

## GOOD AT GETTING

I'm moving out of the light  
Into Barbara's basement  
There's no guarantee I'll return  
And no afterlife in the making

The finer points are swallowed up  
In memory of a recognition  
That time cooks all the books  
And hasn't been audited once

You might call this au courant  
I call it by its name  
Dispassionate arbitration  
With the powers invested in me

## ACEPHALE

The words do something strange  
exposed to the elements  
travelling stiffly alone  
across an airless gallery  
that shudders in a storm  
flames from the bain marie  
burn perilously close to dawn  
drawing blue into the room  
where I decant my mood  
my list of victims grows  
a positively negative response  
makes a depression  
eyes ache from underuse

## ADVANCED PLACEMAT

Writing just to say  
you're ruled by an exception  
far be it from me  
but still audible in the wind  
we're walking like two filaments  
neither purposeful nor lost  
making light of our affairs  
pretending we're old friends  
a paper trail blows across the street  
by all accounts a lovely sight  
sun high in the sky  
three feet wide at least  
the students have gone home  
their quad is a solemn space  
a crater on a sallow plain  
softer landings will prevail  
night and dreams

## BITTER HALF

The last word begins  
like a poorly scored pill  
I can't speak for you  
cherry picking is one method  
a frame within a frame  
where the past is heavy with hidden costs  
and you can't get out of the way  
we don't need another hero  
to return us to point A  
the end of our transparency  
is the beginning of our composition

## NEWTOWN CREEK

### DUTCH KILLS

Neither seen nor heard  
in the run-up to the runoff  
a bucket sits in a puddle  
the retaining wall is hallowed ground  
a burning pillar is my guide  
pointing to a green place in the sky  
where the slip meets the river  
and the city burns its dead

To continue to speak of this scene  
I'll need a story of my own  
the mouth of the left bank  
its irregular drift

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### WHALE CREEK

The cement truck in the rain  
looks like another long day  
you're here too  
sing the song  
of the shipyard and its flags

The switching station in the fog  
the toll plaza's pulsing light  
an estuarine dream  
mixing salt and time

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## MASPETH CREEK

There's so much I want to show you  
before the slow fade

Colors are erratic  
on summer nights  
a fluted sky

The refinery near Penny Bridge  
in a photograph dated July 16, 1923  
I'm confused by your reaction  
don't focus on the flame

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## ENGLISH KILLS

A giant drain  
thoughts gain landmark status  
tall grass rises from the tracks  
under the overpass

Next time I'll pack a lunch  
fear of hunger everywhere  
running among the oil drums  
a push me pull you kind of deal

Now I think you're vanishing  
but sound is timeless here  
where the last ditch is flowing  
and Bushwick is drying up