

5-2015

may2015

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=====

**We owe it to our language  
not to change  
our names for places when they do.  
Call it Persia, Siam, Peking,  
Calcutta, Königsberg, Leghorn,  
Constantinople. Let history  
loose on us, let time speak.  
Call yourself anything you like  
but I'll still call you you.'**

**1 May 2015**

## **SANTA ROSA**

**There,  
    under the olive tree  
where the ripe  
fruit crushes dark red  
beneath the feet  
staining our summer skin  
once,  
    in the abandoned convent,  
ghosted by exalted desires —  
vision clear, eyesight poor —  
we wandered through the commas  
of an absent text.  
    How bitter their fruit!  
Crack them, pack them in salt,  
leave them to time.**

**1 May 2015**

=====

**Cavernous man-thought  
no virile sunshine  
can coax leaves out  
only She'll lure them  
out into the evident.  
Of course I tend to see  
Nature as the sex life of the mind,  
the mind, the one that thinks us —**

**we are not the playthings of the gods  
we are their *play***

**and there are no gods  
and we are they.**

**2.  
That's how the ode starts,  
sonata-form, from  
the obvious to the hidden  
causes then back  
to the soft obvious again.  
The skin of your arm  
on the skin of my shoulder,  
waking, spring morning**

**a day off, they say,  
first in weeks, but why  
off? When here at last  
the world is on?**

**3.  
Right down to these  
leaves finally appearing,  
new pale new green  
tentative, anybody home  
out there? They're asking  
and here we are  
clutched in the wild  
dangers of the world,  
the-one-thing-thing-after-another-thing  
banana in a monkey's hand,  
sweet, shapely, no more lasting than that.**

**4.  
Or isn't that a good analogy?  
Who needs one anyhow?  
The girl was driving too fast,  
the car too efficient, the night too long,  
the tree too firm. I read it  
in the paper, the car was yellow,  
bright yellow, open, peeling**

**into the dawn, they're all dead now,  
the law can protect us  
from everyone but ourselves,  
every moral has a story,  
we go to the beach,  
only the ocean comes home.**

**5.**

**Use long sentences  
the way you play pool  
a way of studying  
the lay of things  
and how to move,  
win harmlessly,  
lose without pain.  
A real sentence  
comes to a real end.  
Don't bark out phrases  
at me, I know  
you're desperate, we all are,  
but there are lots of us here,  
we need more than one slim canoe.  
Sing long sentences round us,  
tow us to safety on the other side.**

**6.**

**Where all this came from,  
love and war, frogs and clouds,  
old men bitching at pinching shoes,  
young men battling the sky.  
There is no one left to impress —  
we're all celebrities now,  
my selfie kisses your selfie  
in the pixeled night and nobody  
even knows, *images*  
*at last replace the man*  
I translate from Tuscan  
a phrase Dante never wrote  
though that's what he was thinking  
by the time he smelled the rose.**

**2 May 2015**

=====

**Green ginneth,  
mourning doves  
lamenting but she  
this early heard  
the oriole!  
At our window.  
Men love springtime  
because always  
it seemeth to mean  
more than things  
can ever mean. So hope they say  
is dressed in green.**

**2 May 2015**



=====

**The people next door  
have a party  
all year long.  
They call it the world  
but I know better.  
The real world  
hasn't started yet —  
only when there's silence  
will it come,  
dressed in an utterly  
different shade of blue.**

**2 May 2015**

=====

**Why shave your head?**

**— to see my skull before I die.**

**2.v.15**

=====

**Vitamins before breakfast —  
what is this, a New Yorker poem,  
where everything is just the way it is  
only more so? Never trust  
an Irishman who doesn't drink —  
that means me. Cleanliness  
is neck-and-neck with godliness.  
Like Firing Line with American misspelt  
Pharoah at the Derby, weep no more,  
my lady, it all has gone away,  
the parables and paradoxes are just Kleenexes  
drifting in the warm spring breeze. Warm!  
After such a winter you wouldn't believe!  
Am I lying, Harry? You tell me.**

**3 May 2015**

=====

**Secular sonnets are something else —  
grey ink on grey paper make sure  
nobody reads poetry these days. Grump.  
Extreme grump — my views she  
characterized as harsh on most issues.  
Most things. Then why am I smiling all the time?  
Risus sardonicus. Retraction of lips, contraction  
of cheek muscles — teeth show —  
sign of rigor mortis. Now just wait one minute,  
muse, I'm still breathing, walking around, blaming  
people,  
I can't be extinct yet. Or does the mind have  
a death-smile of its own, a practiced tension  
suddenly released, the usual meaning  
meaningless now, all thought hollow as a skull?**

**3 May 2015**

== == ==

**Everything could be listening —  
the moon even,  
that Confucius-looking  
wise-face in the sky.  
Breathe in and hold your peace.  
Summerland is only for the dead —  
the undeparted live in weather.  
How many bites before you become a dog?**

**3 May 2015**

**= = = = =**

**Acting in the cauldron  
a lacquer not a stain  
to leave the actual  
layered on you  
intact as the stiletto  
beat of a woodpecker  
(Mary's picus) in the old dead tree.  
Staccato, I mean,  
but sounds turn into weapons  
where I come from  
down there in the streets of desire.**

**4 May 2015**

=====

**Dark enough to see —  
pelican breasting on a bollard  
waiting or digesting.  
Everything is visible  
nothing is clear.  
I think of my sister  
in Vero Beach, how  
far away the close  
things are, the quiet  
friends, everything  
getting ready to begin.**

**4 May 2015**

**=====**

**Layer it on  
he meant,  
until the signs  
come through  
the merely seen.**

**4.v.15**



=====

**Eleven was the strangest age to be  
not one thing and not the other,  
age of the mirror, I looks at I,  
wondering it all changes.  
By the time you realize nothing changes  
you're a hundred years old  
with children of your own.  
It's the number's fault — go back  
to counting on your fingers —  
they at least can  
scratch an itch or caress a cheek.**

**4 May 2015**

=====

**Work your pen for breakfast —  
then write the villanelle  
I'm afraid to write,  
lovers waking, things come round,  
dawn waking never breaking,  
night a satin comforter  
athwart their tousled limbs —  
you know, that poem, you  
know how to do it, the words  
are in your lap now, the many, the sleek  
gorgeous smithereens.**

**4 May 2015**

== == == ==

**That genital smell  
out there, the leaves  
spring green  
in warm air,  
like an Ilya Repin  
painting —who knew  
better than he to paint  
the air between  
one thing and another?  
Intense sexuality  
of distances alone.  
Kilometers imply  
a beloved, and someone  
hurrying that way  
with the fullest heart.**

## **MADERA**

**And a woodpecker  
again, knowing  
his way  
into the material  
itself,  
where alone  
is found the life  
sustains us  
here in this  
imperious atmosphere —  
breathe me or die.**

**4 May 2015**

## **DÉPÊCHE**

**Hurry, hurry  
the sun says —  
so many heartbeats  
so many breaths.**

**4 May 2015**

## **ARS SCRIBENDI**

**Let he off hand dangle  
then from the fingers  
milk a come of words  
the other hand writes down.**

**They teach this  
on the prairies,  
the words grow tall  
as lush grasslands  
in sly Nebraska.**

**4 May 2015**

== == == ==

**The day comes  
towards us  
with words  
in its mouth,  
kisses the ears  
of all who let  
themselves listen.  
Without that  
I could not live.**

**4 May 2015**

**== ==**

**Near bee  
or far bird?  
The senses  
depend.**

**4.V.15**



== == == ==

**Fool's paradise,  
the yes  
buried in every no.**

**Oh blessèd doubt  
that says Not Yet.**

**4.V.15**

## **LAWN**

**light all round,  
this Turkish carpet-  
imitating ground,  
all leaf and brown  
and line and shade,  
all natural! Design  
lives only in our eyes.**

**4 May 2015**

## **DECIDE EACH TIME**

**Who turns the page  
who calls the tune  
*Old Mercy* or *Go Down*,  
who picks the word  
off the list on the wall,  
the word the dart  
lands in when Love  
puts down the cup  
takes aim and casts  
or does Love toss  
blindly, let the dart  
decide? The rest of us  
in the crowded bar  
all hold our breaths—  
what will we do  
with the word  
Love chooses? What  
words can we use  
to mnake sense of Love  
in an actual world  
with doors and telephones  
and hospitals and parks  
dark riversides, pools  
of streetlight far apart  
and in between  
the real life starts?**

5 May 2015

=====

Maybe I should relent.  
Springtime is no time for doubt.  
The flesh of difference  
is a winding hill,  
a tor with tower on it,  
a salmon leaping the weir—

things like that  
are what really understand me,  
high things, quick tricks,  
a Turkish carpet under your bare feet.

O Paradise comes easy to the mind.  
Call this my after all apology—  
I pretended everything was difficult,  
groaned in sunshine and wrote books—  
Now look at me, in love with listening.

5 May 2015

== == == ==

**Cautious raptors  
in the woods  
the clouds  
spill vapor  
and go home.**

**5.V.15**

## BRONZE

*aere perennius*

A bronze woman  
on a heap of rocks  
perched, river  
at her left hand  
and no name.  
Star-tipped her  
pronged crown.  
In the picture  
she holds objects  
I cant identify—  
goddess of obscure  
occupations, patron  
saint of men who  
work with broken tools,  
women who trust  
men, illiterate  
teachers, interpreters  
with no mother tongue.  
I think she loves me.  
She isn't the Virgin Mary  
(no snake beneath her feet)  
but there's something virgin  
about her earnestness.  
Simple industry. Work

**never ends. Once  
you begin to practice  
art you're found forever,  
brazen, powerful,  
with no consequence,  
no river can wash you away.**

**5 May 2015**

== == == ==

**Start here.  
The road  
unrolls  
from your  
breath.  
Every exhale  
a kind of mile.  
Soon there,  
soon restless  
ti be gone.  
Never follow  
anybody's map—  
your guess  
is good enough.**

**5 May 2015**



**== == == ==**

**The crow knows me  
what to tell,**

**I celebrate  
herewith my obedience.**

**Crows always know  
how far to go ,**

**who to take with me,  
who to let know.**

**5 May 2015**

== == == ==

**Ancient ink  
gives way  
to new saying,  
write geek-ese  
with a quill pen—  
that'll show 'em.**

**5.V.15**

== == == ==

**They wait  
for what they need  
skittering upward  
to meet the rapt stars.  
Everybody in the cosmos  
looks at them,  
loves them. Feeds them  
They  
    are we,  
            the universal  
celebrities,  
human species—  
they raise us for our language  
our milk of mind.**

**5 May 2015**

## **KETUBAH**

*for Ava and Bernard*

**Ketubah made of stars  
and beautiful shalt-nots,  
silk socks,  
soft strokes, guava paste,  
palm fronds, phoenix eggs.  
All these he guarantees.  
And she in most exalted  
reciprocity adds a clause  
that confers on him  
an exclusivity: he alone  
may see the shadow cast  
by her arm each morning  
reaching high to raise  
the window shade  
on their burgeoning day.**

**(5.V.15)**

=====

**Why would a word  
let you take it  
in your mouth?  
Doesn't it have somewhere  
a home of its own?  
And yet you hold it,  
taste it, speak it  
as if it were yours—  
isn't there a god of such things,  
a stricter permission?**

**5 May 2015**

== ==

*(for Ketubah)*

**KeTuBah —**

**something written,  
a contract is a destiny  
*it is written*  
like Arabic KiTaB, a book.**

**The vowels are birds  
that fly around in the mind  
guiding us to the specific  
kind of meaning meant.**

**And even this is written.  
Is writing.**

**The way to hold your breath,  
to hold your hands.**

**\***

**Feed me  
Dress me  
Bed me**

**of old  
a wife is said  
to have said**

**and by signing  
the husband undertakes  
to do those things.**

**But what does the wife  
signify by signing?  
She consents**

**to be defined  
as if those three things  
were her desire**

**and on some man  
dependent, signs a writing  
tells her what she wants,**

**what she is supposed to be  
content with having.  
But what does she really want?**

**No book says that.**

**6 May 2015**

== == ==

**Once a woman cost a lot of money.  
200 *zuz* for a commoner,  
ffour hundred for a *bat Kohen*.**

**But now the numbers are all changed,  
all the birds flew away, the Saracens  
besieged the tower. Only the gold**

**cock on the steeple still tells time.  
The moon has set once for all.**

**6 May 2015**



=====

**Write down what you're thinking  
right now — it may have meaning.  
Things themselves are too far away—  
you have to remember them, bridges,  
train stations, cobbled street, bakery,  
chapel. The doors are locked, the choir  
done rehearsing. Take your words and go.**

**6 May 2015**

## **PLATH**

**People say it was a game  
they played  
to live or die.  
If he came home too late again  
she would be dead.  
There are games like that  
deep in the warp  
of what we are.  
We all play them and we all die.**

**6 May 2015**

## FOR LOUIS ZUKOFSKY

Heart forages there  
among the seeable  
for of senses few at  
first it seems our  
lusts be made yet  
lissome choices  
dance a pattern close  
closeted within this  
unsensed palaver of us  
anxiously the world  
this one and to come,  
our mute theology of grief  
from which it rouses us  
something like joy though  
what sort of word is that?

6 May 2015

## MARRIAGE ONTRACT

*(for Ketubah)*

1.

Some hide the scroll  
some hang it on the wall—  
what a thing it is  
to have it all written down  
past and future,  
bride price and prophecy,  
the sly responsibility  
words always reminding.

2.

Demanding. Every  
is a hysterical middle  
aged man begging  
for the part of you  
that he can carry away  
and not worry, the you  
you can spare, the ou  
who needs nothing  
from him. He imagines  
this fondly. It feels  
sometimes like a hip,  
a breast, or the smooth  
leather of a woman's purse  
left behind on the banquette.

**Something you hardly  
know is you. And he  
gives nothing — not  
for selfishness especially  
but because he has nothing  
to give — nothing portable  
that way. He has forgotten  
people live in a world  
more or less together.  
Wherever he is now, he's  
always on the way home.**

**3.**

**Don't marry the man in the moon  
or the man in the tree with the girl  
roped to the branches beside him.  
Don't marry the man with his head  
kissing a book all day long and at night  
wanting to discuss what he has read.  
Don't marry the kudu with spiral horns,  
don't marry the porcupine the narwhal  
the lamprey the albatross the dog,  
the animal that pretends to be speaking,  
the animal who can't help but adore you.  
Whatever you do don't marry the dog.**

6 May 2015

=====

Gossamer because  
sift through the thick air  
summery with pollen and sunlight

on a day like this  
you have to take full responsibility  
for everything — animals

wait for you in the woods,  
why not, they know what you're feeling,  
what you're thinking.

That's the conundrum of it:  
animals know.  
And we bigger ones don't, not really,

we're just decoys floating  
on the sea of mind  
waiting for a real thought to spot us

and swoop down out loud.  
And then we think  
we hear ourselves thinking

**while fox and woodchuck smile to themselves.**

**6 May 2015**

**= = = = =**

**Gift of sound  
across the bend.  
brow down  
as if a word  
could be more  
than the noise  
of it shattering  
the deadly  
calm of the ear.**

**Hearing is all.  
Elegant phrases  
wind whoosh,  
mockingbird.**

**6 May 2015**

== == == ==

**Bracketed roundly  
like a tree.  
Give me  
your pollen.  
Apollo meant  
destroying too.**

**Resemblance  
is fatal.**

**Words  
that sound alike  
mean alike.  
The terror  
of this, the error  
in us, that  
we so hear.**

**May 2015**



== == ==

**Thick sputum of sunlight  
through leaves—**

**it takes the weather  
to bloom a house**

**so suddenly windows  
fill with color—**

**it's always the light  
that decides,**

**another day spoken  
on us. The decree.**

**7 May 2015**

== == == == ==

**I *will* learn to write.  
It will be hard  
as cutting through sugarcane  
with no machete but my hands—**

**to spread things wide open  
without destroying!  
Lips part as if they themselves  
had all the answers.**

**All things are trees.  
We speak their fruit.**

**7 May 2015**

**= = = = =**

**Listen! China  
claims the moon!  
It took us longer  
than we thought  
to start thinking.  
While we have light!**

**7 May 2015**

## **LA CHIESA**

*for Chiara*

**Polyglot virgins  
arrayed around the apse.**

**On the altar a bare cup—  
imagine the light  
collecting in its glass**

**imagine the fortunate  
congregant who comes  
quiet up the nave**

**to drink that light—  
now you know what  
language is for.**

**7 May 2015**

=====

**Not among the living  
do I ply my trade,  
My commerce is with  
the undying, the ones  
who speak and rule  
and guide in silence.  
To them I sell my breath.**

**7 May 2015**

## **CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH**

**Do these sooty stones  
bear memory  
of their future when  
the fated architect  
sketched them  
in the air to which  
ordinary men would  
hoist them block  
by block, into the simple  
American low-church  
sky? Did stones feel  
the tragedy lurking  
in his liberal gestures,  
his pleasures taken  
in the softer matter  
of the world? The rock  
looks mournful to me,  
scarred, lichenous  
with dark. Or is it prayer,  
the noise we make  
to God, to all  
the other deities adored?**

**7 May 2015**

## Rhinebeck

=====

**The painful compromise  
between the shoe and the foot  
we call breaking-in,  
a phrase employed also  
for burglary. Violence  
between content and container,  
skepticism creeping in the chapel,  
adultery. The foot tries  
to outlast the shoe. Pressures  
mount. Nothing is easy  
when you're mortal —  
Puck does right to laugh at us.**

**8 May 2015**

=====

**What would a young poet  
say about that girl on the corner  
waiting for the bus, backpack  
beside her, she leans  
on the fence and smokes a cigarette.  
But what would Yeats say,  
watching from his leafy window,  
or Paul Blackburn as he comes close  
on the very bus she's waiting for?  
And what would I say (her hair  
one way her frame another, all  
the weight on one hip, pivoting,  
the bus squealing to a stop)  
before she throws the cigarette away,  
hoists the backpack and is gone?**

**8 May 2015**



=====

**The evident animal  
lustrous on the lawn  
pervasive. They say  
“sunny” on the weather app,  
and this is it, outspread  
on what had been my lawn  
only last night in the dark.  
But now just look at it,  
everywhere, layering out,  
poking through leaves,  
triumphant, maybe  
only seeming to drowse.  
And what if it should wake?**

**8 May 2015**

=====

**Too many too far  
from me.**

**First a story  
then a shadow.  
Memory is the creation  
of a past  
that never happened,  
a shadow only  
cast by present pain.**

**8 May 2015**

**=====**

**Scatter of small  
birds through fence  
sudden and gone.**

**8.v.15**

=====

**Dateline disaster  
stars roll around  
their own sweet time  
the politics of Little Britain  
of childbirth, common sense  
and all the vicious verities  
abound. Tell a tailor  
to sew a flag with  
all the symbols taken off it,  
a flag with nothing on it —  
tell the sailor to  
abbreviate the sea.  
By nightfall the body  
personal is all alone,  
pray that its raptures  
suffice for all.**

**9 May 2015**

**=====**

**I am far from understanding  
what I just said. In any case  
I wasn't speaking to myself  
but to you, "whoever you are,"  
your job to make sense of it.  
Our dance together, our little marriage.**

**9 May 2015**

**=====**

**Fog gone sun come  
I wanted to wake to veil  
but woke to clear.  
How disappointing  
the actual is to a child!  
It takes years to appreciate the real.**

**9 May 2015**

**= = = = =**

**We work so hard  
to stay the same.  
It's like a farm,  
busy all day long,  
every beast its own agenda,  
the milk, the egg, the meat.**

**9 May 2015**

**=====**

**And here I thought  
this man belonged to me  
because he was there,**

**and I was too, he saw me—  
don't we belong to what we see?**

**9 May 2015**



=====

**The red ink  
veins mean  
writes up  
the words, you  
breathe me.  
To speak at all  
is lungly. Purifies  
the stream, renews  
who we are.**

**9 May 2015, NYC**

**=====**

**To be an American  
is to speak  
the wrong language  
correctly.**

**9.V.16, NYC**

=====

**The cab driver  
gave us Namaste  
with folded hands—**

**what do I give  
with my body?**

**You give good hug  
the girl said,**

**so I hold her  
still in mind.**

**9 May 2015 NYC**

## **POETS**

**Playthings of fortune  
and odd chance,  
for whom their mother  
tongue is always  
an acquired language.**

**9 May 2015, NYC**

=====

**Eloquent bodyness of dream —**

*touch is true*

**they said, how hard it is,  
for soft fingers to tell lies**

*touch is true, skin*  
**is surface of the self  
an offering,**

**from the self to the other  
a thousand miles  
instantly crossed**

**the dream showed me how.**

**10 May 2015**

=====

**Bronze statuary  
hard to read  
— woman, with horses? —  
on a wordless plinth.**

**Civic monument  
to puzzlement —  
look up at me  
and be confused.**

**10 May 2015**

**=====**

**Just because I don't know  
doesn't mean nobody knows  
does it? Or is there one  
puzzle no one at all can  
ever figure out?**

**10.v.15**

=====

**Sharon is a summer rose  
and scorns the spring,  
sleeps late, uncovered,  
nakedly shy, waits  
till all the others have  
dressed up and paraded around  
got a little weary and come home —  
then her moment comes and lasts,  
dances sometimes till it snows.**

**10 May 2015**



=====

**Don't take your anger  
out on things —  
things have feelings too,  
share fellow feeling with other  
things, can take revenge —  
the slammed-down cup  
may be avenged later that day  
by a falling curtain rod —  
it is one world we live in,  
and nothing is ever alone.  
And everything feels.**

**10 May 2015**

## **ALTAR**

**1.**

**On your pale  
I stretch my  
ritual, long  
as I can across  
the shadow of mind  
they call the skin.**

**2.**

**But there are shadows  
of shadows too,  
that is where  
the words are born,  
those inky animals  
I gush on you.**

3.

We can't be sure.  
Liberty begins  
with a touch,

stroke the bell,  
the brazen sounds,  
in a mountain temple  
an empty bowl  
responds.

4.

Their quest for  
authenticity—  
pork pie hat, old  
typewriter,  
the blues—  
led them to you

who scorned  
all that and taught  
never the authentic  
only the real.

**5.**

**Late sun among  
the roads. Love  
reigns, the harsh  
kindness of strangers,  
the woman beside you  
you come to know.  
Takes years to tell.  
Life a mere story  
but bring that too,  
heap on the altar.**

**10 May 2015  
Rhinebeck &  
Weys Corners**

=====

**The blue you  
see through trees —  
color theory  
starts right here.  
The imperceptible difference  
overwhelms the camera —  
the blue shoots through  
the ordinary eye —  
shafts of otherness  
through local  
mother green  
find us here.**

**10 May 2015**

=====

**Between comes home.  
She haunts me  
like you — *chaleur*  
*douceur*, who knows  
how skin feels  
in another language?**

**10 May 2015**

=====

**Insinuations. Remorseless.  
No one I want to look at,  
no one I want to see.  
Be. Personnel of afternoon,  
car radio, departures.  
To be close to the wall  
at last. To be the wall.**

**10 May 2015**

=====

**The howler monkey  
and its howl—  
business as usual  
in the cratered day.**

**The growl out there  
the mower man  
mending nature,  
chiiding the exuberance  
of spring, gears grinding,  
motor stunning  
the poor mad morning.**

**I can be ordinary if I choose,  
complain about heat and cold,  
admire mountains and horizons.  
Or can I? Aren't these  
the greatest sins of all,  
to do what everybody does.  
and wear such uniforms out loud?**

**11 May 2015**





=====

**Things let me say what they mean.  
The egg shape of a plum tomato  
thick-sliced for once, a drift  
of basil, a hail of salt, a rain of oil**

**and so we try to make each silly thing we eat  
into cosmology again. As if once  
making a world were not enough—  
eat, forget Lucretius, wipe your lips.**

**11 May 2015**

**=====**

**One gets used to such things  
a patch of sunlight on the lawn.**

**11.V.15**

**=====**

**Umbrella and wind  
and I have sinned.**

**Weather is the rod  
of a stern God.**

**Big or small  
karma rules all.**

**11.V.15**

**=====**

**Blackbird shrill  
then silence.  
Must mean.  
Things do.  
Cries again,  
shriller.  
          Another.**

**11.V.15**

=====

**In leper-light, in dread  
in the glorious vistas  
only fear confers.**

**The light  
gibbering in every corner,  
streets crowded with  
every stranger is a leper.**

**I lift the cloth and lick your eound,  
we all have one, swelling or gash,  
a cleft among the amplitudes,  
the place where pain is hungriest,**

**and every touch is a contagion  
and to that fatal kiss we must,  
must, offer over and over our lips,  
mouthing whatever comes to mind,**

**because fear cracks open the ordinary world  
so everything is risk and everything is kiss.**

**11 May 2015**

**=====**

**After the bell  
stops ringing  
it keeps ringing.  
Something the ear  
does to the mind.  
Not always easy  
to tell when things  
stop if ever they do.**

**11 May 2015**

## **HUMIDITY**

**1.**

**Sky scratch  
squirrel in a cloud**

**2.**

**Pronounce me  
the way you mean  
me to be.**

**3.**

**Vans indeterminate  
clutter morning  
roads. Who knows  
what can happen  
inside. Anything.**

**4.**

**Be a sport.  
The door  
never locks  
the dog  
never looks.  
Is that exactly**



**what we mean?**

**5.**

**Time after time  
like a dumb song.**

**You need less  
than you think.**

**Me too. Abrasive  
upbringing wiped  
me smooth.**

**You too. Made  
in his image.**

**Whose?**

**6.**

**Call it rapture  
if you like  
we are all gone  
into the light.**

**Remember?**

**7.**

**Oaxacan sausages  
baked potato new  
world food.**

**It looks like rain.**

**If only looks  
could fall too  
from the sky.  
Water, water  
is the measure of us.**

**8.  
Breathless  
as a line.  
Count the citizens  
who care  
Easy as a banana  
slips its skin  
geometry cuddles us  
makes us think.**

**9.  
Few things understood:  
river and wood,  
traffic lights, weary  
gait of waitresses.  
Opulent mornings  
on the Delaware.  
My father called her  
Mona Lisa and**

**you would be too.**

**10.**

**We had to forget  
so much  
just to get here.  
Provenance  
of sunshine?  
Don't be too sure.**

**12 May 2015**

## **NATURAL HISTORY**

**1.**

**Do hummingbirds eat bumblebees  
and if not, why does nature spare  
every animal but us? An oriole  
busy in the old orchard up the hill,  
so many lurid resemblances.  
We too migrate ten thousand miles  
each day to be at home.**

**2.**

**Mosquitoes ride safe  
the raindrops that would  
crush them. Fact.  
The nearer to the door you sit  
the quicker you get out — but also  
the faster the stranger finds you.**

**3.**

**The stranger in our midst.  
You know who I mean.  
Bees homing for the night.  
Lucretius saying a quiet prayer  
to Venus with half his heart.**

**4.**

**Mourning doves are on the lawn  
again, and they find seed there  
that No One scattered for them.  
It turns out that all of us  
live on *The Mysterious Island*  
discovered by Jules Verne,  
a hidden demingod nearby,  
some bird I also don't recognize  
hinting at me from the trees.**

**12 May 2015**

=====

**A fresh leaf  
finds me.  
Bug-bitten,  
windborne  
already fallen,  
still new green.  
Falls now  
further from me  
when I reach  
to hold it for  
inspection.  
But who am I  
to look at anything?**

**12 May 2015**

**=====**

**1.**

**Catch the fence  
before it flies away,  
everything lives.**

**2.**

**The edges of things  
are what we can use,  
the silences, the skin.**

**3.**

**There could be another  
morning like this, or a movie  
adaptation of it, starring names  
for what are just feelings now,  
time turned into color,  
a girl on horseback in the clouds  
playing this woman jogging  
home on gravel roads.**

**4.**

**Or is that true  
enough to have been said?**

**Words are curtains  
behind which an old wizard  
works our feelings—  
and we have no little  
dog to roust him out,  
nothing but the soul.**

**5.  
Which doesn't even exist  
according to our best minds  
and they have doubts about  
the mind too. Blood  
thinks its way through us  
and we obey. Something  
like that. Or have I  
been reading the wrong  
websites again, tattered  
pages that blink on and off?**

**6.  
So there might still be joy  
and jouissance peculiar  
to the human species.  
I'm no philosopher  
as must be obvious to you.**



**I horde my precious silences.**

**13 May 2015**

**=====**

**The wind has done its work.  
Clouds pass.  
The woman jogs back home.  
This is the world  
of hers and ours.  
Sunglasses, sweaters,  
writing things on paper.  
The ozone layer.  
Smell of seaweed on the beach.  
People. Compromise.  
The taste of salt.**

**13 May 2015**

## **LITERATURE**

**is the last resort  
when all the other  
sciences are closed.**

---

**Professionalism works by exclusion, banishing risks,  
guesswork, improvisation, charm. Research is shaped by  
whatever or whoever pays the researcher. The sciences are  
just as much part of late capitalism as the fashion industry or  
auto manufacturing.**

---

**Voice be still  
and let the sun  
anneal your asperities.**

**14 May 2015**

=====

**Late come to leaf  
o Lady  
we stare into the sky  
trying to trace  
your footsteps  
coming to  
us and going back.**

**14 May 2015**

## **ESTUARY**

**How wide the river  
between us and the mountains.  
I take the meaning:  
the land belongs to us  
but we belong to the distances.**

**They have moved me around  
since I was a little boy, white  
surf at Rockaway, dark tall  
pines just south of Callicoon.**

**And the sea, our mother,  
first love, the sea  
is made of nothing else.  
Even here She comes  
between, and means, and means.**

**14 May 2015  
Amtrak (Westchester)**

**=====**

**Driving in the dark  
maybe with no headlights  
even, through forest  
and farmland till we reach  
—whether woods or meadows—  
the place where we  
always are. This  
is what talking means.**

**15 May 2015  
Hotel Wales**

=====

**Wet day bright coming  
bracket fungus tree ears  
on maple stump —**

**the words say themselves  
to things seen.**

**Miracle of touch,  
to know how things feel.**

**Every sense says you.**

**16 May 2015**

=====

**Of course I want the lilt of music, but the words must be clear as trumpets or oboes— words, those mirrors of human feeling.**

**It is never enough to be me. Or anyone. Identity is the thief of love.**

**Now the sun comes out and gilds the lawn. What I wanted and what came — they must be the same.**

***It wills in us.***

**16 May 2015**

**=====**

**Trying to catch  
what never left—**

**isn't that music?**

**16.V.15**



## THE RAPTURE THE SABBATH

1.  
the first and the last—  
on that day we watched the moon  
it flies above us still, its  
trees all gone now and its little light  
still comforts us.

2.  
We create  
our ancestors. Pound  
taught us this, and Duncan:  
*choose your own grandparents.*  
He spoke and the garden wall,  
old brick, opened on a meadow  
so he stood in sun.

3.  
Trying nothing but to keep  
answering.  
                    To live is to respond.  
Can I read the feather

**floats down when  
out of sight above me  
a hawk and some harried  
bird contend?**

**All I have  
is evidence.**

**Be enough for me  
we cry to each other  
like dying statesmen begging for a truce.**

**17 May 2015**

=====

**Nothing is clear.  
Go on and on,  
hospitals blossom in county towns  
our fastest growing industry.**

**Then summer comes  
leaves and wooden benches  
and stains everything ironic.  
No wonbder the scared**

**millennials, the smirk,  
the sly transitioning.  
*Of course I will be other—*  
there is no same left for me.**

**17 May 2015**

=====

**How far can we get.  
Between the cities, towns.  
Between the towns  
les droits de l'homme  
fade out in the trees,**

**Fierce democrsacy of toads!**

**And you don't like it  
when you get it,  
mother vole and uncle toad  
and all the life you take  
hurrying there.**

**And breath by breath you give it back.**

**17 May 2015**

## THE THROB

A flamen stares into the sky  
running through his repertory  
of prayers, rolling on his tongue  
formulae, spells.

*Bring the sky  
down to me,  
heal me  
in its openness.*

*The skin  
is sin.*

*Free me  
from separateness.*

*All edges  
abolish.*

He prays like that.

2.

Roads go—  
but what do people do?  
What is the defining  
verb of our presence?

**It throbs in him  
throb turns into prayer  
he swills around in his mouth.**

**Man in morning on road  
studying the sky.  
No instruments to decide.**

**Sometimes the sky bleeds—  
then he can tell  
a little but never enough.**

**18 May 2015**

## **RABBINIC COMMENTARY ON HUMAN PRAYER**

**1.**

**Notice that the edge  
which begins by blocking  
the way to the interior  
becomes the way.**

*The skin / is sin.*

**2.**

**A man alone with the sky  
is probably the truest  
time there is.**

**3.**

**Doubt finally has  
nothing to do with it.  
A hum in whose ears  
we finally choose.**

**18 May 2015**





=====

**Things wait for trees  
there are parallels  
in Donegal was home  
Erival the mountain  
made the man stay.**

**Provender! We live  
on this air, Celtic  
breathetarians at last  
at home in atmosphere alone.**

**18 May 2015**

=====

**After dry weeks it  
rains on rainday  
still — the alignment  
is healed. I told you  
it would get better  
but I never listen.  
The virtue of desire  
is it's hard to doubt.  
Only identity is grief.**

**19 May 2015**

== ==

**But could have ventured  
out where the animals  
know a different world  
though we walk the same dirt,  
mulch of a million years.**

**Every sparrow tells a little of it—  
I try to listen, I get  
distracted by the habit of I see,  
the thick city I carry with me.**

**19 May 2015**

**=====**

**They drained power  
from the system,  
they broke  
the spaces between.**

**Broke space.**

**Filled it with guesses  
and taught them to the young.**

**Who need all the space they can.**

**19 May 2015**

=====

**Attila dies in drugged frenzy  
a calmer tyrant sidles in  
pretending to be The People.**

**But it was only like a tree,  
a leper's face, corrugated,  
color of dirt, no nose, a gaping**

**question. *I lost my way...*  
I lost my grasp of the Design,  
shoved an aluminum rupee**

**coin into his claw. What can we do  
about Putin, about politics,  
gibbering sickness that we call the state?**

**19 May 2015**

== == == == ==

**Walking there  
as if intention**

**were itself a palfrey  
and the thought**

**a maiden destination  
riding to itself**

**sidesaddle like a nun  
or a shadow on a wall**

**perfectly placed  
to be where it finally is.**

**19 May 2015**

**= = = = =**

**Cool May morn  
o if we but could  
store cold the way  
we store up heat  
how summer would  
make love again.**

**20 May 2015**

**=====**

**Trespass on time  
and what do you find?  
Suddenly tomorrow.  
All your singular  
plural now.**

**20 May 2015**



## **SUDDEN OVERWHELMING SUSPICION**

**I am breathing  
the leaves  
out of their branches  
I am in control**

**I don't want  
all this responsibility  
suddenly I realize  
I am behind it all**

**wizard child  
wastrel mage  
as if I made the world  
with my mind on something else.**

**20 May 2015**

=====

**Blood beat radio.  
I wake to hear  
myself being.  
Skull listens to  
itself! Bone  
of an idea. Pulse  
in the ear. Now  
who's talking?**

**20 May 2015**

=====

**Cardinal at the window  
at first light  
singing.**

**He's red, that's why,  
his color makes him do it.  
Colors make us what we are.**

**20 May 2015**

=====

**I don't mean to be insulting  
but it's Wednesday,  
Woden's day or Mercury's,  
I should be smarter than I am.  
My eyes should be everywhere,  
his green ravens ravishing  
all the information that is world.**

**20 May 2015**

=====

**You are not  
where you think you are.  
You are a blue  
hydrangea in a sea-  
side garden,  
lots to say  
and nothing more.**

**20 May 2015**

**=====**

**Time to deliver  
cows from milk,  
set the identity  
free from function?**

**No, sir. This is no  
hotel, this is ordinary  
morning. Go to work.  
That's where you'll find**

**you waiting for you.**

**20 May 2015**

**=====**

**In that world  
everything means.**

**But how much?  
And are you hungry?**

**20.V.15**

=====

**Imagine if a duck swam  
in this picture and a lake  
all round it and trees  
drooping over water**

**and it was evening and one  
or two people hard to see  
moved quietly in leaf shadow  
and then the duck took off**

**into sunset where would you be?**

**20 May 2015**



=====

**Caught by our rapture  
soul bird sings  
an hour in the age of us**

**then the quiet bone  
takes up the song  
*silence in heaven***

**then we sleep again  
into the next music  
the one called wake.**

**21 May 2015**

=====

**Hiding happens.  
Don't be jealous.  
Seals on the sandbar  
many, waiting for us.  
Each in own way  
arriving. Summer  
hidden inside  
forty degrees at dawn.**

**21 May 2015**

=====

**Get the animal moving  
the one with no wheels—  
Remember childhood  
remember song  
when the music was  
safely outside.  
But now and ever  
since the day Kate  
Draper played  
the final trio from  
*The Cavalier of the Rose*  
at top volume so  
the whole decorous  
upper west side building  
shook the music ever  
after tabernacles deep  
inside the meat of me.**

**21 May 2015**

**=====**

**I can't be sure  
I read eveey word of it  
but I browsed it hard  
for eighty years/**

**22.V.15**

**= = = = =**

**Start it over.  
The rehearsal  
stumbles.  
Start it over  
change the script  
tear off your  
costumes, strike  
the set. Now  
isn't that better?  
Isn't that who  
we really are?**

**22 May 2015**

## TREES

1.  
Screw the bottle tight—  
this is America  
and things evaporate  
while you're thinking.  
With the ink you have  
already extracted  
write a careful epic  
*The Secret of Trees*—

2.  
not some mystery  
some trees guard  
but all of them, huge  
secret all trees are:  
angel instructors—  
wherever they out-  
number us the world  
is clean. The desert is  
a dirty place because.

**3.**

**Each tree a conversation,  
each variety is own language  
or dialect — all conifers  
communicate — and we  
have been slow to know  
we listen to them when  
we listen to our thoughts  
when we're among them.**

**4.**

**Don't listen to leaves,  
rustling branches—  
that's just the wind,  
that's a different language,  
the wind is a different animal.**

**Listen to the wood instead  
that thinks your thought along.  
What you think is what they mean.**

**22 May 2015**

=====

**A kind of measurement.  
Lost locket. Frayed cuff.  
Here. We begin again,  
handicapped by time.**

**Count by absences,  
How many trees. A tree  
stands for something  
always. Solve. Hard  
to read hard to forget.**

**22 May 2015**



## **STAR**

**Everything knows me.**

**There is a star**

**hungrier than ours**

**it lives on information**

**the verbal and symbolic**

**products of us, our own**

**emotional outpourings**

**frescos sonatas poetry**

**and the fairytale we call history,**

**the weird theologies we pray.**

**Arab astronomers had a name for it**

**but they never wrote it down.**

**22 May 2015**

**= = = = =**

**Wind catches the immer  
rim and topples the glass.  
They call this physics  
but it's just everything...**

**Things hsave weight  
only when we listen.  
Lift them from their  
place into our own.**

**22 May 2015**

## **POND**

*for Samzang*

**Beautiful pond  
she tells me,  
should write a  
poem about it  
so here goes.**

**On a green day  
in windy sun  
sitting near  
the Buddha's heart  
I look for a pond**

**a pond I cant see  
from where I sit—  
so many things  
a self can't see  
beautiful things**

**that are really there.**

**22 May 2015  
Bowdoin Park**

## Pavilion 2

=====

What would it be or who  
if I spoke to the top of the morning  
the wy my father, or was the shepherd  
just dreaming when the angel  
or Caedmon in his byre? So that  
we tumble together in the land  
of Home Rule and the paddleboat  
brings white ways to Hawai'i?  
Glottal stop. I lay by the radio down  
on the doggy rug of my aunt's house,  
Scoopy its name, and Philco  
on warm faux-mahogany console  
buzzing a little beneath the song,  
how should I know what song,  
I am a child and children have only  
music, not artifacts like vases and songs,  
only the buzz in our ears from that  
language before womb-time, that  
speech we're already forgetting.

23 May 2015

=====

Or anywhere else  
sunshine. 46 degrees  
Fahrenheit.  
I have used  
all the words I know  
and it's still morning,  
Where will I go  
now to learn the day  
or what to say to it  
before it's gone?  
I assume a language  
flourishes in the leaves  
there are so many  
of them and they move.  
Or is it in fact the hum  
of the tree wood proper,  
the tall dreamers,  
historians of time,  
our sisters and brothers  
teaching us to stay.

**23 May 2015**

**=====**

**(TREES)**

**How to tell  
what they're sending  
from what I'm thinking—  
or is there a difference?**

**23.V.15**

== == == == ==

**Wander  
fallen feathers  
sky-gifts  
filtered down  
to you alone  
to find them.**

**How could a real  
thing ever  
miss its mark.  
The mark is built  
into the fall.  
The throw. The word  
you finally gasp out.**

**23 May 2015**

=====

**Dwell. How you do  
in mind. A deep  
strange linkage,  
something buried  
in the ground of us  
suddenly, perma-  
nently awakened.**

**I lost a gold ring once  
on my own lawn,  
it sinks in, swoons  
through earth — ground  
is a slow liquid  
where things sink down,  
rise up again. the rocks  
ascend, years later  
to someone's hand.**

**My gold will come  
to me again, it is safe  
down there, safe**



**and true and bright  
safe in the circulation,  
the way we are in  
each other's minds.**

**24 May 2015**

=====

**That's all it had to sau  
when the day began,  
forest around us, a road  
alone in the quiet.**

**I mean there is nothing  
silenter than a street,  
a lure, a permission  
to the horizon,**

**a far-away here at my feet.**

**24 May 2015**

=====

**Things I don't have to report  
to the sheriff the doctor the priest—  
secret shameful incapacities,  
stumblefoot, tottered chair, a glance  
at pretty women not returned.**

**But these are the felonies  
that lay me low, the same  
woods I keep getting lost in,  
a bruise I can't explain.**

**24 May 2015**

=====

**Things fall when I wonder —  
griefs proliferate, a sodden  
cigarette unsmoked, soaked  
in dubious chemistry, homework  
never done. Caged guesses,  
sore bones, every cough a rough  
valedictory address. Smooth,  
let me be smooth again, no  
spinal shock, no adjectives.**

**24 May 2015**

## **LES ADIEUX**

**Let it be over  
like steamboats  
and fox hunts**

**the love thing  
(thing-love)  
doesn't last**

**forever, its  
shadow is dull,  
dead light**

**via telephone  
or letter, the glass  
left on the bar,**

**I am tired of  
everybody because  
they're all like you,**

**I'm sorry, it's over,  
like Niagara Falls,  
like Babylon.**

**24 May 2015**

**= = = = =**

**I am a worker a drone  
even a queen. I am we.  
I am the work of the hive.**

**We winter over. We store  
a rich filth of sticky  
words, image, tone, stone,**

**that nourishes us  
and everyone. All  
this the Rose gives us.**

**Find the Rose.**

**25 May 2015**

=====

**Everything doesn't  
have to be the same way.  
Love can linger, cars  
can rust in meadows  
where grass grows tall  
around them, through them.  
Flowers know how  
to fade, exquisite. Mallows  
of Cruger's Island. Iris  
in the sky. Then night.**

**25 May 2015**



## **POETS**

**We are all Bottom.  
We use fancy words  
we don't quite know  
to show our exaltation,  
our joy to be us.  
We get things wrong  
in the rightest ways,  
we are full of ourselves  
but also full of you.  
Without us, love would be  
accurate, cold and dull.  
All passion comes from  
our daft approximations.**

**25 May 2015**

=====

**Gather in to weep  
the sleep of sodden men  
bruised by expectation  
from childhood on, nothing  
can live up to life. Be cast  
down among the doubters  
or rise in rapturing — yours  
for the choosing. This voice  
also makes something wake.**

**25 May 2015**

=====

**Woodpecker, bees  
and trees. See  
what happens when  
you know the names  
of things. The sounds  
things make me say.  
The recognitions.  
The long war still not  
over, Helen still in Troy.  
It goes on telling us  
until we finally hear.**

**25 May 2015**

=====

**But where are they ever going  
the photons that pass  
through the eyelids deep  
into the brain, do they?  
Does light ever stop travelling  
and why? Is darkness  
just the wake it leaves behind?**

**Or are we, even we, radical,  
basic as light, fleeter than water,  
a function of light's entanglement  
with molecular desire, that lust  
for hereness that grounds us  
life after life? If there actually  
is something to call life.**

**25 May 2015**

**=====**

**Soft. Morn.  
Leaf some.  
Always ready  
summer science.  
Ironic sympathy  
narrowly fantasize.  
Apologize. Deconstruct.  
Byzantium. Apocalypse.**

**26 May 2015**

**=====**

**You're Asia.**

**So I am.**

**26.V.15**

**= = = = =**

**Impotent verse  
void of copulation.  
Unlinked, the words  
float, mirrors  
lost in the snow.  
And yet in each  
we see our faces.**

**26 May 2015**

== ==

**Things tarrying. By the chimney  
corner in Arrowhead one time  
when we were alone there. Or at  
the desk upstairs, the mountain  
out the window. You sprawled  
on his bed, I wrote at his desk,  
fondled the ivory whale tooth so  
like the one on my desk at home.  
The liberties place makes us take.  
Makes us — we are powerless  
to resist location. Maybe the same  
whale. The same mountain.  
The same shadow. My hand  
pilfering the meaning of his wood.**

**26 May 2015**



=====

**As arm as he varies us  
as in a lady's poor marsh  
none come dance to navigate us,  
feeble moonlight over pampas  
grass though so little nowadays  
where moonlight marries us.**

**Night is by all. Plighted are we  
by place alone, its potency  
lifts up through some soil to  
seize us, say us, twist the lusts of  
to serve its own messagery,  
its nuptials in our deepest shade.**

**For we are when it comes down  
to it nothing ourselves but land  
that walks us fro and to by rainlight  
and by sleet and by any which weather  
ever. I have no freedom but to be.**

**26 May 2015**

=====

**Part of the brain  
is outside. The wind  
brings it close sometime.  
Twilights in summer  
after cool rain remembers.**

**One part sleeps me,  
one part never wakes.  
One part works all day long—  
but the part outside  
is my darling and my queen.  
She shows me what I  
know and never knew.**

**26 May 2015**

## NEXUS

**Did I make these trees grow  
just by living here for forty year—  
they were meadow when I moved in.  
What is my responsibility  
for what just-seems-to-happen  
out there, over there, trees  
and streams and animals, or  
what is their responsibility for  
all that happens to me, in me?  
Nexus. There is an intercourse  
between [lace and person, no one  
these days knows it but Romans knew,  
*genius loci* was a lusty god, this god  
makes children through us, and us too  
he makes his children and takes care.**

**27 May 2015**

=====

**Bee comes  
to flowerless tree.  
Imagine me.  
I have defined you  
as far as I can, now  
it's your turn.  
Why would a bee  
do what I just saw  
her do, in the bare  
hibiscus. It does.  
What do we find  
in each other?  
Erase me —  
I am your first mistake.**

**27 May 2015**

=====

**How many weeds  
grow into trees?  
Could this depraved  
mind of mine  
one day look on splendor?**

**Who knew the magic of time,  
the work of the never-far protectors?**

**We are guarded.  
Or we are gods.**

**Or *or* is *and*  
in the eternal rose.**

**27 May 2015**

*in grief*

**You're sitting on my lap.  
Awkward at first,  
uncomfortable, embarrassing  
but finally you relax.  
I am talking quietly  
near your ear. I am always talking.  
It takes a while to hear me  
because the body is such a problem,  
isn't it, glad or sorry.  
You feel my bones beneath you,  
my arm holding you steady.  
Gradually you come to notice  
that your whole body is being  
supported by me, no contact  
with earth, only somebody else,  
that you are held. And it is always  
like that in the world, we  
carry one another, in body,  
in mind. And then you hear me.  
I'm telling you about my deaths,  
teacher, wife, mother, father  
all in one year. You're barely  
listening, everybody dies, but I**

**learned something I want for you,  
a piece of nonsense that has  
what I call meaning, helps me live,  
it says that every death also is a gift  
to the living, a testimony, a story  
ended whose moral we must live.  
When the last of them, my father,  
died, I thought I heard a gate clang  
shut. But it was opening, a weird  
angel saying Now you are an orphan,  
now you are finally you, nobody's  
child, now you belong only to  
yourself—which is the same as  
everybody in the world. That's  
what I am whispering to you, this  
old nonsense about belonging to  
everybody in the world, thjs tale  
of how dying too is giving. You hear.  
Maybe you believe, maybe even  
there is some consolation. At any  
rate the bones you feel are real.**

**27 May 2015**

=====

**Things everywhere  
the burden. The border.**

**I do not know  
the song.**

**Words  
are too simple to say,  
the skin for instance  
of your left shoulder  
when you face me.  
The shock of otherness  
so smooth,  
as if  
for a moment the  
world relented  
and everything understood.**

**27 May 2015**



=====

**Do anything  
to keep people living.  
One woman  
off the bridge today,  
did not see her  
I see her falling  
and falling ad no word  
in my mouth to hold her  
from the killing river.  
The more language I have  
the more it is my fault.**

**27 May 2015**

=====

**I read the news  
until it silenced me  
with scandal. Here  
there was noise,  
a mower outside, loud.  
I listened to my stale  
reactions, the noise  
inside so hard to stop.  
Then some breeze  
walked through the window  
like a woman smiling through tears.**

**28 May 2015**

**=====**

**Once all you had to do  
was look pretty and live  
in a male-storm of desire.  
Then the rules changed.  
But men are still the same.**

**28 May 2015**

**=====**

**If I confessed  
what I really wanted  
the world would be  
amazed at its simplicity.**

**28.V.15**

## **[UNDER DILATION]**

**=====**

**Where are the creatures  
the long assembly?  
I will write this upon  
your proffered Urn.  
In this flesh so proudly  
wielded the world begins  
again and again. I inscribe  
these words where  
nothing ever forgets.  
I see the words in the faraway  
I write them down here —  
for anybody to listen  
with their smart fingertips.**

**28 May 2015**

## **BLUES**

**and greens**  
**oriole**  
**diving at a crow**  
*no why*  
**in this kingdom,**  
**blue nature's ever ready**  
**distances.**

**Perpend, saith the Master,**  
**abide the end,**  
**since every story**  
**is another story.**  
**The stars are skillful,**  
**love grants them that.**

**28 May 2015**

=====

**Show me the other  
side of the word,  
the sleek surface of  
what you don't say.  
I want to see  
that sound for myself —  
brilliant semi-vowels  
dancing in an empty  
house by the sea. She  
told me they would be there.  
She owned the place,  
spread the bedclothes  
bright on the lawn,  
spooned out thick curds and jam,  
made us children again.**

**28 May 2015**

=====

**Fell asleep on deck  
the angels tugged the sails  
so it looked like wind.  
In his sleep the timbers**

**split and sea rushed in  
but angels forbade the water  
and the ship buoyed up,  
discover sleep as a powerful magus  
coming from the East,  
most nights he comes  
and some afternoons when  
the lapping of the leaves  
against the side of the breeze  
drowns soft-witted consciousness.**

**28 May 2015**



=====

**Always a new thing  
a picture spoken,  
a grief not told, a man  
sitting at a table over there  
too far to name.  
You name instead  
the blonde shadow at his knee,  
the laughter they share.  
You are happy to be there.**

**Nothing is clear  
but everything is here.  
Witless weather on  
its way to us.  
    You greet the  
mistake with a smile  
I saw long ago in Thessaly,  
a god from the north.  
We belong to laughter —  
the statue crumbled  
all but the lips.**

**28 May 2015**



## **THE FAERIE KISS**

**If you tell anybody what we did  
the dead leaves will turn to dollar bills  
and you'll have to spend them right away.  
Then what will you think about all night long  
when everything is said and done and the pillow's  
cool?**

**28 May 2015**

=====

**Things come along  
and tell their stories —  
*ferly* has fear in it  
and *faerie* has fate.  
So how shall I call  
the Hard-To-See-People  
who guide our magic and delight?  
They are Night in Daytime  
and Day in Night.  
They are everywhere  
and they let us call them You.**

**29 May 2015**

**=====**

**A bird flies up.  
A live hypotenuse  
defining an unseen vertical  
where some treasure rests.  
The earth perhaps, or  
the fleshy peonies  
beneath the kitchen window.  
But it's hard to spot  
the apex of his flight.**

**29 May 2015**

## **THE QUEST**

**1.**

**Let me be along with myself  
see how far it goes—**

**Howe Caverns 57 degrees all year round  
beneath the earth they said**

**I wanted to be where the gods  
wore sweaters, where the naiads  
understood my fear of water  
and the dryads pulled branches low to me  
so I could taste their chaste fruit.**

**Greek 101. Alchemy For All. Welsh  
Without Tears, I need my old studies now  
for a man must one day dare to enter  
into the heart of his life and not perish.**

**Deep down is all the way up. This  
is the Quest, the hilltop from which  
a man's whole life makes sense.**

**2.**

**Caverns then and claustrophobia,  
chemistry and chastity.**

**Islands. horizons held between my hands.**

**Blatant bodies, shy minds, rosaries,  
infections, allergies, owl feathers,  
Scott's last expedition to the Pole,**

**ivy in the bedroom window,  
rowboats on the mountain lake,  
the bus through the cemetery,**

**Everest, dawn in Dubai, Mahler.**

**3.**

**To sit outside  
while the day  
still holds night's cool—  
let weather serve you  
too that grows the roses.**

**Morning means  
every man for himself  
and there is no devil.  
Blackbird. Oriole.  
I write their words  
in and out of the shadows  
of leaves on my page.  
To leave a trace  
of this exalted silence  
birds know how to make.**

**30 May 2015**



## **PELIKAN**

**There is room in the pen  
for ten thousand words  
if I write small.**

**A pointed stick  
is the first tool of all.**

**30 May 2015**

## **A COWARD**

**Now the sun  
comes over the tree,  
comes after me.**

**Whgite feather time  
I hide inside.**

**30.V.15**

## **EPITAPH**

**Nowheres near  
the end  
of what I mean**

**and then I am.**

**30.V.15**

## **LENOX, MASSACHUSETTS**

**we were driving into Lenox  
on empty roads.  
How strange a town Sunday is,  
a jogger crosses us  
as if she's the last to flee  
some quiet catastrophe.  
I thought I had a lot  
to say about religion  
and profit and loss and law  
but my mind is empty as the street.**

**30 May 2015**

**=====**

**Eating a cracker with cheese  
(actually a tostada with tzaziki)  
on a bright breezy  
Saturday summer afternoon—  
could this precise mysterious  
emotion be happiness?**

**30 May 2015**

**=====**

**Resourceful afternoon  
I sleep it to its knees**

**or not sleep, drowse it  
like a breeze out here**

**gentle, not quite forgetting  
everywhere it's been**

**and has to go.**

**30 May 2015**

## **THE TALKING CURE**

**Skipped an appointment  
clash of obligations**

**I want an analytic couch  
in every room. But where is she**

**with notebook, insight, formulaic mind?  
But there is nothing in my mind**

**that needs to be said. But I do love  
the way my silence turns**

**intyo words as it pours out.**

**30 May 2015**

**=====**

**Above the barn-red fence  
white roof of a bus goes by.**

**I can't see who they are  
inside who can't see me.**

**We survive by technicalities,  
somehow safe from perceiving.**

**30 May 2015**



## **BRUISE**

**something I did in the night.  
So what's been done today  
is that kind of not-doing  
called writing—**

**what one's mother would  
call you away from  
to do something useful or  
just go outside and play.**

**But I study the strange  
bruise on the back of my hand  
just under the thumb-gap  
and try to figure out its name**

**or in what dream it came.**

**30 May 2015**

=====

**I'm 79 years old,  
it's Saturday afternoon  
and I'm tired.**

**Tired. I just want  
to sit here at last  
and write  
beautiful poems**

**or just watch the crows  
fly on and off the lawn.**

**Soon I will want  
more than this  
and I will miss  
this gentle spring exhaustion.**

**Already I feel  
I'm missing this.**

**30 May 2015**

**LAWN**

**All this grass  
and no sheep.**

**All these words  
and no me.**

**30 May 2015**

=====

**Thrill of fear  
to leave the cave.  
Cro-Magnon weather,  
pluvial a moment when  
asperity of commerce  
too much small talk  
too little bible study  
in the biggest book  
outside all round you,  
that world when I was  
afraid to talk to girls.  
And there they are,  
complex measures of the ode  
their quiet limbs,  
princesses of permission  
and an even better book  
open on their knees  
than you wrote yet  
he said, that man on the old  
DL&W, open windows  
wooden barred, the loco-  
motive smoke came in,**

**a summer day along the river  
north of the fork the woods  
calm with creatures,  
porcupine on a tree,  
whippoorwill gurgling  
up at me from the ground  
that other sky  
the mystery beneath my feet.  
He must have been my father.**

**31 May 2015**

=====

**The crows  
on varying  
paths today,  
sky divided  
differently  
their roads**

**from what I knew.  
Sometimes they seem  
to vanish in thin air  
and others come  
flying down out  
of nowhere. Something  
is going on up there,  
my life being rearranged  
by all that moves.**

**31 May 2015**

