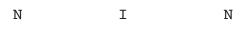
N I N

E P O

E M S

GAVIN CRAIG





E P O

E M S



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### Lines

Lines are unnatural, unavoidable.

For example, now you can't see the way my hand runs across the page, disregarding syntax and rhyme, and traces the curve of your thigh.



NINE POEMS

# My Father Taught Me to Forget Things

Birthdays, and distance in moments together.



#### Written on a Leaf

A leaf knows what it is to fly,
just barely,
a gift of insubstantiality.
While we shoulder our burdens like Atlas,
hunched under
the weight of the sky,
a leaf flares and fades,
and finally,
brown, paper dry, lets go.

And for a moment, if there is a breeze, it may know the glory of weightlessness, and remember its days of unappreciated green, when it looked unashamed into the face of a god and interceded for those of us who avert our eyes.



## Ode to my job

Not every bookstore smells like fresh paper. Some smell like malls and some dust and old leather, but mine was a new book, unbroken binding and sharp pages, with newspaper ink and hazelnut, for texture.



### Lunchbreak

We wax embryonic on our lunchbreak in a seventy-two degree fluorescent room with comfortable chairs.

We fight like domesticated cats in the afternoon because like them we have nothing better to do.

We drink coffee in the morning but it never really wakes us up.



NINE POEMS

#### untended

abandoned daily
embraced
by wood pulp and cardboard
cloth and styrofoam padding
he devoured pages
like a worm
on a shelf untended
forgotten
met with surprise
when he emerged
fluttering
to join the others



# Love is a language of small words

You find it in the cracks in-between things—sometimes a glue, and sometimes, as it hardens, a wedge.



## Nov. 12, 1998

My sister swallowed a half-bottle of pills. It was all she had. I try not to own a gun.



## Blues

I had a beer with the Almighty. He apologized for all the things that had gone wrong. I told him I wouldn't change a thing.





GAVIN CRAIG is a graduate student at Michigan State University, where he co-founded <u>The Offbeat</u>, and served as Editor from 1999–2001.



"Nine Poems' minimalism isn't austere, but intimate and guarded, like fragments from a whispered, feverish conversation. Each poem withholds more than it gives. You read them as you would read a bruise hidden under a shirtsleeve, guessing that the discolored surface signals a story that's unlikely to be told. But there's also something bracing and reassuring about their silence, their insubstantiality; the signs of secrecy, a shared moment, a conspiracy."

-TIMOTHY CARMODY, author of The Bridge and the River

