

How many people die each year from  
automobile accidents?

I do not know.

Each person in their car needs to get somewhere  
very specific, at a specific time

And no one intends to be struck by a car,  
in the course of driving a car

Each near-miss somehow does not convince  
us to stay home, or ride the bus

As a society, we could avert so many collisions,  
if we all used the bus, for there would be

So few

Cars to hit

But the bus is necessarily slower

And we have such things to do,

At such specific times

That every so often we leave someone

All across the road

Fairly or unfairly

At fault, or not

A sacrifice for the preservation

Of this system of a kind of

Flourishing.

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An insurance salesman

Realizes that he is desensitized to death

Offers policies,

So matter-of-fact

When the policyholder dies

He has to get the check to the deceased,

make sure they can pay their debts

“Dollars and cents”

He tells me

“Dollars and cents is all people talk about,

when it's peoples' *lives*.”

The husband on his adding machine

“If my wife dies in 5 years, thus and so,

but if she lives 10, then we will be in a somewhat  
different situation”

An old man tired of his old woman,

Or simply someone in whom love has flickered out

A child of flickering-out, perhaps

When love goes, what will bring it back?

Who can bring the dead back to life?

Dollars and cents and shaving 20 minutes off

our commute and thus and so, so we are

Moving too fast, sucked into the great  
Compulsion.

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A great craving multitude, all it, all we,  
all you, can see is conditioned by getting  
that craving fulfilled.

You are your craving, you are not you.  
If you look at yourself, you will see that  
there is nothing but craving, at any moment  
you are a craving to perceive or a craving to  
exert power, and like as not you hunger for  
food, a mate, fame, security, something  
necessary, something extra. You crave but  
somehow you could learn to desire,  
there is some nuance between desire  
and craving, there is some freedom, some  
ability to soak in what is, when you  
desire, which you are too headlong and  
jerked-around to receive truly.

When you desire, to receive truly is  
to receive in correspondence to what is.  
Somehow the people in our lives are people

by the wayside,

We do not see who they really are  
We are eyes-locked-ahead on what  
often amounts to a mirage

We don't live in reality, because we live  
in the future,

Yet there is hope, and hope is in the  
future

And there is a nuance between hope  
and this white-knuckled drive  
into the future

Hope can let you rest

Even concern, the nuanced inverse of hope,  
Can let you breathe

But there is some other future-orientation  
Other than hope

Which numbs you, dulls you, turns you  
into a robot on a string

We have lived there so long,

We have been workaholics

We have been slaves

And puppets

Though we fought so hard for freedom

Sometimes it was fighting

itself which enslaved us, in the act of  
our attempt at independence and authentic  
self-expression.

I have dragged myself behind that chariot,  
that headlongness,  
I have craved electrically  
And find myself shocked-out  
I am tired out, and even alone  
And still I must pick up my feet and go on  
And still I must work  
The work is not finished  
And the road must still be walked  
though I have worn myself out,  
So I'll smile my gap-toothed smile and  
perhaps wrap my feet when my shoes  
give out,  
And stumble,  
And learn a new endurance  
There is a triumph here  
Although there is much to mourn

--

We are not done, and it is best to mourn  
what is done,  
To be done with sin, to be done with  
Madness  
O, when will I learn how to connect  
with reality?  
To see people as they are --  
First of all, to see people?  
When will I have room inside me to  
Engage, take initiative,  
In other peoples' lives?  
When will we, as a civilization, open  
our hearts to those other civilizations  
in the world?  
When will our churches open their doors?  
But we are all walled-off,  
We have judged that there is not room  
in our lives for certain people  
Which is perhaps necessary  
Understandable  
But lamentable  
And what is the pattern of our exclusions?  
If there is one,  
It will exclude the kind of people  
Who get excluded

Enemies, the prideful  
And the poor  
But only those apparently prideful,  
Apparently our enemies,  
We will make plenty of false friends,  
And we will tend to exclude the poor,  
To not listen  
To those without a voice

Can I imagine being different?  
To never drive a car again,  
To reach out and hold on to other people?  
Yes  
And no  
And I mourn my untrained mind,  
My untrained way of life.  
Yet I can imagine a promised land  
An environment in which all can be well,  
A memory made future  
A field trip at a large park  
Going from museum to museum  
Shepherded by a good teacher,  
And drawn along by  
Trustworthy companions

---  
I hear a woman complaining  
Bringing a spirit of harshness  
“They need to grow a pair and stop  
whining”  
She says  
She speaks in a bit of a mocking voice  
And I think that such a spirit is untrustworthy  
And then reflect that I myself  
Have complained,  
And in complaining,  
Was less than fully respectful  
Less than quietly respectful  
And it was all so  
So  
So  
Inevitable  
As though I could not have been otherwise  
in the moment  
And this I mourn  
That I had not grown and been  
Purified

Before I met that moment  
And found it so inevitable,  
We find life so heavy  
So unexpected  
O woman, may you fight the right  
battles  
And turn in vulnerability to the Great  
Mourner  
Who wipes away tears