

4-2016

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**Mystery of days.  
Blue weather  
in a mist of seeing—**

**the flowers color the sky  
as drunken men at times  
allow themselves to feel—**

**but who knows if those feelings  
are their own, or anyone's  
at all? Who owns the sky?**

**1 April 2016**

=====

**Legitimate forecast.  
Laundry on the line  
means rain, flowers  
on the lawn mean  
snow. Woke up knowing  
nothing for a change  
thank heaven. Drag  
chaise cushions in  
from the deck. Hang  
screen door in place  
between you and them.  
They're everywhere.**

**1 April 2016**

=====

**Sand heavier than sound?  
Go weigh them  
if you can. They're both rock.**

**1.IV.16**

=====

**There is a kind of blood  
that flows through marble,  
glass, chalcedony.**

**A topaz for your thoughts,  
peony?**

*Flowers  
dream of minerals  
as you dream of flowers*

*if you dream at all.*

**1 April 2016**

=====

**They're asleep now  
under the hill.  
Work done, a while  
to rest. Leaving  
flowers to come up  
by themselves,  
our blue squills.  
But soon the Original  
People will wake again,  
landladies and scribes  
to set us straight again.**

**2 April 2016**

## HORA NOVISSIMA

1.

Bad luck to use  
Latin in the rain.  
Drainpipe. Luminous.  
The *mystes* is one  
who keeps silent  
in any language.

2.

Luck follows the locksmith,  
love has trouble with doors  
keeps wanting to longer  
under the lintel, rub  
up against the frame,  
dance on the doorsill,  
caress the sheer openness  
of it being open at last.

**3.**

**Means the end of the world:**

**lust rebuked, indifference**

**energized, ire abated.**

**The Last Judgment. Sin**

**begins and ends in sympathy.**

**A great mural illustrates**

**all this happening, all the sinners**

**going p to heaven, I first saw this**

**painted all over the sky itself,**

**a smiling young man hiding in the cloud.**

**4.**

**Three parts**

**everything**

**has to have.**

**Unity**

**comes in threes,**

**I, myself, me.**

**And thee makes one—**

**four is three**

**even more.**

**Everything happens**

**four times**

**until it finally arrives,**

**once to you and once**



**to me and once to us  
and once to it,  
the fourfold thing,  
the world.**

**And then we will be five.**

**5.  
Now we have used all the numbers up,  
the fingers. All we have now are friends,  
comfortably naked, slipping into warm  
water off Costa Loca, watch out for shark.  
No, lousy metaphor. What I mean  
is the inescapable beauty of whatever  
is just here ort there for a while  
and then something else happens and it's not.**

**6.**

**So why does 'the newest hour' mean  
the end of the world, last judgment,  
heaven and its wonders and all that  
plus al lits dingy waiting rooms?  
After everlasting Sabbaths all beings  
will finally be happy, they say  
if we put our mind to it — and that  
surely will be the newest of all days.**

**2 April 2016**

## MORNING

It's not my fault I'm old,  
it took a long time  
to gather what I bring  
to give you this bright  
April day. The snow  
rests lightly on grass  
and all the blue flowers—  
squills from Siberia  
and won't mind too much  
but the poor daffodils,  
so jonquil haughty yesterday!  
Or is it August. All  
I really have to give you  
are contradictions,  
the ones I squeezed out  
day to day or the ones  
that clutched me to  
as the ancients used to  
say, their bosoms. Ancients,  
I am eighty years closer  
to Athens than you  
and some days I remember  
Abraham. Aeschylus.  
Phryne is the market place  
half-posing, half-for real—  
just like me, in other words,  
but beautiful while she's at it.

**You can see her picture  
by Praxiteles, my comrade,  
who drew in stone. As I too  
used to think I could.**

**3 April 2016**

=====

**We listen to things  
and don't know it  
and that is our problem.  
We listen to things  
and that's the solution—  
cycle of sounds  
hearing saying hearing  
silenced into sound.  
Word. And water,  
wood, petals, steel.**

**3 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**We swim through the air  
until we are there.**

**3.IV.16**

=====

**Exchanging. All you need  
is some name  
to set them on their travels  
their work, life and loves of.**

**Some name. Just think  
of a name and at once  
she'll start to behave.  
He will too. Or not,**

**depending on their *dream*  
you intercepted by calling  
out some name they never  
knew was their own.**

**Name. You say it.  
they begin doing.  
You learn by seeing  
what they do.**

**All stories begin like that.  
Everything comes from the sound,  
is born, fleshes out, rushes out,  
dares and does and dances and dies.**

**3 April 2016**

=====

*I see it all in my opal*

—Charles Stein

The mutiny on the river  
was what I feared, the stupid stream  
flowed backwards, north  
in a south-rending region,  
wrong. Arose in a swamp,  
petered out where fierce  
mountain streams collided.  
When from nowhere to nowhere.  
Just like me, I hear you thinking.  
Good point. I too am haunted  
by having no origin, no destination.  
I am the captain and the mutineers,  
the boat and the water, nobody  
minds, they let me play at being.  
Being radical or kissing the archaic.  
Whatever it really was. All we have  
is lumps of stone, some with faces,  
some with words. Sleep now  
would be an act of politics, a fist  
closed tight around nothing at all.  
Anyhow, I'm ready when you are.

3 / 4 April 2016



## **TRIPTYCH**

**things mind me**

**4 April 2016**

=====

**Snow morning  
without color  
save self.**

**4.IV.16**

=====

**There is no  
room for any  
mere thing.**

**4.IV.16**

=====

Eventually the ordinary  
happens.

Sigh with relief,  
there is a *we* again,  
not just me  
solo in the night  
wings flapping over nowhere.

Even this April snow  
is just ourselves  
oddly dressed  
for the season  
but ordinary.

Touch it,  
it melts in your hands.

4 April 2016

=====

**Waiting for the rafters  
to raise the roof,  
as Thomas Waller said  
the jointis jumping.**

**But the jump  
was long ago, the roads  
are covering with snow  
as I keep watch**

**catching nature at her work  
you can catch a bad cold,  
sky air trees and in between  
the color of nothing at all.**

**4 April 2016**

## **SALOSOPHY**

### *for Saint Simeon of Edessa*

**What do I look like  
as I walk upon the sea  
in my hipster hat  
with my candy cane**

**and all the animals  
caress me, I think,  
and how come I come  
home with such clean feet?**

**What do I look like  
when I climb a chest of drawers  
and hide walnuts in my clothes,  
could I not be anyone at all?**

**Is there an identity, a certainty,  
hidden in what I do?  
I don't think so. We belong  
to the other side, and so am I.**

**4 April 2016**

=====

**April in Annandale.  
The white  
overstands everything else.  
The loud  
voice of the snow, singing  
quietly, so loud, so soft,  
a little like Debussy.**

**4 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**There are those  
and then there are those.**

**Yearning has something to do with it.  
To be the object  
of someone's total attention  
even for a little while.**

**I'm not sure Catullus  
always understood this—  
being-in-love-with'd  
is pure ontology —**

**weird paradox of love:  
your agency as subject  
is intensified by the very  
act, fact, of being objectified,**

**for once you know you exist  
absolutely. Even if it just  
means lying there and taking it.**

**4 April 2016**



=====

**What a virtuous task,  
to fill one's pen with fine  
black ink as if about  
to sign that famous treaty**

**or that contract with the Overworld  
Swedenborg must talk of somewhere  
where we commit ourselves ever after  
to imagine the truth and write boldly**

**what the mind's light showed us  
and we made up. All human history  
lodged in this elegant cylinder —  
yes, I still write with a fountain**

**pen I wouldn't dare let it run dry.**

**5 April 2016**

=====

*for Billie*

**I wish I could write  
a book of women too**

**I could tell you all  
a thing or three**

**but never more.**

**5 April 2016**

=====

**I am ready  
to be ready**

**but then the weather.**

**Sleep now,  
everything is done.**

**5 April 2016**

=====

**Every now and then  
I pass by a mirror and look  
like a human being in it—**

**shows you how far glass  
is to be trusted. Even I  
can be taken in**

**by such seeing, seeming,  
as if I were a real person  
as if I were really here.**

**5 April 2016**

=====

**Why they don't show human faces  
on the stone pillars of Göbekli Hill**

**or why women on horseback far away  
ride east on the crest of the ridge**

**or why the horizon comes closer  
at certain times of day, or why**

**the last Esopus Indians are buried  
on Cruger's Island a mile away**

**from where I sit understanding  
that these things are all of a piece,**

**the far and the near, the truth  
of things seen from the rear, faces**

**lie. Only when we look backward  
can we dare to comprehend the years.**

**5 April 2016**

=====

**I have a blue  
hole in my head  
and summer skies  
I see therein—**

**what wit I have  
is awry and incomplete,  
I stand gawking  
with wonder into myself.**

**5 April 2016**

## **THINKING**

**Having ideas  
is a dumb way  
to begin thinking.**

**Thinking should be.**

**And should be a wave  
rolling in from  
an ocean you can't name**

**drenching your shoes.**

**6 April 2016**

## IN A VILLAGE BETWEEN HIESSE AND NEAUX

So many yesses  
so few no.

A signpost in the marketplace  
shows the way out of town.

A boy nibbles on a salted fish,  
herring we guess  
from the northern light

knowing no better.

The church bells have all been  
melted down to mold cannons  
but nobody goes to war anymore.

2.  
Sometimes they miss  
the morning bells,  
Angelus at six  
and again at dusk.

Sometimes they think  
they hear them ringing far away.

We are entitled to think,  
*think as you please* we all say.



3.

**But mostly they listen to the shadow  
instead, of the steeples  
where the sound used to live.**

**The overtones  
of a shadow**

**last a very long time.  
But what is time?**

4.

**You can have all your women and jewelry  
and athletes and muscles and lust—  
I just want a town, singular,  
with smooth streets pointing left and right  
and ears of corn sultry on the market stalls,  
horses tied to chestnut trees in flower  
mauve and white. And every person  
speaks a different dialect but they  
understand one another only all too well.**

**6 April 2016**

**COMPOSED TO THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF  
THOMAS DE HARTMAN'S  
SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO**

**Up the steps across the marble  
terrace opwned by the moon  
that chilly landlord up the sky**

**doesn't anyone remember music  
in the hour of the flowers?  
after half a foot of snow  
had melted away the blue Siberian  
flowers are still there  
serene as sky-seeds waiting  
for another planet**

**anotheruniverse perhaps  
where each of them will come  
and nurture us  
and no more moon!  
Just glorious Mother Sun  
to make us grow**

**and yet this is my mother's birthday,  
she who feared the sun  
and blamed her for all her troubles,  
woman are like that,  
*women fear women* isn't that the old play,**

**we fear what nurtures us  
or lifts us blue-like to vanish in the sky?**

**We need no vanishing, we think,  
we huff and puff and want to be  
even more here, me, me,**

**delicate cry-baby, effete woodsman,  
I am the green man after all  
I carry every woman to the woods  
but what do I do with her there?  
I fumble and stumble  
and she runs off laughing  
disguised as a sparkling rill  
a rivulet a spring a stream**

**and I have no wound to lick!  
Just a shadow on my thought  
as if I had remembered  
something that wasn't mine to remember,  
somebody else's hat!  
a better man's overcoat!**

**so far to go, the marble steps  
seem only half a dozen  
but in wicked moonlight numbers  
open up and take us in,**

**I have been climbing from the beginning  
to the terrace where the hostess waits**

a cup of coffee in her hand for me,  
she knows my druthers, she stretches it out  
towards me but still I'm only halfway up  
and the steam long since  
stopped floating up above the cup

this very step must be where  
allalong I was supposed to be standing,  
my station, I am a sentinel,  
a watchman of the unachieved,  
any minute now I'll start talking  
trying to explain myself  
yet again, embarrassing the woman,  
and have you ever noticed  
the way the moon can snicker at us?

o it is mild in me now  
and I forgive myself  
for time passing,  
I forgive myself for language  
and not using it well,

but it is too quiet still to forgive the moon.

7 April 2016

## THE CROCODILE

**Yikes, there's a crocodile on the ceiling — at first I thought it was flying there.**

**No, it's slung from wires, hard to see.**

**Why is it there?**

**All alchemists have a crocodile hung above their workplace.**

**How very odd. Why?**

**I'll tell you many reasons for this custom that strikes you as so curious. I'll give you the reasons, but it's up to you to choose the real reason, or reasons, if any. Agreed?**

**I'm all ears.**

**Well, a crocodile is the largest of all creatures who are completely amphibious. Air and water, earth and stream, are both congenial to it. In like manner the alchemist, though of flesh (sometimes very much so) can dwell joyous and serene in the world of the spirit.**

**And a crocodile on land can run thirty miles an hour over short distances — much faster than any man—*der Mensch muss sich überwinden!* as Nietzsche points out.**

**And crocodilians are the only creatures that open their mouths wide by lifting the maxilla rather than lowering the mandible — fact. The whole skull lifts to feed. Think about it.**

**And the crocodile is immensely and securely armored snout to tail, safe from all attacks from above and from the side. But it is defenseless, soft, pale, below — it is subject to attack from the lower realms, the lower reaches — and are we too not most at risk from our base instincts? Surely you have some of your own, and some experience to confirm the truth of what I say.**

**And through the many teeth of the crocodile water flows, and the beast can catch and devour quite small fish and such that venture to swim past or through it, so that minute particulars feed it as well as great chunks of living matter it can seize and wrest off with its powerful jaws — it feeds on all.**

**And the crocodile is master of rivers, is aware of every grain of gold that drifts downstream from the mines in the mountains. The crocodile seems to sleep, but is aware of everything that passes. This awareness is called a *dream*, and we can train to have them too.**

**And while resting in the stream, the crocodile takes on the semblance of a log floating or trapped in an eddy. This impersonation of a tree — an alternate variety of living thing — reminds the alchemist not to insist too**

**strongly on the primacy of the human. People are such ontological chauvinists! They think they're the only people around! They think they're the only ones who think! The beast and the tree, the stream and the stone, they all know better—and the crocodile knows best of all, he who can be an animal, a tree or a hummock of hard green stone, a living vein of jade, a master of the spaces between species.**

**Now tell me which is the real reason. It flatters me mightily that you so politely assume that I know.**

**7 April 2016**

## HARTMAN, SECOND MOVEMENT

Hold the thought  
the gentle animal  
sleek in your fingers  
as a tune you heard  
once and almost remember

or light a candle  
with a puff of breath alone  
or watch the window  
open by itself  
and let the sky in

surely it was your mother too  
among all those departures  
someone must once  
have had to come towards you  
and say Listen  
child you are not who you think  
you are, you are another,

a beautiful shimmer of identity  
silver and indigo as smoke  
drifting from the elegant café  
o you are beautiful in your way  
not the way you think, not  
what some thick book tries  
to trick you into believing,



**the sparrows on your sidewalk  
knew a lot better than that,  
they scatter, they return,  
dine on crumbs and scorn  
big lumps of your sad whatever,  
o how sad what people eat,  
how sad all eating is,  
couldn't we live on indigo,  
deep edges of the sky,  
  
the light tumbling from a cloud.**

**7 April 2016**

## THE WANDERING OF THE TRIBES

Was sun, will rain  
who am I to decide?

All we know is know.  
Every thousand years or so  
southern and eastern tribes  
hurry compulsively west.

Celts. Goths, Slavs. Huns.  
Turks. Yankee pioneers.  
Libyans. Vietnamese. Somalis.  
Syrians. Iraqis. Guatemalans.

We say *refugee*, we think  
it's a political, economic — no  
it is geologic. The earth  
itself demands it, commands it.

Everyone must move north and west.  
Until one day far away  
everyone will be in place at last  
and life on earth can finally begin.

7 April 2016

=====

1.

Really as close as it can  
by weather. Then waft  
of womanbreath stirs pines.

he morning staggers to its feet.  
Cathedral of the cat's yawn,  
hard to be happy so far from the sea.

2.

Liberty has something pale about it  
like a new car passing fast or tender  
flaking meat of a cod. And all  
the other colors too — miracles,  
each one of them. How could you  
forget colors after all these years?

3.

You lived by them as much  
as anything. Cross me the street  
with the bleating lamb, even pirates  
retire from sea-pilfering, but rage  
against ships further than the sky.  
O be my vehicle again exclusive and Hermès.

4.

**When they knock on the door  
a greast spirit weeps, cat yawns,  
girl goes back to infant sleep.**

**We live here, this motionless wave  
rock ridge in my backyard. Isn't  
water just the quickest form of rock?**

5.

**Do you love me as much as I love you?  
That'll be the day, when measures  
run screaming from apothecaries' shops  
and babble our True Feelings in the marketplace  
like that movie with the weasel in it, the girl  
standing indecisive by her bed. Doubt  
is really all we have, a kind fof wine  
fiercer than the Sahara full of stars.**

**8 April 2016**

=====

Now just forget this ever happened.  
We look up at the moon and say  
Sunlight, reflected. We are ornery  
people and get what we deserve,  
*what's coming to us* as they say,  
a hint of winter in the April air.  
I yearn for southern comforts — not  
the kind you sip and swallow  
but the flesh aglow with afternoon,  
the people I love we also are, soft,  
lying on the lawn no snake in sight,  
it could be Ireland — they have a south too  
and a famous middle where the High King  
ruled a green hill with no one on it,  
empty of all but a standing stone  
height of a tall woman, and who touched  
this stone could wipe bad dreams away.  
We slept beneath it and called it *history*,  
Bottom's dream, the Greeks' mistake,  
Luna Park in World War II, Dragon Gorge,  
I'm engulfed by that crocodile called memory.

9 April 2016

## **GOING TO JERUSALEM**

**Turn left at the edge of the grass  
follow the asphalt veering  
uphill to the corner of the garage**

**follow the double doors, bend  
back to the level, keep your head  
down, pass under the tilted**

**trunk of the buckthorn (*Rhamnus* sp.),  
straighten up, stand by the open gate  
and watch the intermittent traffic**

**pause before making their (invariable)  
turn to the east, your right, always  
your right. Then cross the gateway,**

**facing west now, pass the dumpsters,  
the new shed where books are stored  
and her bicycle (gift of a musical friend)**

**shelters from winter. Straight ahead,  
turn south again at the scrappy hydrangeas  
(white, old, summer after summer,**

**fifty years), pass the white birdbath  
the birds don't seem to favor, it is  
pretty dirty, the new green one on the lawn**

**much more popular, plastic, color  
of old copper), then west again at the edge  
of the studio, all those galvanized cans**

**bird seed of several kinds and deer feed  
are kept safe from raccoons and from all  
but the most determined occasional bear,**

**keep going ,past the heating oil tank  
in its neat enclosure, you can hear  
the roar of combustion from the furnace room**

**that heats the studio, the meditation center,  
the cosmetic lab and translation workshop  
upstairs, how loud it seems in passing,**

**then with your shoulder towards the wall  
where all the flowerpots are lined up  
(and behind which the steel jacuzzi waits),**

**then jog right under the sloping canopy  
and clamber up the stairs onto the deck.  
In front of you the door. This is the place.**

**The temple itself is waiting for you inside.**

**9 April 2016**

=====

**My mind is elsewhere  
let me follow it  
into music that meadow  
stretching to a river  
you can never cross.  
Some days you see the mountains over.**

**10 April 2016**



=====

**Dry-eyed in Portugal  
I wonder. Those girls next door  
pale Arab features,  
hips of France, no wonder  
Britain, Beckford, *Vathek*,  
all the black sand  
of the Algarve. Names  
are witchy images, no?**

**10 April 2016**

## ADDRESS

Turn out the light  
and see who's coming now  
walking up the shadows  
from the street, o streets  
are such public mysteries,  
why do we let them pass  
our houses so freely,  
don't we know that on them,  
along them, the fiercest  
and most beautiful things  
come and stare at us and go?

If a road went nowhere  
it would truly be of use, would let us  
stare across it with not the slightest  
appetite for elsewhere,  
just admire its lean intactness,  
smooth, exactness, its single  
proposition: *I go, I do not come.*

But as it is the traffic comes  
and persons of all dispositions  
make themselves available

**at our poor house door undeterred  
by spiraea and lilac bush,  
busy folk intent on interaction  
when there is really, really,  
nothing whatever to be done.**

**10 April 2016**

=====

**I think of the less nocent  
egotism of the ignorant  
their noisy selfy Facebook pages**

**as against the insolent egotism  
of haughty folk like me—  
how shameful not to be in Facebook  
how shameful not to be ordinary, available,  
there for anybody, like sunlight, or Christ.**

**11 April 2016**

=====

**Am I near enough to read me?**

**1.**

**leaves, a few on the lilac  
cold night, squills steady,  
report from the ground.**

***Listen to me* it's always saying,  
listen through an inkstick in your hand  
so we can make sense of each other—**

**2.**

**The Buddha of boundless intelligence  
is a vast brick tower  
that will never fall—  
I saw its picture when the sound came out.**

**11 April 2016**

## **REVISION**

**Of course I revise my poems—  
I put all of me to work,  
the whole crew, not just  
the one it first happened to.**

**11 April 2016**

**OMINA**

**White cars bring rain.**

**Press your face against the glass  
and say Window**

**my window  
you have so many faces.**

**11 April 2016**

## WHAT WE LEARN FROM THE TAROT

### *The Card called The Tower, also Maison-Dieu*

We look and see an old image of a tower. It is being struck by lightning from the upper right (the region that is so curiously blank in Rembrandt's engravings). Its roof or turret is toppling off to the left. Several human figures are falling through the air from the tower. It is not clear where they had been when the lightning struck, or through what voids they passed to fall.

We blink and look again. Now we see clearly. It is not a tower. It is a human phallus, erect, being licked by a human tongue in the upper right. They are not human figures falling, not at all. They are spurts of semen, each bearing countless little humans *in potentia*. And not just humans.

We Bible Believers (the prevalent American judeochristian orthodoxy of both Jews and Christians) have been taught by the Old Testament (the only book that Jews admit, and the only book that Bible Christians really trust) that G-d is a Man of War, an angry god, full of tests and punishments. God punishes human seed (we use that word) spilled for pleasure alone, or for any reason other than to make small humans, babies as we say, small humans falling with great pain from the tortured heaven of the womb.



**What the Bible doesn't say, perhaps doesn't even know, is that human seed spilled on human flesh (not into the woman's body) or on the ground or in the flowing stream or even left to dry on desert rock, this seed, these spermatozoa, are immensely creative. Their power of creation is not foiled by the absence of human Ovum, their fond Elysium. No, they are potent in all the world, producing dreams and images that rouse artists to their deeds, they shape rhythms in the air musicians catch a feel from, a feel for, and compose, and dancers read those shapely rhythms too, read them with their bodies.**

**And not only arts arise from such energies, but science too, and technology — ll innovation speaks from what we so coarsely suppose wasted seed, lost gluten of human genesis. Aeschylus tells us this plainly in his Prometheus Bound: *all human arts and skills are from Prometheus*. From the body of, just as heat comes from the living intact body, so this psychic heat spreads through the world from what is let loose, wildly, when the tongue touches. When the lightning strikes.**

**11 April 2016**

## LEARNING RAIN

Learning rain.  
Luster of roads  
*lithos*, a stone  
polished precious  
by going alone?

It keeps saying:

*Rain remembers.*

Of course rain recycles — every  
drop has fallen and risen, has been  
drunk and excreted flooded,  
evaporated, closed-system  
of the water being, is that what it means?

What does the rain  
carry with it  
from where it has been?  
Is it a part of how language  
happens?

The rainiest spot on earth  
is some name on Hawai'i.  
I live there in my heart  
*illuminé par le même*  
word that suffices to silence me.

**Make things happen  
with no hurt.**

**Song: Schubert  
washes away.  
Not even winter lasts.**

**Rainy days bring out  
the lunatic the wayward**

*White cars bring rain*  
**I read that somewhere  
in my handwriting.  
Maybe yesterday. No rain.**

**Joyful grey  
color of my sky  
the heart is the wettest  
organ, drenched  
with the strange  
and necessary light**

**Rain: you have to talk forever  
to get the least thing said.**

**Rain: quantity becomes quality—  
the leaves are remembering  
last year drop by drop, the green.**

**How it gleams, asks nothing,  
soaks the rich and poor,  
I am wet as the emperor!  
But in the precariat the poor  
need coats, roofs, shelter.  
I remember the monsoon  
in West Bengal, the hillsides,  
the people huddled below  
tarpaulins slung on stakes.  
Is this the same rain? Am I  
the same man I was before?**

**It rains  
as long as it lets me.**

**12 April 2016**

=====

**Am I now  
or have I ever been.  
That was the question then  
returns with a new predicate  
now. And I don't want to know.  
Don't know the question anymore  
then the answer must be obvious.  
But there is a new question  
no one asks — organ music  
in a sinking cruise ship, desert  
full of ATVs, as it was  
in the beginning, only the wind knows.**

**13 April 2016**

## **CHILDISM : A MANIFESTO**

**Still afraid of grown-ups  
and why not? They run  
out of compunction, play cards,  
talk about money, get vague  
on beer, believe or pretend  
to believe in politics,  
go to church, polish their cars.  
Success means oppressing the poor.  
Failure has to do with money.  
What a world. Count me out.  
I'd be an anarchist if they weren't  
usually hairy and grumpy and loud.  
So let me preach Childism instead—  
look at it all with skeptical eyes  
and let them know how boring  
they are, grown-ups. They  
hate it when you remind them of that.**

**13 April 2016**

## **UP THE ROAD**

**AQll the cars  
hurrying to school.  
I don't know  
what anything means.**

**13 April 2016**

=====

**Long-legged stars—  
sometimes a night  
seems full of luminous  
filaments reaching  
down to touch earth,  
a line from each star—  
we walk outside  
in a jungle made of light,  
lianas of light, tendrils  
gently whipping against  
us as we move, and we  
struggle to comprehend  
what they actually do.  
But by then we're asleep.**

**13 April 2016**



## **THE LETTER**

**Somewhere someone is writing  
a letter to me now—  
does their body empower  
everything they say,  
this unknown person whose flesh  
turns into meaning in my head.**

**13 April 2016**



“

*(Louise Smith)*

**I can't read what you said so  
shout it blue. Of course  
we have claws, how else  
would the sky hold the earth  
serene in its song? Come again?  
The altitude of intimacy  
is proportional to the amplitude  
of the amplexus, any barefoot  
physician in Mao's kingdom  
learns that from oracle bronzes.  
Do you find me attractive?  
Can your ship fit in my dock?  
Sorry for all these questions,  
the weave of your woolen coat  
is so dense it looks like felt.  
Felt. What you wear when the word  
is winter. My neck is sweaty  
from so mych talk. Or is it sleep.  
I mean the whole world is  
a hand, same size as yours.**

**14 April 2016**

**=====**

**I inspect the sky.  
Absence of evidence.  
Blue. Aha!**

**Evidence of presence  
but whose? Me  
looking up?**

**The word blue  
coming to mind?  
A lawn**

**turning green?  
Barren rock cliffs  
in Afghanistan?**

**14 April 2016**

=====

**Flat-bed truck  
to cart a city  
over the horizon**

**and be in time again  
out of this space  
alone is real,**

**time, our shared illusion,  
our dangerous fantasy,  
room lined with knives.**

**14 April 2016**

## **HOMeward**

**facing Eve.  
Havah. She is herself  
the tree  
and all that grows from it.  
She was here  
long before Adam,  
himself mostly clay,  
noble in his simple way,  
one of her offspring,  
red with the blood in him,  
just like us,  
red as her apples.**

**14 April 2016**

## **TANNHÄUSER IN THE VENUSBERG**

**This tuneful knight in the case at hand  
turned away from the unattainable  
actual towards the illusory real,  
Venus's city underneath the mountain,  
for his satisfactions. Cases of conscience.  
Don't worry, it's only an opera,  
eventually it comes to an end. Alas,  
the moral question lingers. Is the inside  
just the same as the outside world  
but seen with closed eyes? Somehow  
there is a sin involved here, but no  
wise priest to point out where it lies.  
If you turn away from the neighborhood  
does your own inner world vanish too?**

**15 April 2016**

=====

**These things happen. Orange juice,  
words misheard from neighbor booths,  
salamander pie? We tried so hard  
to turn things into gold. Things  
in general into general gold but gold  
always wants to be specific. Hug  
the friend, help him when he cries—  
that's about as much as we can handle  
by way of charity, from an old word  
that once meant love. Love me  
if you dare: it says that on my collar.  
Here, come close and read it, breathe  
your breath on my face, like that, ah.**

**15 April 2016**

=====

**Why do I keep thinking  
this makes sense? Dragon  
can just mean a kite  
in German, a thing kids fly  
over the Drachenfels maybe  
or La Salle Street in Manhattan  
looking up into the sky.  
As you say, no sense at all.  
But they roar in all our dreams,  
swinge their golden tails,  
light our candles with their breath.  
And then we wake, the same old  
asphalt information all round,  
a paper contraption flying over  
leading its kid along the hill,  
his poor father pleading with him  
in gasping Spanish, or maybe  
with the wind itself, the air,  
the huge ambiguous life of earth.**

**15 April 2016**



=====

**Out for a few minutes in the sun**

**(breath)**

**shadow of a crow  
bigger than the crow  
swoops across**

**(breath)**

**almost warm enough to be here  
but not really**

**(breath)**

**Try. Try.  
Effort always makes some sense.**

**(breath)**

**Learn from the gymnasts  
effort is nakedness**

**all I ever learned is breath.**

**Be naked to what happens—  
Sun in Asthma, Venus in Perineum,**

**Mars at the door,  
newborn, puling,  
let me in I am alive!**

**(breath)**

**We live, we live,  
delighting in the longst disease.**

**16 April 2016**

=====

**Bring me some color  
to my face,  
let me turn ruddy  
as the grass comes green,  
I am all winter now  
and want to change,  
make up new flowers as I wake,  
roses of Pimlico, Sawkill violet,  
milkroot, Lemon lily.  
Fatal vetch of Scamander.  
But only my eyes have color now.**

**16 April 2016**

=====

**Stay a little longer  
till the truth comes out  
like the shy Sun  
from behind her clouds  
this cloudless day.  
Be cold a while.  
The brazen alchemy  
of your Inner Condition  
(that humming apparatus  
you call your self)  
keeps you warm enough  
considering.**

**Then go home  
in the silence of flowers  
to the artifice called 'house'  
where a room is  
the opposite of room.**

**16 April 2016**

=====

**In the window  
off the highway  
in bronze sunlight  
small gods under glass.  
Indian grocery,  
a couple from Delhi.  
The sun from Atlantis.**

**16.IV.16, Pk**

## **THE CULT OF FOOD**

**People who eat,  
how weird.**

**What shall we  
do with them?**

**Eating is so strange,  
so wrong, to take**

**things from outside  
and stick them into**

**your own body, some  
of them still alive,**

**yuk. Who could have  
thought up such**

**a weird religion almost  
everybody believes?**

**16 April 2016**

**=====**

**Falling asleep  
over the soup.  
Dangerous.  
This is not  
a cartoon, I am  
not in it. Prove it.  
Stay awake.  
Keep eye contact.  
Light is good  
for you, isn't it?  
But what about me?**

**16 April 2016  
Red Hook**

=====

**A boat rides by  
reminding  
in middle-class land  
we carry our toys  
home from the river  
lest other children  
play with them,  
and dare to sail  
our private fantasy  
into a wet world.**

**17 April 2016**



=====

**I've lived in this  
country so many years  
but the tackiness of  
America apalls me.  
Yet the pounding I hear  
is my own blood  
in my own ears.**

**17.IV.16**

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

**Do what's needed  
the rest will come to me.**

**Come to be  
more than I can hold,**

**farrier with a herd  
of hoofsore horses**

**must dig the iron for their shoes  
out of some dark place in me.**

**17 April 2016**

## **THINGS: A Sermon**

**1.**

**Always startling  
when things give way.  
A thing should be immortal  
just like me.**

**2.**

**Unchanged, unwearied, functional as ever—  
such is the life of a thing, o blessed thing!  
What mode of consciousness in you  
sustains such constancy?**

**3.**

**But in this century  
we know better  
for the worse,  
the vengeance of things  
upon us – we discarded  
too many and too much,  
planned obsolescence  
and the object dies.**

4.

**It will be the business of the wise  
to cherish things  
and hear the plaint of them  
discarded or unused—**

**they are our minarets  
and Grecian urns—  
listen to their music  
and sing along with them,  
so many ways a thing makes love.**

5.

**I'm in this world  
to take care of things  
and help them  
take care of us,  
all of you, all  
your skins and languages.**

**18 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**Stop complaining.  
Soon it will rain  
and we can hide  
inside each raindrop  
and celebrate  
our nuptials in  
that strange wet light  
so like our thought.**

**18 April 2016**

=====

**Warm enough to be  
out here and a new  
minted housefly  
knows it too.  
We glad together  
sun by sun inside  
the cloudless one.**

**People could be  
naked even and only  
the police would care  
that angry little cloud in  
the wrong shade of blue.**

**18 April 2016**

=====

**Small nameless people  
flying all around the air,  
springs's rapturous population  
swarming joyful to please  
hot mama sun.**

**18.IV.16**

== == == == ==

**The leaves  
are starting to listen,**

**hum my upstart symphonies  
all nakedness and Robin Hood  
flourish on the borderline**

**slip back and forth and in between  
belonging to no nation but  
to keep moving.**

**18 April 2016**



**= = = = =**

**A man confused by his lusts  
liberates himself by  
an unfamiliar form of fire—**

**not politics, not ascesis,  
maybe just a clear hot thought  
cauterizes randomness.**

**18 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**Share these things with me,  
first off, to make sure  
they aren't poisonous.**

**If they are, the sun  
will suddenly seem too hot  
and all the pretty flutter flies annoy.**

**And so I'd realize  
my song voted for the wrong party  
and all the droop-wit congressmen**

**start shuffling in again.  
That shadow of a bird just passing  
is worth more than all the flags.**

**18 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**Pass the world quickly  
before one eye at a time.  
Then close both eyes  
and remember. Difference  
is like this, all of it,  
girl and boy, near and far.  
the changes, the meek  
durability. You own them  
all, all art arises from this.**

**18 April 2016**

**=====**

**Do you know what to do?**

**Go inside inside  
and hover in that secret air—**

**survey your immense  
kingdom down below**

**and let it answer you.**

**18 April 2016**

=====

**When things are green enough  
the air takes charge, doves  
hoot calmly in the underbrush,  
last year's leaves slip down the hill  
in the easy wind.**

**They turn  
green by themselves, the trees  
as we imagine music, cities,  
words — we too need to be green.**

**18 April 2016**

=====

**Am I at peace  
or else?**

**Or what?  
What was that long  
poem I dreamed  
I was supposed to finish,**

**so many constraints,  
half done it was.**

**So much work unfinished  
that isn't even started yet—  
is that the meaning?  
I'm just beginning?**

**19 April 2016**

=====

**The future forgives me already—  
I just need to sleep long enough  
to catch up with it, pine sap  
flows faster, need one of those cars  
where you sleep in the back seat  
while somebody else drives you  
to France, say, or Liechtenstein  
if you can spell it. Green leaves  
are all you see when your eyes  
pop open on a bumpy road, trees  
it must be summer, country,  
could be anywhere, stay home.  
Something like that. What I thought  
is if I kept going long enough  
I'd use up all the countries in the world  
and just be home. Fat chance.  
Home is always half a mile ahead,  
on a slippery road, in winter,  
forget those green leaves, child,  
the whole thing was not even a dream.**

**19 April 2016**

**LISTENING TO A LECTURE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
THAT THURNS OUT TO BE MY OWN**

**Joy is a piece of wood.**

**Polish violence until it shines, call it an Iliad.**

**A flower like that smells of molten steel.**

**As it cools, it forms thousands of tiny crystals.**

**These are diamonds.**

**Revolution is the intellectual's name for a bloodbath.**

**Diamonds, literally, since steel is iron plus carbon.**

**Diamonds are pure carbon.**



**Iron is said to keep witches at bay.**

**What are the actuals 'means of production' of words?**

**How to seize those means.**

**The workers seize the means.**

**Who are the workers?**

**Freud dreamt of a red chrysanthemum and asked it why its color contradicted its name.**

**The flower didn't know.**

**Goatskin cape and fresh water in his calabash, the poet addressed an empty room. He spoke with an elegance equal to the slight perturbation of the air in that enclosed space.**

**A lampshade that changes the language spoken within its  
light.**

**Be especially careful on the sofa.**

**19 April 2016**

## AUSPICES

**What gets said  
is wife to what listens.**

**Auspices are birds.**

*Aues*  
**over the blue page  
reads us all day long.**

**Don't you know who you are  
even yet? After all my words,  
all your lovely hair?**

**20 April 2016**

=====

**There are things in the air.  
Do you fear things if you can't see them?**

**The visible is plausible.**

**Is that a wolf?  
Who would know?**

**Ask them,  
they're not color-blind,  
they know the names of streets.**

**Not me.**

**All those women make me nervous.  
Chorus.  
Angels tease us.**

**I'm tired too of flying.  
All those uniforms to please.**

**I was continuous such a long time—  
there's matter for forgiveness.**

**20 April 2016**

**=====**

**Sometimes music  
takes me entirely  
into itself,  
everything else  
falls away.  
I have no job  
but that's OK.  
Now I am money.**

**20 April 2016**

## **A CAN OF PEACHES FROM WW II**

**Cellar stuff  
somebody's house.**

**I know it must be there  
because I thought of it,**

**noticed it out there  
in the somewhere else,**

**cling peaches  
in sugar syrup, yes,**

**a little rust along the top,  
only a little.**

**It has to be there,  
I saw it when my eyes were closed.**

**The color. The dust. The time on it.**

**20 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**Birds bothering the wall.  
What can you expect,  
everything touches,  
things are here  
for the sake of other things.  
Just like me and you.**

**20 April 2016**

## **SAD KING**

**KING:**

**Meritocracy rules geomancy  
only the best prognoses  
alter the sun's course  
as she travels from one  
mountain to another—  
that is what she does  
while we stand still,  
rock still, o tender me**

**render me jade and lapis,  
gentles, for I was stone  
to begin with, bones and eyes  
and ruby fibrillation  
deep in the bone-box,**

**who can endure my sameness?**

**CHORUS:**

**All we can do  
is listen  
and music is what we do  
to try to hear  
only what the city  
simpers all  
around us, and you  
Majesty, lost  
to us in your thought,**



**that bent place—**

**that temple where  
idols stand  
baffled by idolaters  
confused too long  
by what they seem to mean,  
leave them please  
so we feel clean again.  
thought washed away,  
one skin with you all  
one at last.**

**KING:**

**Forget your measures, people,  
forget I ever spoke—  
I was just dreaming on the hillside,  
a little boy  
and you the bees and mayflies and the grass/**

**20 April 2016**

## **NEED**

**You need a mirror  
here it is  
you need a monkey  
it ran away  
you need a vehicle  
a lammergeyer descends  
you need a new name  
God Understands Me  
you need a whistle  
hang it round my neck  
you need a audience  
the grass is waving in your wind  
you need a house  
the wallpaper is peeling  
you need a bowl of fruit  
the bees are trying to help  
you need a glass of water  
here drink my diamond  
you need an albatross to bring bad luck  
this Ace of Swords is the best I can do  
you need an organ to fill the church  
we melted the pipes down for plumbing  
you need an opera  
the soprano has a cold  
you need a metro card  
the trains aren't running  
you need an umbrella  
the sky fell long ago**

**you need some bread  
here is the cheese  
you need a good night's sleep  
the bed slid down the hill  
you need a catalogue  
one painting looks just like another  
you need a haircut  
the wind agrees  
you need some new friends  
the doors are all locked  
you need a moon over your garden  
it's only early afternoon  
you need a new coat  
we're all naked here  
you need a good cry  
everybody is smiling  
you need to learn French  
there is no such country.**

**20 April 2016**

=====

**It's all true—  
that's what's the matter with it.**

**Think it through—  
white van full of vegetables  
from fancy footwork in the garden  
uncommon kales and heirloom kraut  
but where are lambs' ears when I need them?**

**It's all this green vocabulary test,  
rocket they call arugula but why?**

**At least the truck spills lettuce out  
and parsley, and slender whatsises of mint.  
And when the white van's gone I feel  
unaccountably and only a little bit sad.**

**21 April 2016**

## **METAMBESEN**

**The rush of stream  
hitting the rapids  
below my window  
drowns out my tinnitus  
and human speech.**

**Nothing was ever simple—  
even utter nakedness  
is charged with meaning.  
Is this thinking or is it dreaming?  
Let the noisy stream decide.**

**21 April 2016**

## **AUX LECTEURS**

**A reader is a ventriloquist  
with a dummy on the lap.**

**I am the puppet  
you make to speak.**

**Every word out of my mouth  
is what you mean.**

**21 April 2016**

## HELICOPSIS

*for Michael*

Sheepfully, the meadow  
turned over on itself  
until it hilled.

Then the small beasts  
tilt. But naught  
disturbs the eat.

We have spotted them  
from the highway time  
after time until

beige and umber forms  
seem part of rock and  
sky. But they are us.

We swoon into similarity  
as the magician's hand  
spins the spiral card.

The thing about hypno-  
sis is we always forget.  
Hasn't it always been

just the way it is now?  
And everything just still  
on the way to being itself?

21 April 2016

**=====**

**I am a working man  
I make what comes to mind.**

**22.IV16**



=====

**Now the grass  
is the color  
of what I mean**

**but that's just me  
and the sun  
warm on my skin**

**or is this all  
a generalization  
like weather**

**telling us always  
and only what  
and how we hear.**

**Fill a Louvre  
with it, all that  
spring raves in us.**

**22 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**I am avoiding  
the big thing, the nuclear,  
the unrevealed permission  
in the heart of  
                                  things to go  
get it right.**

**22 April 2016**

## THE SAD FIXITY

1.  
Hydrofoil to Victoria,  
vaporetto to the Arsenale,  
seaplane from New Bedford—

don't you see how strange it is,  
how persistent, how almost perverse  
it is we are, to survive travel  
changed little if at all,

I walked  
in the monsoon, trying to smoke  
a damp Indian cigarette,  
why don't we ever learn?

And we come home with the same names!  
When a walk around the block  
by rights ought to change us  
into Kector or Achilles, Orlando,  
Napoleon's Circassian lackey  
dreaming of his lost mountains  
anybody else but me  
as I suppose myself to be.  
Or even you. There are so  
few ones for us to be,  
so few of us to begin with  
and still are,

may I share  
your lost identity?

2.

**I mean we are not changed.**

**The eye twinkles  
but the man's sense  
of himself persists.**

**Perdures.**

**I will be as Latin as I like,  
it might get me out of this fix,  
back into Lollardy and long ago,**

**you can't stop me,  
can only stop listening  
and that will be silent Sphinx enough.**

3.

**So there I was in the Mojave.  
No, down by the Gila  
midnight, 101 degrees Fahrenheit,  
air you could eat with a spoon.  
I stood by my green car  
and admired the weirdness  
of where I was and me being there—  
no reason! This place  
I could talk about for years to come  
and it would still be just me talking,  
all that river and neon humidity  
wasted, lost in my identity.  
We are who we think we are alas.**

**22 April 2016**

## BLOOD

Battlefields we have known—  
when we hold our fingers  
close together, up  
to a bright light we see  
our blood, the sacred color,  
Goethe's *rose-purple*  
shed in all of them.

Battle is *bataille*,  
is beating the blood out.  
We lie and say the earth  
needs it, we say “nowhere  
grows the rose” and so forth.  
But that's not what the earth  
needs from us. It needs  
the jukebox of the heart  
to shut down, the knives  
rust in the kitchen. Silence.  
The earth needs us  
to shut up and listen, and touch  
one another gently, only  
in love if even that. Maybe  
the earth has had enough  
of our kind of loving.

22 April 2016

== == == ==

**We want to do  
something about today**

**but what can we do**

**everything is a picture  
of something else**

*three gold rings  
on my love's hand  
one says purple  
and one says green  
and one says  
we're married too*

**what more can I know?**

**something to look at  
not something to do.**

**It does it all  
for us, the colors,  
the substances,  
tanzanite and emerald**

**understanding us.**

**22/23 April 2016**

**=====**

**A bead of moisture  
runs down along throat  
to collarbone.**

**Water, perspiration?**

**Geography lesson:  
The world is a woman  
after all.**

**22/23 April 2016**

## THINGS IN PLACE

1.

Seep oil, rebellion  
of things  
against us,  
that we do not listen,

listen to them,  
Rust rock. Wood crack.  
Glass shatters.  
Children though  
are not enemies,  
they try to  
hear, children  
are more on the side of things,

they are deep pastures  
where things know themselves heard.

But the grown ones not.

We're talking timelessness,  
not now, the here is always,  
here is where they are,  
where they speak.



**2.**

**Time distracts us from reality.  
The things, rebellious as they are,  
mean to bring us back  
into immensity. The decency  
of space.**

**All space is here.  
They are for us  
                            and want us with them.**

**Hence this gosselling here to be glad.**

**3.**

**Winter chid. Spring reminds.  
These are changes  
the place does to itself.**

**Place is a thing,  
place is the first thing of all**

**where we are  
allowed to be.**

**It is the one thing that never stops telling.**

**23 April 2016**

=====

**Sit out on the porch  
and imagine things passing  
sumptuously up  
and down the street.  
That's how it starts.**

**Remember the slight  
difference between  
what you see and what is there.  
Make sure the difference  
doesn't increase or diminish.**

**It is your lifeline,  
light in the closet,  
the ghost mother beside you in bed.  
*Hold me all night long.***

**23 April 2016**

=====

**How to be a child  
is what this is about.  
A shepherd on the lawn,  
angel in the fireplace—  
lucky kid with a house of your own!**

**Poor kids build  
a fake one out of cardboard  
at Christmas, draw the bricks,  
trace a clock on the mantle,  
paint the flames.**

**I've been a child long enough  
to write an instruction manual  
other children aren't old enough to read.  
This is comedy, *capisce*, not tragedy—  
we can only learn what we already know.  
That's why math is so hard in school,  
nobody knows what numbers really mean.**

**23 April 2016**

=====

**Childhood isn't a case  
of balls and dolls  
daytime TV and tricycles—  
those things are given  
to distract us, a conspiracy  
to stuff our ears against the real,  
stuff them with laws,  
stuff them with money.**

**Listen to your bare feet on the floor,  
the window screen singing to your fingertips.  
Each sound is a new bird in an unknown bush,  
the wind along the wall, the wind in your hair.  
The sound of touching holds the world together.**

**23 April 2016**

=====

**Look at my face—  
do you dare to tell me  
I am not you?**

**How could we look  
the way we do  
and be different?**

**Everything is the same—  
can light lie?  
I see you with your eye.**

**23 April 2016**

=====

*Die schweigsame Frau*

Nothing waiting.  
A day without day.  
Easy. Sparrow-like  
in quick persistence,  
inconsequence.  
Believe me. Who  
is your husband  
ever? Who is anyhow?

Food began it  
and it got worse.  
We fought for what  
we had been trained  
to need. The conditioning.  
Long human grief,  
old as a stone. This one.

Diamond from coal  
they told us. Coal  
from tree leaves, grass,  
the wold before world.  
I believe everything  
you tell me, why  
don't you speak?  
Sighsome. Free.

23 April 2016

=====

**If the numbers  
who have been with us  
for a while, a thousand  
years or so, grew  
tired of our mere uses  
and went away,**

**would the letters follow  
and we go signify again  
to each other with our  
loud chapped hands?**

**Or suppose  
there were no prose  
and everything  
had to sing—  
where would poetry be then?**

**24 April 2016**

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

**Something gets said  
the trees get green  
human creatures  
live in between  
what just happens  
and what they say  
startled by the real.**

**24 April 2016**



## **DOOR**

**No one is there.  
But it still is  
what it's built to be.  
Admire its readiness,  
adore its efficiency—  
why can't I be like that  
ready to let anyone in  
even if there's no one there?**

**24 April 2016**

## SENTENTIOUS

**This stuff gets  
gnomic as I go  
or it goes along.  
As if after all  
these years of pure  
saying it wanted  
to say *something*  
whatever it is.**

**24 April 2016**

## **FROM THE PERSIAN**

**We can't do this anymore  
we haven't even done it yet.**

**24.IV.16**

=====

**I never think  
about what they  
think of me.  
This is the price  
of liberty.**

**24.IV.16**

## **BASILICA**

**Feeling sorry for the world—**

**so count me  
in steps around the maze  
in marble past the narthex**

*always start in the center  
to find my way out.*

**In is easy, out is far.**

**2.  
Weather is the dome — I see  
a Face up there  
I know from inside out,  
from inside me  
it seems to spill  
upward in flight.  
Those eyes though are not mine.**

**3.  
I call this place Byzantium  
it keeps the vernacular at bay—  
I don't want to understand  
what the crowd is saying,  
who died and why they care.**

**4.**

**Nobody ever died—  
that is the secret.  
Our attention wandered,  
that's all,  
and they were gone  
when we looked again.**

**We're all still in the cathedral  
but some of us are very far.**

**24 April 2016**

## **CABBAGE**

**Resilience is the order  
it's built in**

**cabbages purple kale  
last the winter**

**we die and come again  
it is said**

**we say everything  
again and again**

**prophecy is cabbage  
good for you**

**is the world feeding  
us over and over.**

**Language is this.**

**24 April 2016**

## THE PERMISSIONS

The thing of it, the five  
fingered understanding  
that pulls from a stretch  
of horsehair we  
catch hold as music, or,

or how are we shaped into the world  
we make, we make this place  
and it makes us

but us is no word any  
I has a right to speak.

2.  
Because there is a danger,  
a dungeon built of air  
where we languish,  
linger in language

every breath becomes a word.

3.  
Far enough, or too far.  
We look at the greeny multitudes  
spring all around us  
and have no name for each,  
they're all just all



**of them sprouting up like wheat.  
But not wheat. Things  
without comparisons.  
Look, or look away.  
Every day a new exam.**

**4.  
I'm trying to believe this thing I say  
has something to do with me saying it  
so I can take credit for it or apologize  
or spend the night dreaming of pale flesh  
not mine, alive with beautiful answering.**

**5.  
It is what is permitted,  
more than you are led to believe  
from crime statistics.  
Everything is permitted  
when you find the right place for it  
sometimes out of this world  
sometimes deep inside it.  
Go figure it out, flower.**

**25 April 2016**

## **BLUE ROADS**

**Where have I heard  
them going?  
And to whom?**

**We know where a thigh  
comes from, where it goes.  
But when a road forks  
and one becomes two  
what do we know?**

**And what is this place  
where it decides to divide,  
what magical property  
compels it, what fertility?**

**25 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**Drink water  
from my well  
and marry me—**

**the earth said that  
long ago and we did.**

**But what if we had  
brought our own  
with us, from  
where, what  
distant spring?**

**25 April 2016**

## **IN AFALON**

**More trunks  
than trees—  
herd of deer  
in the orchard  
apple blossoms  
morning mist.**

**26 April 2016**

## LETTER TO TWO SPOUSES

*Aroynt me, bitch,  
aroynt me...*

**As if I knew  
what anything means**

**drive me away while you can**

**I call on you  
to reconcile  
me with the distances,**

**the kingdom and the fall,  
the Tree of Life  
false-planted  
on the moon,**

**nothing grows in Yesod  
that cold man  
hath no fertility**

**not even in the dark.**

2.

Look at a song  
in water,  
your eyes are dry  
with dreaming,

feel here now  
pink of the palms,  
I have misheard you  
from the beginning

when I was an altar  
boy of Venus  
asnd rubbed my fingers  
on every stone

they all were you then  
and you, and then  
the surfaces were good to me,

but now such liberty  
imagines me right back,  
I am a creature  
of what I did  
as you of your  
doing and not done,  
both shape you  
as you go,

**shape me  
to follow,**

**the scandal of Mercury  
speaking of gods,  
who spreads his his news,  
his tunes  
caress you now**

**word with the weight of a hand.**

**26 April 2016**

=====

**No flower wills to be plucked  
but some permit it.  
Some music lets itself get hummed  
by who heard it.  
Old languages are best  
like Hittite or Chinese  
where you can't tell masculine  
from feminine, and the moon  
was still part of earth  
and nothing kept us from all the stars.**

**26 April 2016**



=====

**Or nothing is permitted  
and every breath  
a stolen gasp.  
No wonder we eat  
each other constantly,  
the red meat and the green,  
as if a leaf  
with all his veins and nerves  
had no thought or feelings.  
It seems as if living  
itself is pure aggression.  
How shall we heal?  
Shantih. The peace of pure being.**

**26 April 2016**

=====

*for Normandi*

**Hieroglyphs,  
the ones I see  
are all in my head,  
they shout as I write them  
down. They pronounce me.**

**26 April 2016**

=====

**Weeping ungrammatically  
the April stones  
enjoy what does not nurture them  
the way it does the trees  
and all the green et cetera around.  
But water helps a stone drink light  
and light sustains it in this outer world,  
our one and only in the blessed rain.**

**26 April 2016**

=====

**Can't hear, can't see—  
can't be too obvious for me.**

**I name this tree  
my little flower,  
this hill my Denali.**

**I take what comes  
for what it seems.  
Please do the same for me.**

**26 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**How many rules inside me  
do I violate by getting out of bed  
waling around falling asleep again?  
Repose in the deep serenity of broken laws?**

**26 April 2016**

=====

**Maybe this  
is all it ever was—  
Isolde late as usual,  
Tristan quick to die  
and get it over with,**

**as if that solved anything,  
all that singing.  
The messy world of music,  
transforming our meek velleities  
into monster tragedies**

**and then it's over  
and soon enough we'll forget  
everywhere it's taken us  
only to leave us here.**

**26 April 2016**

## **EXERCISE**

**You mean you  
have to do  
things just  
to be you?**

**26.IV.16**

=====

**A tree walked in  
and tried to see me  
but I was busy thinking.**

**So it went outside again  
to interview some birds  
new to the neighborhood.**

**Birds know how to pay attention—  
little by little I'm learning,  
aking lessons from the crows**

**who are more patient  
than the songbirds, and put up  
with all my grammatical mistakes.**

**26 April 2016**



=====

**Waiting  
to be received—**

**Adonis.  
the lord  
torn in love's battle**

**his open wound  
from which the world pours out**

**heal him kiss by kiss.**

**26 April 2016**

## ARS SCRIBENDI 1

Some things don't see.  
Grass alarm  
the trodden green.  
But the gleam.

Go, pick out words  
and use them,  
pick them from  
the lexicon of your heart

word-hoard  
they used to say  
they who are not we  
they who are gone

but use them, the words  
in an immense sentence  
only you could  
brilliant as you are

find the climax for,  
the reverberant silence  
sudden absence  
of even those words.

27 April 2016

## **ARS SCRIBENDI 2**

**Don't worry about  
constraints and strategies—  
you're random enough  
to begin with,**

**all those shadows  
on the pool of your mind.**

**Try again:  
there are still more  
words inside you  
skilled in the sciences of out.**

**27 April 2016**

=====

**Here I am  
trying to learn Hittite  
by listening to the trees**

**and my wife tells me  
my accent is all wrong  
when I whistle to cardinals**

**those prelates of the feeder,  
and even worse to the wren,  
the wrong whistle.**

**a man growing stupider  
day by day till maybe  
the original language**

**shows up and lets me speak.**

**27 April 2016**

=====

**White dress of wedding  
green leaf of laurel  
the girl vanishing from the god  
into the tree  
of matrimony.**

**Marriage  
hides from god  
whose spirit finds her  
no matter where—**

**hide and seek.  
Annunciation.**

**27 April 2016**

=====

**Who are these people  
warm in dream  
and cold in waking?**

**Are they from far  
beyond China and the northern wastes?  
but they come to me  
so quickly and so warm  
and then the morning happens.**

**Who happens it to me?**

**Where are they gone?  
They took the forms of friends  
and read my mind all night.**

**28 April 2016**

## **THE WORSHIPPER**

**I touched her  
and her magic fell away**

***I am intact  
only untouched* she said**

**and we wept  
for something lost**

**we could not name  
or even recognize,**

**now it was now  
and nothing to be done.**

**28 April 2016**

=====

**Uphill with happy  
a heart you never  
heard before—**

**you pluck my strings  
to hear  
what happens me—**

**we are gods  
first because we are *sounds*  
in each other's ears,**

**all we really ever do is hear.**

**29 April 2016**



**=====**

**One of those soft  
grey days when  
everything feels  
like leaves on a bush  
with berries on it too.  
Find them. Taste them.  
Eat your fill.**

**29 April 2016**

=====

**How could the disease not have come  
when we lay so often out under the stars  
trying to count meanings, trying to read  
the plausible Hebrew of their disposition,  
watching the scribbles of the gods?  
*Too much looking*, the earth must have thought  
and invented death to close our dreams.**

**29 April 2016**

**THIS**

**is an English word  
on a grey day.  
How long it takes  
me to say so—  
o quiet hand  
touches so few  
and yet you do.**

**29 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**In summer I write about  
the hibiscus by the porch  
tracing its flowers day by day.  
Now I worry if it will leaf  
again, blossom again,  
it looks so bare. And yet  
I remember last year  
having just such anxieties.  
A man like me always needs  
something to worry him**

*(And so we move  
from the tree  
to the me)*

**30 April 2016**

== == == == ==

**Silver car, Black car.  
These things pass.  
The girl is lost in a pool  
of questions, finds  
her way out at last  
sentence by sentence  
until silence, that  
deepest caress.**

**30 April 2016**

**=====**

**It's hard to be complex  
if you have nothing to hide.  
Unless you're ashamed  
of your simplicity ("sun  
in the morning, the moon at night")  
and so need to paste parrot feathers  
all over how little you mean.**

**30 April 2016**

## **THE YEWE TREE**

**The yew tree  
hosts more wind  
in it than any  
other tree—**

**it has an affinity  
with eternity,  
shared heartwood,  
where the wind**

**comes from  
in the first place.  
The first place.  
Watch them shiver**

**and toss about  
and exult while all  
the other bushes  
snooze sedate.**

**No wonder the dead  
love yew trees so,  
keep them planted  
by the churchyard gate.**

**30 April 2016**

## **PATHOLOGY**

**1.**

**One lives in a world of pathogens. The door closes by itself, swung by the invisible gravity that lords its over one's little life. The words pronounce themselves in brute contingency, overlapping sonorities, till they lose what sense they meant and take on others, veiled purports, songs of the humpbacked whales, the dictionary of faraway spilling into one's ordinary garden as it seems. One listens with ones fingers close together to let no coin of meaning slip out and fall unheeded. One makes a fist. Here. Tight, tighter. Nothing will getr out of what one tries to hold. Nothing is so obsequious as memory. Every fetish one ever fondled is secure, stuffed into the inappropriate pigeonhole in the columbarium of lost loves. Ashes, ashes.**



2.

On the other side there are always airships, brass rings children get married for a moment with, plungers to force air down clogged recalcitrant pipes. Tubing. The roar of water in the sewer, the archiepiscopal glamor of locked up churches, especially one recalls that preposterously breathtakingly pointy tall steeple on Columbia Street, it goes closer to heaven than any other. Once in Salisbury one looked up the tower from the very base, letting the eye cruise up the angle of the corner to where only sky perpended. Once the tallest building in England. Now the sky has grown lower, every day a meter close to the earth, by the time one does the sky will rest on one's shoulders like an old blue shawl, afghan, comforter, mantilla, and then one will know. Why am I blue? one will ask, and begin to suspect the answer. Gravity gives way to mortality! The church is closed for good.

3.

So many cities. What really did one have in mind, mentioning the titles of various relationships, mother, girlfriend, boyfriend aunt? Everybody is somebody, more's the pity. Escapeless mesh of interwoven identities, that's us. Doesn't matter what color you are, someone is always waiting. One uses the word 'you' with some trepidation, because it seldom means the actual one who reads or hears it, no. We are abandoned in our habits, children of the night making mewling sounds we persuade ourselves have meaning. Here, touch this. Isn't it something? Sabbath after Sabbath the candles melt away, the cat discovers new applications for its tongue, the sun flares messages we don't bother to read even though we know how finally. One knows how to do more things than one does. That is the answer.

4.

If one could stop wanting, or start wanting hard enough with rapturous specificity to rouse oneself from the torpor of science and reach out for the wanted thing, what would happen then? Just one more fetish brought back from the Indies at the back of one's head, one's slippery imagination veiled in Tyvek and crinkly and smooth and the rain pours down and one can hardly hold onto what one has, thank you, no need for all this nakedness this skin this rainstorm this stream hurrying past these naked bathers embarrassed by their pallor and so rushing to hide in the shadow of pubescent leaves. Not at all. The merits of desire are proportionate to the speed of gravity on a calm day. Look into the bushes, do you see any wind?

5.

One wanted more of oneself than just being articulate and clear and all those civic virtues you could learn just as well from a beehive or a colony of Spaniards new-planted on Hispaniola half a millennium ago, no. One wants more than saying so. One needs more than knowing so. It is something to do with a finger, the woman said. It is something on the roof, where the seagull perched, engorging some unspeakable thing in the confessional churchy sunlight, all forgiven, eat what you please, pay the baker, sleep o' nights and ferry me across, she said and one has struggled ever since so to do. Because one is nothing if not obedient. One is a horse in the hands of the farrier. One is a flower in th bosom of some idle parson's garden, how could one be otherwise than what one is told? Tell me again, one says, and again.

6.

Something about Egypt to be sure. Yes, that far away from one's germ-bedizened fingertip, who knows where it's been, and yet one is willing to be touched thereby, the digit of the other on the cuticle of the same. Castor and Pollux. Lilith and Adam. One has waited for centuries to hear the story told correctly. Hold your breath long enough and you'll know for yourself, she said. Was that Lilith? Is that lumber piled up on th lawn, to build a treehouse so she can play with the moon? One knows she likes to do that. One knows what trees are for. One has heard it from childhood on, whiskery blokes jiving about the Tree of Life, one starts believing what one hears, isn't that always the way. To be sure. To be someone other than one is, what a treat, a pool in one;'s own garden, lie in shallows, let the light happen all over one. A thousand years. Or more. Gothic lettering, the Black Sea.

7.

**Germs are the last religion, aren't they, the invisible animals one is taught to fear all round one. And they are. Can they ride on breath? They can. Can they travel on the sound of words? They do. But what about the printed character of English it might be or Chinese, what then? They do, germs can find you from the words you read. What can one do? Close one's eyes, but the dark has diseases too. From all sides they hurry towards one, calm and determined as gravity. The earth pulls me down, one cries. You've got that right, mister. The earth is a magnet and we're the iron filings it plays with. Fact. Do you know how much copper you have in your bloodstream at this very minute? Fact. Can you hear the church bells of a burnt down steeple, can you kiss the mouth of a vanished friend? These are real issues one wrestles with day and night, especially mornings when the sun hurts ones bleary eyes after too little or fractured sleep, o what a jungle of emptiness one inhabits, invisible lianas strap**

**one to one's office chair, one fiddles with the accounts, one lies as generously as one can, but still the words keep clamoring for attention and not one of them is definite, the stupid jabber of provisional vocabulary, yuk, it makes one sick just to think about it, them, just to think.**

**8.**

**And at the end one wonders if one has said the thing one meant to say, or even if one had a such a thing in mind, or where wants come from, or where meaning's stored, in the head or in the hoof, we travel hard to find so little out, one thinks. One lets oneself say 'we' a lot to signify the hope that one is not alone. Language is just a heap of superstitions anyway. Say what you please and hope for the best, it's like striking matches or lighting candles or touching wood or whistling in the dark and hope that Odin's listening and will send his crows to guide you to your desire. They are ravens and there's a difference. That's the only thing one can be clear about—there's a difference. Touch it. Lick the difference. lick it some more, taste it, swallow what you taste. Some germs are good for you.**

**30 April 2016**



## WORD

If you read it from right to left, it spells the southern part of your own world, the place that stretches out from your right hand when you're looking, vague as ever, at the sun coming up over the rock ridge — shale, soil, little trees — behind your house. Otherwise you're on your own. If you touch her you'll have to kiss her, and if you kiss her, you'll have to wed. That is the law. You can see that on the left hand, it too stretches away, into the distances beyond the whaling port, the Indian raid, the fur of weasels drying on poles in front of empty houses, nobody minds, the distances are innocent, most things are. But you. that's another story. And there are so many.

30 April 2016

## **BELIEVERS**

**There are regions in the far northwest where religion assumes unseemly forms. Infants are tattooed at birth or soon after, or parts of their generative apparatus are surgically deleted. Languages other than the vernacular are used by self-perpetuating fraternities or sororities, to suggest knowledge beyond the common, or intimacy with mysterious suppositious forces concealed in history or beyond the sky. Rites intended to propitiate one of several deities are performed with depressing regularity. Every now and again a votary of such cults will escape by design or accident from those regions, those religions, and many will marvel at the stories such fugitives tell. In their innocence, they blame themselves for defecting, by geography or by the cessation of cultic practice, from the only pattern they know of what they — using a word we also use — call ‘virtue.’ It is not clear how that word came to be known up there, or came to be attached t the cruel barbarity of their observances. Language is so strange.**

**30 April 2016**

## **PREDISPOSITION**

**He was tired of saling a toy boat across a pond that wasn't even his. His neighbors were pleasant enough, and, recognizing the universal currency of water, let him drift his tin schooner around and around their pool, which, fenceless, adjoined his own property. A little string was all it took to guide the boat faithfully along any course a string could mark out. Hours could be spent, almost profitably, making the boat go here and there, as if following the hundreds of intersecting lines that in another time could have led to a portolan chart of this body of water. A map. But why map something twenty feet across and rtwenty seven feet long? Fatigue was inevitable. The vessel, the "Frankincense" (so named by his Uncle Fritz) was shiny and red, its pale sails gradually growing dingy, but still white enough to remind a glance of sea voyages, Captain Cook, death at the hands of cannibals. Puberty was on its way towards him too, and**

toy boats seldom survive its onslaught. He, however, this one, Fritz's nephew we shall call him, he wanted his boat to endure, grow large, conquer lagoons, straits, bays, bights (how exactly are they different from bays?), real seas. *Waves wash over us both*, he reasoned, *the vessel and the man, the prow and the penis*. He thought of himself as a man. Or not so much a man now, as a man, the man, he would be when the boat grew large, and traded its tinny walls for oak and pine, and lifted clean white sails into the womanly immensity of ocean.

30 April 2016

## KEYS

Sometimes last longer than doors, than houses. Metal has that property, and most keys, all old keys, are brass or iron or steel or such. Women wail in the streets when they're locked out and their sleeping husbands, hungover like as not, don't rouse to let them in. *Tragoedia domestica*, like the famous opera by the later Strauss. His name means ostrich, did you know that, or bouquet. In allusion to the feathers, no doubt, but which came first? *Strouthoi*, in Greek, were birds of some sort, white one supposes, Aphrodite rode in a chariot flown by them, sailing here and there through the weather, bored a little with her earnest metalworking husband, even though he, he alone, fashioned for her the keys that opened every heart. And still do.

30 April 2016