



**[PACKING]**  
HAILEY HIGDON



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## It's Dark or Whatever You Call It

How long can I stay  
stuck they say—we are  
all entirely undiscerning  
sit back, and enjoy that other people are  
creeping in too, just asking questions  
allows them to fasten around your life.

A gift is an example of a hierarchy, see elegance  
for another                      of how we broaden over,  
ourselves over others, instead of  
fixing those bad links like a nook is  
virtually the same as a book, but a book  
is considered the broken form because it comes  
in what                      is considered by some  
to be a finite expression, 3 men  
sit on a wall evenly placed like runners and  
I turn around to watch a cop in love

park and I man is gone when

I turn back a shift in the ranks as significant as one lightbulb going

out in a long string above the vanity mirror, minor

but not without connection

to the larger

vision, outside outside, the vision or the

dream that everyone is connected to everyone else, don't barf, this is

*serious,*

which maybe we should call *relationship*, the

binary that allows something to be present, presented, to exist or the continuum

of even one

event occurring after another when we retell the story of it

but actually these things occur upon each other too *fat*

or was it *compound* interest, the adding of an event as a cushion, suggesting that

the thing that follows is necessary to hospitality, to host the bone.

In the news there is a hoopla about walking horses here, in training

there is something called soring, to raise the knees, make the gait what they call the Big Lick, and that's funny because it's not like that at all, it's halting, abusive and it looks like a unique, funny and animal way of swimming on dry land, only half the horse's body's okay with drowning.

## Any Day Bill

any day now  
remind me  
any day now Bill  
I'm gonna get me a house  
a good mortgage  
when the money comes in  
you and me Bill

## Packed

Would if it is true I've been watching a lot of movies about how we waste—  
what we get from the earth—all we eat—the holes we dig to feel safe and sleep

the common theme is a menace, all my books are packed

I am looking at the paintings of Joan Mitchell, how something can be your  
tree and you don't waste it by owning the image of it so

a c-h-o-r-d can create union

a c-o-r-d can create union

a-c-c-o-r-d can create union

together the dirt we eat—led led led into the house, onto the floor by our  
tracks, we shuffle

I pile things of the same size together, throw away a lot of paper

and sleep the common theme is a menace

a witch a monster BT corn an early morning if the

wind figures out its ailment I'd be content

crossing the street it's the looking both ways

there are so many little places things sop instead of sit up, but this

is the last of these poems about those places in this city the trash

is in the country too

smooth gliding

across a country road the coke bottle falls off the holler down the holler,  
holler holler

the sound cooperates with the beauty of the place and the object defies it

as I said, all my books are packed, things are together, in the object sense

## Apple Bottoms Etc. When You Are Ready the Conversation Is Waiting

The people in the middle are the bevel

The bridge from top to bottom

Tho usually I am, today I am not referring to the middle class

I am talking about the gray areas of sexuality

I used to believe companionship was necessarily connected to sex, now I'm  
not so sure

I'm sleeping next to a woman whose hair looks like a wind tunnel in the morning

like WHOOSH! like AH HA!

Bodies come in so many different forms

for instance APPLE BOTTOMS

for instance LEGGY

These small choices like the small addition of a small pollutant to a large river—  
wrapper, butt, keep us relatively conscious of our position or type—gendered, sexed,  
top, bottom

We buy our time on credit and by that I mean only that we are quietly suppressing  
the thought that if we don't pay now we pay more later

I don't know if I believe that or if some people are held responsible for their  
carelessness in identifying people from objects

There are so many bullies so much defense and so much catastrophe anyway

For instance me:

on day one of my vacation I was bit by a dog

on day two fireworks

on day three fireworks

on day four a visit to the ER

on day five an airplane

I have compartmentalized my day into something linear

As if there were a singular definition, something serial and discrete

All our directional abilities to objects become

I have hated or loved

And now there is here

I begin to believe that some people are only capable  
of being the crusty bouncers  
of friendship, in or out, there is definitely not a reparation  
for the sorrow or pain and so much  
catastrophe anyway anyway anyway  
seems like there are fewer curves  
not as many directions available for motif  
though TRYING is always a position you can take

## Why Not Minot

if given a place to stay  
some chips some discipline  
the discipline of a situation  
it and how it is unfurling in a regulated way  
what you're supposed to do and when  
does not not follow  
like a fallen hat, dead soldier, one of the socks  
older doesn't provide any new chances to kick a habit easier  
bad habits follow in the idea that we enjoy pain, enjoy suffering, I seek it  
try to explain why  
how this enjoyment makes me a more motivated person or why  
it takes three women  
to warm the car and one ice-block to freeze the bed,  
one oven to cook it  
let's split it, the difference I mean,  
that's the way it crumbles  
five nickels, a dime, thirty-five cents  
and the common denominator thick as a brick, expected  
believing that people are good  
cookie-wise, I mean

## So Many Churches for Sale. Moving? Why Building?

No surprise surveyors make up  
work to do

WHO NEEDS THESE

stats cabs to be yellow bricks  
red why remember the price  
of one thing if the price of that one  
thing doesn't change? MARGINS  
move longitudinal, felt angry,  
felt unjustified, the times you watched  
one cut in line in front of you  
do they bother you? cause they  
bring me to tears and

and that which runs both ways—ownership  
to take place or to take your place  
to take his place or be taken, take the place of  
we annotate the art by the ownership  
ownership instead of the framemaker—MAKER  
OWNER the recommended viewer the viewer who recommends it to you  
puts it in front of your face faces smiling smaces  
LOOK HERE the preferred recommendation  
for a good time  
in this house  
is silence—SHUT UP I'm watching the art and

and it goes up up up like a hot air balloon  
even when we feel like we're losing  
making up the survey to be surveying the land  
up up up even if there are not prospects for next year, I mean,  
you may disappear and lucky enough I remember alone

# When

we count a win

paint it a color

I bet on the bracket

and I won, I'm always winning

picture that guitar a new color, *Oh brother!*

something different

something different happens

she left

she left the building

she left the bar

make a number two with a loop, *Oh brother!*

you make two arguments out of a sentence

it looks like a good fix but nothing like it

I'm given to gaps and traces

God, I love numbers

I have a scar over places

patchwork, fixing

like a wheelchair acts as legs but is nothing like legs, nothing like it

nothing like my skin looks like, that's a crutch for my skin, a crutch

*Oh brother!*

this isn't the dialogue  
the back and forth I intended  
I intended so when does the shit hit the fan?  
I start to pay?

bargain all these, for all these good things

*/hand/me/silver/platter/*  
hand me some time

this too is a way  
winning, the creation of new skin, more time

my play of the day?

*this* one on *this* table

I see these things as risks

—sickness as a risk

at least I've got my health

—I say, speaking at risk

saying

“like this part, my cheeks”

saying

“they're flushed.”

Do you know that since you visited I haven't flushed my toilet?

It's the little things that add up.

Talk about winning, the lemon water just sits there controlling itself.

And now *here*, which is also *there*, at the bar, one of my favorites, *Oh brother!*

Maybe I'll go there later?

After I read this poem, I'll go there later, control yourself, *Oh brother!*

It helps to mention we passed a guitar in the trash on the way, we are sitting near the bar, there is basketball on, I have bets on it,

all the fats are here  
arms on the bar with beverages,

"Ah good, I don't want any part of it," one says

and

"Elizabeth Taylor died, why didn't I hear about it?"  
and then

"I want in on it, all her diamonds."

It's getting late.

Time curls up and we finally notice.

I tried to picture that guitar with some strings on it, the banners with menu items in different colors than what they were—a particularly human brain ability—tokening, right?

Is that how we know who wins?

Isn't that how we determine who is popular?

Knowing

what new things we can imagine they use for legs?  
what additions they can carry?

Knowing

I think this time, I'll not sum it up so

*/hand/me/silver/platter/now/*

like she said, I want in on it, all her diamonds.

## The Stone That Produces Milk

the leper in me is forgiving  
everyone scouring  
getting clean by abrasion, elbow grease

let's shoot for July to untangle our attachments  
we've been ignoring our rudder, sending up flares and  
waiting to be found instead

in the puddle stopped one wet woman, wear and tear  
not on behalf of herself, accidentally, similar to  
accidentally it broke, but nobody broke it

I've been meaning to write a story about doctor's orders  
how others can compel us  
how your friends can go all broken record on you

but doctors, established, all that schooling  
one tip and I hop to

let's review:

I clean up my act, use soap  
try to find my way and take the hooks out of the holes, dense like Velcro  
the wear and tear seems accidental  
and I don't fix it myself unless I'm ordered

I've been relearning how to play this Strauss song called "Roses from the South"  
in preparation for moving home. I think about my mother's knockout roses,  
my Aunt Kay's knockout roses, all the knockout roses everywhere. They grow so  
easily. They are always attractive.

back to the idea of polishing, shiny vs. rusty

would if your relationship to the people you loved was like polishing a stone?

something NOT alive, but you relate with—you scrub and you scrub

you wear down or heal nicks, notches

one day when it is smooth, polished

you hold it in your hand for so long it forms there

grooves around your fingers, erodes someplaces

you decide not to let go but to keep it relative to you

you are the actor in the relationship

you love the stone

it stays, only moves or changes in relation to you

when really what I've been polishing is the face on the back of my head

the mirror components

my elbow that bends the other way, my foot that leads from the other side of me

still, I'm moving to Nashville so I wrote this song about forgiveness:

He is a cold cold stone my darling

when things go south

he is a cold cold stone my darling

don't wanna talk it out

he is a cold cold stone my darling  
don't let me in and though I  
know know know my darling  
I try again

# Everything Matters

Everybody's got a sticker price mine's a lost glove how  
cheap and sad it is to be in love with objects, and let them crowd you, govern

yes I'd love you if you were a sheep, maybe  
a machine even—love the sound of you of the machine you  
you waking up from sleep

more  
better  
than what I make

“blah blah”  
again

“blah blah”

“bleck”

“eish”

what a washed out way to clean the slate

you are such a carefully made machine, even tiny parts are so important on you we  
test them before we connect them to the rest of you, how diligent, deliberate

same way

I carefully repair tiny holes in emotionally important clothing, darn darn  
the sheep you is useful forever, wool, what a thing!

just like how during hard times we use the building for housing, use each, every part,  
the high school gym invites a cot convention and Duncan Regan attends in Japan,  
brings useful things, canteens, tweezers

the ocean got pushed over to our shore, their shore, barnacles drab, drag, starfish  
unstuck and then splat to a new spot, sponge bob says ouch

too cute?—cure me, the superhighway of super sexy super shit  
poetry is everywhere—smog full traffic, dusty wind blows

back to you, say what stays and what goes, what gets  
lost and what do you tell to get lost

sheep sheep follow the dark dark into nowhere and then let them be done with you  
there let them get over your usefulness

how thoughtful, details  
how many trees chopped down and then move down the line

how much of a helping did we throw out? (I scavenge aggressively through the trash)

what did we lose?

we lost business, pleasure when the street closed off, repairs repairs

about lifestyles, it takes all kinds, animate sheep or plastic ones, every thing matters

## 30 Years Happy Birthday Anyway

taken in, a new  
trait or once I developed  
ability only when completely  
taken, the birds peck  
transient,  
ya so what  
I'm not afraid of being a monster  
to say, fuck it, I gotta case  
of the Mondays still after all, still  
this time, after all  
30 years, happy birthday already, oh?  
to know what's  
good fer her, people are never  
done  
pollinating each other  
as if the flower alone was not enough,  
pay attention, it's possible we don't benefit.



**Hailey Higdon** is the author of the chapbook *How to Grow Almost Everything*, (Agnes Fox, 2011) and the book-blog *The Palinode Project*. She runs What To Us (press). She is affiliated with many states and has many homes. She is a lifelong student of sound and language.

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