

11-2017

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=====

**Suddenly November  
after no summer  
magic of sickness  
rearranges time**

**amazing They  
could slip a whole  
season past me  
and be gone. Me,  
I am just a sheep  
shambling along  
on scant wet grass.**

**1 November 2017**

=====

**Give me time  
to know something new  
about the other side  
of what calls itself me.**

**Could it be, could I be,  
a bird on the shore  
or the wave it studies  
or the rock it chooses  
to drop a hard shell on  
to eat the mystery inside?**

**Every human has an *Other*,  
beast or mineral,  
tree or short-lived flower  
somewhere — witches  
called it their Familiar,  
we have no name yet  
for them, for us  
whoever we are, must  
find it if you're able,  
not the name, the person  
of your person.**

**1 November 2017**



=====

**Could I be  
a broken geode  
full of pins  
and tassels,  
rubber bands,  
memos, off  
to the side  
on a lady's  
dressing table,  
the kind with  
mirros, they  
used to call  
a Vanity, still  
my sharp jagged  
crystals gleam  
in candle light?**

**1 November 2017**

=====

**How old is me?  
“Mirror phase”  
— what age?  
where was weather  
before that hour  
nd who got wet  
when it rained?**

**1 November 2017**

=====

**Assume the past.  
You can change it  
only by facing east  
listening to the roar  
of the stream outside  
new-swollen with rain  
rain rain. Or listen  
to the road and remember  
how far you kept going  
before you turned back.  
Believe me. the past  
is waiting still, but not for you.  
you have to make love to me  
now, since me is the only one left.**

**1 November 2017**

=====

**Capsule  
of powder  
white when  
you pry it  
open. Fine  
flour sugar  
who can say**

**a wolf walked  
past us once  
respectfully  
the way truth is  
also a creature  
ruly, not random.**

**Every day we  
take our lives  
into our hands,  
“poisons, potions”  
who can say,  
this little pill  
maybe will kill**

**or not. Sift  
the powder  
into water**



**watch it surface  
a while then sink  
little by little  
then stir it  
with your little  
spoon. Or finger  
then lick the tip.**

**Every morning  
sacred ritual  
then the day  
makes us forget  
what little there  
ever is to remember.**

**1 November 2017**

=====

**See, I want to breathe  
up into the leaf  
where at the tip  
women dance on the mountain top  
but only the spiders  
and ladybugs can see them**

**but my breath will be there  
and you will be able to hear me,  
my singing, through  
all the little bite holes in the leaf  
that quiet flesh so dry so honest,**

**and the honesty of the leaf  
is the burden of my song  
and you know the bush it comes  
from, it blazes red in October  
and is called the Good Name.  
When I was a little boy  
i read a book where it spoke.**

**2 November 2017  
2:45 AM**



== == == == ==

**Nobody knows the answer.  
Nobody even knows the question.  
We're on a huge log raft  
slowly drifting south.  
Ocean or wide river,  
no land seen. Some  
of us are good at seeing stars  
and recognizing them  
to infer where we're going  
or where we are. Some  
of us are not so good as guessing,  
close our eyes when The sun goes down.**

**2 November 2017**

=====

**Let some work done  
be gone to wake  
the rock.**

**Let the words I presumed  
to speak make  
enough of an echo  
to give pleasure or at least  
irritate you into noticing  
something you never did before.**

**2 November 2017**

=====

**Osiris knows his night is coming  
surgery of the fatal Seventeenth  
that feeds him piece by piece  
into the whole world, nourishing  
it all until she can bring him back,  
until all the world is touched by him  
and he knows all of it, he will  
be whole again and whisper to her  
all he knows. But right now  
he's nervous, he knows all to well  
the fierce medicines of the gods,  
tight-lipped surgeons of the Otherworld.**

**2 November 2017**

=====

**Say enough of a sound  
to say a word**

**or of a word  
enough to mean,**

**something now at the cavemouth,  
the door, the day.**

**Listen hard to the wind,  
*what saying?***

**Scrape of your own  
feet on the floor  
says part of it,**

**and when it comes to language  
the part is the whole.**

**3 November 2017**

== == == == ==

**I think I have lived  
all my life in Byzantium  
or all except the little  
morning by the actual sea  
that made me me.  
Otherwise the hold indoors,  
frescoes, cold smooth walls.**

**3 November 2017**



## EXAUDI ORATIONEM MEAM

and the door opens  
old woman on a walker

it is Friday afternoon  
on earth, in China  
the fields are hollow  
after harvesting

where we are  
the sky is a blue flower

Hear my prayer  
let it be ordinary  
ever after,  
                  heaven  
is the next thing  
to be done, this  
blossoming *now*

Hear my prayer

gull up from the great trash hill  
beauty over river

the pretty red tail lights  
winking, hundreds  
homing from work.

**3 November 2017. Kingston**

**= = = = =**

**Take the book down  
open it  
erase all the pages  
now you are ready to begin**

**say what your hand  
remembered reaching for it,  
the tendon of your arm  
stretched to that high shelf,**

**then write down the dust  
and what it said  
when the book came open  
maybe for the first time in years**

**what did the dust  
make you remember,  
what foreign city  
Verona, Arles, Whitby  
you were so briefly in,**

**dust never forgets,  
did you know that?**

**it's what makes civilization  
possible, the dust  
of all our centuries we  
breathe in all the time,**

**write down carefully  
the feel of the binding  
in your lustful but respectful  
fingers, hands know a lot  
but are easily distracted,  
keep them touching,  
feeling.**

**This  
is literature. All the rest  
is sword fights  
with nobody killed,  
card games nobody wins.**

**It is finished,  
the thing you've made.  
You are Dante now, put  
the book back,  
come out and see the stars.**

**4 November 2017**

=====

**Full moon November  
fills all the trees  
enough leaves left  
to make shadow dance  
in shimmer almost  
green.**

**I can see the fox  
move just past the ferns,  
skunk on the lawn  
a plume of fearless white.**

**I don't want to know  
what the old folk called  
this moon, something  
dangerous, probably,  
and cruel.**

***I see  
through trees --  
that is name enough for me.***

**4 November 2017**

## **WIND EYE**

**A peloton zips by  
northing through trees  
one cyclist even  
in hopeful yellow jersey  
on their way—  
such strange things  
a window sees!**

**4 November 2017**

## ANTIQUÉ GEMSTONE

**A liquid heavier than another  
fills her lekythos so she can lift it  
only when it's half-empty,  
she set it down on the mountain top  
wondering why the weather  
ever bothers to change  
it is so beautiful where and as it is.  
So many trees still have their leaves!  
*O let them shed them  
before the snow comes down*  
she prays. But to whom?  
Who listens to the fluid in the jar?  
Who breathes soft on the nape of her neck  
but isn't there when she spins around?**

4 November 2017

=====

**Cars stop by fences  
to make phone calls.  
The tree overhears,  
asks Are you speaking to me?**

**4.XI.17**

## CYTHERA

island way of being

they go there in love  
and linger

we walked there  
late afternoon  
dryshod,  
among the browsing deer.

I found you where the trees  
open wide for you  
to see the everlasting river.

4 November 2017  
*(of Montgomery Place)*



## A DRYAD

                  called  
*huldra*  
in Norway  
stands nameless  
in our woods

sometimes I see her  
through my mind's tangle,  
pale and quiet  
up there behind our house  
on the ridge where  
the mountain lion walked  
once and foxes live.

                                  She knows them  
and I think she knows us too,  
us noisy folk who live  
on the margin,  
                                  blank spaces  
around her real woods.

I want you to see her too,  
our beautiful landowner  
wants me to tell,  
tell and adore and look away.  
The eye is one more  
animal that passes by.

**5 November 2017**

## **SEER**

**I was a cistern before I was a seer. I held all the water I had been given, old, old water, hundreds of years. I kept it faithfully, huddling under mossy covers against the dry days of summer. Every time the mist came in or rain came down, new water would come to mingle with my old. Or maybe all water is old, here from the beginnings, constantly recirculating — so I have heard it said. What I know is that every time new water came, my old water would change. Salinity, acidity, mineral balance — all would change, and I had to keep track of them, make sense of all the changes in what I held. In what I am. In time, a day came when I thought I was a man, and that is how you find me now, all times mingled in me, still trying to make sense, and trying to share with you what sense I make.**

**5 November 2017**

## MYSTES

**M** the original  
owl standing there  
waiting to skim  
over the waters  
to the other side  
quick and almost  
silently, like a man  
who learns something  
and learns to keep mum  
about the core of it  
but sometimes can't  
dropping hints about  
the mysterious skin  
the way an owl  
sometimes leaves  
feathers on our lawn.

5 November 2017

=====

**Striding  
leap of a frog, slewfoot  
slope of the camel  
onward. Onward.**

**A courtesan  
forgives me  
a stole pf m,usktrat fur  
I broke her clock**

**linked together  
by the sparrows of keen sight.**

**Things that we see together  
actually are.**

**5 November 2017**

=====

Through the torn curtain  
a slice of night.  
Not torn, a natural part,  
isosceles.

Streetlights out there  
showing nothing.

Awake alone,  
nothing much happening  
on the streets of my body,  
those roads we call thinking

Not much.

Late into the night  
I read about the alphabet  
so that the silence itself  
has letters in it,  
G for *girl* the book said  
but I said there is someone  
even holier, even closer —  
the letters laughed at me,  
danced themselves into sentences  
they made me read:

*We always mean*

*the simplest things,  
no need us  
for theology and theory,  
we count the fingers of your hand  
when you swept the curtain  
just wide enough to let you  
see what you call Out  
but we know is realest, deepest In.*

**6 November 2017**

=====

**Let the balloon ascend  
into the French 18<sup>th</sup> Century air,  
you knew it had to begin  
somewhere, this journey  
off the surface, off the skin.  
*Leaving the world.* Soon  
it will be common, a nosiness,  
now everybody flies. But what  
happens to the earth soul  
in me when I'm flying to Paris  
at 37,000 feet? I wonder.  
Something gets lost up there,  
left above the atmosphere  
Captured by others? Aliens?  
Does it infect other lives?  
Does it sink slowly earthward  
looking everywhere for me?  
Am I haunted by who I was?  
Do I sound like Rudolf Steiner now,  
fearful of what speed does  
to the human soul, *humanus*,  
one who walks on the ground.  
I don't know. At night  
I could be anybody, or even  
myself again, home from the world.**



6 November 2017

=====

**I am the beanstalk  
Jack climbed up.  
His knees squeezed  
as je shinnied up,  
all I really saw were  
his brown scuffed shoes.  
I don't understand his story,  
cows and magic, fraud  
and somewhere up  
past whatever I am —  
makes no sense. I grow  
what I grow, I know what  
I know, I am pure road,  
I don't go anywhere,  
I am pure theory, like a boy  
in the middle of the air.**

6 November 2017

=====

**The day out there  
looks comfortable and soft  
already, like a day  
left over from the day before,  
well broken-in, an easy  
chair in grey and green.**

**6 November 2017**

**I**

== == == == ==

**Indeterminate excuses  
as if the phoebe  
nested next door  
on the porch light sang  
expressly to convince  
by sensory evidence alone  
that here I am, me too,  
I am tall here is.**

**6 November 2017, Kingston**

=====

*for Hölderlin*

**And if winter,  
be waiting? No.**

**Time is itself  
its own kind of flower**

**its petals all round you  
fragrant as light.**

**6 November 2017, Kingston**

=====

**Reading the sky.  
Trying to  
through the sunroof  
in the rain, one  
vulture crossing  
then blankness,  
grey, tousled, deep.  
I am an ancient  
Roman in my Subaru  
taking the signs.  
Or not seeing them.  
Or not understanding  
the little I see.  
Raindrops. Empty  
space a bird leaves  
nothing ever fills.**

**6 November 2017**

=====

**Dragging his weather  
he over the ocean  
goes Viking marauding the coasts of anywhere—**

**He waded out of the surf at Rockaway  
he was Moses on Molokai  
everything talked to him,  
he spilled a glass of wine in Whitby  
he was black in the Algarve white in Travemünde  
nobody ever believes him  
so he often goes back into the sea.**

**But comes again and again  
till he turns into you  
and you finally, almost toyally, understand.**

**7 November 2017**

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

**Gestures made from night  
as if a hand had  
and no one there to contradict  
what the darkness said —**

*Listen, this is all  
about you,  
yours is the measure  
by which the stars count,*

*now go back to sleep  
and find even more of me.*

**7 November 2017**

=====

**Pieces or rags of  
do we any way believe?  
From our fathers caught  
some guesses about God  
himself our guess about the world.  
What is left of all that?  
Pick a flower and call it Easter,  
kick a pebble down the street  
and call it Judgment Day.**

**7 November 2017**



## **COAT OF ARMS**

**Mountain pissing  
fresh water down the rock  
hoping to heal. Luchon,  
blazon of the town.  
It is good to be literal  
sometimes, healing  
in fact, like a crow  
waking you up by simple  
call, moonlight last night  
muzzy beautiful in cloud,  
or all times commingled  
we call now. Go ahead,  
break the spear, become  
pope, the crow won't mind,  
just get up and get simple  
and do anything you can.**

**7 November 2017**



**brown pottery bowl from lord knows where  
on my desk full of rubber bands,  
yes, and rubber bands themselves, discreet,  
unreliable but easy, easy,  
known, known, paper clips. birdbaths,  
glaciers, axles, we lead to each other  
finally, we belong to what we know.**

**8 November 2017**

## **AFTER SEEING THE FILM *CALDER FOR PETER***

**Dynamic immobility  
of his huge steel works,  
how they can support the whole sky  
if you gave them a chance.  
But they need a hill, an open field—  
that is their dance.**

**Seeing them in a museum  
or even a sculpture garden  
is like trying to swim in a bathtub,  
scale all wrong, clash of gesture.**

***Be the sky  
when you see me  
every one of them,  
the stars too  
are made of me.***

**8 November 2017**

=====

**Her hands  
(whose?)  
holding a dove**

**that's all the mind  
sees, I mean  
the man (who?)**

**who from his heart  
releases hands,  
birds. into free air**

**and smiles to think  
*what belongs to everyone  
belongs to me.***

**8 November 2017**

## **IN THE PHOTO**

**the mother  
like any scientist  
is looking down,  
eyes fixed  
on the experiment  
she's cuddling,  
whose own eyes  
(preposterously  
conscious, alert,  
grown-up eyes)  
are fixed on all  
the rest of us  
out here, suddenly  
seen into existence.**

**9 November 2017**

=====

**Kindly mist  
full of guides  
we can't see  
at any time  
yet in such weather  
we know are there,  
feeding the trees,  
sha[ing leaf-fall,  
hearing us, hearing  
what we think.  
Looking out into the mist  
I know that I am known.**

**9 November 2017**

=====

**Two or three words  
that meant something  
fell away, mind  
scrubbed clean  
like glacial stone--  
a solid void  
that once made sense.**

**9 November 2017**



=====

**The winter mist  
like a woman  
playing the cello,  
Marin Marais maybe,  
old and honest  
a few rooms away.**

**9 November 2017**

=====

**Such trouble being me  
I'd be another,**

**the calisthenics of ordinary  
life, light, exhaust me.**

**I think I should change  
into a warmer mind.**

**9 November 2017**

=====

**Am I proud  
of where I have been  
*bedroom dining room porch***

**and all I have learned  
*to sleep to wake to forget?***

**9 November 2017**

=====

**Being inside a house  
especially one's own house  
is like travelling around the world**

**every room a new language to be learned  
every doorway a frontier to cross  
every bedtime a dangerous hotel**

**and the cost! paying constant attention  
never a moment safe to relax,  
the rugs are tree roots and the floors are ice.**

**Every day a pilgrimage, climbing  
upstairs to Jerusalem, stumbling at midnight  
to the bathroom, that Black Sea.**

**9 November 2017**

## THREE-PART INVENTIONS

as if a number  
knew us, all our fingers  
set to work  
to know just one, one thing  
that happens to the heart  
(the head) (the soul)  
we have no names  
we have only numbers.

2.  
t ripples as it goes  
a little brook on its way  
—water always wants to be more—  
but still the golden pears  
hang low from the branch  
above the stream brown  
flecked here and there  
from insect bite or time's  
sharpest tooth of all

3.  
but water is continuous,  
we part our hair in the middle  
the tall brunette explained

to be glamorous, to borrow  
the gleam that water teaches  
and make it ours but only  
so as to give it to you in turn,  
my desirous admirers

4.  
look at my face  
I told her  
pretend I am a mirror  
and you a quiet girl  
wanting to know  
so deeply what  
manner of thing you are,  
look at my face  
and doubt me, doubt  
is the softest music,  
a flute in apple trees  
annoying the browsing deer

5.  
but hurry, hurry  
my face won't last  
someday it will just  
be mine again  
and I do all the looking  
but now I am water  
I am still

**6.  
Don't be sad  
water always comes back  
the sky is made of  
what water's made from,  
there'll always be  
another face to see,  
to tell you who you are.**

**9 November 2017**

=====

**Work quietly  
a river's passing**

**unless you want  
what you're doing  
to go with it,**

**flow into the sea  
the continuous so  
all that you've made**

**is just beginning  
there, in that immense  
thought no one is thinking.**

**10 November 2017**



=====

**I need a darker  
understanding,  
a lawn with trees  
and no one home,  
headlights intermittent,  
shadows deep.**

**This where our wanting  
brings us, feet drag along  
through fallen leaves.  
There is a gate  
where no one waits.**

**10 November 2017**

=====

**So much walking by the river  
as if the water weren't going enough  
or had to be counselled  
by our contemplative footsteps,  
coaxed towards the sea.**

**The river makes me want to sit  
down and look at it, study  
the sleep musculature of its moves,  
its quiet persistence, something  
Teutonic, craftsmanlike, about it,  
as if every river were the Rhine  
tumbling out of Switzerland  
and making its solemn way home.**

**I wouldn't dare walk beside it—  
it would be like whistling  
while someone's playing Biber  
on her Stradivarius, so wrong  
even if I got all the notes right.**

**10 November 2017**

## MEANING

1.

The lead of pencil  
makes obscure baroque remarks,  
walks more by itself  
across the page, less  
driven ythan a fountain pen.  
Lead (really hraphite)  
remembers the inside of the earth  
where metals reign  
and in its memories a song starts up  
challenging this surface flimsy  
place we bring it to — paper  
and birch bark and floating leaves.  
And when our metaphysical confusions  
put it to sleep, it wakes up suddenly  
and springs onto the paper  
saying more than we allow  
ourselves to grasp.

                                  Type it up,  
silence it in print, yet  
sometimes we look at that cold text  
and something catches like a little flame  
and lights up a meaning we never guessed  
before th match goes out and we're dull again.

**2.**

**That's all I meant to say  
the dream explained.**

**Trace any figure in the intricate design  
and it will lead you to a single truth,  
carry you there, in fact, as in a car,  
old roadster from vintage movies  
with rumble-seats and squealing sophomores—  
because Meaning (alas) is nine parts  
memory and barely one part now, a little  
crumb left over of tomorrow.**

**3.**

**Those are what woke me.  
Spoke me. Cold predawn  
November. Made me leave  
my warm blankets and  
stumble in the dar to  
find my desk, Now you tell me  
if I should have gone on sleeping.**

**11 November 2017**

== == == == ==

**Is it waiting in it to be said?  
Infinity, like a sparrow's wing  
always there wjhen needed  
when the local crumbs run out  
and distance calls us again.**

**11 November 2017**

**DEAR PHRYNE,**

**If I were being honest  
I'd be writing to your thighs  
not for your eyes.  
Lust is like that — the face  
has to be there to make you  
you and not some other  
among the myriads desire  
tries to claim, and it is your  
body that beckons, answers  
more questions than our mere  
brains can handle. Except  
we pray by touch — flesh  
is the great difference, the form  
that understands us deep  
into voluminous existence.  
Love, your ardent Praxiteles.**

**11 November 2017**

=====

**Always trying to move forward  
into a guessed-at place,  
there is a picture of me at five  
getting ready to be just that  
hurrier, standing by grandfather,  
my grandfather is a train, a freight  
stopped in Callicoon, I'm on top  
of a box car, my father snaps the picture,  
I am a child of going places, I know  
no other ancestors but steel on roads,  
wheels on steel, sparks from wheels.  
Today we ate lunch at a place  
I knew when I was seven, halfway  
to heaven, *view of five states*,  
north end of the Catskills, 2000 feet.  
Sometimes you have to go back  
to make any forward move at all.**

**11 November 2017**

=====

**Waiting for the elevator  
I defended Freud — the woman  
was patient with my explanations,  
may even have relented a little  
from her proclamation that Freud  
was useless now. That's all  
I remember, doctor, I asserted he  
at least tried to get us focused  
on causes not just effects,  
even if those causes were themselves  
causeless inscrutable 'complexes'  
waiting to afflict us. But by then  
the elevator came and anyhow  
she had stopped listening to me.**

**11 November 2017**



== == == == ==

**a day will come when  
everything we know  
turns out to be wrong**

**that's why they look that way  
at the harbor, fishermen and such,  
the way they stare far out  
with indifference, guessing  
nothing good is coming**

**god I hope they're wrong  
because all we have is the sea.**

**12 November 2017**

## AZIMUTH

what does it mean  
waking in the morning  
thinking *azimuth*  
as if it were a message  
scribbled in lipstick  
on a napkin from that  
dream café in Vienna,  
Sperl maybe, Mahler  
made me think about  
tonight with *Blumine*,  
discarded romance, too  
easy, maybe, but that  
soft trumpet! leaves me  
with a word discarded  
from a lost dream, azimuth?

12 November 2017

=====

**If I walked out now  
into those trees  
I would not be able  
to see myself from here.  
The thought scares me,  
one more problem.  
Some more baroque poetry.**

**12 November 2017**

== == == == ==

**They tell you to read between the lines---**

**I want to *write*  
between the lines  
and leave the lines  
for birds to rest on.**

**12 November 2017**

=====

**Lookout Point yesterday  
rim of the escarpment  
found again, first known  
in 1942, finally come back  
to eat lunch with friends.  
Outside the famous view  
of five states kept us  
standing in the cold. They  
were in space, I was  
there too but mostly in time,  
my whole life in that view,  
my immense little world.**

**12 November 2017**

## **MEMBRA**

**A line is power  
a line is truth.  
The words I mean  
are not so sure..**

**\***

**To be brutal about it  
I am a map  
and not the territory.**

**\***

**A word can live  
without its referent —  
dragon, unicorn, justice —  
but a map?  
Only a map of Fairyland  
maybe, my home.**

**\***

**Reasonable doubt —  
is there any other kind?**

**12 November 2017**



=====

**If you don't come soon  
walking out of wherever  
looking at me, your hand  
lightly on my arm, say,  
I don't know what I should do.  
Call out into the dark woods  
words that foxes and weasels  
are at home with, they lip them  
softly to one another in the night?  
But will you hear me? Yes,  
but will you come, quickly, sure?  
The foxes know the answer to that one too.**

**12 November 2017**



=====

**Wading in the sea of  
till the words come  
strike against the bare leg,  
shank reports, mind catches  
and something gets said.**

**Always like this.  
No meaning but what happens.**

**13 November 2017**

=====

**I know something about bricklayers,  
something interesting and important,  
but I can't remember what I know.  
I do know it's dangerous to live  
in the mountains, at least to think there  
if you think with thoughts, like Nietzsche,  
but it's OK if you think with music  
like Mahler in the summertime.  
They must be strong, though, those  
men (or in India women) who lay bricks  
one beside another, row upon row,  
until the world is finally done.**

**13 November 2017**

=====

**Allowing for catastrophe  
something small birds are good at  
the sun will as we say 'rise'  
in three hours or so, so  
all the questions will have to be  
answered yet again, no rest  
for the weary theologian,  
the home-grown cosmologist,  
the poor con man just trying  
to get by. There you have it,  
I am tired of impersonating  
myself, I need a better cover story  
or else become at long last  
the character I pretend to be.**

**14 November 2017**

## MERKAVAH

Counting the chariots  
as they go by  
I only ever get to one,

a massive one that holds my eye  
while all the others  
(if there are others) pass.

It is made of that strange metal  
*gold that looks like silver*  
that warms the hand that holds it

so in a rush of heat the thing goes by  
with a sound like a thousand people  
talking all at once and making sense

in a room you're lucky to stand  
at the doorway of, afraid to go in.  
And the wheels harvest wheat as they turn

and the horses are gone before I see them  
so I never know what color they are  
and the driver who holds their reins,

it's like looking straight into the sun  
without a single word of Hebrew

**to protect me. Yet I swear there are**

**or must be other chariots, the air  
and fire full of them, and even water  
shows them, or their reflections,**

**and by doing so learns how to flow.**

**14 November 2017**

= = = = =

**I hope when springtime comes  
you'll take me to your garden  
and show me all your flowers**

**not that i'll ever learn their names  
but the colors will be there  
and those are enough for me**

**and later you might gather a few  
and lay them in your lap  
and talk to them and let me listen,**

**and listening will keep me busy  
and even happy, as if I understood  
what words and lowers and you do mean.**

**14 November 2017**

=====

**Eat something  
make it go away**

**the feeling**

**the sound of inside a self  
crying in the night**

**how many first loves  
can a human have,  
how many very first kisses?**

**infinite number**

**it's always beginning,**

**always a cold night, hot afternoon,  
bushes behind the temple,  
empty classroom, ping pong  
table, drop your paddle, begin**

**begin again**

**desire admits no doubt**

**the weather is always waiting**

**begin beginning again**

**taste of another person's skin  
always never the same.**

**14 November 2017**



=====

**A place is more than who.  
Elsinore for instance  
comes to mind,  
by name  
we travel  
to a known place,  
yjought  
set free  
more than Hamlet's,  
free,  
the play of light on mind.**

**14 November 2017**

=====

**When I get tired of interpretation  
I change my religion.  
This is called Science —  
the stars still look the same,  
the north wind still makes  
the flag midway on the Rhinecliff bridge  
point due south, origin,  
but everything else is changed.  
The basic things especially,  
water, chalk, dust. O love  
we have come to the land  
of the four-sided triangle  
and must make our new home.**

**14 November 2017**

## LOST GEMATRIA OF ORDINARY LIFE

I used to know  
what numbers mean  
but lately such knowledge  
wavers, wobbles,  
sheer guesswork follows.  
What *is* three?  
What does it mean  
when there are two somethings  
dissimilar or same?  
Who took the numbers away?

14 November 2017

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

**Erasing traces  
traces my fear.**

**How I got here  
is nobody's business**

**now not even mine.**

**14 November 2017  
5 A.M.**

=====

*for Susan Wides*

**The heart of yellow  
pours out of the sky—**

**each of us engenders  
our opposite. For instance**

**I am red, they even  
called me that long long ago**

**to be polite. But how shocking  
that you know all that,**

**know where colors come from  
and where they go,**

**you can even spell with them,  
this amazing blue mouth**

**speaking that yellow word.**

**14 November 2017**

=====

*St. John Ultimus*  
the dream said,  
the last converso,  
converted to inspitation

he is the last inspired.

We are waiting now  
for his epistle or apocalypse,  
these things happen in the heart

then the emperors come  
to punish us for what we're thinking,  
they read our minds right in our faces —

so St. John bids us look away  
till only starlight shows  
when the angry powers come to look at us.

15 November 2017

=====

*from ClydaJane Dansdill's collage*

**Yellow beam  
the balance**

**the upright  
harmony  
all the broken bits  
the fucked-up flowers  
of a never very  
ordinary life  
suddenly arrayed  
into peace.**

**We live by spine.**

**The fleeting signals  
up and down  
hold all the angels,**

**the gleaming pathways  
to any perfect act**

**where we quietly  
sit and remember  
the red lips licked.  
the yellow room.**

15 November 2017

=====

*from a painting by Jonathan F eldschuh\**

If from the interior  
*materia*  
I could understand  
anything,

it would be a hand  
lifting the whole sea  
in one sweeping gesture  
and pouring it,  
the whole of it, into  
each human heart.

QED: The heart is infinite.

All the inhabited planets  
fit inside it cozily  
with room left for theorists,  
street musicians, priests,  
priestesses and their gods.

And even room for you.  
You. The object of every  
experiment, the solution



**to every equation. You.**

**And the whole thing no  
bigger than a quartz pebble  
you'd fiddle with  
between finger and thumb,**

**as all human history  
is set free in one quiet breath.**

**15 November 2017**

*\*Particles #31 (Compton Scattering), Acrylic on mylar, 54" x 42", 2017*

=====

**Knowing  
the size  
of a thing  
is also a song,**

**you hear the mind  
humming to itself  
a long lovely  
list of comparisons,**

**that's why the sea  
is so mysterious,  
it isn't the size of anything.**

**16 November 2017**

=====

**In this world  
evidently  
calligraphy  
has to be very slow.  
Everything else  
is a bird flying by.**

**16 November 2017**

=====

**Eventually the bones  
show what man  
he intended to be  
or to become —  
the distinction may  
not be real —  
but the bones know.**

**16 November 2017**

=====

**Nobody expects to die,  
the suicide least of all.  
He thinks he's getting up  
and moving to a nicer room,  
a better view, a friend  
finally answering the phone.**

**16 November 2017**

=====

**We keep thinking  
Egypt Egypt  
over a sea never  
touches it,**

**we get it wrong  
all the time  
and this wrongness  
helps us to dream.**

**(old note)  
16.XI.17**

=====

**As if a manuscript  
from Sankt Gallen  
still nearing  
the gleam of those  
old polished floors  
(we walk in paper socks)**

**turned into language  
itself and it spoke**

**so many  
people fear the dark  
whereas all  
the danger  
(domination)  
comes from light.**

**(old page)  
16.XI.17**

## **TO THE READER**

**My words hold only  
the meaning you  
and only you find there.**

**So include me as a starling  
loud on the porch rail  
bothering your sleep**

**or else close the book,  
sit by the fire  
and just utterly become.**

**(from old note)  
16 November 2017**



== == == == ==

**Exemplary mistakes —**

**kusha grass  
waves them all away**

***asperges* them,  
sprinkles clear**

**pure water where  
nothing wrong could live.**

**16 November 2017**

=====

**Being scrutinized  
in the waiting room**

**diluting solitude.  
Everybody wants to know everything.**

**16 November 2017  
Rhinebeck**

=====

When the day is new  
the wind is slow  
breath even slower  
so the song *swings low*  
scrapes the ground  
plucks up grass and dead leaves,  
bothers birds. The song  
so simple it annoys  
the singer. *Ask*  
*more of me than this*  
he prays, but the wind  
(mild, sunny autumn day)  
says

Be content  
a while, your breath  
will rouse and complicate  
your vocabulary again  
then you'll be happy  
and everybody else  
mourn the loss of simple sense.

17 November 2017

=====

**A line of it waiting  
like a tower for its maiden  
to sequester, save me  
from the brutality of  
a dispassionate glance —  
end of the third movement  
(‘sentence’) of the eighth  
symphony of Anton Bruckner,  
the woman he never  
dared to let himself imagine  
answers him now  
as they both are born into silence.**

**17 November 2017**

## **MEDITATION ON THE EMPTY SIGN**

**Hand reaches out  
rests on a friend's leg  
lap, strokes  
gently, stops.**

**Friend pauses  
in what had been being spoken.**

**Because the hand was empty  
the hand could caress.**

**Only the empty hand can touch.**

**That is the rule. The law  
of all things being  
able to touch or be touched.**

**Only the empty sign  
can carry meaning.**

**Everything is difficult.**

**That is the second rule.**

**Everything is easy —**

**that is the last rule.**

**The friend goes on  
with what was being said  
but it's all different now,**

**the meaning means  
a different thing.**

**The hand still rests there  
empty of everything but feeling.**

**It is so hard to be  
or be with someone**

**but it is easy.  
The sign tells you what to think  
but how can you know**

**pr know what you're thinking  
is the right thing  
the thing the sign meant**

**or what the hand meant  
when it found its way  
through the air all  
the way to the friend?**

**Remember the third rule,**

**iy is easy.**

**It happens all the time.  
So what if what  
the hand was saying,  
in the very act of saying,  
never gets said?**

**Something happened.  
Or almost did,  
sign Of the empty hand.**

**The empty sign.**

**17 / 18 November 2017  
3 A.M.**

=====

**See, it seems that in the night  
the dark helps you think  
and keeps you from being sure.**

**Stop telling yourself a story  
and right away thinking begins.**

**Danger. Retreat to the safety  
of narrative— stories never  
get there, stories never end.**

**Thinking travels to places  
known or unknown mostly  
and leaves you there –**

**you're not dressed for the weather,  
you don't speak the language.**

**17 / 18 November 2017**



=====

**Nordering on mystery  
the solar mouth  
is closed —**

**murky adjectives  
pursue the day nymph  
white-tailed through  
the naked woods.**

**It was all foretold  
two centuries ago  
when photographs  
were first developed  
(Daguerre's birthday today)  
and the Sun fell out of France.**

**A long breath to say: grey day.**

**18 November 2017**

=====

**I wonder what word  
she would have said,  
Sun, had she been there.  
Though she is here,  
always, we turn and twist  
in our shabby clothes, and hide,  
but she is here, she  
is what we mean by being here.**

**18 November 2017**

=====

**We didn't ask  
for anything peculiar.  
It was a simple light  
we asked to show a simple thing —  
address on an envelope,  
vein-pattern on a fallen leaf.**

**But times are hard  
in the world now,  
simplicity  
                  has lost its memory  
so I will never know  
what kind of tree  
or where my mail is headed.**

**18 November 2017**

=====

**Tentative, a cloud  
in bare maple.  
From such wood  
furniture the child  
learned to tell  
some differences  
between himself and it,  
doors and drawers  
full of clothes, yes,  
but what to wear  
and where to go?  
Slow, slow to learn,  
tentative, the wood,  
the cloth, to see  
for himself himself.**

**19 November 2017**

=====

**Cycles. Confusions. Raptures.  
Trumpet solo.  
Wash your hands  
I live here too,  
this is my music too.  
*The phones don't ring no more*  
all sly mechanism now,  
vibration that pretends  
to be your own body  
talking to you, calling  
you, no, it is instead,  
instead of you,  
some evil neighbor's riff.  
Could it be thunder,  
drumbeat, *silenzio*,  
all the cop cars have come and gone,  
you can still see their red  
flashes when you shut your eyes.**

**19 November 2017**

=====

**Why do we belong to  
people we talk to?  
How do their eyes  
conjure up so soon  
a geometry we  
suddenly inhabit  
bounded on all sides  
by who they are?  
So hard ever to crack  
open the figure  
and come out into the plain  
unbounded world  
of everybody else,  
the room, the chair, the moon.**

**19 November 2017**

=====

**The responses  
concern me —  
bitter root  
                  *raiz amarga*  
he said,  
                  love knows it,  
the sad glad sour salty taste  
after the act,  
                  any act, any  
word spoken is the last word.**

**19 November 2017**

=====

*for T.*

**And you talk about crows!  
You who have a hill  
of your own to roll  
down into your trees  
to hide in, and a door,  
you who have a door!**

**And you do know crows,  
a crow is a word from the sky  
you hear, hear well,  
and so few do, hear  
the fierce white word  
the black bird says,  
brays,  
          waits for you to answer,.  
And you do.**

**19 November 2017**



**=====**

**Don't leave me  
alone with demons.  
The stars are silent.  
Soon it will be  
one more night.  
I need you already  
obviously, the principle  
of tomorrow, love,  
the move called light.**

**19 November 2017**

=====

**Cast-iron open-work design  
the Devil's Handkerchief  
spread out on the island sand.**

**Wake up, the machine lets you go.  
Keep me company:  
be an idol in my temple,  
a flower tucked behind my ear,  
a word in my mouth —  
I am nothing without that,**

**Without you. I've said what is so.  
Now we can for a little while sleep in peace.**

**19 November 2017**

=====

**Coming at least  
close to bone:**

**only the rain-dove  
domes down our air**

**miracles elsewhere  
here magic is standard**

**here the world  
itself is miraculous**

**sun moon person road.**

**20 November 2017**

## **WARNING**

**If you jog past my house  
you belong to me.  
At least as long as it takes  
to pass, and in that time  
I am free to think you  
as I please, or choose  
to incarnate you  
as my brief agent  
carrying my work  
into the invisible world  
to which you run  
so earnestly —who knows  
how much of my meaning  
you'll have always with you  
however far you go?**

**20 November 2017**

=====

**Relatively. Absolutely  
relative. How  
can we ever be sure?  
There are secret places  
hidden in the alphabet,  
find them by closing  
your ears. Then the thing  
you thought was silence  
breaks. And a word  
you thought was Greek  
spoke. It wasn't  
but it did. And you  
are hearing it right now.**

**20 November 2017  
Rhinebeck**

=====

**A word more  
or coming less  
fish to our trawler**

**we have heard  
the language of the sea  
dawn chorus of the fish  
under Capricorn,**

**no obesity down there,  
no philosophy**

**but everything speaks.**

**20/21 November 2017**

=====

**I was the worried one  
princeling pale  
of the neighborhood —  
how could I get to read?  
The nearest book a mile away  
so I walked up and down  
the not-so-busy streets  
learning by worrying  
—fear is a swift teacher —  
tailor shop, the feel of gabardine,  
the feel of camel. For a little  
while I forgot the book.**

**20 / 21 November 2017**

=====

**Time to child anew?  
A rooster no longer  
on the hill over west —**

**go back forty years or so  
to hear him call,  
then nothing.**

**Time opens its beak  
and words vanish.  
Things go away.  
Far as you can  
live life in green.  
That sky up there  
is just what you think.**

**20 / 21 November 2017**



=====

**My ankle hurts  
the wind won't listen,**

**where did I get  
such friends?**

**It looks  
like a dance only  
when you're far  
enough away you  
don't hear the groans  
or take them for music.\***

**I guess the air  
is as much a part of me  
as my ankle bone or rib  
or sore fingertip,**

**but where did I get  
such a me?**

**Are you  
a part of me too  
and I of you,**

**pains  
just shifting from  
one dancer to another?**

**Little pains  
shrill as a children's chorus,**

**guessing what's to come  
when all these me's come home.**

---

**\* Maybe even beautiful  
like Bruckner  
in his organ loft  
at Sankt Florian, sobbing,  
trying to make God happy.**

**21 November 2017**

=====

**Leaves turn grey too.  
The wind is in them  
across the road, the small  
tree over the old pump,  
only that one, the others  
show no sign of movement,  
no wind for them. The wind  
is partial, it's let me witness  
a secret tryst, fervid caresses  
not meant to be seen. Or maybe  
meant for me, fisherman  
that I am of dust and sky.**

**21 November 2017**

## SUGAR

Spin sugar  
around in its tracks.  
Bad chemical. The taste  
fades out. Tongue tip  
tells salt.

This  
is alchemy, the old one,  
the first one, old  
as fishes, older  
than a rose, its principles  
gelled before the world.

Sing-along alphabets,  
Mendeleev, Flemish brick-work,  
all that.

But sugar,  
we must exempt sugar from  
our little story, block  
the arrogant chemistry,  
synthesis,  
not-exactly-wheat,  
fields full of bad decisions.

And in the evening twilight

**a zombie walks quietly,  
calmly, they get tired too,  
trying to purify the fields all day  
and in such weather.**

**Stand firm with the zombie,  
stop sugar in its tracks,  
send it back to the fruit, the pulp,**

**sweeten your food with ghosts and myths,  
myth to mend the mind.**

**21 November 2017**

=====

*for Charlotte*

**How is it that I have been  
nowhere special, no feuds,  
sea fights, parliaments,  
still when I look at you  
I have suddenly come home?**

**Because home is where all  
challenge is, the day's work  
and the night's recovery,  
bravery, precision and truth.  
Everything you are is exact.**

**And here I am trying yet again  
to tell you out loud the facts  
of you, that you are the furthest  
I have ever reached, sometimes  
at least to be at your side, you**

**whose little island turns out to be the world.**

**2.  
This is just trying to say a part  
of the truth that moves me so  
when I think about you, the truth,**

**not to tell anything, just say  
what is so, the way somebody  
standing on the shore observes  
the seventh wave is biggest  
and turns to say so to his friend  
but keeps quiet, afraid he'll sound  
pretentious or too observant,  
not everybody wants to be seen  
up close, not everybody worth seeing.**

**3.**

**But you are so much more than I can say.  
I'm trying to be honest, that is, simple,  
you are worth more than I can say,  
more than I can give. I have never  
known anyone so generous as you,  
mind and feeling, time and gesture.  
It seems wrong to use my own words  
to tell you what you so deeply know.**

**4.**

**This is so talky...  
you're next door  
translating French  
and I flounder in English.  
Come home and tune me,  
I need your song.**

**21 November 2017**

*for 22 November 2017*



**=====**

**Weave a coat  
out of fallen leaves**

**alphabet with vowels written  
s the origin of democracy**

**these are magic days  
magic facts**

**thanksgiving week  
origin of all I love.**

**22 November 2017**

=====

**The noise of certainty  
poor scinetists in their cave**

**wind eye wind  
has a mouth too  
how else could we learn?**

**Grey sky grey leaves  
grey alphabet**

**poor scientists trapped im numbers  
number**

**counting instead of thinking  
instead of knowing.**

**22 November 2017**

=====

**The compatibility  
knows me  
there is nothing between us  
a sheet of ice  
a man once looked through  
and looked away**

**Geology  
is just one part of me.  
I am Science  
I am your breakfast  
on the day your puberty  
finally starts, Humanity.**

**I am the fresh bright blood.  
the unspeakable.**

**Pulsing with similitudes  
I speak you fast**

**faster than you can do anything but be.**

**22 November 2017  
Shafer**

## **ESSE ET VIDERI**

**One of the strangest things about this human world is how we can never know, never tell, what forms our actual (as we suppose) identities take in the minds, souls, fantasies, of other people. Am I responsible for all the versions, images, of me that arise in the dream-lives or daydreams of those who know me? Truly we are multitudinous.**

**And does she know that she fingers the strings of Sarasvati's veena in my mind, a holy raga I can see but never hear? And does he know at the helm of what craft he steers a boat full of us poets south into a sea Dante foretold?**

**How can we know who we are  
before all our scattered,  
shattered, images come together  
and I get to see the hosts of me  
for what I am?**

**Will that be Paradise  
or the apocatastasis Platonists dream of  
when it all starts again,  
when a man is only who he is  
and not all the shadows he casts  
willing or unwitting  
into the heart-minds of those  
who meet him, or think about him?**

**So is that who I am,  
that man in your mind?**

**And then a parade passes  
of all the ways I have seen you—**

**are we guilty of all our identities?  
Identity is entity.**

***Esse = videri.***

**To be is to seem.**

**23 November 2017**

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

**It is strange  
to write  
one's mother tongue**

**writing in English  
seems a little guilty  
thing, a poem  
especially, like  
blurting out a secret  
overheard  
behind your father's door.**

**23 November 2017**

== == == == ==

**It's one of those blue  
days when the sky  
comes closer, cloudless  
mild, Thanksgiving  
in a northern state —  
what more could I ask of time?**

**23 November 2017**

=====

**Enact the Mercy  
the ritual I gave you  
where the rational clothes  
slip off by themselves  
and in the shadow of the yew tree  
something starts shining,  
shines all the way into form  
and loves you.**

**24 November 2017  
(Acrylic Series 1)**

**(The poem as abstract painting, all color and movement slain onto the altar, quick drying, holy sacrifice of the sense.)**



=====

**They keep waiting for me  
where is Friday in a week of seed  
where do the hours go to  
when anyone is sleep?  
Yearning fgor the other  
is the chief task of the self —  
a bird spread at the top of the stairs  
wings awkward outstretched  
crying for balance crying for love  
breaks the dreamers heart to hear,  
a big brown and white bird  
gannet, maybe, or a girl in pain  
remember? This color  
in the crayon box is named for you.**

**24 November 2017  
(Acrylic Series, 2)**

=====

Never be easy again  
or Spain  
the laurels shimmer  
in the Petaluma sun  
the apple trees  
remind me of my brother  
I never had, we would  
have raised cattle and made cheese,  
the laurels dark though  
for all the glimmer, glamor  
an Irish word, the spell, the spell,  
I taste a leaf it tastes me back,  
what is it about these living  
things that never had a mother?  
I really do think we were  
first to fall out of the air.  
I bite the sky.

24 November 2017  
(Acrylic series, 3)

## MURAL

As close as we come  
a marmoset  
sprinkling hayseed on a blur  
where the map's eroded  
someone does not wish to be seen  
crystal goblet in hand  
ancestors on the mother's side  
phantom bequests the mitochondria  
on Mt. Carmel one time a long time  
I'm trying to make sense of why this happens  
*mousa* or in Sparta *moha*, muse  
on the rail trail west of Olive  
by foot half Overlook to see  
I suppose we really are spies  
handless gender  
we stand accused  
voyeurs of the stars  
and in the local mountains  
chapels built  
first Man [?] in the wilderness  
praying local gods come join  
*give trees a voice*  
*and keep their silence to yourself*  
when one has nothing on the mind

**the truth comes out  
don't reveal your method  
studied with Glazunov and Kandinsky  
pronounced in the French way  
garden at Vévey  
a man of many towers  
it is not good to talk on TV  
the eyes hate to listen  
soon take vengeance  
are you afraid of monsters too?  
just means Hey look at that!  
particle physics only the half of it  
the real mystery is the void  
so-called particles so-called travel through  
holy sunyata here the bread  
changes into wine and no one dies.**

**25 November 2017  
(Acrylic series, 4)**

**=====**

**Exhortations about crowns:**

**wear me instead  
a clothy fillet soft white  
as Grecian maidens once  
wore to tame their amber hair.**

**you see me fluttering in marble,  
resting sleek on some smooth nape,  
a shoulder maybe, a storm in pottery.  
Think of how I feel to touch your skin.**

**25 November 2017**

## **PIANO CONCERTO**

**waiting for the flowers  
florist lost in the octave above high C  
poor delivery lad  
bike in thorn bush**

**listen to me  
one small pattern repeated  
until you tree  
and what is that hanging from the lowest branch,  
am I just another?**

**2.  
Hear him humming  
over the keyboard  
there's a man here after all  
not just the music**

**3.  
As there might be a bear in the woods  
just past the garden  
who comes and snatches sacks of seed  
and strews them  
as if for birds  
*sator erepo tenet opera rotas*  
and by such gifts the world is made.**

4.

**Delicate be delicate  
as smoke up from a waved-out match**

**in the days of fire  
before the Ark touched land  
and the birds still came back,  
a little smoke above a little sea.**

5.

**Capture my attention  
because I care  
there are white-throated  
sparrows in the piano  
I see them walking beneath the strings  
why doesn't the clangor vex them  
or are they deaf to what so pleases us,  
aberrant as we are?**

6.

**Everything helps me—  
isn't that the point  
of living in a world?  
Living alone in void  
is hard, no one  
to help you climb,  
no one to hold your hand.  
Music means *be here*.**

**And if a word  
began to think  
what would it sing?  
Song ever grows  
out of loss—  
sheep strayed, love  
lorn, those  
we cherish lost to war.  
Then our breath comes  
out as song.**

**25 November 2017**



=====

**Land where the pen strikes  
the cursive geology of words.  
Try recumbency when facing verticals—  
opposition is a golden dragon  
soars down from the mind to the heart.**

**25 November 2017**

== == == ==



**KALMIA SWING**

*(for Ashley Garrett)*

she says it says it is  
she heard it  
*broad-leafed* past the meadow  
when?

Edge of the forest, up the hill,  
fence past the back yard  
howl of those these leaves



**So Pehr Kalm came from Sweden to explore the flowers and trees of North America, beasts and waters. He was what they called a naturalist, he named things he saw. And he saw this and we call it a laurel — not the noble laurel of the ancient Greek poets, and not the Oregon laurel girls in California pick in redwood forests to braid around their lovers' brows. This is the the kind of laurel that back home they named after its fibder, Kalmia, broad-leafed mountain laurel.**

**She braids the colors  
before our eyes,  
wreathes them round  
until the flower  
starts to dance**

**ancient round dance of all living**

**,  
the single act  
the swing of beauty  
comes with us  
where we are  
the only place we can live**

**.**

**25 November 2017**

## **KISDSING A POET**

**I dreamed I kissed you  
it was your words I wanted  
but your lips were as close as I could get  
  
to possess the smooth confidence of what you said**

**26 November 2017**

=====

**List the new words to be defined  
and send the list to poet friends.  
Let them take the risk of meaning,  
things soaked with our intentions —  
and every Hebrew letter in each new word  
we'll nail up there and call a star.**

**26 November 2017**

== == == == ==

**What does the ink  
think?**

**The sky  
must be what they  
mean by blue.  
The only ever  
pronoun is you.**

**26 November 2017**

=====

**Me is something  
to apologize for—  
any wild man of the woods  
knows that. Old  
goiter people up the Catskills  
before iodine in salt,  
it is it seems  
a sin to live too far from sea.  
Now every step uncertain,  
never know when grass  
or leaves or mulch  
will fall away, spill you,  
me, O me, what a burden  
to bear, an identity full of meat and bone—  
*I will leape up to my God* Faustus cried  
and I still feel his breath in my mouth.**

**26 November 2017**



**I= = = = =**

**am a creature in a fairytale.  
The child meets me at the edge of the woods,  
says Hello, hello you are so green.**

**And green I am, I weep and weep,  
she wipes my tears from my face  
with her long, long hair before she goes away.**

**26 November 2017**

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

**To be meaningless and true,  
and just so, at peace.  
The holiday is over  
the river is as it should be —  
an hour like a flower,  
fair but soon fades,  
no one sits on porches anymore.**

**26 November 2017**

=====

**Mix black ink with violet  
half the words will be French.  
Add some brown and get ancient Greek—  
the more colors you use  
the fewer words you'll understand.  
When you understand nothing at all  
the spectrum is complete  
and everything suddenly makes sense.**

**26 November 2017**

=====

**Girl by girl  
we try to tame the tiger.  
Dionysus says You never will —  
look the other way  
and drink a big glass  
of not even wine—  
elderberry juice will do,  
or pomegranate. Look  
in the sky a while,  
the tiger will get bored  
and leave you in  
the dreary outback you call peace  
How empty the neighborhood is now,  
no beasts, no girls, nothing to fear.**

**26 November 2017**

=====

**Why does my hand today  
outspread suddenly  
look like a lizard's foot?  
Have I been reading about dragons?  
Wish I had, wish I could,  
but the whole sky  
can't fit in here. And you  
know what dragons need,  
space, wind, cloud. And small  
children to worship them.**

**26 November 2017**

=====

**The rhythm's right  
the notes are wrong—  
it's just another  
language for the song.**

**26 November 2017**

== == == == ==

*Prementia,*

**I call to you  
from the world before thinking,**

**the word world  
where long-ago spoken sounds  
think for us, before us**

**pour into our mouths  
(from nowhere) and pour  
out again moist with our beast-breath  
and touch any body near,**

**no meaning, all being.**

**25 November 2017**

=====

**Death from the sky  
not Saturn but something  
rock or sleet or lightning flash,  
flesh, break, crack of thunder,  
stay indoors the roof caves in  
tree topples, stay in the cave  
until the stone itself collapses,  
no need for bombs or missiles.  
This is astrology, the dragon  
who always looks the other way.**

**26 November 2017**



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

**Tower, a building  
that becomes part of the sky.**

**Pocket, an unseen realm  
you carry in your clothes.**

**Book, a gathering of what  
you can't otherwise remember.**

**Clock, smiling  
face of the angel of death.**

**Tree, a green flower  
no one dares to pluck.**

**Hand, five or six ways  
for the brain to know you.**

**26 November 2017**

**=====**

**Land without God?  
It must be,  
the way people talk  
about God all the time  
bless this and bless that,  
the way love-starved  
sailors long at sea  
talk about women,  
nail pictures of them  
over their hammocks,  
pray to them as they fall asleep.**

**26 November 2017**

## **RECOVERY**

**It's taken all autumn  
to forget  
what summer taught me  
so that I can  
stand in my body again  
and think  
about something else,  
anything other than me.**

**26 November 2017**

=====

**It wasn't it was something  
heard by the window  
spoken into the room**

**a clatter of metal sheets  
talking though the no wind.**

**I wondered where I come in,  
how can so much be  
not about me, am I not  
or am I not a citizen  
of this very calendar?  
Aren't you awake? Why  
aren't you listening?**

**27 November 2017**

=====

*after Hermann Broch*

He said the style  
of old age is mostly  
grammar, gasps,  
pauses, eloquent  
prepositions.

I'm  
done with all that,  
I want things now,  
write things now,  
pure Thinglish  
be my song,  
plump as a goose,  
fickle as thunder.  
Raise your hands now  
if you've never seen a goose.  
Anyhow, I love your hands.

27 November 2017

=====

Noise like a vacuum cleaner  
and nobody home.  
Streetcars phased out in '57 —  
so many losses to put up with,  
umbrellas, phone booths, staghorn  
sumac, those purple beards  
used to be everywhere, Ottoman  
Empire, why don't I just give up,  
sit down and cry and be quiet.  
There must be somebody in there —  
consider me pounding on your door,  
think about coming out or even  
asking me in. We could grieve  
together and then got on with it.

27 November 2017

=====

**Cast my spell?  
Cast my grammar  
on you rather,**

**I heard the Lady.  
the police seldom far  
high helms and thick sticks,**

**we're pre-electric light again,  
sparrows know more about  
the sky than we do. Science**

**is asleep. No one to help you,  
listen to my tone of voice  
can't you find inside it**

**a gentle place where we lie down?**

**27 November 2017**

## **APOLOGIES TO NERO**

**The city is still intact,  
unburnt, still plagued  
with all the dialects  
the human heart can speak.**

**Wise monarchs burn  
their kingdoms down, leave  
the ordinary people free —  
sunrise, wheat field, cow barn,**

**dusk. And in the night  
we all are beautiful again.**

**27 November 2017  
Red Hook**



=====

**Laughter in the next room,  
familiar giggle. All we ever need  
is to begin again. This day itself  
will never end. Evening comes,  
starfish uncurl in the surf  
somewhere else. O god somewhere else.**

**27 November 2017  
Red Hook**

== == == == ==

**How long it takes to get there  
the place you already are**

**and know it, tree branch  
can fall, people walk by**

**stare in one another's windows  
there is always something to see**

**hurricane howling up the coast  
and you listening to some music**

**there, that lost place where you are.**

**27 November 2017**

***(listening to Scriabin's Piano Concerto)***

## **HOLDING HANDS**

**A little song  
comes along**

**she thinks: this hand  
in my hand  
used to belong to me  
now it's no one's,**

**just like music,  
happens and goes,  
forgets it ever loved you,**

**but I don't know how to forget.**

**27 November 2017**

=====

**There was something tender about them  
those men before the war  
as if no matter where they grew up  
they had heard a flute playing in the woods  
and knew it meant to be them, that they  
were the music the broken world  
was trying to heal itself with, what other  
remedy for grief have we ever found  
but sound, mother's voice or lover's sigh,  
it's all we have. Follow the frost  
of our own breath through the winter  
trees and find the one who played  
the song so long ago. Try the sky first  
and then the fallen leaves, at last  
the place where the stream pools out—  
a heron may be standing in the shallows,  
oak leaves reflect around a human face.**

**27 November 2017**

***(listening to the allegro of Delius' Piano Concerto)***

=====

**The rain stopped long ago  
but rain is still falling from the eaves  
gently, quietly, making its soft sound.  
A man looks out the spattered window  
into a night scene he can almost see,  
tree trunk dark different from leaf dark  
different from moonless, starless, sky.  
He feels the differences, they frighten  
him a little. the way religion does  
or ancient legal customs. Almost  
he can understand them, but the edge  
of them eludes him — how far  
does God go? How can I make amends  
for what I never did? The rain doesn't  
know either, but has a way of soothing,  
distracting. He counts raindrops, sleeps.**

**27 November 2017**

=====

The coldness the answer  
the normal reproaches  
symphony snug  
like a broken tower  
you alone can climb.  
Only you,  
you have the time.

2.  
If there's any mystery at all  
in being me, it's why  
I am not you, the capable, the trim  
aeronaut of inmost spices—  
why do I err on the lummox side  
in this long-lasting comic strip?

3.  
There's more to be said  
so sit down at your hour  
and close my eyes.

Strings dangle from the sky.  
I gave you a roof  
you gave me a head  
to put it over,  
just like money.

**4.  
We met the accountant  
walking in the cool of the evening,  
he said he had news for us  
we said we didn't want it.  
We aren't tired of our garden yet.**

**28 November 2017**

=====

**Bear tracks would be a relief—  
or even possum—just some  
creature I can name,  
not just this anonymous  
stirring of the wind in fallen leaves.**

**28 November 2017**



## **ROSSINI**

**The overture is the best part,  
the opening, all meaning  
and no singing, the music  
knows what the people want,  
the poor characters on the stage  
waiting to bellow their hearts out.  
The poor people in their seats  
waiting for emotions to come  
back and warm them.  
The music always knows.**

**28 November 2017**

=====

**Everything falls  
as has been recounted  
often enough to be true.**

**What else can it do?  
Gravity never stops working  
but we often do.**

**Where else can a poor thing go  
if my hand forgets it?  
Everything falls.**

**28 November 2017**

=====

**The paper tells me who just died  
but not the ones who just came alive  
at a first touch, first kiss, first thought,  
first sound of a violin. Cello. Crow.  
We know so little of what makes us live.**

**29 November 2017**

=====

**The sun she's  
bright enough for  
any two people—**

**sp share my eyes,  
it is too dark in me  
to take so much light in.**

**29 November 2017**

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

**Excess used to kill the exceder—  
now our excess kills all the others,  
waste, toxins, pollutants, war.**

**29 November 2017**

=====

**So many people  
waiting to be me—  
I've been so long  
at my station—**

**I pray continuance  
is not selfishness,  
I always give away  
everything I generate.**

**29 November 2017**

=====

**Packages delivered,  
dreams barely remembered—  
brown woolen dress or robe,  
sense of someone long alone.  
I think a woman is like a mountain—  
think for yourself of all the ways that is so.**

**29 November 2017**

**=====**

**Looking around the corner  
to see who's here.**

**The dreams says truer than the day.  
Men shave, but shame keeps coming back.**

**29 November 2017**



== == == == ==

**Sun-filled curtain  
then shadow of a bird  
on it then a leaf.  
Who ever saw before  
such a small song?**

**29 November 2017**

=====

**These are the people  
who live me**

**without them  
I have no voice,  
no language.**

**I can only say  
what you can hear.**

**Understanding comes later,  
on both our parts.**

**Till then it's all  
more or less music.**

**30 November 2017**

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

**Outside it freezes  
windless and is still.**

**Where can the mind rest  
when nothing moves?**

**The quiet wakes me,  
my reath is a stranger.**

**30 November 2017**

== == == == ==

**Rice in the rafters  
from a wedding in the sky**

**the Romans tossed pine cones  
at newly-weds, to keep  
from feeding all their mice.**

**30 November 2017**