

## SEPTEMBER POEMS

EVERY HOUR I LOOK FOR SIGNS THAT I'M ILL  
FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS  
WHEN I GIVE YOU A SMILE, I REALLY MEAN IT

AND WHEN I WAS IN THE THICK REDWOODS OF  
CALIFORNIA, MY MIND WAS TELLING ITSELF  
SOMETHING

ON THE DRY BACKROADS  
BETWEEN THE MESQUITE GROVES  
OVER OFF SAN ANTONIO AVE  
CRYSTAL ROCKS GLOWING BLUE  
WRINKLES ON THE FACE GLOWING WHITE

PLACES FIVE MINUTES FROM MY HOME  
THAT I DON'T DARE GO

PLACES THAT I GO  
WHERE I DON'T DARE THINK

BRENDAN GEDDES

## 1 TWO DIFFERENT AMERICAS

In the earliest waking hours

The ones that still feel as intense as the hours deep in the night

I wouldn't expect to find myself buried on a two lane Georgia highway

Between limp flags and dormant barns

There are two different Americas

I conquered one on foot and one in Apollo's chariot

One was peaches and the other concrete

One was me and the other was too

## 2 BREADCRUMB TRAIL

Florida went out with a gradient of yellows and reds  
It was spread across the sky and the sides of buildings

2  
Shadows on sand and shadows on grass  
And a truck packed to the brim

I've learned that the more experience you gain the more you have to compare your current  
experiences to  
It's unhealthy to carry expectations from a different mind

A year ago it was nothing that it is now

### 3 PATRICK HENRY HIGHWAY

You can make entire coasts yours if you really want  
Go there, photograph them, and hold it in the palm of your hand

It gets desolate quick south of Richmond  
Long roads winding through golden hills

The late August sun rising and hitting the back of the brown leaves  
The air of the founding fathers floating not too far above our own

Tall pines swaying with the spin of the Earth  
Gas stations getting more and more spaced out as the speed limit hits 70

Standstills on 85 north and coping with the events from our past when the wrong things  
happened

We thought we knew what we wanted but we had cloudy eyes  
The wrong people succeeded and the wrong people died

You can see the curves of the earth if you really look for them

4 ONE DAY YOU'LL HAVE DONE IT SO LONG YOU'LL FORGET WHY YOU STARTED

There's layers of my soul you'd never see unless you peeled them back

September afternoons in a cove by Lake Champlain

Where the rocks were so perfectly flat and the grass was dried out from the last days of the summer sun

Dried grass and smoke are the smells of fall

They sit quietly against dusk

There's nothing quite as peaceful as fall

Fall mimics life

The trees rage beautifully against the winter just as we do against our years

We watch our hairs gray in a mirror

And we sit and we don't touch them

For they aren't ours to touch

## 5 THE HEALING PROPERTIES OF LAKE WATER IN THE FALL

A white truck softly rumbles up its fall lane  
The sun hits the tops of the pines

I hear voices distantly but they mix with the crickets and wind and leaves  
I'd never know what they said but it would never matter

The dark blanket of fall is finally being laid across the valley  
I have ghosts but no more than others

My beard is coming back on a dock just west of Massachusetts  
I'm still in my state

Two lone kayaks float through the reeds  
So soft it's as if they are gliding on glass

The sun falls and the haze is in layers  
I was weathering physical pain and using lake water to heal myself

Thinking about all the things I'll do differently tomorrow