a quiet finger strokes along the skin

is how it ended, verses in a dream,
turnings, now abaft of waking,
text dispersed, epilogue intact.

It felt a little poemy for a dream
even, quiet fingers indeed, yet
it moved me, made me wonder

go on wondering what all this
touching business is about—
most mysterious of all senses

lost constantly into the distinction,
self and other, god, the feel of air.

1 September 2016
The new month’s rabbit
has a soft grey sky —
a blush in the north
might be blue coming
through or the bruise
of storm.

They make
everything look like an accident
as if we had some
place to go that isn’t
here. *Rabbit, Rabbit*
they say in Kentucky
when the new month
starts. I’m know enough
to copy them, praise
the fur of the sky.

1 September 2016
THE ADVENTURE

Hard to tell,
cautious othering.
Other people, other people!

Why are they so wonderful,
each one of you an Aladdin’s cave,
and when you speak

you are Aladdin’s self—
I hear your breath in the dark.

1 September 2016
I used to be the map of as great country, 
the Raj in 101, or the USSR in ’52.
Now I’m a geologic chart 
of local shales and cherts and schists. 
I can show you where it’s safe to walk 
if all those flowers don’t get in your way.

1 September 2016
A breeze in the cool
a circumstance
to see through.

Abandon images.
Try to be true to the true.
Shadows, chipmunks, portulacas,
rain. A phrase you remember
from a woman speaking,
a strange preposition. A woman.

A shadow. You don’t
have to make
anything be real.
See if it blows away
by itself, the cool,
the breeze.

1 September 2016
OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

I am more Tannhäuser than Orpheus.
It took only one
woman to tear me apart.

1 September 2016
Crows so articulate for once I can’t seem to understand. What am I bidden or forbidden? I’m trying to hear but hear only sound.

1 September 2016
The shade shatters.
A glare of Her comes down. Through. Right at me. As usual I hide. It is what men do.

1 September 2016, Rhinebeck
Old dynasties.
Lost kingdoms.
Lost religions.
But all the gods are not gone.

1.IX.16, Rhinebeck
Tenterhooks

those tremulous anxiousies they used to say, as if the machinery of nostra vita were machinery indeed, wood and metal, sex and word and chemical, man is an animal that laughs said Claude Bernard, Alyosha shuddered. We are all atheist scientists we are all reverent mystics, anxiety makes pagans of us all, Saint Venus ora pro nobis.

2 September 2016
GREEN

1. It’s not yet clear what all this green is for. A message from the heart of the rainbow centering us.

        In the middle of all the colors live.

2. Little more than half the year here, plus evergreens in winter, Chesterton’s everblacks so dark they are pines beyond snow field. Maybe. Maybe. Something to do with time?

        Live in the exact middle of time—that place called now but it’s hard to live in the core of it, this very (every) now.
3.
The head inside my head
is still asleep,
dreaming of green things,
goddess, garland of green letters,
leaves, green alphabets,
pickerel weed in mist on lakes.

It is cool this morning
and astonishingly green.
*This color leapeth from the earth*
and the wind comes to talk in it.

2 September 2016
Morning cool and fresh enough
to have a relationship with.
But I am married
to a glad eternity so
will content myself with flirting,
subtle taste of autumn on the breath.

2 September 2016
COVER-UP

Confess it now, my whole life
hidden in the alphabet.
Look at those twenty-six letters
plus a few foreign affectations
and I'm all there. Decode me.
They're all there, secret vices,
secret virtues, all the fascinating
names of people. And places!
I see Dubai again! And Waikiki!

2 September 2016
He lies to the priest in the confessional. It doesn’t much matter, priest’s half-asleep bored by petty turpitude. The sinner rises healed and satisfied — the magic is in the ritual. Is no one out there to know his mind?

2 September 2016
Taking the hand that’s offered. Beasts or fowl, blonde or rousse, there be spirits in the woods back there only halfway to matter. Matter is a lovely thing, a spacious house of giving, of holding. The mind is matter, is a loving song giving and giving and never holds back.

Those spirits earn to take on flesh fully, to give themselves and to be given to, their sleepy molecules suddenly meant to dance. Take the form offered. Leap through the trees and come to us shouting the gospel only you have ever learned, heing’s word, the tender meat of song.

2 September 2016
End of Notebook 393
Do it the natural way
like ski-lodges like motor-cars
like all hyphenated things,
the this of that, composite
things, impermanent.
The simplest carbon atom
is a multitude, drenched
with karma, attitude.
The natural is never simple.
We have to work hard to
make up that fabulous
simplicity we have such
poignant notions of. Emily
had to live her long hard
life to make the simple seem.

2 September 2016
EARTH AS ALMSHOUSE

Omega of the apple skin
we live on the rind

inconceivable marketplace
where we’re bought and sold
syntax made of setting suns

the hills cry out for hands
ourselves we lost in clambering
new-laid portolans of unbounded space?

air beasts flicker past our feet
and we accept their impersonations
(girl from Siberia on a leather sofa)

have to go how far to find
(man from Murmansk in a submarine)
cast the mealy fruit deep into the woods

whatsoever comes to mind is the case
ribald ceremonies of doves and deer
I waited for you but you came

all that saintly waiting cancelled out.

2 September 2016
The star crack in your mirror
shows you the other side of town
suddenly as if a woman were looking
back at you over her right shoulder.

It comes of having mirrors, being visible,
living somewhere, strawberries on the table
you haven't even washed them yet
just like the two-day-old moon in the sky.

3 September 2016
Getting started is not the hardest part. Or going on. Or finishing. The battle comes when looking at the thing you've made you compare it with what you had in mind.

No tears, no suicide help now. The gap between meaning and result is wide but out of that abyss a promise comes as if failure were itself a mother’s lips.

3 September 2016
When you find a difference or distinction celebrate. Bring you friends in the lazy ones you love, and fatten them up with luscious discrepancies, microbrewed beer of otherness.

3 September 2016
A place in the mountains
where the lepers live—
I remember it now
can’t get the name yet
but I smell the pines of it,
shadows on the hillside,
loose-footed boulders.
Ruined chapel. Hard to see
the people in the trees,
pale, shabby, shy.
They have a language
of their own that all
the rest of us alas
will learn to speak.

3 September 2016
My poems have grown too easy to understand. Soon no one will read them but people.

3 September 2016
Azimuth of the obvious.
Examine the woods,
try to understand.
Parse those trees, lubber,
their endless emerald conversations.
Their winter stories they recite
shivery in grisaille and amber.
Got it? They are the citizens
and you are the president.
And vice versa.

3 September 2016
Grow up in a religion  
that’s your alphabet —  
can’t help it, ever after.  
So secular kids  
have one less language  
to fall back on. Or  
fall on their faces in.  
Comme moi.

The distribution  
of language over mind  
is not proportional  
to the language’s self.  
There are contour lines  
to mark the words’ fall  
in conscious, deep opacities.

Language is a cave  
into which our life  
sometimes brings  
a little light.

3 September 2016
The reasonable guess would say the man came first, the ape a dwindled version of.

Look at them when they look at us — they see their lost selves.

Science and reason have really so little to say to each other.

3 September 2016
I’ve been wrong about so many things
and that’s right, being wrong
gives you something to work with,
a tribune, a place to stand.
This time get it right.

The gender
of inanimates. Wrong again —
everything is animate.

Untie
the knots of language,
free in lines and let out sails,
phasellus ille will still float,
Catullus’ little skiff
my foundering craft.

4 September 2016
If it were true
I’d have to prove it.
As it is, it’s just
and just a guess,
a man standing
in the doorway of an inn,
aproned, massive,
welcoming. Ideas
are like that,
the one bright flower
on the very
top of the day’s tree.

4 September 2016
No word means precisely
the same thing in any two minds.
Ruin of philosophy, birth of poetry.

4 September 2016
I haven’t had much to do
with nightingales, only saw
one close up once, France,
by the shore of that sad
beautiful sea where Pilate
found out what is truth at last.
There were roses too, white,
red, golden roses, garden
of fragrances just like Hafez.
Just like poetry and godliness
and lovely sinners strolling
through the autumn rain.

4 September 2016
I AM SOLOMON

I have taught for fifty six years in colleges and graduate schools and given hundreds of readings here and there and everywhere. My thought and wit, my love and will, are all dispersed now through several thousand students, hearers. They are my wives. Most of them have men and wives of their own, some of them are older than I am. And still I spout. Think of it, the wonder, that through the meek shale on which I weakling stand the vast Precambrian force of Earth itself still swells up, the ancient energy still strong, breathing life and meaning into all of us, inexhaustible mothering.

4 September 2016
So suppose the sun is our only omen and the light it drags to cover us with little more than half the time at this season when we see it rise right over the stoplight on 9G these days, when like middle-class New Yorkers it turns at equinox and begins to think its way south. In all these years have we learned how to interpret this gold seal in the sky? Not I, at least, I am baffled by every single dawn

4 September 2016
The Customer hurries past
there is an airport in the heart
from which we fly
unscheduled desperations
to the coast of anywhere else,
people, races, traces,
Costa Loca, Porcofino.

4 September 2016
[Dream Text]

A picture of Mother Goose
taken from the side.
She’s looking backwards
into the dark wonder years
her beasts and boys
and girls and even grown-ups
came from to tell us about
the intelligence of Play
against the cruel
nonsense of the working day.

4 September 2016
Brilliant are the barn doors wide open, glowing sun inside the heaped-up corn

a warm something comes out to meet me, more feel than smell, more smell than understanding. Me, I am a child, in the country, I know nothing, understand nothing. That is why I come, awkward beauty, undeciphered things.

A grindstone. A harrow.

5 September 2016
Once I went to bed with a machine.  
Woke alone. The way they do, 
poor things. Scraps of dream stuff 
rusty in my forehead’s brain, 
one more mysterious machine, 
between man and thing one more adultery. 
We spend all day every day doing 
nothing but figuring out what night meant.

5 September 2016

5 September 2016
THINKING

Is that what thinking means?
Is that all?
Thinking is igneous at best,
comes from fiery contradictions.
Granite. That’s what I learned
from the mountain.
Our wing almost brushed the rock.
Grey rock, some early snow.
Or is it always there?
Bruckner’s is the only music
that actually thinks—
as if he had no other mind.

5 September 2016
Going downstairs is stepping carefully into a pit.
Going upstairs is climbing a rugged mountain.
We are born in fear.

5 September 2016
If the road is on
you don’t need to turn
on the light,
one word
will spin both wheels.

The lost word? The lost
word is Yes, my Masons,
and you will find it not in
but under your cashbox,
in your wives’ uneasy dreams.

I claim a road
know where it goes
better than I di,
may I rest in peace.

6 September 2016
Waiting for the wrong information. Devil doors swing open. Now we know what we have to contend with, refute. Everything turns dreary, turns into philosophy. Now what can we do, the skylarks of ignorance fly away in distaste, We, we, why are we and not I, each of us alone, I mean you too, and you, alone together on a wild continent new-risen every dawn from the sea?

6 September 2016
Your figure eight
should be a snowman
with no head, your
seven an old iron plowshare
shoving through earth.
Steppe. Prairie.
Your nine should be
a ball of yarn unraveling —
let it roll!

Let it spill over the
prairie, meadowlands, etc.
So you never have to deal with ten.

6 September 2016
NW —> SE

shale  shist  gneiss.
“We live in the flicker”

Much of the change left us innocent,
arm of the sea
holds us holy,
never far from water.
Hydrogen oxide, joke,
fancy name of everything,
a bicycle on stilts.

Still, this is our land,
the great transparent flag of air
floats proudly over us,
we kneel or sit or touch
the earth for blessing,
who would dare to stand
where shale lies down?

6 September 2016
I am a priest of the Holy Reformed Catholicic church, you hear me mumble masses wherever I go, I wear no collar, have a wife, know just enough Hebrew to get the Bible usefully wrong. And most of you are me too, one way or other, we fish in different tributaries of one great flow, this river us.

6 September 2016
Count the crystals.
Stroke the pines
that fur of the eroded peneplane —

the place brought here us for that,
ancient religion of being
somewhere in particular.

6 September 2016
After all these years
my father’s gold
capped Parker pen
is working again.

6 September 2016
Almagest of the obvious
this thing I wrote you
so many years,

and even now
this patch of sunlight
on lean grass,
leave it for you.

7 September 2016
Digits scrolling up so fast on the gas pump, numbers meant fingers once and now the distances proposed to go. Unlike them I stop only when I’m empty.

7.VII.16
The Hungarian alchemist you two are looking for is still alive. He lives in a three room apartment upstairs in a grey Stalinist housing project in a smaller city on the edge of vineyards—Eger, maybe, you tell me. I see it clear: the three rooms are absolutely empty, he moves from one to another to suit the element of mind he chooses at that moment to inhabit. He drinks water from the sink in a leather cup — he does have a cup, he’s had it for five hundred years. When he’s tired he lies on the floor or on the ceiling, depending.

During the day he often wanders through the streets, flicking drops of water on people passing, they hardly notice but it cures them of minor ailments instantly, and abates the suffering of the big bad stuff.

for L.D. & T.P.
He wears a sort of jumpsuit made of a fabric he created: three properties hath this linen, it keeps the wearer warm or cool at need, it cleans itself by night and is always fresh it takes on each day the sacred color of that day.

Nobody pays attention to a man in a jumpsuit, just some laborer. And this is indeed his work, healing folk, and living a thousand years and forgetting how to read, and needing nothing but water and light and air and earth. He is the fire.

7 September 2016
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should be a snowman
with no head, your
seven an old [?] plowshare
shoving through earth.
Steppe. Prairie.
Your nine should be
a ball of your unraveling —
let it roll!
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prairie, meadowlands, etc.
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arm of the sea
holds us holy,
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Hydrogen oxide, joke,
fancy name of everything,
a bicycle on stilts.
Still, this is our land,
the great transparent flag of air
floats proudly over us,
we kneel or sit or touch
the earth for blessing,
who would dare to stand
where shale lies down?
I am a priest of Reform Catholicism,
I mumble masses wherever I go,
wear no collar, have a wife,
know enough Hebrew to get the Bible wrong.
And most of you are me too,
one way or other,
we fish
in tributaries different yet one great flow,
this river us.
Count the crystals.
Stroke the eroded peneplane —
the place brought us for that,
ancient religion of being somewhere in particular.

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After all these years
my father’s pen
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so many years,
    and even now
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= = = = =

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three properties hath this linen,
it keeps the wearer warm or cool at need,
it cleans itself by night and is always fresh
it takes on each day the sacred color of that day.

Nobody pays attention to a man in a jumpsuit,
just some laborer. And this is indeed his work,
healing folk, and living a thousand years
and forgetting how to read, and needing nothing
but water and light and air and earth.
He is the fire.

7 September 2016
So the moon
rolls up the sky
over Rondout,
changes color
as the tongue
slips from one word
to the next. Taste it.
*O word in the mouth of the other*
we read, something
like tears in our eyes
but we are not sad,
we are never sad.

7 September 2016
The explanation of a dream is also a dream. Consider. The boundaries are always porous, the mind is like water, flows to any declivity, possibility —.

7 September 2016
= = = = =

Only what comes to mind
I bring you,

    the hands are empty,
washed clean by dream
but void of gift,

    pure giving only,
giving.

    *Denn Geben ist’s*
    Rilke

could have said,
giving has praise inside it,

and hands and hours
    and domes reflected in the lagoon
and corn fields past the middle school,

and even these noises I write down for your eyes.

    8 September 2016
On the other side of the wall
a warren. Who lives in there?
The more or less silences
who live with us
and nobody knows.
Not just mice and ants and such
but all the air out there
is full of them, particles
of light or energy,
no micron not full of their personhood.

So little we know.
Someday we’ll be able
to talk to the light
and parse the molecules that we swim through
and swim through us.

8 September 2016
A birthday every
day is what I mean.
For me of course
and you but also for

the fox behind the ferns,
deer nibbling along
and noisy folk
in morning cars,

even then. Happy
Birthday everyone,
you are not who
you were yesterday
you are tomorrow.

8 September 2016
What would I have thought of the man I became, who doesn’t drink, who eats his nice salad and writes all day long?

What would the boy of me have made of me back then, who read all day long and took long bus rides to look at people and be near them, be in strange neighborhoods, languages, foods. To look at people, and to be gone?

8 September 2016
--
THE POWER

for DZC

She lies down
she lies on the ground

Whatever may be there
silkiest four-poster
or in a sleazy motel
it’s always the ground
right under her

she lies on the ground
and feels the ground
and looks up at the sky,

the sky is always right there
no matter how many
ceilings and floors and roofs and domes
pretend to be between them
the sky is always right there

she lies on the ground and looks at the sky
there is a moon in the sky
she looks at the moon in a certain way
and makes it rise or fall.
The moon is a man.

A woman can make a man rise and fall.

She holds the moon in her hands. No, not exactly. She holds her eyes in a certain way and squeezes her empty hands in different ways.

As she looks and as she squeezes the moon turns different colors from deep below red to way out beyond violet so far that even she can’t see it and thinks for a moment she has lost the moon—

but then she eases her grip and the moon slips back into seeing—

poor moon, to go and come like that, to put up with so many changes—

but it’s good for him, makes him strong, gives him experiences the vacant sky withholds.
She lies on the ground
and the moon is happy at last

she lies on the ground and is very strong,
she is well beyond
happy or not happy,
she is intact, she is in control,
for the moment her work is done.

She rolls over and goes to sleep.
The moon tenderly covers her with light.

9 September 2016
Look where anything is—
did you put it there?
Are you yourself
guilty of geology,
geography?
    Of course
you are. You did
all that, not just
human history
for which you are
already being punished
—state, religion,
age. disease—
all of that
is your fault.
So say you’re sorry,
it will help you sleep.

9 September 2016
Have no need for
that altar of toothpaste
the shrine of now.
I have abused
the privilege of time
so my now is long
before yours,
long gone.  See,
I live on the other
side of time
among pure images
you think
are animals and books
and all those scriptures
with so many legs,
we followed once
their footsteps in deserto,
and here we are.
But not so much
the me part of me.
I’m still with the vestiges.

9 September 2016
RESOLUTION

Campfire. Hot night last, worse now. What to do.
Be an airship steady at five thousand feet.
Open the windows of the gondola, play
the aluminum piano I brought from earth
so long ago. Liszt sounds good up here,
the fiery. The single server brings a tray
sparsely laden with the tea things — a three
tiered cake stand takes up most of it.
And little cups for us. Thousands and
thousands of us forever. This is all
for you, to rescue you from the dank late summer heat.
No mosquitoes
at this altitude, no flies.
We have to be bothered
by our own anxieties,
passions, dreads. Falling
is always possible up here.
But then it always was.
Even once sprawling
languid in the meadow
I knew how easy
it would be to fall
and go on falling forever.

9 September 2016
Hope I get there before I do so I can welcome me at the door widespread arms and smiling just this once, and listening hard to hear what I will finally say.

9 September 2016
THE BUFFALO HIDE

Things we membered
re-blessed
with fresh blood—

medicine wasn’t always a crime,
the slow buffalo world
allowed of soft leather,
potent flowers, sleep.

Sleep was all we ever needed,
knew
    how to put different
parts of the body to sleep
when they need healing,

sleep. We drew
(keep it simple)
a map of our terrain
then stretched it out on the body

till both the body and the landscape slept.

2.
So, many of the tribes
began in Ireland and moved west,
maybe they weren’t Irish then
or when they left, but the island
left its map in them and they
held it to the fierce Dakota earth
and all such places

between
the mountains and the mountains,
never mind the river,

Things like this
are urgent for you to know
and so I tell them,
half dreamt half made up

since no one else will tell you the glad truth:

you are the land
and it is you,

the Emerald Tablet told
only one of the axes
that form reality,

we need
(here is) the second:

As inside so outside

and we shall sleep in peace.
The good year has come again
illness and poetry, karma
ripening, rose of Sharon resisting
our little drought so far, our little
rain on rainday. The *Times* is damp
I pick up at the gate — *hudor*
still lives on earth, lives the earth,
water. Sea level rises, water lessens,
how can that be? *There is water of the land and there is water of the sea*—
their marriage is complex and we
are the noxious noisy guests
at their wedding every day. Look
to the sky for explanations like all
my ancestors, wait for wet answers.

10 September 2016
PASTORALE

Don’t think about it in Greek
the rocks are pretty slippery
the girl may be more than a girl
and you have arrows but no bow.

*The oak tree holds*
*its messages all winter*

you sang once and no one listened.
You weren’t really there for them
or even for the roebuck or wild boar
and you were no hunter either.

You couldn’t even talk with flowers.
So close your lexicon, try to forget
that glimpse you got of *someone*
in or by the stream. Leave your doors

unlocked tonight and pray, just pray.

10 September 2016
Probably nothing works. Those roses must be an accident, likew a roast goose gift of God they used to say about some poor fowl who dtried in vain to fly away. So many accidents. Divinities. I don’t mean to be mysterious roses of Sharon make me delirious, all these old American years of farms and sore knees and lovers kissing andwindowsills and mothers and shy young experiments safe behind the barn and churches full of clean people drowsing and all and everything going on and one—all that is in these flowers potted on a hot day when I alone am full of doubt about the weird weird weather of the republic, the arcane politics of I love you are you in love with me and all the barns have fallen down and a little cloud is sleeping overhead.
It’s right to wait
a long time
for something
quick and brief—
a raindrop
on your bare wrist
the world is changing.

10 September 2016
TOCCATA

You are the first city
the first other
you are the first
I was other in
stayed in you, hotel,
there was a little sink right in the room
the handles were like crosses
on the faucets
and it was always snowing

outside a long long street tilted steep
away down to the river
snow made the cars slide
I watched them skid the whole way down
and out onto the frozen river
they drove away or sank
I never knew
I was too new
are you as young as I am now?

Things go away. Things go away,
that’s what I learned,
the snow was good,
the snow was like the bones
of my mother’s face,
my mother always said
choose a woman for her bones
choose a woman with good bones
the city had good bones, strong bones,
the beautiful hard streets!
hard buildings, hard corners of hard houses,
you could lean against a wall as hard as you wanted,
it would hold you, it would hold,
thank god for hard, hard holds,
everything was strong and right
an angle is always good for you.
I respect you so much
because you are geography,
I am too, because you and I are both geography
while most people are just history.
They are always when but we are where,
there.

So there really are flowers in the snow
gardenias roses of Sharon lilacs—
time makes mistakes!
Did you know that?

So many things I want to tell you,
so many wheres to be there to be now,
how the island of Ireland is the actual
four-chambered heart of the earth,
yes, the planet, because every
part of the earth is an organ of earth
and you know it, you have walked there,
here, but from that organ the island
some of my ancestors came,
from the heart all red and wet
and its shadow was green and they came
and the human heart
does not look like a valentine heart
two plump cheeks and pointy
but the hotel was called Valentine,
my father brought me there
because he wore hats and needed to know
where the hats came from
and he was my ancestor, a father
is an ancestor, but even long before him
they had brought from Ireland a map
an ancient map pigment-painted
on the hide of an aurochs—
here it is, I spread it out before you:

the map will fit you exactly,
and if you put on a little weight
it will accommodate, if you turn lean
it will still wrap tight around you—
every mark on the map
corresponds to a part of your body
your city, the same—
and what goes on it that part
and how you feel,
and how the voice from your jawbones
will reach a thousand miles,
and how you feel
when months from now
when you look at the river in springtime,
arm of the sea, no ice,
still evidence of salinity
and you know that change is coming,
big changes are coming—

all this now you hear from me,
these are just fragments of music
broken out of the mind,
music smashed against reality
blessed by the hard,
smashed into words,
\textit{voice fiddle and flute}
\textit{no longer be mute}
they say and the country changed,
we make a city the way
we make a country, the way
the earth is made, by singing it,
singing it to change,
we change into each other
every blessed day,

better and harder and richer
and at night you hear the map
humming to itself in your dresser drawer
and it murmurs to you of the changes,
map and river and body and city,
everything is coming, everything is now.
The map knows.

\textbf{10/11 September 2016}
The wind and the now and we are.
It was my fault — I was the one who began to be other.

A cheap imitation of the light I offered, and a Bible made of linden leaves those heart-shaped tallies of our losses. Even now, first cool day in weeks, they have begun to fall.

Me and my weather!
That’s all my fault too, why can’t I just give you Helen on the walls of Troy half-naked half ashamed, and all in glory, why can’t I give you Lancelot grieving, remorseful but still lustful,

that is the problem, isn’t it, the sin and its repentance live together like an angry couple in a cramped apartment, why can’t I give you Prince André or the languors of King Solomon instead of my interminable weather?
Even asking you all this now
is just shifting the blame
as if there were a decent answer
and you knew it. You know it
but are too kind to remind me
what feeble siegecraft I bring
against the invincible city of the day.

11 September 2016
Catching up with after —
almost true,
*hair on fire*
they told me a comet meant
running to douse it in the sea —
I believed. How can we not believe
something that fits the mind so well?

11 September 2016
STUFEN

Sound bell dawn make
single voices anthem Jesus
horizon riverfront alternate harmony

in and out the same
current copies singers’ rhythm gladly
absolute randomness discovers aesthetic Sierras!

11 September 2016
Always doing something
sooner than I can

is the rule (goal) of philosophy
from the beginning.

Whereas

poetry says it
before you can think it.

This is the rule.
All Torah comes from this.

11 September 2016
ORGAN VOLUNTARY

blast of sound
precise tones
scattering from the klang
like crows from an oak tree
at a gunshot
gong.

Then it was day.
Scraps of ancient writing
flutter so in the mind though,
unremembered, unforgotten.
Birds. Birds.

12 September 2016
A bride he chose
to lead downstairs.
All day she busied
herself to be alone.

It is terrible to be chosen
for what someone else
thinks you actually are.

The mirror’s no help then
and the little emerald ring
and the nice white horse
tethered by the trellis of roses.

She knew that down her stairs
were such things waiting,
she saw them clearly in
the glass of water he gave her.

12 September 2016
To rescue women from men
is rescue them from me.
Conundrum. Now what to do
with the birdbath, the towel,
the slinky on the oaken steps?

I yield to the daughters of liberty.
Clouds over Round Top, wind from the west.
Of course, of course,
from the cave she looks out at last,
gestures, do we finally get it right?

12 September 2016
ABDUCTED

Years ago
I was carried off to fairyland.
The funny thing is
I never came back.
Fairyland interpenetrates,
pervades this strange
other world we call ours,
this ordinary, sundown town.

12 September 2016
THE SHIPMENT

That crate you see
collapsed in the corner
all splintered wood and tape
and twine and labeling
in several languages —

that’s my pinky ring
from Palestine, a little ruby
to enhance my potency,
made by the same firm
that made King Solomon’s,

it comes packed in dry
weeds from the Dead Sea —
it takes a long time
to finger through all that
life-giving trash
to find the ring

but when I do
and slip it on,
then springtime in the loins,
no more sad harvest
when all the deeds are done,
spring again, and a ruby,
and one other stone
I don’t know by name —
I think it has Hermes
in it, and swiftness,
discernment, even
a little childlike joy
at all my glorious
again to come.

12 September 2016
Dew-soaked and a little devious
the grass uphill.
The bench up there
(hill I say, and up I say,
but the whole acclivity’s a bare
ten feet if that)

one green bench,
faces the stone Buddha
under the tree.

To walk up there’s
a micro-pilgrimage
to sit there with the crows and bluejays
arguing insights in the green zendo,
alert, alone, anew.

12 September 2016
All my Sumerian relatives
in their square-rigged
papyrus-sailed skiff on the way
sailing up my spermatic vesicles
to start the old world again,

life before Abraham, before Moses
got the itch to travel, when poetry
invented kings and kings were smart
enough to know they’re just images at play
and no more state!

Come, I will catch
a new world by its tail, all joy
and fun, that untranslatable English word,
our last surviving word of Edenese.

12 September 2016
QUERCUS

Umbilicus ties us
to the mother
till cut free.

The oak tree though
prefers to linger,
sink its roots
depth in her embrace.

Blessings come not
only from on high,
they rise in us

I too am a tree.

(7 September 2016)
12 September 2016
CATEGORIES OF DOUBT

1. The clipper ship rounds Cape Horn heads north to Yerba Buena—sail twenty thousand miles faster safer than three thousand on land to cross this rugged table of ours this turtle shell.

2. I was there too in spirit, wherever it was difficult, lived to be hard, monster me!

3. Always believe what the ancestors say, they come from Time where lies go to be healed. Flensed. Sea creatures our minds.
4.
You still can find me
identify my trace

my tracks
the letter that doesn’t come

deleted email
snapshot misfiled

corner of the map torn off
that showed your house.

5.
So many infinities
for a child to get lost in,
born in again.
Chase the cat, flee the ghost,
burst into tears before
a stranger at the door,
speak to grown-ups
as little as you can.
All these are valid
philosophies — history
written sideways
as if it all mattered
terribly a different way.

6. But for me it was the corners waiting on a corner cars from four directions coming how could I not be afraid?

Later fear turns into doubt then you can’t get rid of it. Someone dies and the worst has come but the worst is done.

Now there is only me to be wrong.

7. Along about Peru the captain wonders out loud to his first mate about the immensity of their journey and the smallness of their motives. They see mountains to the east higher than they ever imagined. And we are doing all this for little disks of silver and gold. Sir, no, the mate responds, it’s for wife and children, home and land. Worse yet, the captain deems, each of us should do everything we do
for our own soul’s sake. But which part of the vessel is the soul?

12 / 13 September 2016

Some girl I never heard of had a child. That child is mine, conceived by distant thought. Somewhere out there my only son.

12 / 13 September 2016
Where everything begins
be gentle with machines.
The bicycle got there first
then the piston’d engine
began to understand
what wheels were permitted
to do.

Heron of Alexandria had been forgotten,
the Black Plague came and went,
music grew and blossomed and withered
about the time the radio was born.
You hear them passing in the street.

12 / 13 September 2016
Justice had a mirror
it fell and broke,
only through the cracks
can you see clear
a world that isn’t you.

13 September 2016
Narrow peaches
squeezed off the tree
we had one
in our Hungarian backyard
in Brooklyn by the sea.
Each peach
is meant for thee
if only I could find a way
to make them round again
plump and juicy with lost time
when I could spend all afternoon
walking in marshes off Jamaica Bay
hidden safe among the horse-high reeds.

13 September 2016
If you’d let me forget
we could get something new,
elephant milk or dust from the moon,

so many possibles
get cancelled out by memory
that sinister faculty
that runs religions and the state.

13 September 2016
I wish I could tell you what you mean—
but every friend or lover wishes that.
You’re not the sun and moon and stars
but the stars know how to talk through you
because you know how to listen, listen
with your lips moving, and the dark earth
around you stills in its shrubs and orchards,
its long soft grasses combing up the hill
so everyone can hear they think is you.
But to write the thing at all
was whale-deep in hot seas
guessing one word at a time
is it mother or other or matter

and no one alive to tell or tell you.
That is geology, *mon cher*,
and nowhere to go from here.
Gravity is our dancing-master,

solemn music on the Rule of Three:
Up, Down, Lie there like the lawn.

13 September 2016
LARES

What’s so lucky about eight?
We sat up late
waiting for Hermes to remind
the night of what it meant
to tell us.

Then it was dawn.
The hexagrams were all over the wall
where six turns into eight, the land
they were coming from, those
silken ancestors with wax mustaches
who taught the rivers how to ripple.

Every house has in it somewhere
a single strand of their ancient hair.

14 September 2016
This suit of clothes
this long mistake
this billboard in my pocket
this clock that runs sideways—
space conquers time!
This church full of wine vats
this light switch that turns off the sea
this dormitory where no one sleeps
this alphabet of clam shells all alike
this mysterious girl on roller skates
this piano tinkling in a sunken yacht
this architect’s blueprint of your heart—
you’ll never know how much it cost me
and I’m too scared to open up the bill.

14 September 2016
Make it good this time, Robert, otherwise they might believe you.

14.IX.16
Even if it were it couldn’t be.
Contradiction is built right in
like sap in maple trees in March.
What do you want of me, Lady,
I’m only the shadow cast by your star.

14 September 2016
APPLE CORES

stars on the sky
of the lawn
deer come
to share
mute eloquence
of actual things
nothing wasted
no such place as away.

14 / 15 September 2016
= = = = =

While you’re waiting
spin the top for me
I hate to be
the cause of things,

just let me see it
turn, I want to be
just a pilgrim
of the obvious,

things that are
there already
or come to be,
ordinary miracles.

14 / 15 September 2016
INAGGERATION

Inaggerate, make it less.
Take it out of the pile
one by one until
the heap grows smaller.

There comes a Lilith moment
just before the beginning—
that’s what we aim at
in our psychic penury,

banish all mental images
till Aleph falls silent
and we begin to understand
why the beginning began.

15 September 2016
Roses on the tree
comfort me
and confuse me too,
how such things
can come and go
and leave me busy
at the same machine.

These are the moans
of a very happy man
unaccountable alive
so many years
and still sort of me.

15 September 2016
Measurement
is what I meant
how to fit the world
into one neat
sentence with no
tiger left out,
no flounder looking
sadly up from
the bottom of the sea.

15 September 2016
The closest I came
to being a man
was shooting Ballantine
beer cans off
the cattle fence
with a .22,

I hated it,
the feel of acting
as if there were
no feelings anywhere
in the world, just
puny deeds of pointless skill,
of use maybe in war,
that deadly universal
fire-drill that grown-ups love.

16 September 2016
The scatter of leaves
could be words
archaic Chinese or young cuneiform

shadows know how to read
and write, a shadow's always young
always learning.

Could I be new-born like that
at every shift or angle of the light?
Maybe we really are, maybe

shadows with false memories
implanted by the very light,
inspiration, revelation.

Who are we, really?

16 September 2016
GRADUS

Who taketh my books hath me all
it told me on the staircase
between Max Ernst and the Eddas
my mind on Chaucer’s day,
Coleridge at my left shoulder
as once in Grasmere
I sat upon his chair
in the staircase turning,
or Yeats’s armchair in Merano
Ezra, il fabbro, built
from wood and reverence.
Dear God, how we inherit one another.

17 September 2016
Kleenexes for weeping
trade marks for business folk
common nouns for everyday
deployment: sloth, congeries,
whiffletree, trajectory.

There is an itch in language
down the shoulder of the writing arm
to say another thing. O Christ
to be able to say another thing!
Pat your eyelids dry and weep no more,
the animal is stirring, is on its way.

17 September 2016
Her politburo shoulder strap
touch just once and know Siberia.
It’s all for show. We are Potemkin
villages to one another. Touch and die.
Touch and we all fall down and cry.

17 September 2016
GET BUSY

Have I done my duty to the day?
Answer that timely and later sleep well.
No minute without its necessity.
Quiet is a ruse. The weather is watching—
aux armes! artists, no time to waste.

17 September 2016
for Laura Battle

Becomingly (as if reaching astronomic with respect orbit of another) approach

the other. Art in a barn, friends stand in the dim. Dark stanzas allowed by Umbrian light outside.

I saw a meadow asking, tension intense between figure and ground, deep come-hithering surface,

the flirt of sign. Sigils of a new occult pressing outward to be almost understood,

nothing simple in simplicity, all knowing is a kind of swoon and then you wake. I woke. The images found me

right where I didn’t know I was.

17 / 18 September 2016
I know a word I never spoke
a cow you never milked
I know a bird speaks decent French
why not, they have lots of air
in Languedoc or Quebec, I know
a cavern where some people hide
and study vice a thousand years
defanging evil and distilling good.
But I don't know the ther side of you.

17 / 18 September 2016
A statue of my former self
topped off its plinth
sprawls in the muddy piazza
of a scant uncouth republic
somewhere east. Such a task
it is to be a work of art.

17 / 18 September 2016
He woke up no longer trusting circles anymore. And count the leaves before you decide that’s a tree. And what if a square’s fourth corner didn’t quite close exactly? And suppose a line kept going and never ended would it still be a line or will it subtly start meaning something different? He realized at last that shadows, every single one, shadows are distortions of the shape they try to replicate. Something is wrong with the arrangements! And the ocean itself is full of barracudas.

17/ 18 September 2016
There’s always a possibility—competent salesperson hands you precisely what you’re looking for then does it again. Suddenly you know how intelligent, scholarly, well-meaning such a person must be. Arrange a scholarship in the celestial academy. Send angel to tell the good news.

18 September 2016
SLIPPAGE

through the time
a substance made of space
slips through.

It comes to us
brittle, unbroken though
like a game somebody else
palyed and won
and left it here.

Someday it will rain again.
Only in grey cloud light
do colors show their truest.

Can love be like that too?
Are you my mother again?

18 September 2016
Sketchbook of a blind man
drawing the outlines of what he feels.

Or the lightless room in the museum
where we walk through cunningly directed
currents of warm and hot and cool and cold air.

9from earlier in the week

19 September 2016
MEETING A POET

Crows void disaster.
Flee. Rise with them
their wings black
their magic white.

Saints among us
everywhere is Africa.
Can a girl named Z
be happy with a boy

with no name at all?
These are forest speculations
—a tree is a mirror—
I had almost forgotten money,

two crows on the roof pole
reminded me of numbers
and what they can do
so I too (he said)

came into this story
crossed over the heaving
seas to Amérique—
every I is fictitious.
I hope the police understand
all my confessions
are spurious, postcards
from nowhere never sent,

no words on them, no
images, no crimes.
Sheer avowals of guesses.
He paused, as if for applause

the way poets usually do
Mum, I disapproved. Then
hently as I could, O Poet,
poets should be silent

like mapmakers, like boy scouts lost n the woods,
girls kneeling at the altar rail.
But he cried out No,

this isn’t poetry, this is how
things actually are — in poetry things would be different.
And the crows flew away.

19 September 2016
Ill-gotten grace,
a gratitude,

The cars are coming
it must be morning

in clockless woods
and fond of slumber.

Country means drive to work
—that is the difference,

everything else is email and animals.
How else could I learn to speak?

A year goes by with no surcease—
let the book fall open anywhere,

here is the day’s lesson, read it
till you fall asleep. Or wake.

19 September 2016
Eagerly enough
or other side—
neighborhoods of moonlight.

Sit your porches
and watch the ancestors
stately arrive.

Hats are typical, old habits,
dialects in the blood—
revere them but don’t speak:

an ancestor
is always about speaking
not listening. Listen

for them, to them, they stroll
from streetlight to streetlight
all dark in between.

19 September 2016
Everything already is too long ago—should I be otherwise?

Panthers on the prowl.
Some do it sitting down.

And chase the mind by fear from womb to womb.

19 September 2016
Even I by Ganges once admitted sins
even called them mine and threw them in.

*Minimize Wickedness!* it said on the bottle,

I swallowed three pills the last stuck in my throat
long enough for me to taste it going down. The taste

was like tobacco, plus salt, plus licorice. Later

I read all about it in an old Latin book

and knew that I was saved. Or safe. The word was the same.
19 September 2016
STRIP

Two crows pecking on the lawn.

A man and a woman at the edge of the woods. They appear to be naked but because of the bushes around them we can’t be sure.

The crows leap into the air.

The man and the woman are gone from the woods.

19 September 2016

[sketch towards a bande dé-dessinée, a pictureless strip.]
Many seen
that can’t be thing:

mind projects
shadows, mind
that sneaky sun.

(old scrap)
19 September 2016
Quivering leaves
close, close
but sun pierces,
ill-grouted mosaic,
light- lines between
IMAGES illuminate.

(old scrap)
19 September 2016
SPECIES

Resilient species incolate the mind.

Dragons. Enduring.
That bridge in Ljubljana
in Vesna’s snapshot,

I feel the leather
of his breast,
stressed membrane
of his folded wings.

Those fangs were never just imagined.

This is true beast
as I am true man.

Dreams abide.
A few species
pervade the mental world.

We need them,
they fill a void
in our ontological vocabulary.

And day now they will come to flesh.

(old scrap)
19 September 2016

= = = = = =

Know it before it can be known. That is one way. the other is a cave in the rock, hillside, motherlode, water dripping steadily from an unknown source. Fork in the road to lead these paths backwards into unity.

20 September 2016
= = = = = =

These breathless lines
woman in love
tries to hide it
from herself. But
breath tells, *breath*
*weighs upon the soul*
*until it cries out*
and the word knows
its way out of her at last.

2.
You can’t fool language,
it’s always there
a breath (a blush,
a footprint) before you.

3.
I thought I knew you
the way a rain puddle
knows the sky.
It’s a long time
since a proper rain,
a little wet here
and there to tell.

20 September 2016

= = = = =

You elude my fascinations
(a bundle of sticks
tied tight together,
faggots for the fire)
and fall for the twitching
signals of another’s hands.
I’m jealous. Me,
who owns everything.

20 September 2016
Such a shame
we have to make do
with other people’s weather.
Gloomy interlude
of looking around the room
to see who’s there
we share. Bitter taste,
oily taste, salty taste,
sweet. I draw my
words before I speak.
Don’t you wish —
I wrap myself in cloud
and saunter out.
You don’t have to hear me —
everything says so too.

20 September 2016
That fox is just
a patch of sunlight on the lawn
shaped by leaves.
These words too
once just guesses at a shape
stirring at the back of the mind.

21 September 2016
The caution
dissolves the action.
Copper sulfate
left in the jar
enough for a small
planet’s new sky.
Trust me —
I have never been here
before, scientists can tell
where metals came from
more or less. The alloys.
The birdsong left inside.

Of course everything
is a love song
more or less. Things
connect things,
we wake at night
remembering suddenly
who we really
were supposed to be.

That’s the kind of info
stones like to give,
less about theology
more about Touch me.
As if they were different.

All I’m doing is answering
the tink of bronze
against bronze
in a woman’s hand
investigating densities,
deep gouges in the metal
that might be me.

21 September 2016
Mercy the bell
the beginner
a ball rolls
over a carpet, red
and sandy from
Isfahan! All
the world comes here,
comes round a ball
is what it is,
not much different
from an eye or an apple.
Ring the bell again,
this time they're sure
to hear it. And
here they come!

21 September 2016
Willow ware saucer
aswim with spill
rooibos chai
from foreign parts

I am an apparatus
meant to decipher
coins from tadpoles
in swart rivers

Jersey’d with nearness
I can see my own
across the laughter
abruptly wanting

something else so
take it easy, logjam
you can walk on
like the movies man

so far to go and come back.

21 September 2016
Always calling.
Our skeptic lyrics
still cast blue
shadows on the walls,
bare white of Santa
Maria where the waters
join in autumn sunlight.
A church of some sort
is always waiting.
Beautiful AM shadows
on the unchanging white.

22 September 2016
Everything uncanny.
Sunlight. Breeze.
I have heard there is
a river called Amazon.
I have heard bluejays
squawking in my trees.
Grass close cropped,
patches of sunlight, some
leaves at the far
end of the linden branches
already fading to gold.
A fancy word for brown
and yellow, how much
strangeness can I stand?

22 September 2016
All the things we don’t know
and I’m the worst of them.
I’ve forgotten all my calculus
except these two white pebbles —
an inch across, each, maybe —
Charlotte brought back from her island.
They’re paving the highway
around the corner past the trees,
makes the words smell of asphalt
on this cool day. And chemistry
I scarcely knew, and physics
just enough to worship
Gravity, dark queen of all our lives.

22 September 2016
End of Notebook 394
Cannons assembled
on a field—
no infantry anywhere,
no war.

Instruments arrayed,
tombstones of ancient
anger. May they
rust in peace.

23 September 2016
Lofty beginnings.

Feare no more
the day of the fay,
the wild cloud
brings its message—

horizon just means difference.
I slept ill, woke slow, keep watch.

For it does seem to be a campaign
if not yet a battle.
Birds quiet, flowers few

but colors pervade.

Feare no more the waiting, the will
to be somewhere other,

horizon hankering,
the alps of elsewhere.

23 September 2016
ISOLDE

Past any possible
Tristan
stop being in love
a better
music is waiting for you.

23 September 2016
LONG AGO IN THE PATRIARCHY

Hillside dotted with Rachels, pasture land browsed by plump Leahs, a few Calebs barking around to keep order. How it began.

23 September 2016
Residue the slim remainder
of a giant’s feast, we scattered selves.

Music, please. To lead the prophets in,
dancers mysterious with blue eyes.

You know, the kind you clutch I dreams.
We are what is left of a galactic accident,
crumbs of sentience against a throb of gravity—
yes, a wave, like light, like those blue

adveniats promising to rush in soon
from the sea of air (Apollinaire) in which we drown.

23 September 2016
This peanut butter cookie is unlike every one before. All the others came from flour, grease ("the soul is grease" Tamas cited from a late classic authority), sugar and peanut butter in some more or less malleable form. But this, this! Here a wizard or wizrdess has spoken into the core of the peanut même and caused it to form outwardin billows of brown encrustedness, sweeping with it the sweet the unctuous the farinaceous and the dark mystery of taste. Uncanny cookie, sprung from the ground’s own seed.

23 September 2016
THE OPENING
IS NEVER FAR
THEY HAVE GIVEN
ME SO MUCH

A column saying so
discovered upright
in the wilderness—
a gratitude,
a welcome in.

24 September 2016
Sunspots. Vegan poultry.
I knew a man who
wouldn’t wait, Grampa
was a refrigerator, he
had acres and acres
but where are they now?
Where does land go?

2.
Perfect alignment.
Sliced the crust off,
welded the crumb
together with peanut
butter. And jelly.
What flavor? Pink.
Quivers when touched.
Children are fed this
and still grow up.

3.
And that is the tragedy—
they turn into grown-ups,
it must be something
in the jelly makes them
grow up. I almost did.

25 September 2016, WF
The police made me a criminal
he said, if there were no law
I would never have sinned.
Because to be is to be opposite,
to hold firm against the drift.
*To be the other*, even if by stealth
or cunning or violence, he cried,
waiting for my rejection or caress.

25 September 2016
Ethnic goes best.
Circumvallation of the Pyramid—
circling the square

I lift the woolen runner
admire the old chestnut
wood of the floorboards

foot-wide planks
running plausibly north
polished by years.

2.
How old am I now?
A glass of milk.

3.
A heap of stones
is sculpture.
Why is Athens plural?

Religions arise as tragedy,
come again as comedy,
didn’t Marx mean that?
4.
Keep on talking, eventually
you’ll make sense.
Salt march, children of Eve.

Or: wooden duck on a bookshelf
Tomorrow ever closer.
Footsteps pause outside the door.

(a few days old)
26 September 2016
I TRY AGAIN

to reach through the book
the smiling angel
who comes with her own door
to pass through
into this world.

Which might be your world too
if I pay attention
but the ink shies inside my pen
so I need a new horse
and the waterfall even in a droughty season
drowns out my next thought

but she is still near, the angel,
I have to find
that door she lets down
red-ribbed, gold-lintel’d
into the world of appearances

so she’ll be sitting here or there
stroking her lute on her lap
the way idle fingers stroke cat
but that intentional music
will wake me up before
she folds her lap and wings and door and flies away.
26 September 2016

AFTER A TEACHING BY TAI SITU RINPOCHE

Milarepa could walk on air
because he could walk,

anywhere — earth, air,
water, no difference.

*

If you can walk at all
you can walk anywhere,
it’s up to you, really.

26 September 2016
Of course the wolves come back
it’s what woods do —
and we are forest still,
don’t let the streets and lights deceive you,
we are a moment in the wilderness.

I sat in the graveyard and smoked,
where better, and looked up the mountain.
Pharamond, was that the brand?
Something like that. We are alone
scattered on the planet, only two
kinds of places; desert and forest.
There are no other kinds of people
either. What I brought with me.
What I will bring home.

27 September 2016
The goats at Blithewood
crush the young trees, clear
the hillside. White, fawn,
black, brindled, tan.
A train goes by down
along the river — far below
it seems. Then goats
so close. Goats capering
they call it, gentle
eyes, soft noses,
apologies for touch.

27 September 2016
INSIDE NOISE

there is a core of silence

maybe, a place where the prime of sound echoes and re-echoes until we hear

or is a sound a signal of its opposite

and every kind of sound at all has a like-shaped silence all its own?

2.
I lay in the dark hearing the faint noises of all old house at 4 AM. After a while I realized the sounds, muffled, distant, were coming from me, inside me, chest and belly, breath and blood. I was the old house
settling for the night.

3.
So there it is again,
the Ruby Tablet
to match the Emerald one —

as outside so inside,
whatever is out there
is in us too, our red
meat the shadow
of that green world out there

and conversely.
I am the house and the forest.
They are me and now we all go to sleep.

28 September 2016
Words fall out of the sky.
Find ink to write them down.

Or clay, with popsicle sticks
like old Assyrians
to gouge verities in,
eternal as a breath of air.

28 September 2016
Glamor of being wrong!
And so many ways to be it —
a disneyland of false directions,
a carnival of not.
Ranches on the moon
where men raise
implausible livestock
safe from the reality of Earth,

beasts with no purpose but to be.

28.IX.16
Just stand around, show up whether you want them or not. Everything is ready for you all the time. Miracle of the ordinary — it goes on and on. You thought you were a preacher but you were yourself the Gospel text. People listened, they were the same book. Amen.

29 September 2016
Each task a day hath.
Moaning and Choosing,
Wedding and Thirsting,
Freeing and Sit still
and Swooning with bliss.
After their tasks
took the days names.
Grammar is like that,
a stick points both ways.

29 September 2016
In the long years before the Civil War sheep were everywhere in Dutchess County. In fact, Dutchess was the sheep and wool center of America. But then the mills and factories moved away south, fleeing the growing power of new labor unions. Deep defeated South, cheap labor. Away the mills went and the sheep, obedient as ever, followed right after. Leaving Dutchess County pretty empty except for artists, who are people who don’t have the sense to go south. What are artists anyway? They make new things — things that have never been known in the world before: pictures, texts, songs, sculptures. Each work of art — good or bad, boring or thrilling — is unique, never before, ever. Art is wonderful. And even better if the sheep came back.

29 / 30 September 2016
Everything overweight by thought
garnets almost dark enough to look blue
I press my hand against the curvature of dark
hard, like a pilgrim in a rainstorm
a rowboat going over a cascade. Help
we shout, and shudder at the television news
forgetting that they only show the awful things.
But the dark is good, the dark is a door,
the dark knows how to take us in.

30 September 2016
A word or say
enough for two —
a scentless flower
means we can’t know
what the bee knows
can we?

A word
lies on its side
and looks at me,
it snuggles deep in grass,
the awns of tickle
or is it glumes?

The word
will never know
until I say it,
until I am two
and lie down beside it
out loud and we sleep.

30 September 2016
Slim Egyptians
    carrying a boat to the sea.
    An offering.
Sly hips of learning
    another language,
questionless answer.

I watched you
    coming from the shore,
the sea was safe
    the fish unsoiled.
Purity. Only that.
You had gathered up
    all the wrack and weed
and made them green
with new desire.

Desires. Are the sky
or at least the middle air
    within our reach.
Grasp. Hand on whom
    quick eternities

to slip back again
    and be one just one.

30 September 2016
0.
Get out of it a while
and walk around your mind

1.
watch where the shadows
of passing birds
strike the white walls

blank walls

‘blank’ means white

2.
It is shapely, tall
like all.

It remembers mostly
what you put inside

bronze door
halfway up the wall

like the door your father opened
to toss in the coal
3. 
Tall enough to cast a shadow 
most any time of day 
but not at evening 
follow it all the way 
across the clearing 
and into the woods 
somewhere in there 
what you need is waiting. 
not necessarily what you want 
but what you could.

4. 
Hard to say yea or nay. 
It’s all vowels dancing 
in the animals’ breaths 
we copy at our peril. 
*There is a language in the mountains* 
*that uses only consonants,* 
*they speak without breathing,* 
*the sweat runs down,* *they have soft hands.*

5.
... (30 September 2016)