**Grasshoppers**

Sap’s rising

Ground’s warming

Grasshoppers are Grasshoppers are

Hatching out hatching out

Autumn-laid eggs

Splitting

Young Stepping

Into spring

Grasshoppers Grasshoppers

Hopping hopping

High

Grassjumpers Grassjumpers

Jumping jumping

Far

Vaulting from

Leaf to leaf

Stem to stem leaf to leaf

Plant to plant stem to stem

Grass-

Leapers leapers

Grass-

Bounders bounders

Grass-

Springers springers

Grass-

Soarers soarers

Leapfrogging Leapfrogging

Longjumping longjumping

Grasshoppers. grasshoppers.

**Water Striders**

Whenever we’re asked Whenever we’re asked

If we walk upon water if we walk upon water

We answer we answer

Of course.

To be sure.

It’s quite true.

Whenever we’re asked whenever we’re asked

If we walk on it often if we walk on it often

We answer we answer

Quite often.

Each day.

All day through.

Should we be questioned Should we be questioned

On whether it’s easy on whether it’s easy

We answer we answer

Quite easy.

A snap.

It’s a cinch.

Should we be told Should we be told

That it’s surely a miracle that it’s surely a miracle

We reply we reply

Balderdash!

Rubbish!

Nonsense!

Whenever we’re asked Whenever we’re asked

For instructions for instructions

We always say we always say

Come to the pond’s edge

And do as we do.

Put down one foot

And then put down another,

Resting upon the thin film

On the surface.

Believe me, there’s no call

At all to be nervous

As long as you’re reasonably

Mindful that you—

But by that time our student But by that time our student

No matter how prudent

Has usually has usually

Don’t ask me why

Sunk from view. sunk from view.

**Mayflies**

Your moment

Mayfly month

Your hour

Mayfly year

Your trifling day

Our life

We’re mayflies We’re mayflies

Just emerging just emerging

Rising from the river,

Born this day in May

Birthday

And dying day,

This particle of time

This single sip of living

All that we’re allowed.

We’re mayflies We’re mayflies

By the millions by the millions

Fevered

Frenzied

Rushed

No redwood’s centuries

To squander as we please.

We’re mayflies we’re mayflies

Swarming, swerving, swarming, swerving

Rising high

Then falling,

Courting on the wing,

Then mating in midair.

We’re mayflies We’re mayflies

Laying eggs laying eggs

Our final, frantic act.

Sun’s low

Light’s weak

In haste we launch them

Down the stream.

We’re mayflies We’re mayflies

Lying dying lying dying

Floating by the millions

On the very stream

From which we sprung

So very long ago

This morning

Back when we were back when we were

Young. Young.

**Fireflies**

Light Light

Is the ink we use

Night Night

Is our parchment

We’re

Fireflies

Fireflies flickering

Flitting

Flashing

Fireflies

Glimmering fireflies

Gleaming

Glowing

Insect calligraphers insect calligraphers

Practicing penmanship

Copying sentences

Six-legged scribblers six-legged scribblers

Of vanishing messages,

Fleeting graffiti

Fine artists in flight Fine artists in flight

Adding dabs of light

Bright brush strokes

Signing the June nights Signing the June nights

As if they were paintings as if they were paintings

We’re

Flickering fireflies

Fireflies flickering

Fireflies. Fireflies.

**The Moth’s Serenade**

Porch Porch

Light, light,

Hear my plight! Hear my plight!

I drink your light

Like nectar like nectar

Dream of you

by day by day

Gaze in your eyes

All night all night

Porch light! Porch light!

Bright paradise!

I am I am

Your seeking

Circling seeking

Sighing circling

Lovesick sighing

Knight

You are You are

My soul’s

My soul’s desire

Desire my prize

My prize my eyes’

Delight

Porch light! Porch light!

My shining star!

My compass needle’s North!

“Keep back,” they say “Keep back,” they say

I can’t!

“Don’t touch,” they say “Don’t touch,” they say

I must!

Porch light! Porch light!

Let’s clasp Let’s kiss

Let’s kiss Let’s clasp

Let’s marry for a trice! Let’s marry for a trice!

Porch light! Porch light!

Let’s meet Let’s merge

Let’s merge Let’s meet

Let’s live for love!

For light! For light!

**Water Boatmen**

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

We’re water boatmen

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

Up early, rowing

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

We’re cockswain calling

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

And oarsmen straining

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

And six-man racing shell

Rolled into one.

We’re water boatmen

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

Worn-out from rowing

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

Bound for the bottom

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

Of this deep millpond

“Stroke!” “Stroke!”

Where we arrive

And shout the order

“Rest!” “Rest!”

**Cicadas**

Afternoon, mid-August

Two cicadas singing Two cicadas singing

Air kiln-hot, lead-heavy

Five cicadas humming Five cicadas humming

Thunderheads northwestward

Twelve cicadas buzzing Twelve cicadas buzzing

Up and down the street

The mighty choir’s the mighty choir’s

Assembling assembling

Shrill cica-

das Ci-

droning cadas

droning

in the elms

*Three* *years Three years*

Spent underground

Among the roots

In darkness in darkness

Now they’re breaking ground

And climbing up

The tree trunks

Splitting skins

And singing and singing

Jubilant

Rejoicing cicadas

Pouring out their

Fervent praise fervent praise

For heat and light

Their hymn their hymn

Sung to the sun

Cicadas Cicadas

Whining

Whin-

ing ci-

cadas

whirring

whir-

ring ci-

cadas

pulsing

pulsing

chanting from the treetops chanting from the treetops

sending

forth their sending

booming forth their

boisterous booming

joyful noise! joyful noise!

**Honeybees**

Being a bee being a bee

Is a joy.

Is a pain.

I’m a queen

I’m a worker

I’ll gladly explain. I’ll gladly explain.

Upon rising, I’m fed

By my royal attendants,

I’m up at dawn, guarding

The hive’s narrow entrance

I’m bathed

Then I take out

The hive’s morning trash

Then I’m groomed.

Then I put in an hour

Making wax,

Without two minutes’ time

To sit still and relax.

The rest of my day

Is quite simply set forth.

Then I might collect nectar

From the field

Three miles north

I lay eggs,

Or perhaps I’m on

Larva detail

By the hundred.

Feeding the grubs

In their cells,

Wishing that *I* were still

Helpless and pale.

I’m loved and I’m lauded,

I’m outranked by none.

Then I pack combs with

Pollen—not my idea of fun.

When I’ve done

Enough laying

Then, weary, I strive

I retire

To patch up any cracks

In the hive.

for the rest of the day.

Then I build some new cells,

Slaving away at

Enlarging this Hell,

Dreading the sight

Of another sunrise,

Wondering why we don’t

All unionize.

Truly, a bee’s is the Truly a bee’s is the

Worst best

Of all lives. of all lives.

**Whirligig Beetles**

We’re whirligig beetles

We’re swimming in circles We’re whirligig beetles

Black backs by the hundred. We’re swimming in circles,

Black backs by the hundred.

We’re spinning and swerving

We’re spinning and swerving as if we were on a

As if we were on a mad merry-go-round

Mad merry-go-round

We never get dizzy

From whirling and weaving we never get dizzy

And wheeling and swirling. From whirling and weaving

and wheeling and swirling.

The same goes for turning.

The same goes for turning, revolving and curving,

Revolving and curving, gyrating and twirling.

Gyrating and twirling.

The crows fly directly,

But we prefer spirals, the crows fly directly,

Arcs, ovals, and loops. But we prefer spirals,

Arcs, ovals, and loops.

We’re fond of the phrase

“As the whirligig swims” “As the whirligig swims”

Meaning traveling by

The most circular

Circular roundabout

Roundabout backtracking

Backtracking indirect

Indirect serpentine

Serpentine tortuous

Tortuous twisty and

Twisty, turny,

Best possible best possible

route. route.

**House Crickets**

We don’t live in meadows

Crick-et crick-et

Or in groves

We’re house crickets

Living beneath

This gas stove

Crick-et crick-et

Others may worry

Crick-et crick-et

About fall

We’re scarcely aware

Of the seasons at all

Crick-et crick-et

Spring, to house crickets,

Crick-et crick-et

Means no more

Than the time

When fresh greens

Once again grace the floor

Crick-et crick-et

Pumpkin seeds tell us

Crick-et crick-et

Fall’s arrived

While hot chocolate spills

Hint that it’s

Winter outside.

No matter the month no matter the month

We stay well fed and warm,

Unconcerned about cold fronts

And wind chill and storms.

For while others are ruled For while others are ruled

By the sun in the heavens,

Whose varying height brings

The season’s procession,

We live in a world we live in a world

Of fixed Fahrenheit

Crick-et crick-et

Thanks to *our* sun:

Our unchanging

Reliable

Steadfast and stable

Bright blue bright blue

Pilot light. pilot light.