



LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

American bruise : poetry. 2012

Abel, L. Ward

Madison, Wisconsin: Parallel Press, 2012

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FM6GIOOYX7MT38J>

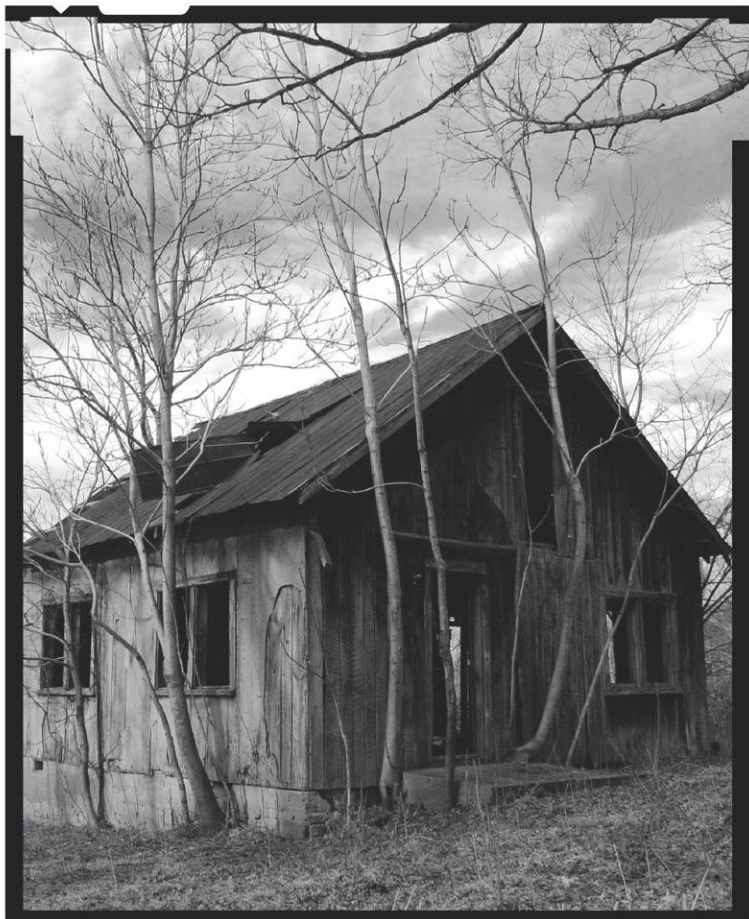
Copyright 2012 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. All rights reserved.

For information on re-use see:

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Copyright>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.



American Bruise

Poetry by L. Ward Abel

PARALLEL PRESS POETRY SERIES

A Parallel Press Chapbook

American Bruise

Poetry by
L. Ward Abel

Parallel Press
University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries

Parallel Press
University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries
728 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
<http://parallepress.library.wisc.edu>

Copyright © 2012 by the Board of Regents of
the University of Wisconsin System

All rights reserved

ISBN: 978-1-934795-41-5

The author acknowledges the prior publication of some of these poems, as follows:

“Leaves,” “Towns Like Greenville,” and “A Place That Feels Remote” in *Pudding House*

“Lizella” and “Summer Such As It Has Become” in *Galleys*

“Three of them ran,” “Ray With Tess,” and “East Wing September” in *Cantaraville*

“What’s Left of the Plantation” and “Lincoln” in *Dew on the Kudzu*

“Something Good Has Come From Rotting” in *The Rat*

“Walk” in *Kritya*

“Winging the Watersheds” in *Northville Review*

“Dead” in *Bicycle Review*

“Birds Won’t Nest in the Sky” in *Pale House*

“Red Crow” in *Sylvan Echo*

“Portal Fear” in *Seven Circles Press*

“The Viewing” in *Ya’Sou*

“Names” in *Litterbox*

“Charles Laughton” in *Leaf Garden Press*

“Shirley Horn” in *Shaking Like A Mountain*

“Miles Refused to Die” in *erbacce* and *The Gloom Cupboard*

“Joseph Cotten” in *League of Laboring Poets*

“Hope and Art Tatum” in *Strangeroad*

“Wine” in *St. Somewhere*

“Fifty” in *Ditch*

“Crazy” in *Moloch*

Special thanks to my family, friends, and peers, without whom I may have stopped writing long ago, specifically Abbie, Jane, Mary Kate, Corey Mesler, ARH, and the loyal readers who have seen fit to follow my work both online and in print over these past many, many years.

Contents

Leaves	9
Towns Like Greenville	10
Lizella	11
Peace is Not a Place	12
Red Clay	13
Three of them ran	14
What's Left of the Plantation	15
Something Good Has Come From Rotting	16
Walk	17
Water and Night	22
A Place That Feels Remote	23
Winging the Watersheds	24
Dead	25
Birds Won't Nest in the Sky	26
Red Crow	27
Portal Fear	28
I Was Once a Painter	29
A Watering	30
Dithyramb	31
The Viewing	32
Names	33
Lincoln	34
Charles Laughton	35
Shirley Horn	36
Miles Refused To Die	37
Joseph Cotten	38
Hope and Art Tatum	39
Summer, Such As It Has Become	40
Session	41
Appliance in the River	42
Ray, With Tess	43
Regret	44
Geometry	45
Wine	46

Fifty	47
Crazy	48
East Wing September	49
Tunnel	50
Sunday, After the Snow	51
We	52
Along the River Road	53
Somewhere	54
And Long Live That Dream	55

Leaves

Coming to rest, an American bruise,
Walt Whitman was already wringing out
his white beard in the brown waters
under a quarter-finished Washington steeple
when morning arrived. White coat soiled with
blood and Maryland mud, he hadn't been able
to write much, at least not during the war.

By then his Lincoln his Captain had ascended
the plains the bluffs the woods the farms of Illinois,
and Abe was green like a tree by the time he'd arrived
in Springfield to be buried. Things were made to remain,
but not people, maybe not even words.

There is a later photograph of Walt in Camden,
of something scattered like winter smoke in a cobweb.
It's in black and white, ink and paper, of course.
But death isn't the word I'm looking for.

Towns Like Greenville

Towns like Greenville
refer to fields that are gone to wood their
townhomes imply estates, slaves, ghosts
ghost singers heard by only three or two if any
and without money changing hands.

We walk out into the open. A square with
cars circling choosing Woodbury LaGrange
Luthersville or Warm Springs each town
the equal of the other in its decomposition its
beautiful reverence for something lost.

This Country is a scary place now.
But I love the way light and color still
pass through shoots through dust paint chip
over ruins on such and such morning, Etruscan,
bathed from having fallen.

There is blood in the soil.
Despite a few arrowheads and sharks teeth
the clay runs with life. I do
hesitate to raise hopes though. As if the
Hardee's hamburger place could ever
come back from the dead out here.

Lizella

Today I drove my father
back to where he grew up
in Bibb and surrounding
counties. He seemed to know
every house we passed:

“There’s where
Charlie Brown and his
beautiful daughters lived; that’s
Dr. Holly’s place; Aunt Ida
owned all the way to the corner;

remember this for me.”
There was a line, he told me,
a line where sand turns
to clay. It went through
Grandfather’s yard. “We dug

shark teeth from here,” he said,
“three million years ago
this was a beach,” but I knew
he meant three hundred million.
We drove along Sandy Point

near Echeconnee Creek
and his memory was whole:
the world was sienna.
“Just wonderful,”
he said.

Peace is Not a Place

Peace is not a place.
Not a destination,
not a product.
It's more like
an exposed root
in the middle of
a dirt road.

Red Clay

My blood has a scent of iron
of metal that permeates
the ground. Looks like
someone with a sword
loosed a million veins
from their fill and
a great pulse pushed my land
to redness. This clay
is rusted wine, a belt of the clotted
and released. We have buried
so many here that we can't
hide it anymore.

Three of them ran

across a wet road
wood fences dark full of
ponds
more gray than green.
The bullets exit as deer;

three of them ran
a buck a doe the third one
a child. There was a rainbow
against ragged black
clouds.

What's Left of the Plantation

The Southern aristocrats, once their money finally ran out, seeped into the middle classes, still with a genetic memory of glory days of brandy of linen napkins; but their children became indistinguishable from the humble brethren they'd joined.

I can smell the good whisky in those darkened rooms, darkened from night, darkened from the road that led to here. And outside, choirs of dead slaves harmonies like parts of a whole sing across these rolling pastures. It's quiet tonight but for them and their scars.

My birddogs worship me, but I've not earned it. I bought it in the breeding. And even though the world is cooling (everybody knows that now) my foliage of magnolia oak poplar maple cedar flourish in freedom and lack of attention. There are barely even traces of the Big House that survive.

Something Good Has Come From Rotting

The old abbeys now in ruin
places without hymns or creed
their walls all that remain of what
has happened since those first minutes
then first days, months, decades, hundreds of years
after the preaching ceased.
No roof against the sky
no ceilings to shield rain from reaching
what used to be floor. I think those places are
more holy now
with a view straight up
and into heaven. Something good has come
from rotting, shingles and beams no longer
obstacles to infinity. Decay is
the very essence of complete sacrifice.

Walk

One.

What to do now is what I'm doing.
You move on, and try even harder.
They that make the rules have
forsaken me with this house sized
prank. What remains is where I'm
going.

Two.

I can feel frozen now and again,
like the frost on a Ford's windshield.
Afraid. The sound of acorns dropping
in the woods encircles my house,
sunrise appears or at least I believe it's sunrise
in some manner of eastern sky. And yet
I'm the small pond that steams below the hill.
I bristle at contrast.

Three.

All of the sudden
there's ice everywhere in the morning.
Blind until we warm up, our eyes are
glazed from sleep.
Like yesterday and tomorrow there's no now
when we toil. I would
like to drive somewhere and buy a peach
but I'm dashed.

Four.

Having lost my job, the word
humility has taken on new meaning
because I never thought
it could happen to me. Now the weather grays
and I can't sit still. The voices I hear in my
quiet house speak unaccustomed things,
so I answer to another name.

Five.

Rain can be seen as a cleansing force
it washes away months, years of residue.
It can also reflect something
that lurks. My shoes are wet from
putting the dogs out. As I left them
they just looked at me, no philosophy.
They only prefer my shelter.

Six.

Down to Macon today, city of ghosts.
They walk all over town with my name
written on a paper in their collective pocket.
Relatives hover and zoom, amble then stroll
as if to tell me all my concerns are spider webs
crossing the path of God.

Seven.

Red and white clay meet beside the road. Gray morning.
It rains. The rains merge join and flow down the shoulder
to a place where gathering occurs. And the streams of pink
have no time, don't look back, don't care about clouds
anymore, have no choice, don't love the hill more than the creek.
My own footprints get in the way without imparting time
without breathing concern into the never living. I only reflect
reveal my intent, my own life. No one
speaks for the rain, not me,
not even the rain.

Eight.

For a little while the world goes on without me. I suppose
it alarms that such continuity exists. I am my own universe,
my only perspective. But everything lives on elsewhere,
with all of it quiet here.
There is an appearance of a great pause like the TV turned off.
My dogs sleep.

Nine.

Now with all of them around me, the others,
the people outside
of my small circle, I am a found object.
Or more a lost one, an oak leaf spinning across winter grass
tethered to smoke. I'm different now even if in between,
after one lifetime and on the verge of another.
Everyone I meet has a job.

Ten.

On the phone we talked a simple philosophy
that it's people who make things complicated. The
example of fractal geometry, spinning loops
of identical design on every level of life, the face
of God in the smallest things, means that the answer
is here. We find as we stray we return to stray again,
still wishing for the elegance of simple infinity
at rest.

Eleven.

So settled in the backyard
that I can hear the leaves hitting ground.
They fall from a sweet gum tree, their falling
makes little pieces of a circle. On a weekday,
for some reason the most quiet of all days,
I stand in a golden place. The air is still
for a minute. All of us are suspended unwitting
elements of a whole.

Twelve.

It's enough that sooner or later I reject the world.
When I say world I mean people world. This countryside
breathes alone tonight through remaining leaves,
rattling now and again. Should I sleep very long?
When I sleep there's no sense of time at all;
things, faces, thoughts, moving, they happen in a parallel way
swim in forty currents like a traveler between lives.
But not in this people world. So I'll reject it
when I find a waking peace
like sleep. Whenever that will be.

Thirteen.

A scarcity echoes in the woods. Year's end at the gap.
All of what's good has been wrung out, and I'm told it's time
to move on. On days like these, paths remake themselves.
I think I have some moments still in my pocket but the way
overgrows. The old mountain knows that he's left me
unfinished on the nightstand again. I walk.

Fourteen.

So I walk. Walk across fields in Peach and Bibb Counties
where my great-grandfather Newberry tended his groves. And
I walk down dirt roads around Greenville where another of my
line rode to deliver babies or mend a leg. I walk along north
Georgia ledges where my cousin Colonel Tate cut pink marble slabs
for the whole country. And I walk the docks at Savannah in footsteps
of my German tree's arrival. An immigrant, a river, an economy,
freedom. I walk the courtrooms of Cohutta with Judge Maddox,
passing wilderness and judgment on the mountain people.
And down in the rail yards beyond Broadway and Houston Avenues
where a world once crossed roads with everywhere, I walk with my
grandfather, covered head to toe with grease a young man who only
knew work, and I'm so much older

without prospects.

Water and Night

Out over the pond
I'm suspended. The summer night
is void of air but I breathe in
handfuls of life. There's

no rope but God's rope looped around
me. When I call out it's without answer
or echo, nothing stirs on the gelatin shore.
But the treeline is full of coyotes and ghosts

of the Creek Nation who wander and wander.
I'm hushed
up here above this water
this water so green that it's black.

A Place That Feels Remote

The placement of trees
around my house, ones I've planted
myself, has become a way to block out
nearby homes that are open
to where I sit on front or back porches.
It only takes a few years
and I am alone.

Winging the Watersheds

When the house is quiet
a breathing develops
in common with the walls.
I wonder about the meaning
of silence as I inhale
all the air that ever was in this small city
of zeros and one without purpose.

Later I'll take my guitar
to the park. They tell me
I have a permit to play. I'm glad
the city will permit me to play.
As my friends join in, there may be songs
we sing that we don't know.
Like life, winging the watersheds.

There's no return to morning
just new mornings, new pauses
to fill with spurs of the moment.
Then we all breathe, and sing,
and talk with no one taking it down
for all its profundity, a gigantic carrying-on
of passers by and sleepers.

Dead

My house breathes. I can
see it from the road. There
are dogs who wait
around it.

All life has drained from the cut hay
that no sun no water can resurrect
it lies white, brittle, a remembered
thing.

Worth more dead than alive
I drink wine on the porch.
I have trouble writing the word
“dead.”

Birds Won't Nest In The Sky

Some people paint their ceilings blue.
They say it's because birds won't nest
in the sky. I would like to lie on a bed
under such blueness, sapphire, face up
lights out. I'm sure stars would appear
there on the darkest nights. They'd be
gone by morning. There is an ancient
custom from somewhere about the depth
of dreaming when you have no roof.

Red Crow

The crow I shadowed
then paralleled
along the highway's
right-of-way fenceline
played a game
of crow and man
with me. It was sunrise
so the fields were red
with moisture, and
when he cut over
the tallgrass it parted
as if a little Moses
told it to part. I came
to my own turn, he chose
not to follow. It was
like I'd squandered
a way of knowing.

Portal Fear

*My heart ain't in it /
but I'll hold the door.*

– Gregg Allman

Cold the August rain
hot the winter snow
cold the heat of Cuba coming up
molten Hudson Bay
hard the life when things move on
move on from sentience
the space that retained and then
relinquished. They tell me
that a law of physics teaches us
no energy ever passes away
nothing really dies. But no one
relishes the door.

I Was Once A Painter

It was March 1994. I painted a scene
a valley from high above ridges all around
into the far blue mist.
First the outlines were brushed on.
Then the shades on top bright
exaggerated full of morning. It was the last
painting that I would ever do
even though for months my colors and
palette remained in my studio, the redolence
of linseed oil
as thick as stone. Never picked them up again
except to put it all away somewhere
in the attic. That piece hangs in a mountain
home now a reminder
of absolutes
of beginnings of endings places to which
I'll never return. Some days
now many years later
these hands still smell
like the cadmium women
who sat for my portraits.

A Watering

The Lark Ascending plays
as the rain picks up.
I know weather comes,
it comes from
a grand cocktail
that formed
over Montgomery, mixing
Mexico, Missouri
and Manitoba
with the Shallows.
If you can hear thunder
you're close enough
to breathe in bolts
of lightning. That's
conventional wisdom.
And trains sound like
tornados, cutting
roadbeds
where the unsuspecting
sleep, their guard
like so much pulpwood
stacked and rotting.
All this I know.
But this Saturday
is green under storms
that fall to flow again
into circles. All of the
water that ever was
is still trapped
at God's whim until
it too ascends
and peels off
into the vacuum.

Dithyramb

and she sang again. This time I know it was her.
The lengthening of syntax like rainwater spilling.

I wish I could grasp her song, and hold it without
keeping. In that continental breadth, like a tower
in Amarillo, that wideness weighing
nothing, I hum along.

There's no need to write the song down because
I prefer it being gone but for the wine buzz
she leaves behind. Sound travels through me.
I can't
remain neutral
in her residue.

The Viewing

A bourbon color and the sun
blow my curtains. I wait to go to the viewing.
They won't have music there. They'll wait
for the funeral to have singing. But there's
always a song in my head when I wake
when I doze, drive, run, even dream.

A soundtrack is part of every scene heard
or not, but present. That must be where
my songs come from. So there will be
a song at the viewing after all, a product
of the self-taught, of the ear released
like a soul ascending.

Names

Something called my name
in the grove this morning
out past the statuary
and pink marble bench.

I could recite the names of
birds there, the trees they
fling and bounce through,
the blooms saved for later.

But it was my own name I heard
in the voice of my mother
when she was young. I had
a crew cut, a small red coat.

And sometimes I hear singing, too,
not just birds but chants,
monks who've gathered
then dispersed into my wild pasture

where there are souls to save
in little shadows, saplings,
newborns, young love
and colors, dew,

morning and syllables of
a word that equals all of us,
all things, teeming, the voice
we answer to.

Lincoln

His face haunts me
like fields that have burned
in a terrible night remembered
undead flames dotting hillsides
hillocks full of suffering full of
dead boys. The end of things
won't go down alone.

There he is: stark, golden, wounded,
half-awake, asleep and dreaming,
triumphant in a Richmond freed.
Surely Lee ran only because
he couldn't fly.

Charles Laughton

In nineteenthirtysix
dozens of months before the
war,
he made a dark movie
about Rembrandt.

Filmed before all that butchery
to come, he had the expression
of horror, humor, of pools
of the henceforth dead.

The black and white is a glimpse
into essence and brilliance, into
a bullish effeminate presence
a ghost, a light.

Shirley Horn

Somehow I imagine
her with Sixties boots
she would've worn them to show
a kind of freedom.
It wasn't just jazz.

She wasn't just smooth either.
In a land of prayers for rain
all lined up and sun bleached,
Ms. Horn sang sweet showers
like de Kooning.

Hear it
in her songs cinnamon
with mute, still
the beautiful night still
a sea perfumed.

Miles Refused to Die

He was close many times
but the guy wouldn't lie
down. Being a cat
and I mean nine lives,
his muted horn landed
on all fours or five-fours
or five-eights every time.
In that last session
with Shirley Horn he jammed
on "You Won't Forget Me."
You know, he was right. I'll bet
his casket had an escape hatch
and East St. Louis trembles yet.

Joseph Cotten

in black and white,
sensitive. He wore
long overcoats, hats,
had an accent
that mixed Richmond
and Gotham
during the forties.
The movies he made
were exploratory,
and I think
Orson Welles
was a friend of his.
Wavy blond hair
like my father's at the time
must have been
where he got that name,
as it was surely
a stage name.
I suppose it was. Maybe.
Only spelled differently.
There is a room
darkened, mirrored
flashing from
cathode screens,
where he must reside
and where others
like him
never age, never die,
reciting their parts
exactly the same way
over and over
again and again. I
know his name, voice

and face.
But he never
knew mine.

Hope and Art Tatum

The shortest day
is the longest night
true
but that night
clarifies
its cosmology
when the speed of light
is approached;
time slows down and hits a wall
at winter solstice.

In the dim
is Art Tatum, almost blind,
proving
for all
that Einstein was right
that our world stops
at perfection,
that minutes reverse
when racing the beam.
Tatum was that fast.
Tatum is that fast.
That perfect.

And
as winter begins
there is jazz:
possibility, freedom,
victory in darkness.
The
beautiful
theory.

Summer, Such As It Has Become

To Paul Simon

There was a record store up on Peachtree
we'd go to, I was no more than seventeen,
"Peaches" it was called and I bought
Simon and Garfunkel's *Greatest Hits*
one summer night.

I was just learning the guitar in those Seventies
that were just the Sixties without the push-back,
the Sixties but with cynicism and indifference, almost
an exhaustion, a surrender; a looking-the-other-way
dance that allowed us to be who we were.

I saw Simon years later from the third row
that one-trick-pony looked right at me, like saying
"it's cool," like saying "there's no cure for this"
because he must've known that I'd tossed and turned
and still toss and turn.

My own guitar, who knew and knows enough of my secrets
to blackmail me from here to Tampa, makes me do
the playing but she does the telling, that beautiful
cured wooden love became the measure of my youth
when this city was just a big, big town, and I was
whatever I have become.

Session

Twenty five years ago tonight
near Carnaby Street
we recorded two songs of mine
in a few hours time. I sensed
opera in the dance for good reason.

A transit strike that summer
hit us with no other way home
but by bus, then foot. We sang
while the beer we bought
lasted. The songs

had chosen
their own players
beforehand, giving us the feel
of choreography, of
predestination.

Appliance, in the River

An electric transmission line
connects with every corner
of this round universe.

When the lights go out
they're out, something is broken
all black.

The bather in the holy Ganges
has it right, that this moment
is all there
has ever been.

Ray, With Tess

To Corey Mesler

They read Chekhov together
like it was the Bible. They
both knew, he and she,
that he was dying.
What a brave thing to do,
to cling to literature
as last rites, recited
over a body that lingers.
You see, he was a writer
and a writer understands
mortality. He allowed
a flow of a thousand birds
through his gills, inhaled
empathy through eyes,
skin. She
let him swim the flocks,
each feather a comb, each
word a comfort. And they
read. And the reading
became like mumbles as
he and she moved away
without moving, the text smooth,
no vowels, no consonants.
Then she was alone, draped
in black, with a manuscript.
As she turned, looked out
of the window on the great river,
the river where he caught his
wings, there were other fishermen
gathering, huddling
where it wouldn't rain.

Regret

A train in dark hours
screams to save someone.

Its cries follow behind it across
these woods. My windows rattle

many miles away through a night
wide and deep as the Great Plains.

And nothing deadens the diesel,
its name a rumble too low to know,

its pain from wounds not allowed
to heal. The steel oozes cut and recut

polished stainless fear. Starless
homebound empty cars trail along

the tracks. My sleep is pulled
like tides from a moon, my visions

fray with each light flickering light
each wail each fissure the great engine

makes. Soon a dulling comes,
the rails cool enough to scab, light

begins to even, cargo is loaded
to return

tonight, tonight
and tonight.

Geometry

*All these things can be said
but why say them?*

– Thomas Merton

Great wide clearings they seem flat they
seem like rectangles fitted, reclined,
one's west wall is another's eastern
fenced by a boundary of flesh.
These are the worlds, our lives
that can't merge
never spill into someone or something
or somewhere else.
The shared lungs of our spaces
belie our solitude.
There are only two numbers:
one and zero. Truth
has even fewer moving parts.

Wine

There's more wine to drink
these days, and less money
to buy it. Don't say
I'm running away when I inhale
my grape. It's more like
singing because of fear. When
I drink, I stand my ground.
When I sing, I become
more than I am or maybe ever will be.

Fifty

I.

It rained on my birthday.
No, it was a good thing.
Nothing was thirsty.

II.

I think I'll name that statue
under the oak and falling sea
Arthur, Caesar or something Greek.

III.

I circle with nowhere to land,
my juice almost spent.
My eyes are on fire.

IV.

It rained on my birthday.
There were and are plenty of seeds.
I can do nothing else but wait.

Crazy

Ragged black clouds that can't rain.
What water they do produce trails only
part ways down. The air inhales it
far above ground. A shower dies
suspended, frozen like a hook.

I am really worried this time. In uncharted
country, I pick up the pace, even
whistle this tune. I'm afraid
I might lose it all.
There are prayers I could say, prayers for morning.

My tune is a chain saw symphony with crickets, with fish,
with wrong way birds that can't read music,
all of this is home for me now. Like rain
that doesn't rain. They make mattresses specially
for rooms at the centers of houses, to protect from

flying glass. From tornados. I sleep on a
mattress like that.

East Wing September

...on the gone side of leaving.

– Guy Clark

Where they take people to die
lay them out sometimes old age
is the only excuse I sat there
drew a wheel with my eyes
in that place Outside

a small cement deck with a
roof a ceiling fan
her and her father His stare
was distant
It started to rain.

Back in the room there was a
partition On the other side
a man twisted he moaned in sleep
without sleep hair without color
skin like clouds

O these souls
that cannot fly sing them home
while they have daylight enough
to fall
into sky.

Tunnel

There is the other side. A resolution
to what is happening now.

But the light the tunnel are one.
We just perceive
moving towards something, never

reach it, because it's the starting point.
We have the sensation of movement
to where clear water springs up and is
named river, to where it's too high for

rarefied climbers,
to corners where our shadows
can finally recline, to better hours,
to a closure.

Listen. There's no other side.
Still we're moving
coming home, coming here

and here is there.

Sunday, After the Snow

She walked just beyond
the shadow of the house,
stopped and looked back
like it was one last time,
then she went on.
She'd left a note directing
me to anyone but her.
I think I got the message,
couldn't remember her
from then on.
Dark eyes that were
always blue, always flashing.
There, nothing.
Lifetimes laid end to end don't
make up a day, so
I promised myself I'd
stop counting. Her day
had just begun.

We

The lawn is full of black birds.
They weren't there just a
moment ago. I had turned away
to tend a need, then back
and there they were. Countless
unfazed, acting as one, they
still hate this time of threadbare
year. Squirrels move around them
without notice. My eyes
capture the weight
of a thousand wings. I look away
and we are gone.

Along the River Road

Along the river road is the poverty
of love, of leaving everything behind
on some vacant weed-caked field
in a heat you didn't choose, it's all
here. Alone in a culture of distraction
you make peace with your murder.
You swim.

Somewhere

It only takes a few years
and I am alone. There
will be a door. No one
has lived to tell about it.
We each have our own door.
And I will go through mine.
All the doors lead to
the same place. It may be
back here with all memory
erased. It may be at the top
of Long's Peak or Mt. Moran.
It may be heaven. But
it will be somewhere. And
so will I.

And Long Live That Dream

I am somewhere. My senses
tell me the room, how warm,
what was cooked earlier. So
I must be. The dream
is real.

And long live that dream.
A dream with touch and
consequences, purpose
and signs. On mornings
I wake

into thought, cross the stream
over stones. Waters
divide things like night and day.
I enter another template. Here
I make my life.

There is a moment. It stands
out in front of all other moments.
Telling me of me as a crease
in the fabric. That I am matter.
That I do.



L. Ward Abel (born in 1959, in Atlanta), poet, composer and performer of music (Abel, Rawls & Hayes), teacher, retired lawyer, lives in rural Georgia, has been published hundreds of times in print and online, and is the author of *Peach Box and Verge* (Little Poem Press, 2003); *Jonesing For Byzantium* (UK Authors Press, 2006); *The Heat of Blooming* (Pudding House Press, 2008); *Torn Sky Bleeding Blue* (erbacce-Press, 2010); and the forthcoming *Cousins Over Colder Fields* (Finishing Line Press, 2013).

PARALLEL PRESS POETS

L. Ward Abel	Jim Ferris	Carmine Sarracino
Mary Alexandra Agner	Doug Flaherty	Lynn Shoemaker
Marilyn Annucci	Allison Funk	Shoshauna Shy
Mark Belair	Max Garland	Austin Smith
F.J. Bergmann	Ted Genoways	Thomas R. Smith
Richard Broderick	John Graber	Judith Sornberger
Lisa Marie Brodsky	Barbara L. Greenberg	Alex Stolis
Harriet Brown	Richard Hedderman	Alison Stone
Charles Cantrell	Rick Hilles	Judith Strasser
Robin Chapman	Karla Huston	Heather Swan
Jan Chronister	Catherine Jagoe	Katrin Talbot
Cathryn Cofell	Diane Kerr	Marilyn L. Taylor
Temple Cone	John Lehman	Paul Terranova
Francine Conley	Carl Lindner	Don Thompson
Paola Corso	Sharon F. McDermott	Jeanie Tomasko
James Crews	Mary Mercier	Alison Townsend
Alice D'Alessio	Corey Mesler	Dennis Trudell
Paul Dickey	Stephen Murabito	Tisha Turk
CX Dillhunt	John D. Niles	Ron Wallace
Heather Dubrow	Elizabeth Oness	Timothy Walsh
Gwen Ebert	Roger Pfingston	Matt Welter
Barbara Edelman	John Pidgeon	Jacqueline West
Susan Elbe	Andrea Potos	Katharine Whitcomb
Karl Elder	Eve Robillard	J.D. Whitney
R. Virgil Ellis	James Silas Rogers	Mason Williams
Fabu	Allegra Jostad Silberstein	George Young
Richard Fein	Michael Salcman	Tracy S. Youngblom
Jean Feraca	Kay Sanders	



Parallel Press
University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries



Parallel Press
University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries

parallepress.library.wisc.edu
ISBN 978-1-934795-37-8