

1-2017

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**The reins of the Sun
are loosened, she rides
over the trees
to know me. This
is a prayer. I pray
to her. To anything—
no one not worthy of
morning devotions,
dawn Mass, palms
upraised in the Temple,
psalms to everything.**

1 January 2017

=====

**I had my body with me at the time
there was a hallway, a sweet encounter,
a smiling woman chattering Latin
I picked my way among her words
and counted every door I passed till one
painted red and with a letter pinned to it
addressed to me at least I think I am
or at least was the person they intended
who left it there — the envelope was empty
so I went inside. Here my story ends.
the rest of it you can see or just infer
I came from terror now and walk in peace.**

1 January 2017

=====

**It's a new kind of theology
words without hats
shivering on mountain tops
with no mountains, noise
coming out, noise of breath
of air shaped through
our anxious flesh, sounds
come out and maybe one
day one sound will be
the name of a god
who will answer me.**

1 January 2017

=====

**If the light blinks
all night long
how will the dawn know
it's time to come?**

1.1.17

=====

**Accidentally shelved the dictionary
upside down. In a few days I'll check
to see what all the words have done.
Will they be empty now, and held
together only by angels of the alphabet?**

1 January 2017

=====

**A blotter is full of surprises
magic happens when we look
away then look again—**

**all of this is time, bakers
and linemen and milkers of fat kind
(my father loved that word)
(I'm writing with his pen) I promised
much and little answered, sorry,
I'm still working — "parrots!"
she ncried from the living room
but I was lost in typing out
some words I thought I said.**

**2.
I missed the birds.
On the electric fireplace
the saw-cut geodes rest,
bookends fo rno books,
the beautiful air between them.
A whole foot of air!
Even if no birds.**

3.

Of course is it like a towel
a little, it dries things
in this season, need a humidifier,
eyes too dry, try tears,
weeping brought you
back to the world.
The terror of destinations.
Daunting portal
they would have called it,
the house door, going out.

4,

When I was a child
parrots knew how to talk.
What has happened to me since?

Stuffed raven at Peter's house
stuffed kingfisher in ours—
my first bird! Naked was I
and the stream it dove in
hurries past me still.

1 January 2017

IN SCHOOL

**Knowing the answer
is the same as the window.
Too high up here
to see the street.
In school you're alone
with the sky. Looking
out the window, only
the clouds. I love them.
Clouds are the answer.**

2 January 2017

=====

**I'd like to be able to sing it
but all I can do
is look at it, sometimes
with a loupe in eye
or a ruler in my hand.
Sometimes I can catch
the tune of it almost
but hearing is not singing
is it, or not yet?
A little pale stone on the table
from a beach far from here.**

2 January 2017

TRY AGAIN

**It can't have been an apple
with its simple
not very interesting flesh
all uniformity and sweetness.**

**It must have been a pomegranate,
its million seeds, all various,
sour with bitter with very sweet,
wine and repentance, white
and red, rough outside and smooth
within, jewels scattered,
profligate, a dense population
crowded in complexity,
migration of the tribes. Clear
now the nature of the fruit
from that trees. Next
to understand the serpent
was no serpent but someone else
and name her. Then we'd be
halfway to the true beginning
of the book we're supposed to be.**

2 January 2017

BOTANY LESSON

**Such a flower once
all the petals
cease clamoring
for the wind's attention
and the rose herself
sees us, looks us
in more than the eye.
We feel this flower
all the way down
to the ground we share.
It pretends
we are the same
and we are.**

2 January 2017

=====

Looking out the window
I become a door.
Windows and doors,
there is nothing more.

I am the door he said.

2.

Doors have doorsills

aliquantulum elata

a little lifted up
to trip you gently
on your way in or out,

to shock you into
that between-space
limen, threshold.

The liminal is the only real.

3.

All the things we have to know:
windows and doors.

All the things you have to feel

**come later, come prancing,
come sauntering along
through every pilgrim road
we wander dazed on.**

**You decide — what is a feeling
or this feeling worth.**

Then you look out the window again.

3 January 2017

=====

I'm hurrying there
all day long
that precious *there*
the other side of here.

Listen to the mist
in the trees, cars
are just lights
noisig their way through.

If I were a miracle
I would cure all your ills.
As it is I am a prayer
desperate, pagan

to the mist and you and snow.

3 January 2017

=====

**The lyric
isn't angry enough
for some**

**so salt their roses
Lady, put pepper
in their honey,**

**the only color
flower they love
is the thorn.**

3 January 2017

== == == == ==

**We try to force the law
into the air pockets
left between
our needs and our desires.**

**This is theology and truth,
the crocodile sleeps in the turbid stream
the bird endures the differences of air.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Sometimes clearing
the throat
is eloquence enough.**

4 January 2017

= = = = =

**Father taught me
to doubt every move
doubt my skill
and doubt myself**

**so even the slightest
achievement would be
an astonishing victory.
This too is education.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Little lyric expostulations,
tuneful revenges
wild men at the upper window
gnashing their teeth at the glass.**

4 January 2017

== == == == ==

**Herm in front of house
haggard satyr ithyphallic
inhibits idle visitors.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Take your pills and go to meeting
where several hundred liars
strive for truth. Call this democracy,
sll it to barbarians ad the isles,
explain it all in big fat books
then sell the books.
This one, for instance, really good.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Rapturous decisions,
rapture as in rap,
there's not enough
truth in the ink.
Listen to the breath
instead. Or listen
to the angelus, it says
you're awake at last.**

4 January 2017

=====

**I dreamed we were talking about God
saying intelligent things on a street corner—**

**everyone we meet might be a part of God
so treat them with respect, reverence even,**

**using the words they want to hear,
skillfully, in the dialect of flesh and blood.**

4 January 2017

=====

**A drum works
by being empty.**

A hand does too.

4 January 2017

=====

**Decide on emptiness,
it sings. Dr. Sunyata
every day will keep
Eve's apple away.**

**You taste his pleasant medicine
every time you hear a bell.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Articulate the obvious —
no one will notice.**

**If they do, they'll agree
and call you very wise.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Useless smart remarks
translated into ancient Greek
and squirreled away inside
an antique chest of drawers
found in the Fayum.
Revise our tragic history.
It's bst to remember that
nothing ever really happened.**

4 January 2017

PHYSICS — A FAIRY TALE

**Heat rises
they told the child,
it wants to return
to the Sun.
Me too said the kid.**

4 January 2017

== == == == ==

**On the beach at Chica Loca
I saw a mermaid clear as day.
She was the Sun
rising from the sea.**

4 January 2017

FROM HAGIA SOPHIA

**Augmented, ornamented
by time itself, eleven
second reverberation.
Two old men groan.
The church itself sings.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Man by fireplace
with no cat*.**

**Sad. But the heat's
fur caresses him,**

curls on his knees.

***Cats are wonderful magical creatures until they
become your cat. Then they grow burdensome, suck all
your affections, corral your anxieties, and exasperate
your relatives and friends.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Not everything is easy
as water running clockwise
down a drain.**

**Some things
are contrary, need
coaxing, shaping, a kiss
on the forehead even
to get them moving
the way we want.
The way we want.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Hill half
grass half
snow. Dualism
pervades everywhere
you look.
No cure
for difference,
indifference least
af all.
Hill half
mine half
yours. You
don't even
know who
you are.**

4 January 2017

=====

**Footloose in Armageddon
there will always be
kids playing under rubble
touch each other's
private parts, learning
how all things begin again.**

4 January 2017

== == == == ==

**Flame in fireplace
air in empty tree.
What I see. Fool,
you can't see air,
you see through it.
As you through me.**

5 January 2017

=====

**The patriotic road
salutes every car
the same. No need
for names. Wheels
are passports enough.**

5 January 2017

=====

**Weird open green
Australian driver
on the right green
jitney. Bush Devil
I rode in or on
wrongly the streets
of a busy Boston
bigger than life,
gave the driver
wrong address, Putnam
Ave. really across
the river, the house
I was trying to get
home to was wrong,
wrong street, wrong
city, wrog people
in it. So much for
desire. All wrong.
Or aspiration, yearning.
The dream said:
whatever you consciously
desire is the wrong thing.
Things. The right goal
of your being in time
is what happens.
The strange young people**

**who call your name
or sit beside you, close.
The angry cabdriver
who said no, the portly
delivery man who said
friendly yes but not now
to take me home, all
to the wrong destination
aiming, all wrong.
The angels carry us
dream after dream
until we wake
in nothing like the place
intended. Just here,
the arguable actual.**

5 January 2017

= = = = =

**Sleep. Enter into danger.
Dominatio. Enthralled
by dream. Visit the fire.
Carry pine branches,
toss pine cones at newly weds
as we throw rice. Dream.
It is a special kind of wine
that drinks us instead.**

5 January 2017

OF EPIPHANY

**word should mean
not the Showing
but showing looking at showing,
the world at last
coming to see itself.**

5 / 6 January 2017

=====

**Trying to find the beginning
is finding the right word.
Is it always the one
promptest to the tongue?
Or pen, if there are
somehow eerily other?
That is the one
the sea of thinking
casts up on the dry
coast of the unspoken
hoping to help
or to be healed.**

5 / 6 January 2017

TUDORS

**I remember everything from before,
their ruffs, their furs
the mean bloated faces,
they answer every question with a knife,
a living body on the pyre.**

**Yet they knew us into the world,
me too. I hate to remember
their smell in heavy fancy clothes,
stink of men and woman reek,
frightened children huddled out of sight.**

5 / 6 January 2017

=====

**You know perfectly well
Rome never fell.
It's all around us always.
cuckold's bed and angry street.**

5 / 6 January 2017

=====

**History is too
many nightmares
for one little boy.**

5 / 6.I.17

=====

**Take a sleeping pill
and tuck it in
and let it sleep.
Stay alert
and watch it dream
this place you
think you are.**

5 / 6 January 2017

=====

**A wheel o the other
side of the world
lets this be now.**

**Sun on a spindle
monkey up a tree.**

**Listen to the leaves
say all they know
over and over till
you know it too.**

**The true astronomy's
locked in your breath.**

5 / 6 January 2017

=====

**What happens to me
if you are the sun?**

**Is there a place for me
in your Jerusalem?**

**Why did I come to discover
the religion of you?**

**Life is like the other,
other side of what I know,**

**I light a candle
to see which way**

**the smoke goes up
the shadows fall—**

**how pale you are
as my only answer.**

5 / 6 January 2017

EPIPHANY

**What is shown?
Everything stands there
waiting to be seen.**

**Then along comes a time
and catches the eye.**

**A knight or a dame
kneels to some king
asleep on his throne**

**or queen wide awake
who sees all these
little lies we hide**

by waking up again.

6 January 2017

=====

**The older I get
the more I becme
father of myself,**

**watch my every move
with scant patience
and little sympathy.**

**I am my own father
by my own old window
but I will go out,**

**I will, and change
the world, I will
and make trees sing.**

6 January 2017

=====

**Organdy curtains
clouds pretending
in an immense window.**

**It is Bergen Street
seventy years ago
can you understand?**

**I am the frightened boy
that day I looked up
and the whole sky knew me.**

6 January 2017

BRAHMS

**When you listen to Brahms
you could easily be someone else.
Your identity becomes
fluid as his, queasy, uncommitted,
energetically baffled
by everything except the next
beautiful move.**

**Every measure shouts I don't know
I don't know how I became
the man I am, tell me, music, tell
this poor sinner my actual name.**

6 January 2017

=====

**Suppose it was a king
back in the days of such things
who ordered a statue to be built
such that a thousand men and women
could live inside it, vast monument,
rhombus upended, eyes
legion all along its flanks,
and in our infant lust to imitate
we built a million more
all over the planet, could you
even now forgive the pale comfort
groaning liturgy of that democracy
and sleep in my apartment tonight?**

7 January 2017

CONSPIRACY THEORY

**Secertly all these years
I have (not) been me.
You choose which —
I'm not even here.**

7.I.17

=====

**On a scale of one to ten
all the blackbirds flew away.
Birds are people, some
people will no tbe measured.**

7 January 2017

AFTER VILLION

**Human sisters who live on after us
don't harden your hearts against us,
we men who sought you as the prime
reality, as children grasp the brightest flower
but god knows what they do with it
sometimes — did we do that to you?
Forgive us as we dwindle in all alone
recalling how lovely you were to touch.**

7 January 2017

=====

**Sometimes a gift
silences everything.
Or words you say
have lives of their own,
don't just curl
into the beloved's ear
and sleep like children.
They wander, squirm,
distort what you meant
maybe into what
you really did mean or
maybe what no one from
the beginning of the world
ever meant before.
Be careful of what you don't say.**

7 January 2017

=====

**Pick up your tuning fork
your Oaxacan rattle
your plastic whistle from
a box of Cracker Jacks
your vila from Cremona
or just croak gulp sing
in weekend weather cold
as other people's sins—
two days off from work
make anywhere a tropic isle.**

7 January 2017

=====

**That face
when the fingers
get tired
of weaving the wind**

**in front of the eyes,
that face,
when the sign language
stops trying to make**

**sense and the face
appears clear
in its own language
of being here, face**

**open as the sky
makes us rush
to meet it, be with
all it means:**

**flower, stone,
story, synagogue,
bed, meadow,
final explanation.**

7 January 2017

TO A READER OF SAPPHO

**If I knew Greek better
I would embroider a cushion
and send it to you**

**to settle on her seat
to ease her long sessions
listening to you complain**

**how patient she must be
for you for me for all of us
who nobody loved enough,**

nobody ever.

7 January 2017

LOW CONTRAST

for Susan, her birthday, 2017

Pictures, you make pictures.
I see people.
You see everything else.

People are my geology
the crag of woman
I climb in dream.

You see all round you
and know how to read
the million dialects of light

so that thought
becomes actual
in things seen

but I am a stone
come sit on me,
a sea come bathe in me

or swim to the shores
of the island I also am
or drink me down—

**my stupid promises just
inveiglements but you
shout Here is Eden**

**everything still
wet with beginning
again for the first time.**

8 January 2017

=====

**It's not good to want to say something,
it gets in the way of what wants to be said.**

8.I.17

== == == == ==

**In the end you
know the beginning at last.**

8.I.17

=====

**To see.
To see
without being.**

**2.
Turn over the stone
look at what is**

all the time.

**8 January 2017
Boston, at Faulkner**

=====

**Well or wheal —
the language slows
to make us choose
to see how close
opponents are.**

**The window wonders
for instance, and the door
endures. And know
keeps saying No.**

**Poor Faust! Poor ____
of transformation!
How he already is
everything he'll be
or can't, his cunning
a kind of coming
through no door.**

9 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Esmeralda, a cautious green.
Skirt swirl, dash up
stone stairs, wind[ing]
over Wilshire.
Look. A set of hills,
a charge of horsemen
tumble out of hillmist
maybe. Tell me, O She,
what you see I said —
saying won't help you
nowt, said she, the mit
is mind, the men are dead,
only the swirl of skirt
is real or true, the sky
a skirt nobody wears.
Except maybe Esmeralda**

9 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Exalted cornstalks
left after November
rim the winter road
by my new hometown.
I lived in Brooklyn 25 years,
lived up here for 50.
Plus. Whose child am I?
I too am somewhat tall,
stand at the side of the road
preferring to stay. Standing
is wonderful — it has
staying built inside it.**

9 January 2017, Boston

=====

**We look at things
as if they were there.
Daisy's cheek
against the tabletop
alongside the book
she's writing in.
She sees language
from the side—
it doesn't know
she's looking.**

9 January 2017, Boston

=====

Intervals of otherness, father,
I bring to confess. Grate
through which we see each other
dimly is a case in point —
glimpses of pink skin of priest ,
glimpses of black steel
between the tell-tale perforations.
We are saints to each other
for all we know. All I bring
in the way of sinfulness
is being discontinuous —
is that like a sarabande
of little suicides, trivial
rebirths? In the discontinuous
moments I felt free,
nobody, work-less,
see no evil, quiet
as an armchair
when there's nobody there.
Count me my penance —
teach me to want
to be continuous
so even one moment
lasts forever
like Him on the cross.

9 January 2017, Boston

=====

Let the margin bleed
new saliva in old mouths —
one more anaphora,
this poetry. Again
and again different words
to one same deity.

2.
Call this liturgy.
The burden of relatives
in the waiting room
rude health of hips and shoulders,
their troubled faces.
Their bodies are praying
while they try to chat, keep
good spirits. Anxiety
is also a liturgy.

3.
There is always
reason to worry.
It is a mind's
favorite thing to do.
I wanted to belong
to the water

but the sea was far.

10 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Bronze bust
of an emperor
unknown.**

**Or I was marble,
those pupil-less eyes
were mine that looked
out on Africa
but saw nothing—**

**we ancient ones
made it all up inside,
no glacier, no giraffes,
no actual animals
it all thought
its way out of us
as words and shadows,
random realities,**

**we have come to a junction
of no roads, a meeting
where no one waits.**

10 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Random notations,
out of our control—
pretty nurse walking down
endless hall of hospital.
Men she passes too
sick to need her, want her,
name their dreams after her,
we just happen like weather.**

10 January 2017, Boston

COUPLE IN CITY

**Two little people
in immense world
in immense dream
looking for the magic
doorway to waking.
Or to even deeper sleep.**

11 January 2017, Boston

A DUTY OF POETRY

**To unknow a place
enough to speak in it
or write its name
across its own sky.**

11 January 2017, Boston

=====

Difference between poems composed longhand and those composed on keyboard— it grows greater every year with me.

My hand alone is lyrical, alert and slow.

My fingertips nervous, intellectual, aggressive, fast.

Where is the mind/soul balanced between?

11 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Let the looms reset
the warp aggressive,
madder-rich the color,
let everything come out.**

**A piece of cloth
is the truest declaration,
most accurate poem,
vernicle, sudarium,
fits every human face.
My old red bandana —
soft breath makes it speak.**

12 January 2017

== == == == ==

**The rain too tries to remember me —
is it time for time yet? No,
still space alone, still the first day
stretching out, gleaming
fresh as a car in the rain,
no time for time,
our hands the only hours.**

12 January 2017

=====

**January thaw —
a bird comes,
we shelter
under its wing.**

(sub umbra alarum protege nos)

12 January 2017

== == == == ==

**Measurement alley
where scientists drink
the intoxicating illusion
of objectivity. When all
outside, on the broad,
thronged, sexy road
of approximation
the crowd's happy enough
just to keep going on,
consents to destiny
and hurries there
with all the friends
they can make,
all the gods they
can half-believe in.**

12 January 2017

== == == == ==

**But what do with my hands.
They sleep when I wake
the jeweled golden casket
gleams in moonlight
The Moon stands full
over this ancient subdivision
life on earth
by the river, facing the mountain,
no one being sure
but nobody doubting.
Only my hands won't move.**

12 / 13 January 2017

== == == == ==

**What kind is this
this town,
arm of the sea?**

**Forgive me
for always asking,
have so much to learn
so little to tell.**

**When I was a child
I thought the names of things
—sandarac, Barnegat, parallax —
would be almost enough,**

**we could dine on
Cufic cinnamon,
and drink Arethusa
syllable by syllable
and never thirst again.**

=====

**Sometimes what I'm watching
turns into what I'm reading
and then it's morning.
But not yet.**

12 13.I.17

=====

**A line
leads everywhere —**

**that is the mercy
of geometry, of poetry.**

**Don't follow it too far —
find another and start afresh.**

12 / 13 January 2017

=====

**Video of a spinning top
a girl crossing the street in the rain
a boy on a skateboard asking for money.
The world is easy —
it's everything else that is hard.**

12 / 13 January 2017

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

**Hold the fort
against the savage thought.
Peace is like a lawn
without all the work.
No mowing, no growing,
just being there all the time.**

12 / 13 January 2017

=====

**It is not my business
to ask why
I'm in business. Enough
to take the daily shipment
and process it softly
into a readable product,
then give it away
as fast as I can.
It is a lovely way
to make a living.**

12 / 13 January 2017

=====

**What could it have been that comes
after sunlight and before language?
A dream with deep red fur. Glass
from the volcano. City streets laid out
by the shadows cast by stars
none of us know how to see. But earth
knows, and the secret bone inside our bones
tethered to sheer mind in the blue elsewhere.
Maybe. Or I have come to you again
after all these years to say my simple piece.**

13 January 2017

=====

**I thought we would have
a lot to say to each other
but it was birds out the window
talking freely this way and that
and of course we can't have them in here
where we made do with our silences.**

13 January 2017

=====

**I called and you never answered.
But my call was silent, wordless
and maybe your answer was too
and if I look I might find it still
among the mind's deleted messages.**

13 January 2017

=====

**Just for convenience
know where I am.**

**Walk a road that isn't there,
bathe in an absent lake,
cross a missing river**

**— already
you're close, too close maybe.
It is not easy to be anywhere.**

13 January 2017

=====

**Orderly ascensions
love lifts
the woodpecker up the pole, he
pecks his way down—
that is the nature
of the tree we be,
deasr groundlings, humans, free
of everything
but our own desires,
the willthat wants us to do.**

14 January 2017

=====

**So be a mystery.
Let love change you
if it can,**

**strange animates
wander these woods**

**and as the sunlight
itself tells you
never can tell.**

14 January 2017

PATRIOTIC HYMN

**Blackest ink
on whitest page—
we will make
a nation of us yet.**

14 January 2017

=====

**One morning all
the pens ran out of ink
the paper was asleep
the light was tired
collapsing through the window,
the color blue
was trying to wake up.
Even the horizon yawned.
Was it all all over already?
Where was the music they promised us?**

14 January 2017

=====

**It's getting brighter—
maybe it needs me after all.**

14.I.17

=====

**Caught by images
I rage. Or is it
just age
 that happens
when we look too long
at what isn't there?**

14 January 2017

== == == == ==

**Things we're not allowed
to think.**

**That's why
they're things already.
They don't need us
but they are kind
and let us listen
to them thinking.**

14 January 2017

=====

**Reserves mean gold
in a hundred years
who will miss or find
this tissue, this white
sock unmatched left
in the drawer? Things
troto tell us, tie us
to one another, to a place,
our place. Overwhelmed
by nostalgia in each
thing my hand holds
and won't let go.**

**As if we drown in the world
and we clutch to things
as lifesavers, to keep afloat.
We owe so much to this
cookie tin, this crystal,
old maple chest of drawers.**

15 January 2017

=====

**Have I said enough about the stars?
Live a long time at ease with everyone—
that's what they tell me,
shine all the time until your time is done.**

15 January 2017

=====

**Midmost catenary droop
a bird sits, I guess a robin
they're here all winter
but don't much sing—
wires we put up for birds
carry our own twitterings
from huse to house. Are we
just functions of our real estate?
Is that what real really means?**

15 January 2017

= = = = =

**I see the leaves
can't read a letter**

**soak the paper in warm water
stir in clove and cinnamon and honey**

**let your body read it for you.
A thousand years!**

15 January 2017

ARS POETICA

**I'm not allowed to mean what I say—
if I did it would make the words
just a message not a something made,
a stone, a vein, a shadow on the wall.**

15 January 2017

== ==

**But things waiting before
were telling us things but what
can a rock decide? Knowledge
is not the same as action, alas.
All it can do is realize. Mostly
what we can do is doing
without knowing. How to tell
myself from a piece of wood,
a big table, an old armchair.
Rest in me, I cry, my words
give you a break but fail
to teach you anything. Worry
not, o pilgrim, your road
curls up at your feet and sleeps.
You are where you mean to be.
There is nowhere else at all.**

15 January 2017

== == == == ==

**You're a maiden till you mother.
It's not what you take in defines you
but what you send out of your body,
that plain soft, hard, open secret.**

15 January 2017

=====

**In the middle of the night
I wanted a grape,
just one red one,
not the sweetest kind,
crates of them on
September sidewalks
where I grew up,
every family made its own,
dumped sugar in
to make the wine come quicker,
flowed freely in our
streets, Ghinny Red
the goyin called it
I never tasted.**

2.

**I am a squeamish dreamer.
Avoid the faces and embraces
of people I actually know.
Instead I wake up from no story
with no image in mind
but the dark all round me.
Or maybe just one thing
;ike the shape and taste
of onered grape somewhere
between the pre-frontal lobes
and the back of my throat**

I woke up wanting.

3.

**Had to be Italian
to write it down
Crescent Street
or had to be Dante
my secret target
all these years
but who would even
know my presumption,
to dare to make
something as accurate
as a poem, a grape.**

4.

**I have milked this matter
with your yellow Italian pen
Monte Grappa it might even be called.
harsh brandy from the lees of wine.
Did the pen wake me
with its own *ricordanze*,
the deep nostalgia of ink
for everything that could ever be said?**

16 January 2017

== == == == ==

**Waiting for the rose
to be dawn**

**this hour far
the train went by already**

**hooting on the trestle
where it called a man**

**a friend years ago
the rose too**

**killed Rilke and Scriabin.
Dawn kills the dream,**

**the thorn of night
is left behind though,**

**blood infection, moon
struggles free from cloud.**

16 January 2017

CURIOUS HABITS OF SHOPPERS

**They take their clothes off in the store,
they want to become commodity,
to be on display is to be real again
after daylight takes their dreams away.**

16 January 2017

=====

**Or does everything go on anyhow
no chance of not?**

**The deer come down the garden
but I won't walk in the forest**

**for fear of falling, roots and branches,
fear of the ground.**

16 January 2017

=====

**All the honest reciprocals
lure us to their primaries.
Lust.**

**(Take a friend
to the movies to transform
your relationship. Campari
afterwards, no hope
for driverless cars, not yet.)
Everybody goes home alone.
An empty room is all I mean.**

16 January 2017

=====

**A window needs somebody in it
even if only a cat, like Amsterdam
on the Herrengracht, my father
looking out towards the creek,
arm of the sea, Oceanside, the swans.**

**We shape places to shape us—
polish the steps with our soft hands
until they gleam and we go up—
sacred attic! The Tetragrammaton
dangling in the window, each letter
a crystal encased in its own gold.**

**The breastplate of the High Priest
tinkles in the suburban wind,
you know? Be satisfied after all
with downstairs. Breakfast
waits for you there like a pop song.
Condescend to the necessities,
bible, butter, a piece of rye toast.**

16 January 2017

=====

**Must be waking
now anger
the evidence**

**sailor cap
wet spot
on the carpet**

**who?
Stands all night
like a tree**

**like Socrates—
didn't your friends
hear about fear**

**your fear
that takes movement
away, leaves you**

just enough breath

**inside your thought
to be afraid?**

**I wake up like that,
schooner sunk
cliff crumbling away
from under me
tree fallen
on my bungalow**

**the ink on fire
birds all over the house
feathers everywhere**

**here's one
as from the smallest
crow presaging**

**one more of all
my many deaths,
the sound of words**

**I clutch as if
I held my wife, my
head on her shoulder**

somehow safe.

16 January 2017

== == == == ==

**The lostness of is-ness —
something like that.
Existing at all in
this world, this all.
implies an absence
of, or *from*
some other modality.
Braver maybe,
full of grace, where dance
is continuous
the way we breathe.**

16 January 2017

=====

1.
Yesterday forgets—
there are goldfish
in the diner aquarium
a compassionate
display of the uneaten.

Reminds us we are sea.
Salt and silica and me,
that's all I'm offering,
chamber music in a shell,
abandoned sinners
wandering through prose.

2.
That's what we try, angels of us
trying to make sense.
Glory road, obvious organs,
show me the answer
so I can spell the question.
Engrave it as an afterthought—
hotel lobby swarming with orchids,
the elevator girl speaks ancient Greek.

3.

**So our ads never lie,
we do sleep better
with our heads to the north,
a kiss between the eyes
crystallizes dream,
the awkward smell of rosemary.**

16 / 17 January 2017

THE DWINDLING

**Faint aftertaste
of jazz, remember,
that old thing,
or Stone Age swing,
all lost now
with Pachelbel.
Music heals everything but time.**

16 / 17 January 2017

TWO A.M.

**Diesel hooting,
there must be fog.
Night wind whimpering
like a wounded dog.
How can a sleepless
man protect himself
from what he says?**

16 / 17 January 2017

=====

**(The skin
asks to begin**

**but the thigh
asks why.)**

**Rhyme is a circle that feeds on itself.
Spin your yarn and burn down Troy again.
We all came to Carthage — it's what we do there counts
or hurts or helps or be quiet so I can sleep..**

**(A little transponder on each little car
tells the government just where we are.)**

**The bells keep ringing far away.
It is the sound the horizon makes.**

17 January 2017

=====

**Waiting for the sea-green room to open
the woman runs her finger down the door.
Touch is magic. The wall itself yawns open
beside the doorway, like the iris of a camera.
She walks in, her mind on other matters.
We walk through miracles licking our fingers.**

17 January 2017

=====

**The comfort of the situation
resolves all doubt.**

**Taste of the teeth in your mouth,
touch of your right fingers
on the back of your left hand.**

**These are the images swans carry
gently in their beaks in their slow
portlan mapping of your lagoon.**

**How far you've come from winning
prizes, now you give them
to the weather, the mist, bare trees.**

**Everything pleases you
and nothing is yours.
You are an animal after all.**

17 January 2017

PRAYER

**What can we do
about the news?
Who will you send
to prophesy to us,
to stand up to her
haunch in the Jordan
and baptize us
with her flashing eyes?**

17 January 2017

IT

**Let it pretend to be morning
there are so many things it does
pictures it scrawls in the mist
what a child it is
and we always believe it
what else can we do
when it's the only one there
the only one who talks to us?**

18 January 2017

VADEMECUM

**Send the girl south with her diary
and don't ask her to write letters,
just a dream or wish on each page
or what the sunshine did that day
and what the fisherman had for supper.
That's the literature we really need,
Tolstoy says too much and too little
and we have too much already—
we need the little, the scraps
left over from the alphabet, a page
you ripped out of the phonebook
or was it the Bible and you're sorry?**

18 January 2017

== == == == ==

**I don't feel safe away from the keyboard,
just look at the letters, Roberto,
everything else takes care of itself.**

**Because this is where everything is stored,
Aladdin's cave and no thieves anywhere,
it's all mine, everything I find, and anything
I find down here I'm free to give to you.**

18 January 2017

== == == == ==

**Easy enough to tell a tailor
make it the size of me.
But what do you say to the priest?
Or the schoolteachers waiting
for yellow-bussed victims,
how can they fit the known world
around each bored and frightened child?**

18 January 2017

=====

**These are just notes
for my alter ego to inscribe
when he wakes up again
and thinks he has things to say.
Right now I feel a little raw
like a lover of some heartless slut
who never answers my letters.**

18 January 2017

=====

1.

**I tried to explain it
to myself but already
I was gone, headed
south in mind
to follow her though
I had no explanation,
just what I was trying
to make up as if
I could ever understand
what I or anyone else
was doing. Or would do.**

2.

**South because warm
Gone because going
is what we know best
though hardly well.**

**In mind because ho
other way to move,
to time, no highway,
no car anyhow**

**just the direction,
sense of different
weather, a river.
There must be a river.**

18 January 2017

=====

**ON THE CRUCIFIX
OF TIME A WOMAN
IS SLEEPING
HER PAIN TURNS
INTO DREAM AND
IN THE DREAM
SHE KNOWS AND
KNOWS THE ANSWER
AND THE ANSWER
KNOWS HER TOO**

Hypnoglyph. My hand was writing these words using a thick magic marker on the side of a two-quart milk carton another side of which I had already covered with writing I don't remember. I remembered this, though, as I woke, about

6:28 AM, 19 January 2017.

=====

1.
Melchizedek made me do it.
Reading the Bible, I fell
into its mysteries
and the ones
still hidden behind them.

The man, the men and who are they,
the women called by the names of beasts,
what world am I still living in,
o Leah my love let me lick your milk.

2.
To read a book is to swoon.
Hard to rouse, hard to “come to”
we used to say.
Some books never let you wake.

(Is that why so many religious people
are angry so much of the time?)

I’m still trying to understand
Melchizedek, four thousand years

and nothing's clearer.
People come and go—
is that the answer?
Are we all it means?

.3.
Flowers on the fireplace
all seasons know themselves in thee
three mornings now full of mist
I must be ready to be bold—
there are identities to choose,
hammocks to stretch out in,
courtesans to paint lifelike
as they loiter on their terrace
hung with rugs from Isfahan,
rugs from Tabriz.

I have to say
my own name clearly
and get it wrong each time
until you answer, and that will be me.

19 January 2017

TRUST ME

**Such responsibility
to fix upon the other!
Why not? I've always
only trusted the weather,
it is what it is
and what more can youy ask?
It's people like me
who give talk a bad name.**

19 January 2017

=====

1.

**In the decipherment
a naked angel stands.
No bigger than a cathedral
but made of softer stone—
a little bit like ours.**

2.

**This is what it means to read
a word or some words
or even a book of them — turn
a page and see the angel.
Turn a few more and he or she
swoops down and embraces you.
From deep inside the words
they rise to you, your reading lamp
blots out the sunshine all around.**

19 January 2017

UNDER EVERY TABLE

The cleft in matter

klephtes means thief or theft,

a theft of matter.

**We gap, Our legs spread,
yawn of our bones.**

**In our dreams we scheme
cunning ways to fill the gap.**

**Bridge the cleft or fall
soundless in the first crevasse.**

19 January 2017, Kingston

CASTALIAN

**just the one word
written on a blank sheet—
pertaining to
that nymph who was
herself a fountain
and whose waters
sipped or -better-
listened to inspired.**

**They say the Muses
lived at that spring
and from her essence
spoke in all their arts
into us if we too pay
attention to their
favorite language:
what comes to mind.**

**Some say that she,
Castalia, was made so
by Apollo, who
ravishd her into eloquence.
But I say she was always
who and what she was
and we can even now hear
her voice in every water.**

19 January 2017

=====

**Cast a wide word
things will remember**

**use the fewest every chance
wait for the rememberer**

**slate or arrow
roof or goal.**

**This man wanders around
looking for his soul.**

20 January 2017

=====

**Precious precipice
in flesh to ride,**

**a person is a mountain
against the sky.**

**Believe my blood
it tells the truth**

**the final sign
an open hand.**

20 January 2017

RITUAL VESSELS

So I have said my
prayers to things
where are raptures undisclosed,
fire engines on the moon
to give the Old Man atmosphere.

2.

Where can we begin again?
It never happened.
The ink wasn't dry yet on the world
when the complaint began,
autumn wind, tree branch crack,
foxes everywhere.

3.

I keep trying to find my way
through the imagined landscape.
Loveliness of maps, that they are flat,
no roots to stumble over, no hills to climb.
So that life I was born a book.

4.

Later, in China, there was bronze
as two dear poets of my neighborhood
have discovered and made beautiful again—
patina, contour, rough-textured mysteries,

spaces cut from the dark safe inside.

5.

All vessels are ritual vessels.

No such thing

as a cup without a mystery.

Bronze. Gold. Cheap

paper coffee cup

is a throwaway Grail.

**The mystery is the shaping
of that which has no shape,
wine or water, so we can drink.**

21 January 2017

APOTROPAIC

1.

**Something else at stake here.
Magical deliverance — the girl
dropped the lemon at last,
the world breathed relief,
that sour fruit would have wrecked Eden
and this time for good. Her tears
were relief too, in confusion,
it takes a long time to learn
to let the wrong fruit go
and let it drop. Let the house
take care of it. Floor of all things.**

2.

**The French call a lemon a pear.
Weasels are cute for them but ferrets vile.**

**Who are we to know anything about things,
or anything but things?**

**Plastic flowers on the diner counter
need their Linnaeus too.**

3.

**Onomasticon. As usual
it's all about vocabulary.**

**Taxonomy of mood and matter.
Sometimes walking by the docks
you smell some chowder boiling
on a no-account rusty freighter
the kind registered in Liberia or Panama,
you wonder what fish is being eaten.
You get a little hungry though you just ate dinner.**

4.

**Thank her for voiding the catastrophe,
the downward turn, irreversible,
the Masonic Lodge in Hell.**

**She dropped the lemon at the instant
when the magic current swept through town
and filled her bare hands with potency,**

**magic of their own, her own, so ever after
words would come from voice and fingers
to protect those near her from disaster.**

**We're safe now despite the government,
Tudor and Borgias and Bushes and Trump—**

the styles are different but the cash is the same,

**it all is money and vanity, what else
could we expect from any state?
So I, the timid anarch, dared to write**

**and wrap my words in Kleenex
and slip them underneath her door
so she'll find it later when**

she bends to pick the lemon up.

21 January 2017

=====

**Heat comes, growling,
cracking in the baseboard.
Everything persuades me
it's alive. Can I rest
now, I seem to ask,
and let you all do
the work of being?
No sir, you're far from done,
you're just groaning
like the radiator,
clanking noises
when you have to begin.**

21 January 2017

=====

Picture something else—
hydrangea six months from now
blue by the seaside even.

This morning mist
is too beautiful, too frail
to clutch to mind.

The mist dissolves the remembered
into the actual, and the other way round.
Not eight yet and it seems to deepen.

2.
Beauty can be like that,
grows deeper as you look at it

The rail fence across the road
an ink stroke, Sung dynasty,

wavering horizon.

Forgive me,
I was almost describing.
Things don't like to be described.
Just praised. Listened to. Believed.

22 January 2017

=====

**Old-fashioned mistakes
go to church because you gotta
don't eat till you get home
cross yourself by the cemetery
imagine you are somewhere else
another country another time.
All wrong. All necessary.
Beatific blunders. Be glad.**

22 January 2017

=====

**All these wise remarks of mine
these days. What's wrong with me?
Shouldn't I just be dumb again
trying to figure out the simplest stuff?**

22 January 2017

MIST

**Mist says:
Look close**

**only what's
close matters.**

**Two little birds
in a bare bush.**

22 January 2017

=====

**Don't listen outside—
all that stuff is commercial,
tribal, manipulative, forced.
Listen inside. Listen inside
everything. Listen to
everything, like an animal.**

22 January 2017

== == == == ==

**The unwritten law
releases me
my eyes close**

**they have carried me
far enough
for one morning**

**the mist is safe
inside me now,
safe as sleep.**

22 January 2017

=====

**That could other.
Empfindung, a theory
conducive to belief
that something happens
in us from outside
of that same us. Emotion
without movement.
Though we say: I was moved
at the sight of. This that.
The outside maybe.
Unintended cause. Effect
unfathomable, can't even
feel what I feel. Magic
would be one answer
but isn't. The Greeks
had gods for such things.
I saw one the other day
in Kingston, she said
her name in my head.
She has very big hands.**

22 January 2017

=====

I have eaten.
My hands smell of food.
Mustard, mostly,
I hardly touched.
It is strange to think
we eat to live.
Is there another way?
I stood out back
a while watching a fawn
nibbling some corn,
she looked up
whenever I moved
then went back to eating.
Mostly I stood there
being peaceful at her,
as it got darker
I went back inside
while still she ate.
I had been present
at a sacrament I don't yet
understand. Privileged,
yes, but ignorant.

22 January 2017

=====

**Exhaustion remains possible.
Street singer on Montmartre
on quiet Sunday cantilena.
I am the young forgiver still
in love with every difference.**

**2.
Not Montmartre the next
neighborhood over, lower,
east. The yellow streets.**

**3.
How could I be sure
of anything that's said?
Frogs and toads, fluke and flounder,
measure me by ignorance.**

**4.
Who so slow the paraclete?
The comforting spirit knows our time,
scarlet memories lacerate the air—
would you choose to come
down into this interminable
conversation? All for the sake
of our few colors? Angels
don't see colors, they behold
everything in primal light.**

22 January 2017

=====

**Mist brings the rain
from the lake in the sky
where cloud swans drift
soft above us. There,
that's more like it, lyric
lie to wipe history away.**

23 January 2017

=====

**Man with nugget of gold in his pocket
and nothing else. What can he do?
How to get where gold is bought
and things are sold? He has only
the clothes on his back. His shoes pinch.**

23 January 2017

=====

**If the page dared to check
itself in the index
would it understand suddenly
what it really means?**

23 January 2017

IN THE LEPER COLONY

Don't know where I went to sleep but when I woke I was in a leper colony. Unclear whether I had the disease myself or was just visiting. But why would I? Eventually someone will tell me, or my body will. The lepers seemed pretty happy, considering. They were all excited about the new commandant of the camp, a brusque no-nonsense kind of businessman, no medical or pastoral experience as far as anybody knew. But voluble and confident. Self-confidence means a lot to a leper.

At the morning assembly, required, we all stood at attention, as well as we could, listening to his first address to his charges. We learned that we were lucky to have chosen him — unclear how or whether we had actually done that, but still, it showed a nice spirit in him. He was going to make our colony exemplary, the greatest, in fact, and protect it from freeloaders who pretend to be sick, and from disruptive elements trying

to insinuate new scientific “evidence” or so-called cures into our familiar and dependable methods, the tried and true chaulmoogra oil.

I was especially impressed with his first Order of the Day: all books were banned. A book, he pointed out, is just a package of germs, every page impregnated with some other leper’s germs, all different kinds of leprosy, not to mention other diseases. No, books are cesspits of infection. Each leper was to be allowed to keep one book — a Bible it might be, or Book of Mormon, or even a Koran — but never allowed to let anyone else read it, though once a week, at a special hour to be determined by the administration very soon, the leper might read from his or her book out loud, to anyone at all who chose to listen. Think what an inspiring moment that will be, every week, and every week the wisdom of some religion or novelist would inspire the citizens of the colony.

I was thinking about these things when two tough-looking orderlies, wearing mouth and nose masks, came

up and pulled me out of the row and marched me towards a shed at the edge of the enclosure. When they got me there, they began shouting at me in Spanish, bad Spanish as far as I could tell, with a heavy American accent. I don't know Spanish myself, so it was hard to figure out what they were saying, what with the accent and the muffling facemasks. Eventually I got the idea that they had checked my medical records, I didn't have leprosy, didn't belong in his wonderful environment, had no right to the benefits of residence and support. I nodded my head all the time, and answered in English, at which they scoffed, as if my accents were funny. Right in the middle of one of my sentences, they yanked me to my feet and shoved me through a door and slammed it behind me. I was standing in a desert-like place, a little lizard looking up at me. Behind me the huge grey wall stretched as far as I could see.

23 January 2017

Shafer Hous

=====

**Trying to decipher
what was never written**

blind men fingering the wind

**they brace their backs
against the blocks of the Pyramid**

uncertainty makes us strong.

23 January 2017

=====

**A deck of cards
hauling its prophecy
towards us
on all fours.
Try hard to believe
what seems to be.
The happening
only once of things.
The reprieve
comes from inside
where nothing
listens and
everything hears.**

23 January 2017

POETRY & PROSE

**The trouble with writing prose
is that I'm saying something
instead of listening.**

24 January 2017

== == == == ==

**Could the taste of the world
change overnight in the mouth?
There are I thought
permissions built into things,
roses, basilicas, even canals
where women stand in the cold wind
in headscarves, watching waterfowl.
This is how it was, all the same,
real, present, illusory, ready
to absorb our minds. Something
like that. We have to be there,
somebody has to watch the swans.**

24 January 2017

=====

**Suppose for a moment I have no identity.
I am someone else. It's an hypothesis,
let it rest on the table a while like pudding.
chocolate, faintly quivering when outside
this secret residence a truck rolls by. Loud.
I tremble a little too — is reaction identity?
Professor Klotz explained that living beings
display irritability—they react when you do
something to them. Run away. Cry out
for their mothers. Shrink in the petri dish.
So what bothers me is what makes me me?
More hypothesis. He blamed me for paying
to much attention to the girl beside me
but I really was interested in her fetal pig,
bigger, more dissectable than mine. But
there again, who was I at the moment?
These could be anybody's memory, don't
remember if she was fair or dark, clearly
a memory is just something you make up
so you think you're somebody who remembers.**

24 January 2017

ARROWS

**If an arrow could talk
would it express
more concern about
its target or its
speed? Or the motive
of the strong fingers
handled it so lightly
before they drew
remorselessly the bow—
would it care about that?
Are we of the senses
or of sense. We are arrows
with little time to think.**

24 January 2017

=====

**Crustacean time
to amble low
with a hard shell**

**ready to nip
the toes of felons
of the intellect**

**or snip the wires
that disinform,
the old old news.**

24 January 2017

=====

**Looking no one in the face
and they look right back.
Vacant lot. Hide back of billboard.
Walk with no one here,
he or she pressing close
beside you. By the light of no moon
you can read the huge poster
beneath which you have enlisted
in the army of the invisible
palpable. No one reaches out
and strokes your chest, you feel it
as if it's inside you. You speak
and no one answers, clearly
making sure you understand.
This is what the night is for,
and cities, their real meaning
is in the waste spaces in between.
Anybody can build. Only the wisest
bravest can leave the ground alone.
No one knows this better than you.**

24 January 2017

THE DESPONDENT PURSUIVANT

Check the records,
the waltz came later,
can't whistle in history
only now. An animal
holds a picture up—
simple as that. Clocks,
cathedrals, simple stuff.

2.
A chair was all we needed.
Her throne, who taught us
to cherish each detail.
Where else would meaning
hide or flourish but in
the actual? How can I limn
the face of anonymity?
Yet no one is the real
hero of this chronicle.

3.
Wait. Morning still
belongs to us, to me
even scion of clouds

Am I enough to be
outside, carrying aloft

a blank sign? C'est moi.

4.

**Ponder the unasked question
and from deep inside the book
the answer comes, smooth as
samite, sinople. Build an arbor
for your love and hrow grapes
on its interwoven laths, drowse,
let the birds fly in, fly out.**

25 January 2017

=====

**Some noble determinant
a flower in the wind
long after this. What kind?
A blue hydrangea busy
with thoughts, holds
its dew all day long
chambered, intricate,
safe. Soft in the garden.
Let your fingers gently
move through its manyness.**

25 January 2017

=====

**Imagine it otherwise,
a cat in a car
hurrying east. Purr.
The sun needs its help
to rise. Cats care little
for people, their work
is cosmic, they sleep
a lot to help the Queen
of Dreams whisper
to everyone, so art flows
through us day and night.**

25 January 2017

=====

**The anonymity of sainthood—
who listens
to the wind in the trees
(what trees? Maple
measelwood, Baldur's
mistletoe),
I conjure
by Saint Botolph
of East Anglia
71 churches bore hisname
but his head was shrined
in Ely, where I must
have done him reverence
during my follies in the fens.**

25 January 2017, Boston

PHARAONIC CARTOUCHE

**How close we live
inside the names.
For sound is spacious,
the sound of a name
is a big house
we live in, and in
things too,
in anything there is room.
In any thing there is room.**

25 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Out of grans sleep
comes roused
a dream republic
up to your waist
and there you stand
mafificent as morning
tossing your hair
and reciting to sparrows
the psalms that woke
you to be now.**

26 January 2017, Boston

=====

**As if it stood
alone among greenness
each tree stands.**

**Millions of trees
between Hudson and sea.
More them than me.**

**They are the real
citizens of America,
outnumber us,**

**outclass us in virtue.
Virtu. *Patience.* *service.*
A dead tree is fire,**

**furniture, frame
of the houses we
live in thanks to them.**

**Sometimes I hear
them talking, thinking
what we just thought**

we ourselves were thinking.

26 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Organized otherness—
spiritual investments
in pure raptures
of being here. This
nice place this only
place there is. So
here we are, marvels
of nature. We wait
our turn which turns
out to be always now.**

26 January 2017, Boston

=====

**We're trying to prepare
an answer to Dante's first
sonnet from the New Life.
We're still at it, months
centuriess later. Why
when Love had fed the
barely wakened Girl
my burning heart He,
Love, had wept so
bitterly and flown away.
Could Love be me and I
in dream or vision gave
myow heart to some girl
I called the donna, the lady
in control the ruler of earth
from whom one can flee
weeping into heaven?**

26 January 2017, Boston

(ETUDES FROM DANTE)

**Noon exactly on our endless day
I need to find a self to be
and find one in the dark woods**

**where every path was taken,
spoiled by the footsteps of selves
before me — where was my self?**

Could he find a virgin way to be?

**26 January 2017
Hebrew Rehab, Boston**

MORNING CHORALE FOR MOZART'S BIRTHDAY

**Servile contradictions
nodes of grace
the gears keep slipping
the match won't scratch**

**and then it all
of a sudden does,
sunrise et cetera
the whole globe spins**

**but above all lesser
circumstance
at the core of the cosmos
a child looks out the window.**

27 January 2016, Boston

PETIT JETÉ FOR BARYSHNIKOV

Legitimate
pretender to the air
a heel kicks backward
to ascend —
 all art
(that means)
 is somehow
contra naturam —
 a man
in midair leaping —
 or does it
signify instead
 the real
nature of what Nature is?

27 January 2017, Boston

=====

**Dream incessantly making masala chai
I rose to do so, taking dream instruction
as Aesculapius. Or to quiet the dream.
We always need to please the doctor.
Please the nurses. Leave the hospital
past the smiling Haitian orderlies. We all
come from different planets. Sometimes
a dream is the harshgest medicine there is.**

27 / 28 January 2017

=====

1.

Now from the needs
come seeds.
Plant these,
a thousand Solemn Masses
will spring up singing.
Ruthenian rite. And in the west
of the Ukraine a little chapel
to the Unknown Saint
whose image is in every house,
a mirror.

2.

Trust yourself
enough to be heaven.
Stars on all sides,
camels limping in
carrying amber
from god knows where.
You think: We live
in society like
insects in amber.
You know this is not true
but you're glad you said it.

27 / 28 January 2017

=====

**Resentment is Romeo
Remorse is Juliet.
They will never be married.**

**There should be only one
family, of all of us.
Mao knew this, but what
could one old man do?
The brother is the enemy.
That's what Cain, the Upright,
was trying to make us see,
or those hidden masters
who made up his story
to test our wits, I wonder
where that city is that
Cain went off and founded?**

27 / 28 January 2017

THE SAINTS

being ex
hypothesi
closer to
the Throne
of Power will
intercede
for us with
Majesty, by
being closer
than we are
now to the Source.
There is a logic here
Dante challenges
by praying to Love
rather than the Lady —
no wonder Love shrinks
weeping back to heaven.
We're still on the first poem
of all, still in the dark
where dreams fall out of trees
like water long after
the rain has stopped and pretty
girls are jealous of Her beauty.

ANNANDALE

**In the night up here
it all belongs to me —
all the dreams, the whole
blessèd dictionary.**

27 / 28 January 2017

DANTE'S OTHER WOMEN

**They move away, they die.
Love then is a process
of elimination, exclusion.
We admire what is left to us
and celebrate this remnant
as if it were what we wanted
all along. We rewrite pasts
and call it poetry. Math
(or numerology) will
help you with this. She
was nine, he was eighteen,
I am eighty-one. Pondering
this symmetry feels like
a good night's sleep.**

27/ 28 January 2017

=====

**Short breaths
of middle night
find a quick
measure, more
lute than viol,
more's left
unspoken.
Night knows
everything but
whispers slow.**

27 / 28 January 2017

=====

**A picture of fire
the sound of stars
close your eyes now
you have everything again.**

27 / 28.I.17

=====

**Tumult, reading glasses,
subway jolt, soda spilt,
wrong to travel so
fast in your sleep.
Only angels dare wander
with closed eyes.
Wings know the way.**

27 / 28 January 2017

=====

**How can you tell
who you are today.
The crows usually tell you
but today they flew away.**

**So guess. A guess is kind of gold
you can buy stuff with.
Temporary identities.
Luminous half-truths —**

**They'll carry you through
coffee at least, and on the bus:
and there the others are,
your dream dates, your enemies.**

**Each one of them is a god
of a universe, an own-world
vast or timid, each one
as unaware as you are.**

**Except that one over there,
the one with those eyes
fixed on you now —
those eyes really know what's so.**

28 January 2017

=====

**Inside me there is someone
whose name changes with the years
but the mountains don't,**

**the ones he looks at as long
as the light lasts, and he holds
the last light over the crests**

**and brings it deeper inside him
into the dark of sleep. He
all the time is totally relaxed,**

therefore steady as a stone,

**complete. He is someone
I want to be, or to sink inside**

**and be him all my time.
But then I hear the wind
whipping the curtains**

**in all the windows of the world
and want to run, half-certain
he'll be there when I come back.**

28 January 2017

INSTRUMENTS

**Just to try
make the word fall
nimble from the pen—**

**so much darkness
to believe in,
sculptures trying to come alive —**

**you know how museums are,
one puff of breath and
Queen Hatshepsut lives again,**

**she so sumptuously throned
like Sappho's prayer
or dream — I gladly mix antiquities.**

28 January 2017

=====

**Carving the paper
with the pen
I fail the alphabet—**

**those signs
do not sing to muscles
but to the quiet skill**

**of one thing upon another.
Lick the pen
and start again.**

`28 January 2017.

THE ORDAINED

The age of the thing
miracles itself
antimeria, sorry,
no softer word
to claim your hasty
ear, Mme. Monde,
I have to hurry
like a despot's hangman
to dangle all the words in place
so that you know me.

2.

For I am Canterbury after Rome
and Lhasa after Anglia,
my merits few, my good fortune
numerous. You priested me,
darling, when I was most asleep
and now I mutter words
of consecration all day long.

3.

But as you say, who listens?
In obscurity is wisdom,
in utter darkness even
a little candle seems dazzling.
So sing we in a dark time
hoping for the grace to jear.

29 January 2017

=====

**By calculation, a blue sky.
Apparition. One band
of color in the grey beginning.**

**When little's left
to be of me, the cloud
insists on parting. A hand
is always coming out of the sky.**

**A mouth is always waiting.
Speak me again,
that's what it means
to say a word,**

any word is a prayer to begin again.

29 January 2017

ARS POETICA

**Where is the ankle-deep
moorland turf of Yorkshire,
where is the peach tree
in the Brooklyn backyard
wrapped in burlap all
winter and in spring
brown sweet gum runs down?
Only the particulars
are of any use, scraping
frost off the chest on the porch,
soft ice under the fingernails.**

29 January 2017

GATE

1.

**We're meeting at the gate
and everything's a gate, a gone,
a road whatevering away
over the hills and into the house
next door where our mind
is stored, spiral nebula,
cafe on the corner, what them pass.**

2.

**This is called being called.
Vocation. To be at the gate
and to be the gate. To go
through. To be gone through.
Then to be gone.**

3.

**In the north they call a street a gate.
They know. They're closer up there
to the Pole, closer to home, source,
gate we came through, keep coming.
Thule is the womb, and we fall south.**

4.

**Study the loins of Apollo Belvedere
— does that name mean beautiful to see? —
see if the tender slender musculature
tells you something about your mother's face.
To stare at beauty is to be halfway home.**

30 January 2017

=====

**Do I have to keep going?
Because I own no miles
they're all on front of me
lined up like paper napkins
in a diner dispenser,
can get only one at a time,**

**but I want to be
there without going,
that's the magic spell
sought in this operation:
a candle lit, a black
hardened block of gum
from a peach tree
never oruned, an iron
key, a cup of saffron
water palest yellow,
only a trace of taste.**

**At the end I have
to be somewhere —
that is the law.
Maybe the onlyone.**

30 January 2017

=====

The danger of the situation is that it is a situation — a complex of variables linked in spacetime, clogged. How can we be sometime else?

Levant from the situation, ditch the system. Daytime is ma fix, the night is rigged. Any paper will tell you that. News-source I mean not an honest piece of paper with words on it somebody wrote.

31 January 2017

== == == == ==

**The quiet of snow
is often noted,
like a humming consonant
at the back of the throat—**

**and the dawn advances,
black shrinking back
to be the bare trees.**

31 January 2017

=====

Maybe things to wait for,
maybe maple sugaring come spring
even in these low parts
along the long arm of the sea
holds Great Antillia safe from Amérique.
We make do with corn and apples,
pears and pumpkins mostly.
pretending to the earth
that we care. Some of us care.
Some flowers grow only in the mind,
blue hortensias in seaside gardens,
the other blue flower, pale indigo
against the setting sun in Lower Saxony.

2.

Who should we believe,
a mountain?
A terrace over Lake Geneva
drinks under budding chestnuts
white and murrey? A calm
umbrella on a drizzly day
a pale wrist carries, someone
whose name you almost remember?

3.

Why so glum, though? There's always

**marriage, even in this special heaven
the words link together to lead to,
o just keep your fingers on the chain,
feel the sleek steel and the rough rust,
wet and dry, oily and dusty, every link
leading to the next and all to heaven
aforesaid, this special one that one
gives to another and two make one.**

**4.
So I claim
the joy of reason
even in this season
snow on the ground
and still snowing,
soft and brilliant
in the motion-sensor
light on the deck,
flake upon crystal on
and on, scatter,
not dense, not heavy,
each instance a gleam,
crystal, diamond, done.
If we can talk about it
it must be true.
If it lets us say all its million names
we must be free.**

31 January 2017

