

## H-2

Natalie Serle to Tom Gilroy

Ah this exercise is such a feast for my brain. I wasn't sure what your feedback would look like, but I appreciate the productive notes and meandering thoughtlines. Feels slipstream-esk.

I am not inclined to collect my thoughts into a cohesive structure right now, so streamofconsciousness bullets it is (and probably will remain for the duration of our exchange).

- A Dickinson parallel? V flattering and how apt that I just watched “Desperately Seeking Susan”. (This joke requires the combination of a series of inside baseball facts and lore. I believe in you two.) I have a gaggle of romantic poems that, at this point, I don't think I could bear hanging in the town square. Give me some time to think of an alias.
- (Big fan of parentheticals.)
- I've always been a sucker for a before and after, but what a delight to acknowledge and dance with the middle. An illustrious, overlooked ampersand. The stitching, really. I always want to know how the sausage is made.
- 6 word memoirs begat haiku for me. “Baby shoes” was my intro, but “I still make coffee for two” has always stuck with me because while I assumed the writer was an elderly widow, it was actually a late 20s guy fresh off heartbreak. So intrigued where assumptions build and break, and how people overlay their own experiences/ defaults and accordant naivety on top of others.
- I understand and connect w a metaphorical zigzag more so than the linear and I think I'm often using poetry to wrangle metaphorical thoughtlines into understanding feeling or processing intensity. The sensitivity remains semi-skyward and fluid, but it's helpful to have a string attached - or at least step towards attaching said string. Emotional lassos, dontchaknow. (There is a Benjamin Franklin kite reference in here somewhere.) BUT if one is thinking of haiku at ground/ earthen level, it is interesting to approach this exercise as bringing some of these poems down through that tether and see if they dissipate in the atmosphere or multiply. Relaying this because I think my kigo default is oft more ethereal than actual.

Ok onto proper business. Below is an incomplete volley, but a return re: the hole-y shirt. Will get to the other haikus later this week.

*Revised copy:*

Should I throw this out?

It's more hole than t-shirt now

Shabby chic, hard earned

- I've had this shirt for 20ish years and despite it being my thinnest, most elder shirt, I always wear it to do grubby outdoor activities... or sleep - quite the dichotomous life. It's so soft, nearly translucent, and so ferociously tattered that I can barely wear it around the house now. I really took it to the edge of its being.
- Below are all my edits in their natural, choppy format. First thoughts are at the bottom and they chaotically stack up as I free-associated words/ the energy I wanted to convey. Godspeed parsing through. Had a real wrastle with this one.

Lived-in proof of life

Frayed, devoted verve

Long beloved softness

Thin, frayed, long beloved

Such frayed, lived-in verve

Thin, frayed, soft, lived verve

Clear verve, fierce, devoted

Thin, frayed, lived soft verve

Thin, frayed, plain. Still soft, poised ready

Earned, thinned enduring softness

Lived in fellowship, known

Lived-in softness earned

Life thinned, softness earned

Thin, frayed, familiar

Thin frayed, soft knowing

Thin, frayed, soft wisdom

Thin, earned, lived wisdom

Earned, lived-in wisdom

Bear endure

Earned, lived-in soft style

Earned, enduring softness

Earned, lived-in softness

Biography, sauce, flavor, pleasure, essence, savor, character, savvy, pep, quality, tonality, complexion

Earned, lived-in glam  
Thin, frayed, lived-in glam.  
Thin, frayed alchemy  
Thinned, frayed, lived-in. chic.  
Thinned, frayed, soft magic  
Thinned and frayed, soft chic  
Thinned and frayed, still soft  
Thinned, frayed, but soft. Stay.

Shabby chic, hard earned  
An earned shabby chic  
A long earned shabby chic  
An earned, lived softness  
Broken by softness  
Earned softness  
Thinned by living  
Thinned by real life, lived  
Thinned soft by life, sun  
Thinned, earned softness  
thinned, frayed, soft by life  
Life softened, thinned, frayed  
Life rounded, thinned, frayed  
Lived in, wrung out, bye  
An earned, lived in softness  
Broken in, now broken down  
Not spared, Worn kind  
Soft scars

Prove, pass, shift, time  
Battered, threadbare, rugged, mature, wise, seasoned, worldly, broken in  
years of washing  
Buckled by time  
Worked so long to get this soft  
Stay soft  
Meant to be lived in  
Love to the point of ruin

Re-reading these scribbles now, it reminds me of this ["Too Much Love"](#) photo series by Katja Kemnitz where she photographs "old, much-loved teddies and dolls and compare them with as good as new doppelgangers". I love it so much