

SENTENCES

These are sentences that have meant the most to me:
we were on our way to the mountains,
space presented itself every quarter mile like a joke
whose punchline is soap,
actually that's a lie, as though
we were thinking of late season snow,
by 11:00 it's time to head for the lodge,
a little slushy in the meadow
but crunches under the aspen;

Bob says that's impossible
and holds up an Indian to prove his point,
you are overly dependent on tonic
and dominant relations,
you are an advertisement for tyres, he says
and for days you concoct a response
that does not refer to the Alps;

in another life the surface ripples,
in Salinas we collect stuffed frogs,
salt shakers of Quakers
and old oil cans, "And this here
my good woman, is the Monitor Top"
"Anyhow, his Tires are just like mine!"
"Surprisingly brings new combined results,"
another sentence is the one about prayer,
I forget which one;

capital provides you with access
to gizmos you can climb under
and inspect, a faint breeze
of incompleteness waves from the lake
where the truly resentful have set up camp,

“Critical Eyes are sizing you up right now,”
“Husband always ate in town; Tasteless
‘bargain bread’ was to blame,”
hand me that yellow wrench
is an imperative you can use
to club these appeals to your better nature
into submission;

I’m not certain what these italics mean
but we listen more closely,
occasionally prose creeps into my language
and we register surprise at the right margin
which extends far into the night
like the voice of a bilquist, partly me
and partly one you can’t anticipate,
the effect of death
is one of its appeals;

these intrusions could have been prevented
by a dog or alarm system but you were barricaded
behind books, “Unexpected Surprise
That Betrayed the Grave Robber”
“How the Savior Really Looked”;
I move between those that others write
and those that form themselves around bolts
of air coming through the window
there are wheels on the chair that make this possible,
I scoot, therefore I think;

mobility is not just a juvenile aspiration
but a downright adjustment
us older folks . . . and then the medley
from Kismet, studs stuck in the drier
Mom crunching on mints, an entire generation
raised on war:
give me a good example
of a bad poem;

what's missing is the inflection, eyes
raised slightly above the crowd
nervous fidget with the moustache, adjusts
bra the audience nods
and produces a ripple of approval
at grandpa back in the mangrove,
give me a bad example
of a mangrove
and I'll show you a good sentence;

when the television first arrived
I was in traction
and Uncle Bob was in drag
the next time we invited it for dinner
and it stayed, imitating the rosewood highboy
spouting towns above the 38th parallel, it said
breath was bad
scum was round
it gave me an example of hair
that I retain to this day;

the voice was one of our finest products
conceived in labs
and perfected on children wearing sunglasses,
see this butterfly it looks like a smudge
or small vagina,
later I bought a Webcor
and spoke to myself beneath the covers
in the voice of Audie Murphy
"This worker scorned Safety Goggles"
"The Tragedy of Domestic Hands,"
without one of these
people mistake you for someone else.