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**Nothing came of that  
we must imagine beginning  
and unwind it forward from that.**

**After a long time  
there'll be enough line  
to let it trail in the sream**

**like a trickle of maybe blood—  
see if anything catches hold of it.**

**2.**

**A stream doesn't have to be water.  
Time, wind, experience, even conversation  
all know how to stream at us,**

**strike us, pass.**

**Rocks in the stream:  
that's what it means to be.**

**1 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**When we say mind  
we mean a different thing  
from what the grass does  
when it rouses the thought  
to grow or go to sleep.  
We call it thinking, they  
call it being. Mind  
pervades, All the rest  
is our vocabulary.**

**1 December 2016**

=====

**Is it summer or winter?  
The mind can't tell  
sometimes, lost in a weather  
of its own. Or found.  
Safe on the new  
island of its awareness  
all by itself, and all  
the raw materials at hand.  
Talk about things  
until they are there.  
Here. Now begin  
to unravel the particulars  
out of the obvious.  
An angry informant  
points to the door.**

**1 December 2016**

=====

**Anonymous participation  
is best. You don't  
know who you are anyhow.**

**Conversations have thick accents.  
Sticks and stubble? Milkweed  
did this to me I used to suck**

**I taste it still, Nostrand Avenue  
And Avenue U where the trolley  
cars turned back north.**

**Where the heart was bound—  
now find the herb a leaf has  
a blade to cut it free.**

**1 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**Allow the words  
to thicken over winter,  
yield a tough resin  
you can chew all spring**

**until the meanings  
start to sprout up—  
one morning they'll be  
even maybe a flower.**

**Or a leaf you can eat.  
Amazing patience  
need for such chemistries:**

**tie a string around a book  
and lick the knot  
to make it wet and tight.**

**1 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**How the few  
tremble, wind  
makes a thyrsus  
of this lone  
yet-leafed bush  
shades my, scrapes  
my window.**

**Some days it seems  
that everything is praise—**

**unfaltering sunlight  
hear me now.**

**2 December 2016**

=====

**He prays praise.  
Pope enough  
for any chapel.  
The word meant  
father once and who  
will be so now?  
Wifeless Christians,  
roll nack the stone!**

**2 December 2016**



=====

**The hope should be  
something from your mother's  
kitchen years ago,  
your own mother's, not a stranger's—  
an egg-beater maybe  
that you could use still  
to stir up a storm of wind,  
a little storm in local air,**

**and it will blow the trucks  
right off the block, bring  
stray sea-birds inland so  
they rest on your roof, there,  
by the chimney, a pelican,  
a gannet laughing on the garage!**

**And you will be you again,  
innocent as snow,  
all over town voices getting  
ready to call your name.**

**2 December 2016**

=====

**Given time, the river  
takes everything away.  
Don't name it — rivers hate  
the stupid names we give them,  
prosaic, romantic, phony Indian,  
all wrong. Rivers neers need no names.**

**They are all one water.  
And they are the dragons you read about  
in stories from Germany or China,  
crazy slow twisting creatures  
that swallow maidens alive.  
They leave us to our clay and marble temples—  
leave them alone, let them be, let them go.**

**2 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**The light of anybody  
is somebody else.**

**That's why we sleep  
to gve the other a chance  
to shine his flashlight  
into our dark souls  
so both of us grow.**

**Grow wise. The other  
is the only light around.  
In her glow we see stars,  
wake up, and wake  
matter also with our cries,  
our whys, our musics  
and give all the verbs  
all the nouns they need.**

**2 December 2016**

=====

**Dormitions interrupted  
by rodentia. Vocabulary  
brittle, crackles  
in the night, fissures  
let old stuff in. Wake.**

**A mouse woke me — yes,  
there are mice in winter  
they come in, into strange houses  
the way we scurry south  
to timeshares in Florida.**

**So here we all are,  
displeased with one another,  
lacking the means and thank  
heaven the will to kill.**

**3 December 2016**

=====

**Have I said enough  
on that topic  
or does the weather  
have to make its  
appearance now?**

**Woke. The astern sky  
was full of something  
over and beyond the trees  
that must be light.**

**3 December 2016**

=====

**Delicate operation:  
the clamor  
of a woman's shape  
passing through  
memory. Only  
the form of her  
enough.**

**3 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**That the soul  
is present  
in every moment  
of the body,**

**can be detected  
by the wise.**

**That the mind  
knows always**

**where it's been.**

**Enough.**

**Sometimes saying  
something is sacrilege.**

**3 December 2016**

=====

**Don't sleep stay  
awake until  
you fall there—  
that is the  
geuine sleep.**

**3.XII.16**



== == == == ==

**Now the light has come  
through all the trees**

**close now, here  
we can almost see.**

**Nothing on the field  
but field. Money**

**hasn't awakened yet.  
It is beautiful to be**

**awake when it is not.**

**3 December 2016**

## **NEUROLOGY**

**He listened  
into his tinnitus  
and what he found there  
was another person  
also being him,**

**a lost brother  
or just a stranger  
altogether, from  
Slovenia maybe  
a man acquainted  
with rivers, cities,  
dragons, ravines,  
someone who never  
spoke because  
so much was being  
said already  
and he's the first  
listener of all.**

**3 December 2016**

## **TO THE RIVER JORDAN**

**Dear Jordan,  
                    you have flowed  
between my imagination of a self  
and of a world to self around in,**

**desert and city, until I've lost  
all meaning — as you have too,  
except 'it flows, it runs down.'**

**2.**

**I never thought it was the Bible—  
poems and alarms, kings and sorcerers—  
I thought there was some other book,  
his wives read from it to Solomon  
every night for a thousand nights  
and then began again. That's what  
a wife is for, to know the truth  
and tell it to him again and again  
with the long muscles of her will.**

**3.**

**One day I learned — don't ask how,  
blue sky, busy street, midtown—  
I had to write that book myself.  
Rivers told me nothing but they helped**

**me learn to go on praying. To say  
is to pray. Say it clear as I can  
then listen hard in case it answers.  
Something answers.**

**4.**

**So every stream  
becomes you, rivers are just divisions,  
silver separations, a blade to keep  
the self and the other far apart.**

**5.**

**How did I let myself  
come so far inside?  
I wanted to stand right  
there in your flow  
around me, through me,  
I wanted to be baptized  
by everything that ever  
was spoken, so I could be  
the son of all that saying.**

**6.**

**How funny children are  
in what they want and always  
they get it, always,  
the world is shaped for that.**

**That is what flowing means.**

**4 December 2016**

**TO A SCHOLAR IN JERUSALEM**

**Emma, I wanted to write a poem  
translated by ear from the Latin  
marriage service in the Missal.  
I tried not to know what the words  
'really' mean but that's hard,  
Latin feels like my native language,  
but I tried, I tried just to hear  
the worlds as if they were English,  
homeophonic poetry, risky, silly,**

**I wanted to make it like a *ketubah*,  
the almost unreadable ornate  
marriage contract, for some friends.  
Do you have one hanging in a closet  
or shyly on the bedroom wall?**

**Charlotte and I were married Methodist  
but by a friend. No ceremony.  
no poem wrought from ancient tongues,  
just us. What was I after with my Missal,**

**did I want to catholic my Jewish friends  
or find deep in the mass its Jewish roots,  
the rabbi who started all of it?  
Not even Catholics know Latin  
anymore. But you and your love  
and we. we know still what  
*unum caro* means and how it says  
something all religions try to ignore.  
If there's a God, wouldn't  
God be one flesh with us?**

**4 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**“Give me back my storm”  
she meant, but she was calm.  
but her hair was wet  
her coat drenched.  
Indoors was too obvious,  
too easy. Made afraid.  
Our talk was of ghosts  
and how the living can appear  
in one another’s dreams  
or sometimes even  
in the shadows  
of the waking mind. Our minds.  
Too much talk. Too much inside.  
She hurried back into the healing rain.**

**4 December 2016**

=====

*for T.P.*

**The thing about guessing games, they must be simple, the answer must be right there, a given a gift to you like a stranger's warm smile. You have to know the answer before the question is asked Your own smile (no one can see his own smile) starts the game, and lets the other know it's time to ask. Can you guess what's in my pocket? Can you guess the name of my only child? What did the wolf find under the snow? Or in a dark room, with your eyes closed, can you ell me is it snowing yet?**

**5 December 2016**



== == == == ==

1.  
Headlights show through the curtains  
like a bird of two flying by.  
Night and day I work so hard  
to make you happy  
it says outside, the world,  
cosmos, whatever you call it,  
everything.

2.  
Leporello  
(little bunny, little hare)  
his variation in the Diabelli suite  
comes to, calls to,  
mind.

*Night and day I work so hard*  
Room in a hotel, that's what this is,  
a room with rooms in it and trees  
and streets and seas in it,  
a room. Night and day  
it hums to make you happy.

3.

**Beethoven loved to wait by the gate  
to see who would come when the music  
stopped. Berlioz fled across the plains  
to hide from what the music wrought.**

*Notte e giorno faticar* he  
sings in German,  
enslaved by pleasure,  
our pleasures, always,  
all the variations,  
creatures of habit.

**We are music.**

**5 December 2016**

=====

**Is there room in the sky  
for all of it, man and mercy,  
Mongolia, steel works , songs  
of a dreary commerce, camels?**

**Camels need the sky.  
Amethysts, Agate crystals  
left on the beach by you,  
sea. Your names now,  
is there room in the sky  
for all our names**

**and still leave space  
for flocks of birds to river through  
on their way to a country  
we will never enter,  
other side of the sky?**

**5 December 2016**

=====

**Or is there another *turn*  
like the belly of a lute,  
an oud, an ox-bow on the river,  
your fingers curled beside your plate?**

**We say it's my turn now,  
so turn is waiting  
for the right time  
and being there for it,  
                                  **doing it,**  
like a river. A river always does.**

**5 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**Admiring the obvious  
when it takes the form of snow  
new-fallen  
not so bad.**

**The aesthetics  
of the evident  
have yet to be studied  
by some laborious Aristotle.**

**Are we to love best  
things that last  
or things that vanish,**

**banish us from their sight,  
smell of lilacs,  
breeze over water,  
tears in your eyes?**

**5 December 2016**

## DE RE METALLICA

1.

The metal is the miracle.  
There is in copper a kabbalah  
the way spacetime bends  
around the talking stars  
faithfully reflected in  
this redshift metal. Or gold  
soft too, my ring bends in my fingers  
as if bone were a better stone  
everything is spelled correctly in the earth  
but we yank out one letter at a time  
it takes forever to get  
that simple sentence straight  
tthe Original Text.

Start digging now. The ore  
is waiting. Try to hear it as it lies  
the snore of vast aluminum through all the ground.

2.

I forgot I never told you about the talking stars.  
Not all of them. Some send images, some moods,

some nothing at all we know about yet. Yet.  
But the talking ones (*stellae eloquentes*)  
send down continuous chatter, like rabbis  
davening or lamas chanting, *the words*  
*are softer than the tones, the drone*  
*says all*, my sweet Manx miss, my Mongol,  
naso-pharyngeal whistle verbs, my Cherokee.

3.

I regularly translate from a language unknown  
to me and anybody else as far as I can tell  
but publish the resulting texts as My Own Work.  
I wonder how long it will be before people catch on.  
(They still haven't twigged John Keats's  
preposterously beautiful verses from Old Indigo).

4.

Metals tell.  
Metals told me this.  
I am grateful  
for every ion.  
The maneuver  
comes to the hand  
that waits empty.  
Gibbet at the crossroads  
critique enough.

**Villon's tarnished silver  
bite in to show the bright.**

**5.**

**I predict they will find a metal  
someday more common than milk  
and rarer than rainbows,  
a metal that will come when we call  
and slip between the sheets at night  
to protect us from dream, I predict  
the metal will be silvery yellowy pink  
and warm in your hands, it will turn  
all other metals into whatever is in your mind  
when you look at them a certain way.  
You have to learn the way. The metal  
will do everything but teach you that.  
When you leave it alone on a plate  
or a shelf in the cupboard, it will smell  
like grain and even look like a distant  
wheat field at sunrise. You know the one,  
you went there once with someone  
you loved at the time but now aren't sure.  
All you really remember is the wheat  
shushing back and forth in the dawn wind.**

**5 December 2016**



= = = = =

**Every line says  
all by itself**

**no furniture needed  
we dream on air  
bed like birds**

**(over Sade's castle  
swallows unsleeping)**

**glad in the hovering  
hurry heaven  
the way we do.**

**6 December 2016**

=====

**Tried hard  
to be a singer  
but my hands  
get weak,  
caan't climb  
the *scandicus*  
my eyes can't  
reach, fall  
back on common  
tone. To see  
is sing enough  
maybe. As to breathe  
is to make sense.**

**6 December 2016**

=====

**Write big  
so barristers  
can read your lies  
and quote them  
convincingly  
to any jury.**

**That's what  
a book is  
or magazine,  
you're on trial  
for your life,  
your words  
the only evidence.**

**6 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**Little traces  
of erasure,  
*I am a pelican*  
could that really  
be what he meant,**

**every word a wound  
from which something flows  
that teaches and heals?  
Could he have meant  
that self-inflicted clarity?**

**6 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**Windows and doors  
are all there are.**

**7.XII.16**

## DAUGHTER

a daughter  
is a doer,  
a double, a door.

*thygater*, you  
“too got her”

you give her  
love and leasings  
(lyings) like the pulse  
on her pink tongue tip  
when she fibs,

or asks  
“am I you yet?”

Interesting, be  
you in another body—  
tell her

Sanctity waits at the door  
you're baptized by rain  
a little trickle runs  
down your spine  
and suddenly you're Palestine.

**I can't believe the answers  
the questions must be wrong,  
a daughter is the only reason,  
a rapture, a road  
I don't know what it is,**

**if there were no daughters  
who would prick the sky with stars  
or slash the furtive veilings of its tent?**

**hey do it all  
with doubt and loneliness,  
doubt gives them power  
to cut through**

**and their distrust  
empowers you both.**

**And if you saw your mother dancing  
wouldn't you?**

**7 December 2016**

## GRETCHEN AM SPINNRAD

Moan,  
          at the spinwheel  
wretched, the work  
of more is never  
done.

          Believe  
a wall when it stands,  
it means it  
more than words can say,

scribble on it  
*venceremos!* all the subtle  
sudden sodden itchy  
love left on your skin,

the work is never done,  
the flax is always,  
the thread unbroken—

no holidays  
in heaven,

beauty suffers  
us to go on,



**the privilege  
of a wall,**

**a woman spinning  
linen, cotton,**

**so we put on  
a coat of leaves  
and seeds and blossoms,**

**shabby as Eden  
but very clean.**

**7 December 2016**

## ADVENT

I tried to wait for you  
but the spoon ... well,  
you know what spoons like to do,  
and the rain trickled down your back  
I tried to follow it but the eyes  
saw something in the forest  
they followed. That was she.  
There is a name for her in the country  
another in town. She sweats  
like any other mortal but the smell  
thereof be lavender and clove.  
Thieves run from it, and leave  
my tomb unransacked and alone.

2.

I tried to tell you the truth for once  
about the island you come from and forgot,  
the ones you married one way or another  
but always came back. That's what an Iliad  
really for instance is bout: they come home,  
they always come back. You stand there  
saying nothing and I understand. Hair  
plays with the wind. Light comes between us  
and caresses us both, safe, simultaneous!

**The ship is entering the harbor as we speak.**

**3.**

**O dilly-dally so much to November  
and now it's next month and the yule  
is snorting in the woods, soon soon  
it swoons us all together in a mess  
of feasting, religion and contrition  
and a gas log in the fake fireplace—  
love has had to make do with less  
and now The Good Thief comes, brings  
back all he's ever stolen, not just from us,  
no, all the world's impedimenta  
fill his sack he gushes out for me me me.  
If I can name it I can have it. If I have  
no word for it it vanishes and both of us  
leave the interaction lighter, fresher,  
but lingers long a hint of lavender.**

**7 December 2016**

## ALBA

When it goes from black to grey  
you know it's coming.  
*Dirty as a day!* the Irish say—  
it lies on its belly  
barebacked to the sky.  
Breath by breath  
hushes down the spine,  
a soft exhale at every bone  
until breath reaches bottom  
and the light begins.  
Breath brings the day in clean.  
On us now the growing senses  
devolve the obligation,  
the oldest one. Begin  
again and het it right this time.

8 December 2016

## A STATUE FROM ITS FOUNTAIN PARTED

Soft the breeze  
from the girl  
to the garden  
once a long  
time back, *la*  
*Baigneuse de*  
*Blithewood*

an image  
something the light  
brings in,  
thought  
impaled, lift  
what you want  
to do to  
what is done  
already,  
          sun  
and sunflower  
raccoon kettle  
lavender, all  
stones—

an anthology  
of dirt

pricked  
by raindrops,  
read your lady's  
letteing, peer  
below, letter  
by letter  
shivering ballads  
plucked string  
tinny sound  
of fall leaves  
copied clear,  
stumble.

    Fall.

It's the way  
fire taught you,  
torture elements  
into form,  
            all  
chemistries  
seize this  
truth —

            you  
thought was a lute  
licking  
heard hard

to sleep  
with her hand  
cradling cheek,  
amorphous  
dream drivell  
as if horror  
made me be  
here metal  
there skin,

all stone  
to begin with  
anyhow still,  
her jagged rituals  
again to touch  
which into motion  
or to still?

O sun my  
semaphore  
spell me  
right this one  
time, grasses,  
ivies, rivers  
follow.

8 December 2016

## MORWENING

Ravenous one wakes,  
a line of Shakespeare tooting him  
out of almost sleep.

To a hungry man the world is food,  
to a silent mind the world is word  
he yearns to hear.

*Tell me tell me*  
*tell me Elm!* his teacher sang  
when he was infancy—

and shamefast he listens still  
to every piece of woods or wolf  
or woman most, or whoever  
lets some sense of meaning out,  
and every stone a stool where wise men chat.

8 December 2016



## **QUESTING, 1**

**Catch the other first  
the side that faces Mercury  
when it casts its tiny shadow  
on the powder long ago prepared  
you swallowed and sweated out and now  
lies before you like a thin sheet of silver  
with that shallow shadow on it.**

**Wake up! It is science calling  
from all the stupid books you read  
that made you wise, and contrariwise,  
wakeup and open up your door,  
the animal is standing there  
panting from the journey  
and his rider beside him, her fur  
glistening around her cheeks, eyes  
closed, already dreaming you.**

**Go out to them. Your house  
is gone the minute you leave it,  
you are alone with beast and bride,  
it is summer there and the rain mild,  
you lead one another across the plains  
days it seems but only hours pass  
and then you're there, all of you at last,**

**the parchment wigwam, the leaden tower,  
the pool of heirloom water, the little  
footbridge to the island made of glass.  
And there you finally all sleep.  
I saw an old painting once  
that shows the silk pavilion  
where you rest, gold-helmeted  
soldiers guard you, old priest  
is reading by candlelight,  
trying for once to finish his prayers  
before he too is swept away by sleep.  
Sleep n Mercury's faint light,  
clutch his tenuous shadow.  
This is the first day of the journey.**

**8 December 2016**

## **FOR STEVEN HOLL**

**The architect is everywhere.  
So many solutions  
to no problem, like poetry.**

**Imagine a house, walk in.  
Your shadow leads the way  
mornings. That sort of house.**

**Tilt the floor a little  
away from the moon,  
you're man enough for house**

**woods highway storm cloud  
churchbell in the dining room  
the sea-sunken bed.**

**Sometimes number theory  
is an agony,  
five miles in another's shoes,**

**your shadow scrapes the floor  
you know it knows things  
you'll never tell**

**no critic knows—  
the way a shadow breaks  
at the first stair step**

**a simple bird  
bounces off a window  
stunned flies away.**

**This is what a house must be  
the rule of three  
divided by eternity**

**we have to know it  
to let it go,  
a house too is stunned**

**by where it stands,  
wake it  
with revelry and prose,**

**hibiscus, spandex,  
the swimming pool  
must have no shape**

**but water alone,  
you have it all now,  
have her in your arms,**

**the form of water  
wakes up the mind.  
You build of light—**

**footsteps follow.**

**9 December 2016**

=====

**In my  
dream she**

**told me  
she walked**

**once naked  
alone along**

**the beach  
near Haifa**

**midnight  
moonlight**

**and finally knew  
how right I am:**

**the mon *is*  
a man**

**and wanted her,  
she gave**

**him all  
a woman can.**

**9 December 2016**

## QUESTING, 2

Go on the Venus Highway then  
the smoky roadhouse  
where your mother learned to dance  
and learned it was good to be bad  
in her own pious way

and why am I holding you in my heart  
like a surgeon tying a tourniquet on an artery?  
who has wounded us this way  
so that we turn away from each other  
as when the sun's too strong on our faces  
and we should be hurrying into the Copper Land  
where love turns itself and all things green?

No wound but the mirror.

From the cold crucible chip out  
three flakes of what was formed therein,  
put one under your tongue and hold  
the others in each hand. See,  
the shadow does begin to form,

a shape you can almost name  
shimmers into being across the room



**Throw the left hand flake at it—  
it moans and gets more physical,  
now throw the right hand and  
the shadow suddenly has eyes.  
Now spit the last flake at it  
and at last the shade begins to speak.  
Hurry to your stupid desk  
and write down every word it says —  
they aren't words but you think they are,  
at least get something written down.  
For the next thousand years  
till next morning this is your bible,  
I kneel before you and beg  
you to share these vague instructions with me.  
These guesses are our true religion.**

**9 December 2016**

=====

**Screechy prisoners  
in a bad time  
shouting slogans  
to or at each other—**

**there must be better  
for words to do,  
wave or fountain  
clean and new.**

**10 December 2016**

## **SATURDAY**

**Saturn is the lord  
of harvest,**

**reap the wheat  
pluck the grapes**

**breasts  
show through the bodice,**

**the wedding bells  
toll winter in—**

**when will we  
two begin?**

**10 December 2016**

=====

**Stubble on the chin:  
looking for trouble.**

**Archaic weather  
the heart knows best.**

**10.XII.16**

=====

**We live still  
in antiquity,  
the emperors just  
change their language  
change their clothes.**

**If Rome fell  
we are where it toppled to,  
our never-ending circus,  
innutritious corn.**

**10 December 2016**

=====

**The oral chamber  
the remember—**

**know the trees  
by the taste of thee**

**the lost one, the amber  
from Latvia,  
the bag of peppermints  
left in the car—  
will the ants find them  
before time ends?**

**I swallowed and I said—  
that;'s all ever did and do,  
my work, practice, doom.**

**I swallowed a wheat field  
and spoke a flock of crows.**

**10 December 2016**

## QUESTING, 3

Sweeping done by asteroid  
and laundry done by light alone  
the measureless path  
inches closer to some moonless orb  
(what a word!). I heard him  
talking Danish with the air,  
it answered hm in some dialect  
She spoke on Bornholm  
three thousand years ago  
give or take on afternoon  
swimming in the Elbe with her friends.  
How far *now* seems from *real*,  
true sensations, wet skin,  
roasted hazelnuts, the tribe's astronomer  
spread legged in the shifting sand  
counting the horizon. The wise  
see the one as many, and the many one.

10 December 2016

## QUESTING, 4

To be perplexed is a small planet  
sometimes orbiting between M and V  
(the esoteric meaning of 1005)—  
who reigned then in your Saxon heart,  
your Irish fields of turf hummocky  
in morning sun? Truth is an animal.  
Strong, seldom fierce, it licks you  
because the taste of you (and you)  
is what truth feeds on—the knowledge  
that it is known by us and in us  
embodied. No bite is necessary.  
Even the moon is optional. Just me  
(you) truth and the Sun herself  
reigning over the daughters of ocean  
our mothers. Not in the picture  
but safe below the saline layers  
in that strange airy house at the bottom  
of everything. You've done Mercury  
now, and Venus, now you have to solve  
that equation with three unknowns.  
Hard. Toss a string into the sky and let it  
catch the legendary diamond rain drop—  
every day She lets one fall, I mean the Sun.

10 December 2016



## **NIGHT MERE**

**Bad dreams bad waking  
the insolence of night**

**when dark knows  
how to make noises  
and no one walks  
with heavy footsteps  
through lightless rooms.**

**You call this home  
but dream it away,  
in strange bedrooms  
strangers in all  
their terrible loveliness.**

**10 / 11 December 2016**

=====

**Bless me, Mother,  
for I have forgotten  
how to sleep.  
I can confess it to you  
in the dark chapel,  
the only dark I know.**

**I close my eyes  
see markets of images  
unknown cities  
crowded rooms  
busy with laughter  
posing playing  
teasing, how terrible  
it is to play.  
Always with strangers,  
never with anyone know.**

**10 / 11 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**Count the steps  
noises an empty  
house makes,**

**matter rousing,  
growling, restless  
around me,**

**saying things.  
The air in the hall  
walked into the room,**

**I heard it,  
stopped breathing  
but it still came in,**

**all last night  
had to hear  
the footsteps of things.**

**10 / 11 December 2016**

## **MANNER OF THE CRIME**

**He sent certain images  
into her mind.  
Poison pictures  
she had to be awake to fight.  
She barely made it—  
stood at the window  
waited for dawn,  
she clutched the curtain,  
could hardly breathe.**

**10 / 11 December 2016**

=====

**Now they tell me —  
it's good for the eyes  
to read a lot.  
Seventy years of guilt  
not easy to wash away.  
Especially with glaucoma.**

**10/11.XII.16**

=====

**You know you're in trouble  
when you start taking  
the weather personally.  
Next step: every person you meet  
has a fixed opinion of you  
you can't decipher. Next day  
a mysterious letter  
comes in the mail addressed  
to OCCUPANT your address.  
And you know it's really you.  
Fall in love. Get out of town.**

**11 December 2016**

## QUESTING, 5

Quest began as question.  
A question you ask with your  
whole body, planetary body  
between Venus and Mars—  
Earth is Hephaestus, tries  
to keep those lovers apart,  
we are crippled by love and war—  
principles not unknown  
to other species, angels,  
whales, mountains. But we  
are their *parents and originall*,  
humans created all this stuff,  
we limp from couch to battlefield,  
beating our brothers with bats  
stabbing our sisters with scissors,  
you know the story, you too  
were a child once. This is all very  
theoretical, we'll get back  
to images soon as the projector  
comes back from the shop  
and the girl who runs it comes  
back from her snow date in Canada.

11 December 2016

=====

I don't know when I got on the bus.  
Lots of empty seats but a woman  
in bluejeans has been standing  
by the rear exit for blocks and blocks,  
never pulls the buzzer, never gets off.  
We're crawling along Sutter Avenue  
in the dark, all the stores are closed,  
even the corner bar on Stone is dark.  
A long black sleeve pulls the cord,  
a rabbi. he gets up, gets off with bundles  
at the next stop. Red light, the bus stands  
long after the rabbi disappears.  
He seemed to look disapprovingly  
at the woman as he edged past her to  
step down onto the exit treadle.  
Maybe it was my imagination.  
Why is she standing there? If  
she's still there when I get off  
I'll ask her. But where do I get off?  
Where am I going. We're on Pitkin  
now, a word that occurs only here  
and in Pound's first Canto. Dark



store fronts here, everything closed,  
only the traffic lights are still alive,  
and a few cars pass. And our bus  
with falf a dozen people still on it.  
The woman still at her post, her back  
still turned to me, I begin to be afraid  
what face I'll see if she turns round,  
maybe I won't ask her anything.  
Street even darker now. We've come  
to the end of the line. Even the big  
cafeteria is closed, and the nightclub  
across Eastern Parkway dark. The woman  
is the first one off. She hurries away  
under the trees, past the benches where  
silent old people are sitting. I never  
had to see her face. get off too,  
what else am I supposed to do.  
I sit on a bench, an old couple inch  
an inch away, sign of courtesy,  
plenty of room. It's not cold,  
not hot. The bus turns off its lights,  
the driver has vanished. Squirrel  
under he empty bench across from us  
or is it a rat. They come big round here.  
I think I am a long time ago now  
but a man sitting on a bench, hard  
to tell, could be anytime, anywhere

**even though I'm here. I need  
to think about something, thought  
can ground the feelings, think  
about the woman on the bus,  
imagine a gallery of faces for her,  
races, ages, colors, attitudes.  
I decide she's Slavic, cheekbones,  
eyebrows darker than her hair,  
grey eyes but her eyes are closed.**

**11 December 2016**

=====

**Could she ever be mistaken  
who thought to gather  
flowers in the snow — blue  
hydrangea from Nepal  
maybe, plumeria from Oahu —  
and there they were,  
ready for her hand, the snow  
shy of such color. One  
had a strong sweet smell,  
lecherous even and welcoming,  
the other hardly any, freshness  
mostly, like the smell of the sky.**

**11 December 2016**

=====

**The ethnology of running in snow  
and falling deliberately  
backward to make angels  
under a grey sky barely dawn  
flapping the arms to make wings  
up first or down first: which  
moiety, tribal custom, handedness,  
stratification. And some  
wont even let themselves fall.**

**12 December 2016**

=====

**The snow makes  
everything look close  
and hard to get to.  
That is why art  
developed in the north.**

**12 December 2016**

=====

**I am near to hearing  
pain in a flower  
silk orchid  
black and white photo of a rose.**

**12 December 2016**

=====

**The essence of a flower  
(as in Edward Bach's  
or RoseAngelis floral  
essences) might really  
be a person talking  
from their own sense  
experience love love  
of flowers. And we  
may be healed by  
all that we hear, or  
just thinking about  
marigold or hearing  
the sound of yarrow.**

**12 December 2016**

## MOIRAE

Out of dawn mist  
three girls standing  
in the snow.

*Respice. Adspice. Prospice.*  
they were the gods  
of the school I went to—  
look left, look at,  
look right: past  
present future knowing.

*Three girls know everything.*  
That is the answer,  
where number theory  
joins anthropology  
and becomes theology.  
Graces. Hours. Fates.

Everything known.

12 December 2016



=====

**The luster of memory  
is a man about town  
checking his address book  
never crossing anyone out  
not even the ones who said No  
and least of all the dead.  
The names of the dead  
nourish us more than  
the breasts of the living.**

**12 December 2016**

=====

**The snow covered field  
is Saraswati's pale back—**

**she embraces earth  
to learn its music**

**and teach her own.  
The confluence**

**of the two musics  
makes language.**

**(11.XII.16)  
12 December 2016**

## QUESTING, 6

Lift the magic off the meridian  
she changed the curriculum  
he has to run through panting.  
Astronomy is like that,  
full of laws, perturbations, sly  
unexpeted relaxations. He felt  
his head was on a platter  
like Saint John, he felt sleepy  
as a marshmallow, abandoned  
as a rain puddle in New Jersey,  
he felt like a frog. Still he did  
get through the whole syllabus,  
passed all the tests she set,  
now stood waiting his turn  
at Venus's mahogany desk.  
Learning cannot happen in any  
other way. You lean on the ecliptic,  
dude, you hang with horizons.  
But despite this character's close  
call with success we haven't  
gotten past Mavors yet, whom  
ye lastlings call Mars but we  
dance up and down three times  
in his honor, leaping thus thrice

for his two-breath name, Mavors.  
Capisce? as we used to say  
on Crescent Stret when the moon  
fell silent outside the old men's  
Abruzzi Social and Athletic Club.  
Why are all drug stores Jewish?  
And shouldn't the Pope be Jewish too  
considering St. Peter his original?  
Grow up — that neighborhood is gone.  
Until then he never realized  
the need for calculus. Guess  
and stretch the cloth, guess again  
and fill the glass with cherry pits—  
the kilo of black cherries you ate  
all by yourself on Montmartre,  
saved the pits in your pocket  
and called them stones like the Brits.  
Remember this carefully. Today  
is somewhere else. Here is  
passionate Tuesday, sky temporarily  
horny with sunshine. Yes, you do  
understand the other meaning  
of mandolin, thin-sliced cucumber  
you dare to paste on the evening sky.

13 December 2016

=====

**Catching up with the god in front  
the “ache / in each” Pam Rehm notates—  
absence is the song the heart knows best—  
winter journey, tunes lost in travel  
home to the valley where sun never comes.**

**13 December 2016**

## DANS LE CAFÉ

Listen to her.  
You know her not at all—  
that makes her accurate,  
girl at the next table.  
Listen to what she says  
cellphone to some friend  
smiling the words  
into her hand, What  
you overhear in a café  
is gospel true, *the words*  
*you hear are meant for you.*

“Are you there?” she asks.  
You’d better be.  
She drinks, you swallow.  
She gets up, you sit.  
It is perfect. Things  
usually are. Everything fits.

13 December 2016  
RH @ Rabbit

=====

**The house across the street  
from where I sit alone  
has been repainted,  
a kind of greeny brown  
with banana trim.  
This is what comes  
of being in town alone.  
I have to use all these  
words to create the soft  
silence I really need.**

**13 December 2016  
RH @ Rabbit**

=====

**The amber in chamber  
glows against the wall  
opposed to the window.**

**Sit where I can see you.  
Your hair. The chair  
painted yellow  
(like that Van Gogh  
empty bedroom)  
long ago looks  
golden now. You now.**

**You now. You know  
how things have turned  
into shadows of us,  
thousands of years to  
take on our shapes.  
I love this room,  
it understands my eyes.**

**13 December 2016  
RH @ Rabbit**



=====

**Is it the cell  
phone vibrating  
or a heart attack?  
Who would bother  
calling a dying man?**

**13 December 2016  
RH @ Rabbit**

=====

**(Musicians come in  
and settle at the next table.  
I suddenly understand)**

**Everything is like a cello,  
big, mellow, gorgeous  
tone, copious repertory,  
awkward, bulky, klutzy,  
a pain to travel with,  
expensive, fragile.  
Everything is frail.**

**13 December 2016  
RH @ Rabbit**

=====

**Hallway  
with day  
at one end  
night at the other**

**what an island  
to stumble ashore on  
from the surf of sleep**

**pined between times  
*vivamus mea Lesbia*  
now I have become  
the whole house,  
father of my mother, old.**

**14 December 2016**

## **COMMUNICATING VAJRAS**

**All pointed objects  
—knives scissors fingers ships—  
point in the same direction.  
Fact. It is like the compass  
before the Chinese or whoever.  
The sword points to battle.  
The hand points to you.  
The ship sails away  
into the only direction.**

**14 December 2016**

=====

**Cold on the sunporch  
I throw a blanket  
over my bare knees.  
The blanket has a map  
of the island woves  
into the wool, clever.  
Now at last I'm somewhere.**

## QUESTING, 7

**There are castigations, forced  
chastity, shark pools, varicose  
highways clotted with carts—  
ox, ass, camel, zebu — we live  
it turns out by alphabets alone.  
Poor Chinese! They're here first,  
this Asteroid Belt that buzzes  
in my head ow ow like children  
running up and down the hall  
sunlight at every end of it, I feel  
weary with childbirth, woozy,  
wonder who I'm supposed to be  
today. Cold north wind through  
the whole galaxy. Local news,  
stolen chariot, unicorns on strike.**

**They tried to sell me: every  
asteroid's a letter of an alphabet  
the solar system's main task  
is to read, align, encode, decipher  
bit by bit and inside out and we**

are just along for the ride. *Jamais*  
I replied, we come first, we  
are the animals of mind, sans us  
there'd be nobody to think,  
leastways what call thinking.  
(Please, and I mean it, please  
study Martin Heidegger on this.)

Then there was peace up there  
(here) for half an hour (notice  
that the Revelator understands  
that time is just an aspect of place—  
*silence in heaven for the space  
of half an hour* it says in the Book)  
so we're in a kind of soft, of trough,  
of a watertight canoe, a punt  
in the isle of Ely, chapels and spires  
point out the necessary constellations  
just like on Earth — where you thought  
(o faithless ones!) we were all along.

No. we are afloat. *The water of the wise*  
(you're familiar with the phrase  
and with the blessed juice itself I ween)  
sustains the body just as it mires the soul  
in unspeakable complexities of joy,  
lust and higher mathematics. Return

**now to the mother ship too long  
left vacant for the ghosts of nowhere  
to play tag in. Return and rev the engines,  
the larger asteroids are studying us—  
it's time to dine with Uncle Jupiter.**

**14 December 2016**



## QUESTING, 7 ½

It's unlikely for all our words and ways that we'll get much past Saturn. But we'll try. We're not even at the Big One yet.

Remember that when our alphabet was cast in mind, and our language came to be, there was no planet beyond Saturn. That makes it very difficult to *say anything* on or about the new-known planets, Uranus (pronounce as dactyl, please, not amphibrach). Neptune and the much maligned Pluto, not to mention the new-guessed wanderer the newspapers chat about every last Tuesday.

We can learn about them by means of the *teskooano* (what do they call it nowadays?) and mountain mirrors and mathematical jiggery-pokery—but we can't really talk them.

Saturn is the limit of our language. That is the problem.

And Quest, these questings, every question, all questioning, are devoted (if ill-designed) to carry our *ar-*

***ticulable cognition* further out from the Sun Her Majesty. But do you think She wants us out there? I'm not sure.**

**I for one am happiest when I can see the shadow she makes of me. See it and follow it all the way home.**

**14 December 2016**

=====

**Change the imagination  
already things wait too long  
for their ultimate definition.  
Me, for instance, as thingly  
a person as you'd care to meet—  
mostly wood and stone and water,  
mostly water, a little electric  
current through it now and then  
shorts out with a blue flash  
we call thinking. All I really  
know is that I belong to you.**

**15 December 2016**

## **I WANT TO HEAR**

**what those girls are saying  
the ones playing lawn tennis  
in that colorful Signac.  
Or those pale sullen ectomorphs  
by Schiele, I want to hear  
the words those images pronounce—  
not the chatter of the human  
models on their lawn or dais  
but what the paint-thin images themselves  
talk about in their long-stretched eternity.  
There is no time in there with them  
so all their language must be absolute.**

**15 December 2016**

=====

**Snared by his eyebeams  
the mariner sinks to his knees  
before the magisterial mirage,  
a temple of the rising sun.**

**And as he prays to it, it turns  
real as any image ever is—  
far, firm, full of color, far,  
humming with honest sadness.**

**We live trapped inside  
the prison walls of what we see.**

**15 December 2016**

=====

**Devotion to the undesiring,  
such protection!**

**All prayer, all praise,  
no bare satisfaction.**

**Ratio of sanity. Daffy  
love-like feelings**

**turn out to be the sanest  
policy. And you,**

**you're just the city  
I live in, you**

**don't even know I'm there.**

**16 December 2016**

=====

**Sea bottom  
sunken mountains  
the luck of water  
lifts us dry—**

**we are sky,**

**live high  
over the sea peaks,  
we are to fish  
what birds are to us.**

**16 December 2016**

## **PARIS 2016**

**It's always about liberty  
but what is that about?  
Is it the same as freedom,  
freedom from, freedom to?**

**It's always about the benches  
in the park, the rats in the sewer  
whose incessant passage through  
cleans the pipes with their fur.**

**Authorities decided these things,  
rats are our friends, what is the link  
between authority and freedom.  
And where do rats come from?**

**Close the parks, empty the benches,  
let no one speak. Rats are relatives,  
being mammals, rivals hungry,  
determined. A rat has nothing to lose.**

**16 December 2016**



== == == == == ==

**The organ grinder  
remembers winter.  
The saddest song  
Schubert wrote,  
lone, alone, alone  
with the weather  
and remember, all  
the monkeys are dead  
he never had, all  
the organ pipes  
are cracked, wheeze  
of his wounded  
bellows. He huddles  
in blankets, poor town  
in the hills, no need  
to remember, winter  
is never very far away.**

**16 December 2016  
Red Hook**

=====

**We think of things  
too late to let them go.**

**Woke up thinking  
haddock chowder to cook**

**and how to do it,  
step by step the mind rehearses**

**hours later the whole thing  
to be done again for the first time.**

**17 December 2016**

**=====**

**Leaving a mountain  
how to say goodbye**

**or what to wear when  
stepping out of your house**

**how long are you gone  
you'll never know.**

**17 December 2016**

## **ADAMANT**

**word of my week  
to think and keep,**

**once meant diamond  
once meant rock hard  
Mohs 10 and the sky even harder,  
unbreakable light.**

**17 December 2016**

**=====**

**I hope I can har me when I wake—  
alternate energies deceive the dark.  
You who know my logic know  
the other side of anything is right now.**

**17.XII.16**

***ELTHE NUN***

***Come now!* she calls to the goddess  
when she needs a friend—  
a god by definition is the one you call,  
the one who has to come when you call  
for that is his nature her nature  
because her life-breath is your call?**

**Not exactly. Her breath  
lives in your call. You call  
because she is. And because she  
like breath by nature is generous.**

**17 December 2016**

=====

**Keeping the mind still  
is easy  
like tying your dog to a sunbeam.**

**17.XII.16**

=====

**We wait our turn.  
It is an animal  
gives us. An animal  
lives us.  
        Pyramid,  
a loaf of bread.  
Argo, a ship to nowhere.  
A paving stone  
from Atlantis.**

**Riddle: what lives in the sky  
no matter who?  
Answer: You are naked  
in moonlight. Surprise.**



**Do you come here  
every night? Or is it  
only the Ocean once more?**

**17 December 2016**



=====

**The wind comes also in the door  
life is a set of variations  
on the simplest things — sun, road,  
window, hand — all leading to  
a stupefying complexity of feelings,  
dream, religion, disbelief, poetry.  
There is no such thing as simplicity.**

**2.**

**The Web of Indra tightens  
as you grow older. Every  
little thing means more and more,  
and all the news you hear means you.  
Every breath of wind a searching question.**

**18 December 2016**

=====

**Walk to keep from falling.  
Wake to keep from waking.  
The liminal, thugh lyrical,  
is tragical. Faust rolls  
back into adolescence,  
a condition far worse than  
infancy or adulthood.  
His hand reaches out for her  
just to touch her once, or one  
last time before she vanishes.  
Or he does. Who is real  
in this fairytale? Walk  
to keep from falling. Love  
wants you quiet in your place,  
needing nothing. Being  
awake is love enough for you.**

**18 December 2016**

=====

**When we sure about daylight  
things change. The shadow population  
votes on what is real. And don't forget  
the more or less furtive animals  
busy with Rilke in their own ghost woods.**

**So it's the rational hour again,  
the great pretending. To seem in charge  
of percept and response! To reason  
particulars into generals! Reverse the flow!  
We play with chipped marbles and we kill.**

**Still, there is some beauty in this guesswork,  
an aspiration, to find God in the clouds  
of phenomena. Or be Her if all else fails.**

**19 December 2016**

=====

Three men who were wise  
came from India with frankincense  
from Africa with desert myrrh  
from rivery Anatolia with gold.  
They spoke various languages,  
had three at least different  
conceptions of the holy  
and how to have it, be it, love.  
They connected when their travels  
converged on the glimmer of a star  
new to them — nova or comet  
no need to decide. They went together  
thereafter, not very far — a star  
is closer than you think.

So here they are at the mouth  
of a cavern where cattle shelter  
and this young girl has come  
to be delivered. She lies quiet,  
baby beside her, the husband  
nervous as we always are  
fiddles with straw and towels, rags—  
how can anyone really help  
at a time like this? One wise man

faltered a word or two in Greek:  
*we came by star*. What star,  
the girl wants to know, we saw  
no star, she said. How could you  
when it is right beside you  
another wise man wanted to say  
but didn't have the Greek for it,  
let alone the Aramaic. He tried  
Nabataean: *you are the star*  
*or he is* (pointing at the child).  
She smiled as if she understood.

They lingered with the family  
a few days, teaching, learning,  
talking it over as well as they could.  
Then it was time and they left  
still arguing, their hands still  
fragrant from the gifts they  
left behind. Two of them, at least—  
the wise man from Anatolia  
had only language left to remind.  
That gold sustains us still.

19 December 2016

=====

**Music box.  
With what for wall?  
And roof to open,  
whose hands lift  
what lid? I am  
bothered by the language  
of despair. The  
no sleep. The  
liturgy of hours  
with no monks  
or nuns to know it.  
Say it for me—  
sleepless, weary, old.  
Sounds like Rossini  
too far away.**

**20 December 2016**



=====

**If there were a world  
after the window—  
but it's past the night,  
no cosmos, the base  
disorder of the dark.**

**Dawn lover, newly  
arrived — cookies  
to keep thought away.  
Thinking is no help now,  
even less than language.**

**Hope is a mattress  
we toss and turn on.  
Despair at least  
lets the eyes close.**

**20 December 2016**

**=====**

**More nights than not  
we sleep straight  
through the slaughter.  
Now I am older  
than anybody else,  
what kind of childhood  
lasts so long?**

**20 December 2016**

=====

*for Daisy Noe*

**Someday already begun to begin.  
her elegant handwriting,  
her face so close to the page —**

**her poems are like that too,  
scrupulous tender attention  
to the hard fact of feeling.**

**20 December 2016**

=====

***Caritas* meant love  
before it meant charity  
but Latin has no role  
in our current design,  
our feeble liturgy.  
Love has to be artifact,  
commodity, like charity  
all those begging letters  
bulk mailed to nobody  
in this season but you  
think for one minute  
it's meant for you before  
you toss the envelope away.  
You settle for the women  
faces you watch on TV.**

**20 December 2016**

=====

**Exalting, called animal—  
no fear of rejection  
we are like them too—**

**in Saxon fields  
midwinter clover —  
in the train station lost and found  
nine woolen stocking caps.  
One French kepi.**

**How?**

**Animals bring us to crisis —  
automatic eating, killing  
for dinner, we never,  
crime of a sloppy bucket  
full of steamer clams,  
one green rubber Wellie  
gashed open on one side.**

**20 December 2016**

== == == == ==

ould it be some non-place where Regulus  
adjoins Alcyone's field of influence?  
Would you even know? So many mistakes  
call me their father. No, it's not logical,  
just true, The way for example music is,  
*The Musical Offering* more than anything.  
*Bach* means brook in German, small in Welsh.  
Fields of force are folded on each other in the sky,  
more like topology than Mercator, a crumpled  
handkerchief will do, Consider this. We breathe  
ur own breath from other people's mouths.

20 December 2016

## **A HOME FOR DRAGONS**

**1.**

**We have to cancel some things —  
the moon regatta, the platonic barbecue,  
three small unkempt religions.  
Then we'll be all right. Winter  
starts today but when will it end  
ah! There's the dragon flying over Mead Mountain  
coming this way to warm all virgin hearths.  
Hearts I mean, why do I get so much wrong?**

**2.**

**A dragon is a lordly dog,  
a cat with wings, a snake with hands,  
o he is everything you need  
and much you don't think you do.  
But dragons know and feed  
the deepest needings of all.**

**3.**

**Mead's because near.  
Near because here.  
Music has to be somewhere,  
can't just float  
past me on the waters —  
without my being there,  
feet steeped in bilge,  
a boat or barge  
in gilt disguise,  
a shivering canoe.**

**4.**

**Was that a mouse just now  
ran across my mind?  
I follow him through lucent tunnels  
not too deep below the snow  
and sun shines on us again,  
her everlasting promises.  
She's riding a goat today  
looks a lot like a dragon.  
In India it would be a crocodile  
but here thank heaven  
the snow keeps them away.**

**21 December 2016**



== == == == == ==

**Now winter is.  
And what to do  
make do with this  
turn by night by  
the disposition of  
the flesh inside us,  
all of us, the sky  
is in our reins  
our muscles our  
pulse of blood.  
Astronomy is  
physiology. Now  
winter tells us  
what we always  
forget. There is  
no difference, no  
space between us.**

**21 December 2016**

=====

The stone the grey  
day the tree  
kindling light the person  
beneath the tree.

It all is religion,  
all religions.  
Mineral Vegetable  
Animal. Each realm  
divines us, gods  
us, shows us.

But what we see  
is so different, each  
of us of that same thing.  
It could be animal,  
fox, coyote, bear,  
salmon, hummingbird,  
raven. Could  
be a stone. Ka'aba.  
Grail. *Lapsit Exilit.*  
Lia Fáil. Or tree.  
He could be tree—  
Calvary. Bodh

**Gaya. *Etz Hayim.***

**Or listen to the bird.  
Take Oðin down from the tree.  
Roll away the stone.  
Behold the (hu)man.  
Ecce Homo**

**He is here.**

**They call it Christmas  
in these parts  
of the Galaxy.**

**Or risen from beneath  
the tree, *jina*,  
the conqueror  
of self, of ignorance,  
of anger and desire.**

**So many names  
for the one  
she gives birth to  
eon after eon  
the glad arrival.**

**22 December 2016**

**=====**

**Good. It's like a hymn  
time for no church,  
a short-breathed  
newer testament,  
a gasp of glory.**

**22 December 2016**

=====

**Grey day clear  
but it feels like night.  
How do the trees  
find their way home  
every morning without fail?  
And the unbearable  
patience of a road.  
Who comes?**

**22 December 2016**

=====

**Sometimes I lose count  
but someone keeps it.  
We call that music  
where I come from  
and where I'm headed  
come spring, come  
with me and count the waves,  
lose track and talk to me  
and they look back,  
we'll see the original  
accuracy timing us,  
for joy or maybe silence  
we are part of the equation.**

**22 December 2016**

## **THE REPERTORY**

**is bold, is gold,  
is gone mostly  
with time, rhyme,  
sad old ways  
to say, to meet  
her once again  
across the cloth  
field the spine  
litany the hand  
even, numbers  
on all your lips.**

**22 December 2016**

=====

**Keep it simple  
the world is terrible  
right now.  
It always is. It always  
is beautiful too.  
What can we do.  
What can we do?  
Instant to instant  
do what you can.  
The rest is just pain  
you haven't felt yet  
or that just let up.  
What they call history.**

**22 December 2016**



## SHOSTAKOVICH'S EIGHTH PRELUDE AND FUGUE

Where are we going  
after we have arrived?  
No journey ends when  
we get where we're going,  
the going is never gone  
Listen to me. It comes  
again and again, the place  
we thought we passed  
through on our way from  
the place we thought  
was ours or at least where  
we thought we were to  
this place, this legendary  
*here* priests and music  
talk about all the time,  
all the time. The blood  
still flows, the breath  
rehearses those ancient  
excuses we call words.  
The least we can do now,  
touch fingers, say hello.

22 December 2016

=====

**fits your face  
precisely. Flesh  
rushes to attend.  
There is no space  
at all between  
you are and  
you seem, you  
who *meditate*  
*in alterity*  
let yourself  
become who  
you really are.**

**23 December 2016**

**=====**

**Oldest dream of magic  
a candle  
with remote control**

**23.XII.16**

**=====**

**Watch out for those  
for whom your own  
door seems already  
open when you meet.  
Prefer those who knock  
before they come in.**

**23 December 2016**

=====

**If you're after inspiration  
don't look at me  
I'm just here for the trees,  
dancing girls the dragonflies,  
the southpaw pitchers,  
Verdi operas the Louvre  
the alphabet the toy floor  
at Macy's World War II  
the apocalypse. I'm  
just looking for it too,  
hands in my pocket,  
chewing on a chunk  
of frankincense, after  
a while it chews just  
like chewing gum.**

**23 December 2016**

## SHOSTAKOVICH, 9<sup>TH</sup> & 10<sup>TH</sup> PRELUDE & FUGUE

We were going to the city anyhow  
carrying the piano on our backs,  
green fields of the Coromandel Peninsula  
strict horizon on our minds: *Sound  
like this*, we told our music, sound  
like sun forgiving earth at least some  
of its long arcane transgressions—books  
know nothing of the real sins. Bells  
were ringing now, as if geology were also  
trying to communicate, gravity, tide  
of bronze, sway of clapper, we are in fact  
a kind of church, stave style, old Norse,  
questionable orthodoxy, our dearest  
Frigga waits for us in the spruces,  
pretending to choose a Christmas tree.  
This piano on my back is what she  
gives me with a kiss to carry home.

23 December 2016

## ARS POETICA

Formal as a mountain  
leafy as an essay by Emerson,  
—note hiatus between *-y* and *E-*,  
that's how poetry gets made  
or scrimshaw or guessing  
if and how much it will rain today,  
formal, hopeful, imprecise.

I fear I'm not making myself clear  
altogether. There is a water  
flows between Europe and Asia,  
another sort of hiatus, any decent  
hero tries to swim it, most succeed  
and we hear no more of them—  
a few drown along the way and they  
are the voices we listen to so  
carefully in our body's flesh and mind  
when we write (the word means scratch)  
a poem (means anything that's made).

23 December 2016

## **NON SUM DIGNUS**

**I am not worthy  
to enter into the contract,  
the contact  
with the holy flesh  
of everybody,  
anybody. We  
are movable temples  
each of us, own religion,  
and though we claim  
that god is One  
we are various,  
shift dogmas by how  
the light falls, shadows,  
breezes, we pray  
by what we want.**

**24 December 2016**



## OF THE KORE

Blossoming mead  
the blue

no better  
name than  
*her flowers,*

she who plucked one  
to open up  
the gates of earth,  
down where the unborn  
masquerade as the dead  
and she by arts  
she learned from flowers  
knows  
how to mother them to life.

24 December 2016

=====

**After the carol singing  
got to talk about blue  
hydrangeas with  
Rosalind's daughter who  
really knew. Nitrogen  
fixing. Yes, aluminum  
sulfate will do that.  
Make blue. Painted  
women running over  
the hills. People  
steal flowers she  
told me, feel privileged,  
,earth gives flowers,  
earth gives them hands.  
Sometimes a garden  
puts the sun on trial  
for her life. Love  
this place. Love it  
to life for us all.**

**24 December 2016**

## A FEW CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

*for Charlotte*

**You like light  
so let me give you all the light I have.  
You like the woods  
so here are the rainforests of Brazil  
complete with ancient cities' traces  
stone roads and marble altars.  
You like music, so here's  
a romantic opera called *Our Life Together  
Forever*, but you love the baroque too, and Bach  
so here's a new Bach Cantata,  
*Das Dasein Christi lebt in Liebe* just for you  
for the fifth Sunday in Advent,  
the lost tribe of Ireland.  
You love birds so here's the best I can do,  
thirty chickadees in flight formation  
with two male cardinals leading the way.  
But mostly you love the sea  
and that's where I'm in trouble I love  
it so much too, so here's what I'll do:  
I give you hereby the whole Atlantic Ocean**

**and keep for me only that mild  
stretch of the Gulf of Mexico where once  
we sat and watched a pelican  
think about things a long time  
before it finally knew, and flew away.**

**24 December 2016**

=====

*Asperges me hyssopo et dealbabor*

Liturgy surfaces

like ground water

always there,

nourishing, reminding,

shaping the rhythms

of how we say we think—

maybe that's the real

gift of any religion—

comes through the dry night,

and look at sunshine, and still

from somewhere nowhere comes

*you sprinkle me with hyssop*

*and I become whiter*

than this pretty snow,

cleaner than what I see.

I stand where I am

and something happens to me

that is the giving of words

to be spoken by anybody,

healed by their happening,

everything possible again.

And what is hyssop anyhow?

25 December 2016

## **TO OLDER MEN, ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN**

**Never confuse  
their Occasional Spontaneous  
Angelic Visitation  
with your own sentimental crush.**

**They come by and bring  
unconditional units of delight  
and then they're gone.  
Don't try to hold on.**

**Don't clutch. Don't crush.**

**25 December 2016**

=====

**Under the windows  
a person.  
Now delete person  
what light is left?**

**Mandate the power  
in uncut lavender,  
no, I mean destiny  
led me come crawling.**

**Calling to you.  
Let me be,  
all I remember of other  
will still be me.**

**25 December 2016  
[zettelwek]**

**=====**

**At the very boundary  
of existence  
a will to meet the other  
A wall with a gate.  
Watchman asleep on the roof.**

**25 December 2016**



=====

**Writing into the glare  
skier speeding uphill—**

**in this place, everything  
knows us. It is called  
language and it hurts**

**sometimes, and is bright  
opaque, smells like amber**

**tastes like air but air  
from the tomb of Abraham,  
the last man not to see G-d.**

**26 December 2016**

=====

**Things getting harder as we speak  
trees in uniform  
voices lost in storm**

**threnody for the Red  
Army Chorus in the Black Sea fallen  
proud humility of soldiers  
singing someone else's song  
to make it theirs  
by men aloud.**

**Things hard enough to begin with,  
the silences of bombed cities  
the clamor of refugees  
*give me place give me place*  
to grieve in or be sick or die  
the sudden silence of the dead**

**o sweet desire come lick away anger  
while we still have the sea.**

**26 December 2016**

## **PICKEREL WEED**

**pond unfrozen  
the chosen word,  
any word is like a book,  
falls open, look and read.  
Forward and back  
and rearrange the little bits  
like characters in a story  
until you know everything.**

**A true thing knows how to sing.  
A word is like a human sacrifice  
heart held up to heaven  
but beats on forever. The victim  
is the priest, we survive  
our sanctity.**

**Our pond next door  
explained all this to me  
when I asked about the word,  
the water, the beaver at the orchard end.**

**26 December 2016**

=====

**Life is clumsy  
enough to go on  
the miracles  
come later  
after you've forgotten  
their names,  
Christmas always  
when you least expect it.  
Look the other way  
a minute and he's here  
suddenly behind you  
born full grown.  
Nothing for you to do  
but be, here, be  
like him, absolute.**

**26 December 2016**

## **FRIED NOISE**

**Don't wear your bikini to church  
elementary politesse  
when you visit the rabbi  
don't bring your pet pig  
don't sing your latest hit to the deaf.  
Have some sense  
who you are  
depends on who they are.  
It's a little like compassion  
you have no self but what you give.**

**26 December 2016**

=====

**Alarmist miracles  
here or there  
grass showing through the snow**

**andbirds are easily pleased  
come and eat seeds  
are pretty as can be  
even when they fly away**

**if only it weren't for that  
divorce lawyer called Time  
how easy happy would be.**

**27 December 2016**

**== == == == == ==**

**Do I have to start  
this life again?  
The dark contradictions  
of this village school  
the earth, the barefoot  
schoolmaster rattles  
his keys, any  
moment opens the door.  
It is the strange place  
where in and out are the same.**

**27 December 2016**

## **ADVICE TO THE NEWBORN**

**No rancor.  
Just remember.**

**27.XII.16**



## **ITHE SCAR**

*Exelaunei,*  
the army marched  
and still is marching,

all those parasangs  
foreign measures  
into unknown languages

unclean, unclean

car tail lights vanishing  
into the woods on a dirt track

1916 the Emperor is dead  
a scar is left  
the scar cannot heal.

2.  
Sorrow of it,  
a nation scattered  
into money fiefs,  
Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon,  
Dakota, Virginia,

**Wallonia, Deseret,  
strip of holy Mormon land  
all the way to Santa Monica,**

**the emperor is dead,  
you called that war a scar,  
the real war—**

**the car will not heal.**

**3.**

**I loved you when you said that,  
my hands reached out for your hips  
to right myself by contact  
with the royal pharaonic balance,  
Judgment on her throne,  
the curvature of woman  
rebuking the curvature of earth  
so that we can stand,  
we can live.**

**But I pulled back,  
I have no right to that coastline,  
the ripe permission, the truth.  
Your lion roared to warn me  
I had just barely understood.  
My hands clutched air instead,  
caressed the air, sleek and deep.**

**The scar will not heal.**

**4.**

**Music stopped then.  
All the lovely painted  
nudes fell off the wall.**

**Will I still be here  
at breakfast,  
will the morning let me,**

**and she who rules the dark,  
can I coax her  
to speak into my dreams  
so the night finally makes sense?**

**5.**

**This is not the same  
as saying something.**

***Wind like a wound*  
moves through our meanings,**

**the banks and bourses,  
my hammer rusty**

**hangs from its rusty nail.  
The Emperor is dead.  
Her voice over the phone  
*the soul is broken*  
and the waltz is dead.  
Only we are left.**

**I loved you then  
when you remembered  
who you were.  
Now help me remember who I am.**

**28 December 2016**

=====

**Why not the child's  
delight at waking  
to snow? Why not  
every obstacle  
a thing to play with,  
roll in, ski down,  
shape evanescent  
incarnations of  
art in the round?  
It snowed once  
in Florence and men  
with brooms swept  
a courtyard-full  
into a nice heap  
and Michelangelo  
that morose introvert  
went out to play with it.**

**29 December 2016**

== == == == ==

**The morning mind  
works slow and kind**

**tends to forgive  
the bad dreams  
that brought us here**

**all of us, we're all  
the same person**

**when we wake up.  
Try to believe me,**

**it's your only chance.**

**29 December 2016**

=====

**On Samothrace they had three gods  
or who knows what they were**

**hooded figures whose names some know—  
any name soon bcomes a god**

**when we say it often enough, call her name  
over and over, cry it into the forest**

**where she never walked, shout it,  
maybe she'll hear you in her part of heaven.**

**Language us a drunken lover  
crying for a lost love in the night.**

**29 December 2016**

=====

**And if Baldur grew old  
what happened to us?**

**When a god dies  
he doesn't stop living,  
he goes on into human form  
breathing now, not thinking,**

**he ages, sickens, dies again.  
The twice-dead come again**

**when the world begins again,  
when someone calls his name**

**and a young virgin listens.  
Die over and over until you are you.**

**29 December 2016**





## **CRAQUELURE**

**they call it  
patterning of tiny  
cracks in the porcelain**

**where the real  
is revealed by close study,  
the true meaning of the vessel**

**read the lines  
in my palm, the creases  
in my brow, explain what I'm for.**

**30 December 2016**

*Beware a smooth man who has no meaning yet*

=====

**Not sure how much of me  
to explain.**

**Certainly not the brain,  
maybe the left hand,  
the one that receives  
without reaching out.  
Yes, that's what it should be,**

**the kabbalah of being  
in a body (*kabbalah* means  
reception, not transmission),  
take only what you are given  
but study it so long and deep  
the stars shine in the palm of  
even my right hand, here  
    let me touch thee,  
    for if I but touch thy knee  
    thou shalt walk in the sky.**

**30 December 2016**

=====

**Given the right side of the street  
you'd get there in no time  
but I am puzzled by the whiteness  
of society, of snow. What  
does it mean, all the bright sameness?**

**30 December 2016**

=====

**When I want to make a mark  
I use the sky, room up there  
for almost all I have to say.  
And for the rest of it  
there's night. Night!**

**30 December 2016**

=====

**The day clear  
trees are lace  
indecipherable overlays—**

**but someone must  
be able to read them,  
sight-reading the unwritten—**

**isn't that our first obligation?**

**30 December 2016**

## YEAR'S LAST DAY

*Elle sait ce qui plaît*  
she's waiting in the woods  
to rise at our call  
*phôs, phôs augei!*  
over the orchard  
across the stream  
over the hill  
that hides me here,  
I borrow Louis' cries:  
*Arise, arise!*  
as if she were the whole  
proletariat of  
the earth we are,  
or *Come!* you  
from whom we come.

31 December 2016

=====

**Language scatters like blackbirds  
at a gunshot. It is the sun  
thinking to come up  
out of the trees and we  
hear her thinking of us  
waking, wording, getting it  
miraculously wrong.**

**31 December 2016**



## **Das Sein**

**I will wake up and feed the crows.  
It is what corn is good for,  
and waking up, and walking out  
and being somebody on earth.  
Giving is being forgiven  
from the strangeness of being.**

**31 December 2016**

## FUNCTIONAL NEUROANATOMY

Old time masters  
of a broken book  
pilfer wisdom  
from a cup of tea

but we need to scar  
the moment's  
consciousness with  
ayahuasca to get

a whiff of how things  
really are. Everything  
gouges the mind,  
grooves and gravings,

thdeep and shallow  
sulcas of time in us,  
the poor organ  
that plays us limb by limb

to fit the facts, those  
kittens in the head  
never wuiet for a moment.,  
never where you need them.

**I'm not complaining,  
not explaining, just here  
for the music, banjo,  
sitar, philharmonic  
to pluck the marrow  
from my moans.  
Music means. Words  
are hard as the frozen  
earth beneath the house  
where only love alone  
lets anything live.**

**31 December 2016**

=====

**Incandescent ninja OK  
flickers by — sedge of the pond  
corner of the eye**

**Light also is a kind of thief  
but all things also are,  
seize self from me**

**and leave me nude awareness.  
O steal these thoughts  
from me again!**

**31 December 2016**

=====

**Don't look back on the other side of anything where its maker's mark and land of origin in tiny letters remind you how far away they are from you and by extension you are from yourself, o poor Atlantean in Noboland among the white Presbyterian bourgeoisie and nothing for breakfast again but eggs (sound like agues) and you hate chicken. One after another the truths troop in, one worse than the one before it. Birth, sickness, old age, death. No, that's a different liturgy, I mean the rat-faced sequence Mon-Tues-Wed et cetera, a dolor a day to keep enstasy away, the sweet condition of being and being you and no measure, no need to look outside the mind, the mind see everything away, so relax, rebel, relax.**

**31 December 2016**

**TEN A.M.**

**Eventide looks like  
to the eye, I think  
like a fireplace  
more heat than light.**

**She who understands  
these things sleeps.**

**2.  
Bracketed anxiety  
insecurity masked  
in carnival guises:  
poetry.**

**3.  
Believe each little  
accident: it is things  
talking to you, telling  
you what only they  
and Yama know, or who  
is that Egyptian girl  
holds a mirror up to you  
that shows you everything  
you ever did or were?**

4.

Things know.  
That's why we chose  
(I chose) to be born  
in a thingly world,  
to care for them,  
hoarding, sharing even  
sometimes, on sunny  
afternoons and in  
war's disasters,  
a word that itself  
means bad stars.

As if the fault were theirs—  
but they are never wrong,  
they sleep and wait and think.

5.

*Hylonoetic* I've been calling it  
these days, consciousness active in matter.  
Matter being everything that isn't us. Me.  
You. The noisy golden deceiver  
down the street, pigeons on the roof,  
germs in my tooth brush. Us.  
Matter is everything else. And thinks.

6.

Hence my continual clamor  
to each and every thing.  
If they can think they can hear  
if they can hear they can speak.  
Hence my life of joyous listening.  
Stone. Shovel — blade and handle.  
Dust. Thread off an old sweater  
unraveling with eagerness. Thread  
lying on the carpet, patient to be heard.  
Then there was that strange hank  
of dark grey woolen yarn I found  
in a room where no one ever knitted.  
I hold it in my mind's hands now  
and wait. What a story it will tell,  
old fingers, plump young arms. No.  
A story has nothing to do with us.

7.

And that's the mystery of narrative —  
all those epics, romances, chansons,  
they are all about the space of world,  
the spaces and what they make happen.  
And we're just accidents along their way,  
warriors, princesses, sleeping on our way to Troy.