

Poetry Series

**Thomas Case**  
**- poems -**

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## Thomas Case(November 10 1966)

Thomas case was born in Oxnard California. He's published two volumes of poetry, *The Bullfrog Dreams of Flying and Artichokes Avocados and Van Gogh*. He has won several poetry contests. His poetry has been published in *Lyrical Iowa* and *Poetry in Public Project Iowa City* multiple times. He has hundreds of poems published in various anthologies all over the world. His poetry can be viewed on [allpoetry.com](http://allpoetry.com), [poemhunter.com](http://poemhunter.com) and [hellopoetry.com](http://hellopoetry.com). He currently resides in Iowa and continues to write and publish poetry and short stories. You can contact him at [casepoet@hotmail.com](mailto:casepoet@hotmail.com)

# Why I Drink So Much

Frozen clothes on  
the clothesline, blowing in  
a vagrant wind.

My nose red from the  
Wine and beer at  
the bar.

December of '87 came  
hard and ferocious,  
forever changing my life.

I was working night shift at  
the nursing home up  
the street.

A few of us went to  
the tavern after work.

I got home around noon,  
and went to bed.

21 years old, with money,  
a job, and a car.

I didn't realize  
life was borrowed.

Mom couldn't find  
her sweater, so she  
came to my room and  
asked if I had seen it.

I said,

'No Mom, I'm trying to sleep.'

I should have realized that  
there's plenty of time for  
sleep when I die.

But youth produces ignorance,  
and I was drowned in it.

Mom asked if she could  
borrow my car to go  
Christmas shopping.

After more discussion about  
her sweater,

I, with eyes closed tight,

held up the keys,  
and that was the last  
time I saw her.

My last words,  
'Quit acting like  
a bitch.'

Ever since, there has  
been an itch to  
punish myself.

I'm not Freud, but  
maybe that's why I  
drink so much.

Happy Mother's Day

Thomas Case

# The Strangest Thing

The strangest thing happened  
to me a while back.

I was driving a  
lonely stretch of  
highway.

A soft vagrant  
breeze blew through  
the car.

My window was  
down about an  
Inch.

I smelled lilies and lilacs.

My cell phone rang and  
I answered it.

The news was tragic.

A good friend had  
committed suicide.

A somber rain began  
to fall.

The wild ride of  
this carnival life  
became too much for  
her.

She bought a different  
ticket.

No judgment from me,  
I wish I could have touched  
her pain, and made  
It go away.

I began to think of the the  
fragility of life, and how  
truly fragile the  
human spirit  
can get.

Life can get  
insidious,  
with its twists and turns

and hairpin curves.  
sometimes, headlong into  
a huge oak tree seems  
just too inviting.

Just then,  
A big white bird  
smashed into my  
driver side window.  
It was like one of those  
cartoons.  
Freeze frame,  
broken neck with  
Xed out eyes.

It was so fucking sudden  
and loud,  
I thought it was a pelican,  
but after some thought,  
I realized it was a  
seagull.  
I thought to myself,  
It had to have seen  
my car.  
They usually fly  
much higher.  
And then I thought  
that maybe,  
headlong into a 69  
Mustang was too inviting.  
And just then,  
the sun began to peak  
out from  
behind a big grey  
cloud.

Thomas Case

# The Womb

Another lunatic trip to  
the hospital.

Nine days, this  
go around.

For the first two  
days, I just pulled  
the covers over my  
head and pretended I  
was back in the womb.

It was warm and safe.

As much as I  
wanted to stay,

I knew it was time to  
be reborn into this  
strange world of  
sick streets, and  
broken dreams.

Thomas Case

# Vagabond Wind

You slipped  
away from me,  
like the robins and  
cherry blossoms when  
spring ends,  
and the fractured nights  
of winter comes.

I will search the  
midnight alleys, and the  
mountains of Chile.

I will listen for  
your sweet laughter.

I long to taste your  
honeysuckle lips, and  
hear your heartbeat.

If I never find you,  
I will be a lost leaf  
on the lonesome  
vagabond wind.

Thomas Case

# Apathetic, Empathetic

The conversation lasted into the long tooth hours of the night.

She read her textbooks and then heard a mouse with its tail barely caught in a glue trap. It squealed as if it were dying. In my heart I believed it was savable. In the agony I imagined him dreaming of fields and insects and seeds.

She had these cold gray eyes.

in one quick movement, she took off

one of her clodhoppers and smashed its brains out. She cleaned her shoe with a tissue, she said, I neither hate the mouse nor love it, it's just a thing. At that moment I was pretty sure she was psychotic.

We're both drunk, I kept watching her ass and that tight black dress.

She said in a very automated voice, I suppose you want to fuck me now and then slithered out of that dress.

Pussy is pussy

But I couldn't do it. I told her to put her clothes back on and not kill anything on the way out.

Thomas Case

# I Know Who I Am

I let what you  
thought about me,  
and said about me,  
matter more than what I  
knew about me.  
Way too intertwined with  
your sickness and cruelty.  
Far too beat down under your  
brutal regime  
These days, I wake up overjoyed that  
I now live the obvious.  
Who gives a fuck what you think?

Thomas Case

# Riding The Breeze No More

I watch life float by  
like a dragonfly  
riding the breeze.

I need to seize the  
current like a  
brick of gold,  
soar ever upward,  
above the swamps,  
and dead lilies.

Transcendent light blinds  
temporarily, but it's  
necessary for new sight,  
and stronger wings.

Thomas Case

# Tangerine Sky

Some poems seem to  
write themselves;  
I just move the pen.  
Others, are like lumps  
of clay;  
they refuse to be molded;  
they need moisture and time.  
This one is like  
a robin that just learned  
to use its wings.  
It heads west, on a  
gentle breeze, into  
a tangerine sky.

Thomas Case

# A Prayer Away

Religion and faith are  
for naught, if there is no  
heart change.

The only thing holy about  
Some people, is that they  
are wholly mean and cruel.

Once again, I'm ripped out of  
my daughter's life, because  
her mother's religiosity is  
In vain.

Even with her pretend  
relationship with god,  
small g on purpose,  
she's still the most brutal  
human being I've ever met.

I miss you baby girl,  
Daddy's just a prayer away.

Thomas Case

# I Need To Visit France

I dreamed I was at some sort  
Of carnival/expo with my  
sister and my ex.

Somehow I got separated  
from them

I met a young French woman.  
She was beautiful, and she  
Liked me a lot.

There was a lot  
of passion and an instant  
connection.

I had cuts all over my  
face for some reason.

She liked me anyway.

In fact, she didn't even  
mention the cuts.

The attraction was strong.

There was a heat I  
could smell.

We started making out,  
and we were just  
getting ready to do it,  
when we noticed a  
large crowd behind us.

We laughed, and she wrote  
her information on my  
hand.

Later, I was playing  
with a bear, and some other  
strange animal.

I fell in a river, and her  
phone number and address  
were washed off my hand.

I never did find my  
sister and the ex.

I woke up, and felt  
Sick to my stomach.

Why are all the  
good ones in dreams?

I need to visit France.

Thomas Case

# A Dreamless Sleep

Three sex dreams in a row,  
and I wake up lonely and  
alone.

I don't need a whore that  
just wants to fuck.

I want more, a woman to  
love, that loves me.

And that love  
cradles us, like  
the wind, and rocks us into  
a dreamless sleep beneath  
an ebony sky.

Thomas Case

# I Don't Even Know Your Name

Rolling down the hill;  
playing in the grass again.  
The future becomes the  
past like a strangler of  
the night.  
My fight comes  
and goes, I'm no  
longer young.  
My storage of strength  
seems to have  
came and went.  
And then like  
heaven sent, this woman  
shows up at my door.  
Nowhere to go, lonely like  
so many before.  
But unlike the others,  
within an hour, she says,  
'Let's fuck; let me suck on it.'  
And full disclosure, I'm afraid.  
My younger self would  
have went at it like a  
Tom cat.  
I said, 'slow down, I don't  
even know your name.'  
She says, 'It's Jenny are we going to  
fuck or what? '

Thomas Case

# Shreaded

The blue sky cuts  
the woman to shreds  
Sunflower saves her  
from extinction.

Mountains want to crumble  
with her into the lake,  
but they can't,  
they are strong, and  
they have their place.

Time has got her,  
she just doesn't  
know it.

Thomas Case

# Deadly Nightshade

I was looking for tulips.  
I found you, oleander,  
deadly nightshade.  
Nothing grows in the  
darkness that you chose  
to live in.  
Had I known, I would have  
left you to wilt and rot in the sun

Thomas Case

# Fever

They came to me in  
a febrile dream.  
Whispered screams and  
misshapen limbs.  
They wanted to drag  
me to the hell they  
came from, but I fought,  
and got well.

Thomas Case

# Liquid Smooth

Once I began to get heathy,  
I cut out all the junk food,  
and saturated fats.  
No more bacon and eggs for me.  
I added fruits and vegetables  
to my diet.  
I exercise, and I pound  
Bloody Mary's from 6 am to noon.  
The tomato juice is very healthy.

Thomas Case

# The Neighbor

I hear the patter of  
the rain on the leaves  
of the oak tree.  
It reminds me of my  
daughter's soft footsteps on  
the hardwood floor.  
She's 3 years old,  
and has gorgeous blue eyes like  
her mama.  
She owns my heart.  
The neighbor downstairs  
pounds on his ceiling whenever  
my daughter walks across the floor.  
It scares her.  
I went to his door to tell  
him to stop pounding,  
and he wouldn't answer.  
As a poet, I'm a gentle soul,  
but honestly, I want to  
harvest his kidneys and  
fill his ears up with urine.

Thomas Case

# An Irish Melody

I'm just a lonely  
wanderer;  
a vagrant out at sea.  
My vagabond spirit  
knows home is where  
I need to be.

Through the fog I can't see you.  
I'm as blind as I can be.  
You're my lighthouse in the darkness,  
and your heart is where  
I long to be.

Thomas Case

# Miles And Miles

I know the wind  
cries for me.

The birds sing of  
my loneliness from  
the sky.

I don't even see  
you in my dreams  
anymore.

Your red dress  
hangs from the mahogany  
coat rack, and the  
storm clouds in my mind  
never go away.

Baby, these miles  
and miles are making  
me soul sick, and this  
trumpet will be the  
death of me yet.

Thomas Case

# Psycho Love

Our love is psycho.  
It swims the muddy rivers,  
and creeps on the rocky  
shores, slithering  
through the dark  
corners of our world.  
It bites into  
the dew soaked dawn of all  
our tomorrows.  
It breaks the tethers  
that try to bind.  
It's wet and it smells of  
heat and fire.  
It tastes like sweet pea  
and pomegranate.  
It's eyes are full of  
desire and untamed lust.  
It's the stain on the sunset,  
and the paint on the pallet.  
Our hearts beating together,  
like a metronome, is the only  
thing that calms this  
psycho beast called love.

Thomas Case

# Tide Pool

There, in the  
tide pool, dappled by  
the sun, is birth and death,  
and the spark that continues.  
It leaves mankind in a wake of regret.  
What have I to do with the albatross  
or sea lion?  
I can but write, while they fly and roar.  
I gaze upon the Pacific from this rock,  
all its mysteries and grandeur.  
I am inferior, while it forever reigns with every wave and break of light

Thomas Case

# Jazz In Hell

Chess in the  
afternoon sun.  
Jazz floats over  
the silky couch.  
Backs ache, while  
hearts break.  
Bishop takes knight,  
and France falls again.

The masks are all  
broken under the  
cerulean blue skies,  
while she eats berries,  
and smiles in her  
pink polka dot dress.  
The pawns are all smug,  
and queenie's on the rag.  
Italy surrenders, and from  
the grave, Charlie Parker  
still hammers home  
those soft amber notes.  
I can smell her heat, and  
I think they play  
Jazz in hell.

Thomas Case

# Belladonna

Everyday that dawns,  
you slip away a little more.  
The distant stare,  
the apathetic eyes.  
Your love is as dead  
as the roses in  
the trash.  
Your heart is an  
abyss that I'm  
lost in forever.  
Belladonna drew me in.  
The poison kept me there.  
#love #pain

Thomas Case

# Goodbye Gonzo

Gonzo goes out  
with a 45 blast.  
He was kicking ass in Aspen,  
we knew it wouldn't last.  
The rambling, gambling  
man of journalism  
put Fear and Loathing on  
the map,  
but in the end,  
he couldn't stay.  
It's bat country.

Thomas Case

# The Compliment

I want to get  
the facts out.  
The glass from under  
my skin.  
The rails from the  
timber.  
Just because I said  
that your ass looks  
nice in those jeans,  
doesn't mean you  
get to treat me like  
sex crazed dog.  
I gave you a compliment;  
nothing more.  
You're not an object.  
And neither am I,  
so don't talk to  
me like one.  
I'm not every  
other guy you've  
ever met.  
Lift your eyes  
a little higher,  
that's where I am.

Thomas Case

# The Western Plains Of The Heart

I miss her, and  
it's uncomfortable.

I'm not used to  
feelings.

In the past, I would  
drink when I  
felt uncomfortable,  
or felt anything, for  
that matter.

Now, I identify  
the feelings, like  
a strange new  
species of animal:  
'Oh yes, that's sadness.

It's indigenous to  
the western plains of  
the heart.'

Feeling emotions is  
strange and scary,  
but it beats the  
alternative;  
feeling nothing,  
and dying alone.

Thomas Case

# Flower Drunk

What would you do if you were blown by  
the wind and the Cherry Blossoms,  
and you were giddy on the nectar  
from all the flowers  
that fell from the sky, Orchids, Irises,  
and Tiger Lilies...and all s are.

What would you do if you were blown by  
the wind and the Cherry Blossoms,  
and you were giddy on the nect  
from all the flowers  
that fell from the sky, Orchids, Irises,  
and Tiger Lilies...and all you could  
do was smile and laugh about how  
great the heavens are.

Thomas Case

# Hanging Out With The Muse

I was helping my  
son with his homework  
the other day.  
For one of his assignments,  
he had to write a  
public service announcement.  
He has been visited  
by the muse  
at an early age.  
His goal is to publish  
his first book by the  
time he's 18.

It got me thinking about  
my life as a writer,  
and the young formative  
years.

As a boy, I had a  
broad imagination,  
and much time alone.  
I remember coming  
up with plot lines in  
my head, and then  
writing little adventure stories.  
My dad was a drama  
teacher.

He directed four or  
five plays a year.  
I grew up watching  
the classic plays,  
and developing a love  
for literature.

In Junior high,  
I saw the power  
of my gift.  
I wasn't a popular  
kid; somewhat of a  
loner.

But one day in  
English class, I wrote  
a story about a  
nappy headed hamster,  
with an underbite like  
a French bulldog.  
The other kids loved it.  
They listened and laughed,  
and applauded.  
Words became my  
new best friend.

I grew, and leaned on  
writing through the  
good times and the bad.  
They were my warmth  
In the long winters,  
and my rain in  
springtime.  
Through the alcoholic  
haze of much of  
my adulthood,  
writing kept me sane,  
and it gave me  
the will to keep  
living when the  
pain grew into  
a beast of its own...

My son hands me  
his paper, and it's  
brilliant--it warns people  
about the dangers  
of cyber hackers, by  
portraying the average  
person surfing the net  
as a lamb walking along  
in the grass,  
thinking life is grand just being  
a sheep, when along  
comes the wolf that pounces and  
devours.

He finishes with,  
'Don't let this happen to you.  
Protect your computer and files  
with such and such software.'

He asked me if I thought  
he could be a good writer.  
I laughed, and and told him  
that he already was.

Thomas Case

# All Good Things

You rolled across  
my body and  
soul,  
working the  
aches out of my  
tired back.

This poem won't  
behave.

The writing streak  
is over.

I know that  
all good things  
must come to  
an end.

The sidewalk  
cracks,  
the glasses break,  
both bull and  
matador die.

And when I lie down  
at night  
on the living  
room couch,  
the ten steps  
to your bed and  
your heart  
seem like  
a thousand miles away.

Thomas Case

# Indigo Night

On my windowsill,  
of that indigo night  
you took me,  
and I haven't  
been the same since.

Something about you  
makes me want to  
be a better man.  
I've grown wings,  
so I take to the sky.  
#flight #relationship

Thomas Case

# Carried Away By My Dark Obsession

You're so sweet when  
you're bleeding, and you're  
needing that cock.  
You're so lovely when  
you study.  
Let me give you  
this rock.

Don't blame it on  
emotion,  
the ocean still rolls in.  
Don't call it love,  
when we both know  
that it's sin.

I don't care about  
the weather  
when the shit  
hits my veins.  
I don't care about  
the tether,  
when I'm going insane.

If you were here,  
I'd kiss you,  
make my troubles  
go away.  
The problem lies  
in the fact that I can't stay.

You can suck on me,  
suck the poison from  
my soul.  
Keep me young.  
Never grow old.

I'm always watching you,  
through the Windows  
of my mind.

My heart is true  
even though my  
soul is blind.

I dream of fucking you  
in the darkness  
Of your cage.  
I want to slide it in  
so you can feel all of my rage.

You're going to take it  
Just like you took everything  
From me.  
I once was blind  
But now I see.

I miss you,  
but not as much  
as I miss myself  
I love you  
but I hate my fucking self.

Thomas Case

# Advocatus Diaboli (Devil's Advocate)

How can you  
blame me when  
you made  
me this way.  
You gave me  
free will, and knew  
what I would do.  
You predestined me  
to lose.  
I didn't choose  
these terrible  
wings of destiny;  
you did it for me.  
I wanted to be  
Michael or Gabriel instead  
of Lucifer.  
I know there needed  
to be a war,  
and an enemy,  
but why me?  
I despise this  
black soul.

Thomas Case

# Wet Orchid

Her lips are like  
wet orchids, dressed in  
the spring rain,  
waiting to be  
kissed and  
caressed.

Thomas Case

# Damnation Island (Lunatic's Ball)

Let's all go  
to Damnation Island.  
Let's all go to  
the lunatic's ball.  
We'll have  
amusements, and  
dancing, and the  
magic lantern.  
The stupefaction  
is for us all.

The poor will  
be there,  
hungry  
and tired.  
The poor will  
be there,  
dresses in rags.  
We'll all have fun  
on Damnation Island.  
The degradation is  
for us all.

The criminals  
are on  
Damnation Island.  
They're dancing and  
killing at the  
lunatic's ball.  
The criminals love  
Damnation Island.  
The mortification is  
for us all.

If you go to  
Damnation Island,  
if you dance at  
the lunatics ball,  
you might stay on

Damnation Island,  
there's a good chance  
you'll sell  
your soul

Thomas Case

# The Streak

I've suffered bouts of  
writer's block that  
made me feel like  
half a man.

Metaphors and imagery  
evaded me.

It was frustrating  
and painful.

a desert  
an iceberg  
a forest with  
no trees.

Lonely, it's the  
opposite.

I'm on the  
most prolific writing  
streak of my life.

It's like building  
a ladder to heaven.

I can taste colors  
and smell sunshine.

It feels like I  
found the fountain of youth.

Like I'm a porn star,  
a rock star, like I can  
grab stars out of the sky  
and light up my writing desk.

I sleep in the  
crook of the moon  
and dream  
that this steak  
never ends.

Thomas Case

# Days Like These

Sometimes, when I  
talk to the ex,  
I feel strong  
as a rope.  
Nothing she says  
or does fazes me.  
I guard my emotions  
and keep the  
conversation strictly  
about the kids, and  
how we can better  
co-parent.

Other times, when  
we talk,  
I feel like  
Humpty Dumpty  
teetering on a brick  
wall.  
Her cruel words  
are like strong  
gusts of wind  
sending me to the  
cold hard ground  
in a thousand pieces.

On days like these  
I berate myself,  
'What the fuck  
Is wrong with you?  
Why did you  
let  
her in again?  
Her heart is  
small and  
diseased.'

I fell in  
love with

hope  
and a  
false image.  
When I saw  
reality  
It was  
like  
finding a  
snake in my  
bed.

Thomas Case

# My Queen

I was playing  
chess without  
any pawns.

The dawn  
came up  
brutal and  
strong.

My queen  
had a knife,  
and stuck  
it in my  
heart.

That was the  
end  
before I even  
got a start.

Thomas Case

# Rocks In My Cup

I was feeling  
down  
depressed  
and dark.  
I put  
some  
rocks in my  
cup  
to uplift my  
spirits,  
to climb  
out of the hole.

I want to  
run on  
the clouds  
and  
touch the sun;  
go 180 around  
the third turn.  
feel nothing but  
the wind;  
go out like  
Earnhardt Sr. in  
a blaze of  
glory.  
Last lap  
last run.

Thomas Case

# Teardrops On A Glass Pipe

Sometimes, on rainy days, i stare out the  
windows; the shadows play  
tricks.

I see happier times,  
when we were decent to each other.  
Yellow flowers, blue skies, I blink  
and then the rain  
looks like tear drops on a glass pipe,  
or dragons rising in the bowl.

Thomas Case

# Shattered (My Lady Of Ashes)

What happened to your heart?

It used to be so strong.

When did these damn nights  
get so fuckin long

You're my Lady of ashes,  
and I'm all burnt up.

You threw me in the fire;

And my soul has had enough.

I've had enough...

I've had enough,

I've had enough

Thomas Case

# Vision Board

I made a  
vision board  
in treatment  
the other day.  
I had to  
hunt for a  
picture of  
Mom and Dad.

Where the fuck  
did the time go?  
They have been gone  
for over 30 years now.

The hour glass  
broke,  
and the sand  
blew and blended  
me in with the  
storms of life.  
I tried to  
drink  
all the pain away;  
to become a  
lobotomized shell.  
It didn't work.  
The poet in me  
felt everything.

I have four  
kids that my  
parents never got  
to meet.  
Sometimes I see  
Mom and Dad  
in my son's and  
daughter's eyes.  
Two have blue  
like Dad.

And two have brown  
like Mom and me.  
They are  
intelligent  
sensitive  
and caring.

When I was  
little, I thought  
my parents would  
live forever.  
On my vision  
board,  
I become a  
better father.

Thomas Case

# Dark Corners Of My Soul

There's a little  
boy that hides in  
the dark corners of  
my soul.

He doesn't want to  
be hurt anymore.

I spent eight years  
with Beth.

For the most part,  
it was hell and  
constant pain.

She made nightmares  
look good.

I heard the  
little boy cry  
late into the  
silky night,  
while snails got  
smashed on the streets  
of Ventura.

When I drank, which was often,  
the little boy seemed  
at peace for awhile,  
while swans were  
murdered in Venice,  
and I tasted the ashes  
of Neruda.

Years flew by  
like seagulls;

up

down

and darting.

The little boy  
continued to

hide in the  
dark corners of my soul.

He wanted to

come out and be loved.  
He was thirsty for it,  
but there wasn't  
any around.  
It was dry, like the  
deserts in hell.  
It's too late for  
sorries, here comes  
the plow.

He began to see  
the pattern of life.  
There are monsters  
that walk in the light.  
Vulnerability equals pain.  
The little boy got mean.  
And now he carries  
a knife.

Thomas Case

# Past Tense

Being polite or kind was  
never an aspiration of hers'.  
And the level of  
selfishness she displayed  
bordered on narcissism.  
When we used to go  
for walks, Tulips and  
Daffodils wilted when she  
passed by.

And those eyes...  
I've seen more  
soul  
in the eyes of  
a dead gold fish.  
In the arena of  
cruelty, she gave Jezebel  
and Nero a run for  
their money.

The sun hid  
behind clouds when it  
saw her face,  
and small animals shrieked when  
they heard her footsteps.

I chose to write  
this in the past tense  
because that's what she is...  
ancient history.

Thomas Case

# My Drinking Career Begins

Her name was  
Amy, she was  
18 and I was 21.  
We met the  
summer after my  
Mom died.  
She had a scholarship  
to Iowa State for  
swimming.  
We didn't have  
air conditioning, and it was  
a brutally hot summer.  
I got sick, and couldn't  
work; pretty soon  
I couldn't get  
off the couch.  
I had my brother run  
to the corner and  
use the payphone to call  
the ambulance.  
It turned out I had  
double pneumonia.  
They also realized I was  
drinking a lot and would  
need help medically to  
d-tox.

Amy visited me in  
the hospital.  
She snuck my kitten in.  
We made out in my bed.  
She was beautiful.  
I felt so alive when  
I was with her.  
The kitten got loose and  
ran down the hall.  
The nurses laughed.

I got out of the

hospital and began  
drinking again immediately.

Amy broke up with me.

She said, 'I can't be with  
an alcoholic.'

I was sad, but I still had  
the kitten, until it  
got smashed by  
a car one sweltering  
July night.

Mom

Amy

the kitten--all gone.

Then, I really started  
drinking.

Thomas Case

# Invincible Summer

I need to straighten  
my dreams out,  
they got crooked along the way.  
In my frozen castle,  
in this grueling winter of life,  
lies in me an invincible summer  
that longs to be free;  
scabbed up knees and  
grass stains on my soul,  
it just itches to run, and  
swim the rivers,  
and lie long in the sun.

Thomas Case

# Like Teardrops On A Glass Pipe

Sometimes, on rainy days i stare out the  
windows; the shadows play  
tricks.

I see happier times,  
when we were decent to each other.  
Yellow flowers, blue skies, I blink  
and then the rain  
looks like tear drops on a glass pipe,  
or dragons rising in the bowl.

Thomas Case

# Perspective

Strangely enough, I  
almost missed the  
birth of my three year  
old daughter.

I have never written much for  
popularity or trends; this one  
is no exception.

My girlfriend and I  
had been separated most  
of her pregnancy.

I stabilized the last three months and  
was able to  
travel the 50 miles  
as often as needed to  
be there for the birth.

The night before she went  
into labor, that morning, she acted  
crazier than usual--passive aggressive,  
and cruel biting remarks.

Finally she just came out with it,  
'I looked at your phone while you were sleeping,  
and you have been watching porn. I'm taking you  
back to so and so city and you can just miss  
the birth of your daughter.

Luckily, we only made it a few blocks before  
she went in to labor.

But, she hasn't let me  
live it down.

And I hoped like hell,  
as I looked down at my  
little angel,

I sure hope the fuck  
that she never becomes  
a porn star.

Thomas Case

# Dead Irish Poet Beer

Back in my bone crushing  
poverty ridden days,  
I collected cans for nickles;  
enough cans meant booze and  
smokes for the day.  
one morning I came across  
an empty can of beer, it said,  
Dead Irish Poet Beer.  
i thought, how odd is this?  
Just then, a car blew by blaring  
a Van Morrison song.  
I thought, ah yes, but he's alive.  
I didn't take the can for the nickle.  
I left it to its green garbage  
can grave.

Thomas Case

# Time Is A Thief

There's ether in  
the cloud at the  
bottom of the hill.  
Birthdays come and  
go,  
and they seal the deal.  
Feelings change with  
the wind,  
but time is real.  
It's a thief,  
and it likes to steal.

Thomas Case

# Benzoed

If you're wondering why there's so many typos? I'm in the hospital,  
Benzoed out and on phenbarbital.

But I guess it's better than hammered drunk at home trying to give the cat a  
bath.

He doesn't like that band The Allman Brothers which I Blair at the side of the tub  
and he tends to scratch me  
even with the Mr bubble bath. Now I'll try to watch the Redskin buccaneer game,  
they'll always be the Redskins to me. But that could just be the benzos talking

Thomas Case

# Dtox

I'm in the hospital strung out on phenobarbital,  
And Librium

The last thing in the world I wanted or expected was several Democrats seeking  
refuge under my bed.

Nancy Pelosi (forgive me for my spelling, I'm high like a kite as George W. Bush  
at a New year's Eve frat party) and friends their  
demanding gefilte fish and Matzo ball soup. Somehow Bernie Sanders is under  
there, and he's rattling his cup for more scotch... I'm getting ready to push the  
call light and ask if they would dose them all with some thorazine so they would  
go to sleep. I even think they dug Ross Perot up Either I need more drugs or  
they need to get these politicians out from under my bed. Or maybe order more  
matzo ball soup.

Thomas Case

# Blue Eyed Delusion

Blue-eyed delusion;  
living in the past.  
I guess sanity doesn't  
last forever.  
Maybe she never  
had it.  
I need a woman that  
treats me right,  
and knows how to love,  
not a monster that rages  
in the night.  
The railroad tracks  
know the truth.  
So do the harsh Iowa Winters.  
And talking about God  
doesn't change it.

Thomas Case

# Olivia

My daughter talks to  
her blueberries like  
they're her friend.  
my soul smiles  
and I never want  
it to end.

Thomas Case

# Congical Visit Death

Sex until the heart stops seems like the logical answer.  
Death in sweat drenched ecstasy,  
and preferably with  
the nubile young Sherriff's wife.  
Now, if she's not around, his sister  
or Mother would do just fine.  
Small town tasty freeze  
serves as the last meal.  
What a way to go,  
behind some greasy cheeseburger  
and chocolate shake. Sheriff said the  
budget wouldn't cover the French fries.  
I don't care much about myself,  
it's mama I'm worried about.  
it will just break her heart...I ain't no good.  
I hope I can see her if I can get to heaven.  
Mama's the best in the world.

Thomas Case

# Smothered

I can't fit  
in your  
pocket,  
that kind  
of love  
is too  
much.  
Such a  
dreamy  
coffin,  
when all  
I wanted  
was  
your  
touch.

Thomas Case

# Assonance

I watch life float  
by like a dragon-fly  
riding the breeze.

Thomas Case

# A Boat On A Leash

I dreamed that I had  
a boat on a leash,  
which was strange  
because moments before,  
I had it in the ocean,  
and I was fishing off  
the starboard side.  
My nephew was with me  
and he got us lost.

We dragged that boat all  
over Ventura.  
We were looking for  
the marina.  
The longer that the boat  
was on the leash,  
the smaller it got.  
Pretty soon it was  
just a toy, a poisoned  
dog that we  
threw in the trash.

Thomas Case

# Tired And Longing

Thank God those  
febrile nightmares of  
youth are gone.

I long for the  
numbing fog.

The dust of dreams  
linger when I awake,  
like a fly in  
a glue-trap.

My mind is nebulous as  
I try to recall  
the nocturnal visits.

Legs tired from running;  
cock sore from fucking.

I've played doctor for years  
trying to reverse this curse,  
prescribing: women, drugs,  
booze by the barrels,  
searching for that ambrosia,  
that nectar of the gods that  
makes life less vivid and sharp,  
and puts the sleep back in  
my eyes.

Thomas Case

## Rain (Haiku)

torrential down pour  
life giving water for plants  
sad at the window.

Thomas Case

# Dangerous Video Game

I feel like I'm stuck in a  
bad video game, like Pong,  
from the first Atari.  
And I'm that little dot that  
gets ponged back and forth.  
Life is like a scene from Dante's  
inferno...Abandon all hope...  
I need mountains, the Ocean,  
and the breath of eight week  
old puppies.

Thomas Case

# Algebra

I sit at my window and look out at the  
snowflakes; they fall vertically, horizontally under  
the grey black sky. I watch the dog break open the  
bone and lick the marrow out. I watch the  
big white cat sleep, snore, maybe dreaming of  
a fat sparrow in his mouth. I think of taking  
a bite of the sunset, living in a cave; the way  
a marimba sounds when I'm haunted,  
how Hamsun took bites of his hand in hunger.  
My mind drifts to Van Gogh's potato eaters,  
the whore that rejected his ear, Lautrec's withered  
legs and beautiful heart. I think of the falcon in  
the city, the stranger in the mirror, the brutality  
of man and the wonder in the doe's eyes.

Anything but algebra, I took the compass test for  
college, 99% in writing, 96% in reading and 17% in math.  
I have to retake the math and score a 25% or better.  
I despise math, my girlfriend says, 'You love math, it  
gets you loans and grants.'  
My brain bleeds with numbers and equations,  
but she's right,  
I like loans and grants.

So I'm back at it, like a kid to  
the dentist, and math does its job,  
it pushes me back to  
the word, the line, my dirt road  
through the madness.

Thomas Case

# One For M

Sometimes the laughter between  
us could heal a leper.

He would say, 'Dear God, my nose is falling  
off, but these two motherfuckers are funny.'  
Jesus would say with a grin and a snicker,  
'Go in peace my son, you are healed.'

I loved laughing with you Mare.  
I felt like a kid that just watched  
a five year old accidentally hit his dad in the  
nuts with a plastic bat.

When you would get really hysterical,  
you'd make these strange snorting sounds  
with your nose. Our eyes watered like faucets.  
I'm crying too now Mare—but not  
from sorrow. My tears are from sheer joy at  
our comedic silly days in the sun together.  
I hope you're laughing too.

Thomas Case

# Golden Vagina?

She acted like her vagina was  
made of gold.

And

that my heart was to be  
bought and sold.

And

that I would bow to  
that wet alter and  
sell my soul.

She was

wrong though—it's not  
for sale;

not for any price;

not even if her

vagina were made of  
gold.

Thomas Case

# Whoops

I've been so lonely  
as of late.  
I set out to  
create a mate.  
Oh, who am I  
kidding, I'm not  
a poet, I'm a doctor,  
truth be told,  
more of an alchemist.  
I'm going to graveyards  
for body parts, all  
in the name of  
science, I swear....  
to create life....boy did  
I fuck this one up  
royally.

Thomas Case

# Ode To Ma And Pa

What difference does it make?  
I'm already condemned.  
There isn't a person in  
this God-forsaken town  
that hasn't tried me in  
their mind and found me guilty.  
Step mothers aren't real  
mothers anyway.  
My mother died when I was little.  
Daddy remarried and couldn't have  
cared less about me and Emma,  
my dear sister, and the ax sharpener.  
I was acquitted, and who can  
judge me now?  
By the way, the weapon was never  
found, it's buried by my feeble  
attempt at poetry.

Thomas Case

# Fuck All The King's Horses And All The King's Men

Yeah, so what I was sitting  
on the wall.

It was mine, and a great  
wall it was.

Peasants walked by  
and envied my crevice,  
they mistook it for a  
belt, I had to constantly  
correct them.

I got in such a squabble  
with one of the villagers,  
I leaned forward to give  
him the what for, and  
I'll be damned if I didn't  
tumble off and smash into  
thousands of pieces.

Because I'm so important,  
the Kings men and beasts were  
quickly dispatched, and  
the incompetent fools could  
not fix me.

So I lie here, yolk and shell  
everywhere, yet I continue to  
think and reason, no heaven,  
no hell. This wretched life  
continues, I watch the scum  
walk through me, I hear their  
uneducated banter and it  
infuriates me...

I've read all the great philosophers,  
yet; nothing has prepared me for this.  
And what the hell does, 'pride goeth  
before the fall' mean anyway.

Thomas Case

# Tempus Fugit (Time Flies)

Wretched and rancid, look what the  
sand did; it slipped through the  
hourglass way too soon.

Seems like yesterday, I was on  
a rod iron chair in my back yard,  
preparing to jump into the  
plastic swimming pool.  
I was singing, Leaving on a Jet-plane.  
I understood the sadness, the good-bye.

48 years later, no plastic pool,  
no rot iron chair, not  
even a song to sing.  
But I still ready myself for the  
inevitable journey, that not  
even time will stand still for.

Thomas Case

# In Lieu Of Flowers

Orchids wilt and rot  
in time.

Roses have thorns that  
prick to bleed.

Seeds bring life that  
ultimately die.

In lieu of flowers

give me your

eyes full of

heat and desire.

Surrender your heart of

passion, but most of all,

water me with your

love so that I can grow.

Thomas Case

# Love Drunk

~To Love or Not to Love  
Is the question

I sit here riffing at 6am  
sifting through the scattered pages  
of love long gone

.....

As this love sickness  
still resides inside my infected heart?  
plaguing ?my soul?  
Torn and tattered  
as if our Love never even mattered  
Watching the sun rise with swollen eyes  
at morning dawn

.....

Rememberin--g your  
eyes ablaze with passion and desire  
Before my soul was poisoned  
by your toxic fire  
Burning my heart  
Twisting and turning Our Love  
inside out

.....

Now we're apart  
and my poetic heart is slowly dying  
This intoxication from  
our Once Upon A Time Love  
Death from remembrance  
It scrapes away inside me  
Rum soaked and drenched  
in a drunken slumber  
Constantly Inebriated

I now suffer

.....

You're so shiny and clean on the outside  
purified by the fire  
The blaze never reaching your heart  
But it's still rotten as a corpse  
and I found out to late  
That there was no antidote  
from the bite of this snake

.....

Our Love so absorbed  
in these crimes of passions  
I'm always paying the price  
Taking chances  
Rolling the dice  
The cost is too high  
I can't take another DUI

.....

I--f I GET BEHIND THE WHEEL  
SOMBODY'S GOING TO DIE

Thomas Case

# Jumping That Train

When I think of you,  
I hear a marimba in my head.  
I'm lost like a stray cat.  
Baby, I swear I'll  
hop a train and head  
west, to roll away from  
the memory of you.  
This mad hatter moon lights  
my way, and I'm done  
holding on.  
I'm getting a  
bottle of whiskey,  
and drinking  
it, until you become a  
blurry memory.  
Then I'm jumping that train.

Thomas Case

# Me And Walter

I was living in this  
flop house above  
a porn shop in Amarillo.  
I had a one eyed cat  
named Walter, I'd bet  
a sawbuck that when  
I slept,  
he drank my whiskey.  
I sill love him though.  
He stuck around longer  
than those old painted up  
ladies that strolled through,  
and tested my bed springs.  
I got two shots of Wild Irish Rose  
left, then it's back to these  
dirty streets of broken dreams  
and sick scenes.

Thomas Case

# Two Dimes

I was walking in  
that old betrayer,  
rain.

I was soaked to the gills,  
and my wingtips were  
sloshing on every  
broken sidewalk.

The wind took my last  
match, so smoking was out.

I'd give my liver for  
a lighter and two  
dimes to rub together.

I think I'll join the  
carnival, get on that  
tunnel of love and never  
get off.

Thomas Case

# Crazy?

Why is it that this fucked up  
world labels all the creative people  
crazy?

They do it all the time.

John Nash

Vincent Van Gogh

Poe

Sylvia Plath

Michelangelo

Edvard Munch

Francisco Goya

Hemingway

Kerouac

H.P. Lovecraft

Virginia Woolf

This isn't an exhaustive list.

I think it is complete  
bullshit.

I think Artists see the world  
differently, so it's easier  
to call them crazy, then to try  
and understand why they  
see the world differently.

As long as the world keeps  
doing this...they can go  
fuck themselves with a  
copy of On the Road,  
and a tube of Cerulean blue  
paint.

Thomas Case

# Taos

I was young, and living  
in Southern California.  
I owned life, I had two pet  
doves and I was reading  
a lot of Dylan Thomas.

I was getting ready to  
go to college for Nursing.  
20 years old, learning about  
assonance and alliteration.  
Poetry, and love for the  
craft found me...all green  
and naive.

On my way out the door,  
the phone rang, it was my  
brother Ted, he was head of the  
biology department at  
San Diego State. He told me  
in his scientific way that  
our oldest brother Todd was  
dying of pancreatic cancer,  
and asked if I would come and take  
care of him.....I said of course.  
Ted said as soon as the semester finished  
he would be back out.  
I drove down the coast sobbing like the fog.  
I was to go out the next morning.  
I would stay overnight with my sisters in  
Ventura. Ted called at 1 am...Todd had just  
died....Ted told me his last words were,  
'is Tommy coming out? '

Thomas Case

# Heaven Reigns Down

What would you do if you were blown by  
the wind and the cherry blossoms,  
And you were giddy on the nectar  
from all the flowers  
that fell from the sky, orchids, irises,  
and tiger lilies...and all you could  
do was smile and laugh about how  
great the heavens are.

Thomas Case

# Stuff, Things, Crap...Etc...

I'm in treatment again.  
Booze is wrecking my body.  
This morning(pre-dawn)I took  
my meds, drank coffee, and  
did the breakfast setup.  
My friend, (a brilliant saxophone player)  
came through the line and said,  
'What's up man? '  
I said, 'Oh you know...stuff.  
How about you? '  
He replied, 'Oh yeah, Stuff...always lots of stuff,  
...and things.Always lots of things on my plate.'

Our laughter broke through the  
sound of Hell's Bells in the background.  
There was a connection, a brotherhood of  
the stuff and things society.  
The little 8th notes and 16th notes,  
and the verbs and nouns floated  
in the kitchen air, mixing with the smell  
of bleach and toast.  
Creation was in the birthing process.  
He asked, 'What's on the agenda for today? '  
'oh crap, lots of crap...you? '  
'Shit...lots of shit, you know.'  
I chuckled, 'yes, I do know.'  
I stopped everything I was doing,  
and frantically began  
scribbling this poem.  
He went to his room,  
and grabbed his sax,  
and began riffing on some  
Miles Davis and John Coltrane.  
Far from the sterile  
smell of stuff,  
things, crap, etc...

Thomas Case

# Olive Skinned Dream

Last night I had  
the strangest dream.  
I dreamed I had  
three daughters;  
they were all  
babies, and of  
Spanish descent.  
My daughter's mom is  
English, and long gone;  
like the Beatles  
and the Jam.  
I remember two of the  
girls names, Amelia and Alhena,  
I can't recall the third one.

So there I was with these  
beautiful olive skinned babies.  
And it was wonderful.  
I was full of joy.  
The babies cried,  
so I cooked for them.  
When the Polenta had cooled,  
I said, It's suppertime angels.  
They lined up and sat down.  
I fed them; each in their turn.  
they made soft  
cooing sounds.  
I turned around  
to pour some milk.  
And out of the corner of  
my eye, I saw dark  
shadows on the wall, and  
heard the flutter of wings.  
I turned back around.  
They had turned into  
doves, and one by one,  
they flew away.

I woke up with an

ache worse than  
hunger pains.  
It was like the  
dreams That I had  
when I was a child.  
I dreamed that  
I had a puppy,  
a girlfriend  
or some candy,  
and then woke up  
to none of it.  
Nothing but a longing  
and a pain in my gut  
that never went  
away.

Thomas Case

# What A Life

Being 16 and free,  
living on the sailboat  
with my Dad and brother.  
I was rocked to sleep  
by the gentle  
waves in the marina.  
Just being...the wonderful  
verb of youth,  
Bills came in,  
Dad would say, 'They can kill us,  
but they can't eat us.'  
We'd laugh and peel  
up the Pacific coast Highway  
to the track,  
Hollywood Park or Santa Anita,  
to bet on the horses.  
We'd dope the racing form  
and Get chili dogs.  
Dad would give us  
money to bet with.

I saw some of the  
best horses ever:  
Secretariat  
Affirmed  
John Henry  
Bates Motel  
We saw the greatest jockeys too.  
William Shoemaker  
Liffit Pincay  
Eddie D.  
Our tiny heroes.

The thunder of the  
hooves coming down the  
homestretch still echoes  
inside of me.  
Dad always said, 'winners buy dinner, '  
but he always paid.

We stopped at this  
steak place on the  
edge of L.A.

It was dark; they had the best  
Fillet Mignon, you cut it  
with a spoon.

The sun sank into the blazing  
ocean, and with the windows rolled  
down, we could taste the salt  
in the air.

Thomas Case

# My Night Of A Thousand Storms

The inner critic  
protects me from  
reality and success;  
It knows best.  
It reminds me of  
my hopeless plight,  
my dark destiny,  
my night of a  
thousand storms.

Councillors say,  
'Examine those thoughts.  
Challenge them, are  
they rational? '  
I nod and smile,  
and somewhere there  
is a sparrow in me  
that wants to sing,  
that agrees with  
the blue skies, and  
the trees, and the wings  
that have carried it  
away from the pain.

But then the critic  
and its minions  
chatter away, and  
remind me of failures,  
they say,  
'The play has already been written.  
You're just doing your part-  
your small walk on part.  
You don't get to rewrite it.  
It's been written, it's finished.  
You being a writer must appreciate  
irony, isn't it ironic  
Thomas, That no matter  
how bad you want it,  
you can't have it.

It's been decided, it's predestined,  
long before you were born.  
You lose, some win, but not you.'  
I faintly hear the dying song  
of the sparrow, as I rise once again  
and stumble towards the abyss.

Thomas Case

# Too Drunk To Fuck

She was too drunk.  
She had drank a fifth of vodka  
over the course of four hours.  
Oh we tried, but it wasn't happening.  
It was sloppy and cumbersome;  
we were like two hippos wrestling  
in the mud.  
I got up and left her to her  
impotent dreams.  
I made a cup of coffee, and  
sat in the dark.  
Images ran through my mind.  
I turned on a light, and started  
writing. At least something was working.

Thomas Case

# Guts And Feet

When I find myself in dire straits,  
which is quite frequently,  
my guts will get me through.  
My feet tend to want to run.  
If my guts and courage are on board,  
my feet will follow, but left to  
their own devices, in any given  
situation that is troublesome,  
if my feet could talk, they would say,  
'Fuck this, run! '  
But usually my guts win out.  
I forge into the various battles that  
need fought.  
Win or lose, when my guts and  
feet are in one accord,  
it's a glorious day.

Thomas Case

# You Just Want Someone To Take Care Of You

She used to clean my ears with hydrogen peroxide.

She cut and cleaned my toenails and fingernails.

She shaved my neck and back.

She even popped my zits.

When I first went to

her apartment,

she had me strip down in the hall,

so that she could wash the

clothes I was wearing.

This all made me a bit uncomfortable.

I was sleeping on her couch one night.

She came out of her room, wrapped in a blanket, and asked if I would lie down with her.

I did.

We were both naked, and I went to work on her.

She later cried and said,

'I wish I could take your pain away.'

At the moment,

I didn't have any.

The next day, after I bought her over a hundred bucks worth of groceries, she kicked me out.

Her last words were,

'You just want somebody to take care of you.'

Thomas Case

# This Is Getting Real Old

I'm back in the psyche ward again.  
It's my home away from home,  
next to jail and the emergency room.  
I sat under the bridge the other night.  
It was January, and extremely cold.  
I was jonesing for a drink—I knew what I had to do.  
I had only been out of jail for a  
couple of days for another public intox.  
I narrowly avoided going back to the can today.  
My nut-job girlfriend said,  
'Why don't you get us some wine? ' 'Sure, 'I said.  
Shaking and sick, I walked a mile to  
my favorite store that I steal booze from.  
I arrived, and had a bad feeling, but I  
don't pay much attention to feelings anymore.  
In and out is always the plan.  
A bottle of chardonnay down the front  
of the pants, and one in the coat.  
I thought I had it. I was wrong.  
A customer saw me and snitched me off.  
I went with the manager to his office.  
A cop showed up shortly afterwards.  
I engaged the store-guy with talk of literature.  
It turned out he was an  
English major.  
I wrote down the title of my book,  
and slipped it to him. He put the paper  
in his wallet. He told the cop that I was very cooperative.  
Instead of taking me to jail,  
the cop gave me a citation with a  
court date on it, and let me go.  
Sometimes, providence smiles on me.  
On my way back to the apartment,  
I was already planning the next store to hit,  
I needed a drink.  
The cop, from the store, pulled up along side of me,  
and said,  
'Your girlfriend called, she said she didn't  
want you at her place anymore.

All your stuff is in front of her door.'  
I felt like I'd been run over by a rhino.  
The cop said,  
'I'll give you a lift, jump in.'  
When I arrived, there were two loosely  
packed bags of clothes weighing around 100 pounds.  
There was no way in hell that I could  
have carried all that crap eight miles to Iowa City.  
I grabbed a back pack, and stuffed it with a pair  
of jeans, two shirts, my writing, and a copy of Don Quixote.  
I went outside and waved to the cop, then headed towards town.  
I finally made it back to the bridge.  
I waited to get the nerve to make  
my next move—steal wine.  
I did it, and with no cork screw,  
I opened it with a broken ink pen.  
I'm not complaining, it was the needed elixir  
and it went down like nectar of the gods.  
I drank it quick, it was three degrees out.  
Life had to change.  
This was getting real old.

Thomas Case

## 4 North

It's One a.m. in the psych ward.  
Let's just call it 4 North.  
On the table that I'm writing at is a plant,  
it looks to be a member of the cactus family.  
Three nurses sit behind a glass booth,  
and watch me with curiosity.  
One of them looks to be a member of the  
cactus family—or is it cacti?  
Either way, I don't want her close to me.  
Just now, one of the cacti-looking nurses says,  
'What are you writing? '  
I say, 'My escape plan, ' without looking up.  
She says,  
'Very interesting.'  
That's one thing I've noticed in the  
psych ward, everything is very interesting.  
Just once, I wish they would say,  
'That is the most boring load of  
shit I've ever heard.'  
Then, maybe I'd be less inclined  
to think they resemble members of the plant life.

Thomas Case

# Reading Is Overated

She drinks beer and farts like a sailor.  
She cusses like someone with Tourette's.  
She complains constantly,  
like it gets her high. She's never read a book,  
and the look on her face when I  
bring up Hemingway, Bukowski, or Gogol  
is something to see.  
She doesn't have the faintest clue what  
fidelity means. Yet, with all of  
her shortcomings, I've never met a woman that  
could fuck like her. It's magical; sometimes  
I think she put a spell on me;  
our sexual chemistry is mythological. She rides me like  
I'm the wild frontier. She makes the cutest  
face when she comes.  
Sometimes, I wonder if Papa, Buk, or Nicolai  
had it this good?  
Besides, who doesn't like drinking beer and farting?  
And after a glorious night with her,  
I'm pretty sure that reading is overrated.

Thomas Case

# Toxic

Our relationship is toxic, like a river of shit  
or a mercury stained fish,  
We argue all the time—we hit each other.  
We bring up past indiscretions and affairs.  
After we haven't seen each other for a while,  
it all starts off well enough;  
we're like dogs in heat.  
We fuck constantly, then the inevitable  
moment comes when one of us will say, '...and  
wouldn't a glass of wine be nice? '  
'Yes, yes it would.'  
Then it turns into bottles of wine,  
then vodka, then you calling the cops  
and getting me kicked out.  
Next thing I know I'm under a bridge  
in the middle of fucking winter.  
You're in your nice warm apartment drinking  
your Chardonnay, dancing with  
your toothless neighbor and  
driving around with your ex-boyfriend.  
I can drink myself to death on my own;  
I don't need some wack-job to help me.  
At times your vagina might have  
been my warped little god,  
but it's time I excommunicate myself  
from the church of your spread legs.

Thomas Case

# Sometimes, Providence Can Be A Friend

I met her on the beach in  
Coralville.

Actually, it was just a long  
strip of sand below the dam.

I was crashing with some  
friends that had tents set up  
back in the woods.

She wore a red one piece  
swimsuit, big sunglasses, and  
she drank warm Chardonnay in  
the sensual summer sun.

We got drunk together and sang songs.

We walked hand in hand to the  
liquor store as evening fell on us like  
a warm blanket.

We got back and found an empty tent.

We drank vodka and fucked long into the night.

When morning came crashing in like  
an intruder, with thick tongues, we  
asked each other's names and laughed.

We spent many hours in the sun on  
that strip of sand, swimming in  
the river- dodging water moccasins.

When the mood struck us,  
which was quite often, we went  
back to the woods, and fucked  
like animals.

Sometimes, providence can be a friend.

Thomas Case

# Liv

We've been apart  
now for awhile, and  
the pain has began to  
subside, but today, something  
triggered it, fresh  
and sharp.

I ran across some  
pictures of your vagina that you  
let me have.

It makes me sad to look at  
them for hours on end.

I may be reading too  
much into the three different  
views, but in one of them,  
your vagina seems to  
be whispering.

'I miss you Thomas,  
we had so much fun,  
you and I.'

In another shot,  
the light hits it  
just right, and I swear  
Jezebel (she loved it when I  
called her that.)  
seems to be pouting, like  
she's sad too.

And the third picture,  
that one is the hardest  
to view of all.

It's in black and white,  
so it has that film noir look  
to it, like a sad French mime.  
It's quite artistic, as far  
as close-ups of  
vajayjays go.

It has that fussy, pouty look  
to it, with a twinge of anger,  
as if to say,

'Why did you break up with  
that great poet that enamored me.'  
It seems to be beckoning,  
'Please take him back, maybe if  
you did, he wouldn't drink so  
much and take your car and  
disappear for days on end,  
and then come back smelling of  
urine and old painted up whores.'  
It breaks my heart to look  
at that one.  
I'm almost crying as I write this,  
because it looks so sad,  
and lonely,  
and a bit angry at you for  
selling my collection of  
baseball cards.  
(it has quite the vocabulary.)

Thomas Case

# Smoke And Write

'When you have 20 bucks in  
your pocket you act like your rich,  
then you get that itch to drink.  
You blow through your money  
like a cyclone, like sand through  
your hands.'

She didn't treat similes well,  
and she was always bitching.

'You eat up all my food,  
and you don't do anything except  
sit there and write.

Write and smoke, smoke and write.

Your cigarettes stink up my apartment.'

She was always lighting incense, and  
spraying air freshener.

I ask her why, if she hates smoke so  
much, does she get drunk and  
smoke all my cigarettes?

She doesn't respond.

'When are you going to get off  
your ass and do something?

But no, you'd rather sit there and smoke.

Smoke and write, write and smoke.

Sure, you fuck me, but your cock  
doesn't pay the bills.'

I ask her if she wants it to, and I  
think she might slap me.

'Yea, the sex is great, but we can't  
just live on sex.'

I suggest we try. She doesn't  
even crack a smile.

'And when I get wine, you drink most  
of it, and then you strut around in  
your filthy boxers and spout poetry.

Then you just sit there and smoke.

Smoke and write, write and smoke.'

She storms off, and an hour later,  
with childlike innocence, she asks,

'What are you writing?

Thomas Case

## Damn Tomorrow (For C)

She dressed up like a  
whore just to go to the  
bank.

And she fucked like  
one too—drunk on  
cheap wine—mascara smeared all  
over her face.

I took her in every  
sexual position there is—we even  
invented a few.

She had the most beautiful  
mahogany eyes—they said  
so much. Her smile made  
my cock salute.

From dusk till dawn  
we fucked and fucked,  
and fucked until we  
collapsed into each others arms;  
warm and safe and spent like  
the sun.

Damn tomorrow,  
may it never come.

Thomas Case

# It

I used to make this exotic Indian dish.  
It combined spices like cardamom,  
coriander, and a hard  
pulpy substance called tamarind that I  
soaked in hot water and used only the juice.  
It was a giant Middle Eastern stew.  
It was half science and half art.  
It was math at its best,  
generally, I despise math.  
It smelled foreign and exotic;  
it contrasted with the wife and 2.3  
kids placed neatly around  
the dining room  
table, waiting on  
the finishing touches,  
sprigs of fresh  
cilantro tossed atop each bowl.  
An Indian bread called nann was dipped  
in the stew. it was wonderful, amazing.  
The wine, smiles, laughter,  
I can still smell it and taste it.  
And now,  
on lonely winter nights,  
my take-out tandoori chicken smells  
like a TV dinner.

Thomas Case

# After The Rain

I watched a young  
boy beat his  
chest and scream at  
the dawn until  
the liquid sky drove  
him away.

He chased thunder  
and  
butterflies with the  
same enthusiasm;  
oozing a lust for  
living in his chasm  
of youth.

Ten years full of  
questions and scabbed  
up knees, freckled dreams  
running across green fields  
and sunlit meadows.

Golden little life,  
resting beneath a  
willow tree to sip the  
sweetness  
from the clover and  
honeysuckle flowers.

Hours full of pocketknife  
afternoons, whittling sticks  
into arrows to  
shoot at the moon.

And after the rain  
oh sweet green youth,  
run barefoot with the  
wind  
toward a sinless  
sky.

And live, live  
live, for tomorrow  
will come with a sigh.



# O Sleep, What A Strange Mistress You Can Be

O sleep, what a strange mistress you can be  
when I think of all our savage nights and long embraces.  
I have cursed and blessed you with bellowing cries.  
I hated you in the green of youth, when the backyard  
was my kingdom, and the dragons needed slaying.  
You invaded long afternoons in the sun with nap time.  
As my years flew by, like crows in autumn and I grew  
out of my backyard sanctuary, the dragons became  
bigger and new beasts arrived on the scene; brutal  
beasts with no mercy, and much harder to kill.  
I looked for you on long, lonely, brokenhearted nights,  
when finding a star in the sky was like panning for gold.  
I found your dreamy kiss and silent embrace far less.  
O, sleep, what a strange mistress you can be.

Thomas Case

# Ten Seconds

You will meet people in  
life that like a  
fixed game or a  
rigged deck.

The dice will feel  
heavy, or the  
take may be  
light.

A jockey might hold  
the whip in the  
stretch,  
or the champ will  
go down from  
a glancing blow.

Don't be surprised when  
you see it, you're not  
imagining things.

Some people need  
it this way,  
they've been on a losing  
streak for so long, they've  
even lost  
track.

The best you can hope  
for is ten seconds  
of one day in an entire  
lifetime when it's a level  
playing field.

And if you get that  
chance,  
be ready, it's  
your turn.

Swing for the fence,  
win by a nose,  
take their fucking  
head off.

Thomas Case

# Old Haunt

How do you think  
it feels to be  
poor and insane,  
looking for  
doorways to sleep  
in, to creep in out  
from the rain?  
As a little boy,  
I used to fish in  
a small quiet  
pond on the west  
side of town,  
catching bluegills in  
the young afternoon sun;  
sleepy neighborhood,  
low crime, safe and serene.  
I owned those  
autumn days long  
ago, bought cheap; the price  
of a dozen night crawlers.  
At thirty nine years old,  
one October  
afternoon, I stumbled  
back to my own little  
Walden.  
Not much had  
changed, the old  
wooden steps on the  
east side of the  
pond were still  
there. I crawled  
under them, pissed  
myself and passed out,  
dreaming of  
bluegills, cattails  
and young easy autumn  
days.



# Thirsty For Your Footsteps

I long for the majestic  
sunset of your hair,  
windblown, dancing across my cheek...  
The burnt orange and lavender...  
I want to consume every drop.  
I'm thirsty for your  
footsteps near my bed, parched with  
desire for your presence—your essence.  
How long until you wet my  
tongue and quench this fire?  
I stalk slumber like a shadow...  
my only release from the  
hunger and yearning for your  
moist lips, like peaches  
pressed against mine.

Thomas Case

# Artichokes, Avocados, And Van Gogh

I slept beneath  
a mad hatter moon and  
dreamed of a big blue  
tarantula swimming in  
a yellow moss  
covered pond. A rat  
terrier passed me a note:  
Mercy and love  
are  
fleeting, they fade away  
like the  
tangerine sun; they  
are lies like  
the dead bulls under  
a bloody red  
Spanish sky.  
I asked his name,  
'Mendacity' he said,  
then turned into a  
pack of  
cigarettes, no matches,  
no lighter...

I drank from the  
pond and became a  
sunflower.  
Vincent shot  
me with his  
lonely cornfield gun.  
He sat down and smoked  
his pipe, as crows  
lied  
lied  
lied.  
He said with sad, iris eyes,  
It's impossible to fuck  
a mermaid, or eat  
a starry night.  
It's the impossibility

of a thing that  
drives one  
mad;  
like a mustang  
caught for the  
circus, but always  
dreaming of escape to  
the thundering  
fields of its youth.  
I saw toothless  
orphans throw rocks at  
his soul, as those beautiful  
eyes saw way too much...  
I want to  
pound  
it in,  
drive it dripping  
home through the  
core  
of a rose, to the  
bottom  
of the tulip. I'll  
get drunk on  
nectar of the god's, then  
reject immortality. (Who wants to live forever?)

There has been a drastic  
Mistake.  
I see it at the  
zoo in the  
monkeys caged,  
glazed eyes.  
No wonder they  
throw shit  
at people.  
Such lies, he said.  
'The artichoke, avocado, and  
algebra; the small of  
a woman's back and  
the emerald head of  
the hummingbird.'  
'If the artichoke and

avocado are lies' I said,  
'then truth is the  
tight, tasty, creamy  
green line that  
refuses to settle or waiver;  
delirious, delicious.'  
'No' he said, as  
his hands stroked  
that lice ridden  
crimson beard.  
'It's conception and  
growth, then cast  
out  
bloody and naked  
cut from the  
cord,  
and a lifetime spent  
trying to return  
to the womb, cock first,  
but only spilling and  
spreading the  
nightmare of being,  
the fever of living, to  
another  
sorry soul that didn't  
ask for it.'  
I woke up,  
drained the elixir,  
and starred at  
Vinnie's self portrait,  
the one with  
bandaged ear, and  
I  
thought...  
Yeah,  
God is into practical  
jokes.

Thomas Case

# Like A Phoenix From The Ashes

Like a phoenix from the ashes,  
I will rise  
up from this mess.  
This test will not distress  
me for long.  
Gone are the days of  
warped god living,  
giving my soul to the  
sun baked afternoons by  
the lake.  
I will take all  
the shit that the  
enemy has to offer,  
with a smile, and ask for more.  
This season will only  
last a little while.  
Spring will  
return, and when they  
burn my world, I shall  
rise, like a phoenix  
from the ashes.

Thomas Case

# Who Are You

Who are you to tell me  
what I can write about?  
If my soul needs to shout,  
it will do just that.  
Try to get a life, and stop  
reading my poetry.  
You weren't supportive  
of it when we were  
together, don't criticize it  
while we are apart.  
If you really want to read  
something, try the  
first amendment.  
I just had a friend die,  
and you haven't asked once  
how I'm doing.  
I've found rabid raccoons  
kinder than you.

Thomas Case

# What More Could You Want?

Dean and I camped out behind  
the shelter in Des Moines.  
There was a nice patch of  
woods north of the river.  
We canned every day to  
knock off the shakes.  
Summer turned into  
Fall and life raked  
us in.  
Dean moved in with  
a friend, and I  
went to this woman's  
apartment.

We eventually got  
married; it didn't last long.  
That's been years ago.  
I lost track of Dean for  
a long time.  
By chance,  
we stumbled upon each other via the  
internet.

Fucking life!  
He has stage 3 colon cancer.  
Reality can be  
rancid sometimes.  
he's still camping, ,  
and he has a  
woman that loves him.  
What more could  
you want?

Thomas Case

# The Pull Of The Streets

It's hard to understand, unless  
you've been there.  
There is a pull to the streets.  
I can't count how many dead  
end jobs I've held—how many roach  
infested rooms I've  
crashed in.

The inevitable day comes when  
I tell the boss, 'Fuck You, I don't need this shit! '  
I walk out into the misty  
afternoon—I look left, then right.  
I drowned out thoughts of the future with  
a cheap pint of vodka.

I see one eye George on my travails,  
he's half lit—living in the woods.  
'Don't let the bastards get you down.' He says, as he  
stumbles by bent, and taking a standing eight count.  
Mickey the midget stops me a  
block from my flop-house.  
'Tommy boy, I'm sick...gotta couple of bucks so  
an old drunk can get well? '  
I slip him a five.  
He says with a tear in his eye,  
'God bless you Tommy—you know I  
had it all, I'm afraid the  
streets own me now.'  
'Keep your chin up' I say as  
I plummet down the  
street, pretending  
tomorrow is a decade away.

I climb the three flights of  
stairs to my room,  
slip the key in the lock,  
turn the knob—it opens.  
'I love these little miracles' I say under  
my breath.  
My three legged cat Walter saunters up to

me—he's white with marmalade splotches.  
He does his best to rub up against  
my leg—I pet his matted fur.

I passed out in an alley one  
night, and woke up to Walter lying next to me.  
I think something crawled into  
my ear and made a home,  
it's been there ever since.

I crash down on my chair,  
and watch Walter scratch at  
the door with his one front leg.  
He hasn't been neutered—he gets the  
pull of the streets.  
I let him out and take a long swig of  
the vodka—the potion does its magic.  
Life doesn't look so bad,  
there will be other jobs, and I still have  
two weeks left in this  
dump of a room.  
A writer needs four walls—yet there is  
always  
the pull of the streets.

Thomas Case

# My Love

Writing is my love that  
never betrays.

It doesn't lie or  
cheat.

It never complains that I  
leave the toilet seat up or  
that I left hairs in the sink.

It has never said, 'You drink too much or  
not enough.' It always wins the bets,  
sets the sun and skins the cat.

It's always raw and never  
well done—medium rare at  
worst, and never burnt.

It doesn't ask me to  
do aerobics or yoga, and it  
would never tell me to quit smoking;  
I would stake my life on it.

Writing is my love that  
will be with me until  
the end.

Thomas Case

# Like Some Kind Of A Warped God

I danced and drank,  
fucked and sang  
like some kind  
of warped god;  
like I owned the night,  
pretending tomorrow was  
a decade away.

And when tomorrow proved  
too much to bare...  
I danced and drank,  
fucked and sang  
all over again.

Thomas Case

# Horny, Broke And Needing A Drink (A Philosophy)

Booze and pussy are  
tragedies of Greek  
proportion.

Take a man with  
potential and then  
give him a steady  
dose of either (or both)  
withdraw it,  
and watch him  
degenerate.

It's not the sex act  
or  
the alcohol its self,  
it's the effect they  
produce on  
one's psyche.

We will always  
equate that which we  
feel emotionally  
with absolute  
truth.

If one has given  
himself completely  
(with abandon)  
to either pursuit,  
when removed,  
there will be  
a vacuum  
a gaping  
hole that without an  
act from the  
gods  
will never be  
filled.

Thomas Case

# You Aren't

You aren't the  
light  
at the end of  
the tunnel,  
you're a pit that  
you dug,  
and I fell into.

You aren't the  
prize in the  
cracker jack box,  
you're the  
popcorn and peanuts that  
I choke on.

You aren't the  
lovely path that  
winds through  
the autumn maples  
and elms.  
You're the muddy  
road to hell.

You sure aren't  
the bluebird in my  
heart,  
you're the albatross that  
plagues my dreams.

And in case you  
think I was fooled,  
you aren't the  
person you said  
you were.

Thomas Case

# Don't

Don't call a women a cunt,  
they don't like it.  
And don't tell a batter to bunt,  
they want to smack it.  
And whatever you do,  
don't try and give your  
cat a bath in the tub with  
that Mr. Bubble shit,  
he'll scratch you.

If your boss gives you the  
newly revised employee handbook,  
don't say, that sucked, it went  
on and on and on.  
There was no plot, and I  
couldn't figure out who in the  
hell the antagonist was.

And one more thing,  
if you fall in love and you  
think you found your  
soul mate, and it doesn't work,  
and you feel like your  
heart is being ripped out  
through your nose,  
don't give up.  
Because the right one's  
out there, somewhere,  
waiting,  
and who knows, maybe they have  
a cat that likes baths and  
blow-dryers, and being dressed  
up like an Oompa Loompa from  
Willy Wonka and the  
Chocolate Factory,  
it could happen...  
Don't give up.



# I Fell In Love With A Dream

I fell in love with a dream,  
and then I woke up.  
I wanted so badly for  
the dream to be real,  
but it wasn't.

The antonym for  
dream is  
reality,  
and the reality  
was  
that she could  
never love me  
like I loved her.

Thomas Case

# We Poets (An Epitaph)

We poets were a sensitive lot,  
in a world that shat on us  
although we fought.

Thomas Case

# Selective Memory

Your memory becomes nebulous when  
you think about your wrongdoings,  
however, it becomes crystal clear  
when it comes to remembering mine.

Thomas Case

# Narcissist

See all those people  
they're real, they  
think, they  
aren't mannequins.

I know this may come  
as a surprise, but there  
are other people in the world  
with problems.

And by the way, the fact that  
you can't find your tweezers  
isn't a catastrophe.

Oh I know you need them to  
perfect your eyebrows.

Just in case you forgot,

We are having a pandemic!

Oh, you want me to leave because  
I make you uncomfortable.

Never mind, it is freezing out  
and it's late at night, and I've  
nowhere to go.

Just a small reminder, we have a  
two year old daughter, and I  
have been helping you take care  
of your son for eight years.

Oh, it's your house, and  
it's not your job to put me up.

I wouldn't live with you if  
you paid me.

I had a place, I gave it up when  
you called me, crying and begging  
for my help with the kids, because  
you couldn't multi task.

Ok, now I get why you got  
rid of the mirrors in your house.

Even though your a narcissist,  
it's too painful for you to  
see your reptilian vacant eyes  
starring back at you.



# Human Touch

I need to be touched and held.  
As a human, I need that like  
I need oxygen, food, and poetry.  
It's not sexual; it has nothing to  
do with a relationship, it just has  
to be someone I've known for  
a long time, and we care about  
each other.  
I don't want to be accosted or  
held by a stranger.  
I boxed for a few years, and it  
wouldn't bode well for that individual.  
This world is brutal, we are dealing  
with a pandemic.  
Life can be cruel beyond belief.  
I need to be touched and held.  
I need to feel a heartbeat next to mine.  
This life is so fleeting, one minute I'm  
five years old burying my goldfish in  
the backyard, crying because I don't  
understand death and the next  
minute, 48 years have passed by.  
I've buried my Mom and Dad, two  
brothers, and over 20 of my  
close friends.

When I'm holding someone  
and someone is holding me,  
I feel alive, and I'm pretty  
sure they do too.  
As a poet my senses are  
on high alert:  
touch, taste, smell, etc...  
I need to taste the salt from  
a gentle kiss on her forehead.  
I need to feel the smoothness of  
her cheek on my shoulder, as we  
watch a movie or talk about  
distant memories.

I need to feel her smooth feet when  
I rub them after she's had a  
tumultuous day at work.  
This fucking Coronavirus has  
got everyone so afraid of  
contact, and I get it.  
But if I die as a direct result of  
touching or being touched by  
someone that I love...  
I can think of much worse  
ways to go.

Thomas Case

# Deliciously Loving You

Deliciously  
loving you,  
yet I'm the  
one that  
got ate up  
and spit out,  
so I lie on  
an empty beach,  
like a broken sea shell,  
while the lonely rain  
pounds the sand.

Thomas Case

# Festus

When I was a boy on the  
farm in Missouri, my Dad got me  
a coon-hound pup.  
He named him Festus.  
Dad was a real Gunsmoke fan.  
Festus grew as I did, and we  
traveled every inch of that 120 acres.  
There were two streams that ran through our  
land and a pond south  
of the house.  
We had lots of cattle and calves, and  
Festus would help me  
chase them.  
When I went to bed at night,  
I heard the crickets and  
cicadas,  
and always Festus way off in  
the distance,  
howling and barking.  
He didn't mind touring  
the farm with me,  
but he did his best  
work on  
his own late at night.  
Now that I'm an adult and Festus  
is long gone, I wonder if anybody  
can hear me howl in the darkness.

Thomas Case

# Yogurt Berry Parfait, Cheesecake, And You

I can't count how many times  
I've been to D-Tox.  
she was always  
there by my side.  
I turned her on to  
the cheesecake and  
yogurt berry parfait.  
It was a plain yogurt with  
fresh black berries, raspberries,  
strawberries and blueberries.  
It was amazing- it still is.  
We'd stir up the parfait and  
pour it on the cheesecake.  
It was divine.

I sit here and eat  
it alone tonight.  
The berries explode when I  
put them in my mouth and  
chew on them, it's like a  
food that the Greek gods  
would eat- an ambrosia for  
the brokenhearted.  
I think of you as the little  
blueberries roll around on  
my tongue.  
It's all so creamy and succulent.

But, I sit here forlorn, and eat our  
yogurt berry poetry and cheesecake.  
And each berry stores a memory in  
every luscious bite.  
I feel downhearted that you  
aren't here with that juicy  
purple fluid running down your chin.

Thomas Case

# Beware The Rotten Fruit

I don't need  
friends like Judas and Brutus.  
It seems like they're everywhere.  
I've even had a few Delilah's in my life.  
They exploited my weakness for their own gain.  
Whether it's a knife in the back, or a few  
pieces of silver, or a kiss, they are all betrayers.  
The rotten fruit of the earth.  
So this short ditty goes out to them and their kind.  
Stay away from me and go fuck yourselves.

Thomas Case

# A Calculated Mess

She had that  
doggy style lust,  
bent and broke,  
taking life hard  
and fast from behind.  
She had the eyes of  
a serial killer,  
with a splash of rainy afternoon sadness.  
I met her at the  
homeless shelter, and her  
soul was a  
vagabond with a vengeance,  
her heart an abyss.  
Life had fucked her  
up beyond repair.

No way was love gonna'  
fix that train wreck,  
that calculated mess.  
In the end,  
the best I  
could do  
was not slip  
away with her.

Thomas Case

## Haiku 2

I'm a hard blood draw  
sticking me over again  
just like fucking life

Thomas Case

# Haiku 1

pink clouds squirt sweet rain  
they are very excited  
then the sun comes out

Thomas Case

# Dead End Eyes

If her eyes were  
a street,  
they would be a  
dead end.

There wouldn't be  
a sign.

And if I drove into  
them, all the promising  
and stunning landscape  
would come to an  
abrupt stop.

Such lies,  
those dead end  
eyes.

Thomas Case

## Room # 3217 (Ivy)

I once had a nurse named Ivy, when I was at Mercy Hospital, D-Toxing. She wasn't poison, and didn't wind and wrap around my room, giving it that green garden and alive look. There was never any doubt that I was surrounded by four beige walls, and two locked doors at the end of the torturous hall.

She was a short squat thing with big eyes, and large plump thumbs; the name Ivy didn't fit her. My daughter's middle name is Ivy. She is breathtaking, and is all, pumpkin-pie colored hair. She has the temperament of Autumn, just like her Mama. It feels like a stomach virus to be apart from her. She twists and tightens around my broken heart. We sure picked out the right name for her.

Thomas Case

# She's My Little Bluebird That Burrows In My Heart

I hate the saying, 'Baby's Mama.'  
It's so trashy. As I drifted off to sleep last night, crocked on a plethora of pills, and the remnants of vodka, I thought to myself, 'She's a little bluebird that burrowed in my heart.'  
I laughed and slobbered, and drifted into the warm fuzzy black.

She's intuitive, she asked me to let the nurse know that her and the kids were coming so that there would be a smooth transition with staff. Hospitals can be peculiar when it comes to visitation with children.

So she asked me how I wanted to refer to her. She's the Mother of my 2-year old daughter, and she has an 10-year old boy that I have been around for 6 years. He's like my own son, but 'technically, ' he's not. I don't want to offend anyone. It's all so fucking complicated. I could say, 'This is Bonnie, I'm Clyde, and this is our gang. They probably wouldn't laugh. I feel very comfortable saying, 'These are our kids, and this is their Mom, ' but it just sounds flaky to me.

If the kids weren't in ear-shot and I felt like a rascal, I might say, 'This is a woman that I used to love and fuck a lot! Finally we had our daughter- WOW- AMAZING! ! !  
The boy came along before I met her, but I love him like my own son- always and forever.

Anyway, this is my daughter, and my son, and a woman that I used to love and fuck a lot, also, a fantastic Mother, and when I'm twacked out d-toxing- drifting off to sleep, and laughing about what to call her, I might just call her my little bluebird, that burrows in my heart.

Thomas Case

# Dapple And Down

Down I go into the  
gray and brown.  
I hit the sides, like being in  
a cradle, and rocked too fast.  
It's an abrupt catastrophe.  
I didn't see this one coming;  
but I felt it, like the slight rumble of  
an earthquake, or like the false dawn, before the  
real light yawns and opens the sickly day.  
It's just another ending.  
dapple and down.

Thomas Case

# A Feathered Stone

Your love is like a frozen bird, a  
feathered stone, falling from the sky.

I wish it didn't die.

It should be flying, and soaring, and  
healing against the warm blaze of the  
afternoon sun- weaving and diving through the  
coolness of the clouds. But it's gone, and all it  
can do is plummet, and kill a few more  
birds on the way down.

Thomas Case

# Sweet Apathy

Life has reached its apex, when the major goal is to not freeze to death on the Iowa City streets in February.

Finally, I went to the back of the ice-box, and there beside the hamburger and lamb chops, and the Atlantic cod, there lay your frozen heart.

I'm speaking metaphorically of course, but finally I see it for what it is; dead and icy cold. You can't hurt me anymore.

I don't care- finally, sweet apathy.

So, whenever sentimentality comes whispering at the door, I just open the ice-box and glance at your dead frostbitten heart.

Maybe you were brutal and cruel intentionally, or possibly, you could never overcome the blizzard people that surrounded your formative years.

Either way, it feels good to finally see your frozen soul and not give a fuck.

Thomas Case

# Ant Hill

You are like a mountain; not a  
sublime snow capped mountain in  
Colorado, or like the Cerro Torre in  
Argentina and Chili. Definitely not like  
the Ama Dablam in Nepal.  
But you seem like a mountain none the less.  
A mountain that obscures  
the beauty of the majestic sunrise, and  
the grandeur of life.  
A mountain that smothers love and  
everything glorious.  
Maybe, you aren't  
a mountain at all.  
Perhaps you're an ant hill, dragging  
dead souls into your busy hole.  
I climbed you, and was so enamored,  
I missed your charade and masquerade.

Thomas Case

# Her Horns

Hidden behind a wall  
of stony thorns,  
her horns  
are unmistakable.  
She smiles and tries  
to hide them,  
but they  
are ridiculously obvious.  
The damage is  
terminal and savage,  
and The pain  
is undeniable.  
Her forked tongue  
pokes the tepid air  
and searches for  
silly,  
trusting victims.

Thomas Case

# Reflection Of The Soul

I've said her eyes had  
the color of a madness shade  
of blue.

That's not true.

They are the color of  
love and angels, and  
eternal spring.

Her eyes sing of  
motherhood and light rain.

The sun shines through them-  
a tepid pool that I  
want to jump in and swim;  
back float through the  
daisies and spilled juice,  
through the ravens-  
all the way to heaven.

Thomas Case

# A Tender Dream

Once there was this woman that  
I could talk about writing and  
poetry with. We talked  
about Emily and Bukowski, and many others.  
We were poets in our own right.  
We shared tears and laughter, like  
a joint among friends.  
Once, we sang our daughter to sleep.  
It was beautiful and sublime.  
But, the brutal dawn destroyed that  
glorious night.  
She farted a lot, but I fell  
in love with her anyway, and her son too.  
We even cooked together.  
It was magnificent,  
although she got a little bossy in  
the kitchen. I can still  
smell the coriander and garlic and  
taste the salt on the back of her neck.  
I picked her wild flowers, and  
ate well from her garden-  
all slippery and divine.  
She had these pastel soft blue eyes,  
like something out of a Degas painting.  
She could be as mean as Humpty Dumpty-  
all cracked and broken-  
yoke flowing everywhere.  
And I couldn't fix her.  
And I certainly couldn't put myself  
back together again.  
And then one autumn, I turned around,  
and she was gone. A wall went up.  
Occasionally I could see her through the  
holes in the bricks. But I knew that I would  
never touch her again;  
hold her, kiss her.  
It made me feel sad and lonely.  
But I keep her real close in my heart.  
And some days that gets me by. And other times,

it's like she was never there at all-  
just a tender dream.

I want to escape the memory of her;  
overdose on artichokes and avocados,  
drowned in a sea of Bloody Marys,  
or run away to far off lands,  
like Montana or Idaho. But, I'm afraid I'd  
still see her there,  
in the Snake River or the wide open sky.

Thomas Case

# Egg-Shells (Good-Bye)

Don't feel  
don't think  
don't talk  
don't drink  
don't smoke  
don't move  
don't live  
don't die  
don't try,  
you'll fail.

Don't breathe  
don't cough, don't sneeze.  
Don't wake up early, or  
arrive too late-don't love,  
don't hate.

Don't express emotions that  
seem insane.

I made my safe little  
world, and I like it this time.  
And you're frayed on  
the edges, and too prone to fly.  
So come closer my  
bird, and get in the cage.  
I'll clip your wings with my  
apathy and rage.

Don't sing  
don't shout  
don't try and get out.  
It's nice and warm in here  
and smells like a slave,  
and the grave will come  
soon, so try and be brave.

And when you're gone and  
rotting, and sunk in the  
ground, I'll find a new  
little bird that won't  
make a sound.

Don't walk, don't run  
don't swim towards the sun.

Embrace the darkness, you'll  
have lots of fun.  
I have my gun, it's loaded  
and cocked;  
make a wrong move, and  
you're bound to get rocked.  
Don't be sick, don't  
get well.  
Don't smell heaven, or skip  
towards hell.  
Don't look at the moon,  
or touch the stars.  
Don't play in the fields  
or go near the bars.  
It's not safe there  
so just be afraid.  
I like to play tricks  
you'll be my knave,  
my jack of hearts  
my ace of spades;  
and we'll pillage and plunder  
and live off the land;  
and you'll lie here quietly  
in my rotten fucking hand.  
Don't piss, don't shit  
don't vomit or spit.  
Don't quit, don't try  
just sit there and sigh  
and be here and die  
and lie naked in my

mansion of filth  
my consuming wealth  
my towering health,  
cuz I'm full of stealth and stature  
and beauty and grace,  
and I'll smear it all over  
your fucking little face.

Thomas Case

# Watch Out

It's always the bat-shit, rabid dog  
crazy ones that will put up a really  
good front when you first meet them.  
You're always amazed at how normal they appear.  
They are intelligent, hold down jobs, drive Volvos;  
maybe they even have children that they  
seem to take care of. They pay bills,  
celebrate holidays and have houseplants.  
They might even have a  
dog or a cat, or a sickly looking bird in a cage.  
But, just underneath the false façade of  
lucid smiles, lurks a whack-job from hell,  
that make Sybil and Lizzie Bourdon look  
like Mother Theresa.

If you find yourself with one of these  
women, don't confront them, it only  
makes matters worse and could prove deadly.  
Just smile and nod and slowly back out  
the door-don't stop until you see the  
Pacific Ocean. Get in and wash yourself off.  
You're safer with the sharks and the rip-tide.

Thomas Case

# Reptilian Heart

She has that  
reptilian heart, snake eyes-  
cat screeching, rabid anger.  
Whenever she's close to  
me, I need sedation;  
another world-one with  
beauty and love.  
Hers is a land of  
brutality and hatred.  
It makes my  
soul vomit.  
When I'm lucky enough to  
escape, she finds me, and  
lures me back with her  
charms and spells.  
Then, it's back to the  
cage, waiting to be  
consumed.  
She quit doing drugs.  
Her dope now is  
control.  
It's the dragon that  
she rides to hell.

Thomas Case

# Her Mouth

I hold my  
twisted angel  
while she sleeps.  
Her ass snug  
against my groin.  
I envision  
her sanguine  
grin while  
she dreams of  
domesticating me.  
I can't believe  
that I never noticed  
how cute her mouth is.  
It's amazing-I'm spellbound.  
I want to nibble on  
those lips.  
The way she uses  
her tongue to enunciate  
certain words is sensual and  
seductive.  
I'm apathetic about  
the book she is reading.  
But while I watch  
her mischievous mouth move,  
I hear Shakespeare's sonnets.

Thomas Case

# Sailing For Insanity

I lost my best friend today.  
She didn't die; well not physically.  
She went away mentally, and emotionally.  
It's a forever vacation-  
I can see it in her dead eyes-  
hear it in her rabid voice.  
It makes my soul sick, but she's  
not taking me down with her.  
I stand on the placid shore and  
wave good-bye, as she sails for  
insanity.

Thomas Case

# Ativan And Cheesecake

Often, when I'm on the  
streets, decaying in booze-  
degradation of the soul,  
I go under the bridge and watch  
the ducks.  
Sometimes I talk to them.  
They don't talk back.  
Some days, it's the only  
beauty I can see.  
I think and dream of  
a different world.  
A land without  
brutal lunacy.  
I can handle madness.  
It's the wicked,  
smiling hatred that I  
can do without.  
The Iowa River beckons  
me to come swim-  
float blissfully to heaven.  
But I know better.  
Katie and Perry drowned not  
far from where I sat.  
It's usually at this time that  
I'm fresh out of bread for  
the ducks and I have milked the vodka  
bottle for all it's worth, that a  
warm blanket of a thought comes to  
me- I need help- go to the hospital.  
I stumble my way there, sometimes  
by ambulance.  
I go through nightmarish withdrawals.  
At around the third day, I get a  
laptop from the patient library.  
I catch up with neglected family  
and friends, then I try to write.  
The first four days, my mind is  
like a smashed snail.  
But usually, the magic comes back.

The muse kisses me gently, and I  
put the shaking pen to the paper.  
I can order whatever food I  
want between 6am and 8pm.  
I discovered years ago that they  
have phenomenal cheesecake.  
So when I'm able to eat, it's the  
first thing I order.  
My withdrawals are deadly.  
Diastolic numbers like 103,109.113.  
So they give me Ativan.  
It helps tremendously- Ativan and cheesecake.  
Suck the muse's tits, then more  
Ativan and cheesecake.  
If I'm lucky, I'll turn out a  
poem or two-like this one right now.

Thomas Case

# Rotten

The breakup was  
the best thing that  
ever happened to me.  
I lost everything except  
my dignity.  
I escaped with my soul.  
She tried to buy it with  
Sushi and Thai food,  
but it's not for sale.  
I would rather  
freeze, and be free,  
than die warm in her cage.  
No amount of love can  
fix that abysmal madness;  
that car crash confusion.  
Daisies withered when she  
walked by.  
Her heart was rotten, like  
an STD, like a  
fish-hook to the eye.

Thomas Case

# The Ball Woman

I once knew a woman that  
could roll herself into a perfect ball.  
She rolled all over town.  
It didn't seem that unusual; sad,  
but not strange.  
Lots of people are all balled up.  
I caught glimpses of her face.  
It was often expressionless.  
She had a flat affect.  
Sometimes, she'd come out of her ball,  
and smile.  
She was gorgeous, educated, and had a  
great sense of humor.  
But when I'd get too close,  
she'd get back into her ball and  
roll away.

Thomas Case

# For O

A black splash  
washes over my mind.  
A dark flow that  
bursts into bloom, like  
Oleander or Night-Shade.  
The four leaf clover in  
my pocket broke into a  
thousand green tears.  
Lovers know how to kill.  
And when she keeps me from  
my daughter, she's the  
executioner, and smiles.  
But the sublime thing about  
light and love is: I will  
never give up.  
If I fall 100 times,  
I'll rise 101.  
And I'll see you  
soon, my little Iris.

Thomas Case

# Windowsill Madness

She tastes like  
a sunset and  
smells like peaches...  
succulent,  
soft.

Moonlight breaks fast on our  
windowsill madness, while  
passion kisses us in  
the white-hot heat.  
Her vagina is a  
stranger, strangling me.

Medusa turns men to stone,  
and I'm rock hard,  
three floors up.

When I explode,  
I'm  
like a butterfly  
floating into the sun.

Thomas Case

# Valentine's Day 2019

I remember Valentines Day  
16 years ago.  
I was staying at  
the Salvation Army in  
Des Moines. I was  
going through a divorce  
and trying not to drink.  
I was competing in poetry slams  
at Java Joe's downtown.  
That little stage kept me sane.  
Some of the guys at the Sally  
asked me to write love poems  
for their girlfriends- to get them laid.  
I told them in order for the poetry  
to not sound contrived, I might  
need to spend a night or two  
with their women.  
They didn't think that was funny.  
I wasn't kidding.  
I ended up writing a decent  
poem about the irony of the whole situation.

Well, it's February 2019,  
and I'm in prison for drinking.  
No romantic Valentine's Day this  
year; but still plenty of irony.  
Even in the joint, guys ask me  
to write love poems for their women.  
The other day, I did write  
a poem for a guy's wife who is  
dying of cancer.  
I hope some day soon,  
he gives it to her.

Thomas Case

# It Matters

I met a man once who said, It's all nothing. Everything goes away in the end.

It doesn't mean anything.

I asked him, What about love?

He said, It's an illusion; it disappears when you think you have it. It means nothing; we are all going to die. I saw him walking one day, and asked him where he was going.

He said, It doesn't matter, all roads lead to death; it all ends the same- nothing matters.

I said, What about family, children, and God- what about life?

Family abandons you, children grow up and move away; God is deaf and dumb, if he's even there, and life ends in decay- everything goes away.

I said, What about art and literature, the power and the hope?

What's the point of beauty if the beauty ends? he said.

I said, What about the moment? You're alive right now, it's real and it's happening.

Look at the simple beauty of that robin- Its breast looks like a sunset.

Do you smell the sweetness of the cherry blossoms?

Do you remember the slippery loveliness of a woman's vagina, the taste of a fine Chardonnay?

Look at the dappled fur on that dog; he's almost grinning, that has to matter; it has to mean something.

No, he said, That dog could get hit by a car in an hour, then he'd just be a pile of bones rotting in the street.

But look, I said. He's alive; his fur is warm and course; look at his tail wag, he knows things.

He shook his head. You don't get it. The race is fixed; the horse breaks his leg in the home stretch. The champ goes down from a glancing blow, the dice are loaded. It's a setup.

Everything goes awry- it's not good for mice or men.

I smiled and threw a perfectly timed left jab to the bridge of his nose, the blood was the most brilliant shade of red I'd ever seen. It flowed from his nostrils and settled on the green grass below his feet. Some of it stained his white shoes. Hey what the hell did you do that for? he said, That fucking hurt.

I said, Pain is nothing- it will end- it's almost like it didn't happen; maybe it's a dream.

You're fucking crazy! It is real; you punched me and now my shirt and shoes are ruined, he said. He walked away, and the sun broke through the clouds, flowers bloomed, and a small black beetle crawled through a patch of blood onto a lilac bush. And somehow I knew that it all mattered.

Thomas Case

# Under The Benton Street Bridge

My derelict soul  
rolls West, to under  
the Benton Street Bridge.  
The bridge is strange and  
lonely and changed, with  
Steve and Scott dead.  
Both of them died on  
the railroad tracks.  
The ducks are still there  
under the Benton Street Bridge.  
A feral calico cat stalks  
them with death and  
hunger in her eyes.  
The river's up;  
fish jump where me  
and Carl used to sit and  
sing old Motown songs.  
I'm in the nut ward for  
the umpteenth time.  
Booze induced madness.  
Pensive about my life,  
bereft of hope,  
I wonder:  
am I just a lost duck?  
Maybe, I'll ask that  
slender cat.

Thomas Case

# Dry Land

No commitment  
no devotion.

I'm like a boat on the  
ocean with you,  
tossed and broken by  
the waves of your emotions.  
Your hurricane is dangerous,  
I'm heading for dry land.

Thomas Case

# Febrile Dreams And Tortured Angels

when I was a child  
I had these strange febrile dreams.  
In the blackness, globules  
would form and float and  
pulsate around the room and  
inside my addled brain.  
They were terrifying, with  
their whispered screams.  
The sounds they made started  
out low and small, and then  
grew louder with every breath.  
It was a horrible sound,  
like a demented school teacher  
scolding a blind student.  
And I thought, in my  
young feeble mind that  
angels were being tortured  
and that if I drifted off  
to sleep, they would wake me  
with their unearthly moans and  
floating globules that would  
grow and attack my brain.  
It was as if they wanted  
help, but they scared me.  
So I fought to get well; to  
make them disappear.  
I don't have those sweat-soaked  
febrile dreams anymore;  
But I still see the tortured angels-  
under the bridge, down by the river.

Thomas Case

# Redemption

I am going to dig through  
dumpsters today; alone or  
with a fellow aluminum  
cowboy. Our treasure is  
cans. Thank God for  
redemption. Each can is  
worth a nickle, and if  
we get enough of these  
shiny miracles, we can  
get a pint of vodka,  
our oasis in the desert.

I sift through trash bags  
full of cat shit and broken dreams.  
I find: losing lottery tickets,  
broken costume jewelry, unwanted  
books, and a porno magazine.  
I examine the jewelry closely,  
hoping for a diamond or real pearls;  
some silver or gold, something I  
can pawn or sell and turn into  
liquor- no such luck.  
The whole thing smells like  
death, and piss, and a  
city dump in July.  
Sometimes I think it  
would be easier to just  
quit drinking, but to do it  
abruptly could kill me,  
the withdraw seizures can be deadly.  
As the sun begins to set  
on Iowa City, the sky  
looks like a butterfly melting.  
I haul my black garbage bag, full  
of cans, over my shoulder  
down the railroad tracks, and  
across highway 6.  
I stop to vomit behind  
a building, then wipe my

face and continue on to  
the store- to be redeemed.

Thomas Case

# The Thing

I found this thing when I was a little boy.  
It's a beast of some sort; it has fur,  
sharp  
teeth, and a long tail. Its pulse sounds  
like a ticking clock. It's beautiful and  
hideous all at once. The thing makes me  
feel immortal, like I'm a part of something  
big and important. Sometimes it eats  
everything in sight. And other times, I think  
it might be starving.

It smells like shit, death, and booze.  
But sometimes it smells like lilacs and  
autumn and different women from my life.  
I haven't been able to tame it, but I  
feel like it's my friend.

It runs away from time to time.  
I stay awake staring at the black sky,  
worrying that it will never come back.  
I walk the streets looking for the thing on  
dark nights and foggy days.

Sometimes, I find it hiding in a patch of  
tall grass- all wet and dirty.  
But usually it comes home on its own,  
when it's tired of the vagabond life.  
It does tricks that make people laugh  
and cry and think.

When strangers and friends see the thing,  
their reactions vary: Some people hate it;  
they want to kill it, they never say that,  
but I can see it in their eyes.

They say, Who needs a thing like that?  
But other people appreciate the thing; they  
love it and the way it makes them feel.  
They say, I want a thing like that.

Sometimes I think the thing is almost  
holy, the way it walks into a room and  
looks at everyone with its searching eyes.  
I'm sure it knows magic. I have a hard

aching love for the thing. It has the most disturbing eyes; they change color depending on its mood. When I look into the thing's eyes, I see people and places in a different light. Smells take shape and waltz around the room. I can taste sorrow and loneliness; I can here the wind blow ripples across a small pond surrounded by cattails. I've had the thing so long, I don't know where I begin and it ends.

We don't always get along, but it's usually because it won't behave the way I want it to. It puts up with my selfishness, and kisses me on occasion. It has no perception of time. I'm getting old. I'm no longer the boy I was when I found the thing. I like it best when we walk together and try to make sense of this carnival ride of a world. It sleeps with me every night. Sometimes, I hardly know it's there. But I like it best when it snores and dreams, and I feel its hot, sweet breath on my face.

Thomas Case

# The Journey Is Done

The feet are the  
soul of the shoes.  
And without the  
feet, the shoes are  
an empty body,  
vacant vessels that  
sit in the corner,  
quiet as a tombstone,  
forgotten, and curled at  
the toes, flowers and  
grass smashed into  
the tread.

The tan leather is  
baked brown from the  
sun, tired and cracked from  
the long lonely  
miles of wandering.  
Finally, the journey  
is done.

Thomas Case

# Mouse Trap

Your ashes don't speak to me Dad.  
They float silent in the ocean.  
I need you.  
I have questions about  
Don Quixote and Steinbeck.  
You implanted in me a  
love for literature,  
and then left me before  
the story was supposed to end.  
What is the theme?  
This plot sucks!  
I inherited your anger.  
I think of you when  
I punch the wall and  
scream at my wife- spiderweb windshields.  
I cry through Man of La Mancha,  
and laugh at the memory of the  
stage you built us in the basement.  
Who does that?  
Props and scripts were our toys.  
I acted and lied my way through my  
first two marriages- always on.  
You were the great director;  
all your trophies are on the mantle.  
You thought the pizza place turned  
the volume down on the T.V when  
your speaking parts came on.  
I think you passed me your insanity.  
I've been to the nuthouse many times.  
I'm a poet Dad-two books published.  
I still remember you reading  
Kipling and Cummings to me.  
In third grade, I read from  
Of Mice and Men to my class.  
The teacher scolded me for  
saying 'Jesus Christ' and 'Son of a Bitch.'  
What a peasant!  
She missed the bigger picture,  
life doesn't go as planned.

Thomas Case

# Searching For Nod

That first morning swig washes  
away the stain on the inside;  
the parade of hearses and the  
lovers lost to the carnival of life.

A few more swallows and  
memory becomes nebulous.

Cumulus clouds form in  
the brain, and the thoughts  
float by, all fluffy, like cotton candy,  
and fun-house safe.

In this twisted mirror  
I see the tired eyes of  
a clown who's not funny anymore;  
just a ragged costume and a  
jagged soul that is hungry for  
sleep and dreams, a moments reprieve.

Thomas Case

# A Long Row To Hoe

When it's quiet, except for  
the fan in the hall  
and apathy crawls across the  
floor like a spider  
and the enemies are  
thicker than friends  
and the brain dries up  
and the flame goes out  
and writing a decent line is  
like panning for gold...  
Remember  
it's a long row to hoe.

When nothing touches  
you but the rain  
and the wind, and the  
pain from the sins of  
your youth  
and every fruit in  
the garden is rotten  
and you take a bite  
just to keep from starving, and now  
what you know can't be forgotten,  
remember  
it's a long  
row to hoe.

When each pain is new  
and every sorrow is fresh with  
the opening of the eyes  
and  
if  
you're blind to the darkness  
of the world  
or  
you see it all too well...  
remember  
it's still a  
long row to hoe.

Thomas Case

# Whose Seed Is This?

I nurture the creator in you;  
the little god that throbs to be master of  
words and colors, lines and notes.  
I watch you give birth to it.  
I see how it squeezes out of  
your brain and crawls across  
the floor- all bloody and wet.  
It's alive and glorious and grotesque.  
You're immortal- a giver of life.  
I hold it to my face, and breathe in  
the smell of rain, pine trees, and desire.  
I kiss its fur, and taste the  
fires of hell, cardamom, and oysters, raw and sweet.  
I feed it a bowl of saffron threads, soaked in milk,  
stare into its wild black eyes; I can hear  
it hum a tune in B flat minor, and I wonder,  
whose seed is this?

Thomas Case

# Getting Old

On the edge of Summer, with everything green,  
I dream less as I get older.

I can still smell the smoldering  
fires of fierce youth, when the landscape  
of my heart was wild;  
a wilderness that wouldn't be tamed.

But, I'm afraid old age has slowed me down and  
quenched my thirst for adventure.

Even my poems have lost their teeth.

Gone are my scabbed up knees and  
swords made out of sticks.

No beautiful maidens to rescue;  
just constipation to overcome,  
as I listen to the clock tick.

Thomas Case

# One For Hunter

This one goes out to  
the rambling, gambling mad man  
from Aspen- the late great  
Hunter S. Thompson.  
My drinking has landed me  
in prison for a short stint.  
To occupy my time,  
I read and write.  
It keeps my mind sharp,  
and the nursing homes at bay.  
Also, a pen or a book in my  
hand has the added benefit  
of a signal to the other  
inmates that I'm in my own  
world, and I don't care to converse.  
H.S.T's guerrilla approach to  
writing, and his sharp gonzo wit  
keep me laughing and thinking  
on this carnival ride from hell.  
And if I can laugh in prison,  
I'm halfway home.  
My mind will go where my  
body can't.  
Like Hunter, I'm a betting man too,  
and I always bet the long shots.  
So I'm putting a bundle on  
me to pull out of this shit hole,  
and do something with my life.  
Ho ho ho, God Bless you Doctor.  
And as my old man used to say,  
'They can Kill us, but they  
can't eat us.'

Thomas Case

# I'll Be Home

Life is a series of tiring verbs  
as I wade through the ashes of orchids.  
I'm a vagabond with a ragged soul  
coming for you on a lonesome hard road.  
I float aimless, like an acorn in  
a mountain stream.  
The death of dreams smells like  
autumn leaves, lonely as driftwood.  
Home is not going to be  
a white door at the end of a sidewalk.  
It's bigger and broader, and can't fit  
behind a fence and walls.  
It will always be the  
sum of my memories and longings.  
Home is walking the streets, hand in hand,  
with our son on my shoulders.  
Home is lying in the grass with your  
fingers in my beard, and hope  
oozing from your blue eyes.  
It's eating sushi and laughing at  
our accidental touch of hands,  
reaching together for the last California roll;  
avocado safe at a sun dappled table.  
I'm drifting lost on a southern wind.  
When I'm with you again, wherever that is,  
I'll be home.

Thomas Case

# It's The Little Things

In prison  
when you have no  
money and you can't  
buy commissary, and  
the hours and the days drag by  
like a tortoise searching  
a garden, it's the little  
things that make the time bearable.  
Someone gives you a package of  
noodles or a cup of coffee,  
or a bar of soap.  
Kindness in hell goes a long way.  
It's the simple pleasures that  
I took for granted that I  
relish now:  
Steaming hot water,  
a bed with a real mattress.  
and a library with thousands  
of books to read.  
I have writing paper,  
ink pens, and reading glasses  
to see with; it could be worse.

Thomas Case

# The Picture

Chain smoking sadness; slapped by time.

Winter doesn't freeze the pain.

There was one thing that Mom

wanted more than

anything else in the world:

It was to have a

picture of her seven

kids all together- in one place,

at one time.

There was an age difference of

23 years between the

youngest and the oldest,

and 1000 miles separating us.

In December of 1987

two weeks before Christmas,

I held a picture of the

seven of us all together.

I put it in the

right front pocket of

her navy blue blazer,

and after the funeral,

we buried her with it.

Thomas Case

# About A Poem

Sometimes, a poem is a  
beast you create that  
shits and pisses all over  
the page.

It doesn't need neutered  
but it does need  
house broken.

Thomas Case

# Chasing The Phantom

Drinking has been an exercise in  
lunacy and sorrow,  
like jumping off a cliff for  
tomorrow's dead dreams.  
The fruit of the vine should  
be sweet and sentimental,  
like mamas and moonlight.  
With a fistful of memories and  
a soul full of pain,  
I try it all again;  
I chase the phantom.

Thomas Case

# Preoccupied

I make love to you;  
exploring your body like  
a garden.

I walk in the  
lovely shade of your eyes;  
that safe sky that I  
long to fly in.

I dream of swimming in  
the blue, and diving  
hard into your wet pink soul.

I want to sink to the  
bottom of your orchid, and  
lick the nectar from  
your swollen petals, like a  
hummingbird- all beating heart and  
pounding wings,  
as I let the juice  
run down my gray bearded face.

I taste your sweetness in  
the new morning sun,  
I feel immortal,  
and I wink at death.

Thomas Case

## Sonnet For Mary

I love her enough to write her sonnets;  
to use an unfamiliar form to woo her.  
Rhyme schemes are like a bee in my bonnet.  
If she were cold, I'd be a coat of fur,  
wrapping her body in love and heat.  
Warming her soul in fuzzy animal bliss.  
I long to rub her gorgeous shy feet,  
and taste her inner thighs with a soft kiss.  
When she's away, I can here my heart break.  
I can taste her salty tears in the wind.  
I'm a vampire, this distance is my stake.  
Taking her for granted was my deadly sin.  
The first tender blossoms ache into bloom;  
and I will feed her hungry orchid soon.

Thomas Case

# Gray

Tired and twisted  
broken and listless  
another day in prison pisses me off.  
Last night was Christmas, and I  
miss my kids so much, it feels  
like I've been shanked.  
I sell my desserts for coffee;  
my one luxury in the joint.  
The complexion of my day is  
gray, and lonely as a  
tea bag in the ocean.  
Everything is gray:  
The sky  
the weights  
the walls  
the blood  
the food  
the fence  
the mood, the soul, the yard, the heart,  
and the beat of the false dawn.  
It's all tombstone gray.  
Hate thickens the air.  
And the light on the  
horizon is a lie- razor wire sharp.

Thomas Case

# Starving In The Whiteness

I've been going through  
a long dry spell, an arid  
wasteland of the mind.  
Writer's block is hell.  
It's an empty nest,  
a dead baby bird in  
the wet grass- ant eaten eyes.  
It smells like plastic flowers on  
a tombstone.  
I'm lost and starving in  
the whiteness.  
Why can't I write?  
Have I drank my mind  
into mush?  
The poems don't come like  
they used to- the click is gone.  
Sometimes, there were  
four or five a night.  
They swam from the  
river of my soul.  
They were my food, my light,  
and my wings.  
A good poem is like  
smacking the ball out of  
the park or, like coming together after  
hours of foreplay.  
Writers block is a  
limp cock, a miscarriage, an empty gun.  
It's like having a stomach ache,  
and not being able to vomit.  
Everywhere I go, I am  
surrounded by convicts and a maze of walls.  
My mind and spirit are not in prison though.  
They fly over the razor wire like  
the falcon I saw through the  
bars on the window.  
He pierced the clouds like a bullet.  
I will make the next  
poem a feast;

blood and feathers will  
fall from my chin,  
ambrosia will pulse through  
my veins, and I will  
sing and soar from  
the depths of my cage.

Thomas Case

# Lonely, Like An Orphan

November smells like an  
empty house,  
like decaying dreams,  
all pumpkin orange and  
burnt sienna.

I search for you through  
the ashes of roses.

My eyes are the color  
of despair.

I can still taste you;  
that last kiss, clover sweet.

And without you, the days  
dawn gray and lonely, like  
an orphan.

Thomas Case

# Vincent

There goes Vincent with  
his jagged sky, and  
ragged beard.

His cobalt blue hands are  
stained with the  
glue that should  
hold us all together,  
but it doesn't.

His sunflowers are  
lost on humanity.

When we can't hold  
on to what we  
pretend to love,  
we kill it.

Usually in small  
treacherous ways,  
like apathy or  
arrogance.

Thomas Case

# Writing Is Orgasmic

I've said it before,  
I'll say it again.  
Writing is orgasmic.  
It's like coming.  
When I haven't  
written anything for  
awhile, it's like going  
without pussy.  
I need it, I have to have it.  
And then when I'm writing a  
poem, it's like sex.

Depending on the  
piece, sometimes it's hard and  
rough- doggy style in  
sweat drenched bliss;  
toes curling at the  
point of climax.

With other poems,  
it's softer, easier.  
It's her on top;  
deep long kisses,  
caressing each other's cheeks,  
looking into her eyes,  
her long hair dancing on  
my face to a slow waltz,  
or something by Bach or Beethoven,  
candles lit- incense burning.

But more often than not,  
it's me on top  
pounding it in;  
scratch marks on my back,  
guttural moans, then  
finally,  
orgasm!  
Sit back, smoke the  
lonely cigarette,

and wait for the  
next fucking session.

Thomas Case

# Sorceriffic Ass

Vicious eyes,  
ferocious smile, and an  
ass that begged to be  
rubbed all night, like  
Buddha promising good luck.  
But what that  
ass brought was  
life under a bridge,  
jail, soup lines, and  
homeless shelters.

The heart pounds the  
head, then the feet pound  
the streets,  
walking mile after mile,  
aimless roaming  
doe eyed thinking:

What went wrong?  
Where the hell did  
I go wrong?

Then it dawns on  
me like the dew  
soaked morning.

It was the ass.  
Always that  
sorceriffic ass.

Thomas Case

# This Poem's For You

What's there to say when  
your two best friends die a  
day apart?

Greg died crossing the street,  
smacked by a minivan.  
Tibbs, from some strange  
brain quirk.  
I did C.P.R to no avail.

They're both gone.  
They sailed away.  
Gone like the last  
spider of vodka.  
Gone like the songs we  
sang together.

Sometimes  
I still look for you two.  
I turn corners and I half  
expect to see one of you.  
So fucking alive one minute,  
so dead the next.

Both of them  
fathers,  
friends, and men  
of valor.  
Iowa City is a  
shittier place without you.

If there's a Brightside,  
it's a brutal winter  
and you don't have to  
suffer through it.

I hope death is treating  
you warm and well.  
Your hell was

here.  
Struggling for that  
drink;  
to be okay- to get that click,  
to carry on, one more  
grueling day.

It's over now.  
You're gone.  
Gone like the last Dodo bird;  
gone like your impish smiles.  
Gone like the miles we  
trod with bags full of  
aluminum nickels.

Words can't express the  
mess  
I am without the two  
of you.  
I know I'll see you again,  
out there beyond the  
purple horizon.  
Until then,  
This poem's for you.

Thomas Case

# Score Keeper

You will meet  
people  
in life that  
love to keep score.  
'I've done this for you, so  
you should do that for me.'  
They keep a mental ledger.  
They're pathetic.  
Nothing is ever done out of  
the goodness of their heart.  
Their mind clicks with  
records and accounts.  
They are slaves to the  
almighty penny.  
Nothing you do will  
ever  
count anyway.  
You're always in  
the red.

Thomas Case

# Dawn Flies Away Like A Mockingbird

I flirted with  
the sun as it  
blushed  
pink  
through the trees,  
their naked branches  
spread wide  
wet with dew.  
Sticky sweet  
dawn  
winked with the  
promise of a new day.  
Swans mate for  
life  
and die in the Spring.  
And she  
lied a little less than  
the moon, and  
the fog, and the  
wet cat drunk on  
feline dreams.  
Her eyes looked like  
they hated her face;  
like  
they wanted to  
leap out and  
roll down the street,  
find a mountain brook to  
wash off all they had seen.  
She saw too much...  
felt too much,  
as the fractured dawn  
laughed  
and flew away like  
a mocking bird.

Thomas Case

# Born At The Wrong Time

Another sun sets on his bloody red  
broken dreams. This is the kind of scene  
where a leaky faucet could be the straw that  
breaks the roaches back, a snapped  
shoe lace, a closed liquor store after  
a mile walk, sick and shaking in  
the pouring rain.

It's so hot, you could bake a potato in  
the dresser drawer.

Hot like hell in the summer.

And after it's all said and done,  
it's not the heat that finally gets him  
or the rickety gate. It's the beating in  
his chest that began two hundred  
years too late.

Thomas Case

# This Moment

If I could take this  
moment and  
own it,  
hold it like  
a piece of  
paper,  
I'd fold it  
and  
stow it away like  
a pocket knife.  
If you could be  
my wife,  
I'd be the  
happiest guy in  
the world.  
you'd be my  
girl,  
and I'd be your man.  
I would hold  
your hand and kiss you.  
And you'd never  
miss me  
again.

Thomas Case

# Aluminum Cowboys (For Tibbs)

I remember walking miles with  
our blackies (big garbage bags)  
They were full of cans, a nickel a piece.  
We were poor aluminum cowboys.  
Kind of like Don Quixote and Sancho.  
Chivalry wasn't our thing, but we  
didn't shy away from it either.  
We certainly had our share of  
adventures, and misadventures too.  
We headed East into the  
glorious tangerine and lavender sky of  
our La Mancha/Iowa City.  
We should be chasing windmills, and  
vodka, and cigarette butts;  
except late one Summer day,  
providence ended it all.  
We sat behind our castle  
(which closely resembled a grocery store.)  
Your face went pallid and you fell on me.  
I did C.P.R until the ambulance arrived.  
You didn't make it.  
I hope there are  
adventures in Heaven,  
my aluminum cowboy.

Thomas Case

# Stay Green

Smell the  
newborn puppies  
placenta from heaven,  
like candy canes and  
burning leaves.  
Stay green as long as  
you can.

Drink up the sunrise like  
a chocolate shake;  
because tomorrow comes with  
a sigh.

Thomas Case

# Lonesome Neon Night

Angels with broken wings, frostbitten dreams,  
morphine nights and gangrene schemes.

She had that broken glass sadness, the kind  
that gets worse with every slammed  
door and every lazy moon mad night.  
The light in her eyes was dim, like a candle  
in the fog, like a frog that dreams of flying,  
but wakes up to the same old pond;  
day after degrading day.

Man, every time I see her, I want to take  
her home and give her a bath; feed her  
strawberries and rub her feet.  
I want to free her from the  
rain slick suffering she's stuck in;  
wash away the stench of  
the lonely diesel strangers.

But I can't save her, hell I can't  
even save myself, so I bum her a  
Midnight Special, and light it for her,  
with a brief sulfuric blaze of glory,  
bereft of any lasting light.

Walk away, Jack-O-Lantern grin,  
into the lonesome neon night.

Thomas Case

# What's That?

I see the ship sink  
just off the coast;  
darkness at the end  
of the tunnel.

Is that thunder  
rolling in from  
the East,  
a tornado, an earthquake,  
or a flood?

Is that sound I  
hear the pounding of  
hooves outside my window?

No  
it's just the noise my  
eyes make when they open.

Thomas Case

# The Pierced Dreamer

I met her at  
the Corner Pocket.  
Her nose was  
pierced, so was  
her tongue and  
her heart.  
She spoke of  
a utopian  
city:  
a town of tree houses.  
She was in her  
third year of  
architectural school at  
Iowa State.  
Some dreams are  
best left  
unsaid.

Thomas Case

# Zits And Chocolate

You used to search my back, arms, and even my ass for zits.  
When you found one, you went to  
work at popping it.  
It hurt like hell, but I never  
said anything, because it seemed to  
bring you such pleasure.  
Sometimes, I don't even think there  
was a zit. You would just squeeze a  
freckle or birthmark.

And chocolate, for God's sake, you loved it.  
Whenever I could afford it, I'd  
buy you chocolate bars. And when I  
couldn't, I'd steal them.  
You hated me stealing, but you  
loved chocolate.

In those golden Summer evenings,  
I remember carrying your son on  
my shoulders into the pink and  
lavender sunsets.  
We had story time on the Shelter couch,  
your head resting on my shoulder.

But time, as it always does, rages on.  
You have your son, your apartment, your job.  
I have my river, my writing. and my ducks.  
I feed them bread, not chocolate.  
And although they wake me up at dawn by  
walking on my back, they don't  
mess with the zits.

I've trained them to eat bread out  
of my hand. Their little tongues feel  
like sandpaper.  
I'll never look at  
zits and chocolate the same.



# A Short Putt

After a tortuous hour of  
math (algebra to be exact)  
I start dinner, middle Eastern stew:  
Cardamom, Coriander, and turmeric.  
Cooking is a little like math, but  
much more like art. My mind begins  
to ease as Bach pumps out  
one of his symphonies from  
the CD player. The stew boils, and  
I want to go outside and play,  
chase windmills. Where's Sancho?  
Dulcinea's here, frustrated by my inept  
ability in the equation game.  
I fucking despise algebra.  
Where's the Bluebird, the Sunflower,  
Bukowski or Eugene O'Neil?  
I want to smell a six week old puppy,  
taste Van Gogh yellow, fuck until  
I can't walk, and ease my  
way into old age.  
Vivaldi plays his victorious song.  
And I know I'll conquer the  
numbers game, but probably not  
before it drives me crazy;  
actually, it's a short putt.

Thomas Case

# Sometimes She Consumates The Deal

There she is:  
naked and fickle on  
the floor, sucking  
marrow out of  
soup bones; her  
breasts  
busy with  
living things.

The muse plays  
hide  
and seek  
like a spoiled  
little child, as I s  
sit with  
sterile white  
paper.  
I think I see  
her from the  
corner  
of my  
eye, but when  
I look,  
she is gone, like  
the last Dodo bird.  
I yell, 'Are you dead? '  
NOTHING.  
And then she  
appears  
dimly through  
the glass and  
gives  
me a hard one,  
fierce, right behind  
the eyes,  
in that still small  
place where sullen  
shadows  
dance to Wagner, while

sparrows burn and  
smell of  
Spider Mums, and  
funerals.

Then, she's gone like  
the Cheshire cat.  
(the grin remains.)  
I get another  
drink, hoping to  
swallow and consume  
her- to become one.  
It doesn't work.  
I get  
frustrated, pace the  
worn out  
carpet, like a  
caged tiger

Writer's block is  
hell.  
It's worse than  
celibacy and  
bologna.  
Far worse than  
constipation, or not  
being able to cum.  
It's like missing  
the vein, or  
dying of thirst in the desert.  
It's like being  
dead, but alive.

And  
finally at  
last  
it's over (she consummates the deal)  
and the words and  
lines flow like  
rain in Seattle in  
the Springtime.  
I can

see the vulva in  
the rose.

Taste

the sweet potato sky,  
plant flowers in concrete, and  
beat Mr. Death in  
a game of go fish.

And

strangely,  
it all smells like  
home,  
eternity,  
and two-week old  
puppies dreaming of  
Mother's milk.

Thomas Case

# The Line

I keep searching  
for the line,  
a line that  
straightens my  
posture,  
unsnarls my  
eyebrows, and gives  
the bathroom mirror  
a better  
reflection.

I keep searching  
for a line that  
stops the midgets  
from crying,  
that heals the  
lame dog's leg,  
and slows the  
ticking clock.

I keep searching  
for the line, one  
that gets me  
laid by the librarian;  
that takes the eagle from  
the city; gives the  
whores hope and the  
hobos a home.

I keep searching  
for the line...

Thomas Case

# Unbelievable

She steals candles from  
the craft store.  
I stole a ceramic rooster,  
and said,  
'Here's your cock.'  
We rock the stores like  
they're our bitch.  
It's an itch that  
has to be scratched.  
We get drunk and  
it's game on.  
It's a high, like  
having sex in public;  
like that first shot of  
booze when you're  
shaking and sick.  
Someday, it will all  
come crashing down.  
But until then,  
it's the flash of  
lightning and the crown.

Thomas Case

# Into The Bright White World

She poured herself into her  
jeans like a nice glass of Chardonnay.  
I wanted to pound it, but we  
had errands to run.  
The sun was out, but it lied.  
It was February, and cold;  
real cold, like her  
heart could be.  
She wanted to set us free.  
She found she couldn't  
tame me.  
Who the hell likes a  
caged dog?  
One thing's for sure,  
The dog doesn't.  
I pulled her close  
and growled.  
She bit my neck  
and then  
we were off  
into the bright white  
world.

Thomas Case

# Frozen Love

Living on the Scandinavian streets have  
humbled her. No Christmas cards with  
a 20 spot anymore. No trust fund.  
All the money vanished like  
the last spider of vodka,  
like a dropped bottle of beer.  
She could go to a shelter by herself,  
but she chooses life on the  
streets in the brutal winter to be  
with her broke Swedish boyfriend.  
Love is lunacy- sometimes frozen.  
Two dead friends last year on a  
mad moonlit night.  
human icicles on the Iowa City streets.

One time, while drunk, her and I stole  
the neighbor's canoe. We had her  
little black dog with us.  
I dubbed him, Senator Ted Kennedy;  
probably because we were all drunks.  
(not the dog)I don't think...  
We wrestled the canoe into the Iowa river,  
and immediately proceeded to tip it over.  
The canoe sank like a bad bet by  
Hunter S. Thompson.  
We could've easily drowned, but we  
laughed our asses off, choking and splashing,  
except Teddy, he swam for Boston.

Thomas Case

# I Want

I want to kiss  
her mouth in the  
spring rain.

I want to  
feel her tight  
wet body  
against mine,  
while the water  
pounds down around us.

I want to  
carry her to  
my underground  
lair, and taste  
her orchid with  
my tongue until  
she wilts in  
sweat drenched  
ecstasy.

Thomas Case

# My Heat And My Feather

You were a woman of soft gray  
skirts and glasses, little boy in tow at that  
place we met where the clocks stopped for awhile.  
As the years pounded by, you became  
my pasture of Heaven; my honey-suckle friend.  
Your waterfall love washed over me.  
It cleansed me like a violet stream,  
dappled by the sun through the leaves on  
the Cottonwood trees.

Once, I dreamed that we flew together on  
the back of a bluebird and laughed until  
our jaws ached and we ate honeydew until the  
juice ran down our face and dripped onto  
the birds wings.

But, we always wake from dreams,  
and birds fly away and build nests...  
Yet, I know the light that shines through  
you...that exudes from your soul  
will always be my heat and my feather.

Thomas Case

# Done

It's heart breaking and  
raining in my soul.  
Love isn't enough.  
It's a swamp in  
her heart,  
mold, mildew, decay.  
She wants my balls in  
a jar.  
a gelded pony to pet.  
I'll always be  
a stallion.  
The fields are  
my home,  
not her fenced  
in facade.  
I'm galloping for  
good  
into the wild.

Thomas Case

# Our Life

Our life lives inside  
her.

My walnut haired angel;  
my freckled dreamer.

She's swollen and sensual;  
beautiful, beyond spring.

Far above the ocean's light.

I want to take her to  
a meadow and make  
love to her with the  
breeze and sparrows watching.

I want to taste the  
sticky sweet dew on her  
thighs, and wake up next  
to her for the rest  
of my life.

Thomas Case

# A New Life

The honey on the  
wet orchid glistens  
in the sweet afternoon light.

I lick softly the  
petals and the bud.

Your sigh is like  
a symphony.

The emotions pound through  
me like an ocean of love  
like a river of madness.

The juice sticks to my soul  
and I want nothing less than  
to give you breath and life.

Thomas Case

# I Love The Country Life

I love the country life,  
in between the feral cats  
and hawks.

Morning coffee March  
I sip it with vanilla  
cream and smile.

Last night I fell  
asleep inside her,  
safe and sound and  
domesticated in her  
tight wet walls.

We came together in  
determined silence;  
family in the next  
room.

I love the country life;  
the ponds and streams and  
sun soaked meadows;  
the wild asparagus and  
gooseberries.

In her arms my spirit rests.

My tired wings  
find a nest better  
than the barn swallows,  
stronger than the eagles.

I'm a brook trout  
swimming through  
her veins.

I'll chase my  
tail in her Fallopian tubes and  
make a home in her cervix.

I love the country life.  
coon hounds and corn flowers,  
coyotes yipping and  
bobcats tiptoeing up on

shocked field mice.  
Last night, after we died  
a little in each other's arms,  
I gently rubbed her  
cheek and kissed her  
eyelids, nose, and lips.  
I breathed in deep the  
smell of lavender, sex, and  
home- the safest  
fragrance I know.

Thomas Case

# Let Love Reign

When anger and hatred  
flow through your veins,  
let love reign.

On gentle Spring nights when  
memories haunt you like  
the lost dead,  
let love reign.

When stress and confusion  
overwhelm you and the  
future seems as  
uncertain as a roll  
of the dice,  
let love reign.

When you think God is  
a grand prankster and  
it feels like an  
eternal winter in  
your heart,  
let love reign.

When the pictures remind  
you of times long gone,  
and the mirror is  
a hard place to live,  
let love reign.

If you get lost,  
like I do in a  
poem or a song,  
let love reign.

In my dreams I will  
see you, and kiss you,  
and hold you forever,  
and there will be no  
good-byes  
only good mornings,  
if we let love reign.

Thomas Case

# Heroin

I put the spike  
in and push it a  
little; withdraw, and there  
it is, that beautiful  
rose  
bloom flash.  
Push the plunger  
and I'm back in  
Eden.  
Naked and no shame.  
And in that moment  
it's better than  
sex and God and Heaven  
and chocolate.  
I'm lost in  
a storybook blue  
sky, and I don't want  
to be found.  
Nothing matters but  
the sublime substance  
pumping through my  
veins that makes me  
immortal.  
Icarus flying into  
the sun until my  
wings melt and I  
fall back to earth  
and do it all again.

Thomas Case

# Return To The Womb

When my mind and  
body digress,  
I return to  
the safety of  
my watery womb.  
The bathtub filled  
with bubbles becomes  
my sanctuary;  
my hiding place from  
this weary world.  
Placenta engulfs me and  
comforts my  
twisted soul.  
I roll through this  
life and yearn  
for my long awaited  
return to the  
watery womb.  
My lighthouse  
my rocking chair  
my wet cave, far away  
from society.

Thomas Case

# My Shoes

I like  
my shoes; they are  
the only pair  
I have.  
I've walked miles in  
them.  
They have  
got me around for years.  
My shoes are  
falling apart.  
They should have  
quit on me a long  
time ago.  
Strangely enough,  
people compliment  
me on them.  
They don't see  
that the soles are  
worn thin, or that they  
smell like cat piss and  
rotting flesh.  
They don't see the  
blood stains on  
the canvas and the  
piece of broken glass stuck  
in the heel.  
Nope,  
they just say,  
'Nice kicks;  
they look good on you.'  
I can't afford  
another pair right now,  
and even if I could,  
I wouldn't spend  
the money on them.  
No, I like my  
shoes, even with  
all their imperfections.  
They have seen

a thousand sunsets and  
carried me away  
from many heartbreaks.  
My shoes have  
run  
walked  
and sauntered through  
snow  
rain  
and all kinds of shit.  
My shoes have  
saved me and  
betrayed me.  
And they have  
tasted every type  
of booze known  
to man.  
When I'm dead and  
gone  
I hope someone  
burns  
my shoes and throws  
the ashes in  
that long lonesome  
river, under the bridge,  
where men  
live and fight  
and dream.

Thomas Case

# Cor Meum, Caput Meum (My Heart, My Head)

Pages turn,  
chapters end,  
books are finished.  
With resolution, and head  
held high, I'll  
fly away to somewhere  
safer, where there's  
less pain.  
I try to love you,  
but you just  
push me away.  
The heart is a  
silly dreamer.  
It sees life as it  
should be...could be,  
and not as it  
really is.  
The head sees what  
the heart doesn't.  
Emotions can be as  
treacherous as a  
rabid dog or a  
razor blade.  
I wish I were a  
redwood or a rosebush,  
or even a dandelion  
just  
swaying in the  
breeze.

Thomas Case

# The Cages

In a dream,  
I see the raven  
fly into the night;  
his dark song beckoning  
from his beak.  
Shiny black wings promise  
flight,  
but to where?

I watch as the  
pair of doves bellow  
their songs of love  
and with a rush of  
angels wings  
fly heavenward.

I hear the  
bluebirds and  
sparrows little hum of  
hope fade softly into  
the afternoon sun,  
and I wonder,  
what does it all mean?

Then I see them, and  
many other kinds of  
birds, with beautiful bright  
colors,  
parakeets and parrots,  
eagles and herons...even  
a dodo and they are  
all rotting in cages.  
Some of the cages are  
open,  
others are closed,  
but all the birds are  
lying on their sides,  
sad dead eyes,  
staring blankly,

finished and flightless.  
and I get it.

Thomas Case

# Like A Cat Out In The Rain

Sometimes, I feel like  
a cat out in the rain.  
A big black and white Tom just  
trotted by;  
ears back, trying to avoid  
the puddles.  
Is he angry at the  
world; maybe a little sad too?  
Was he led away from  
his domestication by  
his drive and desires,  
only to return to  
a locked door and  
no more love?  
Or was he born on  
the streets-never held,  
Were the elements all  
he knew?  
It's a dog-eat-dog world,  
kill or be killed, and this  
old boy is still alive.  
I don't have the  
answer to this feline's  
follies,  
but I do know this,  
sometimes,  
I feel like a  
cat out in the rain.

Thomas Case

# Love, Dad

When I think of my kids now,  
I so much want to say things  
that I know I won't,  
like, please for your protection,  
try not to feel too much.  
If you can't help it,  
you may find that  
life comes at you like  
a left hook...a broken doll,  
a rotten tooth.  
I'm sorry I failed you,  
I would trade it all,  
everything I own or ever  
could possess, for your smiles,  
and deep true laughter.  
May you never know brutality  
or ferocious things.  
I'd rather you get  
dog bit than hope and  
feel heart sickness.  
Find someone who holds  
you tight and  
doesn't let go.  
The woods do in a pinch,  
but they can't touch  
you with flesh wrapped  
bones that cherish your hearts.

My poor kids,  
your crazy father loved you the  
best he could.  
Don't ever let anyone  
kill your light;  
always hold on;  
there is beauty in the ride,  
often too much.  
You might feel like  
a stranger or an alien,  
it's supposed to be like that.

Often it feels like  
a lump in your  
throat that won't go down.

Wear sunglasses, they  
help with the glare...the sharpness,  
and remember,  
some flowers are edible.

Thomas Case

# Love Is The Victor

I sit back in  
the place of  
attack, but equipped for  
battle this time.  
The enemy wont win.  
I laugh at him as  
I greet the dawn with  
a love-soaked heart.  
It smells like  
leather and my baby's  
hair.  
I'm fully aware of  
the antagonist's snares, and  
tricks, but we  
won't be fooled.  
We won't be trapped.  
See, this story isn't a  
tragedy, it's the  
epitome  
of romance and  
victory.  
I'm a stallion, and  
my soul-mate is a  
gorgeous queen.  
And she rides me into  
the evening as  
we eat peaches and  
pomegranates and  
let the juice glisten on  
our faces in  
God's  
glorious setting  
sun.

Thomas Case

# Together Forever

She was dressed  
business sexy the  
night we  
read poetic love  
letters to each other on  
public access television.  
It was like  
that mad moon night was  
made just for us.  
Magic show in between our  
readings.  
Is it all just a dream,  
dreamt by a dormouse  
asleep in a vodka bottle?  
Don't wake that furry little  
screwball.  
This can't end.  
Wedding plans,  
torts and tarts, and  
a tiara for my queen.  
My heart is stained by  
her love.  
My soul reeks of  
our champagne celebration.  
Life,  
together forever,  
unmolested by  
the concrete and the crows,  
and the godless  
heathens, bent on  
their toboggan ride to  
hell.

Thomas Case

# My Soundtrack To Love

I hear music in  
my head when I  
look into her  
eyes.  
It's like a  
soundtrack to love.  
A cross between  
Van Morrison and  
a Gregorian chant.  
When I touch her wet  
cotton candy lips,  
I hear the  
oceans and lions roar.  
The waves crash to  
shore in my heart,  
and I listen to the  
mermaid's song.  
And in the end,  
her footsteps,  
and her heart beat,  
and her  
apple blossom voice  
are forever my  
soundtrack to love.

Thomas Case

# The Womb's Lullaby

I first heard the  
lullaby in the  
womb.

It has a pulse,  
and a rhythm.

It was embedded in  
my tissue and cells.

And when I was shot out,  
bloody and naked,  
the cord was  
cut.

The journey began.

At four years old,  
I remember closing  
my eyes, and lying  
down to go to sleep,  
it felt like I was  
being rocked.

I wonder if the  
subconscious mind is  
remembering the  
rhythm of the womb.

My Mom- pregnant with me,  
walking upstairs- walking downstairs,  
elevators  
escalators  
movement  
pulse,  
the eternal lullaby of  
the womb.

When I closed my  
eyes, it felt like I  
was being rocked.

It felt like I  
was in a swing,  
back and forth,  
easy like a fragrant  
spring night.

I feel and hear the  
pulse- the rhythm,  
the heart in everything!  
In footsteps- in the wind,  
in the ancient river  
in the mermaids song,  
I feel it in  
the beating of the hummingbird's  
wings- I see it in  
Van Gogh's jagged sky,  
in the flight pattern of  
the wasp.

There is a rhythm in  
death and birth and love.  
Oh my God...the rapture of  
the rhythm of love and  
joy- so sublime...  
The primal beat of a  
heartbreak- PAIN,  
like painting with  
blood.  
So real  
too lucid.  
Icarus, lets fly into the  
sun, drunk on  
cheap vodka or wine.  
We'll escape- liquid smooth,  
until our wings melt,  
and we fall back down,  
CRASH-  
to the pulse, the rhythm,  
the beat.

Bum Bum

Bum Bum

Bum Bum

Sometimes, I wish I were

a rock.

Thomas Case

# Death Is Stalking Me

Death is stalking me.

It watches me play cards,  
smoke cigarettes, and  
drink beer.

It took my parents, two  
brothers, and all my friends.

It got Chris last week.

20 bottles of whiskey in  
seven days, I suppose that  
would kill anyone.

They found him on the  
railroad tracks.

Death is stalking me.

I won't cheat it.

I won't escape it,  
but before it gets me

I'll bet I finish  
this poem

Thomas Case

# At Day's End

At day's end, your love is like a ditch full of weeds.  
A rotting pumpkin, a returned letter,  
a dead yellow cat in the grass.

At day's end, the bum drowns in the river  
while trying to bathe.  
The soul is deep in atrophy, and the goldfish  
floats to the top of the bowl.

At day's end, your accusations attack like cicada killers.  
Your eyes are soulless, and  
the clown is a killer.

At day's end suicide is a viable option,  
the light has been murdered.  
Jack the ripper got away,  
and the night goes mad with horrid dreams.

At day's end, the sailboat sinks,  
the horse breaks it's leg in the backstretch  
and neither your dog nor your hope will fetch anymore.

At days end there is a shadow behind the orchid.  
Your vagina has teeth, and the bull becomes a steer.  
At day's end, the planets fall in the ocean,  
the noon is an illusion, and romantic love  
is gored in the streets of Chile.  
At day's end, my Alice won't leave Wonderland  
- the dormouse dies, and the dodo still can't fly.

At day's end Don Quixote burns at the stake.  
Robin hangs in his lonely closet.  
Peter goes out upside down, and old Ernie shotguns his way out.

Thomas Case

# The Purple

For the first time in my  
life, I saw colors- not like  
normal people see colors; my recent woman  
sees colors all the time.

This morning, there was  
purple splashed all over my room.

One time, in her sleep, she said  
the word 'purple.'

I asked her what it meant,  
she said, 'Knowledge of the future.'

I know she will try and screw this  
sickness out of me; God Bless her.

What do I know about the future?

I know it looks bleak, and the  
doves are crying.

Thomas Case

# The Death Of Spring

In the heat of Summer,  
I met her, toted her  
little boy on my  
shoulders all over town.  
Love was fresh and hot.  
Passion was wild.  
She needed an apartment and was  
worried.  
We laid in the grass, and ate berries.

Fall with its autumnal beauty was  
amazing. All burnt orange and  
harvest moons, raw sienna and yellow ochre.  
We had our windowsill madness.  
Her little boy grew, and I read to him nightly.  
He loved those stories, and I loved cuddling with  
my new found family.

Winter came with its frigid frost,  
and we went our different directions.  
I missed her, and thought of her always,  
wondered what she was up to...if she was happy?  
We saw each other a couple of times, but things  
felt icy and cold.

Spring came, I hid Easter eggs.  
Rebirth and resurrection.  
We talked of matrimony and babies, made love like  
rabbits, picked flowers and celebrated life.  
The boy grew into a little man,

The nest is empty now.  
She's moved away, I probably won't  
see her again, but I'll always love her.  
WAIT...this poem shouldn't end here.  
It sucks, because we should have been  
so much more.  
We were best friends, more than soul mates.  
We were lovers building our lives together,

and tonight she's gone.

Thomas Case

# Until The Rain Stops

Our love is  
bigger than paper.  
It's made of flesh and  
bone and blood.  
Words can't tear it apart.  
Distance won't taint it.  
My spirit groans  
without you.  
My soul feels empty  
and alone.  
I feel like a ghost wandering,  
lost, like a blowing leaf.  
Grief has become me.  
I hunger for you.  
Feed me.  
I think of you there,  
lonely and afraid.  
I want to take  
you in my arms and  
hold you until the  
rain stops, and  
the orchid blooms.

Thomas Case

# A Cursed Poet's Heart

The other day,  
I was walking down  
the street-I started  
thinking about pork pie hats  
and how I would love to have one.  
I went to the Salvation Army store  
and found a dark brown one.  
I put it on, and walked out,  
smooth as a puppy's belly-slick as  
a butterfly's wings.  
I loved that hat, I lost it a  
couple of days later.  
I lose everything I love:  
My kids, my clothes, my jaded angel.  
I've lost houses, wives, money and cars.  
What is it about love and loss that  
stalk me like a hound dog?

I've lost hope and heart, and  
even my mind at times.  
I've lost friends galore,  
my parents and two brothers are  
gone. I know if I love  
something or someone I will  
lose it.  
And those losses leave scars on  
my soul that never go away.  
So the answer seems simple,  
love less.  
Yet, that is impossible with  
this cursed poet's heart.

Thomas Case

# When The Laughter Dies

When the sadness strikes like  
a match to my soul,  
and living is drudgery,  
and my pulse slows to 49  
because the thought of  
life beyond the pink  
horizon calms me tremendously,  
I think of our laughter together;  
our churning, choking laughter,  
and I smile through my  
pain for a second or two,  
then I gaze through the  
venetian blinds at the gray  
sky and the sycamore trees and  
the daffodils in the distance,  
and none of them are  
laughing. For they know that  
laughter always dies.  
The heart tries to hold on,  
but loses every time.

Thomas Case

# Too Much

I lie in a bed in  
the hospital that we  
lied in together a couple of years ago.  
I held her; she was tired after work.  
I can't go anywhere that  
memories don't haunt me-chase me like  
a rabid dog.  
But this is too much.  
I can see her,  
smell her,  
taste her.  
And my heart breaks when  
I open my eyes, and  
face the loveless sun like  
a knife.

Thomas Case

# May The Sun Die

In the country  
on gentle silk  
nights  
I held you,  
felt your satin  
skin against mine.  
smelled the lavender in  
your hair.  
And in the  
morning, I wanted  
the sun to melt and  
die and fall from  
the sky, like a  
blazing orb of passion.

Thomas Case

# Back From The Dead

I will not be  
subdued.  
Cages don't suit me.  
I have to be free.  
Fly  
run  
sing  
dance in the  
open fields, swim  
in the river with  
the fish and water snakes.  
My soul can't be  
taken without my permission.  
The access is denied.  
My heart isn't yours to  
mock and rape.  
I will stake my life on that.  
I will rise like  
a phoenix from  
the ashes and sail on against  
the azure sky, free and  
not tethered.  
I'm resurrected,  
back from the dead.

Thomas Case

# Enamored By Your Dormouse

I love it while  
it sleeps- smiling  
wet with tea;  
dreaming dormouse  
dreams.

I tickle its  
downy fur, and  
it laughs and  
moans softly.

I want to put it in  
my pocket and  
carry it everywhere;  
take it out on  
lonely autumn nights and  
play with her until  
she's exhausted,  
relaxed and rested,  
content and lost in  
my hands and  
heart.

Thomas Case

# My Alice

In her deadly  
blue eyes, I fall down the  
rabbit hole.

Down  
down  
down I go.

I hit the  
earth like a  
mock turtle on its  
back,  
with a smack;  
like a shot to the vein.  
She travels through my  
bloodstream with the  
force of a mad tea-party.

Her hair is  
dormouse soft.

I touch it, and feed  
her tarts, as she  
rides me like  
a guillotine;  
sharp and final,  
with a purpose,  
like a porpoise with a  
fish hook in  
its mouth.

I hold on tight  
and never let go.

Thomas Case

# Breath

I was just thinking about your  
breath, before you brush your teeth- I love it.  
It reminds me of simple, beautiful things like,  
streams flowing gently over slippery moss covered  
rocks, and puppies at about three weeks old,  
right before they open their eyes, the way they  
wiggle around with their ears pasted to their  
heads; blind to the world. Soft, plump bellies full of  
Mother's milk, but I think most of all, it reminds  
of home, a home with love and laughter and  
books and plants; classical music and sunlight bending  
through half open windows. It warms hearts and hands,  
and hours and days that slip away far too soon.  
It reminds me of feathers and flight,  
and babies- clocks ticking, pages turning,  
and life- hard, fast, short, beautiful life.

Thomas Case

# My Heart Beats For Her

She comes raging back  
into my life,  
like a West Coast wildfire;  
no force can keep us  
apart;  
too much love built  
up over the years, to  
be touched by anyone, or  
anything-angels and  
demons might try,  
but their most concerted  
efforts are like  
little foam balls bouncing  
off a mountain.  
No circumstance is  
worthy to jade our  
bond or taint our connection.  
Trials make us stronger.  
Man, we have fought and fucked  
with a ferocious appetite,  
like wild rabid  
dogs, our bodies attack  
each other in a sweat  
drenched bliss that is  
primal and prehistoric.  
Last night we had a  
tidal wave, a tornado of  
lovemaking that left  
our genitals,  
spent and throbbing and  
ablaze with  
a flame of desire and hunger.  
I hold her in my arms, and she listens  
to my heart beat fast for  
our miraculous new  
lives together.

Thomas Case

# More Than I Bargained For

I've lost everything I  
owned more times than  
I can count.

All I had left was  
the clothes on my back.  
In some ways, there was  
a sense of relief.

What else could I lose?  
That answer came hard  
and fast like the night.

I could lose my health,  
my sanity,  
my friends,  
my sense of peace  
and love,

I could lose my  
creativity and  
the muse

She could end up at  
the Deadwood, bellied-up  
to the bar, tickling  
some young English major.

I could lose a lot more  
than I thought

Well, here I sit  
in a three bedroom  
house that fell out  
of the sky,  
a few pieces of clothes,  
some food,  
coffee and cigarettes.

I have a blue and  
orange cast on my  
left leg.

I have the cast  
because I fell and  
broke my ankle  
on a debauched

lonely winter  
night.  
I had surgery  
ten days ago.  
Now I have  
more than I  
bargained for- a plate and  
screws galore,  
and a nice healthy  
opiate addiction

Thomas Case

# Let Us Be

When I look  
at her with  
an artist's soul  
and a poet's heart  
I'm in love all  
over again.  
She haunts my  
dreams and owns  
my thoughts  
It's when we  
expect more than  
Love and art from each other  
that things get  
convoluted and harsh  
I will never be  
her Viking and  
she will never be  
my virgin  
but when I let  
her be the sensitive woman  
I fell in love with  
and she lets me be  
the imperfect man that  
won her guarded heart  
the butterflies will laugh  
and sing to the sky and  
stray dogs will  
find homes.

Thomas Case

# I've Been A Slave

I've been a slave so many  
times.

I've been a slave to  
booze and vaginas,  
to poverty and the streets;  
I've been a slave to opiates  
and poetry  
brutality and love.

I've been a slave to  
the flesh and my addictions,  
good intentions galore.

I've been a slave to  
beauty and hatred,  
passion and desire;  
the flame  
and the  
fiery dance with death.

I've been a slave to the  
crowd and the pedestal;  
the morning glory women, and  
their spells.

I've been a slave on  
the slow ride to hell.

So for the last time,  
I'm done with slavery.  
Go find a new cock to control.  
This rooster is going back to  
the barnyard...  
chase the horses and the hens,  
I promise,  
I will crow at the  
freedom-soaked dawn.

Thomas Case

# Joy Deferred

I dreamed I was  
sitting in an  
old  
dilapidated house.  
It was like  
a cave with  
red brick walls.  
The paint was  
peeling; it smelled  
like  
loneliness and  
ovulation.  
I was with  
a woman(maybe an ex)  
and  
she cried (big turtle tears)  
and said,  
'Don't hate me.' (she was leaving)  
I was drinking;  
not drunk,  
but liquid smooth.  
For some reason, I was  
going to  
Chicago, to live on  
the streets (it was destiny, my plight.)  
And I thought,  
fuck that,  
I don't want  
to go to  
Chicago (all that concrete and Oprah Winfrey)  
So I sat there  
and  
watched the red  
paint peel,  
and  
although the cave  
was warm and moist,  
it was unfit to  
live in.

I said to myself,  
I'll go to  
the woods,  
and live, write,  
kill small mammals and eat them (thanks Thoreau.)  
I ascended  
the stairs to  
tell the woman of  
my epiphany.  
(Beethoven's, Ode to Joy, played in my head.)  
She was mock  
sleeping, waiting.  
I said,  
'I'm going to the woods to live and write.'  
She pulled the  
covers off,  
exposing all that  
impossible  
magic,  
and said,  
'Make love to me  
one  
last time.'  
I was glad for  
that  
and  
sad that she  
was leaving,  
ambivalent,  
but  
mostly  
I was glad.

Damn!  
I woke up.  
No woods.  
No sex.  
Sometimes,  
the pain is  
so raw  
it's like  
food poisoning

or  
like a little grey  
squirrel biting at  
my intestines.

Thomas Case

# In A Battle Without A Shield

It doesn't seem like  
Christmas.  
Mom and Dad are gone,  
the kids are grown; there's no  
snow on the ground, and  
I'm in the psych ward again.  
There is a dead dog loneliness  
about the place,  
All the patients are asleep,  
and it's too early to get  
my meds.  
Coffee has replaced  
vodka in my diet, and  
I feel like I'm in a  
battle without a shield.  
Even the pen I wield  
isn't as sharp as it  
used to be.

Thomas Case

# Not Such A Silent Night

It won't be a silent  
night this Christmas in  
the Psych Ward.  
There are some real  
wack jobs in here.  
One guy grabbed his crotch,  
and said, 'I have hold of all my faculties.'  
The nurse asked him what  
drugs he was on,  
He said, 'It's not the drugs that are  
the problem, it's the women.'  
Maybe he's not as crazy as I thought.  
I shouldn't talk; I'm getting  
ECTs (Electra Convulsive Therapy)  
One of the side effects is  
memory loss. I hope they make me  
forget the last woman in my life.  
Life is so odd.  
I'm locked in the nuthouse,  
getting shock treatments.  
She's home in her apartment,  
cooking and cleaning,  
crazy and mean as a shit-house rat.

Thomas Case

# Hook Him Up To The Machine

Hook him up to the machine.

Shock his brain into  
mediocrity.

Death stalks him;  
he is aware.

There is too much  
flash in his eyes.

His brain needs a reboot;  
he needs to forget,  
like a goldfish, like  
a monkey in the zoo.

Hook him up to the machine.

He is too sentimental;  
salmon swim in his blood,  
he has a paisley heart,  
and a tie-dye soul.

He can smell colors.

Hook him up to the machine.

He has Van Gogh eyes,  
and a Bukowski gut;

He walks like he's  
lost in a maze,  
hunchback sadness,  
butcher-knife nerves.

Hook him up to the machine.

He believes in love,  
and has too much trust.

His vivid green memory  
is a curse, we need to  
crash it, kill the  
eternal spring.

Hook him up to  
the machine.

Thomas Case

# Like A Butterfly Melting

The night is torn apart;  
fractured and shattered by  
the memory of you.  
Stars shake and die,  
and I'm filled with  
diesel loneliness,  
soul sick, like  
a butterfly melting.  
Everywhere I go,  
I smell pumpkin pie, lilacs,  
and sexual energy.  
The day will come when  
I'll not think of you;  
not write a single line about  
you- not feel you in the  
attic of my mind,  
but until then,  
the crows peck at my  
heart, spring never comes;  
ice forms on my brain,  
and life inches along like  
a filthy worm.

Thomas Case

# Stabbed By The Autumn Leaves

Jack-o-lantern love,  
stabbed by the autumn leaves;  
bleeding all burnt orange and sienna.  
And it smells like  
cloves and vanilla,  
and loneliness. Kaleidoscope confusion,  
that dog bite pain  
in my soul.  
I don my navy blue corduroy,  
as I bundle up for  
the great void.

Thomas Case

# Make The Static Go Away

Make the static go  
away,  
the dead-dog depression;  
the fleas tip-toeing across  
my brain.  
Hate locks the  
door to the heart,  
and puts the  
soul in a cage.  
The rage consumes,  
like a west coast fire.

Make the static go  
away,  
the electric anxiety;  
the butterflies swimming in  
my blood.  
Love is a fantasy,  
a fairy tale for children.  
Devotion  
imprisons  
the mind and  
subdues the heart.

Give me sweet  
apathy, beautiful  
sedation, let me  
float in bliss;  
untethered by emotion.  
Let me get lost, deep  
in the core of the orchid,  
and sail aimless,  
in the  
vast chasm  
of the sea.  
Give me radical  
lethargy.



# Time And Dirt

He had that  
groaning soul  
loneliness, like a  
puffy white cloud,  
floating aimless and  
aching toward the  
black abyss- that gray sky  
sadness,  
like he was  
five years old, and just  
watched his dog get  
hit by a car.  
You could smell  
the pain- taste it  
like potato chips on a  
sore throat.  
It smelled like a  
basement or cobwebs.  
I told him,  
'Nothing will fix that  
shit- just time and dirt.'  
He didn't blink,  
and his soft walnut eyes  
flashed  
crossword confusion.

Thomas Case

# Night Terror

In my night  
terror,  
I hear the pounding  
of  
your wings, ripping and  
tearing  
at my feeble heart.  
It's beating,  
but  
barely,  
bomb-blasted by your  
attack.  
your love is like  
a stroke;  
like a bloated toad.  
I'm road weary,  
teary-eyed like a  
sunflower.  
And you scream in  
the darkness like  
a lamb.

I long to cum in  
you.  
I'm like dentures  
chewed on by a stray dog;  
teeth missing,  
jagged like a  
jack-o-lantern.

Damage control is  
your best bet.  
I let you way too  
far in.  
No turning back now.  
I'm like a dumb  
cow led to slaughter.

I'm miles away.

You're on a  
different  
island.

Thomas Case

# Well Versed In Delirium

She left me like  
Brutus left Caesar,  
like a shark attack.  
My back was bent and  
bleeding, and I was well  
versed in delirium.

She had the electricity  
shut off the day after  
she abandoned me, and I drank  
my way into a new oblivion.  
There were kittens in  
the wall- shadows, tall and hot,  
and I was well versed  
in delirium.

I stole Four Locos' from  
the convenience store, but  
not enough to keep  
the goblins at bay.  
They chased me through  
my nightmare- molested  
me at dawn.  
The elixir exorcised the monsters,  
but I often misplaced it, in  
the dryer or  
fireplace.  
Meat began to rot in  
the freezer, and I was  
well versed in delirium.

My moon flowered brain thought  
the cat-tree was  
a person- I paced the floor and  
talked to it- asked questions,  
sought solace.  
Degradation of the  
mind reached critical mass,  
and I landed in the

psych ward again.

The bats brought seizures,  
and cheesecake, and yogurt  
berry parfaits that were  
to die for.

I was well versed in delirium.

Thomas Case

# Hope Took A Vacation

I saw the dawn  
rape lonely  
orphans  
with broken dreams,  
while bats ate  
butterflies,  
cats killed sparrows  
and hope flew  
south for  
the winter.

On my way  
downtown  
I've seen the  
dead through  
windows at the  
dry cleaners eating  
hamburgers with  
starched faces.

The librarians, dry  
and dusty, pray  
for rain, as hippos weep,  
hyenas sigh  
and hope  
flies south.

I've seen the strange  
hand of  
circumstance  
wear the jester's  
hat.

I've seen destiny  
angry turn her  
back, while potential  
is wasted on  
the railroad tracks.  
Yeah, hope flew south  
for the winter.

Thomas Case

# I Want To Swim To Heaven

I want to swim  
to heaven, because this  
city has an infection.  
No injection will kill this  
disease, this treachery,  
this brutality...  
So I'm going to swim  
to heaven, back float  
take my time.  
My rhyme will be  
the deep blue trip  
to heaven.

Thomas Case

# Her

The dark dance calls  
softly,  
like night shade or  
oleander.  
Just a little taste...  
Just one more slow  
waltz.  
I can smell her  
wet orchid while  
I sleep.  
She moves languidly  
through my dreams,  
possessing me at  
dawn with lambent steps.  
The love is  
violent, like a  
bullfight.  
It's sweet and  
treacherous, ferocious.  
Fatal for  
one of us,  
and she's been  
gored.

Thomas Case

# Lonely, Like The Leaves

The days crawl by like  
tortoises.

My purpose is obscured by  
vodka nights, and  
raven-haired sadness.

Naked branches of  
the maple trees dance in  
the autumn wind, and  
leaves rustle in  
the dead grass;  
all burnt orange and yellow ocher.

They're like a  
little surreal sunrise.

Hope  
is eternal.

Thomas Case

# For A Friend In An Asylum In California

Give me lazy lithium  
days, soft asylum, Cheshire madness.  
This sadness only  
lasts  
awhile, with sun burnt  
smiles and ocean mist  
kisses...

Give me sweet Mai-Tai  
nights, gentle lunacy.  
The Mad Hatter Moon  
laughs at me, and  
the fog only lasts a  
little while.

Just one more time,  
please stay awhile.

Thomas Case

# There Is A Crime

There is a crime that  
goes beyond  
denunciation.

There is a sorrow, a fucking  
hollowness  
that weeping  
can't even begin to  
symbolize.

There is a failure in  
life  
that topples and  
belittles all  
success.

When trying to focus on  
life  
is like looking through  
a kaleidoscope,  
when sounds liquefy and  
odors take shape and  
waltz  
to sullen night music,  
life must end.

Life must end, because  
a profit can no longer be  
ripped from your  
hands, your knowledge,  
your punctuality, or your  
dedication to  
the machine.

Ever since I can remember,  
I sensed the  
randomness of it  
all.  
I fought against it,

I had faith, I believed.

Thomas Case

# Another Lover

I guess I shouldn't be  
surprised.

In the  
beginning, the women are  
attracted to the light,  
the writing,  
but after a while,  
they hate it.

They get jealous,  
as if I had another  
lover.

I suppose I do.  
And when I'm in my stride  
I don't give them the  
attention that they crave and  
desire.

When the words and  
lines are flowing  
the women seem so needy,  
so greedy.

I guess it's not fair that  
I devote my heart to  
writing- but truth be  
told, they knew what they  
were getting  
themselves into.

Thomas Case

# Mom, Wake Up

When I was a  
kid,  
my Mom would pretend  
to be dead.  
She'd lie in bed, and  
when I arrived home from  
school  
I'd go to wake  
her up.  
'Mom...Mom...  
get up,  
I need a ride...  
Mom...Wake Up...Wake Up! '  
She'd smile, then  
laugh and  
open her eyes, and say,  
'What if I were dead?  
What would you do? '  
I'd say,  
'I don't know, you're not!  
Quit acting crazy.  
I need a ride to Cindy's house.'  
She'd get up and  
light a cigarette and put  
on her quilted rose  
colored coat.

We'd pile into the  
boat,  
the '74 Chevy Impala,  
and we'd blast off  
into the pink horizon.

One winter night in  
'87  
I stood above  
her as she lay on  
the hospital gurney.  
She didn't wake up.



# I Want To Be Your Lumberjack

I want to be your  
lumberjack. I want to  
cut down trees, and  
build us a log cabin in the  
woods by a running stream.  
I'll catch trout and fillet  
them for dinner.  
I'll trap rabbits, and  
muskrats, and I'll  
make you a fur hat.

I want to be your  
lumberjack.  
I'll wear red flannel shirts all  
the time, and grow a scraggly  
beard like Thoreau.  
We can cuddle by  
the fireplace on  
cold winter nights.  
You can grow a garden,  
with potatoes and asparagus.  
We can climb mountains,  
and hunt bears.  
I could make a rug from  
its fur, and a necklace  
from its claws.  
I want to be  
your lumberjack.

In the summer,  
we could skinny-dip by  
moonlight, and  
make love in the  
dew soaked grass.  
We could have a  
coon hound named Festus,  
and I could build a  
tire swing in an  
old oak tree.

Fuck this shitty  
city, and its treachery.  
I want to be your lumberjack.

Thomas Case

# Chaos Is Sexy

Debauched nights, destruction waning.  
There is a twisted pull to the underbelly.  
Chaos is sexy, like silk stockings and  
Bonnie and Clyde.  
I can smell it a mile away,  
like a dog in heat.  
It draws me from the  
safety of my sweet calm life.  
There is an existence beyond  
the bridge, but it's boring and soulless.  
I want to murder the light and  
the routine; dredge the  
marrow from the bone.

Thomas Case

# The Bullfrog Dreams Of Flying

He wants to shake the moss off his back  
and leave the tad-poles behind.

They remind him of his misspent youth  
and wasted Spring.

The blackbird sings of blue skies,  
far off lands,  
and the bullfrog dreams of flying.

Thomas Case

# It's The Hunger That Drives You

I'm on a Bukowskiesque roll,  
pounding them out,  
seven or eight a night.

I know it won't last.

It's like a fast.

It's the hunger that  
drives you.

And when you're starving,  
you eat, then rest,  
not today though; I've hit  
my stride.

And the night is mine for  
the taking.

And the words are mine for  
the raping.

And my heart, I am staking  
on the fact

that

I will stay hungry.

Thomas Case

# Montana (If Only)

We used to talk about  
going  
to Montana- escaping it all,  
building a log cabin and  
making a garden. We were  
going to hunt and fish for  
food- make rugs and  
hats from the fur.

But look at us now.  
You live in the  
city, and drive a Volvo;  
goldfish in a glass bowl.  
You even taught your  
cat to walk on  
a leash.  
Can you see the  
sky with all the smog?

I'm not any better;  
living under the bridge;  
the only hunting I do is  
for cans, the rare and  
illusive  
aluminum nickle, so that  
I can buy booze.  
Every penny I make goes  
for  
smokes, wine, or vodka.

I walk down to the  
river's edge, and look up at  
the expansive sky.  
I close my eyes.  
And when I open them baby,  
we're in Montana.

Thomas Case

# I'll Still Miss Her

She pulls away when  
I kiss  
her.  
And she treats me  
like a stray dog.  
I fell asleep, and  
she retired to the  
box springs alone.  
I suck at good byes.  
It's only a couple of days,  
I know.  
I still suck.  
She's going to Missouri  
to get some things from  
her Moms'.  
She's a fucking nut.  
A break will  
do us good,  
but I'll still  
miss her.

Thomas Case

# Starving

I'm not hungry.  
How many times have  
I said that?  
This time, it's the  
recent woman.  
She wants to savor  
the buzz.  
Food would interfere.  
I know it all too  
well.  
The hell of not  
eating to maintain  
the high.  
Food absorbs.  
I used to go  
six to ten days  
without a bite.  
The light goes out.  
The brain begins to  
eat itself.  
She's starving.

Thomas Case

# Cooking Sherry

I used to crush  
lightning bugs on  
my face. I thought  
I would glow in  
the dark.  
I don't, although,  
my liver has given me  
a nice jaundice cast.  
Almost Miami tan.  
The other night  
she  
punched me, then called  
the cops- blood everywhere.  
She went to jail for  
five days.  
She acted like it was  
an eternity.  
We fucked last night until  
my cock was raw.  
Today, she's a stranger;  
self centered and  
self absorbed.  
I've been drinking Cooking Sherry  
to keep from having siezures.  
She could care less.  
She brought home a  
six pack and gave me one  
beer.  
Oh well,  
I knew she was no Iris when  
I met her.  
I just didn't realize she  
was Nightshade.

Thomas Case

# She Throws It All Away!

Every time she  
kicks me out,  
she throws my stuff  
away:  
my clothes  
my books  
my poetry.  
I'm broke like  
a toad.  
I can't afford it.  
No bother- she just  
throws it all away.  
No apologies.  
I come back, and  
ask, 'Where's all my stuff? '  
Away,  
far away.

Thomas Case

# My Hat

I found this  
old hat at  
the Salvation Army.  
I liked it, it fit well;  
kind of Sinatraesque.  
I've received lots  
of compliments.

But it doesn't stop the  
cats from screeching in  
the night.  
It can't quench my  
thirst.  
It will never bring  
my Mom and Dad back.  
It's just a hat.

It can't fix my  
relationship- it won't  
break the horse or  
heal  
Lautrec's legs.  
It won't give Vincent  
his cobalt blue dreams or  
give back Poe's  
Annabelle Lee.  
But  
it's my hat and  
I like it.

Thomas Case

# Worry

She worries about  
everything,  
real and imagined.  
'What if this? What if that? '  
I watched my  
Mom  
worry herself right  
into the  
grave one disastrous  
December night.  
She doesn't care.  
She wants me to  
worry right along  
with her.  
And when I don't,  
she  
gets pissed off.  
My Dad used to say,  
'They can kill us,  
but they can't eat us.'  
I share this with her.  
Nothing!  
Just  
worry, worry, worry.

Thomas Case

# Westward

I can taste the  
lavender sky  
smell the pink,  
squeeze the orange out,  
and drink it like a  
screwdriver.

My angel with  
jaded wings,  
my heart sings when  
I hold her.

I can touch the  
burnt umber of her  
hair.

And I'm in  
Wonderland, because she's  
my Alice, and I want  
to bring her  
safely home.

Thomas Case