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THE PROBLEM

The problem is dreaming, isn't it. What one wishes for with arms under the coverlet or breathes a name, yours?, with lips just over the blanket top, how the wool must tickle the area betwixt lower lip and chin. What is that scoop of flesh called, this concave sister to the bold salients of the philtrum above the upper lip? What is anything's real name. How dare I ask such a question. The sheep aren't even listening. Then again, what do I know about wool. Start again. The dream is the problem and it hurts, sort of, when I breathe. Maybe that's just me. But suppose I'm not special and everyone suffers like that, very smally, a sense of pain as the dream rolls up and flaps away and leaves one with the day. Or is the day the problem. Everything depends, as it is written somewhere, so why not here, again, everything depends. Now you're talking. A dream of paper, soft moonlight dream, face dream, ice dream. Each in its own peculiar

way brings pain, or the fear of pain, or at the least a faint anxiety about what might be coming next. For instance, it's raining at the moment but what then? Sometimes, you know how you're watching a French movie and for a moment or two you think you understand what the French people are saying, you think you actually understand their words, but then the shock of that awareness knocks you back and you realize you didn't understand a single word, you just dreamed the whole meaning, you know? So dream is a foreign language we sometimes —we are asleep, after all — imagine for a moment we understand. Head on pillow, blanket up to chin. Sleep now. The pain will go away before you know it, and when it comes back, you won't remember you ever felt it before.

1 May 2016

CAUSERIES.

Meant conversations.

**But how to deflect
the *cause* from the chatter,
the meat from the social,
the meat of the meant.**

**Yes, we talked a lot, spent
most of my life talking,
the talking illness to balance
Freud's 'talking cure.'**

**Causeries. But what are the causes,
who is the emperor
whose distant diktats prompt
our unruly, even treasonous, all night palaver?**

**Doesn't talk always have to be against?
Aren't words blunt arrows that crave a target?**

**There is a 'why' embedded here,
a question I'm afraid to ask,
the risk.**

**only the very
brave or very young dare
dwell a while in silence.**

1 May 2016

DARK FATHER

The dark father is a figure that stands over someone and obscures the sun, that feminine warm consolation that abbreviates the eternal dark of planetary space. The dark father, sometimes called the Moon, is always ready to cancel vision, or distort it with pale cold silvery shimmerings, making us think we see. But that is not seeing. The dark father chills the joy in our hearts, and his chief weapon is doubt. We say someone suffers acutely from self-doubt, but it's not the self's own doubt but the dark father's doubt he pours on her, lathers on her, so every one of her accomplishments is undervalued, every friendship doubted, every thought or feeling called into question, every letter erased a dozen times. Such is the work of the dark father, and let us be clear about it, he never gives up. It is his job and he does it with sullen, stupid, grumbling, masculine determination. You will take no pleasure from your pleasure. he insists, and your

pains will always seem justified to atone for some unknown dereliction you feel you must have committed. Guilt is one of his favorite tools.

Knowing his name might help. He is the Dark Father. Knowing that he will always be there, bony finger on your live arm, may strengthen you with the resolve to pay no attention. Pay him no heed. He is a part of nature, your nature, and has as much right to exist as the coyote in the underbrush or the ants on your lawn. It's up to you to credit him no more than you embrace the alien liturgies of the ants. Let him mumble.

Know just this: he is always wrong. Even when he says things that others reinforce, even then he is wrong. Wronger, in fact, because you're not the only one who has a dark father. And the dark father is generous, even promiscuous in his distribution of doubt, dismay, disappointment, blame. He doesn't even know you, or that he's talking to you. He's just mouthing what he always does. It has no more meaning than the crickets in the forest. Well, that

sound has meaning for crickets, but not for you. Who can guess what the dark father thinks he means? Don't heed the dark father, he just goes on and on, If you hear him, hear him as you might hear finches screaming n their cage. His noise is automatic, tautological, void. Let the actual in, the undoubted, the ordinary, the truth of matter. Let the light in. Be the Bright Son, the Bright Daughter.

1 May 2016

MUIR WORDS

1.

**Runagates we said
running wild in the streets**

**and runaways
like lowlanders to the sea**

away away helter skelter

**Run away with you,
run out into the rain
to feel the real.**

2.

**John Muir said to the philosopher
Nothing indoors is real.
It's all contrivance and fantasy and fad.**

**The real is out here,
always just out of reach.**

3.

**Walk through the tree
and understand.
Gate means street
where I come from.**

**A street is just along
tall gate with wide walls to go.**

**Walk through the shadow of the tree
with me, say nothing
and you'll hear my words
rafting down the river of your sense.**

A tree is just a river standing up.

1 May 2016

=====

**Long, it can be long
as you please,
desire stretches it.
African waters
of the Nile
lap Grecian shores.
All myths moot
the same story.
Only the colors change.**

1 May 2016

LIEBESLIED

But May rain. A sparrow finds use for it. the wet, the wary. Find use for most things. But we, we make memorial services out of everything. Long faces, forms to fill out, autographs, auctioneers, selfies at the open grave, too much music. But I like your face and the way your left hand tends to dither, flutter really, between waist and hip, one more restless bird. All right, I like this planet after all, my body tells me so, and I always try to do what she says.

2 May 2016

SALMON

How far have we come, the salmon wanted to know. Far enough, said the sea. I wasn't talking to you, the salmon answered, trying to be polite, but to the more concentrated, forward moving ganoids and teleosts who are bothering you even now with our ceaseless hitherings. And thitherings, said the sea, but anyhow here is where you get off, up you think of it, up that chill stream that keeps us awake all night with its tumbling into us. I didn't know the sea ever sleeps. That shows how much you know —we (I use the royal we) sleep in bays and bights and somnolent lagoons— now get ye gone upstream and breed...it must be nice to breed, to find another self like one's own, and marry it or them, how sweet that must be. I wouldn't really know, said the fish, we don't get close when we do it, in fact there's no it that we do, unlike some I've heard of, with pizzles and crevices and such, we just put something down and drop something else on top and hope for the best, it does take

two of us to do it though. See, that's what I mean, there are two of you, and only one of us. And notice that I have in fact correctly answered your question. Here is where you leave me and run upstream to the sweet assignation awaits you there, ah, fortunate fish!

2 May 2016

PROSE

**Prose, as if the rose
closed up at night
like morning glories
or opened only then
like the white jasmine
by Lake Geneva, last
odor Pontius Pilate
smelled before he
washed away all his
headaches forever,**

**but thr rose
abides the dark,**

**rosa mundi
at once the world's
rose and the world
is a rose, from hand
to hand it's passed.**

Prose is the poetry of going on.

2 May 2016

LETTING

If I use everything up, will the morning still let me? Love me, I mean — it's love I want, not letting. Letting lets the blood flow out of the vein into the white enamel pan of an eighteenth century surgeon, I don't want that. Love keeps the blood, seeps it back in, drums it up to the Heart, that German brass-band leader pumping his arms in the pavilion in the park on a chilly evening, oom-pa, oom-pah. In fact the body is a park. A lovely lively park in a busy city— know that, please, and take pleasure from your presence there. In it, always in. Pleasaunce, they used to say. Be there, that suffices. A small pool in the middle of the park reflects the whole sky.

3 May 2016

=====

**If I lived
in the sky
I might**

**have a right
to say I
or use**

**a name
as an excuse
for identity**

**but as it is
anyone
simply is.**

4 May 2016

LONDON GARDENS

My eyes are poor, it's hard to read, I have to write instead, to gain the pleasure that used to come from reading. So I write my way to London gardens now, not always fancy ones in parks (dear Queen Marys roses) or famous Fields were homeless hunger in bad times, not even trim Georgian gardens tucked away with hortensias for the fortunate. They can be just the green ramshackle allotments you see from the train, where working folk come out before their jobs or in the last light to tend to their carrots, their lettuces, protected from others of their kind by chicken-wire fences on rickety posts. Their swedes. Their spuds. But sometimes I find my way through all of the above into an older garden, almost a woods, overgrown and dense, it might be on one of London's hidden rivers north of town, maybe there, a pocket of untended hedges and saplings in the shade. And I meet great Arthur Machen there now and again,

who used to be Arthur Jones but he found his way to a darker name, just the kind of destiny these scrubby, gorgeous, dense little woodlots propose. Survival. Animal and culture, gods and dreams can still live here. Read his books, you fortunate visionaries! It's not just the vole and the weasel that live unchallenged in such places but the old gods, the old goddesses that Machen sought and found looking up at him from the pages he scribbled, bare maiden with eyes vivid and so pale blue it's as if her face opened in a quiet smile and was the sky. But she is not smiling when I chance to find her. She looks a question at me I can't answer, or she looks over my shoulder to see whom I have brought with me, as Machen brings her often timid readers and dreamers to worship the serenity of her sheer being there clothed in holy nakedness. I bring what I can. I adore her. She looks at me with haughty, casual intimacy, as if I too were the gardener, and she wondered why my arms were not full of offerings, cabbages and purple kale.

4 May 2016

HYMN TO ARTEMIS POLYMASTIS

Artemis

she
is not Athenian
not from that authoritarian
slave-holding
patriarchy, the 'democracy'
as of John Calhoun and Jefferson Davis,

her name means north
means Mother of the Bears
the beasts, *potnia theron*,
Lady of Animals

she is north,
her name is north,
Arktemis, mother of beasts,
Bear Mother who licks her realm into shape,
our realm, we animates, soul-havers,
the beasts of us

she is north,
ecstasy and wildness

and she is Asia
not some enigmatic orient

but the shadow on earth
just before sunrise.
coming towards us,
she is Asia
undisciplined and generous
her maiden breasts are full of milk
for everyone and no one
is constrained to drink
from that immortal source
that to us, reaching up,
lapping the cool air of Maytime,
brings wisdom and long life and mystery.

She has been my source
since high school, since I stood
on shabby corners at 4:05 A.M.
haughty-hungry for love
and she was there

she is always there.
And now she stands
eight storeys tall –
a fraction of her actual height –
on well-named Crown Street.
Kether of the Tree of Life.

all the best Greeks were Jews first,
and all the best Jews Egyptians,
and Egypt was Africa
where the body began.

The one that stands here
needing milk and love and such,

here She is, in off-named Kingston,
the Queen's Own Town
it should be,
she who needed no man
— myth of virgin, myth of purity —
purity is nakedness

as Actaeon saw
before the storytellers made
her angry and his dogs wild,

but let us not speak of him,
we are also victims of her beauty
of her vastness, queen of animals,
here, on May 6th, feast of Pan,
of Tammuz, Dumuzi, all
your secret lovers,
the six of every month belongs to you,
look up to find her

and dry out crazed with joy
Great is Diana of the Ephesians!
the model for your image here,
your Majesty, your Exuberance,

young Gaia painted you for us
so we can stand around on the street again
to celebrate you.

queen of earth, your big hands
outspread, signed with work and care,

your arms around us
settle around us
over a back street, public parking,
a massage parlor, nobody sees,

you are hidden in the sky
thousands of years,
hidden in us now.

4 May 2016

=====

I need not worry
if anyone will come.
They're all here
to begin with,

be good to the animals,
they are her ambassadors,
be good to your enemies,
they're trying hard to make you better,

be good to the water
flowing by your door,
bless the rain and bless the drought,

he said, trying to make friends
with everything before the end.

But the end has happened already,
the book is closed, the oaken door nailed shut.
And why not? Nothing is going on
but everything, and if there is no
difference there is no meaning,

is there? he wanted to know. Sit
in the museum, that's still wide open,

**study the Tintoretto spread out on the sky,
the Turner along the horizon,
you could sit there and count the clouds
if you still had numbers,
you can even stroke that porcupine
if you do it the right way.**

4 May 2016

STRIDULOUS

as crickets. As all
night long summer
trees. As fiddle
flurry, timeless
pizzicati maybe.
Memory in the dark
gibbering. Bothersome
beatitudes. Cross my
heart and hope to.
Hope. Morse code
squealing from the
sunk *Titanic*. Words
all the blessed time.

5 May 2016 (1:20 AM)

=====

for Kim Lyons

He wakes up and needs
something, dream tells him to get it,
honey of the night
but what is that, what
can it be. Or mean.
He tries Latin *mel*
noctis but that says
even less. What to do?
He has given away
all his notebooks his blank
paper so there is nowhere
now for him to go
look it up after writing it down.

Then he remembers.
Ono no Komachi
most beautiful of all poets
washed her book. Why?
To wash all the words off,
to get the pages empty again,
pure, cold as the moon
her lover, blank, blank
so she can really speak
her new words, true words,
honey of the night.

5 May 2016(2AM)

WOR OF THE WINDOW

1.

Look out the window
watch no one pass
faster and faster
the empty road.
Not even the moon.

2.

What will I see
when I look out there?
The glare of the lightbulb
on my naked face.

Because every window
is a mirror, night or day.
The world is a mirror.

5 May 2016

ISOCHROMIC

earth and sky,
let the birds out
to be different
tell roof from saddle
door from down—
my eyes have walked
these moors for years

building houses building
people to come out
from them as they go,
the moor the marrier,
pale protestant deep
in pagan woods

and then I close them,
eye by folk by word until
the sky is just a sky again.
But such a miracle is this earth!

5 May 2016

=====

They don't love me
any more than I love them,
we're all just cards
in someone else's deck,

gypsy tarot if we're in luck
otherwise just a poker pack,
spades that can't dig
and hearts that don't beat—

someone plays with us
all night in a rickety
cabin on Mount Olympus,
a blar-eyed divinity

wonders vaguely what becomes of us.

5 May 2016

=====

What do we have still
that makes sense now?
Street and corner,
cat on a stoop—memories
of Seepshead Bay,
a burning church, a school
on Avenue X. Animate
these particulates
how? Begin to cry,
Mother's Day, Fourth of July,
weep for the colors,
the graves so far away
from where they lived,
the unseen images
that spell a life, or start
a sentence a life must speak.

5 May 2016

=====

**You never know
what nothing means
until it's there.**

5.V.16

EXHAUSTION

Breakfast is exhausting so I gave it up long ago. All those eggs! Each one a thwarted destiny, though that was just the worst of it. Along the way the tiresome sameness, the over-prized variation between one specimen and the next, the obsessive alternation of modes and preferences: poached, scrambled, hard boiled, soft boiled, fried, over-easy, like some dreary Assyrian week over and over again. And that's just the eggs. Whoever thought up drinking fruit juice for breakfast? Start the day with sugar and acid? And where did oranges come in anyhow? Our ancestors did not drink cherry juice and plum juice with their porridge. And porridge, omigod, how can you swallow it by the dawn's early light, that blanket of glop? And have you watched what happens to corn flakes after a few minutes in milk? Sludge. I don't want that inside me. And granola — do you know what they do in Switzerland? They fill a huge bowl with granola in yogurt

at the start of the week and heap it from the bowl day by day onto your breakfast dish. My dish. They really did. I couldn't believe it, we wouldn't feed it to the dog. It's exhausting just thinking about it. And we don't have a dog.

5 May 2016

ONO NO KOMACHI

**Same name same woman
always different face
her body also is different
from itself the way a sky
can be, close, far, grey,
blue, red at sunset, black.
For all I know I've met her
a dozen times in the woods
and teashops and saloons
back when they had such
things. For places have
faces too and faces change.
They say she died withered,
impoverished, not so good
to look at. They say so many
things about beautiful women,
especially immortal poets
like Ono no Komachi. Even I
pretend I knew her, touched
the raffia framework on
her sun-hat when I reached out
to stroke a cheek, the way
a man does, the skin eluded me,
I can still feel the straw.**

5 May 2016

=====

**Examine the link
between the obvious
and the unknown.
In that synaptic region
(smell of apples, musk
as if a small clean animal
crept into your tent).
The apples are not
for eating, and you never see
the little weasel or
whatever it is that's rustling
now in the clothes you
discarded before sleep,
a heap of shadows in the last
glow of your campfire
outside, the walls of such
places are very thin.**

5 May 2016

=====

**In this cartouche
name of a dead king—**

**all words are like that,
shapes with pastness in them.**

**Analyze the alphabet,
anatomize the dictionary—**

**all history is there
mostly kingless, mostly happy.**

5 May2016

=====

**But listen to her from afar—
every image is the imaged deity,
every picture summons
soma from the moon.**

Degas. Hokusai. Carrington.

**We choose the deities
who ravish us
with oceans or dancers or
nightingales lost in sunshine

shouting the daylight away.**

6 May 2016

=====

**I used to be afraid
I'd miss something
now I rather hope I will.**

6 May 2016

=====

**Conjugate means
linked together,
who can that be?**

**Don't red stars flicker over fallen masonry?
Doesn't the door resist the inquiring kock?**

**Why is a wall out there
always waiting to come in?**

**Or a swan, say,
tell me about swans
so that I can know you
(swans I can know by themselves)**

**and knowing you
can go to sleep again like a cloud.**

7 May 2016

== == == == ==

**Evidence of a mine disaster
the grass turns red?
No. The earth is hollow, hollow.**

**Diamonds fall from the vcrevices
of the human body—
no other source. That
is where gems come from,
rubies and sapphires.**

**Emeralds fall from the trees though
when young people sit underneath them
reading interesting books.**

7 May 2016

=====

**Peter means rock
Paul means small
John means gone
away into the sun.**

7 May 2016

DE TEMPORE

**Was there time before us?
Or did we do it,
dragging our blood pump
over the clean fields
virgin rocks of long ago?**

**And now we have it
where does it take us
into what region
we have never imagined
does our own trajectory**

**project us now, angry and sad,
looking back over our shoulder,
hearing that pulsing in us,
the beat in our ears we
can't even hide with words?**

7 May 2016

= = = = =

Wash your face
get out of bed
do my schedule
your way, mirror,
instead,
 thou art
conquistador
of the ordinary!

Here you are with soap
on your fingers, comfrey,
lavender favored by mice,
look away, mirror, it's
only me, the radio, Strauss,
end of *Intermezzo*,
last night is every dawn,
domestic triumph,
drag your voices
through my head,
no snow, spring night,
Venus on skis
swift down pure brightness.

The Ancients had forgotten
most of the things we know,
O to be infant

without petroleum,
in that Elysium
speechless to learn
language all over again,

brush your hair, be neat.
Neat is nice to neighbors.
Keep it in the mirror,
bananas and bones and look at me.
no one will know what you really are.
Southampton Row from that corner
east into the integrity of the law,

east, east, human heart
shape of the cathedral,
a dome lifts the city as a sky,
the heart is a sky,
music is religion's blood,
no god without melody,

up the hill, not even here,
my up has only down beyond it,
it is the morning when the trees have leaves
all cars are white in the rain
when I was young there was a sea

Talk to me for once,
sly piece of glass,
why is it you I see

on my way to being?

**All the silences of poetry
confuse me,**

a jar of honey

from New Zealand

**don't bother tasting
the sound of it
cures your malaise**

**Or (second movement) sleep some more
under the scarlet blankets, at her side.
luminous silence of the sleeping bride**

**credences and summer vines,
sunflowers still shining underground
every tree has all life in it,
yes, human life,**

Kether the crown

**in the light above it,
Malkuth the soft greenness all around,
Lordings, did you think they were just metaphors,
scraps of leftover poetries?**

**All images are real, the glass
has spoken, washing my face
is tantamount to being born
first time again, morning on morning,
why else is water, and cloth,**

and soap so holy, all the free
river from the little faucet

or is that a fox just crossed the road,
water in the pipes, blood in your veins
uguale, all the same, as the master said
and the mirror heard, the mirror
hears everything !

O a shiny wet road
is a glamor thing,
slipped once
near Damascus but didn't fall

or my eye on the window
a fly creeping north,
cold weather,
ait your turn, mister,
the mirror is still busy meaning,

acres and breakfast equally remote,
319 feet perimeter of our paved drive
I can walk miles without leaving home

so the third movement (rocky
road to Dublin, primroses, messages)
is stuffed with silences
and who am I to speak?

Let to the altar by the mirror
fell to my knees
in the modality of prayer

or is anybody there?

yes, I am

and am of a mind to pray
and from my *devotion*

—using the self utterly up
till nothing's left
that is not offering—

may waking up ensue,
the face find itself
washed and luminous,
the mirror answered at last.

8 May 2016

=====

**You stroked my eyebrow once,
do you remember?
Firm, firm, your finger
as if to test the bone
beneath appearances.
I'll never forget
the almost painful
firmness of your research,
it felt as if you knew
something about me
I could never guess
without you, something
your hand tried to tell.**

8 May 2016

=====

yam tad

**How does the sea
come to have
so many hands?**

**Water
is nothing but touching,
the Lady explained,**

**whatever touches
has to be a hand.**

8 May 2016

=====

**The *leak* comes down to sex
the means
given to us to know God
where there is no God
and to know ourselves
when there is no self.**

**The leak from the mountain
from the marble sky
what slips through
from nowhere
to be here,
 the leak, the love
that learned us
till we do.**

8 May 2016

=====

**Gulls over the wall
there must be a sea
out there beyond the obvious,**

**we live by evidence,
buds in the rose bush
already, lilacs maybeing
with the chill evenings,**

**evidence inside us
of what is coming,
not just in flowers**

**or are we also?
It's time to know.**

8 May 2016

=====

**I was just a kid
liked to read,
wrote a few books
and suddenly was
eighty years old.
Where was I while
all that was going on?**

8 May 2016

=====

**A piece of Greek grammar
left on the bathroom shelf.
Was it an aorist optative
that came to nothing, no hope,
no hope, ages ago, Battle of Actium
one of Antony's mercenaries
from Attica may have breathed it,
lost it, no hope now at all.
Or maybe a future passive infinitive
on his mind as the rented
trireme went down, when will it be
my turn to be brought back to life
again.? I'll ask Connie Cavafy
about it when we meet at the Blue
Hour, on the terrace, for a glass
of wine from Samos, haven't had
the luck to taste in forty years.**

8 May 2016

=====

**Leaving a mountain behind
is like leaving home
waving goodbye to your mother
the end of the Escarpment
at your left across the river
what it means to go north.**

But that is where true going goes.

...

8 May 2016

=====

the oak at my back
—Michael Ives

On the way back
from hearing you
we stood among lilacs
at Clermont, not showy
yet or ever now that spring
came and went and comes
maybe again, the smell
was fugitive but the hill
we stood on, that
was permanent, pure
philosophy, people on a hill
in wind, Above a river.
Abaft of mountains. All
the necessary obligations
of heaven fulfilled. Trees
here are famous locusts,
bicentennial lilac gardens.
So I stood with the wind
at my back, the wind is
my special tree, wind is
my mother in fact
on mother's day, wind
from the west, from

**America in another fact
reminding me of all
I have ever heard. All
the susurrus of Latin,
the meld of music,
syntagmas of sacred
poesy they once said
in the sacreder emptiness
of air moving fast.
A man in the wind.**

8 May 2016

=====

**Going is a goblin
the worst part is knowing
he knows I know
how deep my root of staying
is he tears away at
with spade and trowel
all the toothed whatevers
of sheer circumstance
to get me to go.**

8 May 2016

ANALYSE DU TEXTE

**Have to say it say it
meek white collar
vocabulary, the work
has all the sinews**

**and there is no time.
It all belongs, syntax
is like that, a worker
is part of a circuit**

**blame me if it goes
nowhere. Because
I am money, I am
capital and you are**

**too. We want our
way to hell, hell
is the system of
preference, or**

**to use another
word the cosmos,
things are we won't
let them remain**

**untouched, all
by themselves alone.
Heaven is a stone
on the side of a hill.**

9 May 2016

= = = = =

**The wrong color
tells the food away
from the neurology.**

**Alright, I confess it,
I am an alien. Born
in Brooklyn on this
planet by the sea
marshes but still.**

**Alien. Otherwhence.
Suppose the nervous
system isnot a system
at all, just one single
shout long ago now
echoing through my meat.**

**Alien, as I said.
Like music, leaching
through time. Tone.
We are overtones.**

**9 May 2016
Rhinebeck**

=====

**I never feel I'm the you
in her poems. That sets me free,
lets me be me, glad
child in a house of images
from which I am also free
to depart carrying nothing
but the tune left in my ears
from so much looking.**

9 May 2016

=====

**Caught in the rigging
the wind
never reaches the sails**

**the ship gets known
only by waves
gentle up and down**

**fine woven things
confuse simplicity—
my breath too**

**gets caught in you
on its way
to saying sense**

**tongue-tied they say
but the tongue's
not at fault**

**the tight knot
is in the particulars
when the breath**

**in its simplicity
wants everything**

at once —

**the ocean of the other
is infinitely wide
with no America beyond.**

10 May 2016

=====

**Don't tell me who they are.
Tell me what they are.
Kether in Malkuth?
Venus in her bower
before the timid planet
learned to be green?
Or are they maybe salt?
I mostly want them
anyhow, and want them
to be mineral and mine.**

10 May 2016

=====

35 words for Joe Flaherty's 35th Anniversary

PRECINCTS

**Out went the cops
in came the books
then Joe thought
they and we needed
some air, so out
he took them
for a spin in the bus,
all over America
set the books free.**

10 May 2016

THE OLFACTION

for Charlotte

1.

Left light behind
and sound. And touch
was all too natural.

There was this faculty
loomed in the dark,
a fragrance factory

the mind set knowing
each thing by its smell.

2.

Smell is pure relationship,
the self rousing to know the other—

no image in that dark
(might just as well be light)

no image at all. Sheer knowing.

3.

And what is known that way
seems to give us ourselves,
perfume of our own thought
apprehending the other.

The scenter's art
to shape a world inside.

4.

Some from memory, yes,
and circumstance,
but more than those—

fragrance is the essence of each thing,
the part of itself it can't keep to itself,
must always give itself away,
the noble pilgrim, the *given* of the rose.

11 May 2016

=====

**Sometimes daytime
says too much,
a violet shimmer
where the lilacs are,**

**I'll put my glasses
on and stop my guesses**

**but in between
the seen and the known
a great philosopher
wakes from sleep—**

**I used to know his name
but memory's glasses
broke long ago, so
come close if you would
have me know you.**

11 May 2016

=====

**Sometimes I'm pale blue—
is that permitted?**

**When you ask a question
you create an Answerer.**

**this is one way gods are born
and scientists, all kinds of implausible
entities, wizards, women, waterfalls.**

11 May 2016

=====

**Water (because
it goes everywhere,
touches everything)
knows all the answers.**

11.V.16

=====

**Don't lie to me
unless you make it seem
the way the Danube
hides from Vienna**

**or soften it with sea mist
chill off the Vineyard
where the rich can see
no better than the poor**

**and both breathe in
this ion air,
all the planet's myths
taste in every breath.**

11 May 2016

=====

**I used to be somebody else
then something happened
and I was me. I struggle
to make sense of this.**

**Sudden difference. Now
fell out of then. Nothing
is as it was. Or should be.
Or is it. Is this the way**

**it was always supposed
to happen? Study the mirror,
loser. See what it is you've
lost. The terrible found.**

11 May 2016, RKC

=====

**Who is it we listen to
in this famous silence?
Someone so close
your eyes can't focus
so close. The words
appear by themselves
in your head. Silence
full of jabber. Silence
is clanking of memory.**

11 May 2016, RKC

RHINEBECK RESTAURANT

**All the food is local.
Only the eaters
are brought in by train.**

11.V.16, RKC

=====

**Cristobal Colón
that brave Jew from Genoa
set up a tribe of
Sephardic Indians
somewhere on the mainland.**

**Like all other mysterious
groups they migrated
slowly southward to Brazil,
their Hebrew mostly lost
into Aramaic from the *Zohar*
they carried with them,
studying it in the tropic nights
not untinged with Lusitan.**

11.V.16, RKC

=====

for C

**An angel brought me a cup
as I listened to reader
after reader, the angel
set a cup down in front of me,
and this cup did not speak
of death and resurrection
but of a calmer fate, a clean
necessity, paper cup of coffee
cool enough to gulp down
against the sad mortal
sleepiness of spoken things.**

11 May 2016 RKC

== ==

**Above the empty plastic
bowls on the snack table
a balloon
desiccated, demi-airborne,
glittery gold,
leans against the wall.
Symbols of our striving
all round us if we dare to look.**

11 May 2016

=====

**Seaside carnival
salt water taffy
am I Dizzy
Gillespie to
say such words
I wouldn't dare to?
Everything
is the name of a song**

a riff I wrote and long forgot

**unwrap each piece
let it soften
in the cheek
before you chew,
then do,
 save
the wrapper, do
not litter,
the boardwalk is sanctioned by gulls.**

12 May 2016

PARENTETICAL

**(So every word also
means its opposite
—not just cleave and cleave—
but I am on the other side**

**already, things change
all by themselves
Come on, let's go!
they shout in every bad movie,**

**sunrise means the earth
is falling away. Go on,
let's come! and having
come be gone from this place.)**

12 May 2016

=====

**Breathe a night sky
in at morning:
this is the way of the horse**

**reared to strike sparks from the rock
basalt breakfast
on a new-laid earth**

**Begin always again
the Brocken masquerade of being now.**

13 May 2016

PAGODA

**Look at the pagoda
it rises
out of the mind's mist
*across the way***

**who built it, what
imperial piety chose
a nine-story narrative
of brick and tile,**

**such colors?
Sky-blue as Samarqand
red as revolver
yellow as my fingernail.**

**2.
primary colors
imitate us
and vice versa**

**climb the winding
steps inside
the sky is catching**

**so close
at each step
the chemistry of air**

**changes, every level
has its own
dialect of light.**

**Am I there yet?
Are you
even listening?**

14 May 2016

=====

**The rue in the rapture
we take on meaning
as we speak,**

**a long
song excluding history,
exuding instead
all the facts
that never happened.
And happen all the time.**

14 May 2016

== == == ==

for John and Enid

**We are cardboard figures
cut-out, life-size,
an eighth of an inch thick.
All the winds
of our emotions topple us.
But noble we stand,
noble we seem
and really are, against all
odds, the winds of otherness.**

14 May 2016, Hudson

=====

The eels retrace
the lost avenues of Atlantis
to find their way home.

And birds have —
each species its own—
a trick like that.

Which is why I try to let
the light pass through me,
no flesh, no metallurgy.

No, wait, here's an old
bronze coin from Syracuse,
Plato may have fingered it

wondering why he'd come
so far to doubt
the relevance of what can be said.

And right there a silver
denarius from the reign of Tiberius—
who knows who touched it

once and threw it down?

14 May 2016, Hudson

=====

for Peter

**A book to Christ?
Why not. I meant it once
and never stopped,
churchless as I am.**

**A presence has been with me
all my life, I have called it
all sorts of reverent names.**

14 May 2016, Hudson

OWL TALK

**Touch me
the owl said
You have to
the pine tree
replied Do
that for yourself,
just land in me
hold tight,
we're magic
together, even
if you think you
do all the work—
we do it all
together, bring
the wind that
feeds us both.
To touch something
is to be touched,
no matter who.**

`15 May 2016

CLOUDS

**1.
Clouds are our reckoning
our messengers, our just deserts.
They are the figures
on the trestleboard
of all the rituals we must perform,
complete each minute
of the Great Work.**

**2.
“I am the shepherd of clouds
come learn with me
to count the herds as they shift
or settle down
to feed all day on our dreams.”**

`15 May 2016

== == == == ==

**It's green out there
but not real green,
too much yellow,
too much gold.
So few blue.
The sky will have to do.**

`15 May 2016

=====

Now wind
walks.
Talks as it passes
a two-syllable word
not English
then is quiet.
Arrú !
I heard it saying
in the yew tree,
had the feel of Irish,
the wind walked up and said *arrú*,
sounded like
what you'd say
to your lover
impatient to play,
as if to say, Wait,
we have work to do,
arrú, arrú, before
we can be
who we really are.

`15 May 2016

=====

**Listen through me
hear me
all the way down
in you**

**and you will know
new worlds
in your old self—
hear me till we wake.**

`15 May 2016

=====

**Stop worshipping
in words,
stop worshipping words,**

**be silent
God is the silence at center
when everything else
speaks all the time.**

Silence your way to silence.

`15 May 2016

COUNTING WHYS

The tally mounts
to touch the blue
of the first why.

Over me, be over me —
the blue light heals the happy
we read that on a stone
staircase in Shambala,

2.
Tell me the origin,
make it a myth,
a weird narration
I don't quite understand.

3.
Where did you get
your facts, your names
gouged into the bronze
statues you dredged up,

how did you know
that the crescent on her
brow meant the moon,
how had her flesh turned

by time and ocean into bronze?

4.

**I can't understand anything
you tell me, a name
is something that hurts,**

**hurts my head,
go hurt the distances instead.**

16 May 2016

=====

1.`

**Waiting to find certainly
the way to hold the air
firmly as in the deep
Brass Basin
not made of any metal.**

2.

**She came from the islands
and she was very tall.
You fitted handily
inside her shadow.**

3.

**Then the trumpet came,
blare of ordinary air
put the children to sleep —
noise sedates the infant
the wordless clamor
in their heads —
tin can philosophy
but it works. Plato
is good for you,
warns you away from
whatever you think.**

16 May 2016

=====

**The airplane and the woodpecker
so private, so alike
in their distances aloft,
abaft, and both
silent now. Leaving
the blackbird to its simple
gospel, *wake up, wake up,*
I will annoy you
all the way to Paradise.**

17 May 2016

= = = = =

**Warm enough again first time in weeks
to sit outdoors and listen
to that *other* tinnitus, the world as is,
out there, out here.
Me in it and it in me.**

17 May 2016

== == ==

**Most men
fail to be Merlin,
most women Morgan La Faye.
We turn into Helen, into Achilles
and welter in the blood of our narratives,
stories, stories and nothing told.
Myth is almost silent,
the meager echo after
in a place where nothing happens but the truth.**

17 May 2016

= = = = =

**Banish my heart
from the Presidio,
I have walked there
long enough
waiting for the ocean over there
to put on decent
clothes and come to meet me.**

**No one less than the ocean
will please me now
as Williams said 'in the extremity
to which I have come.'**

**So I will go to her cool sister
off the rocks of Cuttyhunk
and implore better knowledge of her
and let her finish telling me the tale
she started whispering
at Rockaway when I was three.**

17 May 2016

FLAG

**A standard lifted strange:
a subway car
full of choristers
silent, studying their scores.**

**And only the wheels
are screaming on the tracks
the tunnel's base reverberant.
And no one speaks —**

**that is my gonfalon for this Tuesday,
red around the central pane,
silent singers,
the hair tousled by the rushing wind.**

17 May 2016

=====

**Suddenly the brown hill
is green and very close.
Geology is frisky,
ridges rise and stretch
and tumble home.
Trees have all they can do
to keep their balance
on this restless earth.
How wise the grass,
to cling like a lover
to the flanks of the beloved.
And we folk
totter around like fools,
saying things and building things
and nothing much lasts.
A shiver in her loins
and we're all gone.**

17 May 2016

=====

**Some hope on blue
I hope on cloud.
Does that mean
I'm mean, would spoil
the fun of all
who seek the sun?
May be. I thought
I wanted cool and wet,
to let the shadows
in to comfort us
with their report
of other forests, other minds.**

17 May 2016

=====

**I'll let the rain
come tell me
when to go in.
A 'timely compliance'
with the force of
natural things.**

**Do what it tells you —
everything yearns
to be obeyed, didn't
you learn that in school,
from those pale wantons
in their stiff cowls?
Do what I tell you
and we will both be real.**

17 May 2016

=====

**One drop is all it takes
I want to rest, oh how
I want to rest, just
sit among the movements
of the air, have no names
for what I feel, see
only the colors again,
all the colors moving,
intimate and far.
Far niente, they say,
do nothing, but nothing
takes a lot of doing
in this world. Close
my eyes around a color,
green, say, and sleep.**

17 May 2016

=====

**From the other side
a miracle
in the shape of a sparrow
eats a universe
shaped like a crumb.
We're home! Complete!
The miserable weather
of childhood is past,
we have survived in gold,
radiant eternal immaturity,
hips of Lilith, lips of Artemis.**

17 May 2016

[ZETTEL — SOME SHREDS WITH NO DATES]

=====

**And let our things
think for us,
let them remember
winter and war.**

=====

**I am at root
American
maybe not at heart.**

transcribed 17 May 2016

[A POEM LEFT OVER FROM MARCH 16]

**Exalted by mere light
he afters his horn
and goes.**

**The whither of it
doesn't bother him.**

**We stir
from the bottom up
anyhow, the ground
moves our feet
where it would
have us go.**

(17 May 2016)

ONEIROKRITIKON

**Fractious embodiments
dreams are warnings,
this dream is a warning.**

**The dreary syllogisms of night
erode our faith
in what we see, in all**

**the glamor of what seems,
dead friend, his dying
spouse, vituperative**

**girl friend I never had,
even the dead cat, white
peaceful where it fell.**

**The terrible weather of sleep
frightens me awake.
It's three a.m.**

**and means nothing. The cards
shuffle themselves, play**

game after game

at the corner of my eye.

Not a game.

A domination,

our ancient masters

snicker in my sleep.

18 May 2016

THE PICTURE BOOK

flops open
and a child crawls out.

So many years
he has been reading
in there. Pictures
harder than words.

You never grow up
when you look at pictures,
even one Tintoretto
will keep you immature

forever. Hand-colored
woodcuts of the alchemists,
no puberty for you.

Then language comes
and you start noticing
how like bloodshed
the woodshed is,
you wonder at the branches,
axes, soggy sawdust.

And that flame
over the tallest pine tree

people tell you is a *star*

**as if that meant
anything more than
Be quiet, child,
nobody understands,
nobody ever will.**

**The child slips back
inside, confronts
the one he fears, the one
he must become,
old crowned king, naked,
wide awake in his tomb.**

18 May 2016

NOTEBOOK

**They slipped an extra
page inside the book,
blank, hungry for me,
quick parley of my busy
hands. More than anything
things have edges,
walls, whippoorwills,
toxic spills, sinister
swimming pools. More
than anything are Alps,
sea foam, golf carts,
memories you can't dislodge.
A piece of paper is no final
answer but I keep trying.**

18 May 2016

=====

**Every picture is your mother—
have you noticed that yet?
And the moon is your glum father,
that's why you're lonely at night.**

He will not speak to me again...
**The sun shines but the moon frowns,
nary a word out of him.
And all your life you need that word.**

18 May 2016

== == == == ==

**I was there
when they
burned Bruno—**

**every time I try
to eat a peach
I remember.**

**How could it be
otherwise?
Here is the center.**

**Here. Things
converge upon me,
eagles hurry**

**to the feast.
How easily
we fall in love!**

**And that's
just how
the prayer begins.**

18 May 2016

=====

**When you take too many
words away what's left
behind is most likely some
inconvenient truth. Raspberry
branches cautious with thorns.**

**Roots reveal. Senators
snoring on their benches,
we don't always see what's rhere.**

**There are doors and doors,
cold iron of the franklin stove
almost summer. Take
even more away. Pebbles
mosaicking the beach,
imageless inage the sea
keeps rearranging, messages
we are not meant to read.**

18 May 2016

PERIMETERS

1.
Interspersed with sparrows
the leaves begin.
What can happen
will happen — that
is the rule. Fight
for my right to be wrong.

2.
Approximation is good law.
Care for the boundaries,
they're fluid and touch your feet.
Walk all the way there
if you can. Treacherous
beaches piled deep with ankle-
twisting myriad stones.

3.
Forbidden but able? Maybe.
But he tide comes in
and annihilates doubt.
How could it not? Violins
screech for beginners.
This one gull's cry

wakes the uneasy dead.

4.

It takes ages to learn sweetness
of tone, and stone
is just beginning. But it is true,
truer than you, I fear, and me.

5.

Call this an island?
I've found better isolation
(the quality of being an island)
in my pocket, when my hand
yearned for some dear friend
out there in the lintless world.

6.

Heliograph, sure,
we learned to read the flashes.
A vessel in distress, or
it could even be a fish
glinting in the sun, or a prophet
versifying on the empty sands.
More likely though it is a girl
you have to meet yet again
before you're done.
There is no never in this place.

18 May 2016

= = = = =

The water tower
keeps remembering
I also her face
recall upward
from the fall
lakeside sun
along her cheeks
it too remembers,
uncoil this death,
unsay her word,
suicide kills
the whole world
besides. From skies
rain also falls—
god grant us a hint
of what rain remembers.

18 May 2016

APPLE

**Are all of Satan's gifts
Boring and bland as this?**

19.V.16, 4 AM

AN ENGLISH SUITE

Waiting for sleep
to rescue me
from dreaming —

the cattle shift upright in the barn—
two hours and they'll be out to browse
since grass is giving now

wet grass, cattle bend to feed.

Cattle, what a strange word
for those people we drink and kill and eat,
almost as if from the Arabic root *k-t-l*, 'to kill'—

a little oriental flavor here,
now back to Constable—

so there they are, that strange
life between sleep and waking
some cows, all horses, have—
no wonder they run so fast from dream—.

**But it will be greying soon
up there, where I want to travel,
cloud-rider, hitchhiker on a sunbeam
away from all my wordy dreaming.**

**Room for me here
between the road and the rail
to watch the cows when they come out.
Kine my father loved to call them,
using all his old words
to get me thinking,**

**kine and gloaming
and his snowy-breasted pearl.**

**Hard to know
if this is dreaming too,**

**seems tuneful enow
like an English suite
by Finzi or Britten,
just one sweet note
after another,
percept after percept
leading nowhere**

but being lovely along the way

**like you and me, I hope,
people short off destiny
but rich with going on
and all the clamor of an empty road.**

**So call it a suite
matutinal, no matins
for this monk,
pray wordless
with open eyes,**

**oranges on the table,
feeble repartee remembered,
truth wasted on the young—**

**I grew wise
on the lies
of Verne and Kipling, Chesterton and Twain,
plenty of time post-puberty
to make all that come true**

**and walk along the road at dawn
watching the cows**

**amble out of their byres
(another of his words)
and hit the grassy breakfast meadow,**

**slow, slow they go,
so rise and fall
this little not even song,**

**a wooden bridge
over a rill
I stood on once
not quite alone,**

**no children in the house,
the sun not ready
even yet to rise**

**o put on your yellow dress
and let me sleep.**

19 May 2016

FIVE-TWENTY

**But call it five o'clock
so dawn light will more surprise.**

**You call this waking, tottering
into the city with a muffin
in each hand, like Franklin
was it, or so they said?**

*Eat ne
the world delights to order,
lose me in your inwardness
then speak me out again
newfangled, m virginal as lilacs*

**The sky trembles with light
now, could I finally be right?**

19 May 2016

=====

**To see what's there
not always easy**

**train hoots
down by the river**

**this is a song
not always easy**

**the sun comes up
to see what's there**

**carpenters next door
scrape and fiddle**

**the noises things make
this is a song**

**power screwdriver
electric drill**

**fill the distances
with being there**

**and still lets some
of there come here**

**this is a song
not always easy.**

19 May 2016

=====

**Is thought
a kind of leaking
from some place
where feeling
and perceiving
conjugate, to make
a not-yet *out there*—
or is that speaking?**

**Thinking
is the unperceived,
the feeling before feeling?**

**19 May 2016
End of Notebook 387**

LEAD

Pb

wasted, what to do?
Saturn's mines untenanted?
Where lead is galena
silver also grows— slow
as metals do and are
quickenened in the smelter's fire

and here it gleams, or comes
glum as cold type dreaming
in the printing shop about
lascivious poetries, dance
of naked vowels, wind-blown
consonants. I love the cold
of metal, bright from all
the years of fire made it be.

19 May 2016

= = = = =

Skeleton of a fish.

**I wish
everything could be
as clear as this,**

**every word in every sentence
hinged just right,
articulated, to use a word
my biology teacher spake,**

**but the French don't say *os*
for this kind of bone
but *gratte*, you tell me why,
no language is ever
simple as a fish.**

19 May 2016

THE ANGEL

**The angel of grace
that is Poetry
alights in curious places,**

**the clod and the mincing,
shaping hearts
full of shallow dogma,
profound superficialities,**

**that dancer is wiser
than Socrates, thanks
to music muttered,
would-be suicides
gladder than sunrise.**

20 May 2016

= = = = =

**It is too late for me to be born
all I can do now
is listen while it speaks
and let it pretend to be me.
No one will be wounded
by this glorious imposture.**

20 May 2016

LESSER EVIDENCE

Pliny piracy—
catch data
where they float
and sing them home

like marble blocks
above the larches
we look up and marvel,
we entrepreneurs of dream
we salamander people
never content in human element,

the ostentation of poetry
keeps it true,
all those klutzy or glitzy marked
features, he said,
mark the way the poet's
thought stuttered it
out into the heard.

CW

2.
And poets
before all
are the first
listeners
to what gets said,

if they're even listening.

3.

**Spread the curtain wide open
you have been here before,
this is called Day
and women live in it
and monks and millionaires
a few, though they
don't know you.
Rough though thought is
it is enough to plough
the old earth loose
so fertile will be there
when you wake up.
Start now, stagger
out the door, a strange
word new in your mouth
from some old book.**

20 May 2016

=====

**A pool too shallow
to swim in.
A thought too thin
to think.**

**How I am ready
for a meeting
in white clothes
by the Jordan**

**to learn at last
who I am
if all these
years I'm wrong**

and am not you.

20 May 2016

=====

**Morning is a desperate
flight of birds
from there to here.**

**All that light out there
and no one seeing.
This looker is left
alone with the trees.**

**Seize me, I whisper,
but breeze has no ears,
only a quiet
determination to speak—**

***the wind hath carried it
in its womb—***

may I learn from thee.

20 May 2016

THE TRANSFER OF THE ROCK

From the first sly gate
they rolled it west.
We saw it coming
before we heard, so
quietly it turned.

When it got close
we formed a procession,
made a parade
to lead it onward,
walked beside it
chanting random psalms,
whatever came
into our mouths to praise
and sing in the dust
of this mighty rolling by
we felt we too
were part of, on our way
with it, to learn
where such a stone would go.

2.
So it was they
and the rock and us,
guiding, guided,
along for the ride—

**music never lets up,
does it? It cheers
to hear an empty
sky, a mindless
tree. How
can such weight
move so silently
as if with no effort—
is the earth flat?**

3.

**Though “you can not make a watch”
you can still tell time
I thought it said. But what to tell it
and into whose ear
whisper such wise intimations
as rise unbidden
in the mind to say, like the stones
ever rising in this
bleak New England half-acre field?**

4.

**That’s the way we talked along the route,
riddles and mis-hearings, wisecracks
for there were priests among us
on loan from other gods, and teachers
of high school algebra, topless
janitors hungering for doors.**

**The rock kept turning
smoothly, as if it slipped along
a groove in earth meant just for it
from the beginning of the world.
But it was just a road, just us following.**

**5.
And when it came to the city it intended
(or was it the same city, just a different gate?)
they let us go in first to clear the way,
then in it came. They shouldered it onward,
up the sudden boulevard to a great gaunt
plaza at the middle, and let it stop turning.
And there is rests, where all the avenues connect,
quiet but as if at any moment they could come
set it to turn again, or by itself it might decide
to roll and lead us out of the city, and we follow.
We live in such expectation, and call it prayer.**

20 May 2016

POSTCARD

**Children on the beach
wag their invisible tails.
Their mothers under parasols
say the rosary in sleep.
And all the poor fathers
stare out to sea—somewhere
there must be an island for me.**

20 May 2016

= = = = =

**Deeply embedded in the sun
a shape like a shoe
as if we looked up and saw
one standing up from it
far above the visible light.**

20 May 2016

=====

for SJK

Sympathy and that's enough,
a bird running under the hedges
where my father learned to speak

by watching alone. Where else
could sound come from but from
silence? The adobe fortress
of Arg-e-Bam was waiting, night
after night two thousand years

and he was listening. My father,
o my father, how much I've learned
from what you didn't say.

And all today I've been thinking you,
talking about your words, wit,
withholding. There are miracles
sprout suddenly from memory,
word, glance, snatch of a song.

He died before the castle crumbled,
before I ever went to Donegal
where on the street they asked
if I was my father's son, I was, I am.

20 May 2016

FIRST DESERT SONG

**Agitprop for the unlit mind
go stay in dark, the dutch
say dunkel, we called a german
dutchman when I was a kid
you know how it goes, no egg
without its bacon, the desert
howls with light out there
shelter in the shadow of your van.
America! So long ago! Now
is so old around here, a man
up the block remembers Moses.
At least nobody gets old, do I?
And when the dunkel darkens
even the dimmest kid sees stars.**

20 May 2016

SECOND DESERT SONG

Raptors over slithering proximates
watch your step, señores, a blind
hero keeps thick muscles still.
Did you know him before? All west
of sunrise was his domain, he chose
and chose and saw too many. Blind
not really but tired of seeing—that's
the way of it, relax too soon and all
the play is over before Edmund at last
gets to say what we all think, swine
that we are *under the Mercy* though
and some real Man on pilgrimage
makes his way through us. Streams
and trees and clement air but still
there's a Sonora of the mind, what can
we do? Feed him as he passes through.

20 May 2016

PEWTER

**the mixture's
dull glow.**

**Drink
this light
from an empty mug.**

**We too are alloy
of light and bone,
stone, sulfur
caverns deep inside
from which we speak.**

**Hence pewter,
earthenware, crockery,
tin. Hence
music, choking
sense out of mere air
without which
immediate mortality.**

No wonder Hamlet

**and all confusion,
philosophy, the sly
rigors of mathematics
to stave off that moment.
It won't be long now
as I sat at the window
watching the lawn,
left with the all-too easy
task of guessing what *it* is.**

21 May 2016

=====

**What a gloomy boy I am
for Saturday and sixty-three
degrees ice overcast
and small new leaves here
on the hibiscus just yesterday
I feared was dead —
there's that word again,
or one word, really, just
with two ways to pronounce it.**

21 May 2016

= = = = =

**To sit in the meadow
and listen to the birds
you don't need a meadow you don't need birds**

**it's all here, blissful
as a blindfold, waiting
to be ignored like the constant pressure down**

**of blue sky in our
billioned heads,
rapt in the moent alone you're everywhere.**

21 May 2016

BROOKLYN 1954

**After a long summer night
of not getting what he wants
a man rides the El home
into one more skeptic dawn.
Harbor behind him, boats
speaking Norwegian, mist
exhausted licking at the shore.**

21 May 2016

= = = = =

**We who do not have children
are children.**

**And the officious mothers
of the neighborhood
treat us so —**

**as if we weren't really there,
part of life, just shadows, maybe,
phantom ancestors,
annoying presences
who live by different clocks and calendars.**

**So we treat them all
as stepmothers in Grimm
and keep our distance.**

**We know how little Jared's scraped kneecap
is far more important than our broken hearts.**

22 May 2016

= = = = =

**Metatarsal. Stand there.
Militate in favor
of the obvious. Vote for sunshine,
vote for cloud.
I who am mostly rain
consent to your preferences.
You're standing, I'm sitting —
some days are like that.
And what a weird idea
where did it come from
that we eat unborn chicks
for breakfast all
over the Western world?
Go east, get fat
on rice with me,
become the vegetable we eat,
drowse in deep awakening.**

22 May 2016

= = = = =

**How far away is
anything, really?
Does she lie there
wearing a sun hat
big as a pizza
but pale, pale
as the skin she
offers to your claws?
Snap out of it —
none of it is real.
Or it is far, far
as pencil from a hand,
and no night comes.
Look away fast
from any image,
before it looks back —
if once it sees you
it will never let go.**

22 May 2016

=====

**If you don't understand me
you should get out of the phonebooth.
I know there aren't any anymore,
or just a few, it's a metaphor,
metaphor, like being under a cloud.
Or barking up the wrong tree. I know
there's no tree and you can't bark
try to understand. I'm only a man.
Or maybe just a metaphor.**

22 May 2016

= = = = =

**Are unicorns
carnivorous?
Wait and see.**

22 May 2016

=====

**That's a nice little story
I'll have to tell it sometime
but the shadows are listening
and a dog barking down the road.
Caution. Narrative never stops.
Before I know it there'd be trees,
vines, underbrush — a whole forest,
strange noises, foxes, deer running away.**

22 May 2016

FERNS

[photo by C]

**In ferns this land
counsels the many fingertips
of similarity.**

**In cool deep shade
this kind of thinking
thrives, more than ever,
no foreign land
but right, right here
by the boundary-marker
fountains of green.**

**The knight explains
to the woman (I come
from where I am,
who can understand
such simple majesty,
a small cloud
red with sunset, say,
nothing lingers
but nothing is going away.**

**2.
Of course they look like palms
(Jerusalem), of course
they look like hands
polydigital, lifted all**

up high to praise —
in the excitement
of the moment
the moment means.

3.
It is possible
to be hungry
in the dark.
Ferns know the way — only
in damp earth,
only in shade —
live under the old
trees and new linden
at the roll-off
foot of our little
hill they flourish
when I observe them
I gasp with delight,
appetite of seeing
them here, close,
as if they were my very own.

4.
But is not comely,
not even seemly,
for ferns to belong to anybody
but *humiditas et umbra*,
they are philosophers,

**coolhand alchemists,
counting their signifiers,
even waving at me
out of the slight breeze.**

**5.
So that is what I
did today, discovered
a fernbrake
there all along
waiting its season.
Not waiting for me
though I for it,
stumbled over the lawn
still rough from winter
and reached the margin
of the wood, my page
of light runs
out here, the ferns
stopped me
with their beauty
made out of sheer
simplicity, multiplicity,
green. This green
has all the other
greens inside it.
Like the Talmud maybe
where I read once
of learned men**

**riding through the woods
talking of this and that
who find themselves
suddenly in Paradise,
where the trees spoke
human language
better than we do,
and the shadows themselves
were green and had
long slim hands.
Or so the ferns
reminded or explained.**

22 May 2016

= = = = =

**Not so easy
to finish anything.
Moonlight on the bay
beside the river.
Road with nobody
going. But still.**

22 May 2016

== == == == ==

**I go the sense that this person
was or is waiting for me.
Because we can be someone
to one another,
as, as all,
and make the habit of
answering the day.
This is what I mean by writing.**

22 May 2016

=====

**Don't get too patriotic about your town
a city is an outrage to begin with
and will draw outrage to it when it can,
wryneck geeks from Silly Con,
all business is the same business —
it breaks your heart. Get out of town.**

for B. R.

22 May 2016

= = = = =

**How did you do it?
I was a wave
that came to shore,
the time was right,
was mine. Was my
picture hanging on the wall.
You can never be sure
what the other
is thinking. I guessed
and guessed right.
Weddings and caravans,
zenanas full of shadows,
full of light.**

**It was all
a wave could hope for,
a science of my own,
flooding the eyes of those
who saw me, welcomed me
as if I were the first
thought they had that day.**

23 May 2016

= = = = =

**The trouble with trouble
is that it comes
by itself. Example:
carpenters buzzing
nearby this otherwise
joyless morning.
Trouble is all about
etymology, whence
it cometh and how
it hurteth thee now.
There is another
kind of trouble you
have to go and get,
get into, yourself.
Subways are involved,
cars put into play,
and other people, those
harbingers of unreprieve,
men staggering
out of the taverns,
arms wide to welcome thee.**

23 May 2016

= = = = =

**Whilom the waking
your hands in silver
O the long trouble
of being meat,
we Irish are halfway
there, to stone,
to towns, empty,
over empty seas,
towers of wisdom
we climb,
 syllable
by syllable,
halfway there,
halfway to gold.**

23 May 2016

=====

lech lecha

**Watching
the go-by
through the gate,
watching, not going,
complete.
When all the leaves
are out, stop counting.
The cars
will never stop passing —
it is a thing they have
that can't sit still.
When you grow up
you'll understand.
The ancient command,
wherever you are
get gone from this place**

23 May 2016

= = = = =

**The longer the line
the higher it flies,
the crow. Shadow
always tries
to stay still, shadow
is a very private
person out there
though for all to see.
Privacy begins
in feeling, only later
spreads to being.
And there you are.**

23 May 2016

= = = = =

**Come soothsay Toad
and foretell my quiet
destiny,
 for you,
from your earthy
brain extend
a becoming beam aloft
into the eagle's heart
and so between the twain
all knowledge shimmers
palpable but vague
before the enchanted
eyes of those of us
who still believe in time.
Alchemy unsays the hour!
Every instant die and be born again.**

24 May 2016

=====

**Man in love
is a boring old story
gets new clothes
onbce in a while
but still...**

**But
love in man
is always new,
full of noise and light,
dragons, sutras,
apocalypses.**

24 May 2016

NEO-EGYPTOLOGY

**Put the date in a cartouche,
it's royal, this day
has never been before
and rules by itself
all future time. Hail,
this 24th day of May.
And any day, long
may it reign, and you
live it to the full.**

24 May 2016

THE RISK

Let me try it once
at least, the juice
of that forbidden tree
by which we know
and know we're knowing

and the shadows
topple out of the linden
and we hear *music*
we have heard before
and then the fire starts
and the hearth

soon makes the kettle sing,
o so much music,
how can you be so close
and I not touch you,
I can't touch you,
Artemis stands exact
same size as the sky

tp exist at all
is to be permitted
I hear her tell me

**yet the hand falls empty
and the lips are dry.
Everything happens
in a dream, that's why
the dream never ends
though the dreamers all
too soon wake and leave the room.**

24 May 2016

=====

**Character? It meant me
a different animal.
Soulful, distinct,
generously ambiguous
like Whitman embracing
multitudes, or the word 'you'**

**Then apart happened to it
or we thought
the star meant something
and a pause between words
meant both separation
and correction,
a hundred lilacs on one bush,
say, to stay with Whitman,
to stay his grief.**

**2.
So it's a matter of falling in love
over and over, never daring
to do much about it,
never daring to stop.**

**And language also
is in love with us,
wants to be used,**

**abused, cherished,
given to one another.**

**Language invented us
and telling, telling
is the least we can do.**

**3.
I haven't used the word yet,
the scary one, with no
hooks around it this time,
I wouldn't dare, I wouldn't know
enough to find the sound
with mortal habit and a face**

**use the operative instead —
the mood of a verb
that implies someone listening
where at midnight long ago
language invented god.**

**4.
Invenire, Latin,
to invent, or 'to discover'
what is already there.
Latin can't tell them apart.
We spend our lives, poor us,
In querulous distinctions.**

25 May 2016

THE CATHEDRAL

**Let the metope
resemble a field full of grain,**

**let the cornerstone
embed a blue-glazed eye.**

**Let the architecture
impersonate a log cabin in the woods
and the clouds all pioneers around it,**

**let the Divinity enthroned on the apse
take the form of a woman studying her nails.**

**Let the nave be long
and peculiarly sinuous
with columns of various orders
standing at random seemingly spots
supporting the vast transparent roof.**

**Glass one guesses
but what happens when it snows?
Architects despise weather.**

**The structural work is incomplete,
scary scaffolding stands all round
with interns daubing colors into shapes —**

**it will be a long time before
the whole picture is complete,
then we can move into it
easy as a book at bedtime
or a warm hand at the base of the spine.**

25 May 2016

=====

aria

**In fern I land,
enarbored Irish written
dare stay some loss
that moans always go manned.**

**Nine fathers parse the will,
trade sighs in groaning,
sighs riddle each
being low and green and gaunt.**

25 May 2016

= = = = =

**Castaway hoping over
the edge a something
not the sun. All hope
is from the east. Weary
atomy of the human
soul, beleaguered by
so many manynesses.
Every shadow shapes
itself like what we need.
But that woman is far,
her skin glowing. Her
taste is here already
though, her taste is salt.**

26 May 2016

= = = = = = =

**If the brain
its nourishment decline
how shall syntax
parse the plaguey distances?**

***Keep out* is the brain's
favorite song, we use
cell music to evade,
invade the hallowed
lonely regions
afloat on $\alpha\omega\nu$,
waters of the Styx —**

**but when *they* murk
what muscle will clear it?**

26 May 2016

POTION

**Three gold bristles from
the back of a red Duroc hog
steeped in dew scraped
gently on a Thursday dawn
from some blue flower—
iris, say, or indigo petunia,
hydrangea, your choice.
When the dew has evaporated
and the bristles are dry
burn them in a silver spoon
using only a flame on or from
a piece of wood — a match will do.
Now plunge the spoon with meager ash
into a transparent glass of cool
linden flower tea. Sip at intervals
through the long day. It will drive
away those tiresome thoughts
you cherish of ruling the world.**

26 May 2016

=====

**They flower slowly,
chipmunks then lilacs
then irises,
spiræa,
 finally we
come out of the husk,
house, and stand
on porches (piazzas)
(stoops) decks
and the sun saunters by
forgiving us our long
abstention from
the real From weather.
Comfort is the false god
we mostly worship—
which is why sadists
are theologians halfway
(wrong way) home.**

27 May 2016

=====

**I feel so close
to the end of now—
soon it will be then**

**and all this
will hide from my hands
only language left**

that calculus of lost occasions.

27 May 2016

THE ARRIVAL

Came out of the woods.
Who? Brandishing
empty arms.
Cloaked, uncertain,
moving quick as if
motivated. Who?

The woods are still there,
I don't want to offend them
by mentioning names.

Especially now, when a patch
of sunlight just
poured along the grass—
a warning.

The whole
machinery (though it is softer,
more permanent
than any machine) works
smoothly, quietly.

Out
of the woods
a swift coming towards.

**Then another and another
till they are nine.
They arrange themselves
towards us, like stars
or a star. Arms.
Bare arms.**

**Fast as they move
it takes forever for them
to get here
where it is
my business to wait,
calm and lucid,
like a little pool of water
spilled on ancient tile,
evaporating in the sun.**

27 May 2016

= = = = =

**After you put everything in place
what's left is what you need:**

**bohemian fragments, skanky
afterludes of common life.**

**We share nothing, nothing.
We give it all away.**

27 May 2016

== == == == ==

**What was I doing in that city?
Leather sofa, zoo outside,
moon at the end of every avenue—
touch me, it kept saying, *if you can.***

27 May 2016

SQUIRRELS

**They're always eating the birdseed
as if they could fly—
just like me sprinkling
too much salt on my kale
as if I could swim.**

27 May 2016

from **THE REPERTORY OF LOST DISEASES**

The Rising Sickness (spontaneous levitation)

Cothurnifugue. Socks will not stay on the feet.

Narcopepsis, eating full meals while fast asleep.

Azimuthitropism. Tries to sit or lie down but immediately finds himself bolt upright.

The Midday Calm.

27 May 2016

HIDDEN WINGS

hidden wings
 in sleep, away,
away
 it said.
And who are they,
these umbrous guarantors
who tell the night?
Muses many, but each
is only. And she speaks —
adapting the gender precision
my tradition supplies,
but what do I know
about pronouns, what
do I know of female and male —
the night is my business
and like a good agent
don't ask too many questions.

2.
When I was in my teens
I wanted to print a business card
for me, with just my name
and the word *agent*. I hoped
the work would find me, give me

**an address, a phone number,
a field of play, hoped
my sense of agency
would be enhanced
and I would do.**

**3.
So much for business.
Now we come to bed time,
that oldest of all stories,
why do we say go to sleep,
where is sleep and why
can't we find a road or river
that leads there, but always
out of nowhere, find ourselves there?
Sex is just a rest stop on the way.
That is our real business,
in the dark.**

**4.
Where those wings hide
that brought us there,
they hide so well we'll forget
they'll bring us back
to this questionable country
of sunlight and Caesars
away from the urgent syntax of the dream.**

5.

But sometimes gasp with relief
when I wake up.
the story over there was too complex,
snakes and flowers,
swaggering voices of the recent dead.
There's something to be said for sunshine
even on a day as hot as this.
But don't bother saying it,
everybody knows, I'm always
the last to learn. Instead
I'll close my eyes and breathe
and be in that third republic
neither awake nor asleep.
Where we get our taste of freedom and.

28 May 2016

GAN EDEN

**What geography did
the Bible makers keep,
where Eden was a single place
and rivers ran out
and four directions went from it
as from any other place?**

**They thought it was a garden
grown, and a garden needs its ground.**

**If it was a place,
why didn't we go back,
whoever we were in those days?
Places are actual. We less so,
we come and go.
Or was that angel's flaming sword
installed in our cerebellum
so we can't find our way back
there, with its flourishing ferns,
its million year old apple trees?**

28 May 2016

=====

**Then a bear shambled out of the woods
and ate all my documents, which is why
I appear before the court naked of identity,
clearly animate, hairless almost, otherwise
I might be the bear himself. I throw myself
on the mercy of the court: name me,
put language in my mouth and feed me a job.**

28 May 2016

=====

**What if *all*
the books are wrong?
The little left
unsaid would be the truth.
Find that silent nave
and brood your Mass there.**

28 May 2016

=====

**Opening the door
is like closing the window.
Choice vs. chance.
Who can tell the difference?
The *ants of your house*
have forgotten your name
before you can speak it.
Door. Window. Come.
Abolished into existence
the mere (all
by itself) arrives.**

28 May 2016

=====

(yet one more Test of Poetry — for L.Z.)

**Find a pretty girl
and have her read
one of your poems back to you
out loud, with feeling,
and if you can concentrate
on the poem, the poem
might, might, just be right.**

28 May 2016

== == == ==

**Dry day. Sun.
A little fly
keeps trying
to drink my eye.**

**As if I were an animal—
deep wet pools of their eyes.**

**I am an animal,
I brush it away
tenderly, as if
I were a human too.**

28 May 2016

=====

**Things get exaggerated.
It is not seemly
to speak of divine matters
in conversation**

**Give your sermon
or listen to one.
Silence is close to godliness so
take God's part in the conversation.**

Or be Demeter listening to the famous Hymn.

29 May 2016

GUILTERS AND BLAMERS

**I bruise easy.
It means nothing
or not much.
There are guilters
in this world
and blamers.
How to be neither
feeling guilt
nor blaming others —
that is the way.**

29 May 2016

=====

**Draw the star
down from the sky
and wrap it round you.
Cloak or tepee,
a cloth of light
to live in.**

**How quiet that would be,
so full of certainty.
Language flows from doubt,
anxiety, need. Any
bird can tell you that.**

29 May 2016

=====

**How heavy the tree
to stand so lightly
answering each breeze
with fluent green speech,**

**heavier than any animal
to dance in air,
every weightless leaf an answer.**

29 May 2016

=====

**Snout snot dribbles in the trough.
The cycle never stops.**

29.V.16

== == == == ==

**Poetry, where one
thing leads to another
always away,
 away.
Be there when it comes.**

29 May 2016

== == == == ==

**And sometimes an arrow
comes out of the sun.**

**We have seen someone fall
suddenly silent at noon,
knowing all at once something
more radical than ever thought.**

She is an archer up there and *She says.*

29 May 2016

= = = = =

**Beyond this point
there is no gender.
Only eyes, suddenly
luminous in the dark.**

29 May 2016

Q.E.D

**Is gender an accident of identity
or the other way round?**

**A big question in our society —
would I still be me if I were she?**

29 May 2016

== == == == ==

**The least, the offering,
rain from the earth
soaking the sky — see
what sunrise does to Man,
any man, that narthex
of a real Person to be,
and Woman, the whole
nave of that being, but
who is the chancel itself,
or out from what mind
will the altar stand intact?**

29 May 2016

= = = = =

**See what happens
if I believe in reality:
I'm left to make my way
in wet socks to the crossroads
to meet the other, whirring
of wings through the air,
wing shadows flapping loud,
she's here, the one who comes
to take me to where I am.
I think we all say that. I think
that all of us are waiting here.**

29 May 2016

=====

The time walks by.

**There is an animal out there
linked to me, some arcane
physiology weds us — sky?
wasps?**

children shouting in the trees?

**Some of all that. Hide me
from my identity,
my meanings.**

**There are words
all over the ground
but I can't read them. Can you?
Our only *hope is in the other.***

29 May 2016

=====

**Wet, but not enough.
Sky too far.
My leaf
won't move.**

**Complaint.
Variety of not
what I want
denatures**

what I am.

30 May 2016

= = = = =

**Heat is not goodfor batteries.
How to cool the Sun as She powers us?
The deep cold of space keeps Her well.**

30.V.16

AFTER THE HEATWAVE

**Now a little
wind comes up,
an I=told-you-
so from local
Powers. The curtain
stirs as if, as if
you know who
were veiled in it.**

30 May 2016

= = = = =

**Trains of thought
need to track, alas.
Run across whole continents
through woods and cities
faster than reason can follow.
Any noticed thing
is the departure—
some gaunt way station
middle of nowhere
is where it goes.**

30 May 2016

= = = = =

**I know the answer
but the question lies
deep in the earth.**

**I beg everyone I meet
to ask it, ask me.
What good is my answer
if nobody asks?**

I am the schoolboy of the world.

30 May 2016

=====

**The longer the meter
the shorter the yard,
a beautiful sunset
rising in the east.**

**We measure *is* by *seems*,
videri quam esse, ancient
wisdom flipped on its back.**

**Cars growl past with open-
windows music, loud,
indecipherably awful, gone.
Cars know the single answer
to most questions: go, go there,
lech lecha, get up from where
you sit and move. Movement
measures us. Wild fowl
clamor overhead— they seek
their lake. Get into gear and go.**

30 May 2016

MEMORIAL DAY

**Nobody died.
They were killed
instead. Death
is not just one
swallowing thing.
There are differences,
different tastes
of being all gone.
Cross my heart
and hope to die.**

30 May 2016

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**The red comes off in the night.
After that, no colors there.
But at morning passing pickups
glint in the sun — they
seem to have colors again.**

**Leaves, besides feeding their plants,
shield us from reality
by creating intricate shadow patterns
constantly a-dance. All
day long. Then the sun sets.
At night we're on our own.**

31 May 2016

CHILDHOD

**Climate is the whole thing
but weather's just what happens
they told me. A day
is not a life, I reasoned.
Yet that is all it ever is.**

31 May 2016

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**I was taught the Pentagram
by my father.
How long it has taken me
to thank him for it.**

31 May 2016

SUNSET

**Houses always look their best
when setting sun casts on them
(provided there are trees and shrubs)
intricate shadows into the glare
on such pale (why are houses almost
always pale?) architecture, make it
a notepad for that ever moving script
that gives the house some meaning
of its own, never mind the tragic
or dreary sitcoms that live inside.**

31 May 2016

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**Those who come to us by dream
live in a different shade
from those we think of, or those
we think we know, or those
we see or think we see
around us in the common light—**

**so many populations! Who can sense
the delicate DNA of dreams,
or the genetics of imagined friends
or real ones remembered and remembered
until they too are unicorns in Broceliande?**

31 May 2016