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Orange is a man sure of his powers.

— Kandinsky

So I ask myself
what color am I?

When Amy Goldin asked
what my favorite color was
I told her orange
to be outrageous—

she bought me an orange kettle
enamel, lovely, I wish
I had it still, maybe I do.

But what color would be best
for anyone or loveliest?

We lie to each other
to make us happy,
any color, darling, any
thing that pleases
you will please me too.
(But please, no avocado.)

1 November 2015

POETRY

**We build our lines
with subtle lies.
Our lives.**

1 November 2015

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**Waiting on a lily pad
a drop of water
one special one.
Things make you pregnant too.**

1 November 2015

EMIGRANTS

**Sometimes I try to remember
the boat that brought us here,
cells of me, all my flesh and fathers.**

**Sometimes I can smell the wind
from the west they ventured,
hear sails flapping and roaring,**

the restless rigging.

**Sorrows of coming to a new place
with all your old bones and fears,**

**the animal of you trapped for weeks
in a creaking wooden forwardness
and never dry. Never alone.**

**But here they are, 1830s, 1840s,
forgetting Devon by the day,
and Cork, and Monaghan**

**to be in this place they, we, I
still find strange, these beautiful
woodlands and we intrude.**

Only the sky is pretty much the same.

1 November 2015

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**Riding this way
close, close.
You rreach me
before I'm born.
Redemption.
Midwinter rose.**

1 November 2015

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**Why is a woman on horseback
like the sun rising?**

You tell me.

**Assume it's a winter day.
Assume she's riding towards you.**

**How far does she have to go
before you understand?**

1 November 2015

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**Little lusts
let us linger here.
Big ones
scare us away.**

1.XI.15

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**Yeast, the dough rising.
The loaf stands up
ready for its loving heat
transforming.**

**Things make chemists of us
more or less digestible experiments
we bring to one another—
how strange it really is.**

A kitchen is the last mystery.

1 November 2015

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**On a café table
in mild breeze
an open book
reading itself.**

1.XI.15

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TIME FOR GRAPHIC POEMS:

**what does the line
make the artist see?**

Draw that.

**Tell the poem
by its visual consequence.**

**Set the artist free.
Fly to the moon.**

1 November 2015

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**How to smell like an American
without actually sleeping with one.
Something to do with asphalt, roses,
desert wind, gasoline, banana peels,
verdure. many sources of smoke. Meat.**

1 November 2015

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**How many of these words
will remember me?**

**We are wed
in mutual forgetting.**

I'm not even sure what day this is.

1 November 2015

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**Read the *Alvismal* All Hallows morning,
answering questions as a way of losing.
How lovely to read it again after all these years —
how many? Dangerous to answer that.**

1 November 2015, 4:20

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**We live, lie, in a triptych :
sky earth and under,
a triptych sealed
against too-easy understanding.**

1 November 2015

=====

**I have a little spring top
I send spinning on my desk
it roams around a while
until its spin gives out**

**and then it topples — till then
the words written on it whirl
out into all space and time
but we cannot reach them**

**they pass so fast
but some one can perhaps
out there in the Magic
we dare not specify.**

1 November 2015

== == == == ==

**Fetishizing every
thing. That is
surréalisme, imagisme.
In school they teach
only spelling. Meaning
eludes instruction.
Stare at the thing
until it speaks.**

***Our motto:
Defetishize the Object
by allowing it personhood: agency and speech.***

1 November 2015

FIRST LESSONS IN KABBALAH.

One:

**Measurement of the Car
she rides in
coming to meet us.
Divide speed
by number of wheels
and estimate your desire
for her approach.**

Lesson Two:

**Your desire is the animal
that pulls the chariot.
Woe to that stasis
when desire sleeps.**

Three

**Spelling her name won't help
if you don't say it,
loud, with tears of joy,
your face in the wind.
And you know who the wind is.**

1 November 2015

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**On the beaches of Rofrano
I spied a young boy skipping**

**but there are no beaches there
at least no seas, no estuaries,**

**and all the boys are girls.
This is what music does,**

**or watching people in the distances,
or moving quickly or even**

**having a horizon out there to
mediate between you and your heart.**

1 November 201

=====

**All Souls — *Dia de los Muertos*,
day of the dead, and this day, now
Ten Death in the Kiche calendar,**

***Kame*. We talk together
in mild sunshine
over fallen leaves
with everyone who has ever lived.**

**So I say this day
has spoken already,
and the mower gone already from the field.**

2 November 2015

=====

**An Advent Calendar, she says, to meet *B.C.*
every day with its own name,
to say the saint or socialist
who blessed the sex of us, sense of us,
the spirit hastening towards us,
coming. Coming. Can a man say that?**

2 November 2015

== == == ==

The ice is melting
the Gods are waiting
I heard that when I
looked up a moment
from being me.

2 November 2015

SCIENCE

**Even when something stops
it's not clear it is finished.
Overtones persist
well past human hearing.
They tell me, those
who know how to measure silence,
angels with thick glasses and sing-song names.**

2 November 2015

=====

**Running under the river
a line of Whitman
races it to the sea.
And now you know
what water means.**

2 November 2015

=====

**Little eyes
inside my eyes
see me looking.
They explain
what I see
in terms of you.
I bring the news
to you like an eager
child anxious
for welcome even
if I have to make
it up all by myself.**

**2.
But there is no self.
Or if there is, it hardly
knows a thing about making,
let alone making things up.
All human arts are from Prometheus
I read that long ago**

**and I believed. He perches
inside us now, our own eagle,
making our live dumb meat
into instruments of making and singing and praise.
We feed on how he feeds on us.**

**3.
So I thought that's what it meant,
that line of Aeschylus,
some god in us that isn't me.
But who else could it be?
The dance begins, and all her veils
flutter in sunlight like the taste of cream.**

2 November 2015

=====

**(Your biscotti I told the baker
are too sweet.
And my water is too
wet he said.)**

(for the Chatham Bakery)

2 November 2015

=====

**Working the party
he saw the opportunity
it had as he had legs
it lived in the city
hence never far
I will track you
to your lair unless you
love me right now.
All right it said, con-
sider yourself adored.
That was enough
for him it seemed.
And the other, well,
what can one really know
about the other's heart?**

2 November 2015

THE VIBRATO

**It begins
o or a
the gender
is unspeakable**

**carrying on
the voiced quartet
what is the sex
of a single tone**

**sex or gender
a or o
what can we know
without beginning**

**so initiate
imitate
the magus in
composition**

**conversation
in heaven
said the abbot
but even now**

**we're listening
love's quiver
all the meanings
of, and quaver**

**likewise, a sign,
a soft uncertainty
throat bare
autumn afternoon,**

**like one of these
o or a, a and o?
unveiling,
signpost or gallows**

**human sorority
a face means one
direction at any now
we are made**

**to be afraid
of behind us
soft hairs along
the nape prick up**

**no Advent candle
burning in our eyes
answers all**

our whys but helps

**the sleep called
human reason
the dream called
being right**

**then at its own
time the overtone
gives out, we say
the vibration**

**is no more
o silence o love
o great Diana
of the Ephesians**

**painted on this
cuty wall
her hands are man's
hands reaching**

**from the secret
out to us
where we somehow
live with no deciding**

**o or a, the woman
brings the other**

woman food, the man
pretends to understand

but nothing knows
after the voice
stops holding
that gleaming stone

shimmering in sun,
because music is late
the last-born
of our desires

come to us
in an abstract time
nothing bleaker
than the names

of things
without the things,
maybe at last
she'll sing again

he will
over the canyon
shifts the little
crystal bearing stream

down to lose

**itself in going,
call it a river
if you need a word**

**or just let it be,
say or see,
bay or sea,
the song alone**

**of vowels made,
shakes the silly
consonants
that merely mean.**

2 November 2015

=====

**I was a girl writing up her diary,
woman, really, but I was three
days late so had to write fast—
no names, of course, a few initials
maybe, mostly just actions,
objects, instruments, attitudes,
ablatives of attendant circumstance,
colors, what we did, what we ate.
Rice was somehow important.
And how after this last one, tonight,
after I locked the door behind him
climbed upstairs key in hand, touched
myself so see if I'm still there.**

3 November 2015

=====

**Did the gods create language
or did language create the gods?
The jury is still out on that
and I am the patient judge
waiting. I feel a little corrupt,
waiting for someone to
offer me a bribe to decide.
But there's nobody's there.**

3 November 2015

=====

**Turning the fact around
is easy. Changing
what we want
is hard.**

**Want
it to be. Want
you to do. To be
according to me.**

**Don't use the imperative
on me, I have
too much to do
already, all
this long wanting.**

3 November 2015

=====

**At least be the face of someone,
reflection in the tip of a black
patent leather shoe — don't pretend
you never looked — the world
is full of consequences disguised
as images whose names we barely
(and I mean bare-ly) can decide.
Who is that woman on the stairs,
why is that steel key in her hand,
the old kind that opens most doors?
Why are their stairs anyhow, why
can't we live on the ground, decent
animals that we are, is the alphabet
worth climbing all those steps
every blessed night just to make
what we call love or even sleep—
but that's yet another mystery,
why we do it, where we go, who
do we meet there, and so on—
abd what door is she going to open
or lock forever perhaps against
the nosy lodgers we turn out to be?**

3 November 2015

KNOTS

Don't know about knots.

Don't care about knots.

Don't know how to know about knots.

something sneaky and witchy about them

it is wrong to tie knots in a string

**that's how civilization began
a bunch of women tying knots in strings,
weaving, knitting. Writing, *quipu*.**

**Show me how you tie your laces
and I'll tell you who you are.**

**And the alphabet is just one huge knot
but in or on or of what string?**

3 November 2015

TO WHITE FLOWER FARM

**What I hate about your
seductive pretentious catalogue:
you never leave me any blank space
to write in response to the pretty
pictures of flowers you show.
What is a flower without its poem?
I know you're just a business
but words are a kind of money too—
so I have to scribble all over your
pinkish "Amadeus" amaryllis
to pay you for the names of things,
pictures, shadows of the real, pay
with these brittle skeletons
of words far from anybody's lips.
Are you trying to tell me in your
glossy way that writing in itself
is some kind of profanation?**

3 November 2015

(ON A PAPER PLATE)

**If we were only
beginning but
we're reaching the awesome hour
when the plate flips over and our food
falls to the mouths of dæmons waiting below—
they are always here, we
are their upright *shadows* cast
up by the infernal fires below,
Earth's own
gleam.**

**3 November 2015
Rhinebeck**

THE ADVENT CALENDAR

Day 1.

Who is on the stairs?

The stars.

Who is on the carpet?

The stains.

Is it wine?

Only one.

Day 2.

Is the doorway wreathed with green?

Determine to open all closed things.

Does it open in or open out?

I am not allowed to say.

You'll have to remember by yourself.

Things wait for us to decide.

Day 3.

It is the oilman

come to fuel the fire.

It is the barber

come to shape the flame,

the masseuse to find it in the bone.

Open the door.

It is a bone.

Day 4.

**Passageways start in the cellar wall.
Go through the whitewashed stones
a long way in— you're under the garden
now you smell the herbs. Name them,
naming them is almost as good as tea.
As flowers. Names are flowers.
You hear the flowers' voice above you
muted by mild earth.
They sound like tarot cards
being shuffled fast, or wild
turkeys stumbling through corn.**

Day 5.

**Admire the dark in front of you.
Reach out and touch it tenderly,
gently, at the level of your hips—
you're holding the dark in your arms now,
be brave and whisper your name.**

Day 6.

**Passage keeps going.
Strike a match. See
the sweating old pipes
that feed the fountain**

over your head.
A fountain is always
above you. Now touch
the wet copper, then
touch your wet fingers
to your brow. Everything
is above you. You belong
to one another.

Day 7.
No passage ever ends
because you fail. You feel.
It reaches the cave now,
you know, the original
one, where Thundermakers
sat long ago inventing
clouds, sending them out
to sail, girl clouds, boy clouds
and one great cloud
all fringed with lapis and silver
on which he'll be coming soon,
soon. It's too dark to count the days.

Day 8.
Be there with me
it says above the altar,
empty stone, cubical

almost, rough-hewn.
Cave or lodge, secret
society of matter. Fungus
growing off the walls—
edible? All things
can be eaten. Not all
we eat gives life.

Day 9.
But the cave is empty,
what good is that?
Don't dwell in the past—
go back to the cellar,
climb the stairs, burst
into the yellow kitchen,
I'm here! you shout
and the windows fill
with autumn light
maple and linden and ash.

Day 10.
Living in time
is living in a house.

That's why the children
grow up and leave.

**But one of them
will soon be coming back—**

**you know it in your heart,
the coming. The coming!**

**Now count the days
but don't use numbers.**

**Day 11.
Imagine fingers on your spine
trailing, telling,
vertebrae as keyboard, rosary,
row of buttons down a long slim coat.
Safe in the kitchen you think about this.
I'm home! you shout again.
And at the sound of your call
the light increases**

φως αυγει

and you suddenly remember.

**Day 12.
Cave after cave.
I love you**

says the wall.
The kitchen curtains waver
in the autumn breeze.
Yes! windows are open,
it's that warm,
'mild' your mother would have called it,
fearing a more impassioned word,
committed word. Some people
are afraid of the heat.
That's why he's coming.

Day 13.
Not that wall.
The other one,
white, flaking, old,
old, underneath
everything else,
the foundation.

Your house stands on this.
It has form. It is firm
as things go.
This is the wall that loves you,
divides your space from
the general commonwealth of earth.
Stand at the head
of the cellar stairs
and listen softly.

Day 14.

**Of course this is all in your house—
where else could anything be?**

**He's there too, waiting
for his time to come.**

**Coming is about time, isn't it,
not space but time
in the actual being here,
in you, in the house.
Of course he's coming,
he always is.**

Day 15.

**Soon the lawn glider
will fill up with snow—**

**you'll have to find elsewhere
to drowse your afternoons.**

**And elsewhere is a very strange place.
That's why he's coming here.**

**Everyone comes here
to be with someone. With you.**

Day 16.

**I like to finish things
before I start
she said.**

**The titmice outside
looked up from their seed—
impossibilities interest birds—
how else could they have
stepped off that first time into the air?**

**Maybe she can do it, they thought,
maybe he'll be here before he comes.
And then they went on eating.**

Day 17.

**This kind of sun
never gets around to setting—
stay indoors, I told the girl
imagine the door opening
what do you see? I see a garden
been there before
with flowers in it, white ones
I supposed, I forgot to ask.
But he'll tell me when he comes.**

Day 18.

**I want to sing the longest song you ever heard
and when I'm done I want you to sing it onward
what else can we do while we wait for him to come?
Or is coming itself just a sudden waiting, waiting
packed into an instant of time, like heartbeats
and beast breath bottled into some long song?**

Day 19.

**After the kitchen is empty
you're on the stairs,
coming up to meet the dusty light—
you can never keep a skylight clean
things fall on it and birds and air
itself brings pollen and disasters.
You stand on the landing watching up—
light also is something worth waiting for
because you know it finally comes,
must come, built into the system,
even in Greenland even in December
it has to show up. He has to come.
You don't have to do anything.
Stand there, pretend to be a broom
snuggled in a corner, pretend to be
the kind of animal that sleeps in light.
Deep in light and wakes to love you.**

Day 20.

**You're at the highest window in the house,
hence closer you suppose to his arrival.
He's playing chess with Mongolians now
or reading the paper in Ankara—he knows
most languages — or walking in the hills
above the city where the First People stood
building stone men and stone snakes around them—
religion is the weirdest thing and never ends.
Or never till he finally gets here.**

Day 21.

**Laughing helps. Stewed prunes
for breakfast and Mersenne primes.
Tweed jacket against the chill.
You can read the paper too, the news
though all of it you've seen before.
Only he is new, and even he is an again—
even now he's in the outskirts of Jerusalem.**

Day 22.

**Math is good to while away the time,
math, and skin, and snatches from opera,
lie there humming Falstaff's the whole
world one big joke aria, or Wolfram's
welcoming the evening star. They're on
YouTube if you've forgotten how they go.
Going is not important anyway. Staying is,
unveiling yourself, lying prone, holding**

**yourself ready for the great arrival.
Ready means naked, naked and intelligent,
eyes closed, doors opening and closing by themselves.**

Day 23.

**But I keep thinking about the cave.
All this sunlight makes me nervous,
all the things it lets you, makes you, see.
Here it is dark, alveolar, alluvial, a word
soft wet in the mouth waiting to be said.
Language has its advent too. Miracles.
Cure the cave wall. Those spooky white
mushroom things in the crannies.
Cure my fear of dark and fear of light,
my fear of skin and fear of loneliness.
I'll know I'm safe when it's dim enough
all round me that I can't read any more
the Nazca lines on the desert of my palms.**

Day 24.

**Pieces of gold not all circular
gold fillings from old skulls
money is so macabre, we hurry
out of the opera house rejoicing
that all the banks are closed.
Only bars and brothels want us now,
the universe at midnight turns**

inside out. But we don't notice.
I ran a brothel once and called it a book,
ran a bar and called it the bible,
opened a church and pretended to be
that vague stone table called an altar.
Ara. Which as a verb means to plow.
Plough. So many languages. Arator,
ploughman, orator, the one who prays.
Some prayer lasts longer than time.
Forget about it. You're home now.
He's almost here. Or he is here already,
never anywhere else. Advent
is when something else sidles up to you
and makes the healing knowledge come.

Day 25.

But the whitewashed wall is what I really mean.
So long ago the house I hurried, the ground
beneath which I composed
night by night my wordless treatises,
compounds of orpiment and lead,
scratchy LPs full of late Mahler,
o his summers when all the work
got done, o the summer of every
midnight when I listened—
and I'm just speaking of me.
All round me hundred thousand
treatises got written, studied,

**forgotten, turned into music,
sung their way into silence
in and under every house in town
and my town was the largest one of all.**

Day 26.

**So if he came here
he'd be everywhere at once.
By my hypothesis
he is. I mean he is.
I mean he's coming now,
I mean he's come.
Look round you, see
his shadow on the wall,
his eyes in your bright mirror.**

4 November 2015

***(Advent this year starts on 29 November and ends on
Christmas Eve, 24 December, so the Calendar has twenty-
six doors, days.)***

***The Calendar was proposed by Billie Chernicoff, who had
me writing it in a dream. I had to do it waking though.***

ADVENIAT

**Beautiful tendrils or
whiplash of the green**

**season rounding to begin—
a church year starts as winter**

**to be ready
rain snow harbingers of light**

**when it comes he comes
when he comes we all are here.**

5 November 2015

=====

**Touching in the night
who knew?**

**Soft upstairs
your blue shoes
left in the dining room**

**always another
miracle ready**

so lock the door.

5 November 2015

=====

**Quick, turn
into one another
before the wind comes back—**

**butterflies and autumn leaves
what sense does weather make
or am I not even listening?**

5 November 2015

TO A DREAMER

Just because you had a dream
doesn't mean the circus is
coming to town, those tigers
step with no cages, elephants
carry pink dancers on their backs,
but they're not on the way to you,
your dream makes up for a lot,
your sleep in full of reconstruction,
political renewal, promises you swear
to our infant republic. We never learn.
We believe you every time. You
stumble into the breakfast room
claiming you had a dream. Bullshit.
Nobody has a dream, a dream
is wet weather that spreads through
the whole town, like a parade,
or the circus wagons and cages
trundling from the depot
to the bleak arena where we wait.
The same dream comes to everybody
in the city, all at once, to anybody
who dares to fall asleep. We remember
the same thing differently, use
our own images and mistakes.
That's what makes us us. Tell me

**your dream and I'll claim it
as my own. I'll tell you what it means.
You'll be astonished at my sagesse
but also feel I've got it all wrong.
And you'll be right. Nobody
knows anything about your dream
much less about their own.
Tigerless, dancerless, the rain
just comes down and down.
You wake up again and again
like a tenor's saddest aria
just before the end. But it all
goes on, the dream you guess,
the interpretation I drone on
till even the tigers are asleep.
We've eaten enough, they think,
the elephants are tired of
standing for so many things,
so exhausting it is to be a symbol.
And I was born into the alphabet,
I know what it means to means
and believe me it's not just fun.**

5 November 2015

=====

**Yet again the margins
of the sky coincide
with the words in your mouth**

**stored there a few seconds
to taste their power
before saying them out.**

Mighty is the breath!

**A note from Summer '15
(5 November 2015)**

TO BE OUTSIDE !

1.

**To be outside
on a day
we'll call it a wolf
in the middle distance,
a why-not
loping over the hill
and fauns in bare trees**

**And you were dryad once
they brought the school kids out to see
life beyond soccer and poetry
but never beyond geometry,
your shadow on bare birches.**

2.

**Of course this is a hymn,
what else has real words in it.**

**A hymn not a him
a him is just a her
can't make up their mind,
mmmm and er and out comes him.**

**By now the hil is empty—
no wolf and no her.
The terrible cost of explaining.**

3.

Of course I'll solve the problems
of the world but at what price?
Don't be clever, I hate it when you're clever
she tells me and she's right—
we both were sparrows once
and throve by multiplicity, humility and speed,
three things every poet needs.

4.

Give me a light
when you're done with the dark.
How much dreaming
can a body stand?

5.

Slow beginning, sorry,
it's only time.
Whiffletree of the celestial
chariot. Murk over
brightness — the dark
comes to help us
perceive through the intolerable light
what we take to be the source,
the second that came first
the Muse inside the knee
bends to adore.

6 November 2015

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**Go all that way
just to touch skin?
Am I a pilgrim
after all, not a cheap
thief of perceptions,
affections? Every
going is a return.
I could spend the day
counting the leaves
but night would come
before I'm done.**

6 November 2015

=====

**Wittgenstein lies
in holy ground,
Anglican churchyard
not far from town.
Final certainty—
talk your way home,
heaven will happen
when you've finished
te conversation,
every word
a step closer to.**

6 November 2015

ACTAEON

**I am no hunter.
I was just a man
walking alone through
woods when I saw her,**

**I stood there, gazing
like a kid at her beauty,
intensity of her being
and being there for me
to see, and her fortitude,
the day was and cold
but she was naked,
cold water all over her,
when she'd stoop down
feeling along the bottom
for things, bringing
stones up, crystals they were
her fingers knew how to find
and each crystal she'd
examine then toss on the bank
where they lay hidden in grass.**

**A long time I watched her
bending and finding and standing**

tall again, leaf shadows all round her—
she must have known I was there,
I didn't hide, I stood erect
almost worshipping what I saw.
And then she looked me in the eye
and smiled, looked away
and whistled into the trees till
down the hill came bounding
two black wolves — not dogs,
the story got that wrong too,
they were wolves, not dogs,
wolves with yellow eyes and thick
meaty tails, what would she
need dogs for, wolves they were
and came at me and tore me,
dragged me down and bit, tore
their way into me and then were
gone. No wolves out there.
They were both in me now
and always are, raging with lust
and yearning and always
something more than I can say.

Now I live where you find me,
by the stream where all this fell,
and I spend my days searching,
researching, those crystals
she let fall. And when I find one

**I use it to cure cripples, lepers,
sick children and sad teens
who come to me. Can't cure myself.
I am a prisoner of what I've seen,
I lie here on the riverbank
remembering how that day
the water gleamed down her thighs.
I am a broken man but I heal the sick.**

6 November 2015

=====

for Alana

You ask if it's vav or yod –

what I have to remember is:
a vav is a yod with a handle

so vav can stick itself in between clauses
(vav consecutivum) as linkage
and then be withdrawn, pulled out by its handle
to couple some new notions together –

a yod always moves, and a vav is a way to move it, yes?

Look at he: 

what we see is a little yod trapped in a box
or cornered in an angle –

yod can escape! Agency set free! It escapes:
by moving out to the left,
the same direction that letters move:
yod frees itself in writing.

The writing woman regains her agency fully.

The yod breaks loose from he.

6 November 2015

=====

**Any gas left in the tank?
The tank is made of gas,
its antlers are broad and sweep
the distances, backyard stuff,
porch steps and equinox,
we have been here almost
long enough to kiss the moon—
it lives right over that tree.**

**This is old music for you. a tune
stays in the head, *ear-worm*
the Germans call it, a harsh
penance for a pretty sound.
Mahler. *And ever ever shimmer
the blue distances* you think.
You have to think something
when the music is like that.**

**Tell me again about the hills
outside the city, the apes
grey and languid squatting
here and there around the temple,
after a few centuries everything
becomes the color of stone.
Human hair is on the way there**

of course. I comply with matter.

**But is matter or meter my mother?
So hard to know if the form finds
the things of this world (Augustine)
or things find their form. That's me
thinking out loud. Soft. You never
hear what I say the first time so.
What is a child to do at the knee
of the frigid librarian? Hay azucar?**

**The jungle is closed for the night,
we don't have anything, sugar, tigers,
honey, shoelaces, Upanishads,
Sabbath candles, nothing that we need.
The meaning is closed for the night,
moneys howl in American forests,
apes in Asia. That much we know,
kids disobey nuns only with terror.**

**But they disobey. They skip class
and go swining in the woods for acorns,
bitter are they but they're free, bitter,
but you can climb their tree, yes, you
even, reluctant as you are to acknowledge
the serene immaturity of your character,
go on, shinny up and oak and see
what the world looks like from ten feet up,**

anything anove your natural vantage.

**Give me a ladder and I'll join you, here's
a thermos of coffee, from the Greek for hot
but I keep it cold, cold inside, black coffee,
meant to chill, cryo-thrill the heart, our meat
is warm enough, now here's some otherness—
I quite understand if it's not to your taste,
I don't like religion either and yet of all
places I being inside quiet churches best.**

6 November 2015

D I S M A S,
or, The Good Thief :
an opera

Luke XXIII:43

Overture:

**Warblers left early
warmish though
soonish goodbye,
what's on your mind
the Good Thief
or thieves' oil
to keep you safe
when you penetrate
the tomb. Here,
other way round
the healing blend,
death comes out
singing.**

Act One:

**Dismas, his name
Greek slang for cut loose?
In the dream the telegrapher
knew to put the full stop
outside the single-quote
in America where we
use singles ostensibly**

**scare-quotes though our
fingers make double.
No wonder telegraphy died.
Or was he a typesetter
smiling, overcoat,
standing on a corner
from another language
watching pigeons on the grass?
Sounds more and more like me.**

Act Two:

**What kind of opera is this?
What kind of music
when a dying
man on a crucifix is
promised paradise
this very day by Another
in like case? The plot
is hidden in the name.
What did he steal
to make him a Thief?
What did he give
to make him Good?**

Act Three:

**Apollinaire thought this thief
Was God the Father come**

**down to earth to know
the world His Son had come
to save. Both of them
victims of experience.
But what do poets know.**

Act Four:

**Sopranos sadly lacking in his story,
though the Man beside him had
three women to sing Him to sleep
(soprano, mezzo, contralto)
and one young tenor We hear
their warbling still, it moves us
though no word of their music
survives. Dismas though enjoyed
all the singing nearby, especially
when John got his Mary and Mary
got her John and the quartet ended
and there was thunder suddenly
as if it were the last notes of the music
and some lightning and rain,
he always loved rain. So he thought
he might be already in Paradise
girlish overtones welcoming him in.**

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7 November 2015

== == ==

**I stood at the rain station
waiting for the rain.
I wanted the skin of things
to glisten wet and show
the colors that only
colorless water makes
things go. Rain,
rain, come and stay,
let me wash my
sins in thee, rain
you are my silver ladder
I climb in love
with the ocean up there
you must come from.**

7 November 2015

PROMISE

**There will be more of me than this
when the fruit tree flowers, long before
the first meek apples manifest.
Stop eating! Live on pure knowing!**

7 November 2015

=====

**When you have seen enough
of the Mysteries of Being
you will begin to be.**

7.XI.15

== == == ==

**How many cubits in a verst?
How many gallons in an acre?
The back of our marbled
school notebooks never say.
We never know the real stuff,
content us with the obvious
if that. Day by day we
count the wrong things, use
the wrong numbers.**

**But the alphabet is still true,
alive, gloriously approximate,
like lovely unschooled children
eagerly leading us along the way.**

7 November 2015

NUMBER THEORY

**See that cute digit
standing over there?
Admire its grace, turn,
curve inward, angle
out. Love it, think it
but don't you dare
count with it. A number
is too beautiful for counting.**

7 November 2015

EVERYTHING FORGETS

Everything forgets
it is a long
narrow scape
of a word
or will
tall as Neruda's
transplanted cactus
maybe, maybe
not quite as slim
syllable by syllable
it pours
upward
into the dark
inside us
where Beings
wait, neu-
rons, winged
greedy synaptic
Circes lurk
unhaving
unhanding us
our haunts
habits stored.
We are store,

hayoth

alaya
warehouse
on the moon
too in us
a mighty tower
made of pure
shadow
we climb—
they lift us
over each
crevasse until
the gone
is come again,
the haunt
happens
so we become
habit again,
animals made
90% of what
no longer is.
Things
forget
themselves
in us.
I used
to be actual
to be a cloud

*now I am
a line in the sand
how could the sea
do this to me
left above tide
any kid
can kick me
asunder
till a storm
releases
the shape of me
into everything else?*
**We are like that
we are happened
still by all
that ever happened,
why call it things
when it's all
just me,
why call it
forgetting
when it's all
getting
and being held,
haunted,
hoarded
by happenstance,**

docile prisoners
of *pastness*
to use a word
a man once used
I can't forget.
Aftermath
as interlude
the game
invariably
plays us again,
the crowd
between our ears
cheers
that's the last
rhyme we'll
ever hear,
grief and getting
lust and loss
all packed snug
in the forgetter,
slim line
memory meaning
stick stuck
all the way down,
scant
avocado seedling
from its black pot

dwindling up
o such a thing
to carry
not even a book
skinny tendrils
of nothing much
yet they persist
insist, o for a
god of real
forgetting, forget
it's me
that carries
all these years
forward into the blank
pale space
where nothing
waits for all
the somethings
you really
can't dislodge—
o let me forget
and them remember.

8 November 2015

=====

**Exorbitant creatures of fire and musk
agitate the gloaming — light dwindles the day
soft as sulfur they understand me, sift
around me, scatter the shape of me, outline
sand on the ground. I was your chemical
not so long ago, my arms around you maybe
any music with no words in it. Words alone
are more music than. Refined me, you did,
me patient in my transmutation, new-winged
by neurons I fled the brisk address of now
preferring the noise of then. I chose to choose
and that was the fin of us, balance, changing course.
End of us and I don't even know who you are.**

8 November 2015

THE INCLUSION

Catch the chance of knowing true
while the blue still pools in the sky
and the shrike is busy on barbed wire
nailing the dream to the day. It was all
the poets starting with the letter O
I praised in dream, chose them at random
from all the alphabet to express how all
poets everywhere and every time
are good and worthwhile and doing
the gods' work among us, *hé tou Dios*
boulé, you know? even the bad ones,
the magazine stars, the backyard bards,
all of them are needed to get the thing right,
get it finally said, you know? So many
names I pronounced in that dream,
yes, I welcomed everybody into the druidry,
we need every letter, every fighting word.

8 November 2015

FIGURE

He was obvious
like a lone sparrow
in a spill of water
on your own walk,

one, just one,
most potent, most
lucid of all numbers,
nothing to doubt,

no need to count.
But who was he
and can we tell
can we even know

without counting
something no
number can reckon
not even one?

Something in him
or something he is
or something in me
he makes me think

but what could that
be, the sparrow
I can almost grasp
the motive of

food, water, preen,
one's own reflection
seen — but he, him
just standing there

motionless, arms
at rest at his side,
alone, on my lawn
in ordinary moonlight.

8 November 2015

=====

**I love opera the way I love
clouds. They cover terror
with beauty, they have form,
sinuous repetitions, edges
in them where something
shows through, something
that is not music, not weather,
keeps me busy year after year
almost worshipping what
they make me see, make me hear.
Scratch the almost. Make me believe.**

8 November 2015

GUITAR

With nose to noise hole
you smell shellac.
Look in. See dust
and a paper label
if you're lucky
in a foreign language.
Somebody's name.
Somebody is always
doing something.
Now remove the tinny
strings neatly, somebody
(you know him) will
maybe want them again
but you remember
those great lines of Lorca
how David *con unas tijeras*
cortó las cuerdas de su
arpa if I remember right.
Now you can fill the hole
unimpeded with flowers
for instance, stuff the stems
thickly down inside
so the gorgeous colors
of the flower heads spread t
over the broad paddle of
this famous instrument.
Now you can carry flowers

**everywhere, show them,
bestow them on the lovely
or the loathly, a flower
makes everybody better
a little, especially these flowers
steeped in absent sound
and carried around town
by a man, you, with tears
maybe in his eyes, wanting
to give everybody something
even more than music can.**

8 November 2015

CENA

after GB and for TP

The giving is enough.
Efkharisto still greeting is,
eucharist, the greeting
in the eating of.

 Welcome,
Sir, be at home in me.

To take anything
into the mouth—
as a little child does it
so easily, smiling
to know the new thing
by this sense too,
the taste of true,

to enhance its sensuous knowing
of this and thus the world
to comes from, is part of,
to take the world
into your soft mouth,

the world and everyone in it.
Speaking is the opposite of eating—

to eat without speaking
is selfish, boorish, monkish, mean.
But to speak without eating
that is my shadowy empty cathedral,

so listen to my fasting words
I did not know I would be speaking
until I heard my voice,
Listen to the Lady I cried
listen hard and listen soft
until you hear her !

Who is this lady, they demanded,
but I had the good sense to shut up,
knowing they would find out
soon enough all by themselves
when they came some cold morning
to rake the ashes from the fireplace
or stare out at the quivering sea.

She leaves her traces everywhere,
alphabets galore

Kabbala is a door,
a tall woman marks the height of it,
a gravid milch-cow its breadth —

and that Lady is your breath,
the first word out of your mouth in the morning
is her letting you speak,

telling the baby inside each of us There,
there, it's all right for you to speak,
no one is really listening,
but I hear, I hear myself think in you,
so speak, join
in the conversation and be food
for all the rest,

we sat beneath the cottonwood in August
listening to the master talk,
half in words and more than half
in silences, you don't
have to go to school to be in school
every moment of your life,
the tree, the tree, his words,
you don't have to listen to hear.

By now, me being me, I've forgotten
the words, but someone in the crowd
had brought a little monkey, gave it
to the teacher, who for the rest
of that conference held the animal
gently and played with it, late
sun deepening the red glow of its fur.
Though I am changed in every way
the color is all I that remember.

9 November 2015

THE VENTURE

1.

It used to be a bus
but now it's pure going..
Or it was a subway car
crowded with unconscious dancers
swaying to the jolting.
But going was going.

2.

Remember?
We were moved
with moving,
we went without going.
How strange to be
carried though,
womb of the bus.
A Latin word that
once meant all of us.

3.

When I was a child
I rode buckboard
above the whiffletree
on a farmer's wagon

marveling at vocabulary.
Cauliflower, horse's crupper,
cow manure, fertilizer.
I remember the smell of the words
but can't recall the farmer
huge beside me,
or the color of the horse
itself by now just
a huge generalization
from the jolt of wagon,
of movement,
summer day, smell of manure.

4.
Everything takes too long
and here we are,
sanctimonious culprits
fleeing the pyre.
The Inquisition
is after us, is in us,
its words don't let us rest,
every place that Field of Flowers
where some Bruno
is on fire
to satisfy the state.

5.

**“My vocabulary
did this to me,”
the dying poet raving
told his dear friend
they were in an elevator
that only went up.
The world is missing now,
Jack, food tastes of gasoline,
wine cracks like a hen’s egg
and nothing tumbles out.**

JS
RB

6.

**No basilisks. No whiffletrees.
yet the Mercy comes—
we forget what words mean
so get to make them up,
learn them all over again.**

10 November 2015

=====

**We've never had a nice fight—
not a knife fight, they're not nice—
but a sweet fight with shouts and tears
and slamming doors and lathered with remorse,
walking alone, crying in the car,
smudged eyeliner, rapt apologies.
Are we even friends before we do?**

10 November 2015

=====

[answering Ashley's Grimm tale poem]

**Will you come to me
now at last
for the first time
again**

**you killed
all the animals
in me
lust and yearning
ownership and trust
pride hunger simplicity
and from their skins
i stitched a coat
for you
all fur and memory
thick warm around
the bare shoulders
of your impossible
desire you never
acknowledged
never even knew**

**years now
you have lived**

**in my kingdom
but only in the wood
in the wilds
sometimes I caught
your laugh or sneer
or once a smile
through trees
so are you done now
with your strangeness
do you know me now
for the one you wanted
all the while or
was it only my wanting
thick and hot
sticky with the blood
of what you
made me
let you kill?**

10 November 2015

=====

**What army are we
part of now,
the gloom of giving
or blood of taking
breaking over the hill
like a demented Sun
we sin down through
the mortal trees
invading, always in.
The rain tries to wash
our crimes away,
the night air glistens
with its keen
forgiveness, color
of water color of time.
Maybe our confusion
is our only virtue.
We know not
what we do — the man
prays we'll be forgiven.
And still never know.**

10 November 2015

=====

**I don't have superstitions
I have stitions.
Basic policies, feet
moving under water
like the duck, hands
in my pockets,
rings on my fingers,
big enough vocabulary
to seem like a fraud.**

**They serve me,
my stitions,
like ghosts with nimble
fingers, black
cats who speak Latin,
indexes to unwritten
books (God bless
Paul Violi), brass
chariot axles
on my kayak,
the clouds full of naked
people, you've all
seen stuff like this**

but never noticed.
I noticed. It helps me.
It walks me to school
this knowledge does,
crosses me at the corner,
makes sure milk isn't sour,
sends the lawyers on vacation,
teaches me the alphabet
forward and backwards,
this yew tree bower my Elysium
(God bless Samuel Coleridge),
live me on the fare side of belief,
miracle me every day everywhere,
the parade goes by
with donkeys braying,
horses are too haughty,
I am a humble egotist,
I believe nothing
so everything is true,
I'd go with you to the movies
but I can't sit still.

11 November 2015

=====

**Go to confession every day
to discover which deeds
you've done are sins
and which are virtues.
No way to tell them apart
by the feel of your skin,
your hands, the weird
taste that thoughts leave
way at the back of the mouth.**

11 November 2015

=====

**Have you ever noticed
that everything is always
somewhere else? So feet
are as much a part of
human culture as hands.
Go, fetch the brush, pencil,
burin, chisel, the bassoon.
Nothing is near but
everything is here.**

11 November 2015

=====

**All that music we listened to
(Rossini's *Moses*, Janacek's
House of the Dead) hour
after hour, over and over,
has vanished without trace.
Or maybe we are the traces.**

11 November 2016

JAZZ

**Let this be the long seeking
without a word
west of simplicity**

**to run the Nile
back to its blue source
recovering all it lost**

**all bone of stone
(slung together, these
two make Music)**

**shaking the number tree
till such fruit fall
to the mercy of our greed**

**and we do eat
the other side of Africa
the bight the bearing**

**where the crime began
we sting from still—
and all they did is sing.**

**What did the Bible have
to do with the slave trade—
we need to know**

**before the next church
lifts its roof against
the natural moonlight**

and the cold man grieves.

.....

11 November 2015

=====

Or to be the last comrade
in the wishing-well, the blue
boar on the cream of the hill,
who? An inn, yes, the other
one, Castle Malahide
where the papers are hid,
hale though and to come.

Horripilated schoolteachers
alarmed at shout,
every word is an aggression,

no? I have been
a master so long
I'd be a mouse
or muse at others be
as they long at me
in vein and sinew
sang me to sing,
as the old rhyme lies,
half-life of truth

depends on the language
(parole vivante, tu sais,
not my white blackboard)

memory changes!
the whistle blows!
the game begins
that never ended,
I spun a cycle
to the birdish air
in hope of answer
(*anser*, 'a goose',
see Egypt)

but the matches
were soggy so
wouldn't catch so
you heated them
(from what fire?)
and they burst into flame
(*flamen*, ritual priest
of Archaic Rome, compare
the cognate *brahmin*),
what good is that,
a little book of fire, on fire
in your hand
(sounds like a priest
already, lend me
your religion till suppertime,
that crazy thing that cultures do)

when all the waltz is
only about her,
the necessary, the one
whose bare shoulder
you mistake for the sun,
yes, that one, the one.

I have trouble enough
keeping up with her guises,
she revises the nomenclature
daily.

(Daly,
a city south of San Francisco
once famous for being ordinary,
compare a coral reef
watched by a young fellow
brushing his teeth with
one of those new-age
neo-primitive, chewed-twig
brush sticks, ouch, I think)

because I am like you
I am, like you, afraid
of all this history we've been having,
hand over heart I swear.

Of all that modernist blaze

the valid vital embers.
time leaves us also amber
(German *bernstein*, compare
Charles B., American poet
on Chinese riverboat,
no need of lute
for that lyric,
we are everywhere).

Amber collar round my throat
(*torc*, Celtic neck-brace made of gold)
so that the deep destiny of old things
(amber) comes to light as speech
(through the curtain sure but surely)
right now while I am trying
not to write down
sloshing motions in my shallow heart

that hinge on the door
(cardinal birds and cardiology)
between spirit-world and matter-world
is us, only us,
the heart runs it. Is it.

Yes. Because I have one too
(compare Mahler, new girl in town,
nights in Bethpage, Alley Pond Park,

rowboat, youth's magic horn, sugar
made from wood.)

Can I (No)

come home now? (No)
Mahler's *blue distances*
have eaten me alive,
music catches up with me,
once I was a sparrow
(*passer*, compare Catullus,
his girlfriend's pet

or differently akin
how a stupid Irish lout
could pass for —
approximate — Anglican)

and pranced on her fingertips
as a cardinal (see above)
or wren at her window
(is she home yet?)
clamored to be fed
or am an old reddish ruin
in my robes nodding by the altar,
still breathing, still
now and roused

to some hot gospelling,
seed I am of her long grace.

O amiable silence
of Her rainy day
(caltrop, danger,
every which
way is up)
you can't lose with a sky like this,
stars bubbling in the telescope

most of us delight in being wet
hence piscine, shower, bagnio
(there's a sly *entendre* there)
and fish tanks for when we are fish—
it could happen,
my mother was a seal—

trucks chirp when they back up
what do people do?
Should I retract
my whole song
only to sing it yet again?
Here goes.

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12 November 2015

=====

**Last me a month
my Lady
while the rain makes
silvery and blue—**

**you are the sibling
`hides behind the sun
too white to see
so we say you dark.**

**The rain gives you away
though, the seen world
is just the gleam
of your hidden smile.**

12 November 2015

NATURA BIFIDA

1.
Starting from the new agenda
a spiritual animal wakes
walks up to you and murmurs
I am you now

what shall we do together
how shall we play
this rainy day?

2.
And as the book said
it was not raining
so there is some dissonance here
between
the bodies that are you.

Pesky. Worrisome. Small.
We'll get past it
into the tropic isles of what we mean,
both on us,
the liberal and the labor,
the lights of can.

3.

**A field of sugar cane
with a zombie walking in it—
that's as close to the beginning
as we can get.**

**We live in fear. We learn to lie.
We learn to fly.**

12 November 2015

=====

Rapture of number conversely accumulating

Wind moves the clouds
shapes the permanent
museum of change

adolescent seeing
bodies in search
of definition

because we can't
walk in those corridors
I will never
abandon the propositional,

number theory
girl at the gate,
we don't have to remember

we are there
in principle
already

in principio

a well
in the desert
of non-being,

thunderweather
they used to say
not today, my liege,
Dardanelles for you
my lady awkward pause,

movie flashing
over dark water
till I understand—

once you've been to the movies
even one time, one narration,
you are stuck forever in cinema
seeing how things turn out,

see one film
and all the world
ever after's caught
in narrative,
your own,

poor Croesus in his money mill

made of his meat,

**or me trying to answer everything
out loud, words all,
this long libretto of a working life,**

**everyone. Everyone.
I thought I was alone
but I was you.**

13 November 2015

=====

**There must be some
tribe in the world
where New Year
starts today,**

**it's so blue and pale outside
bare trees washed clean
and not too cold. Sunrise
a certainty. I'm describing**

**again this first time again
hoping for the wind to come
and name the island where it all
begins again today**

**off in the Newish Archipelago
where they sing with whales at the shore
or in that *desart* old Europe had,
all dense woodland and wild things**

**never a vista unless you look up
and there the sky is!
Everybody's house and even you
will never be alone anymore.**

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13 November 2015

== == == == ==

**Blue tricksters
birds in flight,
like Mallarmé I saw
the shadows they became
come closer to me
as they danced and made
what only we call love,
oh the sex acts of shadows,
the terrible precisions.**

**13 November 2015
(*dreamt matter*)**

= = = = =

**Quiet, quiet
with a dignity
only dead
languages wield,**

**a Sumerian hush
neither gross nor gossamer
shadow itselfing itself
inside another**

**until all edges lost
like the vowels
the old pharaohs spoke
in their hard words.**

13 November 2015

REPORT TO THE ANALYST

1.

**It was terrible
just an instant
someone else's
hand took mine
brief journey
crash landing
never fly again.**

2.

**But nothing changes.
The porpoise goes
on playing with waves,
crows perch on my
roof when I'm lucky.**

**Everything under control
like an avalanche
or a man falling down the stairs.**

13 November 015

=====

**There's so much to analyze,
web cores and semaphores
from an old-time war,**

**hedgehogs too, the kind you see
on English lanes or deep
in the French Alps, but now**

**think of something else, all
this old or absent material
confuses time and space**

**before you know it the silver-
hipped rain goddess decide
to make our pathway blaze—**

**ejected from my domicile,
,my desk, my nest, my lair!
off to teach the Bible to**

sweetest atheist believers.

13 November 2015

= = = = =

**The human soul is on the prowl
for all it can next lay hands on—
which is why wise men fear the soul,
know there's no pain like connection
except broken links, quick goodbyes;
we all go home to private grief
while soul is sighing with relief.**

13 November 2015

=====

All I would need now
is another animal
to be me.

 I want to go
into the trees
between my house
and the stream
to let one find me.

I will feed it language
and human fear,
gender-free like
fresh clean-sawn wood.

It will speak for me
gently at first,
 later
full-throated,
 and say
clearly what I mean

so I can rest in the after-silence
in the having-said
the word I didn't know
pronounced clearly
in its melodious cry,
keen, contralto, true.

14 November 2015

SCHOLARS

for I.D.

**Sometimes you have to
look things up in books.
Sometimes they do
the same to you.
A book needs me so
both of us can know
what it's trying to say.**

**Later I'll learn Akkadian
like Ian, but read it now
from cracks in sidewalks
or gashes in dead leaves
where insects bored and birds
plucked with sharp beaks,**

**even those bright wormholes
in the night sky the rabbis
used to read like ABC.**

14 November 2015

IN LOWER SAXONY

**One night on the banks of the Hase
a woman said something as we passed
I didn't understand her German,
,whether she offered or requested.
So I muttered something in response
and kept going, terror in my chest,
with shame in my veins for not meeting.
Somehow I'm still on that midnight quay—
how dark what we know of each other.**

14 November 2015

SALT

in quo salietur?

**Something about salt
and going, knowing
just enough to get moving,
all the -ing words,
all the processes we trust
to convince us of movement,
goal, destination, fruit.
But salt is there already,
it always was. No -ing to it.
It is the mountain
hidden in the sea, the mountain
holding up the sky.**

14 November 2015

= = = = =

**Till the stars come out
and shout their names
and we write them down
together, me consonants,
you the vowels,, breath
makes true what bones
can lie, and we will
believe us endlessly.**

14 November 2015

WITCHES, WITHIN

1.

**Wizard's ecology
churn of the witches
all in satin dancing
unsated inside me**

**as if my body (your body)
could dream out there
in the person world, the Other
Place, our home.**

2.

**I knew their words
'dance', 'sate', 'inside'
but there were no
things there**

**to mark what they meant
Or I meant by saying them.
When I looked again
they were actual**

**like birds floating
fast past windows or
white sedans slow
on their way to church.**

3.

Because we had (they had)
Sundays in that world,
tattered sacraments
that still gave life

and Sabbaths of such qualities
they held the land together
family by family,
the merciful, the compassionate.

4.

But I digress.
The witch
was one of us
for sure,

they all were
beautiful but
none was me.
Then arrival:

the king's herald
cried in a great voice
Say who you be!
and no one was.

**And then we knew
the witch was
always the one
who was silentest.**

**5.
It's a good month for witches
between you and me,
so often their saddles
show no sign of wear,
their clothes are empty
often when you reach
out to hold her in your arms—
you wouldn't dare.**

**6.
But they are dancing.
By word and implication
and rags of remember
they whirl around.
Exciting. Just out of my reach.**

**Or yours,
dear citizens
of the same dream.
You will never
get their measure,
never come to**

**the end of them
or what they mean
by what seems
even now I know
better, seems
some kind of dance.**

**7.
I loved them for their beauty,
you because they could
kill the king or marry him**

**we both love their dance
but hear very different
the music that moves them,**

**you and I, citizen,
we too are equals
in the senses touching—**

**we have swallowed down
the shapes of their dance
and we can never rest.**

15 November 2015

THE GIFT

**Years ago a man
gave me a tiger skin.
It had no head no paws
no fangs no claws
no tail but all the rest
was tiger, heavy. thick.
It smelled of dust
and animal and time,
cruelty too, the killer
killed, some idiot freshman
had it skinned.**

**I touched it, rubbed it,
I spread it on my lap
and it made me think.
I sat on it, lay on it,
made love on it,
got scared of it, hid it
away, took it out,
put it back, finally
left it in the woods.**

**I wish I still had it
to give to you now,
a fierce orange rug,
robe, wrapper,
wizard's apron—
but all I have to offer
is the touch of the tiger
left in my hands
to touch you with
gently, as if by accident,
walking in the trees.**

15 November 2015

WATERFOWL WEEPING UNDER A SLEEPING WILLOW

1.

**But why are the birds sad?
That information had come by itself
as I cranked a child's poem-machine
(bright colors, tin, circus figures and cute
animals carry on all over the sides)
in my dreams, in my head, I mean
I was dreaming this in my dream**

**and the device started to speak
and I wrote down what it said:
a pleasant poem
drifting
down the page—**

**not this, not this one.
Short lines it had
and pale images
clear enough to see
but not overwhelm,
the tide of meaning
ebbing as I wrote
and woke
and now there's only this.**

2.

**Maybe the birds wept
because they knew
they'd have to wake
and fly off to work the sky
the way they do, or cruise
the greedy depths
of fleeing streams
when here they were
at peace all around the tree,
the soft leaves of sleep
sheltered them from
this terrifying space out here
where I am writing
and you read this.**

16 November 2015

== == == ==

Love at children at the dock
the dog the log
a little bit on fire in the stove

but shy me the adult—
we need not love
but knowledge,

the informing agency
that wakes us to *do* love
not crave it, not desire.

2.
For desire is *fiamma*, a flame
towards which destruction runs

but it illuminates this
unmothering earth

with the brilliance of alterity,
the pther is the shadow of God

suddenly suddenly
we could never see without

the little light we bring.

3.

**Have I come far enough
to see beyond the sea
or scry beneath the mountain,**

**am I salt yet
or still a-pilgriming
a stupid bagpipe on my arm**

**trying to make sense
by making sound?**

4.

**Then Moses died
without an explanation
and was buried
or God buried him
near his Pisgah sight—
or not so good
to see so much at once,
the future in the past—**

**and no man knows his grave
but women do
and visit it every day
when they say hello,
saying language to us**

of which his body's made

**because
we are
buried
in each other,
graved,
engraved.**

**5.
"I am the resurrection and the life"
He said, and meant
every one of us to say it too,**

**the prophet comes
to life in you—**

**a city not a book,
a book is the shadow
of what we do
to or for the other**

**eloquent as seagulls
screaming the land awake**

**every prophet says too much
and not enough,
that is the tragedy of faith,
we cling to vague certainties**

lost between lust and a book.

6.

**And here I am among them
watering dead flowers from an empty can.**

**Man, if you write
with your eyes closed
speak with sealed lips
how close to truth
you'd suddenly fall,**

soft lawn of being almost right.

7.

**There is a story
I will not tell
and so there is none**

**silence is someone's fingers
touching you in a sensitive place,**

**silence is where the story ends—
be there already,
safe without beginning.**

8.

The fear is that someone

will remember, will understand.

**Man, words were not given
to you to understand,
but to sing with,
keep your music safe**

**inside them, your
breath pure**

**free of meaning,
that last defilement.**

17 November 2015

=====

**Gods are people too,
but all our silly
ontological chauvinism
pretend only humans are,**

**or count, or need our care.
Gods need us and we need them,
elder brothers, savvy sisters,
people. People People.**

17 November 2015

``

= = = = =

**When you touch bronze
your fingers feel
the fire it comes from**

**that's why people
love to touch each other,
the fire doesn't burn**

**it shapes the space
between them
the shape that finds them**

makes them who they are.

17 November 2015

=====

**Too many thoughts
in one head,
too many thoughts
to call it thinking—**

**I remember nothing
the woman said, she
must have been full
of marvelous presentness,**

**pure awareness
that fely like *again*
then she stumbled and fell.
Without remembering**

there is only good-bye.

18 November 2015

NEWS

**Jazz heals pop shlock.
No more to say than that.**

18.XI.15

THING

**I wanted to be close
when it was far—
things need me
to remember
teir essences,
translate from their spirit-French
into my Thinglish—
the least I can do
is to say all their names.**

18 November 2015

=====

**Irby's birthday, he'd be 79.
Wakaruse marshlands. Maybe.
White road runs right through.
The places articulates us,
all the places. A star
in a bare cottonwood tree. November.**

18 November 2015

TO MOSES

**When you led the lepers out of Egypt
when you healed them in the Red Sea
(deep promises, the water never parted,
you marched them right through
they breathed below the surface
and they were cured), when you freed them
and bound them to a promise,
when you died on Nebo and the Lord
buried you or had you buried,
were you the same man all the time,
were you the same as me?**

2.

**He told you what to tell them
but what did He tell you?
What did you tell me
when I looked across the water
do a land I could not enter,
looked across the valley to Canaan,
Winslow Mountain, Berkshires, New Lebanon,
what did I see?
What did He tell me?**

....

18 November 2015

HARUSPEX

**I inspect
the entrails of the sky:
I watch the sky
I parse it for birds
their songs their silences
their flight their perch,**

**I read clouds,
clouds are what I mostly read,
fog, read it as it gathers,
blankets the valley,
lifts, lingers
over streams,
 beauty too
of the cool unbroken grey
of sky, all one color,
I read that smooth language,
quiet song, I read
dark branches of bare trees
interfering with the sky,
everything wants to write,
everything wants to be read.**

19 November 2015

=====

**I have seen the sun
as a woman,
could it be
the moon is woman too,
and earth and sky,
and there is no man
anywhere but me
and I am the witless
father of all I see?**

19 November 2015

=====

**We'll know enough
when the ship comes in
that never sailed
from a land I don't believe in
though I believe everything.**

**And when it comes
the sailors and their lasses
will stroll about
our dingy streets
in their white and crimson,**

**no sounds will be heard
but all of it will
look just like singing.**

19 November 2015

=====

**Run away, runagates,
run like me,
the morning's sleek with rain
I can barely catch
my breath from watching it.**

**Awake with no necessity,
day off work, trees
doing their duty on all sides—
be free, flee
into this moment
as if there is no other.
There is no other.**

19 November 2015

=====

**No one knows
what who wants sing.**

**Careful how you start
a car too full for going**

**so you come home
carrying a couple of fish—**

**the world gives us things
the light is on, the tower broke**

**but no one knows
words want saying**

**cushions on the daybed
light in the window**

complete now we are.

19 November 2015

=====

**Listen to the moth wings
lift the light
out of the breadbox—**

**things frighten us
sometimes as much
as other people do—**

**lift your lorgnette
see those lovers snuggle
in the nearby loge**

**indifferent to the opera—
and you are too,
moment of silence**

when nobody dies.

19 November 2015

HEIMSKRINGLA

**A little light left
in the rainy sky.
Is it you or I
makes a house work?**

**Your linden essence
warming in water,
loins of the trees
outside in cold rain**

**me fiddling with
trying not to
answer the mail
but using words**

**just the same,
the snug of life
close around us.
A house is doing.**

**We are what it
does. We do
things we think
we mean, every**

**day a new plan,
a new paradise
over the old
brick wall to come.**

**It is up to us
to keep our house
happy, the whole one,
vast circle of home.**

19 November 2015

=====

**People who live by the lake
love by need, legitimacy,
storm clouds and crocodiles,
why did I work so
hard to learn Greek?**

**Always keep answering,
that's all I know,**

**the words allow
and sometimes truth**

**as the tight knot of a rosebud
in some girl's poem
even will open.**

20 November 2015

=====

**Men out of balance
bring the elements with them**

**it's not the asters
that make disaster,
not the stars, not the devil,**

we make the weather.

20 November 2015

=====

**At first light
a car's the same
color as the
road it goes**

**only the little
tail lights show
the human difference.**

20 November 2015

PARENTHETICALS

**(Just keep noticing
things
eventually make sense)**

20 November 2015

=====

**Billie, your bronzes
if I could be pure
enough to look at
things as they are
in me, as you
found all China
Venus-green
inside you.**

20 November 2015

=====

**(Not clear how long
one can go on
saying without song)**

**(Prose, like a calm morning sky
north, over the river.)**

**(These
non-committal
parentheses)**

20 November 2015

=====

**Try to sleep
and leap again
into a more cogent dream,
no lawyers, no boyars, [?]
no unexplained fatalities —
something lucid, please,
like a single image
no one ever said before —**

20 November 2015

=====

I see the stream across the road
quick from Thursday's rain —
in autumn one can see such things —
why do I have the feeling
I'm calming myself down
after some catastrophe
lost in oblivion?

I try to find my way
to this day's gospel,
how can I be Jewish
again under such a sky?
No more identity
than a pebble on the path —
but made of stone,
older than any living thing.

20 November 2015

=====

**Can't get there yet
the top still spinning.
Things to wait for —
pull these curtains down,
the triptych opens!
Now you can see
who you've been
worshipping all this while!
This little altar
with you the only sacrifice.**

20 November 2015

=====

**Gently there — maybe sleep's
cool pillow quiets history.
I found a garnet on the street,
I had come to the right place.**

20 November 2015

TO CHARLOTTE IN NOVEMBER

1.

The thing to say is how love
distinguishes all that can be perceived,
sorts into categories
depending on how close each is
to you, the clinamen, the reason
I'm still here. By this hypothesis
I am the lover and alive
and no more need be said of me
because it all depends on you.
You. Born into clarity,
you mastered serenity.
When I first met you
I could hear the ocean
quietly understanding the ancient
shores of our islands,
I heard the land birds
singing, then the quiet
after they go to sleep,
except the woodcock maybe
hooting in the hedge.
You didn't tell me
all these names at once.

2.

To live with you
is one long permission.
Like a Honolulu afternoon
bright sun, quick lucid shower,
rainbows everywhere, sun again,
sunset, sea. Always the sea.

3.

I watched the day come up
thinking of you.
Now it is here,
now what am I going to do
to analyze the difference
into not too simple
music, not choral,
not song, something
trickier, truer, bowed
on strings, slow fast,
you can see daylight
between each note.
You are the daylight
showing through the music

**I meant, I mean
interwoven in the partita
strands of sense
that sound like light.
My favorite music
is listening to
anything with you.**

**4.
Shall the man not have
the simple instruments or
tools of his trade?
Sunrise catches the first trees
now, you still asleep
so close, so close —
you wake and all's complete.**

20 November 2015

=====

**(Less talk and more
action. In poetry
that means silence
—when, where,
the reader becomes
(what’s just been said)
(what they’ve just heard)**

20 November 2015

=====

**(Opening another door
the blur of light outside
(which is inside another room)
haru, the entrails of the sky —
seeing them half-blinds me,
the blur built into seeing.)**

20 November 2015

=====

**Stepping out onto my own porch
is the strangest dance,**

**how could there be
so many me's**

**and all of them casting
only one shadow**

**among them? No wonder
I don't like sunshine —**

**it reveals the evidence,
denies my multiplicity,**

**all the universe of beings,
just a man is sitting on his porch.**

20 November 2015

=====

**I have no story to tell
so it's hard to find a meter for it —
so the music will have to be intermittent,
like a drunk humming to himself
snatches of triumph and catastrophe
in song, like Baron Ox on Lark Meadow
nursing his bad leg and
fondling a memory or two.**

**No more than this, one taste
after another till the dish is done,
the news is finished comg
when you fold up the paper,
switch channels, go to sleep.
There is a conspiracy, we're all
in on it, to trap us between
the news and our memories,
leaving no room for now,
the wordless, the meaningless,
the actual, the true.**

20 November 2015

NERO

The emperor does not see well

he needs his hands
on what he loves

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

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

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

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

that made far away things
look close, close

and sharp and green

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

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

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

24 January 2013

discovered 20 November 2015

= = = = =

Wondering of course
where it came from
it arrived. *Hier
bin ich!* it exclaimed –
was the language
in its mouth a clue?
What would you
think if it spoke to
you? I took it to be
some kind of sign,
something it had heard
long ago, in another
religion, or in one
more strange bed.

20 November 2015

I= = = = =

**dreamed a process, a practice, called
Let Your Name Be Your Spiritual Guide.
Learning all the names you're given and studying
each — historically, etymologically, biographically,
etc. — and learning, bouncing off said knowledge,
to locate yourself by inference, inspection, triangulation.
positive and negative acceptances**

**A Perez will study every other Perez, Peters, Peterson,
Petrov, Bedrosian etc. and every Peter. He is at the
intersection of them all.)**

21 November 2015

=====

**Fly on window
or bird goes by,
the nearsighted eye
has lots to consider.**

21 November 2015

== == ==

**We get things from each other
we are fond of the dance
I'm dictating this
across the centuries to
John Milton's daughter,
I wonder what she looks like,
I'm not blind yet
but history makes us so,
we'll never know
the real face of Eve or Mary or Miriam
or Pharaoh's daughter or
your mother's real face
an hour before you were born.
Photos and home movies show
a little, but never really know.
Before that, eternal darkness
where so many live,
whose names we know,
who let us talk to them
in dream or waking
just the same.
Sometimes they speak.**

21 November 2015

CHARLOTTE

**Only a little rain
to shine her streets.
She wakes in a pale house
where three roads meet.**

**I think she's happy there,
I'm guessing that because
everyone around her
cheers up when she's nearby—**

**they feel her kindness,
the serenity from which
they, and I, take strength,
and with her quiet energy**

**she never stops, never
gives up. I'm trying
to be objective, this is
a love poem and should be**

**not about me loving
but about the one I love,
I'm trying to pay attention
to her difference, difference**

**is the root of beauty. power.
Attention is praise enough
Dante taught me, save big
words for far-off abstractions**

**they need elaborate praise
to make them seem actual.
But here, among the real,
it's enough to say her name.**

22 November 2015

=====

**Measure
started out to be
something about the moon—**

**but what can he measure,
he's a different size every night
and sometimes AWOL
from our poor sky,**

**but I love him anyhow,
Sir Moon, my friend
in high places,
shows me just enough
to let me walk across the lawn
and get into the trees**

**where neither of us finds our way
and there is no measure,
darkness has no measure,**

**it goes on and in
the way memory does,
no beginning and no end.**

**No wonder I get scared in the woods
and make my way out,
heading towards,
reaching towards,
moonlight.**

22 November 2015

=====

**Not a word.
The swans have sailed
under the bridge,
moon high over the woods.
Leave me alone I almost
wanted to say. But the swans
were gone and the moon
never listens. I think.
But what can a man
know of another man,
let alone the moon?
I have to keep talking,
it's the least I can do.**

22 November 2015

=====

**The way we write now
leaves a bird or two in the sky—
shadows move through trees,
shadows without mothers,
no solids to call their own.
Weather is usually blamed
or nymphs at their orisons
praying in dubious formulas
to change the simplest things
into one another, this stone
for example to a glass of milk
I would be afraid to drink.
It's hard to be with people
in this world, but I for one
love to see them doing it,
she said, rising from her divan,
Persian word for a book of poetry..**

23 November 2015

=====

Alternatively the fish could be fried though I always opt for chowder when I can. But who was speaking? Who dared to have opinions about living things and how to eat them after? I speak from habit he said, which is all language ever is anyhow. The same voice, the chowder guy. But why was I listening? Why did I too have views on these or any other matters? Time to go *sannyasin* or whatever it's called, wander off and loaf under a tree and just stop thinking. And I heard a voice say with a snicker: You call this thinking?

23 November 2015

HAMATARAXIS

what is that?

**Like hamartia, missing the mark,
sin?**

What mark?

**Heaven's goalkeeper
sleeps at the net,
I sneak in and listen to the world.**

**Fish talk: sink for safety.
Man talk: there is none.**

**My eyes water in sunlight
why do they grieve?**

**ust because a word comes to mind
doesn't mean the mind is working.**

**He probably should be a pagan king.
And so should I.**

23 November 2015

A VISITATION

But at the end we had to name the colors
all right, this smells like blue,
feels like Aunt Matilda's horsehair loveseat,
Uncle Walter's morris chair.

Everything has gone and gotten old
but color's just the same. Red, yellow,
ever young. Turquoise
pretty as Tibet. The mountains stand

though you would have them run
he said to me, rebuking my quest
for imaginal alterations in
this bleak anthroposphere,

you can't even pronounce it he said
go back to your furniture
your dreams of color, leave
the geology alone, the Alps

are God's dream of what we could become
if only we stood in one place and
really thought hard, hard as stone,
high as Matterhorn — an exceptionally

**well-chosen name don't you think?
I didn't answer, being shy of angels,
that is, anybody who suddenly says
anything to me. Language comes**

Only from heaven so he must too. Amen.

23 November 2015

THE PHOTO

Black and white
but picture it blue.
Blue again.
spirituals sung
spry white voices
imitating South.
Merge our winnings
and buy a house.
This is how cities
get rid of manure—
import your food
from other countries
other people there
need to live too.
France. The countryside.
People at table
not eating. Why be there
foodless and long ago?
Blue again. Mojave.
jota, dance
your way there
in nd around
the venomous rituals,
you can't eat money.

More from Calabria
than Abruzz', a few
from Naples. Skin
remembers sunshine,
everything taste good.
Mangia e beber
domani is never!
Even a wall knows that,
Erculaneo, dinners
last a long time
songbirds thousands
of years swallows
over nobody's head
to be clear. Bellini
had blue eyes, that's
what I'm getting at here,
blue-eyed bel canto,
that's the real music,
nights of high tension,
tessitura, bone break,
naval battles, red tile
roofs, knights of Rhodes.
Proust looks up half-
alarmed from the table
al fresco. Who *are*
these women, and why?
I tried to love everybody

somebody has to do it,
what religion am I anyhow
to begin with? Or now sweep
all that dust under the carpet,
the saint's shrine moved
to the south of the country!
the holy house flew
through the air, always
heading west, to meet us
here on the banks of
the Ocean River, merciful
full of need. Need
takes the form of fish
myriad, *ikhtuoessan*
in the poem, back then,
remember, Istanbul
always across the water
from itself, memory
shot, fell in the snow
with Lenski, the duel
between memory
and mindfulness is fatal,
stand up, signore,
you're not dead yet,
only sounded to the deep
part of your tessitura
where groans lie

beside you in the desert
whimpering in Latin,
Proust's funeral Mass,
supposed to attend, I have
the invitation somewhere,
poor Proust, the best.
I'll always remember him
looking up from the table,
summer day, too many women
to account for, looks at me
as if I were a camera
that one-eyed policeman
on the track of all of us.,
I want to reassure him,
Debussy is fiddling with
something cell phone,
string of *quipu*, tone row,
knitting needles,
we're all together at last
in sun and leaf shade,
each of us impossible,
hard to pronounce, nobody
knows my real name,
Huxley died the same day
as C.S. Lewis as J.F.K.
I mourn the posthumous
unclarities of the calendar,

**death should mean something
if it has to keep coming
and disturbing the table
setting, and always
one more novel begun
but I never finished
books weigh so heavy
in the midnight hand, but dance
of candlelight on the ceiling
so compelling, read me,
darling, read me instead.**

23 November 2015

MANTEGNA'S SAINT SEBASTIAN

for Frederick Hammond

**They came from all directions,
arrows,**

**what
kind of archers could they have been,**

**he is pierced everywhere
from every angle**

**or did he writhe and twist
bound loose to his martyr's stake
as the arrows came?**

**Crooked are the trajectories
of desire,
 eyes of the painter,**

**every part of the body
ready for what comes,**

**Love's famous insolent shafts
strike in from every side.**

**He looks up to heaven
but he can't hide from love—**

**his whole body is its fetish,
marksman's goal,**

**his flesh
replenished by its wounds.**

24 November 2015

TINNITUS

for Gracie Leavitt

**Casting or entering
do not interfere with a stone
she said, using different words
and meaning something else,
don't break into a rock,
its long concentration on itself
I heard, manikin? Manitou?
We stand diminished before
Divinity whoever she is,
a worthless pilot, a groom
without a dominie, my hood
slipped over my eyes, all
I could see was with deaf ears,
rise up and smite secrecy, lay
yourself open or was it upon
the altar also is an animal,
whenever you can't make out
the words it is the god that's
speaking, the only way they ever
do to humankind, through
women's clear voices and men's**

**feeble hearing, buzz buzz,
cicada tinnitus, too
many drumbeats, tuba bucina,
*war quieted my ears, my blood
is deaf now, the food I eat
barely can pronounce my name
and yet I am, hopelessly accurate.***

**But suppose it kept going on,
hearing things she didn't say,
hearing words that no one said,
would that be madness, lunacy,
e-mails from the Moon ,or just
the same old Homer-Bashō route,
the insolence of human poetry
against the gods! Hence babble.
This is the tower some men
bilt in Shinar once, I'm tracing
its shadow as it rises, it never
falls, always another word
gets piled on word until the cloud
crackles into sentences and we
hear. Or you do. I hear noises
and make up some words to fit
more or less the thunder's meter,
the girl's enthusiasm, chirp
of hungry birds in hedges,**

whose? clustering round my house.
They move, you know, the way
the seasons do, verb to noun, noun
to adjective until we think
something has been said. That's
how all this started, Ophelia
fell into her fish-bowl, nibbled
kisses with *Betta splendens*
remember her, old Wing & Fin
on 23rd St. specialized in them
where I bought two white rats,
wait, that's just the truth, two
rats in a clean cage, just like
a daguerreotype, you try hard
to believe it, their little faces,
wait, rescue Ophelia from school,
I'd make a great King Lear
but have a lousy memory for verse
and I'd love all my girls the same.
Every woman is Cordelia in fact
and Shakespeare came to know that
(*A Winter's Tale* for example)
but Ophelia's gone by this time,
out to sea, daisies in her paws,
insanity is too easy, forgive me
for coherence, the mind is always
getting in the way of sense.

24 November 2015

=====

**There are things in sleep
that need me. We talk
loose about dreams
but they are things, beasts,
someones — who come
in the half-light of the mind
to show us, teach us
and like all teachers
make impossible demands
somehow we comply with.**

**Because they need us
to attend, to finish
work they begin in the dark.**

25 November 2015

=====

**She was one of them
the dream people.
An inventor, like Hedy Lamar
or John Hays Hammond,
her inventions filched
by boys and rivals.
She liked my voice
and told me all
as if she fitted in my hand
and I could go all by myself
to the mountain
but she would be there,
people like her
know how to do that.**

25 November 2015

MY OPERA

**One set — rock pile tumbled across the stage—
and one story but told twice—**

**in the first scene from the point of view
of ordinary people:
hectic, hyperchromatic, restless, afraid**

**but in the second scene the king is telling—
think Boris's monologue—**

**this ends with an amazing quietude
higher and softer. achieving pianissimo
in the king's falsetto tender
thoughtfully floating up to D over high C—
Carey sang it and I was very moved.**

**25 November 2015
(as dreamt)**

AGAINST PORTRAITURE

**Don't stare at my hands,
look at what they have made.**

**I was an accident of the process
vague someone between call and response.**

25 November 2015

=====

**Where we were going when we hush
we're here already go to sleep the world
came with us never you fear the owls
yes and the fox behind the summerhouse
his den go feed him those stale cookies
human metabolism is a different angel
sweeps low over grassland and finds us
where we try to wake can't do it go on
sleeping where the dream's sweet lips
whisper into the palms of your hands.**

25 November 2015

PASTORAL

**Pastoral means sheep
and shepherdess between
the fierce intentions
of some earthly swain.
But wasn't some god
implicit in this narrative,
dangerous Apollo maybe
or Dionysus the far-born
come on his tame tiger?**

**We have to make do
without the sheep. As long
as people are around
animals are optional
and gods discretely,
politely hide behind the scenes.
The scene and the unseen,
as every child discovers
sooner or later, somebody
moves all this stuff around,**

**it's not just simple chemistry
you know, machines have
feelings too. Watch out**

**when they begin to speak,
long snaky poetry of things
our never-ending epic and
we are caught in its coils,
its modest determination
just to go on and on. *toujours*
means all day every day
until the sun runs out of charm,
glamor, gold and beauty
the scholar's name for hydrogen.**

25 November 2015

=====

**Watching the sun drift by
one year after another
I'm forgetting my Etruscan,
I've lost my taste for wine
and yet**

25 November 2015

=====

**Too many dreams
and my dreams do not know me**

**there is a little lizard
quick in the house of the mind**

**tropics of dream—
desire is a steamship
far out on the horizon**

**when it comes to port
a part of me is lost
but that's just me
spread my legs like a church
I remember**

**I was a voice behind a lawyer
displaced him,
sent him to a monastery
for his own good**

**What does it matter
it's all just opera anyhow
which opera do you choose to live in?**

25/26 November 2015

= = = = =

**By artifact the truth
siren far off**

**noon somewhere in the night
the forest pauses in its work**

**when things are closer
the dream is more forgiving**

**it's those big spaces
where terror lives**

**Montanas of the mind.
Close my eyes and meddle night.**

25/ 26 November 2015

=====

**To hear music on the other side
when you know sure
the dead are singing to you—**

**I say singing, they would say
reciting clearly lessons they've
half-learned in that other place,
that other kind of light.**

**You are tired of waking from their indiscretions
yet afraid of banishing dreams altogether,
of turning the dream machine off**

but what did the night ever tell you?

26 November 2015

=====

**The smooth skin
from the waist
down along the hip
should be
intelligence enough
for me even
if I'm not Praxiteles.**

26 November 2015

=====

**Cheerleaders
bottom feeders
parade
and from the crest
of time the weary
dancers saw
finally the sea,
thalassa they cried
or some said *thalatta*
or Our Salt-Mother
we are home!**

**It was hours though
before they pranced their way
down through the crowded streets
pushcarts and knife grinders
sausage men and corner preachers
and reached the shore.
Quiet harbor, on the dock
they stand docile as children'
staring down into dark green water
at their reflected moves,
feeble now after so long a dance.**

26 November 2015

= = = = =

**Less Homer more Virgil.
Less plot more sensibility.**

A hero is the villain of history.

**No more war. Only a city.
Beyond the city there is only the sea.**

26 November 2015

=====

**Poets are much like politicians—
they know nothing
but talk authoritatively about everything.**

**Taking one seriously
leads to hell, the other to heaven.**

26 November 2015

=====

Clouds are the mail between continents

—Max Jacob

Today they drift in
fan mail from Canada,
looks easy, friendly,
but I can tell already
some sob story is on its way
and our streets
will be wet with weeping.

27 November 2015

=====

A writer at times feels the weight of the sky

—Max Jacob

But who am I fooling?
We all do.
The longer we live
the more our heads bend down
till we're like the old man
in my childhood who sold
live chickens from his little shop,
bent over from the waist,
a number 7 walking along
hen dangling from each hand.
We all do. Writers
make a fuss about it
(Hymns to the Sun,
Chants to the West Wind, etc.)
but everybody, everybody
is crushed by that
steady unyielding mountain of blue.

27 November 2015

=====

**Today I want to make
someone else's mistakes**

**not my own. To trip
with someone else's feet,**

**topple on someone else's knee
and mispronounce**

**words I've said correctly
too many times already,**

**to wake up on someone
else's pillow! To be wrong!**

27 November 2015

POOR VILLON

**If I rhyme
I'll have no time
for major crime.**

**And it's even worse
to be a mere cutpurse
and write free verse.**

27 November 2015

=====

**The witch I was
woke me in the night.
I lay there counting my ribs
never the same sum twice.
Slept again, in dream
(and only in dream)
all numbers come out right.**

27 November 2015

=====

**There's a wealth of poetry out there,
I don't have to write it all myself.
Yes, I do. It's the elast I can do.**

27.XI.15

THE BLESSING

**A bird lands on my earth
a bird lands on my house—**

**So many this morning,
I trace, the angles of their flight**

**converge near this porch
this mere place**

**they signify.
We all must be home.**

27 November 2015

CAVERN

for Charlotte

**It would have to be about another region
where the blood remains within the white
aggression of the swan and none is shed
by unconscious men on their way to the Grail.**

**Identity is not so far away I think. Or that's
because I never found a different one from
what I do. Says the I. *Function is identity*
enough, and paradise withal, says Dante**

**if I read him right. Leave me out of this,
no swans in sight except on that most calm
and autumn lake beside the bridge to town.
I have a picture of him where I work, she**

**took the picture, gave it to me, mounted
large. And now we're getting to the issue:
no man stands alone, all women do.
Meditation is learning to be a woman**

**that's why we go to caves in mountainsides
to know the silence of the actual life
before the intervening self. I'm guessing
hard and hoping for the best, the serenity

the mind can one day wrestle from the brain.**

28 November 2015

Logoblast

**the budding forth of language
from experience**

the senses voiced

**there are so many seashells
but only one sea**

is that what I'm trying to claim

**everything we see or feel
is part of language lurking?**

28 November 2015

SUBMISSION

**When you kneel down
you come close
to the earth
you're always on**

**but now you know it
you bend to her,
submit to her majestic
gravity, you yield
into her all you are**

**and suddenly
in that yielding
you are complete,
you know who you are
only when you give
yourself away,**

**here, bending low
where your shadow
also is waiting**

to kiss you awake.

28 November 2015

Deeply submitting to the entity behind the self, the mind of you before you are.

=====

Calling again

**if I could catch the word
clarinets tuning**

**wood the wind
nothing is at it seems**

**the builders have abandoned
a crane in the marsh**

**we climbed up along its slope
anf from the top could see the city**

**over the channel the tall grasses
one sluggish barge going by**

**music makes remember
especially the tuning up**

**when everything is
there already but no one speaks**

28 November 2015

THE LOGIC OF THE SITUATION

And wanted to be someone else
but enough to sing for
the way birds do
when they're tired of being themselves
(cardinals attack their own
reflections in the window, hate to be who they are)

and when *Another* comes
that god or girl
who looks enough like them to know
but different enough to be real.
Because I am real only with the other
but too early to sing
so I'll have to find him in me.

29 November 2015

UNEASY ALTERITIES

Quiet eyes
the heater purrs

three-master
breasting through storms
downstairs,
 an opera
in my pants pocket
not too near my heart—

I'm on the other side already!
live on the other side!

Somewhere in Prague
midafternoon kids dance
at a church fête,
decent, polite
almost protestant
but you can never tell
what goes on inside
such human clothes—
the other side is calling,

**erratic, inconstant,
a drunk on a trombone
but still, but still
come dance with me**

**because like Søren
I do not dance
instead I sit on your terrace
and for you, only for you,
number the autumn
leaves that float past.**

29 November 2015

=====

**It sounded to him
like a glass harmonica
but certainty is not easy
for a man who finds it hard
to distinguish harp from heart—**

**they both have strings
for one thing, though one is red
and the other gold. A woman
though was singing now
so his confusion changed
to language, which is nothing but lust.
How can *was* happen *now*?
And maybe she's singing to him—
he'd be the last to know.**

29 November 2015

=====

**I spend a lot of time
listening to music with a pen.
I never asked if it's allowed.
If my hand can hear
what else can I do?**

29 November 2015

=====

**There should be a little lake on Lammermoor
with corncrakes cawing, little ducks exploring,
no human people anywhere, only ηχως,
the *sound* of music without the music
far away of course even men are weeping,
even blue skies do that to us at times
when we happen to, or dare to, remember.**

29 November 2015

THINKEMBERING GLOUCESTER

Something easy
something morning

the schooner
too far from shore
to read,

 it's all
about identity
with us,
 isn't it,

what if it weren't
who would we be

and would *polis* be closer
or is that one more mistake,
after the cavern
the heap, the hive?

I never got, never dared,
to question Charles on this—

**why talk about city and live in a town
where local politics
ignored the lives of those who live there
and serve only business**

which is no business of ours—

**so we had different answers
though I didn't know mine yet,
solitude inside difference**

**and pray hard into local mind
word by sign by song — see,
I cant say it clearer even now.**

30 November 2015

=====

**Why do I keep thinking
the answer is theology
when my knees are cold
and no girl sits thereon—**

**just like an ancient monk,
when it's clear physiology
makes men behave crazy,
markets are neurotic,**

**war is psychosis. But
labels don't help a bit.
All we can do is learn,
duck before the bullet comes.**

30 November 2015

MEASUREMENT

for Ed Casey

Measurement
continues to fascinate
by opposites.

I don't fit in,
nothing fits me.

And yet the sway of song
among the pebbled words
streams brightly on.

Is there really only *now* ?
And now can have no measure,
it's gone before clock ticks
or the tape whips out to tell how long it is

*Now is none of these
and we are made of it*

our bedtime prayer and morning orison
should anthem only this,

**Be now now,
now is a cleft
between dimensions**

**and into it you can
(as I do)
fall to bliss**

meaning only ever this.

30 November 2015

=====

**But I was listening when it fell
*the tower predisposed to fall***

**a soft catastrophe, as if fur
muffled its collapse, and bricks**

**mortarless till now recruited
vague trajectories in thick air**

**so did not hurt me when they hit
insinuating as kittens on my lap,**

**why me? is all I wanted to know,
no pain but strange responsibility,**

**why me? I have been chosen
by its ruin to speak the word it meant**

**since first it shouldered up the sky
too feeble in vocabulary to control**

**the vagrant philosophies up there
that rouse the ancient indolence of god—**

sing it, he says, don't say it yet again.

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30 November 2015