



## BEAT THE DUST

November 2008

HP Tinker writes his own mock obituary



HP Tinker passed away suddenly last week after choking on a walnut. A collection of critical essays, "I Used To Be A Postmodernist (But Now I'm Not So Sure)", will be published posthumously late next year. A novel, "Of Men & Ampersands", will be written posthumously even later next year. In accordance with his final wishes, HP Tinker's ashes will be scattered over Audrey Tautou while she isn't looking.

**the girl who ate new york** by H P Tinker

Her face eschewed the acknowledged ethos of winter, even mid-June.

As small and sad-haired as the young Mickey Rooney himself, she was conceived in the Riviera by a six-fingered philanthropist. Her front teeth were sharp enough to pierce clean through a grown man's boot. Displaying an incredible gift for verisimilitude, one day she swung her mighty fists and beat on her tiny chest and vowed to eat New York.

"Some time next year. Probably May."

I never for a moment doubted the veracity of her ludicrous claims. Many had tried to pin her down as a feminist icon, a pioneer in the field of Girl Power, but her startling curves in the manner of Erich Mendelsohn remained tremendously under-appreciated outside of her immediate

knitting circle. For my own part, I kept quiet about any future intentions, or lack of them, took lots of aspirin, decided to wear the sleeves of my frog suit rolled-up, affecting the industrious look of a vapid young deep sea diver, and simply let the months flow... and one day I looked down to the end of my arm and found her hand there, in mine, resting quite comfortably.

"Events are accelerating," I observed.

"At a quite terrific rate," she agreed.

"Maybe we should slow down the pace of these events a little."

"Why – *what are you afraid of?*" she asked. "Reality?"

"Oh no," I admitted. "I avoid that, mostly."

There followed an oblique period of a very approximate 18 months, which she illuminated with a variety of historical costumes and indestructible sideways glances while we spent hours discussing nothing. She sat nude in the centre of the room while I took notes. Nearing the end of this painfully naked period, when she was particularly lucid, I asked:

"Could there be more time spent together?"

"Yes," she said. "Almost certainly."

"Time spent happily together, like lovers?"

"Well," she said. "Some time spent happily together, *like* lovers - although not actually *as* lovers."

I returned to my bunker, wholeheartedly despondent. Winter had become utterly dependant on her smile. Any winter can appear beautiful to the unknowing eye, of course, appealing even to venal academics, the soulless bourgeoisie... but for her, the fear of a frozen existence was too avidly well-maintained to completely circumnavigate her innate sense of social scepticism... so I always knew time would part us, undoubtedly bend us... lead us someplace else...

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Some distance fell between us the size of a Winnebago.

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She was sighted boarding a private jet, titanic handbag in hand...

I wore a suit of armour to protect me from her leave-taking, time slowing down until I fell onto hard verisimilitude in slow motion. Complications arose like a gaunt monster breaking through blunt, asymmetrical waves ... lengthy snags of time, like death... her departure seeming to confirm the long awaited end of the aftermath I had been so afraid of. I lingered amongst the

silent statues and waited. Wandering the landscape of ghosts, I had lost all my former substance, memories uncoiling of a life largely un-lived. (Not my own though: Arthur Koestler's 1.) Word of her success arrived on the wind, successively elating and deflating me. She had taken up amateur dramatics again, I heard, landing the role of Oswald in *Ghosts*.

I gazed gently upon things past with turgid remorse.

After a dozen or so months of ongoing absence, then, while the surface of things bore all the familiar trappings of daily reality, I cornered Kaufman, my attorney, and confronted him with legal questions.

"How do you avoid the unavoidable truth?" I demanded to know.

"You can't, generally-speaking," he said. "The nature of the unavoidable is that it can't *usually* be avoided."

"Yes," I agreed. "I know. But the thought of her atheistic hairstyle gnaws at me, eats away at my romantic matter, while in time she will consume the entire city of New York, and many of its adjoining areas besides, biting clean through the antiquated brickwork, a copy of *Mansfield Park* propped up next to the latest daring young man to enter her bed... a daring young man entering the narrative, entering her room, entering her, discovering between her thighs a capability to pleasure millions, a small portal to another universe, a parallel world, similar to a bygone age of years gone by, where all art, music and human emotions are deemed illegal and men under 45 are shot for expressing a desire to read the poetry of RS Thomas... but despite all the available evidence, my heart just refuses to give up."

"I see," mused Kaufman. "That's quite a stubborn muscle you have there."

No, I was not harbouring any superfluous desires... yet the fuzzy reverb of paradise lingered on the fringes of the action, ready to ignite... *would fake melancholy and middle-class New York change her?* I shed my skin and began writing a very bad book about it all.

"This is a very bad book you're writing," I told myself.

"Are you sure?" I replied. "I thought it was really rather good..."

"No," I insisted. "I'm afraid I'm the one who has to tell you: *this book is really very bad...*"

"Okay," I admitted. "I know, I know. You're absolutely right."

I stopped writing my very bad book. Instead, I bundled up the remaining words and brought them to you, in the manner of a short memoir, the very same short memoir you are indeed reading right now.

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1 Born in Budapest. Brought up during the last days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Grew up in the shadow of World War One and the Great Depression. Eventually naturalized as a British subject, yet moving restlessly between Europe, America and the Middle East. First a Zionist, then a Communist. Then an anti-Zionist and an anti-Communist. Finally a scientist fascinated by the paranormal. Writing *Darkness At Noon* and *Arrival And Departure*. Committed joint suicide with his wife in 1983.

"What kind of perverted version of the truth passes for reality in your sick mental wilderness?" you inquired, somewhat violently, pointing toward the door... if this city was to be my mortal fate, then I determined to remain a nagging absence inside of it. Although exactly how you went about such a thing, I was not certain. My disenfranchised, original, authentic self walked out at five o'clock dressed as the Marquis de Sade, solely for laughs. But like Tilda Swinton's descent into hell, there was nothing out there except my broken velocity and the sense of a supreme being perverting the universe with pale humour. Wandering a wasteland, trawling the depths of silver-haired women sitting at facetious angles, conducting ungainly sexual manoeuvres with their feet, beneath low coffee tables. Into the greater silence, then.

Distance ... other departures, of sorts.

Big departures.

Leaving hulking great gaps behind. Miles and miles of empty space lingering queasily. And the no small matter of some considerable time too. There were some other fairly contemporary girls during this period... the girl who emasculated Paris... the girl who aroused Budapest... the girl who conquered Hong Kong... the girl who slightly annoyed Tel Aviv... the girl who totally bemused Bangkok....but the girl who swallowed Manhattan whole... for an extended period I could not move on until I saw the finest cat of its generation fall down dead on its paws. The day after the day after, I began moving forward in time again, fairly rapidly, through dark entangled moments of legal wrangling that spoke of another world: the modern metropolis in a thoroughly wretched state. Without recourse to tomorrow, I had lost all faith in the past and held no hope in the future. I received numerous reports regarding your movements and machinations, including a dossier on your possible return. Information ascertaining to your current whereabouts began piling up... but the motives of others are inexact, intangible, always too cluttered with back-story and unclear intentions that I didn't know how to act, what to make of it all. Then, one evening, the planets fell from their pre-assigned orbits, and the stars rearranged themselves accordingly... and I saw her crossing the horizon barefoot, like a beautiful mourner minus a funeral cortege. Time, and lots of it, having passed since our last meeting I had not been expecting her newly epic status. Now twice the size as before, with exactly the same hairstyle, she had returned intact with distance between her eyes, all wrapped up in a natty black dress like a precocious little trinket happily vacuum-packed in confetti.

She spoke at once with ruthless candour: "I am dressed as a Concubine to confuse those who might otherwise recognise me," she explained. "Now I must rest."

She slept for a brief eternity.

Regaining consciousness, she sat up and drank Bovril, the brunette cow extract. At first she couldn't recall San Francisco or San Diego or Santa Cruz or Santa Fe or El Paso or El Dorado

or anything very much at all. Then she disappeared, but re-appeared, quickly enough, wearing a heart-shaped bikini bottom.

"Everywhere is pretty much like everywhere else," she confirmed from inside the bikini bottom. "But my struggles against time have been far more perilous than you might first imagine..."

We took refuge in a basement where all the women looked like Kim Novak. Her newly epic status rendered finding suitable seating in restaurants unexpectedly difficult. Absorbed in the ambience of *Gatsby*, she confessed to a depression of her own, a great big fat one, and explained her motives behind attempting to find full-time employment as a professional pastry chef. Over an extraordinarily aromatic salad armed with intensely serious tomatoes, she bombarded me with irregular sentences, acute phrases, barbed verbs...

"Recently I ascended to a whole new level," she confessed, quivering. "I relocated to New York for the duration of the war. I modelled nude in a variety of unbelievable wigs through the most violent of times: famine, plague, talentless lounge singers... tortured by the unenlightened, the unimaginable, the unintelligible, I longed to escape New York. I had consumed about as much as I could take. Chelsea, in particular, proved very difficult to ingest. NoHo was stale, SoHo's gone soft, Nolita's totally tasteless. And the Apollo just a gelatinous grease-ball; I didn't want it anywhere near my mouth. Battery Park seemed decent enough, but the financial district stuck in the gawk like crude oil. China Town was a rare delight, however, and both Brooklyn and Queens slipped down rather too easily. Greenpoint was not hard to swallow, though quite difficult to get to the bottom of. While Staten Island smelt like the last stale kernels rattling around in a near-empty popcorn bag. Eventually I was run out of town by a mob of 1920s partygoers, Wall Street fraudsters, pickpockets, whores, murderous pimps brandishing the current issue of *Vanity Fair*. Following various strenuous travels and travails many of the words I previously employed stopped working. Recently, after even more various strenuous travels and travails, several of them have started working again. My new-fangled strategic employment of language for the future is all of the bittersweet type. I have found a new-found love of violent verbs. It happened in New York during a minor lapse in concentration. Now I am scything people mercilessly out of my life at a quite distressing rate. New York is dead to me now. There are so many other cities to devour..."

Though twice the size of the Titanic, she was still as tenacious as a lobster.

"Distance = distance: there's nothing you can do about it," I informed her. "And time isn't really all that important either."

I unlocked two potentially understanding arms.

"My scatological heart is open wide before you," I continued. "Like a bottomless sewer..."

"Oh, but my heart is a bitterly congested zone," she insisted, insistently. "I already have 14 lovers. They live in a blissful state of ignorance, completely unaware of each others' existences. It's a convenient arrangement. For me, if not them."

Then she drew up her legs and raised herself onto her elbows, like a paraplegic Olympian. "I can't prevent you from going insane," she said. "That's not in my remit. But I can see you've been working yourself into a type of demented pulp. You just need to lie down and wait for some kind of deliverance to be delivered."

She rattled and hummed to herself for a short while then suddenly bounced upwards from her thin wooden chair, rising deep into a sky full of blimps, drifting like Sylvia Plath shortly after graduation, floating into the fringes of the stratosphere, as I always suspected she might... wafting higher into the upper reaches, awaiting the arms of significantly younger men, confusing herself with complicated martyrs from then on no doubt, until she was almost completely out of sight...

"We're all doomed, incidentally," she called down from way up somewhere.

I adopted the internationally-recognised foetal position and gestured for immediate assistance.

#### Ed Makowski writes his own mock obituary



Ed Makowski had a real passion for making the best sandwich. Eddie's Delicatessen kept Tuscaloosa, Alabama well fed for over 52 years. Up until his last days he was creating new things to eat. Eddie is famous for saying, "If you can't swallow my salami, I'll buy you a Buick!" He is survived by a small farm of animals he lovingly tended and butchered himself. The Tuscaloosa Optimist Society is currently researching options for where the animals will end up. In lieu of flowers, feed can be left at his farm on Branske Road.

**scoring** by Ed Makowski

an ex-girlfriend called.

said her mom had died.

So we got together and

fucked about it.

The score's even now, we're both

one down and

one to go

and we still know

how to get together and

not talk about

anything

**talk radio** by Ed Makowski

*Need an adventure*

I think to myself

reminds me the other day

my kid's mom

said all she really wanted

was a night of debauchery

Debauchery, I think.

Heh.

Heh,

I grumble.

*Debauchery.*

that's what put me here

alone in the garage

lying on my back

turning wrenches

listening to talk radio

The radio talks on

someone interviews someone else

about traveling to foreign countries.

I like to hear about it,

hear about people going where they'd

rather be. I grin for this radio guest

and all the places he's been,

he sounds so in love. I'm glad for him.

My hands in the bowels of a Toyota

turning and turning the oil filter

as I lay on cement,

considering firewood supply

for the coming winter.

**why we are where we are** by Ed Makowski

The guys from the design firm came in to drink sake and eat sushi tonight. The one guy has a wooden cup we keep behind the bar that only he drinks from. It's a ritual. We select his favourite sake, retrieve the cup and pour it for him. He shakes his head in a slow smile, leans back and rests an elbow on the seat back next to him. Some people need that. At some point there's a lull in conversation and the one with the wooden cup asks me how the poetry is coming. It's another one of the things we do, they find it cute that I'm a poet and somewhere inside feel they're funding the dreams of that one bartender guy. A feel good sushi moment. I tell him it's not been poetry but visual ideas I've been having lately. I'm trying to learn photography to make the ideas in my head live. He suggests I enroll at the art school where he's a board member. I laugh. I tell him that the tuition for one year is more than twice what I made last year. He looks at me like something smells strange. He asks which model camera I prefer and I say borrowed ones. I haven't been able to buy one yet. Soon, though, I think. Soon. He says he's got a photography show next month- the first gallery showing of his photographs. They'll be on the walls of an urban contemporary restaurant he designed. Nature photos. He's proud and feeling proud is a good place to be. The orders of raw fish on rice arrive and we all remember why we are where we are.

Darren R. Scothern writes his own mock obituary



Darren R. Scothern, 2109-2008 - forgettable poly-metamorph, who came into existence via his own imagination. Emerging from a cocoon 99 years after his death, he lived his life in reverse after mistakenly assuming the universe was contracting rather than expanding. This had the unfortunate effect that he lost friends before he met them, and influenced people before he had the chance to reap the benefits. Living his life in Shame (a village near Bognor Regis), he resided in a delicately whorled shell strapped to his back with a neural net. He leaves behind a trail of glistening slime.

**inside the box** by Darren R. Scothern

*"Why did you do it Melanie?" Her father tried to fix his eyes on her face. She avoided them. The brittle sunlight needling through the window bleached the view of the grounds outside, but in here it pitilessly picked out every detail. He hadn't shaved, and the bristles on his chin were a haphazard mix of his natural brown and metallic grey. He was dressed in old jeans and a shirt that looked like it had never seen an iron. The bags under his eyes had wrinkles of their own, and as he spoke, his mouth trembled. "You're my daughter and I love you. Just tell me why you did it. I don't get it."*

"You just don't get it, do you?" The kid, one of the students from her class - there are so many she hasn't absorbed all their names yet - is grinning, pausing. He's waiting to deliver his point, enjoying his moment, and Melanie almost loves him for it. She leans forward, trying to edge herself further into the group. There are six of them now, clumped around one little Formica-topped table in the University refectory. There are brown rings staining it, and tiny crystals of sugar sticking to her arms. Paper napkins are absorbing spilled tea, and for some reason, to Melanie, they look like bloodstains.

Still the kid doesn't notice her. No one is looking at her, they're all concentrating on him.

Now he gestures with his hands. In the air before them he delineates a cube; the shape of a box.

He's speaking again: "It's not that we *don't know* whether the cat is alive or dead." He's shaking his head now, still grinning, curly brown hair flopping. "The point is, the cat is neither alive nor dead... until we open the box." He lifts one hand - raising the lid on an imaginary box - and now they all start yammering and chattering. Everyone is offering an opinion. Except Melanie. She doesn't get it. But she's smiling anyway, and nodding. The kid is babbling now, trying to argue with everyone at once. She wonders what his lips would taste like.

*Her father smiled, leaned close and cupped her face in one rough-skinned hand. "Your hair's growing back," he said. Tears rimmed his eyes.*

"The worst hair I've ever seen, dude."

Melanie is standing in the old market square. There is no actual market any more - the place is just a pedestrianized precinct lined with upmarket fashion houses, beauticians, a tattoo parlour, a couple of restaurants and a few bars. At night the square fills up with students doing

the bars, getting hammered, getting off with each other. They laugh and call it the *meat market*. So far, Melanie hasn't got off with anyone. It's a sunny afternoon.

A second voice speaks: "But would you?"

She sees them, like herself, in reflection. She's standing in the doorway of the department store - a good position - holding the big white collection box. It's very heavy. People are generous.

The first voice again. The kid. She knows his name now. They call him Mike. He says, "Yeah, man. I'd do her."

They're standing behind her, not too far away. Because of the angles of the big glass double doors she can see their reflections, but she thinks that they probably can't see hers. They're just staring at her from behind. She's wearing a skirt. It's not short, though. It's old-fashioned in fact, below the knee. But her calves are slim and firm. She doesn't think they realise she can hear what they're saying about her. But the alcove of the doorway she's in captures the sound. She's hearing everything they say. And yes, her hair is a mess. But Mike has just said he'd *do her*. Her hands feel slippery on the collection box, even though it's cold and hard. She feels warm and moist on the inside. Her heart is hammering.

The second voice, the other boy, Bob: "Dude, you'd need a blowtorch. Total uptight virgin. Telling you, she wouldn't know what to do with it."

Mike speaks now: "Didn't say I *wanted* to do her. But if I was pissed, you know. With a bag over her head."

They are walking away now, laughing. Her heartbeat is slowing. Hands slippery on the big white collection box. The box no longer feels cold. It's getting warmer and harder and heavier.

There's a photograph on the box.

*For some reason, darkness turned to light that hurt her eyes. Her father had pulled up a seat, and then sat staring at her. She didn't know where or when she was. Tears stained her father's face. "I love you so much, sweetie." He took her hand. "I love you so much."*

Her hand feels soft, her slender fingers so light and delicate in the hands of the beautician. Tiny brushstrokes slip scarlet layers over her fingernails. The music is soft, but vivid. She doesn't know the names of the artists, or even the titles of the songs. But they're trendy and it's good to be around them, in a place like this.

The beautician is dressed like a slut. Melanie wants to look like her, with sexy, bleach-blonde hair.

The beauty treatment so far has been expensive. So has the fake tan that has turned her arms and legs a gorgeous deep copper tone. The clothes - dresses, skirts, underwear, all designer names - have cost a small fortune, but she still has enough left to finish the makeover with the hairdresser.

*Her father's voice sounded very distant through the telephone. Melanie didn't know whether this was now, or some other time.*

*"Melanie, you're a very pretty girl," he said.*

*"So why don't people like me?"*

She's struggling, now. Rushing. Trying to carry the big collection box full of money. She doesn't know how people can be so generous. It's like Maya has cast a spell on them. She hurries the box into her shared student flat. No one else is home.

*Father set down two cups of tea on the low plastic table. The liquid inside the half-filled cups sloshed, revealing permanent stains inside.*

*"Melanie," he said, resting his hand on hers. "You're my beautiful girl and you can tell me anything. Whatever it is, you can tell me."*

With the flat empty, she tries on the new clothes in private, in front of the full-length mirror.

The TV is on behind her, but muted.

She uses a serrated kitchen knife to cut the tags from the red mini-dress. She steps into it and slips it up, tight around her body. Pushes her breasts together. The bra keeps them pointing the right way. With her bleached curls, she looks like the slut she wants to be.

Through the mirror, she sees the TV screen flicker. A familiar face appears on it.

Maya.

Then Maya's father, breaking down.

Melanie turns, feeling her stomach knot. Across the bottom of the screen, the news ticker reads: *breaking news - missing girl - body found in woods.*

*Melanie's father said, "Sweetie, you have everything to live for."*

*"You don't know," she replied, "until you look inside." Her hands started to shake. "I broke the spell."*

She uses a knife to prise open the collection box. The box is white. There is a photo of a beautiful little girl on the outside of it. Printed below it are the words *The Official Find Maya*

*Appeal. Give generously.* The box is full of money. A lot of coins, and a lot of notes as well. They'll never miss it. Money must be really dirty, she thinks, because the box is black on the inside.

*Her father's voice caught as he leaned over Melanie's hospital bed. He rested his hand gently on her bandaged arm. "Oh, God," he said. "My baby, my poor girl."*

She faces herself in the mirror once more.

*The point is, the cat is neither alive nor dead... until we open the box.*

But Melanie had to open the box. Melanie had to have her money. Melanie had to lose her virginity.

All the money... the dress... the hair...

She picks up the knife with the serrated edge, moves closer to the mirror. One hand holds out a clump of bleached hair. The other chops into it with the knife. Strands fall to the floor like ashes. She'd always had a pretty face. Her looks weren't the reason people didn't like her. It was what was on the inside.

She jabs the point of the knife into her face, and pulls it down. Her arms are next, the fake golden tan an embarrassment. She slices them, vertically, horizontally, in jagged crosses.

It's not enough. Not for what she's done. She turns one beautiful delicate hand palm up. Examines the tiny blue threads on her wrist. With the knife, she gouges them open.

#### Jean-Paul Sartre interviews Jack T Marlowe



JPS: Can I call you 'Jacques?'

JTM: Sure, if I can call you 'Dog Breath.'

JPS: Um...okay. So, tell me, what makes you write?

JTM: An aversion to not writing.

JPS: I mean to say, what inspires your work?

JTM: The absurdity of the human condition.

JPS: *Tres bien!* Do you consider yourself to be an existentialist?

JTM: No, but I did when I was a teenager.

JPS: *Vraiment?*

JTM: I'm sorry, but we don't parlez vous much Français here in Texas.

JPS: Sorry. Is there anything in particular that you'd like to say about your writing?

JTM: Yeah. You can read some of my poetry in *Gloom Cupboard*, *decomp*, *Instant Pussy*, *Underground Voices* and *Word Riot*. And at my website: [www.inkandblood.net](http://www.inkandblood.net).

**somniphobia** by Jack T. Marlowe

the ancients  
said that  
sleep is the  
twin sister  
of death

and however  
appealing the  
thought of a  
menage-a-trois  
might be

that's one  
pair of ladies  
who aren't  
welcome  
in my  
bedroom.

considering  
the distance  
between  
womb  
and tomb

is often as  
close as that  
between  
sinking pate  
and soft pillow

i accept the  
inevitability  
of death  
but i'm not  
yet ready  
for her

and i don't

trust her sister  
not to pull a  
bait-and-switch  
on me

sometime  
in the middle  
of the night.

**two legs good, three legs bad** by Jack T. Marlowe

*(with apologies to George Orwell)*

sexism  
is a pernicious  
social evil

unless, of course  
it's directed  
towards men

when  
cheap-shot  
artists dip  
a broad brush  
into the  
tainted paint  
of a bad  
childhood  
failed  
relationships  
or criminal  
assaults

their venom  
smeared  
across the  
names of the  
blameless

framing  
anonymous  
chromosomes  
to hang  
in a gallery  
of hatred:

all men are  
molesters  
abusers

rapists  
killers

time bombs  
waiting  
to go off

with the  
exception of  
those who  
have been  
defused

succumbing  
to the figurative  
if not literal  
separation  
of manhood  
from man

fresh cut orchids  
relinquished  
at the chopping block  
to earn your trust.

*Note: 'orchidectomy' is the medical term for surgical removal of the testicles.*

William Taylor Jr interviews himself



Me: Hey, Bill. How ya doin'?

Me: What do you want *now*?

Me: Just a quick little interview.

Me: If we must.

Me: Whatcha doing right now?

Me: Having a fantasy where Sarah Palin falls from a helicopter while aerial hunting and is torn apart by polar bears and arctic wolves.

Me: Nice. What else you working on?

Me: I'm creating my own Myspace quiz to circulate, though rather than the usual "who is the last person you kissed" type questions, it will be more geared towards adults, with such queries

as: You have failed at most things in your wretched life, and your death is imminent. Deep inside you know there is no afterlife or silly god man to forgive you your sins...how does that make you feel? Stuff like that.

Me: Uh, nice. I think. Anything else?

Me: A new book of my poems, called *The Hunger Season* is due out from Sunnyoutside Press early next year.

Me: Okay. Great. I gotta pee now.

Me: Me too! Bye.

**my plastic heart** by William Taylor Jr

In my time upon this earth

I have loved the sun  
as well as the rain.

I have been at peace  
with the light and the dark.

I have spoken  
in private with the sky

and the night has shown me things  
I've promised not to tell.

Wasting my hours  
dreaming of my  
wasted hours,

dreaming of everything  
and everyone  
I've ever loved,

surrendering nothing to the void.

My plastic heart breaks  
for most anything as it melts  
in the September sun.

The grand and beautiful  
sadness clings to me  
like a desperate lover

and I sing with its voice until it becomes my own.

**this drunken reeling beneath a dying sun** by William Taylor Jr

Awkward and absurd  
in this moment in time,

lost among the lost,

lacking the grace of God's  
finer things,

we are given so little time  
to be beautiful.

Our tiny lives

so soon forgotten,

so soon

just lists of things  
to sell or give away.

The dance is a strange one,

and I could not hope to offer  
any dream of meaning.

I only know

this drunken reeling  
beneath a dying sun  
is all we are,

this briefest of instants,  
as we brush death aside

to wait jealous  
and vengeful in the hungry shadows.