Thomas Case
- poems -

Publication Date:
2021

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive
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, poemhunter.com and 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.
A Dreamer

By the time I was 23
Mom and Dad were
both dead.
I know it sounds
strange, but I felt
like an orphan;
like Oliver Twist.
Real love has
eluded me ever since.
like the goldfish in
the tank
at the Chinese restaurant,
when I reach in and
try to grab one.
Growing up, I thought
my parents would live
forever; of course that's
absurd, but even back then
I was a dreamer.

Thomas Case
Life In The Clouds

The birds started
singing at ten to four
this morning;
coaxing the dawn on
with their song.

The sex would be
great on the clouds
I saw yesterday.
They looked like
rows of fresh
cauliflower.
Every position would be
a little miracle;
perfect depth and
perception.

The sweat stung
my eyes as I
smoked in the
sweltering July
sun.
I wish I could
live in the clouds...
No job
No taxes or tired back.
Just relaxing in
that puffy white
perfection.

Thomas Case
Lost At Sea

Her heart was my port, as I sailed lost in those vagrant waters. Her eyes were my lighthouse through the fog and the storms of life.

Oh, how I loved her once upon a time, when I was lost at sea; she was my shore, my harbor of joy.

The nights are darker without her, and the Stars hide their sadness behind the clouds.

Life has changed, I am older now... colder now without her touch.

Thomas Case
When people annoy me with their constant complaining or their non stop arguing, or even worse, their illogical demands:
'For the last time, you can't buy vodka with food stamps.' Or,
'There is no way a crow took the rent money out of your hands and flew off with it.'

What I do is close my eyes and pretend they're squirrels chattering in squirrel language. Then they don't bother me so much. I just want to reach out and pet them, or give them a handful of nuts. It's not hard; half of them look like squirrels anyway.

Thomas Case
I've been to a place where the hobos have no soul where everything's jaded, tainted, bought with the cost of a dream, where whores cry plastic tears, where fears rule people, like Caesar over Rome; like turf In the Astrodome.

Oh someday, someday baby,

we'll all be home

Thomas Case
Birth Of A Poet

One of my earliest memories is of afternoons in the backyard, standing on a wrought iron chair that was painted lime green. My creativity was feril. The paint was peeling, and the sun beat down upon me. I was 5 years old. and the Genesis of my writing career began. Below my chair was a plastic swimming pool filled with water. I sang leaving on a jet plane I understood pathos, and plot, and melancholia. In my mind, I was a man leaving a woman. As I jumped into the pool I could smell loneliness. And I understood the descent, the separation, the sadness.

And in my little life, and in my big heart, under that hot July sun, The poet was born.

Thomas Case
Stealing Death From The Ferryman

It's a lost planet; all jacked up on caffeine and pride. The slime from the snail tastes like jasmine and tangerines.
When I think about death, I picture all the billions of people who have already died.

Death is just as known as life. Death is not a mystery to the dead. It's as common as paper clips, and grasshoppers. My Mom and Dad know. Bukowski and James Dean know. All three stooges and Superman dine for eternity with the worms and the rot.

This mindset steals the fear from the ferryman, and the river Styx becomes a placid stream.

Thomas Case
Over There

Hope migrates to
sunny Island shores.
There is no sorrow,
roses always bloom,
and the birds of paradise
fly forever free.
The salty ocean
cleanses the rot
from the skin
and the heart.

Thomas Case
The Search Continues

The way she faked love on those gentle autumn nights in the country was one of those little miracles that made the trees cry, and the flowers weep.

Sleep brought dreams of an actor on an empty stage... A big crowd that wanted entertainment. They followed the actor everywhere. He felt like he always had to be on. He didn't like that, so he moved to Idaho, where he fished for trout, and real love.

Thomas Case
The Birth Of A Poet

One of my earliest memories is of afternoons in the backyard, standing on a wrought iron chair that was painted lime green. My creativity was ferril. The paint was peeling, and the sun beat down upon me. I was 5 years old, and the Genesis of my writing career began. Below my chair was a plastic swimming pool filled with water. I sang leaving on a jet plane. I understood pathos, and plot, and melancholia. In my mind, I was a man leaving a woman. As I jumped into the pool I could smell loneliness. And I understood the descent, the separation, the sadness.

And in my little life, and in my big heart, under that hot July sun, The poet was born.

Thomas Case
What Might Have Been...

The saddest place I've ever seen, is looking out the window and watching the rain fall again on the green Meadows... Thinking about, what might have been.

Thomas Case
Amor Tardius Occidit

We should have
been so much
more.
Now we're just a torn
page
in a finished book.
The memories are
fading,
but the pain still lingers.
I still smell you on
my fingers.
I still taste you on
my tongue.
Love kills slowly;
a backward glance from
an invisible god.
I'm a bird that sings,
but cannot fly.
I'm the ticking of a
clock.
A rocking chair.

tick

tock...

Thomas Case
Her skin is full of holes, and she's raped by the dawn on a daily basis; wandering the midnight streets of this broken City. Her feet are calloused and raw. That once tough heart is soft now, looking for love in the rabid faces of evil. Seagulls still fly into cars, and spiders spin webs in the dark. Abandoned houses have become her home and her soul aches for someone to hold. Sometimes, dreams float by, like a dragonfly on a soft breeze.

Thomas Case
The Carnival

I can hear
Them playing,
The devil inside
from the carnival
down the street.
All the bleak
eyes wandering
through the
empty crowd,
looking for
love or dope;
something to change

Thomas Case
I had just came
Out of an AA meeting.
I looked to the
west, and spied a
mother cat with
a litter of kittens.
Little balls of fluff
running and jumping in
the tall grass,
unaware of the
danger that lurked.
A large black and white
Tomcat eased his way
up on one of
the kittens.
The tiny one arched its
back and hissed,
trying to be brave.

Male cats kill the
kittens so that
the female will go into
heat sooner.
And then he can
mate again.
He's a born killer,
living to fuck.

As I walked towards him,
I thought to
myself, why can't cats
be like penguins?
The father helps raise the
little ones, and they
mate for life.
Why can't nature
have morals?
He was nosed to nose
with the baby, when I said,
'Go on, get out of here.'
He walked slowly, and then turned and tried to come back toward the kitten.
I put my hand on his side and pushed him.
I stomped my feet and he sulked away for the time being.
He'll be back.

It pissed me off and made me sad.
I thought of Caligula and Roman empires.
And felines of all breeds.
The sex drive, human and animal, has its brutal side.

Thomas Case
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 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
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 are. 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
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 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
going 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
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,
ilies 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
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
If you're wondering why there's so many typos? I'm in the hospital, Benzoed out and on phenobarbital. 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 Redskins buccaneer game, they'll always be the Redskins to me. But that could just be the benzos talking

Thomas Case
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
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
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
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 too 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
SOMEBODY'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
Fransisco 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
dothes, 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
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
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
Llv

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
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 dinning 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 tandori chicken smells like a TV dinner.

Thomas Case
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
captured 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 breadth.
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
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 itself, 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,
you don't like it.
And don't tell a batter to bunt,
you 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.
Thomas Case
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
staring 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
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
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
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 rapscallion, 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
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
treptilian 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
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
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. It's 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 hear 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 moment's reprieve.

Thomas Case
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
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
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 hear 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 Flys 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
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
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.
Thomas Case
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
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 then 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
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
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
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 won't 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.
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 trys 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
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
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
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
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.
Thomas Case
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 Delerium

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
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
treachery, 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.
Thomas Case
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