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author's Uncertainties description

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Call and response. The breathing body of poetry from the beginning. The psalms of David, the wave of them, rise and fall of plainchant, verse and response. The constantly shifting pause between the half-lines of Old English poetry and the poems of the Edda, the half-lines of the *Kalevala* swayed out four-handed on the saga bench. So I thought towards the two-line stanza as experiments in duration, in complex syntactic and melodic demands. The melody of the first line necessitates the melody of the next. Shape shaping shape. Formally, the poem engages with one constraint: each line wants to be semantically intact—ideally, any line could stand alone, be my Last Words, my epitaph. Yet it also must link syntactically or narratively with the line that follows. And each stanza must stand in like relation with the stanzas before and after. This requirement extends to line structure something that I’ve worked with for years (usually furtively): hypersyntax, where phrases link with what comes before or after, or plausibly stand alone. *Uncertainties* tries to use these strategies in “mental strife,” to solicit the dissolving of certainties—in between the inbreath and the outbreath, where nothing is fixed, and freedom begins.

(author’s statement for *Uncertainties*)