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=====

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. Im 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 Tann-
häuser 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

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
pinces 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**

=====

in mem. E.D.

**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

Start of NB 394

=====

**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
buyt 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.
Malachite. Jade. Tanzanite.
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

== == == == ==

**Keeping. Keeping from waking.
Keyring. Anxiety.
Door. Hide.
Star. [Blank].
Free associations but why.
The words lead one another
out of the paddock.
They step on one another's
traces. Feces.
I am the dying zookeeper
mauled by his favorite tiger.**

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.
Glebe. Furrow. Soil.
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

=====

**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

= = = = =

for L.D. & T.P.

**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.**

**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

**Your figure eight
should be a snowman
with no head, your
seven an old [?] plowshare
shoving through earth.
Glebe. Furrow. Soil.
Steppe. Prairie.
Your nine should be
a ball of your unraveling —
let it roll!
Let it spill over the
prairie, meadowlands, etc.
So you never have to deal with ten.**

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?
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.**

6 September 2016

=====

**After all these years
my father's pen
is working again.**

6 September 2016

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**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

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**Digits scrolling
up so fast
on the gas pump,
numbers meant
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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.**

**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

=====

**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

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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

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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.

9 September 2016

=====

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 and windowsills 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.

10 September 2016

=====

**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,
voice fiddle and flute
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.**

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
agains 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
deep in her embrace.**

**Blessngs 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 Alex-
andria 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.**

13 September 2016

== == == == ==

**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
downthe 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
toppled 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 footstep) 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 wizardess 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 fdoes 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.**

**Was saved by irresponsibility,
books and beast desire. The road
to Mandalay. Cello suites, Tigers
in the temple grounds. More books.
The moon outfoxed by clouds.**

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
chew 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.**

28.IX.16

=====

**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.

=====

**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)