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The rabbit that bothers the sun
is small and chilly, needs
all the warmth he can get, has to be
cold to hold fresh and intact
the precious semen of all our thought
— human, angel, animal, matter—
all thinking all the time, and from
the rabbit’s little cup of thought
the queenly Sun envisions us.

1 October 2017
Enough myth.
Time for math,
the other
on the other
side of the same
dream. Here,
I count my
breaths for you.
Only for you.

1 October 2017
In the *iosgad* of the knee
the hidden place
valley by the tendon
dark, soft —

There
Thetis’s fingertips pressed deep
when she knelt before Zeus
praying for her son.

Sit quiet, reader, and you too
will feel her fingers’ touch.

1 October 2017
= = = = = =

And after all the others
there is some me
standing idle in the big trees
trying to pass for a shadow.

But you can see “my” breath
either because of the chilly day
(it is) or because words
themselves are blue as they sift
quietly from the lips,

    a little like
those Mexican codices where breath
as a blue cloud emerging
from the profile of the speaker
god or human.

    As if it doesn’t matter
what he actually was saying,
what counts is he was speaking.

And in that blue cloud all words are found.

1 October 2017
I heard it from far away
but it got no louder as I came close.
Then I was beside it
watching the flow and fall
but still I couldn't understand.
Wind in leaves, quick
shadows amazing me.
Some organizing principle at work.
Or was it just music?

2 October 2017
I can feel it when you’re thinking about me, you know. I’m aware you’re doing it but I’m not sure what you’re actually thinking — so far you’re safe. But after years and years of people thinking at or of me, I’ve gotten used to the sensation, a little like a tender touch on the back of the hand barely stirring the fine hairs. But no hand is involved.

2 October 2017
All my life I’ve been turning doorknobs the wrong way. Evidently they’re supposed to turn away from the door jamb, the lock. Makes sense. All these years wrestling...didn't I really not want the dolor to open, no one comes and no one goes? Could I have been so intelligent?

2 October 2017
Native woods native words
the cyclotron of ordinary time
hurls us together—
to touch this thing
means to name it. Light
fades down through the trees
until it is hardly different
from here. From me.
All the words are gone
from the dictionary but come,
there is all the more room for us.

2 October 2017
Those trees, they shape the day I see out there,

shape the way I see at all, all those greens under all that blue, and slim streaks of civic otherness slip through—road, rail, wire. A car goes by like a revelation.

3 October 2017
Let it be sunshine
after all. That dragon gorge
I grew up in
gave me my taste for dim.
Dim means home.

But there she is,
Our Lady Overhead ad Hot,
I lift my cold hands in her light,
a convert to lucidity.

3 October 2017
he fragon has legs and wings
more like a man than a fish,
walks, can fly, stamps
his feet and screams fire
he knows what the earth is for
and how it works, he lurks
deep in geology and comes out
when the errant nations need him:
o teach us the land we stand on
teach us the real rules..

3 October 2017
Island.
No help in sight.
So no harm.

Let ocean do it —
it knows the way.

3 October 2017
at the doorway
a gardenia
flowers every year
on her birthday,

our mother’s,
our mother’s favorite flower.
You open the door in April
and say Hello, Mom
as that scent comes in.

I don’t think she ever saw Florida
but she is there.

3 October 2017
What if the world wouldn’t let you close the window or pull the curtains closed?
What if it is always there?

3 October 2017
The amazement is shared.
Call it a basswood tree
American linden, trace
the heart-shaped leaves and say
heart. Heart. We recognize
ourselves in what we see.
Parts of us. Rivers and roads.
This blue line the nurse discovered
somehow leading to my heart.

3 October 2017
Enough to say so again and again, the day’s a dictionary waiting to make sense—nothing random, purest harmony. Vibration of a single string.

You heard at dawn a conch shell blown, ritual of the ordinary air.

4 October 2017
Knock on the door
listen to the hollow
inside.
   Be a body
empty. sTong-ra,
empty enclosure.

Be hollow. Hollow
means hallows. Holy
emptiness fit
for everyone.

Open
the door. From the widow
ledge outside a bird
you can’t name
saunters off into the sky.

4 October 2017, NDH
WAITING ROOM TV

Insolence
of what just happens,
the news,
one thing after another,
why bother,
leaves keep falling.
This body is real
but how far does it go?

4 October 2017, NDH
The cast-off chasuble
and the priest unarm’d.
Like fated Troilus
a faith without ritual
succumbs to any trollop insight
or strolling good idea.
Ritual is rock, tu sais,
keeps the mind from
tinkering with truth.

5 October 2017
ANTOINE DOINEL

over and over
in the mirror
in the movie
to discover
a man’s own
meaning,
or say
any word once
till you get it,
even if it takes
a lifetime of saying it.

5 October 2017
Too many things
on the desk
for any one religion,
I turn out yet again
to be a pastor of particulars,
no Big Idea to hold
all these beautiful things together,
I shepherd them in and out of language
hoping for the best. By which
I mean you read them, you smile.

5 October 2017
Pale muslin curtains
thin, censoring the light
morning lets in. Leaves
shadow-dance across them,
make this new day
look like a discussion
between the old friendly
enemies, dark & light,
wind & standing still.
I remember old Hungarians
playing chess on
stone tables in Washington Square,
oisy clatter
of snatched pawns,
fierce smiles and words
nobody knew. See,
no curtains can ever
block memory.

5 October 2017
Waving out the window
a human arm
the truest flag

5 X 17
IN HOC SIGNO

It has to do with the sign
the thing we read
the thing that tells
and all around the signs are winking,
colors, words, birds, clouds—
mostly birds.

The Romans knew
birds tell everything,
their fearful sagacity
we read.

2.
Picture it. Every
cloud has a hawk in it,
every bush a prowling cat.
Fox. To know
where anything could be
is to know where anything is.

3.
If you know the name
of something does it run away
in fear of being known?
What if you were walking along
in the woods
at twilight
and someone called your name—
what would you do?

6 October 2017
R’S POETICA

1. No grammar only images. And that is itself an image swirling quick, rushing towards you.

2. So there should be a suspension then a fall, a cliff in every line, cave in every word.

3. The necessity is like curly kale or purple winter cabbages, resists the weather, challenges the teeth.

4. Portions may lictly be clear portions dingy in half-light. the whole hot as silver in your hand.

5. It has to give itself to everybody uniquely, differently, satisfyingly yet be untouched itself — a courtesan.
6. Keep wanting to know more, give each word a chance to find a wife—this pause is called electricity.

7. Run to the grocery, run to the woods, say boo to the goose and kiss the cross—every mistake blossoms as truth.

8. Write with the pen of desire dashed in the liquid of your ignorance. Let it dry in the sun, and see.

9. Every word an island in a stormy sea, on the frail raft of my intelligence I seek the safe shore.

10. Close to the sun the image fades—don’t outsmart yourself with clarity—mysteries last longer than math.

11. All bad advice is good for you. Use and discard, wipe your brow,
go look at the asters growing by the road.

12. Specifics are the irritants around which the poem forms its pearl. Isn’t truth annoying sometimes?

13. Snatch the maiden from her tower snatch the lover from his steed: be them children in a playground at last.

14. The story doesn’t have to be told, it has to be sniffed out, neighbor’s fireplace on the first cold autumn night.

15. Doubt does you no good—leave it out. Confidence is smarmy — fear for dear life. You’re in the words’ hands, let them run you.

16. The sun, enormous sleeping pill, warms you towards silence—let language be a sort of sleep.

17. O child of Hermes and Apollo
let it do all the work
while you pray to your unknown Mother.

18.
Strictly speaking is the only way.
Give them gristle, give them fat
so they’ll worry your bone in delight.

19.
Sanity of a cylinder,
precision of a square—
let things pass through you on the way to being there.

20.
Caught in common light the word crumbles.
Save its life. use it to say a different
thing, a claw hammer, a broken dream.

21.
More like a poltergeist than Apollo,
full of clatter, rumble of real things,
scary but a little silly—poetry.

22.
Try to take the night seriously—
dark and moon and uncanny noises.
Then you spoil it with language, that neon light.

23.
Skinny legs but strong. Agile elbows, fingers on the prowl. Of skin and hair and bone and meat, the human soul.

24.
That’s what the poem is always saying, go and come back, go where I can’t go, come back and never leave me alone.

7 October 2017
THREE HEARINGS

HEXAGRAM 57
Larry Chernicoff

Who knows who’s coming?
all we can do’s hope

help me hope

I hear an unknocked door

on the terrace several women saunter back and forth
as if there were sinewhere
and hey were three

eye were there once

and a voice calls from the sky
reminding

all most gods can really do is bring to mind

and then the shadow falls

shadows try to hide
the sad facts of human life

any life

a gentle stream, eddies and soft channels

not all is flow, not everything flows
the birds try to make it right with us

every flower says OK

but we know better than believe.

7 October 2017
OCTOBER
Larry Chernicoff

Cast aside the broken mirrors
you have seen too much already

let your fingers idle
on the rosary of the woman’s spine

call it prayer
and here come the gods

vast and beautiful and speaking language
no need to understand just listen

one came from India on his tiger
one from Anatolia on her special cloud

but one was always here
and woke up when the others came

a little cross to be awakened
a little turned-on by the company

you know how it is
we stop and start again

we hear the rain one drop at a time
and quarrel about history

a sad man sits on the curb
remembering when he cared about politics

and all the shiny cars go by.
I look up the road and see more trees

but these seem different somehow
is it autumn or my eyes?

7 October 2017
TIMELESS
Larry Chernicoff

He says this
but means that

says he wants this
but really wants that

and that is far away
belongs to other people old money
politics the end of the world

but even while saying this
he finds his way to that,
there is is, that,
he drinks it, prays to it, sits on its lap

because where you’re there
(when you have that)
it’s just like here (this):

a river delta
sound of a heron hooting as it rises
just like here

and yu can be one of the men and women
working in the shallows
from the middle distance they are beautiful

fishing with nets?
scouring the oyster flats?

the sun makes all of us into all of them,
a little beautiful, a little far away.

8 October 2017
SOME IMAGES SHOWN

Nape, back, hip.
She sits in the water
very white
nape, back, hip.
her face is elsewhere.
She is plump like a goose
or a swan, but heavy, heavy
her bottom in the water.

2.
Earlier she had stood on the edge of something.
She had big man arms, her own,
hiding her visage. Again.
Where is that elsewhere where her face is seen?
She wears flowing white dress and stands on the edge,
she wears no underwear
because she is supposed to be Poetry
and a poem has no underwear, ever,
always risky, always embarrassing.

3.
Or is it even the same woman?
The style is the same
but would you trust your life
to style? We want
our friends to have faces.
That is small of us
but sometimes they do.

4. Imagine that woman
not the back of your mind,
warm and comfy in the water,
naked pictures never catch cold—
on the contrary, they warm the mind a little,
like the scent of a flower or the name Waikiki.

5. When you can’t sleep
the maiden comes to call.
Maiden she is, unbought,
unhandled she comes along and says
“I am serenity, a kind
of beauty more to be than to see.
come wade with me—
someday we will teach each other to swim
and away we’ll go to where water ends.

7 October 2017
Apollo is beautiful—don’t forget that. He walked over here from the Belvedere, showed me what a body should be, always is. Walked over here in Harlem where every morning I waited for the bus in front of his famous theater, made me feel like a celebrity just standing there. The celebrated sun, the chariot, the wheel, all the round toys we play with, boys, beauty of our arm outstretched, having just let a ball drop free, balancing the world.

8 October 2017
The past is a sin
the future a time-bomb
the present is gone
before you can touch her.

Where is that man
you thought you were
a moment ago? Tell me,
please, because I too

am lost with him there.

8 October 2017
Where the territory end
the words take over. Loggers
at ease by their campstove,
smoke of also human breath
rising in the cool library air.

Work hard, élèves, let your vowels
suck consonants up from the ground,
consonants, those toots of all our brees—
be tender to your roots.

Fall asleep
at your desk now and dream
of a flowers that has no name
then wake and give it to a lover
who has not cometo you yet
though you hear somebody’s breath
close, close, through the syllables.

9 October 2017
Cast a spell
far as you can —
where it falls
a shadow rises
of what you
have to do or
build or be
just there, house,
a husband, a tree
full of unknown fruit,
ripe, juicy. you’d
be proud to offer
them to the ghosts,
to the ancestors—
so long they’ve been waiting!

9 October 2017
Rain in the night
heavy
as if it came
from deep sleep.
Grey sky morning.
How much of what
I see is me?

9 October 2017
What could the offering be
worth slathering on the stone
and praying for the wind to come
and take it to where the gods
or some of them are waiting?
Milk, meat, bread, blood, wine?
Or stones from beneath our feet,
yielding up the very ground
on which we stand. Or rest,
arguing gently with one another
till the light fades, musquitos hum,
a little rain falls, stops. We grow
quiet, like folk who know the answer.

9 October 2017
OPAL

I like the kind that come from mthe Antipodes, the kind that girls give to me, flecked scarlet, blue glints in the gentle milky cabochon. But there are other kinds — I see them sometimes in my dreams, blue to begin with or golden as the metal itself, but soft, soft, a stone that is always listening, the way gold itself never does, it has so much to say. Yes, opals always listen — that’s why folklore views them with anxiety, a thing that always listens knows you better than you know yourself. Maybe that’s why I seldom wear an opal ring, too many people have found me out already — I wear a yellow sapphire, that open door.

9 October 2017
Suppose the children
all the ones we never had
are waiting for us in those
trees over there, maple, ash,
scuffling through leaf-fall
covering themselves in leaves
daring us to name them,
tell them the long story
of why they never came to be.
Go in among them, make
something up, they’ll know
you’re lying but believe you
anyhow. A myth is a better
mother than just the dark.

9 October 2017
Not many kingdoms left
but a world full of kings and queens
and who am I to count them?

Every shadow I see is one of them,
passing, standing there — royalty,
sanctity, anointed, fragrant still
with rose oil and frankincense—

I want to worship everyone I meet.

10 October 2017
INDIAN SUMMER

agle day in Maya
land but here pale
ths greens are fading.

The strategy of things
determined long ago,
weather is a weapon.

Workmen wore indigo—
thighs turned blue
from new dungarees

remember? Before
they called them jeans.

Before the world settled
down and you grew up.

The beautiful haunting phrase in our current sentimental
language began as insult, racial slur—a weather you can’t
trust, a shallow truce with winter. And then. By now we
have forgiven them, the ones who let us kill them and
take their land, their name (wrong from the start) is
romantic, exciting. Warm afternoons in the gazebo, cool
nights, clear stars, maybe a log
burning in the fireplace. We sit and smile sleepy, happy, do not ask if they have forgiven us.

But the woods are still here, the tall leafy animates who tell most of what we think we know. Listen to the trees. The long Algonquin murmur starts to make sense.

10 October 2017
The wind knows itself all over the place, hot day but breeze.

You will read this in a thousand years and wonder: what did they mean by ‘hot back then, and what does the wind mean?

10 October 2017, NDH
Labor intensive
the sunlight falls.
Close the curtain
the play’s about to start—

*Merkavah*, mystery
of the Chariot, God
in motion, ever,
over. always — God
is motion.

What one thinks
rules the world.

10 October 2017, NDH
The cause is hidden
the effect obscure.
But somewhere there
a candle catches flame
and the sky relaxes,
its work done.

10 October 2017, Kingston
ASHES

of the old understanding

a pause in matter
pause in fire

Listen
the ash is everywhere
sifting from the volcano plume
of all we’ve lost.

Every name is ash,
memory is ash

zikro livrakha

this ash for a blessing.

11 October 2017
Startled by shadow
of falling leaf
he sits by sunny window
startled again
each leaf casts
shadow of a bird a moth
something coming towards
everything
comes to him again,
all of us
startled by shadows.

11 October 2017
I was a tiger
till I was young
then no moon
ever came back
and I was nobody
again, like all of them,
new-born outlaws
in a rule-bound world.

11 October 2017
What are we to make of the Caspian
a sea no part of the ocean,
but bounded, corralled by ethnicities,
dazed by languages, Aryan, Turkic,
Arabic, oil rigs?

What manner of man
are you? Can I trust your water,
lost Sufi rhymes in the seagull’s scream?

But all that is cover-up
of what I’m really saying —
I know that much at least
but not what it really is
I’m trying to tell us both,
to intuit deep mysteries
like the meaning of ocean,
shallow puzzles like gravity.

Sauer explained that we are littoral,
can’t get away from water,
closer the better, even Tibet
has its Brahmaputra, its Mekong,
we make do with rivers, lakes,
ponds in autumn with geese thereon,

can’t understand a thing
without water, Rhinecliff bridge
3% salinity, arm of the holy sea.

Maybe I’m getting there now,
*I never left home*
Joris has gathered all my cormorants
in the Narrows and made them sing
his tunes, bravo, Pierre,
and upriver too the birds,
trash heaps, hillocks of East Kingston,
paradise of gulls.

Yes,
when I hear their cries
I know myself to be
the one I knew I was
before the dark waltzed in.
Then at dawn a gull
pacing the mist-drenched lawn.

Something like that.
The sea is a triptych,
our task to spread
the panels open wide
to show the face
of the one inside.

12 October 2017

Look at this other man, ring on the wrong finger leaning against a tree as if he were himself one or two of its roots — what language does he speak and to whom?

Is a word just a thing to him or the other way round?

12 October 2017
The hope of heaven
is a market fair
green heaps of alligator pears,
scarlet waxy Chinese apples.

In heaven all the names come back
with scholar-rabbis and pandit-lamas
arguing the real meaning of things—
what is a comma, really? Why
did kiwis choose not to fly?
And who should live in a lighthouse
and why?

Yes, heaven is an afterthought
that came first,
a reminiscence of the not-yet-been,
full of saintly people
thinking hard as they can
how to help everything that lives.
Heaven is a house of thinking
gold or copper in your own heart.
You know it’s heaven when you care.

13 October 2017
Now sun in tree
now stones in river

the ever. Never
too soon. Hear
the birds of it.

Why is owl
at morning, scream
of blue jay
last nigt. Not
dark. Never.

Daybreak now
Friday the 13th
but why.

Vague
clouds. We

are victims
of what we perceive.
There, that’s
what the tall tree
meant, the first
to catch the sun.
Then it was nine. 
Or it was none.

How to wake: 
ohrase a spell
to make the crows
welcome in our yard:

Come call, come call, 
food’s for all,
no one can believe 
it’s day unless a crow! 
Come call, your calls
all the prophecies we need

I thought, and said
silently, so they
could hear me
all over the sky.

14 October 2017
Going somewhere
the daytime asked,
trowel in the sun’s mitt
as if She’s gardening still
hiding her faves against winter,
my ferns! In shade the summer house
Hump on the hill — watch me go there
this mild afternoon
when i will be a satyr in those woods
distilling dew from fallen leaves
to cure my droughts. And euonymus
the ell-named begins to burnish
scarlet where the sun says Turn!
Burning bush and me no Moses.
Tell me, woods, is this a sonnet yet?

14 October 2017
I want to tell everyone
whatever can be told,
yjay way we'll all be
one again, safe inside
the smooth strong skin of words.

14 October 2017
Sushi for breakfast, 
crab and avocado
strange, strange.
For this they fought
on Guadalcanal,
Iwo Jima, Okinawa.
Everything turns
into ordinary life.
The blood turns wine again.

14 October 2017
For some
the sea’s an animal
for some a mirror—

what do you imagine,
the longer the word
the less useful, maybe
less true?

Wonder
about this, wonder
is good for the soul,
that soft writing
tablet of the mind.

(recent scrap)
14 October 2017
Begin the day again
be Celtic after all
lyrical over the top —

we waiy by the altar,
brides galore and countless grooms
for a priest who never comes.

*

The Jews know. No one
can worship alone.
Your need a minyan,
not wise, not many,
not holy, just some
ordinary hearts to
;lift with yours.

*

Hence holy music.
We do it all ourselves.

(recent scrap)
14 October 2017
PILGRIM EYES

always move
tavel

a different kind
of desperation
all the breath in your lungs at once

color of your eyes
sunset
try to leave a mark on every rock
scratch
writhe of shadows
spelled

my fingertips feel the grooves
that spell your name

zebras fucking in the zoo we saw

a horse is anyhow a mystery

I’ll beat you at your game
Miss Mystery

obscurity — see the distant swimmer
imagine the shoreline
the watching women or women watching
what looks like rain?
so close to Africa how could they not Egypt
a jar of balm alive with myrrh
this is your hand for now
I will never stop trying to get there
the other edge
of Egypt
domus Donegal
cheekbones
Cro-Magnon melodies
Dravidian flute
always on the way there
simplicity
nothing easier than forget
I will not stake this music to the ground
at the city dock in Galway a seal
ceremonial welcome
to this island

homeland magpie

every creature has its proper greeting

g’day sir

who even knows where pilgrimage began

this one

to the sea

the other sea

the limitless

certain merchants of Wismar

the thing I think inside me is the Baltic Sea

touch every language

glide silently to the pier

your sail reefed

the coin fell on its other side

alas no queen no eagle

just a sad number

a thing they dreamed up to claim the world

Arabs did it

a little desert music

wrong kind
but wind in your pocket!
your hair in the leaves!
all truth comes back
to a green chapel

walk the road with me
to see Jesus’s brother
the long road

hre listens to the sea for us
he tells us
always less than he hears
try hard as he can to say all

telling is like that

the sea’s pure Hebrew hearing
hush, you are a baby still

hence I cherish you
in all your clothes

love for one another is the core of health
Arab handbook of medicinal plants
begins with the rose

came to Europe with the rosary
beads in Budhist fingers Sufi fingers Hail Mary
we have been on the road so long

everybody I ever knew is there
gliding or trudging or lounging west
you fall asleep and wake somewhere else

hic locus est

wash your sticky hands in cherry wine
antiseptic lignin in new-cut wood
under the hornbeam on the height

there you are at last

you wait on the edge of the shadow

move slow as the sun seems
*the glory leap to stand in light*

No matter but music

O lovely mother of all living
conscious *materi*,
she wanders in the rocks
like Wisdom exiled from Jerusalem

tournament with no lances
we cast shadows at one another
blue shadow of a leaf
becomes in the photo
a blue flower grown from a rock wall

that is the last clue

or maybe the answer alone

when you see this
everything is known

wind in the trees
happier than sin.

15 October 2017
Emergency measures
at the court of Oz
too many boys think they’re Dorothy
too many puppies altogether
and the Wizard is long gone.

What do? Pick peppers sweet and red.
milk an idle passing ewe
chew a chunk of ginger till you cry.
Bad dreams dissolve in new-shed tears.

15 October 2017
THINGS BOTHERSOME

Pretend everything outdoors is picnic
everything indoors love affairs —
innocence pervades knowledge
the more the merciful.

Ten to nine, are we going backwards,
as if the sky sent down these cars
to hurry us along the roads
and the earth itself scoots them along
yowards a destination never yet determined.

And every meeting is a sad mistake,
early to get it over with
late to abbreviate the pain

whereas on ancient Crete
your women leaped over the hull’s head
hoisting themselves up his horns,
that was their dance
enough and daily bread —

how can we learn to work by leaping?

16 October 2017
If the bronze’s patina
is the color of my tea
it is old enough to sing.

And this is the song
the good bronze fittings
in the Ely railroad station
(12 minutes from Cambridge)
dark among all the gleaming
brass pipes and drains an
old man polishes all day
sing:

*I have waited
while the scholars
did their guesses
in the cathedral —
we grew old
together -- the tallest
trees in England up there
and me an upstart
doorknob from the days
of Pitt and Blake and iron
roads to tear the night
apart and lo! we are,
we are the same, linger
as things do, I green
for them, those tree
trunksso pale that hold up
a church’s lordly gesture,
and I green for these
poorshiny washbowl pipes
that never in their lives
feel the ancient thrill of green.

16 October 2017
The luxury of inattention
is not for us who scrounge
our living working stone—

things write themselves on us,
as us,

and then we have to be them
till the stars come out.

Read the stars,
each one tells a different story,
scripyure of each different world
true as the Bible if you know what I mean.

Ergo we pay attention:
worry, fretting, despondency,
doctor bills, short vacations,
pillows damp from sweat and tears.

Yes, I am the one you know,
I have been in your face before
with my addled theosophy
and feints of prose,

forgive me
for being here again,
I always have to tell you all I almost know.
The French say randoming in the wild, and we say roaming like going to Rome. Why do we call walking in deep woods just Good Exercise?
Canonic — the law lets me
so I come to you today
wrapped in bird song sharp
(house wren, blue jay)
troubling as usual in my address —
when my hands are music
they get all over you.

17 October 2017
Let water find
its own way

it knows how

leaves fall
at the right time

that’s all we ever
mean by right.

17 October 2017
Or maybe a sun gleam
off a parked car
is all we really are.
Where could we go
if we ever began?

17.X.17
Genuflect
kneebend
it said in the night

brutality of body
doing the work of soul

raise your hands
if you believe in soul
that presence or energy
different from body or brain
but somehow coupled with—
hieros gamos, the true
sacred marriage —

and if your hands rested
skeptic in your lap instead
tell me why Mahler can break your heart
and the thought of ocean makes you glad.

Raise your hand if you believe in heart,
close your eyes and remember with me
someone you loved sporting in the surf,
the incoming waves at Rockaway
which is how New Yorkers spell Waikiki.
18 October 2017

= = = = = =

I disguise my neuroses
by acts of gorgeous symmetry —
Doctor, my figure-eights look
like bowling balls making love —
the woman on top of course
but you’d never guess.

But it gets dark around me early
and all the roads shut down at night —
did you know that about America
this place where I think I live?

18 October 2017
Cast adrift
in thought
till the mailman
clanks the mailbox door.

Now the real world begins,
the one I can't even try to understand,
slogans and catalogues and war
and quiet bankers making children cry.

18 October 2017
This is what happens
the leaves cast shadows
the shadows become flowers
grow out of, flourish
in front of the old rock wall

150 years it waited
for this mystical botany.
No. Nothing waited.
Leaves cast nothing. Blue
shadows look like flowers
only to a certain cast of mind.
The sun did it all by herself.

Eye of the camera, eye
of the photographer—
what did she see? She coaxed
the camera to see this,
stones of the embankment,
shadow flowers, color.
But what did she see?

Unknowable. She lifts
the camera (in my mind’s eye)
and lets the light in—
we call the action ‘shoot’
but it’s the light that moves
its immense speed piercing
the camera and leaving this,

blue flowers I swear it
my wife saw on the rock wall
in front of the place where I work,
casting our own kinds of shadows.

18 October 2017
PILGRIM ROAD

Step on the colors

be careful

a man who falls between the colors
can be lost for years

we are all pilgrims of course

remember what happened to Robert Kirk
lost in the land of Faerie

I am he

he never came back but here I am

years come in different sizes
in that country

a girl carried to the Shrine by her mother

the colors will cure her
every disease has its own color cure
fold up the road and come with me

negative spectrum
with mauves and olives

mallows by the Hudson
you skim by in your canoe

not every season
not every color
come with me
come with me
the road is in my pocket now

it tastes like toasted barley
like pumpkin seeds

he taught us to walk on the water
when no one’s looking

and at high noon heaven closes
for the space of half an hour

girls chase foxes through the woods

they are red the girls are pale
they want the color

time is a kind of fur that grows on us
I think of Van Gogh’s left eye
compassionate and deep disturbed
in the photo where he’s dressed
like anybody else, a businessman,
a scholar of Hittite, a schoolteacher

how could he love himself to little

left it to us to love him

maybe that’s best, the pilgrim way,
leave everything behind,
be at home nowhere

a man is defined by his destination

where to? the driver asks

I have a little road that goes to you
I take it out from time to time
and stroke it smooth
and see how close I am this day

think of the inn where pilgrims lodge
if they’re lucky along the way

or where on rugged trestle tables
their food is served by boys and girls who say
Oh we never go anywhere. or
Where are you coming from?

but the pilgrims have forgotten where they started, the tower or the byre, the basin, the rocky wilderness beloved of sheep

pilgrims always change the subject at that point, warn the waiters about colors, step carefully, don’t fall between the colors, and so on

one boy listens hard one boy wants to know

what is the place between the colors if one steps there where does one go

isn’t such a one a pilgrim too?

then the pilgrims ask for more bread wish they could drink wine but only water is allowed

or elderberry juice with its aftertaste of skin moist body folds

how many have you licked on your way here
to get this far

can’t rest too long at the inn
resting is the wrong color
for the urge that ails them

but sometimes the road just breaks

what do you do with a river?

some say go with the flow
some say more virtue to fight our way
upstream against the easy
against the ordinary

salmon men who leap upstream
to mate with God above the first cascade

but I say build a bridge
and cross into the destiny of the straight line

crossing a bridge = flight into Egypt

save the child-mind you carry in you
bring her, him, safe to the Nile
where wise instructors borrow all religions

and let you sit down in the shade

but that’s me, that’s not the pilgrim way

at some point in the journey every pilgrim encounters a muddy stretch of road

amid the mud thereof, scarce visible,
a paper smudged and damaged lies —
this paper is for this pilgrim and only this one,
the pilgrim if wise (fortunate) now must bend low and pick the paper out of the mud
smooth it out and brush it clean
and read therein the directions to be followed.
the offerings to be made, the words avoided,
the way to lie down to sleep, the prayer at dawn

but why are you a pilgrim?

I am a man like any other
there is no telling what I was before

now is the strangest time

now has no future

now is pure mystery
will you walk with me?

18 October 2017
Lothringen accents
I want my chou-kraut
jive the pallid morning
old-fashionedly
by speech!

19.X.17
Lasses with moon faces from the east
but blue prejudices on this Baltic scow,
bring the garbage back!
    For we have
not finished with things yet —

has the sun changed her color yet?
prayer is comfort
as the woods are deep,

afterludes of medication
spell me as you choose
I am the word in your mouth

little by little the ink sinks in,
darkens, weather comes along
and we’re stuck with what we mean,

yje road gets noisy
and money changes hands
(think what those words say)

now how does the word taste?

19 October 2017
The usual thing is for someone to be waiting, at least a crow on the lawn, teller at bank cage, mechanic at garage, everyone has their own special oil. Drink Me, says the river. I Did and See What Happened says the sky raining all over the ranch. Language takes a long time, misery loves company, blossoms are the first to show up on the princess tree--even now the verb is fast asleep beneath a woolly heap of adjectives, they feel good on your skin but leave you guessing. Who? What? What wanting? When it comes it will sound red, make aluminum gestures, drive a white van. And she will be yours for a little while, until the river comes again.

19 October 2017
I forget -- is it BC
or is it AD already?
Clothing seems so
old-fashioned, aren't
we free of rayon yet?
And these bodies
around us all day long,
arms and squirmy legs,
mysterious bellies (what
goes on down there?)--
isn't it time to be free?

`19.X.17`
The grease of greeting
and the grit of gone—
every moment a mirror cracks
and shows what isn’t you
that ancient temple of God.

2. Spell the answer in runes
don’t make it too clear —
you don’t want the animals
to know how little we know.

They get their information
directly from the setting sun.

Close your eager eyes and you
mau get a whole cat’s worth yet.

3. Apostasy from the obvious
is a serious venture —
whose is your shadow then,
and where nas the sky gone

so recently over your head?
Yet some mystics take that step

and hide their eyes in some idea.
For them weather is a poltergeist

in a house where nobody lives.

20 October 2017
By gematria
walked under a bridge
and found herself on the other
side of the highway or the river
who can tell with all that flow

stood and watched the city disappear.
Sat on the berm and counted the answers
and when she came at last to zero
she slept, and in her dream
swam across the river and came home.

That garden. This is Eden —
the story is about to begin.

20 October 2017
FOUR ENTERED THE GARDEN

Four entered the garden
and found a woman sitting there —

she of the orchard
as if waiting for them,
called each of them by name
and told each what to do.

One changed his name and slept
a long time, still is sleeping.

One tore up his books
and took to a different religion,
one changed his mind
so he did not need to see what’s there.

And one went out again, cherishing
all he was able to remember.

20 October 2017
Exceeding the zone
that *belt round the earth*
causeth a species of distemper
called astrology or starcraft
by which the mind is lulled
into fanciful knowing

therefore the Wise in all times
have pondered the signs immediate
to the place they stood, knowing well
that where one is is where one ought to be

with signs following.

Ponder this
while waiting for the schoolbus
or the packboat from Calais
bringing attractive Protestants from France.

Peace, children. Be where you are.

20 October 2017
I waited while the owl cried, 
waited while the curious rustling 
sounded in the fern brake 
in deep shadow, foot of the ridge.

My waiting was like a house to me, 
i could rest in it, drowse a little, 
leave it to the moon to do the journeying, 
the stars to spell their letters in the sky.

Then it was silent. i prayed the owl 
to cry love songs to its mate, and the ferns 
said nothing at all. Now it was my turn 
to speak. Now it was waiting for me.

20 October 2017
One touch
not enough
one taste
cures thirst
where do you
keep keys,
the keys
to the other
house,
you know,
the one
no one has
ever entered?

21 October 2017
(WHAT ONE OF THEM DID IN THE GARDEN)

*Tore up the plantings* in the orchard, set down alien trees in their place, saplings from unknown stars he guessed — guessed, genuflected, worshipped them thinking a trees is more like a woman than a woman is. Now his forest grows still, but far away from the first orchard.

21 October 2017
RESTITUTION

Summer sun
on autumn trees —
mysticism
has its pleasures,
its secret measures,
its hand on your thigh.

21 October 2017
In Xanadù I fell asleep
it was in London
on Great Russell Street
tourists from Hapan
all round me, with cameras,
with eyes. So I slept a long
long Irish sleep, penicillin
of our poor people, sleep.
When I woke I was me again,
sort of, alone with my wife,
and my vocabulary, watching
grey evening clutch grey buildings.

21 October 2017
End of Notebook 407
Me loves him from first time saw him cry
even now his stupid plans and projects
make me reach out my hand to touch
his poor enfeebled skin, his body leashed
by respectability. Or is that me?

22 October 2017
[hypnopompic]
There’s one kind of rain
that falls without wet
from a clear sunny sky.

This is where the honey comes from
that feeds the bees
in old alchemical engravings

pictures too rain down on the mind
and leave little shadows that the local
memoirist Ithe self) had better

organize if he knows what’s good for him—
mutinous shadows! rampaging images!
Study the clear sky and pray for silence.

22 October 2017
THE SMALL PRINT ON THE CONTRACT

Small persons stirring in the grass
small persons nibbling down a leaf

I was a well in the desert
you drank me dry

And then all the parasangs were past
weary horses bore sleeping men through the gate

and there I was waiting
and they all drove towards me
meaning no harm,

men casting the shadows of women—
how strange reality must be.
Little by little learn where I fit in.

22 October 2017
Only if you’re listening
can I speak.
Headlights of a passing car
illuminate the nakedness of our thought.
Dark is quick, a toad
hops along the road.
Our plans have come to nothing.
The moon hides in the trees.

22 October 2017
In relative calm
the light goes on.
We only scream a little
at what it reveals —
shadows, mostly shadows,
but someone must
be making them
and there is nobody here but us.
But maybe shadows need no body,
maybe they are seeds native to light
and flicker seductively
whenever the light goes.
I look around the room—
a wall is all I see, maybe
a wall is enough.

22 October 2017
Along the road of broken coffee mugs
she goes out and comes back
only a little while later
in her full-flowing red skirt
with tassels on the hem,
this daughter I never had,
sobbing now on her bed.
I sit alongside her,
my hand like a hawser
she clutches to her chest
to make sure she doesn’t drift away,
or we are gone from here,
because here is the only
where the action is.

23 October 2017
for Tamas

Cloudy day at last
the basket full of stones
she keeps in the sky

she takes one out
and leaves it on your table
disguised as candlelight

only this dawn you see
it is a crystal of selenite
long and pointy

and those you point it at
feel at once the meaning
of all you are too shy to say.

23 October 2017
SLEEPNESS NIGHT

Waiting for sleep
to come
is like anyone else

a friend’s dog died
i think sometimes
they do it in our place
to save us, take
our fate on themselves

suffering servant

pages from the Bible
flutter in the rainy street

poetry Isaiah Ezekiel
it all depends
on what the angel said

what angel
carrying what
token of authenticity
a stalk of fennel
a burning coal
then the inner
eye also
flutters closed

the animals recede
to the far edges of the field
but we still see them
they look at us

sleep is coming now

fear ia near

someone stands up
in the middle distance
and wants to name us

all right, tell me my name

2.
when we wandered among the sheep
on sunday at the fair
we were in the Bible then, horns of the ram,
deep cuddling fleeces, the permission
in their wise kind eyes, yes, let us stroke,

we are beasts
and whatever we once were
for ourselves
in desert rock and pastures
we are for you now,  
use us wisely.

In cartoons we count them  
on the way to sleep

but in my kingdom  
we set a sheep on the throne  
and live at peace

and deep sleep is the price of peace

3.  
Sleepless Beauty a book I wrote  
in another language once

in sleepless nights the language changes  
the rustling pillowcase beneath my ear  
is telling me stories in Etruscan, can’t  
even get the drift of them, one word  
comes out mund or mundus, the Romans  
took to mean the world itself, but me  
and my pillow we know it is a little ditch  
around our little village, dug out with much  
ceremony by a little priest with a little trowel  
made of gold and sent down by a god
whose name alas I don’t recognize

but you know that sleep must come eventually

but if I die before i sleep
I pray the Lord by soul to keep

I mean the Lady.

24 October 2017
Heart on the wall
her heart
   the figure

Do we kiss the ones we were
or yet to be?
The *wordless word* a kiss is
saying—
   is it memory or prophecy?

24 October 2017
What is the Biblical Hebrew for somewhere else, not here, you can’t see it, you’re not allowed to go there but it’s there? We call it the Ordinary and it’s the hardest place on earth to find.

24 October 2017
GONE MISSING:

Ashtrays
fax machines
tape recorders
gardenias.

24.X.17
EVENTYR

a piece
by Delius
“Adventure”
maybe, buut he
called if Long Ago,
haven’t heard it in years.

*

Listen to the other
only the other
will do you any good
or be of use to you

only the alien
can really be your own

unspoiled by commerce,
not lost in the crowd
who think they hear
in music their own lost souls,
lost lazy selves.

25 October 2017
NOWMUSIC

feeds your loneliness,
sells you your sadness
repackaged in glitter,

25.X.17
Pilpul maybe
I helped him all I could
interpretation
is the whole of life
*to understand what we perceive*
then go back to the sleep of the senses
and dream some more.

25 October 2017
Mercy is a mild maid
but the lady that came
to meet me was neither,
but elegant in black,
the Eye of Horus
tattooed on her forehead,
large. And what do you see
with that eye, I demanded.
I see right through you
she said, then we were friends.

2,
Went to the candy store together,
waited while she bought cigarettes
but nobody smokes any more, true
she said but these are offerings, each
a living flame lifted to the local gods.

25 October 2017
PILGRIM MUSIC

Listen

it is the other

the only

voice worth hearing

is the other

the other

music

you hate it

first time

in the ear

it screeches

it is formal

(but you don’t know the form)

it is old

old

is terrifying
you hate old

you hate this old music
will bring you to life

tear away the mask
conformity imposes

store-bought pleasures
of a compulsive world

. . . . 25.X.17
Opening the door of the day

Who's there?

I heard a word
singing in the leaves

forgive my sleep
forgive my dreams

leading sleep away
by a dream that leads
to the door of the day,

open the day
hear it rattle on its hinges
hear it slam open
and the wind come in

the blue wind
of this dream space
of the senses,
this day
forgives your sleep,
go through the door,

the time has come
to live in time again
while there are still leaves on the trees waiting to be said.

26 October 2017
What one wants of course is another thing,

the virgin lost by the rock pool and a kingfisher looks on —

water is the way, way out of the underworld,

she takes that road, the rock flows past her the water stands still

that is the secret, endure the still water till the world gets there

rushing and flowing and you at peace.

26 October 2017
Nothing is really true until it is translated.
But someone else
could be waiting
inside the alphabet,

the 27th woman,
in a long scarlet gown
a crown of asters in her hair

blue ones, the kind
just fading from the roadside
+as the burning bush begins to blaze.

She is the other side of speech
where love heals us,
she is the echo of silence itself.

26 October 2017
Kingston
FEAR

Why the fear
when the answer
stood right there

across the lake
unright as a birch,
still, waiting?

But fear is a comfort, has
nothing to do with
the person facing you

across the water, see,
casting a shadow even you
can plainly see, just like yours,

but what if the person moves
and the shadow does not?
Close your eyes and be afraid —

fear is a strange kind of wine
in a cup that is always full.
You know who you are when you’re afraid.
Turn on the radio
and hate what you hear —

that’s how the pilgrimage begins.

All that noise
is aimed at you
by those who do not mean you well

for this music comes you
from the dead
and leads you, tries to, to that mum place

where they, when they,
have silenced the psalm
you, and only you, where born to speak.
Peregrinus
is the book,
pilgrim is the sense of it.

28.X.17
at a certain point in your life
it’s hard to pry loose the gemstone
crystal from the rock matrix where it grew —

and maybe that incapacity is right:
Keats didn’t say fill every rift with silver
but with ore, the natrix, the mother with her child,

here, hold this geode and close your eyes,
finger the alphabet of the rock
those little points that press your skin.

So from some text extract
some sumptuous fragment?
No. Give them the whole stone.

28 October 2017
So many leaves still have the trees, the greens though are getting sleepy in morning sun, slow slow the autumn answers.

28 October 2017
Caught making eyes at the sky
the virgin blushes
hides her hands between her thighs,

doesn’t respond when neighbors ask her
How can you sit all day long
on the rock, staring at nothing?

She leaves it to the sky to answer.

28 October 2017
ПОЗТА

Plenitude and Amplitude fought for this mind —

I will let both of them win
he thought, they will be

my mother and my father
and I will at last be me.

28 October 2017
Avoidance of the obvious leads to Sotheby's high-priced item soon devalued, legendary trash.

28.X.17
THE SPEL OF EVE

I was Eve
and I am you now.

I am the first-born
and from my body
a man was born
of mud you call flesh
and blood you call ghost
or mind or spirit.

No man was needed
to make a man
in me and from me,

a man is the second thing
that came along,

and it was I who came him
into the body of time.

My body knew itself
and knew how to become another—
and that is the great mystery
your time must discover,
Miriam called Mary reminded you,
virgin birth, helpful
Joseph looking on,

we taught you how to be me,

how to be everyone,
how to stand on a hill
and see yourself coming towards you
saying Yes Yes
but you must
cry out Be another!
And there he is,
there they are,
the 84,000 habits of the world

the many of the world,

the men I make
to carry and labor and comfort sometimes
all women, whose business
is to rule the world
quietly, by sheer knowing.

28 October 2017
Slowly the leaves
into conversation.
She stands at the counter
waiting to be served.
He stands at the corner
waiting for the bus.
Leaves slippery underfoot.
Rainy day. Leaves
on the trees motionless.
She looks up at the sky.

29 October 2017
Looking northwest, guess
grey wet road
vanishing in trees.

Every day a new passage
into the unknown
forest,

the frightening
Forst of No Trees.

29 October 2017
Trying to catch up with myself is a fool’s game: myself is always a little bit behind me, limping along wherever I go.

29 October 2017
What does the morning need?

I heard the question, turned to the window, rain, misty, a lot of leaves still on the trees. What does anyone need? I need to be part of what happens, it needs to be and be part of me. Those the right answers? Tell me, day, before night brings questions of its own.

29 October 2017
But late is licit too —
a Roman lector carried
in his head a lawbook
no one ever wrote —
a bird flies over him
and knows the regulations too.

How dark the rain
and cold the wet leaves fall
onto the skin of the earth,
and we also know the rules,
the man I was and you were too.

History is over and over again
till we are newborn at last.

29 October 2017
IN A STRANGE SMALL CITY

Listen to the Gatekeeper
worry about his sheep —
who is he, and wide the gate,
sheep so many and who is he?
This is the Bible again
despite all the half-empty buses
on rainy streets down to the river,
and the high-steepled churches
are empty, shut against worship
but still the Gatekeeper’s hands
are sweet greasy from fleece
so deep he digs his fingers deep
pleasing the beast and the self,
when you touch wool you know
we’re still in the Good Book,
when the lightning stops, a housewife
hurries down to the bodega, rice,
bright yellow rice! and milk!
from far-off dairies, leave sheep alone,
learn a new language every week
eventually you’ll begin to speak
it says over the Korean restaurant
but it says on the sidewalk Slow,
go slow, look down, see God,
the Gatekeeper slams the gate
open and shut, he shouts out
endearments rto his ambling flock
Come bleat with me an autumn song
or Now be rascal Niw be nice,
so many tunes the sheep remember
the nibbled grass keeps coaching them
day by day this city by the river
where once yhe great ships unloaded
cargoes of rock salt and blubber
and carried wool down south and skin
and goat horns for witches, ram horns for rabbis and who knows what,
sunbeam hits a crystal then cloud comes back.

That’s how you know it’s the Bible,
all times turn into now
and you become the Gatekeeper
or at least you keep the gate,
you take a census of the sheep
and not just sheep. You wish
someone would invite you to lunch,
rice, greasy meaty yellow rice
;ike the sun that shines no more,
broken cathedrals, opera house in flames!

Close the book, open to a different page:
*Mercy is a maid* you read
so hurry out now and marry her,
let all your precious alphabets
be jewels necklacing her throat
druzy and opal and tourmaline,
stare into her eyes and wait for her Yes!
even if it takes ten thousand years.

Meantime at low tide
splash across to the island
beneath the iron bridge,
watch the earnest kayakers
discern amphibia — they
are in the Bible too, can’t
get away from it, everybody
on earth is the same religion,
Sodom, Nazareth, Bodh Gaya,
you’re never ever far from home,
only a few of us Samaritans
to rescue y our sheep from
the sacrificing temple priests
who pray with axes and basins
bpiling with blood — or am I
just dreaming all over again?
Rain does that to people, wet asphalt
gleams, seems like the road to heaven,
a different road to a very different
heaven, but you’ll see for yourself.

30 October 2017
Forget the rubber eraser. Open the pencil, refine the lead. It’s gold now if and only if you write with it still holding tight that sweet cedar.

30 October 2017
Eve said: No woman needs a man if she would have a child. From herself she releases a precious jewel, an egg some call it, and she encloses it in a vessel. This is called the Athanor, because there is no death in it, and it conquers death. And there for months she tends it or has someone tend it until what is in the Athanor takes moisture from the eair and firmness from the earth and thought from the wind and grows limbs and eyes and opens them and cries out. Then the Athanor is opened and the child is born. This is the great secret that certain men called alchemists half-understood, and stole, and thought it was about making metals out of dross or some such policy — how wrong they were and are, yet they kept some word of us alive, the process whereby we give the life we have into the world again as another being, over and over, until we have filled the earth with golden children, who chant psalms and play instruments of brass and wood and wire, and the world is free.

30 October 2017
Could there be speaking
in the old log ccabin
wind through the cracks
ill-stuffed with mosses
a girl’s lips saying All
you ever need is a house?

[gessed from an old scrap]
31 October 2017
AN ALPINE SYMPHONY

1. Looking for aggrandizement they took to mountain roads along the foothills, *querschnitt*, excerpts of the Alps, hard going, rock slides, too much music, the rest stops too much merchandise, woodcarvings, antlers, goat horns you can actually drink from.

2. But why do we want to be great when already there is milk, evening shadows, tall hedges, starlight, butterflies, bread?

3. And yet the mountain keeps asking that question mountains always do, an inquiring look that seems like a command. The Opel broke down halfway to Glock and one of them walked into town for help, the others waited to keep all their gear safe, played chess, wrote postcards with no stamps yet. Before the tow truck finally came
the mountain answered its own question.

4.
Symphonic vagueness happens now. Harp yes, but trumpets too, trombones. They fear for their lives — each for his own life, hence they say nothing..

But when is some help going to come? When can I mail this postcard to my new true love? Do I dare to I tell her what the mountain said?

31 October 2017