

9-2017

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1.

**As if from the beginning
we knew this flame**

**aria the light sings
all tremolo of brds and clouds**

and all we ever have to do is listen.

2.

**The gifts. These are the gifts
pf entity. Know
yourself as one of them.
Take it reverently inside.**

3.

**In the parking lot at Staples
on a very tall light pole
a seagull hugely arrives.
It makes me feel like asking even more.**

1 September 2017

=====

**In the regiment we used to say
Death's only half a block away,**

**always behind us, never before
so head for the woods and try to be trees.**

1 September 2017

=====

Clarion could be
or shimmer over the hill—
who can hear
such things,
vital signs of a repression
whose name is *Homo sapiens*?

Ah, come on, don't
leave a sad truth
hanging in the air
like a worm-wrecked apple
festering on the tree,
leave space for hope,
it's no crazier than all
the rest of our lunacy—

so taste the first
thick cream of the morning cow.

2.
Bell tower I mean. Big Ben
silenced. Go to church
to hear the bells—
from inside the building
the bells sound far away.
We live for things like that.

**Or ask the question—
it might turn out to be
the one the Lord wants to answer,
that throbbing in your chest,
the two silly images in your mind
that meld to form a perfect rose.**

2 September 2017

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

**Or one day it will all stop working
and then we'll see who we really are
and what we've done and where we've done it,
and the wind will try to set us in peace.**

2 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Our little habits our mistakes
chipmunks maybe
but pound like stallions through our dreams.
You're never sure.
That's the point of music,
will it end? And if it ends
what will be left
of where it's been, and of you
it took along with it?
To this place. Flowers on the dining room table.
Peruvian lilies, daisies, uncertainties.**

3 September 2017

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

**We like
it nourishes
the soul.**

3 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Sitting by the fire
look at the fire.
Sitting by the sea
look at the water.
Sitting outside anywhere
look at the air.
The air never lies.**

3 September 2017

== == == == ==

**I calculate it takes
about three of these
notebooks of mine
to produce a mile of writing.**

This concerns me.

**A mile of anything is
closer to where you're going.**

Or coming from.

Writing

might be fall

from primal lucid sound silence.

Or mile after mile to get there at last.

3 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Call it a prairie
and walk there.
Be first.
Let the first flight goslings
cry overhead as they pass
not always southward but
always to water.
Be like them. Cry
in simple words
as if you really did
understand what they mean,
words or birds
and grassy fields or that
morning sky over your—
yes, even your head.**

4 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Near the exit. Bridge.
Everything enacts
another meaning—
anything you see
can speak of death,
illness, paradise,
the end. Antlers
of the young stag.
Antique shops.
Full of dead time.
You get the picture—
next exit 1 mile.**

4 September 2017

=====

**Listen to the flowers
before they go,
blue on the rain day
not fading
 --so might the old
have said it
when they were young,
Novalis, Mörike, Rilke,
the blue flower is
always in your own backyard.**

5 September 2017

[Praise to Hibiscus!]

**A dark thread
on white muslin—**

**hair of a himan,
clock on the wall**

**where have we come
to see such miracles**

**rain in the sky
the ancient pavement dry.**

5 September 2017

SYMPHONIA DOMESTICA

**To be the same as
not be old—
kitchen light on,
dining room off.
To tell the weather
all over again
how to be.**

**How
to be Zeus in the house,
how to sleep.**

5 September 2017

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

**If there were enough to go around,
real music, the kind
falls from the sky and
someone**

5 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Counting on it
almost gets you there.
Ribbons in the sky,
maybe later rain.
El Greco pauses by the fire,
heats a cup of wine and water,
waits. We see him waiting—
that is what colors tell,
long pauses between brush strokes,
sad memories we will never know.
But through the dusk we hear the man sigh.**

6 September 2017

=====

**The pains control us,
submarines patrolling
our most secret waters
and no consulate
to hear our complaints
about how we are violated
by what we merely are.**

6 September 2017

== == == == ==

**More width—an egg
at least, a spiral,
a bandolier on a guerilla,
a cave mouth saying Yes!
in every mountain,
we're getting there, the blue
off the sky slipped
round our shivering shoulders,
Yes! more Yes!
The birds note our self-absorption,
flock gently south from our need.**

6 September 2017

== == == == ==

**If anywhere is as good as here
then we might as well have ice cream—
the rigorous deployment of the easy,
the strict decorum of the obvious,
these are our Gypsy lures to which
the silvery fish of Castalia seldom
fail to rise, lip-synching our next
half dozen lines to us, we mindly
follow, O Poets of us, we marvelodes.**

6 September 2017

=v = = = = =

**Why not new words?
Be big as your brother
and full of light. If
I understand you,
then it's a real word
however much it may reek
of shoepolish and glue.
It works! The crate flies!
The seagulls sneer but flee.**

6 September 2017

Remembering Ashbery (for BOMB)

The Hindus spoke of *lila*, play, the play of the gods that makes the world. I think of that recalling Ashbery, the ever-playful willingness to be surprised by what he might not even have known he was feeling. Surely he was the least grown-up octogenarian I ever met—there's a kind of sacred immaturity, smile of Apollo, , in that delight in the new and in new joinings of blessedly ordinary things.

More than anyone I can think of he rescued poetry from the solemnity and self-importance it so often threatens to assume — especially in the angry politics and intense self-absorption of the decades in which his work began, when young John started to show us some light through the trees.

The grand thing is that he always surprises — not by gunshots or *épater*, but by the subtle, gentle, afternoonish juxtaposition of image and idea. The next line is always startling because so natural — a paper-moth settles on your wine, your fingertip flicks it gently up and it flies away.

6 September 2017

=====

**Broken urn
punchline to no joke
spilled oil, just a little
I hear you talking to me**

**could it be beginning again
the pain is hiding somewhere
more oil, the engine coughing —
lachrymose tidings from dream world
but you're awake now.
You're safe.**

7 September 2017

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

**When it's dark enough to see
I'm with you.
Cradles
in folklore museums,
fanciful carvings
where are the children,
how can we beat our descent
against simple things
like raindrops on windowpanes,
color of your eyes?**

7 September 2017

=====

**And this is how it must be
every day forever
because I will it so
and that's all will is for—
to go on as you are,
perfectly fitted in
to whatever happens.)**

7 September 2017

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

**When I am two miles inside you
I can finally sleep. News
won't reach me
of storms and politicians,
I'll be alone with my own
native dreads, the dream.**

8 September 2017

== == == == ==

**He said enough. Fill
the martini glass with olives
and let the gin take care of itself—
doing my own job is hard enough
without worrying about vermouth.
I am the man who brings you rapture,
affordable, dependable—just
watch me mow your tidy lawn.**

8 September 2017

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

**Even when there's no one
left to apologize to
there's still the weather.
Smile at the rain,
the wind will remember.**

8 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Tug the door open
there's more inside
in tiny potters figurines [?]
full of ointments,
the kind you need.
Oil of oregano
they distill in Hell,
everything needs somebody
in this world, a friend
steals berries from the bears,
medicine cabinets tremble
when you finally slam them closed.**

8 September 2017

== == == == ==

**It's a harbor anyway
this waking up
safe from the perils of the night
noctium phantasmata,
rain pelting through imagined windows.
The tranquil light of the actual
slips through torn curtains.**

9 September 2017

=====

**I was a dream
that almost had you—
chain squeezing Unica’s hips
in those terrible Bellmers [?]
—a chain is about leaning:
systematic, link after link,
plus find constant.
What the body allows
the dream digs in.
The framework tightens,
it takes a revolution
to turn a gasp into a song.**

9 September 2017

== == == == ==

**As if it were morning
but the dark is safe
and no one sees me.
But what is there to see?
A bathrobe trying to think.
If I forget how to sleep
What do I remember?**

9 September 2017

LOCUS

It all comes from place. It all goes back to place. Most of it we carry with us. Wherever [?], as we say. Barbara is flying to Nairobi and who will she be there? Mac suddenly understands he needs to study the ocean, be near, become. We live in language so freely because we come from ocean. Whatever [?]. Long ----- . We need everything—we can spell. Freedom has a grammar of its own. Things hurt too. Have a care for the feelings of things—that's what language is for.

9 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Pure testimony
rigor and truth
salmon pool of Donegal
we come from what they heard
the parent people
with their ears in the wind
and their eyes on the whitecaps,
we are outcomes of their experience
which (as the French know)
is always an experiment.
I am the wave that day [?]
they saw tumble on a rock.**

9 September 2017

=====

**If I can no longer
read character from faces
who am I?**

10 September 2017

== == == == ==

**The grain of wheat
crunches in the teeth.
What does taste cost
the perceiving mind?
Can I taste a ripe cherry
and still walk up Montmartre,
out of breath on the steps
and a church looking on?
I look at the werd impending dome
and all I can think of is Africa.**

10 September 2017

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

**The sweetness of things
is legitimate.**

**Our taste
diverges often
from the actual.
honey left at the bottom of the cup,
plane disappearing into a cloud.**

10 September 2017

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

Say good about all.

Be a white wall.

Every portrait will become you,

every landscape be your homeland.

10 September 2017

== == == == ==

**The open spaces
in the marbled paper
let you in,
and once in you go far,
far as stone and true as fire,
because liberty is part of the design.
any sign
points to it
one way or another,
you choose either,
one mile or a thousand
and you get there.
As if time were real!
you shrink from the distances
but they are all we
such as we are
really have between us.**

11 September 2017

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

**Sometimes the world
a jealous silence place.
Squeeze it where it counts
and hope it works.
It does smile easy too.**

11 September 2017

=====

**The alms
the light pours down on us
giftable mortals,
aswim in all the hopes
language gives us,
to say is to be.**

11 September 2017

ANTLERS

**over you
come play
in my forest**

**you have no woods
you have a cave
cold and with a stream
curling through it**

**but my antlers are green
mussy, small animals
delight to chew on them,
do you have teeth too,**

**can you come in my woods?
The head
is the place where we meet
foreheads rub together**

**like Tibetans
like sunray falling on cabbages
early autumn is it
I invite you into my antlers**

**I mean my trees
those shoes I tie on**

**to walk deep in the ground
withyou, are you coming already**

**how long does horn have to wiit
to learn language?
I felt the flesh of your left side
where the heart makes its conversation**

**I felt your right side cool, the moon
sailed overhead with a moth
stuck to his brightness,
now will you come with me?**

The cave has all the answers.

11 September 2017

=====

**Only the words
will ever happen again.
Everything else
is once only.
I'm gone before
you got here
but the words wait for you.**

11 September 2017

=====

**Answering the wind
soon as waking
lets light in
with the word, the one
word that comes to mind.
That is your answer
to the question of the day.
the trees are still green
in September for instance
or I never even saw my Aunt Sally.**

12 September 2017

=====

**It's all about taking
the world personally,
believing the horizon,
naming the trees you pass—
not elm, oak, maple,
not those kinds of names
but each tree's own, not some
label scholars give it, but
each tree's own personal name.
And every tree is someone.
And I am not a White
American Euro-Celtic hybrid
I am Robert. And who are you?**

12 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Coaching the weather
old men on the porch
maneuver the clouds around
using memory-sticks and tricks
they learned from summer days.**

**What else is there to do
but rule the world? We can't
leave that to kings and presidents,
we have to do it right here
and do it all by ourselves.**

13 September 2017

=====

1.

Waiting on the edge for it
the air will come, bearing
its eagles up to you, window,
cliff-top, idol of a lewd deity
shaped out of raincloud,
damp destinies await you
In the science of lingering.

2.

Stop right there.
You can see it well enough
from here. The eye,
the scarlet spiny hackles
piercing the horizon.
Any minute he'll be here
and we call him *Any Minute Now*.

3.

What a sly unspeakable sonata!
Numbers make fools of us all,
and shapes we carve to stuff with
what we think are words—but are they?
Is anything what it seems?
Toss the dictionary overboard
and start again. Boat. Oark River. You.

13 September 2017

=====

**Marching under the river
noisy as finches
we frighten fishes.
We imagine ourselves
in illicit places,
playgrounds of the spirit,
phantom opera houses,
cold ovens full of warm bread.**

**2.
That is what Love taught us,
the sky fits in our pockets;
everything is lost so everything is possible,
a kite flying over the cathedral,
a man refusing to weep
although his nose stands at his side.**

**3.
Come back to the river.
The river has said everything already,
so no one cares what we say—
that leaves us finally
utterly free. I mean the sea.**

14 September 2017

=====

**Let everything be the same
and then again. You told me
something about a door, a glass
but not of wine. I answered
with a drawing of a house
my father made 100 years ago.
Now we can ride. Now
we can go upstairs and hide.**

15 September 2017

=====

What we see in *the darkest room*.

15 September 2017

=====

**Sometimes you just know
the phone is going to ring.
It happens. You talk
with someone—relation
or relationship, how far
apart those are.
Or it's from someone
you hardly know, or never met,
and there he is, all words
and no images and you think
Why did I answer the phone?
Isn't it enough to know
someone is calling, and best
never to know who?**

16 September 2017

=====

**Going out where we came in
seems a fool's game to me.
Never retrace your steps—
Paradise is always a furlong straight ahead.**

16 September 2017

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

**Sell me a ticket
to the other side of now
where I am waiting, almost
patiently, for me to show up.
There are trees there too
and I suspect birds are in them
though who can tell from here
what color their songs will be?**

16 September 2017

== == == == ==

**If everything were known
it would be the other world.
But as it is, it is.
And we with it. *Darkling*
the poet said, and all the blur
of space time that yielded [us,
ancient fresco on the wall
lime and time corroded, no one
can tell what that lost image is.**

17 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Little things
that sit on windowsills
and remind.**

**Penguin in snow globe
triptych of Our Lady
rabbit carved from stone**

**and sunlit-trees behind all that—
I let these things
do all my thinking for me—**

what could I add to what they remember?

18 September 2017

=====

The sighs of butterflies
it said and I got it wrong,
I got a small bird, blackish,
past the window as
the morning warmed its way
into the day.

 There is so much
to hear, evaluate, participate,
renew. And there
they come again,
slow-flitting, roly-poly almost,
two of them now
gone over the roof
size of the sky
contracted through trees,
once in Dakota
I saw the land big as the sky,
prairie, grass shoulder-high—
see, looking out the window
is the same as remembering.
Yesterday, bright orange, broad
as my hand, flew by our trees.
Skimming the flowers
around the hospital, blue
and a strange mauvey kind of red.

19 September 2017

=====

**Revise my opinion
by the light.
Then by the sound,
then by the touch,
her firm thigh
as we're almost waking
into this new parable,
this metaphor of a morning.**

19 September 2017

=====

**Sometimes one's own breath
sounds like aother man's voice
far away.**

**He's standing on a hil
watching the stars.**

**He can see them much better
than I can. he calls to them
and they answer.**

**So I relax,
knowing hell get around
to telling me what I need to know,
stars commonly telling the truth.**

19 September 2017

THE ESCAPE

**A dying man
slips out of himself
into the world.**

20.IX.17

== == == == ==

**Breeze in the trees
the sun. Movement
is more than music**

**mostly. No sun
hence no shadows
to dance**

**counterpoint
to the leaves.
Then breeze stops**

**and no one knows
anything again.
Every leaf an open door**

and who is waiting in it?

20 September 2017

=====

WINTER. SPRING.

**All for a glass
of water
today and not tomorrow.
Spindly shanks on the messenger —
carry my meager letters, mailman,
give them to anyone you please,
everyone will know the one for her,
him. They are the company.
my people n the world
whoever I am. They know.
The company is the eyebeam of the mind—
and a little while ago I knew
that is meant when I wrote that.**

20 September 2017

== == == == ==

**The word comes first
and lasts.**

**On my way to the hospital
I see the sun**

is safe in the trees.

21 September 2017

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

**Back to life. Promises
have kept me strong. Long
the nurse's pony tail,
sunlight on the roof.**

**22 September 2017
NDH, Rbk**

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

**Window in the west
where it should be
to show, in the last light
over the blue hills
the words the world
is written from,
and you can see them
only there.**

**22 September 2017
NDH, Rbk.**

RETURNING TO THE PLACE

**where Place is all
and every beginning.**

**in anaesthesia I was no place —
after that, no place seemed real**

**for a while until
I found the Place again.**

**The Place has you in it
the Place makes me,**

**shapes me, the Place
begins everything again.**

23 September 2017

=====

**But the blue is pale
vague sky of the hottest days—**

**blue cools us and when it fades
the heat makes you feel**

**continuous, just part of the air
around you, identity**

**erodes on hot days,
all those bikinis on the beach**

yearning to be part of the weather.

23 September 2017

=====

**solution quiet
trees remembering
heat of the day
they dream the
meaning of only
now when our
greedy stares no
longer distract them.**

23 September 2017

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

**Ribbons in the sky
last Friday driving home**

**untie those clouds
to see the presents that tumble out**

**the presence maybe
those ancient stones that float**

**over the speculations of the alchemists
as they too idled by the riverside.**

24 September 2017

=====

**Would block
my ear
to unhear**

**sp,e bird's first
chime outside
my quisling window**

**collaborating
already to let
the new day in?**

25 September 2017

=====

**Now let me listen.
The box of gifts
opens, full of friends.**

**Edgewise to the great
magnetic flair
one sleeps ill
but dreams deep—
gate of ivory dreams,
false witnesses,
goddesses no one ever knew.
Everyone is in the dark.
Everyone worships alone.**

25 September 2017

(1:40 AM)

**The knack
of sleep
comes back
as after dream
or drunkenness
an ordinariness
returns and heals**

25 September 2017

**Let this book
pillow your head.
Dream of ice skaters in Vienna—
Danube canal? Ice rink,
horses of the aristos [?]
hobbled by the frozen fountains
and music everywhere.
To be born as such a place!
Skirts of the dancers, swords
of the hussars! Can you ever
forgive me for just being me?**

25 September 2017

**Illegible memoranda
are best. Nothing to do!**

25 September 2017

**A word maybe
and to say it—
isn't that river enough
or waterfall
gentle among the lilies?**

**2.
So that at least
is permanent, the sense
of place. It knows you.
It led you here maybe.
After all the trampling [?]
buffaloes got close.**

**3.
Got through, I mean,
the way a ball goes through the air,
natural, true to (bound by)
its own nature
 to be symmetrical
and travel far, and fall.**

**4.
I wonder though if I'm telling you enough—
aren't there maps of it, and secret orders [?],
and quiverings on _----- -----
and you have to imagine what is being said?**

26 September 2017

=====

**Ordinary
comes in May for us—**

**the girl on the raft
down the Amazon,
raccoon digs up amaryllis.**

**The air is hot
over the river.
The flag's asleep.**

26.IX.17

NOTES FOUND ON A PILLOW ALONGSIDE YOUR HEAD

for ClydaJane

Never contrive continuity.

Never force thingstogether —

forced copulation is an abomination.

Let things (thoughts, facts, anecdotes) find one another.

There is no such thing as random.

**Looking for a continuity ignores the continuity already
always there in thoughts arising.**

Always. As things come to mind.

That is the precise and correct order:

the stones in proper order to build the temple.

= = =

***So this is a new religion, the Cult of Inherent Continuity.
Its god is the next person you meet on the street. And like
all new religions, it is true — at least for a while.***

26 September 2017

AT WARD MANOR FARM

**A bog
darkling
cranberries
in apple country,
no mist yet
but the shadows
ready for it
when it comes.**

26 September 2017

=====

**Ordinary
comes in May for us—**

**the girl on the raft
down the Amazon,
raccoon digs up amaryllis.**

**The air is hot
over the river.
The flag's asleep.**

26.IX.17

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

**Deep rosary in the bones
heart beats are beads of
I hear too well—
my body is praying**

**the temperature
the learned young woman
holiday canapes, white wine and red,
pours more of the white
into the cup of air.
Paradox—it gets darker and cooler.
She smiles and puts the wines away.**

26 September 2017

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

**Place I work
cars gleam in sun
just a few of them
chrome their bright windows
I see when I wake.
Light always
hungry for form,
goads us into shapes,
obligations, recognitions,
never mind all the trees between.**

27 September 2017

== == == == ==

**We live in the Ponent
of their world,
the ones we keep in mind,
read, cherish,
worship in our chapels,
schools, *shuls*, cathedrals.
It all ___ ___ from them.
They were the Betweeners,
Edge-folk, precarious,
twixt sea and desert stretched
the harp string we still hear.**

27 September 2017

=====

**Self-loathing
gives us
to other people.
It is a sign
that tells them
Use At Will.**

27 September 2017

ALGOL

up there
over. Why
al-ghoul, the demon
star? Where
do such notions
rise?

O dependable
lunacy of antiquity,
loveliest pathways
to getting it right,
glass shadows,
trees
made entirely from
the saliva of bats.

27 September 2017
Shafer

== == == == ==

1.
Always a meeting
somewhere,
a song
depends on what you need —
blossom, berry, root.

2.
I am a miracle
of making do,
I am the world
and all you have.

3.
No one is coming.
Everyone is already here
forever. Listen to them—
some say it makes sense,
some say it sings.

27 September 2017, Shafer

=====

**The little river
is quiet
behind my head—**

**slow water, week
with no rain.**

**It's not complaining.
I hear my pulse
when I rest my right
ear on the pillow.**

**Wake up! That's the wrong
marchstep for this
sunniest of hours,
come out and play
your mind is just an elegant trombone.**

27 September 2017, Shafer

HOLY

**To give pleasure
with no desire
except to please.**

27.IX.17

== == == == ==

**Break in the weather
beak in the weaving
yanking the gold
filigree loose, threads
up-raveled, rough
texturing the old smooth.
Leaves. Things happen.**

**2.
What the words
let us get away with
saying, love and such
or feel of truth,
early autumn trees
a shade less green,
breeze in them
cool after hot spell
do you wonder
why I tell you this,
why you
bother listening?**

28 September 2017

=====

**Even if you don't
believe in God,
pray.**

**Pray fervently,
arms outstretched,
in all churches [?],
all you need and all you fear,**

Pray.

**The world
is full of listeners.**

28 September 2017

the intensity of the ordinary

== == == == ==

**So many trees
so few me's
he said and walked
out into weather.
But what if an angel
told him to count
the trees, or even
like poor Bruckner
all the leaves on
even one of them,
would he? And would he
ask the angel why,
and if he did, would he be told?
Or would he
even still be listening?**

29 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Mathematics might be our biggest mistake.
Counting the innumerable
and multiplying by will.
And a calendar is an abomination.
O for a day that has no name
free floating in a monthless now.**

29 September 2017

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**Listen, the will
gets in the way**

**but the stream goes by.
Etymology of ocean,**

**no one knows, many
pretend scaly fruits of guesswork**

**but he is broad, the sun
looks on him with favor,**

**together they made the land
they bred us to inhabit.**

.....

LOVER

**Dream me in you
so we can keep
talking till we meet,**

**the quiet alleys of the waking mind
will have us walking there
tought in thought entwined
as if this diamond want
of mine had found a plain
ring on your finger to
embed in embed us
in each other till**

someday we lie down again.

29 September 2017

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**And it could just be the night
or just the night
they call At-One-Ment
I wonder
what you bring to the river
to cast into its ever-flowing awayness,
the sad stuff that we throw
as emblems of the bad we do.
But we are like them too,
sad vessels, still hold milk, water,
wine, the chemicasls of onward.
but cracked and dirty. Don't
throw yourself in. The river
cant heal you. Au contraire—
your being there is all the river needs.**

29 September 2017

== == == == ==

**Banknotes of a foreign country
How picturesque
They are, nations,
Personal identities.
Sweet, dangerous,
So old-fashioned.
Someday we will live on light.**

29 September 2017

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**Weird light
of lifting a hand—
complexity of a straight line
leaf off a tree**

**that church in Venice
with saint Lucy in it
my eyes my eyes
how far to go
to make a word speak**

**color is beginning to travel,
unravel,
 ` it's time time
turn your back and face the llight,
song too needs to sleep,**

**bitter politics of waking late.
All this is just one single
word scratched on a crumblibg wall.**

30 September 2017

GRAFFITI

**Graffiti — that's
what poems are,
scrawled on the mind's
ordinary lucidity.**

30 September 2017