Greg Grummer

The Great Butterfly Collapse

1. Deep Breathing

By way of my son's tree frog, brown, of humble birth.

By way of falling asleep while driving, I see that you're only halfway there, invented, by way of playfulness and eroticisms.

By way of easy access there in the crowd on their way to a movie, hands falling into corn, withdrawn at the graze of a hand.

As you said, handing me coffee softened by rain, standing outside the theater, "there is survival and there are rivals, with little in between."

2. Flocks of Birds

Bird is a thing come apart, a flock broken as from the symphony a dropped bow; the grass, fully loaded, swaying with birds, the moon wet like a glass spit in by a ghost.

By way then, of your dove, found at dawn in a windrow, clinging, and healthy as a priest.

3. P to K8

By way of the knight moved forward then pulled back, moved forward then pulled back, till the king collapses at the base of his queen, a tobacco stained finger brought to the lip at the end of the affair.

To then put on one's coat and to walk out the door, alive.



4. The Return After Death

By way of porticos covered with leaves, beneath which linger shadows hoping to enter; a man older by twenty or thirty years, naked now except for his clothes, who wrote you a book once and offered you praise.

By way of surrender, as sleep is the only escape from the stomach; the pillow—a stove for hair. Yours, placed under mine, taken from a comb thrown in haste. By way of yellow liquor, a game of croquet,

a Saturday afternoon, blackbirds, crushed by heat, weaning over a grape, then later rain billowing in kitchen drapes. A woman lifts her blue dress towards your hands, by way of assumption, by way of the basement stairs, by way of binding one's friends to one's past.

5. Fisher of Men, The Farmer, The Long Drive

By way of the sand bar at dusk, its carp gorged on filth at the bottom of a beer glass, too full of scales, too weighty for the net, yet easily lifted by the moon, cleaned by falling asleep,

eaten by crows; in my car: a cue stick left on the back seat.

By way of apology, for the barns, the silo, the wrapped bales of grass. For the windrows filling with snow. For the one car passed at night on the highway, three kids asleep in the back, mom and dad safe, almost home.

For the brother salvaged from salt, put up in a cream of winter, left as a bread on the rise. By way of the hammer that's breath, alone when wind turns from west to east, the sun risen on steam, the creek filled with dartings of gold; to return there, to walk in memory, unable to sleep, to be buried.

