

1-2013

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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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= = = = =

To give a word to the same
and make different.
Jungle snow.
Roads do not go.
I hold you in my heart it said
I have no hands.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

There is bleak or better
litter of time we habit
jetsam deities statues
pinkish marble statue's
great toe of Artemis
to whom the women come
to pray for aim. *Daß mein
Leben ein Ziel hat*
sang Brahms. Sings
still my life's goal
to deal with always
must. The committee
of me busy deciding.

1 January 2013

FUNICULAR

All important evidence
swinging cable car
rabbit tracks in snow
winter musements
a monument to time
future periphrastic:
history has not
yet even begun.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

Wolf riding women long
ago come back renewed
all younged to arrive
smooth shanks off shag they
swim the Canadian air.

Burn, as if oil. Tell,
as if folktale. The woods
are full of you today
abide me to house.

1 January 2013

=====

Cream of thing.

Avail me your sleek.

Insubstantial

adipose contour yum

a muscle made of air.

Treat it like snow

swept in the Tuscan court

to matter Michelangelo.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

I am the man
you read about
when you were a child.

Fear and love
appropriated
in those days

your virginal neurology.
How am I different
now, how can the woods

be full of light and air
snow underfoot
a crow calling?

1 January 2013

= = = = =

Things by their right names
of course love us—
we said blue and twig and starling
and so it was. Every
word an elegy, every
true statement must have a bird
somewhere in it we solve by fugue.

1 January 2013

=====

Meant to be generous
but it snowed, The camp
was on the river. Snakes
rocks guards. People
treated you as if.
But you don't know what.
It was the place beyond
comparison and all you knew.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

They call that thing a river does
an eddy. A violin playing itself.
In the dream she just wanted
to sit in the corner surprising
herself, it might be with pleasure.
I could hardly understand how
far away everything is. Young
as she was she always wore black.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

Only later did I learn I dreamed it
the thing I said. Was it said
already in the dream? Or did I make
memory wake up and remember?
Memory anyhow's a made-up thing
like pretty clothing we sew then don—
but what is the body we put it on?

1 January 2013

ARIA

O Lord it's me O Lord
send down an update fast
upgrade me with thy new release
for I am worn with glitches.

And as I prayed thus I looked up
saw a dove come and sit on the phonline
outside my window—no lie, it still is there.

So when a bird appears
it upgrades the system.
They change your mind.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

Lost in the selfishness
stumble over your own roots

curl up beneath the tree
that grows up out of you.

There has to be some way
to get out of the forest.

You have to leave me.

1 January 2013

HOW TO WRITE

Write out of the corner of your eye
the way you watch yourself strut down the street
on a summer evening in a brand-new city.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

One more word
than I was given
one more tree
than the woods hold.

This is not about
greed, it is green
to know the earth again
in what it means.

Or trying to.
Forgive me, things.
Meaning is the most
arrogant of all our songs.

1 January 2013

= = = = =

What can the new year say
without using last year's words?

It has to come out of dreams,
eating veal cutlets in Innsbruck
mistaking the river for a silver
headband a princess lost from her hair?

It does not avail. It sleeps
between one breath and the next.
And all by itself it wakes.

1 January 2013
(*impromptu on Google+*)

=====

Organize the obvious
what's left is that stain
on your bat mitzvah dress
that mystery

1.1.13

THE EDGES OF

1.

The edge the tooth
the cat stirring in the night

the sour grapes our fathers ate
our teeth our teeth

are set on edge
o god what do words mean

the psalmist prayed
hidden godhead and guitar

abscondita herself
concealed by the actual

stars that reveal her.

2.

The *the*

we set before the thing

defines us

specifies our relation

to the matter world

where teeth chip

strange sounds

happen to the night

things fall

and in the foliage

all summer long

teasing virgins scamper

pale or umber

shapes in green.

3.

The *we*

argues a pretense

one mouth to speak

unknown multitudes

meaning-meaners

as from these forests

from time in time

someone explicit

saunters forth

a queen of astral

love a shadow

a waddling porcupine.

4.

so the day of the cat and the tooth
the road and the border guard

La tago de la kato kaj la dento
la vojo kaj la limo gvardio
dormantaj en la ombra ravino
tago ĉiam diras al vi
tiom da aferoj se vi aŭskultu

asleep in the shadowy ravine
a day will always tell you

so many things if you listen
the *you* in question

is a distant star
whose gleam on desert nights

is quick enough —light
is speed— to cast

a clear show of
some other person

dearest friend
on the sparkling sand.

2 January 2013

A WEEKDAY SERMON OF

FATHER RABAT-JOIE

The things we love to live with kill us
seems

cat on the staircase
deadly swimming pool.

All pleasure
(sing it like King Pleasure,
play-zhur)

all pleasure is a little bit of suicide.
Aspirin takes the pain away but leaves the sin—
Thou Shalt Not Kill also means yourself
even bit by bit,

all pleasure is compulsion
all compulsion kills.

3 January 2013

= = = = =

Get one dumb idea
and drive it through the wall

the birds soar through
come peck out your whys—

our morbid science turning
mind to money

don't trust any vision you can buy
come listen to me and learn free

the innate psychedelia of the waking mind—
every word in your vocabulary

backfires, explodes, tries
to blow you to the places—

sink into the danger and suddenly see.

3 January 2013

= = = = =

1.

Because of what eyes
surmise makes you special
so born on Jupiter where
the moons grow grass
that down here you have to
teach the czarina's ocarina
to soothe cooing tutors
fed on organ meats

I understand best
by looking in whose eyes
now going to embarrass
both we are crocodiles
in the same ancient Nile
we are born in mud
and live in music
let me lick your wound
that permanent displacement
in the rhetoric of signs.

...

(3 January 2013)

THE OMICRON

the little o
happens on the way home
neurological,
starts
in the pain receptors of the skin

and causes pleasure.

The omicron
likes to decide: you do it,
you say the touch is wound or healing,
you call the meet of skin with skin
casual, inappropriate, offensive, calming,
exciting, you say ll the words you know

but skin abides, the raw fact
of being trapped in a body, of reaching out
and what happens,
the hurt or hap of that,
as if language only came
into being to tell
about the skin
and what it in itself so silently knows.

You are me like anybody
nobody's business, the omicron

rolls along this spoken skin
tickling, teasing, teaching
healing your life
is this little letter
the nice thing about the alphabet there is no waiting
the omicron is there
as soon as you round your lips

and for a long time or a little time
it sounds in the room
such breath makes
and something in you remembers.

4 January 2013

CLEARING THE WHY

the deficit

after feeling.

O busy dream

men call the morning

but women are still sleeping

wise.

Being clear is also caring.

Touch.

And then let go.

No one knows

which counts more.

The deficit is feeling

what's left after human interaction.

Haptics.

But the touch is only part of it,

the skin thing,

the whore-house piano roll,

the sleeping dog.

2.

You get over these things
but never get over the deficit
you get over things
but things never get over you—

they cling,

they inhabit

your attention,

thing-music

makes you dance.

Dance means to take
your body for a ride
take yourself into space
and let the place decide.

3.

Alors, the dance-floor makes the dance.

No Answer Required

you did it already

just by watching.

Or is it that we lose things

by seeing them?

Is the knife
too light in the carver's hand?

Or the rational
enfeebles us
leaves us ill-prepared
for The Contingency,
whereas the drunkard is always ready,
the lunatic needs nothing but the moon.

4.

A grey car shows less dirt. Dirt less.
The words fox you,
 the girl flees the city
 no longer young,
the job is waiting but will they
remember how close she is to her skin,
will they know that's all that matters,
will they have a meter by the door
that tells someday we each will be alone?

Sad employers longing for caresses
using humans as resources
what does that mean, all the sad words,

all the sad o's,
orgasms, ocelots howling in the rain forest,
owls and stained glass
ogival energies of the merest church—
o collect all this
and send it to heave.
give the light back to God.

4 January 2013

= = = = =

I am the light you can't turn on.

—Alana Siegel

Since childhood I have dreamt you
sometimes even the bulb warm in my hand
but no light comes

and the room
when is perfectly dark is very large
might not be a room at all
or room is space, goes on forever,
when the light won't turn the dark goes on forever
everywhere

but when there's a teasing mocking glimmer
a dusky yellow amber almost fading
then there is a room and fills with shapes
and sometimes the shapes are moving

again and again I pull your chain
snap your plastic switch up and down up and down
and nothing of you happens.

This is the dream
of going blind. Of losing sight
in a world full of shapes,

and always the sound of them moving.

I'm not trying to deceive you

this is the way the dream is

year after year,

way the world is

a vast blind space with glimmers here and there

that might be you,

shadows of shadows, shadows

thrown on the walls and the walls are moving,

and when there is a little light it shows the terror.

You are a part of me, Your silence

belongs to my fear,

and maybe you're afraid in me too,

are you afraid I might be brighter than you?

But I am dark,

maybe you're afraid even all your light

couldn't light up the darkness I am.

Maybe you're afraid of me, afraid to try,

So even if you one day came on

what would your light show?

Are you afraid to see who I really am?

4 January 2013

= = = = =

Legitimate as a hand
holding a banana
in a northern land
of a man dreaming
southerly all day long
and who is his mother?

4 January 2013
(improvviso on Google+)

= = = = =

Let the yen dissever from the dollar
And the scarlet birds of Indonesia
Flock to my friend's yard and squawk
Pleasantly till the neighbor's goat..
Hides his six horns in the compost
Hoping for love. Barbara, does your
Lady next door even have a goat.
Is love on the loose in Bali, is the
Afternoon longer than the night.
Spät spät croak the little toads
Who hide in the rafters, hear them,
They look at you with eyes like mine.

4 January 2013

= = = = =

Let me risk an answer
to those eyes. The crime
of fovea slays me to the spot.
they laud inm they haul
half-reluctant suitors to,
leafwise tremble arbor.

Ardor of that cool observe.
She brings her forest with her
silent murmur of her glance
the old book says no one can read.

5 January 2013

= = = = =

A car is friction
a road is always open
use a broken flashlight
to spell my other name
the one you know

and so few do, the said
of my hand saying
the lucky misery
of knowing me. Bricks
to build bookshelves, books
to hold what's left of us.

Look for false notes
in my old champagne,
wait for a few *cents*
blurry off my low F—
we priests sing down
there where we live
the lowest place of all
holy beneath her chair—
even below the shrill
sound of joiner's work
but only if you listen.

5 January 2013

= = = = =

Is the sprinkling of snow we had
also a snowkling of spring?

Are all weathers
enwrapped together?

Explain to me Emily
you classicist with earnest
eyes so easy to surprise
with Attic innuendo

am I secretly your brother
too, so we live for one another
no more separate than snow
flakes in he drifts at Borodino?

Are we the same? As if name
color and all those accidents
just counterfeit a difference?
Are these words themselves now

really coming out of your mouth?

6 January 2013

ELEGY FOR SIN

Bees are our ancestors
living all at the same time hiving together.
Ajmac. Day of the penitent
kneeling in the snow
a vulture overhead.

What snow?

What sin do I confess?

All of them.

To live

is to take life.

So apologize

and go on living.

2.

In the past dozen years or so
vultures have become common in this region.
I first saw one here in the apple orchard 1990
but only later came many.
We remember these things,
we are the ancestors, we take stock
and bear things in mind and get confused.

We are always apologizing
so apologize to us too.
And most of all, apologize to things,
things are so beautiful, chaste, remote—
it's an ecstasy to pick up a piece of wood.

3.

The distance moves.
Crow on rooftop eating snow
we drink where we can
we run on water and on air
most of which is everywhere.

Apologize for telling lies
those cognitive adulteries.
Apologize for eating meat
which is a part of what you are.

All food is human flesh
and every restaurant cannibal.

4.

He carries me in his beak
he means me
he is a crow, he carries
what I think is me
something fragmentary raw and cold

he brings me to his house
hidden in the air
and feeds me to his vulture friends
then I tomb my way
soaring into heaven
where I rule alone
limitless blue emptiness
my sins are forgiven.

6 January 2013

Day 7 Ajmac

=====

sGrol.dKar.la

Eyes in her hands

she sees

the me before me.

7.I.13

=====

**Who knows me
after all, who
answers the ball
when it swims across the lawn,
who dares to open the leaf?**

**Because there is always a going in
always an in.**

7 January 2013

=====

Crows on snow

interpret

and then forget.

7.I.13

=====

**Think of the first time
that song was heard
where did it go
in those who heard it**

**and what did it do
to the air,
 the walls
of the room, old
oak of the floor**

**did the glass in the window
hear it, did it change
the look of things out there
where maybe they could here it too?**

7 January 2013

IQ BAKXAI

**for I have a man-cry too
the silent one
you hear in the woods
you hear me deep
in the slowly drying ink.**

7 January 2013

=====

These cars up Cedar Hill tell time
to wait for me. I have a cold
(as Pessoa before me said, and got
a marvelous poem out of cough and snot)

and what else is missing, suddenly
to be a member of the uneasy
confraternity of the sick
I never am. So tell time for me

she'll have to wait her turn—
she?—o you didn't realize
that time is feminine?
How else could she last forever?

And I'll be here waiting
before she comes back.
Back? Of course—from
the beginning of the world

till now is just one day
and it isn't even noon.
My time is your time
as the dumb old song said.

7 January 2013

=====

**Have I ever really even once gone out there
out through the snowy trees or animal streets
or stores full of merchandise I can't understand
in all these years of looking? Where does looking
take a man. Wait, There was a grey wood fence
out the back window on Crescent Street.
In the marshes of Kinderhoek timothy grass
with nutritious tubers I never ate. Wait.
Jamaica Bay. Was it always just looking?
Was it always saying this and saying that
and never standing up and being gone?
What would it be or be like
to get up right now and go there,
there, that place through the window,
and I came to walk there I'd have to leave
my heart-house here? I'm asking simply,
humbly even, can a man enter what he sees?**

7 January 2013

CASTA DIVA

To the chaste

Goddess she sings

as in my folly

I pray to Wisdom.

7.I.13

=====

**There is no bondage worse
than being committed to your own feelings.**

7.I.13

=====

**Cold and bright
this snow for you
you sprawl in it
to make angel wings.
You ski out the window,
a lake of wine of beer of mead
flows under a bridge.
Trolls live there
and help you with your hair
braiding, untangling,
weaving winter flowers in,
silk ones, peonies showy
and small plumeria
till you smell like an island
your skin like sea foam,
my touch slips off
and blows away.
How can you bear to be
naked in the snow?
You whisper me your
answer as you always do:
the snow is naked too.**

7 January 2013

=====

**My childhood was all steeplejack
all brave blue boy in a bonny sky
and down he'd come with tar on his smell
and god how near he'd been to God
up there with the cross or the weathervane.**

7 January 2013

=====

**Perplexed by evening
the snow purpled
I watched
till the light in the dining room
was louder than the sky outside
and the trees had all gone home.**

7 January 2013

=====

enjoy giving up

—A.L.

the grist in the mill
squeaks under the millstone
the water in the sluice
gushing by turns
the whole miserable history
into fine whitish flour
the miller's daughter
that's her make-up her
glaring crimson lips
try to pronounce my own
most difficult name.
I press my mouth to hers
to quiet mispronunciation,
if she calls me wrongly
I might fly away or she
melt in my arms to dough
mush remembrance love
then where would we be?
No mill, no girl, no wheat.
The image of her lips
lasts a long time
then flies away like a bird.

**I think of all the things
that will never be mine
and I smile, nothing to lose,
everything I have ever
imagined turns to stone
in my mind. The rock
on which I stand.**

7 January 2013

=====

**The me who talks to you
is other me.**

**We
the all of us
are levels
of imposture felt together
to *seem* a smooth person
someone you could name.
So forgive my anxieties
and all the other lies.**

8 January 2013

=====

**The voice comes down the sky
and what it says is the pure
sound of itself — no word
disturbs the clarity of that presence**

**suddenly with us. Later the words come
and the magic goes, now
it's just opera or hymn tune — story
obliterates glory — but how**

to keep that absolute unsaying sound?

8 January 2013

=====

Hearing
is not listening,

listening
is full of me

intention
desire ego

hearing
is full of you.

You are what is there to be heard.

8 January 2013

=====

**In the land of signs
a color is money**

**I don't have the breath
to tell another lie**

**how can I give you what you need
am I a Viking in a funny hat**

**my red-furred forearm ready
to grab diamonds from the sky?**

**Just curl up on my lap *modo* cat
a minute lost from the annals**

**doing nothing nothing doing
just being here. And where is that?**

THE GIFT

I want to give you something I don't have—
and that's every friend's problem, every
lover's. But the lover can cheat, and bring
you his body or her body, and while it's there
both of you forget what's missing. Something
you can't name, Something I don't know.

So imagine a whitewood frame
around no canvas—just a frame
to define a space of emptiness.
Here it is. I put it in your hands,
now carry it around the woods
the neighborhood the room
and look through it until you see
something you never saw that way before.

And I don't have that either, I have
nothing of much use, But at least
for that moment you got to see.

Or maybe there was nothing there
so you lay the pale splintery thing down
and change the subject. You are kind,
don't want to hurt the feelings of emptiness.

**The fact that there was nothing there to see
is itself a kind of seeing, no? No,
only another disappointment, We endure
our desires and their thwarting. I want
to give you something and this want
is the only thing I have to give you.**

for Susan, her birthday, 9 January 2013

DAYS OF THE PRACTICE

**Woke stiff as Ötzli
in his leather body
babe-bent beneath the ice,
be fetal, be morning, be ready
for the pain to be born
the pain of being new**

again, of being you.

This is the practice.

**Every waking an abortion too,
something could have been but didn't
or you didn't let it,
world full of blame**

**you could sleep all the time
in starfish splendor
and let the dream milk out
of your sleeping self,
squeeze out the beautiful phantoms
who march on the runways of the world
glamorous and sleek while you
lie there snoring, faint smell of onions,
reeking of cigarettes you never smoked.**

**That is the practice,
getting across the border
with your mouth full of language,
while the train from Montreal
stalls in an endless field of snow,
this is the practice
getting across the border
with your dreams intact,
smeared all over your body**

to hide them from the law.

**One human body
can host a million dreams.**

Unaccountably the music slows.

**This too is the practice
pain in the bone behind the left ear
all the symptoms of reality
the sky greying over but no rain.**

**The day of rain: good for girls and turtles,
to hear the word that seeps
up from the soil. So many
of us are sleeping there beneath the ground—
how long since I've held a heart in my hands
how long since I sat in the opera house built by Garnier
and watched the dancers far away below me
and I was each one
each leap each glide knew itself in my body
as I fumbled through the bodies of the masked ballet.**

The practice. Make

a sound

softly but big enough

**so it fills the concert hall,
globes itself around all the listeners,
every one,**

how long has it been

since I was everyone?

Here the Roman legions march in

in any opera,

coarse men speaking reasonable words

and every soldier is afraid of women,

afraid of that single word that women know,

the word it kills a man to hear.

And aren't you?

Something has happened to the sky

the sky is part of us too, this decision,

decision is part of the practice,

falling in love

or refusing to, standing your ground,

being alone. Being alone

under the apple tree,

yes, *that* music.

You have only one mouth

to sing with, your tragic song,

mountain goat slain on the rocks, the wolves

snickering in the culvert,

the dream

is always a woman,

don't you know

even the simplest thing?

9 January 2013

=====

**I know the answers
to so many questions
but you don't ask them**

**and why should you
you know already
or else don't want to know**

**and yet I know
that somewhere poised
almost at your lips**

**is a question—you hardly
feel it yet but you feel it
that if asked and answered**

would set us both free.

9 January 2013

CANZONE: *Donna mi priegha* 2013

It's easier to do

than tell

about but

because a lady asks me

I will tell

what little I have learned

about how not to fall in love.

Avert your eyes

first of all, for the love-fall

tumbles through the eyes,

the pain of it

comes from looking,

and looking is so hungry.

the lover looks so hard he can't see,

his mind lost in sheer focus—

so turn

your eyes

modestly from her eyes, from his eyes,

so when she's not present

you have nothing to remember,

and never imagine,

never think about her, him,

never in the watches of the night

fantasize on the shape or feel of her, or take

that *morose delectation* the priests
warn us from,
imagining this and that
and doing this and that.

This and that
will slay you every time.

Remember you can be yourself all by yourself
and be free,
don't need anyone else to be.

Do not enter the terrible prison house
called being in love,

walls you build
with images and recollections,
you block the daylight out
from every window

since all you see is her face,
his face, the special one.

The one it hurts to know.
So turn.

Turn inward and away.
And every
night before you go to bed
let yourself
imagine just this one thing:

that the one
you are so caught up with wanting, not wanting,

INSOMNIA

**You can't sleep
because they aren't
ready for you
on the other side.**

9 January 2013

=====

**A gleam with no glasses
goes up the road
listen to her shine
off what must be a car
clean car in sunlight
trailing a footnote of pure light
to its uphill tract—
that's better, I can see now
but can't see them anymore,
all time is lost into now
and the car is gone.**

10 January 2013

=====

**Sleigh bells in the sky
or is it sly Stravinsky
clanking irony**

**when I just want
the sweetness of it
after all
coming close to the only one?**

10 January 2013

=====

**What in your language
is the closest word for God?**

**Thing that can't be measured
that is always there?**

**I know a better word
a crow flies over no one's house.**

10 January 2013

=====

**Have I begun to watch
the wind walk in the doorway**

**what a rich and thingly world it is
but how much passes me by—**

**o the meanings of things, of each thing
by itself and the dance of them all together**

**how shapely the spruce keeps itself
how yew grows every which way**

**and the sky since I last looked up
has turned out to be perfectly blue.**

10 January 2013

=====

**Our pale eyes not apt
for such entanglements
as hunting on the grasslands
of a cloudless planet
lonely as a clarinet
we northern lastlings,
glum survivors
of a Viking time,
my body is only good for feeling.**

And we know the easiest thing to feel is pain.

10 January 2013

=====

I hear voices in my house

who can they be

woman voices in the upstairs

who is there

woman voices not complaining

not explaining

make me glad that I have heard.

10 January 2013

=====

**Who knows how much the word will weigh today
when statesmen stammer and Damascus burns?
Does it even matter what they say? Doesn't fire
start itself and feed on us forever till we're all used up,
word and oxygen and paper testaments, all
kindling for a chemistry we don't begin to understand?**

11 January 2013

=====

***Gott allein genügt* it said
on the radio last night
no gender marker no context
God alone suffices the schoolboy
in me immediately said out loud
and left me marveling
at the compact enoughness
of the phrase, the solid
certainty impossible to
misunderstand. Or understand.**

11 January 2013

=====

EPITAPH

**I have been closer than old
wilder than here,
a tune I couldn't tell you
and that too led me here.**

11 January 2013

=====

**And there it is again, the beginning
like the first flakes of an evening snow
catching lamp light, so we know
we do not think alone.**

11 January 2013

WHAT I LEARNED THAT YEAR IN L.A.

**So much coming. So little silence
for me to milk. Cow
size of the night sky over the basin
she has grazed on human daydreams
all day long in every language
and fattens on the sleepers in the valley
now yield to me. Because the words
we write are from silent people's dreams.**

11 January 2013

=====

Sometimes you hear the voice
you don't want to know who it is
it is everyone

and it is especially
your mther's voice
speaking from the ground
and from the clouds at once
for she is everywhere
this voice you sharpened your ears
to listen for but half the time
forgot to hear,

and what you do
hear so often forget to write down.
And even then you botch, and call it
music that you're doing with
what she was trying to make you hear.
Later you call it meaning, written
through your passions one by one
and each blurs a little more the few
words that finally came through.
Try harder. Lie there and do nothing,
naught they used to say, name
of that digit that makes all the other
numbers possible. And you
are a complex number too, you need

**other people to solve you, and you try
to do that for them too, and all that's fine,
but what you hear when you let yourself hear,
that isn't complex at all. It isn't anything
but a voice saying, and what it means
is no business of yours. Just write it down.**

11 January 2013

End of Notebook 352

GROWING UP ITALIAN

1. The Godfather

His necessity is always waiting
grim compadre, *gumbaa*,
frowning at the font—

“Who is this infant
worth owning or belonging?
Even the clock
can tell a better story,
lewd drip of the clepsydra.
It was a woman brought
us both here, woman
of whom it is not right to speak,
girl around the corner, mother of God.”

2. The Lesson

**A child is mostly about miracles—
laws kick in only later
when gravity happens
and the eagle that snatches you
from your cradle
soon has to let you fall.**

3. Right Food

Or salt anchovies and gold sultanas

lank tresses of whole basil

onion'd through with oil

just enough to coat

each shank of the pasta

accurate *secco* succulence

with no gaudy sauce

for the Americans, no red slop.

11 January 2013

=====

**Night. When the world
walks away from the window
and you're alone
inside yourself.**

**The houses we build
are meant as outer signs
of an inward seclusion,
to be yourself inside.**

11 January 2013

(GROWING UP ITALIAN)

4. The Catechism Lesson

Where is Adam buried?

In my testicles.

And where is Eve?

Among your ovaries.

11 January 2013

5. La Chiesa

**And the church walls
painted to look like marble
green snaky feints through travertine
o I knew the words already
so felt the sleek shock of fake.
But other colors were truthing me,
stations of the cross Christ Falls
A Second Time the organ played
while we filed up for communion
so many of us young and old to
kneel at the rail and elbow up again
while the organist carried on Mascagni
that famous intermezzo between
the lovers and the murder. And who
was Santa Fotunata anyhow?**

12 January 2013

6. *La Festa*

**Girls in eggshell satin blouses
boys in white long-sleeve shirts
we smelled different too.
We were carrying a message
we didn't understand
most of us would spend
our whole lives deciphering.**

12 January 2013

=====

**Caught in blue ink
a snowdrift with
two deer in it
nuzzling down for corn.**

12 January 2013

=====

**My eyes are going
the light while it lasts
belongs to me.**

12.I.13

=====

**So little to say
this sick day**

they call it that

**nothing wrong with
the day though**

except maybe the dark.

12.I.13

ON THE PUSZTA

**Berlioz put his Faust to start with
on the endless Hugarian plain
because a man all alone on the grasslands
is the bravest challenge to the world.
Suppose it to be a devil. Suppose he has
a host of devils speaking their own
devilish language that looks like Basque.
And there the poor tenor stands
through his whole life, everything
that he does or happens at him is
no better than a dream. Still
he's a hero. Aloneness his virtù,**

12 January 2013

=====

**Footsteps in the attic
if only I could be sure
whose they are
who is walking
the road over my house.**

12 January 2013

=====

**So much guesswork to be done.
Do you miss the flowers
when you're indoors, do you
miss the Turkish carpet
when you're walking on the lawn?
You are the one we've been looking for,
a priest itching to believe in some strange god.**

12 January 2013

IRISH STUDIES

1.

**Coming back to life
after a long day sick
ten hours sleep, sleep
the Irish penicillin.
For we are a dream people
and our strength is from
that somber landscape
shot through with such light,
our native country.
The woman in black
stood close beside me
she moved inside me,
a sudden healing
goddess from our nether world.**

2.

**Irish folk beware:
I learn these things
from dream and family
not from books.**

**Not from those pretending
out liud to be one of our kind.**

3.

**Ireland is January
Celts always at the extremes
the greenest meadows barrenest hills.
Erigal, mountain
where my mind's at home.**

13 January 2013

AD POETAM

**Now ask yourself
who wants to hear
such music as you make?
Isn't it all convention,
imposition? Are you
giving them pleasure
or sucking their blood?**

13 January 2013

=====

**Tyranny of name—
the part of you
can be unscrewed
and some other
one screwed on
et tout va bien?**

**I wish it were so.
A name is part of your meat.**

13 January 2013

=====

**Breath not back yet.
Everything short.
Bach's first English
Suite seems just
slow enough for me
to climb aboard or
at least count the
freight cars as they pass.**

13 January 2013

LES FALAISES

**Maybe this hour is the time ago
or cracked beneath the rich man's iceboat
could we promptly deluge or great comet coming
pur the window out of the wine**

mergansers on the bay a bad cold though

when fences break the fog comes out
it's hard to live close to the very rich
even if you share every neo-Gothic chapel

the more money you have the longer ago it is
Ellery Queen! coffin mystery! Nesselrode pie!
with enough money you can't understand anything
only information has value all the rest just sings

mandrake in dog jaws cry cracks the sky
the sun falls over the cliff open your mouth
autists versus artists Stalin versus Mandelshtam
wish I were an architect to let red berries grow

cliffs and quarries bears and swans
no more crime! let the labels slide off the jars
all food is poison all poison heals
make your last stand on the rocks and whisper fast

but who is tht who needs me most
is the coffee frozen in the thermos is the bird alive
the wind in the yew tree gives me all I know
cars those latecomer animals soon will pass away

you have to learn something from every line even this
stand responsible to ocean and the silver-shouldered moon
revise when needed you made these rocks after all

it gets longer as it gets easier simple sciences.

13 January 2013

=====

dlya Mashi

**cast off from the coast the coast
let the sea come in like a bell
the one old women can hear
coming up from any water
because they are the only ones
who are not bored with listening
all their lives they've tried and
still heard nothing even yet
but they have heard the bell.**

13 January 2013

=====

after "The Dream of Macsen Wledig"

**Women you meet in dream
and I have met them too
not just over high mountains
or watching idly young men play chess**

**they just stand there, close to you
and talk about your travel plans
or coax you to talk about Kandinsky
you feel their breath on your skin**

**if you touch them it is lightly
lightly, conceding nothing
to the circumstance of closeness
you always have a plane to catch**

**from this town you'll never see again
but her face will travel with you.**

13 January 2013

=====

**The old man dozing on the porch
stood up without my help
stood straight and tall forgive me
I said for disturbing your rest.
No matter he said I had almost
escaped and made my way to Fairyland
across the lake of lies that men call death.
One day I'll get there, and no more need
of drowsing in sunl. Dream will be all the time.**

13 January 2013

(this conversation woke me from broken sleep around 4 a.m. 14.I.13)

=====

**Sometimes there is ink in pens
like blood in living beasts
will not be sacrificed to flow—**

**once offerings were never victims,
Ovid says, but grain and flowers only,
and no one killed to woo a god.**

**‘Sacrifice’ is the strangest of all
human mistakes, to try
to please a god by taking life,
‘making it holy’ by killing it.**

13 January 2013

ROBIN

**A robin spoke
the snow she melt
mist flees
through trees
green again
be seen
like your violin,
winter thaw
is category shift
you have your mate
and now must me.**

14 January 2013

JANUARY THAW

**There are those who will be happy at the change
the tree see their feet again, the deer
have freer access to the mysteries they eat
in this season when nothing grows. The snow
is mostly gone. And I am Ovid on the Black Sea
wondering the roots and branches of all things,
why things are called by their names and what
it means to call them anything, and how
one girl could make all of this happen to me.**

14 January 2013

(or maybe)

Because she did it.

Always one

and only one

but never the same

one did it.

She made my life

happen to me,

I am a patch

of sunlight on her lawn.

14 January 2013

=====

**I am a nomad who stays in one place
my caravan my gypsy Cadillac are the eyes in my head
I am never at rest and always at home
I've been here forever and haven't gotten here yet
do you understand what I'm telling you,
how much this is and isn't about love,
the corn in my fingers feed the deer in deep woods
I am further away from you than the winter moon
closer to you than the skin inside your wrist,
my caravan stuffed with everything I need, an empty room.**

14 January 2013

sGrol.ma.dKar.po Κορη Κοσμου

Virgin of the world

to see the world as virgin

**to pass through without penetrating — that
is the mystery**

the body is a rainbow

the mind inhabits.

15 January 2013

=====

Sound

comes from the ground

Tesla knew

the real road is below

endless anaerobic chamber of the earth

carrying the word of music

the messaging below.

I take

this as matter of fact

voice of our mother

calling from the ground

the place men call the *grave*

but I know better,

it is the house of words,

you bring the earth back to life

every day by speaking

words out loud

that your dreams dream

and your reveries recover

from all the whispers and cries

you hear from all the way down there.

15 January 2013

=====

**Look quiet
and a tree
is a flame**

**as a city is a single word
fragment of a lost sentence**

**This cool quiet moveless conflagration
a forest is,**

**it is a different time from ours—
if only we could hear the raging roar of
it, all that green beauty ascending,
always upward, *returning*—**

Believe the dead, for they have seen the rising.

15 January 2013

=====

Not one word more
and then them all
pressed against your back
like a wall
forcing you forward
into the speaking
where those others
are, the lovers
created by speaking.

Without words there would be only the world
and no people, we exist
to discover them and find their sounds
and say them.

Try to believe me
this winter morning
when a warm hand on the back
is a glad thought, or a wall
sleeping in sunlight
and taking in warmth
the way the world takes us in,

all of it speaking.

15 January 2013

=====

**I am I suppose
a rock in the sea
singing mermaids
cling to me**

**and I am the hard
thing that can break
the boats they make
come in too close**

**but all my will
is set on acts of love
so I can be the place
saves the ones they kill.**

15 January 2013

=====

**But if the horse could talk
the color of its hide
would be irrelevant,
we wouldn't have to
listen with our bodies
to its fantasies
which is what you really
ride, you know, his
imagination is all
those cliffs and gullies
the brackish streams
grasslands alkali
plains and chaparral
you'll amble through
thinking his thoughts
with your thighs
while you imagine
you're riding tall
and beautiful, your head
holds up the sky
and the wind, ah the wind
is laughing at you,
you animal's afterthought.**

15 January 2013

IN VERITATE VINUM

Call anyone and tell them the truth
truth is something you gouge into soft rock
a fingernail is sharp enough to do it
bake in an oven suck in your mouth
truth is suck. Truth is a tree. A tree
that laughs at me. For one or two maybe
truth is a dog but never mind about them.
Truth is a hollow in the trunk of a tree
that reminds you of me. Truth
and trees walk around together through
a world that only seems to move,
truth has your back but truth is a knife,
truth is a man spanking another man's wife,
truth always has something creepy about it,
distasteful, something not right, in bad taste,
truth is inappropriate, truth smacks of elderberry
avocado wintergreen chard, seeps into everything
like salt, truth too is brought by camel caravan
too much truth is bad for the blood pressure
remember what happened last time,
truth is a marrow bone you're still sucking on
suck. Truth pesters you all the time
to tell it, truth tells you to tell it, truth
like you always tells more than it knows.

16 January 2013

=====

**It's all right, you can bring
all the books back to the library
now, you have understood
as much of them as you ever will—**

remember:

the unread word ripens

inside you

like tomorrow night's dream.

16 January 2013

BUT THERE MUST BE MORE

1.

**They must have meant more, those
masters of music**

Beethoven, Schubert, Mahler—

Don't have children, have wolves

**she said, sitting soft in the Liszt sonata
o those minor keys, those ivory little teeth.**

2.

**Then let me see yesterday again,
that battlefield with so many flowers,
roses, violets, lilies of Peru.**

3.

**Put on a dress made of flower petals
put on high heels made from books
whisper poetry on strangers' smartphones
make traffic grind to a halt,
be a beautiful drag.**

4.

But even that was not enough—
are you grey-haired and crazy now, like me,
or did time trick you in some other way,
teach yourself Gaelic, take up topiary?

The cars go by—that is all we know.
Where they go, and why, doesn't bear thinking.
Everything is something else as well
and only too well do we know that.

But do you? Do I?
Sometimes I think I know
practically nothing of what everybody knows.

5.

Boundary issues
I think you call it
personal space
and the little name
your mother
sole of women
called you

**when you were young.
Or were you?
Did I get the whole story wrong?
You have no body?
I have no hands?**

16 January 2013

=====

**When you're lonely call the animal
the animal will always answer
but what pale eyes it has!
how far it travels in a single afternoon!**

**If you could go with it surely even you
could outrun loneliness, but as it is
it comes to you and touches and consoles.
But how pale its eyes are even so.**

16 January 2013

THE CUP

**That could be my cup
this friendly woman at the ice cream truck
or that priest across the street
all beard and Mare Nostrum manners
or the two Israelis playing chess out loud
or the kid apparently asleep on the grass.
But I have no cup, no cup for me,
I have to shove my face up and drink from the sky.**

16 January 2013

=====

**Because there are things to love
and no not turn their backs on you
and even if they one day did
their backs have nothing written on them
no love letter no agreement no farewell**

**because the skin is the silentest of all.
Because I am only what I am
you can listen as hard as you can
and I still don't mean anything at all.**

16 January 2013

=====

Lift

into the chamber
that knows itself
this other
knowing—

short breath short steps
endless journey.

Hold my hand
against your wall
let me feel
what feels you.

Cloth of houses.
Skin of light.

17 January 2013

=====

**The snow said beautiful
the rice becoming of a branchlet, oak,**

**I am a car for you, I think,
a dark marauder in the overexplained day—**

we are sinews of each other.

**Man speaks to God,
looks around for answers.**

**Be otherwise, darling,
proliferate inside most spacious emptiness,**

**build in, build in—
this hollow body your best house.**

17 January 2013

=====

**Steal a glimpse
through the curtain
see something
I'm sure we're
allowed to see—
wild animals
quietly stirring,
waiting their apocalypse—
a word that means
revealing, not catastrophe.
Close the curtain
carefully. There.
Keep the words straight
and we'll be all right.
Now wait and see.**

17 January 2013

=====

Can this catch the weather? Rarely.

What is *this*? The wanderer

is still with us, passes below us

through the caverns of our inattention.

We call them streets but they are long

terribly empty bedrooms.

At one end the window is completely

by the eye and beak of an immense crow.

17 January 2013

=====

Take it or leave it.

**When I woke up the trees
were delicately traced with snow
each branch and twig.**

**Now they're bare as ever
and the snow is all on the ground.**

**There's a darkness in things
that waits its turn. A light
later only you can turn on.**

**The job is yours if you want it.
Love me as hard as the ground.**

17 January 2013

=====

**Not yet light
a growling in the sky
like a snowplow way up the road
but it isn't snowing
or a cargo jet up there
but we're not on the route to anywhere
o where could it come from,
no light yet, or just enough
to make out the dense cloudbank,
a growling in the sky.
I feel spoken to by it,
why not, I'm the only one here.**

18 January 2013

=====

Dawn nocturne the turn
against time, *serene morning*,
the words once betrayed
sulk far from what you mean to mean
although you're writing
almost fast enough to be.

Interrupt to grant myself a late appointment
an artist to be seen, a picture
that needs talking to. Will I remember this
after sunrise, when the phones fly again
and machinery pretends to run?
Right now it's just me and one or two
passing cars, those animals.
How far away it is I am!

18 January 2013

=====

**Hoof clatter
only in my head—
January katydids
tinnitus.**

18.I.13

=====

in memoriam H.B.

**Writing in the dark
inspects the night—
and what the light never happened—**

**is that a thought too?
'Language can say
what you can't think'**

**dear Heinrich, how much
your little gave.**

18 January 2013

=====

**It's worth thanking everyone—
it's so beautifully made
like the inner surface of the sky
where her legs and belly come together
and the light pours out.**

18 January 2013

=====

**Write your way to it
then burrow inside
till the words sleep in your mouth.
And maybe you wake up.**

18 January 2013

=====

**If not a rapture
then something like,
winter sky
through winter trees,
the silence given
all the way to us.**

18 January 2013

=====

**A book longer than a week
a song longer than a tree
but what about an owl?
Or the blue sky beyond the windmill?**

18 January 2013

VOCATION

**There are depths and margins
and a blue coin fallen from a woman's hand**

**pick it up and give it back to her
hurry after her, give it back**

even if it takes your whole life.

19 January 2013

VOX NIVIS

and me listening.

Beethoven's Large Fugue

Youtube.Enjoying

the kindness of strangers.

19 January 2013

=====

It began as a good idea.

A lifetime later

it has become a vast steel bridge

over a dark river

leading to an island

where no one lives

where no one wants to go.

19 January 2013

=====

**I was a tree once
and so were you
since then our relations
have been formal
maybe excessively so.
Can we do anything
about it or is it too late,
will our natural
fear of fire keep
us safely far apart?**

19 January 2013

=====

**Capture the shadow of a seagull,
breed the shadows of tropical fish
in a paper aquarium.**

Write a book.

19 January 2013

=====

**Change my name
I've had it so long**

**take off these vestments
and learn to ski
listen to what people
put on the radio
learn to eat fried chicken
buy a car.**

20 January 2013

=====

**The tree has changed its shape today
what power the night has**

**and there's a wind in that tree
not this one**

welcome to the mystery.

20 January 2013

UN CRI DE MERLIN

**I'm being too clear
soon I'll have
nothing left but breath
then not even that.**

20 January 2013

=====

**Take longer to tell
in this mini-time**

**build attention spans
an hour in your**

**company darling
worth ten thousand**

four minute songs.

20 January 2013

=====

**Sunday morning
not too cold
people running
up and down roads
what a strange
god they must serve.**

20 January 2013

=====

**Then she talked the clouds out of the sky
persuaded the sun to go down
showed herself to the moon
then it was evening
and I began to understand
what the world is supposed to be about
and why I think I'm here.**

20 January 2013

=====

Ego scire cupio vim...temporis

**I said to Saint Augustine I love you anyhow
and he said you like my Latin more than my soul
well not exactly but I can understand it
and you're only showing off with your prose
but that's what we're supposed to do before God
witness David prancing before the tabernacle
and we call it a dance and we call is language
and you're terrific and I guess I am too
and sometimes we get brave enough
to call the whole megillah by a word like soul—
we find out what it means by how we live.**

20 January 2013

=====

**Lost things. Like the Alps
lost into Italy. Austria.
The language of the next
valley we can't understand.**

**And when the sun goes down
the cliffs turn red. Every
night we think the same thought:
there is something up there,**

**something we should know.
Find it, find it. But tomorrow
we forget all that when the cliffs
look like ordinary stone again**

**and things have their way with us.
We waste our time and time wastes us.**

20 January 2013

=====

**Letters are about their senders
as the blackbird flying across the common
is about itself. I mean the sparrow
I mean the trine of battered winter grass
fruit trees and spruces sees my house.**

**I want to belong to what they know.
The bird. The sky. The woman who wrote the letter.**

21 January 2013

=====

**In the old days
sound sounded different
and the moon was brighter
but the sun less bright**

**things came closer
in the old days but women
were further away
from men and likewise**

**even now all people
with the same name
are the same people
and rain still comes down**

**in the old days the priests
said their breviaries
walking in the garden
rabbis walked quickly in the street**

**the difference between noises
was clearer then, this
was a dog barking but that
inside the room was music**

**nuns taught children
how to play the piano
but we had no discipline
nowadays all children are good**

**but in the old days children
just wanted to eat or hold
new things in their hands
and cry in vacant lots at night**

**in the old days people were afraid
there were ghosts but no machines
nobody knew about the weather
and cars smelled good inside**

**and all the things you loved
had handles on them
so you could carry them with you
all the way through sleep.**

21 January 2013

=====

**An idea long frozen under the ice—
then the explorers came and loosened time's hold
and it leapt out again free to be thought.**

**What did Amundsen bring back from the Pole
or Scott send posthumous? In the brittle masts
and rigging of Shackleton's ship what ways**

of thought tinkled crackled spawned?

21 January 2013

CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL

**“Epicene spokesmen
of a lost cause
dressed in lace and crimson”**

**he called them
but when they came into
the room he still knelt down.**

21 January 2013

=====

**Still, I heard her—
she was stirring in the dark room.
Didn't she need a lamp
to see what she was doing?
But the body needs no light
except its own, feel
of a box, a blanket,
drawer tugged open,
shawl draped around shoulders.
I don't know the answer,
Any minute the door will open
and she'll be there in the fearful light.**

21 January 2013

=====

**But will there ever
be time for today
in all this history
of tomorrow,
 bears
fossicking in dumpsters,
sailboats at the bottom of the pond—
o Sodom I have loved your streets
busy with the merchandise
of pure ideas that needed
only yielding bodies to make sense.**

21 January 2013

CALL IT PALAESTINA

where the Celts first
divided into Irish and Jews
one to go all the way
west and the other to go everywhere.
Galatea. Galatia. Celtic. KLT
the Celtic wave
swept in over bleak Anatolia—
and I don't even have the force
to overturn the rock
and see what's written under it,
carved on the underside of things—
it is the Celt's habit to hide what he means,
Göbekli Tepe, upend the earth
and read the bottom,

For everything

is hidden there

from the beginning—

and always the Celt driven west
the cruel sunlight keloiding his back.

look at the back
to see where he has been

and what his Luck has written there—

then the phone rings, the smashed

crates on 13th street near the river,
where the meatpackers were
when there used to be meat in this house
when there were men and women in the valley
and the rock
gave us what passes for our name,

the breaks of consciousness
by which the banks are sustained,
cognitive capital—
but there is no property
to thought, no moral
to remember.

No right to music you have made
and even this song is
a broken branch, the withered
apple tumbled in the snow.

21 January 2013

=====

**Bridge over the lugubrious canal
the Maestro's dead
the blue sky of Russia bleeds for him
cathedral of the Precious Blood—
so many years this wood of my desk
has endured so many words.**

21 January 2013

=====

I thought I was another country
my hat blown off my head
a girl perhaps named Emma
smiled past me from the pier
s the dirty fishing boat docked
but I was another country
thr opera was still moving
in my idleness I had strung
together a chain of paperclips
I looped it round her neck
like a lei but she wasn't there,
it tinkled dully to the dock
messy wood wet gore of fish
man shoes a little rain,
a rough patch on my knuckles
I rub with oil I find somewhere.

21 January 2013

=====

**When it is fire
who is the burn?**

When air, where?

**We hide the elements
the way music is
hidden in the spruce wood**

**flute or fiddle
anything me.**

**In ourselves to happen
the broken path.**

21 January 2013

THE NIGHTINGALE

**in the little scented garden in Yvoire
sings for the blind.**

The lake beyond

**soothes us on the way to Switzerland—
old ferryboats are best**

**old, with shiny engines on view
the great pistons moving,
part of our journey to admire them
gleaming red and brass and all the lake
sparkle. But the blind
see only the nightingale,
see the smell of lavender, bee balm,
clean motor oil, the gull cries,
the ghost of Pontius Pilate
explaining history in yet another different way.**

22 January 2013

=====

**In this place I lost my memory
please give it back when you find it**

**I was gazing at the bare belly of the waitress
trying to understand the menu she was reciting**

**then I blinked and found myself alone
on a park bench in Seattle**

**everywhere I looked were mountains
and seas all mixed together.**

**It is never easy to believe the senses,
we're smart enough to doubt the clearest thing—**

**I heard a cow lowing on the meadow
behind me improbably. And I saw**

**a great and beautiful lady
walking through the clouds en dishabille.**

**It is not easy to be me, granted,
but I should be able to tell past from future**

at least, easy as telling front from back

but it just isn't so. In fact

nothing is so. So there I sat

a mere amateur of the weather

wondering whether whatever it is

has happened already, and here I am?

22 January 2013

=====

**Give the wind a name
the way the Romans did
it will help you to rule all space
the way the Romans did**

**all your roads will get there
your temples will have real
gods in them, shimmering
in the civilized atmosphere—**

**all power from the names!
Piano on the radio, unfamiliar,
I guess Schumann, feel it
happy and far away and sad,**

**did you ever wake up knowing
this is still the Roman Empire
after all, nothing changes,
only money from hand to hand,**

**the hidden emperor lost
in imagery, turns out to be Schubert
and I know nothing of the roads
but all of them still take us home.**

22 January 2013

=====

**I see my own shadow
running up the road
while I sit here.
It's hard to be a heathen
in this Abrahamic land
all super-ego and big cars.
Maybe it wasn't my shadow
that tastes of maple syrup,
maybe it was a yearling deer
came for our cracked corn,
ate some and pleased and fled.**

22 January 2013

=====

**Pause between
movements of the concerto
the clarinetist breathes
a few seconds like an ordinary
woman and it seems the whole
orld breathes with her too.**

22 January 2013

FRAGMENTS OF PAGAN HYMNODY

1.

**Let the Mondays of the meek
use Tues's anger to repel
the form of norm. The
norm of form. Spring
thirsty through each dry day
until the need for new
be sated never.**

2.

**Let the so-called week
hurtle forward never back
no week no vici no vicar
no wheel.**

Lo!

it is tomorrow before it is today.

3.

**Weeks are wimps.
Months at least
happen in the sky, Hi,**

Luna! Khaire

Selanna!

And years

come around us

uncontrollable

we do what we can

to master it by abstractions

Kant Fichte Hegel, you know the tune,

open any book and find their traces.

Aiee, my children,

good grammar is as close

as I'll ever come to morality!

4.

Could

they be hymns whom

the gods gave to sing

this me?

And when it is to praise

am I praising them,

those psyches of lightning of cedar of honey of waterfall

or praising me

by not so subtle

confusion of self with deity

since no one else is there?

5.

**O yes I mean it
how I mean it
this common book of prayer
I lift above my head
to shield me from the ordinary
sun so I can see the one
hidden in her eyes.**

6.

**Soon we will be able
to listen
to what the stone says**

**it is a northern country
where everything talks
except for human men**

**who nurse their silence
while the wind speaks
ice cracks jokes beneath their feet.**

7.

Rabbit tracks in snow
fox tracks and once
mountain lion by the stream—
o gods of earth and heaven
what wonders you teach
us to read when we
dare to look down.

8.

Away from that kindly despot in the sky
the golden girl the one who thinks
she is the only one there is...

9.

I was just getting started
when the breath went home
I follow it now
down into the ground

10.

winter trees in sunlight
thick brown bed they rise from

**a hundred years of their own leaves
and every one of them
written with your name,
all of your names
written so clearly
in the original alphabet
the one we read best with closed eyes.**

11.

**The harp was an easy idea
so we made a lot of them
taught all our children to play them
those who could carry a tune
and those others, tone-blind ones,
they are worth music too,
have thumbs to strum, fingers to pluck
and you have made us smart enough
o gods of wind and water to hear
all that sound as beauty, a word we
are just beginning to comprehend.**

12.

Chestnut slippery shells
hot from the fire smooth as glass
how did we learn to eat things
make things build things
is it all by ourselves we did it
in a usable world or did you
Pramantha twirl your fire-stick
until we finally got the idea,
friction, pressure, heat and sweat
and things leap into form
then learn to leave things alone?

13.

We listen
as hard as we can
hard heard

we slowly learn
all your names
more slowly still
learn to say them
quietly out loud
on top of the hill.

14.

**There is only one mountain
the one we build
from logs and bricks**

**our effort is the god of it
and talks to the other gods
up there and all around**

**and the crows fly away
laughing at us
the way they do**

**kindly knowing
even we might
one day get it right.**

23 January 2013

=====

(answering Alana)

**If I am your soul
you have no alone
Only no one ever is**

23.I.13

=====

**The waking body
in which the shy
 pornosophists
 are content to dream**

**is somehow actual.
This is weird, that is,
is fate, the Wyrd
of your becoming,**

**what will come,
what will become of you
when only dream
is left behind to tell.**

24 January 2013

VENCE

**Maniple a sleeve
on a sleeve. Alb
a white you take off
and put back on.**

**A chasuble
a house of silk.**

**Matisse made them
for his chapel,
too heavy for the priests
to wear, replicated
in rayon later,
the walls are still his
walls, the light
comes through
his windows still
unmediated by
the weakness of
who we are.**

**Once there were giants
among men, even priests
who could bear the weight,
spiderwebs on their shoulders
all those passionate colors.
And long before them**

**men could stand naked
as Francis or Milarepa
and lift a cup of thanks
up to mindfulness alone.**

24 January 2013

DIX-NEUVIEME*a notation*

**Arrondissement and century
the great Nineteenth.
Schumann and the Buttes-Chaumont
Wagner, Hummel, Raff,
Schubert, Beethoven.
Beethoven. This is my
arrondissement, beauty
heaped high out of spoiled
emotions, sickness, syphilis.
Buttes-Chaumont were built
on the hugest garbage dump
in northeast Paris—
these hills, this music, these
stone-log steps, duckpond,
Gounod, Chopin,
symphony, Liszt, Bruckner,
all this music is
the outer voice of alchemy—
the science Paris bred
all through the century,
Nerval, Eliphas Lévi, down**

**through Huysmans, Mallarmé,
stages of the work,
the one Great Work,
turning the filth of the emotions
into purer happening.
Climb this city mountain
now, children skittering
on the ancientest science.**

24 January 2013

THE GIFT

**To give you something
never made in this
world before, a gift
from the world to the world
entrusted to you
somehow guided by me
into your hands.**

24 January 2013

=====

**I didn't know where I was going
or what I wanted there
I walked slow slow
to let the place catch up with me**

**and there it was, a tree
made out of glass but with real fruit
a kind I'd never seen before
opalescent yellow cream and sweet
when the soft rind yielded
to even the slightest touch**

**sweet in a pale forgiving way
as if it pardoned me
for all the meat and blood I'd drunk
and now said No
No more taking life to live.**

24 January 2013

=====

**Is it here yet
that tomorrow made of glass?**

24.I.13

=====

**The examining air
pours in round our bare arms
but it could be a harpsichord we're hearing,

or the voice of a poet from Benin
whose lines seemed graven on his face
one of those faces that tell the whole story
or as much of it as white men can bear to read.**

24 January 2013

NERO

**The emperor does not see well
he needs his hands
on what he loves**

**he needs everything to come close
but what if when it touches him
he loathes it**

**what can he do then
the touch lasts so long
the wrong touch wrong skin**

**and so it is the city's fault
the empire's fault
that brought such people to him**

**a wise man from the north
ground and polished a big emerald
for him, a quizzing lens**

**that made far away things
look close, close
and sharp and green**

**but there too, once
someone is has been seen
the seeing lingers**

**rhe hands of all his eyes
are spoiled from looking
it is the world's fault**

**the womb that bore him
into a world where each thing
tries to be beautiful and fails.**

24 January 2013

EN BLANC ET NOIR

1.

But it was a piano

It stood

exactly on the center

of an empty room

32 x 21. It made

no sound.

I'm sure of this

because a room

of any size

is always listening.

It would have told me

if it had heard

Couperin or Liszt or Art Tatum,

a room always tells what it knows.

And I'm always listening.

2.

**Silent instrument, not even a breeze
to sift through the strings,
windows sealed, door closed.
How did I even get in?**

3.

**A white truck delivers
white men to a white house.**

**This is no dream
I stand broad waking.**

**We are the colors of ourselves
forever. Or till it tells.**

4.

The black part was the piano

small black keys

in a white room,

small black keys

minority lift above

all the flat white keys.

If only someone would speak

Beethoven through those teeth.

The lateral iron harp

the metal strings

cold coiled wires, felted softwood pads,

a lid could break a wrist if it fell.

And so quiet. The hammers

narrowly sleeping.

5.

Approach?

Si.

Touch.

Just

one key.

D.

It has that feel

of going somewhere

start of a journey

in good shoes,

sun at your back.

Everything

far away.

6.

A piano has no mother.

That's why it's always sad,

the happiest it can get

—stride, barrelhouse, 32

Variations on a Waltz

by Anton Diabelli—

is only when it can forget

the dead tree, iron foundry,

scream of steel wires stretched,

no mother, no mother, brass

feet some joker gave it,

wheels! Wheels on silence!

7.

Now it is alone in the room,
has somehow gotten rid of me.

Now it is praying
and we must imagine the god
its vacancies conceive,

imagine the eternal reverberation
into which it hopes to soar

powerful and silent as an eagle
floating far above an empty highway
or a steel bridge as it begins to snow.

25 January 2013

OTHER PEOPLE'S GODS

Who are they? Why?

People all have their own.

**Are there as many gods
as there are men and women
or more, more?**

**Make each child describe god—
children know more about it
than the rest of us, much more
than theologians can, they think
too much and talk much too much
and spend too little time knowing.**

**But children know, that's all
they're good for, don't you remember
when you stood alone on the street
and knew? Child you were,**

tell me what is god?

How does god sound

when you're all alone?

25 January 2013

=====

**Lead a horse by a feather
ride bareback all
the way to the hall of presence
where Mawet judges,
discerner of deeds—
dismount, stand naked,
and if you've done something
big or bad or better
Mawet might blink one eye
or rouse a moment
from eternal sleep.**

25 January 2013

DAY ONE-AJPU

Full moon of the sinner
now why do I know this
how can one man know
anything of time

 unless they tell him,
all the whoms who came before,
victims of natural perception,
agents of taking note of things.
Gives agency to children the magazine
said, reviewing a book of fairy tales
and to women,

 the primal agents of the world.

Rescue operation. Reclaiming
poetry from literature,
 lit from scholarship,
scholars from the academy,
 the academy from industry,
industry from money—

one step at a time, chief,
save Christ from Christianity,
 save religion from an angry god,

**save god from human imputation,
save god from men who know god's plan,
save humanity from me.**

I am the only agent, and I fail.

26 January 2013

=====

**Tether the horse
to the idea of horse
and see if it can
still run over the hill.**

26 January 2013

=====

**The sun Donne called busybody
dissuades snow's meek frosting now
and words clumsy me in my consenting
to watch, love, just watch that wading in.**

Daytime is dreamtime.

**The sky is slow — this means you
are vivid the same blue, orchestra
know thy place, spirit keep the tally:
bracts of lost flowers, the snow at sixes.**

26 January 2013

=====

**The soup pot the rust the old breadbox
devices**

soup rust rot breadbox

save for another day

the glamor of

an ordinary thing

devices

for mining the mind.

Set out a week ago to cast off fat,

its own fat,

to give it away, fat is the surface of things,

fat rises, rust loves the surfaces of things

but rust runs in,

a pot of soup

set out to cast a week to last

and now it's frozen, what does it say,

what does the fat say when it comes

to the top of the liquid, forms

its own meniscus slowly,

flesh, but she knew better
she knew goddam well
that all flesh is flesh,
and things are only worth their feel,
hell hell hell, let her sit still, sit and gaze all day,
all the rusty sunshine of a winter day,
all flesh is flesh,
she could or you could,
anybody,
hold it, could dwell
on this rusty nautical device with composure,
no threat in it,
this big heavy haughty iron omega,
some great Isis could come and loop it on her arm,
rattle on her sistrum,
ça va?

Rust is best,
the color
of time itself,
some say,
or color
time likes to paint things with,
improving our pale world,
finding out the blood of common things
or this is Russia
where 'red' and 'beautiful'

share some word in the ordinary
 way people talk,
 I wouldn't know,
 but so they tell me,
 those busy people who read books
 then actually go there, Bookland,
 the physical (the word 'real' is often used)
 replica across the seas
 of what they read,
 all the *described things*,
 Red Square, cheekbones, insidious ballet—

the soup has to wait even longer,
 really the substrate or viscous heirloom
 of a former soup, now ready
 for its new antics,
 a quantum of kale,
aliquantulum salis, a bouquet
 of mustard greens,
 a lump
 (*bolus agni*) of long-stewed mutton hoofbone
 to light the greens up with the brown
 aftermath of meat.

 Red red red
 red red sang the rust,

 this rust is for Sherry

**lives over the dairy
paints in a tower
over and over
the strange black flower
botanized by so many poets in our day,
or a little bit before**

**she gathers rust
because we must
and in the loss
our beauty won
she spills in black and red
and no blood shed**

**or yesterday,
ah, there's more to a day
than opening the festive eye
nipping to the bathroom then standing
at the window and glomming at
your neighbors jogging by,
squire, it's the whole
Kantian enterprise de novo and toute suite,
imagine a a question that fits your answer
and announce it in a noisy monograph
and so to bed—**

**but wait,
the sun's still rising,
you have all this light to get through,**

all this sheer result,

and me an amoeba on your wash-stand

watching the shimmer in your hair—

but how did you come in,

isn't this

all about the soup, coffee, breadbox,

soup pot, prowling foxes, nautical hardware

standing on deck in a clever wind,

books about Russia,

some man who walked to the end of the cosmos,

neighbors trotting past with nary a glance at me,

being invisible, breadbox, shiny hair,

rusting all over,

babbling somebody's name,

walked all the way there

whistling a tune by Aleksandr Glazunov

whom my friend Martin studied with in Paris

not long before any number of wars.

see, Time did it,

bright wandering one,

brought memory in

and the names of famous composers

to pin to the wall on oaktag,

every class had its own Grade Composer,

Grade Saint, Grade Poet

mounted on the classroom wall—

just the names of them, the names,
the names are sacred, never a note
of their sense or music were we given,
just the names, the names are sacred,
the names are enough—

but wait,

who is this we
sauntering feral but forgiving
out of Blessed Sacrament Euclid Avenue?
We live in the breadbox,
we are memory moldy ever green,
we are the ones who remember,
anybody who remembers
has been here too long,
the breadbox
that better, chaster, mind seems far away
but not forgotten.

Roll up the top,
a dry old American flag on a plastic stalk
is in there too, one of those flags
everybody gave everybody else
right after 9/11

and sheepishly a few
days were patriot—

that very Tuesday
when our wonderful plumber
came to finish the new downstairs bathroom

Lenin moulders in his inefficient sepulcher

but I can't do anything about that,

a little prayer maybe, now and then,

for peace and stuff,

just make the soup,

squire,

someone is bound to eat it and be glad.

Or at least warmed and nourished and

what else happens when you have been in the world

so long,

eating and rusting and watching,

Che Guevarra started by wanting to heal the lepers,

intentions rust,

things turn red,

take on a hard core policy,

Emerson lingers indoors

reading the lovely book of his found mind,

me, I go

down to that little stream

with all the fish

down below Yosemite

and spend the night

dreamng the water

back to the rock

back to the sky

grieving for my lost years

or I go

out in the snow to fetch the paper in.

27 January 2013

A KINGDOM UNDER SNOW

1.

A tenor tells a courtesan
it's time for both of them
to repent—but they have to
repent in the flesh—

that's what music is,
the opera explains,
there is Reason in the
slightest sound or touch
which if followed
all the way will lead
to heaven—or such
heaven as women and
men can bear to dwell.

2.

But the broken forest looms.
Warlocks bereft of their witches
crack stones in mortars
try without fire to make a cement
that will hold the mountain up
and not let the sky come down,

**a thick, interesting menstruum
in which their herbs can mingle
and make the birds sing again.
They try to grind rock into spring,
lick salt off the back of the wrist,
squeeze their eyelids tight
until the sun breaks free.**

3.

**The repentant courtesan is in the desert now,
her technocratic lover close behind.
They sing a song of water and water suddenly
bursts out of the sand at their feet
glad to hear itself summoned at last
fter all these dispassionate theologies.**

**This would normally be the point in the opera
where the soprano gives up the ghost
and the tenor grieves at the top of his tessitura.**

**But someone is coming:
it is the high priest, the bass,
he sings a quiet pretty melody that points out
there is not much music left in grief
that sobbing hasn't sung already.
Decline to die, he urges them.**

**The lovers stand up and embrace,
the high priest sweeps the dead leaves up
into a heap, then takes an armful up
and drops them in a burning basin
then vanishes in greenish smoke.**

**The lovers wonder where the trees are
that left so many dead leaves around them.
But this is opera, the place where fire
does not burn and death is beautiful again.**

**The high priest's voice falls from the sky:
Be one another. Be at peace.**

**Somewhere way down there,
the conductor lays down his funny little stick.**

28 January 2013

=====

e il mare suo

because any place
has its own sea
all round it,
ocean
of earth sang Apollinaire,
oceans of air and wheat and rock—

and there in the middle of the sea
the little island of anywhere

where you stand, always alone,
watching the almost unmoving

around you. Does anything seem
or seem to come towards you?

Anyone out there,
anyone who is not an island?

28 January 2013

=====

vorrei e non vorrei

**Joyce took care of that,
I want and I don't want
and I don't want to do
the thing I want to, true
to every moment every life
I'd rather and rather not.**

28 January 2013

=====

**If a clarinet were an animal
with four legs what would it see?
Slim people slipping through saplings
people not the least
ashamed of themselves or being seen,
leaves let them through, roots
try to trip them up, it's a game
among these slim people always moving—
the clarinet watches closely
with its single darkness and its many eyes.**

28 January 2013

=====

A.

Everybody always wants to be somewhere else.

B.

I haven't been anywhere long enough to notice.

28.I.13

=====

**Here comes the camera
the heart without a head
here comes the tripod
that conquered Kanchenjunga
here comes the finger
that invented history
here comes the glass
that loves assassinations
capitulations firestorms
and naked people caught
in their embarrassment
here come the annals
won't leave us in peace
the dreary records of our
poor excting ordinary lives
here comes memory
with its head on fire.**

28 January 2013

===== [STANZAS TO *LULU*]

1.

So how many have come to watch
so many watching. The anger
is in the white paint, titanium,
the peace is in the red, only red
has the kind of voice you can hear
over the waves. The self-pity
that chisels an island out of a sea.
Be. Be. We're always trying to be.
Says who? The mannequin
in the mind's window. Now spill
the color of a woman on a woman.

2.

It was in another state another climate
and the trees hid their names from me
we played cards but it didn't matter,
people die all the time, we thought,
so what was so special about me
that I could die and come to life again
with dirty fingernails and hungry for
you, whoever you are. Remember
when we were someone else, and you
pale with dark hair, recent escapee
from the harem of a third-rate potentate.

3.

Skip the remembering business, it's all
just ideology anyhow, people trying
to interrupt people trying to make love.
We let ourselves fall in love with the color
of a shadow, the tone-row of her laugh,
more like a giggle and the birds outside
add to the fascination—she feeds the birds—
and the house so dark when we come home
as if no one ever lived here, but still
we come in, sit down, sit there in the dark,
who knows how many others are here too.

4.

Spill now the yellow forefront on the fender
let the cadmium medium of which the literati
are so fond define the forward motion as if
the Volvo were going somewhere O Moon
of us Swamp Children spread out your map
and may it be to us as desire's autobahn
breaking the barrier of civil coherence yes!
let the animals howl their desperate vowel
the one they all know the one we try to copy
when we blab in our fat lips our skinny tongues
what you call a word I call two silent hands.

28 January 2013

=====

The soup pot the rust the old breadbox

devices

soup rust rot breadbox

save for another day

the glamor of

an ordinary thing

devices

for mining the mind.

Set out a week ago to cast off fat,

its own fat,

to give it away, fat is the surface of things,

fat rises, rust loves the surfaces of things

but rust runs in,

a pot of soup

set out to cast a week to last

and now it's frozen, what does it say,

what does the fat say when it comes

to the top of the liquid, forms

its own meniscus slowly,

stays there a frozen week,

what, who's asking, who wakes it

now, lifts the lid,

careful first

to sweep the bits of rust away
off the top of the soup pot
held down all the frozen week,
held by a nautical loop or hasp from
the beach grass down near the ferry found,
put on top of the soup pot top
to keep marauding coons and foxes off,
out— can they even
smell lamb fat in the freeze?

take no chances,

squire, anything you name
will also name some part of the mind
and when I say mind I may mean brain,
the results are still out, I mean they're not in yet,
a part of the mind belonging to
the imaged or imagined referent of that name,
as fox, soup, rust, hasp

anything will do the trick

("awake, awake," as Louis almost said).

But what of the breadbox?

Isn't there more than lucency
in the old roll-top, more than gleam
in the stainless door,

not so old really,

isn't there curl, and shape, and smoothness,

rhythmos, melos, all the Greek things

we like to mind,

the door slides open a quarter-circle,

not so old, really,

just a crack in the bottom,

wooden under all that sleek,

crack, not good for bread or such

since ants would come

columbusing and colonize,

no, not good for cookies,

not bad for keeping

the odd bag of coffee beans

fresh in a frozen week outside,

ants don't drink coffee, yet,

no ants

in winter or if there are, not here.

Where are all the lives that are not here.

The rust, though,

is glamorous and rough,

reminds a girl

of Bible passages when she was even younger,

squirring with boredom in Sunday School.

all flesh is grass, they warned her, grass that withers,

goes into the fire,

flesh, but she knew better

she knew goddam well

that all flesh is flesh,

and things are only worth their feel,
hell hell hell, let her sit still, sit and gaze all day,
all the rusty sunshine of a winter day,
all flesh is flesh,
she could or you could,
anybody,
hold it, could dwell
on this rusty nautical device with composure,
no threat in it,
this big heavy haughty iron omega,
some great Isis could come and loop it on her arm,
rattle on her sistrum,
ça va?

Rust is best,
the color
of time itself,
some say,
or color
time likes to paint things with,
improving our pale world,
finding out the blood of common things
or this is Russia
where 'red' and 'beautiful'
share some word in the ordinary
way people talk,
I wouldn't know,

but so they tell me,
 those busy people who read books
 then actually go there, Bookland,
 the physical (the word 'real' is often used)
 replica across the seas
 of what they read,
 all the *described things*,
 Red Square, cheekbones, insidious ballet—

the soup has to wait even longer,
 really the substrate or viscous heirloom
 of a former soup, now ready
 for its new antics,

 a quantum of kale,
aliquantulum salis, a bouquet
 of mustard greens,

 a lump
 (*bolus agni*) of long-stewed mutton hoofbone
 to light the greens up with the brown
 aftermath of meat.

 Red red red
 red red sang the rust,

 this rust is for Sherry
 lives over the dairy
 paints in a tower
 over and over

the strange black flower

**botanized by so many poets in our day,
or a little bit before**

**she gathers rust
because we must
and in the loss
our beauty won
she spills in black and red
and no blood shed**

or yesterday,

**ah, there's more to a day
than opening the festive eye
nipping to the bathroom then standing
at the window and glomming at
your neighbors jogging by,
squire, it's the whole
Kantian enterprise de novo and toute suite,
imagine a a question that fits your answer
and announce it in a noisy monograph
and so to bed—**

but wait,

**the sun's still rising,
you have all this light to get through,
all this sheer result,
and me an amoeba on your wash-stand
watching the shimmer in your hair—**

just the names, the names are sacred,
the names are enough—

but wait,

who is this we
sauntering feral but forgiving
out of Blessed Sacrament Euclid Avenue?

We live in the breadbox,
we are memory moldy ever green,
we are the ones who remember,
anybody who remembers
has been here too long,

the breadbox

that better, chaster, mind seems far away
but not forgotten.

Roll up the top,
a dry old American flag on a plastic stalk
is in there too, one of those flags
everybody gave everybody else
right after 9/11

and sheepishly a few
days were patriot—

that very Tuesday
when our wonderful plumber
came to finish the new downstairs bathroom
and we discussed what seemed
to be happening 130 miles south
as a direct result of a plane that had flown

over our house an hour ago—
that very flag.

what would we do
without plumbing,
to sweep those memories out to sea?

It's the old principle: pretty librarian,
learn to read,

begin anywhere,

every road goes home.

This could go on forever

so could the crows,

they have finished their morning offerings now

and gone to croak their solemn

high mass in another tree,

not far,

my favorite bird—

but what of me?

Soon

it will be time to strip mustard leaves

from their tough stalks

and chop them coarse,

get the new soup moving in the old soup pot,

put the top on top,

time will never come back,

Lenin moulders in his inefficient sepulcher

but I can't do anything about that,

a little prayer maybe, now and then,

for peace and stuff,

just make the soup,

squire,

someone is bound to eat it and be glad.

Or at least warmed and nourished and

what else happens when you have been in the world

so long,

eating and rusting and watching,

Che Guevarra started by wanting to heal the lepers,

intentions rust,

things turn red,

take on a hard core policy,

Emerson lingers indoors

reading the lovely book of his found mind,

me, I go

down to that little stream

with all the fish

down below Yosemite

and spend the night

dreamng the water

back to the rock

back to the sky

grieving for my lost years

or I go

out in the snow to fetch the paper in.

27 January 2013

A KINGDOM UNDER SNOW

1.

A tenor tells a courtesan
it's time for both of them
to repent—but they have to
repent in the flesh—

that's what music is,
the opera explains,
there is Reason in the
slightest sound or touch
which if followed
all the way will lead
to heaven—or such
heaven as women and
men can bear to dwell.

2.

But the broken forest looms.
Warlocks bereft of their witches
crack stones in mortars
try without fire to make a cement
that will hold the mountain up
and not let the sky come down,

a thick, interesting menstruum
in which their herbs can mingle
and make the birds sing again.
They try to grind rock into spring,
lick salt off the back of the wrist,
squeeze their eyelids tight
until the sun breaks free.

3.

The repentant courtesan is in the desert now,
her technocratic lover close behind.
They sing a song of water and water suddenly
bursts out of the sand at their feet
glad to hear itself summoned at last
fter all these dispassionate theologies.

This would normally be the point in the opera
where the soprano gives up the ghost
and the tenor grieves at the top of his tessitura.

But someone is coming:
it is the high priest, the bass,
he sings a quiet pretty melody that points out
there is not much music left in grief
that sobbing hasn't sung already.
Decline to die, he urges them.

**The lovers stand up and embrace,
the high priest sweeps the dead leaves up
into a heap, then takes an armful up
and drops them in a burning basin
then vanishes in greenish smoke.**

**The lovers wonder where the trees are
that left so many dead leaves around them.
But this is opera, the place where fire
does not burn and death is beautiful again.**

**The high priest's voice falls from the sky:
Be one another. Be at peace.**

**Somewhere way down there,
the conductor lays down his funny little stick.**

28 January 2013

=====

e il mare suo

because any place
has its own sea
all round it,
ocean
of earth sang Apollinaire,
oceans of air and wheat and rock—

and there in the middle of the sea
the little island of anywhere

where you stand, always alone,
watching the almost unmoving

around you. Does anything seem
or seem to come towards you?

Anyone out there,
anyone who is not an island?

28 January 2013

=====

vorrei e non vorrei

**Joyce took care of that,
I want and I don't want
and I don't want to do
the thing I want to, true
to every moment every life
I'd rather and rather not.**

28 January 2013

=====

**If a clarinet were an animal
with four legs what would it see?
Slim people slipping through saplings
people not the least
ashamed of themselves or being seen,
leaves let them through, roots
try to trip them up, it's a game
among these slim people always moving—
the clarinet watches closely
with its single darkness and its many eyes.**

28 January 2013

=====

A.

Everybody always wants to be somewhere else.

B.

I haven't been anywhere long enough to notice.

28.I.13

=====

**Here comes the camera
the heart without a head
here comes the tripod
that conquered Kanchenjunga
here comes the finger
that invented history
here comes the glass
that loves assassinations
capitulations firestorms
and naked people caught
in their embarrassment
here come the annals
won't leave us in peace
the dreary records of our
poor excting ordinary lives
here comes memory
with its head on fire.**

28 January 2013

===== [STANZAS TO *LULU*]

1.

So how many have come to watch
so many watching. The anger
is in the white paint, titanium,
the peace is in the red, only red
has the kind of voice you can hear
over the waves. The self-pity
that chisels an island out of a sea.
Be. Be. We're always trying to be.
Says who? The mannequin
in the mind's window. Now spill
the color of a woman on a woman.

2.

It was in another state another climate
and the trees hid their names from me
we played cards but it didn't matter,
people die all the time, we thought,
so what was so special about me
that I could die and come to life again
with dirty fingernails and hungry for
you, whoever you are. Remember
when we were someone else, and you
pale with dark hair, recent escapee
from the harem of a third-rate potentate.

3.

Skip the remembering business, it's all
just ideology anyhow, people trying
to interrupt people trying to make love.
We let ourselves fall in love with the color
of a shadow, the tone-row of her laugh,
more like a giggle and the birds outside
add to the fascination—she feeds the birds—
and the house so dark when we come home
as if no one ever lived here, but still
we come in, sit down, sit there in the dark,
who knows how many others are here too.

4.

Spill now the yellow forefront on the fender
let the cadmium medium of which the literati
are so fond define the forward motion as if
the Volvo were going somewhere O Moon
of us Swamp Children spread out your map
and may it be to us as desire's autobahn
breaking the barrier of civil coherence yes!
let the animals howl their desperate vowel
the one they all know the one we try to copy
when we blab in our fat lips our skinny tongues
what you call a word I call two silent hands.

28 January 2013

5.

Answer obvious the question less so
day of rain and the five quarters of the sky
speak Irish to me swiftly honeychild
because the land of Goshen is not far now
on days like this you even get to hear
the horses neigh and the neighbor's radio
sings Irish too there is your old dream
of bodies mking sense of one another
only ever is a dream a plausible mistake
human grammar was not made for this
hawks nest on banks you hear them scream.

6.

Learning to write with this wet stick
and every rock has a different heft
and every aim a different throw
learn witchcraft from the youngest nun
lift your will and thread it through the needle
and everything you stitch will stay together
all the other pages are gone from the book
so rest your hand on mine and read me

there's still time for prophecy while we live
every morning a Gethsemani we take
this cup of what we've got coming to us.

7.

Tear each note in half and hope
loop the first overtone of each half
on a laundry line from ear to ear
your brain is someone else's backyard
you can hear them speaking French down there
till the note grows ever smaller, slower,
coming through the all-too-meager silences
I wanted to sing this just to say something
anything to break the news of my disappearance
before you read in the newspapers about
some man lost in the jungle and think it's me.

8.

But they were more interested in the weather
their bodies drifting vaguely after picnics
maybe bonfire on the shingle beach a roar
of orange flame at midnight and no more
be careful of the minimal it works on your fears
repetition causes old-age dementia so knit not
neither tic-tac-toe and wear your warmest coat
every night is winter my opera's getting cold
worship women but never let them know it
I was wiser when I was young and the flag

had redder stripes and all the stars had eyes.

9.

Well you could get there horseback
but not in time to cancel the execution
of the Emperor Maximilian a grief
you've carried all these years horse
or no horse do you wonder I'm upset
wouldn't you be if the Archon
of the local universe had it in for you
and all your weather smelled like
radishes forgotten at the back of the fridge
or you could walk like an Abrahamic hero
all the way there over crumbling texts.

10.

I keep forgetting you're a girl my little son
you get through the trees as fast as mist
breathed up from the wet ground to meet
the morning light the way the bottle breaks
and all that wine maketh red the maple
in the season when children go to prison
but you are free you dress in gnostic hymns
you worship the wrong father that's me
but they forgive you still believe in them
you play handball with their portfolios
and no one knows the formula but me

29 January 2013

11.

*Kunst kommt von können, nicht von wollen, sonst müsste es
ja Wunst heißen . — Karl Valentin*

But I could still hear her far as I ran
it was like trying to outrun my own legs
shadows under the trees a smell of car
that blend of all things hot from going
did you ever pray for it at midnight
the clarity of being at the end of wanting
“art comes from being able to—if it came
from will we’d call it wilt” and able was I
once, you hear the music now and understand
there is more to now than being here aloud
the coiled rope the sleeping animal the clock.

29 January 2013

AFTER

There are miracles among the dead
some of them are too busy to remember
but some see the shadows of their former lives
the way we see mist rising mornings
from an autumn lake, the one behind our house,
a pond with dam and reeds and beavers
all that frozen now and quiet. But the dead
are never sleeping—maybe that's the first
thing they notice, the unrelenting consciousness
of whatever they brought with them
that turns into whatever they find. A small hotel
maybe halfway up a mountain, where France
leans onto Switzerland, geese and many goats,
we watch them carry candles in the windows
and all we can do for anybody is go to sleep.

29 January 2013

=====

**Little prisoners in a yellow bus—
their day belongs to someone else
(The Man, the State, the potentate)
and that's the first thing they're taught
when the bus draws up to the door.
Nothing is your own except your sleep.**

30 January 2013

=====

**You hear the music it is far
meager longing of a misty day
most of it is close most of it is here
already where the eyes are
vigilant all day, blue
from sky watch, brown from earthsight.
Look in their eyes and know.
What does this one know?
Kor-ten steel rusts so far and then
no further—rust is color, rust
is skin, rust is the region of the weather.
And what do those eyes know?
A region is where something reigns
or rules, where we live
the atmosphere has teeth. And look
down here, that broken branch,
how small a thing to have such marrow!**

30 January 2013

=====

The fog

**(a suspension of ice particles or water drops in the air
diminishing visibility to less than one kilometer)**

is beautiful.

Inside me

it is bleak

**(an old word that meant either black — sounds like it still —or white— as we
mostly use it now — i.e., void of color)**

in me, a dull

resentment

of going to work

but the bleak

of this soft fog makes

the bleak in me

shimmer and show

good signs. I may

come back to life,

disperse myself in this.

30 January 2013

=====

D.956

**The sadness of Schubert
sings beneath the bright
like the sodden earth
below the sparkling stream.**

**Both are given. And we live
with what is taken away.**

30 January 2013

MYSTERIUM

Things waiting for their envelopes (birds)
to carry them past the zenith sideways
into the universe next door where you
woke up last night and called me
just once my name called in the dark
and maybe I heard and maybe I dreamed
and maybe I'm next door now like any
random animal outside the house
stirring o god I know they're there
I feel them muscles of the night itself
moving ever closer to my door
I try to persuade myself they're just
deer or catamounts or wolves or
anything simple and motivated
by ordinary appetites but my heart
knows better it knows a different
kind of fear the kind that children
associate with what they have the sense
to call mean people mean man mean lady
and they know that in the distance
from their own innocent animalness
that the meanness occupies the whole
mystery of evil arises and comes close.
Can the birds save me? Can they carry

**any relevant part of me out there
beyond the chancy constellations
into the well I wish I knew what's
out there in the eternal roar of stuff
fountaining out of nothingness
at no one's bidding. Maybe yours.**

30 January 2013

=====

**I dreamt a man who wasn't there
and woke feeling that his name was Brown
ancestor figure Victorian savvy master
of the size of things, with children
many, his influence profound on science
art and evidence, dark-whiskered
man of the Midlands not a painter not a poet
not a scientist or priest, just a man
who wasn't there when I woke up,
not even in the history books of casual aesthetes.**

31 January 2013

KARAOKE

**Students pretending to care
about what they are pretending
to learn when all the while
their beautiful minds are alive
in other places with other things.
Only distraction shows
the real track. Follow it out
of all this music and be free.**

31 January 2013

=====

**Things are not always together.
Wear white shoes. And things
you never knew knew you know you
because now, our time together, now
is a dry mouth full of seed-cake
aunt-sliced soon to be coffee-sluced
or tea or any cognate relation, the day
is made of many yous and spirit messengers
from the unseen world guide vagrant
thoughts here and there through
all your minds, thoughts nimble as
pickpockets plucking something out of
nothing and finding meaning in it
alas, a smile in someone's teeth or a seed
hunted loose by the tonguetip,
your own food does this to you!
The miracles of happenstance—what
the priestly caste sums up as 'heaven.'**

31 January 2013

=====

**Open to anything
nothing on the mind**

**he needed his breakfast
and the world came in**

**What kind of cave
was his anyhow**

**more light than shadow
more skin than rock?**

**A performance of Hamlet
in another language**

**watched in his dream
and all he understands**

as usual is their eyes.

31 January 2013

=====

**The last day of January
is the first of March
bright cold and the wind
wild sudden in the trees
I heard it before I understood
what was happening.
A Schubert sonata, Number 18
played by Pauline Ossetia
in Leningrad though all
our names are different now.**

31 January 2013

=====

**Babulous famous but paparazzi know
more about you than there is to know
and surely more than you do. Alas,
we are all celebrities. We all walk in light,
on red carpets of envy, cherishing
our polished aluminum images,
we all rule Dreamland with an iron rod,
we all dream in infinite harems. *Haram*,
forbidden is what it means. No one
can get in there but you. We dream alone.**

31 January 2013

=====

**Only once in Pittsburgh and not long
but I had friend from there and saw the movie
but never learned to dance in a normal way
but knew enough to jump around the room.
What kind of sonnet is this anyhow? Children
are taught to count using my poor fingers,
curveballs wear out my poor rotator cuff,
time is chopping my river into weeks,
o the shriek of wounded water, the sob
of atmosphere when we breathe out
vicious words—we owe it to the air
to tell the story and make it the truth.
Or if not the whole truth then some
gracious lie that makes somebody happy.**

31 January 2013