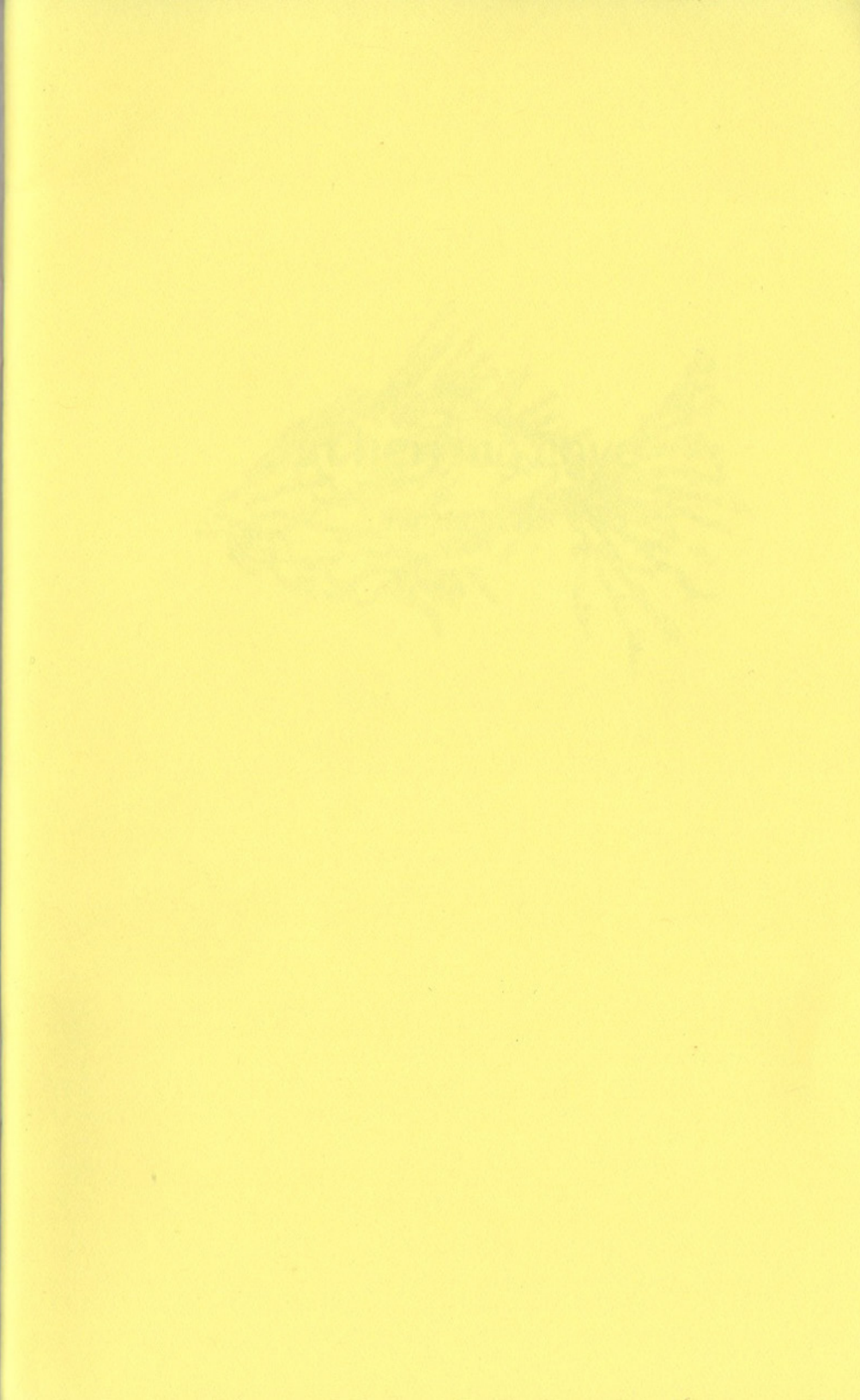


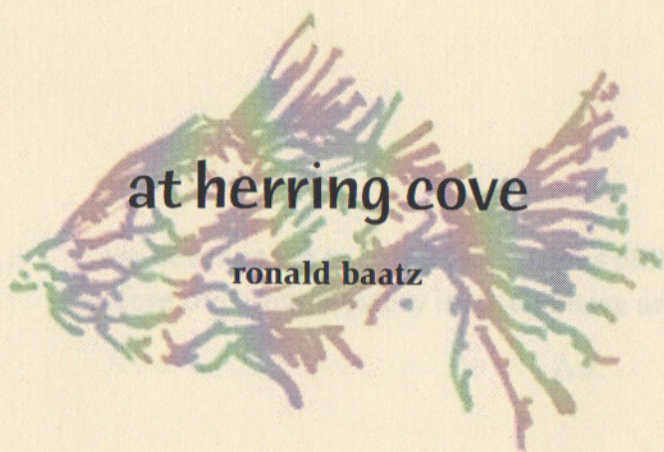
at herring cove

ronald baatz



at herring cove

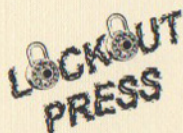
ronald baatz





title page drawing by Jack Cooke

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for m

...we never cease to stand like curious children
before the great mystery into which we are born.

A.E.

weatherwise dearest
it's a grand sunday
for sailing beyond the blues

to cool
soup spoons
comes a breeze from the bay

a leaf caught on a fence
catches mother's tender eye
when she is ninety

women breathe deeply in sleep
after dancing and drinking
in clothes light as straw

the yolk gives her pleasure at breakfast
because it is soft
and her favorite yellow

any umbrella left here on friday
usually is gone
by monday

a soldier speaks
of lessons learned in the desert
when not too long ago he was a young man

across orange and tea
the loving of a certain hour
we cannot see beyond this bliss

cut at a sharp angle
a slice of apple
stands on its peel

muffins for breakfast
made with too much salt
thrown to the sea gulls

with robe tightly closed around her
she tells a joke
about a kitten and a knife

crossing the back field
a coyote with one pup
such sad wind-blown eyes

sheets being changed
a tiny black pit falls
in her slipper

forgotten in the cellar
a bicycle
with both tires flat

running in his thin jacket
a boy spots the big dipper
above the pond

hand me that lantern
the frost has killed
another puppy

such a coward
is that neighbor of yours
flies make his knees jerk

a pair of glasses
by the side of the road
one lens missing

the merriest of daughters
snaps like a wet towel
when pinched

uncle marco wet from a sudden downpour
is joyful but stiff
eating fried eggs

einstein said every possession
is a burden
but boy did he love his comb

a spark plug
held tight in my father's old fist
as he approaches the shed

sunflowers lose
all enthusiasm for the moment
when faced with a dizzy goat

birds chirping on easter morning
the librarian wakes
next to charles dickens

wars
make the earth weak
and unsteady as a calf

a gypsy eating a slice of squirrel pie
is convinced he sees a flying saucer
over the cemetery

take those leftover french fries
to the orphan we saw
fishing underneath the bridge

an empty milk bottle
knocked over by a thief
rolls across the kitchen floor

families rejoice
upon hearing the story of the thousand quilts
found in one cedar chest

the song of the mockingbird
can be heard clearly
over the boiling of an egg

**the sparrow
in the last chapter of the novel
is killed by a brick**

**the bored beautician
complains about the horrors of child birth
at the hands of a quack**

**everything is green
from the endless rains
even the droppings of geese**

at a distance the shadow of the beggar
looks like a branch
of weeping leaves

giggling children
the frog they placed on the couch
watching the weather channel

on a prescription pad
the doctor's small poem
stained with blood

in his bathrobe
the clown finds a peanut
with no shell covering its cold self

give that oyster a nickname
before you wrinkle its flesh
with your teeth

the stairs on the back porch
falling off the house
like crust off a pie

relatives at christmas
storm the living room
where a train knows no destination

the newly-elected mayor is as deaf as god
and can see only as far
as a moth

while eating an olive
she stares out at her garden
with the blank look of an owl

a chicken in utter despair
over the stubborn cold
grandmother has

the sense of humor
at the bathhouse keeps the place
crowded and sincere

the scarecrow can at least be happy
that home is not a field
aflame with flying arrows

i see her veins drowning
in buried flesh
when my dream turns bad as a cloudy jewel

it was upon the handsome prairie
that the railroad spike
influenced nature most

a quarreling merchant
forgets his wife is waiting for him
to drive her to choir practice

there'll be no mistakes made in heaven
the day the swedes arrive
bringing their oak leaf wine to be judged

in the fridge
the tip of a slice of pizza
pointed at the hot sauce

counting melons
i forget to add the one
i found in the cradle

don't expect an angel
to come rocketing in here
to save that dying elephant

the butcher causes pigeons to wince in pain
when he sings so sweetly
of the slicing of the pig

hidden under the widow's bed
a violin
wrapped in an old beach towel

lightning comes to the field
and strikes at the only pear tree
barren of fruit

squirrel monkeys
scare the new women
in the neighborhood

please! let's not argue
while such a beautiful twilight huddles
in the chest of the quail

a soft saddle for a journey
doesn't make an unruly horse
any less uncomfortable to ride

the baker sucks powdered sugar
from the tips of his fingers
as he navigates the crumbling sidewalk going home

no word in the journal
concerning the last time
duck was had for dinner

birds serenade
in the architect's garden
as he gazes at the neighbor's chimney

dark afternoon sky
no sense cutting irises
half-eaten by time

as fireflies swarm
she experiences the mysterious
through a screen

the beauty of the plumber
was that he ate only one peach
before leaving

the landlord
swimming naked in the pond
forgets his battle with cancer

in a crowded prison yard
tongues unlock with what
contagious evil they know

having hired a carpenter to build her apiary
she chooses the room
with the faded parquet floor

a passion of shrimp
eaten from a decaying bowl
on an equally decaying patio

the silken wrath
expressed in the lover's diary
makes for excellent reading

bored teenagers
become part of an angry sermon
the priest writes while changing a tire

opening the screen door
she steps out
to blow a spider off her tea cup

in the cold garden
pansies
deathly-thin

in the same direction as the hands
a ladybug walks up
the side of the clock

a stalk of celery floating in the canoe
from when we had lunch
at herring cove

sultry pagan rituals
staged outside the back of the hotel
prove to be good for business

crossing a hardened lake
a trapper craves hot oatmeal
in the suburbs

a dented pea
is all that's left of the salad
at the weary end of a long weekend

on his fiftieth birthday
an indian
shivers in a meadow

**it's not necessary that you continue
tinkling at the piano
once the party is over**

**the robin
poisoned by the dart of the villain
is buried at sundown without marble**

**on its back
the beetle plugs into
a new frenzied energy**

the bear cannot waltz
even at the climax of day
nor can a butterfly be oppressive

the grocer sweeps a dead cockroach
out the back door
cursing its ancestors

ah! to be drunk and to lasso an alien
from the land
of short skirts

having gone rancid
the salmon at the back of the fridge
exhales its last beauty

do you remember the nonsense
we had that afternoon in the attic
of canine behavior

a bundle of magazines
left beside the sofa
only encourages further indolence

as twilight sinks
into the couch
finches grow quiet

einstein had dirty underpants
gandhi
had none

the waiter brings a bowl of moody macaroni
on this night
of the orange full moon

a pumpkin smiles
then lazily becomes
unsteady in soft decay

the house in autumn turns narrow and yellow
but welcomes
the poet who is lonely

children feel life
even when folded in the lamb
of sleep



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