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Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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Spring 2018

## Horizon's Door

Mackenzie Kristofco  
*Bard College*

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# Horizon's Door

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Language and Literature  
of Bard College

By  
Mackenzie James Kristofco

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

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*for my family,  
without whom I would never understand the necessity of care*

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whose compassion, support, humor and strangeness lift my steps each day*

*for Robert,  
who continually shows me that I know how to listen to the world  
who continually shows me what any of us mean by poetry*

*for Katie,  
who turned on the light*

# Contents

I.	<b>The Approaching Vista</b>	6
	Poem For Beginning	7
	Thalassocracy	8
	Recalling The Conversation	9
	After Sze Tsung Leong's Photograph of Cairo	10
	Secret Places	11
	Remembrance Of The Island	12
	Warmth	13
	Between Breaths	14
	Back Breathes The Ocean	15
	Moon's Language	16
	In The Morning	17
II.	<b>Poems For Finding:</b>	
	<b>Love Poems And Other Songs Of The Threshold</b>	18
	Again, Here Are Words	19
	Penetralium	20
	What Comes Back	21
	Arrival	22
	Lesson Of The Sun	23
	At Last, We're All The Sun	24
	The River	25
	Thru My Hands	26
	Answers	27
	What I Know	28
	At Bash Bish Falls	29
	Search	30

Two Lines	31
Affection	32
Love, A Poem	33
Ocean's Words	34
Realization	35
The Word	36
The World	37
<b>III. Where The Water Meets The Shore</b>	<b>38</b>
Ode 1: Remembrance	39
Ode 2: A Moment	40
Ritual	41
My Part In January	42
Point Of Crossing Thoughts	43
Ode 3: Words For You	44
Ode 4: Muse	45
First Incantation	46
You (Second Incantation)	47
Found In The Clouds	48
Third Incantation	49
Empathy	50
Letter In The Stone	51
Ode 6: Hagia Sophia, Pining For Faith	53
Ode 7: If We Meet Again	54
In These Patterns	55
Behind The Door	56
Mechanisms Of An Interior Music	57
Ode 8: Where Only Two Can Arrive	58
Ode 9: Mind	59
Ode 10: Absence	60
Ode 11: Detection	61
By Songs, Creation	62

Fourth Incantation	63
Story Of Generation	64
The Flower's Importance	65
Hymn	66
Ode 12: Ever-Present Light	67
Ode 13: Portrait Of The Soul	68
Ode 14: Geography Of An Answer	69
Ode 15: Want	70
Hymn Crafting	71
Ode 16: Message From A Room In The Back Of My Mind	72
Ode 17: Everything	73
A Moment, A Drink	74
Ode 18: Present Acts Of Past	75
After Louise Bourgeois Marble Sculptures At Mass MOCA	76
Always Again	77
Ode 19: Motion	78
Song From The Wind	79
Ode 20: Lesson From The Robin	80
Speechless	81
Poem For Ending	82
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>83</b>

*It is undone business  
I speak of, this morning,  
with the sea  
stretching out  
from my feet*

-Charles Olson

I

## **The Approaching Vista**



## *Poem For Beginning*

The poem drips through gaps in my winged fingers.  
A creation tale--  
blossoms for newborns.  
Not as a gift, but a port for departure.

Come inside the leaving.  
That's all movement is:  
moment leaving moment.

Childhood hallway,  
down which the exit is at once obvious,  
at once a sand dune  
standing vestige before the ocean.

There is a distant, open door.  
You tell me to squint my eyes.  
Slide back into the tides.  
The unbound horizons begin to overwhelm.

## *Thalassocracy*

Today is rain.  
The hen fell off the boat  
again. Screams in her language.

Imitate that all one wants, the chords  
will never be right. They may as well fold  
in on one another. Tangled mess.

Balls of yarn scatter the docks.  
Lovers knit and wait for ships to come in,  
calling at the waves, calling to change this picture.

Painters gather at the quay.  
Somebody is in this background listening:  
those at sea who call back to the shore,

waving hellos and goodbyes,  
gesturing everyone away from themselves,  
to look, call, listen for another.

Imitation of the ocean  
who will mouth at the beach until it eats  
the boundaries of what it is anybody knows.

## *Recalling The Conversation*

Memory is the murmurs,  
stories we shared by the ocean.

We walked away from the crags  
as tho we could take these songs

into the whole of our smallness,  
call them up from the recesses of ear's archive

and release the notes of other worlds  
to construct the grandeur of any present.

Piecing together the collage of past  
distant chants float upwards

tuned to rhyme the ocean's rhythm.  
Persistant song home to all these words.

*After Sze Tsung Leong's Photograph of Cairo*

This book gives me an overlook of a city.  
A photo capturing white-stone, deep-tan and red-ochre:  
a collage of infrastructure that equals Cairo.

Stillness on the precipice of one moment.  
No clouds, the feeling is never-ending dryness--

an ubiquity, like any mysticism,  
in which one drapes themselves  
to walk through the labyrinths  
with the riddles already answered,  
ready to pretend that they know the right door.

Maybe the green door in the cobblestone alley:  
lintel of color, droplet in this coarse pool:  
beautiful fixation, unexplainable heed of my eye.

## *Secret Places*

The yellow blossoms  
yanked upwards in the fall.

Dried, now lasting images  
scattered in bulging paper,  
falling out of books like words.

A peeled orange  
that the room becomes perfume.  
Maybe then it's more of an unmasking,

like how I can now see your eyes  
through the rupture in your cloak.

## *Remembrance Of The Island*

Low clouds among pine shadows.  
Fishing-boat lights finding their islands,  
uncharted tho or charts forgotten,  
because these places are remembered  
the way one remembers fire occurs;

the way history is not soft or distant,  
but the movement of my head  
to hear your breath's  
pillowing whisper,  
secret from a heart:  
the pulse of life.

A single leaf passes from the shore wood,  
nestles into a tuft of yellowing sea lichen,  
waits in the spray  
to be dragged in,  
to move towards the boats  
in lost wave saunter  
or wait longer still  
to become a bird  
who flies out and into  
the breaking open  
of one question:  
how does even the water  
know where to return?

## *Warmth*

In the walk out the door,  
the bluejay darts towards her incursion  
into the fir tree: cave within a water flame;  
heart within a forgotten chest.

Coals within the grill basin,  
glowing under the grey sky  
as I gather wind to blow into its fire.

## *Between Breaths*

The ocean continues to sound,  
bursting the silence of coastal Tamaracks.

In apprehension,  
the calls that hang between the breaking waves  
(unknown bird chorus,  
airplane ambles the sky)  
to rearticulate into her breath.

Waiting for response at the bouldered beach,  
her breath again to exhale close to mine.



## *Back Breathes The Ocean*

In trying to write a generous thing  
I dump handfuls of mussels  
out onto the rock-lined shore,  
itself propping up the gull  
and eventually the seal,  
all these creatures then do fall  
back into the grey blue sea.

Trying to move a voice into abyss,  
alabaster sea flowers  
direct my eyes towards distance,  
fog unfolding from the wave  
upon wave that heaves back to  
from where the waves unfolded,  
to come in and move out  
to define contours of land.

Where I stand, breath of the flood before me  
rhymes my own unending thoughts;  
perceivable things' endless  
battering of horizon's inner shores.  
My way of knowing the sea  
is different in knowing  
but too has thrown a blanket  
over the world in its breath.

## *Moon's Language*

cloud-thought ocean

full-moon's silver midnight

phosphorescent motions

an arm-in-arm dance of argenteum pulses

shimmers over water-ripples

towards the indents left in lichen

Silence the sea ushers.  
The projection of moon's tower,  
a wordless touch.

## *In The Morning*

The sense I am constantly doing  
a motion from one place into another.

The mourning dove wings his flight  
over the canopy into a new maple.  
A new bough, a new home  
inquisitive mein hopping to branches extents  
where flush orange leaves remove themselves.

So many to rake in the yard today.  
As the cars pass the house  
seemingly they all have one place towards which to go.

## II

### **Poems For Finding:**

Love Poems And Other Songs Of The Threshold

*Threshold: what it means for two lovers  
to be wearing down, imperceptibly, the ancient threshold of their door*

-Rainer Maria Rilke

*Again, Here Are Words*

Out from Byblos I walk forth.  
Arrows shot out from the depth of a well,  
landing at varying heights in the desert sand  
blooming into azure flowers.

Their stem's pedestal hoisting petals upwards--  
an idling boat set to go outwards,  
set to contend the ocean  
as seasick Dawn spills her gold into the blue again.

Petals float across the sky's arch  
to meet the distant ground and further sky:  
my eyes' final reservations--  
that king whom we all bury  
in an oasis beyond the city walls.

## *Penetralium*

Exactly what I was always supposed to do.  
We walk into the quiet room together.

The doors creaking in the wind,  
your thumb pressing my palm.

Night owls fly in from the wilderness to coo.  
Dreams from reality, reality from dreams.

Who will ever guide their hands like this?  
Pulling out costumes,  
themselves buried within wooden drawers.

## *What Comes Back*

The world cannot be undone.  
Alone I throw a horseshoe crab shell into the ocean.

Shells, sand, coins, trash  
wash up onto a public beach,

a treasure people gather to take home.  
Even the gulls will rush to collect the coins.

People still tend toward being people,  
searching for warmth, searching for blankets,

thoughts that come back as trash, sand and shells  
But who could work that loom but us?

Moving the world forward around the circle,  
taking in all its parts to the pattern.

## *Arrival*

I know that here are the chipmunks  
in the Western sky grazing on pine cones.  
I know that here are the rocks  
imitating the rippling river current:

a watercolor grey tricking vision's boundaries.  
All statues are built to defy  
what I think rocks should do.

Venus of Hohle Fels the first statue,  
a pregnancy, symbol of constant becoming  
to show from nowhere into somewhere.

Two walk thru the swinging garden gates,  
their hands smear an ash against the door.



## *Lesson Of The Sun*

That's where light comes from.  
Always the sky, always upwards.

I reach my hand to grab you, royal-yellow leaf.  
The largely leafless tree I need to climb.

So much easier when I was a child--  
the tree was a tower,

branches reached heights where everything is visible,  
led to places I knew not to be,  
where wood would snap under my weight  
and I again could only look upwards.

But only from there, the ground,  
could I find the arboreal pipework's genesis  
a furnace of light and warmth  
seeping into my skin's pores.

## *At Last, We're All The Sun*

“If you eat the sun,  
you will forever be warm”  
God spoke a science  
to the apple tree.

I too am a fruit, I too eat light.  
Throw all of me into your basket.

But nobody can have anybody.  
The understanding of a child,  
told to *kill to win* his whole life,  
who throws gravel to hit a cloud.

Life comes thru the window each morning  
an islandless sea with no arrivals.  
One moment, everybody was simply here,  
everybody looking over their shoulders.

At last, skin comfortable against cold.  
I uncover a warmth--  
her timeless whispers into my ear.

## *The River*

Light the tea-candle and float it down the Hudson.  
A flame obscures its own shadow,  
passes thru the shudder of nocturnal opalescence,  
over reflections of trees and under moonbacked clouds.

Once someone dies, those left take up their silence:

Goose wings batter the water.  
Shifting radio songs saunter with their boat.  
Amtrak calls and beacons thru the northward tracks.  
Egrets shriek under river's stars.

σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος Pindar says  
*Human is but a shadow of a dream.*  
Dream: a blessed sound that the shadow reminds  
once the current overtakes the flame.

## *Thru My Hands*

The burnt-yellow leaves along the roof:  
ships wrecking in my porous thoughts,  
spilling celestial treasures,

a detritus of the sky-palmed earth,  
coins presiding between my finger and thumb,  
never to be cashed-in for anything but the thing thought.

## *Answers*

As neither survival nor ritual,  
molecules are compelled into an understanding.

A map of particles to find each thing's ipseity--  
that dance which invites another into their arms.

All the while, muffled whispers from across the room  
and each time a word is really heard  
unrecognizable wings fly over the back yard.

Maybe towards the coordinates of some lost, buried library.  
Yet, still, no place is as good as water.

## *What I Know*

My bones are the desired instrument.  
In sleep I need my body,  
in waking I need my dreams.

The wind rushes,  
chimes sound from the porch.  
I swear I've heard these bells before.

### *At Bash Bish Falls*

Shutters of the world are open.  
Ice along contours of small caves and fissures.  
White water spews from rock mouths  
motion within green, dark pools.

Whispering to me, whispering out.  
Water between three chemical states:  
thaw steams, mist heaves above the rushing stream--  
cup spills in the mind, the thought is outside.

I break-off ice pieces to place in my mouth  
roll them around my tongue until they melt,  
water dribbles onto the stones.  
Now seeing out-from, as much as, into these caves.

## *Search*

I have constantly worked my way back to you.  
Hudson ushering your waters to shore.

Or am I thinking of a bird,  
whose eyes all day watch the river currents,  
until watery entrails collapse into golden twilight,  
until your days final flight brings you to nest.

I sit at the exposed willow roots.  
Their largess is in my listening.

I continue to unearth gardens--  
small ways of understanding  
the actual occurrence of dreams.

Plays beneath the world's firmness,  
thru which daily I must walk.



## *Two Lines*

Attain a conception of what *shore* is

(at fifteen beholding stars above the beach,  
an arch of scattered illuminations  
tossed over the dark ocean,  
diving into their own reflection--  
an uncertain horizon.

Then, following that starry trail  
walking into the surf  
among nocturnal sky blossoms  
holes in the veil draping earth's skull  
that push thru stillness, that grow.  
*Being* also requires a motion,

requires island and sea tossing in space,  
meeting at one quiet confluence.

My vision.

Gnawing ocean.

The sky's distant border.

Perception meeting perception,  
moment meeting moment,  
the border quivers)

bells meeting the wind.

## *Affection*

“We cannot know,  
not without doing something,”  
she murmurs as she grabs my hand  
placing it gently on the window pane.

The crown blows right off my head.  
The diameter of my thought becomes unknown.

She scoops rice from a burlap bag,  
feeds the nagging sparrows in the yard.  
Wood-brown feathers fly into the grey clouds  
to become a part of the word *sky*.

## *Love, A Poem*

Who compels the flowers but you--  
breaking down the garden walls,  
letting in the meadow.

Way you move me without hands  
I carry wheat bushels to your mill  
on the border of dreams and purple winter chicory.

Loosening binding horizons,  
you bring down a snow  
falling beneath the forest boughs.

I hear a whisper against the earth,  
a tapping at the door  
as though you are a poem.

## *Ocean's Words*

Assume sky. Know.

Come back for language.

The runes will be here

always playing in the surf.

## *Realization*

The thought occurs, that angel,  
hunched over the bench in my silence,  
a messenger from all the world gives in sense.

Finger to lips to quiet those who follow  
crunching loudly little twigs and leaves.  
The closeness of ground

about which animals are nervous all the time,  
a remembrance of moment heaped on moment:  
that mad lion from birth  
still wild somewhere in these woods.

## *The Word*

The word is endemic to my being,  
constructs my body, from wherever it comes--  
parts divided: a sensation, a thought, the word.

Setting sail towards horizon,  
breaking open, thru the border, which is this:  
the sea flowing back,

right to me, hands in world's stream.  
I've been mulling the word over for hours,  
pointing at the soaring gull.

I swear, the same bird,  
I showed you hovering over moonlit waters,  
alone in his silver outward/inward passage.

## *The World*

Build a house  
without any walls.

Shelter in this world:  
eating the apple as apple and nothing more.  
Because there is nothing more

than words.  
Because that is all we have.

### III

## Where the Water Meets the Shore

*Old people in the Isles sing this or some other short hymn before a prayer. Sometimes the hymn or the prayer are intoned in the low tremulous unmeasured cadences like the moving and moaning, the sougning and the singing, of the ever murmuring sea on their own wild shores.*

*They generally retire to a closet, to an outhouse, to the lee of a knoll, or the shelter of a doll, that they may not be seen or hear of men. I have known men and women of eighty, ninety, and a hundred years of age continue the practice of their lives in going from one to two miles to the seashore to join their voices with the voicing of the waves and their praises with the praises of the ceaseless sea.*

-Alexander Carmichael on the Incantation "Rune Before Prayer" of the Scottish Highlands



### *Ode 1: Remembrance*

I lost that dream along the walk today.  
Birds who woke me in their flight--  
movement into sky formations, their symbols,  
a knowing without books.  
Daniel too must have met the lions before.  
Not as trick but how things are more earth than world.  
To work a system not work on others,  
not to be worked on.  
Moon's descent towards the waking cat in the window.  
The whole world an exodus from a cave,  
reworking the pieces of vista.

## *Ode 2: A Moment*

Songs from beyond the forest. Sparrow flies;  
blue silk drapes; french lilacs: a music.  
Each thing a chord that pools  
a moment's orchestration--  
a flood loosening the mind towards a motion,  
not as a forged thing, but as a growing fruit,  
in the orange grove listening to a new song erupt:  
notes of dragonfly wings rising to meet the wind.  
Senses coalesce to capture this inner poetry.  
My parts, my human, so profoundly same:  
bent, leaning over the edge of a fence,  
waiting to jump with the memory  
that heaves the day into next.

## *Ritual*

The reason for anything, the reason all keeps going.

A choral church song arises from a winter finch.

Memories eddy with water into the bathtub.

Washing feet at the garden wall, as if entry is once.

Bringing in everything I have, that too is future.

Life marries the branch to the tree.

Because forward is two ways, growth outlasts construction.

Light erupts from your blue eyes irises, petals unfold the stamen.

Oakum fibers weave a rope I throw into the tower window.

Sun comes back with handfuls of purple to move all this forwards.

## *My Part In January*

Three deer dart past the house,  
enter the forest snowy terra firma;  
owls preside in pine towers  
architecture already present, never built.  
The way water is the architecture of body  
keeping the skin full around the bones.

So when the cities burn and the cisterns break  
people drink the melting snow,  
wait for the sun moon chances to change light,  
bring the berries in from the cold  
to paint the house a vibrant raspberry.  
The already present color,  
the flush in my frozen cheeks,  
reminder that I too am a tree in this caged forest.

## *Point Of Crossing Thoughts*

The slow creak	of tired January	branches foretells
trees movement	wind that unpacks innate sound	this voiceless song
tracks in snow	I follow to beginning.	Forest's weather
a journey	leading to a frozen pond	crouching by stones
mind breathes out	your eyes in the reflection	so you led me.
Directions	by a compass of the heart	to an old fire
simply warmth	no power needed to be	this palm'd ember.

### ***Ode 3: Words For You***

*Tell him of Things.*

-Rilke

Patterns of chemistry run thru veins.  
Children on the sidewalk walk to the store  
as I once bought M&M's in another town,  
examined the clovers in the median,  
brought the flower home with me, named it *for you*.  
The words bloom petals within you.  
Words, those sounds rising up from one body,  
that all minds can listen to know its thing is here,  
a story of elsewhere coinciding with this moment,  
any memory, each person's facts, timelessly to grow.  
Waves slowly revealing  
the contents of the ocean to the shore.

Waters given to construct human blood.  
But what is this chemistry without you speaking?  
Speak to me your story.  
Polish the stone and see a reflection.  
That saintly task to sneak past borders.  
But forests and pastures do not end  
as life doesn't cease with mine.  
Waking some morning, fumbling for keys,  
figure knocking fiercely at the door.  
Nobody, not even time,  
can run off with my words.

### *Ode 4: Muse*

A muse is a stone that falls from the scaffolding.  
Heart beats crouching in the shrubs by chapel walls.  
Vulture wings flap from gutters to over river.  
Currents exuding and swallowing water.  
All these phrases I've heard before.  
Laws of mind, an ancient gossamer still collecting dew  
As temperatures rise, snow steams to mist.  
A child waits in the desert for the storm to come in,  
following the maze to its center realizing he can fly.

## ***First Incantation***

*There is no life that does not rise  
Melodic from scales of the marvelous.*  
-Robert Duncan

Jam smeared on the counter in mom's kitchen;  
today, I found, to share, an affordable pear.  
I will come in bearing laurels close to my chest  
because everything like this matters.

Lights turned on in the back corridors.  
Warmth of a fire working a temple into the mind.  
From window, a gull flies into seething ocean's abyss  
to invent dictionaries of unknown vocabularies:

constellations of world pulling things into story.  
These trajectories a *Song of Other*,  
from the swell under lovers' touching lips  
where the Earth rises from the ocean.



***You (Second Incantation)***

This line, this poem-- all words are for you.  
Follow what I say, an overgrown path,  
everywhere thickets or berries snagging and painting ankles.  
Nowhere is a place at the end of the circle

with everybody rooting around in the woods,  
pulling the seed from the center of my chest,  
or your chest, but the seed is there waiting:  
other dream beneath mind's silent lake.

## *Found In The Clouds*

Slowly reassembling the memory--  
mystery of cloud movement, pieces of sky  
a child finds standing on the rooftop.

Within unthinking veins, something blooms;  
the spinal stem awakens neverending roots,  
an ancient earthen cistern housing vital waters.

Eventually, kneeling, rolling among rose petals,  
unable to count the shape running thru my mind  
clouds separate back into some vessels of horizon.

### *Third Incantation*

Words for the heart to simply speak.  
A book which can never be written down.

A bird leaves this field for another realm.  
The sky will always follow closely.

Sun ends day by breaching the gap with night orange.  
Lovers within each other,  
simultaneous orgasm,  
the breath of a wholly other--  
eyes become islands, the whole world sea.  
Door swings wildly in the wind.

When the wind enters I know what is here  
as joints know to bend to the mind.  
Dandelions grow thru cement's decay.

What more than what you and I do  
is the nature by and within which we do?

Space filling in with atmosphere;  
we, as always, wander under its silent stars.

## *Empathy*

I am still playing among the pillars  
that hold all this up, waiting  
for sun to show me elsewhere,  
show me limits: road, town, harbor.

Humans standing on the beach  
each you is shrine of that which I will never see.  
Your beach is a seagull, yours fire, yours fear.

At the threshold of limits,  
mind holds up these multitudes,  
moving sacred waters to their basins,  
to devine their being amongst experience's vast tumult

and sit in this thought as a new habitation.  
Book opens, beacon upward surges  
to illuminate the pillars of your ever-shifting chamber.

## *Letter in the Stone*

To whoever finds these carvings,

The implication of *to be* in a Christian narrative is “the fall,” and, so, from somewhere, from a garden. When people talk of “the garden”-- a garden-- it’s because they want to be there. A guiltless state. Worryless. Working towards the perfection of an imagined pomegranate tree, sun breaking between the flower’s calyx and the drooping orange lily petals. But, what more is happiness from a sweet fig on a lost paradise tree than a planned, unlasting moment? A garden is planted and planned. One cannot walk among fruit groves and not achieve fruit.

The unplanned walk, the lapsarian walk, somewhere separate and always present is the circular pathway, pathway along a river coursing towards an endless meadow. The only map are words clambering from the throat, books of the particular moment.

Bones to flesh to skin:  
by these people know.  
Nobody planted people,  
planned what they do/ what they’ve done.  
Humans came from the meadow:  
wild thickets, hawthorn, queen-anne's lace,  
tall sawgrass, mosquitoes, ticks,  
the sweltering sun, the pulse of cicadas.

And what of this time in which people always trying to get away? And if they do...  
the question is: does it work when all simply are here?

Picking out miscellanea from the kitchen sink, grab the sponge and squeeze.

That is the decision I always thought I'd make.

Then...was it a crow? Sent not with a message between his talons, but as the message himself: an omen-- which is to say, a being of significance. And isn't that anybody or anything? omen moving among omen, incessantly calling to one another.

The crow lands on a stone ruin, a rose petal between his beak. Because everyone is here to see everything always moving. Because everybody is among the moving, knowing the actual is the sound banging at the door.

Inner wilderness, always present, baring forth on the other side of everything.  
The world each one carries together.

Truly love,  
The Stones

***Ode 6: Hagia Sophia, Pining For Faith***

All these different times walking around  
the dome of worship, which Earth as God revolves  
that Sun's light illuminates mosaic pieces.  
True architectects of Hagia Sophia  
from whom people built chiseled mineral into sky  
because we too are all light in different times  
unlacing the petals from their flowers  
to find a wisdom, a simple photosynthesis--  
Sun as water, directionless in stream.

***Ode 7: If We Meet Again***

I can't do anything but choose verbs.  
I sneak into snow to remember birds also sleep,  
let myself be tired, keep on moving.  
Find the monastery on top a burgeoning mesa.  
All minds live somewhere that isn't body.  
From this: the fear that we will cross paths.  
Yet, we're already here together,  
mingling in the sky, light breaching mountains,  
waking on the hilltop to offer an eagle dream's thorny rose.



## *In These Patterns*

### I

A search party who suspects murder.

Because we have all run like this  
into deep self-caves,  
mind's hands fiddling with rocks  
which, in our abstractions, could be any thing.

### II

I watch you paint the canvas  
more real than the ochre leaves at your feet--  
actual kisses, each other's faces, the world...

this unpatterned mosaic,  
intricate consideration of each brush-stroke,  
each a cerulean stone, a sun, a moment's flood.  
Hands raise city and pasture to sky's high-ground

to where three brown finches fly-- one stays to eat.  
Dinner on the porch watching the pickups drive.  
Twigs in hair, wondering how any of us got this far.

## *Behind The Door*

Creaking door,  
steady wind,  
ear to Alder.

Open ports,  
so why can't I sail out?  
The sea hums to affirm a continuity

but of unique wave that crests  
into another wave--  
innumerable tweaks thruout the ocean  
for the next pulse upwards.

As if to sing:  
singularity implies a loneliness,  
that there is one person in history  
that one mind could place on the pier  
that the world is not already infinitely discrete.

## *Mechanism Of An Interior Music*

Follow your world out to its moon.  
Boat along night's silver waters.  
Quiet buoyancy of leaves and branches.

A hum of vibrant still-lives  
builds rapid movement towards a stop-motion:  
thoughts' constant resonance.

Boat floats towards sun's radiance,  
mimic of coyotes' howling cantos,  
shouts from those hanging over the taffrail.

***Ode 8: Where Only Two Can Arrive***

Open the next door, find the next world.  
In the back of your mind I am cooking.  
You lift the ingredients from under my skin.  
Just now though can we make this dinner.  
You stand across an old bridge.  
The island to which our flesh and thought floats.  
Eyes barely seeing beyond the shadows of these plains.  
Our dawn boats anticipate next twilight.  
That fire we billow within the world's freeze.

### *Ode 9: Mind*

I walk into this dim, quiet room dripping.  
Years culminate to one step.  
Then the mind busies itself with what has been done.  
What now draws me far indoors.  
Fireplace warmth, drying clothes.  
Just for this, I keep my heart poised here.  
The distant reverie of those outside.  
I stand at the doorway of each second.  
A plate that tilts slowly in the sink.  
I grasp to retrieve the crown  
beneath the steaming water.

### ***Ode 10: Absence***

He has been here before,  
his tracks are in the snow.  
Chimney smoke pulled into night's vastness  
*with stars' stories-- con-stell-ations.*  
Memory embedded within a celestial gaze.  
For each eyes, a personal *muthos*.  
Echoes among the mind's stalactites.  
Tell me that astronomer, speak sermon  
to these absences grasping my forearm.  
Ice baldachin that melts over the silent pond.

### ***Ode 11: Detection***

Always speaking this essay.  
Voice is a star-- pinhole light  
that ruptures dark sheets of night.  
Distant glow of a city to which all roads lead.  
The heart expands into shadowed world.  
But a sea is only waiting for itself.  
Nobody can wait for anything more than everything.  
Keep the door open,  
let's watch from the porch.  
Endavouring to articulate a silence,  
a promenade to which I watched people flock when I was young.

## *By Songs, Creation*

“Let us drink deeply before the wolves come”  
but I am a bigger problem than wolves  
when removed, not from a paradise,  
but everything and everyone around me daily.

Run into the house into the woods.  
By the fire, Chopin’s piano ascends to a single voice,  
Davis’ trumpet perfectly breaks textures of invisible air,  
Lamar orders history into a communal music.

Songs of thick wool knitted to brave the actual,  
stories in which somebody rises from a well  
I was told was filled when water disappeared.



### ***Fourth Incantation***

I walk to the garden beds  
to extract sweet potatoes from the loam  
to show sun the work done.

Harvest from etymology meaning *pluck*.  
Movement from the thought to nerves.  
An *idea* eyes see, a vegetable hands *pluck*.  
My soul takes over and cooks us dinner,

moves like a lonely child's thoughts by the pond,  
who remembers traces of his recurring dreams--  
standing in the center of an inscrutable forest  
holding a crown and not finding its name,  
gifting you a blanket buried under an ancient oak.

## *Story of Generation*

Quiet ear to this one time: a person.  
The older are elders, tell us their *epos*,  
An epic is all words within one life.

Deeper moments of my grandfather:  
he tells me at 5 am of his father's house--  
Western Pennsylvania, steel town, six other children.

His father's father a man of unbreakable silences.  
in a house of Slovak words  
which stayed with members of the family I never met.  
Here, Dutch, my father's father, your influence.

Learning a part of your name again.  
Palmed waters physically untraceable  
but in your mind, your chest and what you speak.

Invisible tendrils reach into your each moment,  
their bellflowers ringing in your action.  
The person by whom my own words rise,

allowing my own time--  
a heron flying from the pond at dusk;  
I have only read about where he could be going.

## *The Flower's Importance*

Humming from the sleepless temple  
water splattering on daffodils.  
Wordsworth never with me like Coleridge,  
never knew my daily, unconscious prayers, poems  
for which I hoist these images, these sounds:  
flags over a fiery field, over carnage  
with nowhere else to go, but up  
words from heaven, angels in the light  
searching for some painter  
to gift them their halos.

## *Hymn*

Written flowers  
uncover things  
in human time--  
breathing out heart,

capillary  
anybody has,  
needs no power  
only water.

Maps are alive  
being the message  
stuck in branches  
knocking down trees.

Please do something.  
Unbuckle time  
from your body--  
rose grows again.

***Ode 12: Ever-Present Light***

She walks thru the ivy-covered arch.  
The sun always the headstone of a moment,  
coming into the foreground of time to sit.  
A boat never still on the ocean.  
Nature's relativity before Einstein  
painstakingly half-stepping to us down the stairs,  
descending down scale to one moment,  
to violin's ecstasy, sound writhing in air  
light meeting music.  
An owl leaves at sunrise,  
flight with no choice but direction.

### ***Ode 13: Portrait Of The Soul***

Call in the painter for one last portrait.  
An image of solitude, but you look in:  
waves of your inner waters rush forwards  
towards fires gathering in my chest's center  
to break open traditional geometry  
which defines heart as shape, blood flow as metric,  
that the only truth are arrows of mind-body,  
that there is no archer, quiet on an inner river...  
and he is the soul, tossing gold into your eyes.

### ***Ode 14: Geography Of An Answer***

Tear the ax from my chest, throw it back into past.  
Maybe we all arrived here together  
and I didn't even see the back door open,  
the pasture expand into evanescent horizon  
Anywhere where can I sit and wait for anybody.  
Stare into my eyes, I am from the same stuff as tulips.  
That's a science that we've arrived at God.  
Yet, I'm still here searching for my argument,  
sifting thru the sand like my head is buried,  
staring out the window to waltz towards the clouds.

### *Ode 15: Want*

What is it that any one of us want?  
In the snow past the bushes shaking leaves,  
or no more than your heart & running for the distance.  
Sense waits at the forest's edge with my hat.  
But running past where I can count things...  
No-- not even nothing is mine.  
That's a lesson from Clarissa Dalloway:  
many threads of a spiders web blindly pulled--  
peering thru the center I shake in anticipation.  
Tho, I cannot wait for the flood if I am already drowning.



## *Hymn Crafting*

Belltones persist.  
Ribbon unfolds  
moment's music:  
mountains behind clouds.

Dream of searching.  
Then, fabric-rips;  
fish bursts from the water.

Sounds are inwards,  
so outwards reply.  
Speak words you know.  
Not words you believe.

Write as tho singing.  
Sing as tho running up the stairs.  
Sky becomes space.  
Call persisting, make melody.

***Ode 16: Message From A Room In The Back Of My Mind***

Not in a recent memory, but somewhere blind.  
Within a Victorian mansion, a big tabby on the sill.  
Both of us waiting for night, the wind to rush.  
Carnations blown in from the season of my dream.  
Lasting finch stuck to my knee in a Moorish garden.  
That I might wake to remember a momentary answer.  
Day waits a wolf I want to pet.  
Again, I will eventually happen in spring.  
Even this beast side reminding some ancient calendar.  
I am an earthen creation awaiting understanding  
from the bellowing tones off the mind's shores.

### ***Ode 17: Everything***

So much leaf so much sidewalk.  
Their parts are not their verisimilitude.  
I've walked this direction innumerable times.  
I know them in their consistent pattern,  
working a story with the direction of all our bodies  
in motion pulling elusive tethers to open new doors.  
Enough opens and I'm only *me* no longer.

So we are story not narrative,  
a complex of everything.  
Wind courses thru the house,  
blowing paper in the corner,  
running into walls without asking what they've seen.  
Scared of the storm, somebody throws a rock.  
Hold my hand, I'm seeking the already found.

## *A Moment, A Drink*

Thru the door I walk naked.  
O this is not me, this is not naked.

(This is when I hiked a mountain in December  
searching for some peak, any view  
tectonic plates pushed into summit).

Bare as I was, borders of moments eroded,  
to anticipate all meanings within my time of nakedness.

Whole of time knows your iris' golden rings.  
Buckets of water slosh over pale's edge.

Returning each day to the well,  
as tho the body is a construction of humming canals,  
locks open: a moment, a drink.

***Ode 18: Present Acts Of The Past***

Daydream: Vivaldi's fourth winter violin concerto,  
a car floats off-kilter thru the sky.  
One blackberry pulled from childhood bush  
Before some bully smashed the tomatoes.  
Seeds across garden bed digging into soil.  
The Earth provides the place for these roots to take.  
Nothing is ever forgotten.  
I rearrange the furniture in my house,  
the way the snow fell lightly on the ocean.

*After Louise Bourgeois Marble Sculptures At Mass MOCA*

A constant water drips,  
unveiling deeper strata of marble,  
doors to earth's center  
already a city,  
thick walls of marsh reeds.

Pearl-white ginseng flower grows from a boulder.  
The rock expands, as tho being poured upwards,  
firm clouds, bursting with lightning.

But the lightning knows me.  
I do not know it, but the marble swathes  
yet itches. An unplaceable memory:

blue cream pitcher brushed,  
breaking onto canary-yellow table runner;  
or I am outside, coarse grass, dry, cracking dirt.

the large egg-shell bed sheet  
falls onto me, off mom's clothes line.  
There I waited for the whispers  
to overwhelm me as stone.

## *Always Again*

The story never ended.  
People mill about the park,  
a fresh leaf splashes into soil.

The world begins again always--  
*again is an other time*  
with the same photons.

An illuminated bramble in pathway's distance.  
Resist the seen by being seen.  
Shore of damp pine needle feeds their nascent trunks.  
Greedy hawk snatches leaf on water.

Blindly gazing out the window,  
fiddling with dry lips the entire car ride,  
knowing air is a memory touching the present.

### ***Ode 19: Motion***

Sound of ice cube tightening to air.  
Thinking this sound is the sound  
of all the world's trees falling in suffocation.  
I know why matter *matters*,  
why water, as a mineral, is my main part,  
the center emerald on my crown  
made from tall meadow grass and mud.

The crown of life is not the crown of knowledge  
as long as one has to live to know.  
Going along the highway at midnight,  
I realize why streetlights' strange quiet  
hurls me into the thought of motion.  
A rabbit hops into a nowhere forest.  
A cloud leaves the distant mountains.



## *Song From The Wind*

A song from the wind:

Unfolding branches from their trees  
the winds brought decree from nowhere  
that I could see, two eyes that teather me.

Starlings erupt from the field.  
Wherever they go is the boundary.

The sea, where horizon is always ending.  
Tell me the story of how you filled your skin.

No accidents,  
reason is simply what everything does.

***Ode 20: Lesson From The Robin***

If someone can contain the thing,  
someone will try to consume.

A survival technique run amok,  
as we've run from the hills,  
out from the heart.

A robin's twig and saw-grass nest--  
a careful construction by instinct,  
an extension of the bird's growth,  
inspiration of her passion for life.  
She protests that life is always here  
pecking and scratching my window at dawn.

## *Speechless*

Aster, the star,  
I name you.  
Chicken & rice, the food  
I name you.  
Katie, my love,  
I name you.

Then, you wrap your arms  
around my shoulders,  
under the milky-way scarred sky  
and those names dissolve,  
snowflakes against the concrete.

## *Poem for Ending*

However, in the end,  
poetry may be defined  
(tho I often think to know),

at anytime there is a blossom  
ontop the chaotic sea,  
going out, coming back, never sinking.

A poetic stance from the shore,  
looking at the world as tho listening,  
to let the world become within in you.

O creature who can perceive creation  
within the world you perceive,  
the story that world speaks,  
by those signs and sounds  
may any of this persist.

Listen.  
The rain begins.

## Endnotes

Quotations for epigraphs and art considered come from (in order of appearance):

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