

3-2018

mar2018

Robert Kelly

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H:\MARCH 2018.Docx 1

=====

**Wander through the rather
at peace with either.
Neither. A shadow
crawls along the window —
someone strikes it,
someone spares it.
The language is all we really have.**

**1 March 2018
Start of Notebook 411**

A SET OF SKEPTIC SONGS

**1.
They think they can see the edge
of things — I wonder.
He sees his own face
mirrored in the starry pond
and calls it science. No wonder
they need number.**

2.

Scant impact

true belief.

The sun has risen quite

it is nighttime in Japan —

explain yourself

what makes us think

we're thinking?

3.

**Religious skeptics
are merely impolite.
Science skeptics
are a public danger —
schools could close,
kids could play
all day long abd read
and dream and think.**

4.

**Browbeaten, towards equality,
able to lift an eyelid
against the prevalent dark
one wanders onward, a pebble
tiny, shiny, in a hasty stream.**

5.

This is as precise
as daylight can make it,
pale avenues aligned
across the deserts of identity.
Who travels on such dry roads
when all the rest's awash?

6.

Maybe not music
but a simple thing,
tinnitus they call it,
ear happening to ear.

7.

Handle bars

don't work on cars

small as they are

they crave two wheels

it seems unfair

when I gave none.

1 March 2018

=====

**Thr orchestra of herring gulls
saluyes the prompt arrival
of the fishing boat, o island life.
Cities rise up overnight,
architects are everywhere
changing the face of here —
what canwe do but bless
the differences? What can we do
but imitate the gulls and sing
our way to eat what comes our way?**

1 March 2018

=====

**Unroll the scroll
stand tall in the transept
and bellow out
what you can read of it.
The best parts are in Greek
so learn the alphabet
next time you sleep.
The rest is ordinary stuff,
breast and buttock, wing
and hoof. But all of it
needs to be heard, every word,
till you get to the very end
or the cathedral falls.**

1 March 2018

HISTORY

**Ink soaks into paper
we read it backwards
from the other side
some other day.**

1 March 2018

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**If I cant have your body
he said I'll have to content
myself with your soul.
And so it is that devils are born.**

1 March 2018

=====

**Majestic beauty
of what just is
what happens,
snow out there
writing white
barely readable
branches, sentences.
and inside the room
our little Vesuvius
of the opposite element,
a humidifier smoking
vapor, the grandeur
of dust on the windowsill,
everything utterly spoken.**

2 March 2018

=====

Carefour closing
the A&P gone,
who remembers
Bohack's?
The alchemists
have done their work,
one metal
looks like another,
everything different everything same
turn the page and start again.

2 March 2018

ABSOLUTION

**She lifts her skirt
gently above the muddy walk
and comes to me
across the middle field,
the one we are.**

**Blank sky.
I feel remorse,
see the falling snow,
feel anxiety, fear.**

**She's closer now,
everything changes,
recognizes.
Remembers.**

2 March 2018

=====

**Do they wait for us
or are they us
waiting for ourselves
to come together,
outside and inside all one.**

2 March 2018

=====

**Thomas' "weather of the heart"
here made literal.
Why such anxiety
when I see the pale sky
as if the Last Judgment
is waiting there, always?
if I look down I might
stave off the hour, clutching
the unknowable, the dark.**

2 March 2018

YESTERNIGHT

Why? Because “Last
night” puts it behind us,
treats it as mere prequel
to today, lascivious or tender
or dull as it might have been,
over and done with.
But yesternight
is the climax of yesterday,
the place, pleasure or pain
to which the whole day climbed,
yesternight is what the whole day meant.

2 March 2018

SARGASSO

Spawn

**and they come back
to eat and be eaten
fished for off the Kingston pier
out under Wrongside
whose owner got across the North
to late to greet Lafayette.
But the eels persist,
the glory of the natural
is to have nop history at all.**

2 March 2018

=====

Intimate causes
spoke, smow on wheel,
wire — first inklings
of mechanics — a child.

Semaphore. Says go
or no. Train tracks
in the living room,
around the Christmas tree
when it goes too fast it falls

lies on the carpet, spinning
on its side. Things die.
Begin to understand
where they go.
Nowhere but here.

3 March 2018

= = = = =

**The difference between
a thread and a wire will
keep you busy for years.
That's how it begins.**

**A wheel rolls along
w while then wobbles
then topples over. Why?
That's all you need to know.**

3 March 2018

= = == = =

**Pick up a pencil
and erase the sky.**

**Now it's blue again —
you told it what to do.**

**It listened.
Colors do.**

3 March 2018

=====

**It is not senile decay.
On the contrary. With age
one comes to recognize
that what one once
thought was not thought
at all, not really thinking,
just shadows passing
through the mind one took
as the mind's own work.
Now one knows better —
you know the silences
for what they are, any images
for what you really mean.**

3 March 2018

= = = = =

**What would I do
if she were here?
I would be there.**

**That is soul's
best answer,
absence, tardiness,**

a piece of fruit.

3 March 2018

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**I hear the crows
they know something
I forgot,**

**tell me,
tell me, crows.**

3 March 2018

=====

**Random exclusions
a starling say
from a living room
or the letter V
from a letter home.**

**Too many things
get in by mistake —
is there an angel
who leaves things out?**

**Parable of the Fishermen
and the Seal. You never heard it?
Sorry for you. It speaks
directly to the problem.**

3 March 2018

FOG

**at Gerritsen Beach
near the coalyard
smell of burning coke,
heavy fog, no bus stop
for a mile. Evening
always like autumn
any time of year.
Here I learned to love
fog, to hide in, to hide
even from myself.**

3 March 2018

=====

**Bring me the necessaries
the blue band, the stripper
for ancient ice, the treadmill
to hoist messages aloft
so even the demigods can read them.
Now you can call yourself
married to earth and mountain,
time and gravity. Now you are
her husnad or his wife —
no one dares to tell you apart.**

4 March 2018

=====

But it turned out
that what I was thinking
was ancient times,
wool-filleted bronze hair
on calmly joyous maidens,
shy half-men in the woods,
a couple of deer run by.

What I was thinking was
never a wolf or a wheel,
just a bright tiny brook
rippiling across the meadow,
the kind my father called
a rill and loved to watch
even if they were too slight
to draw his beloved swans.

But water hurries
tugged by gravity
and lust for ocean
even here, thousands
of years deep in the woods
where those maidens
tear day-old bread

**into chunks to feed
the little ducks lingering
where the rill bends slow,
the way he used to toss
bits of bread and muffins
to the bold swans by the sea.
What I was thinking was my father.**

4 March 2018

=====

Somehow this angry woman
chose us — *it hides*
the earth beneath a fallen
sky

The cold branches
through the trees in us
blood and nerve and marrow,
or is it just me,
a lyric crybaby
whimpering for mother sunshine —

how dare I take exception to the real
or pass judgment on what just happens?
I happened too —
and that should keep me still.

4 March 2018

== == == == ==

**Dangerous to mix inks —
the chemicals of color
act like new wine,
befuddle the words
coming out of the brush,
out of the pen,,**

**the letters or characters
quiver, start to blur,
blend into one another,
the Tide rises, washes away,
fish swarm ashore,
decades pass, your eyes
refuse to make out
what your hands have done.**

4 March 2018

=====

**Ride the elevator with me
up and up and hold me close
all alone on this narrow road,
calm methodical ascension
with only a little anxiety
blended with the whir of
the far-away motor lifting us,
lifting. We are encased now
in knowing one another —
they say you never really know
someone till you travel with them.
Think of how wise we'll be
when someday we get to the top.**

4 March 2018

=====

**Consorted with prostitutes
bartenders tax-collectors
rose from the dead and went to heaven**

**How many fit the description?
What if everything is really religion?
What if all religions are true?**

4 March 2018

=====

**Churchy old music
heard in a velvet gown
in a dry room not now.**

**We know all the answers
until the question's asked.
Then gasp. Wait for the oboe,
bass conyينو to carry you home.**

4 March 2018

=====

**I went to visit Mozart's sister,
I called on Mahler's wife.
The first let me flirt a while,
the latter showed me the door.**

**I'm friendly by nature and they
really are friendly too, sweet
like roses with thorns, like carp
in a pond, a piano asleep in the parlor.**

**I couldn't have stayed long anyway —
Bach was downstairs waiting
anxious in his roadster, don't be late,
always on his way to church.**

4 March 2018

=====

Oahu long ago
a leaf
from no tree

the sea
interrogates us
and we answer
with our quiet lives

or with a roar
like its waves,
sound of a smile
from far away.

4 March 2018

== == == == ==

**Waiting was best.
Then the city broke
around her, rough
concrete leaning in
against her. Skin
like the sun. You
have to break away
before the earth does
they told her, flee
the mother, be
your own father.
Sometimes she listened.**

5 March 2018

A WQMAN

**Is there a number
that says who she was.
Driver's license.
Potting shed. Upstairs
a bathtub on beast claws.
She knows how to slice
water, how to make
shadows sing. Or weep.
But fear was like fur
on her, she kept going,
always being, being beyond.**

5 March 2018

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for Crichton

**Make a movie
of our conversation
without letting
the words of it
get in the way
of what we see.
Make them see what we say—
dawn over dark trees,
I hear your skin.**

5 March 2018

THE IMAGE

**Sometimes I get haunted by her.
Then I turn to Praxiteles
who went through all this
long ago and knew her best—**

**surface and depth, haughty
glance and soft breast —
she never turned away
he says, half of her**

**I had to imagine
but the half she gave me
was twice as much as any other
ever had, he says,**

**and I am comforted
by his information,
he seems to give me ore
of her that she lets me know for myself.**

5 March 2018

=====

Can I touch this?

**The road is full of answers
in this museum of substances
this world of ours is
and few guards watching us.**

***Taste* means touch in German,
we like the taste of time
on stones we handle, the taste
of new life on a hand we touch.
Touch the elderberry, walk
always means remember.**

2.

**So having learned that the world around us
is there for our sensory enlightenment, our joy,
anxiety, consolation, to bring us to our goal,
slay and bury us — so many rooms, corridors,
stairways in it, so many ways, so much to taste,
I try not to look, try to keep the birginity
of my perception, try to make up for myself
more than what is just already here.**

6 March 2018

A LETTER TO PEOPLE I MET IN DREAM

**Dream a quick
tour of the museum
using some quiet
vehicle to get
from art to art
in the endless halls.**

**This letter would begin
by saying how glad
I am to meet you, you
and your friend, your
little white dog carried
in the crook of your arm,
here, in the only world
you are, safe from snow
and sunshine, intact
and generous, you walked
me, talked me, through
and kissed me goodbye.**

6 March 2018

= = = = =

**Nothing getting done.
Symbolism had its day.**

**Now the sun is on again
after days of cloud**

**but wqhat what happens
when what happens hurts —**

**a cylinder seal
from ancient bureaucracy**

**beauty of cold old things
in our new hands**

**our skin feels
the songs they carry to us**

**and the ocean is always
close to something old.**

6 March 2018

=====

**Nobody played the piano
but the humidifier it needed
to help it stay in tune
roared underneath it
night and day all winter long.
I used to touch the keyboard
now and then, but that seemed
just wrong, the noise itself
from underneath I thought
inherited a little something
from what they used to play,
a little Schubert in the vapor
hiss, some Brahms in its growl.**

6 March 2018

THE ARTIST'S LIFE

**Stand on a glass floor
be a fiurine
porcelain or pottery
easily breakable**

**have colors on you
they will be your clothes
business suit wedding gown**

**when you've been long enough
come home and read the paper
see if anybody noticed
see if you still feel like you.**

7 March 2018

=====

**Vaseball only
thing I can
watch on TV**

**the one
against the many**

**every batter one
lonely Prometheus.**

7 March 2018

=====

**Newfound terrors
textbooks
discovered on the moon
for inconceivable sciences
or a quiet wind down here
that lifts the spring
rain back into the sky.**

7 March 2018

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**So the day-walker
caught the sky suppose
geeen-gaitered herons
stood by his going
because he god.**

**So the wind imagines,
so the earth believes,
who are we to doubt
the panoply of wars in galaxies
we don't really really trust exist?**

**So the walker marches heaven here,
the walker pours the river vback into the sea,
you can't deny his laborious efficacy,**

**the poor heavily muscled ancestor of us,
ourselves this morning before this whole
ierce beautiful slow copiously snowbuilt day.**

7 March 2018

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**Resilience masters
the bold, the Viking
blood we all have some
the 2% Neanderthal,**

**we rebound, we know,
we last till the end
a few of us foresee
but we all get there**

**cluster by the gate
breathe the magic word
our life has spoken
and pass through.**

In that way we come to the City.

8 March 2018

LESSON

**In the bright morning
only the lower branches
keep their snow**

8.III.18

=====

**Always do
what the sun does
be Florida a while
snack foods won't
kill you right away,**

**watch the shark fins
slice through the bay
and bless the sand.**

**This is ordinary, this
is earth, It has been
waiting for you just
you a very long time.**

8 March 2018

=====

**Are you running
or walking**

**it's not the speed
that decides.**

8.III.18

= = = = =

**Inspiration spread wide
sunshine in the promised land**

**no matter where we go
a great lake spreads out at our feet**

**but when night happens
we're never home.**

**Prayer changes your genetic code—
fact. Try it and be.**

8 March 2018

=====

Speed wrack
the cost of go—
the sun does not stumble,
frost is not far.
Forgive me for sitting still.

2.
The Greek
adored her,
did not admire her
as much as we.
Her long legs,
swift passage,
her gait we shadow.
Stride of her
always moving to the left
so her heart side
is what we see,
great stride of her being.

8 March 2018

=====

The open door
said all he needed
to hear. The color
didn't matter
but the sky was white.
No stars tonight,
he thought, no answers
either. He went in.
This has to be the place.

9 March 2018

=====

Unfinished pilgrimages
all over the bedroom.
Heap of clothes,
heap of woes.
Nobody knows
she kept humming,
houses are like that,
full of standing still.
But each shirt, each sock
knows a poignant elsewhere
to which the heart,
that magnet, swings.
Now is wherever you are,
she could go on humming
all the white day.

9 March 2018

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All roads lead to guilt.

**The scars on her forearms,
the stars stabbed into the sky.**

9 March 2018

== == == == ==

Watching the numbers
pretend to be days
the prisoner's blue sky
the lame man's mile,,

broken over and over
the sound of snow
her friend's apple tree
fallen, branches

too many too many
and the woman hurrying
north with the weather
clutched in her fingers

but spring knows its hour
when the green man wakes
he will marry her a while
until everything is her house.

9 March 2018

=====

**Mountain us
maintain us
hold us
in your hand.**

**They prayed. So much of their theology
spent on inquiring, defining, who or what
the *you* is to whom they prayed, and
never a thought about who the *we* are, who
pray.**

**If we know the self, we may come to
know the other.**

10 March 2018

OPUSCULUM THEOLOGICUM

1.

Are we intimate?

Is it tomorrow?

**The masterpiece is lying
in the snow.**

They often do.

**Agreement makes things wonder
then the night comes
and blue stars take over
take cover**

**a man who knows what he's saying is a fool
meaning eludes always**

colludes with

there are branches on the mulberry

I never counted

in my own backyard

the only one

2.

Bring some other.

Otter by Seattle

langouste by Morbihan

fear is always adequate

revisions of a fugue

I see her once again

running our way across a lawn

the wedding hadn't started yet

there is an energy

in people that kisses them together
random rivulets
sweaty photo
I knew it before it mattered
goblin glass
cracked under the chuppah
so many letters to write
get out of winterwear
where
a child discovering stone

3.

And then the island came
a time of night
a paradigm
or cliff to fall
mercy is a morning again
travel is a handle
but on what
and whose hand hoists
is it only habit
habit of the breath
late winter when the owls finally sing
time is questionable
commodity
spume of vapor rising
ocean us after
measure of our fall

4.

Begin again
the traces clear across the sand
wet feet clogged between the toes
somatic evidence
the astronaut's DNA changed in space
I told you they were out there
listening in gravity
we are changed
his first wife was a man
who carved him out of wood
and taught his veins to flow
and we are changed
spirit happens before you know it
spirit happens before knowing
why we have to live by the sea
folly to be far
true for all times and places
eternally fashionable
take my hand

5.

Half the year is habit anyhow
cunning apprentices absent master
count the months till now begins
scissors and pins
leaves on the oak still
count on your fingers
subtly suddenly everything wrong
unscrew the hour from its metal base

sweet alloy of aluminum
if you can't fill a vacuum what can you
volcano
island we also walked
tufa underfoot
larder full of lather
lava
the child looks up the word
a bird flies out
it always happens
loges in the movie theater
wise smokers offer sacrifice
unconscious mandarins revive
why is a book called a beech tree
don't we write on birches
initials of our speechless loves
in fancies galore

6.

The new state begins
cross the timeline
navigate the blue how
sigh for me
I'll be there
fingers lightly on your wrist
taking each of your 21 pulses
until I know thee
and am known.
Promises a morning makes
a noon decides
sleep through the day in action
wake up and dream
close for comfort
ship far from sea
it's not despair it's daylight
habiting your sweet window
mercifully found.

10 March 2018

=====

Are you born yet
can the cloud
hide behind a tree yet
and where is the time we save

do you love me even

and let me love you and
let the blackbirds pick
thread for their nests
from our flags,
does your hair glow like Sunday
and where is the time we save

does the snow burn
when you touch it,
what happens to an apple
left out on the porch in March snow,
does the temple let just anybody in,
does the road keep going when I close my eyes,
does the sky?
And where is the time we save?

11 March 2018

=====

Close to where I'm standing
a tree woke up. Birch, blank
canvas, art is menaced
in this day, music, painting
poetry all,

menaced by things
that are a little like them,
just enough to keep the money
flow from consumers to
the corporate imitators,
the tree said. I listened.
It took me so long to learn
how to hear nature I'm
not going to stop now. The tree
is right. We work by night
but someday soon our dawn will come.

11 March 2018

=====

Wander through any rather
the wall will come -
I speak of things
 that always are,

I write a piece of wood
oak floor or maple dresser,
I write a stone in the stream
been there five thousand years

I write a cloud
 fast as I can
it will be gone before the ink is dry.

12 March 2018
Red Hook

=====

Open the wisdom they left you
see how much is left
of where the robin hides all winter
or what the vultures carry
you see their diagrams
circling over the trees just north
no bird is ever random
but we think we are or can be.
Wrong. The idlest drifting some-
how is programmed for you, in you
for your true goals
even though they're not in view.

2.

Mix a little water in. Sip.
But do you dare to swallow?

3.

Inside you it becomes you.
Sanity consists of knowing
inside from out. I am
the boundar walker, long
beard and robe of camel wool --
do you know me at last?

12 March 2018
Red Hook

=====

The shadow of a friend
is immense,
 covers
acres of new-fallen snow
next morning
when the sun comes out
again, and all the friend
is and means is clear
like a glass of water held out
to you, or wine.

12 March 2018

CATENARY

comes again,
catena; Latin, a chain,
how it loops
between its poles,
smooth slack,
friendly curve,
swoop,
the best connection is not taut,
not strained, the best
discourse is vine-like
gentles through the trees
from me's to thee's.

13 March 2018

= = = = =

**Something had to begin it
just to say so
is a song**

**each leaf
a manifesto**

**where we are always
ready to begin
never far**

**no door
and always open**

13 March 2018

=====

**Sometimes the sun
comes out the wire
flexes just a little
snow slips off,
a quiver in the line.
Somebody walks uphill.**

13 March 2018

=====

**Snow dropping off cables
a foot or so at a time
like time itself relenting,
the weather letting us go.**

13 March 2018

=====

Never dark enough
the ink,
 the Pilgrims
waiting at the dock but
no ship, no empty
continent out there
for them to fill
with their notions, fears,
 just birds
over water, creak
of wooden pier,
smell of the wind.

13 March 2018

=====

**You is such a dangerous word,
never leave you for a minute
ever, all love songs are aimed at you,
all anger too, reproach, revenge.**

**Never be you and lock the door,
never be you and keep a big dog,
never be you and turn out the light.**

13 March 2018

=====

Well away and whisper loud,
did the morning come you?
The fox woke up, her pelt
was snow, shook her fur
to peel it off—no spring yet,
St. Patrick and St. Joseph still asleep,
bring me a peach, will you,
from dream? Bring me a word
I know how to say
and I'll answer all of you at once.
Or no later than noon, or now.

13 March 2018

=====

**Drone or drum
an answer comes**

**pick the tree
you want to be**

**you are no more than an instrument
to analyze the air**

**or a petri dish for spiritual
presences to breed in**

**no wonder you love
the sound of thunder**

**from far away
it makes you wake**

**your hands tremble
when we talk**

or is it me

14 March 2018

=====

**Proliferate, be sand
on my shore.
Bird my sky
with screaming terns.
Ocean round me
orchestra, old
name for a smooth
place where we can dance
walk on water
and teach me to,
every river wants an answer—
if this were a story
we would all have names.**

14 March 2018

=====

**Things speak.
Listen.**

**What more
do we need?**

And never be lonely.

14 March 2018

=====

When the pilgrimage
wends home
a light comes on
as if an owl
set a paper lantern
in a hemlock tree.

Wearily they approach
the life they led,
left, come home to.

The owl, if any,
has flown away, the light
lingers. Or lamp.
Or some shiny object
what could it be
reflecting the setting
sun.

It is always then,
evening, when they come home.
All they have with them
is the names of things.

14 March 2018

THE GREAT MAYBE

**The chances are liberty,
the choices are traps.**

**What happens by itself
is the only road.**

**Linger a while at roadside
only, then let it
move you along.**

**Choosing
nothing sets you free.**

14 March 2018

PROLOGUE TO ANY POSSIBLE THEATER

**Mesdames messieurs
by force of arms
our magic hand
will reach down
from the sky—there!—
and touch you, you,
in the heart or where-
ever it might be
you keep your love,
your fear, your old
faded snapshot of reality**

15 March 2018

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=====

**After all these years
I can still write in blue.**

15 March 2018

=====

**Sparkling outside sun on
still here and there small
fields of snow a morning.**

**Tote the heavy ledger out,
spread the empty pages
and trace with your quill pen
the shadows' shapes.**

**Let the breeze—not
spring yet but not too far—
sift over what you've drawn
and that's your net worth—
a pattern that never existed before,
you made it, and conversely.**

15 March 2018

=====

Slow to answer
bird in tree
no pheasants
left up in Fort Tryom
none out here either,
no porking-spines,
no beaver? But
bobcat comes, and buzzards
cruising the sky,
grand slow circling of them,
watching us—stay upright!
they warn me, stay alive!

Shocking how in one
lifetime of our kind
the biome changes,
beasts go, they come,
and once our very sky
was dark at dusk with
all the tribes of blackbirds.

15 March 2018

VIS MEDICATRIX NATURAE

Day's belief
a doubt a difference
spoken by the mountain
camped cave caught
and won't let go.
Starlight brawling down the chasm
wherever we looked,
was over us, vines
also grow from rocks.
in pictures they look like shadows
but we know better
o my god do we know better.

2.
So we climb
across the flat and virgin land.
All you need's a line of light,
spring rose, autumn aster,
all you need is a hundred feet
to carry all your meanings
out through the desert abounding
wordless, no *dabar* in *midbar*,
the water washed all the words away
down into sand, and the sun alone
knew what had once been spoken.

3.

So I wake up from that dream
you call a book, terror on paper,
winking on the nighttime tablet,
words sick with being used,
savored, trusted, spent.

4.

Let go of the old story
soon as you can, see
what comes to replace it.
Rebuild it. Or nothing does
and there you are all alone
on highway 9G heading north.
Are you a car? A function
of landscape? A soul
on tired feet wondering
not where to go
but where *go* actually is
when anywhere is so here?

5.

**Keep adding things
until the pot is empty
then take the fire
out of the water it just boiled.
That is your medicine
just that – don't let
the doctor touch you with hands.
touch is terrible.
The medicine will you
of that sad soft music of being close.**

16 March 2018

=====

**Then it was time to go to school
the children sloughed off their dreams
strapped their heavy backpacks on
and went out into the morning's
noisy sluggish compulsory agony
authorities designated as reality.
A bus bile-yellow carted them away.
Will they ever come home? Will each
one's dream and desire still be waiting?**

16 March 2018

= = = = =

**Ink enough
to write one page.
After that
spell it out
on the sky
blue on blue.**

16 March 2018

=====

The rueful the remnant
speaking the old language –
where have you come from,
mariner? But I don't know
the old language, all I can read
are his lips moving, the bristly
jowls of the man as he speaks,
he's a sea-beast of my own kind
but alas from such different seas.
Sea-divinity, why have I lost
the old language, can you give it
back to me, like waves lapping
at my feet, easy, gentle –
why should words ver be hard?

17 March 2018

=====

The girl on the other
side of the moon
says it's just a sign
but I know better

all things that are
are made from the same
fleshm we wear it
proud or dim

it bears us this lovely
thingly space we dreamed
around us, and wake
to find it in our hands.

17 March 2018

WHAT'S THE FRENCH WORD FOR GRUMPY?

**The meaningless smiles
in junk mail catalogues
depress me. Teeth
are for biting, fighting –
don't flash those fake
photoshopped glimmering
choppers at me – I'd only
buy what you're offering
if you frown, growl,
or just look half-asleep, bored
as I am with the things you sell.**

17 March 2018

THE BIRD CALLED

**Unlimited repertory
of a single note -
it's only in our dull ears
the overtones die out.**

**In fact they go on forever
octave over octave
and will never end -
"we live in the flicker"
Conrad said, we live
in the imagined silence
of what becomes the world.**

17 March 2018

= = = = =

**It's the sun
that mkes shadows.**

**That's almost
all you need to know.**

18 March 2018

=====

**I read small poems all evening
but they swelled in the night
I was in Stockholm and my mouth
was opened. Then a woman
in grey wool lay on the bed
watching me. Don't worry,
I said, this is only a dream.
She closed her eyes in some other language.**

18 March 2018

=====

**A little bowl
carved out of porphyry
I fell in love with it
long after I set it
up on the window ledge.
How slow the heart
is sometimes to see
what's already here.**

18 March 2018

=====

**To be awake
in the silence
of everyone**

**it's a little
like being the sky
with closed eyes**

**you have your own
name to console you
after they've gone.**

18 March 2018

=====

**They knew so much more than we did
but nothing we could use - teacher tragedy
education as neglect, starvation of the child's
boundless appetite to know and know and know.**

18 March 2018

=====

**She sits on the ground
there is a chessboard
beside her thigh
she found it half-
buried in the muck,
no pieces on it so
she plays her fingers,
plies her fingers here
and there deliberately
among the squares.
There are sixty-four
mistakes that she can make
and she wants to make
all of them, she must,
until she does everything
wrong there'll be no way
to find the right, she uses
both hands, nestles down
in the dirt to get closer,
looser, wronger, her hands
fly over the squares, dirt
and leaves and bits of straw
skim under her hands, where
could straw come from?
are there really animals here,
animals anywhere? hard to tell
white squares from black,**

askin from ground, all mud
everywhere, all the wrong
answers singing their song.
She listens hard, later
writes them down, soggy
paper, marble words, dirt
under her fingernails like
shores of an immense sea,
the dirt is everywhere, in her,
on her, she leaps up now
rushes to the fountain, stands
in the upwelling, catches
the downward flow, the dirt
all washes away, slowly,
clearly, this is the world,
the dirt finally washes away,
all gone, she is clear the world
is clean. This is the right answer.

18 March 2018

= = = = ==

**Four A.M.
and who am I ?**

**I am like you
the mystery of night -**

**sleep and wake and sleep again
and in between**

**the news comes in
in bursts, sometimes**

**you can catch
a word or two**

that actually means you.

18 / 19 March 2018

=====

Or is this
a day beginning?
There is a trembling
in the air
like a small spring
insect caught in the hair
or a waterfall
a block away
you sometimes hear.
The night runs out of ink
your phone is dead
you turn the light on
but there's nothing there.

18 / 19 March 2018

=====

**Helping weird people
to meet their weird gods -
civilization means just that.**

**The temple is built on a hill
but the hill was there from the start—
that's what I mean,**

a trim ship on a sea you never made.

18 / 19 March 2018

FEAST OF SAINT JOSEPH

**of whose words
nothing is quoted,
remembered**

**only who he was
and whom he held**

**he was San Giuseppe
where I grew up
the neighborhood feast
of springtime, he
was the gentle carpenter
who built the equinox,**

**balanced the light
against the dark and saw,
saw and held his peace,**

said nothing more than spring.

19 March 2018

FORGOTTEN SO MUCH

**Coins, remember coins?
Silver from the empire,
copper in your pocket
remember? Sealskin
in the closet, remember?**

**Pretend you are a fire,
horses clatter in the piazza,
remember? They whack
the old apple tree to wake it
up for spring, they count the light
that settles into the flowers,
anemones of Rhinebeck, remember?**

**the letter from Arthur
that came with no address,
IO could have been anyone,
the kingfisher that saw me
naked once, remember,
but never told, our brothers
all wounded in the war
the empty car
left on the side of the road,
remember? we were children
waiting for the bus, Miriam
had a silky blouse,
remember? Remember?**

19 March 2018

=====

**A bow drawn
across a cushioned hip
what kind of
music does that make?**

**A cello bow
I'm thinking of, long
slim parabola
when pressed against**

**string or skin or
music always waiting
to be made,
declare it in the air,**

**your hands so
reverent bending the bow
against the only
source of sound you know.**

19 March 2018

= = = = =

**Ram's home
spring horn here**

**the day we meant
means us at last**

**but weather is never
is always now**

**a hopeful heaven
we had as children**

**we are to this
day still children of.**

**20 March 2018
Sun in Aries**

WARNING

**Write small
the wall is watching**

**everything knows you're here
most things
know what you're thinking**

**only people can hide
their thoughts from one another
so well**

**they have to use
later language to tell.**

**Everything else
already knows.**

**20 March 2018
from the Hylonoetic Society**

=====

I've been in Kentucky
a lot bnt not
in Tennessee—
what does that make me?

Incomplete.
And yet I swore
allegiance to the union
of humans with their place,

their places.
Sometimes meaning well
is the best you can do,
blind man in a baseball cap.

20 March 2018

=====

**Throw the words on the paper
and don't worry so much
the reader will make up the rest
to suit her own mind, our mind,
the mind that language makes,**

**you know, this one, this
slap on the white page.**

20 March 2018

=====

Old swimming pool
with mosaic walls.
tiles of the old
IRT Lexington line
the beavers of Astor Place,
tie beasts and flowers
synagogue at Dura-
Europus Amy loved,
the tiles,
the tiles are words,
tesserae, the art
called musivary,
writing with stones,
not stone, bright
hard things that look like
srone made them, earth
made them, hard
words to to answer us.

20 March 2018

=====

**There is a palace on the hill
no one has entered,
I see it plainly, have climbed
the slight slope to touch
the stones of its foundation,
even sunbathed spring days
outstretched on its ravelin.
It's right above my house
but in all these years I never
found the doorway to go in.
All my piety does not
make up for my lack of skill.**

20 March 2018

=====

1.

The cause
from the Milvian Bridge
the sky sign
a mark on a man—
a cross is the sign of nature
the genders blended
in a flash of light—
someday go beyond difference.

2.

The emperor is always waiting
for the battle, the barbarians,
the architect of the moment,
the latest sign from heaven.
For the emperor is *the one*
to whom all signs refer,
grievous afterlife, shadow of smoke rising.

3.

I thought his way because I woke,
a treacherous business in this day and age.
I looked at the news, a bridge had fallen,
looked at my mail, marveled at how
some people know how to write their silence.
Then I sat and looked out the window a while—
in my family this is as close as we get to
praying. Or this let-in light as how we pray.

21 March 2018

=====

**Watching the day happen
music to my eyes
boil some water
move around the house
catch a breath of air outside—
I turn out to be me.**

21 March 2018

= = = = =

**Does this mark who
or less me?**

**Who doubts,
despairs. Trust
illusion, it's good for you.
It leads you on
through the desert to
the only land.**

21 March 2018

=====

Keep is kind of hope,
a sign of whom.
Owl in the rafters
after all, hooting
at our pleasures,
his Methodist measures,
his feathers pure
white, severe brown.

21 March 2018

=====

**Snow slight
my hand in yours
spoke. The sun
lifts above the trees,
our dear little hill
magicked within it
peopled, I woke.
You more than me
moving rapture,
Bach behind the trees.**

22 March 2018

=====

**The snow we dreaded yesterday
already melts away.
But not away—sinks down
into the deep thirst of springtime
come back to us as blue Siberian
squills next week, and daffodils.**

22 March 2018

=====

**A man who talks about the weather
is talking about himself—Not so, a woman.
She says snow she means snow. Herself
is somewhere safe from heaven's gossip.**

22 March 2018

= = = = =

**Gentile pleasures
snow racing onto the ground
the great tall faces
on Rapa Nui, face
out of earth, gods
everywhere. The miracle
of matter minds us,
mothering our steps,
minding our sleep.**

22 March 2018

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= = = = =

**Emergent trees
tennis court
mistletoe.**

**History
of our derangements.
Same old house
a billion new rooms.**

22 March 2018

=====

luna in leone

**Try to learn
what is there
while it still is.**

Extinctions outnumber creations.

**I am a lion, I used
to live in Europe, I don't
feel so good these days.**

22 March 2018

=====

The end is opposite,
thje whale road
leads to bone, the sea
is one vast bone
we marrow endless in,
ever opposite, solid
is fluid and water
is also a form of stone.

Things waiting for us
to come to their senses—
will we ever, Rilke,
Mandelshtam,
music is wood and bone
and hair and steel,
delicate reeds and hardware,

did you think language
was any less? It is an *object*
we *project*, a kind of arrow
that strijkes the heart and makes us live.

22 March 2018

=====

(Prooemium)

**Among the living
the forgiving
 the light comes back
in the everything answering.**

**I don't have much to say
but it does
 so we'd better listen,
foresong to an impossible epic,
you are the hero
and I am your words,
your roadmap,
 your sweet gasoline.
Foresong finished
 the real begins.**

23 March 2018

== == == == ==

**The cars, they would come
the road relents
your horoscope calls you to business
but you don't like money**

**we are stronger than ever
as we grow together
time has its own problems
witghout us in it**

**that elevator with no floor to choose
we might be speaking language for all we know,
deep identity of our pale skins,
now it's too late to be anybody else.**

23 March 2018

PASTORALE

**I do what I can to know you
fish and fowl, skin and blood
all the bones in Brazil
all the flutes in Arcady—
but neither of us loves that music,
noise of a grey sky
and lonely adolescents,
shepherd, where are thy lambs?
Go to the mountainside
and hide in shade
until your identity goes away.
There, that is your tune.**

23 March 2018

=====

**Portcullis breathing true
a sparrow in midflight slips
through the iron lattice
as if it weren't there—walls
keep soldiers out, not birds.**

**This is a passacaglia, a fact
by J.S.Bach, a merciful
miracle of sound as birds, as
strolling through the crowded
of an imagined city, there,
down there in the unimaginable
east. Brush against my
shoulder softly please, we are
comrades on our way
to where the dragons live—
they hear us as we walk
and their hearing summons us.**

**23 March 2018
Rhinebeck**

= = = = =

A bird she heard I couldn't

**O key bird
unlock the sky**

**open the door in me
so I can know in**

**where the light comes from
and what it dreams**

as it sleeps all day around me.

24 March 2018

=====

Now more inform me
comes, westering
out of the wastes
a caravan Kasper
Hauser saw
westering, westering
all of God's camels
hurrying the salt to us
scripture after scripture.
All writing comes from the East
of anywhere you are,
books to dream the day away
my mother blamed,
all from the East, *the Other Place*
that lingers in you
after the caravan is gone.

24 March 2018

=====

**Refuel at the station.
Turn on the radio.
Brahms again,
the hidden clarinet**

**I dreamed a woman
with a cello, I saw
a blue sky I swear,
I am a faithful witness**

**but I have my limits,
a word I heard
across the street.
Now you be my music.**

24 March 2018

=====

**Infants running side by side
across the left field berm
to satisfy *mimesis*,
god of children everywhere,
the only god they serve.
If men can catch and run
then children must—
it's as logical as grass.**

24 March 2018

=====

**This color will want me someday
and I will be ready, green of hope,
eyes green as the grass will cover me.**

24 March 2018

=====

**Some things I let
myself not say.**

**A word left in the cellar
against the day,
with grannie's canned peaches
and mason jars full of
purplish I can't remember.**

**And there the word will wait
a braver man than I to say it.**

24 March 2018

=====

**While I wrote
three very small clouds
appeared in the north, aligned,
three eyes watching
me from all that blue.**

24 March 2018

=====

Eichörnchen

**Little oak-horns
running up and down
my special tree.**

24 March 2018

=====

The thicker beverage
of a greyish day
arise and sip,

 slow swallow
it could be any word
that comes to mind.

2.
I have tried to keep
my friends happy,
I have been a large, impressive,
clumsy, garden sculpture of myself—
lifelike, bronze,
not wearing my glasses—
and have stood in my place
holding forth, patient
for fifty years,
solemn as an altar boy
serving a priest he can't see
at a mass he only guesses—
but O that Latin
slanging by, the words, the wonder!

3.

So it is Palm Sunday after all
and I have crafted my meek Confiteor—

to tell the truth and look good telling it—
the way it is sometimes in dream,

enter a city full of beautiful strangers
and as if by chance speak

the word they've been waiting to hear.

25 March 2018

ARCHETYPES OF ORDER

**Our fingers
to count on
the sky
to write on
clear images
that sink down
inside you
and you become
the archive of
all you imagined
up there in the
rigorous void.**

25 March 2018

DRAGONS

something about dragons

make sure they have wings

make sure they have feet or claws

make sure they sleep and wake and don't just dream

The rest is fire from the jaw.

**Respect, renew. Renew your dragon—
it is the special animal of consciousness**

**when your thought has wings
you can rise above what you merely know
when you have feet and claws
you stand firm in the wind of all the thoughts that come
you grasp the wind and take hold**

The dragon is your thinking.

It is you thinking.

25 March 2018

=====

A tisket a tasket
we sang,
 knowing nothing,
nothing but the sound of words—
no hint of what they held
those sly meanings
slipping off and on,

we were hungry
but never knew it
for what the rhyme word carried,
a basket,
 full of colored eggs
or chocolate or Easter
meanings, resurrections,
rabbits.

 All we knew is sound,
some call it music.

26 March 2018

=====

Heal the star
of its imperfection
its difference
from pure light

then heal my sight
from the bewilderment
of what it sees—

heal us by pure light,
all seeing
nothing seen.

26 March 2018

=====

**A shirt color of the woods
is moving uphill through the woods.
Hard to see, subtle
as a deer, only
the movement shows—**

**who goes thre, trees,
you sentinels of my silence,
who dares to walk
where you stand still?**

26 March 2018

=====

**The care
of what we are
falls so hard
on our friends,**

**no way to cheat
the microscope
of the heart, no
way not to feel**

**the hurt of then
when they don't
get it, when the pain
leaves no echo**

**and the hands
are empty, the door
ready to open
and the night begin.**

26 March 2018

=====

**Hombre, umbra
we live in shadow
the fields around us
are thirsty still**

**something out there
hungers for us
we hide in houses
in shadow safe**

**but sometimes the chest
swells with bravery
or some foolish thing
and out we go**

**into the alarming light
where it can find us
if it wants us, can
make us its own**

**and who are we then
but the shadow again
of what we have been
and the world around us**

has all of us it needs.

26 March 2018

= = = = =

**The milk tastes so good
the butter so bad—why?**

**Mind has come between
the taste and the thing.**

27.III.18

=====

**Every Sunday is Epiphany
and Monday too. The ballgame
does not in fact conclude
when the players leave the field.
Everything continues, inning
after inning of th bird, the cloud,
the shadows, the moon.**

27 March 2018

DUET FOR VIOLAS

**Living in a waistcoat
why do you say that?
pronounce it 'weskit'
Oh
(with tremolo betokening anxiety)
who lives thus?
synecdoche for all of us
who's us?
even you
hide my middle?
you bet
vulnerable?
only at the core
who knew?
(words spoken together confuse the other)
blackberry tried to tell you with its thorns
can I go home?
practical to the last
where is the car?
it comes when you call
where is the road
always elsewhere—that's the point of it
those berries have tiny annoying seeds
they do get in the teeth
I don't know what to do with all you've told me
hinted only
what's that supposed to mean?**

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yes.

27 March 2018

= = = = =

**Catch the light.
Here it is
in my left hand,
my thumb plays
shadows on the palm.**

**Catch the light.
The possums last night
loped across the lawn
on their way
to mate. What
strange words we use
fopr being,
for being us.**

**Catch the light.
The grass is waiting
to get started,
the sun. Even the moon
will help,
so bright last night
on the terrace,
on the crocuses,
only its ninth day out.**

Catch the light.

**Up in Cheviot the sheep
are waiting
even harder.
Easter is coming
and they know it,
all living things
know that gospel,
wordless breezes,
lessons no one needs
to memorize, sun,
lush grass, resurrection.**

27 March 2018

IN THE COUNTRYHOUSE

**We're out of need.
All that's left
is wishfulness,
whim, a breeze
in the oleanders.
Listen! Children
are everywhere
in us. We recollect
lessons learned
when we yearned.
Ha, But History has
no meaning when
everything is fine,
peaceful, in its place
and we with it,
ungrieved,
uncomforted.**

27 March 2018

=====

**I looked for a piece of paper
and found the moon. Again.
A face watching me most nights
for all my years. I suspect
the white paper when I find it
will be moon-skin, pale shadow,
a free space left in the world
for life's mind's hand to find,
tug me away from my own
concerns to write the silence down.**

27 March 2018

=====

Bright-thewed, the *hominem*
to whom.

 The appeal
itself is godly, or goddish
surely,
 a call
to the not-known
to be perfect, perfect.
Like a field of rye
in spring, all one thing.
And here we are
already in Antillia
this land that means the Other.

2.
So this is how
theology begins,
a guess that someone like us
likes us

 and will hear.
And will care.

 Every temple
a footnote to that feeling.

3.

On the other side of the morning
you hear a door closing.

Who left the room?

You lie there a while
fantasizing the departure—

one or many, she or he,
or else some feathered person
or soft-pawed beast?

It's only the door you hear,
the air it lets out or in,
the wood of its closing.

4.

Later you karaoke with the wind
until its words form in your mouth—
easier to do this in the dark
but that cloud will help, the one
over the pastor's house, shielding
so many of us from the light.

5.

The wolf of my feelings was waiting.
That's how I got into this story,
not out of credence or conviction
but just how it feels to go in,
into a god-house, a lha-khang,
go in and sit down and nobody there
and be nobody there.

Like rinsing
my face on a hot day
with water from an accidental mountain spring.

28 March 2018

= = = = =

**Waiting is always
the alternative,
birds do it, foxes
practice it, jumping
straight up (stottering),
clouds do it, hovering.
Leap up and be still.**

28 March 2018

= = = = =

**Could there be
more of me
on the other side of now?**

**Blink twice and be another
just like Oz.**

**There are curtains on every window
but you have hands to spread them open,**

**there. You are what you
thought all along.**

28 March 2018

=====

In this holy hall
I habit. Have it
while.

So to be free
of what they tell you
organdy curtains,
gas log fireplace
tea set from Birmingham—
we would settle even for these,
and the sun a coin?
Blake despised us
for seeing iy so, maybe too
for all our resemblances.

28 March 2018

=====

Waiting for a decision
a revision
 day also
is a cancellation
a fancy word
for your night discovered.
Fact: You dream the day.

2.
So everything changes.
Bull kelp by the bay
we cling to,
 slippery ropes
that almost nourish us
and the sea outside
keeps saying Come Home.

3.
That woman jogging by
with her trotting retriever
beside her
are pure consensus.
No flesh, mere conversation.
The flowers I see better
when they are not here.

4.

That people like to run
amazes me, but that's just me.
It took me so long
to get where I am
I can't imagine a departure.
Yet the one time I met
Auden he was walking very fast.

5.

I'm not talking quintessences here,
just weather,
grey sky on a blue day,
I rub my itchy back
against a column of Jove's temple,
the old one, the one they never built,
left it for us to find
following one thing after another,
motionless, in mind.

29 March 2018

=====

Tears in flowers few
deep caressing fog
past midnight,
distance means to be close,
the air made visible
and no one there to breathe it
but you, and me,
and a few deer on the lawn
to snack on corn.
The ocean after all
is nearby, an arm of it
stretched along our land.

29 March 2018

=====

**Mirrors in dark rooms
show some of what isn't there
fleshed out with glimpses
of the real. Mirrors
in dark rooms terrify me,
I try to belong to everything
I see. I move past a mirror
in a dark hallway, someone
is moving also in the glass
but I'm not sure it's me.
Who else could it be? This
question terrifies me too.
The shapes that have no name,
the dark moving in the dark.**

29 March 2018

=====

**On the banks of the Id
I idled, the sluggish
unstoppable river
the rest of me tries so
hard to be a levee for.
To keep the city safe,
city of man, city of god,
city of woman, streets
rushing from the river
inland, into the serene.**

29 March 2018

=====

**The color of the world changes.
So many years ago this day
I looked out at the sky and was afraid.**

**As if the end of all things
hovered invisible there in all
the grey clouds over Brooklyn,**

**and was waiting, waiting for me
as I sat rigid in the dentist's chair
shaken by my own little fear**

swept up into this huge fear this empty sky.

30 March 2018

=====

**A day when everything was the same.
The sparrows knew it,
all the cars on the damp
grey road were grey and wet,
everything the color of drizzle
inside and out. The art on the walls
receded into vagueness. Peace,
brother, all a man can really do
is feel, and no man knows what
makes him feel, or what to do.**

30 March 2018

=====

Wash the water
after you wash your hands.
This is Good Friday
of the iron nails.
Love rusts. Scripture
turns into hammers.
Lances. Stones.

So start with stone
and read a kinder text.
Where we do no hurt
or hurt one another.
Where a tree renews
the air it breathes, the earth
sustains its crystals.
And water heals itself
by being and by being swift.

30 March 2018
Shafer

=====

The bleak of music also knows me.
The woman came late to the well.
The water had long ago gone to sleep.
What shall she do? Doves flitted
batlike through the dusk, the palms.
Not far away some people prayed
out loud in some sort of chapel.
She grieved in her thirst, stripped off
the heavy woolen cape, let the moist
air of evening do what it could to
quench. Why are they praying now
she wondered, why does anyone
think anyone else can hear them?
But I hear them, she realized, I
must be the god they have in mind.
The bleak of their hymns knows me,
I will go down to them and give them
what they want. So saying, she put
her woolen cloak back on, left behind
her useless waterjug and followed
carefully the sounds she heard until
she stood before them in her glory
and they saw and knew and knew and knew.

30 March 2018
Shafer

=====

**I am everything I have ever been.
So must make the best
of my diversity. The ones I meet
and talk to are my dreams
and I am theirs. No need
to bother with identity.**

31 March 2018

=====

There is a legend in the wood
I read it once
on the oak grain of the steps
on my staircase,
I looked down and saw.
Ever since, I pause in climbing
to review the action
each tread tells.
It remembers it from trees.

2.
Seems a maiden met an eagle
long time ago who carried her up
in innocence and ecstasy
to live with one another on a cliff.
They found and studied
crystals from the mountainside.
From time to rime they'd find
a special one, so off she'd go
to find a seaside cove or quiet valley
to build a new city in. All cities
come from crystals, the tree said,
we have been here before them all
and we can tell. And when the city
had finished rising from the dream
the crystal held, the eagle would come
gently lift her and carry her home.

31 March 2018

