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# LIFE DISCONNECTED

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## *Tears of Things*

Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem  
mortalia tangunt  
—*Aeneid*

One of our wedding pictures has you staring  
straight into the camera, like a mugshot, your back to a wall  
long gone. The shadow end of the day. Life disconnected.

Scotch on a sill, amberish, a varicose grapevine,  
fresh stucco with that popcorny texture, torn down  
the left by your shadow—and you, expressionless, dimmed.

But mostly it's the tears in things I notice.  
*Would* keeps breaking through was. Here *we would kiss*,  
*shag flies*, *play Wiffle ball*. Then the mood passes,

nostalgia runs out of gas, and things roll to a stop,  
normal-sized, less time-disfigured. Yours was any old life.  
A day of it was one more day of the change

as transparent and as permanent as the tank  
to the fish that swims in circles around a perimeter  
whose redundancy is a physical law, like light speed.

In its umpteenth iteration, if it notices,  
it may see a handsome old man staring into the distance,  
like God out of work.

Things burble.  
It thinks you're watching.  
The sun beats down.

*After Dropping the Kids off*

he's suddenly alone. The sun  
repeals his solitude, his vision  
overflows. He says hello to Mike,  
and Mike's lawnmower roars back as if to say,  
What a beautiful idea, a lawnmower!  
purring Pythagoras and solving the lawn  
as if lawns were green equations. He nods and waves  
to Penelope, whose upper lip is the white  
underside of a slimed leaf. His lilies are uncoiled hose,  
his closed roses are Juliet's nipples. His hand rises  
as if to fly away, like a tethered hawk,  
and his thoughts rush to the edge of his eyes  
and lean over, astonished passengers, shocked and happy.  
He is that ghostly smudge in the sun-bludgeoned windshield  
of an accelerating car. He is an American Orpheus  
with no passport or portfolio. He begins to forgive  
things that happened to others — to his father's barber,  
his favorite teacher, figures in history,  
characters in novels — and remembers a boy  
unpeeling and flinging his clothes off a Paris roof,  
those men with their big ears and gangster clothes  
reading soaked foreign newspapers, that funny-faced blur  
shaking in the soapy water. The day is a spectacular  
air show over the ocean. Everything he knows  
is uniquely everyday. He is in the press box  
and his life is standing room only. That whistling sound  
is his soul's happy heigh-ho. All that he cannot find  
in his life up to now is spread out like a yard sale.  
His thought is a physical law, a thing in the world.  
Long blue poles run from his eyeballs and hold  
the sky-tent up over all. He catches his breath,  
ambushed by ecstasy. How he loves his life  
is what he must explain. *Life is writing an essay  
and I am the topic sentence.* He says this once  
and nothing happens. Mike has finished mowing.  
The silence is devastating. Things stink of life.