes, the brown liquors  
I'll swim those cherubic cheeks I see cropped in  
Photos of the obscure cyberspace you haunt me;  
Touch your female hands, entwine them with my  
Masculine fingers, the sneak thieves of this inkless smithy:  
In the humid blouse sweating in her peninsulas,  
Recognize you as inebriated proof that my  
Ethereal bouquets have done their job: Just one  
Kiss is worth it, and I will buy you anything from the  
Flee market open to us beneath I-95, and the manila  
Reclamation plant, if that's what it is:  
To smudge your mauve lipsticks against my neck,  
Like when you were a waitress and this was bohemian France  
Do you know what I'm talking about? To see you in  
Display with the expensive palm trees bowed like tasseled phalluses,  
To watch you walking toward me like a skipping reel  
From the other side of the fence,  
To have you tug me gently as if your body was a kite  
And your desire the wind crawling down from its bed of sun:  
I am right to want this from you, and to continue calling  
You in the only way I know how, because I want  
To be pressed up against you under the busy overpass  
In Lake Worth, FL., where they still sell glass hurricanes  
Shattered like hollow-boned angels and hummingbirds  
Against the sea wall, and the grottos where Mary sleeps;  
The justice of the peace, let me kiss you in freeze frame without a shadow,  
Let the sun melt us together like candles on the crown of  
A god king, like two stones found smoothed together  
By the purpose in the uninterrupted tides.



# The Unlucky Poem

Tricks of other planets stain her lips.  
Even though she isn't far away enough not  
To hear the emptiness that I am not crying-  
There are no echoes,  
But clarifying recalcitrance,  
And the astronauts have come to see her with  
Bright auburn eyes and dimpled chins;  
Discovering they can breathe deep-in her  
Perfumes, they have taken off their helmets and  
Shaken their heads:  
High school football stars, monkey chested  
Valedictorians;  
Brushing her hair they think up adds to trim her  
Tree,  
And I am up there on the grade of roof  
Melting like an ice-berg who hasn't done in enough  
Ships before the unresigning summertime,  
A little glass warming my empty hand;

And you are in your dress twirling with just the  
First glimmers of grandmotherhood in your eyes,  
And all around us the city is busy going out to dinner,  
Turning to meet each others' broadsides,  
Driving your cousins to the movies, and looking  
Softly fine. I can lay my head above that banister  
Like a saint nobody has the energy to believe in, while  
The trains move the business-class hobos out to sea, the waves  
Coming in to greet them brush in time-  
I'd said before that I love you or her;  
A relative, a sister obsessed with rockets, but that was just  
The sobering silliness of the pass, because you are all  
For him, like a music box revolving beside the window,  
Glass still greatly bubbling, trying to make it home on time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unobtainable Heavens

If you are alone and  
I cannot hear you—will you destroy my sandcastle  
Forever while stepping outside—  
Another step misconstrued across a nameless park  
To the earshot and corn husks of  
Alligators:  
Lets make a goddess for their love: goddess of corn  
And masks,  
As the school day grows longer and longer  
And keeps on counting the hours  
Until it can be released: prisoner in the shadows—  
In the hedgerows of the trailer parks—  
In the hibiscus at the wild edge of Disney World -  
And so much thunder and lightning  
And words for little boys to get excited and masturbate—  
And then the shadows revealed themselves:  
Donning themselves naked and marking—  
Each holding a dozen roses over the graveyards—  
Like masks of superheroes taken of—  
Like the nude pinups in the middle of the day of  
Shopping malls—  
All of the voluptuous angels sing and then cannot  
Remember the last words that were leapt out  
In a desperate attempt to capture the  
Unobtainable heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unobtainable Travels

As alcoholic as your mother, planes flying overhead—  
I will be going back to Shanghai to see you, my wife—  
In June—  
Another despotic summer, but the first time in memory  
I don't have to sell beautiful fireworks underneath billboards  
As the cars of America drive by—  
Waves of a family's purpose—and I am done with whatever  
Adulteries I had, but not with this liquor:  
Just a little glass, as the sun tips over the earth—  
And she spins—spins, a reasonless goddess until the night  
With her many constellations  
Representing the unobtainable travels of who we are  
Meant to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unopened Gas-Station Of My Homeless Appalachia

Chicken-wire smothers my  
Artichoke heart,  
She adores her young, athletic organs-  
I sleep alone in the park-  
A gypsy of fiberglass and  
Stucco satellites-,  
She hangs breathless from the nape  
Of sweet young constellations  
Perfumed of antiquarian nard,  
Like reclining ingénues;  
Stormy and drenched,  
Up all hours at the unopened gas-station  
Of my homeless Appalachia;  
She breastfeeds in the restaurants and  
The kitchens across the fertile divide, while  
The pull strings and wires of my  
Marionettes go unabused-  
I sign the check and tip my  
Hat,  
Grinning madly at the table in the shrinking  
House- With no one to hold my hand,  
And carry the other half of the bill  
Here at the dinner parties of old news.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unpublished Continent

I'm so ugly:

For instance, I want to join the army  
To leave my dog behind in Arizona,  
To crush the skulls of Iraqi children  
To bleed into the red sea, to prove to  
My parents I am something,

I can feel it in my gut,  
The words which recreate the feeling  
Of a repeating sun exploding the first  
Birth inside me, I have hands which  
Cause prints to forever lay on the  
Carved stone of grave markers,

Everyone has a father, who  
Everyone forgets the name of,  
But they always remember their  
Business and the gross product of  
The year- how people come in,  
Growing the fine plants of the sunlight  
Which bloom best at the end of the year,

Like fashionable coats or the first  
Rainbows to cross the street of your eyes

They take photos of their eyes shiny  
Brightly, always like first born neons  
Under our tents

You can see them now and always,  
Poking out of store windows like newly  
Born words that wilt after a month because  
They have no roots.

So, like I said,  
I have a perpetual tooth ache,  
And a binge to die- I fornicate over the gun  
(I'm a good American with a steady brain)  
Placed to the temple, I have a place to go-



Far, far away- over the sea they will lay me,  
They will lay me

As I graffiti words on the computer,  
The nameless man makes love to my ex-lover.  
As her face lingers over a fading heart, the  
Beating in me still trying to escape into another  
Century, another heart that is loud and obviously  
Beautiful with many people who love him,

But alone, all alone,  
I must beat on, desperate and far away  
From you,  
Know I must have you and the words  
Which linger,  
The bad skin and the eyes on it:

I must go on,

For a little longer,

I must go on

As my arm separates  
As my teeth and eyes take off  
As my heart flutters away,

I must go on,  
Thinking of you naked in the strange  
Ponds in the Urban Heart,

I linger,  
As the grass grows up to God's  
Neck,  
Untrimmed,

I continue  
(toward the unpublished continent  
Of the regional band of the regional city  
With good tits that perk up when two  
\$20s are rubbed together!)



# The Unreconciled Graves

Lighthouses of transom monoliths,  
I just want to undo her bra  
And walk down this way through her easy mazes  
Where the salt water licks into finer things  
Are resolved  
And to the end, like into a holiday,  
Where, equally forgiven, there is nothing left to prove;  
And the skylight is a ghetto over against the old  
Queue;  
And Ferris Wheel waking up and yawning like a swan  
Diademed in pubescent light,  
Who kisses against the neck of your sky just  
As gently as a kite who really does want to get away,  
Returning to the ranges of your bosom where it slips into the  
Wet branches that spindle across the unreconciled graves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unrequited Darkness Of My Night

Pull off this like the string of a kite:  
It is free; it hooks over the old factory,  
And into the weeded lots of  
Rabbits and endives- and all the way over my scars;  
Like a marionette cut loose of its model  
School yard and made to run away,  
To turn lackadaisical near the shore side,  
To lose all of its riches to cats and foxes  
Who speak better to it- to never know the house of  
Its maker again, the hands of its scrawl- like a letter  
In a bottle castaway in the waves,  
Curling up to the shins of a dismissive lover, who never bends  
To ask what is this:  
Already infatuated with the afterlife of her journeys,  
She will recede halfheartedly and yet again into her green  
Amphitheatres where her paper hearted kings  
Will eat their sack lunches across the trapdoors of the floorboards  
That hide the truer braveries from her sight:  
Because she only falls in love with what she sees: she goes  
To work and comes home early, and thus never believes  
In the simulacrums of my factories burning their great and openhearted  
Institutions through the unrequited darkness of my night.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unschooled Moonlight

Ripples of empty bottles  
Crenellate across the forgotten tracks  
Where the elk have shed their  
Crowns- beginning to think of death  
As a friend across the caesuras  
Of the mountain,  
With absolutely no reason to believe  
In the lighthouse that shines its  
Beacon forever relentlessly across  
The enlightened faces of  
The proceeding valley-as the preacher  
Gives sermons to the pew of his identity-  
The rest is left to misgivings,  
As the rains encounter the graveyards,  
And the latchkeys run away once again  
To the cerulean playgrounds  
Stealing forever in the unschooled moonlight.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unspeakable Rituals Of The Game

These egos are playing musical chairs  
On a blue marble cloudy with men:  
We are trying to pronounce our children  
Into the oasis in the obliterating void:  
Listen, Oh Lord!  
For we have created talking butterflies,  
With wings which can weather  
The solar pestilence, and humid wombs  
Where omnipotent twins wait to be discovered:  
This is the aftermath of our folly:  
The clattering alienation of familiar suicide,  
Where the strange daughters walk out  
Beneath the xenophobic moon,  
And there behold the unobtainable knowledge  
Of the celestial spheres,  
Each one further away and more beautiful:  
Then to grow mute and opaque,  
And to fear the joy of the crowded sun,  
The leaping professors in educated tweed,  
The dalliances in the gardens of books  
And words put down in persuasive analogies:  
The scarred men, burned by the truth,  
Fall away from the mobiles of heavenly bodies,  
Lose their positions of names in deep mauve swamps:  
Pushing against the tombs, they swim out  
And kiss the hybrids, the reptilian sirens,  
The startling aunts who cradle their forgotten skulls  
Like speechless infants, as the slow waters  
Running down from their jaw's cenotaphs,  
Refills the unspeakable rituals of the game.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Untravable Hills

I have the skills  
To pay the  
Bills—  
I can travel across  
The untravable  
Hills—  
Up town,  
Down town  
No matter what's  
Real—  
I'll dance with the  
Goldfish atop the  
Windowsill-

Robert Rorabeck

# The Untruthful Promises Of An Evil Dove

Impossible leopard laying upon a  
Suburban lawn I used to visit midway between  
School- the sun a torch passing over  
The airplanes- my heart beating like a paper  
Paperweight:  
There she goes, and there goes me:  
Flying, flying, flying into things that are dust-  
Scars and candy apples left in the trash,  
Words spoken by spectators who have paid  
Very little to see the dwarves who are  
Always diminishing, and who used to be  
Giants: cloudy, high and beautiful things:  
But they saw how you cheated on them with  
All of your love,  
And how you always had to leave them to  
Go home to him,  
And you made them diminish until they kept  
Their own hidden cities in each leaping  
Cleft of their captive waves,  
As you flew further and further away from  
Them like the untruthful promises of an evil dove.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Unutterably Green Classes

Trod on unto the racetracks of death,  
Having kissed her lips for a spell and then having to leave her  
To disappear underneath the open wings of  
Commercial airplanes:  
Everything that has to be said, spoken so openly and wining until  
It is sold:  
The hitchhikers of fieldtrips molding between the grasses,  
When I just want to sleep beneath her in between classes,  
To smell the fumes she released like an engine in careless despair,  
Or to realize how her senses languish there like a film of  
Sunlight over the grasses  
That the grasshoppers dip their antennae and heads into, worshipping  
Her in the unutterably green classes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unwanted Prayers

It doesn't have to end this way,  
But it is all that I have to give: this is my  
Profession underneath the homeless overpass  
After midnight, and before  
The Ferris Wheel of flea markets begins:  
This is my song to the moonlight and to the  
Pigeons, whilst the ice-cream trucks  
Are mouth less,  
And you are home with your children in your  
Brown reservoir: you seem so far away from me now,  
While I have spent the best of my last dimes  
Trying to keep time with you  
Until I got sick and had enough, or the weather  
Came in baying its sick proofs,  
And the wheels returned to houses, as the heavens returned  
To the throats all of the unwanted prayers which  
Had inevitably been given up into them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Unwholesomely Sated

Outside, in that yard that turns blue and green  
Dressed in the hours of the lighthouse: there, will you let  
Your dreams  
Run, losing hands with your spouse, as all day long the  
Bodies are on the move:  
Fingers and lips you know: touching or hooking on to friends,  
Rising up cathedrals from the  
Palm trees and emeralds grown obese off the cenotaphs of  
Conquistadors;  
And in the back of doors, a full garden: lizards and bromeliads,  
And the rabbits sleeping with  
The dogs,  
Or slowly bled- exhausted from making their saturnine rings  
Around a little world,  
Like a thanksgiving feast set on a table for buzzards  
Caracoling the freshly mowed fields, so enamored with their  
Beliefs, they are even still waiting for the unwholesomely  
Sated to give in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Upcoming Bend

I like the bets your beauty has placed with  
Immortality,  
Thinking that it should win  
Backed up like a knife thrower against the  
Virgin spring  
Where the school bus carried all of the flowers  
To their graves;  
You make all of my stubble and scars blonde,  
And after this rented light is gone,  
And morning comes I wish to remember you  
With the kind feelings the  
Best of the lions give to their trainers; and even  
If you have found some better man which no  
Light can kill,  
I would like to have felt as if I had found a friend,  
And to be trusted enough to be left alone with your  
Daughter while you go out with your hombres,  
And read to her the stories which should  
Help her escape from being singed as she leaps through  
The hoops of fire awaiting her around the upcoming bend.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Upside And The Downside Of Heaven

Each line never mentioned in the classroom  
Is the one heaven gives a marionette to become real:  
A book discovered in the gutter instead of  
The library—  
A bottle rocket that takes off in the backyard and then  
Goes down a hole to make love  
To a snake or an amphibian—  
When, across the street,  
Inside junked cars underneath the planes of talking  
Trees,  
The newsboys of shadows are selling pornography  
To the latchkeys and the truants—  
And the silver worlds slip away back and forth  
Perpetually—  
The zoetrope of another hypnotist's perfection,  
And a few more words thrown out of the gutters of  
The mind by the spiders of the fingers—  
That reach for the keyboard and then the booze—  
While the angels cry like little girls and then like  
Wolves in the upside and the downside of  
Heaven—  
And the castles sleep underneath the clouds  
With their kings and queens inside of them.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Useless Aphorisms Of Scars And Seashells

This is what I want you to do for me,  
In the land of the blue cabinets where the  
Egrets are nesting,  
Combing her hair along her bare shoulders  
Far down in the syrupy shadows from where  
The cars are driving, humming in families,  
seeming to leap for miles  
Where the sun is shining.  
I want you to lock the door, and make sure  
To scatter my ashes across the back of the  
Mountain, should I not be home anymore,  
Should I fall asleep and not remember how her  
Eyes skated the trim of nimbus  
Reflecting her semiprecious dreams,  
Like daylight on goldfish or serpent's scales  
Or loose change in wishing wells;  
Or how the young bicycles turned to and from classes  
And jingled down hanging lanes of unmolested tobacco,  
How her flesh displayed for happy surgeons  
As she served them at the café;  
Should I not come home anymore, and if the  
Dogs get too hungry, if it doesn't rain for an  
Uncertain number of days. Don't cry over the words  
I have spilled,  
The useless aphorisms of scars and seashells,  
but get sick on cheap liquor and  
Watch the daytime operas, the little clefts turn red  
Or golden, the clean gifts on shelves  
For little children where the wilderness comes through between  
The commercials,  
Where the trees are spangled. I don't want for you to weep,  
Or even to remember who I was,  
But to lock the door and turn away, clutching her hands  
Together, wondering what there is to eat,  
While the innocent bicycles hustle through the tinseling mangroves,  
And scatter my ashes upon the shoulder blades  
Of that mountain, the woman who loved more,  
Or just go to sleep.



# The Usual Flight Paths

I needed to see you yesterday- just as the airplanes need their  
Stewardesses to survive,  
Without the sunlight looking up through the housewives windows,  
Who else will be left to believe:  
That the singular fox is sucking the tits of the grapes again,  
Like a truant tucked into the student parking lot during  
Midterms,  
His latchkey fingerprints being burned with rum and supplanted  
Time,  
Like a tent in the middle of war on the borders between us and  
Mexico-  
And all of the gold lost in the first softly frightened throats of  
The cannibalistic jungle:  
And the tourists going down there, so far away from what made  
Them to believe,  
Just to get a glimpse at the first luck of the beauty that lies within  
Yourself,  
Like the often seen jewelry bobbling in an over eager wishing well:  
And this is you, Alma: and this is how my words find you,  
Like the lighter than air cadavers whistling from my throat:  
The hollowed bones of flutes that stem from my fluttering wrists  
Who picnic underneath the meadows of the usual flight paths,  
And stymie you overeagerly there and kiss you there.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Vaginas Of Remote Control Boats

Cenotaphs growing underneath the monuments of a  
Mailbox:  
You are her lying with the perennials, and waiting  
For the housewives:  
And you rent glorious houses here yourselves to which  
You have to sell your bodies to everyday,  
As the boys come into you like grasshoppers and butterflies  
Wanting to make love:  
And they crowd your shoulders and like your skin  
With the webs of their spit  
As their windows grow foggy until they are relieved:  
And you elevate yourself like the dew melting off  
The brown shoulder blades of a baseball diamond:  
Like hot air balloons carrying tourists  
Up through the power lines to look down the bottlenecks  
Of churches: here is where your throat  
Burns and all of its kisses burn with the fires of a  
Daycare which fled away into a pet cemetery filled with  
Plastic monuments and the wax lions and tigers  
Which slipped warmly into your hands from  
The vending machines of another zoo: like new born  
Babies from the vaginas of remote control boats  
That you were still too young to make love to.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Valentine Of A Firework

As they dimmed over high school,  
And the baseball diamond,  
And the inevitable wives went home to  
Their inevitable husbands:  
From the malls as from the estuaries-  
I thought of the romance  
In the valentine of a firework: very cheap  
Romance bought in packs  
Like cigarettes- for an amusing moment-  
To scare the children,  
And annoy the neighborhood- and yet to  
Come from so very far away-  
And to be so profound in their beautiful  
Daredevilry,  
But too end up not really there- to last for  
The moment of a lover's holiday-  
A honeymoon of overpriced nonsense-  
And that is all:  
Not even an echo, not even a sad knock on  
A sad door.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Valentines That Will Not Close

Joviality in the display of open-hearted  
Race horses,  
I still go out underneath the moon  
Where all of the palm trees  
Lay planted—  
And the night gets so soft and smooth:  
I obtain no jealousy—  
My muses who are already married  
Make eye contact with my cousins—  
The poisons become so soft that  
They are almost unheard off—  
And death is unhurried—  
The beautiful menagerie of gossiping  
Poisons takes his time—  
Now he is caressing his skeleton to  
The playgrounds of the beach—  
It is his second or third lover,  
Even before school is out-  
And the moon languishes over  
The bottle rockets of our truancies  
Where I once got drunk and threw  
Up in the wishing wells of a  
Vanishing mall—  
Where my reflection had so much  
Acne that I thought that it couldn't  
Possibly be me—  
But now another daylight is dissolved,  
And the girls I once loved  
Have bedded down with their cars,  
Underneath the mountains and  
Underneath the moon—  
Very soon they will have their own  
Children, but for now there is nothing  
More that can be spoken of—  
Just the valleys beside the roadways,  
The valentines that will not close until  
What they have to sell have all but vanished.



# The Valley And Every Time

Cold is the faith of my stream; it wakes up early morning  
And bleeds:  
It goes straight past the tundra of your permanent schoolyards;  
It wets its lips in the chalk of your urchins and spikenards;  
And it goes weeping still, past cold  
Grandmothers dressed in their cold hills,  
Past the rattlesnakes curling in bundles like copper wires stolen  
In the middle of lightning fires;  
And you keep up your mysterious household, and you even have  
The mind to wipe the cheek of your early morning husband,  
But I don't mind: the very fact that he has picked you off the vine,  
Because I have looked at you across the schoolyard and  
Down in the throat of the kerosene mine,  
And I have traveled up the deadly cliffs to find you, and to have  
You committed as my secret bride; and I am doing this fine,  
Knowing that inevitably you will come into blossom  
And then be over spilling in your voluptuousness and  
Down the throat of my vulpine columbine, who has sat here  
And waited for you deep in the nursery and at your bus stop,  
With eyes so green as to know exactly when to pluck your vintage  
Once again like the egg shells of its lingerie stolen from the shoulders  
Of its curling vines, before the collegiate baseball games down in  
The valley and every time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Valley Of Windmills

Crawling to the forefront of another misery of  
Guatemala—I drink my rum,  
I say my lines—and I await for another day to splay me open  
To the eyes and senses of fishermen—  
Or, if I suppose, the sunlight cannot keep you here  
From another catastrophe,  
Like stolen bicycles sleep walking back to their masters—  
Cannot keep you from his love,  
Or from the marionettes of his children he  
Conceived inside of you—then the cave is stolen,  
But in its zoetrope still dances—  
Laughing under the moonlight for the wolves to come  
Into its movie theatre, or for the planes flying above  
It to look down,  
Causing another catastrophe, awakening—  
The moonlight over a valley of windmills—cousins to  
The caesuras—they spring around them,  
Never bothering to wonder what is laughing at the  
Same time with the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vanished Sunlight Of The Stream

There is nothing to it- the minnows are  
Shut up and whisperless in the vanished sunlight  
Of the stream,  
The words for her are curled up or boxed  
Up like legionnaires and maps in the attic-  
For her one brown man has returned to her,  
She has brought him down again,  
And they exchange their little fires in their bed,  
While the same damned world seems to wake up  
For the both of us- Now the streets are  
Echoing differently, as the same raindrops from  
Different thundershowers roll down her  
Shoulderblades- and she works in the market,  
The airplanes touching down blessing over her-  
But the tadpoles no longer metamorphosis in  
The slow shadows,  
Even as her children come home every day  
From school to her, growing strangely  
Even as she remains the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vanishing Children

All over the yard, I've placed my  
Guns in the snow:  
My mother is drying the laundry in the clustering  
Aloe,  
And Alma is somewhere close to here,  
Gossiping to conquistadors while the  
Airplanes fly so low to listen;  
And the television breaks the news, and the  
Kidnappers don't look so bad:  
So soon it will be Christmas, which makes all of  
The vanishing children very, very glad.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Vanishing Highway

As fires eventually die over the once  
Laughing sinks of your own lips,  
And the ships proceed over the banished  
Senses of  
The lighthouse, I strike out again,  
As the serpent peels its own skin over  
The knees of the eucalyptus-  
And the vanished papers are read to the  
Vanished pilots,  
And it feels okay that the blindest sorority  
Is swimming in the perfumes  
Of the senseless heavens- and you sell your  
Own ablutions underneath the mountains,  
Where your every own daughter grows  
Upright and stalwart like a fire Marshall  
Who will not approve me  
As I continue to try pretend to try and sell  
My very own soul outright and for  
Next to nothing in the easement of the  
Vanishing highway.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vanishing Sea

I wait for the airplanes of the stewardess who has  
Abandoned me:  
When will they be coming down, spilling like the water falls  
Over the emollitions of my birthday:  
Heavenly angels,  
Soon they will be picking me up and carrying me,  
And spilling my bouquets everywhere  
While the tall guys laugh  
And my parents abandoned me:  
But they will carry me into the aerie of my cathedral—  
Where I will spark and pinwheel for them, '  
As if laughing for the professors in my high school—  
And she cries down from the orchards with  
Nose bleeds—  
Shoulders and breasts of chicken pox cured by my innocuous  
Amens—  
Will she see me tomorrow, running into her on a bicycle:  
How will she expect this to end—  
And the sun carries upward its many promises,  
Emollitions of knighthood and remembered Christmases:  
This is not how it was supposed to end,  
But it does—my dog howling in his dreams,  
Remembering a Christmas that always dies—  
That comes into her tents  
And kisses her softly, becoming a dream in the morning  
That blows across the vanishing sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vanity Of The Last Of The Earthmen

I am searching out the frequency  
For the vanity of the last of the earthmen:  
Before I saw them in their time silver toothed,  
Driving in their developments  
Supplementing money for love to buy  
Survival kits for their two and one half children:  
Even then, they were taking off  
To cavalier entanglements with the  
Woman who worked part time in department  
Stores,  
The languid hypocrisy of unwedded thighs  
Taking in for the night the strangers already spoken for.  
Note the eyes, the way they tangle,  
The bicycle spokes the souls abstractions,  
The facsimiles they share with the earliest androids,  
And the unspoiled nights awash in nocturnal paradise.  
Now, there is only the empty shore,  
And the goliath behind sinking into the world.  
Nothing moves, but the things which should move,  
Those who are given to purpose and secret will.  
The things that were left unsold, the clothing,  
The skins, everything that was put on,  
Though still on display, will never be found,  
For there is only in its stratifications the echoes,  
The places where the wanting hands fell  
Yet fall no more, in reverence for extinction,  
Unparsed lips in tranquility say nothing at all,  
As the day bows without encore, and in commences  
Every night.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vanquished Daylight Of What Man Had To Say

Hills bathing in the blue street lights that the students  
Carry home to, uncradling books and classroom covetries-  
And from their thimble like studios they look  
Out at Lesbos blowing out her candles of the girls who might have  
Been from their very same high school:  
They too were up to no good, but making a recipe of naked gold  
Down two stories in the communal pool:  
Like wood that had learned to strike fires where the otters live,  
And the cars were turned off, so the billboards were selling their  
Thunderbrush to the very night:  
Helicopters and airplanes taxied, stewardesses stripped of their  
Metamorphosis- and the essence of life floating there, for a moment  
Legless, serpentine, but making love in a good way to  
Her sisters while the night leaned nearer in its bachelorhood-  
And the forces took over, expressing themselves indefinitely to the  
Then vanquished daylight of what man had to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vantage Point Of Their Lonely Studios

Bottles hidden under couches which turn out  
To be beds:  
Bottles on top of red cement, bottles spinning  
Burning with questions:  
Bottles the answer to this;  
My face bleared with roses and abandoned highways,  
And cars abandoned,  
And forts except for their mad soldier blooming fireworks:  
And Kellies are in the sky,  
Rippling as if with banners of all her men,  
The kaleidoscope of her delinquent theatre, the rosaries  
Of her body's tattoo;  
And I am fully scarred and pretty, and I think of her,  
Because I have nothing left in who I am:  
And she sees her children as dolphins swimming beneath her,  
Swimming through the immense greenness of this underage  
Garden,  
Going towards the sounds of dinner, like bottles spinning  
Attune to the whistling of such an immense foreclosure;  
For when her eyes are closed, everything is going to  
Shut down,  
And the parks disappear under the stipulation of her closing  
Heirs,  
And her perfumes leave us just as transfixed as bachelors  
Staring down at the beautiful lesbians who are playing just like  
The pinkest otters from the vantage point of their lonely  
Studios.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vast And Infinite Sky

I have hurt myself again  
While the herds of sharks come to look up through the  
Impervious versions of waves where the mariposas are dancing  
Like untouchable girlfriends;  
If sharks could dream of beauty, maybe they could change;  
And start to lay off the loves for the carnivals of man-eaters:  
And become celibate and fast dreamers in the bottom sands of all of  
These selkies to which the sea is always a vast changing room,  
And my words are only poor repetitions for the  
Meanings that she repeats to herself every night as she finds another good  
Reason to go to sleep and then to get up again  
While the airplanes fly so high as to be unable to be proven  
Through the vast and infinite sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vast Graveyard Of Red Hearts

In a night of somber cadences people die,  
Relatives and gods,  
Like out in the middle of a New England forest,  
All the wheat fields just skating rinks,  
The trees like a luxurious China shop tempting the blistering  
Lips of Apollo;  
And my grandfather died,  
And my father is taking a walk out in a blizzard.  
He isn't back yet- He invited me, but I couldn't come-  
How could I. I am skimming Mark Twain, traveling about  
The pirouetting universe at her fattest middle;  
I've got a headache- I've drunken too much coffee.  
I've stayed up all night and counted the leaves that are missing.  
The librarian is on to me, and eight people read my poem.  
Two of them leave. Six who remain sit around and play cards  
And then Russian Roulette when they are out of Vodka,  
When they should've been drinking rum. Who are these people,  
And what are they doing out in the middle of my storm  
When I am out in the groves of Spain waiting for her under orange  
And perfect orbs, thinking of her breasts and the ghosts of legionnaires  
Who transfer their power from one to the next;  
Or, outside my window birds peck through the flurries with the  
Persistency of winged life, diminutive cousins to angels and  
Devils, and I lay out another line like making a bed  
Or preparing a coffin;  
These are just some things I've had to say, or to silently scream out  
Into the middle of nowhere before the vast graveyard of  
Red-hearts who've been rocked to sleep by such savage lullabies  
Housewarming gifts of the storm,  
Like fires in tin horns which slowly keel over, their youth blushing  
Dalliances of confection, only to gray and ash,  
Blown away by her persistent lips who are always making upon  
The next wish.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vast Wind-Tunnel's Void

She drinks; she:

Drinks in a velvet cushioned confessional;  
Has ideas strung out under the cerulean cones in  
An old forest where copper antlers lay shed;  
Passes the bottle around decrepit birdbaths where  
Bald tires are disposed of, where winged metamorphosis  
Farts chirping;  
Lanks in Navajo flea markets, buys fry bred;  
screws together plywood to sell fireworks;  
Erects tents like giant skirts without any animals;  
Doesn't read- can't read; swings;  
Is undoing herself in stony riverbed- The fish are  
Scared but not harmed-  
The water is veined spittle; the water is cheap gold when  
It leaps; filthy, deluded liquors  
Flaked in homeopathic minerals- and it is swell, and sometimes there  
Are mountains too, at the deluge's vacillating head-  
And distant roads always leading into the sky of  
Lighted fires, as if the clouds are  
A smoky cauldron bubbling in spell;  
Down cold, winsome ways with  
Stranded uptight houses and petulant windmills-  
Doesn't think she should go- her legs are sore already,  
But in time will go there,  
Past where the steeped valleys lay deepest green, and runny,  
And always damp;  
Far above the bathes of crooked trees,  
Fine-spun angels like flimsy vagrants are playing, cavorting with the  
Stinging sport with other things that she can't  
Be sure are there- to graveyards of miners  
Summited in loose scree, hidden amusements of microscopic  
Life, circuses of hardy mice  
And centipedes evolved from the  
Salt of the evaporated sea; and there to listen down through the vast wind-  
tunnel's  
Void, to the lonesome men making love, she used to make love  
To; going down weeping, backlit by Saturn's snowball rings;  
Stores are closing far away,



But the mortal light yet dying streams; exhausted but sure  
She has both seen and heard  
A divinity she before fought to disprove.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Velvet Throat Darkness

Vaudeville of kindergarten love all to put on  
A puppet show to the trained animals in the dark;  
But the dark is such a beautiful species for  
Those inclined to weather bad scars:  
Species can be their own things in the dark-  
They can be whole with shadows, and make friends of  
Every bleeding part;  
And mothers can be lovers, and widows can have sailors;  
And those spaces where you'd think you cry alone,  
They are filled up with the minerals of unholy cheer-  
And you can swing her around in the cloudy park,  
And catch the flinty glances of her satanic eyes on  
The cheap merry-go-rounds, and you can pick up one  
End of the earth and fold it back as if inviting her  
To bed-  
And if you can fail you can blame it on another beast,  
For there are an infinite number of animals just like you  
Shot and wounded and buying unwholesome bouquets  
To give to the dark velvet throated darkness.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Venemous Homogony Of Their Burry Esplanades

Faces decay in their new enjambments  
And I'm supposed to be reading Emerson,  
But in Saint Louis no one gives a damn  
Except for cemeteries and baseball,  
But now there is time for the immense  
Worshiping of my father's fireworks,  
And we will soon sell something  
Along the antique desert  
Where there is so much to buy,  
All strung out through the venomous  
Homogony of their burry esplanades  
Where grandmothers looking weeping  
Into the disastrous sky into which  
Their daughters have leapt before  
Their time—  
But, other than this,  
There is so very little to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Venemously Homeless Convictions Of Sad Runaways

Apologies,  
Because I am drunk- and not fit to appease  
Anything else,  
Not even conjugating the Old Swedish from the  
Forever bruised lips of prepubescent vampires;  
And, getting to it,  
I am not Jack Micheline,  
I am not even his caricatures of Baudelaire;  
But I am figuring out the silver plane of Midwest  
Swing sets over the transplanted thistles,  
And I am going to finish this rum,  
Even if I don't look good doing it (But I do!) ,  
And I am going to move to Saint Louis,  
Further away from the transitory migrations of  
Poisonous butterflies straight over the octogenarian  
Deserts of Arizona,  
And into the truly boreal Mexico,  
Where you wont be able to tell any difference between  
Me and the innocent lovelies;  
And I have written novels to which there  
Is no use for,  
And I am like Mark Twain's older brother, Orion,  
Such the fickle constellation,  
And I am nothing better than the working middle class,  
And that is where I will soon end up because it is where  
I belong,  
Leaving me to get drunk and to only imagine  
The roller coaster amusements upon either coast;  
And if I could get to her I surely would,  
Because I love her, and the children I could have mined  
From plowing her fertile menstruations,  
The fine exegesis I could have performed accomplice to  
Briar Rabbit deep in the purple thorns;  
And I am in love with a girl name Erin,  
But she's been letting a toned bouncer muscle through  
Her fleshy door,  
Zooming through her Missouri caves which the likeliest

Of children must soon explore;  
And Kelly is married, and my ex-girlfriend I will not do,  
And I have poems in homeopathic words which pretend to  
Heal,  
And there are girls in Oregon,  
And cousins in Idaho- And in Atlanta there isn't a virgin  
I do not know;  
And there in the rich fertile rows of orange groves  
And sweet-cigarette terrapin, or down  
Further south into the sweltering reptilian pens of beady  
Eyed crocodiles  
I will lie down my pen,  
And let my heart ululate in alterative rhythm next to  
My earth;  
She will let her child suckle tight upon her breasts pressed  
Up close to the base of Colorado,  
The rhapsodies of her newborn and the mishap  
Ghost of a Siamese twin,  
An abortive novel, half finished in unbaked clays,  
But perhaps my pains will skip like stones off the underbelly  
Lakes of commercial airplanes  
Before I am shut up and strangled by the usurper lips  
Of these evil flowers,  
The venomously homeless convictions of sad runaways  
Fitfully destined to recompose their lives forever  
Rebeatingly bilious beneath her  
Perpetually blooming nocturnal hours, furrowing the shifts  
Of her unjustly weeping desires....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Venom Of Rattlesnakes

She doesn't move away: the fact is that she likes playing with  
Him:  
As the plastic cowboys and Indians say their goodbyes:  
While my useless wishes are selling their many reasons to the  
Widest advertisements in the sky;  
And when they get on home, deluded by wild scuppernongs:  
The soft pigeons cooing on the fences,  
Their masters heady from alcohol, and their arcs swaying,  
Holding out two by two for the pitch perfect rainbow:  
While the animals nuzzle,  
Waiting for the first radio broadcast- like a new color to arrive  
With unadulterated fanfare through the jungle:  
As I make love to anonymous girls through the feverish testaments  
Of my burned down youth;  
As new words arrive, drunkenly- as if Christmas trees careening into  
Other holidays,  
As the stock still youth are holding hands and chewing the insides  
Of their lips,  
As if it is heavily snowing at a baseball game where no one else arrives;  
And yet I can hear my entire muse weeping for me across  
The country of our little hemispheres: or at least across the train tracks,  
As she buys things to mark herself  
And to make love to the venom of rattlesnakes at least until help arrives.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ventures Of A Playground's Metamorphosis

Kickstands like the long tails of bicycles  
Nuzzled by terrapin in the first tangles of the seesaws  
Beside the baseball diamonds;  
And colorful airplanes kicking starwards- never wondering  
Where they are flying,  
But going forever faithfully with their arms spread  
Like little children no longer afraid, and reverent above  
The ventures of a playground's metamorphosis.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Ventures The Ventures They Need To Survive

Unkindled, a word waiting for no return:  
An empty bottle, rolled beside a church that has no following:  
Words that are flat like leftover snakes,  
Bushes that landscape an empty graveyard;  
And it snows in cutout paper over cowboys who aren't  
Really dying; and who have never traveled across  
Texas:  
But it is alright, because you are up in your car, venturing to  
And from a university,  
Long since broken free of my hapless plague- Like a detective  
Without any addition glues, I roam mindlessly-  
Like a butterfly assured of the freaks of joy:  
The houses making monuments to their little wives.  
And everything accumulating and taxing onwards, so promising  
In the ventures they need to survive.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Vermillion Skies

My words—vision of a blind man  
In the vociferous shadows  
Waiting to be fed from the mouths  
Of nocturnal creatures:  
As the jasmines bloom over dump trucks;  
As the airplanes scream like vultures:  
That they should have to say any of  
This  
Another time through the needing mouths  
Over my years,  
And into the fire-pit:  
The pages burn and dissemble—  
As my students will get up again tomorrow,  
And I will have no voice for them,  
As my wife lives in a house on the other side  
Of the earth,  
And my pity for her burns down the swans  
In the apathetic moods of the vermilion skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Beauty Of My Breathy Song

You walk in the green, like the valley or  
A nest,  
For Colorado is so full of your ups and down  
And contrasts of great beauty.  
Like its fjords and red tulips,  
You go turning around higher up in the  
Concealed basins,  
Maybe even ones you've never suspected,  
And you have so much on your plate  
While I was walking around your head,  
Like a tiny ant trying to christen a mystical  
Kingdom,  
While you were getting married and `  
Baring children  
I followed the hostile traffic, their red lights  
Always escaping through the neighborhoods  
Of rain that burned through  
The oxygen that spilled like magnificent  
Wishes down from  
The summits of changing rooms of the pale  
Sisters who crowd around  
Your tiny home just to glance at how beautiful  
You are for some afternoons while you  
Are feeding your child  
Aren't you the quiet significance, winged but  
Calm,  
The very beauty of my breathy song.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Best Friend

I give and I take nothing, all day long:  
No butterflies, and it is funny, funny that I can keep repeating  
My desirous song,  
When my desire is so far down stream singing out to no one,  
Content to go through the little ripples of a  
Rain shower, pretending each ripple is its soul,  
Sure that it can never drown even as the elfish cannibals surround  
The banks of its musical;  
And I love you, Sharon, because you are the only girl for miles  
And miles: And I am drunk, and you are the only girl in this place,  
The only beautiful thing on two legs who hasn't betrayed me,  
Or gone home and fornicated in her fornication place:  
And I am getting up early again tomorrow to check again  
The furrows I have sown to see if they have sprouted the tender  
Heads of my so unfortunate friends, and if they have, then I will  
Call you to them, Sharon; and they will rise up harmoniously  
And almost cartoonish and I would ask you to kiss them:  
Yes kiss them like a little girl with a basket full of rose petals,  
Prancing, because you are most desirous; and, yes, even  
Trans-lunary you are as luscious as a virgin in her grotto,  
Spilling full of blooms and loam; and, yes, you are the best friend,  
The very best friend I have never known.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Element Of His Tears

Lighting at the paper is repeated:  
Folded or lit afire:  
I see you now in her eyes,  
Dancing, dangerously hypnotic-  
Holding a shrunken skull in  
Either palm  
Like a speaking pomegranate:  
As, continents away, they spread and spread  
To dinosaurs opening wings and saluting  
Through the trusts  
Of open heart surgery: cotton candy and  
Other minor confections:  
The things they say to the waves to stay alive,  
As the children of his muse bloom-  
Get older,  
And she forgets about him in a day or two:  
How she used him,  
As he wrote about her a thousand upon a thousand  
Nights,  
The horses contacting with the dunes:  
And what was in her heart but a movie theatre:  
And it is there still, replete and competing  
With the estuary of the boys  
Consumed by an unnatural will-  
And she doesn't care-  
This is how she sings herself to sleep- by  
Blinding the fires that tried to leap  
From the very element of his tears.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very First Caves

Sabbaticals of long tailed ponies crossing  
The prairie of broken windows  
Looking for a promise she stole with her lips  
As she looked across the mountains  
From the school bus- and all of the beautiful  
Girls lay across her,  
Brandishing her elbows, and the copper  
Estuaries that could not be  
Miss given- as the fountains flowed  
And the breads were liven;  
And you stark naked in your field of baseball  
Diamonds, flirting with a serpent  
Who floated with the apples: it was the earliest  
Thing she could remember,  
And honeymoons of dinosaurs- in fieldtrips of  
Bear claws until something struck across  
Her skin,  
And she closed her eyes- in her field trips  
Of honey moons- the very first of the caves  
Ever visited by men.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Graveyards Of Your Very Own Immortality

The body really flexes its muscle; I really flexes it enough:  
And he got to you really early didn't he, Alma,  
My love,  
Even while the airplanes in their pretty bodices touch down on my  
Chin and now I have a tattoo and all of this stuff:  
All of this bright confetti wounds that are open in even  
Early morning  
While the cocks crow and the dragons show their stuff:  
And the traffics moves, Alma;  
It really moves: for both of your children it moves, and it tries  
On it variously pitiful shoe sizes,  
But otherwise it eats poison apples, and I suppose you love  
Your poisoned man,  
Because even now here he is again, touching down and calling  
My bluff, but none of it is hardly even real, Alma,  
And I shoe the horseflies away,  
Because I grew up in even better places than here, and even though  
I want to touch you so-  
I have been high up in the embittered tree line, and I have  
Even more rum to swing my lines,  
And none of it was even close to here, and if you can hear me now, Why  
Then you are too far close to the very graveyards of your very own  
Immortality.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Last Time

Coming up through the blue ways,  
Looking for goblins and keeping out for butterflies-  
At least once or twice I was a little boy, and these were  
The sounds we made together when we would have  
Been better off in school- or further away;  
But the sun always seemed so close, looking down, and  
Inspecting us through the parks,  
The fireworks we stole and lit off his little helpers  
Who felt suddenly wonderful, and wounded-  
The houses that they birthed their fountains around just sat  
There, and waited for them to disappear,  
Like the alligators in the canals waited for angels,  
Or to see through the back, back doors when her lips would  
Kiss him for the very last time.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Picture Of The Story I Sing

The horse lays prone before its mountain:  
You see they are in love, and she is praying;  
Or in the least the horse is in love  
And born many foals, at least four;  
And the rabbits are in their narrow caves,  
They have shut the door  
And gone deeper into the ruby red burrows of churches  
Dressed in their pinafores;  
And you don't have to believe me, because I have nothing  
Left to prove:  
I have delivered all of my Christmas trees,  
I have swung with Kelly on the swings after the seventh  
Evening of the day;  
And now I am telling my story to shadows in Crepuscule,  
Shadows who could be anything, but not you;  
And, back to where we was, at least the horse was in love:  
The mountain lion as teal as a tennis court  
Melted from its tree of wisdom,  
The tree of bitter star fruit, the tree of what was;  
And this is the still life of dying life:  
This is a rest stop in the gloom: This is where you are sleeping,  
Kelly, in the doublewide of your epitaphs:  
You might as well be in the everglades-  
The two lovers are perpetually enslaved, but I am constantly unsure  
Of their sexes;  
Only that the mountain lion is the victor:  
He is biting the summit of her throat, as I took you into my world  
Today;  
Like a blue vampire taking advantage of the virgin mother in  
Pieta:  
She bending down to nourish such a blooming sacrifice,  
And this is, at least, the very picture of the story I sing for you.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Very Same Hearts

You can save yourself again  
On smoky green sailing boats just impressions  
In the way stations of the  
Fiery forest,  
Because you already have a father and a son,  
A mother and a daughter,  
And you don't want anymore, Alma;  
And yet there are so many new ventures and markets  
To explore,  
And I can watch you basketing tomatoes all day long,  
With your pretty, leonine face down cast  
Trying not to meet the hard gaze of my father, your  
Patron:  
You are in your own little world as far away from me  
As the equator is from the Bible belt;  
And maybe I will never mend, but keeping  
Pulling my wagons into doom,  
Maybe you will become the fire: maybe it will shape both  
Of your wings,  
As you strike out, immortal and jubilant;  
But if we had children,  
Can't you even suspect how strong they would be, tied  
Fast from either ends of the world,  
Picking up the best virtues of hoodlums and green parklands:  
They could meet the narrow gauge of alligators:  
They could sing in their own time:  
They would know both of our breasts and languages,  
Alma,  
And they would be as surreal as to carry the very same hearts that  
I now carry for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Same Shade

When the clouds go again over the sun,  
The flies come out from the echinopsis and from the  
Purple armpits of cypress,  
And they go about in their own fair, tasting the  
Flesh for two weeks of whomever they care;  
But cannot be bothered by the housewives driving inside  
Their cars-  
With soft lights, going to the Laundromat, not knowing  
That their very own concessions have made them  
An arcade  
For the very hearts and eyes of young boys left from  
The school, to enrich alongside the  
Clever roadway in the very same shade.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Thing It Is Weeping For

Her family reaches far and wide:

They sing, wake up, and make love; I have a little book

Hidden in the hollow of a sunken ship:

It doesn't move: it only weeps, and when the rain comes

It weeps some more although almost anyone will be

Less likely to hear it;

And it weeps without her name, the very thing that it is

Weeping for.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Third Night

It was the first open mouthed  
Kiss I'd had in seven years,  
On the very third night of our  
Gift giving  
While her lord was at play;  
And it was all she gave me;  
And it was all that she took from me;  
And it was almost enough  
To kill me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Unearthliness Of The Unquestionable Air

Invisibility lactates from the tit of  
Your soul,  
And I will get drunk every night and walk to  
The fruit market for these poems,  
For these words I use in place  
Of nothing else to describe your utter beauty;  
If tonight is a funhouse, if it is your birthday,  
I can get in my car and shoot up the  
Throat of Disney World  
And I will live forever:  
I can make it to the darkest of Africas with no  
Better muses loving me,  
And I will survive for an awfully long time,  
Because the day after tomorrow will be the weekend,  
And I will have time off to think of you  
And the shapes you take like a heirloom still cooling  
From its younger soul;  
And if that is all there is to know about you,  
It will still take some time to comprehend, for  
It seems you are still falling through the sky before me,  
And I am enamored by the quickness by which  
You disturb the very unearthliness of the unquestionable air.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very Wish Of My Soul

Overtures breathing like uncaged bobcats  
Now that they are no longer underneath roofs, and the  
Walls are short enough to leap:  
Long tongued, hyperventilating like the colonnades  
Of industry where too much gas has been spilled  
From lip to lip,  
Like butterflies gossiping, trying to create the chaos that  
Will end them up in Disney World,  
As it got me here- so next door to my next and final muse,  
With the limestone and coquina underneath our  
Little pattering feet,  
And the ghosts evaporated up into the air like the saltlick  
Riming the underbellies of airplanes;  
And I have the sneaking suspicion that I live next door  
To a stewardess, because she is hardly ever home  
To smell the jasmine that works its perfumes in the night,  
Like the delicate ethereal fingers of lovers who were  
Once here, and the duel mouths that their memory still feeds  
The enjambments of odor through which the balmy nights proceed;  
And I only think of her, like a curtained wish, a star yet  
Discovered, as the busses turn around- and all of the metamorphosis  
Gathers to see the first lights of my Alma, the very wish of my soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Very, Very Best

Lesser names are mine of joy:

That I have been writing all of my life for one single

Boy out

Huddling nakedly amidst the sugar cane rattling his brain for

The rains of airplanes,

And Alma, I think of you, while lesser visions come into view,

While every night and every day proceeds,

Upon the long legged hallucinations of another long winded steed:

And I caught a forty pound king fish

The other night and watched its dying breathes on the floor of the boat

Underneath the carpet of airplanes, while didn't you

Clean your house:

Didn't you: and you, as a Mexican wife, cooked dinner for you husband,

While the rainbows disbanded and I wished again

That I could take my own life, while the lions yawned insouciantly,

While in their cherry mouths your missing rabbits fawned and didn't think of you,

While nothing was new under the sun: and my love was just the drinking

Fountain of a famished pop-gun,

But otherwise I receded with it again into the west;

But as I receded with it I wished you, Alma, the very, very best.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Victorious Loser

Me, being the human animal,  
Took that as a reproach: her going off and  
F\*cking some guy,  
Even while after five years and some odd  
Months, she'd only been f\*cking me,  
And me thinking about f\*cking around but  
Not doing anything contradictory,  
Besides secret gifts and emails and less expensive  
Tack:  
Now, oh lordy, how she welted me,  
Got my bravery undone, kowtowed me something  
Fierce; and by such niggardly revulsion made  
Me into the poet: huzzah. Made me eat fish and  
Grow a brain. Shrunk and isolated me into the hills,  
Into a pomegranate seed, into a seat shared on a  
Train with my dogs, or a strange, misty renaissance  
Festival smelling of cheep cologne, the rusty tips of  
Javelins, and smoked turkey:  
So now she is married and has tasted the new fleshy tip  
Of her wedded monument, time and again  
gone down and stuck on that;  
I am celibate, and fine, and sometimes inebriate,  
But I have more money and two dogs, and am looking  
For a house and an agent, and am expecting both:  
So I consider us about equal, for the worldly decapitation  
Has sent me down the backwaters of more frightening  
Townships, where Colonel Kurtz exclaims the horrors,  
And ceiling fans whir like helicopters,  
Where by prehistoric teeth of aspiring house-wives and  
Landmines I've been rejected and made anew and all  
The better: I am extemporaneous and sweltering in my corner.  
When the bell rings I will go back to pugilists,  
And die trying, for I am the victorious loser,  
Who through such traditions of holiday slaughter has been  
Crowned king.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Villages Of Emptier Things

When they go down to the bottom of the  
Well, they blow their trumpets and the blind  
Skeletons dance underneath the make-believe sky  
Where the wolves and the bears are kind  
To them:  
They bring them lunches of fire, and the skeletons  
Dance brighter in wicked desire-  
Like spikenard rustling underneath a tower,  
Or rinds of tin of lost knights that shower  
In the leaves of the orchards of nameless  
Desire: they remain there by the powerful magnetisms  
Of banshees of scorned housewives- women  
Who needed their ruby challises on bosoms  
And thighs- and the moon saddles these brave lost  
Men in their semiconscious graves-  
While the ravens dance and eat the fields of monarchs  
Who cover the fickle plum trees as it rains,  
Like the memories of their own lost mothers  
Who bled them onto milk weeds,  
Until they crawled up to a crystal metamorphosis  
On the chain-link fences overlooking the villages of  
Emptier things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Vines Of Another Sightless World

Awakening onto the patios where the sea has first leapt  
And then ran away,  
Coming to in the morning of the parking lots and her grayed  
Ear lopes:  
It is like I have driven up to her later day school again  
In the earliest of morning hours  
When I didn't know what I should care for, while the world was  
Still young and wild:  
Then Michael was born, and Sharon was still curling warm  
Clays around her hip;  
And Alma was right here in Florida while the strange jungles were  
Still growing,  
And the stewardesses were still leaping right over all the boys  
In their bed, in a chorus line of wishes,  
And the house that I am in now was still right here,  
And the ceiling fans turned like the weather, like the heroes dancing  
With the villains and each of their sisters-  
All the bodies giving off their little sighs from the vines of another  
Sightless world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Virgin Of Guadalupe

I hear the moon calling from the  
Throat of a wolf,  
Like a pubescent throat ululating from its spitooned horn:  
While I was up on some boy's roof in an  
Arm chair:  
Not praying to any god, but spending my fireworks  
And growing naked:  
Soon I might swim in the canal all the way to the little girl  
Who lives in the palmettos:  
I might get there, a diminutive conquistador, and show her  
Pictures of yourself: Alma:  
Like a lapping green zoetrope in the nest of my palms:  
If I even knew you in high school:  
If I could call you the way that the tender trainers call the  
Long remembered elephants home,  
The supple gargantuan turned into the dancers of spiders webs:  
I would caress you and get into your car:  
I would wrap my fingers around yours like a crèche for  
The Virgin of Guadalupe:  
I would take you out to lunch. I would ask you to go bowling,  
But you would say no.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Virgin Of Guadalupe

Flood of a song—lilac at the foot of my bed: meager art  
Wasting away as you do,  
While outside they are having fun—they are betting on the  
Highest stars which are just amusements  
That will fade like ours:  
As the overpasses come alongside of our bed posts—  
Racing headily next to the anthills  
As paper snowflakes fall—illusion of a world of foxes leaping  
In the lamps of a zoetrope,  
Making zebras of barber shops—it rains a little,  
The engine idles,  
And the Virgin of Guadalupe sits at your doorstep waiting for  
The cat to lick her feet.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Virgin's Everlasting Spring

Barmaids in the sauce of waves- so bosomy and  
Naïve;  
I suppose in the morning they will be collecting themselves from  
The lips of dragons,  
Or the great white sharks in the tattoos of a  
Party forest;  
And then the night just glows, like I have seen her eyes do,  
Sitting right next to me at the adulterous picnic,  
Sitting and staring for dolphins,  
For waves;  
And she said that I enjoy spending time with you, and that is all  
That there is;  
But I know that there is some kind of hidden stairway up to where  
The hidden room where her father is still held captive  
By the serpents of thieves;  
And I know I can save him, or at least I can join him;  
And I can feed him little pieces of me, like the joints of a rich story,  
While his daughter looks upon us in a trance of the bluest bluest  
Eyes;  
And I just want to touch around her cul-de-sac of so many scars,  
While in the darkness I fear to see the lions that are loping  
Toward me,  
After I have given up on the school bus; and now I know it is my time;  
And I have to stop sharing the renegade bicycle with my sister,  
And I have to give up on my soda-pop games,  
And welcome death beside the virgin's everlasting spring;  
And I do- I do....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Virtues Of Believing

Foxes with pretty smiles competing for badges:  
While the final battle looms nearer- as death has its way  
Over the pretty chariots and the purple wedding  
Processions,  
As I proposition my heart for her, and the maggots turn into  
Flies, smiling so many ways in their eyes:  
As my parents' home is repossessed by the bank:  
As the mountain is repossessed by the sea- and it all flies away,  
As the strata grows deeper and more mystifying:  
While upon the birthday cake I watched Alma blow her wishes:  
And for a moment they all must have seemed to come true  
Until the dreamer arose  
Accepting the inevitable absence of belief: the dead were dead  
And un colorful, and the moon had arisen but was a thief:  
And the light it was giving to the holocaust of languishing sailors  
Was sending them the wrong way,  
And shipwrecking the righteous upon the petulance of reef:  
The baseball players were harpies, and Jason never found the fleece:  
And the virtues of believing were all beyond belief.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Visions Of Another's Looking Glass

May the day lighten over my estrangements and  
Prove me in more ways unreal-  
May the ocean curl over these abusements and take  
Away how I feel-  
Lingering in the versions of the green wood  
Of an olive tree can only save me  
From the sea for so long:  
Soon you must come again, and whisper of our  
Virtues to me- how we became one  
Some afternoons on our days off underneath the  
Pleasure liners of those airplanes-  
And all those busy people commuting, leaping as if  
Over candle flames- We took together in  
My bed and made love in the soft visions that had  
Come to pass- until you forgot me still,  
And looked away using the visions of another's looking glass.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Voice Of Its Motions Towards Her

Places of loudmouthed anonymity  
Smoking cold shouldered underneath overpasses  
Eating cold turkey on sanctimonious holidays  
Rooted to no particular matrimony:  
Eyes that first follow feet, follow nothing:  
Thought to follow orchards, thought to watch beauty  
Ripen:  
Now under the traffic of torn and beaten flags  
Piled up in an unglamorous concrete valley  
In the fugue of lime disease and citrus cancer  
The body no longer knows what juxtaposition the body  
Once was hungry for;  
It still cracks tiny motes like the spindles of a bicycle;  
And it still may flag other bodies down just to get a little  
Further by car,  
But it no longer believes its muse was ever beautiful,  
Or the voice of its motions towards her.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Voices Singing

She cannot call me, and that's all right:  
The moon still rises over the park, and her shoulder;  
And her beauty reflects in the lake of another  
World:  
It is not so bad, like the serpent says, and only  
Means that I have to move on,  
Like a knight waylaid for three days in a castle  
That is her favorite color,  
But is not his- and the world vacillates and sings  
Like glass brought to the edge of her lips,  
And she dreams about crossing the frontera which she  
Had to come across long before and long after me;  
And her children suckle off of her  
As the weathervanes point out the direction of the new  
Arrivals coming in;  
And the little houses are built all around her-  
In them she can hear all of the voices singing of people  
She does not know;  
And then by night, she crawls into him once more,  
And goes away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Voices To Which You Pretended To Weep

Erin,  
You kissed my neck,  
And it felt so good; and it was all I wanted  
Erin,  
Erin: You were all I wanted,  
To fall asleep underneath the zoetropes of your window,  
Erin.  
When I get too drunk, I still call your old number  
Which I know by heart,  
But you changed it with the luck of your infinity,  
When you showed your one and only man  
The open mollusk of my infinity;  
And I died in the palm of your laughing hand,  
Erin, so how can you blame me,  
Erin- I cast myself in your fire, Erin;  
And I am just a good man, Erin- no good at soccer  
Or any sport.  
I just want to run on like a faithful dog at your side,  
Erin!  
Don't you understand,  
I just wanted to be your one good man.  
Erin- I've always been the man who was left behind,  
And you just added to the fact in your insouciant weathers,  
Taking you dates on horseback,  
Frolicking through the heathers. Now I've misspelled you  
Into immortality,  
Erin, and your eyes are still auburn and floating on the currents  
Of your chesty abodes.  
Erin,  
Erin- I am so lonely, and you made me that way.  
You abetted in my careworn fraternity,  
And now I cannot love a woman again faithfully,  
And what happened to all the flowers I sent you;  
And where will you be buried, Erin:  
Beside what man will you be buried, while I still fly my flags  
For you  
Underneath the soft bellies of airplanes, while you laugh right  
Into my face and watch your bench-pressing cartoons.  
Why couldn't you care to love the dreams

I planted for you, Erin-  
Why couldn't you lay down and close your eyes  
For me in the garden I created for you under these lights,  
Instead of casting me further a field  
And there to grow even stranger towards the voices  
To which you pretended to weep.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Voluptuous Gossips

There is a science up in the air given over to  
Juvenility and lunch trucks—  
As beautiful girls are given to their men,  
Like the sacrifices at the ends of their dusty roads:  
Sometimes individuals amongst them will fall  
In love once or twice  
But it is never pleasant  
And none amongst us will ever have to read about  
It—  
These words now are the scars I have developed  
Sleeping alone in my wife's parents' bed in  
Shanghai, China—  
While there are not enough feet amongst the mountains  
And the camels go without water  
As the cars go without gasoline,  
But I only know so many words—  
And it is a shame,  
That not a single soul in the world loves me  
The way I once loved a muse or two—  
Now you can find me,  
The King Kong,  
The Godzilla of the perpetually anonymous zoo—  
Fretting for no one,  
Ready to destroy cities,  
Learning how to love his infant son in place of  
A muse, while the blind stars shine down  
Across all of the voluptuous gossips of so many  
TV shows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Warmth Of Familiar Holidays

I have a house that is fully grown:  
I have a house that is a grandfather, who I bought from  
A homosexual artist and his mother who  
Was at least as old as this house:  
He painted each room a different soft shade of shell,  
And now each room flows around my barren body  
While I think of Sharon and fireworks:  
I think of the things that will sell, that aren't already venal,  
And yet are not scarred like me;  
It must take a beautiful being to be not either of the two,  
And yet someone who hasn't seen the soft tips of mountains  
Underneath the coiling planes of nimbus:  
For surely the rains will be blocked up like traffic,  
And they will wait for awhile like rabbits in the briars,  
Enjoying their festivals until it is time again to escape:  
Just as I can write my novels, and think upon Alma  
And her warm children  
While around me the people who are renting their bodies two one  
Another make the sounds of a joyful orchard;  
And if I have been away, it has only been to Arizona, or maybe  
My soul has been away,  
But the planets continue to shuffle their feet. They are getting cold  
Waiting outside,  
Wanting like little children, like us all, to return home once again,  
Basking in the warmth of familiar holidays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Warmth Of My Mother's Eyes

Tadpoles feel the warmth of my mother's  
Eyes as she seems to sing to me off their warmth:  
They are like butterflies riding seahorses—  
And they will wake up in nine months in the origin  
Myths of their playgrounds, and pretend to  
Know so many things—as Nature takes off her clothes:  
She is stepping outside at the edge of a mountain.  
Looking down, it is like a kaleidoscope of bears and  
Mountain lions, fighting resiliently for trees  
And birthday presents—but they pause and they  
All take notice as the factories and fruit markets  
Shut down—and the woman that they love  
Steps off the mountain and into her car and  
Drives away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wash Basins Of Your Other World

The day dreams feathered by its hosts-  
Night dressed in palms greenly winnows until the forests  
Kneel before the sea  
And tell her how beautiful she is to me:  
For these are my messengers, Alma- see how little they move,  
But how far they go:  
These are my messengers, Alma- like tall men waiting in  
An unspoken hall to give you these things which  
Tell you of what value you mean to me,  
The way stones wait to speak with the lightning,  
The letters castaway in the glass throats of bottles cradled by the  
Endless sea,  
All begging for hope and salvation, like brothers keeping  
Warm around a fire that bares what light your gaze can reflect,  
Your senses a promulgation of a glorious symphony,  
With each instrument throbbing wet pistils like green blow torches  
Soldering a heroic song inside of me,  
While the trees ripple their reflections into the brook,  
Like unperceivable tears into the wash basins of your other world,  
With great sorrow fearing that you may never return to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Washbasins Of Mandevilla

On loan from the washbasins of mandevilla,  
My scars make no pronunciations of their own:  
They are the love letters to the death  
And blind who fall asleep through their troubles  
In an overgrown nest in the woods,  
Where the kine startle them awake into darkness  
From the glorious crossbeams they summoned behind  
Their floating eyes-  
That is where Alma lives and bakes bread on hot flat  
Rocks down in the dry creek beds, where she kisses  
And sings to rattlesnakes on their  
Lips,  
And tosses witchcraft into the empty cradles now  
That her children have crossed the roads into the frontier,  
Where her mother spent a month knitting and crying out  
Alma's name,  
Like a pinprick of a rosary's perfume in a homeopathic  
Boudoir she wears around her neck-  
The very same diminutive challis she used to win me over,  
And to send my ticking spirit over the homes with no roofs,  
To create a penumbra for a terrapin,  
And to let the sun drip around her as she languorously played,  
Heating up and resurrecting things for me to believe in.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Water Parks Of Pure Happenstance

A sheet of paper killed the emperor,  
And put the old girlfriends into a peaceful sleep  
For the  
Butcher to do his work; it fed the lions any old  
Soda-jerk so their comely fleeces were mottled with rosy  
Bits and blushing pieces-  
Waking them up from the tranquility of the flock,  
It forced the hands backwards on the skeleton clock;  
Off work, it got me drunk, and made me look  
Such a hunk, on amusing swings under  
Deciduous trunk- The house was a galvanized shadow  
Into which us truants liked to flunk;  
And, taking aim, I picked her off with roman candles from  
The roof,  
Giving greedy alligators such luscious, cheering proof.  
I made her remember who I am, with just a gentle  
Cursive of my hand-  
It smelled of eloquence and marble ham, and laid the  
Somber bouquet on her mowed bed, a perfume for sand lions  
And saddle ants; it brushed its fingers across the spindled  
Hips of new romance, and captivated intelligence around  
The Sea of France which it filled out of the water parks of  
Pure happenstance; it read in burrish twists,  
There will be consequence, and charmed the eyes of all  
The strangers transmogrifying them into telescopic lovers,  
Serving girls with dishes of unspoken palaver, each mute syllable  
A generous portion of inkish slather,  
So in gentling tongues wish to abolish her apoplectic indifference,  
Laid out in a bedroom of libraries, ate her oyster and cupped her  
Cherries,  
Took her down the riddled cataract, proposed to her and stuffed  
Her in a gunny sack for the garish moon and unlucky heavens to  
Harp upon, as across the insensitive earth,  
Pouting kisses, granting meaningless wishes, galloped her home  
To straighten my stacks and do the dishes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Waterfalls

If you do not love me again tomorrow, Alma:  
What then will I have to do,  
Because you are the deepest river of my soul, even if my soul  
Is misery:  
Or if it is a buttercup, or a stammering mongoloid in the bright  
Sunny lips of another classroom that it is somehow  
Paradoxically too bright for,  
Just as if it was too burning for publication:  
Just as if it was a fish too deep down for the jubilation of the fair:  
Or for wishing; it is still a thing that breathes and comes up  
For breaths,  
And it is still barbed by the shadows of your lovely existence:  
That is was here, and thus it has always been,  
While my house lies empty save for the perfumes of your adulterous  
Sin;  
And this is wavers and quivers, again, Alma- again against  
The lines of a bosque in the night into which it is not thoroughly  
Cover,  
Or that it does not know if it can mine enough silver;  
Because, surely, Alma- my brother in law is more beautiful than  
I am, all armored in silver; but it matters little, Alma,  
My love, as long as you sing to me in water fountains,  
As long as your love for me drowns out the waterfalls.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Waterfalls The Lions Roar

Illusions in a fluted world practice  
All kinds of mimics, while the sad poetess  
Weeps underneath her gravestone in a  
Record heat wave:  
She is neither here nor there, and her lover  
Or her husband is swept to a sea of chalk.  
The trees use to sing to her,  
The churches use to light up blue cerulean,  
And their was a voice in her heart  
Even though it was a murdered voice- now  
It listens to the raw traffic and the whale bone  
Utterance of the sea saw- the red and yellow  
Helicopters report of a sad nuisance  
And then travel on in tandem as if a wire  
Held them together,  
And she is down there underneath the plastic  
Flowers like a gold fish who once swam  
In the sunlight who has fallen  
To floor,  
Like a penny without the wishes of the cheapest  
Muse- and the airplanes sing deafening  
Over the waterfalls the lions roar.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Waterfountains Of Repolished Hallways

In these days are bared their new songs,  
Like waterfalls gushing over the open wounds of windmills  
That epic heroes have become too lush to  
Ever fully explore: all of the rich aphrodisiacs spread in unison  
Across the forest floor,  
And amongst the pallid feet of aspen: flickering like hot blooms,  
Like house plants cared for too well to ever survive again  
Back into the forest,  
While butterflies are too quick, and they will soon be underneath  
The leaves;  
Just as her lips reinvigorate across the water fountains of a  
Repolished hallways that doesn't have to care to remember me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Waves Messing Around

The bottle seems to disappear into the lips of  
Lonely flowers  
And even makes me think to figure that I am doing good  
Work,  
Even while this ladder leads up to nowhere,  
Or just high enough to scratch at planes' bellies;  
And if we sold fruit up here imagine all of the nose bleeds:  
Imagine the theatre and the fans;  
Or the places we could go alone to be floating on banks,  
To figure ourselves out and really in love:  
To smell the scents of the game, or to just lie on our stomachs  
And watch all the waves messing around.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Waves Of Your Apathetic Beauty

Inside the socially acceptable cars,  
Preschoolers in the backseat doing their arithmetic  
And patty-cake,  
Looking out at a day of shopping in sunlight,  
Or rain,  
The easy puzzlement of their yet unsexed appendages,  
Everything they need to take them outstretched to the zoo,  
Seeing the oily otter for what it is,  
Pomadened and clever, cracking its shells,  
Accepting popcorn, believing in the one true God  
Who seems to hover above them in a true to life mural  
Among the trees,  
Not yet the pantheists I know them as,  
Forever hungrily gambling for the goddess' milk,  
The animals they see you in, the metamorphosis in  
The butterfly house- In brilliant enjambments what are these  
Things you come by them, no longer any use to monotheism,  
The scrappers in the banyan trees, the lost kite entangled there,  
The barbered lovers in the bathroom,  
Or the snakes in the heated cages with the lab rats;  
You in everywhere abound, free for a day and thoughtless,  
Open legged in the grass and calling down your boys,  
Crashing ships and airplanes, riding bareback across to  
The forbidden canal, trusting the horned crocodile;  
And never yet a prize to me, though your neck and things when  
Allowed feed all the hummingbirds;  
Yet thinking that they should call you down from where they  
Are, the impossible thing by unrequited invitations  
That you should come swimming on the other side of the  
Glass, smooth and surreal, licked clean for a weekend of rich memories,  
Thank god you are the advanced vocabulary,  
The knowledge yet netted from the wilderness to be brought  
Out and exhibited, made to perform like a slave  
Yet brought up to their lips,  
Something once sighted and romanced upon to which a body  
Smooth like a stone in the surreptitious sea,  
Never to be unclasped by the waves of your apathetic beauty.



# The Waves' Tumultuous Cavalries

Sky enamel the cross with light,  
Beside the highway without a savior,  
You are for the tourists now,  
For little children at their games,  
Use you for a May Pole, and dissolution  
Your somber dress made for the  
Benefits of the wayward kings,  
Who with their scribes pollinated  
The latest continent, and divided it  
By the highways of amnesiac business:  
They are going so fast now,  
And the possible directions are magnified,  
Where the dead have more homes  
Beside the tombs of blue and gray generals.  
Some one of them loved you  
Before the day, and held your hand  
Even before the conception's glow  
In the park's womb beneath the canopy  
Until, into this graduation of crippled thought,  
You came unpublished hobbling,  
The wasted ink staining the thumb,  
A transcendental birthmark meant  
To signify the deity in her legs' crime,  
Instead, left in the manicured lawn unclaimed  
In between the ants' parade and  
The tourists' picnic, the narcolepsy  
Of a priest's vibrations adjacent to  
The ocean's moaning choir boys, the waves the spasms,  
Edifying only the builder's illusion,  
The mosquito's needs inside the skin,  
The magnificent cross upon the wharf,  
The pestle of apocryphal slang,  
Unjustified alongside the numbered route,  
Where people pass into the sinkhole's memory,  
The mortar of the insatiable pseudopygrapha  
And dead girls, ungraduated, perpetually  
March about in the darkness, concentrically garlanding  
That stemming phallus with unjustified needs,  
The garments of their sisterhood's virginal fluidities,



Fitting upon the hymen's stone as hands cup breasts,  
As attentive ears drink the beatific noise once  
Meaningfully put in the unrecorded day,  
The letter carriers upon the tide, bathing  
In the calm between the waves' tumultuous cavalries.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way A High School Marching Band Becomes Unfurled

Pall bearers of smoke charms running at a  
Distance,  
Through the seems and tresses of the pool-yards  
And landfills of  
Her inherited easements:  
Lancelots blown like ashes over the hot coals  
Of her windswept doorstep,  
Tripping over her schoolyards and the horny heads  
Of her alligators;  
And she is in love with a doorman, by what is  
Brought to her:  
And she looks up into the eyes of a brown man,  
Because that is everything which is beautiful to her,  
The days coming like newborns slipping needily into  
Estuaries,  
The herons and egrets but flashes of disbanded memory;  
And she drives around and looks good and the  
Wildlife comes to her though it is all wild:  
And she has lost her only child to the hungry minds that  
Roam across the brackish charms,  
And in that scrappy pitch the coos and grunts of the  
Things better left unsaid,  
If they were not truly what she meant:  
There beneath the loping shadows of the school yard, she  
Kisses her own wrist, smelling the perfumes she bought for  
The wider world;  
And the coital trills surround her just the way a high school  
Marching band becomes unfurled.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way A Painter Does

Standing off by myself with the pigeons  
Cooing in their shade,  
Watching the busses turning around,  
Spun off the hips of housewives  
Wanting to kiss vampires—  
Returning famished from shopping  
From their afternoons:  
Now look at how beautiful they  
Are, open-bloused in the air-conditioning—  
Their ceiling fans collecting the  
Dusk  
Like Christmas lights and chicken wire—  
Until they finally cook dinner  
When the winos go to sleep underneath the  
Palms—  
And further away the waves caress the shore,  
Touching her the way a painter does  
When his wife is not at home.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way I Fear

The way I fear  
Her hand enjoys being held  
In the nest of his fingers....  
The way I fear  
Her eyes make wishes to  
See his reflection attracted  
Toward her,  
Like skipping stones  
On a lake nearby he lies her down....  
The way I fear  
The conjunction of their lips,  
The hybrid adjective expressing  
The way they feel....  
The way I fear  
The secret compression of love's  
Bodies entwining the chains  
Of their swings together  
As they kiss....  
The way I fear the pact  
Between lovers  
The new seasons in which  
She grows away from me  
To meet him by the old  
Aqueduct clothed in mussels  
And green algae  
Glowing, the only light  
That lies upon two bodies,  
Taking a tumble on the whispering beach  
The finest sport of humanity  
That for its while defeats Death,  
The silenced, senseless body  
In the coffin  
With it's name in stone no one  
Remembers....  
The way I fear....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way I Shall Forever Be Known For Loving You

Okay,  
Now I am so beautiful, I can't  
Even see straight, and I shouldn't be  
Writing anymore for tonight,  
And yet I wonder if my muse is reading me:  
If she knows what's good for her, she is,  
She is, and its as beautiful as traveling airplanes  
To think that she might me, that she is:  
Mi Amour; I have a broken jaw  
When I was four, and my father put me atop  
Of Styrofoam on I-95 in South Florida,  
And my mother drove me at 45 mph,  
Or so she says: and this is utterly personal  
Now, and my body is so numb from cheap rum,  
That I recall perfectly the highways of my scars:  
Erin, and it is quite perfect, listening to this  
Other continent: Can't you see me across  
The scars I give to you, utterly, Erin:  
I love you, and yet I am whole, even as you go  
Down on him in so many ways, after so many years  
I left you, and my epitaph is that I love you,  
And I've been to Spain and chased the guitar;  
And I suppose you've told him,  
And I hate you, but I was so valiant as to become  
The avenue by which my sister Rachelle  
Got married without the mention of Christ:  
And now she works for a man who sells the used  
Cars of her rosy heritage: I used to come over to her house  
With the singular cypress, as if it was a privilege to have  
A cypress in her front-yard:  
But, as I began, so I must conclude:  
The glass of rum has surely done me in, and I  
Really shouldn't be attempting poetry, because mine  
Is full of flaws, buried around the riches surrounding my  
Youth: I don't know Yiddish:  
Ha! Ha! I have all my teeth still, and I love you,  
Erin! And f-you, too, because I am coming to my end,  
Certainly, because of you- I can hardly see straight:  
I have a great uncle who is a retired state judge in

Oregon, but he doesn't even deserve my  
Prose, Erin, and now I am coming to my inevitably  
Sad conclusion: I have enough money to buy a house  
With a chimney and a beautifully sad garden,  
And even without you, my dogs will know my smells,  
And remember me that way, even as they die,  
And the world comes to war:  
And thus I love you, while I fear you haven't  
Love anyone at all, the way I shall forever be known  
For loving you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way It Is

The cathedrals have been lighted across the ships  
That are very fine,  
And I took my day off and went to see you, and bought you  
A rosary full of kisses,  
And told you everything that was the truth:  
The cars coming in and stopping, and waiting to see what  
It might be that you had to say,  
As I wondered if you would teach your children your  
Favorite colors,  
Or add my secret wishes to yours; you asked me to paint my  
House green,  
Because I told you Armando doesn't like yellow,  
And I got jealous, Alma, of my cousin spending time with you,  
But that is just the way it is.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way Otters Shed Tears In A Make Believe Zoo

They broke up and I shot my sister:

It was the eighties and everyone was playing on the  
Beach.

The waves wore neckties. Writers drank waiting for their  
Wives in trailer parks;

And the girl was probably blond: She was probably  
Elizabeth Shue and she didn't bother adjusting her  
Bathing suit as she walked away to bathe

With the harbingers of her song:

Her sisters were in the waves, and they laughed together  
And turned their backs,

Because they didn't care even while I was trying to  
Show off:

I picked these roads for her like flowers like tunes  
For sleeping grandmothers, legions and legions of entombed  
Wombs

That once loved their granddaughters when they knew how to  
Love;

And I have so many bruises while I give up and go to sleep  
Under the greatest penumbras of the University:

You just know I do;

And even when I am done with my canto mime, I still wait  
For you at the bus stop, wasting my time;

And when I get on the bus I dream all of the way to school:

I wait for your eyes to light upon me, for you to love me  
Just the way I love you;

But I am such a fool, because school is gone and this is  
Just a graveyard: You are dancing with your knights, or where  
Have you gone;

And school is over and the lions saunter and fall asleep,  
And you are well practiced: you weep like a young daughter in  
Preschool, and the tears I cry for you shed from your wings  
The way otters shed tears in a make believe zoo.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Way The Powerlines Keep To The Streets

They sat up and said they were in love,  
And the clouds came all over themselves  
Until there were churches in the  
Blue sky  
Like scars on my cheeks, and they sang  
And they danced,  
Holding each other until dawn like the way  
The power lines keep to the streets.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way To My Grave

They had some powwow and they made a truce:  
She has his initial tattooed on the brown web of her hand:  
He used to beat her,  
But it doesn't matter: they held hands as they crossed the  
Frontera together:  
I have money and a house, but it doesn't matter:  
Her eyes look away, and she asked me not to tell her I love  
Her;  
And her brown skin is perfect, but my statue of the virgin  
Fell and shattered,  
Some bad luck, or an evil spell, while serpents curl  
Like smoke in the bosque- the inevitable situations of life  
Where the monsters win,  
While brothers make love to sisters only to be thrown far  
A field-  
And now I will quit the fruiteria and find a job all by myself,  
Or maybe I will write another novel in place of the child  
We could have had if she didn't have her period;  
And it will carry her eyes and her perfume heavy on my senses  
And all the way to my grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way To The Fountains

Late at night, or early morning  
I dream of falling on my knees as  
Deeply sniffing  
Diana's crotch right there in the  
Morning of the fruit market,  
Holding both of her legs like a wonderful  
Crutch,  
With my sister and all those buffoons  
On-looking:

And she is just standing still, steaming like  
A dream taken out of the oven,  
Like a fish from its stream, wavering,  
Wavering  
Like south-Florida crime fiction;

And late at night again, like a zoetrope,  
Lapping the orchid in bed, using my tongue like  
A katydid,  
The aphids hooting on their well-purchased  
Stands,

Diana- Diana with her banner flowing;  
And the sea is peaceful, and the sea is beaten  
Like amusement we lay across,  
And I take Diana  
Hand in hand  
Dripping of sauce and bloods  
all the way to the fountains of my love.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way We Believe

This doesn't have to be the way we believe in  
For us to die:  
I will never at all know what it means to be newly escaped  
From Mexico,  
Where the snow falls and is pricked right away by  
Windmills,  
And then comes down like camel tears, like cigarettes in the  
Taught billfolds of coquets,  
While the alligators wait by themselves, until all of that summer  
Is finally packed up;  
And the guts of the tourists are sucked in,  
And the treats are laid off for long contemplations of the  
Cenotaphs fanning themselves in the most  
Feral amusements of the waves,  
As right this way all of this had to happen, shameful,  
Even as the next of the hurricanes was turning around,  
And husbands and wives tried to survive together lost from  
The perfumes of  
The vanishing orchards, their copper cannons once green,  
Now emptily venomous and looking out across the definably  
Slender lakes of those canals,  
And having their way with themselves, and everything else  
That I am sure of rotted away,  
Like right off the rinds of her green kilns that were even still  
Trying to remember the luxury of the rhymes of her favorite color,  
Even though they didn't have anything else by which to live;  
And the conquistadors came, lustrously courting the stewardesses  
Who dusted across the sky like luxurious sieves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Way You Kiss Yourself

Even now all the night shines, and you don't call me:  
These are my silly wishes to world that knows nothing at all of  
Them,  
These are the most silent of prayers, the candles inside their  
Bushels,  
Placed to the lips of the grotto where I can here you  
Basking,  
And doing the laundry, or making your love to your mother  
Inside the rose bushes:  
And I will wait for you until I starve, Alma.  
As all of my art resounds like a single firecracker in the air,  
And then comes down in no wind at all over a baseball diamond  
Naked of players,  
As the world turns its dials by degrees, and the wind chimes smother  
The butterflies, the mountains cry their cricks,  
And the airplanes kick the dust of the skies:  
I don't know anymore, any more beautiful words for you,  
And I seem to crest like the fire on a wave just as your brown eyes  
Are coming up and are about to see:  
The way you kiss yourself before them and then look away  
Infinitely.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wealth She Has Stolen

Lost in the bivouacs of a fruit orchard,  
Saying goodbye to a make-believe wife while the  
Sun showers slick the ladders  
And the day laborers come down, tanning repeatedly,  
And eating golden delicious:  
What will they go home with, but gold fish in their  
Pockets:  
Up the cinderblock steps, the house cats and their  
Wives waiting for them to read golden books  
To the soft dreams of their children  
Even while outside there is no more traffic, and the moon  
Comes out of her mines with all of the wealth she has stolen.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weather In Which He Comes

I can line up things and squinting shoot:  
Knights will hang from their trees crackling like clams,  
Like mailboxes waiting for the mail;  
And I can line up things to sell:  
Everyday bodies returning to their mausoleums, bodies of blue  
Bells but also pure joy,  
Boys in wheelchairs, girls in curls and weaves:  
The darker their skins are the smaller the houses, but also the  
Closer to the seas:  
And I wake up on the Gold Coast and listen to the beating of  
Spears on shields;  
And I can look out my window to see the cradle of hurricanes  
Because that is where they are birthing,  
Curling like water snakes soon to slip across the yard underneath  
Her heels:  
They go so far away to kiss her mouth, as she lounges outside  
Open bloused like a weather vane,  
Lips bending like wildflowers smelling the weather in which he  
Comes.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weathers Dressing Their Weddings

Now the bodies are gold and the fish are lost,  
And I have my own house:  
I work at my parents' fruiteria which spans almost a block:  
The cars and airplanes go their own separate ways,  
While I miss you, Alma:  
So much that I am curled up in a ball on my floor listening  
The air-conditioning and the other untrue bluenesses of the world-  
While I have been to the crests of mountains,  
While you have never been to Disney World: when there are so many  
Places I would hope to take you Alma:  
Alma, I want to hold your hand in mine, as we walk through those  
Places,  
And place my tongue together with your silly places, and call you fine:  
And call you mine, Alma, whilst the electricity makes love to the  
Lightning on the trams, Alma, and we can follow their  
Sparks all the way home,  
And make love in the jubilations muted by all the boisterousness of  
All the weathers dressing their weddings in so much rains.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Weathers Of Better Things

I want to love you in the silence of a bus  
Broken down behind the school yard,  
And kidnap you and take you back there into  
The burned down  
Memories of my youth- as a companion for  
My truancy:  
I want you to have the same scars that  
I have, anytime:  
And I want to steal fireworks with you, and go out  
With you in the madness of the latest darkness  
Over the suburbia abandoned by all of your  
Sisters  
Running, translucent ribboned on up to their  
Universities:  
And I want to lie there in the oil slicks with  
The alligators grinning,  
On our backs admiring the jewelry of airplanes  
And other things I cannot find without you-  
Even though you don't live there anymore:  
For the daylight has eaten you with all of your  
Fine sisters,  
And made evaporations of your confections, leaving  
The schoolyard to dance without you-  
And hoping for the weathers of better things.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weather's Sorrows

Raindrops rush to kiss their shadows;  
On the street, the ineffective weaponry of little tears,  
They become something else,  
The stanzas to the prism's blush,  
And the joy invades the puddles where the  
Shadows are smothered, and the raindrops splatter  
And lose themselves in the crowds of effluvious reflections;  
The muddy eddies of the nameless insignificance  
No one drowns in.

Then the street is so busy it cannot stop to save  
The wavering shadows of indecisive weather,  
Though the form of the world remains unchanged,  
With neither heat nor frost added, though  
The energy changes sides many times in the little wars,  
And it is true that for awhile everything lives,  
And then for a very long while everything dies,  
Then souls are annexed to their secret rooms,  
And the bones of kings and serfs grin together  
Under the mealy bogs.

Though imagine the mysterious joy I can find in  
The weather's sorrows, the cold tips of liquid arrows  
Send the sparrows to their nettled roosts;  
And house cats meowing to their masters' stoops,  
But if I keep enough time outside by the weighing window,  
I will see her pass by and recognize what she is;  
For a moment, a dropp of rain walking in the shallow sky,  
Before she is forever changed inside the over spilling  
Buckets of her noisy metropolis;

Coming back to her in a dream,  
She continues falling without reason except  
That is what she is, a weathered tear dropp in the shallow sky,  
An inexpensive joy I must recognize before I too  
Am constantly changed.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weathers That Never Loved Me

Spindling its cleverness, the weather of such joy uncoils,  
And you can see it through the living room's  
House,  
How the guts of the world spills like tin trumpets in the  
Deeply saturated field,  
Hoodwinked by brothers who are at war with themselves,  
Clouded with passengers,  
As the green horns and the coral snakes roil; and I suppose  
There is some mountain far away parked straight against  
A sea,  
And there are little houses up her slopes filled with little  
Girls who never even saw the weathers that never loved me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weddings Of The Dry And Foreboding Land

Horses drinking down at the river.  
Horses of dead men, or you can never be sure  
If they aren't speaking to the woman of blue,  
Speaking over her infinite mane,  
This woman of opulent rain:  
She seems to peel straight through the trees;  
It seems that they are bowing to her,  
And yet there is no story recited of her criminal  
Death,  
How she cried herself that way and separated the  
Country from the boys;  
And airplanes leapt over her, but they were just  
Sad little toys;  
And no math could enter her,  
But the horses came with their saddle bags of  
Sand,  
And she opened up her throat and reached out her hand;  
And she ran until she rightly disappeared into the tendrils  
Of the weddings of the dry and foreboding land.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weedy Tombs

Sore wounds of hopscotch:  
The sunstones blistering their lips only on their cousin  
Tomb stones:  
The whole world a type writer being thrown-  
Roses dying in a bottle of red:  
The whole world the scribble of what I wrote,  
Trying to bleed forever what she said:  
And she drives home again with him,  
When she never even wanted to leave:  
The mechanical reindeer foraging on the stony lip of  
A suburban river,  
Their masters far away, tucked behind the garage:  
The children returned from school:  
Tucked in;  
The grapes on the vine that the alligators' grin:  
And airplanes in the sky,  
As is the golden rule: sky writers proselytizing Jesus  
With smoky jizz over the highway  
As the traffic streams with their own delusions:  
And the tractors in their fields-  
With my love lost on her way to work- the mice are  
Gossiping, the midgets give gifts in the  
Palmettos down from which the canals yearn slowly  
Up from which the buttercups grow,  
Attracting the clowns with bleeding souls-  
In the unfurling yards which blossom as they are mowed;  
As the horses are groomed  
Over the weedy tombs of the immortally wounded.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weeks Of The Sea

Made of clairvoyant tattoos in the bitter-hearted forest,  
As this way all of the well transvested knight run,  
Pooling their numbers,  
Blue and purple hearted—as the waves foam and fumble,  
Until the last of them is wounded and heartbroken upon the steps  
Of the forest,  
One time lover of the sea—He goes down into her, tip-toeing:  
And she beckons him, open throated,  
Throwing her bosoms at his chest,  
Never thinking of the times we had together—as the sun burns  
His acolytes through the surf, wishing but once that he had a single one  
Of her priorities—as she sings to them, wishing to become surer  
Towards her—so they swim, salty-throated—echoing men from their  
Abandoned ships—and she catches them and knots them  
And gives them all of the weeks of the sea to amend their love  
For her—smiling as she does all the time at me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weeping Offspring

I love the playoffs in the sky;  
Its where the popular kids make their name.  
Bottled, her lips taste  
Like red lightning  
The last day we saw each other.  
She kissed my neck, but not hard enough:  
Alice is in the hospital,  
Surrounded by the weeping offspring  
She is still going to die  
Of stage four cancer.  
There are many things that die  
Which go unseen from the stage  
Without a jot- The Abyssal Planes  
Hold a multiplexed neighborhood  
Where her legs never sweated  
As they passed me by  
Like peppermint candy  
Swizzled by my honey's lips.  
If she doesn't love me,  
I should not cry,  
For there is someone she will love  
Who will bear her children to see  
Her out one day  
In the afternoons when I skipped school,  
And it is my fault I was never good  
At equations of this certain kind.  
All I know is I have seen her from afar,  
And loved her as I should,  
Sweltering like a mirage in short shorts  
Before the curtain fell  
Without an encore.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Weight In Me

She said that she would say she loved me:  
He has two children anyways; and she lives with seven other  
Family members in a house no smaller than mine,  
But one that they cannot afford: and this is the New America,  
Sung to by a ghost who can never live again;  
This is the petit mort of my new art,  
In its casual catastrophe who by the twilight of whatever fireworks  
There are left to spend is always ruining my liver;  
And I can, and I have made love to her; but who ever thought  
Back in high school that I would ever be making love to  
A real live Mexican girl, light enough to fly- the fulcrum for  
The existence of my inebriated poetry: I don't even need to drive:  
She is all that I have to pray, and she feeds me the overpriced  
Food that I buy for her, each of us indulging in the self involved  
Mirages of our glimmering eyes: hers even deeper than my own;  
And come tomorrow I will see her again at the fruit market,  
And the coppery meat plating her bones; and sometimes when we  
Don't even know it, we sit relaxing in the same air-conditioning  
Of different theatres in the same movie house;  
And we relax together like hunters in the colonnades of an over manned  
Forest which always tries to sing her away from me; but she is  
My art, as little as it is: she barely ways a hundred pounds,  
But Alma is all that is the weight in me.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Well Viewed Sighs Of Beating Hearts

The foreplay of young lovers  
Dances before the moaning tower.  
The ghost in despair can see  
The courting in the silver glade-  
His eyes are the daggers which  
Reveal the flesh of his focus.  
He would tear down the tower  
To fly free,  
But his form has no power,  
And all that is left for him  
Is the subject of his purgatory.  
When the sun is just a cut  
Bleeding through the woods,  
And they lie cusped in pollination,  
Then in ceaseless perambulations  
The specter exercises his punishment.  
All is useless but his eyes,  
Those that he can ever see but never touch  
The living world pressing flesh  
Into the intimacy of reproductive feeling  
When his body lies in a restless place  
Like a crocodile's skull  
The sterile cenotaph of metamorphosis,  
Now the futile incarnation  
Imprisoned by the unobtainable breathing,  
The well viewed sighs of  
Beating hearts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wet Lips Of Strange Storms

You asked me why I had so many candles, when I don't  
Even know all of the saints,  
But I've been decorating for you, like the pretty colors under  
The naked belly of el arco iris,  
To try and call you home across the yards of a far away  
Deminsion,  
Even though I cannot speak fluently in your language:  
We both have seen Christmas trees and made love in different  
Sorts of penumbras,  
And we both hide creatures of shells in our room because I bought  
Them together at a thrift store,  
And then separated them for us: And the same rainstorms share our  
Houses.  
And your children play through the caresses and scabbed knees of  
Your carpet just as I still turn plastic stewardesses out tumbling on  
My paper jets:  
And I can look over my wall and see a sparse statuary;  
And I can breathe in the places that you have walked and told me  
That you cannot leave your children fatherless,  
But you left all of Mexico on the bus like a welded casket down a  
Stone river;  
And now how the nameless hills weep for you, the rattlesnakes  
Striking out at the looseness of your shadows  
That disperse under the wet lips of strange storm clouds that are  
Now so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Whale Bones In The Harbor

By the jeweled crown,  
And the whale bones in the harbor:  
The way the crow looks up,  
Perched on the stones- and hold their  
Eyes like cold  
Jewelry the children walk underneath  
Unassuming of the words  
I might use for her,  
To fill up coffins- to flood and  
Hold over;  
And shadows are in the park;  
And the dog has no master, but it goes  
This way, and eyes the waves as they loll:  
And they seem to be coming back to her  
From far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wheeling Transoms

Through the playgrounds of a sibilant school yard  
We say things about who we are:  
The cars come together as if for communion, their bodies  
Growing older but with no more wisdom,  
And the tired salesmen collapse into the entry ways of  
Graveyards  
Even while the day seems to be hooded with a cap of  
Gold,  
And all the big pictures are playing in the cool and the darkness:  
Alma with her children in a silver dream,  
Like the phosphorous veins that spindle through a disrupted  
Sea:  
I would reach down to keep her body on the surface like a brown  
Leaf:  
I would metamorphosis into a paper boat just to come together  
And kiss her ochre ridges,  
And to smell her through the sounds of airplanes,  
All the way from the soft forests of Mexico- all the long and  
Embarrassing ways she came by bus, pregnant with  
Michael,  
Her eyes looking through the wheeling transoms, seeing so  
Far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Whispers Of Her

Naked apples and candy canes- No one is going  
To the fair,  
But the clouds are not gone- they are hanging there,  
And the road down beneath them, reflecting their  
Shadows,  
As she sheds her skin- and then goes to sleep underneath  
The overpass,  
While the sea brushes the whispers of her to him.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Whispers Of The Butterflies

Down in that chasm where the dragon remains  
Nameless,  
Wasting another quarter- the willow sprigs buoyantly  
Expecting to save another man:  
Well, we made love a week ago, but I wonder if  
We will ever have the chance to make love again:  
The levitations of bread across a window,  
The flight paths of the unseen- Still, she levitates  
So wonderfully, dreaming the undream-  
And I stand still to caress her, my muse of the hapless  
Deficiencies:  
I stand here in strange unfamiliarity of my household  
Waiting for a kiss from her,  
Waiting for the ice-cream to melt for dolphins,  
As the traffics drive around her world- spirally,  
Echoing as if call girls at prom- soon they will be married  
And then divorced: soon they will be calling up the  
Echoes of their misspent wishes,  
And I will follow them like the footsteps of horses  
Through the castles where the whispers of the butterflies  
Still come and play.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Whispers Of Their Birthdays

The foundations of your barcodes look good  
From here- they seem to be sleeping in their windowsills,  
Just like the wives you have chosen  
While the traffic drives all night, especially the trucks  
Of housewives,  
But I have fed all of my bread to the lips of  
The sumo goldfish- I have fed all of my wrists to  
The orange angels who arent even a primary color:  
I believe there are only two or three primary colors,  
As the midnight comes  
With its blind sun, and swims in the rugs of my  
Kindergarten  
Like tulips falling their during night time:  
Falling their, trying to figure out whom I love,  
Or what love was stolen from me,  
While in their estranged grottos, the dolphins play  
Their games beautifully,  
And the virgins light the candles in the whispers  
Of their birthdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The White Mountains

Roads into narcolepsy:  
Returning into that land after all of the fireworks  
Are sold,  
And their holidays forgotten in their fashion:  
Even the birds have  
Migrated,  
Eating the ferris wheels of butterflies along their  
Way:  
Going here where arrows lie amidst the  
Silver mountains  
Where Geronimo used to smoke in golden rings:  
Where once there was so much trouble,  
But now there is only movie theatres that show  
One movie a week under  
Green lights  
And the sundials of the cliff dwellers and their  
Dried sun in the canyons of human sacrifice:  
And tourists, sometimes,  
Who don't want to get as high up as Colorado:  
Yes, they come here too-  
Taking their children amidst the faeries' woods;  
And the bears lick their lips,  
Wondering if they should talk to them- it is where  
I spent five years of my post adolescents  
And felt myself in the vanishing woods  
Underneath the stolid graveyards where my  
Grandmother is, underneath the white mountains.

Robert Rorabeck



# The White-Washed Sea

White bread and white maids,  
Marmalade and sugar tarts: stick me  
High atop the citrus tree,  
Like a paper airplane, paper nose pointing  
The way to the white-washed sea:  
Pretty dolls and forget-me-nots,  
Ivory beavers slapping dams,  
Lover-boys in snowy trams making their  
Procession to the white-washed sea:  
Tourists there, Mickey-Mouse, and fricassee,  
Conquistadors jounced on vanilla poles,  
Saints and crosses like Spanish scarecrows on  
Concrete atolls, bleed anemically towards  
The white-washed sea: Hills of windmills are  
Picaresque, lovely cherries on her white washed-  
Breasts, bones of birds and pica ninnies;  
Aunts sing cantos at their nieces nurseries,  
Pale and freckled and on their knees,  
Girls who'd been roller-skating as if on foam,  
Stop and pray to the white-washed sea;  
Pick themselves up, adjusting their silky delicates,  
Before rolling home, to sit cross-legged smoking  
Candied cigarettes and gossiping underneath the  
Sky's crenulated dome, eyes so lost and hopeless,  
All fair and so lonely, yet well-perceived,  
Searching for some solutions across the white-washed sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Whole D@mned Sky

The clouds are happy to have  
Both their ears,  
And they rise up, rise up  
Like kings-  
I have delivered pizzas under  
Clouds,  
Gossiping,  
Ringing doorbells,  
Spuming rain-  
I have run with my dogs and  
Howled,  
And practiced witchcraft  
To gain you by the pitiless clouds;  
Sat and powwowed,  
And become possessed  
By sweet water demons;  
All to no avail-  
I have failed under clouds because  
Never once have I kissed you or  
Even held your hand underneath  
Any cloud in  
The whole d\$mned sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wide Open Correspondence Of The Sweet Young Earth

Drink while you're awake-  
And don't forget to spell, or bring your love  
Bouquets.  
Soon it will be science-fiction: soon it will  
Be unreal.  
She'll be a unicorn- narcoleptic in an office  
Building; she'll be a literary agent for romance  
Novels,  
And I can only remember that I am doing this  
Because I have seen my reflection in the mirrors  
Of so many humid rest-stops  
In states I had never been to; and to tell the  
Truth, pirates are really beautiful with candles  
Burning in their beards,  
Even after they're captured and garroted and  
Made an example of, they are still beautiful-  
Even if every last one of my novels should fail,  
I can still cross the low bridges where soft-shelled  
Tortoises are sleeping, escaping from the zoo:  
Haven't they, and the wildlife is so close, and the  
Fact that they have pin-ball makes it all right and  
Quite beautiful that you are out of work, and scarred,  
And not made for friends- You have three decades  
And a record and you are just now getting around to  
Reading The Jungle Book- Cheap rum does this to you,  
Makes you soliloquy sugar cane fields and comets  
Newly tossed from planets where her venereal diseases  
Are still burning: The paciderms still remember  
The otherworldly hemispheres, every roller coaster  
In the world where the gunpowder sweethearts, the  
Girls from antebellum cannons are still roaring,  
And like naked waves they go exploring mindless,  
Like the things you think to feel from the roots of your  
Finger-prints:  
Your short lived pets, dogs and foxes, querulous friends,  
Noses pressed to the dirt of dead ancestors,  
Tails wagging to go and explore the wide open correspondence

Of the sweet young earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wide, Wide Canal

With my dogs so far away,  
I really want to commit  
Suicide:  
It seems the most angelic thing to do,  
Surrounded  
By these cars and vultures.  
There is a gun in the back of my father's  
Diesel truck,  
Isn't there:  
That f%cking truck cost him 50,000  
Or something,  
And he wanted 50,000 from me for his  
Horses  
Or he was going to kick me out,  
But I only get paid 100 dollars for a 50 hr  
Day,  
And I really want to get out of this  
Truck into another one,  
And shoot myself in the mouth to slide  
Down that other  
Holy river of razor blades,  
Because it seems so much more glorious sitting  
There rich and full of goats  
Basking on the other side of the wide,  
Wide canal.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wild Flower Graveyard Of Your Mother's Womb

Centrifugal  
Esplanades-  
The land turns like  
A reptilian hum-job;  
Seasonal amusements  
In outer space-  
Some of them have died;  
But the others' filaments  
Burn so brightly  
You couldn't tell:  
That we are even now  
Dying-  
But the Universe is a rubber  
Band, once snapped  
The dead will walk  
The earth backwards,  
And we will play cowboys  
And Indians  
On the green floor under  
The ceiling fan  
Until you are so innocent,  
Blessed to disavow any of  
This-  
Returned to the wild flower  
Graveyard  
Of your mother's womb.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wilder Beasts

Then they have friends who make love too:  
Over the house- over the zoo:  
While the winos nuzzle, and the mountains blue: and then the nights  
Get real cold  
And I think of you: Alma- all warm in your body,  
As in your soul, slipping in your dreams down into the unnamed  
Reservoirs of Mexico:  
While I try to do good work for you, licking off my wounds,  
Sitting in the graveyard or my living room:  
And the rains have stopped- and the traffic doesn't make a sound:  
A girl stood beside me today underneath the tent  
And talked to me where the Christmas trees stood:  
But I could only think of the absence in your brown eyes:  
Of how everyone was moving away, accounting to themselves,  
While the overeager swing sets of my childhood were  
Being taken down:  
And your body verily swam- like an otter in the lust of the sea:  
While its favorite color started to take the shape of a novel,  
Or of the effortless kite that your father gave to me-  
While the horizon was just beautiful: while conquistadors were  
Eating themselves; and either the lions yawned or roared-  
And their young multiplied beside the roadway  
That the tourists adored- and the wilder beasts kept track, and  
Took account of themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wilderness We Abandon

Lakes abandoned to the afternoon,  
All humanity having left the wilderness  
Leaving but the contemplative basins  
Reflecting the verdure  
Almost on the verge of a past emotion,  
Like the tear kept in the eye of a dead man  
As he is buried:

I like to look at you like this  
When my wife and child are out walking  
In the last of the afternoon  
And a melancholy sunlight sweeps through  
The knees of this house—

Ethereal muse,  
Now you consume my passing art,  
Stealing my senses away from empiricism's habits—  
I enjoy lingering on the edge of your  
Abandoned habitat  
Until the humane desires, re-entering  
With slothful pursuits of night

And I put myself to bed amidst the  
Stagnant shadows,  
The crypt that lingers upon your nature,  
The promise of a never unfolding kiss  
Kept inside the wilderness we abandon.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Windchimes Of My Girlfriend

There she is like a seahorse attending bar-  
Underneath the halogens of the football stadium like a  
Lighthouse:  
She trawls through the night laughing with her brown  
Eyes, serving drinks to freshmen and  
Poltergeists- while my wounds get out like zeppelins from  
The rose bushes, and they pull themselves like  
A red wagon across campus- the wind chimes of my  
Girlfriend mutely perverse, and I sing to her  
To the library and to the other places that I think do not  
Want to let her in.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Windows Of Concrete

Returning to the purple ness at the end of the show-  
At the noose of the cul-de-sac,  
Into that beautiful teardropp that is turning around to  
Reintroduce the eye-  
As the alligator watches, as the canoes slow step:  
Across the soft shells, and the blue gills,  
The sugar cane is burning where you cannot go,  
Not because you cannot get there, but because you  
Think it is impossible- and there are no  
More windmills to keep turning on unfathomable  
Hills-  
Or the Indians beneath them, sloshing gin-  
Beside pregnant coyotes- where the sky is all white  
And dead, and the airplanes fly through the shrouds  
Like ghosts changing clothes;  
And you go down, but it is impossible to remember the  
Last breath you made, the angels hiding behind  
The windows of concrete,  
The estuaries devoid of still beating hearts, or  
Anything that can move.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Windows Of The Women

Broken into the windows of the women that  
Are so open hearted,  
They wished, they hoped  
That we would condone them—and open them  
Like tourists departing a graveyard to arrive at  
Disney World  
So swift and thwarted:  
But I have seen the islands: I have seen the Keys  
And they have birthed before us,  
All bended bowed and subtled kneed:  
And I have almost wished to kiss you,  
Though my open throat had been so filled with  
Roses and the day and the night so  
Filled—filled with  
Their sweep supposed,  
And so this midnight burns in seething junctions—  
Even in my ghosts have to sell bottle rockets  
from their primal decompositions—  
I will be alright for another mile or two:  
I will carry my own death's head to the picnics of your  
Graveyards,  
Even if we have to stutter our own time or two—even  
If our own fiction numbers are rubbed off—  
At least it will look pretty  
A time or two  
As the rainbows in their own tennis courts—  
And then, eventually,  
Even their own numbers have to fade—as the ribbons  
shed off their near perfect elbows—  
As in a ribbon in her own dream of spider webs—  
And this becomes my lesser know dream in her European  
Fiction—  
It yet proves that my own shadows can dance, perpetually  
And alone in an unseemly ballroom of their own  
Benediction.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Winds Blew

She, muse, tried so hard in the diligence of  
Heterosexuality:  
The makeups she put on when she didn't really have to.  
Girls name  
Sharon are always beautiful, under the ceiling fans  
Of the emergency room,  
Their families blown to the four corners of the bedroom  
Like crippled lovers;  
And the sun flared up like a green science-fiction,  
And she brought her lover to her like an heirloom of a broach;  
While I passed the liquor around belly deep in  
Waves,  
The traffic hurrying over head, and the sky masturbating;  
But I was alone, and she was thoroughly affixed to the cantinas  
Of the roam,  
And the university spilled over and gave her a greater séance to  
Choose from.  
I could have had any of my aunts, or the ladies who love  
Arbitrarily in the gardens of mailboxes after crepuscule,  
But I wanted the sweet little dark haired girl  
With pinched nerves and thigh-high tan lines; but she was always  
Casting up river,  
Spilling her roe into the pollinations of evergreens;  
And she found her man all skinny and tight roping the Appalachian's  
Skree,  
And loved him there forever as I wished her forever to love me;  
And the moon made love in the snow  
Across the gentle slopes where the horses whispered  
And the winds blew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wind-Thrown Bottles

Warm as the cantaloupes rolled from  
Beneath the trees—  
Sweltering there, somewhere abandoned  
In the upper armpit of Florida—  
Perhaps in the dream of  
A crocodile that was never born:  
Somewhere now,  
Wayward latchkey—  
Perfect in his abeyances lost  
To the billboards of amusement park,  
Assured to over ripen in the weeds,  
Virginal, never to taste the  
Caresses off the lips of housewives:  
Lost there to the serpents  
As to the flies—  
Like a bachelor in his lonely studio  
Filled with an overabundance of sunlight:  
The joy in the room bloating him until  
He awakens,  
Scourged and overly sweetened—  
In his final moments enjoying the reflections  
Of sweaty rainbows,  
The prisms birthed from the slanted and  
Stolen refractions off the wind-thrown bottles.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wings Of Beautiful Grasshoppers

As a course, these people spill their desires far beneath  
The sun:  
This is the way they've been doing it since the world was  
Young,  
And none of it feels anymore sincere enough to be  
Real,  
But it is the only way that I still know how to feel:  
And the sun has been coming up and kicking itself around,  
Attended by its harems of  
Clouds and supermen: while through it all most of us all go  
Through it all but anonymous,  
And we breathe our wildest dreams away at the movies  
Until the night comes and we can lie all together, all the many  
Now faceless breathing in the deepest shadows underneath the  
Overpasses of our cities;  
And that is when the real joy blooms, when we cannot even  
See to feel our bodies:  
And we make love, and the angels watch us, as the waves  
Caress themselves on the other side of our shoulders  
That we rub together steadily like branches of the wings of  
Beautiful grasshoppers just to keep warm enough to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wings Of Long Necked Ghosts

I grew you into a child that had no whim,  
That light refracted everything I had broken you  
In,  
And the customers came in like animals into  
An arc  
In a super swift sea of cars,  
And old teachers who were always tired or  
Forever sick,  
And your knees conjoined like a Siamese  
Lime tree  
Where the herons galloped and the sea caracoled,  
Where a super special secret was buried beneath  
That no one neither thought nor cared to know,  
But then kindergarten was over and we were  
Forced to rejoin the rivers,  
Fast and so-  
You graduated into a harem of a god that all the  
Little tales cry over,  
While my sour tree whispers, whispers with the  
Wings of long necked ghosts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Winters Here

I will write another line as a salute to you—abandoned  
Muse—where are you now,  
But across from here, missing your weekend boy as you  
Miss a new car:  
You have lost both and I am married:  
Your man rides you like a spark—sharp wheel  
That turned with you out from Mexico—  
What kind of utility you keep together I cannot know:  
I only had to bring you one Christmas tree  
Before it was time for life to move on.  
And when it doesn't snow in the winters here  
You do not feel so far away.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Wiser Of The Few

Epitaphs prick with blood,  
And each dropp is a hidden chain,  
Woven by the puckish goddess,  
Who chooses her men whimsically  
Back when this hemisphere was just a nebula-  
In the shapes of O'Keefes' glorious  
Floral throats, exploding,  
Saying the hidden name repeatedly,  
Like a gun going off over the mysterious hills,  
Killing the glutinous wolves one at a time:  
And putting the orchestra back up in the air,  
The harmony of the new born kids  
Who have yet to choose the color they will be:  
The pastoral bloom of the unconscious genius  
Drooling on his goose down pillow  
Before the army comes to burn the house,  
And requisition the livestock of his bucolic nocturnes:  
Against the attic's darkened window,  
And the blown out candle a waxy antimatter,  
Absolving the absence of faith limpidly;  
About the heavens' nightstand,  
The scientists patter like ghosts, or albino mice;  
And she is still there:  
Sometimes a nightingale, but more often a housecat,  
Tamed by the durations of eons,  
Like a grandmother, weary but still in love  
With the sleepers who lie down beneath the sill  
She cleans herself, and occasionally remembers  
To make a meal out of the wiser of the few.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishes Of Little Boys Who Enjoy Leaving This World

While on their honeymoon they eat honeydew and buy  
Fireworks—they stop for a while and eat lunch  
On a hill: they are filled with the premonitions of nursery rhymes:  
And they are coming forward to go back again—  
Aren't they so beautiful, like wishes swinging towards those things  
Which cannot be fulfilled- What a glowing species  
That spill their children like caviar and pearls onto their front  
Yards while the housecats sleep in the aloe—  
It is a beautiful place they can remember to live in—with an  
Orange tree in the backyard—and churches across the canal—  
But they can only escape to here when they have vanished  
From everyone else—  
And the houses of light stand along the road like soldiers on  
Point, as the rockets slip above their crowns—  
The wishes of little boys who enjoy leaving this world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishes Of Lucky Change

Wounded in glorious battle on the cheek  
Like a star fruit in some anonymous class in the middle  
Of a round robin high school-  
Failing gym, and slipping from the trapeze of her eyes,  
Remembering her there in the yard where the cenotaphs  
Breathe,  
Like petrified men embattled in the summer landscaping,  
The busses turning around and taking away behind them  
A youth they will never see again-  
As youngish lovers sweat like blue jays in the afternoons  
In their beds,  
Collecting there in the sports of a wishing well,  
The wishes of lucky change metamorphosed into goldfish.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishes Of One Or Two More Birthdays

No longer negotiable as if from the summer pools:  
All the paper jacks of autumn crescendo and blow away the papers  
Of resolved news:  
The billboards are bit by a plague, and the world continues on a journey  
Of enamorous gravity: while the sun expands like  
A yellowing wolf fighting traffic:  
And maybe by this time next year, Alma will have forgotten me:  
Run off with another man, her brown skirts skipping to and from  
Mexico underneath the out of work constellation that gives so little  
Its many: maybe she will no longer fear my love at  
This time next year, or by the wishes of one or two more birthdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishes Of The Lighthouse

In these last hours while the flowers enfold, or in fact  
They die into new bodies by morning,  
You lay down with him, though tell me that you love me:  
You've had two children from his loins fitted like fireworks  
Or paper craft into yours,  
Like airplanes who conjoin in the outposts of Titans  
Atop of mountains in their beds of corporeal love  
Above the universities  
Into which you never strove; and I get a good look out at you  
By drinking my bottle every day, by which I sing my songs of  
The grave;  
And everything falls down a little more: the trucks coming in  
The middle of the night down the wrong way of a one way street:  
And you make love to him:  
You have his initial on your left hand, where you now wear  
My ring: and I think of, Alma, and try not to drown, hoping in my  
Last desperate throws to see the wishes of the lighthouse  
As I strive to sing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishes Of The Thieves

Newest stem in the garden:  
Arisen—centerfold: don't worry that the airplanes  
Will never look down to see you:  
They cannot see where they are going anyways:  
They are just taking off:  
Be a senseless joy, and pricy—  
Like fireworks:  
This is your route up to heaven and no one can take  
It away from you—even my own ineptitude  
Cannot fail you—  
For, though my senses grew you—I am lost in  
The labyrinth:  
Even though I do not watch television, I see too  
Many movies:  
And I love you: I love you just as if this was my  
Birthday and from the wishes of my lips  
I grow you like an ember—  
Like a center of the pyramids—this becomes your geometry  
Until that is all there is to look forward too—  
And though the fair becomes gone,  
And the streets swept—I linger for you— and wait for  
You like a prayer of the last wish until you  
Come out and perfume the night as a birthday present  
For the wishes of the thieves who continued  
To linger.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishes That Lingered

Comely failures who fade in time,  
Bent with her soft skirts, brown stems in  
The street-  
What ribbon of what handlebar do you come  
From, tasseled- brown skin,  
Muse of honey- laughing dulcet:  
I knew of the visions you planted in me using  
The teeth of coral snakes-  
Soft poisons, you took a year to mollify me-  
That is what it takes,  
While the sky curdles as the flies take to  
Abandoned venison-  
And the memories of your coital skeleton overran  
My lamentable garrison- we failed each other  
Together, as your family  
Burned for a little while like a lighthouse crippled  
By the sea- just as long as I remember you,  
Until the wishes that lingered were finally so wished  
Out of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishes That Never Was

Thirty three years to divide all of this stuff:  
Burning up the newspaper of my open wrists and armpits  
To keep warm,  
Or to be recognized by the mermaids all curling in their  
Pits,  
While I've made them underneath the overpasses:  
And, recognizing their perfumes,  
I call them all up from the over priced rhymes of orange  
Fields,  
And undress them into baseball diamonds- while my  
Mind is gone,  
And the field is not blue- the field is not blue,  
Because my muse is being turned out by another man,  
And all of this is the day gone Shakespeare out on double  
Display in the dime store courts of another man's  
Ferris wheel:  
And there she goes, and there she comes again,  
Taking off her cloths, and putting them on again, and yet  
Singing so sweetly, as the world slips around my ears,  
Taking off her clothes again, unbudding her roses,  
And swearing up the streets that the airplanes wish they  
Were stamping  
That she will be around again, only so that her gardens will  
Finally have to lay off of her long hallucinations  
And have to take final rest in the long and glazed fields,  
Where the butterflies were superimposing- if only if because  
They are always lighter than air, and only if because  
That was always what they hoped they would one day asked  
To be changed into,  
While from them the days turned on, piling up their roses,  
And giving up their wishes even to the wishes that never was.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Wishful Face Of Our Forgotten Florida

I am trying to feel good-  
The way a bird must feel when laughing at kites,  
The way kindergarteners must feel on a really good fieldtrip:  
Newly weds in bed,  
A blushing bride- A teenager with braces and freckles who  
Gets her first bouquet from a boy:  
The same goodness for me was walking beside you through  
The middle of high school- Going across her face  
Where the teachers parked their cars:  
Feeling taller than you, and feeling your eyes along my  
Tallness and my jawbone: Feeling your approval,  
Which was such a flighty thing:  
You always had a boyfriend, and now you wear a ring:  
I am trying to feel good- How I remember one day we had a fire  
Drill and all the untried students went out together along the  
Esplanade before Green View Shores  
Where the alligators barely moved and the storks came  
Like tatters of white before the sea shelled nimbus;  
And you saw me, and left your boyfriend; you left your boyfriend  
And sat by me while I was under some sickly newly planted  
Tree: and it comforted me in a way I haven't been comforted  
Since; You could never know who I wanted to be for you-  
And now you are married, and I haven't seen you since:  
But you comforted me once, like a fairytale that is awfully,  
Awfully far away; and that is the way I am trying to feel,  
While the storms continue to blow the comely tatters straight  
Across the wishful face of our forgotten Florida-  
You could never know....

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishing Wells Of Glitter

Pink clouds on  
A fieldtrip in a nude museum-  
Tourists on the island of  
West Palm Beach  
Take fieldtrips into my childhood-  
Taking snap shots of nude shells  
Images up in those imaginary things,  
The superflous aspects of things  
Which captivate scientists:  
These are the objects of my study,  
Out of reach,  
Of another realm: Platonic yet  
Broken in form  
Not worth a coin  
Thrown in the wishing well of glitter  
Or up to the ceiling her eyes once  
Brushed,  
Turning to greet the patrons on  
The shores of her makebelieve-  
Shadows of a corporeal form  
Belonging to another man.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishing Wells Of The Dimmly Lit Amusement Park

I cannot love in the shadow of mountains,  
Or the neon glow of fast food chains:  
They are the same thing,  
The moonlight falls upon the valleys, advertising:  
Like the winos who go on begging:

My father sells fireworks for a living;  
Like him, I sell things:  
When the day goes down, the night clouds,  
And the air-condition goes on humming:

Beautiful birds fly up to touch the wired joints  
Hung in the sky:  
The chicken wire hung there by the stars for  
Christmas:  
The beautiful stewardesses who metamorphosis  
Back into women as they melt back down

Into the penny canyons  
And the wishing wells of the dimly lit amusement park:

Rubbing our eyes, thinking the poem is over,  
Turning over in beds and then having to wake up for our  
Livings:

The best children caddie for the astronauts,  
But don't have to ask them for favors:

Here in the stucco and chicken wire valleys where  
Dolls play where we are lost,  
They awaken, animated for the morning  
And then, costumed,  
Disappear into their familiar and  
Radioactive haunts.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wishing Wells Preternatural Heavens

Underneath all of the popcorn knuckles of  
All of the Christmas trees,  
All of the knights fell- too busied from  
Kissing the eerie serpents  
In the bedchambers of all of their own  
Motels,  
Underneath all of the lights that had  
Forgotten, in their advertisings,  
To think of me:  
As the sea set out over the very shells  
Again,  
Remembering only their own aunts  
In the euphoria's  
Of their very own amusement- they became  
Another world again,  
Entirely, dressing their wings for their  
Very own casualties-  
And the world turn, throwing its  
Spitballs- and the clause heaved uproariously,  
As the lions cleaned their coats,  
And then fawned bashfully- until very soon  
The hummingbirds settled down over  
The wishing wells of the preternatural  
Heavens and seemed to dance into the very ballrooms  
Where I already supposed they could never learn.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Witches

Nothing yet to do but to distill  
My bone:  
Sweaty on the concrete the young  
Skeletons fart at their game,  
Chewing on the soft candies of their conquest,  
Out back on the basketball court of ruleless rusts  
Wanting to nip their teeth on harder reservoirs:  
Only freshmen in the gravities, they can see  
Those swervey females about to graduate from their cleomes,  
Their knowledge floating in sad bellied cloudbanks on the  
Backs of woven broomsticks:  
All the pretty witches awakened from their ditches,  
Their long black hair, their dark swaying eyes,  
Circling, circling, in their kind of spells:  
The young boys can barely drive,  
But they have a cherry red Super 88 Oldsmobile  
Leaking fumes they fumble guffawing like loony-tunes  
To the sea, to chase her down, the shadow  
She left behind her moted over the waves like  
The darkest complexion of a gaze inside a tent,  
The way the moon sneaks a peek through satiny pantaloons.  
They smoke in the grotto as the waves slip in,  
Each one a little bent of green, the claret crabs on their backs,  
The pallid fish out of their element;  
Next year there will be a cabaret of vodka,  
And the deformities of black snails hiding under concrete benches,  
Leaking their slicks like bodiless sex:  
They will smite, and they will run, and through the  
Classrooms chalkboard crypts cause they their sophomoric pandemonium.  
They will hypnotize chickens, and sleep under the broken  
Down bus when it rains, and tight rope across the canal  
To shoot of fireworks atop the milkmaid's house,  
But never again can they ever see the fortuitous entrails  
Of those lips, the higher educations of the state funded ditches,  
The long black tassels of the hoary bitches,  
Already married to their tree of hung knights,  
Who crawl out of suburban windows when the full moon bites,  
The tomfoolery damsels, the busty poison apples,  
The rich housewives in dark new engaging parades,

With their spotless tennis shoes pressed down on the gas,  
The swirvey females graduated from their cleomes,  
Forgotten in the sad lights invented by a celibate scientist,  
Their bodies in a bed of cleaned stitches,  
The prettiest young things, the witches.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Woebegone Nature

Moon dust in the tears of your own god—  
My cup is cracked, wanting to be a bowl  
For your vanity of seashells—  
How about you going home to him day to day,  
Young body awash in the browning fevers  
Of another dusk,  
Day lost behind you, like a terrapin vanishing  
Into the trailer parks or orange groves  
Slickening in the woebegone nature of  
Such blinding variety.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wolves And The Woodsmen

Now they've shown this architecture to their  
Queen they are going home,  
Pony-eared, long stemmed:  
Leaping, giddy sensed over whatever fields  
They find,  
Fitting between the fences, the pinwheels  
And the monsters in the cliffs  
Until they have to return again after midnight  
All of their heroes metamorphosed:  
And when they get to the spots of danger they  
Have to hold on for their dear lives  
As the stories become unfolded like the hoods  
Of uncountable cobras:  
Like vixens on the highways riding up to the  
Heavens: a Ferris Wheel of two many chances  
Coming around,  
Dousing in the fanfares of true believers,  
As the stewardesses sit in the bleachers sweating  
Of their perfumes equally to the wolves  
And the woodsmen who she guesses will make  
Good use, equally, of both of their turns.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Wolves Are Still Hungry

My liver laps up this fire like kittens do milk  
Like vampires:  
And I knelt on the other side of your vehicle today  
Alma  
And raising your pants leg kissed your ankle  
Which you somehow made me believe was the suppliance  
For a brown fairy:  
And you wore the gold that I fixed for you after it broke  
After the first time we made love:  
And I bought you roses clouded with the clouds of  
Tears the woodcutting angels sawed:  
And the airplanes went down to sniff and drink your burnished  
Hair:  
And it was not real- that you wear size extra small,  
But your eyes drink the world, and your two children have been  
Weaned off your two brown nipples;  
And the rabbits have disappeared, but I am so sorry,  
Alma,  
Because the wolves are still hungry.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Woman's Revolutions In The Dusky Park

Revolutions in the park at dusk:  
There is nothing neat about this,  
Except from a distance it looked clean,  
And her eyes lit up like soft bulbs  
Waiting for you on the swings:  
Walking toward her,  
There is a black man in the shadows  
Against her back applying pressure,  
Humming things you can't remember  
That you wrote last night:  
The best way is to forget,  
But with her tattooed it is not easy:  
You can piss in the mall's wishing well,  
But it will not take out the promises:  
This is where the juveniles sway,  
In the used lawn of well-trimmed clichés:  
Between high school and the rest of life,  
There is where she met you long ago,  
And held your hand not knowing  
How much like a bird's wing your grasp was:  
Fragile but able to fly,  
And she said your name several times,  
But did not know it:  
When she went away, it was inevitable,  
For there are places that stream in work  
Down the street with busy neat men taking charge:  
There is her encouraging religious sea she swims:  
Going away, her eyes are in red shift,  
As the zephyrs' lungs take you upwards  
Higher in the supersonic gusts  
The energy giant who flew too close to Helios:  
Your mothers flit here, and kissing you  
Take away the troublesome memories  
Of the woman's revolutions  
In the dusky park.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Womb Of This Immortality

Lay upon the earth  
against the ancestors' remains,  
hear her molten dirge,  
the womb of this immortality,  
a garden of human consciousness flows  
the civilized spring  
a result of many experiments  
of life  
now moves your new fingers  
along the open page.  
All that you see she breathes  
the ethers that cloud  
the rising continents,  
in her memory echoes the footsteps of creatures  
whose energy now roams  
the thoughtless exploration  
motivating your skeleton;  
In the beginning, you were on  
fire  
until she made a wish,  
blew you out and formed  
you, cooled you in the sea.  
Now lying like a frightened soldier amidst the dead,  
a somnambulist in occupations  
of self denial,  
upon the weedy bossom,  
she closes her eyes as clouds  
mount the sky;  
You can feel the struggling  
evolution,  
your future's brother  
kicking his ascendancy  
there amidst the nameless  
shoots of withering emerald,  
the womb of this immortality.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wonderful Ending For This Poem About Her

I want to sound like a good man,  
I would like to be, something dressing down for  
Summer,  
Conjoining with bodies that are so talented they make  
The rented sea envious,  
Going up, going down, the elevators of blue somnolence  
The easy mysteries,  
The ways that they sound coming and going, like  
A brotherhood of airplanes, and I wonder about all of those  
Sororities of stewardess making fun with their  
Lascivious occupations, looking up their beds so swell and  
Unmade, as good as they'd always been while going  
To classes on their bicycles;  
While I keep doing this, thinking about them all alone,  
And doing this now, like a tourist in heat, but never touching  
Myself anymore, laying off of that- trying to become the better  
Man the specializing scientist, the voyeur on Florida  
Cruises, the lion tamer in need when she comes scabbed kneed,  
Wanting someone to whip her good, draping down the from  
Everglades as I'd already written she would come,  
Glass in hand, smoking an invisible cigarette, lonely and thinking  
If only I was a better man, her pilot, or her pimp,  
And the world she lives in is so wide and amazing with colors  
Following her like a brilliant dog who can still never imagine how  
She sees the world, waving for long instances to relatives  
She never hopes to see again, just following her and wagging,  
Happily homeless in her steps,  
Forgetting anything else, especially the wonderful ending I'd  
Saved for this poem about her.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wonderfully Awesome Skies

And now this all is a tongue who's just been starving:  
And anyways I don't care;  
While if the whales had much less bellies, they would be leaping:  
Like mailman at their rare and common song,  
Like sommeliers at their keeping of the daycares of the petulance  
Of song:  
And I haven't so readily been tasting meat, while I have been out inside  
The forest of a thousand feet of sleepless sleep:  
And now I am here, and all of the way gone: while all of the day gone,  
It has been reading,  
And calling out of the coos of anyone spilling their way:  
As all of the housewives away sleepy eyed of their yokes, while all of my  
Day has been young, and gone and gone:  
Speaking for themselves like growling cars: mewling, and mewling said  
Atop of the hot kitchens of their hooves:  
And anyways I don't care;  
While if the whales had much less bellies, they would be leaping:  
Like mailmen at their rare and common songm  
Like sommeliers at their keeping of the daycares of the petulance  
Of some:  
And I haven't so readily been tasting meat, while I have been out inside  
The forest of a thousand feet of sleepless sleep;  
And now I am here, and all of the way gone; while all of the day gonem  
It has been reading,  
And calling out of the coos of anyone spilling their way:  
As all of the housewives away sleepy eyed of their yokes, while all of my day has  
been young, and gone and gone:  
Speaking for themselves like growling cars: mewling, and mewling said  
Atop of the hot kitchens of their hooves:  
And anyways they are all right here: and here they are all here right  
Now speaking for their wives, and speaking of their sorrows:  
And I've been waiting for you, anyhow:  
And in all of this land of plenty, and in all of this land, anyhow,  
Calling through the venisons through the young colors of their  
Young country: and I just want to spell, while all of your colors  
Are all smelted and I am made unreal anyways: while I am just  
The colors of your sea: coloring their diseased through their  
Friendly skies: and this isn't even gentle, anyways; this is just  
Anyways, dying, speaking for themselves through the kitchens of whatever

It was anyways, speaking, speaking anyways:  
Lying slantwise through the better ways of the often often awful  
Beautifully freed freedom of the wonderfully awesome skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wooden Theatre Of My Miniscule Amusement

Might I go on in whatever many axioms I find:  
Spooling, but also spendthrift- pennies of whizzing fires  
That amuse her like overworked fire-wheel midgets,  
Blowing my mind out like candles who blow lips;  
And for awhile she has a funny time,  
Brindled in her whorish habits; I don't know how long  
It's been since I've road a bicycle, or had a thought of  
My own, or money of my own: I do it all for her,  
Her brown ochre eyes, her honey sweet dun eyes,  
Her apple dumpling cheeks, her plum pudding thighs;  
But what is this, what is this spell I am trying to conjure;  
And something is wrong, because the storm clouds are no  
Longer lanky, but fat like fed heifers beneath the trees,  
Pooling, and shooting off lightning bolts below the knees:  
And what is she doing, as beautiful as she pleases,  
But smiling as she'd first done. She don't even sneezes:  
Oh what a farce, is there something wrong with my brain;  
Are my wrists too juicy, do they need to be drained?  
She looks so beautiful because of this, but it's as she chooses;  
She stares, she drinks to my tiny fluoride body; it's buzzing  
Sweetness- and when the phosphorous is done hissing, and  
I'm just a piece of Chinese paper flickering in the grass,  
She will turn and kiss her bruin, some bearish legionnaire  
Who's come trundling through the forest now that my  
Cheap act is over- they're to get down and hibernate in  
The balmy rhythms of his fire-truck stuck like a red finger down  
By the farm house; and she blows me out like a birthday cake, wasted,  
Hoping that I won't notice that she has wished for this  
Other man's business, and getting it, resigns from the wooden  
Theatre of my miniscule amusement.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Woods They've Never Known

My heart stops cold in a naked blue glade-  
Even the naked sky is cold, and whatever imagination lies  
In the sky,  
It is being taken away: as streams run the other way, taking  
Down the metamorphosis of a springtime  
Birthday  
While the slender white towers of this boreal sorority  
Sway,  
Eventually losing their golden arbor to the stream,  
While the silent bodies in her soul fight to climb  
Up the other way-  
And some prince of kind, newly metamorphosed,  
Stands upon the saddle,  
And thrusts the horns that used to be a crown up  
Toward the sky- there airplanes sojourn filled with  
Goddesses- where fires and foxes leap from  
Each other,  
Eager for recognition from the woods they've never known.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Words I Send To You

I thought it would be a pleasure to  
Meet another connoisseur of Latin poetry,  
Except for the fact that he was  
From Venezuela and born  
To go down to school that way;  
But all it meant was that I wasn't  
As precious as I thought,  
So I got drunk and swam with my friends,  
Pedro and my infinitely better  
Brother in law, Evan:  
We played darts until ten thirty,  
Right when the bartender was getting ready  
To come onto her shift,  
But it was her old, old number,  
Which was a good thing; and now it is  
Seven thirty in the morning,  
And I'm just as gone as a love sick unicorn.  
I go outside and the traffic watches me  
Like an insouciant and obese tiger,  
While I want to stroke myself.  
I count the money and remember the flowers  
I sent you,  
Just like all the words I send to you that you  
Cannot use.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Words Of An Anonymous Wreck

Tossed away from this, you have made a sport of  
My soul,  
Even as angels, weeping, take picnic and  
Pieta on my shoulders:  
But they are borrowing bicycles and have stolen  
Little boys,  
And the clouds ink my cheek bones  
Like the poisonous snakes there at the races to  
Bite their lips at the ankles of  
Race horses:  
And another holiday is approaching:  
Some other holiday, while I will take an airplane  
Like a rain cloud to some other muse,  
Even as I am becoming terribly,  
Terribly lost- even after I should have already  
Drunken myself into whispers underneath  
The chicken legs of the house of the witch-  
As the young boys are still playing basketball and  
Football,  
And some venal muse is still serving drinks in  
The armpit of Florida:  
Well, my words swell out the doorways of middle-class  
Cathedrals and travel down the perpetual hill:  
My dog still sleeps at the feet of my body-  
It is a tomb in the stacks of rain clouds and purple  
Bowling alleys,  
As your lips are red or they are brown-  
And these are the words of an anonymous wreck as it  
Is going down.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Words That Their Poets Came

Words that burn infinitely burn for women:

Lochs of women, virgins breathing and snorkeling both

Above and beneath the sea:

Women of green and amber eyes, like the resins of super holy

And Christmas trees:

Women I was afraid to share the stares of, so I skipped

High school and listened all day sweaty and hyperventilating

To the lions choosing their mates,

Just as not much later the women chose theirs:

Then they jumped through hoops of fire in the street lights of

Their carnival ling bars:

And when it rained, these women stepped bare naked out into

The rain and fell in love, open mouthed,

Their bosoms bared, to the words that their poets came.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Words They Never Had

Perturbed for awhile, and then there's peace:  
The wise men follow the stars out into the East,  
And even the illusions bend and  
Pray:  
Bend and pray like praying mantises over their  
Lunches of today and yesterday:  
While the mountains rise up, and clean the clocks of  
The clouds,  
And the mountain lions upon them grin so  
Blue, so blue and proud:  
In that metamorphosis, and in its spring, traveling up  
The weathers  
To the hidden spring- where the animals diadem  
And are glad,  
Lustily gamboling and sweetly unperturbed by the words  
They never had.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Workings Of Their Darkness

Chrysalis from a glass blower's hypnosis;  
Under the tinkering roofs, underneath the sun that is  
All about metamorphosis,  
The queasy feeling in the stomachs of little boys  
At the moments of take off;  
And the stewardesses who comfort them, half undressing  
With a smile;  
And then it is for awhile in the clouds, the chateaus  
Gallop high-nosed above the arid plains  
With the vineyards of dessert wines puckering the noses  
Of salient foxes  
When there isn't even a lighthouse around; and I just keeping  
Doing this,  
Turning, and turning and discovering for you the limpid  
Abandonment's of fool's gold,  
The latchkey children left to marvel at the canaries minute  
Graves all down the slope's side, like feathery clockworks that are just  
Beginning the workings of their darkness.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Works Of Mark Twain

Everyday going home to that burning drum  
Thumping in a glass  
While Israel the Mexican sleeps with his family underneath  
The overpass;  
And it is such a bright world- so bright that I cannot really see,  
Or know the words how to define its most ancient of  
Tranquilities;  
But it would be something like spending all day long with  
Alma in a movie theatre,  
And groping her like the deer do glades: deer who were once  
Princes, metamorphosized,  
And never wanting to go back home again to castles without love,  
For they have followed the secret corridors of her eyes and found  
Her here, and found her good:  
Like today I craned my neck inside Alma's car and kept her there  
For a better part of an hour, out back of the fruiteria where  
I was no longer the patronsito, and my father was already  
Driving fast through Mississippi,  
Making his own shapes out of clouds, never having finished  
Tenth grade,  
And never needing to finish even one of the works of Mark Twain.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World Anew

Departing into the Amazon,  
Women fly over my shoulders- disconnected  
From their captains,  
Their authoritative fathers- and they go up  
Through the world of seas  
And lay amongst the clouds where the golden  
Chickens lay,  
And turtles evaporated from their shells  
Made into the soups of long ago:  
And I lay with my lover here as well, before  
She has to go home again.  
She is after midnight and changing into so much.  
Her body is a smoking censer in the church of  
The bosque- I bought her a five dollar  
Picnic basket to take with us to the zoo,  
And when she flies over head,  
Spreading her brown wings,  
She whispers secrets to me you never knew-  
Even though she goes home again,  
She lies with me as the rain showers come down  
Again, and kiss the world anew.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World Even Before Your School Day

Green lakes underneath swing sets barren of  
Apples,  
Where I have moped and moped far along into the twilight  
After the last plane has flown away, after the final  
Beauty has parceled the field,  
Or the last copper canon ball flown:  
And you went up to school and made love,  
While I kept on eating my lunch alone, and dripping my  
Lines like a snail quivering for home,  
Cutting paper into snowflakes to make a weather for your  
Wherever town,  
In syllables falling down between your knees, waiting for you  
To salt, to go into the changing room of you mind and to  
Remember to put on something truly beautiful;  
And these words that wake up inside of me like a fire of  
Celsius in a mailbox  
Cannot be contained by mellifluous hands: by your father's eyes,  
Or the trucks of his carriage:  
And I might go down with so many strikes against me:  
I might even sleep unbeknownst in the penumbra of sunken  
Stewardesses, even into the boudoirs of alligators; but at least  
I gave it a shot so that you would know how to find me,  
And who I was made by these welding thoughts of you;  
And that I had swung just as cheerfully without any other  
Thought in the world even before your school day had begun.

Robert Rorabeck



# The World Is So Sweet

So young as to be in kindergarten;  
Or so young again as to be here and mouthing off,  
And lighting off fireworks,  
While Alma falls down to sleep again with her man another  
Night- the man she says she wants to be with,  
But I will see her tomorrow  
And get to show off my new Virgin's of Guadalupe;  
But I already know what the N on her hands stands for:  
I already know the answer, and the world is so sweet,  
But it does not belong to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World Of His Browning Arms

If the rain comes in the afternoon again  
I will write these words as I pretend to hold out for  
You, as I gather these things from my body like  
The leeching of poisons I exhume while the stewardesses  
Look away- and when they are not watching me,  
I vomit and I tear, and I think of the day I pushed you  
Underneath the swings, and underneath the helicopters,  
While you enjoy his brown arms around you  
In the bed beside your sisters and the television of your  
Children: I once traveled in search of you and slept  
On a nearby roof: other travelers said you had made  
Your grotto of Christmas presents in the next cavern  
Over but when I got to you, you said that you were  
Already moving: that you were buying a house together,  
As the mountain lions and wild cats climbed the hills,  
Following the slow lusher of an insouciant wildfire:  
As the blue jays flitted and ate the slow moving robins  
That only wanted to lay down as ribbons in your hair:  
And whatever I thought of you, you took away from me:  
And the wishes I made for you, you took away on your  
Birthday- so all of the towers overlooking the  
Communal pools underneath the highest mountains burned  
Away, and the lighthouses turned blind, and the guardian  
Angels which once arced their circuits over your  
Naked shoulder blades stopped leaping- and you turned  
Away unceremoniously and made love only to him,  
And you gave up your shadow perpetually to the world of  
His browning arms.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World That Has Killed Itself So Many Times

Pantomiming the clouds, what strange verbiage of  
Mercury poisoned haberdasheries  
These words become, hardly recovered, though they  
Are gathering themselves from a battlefield of plagues  
Halfway to Saint Louis or Egypt,  
And the dogs wine up to the night, the coyotes bellowing,  
The mother possums bighting their lips,  
As the rockets of cosmonauts continue shooting off:  
Shooting off as all of the stars of their nations die,  
As half eaten horses get up, but do so little good,  
As the enormous and poisonous centipedes dance  
Halfheartedly with little girls,  
As I call my best friends from their newly dug graves and we  
All stand like a chorus of flighting carolers outside  
Your bedroom's parlors, singing of the night's holidays,  
The banshees of misshapen housewives beating their  
Unkind hearted knell into the roof; and it rains broken horsehoes  
And hardnosed pix-axes;  
And the gypsies come like cold hearted butterflies and steal  
Everything, so in the morning our tree is gone, but your eyes  
Are still burning holes straight through the world that has killed  
Itself so many times for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World That I Was Meant To Believe

Playbills in the dusk of my romances- as old  
Lovers overeat at the movie theatre,  
Growing new children like cantaloupes in a field of  
Busy ants that the foxes cuddle,  
And even once or twice the airplanes found spaces  
To land,  
To rest and look at the comets- and I with my stolen  
Bicycles on the flip side of crepuscule  
Made love to a zoetrope with the bullfrogs-  
And the real girls in the translucent romances slipped  
Across the yard and into bedrooms of  
Noisy musicals,  
While the kittens mewed on the steps knowing very little  
Of the world that I was meant to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World That Was Already There

On fieldtrips we go, slipping into the murals of  
Catastrophe:  
Our five year old hearts beating over our five year  
Old feet,  
And our tennis shoes we didn't tie: and after the  
Movie theatre or the communal pool,  
We will go home to parents who are still growing  
Up too;  
And our mother will bathe us and shampoo,  
And in the schoolless afternoons,  
She will take us to the backyard canal and show us  
Tadpoles in their busy school,  
And tell us how they will change right beneath our  
Eyes,  
As rainbows peer down at olive trees, showing  
Their promise to serpents bundled there-  
As conquistadors cenotaph across the street with pornography-  
While all of this time, the roads we knew stopped  
At the canal, the very edge of the world,  
And kidnappers repeated back and forth underneath the  
Anonymous airplanes- until finally there were graveyards  
And tomorrows and tomorrows of yesterday-  
Somehow metamorphosed, we went back to there- the street  
Was widened and paved- it went straight over her canal  
Without stopping to look both ways,  
And the rock garden our mother planted next to the drainage  
Where the puppies the butterflies enchanted were  
Not there:  
Were not there on either side of the street: it just continued  
On, and on and I am afraid straight into  
The world that was already there.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World You Thought You Had Made

They say you are beautifully written,  
But they don't come home: They leave you with  
A beautiful daughter  
And cartoons;  
And the kitchens are all stacked and the pool  
Is rippling like the fortified spirits  
Of a present that is still alive;  
And if you go out to the backyard and sit down  
In the mowed stuff,  
And really feel around, the conquistadors might  
Be conjured up for you underneath the poisonously  
Gibbous honeymoons of those  
Reckless airplanes- the alligators might even  
Line up for you, and shed one great unifying tear-  
I don't know where you wife is,  
But the pearl of her is in your daughter,  
And she is asleep on the couch, in the alabaster shell  
Of the world you thought you had made.

Robert Rorabeck

# The World's Longevity

Another summer in the  
World's longevity-  
Folding  
Paper airplanes,  
Giving plastic  
Cowboys and  
Indians to the  
Fire,  
Masturbating to  
The muses,  
And playing hooky  
Inside a canoe-  
The canal an  
Unbusied street  
Filled with narcolepsy  
And somnambulence.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Worthless Majesty

Saboteurs are right beside where I left  
Them,  
And all that is Christmas: Alma is taking the day  
Off tomorrow,  
And I wonder what she will do:  
Looking in the windows of baseball diamonds,  
I remember girls who are not altogether  
Real,  
Who are like you, Alma, but from different states  
Of the world;  
It has been for them that I've been kissing the  
Empty promises of serpents  
And poisoning myself in the worthless majesty  
Of fool's gold.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Wounded Baseball Games

Songs in lines flung by hands that cannot fish—  
And, maybe, do not love, of course—  
Except for the little fairies on the cliffs,  
That come in jubilee across the reddened saddles  
And dig up arrowheads and diminutive  
Ferris wheels from the earth—  
A tiara over the savaged garden my father's  
Thousand horses trampled—  
Where my scarred aunt now sleeps, wounded in  
A kidney disease of amusement parks—  
This gentle flood I send as a model from my hands—  
A taxidermist's fable—Without eyes,  
Look at the parks,  
And lead the pretty girls past the cemeteries of  
Their grandmothers—  
And high into the basins of ice-cream trucks that sing  
Like angels in the breathless afternoons—  
High above the wounded baseball games—  
And the flea markets shelled by interstates.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wounded Lovers

I think about coming towards you, like a shadow  
Back pedaling in the sunlight,  
Going by a dog who cannot stand to see me weeping—  
With the light house arisen on the hill,  
And the orchards still smoking—  
Pollinations of my artwork, like night blooming jasmine  
For the cadaver: you go home to your husband,  
Through the secret keyhole of a waterfall—  
Airplanes fly in the sky until it is thoroughly taken over  
By them—Thinking they are angels,  
But they are not angels—and mermaids fall asleep in  
The canal, hearts lost as if barefoot maidens in  
Trailer parks—and in the throats of clams at the bottom  
OF the ocean where pearls should be—  
Only emptiness—even if there was sunshine, there  
Would only be emptiness—  
As the bodies of the wounded lovers move as their  
Work proceeds.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wounded Trees

Fish speared by a wounded dream, taking her  
Away from me-  
The cost of hours upon the house, whose dousing  
Charade sinks into me-  
This time a wound singing up the fire,  
Frightening the angels from the weeds:  
They'd sing so far away-  
Evaporating into the nature of all human beings:  
The baseball players on their knees,  
Calling to her nature through the wounded trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Wrong Side Of The Mountains

If you don't wish for the job then I am here to help  
Proposition you into vagabonding  
In the penumbras of the most god fearing summits, where the  
Over zealous bones of the hikers who knew no fear are  
Still lost  
And cenotaphed into the enjambments of a fearless dinner party  
With the same looming grins of the foxes who leapt up to  
Feast of their discombobulates-  
It is here that there is some kind of resin that has escaped from  
You, Alma, driving home in your car-  
Where are you going, but into a world that knows not the  
Feral calligraphies of my adulterating cartography:  
There may even be new species under your bed, as you turn around  
And make love to your man returned from  
Mexico and decided up the fact that, in fact, there was no better  
Woman that you: than you, my muse- my vida:  
And it is true, and I happen beside you in the darkness, like an eel  
Caracoling through the blindness of the corals that can  
Still feel under the boot heels that make up the jubilations  
Of pestilent and green tenements,  
Of wedding parties of old muses and their friends; as all of my  
Unction slips across you again and again like a blind man breaking his  
Own hands with hammers and nails as he tries to build his own  
House on the wrong side of the mountains.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Year Of The

Your love is doing the action—but who is it doing it to  
And where—If this is Valentine's Day,  
And we made love on this day last year:  
But you were married—and now I am married,  
But it is something of the nature of revenge—  
Because—before—my bones used to ring on your  
Bones, but it wasn't enough:  
I bought you cakes on your birthday—and crawled  
On all fours,  
But no luck: So I travelled across the world  
And found a little girl who would love me without any  
Tricks: This Valentine's Day she got roses,  
But she wanted lotus—and I am so wrong—  
I sent her ten thousand dollars for our wedding:  
She was born in the year of the chicken  
And I was born in the year of the horse-  
But it was to you, once again, to whom I  
Wrote my song.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Yellow Brickwork Of My So Young Tomorrows

In a cave of Ganymede we have to rest our bones  
And then everything after that is poolside  
And not even fireside and I have to take a piss:  
Why then I am only a peachy heirloom:  
I am only an inflatable conquistador and I cannot proceed  
And I rest awhile beside the sour tit of anywhere:  
In the reststops inside the armpits of the peninsulas  
Of anywhere  
Squinting any old eye toward the whale to proceed  
While underneath the sugar sheets of the airconditioning of  
Shark bites it can go anywhere to proceed:  
Pissing my pants for fireworks and for the pinafores of  
All of Mexico and then for all of this anyway:  
Just trying to cut my throats like stone just like all of the pinafores  
Before all of the opened throats  
Of the stone monuments who opened up ice-cream shops  
Across the streets of our heretofore yesterdays  
In the yellow brickwork of my so young tomorrows.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Young Couples

The days peel out underneath the power lines;  
And it is so disgusting that I finished a bottle while the  
Time changed,  
And I wrote the most heinous of things that I can't  
Even remember to young men who are not real:  
I cursed and put down my sick muse, because she was the  
Only one I could write for:  
And then I gave it away like serpent poison to little children  
To use in their milk,  
When outside the store the sky grew angry and picked up  
Husks of corn and made them dance in the sky:  
It was a hypnotic dance that can never leave me, the kind of  
Thing my grandfather was known to describe to me,  
If I was ever listening: and afterward the store was silent  
And a chicken came by and danced for soldiers who laughed  
At it until they found their women  
Who were coming to them from the other direction;  
And then the young lovers embraced, and kissed and petted  
Tattoos;  
And I noticed a jackrabbit in the grass across the ditch:  
It standing there beneath a rusting mailbox, its ears perked up  
Like bottle rockets, and it did not notice me,  
Gazing as it did at the young couples who were now dancing.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Young Mother's Nocturnal Eye

Hard tables waiting the brittle hand,  
Going down like resilient trees meant to burn;  
And the wolves leaping- leaping,  
Singing Christmas carols to her smoking hair-  
High up in the open wounds,  
The bloody noses carports carved from the sports  
Of whispering screams-  
Those empty pools where the youngest of gods  
Once meant to reside,  
Like flamboyant tadpoles- evaporates, made into  
A pot luck: road kill  
For a silver truck, and the moon glows wide and speeding  
Over the bones lashed together of  
Families that can never be separated, tourists all together  
On a somnolent parade- going this way quickened by  
Their lathers- and the sports provided by the comely  
Nature of the young mother's nocturnal eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# The Young Mother's Nocturnal Eyes

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Robert Rorabeck

# The Youngest Of All Of Alma's Young

Bodice at the windowsill,  
Bodice at the sea: starting at a poem this way,  
Remembering the white cliffs of those bucks  
Who now diadem the whitewashed walls of her admirers  
And Tom Sawyer,  
The boys that had to drown to learn how to fly:  
And all of the drafts before this, in all of their pettiest of ways:  
The way that the dog barks along the lonely clefts of high altitude  
Though abandoned highways:  
And now even all of the school rooms could teach me this,  
As I am still teething like a fox after his luscious grapes,  
Like a paper airplane folded over the ceiling fans over the graveyards:  
Something that is hardly worth remembering,  
Something that has many numbers but not a single name:  
While in the fruit market Alma told me that, yes, she did love,  
But just as readily bent back down into her familiar game:  
She comes from Mexico, and speaks a languid only lightly  
Brushed my tongue,  
But now I know that I will not survive without her, for now is the deadest  
Of all of the weathers,  
And I find that I am absolutely the youngest of all of Alma's young.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Zephyrs Brushing Your Hair

Too many unabashed trails going one way:  
Trying to keep in step with the mountain ranges receding in  
Twilight,  
Going to cuddle your soft little town and peep through the  
Transoms of its arcade.  
Now you have a home and a child: The continent divides  
Beneath you,  
And the traffic quiets reverently, while I wait out in my retinue  
Smiling absolutely breathlessly  
Feeling like the sweetest thing tinkering around in an empty  
Chest of your ignorance,  
The zephyrs brushing your hair and whispering most reverently.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Zoetropes Of The End Of The World

Caladium is a name for a flower with ears  
Big enough to fly,  
Around the footstalls of houses where the amphibians  
Ululate until they are picked off like canaries for  
Singing too loudly for housecats:  
And then it rains, and the housewives disrobe themselves  
In the familiar grottos of their carports;  
And they change there vespers in the washing machines,  
And are stung barefooted by open electricity chords,  
While the angels of their young boys are lispng open  
Mouthed with the yellow jackets battened down  
In the impulsive orchards,  
While even the kidnappers stop to sleep along the gurgling  
Drainage taking all of the toy boats of the tallest boys  
To the gulf stream and thus off away  
Or finally to the Gulf of Mexico, with streams attributing  
To the candelabrum's gushing sunlight's perfidy  
Down from the sky; while inside the sparest living rooms  
Nearest to the sparsest Christmas trees,  
The oldest and least luxurious of black and white cartoons  
Plays and plays in coyly feral snouts  
That her children imagine wait for them beyond the  
echinopsis whose red bulbs decorate the rock garden,  
And flickerings of the slashing forest and tangling dunes  
Denote the zoetropes of the end of their world.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Zoos Of Thier Highschools

Fake people standing against high rises,  
Paper dolls lashed against the gates:

Little girls that once were have gone missing.  
The metamorphosis of paper boats have gone away  
And forgotten them to their lovers-

They are grown now and gated in their habitats,  
Transformed by the zoos of their high schools-  
And sated by the dinner dates from the seemingly worthy,  
Six-figured knights-

Unknowing ghosts who raise their children to grow  
Into the calmed frenzy,  
Their city a cloister of narcoleptic army ants,  
Playing football in a hive of decomposing proficiencies:

The hurricanes come in answer to someone else's prayers-  
Lovers who have been forgotten in their windswept youths-

The daylight is reduced to embers- their high schools go into hibernations-  
Their ancestors watch their ascendancy's televisions go up in a cloud of  
Smoke-

And the beautiful girl rests hypnotically beside the canal:  
The princess's toe is touching the water where the alligator breaths inches apart.

Robert Rorabeck

# The Zygotes And The Marrionettes

The sea by the waves of nowhere- -  
I am a corpse,  
Drinking rum and eating pizza,  
As the night fans out,  
Above the playgrounds of the zoo  
And the highway—  
And there is something else  
That can be believed,  
Even though you haven't  
Read the text,  
And the fire trucks have crashed  
Into brick walls—  
Their little fantails fading,  
Pretending to be beautiful  
Even as they go out over the  
Overnight counters—  
Hallucinations in the brick-a-brac of  
Their delis,  
And how can I tell her that I am not  
Here- I cannot even spell her name,  
But this is how I will pretend to  
Survive,  
Playing my little movies while nothing  
But the zygotes and the marionettes  
Are around.

Robert Rorabeck

# Theatres Of My Childhood

Pillow books of my lonely metamorphosis, or  
The way I remembered her in her  
Barrettes bought in the afterwards of the thrift stores-  
And airplanes flying in the sky  
As if torches of the messenger gods- in that  
Perfect beautiful a long ways off  
But in the mirages of our circumference,  
The same way the foxes believe,  
Or the migrant workers- to touch the vineyards of  
The middle class- to touch the stewardesses  
Floating there in a mirage of sisterhood:  
But I ask myself, won't they ever go their own way:  
Won't they ever find someone else to love  
Underneath the drive-ins of the heavens,  
Even after my mother has gone, like the very virgin  
Disappeared from the grottos and movies theatres  
Of my childhood,  
Until all of my loneliness fills up the drainage beside  
The highway, like a nest full of abandoned baseball cards,  
Or the ghosts already matriculating into the classes I will have  
To teach tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Theatres Of War

I am not afraid of you because I have been sleeping  
By myself for so long,  
Listening to the wisdom of serpents and masturbating;  
And you cannot save me  
Even if you own a gold mine, because I have tasted lips that  
Are golden brown,  
As I have fed her lips lunch every work day and Saturdays too-  
And I have thought of names of our children  
Even while the airplanes were touching down, and I am  
Going to buy her a bicycle:  
Now the trees grow tall: they grow very, very tall,  
And there is no use gossiping about them, because they hear  
Everything- around the water cooler and the drinking fountain:  
In those spaces where our eyes meet and make love,  
Alma, and tell each other the very things that you are too  
Afraid to tell me:  
Your family will love you anyways, Alma, but not as I love you:  
My education comes by the slender ways of the highways of  
Your bluest jeans;  
And I am here right now kissing the lips of the Virgin of  
Guadalupe,  
Because I have promised my gifts to her, and asked her to keep  
You and your children safe,  
But to be given to me as gifts; and I love you, and I will give  
You the passenger seat:  
I will give you all of my blood and scars, if you will keep beside  
Me and gather up all of my loneliness just as the most faithful  
Of lighthouses gathers up all of her navies until the  
Nights are closed and there are no more  
Theatres of war.

Robert Rorabeck



# Thefts Of Nocturnal Thievery

Canoe of the lavender gut in the tight rope of  
The canal  
Spending words into dusk when it should have  
Gone to school,  
And underneath it all of the soggy fireworks:  
And in the shade truanancies of panhandling  
The blue gills look up to like  
Cardboard preschoolers: what things do these  
Wilds know,  
Brushing the simulacrums of suburbia,  
And the things coming home with the traffic  
Listening to their music. Do they really know  
How to wonder where they belong,  
Or perceive the telltale signs of their children  
Linger half naked in the Faberge oasis of the  
Well mowed yard:  
Well, for them the moon is just the goddess of  
Their adolescent loves,  
But she will never come down for them,  
High in the thefts of nocturnal thievery.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their

Bromeliads underneath a kleptomaniac  
Sun  
Stick their claret and filigreed tongues out at the  
Bruised housewives in a space of  
The backyard which might as well be their garden  
That slopes away past the  
Chlorinated veins of the suburban mines of a pool,  
And down to the shallow estuaries  
Where the fanciful otters are pretending to be in  
Some kind of fable,  
The housewives coming to them for gifts,  
And the alligators smiling, wordless, floating with  
The messages of conquistadors stolen away so many  
Years ago,  
That were surely once important, but now, mutely coy,  
Not even these favorite green thieves can tell what  
Might have once been their absolute purpose.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Abandoned Sacrifice

Forest fires engulfing sunshine,  
Blinding tourists like the immolation  
Of waterfalls-  
And blue spruce hiding cadavers forever  
Lost beneath the hoods of the summit  
Only ever visited by the shadows  
Of airplanes,  
Lighting upon them like the dark cousins  
Of hummingbirds-  
As their jewelry is weathered into the  
Earth  
Mute and beautiful in their abandoned sacrifice.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Absolute Purpose

Bromeliads underneath a kleptomaniac  
Sun  
Stick their claret and filigreed tongues out at the  
Bruised housewives in a space of  
The backyard which might as well be their garden  
That slopes away past the  
Chlorinated veins of the suburban mines of a pool,  
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Robert Rorabeck

# Their Absurd Fingers

Ants around her lips try to be  
Obnoxious, as the airplanes clouding the sky  
Like queens in an apiary:  
Making up there so much love,  
So much weeping, while the tourists lay in  
Them like  
The confections of piñatas, or in their  
Classrooms bloom for  
Angels moving their houses of clouds over  
The great herds of buffalo or antelope where  
The mountains rise up, aureoled and  
Delicious- aggrandizing their nourishments  
Down the slopes  
And through the snouts of unconscious reindeer,  
All the way down past the train tracks  
And cars  
Where the dogs paw at the rattlesnakes  
Who have already given them fair warning  
And now point their absurd fingers at the exact  
Point where I am afraid lightning  
Will eventually strike the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Beautifully Dissolving Dreams

Grasshoppers under the bridges of the same colors  
Of the favorite colors of her eyes:  
They are dark and dreamy and they go away;  
And I don't live here anymore: my words are for  
Graveyards, and besides that  
Defeated heroes  
Who even while lying down look so good,  
And deserve so many gifts of care-weary flowers,  
As they are divided by the strange mathematics of train tracks,  
And the silent years where the rain is beautiful and veils  
The shotgun houses;  
And the housewives are all poor but very beautiful,  
And they all come out in the middle of the storms where their  
Lawns and mailboxes are waiting for them,  
And they look up together at different times through the deciduous night,  
The weepy canopies garlanding them in the maiden hood  
Of their beautifully dissolving dreams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Beds In Mexico

Mobile of rum—this is how sleep comes on  
A Monday night  
Listening to the trucks and the disappearing shadows:  
The children will get up from  
Their beds in Mexico and dream of marionettes and  
Ride the trains to find her—  
Her parents who have fled to pick from the orchards  
Of America—  
And they following them like the wet afterbirth,  
And the ashes of fireworks  
Leading up the hills where the foxes sleep in either  
The sunlight or the snowdrifts—  
Into the churches where there are wounds in the blue windows  
Looking out onto the campus I disappeared from  
Fifteen years ago  
As my father enjoys riding bicycles in Michigan—and my  
Mother follows him:  
And my mother follows him.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Blind Singing

New evaporations do little enveloping the clouds  
With tulle'  
With hearts of evaporated shell, singing of  
Ghost mothers and ghost girlfriends,  
As little feet get lost on the road to sunset again'  
Stumbling amidst the cenotaphs of  
Conquistadors amidst the orchards of  
Pornography again'  
What will they ever tell their mother'  
Of what fireworks will their blindness sing,  
If they should ever make it home?

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Brothers To Forget Their Names

Enmeshed for Pocahontas in the Bible Belt  
Underneath the breasts of  
Colorado:  
Doing my thing by the canoes pulled like lucky  
Feathers by the harvest  
Moon,  
While the rabbits get out and make eyes  
And eat endives,  
The larger and grander boats smoking around them,  
Gossiping- and gambling afloat  
With so many working girls in their steaming  
Weathers-  
Eyes like cats hungry for the nights of wings-  
Who can let them leave the  
Ground,  
Even while their bodies are like orchestras of  
Graves:  
And they can take off over the bosques, and the colonies  
Of witches with the failed  
Knights like wind chimes in their trees:  
They can go where their father still keeps them as little  
Girls- climbing all upwards  
Catching looks from the gods which metamorphosize  
Them  
And help their brothers to forget their names.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Cadaverous Buffet Of Sweeter Than Sweet Meats

The night pulls me back towards the doors of

Prostitution:

In the pit of some fair damsels body, a tiny spit of fire burns,

And they keep saying I am so cute, so cute:

And it cost me so much less than a housewife's spindled

Shopping list written on Eucalyptus in

The boxing theatres of Telluride:

Those boys she enjoys with soft green eyes lapping all the way

Through Christmas and Easter,

Until the house is empty save for the paper airplanes who

Are softly gossiping;

And then I know that I will never make love to a stewardess,

At least not in this time that is my time:

And I don't want to make love to Erin anymore: don't want

To send the despondent barmaid anymore bouquets,

Simply because she knows who she is and her pleasures;

And she simply isn't enough for me,

Because she is beautiful in a semiprecious sort of weird:

And her nerves are pierced,

But all she is allowed to sell the sweet little girls who come shopping

Inside her doorway are the spirits of tiny little dears:

And red riding hood comes knocking under the jubilation of a really

Thrilling castle, and they lock horns and make pillow fights

And love with moths on their flesh

And in their early morning years they have loved better sorts of

Boys than me:

And they have had to send me away shoplifting across the graveyards

Of the days,

But I loved them still and whistled to them while I was on my feet,

But found out that there were better sorts of girls dripping like bones

Sweating their cadaverous buffets of sweeter than sweet meats.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Care Weathered Bones

Promenades of good intent, and I have a house  
But no occupation except for  
The daycare of my grayed adolescence, as Alma is not  
Alone in the house her father promised her,  
As the green cannons ring with her favorite color;  
And I am not coming down until I have to go to sleep  
And wake up,  
While some trucks will move in the night, and the  
Good people will make money,  
And the kidnappers will nap in peace, like the Mexicans;  
And I will not have to do anything more until my  
Blood settles,  
And the taboos recede again, passing over their cerulean  
Estuaries and back into the courtyards of school,  
Where the good girls are playing across the  
Landscaping and Cobble stone: where they will still be  
Playing,  
Far into the cenotaphs of evening, after all of the butterflies  
Have drowned,  
And the moths shroud the pallid estuaries of their  
Care weathered bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Cats In Perfect Time

Getting sick and sitting on my globular throne,  
Watching all the rock-stars prancing with their Dorothy's  
To their red riding homes;  
And the sky is a brick arcade, you've seen it before;  
They sky is a loom on fire, and it is so wide  
All the airplanes pirouette,  
Pirouette, like tin man body builders for their  
Luscious Pegasus;  
And I am reminded of a house that isn't real,  
A home in horny ivory, a chimney of moist, slow smoke;  
A perfect man inside, perfectly grayed:  
A man such as I should be if I could have followed Virgil  
All the way further into the dank sweet paths of  
His underwater spheres, and to have seen all the luminosities  
He would have shown me-  
To seen his eyes as I would have seen mine to be;  
And that perfect love in low bodiced rood, driving in cars  
That sing,  
And children who go to bed on time; and all of us slumbering  
Quite a few feet above the mowed earth,  
While the clocks keep their cats in perfect time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Childish Neighborhoods

They had friends who made love for  
A little while arm and arm beneath the cars in between  
The middle of their classes  
Like turtles eating orchids- and they sang to her of  
Their romances, dark eyed,  
Scarred with fireworks- and they hungered for her  
In the sea, even though all of her waves came  
Imperfectly - flooding their living rooms,  
Making their mothers dance in the  
Filtered sunlight of their kitchens- until they went  
Outside where their little brothers were playing  
With dye cast cars, and what were they saying  
To them, as they started across  
Like the debutants of ghosts- imagining the pearls  
Hidden in the rhinestones of snails,  
Going back again to the reflecting glow of the  
Slumbering chaos of their childish neighborhoods.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Coffins And Their Tombstones

Come in with your coattails as black as gypsies,  
And I will jerk off as if I am tipsy;  
And I am not macho enough for you to finger yourself  
Like the foreplay of horseshoes,  
Which is your man's sport; and I sell so many fireworks  
First under the full moon,  
And then under the blue moon,  
That I should have to resort to this penance  
Of unhappy tears,  
I have been to so many places, I have leapt  
So many years  
That I miss my dogs in Arizona; and I have so many muses  
Who don't love me,  
Who sleep under the sad mountains and under  
The happy lees;  
That I should have found love by now,  
I should have crept up upon immortality; but only my  
Dogs love,  
Only my dogs love me- and I don't know who I am,  
And your father has died,  
And your grandfather has died: and their coffins and their  
Tombstones are as equally beautiful as their creeping  
Immortality.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Damp Brown Touch

You didn't know how to swing:  
Like a good knight deeply enchanted with his fairy queen,  
I swung you:  
And we were both so good and out of school:  
You were illegal and beautiful before my eyes,  
And the airplanes swam up in the blue strata of the sky of  
Skies,  
Beneath them the helicopters like bees sniffing over the  
Orange groves,  
Their carefully orchestrated apiary, as afterwards you  
Picked your children up from school-  
Alma;  
And my flag remained green in the movie theatre of your  
Good news,  
As I read the captions of all of the ecstatic truth,  
As I pictured long roads covered with rain but enjoyed with you;  
Even as you went back home,  
And my art failed out of doors, like a planted put in the wrong  
Place of yard,  
Wanting for sun, or receiving too much, but remember your brown  
Lips,  
And their damp brown touch.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Deep And Desirous Way To School

Maybe we'll live together once the sky collects  
Itself and remembers all the famished wishes of the rain:  
And the highways finally have presents to  
Tie up underneath the deciduous holidays of more than  
Lonely Christmas trees:  
Or if any of this was possible, I would have a good woman with  
Me right now,  
Curling up like a Siamese blue in the fog that is forever  
Rising in the early mornings,  
Like surrendered flags, or my mother's dreams of flying airplanes:  
Or the way that Alma's eyes looked at me today,  
So far away, like spindles of bicycles that had become lost  
Upon their deep and desirous way to school.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Emerging Yesterday

Crumbling green pigeons dive for the afternoon  
Above the avocado tenements; it is a humid pistil  
Who chinks the atmosphere,  
Drapes it on the shoulders of little girls pretending to  
Eat what comes out of the earth;  
They can pretend all weekend in their little corners  
And not have to worry about class,  
The presumptive eyes of boys who are eagerly waiting  
For their first hint of bloom;  
They would squash it if they could, and their shoulders  
Grow vermilion capes,  
And on the concrete numbers trees move in invisible  
Groves,  
And they can leap through them like robbing Samurai  
And say to each other whispering in curls better words  
Than I could imagine,  
Things that only little girls know latchkeyed for the weekend  
Waiting for the slow tumult of the drying universe  
For the heavenly bodies to emerge and pulse over scar-  
Less lips- They are a post-Victorian novel, and right now  
In an emerald dusk where all the hues of this color go to  
Sleep on the back of molting insects,  
They know everything- And they can go on like this perfect,  
No matter whatever happens, they will have the secret rhymes  
Involving one another's names,  
And the very quiet peep shows of subtle green birthmarks,  
There a teal inlet on the sleeveless shoulder,  
Or along the running backyard stream of a softly skipping thigh,  
As their eyes fall along through the drowsy copper of ancient yards,  
Of what will come to be their emerging yesterday.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Everyday Lunch

Paper birds sweat through the sheets  
Of adulterous armpits;  
And she seems to sing with all she's got,  
Waiting for the mail of drowned soldiers,  
While the waves come in,  
Counting coo and dying like all of that stuff  
Which seems to make up this nonsense-  
Further inland there are tables with still-life  
Moping,  
And little boys of all ages are quite happy and  
Masturbating,  
Waiting for their crackerjack prizes,  
While their women are shopping or looking out  
Of hurrying windows  
As the day goes by recreating the colors of  
Its cereus constellations-  
Soon beautiful Latin women will be bringing  
Us our lunch,  
Busily trying to decide which one of us they love  
The most;  
But it will hardly be enough- The continents  
Float like sweet young terrapin, and if I've never  
Had the chance to think up anything else,  
At least I saw your eyes seeming to float like  
Something bluebird and somnolent- Surely something  
That could never die,  
And maybe even love me- married, and yet so  
Lonely with me, when they were supposed to be  
Enjoying their everyday lunch alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Fairground's Verdant Yards

Space-shuttle looking nice in its place above the trees  
And palaces  
And movie theatres—  
Over all of the forgotten parts of the world—maybe you  
Haven't even completed your mission,  
But she is here:  
Floating over the forests—  
Over the mountains that lose themselves and their  
Summits in the daylights—  
Even with the most gentle of slopes, the little children  
Become lost upon,  
Become foundlings of beavers and bears—  
And their fingers linger in the spotlights of the orchards,  
Hoping that the angels and the genies will place  
Whatever delightful jams upon their finger tips,  
So that they won't have to linger for much longer—  
And they can lose themselves in the daydreams or wherever it  
Is they can find for sure  
That the lighthouses and the windmills talk to them,  
Spinning in the sunbeams—and apexing in the buzzing apiary of  
Their fairground's verdant yards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Fairytale Homes

And there they lay sleeping  
So lost and so nude in a pile of limbs  
Like discombobulated and  
Bled roses  
Being covered by snowflakes  
Underneath the mountain—  
And, as a rule,  
The sled came to collect them  
One by one—to take them  
Back to their fairytale homes  
To their families  
Who worried about them—  
And in the summer they  
Melted again—  
And their eyes ran like pinwheels over  
The escarpments where the arrowheads  
Were lost—  
And they looked so beautiful running  
Together,  
Running to the bitter end,  
Where they leapt to the clouds—  
And basked there, fawning in those  
Unbelievable gardens  
Straight over the heads of the Indians  
And the peddlers—  
Where entire families entered into  
Supermarkets and disappeared—  
And joyriders slipped to movie theatres  
Just to enjoy the kisses of tongues—  
And it wasn't their world anymore,  
But at least they wouldn't have to go to  
School—and if they were  
Found out by tomorrow that they  
Never existed—  
At least they wouldn't be around to care.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Father's Tears

There will be no more days that flash in the yard,  
The orchids in the trenches getting bigger as they grow-  
The cicadas in the jugulars of lime trees,  
And the chorus of young kittens up there all but learning to  
Climb,  
With the last prizes of the Ferris Wheel's gold fish  
Decorating the kaleidoscopes of armpits and leaves-  
Gifts from the fair that has already burned away-  
Windswept newspapers cluttering the grottos of the housewives,  
While the washing machines revolve and fibrillate,  
And the sky writers scribble so much promises over the perpetual  
Lactates motioning in the sea, while mountains rise the other way:  
They go up a good distance just to get a look down:  
They see a world of tourisms beneath them, but before they can  
Cry, their sorrows metamorphosis into the auburn joys of the gods  
And the stewardesses they have captured in the mazes of  
Aspen spangling their laps- an adolescent and silver cloister  
Grown up there after the fire in whose knuckles the  
Grizzly bears gather, opening chapbooks of mouths,  
Having hibernated through all of the  
Starry-eyed neighborhood's fireworks, waiting for their father's tears.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Favorite Pilots

Comets long in the tooth  
Shooting curve balls over stolen bicycles—  
Here they are peppering the earth—  
Graveyard of adolescent boys—  
Alligators and iguanas crawl over them  
And pitch their tents:  
Bottle-rockets and paper airplanes fly  
Over them—  
And then underneath the silver—toothed moon,  
And werewolves—they are gone:  
School is out for the summer again—  
And mothers have forgotten their missing children:  
Girls in a kindergarten sorority send their  
Love letters up to their favorite pilots—  
Blowing them kisses,  
As the otters swim through the chains of estuaries  
That keep the housewives separated and  
Perfectly contented.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Favorite Show

The reindeer who look like sound systems  
Entering a closed down store:  
Smells of grass, and the promises of a false sea:  
Or anyways,  
Words that play their own accord, superfluous  
Luxury items:  
Men reaching out to hold the hands of the women  
Who never come in-  
A dense menagerie- a swing set up against the  
Bicycles sleep  
Half naked tourists in softly lighted rooms,  
Terrapin  
And seashells: old favorite dollars somewhere in the  
Forts of coquina-  
The smells suceeded off the road- the nocturnal  
Orchards that bloom like movie theatres,  
And the long forgotten arrows in the limestone crooks:  
They will go anywhere,  
And remain forever abandoned even as the children return  
Home and turn on their favorite shows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their First Footsteps

When the day is saying what it meant  
And ultimately lying down for the unctions of  
Jasmines, what fairies will play with the cats  
As their owners work all night at some carwash  
Or roller-rink,  
And the stewardesses take all of the time  
To the skyâ€hopping and gallivanting like tree frogsâ€;  
Like knights with copper wingsâ€;  
I wonder how many corsages have bloomed for them  
At so many airports underneath the moons:  
Sometimes they must feel as if they are upon other  
Planetsâ€taking their first footsteps out into  
The neophyte citiesâ€their wings drying in the background:  
They are in high school again,  
Their heavens have touched the ground.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Forgotten Chests

Another carnival taking down  
As the sun goes too,  
Clipped from the pages of better men,  
Men who know how to wink and  
Throw that ball,  
Whose brushes with her lingerie seem to  
Stick to the roof of my mouth,  
When they leave me for bedrooms to  
Tramp,  
And I know the signs,  
And the ways they lounge in insects' moats  
All day,  
Enjoying the ravages,  
Never letting off their playboy grins,  
The forensic teams with hair lips and  
Flashbulbs who voyeur them like conquistadors  
With boxes of glazed donuts;  
And I carve my stick,  
And kiss my dog,  
And it should be the last day for me in this  
Bed,  
Because I'm moving on, leaving on my marks  
In wooden doorposts,  
Leaving only the cenotaphs poached from more  
The steady traffic of professionals off the whale  
Sea- How easily they are taken,  
And given flowers to, and tin horns which do  
Nothing as the wind blows across the mowed  
Grasses  
As across their forgotten chests.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Forgotten Memories

You morons,  
while the night was leaking peonies,  
I strutted to the castle.

In bad repair underneath the moonlights,  
the skeletons were baking breads they  
could not eat  
and placing them on the tables-

I do not care  
how many butterflies came down from  
the moonlights,  
or how many lovers were interred  
in the drive in movie theatres;

or about the hungry, toothed creatures  
who cannot speak for themselves-

I have rewalked the catacombs of that eerie  
high school-  
I used to work there, but I was not paid to leave:

From there, the busses turn around in their  
casual migrations:  
with the sun rising upon her virginal shoulderblades,  
Closing our eyes now, we can almost pretend  
to believe that this is  
Disney World:

I have seen prettier girls married there  
only to awaken hungered, classified,  
The feral conquistadors pinning corsages with  
Crossbows against her door:

There she is a saint we have forgotten  
Taking broken metals to the scrap yard:  
While our eyes left her, she awakened beautifully for a moment,  
but while she yawned and budded a sleeping garden,  
She awakened a grandmother,

And the skeletons of her once presumptive bachelors gathered  
with thorny stems of vanished roses, pressing their forgotten  
memories against her eternal door.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Forgotten Shore

The dragon beat his wings and said,  
&quot;All I want is a loaf of bread.  
Give your heart to someone else  
Instead.&quot;  
As the wind blew over the ocean  
And looked at her—  
As the feelings in his heart  
Began to stir—  
The tourists all perched upon their  
Amusement rides  
Looked askance—  
The angels drank glasses of  
Her tears  
And danced—  
As the fireworks gyred upon  
Their forgotten shore....

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Forlorn Cacophony

Unfitted, the zoo sleeps well concealed;  
The bachelors are moaning their ghazals,  
Their lungs are wheezing like sick balloons,  
Since they can see her through their bars;  
She is that opulent moon,  
Fully formed, the distant transmogrify,  
Who delights in making love in front of their lonely cages,  
To everything else, and in that nostalgic expanse,  
She whispers to them she whispers her tugging form,  
Where the sea rises in sharp nipples,  
And laughs with her in their pornographic trauancies,  
Dancing in the drunken bolero beneath her armpit  
Until they are trapped in the flowing penumbra,  
One part of her thighs which lays across their  
Foreheads like a feverish hand,  
Touching them with her distant interests,  
Until they learn her name,  
The hoary spikenard come aware in their throats,  
And cry it out in their forlorn cacophony.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Games

Fingers that play their games over  
A plums in an orchard, until the airplanes become  
A still-life- that they are so puzzled,  
And the moonlight and the sunlight, like lovers on a picnic  
Hang around for lunch,  
So tantalized- as if by a soap opera; and the crop through  
The crenulations of lucky leaves  
Just keeps getting greener and greener through their experiences  
In the fertilizations of light;  
And I think under the photosynthesis underneath the holidays,  
Like the wishy-washy thoughts of birthday candles,  
Like the songs of the spokes of daisies, or in the truanicies of  
So many bicycles:  
Either she loves me or she loves me not;  
Though I love her, either way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Gold Through The Skies

The Latin classes have new hopes they pass around:  
It is supposed to rain this weekend,  
But I hope to see Alma, chalk smeared on the playground:  
And all of these words like tulips sprouting cantankerously from  
The grave:  
Alma's sister's coronation, churchyards of glowing hibiscus:  
And stewardesses coming into the yard,  
Showing off in their heels so high that they can reach up and  
Stroke the fireworks bellies of airplanes:  
They breath so smoothly, but I can sell them anything,  
While the unicorns have amnesia: just like Alma forgets who  
She is or where she belongs:  
Alma wishes that she could go back to school,  
And the traffic comes and the traffic goes, and the airplanes leap,  
But the bird cages are empty,  
And the little Mexican children are holding the sparklers  
As green as the colors of Alma's flag,  
And the virgin is in her grotto and clouds smolder like recluses  
Counting their gold through the skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Golden Fears

Rhythms in the creek of gist, foaming airplanes,  
Open wrists: the body takes its times going from the leaking  
Flea markets,  
Sashaying to the navy- heliotrope is the desert of its  
Forest, where the wolves hunt  
Outside the damp patios and Astroturf that zoetrope  
Cantinas;  
And if you were lying low: as if you were lying right here:  
Down enough to be the eking devil of my abode,  
Why then I'd swear we could go together into that kind of  
Necrotic Disney World:  
We could go all the way down, with the moans of cenotaphed  
Seashells in our ears:  
With the same type of feral rapture that her tiny brown wings of  
Lips gave to the lieutenants of my senses a couple weeks a  
Go;  
And now holidays and fieldtrips- like bagworms crawling up  
Walls trying to make it to the pawn shop  
To see what they can get for their golden fears.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Goodbyes

Alphabets in lines of pleasure,  
The colonel on his boat;  
Fried chicken and waffles,  
A tourist of a girlfriend or a princess  
Surrounded by her moat;  
And it only takes so many gazes  
To look up into  
The skies,  
To see all of the fireworks: their hard works,  
Their praises; and, finally, their goodbyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Happenstance's Gold

Impoverished bodies- you roam, as wolves reintroduced  
Themselves into your abandoned home:  
Your wives, your daughter- forgotten and swimming inside  
Pools,  
And sloping down from there: canals, and canals-  
Lost toys floating away-  
Cenotaphs of conquistadors half dredged up- languidness of  
Pain and broken chastity:  
Girls on roller skates who once hoped to make their own  
Music in the rain,  
Now with scabbed knees, weeping weeping, head down  
In the palmettos- taking sips form flasks of the  
Half escaped dwarfs:  
Latin graffiti on their broken down bodies- tattoos of never  
Found boyfriends  
And windmills:  
And looking up there, funneling across the soccer field  
That some poor Mexican just mowed:  
More of the horror coming down the yard, souping up the song  
Birds, killing away the hours,  
Peeling away their innocent flowers, their happenstance's gold.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Homeless Tears

Airplanes like school buses leaping above my house  
While I hide deep in the burning armpits of these palms,  
Listening also to the roaring of lions,  
And then to the pedaling footsteps of housewives returning home,  
Arms filled with so many packages  
Until they can finally let go, as pale as the sheets of ghosts  
Relaxing in their air-conditioning,  
Into rooms like mine where I would like to bring Alma and  
Make love to her through the flash and rattle of the  
Rainstorms that come over the places such as these  
And leave their homeless tears on the soft green bellies of  
So many leaves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Hungry-Eyed Epicurian Way

Truncated and made dumb by the silence's  
Everything,  
Made to stand like a soldier in empty rooms,  
Hoping to be first noticed from a  
Distance,  
And then passed quickly over and left empty-handed  
To judge for myself  
My celibacy's saturated empiricism,  
The topographies of walking alone, the heedlessness  
Of trying to find the flower's bloom,  
The staunch and saccharine rigidity that apexes my  
Nature's causality like a stuffed angel on the highest mast  
Of a three ring circus;  
And the women have come, kissing their crystal balls,  
Pushing their cornucopia of trams,  
And I have saluted them from the waves, their sailor boy  
With a farmer's tan,  
But I have never called them over, knowing that they would  
Much better enjoy the freedoms they have to peruse  
In tanned and dancing windows out in the open of an esplanade's  
Mall,  
The Mercado that lays wandering over the seas, like an un-pinpointed  
Ghost,  
The seafarers who grab what they need to feed the husbands of  
Their evening, though it is just as well that they do not linger  
With things to whisper to me,  
But to be quickly upon the soft back of their hungry-  
Eyed epicurean way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Immortal Station Wagon

Gold digging serpents,  
Where is your gold not that the fourteen karot  
Day gold is over,  
And broken its mold. When the art teachers had  
Sweet tits  
Like treats,  
Tits like for candy for trick-o-treats;  
And the traffic is over,  
And she's just waking up and beginning to serve  
Her yeasty liquors to her slurping pups:  
And college football  
And meatballs,  
And things that last forever because they don't  
Feel a need to die,  
As I realized today just exactly I was:  
I was not beautiful, but I was dusty and properly formed,  
And I could make my way through Kansas'  
Corn:  
I could make-believe I was alive and fine,  
With nothing but the silver-fisted moon occupying my  
Time,  
Saying these things like the truancies of bottle rockets  
With the windows open,  
And the sky opening up to angels,  
To little insignificant angels in brown paper bags  
Like hidden things brought home from a fair of turns,  
Or taken over from dark closets and lit to  
Burn  
Anonymously on the darkened stoop while the feverish  
Cat is always watching the young lovers so tightly  
Clenched and dripping the first conceptions  
Of their immortal station wagon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Incalculable Blessings

You met me with your bullet holes across the  
Sea of fences-  
Or at least the sea horses were here, anyways,  
In the tiny architectures of the  
Dear maiden's defenses- and she fell down for  
Them, crying in her lactates  
On unsuspecting holidays- they leapt up  
And mended her,  
Pulling her down into the salts they were  
Masticating-  
The airplanes roared like the thunder of the racetracks,  
As the cars beat in mockery of the waves,  
Who kissed her, and changed her into whatever  
She was by the crescendos of their incalculable  
Blessings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Iridescent Memory

Failures of the every day and of my songs:  
Box cars stuck alongside the highway  
That even the tourists don't care about- weathering,  
As the forests curdle,  
And my dogs with long tongues talk about  
A park they've never been to:  
As you are up there again in your sweet peninsulas  
Flying kites or lactating over your children,  
And the fields are wild over my dead cousins:  
The poets whose hearts were too big  
To live without their muses,  
So the dandelions grow as rich as lilacs, and the  
Butterflies come with their pornographies  
To fornicate and steal away the perfumes of  
Their iridescent memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Joysticks Of Crepuscule

So many ways of crying home: waxy of bosom—  
Making the foxes foam:  
And the will follow you just as long as there is  
Day left in high school:  
If you go out into the courtyard: If you go out onto  
The baseball diamond, you will see how  
The yellow tombs—  
As your mothers corsage in the daydreams of  
Their suburban ballrooms—  
And the truancies of your little brothers awaits up  
On the rooftops for you—  
Pretending their joysticks of crepuscule—  
The alligators smiling gallons for their primeval tanks—  
And your fathers coming home,  
Picking up girls in roller skates and languishing with them  
Atop of the grassy tombs.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Kaleidoscopes Of Offspring

The prettiest numbers are keeping pace with  
Graveyards  
And I do not know who you are,  
And you will never know who I am—  
While there seems to be an entire dinner in  
The sky,  
But what of the luxury of the sea—  
At the same time recording memories for ourselves  
In the amphitheatres of our playgrounds,  
Knights ringing around the rosses  
As the planet melts—  
And times get better attributing to the beautiful  
Diseases which can be found wherever alongside  
The roads—as the princesses get too heady  
Kissing forever their princely toads—  
And on Friday nights, pool parties—  
Languishing in the angelic neighborhoods of  
Far away,  
As faeries get pregnant and prepare  
For their kaleidoscopes of offspring—  
As the unicorns are kept prisoners by the waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Kites

Trains in my ears  
And I only have nine fingers, and I wonder who  
I will be loving until then:  
Driving home after  
All of the pacifying fire of another day  
As the light is parceled out into  
The gullets of the wealthiest  
Men,  
And the skull grows, and the rainbows unwrap  
Their ribbons  
Into another daylight of some other god than  
Who is always here:  
Why it parcels out, and the sad light seems to transcend  
Forever, skulking primordial  
Across the sheaths in those fields of planted  
Knights,  
But after them, the young virgins come out  
And read my poems  
And try their tongues and fly- and fly their kites.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Littlest Kingdoms

Full with the shadows that never fall:  
I will eventually get up my body, gray, boyish,  
A premature cenotaph: get up and draw my body across  
The graveyards of mailboxes,  
The open throats of airplants, the cars resting there like  
Panthers,  
The quick digging of ants- that the ants can dig, and  
The sand lions under the fuselages of their roaring gods:  
That I can get up and go out in the roaring day,  
Watching the conflagrations of clouds pushing one another,  
Falling like the cataracts of vanished lovers,  
Slipping somewhere on the other side of the hedgerows,  
And basking in the tanks of greenness, as the little things dig  
In their little dreams upon their backs,  
All the way down the singing throats, go these littlest kings  
In their littlest kingdoms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Long Shows

Traffic burning like arrows, like runways for airplanes;  
And touching down, maybe congratulating, and going to sleep:  
And I still have a bag of fireworks,  
And visions of her leggy body stepping both forwards and backwards  
Through the sharp mouthed allow that has reasons to suppose  
Underneath the rhymes her bodies has no reason to give:  
It does, and I skip school and watch someone else's older sister undress  
To let her body press like an extraordinary creature in the backyard  
Sun:  
And it is all undone: the bicycles move, and science is explored;  
And another politician is voted for, while she unnoticed for a second moves  
Away, and not just across the street,  
But entire states of street and finds mean love in the snow, collecting fishing  
Hooks,  
Perhaps finding reason too in the luminescent curves of other carnivals  
And their long shows, to be in love with another man.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Lover's Home

I am walking through a field of hemlocks  
And everyone is picking some and  
Committing suicide—  
All in rows they fall like ripened fruit,  
And worms wriggle and giggle just the same,  
As their murmuring lips blister,  
As their eyes exclaim—  
In high school, everyone dies a little,  
But they don't look good doing it—  
Sophocles never went to his classes,  
As he skipped out and jumped around the sun,  
Trying to figure out why the girl in  
Second period never looked at him,  
But he fell dead just before he was done—  
And, just to the east, in her burnished suit,  
The sea is longing to undress as  
Lost children throw themselves into her  
Throat and proclaim that the world is all  
Too much, while behind them the city is building  
New finer buildings up to the sky,  
And the highest windows are like diving boards  
For high diving suicides,  
But their bodies never reach the places  
When they fall, the places they were trying to get to,  
Their lover's home....

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Makings Of Love

Cane fires from Barbados burn me,  
Back from the movies-  
Waiting to fall asleep in a house that moves,  
Like airplane gibberish overhead-  
Long stanzas that aren't yet dry:  
Her eyes are blue birds only for seconds;  
They are indescribable, but sometimes written of  
By Baudeliare:  
Drunkenly he saw her in one of her bosomy stages  
Of evaporation smoking out of the chimney of  
A incandescent bar;  
Maybe there were pirates coming in off the Sea of  
France,  
All giddy and ambidextrous at the thought of taking her.  
They'd left their torn ship behind, auburn,  
Its throat cut on the prettiest reddest of corals,  
And water snakes were coming through,  
But they didn't have the time, being stuck in the middle  
Of the canal as they were:  
Here body was a hermited mirage vacillating at the edge  
Of that perlescent lake;  
And even as they came in, I waited for her, and attended  
To her orchids while children whilst I listen to  
Their makings of love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Men To Bed On Time

Bodies curling in their beds as strumpets,  
As their tits are curling  
Upwards like Christmas ornaments, and listen to all the many  
Stories that they have been telling:  
Like I used to sit with my parents on Easter in the Gun Club  
With the car salesmen and it was a beautiful America:  
At least all the prettier women were beautiful,  
And I and my sister could go and buy cat food and feed all the  
Vagabond felines and not really have to think about it:  
Now my sister and I both have beautiful houses,  
And the ocean teals, and the sky pearls: Sharon, the sky really pearls,  
And I wonder when the last time was you played with yourself  
In the high weeds along Military Trail; or I doubt that you  
Ever did,  
And the terrapin misses you; and at least you haven't had to see all  
Of my new scars;  
And I will sell fireworks and miss you: maybe I will climb in Colorado  
Again just to look down your blouse or up your skirt;  
But if you really need me, I will be there, like a super hero who is always  
Drunk:  
Now stop thinking of anything and just remember how beautiful you are:  
How beautiful your daughter is, and that because of you the day can go on  
Forever musing,  
Trumpeting and petting the swans: and because of you man can go on  
Forever selling all of his stuff;  
And most importantly I don't have to rhyme; and the housewives will  
Always serve dinner and get their men to bed on time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their More Familiar Men

Making tomfoolery with wet paint  
Every midnight,  
And I have to ask myself if that's what I am  
Trying to do now,  
Like an awful twin, the shadow of the sun:  
While houses are going under,  
And the sea is rising like your best man under  
Your skirts,  
And maybe you are either auburn or dun.  
And you have a school bus named after you,  
And even the Grand Canyon isn't anymore  
Beautiful,  
But easier to get down to the very meat of:  
And when your eyes look up from your books,  
What do you care  
To think up, the strange astrology which dictates  
To the pillow of your drugs;  
And I have two names for you, like a snowflake  
Who has a strange twin,  
And the both of you are waiting for me to open  
The door and let you in,  
To make an ice rink of my living room  
When I am homeless, and I don't have a daughter;  
And I want your daughter even while  
The stars are moving away,  
As if Hollywood was the new occidental,  
Because our real-estate is expanding,  
Even as the wooden boys get to enjoy the bonfires of  
Mortality:  
They get to eat and gossip at restaurants on their father's  
Birthday,  
And they enjoy going down like that,  
Like a fish caught on a line being given some slack for  
Awhile,  
As if the galaxies were all of a sudden returning  
Like a reunited sorority,  
And there in the blue foyer sharing eager gossip  
Before setting down and really getting into the meat of  
The constant graveyards where they are sure to



Dig up some dirt on all of their more familiar men.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Most Abscent Wives

Maybe they will feel beautiful themselves tomorrow:  
Maybe Alma will touch my face with smiles,  
Even if she wont allow me to touch her, until we grow big again,  
And she gets naked into my own rooms:  
But it feels alright, otherwise: that I only know how to paint when  
I am drunk,  
And that I have spent my life slipping into presupposed graveyards:  
My feet are all wet and naked,  
And the airplanes are low and curious, while the waves are  
Tasting themselves in too many caesuras to be counted;  
The housewives just smile,  
And some of them are touching themselves while laying eggs:  
Soon they will have names too,  
And Mickey Mouse will come out and bless them; and then their  
Eyes will glow so brightly, like lighthouses who  
Enjoy shopping while their sailors are drowning, defeated  
By the hydras, defeated by the sirens,  
Defeated by their relations, though even as they pass by the  
Saturated anchors, they look good drowning, in the forgiving lights  
That their most absent wives have been so kind to spend for them.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Mothers' Jewelry

Bodies doing pushups know tricks  
And high carols:  
Alma wants a new bust for Christmas, but I  
Tell her she looks beautiful:  
She also wants a new bicycle, and I think  
I can give her that,  
To give her an incentive to come over to my yellow  
House  
As old as most grandmothers more than once  
A week, to tiptoe past the mausoleums  
And the statuaries that smell like the bones of  
Her neck,  
Because her man is leaving again, going to California  
Looking for the fleece;  
And I get down on my knees and beg that he gets picked  
Up by harpies, or immigration:  
And I have the tattoo of the letter N on the web  
Of Alma's hand,  
Because Alma is a good girl, and she doesn't believe in  
Witchcraft, even though her aunt Meirna is certain that she  
Is under its spell:  
But either way I can remain Alma's friend, under the fox-  
Tailed palms,  
As under the fuselages of nocturnal airplanes who look  
As they are taking off as if they are wearing their mothers' jewelry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Muses' Glories

The airplanes speak to me like  
Lions evaporated into  
Their ragged circus: theirs is a joy of much  
Fertility—  
Virile from the stewardesses they swallowed  
Inside them,  
Each of them living as if in an opalescent  
Estuary,  
Each one in harmless pieta,  
A tea party in the belly of a wave  
That knows the night  
Cast in his sling across the waves:  
The homeless men, on-lookers,  
Holding up their empty cans like hungry  
Instruments begging  
For even a pittance of their muses' glories.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Naked Lights

They made their invention like feeding  
Apples to their children:  
A soft boy and girl lost in the forest filled by  
The names they had given them—  
And their minds in a curl, like weeds up from  
Graveyards,  
Or the similar stuff—like shell-fish made of  
Glass in a museum:  
And the sea that wasn't there persuading them  
To likemindedly dream of  
The Ferris wheels casting their naked lights into  
The impoverished trailer parks—as if  
To say, come look at me: spend your last dollar  
Bill to remember the cretinisms of my midway:  
Now that I am gone, and you are with  
Another love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Once And Future Kings

Prisms in a pragmatic antechamber—the beginning  
Forgeries for a new world that only awakens after everything is  
Closed—  
Dwarves with battle-axes stealing clothes for bearded infants—  
Pixies the same consistency as sugar  
Hijacking alligators in order to travel to the epicenter of  
The zoo,  
Elves who steal the poles of firemen—you know who I mean—  
All of those kissing cousins who you've read about  
But can never quite grasp—lonely gentlemen on a road of  
Espionage, or shadows outside of your windows while you  
Are watching television, listening into a world they cannot  
Have—teaching of the plagiarisms of our reality.  
While beyond them, the castles of crystal  
And the unicorns collect the moonbeams of the heavens at  
Every angle—and spring them back across the rivers—  
Thoughts arise as rainbows—as knights gallop for  
The epicenters of their heroic curiosities—  
Gifted with the exploratory thoughts,  
Or sent outwards, embodying the exploratory love letters  
Of their once and future kings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Open Hearted Displays

I drink from my living room—  
It's as small as a shell—  
With the television off, and all of the  
Lights,  
No one can tell—  
And the fair has moved away,  
And all of the beautiful girls have  
Dimmed—  
And it just so happens that  
Even now  
Even all of the dolphins are asleep  
In the bay,  
But when tomorrow wakes up  
Tomorrow it will just  
Be so beautiful that  
Everyone will have to go out  
And buy fireworks and  
Christmas trees  
So even all of the cars will have  
To stop  
To see how beautiful are the gifts  
Of their openhearted displays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Otherwise Oh So Charming Way

They say if you are published  
You can have anything-  
Well, here I am in a paper snow storm,  
Caressing you pitifully  
So far away,  
A pest of homeopathic fireworks,  
And I want one wish,  
One ugly thing from you:  
To have you stand for a minute as picturesque  
As a tree coming up along  
A sidewalk,  
Just as beautiful as any innocuous or  
Grand thing in suburbia,  
Or at the edges of a mowed lawn,  
And give to me your shadow  
To close my eyes under and breath,  
To bask in the philosophy of your thighs  
Milky way,  
Your pitiless glances the stars,  
Your limbs the tracks of those senses that for  
My wish will cover me  
And I can look up and breath such smoke from  
Your volcanic virtues:  
That you are a goddess and that I took  
Lunch. I ate a soft boiled egg underneath your  
Planets,  
Your naked powers and soft monuments  
Before you gathered up and went on swinging  
Your sweet mammalian censers along their  
Otherwise oh so charming way.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Own Ways Home

If mothers find themselves carrying the broken  
Colors of their children at their elbows,  
These mulatto children  
Given gringo names  
if they linger all out of doors  
At different obsessions,  
And they stargaze at the different truly colored  
Insects,  
Or feel the smoke rising from the little grates  
Of angels,  
They will wait too long- their metamorphosis  
Will not evaporate,  
And nothing will be done: and their lifetimes  
Will belong to the lessons of the parks,  
And the busy streets what amusements they find  
Standing on the corners watching until the shadows  
Regress, and the cars pull around  
And the clouds, skipping like wishes of evaporated  
Stones, go along their merry way  
As their children pool across the sweaty mirages,  
And eventually find their own ways home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Perfectly Contented Ennui

I have frightened you because you are actor,  
And I am a poet,  
But only one of us is anything good enough to feel reality:  
Only one of us will live forever, even if he is now dead,  
Even while the spitting young ingénues swing delightfully at your hips,  
And my popguns blow smoke alone across the barren foyers;  
Only one of us has folded so many paper airplanes  
As to make his fingers bleed:  
Only one of us has heard the cars whisper, the crickets sing:  
And I could write the stone words above your resting place:  
I could give an everlasting fever to crown your superfluous soul;  
Because you have never loved a girl named Alma,  
And you have only gone with the other tourists to the bellies of mountains:  
Never even gone far enough to smell the perfumes above the lights of  
The venal innuendos,  
To let the silly yellow light of the foam of girls kiss your dimpled chin;  
But that doesn't mean you are beautiful,  
When I have blinded myself by the nubile sun: I have climbed four mountains  
In one day: I have been atop the two highest points in Colorado in one  
Day, even while my old girlfriend was making love to her freshman  
Love,  
And I came down and the tourists could have made fun of me if I  
Chose to stay anywhere around them, but I was already gone,  
John;  
And this is not yet an epitaph to the truancy in my ever loving park,  
For I will sing out so silently for some time to come that  
Only the dogs will whine: For they are things like me, sensing the world  
Through the grayness of others, loving me as unconditionally as  
Instinct,  
So far away from the cowardly glow where all the glass wildflowers  
Are cheering around a grinning window frame  
That looks out into the dinner party whose wine glasses are singing  
Such a feverish eucalyptus that they don't know how  
The end has already gone, grinning as he drinks in the deep bliss  
Of their perfectly contented ennui.

Robert Rorabeck

## Their Present Perfect Superlatives

I am doing a much better job underneath the airplanes  
Without my father here to correct me:  
What am I doing, being lit up by the careless and yet  
Absolutely sure bombs—  
Combing over the parapets of their memory-less jungles:  
And there is a new word left out in the open  
For you—  
And giving you the newest of securities that we so  
Uncertainly are left to enjoy—and if I've failed you laying  
Down my last catastrophe of a heirloom into  
The mementos of a movie theatre where the blindest  
Of spelunkers proceeds—spreading his wings  
And searching out a careworn alphabet—then again  
There will be another summer—  
And I've been starving—starving—and waiting for this  
To happen and fearing linking verbs  
Or their present perfect superlatives.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Pretty Mirages

Bodies of airplanes moving over  
The house again—the same place where I've been  
Drinking my rum,  
Where the sunlight is growing in spears over  
The emptied space of my kidnapped  
Mother:  
Right next to the washing machines is supposed  
To be her Pieta,  
And I go there to dance and to weep,  
But not to think of other things—  
Outside, the butterflies are following the highway  
Like gypsies not giving a pretty d#mn for the  
Forests—  
And I wonder how long it will be before they have  
To give up,  
And go back to the arms of their windmills who  
Give them all of the time all their pretty mirages of love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Pretty Umbrellas Whistling

Crawling up to its belly, milky with the lactates  
Of spring: it coos, coos as it calls for it again: the hungriness  
Spent before any mother like a ball of unwound  
Rattlesnakes mewing in the darkness until  
They are fed the kittens who have run like marbles down the steps  
Until they are soft and white in the corpuscles of the darkness;  
And all of the campus is lost, and the thieves have run away with the  
Bicycles and it makes for a rude awakening to the premature  
Aphorisms that are sparkling quite nude in their  
Pools everywhere, and just about anyone can stop and mouth off  
To the ultra bright crenulations that stamen for the housewives  
Who have so much time to spend with themselves  
While the bottle rockets of their short toothed truants go off in their  
Backyards and or overhead: and they make their pretty umbrellas whistles  
Above the torpidly sojourning alligators- who are going just about  
Nowhere, and overhead.

Robert Rorabeck

## Their Promises So Close To The Sea

I want to love you, so I paint you on a canvas behind my house—  
Beneath the infant orange tree where the ghosts get stuck  
Like kernels of popcorn in a mouth—  
And the clouds hang over, building up on this side of the canal  
As if she was a mountain,  
But there is nothing there—but maybe it is the sugar cane the  
Haitians and the Guatemalans are burning—  
Bringing tears to the eyes of the bus driver and the crocodiles—  
While boys who play baseball from middle school are no longer  
Sure they exist,  
And I can look back upon them—  
Reverence, as if my senses are the divine incenses of a Ferris  
Wheel of zoos—beautiful brothers get on the road again—  
As airplanes take off above—  
Neither of them are too involved with the actually spellings of  
Things, but when it rains, both take shelter,  
One in the heavens above the clouds—  
And the other beneath the concrete overpasses that keep  
Their promises so close to the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Purple Canals

Juvenile loves who've grayed,  
Shooting at a turtle in the river in the morning of a blue  
Trail,  
The bicycles riding together as precious as our two hearts  
Overlapping like how waves disappear  
Traveling up the bottleneck of a grotto; and I have found you,  
And felt you in the few ways that I know,  
Alma, and give over to you entirely all of my failing instruments  
Like uncut gems gossiping in the wound of a tree  
The otters peruse with salty mouths from all of the sea life  
They've been at feeding,  
And of the mermaids they've been at kissing, skipping school,  
And laying on their oily backs in the favorite torpidities of  
Their purple canals.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Rarifying Dooms

If I'm so cute you should probably  
Kiss me,  
Like the duchess who plucked one of  
Those geese to  
Make the headdresses for one of those  
Chiefs;  
And you know, the lights are finally all out  
And the traffic has run down to a trickle.  
I believe the canals have stopped  
Entirely, they are so shallow.  
We can go to sleep together after our lips  
Are done playing football,  
And the sport of our sexes' spawning sagging  
Like cerulean tents badly beaten in an  
Appalachian rain storm:  
We can pretend to be hiding out in the Washington  
Monument like two young skeletons in  
Cahooots giving each other Pyle driving glances,  
Knowing that maybe there is a way to get through  
Lincoln's beard,  
Leaving Virgil and his rotten slaves to the ice fields  
Over the lawn  
Where the crickets are momentarily not breathing:  
Even the flags like the trees are unbending from the coat  
Of a revolutionary morning,  
But all the patrols are tucked softly into beds nearside  
The tourists,  
And in the morning they will be going home, snug and fattened  
Into trunks of trains,  
Returning to the carports and washing machines in the blue  
And crystal grottos where they are still growing  
Like our misfortunate dreams,  
Like goldfish agog at the curling irons and little sisters  
Petting the gray cats of their rarifying dooms.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Red Yards

Whole days dying- kaleidoscope of glass houses from  
So many days ago,  
As the parks swing and the Ferris wheels go,  
But it never gets any busier than this-  
And the children are never  
Found out:  
Where they've been going, and how it comes down  
To them:  
They've spilled across the sands in their  
Make-believes,  
But in the busy ways of things- they'll soon be  
The housewives of middle-class kings:  
While I've loved you in these spilling yards of  
Roe and  
Fake diamonds: even as you go home to your  
Children in their red yards of baseball games-  
I've said how you make me  
Feel, even as the song birds disappear from the sky  
And I go off to find another love,  
Leaving you to wonder why.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Scents Of Unrequited Reason

The rivers are pretty here, and the drunkards:  
The lesbians like coy tortoises in their chlorinated pool,  
Get entirely naked  
While the freshmen never slumber, and this is where  
I once lived,  
But now to be bedecked by you, and to really cream,  
To really get out and outline the nubile savages in my outlawed  
Dream:  
And that this is real, and able to be hiked too:  
That I have kissed those lips, and plucked from you, Alma,  
Everything that in this mortal hemisphere is able to  
Be salvaged from the fabulously living,  
And that you have thus so become my ultimate muse:  
Both making my drafts more cuneiform and lovingly less inviting:  
And I drink from the bottle of the stars,  
And ride on the ill-equipped equipage of wild horses,  
Drawing insignificant blood  
As I try to outline in such an inopportune stride everything it is  
That I can possibly sell like bohemian presents  
Caring their scents of unrequited reason about you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Secrets

Your secrets laugh in secret—Their gardens are fully overgrown:  
The rabbits are entombed in their gardens,  
The labyrinths of evaporated giants lingering across the loams:  
And this is my avoidance in which I have kept an  
Eye out perceiving for you:  
If a Cyclops, I am not jealous—let both you and your men boast  
And jest around me upon your sea:  
I will be utterly surrounded—The princes will ring me as if  
Areolas—they will sing all of their songs while piercing their  
Instruments all together into me—  
Until it will finally be time to wake up and remember—Another school  
Day beckons all of the dead children underneath the other sun  
And ill-omened space rockets—as the dogs that you pretended  
To light off fireworks towards bear their teeth and  
C@ck their guns—  
And the water fountains run underneath the daylight underneath the sea:  
As the monuments lift their heads into the dusks,  
Trying to remember whatever it was that whoever happened to live  
Here had ever said to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Semiprecious Boudoirs

Every word that I have done, unexpected and unwise-  
Listing there like a legless pet begging for her eyes:  
Rhyming like winos bending their lips to a bottle exeunt of  
Geniis or stewardesses:  
Their hoary Adams apples cursing the skies:  
Bending backwards on the scoliosis of tattered weather veins  
And fossils of coelacanths of backwoods roads:  
Down where your mother tipped over pregnant with your  
Little sister, drowning with her last breath in a blue  
Carp upturned like an electronic terrapin whistling underneath  
The mud and the brambles  
Like a bump on a log, like an entire hallucination- a wish  
For a birthday of a child who has never existed on a day that is  
Not counted, underneath a sky that doesn't go so far, but makes  
Its contributions as the girls return in before their echoes  
Who are always halfway dressing or undressing in the half light  
Of their semiprecious boudoirs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Silky Bosoms

Traveling that way was troubling handiwork,  
Like a kite whose tailfins are on fire, who tries  
To make love to the sky  
Even after all the pilots are down and inebriating  
With the Navajos on some dry creek's bed  
Full of beer cans and bull frogs:  
And the stewardesses no longer shave: they go inside  
Caves to make love with bears,  
Who feed them honey and take care of them all  
Winter; but scar them from their love-  
and if there were resorts of snow,  
They would all melt away, and fill up the canyons  
And the grottos of cemeteries,  
Making love to the chiseled names of the people  
We once knew and who sold used cars,  
Who now lay down at the lowest part of the valley  
Far away from the mountains where the aspens  
Grow like a kaleidoscope of yellow  
School girls gossiping of wildfire as they are perfumed  
By the pollens that hush down the toolbox draw  
And into their silky bosoms.

Robert Rorabeck

## Their Silver-Purple Bodies

Spot on—the little immortality of the fairy nymphs—  
Living like barrettes in your hair,  
As you take them to school—even as you cannot figure out  
What is happening,  
And even as you shake out your long hair—  
Even if the classroom is full of bullies, and the flea market  
Underneath the overpass is filled with echoes—  
This is your place:  
All of the stewardesses are watching you and serving you  
Drinkings—  
As I think of the quieted places that must follow you home:  
They are becoming more quiet,  
As you become more forlorn—and the purple dragon-fly,  
And the purple bowling alley—  
And the purpled star in the sky hang over you like cousins—  
It doesn't mean your safe—  
Only that you can rest for awhile underneath the ceiling  
Fans, to the grin of your Cheshire cats—  
As the world of luminescent simulacrum spins around you—  
Spinning, spinning—taking what is their's,  
And with their silver-purple bodies, drawing what they know how.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Son Of Suns

Please, I need the possibility of fireworks or  
Anything else that isn't real,  
While the unicorns smell the pollens of little girls  
In their bedroom merry go rounds underneath  
The prepubescent windowsill;  
And it throws me in the parasol when it rains,  
The ship is in its bottle, the rose is in its vase,  
The grandmother is in her urn,  
And the hypnotized serpent is just coming out in case  
That there is a light at the end of the movies,  
While the plots are all reconciled and vacillating through  
The webbing lights throughout the arrowhead planes,  
As the lion yawns chastising the bromeliad tourists  
Who walk straight out through the orange groves  
And the green cannons,  
And into Disney World; as this is they make-believe Florida,  
Selling its shares it another seeming amusement  
Vacillating for a little while above the streets,  
And then turning down, and meeting themselves out underneath  
The hungry cornucopias that cop their pleas to the  
Cannibalisms and incest's of each and every one of my smiling  
Cousins  
Who've had their bloody day out underneath the blood moneys  
Of their son of suns.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Stewardesses Baring Wine

Your bedroom of skin lays across the railroad  
Tracks,  
Alma,  
Lays underneath the vast, immeasurable plans of the sky:  
While the earth cavorts,  
The sun spinning it around like a magnanimous child,  
Easily assured of its games:  
While the airplanes take off, and the rockets flame:  
Until your skin is done with the hypnotisms of blowing glass,  
And finally the ghosts of your ancestors have gone  
And past my home  
At holidays, and at Christmas, long before I could have second  
Thoughts which were not my own;  
And you promises me, Alma, that that was the last time  
You would tell me that you loved me,  
But the sea did foam; and the dogs got up on their hind legs for  
Awhile and pledge themselves to the pale word of  
Their inebriated gods;  
And they roamed around the hillsides, and made love to foxes;  
And this is how it was for the longest time,  
The airplanes fermenting, their stewardesses baring wine.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Stolen Wives' Blood

Sun of an obnoxious quarry as we seem  
To be laughing—  
Open throated frog princes all of the way  
Up to the chandeliers—  
While my mother waits in some awful  
Mockery of a Pieta—  
And the lamps bloom in the gold dusts of  
The mines—  
Another song mimics the song bird's,  
As the traffic becomes utterly confused—  
Losing itself into the darkness—  
The mailman apexes, but he is no excuse  
To me—  
Lamp posts lining the streets of my adolescents,  
As wicked men travel home after  
The fireworks' pageantry—  
Licking their stolen wives' bodies of  
An adulterous  
Apiary.

Robert Rorabeck

## Their Striking Loves

Jasmine in a summer creak, pin wheeling,  
Perfume as blanketed as if some snow lingered there  
Invisible in the vermilion dew;  
And tiny brown footsteps wimpling the grass over strewn  
With the twin bodies of your sisters, somehow having escaped  
From their bedroom:  
All of Mexico seems to sing down from the mountains and  
The cantinas,  
And there isn't a car in the world, as I can feel you all around me,  
Looking through the curtains of the trees,  
Migrating through them as the last of the dusk falls upon the mailboxes  
Satelliting the houses further down and never seen,  
As you give an insurmountable beauty to the tranquil ferality of  
A romantic scene,  
Your eyes batting whispers up into the rhinestone clouds, as if wondering  
What should be growing there,  
In the orchards slip away across the mysterious hills whose emerald  
Bossoms no cartographer's map should ever rightly feel,  
But who come down like mockingbirds over my bacheloring rooms,  
Sometimes telling me of their striking loves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Sun And Their Moon And Their Stars

Lying as yet unbeknownst to the unicorns  
The homeless men and petty thieves take turns  
Playing cards and eating canned ham underneath the over pass,  
As it rains,  
As the sea whispers to them as some sort of anonymous mistress:  
But there they are,  
Bearded and blue eyed, never having tasted fifty dollars worth  
Of lobster,  
Their world in a fifty cent can, burning tires—they become  
Their own museum exhibit—  
They became their own shanty city beneath the moon,  
Beneath the concrete—and some, if not many, of them  
Die regularly,  
Beautifully gapped—toothed, broken—  
Clocks that cannot tell time—and I have not known a one of  
Them, but I have known their sun and their moon and their stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Supposed Surrender

Loose angels in the park the wayward mermaids have  
Discovered too lately:  
Now they are husks underneath the slash pines  
And the carpenter ants mount  
Them and take their nipples off like jujus- as the serpent  
Surrenders to the sun,  
Giving up its dog-tags to the witches moaning above  
The baseball diamonds:  
That this is their art, while the high craft girls  
Tan in the red diamonds:  
And school is extinct all summer, and the alligators  
Forage,  
And nothing else changes:  
The dentists grasp for retainers, and the knights become  
All lost through the different color choruses  
Of the long highways blinded by the nights of  
Their supposed surrender.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Throats' Conjoining Spring

Open vases in disguise peering through her  
Glass blown eyes,  
As the buses all return on home: returning home now,  
The children joy,  
Look up into the sky and so employ:  
Their hearts, their souls there  
In visions spring-  
While the lions they have never seen drink directly from  
Their throats' conjoined spring.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Twins

It isn't hard here living with my dog:  
Like a turtle, I can never look up, but I get to go home  
Whenever I want-  
And my head stays dry: I can hold out through a fire  
Or a flood,  
And I can think of girls who have come and gone,  
Sweet little lavender dishes,  
Serving delicate and April songs- how they sometimes  
Float over my shoulders  
Like wishes blown from across the broad shoulders of  
A Ferris Wheel,  
And they keep on coming- a delightful apiary that  
Spreads through the night  
In franchises that never have to sleep:  
And they lay me down against the brushing tide, and their  
Children beside me:  
They come and they go, revealing the nature that they  
Have slipped from-  
They go after the sun: In the morning, they bring their twins.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Unconscious Surrenders

Your friends are in the trucks  
And they are going higher up the mountains and swinging  
Underneath the taillights of the moon  
Which brings down the most beautiful  
Girls; but we cannot even tell whoever they are, or  
Wherever they come from:  
But they dress out for physical education- and they wear  
Braces as silver as the beams which birthed them:  
And the track is oval and red,  
And returning their legs back to the off centered kilns  
Beside the lunch trucks;  
And everything that is there grows and comes up:  
And the life comes around, headily, pubescent and sweltering  
Yet having figured out where it has come from,  
Where it is going- and the Universities loom  
In a fraternity of dreams that are easily imagined:  
And when they yawn, and are filled up by that way-  
They go straight up like instruments of levitation,  
Even past Disney World and all of her  
Princesses: and they make time again for awhile down the  
Hallways cleared between the woods,  
And the animals wait around them, for their turns to drink  
Of the students who, collapsing, so become diademed  
By their unconscious surrenders.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Usual School

Leave me alone and  
Dancing at the playgrounds: leave me alone while  
The sun discovers  
The empty ground-  
And my grandmother has died- her eyes have become  
Empty,  
But filled with the dreams of sea life,  
And I swim alone thinking about her  
While the steam engines of rocket ships take off:  
They go far away to play baseball games  
Underneath the moon:  
The grow up underneath the heavens,  
And collect the tears of golden baboons:  
But these words are here for you,  
Outside the burbling cauldrons of another  
Emptiness of dungeons:  
They go there to serve their wishes away,  
And to kiss the heavens:  
They use up all of their rocket school- and they fly  
Over the playgrounds-  
And the disappear across the luckless daylight  
Of their usual school.

Robert Rorabeck



# Their Very Habitat

Unkempt cars filled with nude women-  
Now I walk barefooted across the empty shells to  
Get to them,  
Petroglyphs cutting my feet that are only five years  
Old,  
And escaping the sound cave of my parents making  
Love:  
Maybe I will finally get away from her to be  
In those woods,  
Warmed in the browned caesuras and nesting atop  
The engines that are no longer any good,  
Filled with my midnight of scars and ferris wheels,  
Doing tricks underneath Saturn,  
And the extravagances of the theatre,  
Knowing only so many words to please me muse-  
Knowing only this alphabet for her,  
Until she spills, fainting from her acrobatics from  
Her very household, and then they will remark about  
How she has fallen,  
And I will remove myself from their very habitat  
And help her before she can metamorphosis,  
Before I may again evaporate.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Wants For Nothing

I don't have to worry about it: it will come anyways,  
As gravestones arisen over night and the museums and the cemeteries  
That talk about them, but not I,  
Since I haven't been doing that great of stuff,  
Just making my rounds beneath the cradles of far away nebulas  
Or wherever they are:  
Great motes of almost nothing pillaging in the void,  
While down here in the insignificant wealth all of the sweet girls  
Who are calling for more sweets,  
Or they are out riding, and trying to call our bluffs:  
The mountains over them like a castanet, the great bays and deltas  
Their bibs: the airplanes their jewelry:  
And they go about with the bandoleers of cowboys and stick up men,  
And I crawl into their earth praying for the fractions of warmth  
They spill and let waste from their overabundance,  
And great feast of life, like the dog of an aboriginal king,  
Hoping for but one petal of a rose in a garden that swarms with  
The stifling mirages that make such sweet honey attending to their  
Great loves and their wants for nothing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Weathers' Metamorphosis

Feral children in motor home crumbled around the stony  
Skirts of some treeless mountains,  
And the sun coming down and making the noise of the infinite  
Ruckus of lotuses and crickets:  
And there is a zoo that I don't know, but I saw an albino  
Alligator a month ago  
While I kissed Alma's lips in the dark hutch, until it was  
Time for us to go away,  
Or swim: and school was over, and the sky looked so good  
Diademed by the airplanes,  
And the helicopters like bees, while the ponies and AWOL  
Soldiers developed in the secret lines of the  
Orchards overlooked by the green cannons of  
Long ago:  
And Alma has very favorite colors that she loves, and  
Ways that she amuses herself by me:  
And I go towards her everyday, while the storm fronts meet,  
Kissing in the brevity of their weathers' metamorphosis,  
And yet always fearful of when they must turn away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Wounded Shores

They stand at the sun tanning brink  
When they should be sleeping:  
They French-kiss in well known vocabularies:  
Each on of them makes a sound in  
Their throat,  
As if they wanted to say something more,  
But they dropped out of high school,  
And now sell the perishable oddities  
On the slender border  
Of reality and feral fantasy:  
In the premature morning without flesh,  
And the eyes that can only see shapes,  
The lovely people who read to them  
Of the massacred school children  
From the first world war  
Laid out in a unplowed fields like cut flowers:  
Groceries in paper bags on the kitchen floor:  
Two friends from early childhood,  
Watching the kittens climb up and  
Down the carpeted stairs,  
In a new development they came to know each other:  
Their fathers bet their lives away  
At the race-tracks in bottles of booze,  
And the divorces which gave them more time  
For tête-à-têtes in blue tents on green grass:  
The gentle stares under street lamps,  
And the furtive kisses which felt out wounds,  
The blue diodes of laughterless cyborgs  
Made them feel better pressing  
Their scabby knees against wounded shores.

Robert Rorabeck

# Their Young Corals

My poetry is as alive as the things you say to me;  
It is as alive as the newly green car horns,  
And the fishtail palms that smoke straight up from my newly  
Forgotten  
Window;  
Alma, and I put your name into every new poem I write,  
Because otherwise you won't find yourself- Alma,  
My liquor bottle is almost empty, and I swear that the fires have  
Already been fought,  
And the night and its windows, and all the illusions of misfits  
And comets  
Have already been taught into the classrooms of gringos,  
While they already have their bedrooms and bicycles  
And just right now I have my old teacher's new  
Car, and I wonder why none of his other younger students have  
Enough love for him,  
And I wonder, Alma, if I am the only true poet that has ever  
Come and been to him:  
While the elephants nod and the poets proceed,  
But it takes so long to make it through all of the illusions of  
The Kalahari, while you yet remain so beautiful and so young,  
And the bodies move right to you singing with their young,  
Like the yellow buses like the mariposas as if out upon some milieu  
Gallivanting,  
And whatever else they are doing I wish I could remember how  
The other muses burned for you,  
Alma, but I mostly wish to see you tomorrow, while the sea  
And all of its architects continue foaming awesome phosphorous  
And sulfurous out in the open, barbecuing so green with  
Their ever-loving Pentecost, as if they had never known you, or had  
Quiteforgotten how that awesome providence had brought you  
To me, like something precious and yet forgotten sent up  
From the sea- Alma, Alma- A beautiful chest of  
Conquistadors and their video games like a gift basket sent up from  
Their corals as a sweet and as everlasting as a young gift for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Them All

Prayers kept in the cool sunburned gardens atop of  
Mountains  
Where mothers boys die passing under the whipping bang of  
Lightning an the ungodly soda fountains:  
Then I will take off my baseball cap and bless you and kiss your  
Body,  
Alma,  
As we make love: and when we awaken there will be the sound  
Of cars and war drums:  
The days will go on forever like they do:  
We can take your fair children anywhere you want to:  
Alma.  
The days are long and needful; the bodies creep like the shadows in  
A zoetrope through the deserts of these spheres,  
The oceans leap like cavaliers, and I really wished that I could  
Know better words to pass through the elements for you  
Alma:  
But if I had been a professional, deep and brown eyed dear,  
I would never have known you; and oh what I loss I would never have  
To fear  
Alma: now I only want to spread the gospel of remote control boats  
For you;  
I want to flag down beneath the over passes for you, Alma:  
I never went to high school with a woman as beautiful as you are Alma,  
Now believe in all the rough cadences from my throat,  
Alma:  
And all the rough silhouettes of paper boys skipping over their moats  
And disavowing all of the castles of their woebegone schoolyards  
For you Alma,  
Passing away into the oblivion of many promises I hope to keep  
Them all for you-  
For you, Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# Then A Whisper Of A Sea

Subterfuge of romance, because what other sort  
Of subterfuge is there: all at once running away from war,  
Running into France,  
Looking at her gondola underneath all of those soft lights of  
Romance:  
Looking up her body like along the soft pews on Sundays:  
Looking along her body and seeing her secret rosaries; and kissing  
Them,  
And speaking to them as if they were a soda fountain of your  
Unborn children,  
While the sky just fumes: while it is packaged by cool jets;  
While its bodies of seraphim divide to multiply, like schoolyards  
Of tankards of jellyfish in the sea;  
And I wish so many times that I was better at these amusements:  
Wish that I was really taking off all of her diamonds of her old  
Times and speakeasies:  
And this is all she is, folding down like fresh laundry in the dorm room  
Of her freshmen,  
Trapping her like the innocent nuances of all of my neophytes:  
A dime of blood, a ruby seed, a blushing point and then a whisper of  
A sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Then For Dinner

Housewives like naves,  
Like low strung truants sleeping in their backyards  
Of days,  
Strung out and as drooling as mastiffs on the pretty  
Easement,  
Until they become cleated with the neat patterns of  
Floritam:  
Which is the greenness I brought for them to rest like  
Easter and with bottles of wine  
Undouse themselves and remember the sun  
That rose like a clementine from  
The gardens of am:  
How it crackles like an artist on her bankrupt jaw:  
Her eyes as open as transoms that are sure that they always  
Saw such a thing that rises over her sprinklers  
And her little garden every day;  
There quite naked she has become the better accoutrement  
To her uncounterable landscaping;  
And she is purer than the liquid body of the grass snakes that  
Encounter her like a pink ribbon high in  
Their greenly firebreaks,  
And she yawns and quivers through the freckles of  
Fire cracken and hibiscus:  
The bougainvillea that ride up the side of her house like fish  
Net stockings;  
And the flotsam jungle of clouds that ride over her bared shoulders  
And make her nuptials shiver even before the bicycles come  
Breaking home to wake her up for afternoon and then for dinner.

Robert Rorabeck



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Robert Rorabeck

# Then Mexico

Gilded into the cauldrons of  
A ferris wheel,  
And starting out while the fire hydrants  
Sing that another day has gone  
Up in  
A place- as the specks of nothing turn out  
Really Beautiful,  
As the housewives fold into themselves,  
Making love with their fingers  
And to the harmonies  
Of their televisions  
Within a hotel:  
It all seems for awhile as if  
To be in a pantheon of  
Zeotropes;  
While she remains in the over hang,  
Like light in a bowl,  
Like a goldfish wise enough not to  
Escape,  
While I am singing, while  
I am counting down,  
As the light falls across my faces  
And the disney world,  
And then mexico-  
And then this;  
And this.

Robert Rorabeck

# Theory To My Devotion

If I could write anything let it be you in the cathedral,  
Hemmed in blue, holding the pet turtle:  
Someone has punched you on the lips, I know not who,  
But your pain and bruises only serve to make you  
More beautiful;  
Unseen, the saints descent and, gossiping, lend you  
Their halo, but  
Already your legs go echoing, and you leave the door open,  
Letting the leaves and wind through.

Postscript: I have become an America citizen, and eaten  
The sweetmeats of unforgotten caribou,  
And when I go through Wisconsin with my window down,  
Letting the storm and rain in, I care to think about you,  
And how if you are now so near another man, watching his  
Brow furrow,  
How can I stand so close to you, and listen to your absence,  
And study how freckles pattern your cheek bones, and thus  
Levitate when you grin, captivated by the Olympics.

For now it seems as if you should be holding me, curious  
Of my recluse; as if Mary in her Pieta kneeling in the fertile grotto,  
Feeding me bottles of wine, and the fatty breast while watching  
The hopes of the Spaniard's armada dashed like domestic violence  
On the impolite shoals,  
Like blistered knees of little girls, if I hold your eyes' candled in  
The darkness, would you walk corporeal to me in the fluid apoplexy  
Of a rainstorm's kinetics,  
Your legs the philosophy of universal motion without a constant,  
Your pumping organs the antecedent, a theory to my devotion.

Robert Rorabeck

# There Is Always Something On T.V.

Give to me more of your esoteric  
Delights, basking in cauldrons  
Underneath the sweaty trees-  
Throw your dead soldiers of love in  
With them,  
And see how they grow, even as the  
Day swoons, and the birds clap their  
Wings over the inland driving traffics;  
And, see here, a snake has bitten my cheek-  
A harmless garden snake run to escape  
The mowers,  
And I'd been lying in the grasses watching long-  
Legged kids removing themselves from school,  
Without bell tolls, the sack lunches emptied,  
Especially the girls;  
And as the last shadows of the neighborhood  
Caracole around these pretty sweets,  
Baptize me in the canal under the multi-lidded  
Eyes of prehistory or whatnot;  
And give me liquor or sue me, because I am  
Just an animal, and when there is nothing else  
To do, there is always something on t.v.

Robert Rorabeck

# These Playful Enigmas

Into those playful enigmas where  
The poetess always find out that they are dying,  
The fairgrounds come and then are passed  
Away, asses and clowns passed  
Down to another part of America—  
As I, scarred, teacher, tread through the remnants of  
Another high school—  
As the planets come down like humming birds  
To kiss and bless off the tits of the mountains,  
To steal the lights and moon off the tourists—  
To partake in their usual transgressions,  
As the stolen light bobsleds off the glittering seas—  
Made up like some Christmases to  
Amass and play,  
Just like the memories I jail in my heart—  
And I don't want to say your name anymore—  
For there are so many waves—altogether,  
Just enough to hide all of the fishes in the seas.

Robert Rorabeck

# These Quiet Lovers

How awful I should appear,  
If I tried to sing like Lorca, hidden child  
Of a civil war, buried somewhere through  
The braided opals of Spain I went through  
As a child. I got a tattoo in Barcelona  
That has faded, and so many scars; they too  
Begin to fade, but I keep them still, like  
The blue tenements of lonely citizens;  
And the crickets whose movements serenade  
As expectantly as every tide; like the flow of  
Blood, and the raise of fluid when two hearts of  
A species enjoin in furtive romancing:  
I should go that way while they are asleep,  
My footsteps clapping expectantly as her scents  
Waif like a heliotrope orchard, where carts rest  
Unmanned and torpid, and she lays open chested  
And ghostly, bosom heaving beneath the scented  
Orbs- If I should find her, and lay there beneath  
The leaves the moon has painted, so closely that  
Our senses combine and swim in a vacated theatre,  
Where our limbs may enjoy the oppositions  
Like thespians rehearsing unlit before an audience  
As private as those who gather under the pool of  
These quiet lovers.

Robert Rorabeck

# These Sisters To The Heavens

Better feelings are the Indian givers of the divinity of  
Consciousness  
Who set out like beautiful girls on their bicycles going a long  
Ways out across the city  
With bodices spilling like poisonous chalices  
Ropes of apples and centipedes;  
And if they were even more beautiful they  
Would surely run straight away,  
Like skiffs of yellow taffy pulling underneath the rainy gray:  
They have been up and down their great uncle's hills;  
They have listened to the monarchs sing like wet paper over the  
Graves,  
And at night while they have laid their machines down and had  
No memory of sewing,  
They have pooled their resources and sang together reflecting themselves  
To the soft bellies of airplanes,  
These sisters to the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# These Sweet Things For You

I am famished by liquor and see how I swim out  
Past your jetty:  
See how I destroy the laws of society; and you are in bloom:  
You are the luxurious cream on the lips of the void:  
Everything about you is blueness; and it is unavoidable;  
And I am well done; and I am being shot off:  
And you are in Colorado in your desirous nooks and crannies;  
And I am just the lispig rose of a blown out carnie:  
I am a hobo dying in his little spaces beside those usual  
Canals, which are now engorged:  
And I am wreck; and your child and your life are beautiful,  
And they are singing to me from so far away,  
But Virgil could take me to you: I know his phone number,  
And what I need to say:  
You are a goddess, an absolute goddess out upon this earth,  
And I haven't yet kissed you, or given you the chance to betray me:  
I know you would, if you ever allowed me to kiss you:  
So don't do that: don't do anything to me, just let me rest underneath  
Your cool tresses, and when your husband comes in say to him  
I am nothing, as I am: Let me be a trinket in your storeroom,  
Let me be nothing to you, but let me be as near to you as all your liquor  
Bottles,  
And let my eyes hang upon you like on the portrait of a lady:  
Let me hang under the Mona Lisa like the penumbra of a daydream,  
And let me keep saying these sweet things for you.

Robert Rorabeck



# These Sweetest

Alma, the planets move and the make love beneath their  
Windows. As I know that you have made love, while my bowels move,  
While other people get married and have sex;  
And the wind breathes and evaporates, as if just for a second it knew:  
Alma, I dream of you in the brashness of our habitats:  
My lungs burn, and then by the deepest hours of the night my father shuffles  
Off to buy produce:  
He is like a ballerina who can never believe who he likely was;  
And what about your bosom, Sharon- my sick muse; isn't the entire  
World growing dark like the red lines around the scars of some tattoo:  
And the city yearns for so many more fine young upstarts  
To overturn and parlay:  
The city yearns for the very essence of what I cannot say, while the moon  
Looms, and the sky balloons and the house follows the housewife home  
Like a faithful pet blowing up the entrails of its choicest of balloons;  
While your daughter is getting ready to read her favorite-most of  
Words,  
Sharon; do you or don't you read my poems: Erin says she reads my poems:  
Maybe that is all that she is good for while the ethereal bodies loams,  
And I have a sweet, sweet home;  
And the answers happen outside the envelopes of all of these sweetest and  
Choicest an secular and insular of my poems.

Robert Rorabeck

# These Things

Thieves in the dark bosque, counting cards down  
The eventual runoff of the ruddy mountains, and all of  
Life clinging on,  
Suckling at the tit of the water fountain,  
As the possums grin ferociously underneath the balls and  
Cannons of fireworks, not really understanding at  
All what is going on:  
And one day soon all of our little sisters will have to  
Come on home,  
As the house is cauldronously empty, but warm:  
And we can watch gray cartoons together on the vermilion  
Rugs,  
And what will it matter if eventually we will have to learn  
How to spell, and then set off to find professions.  
For now we can fold paper airplanes and share our dreams,  
As the alligators pullulate downhill from all the vacant  
Golf courses,  
And we don't have to know anything at all of the lost virginity  
Of all of these things.

Robert Rorabeck

# These Unobtainable Delights

The city pulsates with the need to blow its excuses;  
A spider worships vermilion from deep in the contours of  
Its web: the whole world is vermilion and the cars  
Are just the dreams that cannot be caught:  
Nor would it have a desire to; but it sees the housewives as pink  
Clouds that come out onto the yards sometimes and remove  
More of their thoughts,  
While the silver cars are away: then the spider stops its  
Eviscerations for such awhile, and it almost has thoughts of drying  
Clay:  
There the housewives sit out strumming like stringed instruments  
Across the green planes  
Until the airplanes leap and seed the rains; and the spider  
Holds its little spider breath and almost perceives of what it can never  
Say,  
While these unobtainable delights slip through its yards of sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# These Wildish And Feral Gifts

The sun moves around like fingers knuckling these cornices  
OF rubbed down teak:  
And she has been my forever constant, by whose vacant lips I pass  
The week;  
And I move with the traffic that I wish somehow could be  
Undressed,  
The way her eyes take off my troubles, and I smell her coming nearer  
My home as her corneas engorge like the hearts of  
A tomb:  
They are twins, like night in both hemispheres,  
And her lips are wet and open like a grave inviting in the hungry  
Pistils of these wildish and feral gifts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thesky Always Knows

This body is so voluble that it explodes;  
The busy intersections of the street do not have a notion,  
While the day travels long ways,  
And the pretty girls enter into it smelling of their potions:  
The pullulating of their bodies along their less than average recourses,  
Listen to the pats of rain under the hooves of race horses;  
And I have no better ideas of their ancient men,  
Though I knew that almost always that they were beautiful for them,  
And now the monuments rise up and decide themselves of the sea,  
While I fashion my distillations of bamboo sweetly underneath the overpasses,  
While everyone else gets married, and then I mouth off and sell fireworks  
In New Mexico, and the sky gets cantankerous and I hope to touch  
Alma where the sun seems to slip between the pistils of her Chassis  
In the places that only my dog can smell,  
If I only had them again, but otherwise the sky always knows the best.

Robert Rorabeck

# They Go

Orchards in the high towers that a glove is reaching for,  
While a chimney smokes  
And the oven employs its implore;  
This is an exemplary machine meant to weep, and tell you  
About what it is that I mean,  
Like ripples on a lake, and creases in the sheen:  
Like a birthday cake brought out before a church of ruby  
Glass filled with animals that are in love  
Or at least hypnotized; and I suppose that I have reminded you  
Of those fields atop of which the airplanes fly so low;  
And where they are going, I suppose even they don't know:  
But look at them: they are almost gone,  
So make a wish as they go: they go.

Robert Rorabeck

# They Just Turn And Turn Like Clockwork

Jewel heart and throat,  
Crenellating the excess, the mewling rind  
That effervesces  
And down your savage eyes:  
Maybe the sea is pell-mell or just uneasy,  
But it make it that way by bathing in it,  
And the hat racks are the cliffs.  
Aren't I sad this very instant, and going down  
While you are birthing from your bath for my  
Father,  
For just about any man as the turnip trucks turn  
Over.  
We all throwing rice over our shoulders, like  
Blind pitchers:  
And you make love like spice on meat and your  
Wine caracoles all the water spirits,  
They just turn and turn like clockwork,  
As if we all could be doing so fine.

Robert Rorabeck

# They Never Once

There, just south of me- acting just as strange  
Marionettes against their pool,  
She lays down with him- she who used to lay down  
With me-  
They have a new house to prove their love;  
Their workaday charioteers have me well defeated,  
While the mosquitos suckle my instep and I obsess  
Over goddesses from high school-  
Maybe I will lose a tooth and be forced to start this  
All over again-  
This reckless untruths I have little knack for:  
I am the long shot chomping at the bit, hoping to finish  
Strong and get these sad things over with.  
Maybe there are girls who dream of loving me;  
Maybe they think of me when they have a sugar tooth,  
But if they were ever to come up against me,  
Bumping elbows and broadsides it wouldn't be too long  
For them to glean that there are greater fidelities of  
Sport waiting strong armed for them just a little  
Deeper on the horizon- so they must go, leaving me with  
Good cheer,  
And I watch their backsides swaying like somnolent  
Pugilists, like alley cats on Christmas morning:  
I just wanted to kiss them forever, but already I can hear  
The knock and saw of the new houses like bright cages  
Rising ever and ever upwards for them,  
With so much going on in their immediate vicinities,  
They never once think to look back unrequited my way.

Robert Rorabeck



# They Too Are Changed

Forever wanting to build up,  
Because of gravity,  
Human beings are still a low level creature:  
Our bones are not hollow and yet we fly,  
Even though now and again we fireball just  
Like mythology into the sea:  
And there are no more verdant islands rising  
Like white corks from the oceans with singular  
Talking pools, and a white horse prancing about,  
With perfectly definable days and nights;  
But now we have suburbias and washers and  
Dryers which tumble our flesh into clean and  
Warm, and viaducts of eyes which run in  
Stages over shelves of imported specialties:  
The greatest symphony where I am at is the traffic,  
Which keeps tempo with the traffic lights,  
The constant wear of the tires as they break against  
The natural order, as waves dash themselves upon  
The shoals like kamikazes, leaving offerings of  
Ruby urchins, and secretive anemones;  
And after all of this is over, I will drive with them  
In that river back west to hibernate and play video-  
Games, or go back to college: but I have loved  
Her from afar while I was here, and open-mouthed  
Watched her leaping over the earth in her idealic jaunts,  
Or like fire ants coming out doors to be punched into  
Work for their queen, masticating on the finest liquids  
Until they have it fermented and caking their jaws;  
And we seem to walk here like shadows stealthily surveying  
The womb, not yet realizing who we are, still trying  
To jump into a brighter world, and floating for a little while  
Like a festival of balloons in Albuquerque, NM,  
Surveying the stars, and the icy necklace of the Keiper Belt,  
Until she pulls us back down again,  
Makes us wearied and senile, and licks us like a little  
Girl with her ice-cream cone as she preambles the zoo, lazily  
Surveying the surrounding habitats, until she has lost her  
Parents, and there is nothing of her sticky treat, just our  
Bones in a fine pulp yet around her finger tips:

She nods away on a bench in the butterfly house,  
And all the butterflies come down and cover her in a  
Fleeting coat, unwittingly poisoning her, changing  
Her yet into something else, as they too are changed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thieveries Of Words

Placeless joy, like love birds—  
Little hearts beating like a quarter's prizes:  
Wishes leap from the wells inbetween  
The malls and beating forever—  
Making love over the heads of shoppers  
And well wishers and gift-givers:  
The fly around looking for anything they can  
Steal for nests—  
To fly away and have children, pets for  
Stewardesses—that will eventually leave  
To other swamps and forests  
And cul-de-sacs—  
But in their busy hearts the banks of their parents,  
And the trophies of their lovely thieveries of words.

Robert Rorabeck

# Things That Are Impossible To Move

Mute as the clouds, I hang over your body and  
Pretend to be important:  
I puff up my giants in great coloring books, but none  
Of them coalesce and maybe it was real at  
A point,  
Or maybe you just go on lying in your bed  
And counting the numbers in the trees;  
But outside is another world, running away,  
While I have been counting the impossible steps  
Between the unending trees, while the wolves  
Know all of the grandmothers of your breaths, and now  
Even though we made love yesterday,  
It has all come down to a honed point, and you are sleeping  
With your man, who left you, but returned from  
Mexico to steal you away again- and now your eyes  
Are the deepest epitaphs directing the traffic towards  
Things that are impossible to move.

Robert Rorabeck

# Things That Need

About the milky rind of the green hills,  
The low song plays-  
And the girls come out and dance atop of  
The comely graves:  
They lose their feet in the slow heartbeat of  
Grass,  
As the sun is a troubadour above  
The sunken overpass:  
And they sing to kiss the sweat, and to smell  
The nocturnal rind:  
They step out barefooted and dance to see what  
They can find,  
As the streets pool out beneath them far  
Beneath them, like ribbons in tangles beneath them:  
And the sea listens to them, and eats  
Their echoes like pie: and takes their echoes  
To the other shore for the men there to listen to them-  
The men there who want to die for want of them,  
And the sea laughs as they leap into her:  
All of them into her, and she sings to them of  
Things that must soon die, but she also sings to them  
Of things that need not ever die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Things That No One Will Ever Think To Endeavor To Be Disproved

What have I to say to you that will hold you still:  
That will captivate you right there like a stamp quivering to my love  
Letter:  
Alma, Alma: all of this all is right here for you:  
All of my soul is pressed like a crazy butterfly to your name,  
And I cannot move;  
And you called me a great man today, but it was only because your English  
Is so bad and you didn't want to tell me that you loved me:  
And you languish beside the pools with your sister;  
And she are you are like twins,  
Like silent pools languishing to the side of the river, and yet you are  
So indescribably deeper:  
And the fireworks mouth off over the forest;  
And maybe we will conquer America together, underneath the underbelly  
Of airplanes:  
Oh teach me how, Alma: kiss my mouth, and live together with me:  
Alma,  
It doesn't matter: I just want to swing my weapons: I just want to steal  
For you,  
And fill your mouth with sweet lies who have no shelf life  
That no one besides you or I shall ever read,  
Which makes us as safe and wonderful as the deepest esotericisms of the  
Finest things that no one will ever think to endeavor to be disproved.

Robert Rorabeck

# Things That She Can Steal

If you lie underneath the playgrounds,  
How will I find you so far away from school,  
Hidden from all of the unreasonable  
Classrooms,  
And chancicleer already fried upon an orange  
Plate that is beginning to fade-  
Losses of thought echoing where your footprints  
Have already left-  
Like your own memory for water parks,  
Or the way you held hands with your sister  
In the middle of everywhere:  
These thoughts are for you, like the small disturbances  
Across a baseball diamond abandoned in the afternoon-  
After airplanes have made nests of the highest sky,  
And the moon talks them into becoming  
Things that she can steal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Things Which Must Yet Be Spoken

After dusk, the sky is so blue and quiet,  
Like a fair shut down  
Somewhere near the sea,  
The clouds so white and thin like prayers of  
Little girls who do not know any better,  
Who are still waiting for the waves to bring  
Back their vanished fathers-  
I read some Gwendolyn Brooks from a  
Norton Anthology,  
I look at houses in the tiny greenesses where  
I think I should belong,  
And a picture of my grandmother smiling  
Cobwebbed in the shadows  
Doesn't know anything- Doesn't know  
How much more beautiful her sons and daughters could've  
Been without her matriarchal influences,  
How people can change into beautiful fish  
Swimming in the sky, if they know their own languages for  
The things which must yet be spoken,  
Even as the waves return and disappear,  
And the cars travel down the highway, their bright beams  
Like lighthouses searching  
For a home which cannot be explained.

Robert Rorabeck



# Thinking Of You

Canals are plenteous for reptilian angels,  
And the moon smears,  
But the grass goes all the way down, unafraid-  
Not even just a little bit,  
And I have slipped my thoughts over to there  
Where the trailer parks of coffins reside  
And they are so showy,  
And they just keep going back and on and on  
Through the generations,  
Grandmothers and grandfathers of sharks teeth;  
And my aunt is here,  
Blowing ash on my wrist;  
And I am wearing a baseball cap made in Mexico,  
And it is all mad stuff,  
The serpent breathless in the scarred field will grow  
No more friends,  
And my mother does the wash, and sighs  
And wonders when all of this will end,  
But I just keep thinking of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thirst For Sand

Lines in unsteady distillations ripple  
Fornications halfway out to sea. I can only cry  
For help with the few words I know,  
And pretty soon no one believes me-  
In mass, the words bundle, the traffic drives away  
Like red pepper entrails,  
The buildings nod like encephalitic gods  
Out from which the business men stumble.  
I always knew she'd put me on a bus- she'd make  
Me crumble to the words I know like a pitch  
Of salt, over my shoulder- The lions on the shoulder  
Of the road feed and nod off. She drives home from  
The schoolyards of work,  
Everyday is a spindle of her race, of both man and  
Beast. She has a new house like a sharp pig in stucco.  
I build a sandcastle every night by the sea,  
After the tourists have left from the crummy storms,  
Seagulls and little league herons prattle;  
And in the morning I awaken effervescing, curling in  
Foam and ruins- My elusions melt like cockroaches.  
There's a hole in my bucket,  
But I only thirst for sand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thirty-Thousand Feet In The Air

I have a green note  
Book-  
It is a light green  
God  
Kissing my fingertips  
Anonymously-  
Today I don't have to  
Buy any beer-  
I find emeralds at  
The doorstep  
Instead of dead  
Kittens-  
In August, I will  
Be flying back to  
America on  
My sister's birthday-  
And as I sit here Wednesday  
Waiting for my wife to  
Come down,  
I have a premonition of  
Meeting a beautiful  
Tourist at least  
30,000 feet in the air.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Alma

Windmills revealing the avenues of cold air,  
The streets of the unfortunate bellies of my songs:  
I work for seven days,  
Perspiring in the traffic, the loose sun like  
An egotistical god above,  
My dog sleeping in my shadow- and then these  
Words of strychnine yelping my loneliness:  
Disproving nothing,  
Revealing my distemper of a tree- my throat  
In the yawning hollows of Mexico-  
And the whispers of love from a grotto of un cherished  
Cenotaphs- from my monuments of dead yearning,  
Spindling outwards the garish entrapments-  
The sadly un equated forlornness that this is  
All I have to give:  
Spent into the joyless epiphany, I am returned again  
To the very same motions that I wished to escape;  
But they resend my love on an unproven soul:  
This Alma to whom I always fall from singing;  
And they are happy to accept me.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Alma Mater

Stored here the lazy emporium of her  
Salt, moves slowly undulating like waves  
Of a discombobulated bathtub:  
Inside the college town of new remnants  
Where the cats are the cleanest thing,  
Where even the professors are dirty and candy  
Tongues twisted up in adulterous philologies  
For splits of punk girls with pink Mohawks  
Still sucking on the tit of her iconographic parents,  
The streamline cows in the suburban stockyards:  
How, look, sure joy, how the traffic flows  
In and out, each car like a necessary cell bubbling,  
Air-conditioned and narcissistic:  
Somewhere in the chicken wire and warbled slums,  
She lives like a busty diamond,  
She lives like a thoughtless reincarnation,  
Each day a record put to the needle and spun:  
The beautiful pricks who come out erect and blushing,  
Popping steaming plums on their thumbs,  
And she goes around ready to split apples with her tongue,  
Around and around this, some kind of garden,  
Full of galloping horses on tasseled poles,  
Monkeys on leashes, organ grinders, and the spices  
Of after dinner sex, the stolen guitars imparted to guests,  
And ceaseless processions of inebriate friends, for  
Their while they drive and pollinate the musky grottos,  
The chicken shacks, the bowling alleys,  
And the wharfs of the regal Hassidim: Slowly, slowly,  
She spins to a conclusion, dizzy with horniness and a new  
Pet, while about her the sagging monoliths protrude,  
And the beer cans pollinate like the forest's tap,  
The aluminum stones making a trail all the way to her  
House in the woods, and voices sing-song drunkenly,  
Though in the morning it will take a few seconds for  
The sun to intrude, and for her to remember where she lives.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Americaland

One thing bought the bottle,

One thing bought the scar,

One thing bought the other thing  
While driving around in a car-

The sun is setting quickly,  
The teachers are going home,  
Her hand is resting like an opal trough  
Deep in the rose bushes  
So far into the musky gloom,

Her brother said he loved her,  
As he tipped his hat and set out to sea,  
While the euphoria set out to sting her,  
Deep in the mouth,  
The spume of bumble bees....

Her eyes crossed over and hid in  
The fortunes of his cupping hand,  
And when they have been long since married,  
And bedded like treacle contemplations,  
They sang of their immortality in Americaland.

Robert Rorabeck

## This At 9: 43 Or Whatever

I finish my second book of CS Lewis today-  
Arizona time, and there's flying saucers in the sky:  
They are sailing ships in my glass almost out of rum  
And cayenne pepper which keeps me awake,  
To pay the bills or jerk off;  
And the sky is empty, but it is almost blue.  
When I first got my dog, I'd tied it under the rusting trailer  
From which we'd sell Christmas trees:  
But I didn't name him- I haven't named any of my dogs,  
Because I am not a master: I am not a Christian,  
And I get all my books ten for a dollar at the thrift store,  
And my aunt is dead,  
And my grandfather is dead, and there are black men making  
Tough decisions,  
And nothing belongs to me-  
Now I can feel my breath like a storm,  
And I have scars, and soon I will be selling fireworks in  
New Mexico- Digressing,  
A few years ago a Mormon made fun of my complexion  
After I'd already gotten my Masters degree at 24  
Or whenever,  
She used to live on University, but she never loved me;  
Still, how the waves are beautifully breaking,  
Even some years ago- Back to the blonde Mormon-  
His first son was a stillborn, now look at me-  
Today is Christmas, or whenever,  
And the sky is turning, there is silver on the tree,  
And soon I'll be setting up for fireworks in New Mexico,  
Amanda Breen, Erin Adamson,  
Do I have to keep giving out Christian names-  
Is anyone listening to me:  
The sky is scarred, the work is hard,  
And I can barely even breathe- I've got a car,  
And soon I'll drive East of here: I'll have a beer, or  
Two or three: I'm Arthur Rimbaud, or his shadow-  
I'll drink lemonade or beer- I'll toast the housewives and their  
Class, I'll drink to them and buy a house which will make  
Me impossible to see,  
Because I've had enough, life is rough, I've been abandoned

By the sea-  
But that's all there is, and I am drunk,  
And this is the end of me.

Robert Rorabeck



# This Avalanche Of Lost And Melancholy Time

In all this pain the mundane reasons for  
Getting up and going to work,  
Neverminding the old reminiscent tugs of  
Gravity  
To bring you early to the graveyard where  
Your kids will be playing with vapid ghosts  
Until they come out of the misty shells  
Of your woman's showering fjords,  
Like magic tricks of roses;  
And you've been doing this, and laying low,  
And telling yourself that this is how it's going  
To come for many years:  
How your skeleton will be remembered and made  
Into a bandy legged cenotaph they will name new  
Brands of fireworks after:  
And you've been doing this for the sun and the shadows  
She makes all down from the slopes of your sweet  
Muses, finally realizing that is how your time can best  
Be served,  
Refreshing in those developments, making love underneath  
The impositions of titted matter:  
That she has her swelling daughter strung out on a cliff  
Face above you, parallel and even still to those cars;  
And her days are turning above you,  
Unreligious, and yet like a sanctified mobile:  
And, yes, dreams of marbles and bouncing balls and afternoons  
Matriculating beneath the breathy caracoles of all of those  
Ceiling fans; and the days of leaps and bounds  
That never quite found sure footing in your mind,  
And it goes out like this muddling like a fisherman unsure of  
His lines, of his love for a muse he has never known-  
All the time just wanting one good muse to paraffin his soul,  
Casting up his hope like throwing sweet change into the  
Crooks and teeth of a pantomime's graveyard  
And spitting to see which way is up, to finally escape from  
All this avalanche of lost and melancholy time.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Beautiful, Beautiful Of Times

How comical are your eyes: birds of pests,  
Utterly surreal and insincere,  
Like the waitress who served me the buffet today;  
And I am dying in a lark of masturbating boats:  
Kelly, if you read this,  
I am dying, like a newborn off your breasts,  
And my neck has been bitten by a werewolf or a vampire:  
Twice bitten,  
And once more and I will no longer need to feel the  
Fibrillations of the gills of a blue gill:  
Kelly- and Erin doesn't care: My venal muse all busy  
And like a crown of thorns ventrillitating above my head,  
The first and the last of my muses:  
And I drive up and down the sloughs of Clear Water  
And I dream of her as I return to the estuaries of trailer parks;  
And all the nuns sing that all this liquor will make  
One slower,  
But I don't believe them because I have never felt any better:  
And the faces of the people I have seen today,  
Repeating softly as softer breasts on pillows:  
And I am dying Kelly, dying for the juxtaposition of my  
Comparable fellows;  
And I need someone who can save me in the carports of  
Unfamished camaraderie- Kelly:  
Your nights are young and pushing up daisies; and I am waiting  
For you nude and well-hung in the glittering slopes in  
The back streets of all of this tourism:  
I would never think of drinking wine or eating clemintines  
While I am waiting for you, Kelly;  
But I am waiting for you, while the housewives proceed like  
The sweets of the greatest giants of the gods who went before us;  
And I have been waiting for you passive in all the tenses  
Of this beautiful, beautiful of times.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Broken Mirror World

Softly, displaying what it means—  
Not drunk enough to do any better—  
It rains in Shanghai,  
Each droplet containing the toxicity of  
A fairy holding her breath on Mars—  
I watch Lost in Translation  
For a little while  
And make love to my wife until  
She comes—  
I am proud for a little while with out  
Thirteen month son lying beside us,  
And his little brother or sister  
Already contemplating for two  
Months in his or her  
Mother's belly—  
With all of the complications of Plato's  
Ultimate form they are certain  
To forget about  
Once they awakened to the unbelievable  
Carnival of this broken mirror world.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Careless Dream

I feed my dogs steak as I wait for April:  
I will almost be as old as Jesus; and I eat peanut  
Butter and jelly on white bread, and think how  
Such a briny sea flowed forth from the wound on  
His side; how he could have starred in any movie  
At that point;  
And if I had known him, and joined him there,  
With the thief and the other man; If I had knelt with his  
Mother and Mary Madeleine, how I could have felt a  
Part of something, and helped him down from  
That sacrifice his father gave for the  
Business retreat,  
And put him in his tomb, and played something glitzy  
On the piano, and filled up the wilderness outside  
With Broadway:  
Those were some sick sons of b\*tches who turned him in,  
Who gave him those scars they couldn't do alone:  
I have that evidence too, and here I am with  
My dogs, above you all, floating like a gray-haired  
Zeppelin over the aging Manifest Destiny,  
Seeing how even now the sea waits like a hungry leopard,  
Blue and lapping, for someone to forget to close the  
Door to this careless dream.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Childish Ride

I once read off entire auctions to amber cemeteries,  
Sitting with the vanquished armies and calcifying judges;  
How so, these are the things of the past- Which the grass  
Transmogrifies picnicking in shade and dabbed early light,  
So that I could harangue you from my begrudging place,  
What betided the boiling motorways and the seesawing lovers-  
The places where failed business men go to kiss metal hollowly,  
So you sit upon the bones of his galloping thigh, jarred, and grin to  
Have seen me so far away, so far away beneath the hemming sky,  
Each cloud a gathered stone all in the proximity of rivers of  
Airplanes- they hope to reach their summits by time;  
But I am waving goodbye, for I have no more money  
To motivate this childish ride....

Robert Rorabeck

# This Cold Letter Day

She comes towards me while I drive:  
My work, with the sun in my eyes- telling fabulous stories  
Of a country that we, of course defeated:  
That I have never been to, but once or twice:  
And I think that all of her uncles she be pilots, half drunken,  
On fabulous airplanes:  
This alma, a muse- toying with the elements bruised  
In the armpits of the sooty stars:  
She goes up for a ways, turning around on her mark,  
Never forgetting how she plays:  
Watching soap operas in her room- thoughts of me slipping away  
As she eats the last of the strawberries I sent to her this  
Cold letter of a day- on another valentines.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Envious Sky

The world was held fast in green tourniquets of new  
Envy,  
I held these pictures of you at arms length and wept and  
Thought of fire pits and the ways  
That I better belonged deeply to a night of cypress and  
Crashed planes  
Far from the sororities of stewardesses and always leaping  
Across the succession of drainage ditches,  
Because these were the pills I had to swallow  
And the comet was for the first and the last time  
Skipping like a precious stone across this envious sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# This F%cki9ng Interstate

Days stretch out like nude versions of your  
Silhouette on paper that is burning  
Before the golden eyes of an unidentified saint:  
The conquistadors move up the sheer romances of  
Their jungle;  
Sharon stops to bib the milky drizzle from her luscious  
Plate upon which Sabine's eyes fixate  
And dilate:  
Erin is in her drunken rooms, serving the men and the  
Beasts,  
And the airplanes are always trying to make love to the first  
Of the sunshine rising in the east;  
And you can be sure that it is coming up,  
Just as likely as something else that is dying:  
The copper cannons sit in the relegated majesty of their  
False repair,  
Just upstairs from where Sharon's sister is crying:  
Erin's sister is in Disney World where her little tourists are  
Dying:  
Where all her pictures are all gone like smoke signals over  
The make believe ocean;  
I look at my bullies through chicken wire:  
My neck has been bitten by a vampire, and the traffic is still  
Unmoving:  
The cars pullulate with gold fish, the sugar canes fibrillate:  
And I have two no good muses, busted and fat with roe of their  
Slippery pregnancy, fighting like wispy salmon to make  
It once more back up past the dazzling food courts that  
Diadem this f%cking interstate.

Robert Rorabeck



# This Fine And So Futile Reason

Gilling together- bodies in gasoline and armpits:  
When we get real smart, our houses start to grow like germs in the  
Full blow of a runaway Michigan winter:  
And I really wanted to say the you would know me by now,  
But all you like about boys is in their better built bodies:  
Well, you can go up and up and sing you songs through your mouth and  
Nostrils,  
But it will always still be the desert of a waiting room in a doctor's office;  
And now I am fully grown, so I can stand up in my high heels and  
Feed the cheetah, while the jungle speaks for itself,  
And if I wasn't here why then you would know where I was, for I  
Was almost near the zoo; and if I wasn't there why the you wouldn't have  
Much else to do;  
The bodies speak to themselves, and then why they dictate to the fuzz,  
While I am lip sinking on some other grandmother's bed,  
Just wondering who I was, while the ocean flips over and plays dead,  
Just because it knows that is always was the reason for this fine and  
So futile reason for because.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Hidden Goddess

And I am in love but not in my prime:  
Looking down through the  
Substrate like sifting through a wishing well:  
Words that are forked,  
Trying to find the hidden clefts of reindeer  
Sniffing their fox gloves:  
Prettily eating babies breath, as the sky cries  
And, she, the river floods:  
In beautiful fantasy- where areoled nipples  
Rise:  
This hidden goddess, brown as the streams  
Underneath of airplanes  
That ride like angels: she forever came from  
Mexico, but I think that she will never be  
My love.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Hollow Green Soul

Reasonable silences give me the time of  
Day,  
Holidays of silences, nature preserves of dead  
Grandfathers now I never cared about,  
Never carved turkey for;  
And yet the sky is so pale you would think I  
Had done something wrong;  
And with your eyes given up on my body's  
Burnished hinges, it's the truth that you really didn't  
Care.  
Caught up in your stack of cards, fumbling on your  
Back with that moon-  
Don't you know he doesn't have any light which is  
His,  
And if you love him that way then subconsciously it  
Is me you want, for you are the sunlight I  
Pickpocket to feed the hungry children latch-keyed in  
The ironic living room of this hollow green soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Imaginary

Every word a thimble of a tool,  
I line surceases: thoughts flow  
Like stains of ink,  
Like posthumous shore, leaving the  
Entrails of its reasoning,  
Going back to sleep in a bed under the  
Arc where all the animals  
Are snoring;  
And you are in the heavens above us all,  
You are in a dream seeping down like rain that  
I continually get up thirsty for:  
For I am just a little boy without a class walking  
Barefooted and lustily up and down  
This imaginary shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Is A Kind Of Zoo

I've remembered the scars—how they've  
Settled into the soft light of  
Still burning foyers—and how I  
Can listen to my wife yet breathing beside  
Me—  
An unborn son softly swimming—  
Soft as antelope in her belly—  
And this is a kind of zoo that grows hazy  
Just before Christmas—  
Where, in the dim morning, even the best of  
All Christians stumble—  
And, biting their tongues—can sing that this  
Is not Shakespeare,  
But a little voice—Perhaps the littlest voice  
In all of the heavens—compared to  
The speed boats of our uncles—  
And yet, on the lakes,  
As the leaves fall in autumn all around them,  
And the beautiful birds, like swans,  
Begin to settle around  
All of the banishing graveyards of the old people  
We know so well,  
There seems to be someone else playing  
Upon the lips of our dying summer—  
As our childhood vanishes down  
A beautiful hallway—  
And we awaken almost remembering all that  
We cannot believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Is How It Is

Is this where you will choose  
To take me home and make love to me?  
On this spot of sidewalk so many  
Lovers have used to walk to class  
Their arms linked like an archway  
For sunlight to cross and fidget  
Sylphlike spirits digging with dollhouse  
Shovels through shampooed curls,  
Their hearts automatic Siamese twins,  
The language of love spoken through fingertips,  
Naïve rivers conjoined and inseparable  
For a year or two  
Until the dry seasons in the backcountry  
Of famished mountains when their  
Sophomoric adoration vanishes to less  
Than a trickle  
And they disband—

But not us. We will be graduates  
In love....

Can you see where it is? Just walk  
Outside the bar and go down University  
To the Catholic Church where I had  
The Eucharist once for a class assignment—  
We can go in together and they still won't  
Know. Jesus will know and he will be proud  
Of us as we take the parts of him his Priest  
Gives us to eat, and with the Holy Spirit  
Snacked on walk to your home and make  
Love with him inside us, so that little crumbs  
Of his blessings are passed between our lips—

You've seen this I'm sure, even if you forget  
The glow from the street lamp which comes down  
Upon your blouse, like blue waters on white filigree,  
The light your eyes travel along  
To finally remember me across the drunken street  
Where the old red-bricked buildings gather

Like ancient professors about the monolithic  
Football stadium of an emperor.

Now you have seen me come back to  
You and you have realized this is what was  
Coming to you all the time you've been here,  
Serving drinks and waiting,  
Not even noticing how pretty  
You look for the boys who've just come back from war,  
And only have two days shore leave. How they  
Fight over you to occupy your time. And you've  
Played the games to make things go faster,

But soon I will be there and on the sidewalk  
At the spot I've told you about, so when you come  
Toward me before we kiss you will  
Know for sure all that I have told you and  
Remember that this is how it is....

Robert Rorabeck

# This Is My Dying Bliss

The day on the river chokes of sun-  
Days of family, days of gun:  
I have been so lost into the brighter splinters  
Of a forest fire that doesn't ignite:  
I fill like I am encircle at a table of absent knights,  
Or the adjectives they use to describe themselves;  
That I should revert again to calling out the  
Christian names of my one or two muses,  
Like a sudden spelling bee cast out amidst  
The key dear of the mangroves;  
And maybe that's what Sharon thinks it means as far as  
Being alive,  
But I prefer Disney World, the plastic stilettos of her  
Eyes,  
Because I am dying, dying into the traffics of the real world,  
Dying with my need,  
With my hands outstretched for something they should  
Be feeding,  
And there is nothing more terribly sweet than this:  
I am dying,  
And this is my dying bliss.

Robert Rorabeck



# This Is Too

I'm placing a bet on a house where the mountains  
Live:  
I'm almost certain there's a girl there who's a housewife  
I could have sworn would never give:  
I could have sworn she would never become halfway  
Impregnated on waterslides,  
Or cursing her blue eyes up through the open joys,  
Experiencing the pit bull refraction on the underside of  
Aeroplanes:  
That this is what she does, and how she belongs:  
And this is how she comes to me working her day through  
The tricks of songs:  
I am sure that the tourists enjoy her, and the snowflakes roll  
Un cut from the scissors of the most endearing entanglement  
Where the hikers' corpses sleep forever in the bad dreams  
Of weeping mothers,  
Because this is the way she has become, and this too is  
Where she belongs.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Joy In The Night

Now there is this joy in the night that  
I don't know—the movie theatre is virtually abandoned—  
And you are abandoned:  
There is only your echo—  
And the night cries without you, infecting my ears  
And my cheeks—  
Giving infatuated goldfish to my promises—  
And in the middle of the night, the fair gets up and moves  
Away—and then there occurs the most beautiful of  
Nebulas over the clouds—  
Until the sunlight vanishes over the highways—and  
God shuts his mouth, figuring out that was all that was important  
That he had left to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Juvenile Rope

Well—so this juvenile rope  
Hangs us as we won't go out and light the wicks  
With the dragons coming home  
Over the equinoxes—while our fairytale fathers fish  
And look up at Saturn,  
And can never be resolved if this is actually the place—  
Maybe a beautiful uncle paints a mural in a trailer park  
On the other side of the canal,  
While something else plays on our television—  
And the ghosts leave the burned wings of our paper  
Airplanes—and go outside between the cypress and  
Melaleuca to explore  
And explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Lazy Old Town

If you are a traditional girl, look up at the  
Stars,  
And the dragons making nests,  
Bending down to sniff the sappy bouquets of  
The tangled cypress:  
Get nose bleeds on your knees, praying to airplanes,  
If you can—  
Or stand up slowly, while slowly raising both of  
Your hands:  
And look across the land I cannot show you:  
It is there with all of your people seeming to  
Move torpidly on the back of a tortoise;  
But it is a frenetic merry-go-round:  
Now it is here—too soon it will leave this lazy old town.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Leaking Summer

Bony endives have their location while  
The parks flood and the rabbits cluster;  
And down there on the teeter-totter is your little  
Brother:  
Just looking at the top of his head makes me sad,  
And I want to make out with you in this flood:  
Here comes grandmother in her old fashioned  
Gondola;  
Yes, it's true: and just like us, airplanes are floating  
In the sky:  
The trees are just vermilion flowers in her great  
Blueness of meadow,  
The waters hatching over her, manipulating our families,  
But as long as I have you here with me and reserved,  
I don't have to worry about you going away to college:  
The closeness of you is a salve, and here are dolphins  
Playing with glass bottles:  
Here are the conquistadors blooming with the echinopsis  
All between the flashy junctures of their exoskeletons:  
But where is my mother: I want to bring you to  
Her, to show you off,  
But in this leaking summer I'll be damned if she isn't ever home.

Robert Rorabeck

## This Lighthearted Responsibility

I smell the clefts of books in place if finding the  
Face of Wallace Stevens.

And I would otherwise want to be anywhere, enlightened,  
Stretched out like a cherry and golden worm:

Sure we can all graduate from the enlightened point of state college,  
But how can we still touch ourselves while the paint is still  
Drying;

And now I have a scar on my temple that will soon disappear,  
While you are still speaking uneasily to yourself;

And all the pretty girls grow like hedges, let them grow untamed and  
Feral; and they will grow just like Constantine's balloons,

While I keep the high grade liquor between my legs,

And they keep publishing things that they cannot know, while all of their  
Problems grow and grow; and their problems keep on getting multiplied,  
While of their cities can find themselves trapped inside in slow

Motion, galloping on their ponies like the private séances

Of the waves and hibiscus; while the water moccasins prance,

And all of the stolen bicycles are stolen into the trances of watery bridges;

And the teal-high mothers don't have any other words for it other than that  
They are all spent on the trail head and that they are all but ready to become

All undone; and the night sure looks busy, but other than that I don't  
Claim any of all of this lighthearted responsibility.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Little Song

Tank tops and tabernacles,  
I dream of Michelle Obama:  
I didn't do anything wrong- it's been a good some  
Years since I smoked hashes down in the cardboard  
Crepuscle of Florida's nocturne,  
And that was the last time I did anything very wrong:  
My face looks like it could go wrong forever:  
It can never take charge again, nor  
Somnambulate through Shakespeare;  
And I wonder if I turned away, would she let me hold  
Her hand through the rains of the courtyard if we were  
The only two buckaroos left in school:  
And right now Romero is dreaming of blow jobs as  
He guards the pumpkins and I get loosely drunk on  
Something: Cabarnet Sauvignon;  
It's not as good is whiskey, but at least it's something,  
Though I wish it could be your forbidden tongue  
Which instead helped me write this little song.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Lovely Town

Sun to my diamond while I live at home—  
Specks of emptiness in her eyes where she once  
Required me—  
As I go sleep-walking like a torn kite outside  
Of Romeo and Juliet's tomb—  
And this seems to be the place where we live—  
Empty cul-de-sac  
Beaten down—  
As little girls leap across the ditches—  
Absent minded of all of the pornographies—  
They seem to take all of the world to be in love—  
And they make theatres out of graveyards—  
They cannot give up  
Well then, this is a poem of a wounded creature—  
Learning how to settle down—  
In a trailer park or a baseball diamond—waiting  
For all of the lamps to douse—  
And all of the lonely hearts to leave this lovely town.

Robert Rorabeck



# This Meaningless Traffic

The night is bad almost like any other,  
And the words come out of the open wounds,  
Pass by me like owls teaming together over  
Wayward trailer parks,  
And this is the way they come, half exposed over  
The shivering fichus and the pink tongues of airplants:  
And the cars parked in mass in the lots beside  
The airport,  
Then planes leaping like freed girlfriends  
Going like steamy bottle rockets and seltzer all the way  
To Colorado,  
To buy wine, to get an excuse to look into a good woman's  
Indescribable eyes,  
While I only eat fast food and glut next to bosomy coffins  
Who remind me so well of my mother,  
And when I get fully inebriated I no longer care how  
Ugly I am or how luckily I have failed, but go to sleep  
With the friendly earth warms next to the open pits  
The tranquil beds and plots for everyone,  
Forgotten in between the better vendors of me,  
Because in the morning there will be so many unhealthy  
Bouquets as they are burying grandmother or one of my  
More unwholesome ants,  
Letting me know that it is yet still too early for me,  
And yet I see how she must come,  
The lady in the shadows jacketed with sharp hornets  
With eyes that never close  
Who cares nothing for all this meaningless traffic.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Midnight's Disney World

In a classroom—In a bedroom—Or in a place  
Not really here,  
I killed or made love to the sea—  
Falling all over her, while my wife sang pop songs  
Into another ear—  
Tomorrow will be our first year anniversary—  
And wont there werewolves come up to look at  
The moon,  
Or any other thoughts I've had,  
With the beautiful and the most beautiful girls  
Dancing in the distance,  
While the horses eat the grass,  
And the bats fly out of the closed gates of  
This midnight's Disney World.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Mortal's Reach

How loud are these whispers that I drink:  
The full catastrophe that it is, coming around once more,  
Putting the flowers into their trams for another bordering school  
Out amidst the pharoses still trying to  
Plead their reason to exist underneath the Pleiades while  
I am Alma jog into the zoo:  
We get into her car and go away: we are getting married tomorrow,  
Which is the horrible proof of the paradox of any promise that  
Must happen tomorrow:  
It is always there in the backyard underneath the springs of things:  
The richest of fruit curling above the infant's gums,  
The serpent spilling the beans:  
The luckiest of rabbits' foos still on the foos of a rabbit who  
Too well cultivates the fleeted of foot to ever be truly within  
This mortal's reach.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Most Unanswerable Of Poetry

Bags of gold fish breathing hard  
Over my shoulder as a won gift, as  
Required- and the moonlight dull, but in  
Charge,  
And your sisters around you in the moonlight  
As sea level,  
Telling nothing of the busses turning around,  
Or the lions  
In their perpetual moaning: soon I will  
Be but grafted into  
Your memory- all of my skills bereft like  
Open wishes emolliated into the burning kiln  
Of sea:  
That I loved you and became your artist:  
Un willfully, so too you became my muse, before  
I must have ventured again- tramping  
Turpentine- or at least the uneasy memory  
Gathered with the syrups of her- and coagulated  
Into your valley until it became so saturnine-  
That I had to leave from there again,  
Just to climb up another little ways- while  
You lay basking in the architectures of your name  
To which I had given you incisively from my unskillful  
Attempts at this most unanswerable of poetry.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Palm, This Ax, This Feather

Following the rains,  
Aspen rise as knitted smoke,  
A caroling sorority up on  
Their elevated saddle.  
Lakes engorged in the nests,  
Platypuses lather and slap-  
Blue mountain lions swat at  
Fish in the plumped,  
Excitable river:  
She lays in the woodchips.  
Smell her-  
Her chest is on fire,  
Her eyes the kindling embers:  
Oh, she is sweet lumber.  
I must use her to build a house,  
The cumulus caracoles the  
Summit,  
Hiding it for awhile,  
Her areolas ripple;  
They just shimmer for awhile,  
Siamese penumbras of a hidden sphere,  
Swaying in their naked crèche,  
And her knees lay crossed like  
Firs bent from dampened pleasure,  
Like opal hinges for playthings  
Displayed by the most modern pioneers.  
She has crushed the wildflowers  
With her sweet timber,  
But they are not complaining,  
But kiss along one side her,  
As I kiss the other;  
Her winds moan their moist weathers,  
And verily she reveals her natures,  
Christened by this palm,  
This ax, this feather.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Saturday

I can hear the traffic; it appears to be making love,  
Or it stops for a little while and holds a yard sale;  
And I have seen coral snakes curling in the wishing wells  
And wash basins of those wheels,  
That little opulent way out clenched between their teeth;  
Then wouldn't ballrooms be just as big and wide open as graveyards,  
Wouldn't they sing:  
It would be like going to school again; it would be like going home  
To a house that was usually empty, only to find it suddenly filled with  
All the girls you once thought you loved,  
And so many beds for them:  
By these means, the night speaks, the liquor flows like soft  
Cathedrals for honeymoons: And I am not Catholic, but I wouldn't  
Mind to be,  
Because I will pray to the virginsita this night tonight;  
And I will pray to her for every night, Alma, because you are still  
Reading my poems,  
And you weren't particularly frightened when I told you that  
I knew where you lived, and that I'd been by once or twice,  
And whistled for you the way the wind likes to whistle  
For little innocent children, and little women standing in the shadows  
Against the lights, forever wondering when their men were  
Coming home, their wishes skipping across the waves;  
And when you cried for Flaco to come save you when I was going to pick  
You up and carry you home with me, but you agreed to meet me  
In the new shadows of the house I bought for you  
After work this Saturday.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Should Be My America

As I was eating a bowl of rice,  
What she was doing was kissing  
Another man,  
Eyes the sensing pistons, lips the  
Sport of birds of prey:  
Angels resided in her bone structure,  
I saw them first nest there in high school,  
As she made her rounds with  
Strange little debutants, likely dykes:  
I loved her even then  
When she pinned me near the lockers  
And made me swap spit without  
Pulling out our retainers:  
How they drift now, the body taking  
All of its figs down river  
To listen to the fireside tales of the negros,  
The cotton like lightless stars swaying  
In the field,  
Mark Twain calling down river,  
His brother dead and he feeling guilty;  
But this should be my America,  
To see her last in a wayward eclipse,  
Her body settling upon the newer acquaintances  
Of love and business,  
And finally marriage,  
Her lips the sommeliers which swill  
And then spit, her eyes the causeways  
From which her judgment blooms;  
All the waysides go by forgotten,  
And the boys in their jogging shorts,  
The smell of freshly cut grass and the grumbling  
Automobiles, thus in evening her beauty  
Lights the streets of nostalgia,  
Swaying like the fingertips of waves the  
Moonlight covers,  
And thus she goes, promising with the tide,  
To afflict the hungry senses of this last of the  
Modern generations,  
Now captivating the chastity through

Swinging doors,  
Greeting patrons come in from  
The flurrying snows,  
For awhile a causeway, a muse curled  
Up and busy with Easter decorations;  
Already forgotten, cozily inebriated:  
The subject of the colonial poet,  
Bartering of rumors, canvas that allures,  
This should be my America.

Robert Rorabeck



# This Song Of Romance

Go f&ck yourself in mastiff peeks,  
And long forgotten highways,  
Or hide yourself well-exposed in bouquets  
I will never buy you:  
Flick out your cigarette alongside the rode of  
Forget-me-nots or so many tulips if we  
Are in the Netherlands,  
Kick over the potted plants, smell of cheap  
Fireworks and cheap friends;  
And I am going my way high on blue bells,  
All my veins are having hot flashes,  
From liquor and lack of children-  
The canal bows and winnows- It goes back to you  
Again,  
And all of your hinges and all of your blood are  
Such amusement,  
Such luscious, unrequited flood that I don't know what  
To do with myself,  
But to remove the needle and then place it softly again  
Over your soft vociferous lips and  
Start this song of romance over once again.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Tomorrow's Torpid Stream

Kaleidoscopic mermaids  
Swimming in the drowning sea:  
Playing with waverly kids  
In the sunken school bus,  
Lost mothers bathing in the golden  
Caesuras,  
The fathers the silver kings,  
Entombed in the granite skin,  
Rusted so far down beneath  
The archway of the crumbling Titan:  
The words of the better life,  
Have been buried beneath the  
Millennium's sands,  
Heroes of yesteryears have  
Gone away, holding death's slight hand.  
Outside the window where  
You once swept your hair,  
And tied your first French-kiss  
Into my lips, with your friends'  
Virgin dare:  
All down the street now  
The lights are out in fine, long rows,  
And the cars are parked beneath  
The flags which no longer flow:  
In these awkward suburbs  
Where the young professionals pledged,  
The sunlight is combed over by  
The sea's burnished edge,  
And we are all the oldest children  
Sleeping in a hypnotic dream,  
Our mouths open but not breathing  
This tomorrow's torpid stream.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Too Shall Pass

I've said enough now to pop a cherry,  
And if you had to be my sour grapes,  
And I the bitter fox leaping toothily  
Up from his determined elements, the dirty  
Though truthful earth sick with gravity  
To the skyline's harvest where your veins  
Grew breasts nipples with pits, milky:  
In truth, you pulled back and played games,  
Took your commodities with you skipping the pearly clouds  
On commuter airplanes; but still my tongue  
Dripped self-inflicted blood as I high-jumped  
For that metallic belly which held your thoughts,  
And your jellies,  
But you came to him instead, trundled in the night,  
And creeping hidden of poetry, and fed him of yourself,  
The inebriate knight who spent his off hours in  
Your restive loci, dripping honeyed- What needn't happen did, but after  
He has eaten enough from you to earn an aching belly,  
Do you really think he will head out to the dangerous border,  
And slay your dragons and less definitive enemies?  
Rather, might you think, that I with my cunning and  
Nocturnal pen could have done a better job at lovely assassinations;  
Instead, I, as all self-imposed heroes must, I walk away from your  
Vineyards, taking nothing from you but the scornfulness  
Of Precambrian tourism, heady though defeated,  
Kicking up dusk, the windmills on the horizon my immortal  
Enemy, I combat to keep this purity, you should neither see nor defend.

Robert Rorabeck

## This Unfortunate This

Pain in a terrible candle of gold:  
Leaping above the traffic, blinding the lighthouse,  
And the better avenues down which I am  
Too dumb to travel;  
There I am in a little forgotten space, looking up  
With my dogs,  
Combining our senses to realize the least of imperfect  
Things,  
Even if she does exist, flickering like the last  
Frictions of ash-  
Smelling like an orchard where the ghosts sleep;  
And then I lay down on the stones,  
And pray to her- oracular but ashamed, while  
The tourists trundle by  
Bleeding loose change- dissected on the spot,  
It feels as if for a while I shouldn't  
Have to exist;  
Then the wound opens more revealing a little clearer  
This unfortunate this.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Unpublishable Suburbia

Old books in my hands,  
Are rectangular planets of the psocids who live in them;  
Each page a whispering continent prone to wispy quakes,  
The spine an avenue which halves this earth,  
The migrations of flagella over the landmasses of dark consonants;  
The tattooed paragraphs flow ignored....

I dreamed last night that you had a terrible disease,  
And while I slept you danced in the conversing shadows,  
While the avengers of the world's evil doers  
Flipped each page to move you on-  
You were the zoetrope of a luminescent paramour,

That night I dreamed with my diminutive manager  
Under the beer-can mobiles across the erstwhile yellow apartment,  
In the dirty turnabout of the way station beneath the busy airplanes  
And the flat tires in disregarded towers reaching  
Up your slender ankle,

So where you worked became some kind of castle  
For Don Quixote and my bankrupt uncle;  
They came in every night when you were closing,  
From the banking hill of the laughing windmills,  
In the hour where your blouse glowed like slow cadmium;  
The fuse persuading gunpowder from the impossible mine,  
And your eyes, your eyes were at their most indescribable....

"A castle it is, " they said in the dream,  
Looking at you like gold toothed mules,  
The animal man survived from,  
Climbing with their lucid thievery up your canyon- not knowing  
Of your consumption,  
And how those coy eyes flew over their grayish shoulders,  
Searching out the tawny paladins of your affliction.

Then I would awake, confused,  
Inebriated by the genius of celibacy, and the day's headlights....  
As the industrious lawnmowers perambulated toothily across  
The current page of this un-publishable suburbia.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Unspoken World

These afternoons are going by  
Like the steady stream of jetliners  
At your uncle's air show:  
And you are still just a kid,  
Growing gray from being  
Touched by all the nameless ghosts.  
Your fears are swinging beside  
You in the park alone,  
When you should've been in school,  
Trying to emulate your peers,  
Those pink felons dripping  
Chlorine in their backyard swimming pools-  
They have the eyes of one thousand songbirds,  
Waiting on the power lines  
For the children getting off the bus  
To discard their mind's offspring  
Seeding the sodden green  
Scattered on their front lawns  
The infinite cypress where the wind sways,  
While their families are lost inside  
The television in the living room.  
Only the little boy on the roof's identity  
Can see the momentary prism  
Bridge the heads of pine trees,  
Believing he saw a little girl air walking,  
Her eyes a whisper of blue  
Climbing up the nebular stairwell  
Of the albino's monument,  
Until preserved in the sun's yellow resin  
On the other side of this unspoken world.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Very Cold Holiday

Now your children whisper  
And vanish-  
Looking beautiful before the mirror of  
Your father's house,  
But how long can you hope for  
The to survive,  
Whist another my stanzas vanishes-  
Just as I pull out of another  
Whorish  
Pornography, wishing through the  
Haunted cornstalks,  
It was you,  
As the waves vanish,  
And the airplanes roar into the very  
Eclipse of lions,  
And now maybe my last true loves  
Blooms far away,  
Believe in nothing in which I believe  
In except for myself-  
Until it all because a carnival  
Until the fish grow wings and fly through  
This very cold holiday into which I've  
Been touching myself and  
Trying to grow wings just so I can have one  
Last chance to believe I can grow  
Wings,  
And stay warm into the cathedrals underneath  
Of which I am afraid you are  
Forever lost.

Robert Rorabeck



# This Very, Very Song

You said that you only wanted to be friends  
But then we kissed  
And I hurt myself even further along the journey:  
And now look at all it has all turned out:  
I bought you a book that you somehow finished, Alma:  
And the sea is bright green and playing games,  
And otherwise these words put me to shame,  
And I loved the amber taste of your lips as I drank of  
Them in your car  
Outside of McDonalds in the rain and the river of  
Carports,  
And the lackadaisical musters of their queens;  
But if I may be as honest as the most distant of all of  
Saturn's rings,  
I love you and you are to me more precious than the most  
Precious of things,  
And if this is how all of it must have to turn out,  
And I have to continue getting my mail in my loneliness,  
I suppose that it doesn't have to be so sad:  
That I have tasted your wet butterfly like licking a stamp,  
And I sailed away in a bed where neither of us belonged  
And afterwards I went and sung this very,  
Very song.

Robert Rorabeck

# This Way At All

His Lancelot has been naked but courteous  
To you,  
And very familiar: so many times questing into your  
Octopus grottos  
As to make them so well tilled as to even bear  
Children without any sort of wicked serpent's  
Fangs,  
Except for his; and they rose up springy,  
And were met by the heavy hand of the gravity of your  
Trailer parks and tom cats;  
And this is what they said, but oh boy, and baseball:  
Witches on red diamonds telling secrets to  
Dust devils, or the blue diamonds of pools enriched with  
Chlorine,  
Your sister's eyes- and by her I mean anybody's sister:  
I am not speaking directing to anybody, how could I,  
Except that I mean that he is your knight,  
Proud and religious and adhering to a king;  
And you both know so little of the world: you are so young  
And eager to be questing;  
And when he falls asleep inside of you, when her furls and goes away  
Then don't you close your eyes and realize that it was never  
Supposed to be this way at all.

Robert Rorabeck

## This Way At All]

His Lancelot has been naked but courteous  
To you,  
And very familiar: so many times questing into your  
Octopus grottos  
As to make them so well tilled as to even bear  
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And this is what they said, but oh boy, and baseball:  
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Dust devils, or the blue diamonds of pools enriched with  
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And eager to be questing;  
And when he falls asleep inside of you, when her furls and goes away  
Then don't you close your eyes and realize that it was never  
Supposed to be this way at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# This White Liquor

A field fills up like a city with so many stars  
Lost from the bedrooms of spaceships,  
But these words just become latchkeys for foxes  
And homophones—  
Words that sound the same to the conventional franchises  
That don't have to heal until they take a dive:  
I am the product of the fast food mountains—  
I am so deformed, when I pee it is from all of  
My joints and my eyes:  
I am a Frankenstein burried up from roses:  
I used to teach at your local high school,  
I used to dig up both of my eyes to use  
To bore into you who have beautiful daughters,  
But not alone:  
There are still racecars,  
And beautiful water falls in Tennessee:  
Let is pretend that they are falling from the water fountains  
Of the rural high schools  
And I do not have to proofread this poem before  
Going to sleep  
Or drinking anymore of this white liquor:  
Tomorrow, the cars will move back and forth across  
Shanghai like ants,  
And we will have very little else to prove  
Except that I am not beautiful and you will most  
Certainly not love forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thoroughly Anonymously Enamored Over You

There's a black cat in the woods who leaves  
Me whenever I am going,  
And a man in the woods I have never seen,  
But I am not looking for him anymore:  
I am looking for a kind publisher- I am looking to  
Find a great bottle big enough for an entire armada  
Of sailboats and help letters:  
But mostly I am altruistic, fermented and drunk:  
I could never be as beautiful as you ever wanted me to  
Be:  
In fact now, I am all gone: Like the little boy told me today,  
I'll have to be human for Halloween,  
But like you, I'll love his mother anyways, and I'll  
Listen to songs which remind me of the forgotten holiday of  
You virgin streams, of our common high school hallways,  
Of the water fountains where I saw you shivering as you  
Cleaned your Siamese feathers,  
Your song bird wings: and now you are up above the earth,  
In the amusement parks of fine ether-  
There are glacier pools about you, or they are just your eyes  
Staring on to nothing;  
Perhaps if they think of me, they imagine that I am as beautiful  
As I would like to be,  
But I am not, Sharon- but I am true,  
And I will spend my entire life passed out in the red hibiscus  
Thoroughly anonymously enamored over you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Alienated Tatters

I've gone up the stairs and called down for  
Ghosts above the strawberry fields,  
The little plots that the locusts love, and the possessed  
Men in their cars,  
Adopted and up to no good- and somehow all of the  
Best of us have lost important limbs,  
While the dragon is fatly sated up in the winter-molested  
Limbs of a feral Christmas tree;  
And all of the white girls sleep like powdery ghosts  
Contemplating proms,  
But the girl I am thinking of is nocturnal and ringed by  
Gold,  
And her children come into and out of her bedroom at  
Anytime while she is sleeping or making love;  
And tomorrow I will meet her again at the fruit market,  
Holding her eyes like a totem:  
And maybe she will think of me, or maybe she will  
Think of you,  
While the ghosts swing and try to fly, even though they  
Are only those alienated tatters that people once knew.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Beautifully Anonymous Waves

Plagiarized in soft flesh:

I want to go down touching the swell lips of her

Grave:

Don't care how many children she's had.

I've written so many more poems more naked and  
Imperfectly needing.

The fair is coming to town and I want to string out  
With her and hopefully catch

A vermilion fire

Sparked off one of those bellicose airplanes,

From the match-head of simple tricks;

And buy her a secret diamond

And feel her up under the diademed machines,

Forgetting the reefs of séances our parents have wrecked

Us against;

Or if I was more clever, we could just hold hands:

To feel a woman's heart beat through her hands again

Would be glorious,

And this time I would know better, and really appreciate

That leggy carnival even if I was never aloud to

Really slip inside:

And to win her prizes of each and every kind.

To feed candy apples to her lips, and laugh at the jealousy of

Those red battles.

To smile while surmising the brightnesses of her coy

Duplicities beneath her belladonna eyes:

To dimple my fingers in what salty clefts she might wish to

Swing,

P%ssy-willows fluttering, never caring that I wasn't a mailman,

Or even a shadow of his occupation;

But that I had once thought of kissing her as I would do to

The effluvious nipples of all those beautifully

Anonymous waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Careless Mountains

Problems with the nuisances of the favors  
Of the swellest wives:  
I remember them standing there like salt licking  
Deer  
In their kitchens at cooking time,  
As their pools were wimpled by the cheery  
Breath of airplanes;  
And all of it was so unreal, and in still life:  
So now I can't even recall the feeling of myself there:  
And I have to stand out alone against the stars  
Who have meandered out of constellations,  
Making no sense for anybody:  
The children are lost but happy and on their backs  
Breathing slowly as if they had found every last Easter  
Egg and are now holding their  
Coral snakes like cherished pets;  
And I watch the n%ggers pointing out the rainstorms,  
As the airplanes seem to roar like lions  
Taking off their clothes in the sky,  
As I see the last light of love from her eyes  
Botoxed in my mother's brow,  
And the little boy becomes a felon of iron pyrite,  
Breaking his legs before the faith of his dogs up in the  
Nameless caesuras of those careless mountains.

Robert Rorabeck



# Those Clever Accoutrements They'D Show To Any Boy

Please tell me she's lying on her bed,  
Because I'm done now: I'm off my bike,  
And I'm thoroughly drenched,  
My fingers are cold and would wish to warm inside  
A thicket of blue bells which I'll compare her to;  
And I'm an awful man, not finished painting-  
Didn't learn anything at the university today:  
Didn't go to class, but rode around and drank in all  
The open rooms, and as I tilted back it was just to  
Get a look at the perfect young ankles of all the  
Practicing housewives:  
It was at first a revelation, a button-holed parade,  
And I had to say there were a lot of heroes amidst them,  
And the bravest of them bared teeth when they laughed  
And seemed to freeze for me, and show me the  
Long hot row, so I could almost picture them in the very  
Neighborhood they were bound to transcend in to:  
I could see them hanging glass balls on the Christmas tree  
In the houses they made and kept their souls in;  
And pies on the sills, and house cats along the eaves,  
And crocodiles and roman candles and hangovers that wouldn't  
Go away;  
But it got exhausting thinking of all of these, and even the  
Flowers turned to wilt, and the shade got runny- but the girls  
Didn't leave: They were bound to show for me those clever  
Accoutrements they'd show to any boy- that got them into  
High school and college and free cigarettes;  
So finally I had to look at the time myself and make up an excuse  
I had no reason to procrastinate any more; and I hope my muse  
Is waiting, waiting and that she has nothing on and her  
Hair is undone and is as pale as an unmolested envelop set there  
For me to lick and seal with my letters to put in and her  
In that lonely lovely apartment so close to the amusement parks  
And downtown racetracks that she could be one or the other herself;  
And that is what I am waiting for, even though my words are  
Not my own: that she should have blue bells in her hair and likewise  
Underarms, that her eyes should lay like blue birds half molested  
In their nests, and sleepily speak to me gathered above her  
Soft and snowy breasts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Disciples Who Have Forgotten How To Pray

My hand: like a river that winnows,  
Swaying in banks of light, mountainous  
Knuckles when gripped Titans awakening,  
When asleep punished by teenage gods,  
A creative tool, an injunction,  
A lift for trees and patter of wheat.  
My hand has not been in Michigan for decades,  
Not since my aunt's wedding,  
But that is where it curled from mother's womb,  
Like a yawning doll,  
Conceived in the drooling mists of Appalachia;  
My hand in the shadows, without scars,  
Long curled fingers warp outward, my hand  
The ledger, an instrument of bones and wine,  
The typing instrument, thrilled to a drunken brain,  
A face sometimes mustached who hasn't kissed  
A woman's lips in years, a spider my hand  
Conjoined. I think it odd that a male's hand  
Should resemble a female's, or that the different  
In sexes is only apparent erogenous,  
A hand that should cup an infant, hosanna,  
A hand that should cusp waves as if breasts,  
And pay for the dinner outstretched,  
A hand which pulled her hair and held her  
Neck, who shot the b.b. Gun, and gripped the stony  
Lips as it scrambled over my head to summit,  
To climb four mountains in one day,  
The highest in Colorado: my hand, the processor  
Of humanity, like any other hand digging ditches  
Looking for gold, my hand on the steering wheel  
My lips singing to the radio, palm spread camaraderie,  
Fingers tapdance unringed,  
Or in need to catch a lover's tear or hide the  
Gum under the desk, refusing to learn Latin,  
My hand an expletive, and jest, or any other symbol  
My nerves comprehend, clutching chains, motivate the  
Arc of the frozen swing-set, light a cigarette burning  
Cherries into the snow, my hand to steal, to foil,  
To water-ski, or to reward the dog, to fold the book like

Manipulating a butterfly, to smack her ass, to lift the  
Beer to my slurping lips; my hand who  
Has forgotten how to pray, my hand who gives  
Correct change, or cuts the fruit to its salty core,  
My hand in death remains the worn-out instrument of  
God the ants explore, who swings the weed-eater  
Over the grass and touches the brail upraised in stone,  
Blindly notices the cooling of temperature walking into  
The shadows, my hand like many others  
Working, working, moving through the ceaseless play  
Weathered into spiders, who has forgotten the joyful  
Avenues of women, their variables displayed on  
A picnic table, and to explore with her hands as loudly  
As lips, my hand with no sense of smell brings  
Food to my lips, and secrets to my door,  
Each finger conjoined to the other, disciples to the  
Heart's rhythm, and he the engine that irrigates each  
Line and passage they should explore, and peal  
Open, and devour, and reward....  
Those disciples who have forgotten how to pray.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Feelings Who Let You In

Those feelings who let you in are going now,  
Lighting out in that terrible fog:  
The last one I can feel is the one letting me know,  
Holding the door open as we wave the others goodbye:  
What a foolish thing, ambition,  
To want to know the avenues to your  
Neck, displayed like a creature  
Of the sea naked on the foaming shore  
Without its dress of shells:  
I liked these words I curled for you,  
Because I wanted them to be my tongue  
Slipping between your lips when you were not looking:  
When you were talking with the other man:  
I wanted to surprise you,  
And let that me by occupation:  
To inhabit your heart as if it were my preservation:  
I, a naturalism, and your chest the habitat of my study,  
But I was never so good at satire  
To make you look a second time at me:  
The embolden language of my parents' rejection,  
A child making a mess in his lonely room,  
I accomplished that:  
I became a fool for you, but look at this.  
Here is the conclusion to the thing.  
There are still many words to be said,  
And people to say them as they wake up for class:  
There is a room I am in,  
And outside there are trees,  
And the sky in its haunted night too cold to follow-  
Languages and lovers and roller coasters aplenty,  
But none for me-  
I graduated and that is that,  
And now is the time for my simpler plot:  
No more essays, or thoughts of you:  
The way you lighted the predawn hours  
Where the men were busy selling the fruits  
Which would soon travel northwards,  
To be bought in the morning-  
I loved you, as I told you, but I am still here:

My words should become silent now,  
A mute theatre, a holocaust,  
A simpler traveler abiding the rules:  
And you, the untamed migration  
That is lost.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Government Employed Automobiles

Lonely at the sauce, the stars stuttering jobless,  
And the prairie is concrete, its orchards golden filigree:  
But I still walk,  
While the ponies shed off their riders and sip the waves  
Like curious paramours lost on their first day  
Of high school:  
In between classes when the water fountains become an  
Oasis and made eeried by the bosom of their perfumes:  
And then and at those times the buses laying in  
Waiting beneath the proposed of windmills,  
And the finest cowboy who ever lives sleeps underneath the  
Best of those government employed automobiles.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Previous Songbirds

I go all day along struggling with this;  
And lovers make love in parks, or at least young girls  
Walk their strong young dogs with their mothers;  
And I am certain I cannot belong,  
Thinking of all the people I have loved who have gotten away  
With not loving me,  
And these superfluous words like the rain showers on holidays:  
I suppose that they must mean very little, because my art is  
Drunken and tends to keep to itself like the fingertip of a lighted  
Candle,  
Like a jogger caracoling a park even until sundown,  
While you touch his face and he burns into you his spears, his thrust  
Wishes, as if counting your years inside of you,  
Tapping like a miner trapped in pink taffy until you have forgotten  
All of your scars, and all of those previous songbirds who have  
Gone down wholeheartedly into your catastrophe.

Robert Rorabeck



## Those Roses Put To Better Usage

I could be the boy you couldn't say;  
Instead, the boy you couldn't see: I've had better  
Plans than loving the things I see most every  
Day,  
Blue prints of you in the navy on leave on your  
Bicycle under the Spanish tambourine leaves,  
Dripping like an olive, cursing on the move  
Words that flow forth around you, the rushing  
Sea to prove,  
The non existent traffic, the different ways to  
Misspell words,  
The deep despondent clouds which expel from  
Your covetous body somehow;  
And I am not ready to come to my senses,  
Or at least make money by it anyhow- My word  
I should dispense with like scattering rice  
At weddings, feeding the snowbirds as they retire  
To the south; this worthless vitriol that tumbles  
From my mouth wishing to disprove what a brilliant  
Society that cooked you up- I want to be the one  
Who puts shoes on your feet, Eucharist in your mouth  
And set you well fed and attentive,  
Taming you just so you'll dance for me and call me  
John with everything upon you but your lips,  
Those roses we'll put to better usage.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Silhouettes Of The Wind-Tunnels

Burn my throat by those silhouettes  
Of the wind-tunnels the airplanes  
Flew into on Christmas  
Back on the day in Catalonia when  
I was a sophomore—  
And the words spread like slip streams  
For the muses  
I didn't yet believe I would never  
Have—pale girls from  
High school I kept in love  
With for a decade  
As they were married and birth  
Children,  
And the snows melted from the  
Mountains every summer—  
And the tourists came up  
To their doorsteps  
Trying to imagine the heavens  
They could never have.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Unnecessary Waves

Maybe the bodies burn their cathedrals of samurais  
All day long, but I don't blame them:  
These are just the things that they do when they cant get  
Any reception, when there isn't or there aren't any good  
Sci-fi on,  
And Diana is making love to her bald man, even though she asked  
Me to buy her lingerie:  
And I love Diana even while the basil wilts in its little black bay:  
And now I just have enough money to enjoy myself,  
To forget my mother and father and their awful  
Sorts of spouses: to make love to whores who enjoy making love  
To me,  
And their beautiful tattoos pointing the way like the first star  
Of morning on their inner thigh,  
Like a compass mouthing off and congratulating itself in the bay  
Where the housewives are drowning luxuriously  
And the stewardesses are as of you floundering, collecting themselves  
In the head rooms of the violent green caesuras of all of those  
Unnecessary waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Unreturning Waves

In this conundrum there is nobody to buy  
Ice-cream—the entire town has vanished  
Like apples from their trees:  
The day laborers have gone back to trailer  
Parks—  
The amusements have migrated  
And the waves have receded—some brave  
Men still believe that there are mermaids  
Down in the grottos,  
But the lighthouses have willfully blinded  
These heavens to the skies—  
The little girls' fathers are never returning  
Home again,  
Having given themselves over to those  
Unreturning waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Those Very Promises

Words on the comb of a c\$ck hypnotized  
Before the caesuras of the very leaping waves of the sea:  
And now this: now this,  
I have a house just as little and just as yellow as me:  
And the airplanes peruse, and as they purr,  
She picks out the plums she'd rather take to her house,  
And I bag them,  
And then look away into the shadows under that very sun,  
As she takes back her car keys and drives away  
With the three bouquets that I've stolen for her:  
Her children waiting for her brown bosom the same way  
Hatchlings await for the return flight of their mother  
From the strange opulences of the sea:  
She brings them back all of her promises, and feeds them those  
Very promises she should have fed to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thou Buzzards

Above or beneath me no one sleeps,  
The windows keep their dressing,  
The shadows their creeps; and if you are the  
Vision of high society  
With a palate for a beefier dictionary,  
You make me weep like a crocodile, like  
An onion, like a tourist makes me weep  
Shirtless like soulless for awhile,  
So easily they are shed and driven around;  
And led,  
When they should be taking photographs  
Of the deeper, brighter things, those housewives  
With their afternoon strange, their favorite quiet  
Places, their favorite books and places to take it  
All off,  
The favorite places to shop and stuff their  
Kids: In this beautiful stage-show neighborhood  
Is where I met you, where you now live with  
All your ivy league flunkies and their ivy league  
Sibs- There you displaced me like a generic  
Sheet to the wind, you set me free to migrate  
Some feet out your door and around the sizzling  
Power lines to spin- I was an outside dog,  
That very four legged soul you couldn't abide,  
And I spent my afternoons of peanut-butter and jelly  
Outside on the swings, and didn't wash-  
Went from door to door, quietly stealing things like  
The liquored conquistador using the pool's inflatable  
Raft to sail the treacherously rewarding seas too rich  
For thou buzzards to explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Though I Am Still Alive

When we stole into the Fountain of Youth  
She didn't wear any panties.  
As she climbed the wall  
In the shadow of the concrete cross,  
I saw her own shadow,  
And it had only been with one man.  
Later, she found out that she loved women,  
But that night we were alone,  
Young thieves in amnesia  
Who wanted to live for ever.  
It was so early, there were no tourists,  
But the fountain's water tasted like  
Rotten eggs. Afterwards,  
We were hungry in the misplaced graveyard  
Where the Catholic Spaniards  
Rested perpetually alongside the natives  
And the stalwart fort that looked  
Anxiously across the sea  
Where the waves were repeating in cavalry  
The caesuras where mermaids bathe.  
And looking at her hair  
Whipping atop the parapets,  
I thought there should be fireworks  
With children and veterans on parade in sunshine,  
But it has been so long,  
And now the college in the oldest city  
Is full of dead girls  
Though I am still alive.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thought In Their Bones

Pains in an organ, open to the trees,  
Exposed to the sun:  
Cadavers of little boys bathing in the shadows  
Of school buses:  
Words resurrected off their mollusks tongues,  
While all the pretty girls like blue jays  
Ate their lunches of  
Nectars and other boys,  
And then went straight out into the sheer field,  
Like kites stuck to the sweet whispers of what they  
Could find there:  
The ants marched underneath them, their little ant  
Hearts beating like drums- the suns stroking them  
Like cats:  
They marched on the straight edge, the alligators  
Watching them without a thought in their bones.

Robert Rorabeck



# Thoughts Of A Dearly Innocent World

Out in the pastures the knees of felines and antelope  
Are knocking hard,  
And the cars are getting washed by homeless knuckles:  
Where the fruit trees basked filled with knowledge and  
Sleeping gentlemen;  
And your house is right down there between the graveyard  
And the supermarket:  
And that is where you make love, and I can find you rinsing  
Your hair and smiling through the transoms which  
No longer reflect into me thoughts of a dearly innocent world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thoughts Of Cotton Candy And Pin-Up Girls

Colorful lightbulbs  
Decorate the footpaths and the castles  
Of the Mexicans-  
And a river runs through the  
Center  
Filled with paper boats  
That happen to be  
Love letters burning-  
Burning-  
The displaced rainbow trout  
Stare up to-  
As the clouds promise rain  
With green horses drawing silver wagons  
Filled with thoughts of cotton candy  
And pin-up girls.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thoughts Which Cannot Be Explained

They flow in these blues:  
The thoughts which mountains have,  
The dazed carnivores—  
The way I looked at  
you  
Across the rooms,  
The great basins and wombs  
Of glacial tears  
The flower shops  
The bees stumble through—  
I stepped on your ring finger  
Like a root  
Growing over the carpet in some classroom—  
These things I've never had,  
Thoughts which cannot be explained  
In the blink of an eye  
As you walked away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thousand Flavors Of Housewife

Banished from the court of her cherished liquor,  
I forget to look for anything beautiful,  
I see the backside of my mother going into the  
Other room reflected on the door overlooking  
The end of all things-  
I start out with a sack over my shoulder meaning to  
Steal a thousand flavors of housewives,  
But I only know a few things to whistle,  
Even a fewer words: I have a repulsive novel,  
A dog with bad farts, and a sister of serpents and scales;  
But she is not real.  
The girl is real outside my sold house and down a ways.  
She's been waiting for me beside the fire- I shouldn't  
Think that she likes to roller skate,  
Because it bugs her when I do; but I still think it, and I  
Don't come and she falls in love with the closest of men,  
And I take to new neighborhoods tongue in cheek,  
The sky flashing like a clock out of whack-  
The housewives steam out of their cracks; and I put my  
Tongue in their warm pets- We move with the traffic  
And collect at the end of the highway they were smart enough  
To lead down to the tide, because that's where everything  
Not kept inside goes: we go there.  
We go over the flea market, not stopping even to relieve ourselves.  
I speak my four words and they unbundled and disrobe.  
Yes, in fact, they fall away like children, weeping; they all get  
Their own species at the end of the work day,  
They never call out they are so happy, they swing in the waves,  
And I have never seen anything so happy,  
No matter which way they left,  
And I will never see anything so happy again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thousand Songs

How are you while you are not imagining me:  
There you are with husband and children after the ferris  
Wheels are taken down,  
And my wife is in the bathroom where you used to  
Fix your hair after we made love,  
And the sports of winter are over,  
And you are up there with those horses after  
I have supposed a thousand songs for you—  
Now he lays his brown body across the apiary that you  
Once lost to me—  
And your children coo indoors having no clue of  
How you once shared every bit of nothing with me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Three Children Prompting Death

Three children prompting death- skipped school  
Together to look into your eyes,  
And you just smiled as if you didn't believe in death,  
And the ice-cream man didn't come-  
The air-plants didn't bloom- The liquor was watered  
Down,  
And the swing-set didn't arc high enough for any  
Of the children to tickle papa's feet:  
And I laid out somewhere at the bottom of Michigan  
Listening to my great-uncle water-ski,  
His powerboat making the noise I would like you to  
Make if I could pull your motor,  
Put my tongue to your pistil and steal what is necessary  
For a florist shop to survive;  
But I still have both of my legs, and even scarred the pain  
Is not great enough to start a fire from fiddling sticks:  
Yes, the star falls, the planes die,  
The UFOs pick up strange hitchhikers, but it is yet not  
Enough to realize the bloom of the cactus flower,  
The strange ornithologies my father whispered last in my  
Ear as he took up his walking stick and struck out on  
Your trail, hoping to prove the sweet adulteries which  
Were never for sale in any store in his neighborhood;  
And even then your eyes turned away,  
Gesticulating long-lashed upon other men who sat like kings  
In other hemispheres even as they too turned away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Three Green Lies

Lost in the woods,  
Three young girls make love,

Topless under the cypress  
Flesh brushed by the do nothing wind  
Which rustles amidst the forest, as  
If checking for loose change

As their fingers play posies,  
Ringing around one another's rosies

Until the green man comes  
With his cabbage-green guns  
And chases them  
Over the opal hills,

The wind picking up everything  
They dropp to take back home, to vend  
At the pawnshop.

They jog all the way downtown  
To the cafes on the promenade,  
Where they settle their blue pills  
With tall glasses of beer and pink lemonade.

Then they are nice young girls,  
With good postures and clean panties—  
They have apple green cheeks which bunch  
Up when they eat like sacks full of goods,  
Swinging brightly from their eyes,

Here they wink and nudge,  
And there are little pinwheels of pure delights  
At the corners of their upturning lips  
And smiling eyes

As the young boys go by,  
Who they count, 2by2 and when they're  
Really lucky, 2by4, with pouts in their

Pockets, wanting just one more to stay,  
To brush each of their thighs in hidden  
Turns under the table, like charades for  
The hard of hearing.

Here, in the purple city, where  
All the girls look nice,  
And half look pretty.

On the sidewalk,  
Where the sun gets drunk,  
And colors his love blushing,  
The play of stoplights through the alders,  
To the nuzzle of a grizzly bear....

I try and remember her in  
My bed, her lips pressed  
To my forehead, like a soft gun  
She used to shoot at me with  
Gasoline and bottle-rockets,

Pure fun

Jovially,  
She shot out my eye

From the window at the back of the bar,  
The whole world starts out and keeps going  
On like a tunnel down the walk.

Here there are the 3 girls still drinking beer  
And lemonade, beginning to look at each other  
Like sly foxes, their foreheads warming to that  
Recent dream in the forest,

And their one poor boy, begins to look for a 2by4,  
Now that they are playing together again,  
His fingers have nothing to do.

And the green man, stooped around the corner,  
Smoking a tree branch as he counts his bullets—  
3 bullets shot into green flies,



The thrifty wind picks up, before letting them  
By,

And I'm by myself, on the other side of the room,  
Because she's done blowing her smoke into me,  
And I have nothing else to do.

Robert Rorabeck

# Three Legged Horse

I put up these broken things as decorations  
For relatives I haven't seen before just flown in:  
These are mute hyperboles on a television nobody  
Is watching, but I just bought it, and I love it:  
These are my sad persuasions to the middle-class  
Saints, asking them to shake off their various staples  
Of pietas and stigmata and come in! come in!  
Because they are the very ones I've been looking for,  
And I have a mermaid captured in the bathtub  
I've been happily torturing to get a name for,  
And we can talk and have sex  
And hors d'oeuvres and look out into the back  
Yard where the dogs are burying their bones as the  
Foreground of a terrific pastel train wreck. We ask each other  
About the weather to stave off salesmen, and the guilt  
Of our knowledge that is everyman's inheritance,  
and our impotence in  
Comparison to each suave dancer out on the floor; but with all this  
Business, and the successful initiation of foreplay and  
Ennui, I find myself turning the world into a tank of  
Glass, farmers gossiping outside the four walls that we wear.  
Like a ship turning undecided at sea, and then the entire house is a giant  
Lung of the whale which has swallowed my imagination  
For so long, and now that it is mine I can sit back and  
Say I am published, but it isn't very good. When the knock  
Comes to the door, only the curious persuasion of my dinner  
Guests will cause me to answer it; but instead I will leave  
The uninvited guess to them, and head up stairs to my more  
Saturated bed: caressing each of her lulls, her lips my carnal prayers  
Answered,  
Asking for nothing more.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through

Dissolving through the nocturnes,  
I sing another song for the skeletons—as I try to make  
Believe  
That my last mused loved me—knowing that it cannot  
Be so:  
Wanting to make a muse out of my wife,  
Even though she lives on the other side of the earth  
In an apartment I am too young to attend—  
Knowing it is too hopeful to be a possibility—  
Try to forgive myself—  
A blind man walking into the shadows—  
Who has tried to repossess a god so many times—  
Who houses become smaller and smaller—  
And the chartreuse busses that return to him that  
Much larger—and larger:  
These are the monsters that cannot be defeated—  
These are the beams of sunlight that invade my dreams—  
As you pretend to last forever—  
Basking in the forts of the heavens that can only pretend  
To be what they seem.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through A Lonely Orange Tree

Every morning's light the fingers on the strings of  
A marionette that took a driving test  
And passed, and now goes to work and drinks and gossips  
At the water fountain with other marionettes  
That bat wooden eyelashes and bob wooden heads-  
And are sometimes taken across the ferts  
Of plastic Indians to see the blue gills gulping green mildew  
In the gutter- and the sunlight lifts a finger across  
A lily, and it turns like a dial in the water  
Until someone of them is finally married- as in their  
House, their children sleep,  
The rains kiss the frogs- and the cloths are cleaned and  
Dried out in the carport freckled by moonlight  
Through a lonely orange tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through All Of The Churches In Their Great Divides

The people are going back inside and I have a family  
Who isn't really here:  
I suppose that we can look through all of the churches in their  
Great divides,  
Or we can look through the evidence of our blue bed sheets:  
Alma, you were right here-  
And what was there that was figured out: that you didn't love me,  
And the rain clouds built such a sad and stodgy kingdom straight  
Up to the doors of guilt  
Where our better brothers were made all of gold,  
And we had to lay quiet and listen to all the boring stories that they  
Paid to be told.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Another Daylight

You're all bastards:  
Go play baseball underneath those witches  
And get hard-ons:  
The moon pulls on your Johnny's  
And it feels  
All right,  
In the movie theatre with your girlfriend:  
Or at home  
In your bedroom in your wet dreams:  
But you girls:  
Beautiful pearls spilled out onto the orchard's  
Floor,  
You are the favorites of my classes:  
And you can last so long-  
Immortal beauty of your legs and breasts:  
And I can write about you forever,  
Underneath the lampposts and  
The moon,  
After the churches have spilled out on Sundays-  
And the wines have been drunken for  
The Eucharist  
And the bees are all fat upon their sugar daddy flowers:  
All fat and holding hands up in heaven,  
While my muse has gone to do the Laundromat  
To do her familiar clothes  
Through another daylight where all of heaven flowers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Each And Every Day

The birds seem to wonder about song,  
Chattering through the train tracks in the trees:  
Where, oh where is Vachel Lindsay,  
With my fat and luscious hibiscus all stopped up in its  
Room,  
And science class just a memory- a way to get out of  
Here:  
Outside my window the green smoke of a fishtail palm,  
A house for chameleons the size of churchyard cats and  
Dogs,  
The roaring of light through the sun-washed fronds:  
And the Virgin of Guadalupe in a grotto against my left ear  
Who I pray to for Alma:  
To her for Alma I pray, while the cars leave for all of  
Their destinations  
Through each and every day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Every Season

The heavenly body in its burning valleys,  
Tenebrous over the molting corpses,  
Uncorking bouquets of ivory cenotaphs-  
Something of the glorious, conquering scene  
Like a commercial of centipedal truth:  
That woman, a spider with the flagella of wildflowers  
Looking down, inspecting with her unicorn,  
And her Cyclops- I want her to take the meat right off  
Of me, so that I might transform from the venal,  
The presumptive lover-boy to a thing rich in her grasses,  
In her wild barley- something snug and quilted by  
Her sisterhood of pleased roots:

There you see,  
My unrequited love comes along the disinterested path,  
Passes over me with the smells and ululations of  
Her fracturing monument- a pinprick of infinity, of course,  
Where I lay sated and quill, nothing more of society,  
Altogether moral, resplendent;  
A rosy anemone with a wired jaw,  
And she has marked me in a blue catacomb with golden  
Thread,  
And I can go on forever here now that her daughter has  
Crossed with her living void, with the good luck and  
Flatulence of her sing  
Children:  
And I am anonymously hers and pass as a hidden gift to  
Her along through every season.

Robert Rorabeck



# Through Her Clefts

Ribbons in the sea, what will you do-  
Now there is a fabulous holocaust,  
As you come down from the mountain,  
Losing your candle wax on the rocks- going forever  
According to the way she does,  
Sleeping in her midnight busses, underneath the  
Armpits of marionettes,  
Or inside a dark forest that never stops to linger  
For its knights-  
Filled with witches underneath the seething stars,  
Keeping wolves for pets  
Who melt the snow to get to the wild nurseries  
Before the foxes  
To eat the things that grow- underneath the spindles  
Of her sorority,  
And through her clefts which tend to lose a  
Person,  
Especially a man who falls too deeply in love with her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Its Supposed Rings

Jubilance that is undone nearer the unrecorded surface of  
The lake:  
Another day is taken away from the mouths that are already  
Underground—and in their long and slender  
And tin-footed homes  
Find a way to rest underneath the plastic roses—  
And the sun molests them at the cheeks—  
The rivers bend but only accordingly,  
As the traffic flashes at the geometry of its butchery:  
Long slow flashes,  
Like Morris code telling of the missteps that can never  
Be behaved:  
The justice of her home in an apiary that no longer  
Produces anything sweetly—  
But rides a pace until clawing its way indoors  
And then stutters around the thresh-holds of housewives:  
Where I have seen images of you—brilliant if destroyed  
Kaleidoscope of inferior sorority -  
As you sleep walk around your bed what must be a thousand  
Times like a blind tiger, tamed,  
Trying to find a way through its supposed rings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through My Daylong Work

Pigment of another god,  
Mexican beer and fireworks:  
The sun slips through  
The day,  
And Joe shows me how it works;  
And every woman has different eyes,  
Like the windows into her bosom,  
But they all seem to keep to a certain  
Time,  
Creaking in the sloughs,  
And certainly gathering to shop in the  
Store-green estuaries.  
They never loiter,  
And they never have nothing to say;  
And you are one of these ducks  
Crossbred with an airplane,  
You got further up,  
Above my head and out of my league,  
A snow crystal burning on gasoline,  
Dirty from another tongue:  
Joe knows how you work;  
He pulls the string and you dance like  
The sun's marionette,  
Never with nothing to say,  
Like pale celery crenulated from the  
Muck bottoms of Holland;  
But no matter how many times that  
Old pale blue eyed man shows me,  
He was divorced and his son  
Drowned in a Michigan river or somewhere,  
And now he never truly has the spirit  
Of a magnificent conductor,  
So I can never seem to get it right,  
My job to control your toy species mucking about  
All bosomy and certainly not nocturnal  
Through my daylong work.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Oh So Many Ways

I can hardly taste the liquor  
Coming from my mother's breast,  
Like an Easter basket,  
Or a hard boiled egg,  
And I am wearing a gray suit, so it is  
Hard to tell how old I am:  
I might be twelve, I might very well be  
An old man,  
But I will always know how to ride a  
Bicycle,  
Because once you learn it's like sex,  
And the air is so fine cutting back and forth  
Across your neighborhood of skill  
That you can hardly remember where you  
Come from,  
Where you began,  
And the sea is just awakening like a housewife,  
Her Grecian bosom dun and fertile  
Slipping from her petty coat:  
She could be the next president with her second  
Day eye-makeup:  
She could really care less with all that she's  
Gotten,  
Even though she's forgotten how satisfied she  
Really is,  
And does not know that I have tried approaching  
Her through oh so many ways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Stained-Glass

They keep their flights- and enamored to their shoulders,  
The airplanes seer,  
Pretending they are goddesses descending into an orchard-  
But they only know one or two words,  
And the world gets brighter as they climb down  
Until the waves of the newly blessed ocean calm down  
And can be petted by tourists-  
So they understand that the rest of the world is round  
And made to be beautiful,  
And their hearts beat like gossiping hummingbirds  
Through stained-glass.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Aluminum Sea

Sun set itself through the aluminum sea—  
Paper and toy angels dancing  
Through a midsummer's shopping mall  
While my wife slept—  
The colleges green but empty, friends  
Evaporated—  
And the sad look in your eyes, like a caged  
Animal burned to the ground—  
Beautiful flowers made to kneel by  
The rain—a baby kicking in a pregnant  
Mother on the Titanic—or through whatever  
Beautiful justice brings the night,  
When the bats come singing to blind women—  
And the fox dreams of kissing the grapes one  
More time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Anonymity Of The Loams

Proud filters of cowboys and  
Boyscouts moving the herds and mowing the yards,  
Crushing scuppernongs into wine,  
And watching the terrapin disappear, retracting their  
Senses into a mossy rouse,  
The cormorants down the rows from them like mailboxes  
At the hair lips of caesuras,  
As the gladness of overeager foams- and the girls  
Ride the ponies far back into the storage rooms of  
Orchards until they find each other kissing  
Themselves and spilling over the  
Variegated paper cuts that lay corrugated like nourishing  
Crops upon which the fat and sated bellies of rattlesnakes  
Make indistinguishable patterns,  
As if the spilling of discarded foreskins or weathervanes  
Through the anonymity of the loams.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Beautiful Time

I have new ways of being dismissive, of laying out  
Long again  
Yawning in the yard over which the waves of  
Airplanes are mowing:  
I have unto myself new ways to believe again,  
While all of this was just the usual ventures,  
Passing through the casual hours in the limelight of  
Postumous cathedrals:  
The hummingbirds are croaking, and their feet are sore.  
And while it all has turned out,  
It has all turned out burning on the floor, and it all seems to  
Be a venture in the strange trees in which the monsters are  
Pronouncing,  
Looking for something that must seem beautiful against  
The streets of space shuttles:  
While then all it was, the lost adventures of housewives:  
Why, then- that was all it was,  
While they were all dancing shoeless around the dump  
Truck, singing their songs:  
Why, then, this was their song- and I still seem to pretend  
To be singing:  
Why, then, this is just another song, repeating as a heartbeat  
As the night proceeds, and the new children come into  
Her, crossing their own hearts,  
And swinging into her own cradle while they suck their  
Thumbs while her midnights proceed through the  
Beautiful time.

Robert Rorabeck



# Through The Darkly Lactating Combs Of My Night

The rains have a good time falling down,  
And I have bought a house and this month is  
My birthday.  
Right now I am still homeless with a cup of store  
Brand rum between my legs  
And my mother bending herself in the bathroom  
Next door  
While all of the night is outside curling up against  
The broadways of canals,  
The fleeted souls jumping the trains and abutments  
Over the running lips of waves:  
And it gets colder the further up you go, but the  
More gods you see anyway:  
I will soon be moving into a warm cottage, and will not  
Have to mind all the teachers who accused me  
Of plagiarism:  
Even the Riviera Beach Police Department will be  
Publishing me for the crimes I have helped to solve:  
And now my mother is indoors again,  
And I can feel the throbbing of the moon's penumbra  
Against these walls,  
Repeating like another two lovers with their backs  
Pressed against the fire hydrants all ready and super salient  
Through the darkly lactating combs of my night.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Forest

Through the forest there is a path which the ax-man  
Laid-  
So you could come to town, to look so fetching on  
You way through the  
Sad wilderness  
For all of the wolves lounging in the shadows:  
And you were skipping underneath a castle,  
And you were ranging underneath a star  
Whilst the sea curled and curled  
And you imagined your way to her- dressed all in  
Red, you somehow emerged from the wilderness  
Only to be eaten by the very one whom you thought  
Was safe to be your own.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Forests Of The Sweetest Youngest Day

Alma- you are the soul of the muse:  
You are whatever she has burning like a pearl or a lucky  
Marble down deep in her bosom,  
And even if you never come I will cherish you, because you are  
The first inkling of what I have come to reason:  
You are the beautiful mother protecting her young, while  
All of the cars drive by at night,  
And the airplanes leap, while the birds preen so prettily through  
The yards of dens:  
And I have lived another eight years than you, and I think all of the  
Empty mailboxes salivating for your rich brown skin:  
How far back does it go, through the forests where the grandmothers  
Of mariposas go to expire:  
I loved you like a word on the wire, and you said it was a lie;  
But if it was a lie, Alma- it was one that can never die, but spread  
Like wildfire riding ungilded stallions fast across the land,  
Their hoofs stamping on the green cloths whose virgin appeared our  
Superman;  
And I love you, Alma, like the first light in the sky; and if I don't  
Love you, the airplanes will go to sleep in the sea,  
And the songs that lay stolen from my ribs will yet go unsung:  
But if I love you, then let us both hold hands and go into a country  
Populated by youth- Where death is a lie,  
And your eyes shine the movies of undeniable truth  
For the parking lots of sweet young boys amidst which I lay,  
And pray to you forever through the forests of the sweetest youngest day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Grass

I cannot sleep: The day is mean against  
My body:  
I think of her, and the hours troop like snails:  
Where are they going but to other  
Grandmothers and grandfathers;  
They are curling up the teak of her cherished  
Heirlooms that are moving  
Gallantly with her soft love: She is breathing his  
Name into his imperfect ear,  
And he is having her over and over while the  
Seas make love  
And the very young rattlesnakes go galloping  
Through the grass.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Growing Afternoon

Almost three in Arizona,  
And the sun goes here steadily and dry  
Where used to flow a Precambrian sea,  
Where ancient lips plucked thoughtlessly,  
And nuzzled in the brine: Now there are  
Wondrous houses in the coral nooks,  
And people in them, which is almost a miracle,  
And people in the sky as well, and stewardesses  
Serving them expensive liquor in plastic cups  
So the ice doesn't wake up infants sated from  
A mother's breast. They pass over me and all of  
The uncounted forest, like diamond tree frogs  
Leaping from the sun's branches;  
And I know that I could love any of them, if  
They were to come down in some predestined fireball,  
I would step outside and catch her as she fell just like  
Alice down a wishing well, and invite her inside for  
Holidays, through those doors which shrink and  
Change with the seasons and with cuckoldry.  
If we both sat unquestionably still, after I served  
Her the drink of her choice, then out in the yard we might  
Say to have seen old loved ones playing recklessly  
In the fleeting gowns of leaves, but that would be our  
Choice; and gathering our strength, after what might  
Be perceived as an uncountable repose, we would toast  
Each other and think up new jobs, and watch the other  
People strangely leaping through the cloudless sky,  
And wonder thanklessly why they should go to and fro  
In their gleeful commerce. Then, after the fireworks,  
And the watermelons and tearful glances over the  
Next-door neighbor's wall, we would watch the waterfall  
All the way down into the pregnant belly of the valley,  
Where all the maidens bath nakedly with thieves and salt miners,  
And then to each other again, as a man comes to a woman  
After a long day of burdens, reach across the impassable  
Bodies and remember how in that day we fell into each  
Others arms through the correlations by which divine  
Providence perambulated through the growing afternoon.



# Through The Hearts Of Her Fair

I spend a day without loneliness,  
And I can finally be comfortable with someone who  
Can take me away,  
Even though I go to the movies and theatre hop in  
The afternoon:  
It was supposed to rain, but it doesn't rain, and that is  
The happiest consistency:  
I have miss planted flowers in my shade, who need  
The sun;  
And other things that burn that way: the airplanes leap  
At the starting gun,  
And stewardesses fair through the zephyrs of late summer  
Air,  
Even though I am going to bed without a Christmas tree.  
Tomorrow I will get up early and buy Cuban coffee  
And Danishes,  
And take them straight to where Alma, my soul lives,  
In the midways beating through the hearts of her fair.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Heavenly Fires

It happened upon occasions that I was not  
Here,  
But I saw your grandmother out in her yard  
Doing something with it:  
She was barely dressed; and you see,  
The cars are driving, driving  
Across the interstate beside her. Soon she will  
Be gone, sunken like the cordless  
Reptiles beneath the billboards-  
Sunken beneath the discarded mattresses,  
And the burned out structures;  
And the cars will still be driving, and I wonder  
If you shall ever find a lock of her ashen  
Hair at a flea market- I wonder if you will  
Ever hold another trinket of her  
In your hand again, while the fruit is sold  
In the circus,  
And the sun leaps through the heavenly fires.

Robert Rorabeck



# Through The Hours Behind The Day

I want to be with you: I don't want to lie alone  
Anymore upon the grass,  
Watching the little gems of grasshoppers and cicadas leave their  
Old skins for the woods,  
Watching to the way the southward angels fall, all hipped  
From their class,  
Like the failed sculptures of the students of blown glass:  
Beautiful, if destroyed and falling that way, picking up speed  
And being adulterous,  
Coming to rest in the backyards of the missing philanthropists  
Head first and during the hours of school;  
I skip out to find you in the sunning weeds: I still want you for  
A wife:  
And I dream, and spell away naked and on my back,  
Waiting for you to fall again through the hours behind the day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Injustices Of Crepuscule

One child yelling in the court of  
A scattering room- mother and father gone to  
Oblivion,  
Two sisters both with boyfriends across the  
Canal:  
Now the only sport is touching itself underneath the  
Ceiling fan,  
Motes of plastic toys and witches in the yard,  
The ants marching underneath her skirts:  
The sugar cane is burning paper airplanes and  
Snowflakes.  
The firecrackers have gone to oblivion- and the heavens  
Diadem themselves through the injustices of  
Crepuscule, another day's zoetrope  
Turning in common place around the mailboxes  
That will have to watch the children get up again  
And go to school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Nocturnes

Dissolving through the nocturnes,  
I sing another song for the skeletons—as I try to make  
Believe  
That my last mused loved me—knowing that it cannot  
Be so:  
Wanting to make a muse out of my wife,  
Even though she lives on the other side of the earth  
In an apartment I am too young to attend—  
Knowing it is too hopeful to be a possibility—  
Try to forgive myself—  
A blind man walking into the shadows—  
Who has tried to repossess a god so many times—  
Who houses become smaller and smaller—  
And the chartreuse busses that return to him that  
Much larger—and larger:  
These are the monsters that cannot be defeated—  
These are the beams of sunlight that invade my dreams—  
As you pretend to last forever—  
Basking in the forts of the heavens that can only pretend  
To be what they seem.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Offerings Of His Day

Cave of envelopes in your dreams-  
I've been sleeping for a while in the folding spaces—  
Promises of whispers,  
Lips of butterflies—  
Rains descend over the cities of the cliff's side,  
And we sell fireworks from the roadsides of  
Mars where Christmas trees grow  
As tall as roofs,  
And the men you love float about like snowflakes  
Stuck in mascara—  
And the little children who fall down from them,  
Scabbing their knees on presents of  
Roller skates and bicycles  
Think they see arrow heads and Indian nickels  
In the open markets of the naked slopes—  
Where one flower blooms at  
A time and the sun holds his hand out  
Trying to panhandle through the offerings of his day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Orange Groves

Unequaled vision of this pretty deity  
To whom I rode my bicycle towards without remember  
What notebook I left her number in:  
There she is at the head of the class, giving strange  
Configurations underneath the halogens:  
While outside, the cars sit like a cathedral of  
Arrows  
Underneath the stain glass noontime, and I try to  
Pick out the bouquet of the girls I love,  
Resting in the intersections of my mind-  
There she is, receding over the everglades, even  
As I drive home, and I give her a good recommendation  
Through my spirits, as my words linger like ash  
Dripping onto her amber lips- she remains  
My muse- muse of Guerrero Mexico,  
Muse of fireworks and scars:  
Of lightning and of all the billfolds of the petty  
White men:  
Kneeling underneath the virgin in my tiniest foyer,  
I pray to you and make believe that you can even  
Feel me now- lingering through the orange groves  
Of my spirit,  
As the waves caress the Anglicism of the everglades,  
Lingering nearer, and then departing-  
The way housewives first determining the one whom  
They love before fleeing to their homes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Pines

Downed by the desires of crimes  
That they know will never fit:  
The airplanes and their wives sleeping low,  
Gliding and making love  
Just as quiet as children waiting for sugar plums  
As the world reciprocates with itself,  
Seeming to come out into the park  
Where all of the trees are opening, seeming for  
Awhile to winnow the greenery of their  
Souls-  
And my true love is there, and she is down:  
Axioms of light in a carnival that can be blown by  
The wind,  
A flag of single minded patriotism in her hair,  
A cul-de-sac that can bare children  
Skipping school, fluctuating amidst the allocations of  
Play-  
For awhile make believe, as the airplanes that they  
Know whisper through the trees,  
Before touching down, their heartbeats drumming softly  
Through the pines.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Quiet Order Of These Prayers

Wonderfully alone, without any sort of father,  
And just looking at the trees, their slender throats  
Basking under the hidden lights- They go up and  
Up well trimmed, patient in their dances before  
The red bricks of well inebriated sororities:  
How I used to love her under here, I did- Like a child,  
Tipping over my chairs and gin, thinking it was something else,  
Six years ago, a house floating on the waves with so many  
Mothers lost in their kitchens, and airplanes far away  
On the other side of slow going canals:  
Oh, I am going to find her again, and I'm going  
To pay for it by the Order of Jesus- all my ancient sins  
On a collection plate whispered beneath those unturning  
Boughs; They will wait and see how I come and gossip  
About me all alone, like a very lonely wedding procession,  
Trouble on my brow; neither this or that, or any sort of  
Profession, but the shadows the dark ink of my work,  
And I will be thinking about a nocturnal lover even while  
She inhabits the horizon's far distance, and turns over against  
Him in their well proportioned bed,  
Their shed rind licked by the silver teeth of waves;  
She spends her time remembering his name  
And saying so, never realizing how I inhabit her through  
The quiet order of these prayers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Space Of Unicorns

I was staring through the space of unicorns  
And listening to the captivated sea  
Just before I was just about ready to fall asleep;  
And I remembered Alma's hair tumbling through the  
Blue sheets,  
And I was there like a ship making love to a  
Mermaid:  
There were things that our bodies said, and gave  
While the unions poured their choruses underneath the  
Rain clouds  
That could take on any shape and be so proud of  
Themselves,  
And how they covered the memories of our truancy:  
How I suddenly began to live again this sweet afternoon  
In Alma's arms, as the waves  
Came with my breathing, and my swearing that I  
Wanted to be with her when she was a grandmother  
Until she broke away once again over the fences,  
Sounding her opulence and pointing her horn toward  
The sun.

Robert Rorabeck



# Through The Stained Illusions

Lamppost of blue hallucinations- for  
Underneath there, in the street, in a  
Cornucopia of penumbras cast  
From the church- lies your sisters- they  
Are done up like pretty marionettes,  
And the oldest one is learning to drive-  
In fact she drives everywhere,  
Upriver and down river-  
But there are no more flowers in their vases,  
Nor songs in her heart,  
And the fruit market you work in,  
And sometimes have to sell your soul,  
Is empty- and the paper avenues have gotten  
Wet in the mouths of dogs,  
But sometimes you still know how well  
I cry for you- and through the stained illusions  
You have dreamed, I pledge to try and  
Believe that you also dream of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Surf

Made of clairvoyant tattoos in the bitter-hearted forest,  
As this way all of the well transvested knight run,  
Pooling their numbers,  
Blue and purple hearted 'as the waves foam and fumble,  
Until the last of them is wounded and heartbroken upon the steps  
Of the forest,  
One time lover of the sea 'He goes down into her, tip-toeing:  
And she beckons him, open throated,  
Throwing her bosoms at his chest,  
Never thinking of the times we had together 'as the sun burns  
His acolytes through the surf, wishing but once that he had a single one  
Of her priorities 'as she sings to them, wishing to become surer  
Towards her 'so they swim, salty-throated 'echoing men from their  
Abandoned ships 'and she catches them and knots them  
And gives them all of the weeks of the sea to amend their love  
For her 'smiling as she does all the time at me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Throats Of The Mountains

Womb of cards and brick-a-brack  
And all of the shoulder's happening—  
Not in the busied amphitheatre,  
But in the little city ensconced beneath the  
Pine trees,  
Where I want to return to,  
Like some post pubescent rebirth:  
My sisters saw you even before  
You were alive,  
And were forced  
To relive you  
So many times  
While my father was to teach them everything  
That they would ever happen  
To know,  
Until one or two of them would die with  
Every happenstance or pleasure,  
Pressed like the clouds  
To their ever coyote lips,  
And while this is—or was happening—we  
Sway back again,  
Dream and day dream of primary numbers,  
Of rainbows that happen in the interludes of  
Musicals,  
Until nothing else has to exist anymore,  
And we don't have to pray to Jesus anymore  
For the safety of our unborn children—  
We just have to continue writing these poems  
To construct some kind of transcendental door way—  
As by the reconstruction of our own mind,  
They will infinitely let us into heaven,  
And we can color by number the clouds  
That happen to drift over our own cradles  
On Christmas—  
As if it was we, ourselves, who were attending the  
Birth of Christ—  
And not just hoping to make love to his own  
Mother, or misstep her own image for  
The sake of our muses—

Anyways, it doesn't matter—  
Our first born was born without incident,  
And now we have our foot in the door way—  
If we write any more tonight or this morning  
We know it is only in hallucination,  
For even the doll houses lined up in infinite rows,  
Choreographed to correspond with sorority row—do not  
Give us the infinite right of entry,  
But still we enter,  
If just to show our first born's eyes eyes with to  
The chandeliers of the worlds he must have been born from—  
While the bats nip at the night  
Like the first tastes of the wine glass from blind man—  
And we don't have to settle anymore,  
Just with this constant thing we seem to be displaying  
Just like the monsters—but up in the middle of the  
State you don't have to be aware,  
You can go straight to your bedroom—  
And to your bedroom to sleep for a million odd steps  
Of the dinosaurs—  
Infinitely uncountable beneath the spacemen until finally  
They can pretend to dream of going to sleep with somebody else—  
And the bodies coalesce with the advertisements of  
The movie theatres—  
And somebody else moves into the places of the happenstances  
Of their gardens, and they move along,  
Slowly, perpetually in motions,  
Like cadavers perpetually being pushed down by  
Avalanches through the throats of the mountains.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Transoms

The suckers field their catastrophes through the  
Disorganized space of baseball diamonds and birthday cakes;  
And the land moves and you can feel it move:  
I wonder how the birds feel it move, but they feel it;  
And parks in spring wake up in bloom just as you touch  
Yourself surfacing from sleep in your room-  
Everybody needs a body as they disembark through the darkly  
Fetching indentations of the sea:  
They go sloughing through the transoms; they can't remember me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Warm Day

There is a viper in the tall grass  
Slithering toward her pink  
Arched-a@s.  
While the sun in his high house,  
Beams down on a dead field-mouse.  
The poet spies from up in the tall tree,  
The gathering agents of God's epiphany.  
The lady is licking her lunch  
From her plump fingers,  
As her husband is concentrating  
On adding figures.  
Upon the lake glistening like a mirror  
Comes the timid sailboat of two youthful lovers.  
The young lady arches her a@s  
All the higher,  
So God and the serpent soon conspire.  
The poet in his tree-house is already  
Sleeping  
Through the warm day the clouds go unweeping.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Weepless Boughs

Sabbaticals of nothing- the world slips around in a  
A high fever,  
Ostriches and unicorns sweat off their spells, and uniform  
Airplanes seem to float  
While I lay on my back and wonder if I could touch each one,  
Like bottle rockets in a confection of the very air:  
And around all of that is the sea,  
And the girls I've lost, and then when I am hungry and feeling  
Alone and far away  
There seems to be the hope of ships, each one of them immolating  
In the night,  
Their banners rippling like leaps of phosphorous over the sad  
Currents,  
Or I suppose that it happens that way while I lay on my back  
And moan my unintelligible expressions up through the  
Weepless boughs,  
And the world turns around, devouring itself.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through The Windows Of Our Life's House

I lie all day in bed and think that maybe it is over,  
That a beautiful storm will never pass:  
Alma, I will stop drinking for you, and I will write my poetry  
For you sober,  
But I will no longer describe to the emptiest rooms what  
You choose to do-  
And I only put your name into my poems, Alma, hoping that  
You will find them:  
I put your name into my poems as if it were a lighthouse  
And I was its drowning sailor:  
I just want your body breathing its soul into my rooms, filling up  
My needing tankards,  
For your eyes to brush across the walls like a painter's brooms:  
For your soft wishes to linger through the consequences  
Of so many afternoons  
Until you are a grandmother, Alma: and I can sit beside you  
And watch your body's zoetrope, spinning like the zenith of  
Undeserved amusement,  
And when we are underneath the unending palm trees, so tall and  
Fine,  
My travels will flutter the sweet distance to your body,  
And the joy I felt would play with our children and theirs as well,  
Cloistered like golden butterflies,  
Laughing like the sunlight that echoes and swirls through the windows  
Of our life's house.

Robert Rorabeck



# Through The Zephyrs And Pigmies

I love you and I want your body with me in bed:  
I want our toes to crochet together, while your hair is a  
Shadowy red;  
And never mind that I have ever loved a white skinned Indian  
From Gainesville;  
Her body is just like any other body; so pierced, but it cannot feel;  
It can laugh with its tracks of ancestors, but it cannot feel,  
Like a snowflake surely melts on the grill and the windowsill.  
And they are taking the more sexier swing sets away,  
But today is my tomorrow, and tomorrow is your birthday;  
And I gave you wings just so I could touch them, and I got a gun  
I stole from my father just so I wouldn't have to be afraid on your  
Tresses;  
And even while I hear the zippers of the deepest graveyards in all of America, my  
cheek still itches as it thinks of thee:  
Alma, Alma, body in the cul-de-sacs of Spain, everyday a Christmas  
That is un-American- I love your states of America, and I touch  
Myself just as I wish that you would put me in your mouth  
While the dogs leap and the cats go under the rain clouds and my mother  
Takes her pills and then all of the show goes to sleep with one another's  
Lovers, and our shoes are tired but jubilant, and you choose me for  
The night, just as I choose you:  
Alma, Alma: oh how I surely choose you: tonight and every other night  
Through the zephyrs and pigmies of all that is our new Spain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Those Infinite Heavens

Losing days as snakes shed skin,  
Figuring out the chinks in the gardens of love,  
And Mary saw a star in the sky after the movie,  
Which I figured was an angel,  
Because my belief in you is so strong that I can believe  
Anything,  
And count on the many kisses you have to give to me,  
Even though you have two children almost weebegone in the  
Student parking lot of the university you will never  
Attend,  
But the waves still come in their bands of metamorphosis:  
See how they commonly change,  
Roiling in the strange dress of the sea; and now I almost said  
That I loved you on the page of this truck stop:  
I almost said something beautiful until I forgot my letters  
Of regret in the empty spaces of despondent romances  
That take up all of their time through those infinite heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Your Melting Snow

I have never been as perfectly proportioned  
As the animals that you know,  
But I can drink liquor and I can grow  
Like wet castles  
Whose parapets are like magpies stealing pomegranates  
Through your melting snow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Through Your Unspeaking Roof

In your days of making friends I don't suppose you counted  
On how many hands you'd have to hold,  
Your eyes as brown as a politician's sun, until the night slipping  
Over the gold-dog world and taking away all of  
Its fireworks and fanfares,  
And all of the lights that we were so lucky to breathe during the  
Day;  
And returning you to him, dolled into the playgrounds of your  
Bedroom where I can only guess of what he does there every night to  
You,  
Brown-silver as the moon inside your window, even while I slept  
Inside your house, and the television made a paramour of your shadows;  
And maybe five trucks slept on your little lawn,  
Overgrown but fanciful, as if this was Mexico:  
I could only suppose what sort of love he made to you while my  
Heart beat down like the hammer of a butterfly is morris code of brail  
Through your unspeaking roof.

Robert Rorabeck

# Throughout

As close as the nations of hummingbirds  
Are to the soul of our high school—  
I don't think happens to be such a sweet thing—  
While the incisions are still opened:  
They still seem to be miles  
Away—  
Astronauts orbiting the earth  
Trying to kiss the sun  
Marionettes on their leashes trying to  
Jump and run—  
And the hill is so far and wide—  
And cannot even remember the nursery rhyme  
That took us to this hill—  
As the valley was lavished by rattlesnakes  
All together or at least until up to  
The footsteps of the windmill—  
And then your dead mother had to pull back—  
And your dead grandmother had to pull back—  
And it was just you in the rain  
Trying to hold the lightning—trying to keep  
Base with the shadows that were disembarking  
Towards the infatuations of their candle lights all  
Throughout their evenings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Throughout All That You've Never Had To Feel

Oh, Alma. Come with me,  
And become unnaturally holy:  
I will step outside and kiss your feet and say everything that  
There is to say about this and now  
Unicorns, and now this, and all of the plumes of sciences

And the colors that  
they have passed: and your name is, alma,  
And we have slept together and I have tasted your soul;

And now all of the world turns around like a Ferris Wheel that  
Isn't even real, and all of its joy seems to happen over  
The infinite fields of strawberries where I guessed that  
We were making love,

But otherwise I couldn't  
Even believe, while all of the numbers were counting themselves  
And all of the numbers of themselves were gathering themselves  
Up and bathing together in the rainclouds of  
The rainforests that weren't even there,

And I kissed and held your hand today which I guessed wasn't even  
Real,  
But that is what this all about, the pouting of your body  
Before all of the eruptions of the penultimate summate,  
While my parents are coming home again  
Never minding what was had to be real;

And this is just the silent slender body shooting its way, Alma  
All throughout all that you've never had to feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# Throughout The Day

All off in the light of the ships that are never heard from  
Again:  
Wondering this way until Christmas or suicide underneath the  
Strange sheets of  
Blue ants and their queens; as the fieldtrips blow across the  
Mezzanines that Romeos are always figuring to climb  
While the underage damsels are sleeping next to the treasure chests  
During naptime;  
And I don't suppose it has to finish like this, but it does;  
And the vagrants go back to sleep in their avenues of Spain and  
Civil Wars,  
Their eyes crying as their houses leek, as the serpents wind cantankerous  
Until there is no longer any feeling for themselves;  
And the black children sleep next to the Mexicans and the Guatemalans  
In the tenements surceased next to the ghosts of my months old  
Self: we were still dreaming of  
Diana then, and living in an RV with my parents, and didn't have a house:  
We didn't know Alma in the Spring of this very same year  
In which, like a tourist, we have loved a many number of women,  
But of which only one is still now our muse:  
While Erin lives in Gainesville, and the ancient sheets of conquistadors  
Slip inches deeper into the limestone tenements wept into by  
The curling offspring of the cypress that knew that knew them:  
Who still keep a nursery of the over shed cicadas that weep themselves  
Anew all throughout the day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Throughout The Skies

Bodies come up and they have been singing their songs;  
And I can break them down like daylight:  
I can watch them curling into the very air as I hike,  
And I remember the school yards and the places that I have been well into:  
I can remember the girls in the playgrounds,  
Like young goddesses curling their hair with their fingers:  
And the bodies were yellow and springing:  
They filled the voids well but coyly: They filled the voids well,  
And then the bodies walk clacking with echoes down their corridors:  
They walk this way like classy anchors going into the psalms of  
Princes and I have nothing left about me but the moribund bruises of their  
Prayers;  
And so nothing I have ever had to say has lasted very long,  
But I can still hear the cacophony of airplanes as they take apart this place  
And make raucous love throughout the skies.

Robert Rorabeck



# Throughout Their Evenings

As close as the nations of hummingbirds  
Are to the soul of our high school—  
I don't think happens to be such a sweet thing—  
While the incisions are still opened:  
They still seem to be miles  
Away—  
Astronauts orbiting the earth  
Trying to kiss the sun  
Marionettes on their leashes trying to  
Jump and run—  
And the hill is so far and wide—  
And cannot even remember the nursery rhyme  
That took us to this hill—  
As the valley was lavished by rattlesnakes  
All together or at least until up to  
The footsteps of the windmill—  
And then your dead mother had to pull back—  
And your dead grandmother had to pull back—  
And it was just you in the rain  
Trying to hold the lightning—trying to keep  
Base with the shadows that were disembarking  
Towards the infatuations of their candle lights all  
Throughout their evenings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thugs At A Bowling Alley

Levitation over a battleship—spikenard goliath  
Of the sea,  
Always making her rounds: the waves engulfing her  
Like thugs at a bowling alley—

Robert Rorabeck

# Thunderbird

I tried crying for you by the hour,  
But you would not listen to me,  
A next door conquistador, you awake  
Bare-chested and full of rhyme  
Spindled from the breakfast nooks, and  
The eggs the other man has cooked for you:  
You look the fool sucking in that professional  
Ego, drinking the Chablis so carelessly refined,  
What the television has said to tame and call you;  
But my liquors make a better sport,  
So much so that I would prefer crawling all around  
You, the vagabond of a paramour,  
And making love in the teal courts between unverified  
Dreams and what I really have to say to you:  
I pay no rent, but I have snuck in, and your expensive  
Green space is now my home, and as I wish,  
So shall I lounge about you, and smell you so,  
As the sun cools your meals,  
The pungent aroma reproducing bliss: your legs a shaven river  
Ending in an addictive aqueduct: thus I come,  
An unshaven troubadour to wrap you up  
And get you done, and out the door, before your husband's  
Home with more expensive gifts for you,  
And all he has to say and teach with the successful rewards  
Such civility: And thus you curl, like escargot about his  
Hip, while I look in like a foundling out in the humid  
Holiday, tasting the last of this salt from my lip,  
Waiting until tomorrow again, to regain some more  
Adulterous truancy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thundering Rains

Unicorns kindle like the virgins of green suicide:  
You glide over the sight of me with the age old religious wound  
In your side;  
And now I will live in a house as old as a Bible, and I will  
Flip through pictures of you while I call you from my window:  
And the children will smoke out of the chimney stacks  
From the decrepit factories where they are working for  
Profit:  
And I will give them chalk drawings at their feet like colorful  
Murder;  
And I will kiss the young girls' mouths just as they are coming  
Into age,  
Just like the blooming yet illegal tributaries of sharks with strange  
Conjunctions,  
And I will show them my fleet of paper airplanes:  
Maybe I will make them say Sharon's times like so many Hail Mary's  
Even while she falls in love with another man other  
Than her husband once again in the soccer fields where she has  
Surely been playing again and once again in the deeper  
And heavier thundering rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# Thus Had Become Of Thee

Fireworks go to sleep like bees who  
Are done mouthing off,  
Like wax figures who remembered finally  
Who they are not,  
And like dead relatives are done cremating  
And have left off being scattered  
To the hydra's multidirectional vanishings;  
And I loved her for a week of  
Amnesia,  
And she almost loved me until she too  
Remembered what it was  
About her:  
That she was a lake, or that she was a river;  
And was always too busy with her preoccupations  
Of weeping  
To just love one boy- Thus setting me free,  
I went to kill off the general of the dragons hoping  
To forget what she never meant to mean to me;  
And she fell away leaping,  
All dressed up in the cataracts of her wedding,  
While the airplanes continued along with their  
Heady leaping,  
Wingspans stretched out and through the  
Wind whistling  
Just as sweet and sappy as any old honey bee,  
Never once stopping to think and consider thus had  
Become of thee.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tickle Me To Death

We all have ass\*les,  
but hers' is the only one  
With such pretty lips....

Robert Rorabeck

# Tiffany Epiphany

Tonight I/ had an epiphany  
And I wrote so many poems.  
I think her name was Tiffany,  
But I ain't Sherlock Holmes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tiger Cake

Perturbations in New Times Roman:

I am like a young girl, drunken on the street,  
Almost perfected breasts momentarily ruined  
By acne,  
Wondering, momentarily drunken,  
How will I get home—  
But I am in Shanghai and I live on the other  
Side of the world.  
For now, it is a beautiful place to get lost  
In, but it is only because I am drunken  
And lucid—

Now that I have my own family,  
I don't write anymore:  
I don't go down that beautiful way, anonymously:  
My brother in law, a communist, just sold  
10,000,000 copies of some book:  
He is paid exquisitely for a Chinese: 8,000  
RMB a month plus a 50,000 bonus on Chinese  
New Years

(you can make almost the same working at  
A McDonald's in America.)

But, oh, what a beautiful world.  
My father-in-law is dead, but he is following  
Me; he has magical powers and has agreed  
To help me raise my children.  
Together we will put them into a position of  
Moderate wealth—  
For now, he comes back every seven days  
And eats the offerings of fish heads and tiger cake:  
I can't blame him,  
Famishing through storm-filled doorways.  
Meanwhile, the world-wide economy is collapsing;

But fortunately for me, I lost my job two years ago, anyways:  
I make some money at the flea-market—  
Six figures, it turned out to be—



I make more money than the principle of that flea bitten high school—  
The yellow eucalyptus turn their heads towards sunset:  
The snow melts before it hits the ground in Shanghai,  
But the pipes still freeze—

Beautiful women, drooling, look up before  
They look both ways—  
And this almost feels like an adventure novel  
Or an epic fantasy,  
I have written so little—  
But tonight, tonight:  
I have stolen some more booze from my mother-  
In-law—  
And the feeling is warm,  
Like an apothecary moments before Romeo and  
Juliet's epiphany—

Or my wife awakening in the middle of the night,  
Mouthing that she loves me,  
Giving me an option just before I sky dive  
And allowing Rimbaud's drunken boat to carry me away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tight Rope Walkers

I've lost the clarity of the five fingered discount:  
I want to live too much in the bright hymning spokes  
Of a bicycle learned to pedal for the first time:  
I am turning into a white man right now, and I am  
Not afraid to hum at weddings;  
And the palm trees are well spindled and seem to  
Be drinking deeply from the pumiced roots  
Of the ironed green conquistadors; now they are the  
Piqued speed bumps alongside the weedy borders  
Of a half forgotten elementary school;  
And I will not be accused of witch-craft, for a I  
Have kept prayers for all my deceased house animals,  
And a list of the girls who should have come over  
To swim without moving, topless in the splashes of  
Shade wrought down for the over spilling sun:  
Because the girls were too beautiful, it was impossible;  
They own cake shops, and wine shops, and discount  
Parlors, and had to be answering to the men who could  
Pay for that; and I trundled to the side without knowing  
What it meant;  
And so my mythology chose to fall in love with the  
Face of the girl who could not speak except for dancing,  
and took up drinking without paying for  
It; and the lions in the downstreet amusement park took  
Up yawning because they couldn't care, though their  
Love digressing into laziness, their eyes wandering  
Savagely over the little girls who wandered hand in hand  
With little girls insouciantly safe along the predestined walks  
Outside that well-fed ferality, their legs still spry and  
Growing; though they themselves were likewise as uncomplicated  
As the aerie of nimbus where the memory of failed tight rope  
Walkers danced between buildings that should have existed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Time

All of the contenders were still laughing whilst the sun  
Was just graffiti—  
And the mother of my wife told me to look up,  
As her father smoked all of the cigarettes  
I was forced to buy for our wedding banquet:  
Sad stars—  
Bright over the fairgrounds—  
Turning around, menstruating over the individual  
Conundrums of the highways and the high schools:  
It was all we had to do—  
With the singing trucks selling icecream—  
And another day was spilling its orgasms over the overpasses  
Of her shoulders,  
But she was just concerned with her children—  
Like goldfish collected all together from all of the winners  
Bedrooms—  
Until there was gunfights and another architecture with  
The paper airplanes and kites all up in the air:  
And then we were moving into another impossibility  
Of shadow—  
And the schoolroom kept to itself—  
As the fires burned like poisonous butterflies dancing all  
Across the busses:  
And contributing to nothing else—but the houses that they  
Kept in their minds—  
Until their mothers found them and collected them,  
Carrying all of them to their breasts  
And reminding all of them that it was time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Time And Another Place

Girls with the brown skin and brown eyes  
Perplexing perpetually:  
From the underbelly of the lactating out of doors—  
Where are the tourists going once they  
Reach the end of the road?  
Maybe the fields will melt underneath the angels of  
Billboards—  
Maybe another story will begin from the bruised  
Lips of the milk maid fallen down too many times.  
Now who wants to take the trip again—  
Wax elbows of the pieta in the middle of a baseball  
Game—the same sorrows  
Stretched out of pace,  
And girls in love and out of love, moving around  
In a zoetrope—the wax illusions of men  
Who dream to fly—  
Inevitably, when they come down, the wishes from  
The hot lamps of Ganymede—  
And another burden in the shadows cooled  
From the racetracks of another time and another place.

Robert Rorabeck

# Time Crimes

Strange gifts here they are.  
Some would say they don't come easy  
From the shadows of the aloe,  
Beside the blue carport across the sleeping canal;  
Beneath the electric blankets of breathing dirt  
Mommy and daddy are sleeping behind the  
Stringed beads,  
The television is in its corner atop the  
Overtaken corn hamper,  
And further down the white coral road  
Imperfect from pot holes,  
And the scattered lilacs of little flower-  
Girls, kidnapped never to obtain sororities,  
To feel the love of his eyes burning across some  
Extraordinary graveyard,  
Unreachable neighbors live sawing alien lumber;  
I live here, not knowing what I do, perceiving  
What silence I turn in my hands better than the empiricisms  
Of all the sensual armies, and that I should  
Use my occult knowledge to woo another girl,  
Out of her place and time- Should I find her lectured by the  
Latin grammarians of my future,  
Young legged, scatterbrained in her intermittent  
Virginity,  
While white hot rabbits lie sleeping strewn through the  
Rock gardens of my mother's dusty throat,  
To show her where the amphibians yet serenade,  
Where the skies above the east are yet salmon  
By the premiering influences of that opening light,  
Where the mermaids bathe temporarily alleviated  
From the leaping caesuras;  
And if my words are not entirely pure,  
And my temporal abductions slightly criminal,  
To assure her we've started an infinite doubling that might  
Always come back to itself and try to hold its breath long  
Enough that she might metamorphose,  
In to something that holds me together, like the spine going  
All the way up to her eyes, for my hand to crawl intrepidly  
Like the spider from its nursery rhyme,

And to her lips to drink their well, to mark them afterwards  
The way some tramps carve in fence posts that everything is  
Good here,  
That we should elope for awhile longer, mutually imposing  
Our bodies to the juvenile dust,  
And decide that here is a very fine place to breathe hands  
Cupping what we should not see if  
We were both unaware; but taken together  
This is very much real,  
And the wind sleeps like a dozen kittens  
Curled up in the aloe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Time To Speak With No One

This is the time  
To speak with no one  
Once more,  
The adversaries absconded  
And drunk on the  
Front porch  
Shouting love stories to  
The sororities  
Pouring out of the swamp  
After the game.  
Out of my left ear I  
Can hear a river  
Roaring down the sidewalk  
Where there is  
A blue woman soaring  
Like an addictive moth  
Around the street  
Lamp on the corner of  
The Catholic church.  
I open myself to  
Pronounce a word,  
A sound to turn her  
Gently toward me,  
But she has flown into  
A tiki torch and she is  
Burning, burning.  
The party is just starting:  
Gently graying salesmen are  
Getting drunk and  
Mooning,  
And the strange and eerie  
Boys in the living room  
Are teaching bleached  
Girls their tongue  
And they are learning,  
Learning;  
Not so far to the East I  
Can hear the ocean  
Breathing,

Like a woman in heat  
Trying to find her way  
Toward me,  
But there is nothing I  
Would say  
That could help her  
Find me.

Robert Rorabeck



# Time To Time

Another word grows dim in the  
Hobbies of the mind.  
I've been playing with myself too much  
To scratch her out of the earth,  
Though her elbow continues to rise like  
An ivory wave from the chameleon tub placed  
Like a portrait up against the light-washed window  
Above the train station and further on the university,  
So as she cleans she can be something else too-  
Something francophone and openly mysterious,  
Watching the fraternities queue up holding their balls  
And howling,  
Never minding how the busy grass shivers by the  
Foreplay of the evening's wind,  
Or how she must fart up there and the petit bubbles  
Rise and press for a moment against her flower's mouth  
Before rising up and clinging fleetingly to each breast;  
Nor, how she thinks of them, like packs of wild  
Dogs out in the frothing sun,  
And how it must be a good trick to make them stay  
And watch her from down beneath her dimpled chin,  
as the sun recedes swift and  
Forlorn like a British battleship sunk far from home,  
Rusting the red bricks where the old professors cough  
Their knowledge;  
And at that time, she feels as if she might be possessed  
By her grandmother, a famous vaudeville actress, a  
Mature woman swaying between her eyes as if in the  
Cranberry dye of a bindi,  
But such silliness swims away into the sullied water  
Where her legs are now an even brighter opal,  
But the boys remain, and she knows they will until she  
Towels herself and leaves the stage of windowsill,  
But never does she see me reading across the tracks  
In the library's forgotten enclave,  
Nor do I see her, though there are rumors from  
Time to time.



# Time To Wonder

I have a couple more experiments  
Before I close up shop,  
And do the grand finale by myself  
With a cork and a pop:

Every time the phone rings,  
I salivate like a dog,  
In 30 second intervals of time,  
My mind turns a little cog,

And now its doing one more line,  
To satisfy the monster,  
And if you can't call that's just fine,  
I know you are a gangster.

But even as I'm driving across  
The Navajo Reservation,  
And I see the perfect sky above Ship Rock,  
I can't help but think of your body's declination.

For you are moving far away  
In the sleepy East,  
And I am driving Route 66,  
Neither man nor beast,

But somehow like a broken toy,  
Rolled away from the city dump,  
Sleeping in the concrete cave,  
While the rain breaks its dry slump,

Where the world is unfurled like  
A discount carpet,  
And you are something like a dream  
I only briefly met,

But that is why I turnout here,  
Smiling sad and winsome,  
For you could be my powdery coquet,  
If I paid you your thoughtless ransom.

But for now the game is dimming,  
Out on the red diamond,  
The apposing teams are turning loose,  
Walking away from the unbroken hymen.

Thus here is where I sit alone  
And ponder,  
Where you are,  
I have all the time to wonder.

Robert Rorabeck

# Timeless Secret

The forest is high and sad,  
Where the wind cries until it is exhausted,  
And the apartments are cheap  
Where the men drink whose children are vampires.  
They float down on the monkey-bars with  
The snow,  
Each as unique as an evil flower,  
And the trunks split from the deepest absence of  
Warmth.  
In the morning in the dimmest light there will  
Be no sports,  
For all the children will sleep very hungrily,  
And the mountains will watch them crowding the  
Somber tenements like wayward grandfathers too lit  
To step inside;  
But the children love each other: I used to walk  
Amongst them, and dreamed into her eyes the speechless  
Motes of innocence before all the possible types of  
Theft: She was the one who changed me,  
Who resurrected the unknowable remainders of time,  
So she just goes on and on: perhaps another man's  
Wife now down in the greener valleys where there are  
Actual cars and flowers,  
Another man's wife, a lie- But I will have always seen  
Her breath clouding the icy garden,  
And how her senses skated so finely permanent before  
She budded and all of that she remembered  
Was exposed to that weather and stolen, except for what  
I keep,  
As the trees so barrenly justified,  
A secret which does not bloom with time.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tinfoil God

Silver rose in the golden sea:  
The turtles who live there, knowing her spirit,  
Looking up to her:  
Tinfoil god sprinkled like tears from airplanes:  
No longer the sport of crocodiles,  
Just another song to tell their children to  
Put them to sleep—as we eat cotton candy and pet  
Her hair, dark as all of the longitudes with the  
Sun upon the other side of her earth;  
It was where I kissed her mouth, while her  
Husband was at work—but it didn't work,  
As the otters slipped and played up again and again  
All throughout their estuaries—and sad mothers,  
Or girls who were not even mothers ate their  
Candied apples from the top of the Ferris wheels—  
Their estuaries—as we sang songs of rebellion without  
Even knowing what we sang—as the pilots  
Came down nearer to us, whispering, until they dived into  
The sky again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tin-Foil Swords

Words that are lost can't fill my pain:  
Man of Arms can never be He-man, Erin:  
What is wrong with your brain,  
The paint by number figurines, Erin:  
I am not even nearly as beautiful as your brain:  
Tell me of your soul, let the wet paint run in the rain,  
Erin:  
Did your first love break your soul when he broke your  
Hymen:  
I knew you in Latin class when you were still virginal,  
And even then I knew what you would be doing;  
And I am not beautiful, Erin:  
I could never proceed through the pictures you  
Break yourself in;  
You are a starlet Erin: You shine- You are very bright,  
And yet you don't wear any man's ring;  
Is it the muscles of the gym which impress you, Erin?  
I wish I could be more beautiful for you;  
I wish I could be starlight; I wish I could be the bravery of your  
Flag,  
Erin: There are houses that are vacant that need children and  
Your touch,  
But I don't think I can love you again after the flowers I gave  
You have died like stillborn children;  
After I had loved you that much, and you just stepped aside,  
And kissed your pillows,  
And gave the hunches of your game to the he-men of the story,  
The pilferers of late night dragons,  
While I could do nothing more than swing my lousy tin-foil  
Swords and masturbate to dead writers  
Who all together couldn't resurrect you from your egg sucking  
Hutch.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tinsel

Laid in the corners of the fine  
Fire field,  
I used to consider in midday all  
The things I could  
Steal  
From the cardboard chest,  
Plastic toys that  
Represented the real-  
But your lady's heart is real,  
So real,  
And yet waking up so far  
A field,  
I still hope to take the things  
I can steal  
To make them feel my own;  
To heal,  
The strange occidental  
In the theatre of this bedroom,  
Where she no longer says your  
Christian name:  
Where the rains are always as perfect  
As tinsel.

Robert Rorabeck



# To A Nebular Womb

I have returned to a nebular womb  
Where there is a swing-set and a school book  
Because it has always been my design to do so,  
And I do not knowing anything else,  
Except that sometimes airplanes look so good  
In the heavens above the like minded baseball diamonds—  
And I know just as little about you—  
How we fell into or out of love once or twice  
In between our earliest amusements while nothing  
Else I wrote ever sold, because there just so happened  
That there was no time for it—  
But then you were better at remembering these routine absences  
Than I was,  
And now I am here—happily lost in the playgrounds of  
A Disney World at blind midnight—never letting go of  
Everything you so easily abandoned—  
Smelling what remains of the soul of your cadaver left like  
The hoof prints of fresh paint across the playground—  
After the buzzards and the helicopters and the  
Dragonflies have already crossed—  
What joy to they bring to the paint by numbers—  
What answers can they bring to the land of the crossed?

Robert Rorabeck

# To A Nest That Aches Not To Be Alone

I've been reading and filling in the gaps over  
Your make believe Guerrero, Alma:  
I've been listening to little girls who are walking down  
The street  
And tonight I ate six tostadas that Mierna's sister  
Caroline cooked and fed to me;  
And I picked up all of Alan's dye cast cars that were  
Scattered like bright toys for the angels and the birds  
At the feet of the Virgin of Guadalupe:  
But I kept on loving you even when you were back in  
The traditions of your bad man:  
And the boys and the men say that Mexican women need  
It every night;  
And I bought you a vase of roses and baby's breath  
Late this afternoon, that you could not  
Take home with you,  
Because you had to close your eyes and say that you could  
Never see the perfect snowflakes floating fall:  
And you are still scared of dogs,  
Even though I hold your hand, and I would carry you  
Away from all those feral traditions to a nest that aches not to  
Be alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# To A Place I Am Sure Doesn'T Belong

Heads of tallow now bonfires,  
Little busses circling her wrists where lions jump:  
Her tears are the little showers of  
Girls lockers they get naked in, victorious after  
The game;  
And where am I, and why are they not singing about  
Me- a picture of Dorothy in my pocket  
I will not return,  
All of my friends smoking and telling little  
Secrets in the white washed huts in the waves.  
I hear them singing better from the good side of my face;  
And you can pay for the parade and walk down the  
Street with them, and ride on pasifinos with boys  
Who can do simple illusions; I don't  
Care: I toss airplanes like coins in the sky, and  
I don't even need to fold them.  
Everything has lost its apoplexy and drunken from the  
Fountain of youth, and the conquistadors are having  
Sleepovers and now I cannot sleep:  
The beautiful woman I murdered and buried underneath the  
Roses in the garden of my novel,  
I named Gloria, but now she has awakened up as if  
Fireflies had burned away her print,  
But got sick off her and now are dying amidst the coral and  
Shells along the path leading up through the aspens,  
And to a place I am sure doesn't belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# To A Vanished Sea

My mother was washing her was—Oh,  
In a pieta-  
Of orange and green tinfoil:  
A beautiful thing that could never be spoken in between  
The courtyards  
And the baseball diamonds of high-high school:  
And the heavens ushered the rains  
Through the forests  
As something feral was getting married—  
And it only took so much of awhile to plead for justice:  
Until she came out of the night,  
The chinaberry trees confusing the heavens behind her:  
And in the crooks of that manifested sorority:  
Hidden things for children:  
Pornography and Easter Eggs,  
And the torn strings  
Of kites that whisper of heaven forever lost on their  
Way to a vanished sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# To A World Built To Adore You

Marmalade on the lips of a bumble bee  
On the lips of my muse: there you are cavorting in  
The backyard, while all of the cars  
Are sunken into the canal: your breasts are beautiful  
If shallow,  
And it does not matter what you want- they will  
Give you a house backed up to the hills and stacked  
With Indians and they will run liquors down your  
Naked form in the moonlight;  
And they will ride you alongside a bicycle-  
They will take pictures of your lungs that they will  
Give to little boys, and they will send off around  
You in a procession of canoes:  
Building their amusements in models one fifth your  
Size, their toy boats will carry roses to you and  
Funnel cakes- and when you are gone,  
Making love to your man, they will have another girl  
Step into your shoes: she will be nothing like  
You, but she will learn so much just by being there-  
And the sun will sweeten the throat of the sky,  
And the birds there will sing to a world built to  
Adore you.

Robert Rorabeck

# To A World That Didn'T Know It Should Care

Finish the glass like a little bit of  
Rainwater;  
And now you're too slick for a rope.  
There's never been a fish who's  
Hanged himself,  
At least according to conventional rhymes;  
But you are not that great:  
And must concede that you only once lived  
Near a beautiful pool  
Where you could hear the fraternities raping  
The night near the graveyards;  
But you are too afraid or too good to  
Go back to school anymore:  
You should have drunken more in Saint Louis,  
Stolen somebody's cat, or lit off  
Illegal fireworks. Then you would have  
Stayed. You didn't even go to Sarah's grave,  
You custard- hypocrite you;  
And now you aren't fighting for either side,  
But just planning on getting rich and shooting  
Of rainbows to a world that didn't  
Know it should care.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Adore

Words- words every night under houses like snails:  
Open mouthed for the love nests of birds:  
These words  
Cut their throats with the paper cuts of words, with the  
Spanish conquests of high school  
That never seem to heal:  
Even as the lonely forts crumble, and the tourists retreat  
To their ice creams:  
These words stumble underneath the blowing embraces  
Of propellers and  
Windmills exploring the world, or taunting quixotic nights;  
Entire hillsides of caracoles,  
Of graffitied desks- while the coffins race underneath  
The red mountains of Colorado,  
As the choleric brides are unearthed and dribble down  
Like the landslides of birthday cakes:  
And I watch my muses out on parade, their bodies like  
A fire engine greased with marmalade,  
While the rivers conceive around them whatever slender  
Births they have left-  
And the matadors fight their bulls, and the housewives  
Their bets:  
Until it is time to turn in beside their pools,  
While the hobos slip through the canals like rummy conquistadors  
Finding their loves escaped from the circus in a tent of  
Palmettos fanning up from the easement  
In the safely mowed fields in which the housewives can easily  
Feel content to adore.

Robert Rorabeck

## To Again Diminish

Even by myself, my body feels warm tonight for  
I have drunken so much liquor by these thirsty lips,  
Searching for a muse  
Through the holy grounds of a bachelor's afterlife,  
And even though all of it was a failure,  
I have continued breathing tonight, and overcome by  
Your cloy spirits, I was possessed,  
Like a girl in the first night of her sorority;  
Or like a young mother experiencing the first night  
Being tugged upon by a newborn,  
Like the flag of a new country stuck to the wind,  
Victorious know that it will be so long before it has to  
Again diminish.

Robert Rorabeck



# To All Of Your Children Of Far Away

Too many words dulling the pain, making inebriations,  
Make for bad poems:

But I sat with you on my swings the other day before you left

Me:

I sat and brought you into my neighborhood

Like a wolf into a virgin's bedroom: I guess my head didn't think  
Of what my body was doing:

The woodland church where your body moved under the pitch  
Of clouds, before you kissed my neck and

Drove away into the overly maddened crowd; and you never  
Returned,

But that shadow you stained the coral with is moving here today:

She is a beautiful woman who lines over me like

A crime scene,

While you are back in the warm contours of your folded house

Listening to all of your children of far away.

Robert Rorabeck

## To Another Street Of Coquina

Cold as the soup kitchens that cannot feel;  
Like the cold soup that a hypnotized chicken is cut into  
While it rains in my house  
And over the everglades, and the bums and hobos and  
Their wino cousins take shelter underneath the overpasses:  
My mother reads to my past childhood in the glowing  
Warmth of a library that has since shut down:  
But while she did, her skin and body resonating as perfect  
As a virgin in some grotto or some carport:  
Why, there she was, blue sheets rippling and kissing lemon  
Trees  
And underneath the knees, Mexican candies: and she didn't  
Care about all of the cheap stuff I'd stolen from kindergarten,  
Or the pornography I knew about across the street in the  
Woods:  
She showed me tadpoles, and the kidnapped toys who slumbered  
In the corrugations of the ditches:  
She was like a stewardess taking time off to light off fireworks,  
And if I ever saw her cross over the canal to get to another  
Street of coquina just as poor as ours was,  
Then I am sure that she would be taking me to another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Another World

The defeated spirits are as sure as their handlers  
That I am not really here,  
And the colors happen into the world from inside us,  
As they escape like the breathing of misappropriated  
Lovers,  
And everything else that fails: and right now I have  
A blond come over who I will pay to  
Take me to another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Any Room

Maybe you don't remember this time:  
With the sun going down, and the ponies heading home:  
That I cut myself looking at you,  
Even as the rest of the people discovered so much gold.  
Running to it, lapping,  
Cliff dwellers whose dwellings were suddenly filled with  
So many colorful pinwheels.  
But you were there rippling over their shoulders,  
Coming up as a reflection across the maize and the trout  
Stream-  
Like a good omen in the shoulders of our city,  
Our enemy waiting as the zygotes of evil ghosts in the shells  
Of silver terrapin;  
And it was a long ways to fall, slipping all the way-  
Then I was just a wave heading home, eager to be falling over  
Itself, and to any room that would let me in.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Any Room That Would Let Me In

Maybe you don't remember this time:  
With the sun going down, and the ponies heading home:  
That I cut myself looking at you,  
Even as the rest of the people discovered so much gold.  
Running to it, lapping,  
Cliff dwellers whose dwellings were suddenly filled with  
So many colorful pinwheels.  
But you were there rippling over their shoulders,  
Coming up as a reflection across the maize and the trout  
Stream-  
Like a good omen in the shoulders of our city,  
Our enemy waiting as the zygotes of evil ghosts in the shells  
Of silver terrapin;  
And it was a long ways to fall, slipping all the way-  
Then I was just a wave heading home, eager to be falling over  
Itself, and to any room that would let me in.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Anyone's Homes

Another sunlight going down for the short change  
Of a word—  
Another daylight of my life slipping down—  
The mountains cool from their fires;  
I do not know where you've been,  
But we each have to do this alone.  
My wife is in the kitchen walking towards me—  
The hibiscus is in its grove, curling over  
The concrete—  
The feral cats making love on the road—  
And nearer the beach, a sword fish stares at a shell,  
While the cars honk on the overpass—  
There was once a picture that existed over  
The absences of my grandmother's house—  
When, for now, the hours keep on piling towards me—  
The dogs lick the souls of the fish—  
The roads turn around, pilfering for themselves—  
And the beautiful bouquets placed on the steps,  
And the roads that don't lead to anyone's homes.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Ask Another God Why

Now that it is passing, the axes fall,  
And the liquor runs from the stemmed trunks of the  
Headless queen:  
The trucks wont start but still the reptiles dream:  
And I do all of this for you, Alma,  
While I am sure that I will see you at work again, while your  
Body will run down the sidewalks of your world,  
Trying to keep up with your children,  
Until they become as old and over read as the story lines of  
Fairytale:  
But you don't like to read anyways- Eventually the snow melts  
And cries for itself down the hidden ways of the mountain:  
And I went finding there for the footsteps that you never  
Planted-  
So it goes this way this time, un routed, like the same management  
As the clouds give to cartograph the sky;  
So if I awaken beside you some un calligraphed tomorrow,  
I swear that I will never have to ask another god why.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Attend To Again

Warm perfumes in the rectories, as the pigeons return  
With their messages:  
Alma's favorite color is still green, and we ate camarones together  
Today:  
And her eyes, and her eyes: what did they say to me,  
And what did they leave behind, spilling their ephemeral guts with  
The apple seeds down my throat,  
While the marionettes picked up and carried away:  
The horses stumbling in the clutches of rattlesnakes, breaking  
Their trifectas underneath the turquoise stones backlit  
By the haunted mountains  
Where the gold is buried, where I left my grandmother and my dogs  
With their celibacy: and I joined the grave robbers behind my  
House,  
And together across the cathedrals of a canal we began to sing to  
Her and to over imbibe,  
And our house of loneliness began to swim as we learned her  
Phone number;  
But forgetting how many times we spoke of our love as we  
Made love to her, it felt as if we were lost  
Like slaves who could not swim in the embargos of her landscaping,  
Even while the street lights lamped our windows light churches,  
And the hurricanes spoke like totems, like tattoos to  
The magnitudes of the Atlantic that we could never even use  
Our bicycles to understand;  
And in other houses of her cousins the meals of corn were flattened  
Into the dinner beneath the virgins and the roses,  
While the rattlesnakes tucked in, wishing for the virtues of her legs  
To slip into their venoms to kiss voluptuously poisoned  
Across the fleshs of forests and classrooms that I am absolutely fearful  
My love will never be so careful as to open her eyes to attend to  
Again.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Awaken Again Too Many Times

I suppose that I am here, even though I won't be touching down  
In the firehouse sea,  
As I remember the clusters of all the absentmindedly  
Glorious houses  
That will never return again: the glory days are over,  
The speak easies have passed out,  
And my love for white women is altogether over; so that my colors  
Have changed,  
So still I blend in, but wait for a mother who has passed herself  
Between the countries: who has probably been shot at  
While stripping naked across the frontera:  
Who makes me want better Spanish, or to at least to call up the  
Verbs to jolt her into another metamorphosis that will  
Send her entire hundred pound body hurling towards  
My lips,  
Even though there really is no ice-cream, and all of the dreams  
Have been forgotten into the overused beds of hotels,  
And all of the old girls I knew are done showing their legs,  
And are now embarrassed, though with my apathy;  
For now I only have Alma to cry for,  
And the knife wound seeds she has planted in me, who are certain  
To vanish should I have to awaken again too many times.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Awaken And Go To School Tomorrow

Your body was good and brown:  
Your body was as good as any woman's  
Under house surrounded by the indigenous landscaping;  
And at the pools of your swimming night, my scars  
Looked nice,  
Laid out on the other side of the wall from the table and chairs:  
The house that had a television, the house that had  
A wife,  
And the pool lay in unused shadows, the canal behind  
In a constellation of twin red stars;  
And I dreamed that you were my wife, while the entire  
Population slept, so that they could not believe that they would  
Have to awaken and go to school tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be A Foolishly Welcoming Bride

Interacting with all of the catastrophe inside my  
Soul, listening to your children echo around your footsteps  
Even as they fall'  
And your heart spinning away 'the rain falling like  
Trinkets outside 'as if you were wanting to  
Return again to Mexico'  
To see and kiss your children 'to remember what it  
Was to be a foolishly welcoming bride.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Afforded Any Old Sort Of Wish

I love you, Diana, I love you:  
And I am dying, even while I try you out,  
And you wished that I would buy you negligee for your  
Birthday, so I went to the mall in Palm Beach Gardens and I did;  
If only because I am not a mailbox and I am dying,  
I am dying like a cat on the fence with all of his lives molting and  
Even with all of this air-conditioning, I am dying,  
Dying: trying to not touch myself while I am going:  
And look at all of these beautiful scars pin wheeling in the sweet  
Home of this vortex:  
Look at how I am dying for you and your daughter, Diana:  
Look at how I am going even while you are having sex;  
And that I love you, Diana, and I want to fall down between your  
Faggots like in a hearth, and smell out all of your sweet cadavers;  
And don't you understand now, only if I was speaking English,  
And this was shop class, and I was part of the erudite intelligences;  
Even if I wore a corsage;  
I am trying to mouth off for you in front of lions, but I am just a slender  
Fish, or I am your sweetened coelacanth or gar learning all the roadways  
Of your body, getting ticketed, just because I wished to be with you  
And I wasn't beautiful enough to be afforded any old sort of wish.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Alone

Drowning in this life underneath the overpasses:  
The working girls smelling like marbled steak and marbles:  
Her hands like pigeon's feathers, dirty with fealty:  
How will she answer to my mouthing wonder for her duel pregnancies:  
Or that when far a field we make love, she always wants something,  
Her sisters following behind her like a family of possums:  
They live in one room beside her, and she beside them, and the night  
Comes and wonders and brings down the hummingbirds  
Of helicopters:  
The lions seem to freeze in midair with their dirty tricks while the fires  
Burn out, and the shoulders of the trapeze grown naked:  
And then Alma is just this, a wounded child without a bicycle  
Who I have spent all of my wishes on,  
And time meanders and the rivers overflow and steal away children:  
And houses crumble and lose their affluence through the  
Corn fields:  
And all of Mexico rises up and presses its lips to bullfinches of  
Copper horns- and then there is a victory through the maze of solitude-  
And maybe my soul realize in its wonder that it should no longer have  
To be alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Anybody's Wife

Sometimes the sky feels bad out of love  
And churns up her clouds like boiling degrees, like  
Throwing things out of all of her windows:  
Then there are too many words like tourists picnicking on  
Deadpan mountains,  
Like sweat pearled in the brow of a snobbish bride;  
And I lay on my back while the better men get better  
And fatten at your picking time:  
Then tankards of trucks make noise through the jurisdiction  
Of your windows;  
It is a very long country I am thinking about with no messes  
And you live there, just because you are just good  
Enough to be anybody's wife.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Awakened

Write in a cradle of luxury:  
And wait for the traffic to pass by like  
Beautiful lures  
And housewives in their mouths:  
Now I do not know which way I am going—  
The concrete is so singular—  
Airplanes touch-down maybe fifty feet  
Away from me—  
It is the year of the dragon, and she is my wife  
As the angels fly into her,  
Burning themselves—wishing to be freed,  
As her hair darkens  
Until it is finally time to be awakened.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Blond

Stars they vomit into graves  
If that's what they do:  
Mexicans can never drink rum,  
And when they're done mowing they stay  
Sideways in the gutters  
And pet the slick wet backs of newly born  
Kittens  
And cheetahs, spotted,  
As the white Mohawks share the good times  
Of sweet spit and harems;  
And the sky is a young god of good rock and  
Roll,  
And the buses are yellow vultures in their  
Turn abouts,  
And I just want to be loved:  
I want to be blond,  
And have ice-cream,  
And then meet you out in the courtyard to count  
The houses of cards  
Building up to the clouds,  
But  
I don't have good enough patience to write a  
Sustainable novel:  
I just sell Christmas trees and look at meaty centerfold  
And then spend the rest of my time rubbing my palms together  
And licking my lips,  
Trying my best to jump across the canals without  
Getting wet,  
Because that is the other side of the world  
And that is where the sugar cane burns up from the homeopathic  
Throats thousands of them balled like the mistletoe  
Of all those coral snakes;  
And Sharon,  
I love you, but I struck out and its raining and the  
Bleachers smell like crackerjacks;  
And Erin,  
I lost a wonderful poem about you last night,  
But you don't care-  
You are laughing at me,



And the stewardesses don't care  
Serving their ice-cream and cleavage to the usual business  
Men leaping across the choreographed city states;  
The pullulating lights of reindeer pirouetting  
In the turn stalls of their usual feeding grounds;  
And I can't spell.  
And my engine wont start.  
And the mountain doesn't summit.  
And I just want to be blond.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Him

Mutts get stuck in the patio perchance.  
They don't have the right to ask the pretty  
Girls out to dance.  
The alligators wait at the end of the gate,  
And her father says to have her home by eight;  
But what I am doing,  
I don't really know- I just smoke and loiter  
Outback at the end of the show,  
And yet when I see you its like an entire carnival  
Has lit up underneath the slash pines,  
And the sky just keeps going forever upward  
Like a baby-blue mind-  
But this is something after the chance is over,  
And the car has come and squashed the dog named Rover,  
The old loyal fiend,  
I couldn't hope that you'd remember,  
Since you've gone and laid your roe all swarthy in the  
North river,  
And now you daughter comes, leaping for awhile.  
She too wants to taste the sweet rind of sky,  
But very soon or eventually she has to go down  
Believing  
All the tired truths that fornicate through these school-  
Bus days.  
I try and find your eyes through the fire engine haze;  
But this catastrophe makes me question where I am.  
When I just want to be with you:  
I want to be him.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be In Love

Everything else inside of us seems to be counting  
The numbers that pull off the same way that unmentionable  
Serpents shed their skin:  
And I am doing this again, again, because I have become  
Unmentionably lost:  
I exist in the same semipermeable strata of the pornographic  
Memories as the conquistadors who became so quilled with  
Arrows in the Floridian sand dunes,  
That they had to stop for a dinner of themselves:  
And so the buses whir for me, all less shad, all bright blue  
And yellow,  
Like flowers too big for corsages for submarines:  
While the tracks that the Indians left behind are too famished to remember,  
While your children are too beautiful to be forgotten,  
Alma- and even though all of your world is so strange to me,  
My heart hunts for you through the quietness of these concrete  
Slopes which seem to come so easily,  
While the liquor emolliates my skin, while I am at a loss for any other  
Words or numbers,  
Save for you name, and that we found each other all too suddenly  
And all too same, on this peninsula on this planet and all the same:  
Even if you don't care to love me, I am the fool that you can  
Blame:  
You can squat and piss over my unmentionable grave in the concrete  
Shadows of a sieve,  
And we will carry on apart like the strata of two species born to  
Far away from each other to ever be together, but know, at last,  
That they were always meant to be in love.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Meat For Buzzards

Children who go on fieldtrips always go  
But always come back again- and you are their  
Mother Alma;  
And there are things inside you I will never know,  
That I can never go too, beneath the spindling brown  
Transoms of  
Your deep, deep eyes; and though I have made love to  
You and held you hand,  
You let the other fellow in more constantly- and your  
Heart gallops through a cool, cool night,  
Displaying itself through the voids of your sub consciousness;  
And it seems at last to find peace  
And grazes off the coral that is too beautiful to be meat for  
Buzzards.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Noticed By Your Eyes

In families, the warmth of science's loneliness disguised  
In religion's degrees: You whom think him your lover,  
Cannot actually touch him, your husband, for the both of  
You are forever encased in an electronic sheath—  
You have to go to the sun; it's thermal reactions the metamorphosis—  
Butterflies over Nagasaki and Pompeii—  
While I was sleeping on your roof one hour before yesterday—  
And in those words, filigreed with imperfections and enuendo,  
I wrote you a thousand poems written in a language you do  
Not know—  
And when the coffins of your lovers and your ancestors  
Are laid beneath the ground, they do not actually touch that  
Place—they are developed from the ectoplasms of outer space—  
Better to be cremated in the fire that burns in these pages—  
Better to have seperated from those lesser sages,  
And awakened in these momentary arms—  
Folded airplanes and paper butterflies dying as they try to  
Cross the canal to be noticed by your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Real

Heart implanted in a rock garden of  
Words that happen out of time:  
The sky looks like lucky rabbits feet without  
Any airplanes:  
The sky looks almost real, with the cats on my flesh,  
So cautiously strung like harps.  
Golden is the color of the sea, but it cannot be observed  
From this ancient abode;  
And some girls I love are just stoned.  
They wait suppliantly like coyotes underneath their  
Mobile homes,  
Kissed by rattlesnakes milking their bones.  
The sky in the color of unfortunate salmon. The sky  
A salon;  
And then, with the curtain closing, the girls I loved  
Are finally moving on-  
And the garden is chirping with lightning.  
The storm is coming that will carry on the gossip that used  
To be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be Returned

Sometimes I climb the scarred hoods of  
Mountains three at a time;  
And I take of my old baseball cap and  
Toast the storm,  
Wait for lightning to teach me, but it  
Is a fickle institution,  
Far above your head and your erogenous  
Arousals,  
Like a haughty amusement park for ants  
And beetles if we had any;  
And very soon your daughter will grow up  
To know everything you had to spill into  
Her,  
Whatever fell out of your sweet turnip truck and  
Into her moist lips,  
And I think it so sad that she might never  
Know how to spell the sweet crèches of those  
Mountains that live forever  
Like blind men, as you are to them,  
As you push your daughter in the swings of your  
Back yard,  
Wanting her to fly a little bit,  
Never temping her with the danger of the  
Burning sun,  
Or the places I have seen god aroused, wounded  
And dying,  
And yet still crying your name,  
As he ran away from me, escaping deeply quill-ed  
With that unrequited love  
I can never hope to be returned.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Be The Day

This seemed to be the day  
They kept talking to me about—  
Without eyes—without a television  
The tourists and  
The girls working—  
The clouds making many fantasies  
Up in the sky—  
The moon hung upon itself over  
A tiny yellow hacienda—  
The light falling—  
There you can see my parents  
Waiting for months in  
My tiny living room  
For their first grandchild to be born.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Be The King Of You

Rainbows of cowboys, and I wish to die easily  
To overcome all of these overpasses:  
All of these state colleges shining their time before the  
Brow of professional deities,  
As it seems to be calling to me right now as he comes  
Right into you;  
As he went away to Mexico, only to come back again  
To give you another child, to come into your fronteras  
By your rights blooming in the sweet passages of  
Their wind tunnels,  
And I guess now I don't feel anything more than this,  
And that I am quite undone waiting for the fun banks of  
Unforgotten ghosts, and now:  
And now all this: the savages overpasses to the new places  
In the greenness that we land,  
And he kisses your lips and he has all of you,  
And all of the rest of this is an excuse, or at least it is an  
Apology,  
Alma, and the daylight comes, and lays low all of it spells,  
As he has the rest of you, and as he gives you children,  
Even while all of my bouts are all done,  
And he proves again to be the king of you.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Beat A March

The fortifications became striking  
At night—  
The way they light up the wall  
For the enemy,  
Silhouetting the frightened soldiers—  
The chirping crickets listen  
To the ground purr far across  
The distant land—  
In the morning,  
The lady with the red bicycle  
Comes to visit, breathless and dewed,  
The palms of her hands stained  
From working in the vineyard—  
All the soldiers tell her  
She is a belladonna,  
Some fortunate father's beautiful daughter,  
And they sing love songs  
When she rides up to the fort—  
Sometimes they get drunk  
And light off fireworks,  
The quickly dying pinwheels,  
The brightest colors of silvers and gold,  
Cadmium and azure,  
That, like her, exists nowhere else in the world  
Except for the few leaping seconds in the crackling air;  
But only one soldier truly loves her,  
The one she goes to in the quiet corners  
To kiss and press against his starched uniform—  
But they are afraid to make love,  
Because all the soldiers are waiting—  
The woman is waiting too,  
Lighted upon the battlements  
As if standing on a street corner,  
And her heart is like a hare waiting in the  
Tall whispering grass for its chance to move—  
The land is waiting too.  
Over the low hill where the daylight comes  
In runny pools and shallow estuaries  
Eddying through the dry olive groves.

Drums are slowly beginning to beat a march.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Believe A Thing

Slipping through the abandoning collisions of children,  
While all of the adults have to sit a spell,  
Because all they have learned about the world is that it  
Is up to no good;  
And what they have trained to feel comfortable with,  
Besides,  
Has slipped out of their roofs and learned to swim like  
Blue gills into cemeteries;  
And even before the sun gets risen, the hobos and winos  
Are there sharing their plots, unshaven,  
Headstones and cenotaphs as pillows- the highways of  
A feral make believe the concessions of their mothers,  
Like the trails that they must follow to fully unwind from  
Their jobs,  
While the other larks of men continue to built preposterously  
Above and beneath them these fleeting things  
In disastrous slights of hand made to impress the ladies,  
When what should be imagined is all of their fine lips uncorking  
The romance of the cheap spirits in the vermilion gutters  
That coil through the drainage of its ugly make-believe,  
The snakes and devils speaking in the tongues of weeds and wildflowers,  
While those of us who are with them never have to believe a thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Believe In Unicorns

Filing in, warm alcohol clouds my feet,  
Makes my lonely spirits warm  
And reminds me of the time when I slept in  
Motels and hospitals alone.  
Now I have a family and two children.  
I have to get drunk and write in private.  
Even as I can hear my wife,  
I know it is not something I am supposed  
To be doing—  
But I still dream of other houses  
And horses without names running  
Through the waves—  
It gets cloudy when I have to scratch my  
Head trying to think of the names of  
Vanished conquistadors.  
They too used to own this place,  
But now the planets align to empty palaces,  
People who often speak Spanish now own this place  
Again—and we go to their supermarkets to  
Buy a month's worth of meat.  
I don't work at the high school anymore.  
I got fired from that place because I couldn't  
Fit in with the school culture;  
But it feels warm now here  
For a while—  
Warm from the rum of the Caribbean—  
For a while I forget myself  
And think that I am not supposed to be here  
But then I remember to believe in unicorns.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Better Boys In Better Lands

Day of laughter's surcease  
And what is left to find in the shallows,  
Your heart a kind of jellyfish still breathing  
Painted by seahorses and uncommon jacks;  
And then the sky,  
And then the moon, the alleyways of fine men,  
Feathered and keeping an insouciant shape with  
The clouds,  
The cliffs of far away raising up despondently  
To the weathers,  
Yours is a finer face I would like to reach and  
Touch but you pull away,  
Like a paper kite whose string is cut,  
Who wanders where the wind will take its  
Folded pleasures, I fear to think  
To better boys in better lands so far away.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Bless And Weep

I say I love you even as the petals weep and I don't  
Even know or not if you've been counting sheep,  
And it hurts my soul that I had to lower my jaw and let you on  
Hope, like the lowest scoops of the  
Ferris wheel, like all of the white girls reading this and knowing  
That I am not real;  
But I am here waiting at the bottom of the teal, like an innocent  
Drawn in its bathtub, Alma, I know that you can feel,  
And I have been high up in our state, like the hot air balloons over  
The lookouts of Ocala where you might even come to live;  
But I will come down again, Alma, to kiss the soft pearly sheen of  
Your lips, While even the stewardesses are asking what they  
Can serve, to the burly men who don't even deserve;  
And maybe it is that even now I can smell you, Alma; and I can  
Kiss your sheep high in the airy basins who blow the syllables of your  
Name, and who need no other reasons to bless and weep.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Booze

Laid out my words sing like hollow instruments  
From the lips of women that are passing

By:

They kick their eyes out of bed and beg the priest

Instead:

Like paper airplanes,

All my words fly for the length of several cars:

Newly buried, they kick like a fish one final time

Out into the open space of the fire,

But already the dirt of their store is closing down,

Better lovers are knotting fingers in the storm-

Erin is serving a private drink to some

Swell fraternity's infernal dorm:

I know what color anchors are on those better men's

Tattoos,

But tonight I'll just let them all starve out in the open

Air under the moon.

Let sailboats be sailboats, and butterflies the ends to

Their own means.

Tonight I just want to booze.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Bother Her

What is the day doing in its night,  
Finally undressed with new predators and  
Ghost ships,  
The games of husbands and wives,  
The nocturnal blooms and necrophilia's saints: Oh,  
I don't know,  
But the sounds of water falling of zippers of games:  
The classes are done dear,  
The fires are done, the ancestors cremated,  
The dinosaurs:  
The planets are less jealous and ashamed, and they swing  
Like playgrounds around your unlaced boudoir:  
I know that's what they were doing even  
Before I was born,  
In the darkness of womb out deep in the sugar, sugar corn:  
What sort of flowers bloom then in the night when  
We are doing these things,  
And Kelly steps out and bathes with the butch roses,  
And the moon is almost perfect and making her breasts momentarily  
Levitate before they have to be tugged back down for their  
Newest new borns;  
And she is no longer Catholic, and maybe she doesn't  
Love me,  
But her eyes are just as perfect and abandoned in the darkness:  
And she kisses her man and falls back down beside him  
Into the grotto where the dragons and the serpents are  
Also breathing;  
But she has known them all day, so in the night they have  
No reason to bother her.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Bring Them Down

Saved from drowning by  
My grandmother's seashell doll,  
All that is happening in the  
Orange orchards,  
As the light moves as duplicitous as  
Girls,  
As stewardesses up in the air  
Never imagining how they must have  
Gotten there,  
But feeling good,  
Knowing the spendthrifts of light over  
The water and exactly how much time  
It will take to bring them down.

Robert Rorabeck

## To Bring To Here

Oh, well—we are home again,  
And this is what it might at least as well be:  
A forever weekend of video-gaming dungeons spilled  
Out like gold fish all throughout the midway  
As the sunshine runs forever the other way,  
But by midnight she is clothed—and with songs to  
Sing:  
She could die for you yesterday—but it is so far away  
From here—so collect your own glasses- and remember  
Whatever it was that she happened to bring to here.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Burn Myself Into Your Memory

Pray to the birds in the nests of their pallid moons:  
Far above the broken shells and armpits of eaten conquistadors;  
And there is nothing really beautiful with all of this:  
I am dying for a muse who lives with another man:  
These are the gyps of abutments my grafittis shadow on the  
Underbellies of a criminal world;  
And it is hardly enough, all of the mountains I had to climb alone,  
Cursing and blissing Sharon,  
Never knowing how to tie my shoes:  
And now I wonder how it is I have to die, drinking my bad wine,  
And writing to Alma,  
Writing to her all of the time: like teardrops like raindrops,  
They lament that they will not survive;  
But your body gives me reason to believe in the ceilings of  
Heaven Alma:  
You are my newest and most burning of muses;  
And I want to take you to the Norton Art gallery to show you by  
What methods you inspire me;  
And soon you will be going back to school, to learn through the  
Deep afternoon about nothing that never does;  
And after we have separated and it rains outside and sad things curl  
Up and growing clinging to stones,  
Then I wish that you would stop your tears and look out of the  
Abundance of transoms and hold your breath, trying to gather  
Together the strange sticks which I previously gathered to burn  
Myself into your memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Buy Her Flowers

Earth come down around her shoulders  
And say to the bereaving mountains that she does  
Not work at the fruit market anymore:  
But she has gone up onto the shoulders of  
Her husband—  
And what she can see from there:  
Flea markets basking in their grottos, and soft,  
Unmolested ways back to Mexico:  
Her eyes—oceans—  
But she is entirely dependent and too far away  
For me to buy her flowers.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Buy Your Ghost

Wherever you are living now  
You always make me spend my art into the  
Dirt  
With a glass between my legs watching the  
Dancers flirting  
Under the cheery palm trees-  
I can go out from under the wedding cemetery,  
Go down underneath the fort beside the sea,  
Listen to the tourists taking photographs  
Of making love,  
I can weep into the foamy summit of  
Every wave,  
But I know you are not here, but sleeping in the  
Stores of beautiful mountains-  
I should result in nothing as I try to recognize  
Your essence,  
But it is too elusive, made up of so many things;  
I can only give you the few words that are my  
Anonymous sport- They will end up dying long  
Before my love;  
I finish off half a bottle of rum in one night,  
I look upon the underbellies of airplanes like slick  
Amusement rides under the yard lights,  
But the swing set is empty. The alligator has nothing  
To do- We are both waiting to become  
Better gentlemen, to find the true words of our  
Sincerity; Perhaps we are both ancient fools,  
For you are so away,  
And I will never have the talent to make enough  
Money to buy your ghost.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Carry Us Away

Sarah Teasdale is buried in Bellefontaine,  
And I wish to go and see her and water her grave  
By a single tear I stole from the sea  
Where all my cousin bachelors were sashaying  
A shanty:  
And if I worked all night and exhumed her long  
Mane, then I could kiss her vanished lips,  
And pour down them my wine,  
As the cars of midnight salesmen trained  
By the coal-lit road, and the sky full of nimbus moved  
By, those ushering storms above naked trees,  
Whose crooks are like arms raised upwards in  
Hungering petitions,  
As around her old house, they planted dozens of red  
Roses, even as by this hour they make an untried day,  
I kneel at the head of her perfumed rest, and lay my senses  
Upon her unmoved breast; and call her there, though  
She never knew me, by a memoir of a silent liar:  
Thus I name myself while my heart still knells my breath,  
Until I lie too in the quieted death, with sad egos  
Loosed into the sea. Then, would not her gimlet eyes flutter  
Like the gray curtains' foreplay on the slatted shutters;  
And see by the mutual light of those who have reposed,  
Who are crowned by the epitaphs of gravestones,  
And the fading pages left imprinted in the wilting stores;  
Thus we might obtain new senses, to see by the dint of  
Our waywardly species, to mutually cusp one another  
So as to be mistaken as two flowers in a coupling braid  
Waiting through the quieting hours as the storm, mounting,  
Approaches with those chariots the sun brings to reward  
The living, and to carry us away.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Catch A Glimpse At The Sun

Without air-conditioning, they can still make enigmas;  
And I am growing fat because  
I ate at the Chinese buffet again tonight; and then I jogged  
In the wet grass where the crocodiles fart  
And now the souls of me feet look like exposed brains;  
And I am still alone and waiting to fill a hotel room with my body  
And a female's body that I should know:  
All of these females in the world doing the same things that the  
Males do, getting up and lying down:  
And going on quests:  
One female for me under the street lights of the Church,  
All the best ones educated and spoken for, sucking thumbs of their  
Favorite holidays;  
Or all of the best ones already so far up into the air, serving drinks,  
Looking down at the jigsaw puzzles that are Alma's favorite color  
Interspersed with blue;  
And the fact that most of the species lives in the oceans  
Lessens my chances with the world:  
All of those layers of dead grandmothers and whales wishes away into  
The bric-a-brac of séances,  
My faces getting older and following behind the best of these women  
Like their wedding tresses, like the long tails of a comet who throws  
Her bouquets away without even looking as she continues onward  
Breathlessly, giddily skipping to catch a glimpse at the sun.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Come On

Oh my god, this is the police  
In warm weather, in cold weather, and then in  
Warm weather again;  
Or this is at least your uncle who has seen you naked  
Like the tail of a kite drying itself  
Above the trailer park where you believe;  
And there is a raccoon outside your door, even before  
Darkness;  
And it seems to be waiting all of a sudden as if a statue  
In a topiary;  
And all of the houses are too expensive, all of the  
Horses have been ridden:  
And there is your love out by the mailbox again, sending  
Letters away, but to whom are they for-  
And the sky is looking green, but not in an angry light;  
It just looks like a toddler who has eaten  
A bad canteen of your mother's chicken noodle soup,  
But that was a long time ago,  
And maybe that isn't the color of the sky at all;  
And all the raindrops are in fieldtrips over the swingsets  
In the park,  
And your little brother has stolen your mother's only  
Car and run away to some sweet peninsula further north;  
And you can't really blame him,  
Considering how all of this has been going, with  
This just being another song to blow your time on,  
Biting your nails and waiting for the next wave  
To come on.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Come On Down

How often he partakes of your body I must know;  
Swing back and forth amidst the shoulder joints  
And the tiny cyclones which have given your better  
Furniture to eggplants,  
And strewn your unmentionables every which way else;  
When you are done it is so easy to imagine you smoking,  
Your eyes as gone as your mother,  
As untouchable and wild: the greatest amount of your love  
Yes given to your mother,  
Inseparable yes she took you from daycare and  
Separate the better part of you, the part neither he nor  
Anyone else has ever felt:  
There she is floating through the air-light carnival,  
Just as gleefully as before it all went down, beautifully blind  
To all the senses that have so ravaged you,  
Circling and circling the cheap vanities of your mobile  
Home,  
As light as feather which has learned that she never has to  
Come on down.

Robert Rorabeck

## To Continue

In them houses stilted moon light unto  
Which I've run away-  
My father asking for money: money,  
His horses stamping hoof prints in the clay:  
As the sun lights  
Up and turns around, a zoetrope.  
A virtual nursery rhyme for the blind:  
And I keep pressing my chest out, and  
You keep promising- promising to come to  
Me- you haven't come, haven't  
You, while the sunlight is still out,  
Or the moonlight is still out siphoning  
Underneath her: and I have lovers- other  
Lovers from you; so it is eventually  
By them that I will have to siphon to  
Continue: as it is by them, eventually as  
Well, that I will finally have to take my  
Cue.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Convince Ourselves

Geoding, broking world, awash with hallucinations  
And misspellings,  
You've come for me again underneath the swing-set  
And moon,  
Where the ants are crawling through the  
Grass, feeling each blade,  
Lingering knife of the stars—  
When cars move by during the day in strange séance,  
Going to the wishing wells of their usual haunts,  
And the dolphins play  
Cavorting with the shoulders of naiads—  
And people work and slumber  
In nocturnal parapets:  
Outside, race-horses asleep,  
And each wave in cadence, coming against the stones  
That we have placed here to convince ourselves  
That we should remain for awhile.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Cry Another Tear

House how yellowed, and how quieted- sometimes even  
The hush of airplanes- and how many  
People have lived here- eighty-five years of people-  
Homosexuals and sea-shells:  
And I made love to Alma here forty-two times:  
I made love to Alma here, but how many orgasms  
Did I give her, like  
Orange gorillas- I laid her down and entered her  
Forty-two times,  
But that is deceptive, like an electronic fire:  
Each time I made love to Alma for an hour- and the  
Orgasms were many- her brown body from  
Mexico shivered, and felt me all over- and when  
She learned to feel it right,  
She was like spilled gasoline that I ignited-  
For each time, four or five orgasms-  
She was so afraid that I would give her children,  
But the entire night, and the entire woods glowed:  
She burned away newly made,  
Back to her husband- always to him. Today is her  
Birthday, and now it is all over-  
She will never leave her family to be with me- I have  
Worked and lived here just to be with her:  
I have written a thousand poems of our adultery, all imperfect  
And all sincere: but it could never be enough  
To compete with his witchcraft that he brought back with  
Him from the cauldrons of Mexico, stewing the fallen  
Mariposas- and striking the map of his poisons into her  
Heart- she walked back into his shrunken cathedrals  
Like the map of his sphere,  
Leaving me with only the echoes of the sweetest orchard-  
The bees and hummingbirds carrying news of him  
Over her shoulders- tattooing her sun with his name,  
Leaving me only to cry another tear.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Cry For Real

If I think of you, it is in the cool concentricity of  
The air-conditioned bellies of airplanes:  
It is in the slow arcing moves into which the stewardesses  
Serve: long and leggy and homeless,  
And they don't use words: all they have to do is look;  
And they don't sell things: they just give things away:  
When you smile at me in the fruiteria in the middle of  
Our work day:  
It does away with graves: Alma, and I have a chance of skipping  
Class, and holding hands with you as we truant across the  
Canal,  
As we go into places that can be shared but don't have  
Official names,  
And on larks into bedrooms of absent parents where we start  
To cry for real.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Cry Indoors

In another joyless aspersion,  
The skeletons dance with the tortoises—  
Jeweled in the pirouettes of  
Death,  
Something like the sparkling narcoleptic  
Dance of  
Europa or Ganymede around  
Jupiter,  
As my next housewife lies on the other side  
Of the world,  
Where her airplanes and helicopters  
Fly and hover unseen—  
And the birds and the hummingbirds drink  
From her fountains:  
She weighs less than a hundred pounds,  
Less than a half of me—  
And I finger paint through her,  
As she lies sweating in still life's of cut up  
Pineapple and mango  
Sprinkled with the ghosts on the asphalt  
Outside of another high school—  
As I pretend to be amused another time by  
Her gifts—  
But my strings are cut, and I am just waiting  
For my tomorrow—  
Fairytale all my own with her in the burned  
Out center of my heart—  
Another amusement park that has altogether  
Skipped town,  
Until the papier-mâché imps are once again  
Dancing on my shoulders—  
And we take our own busses through the cul-de-sacs,  
Until the sunlight burns through the paper—  
And the rainstorms have the unforgiving patients  
Until we arrive home and cry indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Death By Your Kiss

Pull my teeth with warm Scottish whiskey,  
And lay me down in the freshly cut pine of this  
Nailed together coffin,  
Just under the shadows of the truncated overpass,  
Or anywhere,  
Really,  
And see if I don't fit in quite nicely,  
Me and all my scars, my half handsome beauty:  
Then it will be like a used car lot on your dime.  
And I can look up the sinful flow of my muses  
Taught ribs,  
The things she stole from me,  
And the hot pink shorts in which she roller derbies:  
And that will be that,  
And you wont even have to put me down,  
Or say you love me,  
Because I will have felt for the entire afternoon  
What it must be like to be vastly asleep,  
Good and buried,  
Like a virulent flower whose only desire is to be  
Awakened to death by your kiss.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Describe

Alma, this is the darkness that your rabbits sleep in  
Every night:  
This is how they feel: how I feel, when I am outside of your  
House,  
Shivering in my cage of short fur suspended like a captured  
Truant above the grasses:  
This is how my body feels coming alongside your body,  
Catching myself staring at the deep reflections of your curves:  
Alma,  
Your name is the soul of a candle in a carport, in a cage:  
Alma, your eyes awaken from the sleep of our world, and they  
See things that dance, and make love;  
But what else they see, I don't think I can bring myself to describe.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Disappear

Laughing through the games and attending the news  
While the jasmine blooms  
Over the narcoleptic lakes: lakes so beautiful and yet no one  
Thought to write a poem across them,  
But this is my séance to them,  
Even if my father doesn't care:  
This, another way to awaken into the languishing shadows,  
Breathing shallowly—and across the many directions  
The airplanes cross:  
Another way to believe in the perfumes over the circuses and  
The family—  
They are smiling through mirrors where they have had to  
Buy themselves—and across the unholy mountains—  
They languish and disappear—  
While—as of yet, some love holds out, and sings to her  
While she sleeps alone  
In her emptied house at the end of some cul-de-sac,  
Waiting for her birthday candles  
So she may cause them to disappear—as another night languishes  
Up the busied rooms of her unoccupied heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Do With Her

Burning in the cold spittoons, the mountains rise  
Up to the f%cking moons, and I have been betrayed again:  
The mailman has fathered my earliest sun while  
I was late to home again: The rabbit went down on his fairy,  
The little girl has shrunken again;  
And my words are just the whimpering of my loneliness after  
My tireless wife has hit the town again: If she were my wife,  
And not another man's worry:  
I want this to be the story that I am remembered for:  
I want to be an American legend, and I am in a hurry:  
And the night spills out semiprecious from its quarry: and the  
Planet Mercury is even nearer to my love:  
And I haven't worn a bathing suit in so long, and the girl I loved  
Has a husband; and I have never betted on dogs, though I think  
That I should have:  
And the knights have gone down into the traffic, empty handed  
From the mountain, and if my goddess was nearer toward me,  
Wouldn't she just love another more endearing man:  
And what about the apple trees uphill from my uncle's house in  
Michigan: what about that professor who is the head of his department:  
I think he was the one who started all of this:  
I think his backyard is the garden of Eden, and I am doing nothing:  
I am just a runaway: a runaway from the sunniest states in the union,  
And the girl in the movie, the girl I love, well, actually  
I have never been beautiful enough to have had anything to do with  
Her.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Dream Of Where You Really Belong

What falls here is not footsteps- it wants to be  
A beating heart: what lies here, without the eyes  
To perceive her- it is the thing that I want: it is a way  
Home through the darkness,  
And candle that does not diminish and comes back to  
Life after the wishes of her birthday:  
It is the thing that I have been so insouciantly practicing,  
While the ice moon of Ganymede keeps the secrets  
To herself,  
Like my mother before my last sister was born,  
Out barefoot in the carport on Haverhill before it was paved  
The rain storming- she steps on an open extension  
Cord and is badly shocked, and it is here:  
The first time I see her fall to her knees in pieta  
Weeping not even for a child, that I want to think of you  
Alma to put you in my bedroom  
Underneath the heavens of a ceiling fan, and to turn my  
Senses around across your brown skin-  
And to kiss you in the secret places beneath the busy traffics  
That cannot even begin to dream of where you really belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Drink The Sea

A deer in the cauldrons altogether:  
Looking up, fathomless to the fathoms—  
And stars and stars  
Of places filled with ghosts—  
Submarines lying in the trenches of the sea  
And on Mars, Mars:  
Two dogs leaping are her moons—  
And in these streets at night,  
The antithesis to Arizona's limbo—  
And the things I saw today,  
Riding on a bus, the caesuras of my wife's  
Legs, and the laziness of being alive  
Brings us back to familiar places:  
The dow in the meadow,  
Eating grasses,  
Chances upwards to see the ghost  
As the moon, the thief,  
Bends down to drink the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Drive Away And Work

Souls cradle in the wishing wells of flesh:  
The hot prizes picked up at fairs that wont be around again  
For another eight months,  
Almost time enough for you to bare me a child, Alma:  
You make your nimble body embarrassed with a mulatto child:  
If I could cultivate your eyes to always turn up to me,  
Like the fires of kindergarten leaping up to the shoulders of its  
Afternoon bus:  
And we could take each other home while the sugarcane burned into  
Dusk,  
While the dolphins laid dreary eyes and all the paled ghosts haunted  
Their ticklish suburbia:  
You know I have a house for you as empty as the soul like a  
Suffocating goldfish between my ribs: Alma, I have house and  
A body aching to be filled with the nocturnal perfumes  
That your body's soul has to give:  
Your eyes are the painless transoms of Geurrero Mexico no other  
Boy from my high school has ever come close to dreaming about:  
Your body is the phosphorous of an overused unicorn,  
Lightning cultivated above the combing sea:  
Alma, my house and my soul are empty, and you have promised to come  
Tomorrow and fill them for an hour, as if I were a church,  
With the slightest offering of your brown consciousness: Your skin is  
So beautiful, and I promise you that I think about you at every  
Opportunity, and will gladly worship you tomorrow for all the whiles  
I have, before I have to drive away and work.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Entirely Fulfill Another Mistaken Life

All the beautiful words shoeless and stripped naked  
And then by the dark winos underneath the overpasses,  
The quietest and most beautiful of flowers bloom,  
As I call out for Alma in the somnolence of my inquietude:  
And I bought a bicycle for her to come,  
Something that could make love to my bicycle in high exegesis;  
But it wasn't enough,  
The clouds kept for her the pictures of her other world,  
My words failed to build a house that would sustain her from  
The elements,  
And now I can feel my face shedding the pitiless sorrows,  
Like the cicadas who leave their legs and armors around the  
Necks of other trees to walk  
Off all of a sudden into other romances; but, Alma, I really loved  
You- or I have a disease:  
But it is more likely that there is a drive in movie theatre in which  
You are naked and starring in my mind,  
And I am the only gentleman you will know, but the irony is that  
You will overlook my postmodern chivalry,  
And go on for so many uncounted heartbeats with him as to entirely  
Fulfill another mistaken life.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Escape What She Is Doing

If you still are a little boy and you step outside  
Right now,  
And the weather enraptures you, and blows you  
Out like a little blonde candle,  
I promise you can still love your movies in the  
Darkness,  
Because the darkness is the best house for those  
Things you have made,  
Covering your innocent head with the weathers of  
Apathetic solitude,  
All the prettier girls not really needing to know  
Who they are, and delighting in that fact that  
They don't have to be encouraged;  
And then you can just slip away like the anonymous  
Academics of a sing-song war:  
You don't have to get on that jaundice bus, and make  
It to the hallways of school,  
Where you would surely smell her smoking like the  
Adolescent perfumes of a violet cannon;  
And she would be the same name of flower  
Attracting the bees, or the bumble bees, or the evil  
Bumble bees;  
But now that you have made it out instead, you can  
Spend all of this day floating beneath the holy,  
Listening to the lions roaring as  
Knots,  
And on your back well in the shady places of a good  
Truancy's gloom,  
You can imagine almost anything about love,  
Because you are outdoors where it is so easy to escape  
What she is doing.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Evaporate

Family in the curfew of a  
Clam,  
In the boudoir of a music box of  
The sea-  
Curtains billowing fundamentally  
With the juvenile girls  
Looking down:  
They are beautiful if puckish,  
With hollow bones  
And streaks of jade: they can sit all  
Day watching the elephants  
And combing their hair,  
As the rivers proceed to evaporate  
Just like young men desperate to  
Reach them.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Even Get Started

Life may be as hungry as death, but I am certain  
It is never as fulfilled:  
As I set out, my body throbs like a coward:  
I get my haircut with politicians while the other tourists  
Jog around the lake  
While the snowflakes are falling and the electricity  
Is leaping from stake to stake;  
And the moon seems polarized: It seems as if it's making  
The feathers return to love birds,  
And for awhile everything is turned back like curtains;  
And I look up for a second,  
And maybe I am beautiful, and maybe I am thinking that this  
Doesn't even have to start;  
And she is getting back out of her car or by whatever means  
She chooses to travel away,  
And maybe she is kissing me: maybe her eyes  
For a second have reached their high water mark, and they  
Seem to be leaving an impression on me:  
Why, aren't we back into the middle of school: We're both  
Virgins:  
The apples are yet unknown to her fingers, laying like unknown  
Vocabularies in their tree;  
And then for a second she floats up again and is bended like a  
Rib under my wing:  
Put back into place I linger: I am a truant who so immaturely  
Wonders why we have to even get started.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Ever Again Hope To See

I lost her to the fireworks- I don't want to lose you  
Again too,  
Even though we have been mouthing off and making love:  
There was a milky jewel in your navel today:  
It looked like a thimble of a tide pool;  
And you were concerned because it took me so long,  
Even though we levitated the bed again today,  
And scared the mailman out of his boots- And I have already  
Told you that my words had no reasons of revenge:  
They just happened that way because; and I imagine you  
Still further out in the great and unrequited bosque too surreal  
To burn,  
Riding an undepleatable stock of red dragons and silver unicorns:  
Your brown skin a working jewel for the sun,  
And the butterflies landing on you and opening love letters,  
Gossiping of fairytales and your prince so far away,  
Who was opening his bottles of hope for you underneath  
The pregnant gravities of the moon which brought them on wings  
To your lips metamorphosing into beings like your sisters  
Who kept you company, and distracted you from  
The leaden pains which would weigh you down into lingering  
Where the shadows burn with the feral eyes  
Of boys who are too far lost to ever again hope to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Ever Come Hiking Down Again

By words I fold up my wings and tiptoe on the drinking  
Fountain of a naked flower:  
She has everything that you have, up in the basins as if you'd  
Had some idea of this particular species growing in the tuff  
Islands between the broiling streams which  
Leap just like chorus lines coming down above tree line;  
And I suppose I know that you have seen these things,  
Because I would hate to know that you have been just like a tourist  
In this nose-bleeding heaven;  
And maybe you have taken your ski-lift up the naked back of  
Telluride,  
Or tobogganed into the water parks in Ouray- but I hope that you  
Have also swung your body up into them, enjoying the healthy  
Sororities of lean and beauteous aspen who reflect your aspects  
Back to you, Sharon- as if this nature was a mirror  
Held up to you by our earth, your man- For I have seen you there,  
And though my body fell back down again, like a coral stone from  
The sea of stars, my soul is still there,  
Hanging in the titular glee of your sparkling seraphim with no desire  
To ever come hiking down again.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Ever Remember

Sleep in a tomb of rum, in sticky fingers,  
In days off.  
I can hear my mother gossiping in the bathroom,  
Her father isn't doing very good,  
But who cares.  
There should just be amusement parks and  
Girls named Sharon,  
And every day should be free, the sky as blue  
As petticoats without fear of Indians;  
And conquistadors should always be burnished silver,  
Whipping like swashbuckling flags around their  
Epileptic cross;  
And now I will force you to with an over abundance of  
Conjunctions,  
And all the money I've saved: I've saved so much  
Money,  
Sharon that I could pay for your escape, or I could become  
More beautiful.  
Outfitted as your superhero on a boat with an outboard motor,  
I could steal right up to those mountains,  
I could float on the seas of crustaceans who had died;  
I could pay for better words that might make you  
Care to remember how I once looked, and made you walk across  
Class once to sit with me and pretend how you really  
Feel now,  
That it might not hurt your feelings at all to ever remember who  
I might be,  
Or who I am.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Fairies Who Don'T Even Care

Rediscovering the tickets that cannot hold out,  
With everyday our Sunday:  
The traffic and the sun down, the palm trees  
Easy,  
And evening kneeling towards the carport of houses:  
Mothers drifted into rivers, or with their  
Last breath escaped with our baby sisters from the fates  
Of the canals:  
The alligators there too: fat off the conquistadors;  
The sugar cane burns:  
The birds of prey nest, the bromeliads bloom,  
The locusts slipping away from themselves in the jubilant  
Pools and make love to fairies:  
Make love to fairies who don't even care.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Feed Make Dos

Into the heroisms of  
Bright tenements  
I find myself dying,  
Scarred and  
Effaced again,  
While I see you in  
The effigy of his  
Mexican relationship  
Who from your  
Tawny kiln  
Has produced both of  
Your children,  
Who come out to suckle off your  
Muddy banks,  
The way fireworks gurgle  
In brown sin  
And chocolate milk;  
Until like mud pies left on the sill  
To feed make dos  
You leave his continent.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Feel A Bend

If you read me,  
Touch my flesh.  
I am a lonely goldfish in its  
Mortal bag underneath the moon,  
Which is outside  
Of society,  
Society that is a used car,  
A nuclear epoch:  
I try to kiss ladies over the flats of  
Impatiens,  
Cheap flowers that have no smell:  
You can get eighteen for eight dollars  
Where I work thirteen hour shifts  
Seven days a week:  
I have enough money saved to buy a  
House outright:  
I have enough money saved to buy a  
Wife,  
But I don't:  
I just keep moving on, like a crypt orchid  
Mythology hungry in the surf,  
Saturnine and floating with the bleached  
Orchids;  
And I don't even know the Christian names  
Of enough saints or monsters to  
Make it right;  
And all I can give you is the names of my  
Two muses,  
Like fists, like business cards,  
But they are insouciant, and hung over from  
Their beauty,  
So they don't care if I am writing to you of  
Them tonight,  
Because they are both strung out in their  
Beds of husbands and  
Heavy men,  
And their lives flow like rivers as smooth  
As pure silver  
That has never had to feel a bend....



Robert Rorabeck

# To Figure Out Its Colors

The only difference between I and these fools,  
These charlatans and plagiarists of daydreams, is that I love  
You, Alma:  
While he just wants to sell his cars and keep the chickens warm  
And hallucinating,  
While I go out on walks up mountains, while I wet my lips in  
Streams and all of them seem to be ribbons coming undone  
In the snowmelts of your hair;  
And that is why I lay alone at night while you rest alone with your  
Husband,  
And your fingers splay through the backyards and their dying  
Fruit trees where your rabbits' young have disappeared,  
Where Heidi is still innocent and loved by her parents,  
And has no excuses for me, even if I bought her coloring books and  
Pretended to be her uncle;  
And she is your beauty rippling newly upon the world:  
She is the flag and the weathervane whose lips have yet decided  
To figure out its colors.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Figure Out Who You Are

The party lasses are at their sport  
Batting eyes across the flight plans of their daily tennis  
Courts:  
And you ring up their acts on your machine Alma:  
And half of your fingers are ringed:  
And at least four with hearts from all the loves you couldn't  
Forget,  
And one of those hearts my heart- the newest one, the whitest  
One,  
But please be blessed and remember that I bought it from  
Your tia and its band is made from 14 karat gold  
From Guerrero Mexico,  
But today I bought you flowers and you would not tell me the  
Name of the town in which you were burn,  
And you would not say that you loved me:  
It must be hard for any woman, or especially you: and you think  
On so many things and all in one day:  
I can see your eyes going to the sacred places of the virgins  
I could barely begin to understand:  
But there you are in my world, blowing me kisses,  
And holding my hand:  
And when I spend my wishes, sometimes we make love:  
And I told you that my heart fills like a bet at the fair:  
Spinning, spinning through the epilepsy of gaudy lights,  
Praying that it should never have to come down  
To figure out who you are.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Fill In My Soul

My teeth are humid:  
The highway is high, licking the heels of the sun;  
And I have had you in bed,  
And then I went under her and bought your dresses from  
The flea market which you will  
Never wear,  
Alma;  
And I remember your brown skin and jet lag:  
And I am sweating out of my skull,  
While I sleep with my dog, because you are not here:  
My entire house is empty and I am on the floor  
Trying to swim,  
Because you didn't cry when I left you, Alma,  
But you wrapped your body around me and looked at the  
Dying roses I had bought for you,  
While the waves rolled up wagging their tongues at  
The doorstep I keep for you,  
Hoping that you will invite my entire family to fill in my  
Soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Find Her Play

Creams of eerie pastures- the delicacies behind open  
And nude glass,  
Like fixtures of lime trees beneath which the stranded mermaids  
Bask,  
Telling of the times when I used to devour books- when  
Foxes were young and glazed red  
And danced like tailed fire from the open lips of their  
Story's bright cave:  
Now, galloping- robbing banks, I cant even stand too sentences:  
I drink liquor to gas the tank,  
And I recite to Alma all the palpitations of my bloodied  
News:  
While her uncle makes live to her aunt back in the pueblo  
Where she finished school early  
And then went out barefooted on the open rocks and found  
The hidden spring where the rattle snaked basks:  
And bending, allowed him to kiss her forehead until she was  
Beautifully scarred: and he was the gentleman  
Returned to her neighborhood novella that showed up every  
Afternoon in her adobe living room,  
Chivalrous as a windmill drawing the sweat off wild strawberries,  
And entrancing lazy foxes, seeing as she would no longer have to  
Travel so far a field to find her play.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Find Her Way Home

Swallowing the whole penny  
As some dogs look up at the strange sun—  
And they cannot smell it,  
Even as airplanes seem to leap over it:  
This is the way that they go,  
That they follow—  
Some fourlegged fairytale in the pit of my  
Stomach  
Laughing through the pitch-fork forest  
That is the desire of her hours—  
And she languishes—  
A girl with a nose bleed above tree line  
And not enough bread crumbs to find her way home.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Find Oneself Climbing Towards

The mountains go up and up until they hug themselves  
Shivering in the cold and open throats of playboys;  
We have climbed up here to see how little that they are selling,  
To see the whole jubilation like matches teasing the fire,  
Where lost souls have been put to sleep by lightning,  
Where little girls have been blown from the tricks of keystones  
Into the gentling passes of abyss:  
Underneath here the wildflowers dance like leggy and pistilous  
Girls;  
And they love their short seasons, how they are pollinated by  
The demigods of angels- and they dream of fire trucks that they  
Hear the answer to further down in the water parks of those  
Dells  
Where something is being sold to everyone, and your legs mark the  
Splits in the concrete like track stars making it easily to lunch;  
But it is still something that I do not like to see, the simulacrum that know  
But one or two things, and this it does beautifully routine;  
And you have never been to my house, and neither have I,  
But it is up here somewhere, a worthy destination to find oneself  
Climbing towards.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Fly Again Away

Boys cuddling in the pools,  
And the moon pulls up and has nothing to prove:  
Is as round and embarrassed as a midnighted sun:  
Goes around the corners,  
Eggs on the run; and it feels alright, stealing on the lips of  
Thunderbirded wine:  
Why it feels alright straight into picking time, until finally  
All the passions are laid low,  
The snakes creep through the ditches that someone forgot  
To hoe;  
And this is the way she comes, like the lights in my heart,  
Or like some many things I have forgotten to tell her that  
She was to me:  
My final rose, and muse: my, alma, sleeping beside me  
And making love for only hours in a day:  
As if all of a sudden my life turned into a carnival, and I got  
To kiss and make my wishes upon her lips,  
Until all too suddenly she had to fly again away.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Forget Their Names

Enmeshed for Pocahontas in the Bible Belt  
Underneath the breasts of  
Colorado:  
Doing my thing by the canoes pulled like lucky  
Feathers by the harvest  
Moon,  
While the rabbits get out and make eyes  
And eat endives,  
The larger and grander boats smoking around them,  
Gossiping- and gambling afloat  
With so many working girls in their steaming  
Weathers-  
Eyes like cats hungry for the nights of wings-  
Who can let them leave the  
Ground,  
Even while their bodies are like orchestras of  
Graves:  
And they can take off over the bosques, and the colonies  
Of witches with the failed  
Knights like wind chimes in their trees:  
They can go where their father still keeps them as little  
Girls- climbing all upwards  
Catching looks from the gods which metamorphosize  
Them  
And help their brothers to forget their names.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Get Away

It is not shallow to want a sun:  
To bathe right here in one light or another,  
Stolen from this side or that  
Side of the galaxy:  
It is not unwanted to want that terribly  
Punctual dénouement:  
That I wanted to try out the same and shallow  
Estuaries that punctuate the very same  
Broadsides as these  
Startling and  
These starving poets:  
But we will start out for a little while in  
Our littlest of paper boats,  
Studying the newest cultures,  
While they shoot some fireworks into the  
Sky for my grandfather's birthday—  
And underneath our monuments of  
Anywhere we will try our say of anything—  
And we will get together to say our peace  
At the dinner table,  
While the jet planes of our birthdays cloud  
Up the sky, abandoning their presupposing presents,  
As they try to get away.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Glorious Life

Wearied by her day's long work,  
She finally draws away  
And prepares for rest.  
She looks onward as her  
Hands become still—Sunlight  
Is falling through the window,  
From which she can see her  
Children coming towards her,  
Their baskets overflowing from the crops  
She has planted for them,  
Now come to harvest.  
Though just silhouettes moving  
Amidst the falling light,  
She recognizes each of them,  
And calls them home to her.  
Though weary and unable to  
Do more, her only wish is  
To carry their burdens for them.  
She does not think pridefully  
Upon her work, now completed,  
Her life spread out before her,  
A blanket in which each thread is a  
Single moment, woven together  
The tapestry of her life she has  
Given to shelter and warmth for others.  
Before she goes to rest,  
She will use it this final night  
To keep her children warm.  
So after her sun sets,  
She warms them still,  
Her kind words and actions  
Lightening their thoughts and  
Lifting their burdens  
So that she remains always with them,  
A gentle song sung in their hearts,  
Mothering them still, sustaining their souls  
Until, with the morning,  
The meadow reawakens  
And springs to glorious life.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Go Around

Riding upon the broadening backs of  
Lushing aphrodisiacs,  
As the noonlights spread their petals over the car show,  
And the birthing mothers open their mouths and moan  
Like weathervanes predicting the holidays:  
Until the fruit of their vines disentangles the happenstance  
Of the accord of their loins:  
And then there is a new face that has to be named,  
And the lions petted and tamed behind the fences that the tourists  
Barely perceive:  
As she wakes up again, marching, the brown skin of my muse  
Collecting light and phone numbers;  
It happens this way- I can barely get close to her and faces of men  
I don't know, just casual shoppers, get obnoxious:  
But she is my muse,  
And I call to her this way- the unbeautifying butterfly  
Collected by the mute wishes of her translucency of flames; -Alma-  
And the entire world happens while I am around her, creating the  
Weathers and its calligraphies;  
And she closes her eyes and smiles, dreams of her daughter riding  
Merry Go Rounds at a fair that hasn't yet existed,  
But to her I promise her, as everything around her happens to go around.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Go Inside

Gun of fire-engines  
How will you sound while the citrus is yet plucked  
And yet round:  
How will you echo over the graveyards and pet cemeteries  
Of this town:  
Even while I go down to the parks in the semi darks after  
The gas stations have all closed,  
As the roses cloth the anonymous graves of the dead  
Working girls  
To which the stewardesses become a symbol over:  
Flying over  
As I wonder if the alligators ever yawn: yawn,  
As the kites are strung  
As the key deer fawn- speckled, as the corn and the  
Cantaloupe grow from the coolers  
Of make-believe- of almost believable snow:  
When my jaw is broken like a cenotaph,  
As the windmills yawn,  
And her brown arms collide through the perfumes of metamorphosis:  
As the tadpoles sing of fairy princesses:  
Until we all have to take a step back,  
Clutching our lucky rabbits' feet, escaping the kisses of  
Rattlesnakes- and thunderstorms,  
To go inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Grieve For The Heavens

Fit for a voyage on the tip of my tongue:  
My dryer doesn't work anymore- the heavens have lost  
Her name:  
And she goes to bed with her children draped around her,  
Forgetting the tastes of the nuptials of my vines,  
The creamy breakfasts and the horses at hot trots  
Who seem to pull the weight of the next  
Day through the mountains,  
Pushing whatever savage purple nimbus remains,  
And leaving room for a fair so great and so round  
That it leaves nothing left to speak for itself:  
And the chimneys of the devil's stone arise  
Like bottlenecks over the television heads of latchkeyed  
Children who sit there postulating fearlessly in their  
Unspoken for yet living rooms,  
And never even hope to think to grieve for the heavens  
That they have been missing.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Have A Look Around

The ponies had a ride out to Lake Tahoe  
To have a look around,  
And to kiss the sharks underneath the purring airplanes:  
There, the sky was so peaceful and evenly spread,  
Like Alma's birthday cake on my bluest bed:  
And I had dreams for her in the greenness of her favorite  
Color,  
And I roamed around sleepy eyed and looked up wet stones  
To kiss,  
And lay in Alma's lap while the animals played with toys:  
Out in the sweaty bliss,  
And men rode in off the seven seas, old heroes and ex-marines,  
And they became our family and changed,  
And slept in the clearest portions of our lake that we filled  
With out tears,  
And the pine trees spread like Alma's eyelashes reflecting  
In the banks of her eyes,  
And we fawned there forever, and forgot our goodbyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Her Abandoned Fairytales

It cannot last and yet I go down  
In the name less forever—  
In the wells underneath  
The heavens and the airplanes walking in them:  
Wanting to become a soft sport,  
Whistling underneath Christmas tree tents  
And tending to learn new vocabulary even while  
Never having to cross the actual canal  
Where my friend the Haitian lives:  
What doesn't he know about voodoo and eating faces:  
And the Christian billboards give over so  
Much light to the pagans,  
That the little phosphorescent angels swim in their  
Dime-store pageantries like the willow-wisps  
Of candy-titted angels—  
And on their high wire act they have to cross  
All of the oceans—on my birthday or on my honeymoon—  
While all of the sky is still silver  
Cutting like a kitchen knife across the recesses of  
Hot air balloons,  
As the mountains struggle upwards from her bedrooms—  
And the heavens fall down forever  
Try to kiss and to make love to her abandoned fairytales.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Her Forgotten Name

A rain of pedophiles over the soft hearts of the fort,  
Where the soldiers are now all but finally gone,  
Their fireworks the spent fireworks of a more apoplectic world;  
Only one of them remains, and he is like a windmill,  
Calling down to the orange groves as across the burnished waves:  
He is shouting from far away:  
Featureless, a barren king: his wife all the delightful pestilence  
Of a midway on parade, all those nubs of lights  
And loudmouths guns gone into the grave,  
All the fanciful illusions melted like wax into unspent wishes:  
And now he sings to her like a cut throat from his high  
And cannoned ditches,  
Over the opened beds of the conquistadors where the roses  
Grow, giving their colors over to her forgotten name.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Her Light

And I have this dream of  
Screaming my mothers name  
As a child  
In the carport- as it rains:  
The frogs laugh at me, the sky throws its  
Darts.  
Airplanes are black phantasms-  
And my mother, where is she:  
Is she stuck to the black vine with him,  
Kissing something that doesn't  
Have any feet:  
Has she flown across the canal with him  
And lost herself in the holly  
With the paper airplanes  
And forgotten school buses;  
And how do the cats cry for her  
When they wish to come milking at  
Her feet?  
Do they cry for her the way I cry for  
Her-  
And how can I go on the fieldtrip without  
Her; and the washing machine  
And the orange tree in the backyard seem  
So empty without her:  
And the moon doesn't have anything  
To still,  
And I have no one to feed me,  
Or to hold up my words to her light.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Her Love

If the earth grows dry of voice, now this:  
Autumn curling through the parks and estuaries of  
Fairy princesses who are no longer even there;  
And it is nice to be working beside the Mexicans,  
Making a pittance so as not to despoil my soul:  
Working beside Alma too, which means the same thing,  
Looking up and getting nose bleeds underneath the southbound  
Bellies of the usually unusually leaping airplanes;  
And when I drive through her predominantly Hispanic  
Neighborhood on my days off, getting so close to her house,  
I can see the bleeding of old iron works rising up like  
The false petitions of a god who by some fire abandoned  
The women of his forest;  
And now the heady frames recall a Ferris Wheel of Iron  
Pyrite, while whatever wishes I once had crawl up to her in my  
Overworked dreams and dissolve themselves this way  
In the avenues of old hats that they have to go immolating the wishes  
Of her birthday; and her sister will be coming to work at the  
Market on Sundays, even while I swear I am leaving to sell  
Pumpkins and Christmas trees, as our hemisphere tilts further  
Away from the wetbacks of the star that gave us the first  
Instruments that would eventually lead to the knowledge of our science,  
Just as my heart would lead me to her love.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Hide Their Faces And Weep

The day has a brown river with a need for  
Going down hill-  
The airplanes are making believe they are angels,  
While there is someone in Africa far away:  
Engines entwine with the hours of the day, and the  
Faces light up as the bodies  
Move in: stewardesses opening up love letters over  
My shoulders,  
Brown and tan professors humming to the ululating of  
Their accepting seas:  
If I drink anymore maybe I will die, but the mermaids  
Will still pet and coo to their otters:  
Alma cannot love me: she is finally at home cooking  
For her man from Guerrero, the one she flew in with  
From so far away;  
But at least she doesn't want to hurt me,  
And the big engines pretend that they are bullies in the sky,  
And the littlest of children get off their discordant  
Buses to run along home  
And their to hide their faces and weep.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Inherit The Earth

And then I will survive forever in nothing  
In the absentee places where the highways leave  
The Earth  
Teaming,  
Or I will enjoy the zoos, kissing before  
The lips of the albino crocodile,  
While the romances who never seem to  
Enjoy here always seem to embark from  
The Earth—  
As the weather gets colder, and you seem  
To swim further away from you daydreams,  
But it doesn't get any prettier—  
While then the flowers flow and seem to  
Die into the river—without any words  
Or any other intentions—  
They just seem to do this according  
To the buildings of nothing—and the daylight  
Eclipses the unannounced utopias  
And my unborn children seem to inherit the Earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Invite Her Heartbeat Home

I have lost myself the starship because I am  
Not marigold-  
I have failed like sunbeam tainted on the rust  
Of the trailer parks;  
Where the little girls wilt like flowers too  
Succulent on the chlorine pools;  
Like the little Madonnas enmeshed as tricks from  
The traveling fair,  
All strung out with dwarfish conquistadors and  
Their bottle collects on the inflatable rafts;  
As if they were magic rugs;  
And I have two wrists, as butterflies have their wings;  
And everything is paper thin,  
As her love and star beams:  
And what I am doing again I don't know,  
Trying to become more asymmetrical beside the highway  
Coiling in the glut;  
Underside musseling by the commuters' sea;  
And the delta of her grotto's sphere, where if you are  
A heavier element you must go;  
Where, I helped her move her furniture as if I was her  
Friend, while the other girls slept-  
Trying to pretend I am dying as I drink this beer,  
Trying to say I love you to an innocent friend-  
A word upon the lips of a coffin epitomizes the human race  
Which I despise, though for the brevity of innocence,  
I thought to call her near to invite her heartbeat home.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Kansas

There is nothing here to describe-  
All of your senses in a frenzy of windmills-  
Nothing without color, fireworks that weep for  
The dead stamens of earthquakes-  
A mousetrap of madness, my belt in your teeth,  
While we amputate your social engagements:  
The buzzards are beautiful, beating around the bush;  
And we can kiss and make up in the aloe collapsed  
Beside the carport  
With the rebar and platoons of frogs and terrapins,  
My mother like the Virgin of Guadalupe,  
Coming out fresh-titted to be zapped by the open-  
Faced extension cord,  
Like a water moccasin kissing her shoe-less foot;  
And then she is collapsing into Pieta without a child to  
Hold there,  
Juxtaposed next to you and dragonflies,  
And she wants what you've got- but when have you  
Ever cared;  
And you make love to your man as the traffic of tourists  
Comes in-  
The snowflakes are as large as elephants and just as easily  
Frightened;  
And they are closing the roads down to make a creche of  
That winter wonderland:  
You are above all of our heads, your hands as smooth  
And intelligent as beavers dams;  
And if you awakened suddenly frightened, and said enough  
Of this,  
Well then it's only a few well-placed steps to Kansas.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Keep Death Warm

Back in the echinopsis of cowboys  
Alma sticks her tongue out at me at high noon  
In a cathedral of carnivals,  
Like gum sticks to the roofs of school buses,  
And fifty percent of the crossed legs are  
Virgins:  
In the cafeterias, a play- In the art class, her hands  
On wet clay,  
Spinning around,  
Turning into something really useful:  
And on the land trucks:  
And in the sky birds. All of it wonderfully colored,  
Absurd:  
But at night graveyards, cool sacks, leftovers,  
Beautiful ashes of cooled embers,  
And nocturnal firelight:  
The ruby jewel of her eyes, even without warmth:  
A tool for suicide,  
A rich memory to keep death warm.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Keep Such Beautiful Weather

Palm trees waiting for days, whispering the way  
They can only do here,  
So close beneath the overpasses of her ever burnished  
Sea,  
And some girls love their football,  
But some girls don't love me:  
And these are just words folded up on a page, making  
No sense or decoration:  
They don't even start out in the less than amber period  
Before the dawn,  
When there is nothing on the television, but the snow  
Begins to fall;  
And it falls so much that it makes the bicycles well invisible,  
Topped over next to the shoe-polish  
City like teenage romance,  
Something that I cannot remember the taste of,  
For the water moccasins in my canals are always making  
Such an ochre ball that it is impossible for such weather  
To persist underneath their venomous eyes,  
Where one or two housewives pass home to cook dinner,  
Their heels clicking like a despotic Dorothy,  
But it is never enough  
To keep such beautiful weather.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Kiss The Sea

Parade of purple airplanes with nothing better to  
Do,  
Going up in the sky and kissing clouds who haven't  
Decided just yet what projection they are:  
And it is too far away anyways to know how long they've  
Made money while skipping school:  
They travel across all of the canals so easily, and look  
At the rural housewives inhaling as the sugar cane burns,  
Their open blouses like offering confections  
While the unglued armors of the katydids wait in the  
Pews of cypress-  
And another girl goes to sleep dreaming of becoming  
A stewardess, as cars pass beneath the overpass  
Dreaming of what it will be like to kiss the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Leave Behind

Down to the tender moments-  
Currents returning to the ocean, traffic in a city  
Winnowed into homes  
Whose lights our doused: and in the yard,  
The cats who somehow make love to the fish,  
Like kidnappers with lips of pornography,  
Or the lights over New Mexico  
After all of the Navajos are inebriated  
And hitchhiking along the devil's highway  
For a dollar-  
And the daughters have turned to salt after looking  
Back on all that they had to leave behind.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Look Her In The Eyes

Not much to her, as the dead lay around  
The Alamo—and the ghosts lit the candles of  
The phosphorous of the stars,  
And the boy who remained surviving,  
Cupped his bugle and surrendered to the  
Mexican army,  
But gave to them a bad omen even while he put up  
His instruments of lovely equipment,  
Reminding them that this one day would be  
A ceremony for tourists to build their classrooms,  
Their day spas, and their silent campuses—  
Where housewives would survive better than  
The otters—underneath the moon and how she  
Finally had to look away  
Her physical features admitting to her thievery  
That the world was once made out of a feral  
Joy the men from her high school died for,  
And stood up for—saying the pledge of their  
Allegiances to her daydreams  
Without being able to look her in the eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Look Into Your Eyes

Cars churn like washing machines in the distance,  
Fifteen minutes before new work, scars like bruises on my  
Temples like orchards being overworked in a furnace;  
And the sky going ever upward like drapes in a cathedral,  
Like plumes of a forest fire, or the truancy of angels smoking  
Underneath all those tall swings the authorities have since  
Dug up  
To make the world a safer place, just so innocent children couldn't  
Get high enough to look into your eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Look Outside

Each world an echo  
Restarted from the cacophony of the viaducts:  
In time, there are tears  
Even from the mountains  
And men resurrected who  
Only a little while ago  
Were sleeping in their cars,  
And as the world melted,  
Forgetting its different species,  
I had time enough to turn on the light  
Of my room,  
Though I remained too frightened  
To look outside.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Look Over Her World

This is not Halloween  
But this is still Shanghai even some  
weeks from burning  
Fake money to my wife's  
Dead grandfather—  
And it is past midnight  
But the airplane that will take me home  
Is still floating in the sky  
And not sleeping inside of a pumpkin  
patch  
and while I drink it continues to rain, .  
Modestly,  
And I have modest dreams  
Of where myself and my family will  
Live once or twice,  
Out of the limelight,  
Where the vanished arcades must once  
Have existed,  
In between the fairy tales of Indians  
And the race tracks underneath the mountain;  
But eventually and for the mean time,  
I will just have to close my eyes  
And here then  
Everything will have to get beautiful—  
The rugged clams will have to close over  
Her mouthful of pearls,  
And sleeping beauty will just have to go  
To sleep forever,  
While the monsters of forever continue  
To look over her world.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Lose To Remember

Vaporized until finally hushed:  
The vulpine mouths sated off of so many grapes  
And housewife breasts:  
And the roads again aquamarine, cooling softly and not  
So eager for the hours to come after school:  
Or any of this, like adolescent boys held up in bedrooms with  
Their best friends,  
The way bottle rockets have made their landings on neighbors'  
Roofs, never to fly again:  
And the alligators down the stoops of the pool underneath  
The ivory sheens of his topless sister enjoying the  
Comic books and the crenulations of  
The pool:  
Soon it will all surcease and surrender: these will be the last days  
Of high school,  
And college will come like a sun shower:  
And there will be even prettier things; but they too will disappear,  
Leaving us to find some other avenue to romanticize that  
We will first have to lose to remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make A Grotto Out Of The Carport

Moving further in the mazes of New  
Mexico, or another heaven- getting further lost  
With the Navajos,  
Down the backsides of ships of rocks:  
Words on your lips as poisonous and stuttering as  
Rattlesnakes:  
Your house, back alone in a daydream of  
Syphilitic yellows- like girls from  
China knocking up the cinderblocks above  
The freshly mewling kittens-  
All the way up to the goldfish in a rainy bowl  
Staring back at her with the same sort of eyes  
That abbreviate even the mailboxes heading into  
Dusk-  
Your mother stepping over your drunken absence,  
Seeming to make a grotto out of the carport,  
All sorts of toads serenading her, and even the  
Turtles singing with blue tongues,  
And eyes that go away to hide again.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make A Romance With My Tomb

You have put me here,  
Burned and blinded by your fire—I cannot call for  
A ride home—I only want to drink more  
Liquor and wait for you—  
Though you are married and taking up all of the  
Sunshine—  
Pieces of enlightenment through the blindness  
That surrounds you,  
And another crippled airplane touching down-  
I swore I saw you diving with the swans  
As winter returned.  
Now you make a throne beneath the ice  
That tries to make a romance with my tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make A Together

Slipping heretofore back and forth from  
The general  
And the specific, I wish to try my hand at comparing  
The greatest things to you:  
Alma;  
I want Jove and the greatest gods to steal you away,  
Even while I drive around with you on our homeopathic and  
Far fetched honeymoons,  
Leaping across the blue or green graveyards like fifteen year  
Old boys,  
As I admire you ass, and all of the profundity of the profound  
Nothingness my admiration for you surceases  
Into my art form, or lack there us:  
And I let us pretend that there grows up there strictly around  
That little hut of the albino crocodile there at the zoo  
After we had made love only one time-  
Even though that very evening and very sincerely we would make  
Love again,  
Even though my uncle would take the fruit market back from  
My parents,  
Making them move back to Arizona and my dogs:  
Just as you would have to move back to him nightly, in that overly  
Mortgaged hatched,  
Even though we've now made love approaching some two dozen  
Times, though it hardly seems enough;  
And the carriages are still wild and migratory, and cursing up  
The heavily penumbrae slopes which just seem to go up and up  
As if approaching the summit of some sincere adversary:  
But until that time, I will still hold my breath  
While we see different movies in the same movie house, our  
Whispering bodies still whispering to each other, and blowing  
Across each of our stolen bones incorrectly as if we both are together  
Waiting for the opportune time to make a together of our most important  
Wish.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make Believe

The sky cattles- up yip,  
If that is what it does: the sky looks stormy while we  
Have all gone indoors,  
And my parents are coming home, and turning around,  
And looking for baseball games:  
They are bringing me my dog, and I can barely breathe:  
The beautiful crenulations of the seas continue  
On for many days, up thrusting, and showing their  
Wares:  
Looking just as beautiful as any housewives, turning through the  
Showers up thrust around the maypole,  
Curtaining ponies- and the entire world settles around the  
Basest of elements, the basalt around the pony's  
Eyes,  
While orchards await the blue gills to storm through the tenements  
At their roots;  
Even while all of their daydreams are right here and curling up  
Around the sub tenements of the adulterous knees;  
As the puppies jump yip wanting some salt  
From her nubile games,  
Hanging out of the windows,  
Like a dowry of Siamese orchards, fruits awaiting at the end of  
Her games;  
And her belly is a coiling misuse, echoing sometimes like a baby  
Crying- and the sky echoes just what it does,  
The city proving that the cats are only here to make-believe.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# To Make Diana My Bride

Words drooling on the bone:  
What is the moon doing but pulling up the bed sheets  
Of tide,  
After salty coitus,  
Leaving all of the anemones shivering like pomegranates  
In a cold and wearisome sun;  
And I have good friends again, because  
I am slightly beautiful: I am good for getting drunk with,  
And getting girls done:  
I wear the dress code of ancient planets- My shoes  
Have no laces.  
I can be folded into cul-de-sac, or spit shine your beautiful  
Sister's braces;  
And the day is young; and the day is young, and all the  
Glaciers are just the tears of crocodiles;  
And I want to take you on miles of miles of simpering fun:  
I want to sit for strange photos with Dianita on my lap;  
And then at night, all of your ancestor's lights blown  
Out,  
Kiss and throttle her tongue, make wishes, and burp her young:  
All the tadpoles of ancient and ferocious rivers;  
Now I am the conquistador, and I am the Indian Giver,  
And I will make Diana my princess,  
And we will eat together with the cannibals, and play bumper  
Cars with the bodies of our two young mammals:  
For Diana's ride are the plumes and cabbages of one sweet  
Ride;  
And for Diana I would doom anything, polishing my skeleton  
To make Diana my bride.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make Her Mine

Looking up all holidays across the napes of  
Censual trees: you could say I've seen my mother here,  
But I disbelieve:  
The muse is elusive, brown bodied in the trackless skree,  
Brushing the borderlines that were never drawn:  
She came up lactating all of the calendars and golds from  
Mexico,  
And now this has become my sport, to echo up the shadows  
Of her unglamorous caves, all the passes that she has  
Survived from, nicking her feet too across the switchbacks  
Of alligators and rattlesnakes  
To arrive here and without fanfare in the pinprick of our  
America: she says that by the wells of her ancestry,  
It is all that they ever talk about:  
But when they get here, to my old neighborhood, they find out  
It is not so much:  
But she still kisses my mouth before or after closing time,  
And she practices to become a citizen: my Alma,  
Brownly damseled, she wishes that I would not write about her  
So much: but I am like a caged animal,  
And this is my lunch- and so I must awaken to her on time,  
And kiss and growl and caracole her lovely instruments in the  
Insatiable hopes to make her mine.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Make Him Real

Alma can never leave her family- and this is how she wakes up  
In her little room,  
Not knowing how to swim: her bellybutton filled with distemper  
And the saltwater tears of all of her unfortunate unicorns-  
And she wants a new bosom for Christmas;  
As I remember way back when, four or five months ago  
And the virgin white panties she wore the first time we made love:  
And how she fixed her self up for me,  
Like a child of brown coffees, and laughing in the caesuras of our  
Juvenile and open graves:  
And it has been fun, the promises I have broken each successful time  
We have made love,  
The feral excitements I have gathered from her throats, the hickies  
Like boy scout badges she has given my collar bones and limbs-  
And the nights I've been tried spending myself alone,  
Wanting to look her up:  
And how we have lived together across so many streets: how I bought  
Her a bicycle and had to return it, because she found out she would never  
Have the time:  
And the time we went to the beach, and I held her up in the waves and  
Kiss her mouth and laughed because she couldn't swim but fitted against  
Me like two pieces of furniture that were a set,  
With the tourists looking on: or how very early on in our love making,  
My parents lost the fruit market  
While we were at the zoo: Alma, that was only the second time we made love-  
Now look what I have done to you,  
Though your children are your life and it is still two months before  
Christmas- you are my life, and I cherish you- your soul is the symmetrical  
Trail that I follow from morning until noon:  
I would wish to commit suicide without the familiar lights of your laughing  
Cathedral, and my art is brandished by your soft and shaven fleshs;  
As you come over to my house like the spendthrift light through the stained  
Glass in a church's transom:  
Through you, I have become familiar with the Virginsita of Guadalupe,  
And I kiss and bless her, and follow you home through the many wishes  
Of my thoughts,  
Like a wooden boy distended from so many lives, hoping to burry his final  
Truth in your fibrillating architectures to make him real.



# To Make It Known

Striking out like the venom of a favorite color:  
And I get drunk again: lose my promises: try to figure out the old  
And vulgar sins of becoming for a little while  
More beautiful:  
Words without gods or presidents lying in the wishing wells of  
Their death beds:  
Like bloodied rabbits in the suburban grasses while the  
Red toothed dogs are smiling:  
Old words of luckless friends vanishing or selling Christmas trees  
While the bodies ache far across the swaybacked wishbones  
Of all of those mountains:  
Forgotten muses selling wine working on their second children  
And their mortgages:  
While the luckless three legged rabbits leap, frightened by  
The din of triangles who  
Are doing their best to make it known at supper time.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make Love To The World

Wind through the palmettos sounds like  
My mother's footsteps,  
Sounds like the trafficking of beautiful patrons  
Through my sleep;  
And today I rode a will a real felon so he could  
Buy new trailer parts for  
My father,  
And I thought of all that my venal muse had  
To say:  
How she would like to be with another man and  
His other woman,  
And the chickens kept time in the sky,  
And even the headless ones were beautiful,  
As I counted the hours of the day,  
Thinking too of beautiful women in Colorado,  
Women who could never be sold  
Nor defeated,  
Women who could take all of Africa and turn it into  
Holland for Joe;  
And I thought of the tall Blackman James, from  
Kenya, and how he keeps on making me  
Miss Kenya even if I have never been there,  
Because he is so nice;  
And I dismissed socialism,  
And I pleased myself, but was too busy to  
Think of buying a house,  
But one day soon I will have a home and my dogs  
Will come running to me from Arizona,  
And the winds will advertise like leaping tigers in the  
Sky, floating across the wings of airplanes like  
Hungry lovers,  
Like flowers who open and close throughout the day  
Unsure of how they should continue to make  
Love to the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make Love To You

The bodies are really here, terrifying through the shadows:  
And I am sweating through all of my scars  
Laying potbellied on the couch I bought last week at faith farms:  
But I have no face other than in you,  
Alma:  
You are all the proof I need, your silhouette showing up in the dreams  
That try to preach to anyone:  
And when I awaken each morning, I can see through the great bay windows  
Of my house,  
Past the cataracts of the fox-tailed palms,  
To the power lines and to the airplanes leaping away:  
Eventually they get to the spot where they have no more wounds  
And can hover together like love bugs pulling their bodies  
Apart and make amends with one another in the sky:  
In the spot where we cannot believe, and then I clean and dress,  
And hope to find you awakened and in the fruiteria, moving around with  
The brilliances of dust:  
Your body so brown beneath the leaping airplanes that have no business being  
There,  
And you standing out against the streams of traffic;  
You in the sixty degrees of my line of sight, twice that of most alligators:  
And I saw a coral snake today before she went away;  
And I just wanted to make love to you,  
Alma: I just wanted to make love to you, Alma.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make Room For Themselves

Employing myself in the graffiti of those hands,  
I toss this world, and make pearl-glue:  
I sew into the carport where the sailboats  
Lie emasculated and jealous;  
And I hold out until I can drive again to visit those  
Plush houses of red velvet,  
The girls tattooed from Spain, or from the discothèque,  
Up and like pretty juniper from their hostels,  
Trying to burn wet logs while their knees are chattering,  
Waiting for some roof to stop moving,  
Or stop whispering of the traffic that drives its  
Apathetic ribbons;  
And the mountains are just as long and uneven as an  
Impossibly solvable serpent,  
The candles entrained in a mask of cold-hearted daycare;  
And I've been singing to them of my wealth,  
To make myself feel as beautiful as their tremulous shadows,  
Like all the beasts trapped in the surf awaiting their  
Time,  
When all they wanted was something hardly empirical,  
Pushing the ghosts from the red pits of junked cars,  
Displacing the shucked bodies of yesterday's crustaceans to make  
Room for themselves tonight.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make Sure That You Will Never Die

I get drunk in the sweet graveyards of your  
Legs,  
Alma, and I mine for gold with the canaries of my lips:  
I give you besos  
While your cousins pick clean the mangroves;  
And I invite you into my house and kneel for you  
Before the Virgin of Guadalupe:  
I kiss the brown poles of your body the adventures have mishap-ed  
And disappeared up;  
And your roses have died in my foyer, and you have only been  
Bowling once,  
But I love you, and the silence your lips give me,  
And the sweat of a humid Florida:  
I feel as if I awaken in your back yard every morning,  
And I enjoy just sitting in your car, and watching your eyes  
On me:  
Are they just the transoms for a cruise ship your slender body  
Delights up:  
It seems to swim all the way up to the kitchens of heaven where  
Your Rosa is waiting,  
Because I know you can never leave her; and cross my heart  
As I sit down to my cine that you will serve me  
Tomorrow:  
That you are so beautiful, and I will work like a beast around the  
Slender humidity of your dun equators;  
And I swear by all the low flying saints and airplanes, that  
I shall do my best to make sure that you will never die.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make You Mine

Build up your stores by the dozens  
Because I have great legs;  
Helped out by my dogs I yet can carry a  
Forest so far on my back,  
My black jeans slimming:  
There are only so many candles on a cake,  
And verbs are awful things,  
The way they wish to do upon the empiricisms  
Like you wish to do upon,  
And yet you are still a real beautiful girl:  
I assure you without a doubt you are very real,  
And even if it finishes me I will take what  
I needs to build you the proof,  
But you must be ready, a hoarder of wine;  
And you must lay off kissing your husband,  
Because I will have to learn to do the bruises  
If I am going to make you mine.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Make You Wet

Grandfather will have a new poem this  
Weekend,  
But I won't be the one who gives a dime for  
His tombstone,  
And I am almost gone,  
While the intelligentsia could give a damn-  
They don't even know who I am,  
But I still go on swinging my thing:  
My sword, my gun, my pen:  
To rust on after midnight because I have seen  
Kelly naked:  
The second or third girl I loved,  
And she has five or so children, and they all  
Have guns,  
And race horses,  
And they cannot lose, because they have a beautiful  
Mother I want to go down under the crocodiles.  
The bruise:  
And all the night is flighty and all the night is good,  
And I just want to run my engine nightly under her  
Goddamned hood:  
Painted up like a Celtic woman, someone who makes  
Love to his aunt,  
While the nuclear engines are ignited,  
And the feral supplants the land of shopping malls and  
Universities of well placed granite:  
And I just want to love her,  
Or I just want to fill her up:  
I have been away from home for so long,  
Just to feel her warm tits squeezed like utters in my  
Grasp would be enough,  
With so far to go:  
If my face could look good for one night under the moon,  
Down by the trough of the milkmaid's song,  
I could have her good in the mowed  
Grass:  
It wouldn't take long:  
Kelly, the girl I named my cat after, my most  
Feral and antisocial pet,

I want to get to know you  
And to make you wet.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make-Believe

The sky cattles- up yip,  
If that is what it does: the sky looks stormy while we  
Have all gone indoors,  
And my parents are coming home, and turning around,  
And looking for baseball games:  
They are bringing me my dog, and I can barely breathe:  
The beautiful crenulations of the seas continue  
On for many days, up thrusting, and showing their  
Wares:  
Looking just as beautiful as any housewives, turning through the  
Showers up thrust around the maypole,  
Curtaining ponies- and the entire world settles around the  
Basest of elements, the basalt around the pony's  
Eyes,  
While orchards await the blue gills to storm through the tenements  
At their roots;  
Even while all of their daydreams are right here and curling up  
Around the sub tenements of the adulterous knees;  
As the puppies jump yip wanting some salt  
From her nubile games,  
Hanging out of the windows,  
Like a dowry of Siamese orchards, fruits awaiting at the end of  
Her games;  
And her belly is a coiling misuse, echoing sometimes like a baby  
Crying- and the sky echoes just what it does,  
The city proving that the cats are only here to make-believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Make-Believe Where The Trees Never

Dancing lights in the summer,  
While I am just trying to live like a dog,  
But your picture books are golden:  
They live so long,  
Slung over the shoulders of the canal,  
Pretending to grow up and to be beautiful,  
And you truly are  
A goddess  
All strung out and carrying your backpack-  
And I will have to see you tomorrow,  
And pretend to be you teacher,  
But now, all strung out,  
Maybe I love you even more than  
My muse,  
As the zoos slumber- don't you know that  
They do,  
And it all becomes a quieted epitaphs:  
Yes, and they don't even have to sing to  
Themselves,  
But it quiets for awhile so you can almost  
Here the angels whispering underneath the traffic  
As we take her for awhile  
In the echoing river walks of traffic,  
While the dragonflies stand jewel-chested  
Beautiful in a make-believe where the trees never  
Have to change.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Me Anyway

All the story does it as if it was told,  
And there is nothing new about it, and I am hung over:  
Maybe I am even well hung; maybe I am even black  
And well hung,  
Given to the proportion of my phone calls,  
And how you haven't answered me, just as I haven't  
Answered you,  
Just as this isn't football, Kelly: just as this is even a new  
Game,  
And you haven't as yet really been playing; and I am  
As of yet cold and all a foot,  
And this really isn't a mystery, because I am still all strung out  
On rum,  
So I haven't as yet considered all of the things you haven't  
Yet been saying to me:  
And yet, I know you will as yet will:  
Say to me nothing, Kelly, because you are just a lucky  
Catch, Kelly: what are you really, underneath the rain and all of  
The hedgerows:  
What is this satire you haven't yet been complaining about;  
And maybe I am fully done, maybe I am so beautiful in angora  
As to be what the other ladies have already been talking about:  
Now while my mother's typewriter flumes,  
I am like my very own Yosemite: I am coming home, and even  
Though I am not quite beautiful enough for you, Sharon,  
The path are as easy as they are known:  
And I am still young and struggling; and I still love you,  
And this is the ocean of your early morning, so that by tomorrow  
You might not even recognize me, because you are always so beautiful.  
Maybe even by tomorrow Hollywood will have spilled away just  
How beautiful you are to me anyway.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Me With Kisses

It flips over in good pools all over the world:  
Her sisters write to me, thanking me for the strawberries I  
Bought for Alma on Valentines  
That she shared with them, one for each of her beautiful  
Sisters-  
And she calls me herself, my muse- and thanks me,  
But doesn't call me all of Sunday:  
Her husband has taken her phone away and may be kidnapping  
Her back into Mexico:  
I read fantastical short fiction all the time while I wait for her:  
I loose myself in the sunlight of my little yard,  
As katydids disregard their seasonal armors on the armpits  
And the thrombosis of the Kumquat tree:  
Holding my breath- counting the zeros poorly armored in the  
Sky,  
And the ants killed namelessly by little boys- for Monday,  
When she might lose herself from her family again,  
Coalesce my little brown muse inside my little house,  
And make love on more time,  
Like a joyful train stealing around a Christmas tree- returning  
To me with kisses and haunting me wonderfully-  
Even if she can never love me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Metamorphose

Now they have facts to imbibe their sounds:  
And it feels very real, as the sea caresses the forts even while  
There are no more tourists around:  
And they have gone away from the orchards, to swap out  
Apples for Disney World:  
And they have been breathing anyways all of their candles  
Underneath the roller coasters and across all of the  
Canals that I used to bask in underneath the pine trees and beside  
All of the blue gills,  
Sending all of my kisses and all my cursing to the girls who  
I guess once lived there,  
Gilled and hiding out and eating pinecones: the gold around  
Their wrists fluttering there and holding out  
For their families to swim in on their canoes:  
And for the princesses to become so white and milky, their blue  
Eyes standing out like tears, cursing me for turning away  
And finding my muse from Mexico: my soul, my Alma:  
Even though on Sunday she never calls,  
And I have to go and find all of my movies alone: though I never  
Stop thinking about her, or cutting my wishes for her deeper  
Into my wrists- my symmetry drinking its liquors and blessing in its  
House, and holding its breathe like a carnival of fish for  
My love to metamorphose into spouse.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Metamorphosis

Then they have another song for you—  
As their fingers are dying—  
Spiders exhumed alongside the traffic:  
As the same sun flickers  
Torrentially—then you know it is him  
And he will never awaken into you:  
This song is your pilgrimage I write from  
My gut, like tadpoles wishing  
To metamorphosis into you, knocking:  
Don't you know they are here:  
All of your princes, waiting for you to  
Let them into their truest form with'  
Kisses,  
As it rains over your shoulders when you  
Take a fieldtrip to the museum—  
Until another day is over,  
And you return to the deformity you take  
Every night in bed with him.

Robert Rorabeck



# To My Comely Love

She has whims, and they change  
While I drink sake:  
She wears all of my white gold I bought from her  
Aunt,  
Who ran down to Miami, where everything comes  
From Cuba,  
Or well- Oh well, Mexico:  
And the night fights itself; and it curls around and sleeps  
With mailboxes,  
While the housewives are all fetched, and the baseball  
Games are pleasured-  
She changes the rings on her fingers anyway: my alma,  
But beautiful brown soul: she is twenty four years old  
But no older than five,  
And the jeans she wears are just as tight as how she wants  
Me to pull her hair:  
But she doesn't want me to plant the magic beans in her:  
Not now anyways:  
But we are always getting married tomorrow, tomorrow:  
And I plant dreams in her,  
That curl around her five years of brown mind like a  
Voyage she is just learning the tongue to speak  
To provide recompense  
For the things that I can never give to her, that she is still  
Waiting around to receive:  
Since everything comes to my comely love in time.

Robert Rorabeck

# To My Dogs

Lancelot turned out the lights  
So I could tell S- I loved her,  
And she didn't even care that she cut her  
Finger  
At the joint between here and there.  
She got so rich she bought the sky,  
And finally found no reason to last forever.  
We were all doing very good then-  
We were saving animals,  
And the rivers were so frozen I could hold  
Her hands and gallop-  
And the trees, how impossible to describe,  
And yet they seemed like her, S-  
They held her gaze while we walked in their  
Wild birth,  
And cracked and exploded with heartbreak,  
Like hoary fireworks,  
While the other knights piled up without end-  
And I went back home,  
Empty handed, heartbroken, but to my dogs-  
I thought of S-

Robert Rorabeck

# To My Fingerprints

Hesitating beneath the slash-pines  
Where the paper airplanes in their changing rooms  
Fall—  
Starting a kind of kindergartener's fire—  
The hobos laugh and fart  
And sling back more wine:  
And the children of the blue color workers diadem the  
Communal pool:  
I suppose you haven't seen us here while I was  
Writing to you,  
Chivalrous and diademed in witch craft:  
When becoming venal, trying to telephone you to  
Come down from your sorority's  
Hall: anyways,  
Naked sunlight falls upon the naked back of a rattlesnake,  
Professors ride their bicycles home:  
Adversaries cross the roller-skating rink,  
Turning it into a pugilistic ballroom,  
And the knights in the séances dance with death:  
Dance with death,  
While the marionettes slip into their lovers jaded  
Bedrooms, and according to my fingerprints—  
Have it all-

Robert Rorabeck

# To My Old Neighborhood

Divine providence returned me to my old neighborhood  
Just on the other end of Southern Boulevard  
Not to win the lottery but to fall in love  
With a girl from Guerrero Mexico: who the same old  
And lucky dog had taken her so far this way  
Herself,  
Until we were like two butterflies perched in the same petal  
Enjoying the same romance of our games of  
Love, neither wishing to return to the homes that once knew  
Us  
And the loved ones who had forgotten us to the steps  
Of graveyards;  
But only for the soft bliss in our tomorrows, holding hands  
And driving together, sometimes east, toward the sea:  
Which is always the best way: but you can only go so far  
Before you are returned by the memories who refuse to  
Forget the furtive clothing, that like fire we were  
Trying to disrobe.

Robert Rorabeck

# To My Sorrows

They keep their moonlight burning to my sorrows—  
So very soon I will have to digress into the crypts of the banshees:  
The dead girls brushing their hair—  
And maybe they will not be able to survive tomorrow—  
Maybe they will keep themselves like butterflies who have their wings  
Folded over until the next sun shower—  
And then they will suddenly be overcast in their virginity—  
And then they will be birthing new children on the east side of  
Mexico and in their dawn—  
While she doesn't read, breathing into the healthy numbers of  
The goldfish that only know one avenue of a canal to  
Survive—  
Blimps, showing off their catastrophes and how they suddenly  
Came to know the edge of the world—there they are standing at  
The very precipices—like two daughters who cannot keep  
Track of themselves—  
Don't you see how beautiful I am now—or are you still asking what  
Happened—as the school spills into the sky,  
And I continue writing books that are impossible for me to  
Understand.

Robert Rorabeck

## To No Avail

Statures of Christmas trees always being sold  
Into twilight to a zoetrope of high heeled housewives  
As the foxes fish quite constantly from the side steps  
Of the canal where the green and copper  
And jade coffins lie like a Ferris wheel of unspeaking  
Folklores- where the animals are lazy shoppers,  
Picking flowers and leaving their trails:  
And the sky and its hobos does what it always seems  
To do, while the children- the children get out of  
School, going home to homes abandoned looking for  
Other things to sell- as I look into your eyes-  
Into your brown, brown eyes, oh muse, but to no avail.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Other Boys

Pour these imperfections to my throat:  
Drown and swell the song birds that she pretended to give  
To my eyes:  
There is nothing more imperfect than my art:  
Nothing more perfect than my pain: my pain like all of the  
Gathered memories souped up from forgotten ancestors  
And made to swim around  
A branded aquarium: and given the color of slaves:  
It feels this way, coming back and forth-  
Retinues that spill across the climbs, getting nose bleeds further  
Up, transferring over the flowers that have died for her  
And have been put away:  
Here is just another hour of my disease, sluiced and lost  
In the wasted affliction of my disease: as I dream of houses that  
She can never believe: my, Alma, acquitted of all of her states of  
Mexico; she came this way like a butterfly reborn  
And spread her shoulders into a new world that called  
Itself America and promised her everything because she was  
The toy motor in its soul; but all she did was laugh and laugh  
As she did summersaults in its cage and kissed and made love  
To other boys until it could do nothing else  
But look away.

Robert Rorabeck

## To Other Women

I can follow you on our bicycles for quite some while:  
We can move across the intercostals and further away from your  
Husbands,  
And I will still be afraid of losing you; it seems that your body  
Can never tire, carried by the transoms of your blue eyes  
Like engines in the sun; and I could lay you down in my house  
And you could never move, but I know the moment my eyes  
Were distracted from the lagoons of your flesh which seemed to  
Be perfectly tamed, you would disappear like beautiful water lapped  
By the daylight, like all of these neighborhoods which used  
To be so full and pullulating- They have to be going somewhere,  
And maybe that is where you return, your dresses molting  
Like cicadas or drunken prom queens across the front yards  
While the palm trees swayed and the cars slept with all of their quieted  
Windows closed and darkened  
While other men made love to other women deep, deep through the houses  
That I am afraid I would surely lose you in.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Our Dead Relatives

Poem a version

Of what was mentioned to happen  
In art class if I were divided  
And had the chance to hold hands with the girl  
I love  
To kiss her while a butterfly's wings divided  
Over Mexico  
And strut out and got horny into middle of  
An august festival and a looked around  
At all the open things they saw  
Like windows on vines to which the foxes  
Smiled  
And danced, preening: and later on there  
Was certainly roller coasters and water falls  
To which I took all of my students to  
And we made a day of it, holding hands  
And flipping head over heels  
Drinking libations to our dead relatives, and  
Try to forget about all of our days at school so far

Robert Rorabeck

## To Pay For One More Hour

They'll put their pledges into your eyes—  
Yes they will, and then you'll drive out of the parking lot  
Of the mall,  
Or your own driveway—just like the pieta half hidden  
In the estranged corsages on the side of your house—  
And then won't it be flat out painful—  
And won't you guess, or can't you imagine:  
Tomorrow, another day at school,  
Or another borrowed dollar to pay for one more hour—  
And the ship is wrecked, its beautiful negligee torn—  
And the wolves stand alone  
All but kissing your name.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Pen Names Of Other Mirages

Flowers given to pen names and other  
Mirages—  
The savage boys who wear headdresses of  
The most religious feathers,  
And the rainstorms chant  
Over the pin wheeling houses—  
In the middle of the week,  
While the schools are alive  
The flea markets don't even exist—  
Soft brown mothers well hidden in  
The kitchens of your apiaries,  
These are for you, I have found outside  
While I just so happened to be  
Skipping stories—  
Crippled though beautiful presents you  
Would never find without me,  
That you don't even see now  
As I am holding them out to you,  
And standing in your house—  
Soon the star will rise above those rafters,  
And you husband will come back home,  
Having climbed down from  
His latter—and aren't you too busy,  
Even now—you have to call your children  
Back inside and do your laundry—  
You have to turn your back towards me,  
And continue in these avenues of your  
Usual gardens without me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Pitiful Cinders

You're so mean-  
I guess because your beauty is so ancient  
An aphrodisiac,  
You get to select your men by slaughtering them  
First,  
Decorating your forest's sorority with their  
Pitiful guts  
Along the extended pine needles which are always quivering,  
Alive and thorned,  
They never lay off the green:  
And it is your church, and it does you good on Sundays,  
And the work days in between,  
And I can feel you now spilling my guts to feed the angelic  
Pigs,  
The cloven hooped saints made practical by remote  
Viewing,  
And I get a little drunk as I fly like a torn but patriotic  
Color over so many states to find you,  
And to lay like a forgotten ornament on the side of your  
Table:  
I can almost feel you beginning to pick me up to study me,  
But I am not beautiful,  
And there you go taking me down again,  
Making me worship you even after the fire has burned  
To pitiful cinders.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Pleasure Her

I traffic in star-crossed lovers:  
I cut them up and snort them and then look up  
And try to match the stare of other  
Planets,  
Who go about according to the motions of the  
Very same sea that we have right here  
In our backyards,  
The sea of trailer parks comes to me,  
Effortless, where truants are smoking green stuff  
Underneath the recesses of her viaduct,  
Never accounting for their songs,  
And the bicycles lay in sleeping harems,  
Stolen and made to run into her  
Dresses which mote and dudgeon their bells,  
And make their tassels somnambulate;  
It makes them as lazy as liquor,  
Like starfish who never crawl- and she never loved  
Me,  
But only moaned when I pulled the plug;  
And when I walked away, she moaned again and finally  
Did come,  
For another boy who I thought I was, the perfect shadow  
I left behind to pleasure her.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Procure The Golden Rule

Aplomb in the folds of this theatre that was  
From a high school I imagine just because:  
Lost in the early day gloom in the student parking  
Lot sleeping through math or baseball games all afternoon:  
Like a spell tossed down to the canal into the rosy  
Glove of some crocodile, while the housewives  
Were bathing in the sunshine for awhile- like bottle rockets  
They was, into a mortgaged cathedral, filling their  
Doom: they made love to no one in every room all  
Afternoon, while the daylight molested their wine glasses  
They bought for themselves, and the jasmine bloomed  
Healthily, perfuming the nighttime when the foxes  
Stole their hands out of their silky gloves and took them walking  
Across the vermilion carpets of mowed grass  
And down to the pastures of the canals which proved  
To be their mortality's overpass: the cenotaphs of conquistadors  
Sleeping there in undersea ballrooms, the alligators waiting  
There, tearless, but happy for the venison raised  
Without a thought from their dayrooms- as their young  
Children skipped off again into any school,  
And they once again set out to procure the golden rule.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Profit From Your Return

Imperfect whispers beneath my eyes,  
Words like the tongues of monsters kissing between  
The thighs,  
Wanting to swap meet with you, handy and cruel,  
In lies since kindergarten; but the sky in autumn gave  
You better romance:  
Children and new cars and church:  
You propositioned your boss in a lurch, but you  
Married the cousin of far away.  
When I was functional, and had a girlfriend,  
We named our cat after you- She didn't even know.  
Eventually she married and ran away and got together  
With her lost tribes and made out in law school-  
Thus on and on, like the lyrics of a merry-go-round,  
And the cat was eaten by coyotes,  
I bedded all the waves that I could, but I was never good  
At science except what came before all of this history,  
The path of words that might have led me through the hills  
Of Christmas trees where the dragon was sleeping with  
All my friends, in the lost civilizations of junkyards;  
It could have been an empirical victory, but I couldn't understand  
How to carry you around with me, a miracle that was always  
Changing- You were like so many other girls when thrown  
Up into the sky, what you turn into has wings  
And definite migratory patterns, and you leave me in the bright  
Lights which you know aren't real,  
Spinning, spinning, with no hope to profit from your return.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Promise To Smile

The great waterfalls flow and take their clothes off  
For men:  
The cars stop and gawk, and the tourists grin:  
And when I sleep and without motion I move,  
You are there holding my hand above the feral boys:  
You are there every time,  
Fearless in the darkness while in the daylight there is fear:  
You are the caress of an undiscovered species:  
While the throats of the simulacrum enjoy their cheap liquors  
One or two times,  
I think in my cells I can always enjoy you, while the rainbows  
Start and stop in mirages across the carports in the sky,  
You are a mailbox that can never be touched,  
Gleaming with her throat open and blushing like a naked  
Song bird:  
You are here, Alma, and you made it so far without moving  
A muscle:  
All you had to do was to promise to smile.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Prove To You

I walk to your house some nights, Alma, and sleep  
Across it,  
Because that is my migration, even if it makes you angry and  
Less likely to talk to me;  
You still come to me in the few hours that you can and become  
A tiny brown marionette whose strings are like  
The spit of caterpillars I succeed from:  
And do those things for you that you always had planned:  
Instead of watching televisions with your family,  
I go outside and still the lactating flowers from the landscaping of  
Creamy white housewives:  
And then I gallop along the shadows of waves so gallantly and so  
Cruel,  
To cut myself through the broken promises of your front yard;  
And lie there famishing and exasperated like something cruelly punished,  
Just to bring to you all that I have thought of you:  
And to prove to you all that you truly are.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Race Against The Abuse

In blue napalm wakes up singing to the pueblos  
Until the wreckless butterflies are nearer,  
And I have no more songs outside of the shopping  
Malls of Walmart:  
Even after I have stolen so many baseball caps,  
And I am here just because I will every soon  
Be married and then this will be Disney World  
While you have been looking at me from the poolside  
With your blue eyes just because:  
And then this will become your satiated cannibalism:  
This will be all that there is inside of hurricanes  
Just because the stacks are stacked against  
The Mexicans, while I have loved you from the giant  
Halls and labyrinths of Mexico:  
Alma, I have loved you so far: I am here: here,  
Standing in for the Minotaur, wanting to be  
As beautiful as to be in a soap opera- a telenovela  
For you Alma, while your children fixate together  
Upon you breasts just because like hummingbirds  
I am here- I am here for you, Alma and my  
Parents are superheroes while the lightning falls-  
In the incest's of waterfalls for you, Alma- Yes,  
Here it is, and yes it falls- Alma, coloring against  
The walls- like the pornographies of your daughter,  
As I was just here laughing with the thirty thousand  
Years of stolen history, trying to get it up with  
The waterfalls and the wildflowers while my ancestors  
Go to sleep against your racetracks- while it all  
Lines up speaking up against your old boyfriends-  
Powerful if obtuse- and they are here Alma- revving  
Their engines and getting ready, ready,  
Ready- To race- race again the abuse.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Rain Like This

It still happens to rain like this,  
Into the avenues that forecasted ablutions—  
Even while the pale, blue pilgrims were  
Yet echoing to the swing-sets of the wishing wells—  
Wishing and cursing that they should live forever—  
While my gut bended outwards,  
Even after the Catholic and Columbian girls of  
My midday playgrounds seemed to disappear—  
That I was still beckoning,  
As I seemed to do forever—poltergeist or  
Pomegranate, still sitting here whilst  
My wife brushed her teeth:  
There is no bigger narrative than that—  
And all of the disenfranchised girls in the world  
Can still dance in the ballrooms of the citrus;  
And I can play amongst them  
Cradled with my firstborn child—  
And so I'll love you until the echoes of the pussywillows,  
Or I won't even start out—weeping,  
Weeping—the day and the sunlight bleeding their  
Forever obtrusions of echoes.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Remember Any Of Our Names

I still think of you like a Chinese  
Dinner is South Florida. It is so difficult to learn  
Your tongue even though your parents  
Are so worried about you,  
And I am coming home to my world,  
Leaving you pregnant and waiting for an interview  
That will bring you to me in a few weeks to  
A month:  
You thought my father's eyes were green:  
And you said so repeatedly—Maybe he was the  
Better man for you, if only he wasn't so perpetually married  
To my mother:  
And we visited temples together—and made love,  
Burring our heads in the old beliefs of junked cars—  
And I kept getting drunkardly—on and off during  
The weekends,  
And even while I am preparing to leave,  
Shanghai is expecting a typhoon—maybe she will come  
And drown out all of my other wishes,  
But otherwise I am going home and wont you have  
To follow me eventually—  
Down into those cyanide viaducts where it just so  
Happens we used to skip school,  
And spend all of our otherwise wishes daydreaming,  
And drooling in streams which otherwise ran to swing sets  
And silver foxes that continued breathing long after high school  
Without ever having to remember any of our names.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Respond To Me

There is a lesson in my body  
As it catches blue gills- then it lounges and thinks of  
Evil,  
While the rattlesnake digests the heavy rabbit:  
Pregnant and filled with magic tricks:  
And even during school,  
I can go out in the infinite sun and touch myself and  
Watch the way that the housewives run:  
Back home to supper, to spill their goods, leaving trails  
Behind them of betrayed damsels,  
Of little girls yet lost in the woods:  
And these words form like hernia- like the soft bellies  
Of fears who come to a boil in the outside world,  
While the spokes turn in place:  
The static motion that defines the race:  
Like windmills sipping the hijinx of the sea too:  
And that is where we go when we stumble upon water fountains  
And our guts spill like the inclinations of roe;  
And they seem to be finding their own way through the sea:  
And she is there doing breast strokes underneath a fountain that spigots  
Its guts to a summer murdered glade who refuses  
To respond to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Return Home For Her

Empty as the way to  
The trailer with the horses,  
Or the field with  
The horses- abbreviating- starting out  
Like this,  
As from one's familiar town,  
Getting far enough to get  
Through Indians  
And then through a few bushwhackers-  
But eventually distracted:  
Maybe, they think,  
They will never make love to her again:  
Her gold necklace lost  
In the knife lips of the palmettos grown  
Over the conquistadors  
Who laid down there finally in the middle of  
The sixteen hundreds:  
That was as far as their journey went:  
No Disney World,  
Not even Pocahontas- and it rattles out,  
While some young lover,  
Maybe even my muse, waits at the third  
Cinder block  
Up to the little house on Haverhill, the  
Night trilling,  
Expectant, and the more insouciant things  
Losing themselves on the naked  
Trunks of cypress-  
The carport as silent as an empty church-  
For her husband- or for anyone  
To return home for her.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Return On Time

Succession of crepuscule into night on my littlest of  
Streets.  
My vocabulary becomes dimmer, while the mailboxes  
Shrink outside,  
And the airplanes keep on rushing to the sea  
In to which have sunken so many ships embarking from the  
Names of her memory- and it gets quieter  
And then even the stars have their darkness- there becomes  
A greater folklore in that place without the eyes  
For fires- for any and all sorts of creatures can live  
In there- a museum without walls into which the blind  
Men thrive,  
Suckling the nubile women in their gossamers of shows,  
Like foxes pulling down the vines:  
The trees kneeling at the field's summit, the trucks passing  
Cautiously-  
And someone overseeing whose senses are kind,  
Promising us that we shall arrive unhurried, the produce of  
Our labor slung over our shoulders like lap sacks of  
Pregnancies- and our young wives waiting for us  
In the parks of softly lit trailers- making offerings to a comfortable  
Nature for their husbands to return on time.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Return The Favor

Her carpet matches the sea  
Of blue matches,  
Of tennis courts- a jealous epiphany  
Topless in the front yard,  
Her legs akimbo in roller skates,  
Sweet wheels like marbles still taking out,  
Revolving with the tiny energy stripped  
From her sway:  
I see her out before the fireworks are expenditures  
To quick to parlay,  
But she diminishes everything, as glittery  
Sweat pearls from her bric-a-brac:  
I loved her, but god knows,  
Strung out in her wimpled rows,  
She had no reason to love me back;  
But she just closed her eyes which made the sky jealous  
So he rained down on her all of his bright engine  
Light,  
But she had him so parched that he couldn't weather  
A storm;  
And he loved her, but god knows she had no good reason  
To return the favor.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Return To Us

Sad ribbon left on the vanity,  
Who place it taken by the preferred barrette:  
Come and stay with me,  
Even though I too prefer the barrette more:  
Walk in my hand as I go to  
See the alligators in my loneliness,  
Far beneath the love of airplanes  
Who are leaping away forevermore: when will  
They ever let off leaping  
Into the banquet of clouds: girls dressed up  
For their pilots: they prefer barrettes,  
But they have forgotten the smells of jasmine,  
Or the slender teeth of foxes smiling  
As they leap for the grapes of their windows,  
Which leaves me right here with you:  
A pinwheel in my other hand for example,  
Turning, bemused- a little science experiment of  
How my heart leaps like a hummingbird,  
Turning summersaults and kissing all of my  
Fingerprints all at once-  
And I will take you through the natural disorder  
Outside of your abandoned bedroom,  
And tell you things I what I always meant to  
Be for her, even if she never means to return to us.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Run Barefooted Back Again

If my body is here now; it will soon be a  
Cenotaph, it will soon be a firework spent:  
And even while I still have my bicycle, even it will not be  
Able to move after I am gone-  
Then perhaps I am doing this right now, like a soldier  
Being ruined in a war:  
Like a wildflower humbled into the winter of its short life,  
Even after its stamens have had at pollinated into so many  
Perfumes by the orchestrations of the  
Nose bleeding bumblebees:  
And there are some mountains I cannot climb;  
As Alma is sleeping again in her house right now, sleeping  
Next to her man who builds swimming pools for  
Housewives right now: what he does for them is that he  
Puts in the blue;  
At least that is all that Alma could explain to me.  
As I took her back home from the orchards and the monasteries:  
And we made love until we both found our summits,  
But she was bound for home again,  
To pick up her mother Rosa from work, to buy a bouquet for  
Her mother who died back in Mexico so many years from now;  
But I still found her, opening like a basin into a wishing well,  
And even the very same way that the water fountains have  
Fed their lips to hummingbirds  
And cheerleaders, as the sky offered me her belly button to touch;  
And even if I didn't nor ever will I win the lottery:  
Nor will I know the destinations of most rain storms, or the  
Trailer parks in the northwest: I lied and pollinated with my  
Ever faithful muse today: our bodies sang together today like  
Angels, like rattlesnakes until she had to run barefooted back  
Again away,  
And that will forever be enough.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Save Me

Thank god I live in a trailer park underneath  
The sun where all of the lamplight has  
Been burning,  
And you've been counting your numbers  
Outside of the orchards where  
Your old lover makes love:  
As the waves whisper to the forts,  
And it all becomes contrived-  
When all of life fails anyway- and culture fails,  
And art,  
And all of its homonyms- then you don't  
Have to speculate anyways,  
Because all of the gold is gone, and all of  
The summits have crumbled-  
And the fruits have dried at her sleeping lips:  
And she isn't even in love-  
She has made a flea market out of her heart,  
And it is only the hearts of her rabbits that continue  
Beating- and it feels strange to still be here,  
But we are here- underneath the overpass with  
The homeless men- and I wish there was someone  
Here to save me or, at least, to buy a dollar from me,  
Anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Say Her Amen's

I will not answer again:  
My words will fall against the easel- they will  
Fall broken hearted through the clouds  
And their friends are hoed from the amusements  
Of personified rainstorms:  
And it will be as if something beautiful came out  
Of the student parking lot between classes,  
And cursed  
And showed its speckled wings before lunch  
Before returning in again:  
And it was true, before my car was keyed:  
That this was my heart,  
And I hungered toward you almost as extinct as  
A panther even while the Indians were  
Shooting their arrows and showing their  
Rib cages:  
That I tried this way, escaping into the spotlights,  
Despoiling myself for the science experiments:  
That I became untrue and un unified:  
As your sisters sat out upon the bleachers and cried  
For me,  
And ate their sugary nudity- and grew forked  
Tongues and in their beauty knew of the tide's surceases,  
But even in their pagan apertures could not save me-  
As I was a happenstance for you, growing wings  
Neither large enough to fly or escape from harm:  
I sat at the end of the fire escape and did mathematics  
Habitually, and waited out the hours  
And sucked my thumb underneath the armpits of firemen  
Who scrambled like red ants up the Ferris Wheels  
Just to get a chance to bid for you before you moved  
Away again- the way a fire moves through  
A forest,  
Or the way a lonely housewife lies down to say her amen's.

Robert Rorabeck

# To See Her In The Sky Again

Weakness drowning in the camouflage of a tiger,  
I do not know how I will wake up again,  
With the traffic going over the overpasses, and the  
Waves seeping up the sands- it does not feel  
As if I have to wake up again, but in the morning  
Airplanes will fly like silver knights into the sky:  
And like them, I will will myself to want to  
Wake up again, to see her sky, to see her in the sky  
Again.

Robert Rorabeck

## To See Her Make Any Wishes

They made love over brown railroad tracks;  
And in the web of her left hand,  
Just as brown- as if she'd just come from playing  
Baseball,  
His first initial for the rest of her life:  
Though she slept with me off and on for a year,  
Today it is all over- we told each other  
As much.  
I imagine the birthday cake I sent her has arrived,  
But with a different meaning-  
The last gift was the same as the first, but I was  
Not there to see her make any wishes-  
Things she didn't have to believe in anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# To See What They Can Get

Rhythms in the creek of gist, foaming airplanes,  
Open wrists: the body takes its times going from the leaking  
Flea markets,  
Sashaying to the navy- heliotrope is the desert of its  
Forest, where the wolves hunt  
Outside the damp patios and Astroturf that zoetrope  
Cantinas;  
And if you were lying low: as if you were lying right here:  
Down enough to be the eking devil of my abode,  
Why then I'd swear we could go together into that kind of  
Necrotic Disney World:  
We could go all the way down, with the moans of cenotaphed  
Seashells in our ears:  
With the same type of feral rapture that her tiny brown wings of  
Lips gave to the lieutenants of my senses a couple weeks a  
Go;  
And now holidays and fieldtrips- like bagworms crawling up  
Walls trying to make it to the pawn shop  
To see what they can get for their golden fears.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Set You Free

Days building up their games in quiet rooms  
On the tired green carpet where I've had at myself,  
Almost leaving trails like slime,  
My overbite the little indentation of the beak of  
A terrapin,  
I move like an obese winner in a trance;  
And the pine trees peer inside, paper snowflakes  
Stuffed like trucks of pillows into their armpits,  
Time capsules in their roots soldiered by ants,  
All the spent bottle rockets hanging around the yard  
Like gaunt young cenotaphs;  
And the world knows what I mean;  
It just absolutely fizzes with lights,  
Even with their own pin-shell identities that cannot  
Be identified by the queens tongue;  
They are like the fibrillations of oral sex the swans wings  
Give to the yard,  
Carelessly and most pleasurable like crisp fruit  
Moments before enjoyment;  
Then it is there in your hand, firmness and color and ecstasy;  
The very first senses of it already inhaled like unicorns  
Or seahorses;  
Something a mean stepmother would insist couldn't be real,  
But there it is almost ready to set you free.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Settle My Body And Cry At Your Coquina Doorstep

Like a leaf winnowing for the sun,  
I come out and sing for your world:  
I run my fingers down the rivers of your brown flesh  
While the day plays like a girl in a seemingly everlasting  
School yard:  
The nights are bricked in red, and you lie down in another  
Bed  
In a house I have walked to and slept beside:  
You told me I needed a new car but I would rather move inside  
Of you, Alma:  
In that unreal material in the opalescent grottos entered  
Through the very fine transoms of your gaze,  
Because that is where the precious beasts slumber when they  
Do not graze:  
That is a cathedral without any room, more important than  
A white house,  
More successful than a pontiff, and I mean to lie in there  
And cure my wounds,  
Or I mean to settle my body and cry at your coquina doorstep  
Until all I have left is bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Shed A Tear

Gold leaf passing over an eel in the shallowest  
Estuaries of a washboard sea:  
Looking up and studying the moon: its eyes mother of  
Pearl,  
As round and thoughtless as feral boys:  
Swimming to and fro to the bleeding lap:  
A sea so full of thoughts of salt that the animals in it  
Never need to shed a tear.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Steal Your Hand

Vagabonds of hyphenated schoolmarms  
I want to fall for you and unsettle your books,  
And pin your plastic barrettes askew:  
I hate the fact that you think you are married,  
Because you are so brash,  
I just want to wet your mouth underneath the  
Infinite feet of the old overpass;  
Because the waves are feral and they are just  
Some ways over,  
And they go in packs and they fall in love  
So many bodies without reason or names,  
Even the sky is embarrassed for them;  
And you have a car and hours you keep,  
And a business number,  
And sometimes reasons to weep,  
But I want to take that all away from you  
Make you surcease from the library of your thoughts,  
Lay you down in a bed of collected forget-me-nots  
And speak and smoke indescribable reason into you,  
And watch you eyes turn colors from the immolation  
Of the things who thought knew you,  
That unreturning languages that don't keep their  
Identity underneath the unabashed snow;  
To steal your hand and away we go.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Step In Line

Overbearing to the next steps of  
The millennium—  
Overbearing until the next steps have come  
And we, both have new, warm hearts  
In the independent séances leading  
Towards the highlights of our  
Endeavors—until, finally now—  
We have to step in line and look  
Beautiful, or relatively beautiful  
While dying—  
And the sun becomes a master key over  
The whole lot of the affair—  
If approaching the middling séances  
'I don't want to become lost again,  
Then just what then Is the  
Answer to get out of here—  
In truth, the cemeteries have no answers  
But once again beautiful pictures  
and the same way as the old way  
To get out of here:  
Beautiful memories disguised  
In a zoetrope, dancing with themselves,  
just so they won't be eaten in the pizzas  
Of the zeotropes of a brand new midnight—  
And that is about it, anyways—  
At least from the fictional monuments where  
I at least pretend to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Strengthen My Gut

If there seems to be a memory  
Of her  
Or of this place  
Or of the cars we kissed in  
Let it happen over the graveyards  
That are sure to contain us  
Once we our in our place  
And inescapable from Zeno's paradox—  
Once upon a time,  
Everything seemed to be beautiful  
In a very absent and listless way—  
I followed her home and slept on  
Her roof,  
My parents lived in an RV—  
Behind the canal and underneath the mountains,  
And a side of my face was purple:  
A Columbian woman swung on the swings,  
one or two,  
And in a month I would be robbed at gun point.  
Now I am so far away there is only this:  
The mythology of hummingbirds and  
The cheapest Chinese rice wine  
To strengthen my gut.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Surrender To The Monsters

When the butterfly makes  
Its sounds in  
Bed it is time to  
Go to work,  
Across the traintracks,  
Inside the  
Mountain-  
Where the darkest road  
Goes nearest the  
Fingers of  
Blind men-  
And the goblins say they  
Are in charge  
And get no resistance-  
Where school boys  
Change into  
Grown men drinking in  
The lavatories  
And masturbating  
In the crawl  
Spaces of crippled  
Airplanes that lay like  
Dungeons raising their hands to  
Surrender  
To their monsters- as crepuscule makes  
Its charge across  
The wooden necks of mailboxes-  
And the mermaids take  
Their turns in the  
Shallowest baths of  
Infantile canvases-  
For the foxes who are  
Not brave enough to  
Reach them  
And the pilots who are  
Too far gone to return.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Survive

There are pizza parlors lost in  
The White Mountains—  
Maybe even the pizza parlors are still even there,  
In the little armpit dug up from the desert  
And where it yet snows in  
Arizona,  
Where we might be seen outside the Chinese  
Restaurant that used to be a Taco Bell for less  
Than a year—  
And in that ancient memory  
Where only ghosts survive,  
What will we celebrate but the ghosts of  
Capitalism and Jesus,  
The only things that ever haunted the history  
Of our monuments,  
While we poked our heads out of our shells once  
Or twice,  
And thought of all the money that it would take  
Forever  
To survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Survive For Very Long

Purple elbows of a sparrow  
And ashes of hurricanes over the sleepy canals  
Of housewives:  
You come home while I've been masturbating and  
Lighting off fireworks,  
As Elvis sings-  
And all of this is only the joy I gave to myself  
Underneath the school bus-  
But even the windows cannot destroy your  
Perfect body,  
As the virgins arise from Mexico-  
Can you see them now, with roses in their vases-  
They are filled with the joy of their family:  
Their little children coming home  
With bleeding hinges,  
But not one of them ever lamenting that they  
Should have to survive for very long.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Tell

Now you are elected by what I must know  
To become the milkmaid of my dream: I have put you  
Here the queen of my everything,  
And these words are for you like the breaths ornithologists  
Give looking up into the sky:  
Or looking up into your eyes, Sharon: You see that they are  
The same thing:  
The same painlessly blue cases that your child looks up in;  
And I want to be like your child, resting in your shade.  
I want to be a passenger underneath you, riding all of these  
Poems as if in a merry go round of pain;  
And if you happen to look for me, know that I can barely go  
Outside; and I am not right for you:  
I am not right for anyone: I am packed up and dreaming,  
And I have traveled back some while so it is the middle of  
A school day and you are whispering attentively; but I am  
Not even there: I am out in the world: I have stolen a lonely  
Man's bicycle, and the yards are green and perfectly  
Superfluous, as the houses are affluent: and I could move us  
Right back in there right now, Sharon: without an occupation,  
Without a mortgage: You wouldn't even have to marry me:  
You could be my field- All you would have to do is step out  
Doors and collect the mail and the daylight; and I would  
Do good work for you: I would pronounce your childhood,  
And that would be all right, because that is all I have ever done  
For you:  
And I have a bag of fireworks and two good legs, and miles and  
Miles of paths up to you:  
And I have already been above your head, but would come back  
Down for you, to look into your eyes for miles and miles:  
For in their perfect darkness lies all the stories I could ever think  
To tell.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Temptations

Poem of vicissitude—of needle point  
In the moonlight,  
Underneath a skeleton of a lighthouse while  
The airplanes are  
Dancing,  
Marionettes of witches over the old houses  
Making silhouettes of a numb  
Ballet over their bays of  
Green yards—  
So easily mowed—across which their diamond  
Eyes are sweating,  
And the horses eat their apples, saying nothing  
To the serpents who would try them to temptations.

Robert Rorabeck

# To That Beautiful Holiday

I have been to Saint Louis, Alma,  
Pulling all that I owned through a wind tunnel that  
Was trying to blow out Christmas,  
But now I have come back home to find you shining like  
A silver beast who has a cure for the homeless  
Plague;  
And you asked me who Sharon was, and I told you she was not  
Real,  
Unless we moved to Colorado; but I am just as sure that  
Sharon wonders who you are;  
But you are beautiful and young, Alma, and your beauty will linger  
Beyond the precipices of this world,  
And it is this undetectable horizon that I mean to explore,  
For it is what my intelligence is good for: I am the captain of  
A frightened ship, but this is the way I go while all of  
The patrons and the saints are sleeping,  
While the virgin has gone down lactating for her young in the grotto:  
For I saw you and your man today, and it was not beautiful:  
I walked straight by you like a phantasm, and it gave me power:  
Alma,  
I am not a popular novelist, but this is real, that I am so lonely because  
All of my senses are dead to the world:  
Alma, it is only you who I can feel, and I need you to brighten my yellow  
House down the dead end street near the sea:  
Alma, you are the candle stick that I would keep burning  
Through the burning pinwheels,  
To keep up all night the drunken forts of conquistadors:  
Otherwise, I will burn away- Alma,  
And it is such a shame, to disappear before the buses of your independence  
Arrive,  
And carry us to that beautiful holiday.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Adventures

Adjustments to the adventures that  
No one reads—  
Starting out again, going to the discount  
Shop one or two blocks from  
The house—  
To buy five dollar wine,  
To blindly past the topiary  
While the otters so eagerly sleep at  
The zoo—now more going around and  
Around on the merry goes—  
The children are very well gone too—  
Words lying abandoned upon their  
Discount shelves,  
And not a housewife exists who will  
Buy them—  
But back near the sea—cenotaphs of  
Houses of monuments the elements  
Forage,  
Carving out the escargots,  
Making us remember—that  
Maybe there is something good left  
For you—left for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Boreal Churches

Where I became lost in the space of  
A classroom,  
Like a coffin in immense daylight holding  
So many boys and girls-  
And all of their pretty parts:  
At first they seem to come in  
To make love without windows,  
To look at their teacher's face: what do they  
See when I am not there,  
And my words are echoing beyond the mountains-  
Do I think of there,  
Caught up in the higher basins their eyes will never  
See,  
As they will go home together and become a  
Real illusion in the shadows,  
And I will just write them off: I will go  
Home myself,  
And never have to return to the boreal churches of  
My muses, or even above then,  
To look for the feverish meanings of impossible  
Love again.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Bosom Of Mountains

Never sing to the bosom of  
Mountains anymore:  
Their beauty gone, burned up by the fire that  
Pushed all of the bob cats forward  
And the planes along—  
With my parents lonely beneath her:  
She isn't waiting for me to sing to her anymore:  
There is a cloud at her knees  
As she squats—the opals are gone from her throat  
Like thieved cadavers—  
But the beautiful lights of werewolves play  
Across her shoulders,  
Bathed in the full-full-  
Full moonlight,  
As I eat my lunch in a room far beneath her,  
My head cocked to the waves: to the sea horses and  
The mermaids,  
With the virgins singing a lot in their grottos  
To my muses across so many hiccups and caesuras:  
To my wife of another land—  
But the mountain I once sang to,  
She has no words for this:  
She just sits there; her lamp is blind—  
The airplanes diadem her sporadically—but she couldn't  
Care—scarred, un beautified—but still  
She has no reason to understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Children Of The Lovers

The little places of our hearts' cathedrals  
Kept lit by the show and tell  
Of the faith of  
Bon-fires—  
My wife hums songs from across the  
Oceans,  
And the words dissolve into theatres  
Of metamorphosis—  
I know who you are, strange girl of  
My Hollywood,  
Silhouette still shining from the fireworks  
That keep going off in the places  
We've both abandoned—  
And there is not one sea horse  
Big enough to carry the both of  
Us,  
But we can make a carousel out of the  
Lies am telling,  
And go around and around singing  
To the children of the lovers  
We once left behind.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Clouds

Admitting to the clouds that they will not rain,  
But you can trust me to drive myself home- as you turn away  
Over a golf course that your father maintains during the  
Day- after he has passed across all of the fronteras and made  
Wonderful forts in the countries of our blues:  
And you have a son, and you have a daughter and they live near  
The Christmases that even the giants cannot pass;  
And they wander through sly avenues and have children of their  
Own of sticks and hay: In the storms gathered by the mountains  
Like wet clay, the horses stumbling in the peat bogs,  
And the willow wisps flickering heatless promises:  
The castles that were once so grand, are now all awash, and drool like  
Landslides that the dragonflies patter into like woebegone  
Pilgrims who once were well on their way; and your uncle belongs  
In Mexico hanging in the trees that shaded your childhood-  
The places in which you belong, my Alma- my soul, which have  
Forgotten you, while I grow more imperfect trying to sing:  
The swing sets diminish as the sunsets, and your children will soon  
Be bussed into a high school to be taught things that you never  
Will- and that I sincerely wish I could never understand.

Robert Rorabeck



# To The Comets

Sand dollar covering an areola or  
Covering up bad art-  
Where the horses stumble along the shore-  
Wounded after high school with  
Blue cats riding them, and lightning in a jumble  
In a basket in the sky:  
Everyday, writing some things that will never  
Survive next to the Ozarks in the park-  
As new countries develop and then drift into the ocean:  
And words surround her and make love to her  
In bed, even though I am far away-  
And the dinosaurs are gone- streamline and semi aquatic:  
They raised their heads to the comets and  
Thought nothing- and now not a single one of them  
Exists-  
As you lay across his brown belly trying to forget what you  
Must have thought of us.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Days Of Your Colored-In Curls

Little girls- dolls made of sweet corn husks  
Surfing in the waves,  
Won't you caracole and hula and pineapple right  
To me and take me back to the Saturn rings of  
Better days-  
There were days, discombobulated with yards dewed  
From spilled rum,  
And a few times fist fights with a succession of boys  
Who now do construction that I always won:  
And mostly truancies of days, day school skipping days  
Where I was freeform on the canal, and in charge,  
When I slipped up the easements with freshwater  
Otters and made love to the sisters and their housewives,  
As I knew I oughter:  
There were days of you up ghostly in the tree,  
Days of pollinated spikenard and paper airplanes thrown  
By the winds lips and thoughts of ye;  
And I knew that sometime or another you thought of me,  
And you were just the loneliness down lost over many  
Hair-lipped bridges,  
Over so many lost and vanquished green yards-  
Days, days of roman candles and Christmas trailer parks,  
Swimming over the hills of teal caesuras:  
Girls, girls so young and unreal, come take me back there  
To the days of your colored-in curls.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Defeated Gods

They were laughing and they went to school:  
Some of them while they were  
Still young, anyways: and soon in the dead of  
Winter,  
They will be searching for coal,  
As the butterflies die in the forests even as the  
Turtles come to them:  
All of it remains unpublished even as the  
Stewardesses fly over graveyards-  
Even as I have written so many psalms of so  
Few words,  
Trying to abstract myself into the ashes of another  
Playground,  
A metamorphosis trumpeted into the flags of our  
Country while some poor girls  
Have still been busy singing, trying to  
Make diamonds from the coal of their fathers' mining:  
As the world stretches up to the defeated gods  
And somehow pretends to carry on.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Devil Inside

Spasms of fish out of the sea—homeless men burning tires  
Beneath the trees—and the entire world tethered  
To a pole without any Christmas tree lights—  
The entire heart of high school burned away,  
Made into a cemetery—  
And the forts we made out of blue fabric and the  
Kitchen table sunken into the forgetful gravities of  
The children who cannot understand us—  
It goes all week like this—words trying to kiss the  
Shoulders that have grown too high for them—  
Fetishes strewn out for witchcraft drowned out  
Underneath the busied flight paths of adulterous  
Airplanes—and my soul waiting for a sign like a maiden  
Beside a wishing well—perfumes that signify the evening  
And dinner tables strewn out, tumbling with the results  
Of the tender hooks of death that allow us to survive—  
Yes, in the morning: angels who so gently lead us to the  
Devil inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Duny Park

Bodies getting smaller as they pass like strange  
Calligraphy out of hand;  
And maybe I can't understand any other world than this,  
But when I take Alma by the hand,  
And show her the blue resilience emolliating in  
A sheet of feral angels off to the left;  
It is all I need:  
I ungreedily drink of the light her brown eyes sip;  
And I compare her to the ocean and say,  
This is exactly how beautiful you are, as we drive on  
To the duny park to swing in the playgrounds  
That will soon no longer be there.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Ears Of Drunken Horses

By the time this song is gone to the  
Heavens of stolen bicycles—  
My dog is barking, my wife is  
Almost out of the shower,  
And I am trying to get drunk for real—  
Don't you remember the  
Time we folded paper airplanes in  
The mausoleum  
And waited all afternoon caressing the wildflowers  
Of the crypts just to  
See the hummingbirds drinking of  
The ethereal bouquets,  
Like the stewardesses who seemed to levitate  
Wherever they went—  
Until they came down forever,  
The paperweights and the lovers of sea horses—  
Even if their song became a scar  
To the ears of drunken horses who had learned how  
To hold their breath forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The East

I love you so the moon falls down while you were  
Bending to tie your skates;  
And your son Michael wants so many things for his  
Birthday, Alma:  
And you are there, enclave d into that little room of  
Your father's  
House,  
Over the train tracks and on the other side of your spouse;  
But you never fear that I do not love you: you know that I love you,  
And my hands make a mobile over your body,  
Like the pantomime of the sub stellar airplanes across the moon  
At night;  
While I have just been drinking, and not doing much of  
Anything right: just waiting on the polished tarmacs of the ancient  
Fraternities of doused forest fires  
For the heavens to give in, to your flights to surcease:  
For you to return with you promises of fidelity by all of its morning,  
Like the eucatastrophe of all of those extinct hemispheres,  
Captivated by the tiny throat of a flute or a ukulele:  
And then to lie with me atop the un bashful sheets and wait for the  
Ever loving morning to deliver the mail to the east.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Echoes Of Her Silence

Angels dance over the day—hurricanes turned  
As the housewives hurry home:  
My Mexican uncle is expecting twins—my  
Classroom laughs  
And echoes in its laughter—as kidnappers  
Disappear—  
As I consider his niece—I haven't been  
Alive so long  
And yet I loved her so many times underneath  
The feet of rattlesnakes,  
Even though I was only like a movie theatre  
For her,  
When she became lost in the mountains  
Above tree line—  
As the sun danced over Satan and lost itself  
Eaten into its own shadows—  
Now I am married to another girl on the other side  
Of the earth—  
And it means I can no longer give this once  
Muse Christmas trees and fireworks,  
And I cannot remember her as she lives—  
Up in the orange groves and hoof prints—chanting  
To the echoes of her silence,  
Listening to herself because she is too afraid to  
Be alone.

Robert Rorabeck



# To The End

In the weekendâ€”balloons, babies in the daylight,  
Brown skin:  
They do not wonder who they areâ€”they have never  
Been to schoolâ€”  
They are filled with the equalities of icecream;  
And their parents buy things that no one else cares  
About:  
Their first cat has not died: their hearts never skip a  
Beat,  
And the kidnappers pass them by, villains set upon  
Other delusionsâ€”  
And in their trams, not knowing a single word,  
They seem like they can go on to the end of the  
Roadâ€”  
Fireworks that should never have to burn to the end.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The English Professor

Out of the old habits of the moon,  
I place myself with my dogs and start anew:  
And we look over the rafters of each of our churches,  
And down the sweet blouses of the Catholic girls inside  
Putting on miracle plays and busting out the papier-mâché  
Angel wings;  
And we started out like this all together at the starting line;  
And we were given roman candles and brown bags of store brand  
Liquor by the state;  
It was really swell as all the mariposas licked the armpits of  
The apple orchards we all know so well:  
And our dogs howled at the fornications of so many blimps  
That they absolutely got in trouble;  
And I named myself as the culprit and you the princess:  
I bought lingerie for you on your birthday, but I would not  
Buy you a new truck; and then the moon was full and yellow:  
It was like Spanish bullion sinking insouciantly through a sea  
Of clouds;  
And I had to touch myself and mouth off to the English professor,  
But I was so drunk by then that neither I nor my muse gave  
Any sort of damn.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Fireworks Of Her Name

Her reams of brown skin spread out before me,  
Like a picture book for everything lucky:  
Because she has never know the venal sabotages of  
A suburban housewife, nor  
Any of her children: and the Alamo was capture by all of  
The best of her ancestors,  
Even while my parents have returned to Arizona and  
Aren't doing anything so good; but are good at surviving,  
Like a beautiful butterfly who spends most of  
Her life caught up in the tin confines of a stainless steal  
Grotto of a trailer park of  
An amusing estuary, while everything else fails,  
And even the best of the angels tell lies to the warbling estuaries  
Of the bromeliads who only come some times this way  
Out of the armpits of air plants,  
The way that even the best of stewardesses give up and finally  
Find clear ground,  
Sweating and panting in the deepest and sandiest of epicenters,  
Like cats panting in heart or for milk,  
Or for me to stretch out my charity, finally caving in  
And admitting all of my beautiful faults to the fireworks of her name.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Flame Of Its Muse

Tombs of rattlesnakes shaking rainstorms  
In protest and jasmine after the tanks are all closed,  
And even the cars have  
All stopped their driving:  
And then there is just the pale, pale monoliths  
Softly repeating,  
Going up and up over the sororities, like escalators:  
Like elevators,  
Like ladders into the bereavement of whatever heavens  
That I am sure they are:  
And they end in lighthouses,  
And commercial airliners- or they end in little rooms  
Far, far above this stuff:  
Through the strata of pornographies and conquistadors,  
And Labor Days and home room classes:  
Through the shed papers of firecrackers newly bloomed,  
And the trailer parks:  
And the fruit markets: they end in a peaceful grotto  
All to themselves  
Where a single candle burns to the flame of its muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Gentleness

Fornication is nice  
When the shadows are involved:  
The rabbits pullulate in the aloe, rubbing off of  
Hands,  
The picnic then is backed up, the orbs are first  
Hanging from the despotic bouquets of the tree;  
And then they are in space-  
Why cannot your eyes be the pools in a jungle  
When I am thirsty and sleeping alone:  
Why can't we only be friends coming together in an  
Agreement of love,  
Coming like the palms of an agreeable religion refusing  
To migrate away from one another,  
Coming together and then scissoring like legs in PE:  
I want to work out against you while  
Your children are sleeping in dollhouses in the most  
Auspicious fires of then thousand stories,  
While the horses rest and feed in the yards  
Of neighbors in love,  
So that tomorrow we don't have to learn a thing:  
Don't you think that we've just about learned enough;  
And so we can skip school  
And I can busy myself with my longing to touch and be inside  
Your flesh,  
Like your legs brush themselves so rich from their all day long  
Migrations that they just want to lie still for a little  
To the gentleness of both of my lips;  
And then move a little still like rivers joining flowers  
Again, you know, to the gentleness of these kind though un begotten  
Lips.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Ghosts

Now it says there is a sad column rising from  
Her relatives  
Because they wished that they had graves,  
Wanderers piled inside the caravanerserai—  
What lips they had still sing songs  
When the wind plays them underneath the  
Lamplight stolen into the sky:  
Unbeaming wishes in the architectures of  
Those bodies:  
The wolves and dogs come and howl:  
Somewhere close, a suburbia, and amusement park:  
And trams to take the living home—  
Emulations above the heads of these crypts  
Where roses thought to drink—  
And crickets dipped their necks like ticket holders  
On a ride to the ghosts.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Glorious Women

Now they have friends here in the park,  
After the footprints have left and the lake is quiet and full  
Of manmade secrets;  
And maybe there were no promises or rainbows here  
Ever,  
Or things to tie the knot: maybe this is the only place where  
Silence has always been  
Perfect,  
And I can step out into here and feel the short cuts of  
Grass that sing their offerings to the sun  
In the middle of the school day  
When I was supposed to be in class,  
And the clouds have come down low, so curious and experimental  
And doing things that the despondent housewives would  
Better off to be watching;  
And where the seasons change without doors, and the fireworks  
Bark:  
Where little girls go to pray to the glorious women who  
Are not quite there as the world and all of its traffics travel on to dusk.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Heavens

Crepuscle in the mailboxes-  
And another zoetrope returned to ash.  
My favorite words lying with the rattlesnakes,  
Like the bums beneath the overpass-  
The crickets hungry in the yard- the lions open  
Their mouths down the street-  
The housewives disrobe to lie down somewhere  
Else.  
The clouds leave the hall- the blueness fades  
Into stolen light-  
The banks close, and the memories slip back  
Through the cypress-  
All the way to the crashes of airplanes that  
Remain surviving-  
And the little truanacies that I took to think  
Of your love;  
And our little brown hand in mine, Alma-  
How we breathe sometimes together- coins  
Are tossed in a well,  
Until you come home to work, and your children  
Relish you-  
I watch you across the train tracks, and all of the  
Mothers coming home,  
Until the movement of your body is blotted out,  
As if offerings to the heavens.

Robert Rorabeck



# To The Homecoming Of Our Supper Time

You don't have to tell me you read my words,

Alma:

I can tell by the rich auburn of your eyes when you look up and

Stare at me from across the fruiteria:

Then all the world shines, and I know I have been doing some good,

Because I am not beautiful enough to have you look at

Me that way on my own,

Alma:

And the customers come in and giddy-up to you, and they tell you

How beautiful you are,

Just as they tell my mother how beautiful she is; and the best I can

Hope for is to be mistaken as her brother,

And for your landlord, Alma: Your body is so sweet, and you have

Just one initial of a man tattooed on your body-

That is all I know about you,

Except that you are a butterfly migrating to work and home on

Cherry Road- I stole a pelota there for you:

Now I want to steal a kiss: I want to press my stygian hand to the furnace

Of your womb:

I want to say names into your breath that will be proven to be real:

I want to finish off this bottle of the cheapest wine,

And then see you again tomorrow and make you mine, so that I can see you

All the way to the homecoming of our supper time.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Hours Of The Tomb

Horses run around and around  
As my mother is coming home:  
I want to learn new words for her—  
I want to be a cat curled up  
Underneath a beautifully lit Christmas  
Tree for her:  
I don't want to have to go to school tomorrow:  
I just want to wait beside the bus stop,  
Pretending to be a good by while the lions yawn—  
Both of us just to pass the time,  
While better off boys make all of the money—  
And then I just want to lie in the holly  
And croon the larks of the midday soap-operas—  
And maybe sometime after thirty I will get a  
Wife or graduate high school,  
While all of this becomes the living disease of  
A living tomb—only so many words  
Gathered in hand, like some Easter Eggs gathered  
Some Easter by the hands of a blind-  
Blind man—  
And even with the sun coming up over some graveyards,  
And even with some of the beautiful mothers coming  
Home—  
With the daylight coming down,  
The night beckons in its loneliness—and hands grasp  
For hands—because no one wishes to be alone  
When it comes to the hours of this tomb.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Lips

Someone snores and I've made a  
God of tracks and transoms that no one will  
Ever read,  
And that is good because the candles and  
Curves of Colorado  
Are tight,  
And you have to keep your eyes wide opened  
All goddamned night;  
And whiskey is good,  
And cats have nine lives, and her favorite color is  
Blue as it begins to fade into her eyes,  
And the words sing atop of tilted flowers  
And bird baths,  
And the garden is homeless in a penumbra of incredible  
Pestilence:  
And I love her and want to live with her in an overgrown  
House in Saint Augustine,  
But instead I am selling these things for my father,  
Waiting for the beautiful wings of whatever happenstance to  
Come singing around once again,  
But the eyes of incredible alligators never falter  
Once again the sweet perfume of the airtight vision,  
Like the legs of stewardesses making their arcs and swings  
Over the crenulated Atlantics,  
Plurals that have no reason, like all the animals who have  
Died giving their bodies and their sexes,  
Equally to the lips who are in stores,  
Who wake up without wonder,  
And who cannot breathe.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Lips Of The Heart

Various ways of impressing the  
Earth  
Includes your breath on my  
Shoulders  
And I don't have to be here  
Right now-  
But I came even through this  
Weather-  
As rains fall in your absence,  
Fall through the roof-  
And I am getting too old for daycare-  
Even if your children are not  
Home yet-  
Because you don't have to go to  
Work-  
You don't even have to  
Wear shoes,  
Though you are in pain-  
And I am on the other side  
Of all things,  
Of horses entwined in  
Deadfall-  
Where there is not even  
Whisper of metamorphosis-  
And names mean nothing  
To the lips of the heart.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Midnight Rai

I am a good boy and I get up from an early  
Number from my slumber,  
And I say to the kissing teeth of the vipers  
That from my windows  
I can see it raining over the amusement parks that  
Have stolen away from my heart  
Who are up early anyways, dancing in migrations,  
Tumbling,  
Causing their amputations to look up ex-lovers  
In these woods-  
Passing by our shanty towns as the sugar cane burns,  
As the lamp light is lit:  
Husbands returning home to their wives,  
Like foxes to their vineyard, cuddling with their  
Boxes of knives  
Above the bones of conquistadors- their pools  
Are diamonds reflecting the abandoning skies  
Recoiling in their mischief-  
As their yards roll down to the throats of the canal,  
The primordial suitors playing with the gold  
Fish-  
Until all the world engorges like a flower making love  
To a hurricane,  
As the daylight hours succumb to the midnight rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Midnight Rain

I am a good boy and I get up from an early  
Number from my slumber,  
And I say to the kissing teeth of the vipers  
That from my windows  
I can see it raining over the amusement parks that  
Have stolen away from my heart  
Who are up early anyways, dancing in migrations,  
Tumbling,  
Causing their amputations to look up ex-lovers  
In these woods-  
Passing by our shanty towns as the sugar cane burns,  
As the lamp light is lit:  
Husbands returning home to their wives,  
Like foxes to their vineyard, cuddling with their  
Boxes of knives  
Above the bones of conquistadors- their pools  
Are diamonds reflecting the abandoning skies  
Recoiling in their mischief-  
As their yards roll down to the throats of the canal,  
The primordial suitors playing with the gold  
Fish-  
Until all the world engorges like a flower making love  
To a hurricane,  
As the daylight hours succumb to the midnight rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Mountains

If you love me, go with me now  
Before this apple falls  
And the earth turns over and becomes  
Uncovered  
Before her perfumes are covered with earth  
Before her avenues decay  
Or my words are found out by carrion and taken  
Away across the boulders where  
The rattlesnakes are lying all strung out  
Like tangled extension chords  
Carried away by the same mother whose ankle  
Was bitten beneath a lighthouse  
And the hummingbirds flew backwards to  
Just as the paper insects mopped and coated her  
The waves ululating against  
The pylons that they could not have her, or that  
The road was forgotten  
And still she found her way back through the virulent  
Glens  
And the stallions into a house that didn't even  
Exist anymore where she laid and curled until the crypts  
Of the grasses overcame her, and the wild  
Peonies told unbelievable stories of her to the mountains

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Museums Or Breakfasts

It is Christmas and the gods die from too much  
Beauty,  
I feel embarrassed from too much liquor, but the dawn  
Knows that it will give itself to  
Better loves,  
While it will find me working again down deep in  
Some little corner,  
While there aren't enough caracoles to get around,  
And Alma will wipe the drool from  
Her pretty mouth, and she will get up to leave her abolished  
Man for the day,  
And come nearer to me, like two electrons in an atom,  
Dancing in mostly empty space,  
But maybe I will take her to the beach tomorrow,  
Or maybe I will make love to her: or maybe we'll  
Just f&ck, as the sexy swing sets wait for us  
Closer to the infinity of nothing,  
And we take a breather as she comes down, and changes  
All together into her favorite color,  
While I hold her hand, and think about all of the possibilities  
Of where we might go together again  
To the museums  
Or breakfasts.

Robert Rorabeck



# To The Pains Of Her Dance

These bodies play their bands, pumping,  
In the chorus of the neighborhoods and the worlds:  
They wake up and pat their children:  
On Sundays the go to zoos or musicals:  
If broken down they are symmetrical: they know so much beauty:  
When asleep, they don't know it, but they float with the Man O'  
War:  
Then her dress is the perfect ocean-It is the séance, weeping,  
Curling beautiful all of that green:  
The sky evaporate of the same stuff, with corsages thrust into her  
Thrown from the coquina walls of the fort where the  
Bachelors hang out looking far across her  
Standing like paled predestinations up from the sunken armor  
Of the missing conquistadors:  
They have been kidnapped by these centuries and taken mightily  
Into her- maybe they are entranced into her gown  
Like the leashes on a sled; and we wake up and rub our eyes  
And then get busy moaning, our throats ululating as we hearken  
To the pains of her dance.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Places I Could Never Belong

The antediluvian lights go out, and my hand falls upon her  
Undervalued knees; it is easier to speak to her with the crosshairs of  
A feral tongue,  
To become for her more and less human, a forest fire too licking  
Her salts she turned back upon:  
And she told me this Thursday in the semidarkness that the blinds helped  
To douse, that I took too long;  
After she moaned in a headdress of sheets, like something that  
Was learning to fly, but came down thirtily on my wounds  
And multiplied- and green was her favorite color;  
And it fit: that she had succeeded from Mexico, where I wished that  
I had known her as a little boy:  
And from those springs that tasted her virginity, I had tasted the soul  
Of my kindling muse:  
My Alma, and read out behind her house the poems of horses that  
Would never disappear, even after she has wantonly traveled  
Home again to the places I could never belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Playgrounds Of My Soul

As true as an echo to the playgrounds of my soul,  
Can't you see me dancing  
Echo to your brilliant shadow  
With the night moving over us like an entire  
Airplane  
And the apple orchards shuddering like dancing girls:  
There she will be tomorrow, held over in the species  
Of her classrooms—  
Overly complicated by her good-looks and by your  
Infatuations  
As another truant peters out through the hallways:  
Where is he going?  
To the sea? To the moon? Or towards where you  
Sent him,  
For he has made himself an offering of the love you  
Can never obey—  
But, tomorrow, other boys will plagiarize him  
Who you will fall in love with—  
And after you have gone away with them  
He will metamorphose into actors of  
Chalk and moonlight  
That steal whatever they can from the  
Moonlight that resolves itself by the light of day.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Presumptions Of Epiphany

Silent auction of the lips,  
Pursing- pensive, persistently disenchanted  
And almost wet,  
The way the fox's lips must feel as he leaps  
For the grape,  
Or the little vanities in stewardesses legs  
As they too leap to and fro in their airplanes  
Following sun up and sundown,  
As the roosters grow and it gets up into some kind  
Of mischievous song-  
As the horizon, like some kind of curtain is  
Almost pulled back, leaving the slightest  
Possibility of what lies unaware  
To the presumptions of epiphany.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Rivers Or The Woods

Unfathomable numbers of one or the other,  
Almost endless hallucinations of the sexes,  
Both happening in the opposable gloom  
In various degrees of destitute or beatification:  
And Erin is there,  
Glad of bicycles coming all of a sudden out of  
Crepuscle  
Like serious cocaine, cauliflower, or gangsters;  
And you could look straight up at her and lose yourself,  
And call it a Christmas tree  
While the sea bares repeating; and then all day long  
The work-class would have a lark,  
Figuring out how best it was, and how easy it was to  
Love a certain number:  
You could draw her out of fine clay pot, like the  
Hangings of a ghost,  
All of the pumice of distended antlers or the cremations  
Of your aunts;  
And then Diana would have to come again,  
Busy with her business, all of those wildflowers yoking  
With the lifting of the cold, the higher valleys beginning to  
Play heavy rock and roll,  
And then you could tell her just how much you loved  
Her, since she then would have the same number of  
Limbs as you;  
As she no longer budded, as long as she chose to remain  
With you, and did not return to the rivers or the woods.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Sea

If we have accounted our hearts together by the  
Sea.  
It was only to sound beautiful in swinging adultery-  
And I lifted you up,  
And pressed your brown skin to the sun- because  
You could not swim:  
It evaporated you, and made you fly; and I made a nest  
For you in my arms,  
But you went back home to him- and children without  
Words-  
The moon watching you from outside your window;  
It stole your light too;  
But I'll be damned if it gave me anything to do-  
So I made a gift of myself to the sea- but she, oh she-  
Is still swimming inside of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Shoulders

Each railway bends to the shoulders,  
Like seahorses looking around for kaleidoscopes:  
And it just so happens that they cannot find any better  
Numbers—  
Each pigeon sleeps in the apoplexy of its rainbows—  
Trash and concrete tied up  
In the urbanity  
Of sickly sweet espionage—  
And the daylight floods like a dump truck over  
The hedgerows of all over the place—  
Wives are touching down wherever they can—  
An apiary of wives discombobulated in their neighborhood—  
Like sickly sweet cartoons learning kung fu—  
Like the rhymes of the Telluride amusement parts while  
Your parents swing and skate—  
But in the morning, they will be taking down the airplanes  
From the mobiles of clouds—  
And your wife will have already closed her eyes:  
She will have already gone to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Sideshows

Bean sprouts of my songs and amusements:  
Tadpoles kissing her  
Toenails as she wades halfheartedly through  
The shallows-  
Salt and sweat peppering her from  
Their afternoons of  
Love making-  
But it still seems a long ways up the slopes  
Of the impenetrable mountains,  
The coyotes laughing chaos  
And slang,  
The wicked snakes down beneath them,  
Poisoning the debutants sweated off  
The ballrooms of their proms:  
As I've said I loved her a thousand times,  
Howling from the corrugations of  
The trailer parks to the side shows-  
As the donkeys bray up to the monuments of  
Discombobulated windmills.

Robert Rorabeck



# To The Silken Grotto

It's almost midnight and  
Nothing has changed;  
I was held up at gunpoint  
And pleaded for my  
Life;  
But when they left with  
My muse underarm,  
Folded up like a kidnapped  
Butterfly,  
I ran after them  
Screaming, screaming your  
Name;  
And I got their license plate,  
So the cops drove me around  
And eventually took me  
To the silken grotto where  
You are living with  
Him unlawfully;  
And I deified you even though  
I didn't want rain;  
And I am waiting for you  
Still, because I know that  
Eventually you must come  
Out; and you are mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Sky

Bones in a white box,  
Bones in the sea: bones in a fish, in a bird,  
Or in the sky:  
Thrown up like luck over the mountebanks of  
Insouciant lions,  
Hypnotized with the animals in the feral churches  
Of ruby glass,  
While the water is always falling, falling  
Like the coattails of weather balloons over the vast  
And effortlessly tall jungles;  
Only unto all of the mouths of minds have moved  
Away,  
Hibernation with the vast fairgrounds of northern  
Peninsulas  
Into the vast and populous frescos of  
Teaming glaciers who call to them the tiny biplanes like  
Cattle,  
Until so many pilots have landed into the tundra  
Of borderless anachronisms  
Upon whose missing ribs the butterflies sleep like resplendent  
Badges;  
And they flutter once more, remembering how they once  
Flew,  
And how once before all of this they changed so resplendently  
Into the changing room that ultimately led them to the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Spider's Web

Sacrifice to the spider's web,  
Underneath the airplanes and the bats that fly  
Out of the cauldrons and  
Witchcraft without stewardesses—  
Enveloped in the blind acrobatics of a beauty's  
Midnight,  
They funnel over the universities like a narcoleptic  
Daydream,  
Fulfilling themselves with the ranges of solitude—  
They know nothing about the beauties of the finest  
Of women—  
In fact, all of the housewives have already gone  
Indoors—but they are out, collecting  
Their silent infatuations to the strange atmospheres—  
Until they cannot be resolved  
Until the minute of the hour—  
Into whatever felicitations they find themselves,  
Run away to the bitter cul-de-sacs,  
And to the crawling icebergs—and I love you  
Crawling into the graveyards after the storms  
Have stolen all of the plastic roses—  
And the pilots have touched their bones to  
The ground forever to sleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Sport's Loneliness

Spilling their contemplations down my throat,  
I think of our honeymoon in Shangri-La—  
Of all of the plasticine bedrooms attended underneath the  
Porcelain moon, as my hand found your ghostish thigh  
And knew who you were in the fermented darkness,  
While my thoughts wondered back across the airplanes  
Like skipping stones,  
To some ghost of a park in California,  
Where I left my dream that way behind—  
Where I couldn't look at my face, ruined in my post-  
Adolescents—  
And all of those dreams I had forgotten with me  
As I drove back to Arizona—  
The lost tankards of dreams—and now, in this  
House in the middle of my life,  
New accoutrements to the sports loneliness find their  
Place inside my lips that speak of the whispers  
That nest inside my mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Tomorrows Further Away

In the object of full disclosure,  
I've always been attracted to you, Amanda:  
Though I can barely remember you from middle school.  
I remember John McGlaughlin had Nirvana's Nevermind  
CD, and S- - was the only one who could  
Best me at four-square; and I really had a think for her,  
And now she's with a hyphenated last name and even more  
Than a frequent lover, and wine shop in Colorado:  
But even more than that, I've had a thing for Erin,  
For Erin: but we were all in Latin class together, now she's  
A waitress in Gainesville still, and I might even be going up there  
To start a Ph.D., (only though when I applied to the school  
I think I miss-spelled P.H, D, or something to the fact of that  
Case) .... But those were so many days ago, and I spent my afternoons  
Farting in front of the television and listening to the lions roar  
Down the street under a heliotrope sky. Now, Amanda, I am  
Thinking of writing another novel, and I have a vague idea,  
Even while I wait for word from a literary agent about another  
Novel, even as I imagine you in your big open house in  
Wellington- like your lover, affluent and well lit and covered with  
Your dew in the morning: Oh well, these things I have a tendency  
To say when I wake up in the morning and raising my head like  
Chanticleer, looking out into the neighborhood and imagine the  
Most fabulous storms. So now, even if I am shot, and vanquished by  
Thuggish conquistadors, it won't even matter, because I've already  
Written enough to in most ways justify what I've had to say for myself:  
And come morning, I will have more to say, even as I think of skipping  
Out of class with Jordan and tightrope walking across the corrugations  
Irrigating the canal. Maybe I love you, and yet there are so many things  
I've seen you wouldn't even imagine. Your neighborhood is affluent  
But unimaginative, even while you are a genius, I suppose, and you  
Put off a beautifully ridiculous light self-illuminant in your church,  
And I would like to give you a Christmas tree and lie with you in  
A crèche for awhile, and put of tomorrow, and put off the greater  
Persuasions awful gravity gives even more to the tomorrows  
Further away.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Vicissitude Of Her Cardinal Sins

Drank so much soda pop that the embittered  
And venal cop tried to arrest me for  
Public indecency;  
But I still had my legs about me,  
Escaped into the aspen grove, and did  
The Cha-cha twist,  
Stealing my grandmother's outlines of  
Chalk she'd spent busily there  
Backside up towards the sun,  
Trough ing old friends, trying to impress  
Healthy young boys to the vicissitude  
Of her cardinal sins.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Waves

I farted along in Saturday school,  
Until I was expelled, and rejected from the clicks of  
High school drama. Still, I came faithfully  
Everyday just to sneak back across the canal,  
Salivating like Pavlov's dog in salty humidities:  
Sat alone on the swings, thought of the  
Dwarf girl who lived there in a dugout around  
The root of the squat palms, from which she had  
Escaped the circus yet came out in cooling rain showers  
And danced naked in stunted opulence in the long  
Mowed ruts of the soccer field which sloped down  
As if a lip to the muddled bank where alligators  
Lay like pets, torpid and untrainable:  
I would row out to her in my underwear slogging gin,  
On the inflatable raft smelling of chlorine stolen from  
The dentist's pool, after all the fireworks were spent  
In the air and coming down in little wishes of forest fire:  
Would draw up to her on the bank, her bee stung wishes  
The areolas of little seashells, tell me how she thought  
Of migrating on Monday to the sea, but needed a bicycle  
Her size: I thought maybe she loved me, even though  
I was quite busted and unbeautified- Couldn't imagine  
Then how she might disappear, picked up on Halloween,  
Mistaken for a Guatemalan and drafted into the step ladders  
Of the orange grove, so I was left to salinate alone, tilting  
In the grass like a ship going down, but not mortified:  
So lazy there that the mosquitos didn't want to draw blood,  
And when the principle drove around, fearing his wife,  
He didn't even solicit me, as I swigged my brine, thought  
How early the sky would blush, my farts would rhyme,  
And the dalliances of youth went down like sneakered tramps,  
The landscaping swell calligraphies: Each house held  
A neat family, and a dime buried in a curse, and we all drifted  
Away from one another like hoarse survivors allotted to  
The waves.

Robert Rorabeck

# To The Whispers Never Made

The wrong sided angels go flitting to the  
East;  
And it is over the dark and angular caesuras of  
A feral sea,  
That you can see them  
Cavorting with the beast:  
And wetting their tongues across the flotsam of  
Apple trees,  
And speaking with the lips of multitudinous  
Apiaries;  
And homeless- and shoeless- and like candle  
Flames,  
They slip their dresses off over the infinite regresses  
In their unseen sorority whose  
Corsages pinprick into dust:  
Whose bared shoulders cajole us, and make the  
Fire trucks rust;  
And they are the darkness of overspent fireworks;  
And they are the tombs in the shade,  
As they curfew to the whispers never made by the  
Ants and the lions who first  
Crawl and then lay in the undervaluing pornographies  
Of a presumptive glade.

Robert Rorabeck



# To The Zoo

Airplanes of many shades  
And colors,  
Moving around the playground,  
Waiting for their parents after school,  
The sky a mote around  
A sand castle of tears,  
The clouds so many insouciant television shows.  
You can pick which one and grow a knot in your  
Throat watching it,  
While the hobnobbing sprinklers spit and chew,  
And the young Guatemalans drive around  
In electronic vehicles tilling self effacing dirt;  
And all the important words are in  
The bible,  
And all the girls are in Colorado;  
And the side of my face is a mess,  
But all I want to do is think about you-  
All I want to do is get drunk  
And go to the zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Their Guardian Angels

You are dumb, and yellow  
And stupid: your children also live in the armpits  
Of a flower,  
While the wolves hang out opened tongued  
Waiting for the pottery wheels of school to start-  
And even at her wedding,  
It was brilliant and made of flowers: she has her newest  
Love and they go around merrily  
Attracting the tourists from their wonderful playgrounds:  
Come and look at the new things they have found  
Underneath the lighthouses  
Who meant to speak to their guardian angels, and to  
Reminisce perpetually across the physical educations of  
Their equally mutual yesterdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Their Impressive Work

Holding onto my skull through the days of  
Unsure fire- Racehorses tracking the sky with muddied  
Abdomens-  
I can hear their echoes all after noon, through the firedrills  
In the halls- or afterwards,  
Anyways, when all of it has emptied, and I am  
Back at home, masturbating,  
Sure that no old girlfriends are coming over.  
I cut angels out of paper and send them up to the ceiling  
Fans to dance-  
I wait for mother and father to bring me fried chicken-  
I read cheap books  
Of cheap romance- and then the cinders fall from the sky  
Once again in such kill joy;  
It kills the toys in the park, and all of the children go  
Home gloomy and stupefied,  
But I watch them come the following morning returning  
Accordingly to their impressive work.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Their Own Conclusions

The same memory waits for no one more  
Than this—  
With the days caving in like sink holes over  
Our lives—  
Words come to their own conclusions  
Outside of throats played like instruments  
By their hearts—  
And we get up, evolved into our necessities,  
Wanting a drink at the very start,  
Some elixir so to fall in love without having  
To look anyone in the eye—  
Brown skins piling up in their cars like  
An apiary on the road—  
See all of these strange girls, a menagerie  
Of a harem escaped from the outskirts of  
Mexico—  
And I love them all, calling them with my bedroom  
Thoughts,  
Turning my scarred architectures their way,  
And sometimes they come again,  
Like waves at high tide—  
My sorcery the same thievery as moon light  
Upon gravity—  
But never mindful, they soon forget,  
And go back on that usual road,  
Yet sizzling with the filament bright enough to  
Dull a Ferris Wheel—  
And up until that very moment when they step  
Back in doors I like to imagine that they  
Think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Themselves

Rubric going off in bed with only a little bit  
Of daylight left:  
But just the false time, and studying for school:  
When it clocks midnight around her wrist,  
Everything will change again:  
And she will get up only to lie down again:  
While the waves roll green across the viaducts, musseling  
And smoothing the stones,  
Making immaterial things live there awhile, worrisome  
Cousins of the banners in the sky-  
In a jubilation of evaporating armies whose jingoisms  
Will soon disappear:  
Dissolving until looking down, finding only you resting in your  
Car,  
The thieves surrounding you by many possible directions:  
And the fairytales growing and telling many marvelous  
Lies to themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# To These Mountains

Drinking, the body turns cold—like a cadaver  
Hungering for the torch  
The way carports huddle in the rain—  
The used car salesman out of a job  
As the planes fly in,  
Flores licking their lips and snapping thier  
Jaws, leaping for stewardesses whom are too  
High up in their sorority's train—  
Over somewhere there is a park,  
And the nocturnal floods sucrease imperfectly,  
Striking thier hidden flints against the tallows—  
Trying to bear warmth to the nocturnes,  
Some kind of warmth to these mountains who go  
Without any names.

Robert Rorabeck

# To These Things

Up cadaver: this is your apple, if you  
Still have a tooth for the orchard:  
This is your song:  
Up, up, while the music still throws:  
The kites are bending low  
To dance with snakes in the yards of  
I don't know:  
Up, cadaver, bend your spikenard into  
A bow  
And from your appendages throw:  
Throw the songs that  
I can never know- through the rivers  
Cried from the sky:  
Kiss and bless the things that have to  
Die:  
Dance, all over the churchyard,  
With its warbling bell:  
Dance all over the schoolyard,  
With its kisses and tells:  
And then sing to the airplanes in the sky,  
Sing that they will never come down  
To die:  
Sing of the apples blossomed from the bough  
Sing to these things so that they never have to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Think Of Me

Sunken, the plentiful land records itself:  
New numbers and new scars in the flesh, tattoos of windmills  
Recorded across the field,  
And children lost on their way home: the fire too shy to ignite  
The bush,  
Stones in the clutches of rattlesnakes snuffed by the snouts  
Of hounds before the remedy of the storms,  
And all of the long phrases too far away from home  
To account for the actions of the tourists  
Who threw them just to get a jubilee out of the waves or anywhere:  
The forts that stood there for so long, too proudly-  
Eaten away by the sea- the dead prostitutes beneath them,  
Buried beneath the canon balls- too young and too deeply  
To be remembered by you,  
To think of me.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Think Of You

There they go- up there making love-  
Wish of the wind has blown their paper carnivals-  
Swimming birds of grown up mobiles- Now what will  
They do,  
Impossibly above the mowed and mowed again grass:  
Like paper airplanes above paper trees, who  
Will they sing to? The lion is asleep-  
The fire has died, and the stewardesses are asleep in  
Class- The fireworks burned away after less than  
A minute and a half- These things,  
Eyelashes and embers through the power lines and  
Orange fields- less than ghosts in love,  
But do they know their own way, and what cathedrals  
Are they going to, as the boys wander again  
Away from school,  
And my body gets up again to work, to think of you,  
Knowing that it cannot fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Think That They Too Never Think Of Me

You come upwards like a star of your high school:  
You swim and baptize this way  
Like a carnival fish, and I have survived so far because I have  
Seen you captivated in a saucy dish:  
Lavender, eyes so blue- like lapiz lazuli graffiti going down  
Into a subway:  
Sharon, I think of you this way: I first sate and then starve this  
Way  
All for you: your child is beautiful, and before she learns a  
Word, or how to stand and walk, she has defeated me:  
Sharon, your daughter is my crucible:  
She has made a simple man indefectible, invincible, immortal:  
He will continue on now forever because of your accordance,  
But has he ever seen the navel of the Grand Canyon,  
Or has he ever played baseball alone with his friends in the  
Ashes of sugarcane blowing over Royal Palm Beach;  
But he has taken his shirt off and laid across you; and now your  
House is blue from holding its breath, because it has so many wishes,  
But I shall forever sing for you, entranced by the fata morganas  
Cast from your body and far across the lapping bodies of our seas,  
While the traffic bleeds beside the canal, weeping the joy of their careless  
Lights traveling home: they too are immortal in an imperfect way,  
And it helps to think that they too never think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To This

As tender as a kiss given over easy with the eggs  
At breakfast:  
Your brown body taugth with promises:  
And I holding you there in that booth, swearing into your  
Eyes, just as any boy:  
Your wordless lips lingering upon my clothes  
As I got to work  
Selling Christmas trees; and at night I have to make love  
To girls neither of us knows  
And the snow snows, but it isn't real- but paper cut up  
By custard cowboys  
Lingering in the plastic graves of kindergarten sung to  
By kittens with wings and castanets of their  
Own,  
Petted by Stewardesses who are always too busy to address  
Us directly- their eyes lingering in the booths of  
Clouds- their pilots happening upon the sun:  
And I think of you, sitting down to a  
Feast that melts through the coops of my daydreams- Alma,  
And finally comes to this.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Touch Down

Enduring the shouts of echoes,  
The yesterdays of airplanes  
Over the summer fields of  
Preschool,  
Talking about fieldtrips to the  
Sky.  
Above where the rabbits lay so  
Frantically  
To the dinner bells of  
Supper time,  
As I am left up in the  
Angelic armpits of  
A lustrous tree;  
She could even be a virgin  
The wind doesn't know  
And I wait in her arboreal  
Nursery for my love to love in,  
To touch down on the shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Touch What I Was Not Meant To Feel

There is no easiness to this body's way-  
There is goes, pretending to be of some good avenue,  
When even near the major highways of sunlicked  
Stock,  
It is wandering off with its eyes:  
I am wandering off, looking for the milkiness of  
Your sodden gold, the crèches down by the carports  
Of your knocky thighs;  
And, as a little boy- I had wishes; and I had dreams,  
And I snuck across the property line  
And drank the neighbor's beer;  
And I have had wishes and dreams of you  
Since first I ever saw you-  
I have put you in the triage of aloe: I have put you  
In a spell- You- so dashing, blue-bell,  
Curled and tucked into mountain rind,  
Abashed by the old forts of the old gods' sea-  
I am trying to cheat fortune to hold your hand,  
To brush one finger once across your tremulous lines-  
To dab one spot of flesh onto your spot of gold,  
Just once, while you are yet breathing and surreal;  
And I do not know your proper names for the things you dream,  
For the children you are yet to have;  
I am but half winsome, comely and lost- and I'll go by my  
Own motorcades down away from you into the sweltering peat:  
I'll fornicate in old graveyards if it's what I have to do,  
And pay less attractive women to whisper venal nothings into  
My ear;  
If that what it means to surround you in a turgid ghost,  
To envelop you like a decrepit seal: with no royalty in my host,  
To touch what I was not meant to feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Try And Sculpt The Sea

I have a picture of you in my studio as a night  
Cap—you seem to be coming home, kissing the purloined  
Roots of the upturned flowers—  
They would be plastic, if they were stolen from the graveyards,  
As a new song bird sings—  
And the boys get out their golden colors to paint their  
Faces—  
And I stare out of my window at the moon: there is a new  
Cloud hanging over her: she seems to be in a movie,  
Or in the middle of making one:  
While I sometimes dream about writing a novel about Lancelot's  
Child—  
And my wife just wants to come to America baring our child:  
And he will come,  
And she will come, and fill up the hospitals with her screams—  
While the flags whip in the wind,  
And the waves continue to try and sculpt the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Unbutton Herself

Painted echoes upon the side of a standing horse:  
I wait to go to the flea market,  
The airplanes fly away, of course- -  
And I have made an instrument of my unbeautified bones'  
They can wait outside forever,  
Dancing like the waves, the skin of the sea'  
But eventually she will have to unbutton herself and let them in,  
Where all of the echoes will take herself to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Understand

Old professors having committed suicide  
Somewhere outside the all night bars upstate  
In the bonfires of state colleges  
Her cadavers still perfume—  
Luxuriant aphorisms for the things  
That have never been found—  
Lost boys like scattered coins along the road,  
Just the foreknowledge of the expressions of  
Thoughts.

My wife loves our son and sits with him for  
Awhile,  
Reading him books he doesn't care to understand.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Vanish

Lucky clouds shroud the moon:  
That is what she does with her frenetic weathers,  
And cars and cables run well and long  
Beneath her,  
Through the cities and out between the well-  
Open pastures,  
And I have been thinking of her some nights,  
Thinking over her like the diminutive wildflower  
Above tree line on the mountain's  
Nape,  
Like a dragon-fly sipping wine- I already know she  
Can do no good,  
Because she is pushing the handy coffins toward me  
In her races by her degrees of braver  
And braver men:  
But I've just been thinking of her and drinking whiskey,  
Alone underneath the house of the one armed  
Farmer,  
And I am not so presumptuous to consider myself  
Beautiful anymore,  
But I can still remember the way she looked in high school  
And Disney World,  
Which was so damned good to keep me writing of her  
Far into old age,  
Smelling her vanished but lucid bouquet  
In the salty viaducts of my forever truancy, helping me  
To remember as well the ways in which I  
Have allowed myself to vanish.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Vanished Angels

Trees can look after themselves- they do that very well,  
Even when there is lightning,  
And the grandmothers have all passed away;  
And the carriages have wrecked down so far beneath the glaciers,  
And they've spilled out their pornographies:  
And the conquistadors have eaten themselves: and what  
They did not finish, the wolves have finished,  
And now the table is set with silverware, and the fairytale  
Princes' hair is golden,  
But she doesn't care about the singing of such mines: she has lit  
Right out of here,  
Her birthstone an empty basket at picking time;  
And the mountains groan from the indecisions of their loneliness,  
And they stop up clouds and delay then for awhile just to encourage  
Tears to flow from the forlorn viaducts which attribute themselves  
To vanished angels,  
So that fountain spring from their summits, and plummet like  
Promises through their perilous keyholes.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Where All The Genies Live

Technically, the words can play for a little while,  
Drunkenly  
Five stories up in a Shanghai suburb  
Even if no one else remembers me:  
The little places we used to go,  
Alone,  
But with a glowing bottle,  
And the language that we used in our nocturnal day  
Was not so peaceable,  
But it made love to flowers  
And made fantasies out of acrobats—  
In the morning, as the children return to lock and key,  
You can only see the used car sales men  
And all of the atrocities underneath the sun—  
But for a little while  
I ventured to where the genies live—  
And we in our trauancies took a knee in the waves,  
And cursed and threw all of our flowers,  
Especially the roses, into the sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Which Even Time

I want to have school buses and better fun:  
I want the day to leap up and lick my hand;  
So that every river is her eyes in amusement,  
Meeting at forks like  
Church dinners, like ways to do math;  
And her nonsense should cover up the silence  
Of cemeteries,  
So even though her mouth isn't there, it is all  
Around me,  
Mouthing off, doing its best to make friends-  
We go to our amusements together now.  
We build a house in the woods and shoot all the  
Indians even though they weren't but  
Bringing coffee cake like fat warm centipedes,  
And in a millennium it will all be a Laundromat  
With ancient arcades,  
And ways to jog and amuse with her there,  
But I can't wait that long.  
I want to French kiss her right now- I haven't French  
Kissed a woman like my dogs in nigh a decade,  
Since there were warm pirates whose warm and topless  
Maidens got their busts sizzled by candle wax  
Dripping from the nobby,  
Corked beards: Even though beautiful women come into  
My tent every day,  
I don't know who they are:  
I can only want to know one woman at a time,  
And you are so far away,  
When you are already saturated by the monsoons, the  
Pregnant bellies of snow clouds that gather around your  
Mountain and dropp their unique weather over the  
Hoods of race cars,  
While you and your family are tranquil, having well imbibed  
Those blue spirits I have sent to you,  
To which even time has known no sword or talisman that  
Can kill.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Win All That They Have To Lose

Scarred and selling in the woods, stilted by  
Windmills who stretch their tattooed necks- rookeries  
For the pilgrims of song birds  
In the motes of light distilled through the pantomiming  
Keyholes  
Of disgruntled mountains: the airplanes eating themselves  
Through the over clouded passes,  
And everything up in the basin shedding its sins, like a  
Typhoon broiled from a inland sea that dried into salt mines  
Before any of us existed,  
Like a burial mound looking into the drugged streets of  
Mexico,  
Where little girls flitter on cobble stones, and leech  
The milk of moribund alley cats:  
In the spume of a glittering womb of a holy mother who is  
All too sure of her voluptuous attributes:  
And there she hovers like the boudoir of a rain cloud,  
Pinching the nipples on the fetuses of grapes,  
Weathering the copperhead skin of the farmers who worship  
Her as muse,  
Warming their hands so by her promises of her stones,  
Shaped like the eggs spilling a preferential lottery that hopes  
To win all that they have to lose.

Robert Rorabeck

## To Wipe Its Old Self Clean Again

And the bodies are going to feel so real;  
And the bodies are going to feel so real and come for me  
In the gypsum bong fests,  
That nothing else can very well be survived,  
And this is just the verbiage of the very last of all of these  
]Very pitiful bouquets,  
But otherwise don't you know the very least of any of all of  
This,  
And wont you at least admit that neither of us are the  
Attorneys or the vermin of  
Every single one of these tourisms;  
And now at the very least we can all sing, with the Mickey  
Mouse ears of all of these tourisms,  
And now that it all almost  
Felt good- I can liken you to the tourisms of my  
Neighborhood, while the old serpent licks its wounds until  
While it can battle again;  
And by then the old standard will have wiped clean and have  
Gathered itself together to wipe its old self clean  
Again.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Yet Another World

Pestilence in a field of joy:  
Little girls sleeping with spiders of tin-  
Their dogs run away with foxes:  
The sea wanting in- and across them, all of the  
Old wounds of mountains,  
Of the old men sleeping in their wombs:  
While across their bodies the shadows  
Entomb,  
Tattoos that float like clouds living there:  
The vampires looking through the window:  
Their hearts an apple orchard:  
The sky filled with the jublations of fireworks,  
Pinning around, collecting the dollars  
Of their wishes from the throats  
Of gold fish,  
Little boys coming home off the streams of their  
Dying fathers  
Don't say a word, but climb back into their  
Wombs like homeless turtles curling in the  
The grottos  
Where she cleans the laundry, and sings for them,  
Her throat an underwater pearl  
Returning the stolen moonlight to yet another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# To You Right Now

Can't I say that I have been born into you,  
While I put the bottle down and try to jump:  
Sure, yes, I am going,  
As I am leaping: Like a pretty butterfly while I am lying,  
While all of the prettiest of white boys are  
Sleeping in their air-conditioned cars: while all of this they  
Are doing, reassured because the graveyard she is still blooming:  
And they have seen the oysters sequestered in her grotto,  
All the peals laid out thoroughly opened in her boudoir,  
All as if the open throats of opals on Sundays in the jewelry rooms  
Of her blonded boudoirs;  
But I am just as sure, Alma, that they have never seen her;  
Just as I am sure, that they will never see you, Alma;  
They will never see you, but you are just as beautiful laying across  
The places that they sleep, as brown as delicate as a picnic  
Of mariposa, all the mariposa weeping the molasses of all the sweetest  
Times while all of the gringos sleep and dream of fireworks shooting  
Off that are never as so sweet and as near as you are to me right  
Now, Alma: Alma, as I am to you right now, As I weep....  
And weep.... And weep.

Robert Rorabeck



# To Your Divine

I drink so much it is as if you are standing  
Righteous before me,  
Pushing your trams and your coffins,  
Hawking your wears and jingling.  
The child diadems your hip  
And you are more verdant than any forest now  
Extinct,  
And make for good reason for the unnecessary ness  
Of decrying whatever animals need never  
To exist:  
Only you are here, one deity arisen out of a species  
Of titted sex;  
And your tiny vestibule rises in the north like  
A fox-grape monument that traffic turns  
Toward,  
As if hearing a perfume; and these words are the  
Barn door left open,  
As the windmill squeaks protesting the quixotic  
Nights,  
And now the cliffs are real and moonlit,  
Circled by the ghosts of gentlemanly birds,  
And the highway is so long outside your door,  
But you can just stand beside it and it  
Fades away.  
Then the snow comes and takes up the place,  
And adds to your divine,  
And multiplies you in my mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# To Your Questionable Travels

Fine weave of Zoroastrian souls  
Suspended between us and the clouds all day,  
Wishing that it was my ancestors there  
In that amber patina over the new crust:  
In the distance, low backed mountains without  
Trees  
As maroon as warlike grottos; and maybe you are  
There someplace indiscernible in my canvas:  
Always there trying to migrate with your one good leg,  
Counting the troubles which harangue the atmosphere  
Over your eyes like the ghosts of defeated soldiers,  
In the landscape of mothers baked in that clay  
Which make your eyes stand out even more if you  
Ever chose to open them again, as if it made a difference,  
Or gave even more wonderful sadness and  
A destination to your questionable travels.

Robert Rorabeck

# Today In A Rain Shower

Sitting on my laurels and drinking the last of my  
Guatemalan rum,  
I am yet always hiking further and further up for you, Alma:  
I have almost masturbated atop the pearly summit of  
Another orgasm,  
While your sister laughs at you for being in love:  
And then at night I light candles and pray to the Virgin of  
Guadalupe to give you the best carnivals the goodnesses that are  
Your pleasure:  
While your body has already breastfed the god fearing lips of  
Another man's two children,  
They are like the Siamese springs of a hidden cemetery still  
Breathing in the topknots of a cliff only the best climbers  
Know how to survive up to:  
And now that I have gotten here, I remember how you road me  
Like a cowgirl up into the rowdy lights of a cherry-creek  
Rodeo:  
And we made love, face to face, while you smelled like the spilled  
Syrup over a delectable and forbidden meal,  
But it was the best love that I can remember: Alma, it was  
Real, and the gods remembered us,  
Even while the airplanes fell down into the organic pits of the  
Gulf of Mexico:  
Maybe that was where our ancestors met and ate themselves:  
But can you imagine the breakfast our child would have if we came  
Together,  
Two souls separated so far by all of these forbidden worlds:  
They would be so brilliant as to be the first to go to even more forbidden  
Planets,  
And they would have no need for television: and she or he could feel our  
Roots growing through the rich abutments of their body, Alma:  
I am sure that our child could feel this way,  
But I can only imagine how he would see all of the stars in the heavens:  
I can only imagine how she might feel the pulsing lights of the far  
Away stars as the rain kissed her skin, as I kissed your skin  
Today in a rain shower in the living mausoleum of your sweet-ass car.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tomatio

These tasks you give me ring like cicadas over  
My sweat and tears,  
And I put my fingers on the shedding green skin of  
A tomatio, and feel it like a jaded breast-  
Then at night after the black children have graciously  
Vacated my swings under the combusting canopies  
Of slash pine,  
I try to metamorphose beneath the very same moon  
I have no doubt you are trying to sell under,  
Though your face beneath it is indescribable,  
A mask with so much power but no eyes.  
And I thought I was trying to conjure you and your taught  
Junoesque thighs,  
But it seems that you know how to better handle this  
Cerulean airplane,  
And so you glide your sweet coffins like a broom through  
The floors of close space,  
So every corridors becomes your song bird,  
And you never have to look up to watch me die for what  
I was shooting for.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tomato Dacaries

Give me motion without motion,  
And I will show you  
The male and female lives  
Glowing at either end of a magnet  
Or canoe:  
The sides of my face switching sides  
And finally surrendering  
To the graves:  
How I keep doing this,  
Painting mountains and going to bed,  
And rising again,  
Wishing to worship the beautiful world  
That has abandoned me,  
Wishing for a beautiful woman to love  
Who hasn't even thought of me enough  
To have to leave me alone,  
Because all the good girls wear the same  
Uniforms and they always sit with  
Their legs on both sides of the saddle,  
And the stop at all railroads  
And obey the wishes of crossing guards.  
They have never missed a candle on any of  
Their birthday cakes,  
But they secretly love it when they come around  
To the swamps,  
And the mosquitoes steal tiny tomato dacaries from  
Their jiggling breasts.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tombstones Of Their Crosses

Dawn cluttered with song birds- cannibals with  
Beautiful throats  
And torn wings- fighting for superiority  
As the curtains rise on the day  
Like a movie theatre exposed to horribly  
Carnality-  
And somewhere in the chaos, looking down from  
Broken nests where there now lay  
Only bleeding arrowheads- you down  
There somewhere,  
Riding across an alligator or a rhinoceros-  
And you look beautiful, even eating that flesh:  
And you make love to conquistadors until  
They are cenotaphs,  
And you bathe in their hearts underneath the pale  
Light and tombstones of their crosses-  
The sea a salty sister, with feral whispers, wishing  
She were what you are....

Robert Rorabeck

# Tomorrow And Tomorrow

Now I am down for awhile, underneath the planets,  
Just as if I was a crèche of airplanes  
Slumbering:  
Just as if maybe you loved her for a little while,  
But then you had to become all stuck up,  
While this is just my dream repeating:  
Maybe you don't even have to hold out, silent  
Song beautifully managed between the  
Breasts of the canyons:  
Maybe this is just how I pretend to dissolve,  
As the heavens matriculate before the management  
Of the better tenements:  
Maybe this is just how they do their thing, singing through  
Their bereavements, their flagella struggling  
Like freshmen:  
And this is just a new song in which they have to peruse themselves,  
Trying to become better lovers,  
While I can stand out and swear, like a unicorn, like  
A werewolf,  
That this is just the bouquet of another slumber echo- and  
I don't even have to manage to be here-  
And I want you now,  
But in your houses, the angels sing in their cages,  
Of the wonderful but obtainable possibilities of tomorrow,  
And tomorrow, and tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tomorrow And Tomorrow

The death of many things and all trespasses  
Apathetically on the livings' cages:  
And on their houses and what all, while I lived today,  
Alma,  
And ran my fingers across the blinds of your ribs:  
Maybe it is true that you stole them from me,  
And made it all the way home from  
Mexico, but I don't care:  
You live here now, and I am yours, and maybe we will  
Have children,  
But I don't care: whatever possibilities can blow on the  
Winds,  
As long as you happen to me tomorrow, and tomorrow  
Again and again.

Robert Rorabeck



# Tomorrow's Consumptions

The city at night,  
The city at large:  
Open mouthed, swallowing,  
The giant in the clouds;  
It was swallowing its bridegrooms-  
It was swallowing its anyways at night:

This wasn't just America,  
Like a bridegroom awaiting  
And this wasn't just a lonely  
Wife pressed against  
The canals-

Trying to press herself up against the saltwater  
Tears  
Of christmas.  
This was all of the saltwater tears of all  
Of the presidents  
Awaiting the come down and the annexations  
Of all of our houses:

Even after we had realized that we were just rabbits  
Pressed into our hutches after hours  
Of the openness of holidays:

This was just the last lamp that shed itself  
After the last opening hours of all of the holidays:

And I have kept myself closed mouthed afterawhile  
After the closings down of all of the openings of the highways:

The high schools are all of the pretty monuments:  
In the bathrooms, all of the prettiest girls have been looking at  
Themselves after the bypasses of all of the highways:

But now, anyways, after the nights bloom,  
I swallowed my pride and learned to walk sideways:

And this winds up to be shown into the wherewithal  
Of all of those defeated decades:

The night blooming jasmine are coming soon  
Before all of the echoes of the blooming tomorrows:  
In beautiful decades, all of the housewives are opening and bedecking  
themselves

And this just happens to be the last restoration  
Of the colors by which they are costuming themselves tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tomorrow's Forever Rainbow

And all of the stars- what did they  
Know while the candles kept their bow—  
And the heavens sang—  
And the seas complained—  
And the unkempt heroes slept beneath the  
Possibilities in tomorrow's forever rainbow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tongue In Cheek

So the world heaps up the joy for its grotesque  
Figurines,  
The cowboys and Indians fighting again in the sand,  
As another day proceeds;  
The wind brooms the faces of tombs, and mothers go out of their  
Rooms to go shopping in the yellow nude;  
And they all have children who safely sing,  
And who swing so safely on the safe, safe swings:  
While the world spins in a perfect arc,  
And the frogs go chirping after dark down to the dark, dark prominence  
Of the slow canal:  
And it goes creeping, creeping softly how it goes creeping past  
The bedrooms for another week,  
And all the wives kiss their husbands tongue in cheek.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Afraid To Visit The Graves Of The Girls I Love

Cold and almost down deep enough to see,  
The sky is a blind woman clothed in shimmering  
Rags;  
And I am failing her- I can barely breathe,  
And the girls who once sat against me in class  
Like windblown trees, roller skate over my bones,  
The innocuous cenotaphs lying on the blistered  
Planes of Colorado- They are shooting forth to  
Find the cavaliers, to take shelter and wash themselves  
Under the silver shields and platters:  
She has made so many more important friends, well  
Dressed, who graduate from Harvard and go  
On cruises; and the truth is, I can't even fix cars,  
And am even too afraid to visit the graves of the  
Girls I love, but I just keep doing this, tooting my  
Fading horn after all my cousins have already charged  
Into marriage, sunken into the trailer parks of a  
Penniless saccharine malaise, they love the things they  
Love, and don't have to work for it, or try and appear  
Proud and handsome- She is married now,  
But my words are spilled down here the cheap forensic  
Evidence in the black and white noir, never found or  
Even thought to look for, with the wavering plastic weeds  
The toy mermaids made of hard and knotted wood,  
Who I have given my heart to, but it seems they also  
Are never hungry.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Beautiful For Me To Describe

I drink as I stand and the night vanished  
Without any reason—  
I do not have any more personality than the morning,  
And the most of what I've done should be  
Forgotten:  
And then they are growing up—and the lungs of  
Infant babies are becoming butterfly wings—  
Each wave a glass house that is soon  
Destroyed—  
And another number gone into the lost and  
Found of the playgrounds of the echoes of  
The churches—  
Your old teacher was your beloved, but now  
There are so many mice in the castles that  
There doesn't even seem to be a place to stand in  
The movie theatre—so the words are divorced  
From their mouths—  
And the night shutters its existence a kaleidoscope  
Blinded by the daylight and the multitude of  
Things that are too beautiful for me to describe to  
Enjoy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Busied

Wounded by airplanes and agape,  
And then to be seeming to look away at new wounds:  
The sky opens up,  
Like the proverbial sea parting,  
And the old lovers find untried things to say to themselves-  
Their bed sparking of the utensils of heavily  
Used fireworks,  
As the rusty wolves wait in the timbers of the over-fallen  
Woods,  
Where even the tinniest of little girls have over-slipped  
Their playgrounds  
And are making new wounds into the dirt,  
Their skirts all too open for the busiest of ants  
Who are themselves too busied in their work.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Busy With Your Disbelieving

Anything for a cheap thrill:  
Roller coasters, sorceresses, and that funny old sun  
With nothing to do:  
I looked into your eyes as long as you would let me:  
I looked in them still while they were lowering me  
Into the grave on the wayside of the  
Pilgrimage:  
My body had lost its tingle and its shine,  
And a pall had set across me like a gunfighter doused in  
Turpentine:  
And I want to buy a house and invite you in like a  
Vampire: You kissed me neck once, twice;  
And then I kissed your lips like a fat hibiscus;  
It was as if I drew my saber on an over-trained victim:  
I became too good for the Olympics:  
I defeated my master even before I was out of high school,  
And now you cant look at your eyes in the mirror anymore:  
You just eat after midnight with your sister,  
Wondering why anything about you hasn't changed:  
You were still very beautiful weeping above my grave,  
Because that's how I wished you:  
I brought you up as a daughter I could never kiss, because that is  
How I raised you to be;  
And now you are immaculate, a fun house of perfected genuflection  
Only in town for a week:  
And other men will bring you flowers, and you will kiss their  
Cheeks,  
But you can never see me again; because this is my carnival  
And I am packed up and leaving  
While the different sort of palm trees whisper your name;  
And you are too busy with your disbelieving.

Robert Rorabeck



# Too Close To Touch

Reiterations of the progenitors,  
We ripple outwards  
From our ancestors—  
The craftsmanship of  
Ephemeral carpenters,  
Each of us the latest  
Attempt to realize the  
Original Form,  
The desire of our species  
To return to the loci of paradise;  
So we amputate our self into  
The opposite sex,  
In the futile search to  
Recover the innocent childhood  
Kidnapped like phosphorescent mica  
Under forgetful stones  
Scarring the historical battlefield,  
Utterly imperfect with each  
Passing generation  
Stumbling blindfolded and  
Gut shot,  
Feeling but not recognizing  
The manic happiness  
Of our breathless ancestors'  
Lipless grinning;  
With each attempt the God  
Inside us becomes more miniaturized,  
The domesticated kine  
Who stands dumbly  
Expecting to be fed for  
Scientific butchery,  
Crying in our powerless homes,  
Latchkey kids microwaving dinner  
As those we love die  
Similar lives  
Surrounding us,  
The paradoxical splendor too  
Close for us to touch....



# Too Coy To Be Frightened

Plenty to do this evening:

Fifty bins of pumpkins- so many spooks  
For one holiday, but we hope to do  
Our part at rotting teeth and welcoming in  
Satan:

Oh Satan, thank you for your greatest counterculture  
We are never allowed to speak about,  
And for helping me get this farmer's tan throughout  
The day while the black men stoked up this  
White lung of a tent  
The lights glow under like the softness of a suburban  
Foyer.

And there is a black cat stalking birds in the grass,  
Which lights out towards the blue gills in the canal  
Whenever she sees me-  
Every animal with its survival instinct- That is why  
I haven't looked into your eyes in so long,  
And write short poems to get my fingers away from you  
Before they entirely burn with insouciant poisons;  
And the buses turn around every day like a wedding train  
Of really fearful ghosts,  
And I always check to see if you might be on one of them,  
But you are never on one of them-  
And this poem is keeping lit too long to justify any more  
Of it being sent into the unreturning sea of obscurity,  
Like fifty palates of pumpkins tumbling in the waves,  
The moon's Amazonian breast smiling down upon them  
And fluming its milky penumbra to feed the feral cats  
Who are too coy to be frightened to say hello.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Enamored To Even Care

I eat kettle corn  
And exhale through my sugar twinged  
Lips,  
And pretend that I've just come down  
From working the  
Winged  
Fair;  
Or that I was its auctioneer  
With so many words on my lips,  
Or the lover of  
Her fairer sister,  
My fingers entwined with ribbons  
Of absolutely nothing  
I have stolen from her hair,  
As she lay dazzled,  
Bare breasted,  
Giving her all to the sun so absentminded  
And immortal it would do her no good:  
It was as if he wasn't even there,  
But, alas,  
She was too enamored to even care.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Far Away To Listen

Which leg should die first:

On the contrary, I am sure things are getting worse,

And her eyes should look further away:

Bukowski should return in full conflagration,

And take charge of all I've forgotten,

And I should say her name:

I should say her name, but I am a vampire hunter

Without hope: Come and take my death and check

My billfold:

There is nothing here so important that it should be allowed

To stare out impishly under the stars and hope

To be understood:

Hood this curse, and gunny sack,

Take it home for a meal, nurse your sweet, toothy brood

On your pap, steal what you can not find wandering

Around the feral borders of your mind:

Wash the chassis of cars of strange young masters,

Check the stars for ensuing disasters,

And hurry on home to your curt your masters,

Twine your slenderest of fingers into his slender mustache;

And let your eyes fall away to the side, like sad toys;

Let your eyes fall away to the side like sad toys that I

Have refused to put away- uncork the rood and let it sail straight

Over the national forest of hot springs and antlers:

Let your spirits giggle nastily and in love; let the kindergarteners

Go out underneath spittooned sprinklers and enjoy the plastic

Heather,

While you and your bo lie suppliant rocking in the trailer

Atop the uneasy esplanade while your young toddlers learn how

To stand upright, mighty-fisted fighting cougars

And the wolfish who grin like politicians being just reintroduced

Like strangers to the headshots of your youthful ambitions,

Who sigh and bay behind their thrush of walls,

But your children are already too far away to listen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Far Away To See

I set out on my horse- it was the  
Best thing I could do-  
We galloped to the sea- it was the only  
Thing I could do,  
And we drowned beneath the windmills  
For her-  
My horse and I, as my father watched,  
But the stars were too far away to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Far From Her

You'll go this way, and we'll make love:  
We'll sleep over alone together- the rivers will  
Flow around the empty rooms in  
Houses,  
And the eagles will birth their young over the highest  
Canopies in the forest:  
Their first born will be as blonde as a forest fire,  
And in her freckled armpits he'll find shade,  
As if in a fire escape or  
An apple orchard:  
He will learn how to stand up and breathe at a rest  
Stop going up to her university  
Oily and tanned, never learning a better language,  
The airplanes traveling as if on  
A scent overhead, the pinwheels and roller coasters  
Curling in the peppermint hallucinations  
Too sweet for the tourists to avoid-  
And if there were any better words, or prayers to  
Sing to her- and if there is a better girl than  
Her to sing to,  
He, of course will never know- because she will be  
As far as he can learn,  
And even all of his nights will be spent auburn, nude,  
And wounded beneath her windows,  
As she cries down to him the names of other loves,  
In languages he is too far from her to understand.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Fearful To Go

Lights go out and the rides at  
Adolescent amusement parks slow down  
And stop,  
The oil lays asleep in a windless castanet  
Far beneath the earth,  
Gurgling and cooing,  
And the traffic narrows, simplifies, as your  
Lawyers and doctors and stronger and even  
Braver men return to reciprocate;  
And they have bought bouquets and been to the  
Jewelry store,  
While I am the enigma on my stormy mountain  
Trying to create enough static electricity through  
My joints to keep the show going,  
To keep just the smallest town alight by  
Conducting energy through my toes to the  
Light bulbs in the snow;  
And I haven't seen you for a decade, but I know  
How you look,  
How you can raise entire armies of enigmatic dead  
From just your simple tears:  
And I want to call down to you an orchestra of things  
Highlighted and unreal,  
But I want us to defy them all and stir up a hornets  
Nest,  
To crenellate a show above tree line,  
A strange and better lit amusement where every tourist  
Is too fearful to go.

Robert Rorabeck



# Too Lighthearted For Anything I've Been Heard To Sau

Another put down séance to hide my face into:  
So you won't find it where I've crept so far away from  
Your town:  
You will be going out tonight, your face so pale and  
Youthful under the banking clouds;  
And your eyes will soar upwards, delighted and without  
Fear;  
And your man will turn you around like a wind chime  
Of a weather vane;  
And the crocodiles will watch you with eyes just like  
Your birthstones,  
Watching you peel out gleefully underneath where little  
Boys too fly,  
Where I am so far away,  
Where I am sleeping underneath a bus and hiding  
My face in a selfish mirror of the very earth that you  
Dance atop of, so garish and nude in your many miles  
Of display;  
It seems as if you'd be smothering me, if you weren't  
Too lighthearted for anything I've been heard to say.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# Too Many Bottles To Count

Do not applaud what is ninety-five  
Percent failure,  
Unmarketable, expired:  
The crenulations of a frozen river,  
The ineffective sulfur of a homeopathic  
Spell:  
There is nothing true to these relations,  
The city avoids what it can't sell,  
The beautiful housewives living well  
Displayed in the beautiful neighborhoods,  
Each housewife's home a window  
Displaying their aspects of a desirable  
Gender;  
Expensive wares are desirable and take  
A long time to acquire,  
The proper spelling to handle, and a  
High position;  
The waves are so brilliant, though down  
From there- the dragons sleep in clutches  
Like ship wrecks, green iron cannons molted  
Together- the earth bubbles pearled flatulence,  
Young gangsters holding hands go into cool  
Movie theatres,  
Little girls writing their dreams of princely loves;  
But this has nothing to do with the soft  
Murder I've done,  
The fetal nebulous of uniformed glass, though  
Glowing like a priceless miracle,  
Disavowed and in second thought returned to  
The un-enchanted womb, who is too busy  
Fondling her better intended playboys,  
To write excuses to such failures of chaos  
In the rabid sea where there are already too  
Many bottles to count.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Many Fanfares

Another Monday in the sun—looking up and searching the  
Airplanes leaping the burning everglades for the  
Answers—and the answers come:  
Daycare and kindergarten—and any words are poems  
Spoken from the misinformed tulips of the young:  
And you were there bright as an angel on a fieldtrip  
From her tomb—  
Were you as careless in the suburbia's insouciantly green  
Labyrinths as a youth could become—  
And the world without a joy came to rest into its undiscovered  
Fantasies on the other side of the canal—  
Words of joy lost to the mouths of dogs—and I know that even  
Though you are taken for granted, a better place can  
Be spoken to you— and as the morning calls through the  
Daylights of its conquests, you will be made to come—  
Harlequin of too many fanfares—a marionette of all too many young.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Many Feet

When the day lies down then so do I,  
But before that I unharness my team of unanswerable dogs:  
You see, they don't have to look anyone in the eye;  
But you are a beautiful woman, and you are floating in the sky.  
Maybe you were also in my dream while the cold cracked the  
Necks of trees, while the buzzards swang:  
This you know made the stars so glib that they cut themselves and  
Fell down from the sky, and even the wolves howled with my  
Dogs  
Until the entire world was painted out, and it became so frighteningly  
Cold that it was forced to grow warm again  
While life was giving out down the blisters of the street,  
And you came loping towards me a creature of little heart and  
Too many feet.

Robert Rorabeck

# Too Many Worlds

Slides down into pools, baseball diamonds wimpled  
And coy underwater:  
I got my first gray cat when I learned how to pee in the toilet,  
But I continued wetting the bed until I was twelve:  
I loved Chelsea in kindergarten and she loved Michael;  
I loved Denise in second grade:  
I brought her tulips: I loved Kelly then, and kissed and tongued  
Her once just off of Blue Heron:  
Only once, and now she is driving back down to Tennessee to kiss  
And hug her children,  
And her husband, and by the middle of this week I will have a little  
Spanish house that will also be my grave:  
And I want to love a woman, because I have jogged all alone for so  
Many nights side by side with the canals of this world:  
I can no longer love white women, because they make me have nightmares  
Of sleeping with my sister,  
And their clothing is too beautiful to see myself in,  
And the lips of Mexicans burn with fire, and the desire of new knowledge  
To be born again,  
To surrender to the flags of their third world countries,  
And to wheel their leggy cannons into my new living room like green copper  
Trams to pin mobiles over, and underneath those plans to kiss and mew to  
Our mulatto children who through the both of us will know  
Too many worlds to be contained by any of them.

Robert Rorabeck

# Touch Down

This smoke without reason I will and cannot

Save:

Like a panhandler of the fateful aphrodisiacs, I

Have discovered that it is the really evil people

That get more than lucky in this world.

As the fish swim backwards up and down, dumping

Their row on the slick backs of rounded

Stones

The dogs never stop to paw:

And I have been in love in my solitude: I have traveled

Alone up the wedding gowns of so many uninhibited

Mountains,

And I have wet myself alone after crepuscule,

And after midnight, after all of the middle class housewives

Had already gone down and down:

As Alma has gone down,

And the roads become easy and almost like fairytales,

And they do this to survive, but again because it feels good:

And the roads turn into themselves,

Hugging in their gypsum like grandmothers who are even

Still breathing,

And beyond them there are only the clouds who bring the

Exegesis of so many possibilities;

As if they were bringing my muses uninhibited to me

Even while I slept aboard airplanes that refused to ever,

Ever touch down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Touchdowns That Surround Her

Fruit market in the sunlight without any other muse:  
Daydreams through the bright spokes  
While I don't have anything else to lose: the government  
Hardly pays anymore with the airplanes touching  
Down- the private enterprises  
Of angels spilled out across the frontiers that no longer  
Have to believe anymore:  
There they are all laid out in numerous cornucopia  
While the apples of her delight never even had to spell  
The world, but we are all awakened by her lips  
Eventually, while she bights into the perfumed  
Meat and swears: there is her country left behind her:  
There, like the fireworks as if unlit,  
And the other scars that could not be trained by circus  
Trainers, and yet I may very well survive it:  
There she lays, perpetually semi naked underneath the slants  
Of her window- inside or outside of his arms:  
He who fathered two children inside or at least around her,  
While I remain still troubling in my fits-  
Lost in the flight delusions which still whisper her name,  
And which still hold something more than mere  
Delight by lighting their wings  
And make touchdowns that surround her.

Robert Rorabeck



# Toward The Finish Line

Quietly, quietly swing my stick  
While the mist is whistling, while the school is still  
Locked;  
And all the kids that will enter here in are back in the  
Tiny little ballrooms of their social classes,  
Except that the prettiest of them has been given over  
To the crenulated back of the alligator who waited  
For her all after midnight,  
Like some lazy whirligig fallen off the truck as the fair  
Was leaving;  
And she can be all somnolent, like the breath of a deity  
In the wind blowing;  
Something really old and turning out- there she was,  
Seeming to float, blind to the swings and slick,  
Silver amusements,  
Dulling even the moon: she went to her motionless lover  
And put herself on its horny back, like Europa did with  
Jove,  
And he slid smiling into the slick canal where never an  
Orchid grew;  
And I thought she would just go around for some times turning  
In the grids that would confuse her of the sea,  
But she never returned to the school-yard,  
And I skipped class and slept for her in wayward cars like  
Pine trees, and never learned the proper names for the sweltering  
Flowers the Mexicans had planted there-  
So eventually I graduated and left before the ceremony was over,  
Like a fish out of his plastic bag, finally really breathing;  
And ran through the parking lot my cap and gown streaming  
Like a virgin in a vacuous library;  
And I never found again where it was she disappeared into her dreamings,  
And the ballplayers played, and the jockeys squinted on their  
Horses  
Toward the finish line that they were sure wasn't a very long ways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Toward The Jungle Of The Deeper Shore

Traffic is an endless dream:  
That is what our Presidents are made of,  
While the Mexicans crack ice,  
And the great population of iguanas lick  
Corduroy flies in their despotic jungle;  
And today I ate my plantains,  
And the sun and sky rolled nice for me-  
Well, I wasn't the prettiest boy around, but  
I didn't need to be:  
I was sharp and could dive down for miles,  
And paid no attention to the housewife smiles:  
They could not enter me for very long without  
Needing to come back up into the shallows;  
And the Italian boys came in nicely bronzed,  
With teeth like corns of ivory;  
And their wives and lovers and day glow honeys  
Sat up for awhile on the hay bales and took their pictures;  
Studded and ringed- it is a funny two legged circus  
They go around in- living their lives promenaded monkeys  
On moony chains;  
And the sad thing was I saw you there with them with your  
Auburn hair and your old soccer tan lines like beautiful scars,  
And you were going around with them like a sweet titted  
Goldy bear,  
Bobbing alluringly in their sunny shadows, taking your pictures  
To remember and compare  
How illusory your world of his is, and how spare:  
While I stared at you from underneath a gray hood and cheeky  
Scars,  
Watching you mop your cherries across the tables and the bars,  
And it was all I needed to perceive  
How lovely was your shallows, and how save I was  
For from any side of your luscious contours it was only a step  
Or two toward the jungles of the deeper shore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Towards A Beast Of My Lovely Soul

The candles fix themselves after their mother has  
Died, and the paper airplanes  
Fold their own wings: you can look for me on the other side  
Of the canal,  
And listen to my voice the wind sings through the cypress eaves:  
And I am scarred and full of sorrows,  
And I keep on taking back, and wishing my promises were more  
Heartfelt; or that the Virgin of Guadalupe could get up  
And stretch her wings and flying the same paths as the flight attendants,  
Who cast through the shadows until their burning wheels are  
Cooled;  
And then in the places that they land that I don't know: well, goodbye,  
Like graveyards in the south of France  
Where little girls take little ants onto the spittoons of their wrists,  
And they talk to their silly things all day while real boys and  
Marionettes who are training to lie for themselves,  
Take the trains in and out of heaven- and the other places where I  
Should not belong- but you will still come high tomorrow,  
In a silken pedigree out besides all of those mailboxes,  
Rubbing elbows with the gods who are wearing gasmasks afraid to  
Breathe the same air as my muses, their horses, and cowboys,  
Who all are smiling down through the rich substances of the valley  
That pitch the cerulean tents of dollhouses and the other model  
Games that my knuckles crack like firecrackers in the lips of  
Roses; and in increments towards a beast of my lovely soul- toward  
My Alma, methodically moves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Towards Heaven

In ways I bet like fire,  
My belly growing pregnant with rattlesnakes and  
Liquor- yet, still  
I struggle up the impregnable slopes, taking my  
Time, and finding my ways  
Up the insurmountable- to kiss the lips of god,  
My muse striped in the colors of  
Mexico:  
From here, the traffic looks like the toys of infants:  
From here, I can see Mount Esquidilla like a goddess:  
She rises still, her neck as white as from opals,  
From the juvenile aspens that bud around her  
Neck  
After the fire, after the grizzly bears- and I take my  
Time surrendering to her, counting my prayers  
And climbing into a dead tree amidst the boulders  
To have another photograph,  
To think of my mother's cradle in the woods of  
Colorado now fifty years ago-  
To rest like a bird  
With my dogs, praying to some god I haven't even yet  
Met,  
The road beneath me an endless ribbon that the  
Anonymous traffic kisses,  
Flooding themselves in the letters of nameless saviors,  
Themselves not even sure that the way they are going  
Is towards heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

# Towards Her Abandoning

In these young stages of your echoes—  
I will not fear you while I am your teacher,  
And my poetry is remiss to echo or even to include  
You—  
And the part of my soul that includes you is  
Devoid of aesthetic beauty,  
Because in the summer the planes come:  
It costs a week's paycheck to ride upon them:  
But you can ride over the playgrounds,  
Or you can ride over the see—  
The sun shines it's a\$\$ over the open abuses—  
The housewives like the cloy bouquets over  
The Bay of Bimini—  
And the horses of the cavalry gallop—until they  
Are eaten by the spears of the sun—  
And bottle rockets jump up like crickets to meet  
The caresses of daylight,  
As if all of their cavalcade was a soap opera  
Delineated to the afternoons of a daydream—  
And not a cabaret in the midnights of  
A theme park where my darkest muses still come—  
Nocturnal roses perfuming beneath a Ferris  
Wheel refusing to move on—  
These are the places it cannot keep—as the song birds  
Fall into the briars,  
And I love her ceaselessly, even though abandoned of  
Her amusements—having to awaken again tomorrow,  
To imagine her singing to her children  
Awakening upstate alongside the rivers she had to  
Follow towards her abandoning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Towards The Childhoods Of Delusions

Dancing towards the childhoods of delusions,  
The moth becomes in love with the  
Flames,  
Just as the midnights fall in love with the cadavers,  
As the sunlight obsesses with the rains—  
And didn't I see you at the football game, playing  
The flute, your skin as brown as honey,  
Your mind as undone as rum—  
And you were laughing and blowing kisses  
To the boys in the skies—  
Each one of a pilot of your adolescence's goodbyes—  
Words that escaped me and their heavens  
Languished in your eyes,  
As my memories ran around the fields for  
Other girls—until I returned home and remembered  
My wife—and the passions that lay narcoleptic  
Behind the houses where we spend our lives—  
The avenues of rivers that keep turning toward  
The seas—  
The memories of angels of your adolescent trauancies  
Shooting like fireworks on up into skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Toy Soldier, Plastic Boy

She might have won her war,

But I won my little battle.

Robert Rorabeck

# Toys For Your Children

In this body, hunched—lycanthropic—  
The memory of the sea trying to reach the  
Overpass where its homeless lovers  
Wait—  
The cars arrows of predestination—controlled,  
Wheeling beneath the highways of  
Airplanes,  
Peppered with the plantations and nurseries  
Where the bees pollinate  
For things of flowers—and where I've  
Thought of you,  
Coming out like a mollusk from a tear:  
There, I see you again:  
Your wings are wet, but will soon dry—  
It is your birthday  
And there are toys for your children underneath  
Your arms.

Robert Rorabeck



# Transcendentalists

Tired, where the hole in the heart buzzes,  
And hairy men who tell me they are transcendentalists  
Keep going down, down, down, chewing nature food,  
As they point out the molasses cataracts,  
The steps they take inching the body's rhythms:  
They pass through a hole in my ribs, and say,  
"How so." Muir climbs up one and sleeps on it  
On his back, says there is nothing more natural than the  
Un-abating love of silly fools. Thoreau, in a lady's  
Sunhat thinks quietly that he should build his house  
Right here where the tissue is firmest, the darkening purple,  
Beside a lake where day dreams splash like brook,  
But Thoreau soon calls the others nearer to him, for  
He is in the lead and the darkest down, where there they  
Can sense the throbbing of all things pitiful. Here where  
There is hardly any light, though above my fingers flutter  
Like frightened flocks of silly, featherless birds.  
Here is where the dark spume resonates, and they say  
Before turning back up never to return, "In these dark woods  
We fear to go."

Robert Rorabeck

# Transoms Of My

How it was that you have a family I don't  
Know,  
Maybe it was that you had it while you were crossing over  
From Mexico;  
But this is my pledge, my Hibernian fire,  
My paper airplane torches,  
My love crossed bird on its wire: Alma, Alma; alighting,  
Fly:  
I give you the promise of hope- and I stab my heart and die,  
I die:  
Or I hang myself inside my yellow shelter, while my  
Bromeliads cavort,  
This is the last report of my heartache, and the palpitations  
Of my ever beating percussion:  
Sometimes the sky wants rain, and sometimes the rain wants some:  
But I followed you all the way home from work today:  
At least all the way to Cherry lane, and almost all of the way  
Home where it must happen that your two children  
Were blossoming;  
And it was some kind of Technicolor dream, caracoling on its  
Merry-go-round, making fun of nothing:  
Your eyes so brown and wild, filled with a sea of zorros:  
Holding your pin knife, you cut the ears and heads and hearts  
From the day old lettuce, until you looked up and saw through the  
Transoms of my days: my heart my soul- you let off and sucreated:  
Together we were made whole.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

# Transoms Of The School Bus

Everyday losing to the easements where  
The butterflies infatuate  
Over the anorexic pistils saluting airplanes,  
Swimming in brandies and other  
Forget-me-nots just because it is their job, a feral  
Truancy they leave their impossible school for  
In their season;  
And all hung up to flirt with the molasses lips of  
Tortoises who trundle down from the brambles  
Where the saturated foxes as red as gloves  
Can still be found sleeping away forever;  
And the animals go to play with the insects, as they both  
Try to court and make love with her buttercup cafeteria  
Strewn down from the daydreaming transoms  
Of the school bus.

Robert Rorabeck

# Traveler's Song

I'll have to get drunk to move;  
And that's why I've packed my bags, and collected my  
Dogs and dolls,  
And given proper notice-  
And I am leaping across country and wearing an erudite  
Mustache, and puritanical girdle;  
And wishing I was more sound, or that I could swim straight  
Across the Kennedy Space center  
Before liftoff;  
That my eyes were blue, and good for collecting your eyes-  
That I didn't worship cemeteries,  
That I wrote poems as good and cleaning as a little black girl  
Does while skipping through chalk:  
That I was Sara Teasdale in her eternal bed,  
Listening to those rhymes I collected and stole,  
Sweating without air-conditioning,  
And staring blindly at the stewardesses legs and streams,  
And getting all choked up  
Because I wasn't old or religious enough to be with you,  
And I've almost forgotten that I was supposed to be  
Jack all along,  
And you're my candle, or aren't you: That burning tale of a fairytale,  
A religious allegory like cannibalistic hamburger bloodied in the somme:  
I loved you: Oh dear, I loved you,  
Especially on Christmas dinner, a fable for blue jays, laughing,  
And still a fable: jet airplanes cutting through the silence,  
Causing beautiful scars for the lonely commuters in Saint Augustine,  
Or Saint Lewis:  
Looking up, drooling jawed,  
Because I am on the move, and I have died, but I go  
Leaping over the yard where the sprinklers turn across your  
Naked body so young and strong,  
A flame that licks my heals,  
That perpetually kindles my traveler's song.

Robert Rorabeck

# Traveling Home Again

Jumping over those hills feels like a joy  
Even though grandmother is gone and I am no longer  
A little boy- Going through those woods  
Like a river in its cradle, smelling the burning sugar  
Cane in the sky's ladle  
While the apple trees are making parsimonious  
Music again, and the rattlesnake is curling underneath  
Her freckled shoulders again:  
Soon she will be taken home to him, singing her song  
Like rains upon stone, back into a story I can  
Never enter in- too soon will she be traveling home again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Travelogue Of My Blood

This morning all my blood is  
Sweating off its alcohol-  
All my blood is jogging, and circulating  
Its early neighborhood,  
Trying to become less reclusive  
And more adaptable should any house-  
Wife need a transfusion;  
My blood thinks of swing-sets and long  
Once-studious legs of women who have  
Wived college professors in obscure  
Northern states,  
Who are my uncle, who owns a swell house  
Out on the lake:  
And this morning my blood is already thirsty  
For gibbous moons in south Africa,  
And travel brochures to places which swing  
Freely from a rain forest and out into the reddled  
Savannah;  
My blood gurgles through my ears and is attentive  
To the things it hears outside boiling,  
The lawnmower is fixed and mowing,  
Commercial airplanes set in their ways go leaping  
Like silver javelin blades,  
Never thinking to stop and smell the flowers  
Down in the rented meadows where my blood cools  
And pools, and matriculates  
Through these early morning hours.

Robert Rorabeck

## Travis Mcgee Writes His Poem

Because she was more outwardly beautiful than  
Me,  
I got cold when we fixed cars; or I pretended to  
When alone,  
Which was always the case  
And she went mudding with relations who first  
Came to water ski on her lake;  
And all the time my mother had a bad back;  
It was her disks;  
And I drank too much whiskey,  
And I had to piss- Pertaining to that pain, I bought  
A lot of sympathy,  
And then it rained- I used someone else as my muse-  
She tended bar in Gainesville,  
Which was so very far away, and she didn't care-  
She slept all day,  
And watched He-Man, and who she really loved, I couldn't  
Say:  
Honestly, your honor, I don't think she loved anyone,  
But her dogs, but what does that prove?  
I thought of her, and skipped school,  
And lit off fireworks above the sweet young alligators-  
They refused to move;  
And then class was over, and we graduated-  
Far away, in Colorado, the Rocky Mountains were saturated,  
And marked by the foot-prints of my love,  
Another girl: Irish? Catholic? A sommelier? She was already  
Married,  
And so I disbanded to Florida to become a cavalier detective  
In a novel by John D. McDonald.

Robert Rorabeck



# Treats Of Lips

Architectures so near their water fountains—  
Sometimes mirages—treats of lips—  
Filling up the hallway—the greatest inventions of  
Mankind containing them—  
Echoing of heartbeats and school books  
Shifted against lacy vests—  
So they go to classes and daydream,  
And the grownup world forgets about them  
During their hours of captivity—  
A zoo the teachers feed or are eaten—but  
Time goes by and the janitors clean the yards,  
And grasshoppers look up through the  
Vermillion sunbeams  
Concrete slabs holding up the electronic  
Tresses become the lighthouses for an ethereal  
Heavens, and I write this when I get  
Home and feed rum to my heart—  
And think about anything to write, like the place  
Where I work and the girls who live there.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tree Frogs And Ant Lions

Chicken noodle soup in a thermos  
Made me sick in preschool  
On some fieldtrip in Palm Beach, FL—  
There are things I remember,  
But not your love—  
How it crept like a sleep at naptime  
Through the heavy sherbet rug of  
Kindergarten  
Where things startled me that I stole,  
Pissing my pants waking up from  
The dreams of tree frogs and ant lions—  
There were toads in the rebar around  
The carport where my mother  
Slept in the rain—  
And blue pornography across the street in  
Graveyard of drunken cars:  
And the soft dunes where the conquistadors  
Slept—  
And soft boys, no longer running away—  
And the sea that is still there  
Saying the same name that I always wished to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tree Or Butterfly At The Ends Of The Earth

Affixed to the ploughshares,  
Like dust busters who can't  
Imagine their luck at  
Watching the horse thieves  
Hang  
Out in the open, like nudes  
Working all day to  
Christmas,  
The weather like ghosts  
Pillaging  
In the fruitful ambitions  
Who range the  
Aphrodisiacs of lightning  
While the stones gossip  
Near the summit with  
Nary a tree or butterfly around  
At the ends of the earth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tributary Into Those More Serious Of Rivers

These poems are memories of dead frogs  
And bourbon,  
And the chirping calls from the carport,  
And children in blue pajamas,  
And cerulean tarp flapping like throats  
With too much skin atop the roofs,  
Dancing for the hurricane and the  
Moon's ogle;  
And if I were to bring you here tonight,  
And lay my hand upon your knee,  
And touch the plated joint, as well as your  
Eye: Would you as well allow yourself  
The deeper inhalations atop the serenity of  
An un-aroused neighborhood,  
And could we see from there the storm lain  
Across the sea like the sheet a lover dries  
Across a brittle yard, or a sun blinded shroud,  
And our children playing there as well,  
Un perplexed by the merriments of such  
Well-perceived chaos  
Arranged for quiet sale, displayed in those  
Swaths of either gentle or apoplectic grandeurs,  
Which, in either away, allows us to hold one  
Another in frivolity, until the stems are joined,  
Made tributary into those more serious of rivers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Trinket Of Her

It happened upon occasions that I was not  
Here,  
But I saw your grandmother out in her yard  
Doing something with it:  
She was barely dressed; and you see,  
The cars are driving, driving  
Across the interstate beside her. Soon she will  
Be gone, sunken like the cordless  
Reptiles beneath the billboards-  
Sunken beneath the discarded mattresses,  
And the burned out structures;  
And the cars will still be driving, and I wonder  
If you shall ever find a lock of her ashen  
Hair at a flea market- I wonder if you will  
Ever hold another trinket of her  
In your hand again, while the fruit is sold  
In the circus,  
And the sun leaps through the heavenly fires.

Robert Rorabeck

# Trip The Light Fantastic

There is no iceberg under my lines: Their enjambment  
Is a rush hour of pining men, lines of silver cadavers voyaging  
Into the great red forests pressing the Pacific:  
Totem poles tilting in the Oregon mud, with drunk Indians  
Sleeping in quaint patterns, something Delphic for their  
Slaughter gods: Hemmingway will never read these things,  
The pennies in the wishing well of adolescent lies, the way  
First loves run together trying to irrefute the storms:  
Each skipping stone lapping up to her knees, then sinking before  
Her like the topaz in the orphan's hand, her foster parents  
Telling her to put it away, for it is a long drive: Intersections  
Of states she can put her paws on and be four places at once,  
The assembly line of rivers cutting the spine of the Grand Canyon:  
Lip service for a prom queen now a real estate agent, who doesn't  
Remember how you slept in the teal courts where she played:  
The greater poetesses of their times eyes wide as if for examinations,  
These lines are so quaintly direct, without stamen of areolas  
Exposed unlawfully in the summer parks, as the clouds swing like  
A grazing herd of make-believe animals: The way they jog, my  
Words make easy time, place somewhere in the middle of foreplay,  
Brush their brows and drink lemonade in the shade of a civil war,  
Sleep in the studio apartment with their two cats purring, while the  
Sororities of naked laughing hold swim meets in the effluvia of chlorine,  
Fish for keys in the bowl of the lauded professors, and the revered lips  
Of greater satires, the men with motes and slabs for words,  
The prophets and the lead singers, dazzling them in enslaving concert,  
As we snore and mew.

Robert Rorabeck

# Troubling Boredom

In this beautifully imprisoned tool  
Now how do your echoes sound—  
Since they've  
Been practicing with a voice—  
The joy of throats in the boxes collected  
From off the playgrounds  
As the school buses turn and turn  
Around and around—  
Now here is your joy,  
And here is the part which can almost be  
Perceived  
Looking beautiful up in the echoes of the  
Echoes of the playgrounds—  
Well the angels play here anyways—  
And you were once my beautiful teacher—  
Now you are falling asleep in the daydreams—  
Isn't it a troubling boredom into which they  
Cannot recognize you—  
And I love you—and I love—but just while  
The echoes mention themselves to their trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Truce With The Sea

Imperfect, underneath an overpass,  
Underneath the stolen moon- while bicycles  
Recline in the dark shadows,  
And turtles have more than one shell:  
In the morning they will be selling outside of  
The school,  
Outside of the church,  
And the beautiful perfumes of the jasmine  
Will be gone,  
So you will smell each fine blade of grass  
Where the cicadas will then be sleeping  
In their new change of clothes,  
As the trucks drive by,  
Delivering produce and the news:  
And then you will see for yourself who is  
Homeless and who is rich,  
And you can reach up and touch your face  
Just as the brown women are yelling  
And selling things to the light-  
For it will be the hour when all of the lighthouses  
Are blind, and all of the sailors are enjoying  
A truce with the sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# True Beauty

True beauty eludes me after I saw her  
Out in the student park lot taking his cigarette  
To lips, contemplative and sharing,  
But just tasting the rolled tobacco  
Eyes having never seen Bell Glade,  
Not inhaling  
All the brown sugar cane workers migration  
In egg-shell blue busses past the last zoo to the  
West,  
Never seen how they congregate and baptize  
Down the cocklebur easement of that coagulated  
Alligator tank with creepy lilies turning,  
Eat ham and sour eggs on red clay,  
Imparting bare-chested and naked-lipped  
Drippy watermelon  
Voodoo and fummy rum witchcraft approaching midnight;  
Divvy up the moon as they meander to the dusky track,  
Tarnished and yet forensic.  
Could not see her before she took off with  
The quarterback in a full dollar swoon  
Blindly guided to his home turf in the gloomy afternoon  
Of our suburbia, took off like the last wave cresting:  
Her virginal notch now like a cinder stoked in a horn.  
I suppose I should have followed her,  
Began that tramp, thrown my books of algebra and  
Easy logic to the dogs and skunks,  
Cavorted to a private war through the splicing  
Shade of tight green palmettos like knives in a drawer,  
Could have crawled up to the steamy window to  
The pitter-patter of mostly affluent rain,  
Been a onomatopoeia voyeur  
Could have laid there smelling chlorine as the pool was  
Rippling, as the earth was swelling;  
Rains fell cleaning  
And maybe I howled believing the moon was full and rehearsing  
Behind the cultish clouds like apoplectic satin:  
Back in Plato's cave, having microwaved,  
Alone in front of the television, masturbated on a green  
Carpet of my derision, rhyming like a snail poking

Its head out of the curling salmon shell,  
And then shrinking back in again:  
Poor old man-  
I cut paper and made airplanes and sold them over my  
Head to the ceiling gods, the little dusty gods who can't  
Even spell- Pretended she was on them serving  
Drinks to horizontal windmills  
While over my shoulder to the west with the day labor witches,  
The sugarcane goes burning, fuming in an intoxicating swell.  
Then in so foreign a place that it comes from the  
Opposition direction, like in a sad movie  
They are interlocking bodies and fists, knuckles popping,  
Silhouettes enthralled  
While greedily over the canal, ululating, the sugarcane,  
Roaring burns as brightly as a thundershower,  
obscuring what I know must be real:  
How she loves in turns,  
Things she's been told to love, and those which  
Are now just occurring,  
Like grey lips on the television I cannot hear  
But yet are moving.

Robert Rorabeck

# Truth Of Windmills

Here is a new river, bubbling- making love with  
Gold light underneath the apple trees  
Where the truants go to get freckled and to steal away from  
Each other every day:  
Where the Mexicans sleep at the bottom of worthless ladders,  
Knowing what they mean to themselves:  
And I look up at your Anglicism, Alma, with the neverending  
Truth of windmills stuck to the roof of my mouth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Trying Themselves

One thousand gypsum fairytales  
Just trying to keep my tailfins  
Warm,  
Pretending to be another  
Metamorphosis  
A thousand and ten miles away from  
Home—  
And when it gets cloudy, we sell  
Christmas trees:  
Just me and my wife,  
And the dwarf—  
And my grandfather, why,  
He is dead,  
But fully satisfied now that he has  
His anatomical request—  
And in the morning floods  
And toy boats  
With vaginas—  
And my hands typing away in the  
Hedgerows beneath a cloud—  
While a thousand girls get off to  
Themselves—  
Inside the theatres of the hurricanes  
That are trying themselves to be  
Not so very loud.

Robert Rorabeck

# Trying To Collect His Name

Exactly like her resemblance crossing  
After coyote into Mexico-  
There she is, a mirage at the airplanes' feet:  
She will remain here  
As the billboards fade, as the echinopsis of the cacti  
Blush- that the careful lips pluck  
Beneath the cliff dwellers and the stewardesses who  
Rely so much upon which way the wind blows-  
The philosophers and  
Archaeologists beneath them- their civilizations  
The metamorphosis of slender crops beside  
The articulate river-  
Going so far from tourists as to be hidden from  
The show-  
Their families blooming and running down hill  
Into the deltas of casinos  
And the statues of giant blue horses like lightning gods  
Quailing to the heavens,  
As it rains down from her window the silent  
Thoughts of her high school- really, make-believe  
Tears now that she doesn't believe in water:  
But runs down hill, anyway, trying to collect his name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Trying To Misspell Your Name

They seem to be laughing I want to think of  
You with your brilliant, tender eyes as I buy a red barn,  
And somehow seem to survive across the  
Graveyards for all of the winters while I am not there—  
And in the absence of my presence a stallion—  
As full of light and as majestic as the midnight of  
All of your vanishing cars—  
But I'll awaken again tomorrow listening to the yawns  
Of lions until all of our seats are lost on the busses—  
And I can spend forever trying to misspell your name—  
Until my classroom will be emptied—and there will  
Be nothing else left to call me recluse—  
Just the movie theatres that somehow seemed to echo  
Upon the vanishing enterprises of your misinterpreted  
Game.

Robert Rorabeck

# Trying To Reflect Your Beauty

Stay for awhile: the angels are making  
Peace over the canal,  
And maybe it is Christmas- there is  
A new lawnmower in the neighbor's  
Yard,  
But their little girls have gone forever,  
And your children are at home-  
These new words I say of you to noone  
You will never know-  
I will say them to the emptied yards  
After all of the heavens have come out again,  
Trying to reflect your beauty-  
After you have forgotten all of this  
Romance and gone indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tulip Farms Of Norway

Nefarious whispers- let them come,  
If it's the only thing  
You can do then let your drunkenly lascivious  
Fingers run up and down-  
Haunt me from that house in the woods  
I read about once so far away.  
Give me novel reasons to turn back again,  
Looking for you across the playground gutters  
Of Florida. Help me get feverish on the swings  
Of your impossibly carnal joy,  
And throw up my chicken noodle soup  
Over the hydrangeas and the other frilly sex organs  
They were trying to sell before I got to them;  
Because I have new scars like wilted corners in  
The bat wings of my cheeks- novel disturbing  
Not quite knowing why it hangs out plastered beneath  
The smoky sky when it should be in  
A whispering classroom wafting your perfumes over  
Its song bird shoulders-  
This is the only mathematics I seem to get out,  
And I let it pour out of me, a flooded city at a subatomic level  
While swearing like a transplanted sapling that I would  
Do better in your insouciant shade,  
All the time knowing your permed roots curl deep around the  
Transformed cenotaph of a better love,  
And for all of this I might only receive a freckled cage  
In a richer man's side show;  
And even then your heartbeat won't linger anywhere nearer  
My drunken corner enthroned by enraptured  
Though despotic metamorphosis;  
Because you are always waking up in the bowers of  
A cerulean woods sharp and attractive with virginal light,  
Tinseled by woodsmen and their handy oil-cans,  
Guessing you can come down anytime you want,  
And thumb the fat highway which spreads corpulent and flooded  
As if laid out for you happening like a faithful sign  
both ways from the  
Convenient doorstep like the  
Tulip farms of Norway where you choose to live.



Robert Rorabeck

# Tumbler's Eden

There is not much light  
Anymore in the garden-  
The cats are almost over the fence,  
But why should it matter where they  
Are going?  
I never owned but these scars,  
A crescendo of lines seeming comical  
But ending up disastrous,  
Her perfect body which fades from too much  
Jesting with alcohol-  
The yeast doesn't rise,  
What we had for dessert a fiasco, and even the  
Pressurized gazes of the fraternity turn inward  
And sodden-  
Waves are butchers and  
I put down the pen: I don't have it in me  
Anymore,  
The rose is looking downward.  
The serpent doesn't have any knowledge  
To speak of.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tumbleweeds

Staring at the sun,  
Cheap books populate the eyes of minors  
Run away from home;  
Long haired latchkeys of the color-blind foundation,  
Eat their tuna-fish lunch with grandmother under her tomb-  
Some like to say they're pretty,  
Some like to say they're sharp,  
Some swing until they're dizzy,  
But they all drink the mulberry wine deep in the bitter  
Park after midnight;  
Then is when I've seen them, staring until I know they're true;  
Looking like lost cats who want to fly  
Like torn curtains under the abandoned moons;  
No one knows their names, and I don't suppose they should;  
They walk around in parking lots wearing their somber, unmolested hoods.  
They rumble, and they roll,  
They jaunt, and they stroll.... And bound as they steal  
Across the unfinished train tracks which cascade into the polluted waves.  
They live in the boxcars like rusting land sharks,  
And in the ditches like unwashed witches;  
Some prefer the elbows of pine trees; they climb up with scabby knees,  
While some will sleep in the concrete lap underneath the overpass;  
Where they are going, they surely are,  
And already the night is filled with the disinfected stares;  
Like cold beads of unsteady corneas like eclipses in blue and green pools.  
They go by the freeways like the detached shadows of an overcast afternoon,  
They go into the field like any kind of hungry animal;  
The spores of this earth, they look for a place to grow,  
But already there is so much hustle on the cold metal show;  
So just a little further down the road they amble,  
Bobbing their heads, their way and their handle;  
Looking for a roof to spool their knotted threads,  
A bed with some warm blankets to rest their tangled heads.

Robert Rorabeck

# Tumbling, Tumbling Tumbler

Tumbling through the orchard's sea:  
Tumbling, tumbling tumbler;  
Now you can't say what I am looking for-  
That I am looking for her who the mountains  
Cry for-  
Who they en crèche,  
Engorged plum-colored, yes;  
And the tourists come down long skied off their  
Mountainous and acanthine esplanades,  
And imbibe her spirits if they know what's good  
For them  
And I want beer, and I want wine for my long haired  
Honey- Oh, she is fine-  
And I drink cheap, cheap wine,  
And look into the sky, and curse airplanes-  
Why- Why- That I should drink alone at night,  
And kiss the Spanish Conquistador;  
It is not right:  
That I am scarred, and drunk, and defeated onto the  
Floorboards of insouciant traffic and their haunts:  
And I want to live forever,  
And maybe I should- Or maybe not:  
And the tent is breathing slight jazz,  
And I really need my fallow faun:  
My pallid doe, and if I was Don  
John wouldn't I already have her opal  
Orchards picked and plunder and blinking in my  
Suburban lawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Turning Away

Ephemeral in the hemisphere  
Above her eyes,  
As she looks up- froth of waves  
In twilight;  
And now she goes in to feed the roses,  
As the surf touches the world one  
Last time,  
And the daylight caresses his  
Petrified lover,  
Before turning away and going to  
Bed with the night.

Robert Rorabeck

# Turning Off All My Lights

Maybe you are just another little boy and this is  
My insecure monument to your amusing roadways:  
They go forever deeper into the indistinguishable bric-a-brac  
Of your landscaping singsong;  
And maybe that makes my parents really pissed when my  
Parents finally get home all tapped out and unable to fly;  
They sink like heavy wishes that once floated  
For you sometime after kindergarten, and I really loved you  
In that daycare; but now you are all strung out  
And you have too many children for my two bedrooms:  
I still live in a really holy place for you, even when I cannot  
Take off and darkness blooms and the pelicans sing with the  
Eyes of swiftly repeated ancestors;  
And I know before I even start out that I have been singing to  
The stillborn bedroom, because you are not here anymore:  
You are wrapped in your husband's casual soiree, and it must  
Be a wonderful thought to know whose grave will singsong your  
Name, the way the smooth granite of tombstones call out  
To you and your children: you will all sleep together at the end of  
Some dusty road, as you will all float together in the sky and  
Play a chorus so sickly sweet as to be incestual; as I cry out,  
And turning off all my lights for you, curl into an indistinguishable  
Ball in the darkness, and pray hopelessly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Turpentine

Mad faceless men echoing from the Australian  
Pines,  
Sniffing their brillow pads of turpentine:  
When I go to defecate in their woods-  
They yell at me draped in blue gills and palmettos,  
They at first they say get out, young boy-  
And a loose airplane wheel drops on their head,  
And then they have a change of attitude,  
And they say come in, my boy, for you are looking real  
When before you were looking like green shirted  
Thievery:  
For we come from the stars and places and planets  
Which have unfamiliar drapery unto this Technicolor  
Landscaping,  
And young mothers, and two and a half pets:  
It is all strange to us- We have a gun, but she doesn't  
Know what she means to us-  
And their pants hang like a suffocated flag, blue over their  
Smoldering fire:  
They don't have enough money to buy beer or cards:  
Their faces look even better than mine,  
And that is why they spend their entire day waylaid  
Amidst empty banisters going nowhere in rooms of alligator  
Furniture, butchering their freshwater mermaids,  
Sniffing turpentine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Twice On Sundays

The professors can live forever.  
I will eat her hymen; I don't care to know nothing about  
Flowers, '  
About flowers, except I guess I suppose she has one;  
And she makes love to the bartender,  
Under the feet of dolphin,  
But I guess I suppose they will have to both awaken  
Surprised In their graves of Sundays,  
Smelling themselves,  
Smelling themselves, I suppose; as the week carries on;  
And the week jaunts like knights on a quest,  
As my mother counts the money, as I can't sleep,  
Which is best;  
And the days thunder, and the days parade,  
As all my muses as absolutely pretty,  
As they absolutely get laid by boys,  
By boys prettier than me; in their coffins all week singing  
Like ice-cream trucks,  
And twice, and twice on Sundays.

Robert Rorabeck



# Twilight's Vacancy

Thus, feverishly, I pick another stem and hold it lilted to you  
Gaze, but I am a thief, for you are not my attended gardens.

So the sea has washed his lower lip, and made it droop like wet  
Grass, and the sands are measurable if time was petrified,  
And the heavens were a sorority of far away oracles,

And the fort they made to extend the empire stands like a surveyor  
On the perch of tourists, and the graveyard they gave to their penitence  
Is awash in the gloom of a concrete cross,

Where little children not knowing who they are run around  
In the allocated space of games, and lovers like overrun persimmons  
Are in the angles of worship, where they are best seen in the  
Peripheries of twilight,

Thus in the air blooms the preservative of missing theme parks,  
And the grand finale is on the coral parapets, crying the silence's joys,  
For the tourists are glutting amphibiously upon the halogen wharf,

Faint latchkeys swim with mongrels around the satin hotel,  
Now a haunted university, and the quicker lovers who will soon disperse,

Like spores to dry in autumn's impotency, rile in the act in their  
Possessed room beneath the flashing neon sign of a cheap motel  
They will soon forget, as their weddings occur far away from one another.

Robert Rorabeck

## Two Brothers

Up again, arisen into the world I should know  
Filled and overflowing with cars and acrobats: one or two  
Birds are trilling,  
Singing of goldfish in their bellies: And I will wash and  
Get to working,  
But who will read me in this world in which school  
Is over and all the girls have turned out to be  
Women,  
Comely and well-legged and making their yards as fine as  
Playgrounds for their children:  
They have turned out splendidly and not a one of them is  
Mine:  
Women, women of the world, don't you know that this  
Day is mine, but I need of your number the one to fulfill my time,  
To make of this old thing a new togetherness,  
A fineness of our troubles,  
A new day in a fine world for lovers that are doubled  
Like the polygamy of souls, and of legs walking together,  
And arms holding like a nest two hearts beating as if in  
A forge crafted by two brothers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Two Brunettes Named Heather (Pedaling Nice And Slow)

Awake and sparkling in new amethyst:  
My hair is almost red, but I haven't a job:  
Its kind of just like I've tried to smile,  
As she passes her way with a hiccup of eyes:  
Where do such glands lead her that they should  
Also lead so many boys:  
Entire football teams; but I need to eat other  
Things. Why, won't you just look up into the  
Castanets of all these trees. They are truly  
Weeping to have so much of their quiet souls  
Go down into heaps. The students pass by so  
Unattending from points in their destinations of  
Their gardens of what can be used-  
Sometimes a beautiful brunette stops to tie her  
Shoes, but what does she say to them that here can  
Be used; and I've made that up to be kind to my  
Sylvan audience: no brunettes passing by, but the  
Assured night and the canvas is empty afterwards  
It has been well swept and put into the proper  
Grammars that line the sidewalks without a word:  
I thought they said I loved her, but I was only passing,  
And what the trees did gossip I shouldn't care to know;  
It is the same language as some bicycles, I saw together,  
Carrying two brunettes named Heather, pedaling nice and slow.

Robert Rorabeck

## Two Cherries

These psalms, these psalms, they are holding  
Mass for better Catholics,  
Mowing couples swing like censers, smoky, unreal,  
The dying Italian bourgeoisie;  
I can't even spell them, but they make me so horny;  
And look at my scars, and the cornices,  
The bad places in the ceiling- The church bells ringing-  
You can see the silver archway like a monument  
To the religion she keeps ringing in the air,  
Picking cottons and her tears- The Mississippi,  
Gambling, sponge cake: I have two dogs who scrape off  
All the paint of my new apartment,  
Which seems to personify my own new scars,  
And girls from high school, lingerie models calling to  
Me seeded and well fed by the sugar tooth for my look warm  
Pornography: This is the way we go, but it is getting worse,  
And they are all superficially married,  
And superficially beautiful of course: And I want to be just like  
Them, I want my horse to win: I want common stanzas,  
And lukewarm rhyme schemes, and my teams to win:  
I want to teach school again:  
The city rings like church-bells, like reindeer bells from her  
Nipples, and she dances just enough to let me know she's  
Jogged to the door, though her shift is over  
but is not coming in, not even for two dollar bills rubbed together:  
The point is meaningless, the sky so ff%cking beautiful and  
Never meaningfully fulfilled,  
The city rolls over, two cherries then bust.

Robert Rorabeck

## Two Dollar Bed

I write good sh@t for good honest people;  
The oranges from my grove are safe to eat,  
But sometimes bitter:  
I plug into the electricity of locked houses and  
Ejaculate  
While the boomslangs weep down to kiss  
Me,  
And at night in my roofless boudoir, arousal  
Unfulfilled without the conduit of your tight  
Mollusk,  
Necrotic ambulances swing around like stiff  
Gleeful horses,  
Decrying my embittered virginity;  
They sing with a chorus of bloated mermaids  
That this won't last:  
This talent, and this beauty blooming like  
A magical bouquet by my lucky palm-  
That I should grow even more grotesquely mundane,  
While the crickets lay off the job of tweaking legs,  
And campus security won't let me into the head-  
So I have nothing to do but jog and swig  
Two dollar beer:  
And raise the skull and cross bones over my briny  
Two dollar bed.

Robert Rorabeck

## Two Glasses Of Wine

After two glasses of wine,  
He tells me, the poems get good,  
Because the body warms like cuddling,  
Like an Indian blanket outside the  
Thunderstorm,  
The same one they used on their honeymoon,  
And a person begins to feel the words  
As if coupling with a drawn out woman,  
The kind that doesn't stop nor could you ask  
Her to, and the little tinkling of words  
Become more than representations of the  
Sad facts, become women themselves,  
Or whatever you might want  
There in your living room like a forest of  
Monarch butterflies alive but molting after  
Their destinations,  
And on their wings the tiny specks of the roads  
They took, and the eyes which beheld them  
Shyly from behind their uncle's curtains:  
Those things wished to be said, the hesitant poisons,  
Spill out as if from an anonymous wound,  
And instead of slowly killing, they apologize  
And remain there before their author like the  
Glimmering proof of evil, and mistyped love,  
But at the same time they are coyly beautiful,  
Almost like children, but with consecutive glasses  
They begin to blur fully, fading some which  
Both dulls and multiplies their ineffective splendors,  
So one might say before he goes to bed exhausted,  
With a sloshing liver,  
"These ones aren't real. Not real at all, "  
But for their time they certainly were,  
And they lay there now like lost wanderers  
Expecting something more to happen.

Robert Rorabeck

# Two Pieces

I.

Vulgarity: to have my  
Most cherished thoughts torn open  
Like a new mother's blouse,  
While she tries to sate her hungry infant  
Even while the wolves divide  
Her extremities,  
So white branches erupt with seeping  
Red, pealed before the vulturous eyes of  
The other passengers.

II.

I owe my writing to my nemeses.  
I hate the fact,  
And I should quite  
And cut the sh\*t  
And jack off in the silence of pure ennui.

Robert Rorabeck

## Two Soft Matches

When Sunday is finished how does it  
Metamorphosis into a school day, unless it is  
Labor day—  
And where does noon go after the stewardesses  
Have flown over—  
And with the sunset, the words of the housewives  
Silenced,  
And the candles gone from the birthday cakes  
That have been eaten—  
Traffic slows to the speed of canals—  
And, of course, the lions yawn, but there are no  
More tourists about to see them going to  
sleep in the facsimile's exhibits—  
And the love you once showed while brushing  
My lips with your lips—  
Two soft matches against a rose—  
Only the albino's darkness found us,  
And called us children who could not see, or  
Believe that in this very tomorrow you so quickly  
Went away.

Robert Rorabeck



# Two Things

Yellow throated thrush-  
On a blue branch-  
I don't know which one of you  
Is more beautiful-  
I don't want to know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Two Tired Eyes

Two tired eyes,  
Flat tires meaningless to road kill,  
Just things we throw to the side  
Bouquets with their tongues hanging out  
Tangled shoes up on the  
Swaybacked power lines,  
Knowing very little but wanting the  
Refreshments of your lips  
Who don't care:  
They are spry winged mockingbirds  
Who sail over the shoulders of  
Better men and their paper towel  
Laughters:  
And you have a sweet tongue that pullulates  
In the garden:  
It doesn't need to sell things, but it  
Does,  
And your weathers are forever leaping  
Without corners and balmy,  
The nimbus of airplanes celebrating the  
Youth of your immortal holidays to which  
My eyes lay like shallow abscesses like  
Puddles hidden under broken school  
Buses,  
And the soft bellies of alligators as they  
Lay dancing, dancing underneath the world,  
As the jaws of the pearl tent flap and jabber walls,  
With all the pretty things it has to  
Tell to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unamerican

Mexican girls are so much prettier, if you can find  
Them in their labyrinth of solitude the blue sky too tough to reach-  
The blue sky that is never their eyes, and thank god;  
Their narcissisms are quiet and as complex as ready fires; they have  
Their own pageants, when they go out into the night loving those  
Men who can never love them;  
And I've felt them burning in my bones coming with the passion of  
Metamorphosing butterflies; and they awaken on their bicycles  
And strike right out- They have their honeymoons in the darkness,  
And never have enough to say about them, as they put myself  
All in a tangle around the bones of my wrist,  
So all the song birds they keep in their adobe houses are for the weddings  
Of their small daughters: They only drink beer on Sundays then,  
To look pretty for the conflagrations who will never see them:  
They are the small daughters of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and I wished  
That I could know everyone;  
And I am so happy their love for football is particularly unAmerican.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unanswerable Hellos

I'll pick-pocket in the black suites of Halloween—  
I'll look down into the great ovoid valleys where my father  
Is turning his tractor for no other reason than he is  
Perplexed,  
And can't figure out how to avoid selling it:  
And I doubt I should really make love again before I die,  
Or if I ever did good love, or was it that I just hid behind  
The Mezuzah she hung on our doorway to keep out  
The young, industrious bike-thieves;  
And there are faces of wayward angels who take up the  
Space where my face should be,  
And lesser or great Indian chiefs are taking up my stool  
Behind the glass exhibits underneath the Missouri Arch;  
But it is like they have come around and discovered  
That there are too many chiefs, and my scars shouldn't  
Be shown in public,  
And there are no really good excuses for what I have done,  
For cutting class and watching her leave the other way,  
Pretending that there were topless angels schvitzing in the  
Delusions of shadows cut up like pieces of a shivering cake  
In between the cars and football field;  
And if it was something like this served at their wedding,  
I wasn't there to know—because I don't live there anymore,  
And her proud mother and father have sold that affluent house  
I use to swim and know her in, anyway.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unanswered Pain

The irrelevant hollow  
Pushes from the grave,  
The single plot encompasses the world,  
A cornucopia in perspiring autumn  
Unlooked upon by the young women  
The sun dotes upon, hallowing and warming  
Them as they go about their shopping,  
Followed by many migrating eyes nibbling  
On their breasts.

From the graveyard,  
That unending necropolis without  
Points for definition, I struggle  
Both motionless and wordless,  
I cannot step beyond, neither  
Should I, the language of my position.  
My tongue blind and eyes mute,  
I know I have always been here,  
Defined by the deafness shot down by the  
Bright flow of feminine hair  
Cascading like a picture book  
As she walks along the outside of my boarders,  
The black iron bars she never looks  
Beyond, her first love a lost sailor  
Drowning in the mists swarming the  
Perspiring backyards out of her vision.

In order to breathe, I need this  
Stationary hunger; I need to have a clear  
Line of site to her, but can never move nearer.  
I must stay the tree forever at the edge of  
Her fertile sea, watching the other men  
Disrobe and then to go leaping to swim in her.  
Her waves lap against their chests, and they  
Taste the salt on their hungered lips.  
I know myself by them in her. From where  
I watch, I must not say a thing. Remaining  
The calm permanence of a lover's grave,  
I find permanence in this unanswered pain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unbearable Ontologies

Its fun to speak of the gods  
As if they were real,  
And not something made up  
For Halloween,  
And blame them for taking her  
Away upon the serpent's  
Crest undulating in the Possessing  
Lights gowning the cemetery;  
And not her Egyptian eyes,  
The decadal senses who have  
Forgotten you,  
Easily like a fast meal she had in  
A remote classroom before  
She was fully formed,  
Her breasts just stung by  
Pubescent bees,  
And understood what her  
Gaze admired and leans into now,  
They keystone of a hard knock sea,  
Though she once thought  
Of sitting beside you close to the Germanic fire;  
Again, and again,  
The pulsing womb a barb  
That doesn't break away,  
Thus mortified and stung,  
Leaving you in a cage of  
Wanting lions undutifully educated,  
Whose eyes are as sad as rain,  
And as hungry as her eyes  
Before they thought away  
Along the serpentine avenues of forget;  
Outside, the crooked trunks of  
Cypress bend like a canopy for  
A wide open bedroom,  
The same as they would do  
For any man,  
And beyond them the cleft lip  
Of the canal and the dunes  
Where her flesh is warming the dusty

Marble of a crypt,  
And he is there in his only form,  
And laughing sweat,  
Bending her like a smith,  
With their bodies baking in a sawing kiln,  
You cannot dispute the energies  
Who leave you shackled to an  
Unrealized form,  
Though you search everywhere,  
Contesting the proof of gods.

Robert Rorabeck



# Unbounded Wilderness

See even now her limbs enfold  
The quieting places of his refuge—  
The reedy trust his eyes partake  
Their ransom of her ebony swoon,  
In dimming bark reciprocate the  
Shed husks of diminished homes—  
Swing now free in the hot azure,  
In tangled pools the segues of  
Green thought in her ripples—  
Taken to trust the unfastened mollusks  
Of her fragile carriage,  
Swimming in the drunken fauna  
A swarm of seedless infants—  
In the leaking basins of his grip,  
She steps forward for baptism,  
Allowing her knees to perish  
Her stance into the reverberating  
Throat of unbounded wilderness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unbreakable Family

Surely reptiles hording over their mean  
Plates:  
I mean the bone yard of my childhood—primordially  
Thinking underneath their thorny hoods  
Of eating ponies  
And other forget-me-nots:  
This is the place, dressed in a haunted wedding of  
Crepuscule,  
And that is her book of stolen children tossed  
Into the aloe after the hour when  
My parents were supposed to have returned home:  
And all of the neighborhood has fled,  
As if to the sea, as it fills up with your emptiness:  
A burning nest that was supposed  
To be filled with soft eggs—or a warm Ferris  
Wheel that you broached to my heart only to take  
Away,  
Carrying it over the mountains and to another world  
Decorated with the banners of rattlesnakes-  
To feed to your unbreakable family.

Robert Rorabeck

# Uncensored

Read my words,  
The fruit of ignorance,  
And you'll have nothing left to do  
But to return, uncensored,  
To God's original design—  
Duck you head as you  
Pass beneath the flaming  
Sword,  
Like in a line at Disney  
World,  
And inside disrobe in the  
Beating lights; its okay,  
Everyone here is an honorary  
Virgin—  
Just drape the handy foliage  
Over your pistils and stamens  
And stand still for the cartoonist  
To draw you into an illustration for  
A Child's Bible—  
Now come on. Here we go....  
On our left if we're lucky  
You might catch glimpses through  
The rose thickets of Rimbaud  
Trying to force himself upon Baudelaire—  
What could be better?  
And further in,  
Here is the Marque de Sade  
Handing out party gifts  
And precious hats, like papier-mâché  
Sea-shells  
To protect you from God's eyes  
Who shines the ever brighter here  
Looking down through a hole  
In the atmosphere, a voyeur  
Way up high with his angelic entourage;  
He has binoculars to spy on us.  
He makes everything grow 10 ft. taller,  
Now that we have returned to him  
All of his original collection,

His eternal petting zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# Uncertain Promises Of Rain

When the sky promises rain,  
And the highway is fuming like a volcanic serpent  
Expressing the revenues of her men,  
I find myself kneeling beneath you in the cut of  
Graveyard intertwined with the pharmaceutical  
Sororities and the cheap yellow studios  
Where sometimes serial killers live but never grieve:  
In the cradle of the iron gates capped by spikenards  
Where the greyhound tramps of thin and flea bitten  
Hides whine to be set free from in between the unmovable bars,  
Where holiday is the sweet abdomen in the limp grasses,  
And the topaz flies congregate around the navel  
With its smells of long since births,  
I pray with shadows in the narcoleptic eulogies,  
And the darkening concentricities beneath my eyes do  
Not pretend that you have moved away, graduated  
Into the biceped shorthairs of flaxen day-laborers,  
Those poor men who live thoughtlessly colored by happiness,  
Who without a thought girls like you swim to, glistening  
And perfumed, and play unbuttoning games with work uniforms;  
Believe in the shallow permanencies of flesh and bone,  
And the type of love which rides along with them  
Like a carnival hibiscus in his vanilla lapel;  
But I do not believe in anything but this stone, the  
New heads which are slow to cave, the greater denouements,  
The novels which follow the short stories of our breaths,  
The pronouncements of simple truth and thus more  
Eternal form: here, in French, lies a great poet only 37,  
Pray for him, they say, in French, and I do, but not long enough,  
Beneath the lindens and heavy oaks where the windows are  
Like unobserving eyes, and the cars epitaphs of streams,  
The girls simply lovers in a few bright days, they too unnoticed  
Me in my habits, black ants trailing my jeans,  
Everything all at once, and thus mostly nothing,  
As the sky gives uncertain promises of rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unconditional Reign

Isn't your husband jealous because his  
Baby is lost in a swelter of Hollywood-  
Where I've been skipping  
Before there was mountains;  
And everyone looks beautifully available even in  
The libraries of Hollywood-  
And out on the street legs and billboards  
Selling,  
Selling pleasures of grapefruit, and cheated escapades  
Which go great around concrete ballrooms;  
And when I was really young,  
I stayed long enough to put my feet in the Pacific,  
And ran away,  
And that is what I do professionally here today-  
Though you still look so good,  
With your fingers smoking plums, your mind around  
The caracoles of highways where old Spanish  
Ghosts dream well fermented in the legions of  
Orange trees,  
Or up in the roman abutments where athletic tourists  
Still fall in love,  
Recalling every sad glance of your face- even if they  
Had never seen it, or gone to high school with you,  
You are there hung up like a Christmas ornament in  
The Spanish moon,  
And the traffic tries deafly quiet beneath you as if in  
A mute ballet,  
And even more importantly young Catalanian shepherds  
Come all alone as if into a bucolic theatre  
Where you are deep in soliloquy, the waves your loitering  
Marionettes,  
And they rest captivated, dusted red like prehistoric pots,  
And eat venal grapes from careless infested vines  
As down against the night dreamt tide, empty sailboats wait  
In bright folds seeming to cherish you unnaturally  
Like Spanish butterflies who have stayed up very late  
To glance up despondently like unbelieving children at your  
Unconditional reign.



# Unconditional Transcendences

Going down the graveyards whistle in the  
North,  
And I am getting too old to be doing this.  
For to look into your sweet eyes  
Is to consider the prospect of bedding the sea,  
Where the caesuras are so many thighs  
Slipping back and forth all along what they  
Need,  
Like waitresses in cocktail bars  
Who have painted their nails as they look away,  
Whistling;  
And you are so far north bedding your time,  
And the children wait for you in the snow.  
They do not know that this is what they do,  
As airplanes shoot arrows in the sky,  
And all the other common possibilities, the proofs  
Toward a better sun,  
And better lines than these:  
And mother and daughter in fine transcendence,  
But eventually one shall eat the other;  
Thus as the first recedes, I will love her just the same  
For infinity,  
But never does she come back again returning  
My unconditional transcendences.

Robert Rorabeck



# Unconscious Spell

My tail bone like a vanished dousing rod,  
Used to send out strange tremulous messages to you-  
Half destroyed by the wars of high school,  
Always bleeding in bed, attended by a blind nurse,  
It rushes cross-legged through the states:  
Sometimes it bounds pell-mell underneath the fences  
Of clouds-  
If you are not having an important conversation,  
Stop for a moment, and listen to what I am doing:  
We once crawled together on a rock which still hissed  
And popped erudite with important time criminals:  
And our double-lidded eyes perceived the bloom of the  
Very first flower,  
Just a crimson paint brush thought up by nothing through  
The misaligned lava pools,  
Cooling in the stone rhythm I ran my tongue along your  
Beautiful platelets amidst the micas and gypsum,  
And the premonitions of later sororities jubileed the air;  
And the sun shone down from its preschool solar system,  
Still learning the conflagrations of its otherwise  
Unconscious spell.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under All Of The Muse's Tears

More graffiti for stewardesses while  
My wife sleeps curled up in a shell, a baby inside  
Of her like a fully engaged pearl—  
Her land of faraway overpopulated by midgets—  
Words get twisted  
Around the maypole where firemen dressed  
As rabbits dance—  
And it rains outside making the grasses bury eggs—  
Dogs get old and die, but then they are  
Reincarnated—  
And lines as swift as trains appear out of nowhere,  
Going home sometimes takes them all week—  
Winos lifting jugs in the fog where the big  
Ships sleep, wondering where they buried  
Their lucky numbers—beautiful teams of words,  
As if raising from the water fountains that advertise  
Eternal youth in the middle of a school day—  
The popularity that is never used eventually goes  
Unnoticed—  
The werewolves sing to the unicorns in their sleep,  
And other things come to us from the metropolis  
Of the houses that inevitably drown  
Under all of the muse's tears.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under All These Many Things

Posthumous I may be  
Two percent immortal,  
Good enough for looking at while passing  
Through to more important ways  
By car  
Or fast train:  
I may be your esoteric Mickey Mouse  
With fat, almost Jewish lips,  
With eyes of spendthrift cadaver;  
If you would see me rot out in the open  
Air market knee high with the  
Spikenard  
And the red armpits of cypress,  
Then you would know me,  
And how I feel for you with a new side  
Of my face scarred,  
Like a little boy with a divining rod  
Wanting to searching out your pullulating womb  
Down there in the aloe beside the muggy  
Carport,  
And once found, dig his garden house into you,  
To see how deep the water has a home  
Under the citrus tree,  
Under the moon,  
And under all these many things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under Another Silly Moon

Your body in surplice in candlelight  
Walking somnambulant deep into the dreary hours  
Of a department store;  
I see you- I bite my wrist: my eyes flicker like  
Aroused fires who've been fed that very stuff;  
And the English isn't good, just golden loin pirates;  
But you are the stuff,  
While the oxygen dies again like seraphim way up  
Into the hungry mouths of the ceiling fans:  
There you are entrained to the gorgeousness to which  
You are heir:  
You are a nursery in your crenulated underwear;  
And I want to hear you with my tongue; I want to plant  
You just right here; and caracole that pearl which wimples  
The head of your children as they come out like  
Propitious porcelain dolls at first cerulean until they  
Start to weep;  
And then your life comes to me like a sickly sweet movie in  
The dark;  
And maybe the butterflies will make love to the moths  
Entering the forest of crepuscule,  
As your mouth will open moist gardens of rumors to my  
Carport of a mouth; and the day wont have any reason to last  
Any longer, and spill us out in a psychosomatic cornucopia  
Together where the manikins gather,  
The lovely ladies bathing forever just like housewives  
Wanting for nothing, seeming to watch our brushfires  
Once again under another silly moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under Each And Every Feet

Laying in the hedgerows, nose red with rum,  
The rattlesnakes despising the cotton mouths up from the  
Banks of the really torpid drainage:  
The sky all blue with shark's teeth and shark's wounds;  
And you are in school: you are learning how to hit the town;  
But you don't see that the sky is cooking above this  
Feathery esplanade: each blade of grass a vermilion wing under  
The fine shoes of housewives:  
They are in the kitchen nooks tipping glasses up to skies,  
Bosom sore with their new retinues, their little kids like little rabbits  
With sore red eyes;  
So the clouds gurgle and spume: they are living evidence that  
Bodies move up from the shores of the earth, up from the grove  
Lands: All gathered from the teeter-totters; the middle ground  
Is their changing room,  
And now they are in the sky cooking up something sweet, and  
We are looking up, the housewives and I as well, while the  
Various menageries of despised serpents curl under each and every feet.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under The Chandeliers

When my scars go away, you are not  
There: I have no need for you to be there.  
I am mostly beautiful,  
And know my way up and down mountains now,  
Know the witchcraft of the lay of the land,  
Or I know the vulpine grin and can lay it out at  
The dinner table while he and you are talking, at which  
While the whole family is gathering around  
Telling how it is done- up and down Broadway,  
Under the chandeliers.

When my scars go away, I float too. There is  
No more reason for these words, there is no more  
Tattoos, or to cry this ink into her gondolas, into  
A childhood of espionage and wet carpets drunken  
In San Antonio. When my scars go away,  
There aren't anymore heroes to take down,  
And her lips are mature and yet still hung upon the tree;  
They garland there; they grapes they wait, perhaps to speak a new  
Christmas carol, to make the fox leap. Or when my scars go away, I am  
Out in a blizzard trying to call in my charges from frost-  
Bite, those like minded marks of birth and fret:  
How they did in the poetess, how they gave her a better  
Grave, and laid upon her dress there, and built upon her  
Coffin: How they should lay upon me still,  
Or nock for wanting to come deeper in, and grow  
New ones in the spring, how they give it to me still,  
How when my scars go away like strangely misty acrobats,  
How they should migrate and take my better parts,  
Take my more conscious and oozing parts, and leave me  
Only there muddled into a suburbia, holding a gentled heart  
Like a chalice while the otters swim braiding with the alligators  
Behind the glass: How they make love by the coupling of  
Their species, and wait to eat or be eaten until afterwards  
In the driven parks where lovers neck, where cigarettes  
Perfume, and where I in my agelessness have run away,  
Arcing as if something heavy with mercury:  
I loved her, but it was an uneasy charge, but if these winter marks  
Should disappear, if I should become an unchallengeable prince,  
What then would they make of me, or more rightly so,

What could I ever make of myself?

Robert Rorabeck

# Under The Homeless Swing Sets

Gambling for this new night  
Down in the hollows,  
Drinking my watered down spirits,  
Hoping to see real life- moonlit humanity  
Strolling by  
Or cycling like spark lengths of  
A bitter poem;  
It has been such a long while since I collected  
That mammalian press,  
Since she was one dozen of my flowers,  
Or I caught her auburn turn underneath the  
Receptive lights of a supermarket;  
And the parking lot is filled with domestic  
Ghosts,  
And the lake down past the delinquent graffiti  
Of the suburban grotto still  
Floats rosy tampons like summer camp lotus'  
And I never did hold her hand;  
I was just wishfull thinking somewhere  
Lost in the middling crowd,  
While the clouds got up to suntan above the sea,  
And my family celebrated a long succession of  
Birthdays under the homeless swing sets  
And pine trees;  
And I suppose I'll never see her again,  
That beautiful memory lost yet more quixotic than  
Every wave in the advancing sea.

Robert Rorabeck



# Under The Loose Wheels Of The Cars

Regaled in the energy of its clever  
Turbines,  
The city covets with the damp foreheads of  
Its sunbeams:  
These simulacra sit inside boisterous as  
Humid ice-creams:  
I don't know that I must know that I have  
Seen you  
Through the transoms of these portholes,  
Waiting out on your spot in the light of your yard,  
Every inch of you ticking from rhyme:  
I think I must have seen you after the rains had come,  
And the city was as fancy as a  
Newly minted dime at harvest time:  
And there you was, and there you were,  
Spinning in gaiety, but not spinning at all:  
It was the look impregnated in your eyes as if I could have seen  
Them:  
You were starring on Broadway in the sticks in the weeds,  
As you put talcum powder over your newborn's crotch;  
And you looked over across the fiberboard you  
Mistook for the skies in Colorado;  
You wept and the crowd roared,  
Throwing bones and fireworks under the loose wheels of the  
Cars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under The Pursed Lips, The Awakened Stars

Now this mouth is almost dead.  
Painted up,  
It has said what it could,  
In the language taught to the ear,  
But she has walked away  
Drunkenly cursing these words,  
Believing she is still too young  
To behave for any man.  
Now that these lips are spoken,  
They purse silently,  
The subtle fixations like  
The vibrations in the resting mollusk;  
The mind has given up  
The motivating action,  
The sterility of thought leaves  
The blue army milling in the valley.  
Soon disbanded,  
The broken boys will return,  
Though some may range widely  
And follow the private whims into  
The breadbasket,  
The poor hopes in the lake less planes  
Of the great midlands,  
Where trailer parks of defeated  
Dictions spread out in corrugated rivers,  
And at night look beautiful and real  
Beneath the awakened stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under The Sprinklers And In The Rains

I don't want to use you up, because this is not  
Your grotto and my mother only has one flashlight,  
But still very soon I will be touching myself  
And then I will be traveling long footed across  
The baseball diamond just to see the girls  
In the fibrillose tents underneath the airplane's  
Garden:  
They do good work and they are always from Spain  
But they are very expensive, which I never fail to mention:  
And they are always pseudonyms for the real things:  
Housewives and cousins walking back to back  
Under the sprinklers and in the rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# Under Your Wings

If they are words they are tumbling through the mystery  
Of air-condition and ceiling fans  
While we are ruining the world and I didn't get to see you again  
Today because someone was sick:  
Your daughter whose second birthday is coming soon,  
And look at all of these cars and buses now like wishes,  
Alma:  
And the houses that travel the lanes like icing, and you are there,  
And the flowering of your house seems to bemuse you:  
You clean your house and you cook dinner:  
How many times do you comb your hair, to keep so beautiful,  
Alma,  
When the last time you saw mountains you were passing from  
Your home, and away into America,  
Like a butterfly with a backwards stare: and now what is in your  
Dark eyes, your brown skin such a beautiful metamorphosis  
Standing out amidst the pedestrians;  
And can you imagine what our boy would look like, Alma,  
Standing right there, under the roofs,  
Under your wings.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath A Christmas Tree

Their zoo is your dry crypt  
And we go here to touch ourselves:  
Newlyweds in another world as the sun shines  
And the tourists go home, embalmed with wet  
Pants:  
I can say that you never saw me underneath a Christmas  
Tree—  
Even though the airplanes were scuttled  
And made to retreat until we no longer believed ourselves  
Beautiful;  
But it wasn't out country that lost anyways—  
And our lips were like seashells resting up seashells that  
Were left unburied  
Across the chest of a labyrinth that basked repeatedly into  
The caressing shadows—  
Until there were children around us and soft words—  
And we both swore that we would last long enough to  
See them grow up  
And ride bicycles propped up by the moonlight like  
Motels—where my parents made love  
And at least a half of us—so we arose our eyes to  
Where the sun beckoned—  
And so showed us all of that beauty that could  
Never be properly named.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath A Graveyard Of Broken Down School Buses

Ancient prisms of kaleidoscopes whose wealth is  
Lost as it is made more beautiful,  
As the sorority of hurricanes makes the grassy gems of  
Suburbia suppliant, and all of the truants I knew  
Hide to close to the canal, light off fireworks  
As the silent wonderment of alligators arises:  
And the drowsing bees like tourists of a wayward apiary  
Crowd the busily hung intersections of hibiscus  
Across the train tracks of a brown girl I once knew  
Who lies down again with her brown men, as the stars  
Shine like wax on a chicken coop with windswung doors  
Open to the hungry foxes and wait their mystified  
In the lovemaking tantrums like a garden of orchids  
Waiting underneath a graveyard of broken down  
School buses for all of the African tortoises to play  
Hooky from the zoo.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath A Jealous Streetlight

Pages turning to the yellow crayon dust of  
A soul,  
And a fox who has learned to walk steps out  
Underneath a jealous streetlight—  
There are robbers in the graveyard—and  
Thieves of airplanes in the sky—  
The classrooms are emptied, and the ways  
He has been thinking about it are emptied—  
He has echoes of the thoughts of going home:  
The road in his mind used to be like going  
Into the caracoles of a shell  
Where you can still hear the oceans of her  
Name,  
Before she forced him into the venal metamorphosis  
Of an all too common jealousy,  
Taking her fried chicken and watermelons up  
Into the clouds—sharing and sleeping with pilots  
And their stewardesses—never looking down  
To where is mobiles hung, limpid—  
Where he continued jumping his impotence—  
Like birthday candles burned out of their wish's flame.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath A Lighthouse

They were sleeping tantamount to banshees  
And she didn't care,  
I suppose:  
The city spilling over and combing over  
Itself,  
And another beauty was discovered, just  
As another household was toppled- and the spring  
Became the summer-  
And I had to look up into the cloudy heavens:  
It was a forest fire burning there  
That the airplanes somehow commuted through,  
While their pageantry of wishes burned  
And yet I continued singing out for her,  
My tongue forked, trying to touch her at both  
Ends,  
But neither of us disguising who we were pretending  
To be underneath the commuter heavens,  
While the students divided themselves into the primordial  
Lunches of their churches,  
And then there was just this burning- while  
The leopards leapt, spottedly, and the angels burned,  
Searching for another heavens that could soon  
Be noticed,  
Underneath a lighthouse that always burned.

Robert Rorabeck



# Underneath All Of The Moonbeams

The angels cannot die,  
Even though the heroes are singing from  
The throats of your graveyards,  
As it all takes awhile to be illuminated and  
Then to be believed,  
While your sorority has touched down  
Upon the finish line,  
And what about the vanishing bouquets:  
Another word spent into the night  
As the lovers make  
Love again, telling their tales to no one  
Outside of the heroisms of their  
Very own bedroom  
That bares their children, as it all takes awhile  
To coalesce,  
But then their existence cannot possibly be  
Resolved,  
But after the daylight, the honeymoons  
Proceed in their hotel rooms underneath all of  
The moonbeams-  
As it all remains some kind of curse we were  
Never meant to resolve.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath All Your Beautifully Glowing Sisters

I want to make love to the coin of your lips,  
And propose to you down in the glittering river walks  
Of San Antonio,  
And embrace in the tourism of our greatest defeats:

Oh, there are so many places we should've been,  
So many fields of wildflowers that are still virgins;  
While you are still serving your liquored cups to  
Undeserving men:

Scarred, I am still starving over you in my  
Parents' basement. Dreaming of loneliness without you  
In Saint Augustine,  
Looking across the easy tricks from my house  
of some working class  
Golf course.

Do your legs scissor brown and longing  
Words that I have yet to misspell. It is raining outside,  
But they won't let me back into school, because I am lying,  
And the stars are so far away-

They have forgotten their lines, and now they are weeping  
For dead children authors- Men who were so kind as to write  
Back to all of us. They were greater than Disney World;  
And look at all those stars.

Like you, they are so far away- and they are all beautiful  
Women. How can I forget about them when they perpetuate themselves  
Above my earth like a house of mirrors, doing everything  
Angels are supposed to do,

As you lay down in a bed so far away, glowing like a candle  
At his touch, forgetting the reasons for the youthful exercise of our  
Long extinguished glances;  
But your abandoning perfumes still remind me  
Of echoing high school hallways

So I write this for you

As I drink alone underneath all your beautifully glowing sisters.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath An Overpass

And very soon there will be other women:  
Hourglass women  
Up in their romantic trees taking solace with baboons:  
And zeppelins like barrettes in their hair  
Off to the side of long wandering parks- and her eyes  
Underneath the moon like Siamese twins  
On trapeze or bicycles:  
It will be a beautiful sight even if it does inevitably  
Become entirely undone:  
As I kissed her mouth like an open wound across  
The dune falling into the  
Amusements of the sea- and later, sobered,  
We slept together underneath an overpass for all of  
That night- and I held her close, but she always felt  
So very far away from me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath Her Bonfires

I still read my stuff to the lions of  
Rum,  
After the lights have turned out,  
After the heroes are home:  
And I am out of job—  
The carnival of bric-a-brac  
Has turned away:  
The sea has gone away with the  
Other tourists.  
The housewives have turned in  
With their best or at least their  
Better men:  
And the one or two muses are  
In their graveyards—  
And they are so cold that they  
Do not need to be warm—  
And there is a green cloud in  
The sky  
Following the way the eyes of  
The witch moves—  
But she is just keeping the thoughts  
To herself—  
Whenever she means to she can make  
The graveyards spring to life—  
And all of her loves that are buried  
Backwards so that they are  
Facing the monuments of canyons  
Instead of sunshines,  
Can spring to it like jack-in-the-boxes—  
Can call heaven to her shoulders  
To cloak her in daisies fondled by apiaries—  
To make the sea foam a heaven underneath  
Her bonfires,  
To hold its breath and think of her,  
And see her  
As a muse as she stands there  
Almost believing that she is enough.



# Underneath Her Tree

I'll drink the tears, after the genie has  
Deceived you underneath her tree, while the busses  
Wait beside the portables,

And the schools and libraries are closed:  
And it is a beautiful world, filled with grass and trees-  
The students walk through here,  
And the most beautiful girls with scabbed knees

While the tortoises snore-  
And heavens daydream in their perambulating  
Estuaries- and the foxes lay, fat bellied-

They are counting the housewives leaping the grapes  
Of the vineyard like candle flames:  
And seeing what they've been growing,  
The simulacrum finally arrives at the predestined  
Conclusion

That he is a real boy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath Our Semiprecious Sky

Lost to the cycling's of my gray youth,  
With dreams of stealing bicycles and moving out  
Into the great processions of the masses,  
Of joining men with the same color and clothing as I,  
And riding out dutifully into an extravaganza too big for the  
Screen:  
And the sky panting out over us, waiting for fireworks and  
Then the moon;  
And the little whispers we would give to our lovers all up  
And down the rocks at the seashore, lost in their green eyes  
All alike as the waves:  
Multitudinous and happening, and escaping again into houses  
On a block as big as a country, with children underneath  
Parasols watching boisterous sprinklers  
Holding hands with them like little offerings while standing out  
And smiling across the street and up and down at my  
Winsome brothers:  
All of us motioning to different herons that would dive  
Like bottle rockets fast and swift and gurgling into the canals:  
And the mailmen would come while the stewardesses we  
Supposed shot overhead;  
And we would go inside and listen to the silently industrious whim  
Of the air-conditioning; and the ceiling fans making it as well,  
Like creatures of similar designs, so that eventually  
Satisfied stillness and crickets waxing their legs: the little curls  
Of homeopathic processions through the grasses,  
And the hot stifling of making love from house to house for  
Blocks around in fields and fields underneath our semiprecious sky.

Robert Rorabeck



# Underneath The Abandoned Highways

With all of the shadows bending,  
And my dog looking again at me from the floor—  
And all of the shadows healthy as  
A newly cut Christmas tree,  
I think of writing my last and final muse again—  
As the last of the sunlight slithers upon the  
Floor,  
But there is no amusement underneath the  
Abandoned highways of the resting airplanes—  
Sometimes she takes off by herself  
Even though I tell her that she cannot fly—  
And she looms in the headlights,  
And she makes love to herself over the waves—  
And I have tried time and time to save her,  
Even though she pretends that there is nothing left  
Which can be saved.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Alamo

Lost in the water fountains of another high school  
Looking up and down  
And up and down her legs: where is she headed to—  
Like best wishes blown—  
Like ashes blown over a birthday cake, over all of  
The pretty fish of the sea—teaming, aquamarine,  
Basking and fluted and so alive!  
Underneath the skies in their teaming banners  
With no help from their godd\$mned mothers:  
They will have to go to school tomorrow, as she goes  
To the supermarket—  
And the Ferris wheels to another town,  
As the golden fish continue to swim around and around  
In the forgotten rivers underneath the Alamo.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Angel-Like Airplanes

I cant tell time by the candles who are  
Burning for the Virgin of Guadalupe: I still have termites  
In my house and no family,  
But Alma looked good in the out fit I bought her at the  
Flea Market abajo I-95:  
And she served me a dish of pazoli, and I ate it while her  
Children swung wishfully at a piñata, like a mache gondola  
On a clothing line:  
Then it rained and yesterday Alma had a white eyelash as  
White as the sun on her forehead;  
It seemed so white that my mother must have been the owner,  
And these houses I live in are so old that they have  
Forgotten all about the Christmas trees who once lived in  
Them,  
And the soft footsteps over their octogenarian woods-  
And the racing horses that my father has been so abashedly pedaling:  
The cars only come once in a while: they barely disturb  
The neighborhoods of ghosts who live here while the school yards  
Of hungry children pass right through their otherworldly filaments  
Eager to be back into their cartoon mausoleums,  
Where their even young mothers bless them like virgins in kitchen-like  
Grottos underneath the angel-like airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Broken School Bus

Sometimes words are cruel and dredge deeper than  
Canals  
Where kidnappers put all of their sleeping children  
Abed and to reptilian breast vivisected like dark  
And maggoty presents for  
A satanic Christmas;  
And it is a sad lonely place periodically no deeper than  
A puddle,  
And I have been musing and biting on my lip for a  
Bit,  
Wondering upon what pretty lady my eyes will feast upon  
Throughout the slanting sundials of ever present hours.  
Anna-bell says that they are food for the teeth  
And not the eyes;  
He recommends sex with cornflakes and milk,  
Not cherrios-  
And today a very fine gringa asked him at what hour  
I would get off work-  
Imagine her surprise when she found out I was the boss,  
And now my father is hooking up the trailer in the  
Dark and like a superhero to go and save all of his horses,  
And maybe my mother is walking towards me in the blinding  
Light,  
But all I can think about is Diana, the Columbian who drives  
The lunch wagon,  
Who looks like the prettiest and most curvaceous woman  
To ever exist, and Anna-bell says she thinks I'm cute  
And wants to date me,  
But I have to get my tongue unstuck first. I should really go ahead  
And shoot myself,  
Because each word is another step further down the ironic  
Easement to where the awful mirrors reveal the faces of dark  
Children and the unsteady turn of reptilian water wheels,  
In the horned gyrations of a venal water spout,  
Where the ice-cream and the sounds are all runny as an oil slick,  
Like a once beautiful orchid which has long since wilted from  
Disuse underneath the broken school bus.



# Underneath The Canons Of The Lord

Waking up everyday, thinking of what suicide  
Some wolves will give, if they invade me now  
The release they'd give:  
Fjords around my eyes, awful maidens behind  
Them:  
I want to get drunk, I want to get drunk and feed  
The horses;  
It's all of my capability to show penitence beneath  
This dishonest star: To say its name, to slur  
And to fail immediately, the spotlight cast haplessly  
Across the human sea, watching as every relative  
Is canned into wooden boxes: You know who they  
Are, you've seen them,  
And the light flickering like an early stage,  
Painted women are taking a break, laughing, smoking  
When they were before being paid to dance.  
Now that they've seen the tricks of the cannonball's  
Thunder, they are no longer incredulous, nor afraid  
Of the first snows;  
And I am lying beneath them, lying as a humbug in the  
Crass weathers of oily flesh,  
Not knowing what my next meal will be- Preferring  
To eat myself like a worm on a flower, than to return  
To this dust, this frightened old country chapped by that  
Star, the ageless old curse-  
The release by a beautiful woman's eyes, the freedom  
Of her sensory bliss: its all I have to do this for, but she  
Is not mine, another man's child hung nursing upon her tit.  
Gathered around a Christmas tree of so many warm souls,  
I grow even more consumptive, my last candle burns blue;  
And I wait for the final wagon to turn by,  
To sleep in its ruts, sprawled out like a unclean outcast  
Beneath the resounding claptraps the mountains seem to collect,  
Diminished to the selfsame oblivion underneath the  
Canons of the lord.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Castle

Very beautiful underneath the castle of the  
Yellow moon—while my wife sleeps I look at you  
And drink rum—  
I do not feel guilty—in the morning will be the  
Weekend—I will get my car washed,  
I will clean the floor—  
And there will come a million or at least a thousand  
Ways to come around to finding you—  
In that brilliant daylight of your  
Playground while no one else is looking  
And nothing else can be found.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Ceiling Fans

Mountains and mountains of  
Werewolves jackknifed into switchblades:  
Boys who could have been pretty  
But wasn't and weren't:  
Beneath a sky filled with the bitterness of unsealed promises  
Of lotteries of virgins given over to the cul-de-sacs  
Of insatiable demons:  
Getting their tattoos underneath the ceiling fans  
Just becomes the housewives would be too busy to attend  
Their games anyways- and the fuses were lighted  
From their churchyards across the street from  
The pet cemeteries of their papier-mâché  
Hearts: and I wanted to love them,  
But the hotel rooms were empty anyways  
When I got to them- and the entire campus was an echo-  
And echo-  
And the true lovers were found down in their basements  
Spinning bottles- and trying to grow up without truly understanding  
Who they really were.

Robert Rorabeck



# Underneath The Clouds

Broken adventures moving against the  
Stream:  
This is my family,  
And these are the few words I know-  
And none of it belongs here:  
These yards and houses do not belong,  
Nor the airplanes leaping over them,  
Nor the girls here  
Who are shortly to be women: women,  
Long-legged,  
Bronzed women of a special cast-  
They who will know their families like fishing  
Leaping  
Fast- fast:  
Women of the year: women of a single snowflake  
Evaporating underneath a single sun:  
My words are just for her,  
Women- my words are meant to be the flower  
That signifies the metamorphosis of  
Everything,  
And casts its perfumes into the aqueducts of  
The beating heart of her trauancies,  
While she goes out all night long-  
This is the staple of my belonging handed out readily  
Upon the highway-  
A broadside for the busy avenues all headed to  
See her being,  
As she goes back to school again, as the airplanes  
Fall asleep underneath the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Crepuscule

Preliminary daydreams in the afternoon's  
Truancy-  
There I suppose you were, sunning on the rooftops  
Over the fairytale otters,  
Pretending to be beautiful, while the fireworks  
Sparked like misfits,  
And the entire theatre began to fade as the housewives  
Returned home, circulatory:  
See the things they have brought with them beneath you-  
What artwork in their tender clefts:  
In their dimpled chins,  
Out dancing in the spotlight of their living rooms,  
While their pools pretend so many diamonds  
Underneath the crepuscule of the inevitable moon.

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While their pools pretend so many diamonds  
Underneath the crepuscule of the inevitable moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Flowers

I develop you while walking the way I know  
Home-  
The day is hot- the sea is foam:  
I have two beers in a plastic sack and a serpent  
To germ-  
My friends, they are buried with the stewardesses  
And the prostitutes, over the canals  
Or the chain link fences- and we can see them  
If we learn to swim through the shallows.  
Their voices are healthy underneath the flowers,  
And in their palms like instruments the dens  
Of ant lions,  
And in their eyes like decorations, the fires of  
Chrysalis over the way that it turned out-  
The airplanes touch down softly over  
Their cenotaphs, the foxes leaping at their  
Zoetrope-  
The stewardesses laugh at their excursions like  
Monarchs,  
And they will go home to abandon their children  
In the milk weed,  
Who will grow up to follow them like shadows  
Over that which has already vanished.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Gaze Of The Castillo De San Marcos

This Sunday morning I am trying to write poetry sober:  
I am inside my yellow house, but it is a long ways until  
October:  
I have the Virgin of Guadalupe inside the foyer of my house;  
It is her grotto,  
But for now I am the only soul inside my house,  
And the sky swings above the roof as smoky as a censer:  
I can hear the lips of airplanes whispering above my roof,  
And the legs of pedestrians chattering along the sidewalk:  
All the pretty things do is talk,  
And my nights are as green as emerald and Alma's eyes  
Haunt me as dark as drift wood:  
Her eyes haunt me as dark as the drift wood that passes through  
The channels with the sword fish underneath the gaze of  
The Castillo de San Marcos.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Grounds Of Her Amusements

I made love to your wife a thousand times underneath the  
Moonlight while I was still awakening and then this  
Job: half arisen into the seas of wherever—supposing you never  
Collected yourselves—  
Well, at least—It was perceived as another beautiful amusement—  
Well, until the flowers happened,  
Over spilling and over spilling—making new words for  
The phantasms of the day cares and becoming recreational—  
A day time of brilliancies into whichever way that she  
Spilled- beauty piled atop of beauty—until night became another  
Phantasm and was introduced into the playgrounds of  
The architects—and then she had to rest forever,  
After her first or second husband—  
Brilliant as the last blooms of a daydream—a really beautiful  
Creation regressed underneath the floorboards  
As her mansions sped underneath the ground  
And her amusements matriculated themselves away and away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Hot And Florid Sun

In another house where housewives love,  
Where no one could possibly ever read-  
Down on the easement with my dogs, like a short  
Mowed prairie for tamed fairy-tales-  
I take another glass and that is all- That is my  
Poisonous heaven- and I can never be what is not  
Allowed. How they have betrayed me, finely suited,  
Already seated at their dinner table in their  
Gated community- I sleep in a crypt underneath my  
Parents, above their heads- I have an old tattoo from  
Spain; I can never be buried where they are buried.  
They will sleep together forever- I have scars against  
My navel- Pick me, and discard me, leave me on  
The hooks or retail. Emolliate me on stage-  
Make the girls who never loved me, who never read my  
Stuff have one creamy orgasm- scatter my ashes over  
McDonalds- Go out and rent a movie, park in between  
Her legs, the barking penumbras where I used to lunch:  
Never read this column which has forever been here for  
You, a single lonely basilisk out of place but erect  
In the otherwise retention of used cars- Like her eyes,  
With many flecks all of one color, I can stand up many  
Trees for you: look at my scars, I will deliver,  
But will you choose ever a one: She lives in her gated community,  
Insouciant, predictable in the petting zoo underneath the hot  
And florid sun.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Misconceptions

Distant ships on a river  
Passing down a stream of a  
Millennium's eyes-  
I no longer call you on your  
Birthday-  
I've forgotten how your  
Mother lost her rabbits  
Like the gifts I bought  
For your children-  
As the heavens breed above  
Th earth  
Multiplying their decorations  
Of mirages-  
Where immature gods swim  
Like tadpoles,  
Minds of dispossessed zygotes  
Heady from the featherlight  
Atmosphere-  
Underneath the Misconceptions of  
Caricoles,  
Fathers of fledgling tourists  
Take winebagos through  
The arid regions of  
New Mexico's desert  
We stole away from your  
Grandmother who never guessed  
That we would ever think of you.

Robert Rorabeck



# Underneath The Mountains

Gross circuits of a Pegasus—bloom in blue  
Oasis—across the tendrils of  
Bamboo where a university used to live and seize up—  
But the rockets burned away to other planets  
And even moons  
Perhaps of ice-locked oceans—and roller-rinks—  
The prettiest jasmine bloomed in the unapologetic moonlight  
Trying to figure itself out—  
The artisans continuing evangelically unapologetic—  
High stepping through the monsoons through the  
Jungles of the prettiest wildflowers overflowing the  
Highest basins—  
As she stepped out of the shower and then the boudoir  
Of her room—and went to school—  
Vipered with perfume—and translated for a thousand  
Years the queer abbreviations  
Telegraphed from the constellations in the amusements  
Parks that just so happened over the  
Wisped heads of the truants and the latch keyed hooligans—  
Reminisces in the strange romances,  
Runaways crying in the bathrooms illuminating  
Underneath the mountains  
Underneath the stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Mountains Of Beauty

Beauty in a shop without a care:  
Underneath a mountain, collecting the weather  
Like a bouquet-  
Let us diadem her, let us make her wet:  
Beauty, where are you:  
Stepped out into a forest fire  
The bears are bathing in- and the velveteen  
Antlers dance like multiply spears  
Amidst the canopy  
Where all of your favorite animals can finally  
Talk- speaking of that ruckus-  
And about there somewhere, a rose bush  
That used to grow over the grave of our love-  
Now a cenotaph of thorns  
Where beautiful maidens go to prick  
Themselves and sleep for a thousand years-  
Beauties underneath the mountain who  
Haven't a care.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Overpass

They said that in her eyes were a million  
Golden arrows—  
I don't know what cages she  
Kept in her sparrows—  
They lied me underneath the overpass—  
Underneath the sun  
And bought things off of me, and  
Haggled over me—  
While the sea we imagined sitting  
In our classrooms leapt and  
Run.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Overpasses

Then it feels like soft gold- worn by Alma:  
And they make love again  
Only to disappear like her rabbits and the grass grows:  
The foliage crenulates awaiting her overtime  
Heroes and the songs of  
Their epic exploitations: they get penny candy on their  
Bicycles:  
They masturbate underneath the healthy trees in the park  
Overeagerly before bedtime,  
Spilling of their abuse into graveyards- even handling apples  
Wrong,  
As their grandmothers turn away and follow the old  
Tramlines  
Underneath which the wolves are always leaping and snapping  
Until they get somewhere along the sidesteps of  
Metamorphosis:  
Maybe then there is an entire sea all the way beneath them,  
And even she is casting off her close and telling her sisters,  
Who are busily working the washing machines,  
Or handling their tomorrows into flea markets  
Underneath the overpasses:  
Whispering as light as a homeopathic armory of cinnamon  
Of this good, good deeds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Paper Snowflakes

Letting a spider dance  
Over the fairgrounds  
Which—as it happens to chance—  
Had just come to town—  
For a season—  
Cycles of werewolves and  
Bicycles—  
Words left forgotten  
Like abandoned houses  
Beside the canal—  
Or our Christmas trees  
For the garbage men  
On New Years—  
Or your younger  
Sister's virginity -  
Don't you see—  
She doesn't care—  
Emotions given to the  
Marriages of limbo—  
As the professors  
I once knew  
Commit suicide  
Underneath the  
Paper snowflakes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Penumbras Of The Migratory Ferris-Wheels

The tiniest fingers of a heart playing a flute  
Over the embers of a kindergarten  
Fills the pit where I've been singing—  
Watched by the cold gems in the eyes of  
Crocodiles and alligators that once  
Watched me kissing you on the mouth  
While the whole world turned:  
Teachers who were full of themselves,  
And housewives too—  
Going to and from stores, air-conditioned—  
Petty, always forgetful of how they once  
Wore roller-skates—  
Or how the firefighters slid down the poles  
Backlit by the prepubescent mountains  
That carried the purple and blue mountain lions  
Not so far away from them,  
But kept all of their finest secrets to themselves  
In the keyholes of their bosoms—  
Until the rainstorms came, so full of gasoline  
And forgotten fairytales—then the goldfish  
Gossiped inside of their wishing wells and  
Plastic bags—  
And mothers whispered to themselves  
Underneath the penumbras of the migratory  
Ferris-Wheels, where they swore and swore  
That they could say nothing bad about anyone else.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Pine Trees

Everything will get taken care of underneath the pine trees  
As the cars turn around  
Like a merry-go-round  
Where we once came across one another  
To stare into each others' brown  
Eyes through the forest:  
I thought you were a butterfly,  
But I do not know what you thought  
I was,  
And the clouds went through the sky,  
But they weren't anything anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Red Cliffs

Days underneath the red cliffs  
Of the rider-less saddles  
As my mother burns sugarcane  
And my father sells fireworks beside  
The highway,  
Not far from the garden of Eden where  
The leopards still lie down  
Underneath the ceiling fans-  
And the spotless virgins flip in the sky  
Like a mantilla of candles:  
And the lions yawn, filling up with  
Goldfish that are just mirages:  
They burn away like eager wishes-  
And the sky doesn't know  
What to say:  
It just flips the page,  
And the night waits for your pretty  
Voice to fill it with  
Unicorns.

Robert Rorabeck



# Underneath The Shade

Comatose beauty singing through the slits of her  
Elbows—  
Articulated and unarticulated and flying back again:  
Paper airplane bound upon picking up  
His paper paycheck  
As upon this paper this paper song is sung:  
Folded up at the elbows:  
Folded up at the creek:  
Folded up in the folded memory of a folded week:  
Slipped through the reservoirs,  
Slipped through the press boxes: there is the king,  
And there are your foxes:  
As he sings—horned in death and rainbows—  
Butterfly adjacent to the graveyard  
Or the garden in the rainstorm—  
As mute as a box he keeps lighted underneath the shade:  
Here is where I left you—  
That is what I made.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Stars

When I get really good I cant even spell that  
Alma prefers her family,  
And goes back to them like something trained, or  
On a string,  
The way a wary canary tries to flee the vaporous mine  
Underneath the stars in their make believe  
Chicken wire, in the invisible fences in which we made  
Yards for them,  
And all called up in a chorus of pretty girls who were  
Evicted from even prettier cars;  
And it was as if the night came gushing like the defeat  
Of a dam over all of those roads and intersections,  
And crawled up the fences and the mezzanines  
To say its chaos of promises  
To the half light of the bedrooms arranged in the phantasms  
Of lace, to the girls  
Where they'd just had at dreaming away all of the sailors  
Into a song,  
And it was so delightful that they were hardly bothered at  
Awakening;  
In fact, the peals in the pinched flowers of their  
Saltwater clams were still humming.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Sun

Copper plated world filled to  
The gills with  
The hard evidence of the places  
I guess we have to go,  
To end up-  
Coming home again, touching down  
Just as the mirages of  
Airplanes,  
And all of this a busy place,  
Like minded,  
Filled with little hope: in spume of  
Words and roe,  
Like lights out in the quieted streets,  
Like venison still with beating  
Hearts  
Newly born and walking down to your  
Pretty house  
Where you haven't guessed yet that I love  
You,  
As I lay out in your yard underneath  
The heavens, waiting to  
Be the metamorphosis of anything,  
Drooling with the crickets  
Underneath the mailboxes- the jasmine make  
A necklace of perfume,  
And in the morning the roman candles will  
Bloom,  
And each of the comely housewives will grab  
Their keys and strut across their  
Yards,  
Their children will go again to schools:  
And I will teach them underneath the sun,  
The very sun where the angels whisper  
And the faucets run.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Vanished Stars

In this graveyard, in this cathedral—the girls look up—  
And now they seem delighted—  
And now they are turning away, turning up the rocks  
Towards the faces of god knows what—  
And soon they will disappear—like amusement rides we will  
Never have to see again—  
And when they are gone—well, oh, what mystery:  
And I set candles out for them—  
And offer prayers that I am unsure of, and call their names  
All of the way up to the moon—  
But then I already know that they are employed by the  
Better elements—into the sororities of the  
Girls who keep holding out unto all of the weathers—  
And the night is old and priceless—  
And we steal the bicycles of our old professors on  
Thanksgiving and we keep riding out and riding out—  
And you keep longing for me, or something else you cannot  
Believe in—until the yards are spoiled and bright red  
With paint and blood and  
Abandoned apples—□  
And we are left out of all of the establishments, learning to  
Sing for ourselves—until the hurricanes are almost gone,  
And the candles are almost finished—  
And the light of god can almost be seen—titillating  
On the brink of the precipice of  
The joys they let off of the ships that she abandoned—  
And she only did this because of alliteration and  
Because of other things—  
And now she is a memory into the east, like the sun  
Waking up—until she is not a memory at all—  
And the world has awakened underneath the vanished stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Underneath The Window

What will you say about the roses some  
Werewolf threw down the well:  
Now that I love who will paint my scars  
With her fingernails  
And say her rules to my little house:  
As you feed your children around the  
Starving dogs of Mexico,  
And my words spread like wet seed in a dusty  
Bed:  
Little strange fever around your eyes:  
Areolas of the porticos of engraven airplanes  
Circling the vultures of starving whelps-  
My specific language needs so  
Many things,  
But you are with him, and there is a  
Volcano underneath the window  
Where the werewolf grins.

Robert Rorabeck

# Understand

Sharon- I don't have much,  
Considering what you've destroyed through cheap drink  
And the false smiles of our pre-socratics:  
Pastels and paunches in the rooms I can  
Smell you in:  
Yes, I am defeated and you are victorious  
With nothing else on but some roller-skates,  
But isn't it enough:  
I am fully famished, and about ready to move up  
From this Satanic university,  
Floating up like this in my Satanic University.  
Nothing better than this,  
Nothing ungodly, thoroughly enmeshed,  
Haven't you called me- haven't you called me,  
So many times,  
With your blue eyes so combative,  
Almost really undone,  
Almost really all that and all my newest scars  
Peeling like a submarine,  
AND we aren't at war and you are good enough to be  
Another state,  
Sharon,  
I am inebriate, but I am leaping, leaping:  
And I will spend all of my liquor all at once underneath you  
God-gorgeous lips if you lay me, Sharon.  
I will sell myself toward you underneath the beaten rhapsodies of  
That young sun who is yet beating and epileptic underneath for your  
Jaw-bone love,  
Epileptic and truant for you while even diving underneath the higher  
Divinations of an untruthful atmosphere my more  
Intrepid jumpsuits have already led me to understood,  
Sharon:  
And this is all I am,  
Caught up and dying in the Allegany gut-shots of proms and sideways  
In buckskin suede you could possibly  
Apple mouthed in your own milky taught patriotisms  
Running out of gas  
Couldn't yet understand..... Understand, Sharon....  
Understand?

Robert Rorabeck

# Undressing In Sky

I.

The areola is mine.  
I saw it hanging around the sun

And the golden trees which  
Signify death,  
But not mine....

The little girls swaying  
Inside pink hula-hoops-  
Where are you?

II.

You are undressing in  
The sky garden,  
In the bowers of the  
Lonely persimmon tree...

Cars drive by on the crowded  
Highway,  
Men who have missed you,  
Like weeds in the garden,

But you do not mind,  
Your lips brush the neck of your shirt,  
As you take it off

III.

You swim in the unclaimed light,  
Faithlessly charmed,

Perhaps for awhile until  
You are thoroughly reassured.  
Then, stepping out,  
You are taken up by  
The first John who swims the avenue



And what I see of you now,  
Is that thoughtless spot your form  
Left in the woods above the earth,  
Which I claim.

Robert Rorabeck

# Undressing Poetry

This poetry is undressed,  
And her eyes stare through the window,  
Stare down the long horizon,  
Eclipsing the subtle bergs, the pawn shops,  
The slithering roadways,  
The abandoned farms; ignoring the fried-chicken  
Drive-thrus, the dirty yellow laundry-mats,  
The speak easies, and the bright billboards;  
This poetry has a thing for you,  
And watches you lying on the coverless bed,  
Matted with dog hair and lazing delinquencies,  
Drool and spot on rum,  
As the grass shivers like strange children  
Congregated underneath the molten lights,  
As the day sinks,  
As the earth recedes into a ball of shadowy  
Masks,  
As your dry lips crack contemplatively,  
And your briar patch of a brain stumbles further  
Into the steaming swamp of cold blooded serenades,  
Through the mottled cypress jeweled with  
The forgotten memories of cicadas eager to move  
On- There she sees you typing her trifles,  
The microscopic barbs which tingle her mammography,  
And sets her mind to concentration for a little while,  
As if on this page you had succeeded in  
Scribbling up to her, a tiny dimple she didn't  
Know she had, and thus peak her interest infinitesimally.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unfathomable Bibles

With whatever songs there are to sing in  
The dungeons are picking up the better sticks:  
It comes for awhile alive and over  
The unstable forms of the buildings of all of  
Those bricks:  
This is the estuary that they should all together  
Enjoy—while we was bringing ourselves together  
With all of the conjoined joy of the extinguishing  
Butterfly—  
As the thief flies over the river—as he goes  
Over the switchbacks of all of the unremembered  
Gardens—as the mountains loom over all of  
The unsanctioned joys that always remember to  
Be here no matter the origins of all of the  
Unfathomable bibles which they've been fighting.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unfortunate Souvenir

Cherry red souvenir,  
I see that you have no motor,  
So what is it that animates you,  
Going homeless down the streets,  
Trucking your bad language  
Spitting watermelon seeds-  
One could almost say that I thought  
I knew you,  
But that was in the past when there  
Was still cities,  
And you had steady work-  
I could see that you were in demand from  
The windows,  
But now it's just the wind, androgynous;  
It doesn't even care to call your name,  
And yet you still move-  
There must have been something inside  
You that you've stolen,  
Or is it only something make believe:  
There you go, slightly out of orbit now  
When you used to sing:  
I thought I saw you, but  
Now there isn't anybody left in to believe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unfortunately

Unfortunately,

I've had to live without  
You for so long

I've forgotten how I  
Made you c-me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unfortunately Serendipitous

Seas of tiny—even infantile shelters scarred  
With glitter—  
And over them, a movie theatre,  
Revealing the apexes and labyrinths of coral—  
The moon,  
A projector of stolen light—casting over  
Hidden bicycles  
And mermaids colored by the apertures of water:  
Night-dreaming of boys in a high school  
They will never have to attending—languishing,  
Unfortunately serendipitous

Robert Rorabeck

# Unfulfilled

She hid her eyes from me  
Like cognizant blue diamonds  
That once searched under her lashes'  
Sexy canopy.  
She ran away and buried them  
When from far overseas I wrote  
To her that I loved her in a thousand  
Letters scribbled out on the frontlines  
Where fear gripped me in the trenches  
As the heavens had turned into the  
Screeching of heavy iron doors,  
And the earth exploded from the rain  
Of icepicks on those steel shores—  
She couldn't admit what she might  
Have seen in me;  
That, while holding hands and eating  
Melting ice-cream in the summer's promenade,  
She had seen death crawling in me like  
A creeping servant of time,  
So under the lemony sun and through  
The sleepy curtains of citric light,  
She had smelled the decaying mutation  
Of my tragic end,  
And thus she refused to look at me,  
To return my love from so far away,  
Making her bury her beautiful sight so  
That when I died, the exploded husk sleeping  
With his rifle in the dirt as men screamed,  
She could not see me from so far away—  
Only in the dark, fingertips feeling through  
The warm prick of a candle's single flame,  
After my letters had stopped  
And my uncle had sent me home to  
Sleep forever under her, did she dare to open  
Her eyes again upon the man who had survived.  
In the dark warmth of their bed she revealed  
Her eyes, while they lived in the night,  
The sleepy blueness of those things she needed to  
Show. When the day slipped over the horizon

Like an intrusive priest upon her private sorrows,  
She put them away again,  
Cast them toward the earth  
Where my eyes seemed to stare back up at  
Her from so far away  
Refusing to see my love for her unfulfilled.

Robert Rorabeck



# Unfurls

Traffic unfurls like this line of poetry;  
It unfurls like a snail, or like the ribbon for  
Her fairytale hair: she should be beautiful, '  
But her eyes are his, and like pearls, peeking  
Out from underwater. She swims all day  
To and from work. The power lines hem,  
And this tells a story.... This unfurls like a story  
Crumbled and curled in the aloe beside the carport  
With the rebar and poisonous toads. And I am  
Writing without the aids of liquor, without a drum  
To store by, and with it to sell. And this is a poem  
About cars, big and beautiful and affluent, and the  
Woman in the store, break necking her shadow so  
That her hair unfurls like a ribbon, like a long vase  
Pouring silk. In fact it cascades, and gives reason to  
My fingers and there is nothing more to it. In fact,  
That is all, and I should lie here on my back and see  
Her here, through the dreamy spokes of a Ferris Wheel  
And give all of this to her, as she drives away streaming  
The pennants of a winning team, busty like the goddess  
Learning to fly and exchange her elements. She flies right  
Over houses and their apexing roofs, and silent brooms.  
She curls into Cadillacs, and over misty baseball diamonds.  
She sleeps in hotels and in parking spaces freshly painted  
In that easy geometry. I spy her and how she moves,  
And write this even as she unfurls.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unglorified Peach In An Unexplainable Rainstorm

If you weep vermilion over the starless passion  
Of your eyes,  
What brail will buy me fruit; like a strayed terrapin,  
Upon which  
Hibiscus will I survive;  
My neck is open like a honey dewed flower anticipating  
The sting of your barb:  
The sea has so many marionettes that she hired  
To keep the sailors  
Enchanted;  
And there you go leaping like a butterfly driving in its  
Car;  
And I wanted to walk out with you into the meaty cloisters  
Of anemones,  
But it is already past the season for  
Pomegranates;  
And really there are so many beautiful women devoiced into  
The world:  
They slip like paper cuts over the footpaths of fur traders;  
And sometimes they make it all  
The way up to Colorado; and sometimes they get  
Distracted by the Mississippi;  
But I have found you now, and pressed your body to me like  
And entomologist with his kingdom of species;  
And I tasted your lips like the star fruit  
Underneath the flaming sword of the overpass;  
And then I got nervous and blustered away from the really beautiful  
Magic trick or dream,  
The way things stay extended into the air underneath careless  
Airplanes;  
But if I came back to you now, I think I would find you still there,  
As beautiful and breathless as the still life  
Of a myriad graveyard:  
If you are something that can last forever, blooming like  
An un glorified peach in an unexplainable rainstorm.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unicorns

It rained today:  
In the afternoon- I thought  
Of suicide most of it,  
But now I'm drunk,  
Half naked, and dealing with it:  
I found out today  
Who you're with,  
How to tie a noose,  
The problems with race relations  
In America:  
I wonder if the sky is new everyday,  
Virgin,  
Always complex and expecting;  
I wonder if you even care:  
Its Friday after all,  
And you tend bar-  
I am not erudite, I can't even spell  
The word:  
That is why I'm moving to Saint Louis,  
And not New York City:  
That is why I have to find  
A job, before I die.  
Before I die,  
I have to tell you the truth:  
My brother in law is quite better  
Looking than me:  
That is how he got my sister,  
A doctor,  
But he is looking for a job too,  
And ugly boys are better at giving deserving  
Girls, like you, their tongue,  
Round-about, roller-coaster, washing  
And drying,  
And there are pictures of girls I know  
Visiting Africa,  
And places I suppose I've been in another  
Life,  
A time or two:  
And fairy-tales I've chased you in,

I've smelled you on your way  
To grandmother's,  
And taken you off the side of the path  
Where you shouldn't have been:  
I've eaten what you had in your  
Basket,  
And seen what you keep red cloaked,  
And shown to you unicorns,  
Unicorns....  
Unicorns.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unimposed By Prose

Nothing sad tonight, nothing poisoned  
By the maudlin treacle of a rummy rose.  
Tonight I'll be a sober gentleman far out and  
Alone in the mowed field underneath the halogens  
Where the cars stream by, frosty eyed  
Like the expeditious cavalry of our nations industrial  
Complex, swimming to and from beds of  
Business, beds of sex, and the entire cavalcade of  
Glossy housewives whipping eggs in matching kitchenettes-  
No more slurred and stuttered dictions,  
But like a man bedecked for his sister's wedding,  
Cleaning shaved, possibly young enveloped by the clingy  
Night, enwrapped by the frothy hustle of waves and  
Clouds, the bodies turning imperiously even while  
Esteem scientists begin to fade,  
Darker shadowed by the whisking trees, and the soft  
Singing bees all curled up for the night, sleeping in their  
Waxy combs, a gemmy corsage hanging at his breast like  
A valediction, his rank and stature not imposed.  
Tonight, should the crowds come all of a sudden, each line  
Will be ready to maneuver straight and clear footed from one  
To the next, like the tightrope artist walking above the  
Cerulean heads of timeless ghosts of some Grecian fort,  
Weaponless but unafraid,  
Looking up and going effortlessly and surefooted as the  
Fireworks bloom far beneath the unapproachable constellations  
He cannot name,  
And the warm exhalations of the streamline and fertile lover  
Kisses his neck as she would for anyone she doesn't know.

Robert Rorabeck

# Universal, Expanding Gas

There are these apocalyptic turds in  
Space  
Hurtling toward us  
We give them the primetime  
Time-slot  
Tuesdays after SEX  
And inser them with Mercury  
Car commercials  
Super sexy tanned and slipped  
Spaced-super models  
Before we all danced on the  
Edge of the earth  
And sacrificed 26 men in a submarine  
Before WWII  
We parked our cars on the edge of  
The valleys of Mars to have  
Sex like Tom Parris  
And look half pretty naked in  
Overflowing cities commercialized  
Rush  
Half erect  
Our real-estate skyrockets  
In between molestations the  
Serial killer procreate we  
Ejaculate, pollinate,  
And play pool in small rooms of  
Spain  
And pray to the gigantic emptiness  
To be sexy and skinny  
Like the sticks and lipstick  
On the T.V.  
The fart expanding in the head.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unnecessary Bouquets

Bright rainbow underneath the overpass  
And I am not right here,  
While you have discovered your bedroom waiting  
For a rainstorm-  
And I get home and do my job,  
Waiting for my parents to bring me fried  
Chicken:  
Well, you can't look me in the eye, but this is  
Still just a roller coaster  
Or a Ferris wheel getting up into nowhere:  
Beautiful words meaning nothing  
While I am making love  
With your younger sister in her bedroom- and the cafes  
Are booming,  
And the stewardesses are still wondering about coming  
Home-  
But during lunch, teatime of butterflies in the mouth  
Of a lycanthrope,  
Laughing and drooling through the basins that they  
Told you to believe-  
Waiting in the sidelines of many moons:  
This is just science-fiction, and I am still waiting out of  
Breath for you,  
My heart and soul overfilled with these unnecessary bouquets.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unnecessary Senses Of Arbitrary Light

Still entrained to our  
Coited flesh  
How many years  
Will it take  
Before we've evolved  
Into our birthday  
Wishes  
And I can fly open  
Armed  
Right into your bed and  
Like the tide  
Gently do away with  
The otherwise  
Unnecessary senses of  
Arbitrary  
Light.

Robert Rorabeck



# Unopened Yesterdays

I've left them all in a shadow of a shell:  
It was the best and the last of anything that  
There ever happened to be  
Tattooed together upon their hemisphere  
So outside of their agricultures of the places  
Where they persist but cannot love—  
And, anyhow,  
We've had a banquet for awhile anyway. Atleast  
while they were loading their guns:  
And it doesn't have to be a place, anyways—but  
Just a cave that the shadows remember  
Under Neptune:  
And this is how I happened to survive:  
For awhile repeating the happy kites  
Even for the minimum of memory even while  
the heavenly ships sailed off so heavenly  
And all we were left with was the forest:  
The forest, the forest and the snow and  
Her captain while she just keeps remembering  
And rememberingt and calling  
Used bookstores to her and to her the memory—  
While I have driven and driven to her so many  
Times the memory—  
Eventually there are the condolences and then tomorrow—  
Or the tomorrow's tomorrows anyways burned beneath  
The shadows anyways—and, perhaps, I never loved her—  
Anyways—and just because it seemed to happened—well,  
There it was, and it just so happened, or it never  
Happened into the shadows of all of those mouthless  
And unopened yesterdays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unpublished Epitaphs And Things Like This

I have 16 lbs of sh.t in my gut;  
Daddy takes the tractor down the hill  
Almost as many times,  
And I call the trees around him alligator  
Oaks, because they used to grow-up  
Here when it was only a sea: and alligators  
Have been around that long,  
Even as the sun tanked, even as it tanked  
And swam;  
And there aren't even any ravens, though  
They would be cool, especially on Christmas:  
Ravens in the yard, a fresco with Cadillacs, and  
Hot plums destroyed by curiosity and scars;  
But now when the sun goes down, we will  
Be moving away. My book is curling up on  
The kitchen table. My mother reads it as she  
Cuts onions, cries, because she doesn't understand  
Why I did it. I tell her, mother, I don't love  
Anyone anymore, the rivers have gone down to  
The sea, the butterflies are all in Mexico,  
And this is not a poem, mother, but a personification  
Of a disturbing dream walking around like a craven man  
With a pinwheel in his gut, turning like a child's game  
In the front yard, and there are yet the snows to do  
The cover-up, even as she leaps into his ribs,  
And takes one as her own; but they will come tomorrow, when  
The sun stretches the shadows furthest, when the enemies arrive  
By tallowed ships and we will meet them overzealously at the fjord,  
Crying headily and shaking our fists: the lasts  
Republics of winos and out of work gigantisms;  
And sacrifice to them our new leaders, and brand new  
Cars: Then there will be no more poetry, but  
Things like this, and  
Bonfires and curling husks which no longer scream,  
(though we remember how they screamed,  
So negative are they inside of the living)  
Against which all the maidens will be taken, and  
The virginal boys will suffer no more, in rigamortis beside the  
Grayish ways, their heels sticking up like exclamations, like

Donkey's ears, or cocoons dripping in blue silk which  
Before took them many places so many  
Times. For now her lips are like a quiet moon  
Given to other continents, and pressed there no longer  
Consider destroying our celibacy with a fine harpoon,  
Crafted from her own amputated celebrations, a thigh  
Bone of ivory she had no longer use for,  
For no longer does she jog like a lighted doe across campus,  
Because she has consented, and settled,  
And ceased those odd visits  
To these breathing graveyards to read the  
Longest, and unpublished epitaphs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unpublished Scribblers Tediously Feral Petting Zoo

Amanuensis is a hungry sort,  
And restless is the lion in the ivory cages  
Of its mechanism,  
And likely to try and bight  
The hand of the hack who feeds it so irresponsibly,  
Still a bachelor with no sweeter meats;

With the river flowing so close and possible,  
Prowling with so many feet,  
Brilliant and life-giving, though apathetic to the  
Careless tourists who don't bring it gifts-

She is so close playing just beyond the  
Grasp of this industry's starving prison,  
Knowing just how near she can swim,  
Showing off opal limbs to the cast-iron banks without  
Boasting the responsibilities, true love of the chaste.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unreal Surrenders

How sad again that I can't even remember college,  
What I was doing, and with which body with;  
And later on she was sad when she found out all along that  
She'd been doing it with me,  
Somebody out of a halfway talented fairy-tale,  
So while I was previously engaged in Colorado sounding out  
The pewter sun-dogs of a more glorious muse along  
The lines of skree,  
She turned tricks with a freshman, which turned her away from  
Me:  
Eventually she was married in a kipa, and I once again  
Started writing my inglorious poetry:  
The stuff you find weeping in the backs of the throats of stores,  
Kittens floating for the last time in the canals out back of doors;  
And Erin is a singular muse,  
And Erin the flame burning swiftly at the end of its fuse:  
And I am filled with scars and little things-  
When I go to the movies I see nothing but pains;  
And I sleep under the dress of clouds. Looking up,  
A Victorian desert with all the sad shapes of evaporated sounds;  
And this day is no good, my parents are no good,  
And Erin has forgotten about or congratulated herself over all the  
Forlorn bouquets I had sent her;  
She is becoming a fan of the more talented Shakespeare's,  
Laughing and beaming themselves away into the casual darkness;  
And what is she doing out front of a house with a cutthroat  
Mailbox;  
And what is she doing now, just a shapely silhouette serving  
Liquor, becoming just amber into crepuscule;  
And what is Erin doing, serving her beautifully talent less body  
To the anonymously talent less men,  
While my lions are roaring all the time, hungry,  
And forcing the red throats of such flowers to open up  
In beautiful, and unreal surrenders.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unrealistic Enough To Fly

Thoughts of god aren't much real consolation  
To the pigeons who roost in holes:  
That they should live forever,  
Flying rats above the city-traffic never imbibing  
The fatty waves that sing to them  
Like sirens of jumbling tallow by and by.  
They weep when they lay down,  
When starvation doesn't occupy everything.  
They seem to realize who they are,  
That they don't have fists to meet each other  
To settle arguments,  
Or palms to spread real marriages of church  
And nurseries.  
Then their eyes waver like real flames  
That cry a curious envy,  
Because they most especially want you on a soft  
Bed, whispering their curious pigeon names,  
And maybe they even hate you,  
A woman not for pigeons, all legs and pistons  
Well kept in her union of firehouses and  
Expeditious paramedics,  
A woman who the real men love  
Openly on the slick throats moaning  
Up to the gothic vestibules, the pigeons  
As envious and flickering as a roost of candles  
Smoldering shelved in their holes,  
Cursing the mistaken trucks of god for making  
Them unrealistic enough to fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unrelated Relatives

Terrible, Tristan, Terrible!

I want to be married to Murielle.

I've done all I can with my wife named Roseanne,

But she tastes just as terrible as Sara bell.

2.

How many licks does it take to get

To the center of clichéd hypnoses?

If you eat too much toast you'll catch halitosis.

If you've got a nice boss you can kiss is ass

While the ants crawl over the rose bushes.

3.

The third stanza is like baking a cake,

Your two patrons have been waiting all week

They think its quite sheik, this tongue and cheek,

Since they've had nothing to eat but dull proses.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unrequited Receptions

Empty all the ink onto this page,  
Spill it out if it means anything:  
Drive around her old neighborhood with  
Your window down, smelling her, the places  
In which she exercised and farted like  
A hummingbird:  
Hum her busty patriotism on your lips,  
Paint up your scars by sunlight beside the  
Pool. Touch your cousin's swollen belly,  
Like a cantaloupe: She is in her third trimester,  
And her husband, injured in Iraq is building  
Her a 3,000 square foot home in Idaho:  
Put down these things in the camouflaging gust,  
The way an octopus or squid goes to escape:  
Put your finger to your lips,  
And then surprise her with a laugh, admire  
Her work space and how well she keeps herself  
For the ballroom of eyes. Don't let down,  
Or lay in the anthills with the thousands of poisonous  
Abdomens no bigger than the science-fiction of  
Far away stars and planets, the soundless revolutions:  
See her face, and know that her sex is for you:  
Made to fit together as mountains enfold a sea,  
And so overturn the night's vase and overspill into  
Her all the humming and extemporaneous ecstasy,  
The way better men do it and are able to earn their  
Turkey sandwiches, legs folded beneath the power lines,  
so do it for her, and call her out  
Into the dusk of her settling neighborhood and kneel  
Before her, christen by the cypress and evacuated  
Homes of cicadas,  
And tell her those few words which are hers by right,  
The crickets like the static of empty streets,  
To either listen to, or ignore.

Robert Rorabeck



# Unseen

Unseen,  
Nothing was,  
Clothed in  
Unfamiliarity, a  
Similiar claus-  
The world walked by,  
Supposing what they  
Saw was-  
Unmind,  
The soul safe,  
Uncracked,  
Perfect-jawed,  
An invaluable  
Vein  
The priceless mineral  
Kept  
Anonymity to the  
Grave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unsettled Sea

The line is drawn  
cross it if you want to  
leave my head before the  
Mexican General comes with  
his shining men; the  
sharp sticks curious little  
boys use to blind  
dead dogs-

Can't you see there is  
no hope for victory  
inside,  
we will all die,  
when she walks away,  
far far away across  
her white washed hills,

To let those other men  
in- her porcelain wash basins  
drip the blood of the innocent.  
There are too many on her,  
so they will trample our  
walls down  
as they inebriate and  
queue against her  
bed,  
A filling station on her fumes,  
and men pay to watch the  
intoxicating  
shape her flesh  
breathes and moves in-  
She is always open  
for them,  
hanging their guns on  
her brass bed knobbs,

And now the time is  
come  
The line is drawn,

this highway  
men still living driving  
down upon

and the storm casting  
out the unweighted  
clouds that gather with  
sickness of thoughtlessness  
drives us from her  
far away to some place  
unseen upon the  
unsettled sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unsolvable

If the phone is ringing:  
It is a baby crying,  
Then it is a banshee bleating:  
Something competing in the  
Household's estuary, mother.  
Oh, Lord! How I wish to hold you,  
But you are only a voice who never speaks.  
Men love you.  
Your father let you in that car.  
Where you drive around in a wildlife  
Preserve of your Christian name,  
And there is all god in you  
In the bright grasses feeding.  
And beautiful animals:  
The otters in blue glass eat clams,  
The house of delicate mammals.  
Recorded, you do miracles,  
You get the president elected,  
Perpetuate the words like the strata of reefs  
Hold out for another day  
The nude sketches, the shore  
Extends refusing to inhale,  
When you do not come to the rich community.  
Your absence is playfulness of slaughter,  
The prism's ablution in the canal,  
The sink of autumn's corneas  
The bridge's structural collapse,  
Sounds like something rings  
In the distant living rooms,  
Though you never speak to me,  
The transient numbers,  
Killings feeding the unsolvable flies.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unsubmissive Road

Pennies in the arcade of her eyes,  
And anyways we made love and had an excuse:  
Little child evacuated from her body,  
Helped me move further away from the vortex  
Of my venal love,  
Truly:  
And in the morning—morning and tenaments and  
Roses:  
Roses in jubilee and poems amidst the cars in  
The highway  
And islands carressing in The Keys  
And poems that are lost at the hands to the lips  
Of a madman—and little spaces left abandoned beside  
The road—  
While the usual spaces are bedded in remembrance,  
But the night sleeps just as emptied beside the road—  
And to you who cannot love me,  
We are both abandoned in worship underneath  
The torn canopy,  
And the bull frogs and the faeries lie so open lipped  
And opened throated  
As the become like the woebegone heirlooms to  
The vanishing key deer  
Amidst the emptying playgrounds of another  
Unsubmissive road.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until Another Man Called You Home

Almost all poets end up drinking and then  
Hopping one legged into the corners of death to  
Emote their love  
To the spiders busily sewing their threads above  
The overgrown jungles  
Of the slaves of love; and I found you and picked you  
Like flower somehow while I was turning around  
In a ride so far away:  
I felt you upside down as you ran to me, and your brown  
Fingers curled into mine like reindeer lying down  
Into snow:  
Your eyes became so young and overgrown with the amber  
Of a Spanish lycanthropy,  
And my words the words of sailors drowning, half born  
To a world in chaos typing,  
The plumes of giants the gods came slaughtering;  
And I fell beneath you, and you became a beautiful forest  
Slicked with the favorite colors of your soul;  
And we drove hand in hand, Alma, until another man  
Called you home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until Every Last Member Of The Family

Tabling constellations of fruit: if she doesn't  
Love me,  
I want to move to Mexico and become drunkenly in front  
Of her sister:  
I want to forget all of the promises and lies that my  
Colloquial tongue has told me  
With the airplanes shooting above the vinegars and salt mines:  
The days bereaving the children of existence:  
My art failing as all is given up into closing time-  
The efforts of my body's ululating remaining fallen into the  
Grasses after the doors of new mothers have closed;  
And the traffic is all returned; the Christmas trees are  
Sparkling  
With silver clouds, the green snakes remaining entwined  
Serendipitously until every last member of the family is  
Called out from hiding.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until Everything Dissappeared

This is not the only thing I stole tonight:  
Here are my fingerprints running down your sister's  
Sand dollars while your brother was out trying on  
His bicycle, and you gave all of your kisses  
To the man in the shadows across your window  
With the planes striking his shoulders like matches  
As they were touching down- and you broke  
The spider's web as you both came together,  
And were undone as if in a sarcophagus' garden  
The bats flew over like heartless angels, where your  
Guardian angels were mummified and I played  
Baseball with foxes and stillborns- but I still remembered  
You as I drank beer to dull the blisters on my fingers,  
As you sister got darker with the creatures in the park  
And your brother rode his bicycle until everything disappeared.

Robert Rorabeck



# Until Halloween

I go out to movies with teachers of my  
Unrequited love:  
They were the ones who gave me the first  
Taste of my dram of your  
Sweet love;  
And everything is beautiful, even though I can't  
Remember the exact name of the  
Palms we walk under,  
Through the balmy night and past the convalescing  
Homes where one day  
We all ought to belong,  
Past the rusty baseball diamonds and into the  
Cinema;  
And we have a good time, according to the needs  
Of our sweet race to be entertained,  
By the moving pictures of our ever flowing  
Society underneath the airplanes,  
And maybe I still love you,  
And how you drank from your flask and danced  
For me in the front most seats of the  
Matinee,  
Even though you were always a bad woman,  
And hardly did care:  
But you never did become a stewardess, so I guess  
You go yours,  
And I don't have to tell you that it will be such a long  
Time again until Halloween.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until I Have To Leave Myself

Cursing, but taking the time to sleep with myself:  
Or to really clean up, manhandling if softly, and in any kind of weather:  
Or both by themselves:  
As now you have to call it like it is, as the Ferris Wheels turn themselves  
Around,  
And Alma likes me more and more:  
And maybe she is finally found out, as if in the foundation of an unsociable  
Fire that has finally touched ground:  
And what about the airplanes that used to live there: and what, oh  
What have they been doing, but making their own  
Galleries of a nubile show: and then they really impress themselves  
Like the first spittoons off the waves of gallant horses  
Who have always been winning themselves:  
As the storm clouds pirouette into surrender, as the bayonets of  
Whatever enemies we were fighting bleed themselves dry:  
As my uncle's market makes so much money  
Until I have to leave myself, and wave my muse, Alma, goodbye.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until I Was A Cathedral

Swing-set above the world  
I didn't believe in anyways- starless busses  
And wind tunnels into the  
Canyons of lost jobs: the fireworks didn't go  
Off,  
Just as no one said the Pledge of Allegiance:  
It was a filthy class,  
And as I taught to them, I secretly thought  
Of metamorphosis as I prayed to the god  
Right there:  
Said, god- give me wings of any sort:  
I don't care- but mostly give me wings for  
My mind, so that it may fly over the carports  
At feeding time  
And see all the housewives bathing there:  
Leaping over the aloe and the cenotaphs of  
Conquistadors- Oh, it was the finest sort of  
Wish- and if you didn't believe me,  
Then you cannot fathom my gift-  
But I learned to fly like folded paper over those  
Honeys- saw down their skirts  
And counted their monies- until I was a cathedral  
In my own sort of air- and if I ever came down again  
I couldn't care.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until She Thinks To Look At Me

All the clouds have woken up—  
Just you know what they've been doing,  
While my ancestors were farming the jaundice  
Celery;  
And Sharon in Colorado tasting her canines  
While the clouds look over  
All the plum-thumbed children expectantly;  
All their parents just as sweet as cadavers they  
Never knew they were:  
Then the world is such a quieted place and  
So beautiful and just in time for sex underneath  
The broken down school buses in the penumbras  
Of an inept school yard,  
The terrapins have been busy suckling—and  
Suckling all through the word as it was awakening up;  
And she put her hands into the clay and has forgotten  
To mouth off to her dead father—  
The weather farts just in time for parade,  
And all of it was a long time ago while I looked at  
Her and she looked far, far away;  
And even further still through the sad eyes of the stained  
Glass of churches I have never thought to heal,  
But she still wears green stars around the lips of her  
Child and they will never die until she thinks to look  
At me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until The Daylight Surrenders

Potion of earth underneath  
The roses:  
Where your mothers lie who were  
Never home:  
But in words of their silent  
Lips,  
They make their supposes  
As the waves  
And the airplanes come and circulate  
Around  
The dog tracks of your hips  
And in the games of their memory:  
Laughingly jubilant-  
Until the daylight surrenders to the rainstorms.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until The Moonlight Is Mocking The Same

Toiling of problems upon the  
Underside of littlest streams- under the light  
Of her eyes,  
A merry-go-round hardly breathing through  
The classrooms of an afternoon-  
The words felt around her cheeks that her tears  
Eat like ants the  
Menstruations of the hemispheres  
That gather together in their senses and string  
Out across the room in a roe of feelings,  
In that nebulous ecstasy that helps  
As the day is passing-  
So very soon, how she will be returning-  
Back into the fanfare of her estuaries, and along her  
Silent trips to suburbia's cathedrals  
Where everything holds a very little name that is  
Echoing, as the sun dries off them,  
Until the moonlight is mocking the same.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until The Morning

Trying again against the cul-de-sacs of water moccassins,  
Trying to fill out loneliness with well meaning words,  
Eulogizing the bright meanings of your beautiful brown flesh  
Across the roadways and high watermarks of illusions  
In a forest of dry theatre,  
In a living room of nursery rhyme: while the windmills troop  
Across the frozen lakes to wide to wish across;  
And you are once more in your little room bunked down  
Before the birthdays of hurricanes;  
And it feels alright to have you missing beside me as I dance  
Like a tiger through its ringing flames,  
Whilst the angels make trapeze, and the sleepless commuters  
Blaze,  
Until the morning when the comets tuck their tails in  
And run.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until The Morning Dawns

At the certain hour after the country has  
finished its bath it goes downstairs  
to its room and towels off in the dark corner  
kneels beside the bed the sun is under it  
when the cats are on the fence and the  
boxers have finished lacing up their gloves  
and the country says a prayer to its manager  
and goes down to sleep while  
David Letterman is amusing two people  
in the living room but the rest of us  
have opened the door between our ears  
and taken the stairwell deep down in  
our throat through to our secretly decorated  
dens dimly lit antechambers just south of  
the 17th vertebra filled with the selected  
ghosts we wish to drink with that particular night  
you walk over in the room and fill the  
glass of an ex-lover with gin and watch her eyes  
she has him in their candle's flame,  
but she promises one drink with you before  
she leaves if only because there's John Wayne  
playing pool with Kurt Cobain and  
Pocahontas is sprawled out naked  
on the Indian rug with Princess Diane  
they are doing the hum of your dreams  
the dead people who you've thought about  
opening through you taking leaps from your open  
jaw drooling on the pillow pretending you know them  
you sit with the rest of your country on the divan  
to watch the interaction of selected parts held up  
with you in the backyard of your mowed gut;  
a religious person might call this room your soul,  
but you figure it is actually a strange inner-body  
void that connects you to the bohemianism of  
an early 20th century impressionistic French cabaret  
in which you imagine leggy courtesans walking up  
and down the nightlife in the Montmartre district  
of Paris through the ten year old interplay of  
adolescent eyes across a South Florida courtyard



in your high school drunk on vodka the last day before  
Spring Break when someone sets off a quarter-stick  
of dynamite near where you've been quietly  
dancing drunk, watching a special ed. African  
American girl smiling at you, believing in the  
beauty of a single extra chromosome, like a new  
born puppy dog/ when the principal and the  
circus midget hustle over to you  
on the stage with the leggy dancing French  
women doing the high-step, asking if you saw anything/  
when you hold your breath and don't  
declare that you most certainly saw the  
ghost of Baudelaire hang-gliding in  
a static capture in a deliberate spot  
30 feet above you trying to outdo Jesus/  
and because Vodka don't smell, and you've  
been drinking it out of a two liter Sprite bottle,  
the establishment and circus clowns leave you  
alone but next year Mrs. Inglis expels you from  
High-school yearbook staff, but not after you've  
posed for pictures in all the clubs you  
were never in like swimming, track and field, canoeing,  
scuba diving, chess, checkers, and Chinese water polo,  
science, mathematics, aerodynamics, the Young Conservatives  
Clubs of America United Against the Kennedys and Gay Marriage,  
and The Gay and Lesbian Cat Tranquilizer S@x Club/  
relaxing back in the static room  
30 feet inside your chest you  
realize Princess Diane and Pocahontas  
have gone off to find someplace inside you that is private/  
and the ghost of your ex-lover has dissolved back  
into the current body of a current lover's bed undoubtedly surrounded  
by the manicured lawns of her newly adorned c@ck with good paint  
job/ and all that remains in your soul is a pool table with  
unfamiliar eyeballs blinking in Morris Code  
at your back/ when you saddle-up to the bar  
and finish off a bottle of whiskey with the ghosts of  
John Wayne and Johnny Cash  
with Baudelaire drunk under the table serenading you  
little bits of beautiful poems until the morning dawns.



# Until The Night Surceases

Willfully, I want to see you again soon;  
I want to see you like a bad prince in an overgrown  
Fairytale:  
I want to take us to our beaches atop the hills that  
Surrounded a Disney World of Rome,  
And here hide with you in the preaching of the huts  
Of dried fronds:  
I want to palaver with your eyes and your tongue  
Underneath the speakeasies of temptation's windmills,  
Alma;  
And undress you underneath the equal ceiling fans of  
My two bedrooms,  
One of crying blue, and the other of the sky;  
And meet the caesuras of your brown undulations like  
Cheerleaders meeting quarterbacks;  
And it doesn't have to be unreal, and you can flirt with  
Anyone throughout your washing machine of days,  
Like a butterfly who gives its exegesis of colors freely  
But always floats away to me,  
Across the neighbors and their retiring breweries;  
And all of the flowers and the puppies in their ditches,  
Sung to by rattlesnakes;  
And comes to me here of all places, and here puts her brown  
Lips to my brakes;  
And says she loves me just as quietly as she pleases  
Until the day continues until the night surceases.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until The Reindeer Lost Their Minds

Chasing through the parks of the beaver and the  
Bear,  
Chasing through the aspens, where the young hearts fire  
Like roman candles  
And bottle rockets: leap out of the school yards  
And ask, what is going on here-  
And there are blue lights in the jasmine, and drunken  
Wishes with the goldfish who are so pale:  
They can remember the carnivals that left them orphaned,  
And moved away from this suburbia-  
Ran up into the snows and forest fires,  
And became oblivious- until the reindeer lost their minds  
And turned around as if in a spell,  
Tramping the grail in the tundra that was never found.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until The Tears Run It Away

Up these recesses, the fingerprints who are the hoodlums  
Of no criminals:  
Just the turpentines of used up Ferris Wheels and the grounds  
They grew in:  
The little feet and eyes that stumbled in their ways to get  
To their sweets or wherever they were;  
And it feels alright to say these things, even while you  
And your daughter have swung into his arms, and bricked into  
That fairytale house I will never have to tell my own lingering  
Children about, you close your eyes against the catastrophes of  
The stars- and your many maddening explanations:  
And the trailer parks lie all about like dirty silver terrapin making  
Their love for billboards:  
And so things are sold and bought in their way, and car doors  
Are closed and driven away;  
And, summering, the mountain turns golden with all its giving away  
Of things:  
And then it lies, naked, barren, waiting for the foul canvas like  
A lover unmasked before a rudely masterful day:  
That paints it white with fear, until the tears run it away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until The Weathers Became

Panhandling myself out of doors, knowing such littleness of  
Nothing is unkeen to survive,  
And yet watching as the nubile virgins once again made such  
Games in the little squares sectioned off in their yards  
Beside the junked cars and the weather vanes;  
And the words seemed to curl around like bright cobras and touch  
Themselves,  
And they were either making love or poisoning themselves unto  
Death;  
And when the airplanes roared above such wonderful pittance of  
Such constructions,  
It most certainly seemed as if they purred; and they turned around  
An uncountable number of times in the air,  
Dancing as they did so, like enamored mice in a garden,  
Which held our attentions until the weathers became too distracting  
To be ignored.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until There Is No More Heavens

Golden,  
Going to sleep with your brown man-  
What apple orchard is this  
That my muse lives in? 1, 000 square foot  
House,  
Housing eight: mother, father- mi vida,  
Michael, Heidi-  
Her man, Nelson-,  
And two teenage sisters in the other room,  
As exquisite as vespers,  
One about to marry another Mexican in a  
Trailer park,  
My muse, my soul, saying she is in love  
With me,  
But that she will never leave them-  
That Aztec world in whatever hypnosis across  
The canal-  
Yards and yards the tiniest in all of America,  
And more beautiful-  
She drives to and fro from, smoldering in  
Shoulders and flesh of  
Amber- Catholic, remembering her home state  
That she fled north from.  
She comes to my house sometimes and  
We make love,  
Or we do not make love- and I just look at her,  
Remembering how she fled into  
Me for shelter  
But could not stay- so she will be  
Gone,  
And the seasons will change their inclinations,  
And the angels will  
Burn candles over the sea  
Until there is no more heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Until They Roamed Far And Wide

I spoked my bike behind the waves,  
And counted down  
To when the night would finally douse the sky  
And hopefully your gaze-  
I rode home beside the rich houses, and tried to  
Forget your name,  
While one side of the world was cool and seemed  
To forget forever  
In the roiling of its powers and in its womanhood,  
While you did not come to my little  
House today, Alma- and my soul was all washed up,  
And now I am trying to find the pretty words to speak  
To you  
As you are not listening, flashed into the sweet sauces  
Of your bedroom,  
And making love to the man of all of your years,  
The eagerness of two hearts I will never know  
Roaming the caesuras of ribs that were stolen from  
Each other until they roamed  
Far and wide and were found again.

Robert Rorabeck



# Until You Nod Off

In the green fields of if, there is your toy  
Lost like a cloud of young men  
Above the playgrounds, or the cathedrals,  
When it rains—  
Remembering the hallucination,  
The bare feet beside the creeks of  
Rattlesnakes while the trees are changing—  
Or you remember her,  
While you were going down the lonesome  
Memories of another afternoon—  
As she is playing for you with her penumbras  
Of estrangement: she runs to you  
Across the red bricks steaming,  
Becoming a new angel until you nod off.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unto Others

If you sneak into my house  
With your fire-ax  
And cut off my head  
While I am sleeping on the couch,  
I will have ten seconds  
In which my eyes on the floor  
Will direct my body  
To the shot gun propped  
In the corner,  
Already loaded,  
To do to you what you have  
Already done.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unto The Flowers

Mean as the pillboxes for the deceased

Army men:

I know they are just toys, but you didn't have to grin;

As the sky made a mean sandwich out of its weathers of

Sin,

And pile drove over our sandy graves again: while the

Sea was just leaping, and leaping thirsty toothed

For they hand me downs of perpetual youth,

The proletariat hanging on the line, washing out the rust

With turpentine, the graffiti on their joints covering the

Rhyming gold of the burnished sea,

Like a flight attendant foaming at the mouth while she thought

Of me,

And the sky was just climbing up, and climbing up like a flight

Of very steep stairs,

Diademed at the summit by a bomb shell sex symbol that

Caught me unawares,

And spread her lips across my mouth and took away my

Spells,

And the fickle candlelight of my wishes, and blessed me with

This bottle whose slaving genie can grant me so many wishes;

Who by which every night I become a new man

According to the powers,

And flows with the daffodils who themselves account to other

Flowers;

And then it was just driving, and curling, and clutching to the

Overripe harvest, the hearts spilling their misused abuses

Over the centripetal marigolds whose season wasn't even ours;

But we wished them the best,

And kissed them all the same, and then like visiting relatives,

We tipped our hats and turned away as we boarded that forever

Proverbial plane-

And smitten by our chances, we brushed off even our most

Charismatic of glances,

And shot that way that the body fields enjoying the golden corridors

Of the changing rooms of metamorphosis;

And we knew exactly this, what was hers was hers;

And what was hers was ours,

As the sun made its advances unto the flowers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unusual Sin

When I smoked near the canal for the first  
Time,  
From a tinfoil bowl made from rolling it around  
A number 2 pencil,  
All it did was made me slightly horny,  
And the reticulated python slightly curious:  
She came toward me with the usual jewel green  
Satin eyes-  
They were dolls eyes, you see, she had borrowed,  
And she floated for awhile, her tail dragging along  
The earth and making the  
Most curious of markings: She was so bloated from  
Eating rabbit she couldn't any longer  
Fly around the forbidden fruit trees:  
And if she was a woman, I would have wanted to make  
Love to her,  
But all she did was dictate me across the reptilian  
Shadows of the canal, and then across the sugar cane fields  
Along well past rush hour, and into smoldering  
Crepuscule,  
And she showed me the ways that all things must die,  
How they lose composure and molecular cohesion,  
And I poked my phallus into the moist rows,  
And afterwards she came along and dripped in her  
Glowing seeds of venom-  
Whatever grew there I never saw, nor did the cypress change  
For me into beautiful girls,  
Because I grew too old and bought a car,  
And I never smoked again,  
And after I had gone the poor roots of transplanted Australian  
Pines collapsed and block the way,  
The dead fall I guess god pushed over to hide my trauancies  
Of unusual sin.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unwavering Immodesty Of My Cerulean Highway

Cerulean feelings mean I'm blue.  
I've been driving in this truck for too long:  
There have been no exits since high school.

She hung her cares in the library to dry;  
Sparrows came and pricked the folklore  
Until it bled fire:  
Now she runs naked and meaningless,  
Leaping the barbed fields.

They will send men to scout the foals,  
While the airplanes sleep in the forested lakes,  
Young men will drive alone with trunks  
Full of dynamite;  
Leaving their proms and the perfumed corsages  
On their girlfriends' kitchen tables:

I tried a rouse,  
And made it to Colorado:  
There were kids getting off the bus,  
And my mother in elementary school with  
Her brother,  
And the mountain had a hairlip  
Where the naked lovers lay  
Where they shouldn't have been,  
The river was a ribbon  
Entwining them with fish,

Where it ended up there were men in boats  
With lobster cages,  
Grizzlies in the nettled borders;  
I drove back around,  
Turning the spider on its web into  
A holy censer;  
Thought of eating lunch while viewing  
Her powdered bosom,  
And the red baseball diamonds filled in autumn;

But I had no other rouse,

And drove once again past the pedantic fields  
Where other lovers lay  
Too swiftly, so they couldn't see how I left them;  
Or to hear the allegories shaken down  
From the trees,  
Embarrassed by such immodesty.

Robert Rorabeck

# Unyielding My Optimisms

I want to join you now  
Even before we have to eat lunch:  
I want to place my hand on the browned opals of your  
Knee:  
I want to kiss and kiss again,  
Like the wind upon your flesh; and it doesn't matter if  
Everyone or no one is looking,  
Just as the very mountains rise, and the airplanes take their  
Passengers and their cargos deep through the  
Evaporating skies;  
As at night, I wonder if you miss me when I am gone,  
As the sun comes up and climbs again, up again like a fireman  
Surveying his same old world:  
Up there he can see your home so close to mine,  
Alma;  
And just like me he knows that you do not like to read,  
And just like me he wonders who it is that you love:  
Who is that lucky person,  
Alma, as I hold my breath, unyielding my optimisms  
That, yes, I am the he whom is you love.

Robert Rorabeck



# Up

Up where they are singing,  
It will be getting later in the valley—  
The angels will be outside,  
Shampooing—my wife will still be in the  
Shower. And while she does,  
I will sneak outside to drink from  
The bottle—  
I will be sure not to bother her father:  
And in my rhyme drunkenness,  
Waiting for the surprises of her foreseen  
Pregnancy,  
I will jump up and down in the fairgrounds  
Of my many delusions—  
Now that I have known her heart  
And I have great abundance—  
Even though I do not know how to sing—  
There are still delightful children in the playground—  
And there is still springtime's reason in the senses:  
See them being born again over and over,  
Wedding bouquets thrown over the shoulders  
Of the love-grounds of my once muses—  
And the animals in the habitats they don't know  
How to get out of—Now like this,  
While my wife is being distracted—  
Throw the bottle back—  
Throw the bottle back—  
And wait for the room to get larger—  
Wait for the moon and the sun to become  
The discombobulated headlights—  
Wait for real news in the headlines—  
Wait for my son to be born tomorrow—  
There in the headlands while no one important  
Is looking.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up All The Mountains

Flesh of sows spread over the transoms of  
Ghosts,  
And the poor men cannot vacation, but look where  
I have been,  
Up all the mountains and their skirts,  
And atop of Alma's roof; and I've had that goddess in  
My bed,  
While it is almost time to close- The men with great  
Big smiles laughing make-believe in the  
Exterior sun;  
Why they don't know where it is they go when they  
Sleep,  
But the places are yet here to remember, echoing,  
Echoing and  
Measurelessly deep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up In The Morning

Coming up in the morning,  
Like a fish drowning- somebody's  
Swift sided pet,  
Who has never seen trees or television  
Channels which aren't waving,  
Like the séances  
Of working girls, come in doors  
Carrying their baskets for grandmother,  
Not having anything else to sell-  
They have to do this, work naked in the  
Glowing kitchen,  
Until they become that color, all tawny  
And delivered,  
Like ornaments in a tree house in a storm  
In Delray;  
Hot pies for thumbs, dimpled pillows,  
Basins where a slender drip of water echoes  
The loving jewelry taken off necks-  
For both eyes, these are good, and it is morning  
Once more, and I am swimming up  
To meet them, a rose in my teeth like a pollinated  
Bone, unrequited,  
Because there's really no other work,  
And the country joins me from the lip of the bowl,  
And the kelp sways and gurgles-  
In this manner, we enjoy her highways as she carelessly  
Ballerinas the house until it is as clean as a new thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up Into A Blue World

Making my neat rows of imperfections, I am almost over:  
Weaponless, I am also out of liquor:  
Just a squirt, and my dying world becomes hung over in your favorite colors:  
I guess I shouldn't write about you anymore, or at least not use your  
Name so you will never find out  
How imperfectly enamored I am;  
And maybe I will make it through to Christmas and sell trees under  
A tent,  
But all the time I will be looking up into a blue world which doesn't  
Exist,  
Because you have taken it away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up Into Cathedrals

I get up into Cathedrals: Alma walks around  
Stroking and cooing to her children:  
The walls are of her favorite color:  
The leap in foxtail palms and everglades- and the children  
Ripple through them  
Skipping nursery rhymes over the rich banks of a baseball diamond  
Where she sees me from across the field  
And her eyes, like undiscovered plagiarisms, tell me that  
I don't have to leave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up Into His Arms

I have new desires as I lay alone in the  
Same old bed- and the weathers proceed overhead:  
Whipping the soups of their tendrils,  
They gone forever happening bringing sadness  
To the books of the word- and the girls  
I dream of mark me like beautiful scars  
The rabbits travel towards as the lions yawn:  
The words of crushed hemlock, of crushed  
Songs- and I do whatever it takes to move  
Up again, like a pony laughed at by jackals  
Upon a highway that never ends- while she  
Has won a prize, a blue ribbon,  
And her saddle is as silver as it is golden:  
And she gets up into his arms, feeling so light  
That she might fly away-  
She swings over my grave as it rains,  
And she does not listen to what I cannot say.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up Into The Clouds

Look at the new places where we live—higher  
Up on the shelves—  
And only reachable by the ladders from our  
Orchards—  
While we spend all day outside in our playgrounds—  
And helicopters stumble upon us  
Like bumblebees in search of sugar time flowers:  
I remember you in your miniskirt in the  
Middle of the day,  
As we tried to play some kind of sport next to  
The sea—until  
They kicked us out—until they sent us away—  
And all of this has only pretended to be some kind of  
Send up of some kind of love—  
A daisy arcade for the afterlife of jelly-gfish  
With the shadowy echoes and the faint sounds  
Of airplanes—  
And my love butchered upon the gambit—  
The last of the last stars in the sky—another greeting  
Card for the fire of dead mothers—  
And tomorrow another day of high school—  
With the angels looking up into the heavens  
And the heavens looking up into the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up One Level

I deal with power,  
And now you know me:  
I watch good movies,  
And I am being considered by  
Fine men to which it is their job to  
Consider me,  
And I am a silent presence, and I  
Will not tell you what I am doing,  
But I am doing it,  
And these scars are my trials,  
They given me new aphorisms that  
I hand over to you, and I am not  
Catholic, but I write as a member of  
That church,  
And I make love to lonely saints underneath  
The bows of poisonous oleander,  
And this is such a little thing,  
But I don't obey the law, and there is  
No harm in it,  
And my largest organ is damaged,  
And I lost my leg,  
But my muscles are fine; they are workman  
Muscles: I lift three hundred pounds and  
Tie it to the top of their cars,  
And they drive away,  
And now you know me, but never again will  
You see me, for like a whisper in naked  
Sunlight I give this to you,  
But it is the only thing I will give.  
Now I walk away,  
And now you know me, but that is all there is.

Robert Rorabeck



# Up The Alley's Open Chimney

These windows out to seas are no good-  
They have fogged up,  
Or turned away:  
Nobody says I am beautiful anymore;  
And the lighthouse has tripped a fuse.  
There are so many things to consider, walking  
Alone in the dark, biting my lip,  
Trying to ignore how easily the heavens are  
Smothered;

The dogs have left my side- They are  
Dividing up the streets to keep their prospects  
From other dogs, but they are lazy:  
They do not wake as the shepherd steps  
Over their flea-bitten manes with his flock a-braying,  
And soon all of such wealth has floated away  
Like so much rusted flecks up the alley's  
Open chimney:  
And though the oysters are dancing,  
There is nothing left worth fighting;

And she has gone down the wet stones to make  
Love to the sea- She has done this with the deliberation  
Of an unsatisfied lover,  
Waiting for the moon to breach from cover  
And wax over my hand, to distract and palaver:  
And now when all the lights are out and every  
Essential family is slowly breathing,  
She leaps naked into his white comb,  
And thus swims coyly away like  
A somnambulist of that caesura's  
Golden foam,  
With two guiltily satisfied hearts a-beating.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up The Heaven

The day estranges its silhouettes and I make due—  
I just got over getting over you—  
Paper airplanes flying over her eyes like twin diseases—  
And the night is old hoarding her bosom of  
Suburban gold—  
The lights go out on the Christmas tree—the trailer park  
Turns out empty—and the bull-rings underneath the  
Burned down mountains—  
The breakfast table is vast but without a family—  
My wife says sweet dreams to a room that has emptied—  
And the colleges emerge like hallucinations into  
The burned down heavens—  
School again tomorrow—latchkeys that will turn out luckily  
Into homes that cannot live without them—  
School again tomorrow—borrowing the time of a graveyard  
That stares up to heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up The Skirts Of Grizzly Bears

Doubts who presume their colors:  
The overpasses go slouching their stone abusively,  
The airplanes spin in pirouettes  
As they all die into the valleys where the legumes are all  
Emptied and eaten;  
And to take this out in the open and show it to your eyes,  
Costs a pittance;  
But it is really here, where I've been walking,  
Trying to fornicate with the pregnant belly of the heavens  
Angry at the preternatural abasements of whatever gods  
Ransacked her:  
And I get to what seems to be the top where the angels  
Jellyroll, where their lieutenants with busted hips  
And lungs pressed in demand such revelry:  
And there are songs, oh gorgeous- don't you know like  
Women painted in oils,  
Spilling like goldmines for the reclusive hermits who  
Pray to themselves,  
As they fingers run like otters in the rivers of their  
Seamless employments:  
Until all of their days are clouded by that topaz spit shined  
For tourists  
Who these mountains never remember the names of:  
In fact they don't care: they just sunbathe in their split hair sorority,  
Until the lightning kicks in their orgasms whenever it does,  
And sets the aspens on fire, and lifts up the skirts of  
Grizzly bears,  
But that isn't even what I was talking about.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up To The Enviously Starless Day

Everything is EE Cummings in double-  
Soft yard lights:  
Bric-a-brac of dragon spine,  
The esotericism of delightful aphrodisiacs  
And I can feel myself becoming  
Aroused,  
Sweating purple drooling like homeopathic  
Walruses, and I want to go  
Home- but no one is home underneath that  
School bus or mountain where you live,  
And it used to be said there are prettier girls  
Living in the sea,  
But they all got new allocations with fireman;  
And they weren't pretty enough to survive  
The tenements emollition  
And the sweaty fraternities play the stolen guitars  
All night,  
When it was supposed to be lost in Spain nigh over  
Two decades ago- In Salvador Dali, in Port Bou-  
And the tree is as crooked as your spine;  
And you make your money outside of blood banks  
Just by smiling,  
And the sun in all its wishy-washy esplanade has no  
Right to you,  
And you make your money buy selling its light back  
Up to the enviously starless day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up To The Mountains

Openings in the woods leading to where  
They are buried,  
Beside the carriages of rattlesnakes- as the wildlife  
Listens to sirens and tourists  
Buying ice-cream- and angels lay across their  
Canopies  
Glowing like the wreaths of signal fires,  
And yearning up to the mountains,  
Searing,  
Believing that they are the roof that the lesser  
Animals must climb to peer across.

Robert Rorabeck

# Up To Their Goddess Of Airplanes

Doing this by and for the counting of  
So many unanswered hours,  
Moving her birthday cake around the fruiteria just to find  
A place a little more forgiving of the wind and its adulterous  
Powers,  
Just so that Alma: my soul: my Alma, could have her wishes  
Out on the floors of this earth on her birthday,  
But otherwise being very unfair to it: if that was what I was doing  
And am doing still,  
Riding my verbs across the transoms of her windowsill,  
Calling her out of the volcanic footpaths of Mexico, just to  
Bathe in her eyes: her eyes, who have already seen motherhood,  
Who kissed my lips yesterday after a fortnight of nothingness:  
And to who, yesterday, I made love to, drunkenly  
While some dumb cat was up on my roof, and I was so full of  
The fires of my apologies:  
And she was so afraid in a hurry to blow down my house,  
To pick up her mother, Rosa, from the restaurant on Okeechobee  
That she must be busy at all most of days:  
While there are so many palm trees rising up and splaying to kiss  
The sun's esplanade in the amusement parks of this sea level glade:  
And all of the forts just sit together restlessly,  
Waiting for the return of their resplendent conquistadors, their  
Green cannons singing up to the wily eyed birds and  
Their airplanes: singing of this or singing of anything  
While, eventually, the leafs fall, and the birds sing up to their goddess  
Of airplanes: if they remember to sing to anything at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon A Vanishing Midway

Then there was a poem for you  
Buried in the sand by the cat  
By the wolf—  
They said they would turn it into a tree  
For you, but no one read it—  
It was an un coalescing joy, but your children  
Continued to sing around it something like  
The abandoned gifts of an inconsequential Christmas—  
Whatever catastrophe there was  
South of Disney World  
North of the North pole—I kept on abandoning  
You perpetually until the stewardesses all  
Took flight—skipping the souls of their bosoms  
Across the absolute ponds of a very midnight—  
Until whatever sang for you ran and ran away—  
And whatever still hoped to make its love to you  
Had to play out its abandoning pockets upon a  
Vanishing midway.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon An Emptied Theatre

Raindrops in a tortoise's shell,  
Overturned beside the road—no more little  
Souls inside of it,  
And no reason to call this a soup of tears:  
The wolves no longer give off colors,  
Red or blue,  
Going either way, and in their guts are no longer  
Pinwheels—the sky is no longer brightened,  
But neither is it afraid:  
The gardens are not hidden—the waves lay where  
They are laid,  
And the curtains open upon an emptied theatre,  
And the sun opens upon an emptied glade.

Robert Rorabeck



# Upon The Banks Of Michigan

The day trades its dreams upon a Freudian soufflé  
Until its afternoon wherein I drink hard liquor and look at pictures  
Of old classmates who made it all of the way to New York,  
And are doing well, with their white wives- and cats-

Men with troubles tell me to believe in Jesus, because times are  
Hard and parts of the body have to be operated upon:  
Angels come into their room and rearrange the furniture:  
They are getting worked upon; it is a miracle:

And what are the Glaciers doing? But giving the face  
Of Michigan dermabrasion: in those deep ruts, there is beauty,  
And soft things grow,  
And the great lakes spread fjord-like for ships, cold waters as soft as gowns-  
And upon the banks of Michigan, flowers abound, hiding the  
Dead soldiers,  
In those Hyborian theatres where flower shops are known  
To be graveyards:

The is its beauty, tossed alongside the road:  
Asleep in Rimbaud's valleys- it is where we kind find an answer  
For Jesus:  
He is lying down here too, trying to rest  
From the paparazzi who, given enough time, will forget  
And begin to follow other men who are also trying to become  
Rich and famous.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon The Boughs

Lapsing like the tides underneath Saturn's rings,  
Into another arena after the dusks of  
The world I pretended to know and to read upon  
Days of riches and soft shells served at  
Restaurants  
The plagiarisms of those days cannot go uncounted  
Or the fires they kept in the courtyards underneath  
The eyes of the libraries:  
It seemed as if the days were growing shorter and  
Shorter, as was the wisdom of the men who  
Kept themselves there; though they were no longer  
Fighting their own hunger:  
Women whom they had remembered from high school  
Kept dancing toward them,  
Turning into bartenders and stewardesses  
As the lights traipsed across the sky,  
Like foxes leaping for fruit  
Like nuptials upon the boughs that would  
Never bend.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon The Garden Of Eden

Boys are lucky who don't know hallways:  
They can swim for ever like blue gills  
And teeth upon the sun—imaculate tit in the sky  
With an aeriola of sky:  
Just one foundation with a roof that freckles  
With the heavens  
That dinosaurs once saw before they stumbled  
Upon the Garden of Eden  
Vanishing forever.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon The Midway Of The Midwest

Balancing on this dowel,  
Lined up beside the likeliest men  
In the middle of a rickety midway  
In some Midwest,  
I could be a songbird if I  
Shaved. Coughing blood,  
Little girls, or daughters of bankrupt  
Pioneers, line up because they  
Can win prizes by shooting out  
My heart. What a situation my  
Hunger has gotten me into, not having  
Considered my I.Q. Is 130,  
And not the right tool for this  
Desired immortality; when other men,  
Better endowed can come by and  
Knock me from this perch, and set up  
Shop without breaking a sweat.  
Unbuttoning their collar, and spreading  
Polyester lapels, displaying desirably  
Plush hearts openly ululating,  
Catching the attentions of daughters ad  
Their grandmothers who might  
Spend all day there laughing until  
He has won a pinkish marble bust which  
Should valiantly grin for ages after  
I have packed up and jaunted further on,  
Wayward and anonymously starving for my next meal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon The Rooftops Of Another Sea

Coitus at the bus stop:  
A knot of rainbows  
Drinking at the birdbath  
Of a sooty love;  
My muse's name scrawled in the  
Bathroom,  
As outside the  
Palm trees whisper the  
Equinox of their love  
Up to the airplanes  
That are skipping  
Like airconditioned stones,  
Far across my hopes and  
Fears,  
To land caressing like roman candles  
Upon the rooftops of another sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon The Strings Of The Moon

They tried to teach us as the sun showers  
Fell across the moonbeams  
And the unicorns made love to their  
Cousins in  
The happenstance of the roadside motels:  
And the oceans matriculated  
And carried off the roses of dead prostitutes  
Beside the honeymoon forts  
Upon which they fell,  
And the dreams of school teachers still come  
Nocturnal,  
Haunting and scenting their favorite  
Places of moonbeam tourisms,  
Where their children string wild foxes  
To their wrists—  
Wild animals long of tail who go leaping like  
Bottle rockets towards the grapes of  
The gift shops:  
And talking cartoons fill the streets alongside  
Their light shows—  
Zeppelins reach up and zigzagging steal the lights out  
Of the moon,  
But someone else is going home anyways—  
Can't you see that gentleman crossing the street,  
Leaving the bedside of your mother—  
Until all is lost, and the honeymoons forgotten,  
And yet the children still find some kind of haunted  
Warmth in their classrooms,  
As the rainstorms caress the abandoned fairgrounds of  
The Ferris Wheels—  
Who now kiss other lips beneath in seas who dance  
Upon the strings of the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon The Windsome Saddle Of This Uncountable Mountain

What ships the quietness under trees,  
When the wind is done complaining,  
The roots of men under the earth and cold-  
Bitten daisies- There they are like little children  
In their dusty cribs.  
What an emotionless crop buried with their pocket's worth of  
Gold at the edge of most holidays,  
And the clouds are coming in like weary travelers  
To see a half involved play.

Where up above, like almost incandescent gods,  
Her branches form a rustic bouquet,  
Like the quietly irrefutable mother trying to collect  
Her children all at once as they disperse like  
Spores from lips making a once-only wish;  
And I would have liked to save her,  
And play with them, but the succession of busy hours  
Makes me soporific and my eyes  
As drowsy as a hanged man-

For her, I wish I  
Was a better poet, considering all that she has given me,  
And that my words weren't just because of all these scars  
And loneliness, but she will protect me still, indomitable  
Back against the fickle weather,  
And I will not complain as I go to sleep in her dusking  
Shadows, as she plays me a bucolic lullaby,  
And I pretending that I am just a boy settling down  
From bright play, and she my mother,  
Not just another tree in the forest upon the winsome  
Saddle of this uncountable mountain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Upon Whom To Lie The Blame

If your dreams could sleep in unison, then what  
Would it matter if our bodies would never touch:  
Imagine two candles like brothers and sisters in a candelabrum:  
Remember the secret games with your aunt spreading  
Like spurious cousins across the backyards of the plantation:  
And we could run together through the Christmas  
Trees, making eyes:  
And the fields would fill and pollinate, and our masks would  
Be our disguise;  
Because, Alma, I love you, and your body is so near, but I fear  
That our bodies may never enjoy the same bonfires, or that you will  
Never teach me how to cook- and that this is all a game:  
Alma, our constellations may roam together but if their pinpoints never  
Coalesce to touch then I hate to wonder upon whom to lie the blame.

Robert Rorabeck



# Upon Your Vulpine Lawn

Passing along,  
a heartbeat for a blue letter-  
Other words that disassemble:  
This is America,  
and we are made to preamble along our ways-  
Girls that take off early tend to amble,  
Halfway studies of the boardwalks along  
The busied highways-  
In the open air musical halls it gets noisy,  
Little boys, such as Pinocchio,  
such as my son,  
have forgotten to look both ways:  
But I have made them up,  
Anyways-  
and all of the commercials are filled with  
The cauldrons which awaken the dead-  
Dead authors whom I have loved along the  
Ways-  
Cadavers of my elementary school that  
I have called up against the waves-  
I have loved you here,  
tattooed into a spot of anonymous epiphany,  
whilst other people have been watching the  
traffics which come and go both ways-  
The airplanes whom shoot up as bottle rockets  
who apex to kiss the lips of  
clouds only die as butterflies do reaching  
the foothills of the mountains of old  
Mexico-  
schools awaken again and again at  
the mailboxes of dawn-  
the love letters lying sweating, waxen,  
upon your vulpine lawn.

Robert Rorabeck

# Us

Two birds fetching in the sky-  
Slow down to kiss:  
Really,  
They are airplanes engorged  
In a cloud,  
Or they are us.

Robert Rorabeck

# Us All Along Our Way

They felt like their child of other features,  
Lost in the garden or only turning around; and  
It might have been but some awful trick,  
The way I was spelling myself all mumbojumbo  
Besides the day going traffic:  
And the house that we all lay under was wide and yellow,  
And the waves sang a disastrous chorus,  
Spreading themselves at their table- curiously,  
They came nearer, only to scour away- and then some  
Bird sang, and the trucks struck out again like lances,  
Mounting the highways that leapt over all that  
Could be seen and gallantly charged us all along our way.

Robert Rorabeck

## Used Book Stores

Into used books stores in the bosoms  
Of those mountains—I am finally going down,  
I am falling,  
As if into a movie theatre after it has been shut down—  
And the strange weapons of our defenseless enemies have  
Finally awakened—  
And this is the blooming sensuality of the armpits  
Of their gardens—  
This is finally the peaceful comfort of the getaway  
Cars-  
Cars clouded with women who worship the billboards—  
Cars clouded with the statures of the nameless  
Bouquets given each Sunday to the manikins in  
Their graveyards—  
And you know who they are, into all of those places  
Who don't breathe to survive—  
And other perpetuities of wishing wells, hung upon  
A thread, the fireworks well-displayed, or who  
Are duds—gathered together or who are swept up  
Across the desert—  
And the mountain lion yawns bored by the blue-eyed  
Banshee—and eventually the fire-scarred mountain  
Blooms—as if you knew my mother on her birthday  
And she has stepped towards us—  
And as if she was still right here,  
As if these were the things saying a ceremony over  
Her very name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Useless

In the morning, work- and the silence of  
Cars going by their way:  
Like rattlesnakes in their joys of being unperturbed:  
Like dogs who whisper to the cats  
In the rain;  
And I jogged past your house so many times  
After midnight,  
Never saying a thing, the night balm, melting ice-cream:  
The forts on her shoulders naked of  
Their tourisms:  
Not a cloud in the sky, and the heavens as peaceful there  
While you slept in that house  
Next to your mother's womb, dreaming of your children,  
Alma; who would soon come-  
As you would learn better English, and your mother  
Would wash dishes for a living;  
And I would find you for a little while, before you too  
Would drive along your way,  
After I had given you fireworks, and white gold in the shape  
Of a rosary- and flowers,  
Flowers- and anything else I could think of- all of  
It useless, as your love slipped away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Useless Architecture

Useless architects build their paper bridges  
Up to her eyes,  
But ever are my words pilgrims without  
Recompense,  
For even now she is leaning into her lover's  
Ear,  
And the tears which become the slow  
Orgasm  
Easily wash away those efforts of less fortunate  
Men, my windswept brothers-  
Those men without educations,  
And misfortunate kindergartens who knew  
Only the manifestation of thoughts of her  
Coming on like a shade less light within their  
Feeble perception,  
So now she doesn't even think of how they must go,  
Their hearts palpitating like two year old rabbits  
Clutched in the mouth of an overeager dog,  
Who will soon have their necropsy down on  
The leafy carpet of adolescent ejaculations and palm fronds-  
Within the border of their infatuated visages,  
Their tongues rolling like stormy clouds,  
Teeth clack against each others' smiling throats  
Like batwing shutters;  
So hopes melt like the solutions of dusk, homesteaders  
Traveling westward in a great depression,  
Their bridges of love letters falling away behind them,  
Their hyphenated dreams dropping out into obscurity,  
As the young fortunates bed in the pleasurable  
Syllables brought into annunciation by lips and tongue.

Robert Rorabeck

# Utilitarian Scripture

I get drunk because  
I am a dog all over you. How many years  
Now since I seen your lips  
Sparking like a box of matches from that  
Speedy distance,  
Like a nebula skipping town:  
And in high school we jaunted  
The same halls,  
Smoked the same smokes, laughed the same  
Echoes;  
And I came courting for you after a good rain shower  
Further north than the Everglades,  
The same courtyards as the HariKrishnas, the football  
Jocks, the early morning traders:  
I used to get up every morning and think of you-  
You were my eggs and butter and marmalade.  
Leaving her like a solemn tributary,  
I'd smell you out like a wolf beneath the banyans and the  
Silver windowed hauntings. Now after so many years  
I still don't know what I'm doing, but  
Drinking the cheapest liquor and trying to sound you out,  
Testing the depths of each shot glass hoping for the  
Sonar of your fingerprints or lips-  
I really don't know what I am doing at all,  
Except that I am the sort of anthropologist who doesn't give  
Up on your leggy civilizations, even if you ride the buses  
Of other mostly apple-cheeked boys,  
Those guitar players, or soothsayers, or super-heros  
Sprawling with the midges of their forensic evidence all over  
You in the beastly pollinated meadows of a Victorian novel  
With its widely populated lascivious undertones:  
They've long since closed the doors to their class rooms and  
Shut me out,  
But I'll tip my bottle upwards in the unobstructed rains and  
Salute my sailors and their fantasies of high romance,  
And when I finally see you once more up so many ladders,  
In your high towers and shopping malls,  
And escalators and bean-stocked habits,  
The skyscrapers of your successful beauty,

I shall call up to you once more, and tell you my name  
In voluble successions until you know my game,  
And can see it in my eyes,  
How you are reflected for such finite perfection,  
And then maybe you'll ride the elevator down to the lobby,  
And we'll make sweet love that mixes our nectars,  
The blood and zygotes which tend to go roaming  
The oppositions of the regular paths and parkways  
While the shady preachers scry and the blue birds twitter,  
The soft lesbians nuzzle, and the red alcoholics jitter,  
And the aces flicker in the spokes of so many fast and  
Wondering bicycles,  
Because I am just a drifting schoolboy,  
And you my ever beautifully apocryphal scripture.

Robert Rorabeck



# Vachel's Rhyme

Goodly drunk fools conversing by their pools,  
Investing all their time in business and not rhyme;  
Look at their children good behaving as their should,  
They shall grow up tall and speechless down the hall;  
And the women there with pale freckles and fare hair,  
Sipping their glass in time I think to make them mine,  
But it will do no good for things are as they should,  
Their gossip is not mine they care nothing for the rhyme.

Robert Rorabeck

# Valencia

These words are tourists who almost find god  
Lost in Valencia, Spain;  
They ask their directions from the crinkled lady selling  
Tulips, but keeping the orchids for herself,  
And the blind man, she still loves him as a young boy:  
He is the old man eating grapes on the crumbled stoop  
In the bare sun.  
Bright cotton shirt and democratic paunch,  
She points at you into a certain way,  
And tells these words either right or straight,  
But from her mouth they both sound the same,  
Like two moths daring each other before the blue flame:  
Down the cobbled grottos we creak,  
The few meaningless lines looking for salvation,  
Smelling the salt slathered from the sea's undulating  
Coitus, the cats from the sills hiss and spray,  
And the ladies doing their laundries on rooftops enjoy us;  
But soon we are in the pollinated hills,  
The old guitar hills, the crippled ballerinas of olive trees,  
The slender premodonnas of citrus trees in a  
Chorus line of green with orange bobbles where lovers hide and inebriate  
In twined bodies; This way we go, looking for love,  
Looking for god, and the unmarked graves of better poets  
Beneath the rubles of the Roman forts where  
Unearthed ghosts creep to the pull of the moon's penumbra:  
Their legions are swaying way down in the waves-  
Some of these words are still lost in high school,  
Looking at her expanding corneas yet fully grown across the room;  
Some of these words are calling in empty fields for  
Comets to come down and light upon them like solar butterflies;  
Other words are examining the opal wrist of a puppet queen,  
Hoping to steal gems by her good favor;  
Though they will let her keep her birth stone, hidden in her wrist;  
And the rest are crawling through her suburban front yard,  
Each stem of grass hung over from dew,  
But the corpse of the entire troop is still in Spain  
Watching an abandoned kite flirt with the cliffs,  
As the fists of the new sun lance like pugilists;  
We go walking up the stone steps,

And on each one there are elderly men in succession,  
And a new dropp of sun-  
Escaping their youth and selling ice-cream;  
Asking them if they have found god in any sentence,  
They smile, unknowing but unafraid, and motion us  
Patiently past them....

Robert Rorabeck

# Valentine

Give now care to the basins of the flesh,  
On the day of roses spread your lips in her name,  
Though she doesn't know you a single jot,  
Live with her missing in your ribs,  
And take a pilgrimage of the mind,  
Into the sweltering paradise her pose displays,  
And lay with her alone,  
Upon this day of days,  
Where the flowers bloom everywhere  
But on the tombs, and lovers slip  
Amidst the caesuras of high school-  
If you dream of her, this valentine,  
And expose her to your word,  
She will love your never mind,  
For the subconscious is in the garden  
Of the Universe, and after all  
You are but stars holding hands,  
A constellation in the sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Valentines Gifts

Prevalence of lost as the cars go home,  
And smoke drifts  
To the sky like evaporations of sign language:  
Girls bouncing in school,  
As if across a lake- they go jogging along  
The curbs,  
Their little ankles kissed by pigeons and  
Water moccasins who sleep there,  
Though I suppose you've never seen them:  
Damsels hypnotized by  
Spokes of bicycles with golden ingots  
In the braids of their handlebars:  
The traffic lights and the power lines  
Behind them for decoration,  
And the sky tumbling like a heavy confection  
In the orange groves which smell of  
Her long neck,  
Pollinated- like a naked hollow  
Where she rests, and the ants drink her sweat  
Or carry it down to their opulent queen  
For valentines gifts the size of diamonds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Valkyries On Neptune, Little Girls In France

You beckon me in through the seems of  
Stolen valleys, where you no longer live,  
Where the sky is a ribbon dangled high above  
And breathtaking. I do not know  
The names of the flowers which grow here  
In nocturnal clumps of dark industry,  
But I give them your name when you are  
Too far away to hear, and there isn't a lick  
Of water, and even the night is sweating and  
The echoes sojourn with me,

Back at home, I have thoughtlessly left  
A living doll with your name and inclinations,  
The vulpine fevers of her lips left to kiss  
Each wall, and I think I have done a better job  
Than you in defining the shapes and humors  
Of your shadow, and she is so young and  
Yet taken by one of your gentlemen;  
I should say she is mine, but so, she is just  
As much yours, a daughter,

I suppose that this will end with you once it  
All opens, and thus the sky will spread as a doorway  
And there will be kings and ships,  
And valkyries in their polished kits and garb,  
And yet so far away isolated on the tundra  
Of Neptune, as if a star, that they will sit the  
Game out; but I will not need them, if you  
Stop running, for devilish exertions can only  
Get you so far without a modern automobile:

I should come for you just the same,  
Stepping over the wilderness you grew until  
Bastioned in a gregarious society so much like a harem;  
I will take your hand, weaponless and without a clue,  
And lead you back to the fairground of my lips,  
The red canisters the skipping boys have painted,  
And drape you like a wedding gown over  
The piston of an arm,

While our daughter laughs,  
If only because that is the only thing she knows how.

Robert Rorabeck

# Valley Of Windmills

Crawling to the forefront of another misery of  
Guatemala—I drink my rum,  
I say my lines—and I await for another day to splay me open  
To the eyes and senses of fishermen—  
Or, if I suppose, the sunlight cannot keep you here  
From another catastrophe,  
Like stolen bicycles sleep walking back to their masters—  
Cannot keep you from his love,  
Or from the marionettes of his children he  
Conceived inside of you—then the cave is stolen,  
But in its zoetrope still dances—  
Laughing under the moonlight for the wolves to come  
Into its movie theatre, or for the planes flying above  
It to look down,  
Causing another catastrophe, awakening—  
The moonlight over a valley of windmills—cousins to  
The caesuras—they spring around them,  
Never bothering to wonder what is laughing at the  
Same time with the moon.

Robert Rorabeck



# Valley Song

The mountains are whistling:

Jing, jingle-lang, jingle-loo

The spear tips of earth are wreathing,  
Like waves, like steadily entangled hips:

Jing, jingle-lang, jingle-loo

Every blade of grass grows and is happy:  
The strummers of insects vibrate in  
The open throats of flowers:

Jing, jingle-lang, jingle-loo

The sun is a whirligig, a queen dancing with fire,  
Rainbows are bathing in waterfalls,  
And the unshelled knight is in a vermilion  
Tourniquet,

His horse is eating the tart plums  
Enveloped in blue midges,  
And glamorous shimmers from the water lady's mirror:

Jing, jingle-lang, jingle-loo

Blushing purple goes the day over the hills,  
Down into the channel of hazy valleys-  
So brightly, each leaf is burning harmlessly at each tip:

Jing, jingle-lang, jingle-loo

Robert Rorabeck

# Valleyside Of Rubrum

The time has not come before  
And this is new.  
The light is opening for the day  
An ingénue displaying her bosom  
To man's face-  
I remember when  
I was young in following her.  
Her tassels feeling through the trees  
And drinking roots,  
She laughed even while  
Alone;  
Giggling,  
She rode her bicycle across campus.  
I staid up all night and prayed for her.  
When tired, she slept  
In the shade of a house-  
Eyes half closed. I came to her,  
She yawned and turned me away.  
She said she loved me  
Only when she was drunk,  
And it was yet that time-  
So long ago, yesterday...  
Then early this morning she came to me  
And offered me the quaff  
Of lips.  
Dripping nectar on the limbs,  
She said, "Never before now, old man,"  
As they lowered me in the grave,  
Her light budded  
A valleyside of rubrum,  
A wedding at my funeral.

Robert Rorabeck

# Van Gough Wants My Ear

My ear wants van Gough:  
There is a prostitute in a  
Red slip:  
This is for her.  
Rap it up in a burning ship.  
Make it something grand  
She can dance with.  
Do in all the hooligans  
With my knife,  
So even the bourgeoisie can't sleep.  
Do you hear me, Theo?  
Mark the grenadiers with  
A piece of chalk,  
Even the ones who are  
Dead and smoking the  
Drunk whore's cigarettes:  
Clickety-clack, Crickety-smack  
His teeth go like this,  
Do you hear me?  
His teeth go like that,  
As I said!  
Then we can go down to the  
Sea and paint:  
Carmine, cobalt and emerald green.  
Lilting stamens all the way....  
In Montmartre for the last  
2 years, listening to mice  
Crawling into conches  
In the blue stars,  
Beneath the stairs of sepia's hue:  
You'll take this to her on a plate  
From Arles down to  
Auvers-sur-Oise  
I'll give you a head start,  
And then swim in the gutters:  
Where the proletariat  
Stretch their legs:  
Little opal waves:  
There you will see the

Prettiest girls with no last names.  
To dance with one is  
Pure suicide,  
As I am missing pieces  
Of my last still-life?  
Do you hear me, and  
Have you done as I said?  
The penumbra of my gist.

Robert Rorabeck

# Vanity

When she walks down his lonely streets,  
A mismanaged gunfighter,  
She speaks words that mirror light,  
Like a fish looking into a mirror  
Wondering what she is....

Robert Rorabeck

# Vanity Of Your Galaxies

Stars go leaping, leaping like stainless steel  
Frogs:  
When they are young, stars go leaping,  
Leaping like coal tadpoles  
Out from the center of her amphibian butchery:  
And each of them has a reason for existence,  
Or they have no reason at all:  
And each of them has a bedroom where you live  
And sometimes answer phone calls from  
All your boys,  
And yards where you swing outside almost thoughtless,  
Almost naked,  
And you have so balmy of holidays and memories of  
When you walked all the way down into the  
Little parks and almost cried for somebody;  
But there are now so many cars on the streets of  
Your galaxies, that they threaten to make your  
Stars endangered-  
Cars on insouciant streets of big words, going headily  
Over the land, never thinking of romantic languages,  
Never having been to Spain,  
In red shift and gold fish- seeming to come back and  
Forth like a strangely organized tide,  
And where now have they carried all of your boys,  
For they no longer think of you in the vanity of  
Your galaxies,  
And doesn't that seem almost impossible?

Robert Rorabeck

# Various Poems

Writing various poems-  
Weaving a blue  
Shirt,  
Sea horses descend past  
the windows-  
And a zoetrope dances  
On the otherside  
Of the street- The  
Insects are playing loud  
Music because they  
Will be dying within a  
Week,  
And the various days are  
Howling at the feet  
Of unsinkable unicorns,  
Because they've all  
Shared a premonition  
That you will not be  
Coming home-  
As airplanes flying in  
Whispers over the  
Cenotaphs  
Of the green knuckled  
Bones of  
Conquistadors-  
For all we can see,  
They died this  
Way-  
Kneeling at the grassy  
Doorways,  
Their throats blessed  
Or cursed  
By the lofty flights of  
Arrowheads  
Of iambic pentameter-

Robert Rorabeck

# Vast Prairies Of Sleepwalking Thieves

Everyday budding routines of envy-  
I shouldn't be doing this, but its like I'm  
In a spell- The cartoon housewives have turned  
Their backs to me. They let me finish off  
The last of my week's rum without  
Entertainment, but their house is spotless,  
So how can I complain- I want to hear the  
Enchanted ululations of China Forbes fill up my  
Delusions- To lean back on this snow white  
Divan, and imagine the great ivies crenellating  
Steps in the rain where high heels are echoing  
Quickly, pressing books to her chest,  
A girl who never looks up until she's married,  
But I keep seeing her down that steep row  
Perhaps following the regal promises of some red  
Jove, pipe to teeth and an entire fortune to back him  
Up- It wasn't hard to infect my amnesias,  
To entertainment me with half involved women,  
While I puzzle the inner states in yellow gloves-  
Their sugar cookies, oldest daughters reading cheap  
Romance by the pool- these patterns I keep saying,  
Over and over as we wait together for great white  
Salesmen to cross over, show us the catalogue of  
Bibles pressed open like moths returned to the vast  
Prairies of sleepwalking thieves.

Robert Rorabeck



# Velvet

You made fun of me in the parks after  
Midnight,  
Until I wished that I wasn't home,  
And ended up accidentally killing the  
Dragon in the carport in a  
Monsoon,  
And the sky flashed like the inside of  
A shell or a cunt,  
And my friends came up and ate the  
Apples you were meaning to  
Save for your  
Bridal shower:  
And you had to use the tremulous plums,  
While I went away and made  
Television,  
And went and slept into the homes of the  
Foreclosed rich,  
And masturbated on their private beaches  
While I drooled over how you used  
To put your hands all over wet clay:  
And this is another scar,  
This is just the way I do, after you found  
Me out and hung me  
Like a breathy corpse for eternity deep in  
The dreamy efficiency of your velvet  
Tongued soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Venal Attritions

Venal attritions of an overcast day—  
Lonely sounds of a girl going home to her apartment  
Next to the blinded sea—  
Wanting to touch the gray hair of a goddess behind  
Her eyes—  
Maybe she is in love with her own mother as  
Her own heart burns—  
There is a grotto in there, and a little plastic  
Alter, a nativity and a pieta  
That her father once gave her in her childhood  
When he poured a dollar's worth of quarts  
Into the machine that looked like  
A mouth of a lion and spit out things of wax—now  
When she dreams,  
There is only a green yard, and a topiary around  
The church she never enters—  
There is a swing-set in the student ghetto—  
And muses she guesses she never loved.

Robert Rorabeck

# Venal Flytrap Of Enamored Miracles

I'd rather love you than watch baseball,  
Or play pac-man,  
Or even read Baudelaire, and even he is all about  
Getting off on your balmy autumn hair:  
I'd rather sign ships into bottles for you than  
Run for track;  
And kiss you, messing up the rubrum underneath  
The bleachers than  
Watch that tawny quarterback-  
But look at how swiftly you've moved on-  
It hasn't even been a universal hour, and you've  
Already laid upon your back for  
That new John,  
Like a lazy doe, like a windless flag:  
I want to blow smoke up your as\$- why is that  
So dang bad:  
I'd rather sit out with you and peel the world, and  
Listen to the new kitchens hatching from boa constrictor  
Eggs in Spain,  
Than take one step further into the clinging void  
Of things that don't need to be said:  
Because I love you: without you I'd just be the softly  
Humming dead,  
Spinning away my hours in a song-less fugue-  
With you, I can while away the hours decomposing in a  
Venus Fly Trap of enamored miracles.

Robert Rorabeck

# Venal, Green-Eyed Muse

You know that I smell like the smoke  
Of Satanic fires;  
They've been licking the sky all day,  
The ragged flags of screaming countries,  
Maybe where your sister disappeared,  
And where all my money went to:  
Today, I cleaned up the mountain without any  
Trees,  
The witches brewing men into stags:  
I was careful, and didn't buy the cheap house  
Underneath the brewery;  
And you spun, and spun; and lifting up your  
Skirts stamped the grapes,  
Caught hummingbirds in your teeth like a  
Sly cat: danced in four states at once;  
And it's been a long time since high-school,  
But you are still the burning swing,  
The sink hole: Did you ever go there,  
The Devil's Mill hopper, where I trained for  
Alaska;  
Or are you the devil's mistress yourself?  
You get men so high by winking at them-  
More importantly you help me write poetry,  
Venal, green eyed muse;  
But I am not Baudelaire; I got a C in French  
Under the palm trees,  
But you are not yet breathless,  
And I am still alive.

Robert Rorabeck

# Verdant Though Killjoy Stars

So this is how the world works: bodies so brown and beautiful  
Going about and fawning,  
Making the world more beautiful, and you must have seen them  
Diving through the red clays of the university,  
Looking for something good, and calling out the names of the  
Girls they knew for them to come to them,  
And I don't know what else there was,  
But failure in the places in which the dreams of the captains and pilots  
Rust,  
And after she is done working with me, she drives on home and removes  
Her semblances of candor,  
And she rests next to her husband as stranger to her as is a spaceman:  
Alma rests with her husband,  
And they seem now to me as if resting in the greenest fields of the  
Verdant though killjoy stars.

Robert Rorabeck

# Very Much A Lake Of Fire

This is my little house:

In its fire flaming: In my little art, a forest blazing;

And if I had the heart, I would look across

The hills,

My father's trucks burning, and your godmother's baby shower

All lit up like light bulbs of a Ferris Wheel that would

Soon leave town,

While estuaries meandered heartlessly, while the fables flooded

Even while their vines rose and seemed to yawn exaggeratedly

Towards the summits

And to the underbellies of airplanes:

The convections of cotton candy and candied apples of a celestial

Baseball game,

And then while even then we looked up together and saw

The lions and the mountain lions yawning mutually:

While then the day was capped

And made to snow its tears, and the lambs shared dreams with

The grizzly bears, while over the fires the shadows of men and their

Cousins leapt:

They leapt like dark creatures over the movie theatres that wept,

And lit their last stalwart roman candles and bottle rockets

In memory of the sweetest cheerleaders and stewardesses

Until the entire campus was like a forest fire, full of hosannas,

And very much a lake of fire.

Robert Rorabeck

# Very Providential Eternal Rest

My days are finally over, or in this zygote just  
Beginning:  
Same moon in the same hemisphere, what it is doing  
To the tides, I couldn't calculate:  
All pitied up, scars all painted and ready for another  
Nights journey into a bachelor's  
Consumptive sleep-  
The muse bled richly across my peripheral vision,  
Still leaping and elusive,  
My dogs far away into a snowy park,  
Sharon tucked in with her husband and child and all of  
Her mugs and perfect skin;  
Erin tucked in, drooling like a preschooler in day school,  
Like an oyster simply pearled in its bed:  
And I must become again the effervescing child smoking off  
Of whatever liquor he can find,  
Fingering and making rude in the waves of whatever séance,  
The airplanes with their bombshell sororities of  
Stewardesses too flighty to come down,  
The houses of all this land going out like candles on a cake  
Of a god who takes a very long time to make a wish;  
So that we have all grown old and left the stage  
By the time his desire awakens and strip-dances  
Like so many winsome clouds before his astonished eyes,  
Until they close again, like chapters having done all  
That they could for us, and finally contemplating us to rest  
Segregated into the graveyards like scuppernongs into a  
Very providential eternal rest.

Robert Rorabeck

# Very Well Sure

They have some good gods in Colorado,  
Just misplaced off summits where the tourists  
Ski,  
Drink wine and palaver on to dinner time:  
You have to do a little work to see them gods,  
And hung over,  
Your girlfriend cheating still over the old Spanish  
Bones of conquistadors  
All the way the f\$ck down in Florida:  
You can see dem gods,  
Fornicating in dem briar patches of clouds,  
Tying lightning to make some animals  
The rain produces  
As the others die: I was even then thinking of Sharon,  
Coming down from Elbert,  
Having made love to Mount Massive the same day:  
And no one else was thinking about me,  
And I was getting half done with my master's in  
Tallahasee  
That I guess I always knew I would never use,  
But I have it now,  
As I circulate the segregated graveyards of dust,  
And there isn't even a single flower,  
And she is married, and Sharon is married too  
And has a beautiful daughter:  
I guess I always knew that was how it always was,  
That these girls had better things to do;  
And I was how I always was,  
Not exactly a tourist, but still excited as a dog to see  
Those sights,  
Where they hang their braziers up after closing times,  
After midnights,  
And their jiggling zoos breast fed and man fed  
And dog fed too:  
And their gods, of course, I have seen them ludely through  
Their open ended dungeons in the sky,  
Making new flowers and never having to die  
Like the tourists of sweet nothingness whose fat  
Bald heads still sweat in inconsequential sport



Miles beneath where I am mortally wounded  
And very well sure to die.

Robert Rorabeck

# Victim Victorious

You delivered the bomb  
The last summer,  
Your pilots destroyed our civilization,  
Our inland empire;  
Your older siblings showed you how.  
Even your parents were encouraging—  
Legion, your eyes blazed with napalm  
And my villagers went screaming  
As I learned you could call down angel's  
Murder in suburban parks  
Where sunlight runs in singing rivers.  
You laid open the bomb-bay doors of your soul,  
The skating rinks down to the pit of Hell—  
You cut off the lights  
And shut down the rides; Laughing,  
You only stopped the massacre  
To back over me. Injured, I ran away—  
Pieces of me are still falling off from the  
Radioactive breakup—There are great holes in  
Me where sky creeps through,  
Like showpieces of your macabre crafts,  
The arts of genocide, the red canvas.  
Banshee, you wiped out my entire ancestry.  
My infrastructure is destroyed;  
It will take generations to recover. Until then  
I devolve into the dark spaces hoarded by monsters,  
While you drive around practicing ventriloquisms  
Of your coworkers and neighbors, Brutus  
Singing how you've long since forgotten me,  
Cutting your hair, courting your Mark Anthony,  
Teasing him with a parade  
Of your body in our bed;  
The grave where my civilization lays ghosted.

Robert Rorabeck

# Victorious Dark

Yeah- yeah, feral Christmas tree decorated with all  
The blue jays and escaped pet store snakes,  
Blue jays gorging off the shapes of more minor birds,  
And the snakes off of them,  
And the cousins off themselves;  
Which brings a stranger's light, a semiannual death out  
Into the tree, swimming like the ghosts of Arthur's  
Knights, disemboweled and never finding that grail-  
They swing there is if from the memory of the witch's  
Tits  
And armpits,  
While the birds and legless creatures chirp and fart;  
They swing like uncorked censers,  
Perfuming the unquieted, apathetic canopy of  
Victorious dark.

Robert Rorabeck

# Victory Of Hope

My body is stages paling into loneliness:  
I lost my soul somewhere back in the middle of high school  
Like the greedy armor of a cicada stuck by its barbs to the neck  
Of a cypress;  
And what I am now is the midget in his Ides of March climbing  
Down from a tree of gold,  
Spooking the king into a paraplegic, entrancing him with the  
Rattlesnakes,  
Muting the pet dogs on their chains, as I come down for you  
Like dewdrops cried in the Andes: and this is a sport to a place  
We have never been, but yearn for repeatedly in the esotericism of  
Bodies lost homes:  
I remove myself in layers as snakes shed their skin like tears,  
And I enjoy evaporating for you,  
Dreaming obsessively of the venal inflictions I can give to the  
Orchards that bloom, remembering that I once  
Questioned my parents on the indelibility of marriage, while we  
Drove past the hospitals and the insouciant sports of the indigenous  
Reptiles, while I had you on my mind all the way,  
Hoping to experience your respiring carnivals while I still had  
Hope of victory.

Robert Rorabeck

# Video-Game

I like to hypothesize that you love me,  
That I have the gift to connect with my leggy god  
At a personal level;  
But I am mad from cleaning hats in mercury,  
Of jumping over the candle flames in a fable of  
Golden mice who swim forever  
Floating in the ancient Aegean sea, wherever that is:  
I go all the way back to the old country,  
The Spanish flocks kissing my ankles: I am beautiful  
Back here in the corner of my room,  
Sharon; and you have given up and moved on:  
And you sell your wine like naked bottles flaunting before  
The snow,  
And the tourists come like confused snowbirds gagging  
In the languages of their ice-cream know-how;  
And I get drunk every night and write poetry, because it  
Is your destiny;  
And I can love you best from her, from my positronic bedside.  
I will never send you flowers or call you, because you  
Just aren't that kind of muse, but I will spend an hour or  
Two a night writing poems for you,  
Which added up equals more making love than I am afraid you  
Have, because I have been practicing for you:  
Sharon, aren't you right now my Elizabeth Shue.  
I want to leave Las Vegas for you, Sharon, but not anymore  
Tonight. I am done putting the glue to the balsam wood  
Joints of your model ship,  
And now it's time to neglect another pastime:  
I want to try you out for real in my mind. I want to put a  
Joystick in my hands and play a video-game.

Robert Rorabeck

# Virgin Mary In The Mexico Of Her Poisonous And Absolutely Beautiful Metamorphosis

I want to drink like a fish- John Cabot,  
But I really don't drink that much-  
Just enough to go out onto the unpaved  
Street, barefooted,  
And light off illegal fireworks-  
I drink a glass to affect  
Poetry like this,  
I drink to move all the way to Missouri,  
To forget her- to call her up,  
To have sex with a beautiful woman in  
Orlando,  
To spend a weekend at Disney World,  
To feel the emotionless motion of commercial  
Roller-coasters,  
To sing beautifully and then repose  
In a springtime's Easter crèche-  
Well hidden and comfortable,  
And, in general, to loose the verbiage,  
Like an archeologist with his wheedling trough  
(Though I can never match Gwendolyn Brooks,  
This I know, and thus rhyme,  
And am no longer afraid)  
To pick flowers after dark  
And get horny enough to light out of my  
Skeleton,  
To pretend to spell everything good enough  
For my sophomore English teacher, Mrs. Brown,  
To get another tattoo in Spain,  
To look beautiful blind,  
To pickpocket cheap wine,  
And lend my obtuse floodlight to the Lord  
So that he might affect justice,  
To reclaim his runaways,  
To finish the pyramids,  
To count out enough money for the call girl,  
And visualize the every possible angle in the  
Motorized exhibitions of her legs,

Leggy zoos and muggy, short-haired habitats,  
Slices of sweet cherry pie  
In exercise or just fawning in  
Sweaty and dun repose,  
To visit all the old pets  
In the cemeteries of feral relaxation,  
To forget the troubles of my bank account,  
The conditions of my expensive paramour  
And effortlessly perfume;  
To holler through the wind tunnels of Spain on  
Christmas Eve so many years ago,  
All the way to the Hispanic forest and  
Lunch hours to  
A Virgin Mary in the Mexico  
Of her poisonous and  
Absolutely beautiful  
Metamorphosis.

Robert Rorabeck

# Visa Versa

I want to be down in the mines of your  
Body,  
Smelling your back and your front,  
Gripping you;  
Not even believing in myself, but moaning your  
Name like a song bird,  
Holding your hips like a kid on the swings:  
Maybe you are Michigan and I have just  
Run away again,  
Pressing against your body like a monolithic  
Butterfly,  
Smelling your front to back, and visa versa.

Robert Rorabeck



# Visions Of A Far Away Mexico

Lions who are alive in an apiary of  
Sadomasochism worshipping the sunlight as  
The very same tourists watch them  
Again and again—  
Very strange and vulgar zoetrope,  
Like a washing machine around some  
Lazy planet—  
The words get muddled and seem to  
Bend around the horizon:  
The very atmosphere of this gravity  
Pressing down airplanes until  
They are condensed into the semiprecious  
Metal of a tourist's trinket—  
And into the places where I kissed your  
Mouth once or twice until the very last time—  
Seen before the hillside where all of your  
Ancestors are laid low—  
As the horses keep on stamping the  
Arrowheads—and the read cliffs arise—  
The frontera—where skeletons stalk,  
Visions of a far away Mexico.

Robert Rorabeck

# Vitriols Of Another Canal

Tumbling back some more I  
Ran so around to another god-  
And I am Chanticleer  
With holes in my ears  
Up for salvation along the  
Vitriols of another canal  
As satan caresses you,  
Spitting and caressing like a  
Rattle snake:  
And now like in the hollows of your  
Being; in the knees of your bones,  
Looking up your skirts  
For even just a drink of voodoo-  
Waiting again for the familiarity of satin  
To give even a preemptory  
Wink

Robert Rorabeck

# Voluptuous Catastrophes

Churches and playgrounds where  
The kind hearts recede—  
And the lilac airplanes can be seen doing anything to  
The purple hemisphere—  
Just like arrows fleeing Valentine's Day—and  
Other echoes  
Called from the tulips of housewives—  
There they are on their verandas imaging that they could  
Be making love with the  
Mailman or the milkman—until he comes, and he looks away—  
They go back the mirages in the grottos of their  
Kitchens—the evolutions of their destiny—  
They keep trying to remember the schools they attended  
And the boys they loved—  
But their thoughts keep eluding me—as I write to them  
And it rains—a figment of my imagination in a  
Playground of voluptuous catastrophes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Voracious Gravity

I am thankful that cenotaphs don't need to be fed,  
So I can just lie quietly next to my vanished love  
And love her quietly in the wormy bed:  
And the nights wake up and trumpet, sounding the  
Invasions of a fresh kill;  
And the countries move in- the boys in blue leaping,  
Leaping,  
Little wicks as jubilant as steely flowers in their  
Thorns-  
The entire armada amassed before her bed and holding  
Conquest,  
Their heads of state enjoying a banquet over her  
Out of doors senses,  
As beneath her shoulders the lesbians socialize like  
Jaundice goldfish in the communal pool;  
And I should have told her to get out when she could,  
But I was just the little man in the deep end of the pool;  
And when her weapons woke up and realized  
They tried to take over death, or they just tried on new  
Summer dresses in the changing room of her last breath,  
Until she was truly petrified and made to stay there  
In her wonderful new home,  
While her friends and family stood in line to view her  
As unlucky as the corpse end of a wish-bone:  
Like a line of tourists waiting for a ride that they would  
All have to pay,  
Knowing, sadly relishing, that they took would become  
Objectified and made to lie there too, just  
Like her someday,  
While the orange groves wept leaves of salty lips under  
The garish leaps of airplanes the only thing which this  
Voracious gravity seemed to have no affect.

Robert Rorabeck

# Voyeurs Of Stewardesses

Christmas windows—  
Voyeurs of stewardesses—  
I'm in love with a  
Mexican—  
Her mother cleans  
My house;  
I love her but  
Her heart is as  
Tiny as a mouse-

Robert Rorabeck

# Wait And Wait And Wait

Nights shed like katydids or that is what they do:

Oh, I just want to hear the heartbeat atop of Alma's roof:

All of her extended family living like a clutch of lucky breaths,

While the waves pullulate and the airplanes reach their

Stretch;

In the breeze of my childhood, in the candles of the saints,

I lay down like a panther on a path of stones for the featureless

Armies;

And like children on the lip of Christmas:

I wait, and wait- and wait.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting At The Desk Of Scribbles For The Sea To Take Us Too

This night sinks, sinks,  
Sings—like a drowning woman  
She is doing very well:  
Looking at myself now, gray and boorish,  
Somehow distracting from her lavish protestations:  
A virgin bride underwater,  
Slipping, slipping,  
Singing now, being distracted by her own song,  
Being this:  
A knife in the eyeball of a poet's illusions,  
Trying to figure out this liquor,  
The downfall of all of our grandfathers,  
And the bad arrangements which distracted and  
Sank the ship,  
And the lights are on at the very dregs of the ocean,  
And the waves are like the bangs of a gargantuan mistress  
Who eats her little girls and eggs all day,  
And to this goes our uneasy, feverish psalm,  
The first again tonight to be done with the spice of cheap  
Liquor,  
When both of her daughters are down and easy in their  
Beds, well situated with their professional illusions,  
I do this uneasy work,  
I tip the burnish glass as vanished friends give me no  
Reason,  
And I get up into early morning to cheer over the  
Paltry games of ghosts,  
And my skin envelops me like a shroud,  
And I fail math, and drool at my desk of scribbles,  
As the ladies sink, singing a song which gets me into detention,  
And Saturday school which was like being in a movie  
Where I met so many friends where we sat and made games  
In the sand and waited for everything to get deeper  
And take us too.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting For A Real Hero

I wanted to say something about  
Hummingbird eggs,  
So I did, but I am no longer sure.  
For is a coral snake like Satan in the  
Garden of a hummingbird,  
Or am I just drunk? Of course I am,  
But what about a hummingbird's nest  
Like a doll house in the expansive  
Forest without its beginning or end,  
Like a fairytale started in the middle  
And kept up through the  
Ages to stave off starvation, or the preordained  
Judgment of gods who are lighter than air,  
And yet who are way too big to be held  
Up too long by the fickle,  
Overworked winds of wonderful reality,  
Who nuzzle the littlest of things and keeps  
Their secrets all the time waiting for  
A real hero to emerge.

Robert Rorabeck



# Waiting For Her To Fall Asleep

They made up Plate Tectonics for Sharon,  
This sick muse,  
Mouthing off in Sunday school, a liar of good-looking  
Science:  
I know now this Earth doesn't move;  
It is a quiet place made all at once, a nature preserve  
With cars that purr:  
I remember gold fish in the bowl waiting quietly to  
Die  
So that they could bask in the amber pools of gods  
Hands.  
Why can't I, if this is the place, and the swing-set isn't  
Being used.  
I look up into the sky of the sick muse,  
And if it is coming down seems to be slit by Occam's  
Razor,  
The easiest of science is the ambergris in her empirical  
Eyes: The hardest to disprove, empirical senses  
That combat the utter beauty of my drunken angels,  
Who always seem to be made up with broken wings  
Anyway- So they give up to her world of really sweet  
Traffic,  
And clutter about her knees waiting for her to fall asleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting For Her To Get On Home

Scarred in all too little ways- waiting for you  
To come around, kicking balls,  
Your jaw so well outlined in the pullulating rind of  
Sun:  
And I have cannon balls, and bathroom passes,  
And reasons to believe that I am a straight shot of a  
Conquistador,  
Reason to believe that this last little bit might survive,  
Even while the flamingos fart,  
And I untie the expensive lace of another flirt,  
And you don't come,  
And Disney World is such a trip- decapitated, flash-  
Bulbed, waltzing now with the last of the senior  
Class still flecking the promenade like the lazy shells of  
All the palindromes and paladins:  
I do this to check the rigging- To hear the whispers of  
Xs of buried wealth, to pretend to stream out on an inflatable  
Raft, to take my kindergarten and all its stolen goods out  
Underneath some brightly pollinated flowers-  
You know the ones, and show the poor boy the topless dwarf,  
The stranded lady out beside the insignificant sea:  
And all I am doing is just the runaway slop of several distant  
Singers whose minds are not their own,  
Who laugh and sway in a sauntering chorus to which I conduct  
Them while their mother is out shopping,  
And I am well and horny waiting for the return of anything  
Feminine with shopping bags of hash and cheese,  
While my beanstalk grows and grows, mostly unjustly  
Unpublished, waiting for her to get on home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting For My Time To Pass

The lesbians caress beneath me in a pool;  
As If I have summated and am now looking down into  
The armpits beneath her bosom while she sleeps  
With her fireman or anybody who is cool;  
And isn't this my ship sinking into the breakers of the clouds,  
Maybe the lighthouse is still turning, making its loving rounds:  
But I need a girl who loves me just as I love her;  
But the only person on this earth who ever loved a person as  
I loved her was Jesus,  
And he loved us all; and we shot him in the back;  
And now I am not a college professor, and I fantasize about you;  
But you know it doesn't matter anyway, because it is over  
And the plants are loving animals, reciprocating like mother  
And father and the world seems to be tied up in coitus;  
The planet is a kissing ball, and I wish I knew so many more words  
To possess her; I wish I was the college professor out articulating  
In her park of dreams that every so many feet has tiny little  
Churches just as precious as dolls;  
And her floorboards creak even barefoot through the glass,  
Because she is always sneaking out to go and find another lover,  
And the waves crash like mute lovers,  
While this is what I have been doing, biting my lip in perpetual  
Agony, and waiting for my time to pass.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting For So Many Things

What should it mean that I am here again,  
Singing my praises to the open sky above the vacant  
Theatre,  
Or that once long ago I came from the womb of  
A very fine woman;  
Or that my scars are fading, becoming the beauty marks  
Around the eyes of an exceptionally benevolent king.  
No, I am not Mark Twain-  
I have never captained on the Mississippi  
At best when I was five I went into the bluesy dunes across  
The street, the bed blankets for conquistadors and GI Joes  
And looked at the pornography inside the junked cars  
Beneath the Australian pines-  
Up through that, I have appreciated women from their  
Distance, fancied myself an auteur in need of  
Representation; but even that doesn't matter anymore.  
The cartoon rabbit has defeated the kidnapers.  
Blue birds are singing to wise old black men up in the lees.  
The dead men have jumped out of the river and are jigging away  
Their gold:  
I have loved her through seasons of her humid forgetfulness,  
Sleeping uneasily with the drooling canines;  
But today, I am taking a walk outside through the caesuras  
Of hills, as I am waiting for so many things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting For The Rain

Driving to the east, driving home the sky was  
As gray as gray rhinoceroses- I even drove past Alma's  
House,  
And Alma's roses, because she didn't ring me all today:  
When I got home the air-condition didn't work,  
But I think that's okay-  
I am still waiting for the rain, and maybe I have broken my  
Promise to her:  
Maybe there are fearful satellites coming close to airplanes:  
The sky just goes up like the funniest layers of a dream,  
While relatives close their eyes and go to rest like  
Cicadas praying forever on cypress;  
Even if that is just close to what I mean: I am finally in my house  
And I can hear the fornications of the world,  
But the green waterfall leaping from my window is as quiet as  
A blind man kneeling for a blessing,  
And Alma is home and at rest with her beautiful family,  
While I am breaking my promises and waiting for the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting For You

I live inside a finished book,  
Set aside and mostly unrecalled-  
A book of furtive sentences over before  
They begin,  
And brilliant wounds spilling like massacred  
Angels out of self-contained libraries of inner-towns:  
My life is driving down one road  
Under a few moments of sunlight and drying yards,  
A moment when you walk by,  
Your youthful body brilliant and insouciant  
As wet paint,  
You are gone from my life, not even looking in  
My direction as you leap your exercises:  
Moving further and further away from the  
Isolated neighborhood where I roam  
Until the houses are just shells of mollusks  
Unreproduced by the briny womb of a sea  
Now but a swimming pool evaporated into  
Green disuse;  
There are no more whistles in the windblown yards,  
For everyone has graduated, or divorced, and moved  
On: Though I see pictures of you in strange neighborhoods,  
I know they are no more real than I am now,  
Just as you have stepped from that husk that once roamed,  
I look to revive the memory of your unhemmed brow:  
The auburn girl of fitless eyes, the claret lips who  
I have never tasted hang somewhere here still:  
In a cocoon of robbed intentions,  
Or in the hollow amber of a cicadas' armor on the cypress,  
In a humid room where the air-conditioning has died,  
And the ceiling fan sleeps in the shady afternoon;  
The latchkey of an empty living room hypnotized by  
Her gloomy shadow upon the television's dusty mirror:  
So here I roam, my wheels turning like panthers,  
As the tumbleweeds blow beneath the empty sky  
Waiting to find you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting To Get Drunk

The night can be telescopic, and my eye got  
Punched;  
I'm waiting for the stores to shut down-  
I'm waiting for the arcades to wind down, for  
The students to pass out from drink,  
To slip into the street with their guitars unstrung,  
To slip into the street and drool in the gutters of  
What dreams they have laid over from  
Highschool-  
Waiting for the cats to trick like coyotes,  
And for the old girlfriend to finally stop pulling out  
Her hair;  
Here, in the golden turnabout where a cop pulled  
Me over a decade ago, I think of you as I thought of  
You a decade ago: Here, across the street from  
The Chinese junks, from the yellow studios and the  
Naturally hairy lesbians nude in the nude pool-  
All that is different is that I have new scars,  
I've switched places- old friends have faded away into  
New families, better words, employed;  
And I'm still off in that night getting drunk my manager,  
Will be leaving soon for Tallahassee to get my degree,  
To fart and light off fireworks for Halloween,  
To sunbathe in the graveyard of segregated confederates,  
Wandering what tricks you would pull that night-  
That night of sleeping bicycles and all my impotent haunts:  
I knew you were calling off work, tasting the hemispheres  
Of your blue fireman, and that was why I was getting drunk;  
And that is why I'll be getting drunk again tonight.  
Because, don't you still live in Gainesville, and aren't  
You still a beautiful auburn girl? Wherever my old girl is,  
I'm sure she still has a bald spot,  
And the only thing that is different is I have new scars,  
And I'm waiting to get drunk.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waiting To Grow Tall Enough

So It happens that I am going down again into the fjords  
Of body builders of throats and lips  
And tongues to dredge up again the songs that will never move:  
Here, eternally, my ever-loving sister is falling between the fjords,  
As the pages are forever stuck together and this is just a  
String of popcorn decorated around the Christmas tree:  
This is just a necklace for Alma that she will never feel,  
But it is all for her,  
And soon it will be that I will die, and then I will just be just a lick of  
Spit stuck by an inopportune kiss to some indescribable lick of wall:  
And all of it will ever be remembered for the long lances of  
Conquistadors who have just become indescribable again,  
Disappearing again into the fabled mists of junked cars,  
While the kidnappers get away with their innocent songs.  
And the day revolves as if on carousels,  
And for a moment the lion yawns, and I can remember how beautiful  
You are, Alma, as if perfected in a perfect picture that never  
Moves:  
Nubile and receptive and attuned to all of the necessities nude  
And open and waiting for and out upon the empty green jaws  
That otherwise make an arcade for a beautiful nothing high out and far  
Upon the unnamed johns of the deep and multiplying ranges:  
Or whatever it is, while all of the kites sing and my father make money  
High up the hallucinations and all of its cotton candy fables to the  
Strange boys who happen to be waiting to grow tall enough to be  
Called or then to be christened kings.

Robert Rorabeck



# Wake Up, Little Susy

The work I am doing is  
An Extreme mishap;

I can never be buried in  
A coffin of joy-

All the Catholic boys are  
Dead or loitering;

There's a smiling alligator up  
On the first time  
Step,

They just repackaged it and  
Sold it to you this  
Way,

But it's the same song,  
And now where have all the pretty  
Girls gone anyway.

Robert Rorabeck

# Walk In The Wind

I am the only one who  
Orgasms  
An origami jungle  
Screaming in papier-mâché  
Vertebrates  
Where the sun is a paper  
Plate  
Burning orange-flamed lips  
At the picnic,  
Turn to curling ash in the whispering  
Grass,  
As something like 10,000  
Army ants march past,  
The pomegranate armored conquistadors  
Of a luscious past,  
Looking for the fabled city  
Through the bladed forest,  
All that wealth fallen from my sticky  
Splayed fingers, piano players  
Stretching out from my slumbering palm,  
Made entirely from sweet vermillion  
Watermelon  
Which glistens in ruby pyramids  
In butchered geometry toward the sun,  
Circled by gossiping horseflies  
Who are taking a walk  
In the wind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Walking The Cow

We are leading our linoleum cows  
Down the compassed hill,  
Down to the forever basin  
Of the perpetuating sea:  
The sun is a mad conductor  
Leaping in his bright cauldron,  
And little children are playing on the rind:  
Secret lovers siesta unnoticed  
In the cradled bowers of citrus plantations,  
Amidst the shipping trucks and busy work,  
While grandmothers leap up barking  
That: They still love you,  
They still love you:  
When they sink again they are never found.  
Inside the caves of houses  
Housewives are weeping,  
They have cut themselves in the  
Perforated kitchen,  
And their backyards of young Billy-boys  
See how far they can stick  
Serpentine hoses in the ground,  
The curious gudgeonings-  
But she who we care about is  
Nowhere to be found:  
So we go down, down, down.  
We are walking the cow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wanderers

Reindeer are stepping deeper in the bitter moss,  
Mindless of the little fingers of blue hypnosis;  
Clutching the smooth stones of the swaying west,  
Not even the natives remember, as they hunt,  
The ones who have died here and gone before.

What religion the moon casts onto the antlers' arc,  
Across those red stems where felt collects like  
Calcifying minerals, dusted with the earlier snows;  
Here is something not even the quiet speaks of,  
A procession of white throated does,

Their eyes the perception of her unconcerned migrations,  
Their bellies where the snow clings in tufts and balls,  
Where the boreal caterpillars cocoon in moist antechambers;  
When they change it will be too early, and they will freeze  
Like slips of sunlight joined together in a curse,

And they will fall away from the amber steps of hooves,  
The unperturbed steady trunks of the horned wanderers,  
Their kids tugging on the black nipples at their bellies,  
The orchids of forthright animals, the milk of talc,

And northward where the glaciers climb in ways of deep ruts,  
Past the splendid death buried in its time,  
The moments of lucid trinkets sparkling a wonderful mystery  
Freed of the concerned stems which motivated the restless bodies,  
Beneath the swaying monuments of vermilion hue,  
And the breathless curtain pricked by furnaces, keeping pace.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waning Marble Spine

Harrowed to the acanthine bone-  
You once was a conquistador,  
Sister a teacher to the oldest towns,  
But now what are you, Now that  
Even the scabrous eyes of  
Engulfing mothers don't look up;  
You suppose that wearing a  
Ringing on your fluted finger and  
Slinging some vows would resurrect  
This town,  
Would bloom this celibate mausoleum,  
And draw the curtains, and green the  
Room,  
But even his soft kiss has gone overused,  
As to be only as palatial as an  
Ant mound,  
With your eyes changing greedy colors  
Just as uncaring  
As that taciturn creed I've seen you  
Grow yourself;  
So that you should never look up,  
And keeping going down cast  
Counting the cracks in the starving  
Esplanade of you mother's  
Waning marble spine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wanting Her Memory

The traffic doesn't hear me when I am tucking to bed,  
When the traffic has mostly done gnawing the bones of the road  
Where angels float like smoke  
Whipping jingoistic across the drum-beats of the world:  
My mother and father have had cantankerous sex in the sports  
Utility vehicle;  
I have tried to read Stevens, while I pushed all day with the Mexicans,  
And sojourned to and from our jobs laying grass  
In the white bred neighborhoods;  
Now the ants rest with their legs splayed like kittens;  
And there is no rain,  
And the traffic moves so far away, like the wound in my mind  
Waiting to open a little further and pour the red visions that are  
Wanting her memory.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wanting To Be Hers

New rivers in the full horizon- beautiful words that  
I don't even know  
Newly budding in a cemetery- and how they hold over  
For her like candles  
On her holidays- ripe as corn in an unabashed field-  
Brown as her body looking at the  
Sugar cane burning,  
As she came over to America and pulled up to the movies,  
As the raindrops of another place-  
Hit her body once or twice wanting to be hers.

Robert Rorabeck

# Warm Bottles Of Suicide

I grease the snow over  
Which the  
Cannon balls  
Practice magic tricks,  
Floating like old  
Fashioned jaw breakers,  
Lovers of little  
Children,  
Confections of high  
Ball  
Dreams,  
Bowling alley trances,  
And the ways  
You look  
At him;  
You are such a match,  
On your voyage to  
Damage my liver-  
I raise my flag and  
Surrender  
But it's just a  
Trick of light to  
Buy me time,  
As I watch the  
Heavy iron kiss  
Snowflakes  
In the low sky  
Yet somehow safe  
Above where you've  
Set up your  
Pretty coffins  
To sell you warm bottles  
Of suicide.

Robert Rorabeck



## Warm Insouciance

A tingling in my neck: a warm insouciance,  
And I think of the underaged English girl who comes  
Every year to run between the evergreens we put up  
To sell in South Florida: She will be coming into her  
Own, and I am published in her country,  
Even though she will not know: Her father, or grandfather  
Is a grand thespian and a drunk, and a used car salesman,  
And bankrupt. She has the lips of a terrible carp;  
For in which to fit an entire sandwich, a pensive fist,  
A thrusting tongue, or this, and this: The night is warm,  
And either way goes a long way without her: And my ship  
Is burning with effluvious energies, just by the kinetic  
Energy put off my walking towards her, without even  
Walking: Or, likewise, with quiet celebrating of my departure,  
When I should leave without her, without touting my  
Lines to her, my furtive off-hour lines which hang over and  
Wait to be picked up for work, crowding what must certainly  
Have been more industrious junctures: Now the bourbon  
Swims like the coattails on a groom waltzing in a flooded  
Night, and I drift and wander on, and place bets on if  
The flirtatious French women will come so that I might deliver  
A Christmas tree to their house, so they might smile and say  
Things in the language Rimbaud wrote, under the gloom of  
Their roof, and their beautiful daughter in the kitchen making  
Eyes with her cousin, who is also beautiful; and watching their  
Petit fingers move through the verdant boughs I have trimmed,  
And heavy breathing, and my eyes on her, as her eyes on him.

Robert Rorabeck

# Was An Echo Of A Daydream

In a classroom of echoes  
How can we go on fieldtrips where billboards and  
Rainstorms fade over wherever it was  
In the places where  
I remember you—Looking up from the ceiling fans  
In the bedrooms you shared with you  
Unlucky husband:  
As I cradled you from the parapets and made love to you  
As the purpled and marmaladed butterflies past:  
As I taught another day from the water fountain  
Trying to control myself as all of the prettiest girls past—  
And in all of the day—and in all of the classroom  
There was an echo of a daydream  
That meant nothing to her anyway.

Robert Rorabeck

# Was That All It Was?

Was that all it was,  
To call me once to see again  
My ugly face echoed in my voice  
Five states away? To question me  
Like a concerned middle-class mother  
Whose daughter is dating a Chinese vagrant?  
Did you not hear me whisper I love  
You over the line, a much softer rendition  
Than the last 4th of July, when I shouted  
Your name to the night's sky-line,  
As the fireworks burst their bloody colorful  
Bodies overhead like exploding deities,  
As dead cars and ghost trains  
passed away along Highway 66....  
Was that all it was?  
I could die in a plane crash tomorrow  
Like Patsy Cline, I could fall to pieces,  
and you still wouldn't call  
To give your condolences....  
Call me, and we will not worry about  
The long silences,  
The way your mind skips town,  
Leaving your lips with nothing to put on,  
As you, humming a stroll, with pretty boys  
From your town who you are not so far away from,  
Forget my name and the nervous ways I came  
On to you once or twice after six years....  
Was that all it was  
Or are you secretly engaged?  
I could tell you wanted to tell me something,  
But what was it? Are you seeing somebody?  
Or do you not remember the ways you put on for men,  
The type of men you like. You say I don't know you,  
And I don't, but that has not stopped me from writing  
You into every line, because that is all I know to do.  
To lay you down as if in bed,  
And to run my tongue across you like ink on a page,  
Making your body numb to the hurt and pain,  
Even when you are so far away from me,

Even when you call his name and forget mine....  
But, was that all it was....  
Was it the last time?

Robert Rorabeck

# Watch Me Dance

In the still-life she draws to try  
And save animals,  
Those flowers are not real,

Though to her lips the beer froths,  
The yeast of a microbrewery tattooed  
On her left breast,  
And the nun looking up, and the sparrow  
Above that:

When the winter is in the finest nudity,  
She steals Robert Frost,  
And breastfeeds him in the empty hutch  
Where she choreographed the rabbits all summer;

All this afternoon I used to think  
She could be my wife, if I brought her to church,  
Where I watched her in the dim suicide pictures  
In the surf,

But it turns out that she laid her wrists  
Across the earth like a handcuffed angel off to  
Disney World, and French Guiana, and let the machetes  
Clear the deadfall of her junior year,

She wanted to save the earth, but the doctors  
And their priest kept her medicated, and in the Nor'easter  
She took off her blouse and came on to Dorothy,  
Until they were both picked clean and carried off to  
The South of France.

Now that ends the story. Watch me dance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Watching Midnight Express After John Hurt's Death

This the residential neighborhood  
I think you remember-  
You grew up here, child of woman and of man-  
But while you have slept,  
the nocturnal animals are reclaiming their  
playgrounds-  
Where you used to sleep, growing up  
as a boy,  
was once their cannibalistic fairgrounds-  
Terrapins and jaguars,  
spotted, lethargically,  
hunting for orchids and hares as in the  
fields converted shadows made  
love to your cousins:

The roses you once tried to give to her  
are buried here-  
the skeletons made to rest here  
are re animated during the work week  
while your mother and father have driven away  
to their reconciled plots:

And I am left at home watching movies  
that I was once too immature for-  
Watching Midnight Express after John Hurt's death-  
The storylines of puppets you used to master for  
me while I slept,

And the airplane spread their wings.  
They are leaping to kiss the volcanoes,  
as the girls that work on them have learned to fly  
to and from their places of work and of lovers:

In fact, all of the actors in the show are  
changing forms- women fleeing the staged shadows  
of feral kings,  
recruiting the metamorphosis of wild birds  
that struggle to rise from the stony pits,  
the haunted suburbia of our once shared childhoods-

Now these graveyards.

Robert Rorabeck

# Water Lilly

Words in dying error:  
Kiss the wrong girl,  
Or don't kiss at all:

A ghazal of love stuttered to  
A stork,  
She is up to her knees in things I didn't know,  
But I'd like to watch the magic beans  
Curl up her legs,  
And sit on her patched knee  
While she eats her jelly sandwich

Her bum in the mud

In the croaking glades;  
The reptilian harem,  
And she has a book out, a nursery rhyme,  
A nip of gin for her bib,  
She rides cross-legged on the back of the racing snail  
Who smells like an apple barrel,  
Having a staring contest with the tortoise.

The weathervanes are mangled in the undergrowth,  
And her nails are black from diggings:  
She whispered something to the thorny fish,  
And he's gone off to sleep in the thighs of slower currents,

I've tried to find her nudged in the watery bramble:  
Sometimes she doesn't wake up for days;  
The sun glazes her like a student's vase,  
As she sleeps curled up in a black tire of a plane crash,

But she doesn't remember  
I went to her high school where the  
Turtles crawled up to the moon and spawned tar diamonds  
That fell to the earth again like toppled coal into the waves;  
When she made her escape,  
From canal to river to estuary and then everglade;



She was a frantic beauty with wild complexes;  
I'd wait for hours just to see her swim in inky puddles  
On suburban roads after the thunderheads'  
Embarrassing display;  
But my kiss glanced off her unconcerned shoulder,  
And fell to someone different,  
After she touched purple water and did not surface.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waterfall Playing Over Purple Flowers

There was a waterfall  
Playing over purple flowers—drinking them,  
Feeding them the apiary of  
Sunlight,  
Down from where they could not grow,  
Distilling angels:  
It was not the easiest thing to describe to  
Anyone  
Even though a thousand angels walked  
Down her path after midnight—  
After the cars had parked  
And the dogs had run: Now, those who could  
Be kissing were kissing,  
But a million more just so happened to  
Be lost in their echoes—  
Those who turned around were turned  
To salt and so could not run—  
They remained in the valley forever,  
Topiary of salt-lick with  
Salt mine hearts—the dear came and kissed  
Them down to their knees:  
It was kissing time down in the valley—  
And everyone who possibly could stood  
There listening—  
After they paid their tickets, as the mountains  
Listened to the breeze.

Robert Rorabeck

# Watermelon And Fried Chicken

We'll go into the day's lesson as the hummingbirds  
Drink their fill, just like the cheerleaders from the  
Water fountains from the blocks of our high school—  
The airplanes will leap the everglades  
And the echinopsis will bloom in the cypress trees:  
A unicorn will lay in a bed that was made by  
Alligators swearing to the pit of her—  
They will tell of her in the books in which they keep for  
Tomorrow, and swing up to her from her censures—  
And the apricots will entwine with the poison ivy—  
And the congregation will sing in their pitiless senses of  
His infinite glory—my mother kneeling in the  
Carport—my father coming home with armpits filled  
With watermelon and fried chicken.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waves

I could love the waves  
As they came upon me with great unconsciousness,  
Love the salt of a tremulous embrace,  
And the mimesis they return to the sun  
As he goes down on them,  
The throbbing pain of her blood in the wound,  
The magician's rabbit I palpate on the floating log,  
Hyperventilating while homeless men  
Fish, and midwives hike up their skirts  
And move into her to give unquestionable deliveries:  
But if I answered her solicitations, I could not  
Return to the dry home where my parents  
Eyes dwell on me, where they suppose I am  
Brushing my hair in the mirror,  
But forever would I know and see her in those  
Multitudes, how she becomes even now when I  
Have yet to draw the shades and let her in,  
For she is too ready to proceed, and this is how  
It is, most akin to blood;  
Thus I must concede, and let this be a testimony,  
For she has made a carriage of this house,  
Taking it deeper in, and from every window  
The light refracts like splinters, and her whispers  
Are swimming from the throat I wish  
To enter in with my entire body.

Robert Rorabeck

# Waving Goodbye

Golden-  
Curfews of all  
The things you said,  
As you  
Get ready for  
Business,  
And comb your  
Hair for  
Bed  
As the rockets are  
Mouthing off  
To the  
Sky;  
The sun a  
Sunflower in  
Her warm  
Bed,  
And we  
Are all  
Waving  
Goodbye.

Robert Rorabeck

# We Commence

Sometimes scars mean I love you,  
And the glittering webs the rain makes on school  
Bus windows coming home;  
Slowly bending down,  
It feels like a thousand years ago,  
Even when the sun comes out and rustles through  
The grasses,  
Huffing on each green blade until its cloudy with light-  
I half expect it to find something,  
And you are there, as you are in all of it,  
Even though I think that this was even long before  
I met you;  
And you were in the canal, and in the red beads of  
The Florida Holly,  
In the sweaty bulbous citrus like blushing lures on  
Each stem.  
I used to wake up to your humid translucence,  
And tried to put you on over my youthful loneliness's;  
And when you did come, what an example of life:  
You bloomed once in my classroom,  
Auburn and floating and then you were gone,  
A priceless furniture of teak,  
Tidal and retreated.  
Paradoxically, I saw you everywhere and used to skip  
Class and smoke in the eastern waves just to get close to  
You. Then, as if in a dream, you kissed my neck when I  
Was a man and then walked away and folded yourself against  
Your true love, or whoever he is; and I was left with  
So many splintering echoes of your fledged embraces.  
Now I think of moving next to you,  
Of buying a home which will inspire you to think of me  
Again, to reawaken you to my slow ochre glances,  
The drift wood of my long distance romance,  
And the vigilant terrapin who I keep as a pet watching you,  
To the weathers I move in over you;  
And even if it is all too late, and this is my grave I am dressing  
Into, I will still come, because it is the nature of every man  
To be flawed and needy,  
To lay his scars bare before your sightless reflection,

To watch your beauty play out across the awake and dreaming  
Heavens,  
And to know you by the early mourning silences,  
Before the cars, and restaurants, and sports of the luckier men  
Rejuvenate to teem over you with all their frustrating  
Distractions,  
The time I yet have before you turn your gaze upon me  
And we commence,  
Breathlessly and mute, drowning by the dusk of the road,  
Rolling where all the grasses are mowed and drowsily affluent:  
This settled, we'll nod and sweat  
And drink whatever liquor will quiet the uncertainty of your  
Lips,  
And turn our mutual gazes to that steadfast terrapin,  
My friend eating the proverbial orchid, and the dogs,  
And I will try to explain what he means to us.

Robert Rorabeck

# We No Longer Go To School Together

Cars can-up the road,  
And business is good,  
And mail boxes are choking:  
Girls in the shortest skirts you've ever seen are  
Walking their dogs,  
Leading them into the open throats of crepuscule,  
Leading them to the good lakes of sad colors.  
Then the world is only blue and has an easier alphabet:  
You could spell it once or twice with your first words.  
In this place there are only so many houses in the world,  
And they turn all the same way  
In their zoetrope neighborhood. Coyotes chase them innocuously,  
And I fall asleep open mouthed  
While dragon flies capitulate around the ringing light  
Of the foyer's centerpiece;  
And all the dinner guests have died, but they have not  
Walked away,  
Because death is talking a piece;  
His scythe like a shepherd's cane resting over beside  
The wheat.  
And it is warm and cool outside across the yards of modest  
Sepia that don't even try to grow but an inch a year;  
And I sat out there amidst the faux roman  
Pillars and wrote this you would love me many latening  
Evening ago;  
And the world was so polite even the insects didn't bother me;  
But I confused politeness with apathy,  
Because I can no longer climb those mountains between us.  
I am blinded by my loneliness, you have taken his name,  
And we no longer go to school together.

Robert Rorabeck



# We Who Are Missing

In the high canyons where  
The mad inventors live  
Hand in hand with the last of  
The Cherokee Indians,  
The last of the wolves,  
And the first of the heathens,  
I go to give offerings  
Of leprosy to the hungry axe:  
A hand a foot,  
A lip a tooth:  
We can use these to buy things,  
The parts of the body that by themselves  
Are useless,  
That, alone, you would not have:  
So, I barter them for beaver pelts  
And sacks of grain,  
And rice,  
And a daughter none others wanted  
Because she only has one eye,  
But with it, on the shadowed prairie  
Where I am ever still  
Moving away from you, and the  
Bedroom in which you would not have  
My things,  
I show my daughter the moon's  
Sallow reflection on the flaxen seas,  
And the promise of mountains  
To the west  
Where the rainstorms stampede down,  
The plentiful timber and game,  
With which we who are missing  
Can build an acceptable home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wealthy And Amused

Nothing can be wounded eternally-  
Eventually, left out in the cold it dies:  
It dies and sinks quite peacefully into the sea;  
It grows sedentary, unseemly irate- it takes up law,  
And fails to appreciate the high stamens of  
Stewardess' flirtations on the busy crafts of their show;  
But I keep on doing this as my some sort of  
Dysfunctioning reveille:  
I salute all my pitiful paper crafts to the fashion of  
Your warm body pressed against his,  
Drinking rummy bouquets- I suppose he has never  
Done this for you,  
Trying to drink your contractual immortality,  
Or driven alone and screamed halfway across the mortality  
Of our patriotisms:  
And I am a wreck, but looking down the coral is so beautiful  
It is not a pain to die:  
And I will die for you- Bare the brunt of his spume,  
And all that reckless wealth busily wasted to persuade your  
Heliotropic demons- I still love you underneath the effluvious  
Buses,  
And I have summated mountains for you, and realized the  
Bastardization of his angels- and grown more distant and more  
Scarred for you:  
And I have grown to appreciate lightning storms and pearl handled  
Firearms- tucked into the double entendre of your silk purse;  
And I would dam the Atlantic for you,  
Or flood the Pacific across our manifest destiny, and put two  
Mammals of each sex behind each kiss pressed into your adultery,  
So stop selling what you consider news,  
And look to me,  
I who am wealthy and amused.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wedding At My Funeral

The time has not come before  
And this is new.  
The light is opening for the day  
An ingénue displaying her bosom  
To man's face-  
I remember when  
I was young in following her.  
Her tassels feeling through the trees  
And drinking roots,  
She laughed even while  
Alone;  
Giggling,  
She rode her bicycle across campus.  
I staid up all night and prayed for her.  
When tired, she slept  
In the shade of a house-  
Eyes half closed. I came to her,  
She yawned and turned me away.  
She said she loved me  
Only when she was drunk,  
And it was yet that time-  
So long ago, yesterday...  
Then early this morning she came to me  
And offered me the quaff  
Of lips.  
Dripping nectar on the limbs,  
She said, "Never before now, old man,"  
As they lowered me in the grave,  
Her light budded  
A valleyide of rubrum,  
A wedding at my funeral.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wedding Of Midnight

They held all of their flowers in their  
Make-believe wedding of midnight,  
But it was just a funeral,  
Like looking at my face before the  
Graveyard:  
What could be more beautiful, Except  
For a movie theatre after closing time—  
And all of the amusements that  
Ate themselves—  
So, I suppose I can all her, if I knew  
A few more words,  
And the bard kept wondering while  
The griot ate the stars:  
But we've already taken a few too  
Many steps,  
Up the contraptions of the marionettes—  
And I suppose that we've come too far  
To figure out what it really takes to  
Save ourselves, with the lights coming  
Home over the waves—  
None of this will sell, and all is for nothing,  
But at least we can pretend to remember  
That there is no one else to save.

Robert Rorabeck

# Weeds

Hope in abandoned fields  
Fertilize our retreat:  
She is sitting on a couch in  
Her living room,  
Using his tongue as a  
Slippery treat:  
The waves go on and on,  
Saying everything that is  
Never heard,  
The greatest poets trapped in  
Her panting, dying by the hour.  
If she steps outside  
To see him out,  
She might trip over us,  
She might injure herself  
On our inebriated poses  
Passed out,  
Hoping to be picked up as strays.  
Left on her windowsill,  
We could bloom every hour  
As she slips out of her bra  
For afternoons and days,  
But it is not within her  
Line of sight,  
The ones she never sees,  
So we stay right just where we are,  
And learn to grow up with the weeds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Weeping All The Way Down

Bodies become impaired at sunset, Sharon,  
Or they fall in love, as you spend all day long in  
A cradle of yellow abyss:  
Rams drink the ribbons that curl down through the crust  
Like cracks in porcelain dolls,  
And when I think about you, I wonder if either of your  
Grandmothers are still living,  
And how near they are to you; and yet I know that you  
Still must be a girl  
Who loves her car, but who would also love flowers  
Once in awhile: flowers, flowers I can give to you and  
Songs,  
But I am mute of camaraderie, only because I am strange,  
And I do my best romances from the celibacy of light  
Towers where I always keep out for you  
And smell you as the orange groves are awakened,  
You taking your daughter through the rain marching up the  
Hill with the other tourists, and yet apart:  
And I drink to you alone tonight, Sharon, even if it is because  
You are the only girl it is safe to drink to;  
And I hope that is enough: and I think of your grandmother;  
And the pets you have lost, and the places you used to live  
I can only imagine, or the things that are even more precious  
To you while you attend to your shop  
And I try to capture you there in the still-life of a make-believe  
Church while the mountains are weeping all the way down  
To the coffins, but at least they are taking their time about it.

Robert Rorabeck

# Weeping And Making Love

By strange visions I strike out, the lion defeated  
And his pride taken over by strong drink:  
I work all day and am harassed by knights whose skeletons can  
Be seen through their suits:  
We hustle the cadavers of landscaping straight beside the traffic,  
And sometimes when the day is failing you can see the moon:  
And Alma comes like a republic; and my words for her are  
Stuck on the roof of my mouth, but they are plenty;  
And Alma thinks my house is beautiful: and it is also Alma's  
House, if my dreams are as real as Disney World:  
And the ocean moves, oh doesn't it, just as beautiful as a prom queen;  
And just as apathetic for me; and right now I can hear my beautiful mother  
Counting the beautiful money, but very soon I won't have to hear it at  
All:  
I will have my own rooms, and get my five hundred a week and be happier  
For it,  
And if a true woman doesn't move in with me posthaste, I have other women  
To choose from, whose kites are tattooed on their person; and their souls  
Are so good that they can love any man, and I have felt them coming  
Towards me for so long,  
These beautiful women who are stowaways on the ships of this earth;  
And the graveyards are populated by their silent mothers,  
And we go to visit them with these flowers, weeping and making love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Weeping Naked With My Unfortunate Eyes

There is a transom in her eyes  
They see at more degrees than an alligator  
Who saw me leaving school  
Before denouement;  
And I have return to her many times,  
Underneath the penumbra of the moony skies;  
And I have returned to her and drunken alone,  
Until my rucksacks were empty of  
My father's fireworks,  
And I was done with my soda,  
And with my jerks;  
So I imagined her there above the busty head  
Of a gray wolverine,  
Shooting like streamers of pure crinoline:  
She had her busts turned into twin engines juggling  
Gas,  
And Jack was planting his beanstalk under her  
Belly:  
She was almost waiting for him,  
With that promiscuous glint in her eye,  
Her black fields almost green, while I knew  
I could never really be entirely enough for her,  
Because she had so many stewardesses serving drinks  
Between the wingspan of her opulent thighs:  
She had so many things changed inside of her,  
That she was never more perfectly in disguise,  
While I looked forever up at her,  
Weeping naked with my unfortunate eyes.

Robert Rorabeck



# Weeping To Be Inside

Failed into flames, lapsed into tortoises,  
Just trying the words to sing-  
The busy throats, the ways on home: envisioned by  
Words unremembered,  
The laughing games of homeless homes,  
The busy bodies of boneless bones- the cracks in the basalt  
That steams from the stones,  
And girls lying there, virgins to the rectitudes, suppliant  
Transoms of their mother's wombs:  
Lying there like the deep purpled throats of some flowers,  
And never singing:  
But waiting with busied eyes just as if at a baseball game,  
With the weathers coming in with hopes a wild:  
These gifts of lonesome visions,  
Sand in their eyes, bosoms waxy- and the evils grinning,  
Looming atop their salient dishes,  
Packages employing limbs and little carnal dishes,  
Weeping, weeping to be inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# Welcome To Early Morning Preschool

I am a fan of dying, of never learning French.  
I plan on never leaving the cafeteria. I have eaten my gelatin  
But I am so embarrassed- I started out fine,  
The way you see things relaxing in runny amber;  
Oh, in the balmy reasons in squinting hijinx farting  
Quite happily under the swings-  
I said my things to the escargot of sweet little girl's ears,  
Curling, curling like fun slides;  
And my mother would hold my hand without reason,  
And I'd make up excuses for stealing things from my peers;  
I'd stand there for some time supposing about the tin  
Horns and copperheads at the pet cemetery,  
While the buses encircled me like rattling cartoons-  
Back at home, sweet death, grandmothers and goldfish,  
An impure ghost in the corner behind the Christmas tree,  
Erin Adamson- I'd play with my sisters; I'd kidnap them for a  
Swell, and he'd pay me in penny candy,  
But I was just doing my thing- I don't imagine there is anything  
More heinous than the misspelling of my anonymous crimes.  
Conquistadors saluting consumptive mermaids in the sea  
Under the clacking overpass with green copper cannons.  
Tourists in restaurants and hotels like hypnotized chickens-  
Let us sell them things to make up for what we've done,  
And at night, down on the scabrous knee, implore god for his  
Fealty, and his recommendations for how to make up  
For what we've done.

Robert Rorabeck

## Well Accustomed To Alma's Blaze

Waiting until morning for my fair, hoping that  
She keeps her promises  
And is neither fearful of her uncle or the wolf,  
For she has come far across all of Mexico  
And found me here,  
Like a wound waiting to be closed, and she has:  
For the moment,  
Even while all of the dangerous amusements are being  
Taken down:  
Her lips brush across me, and we go to town:  
Like the very wave that forever combs,  
Like a woman who transforms my room into the grotto  
Of a Ferris Wheel;  
And everything that just has to metamorphosis and move  
On,  
Instead waits and looks into the charisma of her eyes;  
Understanding that she can be the hero for all of them,  
They keep their skins  
And thus become well accustomed to Alma's blaze.

Robert Rorabeck

# Well Before She Could Even Say

Days going away, growing up like ladders pressed like  
Clinging girlfriends through a Faberge orchard of fireman lovers;  
And we have so much fun, that the blonds can't help but running  
To us and collecting us from where we've  
Fallen off the stage; and they are the apples of our eye,  
While their father's quit the Navy and disappear into otherworldly  
Families;  
And she shakes her tears in the bedroom, like a sky taking things  
Off:  
She becomes a child of rolling milk, the tears of a silver body  
Raining in the soft basins framed with human bone:  
To make love to such a doll, such a philologist, who cleans up afterwards  
In so many languages;  
And the sun over brand new cadavers; and we hold hands in the valley,  
The good boys in California making good movies;  
And me like a smiling crease in her brightness, finally rewarded for  
Learning all about her and using it to my advantage well before she  
Could even say who I was.

Robert Rorabeck

# Well Of Holes

A sea of trees brimming at the edge:  
A well of holes of words pretending to fill a soul—  
And Jack-O-Lanterns on a porch,  
And pornography across the canal—and many, many  
More things that I can neither tell nor  
Spell,  
But I see someone else's paper airplane up in your  
Tree, as the cicadas are digging their week long lives  
Up into the graveyards of a harmless suburbia—  
As little boys steal fireworks underneath the housewives'  
Untrained eye,  
And doppelganger shadows move from the necks  
Of their mailboxes—  
Sometimes there is someone home,  
And sometimes I have wet dreams of your sister  
Who I never think about anymore.

Robert Rorabeck

# Well Of Moonlight

This moon,  
This moon,  
This moon is not real:  
There is another moon up  
On a hill,  
And my that moonlight  
I draw water from the well.

Now my sister is getting married,  
While I am waiting,  
Waiting,  
Wondering if I should stand sometime  
Beside her stone  
Beneath the well;  
In autumn, or in summer,  
I cannot tell.

My scars are salmon,  
Salmon underneath the stars  
And the pallid aspens, like sisters  
All up and down the hill,  
They stand so very, very still  
Just down the draw  
Where the moon spills its light  
Like water down into the well;

And onto the stone  
Where beneath my sister lies yet married,  
So very, very, very still.

Robert Rorabeck

# Well Suited By The Encroaching Distance

Heavenly clichés,  
Masturbate to your hump  
Until the night is a cured nirvana,  
And I don't care where you are:  
I'm just doing this out of reflex,  
Recognizing the chief convictions of mountain  
Ranges in their great loneliness;  
And high up in the cold there lives  
A celibate god,  
Recording the world, watching out  
For wildfires,  
Burs at his hips, he grows and seems to  
Call me from upstairs,  
Handing out the cads to the middle-class  
Until I remember the golf-date out in the rain,  
And lose my virginity near beside the  
Alligators and their primordial circumstance;  
When it is all over,  
I forget to apologize, and handed over her  
Stuff so she could ride away on her bicycle  
And turn back in to the mysteries of tame households;  
And I could get back by four am,  
To lose myself in a sooty dictionary, like Cinderella  
Looking away into telescopes while  
She got married and metamorphosed into something  
Else, though very similar to a housewife,  
As he worked her through the threshold,  
And I sowed my old friends awake from the dragons  
Fangs, the sea growing in between us like a violent  
Collage until it was useless except to drink,  
For we were both well suited by the encroaching distance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wellington

I fall asleep in the middle of the day,  
Because of the wounds you gave me, the wounds  
Which have come naturally, unattended;  
I give myself newer chances at metamorphosis,  
As if I could awake myself opportunely,  
Become your noontime bachelor, put on toothy grins;  
I lay down across an entire suburbia, melancholic  
And yawning who doesn't remember me,  
Who in kind go out into their romantic yards and fall asleep  
In the landscaping of quarter-acre lots, like  
Toy countries of kind old men:  
I see you swimming around the single cypress in the  
Daubing humidity- Wasps clean your mouth humming,  
And birth their young underneath your bawdy eyes,  
I try to write down what I see, to say mutely  
To nobody, or a stewardess busy on an airplane  
Pretending to show an interest, I try to become beautiful  
For her, and the entire mess that spilled out after graduating,  
Where they fly now from home to home, kissing lips  
I've never heard speak, while my mind wanders the red  
Clay of the baseball diamond behind the high school in  
A merd-brown fog, and girls no longer young think  
They hear the quobbling of basketballs in the picturesque  
Moats of light, romantically, from the fairy-tale  
Courtyards where used to be their game.

Robert Rorabeck



# Well-Sated Menagerie

I take refuge in fathomless scars-  
With my dogs, or alone, I sleep in cars,  
Or bare-naked in the upper Peninsulas of Michigan,  
Or I hide out in the corner of English class  
And wait for the band to march me out to lunch,  
And the courtyard is bricked with red clay and the bones  
Of ancient baseball players. Where I call her from this  
Tomb, she doesn't answer; I drive along her window and  
Watch her open mouthed, sharing her secrets with an  
Innocent boy. There is no joy, but it rains, and the  
Streets are pensive, and well matured; Inside their church,  
The housewives are fully breasted and putting on reckless  
Plays, trying on lingerie. Some times they become so light hearted,  
They float up into the rafters. Their lipstick stains the spotlights,  
And the waves echo repeatedly like guns going off like footsteps  
Running from a suicide down a hallway; but she isn't there  
Anymore, and the center is hollow and put on, the hall is empty and there  
Is no one there to bear my cup, blond-headed, eyes like hungry  
Song-birds. I be a champion alone. I slay a dragon one handed,  
But go without reward. She is in Colorado selling wine, perchance  
By the cleverly laconic bone structure which got her so many boyfriends,  
And eventually a husband who drapes across her warmly when it  
Snows. And the tourists move around her, like socialites in a maze,  
Entranced by her addictive perfections, seeing what I used to see,  
Such a magnificent playground full of clever arcs. Now I cannot speak  
The innocent questions I used to ask telepathically to her like this  
Across the classroom, foraging; but from the drifting continents,  
I try to do the same; she brings the glass to her lips, and drinks  
homeopathically; there is time proceeding in everything, marching like a  
Bollero, like a canal I have dredged up to my doorstep the way a little boy  
Plays in the sand, imploring the waves to turn into faithful pets, in a  
Well-sated menagerie following his footsteps all the way home.

Robert Rorabeck

# Weren'T You Already A Lion Yourself

Zoos and zoos of lions open mouthed  
And remote control boats  
And tiny roads for entire families to circulate,  
And plastic mermaids:  
I once lived here and listened to the hyenas,  
But never got their jokes;  
And she lives further south, doesn't she in her  
New house,  
And broken in husband,  
And everyone has a new house,  
And every yard as at least one windmill that I  
Must battle,  
And I love you,  
But I got the sh%t beaten out of me by a punchy  
Butterfly,  
But I still love you: I would feed you every ounce  
Of my body:  
My teeth would make a good luck charm for  
Your child,  
After she was fat and burping from the wild scuppernongs,  
And don't you understand,  
I am not real,  
And I missed the bus,  
And I am going the other way,  
And the lions are so hungry and yet so sleepy,  
And there are battle boats and bags of peanuts for you  
Or your loved one  
Or the elephants  
And the unicorn,  
And you can go all the way across the canal,  
But I doubt you even live here anymore,  
But if you did it would be so beautiful,  
And we could skip school  
And feed the lions if  
You weren't already a lion yourself,  
Of course.

Robert Rorabeck

## West Again

How does it happen? This swift speculation, come to me.  
Like mercury, I draw you. Is it not in my blood;  
Is the harpsichord not being played down against the river,  
For the new constructions: And my wife? No, don't tell me  
Where she has gone, or where the grounds fold upward wanting  
Storm. Eventually they go so far north they get what they deserve:  
They cannot breathe, and there is the moon she wants; she  
Stands on her tiptoes and offers up a muddled breast. I say,  
I have seen it many times where she hopes to enfold beyond the  
Tattering of this frontier. At her feet there is no longer prairie,  
Nor miner's print, no substance empirical to man: She wishes  
To escape? Hah, for I tell you, my interest, she is a dance-hall girl  
Of the finest sort, and I've swiftly taken her from closer to the  
Pacific, and dropped her many paces east, until it is mostly west again  
where there is yet paint on the buildings;  
And the sawing continues from breakfast to dinner, the hard-heads patter the  
nails by the seconds, with preachers uncorked; And it has confounded her,  
and that is all. She has yet to make money,  
But there will be time, and good earnings, and I expect she will settle  
Still and come back down and do those things finely shown up on  
The stage we build for her, as we expect her to, those things that once  
Settled she knows how to perform, and I have seen her do many  
Times before, over many hills:  
She will perform her stuff: That is why I married her, and because they call her  
Carmine Ridiculous;  
It is rumored she killed her father, and that is her picture on the poster hung  
beside the door: Its ten cents to see her, but if you wait until tomorrow  
I will only charge you five. If you are a good climber,  
I wont have any choice to but let you get a good look at her tonight  
For free. Either way,  
She will make us rich, once she comes down, for everything must settle  
Into its place, even like the gold they are taking out of the riverbed.

Robert Rorabeck

## Wet And Yielding Clay

If my body warms in the scars of my pools,  
It means I am going there-  
Barefoot, without cars:  
Going to the underbellies of my childhood, going to see  
Blonde hair,  
Where I keep my stolen bicycles above the refrigerator,  
Where my mother is young and plays like supple instrument  
Behind the beaded curtains of my father's hands;  
Going to go where I've never yet been up a mountain  
Except for straddled to my father's back:  
Look here, America is younger, and all of my classmates  
And peers are younger and not yet ready to accumulate  
Into a high school which will affect me  
Intrinsically: they have not yet seen the beautiful herons mugging  
Above the sleeping buses that I will see:  
And I will see Sharon putting her hands on the field,  
Her eyes so cruel; and it will yield to her- and I will yield  
Until she peels and zooms away;  
And I am going where I have yet to be Sharon's wet, and yielding  
Clay.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wet Dream Of A Well Crafted Boy

Now through the arrhythmias in the screen doors of  
Common hotels,  
I can hear the traffic dismissingly burning their taillights  
Like the devil's lanterns, like the red tide of her  
Sea life,  
In the wishy-washy gardens of open keyholes where the little  
Fruits slither,  
Where the eyes of man and ambiguous baseball players  
Peep  
When she is raining naked on the handball courts, body raised  
Like a thug peeling into a migration stuck like wet paper  
To the lip of a wet dream of a well crafted boy in  
A private school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wh Auden's Ode To Lord Byron's Ode To Bukowski

Fine liquors are not to be drunk lightly.

They are, in fact, to be drunk day and nightly.

Robert Rorabeck

# What All Of The Kings Have Made Her Do

My mother doesn't play baseball:  
She does the laundry—her eyes follow all of the heavens  
The trails my father left across the  
Rebar and sycophantic toads to go picking with  
The rest of the knights in the orchards,  
Having taken with him the last of our dromedaries,  
But that is not why my mother weeps or doesn't  
Wear any shoes:  
The open extension cord has bitten her naked ankle  
So many times it looks like a birth mark  
And it doesn't care—the heavens send down tiny  
Sparks that pirouette like little Chinese houses  
For new years—and the iguanas roll and splay pot bellied  
In the rock garden, nostrils flaring from  
The perfumes of the night blooming jasmine:  
Why she is desperate next to the blue Cadillac with electric  
Doors is because she is waiting for it to rain  
And for a young boy, maybe her son, to climb down  
From the cross and lay like all of the weeping holidays—  
Giving back to her what the thieves have stolen,  
And what all of the kings have made her do.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Colors Of The Flowers

Fireworks which used to be everywhere in  
My soul, sold out—  
Burning into whatever color it was meant to be  
Used to deceive the sky—  
What colors of the flowers which were  
Meant to be underneath of her,  
I don't know—  
The pathways of delusions confuse the knights  
Underneath the windowsills of  
The windmills—  
Until it feels all right, that she ever had to breathe,  
That we collected ourselves and found  
Out that we were alright even  
Though we both lived in very different  
Cities—  
And the schoolyards confounded us—  
And yet they grew wide in their illusions,  
And in the middle of the imaginary days, the rabbits  
Grew to the proportions of rhinoceroses  
And disparaged into and outside of  
Holes, spilling candies, ripping clothes—  
And remembering that it was still alright to  
Hold out and breathe, as  
The graveyards waited and the heavens sneezed.

Robert Rorabeck



# What Do I Have Left To Prove

All my muses cut from high school,  
And now my body lags from the breathless  
Irrigation cured from  
The sandbags of the flooded rivers;  
Or whatever they have been doing; these rivers  
Like candles on your birthday floating into your  
Lips as you inhale;  
And it is a very sad thing, like being a city in the  
Middle of this country:  
You get wonderful thunderstorms and ancient cartoons,  
But you really cant feel a thing,  
How these oceans are pushing you with your turmoil;  
And I guess you've never had to find out,  
Or fill the concentrically fluming of the parades I  
Keep for you,  
As if flames lit for the fuses of your high mass;  
If you'd actually wanted a lover, then we'd both have the  
Very same children  
Fast asleep under the over pass;  
But you don't actually love those things you can use;  
And yet you still are my awful, awful, venal muse; so what  
Do I have left to prove.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Else Can You Expect Of Me

The day is over and Alma is lost to me again;  
It rained today- I thought of killing myself,  
Because my house has termites, but even without a  
House I could vagabond,  
Underneath the turtledoves resting in the armpits  
Of the sweet statuaries;  
But rather I wanted to kill myself because Alma said  
That she couldn't love me  
While I looked over at her baseball brown skin in her  
Car,  
And I touched her the way a feather touches its wing,  
And the cat had seven kittens under the brown-  
Red fuselage of the trailer  
While you were away in Ocala, Alma- and I thought  
I would kill myself because I asked you if  
You loved him, and you said why did I think you were  
With him,  
And that you could not love me, or leave your family;  
But instead I am drinking Alma, after the rains have left  
The sky and she has nothing to do:  
It is just the same as me, Alma- alone as a shell flipped over  
Beside the intercourses of the road- I am drinking,  
Drinking, because what else can you expect of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Else I Have To Say

Collecting yourself to the shadows of was—  
Now I sing songs and dance for just because—  
While my pregnant wife sleeps in an  
Empty doll house lost at sea—  
I dream of you while you dream of me,  
And the shadows grow across the continents  
That spill over the prairies and down the hills:  
Jack and Jill making their make believe love,  
Playing doctor and drinking  
Orange juice in the shade—  
Soon they will be returning home by going  
The other way—  
As the light vanishes over the homesteads  
Beside where the arrowheads are buried—  
I haven't forgotten you,  
But now I am married—  
As my father sells Christmas trees across the  
Growing sand—  
And the Christians pray to a religion they cannot  
Understand—  
Made up to remember the loves our unconsciousness  
Held so dear—  
The bottle rockets shoot across the final year:  
The astronauts return home,  
This is their space—  
If they didn't truly love you,  
At least they won the race—  
As Disney World fell into the light of the stars—  
And you lost your consciousness singing at bars—  
The remedy was a cold acumen  
They kept using to buy new customers—  
As she took off her clothes, her jewelry, and her negligee—  
And reclined for nobody,  
Because across her bedroom the space was infinite—  
She lost herself and she was negligent  
But beautiful in a most uncertain way—  
Maybe I am done singing—at least  
I do not know what else I have left to say.



# What Escapes The Land Of Silence And Darkness

No one answers these pitiful queries:  
In time I will shed and not re-grow;  
The yard stumbles lost in the season,  
A paramour for grandmothers,  
I bleed ketchup and stolen dimes.  
The dog farts smelling like tiny repetitions  
Or seizures in the earth;  
It rains the paper snowflakes which I've  
Cut, and I'm doing no good-  
When you get dumb and you've never  
Been a soldier, what an allusive trick, and  
Your only tattoo is hidden,  
And you haven't done any time-  
Some old English teacher has accused you of  
Plagiarism and called you out behind the portable  
Which was erected because of the student overflow.  
Why, then just look at her and smile,  
And say to her, here I am some twelve years later,  
As fresh as a spring chicken and churning my butter;  
And it may be true that no one gives damned,  
And in the morning the rides will be closed anyways,  
But the virgin will still be impregnated- then show  
Her how many things can grow in the water stained  
Livelihood of vacillating tide;  
And explain to her that life sometimes mussels under  
The underbellies of commercial airplanes, like  
Skipping stones or snowballs;  
And you have been to the summit of so many things,  
Though little published, it should not matter what  
Escapes the land of silence and darkness.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Happens

This is what happens walking towards the ends  
Of those lost paths:  
This is in the strange shadows of sharks and the other  
Aquatic wildlife  
Of the strange shadows of  
The displays of again another high school  
According to its elements:  
This is what happens when you get off track—  
And drink too much,  
And cannot come home,  
But look beautiful with a husband you love  
Who is too big for you—  
And when you never think of cemeteries  
In those coldest of shelves of whatever their estuaries—  
And, Oh my god,  
I do not have any muses left—  
As my first born son changes to his mothers  
Last and second breasts—this is how it happens—  
This is how it happens, after the sun has already gone down,  
And the horny toads have already left town—  
This is how it happens with the sun luxuriating into  
The decrepit parapets—  
Sunlight and moonbeams and anywhere but so far away  
From here—

Robert Rorabeck

# What Her First Daughter's First Word Must Be

Listening to the bodies partying in the rain  
Like the red shoots in the armpits of cypress, there is a  
Good chance that I will begin making love again  
Just as steadily as two wayward cats in a rainstorm;  
And I love thinking like this, my head as numbed as a goldfish  
Crossing county lines in a plastic bag,  
Homeless from a state fair that has packed its bags and it  
Too is moving away;  
And here out on the shell rock avenues, I imagine I can perk  
My ears and hear her breathing:  
She seems like she is coming from a broadcast in Colorado,  
And I crane my neck and flutter my lucky gills just to  
Catch a glimpse of her,  
But I am no more lucky than a penny of a wish tossed into  
A drinking fountain on a lunch break, while she is swimming further  
And further up her sweet accoutrements,  
Forgetting all of the superfluous wishes of her youth, and now  
Only dreaming about what her first daughter's first word must be.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Already Told You

Under the influences of my class,  
I am getting sedentary;  
I don't go out and shop for shells,  
I don't wear my jean-jacket,  
Or walk my dog beside the red diamond  
Underneath the sweaty palmettos-  
I no longer jog brown-eyed after  
Midnight to catch glimpses of sweet little  
Girls unhinging of their dresses from  
The blown-glass boudoirs;  
And my memory is fading-  
I am no longer the captain of this ship,  
My body doing things without me I can't remember,  
Kissing only the cadences of early morning or  
Evening insects who think they are musicians,  
Never going near the hideouts or grottos of  
Old lovers newly christened with the names of  
Men who remind them of their fathers;  
But while I am still somehow in control of  
The least of my faculties,  
Though torn out and burned and wandering the  
Yard downward like a fading paper airplane,  
Remembering his college years,  
The liberal arts football teams who could never score  
A goal,  
Getting drunk and bowling instead of teaching the  
Classes he couldn't afford to school anyways,  
I should say that I love you,  
And given pause, I should say again I love you,  
And I am not Herman Melville,  
And I am not Ernest Hemmingway,  
Nor Mark Twain,  
Nor Steinbeck,  
But I've ridden my bicycle through your neighborhood  
Even while the curtains were closing,  
The working middle-class returning to get drunk  
And eventually sleep,  
And if I cannot remember who I am,  
At least I am able to recall what I already told you.



Robert Rorabeck

# What I Am Looking For

The day has no attention, nor attributes anything to

It:

The housewives thought that I should begin the day each morning

Starting out filing in the crenellated shadows

Of the sea creatures and mammals

Lost but still hunting beneath my eyes: I think that they

Must be starving in the dimples of sweet young glaciers,

Stacked so high upon themselves, it would be dangerous

To really find them;

And they don't seem to want to behave;

And I wish I knew better words for them, this fetishism of

My desire they never address in church;

And they have taken down all the spectacular swings to keep

Them out of reach-

There are only black cats in the graveyard, strutting like innocent

Panthers. Maybe that is what they think they are.

Maybe that is what I am looking for.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Could Feel

Words of clues to find beauty,  
And grandmother,  
So that I become shot full of false arrows.  
I bleed ketchup from my armpits  
In the cactus and the paper  
Snow,  
Which is why no one cares,  
One car goes by.  
My sisters look at me, and the lizards.  
My parents make love upstairs,  
But I never counted the steps up into  
Them in the green carpet like  
A forest where I have sometimes hidden  
Crumb cake and taken  
Lukewarm pisses when I felt the urge;  
And airplanes shot down from there,  
Down from the Aristotelian spheres of  
The ceiling fans,  
And looking back at it all I might think  
That I was beautiful in my  
Little theatre,  
Except that you were never there to see me,  
You better airplanes touching down in the  
Muck bottom fields across the canal.  
And who were you kissing in the sunken  
Shadows of baseball fields,  
What witchcraft were you bending like a golden  
Bough,  
With your tongue a simple minded flagella  
Just feeling up what it could feel.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Had Left To Sell

I do not deserve to live here,  
Happening like the mishap of Conquistadors  
Through the despotic dunes,  
Sweating it out inches from the pornographies  
Of the blue saber tooth,  
Each of their fat bellies swinging impotent,  
Pruning swords,  
So chock full of long shafted arrows that they  
Will soon be shiskabobs;  
And there will be hurricanes and taboo,  
And Narvaez will eat all of his horses somewhere  
Off the Gulf all the way west  
Of Tallahassee,  
And the rest of them will only survive through good  
Wholesome cannibalism,  
Which will bring us straight up to the new and  
Holy Séances of your eyes:  
I worked and strutted Christmas trees all day long,  
And then a drank a beer and tried to write this  
Think,  
While you just sold me milk and pastries and  
Then drove away,  
Like Erin did so many years ago after she had eaten  
All of my flowers:  
She went straight back in, legs and all into her shell  
Hole,  
Saying as she did so and all the way,  
That she loved me, that she loved me,  
And that she would be around later and maybe buy  
What I had left to sell.... Maybe.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Had To Say

After lunch, I crawled underneath the  
School bus and cried into an oil slick,  
That I was not an author, and that I had been  
Accused unfairly of plagiarism.  
Out behind the portables which schooled the  
Overflow, the old spinster of a withered bard,  
Scolded me by the wrist, even though I  
Told her with my dower eyes that I might explain;  
That there certainly was a passage by Don Quixote  
I had misquoted, but might find again.  
Towering over us, the windmills swam with arms of  
Propeller blades, and I sweated as she let me go,  
Like a fish, and afterwards, then, I took to the  
Hallways, hoping to be persuaded anew by the auburn  
Goddess, but when I saw her there, taken breathless,  
She only passed me by; and after all these years I  
Have not forgotten how she passed me by, or her eyes  
Sensed her body through the motes beyond younger men:  
And so, inexcusably, I tend to the weeds, and turquoise  
Dragonflies nipping at buds, the tenderloin-infant stings.  
Like a page turned in an overdue book, I pretend to  
Brush her thigh, and these are the things I say,  
Which I have not stolen, but borrowed the recipes of,  
And the spinster in her grammary dusk continues to  
Parcel on the parts of speech, in such a gloomy way that  
The country all recedes around her, as she never heard at all  
What I had to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Have Left To Say

Collecting yourself to the shadows of was—  
Now I sing songs and dance for just because—  
While my pregnant wife sleeps in an  
Empty doll house lost at sea—  
I dream of you while you dream of me,  
And the shadows grow across the continents  
That spill over the prairies and down the hills:  
Jack and Jill making their make believe love,  
Playing doctor and drinking  
Orange juice in the shade—  
Soon they will be returning home by going  
The other way—  
As the light vanished over the homesteads  
Beside where the arrowheads are buried—  
I haven't forgotten you,  
But now I am married—  
As my father sells Christmas trees across the  
Growing sand—  
And the Christians pray to a religion they cannot  
Understand—  
Made up to remember the loves our unconsciousness  
Held so dear—  
The bottle rockets shoot across the final year:  
The astronauts return home,  
This is their space—  
If they didn't truly love you,  
At least they won the race—  
As Disney World fell into the light of the stars—  
And you lost your consciousness singing at bars—  
The remedy was a cold acumen  
They kept using to buy new customers—  
As she took off her clothes, her jewelry, and her negligee—  
And reclined for nobody,  
Because across her bedroom the space was infinite—  
She lost herself and she was negligent  
But beautiful in a most uncertain way—  
Maybe I am done singing—at least  
I do not know what I have left to say.



# What I Mean

All my life in Hell  
With a wife I've never  
Had,  
Rolling boulders  
Trying to create children out  
Of clown fish:  
When will I ever wake up,  
When will I ever stop being  
Raymond Carver.  
Not tonight.  
Tonight I still live  
In the same sports  
Utility vehicle,  
Like a salty dog,  
Like a sardine.  
My father is a werewolf,  
My mother is  
A mermaid,  
And you are my  
Muse  
And at least I love you,  
Or at least you  
Know what I mean.

Robert Rorabeck



# What I Mean To Say

If you want to find me,  
I'll soon be selling fireworks under  
The desert sun,  
Even if I am dying, out of water,  
The truest of conquistadors,  
Coughing up a lung, or with the swine flue-  
Unmasked, an immodest superhero-  
I'll soon have a little house,  
Occupied by a little spouse,  
And little children like fairy-tales in the garden-  
A car that halfway runs,  
A halfway job in the middle of nowhere:  
It is a fine story book,  
And yet so far away from the stewardesses,  
The shopping malls, and the better truth of the  
Amusement parks which carry the stamp of  
Your beauty and youth;  
But it is better to dream for a little while,  
To go out and work and sell what things you  
Have to sell,  
To survive by not stealing horses or hanging  
Yourself,  
By masturbating extemporaneously in the restroom  
Stalls of wayside markets  
And anything at all- unkempt, with distemper,  
Or without reason- an experiment towards a new class,  
A space shuttle for tourists,  
A diminutive font, a little prison, dancing on the head  
Of an angelic pin or the fountain of her areola-ed  
Nipple-  
Just to be alive for this next line,  
Naked and beautiful, leaping well-tongued:  
This is what I'll do to try out how to distill  
My American liquor to pour full mouthed into the next  
Way station or grotto, the cavernaserai of our youth  
Yet unimpeded by the day laborer's pluck from  
Atop the ladder,  
The steady, uncaring traffic of the interstate going by  
Serenaded by the ululations of commercial reptiles:

Or it never ends, the epitaphs of comely conquistadors  
In polished stone,  
Cupid's arrow through the pullulating hearts,  
Their armor well polished like serenading crustaceans;  
Or, if I'm drunk, at least you get what I mean.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Meant By Being Sincere

Let me nuzzle up to your gorgeous golf  
Courses,  
To the bows in your swayed esplanade:  
Let me ruin endings and  
Airplanes for you:  
Let me talk straight out; Oh, gosh, I'd like  
To say your name,  
But who are you listening to now,  
The baby tugging your long list of satin  
Accomplishments;  
I'll just sit here and refrain as one of your hounds.  
You help me put down the gun:  
And I can pretend for you to be on a ride in the sea,  
Each of your sisters nibbling our gunny sides,  
My toned biceps scrimshawed with chorus  
Lines from Tex-Arkana; say that you remember me  
Now, some gumshoe out lost around the  
Terrible borders of high-school,  
And I'll gallop you all the faster to the dinner of  
Scallops and sweet disaster,  
But you must tell me first what it is you really want.  
You are so gallant, yourself: I think you must have  
Chosen your husband with much discretion,  
And so you care so very little for this flagrant bouquet of  
Passion;  
But I won't yet be shut: but stamp my fingers softly in  
Your pink hutches, and use my tongue to get you along  
As a crutch: and I'll sail gingerly along the whimsy  
Of my hunches,  
And bring such pestilent rich flowers to your dimmed window  
After brunch, that you will be so well and flustered,  
That maybe you'll let me in and on the sheets of rippled  
Plate tectonics, back my front up to your haunches,  
And whisper your name,  
And curl a lock of dampening hair around your ear,  
Hoping that by some apple-orchard or at least dinner,  
You will remember what  
I meant by being sincere.



# What I Might

Realizing that I am something else past its  
Prime,  
While you have been enjoying him for time in  
Memorial;  
I get all religious and go into a nose dive,  
My pintails fluttering:  
I become the midday catastrophe advertised over  
Your eyes,  
Abounding the slopes underneath the doomful  
Mountain,  
You look up with the other tourists and agape with  
Wonder;  
And it is something to look out for while it is  
Happening,  
While there is like a brilliant bullet hole through  
The chest of skyway,  
Creating an easily discernable mote where angels  
Shout the reckonings of the depths to their  
Stalwart captain;  
And I am glad that I could be this for them,  
Like a bottle rocket shot down past the blue gills in  
The canal,  
Like a truant falling from his afternoon tree,  
Like a catch of twigs breaking against the river that  
Is tickling your ribs  
Making you think to look up and speculate on  
What I might momentarily be.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Suppose Doesn'T Have To Be Real

Monday before work, and I'm trying to get out  
Again to steal some bases:  
I think of girls, and mostly I have longings to write  
Them better eulogies:  
Maybe I have a longing too to kidnap them above  
The clouds,  
In the breathless spaces where the sororities  
Of their cousins move so finely to make most mammals  
Feel broken down.  
What eerie baptisms to be made of clouds and thoughts,  
Bones no more, no more grease or tears,  
Uncorked hinges that effervesce and make years of  
Lost girlfriends meaningless,  
The solar shade wimpling through us like cheery flags,  
Like those feral pets leaping toward a master's smell,  
In another revelry of an esplanade above our walls,  
Diademing what I suppose doesn't have to be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# What I Wish To Say To Her

Any word can be picked,  
If she carries the needed sound, said  
With the intonations lilting like a great midway  
Of a world's fair:  
For one, her hair is streaming deep out in the  
Flaxen field,  
And I know her eyes are casting far across the  
Furrowed earth, so wizened and unyielding:  
Yet the clouds are there curtailing to the wind their  
Forgetful sorrows- They will decide when to  
Weep, but for now they are congregating high up  
In the hall, and I am in the cemetery trying  
To learn to spell:  
The grass here is greener than anywhere, and  
Though the willows weep, I know their roots go  
Very deep, and touch the cheeks of young men no  
Longer here,  
And when the centipede comes crawling red and cheeky  
Over the basilisk-like masonry, I think of her  
Far across her field; with feckless tools I wish to  
Earn her gaze, to draw her element into arcing play,  
But she is not there- She is not real,  
Though the insects rise up with the unmoved rain,  
Like indecisive cannibals off to meandering war:  
I'll see her somewhere unexpectedly driving along  
My border,  
But when she comes she will be moving so assuredly,  
As if a front before more sang-froid weather  
That I will bight my tongue as she carries across  
The sculpture of her body and then gone again,  
Like an apparition on an early lake, but, truly,  
What more could I have said to her?

Robert Rorabeck

# What Is Made

I am a quiet man: These are what I do,  
What I say:  
The clouds lay across the land.  
You drive inside the cars: and I wonder what is  
Inside you, like what is inside cars:  
The dogs are on the patio, any dogs with blue eyes.  
The flies are laying low with the blue eyed butterflies.  
The carport is a grotto, is a land for saturnine  
Tigers;  
Your hair is flaxen, yes it glows: one of the lower deities  
Always on her toes:  
The goldfish blows in the living room. The curtains  
Flutter.  
Alone in the houses of your sisters. Where, oh where is  
Your mother:  
Everything broken down in a school yard, in a ghost yard  
Of chalk games, of outlines of how I laid out for you.  
Now who am I to blame? I am just a quiet man  
Biding my time while the wolves are in the glades:  
They always seem to be grinning amidst the stock of easy  
Days,  
Leaping inside the beds of your dusky trucks,  
Making you say their name: I am just a quiet man, while  
They always seem to have what is made.

Robert Rorabeck



# What Is There But A Greater Morality

Rhododendrons, rhododendrons  
In the wheel well of her eyes,  
And little garden snakes slightly sleeping- And theme parks  
Overcrowded on midsummer Sundays,  
But shut down from the rain:  
Where I stand shivering with my middle-class  
Family, the wife with the temporary newborn  
Slipped down to her awesome hip,  
The drool and encrusted sour milks.

Still I think I can see her like a glimmer from the east  
Over the cobalt blue castles of stucco and chicken wire,  
Just on the other side of the failing fireworks,  
Over the backyard habitats of crinoline swimming pools,  
Like memos scrunched up and set afire when there is sunlight  
And beer:

Something bottle green and coming down to the sea,  
Where things in love lose their otherwise permanent expressions,  
Where there are no librarians,  
But the dalliances of shooting stars and leaping airplanes.  
She is there; where there are no gates in the waves,  
No fees, nor the common definitions given between  
Two sexes queuing for the obtainment of the usual fair:  
Embedded far to the east  
Like a fairytale for feral boys and flight attendants,  
What is there but a greater morality.

Robert Rorabeck

## What It Is

And my heart like a lavish dinner laid bare alongside the mollusks  
In the hyperventilating shore;  
And it was as if, sitting down, we both shared a heart  
And ate popcorn while looking at the most pitiful of animals in the  
Zoo,  
Never minding what the clouds were doing; we were along with  
The housewives and their steady stock:  
We were underneath the regular gazebo of airplanes, and there  
Wasn't any use to looking up:  
You wouldn't allow me to ride the merry go round with you,  
Alma,  
Because it must have reminded you of the hapless freedom which  
You had when you was single,  
But we both got to look at the panther together, which you said  
Was your most favorite of those animals;  
And we kissed and held each other in so many kinds of ways  
Like animals being tamed ourselves,  
While the whitish housewives were looking on, but I swore I  
Never saw them  
Because the only thing that I truly remember is kissing your mouth  
In that little aquatic hut which held the albino crocodile.  
It was the only creature in the world who saw us doing this,  
And I am sure he still remembers: perhaps it is all he thinks about  
These months and some months later while I am in my own  
House, and under its old roof as it is raining,  
And raining: thinking and thinking of what it is that you must  
Be thinking.

Robert Rorabeck

# What It Is That You Really Have To Say

Abbreviated by a dandelion

And made to laugh at yourself- forgetting where

You misplaced your liquors or how

Far you really ran from the wolf you

Really wanted-

And at night like a goldfish won at the fair,

Sleeping with your husband who really isn't there:

Or getting nose bleeds up on the Ferris

Wheel,

Even after it has packed up and moved away-

Now how is that that can really happen,

And what is it that you really have to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# What It Is They Truly Want

Her hair wakes up in the second grade and  
Burns golden.  
Until all of the story books are closed and it is time  
For napping  
And the trials of the thieves and bed wettings:  
It is at this time that the overeager buses look in through  
The monopolies of windows,  
Spying on their beautiful charges: how like the pilgrims;  
Some boys nuzzle up to girls,  
Breathing heavy over their shoulders,  
Like anchors of party favors trying to drag down wishes,  
Like cats looking into the gilded cages of  
Inviolable song birds; yes, realizing what it is they  
Truly want.

Robert Rorabeck

# What It Means To Me To Be In Heaven

I have been to the mailboxes which have had their  
Seasons:  
I have bought tickets to see the opened breasts of witches,  
And now I have my own house  
And it is really beautiful:  
It is the fieldtrip of a dream you have traveled too far away  
From to enter,  
And the brick layers lay down,  
And the clouds grow fat and equally embarrassed,  
But the cars don't slow down:  
And all of the things I have to say, unequivocally,  
I have said:  
And the cat has had her kittens, and the rattlesnake her milk  
Bottles of venom;  
And even right now the professionals are touching down,  
And all I have to say for myself is that I am glad that it is not  
My job when it comes to bury them:  
But it is my job to steal fireworks and light them off  
While looking Alma in the eyes under or atop of her favorite  
Color,  
And telling her that this is what it means to me to be in heaven.

Robert Rorabeck

## What It Seems To You

Morning trills sound beautiful to the untrained ear:  
But maybe there are more than blue eyes opening to this  
Sound everywhere in the trailer parks  
Of the open country:  
Girls who have fallen asleep halfway to the door,  
Feet entwined with thistles and those corpulent rattlesnakes,  
They finally get up off their laurels  
And go inside to fix themselves while their delicate  
Little ears are ringing from all of these musicals,  
If that is what it seems to you.

Robert Rorabeck

# What It Was

Fire spume  
Across the monuments: and I suppose I am not  
Alone,  
While the bulls fight and the rockets take off:  
And your son smiled today at me,  
Muse, without discovering who  
I was: while I drove by him, and then I continued  
Away- while the sky struck up  
And floundered underneath the airplanes  
Like dancers with nosebleeds  
Trying to figure out what it was  
That they hadn't seen in the mobile hanging  
Over the crib of the day:  
But their neighborhoods were finally collected  
In a book that was passed around the cathedrals and  
Lavished and baptized- and it was a long way  
That it traveled while the dragons bathed  
Through unimaginable waves  
Until was finally discovered just how exactly it  
Was that they had stolen what it was  
That they had meant to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# What It Was They Imagined

Words in the graveyards of little pets:  
Thoughts of paper thin things that hardly were ever  
Awakened enough to breathe,  
Like a family of membranous voodoo cast in a game of  
Bones,  
And eerily displayed through the broken reflections of  
An industrial swimming pool  
At a water park of geeks, or in an sluttish aquarium  
Where they let the dolphins fornicate  
For the commercials of our sweet Disney Worlds;  
As the sun receded into commas where it no longer realizes  
How attached it is to this  
World, and the Mexicans fall asleep straight under the  
Orchards  
Where the busses wait for them until morning like good  
Lovers, their engines idling,  
Making oily breaststrokes, and ever one of them remembering  
How the truants once slept under their motor boxes,  
And cursed the scarred hopes of  
Their high school's infatuated love: before they were stolen  
Away;  
And like simulacrum who can only imagine one or two  
Things,  
Are wondering still, while the terrapin steal from the courtyard,  
And go out to fornicate under the saucy eaves  
Of saltwater embankments, stolen by egrets or left by  
Morning before they realize the tarry payoffs  
Of what it was they imagined they had to sell.

Robert Rorabeck



# What Kind Of Angels There Are

I am right here again- and here is where  
I've been found out:  
Underneath the practices of tunnels- as if  
For a little while in another  
World holding together its statuary without  
Anymore of its candles:  
Trying to find for awhile and burn for itself:  
Otherwise, it has been  
Dancing,  
And trying to find itself own way through  
The busied  
Architectures: as, at last, it seems to come  
Out loud and once again  
Into the holidays that only my one true muse  
Can know-  
While, otherwise, it has been to busy trying  
To find out once again for itself-  
What- exactly what kind of angels there are  
In the skies- and, just as likely,  
I'm afraid,  
What kind of resolution can there possibly  
Be to this.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Kind Of Creature I Might Be

She laid on her back and I touched her shoulders,  
Like two rivers bowed in the rocks;  
And we had been going somewhere-  
I made love to her for several seconds and found out  
That was enough,  
Caressing her for the rest of our hour together,  
She told me that she was from Seville but grew up in  
New York:  
She had the tattoo of the man who'd turned her out on the  
Nape of her neck.  
She told me she fell asleep every night to the disaster  
Movie where the buildings are always falling;  
And I didn't know what to do with her:  
That her eyes were blue, but even they weren't their real color.  
Her earrings were even like gang symbols,  
And we were lost in the dark night of our love,  
And when our hands slipped through the door it was a very  
Real possibility that other men would be coming in.  
I found out it was comforting that she should never have to  
Be alone,  
That she had given her grapes to me with little protest;  
And that I could pleasure her without her wondering  
What kind of creature I might be.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Lavender Is Left

I want to buy a produce market for her shadows,  
And leave myself alone for awhile in its kale of make believe;  
I want to surrender to the shallows, and bouquets of  
Rich laments spent away,  
Dashed to the fences where the broken legged horses are  
All given up like an evening of wishes,  
Even bled from the supermarkets and Spanish cantinas,  
Like whores fed up of love, like pennies spent of presidents-  
And what an easy life,  
Folding down the corners to this concrete prairie, running off  
Into a the statuary of basilisks where all of the used up  
Grandmothers are buried  
Spent off their days of care giving and kindergarten,  
Moving only to take things apart- what lavender is left has fallen  
From their berries,  
And our worlds are rendered apart.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Little I Have Made

Put my rope up into the air  
Where your sweet trees are missing;  
It will stand and I will go up and  
Disappear,  
The busses turning around beneath me  
In sweet circles,  
Caracoling like timid fingers around  
The doorbells,  
And the locks of her hair.  
When she laid down in bed like a serene  
Octopus,  
I thought I would be her mystic,  
But I am not even a writer:  
The words on stage doing battle in plywood  
Weathers:  
I wish all of the green world would push  
It down,  
And the vermilion cracks to open all around,  
The tennis courts of sea,  
Because this is all I have repeating in me,  
Anonymous bicycles through  
The uneasy glades; and I am weeping  
Like the green enamel of  
Envious butterflies, so easily destroying  
What little I have made.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Makes The Stars

Where will your children sleep—the car going down the  
Road,  
The music making its hum—the day entirely lost—  
Strange visions in your head as your take  
Your young family into  
The south—  
Their hearts beating around you—fearful of witches  
And the illusions in the sky—  
As the knights you never see drip with sweat which  
Feeds the amphibians and the only airplanes burn  
In the sky—their fires are what makes the stars,  
But they are nothing to make wishes upon.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Might Be Its Worth

And it goes away, as paper snowflakes melt for my  
Grandmother,  
As the warmest of fires melt in my stomach-  
By morning I will have more scars,  
Fabulous and collecting like gold in a forsaken bank-  
And otherwise, the flowers will turn towards the sun,  
And the traffic will return home,  
Fleeing in their numbers, the homeless men staying out  
Underneath the moon, fleeing themselves,  
The alligators smiling as bright as death, mindless,  
And absolutely lucky, not even having to think that this  
Is their place- the traffic scratching a pitiful fire  
On concrete, burying the cenotaphs of  
Mindless playboys as deep as a fingernail-  
The queen of ants waiting in her foot deep abode,  
The knight of her paradise coming into her  
To re-appropriate the population after Christmas,  
The dead buried five feet beneath her,  
Curling their toes-  
Their hair the garland for super-heroes, as Saturn revolves alongside  
The earth, and birds take their baths beneath the trees,  
The sun settling against the crowns of houses, counting its change,  
Figuring to itself what might be its worth.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Must Be Real

Oh,  
God of cancer, god of spikenard,  
Don't you remember me and all of my drugs? Yes,  
Your remember me and me in my speakeasy tumult with all of  
My thugs, getting dizzy  
Getting pretty while the mountains snugged:  
While the mountains hugged like long lost sisters and then they  
Jugged:  
Yes, you know, bar-muse, just how exactly that they have jugged,  
And the night is pretty; and the night is dizzy;  
And maybe the night is even Spanish for rainbow all alongside  
The river walks and all of those defeated forts  
Now abandoned except for all of those yard lights and all of those  
Football games: getting things done,  
And turning things out: and now look at all of her beautiful children  
Spume-ing like exceptional windfalls,  
While the airplanes drool downwind turning, and turning,  
Trying again to get a scent of what is real, what must be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Must Bloom On A Cadaver

What strange hope this fettering tool  
Which gives me to breathe each morning and at  
Dusk,  
And puts this elongated mammal into its familiar  
Occupancies, sets me out like a string of pearls  
Tossed in the underhoof sundown;  
What I might call form, the reckless spume scattered  
Around the ankles of a morgue-ish orchard-  
These lines I cut less expensive than a thief,  
To make what estuary you might find at a fieldtrip of  
Kindergarten, the shoals for Easter eggs and Spanish  
Muses with an entire nursery lining up for refreshment  
From your sore and bleeding venders:  
I would give this to you in a gunpowder bouquet,  
I would orchestrate my pastimes for you into a routine  
You could feel, that would blend us into a second class  
Immortality of policemen and bar maids,  
If you only turned once again from looking at your marriage  
Tomb, and see that I have flooded the spaces unrecognized  
By your senses with the beasts I have torn right out of  
My self and captured, and made into a three ring mythology  
For you, something once thought feral by now  
Hypnotized and wishing to swing before you underneath  
The penumbra of the moons tent, wouldn't you realize  
How long and horribly I have thought of you; and how  
Even if you fell in love with me, how inexorable all my  
Spent fluids and ink are- See how I have made myself into  
An utter failure alone and roomy- Press your erogenous  
Vitalities to my fading dimples, and find out what must bloom  
On a cadaver.

Robert Rorabeck



# What She Might Say

Insouciant feelings for me,  
Like she doesn't know what to eat:  
She might love me for an hour,  
She might love me for a week,

But she always comes back to him,  
Like a philanthropic uncle patronizing her  
Disabilities,  
If her leg bleeds in its stigmata of cicadas  
And mantis,  
He will put the lucky balm on it,  
He will,  
He will,  
And she will say his name like a monosyllabic  
Prayer,  
And she will heal:

I think about her by the hours spinning in  
My bed. The earth pirouettes on her axis, like  
A morbidly obese savant of space,  
And she whispers throughout the shades of light  
Flickering like a dragonfly's static prance  
Before my eyes- Like water rippling from a  
Faucet where her lips overflow,  
And places the cleaned dishes on the sunlit windowsill:

Out in the yard, the leaves are  
Curling in dusk,  
And the bicycles lie like unearthed fossils and rusting,  
And sometimes for an hour or so,  
She sits on the innocuous porch of cinder blocks,  
And lets her fingers drag the cigarette to her claret lips;  
Sometimes like these, while the earth dances,  
And her diffuse eyes wander away,  
She gets lost in her thoughts of who I might be,  
And if she saw me tomorrow, what she might say....

Robert Rorabeck

# What She Said

Drinking out the side of my mouth,  
And looking the other way into the mirror,  
I try to forget your smile,  
Or how you gave your man my poems,  
So I learned to never trust a girl  
With eyes as lovely and wooded as her  
Hair;  
And when she says she loves you she  
Keeps her hair long,  
And in the same free flowing manner that  
Whipped like a wind vane after she leapt all those  
Hurdles like ditches,  
Like canals way back in high school,  
How she time traveled over those things;  
But, if you saw her,  
You would see she has cut it, or permed it,  
Or worse,  
And she hasn't loved you for ever so long,  
And she has made love to men in strange pools,  
Both of which you will never see,  
And you will never smell her again,  
At least the way that she seemed to smell across  
The halls of high school,  
Something so young and so sweet and so  
Surreal,  
And yet you believed what she said.

Robert Rorabeck

# What She Will Do Tomorrow

I have another word that slips into the covers  
Of the fire,  
While my glass melts- becomes butterflies, if it  
Wants to:  
And it was supposed to rain, but it didn't,  
So my muse came over and made love to me.  
Then I took her to the store and bought a present for  
Her daughter's birthday,  
Until her husband called and stole her away,  
Leaving me alone to wonder what she will do tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# What The Wind Had Done

The windmills were laughing beside  
The ripe old sun.  
The windmills were laughing at what  
The wind had done.

Robert Rorabeck

# What There Is To Buy

The pleasing flesh opening  
Like flowers exposed to the school buses-  
On a palate of pure white  
Marble,  
As if on the steps to a museum we took a  
Fieldtrip to in kindergarten,  
And then just the sunlight kissing through the  
Effluvious wings of  
A dragonfly- until the invisible architect  
Returns to the store,  
And the ladies dance around them, kissing,  
Bemused, their lips turning the color  
Of lilacs or for-get-me-knots  
Too busy to breathe, wondering what there is to buy.

Robert Rorabeck

# What They Are Doing

Scars of Colorado- fabulously indistinguishable mothers  
On their second child,  
Lactating ice-cream for tourists, while all of this flat lining  
Traffic dreams,  
And the rabbits hide in the brush- hearts as fabulous as  
Runaway rubies,  
Pounding, pounding: making sounds into the grass,  
Drumming for the mounts of ants and other things with so  
Many legs that they move without even knowing what  
They are doing.

Robert Rorabeck

# What They Are Worth

I told her that if she was my girl,  
I'd give her all of the money that we need:  
She laughed at me and spit in my face,  
While the tide receded:  
The airplanes took to the sky too, jingling their  
Drinks,  
And counting sideways the greened corks over the earth,  
Dastardly and menacing for the neophyte superheroes  
Crammed into the out of work phone booths:  
And who knows if they would ever know just  
Exactly what they are worth.

Robert Rorabeck

# What They Have Become

Woebegone, the headless knight flies over his battle:  
Like brown stems, he will grow anew:  
Dictations of my thoughts for him,  
Waving at the panhandle- conquistadors eating their  
Own horses  
And building rafts underneath the thoughtless processions  
Of dead windmills-  
Sand dunes in her armpits, and panthers in her tongue-  
Her eyes look up so brown and long  
At this- Siamese tigers leaping through duality of burning forest:  
And this is what they have become.  
The children play with rattlesnakes- and candles fill up  
Their boats,  
Rain washes through the empty gullies of forests-  
Shed antlers collect like horned drift wood- and the naked kings  
Bow and kiss the mud.  
Their sisters embrace them earnestly- and this is what they have  
Become.

Robert Rorabeck



# What They Know But Not What Is

I'll dress myself up as a gentleman,  
And you a society lady,  
And buttoned in our new finery, we'll  
Remove ourselves from the shady valley:  
No longer vagabonds,  
How you got drunk and swam naked  
With the regiment,  
Firing their cannons and laughing  
At you, lascivious;  
Now thespians, and you a better wife  
With peacock feathers in your hat and tresses,  
I will cut my fingers, redmarking each page  
Of the sparse script: How we will kiss  
Under the spotlight, and drink wine and laugh.  
Himalayas will be the backdropp for our  
Bedroom, resounding in echoing ram horns,  
Risking our pride for the pennies of the crowd;  
And after our stage is vacated, the real  
Show, extemporaneous, and terse,  
Rags with switchblades upon the  
Pulsating throats of piggish judges,  
Their governors and their society ladies:  
Hiccups of uncorked blood, the actual money,  
And savoring the anonymity of a better art;  
Letting the bourgeoisie applaud, queuing in a  
Snooty cavalcade, not a spot of consumption  
On the frilly handkerchiefs waved from open windows:  
The opal ululations of egg-white jugulars,  
See how they will love us, when we match the  
Behaviors of their dress, the fineries and  
Linens of sweaty ennui; Up on the stage before  
All of our society, kiss me now,  
But hide the knife which does the real work  
Behind your dress,  
And share in the churlish thrill, of what we have  
Made ourselves, what they know but not what is.

Robert Rorabeck

# What They Really Are

They get fat off of their echoes like  
Tourists enjoying all of my scars- they just  
Happen to shed their skin  
As they slide in and out of trailer parks, and  
Ferris Wheels,  
And flea markets: with her little children beckoning  
Beside her like miniature lighthouses,  
How is it that she can ever again think of me:  
But I gave her son Michael fireworks  
For his last holiday,  
And the planes continuing galloping  
Across the mowed field where she parks her car:  
As she falls asleep beside him again for one  
More night, neither one of them interested in  
Discovering what they really are.

Robert Rorabeck

## What They Used To Love

Now all the children are done and grown up,  
And they have put away their video games  
And high school crushes;  
They've staved off getting some dreams all this  
Long,  
But otherwise their houses are beautiful,  
Even if they are not their houses:  
And they create no more art, if they ever did.  
And their swimming pools are beautiful,  
And their wives are beautiful.  
They have dinner and some kids,  
And yet the canal creeps as it always does  
The paradox of human dredge where the ancient  
Gods sleep keeping tabs on all those wishes  
The conquistadors superimposed;  
So now, reintroduced, the iguanas find new abode  
Down the embankments of yesteryears  
Slapping kisses with the semitamed otters  
Who come over and cluck and crack nuts upon the  
Open breasts of venal sisters,  
While all their grown up boys are away and hauling  
Their heavy loads,  
Just because they never moved too far down the  
Ways of what they used to love.

Robert Rorabeck

# What They Were Named Anyways

Flowers who close their blue eyes at night,  
Stems who quiver like strings and the wind the bow:  
I have seen you there sleeping too,  
The sky a fire of untouchable passion, and the waves beside  
You, like dogs beckoned to your knees:  
And right now you are for real in the tall grass, shoeless,  
Spectacle of anemic crosses in your ears;  
And maybe tiny lights come on above you in the fiberboard,  
And the ceiling fans spin like the roulette wheels  
Of domesticated hallucinations:  
Your new tattoos curl across the overpass of your ankle,  
And your husband sleeps beside you too:  
The bb gun is propped up in your oldest child's room;  
And they all dream of differently similar things than you:  
This is your family in the wildfire grotto of your eyes,  
Unperceiving, though breathed from your womb;  
And I have tried so many times to justify myself to you,  
Waking up, yawning and kidnapped with new scars and complexes:  
The high rises fall like penitent sinners, and you close your eyes,  
Though your eyes were already incredibly far away;  
And new men come toward you repeatedly, allowing you to either  
Pass or exit;  
But your marriage remains in the tall grass that you stepped barefoot  
Through, nearing the rattlesnake in its semipermeable cocoon:  
I waited for it to strike you, but it only reached out as if it had  
Lips,  
And it kissed the flower on your ankle, and from its unpromised  
Poison,  
The butterfly resumed while you were sleeping, and the stars twinkled,  
And divided like the mitosis of starfish,  
Which is what they were named after anyways; and which is what  
You are.

Robert Rorabeck

# What They Were Never Meant To Explore

I have chances to believe  
While my dog drinks his fill of water, and my muse  
Is in another house,  
Around her, her children as if at a fair-  
In the theatre of her television, her favorite telenovela;  
And her umbilical hernia mending,  
So in a week or more we might make love again,  
While the airplanes keep on roaring,  
Roaring: going straight at it,  
Reaching their destinations skipped across the seas-  
The mermaids in their grottos, the gods at their  
Ease,  
And never a single creature here on the earth ever missing  
What they were never meant to explore.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Truly Is

If I could be what I am not, I would be a Ferris wheel  
And assign you the wind. Guess where I would look?  
Or I would have you tear pages out of dime store novels  
And give them to your throat as airplanes, to let you  
Take them casually to the orange groves, your naked dressing  
Room to read over casually, and to laugh;

Or, I would like to be an imperfection in your eye without  
Anchor; something that floats around according to where you look.  
When you are watching migrations then you would throw me  
Up like snow and I would float down for the rest of the day,  
Coming across your gaze while you ate lunch or whatnot;

The world is full of quiet places and those are where I look for  
You, on any old lawn out behind the house. The rattlesnake slithers  
Across your belly when he has nowhere else to go and his tongue is  
Tapping the humid air as if it were sweet confection;

And if I had time and was smart enough to get myself out of  
School for the day, I would kick off on some trustworthy swings,  
And fan my shadow back and forth across your shoulder  
And we could imbibe in the perfect quiet of best friends;  
And go off together like the fine end of something, and forget all  
These words and birthmarks which place us in our cars.  
Instead, we could be what truly is:

What we make time to be when no one else is looking,  
Or paying any mind.

Robert Rorabeck

## What Usual Reward

Cornucopia of Cyclops and unicorns-  
Wasn't this what the kaleidoscope was supposed to  
Make out of the heavens-  
While I fold paper airplanes and shoot them off  
Across the perfumes of my armpits,  
Dreaming of you in lactating castles: but someone  
Else has stolen you,  
And how did this happen, evaporating carnations  
As the housewives return home to their  
Particular section of their well manicured tombs:  
Bright in eyes and full in bosom:  
What usual reward will they use to receive the night-  
While their little boys with sore thumbs from  
Hitchhiking out of school, fly the kites they have  
Stolen through the molesting night.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Was Its Yesterday

Windmills: windmills of that banal architecture,  
While traveling through the hallways it  
Seems as if very little else has changed;  
But the fruit still falls from the tree  
Of baseball diamonds,  
And you are still looking up: up, up,  
Casually around the world,  
Trying to dispel your unusual language:  
Well, here it is, while the octopus runs away:  
Away,  
In the inky censers of what was its yesterday:  
Gone with the playgrounds in the albino  
Snow,  
Gone with the tomorrow- the tomorrow,  
I'll suppose I'll never know.

Robert Rorabeck



# What Was Right

Errors of a pueblo-  
There is your brown family gossiping around  
A surrendered flag  
And on Monday I'll get up and go to school  
Again, noticing all to whom I've been around:  
See the parade of  
Chivalrous insects in a chorus whose songs I  
Cannot understand,  
While far around here the moats of housewives  
Lay with lavender painted toes:  
They swing in their own shadows,  
And smell like insomnia's jasmine-  
And they lay painted on the road back to the  
Orange groves,  
Or the smoking prairie grounds of rum:  
Listen to them echoing in the bathroom- see them  
Playing over the concrete-  
They stay up all night batting lashes at foxes  
And smelling so bitter sweet:  
And the libraries keep their lights on,  
And the tourists return to echoes- and the ash  
Falls on her shoulders like small cathedrals  
As changes to meet him in the tall weeds around  
The swing-sets of her echoes:  
She changes to meet him, singing like a humming bird  
Stuck underneath the moon after midnight-  
After all of that metamorphosis was stylized and  
All of us were reminded of what was wrong  
And what was right.

Robert Rorabeck

# What Was Supposed To Have Been An Ode To Zucker's Bicycle

How easily we can be defeated  
By any word we choose next—  
An entire classroom of  
Wrong answers in  
A high school of enemies—

Like businesses of trophies  
Seemingly triumphant  
All of a sudden  
Shot down into the  
Shark filled abysses by  
Enemy airplanes—

Now, entire decades later—  
I have children and a family,  
But before that I was alone on Thanksgiving—  
And I stole Zucker's bicycle  
And rode to the closed down high school—  
And, entering crepuscule,  
When all of the mailboxes- according to  
The regular laws of suburbia,  
Like all of the crickets and housewives  
Crossing and uncrossing their legs  
And making twilight noises  
With their scissorings-  
Began to seem to hum  
And to glow  
As if perplexed by a fairyland's contingency of amusements—

I stood upon the common asphalt and concrete monuments  
And it seemed, momentarily,  
As if I was finally triumphant upon the aforementioned holiday:

In all of the holidays practiced upon by America through  
The daylights upon this resurrected peninsula  
So exhumed from the salty boudoir  
Of the feral and surreal daydreams of the sea's daughter—

With my son laughing in my ear  
And exalting in his newfound comprehensions of money—  
I seemed momentarily glorious and alone—  
My soul felt as if it were a closed-down amusement  
Placed like a slumbering lover atop  
The abandoned daydreams—  
All of the lost children who also did not know the corrected answers—  
They seemed there before me—  
Nameless constellations that were long since placed above  
Me, properly attributing to the heavens—  
Like little golden teardrops pricked upon the fingertips  
Of the aforementioned teachers:

I stood there alone and beneath the stars—  
As the alligators hibernated underneath of the school buses—  
And the other children,  
Lost and found, beneath the roofs of their own houses—  
Like gingerbread houses filled to the rafters by their  
Salty dinners,  
Tended to yawn and look up—  
And forget of themselves as rivers graduating towards  
The state universities they would find their new commonly  
Accepted identities destined towards:

Tributaries I had at first run away from only to  
Return to,  
Lost and frightened and delicately frost-bitten:  
Looking at the parked school-busses,  
I was lost again;  
But, having stolen my favorite teacher's bicycle to  
Return to here  
I felt momentarily heart-broken—like a rabbit  
Trapped against a high wall between here and Mexico:

Half a decade later,  
Having been rejected from that place of a holy cemetery—  
Having drunken half a bottle of \$10 rum,  
My son fawning and making trucks dance around my elbows—  
I try to remember something that once was  
Absolutely beautiful—

An esoteric and occultish beauty that we were forced to  
Find inside the places the state would force us:  
Inside a hidden cave into which our parents  
Could not even begin to pretend to love:

And our favorite teacher's bicycle:  
An instrument once animated—a muse  
That we lifted from her habitat—  
There she slept beneath the increases of our monuments—  
And here we write to her, forlorn and yet collecting for  
Evermore,  
As if we were the waves surceasing—  
Battings upon the lashes of a daydream that happens once  
In a while as the rockets that are supposed to leave the  
Earth fail and return again, exploding into  
The lips of gravity  
And back into the whitewashed daydreams of an  
Adolescent's afternoon.

Robert Rorabeck

# What You Are Making Them

Swamp of metropolis and limos:  
I am just trying to meet my quota as some Cinderella's  
Coach turns back into a pumpkin,  
And the mice eat the cheese:  
And I sit and watch with my dirty baseball cap well  
Pulled down,  
So that I'll continue fitting in, and won't be exposed:  
It's always good to wear a baseball cap when you are out,  
And male,  
And don't want to be found out- That one of your ears  
Should be missing for the busy waitress who just  
Doesn't give a d\$mned:  
And I am in the Montemarte district of West Palm Beach-  
And I have something like three thousand pumpkins,  
And I haven't yet given one away to a pretty girl  
With piss brown eyes-  
You know, but if that mother comes back, I really want to  
Buy her a bicycle:  
And when I'm finished, I want to masturbate alone  
And then die into a truck or somewhere,  
And the nights are well shut off and balmy and the crickets  
Are always complaining-  
And I can't stop thinking about womb deep wildflowers-  
Girls who live so far away,  
Even slightly above the earth in observatories of mountain  
Napes:  
They sell wine and when you run your finger around their  
Glass, they sing without even having to acknowledge  
What you are making them.

Robert Rorabeck

## What You Can Become....

Though the whole night screams,  
I can only whisper silently with my brown eyes  
Who have to do their job across country—  
Where they look up at constellations, maps  
To your pretty eyes as they bat about unabated  
In the places you work and play—  
There you go surfing again, your entire young  
Body wet and in motion communicating with the  
Other young and healthy bodies moving  
About with you—  
Seldom do you take a break from your gambols,  
And when you look up the stars seem just stars,  
Immeasurable gaseous bodies that punctuate the  
Black tarp, under which you might have a drink  
With others of your species, but that's all they are—

The same way as when your thoughts may fall  
In passing upon me, a boy who once circulated you  
A couple times at most, icy and distant, a nameless comet  
That still turns about primarily unobserved, as is my  
Wish, except with you— For you are right, I am  
Just a boy, rather flawed but harmless, though I have  
Been through space and have seen the stars up close,  
And know them to be much like you, immeasurable  
And heavenly bodies, circling about through the voids  
Of light and darkness, set into their spirals—

If you take my hand the next time I come by you,  
Say in a few decades or so, then I can show you who they  
And you are and, with me, what you can become....

Robert Rorabeck

# What You Do To Me

Because I can never be  
As beautiful as my mother,  
And because I can never be  
As truthful as my father was,  
Nor will I ever own a winning racehorse,  
I am writing to you now,  
Because you owe me nothing but an ear:  
And you are too late to know,  
That these words are blackmail,  
Because I cry to tell the world what  
You've done: never coming by,  
Taking strange boys out to dinner,  
And enjoying the air and satellites  
Without me: The revolutions of your  
Society in the communal salts,  
In the work hall's dim lights,  
Because I see you there  
Kissing a man you know less than me:  
Just because you work with him  
When no one else is around,  
Saying his name in the dark  
And groaning,  
Because you love me but you cannot care:  
To know that I am weeping for you,  
And casually recording all the pains,  
The gentle machoisms  
Your instincts gravitate you towards,  
Until you grow old and mindful,  
And might sit down next to the lamp  
And by it read of me the thoughts of you,  
Thoughts you couldn't imagine:  
The world you hang is already passing,  
But here is an immortal bouquet  
Set off to the corner,  
Or a sweater you can wear  
When you want something on your  
Shoulders- a reminder  
That I will holdout through the pain,  
Until I meet you some time,

So you might see for yourself  
what you do to me.

Robert Rorabeck



# What You Have Pretended To Save

Kiss me on either side of my face,  
If you are from Seville  
And it is your whim: Play your radio and  
Back off,  
As old men drive away back through the  
Perfidy of their adolescence:  
Think of the time you spent mocking me in  
High school,  
The cumulostratus or whatever you call  
The flying holocaust it put me through:  
Build up and pull over and make love at the  
Anonymous road stop underneath the  
Great stone bridges where the Indians died  
Or at least gave way,  
Because you are the greatly educated:  
So proud of yourself and your football teams.  
Your bedroom is full of red and blue ribbons,  
Either coming or going away,  
But it is just a very thin wall, thankless,  
Persuaded,  
When the wolf comes with cheeks gorgeous enough  
For orchards,  
Biceps strong enough for batting cages:  
Then you will know who I am, like the culprit of  
The deceitful fable, I will not be denied;  
And your eyes are just wimples in the dark floating not  
Even like candles inches apart,  
Hoping against the window that I will have the bravado  
To take what you have pretended to save.

Robert Rorabeck

## Whatever- I Am Not Here

I am gone now—  
A million moons away, going to China—A million  
Requests away underneath the Christmas trees  
Of a blistering Christmas  
As we sell ourselves away—  
As we cry out—  
For those who are not here—  
Who are fanfare and comatose beneath the milky way—  
As a I loved you a thousands miles—  
As I closed my eyes and pretended to count coup on you  
And the lawns stretched out all of their  
Greenest mouths for you—  
Emerald and other words for green—  
As the graveyards lay just right there—a million  
Diamonds in a checkerboard of un-played  
Dimensions—  
And it was all right here for all of this time—  
In the unopened story books and the unmouthed rhymes—  
But I am going away, while the pictures repeat  
Masturbating themselves,  
And pissing on the feet of the clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whatever Existence

I don't want to play around with you  
Again, around the parks of the dead railroads  
Or the willows of the murdered  
Girls: I have felt your brown skin in my ghostly  
Hand,  
And put it inside you like clay in a lost school  
Yard the children are abandoning  
Like hapless kites, as the weather floods  
Whatever existence that is there's to have,  
And they go away:  
Softly. Butterflies laugh at them, and the housewives  
Never look up to see how it is that their  
Children all but disappear.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whatever Gold Summers

Killing whatever gold summers come in their outgoing vestments-  
You step out in a purple curtain,  
And smile through your brownness: and I like it, when you remember  
Where the cars drive alongside the overgrown fences,  
And the crooked mailboxes that sway like nodding gravestones:  
They just go this way, and I have to imagine the ways that you take  
Home to your kids,  
Because you get angry when I follow you too far, the insouciant airplanes  
Taking off like bottle rockets,  
And other assured but meaningless things, who only move because  
They have to.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whatever It Is

Weak children brushing down on airplanes,  
Never wondering where it is that they should land,  
Never understanding the concepts brushed from the  
Lips of the mountains' graces;  
Only their mothers' breasts and now this, clouds in  
The fog of make-believe, and the stars the spitfires  
Of far away giants:  
Words that seem to move, but don't move at all,  
Stumbling forever drunk out into the beautifully studded  
Esplanades of the graveyards; and there truncated,  
To mew up to the sensory mausoleums of the billboards  
Who are even less than ceiling fans,  
While the airplanes fumble their innocent holidays into the  
Earth,  
They just sit there mutely chattering about whatever it  
Is that they must sell.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whatever It Wa

Indebted to whatever hemispheres there were;  
I was not a wise man, but I came baring gifts, and stealing  
Bicycles;  
One ear pressed to the waves, a lucky rabbit slowly murdered  
In the grass underneath the hoof prints of terrapin who  
Didn't belong there anyways,  
Like busses who took a round about underneath the burning  
Sugar cane,  
Who only carried in their custard tresses the pantomiming  
Pharoses of pubescent  
Truancy;  
And the color of my soul was green: Alma, it was my favorite  
Thing while it was waking up;  
And by tomorrow I will know if you do not love me,  
While the boomslangs sizzle above the trapeze of teepees:  
They say all of the awful things:  
That you will never make it to water, that your dog will know the  
Luck of the gods before  
You come to your senses; and that the Hibernian woods will have  
Decorated all of their Christmases even before you get out of  
The yawning of your trailer park,  
While your dumb wife is sunbathing topless beside the communal  
Pool,  
Or estuary; and there are always still fireworks to sell across  
The seven seas who penumbra the desert like the evaporates of  
Metamorphosis,  
As the kings crown in chrysalis, their youngish boys jouncing  
Across the earth,  
Shooting their bows into the heart of harts, biting their lips and wet-  
Dreaming of whatever it is that they will become.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whatever It Was

Indebted to whatever hemispheres there were;  
I was not a wise man, but I came baring gifts, and stealing  
Bicycles;  
One ear pressed to the waves, a lucky rabbit slowly murdered  
In the grass underneath the hoof prints of terrapin who  
Didn't belong there anyways,  
Like busses who took a round about underneath the burning  
Sugar cane,  
Who only carried in their custard tresses the pantomiming  
Pharoses of pubescent  
Truancy;  
And the color of my soul was green: Alma, it was my favorite  
Thing while it was waking up;  
And by tomorrow I will know if you do not love me,  
While the boomslangs sizzle above the trapeze of teepees:  
They say all of the awful things:  
That you will never make it to water, that your dog will know the  
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You come to your senses; and that the Hibernian woods will have  
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The yawning of your trailer park,  
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The seven seas who penumbra the desert like the evaporates of  
Metamorphosis,  
As the kings crown in chrysalis, their youngish boys jouncing  
Across the earth,  
Shooting their bows into the heart of harts, biting their lips and wet-  
Dreaming of whatever it is that they will become.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whatever Rhymes I Choose Tonight

Your friends are super-fine  
And I've seen them in the back seats  
In the back of the bus  
Or the movie theatre figuring 69:  
And this is what I do when I am not  
Hiking,  
When my imbedded molars are aching  
From cheap liquor,  
And I persistent to write in freeform,  
Not rhyme:  
But there you go, in silent parks which aren't  
Real,  
Under slash-pine: sweaty, humid and recreational  
In the daytime:  
They have no sums or parking codes,  
But at night they provide shelter for the nocturnal  
Scavengers and homosexual hobos:  
Beardless, how could you tell Walt Whitman  
From most anyone else,  
Even his poetry couldn't keep time;  
And these words are an enigma, like in the  
Shallow pine forest next to the golf course I used  
To jog in and bemuse myself with jealousy over  
The desirous position of my major professor;  
But now you situated yourself into a greater design of  
Love, another of your ancient tribe;  
But I've read about the Macabees, and I am that  
Kind of warrior: Listen to me scream well rummed  
To the Roman night:  
I never loved you, but amused myself by the lesbian  
Theatre down in the bohemian pool- You don't even  
Remember: housewife to a lawyer now just slightly  
North of Boca,  
And I have certain scars you shall never see, new forms  
Of embarkations on the old form body,  
And tonight the park close to your abandoned house  
Is mine: I will not petition the moon for you;  
Whatever rhymes I choose tonight are mine.





# When All The Woods Are Black

What can live in this sea  
When all the woods are all black, but the sky is still blue  
Without even thieves, the robbers of her fretful eyes.  
Where the feet in their cerulean stockings stick out like  
Hoods in the waxy hollies;  
Where the thwarted flies bother.  
This place has been here forever, but the women  
Have all been stolen by the gods no one believes anymore,  
And the sea retains the hints of their claret leave-takings  
The grass' green is turning chartreuse, and snakes  
Live coiled in balls where it has gone unmowed,  
And cars rust on cinderblocks down the throat of the steep  
Hills, the darkness of the black woods beginning to  
Eclipse their taciturn chassis;  
The grottos here in the nape of mountains are without pieta,  
And motionless in algae and purplish lilies  
Who do not sing, nor do maidens step blood-pricked  
Out from brambles, nor the secret chests of aspens,  
For eyes forage here, but they do not wander nor bight their lips;  
The school in the little clearing is quite extinct, though  
Each square in the linoleum floor is well mopped  
And in good geometry, for neither sex has moped across it  
For some time; This is the beautiful valley of her dressing room,  
But she has been stolen away by a sucker quarterback  
With good aim, now all the forest is beautifully meaningless  
When all the woods are all black, but the sky is still blue.

Robert Rorabeck

# When He Was Asleep

While you were waiting for  
A sound from the tomb,  
Of a vampire or werewolf,  
I was right there  
Outside of your car or atop of  
Your roof  
With a foolproof spear in my heart  
And cold-hearted airplanes in  
The sky—  
The flying monkeys were on the  
Warpath,  
Another villain was having an industrious  
Epiphany—  
With the night settling in all around me  
Like a cloak of the sinking  
Sea—  
And you with your family swimming in  
Movie stars,  
Awash in that jungle you called paradise—  
And my heart dripping out  
Like the meat of  
A terrapin—  
And your lips drooling like lion whose hungry  
Grew exponentially all because he  
Didn't know when he was asleep.

Robert Rorabeck

## When I Am Not Really Alon

How great to illusion myself in the demiurge of evening,  
To drink the last of this amber substance  
In the leaking air-conditioning, to sing that I am not alone:  
Mind and body co-mingle,  
As Alma is disarrayed into the house her father promises her,  
Slipped into the bed beside her thief of a husband;  
And her mind even further away, thinking nothing of the  
Rude and erudite suburbias cut like gems all around her:  
Her newly migrated weeds are somehow more precious,  
Her body more supple; her mind in unspoken of corridors:  
She doesn't like to read, but I have felt her heart on the pages  
That should be written down:  
Her daughter dances before her in the moonlight that she owns  
In her room;  
And this is how I think of her when I am not really alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# When I Am Not Really Alone

How great to illusion myself in the demiurge of evening,  
To drink the last of this amber substance  
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In her room;  
And this is how I think of her when I am not really alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# When I Disappear

Birds make love next to the canals I jog:  
Birds fly over me and terrapins disappear into that inkjets  
Of ribbon,  
And the highway roars with housewives busy from shopping;  
The money is gobbled up faster than my legs can exercise  
The burry earth:  
But it is true that girls move and it is raining, and eyes look out  
Of the windows of their houses,  
And I am not just a little boy anymore;  
I am a man by this river who is trying to hawk his ribs to any woman  
Who needs an extra spear;  
And I will put children in her to make sure that I do not disappear  
When I disappear.

Robert Rorabeck

## When I Heard Death....

I heard death for the first time  
In a human voice when I was very young  
And my blonde aunt argued with her husband  
On the other side of the screen door,  
Upon the small green yard with color changing  
Lizards and mother's rock garden ringed with stones—

Between the palms and the humid sky,  
The last shades of vermillion before the  
Sun was shut behind the door,  
Her voice died in certain way like a  
Sea butchered by a silver knife  
And bled dry, wind and  
Waves departed  
And she laid flat on a marble slab  
On the other side of cold inoculated doors  
That was how it sounded  
When I heard death for the first time  
In a human voice.

Robert Rorabeck

# When I Take Walks With My Mother

When I take walks with my mother  
I am a tree in the wind— I move,  
But I go nowhere; it is beautiful  
Sometimes to shimmer—  
The light of the moon over running water,  
The memory of her face reflected by the sea—  
The aching memories that wash and run over  
Me, move within me, stampede,  
And, exhausted hibernate, but they never leave  
Me, the soul's locksmiths,  
Tarnished metals and rings waiting in my chest—  
When I take walks with my mother,  
I can feel myself in her womb, just to  
Be close to the woman who loves you,  
A gosling under her wing as she explains  
How God turns tadpoles into toads,  
How mountains rose their heads from the sea,  
How a rainbow leaping over a red ridge  
Is his promise that you will go on forever in him,  
Strolling in that immortal chest, a perfect memory,  
Like a present bought for a lover,  
The cherished pet of a young child,  
A piece of blown glass still warm to the touch  
And glowing beneath the window....  
When I take walks with my mother, light falls  
Down from the other side of the dizzy universe.  
Exhausted travelers rest in between the space of moving  
Bodies as the dogs chase a herd of elk through the dusk—  
I move but don't move— I breathe and the memories,  
For this short while stand quiet and listen....  
When I take walks with my mother.

Robert Rorabeck



# When I Was A Wolverine

you were a virgin  
learning about Greek gods  
and trying to speak Russian.  
Alone in those shady halls  
I studied tears.  
We sat across from each other  
and made fleeting teases  
with our eyes  
gunning each other down  
as our minds raced like  
Tennessee studs  
and undressed each other,  
fucking all day  
or at least through Latin Class.  
And how my thoughts  
echo for you now  
where you stained  
perfect  
a beauty mark  
in my ugly mind  
across the distance  
of blasted years  
In blasted lands  
I long for you  
and howl your name  
to the mountains  
I hear your beauty  
in the naming whispers  
among the aspens;  
but you are all gone  
from here,  
you have walked between  
the bloody waters  
to your own promised land.  
Here,  
virgins are for sacrifices  
and you would not cut off  
one bit  
for me

and I have forgotten how to speak,  
with my eyes,  
the language of our high school  
that has laid dead  
for a decade

Robert Rorabeck

# When I Write

When I write I write  
Maybe an hour or 2 a day  
but the #s stay with  
Me like lead  
From my fingertips  
Seeping deeper  
Ink on my lips  
My face molts  
I rust  
When I write the feeling  
Creeps through me like  
The morning after too  
Much alcohol  
Cold shivers a mirror  
I can't get it out of my face  
And her  
When I write  
She turns on over my bed  
A lamp shaped like a leg  
Filled with effervescing  
Beer and drunken fish,  
Possibilities,  
Prizes,  
Games  
And carnivals  
When I write God puts  
Her rib back into me  
The first pain  
Her breath in me  
Her love in me  
When I write I can't get  
Her out,  
And it would be okay  
If I had her,  
But I don't even know her number  
When I write her favorite  
Color is blue  
When I write she only  
Wears a fig leaf

And my fingers  
When I write  
Her fingers tear apart  
My temples  
Like rotten fruit  
When I write  
God flies for hours my  
Teeth taste like microwaved metal  
When I she's just  
There  
She's just there the next door  
Over  
When I write  
I cup her breast  
Oh, God, how long it's been  
When I write for just an hour  
It's all it takes  
And she's with me all day  
Nakedness and beautiful eyes  
And milk and sweat and  
Redness and the places on her  
I put myself  
When I write  
When I write  
It's like mercury settling  
In a crown around my temple  
Silt  
Gently  
Higher and higher  
When I write I'm Harvey  
Silver  
Jack Micheline's alter ego  
Jewish actor  
Rimbaudian misfit  
When I write  
I'm with her  
When I write I'm burned  
Through Bukowski's fire  
When I write I'm in Michelangelo's  
Fresco  
Reaching out for God  
His hand the promise

The self I lie in when  
I write  
She's in my mouth  
I can taste her  
It's just too much not to have  
Her  
I put the pen down to  
Spit her out but I've  
Already swallowed her  
Candy poison  
When I write  
It's like being inside her.

Robert Rorabeck

# When She Isn'T In My House

There you are, a pieta drooling the honey of  
Her children into her lap-  
The last curse of beauty serenades by the  
Feral cats,  
As the songs of the habitually lonely continue  
Around her- as I slept on her roof,  
And wrote to her so many rosy tombs  
Underneath the ripe bellies of the  
Helicopters,  
And underneath the jump rope of the stewardesses  
In their airplanes-  
What a delight, say the church goes on  
Sunday underneath the graveyards where their  
Grandmothers are buried alongside the  
Catholics and the Indians-  
Strange per severances that don't always have to  
Survive-  
As she culls her children again to her womb  
Amidst the lilacs,  
And this is how I sing to her when she isn't  
In my house,  
And yet doesn't have to be alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# When The Dead Walk The Earths

Used car salesman of kites and bric-a-brac  
The tender fabrics of high school, but it has no  
Fingerprints to remember,  
The gentle molestations of slight penny-birds,  
The wishes of housewives,  
Lingerie slipping like the skin of a beautiful snake  
From the surcease of her mind:  
And where does she live, where does my heart  
Fling like proverbial messenger bird on a string  
Of unspooling copper wires, stolen from  
The galvanized esplanade; but looking up into the  
Sky it spells lightning,  
And wild horses and fortified wines:  
And it is a strange vortex of costume jewelry I am  
Selling;  
And it belongs to no cabalistic green eyes, though  
It continues laying out more taught line, wishing for  
Her Translunary amusements,  
On holidays, or valentines, where the dead walk the  
Earths and float in the skies.

Robert Rorabeck

# When The Meteors Sing To The Moon

I never think of dragons anymore in  
The unpalatable rooms underneath the paper trees  
In the midst of a hurricane-  
Why, I'll just lay out here, baptizing in the raiment  
Of tadpoles-  
Soon I'll be their dessert, and the long  
Chords of unicorns will embrace the shore in a  
Beautiful effect,  
As we ourselves try to escape to the river-  
And any hopes of your family are lost to our love-  
And maybe tomorrow will be the time  
Beginning the great romance that surrounds us  
And keeps us from the specters moaning in the forest-  
As I hold your hand,  
And wait to distill the pornography of the rainforest  
Into your lions for the famished rabbits  
And the lions:  
Why cant we become our own amusements- our  
Own carnival,  
Even though I am neither famous nor talented enough,  
As I tend to be for awhile  
Greatly in love with you without the panoply of  
Wonderful words to diadem your nuptials,  
Or to call you to me in the nights when  
The meteors sing to the moon.

Robert Rorabeck



# When The Sun And The Moon Are Down

Sunlight mottles through the blinds  
Of another day;  
Yes it does, as if at the hospital; and old loves  
Never weep,  
They just turn to the side,  
And we forget words and thoughts:  
And the thoughts we don't know are the words  
We'll never have,  
Words of other countries, of knights young and  
Old defeated by the basilisk and his frosty  
Witches;  
And yet the dwarfs have great libidos dripping like  
Fertile gardens somehow three times their stature;  
But they are still too dense for bicycles  
Or swimming in water that isn't for children:  
So when she comes, they whistle,  
Entire tribes of bearded men, and the dragons swoop  
And holler. When she comes, they forget their vast  
Wealth,  
Their weak spots, which she takes advantage of squinting  
Her eyes to feel the turquoise feather stretch to her  
Cheek:  
A marksman, she has many scalps, scaled and wonderful,  
And she keeps them at a steady clip as she leaps  
Through town,  
Only stopping to drink in mountains when the moon  
And the sun are down.

Robert Rorabeck

# When They Are Lucky

Rising to the occasion,  
To the cobwebs of her family;  
Nothing about her is old,  
Or kept away too long:  
In the opal ladders of her Siamese  
Estuaries,  
Her pillbox of a womb has  
Birthed two children,  
Bilingual,  
Straight out of the old habitats  
Of cliff dwellers and  
Conquistadors:  
She knows how to use the  
Government,  
But not how to swim,  
So I carry her out into the  
Breaking brim, and Alma's  
Little brown body braces against  
My stalwart show,  
Like a fox leaping into  
An Eskimo,  
An anarchistic fable  
Of our time of the week  
When butterflies get the day off,  
When they are lucky.

Robert Rorabeck

# When They Too Will Leave

The lions roar to their upland gods,  
And I do not feel alright.  
I wonder what is alright to believe in even  
While the birds sing all of their songs-  
All of the swing sets are being taken away,  
And maidens swim across the lake-  
Where are they going, and what lake is this:  
Even so, they look so beautiful even while they  
Are leaving.  
Replacing them, birds travel in from the north:  
They are foreigners to this country,  
And they say nothing to the sky- their bodies  
Fold up and swim,  
Like a new kind of wedding- I hold my breath  
And clutch my heart-  
A birthday cake waits uphill candleless in  
Another empty house,  
As I wonder when they too will leave.

Robert Rorabeck

# When We Go Back To School

The bed is a  
Spendthrift ride- and  
It seems we've  
Been going to  
Worship so many  
Ferris Wheels-  
And they are already  
Gone-  
The way summer will  
Have to be  
When we go back to school.

Robert Rorabeck

# When You Are A Sailor Without Any Sea

My wife grew up in a one bedroom apartment in Lanxiou, China  
At 3,000 meters,  
So she assures me she won't get a headache if we go to visit my parents  
In Nutrioso, Arizona:  
But she found out she was pregnant today and grew slightly depressed.  
I said, it is a good time to be pregnant, as we took a walk  
With our one year old child around the neighborhood,  
In the suburbs of Shanghai, China—  
I've been sick since we got here over a month ago—  
I keep worry about our car and house back in Florida:  
I cannot enjoy myself—  
We are going to the People's 10th Hospital tomorrow to see if  
We can fix my hearing,  
So today I just stayed in and looked at houses in Show Low, Arizona,  
In the less than \$250,000 range:  
Meanwhile, I probably looked at my face a hundred times in between  
Playing with my first born child.  
I ate two cheese burgers for lunch, and that is all.  
I need to lose weight. I weigh close to 250 pounds  
But I am a healthy day laborer back from where I come from.  
I am the only man who can pile four boxes of Idaho potatoes on top  
Of each other and carry them all at once to the delivery truck—  
This is the job I went back to after being fired from my high  
School teaching job—  
I am doing just fine  
And halfway saved up to buying a second modest home  
And semi retirement—Like I said, I am looking at Show Low,  
Arizona—  
I want to take my wife there next summer—  
By that time, if all goes well, we will have our second child—  
Now, while everyone is sleeping,  
I drink fifty proof Chinese white wine—  
It is like visiting the moon while I write this thing:  
And on and on, these things I do,  
Anonymously for all posterity—  
It is the only thing that feels okay to do,  
My miniscule progressions through an unseeing,  
Unbelieving, and unforgiving world—  
I wrote ten note book pages earlier on a sloppy novella I am

Almost finished with  
About finding the Holy Grail in China,  
Only the Holy Grail is a Mexican woman—my old muse:  
It is a laughable mess,  
And this is not a poem, but it goes this way  
Sometimes  
When you are a sailor without any sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# When You Cut Your Hair

When you cut your hair, we made love;  
And I made rounds with my sweetheart- and I never had to come  
Down:  
I wrote something when I was twenty four that was published but  
Never read;  
But I still have a story, and you are definitely in it right now:  
While the music plays just as carelessly as rain:  
And the faeries moan in their green chateaus; but I like you,  
And marmalade:  
And even as you yawn, why even then the stars rise up and the windmills  
Gather around,  
And I fight off the banishments of my lonely diseases, and I cry just  
To fill up middle class swimming pools,  
While the new children of my peerless grownups gather still in the  
Same high schools that my ancient footsteps echo around;  
And it is as proof less as the fireworks who never  
Have existed; and yet I finally have made love to my soul,  
And it feels as good and as luckily placed as a ship in its bottle into which  
The waves have finally settled down:  
And in those museums even the airplanes stop to pause, their armpits  
Smelling like wildflowers, who from those transoms all of the agogs of the  
Seamless stewardesses, through their streak less transoms, finally settle down.

Robert Rorabeck

# When You Make Me

If you linger here, maybe midnight will find us both  
Kissing in the graveyard:  
Maybe Michael will read Mark Twain before he goes to sleep  
Tonight,  
Alma, because I bought him *The Prince and The Pauper* for  
Two dollars at the dollar store  
That for all I know may be the nearest to the sea;  
And when I hold your hand I feel good;  
And when I kiss your lips I fill better-  
And I am not Shakespeare except when you make me  
Shakespeare:  
Alma- And, Alma, why I'll be damned if you don't always  
Make me Shakespeare.

Robert Rorabeck



# Where All The Wayward Paper Airplanes Fall

Reindeer in my afternoon are just other words  
I do not know,  
But I've been so long away-  
I've been away- and I'm going to Mexico:  
Why cant you come with me,  
Why cant you remember how the green clouds  
Came to be, diademing the fields of maize  
And the consumptive volcanoes:  
Where your grandmothers lived forever like  
Jealous rubies  
While I keep poisoned arrows for my  
Competitors  
Because our houses are all too close together,  
And I do not love my neighbors-  
I said I loved you, but that was just my coffin  
Speaking,  
As you didn't answer, as the busses turned around,  
Waiting for the swans to return to them,  
But they had gone away forever:  
They had changed into some that was too beautiful  
For us,  
And your children have run away across the canal-  
Into another world where there may not be  
A Christmas, where all of the wayward paper airplanes  
Fall- I told you that I loved you,  
But you said that you'd heard it all-

Robert Rorabeck

# Where And Whom They Are

Beginning again to taste the comely  
Sailboats scrimshawed into my drinking glass,  
The albatrosses swimming like chalices  
Away from hapless knights  
Who will eventually swing green and envious  
From the witch's  
Tree-  
The traffic, the waves- all of it continues,  
While there are Christmas trees in beautiful  
Homes,  
Unbounded and spilling like beautiful women with  
Their throats slit,  
Eyes as open and dark as hungry tigers,  
Their corneas eating it all, the baseball players of  
The dark burs and stars  
And the red lights swim over the cars  
Like great heavenly lights that are coming nearer  
For warmth,  
Like lonesome young men who have forgotten  
Where and whom they are.

Robert Rorabeck

## Where Cold Planets Live

In the soft whiteness of her daydreaming skin,  
The way some highways move across  
An evaporating landscape—  
And the fruit of the cactus goes to sleep,  
Pedaling to the waves  
Tuliping in their cadence—  
A sister buys a soft merry-go-round,  
Remembering to the eyes of the darkness  
Of an often time playboy's  
Nostalgic zoo—  
Where there are still estuaries where  
Make-believe crocodiles cry  
Toy airplanes  
After a graveyard's curfew—  
Animals hallucinate of men  
Selling them places that they could move to,  
Outside the corners beyond the yards,  
The separations of fingertips,  
The lost acres that I left to you—  
Imprints of children and washing machines  
And other holidays  
Where cold planets live.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where Does The Dog Go?

Where does the dog go?

When the preachers are preaching  
And the teachers are teaching

And the societal bowl is being passed  
Around with the opposable thumbs,  
Followed by bright eyes and egotistical,  
Self-righteous smiles

And dollars flow religiously into  
The collection bowl....

Where does the dog go?

Escaping the sermon of the human tongue,  
He squats down low and crawls under the fence  
At the edge of the parking lot.

Outside the master's borders he is free to  
Follow his nose. Here, loping down the street,  
He sees the world not through the old grey television set  
Of his eyes, but through his wet, throbbing snout—  
He tastes the world with this and his tongue, hanging out.

When a good breeze comes by, he gets a whiff  
Of the still frozen snows from a mountain miles away,  
And the golden taste of aspen leaves just before they fall....

Walking along, he can smell the fear and sadness of a  
Cuckolded man and he can taste the whiskey on his breath....

He can smell the newly born love on the woman's lips,  
And can taste the swaying heat over her eager hips....

When children come to play with him for awhile, he enjoys  
Their fingers, like sapling branches still to grow, running through  
His fur-coat, and he sniffs deeply of their new feelings still stretching  
Out into the world, and their flavor is pure without hurt.

So the dog goes along where he wills and as he wishes,  
Not consciously understanding the ordered nature of man, but  
Getting startling whiffs of how things run, the hungry hearts and  
Damaged dreams spilling out of human vessels, like broken pots,  
Wavering in bright colors about him....

And when he returns, he might get a pat or a bone,  
But not often does his master think of where he's been....

When the preachers are preaching  
And the teachers are teaching  
While the sun is the great warmth above it all

And the world of human thoughts reach out and  
Intertwine in burry knots, the dog settles down at the feet  
Of men, his illiterate master, and sees them pouring out into his world,  
Reaching out beyond occupations and positions,  
titles and incomes,  
the dog smells them how they really are in the world under the sun  
and loves them as he will.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where Every Wildflower Still Grows

She was about to kiss me,  
And I wanted that kiss:  
I haven't kissed a female soul in this side of  
A decade,  
But I demurred, and my father has bought rose  
Bushes;  
And coming home from the little black children's  
Park,  
The light is still on in the trailer;  
And when I get inside I listen to Keats;  
My mother farts: She is still beautiful, and that  
Kiss would have been mine,  
If I wasn't afraid of you becoming your mother;  
But lets pretend that I will return in the spring,  
And we will live in the country,  
And I will find your kiss again on Tuesday,  
And we will go to bed while the sun is still high  
In a garden where every wildflower still grows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where I Am Necessary To Belong

All of the clairvoyant statistics fracture like tragedies of  
Our sky,  
Like the ashes of birthday wishes over the maelstrom of our green  
Planes, of our prettiest and favorite colors;  
And I can see Alma all day, and she even parrots my name,  
After I cry out hers in my sincerest of pains;  
And I dance for her, and I turn around drunkenly, but she says she  
Doesn't want to dance:  
Alma has a skull on her phone:  
Where does Alma live except where all of the Mexicans live,  
And now I can give her a house to prove her body justice; I can give  
Her breath under the caterwauling moon: I can skip school for  
Alma and remind her that in her secret estuaries is where I am  
Necessary to belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where I Cannot Say Her Name

Putting words together like playing,  
Like guns  
Over the landscapes where there is no airconditioning  
As there is no returning of this love:  
And now I know that it doesn't feel real:  
Little feet floating up mountains  
Skirting lions with their tails between their legs,  
Dead cars arranged in a certain way  
And all made up in the yellow school yards of the desert  
While I am waiting in the rock garden to be discovered  
Not far afield from the scars and cenotaphs of  
Conquistadors quilled like badges into the disappearing  
Pornography;  
This is where I always set out and happen to wait for  
Her: this is where I cannot say her name.

Robert Rorabeck



# Where I Guess The Airplanes Fly

Roosters crowing in the fireworks  
Produce bright sunshine  
That isn't anywhere, but flowing over  
The yard-  
Vermillion possibility that has left  
This house  
And is floating over it, spying in the  
Nebulous in its arc  
Over slash pines and blue gills  
Clairvoyant as it does  
Over birthdays in the park where  
Girls I don't know curl in the sand dunes  
And kiss the blisters of abandoned  
Pornographies- there they are,  
Burying themselves before school,  
Getting thorns in their paws.  
The coral snakes, wishing to be up and  
Down their brown avenues  
Like their mothers' jewelry being passed  
Down from beneath the ballrooms  
Where I guess the airplanes fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where I Have Never Belonged

Days of vigilance abroad;  
And other sketches brought to  
The corners of  
The skip, collected as if  
Marbles in their mouths-  
The traffic still going  
Home in the sunlight;  
Her soft whisperings  
Blowing across the cerulean  
Headdress  
Of another imposter who  
Has no proof of being here,  
Except that I have worshipped  
Him in  
Disgust- and now I dream  
Of the color blue from the  
Open sills of  
Blue gills-  
As the little girls fight  
Form themselves  
Across the open wounds and  
Caesuras of the frontera  
Until once again  
Cradled by the names of spices,  
Nesting into the soft green pueblos  
Underneath the redondos of  
Impassable and paganistic ranges-  
The horned animals masturbating  
Where I have never belonged.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where I Have Thought

I don't want to live without you- for a little while  
As the hours die:  
The sea of horses jumping over the house, despising  
Its suburban wives;  
And I said that you were so beautiful, calling back again  
The first memory of your belonging-  
While my blood is filled with the tearless rubies of  
Crocodiles,  
My face smoldering the tears sweated from the armpits  
Of angels who weren't even your cousins:  
Why, aren't we in the same world,  
Alma, counting our good luck and trigonometry, as the entire  
House flies,  
And the flowers I've stolen for you are getting so old:  
And I go out to the sea and look at its outcasts- the beauty of  
Its equipage the same memory as I have you in:  
While the petty government has stolen away my swings,  
And the helicopters fly in the colors of coral snakes:  
Yellow, and red up in their strange- and I do not know  
Who I am:  
But a cenotaph in the hibiscus, a zoetrope of grandmother luxury  
Turning around outside your bedroom,  
As you get off of your love- and you know that I love you,  
And I want to go back to Mexico, anyways,  
And to a place where I have thought I have never been.

Robert Rorabeck

## Where I Left Off With You

Somber novels, you give me a street awash in rain,  
Lullabyed from the waves across the boulevard, where  
The cheap red women are making love standing up:  
The men in innocuous shadow, men as brave as my father,  
Holding them as if they could hold them like the weather,  
And my childhood in the median with an albino,  
And thus the trees record a whisper: a fruit falls cylindrical,  
Each blade of grass is mowed,  
And salted as if by a fairy's tear, for the heroes have  
Gone and done a massacre, and the housewives are naked  
In perpetual straddle moving halfway up to their necks  
Mounted upon the Precambrian crocodiles: They do not cry,  
For it is as if they never gave birth, still young, unmolested,  
Treaded high, as yet in sorority, they move in unexpected  
Patterns of eternal hunger,  
And I watch them leaping like the bird of time at the  
Apex of this bridge, joined by the auburn otter, the soft-shelled  
Tortoise, he torpid and religious like the conquistador;  
I suppose I can never die here, as the shadows linger and  
The neighborhood's lights presuppose the evening: Far away,  
Upon another shore, the virgin succumbs topless to his lottery,  
But I can only suppose the meaning of that sacrifice,  
For now the workers leave their machinery in the quitted field,  
The teachers remove themselves from the desk to grade papers,  
And the lions in the zoo close their copper muzzles and thus repose,  
And I remove myself from this immortality,  
Picking up again where I left off with you....

Robert Rorabeck

# Where I Remain Dreaming

When the lions germinate they are asleep:  
The airplanes are silver quarters in the arcade of cerulean sky:  
And this is south Florida, or this an arcade:  
And the lights are out, but the power lines, like camels,  
Are still good for something:  
And the canals form a safety grid so that the afterlife of  
Crocodiles doesn't flood in and disturb our Christmas;  
And I don't know what better words to use  
To become the special place of fawning reptiles: If you are not  
Around to receive this attention, then make sure to garland yourself  
And your daughter in the sweet shade;  
For it was never my intention to vulgarize you in the salt-lick plane:  
Yes, I have been up the backside of so many mountains,  
I have effervesced with blue collar legs from the insouciant of  
Ice-cream shops of tourism;  
And now why don't you serve rum, or why haven't you become  
The better iconoclast of my sleepless harem:  
Why don't you turn off the lights and become brail:  
Why are you still starving me with empty lunch pales you use to  
Build sand castles when you know the tide is coming in,  
And your cousins the mermaids will soon be sautering with firemen  
And the better licks of the green flames of fireworks:  
I don't know what it means to be, for I am yet still in the last stages of  
High school and you are the captain of the soccer team:  
And I have never seen your house let alone your bedroom; and yet  
Those very same orange groves is where I remaining dream.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where It Certainly Is Supposed To Belong

They give good rhymes to cars, and in passing,  
Their daughters look really beautiful; and didn't I fail to  
Mention that all of them may be moving to Georgia  
To convolute with the wavering harems of indistinguishable  
Serial killers:  
All the voids of parked cars diademed by icy bodies which  
Have been demoted in their hemispheres to something less  
Than planets;  
But it doesn't change a thing: The fact that I loved them anyways,  
And now their black police force is publishing me anyways,  
Because I sucked up to them like an egg sucking dog  
Pissing on a blushing fire hydrant:  
And tonight I will leap the hedge again and swing on the  
Swings of sleeping pedestrians:  
There I can turn the moon into a glowing ladle: I can make  
The moon move with me through my very own constellations;  
And there is no question that what I am doing  
Has its own ornithology:  
When I am in the darkness with my prayers flags of women not  
A single person on this earth can touch me:  
Airconditioned into their make believe cars like being on safe  
In a game of bandit children: All the pretty girls and boys who I  
Call out to as if crying in the voice of their dead mothers:  
So they have to come  
And trust the alligators to take them across to my deep orchard  
Where the mariposas light up and glow like some vast and  
Religious holiday congregated and finally moving off of its  
Trails and footpaths,  
Realizing with some certainty that this place underneath the fireworks  
Of airplanes and Spanish gondolas  
Is where it certainly is supposed to belong.

Robert Rorabeck

## Where It Is Most Needed

Houses on rivers pirouetting just for the  
Reflections of their lovers,  
Housewives stuck in the snags of the high grasses  
Like torn kites,  
While rabbits snuffle the grasses;  
They eat the velvet thistles and they make no  
Corrections,  
The terrapins returning to the containers of  
Eucharist;  
You could say that they are touching themselves,  
If you listened to anything different than the young mouths  
Of rock `n roll,  
Like the splinter religions of this country,  
You think that your young gods are priceless, but they  
Are just hungry;  
And they want you mouth in the soft though tourist  
Light of the Castillo of Saint Marcos  
Where there is only saw grass, and I don't know  
How many of these disinfected heirlooms you've been with;  
And it shouldn't matter to me-  
When I barely stop at the rest stop, I cannot even begin to  
Look at my face;  
And I drive by you and around again like a bird enraptured  
By your flowers held by your favorite man;  
Soon you will be dying, you don't know; or maybe you  
Only need a rest and soon you will be sleeping,  
As this new cold front rolls in and pushes out the nimbus,  
Does away with any unnecessary imagination;  
As if mowing the stars,  
And you can wake up again and believe in anything you want to,  
Like the amnesias of a fire hydrant that doesn't have to stay  
Where it belongs,  
Or where it is most needed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where It Never Snows

Folded up into a showroom of our bodies:  
Boiling cadavers over spilling for pirates at the beach:  
Old words found on the lips of  
Trailer parks-  
She works on Mondays, and has no room for love,  
And we move alone being chased by a zoetrope of  
Our shadows,  
Everything we have to say, drunken, furtive  
And dismissed by the greater discoveries in the stars:  
Like any bit of desert out there in the barren spheres  
Between two adversaries:  
In a strange and meaningless path that her grandmother  
Had to cross, being led out by her special saints  
Into a new town to find a job  
And a place to keep her horse where it never snows.

Robert Rorabeck



## Where Its Prize Is Won

Spokes on bicycles  
Falling through her hair- as if birds  
Realizing they are on holiday,  
As the waves leap like dogs:  
And that they are real, when they travel  
Through the cathedrals of time,  
And she happens again to be there,  
Like a firework who is never done  
Clapping-  
And her interludes resonate- they look out  
Of the windows of her kindreds house,  
Where above her the sky is  
An apiary burning down the armpits  
Of the hemisphere,  
And then she swallows her pride and goes  
Out into all of the summer,  
While back inside the gold fish waits  
For her,  
A little prize with a littler heart,  
Like an enormous spoon that the fly spies,  
And drapes its multifaceted simplicity  
On the windowsill  
Where its prize is won.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where Lies The Lost Language Of God

Where lies the lost language of God, his affixed words  
Which were the things themselves, grown sour and  
Sweet things on vines off his tongue to trample down and  
Relax upon the infant earth and there to spread as God  
Directed them, his fingers spindling life through the rows  
And waves, new heads and sprouts arising inquisitive?

She is one of the words, I know, and the sea is another,  
I believe, and strung together make the first and the last,  
Mixed together they join into the unction of love spilled into hearts,  
And they sometimes lead to marriage and mortgage, but  
More often collapse into heartache and loneliness... And was  
God not distraught by these indomitable forces spat  
Out before they had time to be cooled and tempered  
To fit and lay beside him, as he lounged exhausted under  
The hot word sun, to be tamed beside the nude beasts of nature?

God, like the young  
Poet drunk on lemonade and beer, a waltzing seventeen  
Years old experimenting with his eyes on newly born  
Ladies' delectable parts, the pink sugars and powdery meats,  
To be stung by a sinister star spearing down, ,  
Did not yet know the wild  
Tempest wetted from his tongue and set loose like a  
Herd of primordial horses stampeding down the interstate.  
He had not the experience, a virgin to the feel of grass on  
His sandaled feet, a motherless thing yet to suckle from  
The pearlescent breast. Unable yet to fly, he had nothing to do but stare  
At the results of his gardening, and the succulent flow  
Made him come, but would not stop and lie beside  
Him lovingly as he had commanded.

I don't know, but he must have become lost under  
All that ragged time that soon trampled down on top of  
Him, not expecting the words to perpetuate themselves,  
The sad hungering, and the delighting of the devoured,  
With the words she and sea coming first and foremost,  
Mounting and surging in frothy combs, in sweaty female legs  
Undulating and bucking through a dangerous forest, sweeping him away,

feasting, drowning his perfect garden and brilliant swing-sets he had set too close to her

Raging shores, not realizing the moon was hers.

There with him went so many of his words,  
Drowned sailors and lost epitaphs to things yet unseen and  
Possibilities yet unrealized by the young benevolent, our  
Creator, to die so young, only 17, and in a death perpetuated  
From the grief of lost love cast in her sea which engulfs all  
Men ignorant enough to step into her shore when  
Her tides are writhing and her shoals are red. So, He must  
Sleep forever down deep in her coral beds, those later words  
He had yet to speak, those spells which would have come with maturity,  
Blinding cures and multicolored beasts of transformation  
Hidden in his breast, are never to seed and grow upon her earth,  
For now in his breathless chest those treasures lay dark and hinged,  
And none may know the vermillion splendors affixed in,  
The secrets her sea sways forever upon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where Love Is

Now there is no music,  
And of course you are here.  
You say the meanest things,  
And my body is sad for love of your  
Body,  
Or maybe since kindergarten I've made  
A terrible mistake,  
And I never found out what love is;  
I've just been on one long extended field-  
Trip eyes bugging out over the naked  
Still life in the painted arcades,  
Or the football stadiums;  
And I wanted to be profound for you,  
Wanted to crawl on my back up between the  
Pink-shell keystone of you breast,  
And say good things to your napes and stems,  
To see where your rivers started,  
To smell your wildflowers,  
And to lay my tongues on them;  
But you have found your pretty boys busting  
Bricks in other exhibits,  
And I can't seem to find your soul behind the blue  
Velvet forest fires of your eyes;  
And I guess nobody can tell me where love is....

Robert Rorabeck

# Where My Hope Can Be Found

The bottle is emptied as if your milk has dried,  
And I have been saying for so long it seems that I have  
Become an echo of myself,  
While the buses are still turning and returning home,  
Like woe begotten merry go rounds,  
And you can walk down the street and pick up your  
Children and taken them home  
While the sunlight hits and rebounds, and you cast your  
Eyes a little further across the esplanades of ground:  
Alma,  
But if you are not home, nor anywhere around,  
Then where, oh where, can my hope be found?

Robert Rorabeck

# Where My Sisters Live

They give it to me while whichever  
Way you've been smiling up beside the vaudeville  
And the theatre continuing down  
To the dungeons where the dwarves and the heirlooms  
Are dancing or whatever  
In the preposterous mines: and it becomes  
Like a photo in a school yard,  
And we all get so bummed out, that are school days  
Are so echoed,  
And the night is not filled with ribbons  
Are of plastic barrettes, but, otherwise,  
Our mouths are becoming so filled up and down  
The highways,  
And she loves me, or she loves by the ways that she  
Knows to love a gringo,  
And I call to her from the hallucinates blooming in  
The armpits underneath the cypress  
As if decorations for the egrets- and I love her,  
But this is just another song not happening to belong  
To the angels who haven't attended their gardens  
Anyways- this isn't even an echo,  
But the night continues on into the hubris of the quite  
Impossible volcanoes- as you attempt to summit  
Anyways, and the highways cross and cross through the  
Delusions of the populations of the desert,  
Where my father stores his fireworks and the  
Instruments of his dark and illustrious worship- or  
Where my sisters live, anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where No Flowers Can Grow

The parks fill with the cadmium lights on evil sparklers:  
Underneath the phosphorous sin,  
The phosphorating pinwheels of really American holidays,  
I can see the innocence that hasn't been banished,  
And so I go to the other side of the park and am alone:  
The swings have been removed, like the teeth of my love:  
How will I ever eat a candied apple again,  
How will I joust through the groves. Now in the light of day  
My parents are coming over to see my new house,  
But Sharon is still a young mother in Colorado: Listen to these  
Airplanes gliding like self-aware rain, touching down just  
As quietly as new lovers in a new bed,  
While the peonies blossom underfoot in the cages at the zoo,  
But they will soon be taken over by the cool semidarkness of  
The banyans; but it is even more beautiful where no flowers can grow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where No One Else Can Be Found

Voices of tourists,  
Miss matched song birds-  
The Mexicans are sleeping in the aloe  
Beside the carport,  
And I havent seen anything more beautiful-  
I can go along like this  
Like a little girl completely unaware  
That the sunshine loves her,  
Her shoulder blades innocent like  
The handles of a bicycle still hung up  
In a store somewhere,  
Waiting for a man to come around  
And take her to the sea and the places  
Where people meet under the ancient crossways,  
Until the words are spoken by the beautiful  
Godmother who will put the kingdom to sleep,  
And I will find a bed with you in a chamber  
Where no one else can be found.

Robert Rorabeck



# Where Nobody Really Belongs

Sad that no one is reading the songs or the odes,  
Sleeping in abandoned train cars,  
Eating their breakfast, kissing horny toads-  
And I am no longer in AZ-  
I am no longer anywhere, as I've been for so long  
Dreaming of beautiful jaundiced women, gazes scarred  
Like jetting stars,  
Sleeping alone; and when I leave my dogs howl,  
Even though I am not going anywhere- No matter  
Where I leave them, I am always around;  
And I want to get drunk,  
But I have to look for a job, and smile, and tell  
Them all about myself-worth, that even in strange  
Cities I can drive cars,  
I can get around and lean against the woods and see  
The shadows undressing themselves and making love;  
All the lost girls banter and tongue;  
And I give them a crooked, lazy smile, according to  
My face; but I do not tell their secrets,  
But if I smoked, I'd light a cigarette and burn a long  
Silent cherry,  
And appreciate them for having escaped the rat race,  
As the traffic perambulates along the driving roads  
Where nobody really belongs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where Only You And I Can Play

You need to leave him  
With the sun coming up  
And shooting through the sodden fields  
As if an angelic sorority  
Crossing the interstate;  
You need to lay off the  
Uneasy masks of  
Disney World,  
And take a seat at my plate,  
Into the amusements of empty  
Cathedrals  
Filled with the starvations of  
Your eyes  
Or the dreams of your forest  
Grown off the aquamarine esplanades  
I have dredged for you  
Stolen from and no  
Longer of mermaids  
And the temptations of amphibian  
Habitat;  
I will cross myself with the  
Most  
Majestic of harts,  
And come to you like stolen royalty  
And take you to the midways of  
Exemplary amusement,  
Where only you and I can play.

Robert Rorabeck

## Where She Becomes Quite Undone

As sure as there are contrivances in the moon,  
There is this,  
Or the confusion of the animals in the park all during school,  
When the sun becomes paradoxically estranged,  
And all over our mouths it slips its hopes into the packages  
Of our wounds,  
Just as I told Alma today that I would give her all of my blood,  
So she doesn't have to pay for anything  
When her children assume the world, and their eyes remember  
The fronteras of the sad ballrooms.  
And how they past away from all of Mexico, just so that  
Their parents could assume their dusty jobs  
To tackle each other again at night in their little rooms,  
Where she forgets all about me, where she becomes quite  
Undone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where She Belongs

Diana, I count old issues before I sleep,  
Before and while my mother is still watching me,  
And bending the ass I came out of to count the  
Trash;  
And we both live so near I-95 where the tourists  
Are still counting;  
And the days leap so far, Diana, to be aflame;  
Tomorrow I want to show you a copy of my book tomorrow.  
Diana,  
Because that is how desperate I am for your light;  
Diana:  
I get inebriated and count to myself to prove to myself that  
I can still breathe, while my sick muse Sharon has a baby who's  
About to turn one in Colorado;  
And her shade breathes with the penumbra of whatever moon  
It is;  
And maybe I love Kelly, who is this sweetly tattooed wife who  
Lives in a trailer instead of a house in the middle of many a cricketing  
Acre in the middle of Loxahatchee,  
Like a narcoleptic lover to the golf courses and to the ceiling fans;  
And tonight while I pretend to fold airplanes  
All to be closer to Kelly's lips, I dream of you as well,  
Even though you can't read poetry; even you my venal muse is filling the  
Frothy jubilees for the more cavaliers gods well above both  
Our heads,  
I will sing to you moving around in your truck of ice and reefer,  
Like something silky fine anthem from Antarctica who, I guess,  
Doesn't yet know where she belongs.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where That Must Leave Me

Two bodies, opposable-ly jarred  
Sequined by mud,  
The remunerations of the forget-me-nots of  
Their vanished children,  
Tasseled like silver comets still buzzing  
Around each other,  
Glowing-up at night like sticks in a fire;  
And they make love  
No longer fearing the population of the earth;  
The bicycles unused and asleep  
In the tool-shed.  
The rabbit asleep beside it, restive of heart,  
Not wearing any tennis shoes;  
And it's a good old world, perfectly done:  
There are tennis courts on the elbows,  
And money in the bank-  
While all your clay pots are waiting on shelves.  
Each one has a name,  
While you are with your husband in the first  
Numbers of this countdown-  
Not even thinking as your pinwheels finally cool,  
That you should finally come  
Down from harassing to the lake where my  
Parents sleep,  
And being like them, making love across the ripples  
Of sweet Colorado,  
Always waking up like flowers on the mend and  
Where that must leave me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where The Angels Whisper And The Faucets Run

Copper plated world filled to  
The gills with  
The hard evidence of the places  
I guess we have to go,  
To end up-  
Coming home again, touching down  
Just as the mirages of  
Airplanes,  
And all of this a busy place,  
Like minded,  
Filled with little hope: in spume of  
Words and roe,  
Like lights out in the quieted streets,  
Like venison still with beating  
Hearts  
Newly born and walking down to your  
Pretty house  
Where you haven't guessed yet that I love  
You,  
As I lay out in your yard underneath  
The heavens, waiting to  
Be the metamorphosis of anything,  
Drooling with the crickets  
Underneath the mailboxes- the jasmine make  
A necklace of perfume,  
And in the morning the roman candles will  
Bloom,  
And each of the comely housewives will grab  
Their keys and strut across their  
Yards,  
Their children will go again to schools:  
And I will teach them underneath the sun,  
The very sun where the angels whisper  
And the faucets run.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where The Beautiful Girls Are Always Flying

I still live underneath the flight paths of  
So many vagabonding airplanes:  
Like a sorority of silver bellied girls who get up  
Every morning knowing exactly what they  
Do:  
They start out and then they go: they seem to  
Fly to New York  
Through their sky of ice and snow:  
And the sun warms them and curls their  
Hair like a lover,  
While down below we sell produce and knickknacks  
Beside the river- and our days seem long,  
But sooner are later we go away anonymous-  
Our dreams spread out of our breathing  
And disappear without anymore alarm or amusement  
Into the sky where the beautiful girls  
Are always flying

Robert Rorabeck

# Where The Bicycles Lay All Sleepy

I can start out a new:

I can stare far out the windows of a beating class

As the rain comes,

As you have stepped up and pushed back your chair

And taken off:

Then the school is darkened and quiet and doesn't

Use any lights,

And the easements are no longer giddied but filled up

To the brim with mallards either fornicating

Or being fed upon by the horn backed alligators;

And maybe I slept under some bus that day you were

Kissing him,

And he was telling you the better words of mute children

Or blinded carpenters,

The sun just a spear gutting the side of that

Courtyard

Where the bicycles lay all sleepy and naked and the world

Swelled all together and bloomed as if there was

An orchestra playing in time to your physical education.

Robert Rorabeck



# Where The Devils Creased

If I have existed forever, I have only been remembered  
In the writings of love,  
Then the horses stand still when it snows, and the moon is  
Covered up while she is cold by  
Furtive blankets; and then it feels this way all across the  
World,  
That the virgins are crying for the wild flowers again,  
Because in the highness of the patriotic basins,  
Only the flash pan of the silver pot bellied airplanes are  
Leaping,  
And each stewardess inside their winged lamps just  
As callous as a math or gym teacher from second grade:  
Except that for somewhere beyond her extend,  
And through the wilderness and wild trash of finished  
Baseball games, she really exists:  
She is maybe even right there over the railroad tracks:  
Even while she, your muse, your Alma, told you today that  
She had never ridden in a train;  
And you told her the story of how you took one to Washington  
DC in Fifth grade:  
Then you held hands with her all the way in the car, until  
Her man called and she had to go home, and prepare the feast  
That her family would enjoy even after the fires had died,  
And all of the horses had wandered off, and disappeared  
Into the wilderness that seemed to envelop where the devils creased.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where The Jet Engines Crisscross The Spaceshuttles

If it rained over your lips as you kissed  
Him outside a beautiful house  
That was not yours, I would not tell a lie-  
Underneath the rafters and the solar  
Flairs making our  
Star look as if it were an arachnid full of changing  
Space, in the black web of  
Blackness:  
But I would hold you there, in my delusion  
Out beside the pretty canal  
The unicorns came to drink from: why aren't  
They just right there:  
As the cars stop so they can take pictures-  
And the jet engines crisscross the space shuttles  
Until they woven a quilt in the very air-  
And I wanted to call for my grandmother to come  
And see this but I am afraid that she's gone off  
And died somewhere.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where The Mermaids Have Been Sleeping

Each pinwheel burns across a new caesura:

They say this is where the mermaids have been sleeping,  
Bathing in the foam underneath the pomegranate crosses:

But that the men who came to love them

Having crossed the ocean—

It is not enough: checking the window, there is no airplane:

They bathe there feral outside of school forever:

They know nothing of cul-de-sacs singing sweetly inside

Of vermilion suburbias: they only know that all of that

Has been made up:

The busses turning around pretending to believe in butterflies—

The fairies who hold clitoral orgasms in the apexes of their wings:

What do they know of business:

All of theirs is the fanfare—everywhere like pollen over the fields

Of a holiday—maybe they will even fire the poor boys tomorrow,

But, at least, they will never have to grow up—

If this is what is real: concrete, and professions, and dead ends,

Then let tomorrow be a hidden thing,

And the beautiful spirits grow in the grottos underneath the cypresses

That lactate their pollens bell tides to an ocean who knows

All of their names.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where The Sky Whistles

Let's get out of here and go  
To where the sky whistles,  
Where even now she is getting laid  
In places beautiful,  
Where the waves rile their parade,  
And the sky exonerates in humid scepters:  
This, through the succession of underpasses  
In epileptic reoccurrence,  
Where helicopters float as dreamy wasps  
Above the orchards of round and fragrant citrus,  
Above the limestone where she whispers,  
The wheels beneath us doing their empirical  
Cessations- Oh, there are tourists wearing  
Their moribund corpulence,  
And fine young navy men singing their  
Jingoisms, and white haired men selling  
Ice-cream in the cross's wispy shadow,  
but the lips of one thing surrender  
To the lip of the other, and slip beneath her  
As she pleases, and live with her there in  
Innumerable caresses in the shallows,  
Cradles for the teaming of gilled children,  
And this poem gives little answer to all the  
Waves which lull their slumber,  
But let us go and sit and wonder where they  
Make love inside their bed of lucid spittle,  
And make things up in puckish kisses,  
Where the land ceases its existence, in  
Keen mirages falling like unclothed wrapping,  
Here is where we should sit to name our children,  
Our lips mirror sea and shore,  
And the sky is whistling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where The Super Heroes Fail

Coming swiftly towards Christmas while  
All of the boats and their  
Pirates swing-  
And the oceans look so beautiful, whilst the rose  
Bushes are all awash-  
And the forts of your harems are always so beautiful  
That their colors cannot even be described,  
But they keep to themselves,  
And keep flying their unsundered flags  
Underneath the heavens whilst I search for  
My own home,  
As the sea swells and becomes too beautiful and  
Doesn't even care,  
As my sisters travel further and further away from  
Me,  
As you keep your mouth to my ear, and keep  
Wanting to promise me "promises, "  
Forcing me to spend the weekends alone-  
Getting massages,  
And losing all of my faiths as the sea swells,  
And the airplanes fly higher and higher, managing themselves,  
And trying to keep up the witchcrafts- whilst, eventually,  
I cannot even bother,  
As the sunlight burns forever through the windows of  
Trailer parks, and the evil I know just gets more  
Evil- and the super heroes fail while we all travel back  
Again to the shadowy passages of another school.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where There Lovers Seem To Go

Even when there is a stage of eyes made into an  
Ocean of tears—  
And the sword fish metamorphosize into the beaten breasts  
Of waves  
Underneath the armless clocks of sky—  
Even there—from the windows of the zoos, the peacocks  
See—lighting around them their fan's body—  
Like a Ferris Wheel in a verdant cage—  
Trying to distract her attention even after she has evaporated,  
Becoming another man's bride—  
As the swordfish flash their bills to an innocence  
Gone before to the horizon—  
Where their lovers seem to go as they are left behind

Robert Rorabeck

# Where They Belong

This has to happen sometime, with the sun coming up:  
The working girls exhausted like the nocturnal blooms of  
Cesspool weeping flowers  
Underneath the hangnails of the moon  
Who has collected so many wimble bellies of weightless  
Cosmo naught s  
The curious angels flaunt around like comely goldfish  
Above the apple orchards and the forts who smear  
Their wreaths into the sea;  
And it goes so far away until the first inklings of the morning's  
School day comes up and shows the weariness in the surface  
Of trailer parks:  
Mickey Mouse who lays off the whores, and gets to fitting himself  
Back on,  
And the carnival takes to the road again, like hungry, dirty  
Butterflies just trying to figure out where they belong.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where They Were Bound

All in a place of fealty let off of monsters,  
Kissing though breathless like  
Deep purple lilies,  
Like a brother and a sister who never knew,  
And a sword that sang up through the jungles  
And eucatastrophes,  
Every teardrop of a waterfall that hummed until  
The blood has stopped weeping  
From the wound,  
And the body laid empty, like cenotaph,  
Like tomb;  
And the night around the school buses caracoled  
While the mountains rose up  
The oldest of old,  
And the murder underneath the rose thorns was  
Never solved,  
I just looked up into your eyes until I saw that she did  
Not love me,  
She did not love me, even though she kept her brown  
Hours around my ghostly town,  
Like the ghosts of sailors who finally laid up against  
The whitewash of a lighthouse:  
Their souls, their almas no longer safe, but restless,  
As if they were the butterflies courting back to Mexico;  
Or even after that:  
Who knows where they were bound.

Robert Rorabeck



# Where To Find Her Next Meal

Some casualties are stolen by the wind:  
That is when the busses pick up, and the baseball players  
Start swigging their gin,  
That is when the loam in her throat starts burning the notes,  
Like a weathervane across the old valley's moat:  
This is where I've swung for you, and stretched my fattened  
Body towards your holidays;  
And this is where you've sighed for me, as the wind brushed  
The mowed sod blanketing a comely grave:  
And where I failed in the repeated motions, the way a headless  
Chicken starves out in the tundra before the eyes  
Of a heavily sated mountain lion, blue and lucky anyways,  
Purring as she knows where to find her next meal.

Robert Rorabeck

## Where To Look

Call now down the boy from his dreams,  
Because the day itself is weary and the school yard  
Is going away,  
Like a vase of flowers emptied;  
And aren't you at your window, looking so good:  
Maybe somewhere over your shoulder the music  
Is playing you recorded yourself,  
As if a fish from its thoughts; and you are calling  
All the pretty birds to your father's  
Ornithology: And I haven't forgotten you:  
I've even been stealing bicycles for you; and I've  
Met Orson Wells, and been to the planetarium  
In the middle of my lunch break. I didn't once look for the  
Waves,  
But caught you in the distant hemispheres, opening your  
Window and undressing in your boudoir for all the world  
To see,  
Like Mary in her heavenly grotto while all the birds were  
Singing. Crossed by intersections.  
Your holy image shows up everywhere we drive;  
And at nights right smack dap in the boulevard your penumbra  
Is in its holy suite; and I care all about you and wish  
To show my friends, if they only knew where to look.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where You Are

Where you are  
The space between me and you  
The platterless green table  
Devoid of edges and silver wear  
The dead vermilion sea our eyes  
Look across but never meet—  
Upon the void of casual living,  
You lay yourself down for a man  
With casual hands, who keeps you  
Timed with a stopwatch  
On a tiny plot of sodden land;

Your house is on the corner  
By which other cars divide  
Into tiny white tombstone  
Homes like yours,  
With one cypress tree in the front yard,  
Lonely and confused,  
You walk your toy dog back and forth—  
Never thinking of staring  
For the length of a TV show  
At the corrugated pink underbelly  
Of the clouds wrangled in off  
The invisible sea,  
Or to walk down the green embankment  
To stare at the sopophoric alligator  
Who, if you feed it your hand,  
Will tell you my name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where You Wish To Be

My head in its amusements, a castaway not caring  
What the crazy thoughts it might jig;  
Going like the splendid cut-throat light amidst the  
Caesuras; Sharon, aren't you reading this-  
Cut-throat bouquets of piratical jargon- it is fun,  
Sharon:  
I wish you could share in what I am doing, Sharon,  
Cosmonaut: I know who you are- I know beauty,  
I have really, really been to mars:  
F\$ck all my sisters and my great uncles, they just know  
Animals the judges of this species; but we are really something  
Sharon,  
And we can take Erin along as a kick-throat spell, like  
Going along together for a very long while, a fairy-tale first  
Along through the aloe an then through the very unending  
Desert of lieutenants and petroleum jelly:  
Like jelly-fish, we can't have no feeling except for what we  
Can kill- what we can dispel; and I am already some sort  
Of homely god, lost without directions or lights of traffic  
To kill;  
It is the best place to be without the lights fall on my face,  
Sharon, and you could be here if you were more sensitive,  
And now all the word is a verb with a fin:  
Sharon, Sharon, Sharon: your breath is just a kicking-globe,  
And how does your child feel: going into the deep cauldrons  
Of red-lipped valleys,  
And I would like to say your child's name while she tugs  
Away at your breasts, Sharon.  
Which one does she prefer, but that would be too unfair,  
Sharon- that would be too surreal, while my dogs howl,  
Sharon, Sharon:  
I would change your tires, I would set you happily again along  
You way through the Indian casinos through the headless pines,  
The depthless estuaries, Sharon  
If that is where you are- If that is where you wish to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where Your Gold Is Buried

No honey on the lake of concrete:  
A yard of concrete costs a buck, and you can  
Cover all of the beautiful vineyard  
For a penny,  
And the entire hills will roll like a marble  
Arcade,  
But I still wish I was in Colorado,  
Stealing a beautiful mother,  
Going to get laid;  
And I loved- I loved a bird.  
I loved a salamander, so long I loved:  
Atop the apexes of rotting houses,  
I loved,  
Alone: Mermaids and naked creatures undressed  
Of exoskeletons,  
Screaming for the pot and without guns or  
Belt buckles;  
And nothing but the night is still waiting for me,  
And the swings are waiting to take me nearer  
The pine trees' ankles,  
While a housewife in South Africa loves me,  
And I her:  
And I love the gentle tears you might shed if you  
Ever thought to climb high enough to get to  
Where I've been,  
Sharon,  
Riding the narrow gauge backs of slender trains,  
Sharon,  
Because you are the only good muse I know,  
And I want to make love to you inside blue tents,  
While hiding a lamp close to your  
Choreographed backside as it leaps like a fairytale,  
Because I am mystified by every river of your being,  
And I most earnestly wish to know  
Where your gold is buried.

Robert Rorabeck

# Where Your Paper Angels Turned

Pomegranates growing outside of the  
Orange and yellow flea markets:  
But you will never forget about me,  
How I brushed your sugar cane shoulders with  
My astral fingers,  
And made you come out loud like a full color  
Television turned to its highest volume:  
Made you scream through the minuets  
As the girls high school volley ball team was  
Playing a tournament-  
Made you weep and orgasms right on the rug  
Of your childhood living room,  
Made you sweat and beat your breasts  
Right up to the ceiling fans,  
Where your paper angels turned around in  
Dunned moats: but eventually they came down,  
And rested quite perpetually underneath your  
Sweat and tears.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wherever We Wished

All the picture books have told you that you  
Have been in a triumph of Sabbath schools for so long  
That you can't remember the park where we swung:  
With our instruments down our spines, and our dice  
In liquor sacks  
And the mice running in between the smooth, lucky stones  
Of our tracks;  
And the world glittered; and the world shone,  
And there wasn't an officer around who could send us home:  
And the pine trees spoke to us, and the moon gave us fish,  
I asked you to look at me and then we glided in tandem off to  
Sleep,  
And the waves lapped like mouthy kittens their milk from  
The dish,  
And the trailers came bringing new homes like seashells where  
Diminutive mermaids lived; and they combed their hair  
And fit into our pockets;  
And we took them along with us wherever we wished.

Robert Rorabeck

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Robert Rorabeck

## Which Flower Is This

Which flower is this? They don't have penny Candy  
Anymore- They have plenty of dollar stores  
With dollar candy, which used to be penny candy:  
They aren't accepting applications; they've got a stack  
Of them so high,  
The skyscrapers cause falls of shadows in the heart of  
A Midwestern city,  
But not enough time: I write this because I brag I  
Gave a hobo all my pennies today,  
Two fifty cent pieces I stole from home:  
They were both worth fifty cents;  
He can buy a little beer. Look at the scars on  
This side of my face, mirror- Now look away;  
And I haven't been to visit your grave, I'm sorry;  
I'm too depressed to get out the door- Its too long a drive  
Now that you're my neighbor, honey-  
Those silent green neighborhoods they don't make anymore.  
Now its all cemeteries:  
Like Viking Kings in their houses, what great dogs  
And chattel rubbed together it makes for  
Slender tourism: I've seen her jogging everywhere, and her  
Hair cascades the autumn where so many leaves sleep  
Upon my floor.

Robert Rorabeck

# Which Is What You Are

Flowers who close their blue eyes at night,  
Stems who quiver like strings and the wind the bow:  
I have seen you there sleeping too,  
The sky a fire of untouchable passion, and the waves beside  
You, like dogs beckoned to your knees:  
And right now you are for real in the tall grass, shoeless,  
Spectacle of anemic crosses in your ears;  
And maybe tiny lights come on above you in the fiberboard,  
And the ceiling fans spin like the roulette wheels  
Of domesticated hallucinations:  
Your new tattoos curl across the overpass of your ankle,  
And your husband sleeps beside you too:  
The bb gun is propped up in your oldest child's room;  
And they all dream of differently similar things than you:  
This is your family in the wildfire grotto of your eyes,  
Unperceiving, though breathed from your womb;  
And I have tried so many times to justify myself to you,  
Waking up, yawning and kidnapped with new scars and complexes:  
The high rises fall like penitent sinners, and you close your eyes,  
Though your eyes were already incredibly far away;  
And new men come toward you repeatedly, allowing you to either  
Pass or exit;  
But your marriage remains in the tall grass that you stepped barefoot  
Through, nearing the rattlesnake in its semipermeable cocoon:  
I waited for it to strike you, but it only reached out as if it had  
Lips,  
And it kissed the flower on your ankle, and from its unpromised  
Poison,  
The butterfly resumed while you were sleeping, and the stars twinkled,  
And divided like the mitosis of starfish,  
Which is what they were named after anyways; and which is what  
You are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Which Makes Me The Boss

Undying pinafores, I was worshipping you, I said  
The pledge of allegiance to you from atop our mountain,  
While the rains cried cheekily all week;  
And I hadn't written poems to you the last two days  
Of this sodden week;  
But now the deluge it comes like a surprise, like kittens  
On your birthday; I guess I wanted to live forever,  
And I guess I will:  
My grandfather wanted to live forever, but now he is gone:  
My grandfather is gone, he could not last,  
He disappears like smoking diesel underneath the  
Crenulated overpass; and he wanted to build a house,  
And he wanted to last- His wife was young and  
Christian- and all of my aunts and uncles have so many  
Children-  
But that is not important; it is important that these words  
Should grow and come again, should worship their  
Own heads after the green, green frost, should masturbate  
Alone without any tourists,  
And in the savage green sea get tossed; and now I have bested  
Him: my father, my grandfather; and I am lost;  
And the sea is sea-green and teal with envy-  
And who do I love, I don't know- I am lost; I am not  
Even who I once was, but who cares:  
I will live forever- I will live forever,  
Which makes me the boss.

Robert Rorabeck

# Which One Of Us Was In Charge

I groped her body like a blind gardener;  
And she was yet too taught to have any children or  
To have drunken much liquor,  
So I imagine that tomorrow she will be shopping,  
A pretty flower right next to the fine and opulent  
Shore; and it can go on forever  
That one body next to the fine and opulent shore,  
While the trees are all bent and leeward:  
So that the children of innocent young mothers can  
Play and lean upon them,  
And even yet exercise their animals upon them  
With periods of alligators through the mowed grass  
And airplanes in the sky;  
And if you were to search out there tomorrow you  
Would find me out there almost nude in the pale green  
Underlying of that almost infinite sky;  
And we could make love together while the motors  
Didn't question us with their cylinders or barbs;  
And the greater emperors or grandmothers wouldn't have  
To reawaken from their graves to question us  
About which one of us was in charge.

Robert Rorabeck

# Which Way To Land

Into the heroisms of  
Bright tenements,  
I find myself dying,  
Scarred and  
Effaced again,  
While I see you in  
The effigy of his  
Mexican relationship, who from  
Your tawny kiln  
Has produced both  
Of your children,  
Who came out to suckle off  
Your mud,  
The way fireworks gurgle  
In brown sin; until like mud pies  
For baby dolls left out in  
The sill to tempt  
Mockingbirds,  
You leave that continent and return  
Quite faithfully with olive branches in  
Your teeth  
To show me which way to land.

Robert Rorabeck

# Which Yet May Be Real

Now does the spider dream of me,  
As I dream of him,  
The poisonous expectation set up shop in  
The bends of cemented plumbing, vibrating  
Around the knees of the pump house's tinned hum;  
Or, like me, is he unable to conceive the ambitions  
Of higher men as they reach the summit of petroleum,  
As we go down the other side like lost children  
Just learning to walk, as I spill out reckless novels  
For a half hour a day, as excuses for my hours  
Of self-inebriated recreations,  
Though surely I continue to conceive him spun in  
That diminutive world, waiting for the monsoons to  
Grow the flies,  
Just as many legs as her, the galloping centipede,  
The ambitious love with honey-split lips, though how  
Can I know of her except that she busies me in  
Unwanted sleep, and I keep up on her with my words,  
Like spindles of love from a hypothetical thorax,  
Just as the spider weeps a life on lesser fluids,  
Weary of the multitudinous cannibalism of his offspring,  
So I see him resting there in the dryness of his cove,  
While mothers wash and wash the clothes, just as their  
Children, until they are sure that these are clean, and smell  
So- But if they saw him as I did, would they not call for  
His extinction, only because they smell as soap and lavender,  
And have not yet perceived him watching me in fitful conception  
Of slumbering wounds, as I behold him steadily in kind,  
Assuring one another that we are the halves of the complexity  
Which yet may be real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Which You Have So Faithfully Have Strayed

A casual touch to be the end of me, like the purring of  
A ghost:  
I carried your cigarettes to the cemetery, and you were  
The most utmost;  
But you could not linger in my dally,  
Weren't your eyes made of far away:  
Weren't they just as newly painted as the happenstance of  
An all of a sudden story,  
And I will not say your name to save me:  
My joy was the joy of a firework making for a moment  
The curb brilliant,  
Making even the most religious of mailmen hesitate:  
All of these colors foaming and sizzling down into your  
Hot plate;  
And this was just you out there in the outstanding cold,  
Lost for a little while pressed to the jubilee of a needy child at  
His favorite game:  
Hot and wild, until my paper flamed and curled,  
And all that I loved darkened and mewed to you, which made  
You realize that I wasn't your favorite,  
And that this wasn't even real, and that you had a home,  
And a father whose warmth was even more certain than the empty  
Darkness to which you  
No longer linger, from which you so faithfully have strayed.

Robert Rorabeck



# Which You Will Eventually Have To Eat

Alma: you are not wounded:

You came from Guerra Mexico like a monarch butterfly

Who had forgotten what it was

Seven years ago:

You've been here as long as I should have been celibate,

Biting my lip and playing video games with the moon,

While you made love to your sometimes husband and brought

Two children into the world:

Michael and Heidi,

And I don't know exactly where you live, only that it is

Very near here and with your parents: I know you already have

Papers, but not if you can vote; but that means if you

Have any sort of use for me it would be out of consideration,

Or that I have promised you my new little house near the sea

And a tandem bicycle:

I told you I was published, but that was just to make you think I

Was macho, but not macho like your husband who didn't

Want you to finish nursing school;

And that is why you were separated for two years, but macho like

A fish basking in the shallows of your nearly ochre eyes,

Because you love scary movies, even if you said you were only

Playing

And you didn't accept my bouquet of gladiolas tonight, the purple ones;

But you did accept the little potted flower which I don't know the

Name for, and you had the audacity to ask me what kind of

Shade it liked when you knew the only thing I am really good

At is selling fireworks;

But you are very good medicine for me Alma, and you are truly beautiful:

You really are a vibrant mariposa, and vermillion,

Because green is your favorite color; and you are helping me to forget

The other mariposa who drive lunch trucks or who disappear into

Tennessee and Colorado;

Even if you do have two children cooing in the basins of your parents'

Carports; and even if I am not really beautiful enough for you.

At least I will always know that your favorite color is green,

And you love the two rabbits one of which you promised to name after me;

Both of which you will eventually have to eat.



# While Everyone Decides What To Do

Made for the green terraces, with the sorority of moons  
Above the unicorns,  
Grazing- grazing and purple throated- what frogs and  
Princes there are watching them,  
Ululating in the imaginations of shell and rebar,  
Your mother in the grotto  
Or the carport, barely even twenty- and she is sweating over  
That machine, swearing and crossing herself  
For your father to come home, skipping across the skulls  
And bones,  
The cenotaphs and pornographies of conquistadors and  
Abandoned school girls, just so that she can feel okay-  
The sound of her work so furious she cannot even  
Hear the warning of the rattlesnake  
As it comes out across orange extensions cords,  
Wanting to kiss her too,  
To put a vile of venomous pearl beneath her knee,  
And then it rains, while everyone decides what to do.

Robert Rorabeck

# While Feeding Its Young

Flowers who can never exist in sandboxes:

What are they looking up to now, with the world of make believe  
And little fingers surrounding them,  
The imprints of a game that the wind takes away,  
Arousing the stewardesses as they turn around like a game of  
Prizes at the midway,  
Or sudden fires from the small lips of bottles, cantankerous  
But fickle under the moonlight of a playground,  
Are good for only one kiss,  
Dripping the mocking lamentations like the insincere love songs  
Of a bird  
Who, dripping its wings across the surf of ant lions,  
Is only on the search for pretty things,  
To diadem its brambly carriages, back at home where it does its  
Best jobs while feeding its young.

Robert Rorabeck

# While I Am More Beautiful Than Enough

Night slips through my hidden sorrows and I enjoy  
This new pain:  
It comes up to me like panthers wanting a free meal, and I  
Only having my tired body:  
Really, Erin, what did you expect of me, if you are still reading  
This painted stuff:  
That I was celibate for almost seven years, and now I'm going to  
Get my muff; and that I saved up a pretty time for you,  
While you didn't return my calls:  
Did you expect that I would spend it all in the aquarium of the  
Last paganisms of a final Catholic school in Missouri?  
I hardly had enough, Erin: Erin:  
So follow your fire engine boys and blow hard, hard, Erin:  
Because your beauty hardly is enough, but I can still remember you  
From high school Latin, Erin, blowing hard:  
You are rightly beautiful, but you are hardly beautiful enough to shine my  
Horse, Erin,  
While I am more beautiful than enough.

Robert Rorabeck

# While In The Sky

Blue wood:

He says he made it for my mother,

But I can tell he is lying:

He chanced upon it,

Or he stole it- and it is not for her:

It is for him-

But the carport is for her,

Barefooted- the open chord, orange-

Throated,

Will sting her lying there in Pieta-

And that will be her grotto

That he rents,

But not for her:

And when it rains, the canals will

Overspill,

And her children will come and go-

At first from elementary and

Then from high school,

And the heavens will linger for

A little while in the sky-

And he will say they are for her,

But I am sure they are not even his to give away.

Robert Rorabeck

# While It Moves Away

Mitts of hidden roses to play baseball,  
Oracular hollows in the woods for the eyes of  
Boyfriends to see your steaming fires,  
Your hair as black as frightened octopus,  
The liquors of your amber skin,  
Diana- The park of your natural beauty is filled  
With the molar pillars that can have no rest-  
Truants are always smoking and ejaculating within  
The bunches of your spikenard midst;  
And you came to the fruiteria on Saturday when it  
Was spitting raining, with your boyfriend,  
And asked for me, only you called me guapo hombre,  
Your handsome man- Not even my own mother  
Would believe your kindness; and how am I to love  
You tomorrow after tonight I have pitifully described your  
Parks and estuaries and your boyfriend who flits there  
The like king of your huckleberries,  
When this is a dream that will be hung-over when the liquor  
Is finished; and when I see you tomorrow I want to give  
You all the flowers we sell,  
While the traffic runs so prettily; it runs on and on,  
But how should your body then move when it realizes how  
It fully occupies the body of my hapless souls-  
Will it be just as migratory as a gallery as I already know:  
Will you take all the roses that I know to give you:  
On its pretty fine-ass wheels, will it moves away with my soul....

Robert Rorabeck

# While My Heart, The Slave

They have some plan to cut the uncircumcised cake  
Far back into an estuary or a glade  
In the forest underneath the overpass where the bums and winos  
Are all passed out from doing the same exact thing  
On furniture your Lebanese carpenters have  
Discarded:  
And there is a plutonium factory here at the end of the hall  
After so many windows that they have shut down and turned into  
A fireworks factory:  
So all now they turn out is whistling cuckoos that end with a  
Bang into the night anyways,  
While you have taken off all of our clothes and slipped into  
The sheets in the grotto of your bed,  
Already well supposing that you are some man's muse:  
In a warm and quiet place, as steadfast as a grave:  
Their he rests beside you: your jailor: Alma- while my heart,  
The slave.

Robert Rorabeck



# While My Wife Takes A Shower

While my wife takes a shower,  
Brushes her teeth,  
I get drunk—it is almost all of the time  
I have—this watermelon field of Disney  
World is almost over—  
My mom is calling;  
It sounds like oblivions—  
Tonight or tomorrow my very first  
Child will be born—  
Don't you know wherever it is I will have to  
Take him  
While the daylight of my childhood  
Remains upon the last elbow of  
Another kaleidoscope of my vanished  
Bachelorhood—  
Now don't you see that I have to survive like  
This, no longer looking beautiful,  
And having to accentuate my gut:  
Now it feels as if I have to write my latest and  
Strongest mews,  
While of it sounds like echoes of elbows touching:  
And this is all that I have for tonight  
Or forever  
While the vampires are practicing their  
Espionage to the werewolves of the forest—  
I have loved you for a little while,  
Anyways—but now, I am sad to say, this is all  
That was made to happen.

Robert Rorabeck

# While Our Eyes Are Closed

My son is here beside me-  
My half-blood son,  
Naked-  
The stone is sleeping,  
And soon my son will sleep.  
Outside,  
All of Shanghai is naked  
And making excuses for  
The way the world is turning-  
The planes are sunken,  
And my father in law is having  
An operation tomorrow-  
My birthday-  
For now, all of the lights  
Are turned out  
And the quiet intrudes-  
All of the daylight's fondlings  
Through the daytime's interludes-  
And I think about my blue collar  
Job on the otherside of  
The world,  
Something I cannot be excused from,  
And the poem I just lost-  
As the night opens its romance  
For strangers down upon the street-  
My son goes to sleep in a room  
Beside mine-  
The lights go out,  
As our hearts, close together, like  
The circus, move to another town  
While our eyes are closed.

Robert Rorabeck

# While She Is Crying

I watch the alley cats' ablutions  
Next to the fire hydrant-  
Not knowing what it is, except that it is peaceful-  
And for Christmas they will eat  
Discarded turkey and  
Swordfish-  
And in their dreams, great cicadas as tall as  
Red woods,  
And stewardesses as grand as giants to love them,  
And let them indoors  
To give them unending saucers of strawberry milk  
And sing songs to them that they  
Can understand beneath the greater and lesser  
Heavens  
And her planets who come as gallantly as gallants,  
Singing her songs and  
Slaying her witches- and ringing about her  
In unending lessons of servitude and  
Virtue- but she will love them less than the alley cats:  
And she will let them go,  
While she will keep them- and they will bestow upon  
Her luck and virtue,  
And keep her bed so warm even through the nights  
While she is crying.

Robert Rorabeck

# While The Orchard Sings

I very much appreciate breathing in the shadowed  
Real-estate of your distance:  
All the cars seem to be buzzing upward satisfied in their  
Air-conditioning, while I get quotes on house insurance:  
I drive past golden lions to look at my yellow house sleeping like  
A mariposa fat and sated, escaped from the zoo  
Where I grew up as a little boy; and then I had to matriculate into  
Highschool, and I had to see you- and it really busted me up:  
Now I am a minor poet destitute from the red bricks of state university:  
Gone from the gong shows of the sweet titted sororities and all of their  
Hosts:  
I used to jog the graveyard shift all around your university, Sharon;  
And I thought of you creased in the armpits of love letters while I slept  
With a woman who could never know how to really sleep with me;  
And the wind whistled your name, Sharon;  
And I have hidden beautiful heirlooms in the wombs of trees that you  
Will never find, which would have been the secret marriage of my  
Love if you ever skipped out of class and smelled the resin on my baking  
Blocks, Sharon:  
Now I have a house which is a perfect miniature of the Alamo, and I can  
Bicycle down to the sea any arbitrary evening and kiss her mouth instead  
Of yours;  
While all the lucky cats are dying, and the housewives sleep in the unlucky  
Guts of the harpooned albatrosses, and the numbers for all of these  
Crimes come with the territory, I still whistle for you like a day laborer  
Out in the fine morning, his fingers numbed and fibrillating  
Excited if hardly paid for his picking time; while the orchard sings and  
Vibrates in your beautiful name.

Robert Rorabeck

# While The Tadpoles Metamorphosis

Here in the twilit distance of nothing that was ever  
Perfect,  
I hold your head against the ancient walls that cry with your  
Spanish decrees:  
That you were my first and only muse that I have made love  
To,  
And this, and now this:  
The terrapin poking its head from the shell, as if from a bowling  
Alley,  
While your kids wonder and kiss the green arcades of nothing  
That you have given to them,  
Under the sun or your roof that I once made a bed out of, Alma;  
And now all of this is floating like protoplasm,  
Like the matters over our heads that can never be explained,  
Like Christmas presents or the satyrs that can never be real,  
But the airplanes come,  
And the dogs chase the perfumes of your runny legs in the park,  
And it is okay to be afraid, Alma;  
And now this; and if I hold your lips up next to me and drink  
While the tadpoles metamorphosis; why then, now everything.

Robert Rorabeck

# While The Waterfountains Await Your Lips

Imperfections waiting there,  
And in the hall:  
All of the locker combinations, and my father  
Wants to borrow more:  
And here I am drinking alone, lingering,  
Remembering Sharon in the sunlight of fire drill-  
The places that will not fill,  
Except that Alma is so brown, and she has become the  
Amber fire of my town,  
Licking the school houses and the elbows of  
Sweet things that even now fail to move,  
While the water fountains await your lips or mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# While The Wine Glasses Shatter

I can smell my belly-button coming undone;  
Its what turned my ex-girlfriend off me,  
So she went to other resorts,  
Exclusively Jewish with belly-buttons not  
Deep enough to attract the dogs;  
And I have begun to think about that more,  
How the skin is like an entire sheet that wraps  
Up something otherwise unsavory;  
And how my skin is coming off, and I am  
Becoming the monster outside of society,  
Not invited into the loci of heroes and their  
Cupbearers, the fine locks, the powdered breasts:  
People who dress up on Friday night and pay for  
Dinners, and smile, and say now if the food was good,  
Or if it was not good they find someone to replace it  
With better food. I cannot say that I know these people,  
But I imagine each of their belly buttons, tightly wound,  
Attributing to their prosperous accords. Tomorrow I  
Will be able to fit two fingers into my belly button,  
In a month my fist, so that by New Years, my stomach will  
Be nothing more than a rippling sheet with a frayed hole,  
And beneath it all that stench, the moaning wound,  
And the scars I have there from rock climbing and  
Chickenpox, they will fly away with the rest of me when  
There is a strong wind, if I forget about the dangers of the  
Beach: I will go with the kites, and my major organ will fly  
On its own, and the rest of me will sit down and ponder  
A grave that doesn't yet exist, while the wine glasses shatter,  
As the women scream.

Robert Rorabeck

# While They Are Away

What word to begin with to cross the fjord  
Of troublingly planted anthems:  
There they are waving like a sea of grass, like  
Girls in bells or  
Poisonous tulips;  
And I can hear the truck coming even now,  
Coming to pick me up and take me off to work or  
School;  
But down there the dragon sleeps in his quiet and  
Tiny sororities;  
Sleeps with the colonies of water flutes:  
He wake up and divides and all day long the dwarves  
Bring him his gold,  
And thieves tell him where he can find things:  
All day long he doesn't even open an eye, all cool  
And green and wimbled  
Like water chestnuts-  
So very sly and comfortable is this mighty king  
In his shady hold,  
That he doesn't even mind that I've been peeking down  
Into the cracks of a highway's well just to  
Get an envious vision of his court;  
For even I begin imaging what I he needs from me  
While I close my eyes through the tightly vested lectures  
Of arithmetic and green lawnmowers;  
How I might go down to him and appease him  
And bring him gifts of approach to become mutual in the steep  
Valley of his wonderful truancy,  
Maybe like a soccer field sunken in her distantly burn eyes,  
That only seem to be sad while they are away.

Robert Rorabeck



# While They Serve Their Handsome Men Their Pretty Dinner

All this gaff for no limelight-  
Slipping into the shadows of the lockjaw  
Curb,  
Waiting for her to leave and for it to rain:  
I suppose she kissed me once in the opening act  
Of this awful long winded play-  
Corn-pone or cobblestone,  
Looking forlornly through rain thrashed windows-  
At the steaming plumbs, the plump and steamy  
Housewives with red rocket ships tucked between  
Their thighs-  
Just literary ejaculation, the stage craft of a weary  
Soul licking his lips to get to Venus-  
But isn't even virile enough to erect the tent of  
His blue phallus:  
There are names I love, and girls too in all kinds of  
Winter;  
In all kinds of winter I am perpetually looking in  
While they serve their handsome men their  
Pretty dinner.

Robert Rorabeck

# While You Give In Your Eternity

Sisters in the same room,  
But one at a time; and I've been doing nothing  
Beautiful except for you,  
Maybe once a month, or not at all, but one at a time:  
Slowly and really economically:  
While your bodies are just as coy as the disembodied  
Cheshire Cat underneath the airplanes:  
That is how you play out for me and any old boy who  
Is willing to pay;  
And maybe like a satire, or like a sitcom; or maybe just like  
The letter S, I will see  
You again this Friday, because I want to come in out  
Of the rain,  
And I want to feast upon you perfumed in your lingerie,  
Because I am allowed to fall down upon you like a man  
Impressed by his savior in his grapevines,  
Like old or even extinct lovers getting together in rest stops  
To pass the discordant time;  
And because of this you are like Disney World, and I am  
Just getting started; but I want to be all busy all over you,  
While the night transoms into itself,  
While the ships sink, and while your other sisters who are  
Only half as beautiful have fallen so far away  
To have forgotten the important business you do for me  
Takes away from the flirtatious meaning they only give with  
Their eyes in passing, while you give in your entirety,  
Which is why you are so remembered and absolutely praised.

Robert Rorabeck

# While You Lay Asleep

Going through the motions of a work place,  
Trying to make eyes with Alma:  
Brown, saturnine, always cleaning: Alma:  
Sometimes you look up at me and my soul tears away  
Like a little boy releasing his kite,  
Hoping it will go past the power lines and be free:  
Sometimes you don't look at me at all, and I stand beside  
The water cooler  
And know it is because I can't put together two good stanzas:  
I've been doing this all week:  
Drinking and bumming for you, Alma, while you make love  
To Nelson;  
And where do your children sleep?  
Where do your parents sleep:  
You have so many beautifully and golden rings on your fingers:  
You shop at the Sunshine Flea Market where I used to play in the open  
Theatre of trees as a boy, past the clutches of  
Rattle snakes and the dams of water moccasins:  
I was alive a full seven years before you were conceived and then  
Set out like a paper boat through the tiny saints of Guerrero Mexico;  
But you found your way here, Alma,  
To my playground, and we happened together as I made my way home:  
And now I have no other wish but to find you out,  
Alma,  
To find out what your dreams sound like while you lay asleep.

Robert Rorabeck

# While Your Birth Mother Is Away

The wind blew to me all today:  
Blew and blew like a mother of sweet ferality:  
She swam and swum and couched over me,  
While my birth mother was at work:  
I sat alone nursing at scars, thinking of a girl who  
Cannot love me,  
Because I cannot love, and the places that are lost  
To me,  
A god I cannot pray to, because I cannot;  
I went outside once after the rain, giving up on so  
Many of the darkneses that would  
Have set me free:  
There is a stack of cinderblocks and weeds next to  
The canal;  
And it will be there tomorrow, and the wind will  
Blow like a mother who cannot be caught or made  
To understand:  
She will blow out all of your wishes while your  
Birth mother is away;  
And tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whiskey

I get drunk. I tear down  
Mountains,  
Grab my father's gun  
And shoot up and down  
The night until the  
Coyote howls. I kill  
10 Indians.  
I forget to say my  
Prayers. I kneel down  
At the foot of the  
Bed and vomit.  
Then I passed out on  
Her birthday last year  
And wrote her love  
Letters while I slept  
I can't remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whistling

Published in a bloodspot  
On a canary  
As he's sent into the odorless mines  
To sing no more,  
To sing no more

Robert Rorabeck

# White Christmas

The ghost unobserved in a sea  
Of cacophonous Latinos,

I saw white Christmas  
For the last time  
At the exhibit of Anglos  
Behind the glass  
In the museum of New Mexico

The stuffed family of luxury  
Grazing about the winking bows,  
The brightest of metals remembered,  
Dipping branches in the sad dissonance,  
Deaf ears on mannequins can never explain  
The new waves of blue-collar wonderment  
Flooding in from the scorpion-dessert,  
Ushering in the sadly wonderful change  
Of social evolutionism  
Which has forever mutated the color and appetite  
Of America's skin.

The plastic children were very polite,  
Holding half eaten bits of holiday cake  
In their cherubic, polished fingers,  
Shaded in the spindles of holy light  
Their eyes glutting on the feast of presents,  
They never seem to ask where their souls  
Are hidden

The father and mother smiling rather slightly,  
Resting tiny porcelain tea saucers in their laps,  
The last unbroken bit of their empire,  
Now like frozen polar bears in naked rhapsody  
For the voyeuristic eyes on the new waves of  
Modern conquistadors

I, their impotent cousin, look on like  
Some sort of ghostly dessert slowly melting  
Away and evaporated by the heat of the emerging

Bodies, spiced by chili and the scent of  
Strange tobaccos hissed between their silver-shingled teeth.

Hispanic mothers, corpulent and fertile,  
Their smooth bowled skin followed by a health train  
Of offspring speak inspirational epitaphs to the dead.  
"Bonitas blancas, " they whisper religiously and the smallest of their  
Young cry. "Pero ahora totales son muertos."

But their drunken husbands, walking at the tail end,  
As if trying to stabilize on an inebriated ship, say the truth of their feelings.  
"Gringos putas. No mas Patronos ahora. No mas Vatos.  
Ahora total son dinosaurios."  
And all the men in agreement, they zip down  
Their pants and try to piss on the exhibit, but the  
Glass splashes the fiery urine back onto the faces of their  
Smallest children, making their women curse them.

They wear the true religion now, in small  
Busy streets cluttered with smells of meat cooking,  
With men playing dice in dirty intersections,  
And the unabashed love fornicating wherever there  
Is light and space to do so

Bullfighting and drag racing are the new  
National sports played in the stadiums of great  
Red corrals, where battalions of dust devils spin whenever  
God breathes in the expansive sprawl of poor cities  
Those splay out like the veined flesh of sweet fruit  
Across the great desert beds which are no longer empty

Here where there is no longer reasons for one to  
Take position above the other, where God is readily  
Available to any man and can be seen lighted by sacred  
Candles nearby bowls of sacrament for strangers to feed upon  
As they look into the smooth glass face of the Holy Virgin

Here, where the new language sings upwards through  
Bustling streets, the strangest cities and byways built by  
The absent landlords whose providences now lay scattered far a field.  
The white man, who has transgressed his religions,  
Aborted the wishes of his destiny,



Spilled semen into condoms and  
Slaughtered the hopes of children upon the spasms of contraceptive  
Fields,  
So that the red man rose plentiful from the earth  
Once more in crops of excellent corn,  
Plentiful and multitudinous on the great planes stretched between seas.

And pyramids began to arise again,  
And there were human sacrifices,  
But not many and they were quick and bloody  
Shows out in the open  
Displayed without excuses so blood  
Stained the saltlick for cows  
And people lost their heads once again  
But this time for the glory of god,  
And not to fill their gas tanks.

Impotent and vaporous,  
I was hollowed, one of the last of  
The pale men, a blunderbust  
Staring there in the peppered throngs  
At my ancestors like new-age Neanderthals  
In their airless tomb, waiting for one  
Of their eyes to raise to me and pull the  
Heavy weight of my soul off my shoulders

When one of the smallest children  
Came up and tried to press her little hand  
Into mine. Her father came, swaying up  
Drunkenly from behind,  
And I thought he would curse me.  
Instead, he only took her hand in his  
And, as he turned away with her,  
Said to me, "Adios."

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Am I

S- begat the stars,  
Began the clothes lines and haberdasheries of all science,  
Begot this too:  
This little wound, this thing touching down on the  
Lemony promenade without any other  
Traffic around,  
Begot the bouquets in the thirsty windows,  
Begot Arthur Rimbaud;  
And Erin sat in the storefront and smiled:  
Brown, brown eyes the epiphany of the earlier modern  
Science,  
Of men in light beards,  
Of light bulbs.  
She thought of me, and drank domestic liquor for  
An awful long while,  
Which was according to the Catholic Church and its great long  
Antennae;  
But I sat alone on my greatly unpublished perch where  
I pretended that I was a pirate  
With candles of virgins licking his beard:  
I pretended I finally made love to someone or something  
That was real,  
And the wheels spun without moving, which was the  
Sensation of all of this carnival,  
But I only knew so many words, and I misspelled;  
And I thought of girls in Colorado,  
And beautifully made up skin,  
And selling Christmas trees and drinking British gin,  
And if I was a pirate,  
Or a rumor I once heard, like a grand old ship floating up  
In the trees,  
As if the river was thirsty,  
And I was petting my better hand through E-'s suppliant hair;  
But, open eyed, she was making love to better,  
Better men:  
She never called,  
She never wrote: she never footed the bill,  
So who am I to care,  
Care,

Care.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Am I To Say?

Did you rent your paint for my name,  
As the sea licked it away?  
Weren't you just the one candle burning in  
The cardboard of our cheap play?  
And now the city is fully wounded and baked  
From a kiln of your fingerprinted  
Clay,  
And yet the waves come leaping, leaping out  
Of the kennels of their combs,  
Crying your name, crying your name and  
Attributing to your false sciences  
Each and every day; and I have made gold out  
Of you, but I don't even know who you are;  
And I just want to swing and play badminton in  
The wings of a heavy wind,  
And who are you? But who am I to say?

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Are Almost Real

I have friends who are gods in shallow graveyards,  
Taking dust baths like wormy hummingbirds:  
I assure you, I have friends who take pledge drives,  
Who spume dirt and sod in little gurgling fountains in un-  
Exumed parks, under feverish swings:  
I have friends who are gods who cannot sing;  
And the traffic is up and early, and doing everything:  
See that it is not- How can you believe that the morning is  
Mourning, and when you wake up if you have a voice to sing:  
Your eyes are auburn, your hair is the flume of a trumpeting  
Mammal,  
And this is another day and we will both sell some things;  
And other girls will sell some things,  
And mammals like us will perform in their concentric rings:  
And there is the sun, and there is the moon, or earlier gods,  
Now just our friends, going around in the celestial carnival:  
I have friends underground, didn't I tell you-  
I have friends who are almost sleeping, who are almost real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Are Always Getting Up Again

Sun comes up, up- paling the marionette boy,  
Gasoline ribbons through the strange rows of trees-  
Traffic lamps bleed away her beauty,  
And every swimming swing is put to quiet and people  
Get up and flume in tattered souls of jelly-fish work:  
And entire sororities of neighborhoods of beautifully  
Anchored housewives get up,  
Like an entire farm of tulips rising open, pits of drool  
On lips and tongue- wiped away,  
Eggs and areolas, playgrounds of soft sand and  
Somnambulant chickens- beautiful housewives without  
Scars, with discerning eyes can go everywhere  
And do not have to wear baseball caps: Their legs  
Bats and lamps through the mowed grass, sashaying like  
Long legged cats- And we sell watermelons and  
Cantaloupes to these women while staring for a long ways  
Into their eyes; and then at night we slip subconsciously  
Invited through the windows of foyers, faux crystal  
Chandeliers floating like gas moats,  
And we take back from them those whispering espionages  
Those dates to the prom they couldn't see before,  
And seed them again into the graveyards of young dirt,  
So in the early morning they will be news and ready  
To be given unto the tamed wildflowers, the women  
Who are always getting up again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Are They Really Are

Missives prove otherwise than cars: things that seem  
To go anywhere,  
But who are they really, anyways: while epitaphs on stones  
For grooms that never got to their bridal rooms:  
The night pervades the stars, you can bet, like adolescent  
Truants:  
The yards get wet, and the bicycles whisper that they too  
Are going somewhere;  
But where, oh where can they be going,  
And who are they really are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Come Out Singing

People behaving like butterflies  
Drunk off the taters of doggerel  
In the mirages of  
The Sahara or the Gobi- or-  
Growing up bigger and bigger,  
Their shoulders are the shoulders of  
Airplanes:  
Their teeth and their eyes are the windows,  
And they court the survivors of  
The luminous omnipresence- there is nothing  
Special about how they behave.  
The lighthouse spreads its wings over their  
Grave,  
And they metamorphosis through the pages  
Of paper snowflakes like ash over the  
Cathedral-  
They bloom through the high masses of their  
Umbilical arrangements,  
Like cantaloupes getting fat on the vine,  
Lying there like serpents awaiting the virgins  
Who come out singing at picking time.

Robert Rorabeck



# Who Has Forgotten How To Fly

Waking up to your children:

They are there, Alma, nuzzling at your olfactory,  
And other heirlooms that don't come without  
A cost,

While the canoes are lost underneath Colorado:

They keep collecting for themselves underneath the  
Accumulations of Pocahontas,

And into the ways by which I've delved for you,  
Coming up thunderstruck,

And crippled- while your children are ready,  
Elementary,

And as beautiful as the headlong weeds:

The roads they move along are wooded, green in their  
Verdure: the mailboxes drool:

There seems to be stones here mounted from the armpits  
And tear ducts of god:

Either he bleeds or he sweats, while the dogs that you  
Named leap:

And the keystones weep in chorus,

They moon around and wait for you to come home:

It seems as if you are like my mother playing hooky with  
Her younger brother,

And this is yet another world I don't know a thing about,  
That I sing to while I am lost and

Throwing unanswered prayers to the fire,

Waiting for you, a brown angel who has forgotten how  
To fly, to step around.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who I Actually Was

The body blooms: it shoots off and molests itself,  
While I tell everything that I own that I have just enough to barter  
With her with, but that is not so:  
I know no one in this place, in the kingly grotto where her ripples  
Sing,  
Where her children play mating games, and she takes off down the  
Rows like jubilant squid;  
The manatees and sting rays surrounding her and looking into her  
Vast eyes like transoms above her tumbling surplices,  
They can see her in her living room and then into her kitchen,  
Almost naked and making things,  
As if she were a tomboy in shop class; as if I had found her and  
Stolen her away from her husband with absolute certainty and met  
With her in the thorny park and swapped tongue  
And continued congratulating her into my newly purchased bedroom  
If she could only believe in me, and if only I was certain enough  
To tell her with some certainty who I actually was.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who I Am

Palm trees are so humble they only blush their  
Reasons for god at the very top of  
Their anorexic spindles,  
And maybe that is why you are so beautiful,  
Making love to quiet gentleman,  
Listening to the hungry tourisms in your shop;  
And we are separated by so many canals,  
The silent tortures,  
The American avenues without any gondolas;  
And there are so many homeless under the  
Skirts of these empty boxes-  
They throw quite a fit of gin, too; but it is not  
Even sad,  
Because they only want what the best of the bankers  
And politicians want.  
They just don't know how, and they don't even  
Sing songs;  
But you have a dimple in your chin. You are an orchard  
All to yourself, and you know how to fight,  
And your daughter was lost in the forgotten architectures  
Of Spain but found her way back according to her  
Understandings of subtle taste,  
That she inherited from you, which is a wonderful thing;  
As you stand like a xenophobic fish, a basilisk all to yourself  
In Heraclitus's rivers,  
Which is what makes you delectably beautiful,  
And is the foremost of the many reasons why you do not  
Care to remember who I am.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who I Am Supposed To Be

Couples look beautiful when they're not yuppies-  
Slightly beatnik, selling wines under  
Pike's Peak where the cars are making test runs  
And the mountain goats are horny.  
My mother was born around there- You can look her  
Up, but I am unsure about my real voice;  
It seems to me to be calling from anywhere,  
So I don't know what position I have to play,  
But I want to do good for you- I want to show you who  
I really am. That's why I drink my dram-  
To get healthy; but I've lived out of a suitcase for ten  
Years. I haven't bought any clothes in all that time.  
All my jeans have holes. I couldn't get up in front of the  
Class even though I know what I'll be selling-  
I can't imagine how I made it through college-  
I am very poor at writing good prose, but I think of your  
Eyes- Your eyes like sad tennis courts, your eyes like a poet's  
Color, giving of shades of green, all the clichés of  
Ancient societies in the sea- My words have always failed  
You before, but if they ever succeed I will request a tiny  
Sliver of your polygamy- And success will be when your lips  
Part as if about to disclose a thought of my name,  
Close again, become of the resolute distance of all of our  
Kind. In more lucid incidences, I think of William Carlos  
Williams. Maybe that is who I am or, for you,  
Who I am supposed to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who I Might Be Or Who I Really Am

She got married on the same damned day that another  
She was put in the show before the grave:  
And the fair came and gathered up the eyes of the churchgoers  
And the gravediggers,  
While I pretended to sit on the lap of both my living and dead  
Muses and practiced the patience I would need to  
Call the rain:  
And the cars came and the cars, flipping like switchblades before  
The alligators' thirty degrees of old vision:  
Like wolves leaping in a zoetrope, or in the geisha's fan:  
And just as well, because I was skipping school, and bighting my  
Tongue, saluting the hidden grotto while you made open thoughts  
Of your man;  
And you never graduated high school, so what are you doing now  
But one thing or the other, but the living are still living,  
And the dead are still damned,  
And you drive home in the morning weeping never once figuring  
Upon who I might be or who I really am.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who I Really Am

I love the smell of your body:  
Each of your ears are like the bouquets of wildflowers  
Who don't yet know what they're  
Going to hear;  
And the fact that you live in a trailer park, and are  
Yet so smooth:  
I love the smell of your body against your husband's  
Clean shaven face,  
Bear hugging;  
And all of these tattoos of fanfares:  
The I am left unintelligible and without responsibility:  
I don't know but that I love you  
And that I stake out for you underneath the bleachers of  
Carnivals;  
And this is the way I move through the undulations of  
My mistaken scars,  
And the soda pops of high school cannot uncork you;  
And this is the way that you move,  
Fanning before me through all the hibiscus and the weeping  
Plumbagos; and that you know me,  
Because our bodies have increased our bodies in little ways  
In the sheerest bluenesses underneath the overpasses;  
And that you think that you should like to know  
Who I am,  
Even though I have yet to hold your hand, or to unfold into you  
The seeds of the garden beneath the sheer tinfoil  
Of the leaderless kites who might yet tell you about the man  
Who I really am-  
Who I really am.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Knows Who

Pinpricks of marks of foreplays of beasts  
In the graveyard and brass wires under the street;  
Your bare feet balancing on chicken wire  
Over the zoo of housewives and alligators  
And who knows who;  
And you seem to still be in love with the acrobats of  
Bodies and darkness,  
The boys who have nonsensical pleasures deposited  
Like locusts manifesting wishes on your too soft lips:  
They go down hungrily beneath the control towers  
Of your blue beams;  
They go down meaning to drink from the warm bath of  
Your body's springs;  
And you seem to let them; its what you seem to do  
And I wonder if you would let me too  
Join into those softened playgrounds of your who  
Knows who.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Might Still Be Trying To Survive

Skipping through the hard courts of Mexico,  
And someone else dies:  
As the purples bloom on a wedding vest- the brown  
Excursions through the monsters of the Bosque:  
The way sometimes a wanderer must leave his family to  
Convalesce in a foreign country with no one that he loves,  
Until the babies are born novel underneath the  
Crepuscule of school buses;  
And it all comes back around and touches itself after school:  
Where I've seen you in the shadows,  
Alma, playing with the confederates, arms filled with  
Cheap prizes of their popgun games,  
While the entire extent off it rose up above your head; blowing  
Thunderously,  
Teetering like something the municipalities would never allow:  
As I caracoled your neighborhood with the Virgin of  
Guadalupe looking out the back of my car  
To cast a spell of fortunate luck, like fishes won at a fair before  
The cat's eyes:  
As if the entire graveyard was filled chock full of fireworks;  
And your lips brushed across mine in the graveyards next door to  
The university you'd never been to, but you came up breathlessly  
In lips of brown sugar-  
In cornfields of rattlesnakes- just trying to knock off to  
The extravagant fire engines and they already headed towards  
And trying to save just about anyone who might still  
Be trying to survive.

Robert Rorabeck



# Who She Is At All

Seashells I once had,  
Buried by the throats of daycare:  
When I drive alone, I look at the fire through the  
Clouds:  
I see a woman from Columbia driving everywhere:  
As lost as I am,  
Only that she has found love, and very successfully  
Left her husband behind in  
Columbia:  
I bought my little house on her birthday,  
But fell in love with another girl for a year:  
She too already had a husband lost in a cloudy  
Bedroom where she sleeps with him,  
Her two children all twisted around her- sometimes  
They look up and they see that she is their mother;  
And sometimes they look up and do not know  
Who she is at all.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who She Might Become

Rivers flowing in the brown surceases of our  
Ancient timbered veins:  
And I sit on my couch with Alma and ask her who is the  
President,  
And what is the biggest longest river:  
Alma is sincere, aquiline: Alma smells of oleander and night  
Blooming jasmine,  
But she doesn't like how she cut her hair: I think she cut her  
Hair for me,  
Because that is what happens to women who find a new  
Man to love,  
And I kiss Alma during lunch and pull her closer to me,  
To smell her sitting there  
Still in the metamorphosis, as darling as a mother can be  
Who doesn't yet know who she might become.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Then Would Be Set Free?

Whippoorwill trills at 3: 36.

I used to believe that someone was going to

Die,

To get his throat cut, or get lost in kindergarten on

A fieldtrip to the art museum

To never return,

To eat fried chicken and sleep in graveyards

And be called by the woman in the sea with great tits:

To never return,

But now I do not think it is possible to never return,

Because you drove in today,

And you knew nothing about me, only that it was Halloween

And your son was going to be a human,

Because I asked him,

And your daughter was going to be a witch,

Because that is what she shouted at me-

And I drank a bottle of wine, according to the jocular skeleton

And then passed through the clock down through the secret

Passage where the unicorns had forgotten themselves

Under the gray kings sea,

And I became seriously puzzled,

As I thought of the porcelain shelves of your calves:

Was I the gray king, or was he me,

And if I stepped out into those breaking combs

Who then would be set free?

Robert Rorabeck

# Who They Really Are

I am having trouble passing through the day:  
Something has gone from inside me, gone over the sea  
Rushing to find the stone that  
Skipped away; and I make my ideas up in my head,  
So I can breathe:  
So I worship strange girls across the world like laurel leaves  
Placed on the crown of the fastest emperor in town:  
And I park my eyes underneath her mile high bridges and  
Breathe;  
And it is not right: These candles are not mine,  
But they will do for the night: Their little warmth like  
Nocturnal butterflies weeping molten in my palm;  
And I look at their light passing away, whispering like amber  
Against the vinyl of my sunken car;  
And they seem to dance for me like little wishes and  
Wonderfully ornate cheerleaders  
Kidnapped from music boxes too delicate to wonder who  
They really are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who They Truly Are

The herald of the kings mother has gone  
Up again,  
Like a stork in shallow water; coming out of  
The bath,  
He sings across the freshly mowed school  
Yard:  
Where are the busses of students coming  
Around,  
Where is that cacophonous apiary-  
Now the janitors bristle in gossip, and I eat  
Lunch with my old teacher:  
It rains, but there is no one there to be  
Avoided- and there are no ghosts here,  
Even those too have wised up and figured out  
Who they truly are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Time Cannot Kill

I can talk this way, my voice yet  
Reacting to the scars, so that I sound vulnerable  
And well-made: I can lounge around in the  
Humid duns: I cannot look at cars, but I can hear them,  
While Pedro makes a little extra money cutting  
Branches for wreathes: And it is Tuesday and slow,  
And mom and dad came early with blue berry pancakes  
And requests and admonitions of guilt, and tickets  
To price things: I've have put so much poison into the  
Grass, but the ants are still building their kingdoms beneath  
The stars, with so many legs: the mythological race  
Which will succeed us: strange apoplectic kingdoms of  
Daub and mastication, hired by queens and reacting  
The scents of her pullulating abdomen: stranger sorts  
Of men lounge upon the earth, like Martians presupposed  
By Ray Bradbury; and us sown into the earth, and our  
Headstones eaten away into just the roots of convenient  
Monuments, and all those billions of human squadrons,  
Of entire families and nations who feuded, resting  
Like a feverish book finally laid to rest: all those dun men  
And their epitaphs given over to a new sort who might  
Not even acknowledge us except by their radicals, in their  
Apogrypha: those sorts made to drink hemlock, who do  
Not shave, whose eyes deserve the unruliness of a sailor's  
Sky: those men who even as magma reemerge to tumble like  
Newborn puppies of fire, who I can almost remember,  
Who time cannot kill.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who Was My First Love

I am more interested in the art than the life  
And I cannot imagine how this must  
Be demeaning for you,  
While the pitch-perfect echoes are swollen  
And then are left unattended to be believed in by  
All of the people who are left outside  
Of their graveyards—  
Spinning in the echoes of their Christmases—  
Tending to become the less brighter amusements  
That have to read the unenlightened papers  
While the rest of us head inside for breakfast—  
Until the day of the manifest comes  
And there are two of each animal—  
And the angels play hooky—and the world swells  
Form the whore's tits—swells and swells  
And becomes manifold—because that just a world  
That keeps to the tracks of its unambitious joy,  
While you have your mother waiting at home  
For you far across the world—  
As your brother is playing a game I cannot spell  
And falling in love with another woman from  
The north country—  
There it seems to be her joy spread like jam across  
Country—  
While the peasants go unlistening to the knights who  
Are errands anyways—and  
I sometimes wonder who you cannot love,  
While I try to figure out who was my first love,  
Anyways.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who We Intend To Be

A poem of horses outside my door;  
It does not belong to me,  
But then it is there in the darkness,  
And tomorrow I want to ask you what it  
Is like to be in this world a beautiful  
Woman,  
The trinkets of your eyes a revelry for  
All kinds of men,  
Bosom the chest wounds of penultimate  
Wildflowers;  
Or if you get jealous of your betters and  
In between:  
You told me at our last meeting that  
I should buy a boat instead of a house,  
And then you stared out into the intercostals  
And a boat just seemed to appear at your  
Very wish;  
And I wondered if it was your boat,  
And where you had gone even though you  
Were still baring your shoulders right  
There beside me on the bench for the hour  
We shared;  
And the day should not be any longer than your  
Hair,  
While my better and more consistent muses  
Are sharing their times with their more likewise  
Men,  
While Diana is traveling around town,  
Her nameless daughter transforming in the daycare  
Of the stars  
Wandering what love truly was-  
Then I want to go underneath the bridge with you  
And open up,  
And say I am yours without knowing what I  
Truly am,  
While all these reoccurrences of daylight tend to become  
Meaningless until we finally understand and  
Disappear entirely into the occurrence of who we  
Are, or taken together, at least,



Who we intend to be.

Robert Rorabeck

# Who You Are

Scarred gray-  
Today is a sepia holiday:  
Knocking on your womb, wanting in:  
Wanting to prick you with the mammalian barb,  
Dreaming a little of owning a boat,  
And taking you out in the scarred webs the  
Spider-sun spins,  
Each wave a crucifixion, a lunge a woman throws,  
Rippling herself into the shore:  
Like the hood of a car after a head on collision,  
But you have no room for aphorisms,  
As you are the steady contributions of inebriation,  
A failed lover now an impotent nemesis,  
An entire period of artistic discovery, the fallow  
Enterprise of breath;  
Once so close, I could have looked out the window  
And seen you playing the guitar,  
As I drove around you like a pointless ghost-  
Now further away than the dimmest star,  
I swear by Christ I know who you are.

Robert Rorabeck

## Who, If Anyone: 12: 11 Mountain Time

Sometimes its best to be the background noise,  
Especially while going to heaven,  
Or your sister's wedding;  
And tonight I'll sleep on an air mattress,  
And listen to the fish tankle filter, like the littleness  
And confined dreams of the afirmed middle-class;  
I write this, not having been invited to the  
Bachelor party,  
Withou the aid of a well-paid editor,  
With a shot of tequilla, in my sister's  
Living room. Two and 1/2 years younger than me,  
And she's a veterinary doctor,  
And this Sunday she is getting married;  
I will play my spotty part,  
Anonymous, dreaming for girls so many miles away.  
Then next year either go back to school,  
Or buy a home,  
But continue to write,  
Busted and wreckless, because  
Today I read 700 pages, finished Stephen  
King's Duma Key plus the back end of a Bret  
Harte compilation,  
And now I should have another shot before bed,  
Wondering who, if anyone, will read this...  
12: 11 mountain time

Robert Rorabeck

# Whoever

You deserve better words than mine,  
Angled in soft lies, like prehistoric trout found  
In the oily conservation of their brief lives:  
I flow upstream for you with all I can,  
But I am thinking only of myself, like into a mirror  
At dusk. A little more money, and I can buy  
A house at the sea's lip and swim in her for my job,  
And say to you when you are not there,  
Now this is you in perfect matter: this is you  
In your wedding dress, the one you wore that day  
As you walked down the street kissing towards  
The trees' canopy, and the sunlight rushing to fondle  
You and swim around your bosom like goldfish won  
At tossing games; When you are on the street,  
Strangers and birds stop to palaver with you, but  
You don't have time to translate their harangues of love,  
Sometimes you even forget your name, and cussing  
You try to forget even more, and the secrets that lie  
Inside you have an entire nation within you, plusing and  
Adding into you the infinite ways things may combine:  
But I give to you no cessation in my lines, for they crowd  
Into the next enjambment like force feeding French kisses,  
And I know I haven't figured you out, or done you  
Justice, but you still pretend to know where you are,  
But you are also here, for here is a kingdom I have  
Gardened, and a castle with a sundial for your nudity anytime  
Of day: Lay across me with your eyes, and I will say I  
Love you, even if you don't know why, or who you are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whom I Had On My Mind

All of the Shakespears are of a kind, as their  
Dogs remember the moon like old masters; as all of the snakes  
Are green and curling up to the sleeping  
Housewives  
Whose svelte bosoms the out of worker otters had been cracking  
Legumes upon,  
As the piano's metronome kept the time  
For the unicorns in gray keys out on the foam;  
And traveling through the highways of the fjords where  
The nocturnal flowers swam,  
It all seemed out and out so beautiful, as the sky made monotonous  
Love to the land; and it was calling up to him,  
Like a prayer of a hard-up wife clutched around her knees  
And shoals by all of her hard-up children:  
They were coughing blood and coins to pay the ferryman:  
And he came through the canal just as the billy goats were  
Crossing over,  
All brothers of a kind; and I have to tell you that I hate to tell you  
That it was you whom I had on my mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whom I Really Love

Parks smolder like little girls upset for Valentine's  
Day;  
And I go out from their Sabbath School Grottos and watch  
Them French Kissing fresh Thom's in the parking lot;  
And they last for so long, until once again they go back inside  
And start out anew:  
And I am left alone in the gray undertones of the pines:  
My shoes are almost gone,  
My sweet eyes hung over like censers hung up on hat racks,  
Their chains the new somnolence of an opulent cat:  
And I wonder about you, and where you really live:  
I already know you get up every day and attend your work like  
Love,  
But where you really live, I don't know: I will never know who  
You are, or looking up, who is traveling with you on your airplanes;  
I cannot explain enough for you: How I have failed in the easiness  
Of the air-conditioning, how I am especially failing for you tonight;  
But I once fenced and beat an Olympic fencer, or his son  
Before I ran away to Michigan, but now I am myself all beat,  
And the words just come, but they are not the words that were  
Best meant for you; and you are off again in your night  
In your rose colored states of love; and I know to whom you give  
Your body to every night, and whom washes your clothes in the  
Grottos of blissful doves, but I still don't know whom you  
Really love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whom She Came To Ask

I was going to the cooler to become a thinker  
When all of a sudden a blond girl comes into the market:  
She is winsome as anything that might mentioned,  
And she wants to know about trees:  
Trees, and she is from Poland and she wants to send that  
Certain type of pine tree back home to her sister,  
Or someone who should be so lucky;  
And she stands right next to me and points across the way,  
So I have to squint because I am not sure, but I dearly wish to please  
Her:  
She is such a sudden treat and puts suicide back into its closeted  
Nothing, but now I don't know what the tree is:  
I can barely see it, because it is so far away: it is across the street  
And the next yard and rising like a gaunt titan under the skirt  
Of the power lines;  
Yes, that is the one, and now I have the same type of pine tree growing  
In my future yard, but for the girl I could say nothing:  
Trying to keep her there as long as I could, I promised to ask the little  
Guatemalan and he in turn asked the Venezuelan and we all stood  
Around her like three of the dumbest wise men, sharing wolfish looks,  
Our nostrils flaring from her mail-order bouquet;  
And I guess that she knew that she must all the time be doing this,  
And causing the disgusting self mutilations in the lonely nights transgressions,  
Or by ourselves in the long silver trailer parks of the day: weeks later  
I think of her, because I am buying a soft yellow house with that same  
Sort of tree rising up from the yard, bowed like an imperfect phallus  
And yet something extremely beautiful;  
And that is why she wanted to know the proper name for him,  
And I am still glad that it was I who she came to ask.

Robert Rorabeck

## Whomever It Seems That You Love

As it happens I am getting up higher and higher,  
Laughing at the filaments of banshees: I don't even pretend to  
Write to Erin,  
Anymore; and I gain more weight: I can do ten pushups in the  
Fruiteria all at once,  
Which was nothing I could even pretend to do in high school  
When I didn't even know, Alma:  
My muse who is probably even now sleeping opened lipped  
And drooling against the deep brownest shoulder blades of  
Her illegal husband;  
And I have never been to Mexico, but I have been in her:  
I have kissed her damp butterfly the way a mother cat cleans  
Her young,  
Instinctually and forever, while the nocturnes howl over the open  
Throats of drive in movies,  
While young lovers kiss like vampires all night long,  
And until the awful truths of manana's morning happens, it seems  
Like forever:  
And that is when the grass seems to be filled with so many tears,  
And you can drive to the quietest corners and kiss for a very long  
Time whomever it seems that you love.

Robert Rorabeck



# Who's To Say

Cars pull in beside tombs and who should  
Get out but the silhouettes of movie stars,  
And soccer girls from high school,  
And the night is so heady with their atmosphere that  
It sways as if being tugged like a table cloth,  
Like the sea by the moon:  
And even the souls of the dying radiate like the flagella  
Of maypoles,  
And the water near the shore is so shallow that it brings  
All together such wildlife in rapacious harmony;  
And Amanda has been to Africa,  
But I have seen the corpulent tortoise under the bus,  
Tugging out the engine of orchids like a child who is  
Not bashful,  
And even though I leapt away like a little girl over the  
Heads of the disinterested alligators,  
Who's to say now that I don't care, or that I won't once  
Again be beautiful,  
Or that my mother isn't weeping over the walky-talky  
Because I am bivouacked so far up I diadem  
You subconscious, and even though it is much too late for  
Me- Who's to say I won't once again be beautiful.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whose Afterbirths Are Rainbows

Another anthem without the girls:

Here is the down trodden making love to the  
Blistered leaves,  
In a cathedral of ant lions that the sky presumes  
Above,

The buses having turned around:

The butterflies, they are in Mexico, being stolen  
But multiplying- the words work for and  
Figure out themselves, against the suppliant  
Branches:

Pull them back and find, marble arcades,  
And carports where laundry spins, and toads  
Sing to the clouds, with mottled throats  
And spotted bellies: they sing there up to the  
Curtains whose afterbirths are rainbows,  
But not unicorns come to them,  
And the housewives fold up the clothes for  
Themselves:

Done praying, they go inside, and wait for their  
Children to approach them.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whose Burns Are Very Real

As if the very wildflowers were your family:  
Alma, but I am still right  
Here, like a rattlesnake with a sweet tooth for your  
Woebegone ankles,  
And it feels alright to lie that I wont bite you:  
You only weigh one hundred and ten pounds and you  
Are really a sight, especially when I can lie down  
Across you like a buzzard on its eviscerated  
Highway and make love for eons,  
As the moon showers us with the preposterous and light  
Hearted gifts,  
As the lines end and begin again, underneath the Indian  
Monuments of the earth,  
The stone rainbows, or the ways to remember you own kind;  
And to just kiss your lips again in the semi-permeable  
Atmospheres underneath the overpasses of any kind of flea  
Market would feel like it would be enough,  
As quarters are enough for the homeless regiments surrounded  
By the eager cannibals,  
Lying down after dinner to sleep with the man of your young;  
And it all seems to bleed away into other immortal promises  
That you swear you will no longer read:  
But the Virgin of Guadalupe remains your goddess,  
Remains my goddess,  
And the fires in her hearth of promises are like ephemeral roses  
Whose burns are very real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whose Purest Of Natures Is Not For Me To Describe

Now if you evaporate what will I have  
Left to drink,  
For the railroads and all the cemeteries are perfectly  
White:  
They seem to have the same telltale face as my  
Mother on her wedding day,  
For she was something of perfect beauty;  
And she still is,  
Like stamp on a rifle but, like antlers yet to shed from  
The horns of the toughest stags from the opal  
Pure necks of all of these mountains,  
Because October is a beautiful holiday,  
And it is still coming around; and a sorority of girls with  
That birthstone seem to be getting up and diademing my  
Silly head,  
Spitting with well sewn breasts and lips. And they will never  
Let up,  
Even if they can't believe in who they still are,  
They are still leaping like a carnival predestined on its  
Providential tracks;  
So there is no reason for me to fear of their savior;  
Maybe they are mine, for they are always leaping  
As tall and wide as a movie theatre,  
Just as lustrous as the feral lips of the sweetest gods  
Whose purest of natures is not for me to describe.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whose Song I Could Never Own

When your body gets home, it makes love:  
The fish are in the sea, the turtles dream of doves:  
And I have slept on the roof of your house  
In the penumbras of the airplanes that were waking up  
And taking breakfast:  
And it seemed to me as if I had found, the temple of  
Love rising up from the grounds  
Of an illegal suburbia so overgrown:  
And you were the goddess whose song I could sing,  
But whose song I could never own.

Robert Rorabeck

# Whose Time Is Still Coming

The snake pulls back its hood  
And spits disgustedly at the rope trick.  
I gave Kelly opals  
And hid in the bathroom:  
I am hiding there still while the movie plays,  
And I have pissed myself.  
Already all the ghosts have come out and haunted  
And gone back home,  
And Kelly is a mother, and she goes home too  
And lays down like a velveteen cathedral in all of her  
Tattoos;  
And she forgets about me, and the swings we  
Enjoyed upon: She doesn't recognize how beautiful I  
Am,  
Absolutely,  
And somewhere in Missouri there is a riverboat who  
Has exploded quite luxuriously maybe a century  
Before us,  
And bits of it are still falling like  
Meteorites for the forth of July;  
It is still falling,  
And I shoot off to sleep in my bygone lonely, and Kelly  
Curls up in her tinderbox in the saw grass beside  
Her husband;  
And she has the easiest time forgetting about me,  
Like a brother who has long since gone before her  
Whose time is still coming.

Robert Rorabeck

# Why I Can'T Believe In Anything But You

Growing closer whichever way  
The sun  
Crosses you,

All day long making  
Cold cuts of reason;  
This is why you exhibit  
Such  
Feverish treason  
To the spectacular ruby  
In the  
Crocodilian gaze;

You never step  
Down or  
Hold hands;  
All you need is a  
Glass of water  
And you are ready to  
Skip  
School again,

Spurious,  
Pugilistic and saucy,  
But able to shape pottery;  
And the traffic slows  
Even though you are far away,  
Knee high in a suburban field:

They still have the senses,  
The creep of unexplainable wonder,

But I know for certain that this is  
The way that you does,  
And it is why I can't believe in  
Anything but you again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Why I Run Away

Houses grid by canals lined out in a peaceable world,  
Ennui schvitzing, and I used to be a truant articulating on the  
Swings of this  
Inconsequential masterpiece: I suppose I thought I was  
Beautiful, doing something to get rid of high school:  
The birds who were there are immortal,  
They follow me around- I can hear them outside of my trailer  
Gossiping as they collect a beautifully loose woman's  
Clothes off the ground:  
The traffic is immortal too, sending like nerves do up and down  
I-95, running the beautiful appliance of Florida  
Where high schools still grow, the training centers for off-white  
Gardens,  
The universities around her shoulders where Erin somehow still  
Makes love,  
Childless but well sated;  
And we play out here, eyes like lousy diamonds- the natives have  
Found someway to replace themselves with Mexicans and  
South Americans, of which I saw very little in my high school:  
The beauty of these brown skinned girls to which I have  
Very little words for, the tongue of a gringo  
Like the bathing suit of a grandmother; and I guess that is still  
Why I run away.

Robert Rorabeck



# Why We Have Yet To Even Get Started

Life may be as hungry as death, but I am certain  
It is never as fulfilled:  
As I set out, my body throbs like a coward:  
I get my haircut with politicians while the other tourists  
Jog around the lake  
While the snowflakes are falling and the electricity  
Is leaping from stake to stake;  
And the moon seems polarized: It seems as if it's making  
The feathers return to love birds,  
And for awhile everything is turned back like curtains;  
And I look up for a second,  
And maybe I am beautiful, and maybe I am thinking that this  
Doesn't even have to start;  
And she is getting back out of her car or by whatever means  
She chooses to travel away,  
And maybe she is kissing me: maybe her eyes  
For a second have reached their high water mark, and they  
Seem to be leaving an impression on me:  
Why, aren't we back into the middle of school: We're both  
Virgins:  
The apples are yet unknown to her fingers, laying like unknown  
Vocabularies in their tree;  
And then for a second she floats up again and is bended like a  
Rib under my wing:  
Put back into place I linger: I am a truant who so immaturely  
Wonders why we have to even get started.

Robert Rorabeck

# Why You Are My Venal Muse

Lights that peel out forlornly behind wimpled  
Windows,  
The dead poetesses who sleep out bare-chested now  
In the dead center of black town,  
Little black boys pissing on their graves,  
But only half as worse as the corpulent tourists  
With cantaloupe sized hearts,  
Freeze-dried lawyers for sh&t canning astronauts  
Walking their dogs,  
And moping through the ruckus of this canopy  
The way little lives do  
Every day through the franchised and fast food  
Drive through,  
While you are in your sport,  
And liking bedding down, while you imagine  
Puffy unicorns up in the sky with black eyes without  
Reason,  
And your he-men running around on your  
Color television, bare footed and fighting the skeletons  
Of lesser men's diseased;  
And they tore down the church to expand your work,  
And right now the professors are sniffing paper bags  
Of glue,  
And your university looks so red and shiny,  
As shiny as a ruby shoe, but everything about it is  
Venal,  
Caught around a line of tenements and things that  
Have a hard time breathing,  
And your eyes go on forever seeming, auburn  
Fires of old news:  
This is why you are my venal muse.

Robert Rorabeck

# Why You've Forsaken Me

Everything is lighting up in the very  
Plausible world of butterfly midgets:  
Everything can be seen even where  
There's shadows,  
And I'm pressing my palms to my eyes in a  
Heartbeat mask;  
And I've known where you are for so long,  
Sitting at that strange desk the roof pretending to  
Separate you from the stars;  
And it is my unquenchable horror to be in the same  
Room with you and for you to be in  
Love with another man; but look at all these walls  
The four winds of our room.  
Midnight is laughing bloody murder and all the churches  
Are just as naked as an orchard,  
Because the sea is in love with the stars;  
And isn't that who you are, why you've forsaken me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wide And Beatific

Glade of spirits- origin myth in the eyes of  
My classroom,  
And there are eyes, dark brown and dark blue  
And all over my classroom,  
Trying to discover things, skateboarding,  
And trying to make sure everything turns out  
Alright-  
And I am not trying to control this menagerie:  
I am just trying to make sure that it  
Is beautiful,  
While the children of your father skip down  
The path underneath of which the  
Airplanes fly,  
And beside of which the cypress trees grow,  
And the ocean's waves leap and frolic;  
This is for them,  
And for your children that will disappear into  
School tomorrow,  
As I try to impress you anonymously,  
As I just try to survive down the river that is  
Too wide to dream across  
Without waking up and realizing the mistakes  
That happen altogether through its wide  
And beatific course.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wilderness Of Disinterest

You've said this is the summer,  
But you do not know, but are just attempting  
To wax poetical,  
Even though a better poet than I am,  
When you are drunk and your lips burned on  
Cigarettes and just beginning to black out,  
But I don't really know about such things,  
How to be cool, how to meet girls and  
Persuade them, but I like to sound like I know.  
Rather, I am thirty and woke up today after  
A wet dream I'd rather not go into explanations  
Of, and changed my pants and walk outside  
As if in the first stages of a sleeping sickness,  
And moaned under the sun, and watered the horses....  
But it is better, for I no longer wonder if  
You read my poetry, and would really rather prefer  
If you didn't- For it is true, that you have separated  
Yourself from my pleafal dysfunctions,  
Spread yourself open like a garden overrun with  
Pollinating bees, laid yourself like a red bible  
Suppliant to the religion of his smooth hands;  
If I was a better poet, women would love me as they  
Know how, and maybe even you would love me  
And come into my room whispering with the eyes of  
Your disquiet, but my physicality would be just as scarred  
And unappealing, and I would lay out just the same  
Beside the yellow pools, the zoo of sterilized ocean,  
And let my fingers howl unrestively, like wolves  
Hunting through your unbuttoned preservation,  
Starving in the wilderness of disinterest.

Robert Rorabeck

# Will There Be Cake?

On the day I die  
Will there be time to eat cake,  
Or will everyone be too busy trying  
To put me back together on the table  
Of my broken shell,  
And will I hear the new languages of  
Insects buzzing all around me in  
Their greedy way,  
Waiting to crawl into my leaking orifices,  
Like the skin of putrid fruit  
Burst from wrong gases above my eyes  
And along my collar bones? Or  
Will I be the only one to turn with  
The boring nock on the door,  
The inevitable salesman of returnable goods,  
The reaper of useless necessities coming  
To collect his recall,  
And then to jot down my soul into a little  
Notebook of names and times he keeps in a pocket protector  
Of his polyester work shirt?  
Will that be all then, the processions of  
Common grief, the sermon unasked for,  
And thus the nearly anonymous burial down  
The rows from my aunt and grandmother,  
An epitaph on stone that cost a grand  
But says nothing of who I might have been,  
And then, thankfully, the top secret corruption  
And ruination from greasy head to grimy toe?  
Some plastic flowers,  
Some days of rain and more of sun, some of  
Snow, but none of it experienced or toiled through,  
My dreams left unrealized, as her pulse  
Beats onward clasped in another's hand;  
But what must be answered before all this hubbub,  
And the howling of my lonely dogs through the  
Friendless nights in the basest amounts of pain  
More smelt than suffered;  
Is, will there be cake?



# Will Work For Food

Work me like a dog.  
Pay me like a whore.  
The decapitated reindeer's  
Head  
Drips clotty red into the  
Pasture  
(Merry Christmas  
    You bought me)  
What does it matter?  
No pretty girls are  
Available.  
All the pretty girls  
Are loosely tangles:  
Engaged in Oregon,  
Married in Colorado,  
Serving drinks  
In deep amnesia  
The sun is a long  
Distance  
Swimmer doing laps  
In the sky's  
Highschool gym.  
The seasons change  
The color of her eyes  
The fastforward love  
Into death,  
Corrupted into beds of  
Eternal rest.  
Choaking on the red flesh  
Enchanted by the  
Jealous stepmothers,  
They slumber-

Robert Rorabeck



# Windmill Dancing For Its Lover

The grasses were talking even after the  
Day was gone,  
And the airplanes in their dresses dancing  
With pearled bellies over the sea:  
Did you see which way they were going,  
Or notice their laughter as it disappeared?  
And I just sat there and thought of  
Her,  
As the Ferris Wheels went up and then around:  
Around, waving their hands  
As if they were on an island- after the traffic  
Had gone home,  
Past the scuppernongs growing on the fences  
And the mailboxes  
As somewhere far a field a windmill stopped  
Dancing for its lover,  
And all of the heavens went indoors.

Robert Rorabeck

# Windmills Of Our Wandering Bones

When they make love through the strings of catgut underneath  
The power lines-  
I don't suppose either of them ever wore roller skates or  
Ever flew in airplanes:  
And she tried to prepare her reasons for her love for me,  
But it was just because I bought her so much  
Gold for her brown fingers-  
And I continued singing to her as roses ached over my  
Bones:  
And she smiled and played gamed- translucent  
And phosphorescent:  
This specter, what did she care about my sun- while I was  
Seizing the rapidly increasing embraces of  
Windmills- as the cars drove home over the old cradles  
Of our wandering bones.

Robert Rorabeck

# Window Haiku

I have new eyes for  
Awhile the windows  
Of my orgasm.

Robert Rorabeck

# Windy Night For Boo Radely

Good and drunk enough now  
To write about a Guatemalan wife:

When I swore I wouldn't:

What a sad and tragic display to write  
About a beautiful woman  
You see ever day

When she is just trying to feed her children  
Or her boyfriend  
And make the car payments  
And pass the time

When you are so troubled and  
Silver on a tree  
That she can barely look at you,

When you love better and more venal women  
Who are always so much further away,  
And your father sells star fruit,

And your life is a famished joke,  
In which you once jogged the length of a marathon  
In Okaheelee Park with no one to see  
When you were still with another girl,  
Who just bought a house with her husband  
Who is also a small time lawyer,

And yet you managed off enough gin and water coloring  
Tonight  
To get this all out there  
And finished the game early in the seventh because you  
Kept throwing duds  
And managed to turn her eyes even further away  
In the grass where the jaundice  
Lions are panting  
While the tourists fart  
And take photographs:

And thus the word is concluded,  
The muse turned around and led back to the  
Suburban butchery:

She doesn't love you,  
She- She is a beautiful mouse in  
Disney World

And it is another windy night for Boo Radely.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wings To Fly

It is hot inside this truck,  
Like a body inside a soul  
When it shouldn't  
Be there,  
When it should be the other way  
Around,  
And yet it has no place to go,  
As stars divine like goldfish,  
If that's what they really do-  
And lines are to the point  
While airplanes seem to hover overhead  
Feasting wild and light-eyed on the tragedy  
Of our race  
Which has so many legs, and eyes,  
And wants,  
But so words to describe those things,  
And no wings to fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Winning

Evil men win in this  
World- I saw you dancing with  
Him- I saw you dance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Winter Is Coming

Winter is waiting down  
at the gate to the park  
like a vein of chalk  
scribbled in the fleeting warmth  
of adolescent love  
amidst the swinging sliding  
metal silvers.

She is scaring away  
the song birds  
and hurrying the remnants  
of Spring to close up;  
Spiders go busily unhinging  
murder-cobbed webs  
to dissolve with the  
weather upon the  
bladed lips of anemic grass;  
Their children unseen  
except for their many legged  
thought, hurry into the  
autumn hay bales stacked  
at the edge of the  
murmuring creek;  
so they are gone when  
he comes,  
falling from the sky on  
his white and chilly steed,  
when she steps forward;  
Then this sphere is its  
furthest from the sun,  
and in her night sways  
like a drunken lover  
in the snowy sheets-  
The trees are naked  
and frozen, as she  
reaches out to touch the  
earth;  
her tears solidify his lap,  
saying things I cannot hear,  
though alone in this house



I watch her lips begin to  
blister the windows,  
the material of her dress  
is the hoarfrost on the lawn,  
as her lonely footsteps  
echo up to meet me  
from the other side  
of the door.

Robert Rorabeck

# Winter Surely Comes

Troubling to look in the mirror since  
Middle-school, when everything else was just shear  
Nirvana,  
And I hadn't yet drunken hard liquor, or known the  
Delights of venal distemper;  
And you were just the zygote of unbeaten memory,  
Or I had really just laid off you in the cool green  
Rug in front of Saturday morning cartoons  
Up the stairs where I had hidden the last of the crumbs  
Of the birthday cake I wasn't suppose to eat for the  
Next day or two,  
With piss stains and come; and I'd stolen from  
The rich white paper folded into airplanes, to count  
Coo on the satanic femme fatals lounging on day trips  
Between the rafters;  
And fans, and fans, and above that a zoo of airplanes;  
And there was just one beautiful orange tree, budding, spun:  
And you were just a little girl I had thought of,  
Now cornered, a housewife on the run,  
A daughter too- A tiny house in a forest that is shooting off,  
Amidst the trees I had never seen, whose cones are pure  
Gold and silver,  
Ornamental they fall down and hypnotize the very wolves  
They reintroduced to seduce you; how you do that,  
I don't want to know, and yet winter surely comes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wintertime's Wedding Party

When we begin like this on the evening,  
It is because we know no better; but these words  
Are ours, and they are married, and speak within  
The embers of a stoked fire;  
And there returning from the caesuras of an engulfing  
Basin, the clouds come tromping over the mountain's  
Lips and womb of estuaries,  
And soon the pallid snows, in whose tresses  
The days are receding, the colors dulling,  
And within them like the glances over the stranger's  
Shoulders, as from the highest reaches the storms  
Plunge downward, down away from the polished bellies  
Of airplanes, and the horses of dead riders who go  
Forever leaping, as confederate lovers from the arboreal cataracts;

This is the time where I should hear you breathing,  
As steadily as the great hunters in their hibernating,  
But far away I can only imagine you laughing, your body's  
Salts reciprocating with the sea's salinous caressing;  
Your own vocabularies are treasonous to the season,  
As I would have you enfolded in my arms and these walls,  
As the Furies begin their cyclical howling; they are  
As beautiful as they are deadly, as you are imbibing  
Warmly the daylight of your new steady; unfortunately,  
Your heart is never beating nearer me, and yet here comes  
The lupine pattering across the last garments daylight sheds  
As it is fleeting, revealing the utter beauty of the waning  
Living; and how shameful it is that you are not near to  
Hold me; for me to smell your oily perfumes by olfactory,  
Or our bodies to relay heat as if by the careful study of  
A pacaderm's memory;  
But so wants this fate, as fleeting as love, as splendidly turns  
The embellished season, and the billows resend again, as  
Finely dressed as the last members of wintertime's wedding party.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wished Upon

I live so close to the rivers of  
Old people  
That you would not believe  
Me darling  
That last night I got robbed,  
But otherwise I have  
Never looked so good; and I  
Flit after the perps  
Singing their gold toothed  
Lullabies  
And it was fun and exciting;  
At the police station  
I drew you as a stream  
Running through a forest of  
Aspen and evergreen just like  
That week I drew you in  
High school when I just wanted  
To sleep underneath  
The penumbra of your  
Desk across the sky,  
For it to be my shelter,  
Its cheap metal frame my  
Crossbeams,  
The chicken wire my stars and  
You the goddess swimming there  
Still a virgin and able to be wished upon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wishes That Disappear

Trundling of golden marbles  
Down the lips of a child or a songbird:  
So many words,  
So few to mention: new born mothers getting up,  
Looking startled,  
Shoulderblades and tableclothes as lost blue  
As egg shells:  
My muse down in the sandpits making love to  
Rattlesnakes  
In the discombobulated sun: bit of her evaporating,  
The steam of a meaningless engine:  
They float up so far,  
They become wishes that disappear,  
And then there is another fieldtrip, her children so  
Far down below  
Growing less bashful, moving on without realizing  
That their mother was once my goddess,  
As she also leads them astray.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wishes Upon Her

Up in the candles into which she has been  
Busy praying and weeping  
For any boy- as the customers come in according  
To custom,  
As airplanes fly in the air- and it doesn't hurt  
Me anymore, how she has bothered me-  
As she has started first to cry,  
And then to wean herself from an easy pain,  
To kiss the fists of pugilists-  
And she is breathing the brown air, and she is  
Panting or cursing just as busily as  
Any rattlesnake- so come the dusk, in the farmer's  
Yards she is purring- like a hot jewel she is  
Cooling- and I stare at her in my fashion across  
The canal, forgetting anyway home as I think up  
Wishes upon her.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wishes You Will Not Have

Icicles melt off her toes  
She falls in love on an airplane: she is going somewhere:  
And it feels alright to look up into  
A church—  
Stained glass still weeping over the basins  
Of Colorado—  
While the innocent tourists lick the ice-cream melting on their  
Fingers, like svelte  
Dripping from the crenulations of the antlers of some young  
Stag:  
Up in the bosoms of the mountains weeping  
Like centipedes with breasts: so close to where the stewardesses  
Leap in the never waning dreams:  
They seem to have escaped the atmosphere:  
Birthday candles licking underneath them:  
Maybe they will leap forever,  
Escaping over the wishes that you will not have.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wishing At The Well

Moon grows over the snakes  
As I wonder what they are feeling: their bodies  
Must feel the grass, each  
Blade like a kiss, as they sojourn to the well,  
And they wonder who their favorite maiden will be  
Kissing this night,  
As the bucket waits in the pale.  
Maybe they will climb the apple trees and  
Whisper to the apples too,  
And linger there like ropes- and the curl,  
As the children travel too lately home from  
School,  
And the guitar picks the throats of seashells-  
It lingers over her,  
As she makes love as she will- the waves not  
So far away are a romance,  
Kissing as they swell, but the snakes will feel  
Every inch of her body,  
As she lies wishing at the well.

Robert Rorabeck



# Wishing That It Had Never Happened

The fine young make-believes have already started  
Shooting in:  
From the gated communities of Parkland they've  
Drifted,  
And young Italian girls take photographs of each other,  
And I take photographs of them:  
They are venal and cottage cheese-  
They will go to college, or they'll do as they please:  
Like you, they might make love to me,  
If they have to, but they will never fantasies over  
These estuaries as I have had to:  
How I've tried to compare you to the muses of  
Baudelaire, the two strangers made sisters by his  
Pervasive charges,  
The sick muse and the venal muse: I didn't remember  
That before you used to play soccer together,  
But who as really in charge;  
And if you'd won the season for our white tributary,  
What then would have stopped your taught calved  
Sorority from kissing under the bleachers,  
And then to pass out like carnal wildflowers;  
If it's not what happened, it is at least what used to happen  
When my mind awakened from happenstance  
And began to matriculate toward the better causes of  
Missing graduation- wishing that it had never happened.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wishing That You Were Mine

Oh wont you find me a cenotaph  
Stuck like an old piece in your yard,  
High enough to be perceived by the ever building  
Snows;  
And won't you hold on for a minute and  
Watch out for me,  
And think in the entirely opposite directions the  
Tourisms of your state are leading you,  
Because I have fallen down from the mountains  
Where nary a girl thought to look at  
Me:  
I have shot down like a killed star: really just like  
A piece of asteroid,  
Like a junked video game from an old arcade  
That you can still hear laughing and ululating down  
Your street with the tumbleweeds;  
And hold on for a minute, and press you child  
Nearer your breast like a fat vine,  
And remember the first word she happens to sing  
To you,  
Knowing that I have fallen so far, tumbling downhill  
From hell,  
Wishing that you were mine.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wishing Well

I want to collide with your anatomy.  
I especially,  
Most especially want  
You c%nt:  
I want to collide into you like an atom splitter  
And make you say my name  
So many times  
Like a fat piggy bank breaking apart and crying  
As it falls down  
Jack and Jill's  
Wishing Well.

Robert Rorabeck

# Witch Defeats A Paladin

my god

I invade the privacy of witches  
check the drawers to see how many r@bbers you've  
had inside you  
while I was in Colorado  
14,000 feet up, wanting to f—  
rings of sunlight which ascend  
in golden rain  
Oh, if you could have seen  
mountains  
upon the rolling shores of my reddening plain  
you would have not been so jealous, you would have slept  
like a cat in my lap  
and we'd had rolled forth to  
Alaska  
Instead you used sewing needles to pierce  
my throat  
and cut me from  
your crippling ship  
You said you didn't f— him, not yet,  
and not that you didn't want to,  
but there was only one condom in  
That suspicious drawer—  
meticulously placed for show,  
The box behind it was empty  
I dreamed I loved you,  
but then he was there  
with you in the dark  
and under your skirt  
Now I am left with the need to explore  
the laborious slopes of another's body  
to swim like angels  
into the flesh  
She is a vagrant and a truant  
but at least she doesn't pretend to  
love me  
and doesn't place c@ndoms  
there  
as if she were arranging

dinnerware

Robert Rorabeck

# Witchcraft

The scarlet ingénue  
Swings in the cloudless park;  
The sky is bare naked blue.  
Her lips are humming  
Like the song of a downed  
Power-line  
In the arc at play,  
Her talented backbone is  
Arthur's sword  
Sheathed between her  
Breasts, the tip piercing  
Her opulent lake, the truth of  
Her fits drooling like a clutching orchid,  
Where the sun swims torpidly  
In the humidity expelled from  
Her petite body.  
The alchemy for precious metals  
Repressed in her lips,  
She whispers of divinity  
And she smiles  
At the boys she's turned away,  
Disavowing the  
Touch of morality—  
The fuse is lit like  
Phosphorous packed into a  
Sling,  
She burns the air—  
She blinds airplanes;  
A nebula is her talent exploding  
There in the park just off the way;  
Six feet off the ground,  
She calls housewives to  
Their windows to partake  
In the act of a  
Young God  
Learning her craft.

Robert Rorabeck

## With A Man

I drink green beer  
And I really want to see your stupid  
D\$ck, joto:  
Policias, banditos, bandejos, maricons.  
We'll go to the movies often  
And pray-  
Tip your flask and show me your best  
Dance,  
Like a tipsy zoetrope in a sinking ship  
All before the scentless  
Plum trees,  
Tremulous-  
Coyotes coming to your lips,  
Scenting your grave,  
Because I have seen you in the segregated  
Graveyard  
In a crèche of rotten spikenard,  
But I love you and cursed you,  
Dousing your vivisected abutments with  
Gasoline and army ants,  
And the little known sins you committed in your  
Bedroom during high school:  
The boys you loved,  
Their torn shadows populating you now,  
Or ululating like horrible arcades and pinball  
Machines of giant painted breasts  
And consumptive vampires.  
Now you are lost in an overwhelming house  
With a man that has penetrated you so many  
Times as to become numb,  
Now a disproved science,  
Wanting new golden apes, bighting your clenched  
Fist as it snows fabulously metamorphosis angels.  
Who cares if I say I love you,  
If you never choose to look up to the sky  
To acknowledge how beautifully you are crowned.

Robert Rorabeck

## With A Man I've Never Known

Why haven't you written the most beautiful eulogies,  
If your senses are so impaired: why only essays and religious  
Treatises  
Making the same wages of your pronged love as an airplane  
Pilot flicking ash over the green pools,  
Because down in those whirling machines they are washing  
Angels,  
And little girls who have skipped school and are hanging out  
In their effluvious surplices  
Dreaming of unborn sons in the eyes of the intelligence of  
Fish that can see behind the curtains of this stage,  
Because that is where you are my darling, head being hooded  
By a veil of snow,  
Like at your wedding, making out and swimming with a man I've  
Never known.

Robert Rorabeck



## With A Nude Midway

Oh that rainbow is good for poetry and going  
Down on her on display in the window of her brown reality:  
There it is: she made it across so many canals,  
And through so many forests, like a butterfly who had no  
Intentions of dying, or of ever coming that way again,  
Like a fair returning to my heart  
To light upon it with a nude midway made of a surprising  
Panoply that somehow learned to keep itself burning.

Robert Rorabeck

# With All Her Aeroplanes

I think I did a good job  
With the show,  
Displaying all my scars  
And making apologies for the soldered mermaid-  
A finer piece of criticism  
Couldn't be found  
For much cheaper in any university's  
Book store,  
Given the week or two it  
Took me to write,  
Which is all I'm good for,  
Being that all I have in me is  
The attention of an insect's gestation;  
And that is why my love  
For her  
Has all burned out,  
And my novels lay unfinished,  
Spread open and disavowed like failed moths  
Still quite sure of their ideology  
On the floor of the old carport;  
And I skip school  
And remain completely mystified  
Out in the empty parking lots  
Underneath the faded sky-  
Hemmed by the inexpressible  
Reptiles  
Who bejewel rough-hewn the chapped tennis courts  
Underneath the low voiced palm trees  
Far after the traffic has died,  
And everyone else is  
Back at home and unspeakably peaceful,  
And the all important heron has  
Flid far across Aristotle's spheres,  
Across the crinoline-glades,  
Splayed and rippling the currents of its  
Usual migrations,  
And disappeared along with all her  
Aeroplanes.



## With All Of Its Breath

My body is as scarred and indecisive as a Manticore;  
And when I mount you, I feel like a lucky mountain  
Surmounting a unicorn;  
And none of it feels entirely real, except that I know that  
Your favorite color is green,  
And your eyes are more beautiful than the breathless  
Panoramas that I have seen atop the highest mountains  
Of Colorado and California,  
That I have illegally hiked and thus been fined;  
And now that I have found you, it feels as if I have been given  
An entire orchard that cannot entirely be mine,  
But from which I eat and imbibe illegally, while all of the  
Guns go off so high above Christmas and all of the ancient  
Alligators of my old alma maters,  
While the cars turn around, and the weather vanes;  
And the world finally turns out and shows how it does  
All the tricks that somehow combine together  
And blow with all of its breath my secret wishes for your name.

Robert Rorabeck

# With All Of My Scars

Embroidered with all of my scars  
Why don't we buy Chinese food on Christmas:  
And then we can eat together and enjoy the smacking of our  
Warmth and we can always look into our eyes  
Afterwards, sated, and blood on our snout  
And laugh out loud and out of doors at the school kids  
Collecting there  
Like snowflakes in our yards: and then you will tell to me  
By the words from your lips that we can never  
Understand even though we are struggling up from the canyons  
To get to Phoenix by our cars:  
We are not Navajo, and we spin across the earth:  
We eat ice-cream and light off fireworks and whatever else  
I do not know:  
You see, Alma: you fall asleep in the very same house as your sisters,  
Though you have made love to me almost three dozen times  
Which is as sacred to me as donuts are to cops:  
And I am your dog: and I am entirely gone into the poppies  
That I guess you never deserved unrequited and from a bachelor  
Who spent too long in the sanctities of universities embalmed:  
As the newborn hatchlings lactate from the sky and from  
The summit towards which we are hiking,  
Bringing our bones as offers- or otherwise just dying to see you  
Off- as you lay your shoulders bare as moonlight through  
Aspens and other similes which I guess would make you laugh and  
Which you would fretfully disavow.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Another Softness

Beginning with another softness  
Like light in the woods lost before crepuscule  
And wondering all about dinner—  
A little girl wandered off meant to see the fair  
That has picked up and moved away,  
The lover she would never know—  
Until other fears come around in the sky:  
The dragons in the rivers, the witches in the moons:  
She sits in a circle of fungus sucking her thumbs:  
They are as red as her cheeks;  
I am afraid she is lost—  
The busses go down the roads, and the bicycles after  
Them—the fiancés on their way to affairs of school  
Will never see her again,  
As she is abducted under tear under the stolen  
Light of the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Ant Hills And Que Seras

Down in the lime-green valleys  
With ant-hills and que seras,  
With those beautiful instructors paid to mend,  
Paid to say almost anything;  
And they are looking me in the eyes- Oh lord,  
The joy of the blowing grasses on  
The indestructible prairie, like the joy of  
Unmolested skin running around on those courts-  
I'd giving anything just to sit down and have  
My lunch under those eyes,  
Unemployed so that my being might stem anywhere,  
Go in any direction following the dusk  
And the more languid ambiances glowing outdoors  
From so many windows,  
And the smiling housewives beneath, being shut in,  
Like folded up angels:  
This is a park where I can sing and drive,  
And run my fingers through the air and see how so like  
Truthful fabric is this humid breeze, and all the herons  
Are quiet and well-migrated, and all the furniture moved;  
And her eyes Are settling down,  
And she is being placed vertical in that bed like a prize,  
After they've stomped the ritualistic crystal,  
After they've touched brows and lips, like much  
Enamored cousins who upon holiday drive through the  
Countryside, crossbreeding with the vibrating stamens,  
Drinking porously the same affluence, groping until dusk,  
And saying to each other the names of expensive flowers,  
And the seahorses that come from Europe  
Or another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Eyes Such As Yours

How many girls have blue eyes,  
But they are not like yours: They are the yoke of  
Graveyards compared to you eyes-  
And in all sincerely of parks filled with children chasing  
Hidden eggs on Easter,  
I want to find you; I have always wanted to find you,  
Even while a paraplegic being driven  
To Alaska by my father to participate in gunfights;  
And then to have my hand pressed in the coat of the grandest  
Grizzlies with sleep apneas;  
I really have to congratulate that I did this to myself,  
While keeping my eyes turned up and cursing and bighting my  
Tongue like a lobster trap of escargot:  
And it was fun, and I got to ride a moose and buy shaven  
Jewels with so many other tourists as fat and copulating as  
An entire aquatic nursery of gurgling terrapins  
While the otters swam and listened to the sea from the bellies of  
The nuts they were cracking;  
And you are special joy, Kelly- fibrillating against the species  
Of really unexpected clouds;  
And you make me think of rainstorms, and how someone really  
Entrepreneurial can follow them across country,  
Like a mighty exegesis on a book of manifest  
Destiny;  
And now you couldn't care what I have been saying about  
Myself:  
This is just the glittery strata fornicating with the down syndrome  
Moths on the top of the shelf:  
And Kelly you go away now, into your doublewide kingdom of  
Alligators and whippoorwills;  
And lay into your poor husband, and make him sing for you  
The way any poor minstrel should have to proposition a queen  
With legs of muscle cars and trick ponies,  
And too with eyes such as yours.

Robert Rorabeck



## With Fathomless Kisses

If I and the cattle were all here, and burning our  
Lips on the side of the mother loving sea;  
And I looked up, and saw you as a brown  
Angel swimming with her hair and eyelashes waving towards  
Me;  
And then I in a helpful mood waves as a misaligned reflection,  
Trying to match the beautiful movement in the body  
Of that carriage,  
What would the purpose be but to climb up the newly grafted  
Stairways of our college in your name,  
Listening to the church bells chattering like bluebells  
In the arboreal firehouses that shaded all of the students  
Of my thoughts for your bliss coming to me,  
Like a newborn child of a starlit ballerina folding back into  
A paper airplane whose lighter than air edges had  
Caressed by fingertips for all of a moment before I sent it away,  
Steaming like a bottle in a vermilion sea over all of that  
Yard, looping and tying invisible knots around the  
Maleleuca trees,  
Until for its final while gamboling still, being peppered there  
By curious ants who carry away the scents of your  
Divinity down into their fathomless castles  
To be greeted with fathomless kisses by their most homeopathic  
Queen.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Forest Fires

If I go to New Mexico  
Again, and leave my true love behind  
For a little while-  
Will she become like that hallucination without  
My trust:  
Will she be the busy noise of an airplane  
As it skips across the  
Ocean,  
Or the fire after it has eaten a forest  
The butterflies have sifted into after a long  
Journey-  
Or even the fair after it has packed up and  
Metamorphosed  
Leaving only its prizes of gold fish to the housewives  
Who are too young to care-  
Will I become like a memory passed a thousand  
Times a day on a busy highway,  
The night and its descendants smelling of  
Jasmine and the spent  
Noises of engines- like a manmade  
Ferality,  
And will I have to spend away the waves of  
My midnight thinking of her,  
Hollowing and whittling her grottos into  
My chest,  
Like scars or tattoos, just trying to become  
A longer poem holding out for her absence-  
While she remains greener in another man's mind,  
Blazing like an airport of jealous jewelry-  
Until she finally stops reminiscing of my make-believe  
Promises,  
And returns again to his sterile joy,  
Losing all of her favorite color,  
And her soul- her child busy at the hips of  
Her playground,  
And they ring around her again-  
The sky blazes with forest fires that never signal  
My name.



# With Games I Cannot Understand

It opens up in all of us  
A smoking ballroom  
Where the airplanes  
Fighter jet, or dissapear;  
And the sanguined  
Bees lose their wings,  
And their flowershops,  
And tend to crawl  
Around of  
The carpet of some  
Living room for  
Hours and hours-  
Without any movement  
Of her hands  
To get them where they  
Are going long after  
The tourists have driven  
Home,  
Super saturated-  
All of their advertisements  
Cut down as if  
Airplanes from a mobile,  
Like fish escaping  
Back into the sea;  
Finished with games  
I cannot understand-

Robert Rorabeck

# With Gold And With Oranges

Bodies who lay laughing without wings  
Ringed in the salt of insignificant stings- here  
They say you lay almost faithful upon your  
Wedding day,  
And the echoes of joy enjoyed the candles  
Flames:  
Your house was filled with gold and with oranges,  
And your chariots never had to change:  
In your little bedroom like a story book after  
Midnight,  
As you must be taking part in your love making,  
As your children lay sprawled as if after a holiday  
Of confetti- They seem to enjoy the weather  
As the airplanes touch down like feathers,  
And you hold your brown heads  
Together  
And whisper.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Her Eyes

Forecasted as the memory—beautifully scarred  
In the student parking lot  
And drowsing until the lights come on and the crickets  
Sawing the bows of their cricket legs  
After the girls have gone home, silencing the water fountains.  
There is only my cherry red Oldsmobile  
And my cheeks flaming:  
I dream that there are fireworks in the sky  
Going off,  
And in the middle of the afternoons of my truancies,  
Housewives percolating as the grass wreathes and struggles  
In the moats of sunlight:  
And all of us boys are up on her roof getting off,  
As the canal twinkles like a metamorphosis:  
In the eyes of the alligators and rattlesnakes rubies that are  
Busy listening,  
As the children come home and ring around her,  
As she lays down her glass and sings to them with her eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Her Eyes Closed Or Her Eyes Opened

What is it I want in the female body  
My sad mind wonders on fermented sugar cane;  
Maybe I am just listening to her song,  
Just another of my unexplainable species, her legs  
Scissors like crickets out under the stars-  
All the wonderful happenstance of that strange science fiction  
Keeps me young in fits;  
And the night is terrible, terrible, with or without this:  
Freshman year I was in love with a palindrome who has since  
Changed her name and bared children;  
And sometimes in the middle of the week my aunt comes wearing  
The costumes of the post-office,  
And I give her money- Then it's always crepuscule, and the  
Sprinklers chew, and the traffic comes back and forth  
With or without policeman,  
But I am never being so bold as to just come right out and say it;  
And I wonder what I truly intend to mean,  
Being that I've never been any good at playing sports,  
Though I once sweated and fenced:  
Maybe I am just trying to save myself by all of this,  
Scribbling in the snow as if trying to reinvent electricity under the  
Teary eyes of hidden glaciers and the virgins of their  
Breathless grottos:  
And don't the days tremble, and I still don't know all the names  
For these flowers;  
And I still only keep one or two regular muses, both either  
Unavailable or disinterested;  
But if I keep at it these will become swings for my children,  
And I will be able to taste her mouth again  
With her eyes closed or her eyes opened.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Her Other And More Nameless Of Men

I am not alright to feel these wordless things:  
Wingless, like wingless airplanes:  
I am not alright to move again, until the days come  
With all of their fathers  
Lifting up all of their children; and I am not alright again,  
Thirstily down at the foothills of my mother's  
Most precious of mountains, where she was raised  
And where she has come again,  
And lifted up across all of the snows and the caracoles of  
Tourisms,  
Lifted up even past the youngest and most vibrant of  
Overpasses,  
Who are like hopeful suitors rising their backs like saddles  
Of the rushes of virile flowers to her:  
Of which of them my she choose, I cannot choose for her;  
And it does not feel alright to wish for any of them,  
While all of those fish are swaying underneath the manes of  
Panting lions,  
As the school buses make their rounds again across the vibrantly  
Weed-strewn yards where me soul is sleeping off a ways again;  
And where Alma is sleeping again, off a ways from the path  
Again with her other an more nameless of men.

Robert Rorabeck



## With Her Unkempt Eyes

Half the bottle is gone and I am even more empty  
Than I was before,  
With the school buses circling around,  
The schoolyards mating just as they was before;  
And all of the light going down,  
And the schoolyard closing, and all of my muses going home,  
Back into the schoolyards that there were even before  
Presupposing:  
And the houses loom like magnified terrapin:  
They loom and loom,  
And the words of diamonds stretch out so languid before  
All of them;  
And they wait like precious minerals in the mines of their  
Dorms,  
Until the lighters come like stalwart young gentlemen,  
Touching their brightest of heads to their flumes;  
And then they come brightly erecting like glowing and  
Cerulean tents in the gloom of schoolyards miles  
Above the mausoleums of mice and tourists,  
Glowing as I have seen you yet lighting out above the gloom,  
Glowing like ghostly candles touching the lips  
Of unconquerable fireworks mouthing off in the rock sewn  
Bosoms utterly far above the graveyards  
Of your popular aphorisms; and then you just douse your self.  
And you realize that you love your new child and  
You husband equally, Sharon, in the snowflakes that you have  
Cut yourself out of the snowstorm;  
And that I was never beautiful enough to truly love you;  
And so you go walking like an unatuned orchestra over the  
Dams that might yet glow with the leaking mysteries that  
My mother still my yet give me with her unkempt eyes,  
Sharon.... Sharon.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Hips Of Tattoos

Turning up for brail like children without any sense,  
Wimpled in pieces of dismissive alphabet reaching for the  
Sun:

You know that is just how your bodies are, like spindles of  
Golden castles on the run:

Cresting atop of my pistols, and pointing all of your guns,  
The eurhythmics of cheetahs with hips of tattoos,

And your eyes far away atop of your nubile pedestal:

This is how I think of you after you have conquered,

And won over me by what you have done.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Its Heartbroken Love

My mother does the wash behind my back  
While I feel up my bad cheek:  
The Guatemalans are now well home to sleep,  
And I read some Borges in translation.  
Then I read a poem I've written before to Erin.  
And it is not good:  
The way I masturbate into the ever ready night  
With the background noises of the way  
Things have always began,  
The way they are always going.  
The things you can't get back, things covered  
Up by weather,  
And all the sad mermaids matriculated in from the  
Everglades,  
Or places I can no longer believe in,  
While she works in the despondency of a true misfit,  
And I have accidentally erased the more  
Beautiful things I had to say to her,  
When I promised not to say anything at all to her  
Once more or ever again:  
The mythology of a good woman walking alone in the  
Park,  
Baring children like fruit,  
Her eyes so lonely, but her body so well perceived;  
And prop airplanes flying low in the dark,  
Sound like the dangerous kisses of  
Venal lovers while  
I don't remember how I began to speak of this fugue,  
How I hoped that it might resonate for years after  
Instead of coming out as a stillborn prepackaged into  
A coffin,  
Something that will break my parents hearts until  
Their very own graves,  
And yet no one else on earth will be familiar with its  
Heartbroken love  
At all.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Mute Efficiency

Following the sparks of egrets, my soul has sparklers  
That burn across the glades of  
Kindergarten: at first they seem to make a sound,  
But then the prospect goes away  
As if led off by kidnappers who only supposed for  
A little while they were in love;  
But the sunlight falls, metamorphosing the rain and  
Ice cream,  
The little plates underneath the trees catching both  
But spilling down to the homogenized sea,  
They offer this to nobody- and the words speak for  
Themselves  
With mute efficiency and this is what they say.

Robert Rorabeck

# With My Bedroom Thoughts

The same memory waits for no one more  
Than this—  
With the days caving in like sink holes over  
Our lives—  
Words come to their own conclusions  
Outside of throats played like instruments  
By their hearts—  
And we get up, evolved into our necessities,  
Wanting a drink at the very start,  
Some elixir so to fall in love without having  
To look anyone in the eye—  
Brown skins piling up in their cars like  
An apiary on the road—  
See all of these strange girls, a menagerie  
Of a harem escaped from the outskirts of  
Mexico—  
And I love them all, calling them with my bedroom  
Thoughts,  
Turning my scarred architectures their way,  
And sometimes they come again,  
Like waves at high tide—  
My sorcery the same thievery as moon light  
Upon gravity—  
But never mindful, they soon forget,  
And go back on that usual road,  
Yet sizzling with the filament bright enough to  
Dull a Ferris Wheel—  
And up until that very moment when they step  
Back in doors I like to imagine that they  
Think of me.

Robert Rorabeck

# With My Mutely Jubilant Tongue

Born in the silver forts and there you are, Alma:  
Brown as the most auburns of snows in my bed:  
And we lay together,  
And I paint your copper cannons green with my tongue,  
While the starving conquistadors filibuster  
And the stars rust together until the night cannot close  
And the horses and their riders are forced to waylay around  
The Christmas tree with the little train and the presents I  
Have bought for you during all of these weekdays,  
As I run away underneath the busy overpasses praying that  
I get back in time to do your dishes, to clean you like a mother  
Cat with her kitten with my mutely jubilant tongue.

Robert Rorabeck

## With My Reassuring Sacrifices

Now I have a new tomb generally right here  
Next to the railroad cars next to the elephants being loaded  
And underneath the mountains I once thought  
To climb to pick the vineyards of the lightning,  
Themselves beneath the heavens:  
As my muse lays in a cerulean bed not too far away from here,  
Not too far away with her children, or with her man-  
And I become her living cenotaph, glowing around  
The parks and the graveyards, something unspoken about  
But as toothy as a fox:  
And if she could see the hieroglyphics of my skeleton right  
Now on this spot wouldn't she understand like a snowflake  
Melting in her brown palm across the ways from  
All of those rivers she had to cross just to get here  
To find me- insouciant and disbanded, and standing over  
Me like a windmill without any breath  
In the palm of her brown hand- her womb opening like  
A rose garden underneath the crosses and the echoes  
Of the waves of some Spanish fort that represented  
The vacancies of another pit stop that I supposed  
At one time or another her family owned:  
And I want to take her Christian name, and to voyage  
With her across the many hallucinations until we find our  
Honeymoon- and out this very spot coalesce- tattooed  
In the dressed of our souls, while her children turn around  
Beneath us, lucid, ovoid stars in their game- and I inhaling her  
Heavens, with my reassuring sacrifices telling her what it  
Is all about.

Robert Rorabeck

## With My Song Of This

Really desperate, as desperate as boys wanting  
To become real,  
Or trying to figure hard on what it is to be exactly what  
They were yesterday in the biz,  
While the water fountains gathered at her tan lips,  
And the teachers' echoes called  
Over the migratory steps of a red Mexico: the landscaping her  
Favorite color:  
While we kissed open mouthed before the eyes of  
The albino alligator, and Alma says she remembers this,  
While the bicycles park in suburban bliss,  
And she recedes like a well placed waterfall back into her  
Neighborhoods that I somehow miss,  
While the stewardesses call their captains in the skies:  
And they all wear pristine platinum wings over  
Cerulean uniforms, their arms spread like wildflowers, this way  
And this inside their leaping cabins:  
And I must say that I know nothing about her, but that I think  
About her all of the time,  
And call to her with my song of this.

Robert Rorabeck



# With My Wonderful Mother

Nooses of sky over green pepper fields-  
A grandfather and a granddaughter attending,  
The coral snakes under hooves of loose thoughts drifting  
Away like stolen bicycles,  
Or muses that don't reorganize themselves anymore- words that feel  
A money changer's scale provide no intercourse for  
The senseless at heart,  
As the mother I once knew waits in doors, the cicadas  
Waiting in their changing rooms of trees  
With the schools closed down and the selkies lay  
With the fallen oranges molding beneath the trees:  
I thought I saw your eyes once, I thought I saw them looking  
Away while my guardian angel evaporated with the  
Burning lighthouses kneeling in the senseless day-  
With my wonderful mother underneath the roof,  
The thieveries of moonlight stealing all that she was away.

Robert Rorabeck

## With New Poems

With new poems, a fever of under developed  
Skeletons—  
Sea monkeys in a petri dish—  
That believes itself a storm—  
My dog walks into my room  
Underneath the ceiling fan—  
Across the threshold,  
My wives cries not to drink too much,  
But this house is only a thousand feet—  
There is not enough air in its lungs to breathe  
In and out—  
A swordfish on some old gods mantle  
Caught out of time  
Like poor old Gatsby—  
His dreams of golden heifers, the same way  
I thought of you—  
I still have the stem of that first rose  
That you returned to me—  
Now it has mostly fallen from the trellis  
Of this yellow house,  
But the sun is shining above the pines—  
And the airplanes are singing beneath of her,  
Their breasts out—  
They are just as drunk as I am,  
And they are not sad that they aren't going home.

Robert Rorabeck

# With No One Around

Nights are cool and sibilant and unreal.  
They are the best times to be out,  
Alone and drinking  
Just off the block of Military Trail where  
The girls are always selling,  
And now you can think about them safely,  
Now that you are getting too drunk to  
Drive,  
And you can just masturbate to female sailors,  
Those leggy stewardesses and busty  
Astronauts,  
Fail into the maggots eating your jive,  
Fail right smack dab into the middle of your class,  
Licking your lips over Disney World,  
And the hot names of plants used for South Florida  
Landscaping:  
It's what you're selling now, and it would be best  
To memorize them,  
To be good at your job, just like the mailman knows  
And shakes hands with everyone on his  
Block:  
And the traffic is moving,  
While your gut is lazy, and yet the trains seem to be  
Hanging out: They could take you to Colorado,  
Or back home to your dogs.  
Why did you have to leave your dogs? There was  
No reason:  
Like this night, it was inconsequential and yet so  
Profound,  
And not a woman on the earth loves you,  
But for this second its like magic, remembering their  
Pretty plumes and flowers  
Brighter than they ever bloomed, even now,  
With no one around.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Nothing Left To Prove

Yes, the country dies fighting dragons:  
It dies gallantly not knowing that it is Beowulf fighting its  
Last monster:  
The country dies into trucks and cars,  
Blaring with all of its country stars:  
Right into the middle of Bellefontaine Cemetery it gives its  
Last ballyhoo;  
And the monoliths of its last breath rise up like skyscrapers of  
Honey bells:  
The country dies as it touches itself; and you don't write  
Because you don't have anything to prove;  
And I swam on the swings with Kelly today, swam in the black  
Man's playground on new Pompeii,  
Neglecting to collect the new coloring books of animals for  
My papier-mâché arc- My father's name is Mark,  
And I am the captivated sailor who farms from his main staff  
A rich topiary of honey-spectacular seahorses;  
And in the grottos of grizzly bears I transform with the  
Conquistadors into carnivals of cannibalistic carnivores;  
And the old poets burn like leading waves,  
Like girls heavily perfumed on strawberry floats in Saint  
Augustine:  
You are the richness of my soul, and I watched you being planted  
Today;  
You fell down burping blood and little plastic dolls right  
Next to Sara Teasdale who'd just come up shopping from her  
Immortal malls;  
And we held her hand like a conduit; and I listened to you  
Breathing like a lonely washing machine in a carport the rains were  
Spitting over like a typhoon; and the country gave its final throws;  
The pitchers closed on the mound  
And the golems rose; and I fell asleep with you underneath the  
Bleachers in a country of losers:  
From that high school you got thrown out from as a freshman,  
That I graduated from but still live in,  
Like the lucky old son of a felon, behind the illusions of your  
Tragically sellable eyes,  
The country dies, love struck and battle weary,  
Like an old veteran in the blistering trams of an epileptic playground

With nothing left to prove.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Nothing On Their Mind

They come out from the door  
They've been making love behind.  
They make it all the way to  
San Francisco with nothing on  
Their mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Nothing To Survive

Mutilated with the horrendous flowers  
In a freezer of romance,  
Bleeding out words that come shoeless to the fair  
And baseball games after she has already  
Left-  
The pickup artists pack up and leave and take the  
Grass out of the field that was once  
Soft and young, expectant of your  
Truancies-  
And even the eyes of the alligator which were  
Once the biggest of marbles,  
Are gone,  
And they seem there beneath the surface like  
The inevitable death of music,  
Their tongues hunger less- the airplanes above  
Them as mute as punished children,  
And the sun is a mother who abandons her young,  
Gone away without any feeling at all  
Leaving them with nothing to survive.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Only Me

Making their marks in red jackets,  
Like burning paper flirting with the windy popcorn  
Over the fair- and all of it without a home:  
Comely though dejected and playing hooky while  
All of their better fathers are working  
Losing fingers down by the sawmill while they take their  
Cane poles to the fishing hole  
Where the selkies curse in the slow moving pinwheel dreams;  
While at night she echoes that she only wants to  
Be with him; and her brother is off to war  
Where the mines evaporate bodies into wishes-  
And she returns igniting her keys into her car-  
Only wanting to be with him,  
While the birds sing, and the fish swim, and she lays down  
Again with only me.

Robert Rorabeck



# With Our Swords That Flame

The snake has tracked its lions all across the earth,  
And maybe it hates the man, as in its religion this is its evil,  
And all of its folklore is bent around the monsters  
With legs,  
As it also inhabits the gardens that burn, that we too  
Have made so strange with our swords  
That flame.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Plans Of Yesterday

It is my job to drink this  
Liquor,  
To sit like a scarred basement  
Underneath  
The tinfoil fascinations  
Gazing down  
From the heavens-  
And reconsider, while the  
Gears in our lovestruck  
Bodies compound  
Their tensions  
And windmills our hopes-  
Loves like  
Bicycles gulping the  
Caesuras-  
Through the birth canals of  
The old avenues-  
Aquamarine-  
And teardrops of sea horses:  
In relations of Queen Anne's  
Wheels,  
Or the diadems of hemispheres  
Who are perpetually  
Fertilizing their inner concentricity's-  
Revealing the yokes swimming  
There, like young sisters  
Teasing their bare shoulder blades  
To the sunlight  
With plans of yesterday-

Robert Rorabeck

# With So Many Songs

It doesn't happen that I am here and counting down  
And brandishing magpies in my cathedrals,  
And becoming all of the otherwise thoroughly unhooked,  
And making love to the misaligned maypoles of the acolytes of  
Paganistic cathedrals:  
And now in whispers over all of those canals, where the winos  
Have misappropriated the most blondish of blond boys  
From their fieldtrips:  
I settle down: and I hunker down, and I finally make a theme,  
A day laborer in a day dream: of his burning soul, his  
Gasoline, his Alma:  
And I can still smell her brown skin coming for me like  
A sheet on a clothes line through all of the burning sugar cane:  
And it was that it happened that our loins met,  
And we made love:  
But however two butterflies or mariposas happen to meet  
And make love, I don't care, and I don't wish to know:  
All I do is sell fireworks: I sell Christmas trees:  
And I have laid down in love with you, Alma,  
And swatted the fires that burned across your sea: and this was  
Enough to know for all of the love in me;  
And I love you, and I burn up into a thousand ways of failure,  
Just to warm you in a bed, in a kingdom who with so many songs  
Of blue jays eating themselves have no further needs for me.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Such Blindness

I saw her there and held my breath  
While the busses were turning around like equal marionettes  
In the counterclockwise lamentations of a funnel  
Cloud;  
And even though she had turned her rears to me, and walked  
Away with him; it was as if I could see her acceptance  
Taking shape like a metamorphosis crawling out of  
Nap time into the crepuscules of music class  
In which the rhythms of young bodies get up and bow,  
Hoods congratulating the soft encouragements of the young  
Teachers getting experience permeated by the airconditioning;  
Until it was all a hoot, and the things that were  
In fact never seen,  
Still called out until there was darkness through the mowed  
Grass and then into the lounging cypress like feral  
Christmas trees, and it went that way following and seeming  
To light her path with such blindness.

Robert Rorabeck

## With That Fox

Burning up in prayers of our semiprecious beliefs:  
Like commuters waiting on the tarmacs for the divine providence  
To touch down as airplanes,  
While everything around them has an action, both good and bad,  
But always dying and forgetting to mail letters,  
While loins cross and bleed, and her little children look out from  
Windows that she once made love behind:  
The very love that created them, and sent then cascading through the  
Acrobatics of their living rooms and into Christmas,  
Until everything falls like a séances that doesn't matter,  
Both gods and devils making love,  
And the fat bellies of airplanes touching down, hungry to be  
Sated,  
Like the embarrassment of a vineyard ripping its clothes of the vine  
To get in bed with that fox.

Robert Rorabeck

## With The Beautiful Species You Employ

Your lips are beginning the fine creases of a  
Distinguished grandmother, which is no insult-  
I have never kissed them, but sung of them by my  
Own lips, the insecure choices you will never hear;  
Perhaps, I will drink a bottle of Lysol next  
Summer, and go the way of Vachel Lindsay when the  
Aspens are still green, their bodies reminding me  
Of you swaying like a wave in a varnished hallway,  
And then as a ghost I will sleep in the dimples of  
Your pottery, and know those things about you no one  
Could describe; and enter those things like an old Spanish  
Fort, your lovely narcissisms, the roots your flesh  
Enfolds your blood like Spanish wine- Only then I would  
Know the ways. Though sleeping on some sad hill underneath  
The cold crosses, the chicken wire strewn through the  
Plenitude of corpse weed; I might then be considered fully  
Formed, and go about you bathing as if in the reservoirs  
Of a crustacean, preferring the tributaries you most often  
Employ, running along the appendages of your carriage  
Like light slipping down through the bay windows of a  
Living room- For otherwise I will know nothing of your off-colored  
Crèches,  
Like lamplight which cradles your child,  
kindled by your elegant lashes; and I am lazy and play no sports,  
But wrestle all day in the arid basins where your perfume  
Wafts like lavender pollens, or the descriptions of species  
That you would know better, having petted and fed them along a  
Path I have only come to in passing, struggling through the boreal  
Scars; and, not invited upon, never learned to speak French,  
Having to sleep under the leaky guts of school buses during lunch  
Time,  
You already in a deep esoteric conversation,  
Like in a fairytale's trance with the beautiful species you employ.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Butterfly

Like thunderbolts they've been  
Snapping up the rainstorms—  
Well, dogs, they've been leaping,  
Leaping:  
Until they are going home without  
Any answers:  
There they are, just as beautiful as  
Any home on the other side  
Of stained glass windows without  
Any answers,  
As I've been calling through  
The monuments of the eye-less skydivers:  
And this is the place where they belong,  
Calling together into their shadows,  
I don't even suppose they can  
Reason for themselves—with or  
Without their star-crossed lovers,  
As they've been beating away for hours and  
Hours—  
Burying their wings into the places that cannot  
Hold without any shadows—  
Until the lances beckon for the sweethearts of  
Her children,  
And the highways end up right in the sweet spots  
Of her bedrooms—  
And the waves glisten off the lips of the prepubescent  
Giants,  
And all of the night laughs away into their cathedrals:  
And the airplanes touch down in the foothills  
Of the truants' memories,  
Until it already feels alright to survive,  
And you are called back to a home that feels  
Entirely believable—next to me,  
And to the tortoise who is happily eating his  
Breakfast with the butterfly.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Colors Of Your Soul

I've even been up in the fanfare of markets  
Above the tree lines of your beauty and of your  
Flea markets:  
I've sauntered up in the mineral ways, while cursing  
The sun like looking in your eyes,  
And remembering the way down through my  
Hallucinations,  
Following the shed horns of elk like bred crumbs  
Through a tree less forest-  
Like an instrument that plays the sweet sound of  
Your soul through this insurmountable pain-  
As if I found the only firework in the world  
That blazed for a moment with the colors of your  
Soul.

Robert Rorabeck



# With The Constellations

Burning throughout its own echoes,  
The suburbia enjoys the laziness of crepuscule,  
And its green yards go to sleep:  
Its flags and housewives go to sleep,  
While above all of the abandoned forts  
And baseball diamonds,  
The airplanes leap through the sky with the perpetuity  
Of inspired lovers:  
And I swear that I have seen you hear,  
Through the blue lights of the hibernating churches-  
When the hummingbirds no longer molest the roses,  
And the children surcease from the playgrounds-  
Then my eyes awaken to the other world  
That perfumes the graveyards and the lakes,  
And I hold my eyes up to your beauty  
And your candle light burns with the constellations.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Drumming Of Excited Hearts

Sommeliers are singing in their wine  
Gardens;  
That is what they're doing, or they're turning  
Into seagulls,  
And scooping silver fish from the sea,  
Like great strips of tinsel floating in the long  
Green hair of a vast and naturalistic maiden:  
That was always what I supposed;  
And when they get thirsty, they lie down in the  
French sawdust right next to the slender  
Docks with the gondolas where I am trying to  
Sell my bread for words;  
And we pour wine from a box into her lips,  
Until her eyes turn demure and askance toward  
The Eiffel tower where the tourists are churning up  
Like mechanical confections;  
And entire clutches of hummingbirds hatch from out  
Her nose, and baby's breath, and tiny dolphins;  
And they all swim down those dimpled avenues,  
Gently sloshing around her lips;  
They stain her white lapels until her infant cries and wants her  
Home;  
And we'll take her hand, knowing that it is what  
We must do, and enjoying it, for doesn't she have the bone  
Structure of an angel, which still gives us license to write  
Even in her absence of over ten years. We saw  
Her when our occupation was stealing bicycles briefly,  
And then only for ten seconds inside the Chinese restaurant;  
We had to watch her kiss the cook,  
But if he is her husband now it is not relevant; and even if  
It is someone else, it is our hand she is relying upon to  
Guide her lactating flesh under the franc aphonic heavens;  
It is just delightful to turn even briefly through the  
Ways with her,  
And listen to our footsteps intermingle with the drumming of  
Excited hearts.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Graces Of Pretty Flowers

Graveyards filled with the graces of  
Pretty flowers and pretty  
Stones—  
Ways beyond here,  
Going up to the dumping grounds—  
As you lay into his shoulder blades like a fetish  
Of unrecognizable kites trying to  
Make a pornographic movie high up  
In the switchback gloom—  
Ways that we have gone being lost forever  
Inside a thunder shower that lasts only for a small  
Part of one particular afternoon—  
Flowers that hang over the  
Battlements of lost grandfathers—  
And your shoulders open to the sun,  
Running red and brown,  
Brown and red—  
Castigated and stumbling over all of the  
Remaining bodies of those whom they will love  
For forever more.

Robert Rorabeck

## With The Moon

Crawling to the forefront of another misery of  
Guatemala—I drink my rum,  
I say my lines—and I await for another day to splay me open  
To the eyes and senses of fishermen—  
Or, if I suppose, the sunlight cannot keep you here  
From another catastrophe,  
Like stolen bicycles sleep walking back to their masters—  
Cannot keep you from his love,  
Or from the marionettes of his children he  
Conceived inside of you—then the cave is stolen,  
But in its zoetrope still dances—  
Laughing under the moonlight for the wolves to come  
Into its movie theatre, or for the planes flying above  
It to look down,  
Causing another catastrophe, awakening—  
The moonlight over a valley of windmills—cousins to  
The caesuras—they spring around them,  
Never bothering to wonder what is laughing at the  
Same time with the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Premonitions Of A Greater Truth

These words who burn my throat like lies:  
Alma says that I am a liar,  
That I am always lying: but the clouds lie too when they  
Seem to perceive the images of our language,  
And at least my lies are pitiful and homeopathic:  
They cannot swallow much,  
And they wind up on her doorstep- to a girl who has never  
Been to Colorado to see where my mother was born,  
While the newborn unicorns curl their horns in the  
Thunderbrush of their woodland creche,  
And the traffic jams of rains pile up through the aspens,  
I show all of my wounds to you,  
Alma- and if they are not great, I apologize;  
But I can still see you here all the same, the wooden hallways  
Smoking with your basic instruments:  
Your body wears the day, or it is a mirage, and something  
I cannot help lying about,  
For its divine aesthetics ring with the premonitions of a greater  
Truth.

Robert Rorabeck

## With The Same Beautiful Eyes

Long days of love making coming outside of the houses  
That are not ours,  
And running our scarred bodies into the first breaths of the sea,  
Trying how to find out how the waves come  
Up and down with the even pressures; maybe all of this is bound  
To kill my liver,  
But not before my loneliness takes me whole: The loneliness of looking  
At all of these houses bound up in great fits the same way we are,  
The way our bodies are made to coil together,  
To press and need together, to know our astral signs that birthed us  
In the pinstripes weathers;  
And I dream of a road going through the country with tall grass and  
Tall trees:  
I dream of you along this road winding, and how we stop and make love  
And almost lose ourselves while the murderers and grave robbers pass  
Us by and forget about us;  
And I dream that in all of this world there is really only one house,  
And one beautiful woman to fill my life with her companionship;  
And all the remaining answers are just the wrong doors that dropp off  
The cliffs where the cars are crushed;  
And under the eyes of this woman lies the seas filled with the only answers  
That I need,  
But besides this death is all around me and is filled with the same beautiful  
Eyes that she seems to want to make for me.

Robert Rorabeck

## With The Shadows, Mary

What has the evil troubadour done to Mary?  
I have checked the hay-loft, I have checked the dairy;  
But she has gone like the summer's river, like  
The Spring-time's cherry;

Now the snows crowd her new job, and there  
Are Mary's footprints in the snow's jaw: She is working,  
But I cannot find her. Taken new routs, so I cannot  
Find her, but I can smell the kiss upon her flesh,  
Of a fine John,

It makes me so hungry and so feverish,  
That I begin my drooling stutter; I would like some  
Bones with pie and butter;  
And as I leap from crook to shutter, I moan  
And this I mutter:

"Mary, Mary, our children are hungry without  
Your breasts to suckle, and Mary, Mary,  
I am hungry without your flesh to mould and knuckle,  
But your kiss has gone away, Mary,  
Mary, gone away, but I will follow the steps it took,  
Mary, Mary,  
Because there are all sorts of trails in these woods,  
And the new weddings and hair cuts shall do no good,  
For I am coming with the shadows, Mary,  
Mary, with the shadows to do no good."

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Shoulders Over The Gloom

And they make love in the pieces of the forest  
After the school has closed  
And the graveyard has opened—  
New and oiled  
Are the werewolves and no one knows  
Where they are going,  
Back and forth  
Through the bric-a-brac as through the gloom,  
Taking their applesauce parcels upon their shoulders,  
Trying to look high and mighty even as they  
Get lost and eventually are enveloped  
As envelopes are kissed by werewolves—  
And now here you are somewhere,  
While the fish are breeding—  
And the long nights get lonely  
And there is nothing left to save for ourselves—  
And you condescend one more time to kiss  
The shoulders over the gloom.

Robert Rorabeck



## With The Silence That Evaporates

With the silence that evaporates the cars from their houses—  
It inaugurates these congregations of misspellings the frogs  
Are serenading,  
So I don't suppose you know a single bit of my love—  
Even though it seems to last forever, and has been about you  
For so long—until eventually even the yellowness echoes  
In evaporations and the sunlight has nowhere else to go—  
The last pools of it remain in the mispronounced ivy  
Of narrow-minded bachelors until they are too  
Drunk with shame and liquor to see—  
And even though my love has never found out, I still  
Wake up every morning and teach your children—  
Anonymous mispronunciations across the day light graveyards  
Whose sadness is drowned by the daylight that is too blinded to see.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Speed Of Light

Baseball games are the openings of the day's lunch boxes—  
Don't you see how they make pretty news in between the playgrounds  
Of the day's pretty tears:  
Well, she was here anyways—reclusive, until she got bored,  
Cardboard marionette torn about by the passionate  
Happenstance of fireworks—  
And the highways proceed swerving around her,  
Going all of the way off to Tennessee or some other  
Out of the way place, filled with isolated grottos  
And mermaids who have become cenotaphs  
Until there is no other way to run—  
And all of the Goldilocks have been defeated—  
Places that leave us in the dust,  
As if we've been looking back for a million years,  
And she has gone forwards with the speed of light.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Sun Going Down With Nowhere To Go

With scars adept to traffic,  
I go sideways: The dogs want out.  
They are very needy, and the days are needy  
Too. Another one has eaten the world,  
My soul is joyous- but my face tired-  
If I sold wine, I'd be beautiful,  
I'd have a little family, and a house in the  
Snow- I'd play with my daughter under the  
Tree, and I wouldn't listen no matter what  
The serpent sang to me;  
And my soul is joyous, it has nowhere to go.  
Maybe tomorrow it will follow the sun outside  
And around the world a bit;  
Maybe it will visit you and crenellate your daughter  
Like a good luck charm, and influence more  
People to consummate you- They consummate you  
Already with the sun going down,  
The cars swirling down the mountain as if in a  
Clever, automated dream; their faces winding down,  
But I should think that their souls would like  
To crenellate your daughter with me too.  
She is drooling on a bib you wear over your gown,  
With the sun going down with nowhere to go.

Robert Rorabeck

# With The Tigers And The Lions

Angels have earned the right to  
Own knives, and to hold them  
Over the bushes,  
The airplanes have burned into  
With the tigers and  
The lions—  
In two weeks of an end of  
Winter amusement—  
While my cousins all get married  
And build their married houses  
Further and further up the  
Mountains—  
So when they step down, oh what  
An orchestra—  
To the super markets  
And the movie theatres—and their  
Shadows glisten,  
And sometimes a hidden daycare  
Of unobtainable flowers blooms in  
The hidden passageways,  
As if seeming to want to follow them.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Their Eyes

Beautiful simpletons using brail until  
The circus comes  
Counting midnight backwards- and the clouds  
Fail to tidy up or foreshadow  
The sexy romance  
Of airplanes entangled with Titans:  
That in their bedroom of worlds above us,  
They do so much nonesuch-  
And the world comes down around their shoulders:  
Cascades of waxy tears  
Or salty candles: and we hold hands in the roses  
Underneath the overpasses:  
And especially on weekends, they come to  
Sell things from far and wide around  
Us- and we get liver disease from wishing to  
Be like too many pilots-  
Anxious, with green ax handles, and the girls getting  
Out of high school and melting around us:  
Developing in the higher basins until they are  
Nothing more than something vermilion  
In a sky of wounds- in an arcade of  
Perfumes and open doorways until they finally make  
The decision for us to let us in or to not  
Let us in with their eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Their Feverish Lips

Airplanes in the sky with the clouds:  
Child's mobile up in our thoughts,  
As it snows over the rivers  
And love freezes at our lips, as bouquets-  
There are knives in the mountains all  
Winter,  
And your shop lies beneath them with your  
Two children at your hip in  
Pieta- in your little shop- and it isn't right,  
But you remember nothing of our  
Diminished high school, but I have returned  
Again,  
And teach there, lying in the mowed grasses  
As the rivers run all over your gardens  
And sing to you of the hoary men they have  
Metamorphosed of: yes, they sing of  
I with their feverish lips coming down,  
Making new wounds beneath the heavens-  
And of other things, I suppose you will  
Never know- but which I've said for so long.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Their Husbands And Their Children

Lost in the sections of an oval race  
As sunlight falls on the wrong side of my face,  
And the housewives come home  
To their vineyards along the groves of the sea-  
Like young goddesses upon their seahorses  
Who never have to think of me.  
Eventually they will slip away, their metamorphosis  
Migrating,  
And they will make love underneath mountains  
Beneath the keystones of their ruddy peeks:  
Never suspecting the mysteries of the higher aeries:  
That I was once above them, looking down  
Counting my loves to a lightning storm.  
And in the morning they arose with their husbands  
And their children  
And drove the few blocks that it took to buy ice-cream.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Their Most Beloved Of Men

Joyless tabernacle of dollar bills:  
Housewives jumping out their window sills.  
As the days of any number spill  
And spill-  
Goldfish in a choir remembering the heavens of  
The sea now separated  
In the suburbia of a pet shop awaiting epiphany,  
Or any cloud in the sky  
To rain its long abandoned cares upon them  
Just as sometimes mermaids cry their salt back into  
The sea  
Lamenting that they are legless to dance  
With their most beloved of men.

Robert Rorabeck



# With Things To Say

Perfume of cadavers and  
Another word strikes out for the night,  
And I am old before the time  
And looking at all of my spume,  
The spend threats for the arachnids with beautiful  
Legs,  
Young women in the waves having better things  
To do than to pass their time to me;  
And yet I remember that one time deep in  
Suburbia when all three of them showed  
Up for me at that party  
And I was so drunk I just crisscrossed the yard  
And farted  
And wished I had some fireworks while all three beautiful  
Wombs beat it home;  
But I was still good,  
And I had beautiful things to say,  
And I am still saying them, so far away from the cold party,  
And one day I will have a coffin,  
And even a tomb stone if I am lucky enough  
With things to say....

Robert Rorabeck

# With Touches From The Rain

Dancing in the shadows as I stood alone:  
Now you look like  
My uncle,  
Now you look like a tomb- but the night is  
Easy to see by anyways-  
And it wont lake long for the heroes  
To walk with the virgins  
Back home through the forest:  
Hand in hand,  
And I wonder if they will kiss-  
Or, if in the morning, you will be my bride-  
But, either way, it will take awhile to  
Ride out and get a good look at the other side,  
And in the meantime I suppose you've  
Thought that you were just beautiful,  
While the waves were lapping at the Ferris wheels  
Or, in the very least,  
The foothills of pinwheels- and then it wasn't  
So long anyways- Just another  
Starting out, knees keeping warm beside  
The open fire,  
As the dragon sang up to the airplanes leaping  
Across the oceans to Spain-  
As the girls spilled out from the hallways so  
Beautifully beneath them,  
Like pearls from the love letters of  
Waves being dimpled with touches from the rain.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Utter Civility

Bottles and perfumes of popgun antics  
Distilled from your distemper  
And I am supposed to be getting up and giving  
You negligee on your birthday:  
I chose robin blue, because its what your daughter  
Would have wanted  
And we could all be lying in bed together reading books  
Underneath innocent mobiles,  
The perfect models of commuter airlines replete with  
Stewardesses serving rum and captains with little  
Roman candles smoking in their beards:  
Every day would be just as smoky as the perimeter of a  
Forest fire we had under control,  
Just so we could watch the wildlife leaping and to send  
Or blossoming patrols on trains to see the capitol  
And all of its godly monuments:  
We would be like giants, like the primordial gods,  
Or like sea monsters who had finally decided to settle  
Down and stepping out onto open land learned to breath  
With utter civility.

Robert Rorabeck

## With Weekends Of Forever

A life of loneliness lines the road—as people  
Are going as they're told,  
As their shadows are going all days of the week—  
As the waters follow the contours of the creek—  
And the day laborers go to the orchards  
To sweat—  
And the housewives bet on who to bet—  
And every syllable is like a creature imagined from  
Childhood—  
As though the devils were angels,  
And they are up to no good—  
And the pilots have developed no fear  
For the sky—  
Who skip their stewardesses like stones  
That must never lie—  
And in the morning there must be another  
Truth to be told—  
As the young grow up to do what they're told—  
And your shadows will follow us to  
The holidays lost—  
With weekends of forever whatever the cost.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Whatever Cenotaphs

All day long in a cloud of dynamite  
Rattle teeth as  
Golden as the armpits of the moon, until finally  
Released  
And settled down and sucreased in the shallows-  
There off in the penumbras  
Of the satellites of  
Anywhere, I wonder what it must feel like  
To come down off the cooling steps  
Of the bus and to fiddle on home  
Like a crustacean touching its open wounds:  
Like a firework who has figured out how to handle itself:  
Over the bridgeworks of bleeding gums where  
The otters still swim anyways,  
And the hobos toss their overused bottles underhand  
Like flutes with too much spit,  
Cursing and writing to the awful green grass in short  
Hand,  
Mystified again by what the day has done to them:  
Until the housewives scuttle across their heady bones  
All in a home ward circus of Cadillacs and roses,  
Esteemed that the day is just going to be all right,  
And then their in their weeping bodies  
Crying with whatever cenotaphs who can bleed all throughout  
The night.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Your Brown Eyes

How it opens- bright as tennis courts  
In a voiceless springtime: so privileged, and with their  
Young hands on their bodies,  
Watching the waves over half a hemisphere:  
Sometimes it must come across them that  
This is exactly what the conquistadors came across-  
But, very soon,  
Their young bodies are busied by the pestilence  
Of their busy arcs,  
And the silver airplanes cross them like werewolves,  
And their art dissolved  
And becomes the better part of another transparency of  
The middle glass-  
And it never gets better than this:  
A little vermillion Christmas tree a kissing cousin  
To the television,  
And their little sisters sleeping side by side with the  
Very science fiction of ghosts:  
And when they wake up tomorrow- somehow  
Losing another tooth- they will finally decide  
What they've figured out- and you will  
Slip down beside him,  
Kissing his brown lips- and loving him with your brown  
Eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Your Brown Hair Flowing

A few glasses  
And a few more words for you,  
A simpler time:  
A common beauty.  
That is what you are  
With your brown hair flowing.  
How many boys have chased after  
You in your life time?  
Plenty, I think- and you are too modest,  
Save when you've been toking,  
And can laugh at your own beauty  
And then demand sex-  
I am surprised you are not famous:  
I imagine you in so many ways:  
You eclipse the famous women  
Who attract me:  
Patsy Cline,  
Loretta Lynn,  
Liv Ullman-  
I think of you and espousing,  
You become my premeditated muse:  
Look at this. Here you are.  
Another page for you,  
And another day without knowing  
You- Are so many waves,  
So many lines and hours....  
I should be filled by now.  
Can you love a common man,  
A pilgrim searching for you?  
Then here I am, and hurry up,  
Because with another sip of this,  
It is getting too cold to feel....  
What folly, to consider you,  
To believe you to be the reincarnation  
Of my ancestors' romance....  
What narcissism to believe as such,  
Though the tomb is waiting,  
To finish all that,  
And soon there will only be

The stone mason's calligraphy,  
Some words facing east,  
And the horrible wind blowing:  
A thought, a word and its memory....  
My feeble attempt to reach out to you:  
If you do not hurry,  
Then you will not know me,  
And there will only be this....  
Graffiti on the high altitude cliffs  
That no one reads....  
And another glass:  
I am waiting for you still,  
And holding myself until  
You come to take up that duty.

Robert Rorabeck



## With Your Help

Joy to the ingénues- the bug bears,  
The aces of the swags in the sky:  
Joy to your lips that shall never die:  
While I haven't been keeping count of the hours  
On the swings:  
Why, I swear I don't even know how much money we  
Have made,  
While the paper still burns,  
And the airplanes still sing, and the penumbras bring in the  
The fieldtrips of feral but kind things:  
Maybe they bring in the bodies of your offspring:  
Things who aren't yet wearied and so sing:  
They don't even remember what tomorrow is Monday:  
They just sit and clap beside the fire  
And they call down the angels who burn there,  
And maybe they know the keystones of heaven or at least  
Purgatory;  
And all of this time I've just been singing or moaning while  
My father and his brother had a miraculous bout,  
And I don't even know what my dog is feeling now,  
Alma:  
But with your help I'll find out.

Robert Rorabeck

# With Your Undying Forgetfulness

Temples burn from free liquor,  
The mosquitoes say nothing while they drink  
My legs,  
While the cicadas say so much but do nothing,  
And somewhere around here there is  
A snake as tiny and ringed as a ribbon in your  
Indecisive hair;  
And it can do just as much to me,  
And quite as easily as your insouciant decisions;  
If I want to press it to my sweating hinges,  
If I want to caress it to the nest of purple veins,  
And offer up the delectable avenues and  
Choice thoroughfares to the star fruit tree tremulous  
With the self-inflicting light of my soul:  
This coral snake as tender as the most unnoticed wanderer  
Through the weeds and wild crèches,  
Like your sightless wanton kisses can do to me,  
Lay me akimbo in the crime scene awaiting recognition,  
The suicide of a unsparing cat  
Who has no choice but to like the way the poison purrs  
Like your hand upon its oily coat,  
And thus lose all of its inauspicious lives to lie down and digest  
Into unstoppable mounds of industrious stingers,  
A cenotaph barbed so lucidly with your undying forgetfulness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Within The Anonymity Of So Many Vanishing Years

Chinese people waking up around  
Me and drying their eyes:  
Walking upon tiptoes around me—It  
Is as if this is the planet Mercury  
And something even more beautiful:  
The wait gets down  
And they seem to be losing their places:  
All accompanied by the weight of so many years—  
And I love you's, and I love you's  
While eating dumplings  
Within the full penumbra of the shoplifting  
District—Now  
Doesn't it seem, or will it soon seem  
That we have been doing something so beautiful  
All up in her eyes and the cataracts district:  
The streets get cloudy and then they bloom:  
All of the virgins holding bouquets  
As they head off to school.  
And I was just waiting for you to read my poem—  
As the horizons of denouements settled upon the cemeteries  
Where both my aunt and grandmother are buried—  
But we don't have to go so far from here:  
Here is where we can end our story—  
And I can touch you softy within the anonymity  
Of so many vanishing years.

Robert Rorabeck

# Within The Lactations Of A Suggestive Schoolyard

Within the lactations of a suggestive schoolyard—  
Memories such as gravediggers and dwarves  
Conjugated from the merriment of some alcohol  
To diadem my make-believe loneliness.  
After we have escaped the better situated elements of  
Society,  
And crawled under the glowing blankets of inebriated  
Grottos,  
We can kiss the poisonous darkness here,  
Finding the fork-tongued stamp they warned us about  
Before we all rose and said the Pledge of Allegiance—  
And we can do other things, skeletons vibrating  
Towards the roar of airplanes,  
Tuning forks conjoining until we glow together  
In a rainy and pagan forest—  
We can say our I-love-you's with our eyes closed  
And no one anywhere around us can tell us anything better to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without A Single Word

I want to believe that going to the movies  
Is the only activity that I can take a stand in—  
And I want to message your brother who is now your  
Sister in Dallas, Texas—that I still love you—  
And maybe there are reindeer who are still mirages in  
The dry desert climate,  
While you've still been climbing out of the shark tank—  
And maybe I still love you,  
Or maybe now I am just an echo that you want  
To forget about—  
After the long day is gone and all of the horses  
Are already praying to the stained glass of the mountain—  
And I loved you—and I loved you a thousands times—  
While all of the rest of it became echoes and echoes  
I could not pronounce—  
The joy in the bellies of the spacemen—and another day  
Languishing to the tenements of the self-same free  
Cadavers—  
As all of the cars were parked near the sea  
As all of the monuments were erected without a single  
Word for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Airplanes

They made room for us in  
The beehive.  
We're the busy French girls.  
We're taking off our clothes  
And spreading out  
Arms like stewardesses  
Who want to fly  
Without airplanes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Any Audience

Time for pigeons packed away in excelsior packed away  
Beneath the skyscrapers of Shanghai—  
Time for a honeymoon in the foothills of the Himalayans—  
And half-blood children in  
The oasis of a penny-arcade: there they will be, the fulfilled  
Exegesis of my father's loins:  
Lions and housewives done with their laundries and folklore—  
And an arcade blaring away underneath the  
Sky—  
Leading to the secret hollows of fairies no bigger than  
A venal midway's prizes—  
They seem to be dancing and making love in a diorama  
Within the windowsill across from the church—  
And inside from where the dwarfs live in the palmettos anyways—  
If this was a holiday, they would be out upon the bond of  
Any news—  
But they seem to be keeping to themselves,  
And whispering softly—  
Like fireworks going off without any audience.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Any Sense Of Direction

For awhile now in a world of  
Fay gutters where I have to sport-  
Even when I get up to mew, to drive  
Seemingly for recreation,  
To pick up fast food so swiftly that they  
Never see how I have become;  
To drive around intoxicated, to fall in with  
Bums and alligators and all they have  
Masticated;  
And the sea, she is over there:  
She is just over there, reticulating in her  
Creamy nest:  
She goes on in every direction. She is a real  
Resort;  
But we don't go to her in prayer.  
We don't bed with her, even though she is always  
In our minds,  
And she seems to be filling our body like a vase,  
Softly trickling inside the mould that has the contours  
Of a little boy who has grown old and  
Despondent from too many movies, from too many  
Misbeliefs in the tomorrows of his beauty;  
We can climb up the orchard's perverted navel,  
And try to get a sight of her and all her cerulean pinwheels,  
Like gesticulations of wrong fire,  
Or a colony of beautifully eyed windmills; but then it  
Would be to see how truly far away she is:  
How many children and husbands she has, and the jobs  
They have created together,  
And how they love each other; it would make us fall so  
Far as to fall down without a chance of resurrection;  
For now let our lonely pieces come together and fit  
The best they can,  
And move around and shake hands, curling  
Slightly in false sympathy at the obligatory dinner party  
Without any sense of direction.

Robert Rorabeck



# Without Any Thoughts

On Sunday there are wildflowers,  
And I make love to Alma high up in church on those  
Mountains,  
Because, mother, don't you see me now,  
And all of the beautiful joy that out of your heart I've  
Stolen;  
And now it might as well be time for the fair to come  
Around again,  
Because I am laughing, and I am just a day laborer,  
While a couple young boys fight out underneath  
The yolks of sun of another yard;  
And all I have left to explain myself is this:  
The aero buses having picnics through the cerulean  
Blueness above the Indians,  
And the parks becoming unwound, and the fireworks having  
To say what they have to say for themselves,  
While everything else in untrue, their monsters the killjoy of  
Merry go rounds, until finally the morning is picking up,  
And the year is returning young; while your family still doesn't  
Know who I am,  
Famishing and burning, but sparking such joy, whistling  
Against the fresh haircuts who cloud their memory without  
Any thoughts of ever coming down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Anything To Say

Beginning to stutter in a rain shower,  
I take my face down from the portrait and  
Vacuum the house in despair:  
Ink stains and semen helix the carpet like  
Adjoining wounds, and when my mother calls  
Me from another state, she addresses me, "Hey  
Guy. I think your dog is sick, " but her voice is  
Less real than the rain, and the nimble fumbblings  
Of school yard boys and Mexicans at their games  
Of marbles and yeguas:  
Every time my father passes me in the yards of  
Azure flies and mounds of horse excrement, he  
Sighs busily outwards as if I give him a toothache:  
Sometimes he burps, but I haven't been paid  
Eight months wages, and I dream of the sea when  
Nobody trusts me and I'm not even good enough  
To place in poetry competitions,  
But I prefer to kick the can a little further down the  
Road, where the suburbia is cloistered with bright  
Flowers and flowing cars,  
And little families dance in amnesias and dreams of  
Circuses and rodeos all the way down past the swings,  
Where the alligators live on like immortal spectators  
Without anything to say.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Asking

Days of zoetrope addiction,  
Little red riding hoods with their virgin apples,  
So sweet and deceptive underneath  
The banners of heaven,  
The leggy bouquets for the reintroduced wolves;  
And it rained all day long, but we still sold the most of  
It,  
And I sang about how I was wrong,  
And still I got the most of it: Two muses mouth-F\$cking  
In the dark on the swings in the park,  
The moon on a rise through the pinnacles of the skies:  
Two moons, one white and one blue,  
Semiprecious but as patriotic as the stars:  
Swans before the moons,  
Swans who could steal your homes, who mouthed off  
As teenagers in the lunch room,  
Who couldn't care less for Shakespeare:  
Swans named Sharon, there they are: Two girls named Sharon,  
Leaping,  
Drinking the red belches of fairytales:  
Their eyes the pomegranates and geodes of the places  
Where I've sold fireworks:  
How many times have I come across the homes of the  
Names of these girls,  
Going scarred to my sister's wedding and graduation,  
Waking up again and hiking toward a funeral  
Where the greatest of beliefs can only be found atop the arisen  
Cleavage of mountains:  
Sharon, I saw your angels there while the girl I was with had  
Parked her car and started making love,  
Never caring for the rain, the kittens all strung out through the  
Wet, tremulous hibiscus:  
Sharon, you are sweet on the brain, and you lamp the arcades  
Of your quiet streets, as the snow ploughs through the  
Amber globes of the first scientific feats,  
You are like the thing I was looking for above the misfits  
Of tenebrous concrete;  
And it is because of you I lost who I was all those years ago,  
And it is for that very reason that tonight I am beautiful,

And you are like the honey-water spilled from the  
Gut of the average god,  
I put my mouth too like a vampiric-mutt tonight,  
Sharon,  
And try and suckle upon your infinity of wounds,  
Without asking or even hesitating.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Darkness

I jogged twice today and I ate so much;  
And, hey honey:  
It costs too much to see the lions, to go as the invisible  
Man into the cages where they are eating  
Fiery meat torn from the instruments you don't know  
How to play;  
And now how do your eyes turn like pages fanning your  
Children,  
The little squirts with rubber bands and toy guns:  
I love every one of them, as I love letters I never write or  
Send to you,  
Because this is the graveyard where I sit alone and choke on  
Peanut butter and jelly; and my eyes water  
Because I have lost my diplomas and I don't talk enough to  
Perk your fancy anyways:  
And the deciduous lights of the city enter you; and they enter  
You anyways:  
And there are two boys walking toward you in the darkness.  
I didn't see them but it seems like they want to hold hands,  
While the rattlesnakes coil and masturbate until the  
Day is with warmth and without darkness.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Even Knowing Why

The ships of dead kings sleep underneath the  
Mabinogean orchards- and you have stepped across  
The cinderblocks and rebar;  
And the cars on blocks seem to know your name;  
And all the pigeon wire making love in strange  
Suppositions up into the unearthly sky,  
Maybe they know who you are even if I can't;  
And this is why I sit out with myself  
And try to change colors, wishing I was more of a cowboy  
For you;  
But that is all there is too it; and your day is your own day:  
It is just one single candle, and yet the jellyfish still seem  
To be dying any way they can upon the shore  
Next to the luxurious grottos; and I still have both my ears,  
And my nostrils like comely biceps that pick up  
And weight lift your smell like unbridled bouquets:  
Kelly, Kelly; today is your day; and everyday is your day  
In the valleys that wake up and coil like rattlesnakes  
All the way down the switchbacks of tourists with eyes too bright  
To every find your gold,  
While the rivers go roaring diving your folds, and your children  
Sit out on the bleachers and wait to be picked up  
Swinging their eyes into the batting cages of the very dreams which  
Divided them into the real live earth underneath this burning sky;  
And like them, Kelly, I love you without even knowing why.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Even Smiling

I want to walk to your house  
Again, Alma, and sleep in the roofs and look down the blouses  
Of the red throated mailboxes,  
Because I have hit the conclusions again, Alma: but I don't have  
Any movies in my house,  
And I am a citizen of the united states of America, but this is not  
Your country,  
And I wonder where I look at when I look at your eyes,  
But I cannot possibly see those places and I suppose that is why  
I am no poet laureate:  
I just croon my feast, while Romero heads west with my father to slay  
The infinite beast,  
And then he will go south past Chihuahua and catch up with Tanya,  
Who is Mierna's Sancha:  
But Mierna is my beautiful aunt, Alma: and I hate to think of who  
You will be sleeping with underneath the wash basins of those  
Milky eyed stars,  
While I invite the coral snakes up to my wrists like bumble bees to  
Drink my blood like pollen,  
And to lay me low in those soft grottos where your mother cleans  
Without batting an eye: without even smiling.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Even Trying

Open up sparrow- can-open your voice  
To the leather tramping sun,  
You haven't a choice:  
Your canaries are all wrecked in their minds,  
Slumbering poetesses for men  
With burning-coal eyes;  
Your voice recedes- your voice comes again,  
Like so many things that haven't a mind,  
Like traffic, like swings,  
And waves.  
The tiniest of the littlest girls on their knees  
For trinkets-  
The trucks honking. The airplanes are speaking too,  
And writing your name in the sky.  
They are really trying, even though they can't  
Spell.  
They haven't passed kindergarten, but it is just  
As well,  
Because if they were more gallant you would love  
Them without even trying.

Robert Rorabeck



# Without Having To Say One Thing

One highly functional genius  
May loiter  
At the truck stop for hrs-  
And get nary a play;

While the leggy mongoloid  
Will be engaged  
For many an hr-,  
Her lips will without question  
Be useful—

They buy enough gas to make it  
To the next carnival,  
Even while the blue morning,  
Like a hair lip curls  
Indigo under the trees

Without having to say one thing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Ourselves

Cloudbanks of cold and hot innuendos  
While you are waiting for the forever lonesome stewardess  
To take of—  
You can go anywhere  
Across the earth,  
While she is shaking her evergreen shoulders  
In a forever golden filigree—  
Pigeons that at first  
Prance and then make love over  
The mastiffs of their bedrooms—  
Cooling,  
Dandelions—of anywhere that was just because—  
Words that started out as lions,  
Peeling their wares for the shoulder blades of  
Rusting airplanes—  
And we made love—and we made love,  
Or at least I thought we did—  
Words struggling- -  
Tugging for breath in and amongst the  
Amphitheatres—  
Words that are lying to themselves and waiting  
At least for a while to just try to take off—  
Pigeons in the practice of dance—  
Of ballet—  
Of other words trying to reform themselves—  
To strike out again,  
Northwards in the better weathers—  
And feathers flying by themselves—  
Or falling down—  
Floating without dreams—  
Wondering if they could ever discover  
The murders of whoever they are with our  
Without ourselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Prestige

I am through performing  
Grotesquely muted  
Against this voyeuristic  
Wall  
As clear as a shallow sea  
Prostrate before a  
Warlord star.

A gift  
For your casual soul  
Window-shopping.  
My heart is hung around my  
Neck with your name.

Your pet,  
My only trick is to  
Disappear as you  
Walk away  
Holding whoever's hand.

Without prestige,  
I prefer to be discovered  
Only by fanatical misfits  
And deep sea divers  
In the obscurity  
Like a good gentleman.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Rainbows

Dancing man with married fingers,  
You still wait for the girls  
To get off the bus  
Sweaty and discombobulated as  
The airplanes fly:  
They crease their brows once or twice,  
And then try to swing their  
Hips over the side-  
Pretty, but without rainbows,  
And the numbers  
Somehow manage to win- and in the night,  
Through his married windows,  
He thinks he's going to  
Get you again-  
As the night sky is blue and creaseless,  
And all of the stewardesses and all of the  
Waves have gone somewhere  
Else, and it is just like an empty injustice  
Spread over an empty wedding table  
Another bachelor is weeping over  
In the deep, deep south.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Sunset And No End To Cross

I don't have anything left,  
Riding on the coattails of grandpa's pantheism,  
I plagiarize the sea,  
But I still can't stare at pretty girls;  
Their eyes get in the way of their souls,  
They hang out in front of vanities and sneeze:  
They have so many children-  
Attending to all the homesick passengers,  
Giving the free milk and liquors; oh how their legs  
Sway, playground of the sky,  
Happenstance of my eager truanities. I nudge my  
Buddies; say, lets make movies out of their expenditures,  
Get them while we can, before they go home nuzzling  
Husbands in sweetly cleaned beds, honeybears-  
Ornithologists sick off of categorizing saccharine feeders;  
And then, until I have to go back to school,  
Give them my little things, this way and that, a little-pitter  
Pat, as they slap their dough and twirl them over head,  
Their infants lunching on their sweet bread;  
And I would lay her still across the sky, like a highway  
Without sunset and no end to cross.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without The Ice-Cream's Romance

In days of artificial lights the girls play  
In- I was always afraid of interrupting;  
And today I felt an electric charge start up  
From the ground,  
And I bolted and hid in the truck and didn't  
Die;  
But tried to think that there was something  
Mystical in the trees we're cutting down-  
So the earth is redder, going around,  
The truer epicenter of the old neighborhood,  
Centaur's migrating around us, leaping  
From their ice beds; and this evening they were  
Beautiful falling tannebaums reminding me  
Of girls I'll never see again,  
Making me get out my mind and float with  
The eerie mysticisms around some half-sunken  
Lunchroom where the alligators are always  
Grinning; and my father is laughing at me,  
Because I've forgotten the passage and I'm out  
Of time; Exhausted, succulent darkness around  
The university's eyes,  
I stumble into the beer hall dying of thirst,  
And from her lacquers burst all the meaningful things  
Of a young and self conscious religion;  
And I go to her, and I tip her well; and I propose to  
Her, but she will not think to even kiss a man  
So short as I; leaving me in rouge orbit tattoos of  
Anchors and sighing breath, I return wounded to  
The barren mountains, the coyotes and crosses, wooden  
Askance; I float like root beer without the ice cream's  
Romance.

Robert Rorabeck

# Without Waking Up

Glade of spirits- origin myth in the eyes of  
My classroom,  
And there are eyes, dark brown and dark blue  
And all over my classroom,  
Trying to discover things, skateboarding,  
And trying to make sure everything turns out  
Alright-  
And I am not trying to control this menagerie:  
I am just trying to make sure that it  
Is beautiful,  
While the children of your father skip down  
The path underneath of which the  
Airplanes fly,  
And beside of which the cypress trees grow,  
And the ocean's waves leap and frolic;  
This is for them,  
And for your children that will disappear into  
School tomorrow,  
As I try to impress you anonymously,  
As I just try to survive down the river that is  
Too wide to dream across  
Without waking up and realizing the mistakes  
That happen altogether through its wide  
And beatific course.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wolves!

Wolves!

Come on, Wolves!

I am not afraid-

I will kill you in your element:

When I step outside to relieve myself:

I know who you really are,

And I do not care:

Today,

I saw three revolvers beneath my father's bed:

Even in the night,

When you are howling between

Your gnawing on the horse's hoof:

Even when you are sniffing Death's crotch:

I know that you are

Hybrid with the local dogs:

You are illegal:

You are a major political party,

And I will skin you alive

For you maudlin hypocrisy:

Oh, Muse!

Sing my song,

And obey my yellow avenues:

Hold my hand, and we will defeat

The feral child together:

It does not matter who is elected,

As long as I have you

We will live together amidst the slash pine,

And our children will skip on outwards

From our groins' rhyme:

See me now, wolves!

Howling better than you:

Baring my teeth for the muse,

I will reclaim her from your night,

And banish you again

Into your rightful extinction:

Armless, I will search you out;

As your brother, I will howl,

And extinguish you into the feral children's tale,

From which little girls hide



Their collections inside trees:  
And swaying in the wind  
I will reclaim my muse,  
Oh, wolves!  
I know you,  
And I am no longer afraid....

Robert Rorabeck

# Woman At My Door

I need a woman at my  
door to drive home to  
some long honey momma  
who will love me  
simply and cook frijoles for me  
a woman I can lie  
down on the couch with  
and just love appreciate her silhouette  
a red earth woman who  
always wants to sleep  
all night long careless in my arms  
a woman who miraculously  
will not look at  
other men to judge  
them sexually or not sexually worthy  
a woman who likes my face  
and the lines and briars it takes  
and doesn't mind  
that the paint flecks  
from my truck when it  
gets up past fifty-five and  
doesn't care how long  
my hair gets  
a woman who can  
show me new ways  
to religion and introduce  
me to this world  
again the right way this time  
and might not care or be concerned  
that I write poetry good  
or bad about her  
or question my questioning  
of capitalism's excess waste  
and this fucked up interpretation  
of Judeo-Christian religion  
that supports it  
a woman who will work  
beside me  
breathe and live on

my ribs  
kiss me deeply  
with her pretty  
lips  
show off her  
self only to me  
in new lingerie look good  
forgives my atheisms  
shows me how to  
light candles for  
Catholicism reminds  
me of those old  
great saints  
who saw god in everything  
wet comes at me like  
bright news like  
bathing my eyes with light  
and doesn't come  
until I come  
lets me use my  
tongue longs  
all day for our  
bed gives me  
head rides  
horses with me  
in those green sea  
washed valleys that  
split the land like  
a woman when she  
takes me back to  
the classic forest  
to let me swim in the  
pool the moon  
birthed her in and  
then to sleep all  
night inside her flesh  
when she sleeps  
with me entwined  
in a tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# Womb Of A Coiling Succubus

Coiling at the corners,  
Womb of a coiling succubus,  
And drinking tequila—  
Now I have to pee,  
While the remote control boats  
Look so beautiful,  
Floating on their own regards,  
Left outside after midnight  
With no adolescent fingers to  
Attend to them,  
And new bonfires echoing  
Like the unsubtle teasings of  
Amusement parks,  
And now she is left to fend for herself,  
And now she gives all of her unorganized  
Complexes of espionage the cold shoulder—  
Once dreaming of making something  
Absolutely beautiful,  
Even after the weebegone child wrecks  
All of his trains around the Christmas tree  
This holiday season—  
Spoiling the reasons  
Why I fell in love with him in the  
First place  
And for the very same reason wrote  
Many things down with ever hoping for  
An audience.

Robert Rorabeck

# Women Out In The Routes And Bays Of Old 66

I'll watch sitcoms with Charlie Sheen,  
Or I'll make love with my dogs- anything to  
Pass the time  
Until we are set up and ready to sell everything,  
And I'll be out under the white tent like a  
Giant, dumbo lung,  
Like a circus tent beside the desert stream  
Without any midgets or pacaderms;  
Not saving anything, but not meaning any harm;  
And beautiful women will come in and decide  
Upon the show,  
Like girls I used to imagine that I knew,  
And I'll breath the clays with them, and the skies  
Will bleed from the commercial airplanes and their  
Sharp straight wings;  
And I should say now that I've only been keeping this  
Up to pass the time,  
And from the bay in Catalonia a block south of where  
Dali was born,  
You can see a woman standing out in the rocks waiting  
For her man's return,  
And you can drink sangria while watching her,  
And even trick yourself into thinking she'll notice you-  
But that's not how it is-  
She's graduated from a fine college,  
And is smoking her brand of cigarettes- Picking at  
Her crotch of rose thorns, she has a curve on her lips of  
Stone, a great philosopher because great philosophers  
Said so, she has a many disciplined degree,  
And she could help you out if she'd only condescend  
A word,  
But her merry-go-round is done hunting;  
And though she is beautiful and heartbroken,  
She knows so many words she belongs in a museum;  
You can get your pants wet over her,  
And swim out into the frame, but she will still be made of  
Stone:  
She knows so many words,  
But not any of their meaning.

Robert Rorabeck

# Women Who Begin With Letter S

Never published majorly,  
But far beneath the sea, while I  
Wake up on Tuesday after a holiday,  
Holding my breath as a school of  
Fish waits at the bus-: stop underfoot from  
The lion,  
I am surprised that I have arms and  
Hands extended,  
And a history brief and not well planned,  
But sure,  
And there are women who oppose my sex,  
Who I am supposed to fit into,  
Marry, love, support and reproduce into,  
To eventually drift away every night  
Our togetherness of the coital bed only  
Highlighting how different planets we are,  
But now I should move my fingers  
And swim upward,  
For there are bills and car insurance,  
And naked speckled swimming in the shadows,  
Their legs good enough to compete in  
The Olympics,  
For, you see, I created them. One of them  
I named Lynn, all the others start with the  
Letter S, and one day they might see the light  
Of day,  
So when the general populace wakes up  
Sporadically, swimming into mass produced  
Consciousness, they might see my women too,  
And swim up into the belt of sun where  
Green things grow, and notice how the sorority  
Of freckled navels indent like flirting come-ons,  
Like the bosom of fruit still clinging to its tree.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wonderful Story

Now the night moons itself while I have been  
Counting perfect:  
Maybe I am the perfect director for your divorce of  
Numbers and coelacanth,  
Because otherwise f%ck these birthday wishes that  
You were supposed to mean to me,  
While even my brother in law was taking it easy  
Before his wedding to my sister above my head:  
And oh my god, he is so perfectly more beautiful man me,  
But he will never be the conductor of these things,  
And you have four children, and I am so done:  
I am laid out immaculate and awaiting the virgin Mary  
To sing her most usual of usual songs to me:  
Now you suck your sugar cane and sing your semi  
Religious hymns to the religious that has seemed to have  
So easily floated towards me:  
And now I remember your bed or anything that has so  
Unsteadily arranged itself towards me: You have lived  
Such an exciting live, but now I am just the bright eyed  
Ingénue in a bright eyed story and the theatre  
Has gone but hello, Sharon, you are still the clear eyed  
Mused clearing the acres necessary for my another  
Wonderful story.

Robert Rorabeck



# Wonderfully Awful, Emperical, And Real

I drink tequila and kill the worm  
By coming up unsuspected from the fjord  
Where they're  
Growing purple tulips:  
And dying, he has so many things he says  
To me:  
In fact he has a list of all the men you've been  
With,  
Or dreamed of conquering;  
And you park your car underneath the palm  
Tree and go to class,  
And you never think to look up into the eyes of  
The man standing on the  
Borderline  
Who kills such wonderful monsters for you;  
And now you are a mother,  
And still a beautiful swimmer-  
In fact they have named some many aqueducts  
And dams and power plants after you,  
But you just keep holding back your lips,  
So that the cactuses bud fatly,  
And the hummingbirds suckle and the great giant  
Beasts dry up like science fiction,  
So there is no use for my sharp innuendos anymore,  
And you are just like a sister to me now  
Who threw herself down deep into the  
Cataracts  
When she found out we were related,  
And became a mermaid  
Who sat up on the thorny rock and farmed spikenard  
Alone;  
So that I came to the faraway shore and imagined your  
Silhouette out in the glittering spume,  
And played a harp for you that I had stolen  
And was not very good at,  
So that I could hear your laughter all day long after  
Your lunch break,  
And the squeaking breaks of sudden cars;  
And it was all so wonderfully awful,

Empirical,  
And real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wondering Where All Of Her Boys Have Gone

There are cowbells in the high basins,  
In the guts of grizzly bears, in the wombs of  
Sometimes stormy and sometimes yellow  
Mountains;  
And you can't hear them, as they go through  
The neck high weeds  
And raspberry thickets- going to hibernate  
In their caves as the rivers  
Freeze,  
And the tourists go away- yes, they go down  
To her- and she serves them all winter  
Even though there are no more wildflowers  
Or ways up to heaven:  
She serves them even though they find it  
Difficult to carry on:  
And on her way home, walking purposefully,  
She looks up to those frozen basins wondering,  
Wondering where all of her boys have gone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wondering Who You Are

Strange goddesses walk  
Floridian parks at midnight.  
They talk to themselves  
In the voice of songbirds.  
They don't know how many  
Young men love them,  
But they figure it's a lot....  
They glide through the mossy  
Grove upon the princely backs  
Of quiet alligators who enjoy  
The feel of their marble legs  
Surrounding them....  
They are a sorority in the mists  
Of your thoughts  
Who stare out from the lichen  
And cypress boughs  
As the world turns ever slower  
Wondering who you are.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wondering Why I Must Die Alone

Alligators in the canals like long lines of  
Quarterbacks,  
Nights and nights of feverish unrelieved contagions,  
Somehow smoldering in the gurgling  
Brush;  
And I have your phone number and your home town,  
But the days go so far back into the nights,  
So humid and so scarred:  
So long since I've been beautiful,  
And craven to your body's rush; and watched you sit  
In art class your what I supposed to be  
Yet virgin thighs superimposed around the potter's  
Wheel,  
In a creche of red clay you called up the meaning of  
The afternoon;  
And even as the buses churned and churned  
Soft-serving us back into our all too many white,  
White homes,  
I thought of you: blue-eyed beauty,  
Buzzard of great tits and little, fluted wrists- I went along  
My way and got confronted by even worse bullies  
With plywood and 2 by 4s underneath the Florida  
Holly and flatulent jet planes;  
And I took my punches, and I rolled with the licks:  
I rolled snake eyes and read Baudelaire,  
And the trains cut over the flooded anime all the way to  
Japan,  
Where I couldn't stop to quit remembering you: S-,  
And there you are still  
Fooling your quarterbacks, making love in a splendidly  
Unkempt rush;  
And I guess I am really no more uglier than I was when  
You thought about me  
Like a red ant bight along your wrist;  
While now I can hardly stand to feel what is ring must  
Feel like faithfully banded around your humming bird  
Of a finger,  
As if a homeopathic soul,  
Giving you just a hint of a farmer's tan while I stand out in

The un resurrected row  
Wondering why I must die alone.

Robert Rorabeck

# Woo

I am quited by the bottle, but when I look into Alma's  
Eyes I sing  
Of their dark brown rivers: Of how they have seemed to fit  
Into a state of America that has no record of her existence;  
And yet she goes on and on,  
Surprisingly beautiful, and a better light for the cops:  
Alma, I am so happy for you, and your body is a weathervane of  
Brown fireworks:  
I want to pick it up and smell its wooden battlements,  
The hinges that play across it and are good for your metamorphosis;  
And I am sorry if I have done you wrong,  
That I am not completely beautiful for you, Alma:  
I got inside your car today and it was so clean: I must have left you  
Three dozen tulips that I wouldn't allow you to give back to me;  
And when I am in my graveyards, Alma,  
When the bottle is empty and my lips are like over-drunken caterpillars,  
I warm up to you on the grasses of your unkind yards  
And make believe that I know you, and that I can sing to you in the  
Ways that would make you sure of the poisonous wisdoms  
I have called up for you from the small pits of the classrooms  
That I came to learn in so many years ago  
That my eyes became brown as well- and I road my bicycle until there  
Was a storm,  
And in the storm I cried your name; for it is you who I believe has taken  
My missing rib:  
I do not want it back, but I would like to lay beside it every night on  
The springs of an old teachers bed in the house I have bought just  
To woo.

Robert Rorabeck

# Woods Of A Wino's Mind

I drink to monuments of wine-  
I tilt my head back, jolted, to look away from  
The mirrors of a sad Disney World:  
I do this every time, and there is no one to  
Hold me or feed me from her fleshy vines:  
Boys in coitus and Toyotas, making magical peach-  
Smooth prominence,  
And I'm just going, going, ever fearful of her  
Unbanished skies:  
And the billboards talk unreasonably-  
The alligators are wearing the suits of their less fortunate  
Cousins,  
And soon again it will be feeding time,  
So I stand and wait out amidst the cinder blocks  
And cut palms,  
Unreasonably hoping she will pass this time  
And devour all that is mine:  
At least that's what I having going on in the smoldering  
Woods of a wino's mind.

Robert Rorabeck



# Wordplay

I like to play tricks with words,  
Because they feel so much better than

The tricks I played with you.

Robert Rorabeck

## Words & Phrases

Here these simple strings of words,  
Come out for her again,  
Like honest men telling lies &....  
.....& from the porch light shed the tears,  
They are working men  
Troughing deeply the sea level flesh,  
For motes to gather the crocodile's  
Sorrow, the micras of glistening distance,  
In spears of light taillights send receding....  
The way the dogs angle their snouts  
And howl in the innocence of pure pain,  
When the hand that feeds  
Steps outside &....  
.....& and is gone for even so little time.  
They would steal any greater man's  
Words,  
The divine longings of the masters,  
The humid entanglements of ink and page,  
A few bread crumbs tossed to doves,  
Just to get her to step near them,  
To stand awhile breathing the proximity &....  
.....& the scents she gives off,  
To nuzzle her palm and feel the lines,  
And to know where friendship is,  
The gratitude of strangers' perplexing embraces,  
Why they stop to kiss in the gardens  
Walking home by themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Words I Have Already Written

They are down again-  
Underneath the stones underneath where the  
Fish are leaping:  
Strange girls with gills- maybe they hope to  
Understand the sunlight of our  
Neighborhood,  
But we feed them anyways as pets, as the pilots  
Perambulate again,  
Touching all the breasts that they can  
While the lions yawn,  
Like the very tulips of pornography- as nothing  
Else that I've said ever was:  
But the busses pirouette- preternatural,  
And surreal,  
Just as I suppose they always will- just as the fires  
Will pretend to burn,  
And we will continue, forever,  
In the memories of our bouquets, like two  
Flowers sharing  
Their suffocation- in a world of make-believe:  
Even after your children grow up,  
I will know you- even though I do not wish  
To proofread the words I have already written.

Robert Rorabeck

# Words In A Classroom

Eccentricity of words in a classroom:

Where there would be blue bells and meadows

And little fish spilling from over turned

Mason jars like soft boys drooling on soft pillows—

If there were any windows, or ways out of

Here—

But the door has swung, and the bell has rung—

And it will be another day's graveyard before we have

Any hopes of getting out of here—

So I will look into your uncanny eyes, which

Mouthlessly tell you best to me—

As the sun paints the sky so close above that

We cannot see.

Robert Rorabeck

# Words None Of Us Can Remember

Banks of sad monuments have their  
Thrill:  
I am your secret admirer.  
I am Daniel Boone, even if its been so long  
Since I've gone to Spain,  
Or risen up and  
Masturbated in the fair rains over your house:  
You did not complain to me,  
Or when I pretended to die for my grandmother;  
And now that she is dead,  
And sometimes my dogs weep:  
The drillmaster puts me through all of his unkind  
Drills.  
Though I have a knife, I don't know if I will ever  
Use it;  
But the lake is nearby where all the bicycles and  
Their ladies go.  
The bell tower's shadow slips right into it,  
And the grass is high.  
I want to steal you away from your husband.  
He won't mind if I run my fingers down your thigh  
Into the shadows  
Even your children cannot remember;  
Into the shallows when weren't they just minnows before  
The metamorphosis of our first words  
None of us can remember.

Robert Rorabeck

# Words That Bloom In Wishful Fountains

Words are foam-

Words can be inebriation, when they help:

They can be guardian angels,

They can be transportation; If you went Ivy League,

Then likely your words are very,

Very terse and good:

But if you are like me, your words are made of wood,

Like marionettes of boys jerked straight up,

Strange wood-buttoned and lips hungry for cheetah paps;

Words that lay down on long green ejaculated

Carpets,

Wanting naps:

Words of cowboys and words of Indians, words of reindeer

And spikenard and teak bat winged cabinets out in

The spring nearby the fauna of Jordan's slightly

Older sister, raven black hair, jet black hair- I don't care:

Hair- Lovely long Indian hair, black-luck,

And hair down there, bee-stung clichéd nipples out for the

Week getting sunny, sunny cheeked-

And I spy with my little word eyes apple pies spitting smoke

From the kitchen,

And I grab one swiftly with my malediction and go down to

The green Astroturf easement under eyes and pierce my

Warm fingers through the warm crust,

And take out a piece of the sinfully cinnamon bust,

And engorged and confectioned stuff of lies and falsifying liquor

Pies,

And wait for the better stuff of creamier words to go floating

Through the ever worshipful sky convinced by the currents

Of other words floating just above my head,

Words I guess I never thought nor said.

Robert Rorabeck

# Working Girl Of Metamorphosis

Simple affection of a human palm upon the back of a feline.  
The settling of a disjointed, oily body upon the cushions of an afternoon,  
As airplanes leap like mechanical jacks over a candle's flame-

The boys are rounding third- and she is taking off her knickers-  
In the cul-de-sacs bejeweled by the night-lit pools:

Oh see them there, strangely irritated dreams such as  
Semiprecious stones pressed into the secret pages of a privileged diary-

Caesuras over a birthday cake surrounded by the loam  
Of a purple cathedral,

And irises of monsters looking down, straining their truncated necks  
To get a peek into her cage: a working girl of metamorphosis:

She pricks her finger and falls asleep, but dreams as a bird  
Through a city of fallen shadows:  
Each car on the street a representation of a coffin in a graveyard.

Robert Rorabeck

# World Parades

Chandelier boats of words that don't belong,  
Like a drenched dinner guest under the kiva of her  
Jewish wedding,  
And helicopters trail blaze underneath the Cornish  
Sun-  
As all day long feathers start their new paths plucked  
By whirling dervishes with great cerulean bosoms:  
The feathers fall waywardly like homeopathic spells,  
Like Hallmark movies,  
And they cut across your eyes and make them softly  
Wounded,  
And they take you to unearthed graveyards where the dead  
Are arriving like an Easter amusement park:  
And see them come up holding plastic bouquets like  
Love struck boys in the check out line;  
And all the parking lots are slicked and postcard worthy  
And all the girls are stricken by the beating of  
Baboon hearts,  
Or they've taken nips of liquor from blue bells and  
Honey suckle, and the gunman is tucked away snugly in  
His clock tower,  
And he's missed the motorcade and all the dreams are filled  
With students, and the graves are green- They resurrect the  
Entire state and all of its islands, and the conquistadors are  
Like green copper cannons,  
And their cross is like an arcade causing epileptic seizures,  
And they go across the moats of waves,  
And nothing dies- not day, not night, not earth or sky,  
And your love you never had for me before is resurrected  
And plucked from you as if from an orchard of shoulder blades  
And spine,  
And it is a splendiferous chore, and such a treat-  
And I suckle upon it all day, and twirl it between my gapped teeth;  
It making me a boy of only five years old,  
And you are like a substitute teacher I wet my pants for,  
And stuttering watch you pointing out the alphabet while the  
World parades in the three most playful Aristotelian spheres





# Worshipping The Beauties From The Backside Of My Canoe

Looking at the dog-star adds planets to your  
Soul; but it does no good,  
She's still selling her wines deep in the snow,  
After the avalanche has fallen,  
And school is over, and it is raining dampening  
The bees onto the snouts of dyspeptic alligators,  
When I used to sneak up on roofs  
And look down the blouses of the sweet  
Administrators: Now, I don't believe in god  
Anymore, and I'm even losing faith in beautiful  
Actresses: They show us terrible car accidents  
Between classes. I still drink and grease pigs  
And light off quarter sticks of dynamite:  
I masturbate underneath the splash of shade from  
Palms- I dream I have better friends. My shoes  
Don't fit. The black kid laps me at tryouts.  
I sleep in Dave's fan- No one cares,  
And when I get days off, long uncaring days, I slip  
Through the canals, floating on my back or in a canoe,  
I search out the housewives and their sisters in law  
Sunbathing topless in the sparse orchards, slipping  
On the slick grasses of the easement, they pretend they  
Are going down, and I pretend too- to be an otter,  
Lapping at their breasts with their eyes, the mammalian  
Confections, or I pick up feral baseball games when it  
Is almost midnight and all the tourists are home in their  
Hotel rooms sick- That is when she casts her industrious spells,  
Sleeping under her ceiling fans like spiral galaxies,  
And I lie back and dream how deeply she'll never know  
Loosing the equilibriums to discover the beauties that don't  
Really care how you worship them,  
As long as you worship, and I do.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wounded Bird

Wounded bird: I hold you—  
Now you sing, out of the window  
Like a child of my kidnapped home:  
As I remember the scars  
Of my reflection,  
To the soft lullaby of the waves called to  
The bedside of a richer man:  
That all of this is my plunder without  
Sunshine,  
In the night when the pools are blind:  
And I lay beside you again in the darkness:  
Muse of stolen opals  
And birthday presents—The Christmas  
Trees are in the trash and in the gutters:  
The stolen bicycles have been abandoned to  
Jewel the necks of canals:  
As very soon you will be waking up over  
Then—brown eyed with  
Browned eyed children, kissing your man  
Like glass blown in another world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wounded Haiku

I am wounded but your  
Tits and your scars are all  
I need to be saved.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wounded In A Crooked Garden

Wounded in a crooked garden  
While the ants make love  
And sculptures of each of your breasts;  
And I let the homeopathic conquistadors  
Enter me,  
If only to displease housewives and their  
Grotesque habits of  
Natural selection;  
And I always knew that it wouldn't be me  
Who entered her demure;  
Not me; and I don't have a house,  
And I don't have a bicycle- and I tell myself  
I am practicing delayed gratification,  
But now there is so little time,  
Even the furthest stars are turning away,  
Having caught the perfumes off one of our  
More adventurous satellites,  
And all the girls from high school who were  
Any good are now entrained,  
Higher up in heels and tall vehicles;  
And none of this is good, I don't know:  
They are all getting down on their knees to pleasure  
New ovens,  
And it is no wonder there are so many pies  
Cooling on their windowsills,  
Enjoying the steady traffic, the spikenard wheels  
Of mackerels, but not a one for me,  
Not even a flaxen haired older sister for me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Wounded In A Pretty Forest

Wounded in a pretty forest,  
The last of the bravest knights falls—  
In a dry country without any lights—  
The same place the last of  
The ferris wheels moved away from  
So many years ago,  
Forgetting her birthday,  
And how their light used to dance in  
Her hair—  
While other minds got wound up,  
The decapitated heads in the witch's tree—  
The knight on his knees prayed most  
Jingoistically  
For the mermaid to dissolve his problems  
Right into the very sea—  
And she came at midnight and  
Took his head,  
And threw him there, as he flew through  
The aloe's bled—he watched my mother  
Washing clothes in the carport before  
My second sister was born,  
While the frogs were serenading her,  
Never realizing they had not yet taken their  
Ultimate form—  
And so he found himself swimming in  
The banyans at night until his last girlfriend  
Kissed him at took him a flight—  
For it just so happened that she was a wayward  
Kite—fashioned out of the geometries of  
Grief,  
She led him to the fairy reef,  
Where the cup he was looking for was glowing in  
A coral fjord guarded by a water snake as  
Big as a board—  
Who consented to let him taste the salted beef,  
Just so long as he promised him one look  
At the thief who was willing to steal the promises of  
The eyes from his lord.



# Wounds Of Love

Because there is nothing under the sad moon,  
I keep singing to you from the inconsiderable house atop the hill;  
My tears are falling where there use to grow  
A thicket of anemones,  
And a contradictory sea, in love with the motionless shift;  
The swathing ocean between our eyes, the striped lighthouses  
Of the burning soul;

Now how the night is void, zeroed into extinction of lesser mammals:  
The lions are loosed and eating the fish  
Jerked onto the naked rocks- The boys with manes and footballs,  
Who sink inebriated rhymes into your throat;  
The way your cadaver swoons instructing the masculine  
Students of your newly surreptitious science;

So swiftly the un-cherished tide recedes,  
Taking away her silken tresses, and her nubile offerings;  
She looked away, scattered in a nebula attached like afterbirth  
To the fiery meadows; You strolled away with the dawn,  
The perfectly unrepentant haze,  
The bell ringing class like the homicide of desperate regrets;

And the hung-over ghosts receded into the park,  
Shelled inside the heart of spiked palms,  
Fearing your unshared glow....

Robert Rorabeck



# Wreaths Of Flames

Railroad tracks of bottle rockets  
Running their rebel jackets, running their makebelieve  
Flags:  
And I have been down from the fences for a long time:  
And I haven't been to the dog track;  
But picking up the bottle again sure feels good,  
But doesn't take the place of your brown skin:  
Like Christmas at the movies  
All alone- with the fanciful armies that they let in:  
To display the knights in trees,  
And the children running home through the twilight:  
The surplices filled with  
The connivances of bees- the queen of my eyes  
Somehow returning home past the  
Mailboxes of Disney World- Alma  
In the immense twilight: her birthday cake taken from her:  
Her love on the mend, her lost children  
Eclipsing beside  
Her- just as Saturn has rings- and lions leap bloody  
Lipped through their wreaths of flames.

Robert Rorabeck

# Writing On You With Nothing

If I have had undiminished thoughts of you,  
It is because your body is yet old-  
Taught and wired in its cages, I drive around like the  
Other men,  
My fingers hungry to undress you in the voyeuristic  
Boudoir of things that just happen to be real:  
That is why I try to get the highest score in ancient  
Video games,  
Why I color Mighty Mouse- and then when dreaming  
With wine strummed lips, break into  
Empty affluent houses, and float in the pools like  
Giant cut stones of butchered deity tears:  
And I'll love you until you aren't beautiful,  
And in your bedroom's success, an older sister,  
I'll lift your shirt and run my fingers along those ventures,  
The vermilion and crimson and chartreuse scars  
You hoped that nobody would see,  
But I'll run along them and put yard snails on them  
And call out their depths,  
And then your eyes will close like obnoxious children  
Sleeping,  
Because then you wouldn't have anymore use believing  
All the falsehood they tried to show you,  
That I can better show you- snuck into your house like  
A wiry dragon,  
Swinging there in your indigo moats of porcelain  
Dolls and indigo headdresses,  
Your divine inheritance as well as what I have added  
By writing on you with nothing.

Robert Rorabeck

# Writings To The Sea

Secretive act,  
Sobering, a few words on a palette—  
Lines of coke snorted before a wide-eyed  
Tiger:  
I took my last drink in Shanghai  
And it tore away my smile.  
My wife said I could not drink anymore.  
Two months before our second  
Child,  
A girl—  
And I am not allowed to drink to muses  
Anymore,  
To cultivate the wounds of a bachelor  
Who lilted into other mens' bedrooms  
Using the broken feet of  
A mind quilled by passion—  
Like a hart wounded in a forest  
Beneath the cliffs of almost vanished ghosts—

As a result of this edict:  
For the most part, happiness:  
Family, and a drying up of the world—  
The muses remain less poisonous,  
Hanging out in the amusement parks that  
Are forever too expensive for me:  
But in the curling hours of the afternoons,  
As I imagine twilight and thus  
Crepuscule beginning to fall upon all  
Of the woebegone mailboxes of  
Suburbia,  
I allow myself to wander there again—  
Thirsty,  
I look out into the grotto of shipwrecks  
And imagine all of the mermaids  
Shopping there,  
Mythologies which once toasted my heart,  
Impossible dreams that yet pang in  
The shallows—

And I let the words fall in a few  
Sauntering lines,  
Like trying to sew a crop into  
A parking lot—  
And thus pleasure myself—  
My family asleep in another room,  
Safe  
From the illusionary storms  
Troughed from the lines I cast out  
To a callously beautiful sea.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yankee Boy

These valleys are all the same,  
And the path through them linear,  
But men still get lost even a mile from  
The train-  
When I have come down from the high  
Basins, and the water is singing in the glowering cleft,  
And I have summited two Siamese mountains,  
Clutched between Silverton and Durango  
And still have time to bight my lip:  
What I have done is not the average tourism,  
To scramble like a philosophical ram above tree line,  
Following the cairns of leather tramps,  
Over where the voices of the trees worry  
Of the lightning,  
Where even the air is minimal, and the people  
Very rare, but haggard, crippled,  
And mostly indomitable- my friends;  
I have followed the rim from Windom to  
Sunshine,  
Eating granola and smacking sweet farts that  
Tang bumblebees,  
And around the glacial lakes of wet nurses,  
Where there is neither echo nor ripple,  
And the water is newly transformed and curious,  
Where college students yet evolving make love,  
And peel the gear off each other like cicadas molting;  
And then roll like angels amidst the dirty white  
Coats of the mountain goats and their harems;  
When the time before I got lost on Jupiter,  
Following the wrong lines,  
And went down early though reaching her throat, because I feared  
That serrated goddesses of many ridges and shortcomings,  
The false ways she could take me after beckoning,  
And I felt her watching me dissatisfied as I fled like  
The runoff of melting snows  
Down her bosom and into the great table of stunted juniper  
And bear dung, and the nourishment of mud slicked down from her chin;  
But on this trip I succeeded in her eyes inside me:  
The whys of my gazelle-legs leaping the class three

Rocks, grinning up as if in ancient worship,  
As the sun removes a mimic of my soul;  
There at the top she is open bossomed and expansive,  
Unmined and yet elusive franchise, the lazy politicians  
Have yet though to elicit,  
Where the sons who work long days for their fathers  
Can open up new furtive lots with epiphany,  
And her tricks are pure and tangled like a disarrayed festival  
Of permanence and unbearable truths,  
And I can almost see all the way to where she lives,  
Neither aware or turned to me in unrecognizable appreciations;  
But I have done it for her,  
And the way down is beautiful even in the dark and the  
Herding weathers- I am the only one of my company  
To see her face lucid and immortal in the falling light.  
When I left her I did not go all the way,  
For I keep her still though she doesn't know,  
For she doesn't even suspect me  
Where her dreamless head rises above the hardpan plateaus  
And the nocturnal city's airy lamps. At the trailhead,  
I gave the lost man water and showed him the way  
Back to the train where my aunt was waiting  
And impressed.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yankee Doodle Dandy

I am holding my head against  
A cathedral- or a marionette: it is as brilliant  
As a Christmas tree  
Come home to no particular holiday: then it  
Has to think again about what was its  
Yesterday,  
As the sisters underneath the house cloud through  
Their bedrooms  
And there is light singing as they undress and make  
A profound use of the shower's  
Acoustics- and it feels alright to rain against  
Their freckles- tears spot them where  
They've not been crying,  
And tears run down across where the flames  
Are dying, as they forget the boys from their school:  
As they surcease into their bedrooms and  
Take it easy underneath the ceiling  
Fans which are the only way-  
As I lift a bottle to their memory as suck the head  
Of that genie just like escargot,  
Or Yankee Doodle Dandy.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yard \$ales In The Mouthy Storm

A few men have the banner of songs,  
And pin wheeled whistles on their lapels,  
Something winning up their sleeves  
When they walk into the restaurant of  
Devourous dins,  
The way polite and poker-nosed people  
Eat the meat other people have prepared for them,  
the way socialites concern  
Over their marbled ham chased with wine,  
and the veins which stick  
Like petroglyphs between kerneled teeth,  
Then the evening becomes their theatre,  
And they open the sky up for them, and ask,  
"Is this all right? "  
And it is, they suppose, as they make their  
Money in the fluid ways of ancient celebrations,  
The charnel hums, the subtle electrocutions at  
The dinner tables,

You can see their brains pulsing up their noses.

Out in her front yard, they keep their motors  
Humming, so she knows that they are waiting,  
And she must hurry,

For such sunny men are well known to be  
Migratory,  
For fine weather is known to pass  
Like unlined leather across her ass,

Verily, she leaps from the window in her veil,  
And he punches the gas,

And they will not wait for long,  
Paper marriages in their springy arcs  
Burn like yard sales in the mouthy storm.

Robert Rorabeck



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Robert Rorabeck

# Yeah, Whatever

People forget themselves in the dark:  
The stars are smoking,  
They will soon be run-  
People forget themselves,  
And mountains are unforgiving but  
Beautiful-  
I never made it to prom:  
I ran out of time,  
But here breasts are still magnanimous-  
The angelic flesh of mermaids is paradoxically  
Without legs-  
I think I could make a living selling ice-cream  
At the Castillo de San Marcos-  
I haven't enough to buy the rest of the sentence,  
My legs are cold,  
They are out of rum,  
But will soon lie down like lambs before the mouth  
Of the video-game- I.e.  
There is a pool where I'll dropp out in:  
I'll spend my cash,  
I'll smoke my last dime,  
The sea is pitifully beautiful,  
And my ex-lover wrote me to say that she is sorry  
To see the face of my last story,  
And this poem is drunken and without rhyme,  
But I still love her,  
And somewhere deep in the heart of suburbia the lights  
Are still glowing over the names of places  
Where faithful people still live,  
Suckling, eating their corn-flakes,  
Believing in celebrities,  
At least until the world burns,  
Her car leaves the cul-de-sac, and God returns,  
Fists up, a pugilist whose heart palpitates  
In the middle of Africa,  
Trying to disbelieve what he's done, how he's  
Made us,  
Until I knock him out, and collect,  
My just reward.

Robert Rorabeck

# Year After Year

Going back home to the sad Indian adventures:  
The conquered continents are all right here  
In the same way we've been ready at believing- in the same  
Clouds around the unreachable summits:  
Trying out again,  
Setting out their limbs up into the avenues that cannot  
Be described,  
Eventually to go back home again- to mothers in their beehives  
Drinking steadily beside the strange ululations of their pools:  
And it doesn't seem to belong anymore,  
The aborigines in the dismissed conundrums, nor any of it:  
Not even the tadpole in its mud bath: how will it  
Proceed from here,  
And yet the traffic keeps busily at its stations,  
As the ghosts haunt their very own castles year after year  
After year.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yellow On The Honey

So they said in that park of yellow,  
And so they set to away:  
Knights and heroes themselves on a grand adventure  
They couldn't spell;  
As the day looked away from them, accounting to  
The elements of its sunshine,  
And hoping for new brides,  
And time to travel the seas,  
Even though it wasn't possible- the honey bees  
Sleep each one of their two weeks,  
And then they go their way- forever, impossibly:  
They seem to be singing at their  
Work, even as they are dying, painting the mouth  
Yellow on the honey- and agaping trees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yellow Soul

Watching children run away from her classrooms—  
Minds of hummingbirds—  
Souls of canaries—going to the markets—  
Nursery rhymes like delicate  
Snakes around fruit climbed down from  
The vines—  
Foxes laying in Easter grasses  
As we wore our Sunday's best—  
My sisters holding golden rabbits  
Sunlight's yolks running from their  
Shoulders to the grass  
Where ants hurry to steal a yellow soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yellow Words In The Scree

I went up her again today, the beautiful easy mountain-  
Old gal; I suppose you'd say I was yelling, walking silently  
Through the comely changing aspens: that was what they were  
Doing- drinking too much sun to sicken then to die:  
That I was trying to show off with my dogs when there was  
No one else in the world around;  
And that's why I write this poetry, you suppose:  
Am I trying to give death a bad hand? Or, am I just trying to  
Send you flowers without having to pay?  
- I climbed Mount Elbert and Mount Massive in one day,  
And I professed to having seen god, slipping down the slopes  
Like yellow liquor, like an unidentified serpent,  
Some entity not a single religion could either identify or  
Dispel; and I wept- I wept and decided I loved my girl,  
While she was making love to the anonymous Joe- I know:  
And I went down with four grandmothers, and they were so proud  
Of me, their little scarred Indian- but they didn't stop to help me  
Change a tire I had no spare for once they passed me coming into  
Some tourist infested Colorado town: And I am not beautiful,  
And that is why I do it: To become beautiful, to become right for  
You, a suitor to your beauty; and you are being a vulgar paramour  
To service any other gentleman than I- Because I have seen angels  
Like baseball players- Even if it was only the minor leagues,  
I beheld their sport like cryptic yellow roses, like hydras waving out  
Of the crackling scree; and they whispered quite conspiratorially  
That you should love me, love me, even you don't know who  
You are- Even if you don't believe these words, and I am a lemon  
Suited monster- Just love me, because I have done enough for  
Your love.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yellow Yes

A green skiff goes sailing in my head.  
Everyone on it has long since died,  
And there is no longer a cartographer for the sky,  
But the sea keeps trying to carry it on  
As if nothing has happened;  
She is humming up a beautiful day for no  
One to see in the heart of her, in my head;  
In the long doldrums where she can barely move  
And it just sits there like a coffin in a dull living room,  
But she will not admit to what she has done,  
The long absences in the careless wind-  
The lips she tastes under the lampshades' dim;  
The undo currencies she gave to my men,  
The diseases which place the bones on the boards  
And shifted them for rats:  
The stowaways of death she complacently conscribed.  
Now all there is the floating thing. Not a continent,  
Not a wound to describe in detail how it happened:  
The sun is a brandished yellow yes,  
But that is not how it happened; She did it  
Who is carrying us along slowly in a daze:  
Up and down the road of someone who is guilty looking  
For the brambles in the clog, steady aquamarine rain,  
The carnivores of the forest to flood us and sink  
Us into her skirts, where she can look down at us  
And dream of us unwholesomely deeper inside her shadowed innocence.

Robert Rorabeck



# Yesterday's Rains

And you are wrong in all of your slumbers  
Perpetually on some other day's  
Afternoon while I can hardly breathe at the pollinations  
Of some dog track  
And you are getting nailed against a beautiful wall  
Until the sea wharfs in its grotto  
And I drink all of the wine which calls the chickens home:  
The children get up for kindergarten,  
They steal things, they go home until tomorrow jumps  
Up as yellow and unmolested as a feral child  
And across the yellow playgrounds it runs wild  
Still not thinking up all of its things;  
Until tomorrow springs upon its playgrounds,  
As the graveyards of her ancestors cry remembering yesterday's  
Rains.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yet A Mirage I Knew To Be

I remember the wind tunnels of Spain on  
Christmas:  
There were no gifts,  
But a lost guitar, and I got drunk and the tattoo  
Of a sword now faded on my thirty year old  
Gut,  
And the drunk boats are swimming too gray to  
Be Arthur Rimbaud,  
But I am still dressing out for physical educations,  
Running my laps I cannot possibly ever win,  
Eating my crackerjacks And swinging my bats  
Looking for better and better prizes  
AS the more beautiful and younger girls come in sweltering,  
Bosomy and without care  
While the young white tent breaths,  
And they've never read Shakespeare,  
So they don't care how many words are missing or misspelled;  
And I can feel myself in them.  
But I can only love one of them at a time, Sharon  
Like a single rose on your grave,  
And a tender dog wining there. I would not feel comfortable taking  
You out to dinner,  
But the castillos are still beautiful, and I've stolen so many fireworks;  
And I am no longer beautiful,  
But this is how it works,  
And I'll love you forever going through the turnstiles of  
The other world,  
Rejoining our common ancestors until we can't feel alone again;  
And this is how it works,  
So eventually the lions will surcease from yawning up to the  
Constellations and settling down continue with  
Their Christmas meals,  
Of the long legged ibex slaughters out in the middle of  
The Kalahari,  
A place I felt you in,  
Yet a mirage I knew to be unreal.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yet Another Simple Harmony

Sensory cocoons the miners going into  
Mines,  
The moon rises up its lantern to see what she  
Can steal as she finds what she can find:  
And the cars leave their mothers house,  
The horses sleep in the valley  
After the sun has left the world- but two  
Bodies coming together can still  
Make children,  
Like hands clapping in applause appreciates  
The attempts to bring  
Yet another simple harmony into the world.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yet So Far To Go

Airplanes like sugar cans with their  
Leggy effervescence leaping over my head:  
Going on sabbaticals of sunken mausoleums completely equipped  
With mermaids:  
And Alma, I didn't know you a month before hand,  
But I know you now,  
And I enjoy buying you lunch and watching you eat habaneras  
Out beneath the fox tail palms,  
The way you did for me today, and then we both watched the  
Imagine of the Virgin of Guadalupe appear in the lost window  
Of my car,  
Just as she appeared on that cape long ago in Mexico;  
And you have come so far to get here,  
Alma, but I pray you have yet so far to go.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yet Sweet Harems

While all of the fruits of its body pours  
We have been drinking the stock of our friends, while the rainbows  
Curse into the flight paths of mariposas the very bitterest of  
Ends;  
And Sharon your grandfather clock is already becoming gentrified  
And we can burn into your bark, and softly glowing become  
Realized with the other white-haired sparrows of your disease:  
Sharon, I am a coffin and I am touching myself:  
I used to think that I was marrying you, Sharon; but just look  
At these crocodiles and these amphibians- they go back; and don't  
They go back and what have they been doing, while the stars  
Have been luscious and haven't they been picked and just bundled  
Together for the architectures of your harems; and I don't really want  
To start out anymore: I don't want to do this again- and where  
Was I running away to anyways, while the sky was all shut out  
And the stage resuscitated into the brightness of the stars of your harem;  
But shouldn't I just shut that out as well: Or, I can love you forever,  
And invite you in into the venal plentitudes that are happy to please  
The first greenness of clouds of my latest and yet always indulgent  
Of homeless and yet sweet harems.

Robert Rorabeck

# You Are So Beautiful That My Heart Doesn'T Care Where It Resides

Disillusioned by caracoles, this is not Christmas;  
But then havent your toes been painted since then;  
And I ride bicycles across the rows of  
Crocodiles or close cousins of whatever they are;  
And we have fun until the nightgowns douse;  
And we light off fireworks out front of your paper house;  
And Zackery and Jessie have BB Guns;  
And there are glowworms in the earth:  
We get citrus in today, and the plains reciprocate through the  
Sky;  
But, Kelly, what are you doing now; what are your very fine  
Lips smoking, Kelly-  
You are a beautiful woman, and you have already broken me in;  
And I want nothing else than you,  
For my fine saddle for my bride, if you can never mind my scars;  
Then I want you inside to heirloom my house in  
The cherry orchard of rainstorms that destroy my chalk stories,  
The other romances I've been denied;  
But you are so beautiful that my heart doesn't even care where  
It resides- as long as I have you inside, inside.

Robert Rorabeck

# You Are There

I have been to Spain, which is the best compliment  
Of a drunken man:  
I have been to Spain and the whole time I kept  
My eyes closed,  
While I got tattoos and ate oranges;  
And the 2-cycle motorcycles purred, luxuriant and  
Bilious parade over the olive esplanade:  
And I have been to Spain, or I have caught yourself  
Looking in your eyes:  
That thing that has eaten, eaten what has come up from  
The red,  
Red petticoats of ancestral highway men;  
And you didn't care that I burned cypress with my  
Uninhibited gasolines;  
Or that I caught the shadows of séance or of  
Light weight devils:  
That I might careen down into you in a part that is just  
As good as the whole,  
With my eyes clinched shut, like a yard sale overrun  
By burning ants,  
Having a debate about what is real and what can be  
Gotten away with:  
I was in both Spain and France for Christmas- and  
I love you,  
But haven't yet opened by eyes to see if, finally,  
You are there.

Robert Rorabeck

# You Beckoned?

If I am wounded attend to me with liquor,  
D.H. Lawrence and snake bights:  
Your eyes sumptuously vermilion across the  
Patio like hauntingly drunken street lights;  
I am famished from these bullet wounds,  
These hungry pen-knives: Poor it in each a thimble  
Full, listen to each pullulate like tom cats  
Down in the harshest grottoes after midnight-  
Then attend to me no more, for the sea is crying from  
Its futility and yours; and yet you have so many hours  
And so many worlds- So many children that tend  
To occur as epiphanies of your higher altitude beauty;  
But you have done enough for this dying soldier,  
Your plastic paramour: He who will never be talented  
Enough to procure your lasting beauty; but transcend him  
To the sea, his queuing mother and enter him into her  
Foaming doors- become him awash in agony,  
And step lightly where no one else should have to see  
This sad sight getting carried away: Trace the steps you took to  
Find his stone-cursed morgue, and attend again to those  
Living men your voice yet implores; and beckon them  
To do your bidding, to bring you children and whatever more;  
For they are of the kind living, and they will love you  
For ever more- So says the lost one vanished with the  
Waves cursing upon the shore- I am sure; I am sure.

Robert Rorabeck



# You Like My Poems Because.... (Censored)

You like my poems  
Because you know they're  
All for you....

Even when you slip  
Into the arms of other men,  
Even when you die together  
Into rapturous sin,

You know my every word is  
Yours,

And even after I follow my  
Ex-lover's lead and stagger defeated  
In the material realm to dig myself a  
Married grave,

You will remain there hovering,  
Like a power-line,  
The truest form of womanhood,  
A creature birthed from Plato's lips....,  
Immaculate and wielding everlasting beauty  
Your body cast in the armor of  
Naked radiance, bejeweled in the  
Glorious reds of  
Your parted places,  
Those flowers that lay upon you,  
The stimulated filigrees....,

Though I will fall into the disgraceful  
Spoiled bowl of human commitment,  
Of social shackles,  
Where I may marry a politician's daughter,  
A defeated nun, a p\*rn star,  
Or even the rare female ax-murderer,  
Who will split my head in to two  
Instead of stabbing me while I look away  
Towards you....,

You will remain  
Perfect in those imperfect lines  
I have taken from your realm out into this  
Cold globe, to show all around what you really are-  
Blooming,  
Perpetual spring  
The ancients spoke of  
When they invented knowledge.....,

This is why you like my poems,  
Dearest soul,  
Burn me up until I am almost gone  
Knowing on and on  
They are all for you....

Robert Rorabeck

# You Lost Your Car

Your birthday again in a dozen days or two—  
And it wouldn't have to be so bad—if you ever believed in  
Me—  
If I never believed in you—but for now, anyways—  
I will give you this castle—  
Isn't it so ever bright—it is made from the emerald of  
The blown glass of these bottles that  
I have spent for you—  
Wonderfully delirious affection—  
Another day in a house or in a ballroom—and you  
Lost your car,  
But it wasn't so bad—you kept both of your children—  
And moved into a world that seemed to disappear above  
The clouds.

Robert Rorabeck

# You Really Couldn'T Care

And this ache is something wonderful,  
And it helps me magnify the font, to make  
Something profound for infants;  
And how many times to I have to retry penning  
For you the bouquets of sick immigrants  
I can't even spell; and, when exploring,  
Would like to lay you down like bending supple  
Foliage where, of course, your legs are like  
Either aloe fronds, or curtains shaved beneath the  
Windmill my lips to tickle and turn like giant-  
Hunky lips, and by my words do you without even  
Speaking to you,  
While I pour the rum into my glass and dream,  
And smile a little lopsided and bruised with caracoles,  
And the shadows of speckled things in shallowness,  
But you don't care:  
You have begun to see phantoms, haven't you?  
And I imagine those ghosts are well-suited in offices  
Overlooking the city, and he may be married but you  
Are still his surf, I imagine that you are; and that you  
Have many friends, and not one of them will wake up  
Early and read by just awakening traffic lights my  
Mystified dreams of you; because they still come this  
Way, come when I call them, and with the liquor,  
Come because I haven't yet moved to find another  
Muse,  
Subtle and falling like gossamer in my hand,  
Dewed by moths and their midshipmen,  
And by that newer flesh bare children and more publishable  
Dreams, while all the time the seas are rising, quietly,  
Horny and out to get you, and cover you up with effluvious  
Satins I can see you through,  
Naked and capitulating, because your are lackadaisical  
In your games, petting terrapin,  
Lunching with orchids in your hair,  
Smiling halfway insouciant because  
You don't care: you really couldn't care.



# Young And Over Eager Skeletons

With jewelry bent in their hands,  
They gave us such a blessing, while the circuses  
Cursed,  
And the pilots cursed- I wonder where it  
Was that they were going,  
While the bobcats sat on the blue cliffs  
Above where the Indians were yet mowing:  
Their forgotten arrowheads in the indentations  
OF their necks- the forlorn architectures  
That crippled the first blue cavalries-  
They set out justly suited to their pommels,  
But the rains killed the joys in their  
General directions:  
It souped up the blue jays and gave trouble  
To their complexions:  
And now where they lay amidst the delaying  
Pinions, scalped while out on holiday  
Senseless- without direction-  
And copper bugles pressed to the lips of  
Too young and over eager skeletons.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your 10-4 Prerogative

So suitably you play  
Down in your silly hilly city:  
Watching as the nights sashay into days,  
Driving in your cars beneath the stars  
With your poky little puppies  
In and out of lukewarm bars:  
Swimming with the neat and yellow fishes,  
In and out of the their mothers modern kitchens:  
Keeping to your 10-4 prerogative  
You eyes highlighted by their fascinations  
With it all, as you tiptoe zigzagging  
Down the cathedraled study hall:  
On your slender silken wrist is a number,  
A cheat sheet and a phone call,  
But you really don't have time to remember,  
Because you are desperately, desperately late  
As you tiptoe in cursive  
Down the vaulted study hall.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Absolutely Gorgeous Worth

Next time again I see you  
Against the sun angel with bosom:  
I want to fall on my knees for you and snack  
Off your perfumes,  
Even if the boats in the harbor don't know you  
At all:  
Even if this is the orchid I forgot to lay thirsty  
Rooted  
As sacrifice to your family's crypt:  
I want to smell you like the branch of a great long tree  
That never lets off its givings of fruit,  
The selected offerings of the glade,  
The nuptials where you are always leaking like a book  
Of parables;  
And it makes me wish to close my eyes and regress,  
To fall like waves of sunlight over your unnoticed abyss:  
This is where you live,  
And this is this: while the students multiply in the university,  
While the armies ant:  
I see you out reconstructing the nature of being in the  
Freckled diadems of the arbor  
Beside the carport, beside the church,  
Not even thinking, like the words on the tip of a candle blessed  
In a church:  
You are going out tonight with your sister, while the earth turns,  
Baring your shoulders, giving us a delicate peep show  
Of your absolutely gorgeous worth.

Robert Rorabeck



# Your All Too Happy Conquistador

If I want to slow and beautiful,  
Wouldn't it be like combing your hair under  
The trick lights of a carnival-  
I don't know- I don't know,  
But even the cars are weeping  
While the airplanes leap like gentle gentlemen  
Through the air,  
And I know your name, and who you've  
Been with in the smoking jackets of awful weather;  
And that is why I've had to climb so many  
Mountains,  
And even tonight I say your name to put  
Pedro to sleep,  
Because it is not beautiful where I live:  
There are awful gang fights, and hungry mice  
Who cannot speak,  
But if I had you here then we could roller coaster  
Across the crenulated space of chlorinated  
Amusements:  
That's what we're going to do, once you leave  
Your life  
Behind,  
And let me become your all too happy conquistador.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Almost Beauty

I stand in you the shallowness of echoes  
Waiting for the bus  
As the lions yawn- and your children whose  
Pink ribs are as if candy  
As if roses scattered across the shell rock:  
I am sure they would rather me at home-  
I am sure that they would rather be almost anywhere  
Else, as the sun rises  
And the earth in her neighborhoods effervesces,  
As she has been at this a long time  
While there has been so many restaurants and daycares  
Planted about her,  
And so many things she doesn't care about  
But are lucrative, just as I saw you the other day,  
Golden, hatching, but you went off following  
Him- and my neighborhoods smelled of your perfume:  
And my wrists smelled of the tears and carnivals  
Of your body,  
Even though it was not echoing- so it too became  
A franchise of saltwater and horseshoes-  
And then like a lament over a battlefield decorated  
By arrowheads, you gave yourself to another man-  
And I left the asymmetrical fields of your almost  
Beauty, my defeated warriors never to be entertained by you  
Again.

Robert Rorabeck

## Your Amens

The neighborhood is becoming gentrified,  
And this isn't the first rodeo she's been too, but you can still  
Step outside and see the motorcycles being ridden away  
By graduating bicycle thieves;  
And there is only a little bit of winter metering in the  
Unkempt eaves-  
Here we will be upriver from my old girlfriend, and we can  
Send her things, marble packages of paper rings;  
And I can send for my dogs, and they can come with their  
Swift lives burning,  
The tails churning and flagging through the air, cutting  
Like faithful tarps across the street,  
Never minding the injustices of men; and we can sell grapefruit  
And cantaloupe-  
I could pollinate your stamen and turn our grandmothers' graves  
Into apiaries of queens and their slaves;  
And then we'd postulate every night and press our hands together  
Like baking things,  
And then I'd put my tongue to you and press and feel and say  
And taste and smell your amen's.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Beautiful Insouciance

Oh, the pain of roller coasters that I have:  
And I walk with you near the sea, and I remember you in  
4th grade,  
And I wish I was so beautiful as to catch you,  
And line you out and slit you from gill to gill, cleaned;  
But you have beautiful ears,  
And your sons shall play baseball, and Gracie will prick her  
Finger on a loom and fall asleep for so many thousands  
Of years;  
And this is the grayness of my scuppernongs in the deep norths  
Of Michigan that howl for you now uncontained,  
Like werewolves out jouncing on the untestified footpaths of  
Tourists  
While the fireflies are dying;  
And then today, amidst the traffics and hullabalooos,  
Didn't we press like powder kegs, like mammals in the chimpanzoo:  
Didn't we press our juxtapositions,  
And then we kissed like little golden books;  
And I was so afraid of all my scars next to your perfect perfections;  
And we kissed, and your lips were the afterlife of  
Nocturnal gardens taking their time with me under the overpasses  
Of this life;  
And so I swear by you and bury my head like a terrapin in the wet  
Cement of another dream,  
The emotions of censers reciprocating on the swings;  
And I dream like a windmill of a dream drinking from a the water fountain  
Of your soul;  
As you turn and spin, effortlessly- and your beautiful insouciance  
Makes me whole.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Beauty

Your beauty has no identity:  
Your beauty is who you are,  
And it is just why I love you,  
But it doesn't get me very far.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Beauty's Spirit Haiku

I just want to be  
Homeless with my dogs in  
Your beauty's spirit.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Because

The nights I have loved in high school when I was  
A wolverine, I am still resonating out from:  
I am a still born in a glass masons shop, being reintroduced  
To the forge as punishment for my plagiarism and pornographies;  
And the only conquistadors I have ever known where  
Ants stinging my palm like toy soldiers,  
The only combatants I have ever loved; and what about your  
Love, Sharon:  
Sharon, all washed up like torn and pleading paper dolls on the  
Beaches of Normandy: Defeated, this is the new world,  
With the sky coming up like the make believe filigree above your  
Dollhouse, Sharon;  
And I sing to you because you are the only muse who I haven't  
Afforded the change to betray me:  
And I've saved enough money to buy a house outright or to  
Climb Mountain Everest under the moonlight; but that really isn't  
Enough to get you to believe in me;  
And Sharon, Sharon: The earth is moving beneath us, and I have  
Finished off most of a bottle but I am not a fine lady, Sharon:  
And tonight is your night, added to your like galleons to your conquest:  
Tonight is your night, and for you I am doing my best:  
I wish I was the tin-man for you: I wish I was going down to vacuum  
Your caesuras: I wish I had the confidants you had toward this  
Life, Sharon:  
I wish I obeyed your natural laws, and that I was a butterfly whose  
Final declaration was upon the tarmac of your softly crenulated  
Bosom, Sharon; because that is the only thing anymore that  
Ever draws me to, Sharon:  
And I wish I was a beautiful man for you, Sharon:  
I wish that I was your because.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Body's Flirt

How are you doing what the dry and  
Coughing road sent you for,  
The things hung in its easements the  
Accoutrements for your dirty  
Bust,  
Your eyes long song birds scuffing the  
Ruts,  
While the university is already sold out,  
Its stolen bicycles now homeless,  
And even the new gosh dang its have better  
Eyes than you:  
Full aglow, like a preachers they never talk  
To sing,  
While the ephemeral homelessness lathers  
You like a less than holy thing-  
While you are going up where the road  
Pretends its voyage,  
As if your stride was a smoky censer  
swung before  
He laid you; at its full dawning I saw up what  
You are, but you kept on into the shadows  
Of other mailboxes and their crepuscule,  
Like the humming of dangerous cords  
And their jellyfish dirt:  
You still down know how you are,  
As you swing your body's flirt.

Robert Rorabeck



# Your Body's Sea

Nimble suicide;  
How you tickle me,  
Run up and down my spine on your back legs  
Like a trained dog:  
How you swallow the alcohol like a hungry  
Bird  
To stay alive in a windowless nest  
All the things which death says to us,  
As he veils the day with a quick laugh-  
Selling his apocrypha door to door:  
Should we let him in now,  
Or let him in tomorrow;  
If he stays too long, he will eat  
All the oranges of our citrus tree before they ripen.  
The canker of his eyes are like white persimmons-  
For, we've made an appointment,  
And he has to come in eventually.

You little whore- who have you been  
Playing with today,  
When the neighbor asks you over to  
Fix his washing machine-  
How come you are gone so long,  
And I have to listen to the toads proclaim  
In the aloe next to the carport  
Procreating on the stacks of rusting rebar\Until  
You come back smelling of  
His brand of cigarettes and aftershave:  
The chamber of the single bullet  
Is more assertive than a game of cards-  
In this rented house which is  
Closer to the canal than it is to the sea,  
And the dated pornography stacked in the  
Junked cars amidst the pine trees;  
Your lips lay as far away from me on the bed  
As they can, and we are both so young,  
Already starving;

You don't have to get to your knees to me

And pray, because I am leaving:  
The children are still just unplanted thoughts,  
Though the rabbits are dead in the rock garden;  
Death is sitting there lightly touching a blue cactus,  
And cocking his head for no reason:  
If I go outside now, he will have me as soon  
As my back is turned;  
Barefooted, he will jump on me and ride  
Me until I spill into the flooding ditch  
Attributing to the canal; but soon are all  
The greater things deceased,  
As the skyscrapers raise their cocaine heads in  
Miami;  
Even if the horizon above the sea is beautiful,  
Those who are bought and paid for will not allow it,  
But death will allow,  
And find me like a fallen fruit tarnishing the  
Concrete easement;  
He will take me up like a dry leaf and crumble me  
Between his fingers, like he does to cats;  
And after that is done,  
You might creep out in your lucid slip,  
And go share a beer with the neighbor and  
Explain to him, like foreplay, how it was done to  
Me;  
As he tastes your tongue with his,  
The beer effervescing your lips, the yeast rising  
The fermented death sailing on your body's sea....

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Brown Again

Brown as the brownest parts of a day:  
Brown as the brownest midway, and full of lights,  
And just as absentminded of the things I say:  
Perched in my curling sheets of gray:  
I sing to you like the earth falling down like a marble in  
Colossal game through the heavens,  
Like an auburn tear, your body sheds through an autumn  
Year:  
Brown and as beautiful as a leaf coming down  
Across the crossed browned streets like the dun ribbons  
In the hair of cafes:  
Brown and as important as a reddish brown brick in the  
Façade of a university while I am sure that you will never  
Attend;  
You crossed barefooted from your tiny brown town  
To the other end of America:  
You crossed the frontera in your little brown time:  
And now I intend to make your brown mine,  
For when I awaken I can see your brownness floating atop  
The topless sea:  
Airplanes are touching down in the deep red brown fields of  
Your hair,  
And your sisters come around a delight with you there;  
And you seem to call to me from across the other end of a brown  
Pool,  
And you cannot even swim, but I swim to you, and press  
Your brown presents to my pale skin: Alma: I kiss you, and  
Take you further out into the dun dim, where we kiss once more  
And I sing of your brown again.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Brown And Unending Shows

In the yellow houses that the bodies carouse,  
Some making love, and some abuse: all of the whirligigs of  
Tantamount success,  
The housewives in the nomenclatures depending on the rooms  
Of their house:  
The winos forever underneath the repleted overpass:  
The wildflowers in the wild glass;  
And your bare feet out against the propitious paths over  
The neighborhoods that you pass,  
Like a lovely angel, a fine girl of proletarian class:  
And I look out for you, and call you by the waywardness of my soul  
That has found its home in your  
Brown cradle,  
Like a warm cave where immaculate things so come to pass:  
Where butterflies winter, where rainbows drink,  
Famished from their blue hallways, your perfumes so likely  
To linger,  
Even as your journey continues over the ribcages of my zoetropes,  
Beatings its strobes the way windows let in the fanfares  
Of airplanes into a darkened room,  
Or across the glittering spine of girls, even where beautiful girls  
Are looking up into the dancing hallways of  
Your brown and unending shows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Busy Garden

In your body's movement, a religion:  
And sea-life:  
Pink lettered sandboxes and orchestra,  
Gypsum:  
Underneath your corduroy an artist's garden  
These topiaries of limbs  
I know we can sell: your bosom an ice-cream  
Truck for your children:  
And I am just the man at the door singing what  
He hopes will be your name,  
Two silver pales strung across a wishbone along  
His shoulders:  
Maybe he is just a wolf that wants to be kind  
Enough to lay down with the innocent lambs  
Of your busy garden.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Carelessly Wimpled Shoulders

In the callous divine of spikenard  
And ambergris and bear-cats  
What are you doing, but making your  
Ever ready,  
Playing topless hooky into trailer parks,  
And looking good on the mobile vine,  
While the little children are sunning in  
The rusting bathtubs,  
While the marble fauns are proudly  
Crumbling,  
And the torpid teachers are put to dull  
Pasture,  
Chewing their every day verbs and  
Equations:  
And the sun is winnowing like grain through  
The declivities,  
Through the stony canopies where the  
Water orgasms like freckles or chickenpox  
On your carelessly wimpled shoulders.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Chosen Foxes

Angels half asleep in forgotten neighborhoods  
Because they've been here for so long,  
Practicing each of their religions,  
Waiting as if the wind veins of your old school  
To return  
With the frogs open throated,  
Like paper bags in movies; and I don't know  
How they feel  
Just because  
You are not going home,  
And this is my heart all venal and chartreuse,  
My greatest organ is just a mirage;  
It has a harelip,  
And it is filled without a care,  
Cyclical, pantomiming like a ride at the fair  
A zoetrope of trained animals out in your driveway  
Waiting for you to come;  
And maybe you used to tell the editor of  
The school newspaper how you felt about me:  
Maybe you skipped lunch and danced  
For rain,  
And made your hapless clays into something useful,  
Like a goddess;  
But you are gone now, gone with the surcease of time,  
Gone on a forever trip to the mountains,  
And this is just a poor attempt to call you back,  
To looking you up,  
But the angels are evaporating like apple pies in sweet  
Tinfoil,  
And the buses have stopped coming around suspecting  
That now that you are just crying wolf,  
Your grapes so much sweeter on the other side of the  
World,  
Hung low enough for your chosen foxes to eat.

Robert Rorabeck

## Your Coquettish Supposition

The wind curls the hair of the girl who he loves,  
Verbatim- Sometimes he come leaping like a tiger from  
The poem above the great Atlantic Basin,  
Knocking into sturdy walls of coquina: I am so sad,  
Because she will not have him. The pagan wind, he is no  
Catholic- He does away with crèches along the bible-studies  
Near the shore, he thrashes mangroves, and he is apoplectic,  
Which is a study word, remember it:  
And in all his bags of tricks he is seldom recognized when he  
Is subtle, when he is fondling candle's flames like a careful  
Father over his married daughter making full grown coitus on  
That bed with so many dime sized stains, and so many quarter  
Sized stains when the sex is better; but here he has forgotten his  
Carefulness over that daughter, and he goes growling down the highway  
Which is also careless and the sun is in its azure tenement and  
The knives have all be tossed into the opaque waterways and  
Estuaries, and all the widows have laid subtly bare-chested,  
Have lit candles hoping to begin a paragraph of forbearance  
Near their bedrooms, hoping that he might part the palmettos  
Outside their lonely windows like a thief or a thespian;  
But the wind is done being a prop, a handyman who ushers commercial  
Airliners over the heads of bubbly faced infants in the roar of  
Humid shelters. None of this is a thing to him. Half feral, he  
Dropped out in tenth grade and he is coming towards her like a  
Track star on cocaine, or nothing more than this trick of a poem,  
My insouciantly penniless occupation. The rest, sweet dear, is left  
In the hands of your coquettish supposition.

Robert Rorabeck



# Your Crimes Of Amnesia

Make love in your  
Denouement  
It is almost over and then  
You'll graduate,  
Take off your water skis and  
Eat warm meatloaf while  
Looking across the celibate  
Piano and down into the very  
Strange lake from which you dried  
Off and came from;  
And tiny green apples will be growing  
On the hill,  
Filled with tiny green worms,  
Like the vastly lesser children of your  
First influence;  
And you may grow pregnant living in  
The loose swelter of your uncle's  
House,  
But hijacked there are parks and  
Cemeteries and bicycles that know the  
Way to penny candies and  
Cold medicines:  
And you would have friends there and  
Quiet instances in which to pray,  
To collect yourself and run away again,  
To get to the train stations like the arteries  
In a giant and careless heart beneath the  
Coal stack mountains in  
Fare Colorado,  
And there again to discover what type of  
Criminal you are,  
And how much exactly your crimes of  
Amnesia are worth.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Delivering Mind

I've seen you baring breasts in the east,  
Walking on waves that are lavishly caressing your  
Calves  
While I drowned underneath you, as I drowned underneath  
That bus:  
And I've always thought of you though even now I  
Am not young  
And no longer know that ladder up to your grapes  
The sly fox has in his lips anyway, the man that has  
Your name,  
So like everything that is clever with anything you  
Are driving forever away through the storm,  
Your headlights looking at new animals,  
So all I can see is you leaving, like all the planets that should  
Have existed like tiny orbs for my lips and phallus to  
First suckle and then to prick,  
So that all I have are these feeble words, these younger  
Man's toys, who feed their sorrows to the fish,  
And then go on wishing their  
Sophomoric pines, while you have turned into an  
Incredible Indian with a beautifully alien world shooting  
Up red tongued through the sweet armpits of  
Your delivering mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Divine Dissapearing Acts

The stores are freshly open; they are waiting  
As in this very night the moon sweeps clean the  
Streets;  
And it haloes a goddess, she is you;  
But tonight I went to the theatre with my sister,  
And sat for hours just eating peanuts,  
Because I couldn't figure out the attraction without  
Your soliloquies, the remote control  
Boats in the papier-mâché sea were not there,  
Telegraphed by your eyes,  
All the blue-green creatures of the zoo well-spun  
In their false habitats were gone;  
And the little girls were weeping from the cypress  
Shoots before transmogrifying into herons,  
And they too flew away;  
So I drove home, watching out for elk, barely speaking,  
So dysfunctional- Went straight to the liquor cabinet  
And to bed,  
Hoping I might find you there, but you never spoke  
To me; unless your eyes were closed and camouflaged;  
Restless, I struck out for the moon, and thought to  
See you lying there like a flickering lamp in an ancient  
Room, but coming to it I saw that it was another  
Girl, she herself hoping to find a gentle young man,  
But I did not love her,  
And making some excuse fell to bed weeping,  
Wanting the airplanes you fly upon wherever you are  
To land restive like tin-can birds, and you there only passenger  
Strung out finally having found a good place to stay the winter.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Doused Religion

I've tried doing better for you,  
Even as the sun was old and disappearing  
Behind the slats of trees,  
Into the autumns seasons which misspell  
And do not get up again after they have bent down:  
And I have looked out for you against the traffic's  
Flow, and through the rattling shadows from the  
Landscaping brushed against the dun buildings:  
Somehow they have made it all to hide you,  
And everything is more forgetful even as it comes into  
Its time; and I am chained and unrequited  
And my eyes are brown and so are yours:  
They want to move across you lazily and calm,  
And give truisms into the loci of rest bowed into your arms,  
But already the old are disappearing and the shadows congest,  
The sea is leaping and yipping into the west,  
And there are better men for you who are breathing in  
Their time, and they move about you in the gentle gravities  
Of courtship, and the dunes have drunken in the tide  
When I would have thought to find you  
Where the palm trees stand like a stoical chorus or  
Sorority, and move with you there clasped in a coupling  
Arc, and to have swung with you in a studious dream,  
Until nested in a crèche made from the springy, pealed bows  
Of your doused religion.

Robert Rorabeck

## Your Esoteric And So Young Body

It rains in my garage as the clouds come down  
Over some nameless guy riding his bicycle,  
But it becomes so easy, because there are no mountains;  
And all of my dogs are missing,  
But the world is no less beautiful: he gives you hickeys for  
All the world to see: you give my those too, but for  
Us alone,  
And our two bodies become a private midway that I don't want  
Taken from me;  
Even though I am so bankrupt and so fallow, and the lions  
Are staring at me with eyes wider than their glorious mouths:  
I want you to travel towards me now, you little brown  
Feet as lucky as rabbits multiplying in a house of mirrors,  
Forgiving to me my prolific failures,  
And enrapturing me in a garden returned to me of your esoteric  
And so young body.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Eyes Never Turned My Way

Your eyes do not answer me:  
You have a lover you stare upon.  
Like a hungry bird,  
You put your lips to his open  
Palm and give soft pecks,  
Dewing his lifeline with your spittle  
In which your tears catch like blue flies.  
And he tames you like a skilled  
Trainer, placing you  
Into the better days where your life  
Strokes like a teenage athlete  
Warm under the sun at a swim meet.  
The chlorine in the pool makes sure  
Your body is clean as you  
Kick your line and  
Sun the shellacs you an auburn sheen  
The elastic curves of your swimsuit,  
Keeping your hidden flesh  
The color of a whitewashed picket fence,  
Punctuated by a couple roses.  
You sometimes allow your eyes to  
Admire your virgin flowers as you decide what  
To wear to school.  
Finished and placing well,  
You drive away in his car.  
Giving long stares to his silhouette,  
You fall into his arms in a dark  
And comfortable living room  
Paid for in the heart of  
The malaise of suburbia  
You lounge and make advances toward  
Love making, but only allow  
Him to taste your lips,  
To put his thumbprints in secret  
Stamps under your clothes,  
To kiss recklessly again, like  
Water spilled out from buckets  
Hurriedly handed from one to the next  
Filled one way with gasoline

And the next water,  
To first start and then put out  
A fire.  
You take a shower  
As he cooks you brownies  
And then uses his fingers to  
Shovel food into your cheeks.  
Wearing a towel,  
You eat and  
Fall asleep in his arms until he drives away.  
In class you dream of him,  
Through mathematics and English,  
Science and social studies, your  
Mind performs experimental fantasies  
Starring him.  
I watch you from the back corner  
Of class, but you never turn my way  
Or speak my name.  
Your eyes have nothing to say to me,  
But I see you five days a week  
And the boy you always eat lunch with.  
I don't know who he is  
Only that he captivates your stare  
As he attracts your attention.  
One day you graduated and drove away  
With him. I am still standing on  
The last spot I saw you,  
Watching you faithfully, a senior  
Lost in the labyrinth of these high  
School memories  
Where your eyes never turned my way.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Favorite Mexican Boy

Burning through the spirits of your ancestors,  
Alma,  
I've begun having feverish dreams of the skinny valleys of  
Guerrero Mexico,  
Your home town and how you like your men: maybe that is  
Why you flirt with Armando, the little maricon,  
Even though today at lunch you echoed my syllables when I  
Told you I loved you,  
Even though you would like to put it off as a lie,  
But I can tell you only the empiricisms of the world can tell you  
The tin kettle joys of the coral snake on your roof:  
There he is, and you will never see him, but I have culled him out  
Of the places your family works together,  
Those who are renting:  
Your extended family has done so well for themselves in the eight  
Years that they have been in this foreign country:  
I could do half as well, except that I am a gringo and accustomed to  
The penumbras of these rolling overpasses,  
And the divine mirages of the slowly floating helicopters,  
And these sad lies- Except that I love you, Alma,  
And I have my house that you've been to four times, and the last time  
We made love for hours,  
And you came multiple times: and your favorite color is still green,  
Alma,  
And I pray every night to the virginsita that I have done work good  
Enough to become your favorite Mexican boy.

Robert Rorabeck



# Your Foremost Of Senses

If I am waiting to fill out and become the  
Man that can drive you around in  
Barrel-chested trucks, will you come for me  
When I am ready for you,  
And let me take you out into the bonfires  
Of the southwest;  
And I wont cut my hair- and it will be just as gray  
And silver as the smoke and the airplanes through it;  
And you wont even have to look at me,  
You can just cast your eyes high into those nets,  
Dreaming of acrobats always falling through the burning  
Serenity in  
A pleasant though arresting way;  
And I can keep a steady glance on you watching you like  
A cat watches a child, full of daydreams and hunger,  
So that when your eyes finally come to my own  
I can return your foremost of senses;  
And we can believe together that most of this is real.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Glorious Perfumes

My sense of smell is not real;  
I will give you this bouquet, and then I  
Will go away and die.  
My dogs will wait for me barking like a  
Cenotaph in the waves,  
The cormorants wonderful as kites  
Of little boys,  
Your oldest sons who look at you, whose  
Love I cannot steal;  
And when I will be gone, like Jesus, like  
Cars to school,  
Then my nose will disappear as if it was lost in  
A knife fight;  
And you will have good reason not to love me,  
A nose less man,  
Knowing of the unstopped aromas of your  
Boudoir;  
It is laughable that we should all go this way,  
The baseball players in the red gems of sky;  
And I in my golden gem of fireworks,  
Brain-sunken now like a gaunt tortoise beside  
The black cats hyperventilating beneath your canal;  
And you will come swimming like a pungent mermaid,  
And I wont even be able to smell your farts;  
And I would have other men describe them to me,  
But they will be as mute and piss-stain as  
Frightened children,  
I could easily still friend and hide their plastic rewards  
Above the church of my mother's refrigerator;  
And then tomorrow afternoon, Tuesday,  
Meet you in the park and see your new  
Butterfly tattoo,  
And grab your leg like a speech and try to smell the  
Flower on your ankle;  
But I really just want to smell your flower before  
I die,  
And am so noxious as to overpower myself for the love  
Of your glorious perfumes.



# Your Golden Rules

Daffodils in the penumbra of my uneasy afflictions;  
And unicorns,  
And I know you cannot look at me, or be my true love,  
But I just want to escort you still out into the  
Yard,  
To hold your hand like the page of a soft mammal,  
To watch you metamorphose on the strings;  
To leave off you like a dead boy with  
Blue socks in the weeds to Canterbury,  
If you can't be my fable, if you can't be my dream:  
Then I will not want to take your beauty,  
The hope of all your freckles, the shadows of the heavens  
Or goldfish flirting with the cat's saber tooth;  
I just want to pay my dollar to get a good look at you,  
To tip my bottle and well perceive the beauty as  
You wash your feet in the lucky river;  
If want to be your weary fetish, the knuckle bone of skeleton  
Rubbed in your pocket, your silver boy kept in the  
Secrets of the railroad tracks;  
And if you are never to come around again, to be like a single raindrop  
Quiver on your roof, never looking indoors as you learn from  
Your teachers, as you have children and pools,  
As you divide and multiply and live by your golden rules.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Heavens

The telltale signs I don't believe in:  
I am missing the rest areas, and my dogs- but the pain is  
Gone with the seasons of glasses,  
But Alma is also gone, which seems to be the aphorisms  
Of these days' particular colloquialisms;  
And it really feels strange being in the direct gaze  
Of her eyes,  
While my parents are pillaging in Arizona, searching  
For movies;  
And the stars come out too in particular constellations:  
And you are one of these, estrella,  
As you made my wishes as I made love to you,  
Looking up and down into the various positions in which  
I placed your heavens.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Hopeless Name

And the busied fruit market gone  
With the bumble bees underneath the airplanes,  
Just as my dreams of  
Houses or marriages with you:  
You have leapt across the canal  
And back  
Into Mexico,  
Brown eyed beside the firelight beside your  
Children  
Where your husband keeps you,  
Because you used me—because you could not love  
Me,  
But took me down from the sky and played with  
My wings:  
And now my wife is busy breathing on the  
Other side of the Earth:  
But soon I will have her, which makes me think of  
You, even though you are gone,  
And it is only these things burning which linger,  
Trying to carry your scent at least up to the clouds  
To amuse another god with your hopeless name.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Hungry Snows

The family sleeps in gloom, and I am just waking up:  
And the world hasn't recognized me, just as I haven't yet learned  
The gloom of all of these flowers:  
I am absolutely imperfect and beautiful, and I am going down on  
You in a wishing well,  
Because I Haven't yet given up on you:  
My whole life is a musical, and I cherish on swings in the midnight,  
Or in crepuscule,  
And I don't even care that I don't even know the law:  
Or that all that I can see you in is in black and white,  
Or that you are only my sick muse  
And turned down the part of Frankenstein, and this is just  
A train ride of a little girl in a cherished hurricane;  
Or that I cannot drive a truck right now, Sharon, or that I haven't  
Chased a girl on into Mexico, as if I weren't a butterfly  
Impossibly changing, or drinking your spirits,  
Because you are my unicorn: Sharon: you are my America,  
And I cannot help but to keep waking up for you and doing what  
I do for you,  
Sharing my spirits with the toothless hobos underneath the overpass:  
And I have new dreams that aren't even right,  
Because I have stolen new bicycles underneath the censers of  
Mars and you aren't even mine;  
And again, tonight, tonight: you aren't even mine, tonight,  
But to the throat of a funny werewolf you go, like a rose that has no  
Home but to the strange placed you give, placed in the theaters  
Of your hungry snows.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Husband's Everydays

Cracking farts who applaud Australia,  
But I will never be the star of that seafaring  
Movie:  
If I even will be, O', I will have my bit part:  
I will think of immaculate teachers,  
The cars they drive,  
And their apple-rind farts, given to them like  
Jazz by their most beautiful pets,  
But when I's think of you it make's me wets,  
Like wet paints drying on a wall  
Nearer the houses nearer the sea, the old movie  
Theatres,  
The hills of Spain,  
And red wagons moving softly down hills,  
And coffins filled with little girls  
In curls,  
The locomotion's of haunted planes,  
And little girls again in red wagons going down  
Hills to their sweet professions  
Like gifts of holidays,  
And to you again, and it makes me wish to say  
Your name,  
Like the secret senses tucked away in the deaf  
Dumb brain that kicks up its heels  
And lights out after the world is buried,  
As you think of me while you make love to all of  
Your husband's everydays.

Robert Rorabeck



# Your Intangible Amusements

Lions underneath the airplanes  
And other toys-  
The knights started out but got distracted,  
Such as this:  
And on, and on- and through the trees  
A forest:  
I loved you, it was plane,  
But I couldn't force you to do the same:  
Up in the apertures  
Of girls with golden hair-  
I saw my muse, but she couldn't care:  
So my words are bitter  
As if on a wild persimmon tree-  
You could see me there  
If I hadn't fallen into a wishing well  
And sprained my knee:  
Now I love you- now I don't-  
I could forget you, but I won't-  
As the daylight proceeds beneath the cathedral  
Of airplanes, the spectators looking down:  
But they will forget your intangible  
Amusements before  
They touch down.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Little Girl

If this is a game in cricks and solitude,  
I have no bats to swing: the birds have no cages in which  
To sing,  
And they go out and make a naked Christmas underneath the  
Naked wings of holiday's airplanes:  
And I love you,  
Alma: Oh, how I love you- even while my words dry up in the  
Hidden pools of venal mermaids:  
Even under the shade cloths of the Mercado which bares your name:  
That you have kissed me and we have tugged our  
Bodies through the rolling air-conditions,  
That I have strutted like a rooster around the water cooler rustling my  
Comb and blushing and calling out the hours clearly:  
How much time I have left to live, and for the pilgrims of our  
Legacy to rustle their heads up from the hungry walls of our ancestral  
Adobes,  
And to march out again across the highways, over the orange groves  
And the sugar canes,  
Swinging their censers and making a smoky dragon while the airplanes  
Leap and pinwheels like little girls have birthdays:  
Just the same as you held your little girl named  
Heidi today and for a little while she turned and smiled to me.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Long List Of Pretty Things

Homeless in the low hanging clouds,  
Baseball players without any clothes; and I don't  
Know where this is going,  
Except to the inevitable whore house;  
And you are in Colorado and this is my banjo  
Hoping to echo all the way up to your basin,  
And be clear enough for you to distinguish me from the  
Other tourisms;  
But enough for tonight, and enough for so long;  
I can't really remember you, and this ain't our song:  
This is just the memory of the exact moment of when I  
Decided to leap out of school:  
I leapt straight out of the window, sure that you were watching  
Me, and hoping that you thought I was cool:  
While the sun cheered and then the moon beamed, and I  
Swept on the swings on into crepuscule, trying so hard not  
To believe in another single one of your long list of pretty things.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Mothering Shoulders

I have a book of all of your shoulders—  
And you do not remember who I am—But  
Won't the dolphins surrender to the sun—  
Evaporations of the merry-go-round of  
Your mothering shoulders—  
Until all of the day is cradled in the night of  
Those mountains,  
And the magnificent spins—a world of spiders in  
Their equinox—and other things I do not  
Wish to comprehend—I can hear a muse putting  
Her fingers in the kiln to  
Retrieve her children—they are already something  
I haven't knocked—  
And the sun blooms in its kaleidoscope of knuckles,  
Another easy if insouciant wish—  
They day is a pinwheel of airplanes and arrowheads—  
Another soldier goes dying in the amusing waves  
Of her hungering dish-

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Mother's Rabbits

And I said I loved you, but I almost  
Failed math:  
You didn't even finish school outside of Mexico:  
Your house is your jewelry and it goes well,  
Smoothing like smooth stones skipped on the soft  
Brown elbows of your likely agitated body;  
And if we made love,  
I wasn't there: I was on another shore, battling with  
My fraternity of heroes:  
I just spied you for awhile, and we made love that way,  
Through our small change of wishes:  
And your children grew up and learned all that you  
Had to teach them- Don't you ever think of what they  
Will learn  
In the green elbows of your house where all of your  
Mother's rabbits have all but disappeared.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Never Mind

I try to line up words for you  
Glass bottles filling with sunlight  
On the fence, rows of speckled birds  
Who I have taught to sing your name,

You write me on my birthday,  
A couple distant words the snake into my heart,  
And once or twice you glance across the crackling fields  
Down to where I have caught afire and dancing—

You slant you head as if trying to figure something  
Out, and your blue hair falls like waves upon  
Your neck's opalescent trunk,  
But too soon men in red trucks drive around your porch,  
Hollering your name like sledges nailing train trestles.

Distracted by the tautness in their young smiles,  
You go away with them too soon as not to see  
The tremendous blaze I have ignited myself,  
And all of a sudden I am consumed and lost  
In the cluttered and rusting backyards of your never mind.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Nude Knees

I am as mute as the cathedral, and I  
Am dreaming  
And all of this is the reason that the snow falls  
Across the television:  
I don't suppose it is anything entirely beautiful  
But then it was just the weather  
Across the television in her high heels  
And then I guess I knew what it was you  
Were talking about through the echoes  
Or through the trees while there was still  
A reason and it remained echoing- echoing  
Across the forgotten chassis-  
While the sweet- sweet pornographies sang  
Of the open estuaries of your nude  
Elbows- or, or they sang as well of your  
Open estuaries of your nude- or  
Your nude knees.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Pretty Things

The power of the stars has Jesus' name on them,  
And now, my find young sisters, Sharon is melting the snow,  
And my Alma cant describe for herself what to  
Do:  
Oh, If I was more beautiful and more Mexican:  
If I had come all the way from Guerrero on the same bus  
That she knew,  
Pregnant, and breathed from her mother and father:  
Oh what would I know:  
I only know graveyards and the silvery bellies of fish,  
The boats of warriors overturned,  
And snowflakes in the amusements of the times that were lost  
And can never be reclaimed:  
The cats are all pregnant and as fast as speed boats,  
And in the morning my forehead will brush through all the  
Fiery motes  
And you will just have to forgive of all of this,  
While I drink my wine and kill my dragons and defeat my own  
Mobile flames:  
I will go down to sleep tomorrow believing that I am still the same  
One who deserves the blame,  
While you spread your wings and save your cities  
And sing your pretty things.

Robert Rorabeck



# Your Real Boy

Would that you called- but you have never  
Spoken to me:  
Never seen my eyes. Senseless like the lying  
Wind,  
You roll up your windows and sing down your  
Pretty highway which is lighted  
So brightly that butterflies and f-ed up unicorns  
Play by the concrete atolls even by  
Midnight;  
And how many dreams have you killed,  
That you didn't even care- It's just that you like  
Football,  
And bouncers- and your ups with more up:  
I have lock jaw from singing too loudly of this rust  
I can't molt,  
Or confessing my infections to ghosts and cheerleaders  
In junked railroad cars in the burned hills  
Of California; and now I am guessing that you  
Can't read- You just blow your nails;  
And you have nothing to crawl into- you've never  
Wanted for shelter other than in the busty anchored arms,  
That blue ink you lick with your tongue  
A creature of pools and highfalutin causeways;  
Infected with attractive ploys sewn together under your  
Sinister trumpeted flag,  
Reanimated with the kiss of an acetylene torch- you tick off  
Like every phosphorous angel too heavy for the abodes  
Of heaven,  
Coming crashing down on horseback trips to drink with  
Modern cowboys in rushing jungles of the Grand Canyon;  
And I have no friends who are not typed out between  
The pages of a deep winter chrysalis where we pray for  
Your ice-crystal lips to open us into a fantastical pulp reality;  
But I am yet in disbelief that you can make me  
Your real boy,  
Even though I already know how to fly.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Roman Sky

Gradually receding sounds go to forage  
Further away underneath the coolly banyons  
Where buses sleep in beds  
Of sweet pornography,  
Where lizards mate with colorful birds in the  
Joints of trees which spread  
Like fans who reach out to caress airplanes,  
And the sky is so rich it is like drinking wine:  
And the boys come and lay out and dine,  
While the serpents move,  
Whispering the special's menu,  
And I am here wrapped in the filigree from  
Falling off a cliff bereaving like a great  
Pagan in its tinsel:  
And we all lay out and crack open books,  
And smoke and drink and steal our looks  
Through the sky  
And your metal buses with arms stretched out,  
For we know that there you are leaping  
And riding in your chariots of superimposed  
Gods,  
And we share every breath with eyes glued to the  
Blue,  
Because you are our only god,  
Titted pie, and we would lie there for always for  
Just one glance down from you;  
We would do your laundry until we died,  
Just to get one whiff of you like an orb of  
Spanish citrus flung like a perfumed baseball through  
Your Roman sky.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Sincerely Beautiful Soul

There are things that I shouldn't say,  
That you shouldn't hear,  
But I want to anyways, while the Ferris Wheels are  
Caesuraing perpetually into the sky,  
Like soldiers saluting the president, but secretly keeping  
Bright ideas,  
While everything around them fails and goes away, but  
Only for a little while,  
As the tide swallows itself and all the lost boys and their  
Kites;  
And now you are in one of those moods, Alma, and you've  
Forgotten your English,  
And all the mayhem I've made for you, skipping school in  
My own tongue,  
But it has been a fairytale that you have loved me,  
And have stolen from me everything that I left cooling out  
On the windowsill:  
It has been unreal, the way the airplanes make extended crosses  
In the sky,  
Like visions I don't really believe in, as your eyes will cut  
Across me tomorrow,  
In the traffic or in the rain, while all of the virgins sleep in  
Their grottos,  
And I know for certain that the only way that you have love  
Him is through the avenues of your daughter,  
But even that illusion will eviscerate as she learns to grow up  
And walk right out of the transoms of your sincerely  
Beautiful soul.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Sisters' Fair Promenade

Ghosts of this avenue's heredity don't have  
To be afraid-  
They are never getting ingrown toenails again,  
Or carrying unnecessary books.  
Doors mean flat out nothing.  
They hang from meat hooks,  
While Pedro ejaculates to Mexico and doesn't  
Have to displace her into the sea.  
My friends drowned entering her salt-lick  
Carnival,  
And gave her all the aphrodisiacs of her horns,  
And cried softly like swing-sets  
As she broke them down into their  
Better elements.  
She never cared, but came like a tiger in the dark  
With eyes of soft tulips  
Maybe like the ones I gave to Denise in second  
Grade,  
Or maybe the ones now trampled by the  
Elephants and the hurricanes,  
The beefy tourists you feed,  
As you never once think to look up with your eyes  
Past their usual arcade,  
To see the hoods of mountains,  
Your sisters' fair promenade.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Strange And Sad Numbers

I stayed here for you- Alma:  
And now that the baseball game is over, and my  
Parents have left:  
And I've been in the flowerbed of prostitutes, who  
Will sing my sad song:  
As your sister dies again into the beds of high school:  
Until the night really has to wake up and fly away  
Like a bridesmaid in the latening afternoon:  
Even while we realize that all of the fish we could catch  
Could never truly be described:  
Until we remember the fort, and how it hung and to itself,  
And the sad marionettes that made up the backyards of  
Its drainage:  
Until the green decorated from its cannons up on the terraplane  
Of its second story, Alma: and everything else that it never  
Had to do:  
Until all of it was a fire, gurgling, saying its first words to  
The fight that was already won, while you were taking your strange  
And sad numbers home to him kidnapped into the bags  
I'd already fulfilled for you.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Stranger Wedding Day

I came back from California  
And fell asleep at the movies:  
And the town was empty from  
All the girls I knew drifting away:  
And the lake was empty of its woman  
Out beside the swings and  
Graffiti,  
And crepuscule came and cut the throats  
Of all the needy toolboxes and  
Mailboxes and things with chests  
To be filled  
Like hollow trees;  
And then I could see the sword in the lake,  
All aglow,  
But there was no swan to dive down and  
Pick it up,  
No teacher with the words to make it grow:  
And it was as if I was without a car,  
Or especially a bicycle,  
And all the lions couldn't roar:  
They couldn't even purr,  
And the rain fell without sweet sound,  
Without the noise of the heavens raining down,  
And you were up in college,  
Putting your hands on strange new clay,  
Making love to strange boys I wonder if you  
Happen to recall on your stranger wedding day.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Thigh's Pinkish Highway

Follow me to the door if I will be going,  
And the greater lights are turning down across  
The drills and water tanks, the men unbound  
From them and drop their tools and queue  
Into bars and fight, but I have come to you; my  
Lips get off to salivating, prepared to speak,  
And your door is painted all white and daisies  
Are in red clay pots, but it is getting dark.  
I noticed the flag was up on the box, and a shadow  
Of a tall man through the window, but I will knock,  
Because I've driven so far down from the oil rigs  
And chainsaws, and if you should kiss my neck  
Beneath the scars, my eyes will light little fires on  
You and keep warm in those opal nooks, the  
Tongue purveys, another attempt at children to run  
Backdoors and down into the tangle ribbons in  
The trees; If I stay tomorrow, I will catch a fish  
From the brilliant stream and making you naked  
Lay it upon your inner thigh, and compare it,  
While your eyes swoon to the hidden nest of birds  
And patches of light and panting green; This is the  
Way you should swoon in between the whistle's  
Blow and the engine's steam, and the surveyors  
Diving rods: I should find your well, and test the  
Depths and in the morning yawn and feast, and  
Put my index finger on the text of your breast, or  
Point to it if out of reach. Then you should let me out  
With a lunchbox and a hardhat, and paint the door  
In the morning, and turn your back as I go to work,  
And bend your ass, and yawn the drooling way eggs  
Crack into the bowl, or if you allowed me, to  
Drip upon you the inky dough, my tongue the dividing  
Line of your thigh's pinkish highway.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Tiny Birthstone

Mailmen can never be found on my  
Alcoholic swings, because they are whistling and attending  
To your neighborhood of sweet knees;  
You dab your lips to boy sized dragons in the apiaries of your  
Boudoir;  
And you swing as light as a cypress bough doing magic,  
Making the tiniest of airplanes fall asleep in their  
Bird houses:  
And little people come out in tiny worlds,  
And scarecrows fall in love with perfect strangers:  
Each finger of the dark glove is its own galaxy which claps  
And grabs in a waltz in the carport where the ghost of my  
Mother still survives:  
And the dogs come out like gentlemen still learning to speak  
Under the meaning of your eyes;  
And the toads hold court with rebar and thoughtless places  
That seem to recall the meager brightness of the colors you have  
Dreamed in,  
As you come just as wonderless over the busted lips of  
Conquistadors now as good as cenotaphs; and yet if you know the  
Signs then the world speaks of all its history of adoring murders,  
As the guilty fall before you; as I would and use all that  
I have learned today in the wayward fruiteria to pleasure you,  
To give you a divine buffet in the centerfield of your  
Red diamond,  
Pitching, pitching, and saying tiny prayers into a paper bag full  
Of jewelry,  
Your tiny birthstone you keep hidden in your unawares.

Robert Rorabeck



# Your Tongue

Cadaver that has to listen to the dogs breathe  
Above it—  
Who, broken hearted, howl to the moon,  
Or to the floating ships  
That glide against the half-hearted balloons—  
While my mother and father sleep  
Together in their monogamous  
Ballrooms—  
But what words I have left only rhyme with  
Their echoes—  
The daylight is no longer young—  
All of the bicycles are stolen—  
The cat has got your tongue—  
With your eyes so blue and petrified—  
Against the billboards over  
The cities that only sing to themselves—  
The world is far and the world is wide  
While the virgins cannot even count on themselves.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Utterly Beautiful Eyes

I tip my glass back and have my fill,  
And the entire world turns like a boat  
Of bootlegged rum,  
And I dip in my glass  
And have my fill without even once  
Having to admit myself to the burnishing  
Cathedral of your utterly beautiful eyes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Your Very First Boyfriends

In their gardens was this pledge,  
That they were having sex and beating chords;  
Just as the pitcher on his mound  
Was wound up to throw,  
And the jackrabbit had buried his long ankles all deep  
Into snow;  
And wound down, like an accordion in drag:  
And the sky fell over and got a good view of her scars  
With the exploded cars in their canyons,  
And the venison in its gunny sacks: the mountains looked  
Like sad teenagers, but I  
Take that back; and it was okay to report that this  
Didn't really happen to me:  
I was just a raconteur's heart beating its bicycles into the  
Sea,  
While all of the flashy broads had already swam away,  
Folded into the paper airplanes,  
Or tossed unceremoniously into the golden hay:  
As all of the latch key children were looking up and drown into  
Their out of state graves,  
As all of their colleges were burning up to cinders,  
Just as your very first boyfriends were just learning how to shave.

Robert Rorabeck

# Yuppie's Prayer

Dear God,  
Do yourself a favor,  
And get a haircut.

Robert Rorabeck

# Zeno

Everything that is born  
Moves from the earth,  
Crowds for the sun,  
Sings on the swings.  
Has a favorite color  
And a way of getting around:  
Legs, flagella, or roller skates.  
Wants your lips on  
Their lips,  
Is tortured by the motivations  
And the expanding beauty,  
Writes notes to you  
In class,  
Whispers to the sea,  
When looking up,  
Is mystified by the aeroplanes,  
Goes on fieldtrips  
Works in factories  
Lives in trailer parks,  
Can't remember the last time  
They touched,  
Or came across eyes that  
Said they too wanted to touch.  
Made a movie  
And the whole time in it  
You were walking away,  
Went over the bridge three times,  
But each time a different color  
And a new sound,  
Though you never changed,  
The country changed,  
Birds migrated,  
Neighbors moved,  
Relatives passed away:  
Committed a crime  
Went to prison,  
Then outside again with gray hair  
And a new name,  
Saw you there shimmering on

The street,  
Any number of  
A manner of things:  
But still the same,  
A girl I knew who went  
Jogging by my red car so long ago,  
Then there you are  
Making love  
I never knew,  
In the rain coming again,  
Or are you just passing through,  
Even so it is the same,  
Every word belonging to  
This place:  
Your eyes  
Your lips  
Your name,  
This thing I see,  
You know,  
Nothing changes.

Robert Rorabeck

# Zigheil, Jungfrau

The heater is on and it smells like  
Roasted peanuts,  
But the theatre is quiet and all the  
Young gentlemen gone:  
The four-ring tent is still up, though,  
And so I shall continue rehearsing my act.  
In fact, Arthur Rimbaud is deep in his  
Weepy one-legged grave;  
And you can't barely hear his farts,  
He's been so well plundered by lesser poets;  
But there's still time left for one  
More poem after midnight,  
If only because I've been reading Mark Twain's  
Concerning the Jews,  
While this coach has returned to a pumpkin;  
And though it isn't likely that I should use  
Any of it directly for my dissertation,  
It is the truth that I once did love her,  
She who is so easily related to Satan, and kept  
Her in my bed while the clock was still  
Concerning under the hour of the bicycle thieves;  
And we had a mezuzah taped on the door,  
And she cooked potato latkes-  
When she farted it sounded like Dumbo trumpeting;  
And I guess that's why she finally left me,  
Because I was gone exploring my Rocky Mountains,  
Such a goy, my farts like goldfish in a tiny bowl  
The cat plays with, so demure;  
And this is what I've meant to say, that she's gone  
And married a local lawyer of her same proclivities:  
She's gone and shut the door and hyphened her last name,  
And continued on with her tefillin and civilities:  
Nothing more than expected-  
Those used-car days,  
And I'm sure that I could grit my teeth and explore the  
Long list of anti-Semitic possibilities, but what for?  
Instead, I should stand tall in my revelry because  
I am more of a Jew than she ever will be;  
She's just lightly-frosted secular, leasing her Lexus

And BMW's- Calling her man in to eat at Friday's,  
While I'm published,  
Will soon be studying for a Ph.D.-  
Of this I'm sure,  
I once loved her- her entire race.  
Now bow down to me, because though a  
Goy, I'm much more the Jew than she  
Ever will be,  
Sure.

Robert Rorabeck



# Zing-Zang, Charlemagne

This just in today:

Two match-stick suicides on the back of a  
Wild brome pony:

Death and Co. &, she wrote:

a mother and son team,

Boys, that's the real kicker-

With nowhere else to go, the headlines proclaim,

There could only be one conclusion.

Yes, that she was beautiful, mightily so,

Even with that black spot in the upper plateau

Of her left cheek and her smoke-dried poesy

Of a husband.

She didn't get bucked, not her,

But stuck her head in the oven. Zing-zang,

Charlemagne- Her eyes, why even closed,

While even preached upon and laid around with

That bright polished wood of her snow-white coffin

They sang like real live blue jays,

They sang to us all who were there and jotting it down:

Swinging through the bell-jars of life's aberration.

Nothing so sweet can last so long;

Why, its just as contagious as poison,

And I want you to write that down.

Like Siamese twins as blue as virgins

Flirting with all of the tweed jacket bull-pen.

Hee-haw and Scooby-doo, and her son too,

Just yesterday, in fact- That big boy up in Alaska

Studying trout, or whatever he was up to:

Not as big as a woopy-doo as the mother,

But a big boy- forty-two, I've been led to understand,

His hands clasped and as sweet as kittens.

Nothing surpasses the real corruption of female beauty, though,

Especially ones with her talented legs and nearly

Infallible acumen: but it was a real shame.

They say it runs in the family, and the more they get to

Know about suicidal brains, the less they tend to go out

When it rains. I.E., he hung himself from the rafters,

Just high enough so the grizzlies couldn't get after him

Except for a trickle of primordial svelte

Like expensive fur across the souls of his effortless feet.  
So that's the flawed chapter, boys, that's how it  
Ends, almost floating: Already yesterday's headlines,  
Except for the sweet lines her corpse still sings in all  
Types of continuing weathers,  
Like sweet lullabies, boys from the lips of  
Dead lilies- She still sings to her children,  
As she sings to all men, the uneasy penumbra twittering  
Alongside the dishes of her darkened kitchen,  
Singing to us who are all of her boys, us grown men:  
Who must come to her when she calls us now,  
The wife and mother who calls us down in swift conclusions,  
To contribute to that knowledge which flows so wonderfully  
Chock full of mothen secrets,  
So deep that there is no clear bottom; but down there still  
The typing of the unjust machines: the weeping of  
That sweet mother and all her fine and effortless children.

Robert Rorabeck

## Zoetrope Around The Moon

I'll put another disguise upon your hour—I press another  
Glass to my lips, and then I'll go to sleep:  
I'll get up again, mummified—brilliant—like the all of  
The phosphorous lined around all of the  
Cadavers down the banks of the canal where we used to  
Sell Christmas trees:  
It was the happiest time, if you cannot remember:  
I was in love with you—and you were married—  
The paper boats sailed out to the brink of the stars—  
The hummingbirds settle upon the vanishing archipelagos  
And we all sang happy birthdays to the black holes that  
Made a zoetrope around the moon.

Robert Rorabeck

# Zoetrope For The Marionettes

In daylight echoes  
New words for old loves,  
Strangely finally deciding to  
Be together  
While my wife sleeps—  
And I drink rum—  
And the airplanes dream of  
The rough necks of baseball  
Diamonds underneath them—  
Sweltering,  
Covered with the innings of  
Their games—  
And I notice you, as you  
Watching them—  
Even after all of the professors  
Have evaporated or  
Metamorphosed from the naptimes  
Of our once university—  
And the world spins like  
A zoetrope for the marionettes  
Who are still trying to close  
Their wooden eyes just so  
They can try and dream of  
Becoming real boys.

Robert Rorabeck

# Zoetrope To Your Shadow

Like the prettiest rooms of the closets,  
Everybody who loves Disney World keeps saying your  
Name—  
And the shore in its endless lovers perpetuates  
Our illusions:  
There you are, a mermaid of a water coloring  
I lost somewhere amidst the backyards of  
High school  
As you became more and more aware of the  
Special places of your desire—like beautiful children  
In the daydream of a church's bathroom—  
Aunts and nephews bathing together beneath the  
Stained glass Pietas and Eucharist's.  
I want you to attend my eyes as I steal away your bicycles,  
As I hijacks your airplanes—but you have already  
Gone down into the holes of your Earths,  
You are already warm and dry—  
Goldilocks of a children's story—  
When you awaken after the thundershower,  
Will you eat all of the dandelions underneath the sky—  
Or will you remain for a moment with your ruby soul  
As nude as the junked cars underneath the moon—  
Will you look at me hiking up the hill towards the fire tower  
That looks down over all of the properties  
Lying like pilgrims beneath you—  
And will you recognize that I remain a zoetrope to your  
Shadow, dancing like something that isn't real  
Through the ashes of the fire that has long since burned away.

Robert Rorabeck

# Zoetropes

You all get together and make love, and this is what  
You all have been doing for so long that you all  
Have become accustomed to the song:  
Now the ponies ride: The kites glide, and the kittens are oh so  
Mewing beside the fire-lit side of the gold fish who are oh so  
A glowing;  
And I have this Alma in my side, like a feathered arrow-tipped bride,  
And this is what I have been doing for so long,  
So that this is my age old proverbial song; That I am so alone,  
That I am now sunken into the cottage cheese pornographic folklore  
Underneath the far away bastions that the airplanes are sewing;  
That it doesn't feel right, that your bodying is mowing my bones through  
The night,  
That my body should know better: That my body is cast away:  
My body is just a cast in the carriage, while your body is so fully lit  
And laughing with its family that it should be in Christmas,  
While they come again the strange tattoos, the entire crews,  
Laughing and prancing their zoetropes across the epidermis of the  
Bays.

Robert Rorabeck

# Zoetropes Closing Shop

As the mountain who fevers me goes down  
Singing nocturnes,  
And the zoetropes close up their winking shops,  
My wife sleeps beside me  
Not in a forest but in a house—  
In her belly another house for this developing  
Thing,  
Made of mine and hers, rainbows and katydids—  
All of the muses put away beneath  
Their blistering waterfalls—  
All the metamorphoses returned home—  
No more borrowing of others' things—  
This is the land that we've made  
Where the airplanes sleep amidst the clouds  
Waiting for their pilots to come home.

Robert Rorabeck