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Someone is drinking inside my skull. I hear the lips smack, the gurgle going down, the sigh of satisfaction after.

Silence. There is a wine fermented in the dark, I do not know the vine its fruit came from to be pressed in me. The skull is such a huge country, rivers and plains, anything could grow there.

1 November 2016
WINDOW

When the street lights go out
I am permitted at last to see.

1.XI.16
All Saints Day. 
The ones whose names we remember are not the only ones here. St. Unknown, St. Forgotten, St. Oblivion... They are with us too, Giotto-haloes habiting their heads, so bright we can't see their faces... We do not know them but they know us and help us in kind kinship when they can. For we have no names either, and will not have them till our deed is done.

1 November 2016
The middle gets closer all the time.
Sweet rapture of disorder
house full of books and looks
and windowsills and hanging lamps,
a whole Byzantium crammed inside
a modest dining room. People
find room there too to lecture
one another on the meaning
of all earthly things, art, poetry,
language, apple cider, cheese.

1 November 2016
I asked my dear father
where does the light
go when it goes out?
He smiled. I’m still
waiting for an answer.

When we went out
we went to Levittown or Babylon
or downtown, the light
had to go somewhere,
there must be a place—
I knew you could tell
lies with language
but I don’t think language lies.

1 November 2016
A dream is a recognition
of power lost,
a roadmap for finding it again.

A dream is all potency.

Night’s ripest fruit
is sometimes silence
dreamless sleep or
your quiet breath beside me.

1 November 2016
If I told you the sun
I mean sold you the sun
as a thing up in the sky
and you can have the whole
earth it shines down
if you believe me

and all I ask is the right
to stand or lie down quietly
in any shadow cast
by you or another
till the sun goes down

would you buy me
back from the slavery of being alone?

1 November 2016
INDIA

I am India all the time already
the mountain and the crocodile
just look at me

he became what he beheld
says Blake, who was India before me,
was me,

the grey temple
full of sullen monkeys
by Tilopa’s grindstone,
sacred metate,
luminous stone
to have worked such hands, his hands

or we are everywhere
we have ever been,

location is identity,

no more, no worse,
soft In the blue bedding of the sky.

so I sit pompous on the porch
in my stupid sweatshirt
and am India,
I let
the peoples come to me, why not,
my mind’s a crocodile
tries to scare bad ideas out of them,
Wrong View, sloppy motives,

we sit together with greasy goblets
in our mitts, drinking
god knows what
from the skulls of our fathers
and we are wise, wise.

Come visit me the next time you are you.

2 November 2016
The links of union
things that fit together
all over the map —

go back to our beginnings
why were we so afraid
and where did out fear go

now we really need it.
lost children in a blizzard
freeze to death from mere sensation —

something like that.
Go back to the beginning,
the river, the sick man, the corpse floating by.

We knew something
but it wasn’t enough
just to know it.

When I finish ranting
you look at me and whisper
There was no beginning.

2 November 2016
As if I were the other
and in love
you liked it or let me—

how could I ever tell?

2.XI.16
Repercussions
are like rabbits
breed and breed
and beat the earth.
I was a drummer once
and had no drum,
a sailor with no sea.
But when I was a blacksmith
all the iron in the earth
cast its spell on me
so I belonged to everyone.

2 November 2016
We eat the shapes of animals
they grow tall inside us
and run wild, we are the jungle
for them, the shallow sea.
And from their prance their
supple turnings their sturdy
sameness we grow our lives
action by action, trying ever
to live their lives as ours.

2 November 2016
A day and how to eat it.
Whole. Raw. Let it dissolve first on your tongue, that porch of your mind. Then gulp it down.

Otherwise a man with a shovel will come and bury it under tomorrow, all the sad dirt still to come.

2 November 2016
A kind of belief
as far as it goes,
a girl skimming through a swamp
but nobody I know,
nobody I will ever know.

And on the coasts of Chica Loca
the mangroves grow dense
and weary swimmers can choose
to rest in them or just hold on.
The manatees will leave you
in peace, the sign says,

and the snakes belong to Asclepius
and they heal more than they kill.

2 November 2016
I have a funny feeling we’re running out of food. And not just us. Eat me remains at best equivocal. Or as the French say, the hay for this mattress has not yet been mowed. Reaped. Harvested. What will you sleep on tonight? What preposition will give you the best dreams? Or would you prefer the silent version, a lump of lapis quiet on your eyes?

2 November 2016
EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

All the dead live
in the mouths of the living,
kissing.

a kiss
is the silence of language
speaking,

it takes two mouths
to silence even a single word.

2 November 2016
Noisy clockwork of ordinary life —
gears, hweels, plates, pins —
deep n the biomass of me.

Why do we sleep so long? Work
we have todo in other places,
The Other Places where no clock runs

and we come back weary to our sleep
just in time to wake. Here again.
Life sounds all round me.

Images from all our elsewhere
blow away like autumn leaves.
scars on my soul from saying No.

3 November 2016
In that country they have dry rain. Rain falls from heaven but on its way down crashes into motes of dust and stray pollutants, the water evaporates but its inertia propels the particles downward. Some seasons they litter lawns and piazzas, cats and children roll around in the dry rain.

3 November 2016
When we were queens in Egypt
one girl said, you wouldn’t dare
ask us to go dancing —
but dance we did! Mastery
is all, to have rulership
of art and prance, cash and romance.
All the games we leave to guys.

3 November 2016
The battery lasts forever
the frame rusts out
the mind keeps spinning
after the gas runs out.

3.XI.16
The things that persist—
Byzantine commentaries
Hawaiian feather cloaks
the little pool in the Black Forest
from which the Danube flows —
languages, old wors, tattered flags
winter dreams, hard work
and slacking off, rosebuds, the reek
of cabbage boiling but we'll eat.

3 November 2016
Can’t hold on
to what I know
or what the grey
sky knows about
where we’ve been.

Been everywhere
and soon forget.
A maiden
by a fountain
stays in mind,

the one I never knew.

3 November 2016
She spread her legs but where her sex would be was only darkness, the a few stars, a road to Spain, cobbled, broken, Roman horsemen, peddlers bearing salt or honey, wolves. The dark has everything in it, all of it going away and away.

4 November 2016
Fifty years
live by river
and no boat
to go. A bridge
goes only to
the other side
of this.

Don’t know where
this river goes
but I came from
there. Memory
is the enemy
of identity. Water
is just here.
Just water.
Just me.

4 November 2016
In this wind
some leaves
turn out to be birds.

4.IX.16
It had to happen that way
the strings come down from Zeus
and trail along the earth
tickling the grasses, no,
nothing touches us. We stand
moveless and unprincipled,
a pack of lunatics
ashamed of the moon. Y
es. That cold
gentleman aloft
did this to us.

We wait
impassioned by a silver stream
that may be molten steel
for all we know, we go
by fancy and call
our nightmares sciences.
I saw a swamp once
and was the scaly monster in it.
Or you were.

Doesn’t matter—
every man is guilty.
The stone Christ lay on
a day or two then rose,
that stone holds us still in place.
Arise, arise the poet said
but that was politics
and Lenin still is dead.
Would you trust him if he rose?
Of course not. We barely
listened to his chatter
while he lived. Chto delat?
he asked and who were we
to know what to do. Or trust
anyone who told us they did.
There are too many starving
people, too many sick, too many
suffering, for us to think
anything makes sense.
I am guilty and so are you.

4 November 2016
Mind not sleep
there must be a car
takes you there
my father’s Isotta-
Fraschini his
name for such,
his Tamerlane,
his Baudelaire.

2.
But we can’t all
be our fathers
can we?

Sit on my knee
and explain me again,
my wooden eyes
swing to adore thee

3.
or at least listen
or at least wake up.

No car goes there,
I know that now,
I’m almost old
enough to be alive,
tunnels of Stalingrad
burning avenues
of Mosul—
breaking
the world in pieces
small enough to
choke down,
the taste of time.

5 November 2016
These are raptures of uncertainty
pilgrims rushing into the sea
to catch the blessing of the *first wave*
when each wave is always the first,
the ink does not dry out in the pen.

5 November 2016
When I write clear enough to read the paper bleeds. I wonder what else is wounded by what I say?

5.XI.16
We are Roman palæographers struggling with Greek—
if I knew how to sleep
I would know everything,
Christian again in Paynim land,
or chilly rabbi who runs the moon.

2.
It will never be easy,
the sad Mallarmé of the heart teems with ambiguities,
amphibolous, the man said,
I throw this stone both ways at once.

3.
So in the middle of the night it was morning.
Dawn happened to my head,
I got to the window in time to see the dark,
the pill I swallow for my heart.

5 November 2016
THE LESSON

Know enough of the words
to make mistakes.
Who is listening
at the classroom door?

Wave the flag
behind the teacher’s back,
there is magic
in every fabric,

wave it to let it loose,
magic in our clothes,
so the distant stars
embrace all over us,

we are the celebrities
of dream! Wake now
in humility, docile
as daylight, heart wide open
ready to learn again
the real name of everyone,
even that one in the corner
sobbing with closed eyes.

In a world of sensation
everything makes sense—
there, there, come
home with me now.

\`
5 November 2016
I lost the thread of where it went. It will be light soon, thwarted love, migrants drowned, devalued currency. And just this one liminal hour to set things right—or at least feel a while at peace. We live from one such sly deception to the next. Keep going. We will get here at last.

5 November 2016
THE FLIGHT OF THE PENGUIN

Flight of the penguin
in deep dark
so no one sees,
over the frozen shores
of Melatonin, lost Alps
of Somnia, swift
as almost thought
he soars, discovers,
settles on a drift.
Back to the sad soft
comforts of below.

5 November 2016
THE CHILD

Where have I come from
the little child asked
meaning no harm. All
the elders wept and
groaned and tore their clothes,
O beautiful mistake
they sobbed, from us, from our
insatiability, cluelessness,
anxiety, agitation, sin.

But where do I come in—
the child wanted to be clear.
Am I consequence or cause,
did you all happen
so as to make me be?
Or is there somewhere
we all come from,
a lake of milk or mercury,
landscape, a lab or a tree?

They all cried louder now—
No way to tell,
no where, no why, no how.
We think and think
and then things happen.

Should I go back
to where I began?
You never were!
they screamed,
You barely are!
Grow up like us
in mild stupidity,
take pleasure
if you can alone
in how things seem.

5 November 2016
There are small leaves last longer. Hibiscus. Euonymus. Brief as the breath to say them beyond their names. Still green, Still red.

6 November 2016
STUDY

I opened the Tanakh
and this is what I saw:
a man looking into the sky.
He wanted me to see
what he was seeing there
but I saw only him—
his sky was on the inside.
I looked all around
the found only myself
looking at him.
The man. The sky in him.

6 November 2016
Poetry in this asthmatic age:
panting we reach out for one another
brief gasps on the lyre
amorous swoons of cunning silence.

6 November 2016
The title of a book
should come at the end of it,
tell us at last where we are,
breathless the last page.

6.XI.16
Loosening to music
lying on grass or beach
like an ad for elsewhere
or in dark chambers
shuddered with delight.

6 November 2016
I’m not sure I got this right
but I’m asleep into bright Sunday
where monks are finering unfamiliar
Hebrew manuscripts, parchment for a pal,
could this be holy? Must, if there are words on it.
And so forth. Meanwhile the family next door
moved out twenty years ago but the grass
on their lawn keeps growing, o sweet
world after all. It makes me think I must be
one of those people Plato warned you of,
the ones who strive for a day to come
at last when women rule the earth—
a fate the Greeks of all things dreaded most.
Listen, the sun above us is a girl, I myself
was at her Bat Mitzvah, the moon’s some guy
who comes mooching around some nights
smily-face all full of boyish hope.

6 November 2016
Wind in bushes whipping. Then still.
Leaf tongues telling.

Listen with me—
let’s go make weather together.

6 November 2016
The fearful thing about poetry: a poet knows nothing but has to keep speaking. Terror in hope. The words come true.

6.IX.16
Never doubt
the lies I tell you,
they do you
more good than truth
that ordinary
stuff, the news,
the bleak consensus.

6 November 2016
How come you fly
with no wings?

I know where I'm going
eally know,
and knowing gets me there.

6 November 2016
I do not like
the only song
I know how to sing

so I left my wings
at the priest's front door
and sailed away

in an old felt hat
down the gutter
to the river

on the river to the sea
where I can sing
and no one hear

so full the waves
are with intellect,
with accurate music.

6 November 2016
[from old scraps:]

Flowers year by year
arise and arise
rousing the dreams
of the middle classes
for palm tree romance,
lust deep in dunes.

Some people we know
rejoice in curious
abstentions —
dreams instead of dinner.

But isn't it all singing?
Doesn't every percept
cry Come play with me?
for Charlotte

The sky looks cold
but warmth comes down.
Ivy round our bedroom window—
that’s enough to go on.

I know that physics says
heat rises, but from the blue
happenstance up there
enough comes down to keep us,

let us sit some afternoons
out in the yard with the other
animals and learn from them
when to feed and when to hide.

I like to hide. Big as I am
I claim invisibility, like a tree
among trees, or this one wave
washing up on the shore.

But a wave (more physics)
is only motion in a substance,
not substance itself. So I’m a time
maybe, a common happening

and no more. But you are real. That’s what I’ve been learning, the stubborn fact of you, smart, unyielding, kind, a citizen of calm

more than anyone I’ve known. Near you I begin to feel at times close to being real myself — men need a certain self-delusion

just to keep going. To be out loud and last in the world a while, *exegi monumentum* and all that, knowing perfectly well words last.

What else can we do with language but read on. And you give twice as much as I: what you translate and what you instigate in others.

*Just say the word* is what you say, the prompt or prone, the trumpet flaming from the sun, the mess that language straightens out

at your bidding as you stare severely at the foreign print-out
or at me wondering when I’ll leave off murk and get to work
giving the angels stuff to read. Did Rilke tell us they can’t write themselves, but yearn to read so leave it to us to answer the word’s bidding? Just write it down, you say, and translate like me the gibbering silence of the heart into what it means.

6 / 7 November 2016
If I were a wall I would
but as a roof I’d rather.
I come between the sky
and the inside. This is policy,
magic, election day
every day, this is tar,
tile, thatching, tin.
This is me rattling in breeze—
I make the wind up,
it’s a tale I tell myself
that you can hear too.
Sometimes it knocks us
both off our feet
but that’s what stories do.

7 November 2016
For men who can’t swim we have a drier ocean. You can walk around in it pretending waving your arms gracefully out and in. But the waves are real, they’re just not made of water. A wave is a wave, it doesn’t matter, it comes and splashes all over you — light or sound or even (some claim) gravity: you could sink down in fact you could drown but you’ll hardly notice, because you drown in air.

7 November 2016
Begin again — the star is calling: Come out in daytime and play, you are the only one who can see me now in all this othering light, you know just where I am, stare up the bright tunnel and here I am waiting for you as once on St Michael’s tor I spoke and you looked up and heard me, and we have been lovers ever since.

7 November 2016
mug.pa the mist
of mind
    no soon
dispersed,
    Justinian
enters with his passioned wife,
the god-gift herself
to rule the law.
    The mist
it turns out
is my cathedral,
    herein
I most worshipful
deploy the regiments of mind,
tattered vexillae of my legions.

Mist has all life in it,
makes me see
what can’t be seen.

Towards a throne by the altar screen
the empress is led.

    All auspicious things
are in place now, in one place now,
ruler and lover and the sun’s holy light
lifting the floating dome above them
and the sacred place of transformation
veiled from sight behind the iconostasis —
transformation is not to be seen,
eyes are for outward

but the majesty of transforming
is inside, sensed
not through the senses,
the rush of wisdom through us
that if we felt it
would feel like pain.
But here there is no pain.
The empress is all yearning.
The church is full,
priests chant language loud
to hide the godly silences inside.
So strolling through the mist today
I found myself in Byzantium again,
the Holy Wisdom always waiting in the trees.

8 November 2016
Not another word.
This word. Only this.
Sometimes the soul
sleeps while language
wakes. *The cross* —
woman: head to the west,
feet to the south. Man:
head east, feet north.
The cross needs two.
A photo of them,
a couple incarnate
as a cross
from 500 years ago
when light had to pass
through human [?] fingers.
Meriann. de Bry.
Her breast depends
to feed us all.
Himself erect
to answer the sun.

8 November 2016
To close my eyes
and sleep, the mist
outside, my shell
my shade my sheet
enclosing, my shield.

8 November 2016
Causes of certainty —
moonlight in November
*Halve Maand* the boat
remembered us to Europe,
up here, beavers
and Irish immigrants
those pale Mohicans.
Happenstance rules.
We forget one another
and blink at the moon.

8 November 2016
Affirm the policy of mind. One thing and not another.

“Hold the thought” we say. But let it go.

The leaves turn yellow and begin to fade, beside the unchanging evergreen.

Such different people we are, a world, soon forget, too soon remember.

9 November 2016
Guilt and politics. 
No wars actually end — especially not civil wars. 
The fighting stops, the war goes on. Hatred and contempt deployed for centuries after. 
Parties and moieties, cliques and clans. 
“...love one day will rise?” Churches? Forgiving should be a sacrament. And kissing another. 

9 November 2016
Orchestrate an animal at the gate, the song of newing all beasts must sound, so here is the unbroken wing the uninterrupted flight into the pale sea above sea—and did we walk on water then? Was that the foible for which Egypt paid so dear? Porphyry I stand and stone she sits grace-lapped in linen indigo wide-eyed at us. Cross! Sea is meant for exile surely, what other urgency hath whale?

9 November 2016
Knowingly the light augmenting.

    Oil truck
growls its deliveries,
winter comes.
We Greeks knew that
and traveled south
to the snowless realm,
ant-busy Attica,
love-infested islands,
the more or less docile sea.
But some of us stayed,
kept an original language,
hailed our Queen the Sun
by Day and Hel
bright lady of the dark.
And here we are still
in inmost exile,
shivering penitents
in the basilica of air —
we still have never fully
spoken the word we were meant to say.

10 November 2016
All words are magic —
that is the problem.
The spell compels
by being spoken.
No wonder Lenten silence
leads to resurrected Truth!

10 November 2016
OF THE TAROTS

1. 
*Each* card must excite
*all* the senses
*all* the appetites
and show at the same time
an inner mode
of overcoming all of them.
Restore the poignant stimuli!
Reveal the ways of transformation!

2
*Ein Geist genügt für tausend Hände!*
One body suffices for a thousand images,
and of course the 78 snapshots of the mind,
in pretty colors, shuffling in your hands.)

3.
*We are Eve’s tarot cards,*
her billions of attempts
to get the human image right,
dear, illuminated so
the everlasting truth shows through.
If this were war
every one of us
would be at the front.
And it is.

10 November 2016
Go travel in each other, coasts, islands, promontories. But leave the central plains unvisited. The folk who live there think like corn and pray to strange makeshift deities — Baal Peor mentioned in their Bible. Stay with the sea, the littoral, the wet. What’s best in us is the sea. Be sea.

10 November 2016
Mesentery of the sky
that’s what I mean,
what holds the light together,

the aleph of genesis
that breathed the beth
that spoke itself

into the waiting mind.

2. Language is mostly listening,
isn’t it, saying back
what we think we’ve heard
we learn to speak.

3. But after speaking
listening is hard
isn’t it, the more
said the less heard.
Hôs ephat’ then
thus spoke...
the story goes on
after the words
as if the blood and iron
listened, the trees
and river heard
but we did not.
We do not.

4.
But in the sands
the wind
spoke and wrote at once.
Once in the desert
of the Empoty Quarter
(my on name in Arabic)  Ruba al-Khali
I saw what the wind
had written,
contours of its
playful solemn breath
I’m still trying to read.

11 November 2016

Then philosophy came along
to talk about things that are not things,
vying with poetry to explain
the most about the least —
yet of this striving the things of the earth are made.
How many welcomes in one day? Or wind or tamaracks shaken? Or sun on lawns outstretched? Or a bike going by, backpack big as the body on it? Or who knows where the wind’s coming from and what it brings? No one is immune to its religion.

11 November 2016
Where do they go when you delete them? Aristotle and Aquinas persuade us that matter is indestructible. Matter is our mother. So if messages are not matter what are they? They come, we read them, leave them, wipe them away. Where is away? And what else might be living there?

12 November 2016
CASTIGATIONS

Blame everybody.  They did it,  
they all did it.
I walk around  
in the woods  
not thinking  
about you.  
Careful not to. 
So much to get  
over, roots  
and tangles,  
tripworthy stones,  
slippery leaves,  
rain is grease.  
You did this to me,  
this walking all  
around instead  
with nothing  
in my hands. as if  
I were anybody else.  
I’m not. I’m me,  
I am this oak sapling,  
see, my rattling  
rusty tenacious leaves  
abide. What good  
is rattling all alone.
Hence this walkathon, quest void of dragons void of maidens, this pilgrimage to the self I suppose. Actually I step a little bit more lively than the tree I think I am. But you move faster just to get away from me, didn’t you? The way you do, all of you, you is plural always in my vocabulary, slippery, a smile at the crossroads soon vanishing, heartbeat, blood pulsing slow between pillow and head. Yes, you. I think sleep is the only language left. I mean forest. I mean forgive me, I did it too.

12 November 2016
= = = = =

How can it be
to hear music clear
but not hear speech?

Am I in heaven already
where all the words
speak at once

in one burst of sound?

12 November 2016
The local mind is a fetish factory
irises in Maytime, purple Lent,
cold fingers clutch a warm wrist,
kites over Riverside, dragons
guard every bridge. But the mind
behind the mind wants none of this.
Quiet after music. Audience gone home.

12 November 2016
I see the ship
and seeing it
carries me
to the place
such craft
extends — an
island like a hand
reaching out
to me in welcome
or forbidding,
how can I ever
tell without landing,
ashore, wet-
ankled, the ship
leaving without me?

12 November 2016
= = = = = =

Being close to the light
is not the light, not seeing.
The piano climbs the ladder
scale by scale to reach
always the same beginning.

And there you are
with a trumpet in your ear
remembering somebody you
should never have met
and now it’s too late.

But music is like that.
Summer’s masterpiece
is autumn. Here,
have a cup of cider.

12 November 2016
In what country is the true king hiding now?  
The crows know. They come and tell me he will never come.  We have lost the faith would make a coice possible we all could hear.  
Now we are just accidental dialects of a lost language. No purity. No suffering either. Just little trees, branches trembling in no wind.

12 November 2016  
End of NB 396
IN DOUBT OF NATURAL IMAGERY

If I went along the road with Lorca
and talked only about the moon
the stars the empty road
the ants in a dead man’s house

you’d never know what I need to tell
that the Moon is a lonely shabby man
wandering around waiting for that one
night every now and then when

he has the full attention of his wife the Sun,
you wouldn’t know that ants are angels
of a mighty power deep inside the earth
and what they do is no concern of ours

they’re writing a scripture on the ground
and on our floor we’re not allowed to read
and dead men have no houses, the dead
have gotten where they meant to go,
that’s why the road is so empty in moonlight and nobody uses mules much anymore but when they do the animal intelligence is graver and more persistent than any man’s.

Only a woman thinks faster than a beast but women do not like to be discussed as if they were a part of nature, or maybe don’t like to be spoken of at all.

12 November 2016
GOLD

1. Hope for gold — see, the gold implement knows you best, it holds in mind the shape of your hand.

2. The sun knows you, everything finds its place shapely around gold. Gold is the middle of it all.

3. The manner of gold. Its color changes you. Its taste is hard to describe. It mostly tastes like remembering but it is now.
4. When you’re with gold the sea is never far. Au the chemists say, thinking it means aurum, Latin for gold. Close—but it really stands for Aurora, dawn over the sea.

5. We come from sea and gold remembers. Simple as that, Ring on your finger is Okeanos, Ocean River that holds the whole world together in its loop.

12 November 2016
RECORD

1. Was there anything there waiting or not waiting. Principles are hard to articulate but not all of them are white. Some are spotted like the pard or the hat I used to wear a crease in the crown, a longitude replicating the sagittal suture somehow, the way cloth knows us sometimes. And wy we call it felt.

2. Then there were chickens in the yard spilled into the store out front on Avenue R back in the days when streets hadn’t won their true names yet. I too am R, and sign myself that way. The poor hens scrabbling in the dirt, the feathers of the slain lay everywhere. There was a war on and an old old man with a bent back, walking gamma, sold all the poultry that he fed and killed. Only lately can I bear to eat such meat.
3.
R meant rob and rapture, ravine and riot, renegade and recollect and renovate, radio and ratio and record player and rug. Rug. You get a kind of comfort from a red Persian rug, even a replica, that no bed would ever let you snooze. A dreamy softness on the hard bones of the house. Yes, dreamy. The dust helps too, a funny not unpleasant smell no vacuuming undoes. You’re here and R and are on the floor. At least I am, no reason yet to tell a lie.

4.
But now is all so long ago. Many an iceman came and went before the fridge. The ivy grew shaggy by the window. We moved away. I’m still away. It’s been a long time since I let myself sprawl on the carpet but I’m still R. But not the R that was. He’s gone with the purring and the growling, the radio and the riverboats we used to take in summer up the Hudson strangely close to where we all are now.

12 November 2016
Lost in the night
some person or persons I had been
a long time and now not.

Waking is losing
identity I learn

the hammer hits the nail
and the nail is no longer
a bright individual
a Melville isolato under the sun
he’s now a part of something else
fixed in place but
doing his job by being so.

The nail. The hammer
wakes the nail.

And all over Paris the bridges
scoff at those who cross them,
scoff at human hopes
that the other shore will be better

or freer or smarter than this.
The Pont Alexandre III laughs loudest—
named for a foreign sovereign
it finds all of us 
ridiculous to begin with, 
silly as a bent old 
rusty nail 
left on the pavement 
danger to itself and others. 
Tetanus. Flat tires.

So I woke up wanting 
a monster living room 
easily 40 by 30 
with nobody in it 
not even me.

Try to tell people 
whenever you get a chance— 
identity is a nightmare, 
wake!

13 November 2016
Girls can be boys in their dreams
but boys can’t be girls.
Then again girls can do anything
while boys just keep grinding away
at the huge stone mill of their desires
like blind Samson in Old Gaza.

13 November 2016
To love them all or hate them all require the same presence-of-mind. Go for the method of love — it helps a little, slowly lights up a dark time

13.XI.16
= = = = = =

Know the other side
before you get there,
Let your fingers play
on the old record's grooves,
guess what they might be
hearing as you touch.

It's as if we read in an old New England poem
_When my fingers touch your skin_
_I hear everywhere you've been._

Our skin is rich with many ears.
Pores. Every part of you
is listening all the time.

What seems like silence is the mind
sleeping while the skin exults,
bones clamorous with traveling.
Let me touch you
so I can hear you think.

13 November 2016
Guided by failure
we find a way
and call it ours.

The end of the road
is where we stop.
The last joy of all

is definition.

\`13 November 2016
ODE FOR SAINT CECILIA’S DAY

The rigorous analogies of classical poetry are represented here by you, Music. music being the noise you make by being you, all those organs in you (language doesn’t lie) blood and humours pulsing flooding us to heaven.

A rigorous theology would classify heaven as a state of being in joy of mind, unfolding awareness, living for them, by love becoming all the persons on earth, saying and singing their own true word all at once.

The truth of things is in their chatter, dry leaves of November speak as loud as August did, and we have heard our clear,
orchestra of your breath.  14 November 2016
ODE FOR SAINT CECILIA’S DAY

for Charlotte

The rigorous analogies
of classical poetry
are represented here
by you, Music.
music being the noise
you make by being you,
all those organs in you
(language doesn’t lie)
blood and humours pulsing
flooding us to heaven.

A rigorous theology
would classify heaven
as a state of being
in joy of mind,
unfolding awareness,
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by love becoming all
the persons on earth,
saying and singing their
own true word all at once.

The truth of things
is in their chatter,
dry leaves of November
speak as loud as August did,
and we have heard ou clear,
orchestra of your breath.

14 November 2016
Waited for her in the cathedral alone with a notepad in shadows not quite admiring the stained glass from only a century back, the tattered regimental (maybe) banners. Up in the chancel a widow woman, all in black at least, moved buckets of flowers here and there around the altar. Chilly stone, pinkish flowers, silent woman. Why, why? I kept wondering, then wrote ‘why’ down on the pad and got no further. She had left the car keys with me, I clutched them in my unwriting hand.

14 November 2016
I seem to have lost
my way in the calendar,
the spokes in the wheel
whirl too fast, confuse me.
The road twists too.
What if every day is the same day
and we just rename our seeming
wakings, and it all is asleep?
I don't like this road. Only death
is real. Where will I find another?

14 November 2016
The lawn at midnight
under the full moon
looks like snow,
calm, unharming,
a blessing on the earth.

14.XI.16
[answering Cassandra]

Yes you can
the teacher cried,
I’ve seen you prance
from idea to idea,
and word to word
so easy, light foot
leaping, and fire
in your synapses
from idea to action,
I’ve seen you listen
to their woes,
fears and sex and
fears of sex, those
who slouch in
to be guided
and you heal.
I have seen you fill
them with vigor,
all of them and
all of you moving
to the msic
of your strict attention.
There is no dance
greater than listening.
Let me be longer in the vale
for I am not thy people
I am a grim sister
of a god-ridden neighborhood
and hurt to touch.
Explain me as best you can
in your own alphabet
I am a door
but no man knows
if I lead out or even deeper in.

14 November 2016

15 November 2016
Listen clearly—
I am your other ear
the one you call deaf
but what I hear flows
wordless noiseless
deep inside you
where it shapes
all you know and
where you go.

One ear to tell you
one ear to spell you —
such delicate balances
fragile humans need!

15 November 2016
One rain and all the leaves are gone —
the ‘march of time’ we used to say
but time sneaks by, and sidles,
slips in and out and suddenly
it’s all gone, or there’s a crappy
po-mo mansion on the hill crest
and all the Little People move away.

15 November 2016
Her lute or vina has six strings: gold, silver, steel, tin, copper, lead and one more that moves so fast no one can see it clearly but we hear it, shifting through tones and overtones of all the others.

Saraswati. Everything we hear is a reverberation of what she plays, the tones she fingers turn into words, tones to words and words to us and over five or six thousand years we begin to understand. Slow,

It is a slow time now, a dark time, we remember little of what we’ve learned, hear these days only the iron string. But only for a moment. A time will come when we allow ourselves to be all again.

15 November 2016
Knowledge of the night
is intermittent, a phone call
from dawn you don’t answer,

Clear your throat.
Banana boat
sloshing in to a Brooklyn pier
you’ll never know how long ago.

Husbands and wives
solve it for themselves
they have no need for politics,
But then they wake
and a government is there.
It is the nature of the state
to be there while we sleep.

15 / 16 November 2016
As long as you look at the picture you’re safe. The cat will not move, the girl will go on reading. No one has ever read her book and its pages come to no natural end—the words keep going as long as she sits with her legs crossed never looking up. The wall is some other color. Little by little I begin to get it—the drapes, the sofa, the line of pine trees nowhere near the window. I begin to make myself a story about it all, starting with her name. A different name for every chapter like the Bible if I’m lucky. Or not. How fond can we be of what we are permitted to see? A picture is the end of something and after watching it for a while I begin to feel slightly afraid.

15 / 16 November 2016
In introduced myself as a vampire in residence to see if anybody noticed. None, but how healthy all of them look, worth a bite or two. Or a chat with them, learn where they come from, learn mother’s maiden name—a sad old expression, tepid water, tapped lapels. It is my job to ask them—in this bloodless era information is our only armor.
Looking long enough
makes every sight a street.
Fear sets people moving on it,
soldiers, coming this way.

Look the other way — pine trees,
spruces, a young oak grove
shivering in yellow tatters.
Better. Nothing stirring.

Close your eyes.
You have been on earth
too long. You know what’s
coming. You always know.

15 / 16 November 2016
Wolf’s Law of Bone Growth means the ring I’m not wearing tonight left its shadow on my finger bone.

Phalanx. We have them all our lives you’d think by now we’d know the name of every bone. I don’t mean its science name, its real name special to this bone, this hand, this man.

We are built up out of hundreds of names, each bone an ancestor we don’t even know. The ivory people who live in us, for us. They know everywhere we’ve ever been.

15 / 16 November 2016
am the size of myself going away
into a kind of cave right in the air
on the way to distance
I stumble forward and disappear.
You’ve seen me do it many a time
leaving a few dry leaves behind
as if I took the trees away with me
until find the one I am supposed to be—
there, hurrying away, the one
of whom I can barely be the shadow.

15 / 16 November 2016
ANGELS

1.

Angels take the form of the other. Whoever. That jogger for instance in a white sweater, no gender in such distance. Must be one. Angels have no gender, but they do have pleasure — one told me so and I believed. No shame though if you don’t believe me. We do what we can to get by, meet each other, say hello, thinking to ourselves You, you must be an angel.

2.

Else how could we see them if we didn’t really see them? Or hear their merry (used to mean holy) voices chatting with us about silly (once meant spiritual) things?
3.

We’re close to the edge all the time, one man in a two-woman kayak, oarless near the waterfall. Hence angels, deliverance, dream, branches low over the stream, long arms, nick of time, tv screens, laugh tracks, rescue, old magazines, woman on the bridge’s parapet commands the river to stand still. Green light of almost evening. Angels wake us. Sleep us. So we dream them all day long in sweetest reverie of ordinary life. There goes one now, not jogging this time, walking quietly beside what at first looks just like a dog.

16 November 2016
The words all forgive me
for using them up
and leaving the alphabet
scattered all over the floor
like children’s blocks
when I was one, one child,
one word, one piece of wood.

What shall we make of all these letters?
And when we have finished to whom
shall we send it? Can dragons read?
Does the girl sitting on the rim of the well
in the countryside north of Jerusalem
can she read my language? Too many
things left to chance, but then again
chance is the mother of us all. Not true
but it makes you feel better to say so.

16 November 2016
Raptors up there, crows dissuading them from coming down. Close to the earth a kind of safe place maybe. The wizard pours ink into the boy’s palm, has the boy read out loud what he sees there, then the mage reads too. But how will the boy ever see his clean plan skin again?

16 November 2016
Astonishment meant turned to stone. Silly meant blessedness of soul. What can we do after we lose our words? There must be something waiting by the woodshed, casting a long shadow, oddly shaped, like a man with wings on his head, you have to believe it to see it. otherwise it hovers just above and behind you waiting for a new meaning to strike you dumb. Oh signifies intake of breath. Astonishment. Apprehension. Which meant taking hold or someone taking hold of you.

16 November 2016
Laconic questioners and the time passes. They don’t want answers they want to be known for asking. The answers are all over to begin with anyway. Try to find one that fits your fetish needs. All needs are fetishes—only desires are free. Like that painting by Monet of a street just after rain so many years ago, still wet.

16 November 2016
A book leaning on the table
too weak to hold itself up
Too many words, too many
scriptures. Exhausted
by revelation it tries to sleep
in you, only in you can the words
in a book find peace. This book
especially. I left it leaning
on a short stack of other books,
irrelevant. Window open
just enough for a draught to
come in and riffle the pages.
The air tries to read, you like it
when the world does your
work for you, or tries to.
Man up. Come to the book,
sit down and read. Earth
will begin to turn again
and the moon will light up.
You’ll hardly feel the pain.

16 November 2016
But it was a dog I saw high up the cliff
marble blocks of the old quarry,
a german shepherd pale and tan and dark
erect, looking down across
the placid lake at me.

And it is the day
one deer come round again,
to make me born again,
born dire, to speak.
as if what is so dire as our talking?

In multiloquio non fugies peccatum
said Benedict, in talking a lot
you will not escape sin.

So are all dreams true
in their silences?

But why a dog?
   Why not a shy deer
pn those pale marble cubes,
or a prancing horse
of the conquistadors
over this lost cenote
drowning in dreamland?

What is some German dog to me, and why so peaceful, vigilant, far, like an animal on a coat of arms.

And who am I asking, and why? It warms us up in the morning to ask a lot of hopeless questions, it’s like exercise, like religion, pretending there’s someone there.

17 November 2016
Partial to my silences
I store up palaver
to let it loose
when you come in,

blonde words,
stubbly words,
tophat words and
words equivocal—

all yours, I pour
when you come in.
And all the while
I’m jabbering

silence reigns supreme
inside me, maybe
inside both of us, at peace
under all that wind.

17 November 2016
They are saying things again
middle of the four a.m.
The noise of sleep
all round a lucid
message I must wake to send.

Where are those hermetic birds
who once could wing
a meaning straight and swidt
from one mind to another
awake or asleep?

I think language put them
too to bed a nest
from which I want to learn
how to wake them--
but do I have to give up this?

18 November 2016
Compensations
in dark places.
Wolf pawprint,
cold ash, stalk
of winter kale.
We lie in perfect
silence remembering
a noisy coffee shop.
See, we can have
everything! The
gracious mind allows.

18 November 2016
Let things remember themselves
while in us, everything
has been said already,
now let the chunks of sound
move around and find their targets,
our liberty. Like children
at the zoo, guessing which names go
with what beasts, or o my god
all those birds in the flying cage,
so many, so many...

18 November 2016
Hurrying after myself
I came to a lion
stood in my path

“I am you!” I boasted
and he did not disagree,
just stepped aside.

We let each other pass.
Too many people wait
for something to happen—

fangs, roaring, wounds.
But nothing does.
We just pass one another

on the way to a self
that won’t be home
when we get there.

But it is some comfort
to knock on the door,
sit on the doorstep,

watching the animals pass.
18 November 2016
One day in London
I walked up to Freud’s
house in Hampstead
and knocked on the door.
Waited. Peered
through the glass.
Turned round and went
away on the garden path.
It made me feel somehow
strangely like a triumph.

18 November 2016
How long it takes, 
the anything. 

    By a lesser 
pyramid, *bekos*, 
a loaf of bread. 

    The Phrygians 
came first, maybe. 
The pharaoh said so, 

in Anatolia Eden. 
You still can see it, 
scrub around Fatbelly Hill, 
redrocks of north places. 
The garden has run dry. 

Maybe the Egyptians were right, 
maybe they’re still with us, 
Gypsies, Hyksos, Irish, Welsh, 
the questionable citizens 
 nobody loves. German *Welschen*, 
undesirable foreigners, 
weird pleasures. 
I am the least of all the pyramids 
but I’m still here, 
still remembering for you.
18 November 2016
Listen to the meat
the law runs down
along the veins
and up the arteries.
Muscles. Bones.
All the exceptions
to the law. Student,
be bold in obedience,
no one has ever
managed to fulfil
every commandment,
Be the first. How rich
the senses will exult
in the orgasmic bliss
when the whole
law is finally fulfilled.

18 November 2016
A dead man’s birthday
my dear friend
lost in the poison
places that spew renewal—

be born again
even though I can’t
find you again
ever. But being

will be being enough.

18 November 2016
Hardly anything worth remembering. Judgment call. Old Chevrolet rusting on the lawn. Woman called herself Lily, lily, yet there they were, all of them, parts and whole, the preacher stripped of his religion. Lily resting quiet in the mud. The town. Outside of town. I mean nothing goes away—where could it possibly go? Wherever iam, the lingering. You can hear it in the woods, even the scrappy new growth behind the Stop & Shop, woods. Maybe trees are our forgetters for us, grow tall with our forgetting.

19 November 2016
Too worried about the next thing. Do they still use postage stamps in France? What was her name, Marianne? And why? Actually a century and a half of sheer philately. Clear fingerprints on the mustard jar, left by what vanished Alsatian traveler? Come back to basics—wool in winter, crowded buses, opera on the radio afternoons, endless war. I want there to be a land of otherwise, faded blue bandanna like hippies used to tie round their dogs’ necks as if it meant something. As if anything did. By now I’m tired recalling and nobody answers. What happened in the desert? What did the mountain say?

19 November 2016
Turbulence of being anywhere. Even on the quietest plateau the undermind runs rivulet. No thinking ever really stops. Changes course maybe, soaks up to the surface, sinks down so deep you barely hear it. But you hear it. The noise of thinking never lets up. Lucky men get tinnitus late in life to distract them from mere thought.

19 November 2016
Astronomy is mostly meant for birds, geology for dwellers in the cave. I have no science to take care of me.

19 November 2016
NO TIME

What would it be like if there were no time. Just space and us and what we see and what we feel and no need to measure between one perception and the next one and we lived alive glad at each arrival and disappearance shower of endless surprise?

20 November 2016
Poetry unlike science
doesn’t have to prove it.
Proof is about wars and arguments.
Poetry is just something
quiet to go home with
or a jab in the chest to make you
pay attention to something you never knew.

20 November 2016
VOCALISE

1.

Mild metal — snow a little, mountains clad, uplands slushy, none down here. Metal mild.

Priests waitng for sunrise. Sunata form. Piddling differences build all kinds of churches.

A book made out of twine—quipu—are you sure you can? I rode The Cycone often as I could,

The Thunderbird hardly ever. The way it goes down makes all the difference. Headlong, sonata form. But never have I dropped down from the sky except only that one time nine months before I was born.
2.

Such adventures!
I was never lonely,
love to be alone.
I believed every
distinction I found,
like some gullible
altar boy kneeling
on the wine-soaked
steps of the dictionary.
Blood-soaked. Turn
night into day.
And the birds fly
right through us.

3.

Until it is time to wake again.
Turkish carpet, waxed floors,
narrow streets, squeeze
onto buses, breathe in
other peoples’ breath.
Where they come from, what
they have eaten, drunk,
smoked, thought, spoken.
A foreign country begins
right out the door of my house.

4.
We are children of the sea.
The further we are from the tide
the more we lie. Fact.
I read it in the sands of Rockaway
where they brought me at five
to learn the measure of desire.
Look but not touch. You drown in it.
AN DIE FREUDE

In Schiller’s *Ode* (he doesn’t call it an ode) *to Joy*
he makes the Cherub
(I think he means
an ordinary angel, not
those vast winged bulls
that guard the Throne)
stand before God.
*Vor Gott, vor Gott,* Beethoven
repeats, shouts,
before God! But we,
what we hear is
*Forgot, forgot...*
so heaven with its habits
slowly hides from us
in the dust of music.

20 / 21 November 2016
Not easy to find
the key to no door
that opens just this
one person to me
and me to them.

No door but adore
the child punned,
so the teacher smote
the child tenderly
with a soft-bound
catechism, said

you don’t know how
right you are! Then why
didst thou smite me
the child was bold to ask.
For a cause you don’t
know yet, sweet one,
a blow blesses, a kiss
intrudes. Some day
you too will be alive.

20/21 November 2016
LA NOCHE

It’s 3 A.M. and again my sleep broke. I’m at the old desk in the spare bedroom, not looking out the window. The snow is not falling. In my mind I let it be around 1970. There is no internet, no device I can switch on to pretend I’m learning or thinking or doing something. I have a light, a notebook, a pen. An old Roman Missal in remarkably clear small print. My wife is sound asleep. There are no noises. I read some Latin, then stopped. Now I am left alone with my unaided self. What does one do with a mind in the middle of the night? A mind in the middle? You try to quiet it. You slip a gold ring on the mind’s finger, with a gold-flecked lapis lazuli cabochon on it. You let the mind stare at its pretty new ring, stare till the golden glints in the dark blue are stars in the night sky, and it sleeps. When it sleeps it will bear you with it, into that country we are so eager to visit, from which we bring back so few souvenirs. I mean it take me
with it, I’m always confusing me with you, Whitman’s famous boyfriend “whoever you are.” Sleep is in the stone, listen to what it says, then listen harder to what it doesn’t say. Try to hear its secret, the mysterious river that flows through everything, even me, carrying so many fallen branches down to the anxiously waiting sea.

20 / 21 November 2016
Snow on outdoor carpet
snow on shed roof
snow nowhere else.
Except the mountains over there,
our mountains
by right of eye.
What we see
belongs to us securely
That fallen tree way off in the woods
coated with snow
is a real dragon sound asleep.
To see is to believe.

21 November 2016
GAMBOGE

Among the oaks
it’s never really winter.
Those people keep
a different kind of time
means weather.
Pale orange leaves
chatter as I pass.

21 November 2016
Not a lot to wait for at certain crossroads. A crow, maybe, on a light pole or a biker snarling past you. But always and always the calm blue distances where the road reaches the heart.

21 November 2016
The clock keeps changing. Politics distract you from the local mind, the only mind that really talks to you.

22 November 2016
Some on us
waiting on us
as the clock
used to tick
slow now
hums so fast
are we catching
up with someone
or fleeing
for our lives?

22 November 2016
The machine inside
I hear it chirping
pumping when I rest
my head this way—
pathology of pillows
scares me. Keeps
me from sleep.
The body is a bonanza
of frightening sensations—
no wonder we try
to hide by waking.

22 November 2016
The First Mass of Christmas happens all year round. Children’s oatmeal in an old porringer, arrowroot cookies soft by the milk mug. He is born to us in every babe—a word I’ve never used before, a sticky word, smudged with sentiment, squall in a cradle yet every her and him is He.

22 November 2016

On Christmas Day, priests are permitted to say three masses.
The soul is a little light for seeing but not be seen.

Call it the fleshlight and smile at your accusers—

they need one just to find you. And when they do they are you too.

22 November 2016
What nonsense
a boy in the desert
always talking about rain.

In Damcar they know
how to turn
light into water

water into flesh
and me. And him.
And he still dreams of rain,

to be drenched in the actual
for once, free at last
from all the feints of will.

22 November 2016
Always more.
Mercy spilling,
Picnic om the snowy lawn

So many miracles—
Tell the truth,
They all came
Out of you,

You motherly mind,
And where are they now?

22 November 2016
REMEMBERING

Lama Dönyöd standing beside Kalu Rinpoche, kindly explaining to me Rinpoche’s examples of quieting the mind, first a waterfall into a turbulent stream, then a broad river flowing into a calm sea. Sonada, 1983.

*

The same year, in Darjeeling, slipping some zinc coins into a leper’s hand.

*

How far we have come to be no one.

22 November 2016
Thus waiting by the bush a beast.
It knew you, you knew it.
The woods have few surprises
for pale skin like yours. Moon
comes and goes, depending,
dodging through the branches.
Who knows what you know?

The beast
is, has been, waiting for you
you reckon since there you are,
both of you. Same place, same
time. Only there is no time.
It’s always right now.

Quiet light in his yellow eyes
you wonder what your
eyes look like to him. You call
it him now, a kindness meant,
nothing more. Thinking about him
fills you with a sort of warmth,
even a satisfaction. Whatever
it is seems to go on and on.
GLEAM

Gleam sometimes, glint another. 
Different kinds of invitation. 
Points of reflected light concentrated 
are doorways for the mind to rush in—
that bright nowhere, hurry friend, 
be there. I used to meditate 
in the shrine room at Naroling 
traveling into the gleam. Into a place 
without images, postcards, souvenirs 
but a place all the same. I pray 
the world to come join me there.

23 November 2016
Waiting, it keeps being about waiting what am I waiting for and where do I stand looking up no road just widowed sunlight late in the window.

23.XI.16, Shafer
The sea is big
hou can see the sea
even I can see it

nothing hidden about ocean
no furtive rivulets
half submerged in leaves

or marble sweating in dark quarries,
no, big, big water,
big enough to fill the eye

the window the coast the globe—
most of us anyhow is sea.

24 November 2016
THANKSGIVING 2016

I wish I could see
the other side
of what I’m thinking,
thinking and people
strive to be happy,
holiday. The lovely
gold saffron seeming
of autumn takes us
by the mind, leads
to quiet, maybe
even happiness.
Lord, forgive us
for our blessings
we put to no use,
forego us for all
the tunes we didn’t sing.

24 November 2016
Looking ay off
holy day
the normal forgets
for once

sweater tight
over shulder bones
tese things we feel
bones bridges

patches of earth
know us better
I’m trying to remember
what the door looks like

I came in I came in.

24 November 2016
Is this me
looking at the sky
or is some other
perceiving snug
inside my seeing
the quiet grey
beyond bare trees?
To ask the question
is to answer it.
Welcome, other,
enjoy my sky.

24 November 2016
The hacek on the c makes good cheese.
Milk listens to what we want and curdles at our need.
Curds and whey, girls and boys!
Easy alchemy in the fridge.

Want versus Need. Peace is an interruption but of what?
Accent marks on all your letters.
Apologize to the alphabet.
Hate what you need.
Love what you want,
All poetics stems from that.

◼ 24 November 2016
Arguable time
anything takes
did I eat death
along withe harvest?
A girl staring
into a pool
five hundred years,

24 November 2016

(Zettelblätter, November)
Could the certainty of sunrise have anything to do with how we feel about the moon?

Does the girl kneeling by her bedside have something to do with how we feel about God?

So much I need to know like an animal suddenly in heat — the machine we call love.

(Zettelblätter, November)

(12.Xi.16)
24 November 2016
Agreeable animals
waiting for me
to ride them
back into the forest
then be gone.

I have a hunch
I will not be alone—
the blue undersides
of leaves,
gold of their young eyes.

(20.X.16)
24 November 2016
Wondering as a form of waiting, letting the world come to its senses and begin doing what its wonder spells in your waiting mind.

(Zettelblätter, November)

(20.X.16, Kingston)
24 November 2016
(Zettelblätter, November)

There is some exaltation here.
Tuba bucina.
The walls fall down.

*

The door I opened stays open before.

*

The words all forgive me.

24 November 2016
The names of water
on the beach at ____________

Name each wave as it comes in,
the mild ones, tough ones,
even eleven or so a rough crest
souvenir of far off storms
the kind that bring agates to the shore
and fish and kelp and all lost things.

24 November 2016
And what we were waiting for
is the cotton to soak up the milk
then there would lie soft on the table
nothing but clumps of wet cotton
white in white — a sort of flower.
Only then would the conversation begin.

24 November 2016
Lugubrious improbable hopes, a dog size of a bungalow, a cat like a camel.

Am I one of those animals too, meekly personing a man? Self-doubt is treacherous but kind of fun. I might not even be here at all.

24 November 2016

(Zettelblätter, November)
The ball has to roll
it is its nature
on the inclined pane
given the right array
of forces it will roll
uphill too. Good
to be obedient
to one’s form—
those of us who have
been balls all our lives
have the satisfactions
of rotund compliance—
we vote for the candidate
who wins, go to church
of the god who works best.

25 November 2016
You know right away something’s wrong. The name of the author and name of the book don’t really match. You finger it at B&N, read a photo caption, drop it back on the stack. Why do you even bother to look? A man’s name, a woman’s name, tells the whole story. No one can tell us any more than they are.

25 November 2016
LATE IN THE DAY

1.
clarinet trio by Mozart
I’m near enough to hear
I’m clear, the mind
maintains itself in sleep
even, the way people
breathe.  _U-khor_,
circular breathing,
skilled instrumentalists,
it comes in as it goes out.

2.
Once I too was lost in deserts
would you believe it?
Only for a few minutes
one afternoon, but very severe.
The sun was a kind of saxophone,
my eyes hurt with bright thinking.
It makes me wonder if
I’ve ever lost anything at all
the way young Balthus mislaid his cat.

25 November 2016
At least to stay
to the end
not of the day itself
but this ripe hour

that needs you
the now
waiting all these years
only for you alone.

25 November 2016
= = = = =

Feeling the wind in trees lifting as it can from our damned rootedness to sky! That would fly.

Things I could wait for, choose, fall asleep desiring, deciding, waking in a wanted world already all done around me, nothing to do but be!

26 November 2016
A NEW SPORT

Legal permission
to be somebody else
for a whole hour
body and soul.

26 November 2016
What we are offered
what we receive
corn stalks and stob
rattle in the field,
husks tattered,
juicy kernels roasted
on the table. Sequence.
We eat the given,
amazed at the sky
how far away it is
they tell us that seems
so close. Right here.
We stand in the sky.
Two little diamonds
for your ears, moon
and stars, and sunlight
tidy on the earth.

26 November 2016
MUSEOLOGY

A Beinecke of bells.
Or archival hive
where every mellificious stratagem is annotated,
memorized, pit
into practice, Melissa herself the deity of
a library of bees.
Bees and bells
humming across
the courtyard between.
We save all sounds.

27 November 2016
That he doesn’t like streaks
stains or strips that catch the eye
lead it down or elsewise
to nothing special. Just a line
pointing nowhere, gross,
a crime against topography,
glowing even in the dark
like a map of nowhere.

27 November 2016
PHILIPPIDES

I who once from Marathon
brought glad news to archons
now in cold rain, hooded
white sweatshirt, jog up Cedar Hill
empty Sunday morning early
late November knowing nothing.

27 November 2016
The money lives as we live to lend
broken furniture carted out of the mind
I stand in the street guarding it from reluctant thieves.

27 November 2016
Glorious golden flame of a tree
oak by the streamside, winter—

only what leaps to mind
is true. All the rest
is composition class,
notebooks filled with exercise.

27 November 2016
The heart in love
is a cunning thief

snatches from reality
what feeds its fantasy

strips the world naked
of images it borrows

to people its huge dream.

27 November 2016
If we forget all that
we still have
love I was going to say
but trees say it better
or stones, and they last longer,
and sometimes in their core
are geodes, glorious
shimmering absences
or even in the stone heart
a different kind of stone
has formed, new
chemistry, new pressure,
color leaping or
pure transformation,
diamond, soul.

28 November 2016
Grasp
for what I can hold —

children made of light
seem to slip in and out of the trees
bare now, as if
there were leaves they could hide in.

But they are pure enough
to hide in being seen.

28 November 2016
Sometimes it seems
that everything is gone
when she is gone.

Or sometimes even worse
it seems everything else
is noisily stupidly here
but she is not.

Her absence is the presence.
I have rushed up stairs
in houses no longer there,
beaten on doors
that sheltered only strangers,

I have sworn This is a dream
and I must wake.
And I can’t wake.
And even if I could
the sun would keep setting,
its own trick
of leaving me alone,
maybe trying to teach me
the elements of forgetting.
Emptiness studies me
like its new language.

In memory of Anne, for R.S.
28 November 2016

The best way to get to sleep
lie in the dark
enjoying the dark outstretched
everywhere, you see nothing
and like it, sigh with contentment.
You are the horizon now
and the sun has set. Nothing
needs to be done.
Everything has already come.

29 November 2016
I tend to be transparent
not much fund
trying to see through me.
Breathe on me, though,
softly, and you’ll see
the brif moist opacity
as on a mirror breath.
This ia all there is between us.

29 November 2016
I could write a love poem to a chair
if you were on it
or a lonely beach
if you walked there.
Songs come easy
when their meaning stands right there
or sits there quiet
on an old wood chair.

29 November 2016
I should be tumult now
a block of blood
links of the old neighborhood
where humans live
on their little skin of earth
people of the rind.

Wingless animals
keep thinking all the time
to bed in matter
and wake in mind
we always pray
but they are muscles
of the same mother.
Nothing lets us go
and nothing keeps us.

Why are we so quiet
when killing is such
a terrible waste of time?

29 November 2016
THEY COME TO US

And through the cold rain
the circus wagons come,
one cage with a lion, cage
with a bear, and a monkey
in a big faux-fur coat
sits up beside the driver.
Pitiful small circus
come to ittle tpwn, poor
old lion, poor sleepy bear.
And yet they come to us
again and again, cages,
old driver, old monkey
shivering in his faux-fox coat.

29 November 2016
Voices, real voices, 
echoing down the streets 
of a hypothetical town. 
Everything is a mouth.
Don’t struggle — you are who you are and you are here. Yes, you do have a foreign accent, yes, explaining oneself is never easy. Still, we’ll get some sense of you in time, what you want, what you mean. We are all animals to some extent, trust us. Sleep is not the worst hotel. We all were you once.

29 November 2016
I suppose there is something in the weather like the news from a far country deep inside us. We have to learn to read the messages, every generation has to, and when they're done the world changes a little, a new ghost draws in a new era and we start to learn again. What is rain?

29 November 2016
I am easier with the sea than with ships
 seem to remember a time before them
 when the sea was just itself, orderly,
 principled, everywhere. Then they came,
 they still seem new, cunning, even cute
 the way they skim and sail and steam and storm
 back and forth like random stories in the mind.

29 November 2016
All the mist is gone.
I used it all up
adoring and beholding,
watching it cushion lights
and carry them downhill,
ghostly porters
vanishing around me.
I watched until it went
and was just night.

29 November 2016
We are secrets to each other
we don’t know what we know
don’t know what we want

we are children
you ar the first girl I ever met
I hit you and you hit me back

we don’t understand
or there is nothing to understand.

29 November 2016
Even if it says nothing
I am ready to mean it.
Ready = awake
eager vocabulary
simmering in the dark.

Who knows what comes?
Love this deep autumn mist
wakes you work hard
to see what’s right there,
find the lost familiar
anew. Art should do that.

30 November 2016
Tired guesswork
sheltering the islands —

how much did I need
to get here?

30 November 2016
There was a fireplace
we sometimes slept in front of
and huge windows looked
outr onto different fields,
not these, but it was still house,
my house, it changes
as I go through years
always the same.

30 November 2016
THE HAT

1.

Where does my hat think it is when I need it?

Things have GPS’s of their own, all things know exactly where they are. Call them then listen, sometimes they tell.
2.

Here I am
in the hall
on a hook

in the dark
the weather
the year

bears crawl
through underbrush
out there

not here.
Here,
put me on your head.