Zen Fishing

Bare hook—
Not artificial
Flies' peacock
& pheasant
Feathers tied
To trick
No elk
Hair caddis
Or sparkle
Dun no
Royal wulff
Or flashminnow
No terminator
Spinnerbait no
Zara spook
Mepps aglia
Or phoebe
No corn
Or cheese
Bombs—I
Never caught
A fish
But did
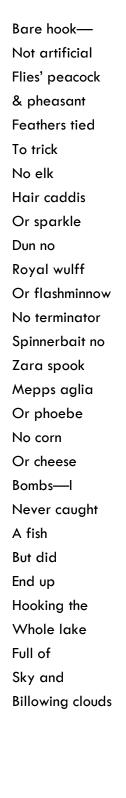End up
Hooking the
Whole lake
Full of
Sky and
Billowing clouds

Protest

for the militia waving American flags

showing off their automatic weapons protesting

in the Michigan State House, April 2020

If we dressed for war the way we dress for God

If we left our shoes untied to honor stumbling

If we came to the Statehouse with a white

Tin cup rimmed in red asking alms for the homeless

The penniless if we ripped off our camouflage

If we lost a child or took a knee and removed

Our hats if we lost a brother a sister a mother

A father a grandparent a friend if we allowed moonlight

To vaccinate for the many viruses of hate if we stood

Against the enemy hurt and broken hearted

If we gave the shirt off our back to acknowledge

Our addictions if we worshipped the fractured love

Which is all we can offer if we allowed the earth to heal

If we dressed for war the way we dress for God

Top 10 Miracles of Being Home All the Time

1) Moving on one moment to the next makes
History sweeps away the matzoh crumbs
Caches them in a big jar through the weeks
Until 2) there are enough with added schmaltz
Broth and eggs pepper and salt chopped parsley
Good luck from kitchen tables past
To form the dumplings 3) plopped like the angels'
Own stories into this new evening's simple
Chicken soup 4) how home is a miracle
Of balance an iffy future against
A precarious past 5) clean the table
Save all crumbs like my Uncle Max did and invent
6) The stories eat the soup 7) ticklish dance steps
One day and the next in night's empty black
Hat 8) eruptions of doves loaves and fishes
9) the top 10 miracles of being home
Arising erupting until 10) there is this meal
Here today and tomorrow gone

Cul-de-Sac

Here I am near the end
                              of my street, just a few
squares left on the sidewalk
                              before the ditch
                              accepts its handful
of light and there's nowhere else
I can go. Here at the cul-de-sac
                              what I notice most
is how small everything seems—a feeling begun
at the elementary school when I returned
                              in high school,
                              how tiny the hallways,
polished floor holding a reflection
half my size, chairs and desks too small
                              to shimmy into; then the house
of my childhood I wanted back, that mansion in memory,
                              how small the yard, the swing
still up, rusty chain broken, seat flapping. And the countryside when I flew
across the earth,
                              squares and circles patched together,
                              mountains as jagged as infants
reaching out to the moon,
                              the ocean no wider
than a single night. And now when I'm looking back,
                              those monumental
catastrophes,
complicated ways life stepped on me,
                              and, to be fair, simple
ways I stepped on myself,
seem small, though they reassemble
                              my life,
                              and stupid, though
it took what courage I had to outlive them,
and trivial, though they were great chambers

          in the holy cathedrals

of my worrying.

          I see what kind of architect

I've been, the life I've chiseled.

          Now I can breathe, take deep breaths

Deep

As the ditch ahead. A strange comfort

          in having nothing

to fret about in glancing back.

          A good length of road,

          how small and consequential it seems

here. This must be closure, the surprise of a great opening:

          a lotus

in the middle of a pond,

its little head

          unfurling suddenly, quickly, completely,

as though steeping in a hot bath, reaching up

          for the bright night.

The Boat

A short distance into the woods, rain
Over a small pond, long needles
Of southern pine drink at the water's edge.

You can't know the pond is full of rainbow trout
Under the dimples of a billion raindrops.
But it is. You can't know the boat

Sunk beneath the small dock once allowed me
To walk on water, or like a cloud
To float in the sky on its surface, or like a garbage truck

To empty bottles and tin cans with flipped tops
Recite the junkmail of disappointments and very small
Victories of my natural life into these waters.

You can't know how this pond was baptismal font
Maybe against its wishes if it had any at all.
And now a small crack in the bottom

Of the boat has let the pond fill it full,
Bring it under to the muddy bottom and
Finish off the reclamation long overdue.