

Reality

Reality is a city
steel and concrete crystals
rectangular arrangements
spearing up from asphalt planes.

Reality is a country road
meandering among trees
around the hills and corners
of fields and isolated cottages.

Reality is a boat sliding across a lake
bow waves trailing away on either side
outboard motor churning a deep well at the transom.
Writhing fading foam
traces the course
back to the island.
Back to small knotted pine board cabins
towering pine, spruce, hemlock
and white birch
ripples flashing in morning sun
slap of distant screen door
persistent drone of another outboard
trailing its own foam line
in other meandering directions.

Reality is an echo of a freight train horn
permeating a prairie night
above a subliminal roar
above the song of standing corn
and the dreams of sleeping cattle
while mice creep furtively in walls.

Reality is sitting in small rooms
pressing small words onto paper
peeling small thoughts
from a white bone ceiling
chasing small echos
around an empty skull.

Reality is a bag of sticks and giblets
proverbial meat-puppet
dancing asserting inquiring expiring.

Reality is the soft white silence
of snow-covered winter streets
punctuated by one separate crying bird.

Reality sits in an overstuffed chair
wrapped in extra blankets
shivering hands
cradling hot cocoa in a cup.
Panting from the joy of a long toboggan run
down golf-course hills, airborne
careening over slushy roads
across a frozen stream

fetching up against an icy snowbank
breathless with laughter
stunned by cold
eager to attack the hill again.

Reality is a strip of film
strewn with images
imprinted by the brightness of the light
insatiable intensity of sight.

Reality flickers on the screen
in tapestries of trembling moments
alight with self-illuminating colors.

Reality is the great vacuum
on which this show is seen
on which the projector beams the scenes
of hearth and horror and happiness.

Reality is stretched
from one end of the universe
to the gesture of a dying mother.
Stretched so thin
it can't contain itself.
Stretched like a web
of wafting spider silk
more elastic than memory
finer than the beam of sight
from eye to object
following the curvature of space
through sun-sized masses
dipping down the dimple in a baby's chin.

Reality is tissue-paper thin
encapsulating consciousness within an image
on the inner surface of a sphere
a planetarium of senses
a fishbowl of defenses.

All this reality is.
How solid
how substantial
how definitive
over-arching
invincible
preposterous.