

Poetry Series

Thomas Case
- poems -

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Thomas Case(November 10 1966)

Thomas case was born in Oxnard California. He's published two volumes of poetry, *The Bullfrog Dreams of Flying and Artichokes Avocados and Van Gogh*. He has won several poetry contests. His poetry has been published in *Lyrical Iowa* and *Poetry in Public Project Iowa City* multiple times. He has hundreds of poems published in various anthologies all over the world. His poetry can be viewed on allpoetry.com, 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

People

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

Home

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
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

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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 Soul Aches

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

Killer In The Grass

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 the
fragility of life, and how
truly fragile the
human spirit
can get.

Life can get
insidious,
with its twists and turns

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

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

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

Thomas Case

The Womb

Another lunatic trip to
the hospital.

Nine days, this
go around.

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

It was warm and safe.

As much as I
wanted to stay,

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

Thomas Case

Vagabond Wind

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

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

I will listen for
your sweet laughter.

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

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

Thomas Case

Apathetic, Empathetic

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

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

She had these cold gray eyes.

in one quick movement, she took off

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

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

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

Pussy is pussy

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

Thomas Case

I Know Who I Am

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

Thomas Case

Riding The Breeze No More

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Tangerine Sky

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

Thomas Case

A Prayer Away

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

I Need To Visit France

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

Somehow I got separated
from them

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

There was a lot
of passion and an instant
connection.

I had cuts all over my
face for some reason.

She liked me anyway.

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

The attraction was strong.

There was a heat I
could smell.

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

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

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

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

I never did find my
sister and the ex.

I woke up, and felt
Sick to my stomach.

Why are all the
good ones in dreams?

I need to visit France.

Thomas Case

A Dreamless Sleep

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

I Don't Even Know Your Name

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

Thomas Case

Shreaded

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Deadly Nightshade

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

Thomas Case

Fever

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

Thomas Case

Liquid Smooth

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

Thomas Case

The Neighbor

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

Thomas Case

An Irish Melody

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

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

Thomas Case

Miles And Miles

I know the wind
cries for me.

The birds sing of
my loneliness from
the sky.

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Psycho Love

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

Thomas Case

Tide Pool

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

Thomas Case

Jazz In Hell

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

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

Thomas Case

Belladonna

Everyday that dawns,
you slip away a little more.

The distant stare,
the apathetic eyes.

Your love is as dead
as the roses in
the trash.

Your heart is an
abyss that I'm
lost in forever.

Belladonna drew me in.
The poison kept me there.

#love #pain

Thomas Case

Goodbye Gonzo

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

Thomas Case

The Compliment

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

Thomas Case

The Western Plains Of The Heart

I miss her, and
it's uncomfortable.

I'm not used to
feelings.

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Flower Drunk

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

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

Thomas Case

Hanging Out With The Muse

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

All Good Things

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

This poem won't
behave.

The writing streak
is over.

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Indigo Night

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

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

Thomas Case

Carried Away By My Dark Obsession

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

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

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

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

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

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

My heart is true
even though my
soul is blind.

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Advocatus Diaboli (Devil's Advocate)

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

Thomas Case

Wet Orchid

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

Thomas Case

Damnation Island (Lunatic's Ball)

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

The Streak

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

Metaphors and imagery
evaded me.

It was frustrating
and painful.

a desert
an iceberg
a forest with
no trees.

Lonely, it's the
opposite.

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

It's like building
a ladder to heaven.

I can taste colors
and smell sunshine.

It feels like I
found the fountain of youth.

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

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

Thomas Case

Days Like These

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

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

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

I fell in
love with

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

Thomas Case

My Queen

I was playing
chess without
any pawns.

The dawn
came up
brutal and
strong.

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

That was the
end
before I even
got a start.

Thomas Case

Rocks In My Cup

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

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

Thomas Case

Teardrops On A Glass Pipe

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

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

Thomas Case

Shattered (My Lady Of Ashes)

What happened to your heart?
It used to be so strong.
When did these damn nights
get so fuckin long

You're my Lady of ashes,
and I'm all burnt up.
You threw me in the fire;
And my soul has had enough.
I've had enough...
I've had enough,

I've had enough

Thomas Case

Vision Board

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Dark Corners Of My Soul

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

He doesn't want to
be hurt anymore.

I spent eight years
with Beth.

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

She made nightmares
look good.

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

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

Years flew by
like seagulls;
up
down
and darting.

The little boy
continued to
hide in the
dark corners of my soul.

He wanted to

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

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

Thomas Case

Past Tense

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

My Drinking Career Begins

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

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

I got out of the

hospital and began
drinking again immediately.

Amy broke up with me.

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

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

Mom

Amy

the kitten--all gone.

Then, I really started
drinking.

Thomas Case

Invincible Summer

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

Thomas Case

Like Teardrops On A Glass Pipe

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

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

Thomas Case

Perspective

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Dead Irish Poet Beer

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

Thomas Case

Time Is A Thief

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

Thomas Case

Benzoed

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Dtox

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Blue Eyed Delusion

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

Thomas Case

Olivia

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

Thomas Case

Congical Visit Death

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

Thomas Case

Smothered

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

Thomas Case

Assonance

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

Thomas Case

A Boat On A Leash

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

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

Thomas Case

Tired And Longing

Thank God those
febrile nightmares of
youth are gone.

I long for the
numbing fog.

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

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

Legs tired from running;
cock sore from fucking.

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

Thomas Case

Rain (Haiku)

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

Thomas Case

Dangerous Video Game

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

Thomas Case

Algebra

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

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

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

Thomas Case

One For M

Sometimes the laughter between
us could heal a leper.

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Golden Vagina?

She acted like her vagina was
made of gold.

And

that my heart was to be
bought and sold.

And

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

She was

wrong though—it's not
for sale;

not for any price;

not even if her

vagina were made of
gold.

Thomas Case

Whoops

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

Thomas Case

Ode To Ma And Pa

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

Thomas Case

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

Yeah, so what I was sitting
on the wall.

It was mine, and a great
wall it was.

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Tempus Fugit (Time Flies)

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

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

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

Thomas Case

In Lieu Of Flowers

Orchids wilt and rot
in time.

Roses have thorns that
prick to bleed.

Seeds bring life that
ultimately die.

In lieu of flowers
give me your
eyes full of
heat and desire.

Surrender your heart of
passion, but most of all,
water me with your
love so that I can grow.

Thomas Case

Love Drunk

~To Love or Not to Love
Is the question

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

.....

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

.....

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

.....

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

I now suffer

.....

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

.....

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

.....

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

Thomas Case

Jumping That Train

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

Thomas Case

Me And Walter

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

Thomas Case

Two Dimes

I was walking in
that old betrayer,
rain.

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Crazy?

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

They do it all the time.

John Nash

Vincent Van Gogh

Poe

Sylvia Plath

Michelangelo

Edvard Munch

Francisco Goya

Hemingway

Kerouac

H.P. Lovecraft

Virginia Woolf

This isn't an exhaustive list.

I think it is complete
bullshit.

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

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

Thomas Case

Taos

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Heaven Reigns Down

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

Thomas Case

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Olive Skinned Dream

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

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

I woke up with an

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

Thomas Case

What A Life

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

My Night Of A Thousand Storms

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Too Drunk To Fuck

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

Thomas Case

Guts And Feet

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

Thomas Case

You Just Want Someone To Take Care Of You

She used to clean my ears with hydrogen peroxide.

She cut and cleaned my toenails and fingernails.

She shaved my neck and back.

She even popped my zits.

When I first went to

her apartment,

she had me strip down in the hall,

so that she could wash the

clothes I was wearing.

This all made me a bit uncomfortable.

I was sleeping on her couch one night.

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

I did.

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

She later cried and said,

'I wish I could take your pain away.'

At the moment,

I didn't have any.

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

Her last words were,

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

Thomas Case

This Is Getting Real Old

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

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

Thomas Case

4 North

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

Thomas Case

Reading Is Overated

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

Thomas Case

Toxic

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

Thomas Case

Sometimes, Providence Can Be A Friend

I met her on the beach in
Coralville.

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

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

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

We got drunk together and sang songs.

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

We got back and found an empty tent.

We drank vodka and fucked long into the night.

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

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

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

Sometimes, providence can be a friend.

Thomas Case

Liv

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Smoke And Write

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

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

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

Write and smoke, smoke and write.

Your cigarettes stink up my apartment.'

She was always lighting incense, and
spraying air freshener.

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

She doesn't respond.

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

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

Smoke and write, write and smoke.

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

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

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

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

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

Then you just sit there and smoke.

Smoke and write, write and smoke.'

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

'What are you writing?

Thomas Case

Damn Tomorrow (For C)

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

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

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

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

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

Damn tomorrow,
may it never come.

Thomas Case

It

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

Thomas Case

After The Rain

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

O Sleep, What A Strange Mistress You Can Be

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

Thomas Case

Ten Seconds

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Old Haunt

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

Thirsty For Your Footsteps

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

Thomas Case

Artichokes, Avocados, And Van Gogh

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Like A Phoenix From The Ashes

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

Thomas Case

Who Are You

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

Thomas Case

What More Could You Want?

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

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

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

Thomas Case

The Pull Of The Streets

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

My Love

Writing is my love that
never betrays.

It doesn't lie or
cheat.

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Like Some Kind Of A Warped God

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

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

Thomas Case

Horny, Broke And Needing A Drink (A Philosophy)

Booze and pussy are
tragedies of Greek
proportion.

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

You Aren't

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Don't

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

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

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

I Fell In Love With A Dream

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

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

Thomas Case

We Poets (An Epitaph)

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

Thomas Case

Selective Memory

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

Thomas Case

Narcissist

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

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

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

Oh I know you need them to
perfect your eyebrows.

Just in case you forgot,

We are having a pandemic!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Human Touch

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Deliciously Loving You

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

Thomas Case

Festus

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

Thomas Case

Yogurt Berry Parfait, Cheesecake, And You

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Beware The Rotten Fruit

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

Thomas Case

A Calculated Mess

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

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

Thomas Case

Haiku 2

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

Thomas Case

Haiku 1

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

Thomas Case

Dead End Eyes

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

There wouldn't be
a sign.

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

Such lies,
those dead end
eyes.

Thomas Case

Room # 3217 (Ivy)

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

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

Thomas Case

She's My Little Bluebird That Burrows In My Heart

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Dapple And Down

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

Thomas Case

A Feathered Stone

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

I wish it didn't die.

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

Thomas Case

Sweet Apathy

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

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

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

I don't care- finally, sweet apathy.

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Ant Hill

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

Thomas Case

Her Horns

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

Thomas Case

Reflection Of The Soul

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

That's not true.

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

Her eyes sing of
motherhood and light rain.

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

Thomas Case

A Tender Dream

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Egg-Shells (Good-Bye)

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

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

Don't express emotions that
seem insane.

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

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

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

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

Embrace the darkness, you'll
have lots of fun.

I have my gun, it's loaded
and cocked;
make a wrong move, and
you're bound to get rocked.
Don't be sick, don't
get well.

Don't smell heaven, or skip
towards hell.

Don't look at the moon,
or touch the stars.

Don't play in the fields
or go near the bars.

It's not safe there
so just be afraid.

I like to play tricks
you'll be my knave,
my jack of hearts
my ace of spades;
and we'll pillage and plunder
and live off the land;
and you'll lie here quietly
in my rotten fucking hand.

Don't piss, don't shit
don't vomit or spit.

Don't quit, don't try
just sit there and sigh
and be here and die
and lie naked in my

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

Thomas Case

Watch Out

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

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

Thomas Case

Reptilian Heart

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

Thomas Case

Her Mouth

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

Thomas Case

Sailing For Insanity

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

Thomas Case

Ativan And Cheesecake

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

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

Thomas Case

Rotten

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

Thomas Case

The Ball Woman

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

Thomas Case

For O

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

Thomas Case

Windowsill Madness

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Valentine's Day 2019

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

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

Thomas Case

It Matters

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

It doesn't mean anything.

I asked him, What about love?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Do you smell the sweetness of the cherry blossoms?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Under The Benton Street Bridge

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

Thomas Case

Dry Land

No commitment
no devotion.

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

Thomas Case

Febrile Dreams And Tortured Angels

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

Thomas Case

Redemption

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

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

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

Thomas Case

The Thing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

The Journey Is Done

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

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

Thomas Case

Mouse Trap

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

Thomas Case

Searching For Nod

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

A few more swallows and
memory becomes nebulous.

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

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

Thomas Case

A Long Row To Hoe

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Whose Seed Is This?

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

Thomas Case

Getting Old

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

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

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

Even my poems have lost their teeth.

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

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

Thomas Case

One For Hunter

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

Thomas Case

I'll Be Home

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

Thomas Case

It's The Little Things

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

Thomas Case

The Picture

Chain smoking sadness; slapped by time.

Winter doesn't freeze the pain.

There was one thing that Mom

wanted more than

anything else in the world:

It was to have a

picture of her seven

kids all together- in one place,

at one time.

There was an age difference of

23 years between the

youngest and the oldest,

and 1000 miles separating us.

In December of 1987

two weeks before Christmas,

I held a picture of the

seven of us all together.

I put it in the

right front pocket of

her navy blue blazer,

and after the funeral,

we buried her with it.

Thomas Case

About A Poem

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

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

Thomas Case

Chasing The Phantom

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

Thomas Case

Preoccupied

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Sonnet For Mary

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

Thomas Case

Gray

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

Thomas Case

Starving In The Whiteness

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

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

Thomas Case

Lonely, Like An Orphan

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

I search for you through
the ashes of roses.

My eyes are the color
of despair.

I can still taste you;
that last kiss, clover sweet.
And without you, the days
dawn gray and lonely, like
an orphan.

Thomas Case

Vincent

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

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

His sunflowers are
lost on humanity.

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

Usually in small
treacherous ways,
like apathy or
arrogance.

Thomas Case

Writing Is Orgasmic

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

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

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

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

and wait for the
next fucking session.

Thomas Case

Sorceriffic Ass

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

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

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

Then it dawns on
me like the dew
soaked morning.

It was the ass.
Always that
sorceriffic ass.

Thomas Case

This Poem's For You

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Score Keeper

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

Thomas Case

Dawn Flies Away Like A Mockingbird

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

Thomas Case

Born At The Wrong Time

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

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

Hot like hell in the summer.

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

Thomas Case

This Moment

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

Thomas Case

Aluminum Cowboys (For Tibbs)

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

Thomas Case

Stay Green

Smell the
newborn puppies
placenta from heaven,
like candy canes and
burning leaves.

Stay green as long as
you can.

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

Thomas Case

Lonesome Neon Night

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

What's That?

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

The Pierced Dreamer

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

Thomas Case

Zits And Chocolate

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

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

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

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

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

A Short Putt

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

Thomas Case

Sometimes She Consumates The Deal

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

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

sparrows burn and
smell of
Spider Mums, and
funerals.

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

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

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

see the vulva in
the rose.

Taste

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

And

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

Thomas Case

The Line

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

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

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

I keep searching
for the line...

Thomas Case

Unbelievable

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

Thomas Case

Into The Bright White World

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

Thomas Case

Frozen Love

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

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

Thomas Case

I Want

I want to kiss
her mouth in the
spring rain.

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

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

Thomas Case

My Heat And My Feather

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Done

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

Thomas Case

Our Life

Our life lives inside
her.

My walnut haired angel;
my freckled dreamer.

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

Far above the ocean's light.

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

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

Thomas Case

A New Life

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

I lick softly the
petals and the bud.

Your sigh is like
a symphony.

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

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

Thomas Case

I Love The Country Life

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

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

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

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

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

In her arms my spirit rests.

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

I'm a brook trout
swimming through
her veins.

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Let Love Reign

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Heroin

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

Thomas Case

Return To The Womb

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

Thomas Case

My Shoes

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

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

Thomas Case

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

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

Thomas Case

The Cages

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

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

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

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

finished and flightless.
and I get it.

Thomas Case

Like A Cat Out In The Rain

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

Thomas Case

Love, Dad

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Love Is The Victor

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

Thomas Case

Together Forever

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

Thomas Case

My Soundtrack To Love

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

Thomas Case

The Womb's Lullaby

I first heard the
lullaby in the
womb.

It has a pulse,
and a rhythm.

It was embedded in
my tissue and cells.

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

The journey began.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bum Bum

Bum Bum

Bum Bum

Sometimes, I wish I were

a rock.

Thomas Case

Death Is Stalking Me

Death is stalking me.

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

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

It got Chris last week.

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

They found him on the
railroad tracks.

Death is stalking me.

I won't cheat it.

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

I'll bet I finish
this poem

Thomas Case

At Day's End

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

The Purple

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

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

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

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

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

What do I know about the future?

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

Thomas Case

The Death Of Spring

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

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

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

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

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

and tonight she's gone.

Thomas Case

Until The Rain Stops

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

Thomas Case

A Cursed Poet's Heart

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

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

Thomas Case

When The Laughter Dies

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

Thomas Case

Too Much

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

Thomas Case

May The Sun Die

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

Thomas Case

Back From The Dead

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

Thomas Case

Enamored By Your Dormouse

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

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

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

Thomas Case

My Alice

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

Down
down
down I go.

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

Her hair is
dormouse soft.

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

I hold on tight
and never let go.

Thomas Case

Breath

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

Thomas Case

My Heart Beats For Her

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

Thomas Case

More Than I Bargained For

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

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

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

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

I could lose my
creativity and
the muse

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

I could lose a lot more
than I thought

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Let Us Be

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

Thomas Case

I've Been A Slave

I've been a slave so many
times.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Joy Deferred

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

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

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

or
like a little grey
squirrel biting at
my intestines.

Thomas Case

In A Battle Without A Shield

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

Thomas Case

Not Such A Silent Night

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

Thomas Case

Hook Him Up To The Machine

Hook him up to the machine.

Shock his brain into
mediocrity.

Death stalks him;
he is aware.

There is too much
flash in his eyes.

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

Hook him up to the machine.

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

He can smell colors.

Hook him up to the machine.

He has Van Gogh eyes,
and a Bukowski gut;

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

Hook him up to the machine.

He believes in love,
and has too much trust.

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

Hook him up to
the machine.

Thomas Case

Like A Butterfly Melting

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

Thomas Case

Stabbed By The Autumn Leaves

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

Thomas Case

Make The Static Go Away

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

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

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

Time And Dirt

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

Thomas Case

Night Terror

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

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

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

I'm miles away.

You're on a
different
island.

Thomas Case

Well Versed In Delirium

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

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

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

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

psych ward again.

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

I was well versed in delirium.

Thomas Case

Hope Took A Vacation

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Case

I Want To Swim To Heaven

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

Thomas Case

Her

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

Thomas Case

Lonely, Like The Leaves

The days crawl by like
tortoises.

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

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

They're like a
little surreal sunrise.

Hope
is eternal.

Thomas Case

For A Friend In An Asylum In California

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

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

Just one more time,
please stay awhile.

Thomas Case

There Is A Crime

There is a crime that
goes beyond
denunciation.

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

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

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

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

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

I had faith, I believed.

Thomas Case

Another Lover

I guess I shouldn't be
surprised.

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

They get jealous,
as if I had another
lover.

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

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

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

Thomas Case

Mom, Wake Up

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

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

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

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