What does it mean that Joe has been alive in my dreams? ⇒ Very alive ⇒ I feel like he is visiting me ⇒ I know it sounds crazy ⇒ but it’s like he followed Mom here to watch out for her ⇒ Like he’s helping me take care of her ⇒ I need to see someone ⇒ a shrink ⇒ But I want it to burn ⇒ let it into my work ⇒ I don’t know if it will be good art ⇒ It’s just my reality and that’s all I can draw on ⇒ I hate confessional poetry ⇒ writing or reading it ⇒ I especially hate my own ⇒ Other people’s confessions can be interesting ⇒ but for me at least, art is a way to escape my own head ⇒ sticking your interiority into an something else (that sounds like a crass metaphor for sex) ⇒ letting it meet the world ⇒ know the world⇒ but I am loathe to seek help with coming to grips with Joe’s death and Mom’s illness ⇒ It’s an Irish thing ⇒ a Mick thing (as my aunt MJ would say)⇒ a perverse conception of self- reliance ⇒ I want to get well ⇒ but seeking helps feels like a betrayal ⇒ besides it is not something I have control over ⇒ external events do what they do and I am affected by them ⇒ it’s no mystery why it hurts ⇒ It hurts ⇒ I don’t care if it isn’t fashionable or contemporary ⇒ I want to make [art]work that’s true ⇒ even if I end up telling all sorts of lies in the process (and offending people) ⇒ It’s all lies anyways ⇒ and lies get a bad rap (generally
speaking) ⇒ Joe Wilson, the idiotic racist congressman who yelled at Obama ⇒ “You lie” ⇒ What if the president replied, “Yeah, so” ⇒ “What’s your point?” ⇒ that all human communication shares kinship with the lie, the fabrication, seems plain enough ⇒ the problem is: how does the lie make others feel? Like shit? Proud? Deceived? Loved? ⇒ are your feelings really just another set of lies you tell yourself? ⇒ Like this sad confessional poem I’m spilling out⇒ It’s not poetry if its confessional⇒ Really it is therapy ⇒ Therapy is not art ⇒ So the common wisdom goes ⇒ But what does common wisdom know about art anyways ⇒ if art is haughty (as those would claim that want to press art into service for the “Common Man”-- whoever that maybe) then common wisdom does not apply ⇒ Three cheers for the snobbery that recognizes therapy as a form of art!!! Perhaps it’s not the highest form, but it is a form nonetheless⇒ and what is more, it is a form that resists hierarchies ⇒ ipso facto ⇒ therapy is the highest form of art. Take that revolutionary elitists! Dumb Ass! The common man is dead! Long live common man man that reads Robert Lowell and Shakespeare’s Sonnets!!

A question then arises ⇒ Where will I be when all is said and done? ⇒ The problem ⇒ To be successful does one need to be an asshole? ⇒ (Often appears that way) ⇒ but at the end of the day, life on this planet amounts to a single question⇒ Was I an asshole? ⇒ How did I treat others as I made my way through this life? ⇒ Success is no Success ⇒ Success is something else⇒ Dad said: You can’t control what other people think ⇒ True ⇒ But that’s not what I am talking about⇒ What I am talking about are those times when you are alone and the
questions/voices/doubts/demons come calling and there is no one to answer to but
the night-watchman of your own soul ⇒ Who has seen all that you have done⇒
Recorded all of your thoughts⇒ What will he say? ⇒ Where will the verdict fall?
⇒ Are we all assholes in our own mind? ⇒ if not, should we be? ⇒ That is, if
your not, have you clearly discerned your own complicity with the evils that
animate our world? ⇒ the cheetah that eats the gazelle ⇒ maybe the cheetah is not
evil ⇒ maybe it is cruel ⇒ there is a difference ⇒ Still, it has something to do
with the asshole doesn’t it? ⇒ The cycle of life revolves around the asshole ⇒
Food and Shit ⇒ Life is cruel ⇒ But where is compassion ? ⇒ Can we be
compassionate? ⇒ What does it cost us to be compassionate? Can we think
outside of a cost benefit analysis? ⇒ Can we ever be truly selfless? ⇒ Don’t we
always act in self-interest? ⇒ Looking after Mom is selfish isn’t it? ⇒ She is my
Mom, not yours ⇒ I am writing my way out of it ⇒ the guilt & sadness ⇒ and
looking for help ⇒ Looking for art to make some sense of it all⇒ Something of
larger cultural import to redeem the banality of depression⇒ My stepping into art
with my mother feels exploitive ⇒ But she put me up to it from an early age ⇒
couraged me to be an artist ⇒ But my brother isn’t appealing to an audience to
help him understand his pain ⇒ Share his pain with strangers ⇒ It’s more real ⇒
he’s taking care of the finances ⇒ I am just muddling things up ⇒ But honestly I
could give a fuck what you think ⇒ I am just trying to get through this process⇒
This journey ⇒ I believe is the euphemism the healthcare industry uses⇒ Old age,
sickness, death ⇒ get through it without totally losing it ⇒ which I am sure
sounds like hyperbole to you ⇒ but if I were honest ⇒ and that’s what is being attempted here⇒ Then guess what ⇒ I am right fucking there ⇒ On the edge ⇒ Close to completely coming unglued ⇒ I mean I am seeing dead people and not only when I sleep ⇒ but when I am awake ⇒ I am not hallucinating ⇒ I want to see them ⇒ Kitty said that my séance performances had to do with my desire to hold on to my parents ⇒ She is right ⇒ that revelation rocked me ⇒ the obvious stuff always does ⇒ The séances started as a kind of joke ⇒ and now it all feels real ⇒ not kind of real ⇒ REAL ⇒ like the feel of a sweater real ⇒ the warmth of skin real ⇒ and it scares me ⇒ What if what you thought was a “just a joke” ⇒ Was actually fucking real ⇒ But maybe that is the only way to approach death ⇒ Through the joke ⇒ a game ⇒ Day of the dead ⇒ Dia de los Muertos ⇒ I don’t know ⇒ Is all art something like this? ⇒ A glorified coping mechanism ⇒ But everybody finds coping strategies ⇒ not just artists ⇒ So art isn’t just a coping device ⇒ Just like everything else coping is used used to analogize art ⇒ Art is always a “something else” ⇒ We have coping + something else ⇒ Something else + Love ⇒ something else + Hate ⇒ something else + Politics ⇒ something else + Expression ⇒ Something else + etc. ⇒ But maybe it’s not always about surplus with art ⇒ Maybe art takes something away ⇒ a minus ⇒ Art takes the life out of life ⇒ Makes it more manageable ⇒ maybe it adds and subtracts simultaneously ⇒ Maybe life ⇒ whatever that maybe ⇒ needs both addition and subtraction? ⇒ dial it up a little ⇒ dial it down ⇒ But do you even care? ⇒ This is just me in pain
but here’s the thing this pain is coming for you too and nothing I say or write can prepare you for what’s coming down the pike It will just destroy you and like me you will hunt for ways to keep it together You will feel vain, stupid, and ill-equipped when it washes over you and the waves of sorrow will pummel you to pieces they will keep coming and you will write and write or do whatever it is that you do But it won’t be enough art will fail it will just keep coming all I can say is that I love you whoever you are that is reading this now whether you are living or dead I love you and want it to stop for a second Just so you can catch your breath I don’t know for how long it is possible I love you hold on

- for Meredith & Tal