Lawrence Beck()

My advice to anyone reading one of my poems: read it so quickly as you can the first time through. Since I write in a rush, my melody will become most evident if you read in a rush.

I have a web site, , which contains more of my recent poems than the 50 I leave up here. I refresh this site every other month.

Alas, I must add this: if you write to me asking me to read your poems, I may, but I will not comment on them. I am very sick of numbers hogs who troll through a day's list of contributing poets, and ask each one to read his or her poem. If you write well, someone may notice and comment. If you browbeat people into reading your poetry, the comments you receive are worth nothing.
"Vamos A Bailar, Abuelo"

The fine merengue band has worked up
To a fevered pitch. I’m watching Marisela
does so as if she's possessed,
So beautiful, beyond my reach. I sit behind
The dance floor's little wall, and drink
My , untouched, sweats
On the 'll be back for it in time..
She'll laugh and say I ought to join her,
But she knows that I will not, while I
Have not the slightest idea why she
Brought me here.

Lawrence Beck
A Peculiar Process Which Crops Up From Time To Time

There is comfort in these fantasies, I know,
And I don't say a word when people speak
Of unseen spirits, their God, Who, alone,
Is ageless, somehow conjuring what is
(Which can't be ageless)out of nothing,
When the simpler course would be to say
That that which is always has been, and their
Creator, unperceived, is not, and these souls,
Which they hope to have persist after
Their bodies die, and, better still, ascend
Into a heaven somewhere out of sight,
Are real."Okay, "I say."Assure yourselves,
But understand that everything that I have seen
Suggests that what is neither comes nor goes,
And we are little eddies without meaning, without
Permanence, components of a middling planet
In a middling galaxy, and, in due time, we'll disappear,
As countless others like us, too,
Had harbored fantasies."
A Shitty Everyman

It's , here I am again, misfortune's
Latest refugee, not one who's fleeing killers,
Corporations, armed enforcers of a status quo
Which couldn't find a place for me.I am,
Instead, the wretch you know I've always been,
The one who could have found a job,
And hung on, as so many do, inside his
Cubicle, just idly strolling through the Internet,
A purchaser of useless things, a devotee
Of unexamined dogmas, someone at the far
End of the conference table who agrees
With almost everything, but can't articulate
What he believes, a shitty Everyman, but I
Became a refugee because you are the Promised
slippery hands have led me
To let go of , I bow to you
And beg.I need a meal, but more than that,
I wish that you'd provide me with a reason
To keep living, to keep coming back to you.

Lawrence Beck
Struggling to stay upright against a raw
November wind, and drunk, and old,
And ever more convinced that art's
A stupid calling, certain now that all
Of my life's flesh has been gnawed off
And chewed so long it hasn't any flavor,
I move toward my pauper's flat,
An aesthete wanting columns, arches,
In a wasteland filled with cubes,
Intent on nothing more than one last
Bourbon in my ghastly kitchen before
I head off to bed, I spy two kids, a precious
Couple, courting, it would seem (their eyes
Are locked, they have such vacant smiles).
She is sitting on a wall, while he moves
Back and forth below. I cannot hear what
They are saying, shouldn't, and don't, want
To know. I fish within my pocket for
My few remaining coins of hope to toss
To them, to urge them lovers!
Search for columns, ,
And grip each prepared
To fight the wind.

Lawrence Beck
Again

The tail lights on the highway seem to mock me.
I have failed should have known.
She knows me well, and knew from the beginning
That I dreamed, but couldn't
Wasn't any reason to believe that things
Would change this time, and they have not,
And I'm 'll make her way home
Fairly soon, and, when she does, she'll send
Me packing.I guess that's what I deserve.
I dreamt, but that is all I did.I failed.
I ought to go.

Lawrence Beck
Autumn On A Good Day

This tragic season has its pleasures, dear.
The vista widens without river
Shows its face only-sometimes
Half-warm sun streams through the windows,
Sending me to sleep which brings the strangest
I awaken, all is quiet until
I unleash The Beast, and hurtle along
Country roads; 110,130, madness!
Then I return home to make a dinner for us,
And a fire for when we are done, and trying
To ward off the chill this tragic season brings.

Lawrence Beck
Beneath The Lion's Head

It smells the same, the truck exhaust, the woks,
The burning wind picks up
The sidewalks' trash. A thousand voices
Merge into a roar among the market stalls
As bent old men and women shuffle home
With dinner in their sun sinks lower.
One by one, each window in each high rise
Glows; a TV's on, a kitchen light...

...But, when it's dark, the smell is different.
Black-clad children crowd the streets.
The stalls are chanting starts,
And, in the distance, men in armor march
Together, swinging clubs and shooting
Cans of would be the smell!
The kids smash windows, spray paint walls.
A few throw bottles filled with gasoline.
The men in armor charge and swing at heads,
And tackle those they can, and, when
The evening's done, a dozen kids go off
To jail, a dozen bent old men and women
Curse the hoodlums wrapped in armor.

Nobody knows quite what to kids
See life as it was ending, all they cherished
Swept men in armor see rebellion.
Such men tend to favor er balks.
The streets are strewn with broken banners,
Teargas stalls will open in
The morning, but the smell is not the same,
And what was can't be hing
Must give, they all agree, but what?
No one can say.

Lawrence Beck
Comfort Is Overrated

How romantic are you, dear?
I ask because you say you're
, I am out of bread
And jam, and almost everything,
But no grandeur comes with eating.
One turns fat, gets sluggish, sleeps.
Think how much greater it would be
To be discovered starved to death,
A poem in your hands.

Lawrence Beck
Considering Depression

Somewhere, within me, in a place I've never found,
Perhaps some shrinking ember of me glows,
And in its warmth, though I am unaware, the person
I once was persists, too weak to reassert himself,
And there, in it, the things I have abandoned
Lay in ordered rows, the person I once was
Believing that the opaque curtain which has
Fallen on my stage may rise, and that one on it
May retrieve those long-lost things, and will
Look upward toward the skylights to absorb
A brilliant sun, a sign to this one, dead, without,
That darkness needn't swallow everything,
That, somewhere, someplace I can't find,
My lucent alter ego still survives.

Lawrence Beck
Dignitary

All this preparation, all these meetings, all this
Flying, trapped in limousines and hotel rooms,
I've gotten very tired of here, we're
In Vienna for the third time in the last two years.
As I recall, it's quite a town, with crowded squares
And lovely buildings. I'll be captive, kept from
Them. I've never even seen the Danube.
When we're done, we'll be whisked through
The city's streets to fly back home. I'd rather
Grab my suitcase, take the back stairs out
And run away to... wander, is all.
I don't suppose I will.

Lawrence Beck
Down At The Wagon Wheel

Perhaps it's just the bourbon, but I swear
I'll fall completely for her if she says that I
Should weeks alone, the mournful
Sound of only keys which clatter as I scorn
The rubes and name my sorrows, drunk
At home at night, have left me ill-prepared
To steel myself against the flights of fancy
Her unbuttoned shirt and raptor's gaze
("Divorced, you say? Who would have
Guessed?") elicit. I'm a broken man,
And, if she sees something in me, if she
Can kill the loneliness, at least until
Some other guy who sports a bigger
Cowboy hat and has a newer pickup
Truck, can lever her away from me,
I'll sway serenely, falsely thinking I've
Ascended into heaven, when it's quite
Conceivable that I'm approaching hell.

Lawrence Beck
Downwind From The Feed Lot

It stinks out here imes, the odor
Of the feed lot in the valley carries this way.
All the world is cow manure, and the air has gotten
Cold.I grab some wood to make a fire,
Pausing, as I always do this time of year, to place
Myself within these grim surroundings:leafless
Trees, and distant cars, and stars of little
Consequence which feebly light the frozen sky.
No one is one is coming.I will
Make a fire, do some drinking, write a poem,
Go to er night will pass, and, in
The morning, I'll return to work, and, should
Somebody there, in passing, ask me to assess
My life, I'll smile bravely, as I'm wont to do,
And tell them that it stinks.

Lawrence Beck
Drought

We stood on a rock in the middle of what
I remembered was a raging 'd
Been a was barely a stream.
Metaphors edifice shudders.
After you'd come, like a figure from out of
A fairy tale, to the bubbling pool, the picture
Of loveliness, Disneylike, almost, you didn't
Show up at the one on the roof, and I swam
By myself, as I sat by myself for the greater
Part of your family's 's said
To ference can, too. I could
Send you a text, and you'd send a response,
But the warmth of the words I would write
Would be greater than those you would peck
Out to would be hors
Build. I'm the 're barely a stream.

Lawrence Beck
Erika

She's somewhere in me, hidden, like a virus.
Suddenly, she'll did last night.
She showed up on a beach, in flowing
Turquoise ng almost like
A peacock, she drew herself next to me.
I put my arm around felt thin.
She led me down the beach toward a place
Where I had said I'd hoped to find her,
But I hadn''d returned to be with me,
And I was happy, but she stopped abruptly
At a border line, stepped backward, and I
Tried to warn her not trip upon her clothes.
She looked at me, secure, within me,
Smiled.I awoke.

Lawrence Beck
Everyone Sees Through You, Uncle Sam

He cannot 's just as well for you,
As he holds a child who's starving, as he
Starves himself amid the rubble of his home.
His wife is  jets come south,
Their pilots pampered princelings from
The oil-slickened monarchy which you
Have chosen to death, his death,
The child's death, are meaningless.
It's hydrocarbons that command your loyalty.
No amount of human blood can clean your
Fingers, brace of suited
Toadies, smiling, agitates for "human rights."
Another, just across the border, helps
To load the bombs.

Lawrence Beck
Facing The Facts

This back, a misused, wretched thing, holdover
From the days when my sort got around on hands
And feet, and spent our idle hours in trees, protests
The use to which I put it. "Walk upright? What's
Wrong with you? You're asking too much of my
And feel the pain subside,
And recognize yourself at 're neither
Homo nor  are just an ape."

Lawrence Beck
For Now, I Gaze Passively

The sun's begun to drop with greater urgency.
The far side of the valley grows obscure
In horizontal highway's clogged
With cars of hobby farmers headed home
From work and ersatz toughs on motorbikes.
A few birds bolt from tree to tree, and that
Persistent autumn wind blows through
The branches still with should
I place myself tonight, among them?But to
What degree?I do not farm.I don't affect
The studs and kerchiefs of the masquerading
Thugs.I'm not a bird, a tree or leaf.I'm
Just a creature staring out at things that he
Sees every day, a coyote or a prairie dog
Observing, staying time,
My appetites will flare, and, when they do,
My view of this tableau may lead me
To look out upon it with a sense of urgency.

Lawrence Beck
How Would Passion Change Us?

Imagine somewhere dark as death,
A cloudless sky, a moonless night,
And us, unseen within this darkness,
Madly groping, sliding, writhing,
Liberated from the eyes and judgments
Of our pilgrim we have
Become less than human? Would we,
Rather, have obtained a taste
Of the divine?

Lawrence Beck
Hubris

Moving sideways, crab-like, at cross purposes,
We cross each other’s path, but sidestep
, the doughty engineer,
Would tame the land around us, make it
Orderly and ordinary with your rows
Of cliched flowers, herbs and fruits
And vegetables, while I would have
The wilderness, the soul of what
Surrounds us, keep its place close
To our weedy ction, order,
Both have worth, I guess, but chaos
Calls the ce 's not all
That bad, whereas your precious cultivars,
For want of rain or sun or something,
Die, so you must start fight
With nature, and she might be best
If you move sideways, and don't cross
Her path.

Lawrence Beck
In Honor Of This Year's Winners Of The Nobel Prize In Physics

These instruments which you've developed
Let you look into such far-flung recesses
Of outer see the light of stars
Which may not even be there anymore.
You find the holes of no
Witness so much, but, alas, your little
Mind can't blather
On about beginnings, bangs, because
Your primate brain insists that things
Must start and end, but how could
Something come from nothing? What
Was here before your bang, back in
The endlessly receding time you
Cannot understand?

Lawrence Beck
In Your Absence

I'm going through the motions, J.
I couldn't write a decent love song
Now if I was facing 're
Too far off and rarely speak, and I,
Who've loved you pitifully, I, who
You at least once loved in equal
Measure, cool, a mess of dying embers
Under ash. I do see women sometimes,
Lovely, 've no use
For me, and, really, I've no use for
empty vessel, I can smile.
I can even say hello, but I'm just
Going through the motions
In your absence, J.

Lawrence Beck
They have pulled him from the water.
They've been asking whether he fell in
Or does it matter now?
He's brother John is dead.
A little gentle poking will reveal that he
Had been depressed since back when
We were little kids. A curtain sort of
Covered parents may have
Put it on of them were
Grim, and they demanded so much
From their firstborn son, their wounded
Champion, and, when he couldn't cope,
They didn't put their arms around him.
They made snide criticized,
And slowly John began to crumble.
In my oldest memories, I see him laughing,
Leading me along the trails beneath
The trees. I see him, like a little brother's
Hero, doing such great
Swung on ropes above the chasm,
Boldly strolled into the drug store,
And back out with stolen goodies,
Which he'd always share with me,
But time and sorrow ate at him,
And, recently, the curtain seemed
To shut the light out more completely.
I could see him drawing may
Have slipped. I doubt he did, but how
Much difference does it make?
He's dead, and, since he's better off.
There isn't any point to asking why.

Lawrence Beck
Junk Food For The Soul

I'm listening to videos of Arab rock.
Thomas is down at the synagogue,
er of us finds much
Worth in our world: the sprawl,
The houses, cut like cookies, strip malls
Populated by the hawkers one
Encounters in such dismal strips placed
Everywhere, and, anyway, where
Are we now, in Wellesley or in
Naperville, or Bellevue, or Santa Ana?
Who can say? Why would one care?
We're all the extras in some firm's
Commercial selling underwear.
We're all among the leering losers
Cheering on a fascist conman.
Life's too short, somebody said.
It seems too long to Thomas and me.
There's not any fiber in ons
Idolize the ed onto
Couches, they turn off their minds
To watch TV, as Thomas and I
Search for 's reciting
A kaddish. I smile. A woman
Ululates.

Lawrence Beck
Larva

I'm the poison 'd be wise
To let me pass. I'd rather not bring harm
To you, but, if you're drawn to my bright
Colors, spines, and cuddly way of moving,
I will 'll be hurt, and I'll continue
Undulating, one of those poor organisms
Who can't have companions, and are doomed
To wall themselves away. I will will myself
To be another, someone unfamiliar, who will
Rise and fly, no longer poison, but also
No longer of substantial interest to you.

Lawrence Beck
Loser

He was ranting, as his sort is wont
To do, three beers in in the bar in
Elk City, complaining the race
Is in danger, besieged by blacks
And Hispanics, and uppity women,
And sexual perverts of various types.
Assuming that I was an ally, he told
Me, "We must stand together and act,
Or we're finished." I looked at his dull
Eyes, his long, greasy hair, and thought
Of his brother, who'd overdosed
Recently, thought of his girlfriend,
Torqued up on speed, and said
To myself as I got up to leave,
"All of you are too far gone to save."

Lawrence Beck
In a dream, I watched the nation die. I was compelled to what I saw a comedy? A roaring mob of unwashed clods installed a moron in the White, a land which had been broke for decades became broke. Air grew thick with heat and toxic ren went to war to fight for nothing, really, as their parents' yards went es disappeared. A wall was built, which wasn't half so good at keeping out the ones who might have saved us as the moron's laws and justices (was that a joke? A rapist reached the highest court) conspired to keep our ruined country white, and old, and some point, the Chinese came, but we'd have fallen. Anyway, too proud, too dumb to see our weaknesses. A land of low-life merchants, jingoes, racists, losers of all stripes, could surf the wave of human progress only for a little, when the tide went out, they found us, stinking, on our boards. We proved to be the trash that all the others sifted from the sea, the casts of slapstick comedies, and I just had to laugh.

Lawrence Beck
Marcus Garvey

I'll share my rice with you. I'll share a cigarette
As we watch winds blow past the doorway,
Pushing clouds of dust in front of us. I'll tell you
What I once believed, and you can scoff.
There cannot be a single state of 're right,
But, while you celebrate, I 's wrong
With unity? Do you not think the ones up north,
The pinkie-ringers, limo-riders, see no point
To such a state? They come at us as
Always have, and, one by one, we fall, too many
Tongues, too many petty jealousies and hatreds.
In the end, we're longer shipped away,
They simply keep us working here and take the profits
We have made them home, and, with them, they invest
In craven autocrats who'll do their bidding for a bank
Account in Switzerland, a home beside the sea.
The ones on top, those far away, know how to bury
's how they can remain on top.
The rest of us are played for scared
Of losing what we have, we dare not reach for what
We want, and can't envision 're lucky
To have met someone so dull he'll share his rice.

Lawrence Beck
Men!

There's something wrong with them.
A late night meeting, out of town,
With Mr. Lodge, her preening boss,
Concludes with him on top of her.
She simply strides away.
She tells her goes crazy,
Says he's going to murder Lodge,
Though not to resurrect her honor.
He's concerned with ctably,
Her husband is wounded,
And he heals from that, but her complaint
Draws's sent to prison and he
Pays her an amount that's not disclosed,
And, in the end, with both her husband
And her boss now far from her, she doubts
That she will ever need, or even want, a man.

Lawrence Beck
Might Have Been

It's a 's all, one that grows
Indistinct in the unlovely light of a cold
Autumn  were with me, weren't
You?We marched through the city,
Conquerors, stopping for croissants
And coffee, assessing the merits of Frans
Hals and Degas... And laughing, the part
Of the dream I most cherish, the part
Most eroded away.

Lawrence Beck
Mine Is Not A Dog's Life

Every day is superficially fine, as the sun
Shines through a window, and the dog and I
Doze in its dog's dreams agitate
Her some, it seems. I, too, am sometimes
Jarred by "humph."
She goes outside. I go search
For things which we can eat, and, once
We've done so, she lays down and snores,
But I remain awake and out of sorts.
Beneath this superficial calm, a rising tide
Of anxiousness suggests that things aren't fine.

Lawrence Beck
November

November comes like Dad with 'd be
Wise to stay on bastard smiles
At first and 's he gets
Depressed, and drunk and mean, and kicks
Your fingers face gets
bag of candy's long since gone
As Dad drags you into the basement, climbs
The stairs, turns off the light, to leave you terrorized,
Immobile, in December's arms.

Lawrence Beck
On Being Human

It is not the best time to be part of this
So overrated ne ought
To make a disk to launch to interstellar
Space which shows how horrible we are.
The planet's been divided into shitty
Little entities, and all are ruled by shitty
Men, all egotists and crooks and killers.
What is worse is that these monsters
Are beloved in their , watch
The primates jump and slobber as their
Demagogues declare another band
Of primates 's
For the best, as this poor planet, burning
Up because the primates live by fire,
Kill what lives, even rage
Them to join the the humans
End themselves, and let planet then
Be healed, the galaxy beyond it saved
From the overrated species, of which,
Sadly, I am part.

Lawrence Beck
One Of The Usual Suspects

Cora, come and get me. I'm in jail again. It's not my know how, sometimes, Things will go. A window breaks. A child Cries. A former felon, simply walking by, Is carded, fingered, cuffed. I haven't been Convicted. I'm just stuck here. I don't Have the bail, but, should you come With money (and a pizza, if you wouldn't Mind; the food here still is almost poison), I will find a lawyer, and I won't be sent back To the prison. I don't have an alibi, but, Jesus, Isn't even an ex-con considered innocent Until it's proven that he's not? In movies, Maybe, less so here, but I'm sure I won' be Convicted, if the cops don't screw me. Cora, help tly, I was just Walking by.

Lawrence Beck
Prepare To Defend Yourself

Rupert Murdoch's zombies stalk the land.
You're right to be 're mindless
In their lust for blood from women dressed
In business suits, and black men who are not
In jail, or shining shoes in hotel
From shameless deviants or those who can't
Or won't speak English also can sustain
The on by Murdoch and his
Minions, all the zombies howl as one, in pain
Not so much from real wounds as from blows
To their the the door.
If we can't stop them, all is 'll become
Zombies, too.

Lawrence Beck
Prevaricator

Even to myself, I am the narrator who shades
The truth, the man whose word is good as shit,
The trafficker in rumors, suppositions, false
Conspiracies; whatever helps me make my way
Among the well-intentioned, better-natured, more
Accomplished people always looming over me.
To what end would I offer candor? To be scorned,
To be named knave? I couldn't get by being honest,
With myself, much less those others. I must,
Even now I do it, shade the ugly truth.

Lawrence Beck
Stillborn On The Conference Room Table

Oh, your poem's filled with so much detail,
Life so well observed: the glint of dewy
Cobwebs in the yard, lit by the morning sun,
The puff of sooty diesel smoke from tractor
Trailers setting out, the clink of gathered coffee
Cups upon the bus boy's serving tray, and all
The rest, some eighteen others at
The workshop smile and say you've done
A splendid job (and maybe not because
They hope that, when they read, you'll say
The same), but I'm not sure you have,
My th your piled images,
The poem doesn't 's dead,
The details little more than maggots
Writhing on a corpse.

Lawrence Beck
Such A Pretty Thought

What if I could be with you, thigh against thigh, on the ferry to Vancouver Island One day? What if we could get lost Among tall rhododendrons on our way To the orcas which pass by at times Close to Campbell River or some other Beach? What if you said you'd stay With me after we'd had our adventure, But, actually, ours didn't end, and I held You, and life was unspeakably lovely? Wouldn't that be something worth Contemplating? I'm fairly sure That it is.

Lawrence Beck
Thanksgiving At 66 In The Usa

Come after work. I will serve you a snack,
Some turkey and dressing and mashed potatoes
I've carried home from the feast at my daughter's.
I have some can finish this night
Of loneliness (mine), exploitation (yours),
Licking fingers and burrowing into bed
Until morning, when both of us go back
To we once were told would be
Golden years have proven to be only more
Of the same: labor and that
Thanksgiving is to us has been some
Leftovers we share as snacks.

Lawrence Beck
The Granddaughter

Without Ophelia's iron grip, I'd be inclined
To float kids are
Don't need me, nor does my wife.I've
Seen enough of here and other distant
Places.I've done what I sought to do.
I've no will or drive to take up tasks
To pad my resume, so I sit, silent and inert
Until Ophelia comes to I'm brought
To my hands and knees because we
Have to play.

Lawrence Beck
The shell game has to end somewhere. I guess
It's stopping here smiles as a jackal
Might, elbows on the table, hands together,
Fingers intertwined. "So, we have reached
Agreement, then?" I shake my head. I have
No country fails without his money,
Fails despite it, one might pay our bills
To wealthy lenders as we withdraw food
And fuel from our isn't can't
Get by, and, anyway, they'll throng the streets.
They'll hound me out of office soon, and he'll
Be back to fill his plate with new supplies of carrion.
Nobody tells his nation that it has to starve to make
Ends borrows, spends, and borrows more,
But it's not poor or small or sets the table,
Runs the game which leaves the rest of us with
Nothing in our pockets or our pans.

Lawrence Beck
They're No Longer Together

They watch the drizzle fall, and mourn
so far apart in space,
In temperament, in social standing.
He is far above, at some soap opera
Actor's window, looking down.
The streets are greasy gray, the cars
On them like gathered runs
The carousel which winds through
The dry cleaner's shop, retrieves
The suits and dresses on it, goes back
Home to Mom and Dad, and drinks
Discreetly, goes to bed, as he does
What he can to prove he's free and easy.
Maybe someone there will find him
Perfect for a starring would
Be nice, but he keeps staring at the street,
Imagining he sees her walking from
That damned dry cleaner's store,
Not to her parents' house but toward
This apartment, and his arms.

Lawrence Beck
Those Libertarians

Oh, libertarians are here. They’re going on and on about The state, about , If only people could be free to Pursue their own ends, the world Would be a better place, and trade Would would end. Of course, if all of us were white And affluent, and disinclined To work the refs and bend the rules, And exploit those who aren’t like Us, such thoughts might turn out To be right, but, in the world we Occupy, the bully rich Man has his way, and others have To learn that odds are stacked Against their ends, and only if They seize the state, and turn it Against those who whisper lies To libertarians, will they advance To better places, flourishing As those dupes said they should.

Lawrence Beck
Magda understands that I'm unable to be true
To her, a consequence of where she lives.
I love her face, her disposition, both her
Breasts, her hips, her way of somehow
Soaking up my sorrows. I could live
With her, I think, if I could live in Kansas City,
But I can't. I must commute from Omaha,
And, when I do, I spend the weekend
Loving Magda, but, when Sunday evening
Comes, I bolt in search of barbecue,
And carry ribs and hickory smoke
Back north, along the Interstate, and Magda
Gets a thank-you note, while I succumb
To greasy matters more,
These ribs or Magda? I can't say I know.

Lawrence Beck
We will be sitting somewhere, a little bit
Cold, staring into a camp fire's flames,
Flinching as wet wood pops, sending
Sparks toward our skin and our clothes.
You will be you and I will be me, and I'll
Tell you I'm sorry for all that my people,
These god-awful white baby-boomers,
Have took all the money.
We hungered for clung to
The trappings of power until we were
Timid and dotty, and little was left for
The ones who have followed us, people
Like wars have brought
would have thought?
Our closed little system kept even
Our countrymen arms-lengths away
As the empire, we
Are cold and assaulted by embers.
The old ways defeated, my people
Are gone, and I, too, haven't too long
To tell you I'm ng is left.
Better learn to speak Chinese or head
For the hills, You youngsters now
Are on your own.

Lawrence Beck
Turncoats With Badges

He has his gas mask and his grievances.
Each one is can't afford to live
In something like a he lives
Is more like a coffin, tiny, cramped.
It smells of death, and he can't find a decent
Job, and all his neighbors also suffer,
So he's on the street tonight, ...but look
At this!The man across the barricades,
In armor, that one with his pistol pointed
At him, lives just down the faces
All the troubles that the masked man and his
Allies face, but he's so keen to keep his
Paycheck that he'll swing his truncheon,
Point his gun to save the status quo,
And, soon enough, the streets will empty.
Those above the streets, above the fray,
Will stay where they have been, and all
The ones with covered faces will drift off,
Once more defeated, not just by their
Betters, but by traitors in their midst.

Lawrence Beck
Unknown

In this era of intense surveillance, I suppose
I should be thankful I'm 's been
A long time since I tried to draw attention
To myself. I don't say much, don't share
My feelings, rarely take my phone with me,
And almost never turn it people
Who I know at work, I think, think I am
Blandly pleasant, but they couldn't tell you
If my politics are right or left, or if I go
To church or not, or if I share the almost
Universal racial bigotry of white folks
In this dreadful country, and, apart from
Them, I have only acquaintances I have
No te the ever-more
Intrusive efforts by the self-appointed
Guardians of "national security," and creepy
Miners of my tastes in sex, and motor
Vehicles, I'm mostly just a ams
Always skip over me, as I have hoped
They would. I've tried to guard my
Anonymity, and it appears that I've
I'm out of sight, nobody
Can remember me. I'm just a silhouette,
A cigarette, a half-drunk drink out on
The patio, unknown, forgettable.

Lawrence Beck
Visiting Mom In Las Vegas

I turn toward the setting sun, the sound
Of my own mother's voice still rattling
Within my ears."Come visit," she repeats
To me, but I would rather not, as I feel
Trapped when I am in her home.
She never tells the same
Old stories time and time again, and time,
While there, is stupid cat
Lays, silent, on its sun comes
Up and passes.I look at my watch.
Something is drones.I start
To wish that I was cat moves
mother doesn't.I could use
A mother, a teetotaler, has
Milk and juice, and I begin to quiver.
I need alcohol, and some way to escape
This lights of the Las Vegas
Strip glow down the hill and far away,
As I do a son's wretched penance.
"Say goodnight, me be."
I'll be back in the morning if the hookers
I've engaged are paid, and, if the colors
I have chosen on the roulette wheel
Are not, I don't know what
I'll do, and you can rehearse all your
Stories for the next time I feel duty-bound
To hear your now, accept
That, when the sun has set, your son,
Suffused with desperation, also has
To go.

Lawrence Beck
White Folks

Perpetrators of your sort don't pay up.
They seize even cops will look
The other representatives
Will write whatever laws you need,
And even armies do your bidding.
Thus, your creditors are banished,
Broken, jailed, but not repaid:
The natives who have lost not just
Their lands, but, even worse, their
Tongues, the slaves, still slaves,
Still flogged and hunted, those uprooted
From their homes by wars you waged
And thugs you presents
You with a walls are solid.
You sleep know you'll never pay.

Lawrence Beck
Who's Who

Such an ugly word that is, pejorative, yet
Lacking any meaning. I'm a terrorist?
What, pray tell, does that make me?
Do I kill off or jail my foes? Do my goons
Monitor each street? Is my sort treated
With respect, or do the drooling masses
Wave their little plastic flags and shout
Approval as you send your troops to
Kill us, and our wives and kids? Do states,
Then, never practice terror? Let's agree
To say they don't, but also say that those
Who save their own by killing soldiers
And police, and, sometimes, laying waste
To little droolers waving plastic flags,
Should not receive that 's fair
In war, somebody said, and power's not
An I am a terrorist, that's surely
What you are.

Lawrence Beck
Winter Arrives

I play lugubrious music and sit by the fire,  
Trying to keep myself n is over.  
Winter has come: three months of torment,  
Possibly four. I gaze at the snow between  
Me and the scene was so fit  
For a dirge.

Lawrence Beck