

1-2016

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FERIA

**Happy New Year
but I love best
ordinary days
no names,
about nothing
but themselves
and what they let
happen or hinder.
Does that make
me mean,
or does it let
them what they
mean, distanced
from history
or cult, just
a day with no
name yet.**

1 January 2016

LAPIS BRACELET

for Charlotte

**Wear this for me
now and again forever
it's more like you
than I saw at first—**

**I looked again and saw
precious, well-wrought,
different. Wear this
because you loved it**

**and I love you, you
fit together perfectly,
link me always
to how you are.**

1 January 2016

CLARITY

**Clarity is a white
saucer licked
clean by a red cat,
beauty a shadow
fallen from a passing
bird that stays.**

1 January 2016

=====

**Catch breath
before it speaks.
Words don't come back
and who knows where they go**

**if you want to study
what a word means
shift it from sentence
to random sentence**

**until it tells. Amazing
how often it will make
itself at home. As if
anything means everything.**

1 January 2016

=====

**In a crowded woodlot
(term I learned in the Midwest
for a bunch of trees, what
I always called a woods)
the air between the densely
grown bare saplings this
New Year's Day is shaped
like tall pale people
looking out at me. Innocent
they stand, inviting,
offering something even
better than an embrace—
full interpenetration
of their space with mine.
I want to go over there
and be them for a while
at least until the sun comes
when spaces will shrink
back from me, whispering
“He casts a shadow...”**

1 January 2016

=====

**By living
just by living
loving buying
dancing doing
going staying
being, just
be living they
left a rich
monument,
workless, wordless
it teaches us still.**

1 January 2016

=====

**Molokai and Father Damien
thunder and the Queen of Night
the waking-up mind
is an opera, an island,
a promise made, a bride
pale with expectation—
maple sap, ear wax,
sunt lacrima rerum
we love the things we find,
they guide us faithfully
always to another land.**

2 January 2016

=====

**Let my voice once be heard
bright morning, clever
as eel pout find their way home—**

**all language is a great return
hurrying desperate to the unsaid,**

**let me say my way there too
tongue-wise in prophecy.**

2 January 2016

=====

**I met the Sun
walking in the night,
she was cloaked
head to foot
in black satin,
I knew her by feel
and the glint of one
wise eye peeked out
as she walked soundless
through my own trees!
“I made you human
to talk to me,” she said
so I bowed and kissed
her shadow as she
passed and then said this.**

2 January 2016

=====

So much I didn't want to know,
the leaves are all gone
from Saturn's tree—

was it something in France
when I was young and half remember?

Only one little cloud today
over the chimney, *nuvoletta*
vague girl in all our dreams

love has no rivals
but can you put a face to her?

I can't, I can't, he said
only a white and red dress, river,
a nearsighted bridge.

2 January 2016

CONTRA NATURAM

Why couldn't it always
just be mouth deep and detailed,
handling the mysterious
blatancies of human bodies
meant for fondling and licking
and why should it go anything more?

Death is waiting at the joining,
something lost where the world begins.
Sly striving spills the miracle, sap
seeps murderous into the loins
so new animals happen and we die.

Why. Why does it have to be that way
when an infinity of liberty and joyance
stirs in the touch — the skin—
the surface *is* the depth.
That's the last secret.

2 January 2016

LOVE SONG

**So much I want to say to you
and you know every word of it**

**in your words better than mine.
And that is what my silence says.**

2 January 2016

ON THE PHOTO OF AN ATHLETE

**We are the same color,
have the same color eyes
but we belong to different races**

**the muscles of our minds
sing spaces alien
to each other**

**because we know apart
and knowing changes
the knower strangely**

**even our shadows differ
we offer weird
Fruit from our branches**

**people taste their
music rustling
as they pass us puzzling**

what planet I'm from.

3 January 2016

WAITING FOR THE WHITE CAR

It comes by every morning
the white car, four strangers
are inside it, wings and beaks
and books and manes,
so every morning I Ezekiel
wake to their passage
year after year, and all I know
is what they make me think,

חזקאל

they are alive in there
but is the white car living too?
When you see a white car
or white van in the gloaming
parked near some trees
don't you feel awe, even fear,
some life that is not your
life, not your kind of life
at all is happening by,
or lingers by the side of the road
and you worry what will emerge
and what it will tell you
or make you do. Terror
of the car. It comes every morning,
wheels slow past my window,
makes me speak all day
some language like this.

3 January 2016

.
= = = = =

**Knock on my own door
may the doorway awaken**

**through the sound of vowels
we enter in, the holy hollow
places — *hallows* the old
folk knew — and in these *ausencias*
absences, we come at last
to what we know: rubble heaped
below the slope of what is known.**

**By sound alone we sympathized
then found ourselves home.**

3 January 2016

AFTER PLINY

**Questions quibble but women
wait for the bakery to open**

**philosophy decides and decides
but men mow their lawns**

**music addles young minds
but birds fly south in winter**

**though the robins stay here and keep
quiet about it. The robins stay here.**

3 January 2016

== == == == ==

**I wonder if you know
how important you are to me**

**stay close please far as you are,
the shape of you stays in my mind—**

**shadow? shimmer? a word
made out of pure silence**

only you knew how to speak.

3 January 2016

SOMETHING LONGER

**Something longer
slowly uncoiling
like a passage in the bible
understanding itself clumsily
through Talmud and patristics,
pilpul and kabbalah and Higher
Criticism until we're exhausted
with thinking about it
and just let it say what it says,
nobody's listening anyhow,
nothing long really matters,
no one is patient no one is deep
and why should they be,
a glacial drumlin speaks for itself
climb up and slide down,
the world has no patience
that's why ,marriage matters
the broken glass and the bird flies away.**

2.

**No babies please.
This is all against nature
you should know that from the start,
if I could get out of here alive
I would and bet you would too.**

**So we try. Fa si la si do. We leap
up and fall back. Bless me, mountain,
for I am low. *Break the meshes
of this sweet encounter* he said
and we have been listening. Trying.
It's hard to get out though when
you're not really all that in.
The marginal man is as trapped
as the center, held fast
by the whirling rim of where he
tries to stand. Blame nature with me
and wear white clothes and
curse the dirt we glee to wallow in.**

3.

**You're out there selling yourself
in the desert like the old bible prophets,
sometimes up to your waist in Jordan
(means 'it goes down') sometimes
dry as a sunbeam, nobody knows you,
they all touch you, hear you, et cetera
but knowledge nowhere is done.
Because knowing is a doing thing
not a stone or muffin you carry home,
knowing is tearing through the night
spilling your dream over everyone,
knowing is breaking every window,
splitting every door. And you do that.
That is why I call you 'you,' and praise.**

4.

Or is it grieve that I do less and leave
my sordid dreams unspecified, bony
fingers chill on warm flesh, I hear
what they say, desire is a confession
of inadequacy, no real man wants
anything, it's all there already, you too
have heard that, you know that a hand
reaching out greedily is pleading guilty,
greed is guilt, wanting is withering,
I throw myself down on your shadow
sometimes and make that my mattress.

5.

I hear your doubt: there must be more
than this, comrade, you don't usually let
me off so lightly — my shadow be enough
for you, my tinkling leper bell be
music enough for your serenade? You must
want more of me than this. But no, I answer,
I am the desert, I have you already, every
cry you let out at midnight runs through me,
every grain of me wind whips on your skin.
I have no more desire because I have.

[3 January 2016]

=====

**Il I can do is answer.
What are you asking
now, and with whose hands?
The ash heaps of Sobíbor
this local mind.**

4 January 2016

=====

**Here's the trouble with apocalypse—
loss is permanent, a kind of stone.
You can never get rid of what is gone.**

4 January 2016

== == == == ==

**In cold weather
batteries drain faster.
Who am I
trying to be?**

4 January 2016

== == == == ==

**And my passport is expired too—
so who are you?
Think of Homer's passport,
born in seven cities, buried in none—
no wonder poets are in bad repute—
they fit the shadow of one word
to the sound of another.**

4 January 2016

=====

**My great-great grandfather was
a vicar in the Church of England.
A scholarly man, he edited the text
of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in Greek
with his commentary. I learned this
only after I had written my own
(own!) *Oedipus after Colonus*. His
son-in-law was a poet (unpublished)
who sailed to America and got the
rest of us started before he sailed off
to India, Australia and the isles.
Who am I in this story? A shadow?
I suspect we are all just consequences
of other people, Not just ancestors either.**

4 January 2016

=====

You can't love what you can't know—

**love is guesswork, piecework,
housework, homework.**

4 / 5.I.16

=====

**If I had a name
I'd use it, I'd
give it to you
quick as a flesh
hungering for soul—**

to be ensouled by matter!

4 / 5 January 2016

DREAM INTERROGATION

**I remember myself too well to sleep,
I know so many of the answers**

**There are night passports too,
displaced identities.**

4 / 5 January 2016

== == == == ==

There doesn't have to be an elsewhere

or

there is no elsewhere

or

to open your eyes is to be there already.

**The quiet mind
is the only here.**

4 / 5 January 2016

SUNRISE

**She mounts
above the trees
her sheer
red cloak tossed
aside, stands
above me
as pure light.**

5 January 2016

=====

Language heals the dancers' movements

**among them all
*words stand stillness in***

**so we can see
the elegant between
their movements leave
quivering in the enraptured air,**

**the words stand
while the dancers move,
words are the noisy silence
backdrop against which
each living body speaks,**

leaps out while the word stands still—

**or tries to, but it is not easy
to be the floorboards only
to so many ascensions**

**and by the time the dance is done
the dancers have flung
the words too into their
own luminous convulsions.**

6 January 2016

=====

**Turn on the answer
before the question dares to ask.**

6.I.16

== == == == ==

**Something about the stars
being up there all the time
but we need night to see them**

**is that it,
we need night,
wishing-well, apple tree,
separation of the sexes
in laces of assembly,
moonlight?**

Is it all a kind of religion?

6 January 2016

ON A RED-FIGURED LEKYTHOS

**If you really want to see me
take off your clothes.**

6.I.16

= = = = =

*She'll be riding
six white horses
when she comes*

**the mountain maybe
will be waiting
for you, even you,**

**waiting to speak.
You read the Bible,
you know the kind of cake
grandmothers bake
even if you never
had one of your own**

**and your daughter ranges
at the brink of control
and the sunshine
keeps cheering you up
like an imbecile aunt
who has no room for tragedy**

you are tragedy.

**But the other one,
she'll be riding six white
horses when she comes.
Or seven.
Or the mountain will turn
on its great hidden axle
and spin.**

**And that
it seems to me you will believe.
Matter is so persuasive!**

**Why can't the sky
make you remember?**

6 January 2016

=====

**Driving was always
making sense.
Now what do I do
with distances?**

My skin so far
**a river to see
across, a hill
a kind of sky.**

Be where it only is.

7 January 2016

=====

**Anniversary of an experiment
on this day in 2072
he will condense a cloud
so that it bears a human weight
a slender maiden first
eventually a pair of lovers—
they'll sail from town to town
and nothing will ever be the same.
They will have shown us something
we always knew — and that's
when the garden opens up again.
I mean opens us again.**

7 January 2016

=====

**The sun
rising beyond
trees on the horizon
has climbed into
white cloud now.
A sketch by Picasso
respectful, a woman's face.
The crows fly over
but the cloud is full of light.
I'm translating this
from an old Dutch alchemist
who understood the crows.
I think the music
is by Frederick Delius.**

7 January 2016

=====

**I want to study
what I have made
in hopes to find
me inside — long
have I hidden
in what I said.
To know oneself
is the paltriest
science — the
door springs open
but no one's there.**

7 January 2016

=====

**The technology repeats
owls in the ivy
I embraced
a wraith in the tower**

**turned from the window
excited by my presence
like a lute-string snapping
mouth open, saying**

**and the street outside
was ordinary arrondissement
sparrows and Arabs
crimson glints of car tails**

**I whispered I have come
for you, one for another,
tell my fortune for me
by dregs in coffee cups**

**everything is a picture
every picture tells
everything told is true
I can do everything for you.**

7 January 2016

=====

**You can't help what you see
when you close your eyes.
So listen quietly with attention fixed
on the last light over Round Top
as we drive our way home.
The light is different every night
like Basic English, everything
gets said with just a few words
and it's really harder to tell lies.**

7 January 2016

ARGILLACEOUS

was one word for it,
the mud
hardened out of dream

into the images
of waking day
breathless I proclaim

from the prow of this
foundering ship
as ocne I told

motherland here I am.

2.
Because we mud too
we mind,
always something left
of where we've been,
McNaughton's *shit on my shoe*
his history,
summoning the ancient news.

3.

Cavalier, for where
we' ve been and done
and been done to
walked through a mine field in Germany
a friend led the way,
a poet, an oversetter.

HRHS

4.

So like Audrey this
morning *I remember nothing*
of where I've been, just
the word *argillaceous*
to guide me
to what I didn't mean.

AT
ZA

Day hardens from the mud of dream—
I didn't know that, didn't know
a day is dry, mummy images,
silk and leather, Pompeii at play.

8 January 2016

=====

**Sure demand
the portrait shocks
I peck at this
weird keyboard
a the pace
of a scribe of
Akkad wedging
clay with his
popsicle stick
so slow to set
a word in place
my fault entirely
(:stage Irish accent)
dark trees
against brightest sky.**

8 January 2016

=====

**Morbidly Norwoodly
what would it mean?
A builder lost n what he's made
a secret passage in the heart
leading to an ancient stone wall—
you can't get through
but love the masonry.
You settle down to feel it
fully, inch by inch
the rough the smooth
the archaic mortar trapped
between the stones
as you are in feeling, this?**

8 January 2016

== == ==

Now at last the sun gets into the trees
eightish, tops at least, that bronzy
glow that shows it all comes right.
Comes calling, in whose name? *She*
peers over the earth at me alone—
that's what it means to be one
person at sunup alone, rare word
in these sylvan quarters: from Gaspé
to New Jersey one vast forest runs.
We habit here and there dense in it.

8 January 2016

THE LEPORELLO VARIATION

Diabelli 22

**Left hand clamorous complaining
I'm a basso buffo too
supposed to have fun
but fun is long for great to fake
as much as anyone.**

***Night and day I work my fingers
on your bone* he means, your hear them
clamber up the scale, makes it seem
I'm beating on some door,
they'll never let me in, I'll die out here—
music flees from me again and again
someone else is ready to begin.**

8 January 2016

=====

**Let things be kind morning
a little new light
shaken from the muffineer
light in the form of mist impalpable
such as among the worshipping trees—
I confess it, I have never
as a grown man ridden a horse,
I have had to be
beast enough for me.**

9 January 2016

=====

**Woodpile in the head
lick of dawn along
fresh-cut pine
the smell of light
keep wandering your hand
in country life
used to inconveniences
things that don't come together
definitions, slender
sticks for the fire
that need no chopping.
We only use the franklin
stove coldest summer mornings.
This is what it means
to dream and then stop dreaming
*and hearing is the same as speaking.***

9 January 2016

ARS POETICA

**Touch and know—
a kind traveler
look at things
things start talking—**

**any of these lines
on a gravestone true**

**my epitaph enlarges you.
Every line must be the man himself.**

9 January 2016

=====

**Maybe only men need titles—
a male must be labeled
to tell him what to do,
tell what he has done—**

***Eve tasted, but Adam sinned
that is how the law began.***

9 January 2016

=====

**Scrupulous adjustment
of the escapement—
watchmaker at play,
wind up the sun,
from my hands release the day.**

9 January 2016

=====

**White pills on the
wooden counter**

**the grace of line
commands all form.**

9.I.16

=====

**everything we eat or drink
is a love-potion, air itself
an aphrodisiac,**

**for we are made of love
by love and for love,**

**but evil men compel
children to read the *Iliad* and such
to make them think language
(love's tongue) is really only
about war, and helps them kill.**

9 January 2016

WRITING AT DAWN

Everything pale — I think
the sun too has run out of ink,

Sister, I am not alone!
Face the music, they say,
if only I could!

Diabelli Variations, Number 10
and get it over with
sudden virtuosity

rise above the trees
showering color as she goes.

9 January 2016

=====

**Meeting dawn on her own terms—
everything is person now
this hylonoetic countryside of ours,**

**yes, we share it, the light insists,
she slips off her apron and
suddenly amazingly here.**

9 January 2016

=====

**Never walk your whole boundary
leave room for some mystery
beast to come through or—
sorry, I can't complete this picture
postcard of my backyard.**

9 January 2016

THIRTY-THREE VARIATIONS FOR JANUARY NINTH

After spending two days listening to Beethoven's Diabelli Variations, a vast overwhelming structure built out from a silly little waltz — no sillier than most, to be sure — I am compelled to turn the tables, and compose trivial variations on a solemn and important theme only hinted at by the title.

1.

**There are only variations
on no theme at all
or none we can name
we have to eke them out.**

2.

**I used to write poems
from and about
crappy ads on matchbooks
they gave you with cigarettes**

3.

**nobody smokes now
no matchbooks
what shall I do
but shit must still be waiting
to get turned into gold**

4.

since eight o'clock men

have been chain-sawing
trees by the stream
commotion and roaring
they think they're improving
something but I want gold

5.

examples:

Pb into **Au**.

Stupid feelings into interesting poems

(but see LZ on Byron
in *A Test of Poetry*)

6.

a little waltz
she can hoof
into dexterity

7.

Georges Balanchine was born today
and why not

8.

she sat on my lap and explained his life
until it was her
life and I began to understand

9.

Scheme and fairy nations

that's who I art

10.

**we walk the woods
and worship the same wet leaves
but never do it together**

11.

**we are terrified of circles
that's why we stay home
when the other's out prowling
the sky reflected in the fallen rain**

12.

**Surrounding the woods with attention
who's that with blue eyes?**

13.

**Whose hat upturned up on whose thighs
is full of leaves and twigs and buds that didn't?**

14.

**Do you think sharing is possible
or even legal, given how many trees?**

15.

**Recidivism they call it
when she comes back every day**

**they call it the neighborhood
please call it Temple of the Sun**

16.

**So you take pictures
the old man asked
They take me she said
they take me home—
doesn't take much to make
an old guy frown**

17.

**they have a woodpile but no stove
they have a porch but no wicker
they have a sky above their heads
and only once or twice have vanished there**

18.

***Bloke* comes from Romani did you know that?
Everybody sat around wearing a hat—
we learned as children: this is conversation.**

19.

**Try to keep quiet just eat your food
they feed you to keep you from talking
someday I'll grow up and not have to be fat—**

every child thinks that.

20.

**Could the triangle be sacred
because it shows two people
linked by a higher singularity,
as if the only way *you* and *I*
will ever get together is by or in God?**

21.

**And the Jews make two of them
where G-d joins us together
and we join Them on high**

22.

**Tread lightly
in holy places
lick ice cream
but no children please
the trees
have tender ears**

23.

**Do you see faces
when you look at me**

or only at the bark
of trees?

24.

I saw Auden pass me once
his face lined like stone like wood
his eyes focused far away
walked fast to the meat-packing district,
the river, America across the stream.

25.

I'm getting slow—
there are two kinds of sloth,
the *ai* and the *unau*—
which kind am I?
Help me count my toes.

26.

Slept on a park bench, woke
an ivory moon sailed close above
What country am I in?
but the moon answered
as if just as confused
Aren't I always where I am?

27.

**She decided long ago
to eat no food but live
on light alone and God's love,
Mass every day and the wind in her hair
and so it went year after year
trying not to scare her neighbors.**

28.

**Quick as a tree
slick as a hill
fill me if you can.**

29.

**A whiffletree is a frame that keeps
the horse or horses happy to the cart
full of cauliflowers full of autumn hay.**

30.

**The beggars used to
stagger through the train
on at one station off
at the next, to keep
the subway cops a stop
behind, one I remember
stood in front of each
passenger and pounded
the floor with his cane until**

**a coin got into the paper
cup in his blind hand.
He stared up all the while
at the absent sky.**

**30.
Every memory
is too long—
see what it does
to the song's waistline?
Fat, as Stevens said,
fat, fat, fat.**

**31.
Melchizedek was king of Salem
who knows what that means?
Who knows what meaning means
or who has it, or who has wings?**

**32.
Light comes back to fade away,
the night's in fragments**

**after you get done with it—
images on all sides,
au secours, Iconoclasts!**

**33.
It had to end this way
(which way?)
with as fugue
(what's a fugue?)
running away
(together)
over the hill
till far is near
and we are here.**

9 January 2016

=====

**The difference with a picture
is offering. Speaking
but only to someone
not known until the words
come out and speak.**

**So: look at a picture
and start language—
there is one *implicit listener*
to each telling
the picture makes us tell.**

**Not a tale (= something told)
but a telling (now)
yields two givings:
Finding the listener.
Homage to the painter.**

10 January 2016

=====

**On this rainy day
I remember noisy
sunshine cluttering the lawn
and don't mind her so much,
all those bright antics.**

10 January 2016

ALTES LIEBESLIED

**O all the ones I've been
never added up
even to two.
Until you.**

10 January 2016

ЛЕШИЙ

Take a man into the woods
he becomes a demon
a monster
with a pretty name

wild man of the woods

he sounds like wind
brushing through dead leaves
sounds like a last breath.

How can the trees
bear such quiet fear?
Stiff with terror
they stand all year.

Or why exactly is it
that it's so scary
to walk in the woods at night?

No bears, no tigers,
just fear,
every breeze the fingers of it.

His name is Leshii
he's not a man

**or maybe he's what becomes
of a man a long
time in the woods,
the wind, when his skin
is made of dead leaves
and his hands are the arms of trees,**

**or he is the fear that we become
pathless in the moonless dark.**

10 January 2016

=====

**Put my glasses on
to see the mist better
sounds ridiculous
but now I can see
him if he comes
loping out of the woodlot
his breath mingling with the fog.**

10 January 2016

=====

**Would it be better if I waited?
Nothing good ever happens later.**

**Only now. Like you and me
who else could come after?**

10 January 2016

=====

**Some said Mass
some just stuck
a flag in rock or ice
claiming. Claiming
the earth. Strange
consciences of
conquistadors.
Americans. Field
of stars, canton
of our flag.
We own the sky.**

11 January 2016

=====

**Reprehensible lilies,
lilacs on the make,
why is the blue flower
so hard to find?**

**In the Himalayas once
a whole mountainside
blue with hydrangeas,
udambaras maybe,**

**my mother's garden,
Sheepshead Bay.**

11 January 2016

=====

**The plan: give
her everything
then turn away.**

11.I.16

=====

**Movies give me claustrophobia
even on television in my own house,
plot lines are straitjackets
handcuffs leg-irons, traps.
I muble something and rush outside
where nothing ever happens,
busy street or quiet kitchen,
safe with my own breath.**

11 January 2016

=====

**Secret Alhambras in exurban malls,
painted arches, thighs of matrons,
damp flag hangs curled in cold wind.
It's all secrecy. Anything you can see
is imaginary. The real is inside
where colors come from and linger,
or the actual feel of a lover's skin.**

**11 January 2016
Rhinebeck**

== == ==

for M.M.

**Do it now.
Later will never happen.
It's like history
you can read about it
and still have empty hands.**

**Do it now
before the spring distracts
you, makes you think
things happen by themselves
like flowers,**

**do it now,
be the flower yourself
you mean to be,
the tower, the power
of you. Do it now.**

11 January 2016

=====

**Stars in the trees
I call you by name
the ones you had before Babylon**

**the names that only winter knows
cold pure vocabulary—**

**listen to me as if I knew,
more than just this
pile of pillows, dim electric light
and had never seen the stars before.**

11 / 12 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Two lovers sleeping side by side
having different nightmares
at the same time, same breathing
but wake apart and wonder.**

11 / 12 January 2016

AUBUSSON

**Ink stain
on the parlor
carpet. This
19th Century.**

11 / 12 Jauary 2016

GLAUCOMA

**Reading with bad eyes
is a lot like learning
to read in childhood,**

**guessing, guessing right.
Now I think about it
I can't remember learning**

**to read as a kid, it seems
to me I always knew.
Or did until now.**

12 January 2016

=====

**I forgive you
do you forgive me?
Sit on the floor
lean back on my knee.**

12 January 2016

=====

**How far down
does a picture go
before you see it**

**ledger lines in the sky
to set the birds straight—
did I say words**

did they say Wait?

12 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Looking with language
at your paintings
they see me to be.**

12.I.16

=====

**Mind at play
quick moving clouds—
why some have
blue eyes, adulteries.**

13 January 2016

=====

**Meeting language at the door
cenacle come in,
every guest the god
intended, come
in and be transparent
in us, let us see
ourselves, the group,
the gathered.**

**In the Bible
there would be a little
oil lamp, bread
on the table, a honeycomb.
Friends I mean
I think, shadows, wood.
We need wood
around us, teaches
us to feel.**

**We too
are growing
upright, slow inside,
growing into our meanings
the way children
grab onto language
hardly speaking,
listening, being afraid.**

13 January 2016

=====

**Be warm
back to wool**

**around me
(verb imperative).**

13 January 2016

=====

**White-throated sparrow
ten o'clock
sadder than sunlight,
o keep the hawk away
killed our dove yesterday.**

13 January 2016

THE FORMS

for Sherry Williams

They tear you apart
the circle the square
pointing away

we thrust away from
apart, apart us,
the always going away

every rhombus
has an angry angle
hurting into the soft
flank of the circle

o you know it,
you have been there
over and over,
 the pull
that tears apart,
the curve and the straight,

and color, glorious,
dangerous,
 opera-music
is what color is,
color is frenzy,

you know it,
 crazed
soprano mourning
children that never were,
wild tenor all his dead lovers,
faithless colors, sluttish masses,
dark-eyed adulteries,
green against red, white
white a priest
trying to make peace

but we all turn red.

Black. You know it,
how it turns inside you
until you have to grab it
with your hands
and stretch it out,
no wonder they call it 'drawing'
drawing it out.

At night sometimes
it stabs you awake
torsion, tension,
twisting the circle
to make a body of it,
part of the body

*skin comes from shine,
the skin is complete,*

**shattering the corners of things,
the colors, the colors help you,
hurt you,**

**later we stare at the picture,
watch you being torn apart
across the blank paper,
paint, ink, father, mother,**

every mark a frightened child.

**Blue is afraid
to come downstairs,
blue is you, blue has been bad,
blue turns into the sky and you wake,
wake us so we wake,
help you bear your pain
by what we see.**

13 January 2015

WASHING WINDOWS

**What we see out the window
is what we keep in here—
those trees are reflections:
branches of that infinite
nervous system we guess
our brains are nodes of.
*Let me belong to thee...***

**We see what we expect.
They told us to be here.**

14 January 2016

=====

**Dawn on your day
who was I then?**

**Trying without images
to tell a picture**

**firm it in mind—
by breath alone**

**by interruption
make the shape of things**

**low notes, clarinet
a bead of sweat**

idle on your cheek.

14 January 2016

=====

**Caution needs control—
the hurry of every morning**

**don't let me stop
otherwise the earth
stops spinning.**

**Then we'd be forever
where we only think we are.**

14 January 2016

=====

**Epochs of animal
we live through**

**we have so many
beasts to be**

**things all round
to bother us**

**tunes we can't name
eyes of a stranger.**

14 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Waking under the light
having slept in ancient cities**

**old stone cities, cities of clay
scribbled on the ground**

**nobody designed them
or if they did then
children of men came after**

**screamed on the stones
until the streets broke
and alleys,cracked through the town.**

**Mix up. Big problem. Wrong
people come in from the hills.
A city is wrong people,**

**the country is dead people,
which should we choose.
A tree is a lightbulb**

**that just once for all time
screws into the ground.
Trust trees.**

14 January 2016

=====

**Trying to be small
we open the door.
A bluejay flies away —
what was he thinking?
Trying to tell the truth
grasp the brass knob —
everybody knows that,
it's an aria by Verdi,
a broken window,
in the city it would be
a squirrel, here
I just don't know**

15 January 2016

=====

for J. Wr.

**The man is coming to look at the words —
it's taken years to get them on the page.
The thread, the glue, the cloth
and all those trees. Make light of it
but it takes so much *matter*,
sheer lumber, to get a word
from one day to another, so
that the word is always ready to speak.**

15 January 2016

=====

**Measurement tourniquet
keep the meaning
of what you measure
from leaking out
along with the numbers —
I'm just trying to help,
the nurse is busy at the console,
the patient is starting to dream.
Outside a green truck
goes by in the snow.**

15 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Everything depends on what's not said.
Too many appointments. Two weeks
off. Peach blossoms, remember?
Trunk wrapped in burlap all winter,
survivors in the north. I have nothing
to tell you in particular, you
with your lopsided furry hat —
I too have worshipped briefly
in that sweaty chapel, they even
stain the little light they let come in.**

15 January 2016

=====

**Not so bad to wake in the dark
and see what the night has to say —
it's a little like being disobedient
but to whom. Being bad
is talking when everyone's asleep.
I'm all alone talking to you —
there is a density in these matters,
like muscle under smooth skin —
the Romans called them the mice
that run inside us, that make us run.**

15 January 2016

=====

**Try to say something people want to hear
then take it away and substitute
what you want to say. Secrets
of ancient poetry. Hymn to Agni
Lord of bright things, the sun
keeps his bed ready in her house
though Fire like all things comes and goes.
In the night journey ever a blue flower.**

15 January 2016

=====

**Mirroring the sun
a sparrow. How.
Light gives way
when we remember.
Wings clutter the air.
Spontaneous knowing
mountain spring
no cup, bend,
bend low to drink.**

15 January 2016

MENIN AEIDE

**Rational inquiry recall
pages of some book
the words on it, photo, old,
of a victim, the pathology
of discourse, soldiers
looking at a corpse.
Discourse did this to them,
the killers and the killed,
not emotions, not hate.
Any war, all the time.**

15 January 2016

= = = = =

**Made happy by beliefs
we trust what comes.
Dying Satanist
contort to meet his master.
Shriveling away of the actual,
death mask, gulls
crowding in from the sea.**

16 January 2016

=====

**To have the work done
before the beginning —
aleph over beth
and it would just be.**

16 January 2016

= = = = =

Gladness of

Kabbalah

a green car

waddling slow among a meadow

as in Kipling's day

a car went where it could

like a mind unlicensed

through the sensible

alphabet

habit of the seen.

16 January 2016

THE WRATH OF

Rain ready walk in mist
guess time from light, be wrong.
The anger of *mythos*
waiting for tis temple, every
word needs one.

Build it here.

The girl sidling up in simile of dream,
the unexpected room full of applause —
I'm just going away, away,
end of the day

at dawn. She pushed
against the wall and me —
I made these rules
to right the dream
unfoundering.

Here, build here,
the mist increases, seems,
or is it sees, I see poorly.
This cunning light,
cool skin against mine,
raise money out of language, then see.
Speak. Listen.

**Crowd noises on the far shore —
disembark on Cythera!**

**Well, come in, lustful travelers —
but the gate was locked,
rusty key, an old copy
of the *Iliad* in French.
Achille aux pieds agiles
around the corner where the women wait,
some weeping, some at peace.**

16 January 2016

NOTES TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CASTLE

It has 3 towers.
It has fish in it,
moat I imagine.

 Name the fish later,
they come pre-baptized,
secure in their element.
Does the moat come last?

Which tower or turret has
the blonde woman leaning out the window?
Or do all three? Or none,
none is safer,
gravity is treacherous in castles,
all that stone.
Scramble and fall

stone staircase inside
winding up the wall —
a hard thing, don't fall,
arras whiffing in the breeze,
tapestry with deer and Diana,

no banister. Fear.
Or elevator.

**I see her now
in wool, surrounded by her beasts.
I could be one of them —
can the master of a castle be an animal?
La Bête in Cocteau, for example.
An animal wearing clothes,
oil lamp on the table that never goes out**

**or windless candle flame.
The kitchen, the cook groaning with inspiration —
lamb shanks, partridges. *Perdrix*.**

**Dreaming of etymologies
I miss the moment when the last street light goes out.**

16 January 2016

COMPASS

The needle north,
no choice, it must

we need the must
the compulsions
of things to set us free: thus

a local perturbation of earth's magnetism, as
a big hunk of iron nearby
will quiver the needle

and confuse the mechanism
we follow and we are.

Madame, do you feel my magnet
as I am moved by yours—

and that could be politics.
Or sweet gab of God.

16 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Brilliant as a brick sunshot
low angle morning
aurora making
us see,**

**wall of a house
makes us be
the kind of makers, aching
to do new,
but broken like clouds**

**who are you?
That's what all metaphor
is getting at, Mr Gilgamesh.**

16 January 2016

=====

The moon is a sting-ray
skull-ing through the branches—
bright eye holes that do not see

so many times
I have been here before
shattered by an image
as I'd broken out of dream—
something about
the moon the skull something
about being Jewish long ago
tailor shop, man with no
hair, no fingernails,
sewing machine, bowl of dry
Cheerios beside him he
eats with his fingers.

He does not talk.
There is a woman there,
and he is *sa lune*, a place
where only men gather
and drink till they die.

How many enemies do I have to have?

16 / 17 January 2016

GETTING TO KNOW HER

**Square trenches
centered aisles
inside, one full
one empty, two
trenches side by side.
The full is filled
with astonished water
thronged with jewelry.**

**All these he offers her
and many a music beside
lute-lifted from his caravan
but always she silenced
as to refuse. till he
before the court of listeners
cried out Unfair how she worked
so shamelessly to seduce him—
that made her laugh
and in laughter they were one—
they feel a little like mother
and father now don't they?**

16 / 17 January 2016

=====

**Build a canal.
Don't speak of the weather.
Runs right through it—
Jericho, Babylon,**

**we live in the names
of distant cities,
half-imaginary,
not the streets we
need to be citizens to,**

**but along the river
in the old days
on the bluff ran slippery
the Damascus Road
in rain, red
clay, birth of poetry.**

16 / 17 January 2016

RITRATTO

**It wasn't always
a lonely boy looking at the Moon—
neither of us knew
we're lonely, we hang around
forever and watch everything.
Everybody. He's
a boy too, little,
of little efficacy.
I almost knew it then
but he was brighter
even than I.**

16 / 17 January 2016

=====

**When daylight is feeble
you can read it different ways.
Wintertag. A flourish
of warmth from the heater
overhead. Overheard
a rhapsode dinging on his kantele.
A Baltic kind of light,
a bridge between reason and
where we really live.
Seven bridges. This house
for heaven's sake
stands between two of them.**

17 January 2016

OF EPIC POETRY

Is this an epic?

**Epos. Means something
in Yiddish, So let it be.**

2.

**Got to have hero.
No hero. No anger,
Got to have (Pound says)
history. Nohistory.**

3.

**Yet it goes on.
Is strong even
sometimes
like a little stream
suddenly at cliff
edge powerfully
falls. Waterfall.
*A continuous descent.***

4.

**Dawn over Britain
wherever the language goes.
Wherever the language goes**

**I mean to follow. Epic.
Language is the hero.
I am his Sancho, his scribe.**

**5.
:Look, I'm conforming
to the rules! No roof-beam
without its seagull.
No Bible without its sinners.**

**6.
The cast of characters
is whatever a tune can hold
together. Opera
smooths out character—
King Lear safe from Verdi.**

**7.
I knelt as a child
and stood as a man
until I learned to bow down
servant of that arcane
tongue *colloquial*.**

8.

**How *others* do it
but no *self* can.
Civil War replayed in speech:
everything secedes from me.**

**9.
There are old houses
ought to be torn down,
old iniquities erased—
a wrecking ball
is like the sun,
like a new wife.**

**10.
Change too
is a sacrament.
Bitter evidence
of my white hair.**

17 January 2016

= = = = =

**The earth is heaven's
garage sale maybe.
Live again and take me home.**

**I m a sort of noisy
bric-a-brac, shove
me in a corner and rub
up against me for good luck.**

17 January 2016

=====

**I speak a language
where every noun means
crow, and every
verb means fly away.**

18 January 2016

ORANGE ZINNIA

**OK,
first blossomer in space
they say. I wanted
it to be Count
Alström's flower,
lily of Peru, whose
color and whose form
hold firm, even
on a table in
an ordinary dining room
on earth. Which also
hurtles through space.
Every flower blossoms in deep space.**

18 January 2016

AFTER LIGHT SNOW

**Dear Sun, melt all you can.
Driveway, sidewalk, lawn,
heart of a man.**

18 January 2016

AN AMBIGUITY

I love
what's there
and you

18.I.16

CONUNDRUM

**On a pink map of central Canada
spread wide before me
I see a region or district
stretching northeast from 46N50
called The Stell of Tennent.
A voice warns me of the place,
devilish settlers came and rule
unchanged. Stay away.
Nobody's voice I knew.
I woke and naturally looked it up
and found only a tall model
with a skinny face named
Stella Tennant. What am I now
to make of this dream, a grand-
daughter of the Duke of Cavendish?**

19 January 2016

=====

**Writing on this soft
tiny rubbery keypad
is still I suppose
easier than jabbing
sticks into clay tablets
on a hot day in Nineveh.
Results less durable
though, perhaps rightly—
no fields are changing
hands here, no taxes paid,
no fat kine transferred
from my barn to yours.
Yet you're getting something
from this transaction
of words through time
I hope. You tell me what.**

19 January 2016

== == == ==

**We master the blue sky
we regulate disaster—
there are kittens on the prowl
in forgotten libraries.
A whole new theory of disease!
Beyond Hahnemann, even
beyond Speransky! Wipe
the dust off one window at a time—
we are buried in light
like Herculaneum in ash.
Who will deliver us from clarity?**

19 January 2016

=====

**Little by little changing
things by naming them.
This sapling be Sarah,
she will grow tall, bare,
cuneiform written
against the sky. Her leaves
in turn will spell my name.**

19 January 2016

== == == == ==

**No one must know my
name, because if they
do they will drive me
to school screaming in
a huge yellow motorcar.**

19 January 2016

=====

**Bare trees
runic letters
scratched on sky
mostly one
kind of tree,
young ones, just
different enough
to write different
messages, fast
at our passing car.**

19 January 2016

=====

**Why do I feel my life is just beginning?
Everything is ready to start:
new course of study, new geology,
friendly weathers, talking trees?**

20 January 2016

=====

**The sound of sound goes
deeper than the sight of sight
but that lasts longer.**

20 January 2016

AFTER UNGARETTI

**Brown truck grey car
how far, how far.**

20.I.16

=====

**I keep staring into the woods
expecting to see
myself coming out at last.**

20 January 2016

=====

**Sometimes only winter says
then hurries back indoors.**

**When the heat finally comes up
it takes you by surprise:**

**I'm not cold anymore!
What else works just like that?**

20 January 2016

=====

**Skinny as a sunbeam
fat as sunshine.**

20.I.16

TROIS ETUDES

**Why all these short
sonsg, no music
left to spill?
I lost it in the piano.**

**The door applauds,
be loud, my child,
read from the scroll
they think is your long hair.**

**I know better
than to be.**

20 January 2016

SUBWAY

I was on my way to give a reading, suddenly realized I had no work with me. I jumped off at the next stop to go back and get my manuscripts. The doors were closing as I moved to get back on, but I was too slow. Thank goodness—why should I have gotten back in?

The train was painted dirty dark khaki, like years ago. When am I? There must be a better way back home to get my texts. Outside, I could walk home, yes. Climb the steps. Another level above me. Some papers lying on the ground in front of a dark I-beam. I pick up a book: *Greek Myths and French Critics*. Predictable, but remarkable images inside. I take it with me. I know it was a girl who left it there. Maybe for me. Maybe I'd read from it.

Not at street level even yet. Another long, long staircase, maybe daylight at the top.

This could be a story by Daniil Kharms.

20 January 2016

=====

**Are people really dead?
I hear them talking in my head.**

**Son cosas de la vida,
their voices, opinions,**

**smell of their overcoats,
texture of their skin.**

**Are they dead only to themselves?
But they're out there changing too**

leaving us with everything.

20 January 2016

=====

**The sun comes in.
We are what it brings.
We are figments of light
scattered in dark space.**

**And the specks of light
collect mind along the way.
Mind sticks to light—**

**the particles adhere—
the wave rolls on
and here we are.**

21 January 2016

WE PAGANS TALK TO THINGS BECAUSE THINGS TALK TO US



**A peach pit or stone
leaps out of a peach and asks
How tall am I?
Six feet or more I said she is
because she reaches to the ceiling—
her whole body becomes
a hand aloft, the way**

**the best of us become
whatever we think to give, and give.**

**People stand around the room
pretending not to notice
how beautiful she is,
they want to think this is normal.
But she is what they're afraid to see:
a woman pregnant with herself,
gentle swell of belly, waiting, wanting
nothing but space, space
to be tall in, so tall, reaching, until she
is the message itself at last,
not just the messenger.**

21 January 2016

[Sculpture by Claire Woolner, 2015]

=====

**Come close to exhaustion
don't let the light give out!**

**He sat in darkness
on the 14th floor of a monsoon.**

**Water kills fire
including electricity.**

**Aquarius (today!) ought to know:
he carries both elements**

**in that lekythos on his shoulder,
a canny spirit, he knows**

which to pour out, and when.

21 January 2016

=====

**So there's sunshine on the hill
no matter what. And matter
is busy thinking through
what looks like its eonic sleep—**

**and every hill is Göbekli,
bearing snug in its womb
the language we all spoke**

**eight thousand years before
Moses taught his alphabet
to the Jews.**

**The things
have taught us how to see,
how to hear what they mean.**

21 January 2016

NEANDER

**Things look easy but seldom are—
pipe dreams of 1807,
autogyros at every home, 1947,**

**thank Joseph Priestly for Pepsi-Cola
and little Jewish David Mendel
for the richest history of Christianity—
it took a Jew to know what Jesus really means.**

21 January 2016

HOW TO WRITE

as a start:

sit in front of something made by someone else;

be present to it and listen,

any words you hear in your head, write down.

don't censor, don't worry.

any images that come to mind, write them down

don't censor. don't worry.

any events or happenings or stories

that start telling in your head.

write them down.

This is called listening by language,

hearing by speaking.

That's as much as I know how to tell about the process.

**You'll learn everything just by sitting in front of
somebody's painting or sculpture or photo.**

**Once you've started doing this, and showing it to people,
you'll stop challenging yourself.**

**Everything speaks. That's what the paganism is
about: everything speaks. All we have to do is listen,
and write down what comes to mind.**

**What comes out of our mouths: because our speech is as
authentic as the object's. That is the point, and the glory.**

21 January 2016

== == ==

*for Elizabeth Deran
on her ninetieth*

**The older we get
the closer we get
to remembering
what we forgot—
street map of Berlin,
that song about a
tiger by some English
guy, that bathtub
in Damascus, red
mud of the Delaware,
long quote from Derrida
that made us laugh
until we understood.**

21/ 22 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Nothing to remember, mind
smooth as a slate
under running water.
Time's other blessing, what
Narcissus really saw.**

21 / 22 January 2016

= = = = =

**Or sit on my lap
thinking my
words out of your
accurate mouth
while I sleep
in the touch of your skin.**

21 / 22 January 2016

=====

**I have borrowed trouble
till my house is full,
my pockets
stuffed with bad weather,
Armenian certitudes,
streets of Pompeii.
Tourists come from
Europe and Japan
jus to witness my dismay.**

21 / 22 January 2016

=====

**Be believable at least
like a bird at the window
you actually can name—**

**we are left over
from an earlier time
and have to make do**

**with what we feel.
For 'time' read 'planet.'
For 'feel' read 'know.'**

**Now you can tell a hawk from a crow.
And always choose the latter—
messengers from our beginning.**

22 January 2016

ONEIROLOGY

**How old was David
when he was old
and the Shulamite
came to warm him
by touch through the night?**

**How old do you have to be
and do you have to be a king?
Isn't even any child entitled
to sleep in the warmth
of the other? I suppose
that's what dreams are for.**

22 January 2016

=====

**Would you mix rock oil with olive,
put gypsum in the baker's flour?**

**Then how come you do with language
what you wouldn't dare do with bread?**

22 January 2016

=====

**Lost the name of the day
but the tree outside my window
brought it back:**

*I am yew and I am green,
green as the Lady is
whose day is today.*

22 January 2016

=====

**My new passport
came today,
good for ten years.
Now I can safely
stay where I am.**

22 January 2016

RESISTANCE NOW

Resistance louder than defeat
snowlight through an empty day
full of its will to change,

thundersnow over the Capitol
a dome already is part of the sky

the Resistance wants your body
so It can govern your mind
Resistance is always naked,
comes at you from behind
like poetry, like the sky

Resistance wants to borrow your mind
use it, send it out exploring,

engorging
information, doing work in far places,
action at a distance, the Resistance
runs your neurology

and there was
silence in heaven for the space of half an hour

the space of time — that was Resistance
spinning past your eyes, Resistance
removing your mentation from your control,

even from your awareness,

using, using you

mind without awareness

sent out to seek, research, fondle growing things,

doing work in the West,

in what is far.

Sometimes it's after a flower

you could do it in your sleep,

wake smothered gently

in hydrangeas,

prove the point,

leafy, dewy, softly blue,

child's garden of, Himalayas

rife with,

the Resistance

wants things always as they were,

a thing a person

always what it was

before,

Resistance means

the past form of the living being

and there are no dead.

Every form available

to the Resistance,
using your mind for its rapine,
its plundering the past,

drives into the man I was
to get the boy, the girl
in the woman,
O Lady there are two of you now
the mind needs both,
the past and the now,
the Resistance seizes,

from the baseline chorus
weird wrong shout of nothing happens
the Resistance is gathering,
the sky is full of it, ever be blue,
sky flower

, animal the mind
catches glimpse of, *holds*
onto the sight

so the beast can't run away.

You drag it home, tame it, ride it,
girl on an aurochs,
the Resistance
contradicts everything that seems,

the Resistance is a vast army
of dedicated neurons

**fanatical, leap
from brain to brain easy as weather,**

***the shape is infinitely
reproducible, and it is the shape
that is transmitted to the other,
that is the Resistance,***

**uses your brain
to answer my questions
as lovers slake their lust on one another.**

**I reach in and find who you were
and you to me the same
until we recede into
our awarenesses home**

**and the Resistance is done.
Garden of Eden. Do it all again.**

23 January 2016

READING MUSIL

Reading *The Man Without Characteristics* is like reading the *Thousand and One Nights*. All that seems natural opens into strangeness, delight, anxiety. His people are like no people — no one lets himself be known so intimately yet so fragmentarily. You can feel her breath on your cheek, feel her fingertips—but you couldn't recognize her on the street.

23 January 2016

ANOTHER PRACTICE

**Look at someone in the street or in a café—
write down what he's thinking.**

**Don't stare, don't interpret,
don't be Sherlock Holmes—**

just look and know
by writing down what comes to mind.

**Many 'brains' are scattered through your body—
learn to think with them.**

Hear yourself think.

23 January 2016

== == ==

**I was a phoenix myself
in a former life,
ambiguous relationship
with fire still.
And unicorns are frequent
in these tame woods.
I hear their trumpet
calls most every night,
and neighbor dragons
roar in cloud and cave
and watercourse. Beasts
known in mind seldom
go extinct. They propagate
wildly, like love affairs
and anxieties, they feed
on our dreams. We are all
alive in you and you in us.
And everything thinks.**

23 January 2016

BLIZZARD

**Thirty million people
in the path of the storm.
If even ten percent of them
are nervous as I am
about *what comes to us
from outside, what
the weather wants*, then
three million human
consciousnesses are throbbing
with anxiety, foreboding,
fear. Imagine a way to
harness that mental energy,
shape those mentations
to make something real
out here in the world.
A fortress, An idea. A cure.**

23 January 2016

=====

**Where could all these
animals be coming from
to be us then suddenly
start building temples
and from temples learn
to build houses as from
the gods learn to be human.**

23 January 2016

=====

**There was a lake in the middle of the world
there were rivers flowing in and out of it
we can never decide, *if this is a man*
Levi questioned, what does human preclude
or are we on the way of learning at last
and why does it take so long, or**

**if it took a million years to get to Göbekli Tepe
twelve thousand years till now seems not all that slow
and we would get there in a trice
if we could just learn not to kill.
Murder by man or by the state holds us to the rock.**

**This guess is old as language is
which is not very
but while we're still able to speak
we might be able not to kill.**

23 January 2016

HURRYING TOWARDS NOW

1.
Oil of revenge
meaning of the dog
howling locked in the car
a constellation
(excite by weather)
random archeology
no one is looking at this picture.

2.
Because the ink
is still not dry on he Pyramids
the river reconsidering its course
change is the only will it has
its way of being all of us
sailors or saviors
no captain on this boat.

3.
The world is all about
horizon She rises sometimes
from Her straight chair
shaped like the h
in the Hesht of Her name.

4.

**All nations and all music
are needed to decide
comfortable swagger
of the Sun across the sky
as once in Syracuse a flashing
light imagined forest all around
with eyes in it of all our wolfless
ways, raptors and religions
at peace beneath fallen leaves,
Peaceable Queendom! we sang,
put out the light and open the door.**

23 / 24 January 2016

== == == == ==

**How can the moon know
so many things when his eye
is half-closed most of the time?**

**Or does he (I bet) shield
his eyes from our dreams,
lost and lustful and full of wolves**

**and creatures even he doesn't know
from his mere traveling—
we scare him back into the dark**

**with all our tiresome
contradictions, beautiful
people with bad dreams.**

24 January 2016

= = = = =

**Old Italian designs
show the moon
with a man's face—
wise southerners
to guess the great
Nortehrnr truth,
the moon is a man.**

24 January 2016

=====

**Resilience they call it
when the heart comes back to life**

**we have to forget who we are
if we want to be together
even for one autumn afternoon.**

**For you are a vast city
spread out to the horizon**

**and I am a destitute migrant
stumbling ashore on the coast of you**

**and at my feet a tern's nest
the mother bird screaming overhead.**

24 January 2016

=====

**To understand how far we've come
without getting there—what a symphony!**

**Like Hovhaness in winter, bell or gong
far off in the snow on a holy mountain**

**reminding how much we embed in music,
all the distances we've come,
the years we still have to go.**

24 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Lay millions of words at Someone's throne..
That's all the vates or poeta knows.**

**Write. Let the carmina find their own way
to that great and necessary Ear.**

24 January 2016

=====

**Be my dear my darkling Ink
the thought og your fluent
opacity renews the alphabet
the way I could drink the smell
of coffee in the Viennese café.**

24 January 2016

== ==

**While I wasn't
looking they
all drove away.
Sounds and colors
and were they even
really here?**

24.I.16

RENT-A_GHOST [adv.]

Having had so much dealings with the dead, I am able to offer a new service to the community: ghosts for hire I will arrange to equip any premises with one or more suitable specters. These are especially useful in new houses, and even more so in virgin condominiums or apartments in new-built luxury towers, for instance on the west side of Manhattan. A ghost lends character to a place, and creates an atmosphere guests will delight in, and householders will find instructive, learning from their scarce-seen inhabitants the difference between is and maybe, in and out, normal and not.

**24 January 2016
Hillsdale**

AUBADE

1.

**Urgency. Dream wide awake
throng of fragments
the classic age returns
I married the Æneid
I strove against mere light**

**into the woods all round my house
to be my house**

2.

**Scraps of night at first light
MLK sitting quiet in the chapel
his face gleaming with the hot day
JFK on Eastern Parkway,
all the lost K's, slagheap of memoria
with diamonds in it,
blue gleam in my mother's ring.**

**Style of the classic age
fingering the instrument
prefiguring the lute of Li Shang-yin.**

3.

**Friendly voices of the dead
shaped like the alphabet.**

4.

**Girl on horseback I never knew
people make things
up to confuse me,
all my life bewildered by the real,
an empty bus,
a bird slowly across the sky,
why, why do things do
what they do?
Do they mean what they say?
I have to go back to bed
close my eyes and see.**

5.

**And she will be there,
the reason if not the rationale.**

6.

**The scenario goes like this:
a young man climbs three flights of stairs
the door is opened by a soprano
the opera begins. But music
has not yet re-arisen
from the tomb of speculation,
the egotism of number.
So we hear nothing.
Stagehands roll away the stairs.
The young man is panting from his climb.**

From the front rows we can hear his breath.

7.

By now the daylight means it.

My work is done.

I close the diptych

mother and son safe inside

safe in the eternal

eye of the beholder.

We are only witnesses.

25 January 2016

== == ==

**Stretch some thread for me
cotton from a neighbor field
spool it snug and drop it in my hand
so I can sew bone buttons on
a shirt that was never made,
the thought of cloth alone
shapes to the body the way
the body shapes to the mind.
Drop the spool on my palm
so I really know it's there.
There's something smutty
about thread, all the places
it is free to go. goes already
in its tight-wound dreams.**

25 January 2016

== == == == ==

**I heard you
from far off
that's no way
to talk to a river
and a river
is what you are.**

25 January 2016

BRIGHT DAY

**1.
Shield from shame:
the sunshine
democratizes, ugly
word for lovely
state of affairs,
all exposed at once,
nowhere to hide.**

**2.
Except the damp cavern of the alphabet,
the portable Lascaux that language is,

whose deepest chapel is blue silence.**

25 January 2016

=====

**Sometimes I ask too much
exorbitant animal with blue hands
reaching out into your
fields, flowers,**

**and where are you then,
chosen, lifted to heaven
this tall plastic vase.**

Everybody sees you.

**25 January 2016
[typed]**

=====

**How does this serve?
Watching the angel
walk right by.**

**Cast this in wax
and win the bee**

**why do you march
to those muffled drums?**

**Listen to the crows, my totem,
hurling insults to you,
just you, across the sky.**

**25 January 2016
[typed]**

IN THE DESERT

on no moon nights
the planet Venus rising
casts a shadow
so bright it is, so clear
the air. They say.

I picture a stick or a staff
stuck upright in the sand
making the shadow—

just so the sapling or paling
stood, standing as, for,
the goddess Ashera
worshipped by Canaanites
and errant Jews,

tall tree
goddess
they say.

25 January 2016
[typed]

=====

**Things tend to vanish
when we don't need to see them—**

**there is a miracle
embedded in the fact of distance**

**from it alone we derive
all sense of self and other**

**therefore the distances
are sin and salvation—**

save the distances.

**26 January 2016
[typed]**

CASTING SPELLS

To spell a word
is to be afraid

of what it says
or sounds

out loud.

To spell a word
unmagics it,

then that magic can be *cast*
somehow on cat or cow
or clerk or commoner

even the Queen needs
wizards to come
mornings to brush

the alphabet out of her auburn hair.

26 January 2016

=====

**Get a new start
something is always beginning**

**Climb aboard
and be wherever it goes.**

26 January 2016

=====

**Yew trees more
alive with wind
than any other**

**resurrection-tree
in English graveyards.**

All wind is breath.

26 January 2016

=====

**Reasonable risk
is still red**

**(all my favorite
words point to you)**

26 January 2016

WHINING

So if the tree trunks were red
and the leaves blue
how would the sky behave?

Can we dress our minds
the way we dress our bodies
silk or sackcloth, grunge or fresh?

I think I'm bothering you
with questions just to get you
to talk — I am every child

and you are every silent parent
pretending to be the Rock of Gibraltar
or the merciless Man in the Moon,

just talk to me, that's all, true
and false sound just the same, fill
my ears with sweet syllabic song

doesn't matter what you say
I need the sound of answering,
the spouse of reponse — a spouse

is the one who finally speaks,
the nervous or swaggering genius
who looks at the judge and says I do.

26 January 2016

THE TIMES

**comes in on Sunday
goes out on Monday
sometimes Tuesday
about 10 percent of it
actually gets read.
But what a thrill
on Wednesday morning
to throw the whole
world away! And still
be around for lunch.**

26 January 2016

=====

**Red.
If it were just a color
but it isn't.
It is a limit,
an incitement to transgress.
A limit.
Red is the end of
something we have to go past.
If it were a color
it would have been my favorite
when I was a child
if I was a child.
Nothing is certain.
Saying red is a color
is like saying blue is a color
and that is transparently false.
The world is blue but nothing else is.
Are there any colors
that pass the test
of doing what colors do?
Yes, you. You are my favorite color.
I want to paint everything else you.**

26 January 2016

=====

**All I can do is write.
That is the secret.**

**I walk by writing, run,
travel, fly, besiege
cities, conquer**

**then to the next sentence.
The text. The roof**

**above me, my
shivering scribbling glory.**

27 January 2016

=====

**I saw a bird
soar by.
It was no bird
it was my eye,
spectacular
pathologies.**

27 January 2016

== == == == ==

**Somber morning bright as it is,
woke thinking about making a will,
it's time, sit thinking about trial
by jury and jury duty, thrusting
other people's fate on some poor
citizen. Cling of karma. No absolution.**

**This is not me talking, not the me of me
but some skeptical Jesuit inside
who knows only too well
the truth of things that have no truth.**

27 January 2016

IN THE WORLD TO COME

**O lamb,
how baaa?**

We must be innocent again.

27 January 2016

=====

If you don't know, don't guess.

**It takes hours
to get to that tree**

only minutes to chop it down.

I mean years.

28 January 2016

=====

***Njera* soft flat bread of the Æthiopians
spoken of in ancient prophecy
(you will have to eat the plates beneath your food)
when eaten under the el station on Broadway
near 125th Street strengthens the intellect
and confirms artistic talent. Fact.
There may be a restaurant still there for that.**

28 January 2016

=====

**Maybe miracle?
Garbage truck
backs up
beeping. Bell
in an empty sky.**

28 January 2016

=====

for Billie

**A Yoga teacher
gave me a flower
to be,**

**Water this
till it stands up
and holds its quiet
asana. And you
stand up straight
too, for once,**

**though you'll never
match the amaryllis,
but take comfort,
something will be
upright,**

**maybe
virtue is contagious
the way beauty is.**

28 January 2016

IO HELENE

**You come into the world
with open eyes**

**I suspect you already see
more than most of us--**

**(maybe because of how
your parents see so well)**

**and I suspect you'll have to do
a little forgetting as you grow**

**just to get along with the rest of us,
before you take hold of the world**

**with that strong arm.
Seeing clear and taking hold—**

**that's what the world is for
that and giving back, giving,**

**the way the world
has just given us you.**

28 January 2016

=====

from a collage by Lynn Behrendt

**I know how to dance
because I am brick**

**I was a sky once
when I was a child**

**till I tried to be a bird
and was,
 I was a bird**

**but (did you know this?)
for a bird in the sky
coasting there above all your
cities, all your brick barns
moving in the sky is like slogging through mud**

**I bet you didn't know that
the sky is blue mud**

it is very hard to fly

very hard to dance

I was a bird and then

**I wanted to be a human
a dancer and I danced
unfortunately in female form
so I couldn't break anything**

**so I tried to eat bricks
to be strong
but bricks were too old for me**

**but I still know how to dance
because I am a falcon and
possibly an eagle**

**various feathered events
fulfil their karma in me
so it's usually me you see
cluttering your barnyard, babe,**

**it's hard to be me
so much me all the time,
I can't help it,
I have to become everything I see**

**I know how to dance because I dissolved the sky
I know how to dance because I bird
I bird and I word
and I stand on tiptoe**

I stand in you,

**that delicate pointy foot is not my hoof
I am clumsy but I dance
I am earth but I sky
sometimes heaven comes
down to get me
or just to part my hair**

I like the wind in my hair

**things know how to answer
the way I know how to dance**

**I know how to dance
because I stretch out
along the ground
like the shadow of a bird overhead**

I know how to dance because I am dead.

28 January 2016

=====

**Job answers weather.
Or is it the man.**

**We need a new word for *woman*
a word that doesn't have a man in it—
lady without the lord,
queen without some king.**

**Queen was the real word,
cognate with *gyne* all the way back
but they lifted it to Queen
debased it to quean.
As usual. Nothing in the middle,
the actual, the norm.**

**Let her be queen again, queen and man,
queen and child.**

29 January 2016

=====

**Language is a sentry post in the wilderness.
The border guards are asleep.
Daily I try to sneak across the frontier.**

29.I.16

====

from a second Lynn Behrendt collage

**I know that woman
I have risen from her pond many times
she says she owns that chateau
but no one does. Or the deer
maybe, leaping unaccountably
into the water-feature the wisteria
the greenery everywhere
why is it always springtime in the mind?**

**She seems afraid of what she has made—
that's how artists are different from carpenters
welders and tailors, they know
that what they have made has life of its own
and anything that is alive knows how to kill.
Politics: the science of staying in your house
undisturbed. Birds and flowers
like the coat-of-arms of the sky**

**but you can't see me.
I am standing behind the eagle behind the chimney
the stork on the stack, the stick in the mire,
you can't see those either, my eyelids
flicker close and then you won't see anything**

you ain't seen nothing yet!

and that's the truth of our matter
we can't see nothing]
as long as we see we're seeing something

you look out always and only on a world you made.
You make it by looking.
Why does it always get philosophical,
philosophy is the thief of time,
baggage on board you should have left home,
philosophy is a sparrow caught between
window glass and window screen.

Doesn't matter why we see
what we see is true
or true enough for me and thee,
the bird, the house, the kiss
waiting at the back of the neck,
the soft skin they call nape

because we have to live on hope.

29 January 2016

=====

1. Inference:

**People running by—
it must be Saturday,
work ergs sent out to play.**

2. Leading to Opinion:

**Imagine keeping your energy intact
o what alchemy might be—**

**right now humanity is idling again
in waste of energy, and ignorance.
SISTE VIATOR DOMI I pleaded once:
Traveler, Stay Home. But now:
Jogger sit down and jog inside.**

3. But with a Yeatsian Paqlinode:

**But oh how her
blonde pony tail
dances as she goes.**

30 January 2016

= = = = =

**All this time the snowflake
obsidian on my window
sill has been talking to me.**

**One nation black and white.
The sun's tawny
light when she comes up
bronze in the trees.**

**Hold me in your hand
and be quiet a while,
using words, those true
archangels of silence.**

30 January 2016

=====

EVERY THING

SAYS SING

FOR ME .

30.I.16

=====

for C.S. & A.S.

A top topples
over, the spin
still twists
in the *mindly*
slow, slow

you call it torque
spaces spinning
still
 where still
means moving.

Nothing witnessed
ever stops
being seen,
he argued
on his lyre,

 make
the lyre vibrate,
we listen well beyond

ultimate audible
overtones. It all
is lyric,

hammer
and saw, spotted
leopard
on my stairs—
insoluble problem
we call dream

(any animal an aporia)

dream used to mean
joy in the night time
but now o my.

Dream
used to mean.

Lyric? Lyric
as leprosy,
longitude, Ligeti,
lapis lazuli,
laughter.

Laughter
makes the strings
of the lyre cry out,

guitar with no body,
body with no me,

why am I after
a new metaphysics

sunlight in winter trees

**neither Tübingen
nor *Tugend*, just
the senses as they are.**

**Every word is lyric
no matter how dull
the mind of the maker,
lost in concept found in sound,**

sound finds.

**It's all anyhow
in any you
already, nothing needed**

**from outside except
the kiss of any this.**

30 January 2016

=====

**I have an easy chair by the window
but it's not as if I had an easy chair by the window.**

**There's a lawn with trees and birdbath out there
but it's not as if there's a lawn and trees out the window.**

**I have a table at my elbow
and a cup on it and pens and some books
but it's not as if I have a cup at my elbow
and a book to read.**

**There are plenty of birds outside—
bluejays, sparrows, chickadees, mourning doves.**

But it's not as if there are birds. Not at all.

30 January 2016

=====

**On the other side
of where one is
a storm of light**

**headlights blazing
into the window
of the weird motel**

**remind the child
of what he's read—
can't remember**

**learning to read,
it is or was
an always with him**

**like fingernails
always there
always changing.**

**Light reminds him
of music. Outside,
the trees remind**

**him of the stories
they tell him,
must be them**

**talking, telling
the things you learn
alone in the woods.**

**What is a dryad?
How do fountains taste?
He remembers**

**a story about water,
closes his eyes
and floats away.**

30 January 2016

JUDAS'S DREAM

The garden was a dream.
The police always knew
already where He was,
preaching and teaching and
talking to us. To me.

Why did they need a spy?
It was the *consent of his friends*
they wanted, as a sign
they could make away with Him
as they wanted, a dent
in the consensus of love.
Not His love, but ours for Him.

A silver coin for each day of the Moon,
signifying wholeness,
completion of a cycle.
Judas kept trying to figure it out
and we keep working on it too,
bones and boulders, a garden
of sleeping friends, lovers maybe
and a metaphor floating on destiny

**or was it a real cup, in His hand
finally, and He had to drink?
Real swords on the police,
realas life and death.
But is death itself real?
Judas wanted to know
and knew only one way to find out.**

31 January 2016

STRANGE FRIENDSHIPS

1.
Children are the gate—
a young girl — nine
years old her grandma
said — blowing
music from a hollow
bone.

2.
 Campfire
in the Mojave.
Trees in this
laconic landscape
few. A lake
made all of salt.

3.
Children have
to forget so much
just to grow up.
I think some of us
remember too well
all the important
things, what it really
feels like to see the moon,

4.

**Or how your skim
really belongs
to some other person
you will never meet.
The desert even far
from the meagerest
animal always remains
realer than you are.**

31 January 2016

WHAT THE NIGHT TOLD ME

Agitate, as if a star
were coming
and the blue
entablature only
an idea you almost
have — to call it
a star implies
our terrible distance,
observers of tiny glints
in the dark of the day.
In the desert they
are many because we
are few, don't use
them up with seeing.
Enough to have
some sense of who they are,
busy with differences
in meaning and immensity
we'll never catch on.
Pretend they form an alphabet
but there is no language
yet for them to write.
Make it up for them:
that's your job, all
your yammering bibles are a start.

31 January 2016

=====

**It could be the day itself
waiting at the corner.
It has a diog—
that's not a good sign.**

**Signs are usually
problems on the way,
pretty woolen blanket
spread on a dying man.**

**It must be the dog
makes me so gloomy,
not-quite-animal not-quite-human
padding along as if it owns the world.**

Leaving no room for not-quite-me.

31 January 2016

=====

**Who let all that light in?
Do we need the weather?
Walk slow this day, very,
looking to the left and right
as if there were something
there to see, there never is,
the looking is enough,
the looking *sees*. The lawyer
in me sat down, the jury
pondered. Twelve men
know less than one. The judge
is still asleep. I blame
the light for making me happy,
the dark for dreaming me on
so that mere existence
seems a kind of story, one
worth reading or at least
watching on the screen, mind
maybe on something else,
cheese and crackers, Paradise.**

31 January 2016

