

## Foreword

This is my song  
of midlife crisis  
in the northwoods.  
And rebirth.  
It sings  
of the power of the lake  
the eyes of the grackle  
fallen trees  
and the dances of children.  
Silence and rage.  
The ill-carved path  
from war to peace to love.  
I owe this work to my friends,  
here between the covers.  
Meet Claibie, Kris, Sam, Keith,  
Mary, Marcia, Deb, Taimi,  
and Malia the freckleface.  
Plus Elvis the potbellied pig  
who never quite understood Minnesota.  
Above all,  
I am dedicated to my love.  
She is the lake,  
the woods,  
and my life.



Foreword .....	1
Exile.....	4
Flight of the poodles.....	6
Sharp corners.....	11
The blankey.....	12
Ode to a potato.....	14
Visions of Kelvyn Park .....	15
Rebeca's song.....	17
Her body clock.....	18
Cardboard box.....	19
Professors can't party .....	20
The silence.....	21
The Spring.....	22
Spring .....	23
Baby dolls.....	24
Eyes .....	25
Fading .....	26
Subj: POLICE ARREST TOASTER.....	28
T-ball with Rachel.....	29
Lips.....	30
Cooking wine.....	31
Wet grass.....	32
The glasses.....	33
The hook .....	34
Tapio's outhouse .....	35
Malia's shoes.....	37
The Hawk and the Gull .....	38
We are stranded.....	39
She held up.....	40
Through the monitor.....	42
I need the breath.....	43
Blue face.....	44
Our first fight .....	45
She changed her name .....	46
Back to the Lake .....	47
The mirror .....	48
Mary.....	49
The evolution of western civilization.....	50
The little girl .....	51
Satan is not .....	53
Fifteen hours .....	54
The alternator belt.....	55
The thaw.....	58
The hunt.....	60

Jesus got bored .....	62
Roadkill .....	63
Snow on her tongue .....	64
That shell.....	66
<i>Routing Slip</i> .....	67
Candle.....	68
Bad hair .....	69
Soft hair .....	70
My room.....	72
The blankey - reprise .....	74
Two deer.....	75
The concert.....	76
Thunder .....	77
The rapture .....	78
The Lake .....	79
The 12 steps of AOL.....	80
The 12 steps of Viagra recovery.....	81
Mother Nature and Grandpa Culture .....	82
Trees .....	83
The voices in my head.....	84
A walk in the woods with Malia.....	85
The rock.....	86
Imagination.....	87
The taste of Juniper .....	88
Second verse .....	89
Ponies .....	90
The whistle .....	91
The subtle twist.....	92
Wet wood.....	93
The glass slipper.....	94
Caleb and Malia.....	95
A blanket of snow.....	96
The Spring.....	98
I wish.....	99
Goosebumps .....	101
I stand .....	103
The grackle hid.....	104
Epilog.....	108

## Exile

Fake dogs and pampered lawns  
The effite of the city  
Doctors and lawyers  
Contractors and the women  
Who earned their money  
The hard way.  
Children at random  
And old trees.  
Something had to give.  
Me.  
There is a solace to  
The graveyard of the divorced.  
700 units  
699 fake blondes  
With the children they can't afford.  
Fake grass  
Prim and proper  
But no pets, please...  
No busline  
Dying cars  
Just prayer.  
Sidewalks  
Pristinely edged  
And edges fading.  
Silent grills on the decks  
Silent children in the houses.  
Mothers crying alone in their rooms  
Wiggling for the ring of the phone  
They are afraid to answer.  
She dreams of her prince  
Lord of the U-Haul.  
Light makeup  
High school clothes  
\$14 chaise on the deck  
The sexy shiver  
Plays to the choir.  
Night falls  
And she washes the dishes  
Hauls the trash to the dumpster  
In a last thrash of glamour.  
Takes off her face  
For the real face.

Satin and lace  
A cold bed  
And a white ceiling  
With sharp corners.

## **Flight of the poodles**

The snow skies of October are  
Lurking in the west  
And the poodle clouds of Summer  
Are gone.  
It is warm  
But I need fire.  
There is a fire building  
But we are children  
By choice  
Or fortune  
Or lack thereof.  
We make some awkward conversation,  
But mostly look up for the  
Last poodle of Summer.  
We lean on each other  
Try to touch  
Somehow, innocently.  
Our eyes meet  
And we shiver  
As we bedcheck our hands.  
I give you my jacket.  
The poodles are gone.

The maples are afire  
But soon they will be naked.  
Summer has almost lost,  
But  
The lake is alive.  
I take your hand.  
We know where we have to walk.  
Down to the lake,  
To hug Mother Nature  
Before she hides away for Winter  
And the grackels take the losers.

The earth still has the musty smell  
Of Summer.  
Hawks fly  
In search of prey  
The southern way.  
One last chance to  
Wiggle our toes in the lake.

We sit on our diving rock  
Thinking a lot about diving  
But afraid of the plunge.  
We sit crosslegged,  
Thinking of our shoelaces.  
You reach for mine.  
I am dared to get  
My toes froze.  
I cannot deny you.  
Naked feet are a small price  
For the  
Flight of the poodles.  
The three baby loons of Spring swim by...  
Their mother follows  
A ways behind  
suspicious but wise.  
She gives us a dirty look  
And life waddles on.

The lake is not alone.  
I am with it  
But I am alone.  
The poodle clouds of Summer  
Have been lost in a raging blizzard  
Of thundersnow and contempt.  
Waves are bursting through the ice  
And laughing at me.  
And the lake was my friend.  
Winter is like that.  
But I'm here  
Shivering  
With a frozen mustache.  
The lake and I need to talk.  
I take off my shoes  
And walk on water  
And ask

Why?

There is a voice in the distance.  
To hell with the lake  
The poodle clouds will return  
Someday.  
I'll take the voice.

So I walk back to the shore.  
And wait.

That's it, lake.  
You have forgotten that  
We are kindred spirits.  
You are the spirit  
But I am the soul.  
I'll be right back.

Here is my daughter.  
She will not walk on your ice  
But she will eat it.  
She is ours.  
We sit here quietly  
Freezing  
With our shoes on.

Lake,  
I do not love you  
For who you will be  
When the poodle clouds return.  
I love you for  
Who you are.  
You are my mother  
But I understand.  
It must be rough  
When the weather owns you  
But is controlled by channel 10.

My kid looks me in the eye  
And understands.  
She takes off her shoes  
And walks out on the ice  
Covering her eyes  
So no one will hear her giggle.

I left the lake today  
And just kept walking  
Up the hill  
To the north woods.

It was time to go.

The passion of



Thundersnow and  
Spring squalls  
Is too much.  
I need peace.

It was time to go.

The woods are  
Still and silent  
But they are alive.  
Here I go  
From mother to wife.  
There's a damn chipmunk  
Nibbling on my daypack  
But I understand.  
She is our child.

It was time to go.

Time to leave the rage  
Of a bucket of fish  
With 10-foot waves  
And find my soul.

There is a grackel  
On the aspen  
With an odd look  
In her eye.  
She understands.  
Grackels don't do that.  
But now we are kin.  
She knows that mothers  
Vomit food  
Into their children's mouths  
Out of love  
And that children  
Learn to fly.

I feel much better now.  
So does the grackel  
But not the squirrel she was after.  
Such is life.  
I know she hasn't left me.  
She's just watching  
From a distance.

A woman walks up and  
Asks me what the hell I am doing  
In the woods.  
I explain that I am sitting down.  
She looks me in the eye  
And understands.

She has been cast from the lake  
And is meandering too.  
We touch  
And the grackel flies away.

## **Sharp corners**

I am sitting here  
On the basement steps  
With another cigarette  
Staining my fingertips,  
Admiring the sharp corners  
And white walls.  
March would be proud  
Of the colors I see.  
The floor is bald  
And green  
Except for the steps  
Where children have danced.  
The furnace swells  
Like it wants to explode  
But it has fallen silent  
To catch its breath.  
It is too quiet in here.  
The basement is haunted  
By the ghosts of  
Dancing children.  
I could wake them  
With a primal scream.  
But then I would  
See the sharp corners  
And white walls  
And reach for another smoke.  
Purgatory is a comforting place  
When you own it.

## **The blankey**

Once upon a dream, in a far away land, lived a handsome, mighty prince.

Well, he wasn't exactly handsome, but he looked OK if you squinted a little. And he wasn't mighty, but he could if he wanted to be. And his name was Booger. That's PRINCE Booger to you! Sorta.

People wondered about Booger sometimes, but there was one very very special thing about him: he had a blankey.

The blankey was old and ratty and tattered and torn, but it was warm and full of love. He was afraid to face its last trip to the dryer, because it was his heart and his soul and the very essence of his life.

Across the kingdom lived a lovely young maiden.

Well, she wasn't exactly lovely, but she looked OK if you squinted a little. And she was no maiden, but that is another story. But she had a heart of gold and the soul of a blankey, and her name was Felicia.

One day, Booger and his blankey took a stroll down the internet for want of anything better to do. He mooed with the cows, climbed a tree, got a light from a dragon, and bumped into things. But something inside told him to keep walking. Miles away from anywhere, there was no turning back, and it was very cold. His blankey was cold and tired and a little bit nervous, so he cuddled it and rocked it to sleep.

When they awoke, Booger realized that he had used a cowpie for a pillow. He was lost, too. He scratched his head, picked up his blankey, and headed off down the road. Blankey didn't smell too good, but it was full of love.

After about three days of this, Booger was a little shaggy and he needed to go potty. He had even forgotten to eat, but he needed an outhouse more than anything else. In time, he came to a house by the side of the road, with an outhouse in the back.

You should always ask before you stink up an outhouse, but he had to go, and it made him very happy. He wrapped himself in blankey to keep it warm, and took his sweet time. The place wasn't fit for a king, but he was only a prince.

Then came a soft knock on the door, so gentle that it could have only

come from a lovely maiden. He got up like a shot, opened the door, and pulled up his pants.

Felicia giggled, blushed just a little bit, and handed him a steaming cup of hot chocolate. Booger was a sorry excuse for a prince, but Felicia was full of love and warmth and kindness and courage, like a blankey.

Her house was not a castle, but it was a home. And Felicia was a beacon of warmth and light and hope, the brightest light that Booger had ever seen. They talked all night, about cowtipping, radical economics, space aliens and the infield fly rule. Felicia and Booger were doomed to be lovers, but there was a blankey in the room.

After the ten shortest hours of their lives, the sun peeked out to see if it was OK to rise, and it was bedtime. Felicia trundled off to her room, and Booger crashed on the couch. Blankey was old and ratty and tattered and torn, but it was warm and full of love.

Finally, Booger realized that something was very wrong, and he got vertical. Fast. The room was very cold without its beacon of warmth. So he looked in on Felicia. She was shivering.

Felicia didn't have a blankey! How could someone so full of love and life and warmth and hope not have a blankey to care for? Booger felt very guilty. He gave blankey one last hug, draped it over Felicia, and softly kissed her cheek. It was a sad goodbye, but blankey had found a better home.

Booger moped a lot for the next few years. He had torn out his soul when he left Felicia, and even kicked sheep from time to time. The poor guy was ragged and tattered and torn. There was a ray of hope in his life, but it was very far away. For you see, Booger was alone. Every time he looked, he just got lost again.

Suddenly he felt very warm on the coldest night of winter. He was covered with a perfect blankey, ironed and perfumed and so finely mended that only the seamstress could know. And Felicia kissed him softly on the cheek.

## Ode to a potato

[ With apologies to the reader ]

No two potatoes are alike.  
You can tell by their eyes.  
They grew up in dirt  
But are so doggone cute  
When you scrub them.  
They don't even scream  
When you cut off their skin  
And they turn  
Glistening white  
With a touch of brown.  
And take the flavor of the sauce.  
I think of my daughter  
The day she was born  
When I held her  
And fed her  
And watched her eyes open.  
Her language skills were  
Fairly marginal  
But I could hear her  
Lazy primal scream: "Huh?"  
She looked a lot like a potato  
But I held her like an egg  
And sang gently  
Of a better life.

## Visions of Kelvyn Park

The toilet paper in the boys' room  
Was hanging on a 1" metal chain this morning  
But somebody stole it.  
There is a white teacher in the hall  
Who can't look a student in the eye  
And will not be here next week.  
All of the police  
Are white too  
Wearing flak jackets  
And eating stale donuts in the cafeteria.  
The bell rings  
And everybody jumps  
As if it were a  
Pinprick in the ass.  
My students find their chairs in a circle  
And understand that I am  
Crazier than they are.  
Society is locked out of the room  
And they have to face  
Me.  
And each other.  
They can't handle the silence.  
I adore it  
Because art is made of tension.  
Release comes when  
You get paid.  
Finally  
A boy tells me about the time  
He was shot in the ass  
And a girl explains how she was molested.  
We're rockin'.  
There was a secret corner  
In every student's heart  
But there are no secrets anymore.  
I can't keep a secret myself  
And they know.  
So I tell them about  
The time I painted the neighbor's cat green  
And the time I was caught by the Goodyear blimp  
And the hook where they hung Macchiavelli  
And the infield fly rule.  
I speak of gentle men

And powerful imbeciles  
And the peril of being  
Stuck in the middle.  
They will get it  
In due time.  
Their silence has improved.  
The kids fidget and look up at the broken clock.  
1:30 am  
And they believe it.  
Time for another story.  
I look my sweetie  
In the eye  
And our gaze tells the wildest  
Story of the day.

So the bell rings.



## Rebeca's song

It was a crazy Friday  
For a Monday.  
The ducks were waddling  
With a curious grasp.  
This was the week  
Of the duck.  
Pure idiocy in the rain.  
I skipped a meeting  
And drank for lunch.  
Suddenly  
It wasn't Monday any more.  
To hell with the tie  
And the pantyhose  
And the pavement.  
We were free.  
Free to pander  
And giggle  
And spraypaint the boss  
And knock over the furniture  
With its dreams  
On the other side.  
The shoes came off  
For the lake.  
The ice had melted  
But so had we.  
Time for  
The release.  
Time to grow.  
The sun fell  
Out of the sky  
And we didn't notice.  
We just saw that first star.  
Softly painted  
Empty  
And elsewhere.  
No snow  
Just wet brown grass  
And a promise.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

