

12-2017

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**In the Sultan's palace
the snow won't stop,
lies deep on marble,
janissaries slip and shuffle
their way from door to door,
the wise men of his council
huddle in the skins of wolves
sipping hot rosebud tea,
lord knows why. And still
the Sultan goes on sleeping
between two favored wives
one of them with eyelids
that flutter now and then
as if she dreams but soon will wake.**

1 December 2017

=====

**The sun just got brighter —
she knows something,
recognizes this day
has stopped being tomorrow,**

**and now is all we have.
Help! I want to cry, Who
will save me from Now?
But there is no answer.**

**Why can't I still be
waiting to begin, instead
of being trapped here**

**with all this traffic in my head,
driving on the left, bells
bonging over pointless plazas?**

1 December 2017

HOW TO CATCH BIRDS

for Papagena

**Catching birds:
Seize their shadows
as they pass your curtains —**

**the cloth in your fingers
will remember them forever,
bluebirds, juncos, crows.**

1 December 2017

=====

**Dry ink, wet paper,
high priest of Baal,
his name carved on your wall —
a violin sonata sort of feeling
under your fingertips,
touch, touch, lust.**

1 December 2017

=====

**Suppose there were an alphabet
russianer than snow
hebrewer than Jordan,**

**full of air so birds zip in and out,
suppose we were children
again, or still, and wise
nuns taught us those letters,
chalk on the board, swish
of their blue robes,
our tongues eager to taste new sounds.**

1 December 2017

=====

**The angel of all our maybes—
who are you? Easy to say,
so hard to hear the answer**

**when it comes. And it comes,
a voice that seems behind you,
a voice you know,**

a voice you're afraid to name.

1 December 2017

=====

**Wolfbane? Blake born
the same year their killed
the last wolf in England.
So now poetry has to all
by itself do the work of wolves.**

1 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Believe the harper
when he sounds,
pulling your thoughts
to sad old things
you used to know
and care for and even
love, no more, no
more — the harp knows.**

1 December 2017

=====

**When things are small
they understand.
Larger less so.
A fact fills a small brain,
gets lost in a larger.
All an elephant can
do is remember.**

1 December 2017

=====

**It was something I wanted
it was the moon
nothing special about it
rising through bare trees
and I was inter
and wanted the moon
at last, to make my peace
with light, with that mirror
in the sky that will not
consent to show my face.
Moon without a bone, moon
with long black hair,
moon like a horse on the prairie,
moon meant to be mine.**

1 December 2017

=====

**Hearing another voice in the house
not a bird this time
more like a memory —**

**count the ways desire dreamed
or dreaded or failed, the voice
(radio, it turns out) reminds.**

**And there still will be left
the radiant angel of the obvious,
his wings shield us from the common day.**

2 December 2017

(from the She, or co-Ma)

**When they tell you how tall she is
they mean where does her shadow
touch your body as you walk —
does it reach up to your lips?**

**When they say how old she is
they mean how many moments
can you live without thinking of her.**

**When they tell you her name
they're trying to tell you your own.**

2 December 2017

Everyone has two mothers. One you know and if you're lucky grow up near and live with her for many years. The other you gradually, if you're lucky, get the sense of who or how she is. She is the co-Mother, or simply, the co-Ma.)

== == == == ==

Rozhinkes mit mandeln?

**Peaches and peanuts, we're
simpler folk down here,
a couple of us live
on salt alone, a few more
bread with no jam.
But most of us make do
with peanuts and peaches
or the other way round.**

2 December 2017

=====

**Let the line
master you**

**let the matter
decide in time**

**word or image
uguale
as the master said
in another century**

**2.
let line sound**

**find its way
across the paper**

**that pasture common
to all your swains,**

**flute or dither,
scratch marks on the wall.**

**2 December 2017
Saugerties**

== == == == ==

A car went by
at six a.m.
fast, as if I were
a decent farmer
risen at his window
I watched it pass,
fast, south down
the highway through
trees that do
and don't belong to me.
But he does, or she,
the speedster I know
only by their twin
red lights departing.

3 December 2017

=====

*so if the Vine
clomb the Climber
as old Snow
riseth up to leave
young Grass*
he read in the strange book
dawn spread before him
*and the Hill should set free
fallow Deer from the Woods
then mayhap thou wouldst come to me*
and he almost wept
thinking pf that long-lost
tender supposition, mayhap indeed,
but who really knows
who came and who was waiting —
it was maybe just a song
with all its music gone.

3 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Time becomes place —
6:33 AM is 633 Crescent
my old home. All along
I've said time is nothing
but the measure of place
to place. Space is real,
time is what we imagine.
To our grief. Space is true
measurement of the Face.**

3 December 2017

HERESY

**breaking through
all the underbrush
weeds and pretty
flowers to reach
that open space where
the light of this matter
first began to shine.**

3 December 2017

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

**Possum on the lawn last
night when we came home.
In Latin *possum* means
I can, I am able, *potes*
and you are too. Words
tickle the sky inside,
the big one, to make
you think, and thought
rain down to soak our roots.
Full moon. Metaphors riot.**

3 December 2017

=====

**How strange
my name
the woods before
all round me
nameless trees**

**any name is
a shock to the system
tells it to grow
or stop growing**

**grey dawn
of the self
suddenly day,
everybody
knows your name.**

3 December 2017

=====

**Of course I love
myself, my famous
lost love, my
sad old song.**

3 December 2017

== == == == ==

**The road
leaf-hid
all season's
open now**

**I see it going
even when
no one goes
it goes, seems
to reproach
my settledness
but comforts
me too, lets me
linger long
in hope of home.**

3 December 2017

=====

**Back to bed
bandage my imagination
at the free clinic
of dreamful sleep —**

**waking up
should happen
only once in a while
not all day long —**

**Orpheus told us now
climbing to the sky,
je vais dormir,
dormir! The god
of poetry teaches
us to sleep.**

3 December 2017

=====

**New pen new potent
over Hellespont
a risen girl
spilled from a low cloud,
don't ever think of me as old
she sings *though I alone*
*was born before the world.***

3 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Fishing for bread
hook in the sky**

**hands ready to grasp
shadow of a lady**

**she passes overhead
scattering crumbs.**

3 December 2017

=====

**Open the little gold chest
morning mist in winter trees
the ones who run naked in the woods
are safe today from carping clerisy
foxes bark at empty skies
suddenly I'm the only one alive.**

**2.
Picture the princess
in any of your stories.
Marry her. Try to be worthy
of her bed, her fierce
exalted intellect, her thought.
Now picture her castle
lording over its terrain
vineyards and wheat fields
with priests from the temple
blaring their trumpets
to create the new day.
You can't remember any more
how beautiful she is,
her beauty is the norm
of light, of seeing. Anyhow
the mist is in your mind now.**

5.

So don't listen.
Gold is good for you
this little chest
especially, rubies
and sapphires on the lid
full of rivers and stories
and the kind of mathematics
your muscles use
to scopp up a shell of water
or embrace your friend,
stars jse it too but don't complain.

6.

Live so long to learn so little.
Pomegranates on the battlefield,
it is time to feed the dead.
Your princess leads you by the hand
you mumble your part in the antiphon
unsure of the words. She smiles
drags you to the middle of the field
scattering barley with her free hand
from a silken pouch at her waist.
You reach the center of the field
where the war memorial is crumbling.
She pours the last grains out
and looks at you. All fear is gone.

You have come to life again.

4 December 2017

=====

**A picture is a wall
between yourself
and the unseen—
hence Moses's command,
any image blinds you to God.
Abraham knew better:
look close at anything
and see God.**

4 December 2017

== == == == ==

**What do I know
about the body?
Who is she anyhow?
I met her once
in Connecticut
she said I am
the part of you
you lost at birth
and never found again
till now. And maybe
now's too late
I asked. But she:
I'll never leave you.**

4 December 2017

=====

**Those voices I hear in the night,
I think they're inside me.
Not the head talk or the heart demanding
but other voices, like the liver
talking to the lung above him
or just now my left hip bone
calling past the spleen, trying
to make the heart listen for a change.
He woke me. Now in the dark
I think about my population,
wishing I knew the language each one speaks.**

**4 / 5 December 2017
4 A.M.**

=====

**Trying to make sense
of silence — so many
have lived in this empty
room before me. Tomb.
Chapel with no altar.
A place, and what it doesn't
say. Stone talks, and earth
beneath me talks, and even
the dark has something to say.
But silence slips away at my first touch.**

4 / 5 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Lip balm
shouldn't that
mean a word?
It soothes
by saying it.**

5 December 2017

=====

**Time for a cake
to go beneath the candle,
time to celebrate
a life that goes on
long after its famous
awkward lovely body
goes to the grave—
a life lasts
as long as its human
lasts in memory,
works or deeds
or name alone,
a million birthdays
ever after.**

5 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Hers to speak
the living day.**

5.XII.17

THE STRANGE FLOWER

(from Brian Woods' drawing)

**Plump taut-nippled
breast, slim penis
and a flower rising up**

**like a skullcap
on a rabbi with no
body but a line,**

**a curving line
and a line is all
a being needs**

**to go on being,
to follow fast
between the sexes**

**and reach that chapel
where no Grail is stored
but where the lepers gather**

**to worship a god
whose mercy is not evident,
but our rabbi bends**

**to tend their sores
and weeps his own
doubts away.**

**A line suffices,
is skillful
as no body could**

**answer every question
with kindly, meek
simplicity.**

5 December 2017

=====

**And saw Dionysus
dismount from his Tiger
and hand the reins thereof
to William Blake**

**and saw Mr Blake accept
is his pale left hand
a cup of India tea
from, Catherine his wife**

**and drink therefrom
as from a chalice
and that pale brown brew
enlightened him**

**so all his words
would always grow clear
enough to write them down
for us ever after.**

**5 December 2017
(from *Thought Cell* No.3)**

== == == == ==

Q: How to tell the world from any other forest?

A: There is none, or millions are.

**When the word wakes
maybe I'll understand
all your answers**

**my only encyclopedia
the back of my head.
And yet. I'll try again.**

Q: What is her name?

A: The one who loves you.

Q: Yes, that's the one I mean.

A: Yes.

**It doesn't work, too early
in the day for foxes.
Then who — I'm trying again —
makes all that racket in the woods?**

Yes. Yes again.

**As if the whole of existence
is a single affirmation
indicative, not subjunctive
suppositious linden blossoms
a few dry still married to their tree —**

**from our deck we watch
a distant sea: our lawn.
Yesterday the crows had a lot to say,
not so today.
It makes me feel like Noah
captaining his empty Ark.**

6 December 2017

KEEPING THE LADY WAITING

Lapis lazuli bathtub
big as a horse trough
she lies in it

waiting, waiting
is second nature
for some people

her relatives
are trees and stone
her sister

is a small
mountain in Alaska
waiting

but for whom,
had I known
I would have hurried

nut I have tree
root feet too
slow, slow

as a thought
takes form

in sleepy minds

**but I'm trying
now the ancient
art of arrival**

**coming to the edge
of who and what
she is**

**or of one nature
with that wherein
she bathes**

**not just precious
blue not just stone
but the strange**

**water in it, is it,
where does it come
from, who brought it**

**rained it
left it for her
or did she**

**bring it with her
from where all
waiting starts**

**I wonder
but wonder
makes me slower**

**just go
I tell my body
go to her now**

**pure will
and no wanting
no asking**

**she's waited long
enough for dreamers
such as I am**

**or she thinks
me to be,
she thinks me to be**

**I am there now
and so the others are
the many, many**

**she has summoned
us all by being**

as she is

**ardent waiting
in quiet water resting
waiting hard**

**makes everything happen,
I take my place
among the believers**

**numberless as stars
I think, but thinking
is always opposite**

**the opposite of waiting
and now I, we, all
must be waiting too.**

6 / 7 December 2017

=====

**They're just numbers
after all, have
their own sly meat
on each mean bone.
They pretend, or we
pretend, they are
about oranges or friends,
but they're really
just their own strange
stuff, the piney salty
taste of Six, say,
or the butterscotch
tenderness of Two.**

7 December 2017

=====

**Enough is too much
too little is plenty**

**the crows taught me
by flying away**

**That was the worst part of sickness, the crows deserted
my window and my tree. But they knew better, they
always do.**

**Absence
is another kind of presence,**

**the way you feel me
when I'm not here.**

7 December 2017

DRY ICE

**Dry ice
from drug store
for aches
once,
 buses, horses,
sugar cubes,
lollipops.**

**The skin
of a child
has a lot to learn,
mercurochrome, iodine.**

**How long it takes
to get anywhere
they call 'away.'**

7 December 2017

ACTAEON

All I could think of
was that skin
blinded me to my own
condition, bare
to the fangs of those
I thought my own
powers. We are destroyed
only by ourselves—
all myth means backward,

“spin the glass, fog the mirror,
write with your fingertip
in the condensation
the name of the one
you thought you saw
before you saw nothing more

and it all comes back again.
Read the story backwards,
her wolves drove you to the stream,
you dropped your bow,
broke your spear
and she saw you, naked, undone,
she laughed and took you
as her own, wrapped her arms
around you and brought you home”

brought me home.

**When people walk in any woods
they hear the wind in trees,
the strife of branches, soft scrape
of fallen leaves: these
are my litanies, my praises,
people grow happy when they listen,
I sing to them from the place she made me be.**

7 December 2017

== == == == ==

In dream it finally was clear

**A Woman Standing
Clothed with the Sun
was the Sun — she is the**

Virgin Mother of All Living.

**Her long bright arm outstretched
pointing to the day when
every birth will be a virgin birth**

and there will be no more war.

7 December 2017

=====

Disappearing divots
it said and left me
to reckon if golf
(I know nothing) or turf
was what it had
in mind — my mind.
Suppose some clump
of grass and earth
dug up by deer's hoof
or scooped by accident —
Father Yelchaninov said
There are no accidents.
Karma says that too,
las, law of cause and effect.
Law of the world.
And why do they call priests
father anyhow, aren't
they more like mothers?
Is that what it meant,
when all the accidents
have been cleared away
out of the reckoning mind
only the truth is left?
But what if a divot means
something altogether else,
where is my religion now?

5:45 AM 8 December 2017

=====

**Trying to keep in touch
with what is meant
when some words start
speaking inside, gasp
of breath, a word
is always too fast,
is full of air, escapes
its own nature to find
silence in us.**

8 December 2017

=====

**Why is 'father' *otets*
in Russian? Where's
the parental noises
in all our other tongues,
the p/f, t/d, the r?
I need a friend, a good
dictionary with high
cheekbones, pale hair.**

8 December 2017

PHONE CALLS

**There are worse things.
Maybe. Crocodiles
(one of the first words
we learned in Ancient
Greek). Tarantulas,
no question. Bridges
into the city. Flee.
I pick up the handset,
press the appropriate
and wait for the news.
Shill. Spam. Vote for
some unknown. Friend
calling with bad news.
Meet me under the oak
at midnight, I say, or
leave bundles by my door
or, Sorry, I'm not home.**

**8 December 2017
Shafer**

=====

**Inspection: desire
folded within one
brown leaf, tulipifera
probably,**

**and the light
on and off, we rose
from owls and ravens.
flight lost, religions
in strange places.**

**Alpine Symphony
playing in the background —
who are you
who come between me**

**... 8 December 2017
Shafer**

=====

As the beginning
allowed
 heartbeat
heard in head

pillow percussion

my rhythms
led me astray,
I danced before the Lady
awkward as I am, solo,
limbs lucky to be there,
trembling, at the altar.

We know enough
to do these things,
not enough to
do them well, or stop.
There is silence,
miracles of shade,
repose. I spoke
my piece and stilled.
It took a whole life
to find this silence
that fills the heart.

8 December 2017

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**Word enough
per alteration
I signed the writ
in another's name
plus my *RK* —
now know not
what I ordered with it.**

**Be careful what you sign
in dream, just as in waking —**

**and my drunkard friend
now dead, told me how
the dead miss drinking.
But be careful here too—
you don't learn everything
just by being dead.**

9 December 2017

SNOW MORNING

**The kind of light
that makes you wonder—
something is going to happen.
But then it always is.**

9 December 2017

=====

**Checked my e-mail,
nothing personal
except the weather
the most personal of all.**

9 December 2017

=====

Were angels waiting
tossing Peruvian lilies
into the laps of dreamy
weavers, silence of the loom,
treadles squeak and stop.

Angels guide them to the work
but not in the work,
that's the wavers' world,
the doing of what is to be done.

The lilies compel them
—o the fierce thrust of a flower!—
and they recall the pattern
they long had in in mind,

or their minds were. Start
again. The fabric woven
will deck the Queen of one
small country you and I
will never need a visa to.

9 December 2017

ON THE SHORE

Gathering of truths
fishermen at the fish dock
scaling and gutting
the truth comes out
and we like gulls
wait our turn at the scraps,
flapping about

and call it rightly
education,
 learn Greek
a little Hebrew
 speak
your mother Latin
your almost-English,
 speak

koinē, the common
tongue,

Enuma Elish
scribbled across the sky.
Understanding is getting undressed.

2.

Jesus spoke the common tongue
except when those he spoke to
knew no Greek,

 like us,
the paralytic,
 the maiden dead
outstretched cold on her bed
Talitha, houni Jesus said,
Get up, little girl, get up —

ypu hear the echoes of that
in this fisher-talk here,
the miracles of sheer sound
of coming back and forth upon the sea
seizing what they can
from its magnitude
and heading home.

But what is home
for a man, and most of them
are men, who spend
their lives harvesting the sea?

It must be a strange feeling
to stand in a room
in a house that doesn't move
and feel in your body

slapping fillets on wet stone
of the workbench, scream
of gulls just like us,
incessant, impatient,
picky and fickle,
women waiting, talking, half-
skeptical about these salty hunters
they have to take home and deal with,
talk to in that other language
no college teaches but some learn.

Try to teach me,
let my course of instruction
know haddock and striped bass,
how to tell flounder from fluke
and what name Achilles took
when he went down near Boston
and hid among women at Wellesley,
and who lights the Devil's pipe
when even he comes home,
why
did Lenin take that name
and what does *star* really mean,
Esther, Ishtar, Tara, Astarte,
and how long will it be
before your own springtime comes?

With wet slimy hands
they trace the paths of electrons,

guess the weight of sunshine
falling in an empty room,
kiss the breeze and hope
it finds the face of those they love.

Now blink your eyes
and taste the morning,
it's all here, the fine details,
miracle of mother-wit
and everything we never knew
before the sea woke us up,
spoke us to the limitless air
and made us speak.
Just to one another, no deities yet,
just a bunch of us
standing on the shore,
collegium
figuring it all out,
getting it all wrong
and going on, going on.

10 December 2017

=====

**In the night
up to my eyes in dream
I thought a poem
I forget now
except the end of it:
*there is no hell,
there is only remembering.***

10 December 2017

=====

**Finally things
get to say themselves**

**vast skies
in Dutch landscapes**

veins on the back of my hand.

10 December 2017

=====

**Wed the morning
like an old
movie you loved once**

**and here it is again
brilliant in treetops
snow sultry in shade**

**Admire me, the day promises,
and I will fill you with ideas
better than breakfast**

**swallow me whole
I'm the best medicine there is
I'll take you everywhere, even here.**

11 December 2017

=====

**Think like a prairie
sing like a stone**

**I stretch out my hand
to make me yours**

**pronounce me accurately
and they'll call it love —**

**person and place
the two sacred mysteries**

**person with place
there is no deeper marriage.**

11 December 2017

**it's beauty I mean,
fear no one will understand
or they'll scoff
at my beauty, my beauty
(sinful, soulful, radiant)
the only power, anyhow
it's all I have.**

11 December 2017

=====

**I pretend what I'm saying
is important to the nation
but it only makes sense to me,**

**one more sonnet adrift, lost
on an ocean of prose. Bells
over the marshlands far away**

**rumble of thunder, all my
borrowed music — we sleep
alone though side by side.**

Fugue ends in daylight silence.

11 December 2017

=====

**Silly but honest,
the way people are**

**for instance,
 telling
the truth when truth
doesn't want to be told—**

**if the real truth
ever came out
where would the government be?**

**Shiny cars and pretty clothes
are silly but honest,
at least they try to play the game.**

**11 December 2017
End of Notebook 408**

== == == == ==

**Asked the boat
to show me shore**

**it shoved me here
no Queen no manuscript**

**just a tree I listened to
taught me how to sing**

if this is music.

11 December 2017

INTERMEZZO

**Between nothing much
and nothing at all
(the past and the future)
there is this little music,**

**this now. Hold onto it
but not too tight, keep
time, keep the tune
and take me with you,**

**hand in hand in this
darkness full of voices,
try to makes sense of why
one person needs another**

before all our voices stop.

11 December 2017

=====

**Things new things known
snow on St Ignatius' lawn
where a cat killed a snake
once I figured from the corpse.**

**So go to confession
confess you had a dream
you followed the woman
through workshop, theater,
chapel, corridor. She
led you to your office door
unlocked it and let you in.**

**And that's all?
Father, I lost my key.
I watched her walk
in front of me, sturdy,
competent, brisk.
And is that all?
I lost my key
she let me in.**

**A crow sails by the window.
Go outside and let the snow absolve you.**

12 December 2017

=====

**But in the dream
I passed a workbench
nails and screws were on it,
interesting things to me
but I touched them not,**

**I was carrying a mop
sometimes, or a rustic
iron seat, I was higher
in the building than
the real building is
and I was afraid, fear
heights, falling,
final impact. I passed
a mirror and at least
it looked like me.**

12 December 2017

=====

**Try the sky
next time
adipose tissue
of white clouds,
the world's
whole sentence
spoken in one breath,
everything at once,
the all, the sky.**

12 December 2017

=====

**Trying to link
hands over water
to be faithful
to a disaster,**

**taking an exam
is no different
from everyday life,
as the poet* says**

there are no answers.

12 December 2017

* Thomas Meyer: "easy answers / there are none".

== == == == ==

**Revert to prototype
vision of Jonah
inside the whale —
he is the man
who sees from
inside out,**

**disrespectful of our
so casual surface
seeming, seeing —**

**2.
experiment with longitude,
be for once, dear friend,
west of yourself,**

**this is important,
meet with me there.**

**3.
There is a government
in these things too,
all things are ruled
by slender wisdom.
We follow her traces.**

12 December 2017, Kingston

DE SOMNIO

**Once
were we
awake all the time**

**then the disease
called sleep
came from another planet**

**a plague, or we caught it
from our own beasts
and it slowly spread?**

**Is there a cure
for it even now?**

**2.
Is that what dream
is, or tries to be,
a mild hypnopompic remedy
to lead us out of sleep
at least, into
holy wakefulness again?**

**Or is dream
the core of the disease**

itself, its reason to be,
to carry us bound
and almost silent
into weird otherness,
gold that's gone at morning,
fireside chats with long dead friends?

3.

I heard about a doctor
a specialist in sleep —
helping her patients
sleep better, deeper, longer.
Which side is she really on?

4.

So after a hundred thousand years
we know really not much about it,
that unmapped country where we spend
one-third of our lives, fighting, loving,
being afraid, playing the urgent scenes
we mostly don't even remember —
and maybe that forgetting itself
is a sort of blessing, but I think not:
it is sleep's final depredation
to snatch our dreams from us intact
and leave us scraps, where the whole
panoply of dreams might hold the key
to this deepest of all human mysteries.

12 / 13 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Updating friends
without any drama,
a room upstairs
with tables and chairs,
nothing to eat and
no place to sleep,
just quiet weather
in a quiet room,
lamps and dark
red upholstery,
then friends will
really be friends.**

12 / 13 December 2017

=====

**Is there darkness in it
or oboes or girls, possibly
one lone girl walking
by the sea? If it does
have these things, and
a boy with a trumpet, fog
rolling on the mountainside,
even so put in out of mind—
you need more than the sound.**

13 December 2017

== == == == ==

**I get there before I go —
the mind is my motto,
sun on a field of snow.**

13.XII.17

PASTORAL

**maybe, the shout
of spruces across
the sunglare snow.
No beast to see.
And yet we take
care of them, of one
another, hock
and hoof, soul
and fleecy wool.
The longer I live
there is no difference.**

13 December 2017

== == == == ==

**But I hear the sound of the other
all the time, it sweeps
the noise of my own words together
and makes me speak.**

**Yes, I am listening to you even now,
or trying to, trying
to touch the skin of what makes you
and makes you speak.**

13 December 2017

FOR RICHARD STRAUSS

**Because your father played the horn
it happened. The woods
listened, and the naiads thereof
came down and bothered your mind
with all the particulars of music,
can't get away from lovely people
like that, don't want to, they never
stop humming in your head, water,
wind, wood, the three truths
of music listen to you. Listen
to me now, I was fourteen when
you went away , I hope you can hear
my loving grief, sounds a little
like a horn call far off in the trees.**

13 December 2017

== == == == ==

**When the hand begins to fold
certain lines appear for the first time
or show more clearly in the palm.
Read these. You can be anybody
again. Your fate changes before your eyes
as you crumple up a Kleenex, say,
and toss it at the basket. You miss.
Fate has taken over, the aim is built
into the muscle, the miss is mind.
Now get dressed and talk about music,
say, or some other subject on which
individuals are allowed to express
strong views. The politics of sound.
Mice under floorboards, maple sugar,
anything. You're the boss around here
for a while. I will take down in writing
whatever you say, and read it back to you
some morning when you've forgotten
who I am. Then I will be someone too.**

13 December 2017

== == == ==

**Light through the house
it is the sea**

**I mean the day
as much of the sea as inland lets**

**but the sea is always becoming
it swallows the sun and remembers.**

14 December 2017

=====

**We wonder sometimes
what is really here
close to us and for us
and not hidden away
in some chest of dreams
with rusty hinges, spiders
prowling around inside.**

**2.
Be sure here we are
and all that is with us,
the stone is really there
when I bend to touch it,
pick it up, give it to you
because it has a shape
I think you'll like, a shape
like sunlight glancing
off a distant window
when we're lost in the woods
and finally glimpse a way out.**

14 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Common mistakes:
the apple pretends to be a pear
same family but oh my,**

**or log and crocodile,
mirror and man.**

**My mother had a vanity
that showed three me's —**

**all my life I've wondered
which is the real me**

**or maybe we're just
ghosts in the glass.**

14 December 2017

== == == == ==

**The morning is a clarinet
played over the snow.
The morning is a shadow
of a deer running through trees,
the morning is a tree
all by itself, middle of a field,
big, oak or sycamore,
the morning is too far away to tell.**

14 December 2017

ONTOLOGY LESSON

**Believing in being
is saying your prayers
on rosary beads
made of animal horn,
evidence never far
of living and dying.**

14 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Sometimes too many waitings.
The waterfall freezes over —
who has to pay
for all this beauty,**

**isn't this whole place a museum
we wander through the specimens
we also are? Sun on snow
right now in the trees
makes us remember. Or is it forget?**

14 December 2017

=====

**Or wait for me
at the gate
so we can go
through together**

**to whatever it is
that draws us in,
flames and leaves,
shadows, shouts —**

**or does it matter
even what's there,
a gate speaks softly
our urge to be gone.**

14 December 2017

== == == == ==

**I put red ink
in this green pen
because we live by opposites.**

**Which is why,
I suppose,
some people keep dogs.**

14 December 2017

=====

**But suppose there were a pine tree
such that the cliff it grows on
overhangs a tidy valley with two towns
one at either end, and each town has a church
or at least the steeple for one
though we can't tell what religion from up here,
would a weary traveler resting a while
with back against the trunk and drowsing
a little have a dream clearer and more useful
than any townsmen down there could ever have?**

14 December 2017

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

**I had walked a quarter-mile
when the angel called,
using the voice of my mother,
my students, then my wife,
till I finally paid attention.
When I stopped and stood
quiet, nothing more was said.
Maybe all I need was to hear
my own name in the mouths
of those who loved me and I love.
What other message could there be?**

14 December 2017

= = = = =

**What happens in between
the brain runs out of think
and sleeps. How comfortable
to be nobody for a while
but in a body, w under wool
as if I were a whole continent
vast, full of industry, agriculture,
made of water and rock and dream.**

15 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Sizes of things
that tall tree by the office
shaped like a flower
is the largest flower,
shaped of branches
like spiderwebs, strong
enough to hold
the whole sky in its arms,
ancient chalice of pure light.**

15 December 2017

OLD PHOTO

After so many
unlikelinesses
an ostrich over the desert
comes running—
Debussy sits in his parlor
entertaining Stravinsky,
a great thangka of Buddha
Shakyamuni looks on,
between them, keeps
rivalrous musics at bay.
You can see the two men
are looking at each other
as at an ostrich galloping
towards them over the sand,
large, ungainly, faintly
scary even, but can it fly?

15 December 2017

=====

**Enough ink
to sign a contract, a check,
a confession, a marriage
license, a petition
to the government,
a letter to a distant friend.
You never know which
until it's signed and sealed.**

15 December 2017

=====

**Don't have to be a dragon
to be beautiful, the language
helps. Wings are words,
meanings the fiery breath
emerging. And so on.
Ferocious appetite of speech
to which so many virgin
thoughts are sacrificed.
Proud beast rises, fledged
full with glittering prose,
wings strong with self-certainty—
sometimes he fills the whole sky.**

15 December 2017

LOVE SONG

**Nervous. Lakes
under mountains,
scree.**

Slip, slide.

**No one knows you
because you fly.
Only I do, because
I fly too, in the earth,
under the ground.
We are two kinds
of the same kind.
Now tell me which.**

15 December 2017

=====

**Woe-beasts assemble
Port-of-Noah
still in (our) mind(s).**

**There has to be beginning
hoof-marks on the dusty ramp,
go up, go up, thou baldpate,
laughter in the clouds
howler monkeys rain forest persist
I was a Bible too one day
in mother-weather frequent change
a spigot in the cloud it seemed
I will stop now I said but never did.**

**2.
My doctrine was the animals
all come out of our minds
weird as they and we are,
the romance rose becomes
rhinoceros— you get the picture.
Save us from opinions!
for they can take on
flesh and bone and cartilage
and have their way with the world,
all beasts our sad or glad mistakes.**

16 December 2017

= = = = =

**Not everything needs knowing.
Don't charge the phone
don't listen to the blackbirds
don't taste the coffee.**

**There. Already you feel
if not better at least more like
yourself — remember them?**

16 December 2017

=====

**It snows a little every night
man with a slight cough
woman with a book on her lap
over the roof an angel waiting.**

16 December 2017

== == == == ==

**The flow of species
through the sea of time
went on even after we
fumbled ashore
and were.**

**Nothing stopped
when we began to see and name
though children are still menaced
by old voices claiming
that to stare at anything
makes it disappear.
But we still are here.**

16 December 2017

== == == == ==

**The shells crack
the sound comes out
between two sources
a third emerges
shadow shadow
we can hear
voice of a stranger
suddenly near.
But the shape
pf this sound
is a person, a body
as of a human or
what a human might
one day approximate
eloquently upright
skyward a cool blue flame.**

**16 December 2017
after the famelans**

=====

**Not so much the matter
as the Nile — on the far
bank the dead taking hold —
violet streak of evening — stroke
violent, crucibles of theologic
fear, monkey chatter, aurora!
aurora! folklore rolled up
tight like a cigar (remember
those, babies) rivers along
the black valley verdant grief
so many workmen lost in
building it, even a single color.**

**17 December 2017
(Acrylic series 5)**

=====

**Sumatra on the other side
just listen, here the sun
just now got into the trees
a gong, a guide, glisten
on eyelash, much goes giddy,
party of old people inspecting Mayan ruins,
javelin breakfast, woodpile remembered
thank the woman and make her cry
so unused are we to tenderness,
no problem the cabby said to me
in German but got the gender wrong
this snapshot falls out of the album
thick with black pages in green leatherette,
banks of a river tell go no further,
write the true story by contour alone.**

**17 December 2017
(Acrylic series 6)**

=====

**Pain is concrete
pleasure an abstraction —
will you remember that?
Here, let me put it
in writing for you —
carry it with, test
the specific gravity
of whatever happens.**

17 December 2017

=====

**Like a warmer wade the numbers
crucible I said I thought a thurible
with fragrance billowed up to please
nostrils of the sky the Lady herself
mythomania with no cure I suffer
gladly the ghost I wear, fur collar
round my cranium (who's speaking?
Who in peril?) a stroke of reverence
a splash of origin, skinflint philosophy
of neighbor schools — a yellow bus
all the way to Aristotle, screaming
children out the window shout
mantic etymologies! bask on the beach
can rivers have beaches, Sequana, Donau
most uberous, Annan? Water lusts
for edges, having no edges of its own.**

**17 December 2017
)Acrylic Series, 7)**

=====

**Come back to what we know least,
sunshine, frying pan, checkbook,
sacred breakfasts of the faithful,
maniple, tartan necktie, stole,
this painting is about its own materials
no more than that, tomb on the riverside
every Tarot card remembers for you
lazy lover, Boston in winter, pictures
stapled to a plaster wall, hope they hold,
onset of desirable forms advertised
generous adventures in a green year,
autonomous Cadillacs rot in junkyards
by the Harlem Ship Canal my Golden Horn.
I am the cathedral but you are the God.**

**17 December 2017
(Acrylic Series, 8)**

=====

**Inky fingers childhood trope
grow up and love a mountain
low and blue across the wind
pencil line horizon just a quick sketch
essay about the words it's written in,
am I still England? am I a semaphore
waiting with uplifted arm beside the track
old O&W, DL&W, Erie steel rails
long ago scrapped or hidden under loam,
what kind of earth is this? where does it go?**

**17 December 2017
(Acrylic Series, 9)**

= = = = =

*The black is bright
no moon tonight*
you say things like that
when you set out
go a-courting or
catch a fox though
why do you desire
friends in such forest?
The liberator lives
inside your clothes,
be careful to listen to
your words. The moon
will come back, will you?

18 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Wood menace.
Write your name
on birch bark
the way they did
when men still
believed in magic,
in tree trunks,
in names.**

18 December 2017

=====

**Too much tannin
in the tea.
Too much me in me.**

18.XII.17

=====

**Out of sleep
he smiled and
spoke so softly
one word
Amazing
and slept again.
And we felt with him
in that astonishing
elsewhere we,
only we, could not see.**

18 December 2017

=====

**Gloom of a galaxy
subway runs through it
javel water cleaning the brushes
that try to clean the earth
below where we belong,
weak solutions to cosmic puzzles,
can I drink the water in his glass
and is it water and from where
and why did whoever bring it here
for I am thirsty, lie inert
blanketed with music of the late
Romantic period, I am the heir
to everything, penniless and proud,
all the copper turns to gold, all
the gold buys eight horses and one
great gilded chariot in which she
and only she can ride, day after day
until the dark is eaten up with
luminiferous desire, roadside snow,
acrobats slinging selves through trees.**

**18 December 2017
(Acrylic Series, 10)**

== == == == ==

**Hard to hear if not listening
red shirt reminds of dried blood
but whose and the sparrow chat
outside all the time, hasn't the sky
anything better to do than stare
down at this place forever and ever
while I, the nameless one, try to hide?**

**In any case, a contrabassoon, that's
how it sounds, softly snarling, it
always knows where I am, finds me
without even trying. White thread
on my lapel, sunlight broke the clock,
the moon is out of town, I am saved
by headlights, a deer too cautious to cross,
knows roads are just temptations, resist,
resist by crossing, the risk is worth it.**

18 December 2017

=====

**1.
Elements of equipoise
modular iterations
Taaffe's monkey heads
world of what we were
keeps staring in at us
through the no-trees
forest dank with remember
all our policies arterial
no veins to return,
Rome with no temples
on the hills, conspiracies
whispering together
in the no-pope Vatican.**

2.

**Sitting too long at our studies
mirrors have jagged edges
many have been lost in looking
foundering frigate, Vesuvius on fire,
there is no connection
but we are connected
splendor and horror of propinquity
any body's hand on or
just the thought of skin.**

3.

**Summer drivers like to park in shade
as if their grey Porsches were grey horses
and they cared. Now the stone steps
of Coromándel in Maggie Johnson's photo
lead iup, up to a leafy world before
our sense of God was made or anything
was there for us to be an atheist about.
Calm otherness. A pure *before*.**

19 December 2017

ABSTRACT

**A hundred years now
adored the abstract
or deplored it, but
what was it I so loved,
basement of the Guggenheim
when it was a town house
upper east side and you went
down a few steps to stand
by the desk between the nice
young woman and the four
overwhelming Kandinskys
right there at your houlder,
my shoulder, what came after
that intensity? The gestural
of Kline, the textural de Kooning,
all those boys, dancers into doubt,
color fields and counterpoint,
globes of light and musculature
of sheer, mere, color? Give me
a canvas where every inch
is intricate with thought and fact,
color clash, shape of anger,
shape of lust, make us know,
make us able to tell the difference,
all difference, sing the differences**

**in sluggish oi, in swift acrylic,
and let repetition be
all variation, be kind
to our minds, kindly
as all true things must be,
every shape a long-lost
lover coming to your door.**

19 December 2017

== == == == ==

**New pen
from nowhere
planned,
out of air,**

**penchant for saying
singing a rose, aurora,
a navy blue ballad,
yellow aureole around
the head of coming home—**

**switchboard, call up the masters
let them know the time is ripe
to bursting, all these moments
gush out and soak us with reverence
for everything that happens
and only then be happy.**

19 December 2017

=====

Grex

or flock together
birds or being
with one another,
principle of the dance.
Alarm me with your music

Half a hundred
is one enough,
Pan answered
through the trees

and set the muscles dancing
in all this witless flock
of learned intellectuals
my sons my selves

I do that too
the god all over,
I dispense youth
amongst my worshippers
indifferent to age —
years are humans'
first mistake,
birthdays were harbingers
of you know what,

**count flowerings instead
of springtimes,
using colors not numbers
to tend your tally—
now thank your Pan
and flee, terror
is my precious gift,
my unthinkable forest.**

20 December 2017

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

**Father pen and mother page
a little song between them.
One moment at a time, c'est tout—
one footsteps at a time
makes the whole world dance,
O my oblate spheroid,
my waltz wobbling bride!**

20 December 2017

=====

**Some breath to breathe,
an elephant to ride,
a tree to lean against,
what more does Akbar need?
What Asoka had—a guide.**

20 December 2017

=====

**Consume a rarity
sparkles in the sky
cosmetics start up there
dangers of prophecy
you have to be bright to be
reading my own palm
I'd say my hand is empty**

20 December 2017

== == == == ==

**No complaining just remaining—
like a church bell
over an empty street—
how can we live so
close to the shadow?
We hear horses clopping by
but nothing there when we look out.**

20 December 2017

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

(On a menu:)

**If there are answers
there must be questions
and conversely?
Conversely, alas —
trhere are fiends and friends.**

20.XII.17, Kingston

GAMELAN

**and forget the rest.
There is a shadow cast
between the musics,
overtones in dark blue
robes between the chiming
steel. Intelligence
is in the wrist, the hand's
deft ankle, pivot point,
dance through the din.
Sound is only for the sake
of what it means in hearers,
for their ears to see.**

**20 December 2017
Kingston**

== == == == ==

**Can we look, see,
answer, open the door,
let the owls out
springtime animals
Portuguese gait in Spaniard's dance
deep inquire:
know each petal of the rose
yes, rubicund assimilationist
watch the highway speeding to the north
equivocal animals waiting at the door,
repentance rarer than repose**

20 December 2017

PRO VITA SUA

**Let me ask myself this
on the way to night—
was I sun enough for this day,
was I the army it needed
against intellectual neglect,
against the hordes of whatever
peddling indifference to the young?
For I was old, all day old.
But was I sleeping?
Were the foxes watching
from the little ridge, and
can a fox laugh at a man?
I was a man all day
and tried to understand.**

20 December 2017

=====

**Solstice activities:
fill pens
with light.
Open the curtains,
assign
numbers to what you see,
multiply by me
and there's your answer.
The longest day
lasts forever.**

21 December 2017

PROTASIS

**If we ever get out of this school yard
and the words we use become real words
that other people can hear and respond to,
and we could drive a big car like somebody's father
and people would ask our important
opinions about money and crime and war
but we would have no opinions, only feelings & facts,
nothing else matters, and they would be satisfied,
even pleased at our candor, our difference , our truth.**

21 December 2017

== == == == ==

for ClydaJane

**Your silver fork
is hanging in our tree.**

**Metal is meaning
I think,**

**a fork
points one way
three times.**

Tines.

**Trees in our houses.
Now the sun,
she moves into Capricorn,
nothing in the universe
stands still
except us. We
are the motionless
meaning, we stand
still as a tree.**

21 December 2017

=====

How close we come
to being gone—
ask any bridge,
gephura, over
any golden horn.
Ask any river,
that danger beast
we mythologize deity
but it lies quietly
meaningless, luminous
at our feet, arm of the sea.

Did you know that rivers fly?
When men are sound asleep
women ride them through the sky.—
So much I learn so late in life,
as if I'm beginning to remember.

21 December 2017

TO BE ABSTRACT

To get beyond the heroic gesture of Kline, the polite imperialism of de Kooning (landscape mastered, little said), the pierced heaven raining down in Clyfford Still, the refined earthly cloudcapes of Uncle Ellsworth, the obliterating clarity of Reinhardt, the tic-tac-toe of so many *modular iteratists*—what can we do now but fill every centimeter of the picture with color and gesture, anguish and comfort, color-clash and color harmony, Goethe science and Albers botany, colors that deny their shapes and shapes that flee their contours, every inch alone, colors that like morphine sleep the mind into itself, colors that sing off key, shapes that trick the mind into paroxysms of recollection, resemblance, names on the tip of the tongue. When you leave no space unvexed with making, when you leave nothing to the imagination, then at last everything is ready and the imagination is ready to begin its real work. Then everything speaks.

21 December 2017

HALLELUJAH

**stand until you know
what the words mean**

**listen to your feet
the blood serpent
round your ankles**

**the knee tries to stand
but understands
to bend, the genuflection**

**to what being, the one
he shall reign
but what does his name**

**the word or words
is Hebrew, comes to us
from long ago and far**

***and he shall stand*
as we are standing now
waiting all this while**

**for someone to tell us
what the word means**

and what we mean too.

21 December 2017

=====

**As a beginning
*troth***

**we say,
our own truth pledged
to linger in the mode
mood**

**of now, this
moment ever after.
Marry me.**

21 December 2017

=====

Now the long can day again the light

**φως αυγει and then the venture
glad vernacular the truth of poetry
unschooled by story — straight
(ugly word to say so).**

All

**the Christs are born in you
not just some calendar
renew. If you woud be now
the year begins today
when the ASun sets sail
north again and children shout,
not having learned yet
to tame their natural voices
into the mutter of society
where light seldom shines —
buy listen to them now
loud as sunshine !**

22 December 2017

=====

**Sometimes I think
I'm on the side of nature —**

**how strange that would be
and yet I know I saw**

**a tiny insect like a ladybug
crawl ip the ,edicine cabinet**

**and slew it not, didn't even
fear it very much I think.**

22 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Hearts are not just remember
but I scrub a white sailor cap
mild chlorine solution
to bring the ocean back**

**o Rockaway o surf
around the swimmers'
tiptoe entrances, the chill
of actual, nothing lives more**

**than the sea, a little seachest
full of Roman silver coins
and Gaulish replicas my
heart counts to offer you.**

22 December 2017

A MEETING IN HYLOGNOESIS

Now look to see
what any given
thing will say —

this broken concrete
block beside the dumpster,
if I'm right about the world
it will talk to me

*Call for help
when you fall
keep still
when you rise*

(it said)

*any old stone
could tell you that*

but I want (I said)
your special knowledge

*I know a little more —
salt water heals
crows call us to our proper work
the staghorn sumac*

*that grew once where I lie
has left for another world
the way rtime changes us*

*now let me rest a while
we'll talk tomorrow
and maybe even you
will know some answers.*

22 December 2017

=====

**Linger longer
who would bother
getting up or going
out when all is said
and done within,
deep inside, under
the covers like
next spring's toses.**

22 December 2017

KITCHEN

In early light
the *Oat Bran*
scribbled
on the canister
reads CAT BRAIN.

Why would I want
that in the pantry?
And how much else
of all we know
is also a misreading?

22 December 2017

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

**But what if they're right.
the Catholics. And Jews,
Baptists, Hindus. Wouldn't
it be wonderful if all
we had to do is praise,
pray and obey? Buddhism
is such hard work !**

22.XII.17

=====

**The aftermath
is always beginning.
Think of roses
think of thorns,
put your toy
revolver down
and buy a skein of wool —
stretch out the yarn
from tree to tree
until you run out
of wool or trees,
then call me. For I
am your mother always
waiting for your call—
count your heartbeats
to learn my number.**

22 December 2017

=====

**Walking the prairie once
just once I met a hawk
overhead so close I knew
or thought I knew its name.
Men think like that,
give names to things that happen
instead of sealing their lips
in splendor, the way it was
when we walked, just once,
in the orchard and beheld.**

23 December 2017
Pardes

=====

**Coney Island waxworks
what they didnt want me to see
but I saw and soon forgot,
murder and bloodshed and beasts,
and seeing them out there,
realistic, unconvincing, motionless
behind dusty glass, so much safer
than what the mind anticipates,
wind howling over dragon gorges,
bludgeoned bridegrooms falling
soundless from exalted cliffs.**

23 December 2017

= = = = =

**When typing stops being
dancing with the wrists
the poem slumbers in the fingertips,
summoned back meekly to the alphabet —
but that's where such song began,
alef and *beyt* and kiss your hand.**

**So I must be literal again, study crouched
at the narrow desk of each letter
finding my way to say anything
clear, or merely errorless, and all for you.**

23 December 2017

=====

**Children on the other side of war
grow up dreaming about horses,
black horses their fathers tame
their mothers ride. Wolves watch
from nearby hills. The children
do not figure in their own dreams,
only horses and the few humans
they let themselves know. Silence
wakes them in the morning, snow
or sun on bare rock, all the same.
Brightness all round, and no horses.**

23 December 2017

WAKING IN DOUBT

**1.
Keeping track
keeping to the track
go only where you have**

**walked before — amazing
to see again you think
what you once saw.**

**2.
That is family pleasure,
same plates on, same
faces at, the table.**

**Now I am estranged
from all tha, t all those
and no one knows me.**

**3.
My friends are turned strangers,
dogs crouch at their heels,
they ride horses through the fields**

**and I think never come back
to me. I have made this
happen all by myself —**

**I told my mind against the world
and wanted peace, that smallest
island, here, among the exiles.**

23 December 2017

=====

**Crowless waking I complain
it is time to be everyone
again. Sleep's privacy
violated by pain, waking —
only joy to see my wife's face
quiet beside me, cradled
by her arms in morning light.**

23 December 2017

IDENTITY

**Mermaid on a trawler
caught among the halibut
she speaks good Portuguese
from her previous captivities
we manage to talk a little,
she can't walk and I can't
swim, o throw her back,
o throw me back with her too.**

23 December 2017

P A R D E S

1.

What do I see
when I'm a deer and run
through the orchard?

2.

When I was a man I was a boy
wandered down the street of the Jews
on the Lower East Side, Orchard
Street they called it, for *Pardes*
Rimmonim, orchard of strange apple
trees that we called Chinese,
color of blood outside and in,
color of bone.

3.

Four entered the orchard
and I was a deer
when I came out,
antlers on my crown
that would fall off in time
moved by the stars,
ocean of gravity, fall
onto the forest floor

to be gnawed by mice.
So ask me again
what I did see
in the orchard,
it was like a woman and water
or man and stone,
it spoke clear a human tongue
a beast like me could not comprehend.
But talking was there,
and telling, and flowing and knowing,
so I drank the water
stumbled on the stone,
I looked at the woman
with those big soft eyes I have
just as I'm looking at you now.

4

.
Romance or religion?
I was a man again,
and human life I promise you
is mostly waiting —

only animals *are*
all the time. We people
half-breath half-geology
stand like trees
in an orchard
waiting to fruit

**when the word
inside us speaks**

**or so it seemed
to my beast-wit
a moment before
the man slammed shut
the orchard gate,
I still taste the other apples,
the simple ordinary ones,
worm-bitten, sweet.**

24 December 2017

SKULL SILVER

1.
Exhilarate or clang
loud that coconut shell
of yours against the sky
of a no-rain day
as if we could say thunder.

2.
We talk too much,
rejoice too little
silently or less —

3.
a woman there
wore a crow's skull
on her chest, silver
as dawn, had dipped
it in molten metal
to keep it safe,
shrined in brightness,

*crows know what we are thinking
and will tell us if we ask*

**the right way, and I did
so understood at once
why we had come
across so many rivers,**

**mist on the mountain,
bridges are like sleep,
wake up the bird told me,
I will never change.**

24 December 2017

WAKING CHRISTMAS

Narrow now

the opening
in much snow

bahuhima

hig flakes
at start and finish

a day for staying
saying

children I suppose
wake to joy
of all this.

2.
I slept I dreamt I lectured
on gynarchy
giving the world
back to being ruled by women
o come again

not matriarchy,
not the usual mothers
but women of the virgin birth

because

3.

because it's Christmas

**and the air is full of white
that luminous contradiction
of darkness
and of color, both.**

**It is the feast
of changing natures,
God turns human
and the mind wakes up.**

4.

**There is no empty space.
Quantum psychology explains
how thoughts (complex emissions
cannot be confined to one brain
but travel, like subparticles they are,
compelled through the whole gravitational
field where anyone at all might
catch and think them.
And we are in rapture at last.**

5.

**As the sound of a word
becomes more than itself**

the tree supports the sky

**so what one thinks
becomes the world**

**and one becomes many,
merry**

**meant holy
once and still does. Do.**

25 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Out comes the sun
blue sky
suddenly sweeping
clouds away south,**

**a little snow
shakes off the branches
but most stays**

**children wake
to take it all in,**

appearance is all.

25 December 2017

FOR CHARLOTTE, CHRISTMAS MORNING

The Christmas poem
waits for you
at the bottom of my heart,
shy to say again
yet again how I love you

when 'I love you'
seems more about me
than you, but I do

and I have watched
the pure white of tree
and sky and road give way
just now to blue
sky and green spruce again
in five minutes

the way one thought
gives way to another
in the busy mind
but leaves beneath it
that interstellar hum
of love, the steady
joy of knowing
the other, the you
of I love you,

**love born over and over
in the ever
new-born heart,**

for love restores the heart's virginity,

**wakes me ro tell you
how beautiful you are,
especially last night
as you moved about
the crowded rooms
talking to this one and that,
always smiling, making
each of them happy,
I could tell that, how glad
they were at your quick presence
as I was later, you stood
beside me in the long singing,**

**and I felt all the music
was only about this
calm intelligence at my side.**

25 December 2017

=====

**Greeting the day
careening
 through time
hull of a skiff
Corinna the poet
of long time gone
they loved her
men lost her,
her words in the slipstream.
Time is a male animal
an angry wind.**

26 December 2017

== == == == ==

**The metabolism of order
something about sending,
ptrss fingers gently either
side of the throat
jugular carotid
angels going up and going down,
we are the only ladders
we are only ladders —
gentle fingers
caress the wary gods, caress.**

26 December 2017

=====

**If there were another time
it would be me**

reach for what is closest

**deer on the lawn,
magnifico turkeys
strutting by the monastery**

**we live as heretics
in a natural world**

**at least I do, busy
with opinions abojt everything.**

**2.
The turkey cock
pecks at the door
of the shiny black
Mercedes, attacks
his own reflection
there, one bird pecks
at another. The other.
Animals make mistakes,
we have opinions.**

3.

**The Wappingers who
made this place a place
have vanished from it,
like all the woodland
native peoples here.
There's astill a cave
or two or theirs up
the hillside, the ridge
we live on too. River.
I went there once,
no t hing much to see,
everything to feel.**

26 December 2017

DE ALCHIMIA NOVA

**The last meaning
of calcination:
writing words
pm thje blackboard
in chalk,
hoping your students
understand and remember,
secretly praying
the words you write are true.**

26 December 2017

=====

**Can the old heart
see a nude day
in certitude?**

**Xan a rock
remember? That's
what all this philosoph
is really about**

**prove it and be
my guide to the stars,**

**I'll call you chalcedony.
you'll call me agate.**

26 December 2017

== == == == ==

**It rolls away
when you study it,
settle down before the alphabet
and quiz each letter,
pronounce it silently
in the hippodrome of your head,
way in the back of the skull
where memory
constructs your world.
Every letter has all
the other letters in it
plus the sound of your
own breath breathing
after long study
a single sound out.**

26 December 2017

ESURIENTES

**the hungry ones
for food and justice**

**do not pass them
gliding in your mute gondola
along the canals
of your own brief enough life,**

**feed them,
treat them
as your selves they truly are—**

**you can't find in all this world
anyone who is not you.**

26 December 2017

== == == ==

for Hölderlin

Now I know
where Friedrich
took the shadows
to keep them safe
until the sun comes back
they need,
 and where he hid
the flowers
 when the old wind
came down
to trifle with their petals.
Now I know
 and bless him
for leading me there by the hand.

26 December 2017

== == == == ==

**One monkey
in a big old house
which window
will he look out next?**

**I had a soul once
it's still asleep
waiting for the sun
to come in the one
window it believes in**

of all the thousand windows.

**26 December 2017
Mayan Day 1-ba'ts'**

=====

Now the hard
to find it blue
lapis in the cellar
of the world

where have they
hidden the sky

and how can I find it
down here?

press the sky
to my eyes
and see?

26 December 2017

=====

**Relativity alert
triumphant lasers
scratch the sky's cornea**

advertise light.

That we infect the environment

**wake up coughing
climate's revenge
we call our sickness a 'cold'
we caught,
blame the weather.**

**Now I wonder about time,
what have we done
to time's flow
as it passes,**

what do we do?

27 December 2017

=====

Once I could see
children playing on the moon,
now not so much,
they stay indoors, pale
corridors of blinking games.

But I still can see
the maidens in the sun,
ever-virgin, ever-lovers,
ever-dancing
 because they know
(and I know too)
dancing is the purest art,
needs no chisel pen or brush,
needs no instrument but being,
just quivering exaltation
of that pure light
we call the body —

see them up there most mornings.
And you can hear them too.

27 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Write till the pen
runs out of ink
and then become
the thing you meant to say.**

27.XII.17

=====

**Sort of an animal
sort of a man
the machine pivots
in the driveway
and drives on
scattering salt
to make us safe
as we walk in winter,
exciles, children of Eve.**

27 December 2017

=====

**When morning
opened its jaws
a bird flew out
I couldn't name**

**it soared, swooped
up past my window
its shadow
and then I knew**

the proper name for anyone is 'you.'

27 December 2017

== == == == ==

**I live on Runaround Street
my neighbors look askance
at me and everything,
the shops are always closed,
no bus stops at the corner.**

**I like living here — nothing
gets done, nothing changes
but the weather, that makes
paint fade off our walls.
Nice bats come out at night,
they stain our eaves with their
droppings pale as moonlight.**

27 December 2017

== == == ==

**And then some night came down
low from the sky, seemed,
unlike the usual rise of dimness
from our dark earth,**

**we people
always anyhow in between,**

**why we have hands, I guess,
to find our way in the dark
to one another,
by touch to know.**

27 December 2017

=====

**Things we try to know
and then forget,
 the way
night forgets
all we have seen in the day.**

**Obsessed
 with darkness —
besieged
 is what it meant,
what it means.**

27 December 2017

=====

**Stars on a cold night
tell their own tale
I've lost the key
and I can't read.**

**Old wise folk had it
and could read the alphabet
up there, could read
and maybe even hear
the word of the world

spoken now and never again.**

27 December 2017

THREE A.M.

**Speeding headlights
of one car
I see through the trees
reassure me
there is a world
out there, not just me
coughing in the dark.**

27 / 28 December 2017

== == == == ==

**There is never enough of the other
deep cold outside
and I remember bluebells
just the name, not the flower.
I try to see them
like a kid squinting through a knothole
but nothing shows
up in the mind, not a single flower.**

27 / 28 December 2017

=====

**Things left behind
in dreamless sleep —
I try to figure out
what they are or were,
things too difficult
for memory to carry,
too heavy, too dim
lost in the dark.**

27 / 28 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Knocking things over
over and over.
Gravity is only partly
the problem,
there is an anxiety in me
things pick up on and fall.**

27 / 28 December 2017

= = = = =

**Dream Spaniards
settle on this shore,
our god now is
in their language
praised, begged
for things we don't
recognize, words
I don't know. First
night here they
sleep on the ground.
By morning they
are the rest of us.**

27 / 28 December 2017

=====

**Broadway is my driveway
the old singer said —
I looked up and it was me**

**still going up and down
the elevators in the Empire State
still the tallest building in the world**

**for him for me —
and the Bronx is my backyard
he sang, of a place**

**that never existed
where they'll say anything
that comes to mind,**

**I heard it too
when I was younger even
than he is now.**

27 / 28 December 2017

== == == == ==

**The numbers
sure seem to have my number,
they know how to scare me,
weight temperature blood pressure age
every number seems to be against me
but I'll trick them with colors:
five is red, and all the rest are blue.**

27 /28 December 2017

=====

**My city —
 once I held it
in my hand
from the Battery to the zoo,
what else did I need,
time built the long streets
and filled them with me
and the lions roared.**

27 / 28 December 2017

=====

**What could that be
that makes me remember?
South Ferry, the sea
at my door.
 Eyes in winter
weep against dryness.
Tears refresh.
Grief satisfies.**

27 / 28 December 2017

=====

**A mildish day
it might
in Antarctica
6° at 8 o'clock,**

**numbers, numbers
I thought I did
away with them
last night,**

**we have to cough
we have to clear
them out of our throats.**

28 December 2017

=====

**I have not seen
a ceremonial object
in some time
and even longer
since I have been one.**

**Your chalice,
for instance.
Drink me
in this breathless cold.**

**There: mentioned
you and me and the season—
what else does a poor
wrong dynasty poet need to do?**

28 December 2017

=====

**New deck of cards —
four suits: Cherries,
Coffins, Towers, Geese.**

**Bo numbers printed:
each card shows
a scatter of them,
you have to coun
each one each time**

**to see who wins
or what your fortune is.**

**Cherries are red, coffins brown,
towers are built of bluestone
from our own mountains.,
the geese so pale you hardly
see them, much less
count them against the snowy sky.**

28 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Scraping the bottom of the barrel
you come up with the present moment
mixed with the deepest past.**

**You are a live museum
and you wander through yourself,
how boring it can be to be you**

**sometimes, or so thrilling —
turn the corner for instance
be lost into the Egyptian room.**

28 December 2017

=====

**In round numbers
I'm washed up.
U'm somebody's shadow —
the sun is still bright
but somebody has wandered away.**

28 December 2017

=====

**Delicate elsewhere
Sanhedrin decisions
what is an arrow to do
but follow the air
allotted to it?**

**We live
in a legal world,
pomegranates ripen and fall,
sheep nibble grass,
lambs follows their mothers.**

**We are ducks on a pond
and some of us can fly —
and we too are arrows, each of us
has a goal we never imagine
till we're safe in the heart of the target.**

28 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Look to poetry
for morality.
the skirt slips off the hip,
the sun goes down.**

**What more do you need
to know? Beyond
belief there is this
other place where
things tell you the truth.**

28 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Nowadays they
write or whistle tunes
because they're suspicious
of anything continuous.**

28 December 2017

OF FLUENCY

**Danube by the city
river as instructor,
instructrix.**

**We learn
from what a river
carries past.**

**In Vienna we say
the river
does our thinking for us
we just sing
whatever she makes clear**

**if you want to know something
stare at the river and listen.**

29 December 2017

=====

die blaue Hortensia

**Delicate hydrangea
paper or plastic
knows how to get by
in winter,
 lovely
artifice from a kind
friend given,
 kind
light to lift its
everlasting blue sky.**

29 December 2017

=====

**Who are these people
who live around my life?
I ask the morning each day
to explain them to me,
who and why and what
they want and what I want
of them. And always
the morning says the same:
Just wait a while and see.**

29 December 2017

=====

Cautious as ever
pilot in a storm
I get out of bed

hot quilt v cold night,
elections all over Africa —

hold my hand,
somebody, the corridor
is stumbling towards dawn
scary at the best of times

2.
amateur church choir
harsh in my head
not even birds,

winter-muffled, words linger —
could I have been reading
something changed my mind?

3.
slender woman not so young
needed to sit down —

people in dream are usually feeble,

**have you noticed that,
how Achilles hid among the women
where his name was Semele,**

**the cold, the resentful, the moon
where in secret caverns
our minds arer scripted.**

30 December 2017

=====

**Slow the opening
the river ice
less and less open
water every day,
colder and colder—
too soon for ice-boats
Ricky's at Rokeby,
FDR's at Hyde Park
varnished safe indoors,
the trees turn grey
like landlords studying
their taxes.**

**River, why
do they do this to you
or you to us?
Seems we all are stuck
in one common spell,
when fluency is all wecrave.**

30 December 2017

== == == == ==

**Fairyland interpenetrates
ordinary everything.
We live there all the time.**

30.XII.17

=====

**Hands of bananas
they used to call them
years ago
my father said,
when he worked in sugar
at the Brooklyn docks,
mountains of white
sugar for men to shovel,
and hands of bananas
stuck to their stalk
and on every hand
spiders wandered,
the big hairy ones,
he said.**

30 December 2017

== == == == ==

**A
brave
concerto
determined to
eliminate meaning
for the sake of music.**

30 December 2017

== == == == ==

for Charlotte

**In memory of a junco
you held in your hands
to warm it, maybe ease
its broken wing
in all this cold, a bird
alive, on its back,
grey and white and small,
when you set him down
to find a soft bed box
for him, he rolled away
under the fence, I never
saw him, I see him now
warm in ytour hands.**

30 December 2017

=====

**She brings us plants
I bring her words—
how long each of us
must wait for
our gifts to flower.**

31 December 2017