

Paleo-Indian Feet

once tread
this red

west Texas dirt

rolled over
these

rounded geodes
as they

packed
mammoth-boned

tents of
buffalo

hide
across

the Callahan Divide

*Josiah Walbarger, Pecan Springs,
Texas, August 1883*

he said

it felt
like thunder

ripping up
over

the curve
of his skull

then down
across

his forehead

as that Comanche
knife peeled

his scalp
from

his bone

Cirrus Clouds

fibrous and feathered
they whisk

their ice
crystals into
sunset

like tufts
of raw
silk

twirled
together

Dallas Farmer's Market

bulges with mangos
and papaya

and yellow-meated watermelon

surrounded by the florescent
froth of
pink

azaleas

bumble bees
blitz into
the

purple
perfume

of wisteria

draped
around

Rush Hour

Houston Street Bag Lady

like a
hummingbird

feeding

hollyhock to
hollyhock

she bobs
and darts

garbage can to
garbage can

down
the street

sifting
sorting

looking for aluminum

The Bag Lady's Ode

think of me
whenever you

empty a can
of Diet Coke

read Newsweek

or wipe
with toilet paper

think of me
pawing the dank depths
of Safeway's dumpster

for wilted lettuce
stale rolls
and molded cheese

I am the
grey bundle

trundling it all

along the Miracle Mile
in a Kroger cart
looking for a

safe place
to curl

the night

while you
in your creamy satin
negligee are
home

fluffing
your

down pillows

Rosetta

she was gutsy
and built like a brick outhouse

and so blonde

and she'd just had another baby
her fourth

and we were having a revival
at First Baptist
where daddy was preacher

with a visiting evangelist
a real hellfire and brimstone man

and he was preaching that night, hammer down

when she started
undoing

now I was up in the choir loft
and I could see what she was fixing to do

and I thought
Oh Lord!

but she just kept unbuttoning

and pretty soon she
sorta popped out

all over

and that old preacher was going ninety miles per
when he looked down at her
nursing that baby
on the front
row

and he had false teeth
and those teeth come
plum out of his mouth

well, he caught them
in his hand
and shoved them back in

I thought sure he was going to choke
but he just went right on
preaching

Stripping Cotton Blues

Now you listen to me real good
hear what I'm a saying

Well it was back in 1941
right after we first come out here
and I was the Crew Boss
only black boss they had

and I had me about a hundred and fifty men, good men
brought most of them all the way from Alabama
clean to Stamford, Texas
with me

and I was buying sacks
stacks and stacks of new sacks
five hundred sacks a day
every day

hauling them out to the fields

and I worked them men
blacks and whites
Mexicans and Indians
they was all the same to me

sunup to sundown

but I was fair
done right by them men

and they done right by me
five hundred sacks a day
full of cotton

now that's a lot
of cotton

all done by hand
not nothing easy about that

but that's how we done it
back then

just a stripping cotton

Alzheimer's: What Year?

like the scarlet
flash of

cardinal

that flits
telephone line to
oak limb

the thought
paused in

my brain

but flew on
before it
reached

my lips

Cirrostratus Clouds

fluff white
across the

west Texas horizon

like a goose down
comforter
coming

unstuffed

The Buzzard Roost

every day
it looms

silver above
the west Texas plains

a crimson strobed
cell phone
tower

feathered with
the black

of turkey
vulture

settled in
at sun

down

The Fort Worth Queen of Cans

Her 1976 red
Chevy Impala
stacked roof
high

with
crumpled cans of

Coke
Dr. Pepper
Pepsi
Big Red

green beans
hominy
spinach
potatoes
tomatoes
rutabagas
sauerkraut
peas and beets

leaves precisely
enough room

behind the steering wheel

for her
stocking
capped

self
to squeeze

in

Blackstrap Molasses

juice squeezed
from fat sorghum

stalks

boiled
and condensed

becomes a
shimmered

sweetness
rippling

over blueberry
pancakes

and butter

*Sunset in the West Texas Wild
Mountains*

five dragonflies
do a square
dance

over the garden

full of tomatoes
cucumbers
zucchini
and okra
pods

in the distance
a deer
steps

from the grove
of live
oaks

lifts her head

then jumps
the fence

into the black-eyed peas

Crescent Moon in Texas

the sliver
of warm gold

rocks over
Lake Brownwood

slips into
the cedar brakes

leaving glittered
water washing

up onto limestone slabs

*Rusted Red Ford Pick-Up Truck
Full of Turkeys on Farm to Market*

1178

caged in
the bed

feathers
ruffed

by the parched wind

toe
nails

claw

for a
hold

that never
happens

Texas Grasshoppers

mile
after mile after
mile of west Texas

swarms with

orange
and black
and brown
and blue
heads

bobbing

nodding
up and
down

as each silvered
proboscis

sticks into
sandy soil
sips

oiled molasses

up through
cap rock
to separate
from salted water

to store
in empty tank batteries