

Poetry Series

rich soos
- poems -

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rich soos(April 24,1955)

r soos is a teacher, poet and musician, and has been published in over 200 print magazines. He has 20 books of poetry, including Somersaults With Life (2016) , Parting/Departing (2015) , Bringing In The Sheets (2012) . His books may be purchased at on-line bookstores, such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble. His poetry appears in Peacock Journal, Tuck, Leaves of Ink, Micropoetry, Random Poem Tree, Cuento, In Between Hangovers, and others. His video poems may be viewed on youtube. He blogs at .

Many of the poems appearing Poem Hunter are from his best-selling book Selected Poems (2015) . The exceptions are the poem Ground - a recent poem published first on Poem Hunter, and the senryu translations of Emily Dickinson, all published first on Poem Hunter.

A Few Hours A Day

I practice thinking
and now I wonder
if that will continue
when the dead are raised

from *The Son Is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

A Lamp

calms the heart searching
for new words which will embrace
my notebooks tonight

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

A Poem

won't stand still for you
often it stands on its head
waiting for your tune

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

A Poem (2015)

does not make sense
in the way you wish
it grows into value as
pieces fall everywhere
and gather themselves
into nourishment
blown by whirlwinds
circling over the grass
and the silent sky

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

A Seduction

we look into each other's eyes
whispering visions
while dancing
upon fresh seaweed

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Acceptance

secret moments of
reverent contemplation
sweeps away the dust

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Actor

my skin can perform
without exposing the thoughts
deep within my mind

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Adventure

I have spent my years
walking through the quiet air
seeking the poem

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Aging

a poem is a mere cholla needle
imbedded deep through the skin

when withdrawn the scar lengthens
and the pain worsens

time heals the pain
the scar remains forever

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

All Have Sinned

your feet rest on a carpet of lucifer's wilderness
your foundations assaulted by the years
the histories of your frightened overtures
climax in the shadows of your destination

O sweet children of life,
run through freedom madly

your forehead traces your sleep with a thickness
your wings rushing water over stone
the flushed wines of your sunken cheeks
expose the purest habits of your source

O sweet children of life,
run through madness freely

with furious requiems you'll be reborn
on the altar of a fragment of a wave

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

Andante

play lightly your recorder
play smoothly too-lee-lie
sing airs from dream disorder
play life as by the by
play life as by the by

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Another Year Has

trumpeted through this simple life
with my drawings gathering dust
and my paintings fading with time
it's true love chewed to rhyme
leaving out the sounds of snoring
ants running food over the grass
and toilets flushing what a crime
to edit truth is profound sublime

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Arpeggios

music breaks the grief
blinded as another leaf
falls without a word

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

As Dreams Lie Bleeding

there are times the title says
more than the poem about
the reality of simply living
a log is easily turned to ash
the highest steel towers rust
the poet rolls over and sleeps

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

As You Play Guitar

the lonely song you
sing in the quiet valley
may dance for all time

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

At Night

I read aloud verses
slowly
to hear the dark voices
building
in the resting shadows

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

At The Piano

my deafness teaches
me to hear the crashing waves
deep into the light

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Awake

in the distance you turn
hypnotized by the latitude
minutes are scraped by the
nimble fingers of shadows
restless in a reconstructed air

minimum flights
of ascending selflessness
the slope is gentle
and divulges in a flame
of sunlight

your eyes gleaming
in the soundless movements of a star
you stand savagely delicate
and glow at the perfect
distance of passion

you move counting each footstep slowly
measuring the inches allowed in a dream
our fingertips merge
your eyes light the inner spaces
of an undefined universe

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

Bee

I stuck my nose
in a rose
and a bee
kissed me

from *In Bed And In The Bathtub* (1970)

rich soos

Beneath Whispers

the heart alone
has taken charge
thoughts fill too slowly
prayer acts as referee
between the heart and mind

the dance alone
has vanished bright
thoughts fill too darkly
prayer acts as laughing joy
between the feet and mind

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Beside The Creek

a wren chatters as
we wade toward a trail
named flowing silence

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Bev's Laundry

she is clothes pinning
outlines of swaying bodies
to dance with the wind

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Beween the words

reading ancient greek
makes me wonder if we could
still read without space

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Bibles

<i>(Genesis 3: 19) </i>

in hotel drawers
keep their dignity
in spite of or perhaps
because of their never
being opened and smudged
with hands clenched while
searching through the dust
abiding in hotel drawers

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Bird

you seem still
no rustle of wing
a shadow spread
over your face
leaves nearby
not stirring
the tree seems
to speak of the
song you have
completed
sudden breeze
and you're gone
for the evening

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Birdsong

you take it away
quick as winter approaches
starve the earth till spring

from (2016)

rich soos

Bits

a bird just flew right past my nose
a poem like this just comes and goes

from In Bed And In The Bathtub (1970)

rich soos

Blooms (Emily Translated To Senryu)

blooms

make this November
difficult to be happy
cold makes life perish

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Bringing In The Sheets

Some dances allow travel
into dimensions not spoken of daily.
They create a joy with never ending
laughter willingly rejoicing.

These dances visit eternal avenues
where feet are simply vehicles
of knowledge touching every living
body of water, moon and planet.

Your dances trample flowers and
lay mountains into crushed stone
as other blossoms follow more colorful
and alive in sun and shadow.

Sweet dances sow the seeds of
hilarious despair and joyful weeping
with the smell of roses and lilacs
exhilarating your conscious breath.

from Bringing In The Sheets (2012)

rich soos

California Breeze

the piano knows the words that dwell
deep in the soul of all who desire
mercy for their commanded lives
the radio lightly sends the notes
of the breeze through the heart
and brings to mind the waves
pounding the uncharted shore

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Can't Move

i

the worms sing sweetly
entering the flesh of fallen
friends laying nearby

ii

throw dirt over them
before the ants and beetles
climb on their live flesh

iii

it is not a sin
to wring out my heart today
it won't live again

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Center Field

it's all perspective
right field is on the left and
left field on the right

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Choice

I keep my world small
family books home and food
very small poems

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Cities

what is the idea
behind clumping bodies close
never seeing starlight

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Cocoon

<i>for Bev</i>

there are times
we wrap
up
meditate
and emerge
having
eaten through
the blocks
and bandaged wounds
to fly in freedom's
celebration

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

Coffee

morning brew of choice
works out the melancholy
dreams from last night's wine

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Compassion

failure determined
my old pain magnificent
clouds breathe soft and cool

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Crib Death

I want the song of your mouth
to fly over the desert
with my beautiful body

you sit there among wild flowers
with secret smiles and naked voices
your long finger barely caressing your face

I see the daughter of your body
burning darkness above
your heart with beautiful eyes

you gather strength
from abandoned angels
and enter the forest floor
through your shadowed thighs

I cannot sit
I follow the geese through
the clouds to a hurricane

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

Critics

they argue endless
if seventeen syllables
make a true haiku

it doesn't matter
form and structure give pleasure
to dreaming readers

from *Why Poetry* (1974)

rich soos

Critics (Earn A Living)

it is hard to imagine how these folks
can earn a living by reading a single poem
and then labeling my writing as one genre
different writers have called me
a family poet
a political poet
a christian poet
a love poet
a nature poet
a confessional poet
a modern poet
a haiku destroyer
I love that last one
and find I may be
all those things while
being none of those
just label my grave
a poet
I am that and not
I am truly the imagination
of my self

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Curtains

create an invisible world
we can hide in and dance
beautifully on the stage
of our own making and
the music only we share

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Dad (Prayers)

he's writing prayers
word by word to salvage time
while God waits patient

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Dark Rivers

ride out the storm
and wait patient for the Son
to come breaking though

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Darkness (9-11-01)

the sun scatters ash
inches thick on the cool streets

ash climbs to the sun
and darkens the morning sky

I will live on for a long time
in the shadows of the city

two airplanes at right angles
to disappeared towers

past travelers trembling swirling
apparitions with lasting scents

veins humming with distant
voices marking the pavement

there is no looking back
this is truly left waiting for phrases

more remote than the years
on the other side of the earth

blood dries amid wilted brambles
in deserted solitude of wanderers

crushed brick dust explosions build
fragmented grime gardens down alleys

stone pieces float through the thick air
chewed by workers breathing lungfuls

broken glass piles up in entrances
no longer useful for escape

silence is sure yet impossible
as screams form in asphyxiating minds

struggling for breath once the airline bombs
ignored the bodies still present in the city

kneeling in prayer for survival once the moldy
smell of stone wet by firehoses dries

the engines ceased roaring and no one noticed

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and published 9-11-16 on

rich soos

Deaf

the morning waits for you.
you have an anger that
takes care of you
like a bird that sails
with you through the sky
you can hear the ocean
all the time

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

Death

there is no need for sacrament
or prayer before you visit
walk toward me with cold arms
and take me away while I sleep
the earth will applaud your decision
to leave trumpet soundings buried

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Departing

the last hour on earth
spins upward like eyes singing
of love's deep despair

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Departure

walking away free
overlooking the heartache
that is sure to come

from (2016)

rich soos

Desert

daybreak

the cactus calls shadows
for rodents to hide from flames on
the horizon, a silent blaze quieting
intrinsic voices and ghosts

noon

peyote prays life for life
and lives on rodent sweat

twilight

afire the sun signals
blood to darken the skies
painting red the time/space
between day/night

epilogue

dance with dead
midnight spirits

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

Devotions

the cats sit and gaze
at the rains through
the kitchen window
like mirrored statues
peaceful moaning

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Discipline

composing haiku
for discipline and structure
frees the words to sing

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Discussed/Disgust

discussed
the weather again
innocent of inner life
raging in us both

disgust
raging in us both
hidden sweetly and talk of
the weather again

from (2016)

rich soos

Divorce

my touch is not random
I can't quite forget
the movement of your lips

there is a reason to plunge into life
I am losing time playing at this altitude

back to your earthiness
I draw spanish words of your mouth
desnudo romantico
trembling against your delicate fruit

I embrace the unreachable silence
and use the rhythm of your woman joys
to keep losing time drinking at this altitude

I dance with your swollen selfishness
translate my music for no apparent reason
and watch our hearts come as close as they dare

my touch has not outgrown you
and your nipples still firm at my touch

I wish I was close enough to claim innocence
of your slightly opened thighs
I taste lost time breathing at this altitude

we can't greet us any longer
our eternal ocean has found
more than music composed on secluded beaches

my poetry is used to living alone
my limitations are not

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

Drawing

everything in line
with empty colors inside
repeating patterns

from (2016)

rich soos

Dream

seeds planted in deep
morning light will rise slowly
roots breathe in soil

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Dream Vacation

I would go places
poems live before they find
their way to paper

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Dreams

wild horse run across desert
dust lingers in air for hours
wild dream run across my mind

dust lingers on thought for hours
resting in a secluded memory
till next purifying breeze

from Why Poetry (1974)

rich soos

Dwell In Dust

<i>Isaiah 26: 19</i>

I no longer count those gone before me
I forget too many and feel unreasonable guilt
so many dwelling deep within the earth
and in small packages of blessed memory
the hands of the clock no longer necessary
darkness marches densely onward
closing ranks on the center of my circle
preparing to sink in sound sleep
each whisper a verse of syllables
parsing and parting the departing

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Each Passing Year

gives new life to the poem
with echoes of fresh rain
rushing from the clouded
verses in the lonely skies

from In Bed And In The Bathtub (1970)

rich soos

Eight

one

Your arms hide me
from the self I am escaped from.

two

Your eyes fill me with
the treasures of your depth.

three

Your feet walk beside me
with understandings I desire.

four

Your moons dream the garden
of your voice for my peace.

five

Your hair falls on me
as a covering for your loneliness.

six

Your rivers flow through me
and freshen our lives.

seven

Your heart rests the rhythm
of the worlds we've created.

eight

Your songs are the fragrance
surrounding all we've suffered.

rich soos

Embracing The Heart

the gypsy sings the mystical
revelation of an undulating
rhythm taking root in concealed
magic with docile swaying
the gypsy chants the primeval
struggle between eros and agape
cradling the conscious existence
in a language embracing infatuation
broken wine bottles thrown by
the gypsy after fervent conquests
of sacred altars expose secret
caverns enchanted with dreams
the gypsy sings of freedom
from discourse and meditation

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Eternity/Insecure (Emily Translated To Senryu)

eternity

how firm it looks now
to crumbling men like me
seeking for Your truth

insecure

Your mighty judgement
had kept me running from You
till I hid in You

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Exhaustion

a persistent and expected guest
seldom speaking aloud within
the soul I once considered rowdy
and devised of the songs of birds

in concert with my guitar strums he sings
the tremulous feathered melody within
I walk heedful of the fluttering
of the tearful translucid wings

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Eyes Of Peace

have left for the war
leaving sandstorms to conquer
awesome tasks of life

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Factory

up down
around around
place the poet in the ground
down up
fill the cup
factory factory hurry up
compute the rhyme
one more time
don't let consumers
waste a dime

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Failure

in the end we fail
to breath deep another breath
and shape our future

from Moaning & Groaning (1999)

rich soos

Falcon

his wings hide the sun
while I sit in my garden
talking with lizards

from (2016)

rich soos

Father, Your Beard

is graying
and you could
act a hobo on
the railroad
or yell the
purposes of marx
and convince the
most apathetic
or slobber over
the strippers
downtown
with an old man's grace

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Fears/Hopes

fears

i
my wife will feel like
dancing at the Water Hole
the night I get home

ii
I will have to say
something to my wife and kids
so they'll know I live

iii
they cannot know me
or the person I've become
or I'll kill myself

iv
I'll have to pretend
I'm really blind and deaf mute
so I can survive

v
it would be easy
to start walking to Utah
and live by myself

hopes

i
I pray it's all good
when I look deep in their eyes
I'll forget my past

ii
no questions will come
no memories will survive
no tears in my dreams

iii

I'll sing to my wife
and the shape of her dress will
pull my fiddle out

iv

nightmares will go home
to villages that birthed them
and I'll sleep in peace

v

that the Lord forgives
the way preacher Davies
always says he does

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Fireplace

the flames reflect
the dreams of life
too vividly
become bitter
as they travel
up the chimney

from *Why Poetry* (1974)

rich soos

Flowers

adorn strands of hair
when soft black ripples release
her fragrant blossoms

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Flowers (Emily Translated To Senryu)

flowers

alone in the woods
die without their beauty known
hoping seeds are sown

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Fortitude

disguised in the heart
a thick bitter reminder
of death's companion

stalking the pleasures
this old soul takes solace in
during the music

first appeared in (2016)

rich soos

Friend

she stood there quiet
looking deep into the waves
surging unto shore

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Full Moon

Let's climb through a thousand wildflowers
growing in the yard and follow the scents
left by the bees in the trembling shadows
of the plums and figs fruiting on the way.

Our steps will free the starlight to clear
a path for those who will follow silent.

from Bringing In The Sheets (2012)

rich soos

Garden

mom's ashes
hued greens

then reds yellows blues
while life quickened
up
and
down
the stalks

and flew from flower to flower

molecules awakening breath
her garden a wellspring
of eternal life

from (2016)

rich soos

Garden Song

<i>for Leann</i>

when the power
to view all the morning
glories that
smell in with the
sweet pea bush
and the strawberry
lies upon the
redwood chips
like melted
concrete
poetry
then we sing
aloud
the song

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

Gather

all the leaves to burn
in one pile this afternoon
set the flame tonight

from (2016)

rich soos

Grace

poetic children
gather in the streets dancing
with love together

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Grace (1997)

dense with sweet flowers
the painter streaks his canvas
with your tear filled eyes

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Graves Will Fill

deep and set by time
with everyone living
in a hurry to escape
the inevitable sleep

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Gray Hairs

there was no time to rightly choreograph
a politely patterned rhyme of years from
the voice of poetry in my orphaned beard

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Ground

after each new rain
grass returns piercing tender
crust in small patches

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Guitar

notes plucked steadily
ask the audience to sing
the words deep within

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Guitar Wood

makes the sound of drums
as the night welcomes us to
play till fingers bleed

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Guitars

the songs we sang
seemed intimate and true
now seem nostalgic
for a better me and you

the songs we sang
survived for our old age
and make us laugh and giggle
of the thoughts that made us rage

the songs we sang
contained truth that never dies
the way we've lived and killed
teaches love of our young lies

the songs we sang
makes me know the ways I've failed
and helps me now to understand
the meanings now unveiled

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Gulls

I am free and scream free
I am free and laugh free
I am free and jump free

it's mine all mine
I grow flaming lungs
to blow the ocean back

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Haiku (Form)

the form understands
the full pleasure of language
without prejudice

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Haiku Scholars

are crying that I
need nature and seasons too
they live by the rules

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Hands Outstretched

I reach toward the stars amazed
at the brilliance allowed to dwell
within by a mere whisper of faith
the source of light enlightens the
darkest caverns I have dug deep
in my own innermost selfishness

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Handwriting

a poem in the dark
is good because you have need
to think through the words

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Have Mercy

comfort new poems
they spend much time wondering
if anyone cares

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Hawk

strong handsome vigor
ancient peaceful restlessness
keeping faithful watch

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Hawks

follow paths of troops
knowing a meal is coming
wherever we go

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Heart

trampled by her words
dying over and over
the ocean tide withdraws

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Heaven (Translated To Senryu)

heaven

far as death this way
river and a ridge beyond
no discovery

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

His Power (Peace)

in peace I roam through
night time visions without fear
of silent judgment

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

His Power (Wind)

the wind from his mouth
chases the words of poets
to the gates of hell

rich soos

Home

visiting parents
I saw old versions of me
trying out for life

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Home (1997)

sitting on the deck
with charcoal softly fading
we savor silence

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Homeless

stop in the empty street
with bleak thoughts
spreading their arms
like a crucifix
sacrificing their
vanity to share
the truth they've
learned of society

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Hope/Little Bird (Emily Translated To Senryu)

hope

perches in the soul
sings the tune without the words
never stops at all

little bird

loud in the cold snow
keeps so many warm with song
asking for nothing

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Hover

at the door waiting
to decide whether to step
out and melt away

or close the door quick
and breath stale airconditioned
coolness while alive

from (2016)

rich soos

Human Nature (Emily Translated To Senryu)

human nature

fond of mystery
and prophecying future
'now' has no meaning

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

I Awake Beside My Friend

and touch her hand
lifting unspoken words
from beneath her pillow

from Bringing In The Sheets (2012)

rich soos

I Make Plans

to review my weaknesses
and repair my faults
then eat and drink
and watch the list
burn in the candle
lit for that purpose

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

I Shall Be Old

when winter comes it will
imprint its forgotten wrinkled face
lengthening the future
in silence

the birds have all flown south

I chose not to watch

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

I Watched

a person read my last book
in ten minutes
it took 3 years to write

they said
I don't understand a word of it

someone else will be a dove
cool and quiet within

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Icarus (Dream)

you fly higher than Icarus
with wings that do not melt
a single breath warms many weeks
we are aware

a dream does not become
a dream until it is over

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Immortal

sitting on the porch
drinking beer
thinking about the
UPS driver who was
unable to find my
address in this town
with no street signs

I wonder if death will
have the same problem

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

In Sabinal

The train whistle of songs carry
a romance and dream
of a better future far away.

In Sabinal it is merely a loud noise
that startles and wakes me five times a night.

What if I had fallen asleep in metaphysics,
my myriad of selves talking all the time?

In Sabinal it is merely a loud noise
that startles and wakes me five times a night.

My understanding not a single word
of the empty house raving several languages?

In Sabinal it is merely a loud noise
that startles and wakes me five times a night.

In truth these poems will never reach
beyond a few good friends
drunken and theatrical.

In Sabinal it is merely a loud noise
that startles and wakes me five times a night.

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Injury

I crawl across rooms
waiting for pain to subside
and my knees to fly

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Ink

pass over each hill
with words trailing from your pen
songs from deep within

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Insecurities

time to stop dreaming
and walk out the door again
to see the night stars

time to stop dreaming
and walk out the door again
to see the sun rise

time to stop dreaming
and walk out the door again
to see the dogs bark

time to stop dreaming
and walk out the door again
to see the shadows

time to stop dreaming
and walk out the door again
to see the grass grow

from Insecurities (2005)

rich soos

Into The Streets

come into the streets
all you poets of mercy
sing for the world
what your mother has done

from My Homeland (1976)

rich soos

Labor

for a life career
of professional thinker
since it never stops

from (2016)

rich soos

Landscapes

the lover is cool
staring at clouds traveling
with storms in their hearts

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Language

words defeat the mind
which wants to think without them
wandering around

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Late

name on a placard
outside the hospital door
now all that is left

from (2016)

rich soos

Learning

for Leann, age 2

gathering weeds for blossoms
your eyes have learned colors
the rain falls from the petals
onto your baby hands
without fear of
intellect obscuring
patient patterns
of learning

your child eyes caress
all of nature as you glance up
and sing your alphabet

the rain flowers tears
of rivers from the moon
through your hair
down your cheek
flashing sparked
electricity
for the air between us

explore each raindrop as a world in itself
explore each river as a moment of that world
dance long through the rain as it remains alive

each body movement
flames through the rain
your eyes have blossomed
from patient rains and petals

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

Leave Me

what shall it be?
coffee or orange juice?
yes dear?
no, not this morning
u-huh, nope
what? u-huh
I watched you sleep last night
believe it or not
I know you feel
I've lost track of you
and although all I do is complain
of all the lousy ads and wars
bear me over coffee
and leave me to my morning paper

from My Homeland (1976)

rich soos

Leaves

rule the hills and trees
changing colors as the sun
sings in the distance

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Light

a candle will do
the night has shadows enough
to drift along with

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Limping

wounded warriors dance
wildly on the living graves
walking through the streets

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Little Stone (Emily Translated To Senryu)

little stone

is happy alone
without stress of a career
or survival fears

and independent
with heat from the sun or not
simply casual

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Lonesome Wild

he grows thin as his wife
watches him die one piano note
at a time striving to crush
the entire weight of his body
into one almighty everlasting
chord using his blood to engrave
the melody and the verse

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Looking For A Raindrop

a persistent resonance sings your joy
and flight through a fragile wooden flute
the strains reach my breath and I become
my own passion, a lunatic dream of myself

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Love (Emily Translated To Senryu)

not a useful word
no one can define its truth
know it full that's all

there's no need for talk
when reason is full and plain
its place fully known

love is not a word
to hide behind as answer
know it full that's all

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Love, Repeated Love

At that time your lips seek mine
with fiery flowers long recalled.
You are the love, repeated love.

Beloved and known to feed the
forgotten love of others with
extinguishing flames of fury.
You are the love, repeated love.

Your arms invite the entire width
of the land and the sky the oceans
and the moon from within your being
extinguishing the stars with wine.
You are the love, repeated love.

In the night you travel distances
uncomprehended and deep with tears
and loud cries and I watch faces
move from anguish to peace and back
and pray you will return at morning.
You are the love, repeated love.

from *Bringing In The Sheets* (2012)

rich soos

Lovers Point

waves crawling
closer - sand sliding
through my toes
rough shells
scratching
wind managing to
slip through my lips
leaves salty
almost burning
aftertaste
tide leaves me
standing alone
in ocean

from My Homeland (1976)

rich soos

Mark 14: 52

the young man running
is forever known naked
in the word of God

from Insecurities (2005)

rich soos

Mass

the deep graves hidden
in ditches along the road
grow wild flowers

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Mojave

enter this desert
through broken rock
skid on loose gravel
look up
over the tops
of the joshua trees
flowing from here
to yonder formation
reach up
touch the blue
with your fingers

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Mom (Age)

age engraves your face
there is no need for speaking
with more than our eyes

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Mom (Arthritis)

I see your lone tears
from the arthritis howling
loud in every bone

from Insecurities (2005)

rich soos

Mom (Music)

your knotted fingers
turn the radio dial
even in the rain

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Mom (Pain)

pain spreads everywhere
in every sinew every bone
her healing candles burn
all through long nights
with wisps of prayers
surrounding her temple

from Insecurities (2005)

rich soos

Moon

years of studying the patterns of the moon
did not prepare me for the stone flower
you would become as you lay breathing
alongside me in our well made bed

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Morning

I wake babbling loud
no idea what I'm dreaming
even worse than life

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Mountain Climb

toward the fearless cleft
emptying my passing thoughts
in streams flowing by

from Insecurities (2005)

rich soos

Mountain Songs

the sun goes down
through tall dry weeds
poems cause rashes on
moonlit philosophers
pain exists near the edge
the pattern it's essence
music laughs at everything
the pattern it's essence
I've noticed most people
do not believe music
frame the absurdity
quietly study agony
we die day by day

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

Music

my guitar danced for hours
and never tired watching
you stand still as a statue

birds flew nearby creating
rhythms for my fingers to
caress the vibrating strings

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Music (2001)

when I tell you that
I love you it's good to see
songs burst from your eyes

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Music (2016)

welcomes the dying
returning now to the earth
it all sounds like time

from (2016)

rich soos

My Dad

there's no need to dream his face
I see it daily in the mirror
but I dream his hands
tenderly cutting the nails
of mom's twisted arthritis

as fresh as the day they occurred
are memories of days his hands held
my sisters small and screaming
tenderly knowing the power
in holding them close

and the days he spent with me
at the kitchen table teaching
the mysteries of the slide rule
tenderly explaining the importance
of tools to examine life

his hands killed for his country
and wiped away his tears
each time the awful thoughts
tenderly invading his nightmares
returned

I reach for his hand
after shaving his whiskers
one last time both knowing his
tenderly shrinking body was very
near his final ablution

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

My Guitar

hangs there
with six voices
bleeding with songs
living very deep
in the mirror

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

My Limbs

often ache for the peace of death
my thoughts merely laugh
with the joy of youth

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

My Mother

has her own garden
in the corner of our yard
please bury me there

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

My Neighbor

sweeps the sidewalk
takes a drink from his flask
looks around
takes another sip
sweeps some more
looks around
nods at me
and goes inside

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

My Poetry

my clothes reek of body odor
my wrinkles explain visions of age
my dreams observe the beasts of love
my hymns declare my passion for justice
my words declare my clothes and wrinkles
my words enhance my dreams and hymns
sweat drops from the precious fruit of poem

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

My Shoe Kicks Earth

over the dark mound
so many last roads
to the coming world
a small sign of breath
would ease many distance
memories in this stone path
underfoot a stray stone dances
composing its dust to new music

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

My Son

embraces the world
with sweetness and climbs my chest
to share peaceful joy

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

Mystic

sunlight explains the
darkness held behind the oak
church doors often locked

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Nations

the shamans of all tribes
soar in drunken fellowship
on the bearings of the stars

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Nighttime

nighttime sends her thoughts
into the silent dreams of
two lovers touching

from Why Poetry (1974)

rich soos

Nineteen With Nineteen Syllables (+1)

1

you fly over as I walk
into thought lifted
freely motionless alone

2

the knot never empties as
you entwine yourself
through and around memory

3

beneath your depths wounded
flesh and blood dwell lost
vainly seeking a quiet

4

the cord surrounding us slipped
with freedom singing
'the binds are so beautiful'

5

lives came storming through your thighs
began in simple
joining of two lonely worlds

6

love is not a true question
bright in a shadow
standing in windows of dreams

7

when you hear knocking in dreams
it is only I
seeking to know your deep pain

8

love is a sword not questioned
on a road of thorns
swiftly slashing sharply down

9

your soul allows me to dwell
near an open door
slightly open and singing

10

when you sink into the abyss
of holy anger
the remnants of existence

remain on the fearless heights
wounded yet open
to the lilac scents of youth

11

united pleasures manage
to recall deeper
denials and loosened knots

12

fly over the lonely world
alive and bursting
with inward recognition

13

adding me to your pained life
has not freed your steps
to lightly dance in the clouds

14

my hands are harsh on guitars
and soft on your skin
till I play your burning song

15

my dancing heart dreams with you
fighting and singing
with forgotten blood and fire

16

stumbling through wet caliche

weighing each footstep
you feel swallowed yet so free

17

you were released on the wind
when your roots were sliced
floating radiant with fire

18

when you look deep at the moon
you find in yourself
islands loving hearts with roots

19

the wind no longer passes
your window longing
for your breath to move the sky

from Bringing In The Sheets (2012)

rich soos

No One

no one

hears the old music
washed in a river of blood
guitar on the chair

no one

hears the old guitar
washed in a river of blood
dying in music

no one

hears the dying
washed in a river of blood
voices are ignored

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

No Word But We Know This Truth

trees grow wild from your eyes
winds blow angry from your throat
I'll never weary of surprise

my backbone stiffens losing size
though my thoughts giggle as I quote
trees grow wild from your eyes

the joy is short lived I realize
that for now humor is quite remote
I need to ready for surprise

to not prepare would be unwise
my temple once met a gravy boat
when trees grew wild from your eyes

my peripheral vision must send out spies
despite this truth I've time to gloat
I'll never weary of surprise

I know in time we'll be allies
as our emotions stay afloat
trees grow wild from your eyes
I'll never weary of surprise

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Note To My Students

I grow if you grow
I give you space for dancing
with the butterfly

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Oak Hill Cemetery

generations lie with names on stone
dust piles silent with their philosophy
beliefs understandings
joys and pains
unspoken
forever

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

One Note

delicious joy
strange melancholy
when one note plays
four bars after a string
of 64th notes for sixteen
<i>(whisper) </i> jazz

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Out Of My Self

I have carved a soul
which understands the wordless
melodies coming from within
forgiving me my self and pouring
one more glass of wine

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Outing

<i>for Erin</i>

climbing the ragged thorny hill
behind our mobile home park
we look down on tin houses
and 30 year old palm trees
so puny from here
the thorns remind me that
we are far from Eden
and as high as we travel
we can never reach God
on this particular path
beneath our aging sneakers the earth
actually crunches in the heat
the pond is almost gone in this drought
where do the frogs go, you ask?
I can't answer that
another child once asked me
where butterflies go when it rains?
I can now say - with the frogs
there is something sacred here
perhaps our quietness

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

Outside

the screams from somewhere
help me know my writing life
could be worse much worse

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Parting

eyes search constantly
all the engraved memories
of grieving laughter

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Passion

hanging from a tree
fruit ripens in specified seasons
the stones inside moisten
and may be dried for rebirth
footsteps burn in the realm of sleep
you walk toward me I pass through
and beyond myself surveying the
arrival of each abyss in memory

from *A Foreign Landscape* (1984)

rich soos

Patience

stroking the strings of the guitar
on the street sweltering sweat
waltzing madly in the humidity
no one slowing to sing along
or desiring to join the party
I limp off my self imposed stage
with no sense of accomplishment
except perhaps a permanent warp
in the neck of the once young guitar

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Perfume

among the strangers
I fearlessly know my heart
adorns His power

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Philosophers

think in the corner
content that no one much cares
to wander inside

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Poem Is Playground

poem is filled with banal beggars
words of rain and thunder
with seasons of drought
burning with compassion
and warring with the senses
poem wars with cynical reason
while seeking the streets mystics
dream of with such simplicity
the words of poems written
centuries ago reappear in poem
poem sings from closed windows
a music small and destitute sounding
deeply like the ocean through glass
scrutinized line by line for depth
for poem to do what it is not able

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Poems

can be a real pain
wanting to play hide and seek
when all I want to do is sleep
they peek out and I catch them
and off they run again
twirling in the middle of the room
around and around not drunk
but making me wish I were
so I could ignore their existence

the best worst thing about this
is the guy you just met who said
he read your book and he asks
'it really took you
two years to write this
(expletive deleted) ? '

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Poems (1999)

cannot be trusted
when the pen moves all alone
careless truths emerge

from Moaning & Groaning (1999)

rich soos

Pray Jazz

rhythmate the words
lord you'll find a need for me
beating on guitar

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Prayer

gratitude for the tears
that help me sleep at night
until my hands slap at my eyes
in the darkness to kill the dreams

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Purpose

I write this all down
I know that someone somewhere
needs to remember

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Rain

dances today with passion
wild from the thunder clouds
trembling through the sky
the horizon flowering
near the wilderness
captures my heart

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Reading

poetry with lips open and moving
knowing that behind simple foolishness
is a tongue calloused by imagination
silent empty fields wedged in your heart
covering your thoughts with humble hymns

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Reality

when truth is finished
transforming our perceptions
we create the fiction

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Reduced

aged ash mixed with dirt
good earth for the flowerbed
teeth look like pebbles

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Reflections On The Arizona Desert

a mound of clay is out here
in the middle of nowhere
scraping the edge of the sky
the sun is hot on a winter day
the air is still
no sound is heard
a bird seems to be a mile overhead
flying softly somewhere unknown
I want to fly alongside
fly away, fly around, fly
with wide spread wings
but here I am looking up
and the sky seems filled with sun
I'm hoping when my work is done
and that sunny day I die
into the heavens I will fly

from In Bed And In The Bathtub (1970)

rich soos

Resources

feed your hungry
praise and clothe your workers
teach your youngsters
home your people
use your resources with
a love for life and nature

from My Homeland (1976)

rich soos

Returning

from the war empty
I think I still love you now
forgive my distance

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

Reveries

the latitude of the sun blows
smoke through twisted leaves
the evening fog whispers a soft spray
toward your gold braided skirt
the olive trees of california breed
from the mediterranean in the moonlight
a poem read in the mist of a light rainfall
moved with silence though
a foreign landscape

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Rhythms

are needed to sing
on the journey I will choose
for hours of peace

forest to mountain
the trail follows wind music
dancing in the rain

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Sanctuary

within the garden
grapes grow wild
with singing
the song of sure wine

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

Scratching

layers of dry skin
have become a memory
under fingernails

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Screened Porch

I sit in the humid stillness before sunrise
waiting for the early rays to reach over
the horizon and instill a patience within
to aide my antipathy toward the people
I will be forced to interact with for yet
another day and happy to see a lizard
who is also skittish near humanity silently
hanging on the screen near my head

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

She Wore Silk Robes

when we knocked down the door
there was no fear in her eyes
she simply sat on a pile of rags
pretending to hide the corpse
of her husband from the hollow
empty graves standing before her

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

She's Fallen Before (Emily Translated To Senryu)

she's fallen before

this is the last time
mouth clamped shut with awful pain
she fell who knows when

her fingers won't bend
she won't sew for me again
her forehead is cold

I should fix her hair
spiritless the way she fell
flies buzz me away

I think I will clean
the cobwebs from the ceiling
and polish windows

farewell my good friend
I did not visit enough
enjoy the daisies

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Shoreline Ballet

dancing man
don't hold back
breathe salt air
it was made for this moment

dancing man
jump in ocean
dive through air
we were made for this moment

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Sick

your shallow breathing
under a sheet supports the
outline of body

from (2016)

rich soos

Silence

my mind
tears out pages
waiting for voices
to wake the poems

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Silent Songs

freedom hangs muted
from the windows within
opened late at night for
the inhaling of the warm air

I wander down hallways
deep in thought toward
a distant promise of
the final interrogation

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Sleep

empty body forms
the shield atop the mattress
protecting journeys

from (2016)

rich soos

Sober

facing misery
knowing life and death are hard
we still crave deep love

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Solitude

sounds like such a wonderful vacation
and like all real vacations is often
disordered and confused aloneness

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Some Other Way

witness
not the movement
binding
all our stories
jazz sings pregnant
coyote prays madly
life of life oh send me
some other way
the scene must
decompose with
a clouded scream
swept into a corner
desert saxophone
pretending sadly
life of life oh send me
some other way

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Someday

I will wake up dead
and realize with pleasure
I've served enough time

from (2016)

rich soos

Sometimes We Dream Of

simple living
meaningful work
noble love
feeling free
a clean death
reclaiming life

from My Homeland (1976)

rich soos

Special Ed Committee

in a presence of intelligence
scrutinized measured algebraized
then entered on a spreadsheet
to be graphed and judged by a jury
of their elders without one small
lighted flame in any of them
the darkness is overwhelming
the child's gifts unknown
far above and beyond

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Spinning

an escape from myself
and I won't use the obvious
and I will accept myself
and will know my friend
and lover sees herself as
her own idol carved
in my soul

from Why Poetry (1974)

rich soos

Spirit

the birds all have faith
as they swoop in their beauty
and show us the wind

from *Insecurities* (2005)

rich soos

Spun

the spider's web finds
me half asleep and catches
my dreams in fine silk

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Square Poem 01 - Dante

Dante

hell is a choice we avoid
is sure fire words still burning
a fire displays playful desire here
choice words playful hurt with love
we still desire with hate and
avoid burning here love and pain

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Storm

I stare at the clouds
blown into shapes of flowers
birds and animals
there's little to do
but wait for the onslaught to
extinguish my dream

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Streetlamp

at evening
pale rose d'hanis bricks
walk alongside the heads of lovers
embracing throughout the county
I imagine a photo
of the town center
with a melancholy old poet
wandering through dingy streets
fresh tortillas scent the air

Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Stretching

my muscle and bone
to catch time discarded by
dreams in the garden

from (2016)

rich soos

Stroll

stroll

through lonely poems
singing the language of now
and fear the spirit

stroll

and fear the spirit
singing the language of now
through lonely poems

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Strong Toil Of Grace

from behind the tree you dance
with the grasshoppers
in a precise condition of clarity
the ballet slippers
summon your feet
with elaborate powers

suns swirl in the background
you dance with the warm music
higher with each twirl and leap
the grasshoppers crowd you
with song when you swirl through
the spines of dead leaves

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Study

I master myself
and speak slow while repeating
stories others love

first appeared in (2016)

rich soos

Stupid Me

I hate reading words
of suffering self pity
throw the notebook out

from (2016)

rich soos

Subtle

flowers froze last night
delicate petals swirl down
to decorate roots

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Sunrise

radiance bathes my contemplation
with joy as I lose sight of my self
and all oppressive laws around
I see no limits in the liberty of light

the dried blood on His forehead
was left by man to understand
freedom which passes between
creator and created is despised
by those jealous for His power

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Sweet Secret Soaring

I sang you tall, lovely,
and pure in the moonlight hymn
threading as a river through
the darkness of my body.

Your nimble nakedness
forms itself holy to a single touch
as our feet entangle
in the spaciousness of this creation.

My mouth swallows the sweetness
of your neck and shoulders as we
wrestle the earth first, then
the moon in the daylight.

Your gentleness forms
a hollow void in the earth.

Your knees fill the thirst of
caliche soil where a river
seeking to build stories
in the clay finds solace in a simple
grain of sand hidden near your toe.

The stormy sea lifts our world
with a wave engulfing
the trembling kisses
while clouds envelope our bodies
and the space between us
becomes a door undulating
the ends of the earth
beneath our entwining songs.

Sweetly silent. Secret screams. Soaring sorrow.

You lift angelic arms and swim
in the struggles of sounds
pouring like blood from my soul.

Wild in the fire caught by
the wind you dream is the sea
in the gulf of Corpus Christi.

The roots of your childhood visions
stare deep in my eyes.

Lift the cup and bread high
with your shadowy crucifix form
lengthened on the beach
as the sun considers settling
beneath the horizon.

The wine is your gift
to the flame of the solar center,
the bread your gift to the crescent
moon near the stars.

The darkness deepens
the pool of the gulf while a
bird with one leg hops along
the shore with no sign of
discomfort or pain.

Between the fire and the wind
is the sweat of your body
hungry for the earthy songs
of my dreams filling the depths
of your cavern.

I sing you tall, lovely,
and pure in the moonlight hymn
threading as a river through
the darkness of my body.

from Bringing In The Sheets (2012)

rich soos

Sweet Wine

disposes our thoughts
and engages our rhythms
dancing arm in arm
with no need to die

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Swing

I push my child
soft away and she comes back
yelling 'harder please'

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

Take My Hand

a thousand times each day
I give myself to you

you have soothed the child
crying for a tranquil melody

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

Tendrils

a single shoot sprouts from my chest
and grasps hold of the desk before me
as I wait for the jury to decide

the pressure in the air has deafened me
the pressure in my mind has blinded me
the pressure in my throat has muted me

the vine from my heart alone can breath

from Cell Notebook (2016)

rich soos

The Bloom

<i>for Richie</i>

I thank you son
for truly teaching me
I love the blooms as they
appear unexpectedly on the stalk
and I thought I wouldn't want you to pick them
but now I've seen that glorious smile
only inches away from your
tiny outstretched hand
giving me the gift of
a bloom you
loved

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

The Candle

is still smoking bent
over in prayer melting
like tears left behind

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

The Candle Smolders

in the darkness
smoke ribbons
curl upward

for a time at one
with the fading light

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

The Chair Leg

wobbles has wobbled
for much more than a decade
and yet we keep it

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

The Clock

never thinks to stop
it measures our hearts our dreams
and laughs at the wind

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

The Desert

has no sweet jasmine
scents at night as the friendly
blood seeps through the war

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

The Fragrance

of this new season
garlands your lovely soft neck
with a sweet silence

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

The Funeral Home

the old cat is silent sleeping
the old man is slowly creeping
a painting on the wall a mountain
beyond a young man near a fountain
three pots of flowers standing proud
music playing not too loud
people sitting speaking quiet
and eating snacks despite their diet
a person enters and two more leave
this seems a peaceful place to grieve

from *In Bed And In The Bathtub* (1970)

rich soos

The Garden

<i>for Sarah&/i>

thrills me with each watering
a new bloom here
a new death there
a ladybug with large spots
a mantis singing softly
the flowers all have names
I'm learning slowly
peony pansy periwinkle
I smile at the poem of their names
bleeding hearts
fox gloves
lily of the valley
thank you Lord
thank you
Sarah says it's love
that makes the flowers grow
and I know her songs are true
by the way her young eyes glow
thank you Lord
thank you

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

The Grave (Emily Translated To Senryu)

the grave

wins all the prizes
always certain of success
until the Lord came

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

The Heart Through Your Eyes

beneath the sea is a glass
with painted models singing in the aether
a porcelain dancer tapped gently
calls forth in the proper key
the wine has been swallowed by the silence
the strings of my lute remain taut although
the glues have softened to the point where
the tunes can be played only with my breath

from *A Foreign Landscape* (1984)

rich soos

The House Sleeps

full of tender dreams
while I chase the final words
of midnight with ink

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

The Men

finger their beards
while contemplating
the gold-edged books
held in their laps

sacred prayers whispered
in thin painful breaths

opening solemn doors
in the empty sanctuary

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

The Mighty Pen

that scribbles secret love songs
in the margins of books
also writes the mortgage checks
to keep the wife warm

the empty bottle near the keyboard
witnesses the urge
to destroy to unity of pen and spirit
by carving words in stone

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

The Passion Of Flight

as the dawn dries dew off stones
let me watch you vanish
through the flute of atmosphere
the shell
surrounding my soul
has disappeared
I shall not allow the rippling
breezes of my heart to
threaten your silence
I shall call a bird to quell
the dances of any tempest
which may break a wing

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

The Sea

lovers create a perfect poetry on the beach
as the tide cools the whispers of their thighs
the plankton wades without control
of its movements
in the manner of my guitar strings
and the fibers ripping from my heart

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

The Seagull

spies the jewels around
her neck and hovers nearby
as the sea shifts sand

from Each Day (1997)

rich soos

The Solitude Of Love

The fire you are walking through
was not your choice.

You wear a costume daily
pretending no one can sense your depths;
hoping no one can sense your depths;
praying you can escape your depths.

The universe arranges itself around
your charade in the mirror knowing
the pain will renew each day;
the pain will renew each hour;
the pain will renew each breath.

Thrust into the flames by one
those who chose not to care,
you survived with wounds
deeper than scars;
deeper than souls;
deeper than sound.

from Bringing In The Sheets (2012)

rich soos

The Song

there's a song
in my heart that
wants to get out
a small bit of music
I never let anyone hear
I only sing it
at night when
everyone is asleep
I know it's there
so don't worry
it is not aching alone

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

The Spider Web

reveals
the presence
of a hidden
weaving master
revealed only
when the prey
is fully immersed

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

The Summit

observatory
peeks deep into the heavens
hoping to glimpse God

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

The Surf

yells at my drunkenness
beating in rhythm
at my ankles
attempting to bury
my weight
spraying my hair
wet in anger
and I laugh
because I'm in
command

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

The Tide Washes Our Feet

your cheeks magnify a submissive madness
modulating through joy and laughter
I translate the music of those moments

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

The Voices

in my head often
enter through the spoken dreams
of ancient drumbeats

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

The Waves Of The Bay

create a symphony
as your dreams weave
the flight of night birds
landing nearby to gather
midnight treats left by the quiet roar
the rain of your dreams
has washed away
many of my tears

from Garden Songs (1995)

rich soos

The Wind Awakens

the wind

awakens you tonight
you say you hear your mother
kissing the children

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

There Is Music

hidden in corners
to be found by a child
exploring shadows

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Thirst

I cup my fingers
and drink from a river
blazing with ships
spread along the
further edges
as you dance
higher on the horizon

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Thorns

as I pick up the feather
of a mockingbird
dropped on my sunlit porch
I wonder if there will be enough
dried blood to scribble a small poem

from Dried Blood (1990)

rich soos

Thoughts

when you see inside
the beauty of the whole world
shines forth from the depths

from (2016)

rich soos

Three Questions

<i>freely translated from Pablo Neruda's Libro de Prejuntas</i>

May I ask my book
if the truth is that I wrote it?

What will they say of my poetry
those who have never touched my blood?

Was it just at the point they lost me
that I was able to finally find myself?

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos

Today

I wrote for you
sang songs for love
dreamed for memories
and lived for today
the peacefulness of sleeping with you
appears only when sleeping with you

from Reality Is A Drunken Feeling (1978)

rich soos

Together

sometimes we remember the dreams
in the life we rely on for bread and wine
then strive to recall which breath taken
contained the true call for sustenance

from (2016)

rich soos

Trust Sounds

being probably myself
I have sacrificed sanity
and am actually more rational
than terrible

matter images itself if found
meaning is experience in segments
the breath of the sea
sometimes stops the water

the sun wants the surf visible to the world
silence cannot speak the dark sleep
we talk different syllables

from Patient Rains And Petals (1981)

rich soos

Two Sides Of A Coin

wild bird sings

come let us fly free in the forest

pet bird sings

come let us share my cage

wild bird shrieks

there's no place to spread my wings

pet bird sighs

I have no perch to call my own out there

wild bird trills

we'll both sing the songs of the world

pet bird chatters

I'll teach you songs of the teachers

wild bird whistles

true songs can never be taught

pet bird sighs

I don't know the songs of the world

from In Bed And In The Bathtub (1970)

rich soos

Unheard Sounds Create The Music

conversing with your clouds has taught
autumn winds to whistle under doors
words transform illusions caught

awake at night conversing thought
I might as well re wax the floors
conversing with your clouds has taught

to never fight what once was fought
enjoy those little kitchen chores
words transform illusions caught

crawl back to sheets sleep is sought
within the dark of endless snores
conversing with your clouds has taught

that perfect peace cannot be bought
waves sing loud praises on the shores
words transform illusions caught

in the morning exhaustion will not
spoil dull dread of fears and wars
conversing with your clouds has taught
words transform illusions caught

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Upon Waking

the white page
wouldn't write
the words my
dreams were
singing until my
pencil howled
louder than my
willful heart

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

Vinum Daemonum

my embroidered grammar is
kneaded into loaves that sit
to rise in the morning sunlight
the dough is patient and changes
shape by noon, vaguely resembling
its past incarnation of dizzying
language spilled from an
enclosure which houses ink
and gauges the ink with
some precision

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Vision

I remember God
when wind sucks up all the air
words will form prayer

words will form prayer
when wind sucks up all the air
I remember God

from *Moaning & Groaning* (1999)

rich soos

Voice

you pick the flowers
from the garden of my heart
proud of your singing

from (2016)

rich soos

Voice (2016)

birds repeat the sounds
wind wildly blankets through air
small creation gifts

from (2016)

rich soos

Voice Of The Mountain

his power

is the voice of the mountain
echoing sunlight in the windy valley
with spirit that never leaves

is the river reflecting a full moon
after the rain washes the memory
of the season no longer visible

is the scent of the air near the peak
unvisited by promises from the past
hovering as a bird returned from death

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

Walk

air intoxicates
with humidity edging
life out of our lungs

from (2016)

rich soos

Walking On The Beach

beyond all wisdom
waves sweep clear the memory
of people passing

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

War Eats Through Me

they still fall screaming everyday
voices weeping in shadowed corners
look at my face
forgive me
it doesn't matter what
I wish myself in the fire

from Fiddlin' Around (2003)

rich soos

War Scars

my clothes are leftovers from the past
my legs are leftovers from the past
my pounding temple and bleeding stomach
are leftovers from the past
the bone in my temple was split
moments after the bones in my legs
I sometimes dance now
sometimes walk as a cripple
it is not easy to remember the past
I am reminded each day is a war

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

When My Children Were Born

I could see it in their eyes
each time I saw another poet
has come with passionate wisdom
to wail alone into the void
with fists raised high in the air
constantly contemplating this chaos

from California Breeze (1998)

rich soos

When The Guitar Sings

when the guitar sings

she does not betray
emotions on her old face
the audience hears

when the guitar sings

the audience hears
emotions on her old face
she does not betray

from Guitars (2001)

rich soos

Why Poetry?

let not your song slumber
but pass to others its peace
anxieties, and simple
movements of sound
for each word contains
a fresh wisdom for
someone and yourself

from Why Poetry (1974)

rich soos

Wife

my hand cannot write
when faced with your dark whispers
only touch your skin

from (2016)

rich soos

Wind (Emily Translated To Senryu)

wind

feels mighty at morn
showing all the brand new dawn
each and every day

feels pompous at noon
dancing with bodiless tunes
moving clouds and dust

feels lonesome at night
people close doors and windows
and shut out the light

First appearance: (2016)

rich soos

Wine (Empty)

bottle completely
empty as the evening sun
exposes the stars

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Winter

winter

these poems keep warm
the soul running random in
the wild rainstorms

winter

these rainstorms keep warm
the soul running random in
the wild poems

winter

these souls will keep warm
with wild rainstorms running
in random poems

from Train of Love (2000)

rich soos

With Each Breath

a poem with each breath a sound
and each breath a life
bursting aloud with melody
loud songs that soar through
spiritless skies asking questions
of children who still know only freedom
America, you are my song

from My Homeland (1976)

rich soos

With Vigor

I pour some sweet wine
and watch through my half closed eyes
another day leave

from His Power (1988)

rich soos

Within

the world grows smaller
with each interior view
centering on love

from (2016)

rich soos

Words

the earth has harsh stones
caressing my vowel garden
despite the new rain

from (2016)

rich soos

Words Become Magnets

which consecrate blood
I live with the images
and draw power from them
I shout at the thunderbolt
with unmerciful voice
love is not easily cultivated
seldom ripens for a lifetime
I do not choose words
for lovers to struggle with
I aim for a trajectory
of simple sincerity

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

Yardtime

weeding the garden
here even shadows are green
cloaking my presence

from (2016)

rich soos

You Shall Face

you shall face the fruit of a fable
pulsing through my tranquil bloodstream
and dream the diagrams of my words

from A Foreign Landscape (1984)

rich soos

You Stand By

the open screen door
and I see your clean body
through your brand new dress

from *The Son is Breaking Through* (1992)

rich soos

You Wait

silent in the storm
watching through your pain
as leaves cyclone
and bury you in their midst
you alone unmoving

from Bringing In The Sheets (2012)

rich soos

Yourself

a poem
is a small part of yourself
left everywhere open and
dispensing chunks of your soul
in truth
the few who bother to read
will know you even more
than you understand yourself

from Parting/Departing (2015)

rich soos