

# *And Up She Goes!*

# *Poems & More 2015*

# Dawson Gage

*The Terror and the Glory, Forever and Ever*

**Charlie Who? (January 11)**  
chuckling pundits voice over  
French police claxon wailing  
over footage of a million souls  
marching through Paris past dusk

Abbas and Netanyahu  
linked in a human chain  
with Merkel and Hollande  
in between:  
something isn't right!  
Sunday television flails with hysteria  
cable news anchors paint halos  
above our avatars of justice  
meanwhile psychologist recommends  
Kava Kava chamomile cure for  
atmospheric terror culture  
from Paris to everywhere  
the virus now germinates  
fear and loathing  
here we come  
it's *deja vu* all over again

**Hopeful the Sight of Women Playing Catch (January 12)**  
upon  
the green  
synthetic  
fields  
cross street  
from the  
cemetery  
heavy  
batteries  
of white light  
swallow  
fun and lend  
drama

to careless  
spells of joy  
“I can't  
catch  
that shit!”  
she yells  
to  
her dozen  
companions  
oh wow  
“that's crazy”  
I thought  
once I  
saw and  
registered  
all twelve  
marauding  
ladies  
sport  
winterized  
*hijabs!*  
it took me  
a second  
to  
register  
“Can you  
believe this!?”  
shouts one  
gleefully and  
I know  
what she  
means  
toss a man's  
American football  
and throw  
bundles of |

laughter  
to  
and |  
fro  
and so  
graceful  
candid |  
talky  
loud and |  
free  
| they trace  
themselves  
like  
| (Mohammedan?)  
angels  
flying  
spirals  
through  
the winter mist

**Three Cheers SYRIZA**  
democracy back in Athens  
and what took you so long  
one small step for the Left  
one giant leap  
for what's left  
of mankind

**Bedroom Notes (February 2)**  
after midnight  
I slide my window open  
since it doesn't feel right  
to hide my mind  
from the weather

abruptly wave my farewells  
to outbound January

knowing at least I accomplished  
chaos and having learned perhaps  
another thing or two about survival

### **Bedroom Notes #2 (February 3)**

touch my pen to pad  
room lit by  
computer glow only  
hardly a care  
for my personal story  
larger stranger hotter  
burning world themes  
in my furnace

what can one hope  
not to doubt  
the monitor  
it flickers in and out

curiosity knows  
no limits at all  
when let way to swallow  
the hook that hides  
in the infinite network

### **Finale at Shandy Lane**

can I count it off?  
an out bound downfall  
and tell-tale farewell  
respite from a cold spell  
here goes the curtain call

oh empty of furniture  
yet filled with my memories  
behold the persistence  
of childhood eternal

flashes of sensation  
cut patterns of vivid bygone  
precious hours  
oh what do I even mean?

here where green beans  
and fresh sugar cookies  
fueled my blossoming  
clueless precocity

where I took those  
fateful baby steps  
into the computer

where we built woodblock castles  
then climbed up to the loft  
to drop woodblock bombs from  
on high to demolish  
our toddler cities

oh empty at last  
yet still overflowing  
so here is a place  
to hide from the world  
cocoon of ancestry  
butterfly I was born to be!

### **The Vicious Cycle (On the Killings in Chapel Hill)**

this is a hymn of the vicious cycle  
that rings around our lives  
friendship locked outside the circle  
while inside terror thrives

the vicious cycle twists us all  
against our nearest nearest neighbors  
divides us up by flags, by books  
by colors and by labors

**Feel As You Fly!**

in bound upon Charlotte  
seated by window  
trying once again  
(failing once again)  
to understand

the webs and chains  
and system nets  
contrived below  
by the many points  
of simple city light

feeling so serious  
that it blurs into trivia  
then melts into levity  
reforms into awe  
wavers to worry  
rises to piety  
catches on trouble  
leans into hope  
descends descends into Charlotte

**Into Newark**

jet engines whine  
to the left of my ear  
the view of New Jersey  
exceptionally clear

between mighty airports  
in the heavens we slide  
its after I get there  
we have to decide  
where oh where  
on Earth  
am I going?

**Comfort Space (Hotel in February)**

hotel suite envelops my mind  
whose lively bounce ignores  
patterns of standard issue shapes  
surrounding my quiet seat

modest mix of rectangles and  
squares composes the few-toned  
functional carpet and braids  
of gold and pale red weave  
comprise the coarse and  
ordinary couch, the ceiling  
spackled in low-budget white  
that looks just white in the  
light of the new-wave lamps  
and the chairs and tables built of  
light-weight woods tricked  
together by a few lazy screws

notwithstanding the  
scripted auras pulsing through my  
room my fervent choice says  
I should celebrate the beauty  
of drawing by the numbers

**Another Delay at LaGuardia**

like a leaf on New York winds  
through rush-hour steadily floated  
my taxi to threshold of LaGuardia

rolling to curb the cellphone chimes  
and I answer to hear a robot voice  
inform me my flight is delayed  
so I'm slightly dismayed  
that I might have tarried even

a few more moments

before I'd taken leave  
from Union St. that day  
the afternoon came yawning in  
the open windows  
measure by breath by  
moment by feeling  
left me pondering  
where did the morning go?

with a goodbye kiss  
in the latter morning  
I found myself  
alone in time  
and space, besides  
I opened wide my ears  
but shut my eyes  
so as to drink in sound  
while keeping the light at bay

### ***“To Change In Small But Significant Ways”***

#### **Reveille at The Houses (Day 1)**

strong morning coffee  
pop music rings from  
the old television  
plus loud sensations  
of brash advertising  
talk of good feelings  
push-ups on the  
kitchen floor while  
waiting for the vans  
that go to the clinic

#### **Out In the Yard**

weekend sunshine beaming  
upon the clinic yard

a dozen men and women  
sit smoking in  
separate shaded pits

some wait for vans  
and lament for having  
nothing much to do

others steal a few hours  
yonder, visiting with  
their somber families

or maybe not somber (?)  
after all, a little girl  
in the distance twirls  
and hops and giggles

#### **May 27**

once again:  
where am I?  
and what?

Since  
I have taught  
my cells  
to fear the unknown  
the flesh demands  
its own undoing

a lecture hall  
of Y's and Z's  
deprived of X  
not so complex!  
but what comes next?  
don't think about that

just look at us now  
birds of a schedule  
flocking between  
two buildings

### **Grasping**

I can see  
    through the lines  
of window blinds  
but the landscape  
hardly consoles:  
the other clinic,  
leaf-blower man  
some scattered green  
    and yet  
a long-leaf pine tree  
soars in the distance

### **Whatever Day It Is**

not to know  
what day it is  
a Tuesday  
    late in May  
but ah which day?  
    number my way  
into the waiting arms  
of looming June?  
and none too soon

year in month out  
waiting for summer rains  
so I can sing to the water  
(same themes, same dreams)

### **Ode to Wilmington**

deprived not only

of suburban free movement  
and not only denied  
the joys of radio  
but also of the City  
her sprawls and kinks  
and quantum thoroughfares  
curving the compass  
inside out  
I miss you Wilmington  
still here within you  
dreaming your coordinates  
while locked  
    in a single pair  
wait for me  
and I will underline  
this tattoo of your name  
    upon my heart

### ***Summer in Midtown***

#### **25 June Update**

up in the night  
what a delight  
keenly to feel  
the churning cells  
inside my limbs

it falls to me  
to keep the house  
humanly clean  
dwelling of life  
vessel for time

wide open sliding door,  
summer make yourself at home  
birds and crickets

**18 July**

once and again  
the choice  
to go underground  
and in my own hometown!  
I'm a volunteer stranger  
hiding in plain sight  
along Market St taking  
cover behind sunglasses and  
the camouflage of my  
pounding strides down sidewalk  
I purge the anxiety  
with deliberate swagger  
and begin to remember  
who I am as I beg  
the sun to cook my  
emotions til confusion leaves me  
goodbye bad perspiration  
and I gulp  
down breaths of Wilmington steam

**19 July 2 a.m.**

dwelling uneasily  
in a new-built house  
not quite sterile  
but industrially fresh  
pared down housewares  
sparsely furnished  
home economic starter sets  
not quite austere  
just lacking charm  
yet clear of the noise

**21 July 1 AM**

up once again  
in the eternal night

digging for gems  
inside the mighty network  
meanwhile heat lightning  
flashes to the south  
and the freight train moans  
while crossing Henry St.

**910 Soldiers**

this right here is to praise  
a special tribe  
whose habitat  
overlaps that of  
venus flytraps  
whose bare knuckles  
might just rap on your  
window panes surprising  
completely whatever the season may be  
ordinary kids grow older  
but the 910 soldiers  
were long since baptized  
in salt water and ever  
since then their wounds  
heal so fast they cannot  
be noticed

if your boat turns over  
in the creek and you  
recklessly dive into the oyster shallows  
with no thought to keep dry  
your money and cell phone  
don't worry you need only  
shout like you've never  
been bolder  
and 910 soldiers will splash,  
splash to your rescue

on Halloween nights

they told you not to cross into the  
adjacent neighborhood  
but the 910 soldier  
is blind to the  
lines that the laws  
of development have used  
to carve our city  
to pieces oh no indeed  
we soldiers see only  
the perfect living  
unity of Wilmington

And when you went afar  
in Chapel Hill  
and some fool named Gray  
ran away from a thousand  
dollar debt he was so  
fool that he drove to  
Wilmington and without one  
spoken word the 910 soldiers  
were at his throat such  
that he had no choice but to face our music  
which is to say  
that if he did not pay  
the flytrap would swallow him whole

**25 August**  
oh clear afternoon  
what reverence I owe  
to your simple contortions  
after all I'm tasting  
rewards of my mania  
dubious poises  
desperate pride

whiplash sentiments  
overflow quickly

the basins we readied  
with sins arranged  
tight at the front  
of our shout-full hallway  
shameless we wildly  
proceed to collection  
of favors we offered  
once upon a time  
in the flawless arena  
of militant dreams

### ***And Up She Goes!***

#### **October 23 (@ Lumina Station)**

I.  
for a fraction  
of an evening  
the temperature sings  
at perfect pitch

sixty-eight degrees  
with no hint of a breeze  
banners on the flag pole  
national, nautical  
at rest, presiding  
in absolute stillness

catches of memory  
a place so familiar  
and yet suffused  
with an alien silence

or not quite silence  
but the softest sheets  
of everyday noise.



II.  
two blonde women  
hold forth  
in the coffee shop  
side by side sitting  
laughing and gestures  
identical laptops and  
matching phones, besides  
and I can't decide  
what exactly it is  
they are up to, tonight  
by themselves, excluding  
the one or two workers  
here closing up shop  
whatever it is these girls  
don't care  
    to stop  
        until  
the barista approaches the door  
with a ring of keys in hand  
when the lock is bolted  
they repair to the tables  
(one right next to me)  
that line the strange arcade

### **Lament for Paris**

I.  
bleak  
    trauma black  
triumph  
    witness  
    the movement  
of living darkness  
embracing the planet

sometimes appears  
as if it all made sense

at others we find  
our painful confusion  
is the only medicine  
and hope for a cure  
should be set aside, really,  
    watch  
while  
    the fools  
believe  
    and thrash  
and foam  
    at their mouths

II.  
but what can be done  
when an army of ghosts  
confounds the minds  
of a thousand cities?  
surely  
    there  
never  
    could  
be  
    such a  
thing  
    as a  
friendly machine  
benign and omniscient  
yet here we are again  
desperately yearning  
to build one  
    oh!  
the struggle!

**Precision of Language!**  
December is meant

for constructing stars  
from curves

and so I proceed  
indeed no need  
for straightened lines