

Selected Poems

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TICK TOCK

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Spring was false,
Summer exaggerated,
Fall a lovely shadow—
Winter is true.

I sit by the water
and try to collect myself—
laughter of the gods.

Ducks are landing,
ducks are taking off.
A little girl stamps her foot.

Distant guns—
those who no longer exist
send their regards.

THE FRIEND

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Walking through fallen leaves
by the autumn lake, I see myself,
a reflection among reflections,
golden and dark, and anonymous.

Death, as a friend, stands before me,
and instructs my poem—this thin shadow,
singing the world it knew before knowing.

RUBICON

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It is the morning of my seventieth birthday,
the garbage truck wakes me up.

Sunlight.

My first thought, come unbidden,
is for Ginger, by first dog, run over
by a tallow truck—I can still see the tallow man
pick her up by her tail, and sling her onto his load.

My next thought is for my brother-in-law,
dead this year from a massive coronary—
one minute he was here, and then not.

I remember that summer at the lake,
when his daughters caught their big walleyes.
Grandma and Grandpa were in good health,
the ditches were humming, and at night
fireflies wrote periods on our human happiness.

Now it's time to stop putting down my thoughts,
they have come to the river of everyone's suffering,
everyone's joy, which is too deep and swift for words.