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## Morning's Porch

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MORNING'S PORCH

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
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May 2014

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## THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

**Colby Gillette**

entitled

**Morning's Porch**

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy - English**

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**May 2014**

ABSTRACT

Morning's Porch

by

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*Morning's Porch* continues and follows the walking, waiting, watching that begins and ends off the page. It begins “underway,” with two already on the road, and ends in an eye wanting light. In between, childhood, Easter, Winter, Spring, Venice, asphalt, Summer, Fall, sunsets, moorhens, grackles, billboards, dogwoods and cottonwoods walk along the poems. They walk through the poems as they continue to walk in the world. In a similar way, the poems of René Char, George Herbert, Paul Celan, Emily Dickinson, William Blake, Arthur Rimbaud, Robert Creeley, Charles Olson, William Carlos Williams and Pierre Reverdy walk through the pages of *Morning's Porch* as they continue to walk in the world. The beauty of the world and of poetry is at once and underway as it continues to walk on. The poems in *Morning Porch* aim to keep pace as they walk to keep company.

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## UNDERWAY

“Nous sommes deux sur le chemin”  
Pierre Reverdy

fields are walking Spring  
enters Summer

dawn distance  
linger down the road

weigh in stars  
gravel littered glass

heart's abundance steps  
sunlight catches up

## **CHILDHOOD**

what little sleep my hands  
still carry carries the woods

## **J'AVAIS DIX ANS**

braced by branches that ran their wave ahead of my fate, the cottonwood buoyed me through noon. The sun tallied in the leaves a fugitive face. Another day set, unremembered our ceremony. The yards grew into new hostilities. The whispers climbing through the leaves let go their mark

## WHITE LINEN

a bury of rabbits under the table  
a day filled with animals  
we are sweating perfect animals  
cantered in their light

the sun curls  
glances down your cheek  
bright escape angels  
lovely hymns  
bent inside this sign

our eyes  
atop all this noise

## **AM RADIO**

One day the AM radio  
I'd just learned the first words

said I believed in perfect pitch  
I already carried

I turned to see the doorway  
Various doorways

were looking at me  
were asking a question

What will become of you  
It was New Year's Day

It was the darkness  
the hallway that stared

stated they were beginning  
worried preparations

a present beforehand  
I'd never open or touch

what was inside me  
still longed to see daylight

ran around in a way  
I wept mistakenly

said I was sick  
I was tired I guess

moving up and down  
amazed at the dial

## LEFT TO WASTE

“Le grillon ne se tait que pour s'établir davantage.”

René Char

Summer nights through a childhood  
the moon is warning  
grows the ground dark again

So a window and an open one  
left and let in crickets  
stark and littered music

Our body's heft at another pace

## V

With life a lizard under the skin.  
Another birth lifted the rock, inflected its storm.  
This was behind a wilder mouth, the porch  
back of a first glimpse. The blonde nightshirt rose  
her arms arched over her head. I rolled back through the world,  
ignored the stars pounding at the window. They wanted  
my eyes to recognize every other name,  
my heart for their mud. Likewise Spring  
delivered the news, neighbors roofed the moment  
with their eyes, still joked about the backwoods.  
Their story arched over my density was a color  
that could sway me. A series of obstacles,  
not enough for fun, enough for dynamics.

## HIDE AND SEEK

a cow's end  
isn't where he should be standing

this happens in the headlights  
autumn

and a pumpkin crash  
Elida 1989 the future's  
an animal that burrows in the ground

a bland field and fallow color  
patterns that break between sky

a pumpkin falls

a headlight from the hayride in  
goes out in the field

infancy forfeits able hands

out of the dark  
my brother never comes

## NEAR EASTER

hyacinth alone  
last snows uninnocent  
corner shade and lower print  
entire rabbits drink

a bury to come  
sea ghosts rising stare  
shining translate  
dark under writing pent

paper between ink and table  
the air bends  
horizons first then mountains  
green walks up trees

surprised to be standing  
the entire air bleats

## **AN OWN GOAL IS OUR CYPRESS BOAT**

While the moon's wanting a crib, sunny I sit  
In the mouth of your wound, calm and avid  
Drawing a picture in words of your shoe  
English leather, stript and wept in the dark  
It was the kind of day that made me think  
Desire's inside trafficking: denting a can  
Tickling the curb. Light wind in your clothes  
On a line, night crosses the yard in five  
Different places, the air cries to despite  
The humidity, which means the moon  
Can't wash away. Some of it stays, keeps in  
The tension. My eyes wander, can wear  
The look of stones. You were a light rock  
I realize some kids innocently skipped  
A puddle for toddlers to splash. It makes you  
Lost, and makes me, too—a lucky pozzo.

## LONG CANAL

News bearing illumination.

As we dry the table we see  
every evening finds a singular honesty,  
a corner without example. It fumes in the shadow,  
it guides in the train. Authority comes  
offering its blue poverty and we behave with much noise,  
anoint the long dry mountains:  
truly fine machinery without  
any pilot units resting around.

An old man's laughing cans everything:  
history, water, joy. The tips of your hair  
hadn't heard. Sparks strike the air. It's destiny.  
We see you in a terrific paint, a distinctive rain.

## **SIGNAL FIRES**

live at the angel  
bright obedience traces  
various hearsay  
poise in brimming pails  
the sky interrupts  
bit particle flies  
drown in the lightning  
firewood's gap  
A's horses fine outstrip  
shining whip  
hitch overwhelms the rim  
deciding night from tombstone disposition  
deaf witness deadly weeping  
O is thy rider

## **A PLACE WHERE THIS IS THE LANGUAGE**

not water  
offers directions  
flames lead down the road

open windows staves  
a language for sick ankles

green almonds  
seen at the corner in trance  
cotton dress

too large hands alone  
ashes out of this place

## **ALL THE GRASS**

taut strings tendered  
faces to our face  
sang another gaze  
meant fate ran out  
a singing fabric  
moths ate time frayed  
untwined people broke  
lay split plums  
atop deaf cement  
anchored heaven  
the sound the days  
press out climb up  
cordless distorted  
voices upbraid  
ready to teach futures  
token pasts  
the stick trails

## I'M AT WAR WITH THE OBVIOUS

after William Eggleston

I

a fan a flame fluid  
yellow light metal  
blades tall metal flame  
lighting fluid yellow  
plastic bottle fan  
an end table fan  
tall loose flame  
a strip of yellow red  
ribbon blue ribbon  
right upon the wall  
black belt an enamel  
coke bottle  
red cap black cola  
a wooden end table  
metal fan lit  
lighting fluid man

## II

two outlets the socket  
three white wires intersect  
a little left of center  
a bare dirty bulb  
bulges dully reflects  
the red ceiling  
half black trim  
the red red room  
two walls make  
a corner a poster  
hot pink borders  
yellow woman  
and deep blue man  
display the usual positions  
from behind sixty-nine  
standing on her head  
the lightbulb

## WALKING IN PLACE

Empty on a lit stove Flames  
make anything speak Everything  
speaks Leg work flares  
acts as revelation Dry stainless steel

A spider threads a leap makes  
two trees Copper strings light  
through the dark keeps me  
seeing myself in the window

Warnings to be spent to be  
lines a spider leaves Signs  
the heart runs in blood  
The world as it walks

## CARDINAL SUN AND SNOW

tremble of blood lift  
frozen thin branches

hearing our absence  
bristle light the leaves

## **LINTEL**

is the land drinks up the cracks  
swallows it whole  
fireworks' child  
the darker branches rain  
crickets spring  
make all directions summer weather  
outside light  
you step underwoods understory  
lightning guides  
leaves a black asterisk thin barks  
find first the ferns the paths  
they manage wildly to water  
walk back into grass

## **BLUE EYELET**

after Durer's Owl

near animal blue  
lifts the eye aside  
abruptly unopens

twice blooms the quiet  
look surfaces another  
purple figure stands

## **RED LINEN**

sunset music sifts the hedges  
is who walks edges speak through  
branches leaves  
light walking in place  
my throat the hedges  
upended  
breath blowing up thorns  
birds flare mouths blaze  
highway vine voice ornament  
breaking boundary hands  
not a grave  
empty lake spaces

## **SLIVER OF FLAX**

a year rabid in their mouth  
ruttet in each other  
we were driven chewed  
uneffaced night stopped up  
clotted fog

a floating bone  
tomorrow's ear  
we sheltered our breath  
slept till a light  
long as your hair  
drew us back through the fields  
moved a fold  
near blue silence

## **RED MOORHEN**

shines the clean dive she leaves sleight  
mounts a circumference

## WITHOUT REPAIR

incident music grieves the weather  
relationship walks  
the wild of all living  
keeps the world in two

loss in my chest sprawls  
granite banks shrill parades  
pitch out into space

a bird stammers the air  
figures where to build then  
shatters in the shade

silence  
beyond the window flickers

## **BILLBOARD SONGS**

### *Aloha Family*

closer than the critical blue  
we all piss in, the yellow pull,  
some surf, we walk to the edge, forget  
to fall forward for ever—  
the low fares fetch us back, a g a i n

## **BILLBOARD SONGS**

### *Tropicana*

an orange straw or instruction we know  
never contemplate on or pulp  
images a porch full of IS  
bites out of time, aren't you glad  
I never said death is a liar

## **AT THE HEART OF IT ALL**

speaks a breach  
wades through the living room

the world's war  
at home among us

stocked and squat houses  
gun down dawn

ready to eat  
strangle ties more space

to breed lots  
convict lawns

fit each face  
sits is a vacuum

## IN DARKNESS

“Darkness is more of a feeling inside the drivers.”

James Tate

dearth hiding home  
surrounds us with more  
instance and name

is blue-black  
grackles and sun encrusted  
asphalt

is always talking  
these things where we are now  
parking lots

that walk in the garden  
center fails  
to disturb asymmetrical eyes

## ENTANGLED IN FIRE

our digging shadows  
opens some bottom  
belief in others  
some practice walked in  
is praise in your hand  
a pace fall hastens  
the world pushes with  
their horns our neighbors  
part angry remiss  
demands I or No  
in all its branches  
our actions hold forth  
the sun bare letters  
make choice of a stand  
put lift in our hearts  
know what freedom is  
an abyss without  
our can and cattle  
adventure their lives  
I am carried on  
find and feel such strife  
dresses the garden  
we both hold upon

## WALKING BACK

“Tis that tow'rds which at last we walk”

Thomas Traherne

red oleander  
fits pigeons make  
satellites

hinged in heaven  
a vision  
turns round the corner

is distance  
a face hollers in  
in shatters

Jesus his profile  
two pops and pizza  
with olives

eyeing the empty apartments

## **ROOFTOP OFFERS**

morning quit  
chocolate easter bunny eyes  
one at a time rise  
hide under their curve

the day's buoyant stretch  
iridescent spaces  
share and share alike  
sequenced flight for applause

the corner cold rains  
wear their own small peekaboos

tuned voices wind outsources

## NOCTURNE

all night grass spills rabbits  
climb in their throat  
green and growing in traffic  
a light singing not a song  
our little white automobile

little difference a crystal  
salt-light fires  
sharp sharp stars divide  
alphabets foxes  
hide their throats dark air

spilled grass green traffic  
run faster round birds  
sharp sharp crystal a river  
piled in five directions  
rabbits back in light

## ALL THE PLACE IS SAINTS

true blade of grass  
no respecter of persons  
though experimental an axe  
in January sun and snow is  
first simplicity

as may not be wielded  
poplar leaf

quietly tall earth  
manures inside  
spreading power and drawing  
up all things clear light

one flesh that is  
in every humble and broken change  
a crystal  
more open less done

## **BLACK PHOEBE**

a sieve  
of flickering  
and sleep

listen!  
rings in the shade  
it stays

## MORNING'S PORCH

“The which do endless matrimony make.”

Spenser

begins in the legs  
there are no bridges  
windows fill the stones so high  
our eyes hardly meet in hers  
today lined with waiting  
a repetition of peopled names butterflies  
stutter along loop completely  
a piece a wave  
they raise as a house  
to hear eternity passing trains  
bound for the distant islands  
one last name  
remains in motion

there are no bridges  
the water through passes  
the sea acquires an entrance we ride  
one iris lights the air  
dawn's perfumed figure perplexed twinge  
the signs it breeds from hurt  
remains pieces of cloud  
speak from her shoulders  
a line built around quiet  
speaks our lives

birthday flames in balloons  
launched against sky blue-black light  
washed in your body

a line built around quiet  
butterflies flake from stone  
enter the sea  
children almost understand  
first bloom shines  
binds the days  
three-storeyed music  
morning's porch  
makes of us tall spigots  
shadows magic fails finds another figure  
it happens in a cafe  
waiting twenty minutes through waves  
sharp ravishes violent light

children almost understand  
planted evenly in names and horizon  
shine clear through the dark  
happened day's hard silence  
grinds between presents  
changes directions  
shadows wild flowers  
haul over pieces of the sea  
a small lunch eats at our anger

loose crumbs left over  
brilliant colors  
broken waters whisper  
to clouds

changes directions  
marriage makes waves a mosaic  
sets space in a tilted line  
forever instant  
rain walks the waste spaces  
the next minute undresses at our window  
our watergreen attention  
winds ahead  
tall spigot silence  
our infant eyes pieces  
surface in mountainous approach  
an iris  
lights the air everywhere fits the soul

## **SLEEPING IS WAKING**

a single pane of  
and moving, a kitten is  
an instrument of absence, glass  
grinding animal daylight to rest

while the cat walks, a digest  
of carnivorous intention,  
guitar strings  
linger in a corner of the ceiling

in perspectives asleep  
around the rim of noon, a cat's  
eating absence, wakes rest  
from its single pain. Instruments play

## **OPEN EYE**

blue diamonds the stock  
sawed-off they distract  
a morning elephant song  
the sun meant never to forget

cherry bombs off cigarettes  
potty breaks in between sex  
is conversation  
one brilliant pig rued by the blast

a child's fast pulling murder  
the roots bright weeds  
sews fights overhead  
morning and inside diamonds

death hires time to tell a joke  
rifles through the rain and it's past

## A MUSIC

whisper's green hinges  
open blood and flecked feathers  
face flared  
the pavement waters pause  
a can gleams  
this a music  
between broken breath leaf branches  
plastic bags ripe air  
the pink stones  
wild mountain edges  
lean noises in the morning

## ALMOST SOLID

lawnchair satellite sits heaven in  
a message a murmur of  
breeze brings back the lyrics think  
it has happened before in crystal  
thick air and cut grass  
so as not to end the sun  
in a puddle of orange juice  
up in the yard first gardeners trim  
their aspirations grey green olives  
arbor vitae and day  
continues its distance with pigeons  
grackles coos of turtle doves  
distill and loop fine crystal  
black mountain pink houses  
bleed from the branches we break  
and scent the air together  
it stands in this dissonant light

## SUN IN THE COTTONWOOD LEAVES

a single word from under  
splits each leaf-face  
a hand a wave  
lifted up to another

sifts your speaking  
silence the leaves  
already lit faces  
stammer in sun in the wind

## WAVES THROUGH THE DUST

calls through hurried space  
the honest delay rain brings  
orphaned hours wake  
you leap out of its little light  
I land in no time  
in close and enthralled in your ceiling  
your being in sight

want is a museum  
this airport I land in  
landscapes that leap as they hurry  
enthralled and with answers  
are light in its ceiling  
the rain climbs down  
a flower you tie into pain

space delayed  
unorphaned in rain  
is it here or there I am  
you call in moments of arrangement  
this day doesn't end  
the light curves and you answer  
I land when I wake

## WALKING

slant grass  
the trace of a bee

aims your bent shoulders  
lavender presence

what rests you and I  
exalted flare

each scattered handshake  
a captive stumble

bees in honey  
we bother we wake

a wide gait  
the landscape that gains

what we walk  
in sharp articulations

dawn sings

## WALKING AT SUNSET

song a scarlet cut  
just the tip of a branch sings  
flickers then distance

falls mountain-pitched  
a cometary blaze  
in the shape of a naked waist

walking I arrive  
through the middle of a kiss  
wander in bright erasure

blossoming air picks up  
what I cut in the sun  
lives in this whirlwind

## ASCENSION

white linens  
lovely golden hymns  
in the pull of new noises

and flowers  
they make of it a face  
enough not to think

all aim and straight up  
some fuller breaking  
a bruise so bright I can't miss

seeing here  
an olive and a robin  
fast for their face  
brings the world in

## ONCE OF BEAUTY

always the wrong direction crickets  
spring the mountain's lost  
marigold's gone brown and upside down  
spiders volcanoes  
all day walking never leaving morning's breach  
lower lip impatient  
breath heaped high the east end stone  
a useless linden  
the sky reaching from our feet  
strangers deer  
spill through the local gawk  
their animal testament

a day of domes lentil green volcanoes  
wakefulness spills  
dream script rains  
anchored in trees the blackberries  
sweet mute ability  
kneading pulse  
at large and in chains  
noon brings another river  
our hollow salvage  
fireflies intricate make  
fields unfold  
shadows open recess on the plain

green chains the volcanoes  
high grass drags in rain  
deer walk down the road  
part sentence part bone the sky  
between trees  
a trace we salvage without finding  
wide alarm  
continues to unfold  
select listening  
bell towers and spires  
being uneven

## **DOGWOOD**

walks in branches  
bird green  
earth white shares

this side of dying  
night sifts  
underground morning

feeds the air  
unhealing light  
put it in my eye

VITA

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“Sleeping is Waking,” *Inter/rupture*

“René Char: Translations,” *Octopus*

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