

STEVE LANGAN

To My Friends

I have wanted for us to catch up.
From here, a heavenly monotony.
What was feared, as it arrived,
what the ancients proscribed,
after reading the haters and hooligans,
in communion with star *and* wave.
I'm just a little boat tied up beside
a cliff—a *dinghy*. I'm sure you remember.
The last twenty years or so?
House, house, house, cars, many dented.
Dinner with the in-laws. I'm *married*?
And all our children crying at once
and hungry *shut them up and feed me*.
If there was beauty it was not caring
about clearing the counter tops ticking
beneath the clocks, alert on the shelves.
On to us. One day I sat up straight.
Metaphor, from the Greek: *to transfer*.
There is even some mystery here
in Nebraska. It's Friday morning.
The neighbors are speaking to me again
(*Hullo! . . . Have a good one!*) and so are
the robins. I sat still one day. I had been
so silent. I remembered you all, slouching.
In the rear view mirror, your faces, aching.
I realized you would one day be dying.
I walked to the window (at which I have
been reminded *you are not an old man
who is dying!*). At the spigot, I checked
the attachments. I searched for progress
throughout the materials. I shook hands
with the governor, I called on the warden.
A priest smiled "not *at you*," Liz said,
"but in our *general direction*."

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I hung my wardrobe (by color and weight).
I nodded at my brown shoes and black shoes.
I looked out the window again. I searched
through the grass for the necklaces I knew
I would not find and did not find them
then it rained. For seven days ten years ago
I never told you I believed I was the savior.
For many moments in thrall or wailing.
For three days I planned to murder her.
Had I been trained too well *to believe?*
—*A plane overhead.* I'm in my backyard.
No...a helicopter. Allow me to reconsider.
Let's meet at the bandstand in September.
I always love September. Bring at least
seventy sunsets, twenty pipe wrenches,
forty broken windows. You will remember.
I was drowned and scarred and scorched.
Will you call me? You can count on me.
I will not omit triumph or disaster.