

4-2016

apr2016

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "apr2016" (2016). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1388.
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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 or 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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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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 much 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 longest 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
durabilitiy. 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 gospelling 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
walijng 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 YEW 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.

Germes 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 to 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