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The material the mosquito
dormancy of thought
on morning island

the sea has not yet come

the trees pretend to sleep

I woke up and was the king of it,
nobody home, body full of money,
freed all the slaves at once,
sent all the soldiers home, fed
birds from my balcony.

2.
So things really are inside.
You don’t have to die
just to cross the street,
those houses over there
are just the shadows of here
or the other way round.

3.
Smetimes I see someone over there
a tall grave woman maybe
or fat little boy looking my way
and they don’t know who I am too.
4.
But all that is away
and this is here.

A dove flew low and grazed my hair
my coronation, silence, me complete.

This is what it means to wake.

1 August 2015
If there’s nothing wrong
why does it hurt?
But the doctor said
that’s common

that question—ask
something smarter
with numbers in it

stars on horizon
money changing hands
tired secretaries

hurrying
in pale clothing
home through the rain.

1 August 2015
OLEUM SOMNIUM

Dream is such an oily place
bosky, busy,
you never know who you meet there
and never will

    maybe, because the language
is still wet on the lips,
their lips who speak, your
lips are dry, who wake,

and their dark clothes have an oily sheen,
feel, seem.

    Things seem to shine
in your hands, you squeeze the dark
but the oil is still there when you wake,
it turns into light now
so you see what your hands already knew.

Next time I dream
I’ll bring my books with me
and read out loud to that
svelte audience of shades
then leave the books behind me when I wake.
I think that’s what they want in there, more info from outside, guesswork and numbers and songs from out here, or as they think of where they are the even-further-inside-inside.

1 August 2015
Trading places.

But what would I get for this nobler than is?

An island maybe
but the way they murder language there,
 pidgin-Yankee, Creole-Mermaid,
 I wouldn’t know how to begin
 let alone sing.

So here it be,
the immutable perishable present,

your statue made of sea-foam
lasts as long as a prayer

athanat’ Aphrodita!

1 August 2015
Nimble? Noble?
Only the clown can decide,
the acrobat
with stars in the feet,

leap over me, lady!
Let the horizon
hurry to embrace
your palest absence,

look back at me
over your shoulder—
is this really me?
You are the only
one who can tell.

1 August 2015
LYRICS

Little things,
so many little songs—

isn't there a symphony
simpering somewhere
opulent in front of
a full-length mirror,
all flesh and satin,
with one dried orchid
to remind us even
music was singing once?

1 August 2015
Never lose the sanctity of play
in the regulations of some game—

let skin be your only uniform,
make sure the never stay the same.

1 August 2015
Could the way there be someone known?
Someone brown kirtled or leaf green hastening before?

You follow and find out.

There is a distance built into things, a tunnel of ordinary air through which you have to go to get even to this moment here, still following the one you don’t know no one knows, safe as trees in the woods or water flowing crisp clear over rock.

By now you think you know but you never really are sure who even the least of us might be.

1 August 2015
One thought
cantilevered over
a turbulent quiet dark —

Awake and almost
know.

    Precision
is not far —

we try to know
and confuse it with ‘to go’
there,

    through the dark,
which is the same as being far.

2 August 2015
Things are hard to know.
Stars shine in them
no Arabs named.
They owned the sky once,
lean desert air,
the night.

But this dark
is flesh opaque,
resistant — still
a gleam lets out
and we can measure
how far away a thing is
from our outstretched hand.

2 August 2015
TO BE FREE

1. As of uncertainties mirroring the sky prompt to liberate — we are still Roman slaves “the language, the language” WCW have no native tongue for what we speak, never mind the Vatican, it’s July and August and December measure us here.

2. I am the not-sure, waiting by the water, the one that moves south not the big one so passionately still.

3. Bird cry of course. Who else is up so early after the night games, the perfidy of dreams?
O don’t blaspheme,  
the dream is true enough  
if you stay true to it  
and take its measure  
through the day  
into the next night  
and find them there,  
the Fates dressed as three Irish nuns  
the alphabet dressed as a kiss.

4.  
But they weren’t nuns  
they were our liberators,  
sleek with darkness  
they come with rain  
and leave by dawn  
so all day long you  
try to remember their  
names you never knew,  
searching through old parish registers  
stuffed in the back of your head.

2 August 2015
The lines grow shorter
as we start remembering,
the flannel shirt,
the tiger skin —

our past is made of cloth,
everything we took off or put on
and the whole sky was canvas too
or blue satin, and the weather made of silk,
a child is corduroy and sweat,
and please help me stop remembering.
Sunlight in the trees is
past enough right now
the narrow breeze that sets the leaves.

2 August 2015
It is our business
to find an image
and come home to it.
By our image found
we shall be known.
That’s why I keep
mentioning the sea,
waves crashing
round my knees,
the empty sky.

2 August 2015
The undertow remembers me,
tugs my innocent ankles,
scoops out the sand beneath my heels.

Astragal. We are beauty by bone. Nothing takes that away.
Every grain of sand insists,
whirling in the wave,

count the molecules. The old comedian who had the same name as an epic poet used to grumble Everybody wants to get into the act. Shell and sea and skin and bone. And I’m here too.

2 August 2015
These little songs
for who to say?
Some god some afternoon,
some sophomore
dreaming of something great,
settling for this?

2 August 2015
I give this to angels, 
they’ll know 
whom to give it to 
or when to throw it away.

2 August 2015
Woodpecker at work
needs me to notice?
Not. I am an interloper
but so is he, so are we
all, tourists in mind’s
palace gardens, Alhambras,
Louvres Potalas,
bare hillsides of Anatoba —
at least we (as does he)
bring back news of
what we saw and even touched.

2 August 2015
EVIDENCE OF ELY

She gazes up, he smiles selfie-style at the camera. Fille et père, seem glad to be there.

And gazes is the right word, her upwardness transfixed, could be awe, makes her look younger than her twenty years.

Behind them, far above a few of those great oaks are visible, tallest trees in England once here still if you know to look for them.
they have held up
the lantern high above them,
shaped a thousand
years of light.

She is studying something else
above where we would be
if we were the camera,
something to us invisible,
over our heads forever,
our only clue
the dumbstruck beauty
on her face,
her father’s reassuring
smile — no fear.
Whatever is up there
belongs to trees too
and stone and human thought.

3 August 2015
Too fast to be clear
too slow to catch the curve —
what a dilemma.
There is a rhythm in these things,
like walking on an empty road at dawn
any way you choose.

3 August 2015
Vigorous but in jeopardy
that’s me, he said
to the working man
he also was. By now
he has been everything
almost, I said. He said
hermit and wanderer,
loud and quiet,
I’ve done what I can.
What more can I do?
I’ll do that too.

3 August 2015
REMEMBERING THE POST OFFICE

Mail-truck maelstrom
even in those days
we drowned in information.

3.VIII.15
Better try hypnosis
so I can see
what I can’t see,
touch the evening star,
fondle the horizon.

3 August 2015
Waiting in the trees
no names
a plastic armchair
no one therein

just a little wind
enough to keep from sleep
where we could together
make sense of this.

3 August 2015
THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

Did Wittgenstein jot down somewhere a difference he had studied, experienced, between how we think when walking, and how we think when sitting down? And again between thinking while walking and thinking while standing still, as Socrates famously stood one whole night in a doorway, thinking it is said?

3 August 2015
White for the waning moon
I wear, and red for tomorrow.
There has to be a reason
for everything. That’s my faith,
cause, prom, persuasion.
It’s where I learn to dance —
mid-morning the rooster crows.

3 August 2015
Being close
to another
is being yourselfer
than before,

cleaner, more water
in the pipe, the pond
clear of scum,
your fish in health.

This is how
it means to happen
to the heart. The world
follows meek.

4 August 2015
Caught by the shoulder
sun over cloud —
I have to be honest, darling,
I love grey days best,
even black with stormclouds,
maybe a shaft of your intelligence
cutlassing through a near cloud
to pierce a treetop
with burnless fire
then dim again.
You are too strong for me.

4 August 2015
The squawk of car by,
music in the morning
Doppler effect come and gone
squeal — all words
are shouts all raucous all
reprehensible as rain.

4 August 2015
Sun too much
the worry
girl gone
lost in mind.

4.VIII.15
= = = = =

Trying to consent
I go against my skin
it is as if a raft on the Mississippi
drifted empty
from Minnesota to Mexico
and that’s me.
I wanted you on board
with barrels of rain and crates of chickens
but no,
the empty raft alone
knows where to go.

4 August 2015
Takes more than one prothalamion
to grace a wedding —
when two people get married
we all get married too,
sun brings her chilly moon along
and grass nuzzles his yielding earth
and all that sorry thing
thousands of years yet, of us
standing around kissing the birds,
holding one another’s hands,
holding our breath,
wiping away a tear or two,
two eyes, two hands,
all kinds of twos —
every marriage is a bigamy I think,
mARRIAGE infects us all,
we carry home some of the joy
this wonderful she and he celebrate tonight,
it could be a fever, an opera,
an act of will, two goldfish in a boundless bowl,
left hand squeezing right hand,
cloud becoming sky. The symptoms
run through the crowd, we all catch it,
Grace marries us all, sorry, Willis, but will is grace, will is wants us all, sorry Grace, you have to share — that’s how marriage is different from love, marriage belongs to everyone. 4 August 2015
FOR CALLS

I met Francesca there again,
she seemed tired of not dying.
But it is not death that keeps you young

I claimed to ease her, and you can pounce [?]
your circle anytime you choose,
a circle leaves you anywhere

it is not a road it is a will,
another’s will but can be yours,
desist from wanting and have everything!

I promised, and she listened sagely,
she has heard so much advice before
so all my wisdom smiled on her lips

beautiful still as innocence lets anyone be
but didn’t answer me at first, and then
will you too fall lifeless when you see

how willingly I am another’s will
and he is mine, and love
has nothing to do with time

or roads or wheels or getting anywhere, we always are — and being is a luminous agony.

4 August 2015
FOR CALLS

So that’s what the birds were saying all this while we are, we are
the people that you knew, we could not meet now if we had not met before.

4 August 2015
OPHTHALMOLOGY

Every I is different.
Who could this one belong to?

4.VIII.15
Dream me in, Madame, 
I bring my little pail of fire 
no wonder I can’t fit ocean in 

Dream me aboard 
I want to travel with you 
to the land where shadows sleep 

teach Egyptian in the polar regions 
dine on memories and sailor’s chowder 
the captain’s drunk, mate means make love. 

4 August 2015
Bless the moon that teaches wandering
I want grown men to be our mothers
while far ahead the women lead the way.

4.VIII.15
Spaces in the world
that let us in.
Mostly they’re names
or recollections
or images even, the three
phases of, faces of,
what we call memory
and never understand,
the stuff the mind is full of
when it’s not paying attention
to itself or what there is.

Those three spaces are charming,
they let us in over and over
through the same door
and never get anywhere but doorways
hey all look different, lead
all to the same exit from the actual.

5 August 2015
But I love them
sometimes they come to me
in what I think is sleep,
beautiful responsibilities
I have to spell into my life
to see what each becomes
the streets of some city
not Paris, not Berlin.

5 August 2015
Telling as much as I can
the lie lies in the untold.
I write with a brand-new pen
barrel mottled liked a century ago,
the retro, smell of ink,
clear inscription from the pliant nib.
There. She gave it to me. There.
What am I not telling.
The tree tells leaves
and everybody says
o I know that story
already. What though
do the leaves tell?
What is everything trying to say?

5 August 2015
If I wore a crown
at this point I would take it off
and hand it to you, here,
so heavy, no meaning.
You wear it, or put it
in a low drawer
with the dishtowels to keep it dry.
There, is that what I
in particular am trying to say?

5 August 2015
I tried to escape
without a single image
but they clung to me
like what I won’t name.

I won’t give them the satisfaction —
but what if they never capture me again?

5 August 2015
FLYTING

In the old days
heroes would proclaim
the names of all their ancestors
before they clashed in battle.
Now we have no ancestors.
We know not whom we kill.

5 August 2015
What then
if the highest

bliss is
kissing this?

5 August 2015
If nothing happens in a line
it isn’t a line.
A line is pure happening.

5 August 2015
A call  
is what hope  
comes wrapped in.

[  

5 August 2015
== == ==

Scandicus,
ladder of sound,
rising, falling
here you are.
You are music, I thought
you were an animal
like me, nipples, fur,
all the habits of feeling,
feeding.

But you were some sounds
happened to the air, the ear,
the poor little atmosphere
I bother by breathing.
Yet it might love me too.
Only the music can tell.

6 August 2015
= = = = =

When I was a child
we learned the names of things
but not the things.

Now there are two worlds,
thingly and wordly
I work dawn and dark
to love them together.

6 August 2015
Osage orange
only the unripe
look alike.

Newborn in an incubator
I think we are.

6 August 2015
The pale conciliar rose given to each cleric as he cast his vote soon faded. The pope they chose lasted forty years.

6 August 2015
Causation should be the single definiendum of science — everything causes everything else: map the sequences.

6.VIII.15
It was a ghost
stood there in sunshine —
one eye could see it,
him, her, the other not.
A sheeted specter
it said in me, but she,
he, it said nothing.
Afternoon ghost,
silent as sunlight.

I have to wake everything up,
talk is a way of listening —
who is she, it, what does he want?

6 August 2015
DOCENT

Told as much as I can
she said, the gallery
is closed around me, all
the images on the wall
speak for me too.
Hear then, leave me alone.
At least as far as language
takes yus. We have other
obligations, chances, silences.

6 August 2015
Dew remembering rose.
I gave you to the alchemist,
she played you on the piano
a big Bösendorfer, hard to keep
in tune in this humid valley,
could the name mean someone
from the village of wicked men,
of angry men? Rose doesn’t answer
questions made of water,
she drank her fill this
morning, thank you, now leave her
to the sunshine and the bee.
The bee means the alchemist,
an alchemist is a man
trying to be a woman
without becoming one.
Being and becoming, don’t ask me
if you can’t tell them apart,
go to a philosopher.
Or better go to the rose,
ask her to play
the alchemist again, a flower
trying to be a man,
to leap thornless into your hands.
7 August 015
[Coda to CALLS written this afternoon No. 192]

7 August 2015
"And on the mere the wailing died away"
the line has haunted me for three days
and today I walked into a storeroom I haven't
used in months, and my hand fell on a slim
old book and there it was, Tennyson’s
*Idylls of the King*, where the line marks
the passing of Arthur, from this life
and from the wintry shore, a barge
the poet likens to a dying swan
singing away into the cold distances.

8 August 2015
We have to tell what happens or nothing will. It comes so we can understand out loud lest each of us suppose he alone has that fear, that incandescent lust, that jealousy, that joy.

8 August 2015
So alone I feel this morning — why? 
All the new students come today 
and it is good to be unknown. 
Today I’m just a man on his lawn 
responsible only to the light.

8.VIII.15
Shock of your native language
when it suddenly turns old.
Where have I been all these years
while it was sleeping, dreaming
new ways to make me shiver or delight?

8 August 2015
Rhonda drew the shadows that fell on the page, a huge sheet of leaf shadows, worked quick before they changed, and the whole sheet of them pale accurate, tender, like a man kissing a woman’s back soft between her shoulder blades.

8 August 2015
= = = = =

Titmice and chickadees
your customers
clamoring at the rail —

wake up and feed,
we need the word
you think is seed.

It all is language,
it all sustains,
wake up and word us!

8 August 2015
Orderly perception
could master the maelstrom
of images, the whirl of whatever
churns us round.
One sense at a time
the scripture says,
leave old synaesthesia
to the decadents —
be pure as a crow call
one sense at a time
this fingertip Elysium.

8 August 2015
Mind quiet for next task
sturdy sun on lawn
what leaf
  shadows are writing there.

So many miracles
(miracula, little things to gaze at)

Study me
the shadow says
I am what is left.

8 August 2015
Nightwrite? Plum when you can, violet ink from Frangistan corner of and who was St. Germain? Daytell is easier — sit on a metal chair in front of any caff and scribble what you see. The result is mortal poesy, unclipped wings, desire gratified, envy of your friends. But still they love you like cathedrals, you bulk big on the skyline of their thought but seldom do they come in you to worship or just look around. Better stay with night, Violet, Paris, sly exposition of the never quite secret life of mind.

8 August 2015
Walk with me she said I did
the afternoon was morning still
but the shadows were already
creeping back up their mother tree.

We think of feelings as fugitive
yet they last longer than weather does
she said and I agreed, knowing something of what
it means to feel, and go on feeling, lover, ever.

8 August 2015
Is it time
he’s asking
when the fold’s
not spread open
even on the comforter,
time to wake,
time to sleep
—there is no difference
he said,
the explanation is the problem,
the tragedy is having to have
a stage at all to represent
all your bitter dreams.
You’re wide awake — sleep on.

9 August 2015
TO WELCOME A POETRY MAGAZINE

for “The Doris”

Clear water of celebration
I pour out in your honor—

we have carved a word
into the wall —

as long as this stone
prison stands,
    we
shall have spoken.

9 August 2015
I will walk to the wood’s edge
and talk to the ferns
my friends, so various
in their sameness, like me
preferring damp and shade.
The world gives us also
such beautiful companions,
no wonder we stay.

9 August 2015
If I wrote mostly at night
you’d read less about crows and crow calls
being interpreted. This is one
of the million ways I am not Baudelaire,
the great poet, lui, who still had
to import from over here
the sage bird he called his corbeau.

9 August 2015
A NOTE

(Poe’s “weak and weary” = drunk and exhausted, ‘weak’ a common euphemism for drunk, said of me — heard it in my childhood.)

9.VIII.15
He gets literary sometimes
in the morning,
watch out for that,

he would be cured
by the disease itself
half-gladly he suffers from.

Now that I can’t read well
all the old books come back,
reassorting, transporting,
all the words and phrases
left free again for love.

9 August 2015
COLIBRATION

Sunlight on a hummingbird
the green one red
as Shakespeare said.

Or things change colors —
that’s what color’s for.

Places of Art
eye makes
of leaf bowers
streets cornering
a dogleg road
meeting an oak.
And you can too.

9 August 2015
I’m old enough to take everything personally. Especially information —

all of it fits in snug, articulate as our bones.

My arm around you is you changing me.

Every touch is contagious, every idea crosses the line.

All I am finally is what you make of me.

9 August 2015
The potent will
to be will-less —
hard to get
stronger than that.

9. VIII. 15
Paint a blue Egyptian
wearing a loincloth of papyrus
on which is inscribed
themes he wrote
and sums he reckoned in school.
We wear those ever after
but only the clever scribes of Thebes
knew how to see and represent them.

What I have learned
conceals me
from you. I am
an Egyptian too.

9 August 2015
The grain of wood
the frumious xylitol
our commerce leaches
from the pale innocence
of the naked tree —

but I feel through the slop
we make of it, of things,
the grain persists.

The lines still lead
upward and downward,
holding our place in place,
pointing towards a reality
we still fear to tamper with
except in dream maybe
when up and down
spring together and the heart stops.

10 August 2015
How the silly classicists imagined the rules of classical prosody with their hypermetrics and their catalectic and their anacrusis — think what they'll make of me, of us, when English too is a dead language and wise fools try to figure out exactly why we write as we do. And hey will have new names for us too.

10 August 2015
Strike while the iron is still cold
lest you leave a mark on the wood.
Does the world have too many marks
on it already, or not enough?
You decide. This decision is your soul.

10 August 2015
Every person has a secret name he wrote, knowing not even one.

10.VIII.15
We are guilty of giving more than we have.
Turbulence and war, turmoil astir in every heart — why? why did we?

and yet we do again. Till nothing is left of giver, gift, the given to. Only guilt is permanent.

And there are so many ways of not getting what we want and we are guilty of all of them.

10 August 2015
The lover’s embedded in the beloved’s liberty. We move through one another like wind through trees.

10 August 2015
DARK MORNING

1. The wounds of want hover over waking —
once I could have said it that way
and you would have welcomed
the song of it if not the sense.
We make the bitter sweet, chérie,
 isn’t that the whole point of it?
Not sugar-coating it but by
a deft switcheroo of signals we
(and I mean all of us)
let the wretched facts subside
in a dream town somehow
lingering. And that
was the funeral of Hector, tamer of horses.

2. The wanting lingers though
so what to do?
Bird cry woke me, and the rain —
saying so seemed a spell
lifted the sullen need
to fill the mind with enterprise,
temples, markets, souls
alien to this
curious animal who wakes.
3.
Anything could happen.
The sun could come out
Nausicaa trot up from the beach
still slipping salty on the lawn.
The phone could ring,
alliteration win the day
simply by saying something smart.
Fat chance. My beauty
is of another shape.
A faltering style, an owl
be-dawned in a tree
waiting for mousey weather,
just like Mu Qi.
I mean you and me.

4.
7:37 and still dark enough
to dim the words I think I’m writing
but who knows?
By noon I may have meant
another thing entirely
the words may themselves
have guessed beforehand
the way they do.
5.
Dark morning
to be true to you.
Cars slishing on wet
asphalt please me too,
the kind of truth
sometimes senses do.
I bless the road
that brought me here.

6.
Every highway has a human name,
did you know that? And byway too,
and narrow alleys in Chicago
running west behind the avenues.
Because every road is a person,
or thinks like one at least,
and has friends in high places
who guide their traffic.
So a man walking down the street
is an integer in an immense equation
that means him well
if it thinks of him at all —
as the sun doesn’t need
to mean me to get
warm in her effulgence.
11 August 2015

= = = = =

There is no news today
so make it up.
The Pope is a Buddhist,
Africa is at peace,
my walnut tree was blown down by a storm.
But that was a few years ago.
What else is new?

11 August 2015
= = = = = =

Looking everywhere for what we don’t need the critical conjunction of Mars and Maybe all star-charts dread.

We call them planets but they’re just chinks in the vase some unknown light shines through.

11 August 2015
[...cankanerous friend
who stood at the foot of the cross with me
year after year watching the blood
dry on our hands. Wondering still
if we had done this] or were just witnesses
or are they both the same.

Wake as automation
perform the tasks
you dreamt of waking:
the words, the water,
filling the vessels —
as if sunrise had nothing to do with it.

Correct me if I’m wrong
I spent a forceful, maybe
even angry hour in the galley
insisting on how long and why
I had not liked that poet’s work,
citing lines and phrases that displeased —
not by the proposition they chose
to espouse or express but au
contraire their failure to advance
a single proposition to my mind:
perennial greed for assertions
sensible or otherwise. And my
interlocutor, baffled by my stance
or by my dislike of his fave poet
seemed more incredulous
than defensive. How could I
of all people feel so indifferent
or even hostile to the deft
machination of word contra
word of that rightly
celebrated poet, was it *taste*,
that slither in opprobrium
I should long since have outgrown?
Was it barnyard *jealousy,*
one old cock belittling
the comb and wattles of another?
These insulting inferences did
not estrange me from the conversation
as well they might, because
I too wonder at my distaste
for his paragon’s lauded oeuvre.
To paraphrase another poet I’m
not too sure of, what a strange
dream for a little boy to have.

12 August 2015

*[Opening passage, bracketed, is as dreamt.]*
Since December 1960
I’ve been reading poetry
mostly my ‘own’
out loud around here.

It’s a wonder the trees
can stand it.
Yet they seem greener,
leafier every year,

and more of them.
And I have learned by now
how to listen to them,
their better music.

12 August 2015
A poet bothered by the price of ink — does he write too much or just have the wrong idea about money (pronounced as Pound did, castigating Yankee financiers), that fluent, greenish, never-ending river of supply.

12 August 2015
Next morning still in love —
a miracle!
Wise men come next,
hauling aloft their tethered star.

12 August 2015
Adam couldn’t have been Jewish.
He wouldn’t have settled for the first girl he saw.

Or maybe that’s why the Rabbis invented (or discovered?) Lilith,
the fancy first wife who left him flat.
Hence Eve, the second-best, born

from the ribs of Adam’s experience
(that’s what the rib bit must mean)

O God we are a tragic people
beautiful as some of us were and are.
Edging closer to some bastion
that guards a sly encampment
of our friendliest enemies, the angels.
I know they’re nearby, I can hear
their narratives through the night,
every word intact, unhurried, even though
not always in a language I can understand.
They talk about the living and the dead and the to be,
confuse me with time’s trick mirrors,
but still learn enough to know
their conversation is my nourishment.
I have crept closer to their camp now,
can reach out and finger the sleepy stone
that keeps me from seeing what I hear.
No man can look on them and live.
12 August 2015

== == ==

The cloud loves me — this attitude has held me all my life,

it talks to me over Nashawena over Nepal over the Russia of blonddreams

over my house when I was five over my rooftop now. I belong to its apparencies.
13 August 2015

What comes to mind
is the exorbitant everyday,
a page of Rilke in Chinese,
a cup of tea I forgot to taste.

Cold or beginning —
the ear’s writhe-rhythm
twists it, um,
in. In is what I meant.

The character of act.
I gave my privacy away
because one does, 
but the bear was in the trees

close at hand, listening. 
They all do. My thoughts too 
are obvious to the things around me, 
only people seem to tune them out

possibly by courtesy. 
O highest value in a trodden state! 
But civil imagination 
is not much help, are you, 

my sweet consensus, all fur 
and feathers and credit cards. 
The way things are. Therefore 
I have instructed the dream 

to interview far-off places 
and bring them home 
where I can hold them in my hands 
or play on the tabletop 

pyramids and galaxies.

13 August 2015
Close your ears a minute and think, we may be part of Earth’s plan

and our depredations and maladjustments of surface and underground and weather

may be doing her work for her, faster than so-called natural process could do it
and we are her agents. Moving faster towards a goal that may not be our own.

13 August 2015
Or having said nothing
it communicated well enough
sometimes the river of sleep
is empty, sleep is empty

sometimes images recede—
that is the strange time
when the feelings they evoke
are potent but the images
are gone.

They have all
gone out of the room.
They took the doorway with them.

14 August 2015
But I live by images alone
he cried. That is why
(the silence replied)
the unknown unseen mind
can bring you beyond
what you think is living.

14 August 2015
Are they laughing though
the clouds, clowns
sift out in pale?

Are we listening or just enduring
subattentive to
the cacchinnations we detect?

Does the ground talk?
Do ferns ever sleep?
I have walked this road alone

dark of the moon
so many times
can you wonder I sometimes felt

you moved beside me
on an even stranger
mission of your own?

Peace, peace to the darkness,
together or apart we
wait for its answer.

14 August 2015
Loud music from passing car makes them think they're happy or keeps their minds off what they're really feeling. It is not good to feel while driving. But why does it make me so sad to see so?

15 August 2015
Back when I was Penelope
stretched out above my weaving
busy to keep from knowing
the stories my hands were telling—

we are all abandoned,
cast into this island world
to find our stories.

15 August 2015
1. Asking the mother
will it be cloud?
Or the sung
falter, wordless
into bronze hum?

2. A bowl. Or dish
one a step or not,
a cup, a goblet
silver. A glass.
Find one of these
and that is enough.

The vessel. Found.

16 August 2015
It’s not all history.
History is fake,
an impostor with dirty hands.
You can tell from his nails
he’s been all the wrong places.

But he loves you. He keeps
trying to be known, pretending
to be relevant, hoping
to be embraced as an authority,
the father of your child..

16 August 2015
= = = = =

I am tree or any living thing or stone. And I say everything and mean nothing. That is why I'm true, clean and good for you.

16 August 2015
Listening to Celso Garrido-Lecca’s second string quartet played by The Harlem Quartet

Covert relation. Grapes tart on the late summer vine. Portrait of the artist’s first love, white plate piled with lemons.

Tall dead tree, white cloud caught exactly in its branches equals springtime, tree full of pale blossoms.

16 August 2015
Apple, you are Eve
yourself, no girl
required, witchcraft
of the pale fruit

spell of the spat-out seeds.
Everything takes root.
Everything grows.
We are music

that is our heaven
and our hell.
Silence alone
tastes like liberty.

16 August 2015
Only the continuity of the other allows me to pause,
explore the gap, stare at the midday stars, no wnd, hot as Mojave,
talking to myself but not caring to listen.

16 August 2015, Olin
The gist was history
memory stored
inside some cell
of a population, us.

NY 97 north
along the Delaware
into the never
to be known.

I’ve been up there
beyond it
dozens of times
but never there
where that road river
promised, it would have had
to be on its stone and asphalt
such Edens got entered

and I just came down
from the north and east,
how could it have been
the place that only
north could go?

And what adult could ever reach
the place a child imagined?
Especially that place, 
north, a father driving slow, 
dark pines showing the way.

17 August 2015
As if the Lord
made us out of ink
so we repeat
on paper what we almost know.

17 August 2015
Be different, animal.
A word that once
meant having a soul
or being one—
then what are we?
Everything sounds like rain.

17 August 2015
(What would I say to the mother of my brother the unknown one can I come out of your womb too for the first time again, learn who I am from that luminous other?}

17 August 2015
AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

Or used to leading
instead of needing—
there are grasshoppers in Idaho
know more than we
about the gift of space,
the wield of time.

I have heard and seen them,
evidence of a sort
but not convincing—
if you believe your senses
you’d believe anything—
here, let me sell you
the right to bathe in moonlight
and I will accept
only obsolete Austrian currency
Mahler or Bruckner or Strauss—
is this what they once called music,
swirling white light in the eye
tinged with red and edged with blue?

Have I lost the shape of music?

17 August 2015
= = = = =

(Waking in the night after surgery)

The imagination
is a brittle thing.

I still can see.

In the dark wonder
what dawn will like

or ask of me.
Or make me remember.

18 August 2015
The gloom of who
I am — is that it?
A family likeness
to the unbegun?

I can go further
from the thing I mean
and still mean it—

blink the eyes,
blink the world away,
the little birthday
in between.

18 August 2015
Don’t they realize
there’s no such thing
as an unarmed man?
Being a man is weapon enough,
all that anger, resentment—
a testicular time-bomb
slouching through the streets
suspicious just by being there.

18 August 2015
Thou discernest in me
the quivers of anxiety
speaking as word.
Or whatever this is
I set down in black
on the innocent candor
of some poor white plane
can’t protect itself.
I’m trying to say right now
ordinary fear, the deep
ing thing in us, as once the great
Mallarmé reported, fear
mal tû par l’encre même.

18 August 2015
THE TRIPTYCH, OPENED

I saw a triptych
gilt wood
on the morning shelf—
what would it see
to open it?

Red. Every percept
every human event
has three phases,
faces. Find them
define them,
there is urgency here.

The color red
beneath which
(inside which)
in the spectrum
there is only flesh
of beast and human
animals.

The color
inside red
is the unsaid,
But the central panel means us too. **Explicit deity:** typically visual form the man of Nazareth or his mother or her earlier interview with the light itself. Or some regal personage on high—some image the beholder is meant to be ultimately utterly embodying compassion and contagious innocence.

19 August 2015
A change is coloring the sky
the native softness
into which the sun
rising seems to prong—

why is nothing simple
long, or linger what it is?

Mercy must be like that too,
the finally falling asleep.

\  

19 August 2015
Spend a lifetime
living down
youthful anger—

child’s anger
at not being someone else
heard of or seen

but only this tiny sacred self—
pray the child chooses
that sacred almost-absence

until kindness and humility
burst into flame:
celebrity. Efficiency. Identity.

19 August 2015
ALCHEMICAL EMBLEMS

for L.W.

1. Break the stick short to delight the campfire. Stir the embers, leave the instrument to become part of what it provokes. *Bring fire to the fire.*

   Michael Maier

2. As the pint of chocolate chip ice cream melts on the picnic table how do the particulates —‘chips’ — settle down? The flow from above.

   Things happen at their own time—

   Time is the language objects sing.
3.
Being far away
from the closest things—
the little trick
you need to learn.
It teaches itself
all round you,
you hear it
with your skin.

4.
The statue walks in the garden,
passes two young lovers
cuddling on a marble bench

and smiles. Call this operation
Smile of a Statue
and live a very long time.

5.
This is important.
Reach down into the bucket
and finger out
a little wodge
of something thick and sticky.
Someone tells you what it is, how long it has been there waiting for you, just you, all the places it has been and all that happened there. Now the firm but delicate smell on your finger means you do not have to go there. It has come to you, all of it, all of them, they are here now, on your fingertip. The scent will never go away.

6.
A hand on your hip
a lip on your lip
as if we had nothing to tell and nothing to give one another but here I am.

7.
What a strange gospel is this,
a girl with finger to her lips shushing someone
who isn’t even there.

8.
Cloying smell in the lab
after the chemicals have gone to sleep
the technicians have gone home.
What is it in the air?
The smell of Time
trying to forget humanity,
its mortal enemy.

9.
Sip from a goblet
and remember.
An ice cube
bobs against your nose.
Nothing is simple
in this world—
every vessel
has a sea of its own.

10.
Over the mirror
in gilt lettering
already peeling:
You are the rule
not the exception.

11.
Look down the well—
an eye looks up at you,
not yours, a big one,

an eye in a well
sees right into you.
You want this.

That is why you come here,
that is why we have wells,
that’s why there is water.

12.
Were you here
when the cloud people came?
They were quiet themselves,
all I could hear
were empty barrels,
maybe, rolling around.
Then they were gone.
13.
Of course it was yellow.
You opened the pot
put the lid aside
and peered in
and there it was, soft,
smelly as cheese
but not cheese,
smelled a little like skin—
your own skin on a summer day
after you went to pluck
spearmint in your garden
then hurried in from the sun.

Yellow. It did nothing.
It never does.
Everything is up to you.

19 August 2015
Love is interesting as long as it doesn’t come too close.

It’s a thing to read about or pray to in church or wrote articles about how it represents in current cinema. Not to have beside you an unknown person in the uttermost dark of your bed.

19 August 2015
A GALLIARD BY MR. R.K.

Always something
left waiting
to happen.
Event is inexhaustible,
the future is
already past
and we’re still singing.

19 August 2015
SNOW GLOBE

for KL & VB

Kim is going to Chicago

every artifact demands an explanation

this is called the dream of matter

Chicago is home to so many, it is a great city to be from

how else reverse the flow

what does it mean to go home

in the snow glove a maternal or paternal
elder penguin looks
caringly on a chick

grey feather grey feather
when will I grow old

sex f birds is hard to tell apart
(sex is hard to tell)

they stand on represented snow
inside a globe

sustained by more faux-
snow outside below

summer light
bathes them on my window ledge

and there they stand
at rest, snow and globe and beasts

but au contraire
Kim and Vyt are going to Chicago

that city will take care of them
cities do that

if you give them half a chance
by being there

on the rocky base
a little penguin looks into the globe

but can’t or won’t go in
or hasn’t yet

a globe shelters but confines
the outside one is free

a little bird is free
to grow and be

so why do I think of you
Kim and Vyt leaving

we will be outside one another
looking in

where we are inside too
anything is possible in poetry

inside a beautiful
perfectly transparent

globe made of pure distance
in this famous world of ours
where it’s also hard to tell
going from coming

home from here
or here from everywhere

when I pick up the globe
and play with it

it starts to snow inside
at first the snow falls upward

towards the little sky inside
and then sifts down

it’s snowing in here this August day
then it calms down and the snow stops

we know it’s waiting for you in Chicago
waiting for us here on the east

bank of the river under prevailing westerlies
(mild ‘lake effect’)

but we’re safe
snug inside our globe

as we all are
inside this other one
knowing and loving and nameless stuff
that lights us home

holds us together far apart
but we'll still miss you

as if you were gone.

20 August 2015
Take notes
write down the present
to make it simply
stronger.
There is no future
to read them again.

20 August 2015
Wave yet another flag
incident before any possible war
“metaphysics”
a footstep in desert sand
wind sifts away
the traces, the metaphysics
of our being here.
The ocean secedes from the shore.
What worries me is the part
where the bird flies away from the sky.

20 August 2015
People in movie theater enthralled by the screen yet still able to nibble snacks from sacks open loose on their laps. Up there the hungry images are starved for total control of our mind—but this chewy half-popped kernel saves our souls. This thing, this very thing distracts us from distraction.

20 August 2015
NEEDED ON THE VOYAGE

1.
It has to be long
has to say itself out loud
no mere shy insinuation
lurking by heart gate
maiden meaning sly expressed
by moue of repression, no,
the whole thing, ice cream, salt,
barrel of herrings, national debt
whatever that is.
Whatever you dream up.
Five in the morning, a soft
piece of cloth in your fingers.

2.
And be dark enough
to truth the tell—
you are bronze for a reason,
metal man,
I hear your fingertips drumming
on the unstrung mandolin
just like the old country.
Vienna? Vanilla?

3. Of course every place is a question. How could it be there so long and not have doubts to resolve, something to demand of you, prince charming, princess bold, every child a Socrates, a banker in your bed, immaturity in ever flavor, austerities of state and church, asparagus do best in sand.

4. So a little breeze for once sifting through the late night rain—there, that’s ordinary for you, anybody could say or fathom that. No mysteries, we’re all friends here, or only one, but why.

5. Now I don’t hear the rain. Is it them or is it me? That’s what poems never know. The missionaries are all asleep
the old religion snuggles in our laps.

6.
Each part is called a *voice*
each sound a *letter*
one from home.

    A child
walks through a minefield
of other people’s meanings.
As I once in East
Germany as it happened,
my mind on the sea
safely fixed.

7.
Or does it, it,
get tired, it
of being seen?

Ever-object
seldom says?

*It acts in us*
I think I heard.
Mysterious longevity
of a single moment—
write a book,
it all fits in.
The rain again,  
the beautiful humdrum,  
divine anything.  

21 August 2015

= = = = =

The sky begins  
to tell me something  
but will I listen?  

Love sound of rain  
cool wafture—

what kind of word  
is that to speak  
in a sleeping man?

21 August 2015
[written on a old blue scrap found today:]

1. All I remember is what no one said.

2. Small poppy afraid to blossom.

3. I see in the dark I am a stone.

(21 August 2015)
Using words nearby—

are they the woods
I’m lost in?

Aren’t there others,
on the other side
of the clearing, trees
unknown to my
meager science?

Come, pronounce
yourselves to me,
make me leap
to guess the meaning
of your sound, each one
greener than the next

as I, here,
make you
bend to fetch mine.

21 August 2015
Poughkeepsie
The usual
over Palestine
sun of our valley
don't try to own
your experience
give it back
to the sky
where others, the others,
will find it,
we will be theirs
and they our own.

21 August 2015
Red Hook
THE PROJECT AT HAND

1.
All this you chance to embrace or touch or just survey is only an experiment a world on the way to be itself — a hollow earth laughing at the surface — how could a world have a self or not-self or who talks to us about these things as honestly as I do, I the thunderfaker, the ballroom dancer in a wheelchair, the spotless heifer, the third part of the moon broke loose and sailed around the sky over Martha’s Vineyard, swear it on a bible but whose translation? mother ducks and baby ducks and grey sky in which we’re comforted as by the skilled if careworn hand of the amah, is that who I mean, the plump woman in calico sari who took care
of all us children of the Raj?

2.
I am not exactly human, you know,
I guess you’ve figured that out
by now, what with all the wings,
claws, fangs, feathers, monocles,
walking sticks, guide books under
could this be my arm describing
the customs with maps of every
conceivable country, o a map
is a terrible thing, all blotches
and squiggles and meaningless
remarks (‘rome’ ‘lumpur’ ‘ohio’)
and colors, who knew colors
could hurt so much, borderlines
scribbled in blood, you poor
humans who live this way
like me. Where I come from
(where do I come from) things
are otherwise. No countries
no states no lines even, except
staves to write music on
like poor Thomas Tallis who was
(did you know that?) one of us.

3.
One of what, you ask,
and well you may. As others in this busy time have gone beyond the genders, we (there we are again!) have gone beyond the neuro-anatomical monstrosity they call a man. Or woman for that matter. We are the transhuman, all one or two of us here and there trying to make sense of having senses and a whole planet to spend them on. Just like you in other words but ah! the difference as the Poet says. As the Nineteenth Century sought *no God and no Czar* we T.H.s seek No mother and no father no childbirth and no death. It is what we always wanted: to be the other thing. Whatever that is. Don’t ask me.

4.
But since you insist I’ll quote Yeats and put your skeptic selves to sleep—to be *out of nature*, to take the form of no *natural thing*. There.
Don’t know how he came to know it, probably getting old and sad and missing pretty girls or more likely just being Celtic, pale blood-line of the Cro-Magnons, last Atlanteans, all those folks who made us up then shuddered at what they had done and looked away. Some of them look back now and then and give a word or two to guide us from the mess, interesting as it is, of human loves and human laws and human wars, out into a new world we barely can imagine. But we imagine. Here we are, I stand in the street and cry, come listen to my song, pack your gear, hurry, come and be me.

21 August 2015
Of course I’m afraid of the night
I’m sane and have senses.

And I was born at noon.
Poor mother. Poor women
who suffer to be the gates
through which, through whom
we all come in.

From the dark out there.

Cool now, I could
wander around in the shifting quiet airs
but the trees are there
and people in them of all kinds,
some born from wombs, some not,
some not born at all.

22 August 2015
Waiting for a better
way of being me.
It’s not out there.

At night in the woods
he’s left alone
with what he’s become —

no need for other monsters.
Touch me, I tell myself,
say I am real,

safe, a part of reality.
But when my hand
brushes my thigh

who knows really
who is touching whom?
Pallbearers stumbling along
handle empty coffins.
To graves undug
they bear some flowers
a woman gave them
saying Where
their petals start to fall,
dig there, and dig him up,
the child who’s buried in the woods.
In the woods,
my only son
he is like the trees
but he can walk,
can talk like you or me
even before he’s born.
When and where the petals fall
listen to the ground and hear him tell.
(Sitting in the pre-dawn dark reading reviews of books I’ve never read, never want to, just glad, glad I can read again. A simple paper, newsprint, my native language.)

22 August 2015
Town I used to be
now sudden sense —
name me for your boulevard,
I run as fast as I can
between where other
people actually live.
I am a contradiction,
as we all are,
but I know it. And you
know I do.
Here, let us have
no secrets from each other,
President corner of Nostrand,
biker bar on the corner,
a subway gapes.
22 August 2015

== == == ==

A high chair
is that not apt
for my condition
childish in dazzle
with no grasp of policy?
Once on a carousel
I swung out for the brass ring
that earns another
cycle of go-rounds
and caught it! and here I am
turning around you,
you, my orb and primary
I satellite by day and night
would be one
way of putting it.
Do you want to be one?
Want to be the one?
How somber to be the Sun
and give all your light away!
To me, your mortal nuisance
clad in Obsolete Vocabulary
reborn as speech.
A word, as they say, in your ear.

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22 August 2015
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Pretty obviously
a love poem and yet
(turn the page)
who knows who
that flower-maiden is
who scatters listless petals
on someone else’s wedding?

22 August 2015
We can’t be too sure.
We must be sure.
*Lincoln freed the colored folk*
*I wish he’d free me too*
the soldiers sang,
we have to change the words of it
but it’s still the song we need to sing
the *victim chant* against the state,
to be released from the system,
be rinsed out pure and thrive.

22 August 2015
No, that’s not the way.
There is no way.

No road
and still we go.

That’s the miracle,
the summer snow.

22 August 2015
A tree fills all of its branches with leaves.

Why do we so few of ours?

22 August 2015
Not to arise after a fall but from the prone condition sneak forward to the newly opened goal revealed through every fall.

23 August 2015
Whatever the doctors say with their chromosomes and cells, it’s the psyche of the mother that determines the gender of the child. Women at peace with their own femininity, their own sexuality — and then, thus, at ease with, enjoying, the knowledge of relations with men — will tend to have daughters. Why has it taken me so many years to learn this?

23 August 2015
Waking the wanting
morning six birds
out by one hibiscus
quick. Call this
music or religion.
Your pick.
It matters
less than I think.

23 August 2015
Seeing the people who aren’t there is easier sometimes than they are.

They present more to mind than eye. they hide

but not from mind.
That guy
sees everything,
especially your
glittering absences.

23 August 2015

== == == == ==

Trying to be scrupulous
or just get it right.
Sand bags on the levee
and no word from home —

steam whistle from
noon factory have to make
do, sidewalk packed,
people reading Plato
furtively in bed —
if it rains the river
misbehaves, they all
want to come

close to you
darling, that’s all
numbers are good for,
climbing the lattice
to your window
like a long sentence
from the Psalms —
who’s that

looking in? Or out?
you’re asleep
by now, you’ll
dream the answer

the square root
of something is at play,
the boat left long ago
there was no mail.

Prime numbers
will make it rain,
come home, butterfly
or whatever you are

land on my wrist
the way a shadow
from the church steeple
falls on the street

pointing yet again
to the real religion
counting by twos
right through the only gate.

23 August 2015

= = = = = =

After two years or so not being able to pick up a book
and read with continuity, with mind only in the text,
and now being able (-3!) to read again, I realize what my
soul has known all my life: reading is praying. Not yoga,
not practice, just prayer.

23 August 2015
Find something to write with —
a kimono,
an autumn flower
23 August 2015

STAR

Is there anything
I should not forget
the star of vision
in a young girl’s palm
that makes me see
how much she’ll see
as she wanders
through her mind and lets it. Lets it.

That’s all it needs to be able to speak, the quiet looking away from the unseen where the voice begins.

I saw the star, it drew its lines all over her hand, not the lines of the palm but the vision’s lines themselves floating above that shallow grail her open hand.

23 August 2015

= = = = =

Curious silence of light in the morning today’s daytime tells me nothing yet, it must be my fault (everything is) for not listening
the right way,
the way my blood listens
to a woman’s hair —
we are biology —
or language listens to
rivers best
and learns all the verbs.

24 August 2015

EPITAPHION

Am I hearing
myself think
or is some other
mourner at the funeral
making up the alphabets
we use to label experience?
Did you ever wonder
whose words come
out of your mouth?
And who are you anyhow?

24 August 2015

= = = = = =

The itch to see
is made of flowers
specific ones
New York asters
soon, tiger
lilies gone
weeks now.
Or if not flowers
Maseratis,
tugboats, the sword-belt of Orion
swinging loose
in a glittering sky.
We dissolve in metaphors
and wake in silent light.
The light says
Be specific
it is your only chance.

24 August 2015

What would the sky
look like
if our blood were green?
Would we be
heavenly home then
or just slower here
like trees? I think
of all this red in me
(go to an autopsy
if you don’t believe)
and wonder color,
why color, and why this?
The same inside
everyone. Only our
faces lie.

24 August 2015

== == == ==

I don’t know
anything anymore —
I have to make everything up.

That’s why I’m good for you.
Doubt my data (means ‘givens’)

but not my gift.
Here, lick the skin on your right wrist,
taste the shadow

of a pear tree in Vermont —
cool, ripe fruit,
see? How could either of us be wrong?

24 August 2015
The Muse comments on this morning’s poems:

Too talky
too timid.
Lasso a star
and drag it down,
scorch the page
with it and smell
a million years
of light all at once
then read the mark
it leaves behind,
tyour so-called word.

24 August 2015

== == == ==
A celebrity does one thing spectacularly. We adore him for his limitations, our adulation is a form of pity, poor shiny fellow made all of news.

24 August 2015
Wish were a better name
to call by
the wanted.

Hummingbird feeder empty,
squirrel on the chain —
not much use
to say.

But to call!
And be heard!
And then happening
all over again,

heart in hands,
happening ever,
silent at last.

24 August 2015
Being towards the end
we called it natural

we had a little rain
and called it a night

someone had a notion
and called it us

so we were.
And still are?

No, we did.
The same
we that made it rain.

25 August 2015
It’s still wet out here
an intermittent wet arrival, ‘drip.’
Which also meant
;annoying person’
Once. But not now.
And this is not.
It is a kiss
from another condition,
a quiet physician
making the rounds through sky,
our most reliable
of all hospitals.
Hospices. Our house.

25 August 2015
1. The crow wants to know why I haven’t learned to answer yet. Unless this is doing so even now, by saying And he says yes it is.

2. Comforted, I resume the frail thread of my remarks left here by Ariadne herself asleep upstairs.

3. She was leading me out of a war out of a love story, a short story, out of all stories to that silent monster snug in the den at the core of language. And there something will happen
4.
to each other, it and me,
and when the crows [?] are quiet again
she will wake
and things will be true again.

25 August 2015
CIVILIZATION

is gastronomy.
We dine on leftovers,
one another.

And when the painter
has seen enough
we build a wall
to hang her seeing on.

25 August 2015
CROW

Try to hear he cries,
I try.
It's not my words I’m hiding he
says, my cries mean only
to wake you to your own.

25 August 2015
I hold my breath till the end of the line — the keyboard helps, it has no lungs but only the time my fingers breathe.

25.VIII.15
Just under the tree
the driveway’s dry.
I thought to mention it
with something like gratitude
welling up quietly,
as much as I love
all kinds quiet.
Maybe I’m thanking
anything for being different.

25 August 2015
If I had a plaster cast made of my head I could talk to myself and finally listen.

25 August 2015
Say more here
so the rats of silence
don’t gnaw through the hull
and sink this little ship
of mine, all the while
wind dislodges it
on the moveless sea.
I talk to keep
the ocean company.

25 August 2015
Strange life of venir / aller
je vais dormir — future
vient de paraître — past.

‘to come’ holds future and past.
le livre à venir future.

So come is always past, the future as past?
And to go is always only yet to come?

26 August 2015
SIRVENTES

What the sun doesn’t say
as it gleams on the cars
eve of the festival
that is always tomorrow
coming forward to shout again

five means fight
today is tijax day of the knife
day of getting things right
flash of teeth, obsidian blade,
dragon on the cellphone.

How long can it last
this horror of being me
as if a down comforter slipped off
a naked infant perishing in cold,
identity identity.

Bombs exploding over the harbor
sink the sea
make the air illegal
we did it all wrong
opportunists of the fall

one and all, decency dead
recency only the life of corpses
live TV my hand lets fall
the all-powerful remote
silences the world

my aim is off
gunshot reveille
all victims every one
called absolvent nature
to witness our deploring

why do we do it
we do it
kinder than Jesus?
Who took our nature on
just long enough then took it off
took off into the blue sky
we’re watching still
that everlasting ascension
smaller and smaller He seems
till He’s tiny enough to slip into our hearts

O Friedrich pray that day will come
come means to be from and be here
at once, tail lights at night
lead me to dawn
for an hour the only woman in the world

why I called it Eos
and went there
as close as I could get
hands on the shoulder of a rock
bounded through the sea

are you listening to me
have the weasels come
pilfering hens eggs from the stable
where percherons keep poultry
(they call this a college)
the water carries to the horses
O I was once a thoroughbred
but now a cart bumps me forward
heavy-laden with all I ever made
the gold I gave you, I kept the lead

26 August 2015

[Two scraps of dream]

“. . . and when you’ve seen
a young man die inside you
then you know
the world is old
you are its only hope”

*

“graveyard of illusions”
am not beautiful
because I am a word
and you are sometimes

but mostly you have
the wings of the morning
to lift you out of the book

out into the practical
region of skin and wheels
secret motivations,
parties you should never have gone to but here you are and a man is a bird with one wing.

27 August 2015

= = = = =

So often not thinking turns out to be ballet one lifts another gossamer in limelight

body trying to be and speak at once a leap into meaning all your shadows moving too.
Ballet

Bodies trying not to be bodies, trying to be letters of some alphabet stranger than Slavic so as to flash — carve, sketch? — letter by letter a word we desperately need into the air of our own Neverland.

27 August 2015
Each leap leaves lust behind,
each fall back to earth
is one more spring.

27 August 2015

UNKNOWN OPERA

Other language
listening to a story
I don’t understand
can’t follow
out of time
and far away,
don’t know who
is telling me
or why, yet I
am compelled to listen. 
This is music. 
It will not stop 
until the story's done, 
all the unknown beings 
are dead or married 
or ready to sing 
something else again.

27 August 2015

CAWUK

Didn't rain on rainday. 
Does this knife cut? 
Does this string 
stretch out along a line 
if we pull it taut? 
Who are we? 
Is physics just all our accidents 
considered together?
Isn’t science slightly paranoid, always blaming distant specific causes for perceived effects? It’s all conspiracy anyway, like sunlight on a white wooden wall, no doubt about it. Or a chunk of amber in your pocket, souvenir of Latvia.

27 August 2015

EROS

Eros is too precious to waste on other people or yourself. Only the work is worth his arrows, his emptying quiver, his disconcerting little smile.
27 August 2015
(Between writing and the finished text the purgatory of typing it out.)

27.VIII.15
DRAMA

Plays would be really wonderful if nothing happened.
All talk and no action!
And the event, deed, _energeia_
would all be inside us.

27 August 2015
Tired of people
he went and consorted
with the archetypes.

They live in what
our ancestors called Fairyland
when they still believed
in fairies and feared them.

Now we have to say
they live in Otherland,
that region closer than here.

27 August 2015
NATURE OF THE CRIME

The black-clad assassin at the corner turned out to be a kid on his cellphone walking in circles in a world all his own.

27 August 2015
NINE OF SWORDS

A man sits in front of a mirror as at an old-fashioned vanity. Most of him is reflected. Past the left shoulder of the man in the mirror we see a dim shimmery form of another person who is not visible in this world outside the mirror. The name of this card is Sorrow.

28 August 2015
Watching the shuttlecock fly across the empty room it is natural to wonder who’s playing badminton now indoors, room empty, not a sound? Not even the faint pock of the rubber beak as it meets racket and sails back. Wonder is natural enough at all times, but you know what nature is like.

28 August 2015
Meditate:

The member and the implement, the woman painting the image flows out of her hands onto the panel. The image holds.

28 August 2015
EVE

Is that how she first made us
imag[in]ed a world
outside the Garden
and flowed us into it,
flowered us all,
Children of Eve?

28 August 2015
Was Eve the early scientist who made us be?

Eve of Atlantis
disfigured (disguised for her own protection?)
in a Book.

Take the story back
and tell it true.

It all amounts.
To telling, being told.

Tell her finally anew.

28 August 2015
Density as destiny?
Be thick and you abide?
There must be less to it than that.

28.VIII.15
A storm cloud saunters over.  
This must after all  
be the Holy Land  
since everything is here.

Here we reach the ending of the story,  
eyes are in the leaves,  
the trees see us.  
As once in Eden  
they watched and spoke.

Who else has loved us so long,  
stood by our side,  
made themselves into houses for us,  
occasionally fell to put us to sleep?  
And birds live there too.
28 August 2015

= = = = =

La peau, l’écriture de Dieu —
lisez la peau, et comprenez.

Sur elle les maladies de Soi

28 .VIII.15
A beetle on the patio,
a man with a cigar.

28.VIII.15
(Sin as improvement over stasis?
no. Newspapers
are designed to sadden and depress
so you’ll go out and do and buy
the things they advertise
to cheer yourself up.
(Travel. Watch. Experience
as commodity, the thing
of passing time
one way and not another)
They have left me to the lingering, a ball of wax sculpted with fingerprints of all who made me.

28 August 2015
= = = = =

Being long
and belonging.

Why? The huge
distance you
have to cross
to be here.

28 August 2015
Union is absolute demand. Contingency is angel. Angels are of my orders, colors, languages, lineages. Caress is the human approximation of messages. The kind that union brings, the strange old infant art shows between bride and husband hand in hand. We have known them from the beginning — but there is no gender where they are — transgender may verge on angeldom.

28 August 2015
Years later I can come back
and see how small
this house is
you lost and grieve
for still. But the size
of a room is really
what happens in it,
all the deaths and
legislations, learnings,
all the things you touched
everything you own.
The little room
at the head of the stairs—
you can only
get there by thinking
about steps,
door down,
door into the other rooms where real people slept,
sat about looked out windows.
You were in between, you have always been between,
the staircase is a contradiction,
you will never get out of this little house.

28/29 August 2015
It is changing.
I only call
when I want something.
I want less
from you now
than ever,
Why? I have learned
to live in a certain
poverty, a lack
built into all
the experience of much
love and tenderness.
Or I have drained
the feelings into words.
Something is changing —
I am a selfish
man, I have used
up the experience
of knowing you.
Anyone. Or else
all of you
have fed me
enough at last.
Anyhow it is
and is changing, 
a kind of cool 
gratitude in me 
like the fresh 
breeze from a 
closing door.

28/29 August 2015
And then all the new ‘children’ out there arriving to be known. Can I know them just by showing them the way, so they need to show me nothing but the work that is the way we share, the only way?

To be there for them without being here for them —

? es possible?

28/29 August 2015
4 AM

Cars going
to be anywhere.
Baudelaire.

28/29.VIII.15
A book tonight refused
to be taken from the shelf.
My angel warned me
using my oafish fingers,
could not pry the book
from its neighbors.
After a while
I grew wise
enough to leave it
there. And made
up for myself
whatever I had thought
I needed to know.

28/29 August 2015
= = = =

Or I have transferred you from the phenomenal to the noumenal where you are safe from illness and aging and touch.

28/29 August 2015
SIX OF COINS

A woman rising straight up
out of a bare field,
hers arms half-spread,
a cluster of flowers at her groin,
roses. She is hip-high
out of the earth. And
in the middle distance, trees,
hills, weather.

The name of this card is Fertility.

29 August 2015
In a simple blue sky
one vast cloud,
*mackerel* as we used to say,
and strange to say now
forming the shape of a huge fish.

(*Dozens of curved stria of cloud
separated from one another —
who could have said such a word?)

29 August 2015
I’m retreating
inside but the roses
are still out there,
more work for hummingbirds
pink, on the old tree,
blue flowers on the newer —
they make me
talk this way.
Things do, I’m not
much more than a
mouth for them, spokes-
person we say now —
always, how can I
take responsibility
for what they make me say?

29 August 2015
Friends coming. 
Crystal ball clouds. 
Friends leaving, 
clear skies in there. 
We linger 
in the de of dedans 
wondering why love 
lasts so long 
and gives so little — 
so why do we sign 
our mail with x’s, xo’s 
when all we really mean 
is vaguely wish you 
well, stranger?

29 August 2015
(5:30)

== == == ==

Twice enough is a pale religion
he said coming
out of you can't call it
a dream where there was
nothing there,
not even the dark.

30 August 2015
FIVE OF SWORDS

A celebrated tenor stands near the edge of the stage singing his great aria — it could be from Massenet’s Werther or Mascagni’s Ratcliff his back is turned to the actors and all the action of the opera’s story he seems to be singing only to the audience vast, dark, unseen.

The name of this card is Arrogance, or the Aggression of Art.

30 August 2015
The sky begins again. That huge opportunity to know something outside ourselves including ourselves. Blue happens. What else is on our way now in the dark, trees. Way up the road a streetlight like the final words of an ancestor, resist, persist, insist.

30 August 2015
Is anything true?

Stones in her pockets VW
she walked into the out of us
the stories we tell

But they don't end
Finally enough to worry
hairs on my thighs.

30 August 2015
In leaps again
it at us
apparition:
    seeing
anything is a miracle.

30 August 2015
Triptych
keeps telling
compose such a three

one thing that opens to be three
so such an everything
is really 4
her favorite number

no wonder she permits the world!

30 August 2015
Surely those are not my thighs hairy, blue-veined, never seen them before, name yourself thigh-man, identify some self even if not your own. What is truth as the man said. I have seen the full smooth snowy thighs of Snegurochka, the rough uneasy pale skin between my knees and me. But jamais your hairy habit, black hairs too who are you?

30 August 2015

(In dream I thought these thighs my own)
A little strip of rust
on my green table
seen close up
a landscape of its own.
Rust just means turning
from one state to another,
from the great plains to the Rockies,
the change.
We live for the change.

(Water rushes from our hands)

30 August 2015
== = = = =

The way she bites her speech
white-dressed white-stockinged scholar
with such teeth. Bette? Babette?
In country now, come hike with me
and veering slowly through the courtyard did.

(dreamt) 31 August 2015
Everything approximates a Tarot card — not a major trump, that’s only us —

but my situation is a coin and every motivation is a sword.

31 August 2015
A word of light
slipped through the slightly
parted lips of the curtain.
Dawn. Exchange of sources.

31 August 2015
Deep fog:
The eyes delight
glad to see it before sun swoops it away —
or breaks it into —
what does she do?

31 August 2015
Being wrong
is one of the last
pleasures of the intellectual.

31.VIII.15
So many me’s left to be —

open the morning door
again and again.

Time has to help —
that’s why we pay it so well
with our machinery, our prospects, one skin.

31 August 2015
Let sleep discover me anew
a top that spins
to say a single word

31 August 2015