

2-2016

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Inside a phial
of your perfume
Yseult, inside
a spinning top,
a pigeon landing
on the riverside,
a single essence
reigns. Hear me
in your sleep.
in every step.

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1 February 2016

= = = = =

Indecisive day.
Rabbits uneasy,
warm for the calendar
at least. Keyboard
music left over
in my head. Debussy.
How can hands so
irritate, so soothe.
Unplug the Casio.
Let MacNeice's
"Bagpipe Music"
start up again.
language can be
so cynical, like
reading Heraclitus
before breakfast,
dubious milk,
illusory bread.
I want the Greek to mean
*Politics brings out
the worst in men.*
There, it's said.

1 February 2016

POETS I HEARD AT N.Y.U.

**Edward Estlin Cummings
speaking calm yankee prose.
Louis MacNeice chanting
Belfast uptalk askeptic
lyring song.**

**I was trying
to learn American
in those days. People still
ask me where I'm from.
As if I knew.**

1 February 2016

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**The sun is out
and smiling fast.
Tomb robbers
slink away
with empty hands
but something
lingers in us
after, soft
words of a corpse,
a crack of dream.**

`1 February 2016

= = = = =

**Oh but you're just beginning,
don't put the tools away.
Bring all your workforce
to the chosen site, nail
the morning shadow to the ground
and vbuild up from there.
You've got all the wood in the world
to work with, water and stovepipes,
insulating foam. No desert
for a thousand miles and a bus
every hour. Build! Exalt
your secret vocabulary, Mage!**

1 February 2016

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**Random music of a winter sky,
pallor, genesis, Armenian trumpet,
something buried near the Syrian border
sickens all history there thereafter.
Everlasting warfare, swift beheadings.**

**We must unearth the invert pyramid
but shut your eyes tight when those
ancient unknown colors gush out
to stain the air, pray to Saint Gabriel
till the wind disperses them so we
are snug and actual again. Or some
good god. Bad magic makes murderers.**

1 February 2016

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**Wipe the eyes clear of music
before you begin to sing.
The soft curtain wafts
behind you, touching.
Shivering of overtones.
Alone in a dark room
back to the window
your best song. Only
the words remember
but they hold on.**

1 February 2016

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**I watched a video
of me giving a reading
a woman beside me
signing what I said.**

**She made a flock of birds
fly out of my poem
and swoop around her head
just with her bare hands.**

**Maybe all words
really have bare hands,
try to reach out,
sometimes to touch.**

1 February 2016

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as if they were raindrops
or the audience waiting to begin
so desperate to begin the story
so that it can end and everyone free
in their own lives again
and no story anywhere! Wells
in front of old houses. Trees
on Brooklyn streets — c'est tout,
ça suffit. Something like that
if I had words in my own body,
the difference between the skin
of the belly and of the back,
Tremendous. Means making us
shiver with feeling, who knows
what name we'll give to that
luminous trembling fills me
looking say at your skin. No one
notices, the story won't let go.

1 February 2016

THE SMELL OF INK

**is something like
the hope of liberty.
Of clarity — from which
in turn one begins
to guess identities.
Yours, mine. The news
is never good, but
new things mostly are.
As long as the books
keep writing themselves
all will be well. Doesn't
matter if no one reads.
The inscription of language
into the noosphere suffices.
Scriptum manet. Whatever
is written remains
even when the books are gone.
Ashurbanipal's whole library
alive this minute in your head.**

1 February 2016

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**Spinoza forgot about the stars
as evidence
of our hopeless I-itude.**

**But there they are
clustered by greedy us
into implausible identities
unknown to themselves.**

**The way I tell myself stories
about the people passing in the street.**

2 February 2016

= = = = =

**It never happened before—
woke up from the subway
into the roar of actual train,
loud freight train a mile away
never heard it so close. Dream
as handmaid to waking.
Dangers of clarity. Fall back
into the nowhere of the night.**

2 February 2016

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**...to use me as an instrument.
And I consented. Blue sky
October 1958. The settlement.
It is good to have some things
clear. Have problems galore
(an Irish word) but never doubt.
To doubt myself is the same
as doubting the world. And so
I fitted exactly into my space
down to where the action is.**

2 February 2016

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**Action, the despair
of consciousness.
Do something
is never a good idea.**

**Resist performance.
Negative path. Relax,
money always wins.
Silent prayer resists.**

2 February 2016

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**And we walk or climb
at last up into the secret
that opens before us**

**like the gleam of sunlight
on brass or even gold,
*into the gleam***

**It behooves us to vanish
for an hour or
forever, who can say?**

**2 February 2016
“ Listening to Bartok’s
*A Kekszakallu herceg vara***

= = = = =

**There are always things
standing around**

**but you can't really think
without the trees,
 you must
have trees to think with,**

**lots of trees to think
something through to the end**

**I hate stories, all the pale
entanglements of**

what simply ordinary is.

2 February 2016

= = = = =

Now the now begins
and all the absences fill in
the way water quietly
invades anything it can
or animals creep under
porches and your summerhouse
all winter long. Soprano
is how it sounds, Middle
European, throaty, alluring
as much as opera can. Tenors
hurry to seduce her in vain.
Tenors are not enough like
water, more like tree-bark,
rugged, vain. I was the bass,
villain or father, depending,
are they different, I usually
get in the next to the last word.
Which is how i know how
close we are to the end already.

2 February 2016
(first comp. on new HP)

= = = = =

As if a rectangle. A vanity
stands close to the door.
A woman sits among mirrors,
plangent weather out there,
rain and wind. She complains
to her three faces but enjoys
what she sees. Three me's.
Mixed feelings. What humans
are best at: a game for one
player, chess inside yourself.
No sides, all middle. Endgame
every moment. Strategy of *nihil*,
like Yugoslavia, Deseret, USSR.
Birds rare in such weather. She
forgives other people easily.,
harder on herself. Nice nails.
It would be sunset if here were sun.

2 February 2016

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**Suppose everything I do is wrong
but the day is right.
Rain comes on time,
Wednesday's child wakes up wise.**

**And all the jabber in the street
sounds like gamelan
each voice a part of music
they make without hearing it.**

Maybe I'm not as wrong as I think.

3 February 2016

= = = = =

**Watch the children
cross the mind.
I was one of them
eager for all I could take in.
The feel of place!
The wood of booths
polished by so many bodies,
soda fountains, restaurants,
sea foam, scallop shells,
bicycle. All of it in books,
books and bread and cheese.
The senses just tiny
footnotes to reality.**

3 February 2016

= = = = =

**You know perfectly well
that when I talk about myself
I'm really talking about you.**

**That's the nature of the beast,
rules of the game. I
is your name too.**

**Everything depends on this.
The texts I speak
come from the secret**

**places in your life
using any words that fit.
Remember this.**

3 February 2016

= = = = =

**Raindrops in the drainpipe
woodpecker on the housewall—
sly percussions of compound words
fitting me together quietly
almost till I am day.**

3 February 2016

CROW CAW

**Analyze a single sound
until it's hollowed out
and we can walk inside
at home in the cavern
of a sound though it is
quiet down here. Silence
of everything said, truth
known, work all done.**

**2.
A single sound
is the same as sleep.
Then the angel
of the Other
wakes us. Duty
begins with the
first word said.
A word is the most
complex silence of all.**

3 February 2016

= = = = =

(first take on a Barbara Leon collage)

We come from the after.
Looking for things—
for us a rock might be enough,
a one-hand-stone say
wet from a running stream
flows down from the hills
lead mines silver mines,
but mind is the only gold.

We put things together (Earth).
We think about them (Air).
We give them to one another (Fire).
and we sleep (Water).

The whole earth is complete
every time you look.

I love you for your cave
the man says, and you for your
water she answers.

Water is always the answer.

She sat there on the rock and said
I have made the whole spectrum
from one color alone.

3 February 2016

= = = = =

**Can it speak
from simple pleasure
and every government
tries to silence it**

**it seems to simple to say
but that is what rulers do
they strike us in our pleasure**

**they rule pleasure, they
take away from us
the ordinary splendor of the world**

**[old typed note]
3 February 2016**

= = = = =

**I don't know how it ends
it begins by itself
and wants to touch you
maybe because touch
is the beginning of holding on.
Is it to comfort
or be comforted?
Such simple questions
you'd think I knew
the answers long ago.
But answers are endings.**

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

**Every night at three
thirty the freight**

**sometimes when the air
is clear the noise
travels half a mile
wakes me.**

**I stare
out the window a while
watch nothing happen.**

**Where is it going,
carrying what? Camel
bells jangling
in the desert, caravan.
The real is imaginary.**

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

**Children learn balance
by spinning tops and riding bikes.**

**How do men forget these things,
fall down in hallways, rule governments?**

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

Let me sleep again

**the night is on my side
in somnio veritas
you analysts suppose**

**wherefore I lay my
head in your lap
and compose myself.**

2.

**Now you tell me
if this is dream or not,
the stories I witness
turn into me I guess
where else could they go?**

3.

**A hard goat cheese from Spain
with rind of crushed rosemary
I nibbled before I went to sleep.**

**Dream has porous borders
patrolled by lazy wolves.
Somehow I have slipped across.**

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

Being with you—
that kind of medicine,

action at a distance
thought-propulsion—

we'll get there yet,
our table in the wilderness,

build our little city up
on a flat rock with *nada* on top

till our breaths mingle
seamless in the wintry air.

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

**All poems are love poems,
a ship broken on a reef.**

**All poems are prayers,
rocky beach with no one there.**

**All poems are silent
but the vast world hears.**

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

**How high is the water in the well?
Will I get home in time?**

**Under the arches the harlots ply
and so to the city we came**

**to understand the real meaning of language
that in the desert says only you and me**

**but here says everyone, like money,
and under all this cloth is human skin,**

**pores and dimples and creases and folds
all of it shouting all day long.**

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

**I can wait
for another time
but can you?**

**The animals all
ask each other
this in the zoo.**

**Now is the rarest
time of all.**

3 / 4 February 2015

= = = = =

Offering inky fingers—
is that enough?
Writing you onto my lap
see,s tpp selfish a wish
with all those stars
out there to conjure with—
be at home in melody
like a queen on her throne
simple as Eypt, wet linen,
smooth red stone.

3 / 4 February 2015

CATALOGUE

**Sulky girls in clothing ads
selling sadness to the middle class.**

**3 / 4 February 2015
End of Notebook 385**

FEBRUARY AUBADE

1

**Comes with the gleaming
as if an ax long
stuck in a tree stump
still bright a thousand years.**

**Viking light. Æsir light.
And the Wanes are rushing
to simplify the soil
with all manner of seeds**

**so that it speaks.
History is the story
of gods abandoning the earth
then coming back again**

to bless and bleed.

2.

**It's all locked away
loose in our etymologies.
Our creeds.
Open and read.**

3.

The color of your cloth
must match the day.

The night was warm
the morning cold.

Not a sound. Silence
woke him, and he had to fill
the dark with language
no one heard, No one hears
him say or write down
The gods live in our quiet skin.

4 February 2015

= = = = =

**Is there space
in moving or in staying**

**such that deer
will not take fright**

**from your presence
standing there?**

**Find that space,
inhabit it, sky**

**far away soft
under some bird.**

4 February 2015

= = = = =

Testing language
by you—

Pythagoras
understood
but didn't say.
The gods drank
coiffée in Africa
called it *molu*
to rime with
what no one said.
There is a mixture
of fact and whim
called personality
Heraclitus understood,
Daimon, the driver
allotting to each
moment its fated act
my whole life chose
to do this minute
I never knew.
That's enough
Greek for today.

5 February 2016

= = = = =

**The song board
a bird pecks on,
she tells me
about parrots,
a crow calls
outside, I feel
like a stranger
in this story,
wingless, random
thinking, thank
god nice neighbors.**

5 February 2016

TO HOVHANESS'S SECOND SYMPHONY

Trying to do it
just the being with,
everlasting Lent
sweet fasting saliva
on your tongue tip
I hear the taste
from years ago
not too many not
too furry with time
the taste touches
my hand too
when we were you.

Quiet now
no despairing,
so much caring
then turn away
just to see
the stars again
no smoke no
liquid no solid,

van Helmont
was it named *gas*
from *chaos*
same sound in Dutch
was it, we put
it in our cars
even now a century
later, I remember
your eyes especially
since they alone
gave themselves to me

and all the rest of you
wrapped in that distance
called difference,
miles and miles and miles
the people of just you.

Little pounces
as if an animal
in your pocket
needed your hand
to nibble, not
to get out, music
never wants to get

out, always in, in.

So it's like a stream
going by, bare woods
day after rain
a lot of water fast
relating histories
I neglect to read
thinking instead
about the far away.

There is a temple there
that looks a little bit
like you, the eyes, the towers,
pleasure gardens, chess
pieces human size
to move around by servants
when I say Rook
Takes Knight and you pout
and all the servants snicker.
The pool is lousy with lotuses,
children are ankling around in there
annoying the red-golden carp,
but we go on with our game.
It feels like praying. It feels
a little like crying. Tears
are salty, I remember

**the taste again of your mouth
fasting from so many words.**

**We are in a country we never were
and there is no winter, the birds
are such I cannot name even one
kind of them, perhaps as well,
maybe I have said too much already**

**and the musicians have come out at last
twiddling and plucking and bleating
bothering us with beauty all over again.
You are pressed against me, I think
it's through my body that you're listening.**

5 February 2016

= = = = =

You have no enemies

**That's hard to hold onto
but once you have it
all your anger — your great
pure luminous anger — is yours
for you to use, creatively,
intelligently, to learn
exactly, and *to heal*.**

Focused anger knows how to heal.

**I was a red-head, I was Irish, I was anger.
Somehow I turned it round
and all that energy was mine to use

to use for you.**

One word. One person at a time.

5 / 6 February 2016

= = = = =

**Animals are drawbridges.
At any moment
they can withdraw
your passage to one another,
you and the beast.
A beast is permission.
Be patient as it comes and goes.**

5 / 6 February 2016

THE ROAD WHAT IT CAN'T

Specify.
Otherwise
unspoked wheel.
Riding on rims.

The road always knows—
that is the sense of it
going where it goes.
It worries me
that I would rather tree.

Stay here, bare
in cold mist
alluringly *in*,
always in, away
from going.

Because going
is always *there*
but this is in
itself present
at peace ungoing,

the road ungone.

5 / 6 February 2016

= = = = =

**Read your nice
Egyptian book
until you hold
her hips and
fall asleep.**

5 / 6 February 2016

= = = = =

**Preaching
to a peach**

**be sweet
my soft,**

**allow my teeth
to meet**

**and rest deep
in your calm well.**

5 / 6 February 2016

= = = = =

for Normandi

**Egypt is upside down.
Turn it right side up**

by word and in

**perfect darkness
no more sun**

you'll see.

**What we see there now
are negatives, empty molds, shadows
of what the *night side* knows.**

We live in the opposite.

5 / 6 February 2016

= = = = =

It's never too dark to see.

**Pilgrim images
marching through our sleeping minds,
chanting the strange
liturgies of where they've been.**

**(The pope's staff has flowered again,
the old man finds he can fly—**

we live by sleep and die by waking.)

**Or we live on the holy mountain
they call the ordinary day.**

5 / 6 February 2016

= = = = =

**How come we don't have
two of everything?**

**Say two smart brains
talking to each other**

**et cetera. Why
do some things come in ones**

**and some in twos
but never three**

except reality?

6 February 2016

= = = = =

**Losing by listening
but what vanishes
whose sound says?**

**Worry these things—
arbitrary enemies!**

**The Grail carried on horseback
home in whose hands?**

**Tell the story yourself
without hearing what you say—
that is the way.**

**The cup, the gold, the gleam enough—
who knows who holds?
It could be anyone, and is.**

6 February 2016

= = = = =

**If we had a temple
who would pray?**

**Torments of spiritual
weather drive them in,
everything is a message,
the rock, the mouse
on the rock, the hawk
that takes the mouse,**

all signs from the not-us.

**No wonder we shutter the chapels,
bury Göbekli Tepe twice,
dread the sound of bells.**

**It's frightening enough to be all by ourselves
but what if there were someone else?**

**Every prayer really says Leave me alone.
Every church a hollow stone.**

6 February 2016

= = = = =

**In time to see angels
rush across the road
like deer or shadows**

**the armaments of dream
are made of devious steel
exploding silently**

**or is that my own cry
that woke me
wakes me into seeing**

**the not-here, the fleeting?
They are angels
because they're gone.**

6 / 7 February 2016

IF I MAY — A PROLOGUE

**Ill-starred, all genesis
lies before us, folks,
dressed as kids in love—**

**what answer can I give
to all your newspapers
archaic transmitters**

**of partial information
more war than beauty
more money than war**

**will never stay in mind
but these are real, they think
real thoughts in their bodies**

**thoughts of a kind at least
that keep them busy
with emotions real or mere**

responses to expectations
of the other — oh other people
what a nuisance

the life of the mind. *Si puo*,
si puo, let me draw
a curtain over this sad emprise

watch the play play out
two hearts in no time.
My prologue is complete,

please leave the theater now.

6 / 7 February 2016

= = = = =

**Waking from nightmare into language
is like being hit by a train in the subway—
fierce wind out of the tunnel then steel
your head a word smashed off its sentence,
tile walls, slick with the blood of speech.**

6 / 7 February 2016

LA FILIACION

after Goya's engraving

To whom do I belong?
Tall conifer, spruce maybe,
facing my window,
takes the shape of the road
it blocks my view of,
dwindling in uphill distance
green,
do I belong
to shape or to color.
You tell me, you who know
the chemical composition
of reminiscence, blue
of the calendar, the Land of Nod.

I usually think I belong to you
“whoever you are,” as Whitman wrote,
but that’s a little too easy,
there may be no one there at all
listening. Just winter fireflies,
just the mermaids’ daughters
laughing in their ocean crèche
until the mirror breaks.
Then they belong to me.

7 February 2016

LETTER FROM AN IMAGINARY FRIEND

You know me by my shade.
Have you ever smelled a shadow?
They smell a little like rain,
I'm like that too, but colors
get into it too, the smell of blue.

You have never really understood me
for all our make-believe conversations.
I tried to tell you but you, you wouldn't
listen, so eventually I too forgot
whatever my message or meaning was.

Despite all the times you spoke to me
you never thought of me those times
you found yourself looking in a mirror
or crumbling Greek cheese on your toast.
You seldom fed me, only weird soirees
in Vienna or Samarkand, exotic stuff
whose taste we never tasted what with
the dancing girls and busy dragomans.

Mornings though you often knew me,
smiled, walked with me up the meadow
almost as real as your hallway, the one
that leads to the great window with forest
in it, with bears and deer just a little bit

realer than I, I think you thought.

And so I am a shade again.

**Don't worry, I'm not leaving you,
this is no letter of farewell.**

On the contrary, know me better.

**Come, I am closer to you now
than I have ever been, dear friend.**

7 February 2016

= = = = =

**The sky makes me sad
it's so far away
the sky cheers me up
it is so bright blue.
Just like you.
You must be the world.**

7 February 2016

= = = = =

**Stagger
under the weight
of silence.
Barely
make it home
to the next word.**

7 February 2016

= = = = =

**Sunday morning
they're all
in church
the church
is all in me.**

7.II.16

FUGUE STATE

Blue Note and blowjobs
blur. history
in one hand,
a half-yard
of hard plastic
device, disco-
red and digital
holds all.

I woke with that
in mind, device
full of histories
not by any means
all of them mine,

destiny, music
before birth
into which we grow,
savage emptiness
of memory
vanished games.

8 February 2016
(first 4 lines dreamt)

= = = = =

**Men working
the poor trees**

**work fast
up there**

**cherry-picker
power-pruners**

**crash of clipped
branches down**

cleaning the air.

8 February 2016

= = = = =

New moon
old year ends

Monkey tomorrow.

Sounds ltoo much
like haiku,

banana peel
dropped under oak.

8 February 2016

**“IN TALKING A LOT YOU WON’T ESCAPE SIN”
SAYS SAINT BENEDICT.**

**If you say little enough
it will get heard**

***in multiloquio non fugies peccatm*
but is much-hearing even worse?**

**We listen our way into despair—
too many songs.**

When the heart needs only one.

8 February 2016

= = = = =

**Then one day it was over.
The one I thought I was
no longer had to be.
But there was still a sky,
some trees, men working
in the street, not one
of them was me. It was done.
So I had done what I had
to do, or failed to do it
and I was done. But here.
All the skills I thought I had
were for what had been done.
It is strange to be someone
when there is nothing to be done.**

8 February 2016

= = = = =

**In my earliest childhood
after infancy
I carried a blank sign
around with me everywhere**

**later I learned to write SIGN on the sign
so people would know what I carried.**

**And then there was nmy face
which also said nothing.
This is as much as I remember**

**plus a vacant lot on Nostrand Avenue
with a big billboard on it
and behind the billboard also one ould hide.**

8 February 2016

ASKING

of the night.
Those steps in Vienna,
who sat halfway up
facing me like a wheat field
daring me to be
a bird again, a
crow if I could?

8 February 2016

= = = = =

**Wishing
on a star
that isn't there**

**political animals
heads lowered
to graze.**

9 February 2016

ARS P.

**The plan is to take
time. Take a long
time and use it,
stretch it,
make it speak
out loud in words
so it doesn't know
it's passing.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**So many words about words—
I am an aviator
falling from his plane
chanting in several languages
the word for parachute.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**Snow outside
it has so many
meanings for us
only one for itself
the thirst of spring.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**Dark enough to read
I thought of flowers
unspecified**

**as in
an easy poem
left to the reader
color and fragrance
if any,**

**not all
flowers have a smell
and there is one
without color too
waiting for you
to close your eyes.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**Engine in Wyoming running
I can hear it from here
bare pastures west of Laramie
I think it's the stars.**

9 February 2016

NOCTUDE

**Little sentence
fragments to
capture the night**

**slippery flanks
of darkness
worth a try.**

9 February 2016

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE CALLED HOPE

**I don't mind
standing here naked
with only my own
words in my mouth,**

**no blissful authority
no privilege
of captured information,
just what says itself**

**despite my ignorance.
If only you knew
what an idiot you're listening to,
or maybe you do and font mind**

listening to what I don't mind saying.

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**Slowly thoroughly
like a sheep eating grass
we interpret
this given world.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**Living in the body of the other—
that;s what bodies are really for
to live a time another’s life
another’s world from inside out,**

**to be the living witness,
to bethe self of the other.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**Time is, as, particle.
A little like light
but motionless.
We move, it abides.
We move through it.
We sare light rays
passing through a quiet forest.
We are eyes taking in
the great mosaic one
tile at a time. So time
is us, not anyone else.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

Trying to get close
is easy,
in is easy
but out the other side
is difficult,
so difficult

suddenly to find yourself
in the hinterland of the other.
Because only the other knows.

9 February 2016

= = = = =

**we try to understand the distance
as if we had some measure
in our pockets that could sing
out some numbers and they would please
the Muse of meaning
and we wdnt be back in Algebra again
suffering from a red book.
We would be right here at last
close by the proximate you
of our current dreams.
But distance sings louder than any this.**

9 February 2016

= = = = =

Always being somewhere else
new snow lacing slim trees
lines, cables. Yelp
of ambulance goes by,

mysterious combo of late
Netherlandish grisaille
and 50's-ish TV all white and grey,
only color if a tail goes by.

End of description, deliberately
vague, leaving out Ash Wednesday,
looking north (where else do I ever?).
You don't need to know.

Look at the picture and speak.
School psychologists at play,
TAT, Arnold Böcklin's phallic
dragon in a cunnic cleft—

I will not see what you propose,
I see a macaque swinging on a vine
the way they do in comic strips,
cartoons always tell the truth,

fall asleep watching Tom & Jerry,
the mouse always wings because they don't,
o the raptures of trivial evidence!
By them I live as Dorn once did

live by the augmenting light
that christened its way up his veins
and made us one of him.
Poets appropriate the reader's I

and take s it out for a spin
my father would have called it
to go along an unknown road
with no goal but the going,

there, that's the place I meant.

10 February 2016

= = = = =

**Someday me and my friends
will open an agency that rents out
living bodies of other people
to be occupied for an hour or a day
by your mind, wishes, insights,
you, the customer, always right,
while the original owner's mind
sleeps safe and undisturbed inside
while your will rules. You will own
otherness entirely. And that
will be the end of poetry.**

10 February 2016

= = = = =

**Nobody needs to know—
that's what the snow
keeps saying.**

**I am adequate
for all equations,
contour is my middle name.
I aim at birdbaths, phone lines,
mountain tops, everything
welcomes me the same way.
Let me become you, let me
take your body for my own,
your architecture will be my mind.**

10 February 2016

= = = = =

**As a swine
before whom
many pearls have been cast
I confess
myself chastened
yet bold.**

**Wealthy with pearls
and all the wisdom
words can give
I need never leave my wallow.**

**My world is full
of unlikely gratitude.**

10 February 2016

= = = = =

**We live in a place
where it rains all the time**

**generous morals
nourishing plants**

**and wisdom comes walking
down from the hills every night.**

10 February 2016

= = = = =

**I don't need to do this anymore
this morning and this evening venture
this shield of feeble consciousness
through time, that living animal.**

**There is a moment when
things are easy to believe
then the door slams
and you're all alone again.**

**The room reminds you—
the walls are your own walls,
the pictures stuck up on them
are the few that you remember.**

**If you even do. Things are far
now, and you are here—
it must be where you intended
to be from the beginning**

**and it's the only place there is.
No one know how to sing
that song but you. And you
have almost reached the end of it.**

So shut up and sing.

11 February 2016

= = = = =

**Too late to make sense.
Have to let the senses
take care of us. See this,
touch that. Taste the light.**

11 February 2016

= = = = =

Once it was all images
now just grammar
touching you,
twisting the vagus nerve,
bothering the hippocampus.
Untranslatable stirrings
of consequences. Vines
looped round (say it)
the heart at last.

11 February 2016

= = = = =

**Black on white
is the only right.
In them abide
all the colors
except one.
Can you name it?
Out of sight now
over the crest
of the hill the
absent color
is the castle
where we live
safe from everything
but change. And
change is what color is for.**

11 February 2016

= = = = =

Things we think about
along the way.
Where were we going
when we began?

And where is now
exactly? I watch the train
pass at the crossing
behind the mall,

maybe somebody watches
me watching. Things
like that distract us
from the journey.

Who is she? Who
are they? Am I plural
too, just a poor town
along the tracks,

chapel, diner, shacks?
I have lived here
all my life and don't know
the name of the place

I carry with me wherever I go.

11 February 2016

= = = = =

**Awaking guilty
as from a crime
whose only evidence
the counting numbers
in their Sanskrit form,
especially 4.**

**Legerdemain of light
to whisk away
those traces, leave
sunshine and calm streets**

**only far away
like half-formed
clouds on the horizon.**

**The Sins of the Fathers:
that is, the self in dream.**

12 February 2016

= = = = =

**Passing through
and leaving things changed,
unnoticed miracles,
blue hat on a fence post
I'm talking about
feelings again, about feelings.**

12 February 2016

= = = = =

**Consensus
is a radio
blaring
in an empty room.**

12.II.16

= = = = =

**I want to get rid of this guilt,
this never-ending sense of wrong.
I want to bring it to you
and spill it into your lap
in the form of yet one more sin.**

12.II.16

WHY ONE GOES ON WORKING

**A top
instructs us.
It is upright
only when it moves.
To stop even for a
second is to fall.**

12.II.16

= = = = =

**Sometimes
dangerous
to look at things.**

**A fallen tree.
Sydney Harbor
full of sun and ships.**

**Sudden vistas
break the heart
no matter why.**

12 February 2016

= = = = =

**Odd ways the snow melts
showing where the earth holds heat**

**go back and dream some more—
it's only now**

**you're not due on deck
till then, another island**

on another sea.

12 February 2016

=FORECAST

**Ominous sunshine
to look ahead,**

**but now is simple
as bread, one
taste, one texture
at peace. Complete.**

13 February 2016

IN WORKSHOP

**Help them write
the long
poem they are.**

13.II.16

ANXIETY

1.
dreaming
another place
to be
and still be me.

2.
Anxiety seizes
pain before it comes,

3.
Worry uses every evidence
like a determined
detective, or prosecutor—
that official Greek law
called the *diabolos*—
from whom our word *devil*.

13 February 2016

for Charlotte, on St Valentine's, 2016

How cold it is
for Valentine's,
just to make
the heart work harder,

the meaning
strive out of the chill
ordinary thinking
to the real,

the real Ides of Love,
strange, unusual,
beautiful, like you,
and like you different

from all other weathers.
On this cold Sunday
I refuse to look ahead—
you are springtime

enough for me, warm,
growing the light
like flowers, magical,
earthless, everlasting.

13 February 2016

= = = = =

**A word waiting
in the dark.
Then it was day
and who could hear it?**

**I tried, I pressed
my ear against the light
and let it listen.**

**Is this what I heard?
Or did someone say it
just out of sight?**

**So many voices
lurk in brightness.**

14 February 2016

= = = = =

**When Ahab turned
his body from the sun
he does what the earth
does every night.**

**There are no heroes
there is only us
in cold and heat
turning and returning**

**shouting out names
we guess or hope
are finally our own.**

14 February 2016

= = = = =

*Make sure we have stains
for the waters to wash away.*

Live long enough to be glad—
it is so hard being young.
Everything is your aunt's vase
ready to break, and all
they give you is some stupid
flowers, not even a kiss
that lasts longer than this.
And you don't even know
what to do with a kiss.

14 February 2016

= = = = =

**Wall in time
to lean on
your soft against
its hard, cozy
wall like love
always firmer
than you, tough
as you are.
A wall waits.
Walls wait in time
for our soft
shoulders, all
our little doors.**

15 February 2016

= = = = =

**I don't mean to be shallow
it's how streams are
running from myself forever
trying to cover as much
distance as I can. Language
is just me hurrying past.**

15 February 2016

= = = = =

Assuming, just this once
there are enough of us to go around.
Even in front of the ceiling fixture
it's cold in here. We expect miracles
to come *in boxes* and they come
laughing more or less at me.
Who else is there to ridicule
in a world of trigonometry,
mitochondria, easy virtue?
It's hard to be well-behaved
in a school that never ends.
And in restaurants always asking
for more napkins, more water,
sugar substitutes yellow or blue.
I want too much my mother said.

15 February 2016

THE RESIDUE

knows more than I do.
It's here when I'm gone
so it knows a way
of not going. Anywhere.
Abiding is a chemical
reaction, a little animal—
gerbil, bunny, white
mouse— that loves you,
so hangs around.
Learn to be centripetal,
oMensch, learn the deep
well your shadow is.

15 February 2016

= = = = =

Earth tilt love the seasons
learn from the younger
what you still need to forget,

forsythia, the smell of subways,
Samson recovering his sight,
strength I mean, eyes in his fingers,

let me touch your stone, ice
trying to last but not much does,
seaside escapade below the boardwalk

ordinary Coney Island millions
come each year to watch
you strut through sunlight hours.

What if it happened all over again
would the dog still bark?
It is a white world as predicted

colors maybe coming later.
Where was I again?
People do what they can

but the world goes on.
Smell of gardenia. Sometimes
I wish I were even dumber,

could just hold onto this bard
silvery bar of slippery soap
in one hand, feel its nice sleaziness

and hope. Nope. No soap
we used to say, just that way.
And don't ask me why.

16 February 2016

= = = = =

I'm always talking to
someone as little smarter
than I am, yet also
gullible, someone I want
to love me or at least
put up with my advances
verbally, someone who one
day will tell me all
I need to know, stone
by word by song by
sound by the pale
shadow under the tree.
But that's me guessing—
someone knows better
than me, maybe even
more than that tree.

16 February 2016

= = = = =

Whatever makes me talk,
we'll go with that.
That insidious drug called Other People—
one dose makes me sing
like an orange crate in a campfire
all crackle and truth and smoke in your eyes-
I need to believe that you make me do it,
you glamorous and demanding Not-Me's.
Can't get away from your demands.
Don't want yo. Give me some more.

16 February 2016

= = = = =

**It is a matter of metabolism
I guess, how much one says
of what one knows, or confesses
all the crimes of ignorance
we cover up with guesses.**

**And why not? We're all
allowed to be wrong,
that's what clothing means
and ads for watches in the *Sunday Times*
and skid marks up the berm.
And I love the shirt you didn't wear today.**

16 February 2016

= = = = =

Try to take hold.
Emerald fastenings
discloak snug galaxies
and we se. We see
colors we are or were.

Kircher's obelisk
uplifted— he knew
what we would find
because he thought
of it — there is only
one Imagination
and we are it.,

grammar
of the universal language
every child's born knowing.
Forget Hebrew Sanskrit Greek.
Things pronounce themselves in sleep.
Theirs or ours? We'll never know.

17 February 2016

= = = = =

**Every Sunday almost
we drove out Jericho Turnpike.
We gave bible names
to decent local places
that deserved their own—
now how can we hear
what they call themselves?**

**White people move in
to a neighborhood
meaning no harm, but they take
the colors out of every
natural thing, try to claim
Here is Somewhere Else.
This is not here. :Land,
forgive them. Land,
forgive us for not listening.**

17 February 2016

= = = = =

He gave her his black mirror.
Onyx or agate maybe
or volcanic rock, obsidian
from Mexico. Or like Uncle
Edward's shewstone,
polished coal,
anthracite from Lancashire
now strangely missing from
the British Museum. But his,
hers, smaller, a ring
he gave her, to wear
darkness on her finger.
Now she can see everything
in it and say what she sees.
A black mirror tells everything.

17 February 2016

= = = = =

No, I never saw it rain in the desert—

**you have to imagine some things
just to get through the alphabet
I mean the years.**

**It must be fabulous,
all that thirst suddenly quenched,
the will overwhelmed by what it wants.**

**Have to imagine us there, then,
the sounds of words
just before language.**

17 / 18 February 2016

= = = = =

**Something fine
out of stone.
Garnet crystal
pried from schist.
Song sung
from a long bad dream.**

17 / 18 February 2016

TENTACLES

asleep. Or of sleep.
The sound
so similar—

but who is it
who speaks?

If I could write
this word again
what would it be
then, and where
would meaning
lodge, in what
it said or what
I meant?

Or this? Any line
is long enough
to reach
across the river
like the iron chain
at West Point
once to keep out
warships of the enemy

whoever they are.
Who stands

against us?
Inimicus, the
non-*amicus*,
the not-friend.

Etymology
is the thief of sleep.
Hand to the heart
pledge allegiance
and call it dream
long before dawn's
ordinary rapture.

17 / 18 February 2016

= = = = =

**I thought of Amen
the god, opened
one volume of Budge
at random, dictionary,
first word I saw
was Amen, 'the hidden
god.' What is happening?
When things speak,
and the hidden god
shows himself
in the American night.**

17 / 18 February 2016

= = = = =

All the forms of who I mean—

**language is the great
song and dance around
a single pronoun.**

17 / 18 February 2016

RESPONSA

**The nibble of the midnight mouse
validates the cheese.**

Imbecile lust, to crave what one possesses.

Flesh is continuous. It pervades.

**A bus starts and stops so people can come and go.
Something else is like that — what?**

You say it again to hear it the first time.

**These sare all answers to questins artfully hidden in the
ravine between sleep and waking.**

18 February 2016

HISTORY LESSONS

**In those days
everything was waiting.
They had to wait
because there was no
now for them to happen in.**

**In those days cat and rabbit
were the same, cops and robbers,
head and tail, rain
came from the sun
and I was everyone.**

**Lictors carried fasces
or had servants carry them
in front of them as they walked.
I have no clear idea
of what of those,
these, words mean.**

**Yasnaya-something
train station where Tolstoy
died. Relationship
of railway travel and**

death. Explain.

In those days the poppies
sprouted of themselves
on men's lapels,
 automatically
like dust settling on glassware.
Next day some other flower.

Certain subway stations
opened directly into big
department stores. Loeser's,
A&S's. Gardenias
were sold at news stands
down there, fragrant,
pale, large, pinned
on dark green cardboard.
Sometimes daylight filtered down.

18 February 2016

= = = = =

**Will I ever get it all written down
before they go away?
Before they take me away
back into themselves?**

18 February 2016

= = = = =

Ready to be ready to begin
it took a long time
sitting on the bench
wishing the grass green
and waiting for the crows
to come possess the offerings

but that's how it is
to be in the world,
the first-person-indicative
governs only what the speaker
can do or make happen—
I read that in a book,

I can sit, can wait,
I can want.

Then the magic
part begins,
the Work of the Other,
the beautiful black crows.

19 February 2016

EYESIGHT

**Thought it was a towel
dried his hands on a rabbit.
Thought it was a snake
chopped the head off a hose.
Thought it was a doorway
walked into the mirror
and nothing ever seen again.**

19 February 2016

[*after a painting by Colin Radcliffe*]

**The heart is a Persian garden
but the garden is not a heart.
A garden is a man behind the gate
watching, always watching
in the cool of the evening
when the wind is a deck of cards
telling a young man's fortune:
you have too many columns
to be a temple, you are a woman
and a man, a secret part of an animal
still present in the world but rare.
You are rare, the blanket of infancy
dissolved into language. Beware
of cats who seem to be asleep,
willow trees, the color sandarac
so few understand. Inside us
only ropes stretch through jungle
quiet though, beast-free, a boy
drinking water from his sailor cap.**

20 February 2016

= = = = =

Wind in the yew trees
it will be a short month
a busy mouth
a tune in your ears
a crow on your lawn
your car needs gas.
The urgent pastoral
of things as they are.

20 February 2016

= = = = =

Always stop when you're behind
let the other runner
get there first.

Who knows
what's waiting at the goal
or just behind it
in harsh morning shadow—

let the other discover.
Sit on the rock and consider,
considering is what you do best,
o Mensch, *think along with the stars*,
sit here. or at the window
in the gloaming, full of quietness.
in the heaven of sheer
watching nothing happen.

20 February 2016

= = = = =

**From this blue sky
some answer comes.
Now match it with
that question, your heart.**

**Quiet transmission—
bird shadow, silence.
Now it is complete.**

20 February 2016

LES JOGGEURS

**Suppose they were running to me
or after me or away from —
three interesting alternatives.
But as it is, they're just
parts of what passes.**

20 February 2016

= = = = =

**Leave everything alone
just as it is.
That way tomorrow
is sure to come.**

**Try to avoid that slippage
called history
when things keep happening
against each other**

**and thousands of us die..
Be quiet, a tree,
let wind rustle in you,
pass through and be gone.**

20 February 2016

= = = = =

Cock tempest
the sky inside
moon shadows on my hand
the skin the
ordinary leprosy

the other ailment
of Moses's sister
(was she? or another
function clever,
faerie consort ever after?)
was beauty,

this moonlight now was then.

20 February 2016

= = = = =

Wait as one
as if
yet come
salmon to spring

to find the hazel
that knows all differences

the grey path between
knowledge and wisdom—

you can feel it in your fingertips
but can't say it easy,

you can feel it in your gills.

20 / 21 February 2016

= = = = =

If the dark would let me
I would see a different thing

the true shape of matter
without the intrusive sun

what we'd be really like
if she weren't around.

And it is a male thing, this moon-
stricken countryside

dark people of a sort
we will never meet by name—

dark blue they move
and vanish when we see.

20 / 21 February 2016

= = = = =

**Let the word come
(the way skin heals
all by itself)
after the gash of silence.**

21 February 2016

LOVER'S COMPLEYNT

**If I were music
you'd listen to me.
But I am flesh so
why aren't you in my arms?**

21.II.16

= = = = =

**Wise little chip
off ancient stone**

**or human arm
snaking down the column
at Göbekli Tepe**

**bird across the small
sky of my window.**

**Scraps of meaning,
meaning enough.**

21 February 2016

= = = = =

**A day to be small
like the sun
lost in those clouds.**

21.II.16

= = = = =

**Blistering history
and hers
what happens
when the boys club
gets hold
of an idea,
 the solo sym-
phony of all ideas
that do not walk
the glad agora,
marketplace
with all of us
whoever we are,,**

22 February 2016

= = = = =

Get back to city pastoral
allthose hot sheep
yearning to divest their wool—
not like Schleicher's fable.
Now the sheep has no horse
to interrogate or be wised up by,
left alone in sensuous presence
owis, her charmed life— as long
as we have grass we'll
have poetry.

22 February 2016

= = = = =

**There is a black well
into which a person's
guilt can be lowered—**

**left there drowned
or later hauled up
out again all clean**

**of the personal,
turned to civic energy
to benefit the other.**

22 February 2016

= = = = =

Why couldn't I do this too
a milk stain on a blue sweater
sister, yogurt really,
come back from the Antipodes
(four syllables), come back
with small sea-shells
matted in your otherwise
clean hair. I'm always after
something, now it's shells,
or always, since first some
Roman, I mean some woman,
probably my mother, held
a fat shell up to my ear and I
heard! She said it was the sea
and so was I, ever after. Look,
I'm not really asking so much,
just to be perfect, the way any
and every single thing is, Thing
I say, the object in its prime,
complete and ordinary. That's
what perfection is, being — won't
say yourself, who knows what
a self is, if it is — but just being
here. As if with me. As if me.

22 February 2016

= = = = =

Time to try something else.
Tried learning the piano,
had a fine master but my fingers
have no ears. Tried Greek
and all I could do with it is
read more books. Watchmaking
would be fun, half-God and half
petit Suisse. But poor eyesight
would make a mess of that.
Bowling is easy but the alleys
are all closed, home-brewing
is neighborly but I don't drink.
Suppose walking won't do very
much harm—I'll wait till spring
and learn to tie my sneakers on.

22 February 2016

= = = = =

**Endymion or who
wherever weather
moon plain in Virgo
where that full Man
stands he wants to be,**

**all our linguistic
sagesse genders him
tells us what myth
don't or won't. Dark
of the day he waits
to gimmer in before
She bares her breasts
in morning meaning.**

22 February 2016

= = = = =

**It wasn't the place I heard
or was it?**

**I thought it was people,
those boys who write history,
Homer Hesiod Herodotus
but maybe it was the island
itself, the mountain, sea,
broad plains quiet with sheep
with wolves— no story
but the ground itself. Maybe
that's what I still hear.**

23 February 2016

HAYDN CONCERT

**As if I had not been there
or had heard
only the motions of my own heart
that animal we talk so
freely but shyly of,
an unkempt wild
thing with sharp teeth.**

**But I was there,
I heard the cello nail
Jesus to the cross,
heard the viola try
with all her might
to lift him up
against the drag
of wood and weight
and earth down there,**

**gods knows what
the violins were up to
skittering like sparrows
low and high, busy
with their own agitation,
no song in sight.**

23 February 2016

= = = = =

**My heart is beating
and you know why
I'being literal
it could be a doctor's
office, we could be
machines at one
another's service**

**measuring the long
sincerity of blood
the fickle breath
that comes and goes
and comes again,
who knows what all
this is for, why so
many processes churn
forward all at once.**

**By my hypothesis, you do.
What a weight on you,
what a restless animal
to carry in your arms.
And not just in your arms.**

23 February 2016

