

1-2019

**jan2019**

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## **NEW YEARS LETTER**

**1.**

**Trying new dangers  
amoebas in friend rice.  
We mercenary men  
goth'd our way west  
until we unraveled  
all rhe languages  
and used them all up.  
Then pity poor butterfly  
voiceless as light.**

**2.**

**As if we selves are selves  
as pathogens. Dark  
audience, they collect  
our dreams and publish them  
in an anthology called today.**

3.

Something like that  
at least.

Something is happening to me.

*Albestone*

  dropped from my hand  
but not lost,  
  never lost,  
it glistens in the shadows we call music.

4.

See, naming things already,  
who gave me this near year?

The stricture relents,

Bach's English Suites—

I would have been a piano

if I could, such

love I have of touch.

5.

Fingers, fingers,  
not rhyme.

Specifics of geographic location—

Orpheus in hell,

Eurydice's face

at last from that unsilent company.

In this age, women have all the lines.

6.

This isn't talking, see,

this is lurking in the shadows.

Cars without headlights

weaving home from drunken parties.

Scary out there—you'd think

I was a deer

or someone frail.

And you may be right.

7.

Forgive the form.  
This encyclical  
has to go  
to everyone at once,  
someone left out  
would be in peril  
of the trivial.  
Poetry has to work hard  
to understand  
what it so blithely says.

8.

Yes, you, darling  
in this \_\_\_\_\_  
in actual fact  
every human being  
is a poet—  
but so few know it.

9.

So read me with your pen  
I pray, only your rich answer  
can make sense  
of all my meager questions.  
Ah, slim wrists, ah, chubby fingers,  
leave the guitar in the closet  
and kiss the keys good morning  
one by one until you touch an alphabet.  
Or gouge it in paper with your lucid pen.  
Matter incessantly forgives our mind.

1 January 2019

=====

**Honor is in it too  
being close to the tree trunk**

**is also to be shielded  
from above. Find the tree.**

**1 January 2019**

=====

After one touches another  
with a wand of ultrasound  
the sky seems lighter.  
We know so little  
of where we come from,  
long nightgowns billowing  
round maiden knees,  
shy young men  
unshaven. Cocks  
crowing, crows  
calling, deer waiting  
in the trees for  
anything to eat.  
Hespera men ēn—  
then it was evening,  
the great cycle of Athenian  
oratory begins.  
But who is listening?  
It tastes like salt  
but what is it  
really? Maybe a well  
has roots deeper than we know,  
subtle channels, earth investments,



**swirl the tap water in your glass  
and pray. Life everywhere itself.  
What did the doctor tell you?  
You'll be better soon  
pray for peace by standing still.**

**1 January 2019**

=====

It's what I want  
That counts  
not what I get

The spirit  
Has its own treasury  
where images accumulate

Lasting and true  
From then a world  
Of energy and beauty comes

More than I could ever hold.

1 January 2019

=====

Hoisting the host  
Suddenly  
What the arms are for

It knows  
Upward  
In the priest.

And we  
just as suddenly  
are guest.

1 January 2019

=====

*for Billie, answering*

This fish  
A flame  
That lives in water

water being anyhow  
Our mother

Bless your nakedness.  
Your willingness  
To cleave to the tree.

Birch bark  
Branches  
A poem  
Caught in your hair.

**1 January 2019**

=====

To dine on tomorrow  
the way a child

or blue sky your Wednesday  
just because

there are towers hidden  
in the trees to us

Saint Sagacity  
finds them for

anything is  
enough to begin

2 January 2019

=====

**I should be a farmer  
and plant horses on the hillside,**

**some people make up secrets  
to make themselves small,**

**some people trim clouds  
to fit their bay windows**

**and why not? you say  
because you haven't been listening**

**all these years  
we've been whistling**

**in the belly of the whale  
on our way to one**

**more city we have to rule  
we live for the next.**

**2 January 2019**

=====

I have to do  
the things that make me  
me, and you too  
have a charter to pursue  
the accreditation  
of every mortal hour.  
Some by nakedness,  
some by song  
some by carpentry,  
chemistry, theology,  
all the lovely ways  
of being wrong  
and having it all come true.

2 January 2019

=====

A new day!  
When the old  
is still humming  
in my head—

write a novel  
about a girl on a bus  
a boy on the ground,  
the birds pay their taxes

too to the reigning sun,  
quivering wind.  
Not a novel, a *roman*  
that needs translation—

I'm instructing you  
to write in a language  
you don't know  
and see what happens.

Something always happens—  
that's how you know.

2 January 2019



== ==

When the pen is loaded  
the rodeo begins,  
is that your horse  
hopping over the hill?  
Is that your wine-glass  
shattered on the boulder,  
your straw hat perched  
on a saguaro,  
how wise you are  
to carry a desert  
in your purse  
so everywhere you go  
you can at need or at will  
suddenly have space,  
huge space around you—  
is that your slender hand  
even now drawing the horizon?

2 January 2019

=====

**It wasn't enough  
to wake the sexton  
to borrow the key  
to the abandoned cathedral,  
dangers of falling masonry,  
secret places in the design,  
mosaic pathways.  
You had to go inside,  
and find the living thing inside  
and bother it with seeing  
until it spoke  
the dark language of color  
that you, so few,  
can understand.  
The inner organs of stone buildings  
wait for a new gospel—  
now what will you do  
to answer them?**

**2 January 2019**

=====

Sweet contraltos  
sing my breakfast—  
not that I'm hungry,  
I can wait my turn,  
but start whispering  
at least to ease  
the opposite of appetite  
that only music can cure.  
Sing me whatever  
as you once told Caedmon  
asleep by his cattle.  
I sleep by my window.

2 January 2019

## OCTAVES

1,  
Touch the Baldwin,  
remember,  
extra keys at the top  
make the high notes  
sound fuller, truer.

What name did they give it,  
Acrosonic? Ultra-something?  
I saw one, a big white grand,  
in my dream, no one  
playing it, just there, dark room.  
But you could tell  
just by looking  
how it would sound  
beneath your fingers,  
how everything would feel.

2.

Extra harp strings on the frame  
for notes you would never play.  
no scores command them,  
but their resonance, their presence  
on the instrument makes  
the played notes in the highest  
octave sound fuller. Proximity  
effect. As if I spoke truest and clearest  
only when there are others beside me.  
Language is the other.

3.

But what about music?  
Music is touch.  
Fingers or lips  
rhythm of breath,  
Gould humming into Bach.

4.

So the white piano  
turned into a naked woman  
on her elbow beside me  
articulate and chaste.  
I forget what we talked about  
but it was talk intelligent,  
prospecting fresh ideas  
to investigate, new species of now.

5.

So when I say 'turned into'  
I mean got replaced by.  
What else could I mean?  
This is not a fairy tale,  
it's an ordinary workaday dream  
given by the mind to itself  
to study and be guided by,  
to be delighted by and to forget  
into the bright shadows we call waking.

3 January 2019

=====

**Sometimes as with fancy candy  
the box costs more to make  
than the nougats do. A dream  
is like that, its images far more  
interesting and useful than  
the meaning you weasel from them,  
Dr. Smartypants. Give me plain  
my wombat, my rose, my cathedral.**

**3 January 2019**

=====

**Tumescent cloud  
beyond bare trees  
lean as pen strokes**

**the sky is painting  
Dutch today,  
no need for brushes.**

**I present this ;landscape  
in my latest book:  
*What You Can See Only***

***When You're Not Looking.***

**3 January 2019**



=====

Arroyos, barriers,  
canyons in the land itself  
keep us in place.

Wise if we stay here,  
no Viking, no crossing.  
Water is to drink,

bathe, delight us  
in it and in the sight of it,  
it mothers us, is in us.

Don't cross over.  
Rivers are to lead us,  
wise folk follow them.

3 January 2019

=====

**Is it too late for America?  
All our rivers have been crossed,  
thus crossed out as guidelines.  
We are bewildered by bridges—  
a bridge denies the deep  
meaning of our geology. And maybe  
a boat was our first blasphemy.**

**3 January 2019**

=====

The whale tooth  
scrimshaw  
the waiting game  
we play with things,  
dear things!

I am apostle  
of the miracle  
of matter we are.

2.  
Or do I mean  
more than I think?  
I think I do  
but that's just  
thinking again—  
what did that  
ever get us?  
Feeling is all.

3 January 2019, Kingston  
*for Gabriela, who interrupted me just in time*

=====

It doesn't do  
to be old,  
to be told  
you can't do  
this  
    or even that,

each breath  
a victory,  
each step  
an argosy,  
the daily quest  
is getting dressed

when all the while  
a mile

    away  
the mind's  
at play  
among the birds  
of spring  
still learning  
how to sing.

4 January 2019

## EVERYTHING TRIES TO TELL THE TRUTH

When you run out of rapture  
run back to the mountain.  
Cross the river, it's never far.  
Go climb halfway up, no more,  
just where the clouds come down  
to lick your lips, hem of her robe.  
This hill is all you need of heaven—  
didn't they teach you that in dream?

4 January 2019

## LANDSCAPE

Sunny trees

Sieneese

winter gold

,

art history

in my window screen,

trhe air

at freeze –point

held, breath still.

Seeing is being

all over again.

Each of us

a soft museum

strolling the visible.

4 January 2019

=====

**The only  
difference  
between  
land and  
landscape  
is looking.**

**4.1.19**

=====

Your whole countryside  
covered in salt  
beautiful, three inches deep.

The natives call it snow  
and drive their deer across it,  
but I know what I taste,

I know music when I hear it,  
the generous curve of sound  
around and around,

music is always walking  
ahead of me, now and then  
turning round to see me,

if I'm still following.  
I always am. I need those  
shimmering footsteps.

I need that salt.

4 January 2019



=====

A song by Mahler  
I haven't heard in forty years  
a woman singing now  
from a little round device,

o and the years, the years,  
those vast and sudden meadows  
ragged with golden flowers,  
hedgerows, roads over the hill,

and the music sounds as ever  
differently the same, her voice  
lifting as much memory  
as it can, so much sorrow.

I tap my fingers slowly on my desk,  
the device changes its tune,  
speeds up, my fingers too, Bach  
is happening, that mystery cult

we all are born to be initiates of.

4 January 2019

=====

If a religion had me  
which would it be?

I knew the answer  
but I wouldn't tell him—  
we evangelists are  
that way,

read my gospel  
and leave me in peace.

4 January 2019

**=====**

**Now the miller  
sang to his seed:**

**Be many, many  
on the way  
to being one.**

**4.I.19**

=====

*in the fane of Seshat*

Love is on the other  
side of something  
we can't say

or can you,  
with all that wise Egyptian  
beeswax in your lips.

the goddess of writing  
who invented the alphabet  
is also the goddess of surveying,  
accounting, counting,

knowing how many things  
and how big they are,  
and where they are,

**you see the sinuous  
shadow of her shape**

**tumble down the fore-slopes,  
the Blue Mountains.**

**In their shape I first knew love  
I thought,  
and tore the paper up.**

**4 January 2019**

**MONOCHROME MORNING**

I said into the window  
*eyeless in Gaza*  
*at the mill with slaves*  
it answered right away

yes, Samson, *Shemesh* sun god  
she trundles round the sky  
yes, no sun today,  
I hope  
that is all the answer meant,

my eyes are poor  
I love my mill  
I love you still,  
and I'm the only slave left.

5 January 2019

## EVE OF EPIPHANY

1.

Dark indeed morning  
the wise men  
almost at their goal

soon they'll lay their gifts  
at the feet of Reality

then burry back east  
where the sun is waiting  
to hear their stories

and come to us.

2

.

Myth makes me keener—  
less me, more us,

less veiling, less alarm,  
breathless truths  
suddenly gasped,

**3.**

**Here I dare to argue with  
the truly great Dr. Jung.  
Any story decanted  
into a child's ears  
becomes myth, genuine,  
real as Hercules,**

**any gift laid at the crib  
is gold, is frankincense.**

**4.**

**Myrrh comes later,  
myrrh is breath,  
breath of the other,  
neighbor's daughter,  
preacher's son. Or  
myrrh is the resin  
of the furthest tree,  
the one around the corner,  
the one next door.**

**5 January 2019**



=====

I'll need a pseudonym  
to publish this,  
no one must know I'm me—  
identity is a major cause of death

I'll call myself Red Deer  
or Boniface the Innocent,  
who else could it be?

The myth is stamping  
its hooves outside my door,  
the story is impatient to begin  
and all it wants is to tell  
you the edges of itself—  
shuttered brick church,  
angry crowd, lazy bishop  
miles away, then a stranger  
in an overcoat shows up,  
opens the doors without a key,  
leads everybody in, turns  
his overcoat inside out, turns  
out to be a chasuble how,  
he says Mass, gives communion,  
smiles and disappears Of course

**you know the rest, you know  
an angel when you see one.  
Who would believe me  
if I didn't lie?**

**Don't boast  
(his voice came down the nave)  
you couldn't tell a lie if you tried.**

**5 January 2019  
Poor St Patrick's, Catskill**

## SYMBOLS OF SELF-RULE

An apple unbitten,  
cloud overhead,

fox on daylight lawn  
and in daylight too

an antlered head lifted  
*deer at gaze*

stream hurried past,  
key cold in your pocket,

singing then stopping  
fingers tapping on tabletop

palm rests against cool plaster wall.

5 January 2019

=====

**Urgent onset  
I spoke English as a child  
but learned to talk later—**

**knew something about the clouds  
and what lived inside them  
*and only there*  
in all the world.**

**Children have to know  
all by themselves—  
there is no one to tell them  
the things that matter,  
  
no one at all.**

**5 January 2019**

=====

Leftover brightness  
the sea's own  
the river has it now,

guide of all my years.  
It rose up before me  
when I was very young  
in my father's car

*North* it said  
on the little wooden  
sign beside the road,  
*New England and North*

but I knew it meant  
Know England  
and Go North,

and England meant a book  
because at that time  
there were no books in America.

5 January 2019

## SILVER

There are no rhymes for silver.  
silver is the holy one  
silver stands alone

all the other metals have  
rhyme words of their own  
tin and lead are common,  
gold has many,  
some of them quite sad,  
even holy copper has a few  
but silver stands alone.

The holy gentle smooth one,  
milk of matter,  
half ocean and half sky,  
morning over norther forest

Wear silver on your wrist  
against the pulsing vein  
to open up the furthest dream

5 January 2019

## A DOOR FOR JANUARY

There is someone at the door  
there is a woman at the door  
another voice says no  
it's a man at the door  
go ;let them in

there's a child at the door  
let them in  
does she have a dog with her?  
no, he's alone

is he hungry?  
no she says she's eaten already  
eaten enough

why are they here  
go let them in  
they've come to know me

they come to know you –  
do you want to be known?  
go let them in

she's waiting at the door  
I hear him breathing  
why doesn't she knock  
he called out already

didn't you hear him?

there's only one door  
it opens only once a year

it's always open.

5 January 2019



## KAIROS

I opened the door  
and she was standing there  
the whole year  
dressed all in weather

Come out, she whispered,  
the time is right,  
it's the right time at last,

5 January 2019

## THE NOMENCLATURE OF HEAVEN

breeds a strange biology.  
Impalpably alive—means  
you can't touch them  
but they're there. There  
means here. Hard  
to remember.  
Dangerous to forget.

2.  
You especially  
know the ones I mean.  
You sleep with them at night,  
spirits, sperrits, ghosts, afreets,  
nimble daimons of a brighter time.  
What a zoo you are  
of cosmic entities,  
like a page of Rudolf Steiner,  
a million voices chattering  
through earthbound words.  
Zoo you are.  
And those who love you  
are fed by your desperate guesses.

6 January 2019

=====

Go on, laugh at mirrors,  
stretch tape measures  
out of true, make  
one mile feel like ten.  
I had colors once,  
and fur around my collar  
and a door to guard,  
a pool to gaze in.  
The astrology of spider webs  
was not unknown to me,  
infinite is a word much overused,  
and there were foxes in the brief meadow  
between the trees and winter.  
I understand the pain  
you must never let yourself feel—  
an abstract pain is best,  
deep-gouged bark of an old locust tree—  
pain is the avenue of what we see—  
in this dry paper bag  
is all my broken glass.

6 January 2019

=====

**Sometimes it isn't waiting,  
the word.**

**Spin the top,  
speak Viennese,  
you're almost there,  
rondo in the Gypsy style,  
come on, word,  
I can feel you on the bone  
I call a brain, come on,  
say yourself, be a good  
Christian, Jew, believer,  
sneer all you like,  
just say I'll play  
this damned zither  
till you speak.**

**6 January 2019**

=====

I have a good memory  
but memory is overrated.  
I wish I had no idea  
of how I got here—  
that way I'd *really*  
know what place this is  
and who I am who stands here.

6 January 2019

=====

How few the farmer,  
eloquent his seed,  
his terse mind  
fills the field with rye—  
any week now,  
to feed his lumbering herd.

6 January 2019

## BACK TO THE SHUTTERED ROOM

### The Flume

I ran through in New Hampshire  
at my memory's beginning,  
Minerva my teacher,  
Nora in the sea surf,  
some old stone man.

2.

No need for more.  
In the first five years of life  
the child receives  
(donations from reality)  
all the impressions needed  
for a whole life. All  
the rest is vocabulary lessons,  
grammar. Which used  
to mean magic.

3.

Of course I am there,  
still working it out.  
Precise [?] location is itself escape.  
Escape into numbers,  
names. The bridge

**over the Isar, downhill  
from the Conservatory,  
spread your arms,  
pretend to be a hotel.**

**6 January 2019**



=====

The worst skin disease of all  
is absence of touch  
I came into the house  
from winter, sat by the fire,  
fingertips numb from the cold.  
I rubbed my hands together,  
rubbed my fingers on my thighs.  
Your thighs. Where were you  
when I needed you. Half  
and hour later some feeling  
had come home. *Maladies  
de la peau*, I remembered,  
a beautiful book  
I translated once  
some poems from  
long ago. Too long ago.

6 January 2019

=====

**If you need more evidence  
count the trees around your house  
and divide by me.  
The result will tell you  
more than words or numbers can—  
all diseases come from touch.**

**6 January 2019**

## WOUNDED CENTER

The years  
gave you flesh,  
the beautiful flesh  
made language  
all around you  
now let  
the wound talk.

2.  
All these years  
it's wasted.  
Let it speak—  
it,  
    it may even  
be a song.

3.  
When the center is wounded  
the circumference glows  
with an eerie light,  
attracts predators,  
con men, lotharios.  
All the old words

sometimes salve,  
never cure. Never help.  
Only telling  
breaks the circle,  
lets the meaning out.

4.

Because a wound is a meaning too,  
a lost war, abandoned province,  
a mountain beyond reach. Only the wind  
can reach it, only the breath  
can understand what the wound says.  
Tell it. It's the only truth you have.

6 January 2019

=====

As if a long ago  
was now, scent  
of incense, high B natural  
of a dead tenor  
floating on the distances.  
All the distances we are.

6 January 2019

=====

**Amber  
every wear  
pale throat  
Danube passing  
irrelevant but beautiful—  
the sea so far,  
the mocking clouds  
remind me to praise.  
Praise.**

**6 January 2019**

=====

**Look into the ear  
listen to the eye  
take the taste  
into your hands  
and offer it to the gods.  
This is the real religion.**

**7 January 2019**

=====

The sun is over the house now  
just enough so the far trees  
take color from it. In between  
it's darker. Not for the first time  
I constitute an obstacle to light.  
I'm still working on transparency.

7 January 2019



=====

**This Epiphany,  
yesterday,  
the Kings did not come by.  
But their gifts are everywhere.  
I stand on the highway  
and study the distances  
into which they have gone.**

**7 January 2019**

=====

When you can't drive  
anymore, your era changes.  
These cars I see out there  
driving to work could be  
from a different age,  
past and future all at once.  
*They do what I was.*  
Sometimes the shock comes back.  
I search for what can be found  
only when all is lost.

7 January 2019

=====

I'm getting personal again.  
Next I'll be telling you  
how I'm an owl  
or a crow. And you  
had better believe me.  
Of all my lies, this  
has more truth than most.

7 January 2019

=====

**Ways I betrayed  
my generation:  
didn't do drugs,  
hated pop music,  
gave up drinking,  
gave up smoke.  
Preferred to live out  
the clarity of mind,  
any mind  
I could find  
in me or all the words.  
Will my time forgive me  
or has another time come,  
a time out of mind?**

**7 January 2019**

## FARBENLEHRE

Pieces pf color  
lying on the deck  
some say the ship  
is bearing them  
to some land wilder  
than Borneo  
though close at hand.  
Others claim colors  
are just one more  
gosh-darned religion  
we should have outgrown  
by now but no. I tiptoe  
through flecks of blue  
wanting it to be true.  
I kneel in scarlet  
at bedside every eve  
but the boat keeps  
tolling, tocks me to sleep  
before I even stretch out  
like a green lawn in Cathay  
where metals kept

all the colors and the trees  
hrew black and white.  
So tell me I'm dreaming—  
I've heard worse, and dream  
is our natural condition, yours too.  
And mind you don't step in yellow.

7 January 2019

=====

I catch in the mirror  
a glimpse of the television  
working away in another room.  
Something is happening.  
It could be the start of war  
or an ad for soap. Light  
has a way of shrieking so loud  
you don't know what it says.  
I'm afraid poetry can be like that too.

7 January 2019

=====

*for Susan Quasha on her birthday*

I've been watching you  
since we were building cathedrals

but not together, we always  
had slightly different religions

you built your high towers  
out of pure water  
running and still,  
mine were of ice  
hard-carved and hurt

and sometimes after work  
I'd come and lean against your walls  
and stare straight up the tower,  
beeline to Polaris

and if I leaned close,  
my cheek against the upward flow  
I wouldn't need to shave that day

no wonder I keep coming back to you  
delighted with the distances you keep,  
the taste of everything in my empty mouth



but best of all's  
when I come by  
your edifice at night,  
see the articulate colors  
all streaming out  
through the stained glass windows in your side.

7 / 8 January 2019

## THE WEATHERS

1.

Say what you like  
the weather knows everything.  
Fall asleep by the ocean  
wake on the mountain.

2.

I knew Nietzsche when I was young,  
surly youths we both were,  
fond of silences.  
But then the caged  
animals did their work  
and breath did all the rest.

3.

Tops remind us earth spins.  
Earth reminds us we stand still.  
I have come all this weary  
way just to tell you this.

4.

Marvel at my impecunious religion  
room in it only for me and god—  
how dare I even listen  
to such a word as “mine?”

5.

Lack of evidence is evidence—  
who said that? Some dreary  
*policier* tugged out of memory.  
Look outside and see the snow—  
that should be enough for both of us.  
Who did you say you were again?

6.

La cosa mas importante  
is staying small. Low  
to thje wind, mumble  
when you speak, preach  
by silence, pray  
when you sing. Mum’s  
the word – a word  
that also means our mother.

7.

Yestreen Duncan's  
hundredth birthday.  
He sat in his pajamas  
at my kitchen table  
by the window  
writing with his Parker 51  
and it was snowing then too,  
Greatest poet I ever knew.

8.

But then there's you, of course,  
and me, and the girl next door,  
the blue jay at the feeder,  
the big buck at midnight  
just past the skeletal hibiscus—  
talk about evidence!

9.

Triangles were the best  
in geometry class,  
great names,  
scalene, isosceles,

easy formulas,  
pointy angles.  
And they all look  
like hollow shadows.  
Or pyramids.

10.

It's getting lighter as I speak—  
is that cause and effect?  
Angels laugh at such a question,  
such presumption, sometimes  
punish, sometimes just send  
a mouse to skitter across the rug  
to put me in my place.  
But isn't that what you are for?

11.

Miles and frowns,  
smiles and towns—  
nothing is too far away—  
there are reasons  
built into distances,  
they think it moves  
but it is still the sky  
a polished lapis sphere.

12.

Things could go on  
like Telemann,  
triumph of energy  
over narration.

From what I never even thought  
your hands are suddenly filled.

13.

All at once things take over  
and we know what that means  
.The weather's always waiting  
to disclose. Far out in heaven  
all the weathers themselves  
cast their brief universal spells.

14.

That's as close as we  
could come to it.  
stiff with cold, sulking  
on the mountain slope.  
Intellect broad, insight narrow.  
just like that kind of triangle.

15.

I used to have another name for me  
but I forgot. Forget.  
Easy to lose things in the snow,  
wait for spring to show the right word up.

16.

Great poets and great friends,  
what a sacred geography lesson,  
continent full of rivers,  
rivers full of water, water  
full of flow, full of fish  
and indinite reflections passing  
not one of them meant to last.  
They gleam with gone-ness.

17.

And we are raptured too,  
by song if nothing worse.  
Black angus cattle  
browsing in the feedlot  
yesterday, Sorrow  
to see their beauty  
guessing at their fate.  
Here's Nietzsche again  
who glimpsed the final secret  
be kind to one another  
and all may yet be well.

8 January 2019



=====

On elegant black horses  
they herded the homeless  
out of the central square—  
“Go be homeless everywhere  
but here. Go find a fountain  
and wash yourselves rich.”

\*

So dreamt. Now what.  
What language did they speak  
or do I? What now.  
yje dream event is finished,  
the aching poor are far away  
beyond the gates. Even I  
can't hear them cry.

\*

Is there a basic rule or law  
about what happens in the night?  
Asleep or awake the horrors come,  
precipices sudden yawn,  
doors lock themselves against you

and you fall. Or almost fall  
when almost means breathless  
stiff with terror. Nightmare  
is an easy word, I hear  
you pant with fear beside me,  
I roll over, clutch you, how  
can I save you from your dream?

\*

The hooves of the horses  
have made a terrible mess  
of the stinking shabby sheets  
that had tented the poor,  
who dared to be poor in public.

The Consolation Clock  
was tolling in the cathedral tower,  
as it has for eight hundred years  
a business day about to  
begin in this crowded city—

If you get to heaven before I do,  
tell them about this, ask the angels  
overworked as they are, to come to the aid  
of the ragged and the outcast. Maybe

they'll explain it, maybe they'll say  
in some obscure way the poor  
have chosen their affliction, are working  
some aeonic destiny out life by life.

\*

Even if the angels are right  
don't listen to them.  
We have our own destinies  
to work out, justice and truth,  
or for God's sake just kindness.  
Kindness means the agency  
proper to our kind.  
Humanity, *umanità*.

9 January 2019

=====

He dumped boiled spinach  
into a lady's purse—  
but I've done worse.  
I saw a stone bridge  
and walked across it,  
I heard a song on the radio  
and hummed it back,  
I had pizza for dinner  
and gave you some.

9 January 2019

=====

One person went to sleep  
another person dreamed  
and a third woke up.  
And they were all me.  
It's the usual morning question:  
who am I today.  
It needs no answer from me—  
that's where you come in.

10 January 2019

=====

To endure  
the mincing footsteps  
of the meek baroque,  
copycat music  
from the time of powdered periwigs  
I am compelled to clutch  
in my romantic heart  
storms over Swiss mountains  
or dryads slouching through dark woods.

10 January 2019

**UNRELIABLE**

**A door  
can close too—  
that's poetry  
for you.**

**10 January 2019**

=====

**I spell my name with a K  
because some Englishman  
and I speak sort of English  
because a boat brought**

**but still those pale foreigners  
seem like my homeland  
as if I had no other ever  
country but language alone.**

**10 January 2019**



=====

*Om mani padme hum*

**I write what I suddenly must  
to say what the sky says  
is to say enough—  
we are all translators.**

**10 January 2019**

=====

**If you have enough triangles  
you can make a star  
or form a perfect circle  
to live in ever after—  
all you need are angles,  
as long as each one is sharp,  
each complete in itself.**

**10 January 2019**

## CONTESTAION

Sometimes the alphabet  
turns inside out.

Then the cave opens  
and the marvels roll out,  
winged doubts and words on wheels,  
griffins sshredding manuscripts,  
saintly women with diamonds  
studded in their teeth.

I don't believe anything I read  
because it's all true  
but doesn't need me to credit it.

Il am the isolate, the fierce Hapax,  
the child of your deepest mind.

10 January 2019

=====

**Time is never wasted—  
by its nature  
it communicates, transfers  
you to the destined place,  
port of sorrows, glory chapel,  
the place you never guessed.**

**Time takes you there, taking  
as we say its own sweet time  
to bring you to the door.  
The riverside. The virgin shadow  
of the form you will take on,  
  
no way out of that perfection.**

**10 January 2019**

## THE STATUES

1.

The image persists  
after the religion is gone.  
We stand the god  
on a plinth in the museum  
and wonder. Body  
of a sturdy man, body  
of a fecund woman,  
thousands of years.  
What are we looking at?  
What were they thinking  
who made this thing  
of stone or polished wood  
and prayed to it, or through it,  
what did they know  
when they gazed up at it  
that we can never know?

2.

Or can we?  
What really happens  
now when you look?  
Don't stare

our ,others told us,  
don't stare at strangers.  
Staring gives them power,  
turns them into gods,  
I think that's what the mothers  
meant, staring turns them  
into a problem we have to solve,  
spend our whole life studying  
like children the meaning  
of a stranger, meaning of a stone.

3.

Or is there nothing to be known  
and all the worship just a fine excuse  
to look at beautiful women,  
beautiful men, models merely,  
marble surrogates for what we usually see,  
the dumpy uncomely ordinary?

4.

Or look at Rodin, or Matisse,  
who turn our lumpy lovers into deities—  
the godhead sneaks back in  
admitted by the human trowel, chisel,  
or maybe just by staring alone

like Praxiteles looking at his Phryne  
until she was Aphrodite, intense,  
modest as a naked body can be—  
nude means dressed for eternity.

5.

Or remember those figures at Autun,  
gaunt robed holy ones  
whose bodies seem to replicate  
the thrust upward of their cathedral  
to heaven, frighteningly lean,  
rapt in a strange stasis of ascent  
as if we too, all the time, are rising  
with them, quick shallow breaths—  
never mind religion. The gods are here.

11 January 2019

=====

Turn my phrase  
into a leaf.  
Let it grow  
a tree to live in  
the way an idea  
grows a book  
around itself  
and we read.  
Now climb the tree.  
Perch in the branches,  
try to find  
the original leaf.  
The primal  
is impossible.  
Climb down,  
go home, lie  
quiet, think of me.

11 January 2019



=====

**Merit?**

**Meretricious?**

**Our roots, monsieur,  
are under us  
where they should be.**

**Rowboat? Robot?**

**Accident is queen  
of language, the king  
is old and feeble.**

**Hard work to oar  
this skiff along. Alone.**

**This ship. Make safe.**

**Salute the oriflamme  
of the flutter flag.**

**If I were French now  
back then I'd be at home.**

**Whom?**

**Evidently no one.**

**Noon. The numb  
time when the yellow  
drum beats the sky  
Depending on latitude  
some of us see it  
right overhead. Not me.**

**Powys taught us  
how this hour  
silences our prayers.  
But saying is praying:  
we weave in matter  
and the noon knows why.**

**11 January 2019  
NDH**

## **GHOSTS**

**Ghosts wear sheets  
with holes for eyes  
but why? They don't  
have eyes, all of them  
knows how to see.**

**11 January 2019  
NDH**

=====

They might be waiting for me  
when the door swings open  
or outside on the lawn  
where the deer are feeding  
or npt for me, maybe,  
but for some other, a person  
remarkable fpr obscurity,  
in dark socks and quiet shoes  
pretending to be weather.  
Just like me, I have business with the night--  
the creaking door, the gnawing mouse,  
these are my playthings and imperium.  
No quiet sleep. The naiads and the nixies  
see to that, and on the shelf above the woods  
Woden and his hunters scour the sky.  
And I have to deal with all that, register  
their noisy shadows and cheer their gloom.  
And i can't even smoke anymore!  
Or drink anything more luminous  
than the black black coffee  
Rimbaud sends me from Ethiopia.  
Hard to be prophet when all I want is sleep.

12 January 2019

=====

Have I walked through the gate with you  
often enough to know the way?  
Sometimes I think about deserts,  
how they too have pathways, secret ones  
and hard to find, ones we have to follow  
to get there, wherever there is.  
And there are gates there too you can't see  
but have to sidle humbly through  
just to begin even the shortest journey.  
You do know what i mean, I think, you  
who understand the metronome and how  
Bach should and should not be played.  
I count my breaths, you lead me through the door.

12 January 2019

=====

**Tomorrow I'll have  
only the fuzziest  
memory of all this.  
I'll be a child again  
grasping for an orange  
he had and lost in dream.**

**12 January 2019**

=====

Castigate my folly  
I slept through dawn  
I did not learn  
the name of every flower,  
thought it would be enough  
to say *you* to all of them  
and they would understand.  
But now the flowers are all  
angry with me, flee from my sight,  
my sense of smell and touch,  
pretending it's just winter  
that hides them from me.  
But I know better, I'm sorry,  
I will walk out, work hard  
to learn their precious differences.

12 January 2019

=====

If I were still in school  
I would be pondering  
psychiatry or geology.  
I picked psychiatry I think  
and wrote the soul. But now  
when I look around up here  
at drumlins and anticlines  
I wonder if I wrote those too—  
conceit comes easy in poetry.

13 January 2019



## **ETRE AMERICAIN**

**Make sure you do it right—  
bring a sheep dog with you everywhere,  
practice a phony longhorn accent, wear  
baggy tartan trousers, play  
Beatles tunes on a wooden flute,  
eat buffalo wings at midnight  
camping in the Walmart parking lot—  
then I'll know you as my fellow citizen,  
my bro, friendly as shoe polish,  
sunshine all night long, cold hands.**

**13 January 2019**

=====

Lost the tune  
of the day,  
borrow  
tomorrow—

that's better  
if it sounds  
like sense  
it will be

Sunday morning  
the world  
becomes a church  
and goes to you—

no escape  
from the piety  
of light,  
the trees'

long sermon  
full of matter  
quotes books  
you never read,

**never could,  
it's all just magic,  
church swallows  
you, you blue**

**sky, you tune  
someone hums  
you thought  
I almost think.**

**13 January 2019**

**=====**

**examining the evidence  
all i have is you  
where 'have' does not mean possess  
but really everything there is**

**we live by othering**

**14 January 2019**

=====

**A lean-to in the wind--  
the mind is like that  
sheltering some sense  
from multiplicity--**

**choose the threads  
you weave with, pioneer!**

**14 January 2019**

=====

**O Sun thou revenant  
come from your gracious  
tomb again to give us life,  
teach me to rise too  
I beg, and be for others.**

**14 January 2019**

=====

**Boat on the river  
who can say why,  
who can deny  
the voice of the other,  
the ask of another?  
I hear the small  
faraway sound wake me  
a little more, old night,  
hard sleep. River  
is never far. I try  
to understand, I mean  
I try to answer  
what no one asked.**

**14 January 2019**

## **MOUSAI**

**When the Muses  
danced around Helicon  
or lounged, rehearsing,  
the sky above them  
(the sky that was then)  
took color, shape and  
meaning from their arts.**

**So much we learned from Greece.  
We knew all their names  
but only Terpsichore  
gets spoken of often, in public,  
because the art she does  
(the art she is)  
is moving out there,  
where we all can see.**

**But all of them are dancing,  
some of them above the clouds  
and some inside the bodies  
we think of as our own.  
But we are theirs.**

**14 January 2019**



**= = = = =**

**It wants to be me.**

**Careful days,  
the wind and so on,**

**still it keeps coming closer,  
it wants, it goes on wanting,  
it is the blessing  
the laying on of hands.**

**14 January 2019**

=====

Every line  
betrays the beginning,  
fulfilling it  
at the same time,

every text  
more and less  
than it could have been,

the first line a seed—  
but who knows what tree?

**14 January 2019**

**= = = = =**

**In the event  
or other  
a mixture  
of then and now  
as if a procession  
around with images,  
a sailor  
carrying his boat  
making light of his burden  
.a ploughman  
carrying the whole earth.**

**14 January 2019, Kingston**

**FESTE UMANE**

**Because we live  
by festivals  
called working  
for a living,  
doing, being.  
The toil of smile,  
the smiles f toil.**

**14 January 2019, Kingston**

**AVOWAL**

**I turn my back  
on every mirror  
except you.**

**14 January 2019, Kingston**

=====

If *MShH*, as in Messiah,  
by root means  
the laying on of hands  
every touch blesses,  
every hand reaches  
from paradise again.  
So Messiah is the one  
who comes to lay  
a hand on us, or take  
us by the hand, lead us  
to the unknown beginning.

**14 January 2019, Kingston**

## **NATIONAL ANTHEM FOR A LOST REPUBLIC**

**Once  
there was  
a never  
and it stayed,**

**no one  
held it,  
no one there,**

**each citizen  
their own city  
alone  
all alone,  
no one at all.**

**14 January 2019, Kingston**

=====

**Defiled by narrative  
the dream  
washed its hands all night**

**I was trying  
to wake or sleep or some  
such decent thing**

**but story sprawled  
leaking into every breath  
until I became**

**mere agent of its spread—  
then the light came back  
and things rescued me.**

**15 January 2019**



## A REMORSE

Look

at what rises  
to be told.

The ice sheets  
afloat, a river  
shivers into stillness and

how could I think ill of winter  
ice curtaining the rock cliffs

how could I forget the glisten?

15 January 2019

# 8

Someone told me once that Dr. Jung paid close attention to how his patients drew their figure-eights, finding there evidence in balance or asymmetry or lord knows what of the condition of their souls. Since then for fear of waving a flag of my neuroses I have not even once written a figure-eight in peace. Sometimes I make a snowman, ball atop ball, but that seems cheating, other times I say what the hell and scrawl ordinary snaky sloppy loop-the-loops like everybody else, lopsided, too skinny, I'm glad when a year (like this one) has no eight in it, so I don't have to give myself away every time I write a letter or sign a check –nervous act all by itself. Alas, my reluctance to stand revealed by my eights is itself one more pathology.

15 January 2019

=====

Knowing something  
or enough.  
Lord Perhaps and Lady Could-Bee  
waltz around all my living rooms  
in and out of my trees—  
maple walnut locust pine—  
I am (like the cover of *Matter 1*  
so long ago) a man  
at the mercy of his means..  
They tell me where to go  
and how to travel  
and when to stop  
when I've gotten there  
or near enough  
to walk by myself  
the rest of the way.

15 January 2019

=====

Keep wanting to make changes—  
where will the world be  
if I get my way?  
Unlikely we'll ever know.  
But on the red *milagros* votive cross  
the central figure is an angel,  
with a face, and winged like one—  
an angel at the center  
of all our afflictions,  
emblems of all that can go wrong.  
Look deep into grief,  
find the angel waiting—  
that's what a cross means.  
Geometry can never lie.

15 January 2019

**CHANSON D'AMOUR**

**To put in bluntly  
I am a car run down  
along the road  
and you are gasoline.**

**15 January 2019**

=====

I don't want to type  
I want to write  
with my own old childish hand,  
semi-legible at best—  
just like the poetry it scrawls.

15 January 2019

=====

**I found these postcards  
I wrote years ago  
to him and her and them,  
island pictures & word in verse.  
Now do I dare to read  
what I meant for someone else?  
Who are we anyway?**

**15 January 2019**

## THE REAL

Haunt a Bolivian  
silver mine, speak  
a dialect you make up  
as you go along  
but everybody understands.  
Haunt crossroads,  
subway stations, parking lots,  
toll like church bells,  
flit through the trees  
scaring campers in their vans,  
be a phantom at breakfast  
glistening like the fat on bacon,  
stir this dream of ours  
from which we never wake.

15 January 2019



## ONOMASTIC

1.

Come near to bargaining  
color back into the day.

Explore your own etymology,  
find your great-grand-syllable  
and who she married.

Plumbers take their name from lead,  
metal pipes they lead below the earth.

How about you? Who  
was your magnifying Lass,  
your ultimate grandma, your Eve?

2.

I wake hearing loud but only  
in my head *Seid umschlungen,  
Millionen! This kiss is for  
the whole world—*

but we can't all be sisters,  
can we, *Geschwister*, siblings,  
vassals of a friendly Sire?

**3.**

**Time to revise your prayers—  
the gods are waiting  
for you to make sense.**

**Bring color back into the day,  
say all the names you know  
and one of them may be the one  
the world is waiting to hear.**

**16 January 2019**

=====

Near enough.  
You decide—  
lift the shadow  
of the tree  
from the ground.  
Careful. Roll it up,  
carry it under arm  
like a warm baguette.  
This is your plan—  
unroll it when you  
finally get home,  
follow its dimensions,  
its instructions  
to the letter. Every  
curve and salient  
means something,  
probably means you.  
You decide. You'll  
never find a testament  
clearer than this.  
This is your genesis.

16 January 2019

=====

Listen to me—I was someone  
and I woke. Everything  
was woven tight  
around me, my struggle  
was more a letting go.  
I bring you the empty  
sound of words  
I stole in the shuttered  
prison chapel  
they call school,  
sounds wrapped around  
sounds, tight,  
tight, you have  
to listen so light  
to hear them.  
I stole them  
to bring them to you  
all this way.  
The longer I go  
on living, saying,  
the more I think  
I was supposed to.

**No one stopped me,  
even now the sounds  
still speak  
or is it really  
only the sound  
of you listening?**

**Dreamt 5:45 AM  
17 January 2019**

=====

Lying in wait  
for the word,

glamor of expectancy,  
shimmer of fish scales—

when we're asleep  
we have no skin at all

a hand comes touching us  
all the way in.

How can you ever  
be lonely

when a word is on its way?

17 January 2019

=====

**I need a narrative  
to put me to sleep—  
any story after all  
is an exit door  
from where we are  
into that other place,  
hot street after  
movie matinee,  
the endless plain  
round burning Troy.**

**17 January 2019**

***Dream:***

**After he had stolen the great gold jeweled binding of the altar missal, he turned to me and said: “My astrology seems to bring to me a lot of people who are fact-deniers. They say things like: A fact is a fiction that has borrowed evidence, or A fact is a fiction that believes in itself.”**

**A sharper tool. A keener taste.**

**17 January 2019**



=====

**Truck big  
truck the  
dinosaur  
of our age  
how long  
will last?**

**17 January 2019**

=====

**This chthonic time  
when land shrinks  
away from our uses,  
usages, All our fancy  
words mean fear—  
waiting on the bridge  
and he won't come  
or she won't be there.  
*Pélerinage*, time  
to be a pilgrim,  
a pilgrim is always at home.**

**17 January 2019**

=====

I want it wrapped in you.  
That is the wrong of me,  
the other side of the bridge.  
Something ends over there  
in old brick buildings.  
The need-nature shines through  
the gaps in the fabric. I say yes  
but I mean I must. Yes is so polite,  
the other thing is mandatory—  
coal bin in old houses, heat for fuel.  
Eyes look out of the portrait, clouds  
articulate as much of cosmos as we see—  
I want the world wrapped in you,  
the autonomous autochthonous other  
I find you sleeping in every temple.

17 January 2019

**PORTRAIT PAINTER**

**The slope of your back  
and the purse of your lips—  
what more could I ask?**

**17 January 2019**

=====

**Nude on the phone  
but who can know?  
Close your eyes,  
see the world.**

**17 January 2019**

=====

**Every day can be Friday  
if you wear green.  
It speaks into your skin  
till obligations falter.  
Happy hour happens.  
You forget why you came.**

**17 January 2019**

=====

**Too many love songs,  
not enough love.  
And not enough song.**

**17 January 2019**

=====

**All kinds of things  
can fit in a box—  
a box is volume, not shape.  
Go into the closet  
close the door to find out.**

**17 January 2019**



**=====**

**It won't make sense  
until tomorrow.  
That's what time is for.**

**17 January 2019**

=====

**They are playing the shakuhachi  
across the street from the shrine  
of Artemis of Ephesus.**

**Ten stories high she stands,  
her strong hands outspread  
to the west, giving the city  
to the native world.**

**Some people cry out  
great is of the Ephesians!”  
as they pass below,  
while others walk by  
and don’t even look up,  
minds on other things.**

**But this is what things  
are for, she knows,  
she brought so many of them  
here, shapes and geometry ,  
streams, tawny  
deer hiding in the woods.**

**18 January 2019**

=====

Half the time is past.  
If time were a glass of water,  
maybe with a slice of lemon  
in it, morning, good health,  
it would be half full  
the lemon coaxed a little  
but not full-squeezed.  
Not yet. Time is easy now,  
still lots left to drink.  
After a few sips  
it begins to sound like music—  
late Haydn? early Beethoven?  
Hummel's mandolin?  
A few more swallows  
and time turns into color,  
subtle, Constable clouds.  
So much culture  
in a glass of water!  
And when it's finished,  
Time's smooth new  
marble pyramid is sealed.

18 January 2019

*Dream*

We were being reproached for abandoning two folkways we had for years been practicing. One involved keeping a basin of water on the table with petals of a certain kind of flower floating in it. The other custom, less clear to me now, involved some herbal matter—leaf or petal—which had to be affixed inside a brick teapot, kept there when water is added—not clear whether that was tea to be drunk or some kind of medicine.

(Another custom was mentioned; it involved gathering children and dressing them in some ritual way— but we didn't have children, so bore no reproach.

The strange thing is that as I awoke I was absolutely certain we *had* long practiced the first two, and resp;ved to resume.

18 January 2019

=====

**The air sweeps through the alphabet  
we stumble out the other end  
through zed or omega or tav  
to meet our obligations:  
daylight, go feed the people.  
Can this be your food, or food  
for some mood or need of you  
sometime? The air gives,  
and gives us permission.**

**18 January 2019**

=====

Once we were children again  
and tomorrow came  
with foxes and flowers—  
the roses you'd expect  
but also mallows, water-purply,  
shadows or movements.  
Flowers followed us, I mean,  
pale skin on the collarbone,  
plum velvet blouse, who knows  
what lures the roses on?  
Guided by music  
we came back to earth.  
Sonatas, three-part inventions—  
we danced what we couldn't understand.

18 January 2019

=====

**All I can draw  
are angles—  
they press  
the curved world in,  
an angle is always on guard,  
on the watch.**

**18 January 2019**

=====

**We had our chance.  
We made a dance  
instead of it,  
not even a song.  
Scales on the piano  
to drive the neighbors  
mad. Sequence  
without a statement  
and they groan.  
We groan too,  
never getting down to it  
wherever it is.**

**19 January 2019**



=====

Frightened baritones  
sing poorly. Fact.  
Worry erodes the present.

The waves tell each other  
stories about the land  
they hurry towards—

is that shore really  
the one I crave,  
I need? each thinks

And the coast  
trembles all night  
at the thought,

wave after wave  
never ending,  
always coming in.

19 January 2019

=====

We run out  
of what we mean.  
Then the king  
summons. Best  
that way, stand  
bare-witted  
before authority—  
honor conferred  
or reproaches,  
*uguale*, as the master  
wrote, a man  
with maybe too  
many meanings.

20 January 2019

=====

**Afraid of the day  
he slept late.  
But the day  
was waiting for him  
when he woke.  
A day is like that,  
not jsy weather.  
A statement  
to be made.  
An obligation.**

**20 January 2019**

**AMONG ALL THE *ARTES POETICAE*, THIS**

**All that he wrote  
were sentences  
from a lost treatise,  
dialogues  
from a lost play,  
songs from some  
opera yet to come.**

**20 January 2019**

=====

**Shelf-life of a song—  
misery of memory  
of repetition. Dream  
of an old green car  
I used to drive, star  
on its forehead, tune  
I can't carry. Change  
stations, try hard  
not to remember.**

**20 January 2019**

=====

**Wolf Moon tonight  
with blood on it  
that they say  
comes from the sun.  
I believe what I'm told,  
eclipse is natural,  
infrequent, should not  
frighten us. But we  
know better, fear  
is in our blood, not  
on the sun, cold  
in the blood, wolf howl,  
frozen river. The fear  
has nothing to do  
with all that. Fear  
with no cause, no  
occasion. What will  
they teach us next?**

**20 January 2019**

## THE GROVE

You don't trust men  
and why should you.  
You trust the wolf in the dog  
and the fog in the house,  
the wood in the tree,  
the wind in the branches.  
But not what men say.  
Men tell lies that hurt  
and truths of no use.  
You trust the wolf  
in the dog, the dog  
at your side as you walk  
through the woods,  
woods where no man  
would dare come, even  
if he tried the words  
would die on his lips.

20 January 2019

*Nemus*, a sacred grove.

=====

I walked along the streets  
when there were streets,  
I huddled in the subway crowd  
safe as possums in their lair,  
I walked along the river  
with a million other people,,  
a girl was dancing in the trees,  
I went to school every day  
because one did, and there were  
things to learn—still are  
but school forget to teach them.  
And after a long, long while  
I was only me and where I was  
and no suppositious subjunctives  
disturbed the practice of my day.  
I brought as much of the city  
as I could carry. The rest  
I have to make up as I go along.

20 January 2019



**PRAYER**

**Anxiety breeds  
a siege mentality.  
Let me throw  
open the gates  
of my mind instead.**

**21 January 2019**

**MLK DAY**

**I think of him  
sitting silent  
in our chapel  
while some boffin  
sounded in the pulpit,  
all of us sharing  
fiercely only  
the heat of the day.**

**21 January 2019**

## GENETICS

1.

Offspring? Osprey?  
WQe give birth to shadows  
that skim the clouds  
come down to feed.

2.

Follow the word  
where it wants—  
you have no other  
job but tracking,  
hunter, learner,  
pioneer.

3.

We heard he gate open  
but it was a sonata  
a sound meant to conjure—  
how to tell music  
from what just happens.

4.

We heard the sonata again  
this time slower  
notes the same  
the silences louder.

5.

To say the obvious  
is a royal treat,  
a scholar's obligation.  
But we poor fisherfolk  
under the old hazel tree  
wait all our lives  
for that one swift  
accurate silvery word.

6.

I proclaim the obvious  
so you don't think it's happening  
only to you. Saying the obvious  
is peaceful, helpful, like church.

21 January 2019

=====

**What kind of bird  
flies fast a straight line  
in this kind of cold?  
Just crossed my window  
quick as a fly zips by  
astonishing the space.  
So many multiples  
of its own body length  
in one instant. I slump  
in my chair overwhelmed  
by the sheer mathematics.  
as if a man could fly a mile  
in one long breath.**

**22 January 2019**

=====

**Decide later  
whether to learn  
Portuguese or skiing.  
Right now  
it's time to decipher  
shadows on the snow.  
Find the source  
of everything—then  
bother with the differences.**

**22 January 2019**

=====

I am Pessoa again.  
That's why I don't drink  
even one drop pf alcohol  
and abstain from Africa  
where I used to eb born..  
It would probably kill me  
to be back in Lisbon  
with all the dead and dying kings.  
And speaking of abdications,  
all my names have deserted me.  
I'm working with only one name,  
just a sickly child staring  
at ducks in the pond in the park  
but with love in my heart,  
chill wind around my wrists.  
Try not to blame me for living again.

22 January 2019

=====

**And offer the day's first taste  
to the whole world,  
helping all beings in the first  
swallow and be glad.**

**22 January 2019**



## SLEEP

1.

Call it a parkway  
and plant trees all along it  
then lie down the length of it  
and tell your parents stories  
about what only you can tell,  
this lost aching world  
every child knows and most forget.

2.

You try to sink into it,  
down where the dreams are.  
*Schlaf, schlaf* you moan,  
petulant with drowsiness.  
But it is buoyant, won't  
let you go under. Leaves  
you say sleep, sleep  
but not getting there, awake,  
awake. And then you're asleep.

3.

Later (you guess) the light  
is different, sleep seeps away  
beneath you, you sprawl there  
soaked with it, not awake,  
not anything. What is  
*a wake* you wonder, or the brain  
does that might be you. Isn't it  
something to do with the dead?  
Then sleep gushes up and swallows you.

22 January 2019

=====

Jogging to Jerusalem  
everybody but me.  
My guess was that  
the temple-yo-be  
is our own body  
born into the world.  
Love has something  
to do with it, and love  
is always right here.  
So I jog in place,  
trying to give, give  
to others by grieving,  
desiring, rejoicing.  
The only way to know  
the world is by feeling.

23 January 2019

## **THE SUN**

**that still young  
girl in the sky  
is the only one  
allowed to say "I",**

**All the rest of us  
her children,  
we are *we*,  
even in the quietest  
corner of oneself  
flourishes plurality:  
secret brother  
veiled sister, child,  
aged counselor.,  
all that you used  
to dare to call me.**

**23 January 2019**

## **KAIROS (2)**

**Don't wait  
for the right  
time, the only  
right time is now.**

**23.I.19**

=====

I get smarter as the lines get longer  
slow steady breath of the intellect  
sprawl through the quick body breath,  
shaped silences at the ends of lines,  
joyous catastrophes! Let language  
do it, hear the chaconne, crowded  
piazzas, blue nightmares, cold grass,  
football games, shepherds dozing—  
everything knows you already,  
why wait? When I think of all  
the things language made me do,  
glory, worry, can you forgive me?  
I dive into silence, come up talking  
what sounds at first just like English.

23 January 2019

=====

**Who will absolve  
my sins against myself?  
Every person has, or is,  
stone tablets deep carved  
with commandments,  
no two of us exactly the same.  
Teenagers smash theirs  
then spend the next few years  
piecing them together again.  
*Live by these* the voice insists,  
you've heard it too, the presence  
that never lies .The broken rule  
waits for my repentant hands.**

**23 January 2019**

## IN THE WORKSHOP

Be more thingly, lady,  
sing things into place  
among your melody

so we can understand  
by eye and hand  
what your meaning sings,

every thing is a key  
to a door of its own—  
now lead us in.

23 January 2019



=====

It wasn't a tree branch  
it was the wing of a great bird  
its shadow fell on me  
knocked me down, I lay  
in the snow, marveling  
at the deep winter fog  
drifting through me and the trees

24 January 2019

=====

**Keep putting things together  
till they speak,  
till they stand up by themselves.  
There, that is Jerusalem.**

**24 January 2019**

=====

Tell the girl  
to tell the boy—  
maybe that way  
he'll understand.  
Just stand there  
peeling a tangerine  
while she does  
message neatly.  
He'll get it eventually  
slow as he is—  
her speed invigorates  
his second-hand ears.

24 January 2019

## **IN WINTER MIST**

**Bible far day.  
My nine words of Hebrew  
are silent. God  
speaks a different tongue  
today. I listen with my eyes.**

**24 January 2019**

=====

**Ten hours of sleep!**  
**A kind of baptism**

**24 January 2019**

=====

A swan in the form of Zeus  
Startles the maidens of Jericho  
But seizes none of them—  
the gods need us  
.but not for that.

2.  
Zeus lives in the heart.  
rules atrium and ventricle,  
Calms us, cheers us,  
The republic of our bones  
Obeys his wise blood.

3.  
Other gods there are  
who streak through the living,  
Asking much of us  
but answering even more.

25 January 2019

=====

The exiled friend  
takes comfort from the snow.  
The unmarked surface of things  
is a mark itself.  
And this mark will fade  
if not soon, then soon enough.  
Friendship comes and goes,  
it is a truck with flashing lights  
that roars by and passes in the night.  
Nothing is the same after that.  
But the snow will come back.

25 January 2019

=====

**Sorcery  
confined to scents  
and essences.  
Haunt the flesh.  
Leave soul alone—  
it finds its own way  
through sense and seeming,  
all your magic tricks  
on its way  
softly to the truth.**

**25 January 2019**



=====

**A car goes slowly  
down the road.  
Everybody in me  
turns to watch.  
Slow means.  
But what?  
Are we under surveillance  
or in the presence  
of a cautious gentle  
driver afraid  
of his own strength?  
Slow is scary,  
slow might be at me.**

**25 January 2019**

=====

And inside the notebook find  
a nude photo of a cello  
standing, full frontal, outdoors,  
under some trees, for all we know  
the kind of tree its wood came from  
that now knows how to sing.  
No one is shown nearby, but half-  
hidden in the grass beside it ship  
a long-curved bow to play it.  
This is cosmology, this is it,  
the invitation to begin. Ode  
to St. Cecilia should start now,  
the finches in the trees know their parts.

25 January 2019

=====

**Movement on the roads—  
who dares to go  
while I sit still?  
Have I missed  
the message again  
that tells me to be gone?  
I linger here on Ararat  
awaiting the next move.**

**25 January 2019**

=====

**There are pencils for all the children  
hidden in you, and fat wax crayons  
tull of sensuous expectancy—blue!  
Find saffron! Scarlet in your hands!  
You know the drill. Rub this on that  
and color happens. Scrape this graphite  
on a piece of paper and all of a sudden  
people see just what you're thinking.  
No wonder they call this grammarie—  
something written inside the soul.**

**25 January 2019**

=====

The Word wasn't waiting  
or was it? The old  
white horse still stands  
in the Barrytown field,  
the vague clouds  
illustrate the freezing day.  
Words everywhere  
illuminate my silences.  
I saw a picture of myself  
as a little boy,  
smiling, confident, happy.  
Maybe I'm waiting for him.

26 January 2019

## **CARNET DE BAL**

**All the names  
I've crossed off  
my dance program  
the all-gone  
and the too-far-away  
and the ones whose eyes  
will not meet mine  
even in the slowest music.**

**26 January 2019**

=====

**I have no right  
to have rights.  
I am an animal on earth—  
what more could I ask?**

**26 January 2019**

=====

**With the suppression of the personal pronoun  
the diary took a turn for the better.**

**And no names either. Nouns yes,  
and plenty of verbs, but adjectives only  
when they scream out in the head  
as the day's events are written down  
preferably using the passive voice.**

**This is what grammar is for, the huge  
rickety but enduring framework of syntax  
by which humans can flee from any self,  
the supposed own, guessed at other.**

**How dense the pages fill! They sound  
like a river in springtime—but try  
to avoid resemblances. Resemblance  
is the back door for identity.**

**26 January 2019**



=====

**Advising students in dream.  
Wear glasses,  
lose mean.**

**27 January 2019**

=====

Hours of dreamtime  
condense to this.  
The boy the girl  
the clothes they wore  
words to each,  
a sense they understood.  
Faces almost gone—  
I think they were  
happy at what they heard.

**27 January 2019**

=====

**Polish the stone.  
It's not a stone.  
Polish it anyway—  
you'll hear it sing.**

**What's the best polish?  
Spit on your thumb.  
What is it really?  
Polish and see.**

**27 January 2019**

=====

Once i looked like me  
now I look like everybody else—

this is what comes of mirrors,  
false evidence of identity

I could be anybody at all  
I could be a sheet of glass.

27 January 2019

## SARASWATI

She plays the vina  
or the sarod or the sitar  
or the cello or that violin  
solo in the *Missa Solemnis*  
or one string set  
humming in the breeze  
from which all music stems,  
comes round to find us.  
Saraswati. Her consort  
plays the pe-cha  
the woodblock print  
the codex the printed book  
the gleaming screens of tablets  
darkened by clear letters,  
words. Manjusri  
they call him, Jampal,  
lord of learning, wisdom,  
memory, rapture, the word.  
And how young they are,  
she is pale, he is ruddy,  
white and almost orange,  
sixteen years old by the look  
of them and they never change.  
For at that age even humans

are closest to eternity,  
closest to the truth: it took  
years to get there,  
storms of puberty and then:  
the clarity. Then life  
comes along and blurs it  
into duty, honesty  
but no more clarity. Sixteen  
they ever seem, music, poetry.

**27 January 2019**

=====

In the ;listening booth  
not the flute and harp  
but I think it was that  
Chinese music by Ernst  
Roch she liked so much,  
not my kind of, still I  
listened, tried to climb  
through the music  
into her, into her hearing,  
to know her and be known.  
That kind of music.

**28 January 2019**

**= = = = =**

**School starts today.  
Numbers happen,  
names suddenly have faces  
and words spill over  
devices' soft pale screens.  
On a table, in the draft  
from a window not  
quite closed a book  
flutters its pages at me.**

**28 January 2019**



=====

No one has to be told  
the feeling when the bones  
come walking out of the woods,  
clatter of language as they come  
ancestoring us.

2.

Write from deep desire  
or the fires will go out—  
compassion is the deepest  
desire of all, yearning  
to wipe her tears away,  
see your mother smile again.

28 January 2019

=====

**What was his real name  
I knew him only as the wooden  
house at the tpop of the hill  
when all the others were brick,  
only as a front yard with a tree  
but no dog in it, not even a cat.  
The tree was small, they called it  
quince, they said the man himself  
from his front porch could see the river.**

**28 January 2019**

=====

**A word to stay me—  
buzz of a bee  
in winter midnight how?**

**Sound sleeps in the air,  
lives there. The earth revolves.  
I can even hear you thinking.**

**28 January 2019**

=====

In between the rose.

The castle gateway  
opens up the sea.

We speak of things  
to make them true.

The horizon lingers—  
isn't that a flower too?

28 January 2019

=====

If they had been ;listening  
they would have heard  
but I said nothing  
so I heard nothing too.

Silence satisfies—  
that is how the world began,  
a pause, a deep breath  
and then. The natural  
resilience of silence  
sweeps mistakes away,  
silence spins the globe  
shapes us so we hear  
not a single hum of it.

28 January 2019

=====

**We are the recipients,  
aren't we? Heirs  
of everything, this  
castle, that tree.**

**2.**

***Vermehr uns* we cry  
in what we hope  
is language, Increase  
us, increase us  
till we are larger.  
than our fears.**

**3.**

**It isn't the weather  
really, is it? Weather  
is just the daily issue  
of the old anxiety.  
*But You are protected*  
something says, *Honor*  
*your protectors,*  
*honor them with your trust.***

**4.**

**If you think about yourself  
you will feel nothing but fear.**

**Fear is the shadow of self-awareness—  
if you're no one, there is no place for fear.**

**So fold your winds and go to sleep  
and wake in peace.**

**29 January 2019**

## BIRDS

Capacious evidence  
schoolyard full of geese  
pecking at the packed  
earth of all our sports.  
Canada geese—our fences  
no obstacle. Vegan  
they are, but not  
at all hard to please.

29 January 2019



## **BEASTS**

**Carapace of beetles,  
rough fur of opossum,  
they toddle to their feed  
on this and that.**

**I watch them browse—  
I'm one of them too,  
I browse by watching.**

**29 January 2019**

## MARCO POLO

I have come to far  
to be nowhere.  
All the silks and golden  
fluyes don't make  
me less, or more,  
or even different.  
All my life I longed  
to be otherwise.  
Now I am just me,  
just here, waiting  
like everybody else  
to catch the sudden  
smile of the Emperor.

29 January 2019

=====

1.

Find the socket  
the crow flies up  
succession without causation?  
Maybe. The woman  
with the sewing needle  
the song of thread.

2.

Apologize to the evidence.  
Things are for themselves too,  
not just to prove a theory.  
Cherrywood escritoire,  
rubber ferule on your father's cane

3.

If I were gay  
I could love her glee.  
But as it is  
she just laughs at me.

**4.**

**Spokes of the same wheel  
same journey different angles,  
citizens of anxiety. Travelers  
in the same dream. So many  
different doors.**

**5.**

**Doors can be windows,  
seldom other way round.  
Bird flutters past, Snow  
falls from a phone line.**

**30 January 2019**

## **GLIMPSES**

**My sister the Sun!  
I can hear  
Saint Francis saying.**

**\***

**Quickest calligraphy  
bird shadows on the snow.**

**\***

**A mind's a time lapse photo  
of all I've ever seen.**

**30 January 2019**

## **WATCHING MIST FORM OVER THE STREAM**

**Acts of reverence  
linger in the air,  
as the air, our atmosphere,  
breathed out by all  
the billions before us  
saying their prayers  
whispering their lovespells  
into what they thought  
were the ears of their beloved  
but were actually all the winds  
of earth, the chariots of breath—  
they made love to all of us.**

**30 January 2019**

=====

**What the old  
people thought  
was to come**

*remember this*  
**they cried  
staring out  
into the blank sky**

*remember this*  
**you could be a tree  
or a chimpanzee  
loping through the bushes  
you could be me**

**remember this sky  
this sheer potentiality,  
bright your mind  
with looking**

*remember this*  
**the everywhere gospel  
the feasts  
of ordinary feeling**

the old knew  
something was coming  
the new people  
saw it come  
but so few of us  
knew what it was

was it a new  
kind of knowing?  
of going?  
something  
simply was new

*remember the new*  
we whisper

this remembering  
is all we know,  
why it is so  
hard to stay

hold it tight  
let it go.

31 January 2019





## **POET'S RANT**

**We set you puzzles  
good for you to work out  
we do not carry  
cheap solutions.**

**The simplest statement  
is vastly voluminous,  
hard to drain all  
the water from that deep  
well a word is.**

**Solve it for yourself  
and thoroughly live.**

**31 January 2019**

=====

**Someone will something again.  
That is the premise  
of every cathedral and most books.  
How heavy the pages!  
How light the blocks of stone  
that rear the towers!  
Always and always the word sinks down.**

**31 January 2019**