

1. strange territory: I need some advice, I don't know what to do • I'm turning in circles and getting so dizzy • so give me an answer, a nice, simple answer • instructions in English, a map and a compass • oh, this is strange territory • this land where I'm walking, it seems like a dream • and when did I leave California • and how did I get to this wild jungle scene • and when I get my bearings • when I get my bearings, if I ever get my bearings • will I still be here... • or will it be ending, this dream that I'm having • the lions will shrink, they'll turn into house cats • and monkeys and snakes disappear from the treetops • I'll suddenly wake up and hear my alarm clock... • so can you please tell me what's happening to me • I don't understand and I'm feeling half crazy • pinch me and poke me and maybe I'll wake up • be back in my kitchen peeling potatoes...

2. talking to eleanor: I wrote a letter to you • to you from me • from me to you • nice thing to do • then I found an envelope • grabbed my jacket • put the letter in my pocket and rushed out the door • Tom at the post office sold me a stamp • which I stuck on the envelope sideways, and said • *thanks, Tom!* it looks like • Eleanor, Eleanor • Eleanor Roosevelt's face on a stamp • almost dropped in the box • almost sent on its way • but something distracted me just long enough • to notice that Eleanor's nose stuck out • of a very pink face and I saw her wink at me • there by the wanted posters and the catalog trash • I was face to face with • Eleanor... • she was looking at me • she was blinking I think • as I started to faint • and the room seemed to fade away • in a tiny but resonant voice • she was talking to me • and when I held her up close to my ear • I could hear every word • every word she said... • *how long has it been?* • *so many years* • *and what have you done?* • *I miss those times now that I'm stuck on a stamp* • I let her watch the news on the TV • and she says it gives her a headache and she's glad that her head is not any bigger... • and I never sent that letter • Eleanor Roosevelt sits in my pocket and • talks to me every day • you wrote me to say • *well, why haven't you written* • so I write another, say • I was talking to Eleanor Roosevelt...

3. the dream about fred: it was 8 a.m. and the people were arriving • they were gathered around my unmade bed • I was standing in a corner still dressed in my nightgown • when someone introduced me to a guy named FRED • another guy in overalls was bringing in two microphones • *is this the right house?* • *you're asking me?* I said • and it's so early in the morning, it's all a bit confusing • *the sound system's ready to set up*, said FRED • over on the other side • my mother was examining • the dust on the banister, and looking for a rag • my sister's Pomeranian • was barking at the T.V. • *come over here and bark into the mic*, said FRED • there were so many people • they were waiting on the sidewalk • yelling in the window *is it time? are you dead?* • I grabbed an overcoat and headed for the back door • *the ticket taker needs to have a table*, said FRED • I told him *take the ticket taker table from the back* • but he was picking up his hat that had fallen on the bed • so I don't think he noticed when I shut the door behind me • how could I feel sorry for a guy like FRED? • Fred was on the back porch • dragging on a cigarette • *it's no use to run away from anything*, he said • and as a rollerblader raced around a corner of the living room • *I can't make a living in your dream*, said FRED • *just when we think we've got it* •

you wake up and abandon us • *standing in confusion by an unmade bed* • *a simple explanation, or a dream interpretation* • *should be written in the contract if you will*, said FRED • I was just about to answer • when I heard a bell ringing • or maybe like an air raid, and everybody fled • it was suddenly so quiet • just a few retreating footsteps • as I reached for the alarm and heard the last few words from FRED • he said: *hey, wait a minute! there's one last ticket!* • when I woke up it was floating toward my bed • a tiny purple ticket with an autograph signed FRED

4. surprise: she finally found one more way to surprise herself • and she was surprised at her surprise • making two surprises • after quite a long time of no surprises • and all she had to do was look under the table • right where she sat • look down at her feet and there it was • she'd forgotten what she'd stuck in her shoe • and that her shoe was a surprise in itself, another surprise • being so much unlike her foot • she was always arranging the top of the table • and looking off across the room • now suddenly she found herself in the space below the table • like another room, with other doors • inventions and possibilities fighting for her attention • and making a lot of noise • and new surprises growing • sometimes exploding • out of old ones • so this was the way her life began to seem very different • when in fact it was the same life • and the same place • and the same day

5. funny dog: I was having a bad day • but still some things made sense • there was an apple resting on the windowsill • a chicken roosting on the fence • all the doors were open • a breeze was blowing in • it leafed through the pages of a magazine • and tickled at the edges of my chin • I don't want to be too happy • I just want some good reason for a grin • some funny dog sitting on my doorstep • letting all the strangers in • some dog, some funny dog • some black and white or white and black • spotty dog, some dog • plucking on a mandolin • I might have been having a good day • if I'd only made a different wish • there was one wish lurking at the edge of my mind • or the one that I got from the fish • if somebody hadn't been screaming • on the other side of the wall • if I hadn't grown up with a strange last name • I might not have noticed at all... • it might have been the apple • the chicken or the magazine • it might have been the breeze blowing all through the house • it might have been some different thing...

6. self portrait: I am walking down the street • maybe two feet off the ground • my hands stuck in my pockets • just to hold my pockets down • and below me fairly distant • are my feet and numerous toes • right in front of me I notice • all the edges of my nose • my clothes have lost some buttons • but I still have on a hat • if I look a little serious • life will soon take care of that • one piece missing from the puzzle • one line missing from this song • as my shadow hums along • at the edges of a garden • crooked stick to rest upon • I see my shadow waiting • 'til I finish up this song...

7. close call: I was waiting in line at the drug store • the beehive lady sat at the till • the man right in back of me mumbled a few words • when suddenly the room went still • I was standing suspended in time and space • waiting for the sky to fall • with one big rumble and a tumble and a roar • or

would this just be another close call? • maybe it's some kind of sad joke • a story that you shouldn't tell • I was just walking down the middle of the road • when suddenly the sky fell • I couldn't remember any earthquake • couldn't remember any blow • what dark shadow loomed above me then? • what deep chasm below? • and, oh, the silence • some lost words floating by • green dust rising from behind a rock • the sound of a clock's last tick tock • and, oh, I'm sorry • but the sky won't cry with me • and the moon is gone, just the stars stare down • without a speck of pity • suddenly lost my balance • suddenly tumbled in the dirt • *now are you happy?* the sky shouts • you got what you deserved...

8. doorknob: if you're a doorknob you'll know what to do • you'll mind your business 'til someone grabs hold of you • and twists you and turns you around • and then leaves you to turn back on your own • if you're a doorknob it's a simple affair • you're not an engine or a spoon or a chair • you're not a sparkling dress, or a potted plant • you're a door knob and that's why you're here • or say you're a toaster • and you're just about to pop • you don't need to know a thing • how to start or stop • there's a lever and a spring and a click • and when you're plugged in it's just a simple trick • and if you're a boomerang you'll turn right around • and zoom back to where you were • unless you sit in a box in a closet in the dark • for years and years and years... • well I'm a boomerang, in some ways • and a toaster about to pop • and a potted plant the way I think • all stuck in a little pot • but I won't be a doorknob • you can't twist me like that • and I won't sit there looking down at the mat • I won't be a doorknob looking down at the mat • and you can't twist me like that

9. girlfriend: I want a girlfriend • I want a boyfriend • I want an it • I want a this or a that • I want a lover • I want a secret admirer • I want a pet • I want a be-all-this, I want a be-all-that • I want a dog or a cat or (I know it's weird) • I want a lizard • to sleep with me all night (until we're married) • to be with me my whole life • to never hate me • or just to date me • to make me feel all right • I feel connected • I feel excited • I want a woman • I want a man • though it's not logical • though it's not sensible • though it's not reeaaasonable • I want a woman • I want a man... • she wants a baby • she wants to baby her baby • baby her baby's babies • she wants to nurse them • she'll change their diapers • she'll learn to love them • she'll learn to love changing their diapers • and they'll love her, they'll need her • until they're 13 • until they're 17 • and then they'll hate her • and then they'll go away until she's 98 • or else they'll live with her until she's 98 • and then they'll nurse her and she'll be happy • she want a baby... • he wants a dog • he wants a cat • he wants a baby dog with great big eyes • a baby cat with great big eyes • dogs and cats in human disguise • he says, dogs are so reliable • they won't ever hurt you • cats are so inscrutable • they'll fascinate you • they'll never break your heart • and when they die • you can buy a new one • he wants a dog • he wants a cat... • I want something • I just want something • it could be anything • but just not nothing • I want intensity • I want direction • I want a back rub • I want to laugh • I want to sing this song to someone who understands • and thinks it's funny (if a little depressing) • I want something • I just want something...

10. two poems: hey, glue! • hold me together now • with your sticky tacky many-fingered grip • my limbs in limbo land • my bones will not cooperate • and I cross my fingers daily • hoping that my heart won't just slide down and out and leave the scene • and I cross my fingers that • my fingers will still keep crossing • I cross my toes • well that's for exercise • but I'm serious, glue • I need to stay together and I can't do it without you • arms legs and head • stuck on and holding • and just hoping they can stay there long enough • to be useful...

so let's go around as walking onions • with our papery outer layers so smooth and proud • a rich tan or silky white • we bump against each other • and some of that skin falls off • and the onion juice makes everybody cry • so as we are bumping into each other • we are crying onion tears • all of us • and the layers guard the secret eye • in the center of the onion

11. cheerful humor: I went down to the cellar for a bag of cheerful humor... • I saw a bag of cheerful humor on the shelf • that bag of cheerful humor was giggling to itself • it was bouncing and laughing and jiggling on the shelf • I said bag of cheerful humor would you tell me what to do... • it was wearing red suspenders that were holding up its pants • it was just about to break into a breakdance sort of dance • I saw it edging to the front edge of the shelf • when it fell off • and burst into a rolling, laughing mass of powder • on the floor • still laughing but the laugh was floating on the air • I said bag of cheerful humor • though you're floating on the air • would you tell me what to do... • I was looking for a window in the wall of my illusions • looking for a window that would cut through the confusion • looking for a window in the wall of my illusions • I saw a window in the wall • but it was sliding down the hall • and when I called to it • oh, window, would you tell me what to do • it cried, *I'm late for my appointment and I can't stay here for you...*

13. strange planet: what planet is this? • no moon in the sky • just three purple poodles floating by • I stand here amazed • bewildered and dazed • as maroon mist swirls around me and pokes at my face • well I can jump pretty high • I can just about fly • but this odd atmosphere is making me cry • I look to the right • an unearthly sight • I close both my eyes and I hug myself tight • do you think I'll survive and come out alive • or give in to my fate? it's a strange night and I can't sleep • I keep on thinking something is wrong • and I turn over and close my eyes • and all this purple • these poodles are running in my head • they float by staring and never bark • their lit up collars • shining like bright stars in the dark • shining, shining like bright stars in the dark

Susan Gilbert: keyboard, piano, vocals

Richard Curtis: flute, tenor sax, spoken word

Nate Bynum: bass, bass effects, musical saw

Bill Wagner: percussion

with: **Amanda Strong:** harmony on *girlfriend*

Don Julin: mandolin on *funny dog*

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