in my secret damp dementia minstrels & long-
shoremen line up in two rows & I fish
my way through new streets not held by iron bars
& prison guards, psych ward or seminary –
so now I prop the room up without the old drugs
I turn my teeth hollow, grin “No big deal”

& just this summer toned up, sped up, was dealing
a Z a month, drank pints of lactone to stop the longings
banging out rail by rail, I’d spread the tarot of drugs
before me, or else slip slowly undone like a fish
in the Red Sea stuck in my own sad seminary
of lofty philosophies and inexpensive bars

in the morning I’d whistle a few bars
of some happy anthem, a portrait of the super dealer,
collars crisp, eyes red, the sky scented with semen, airy
lunch in the sun, slip quietly into the long
shadows of evening, circle the lake, fish
for compliments in pants stuffed with loose drugs

the purple fire of August drags
itself into September, double bolts & bars
the door, makes every statesman a fish-
monger, stops the watch until I deal
out the cards, throw the yarrow, one long
& two short & my room becomes a cemetery

and nothing works: not vein, not eyes, not seminal
duct, my dick so frozen from the drugs
periods between orgasm grew longer & longer,
while I imagined my cock a steel bar
rigid in the wind, I say “Baby just can’t deal”
or  “Baby gots the stank on her like dead fish”

but stank of fish or no fish
it’s pump pump, & the mind retreats into a seminary
of blood monastics, striking a deal
with Li Po on the river – I give him new drugs:
2 caps of lactone, a vial of 2C-B, bars
& bars of white powders  fat &  long

together we fish through this drug–
school seminary, through a stale sake bar,
through this ritual ordeal that lasts all winter long
RECOVERY

I’ve been places and through phases of madness & answered the macaw’s calls with my own damp withdrawals

I’ve wandered the streets 
waiting for a door to knock upon 
listened to the howling of hounds who echo back my sorrowful tales

I saw an angeled helicopter 
 flying through a broken sky 
so I pushed my way through town & the gates of the dog park to sit on a cement bench and let my new friends spin around me, climb into my lap and cover me with the dust of a simple Tuesday

It might be the drugs or a certain way I grind my teeth in my sleep but while my torso goes doughy, and my legs grow more bruised each morning, the corners of my face push against my skin, making my skull a visible phenomenon, and not some abstract idea or final stopping place for fists or bottles thrown awkwardly in rage; And I’ll take them all on in a bar in some small town, making a stand for nothing in my torn blue shirt and a pint of gin

But then I loosen my grip on the sides of the bench, sew myself back into the here and now and try to face the late sun without squinting, try to let lilacs
and bouncing mongrels hold me down, sing stillness into my chest with a gentle evening scent on the air, a ball thrown and retrieved by an eager Irish Setter, coax quiet from my mind with a sound.
MALIBU 1

Shuggie unfuelled
  go no g
  go no speed
  no baggies
    of weed
  or yay

my left leg drags
  my right
  across
  the threshold of the dawn
    30 times and back
I’m holding my head in a suitcase
  of sand dollars
  &
The mist rolls in
over the hills,  the sun refuses
to speak

    Her legs stretch
golden  long and slick
from Catalina
to the fires in La Verne

    my sobriety       is the shallowest
of rudefellows
    makes everything magic  dull

I even prefer
the withdrawal dementia
that had me spinning
in tongues of turpentine
telepathy
falsely fantastic,  
finally,  fatal

Now everything  
is cold & unmoving  
I eat nothing but chocolate  
in the light
MALIBU 2

It’s like a constant and complete spasm
Woke up, ate beans, chocolate and ice cream
dozed for many hours and

A note on the floor
warns that everyone is at the market
& I swim through this then that sad
san francisco like fishing for dimes
at the laundromat.

some days I can’t sit still
others, like this, I can’t stand
and everything was easier when I measured my moods
in caps in lines
& Berrigan’s Wrong Train
makes me weak in the knees;
tears squirt uncomfortably over this portrait of you

You,
who left & now never gonna see me no more

if drugs made the whole thing work
what will the sober evening bring
but another SNL rerun
on comedy central

If anyone comes around
looking for shuggie
tell ‘em he’s done gone missing;
presumed dead
couldn’t put up
with the quiet no more