

1-2013

## January 2013

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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**

=====

**Quiet excitement of beginning again—  
but my handwriting looks the same,  
so who am I fooling?**

**You, if I'm lucky,  
and you'll forgive me all the strange  
roads brought me to you.**

**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 13<sup>th</sup> 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

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

=====

**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,



**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,

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Emerson lingers indoors

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with all the fish

down below Yosemite

and spend the night

dreamng the water

back to the rock

back to the sky

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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.

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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

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*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**

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**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  
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**28 January 2013**

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so many watching. The anger  
is in the white paint, titanium,  
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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.

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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.

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Skip the remembering business, it's all  
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to interrupt people trying to make love.  
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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**

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**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**

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**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**

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**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**

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**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**