

10-2019

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=====

Words are not a high-school book reports about the feelings of their speaker.

Words are actions, provocations, to rouse thinking and feeling in others.

Words are for others.

===

In saying this, does he mean Live as far from your feelings as you can?

No, not at all. He means feel, feel deeply, but your feelings are your secret guides, don't reveal them. Let them thrive inside you and let them teach you to speak.

1 October 2019

=====

**A word is ink
in the witness chair
sworn to tell
the truth even
before it was born.**

1 October 2019

=====

**Guilt sounds like gilt,
sheen of gold
without the substance of it.**

**Beyond guilt
a great canyon lies—
explore it with burro and star-map.**

1 October 2019

=====

**They keep waking me
from the dark, calling,
words, words. Listen
they say, listen then
get up and write us down.
Fuzzy-eyed at 4 AM
I thank them with my pen.**

1 October 2019

=====

Electric distance
loaf of bread long
carried under the arm
tight, taut, all
squeezing and no falling
and here it is
buzzing in he appetite.

2.

Just a road in southeastern France.
Churches are grand
for the landscape but don't go in.
The spire says it, all it has to say.

3.

But as ever there is waiting to be done,
waking and waiting all the same,
walking is a way of waiting
because the minute you stop
you're already there.
Some of the towers seem
topped with iron or with tin,

not like the copper green back home,
awls up in the sky, to pierce
the distances like messages
from long ago to never mind,
and we are the heaven who hears them.

4.

At night there too you hear
the stream rush by,
there the Dranse and here
the Metambesen, window open
till winter mutes the song
or stills the very singing of it.
But sun is autumn still and listen.

5.

I recall the bread but not the cheese
and not the meat—
memory has broken circuits,
curious adjacencies, gulfs
where there should be just
the shadow of the girls next door.
I wish I could remember nothing--

a line I ad-libbed in a movie, a scene in a car,
my voice thin
beneath the engine groan,
the passenger a star I can't recall.

5.

But France is still there,
the iron tables, the summer
animations, not a library in sight,
just the stream behind the hospital,
the UK tourists in their little cars.
The goat in the field, *remember nothing*
for all the distances
have come upon you,
wake you from the sleep of now.

1 October 2019

=====

**What makes you think I'm me?
The way I talk, the way I smell?
The church bell in the tower
knows more than I can tell—
what kind of a metal could I be?**

1 October 2019

INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL

**Truck at dawn by
53 feet of noise
the harder the hollower
with sudden sunray
in the yellowing trees.**

**October. You can't
it seems export
a revelation. Here
she stands above us
in the rock grotto.
Here is the light.
Here is what it means.**

**Broadcloth and sashes
the pomps of office.
But shyly the true ones
slip through shadows**

**to the well, naked,
knowing that uniforms
make men blind.
A troupe of finches
scoffing overhead.**

*

**Decide once for all.
Determine
to be obvious,
a camel
could walk through
the gate of it,
drop its burden
at your feet.
Just build the city
the camels may come.**

*

**Interlude of hide-and-peek
to keep the child
in you busy
while I speak,
looking for my
meaning in or
under or behind
every burning bush.**

**Of course it's morning—
why else would it matter?
A springboard, a monitor,
the coast reached at last.**

**Among the Mayan ruins
a chip of Spanish glass.
Our children never
altogether eave home.**

**Heard it first on the cello
then she hummed it
so I stretched it
over the alphabet
to see what it said.**

**But woodwinds past midnight
hurt to hear. Teach me LSL
Language as a Second Language.
You came first
I called out
your skin was soft
that's how I knew.**

2 October 2019

=====

**Weather waits for us
like a friend in need
who loves us though
with a deep affection
no glittering stranger
can offer. So kiss
the sunshine, marry the rain.**

2 October 2013

=====

I have lived
long enough to be obvious.
The dictionary
comes for a visit
but does not stay.
Language often seems
an aunt by marriage,
sexy and a little strange.
at night left alone
with a table and chair
you know the truth of things.
You have been taught
to pray but they don't say
how, or how it works,
or where your next idea
is coming from. you run
your hands across
the table top. Good wood--
you guess that's enough to know.
And here I thought
I was telling you all about me.

2 October 2019

=====

**When I look up at the calendar
and see the year in big black numbers
it feels suddenly like science fiction.
How can the world still be here,
truck on the road,
cat running across the street?
The normal is the strangest thing.**

2 October 2019

HYLONOETIC MANIFESTO

**Things
think.**

2.X.19

=====

**Keble kept.
Newman wept.
Somethjing like that.
We choose
what uses us.
I think
whatever I think
leads me
through my geology.
History
is simply gravity.
We are what's left.**

3 October 2019

=====

**A highway try,
a condor on the cliff.
The river washes
the souls of the city
but leaves a sediment
after it cleans.
I come from the city
still, so every smiling
jogger that I see
seems a fleeing murderer,
a fugitive at least.
Running is always away from
something, never towards.
I sob as I see them pass.**

3 October 2019

=====

**The thing I had to say
was waiting in the flower
not like a scent or a bee
or even a color, it was like
a confusion in me, a blur
of senses, I didn;t even know
the name of the flower,
a complex infolded form
shadowy in the leaves.
But I knew it was there,
that word to be spoken,
no name, no invocation,
no promise to be made.
Out there there are no
promises, I thought, so why
do we make them, keep them,
grieve at breaking them?
A promise is a lie imposed on
the future. And there is only now.**

3 October 2019

== == == == ==

**Sleepless, in dawn light,
the child memorizes
the ceiling above his bed,
sees it just as clearly
when he closes his eyes.
Or is he asleep already?
Or are we all asleep all
the time, only in all
the different kinds of sleep?**

3 October 2019

WORDS COME TO MIND

Languid
)you think lagoon)

iepid
(you think your aunt's
milky tea
half an inch of it
left in the Spode)

pallid
(you think of a ghost
if they really exist
veering through your door
or a friend's face
suddenly frightened
by lightning, say,
or something you said)

vivid

**(you think of a parrot
squawking green and yellow
perched on the phone lines
corner of Flatbush and Church)**

gravid

**(you think of a Stone Age woman
her bearskin kirtle
plump round her middle,
she rubs her belly)**

sapid

**(you see a rabbi
look up from his book,
take a nibble of toast,
smile, another nibble,
smile because he's just read
something that perfectly
agrees with what he knows
already, and what he sees
when he closes his eyes.)**

4 October 2019

=====

in memory of John Ashbery

**When a poet dies
all his unwritten poems
are instantly distributed
through the consciousness
(sub- and otherwise)
of the whole poetic community
who write them out
and publish them to the world.
There. But I cadare not tell you
any more of our trade secrets.**

4 October 2019

=====

**“I can’t remember me own poem!”
cried Robert Browning in the one
recording we have of that noble voice
as he bobbled the opening of “How
They Brought the Good News”
Sometimes the words flee from the mouth
that spoke them after the inner ear
(the so-called brain) detected them, words,
out there in the multiverse, and I do
mean verse. The world is the longest
epic of all, and we are each one of us
a syllable of its interminable music.**

4 October 2019

=====

**Come as you are
the invitations say
but I would come
as I would be**

**another, a brother
to the world,—
are you listening?**

4.X.19

THE A TRAIN

for Isabel Rudner

Pressed *agaibst the door*
feel the dark
flood by behind me

sometimes I turn round
halfway to watch
the darkness flash

*

That;s my favorite place to stand
against the door, I'm tall enough
to see most of the other people
packed around me. It's always
crowded on the A train. Who are
these fortunate ones sitting down,
have they been here from the beginning,
born in Rockaway or Fort Trton Park?
I look down at the one beside me,
reading the *Post*, sports page, boring,

**I look up at the fascinating faces
all around me, all of them in the same
coma I share, the going that takes
the place of being, we sway in the no wind.**

**Outside we're just integers
wandering around,
pigeons in a flock,
no problem.**

**But down here
we are bodies. Bodies.
You're never more in body
than you are on the A train,
every jolt and curve and sway
reminds you, weight shifting,
arms bouncing off other arms,
everybody too close for comfort.
Unless that too is a kind of comfort,
we're all children going to the fair.**

I used to live
near where the line
used to end,
Euclid and Pitkin,
edge of Brownsville,
edge of the Old Mill,
we never knew where we were
but the train knew
and would go no further.
so in the morning
on the way to school
I too would be one of the lucky ones
man-spread on red plastic seat.
Then I too could read, do my Greek
homework on the way, fifteen lines
a night, wish I could smoke down here,
wickedness makes learning faster.

*

And I too have stared
across the aisle
at the *woman with closed eyes*

who stood swaying there,
her bouffant hair-do
blocking my view of the *subway map*,
all those fascinating names
of places I would never see,
weird subway stops in Queens
or up in arctic. the East Bronx.

4 October 2019

=====

**I stand before you
with open mouth
no words coming out
silenced by the size
of my audience the sea.
Now fold my lips together
it tells me politely, they don't
need my admiration, they need
me to pronounce carefully
all their salts, sympathies,
rises, reluctancies, deep
swallowing wallowing shadows,
tides, times of day, moons of the moment,**

5 October 2019

=====

**Too long
and song
stumbles,
meanings fumble
at the latches
of your mind,
ears widowed--**

**o don't think
the song says,
the song says
listen in me.**

5 October 2019

=====

**Remember when a masterpiece
was a piece of cake
you ate for breakfast
and tasted all day,
song you can't forget
or life in a huge museum
only not so cold?
Remember when the world
was somewhere else
and you thought you could get there
on foot, even in sandals,,
just like the Bible?
Then it was now
and you have been there
all the while, here,
by the fountain the tower the cave,
the man carrying flowers
because he knows no other
way to bring colors home.**

5 October 2019

=====

**It's the middle of the night
there's nobody around
I have to answer. And yet,
and yet, this no message
I have to declare, roundly,
in some sort of English,
translate it later into meaning
if you dare. I mean if you care.**

5 October 2019

=====

**If you say music
they start to rhyme—
it's only when you say
silence, silence
that they start to sing.**

5 October 2019

=====

**The host
relieved of making
song relapses
into gourmandise,
cheese and mocha on the *tish*—
:et them keep their blasted dancing class,
I want my supper.
And so life on earth began.**

5 October 2019

A SMALL BOOK OF COUNSEL

1.

Stare out the window

stare

back in

at yourself staring out.

This is how it starts.

2.

I thought she must be Russian

from the snow in her hair,

the wolf-fur collar,

the eyes I couldn't understand.

But I was wrong.

She could have been my mother

if I were say four years old.

But as it was she was as she was.

3.

**When you go out to paint the sky
you tend
to leave things out—
the church bell ringing,
the jogger with a calm dog alongside.**

4.

**Whenever you don't
want to think
about someone
close down and see
the ocean rolling in
onto an empty beach.
Calm sea, low waves
over and under and over and under
until you are washed clean.**

6 October 2019

=====

**It's hard
to know
where the beginning
begins any more,
it's always
there when
I wake up,
I who sleep
later than reality,
no wonder
I wonder when.**

6 October 2019

=====

**Am I a section
of something
or am I the whole thing?**

**Ask the girl
beside me—
a woman always knows.**

6 October 2019

=====

**The generous emptiness of the world—
an empty cup
will feed you everything you need.**

6.X.19

=====

**Irene Adler
the Peaceful Eagle
haunted Sherlock's dreams--**

**in the stories he's never sleeping
but we know better, how
once a day or so he closed his eyes
and nothing happened
for a while and then in the dark
The Woman as he called her
flew up from Montenegro
over the Adriatic of his mind,
Alps of his fatal desires, the Gaul
of his ancestors and found him there.
midway between Oxford and Marylebone,
on the left side of the street,
in undocumented sleep.
Once an eagle
gets into your dreams
you never fly alone.**

6 October 2019

SABBATH

At last. All I have to do today
is whatever comes to mind.
And not even all of that--
I don't have to pick up the phone
because I see someone's face
in the mind's eye. Close that eye! The mind
has eyelids too,
soft ones, almost hear them,
like waves of a quiet sea far off.
I don't have to write a letter
to my sister explaining my silence,
don't have to write a recommendation
for someone I barely remember.
I don't even have to remember
what I remember. I don't
even have to go on writing this.

6 October 2019

=====

**Waiting or waiting
are the same.
Isn't it supposed
to happen in sleep?
So we have the bright
lurid day to get through
before in the dark
it may finally come to be.**

7 October 2019

ALBA

**She thinks:
how lucky the dawn is
to have me in it!**

**He thanks
the day gate for letting
me through again.**

7 October 2019

=====

**I am three hundred years ago
writing by candlelight
a man in the dark.
And what does he put down
on this thick paper so urgent
it got him out of his tousled bed
long before the dubious
dawn over Devon? I can't
read over my own shoulder.
But if I go back to sleep the words
he writes may yet remember me.**

7 October 2019

=====

**How to bandage
a wounded hour?
Study the light
bleeding into the trees.**

**Staring out the window
(I learned this from my father)
is very much like prayer,
pure prayer that doesn't
ask too much of the gods.**

**Stare into the dwindling
of the dark. The sorrowless
grief you feel begins
to drift away. If a bird
happened to come by
your window you might smile.**

7 October 2019

= = = = =

I can feel the light
through the curtain.
Sway the cloth. Sky
distinct. *I will say my Mass
on this brightness,
the skin of time
tender in the sky.*
Something like that.
Soak a pocket mirror
(the steel kind soldiers
used to carry) in a cup
of coffee, milk optional,
take it out in five minutes
and drain the cup, savoring
it, noticing no difference
from the usual. Polish
the mirror and put it away.
The work of the day
is almost done, you think.
It also works with chamomile tea.

7 October 2019

=====

**As we get older
we drift back into the Middle Ages,
hair grows longer, shave less,
wear garments the moth has blessed,
several layers against the chill.
take things that happen to you
or near you as signs, omens,
we think about dead friends,
speak to them sotto voce
sometimes, see their faces
suddenly in tree leaves or poos,
recognize patterns in history,
plan unlikely pilgrimages
and often close our eyes.**

7 October 2019

=====

**And there are swans there too
and water birds I can't name
though I have sen them swoop
down low and fetch live fish
from the quiet sea. We endure
so much. Killing, being killed—
some claim to see a pattern
and call it weaving, and dare
to name the weaber. For me,
I huess I trust the swans, doing
the best they can to be innocent,
saying nothing, being graceful,
afloat. No patterb but passing by.**

7 October 2019

ON THE EVE OF IT

**Look in the habit
the cabinet
behind the mirror,
behind the glass
behind any thing
you can see,**

**Is that where it is?
A day of fasting,
shapely grieving
sorrow songs
for comfort
any bird sings
and you know.**

**Youngas the moon
maybe but it's raining
night cloud
can't see.
cry for your mother
your mother cries for you.**

*

A day begins at dusk,
is halfway done by dawn,
the old words
teach us to sleep
to learn our lessons there,
the most important one:
the sun rises from dream.

*

Amber passed
from hand to hand
amber worn
warm between the breasts.
amber held
light in fingertips,
in your pocket,
tears in your eyes.

*

What is this atonement,
at-one-ment?
Is it wrong to be two?

**Aren't we two?
If there is no other
who can I ask,
who can I love?
If there are not two
there can be no you.—
then who can I be?
A scream of solitude
fades through evening trees.**

**Don't tell me the story.
I'll put on a red shirt
and sit on a park bench
by the river, whisper
to the pigeons and listen,
listen. What more
can anyone do, or learn
but what the river tells?
We live by water.**

**8 October 2019
Erev Yom Kippur**

IN PRAISE OF COWARDICE

Know when things are
then run away.

Courage is a scar on time,
an old dueling scar
played on the English horn—
is that Debussy?

Crawl

out of the moment,
try just once
to deceive the window.

It won't work
but the effort
is good for the soul.

Is there a soul?

Ask Mahler—

my family always said
Jewish people are the only
people to trust.

But does that include the Bible?

Poor Samson!

Those people know how to feel,
know how to help.

**But all generalizations
about identity
are dangerous,
categories are dangerous.
Is there an identity?
Everything is dangerous.
And what does family
mean anyhow?
Who is your mother?**

A light flashing in the night.

**This is all about time,
that scarred veteran
shuffling down the street
looking for a park bench.
We all need to sit down,
watch the pigeons
even if we have
no crumbs for them—
who knows what they
may have brought down to us?**

9 October 2019

=====

**Experience the opposite
as long as you're here.**

**Byron knew the place,
found it a little cold.
But not far away
the night-blooming jasmines
of Montreux sweeten the lake
as you stare south at France
dimly not here,**

stare and stand.

**Let your eyes
citizen this place
as well as they can.**

**Moonlight (waxing,
gibbous, cloud-sliced,
romantic) always helps.**

**There is a dragon in our dreams
left over from the Middle Ages.
glossy leathery his wings
and glittering his green scales.
fire-tongued, innocent
until proven guilty,**

**he is our flaming angel,
our croaking guide.**

**It is always wise to be polite
to what is found in dreams.
Well met, monster! we cry out.
glad to see you, dinosaur,
I saw your picture in some book
how pleasant to meet you
in the flesh, if flesh thou art
and not the spook of sleep
curling up from the campfire
that no one ever lit.**

2.

**Time to be here
is what it means.**

**We are encouraged
to be of catenary disposition—
droop in the middle
but get there in the end—**

**the voice said *love you*
Sarah and we hear it still.
We are hust friends
cuddling in the wilderness.**

...

(9 October 2019)

SOME OF US ARE STILL SLEEPING

**Blur. Blink.
Clear
oh there you are
out here.**

**Woof.
I dog the day.**

**We had a tree
a walnut once
it fell by storm
I keep a few
green furred nuts still
to save the day.**

**I scant
my deed.
The winds
toss leaves
while I abed
don't even
remember.**

**That kind of day.
Meow. My growl
is not working.
Pretty clouds,
bright sun,
lively trees
but I.**

**Chamberlain
of a vanished sovereign
I guess the omens
of the morning.**

**Where is my lordly
self this day?
Self-deposed?
The day itself
a sort of exile?**

**I know another language
when I speak one.
The aftermath
an interlude before,
nouns tumble,
verbs stumble,
I dine on naked pronouns .**

**50,000 disappointed fans
watch Joe Kelly toss a grand slam.
Is that what language means,
what one man says
does to all the rest of us?**

*

**I'm trying to get it right.
Snarl. That's bitter,
I wanted to be me
all my life—
does that make me a monster?**

*

**Palfrey she rode
in the long dream
we call the Middle Ages,
and those who dreamed
her quiet passage
bent their heads and knew,
just knew. And this knowing
was written down as prayer.
Some of us are still sleeping.**

*

**Because she was all
in all,
and I was no one
and still am.
She taught me
what the sky was for
and who lived there
hiding safe in the light.**

*

**If I were sleeping
I would make more sense.
But as it is
it is.**

10 October 2019

DAS LIED IST AUS

**Sending or spending
the song is out,
is done**

**we say
and the bills come in**

**but we dream the trees
and apples come
gan Eden, gan Eden
we're lost again.**

**Or is it all a garden
after all, and we are locked
inside Eden with the lord,
children still,
no knowledge of good and evil,**

**the brave and foolish of us
wake up sometimes
and try to find the gateway out.
But then the thunder comes,
rolls down the hills
down through the busy trees
and we go to sleep again.**

10 October 2019

=====

**Blue bird dreaming
perch on the roof
I am a hawk I hope
but mind be innocent.
To have the power
and not use it -- that
is real power.
To starve but scorn to kill.**

10 October 2019

THE DEDICATION

**Tender book
all truth and promises
how can I fill
your page today?
I am a servant
of the Queen and you
are her choice
ambassador, embodiment
of the moment,
anthem, gateway,
walled garden of her palace
that anyone is free
to enter word by word.
And She will know it's me,
She'll hear my breath.**

11 October 2019

RUNES

And they are runes
after all,
 these marks
that look like letters
trapped in what look like words.

But they are runes,
runes of pure space and absence,
gaps and silences,
When you hear a word
look through the chinks of it
where the light shows through,
the shapely light,

youll see an ancient
shepherd boy and his girl
playing with each other
on a grassy hillside in Galatia,
his flute let fall
as he holds her in his arms.

11 October 2019

=====

**Lost in the word
he sings his way out.
Or so he thinks—
the spider web
of what it meant
clings to him still,
gossamer across his lips,
so everyuthing he spoke
thereafter said that word too.**

11 October 2019

=====

**The fading green
Of trees this fall day
is strangely like
the new green leaves
of springtime—
how is that?**

**Steiner says the earth
sleeps in summer
when its work is done,
leaves it to the trees
and stems ad stalks
to do their own jobs now
and bear their fruits.**

**Is there sense in that?
We know so little
of the things we know.**

**11 October 2019
Shafer**

=====

.

**Our breath
is the tune
of the sacred,
from Latin
sacer, taboo,
outside
the ordinary,
dangerous,
domain
of the spirits,
belonging
to God.**

(dreamt as such, roused at 6:30 to say so.)

12 October 2019

== = = = =

**Sky lightening.
Something frightening
about the beginning
of a day,
beginning of anything,
and rhyme itself
can scare us
with its sly tunneling
between apparently
separate things.
The grief of belief.
The dark hole
in holy.**

12 October 2019

=====

**Wegtam the Voyager:
Who are you
who walk out of my mind
in the grey light?
You are baffled
by the streetlights
unknown in your day.
Your night, I mean,
where I guess we met.
I try to speak to
what the mind says
seemingly unbidden.
I try to greet you
where you stand
strong and purposeful
baffled by our mild dawn,
hardly a wolf left,
and noise machines
growling up the road.
But all this is part
of wandering,
and you know your task,**

**your sacred commitment
to be here and be gone,
to be everywhere at last.
Now that I think I know
what you do, tell me
who you think you are.
Or am I wrong in thinking
we're only what we think we are?**

12 October 2019

=====

**I suppose I should say
something about Columbus.
But all I could think of
is how or why a Jew
from Genoa with a Christian
name contrived
to have me born here
not in Donegal or Devon.
I take this personally.
This is still a wild continent
in town and country both,
you know what I mean.
But what did he mean?
What was the secret in him
that drove him? What
was he looking for?
Did he want me here
for some vast Talmudic reason
of his own? Here I am,
Cristobal or whatever your
name really was, here I am,**

**mouth full of a glorious language
you never heard. Hier bin ich,
Hispaniola in my head, my feet
wet with ocean still, all wet
we used to say, a fool,
a fool saying thank you
i suppose, your day,
the lightening sky
making its ancient promises.**

12 October 2019

=====

**Where is my leaf
says the tree,
I had it just now
and there goes another,
no wind at all
but still.**

12 October 2019

=====

**Seeing the outside
of anything,
that prurient imagination
we call looking.**

This leaf, that love.

12 October 2019

=====

**Spirits haunt the dawn,
dying desires,
the forest around us
waiting for us
to make sound.
That is our real job
on earth, all
kinds of speaking.**

12 October 2019

=====

**This
is what it means:
this stone
is from
and brings us
straight to
from again.**

12 October 2019

====

Then the night said
Listen to me
and no word came.
That is what it meant.

13 October 2019

THINGS WE NEED

**Need to bring with us:
mosquito net and and trampoline,
Limoges tea cups, a wind-up clock,
a butcher block, a flock
of pigeons, a waterfall
(mechanical. recirculating)
a cardboard carton
full of skeins of wool,
one stuffed ocekit, tickets
for the opera in Sofia
just in case (*Turandot*,
the one by Busoni),
binoculars of course,
amd a little mesh bag
full of marbles, all of them
like the keen eyes of owls.
Now take my hand and lead the way.**

13 October 2019

== == == == ==

**Yes, to be frivolous
as a pebble on the beach,
granite chip, yes,
a comparison is helpful
but dangerous as a flashlight
in a rainstorm, or is it?
To care and not show it--
to be in love like having
a mosquito bite, only you
can feel the itch. Disassemble.
Cloak your feelings. Rub
cider vinegar on the site.
The bite. To be frivolous
as dawn with no one watching,
as an old photo of Boston
from the air, all the houses
look the same, frivolous,
to be frivolous is to be free.**

13 October 2019

=====

**The hunter's moon
we didn't see rise last night
through trees that are still there.**

**Nothing is lost. The fox
slips back into the woods.
A car goes by at half past six
and wakes me every day now,**

**nothing is lost, the dawn
is full of information. All
the colors slowly coming back.
And one day we shall
all live on light alone.**

13 October 2019

=====

**Telegraph system
of the body's pains,
old fashioned, nerves
are wires strung
through the dark meat.
The inward prairie,
clogged towns in us
getting the bad news,
flashing along the line,
No wonder we study
history, history is us,
tiem out of mind, the blur
or blaze of information,
the squeal of hurt, edicts
from the invisible emperor
chastising us. Or now and then
rewarding us with peace.**

13 October 2019

ATLANTIS

I was Atlantis
and the gulls knew it,
brought me true reports
of all my old wives,
my broken promises.
Then time took me in,
took me down. At last
I was no one, but once
I was what I was.
I was Atlantis. All
of you were too. Just
listen to the gulls
and you'll remember.

13 October 2019

THE OTHER DOOR

Open the other door.
Let the ink age
in the stone until
the vintage of light
is right and the tree
tells you again
the old story of
who you are
and why, and why
they know it
but you forgot.

2.
And keep forgetting.
But the trees remind you —
they are at their most
talkative these days.
The long dream of summer
has to be told,

retold, analyzed.
You are one part
of their psychotherapy.
You sleep late
to be close to them.

3.
This dawn they gave you olives
black olives, you chopped
coarsely and blended
into a thick,
creamy, tawny paste
that might have been hummus
but wasn't. Wasn't
anything you ever tasted.
Now make your pilgrimage
to noon. This food
will carry you all day.

4.

Nothing is changing.

Just that —

everything there seems to be.

Seeing is a shimmer

of a silken robe, wind

on the sea, a fox

runs across the lawn.

What you see (all

the seeming)

is what changes.

Nothing changes.

14 October 2019

=====

**The real reason
the chimes
over my head
the lure of sandpaper
on this old wood**

**Change me, change me
cries the day
and all I know how to do
is stroke your skin a little
with words and guesses.
snorts and sneezes, wheezes
I pretend are song--
do you hear them, Brightness,
do they feed you?
I give you my blue sky
and all my green trees.**

14 October 2019

=====

We had a once
a walnut tree
it told me true
by falling storm
remembering
now I find some
husks of z new
there must be,
wind and squirrel
logic lifted
Eastering in autumn
tree new tree.

14 / 15 October 2019

=====

Now cast as if a spell
the curtains wide
to shape the random
day outside.

They call this waking
and that the world
but sometimes the difference
eludes the mind
that delicate denizen
of the dark inside
always hankering for
one more dawn
to run out happy
with all its playmates
the rest of you.

14/15 October 2019

=====

**I'm always only telling
what the night said--
the day has ambassadors
enough of its own.
They change and shift and
break their promises
or sometimes keep them
which is worse I wonder.
But the edicts of the night
I type out in the dark
have no time to be false
or even true in. That is
the beauty of the night,
there is no time at all in it.**

14/15 October 2019

=====

Even in winter can't
forget the green stem,
bone of the skull my monitor—

learn to pick up any Yorick's skull
and by the soul's
newest *techné*
hear all the skull's *unspoken thoughts*
inside it,
revelations from a whole human life
recorded in the gritty stryctyre of the bone.

And Shakespeare told us this already
in his ingenious sly half-conscious way.

15 October 2019

=====

**Go back
to sleep
and be**

**while the night
still has
something to say.**

15 October 2019

=====

Alone with my
language in the night
almost afraid to breathe
for what comes out.
the dictionary flaring
angry in my head,

or is it peace
all round me and for me too,
the quiet? Is it the quiet
that frightens me

so I must talk and tell against it,
the unsilent quiet all round
inside me?

15 October 2019

= = = = =

Let it be another day,
some birds.
The French call sparrows
little monks
I think.
They like the lowest
places of all birds
and some days we
are like that too.
The dust. The glamorous
puddle left by rain
that has on its shimmering
skin the world above it,
towers and domes and you,
your curious face looking down.
I don't mean your face
is curious, just that you are
and your face shows it.
Your face by itself
is no sparrow, it is lofty,
looks high, loves light,
your face is always.

So let it be a day
when you are anywhere
and I am near,
birds optional.
a river running slowly
past is best.
I dreamt a sudden fall of snow
and I was ten minutes late for now
Words are always trying
to keep me up to d ate--
like blackbirds, bluejays,
cardinals. Reality
is fancy enough, thank you,
I'll have my blanket, please,
and settle down into the calendar,
and wait, just wait.
Your face tells ,e
that most of this is true.
What the French call something like verity.

16 October 2019

=====

**One tree out there
overnight gamboge
already.**

**You read to me
about Angkor and Mahendra,
our new lost city, the tree
was listening, got old
while we slept,
and now this deep
rich dull yellow shows
that it heard. aumd understood.**

And I too live to answer.

...16 October 2019

=====

Dot the ivy
cross the table
the hand will lunch you
when it's ready—

you drove here
laughing your way
through a grey sky,
the parking lot
was full of space,
there was a dog
but it ran away,

so you were at last
alone with America.
Scars here and there,
a woman in the window,
the last man smoking
in this neighborhood
sits on his porch
and watches you alight,

lock the car,
stretch your back,
walk towards shopping.

Why does this
feel strange, feel good?
You are no purser
and this is no ship.
And yet, and yet

an easy song
in every step,
a whistle in the trees.
You finger your wallet
and remember you're hungry.
So maybe it's time.

16 October 2019

=====

**A merchant thought
afloat on the Amazon:**

**Buy me a memory
with you in it,**

**send me a letter
from me to you**

**I never wrote
that told the truth.**

**I never knew you.
I will never forget you.**

17 October 2019

====

**A mind on the margin
unwraps the sky,
sees around all the corners,
wakes uneasy while the others sleep—**

**o those middle-minds,
all golf and science,
pink Yankees,
connecticutians all,
busybody brokers' life
their unending dream.**

**I watch and wonder
but who am I to dare to be awake?**

17 October 2019

=====

A house of reeds
rede thee hood counsel,
live in this sky
but don't ask why.

Answers everywhere,
just ask, just ask,
unbutton your shirt
bare your breath
and wait.

Never too long
before good counsel comes—
the house of reeds trembles
because it lets the wind in
bringing the hews.

18 October 2019
Day 13-*aj*

=====

**Squeeze up against me
and call yourself a crowd,
I will believe anything
as long as it talks to me.**

**Or lie down wjust where
the surf interviews the shore
so you will be part of both
and your wet skin will make you wise.**

18 October 2019

=====

**Listen, April,
I know you're dead
but that makes
no difference to language,**

**language like Rilke's
Muslim angels
can't tell the living from the dead,**

**just this morning
I was testy with Schubert,
one of his little piano pieces
annoyed me, not like
the great sonatas or impromptus,
this was just dithering on the keyboard
and I told him so,**

**and then felt bad,
he has given me such pleasure in my life
and I never did anything for him,
and here I was complaining.**

**I apologize herewith
and hope that he,
in his fawn-colored coat of language,
will forgive me,**

**so listen, April,
I miss you still,
the unachieved conversations,
your dark suspicions,
your Slavic cheeks,
I don't know what I miss,**

**but language knows
and says it's April
that I miss and that
I should write and tell her so.**

18 October 2019

=====

**Inky fingers
tell the truth**

**lies evaporate
when you write them down**

**that's why people send
printed birthday cards.**

**Inky fingers
mean body;s in the act,**

**the body doesn't lie,
doesn't know how to**

that's why we live in one.

18 October 2019

=====

**The wind calms down
at five o'clock
it knows our times
and goes with them**

**In this calm hour
make your way home.**

***Se frayer*— to force your own way
through the thicket of influence,
make your own path, guess
when to stop and when to go—**

the wind shows you how.

18 October 2019

== == == ==

I waited by the gate
that's what one does
it's the fault of our binary
nature, left
foot right foot
so we go,
we can do no single thing,
heart and mind,
the gate needs us
to fulfil its nature,
we must go through,
a leaf falls from our linden.
Gravity loves us.

*

And then the gate opens
by the sheer magic
of my hand lifting the latch--
in what Damcar of the mages
did I learn such tricks?

*

Inside I find
a green hose coiled
on red tiles
two big propane tanks,
a well-head.
I must be home.

*

One hand it was
to lift the latch
one hand to tug the handle.
As I walk on the tiles
my body remembers the method.
Method means *following the road*.
yes, I was a Greek too,
I knelt before Artemis
and held her knees in prayer.
Praise. Only
my body remembers.

19 October 2019

====

**The tallest trees
lose their leaves first—**

**we see along our roads
the elms and tulip trees
balding fast—
what should this mean to me?**

**Stop thinking, stop thinking,
it's bad for the hair.**

19 October 2019

A TREE FOR A FRIEND

It is not bad to be a tree. A tree makes the philosopher think of all manner of deep and mind-traveling roots, stretching out beneath the common earth, seeking and sensing, ever-outward, feeding on what is to be found at its tips, beholding with awe what can be seen only in the dark. But for us, the laity, a tree is an upright person, is always on the lookout, always alert to all the *moving images* in the air around it, swirl of cloud and paragraphs of lads and maidens frolicking their round dance at its roots, moving, the tree sees them move, sees the swift wanderer and the laggard householder, moving, sees and feels the birds alighting or farewelling, always moving, old priests stumbling past, barely moving, but moving, all of them in the full circle of the endless horizon, moving. Move, move, move! What a marvel that is to a tree, a miracle of being able to be and be elsewhere. Others can be anywhere. But a tree sees everywhere. Now Ovid tells us of timorous maidens, god-

pursued, who as welcome refuge or sad retaliation are turned into trees. Not many tales are breathed forth by grannies or graduates about men turned into trees. And yet the walnut stands, and Coleridge's linden, and the oak, that *robur* of the forest, whose chest holds the barren sky off timid earth. Yes, o learned ones, a tree can stand and be masculine. Or truer to say a tree can stand firm, can stand for every kind of human. All-gendered, all-welcoming, shading us all from the hasty sun. a tre for all. A tree is for all..

On the birthday of Thomas Browne of Norfolk, Robert wrote this page to offer praise for our friend who loved the movement of words no less than the movement of images, John Pruitt, on the occasion of a tree being planted in his memory.

====

**Cruelty of time
reverse by quiet**

**subvert history
by keeping still**

**speaking to silence
listening to stone.**

**19 October 2019
*to Shostakovich's Tenth
Leon with TON.***

ROBUST ENTERPRISE

of being.

**Be a box of matches
scrape on the side.**

**Men shave, trees shed,
women bleed.**

**The unforgivingness
of time, of things
drives us.
A girl in the sky.**

2.

**Less liberal than panthers are,
more catholic than color.**

**Trees do it. We pale with fear,
dark with anger.**

**Why is the sun in autumn trees
like a bell tower sundaying away?**

3.

**The face of a man I never knew
vivid as I woke. I can't recall
so many that I did know
who smiled at me or grinned
or frowned or said good-bye.
Who am I trying to fool now?**

Thomas Albert Kane, d.1935

4.

**Try not to criticize numbers.
They were here before you
but depend on you
to give them life.
Men bleed [?] too,
and women have to shrug off
the burden of men's desire.**

5.

**Cost accounting,
keep track of weather—
or not studying by the window**

still knew the path of
(say) Canada geese
Octobering out of North Bay.
By guesswork alone
drink from this chalice
the numbers fill for you.

6.
A woman I never met
makes me write music too,
music you can't exactly hear
but reading it
you know it's there.

7.
Back to basics.
Number theory. Ketosis.
Life before wheatfields,
there is an island
where winter never harms,
and no venom lingers.
Gaze into a pool of ink

**Waterman encre violette
and find it there.
Take a deep breath
and swim ashore.
Here is where you want to be.**

20 October 2019

TWO NOTES OF MUSIC

**Shostakovich's 10th Symphony,
a long exalted desperate waltzing
train ride, crowded 3rd class carriage,
rough and tumble. Kids excited,
peasants and soldiers, a;; the way
From Vienna to Moscow
and just beyond, a snow field,
weeping pilgrims, a ruined castle.
Mahler to Mandelstam in one hour.**

**Richard Strauss once described himself as a
first-rate second-rate composer.**

**I suppose Handel would be a first-rate first-
rate.**

**But would you rather listen to *Semele* or
Salome?**

I rest my case.

20 October 2019

NEUROLOGY LESSON

**And laughing all the while
a transmitter
linked to the heart.**

**Poetry reading
a soul auction**

**The laundry room emptied
the dryer tumbling round
one light bulb happening
why am I alone?**

**When I was a kid
on the radio there was
an Answer Man
I still am.**

*

**The self is the enemy,
guest in the house,
he wakes you asleep.**

*

**Grammar is the very
house of the self,
scarce windows, a maybe door**

*

21 October 2019

=====

for Lila

Call you *ostro*
call you island

you are the middle
any island

is *omphalos*.
Be an island.

Stand on the green sward
and make old times new,

make all times now.
Be eternal, means

outside of time, you,
the you of you

**the silent one inside
hat guides your road,**

Stand here and be everywhere.

21 October 2019

GEOGRAPHY LESSON

How to Get There

**Go out in the back yard,
find a patch of ground
you like the look of.
Mark it off carefully
with wooden pegs and thread
or a golden trowel
or just your eyebeams
measuring clear.
Nowstep inside
and stand there,
close your eyes
and watch your breath
a while then open up.
You could be anywhere
now. This place
could be anywhere at all,
and you're here,
here pronounced there,
becuse you are anywhere**

**you are everywhere,
Athens, Vienna, Katmandu,
everywhere and everywhen,
a little town upstate.**

22 October 2019

=====

**After the before,
an altar.
On it a sacrifice:**

*something made other,
sent out of our discourse
into the parlor of the Other.*

**Who knows what lies there
on this quiet marble?**

**Stone thinks, stone drinks
whatever is poured out on it
no matter how quick you are
in wiping it dry—
always some blood or wine
thinks its way in
and stays there.**

**That is why we have altars.
That is why we have stone,
it remembers for us
so we can waltz out of every
holy place and forget.**

22 October 2019

====

Cool autumn
brief summer
a wolf pads down
the blood stream
not even hunting,
just going along.

The fur of dawn
not far. The hard
stone of daylight
not thrown yet
over the earth edge.

I am a hand now
waiting for something,
fingers in low lamplight,
music. But whose?
My self id a lover and his lass
in one, a , mestizo child
of sky and alphabet,

**still trying to learn
to speak my mother tongue.
But that's just me—**

**Seventy years ago, Hotel
Brevoort, University Place,
Alma Mahler. I do not
knock on her sacred door.
But even now my hand is raised.**

22 October 2019

=====

**They play with me
they toss my thoughts about
they minnow in my stream
and oak my chestnut trees.
Prost! I cry, but they know why
and switch another channel on
in me to watch, they watch in me,
and that's fine by me if only
sometimes they let me see
the epics and spectaculars
they chisel from my memories
real and fancied, the fairy tales
from which the world was made.**

22 October 2019

DAWN

**The sky barely legible.
The words make sense,
the man does not.**

22 October 2019

LAP{S

**Light without heat:
the philosopher's stone.**

*

**Or I want to buy
a necklace for my wife
beautiful as she—
but how could that be?**

22 October 2019

====

**Make a mark
then spin the wheel
and see who speaks**

**answers are
the weather of the soul
whatever that word means**

**the sacred silly part of us
you have to listen
hard to hear.**

23 October 2019

THE IBISES

Faltering ibises
nude the night sky
into morning--

I told you so
long ago, these moments
drift across the screen
moths trying to get in

but ibises! Scarlet
as your head
inside, the throb of knowing,
that insatiable lust.

Peace, peace, you whisper
but I know better,
there is a measure
in whose hands all things
are processes afresh

even the marble statue of our mother.

2.

Sanity often forbids.
Spell things a different way
and see who they really are--
I heard you in my sleep
ringing the changes
cartwheels on a dusty road
sudden squeak of heaven
by which the old Germanics meant
the sky before the Christians
told them who lives up there
and we try to believe.
But I suspect the God's right here.

3.

Amorous anticipation,
hopeful hands outstretched
habit of receiving
grace before breakfast
pale crisp matzo on a dusty plate.

4.

Because everywhere
is anywhere again.

That's smarter than it seems,
a nest of robins snug
in the crutch of that tree
even winter almost hear them sing.
Time came with me to the fountains,
I watched the mermaids
pose for their painters,
sheets of silver
wrapped around their legs
to do the fishtail look
but I knew better.
Time unwraps all doubts
and unwraps what we have seen
into what is really there.

5.

That sounds smart
the way the obvious always does
when it's stuck in your pocket
and you sit on it,

**the ouch of truth
often comes out as a prayer.
Bless me father because I have sinned.**

**6.
October. The sweep
of color
news me like those birds,**

**saw them in Egypt,
on the sea, in the Paris zoo,
scarlet as your skin
brushing a cold tile wall,
as your eyelids when
you turn closed eyes at the sun.
We are not the only ones
who write on leaves.**

7.

**Egregious! Out of place,
out of the herd, standing out
making the clatter of difference,
the noise of newing,
you know who I mean,
I'm looking right at you:
get back in line.
There is no line.
no ticket-booth it leads to,
no counter laden with
all we desire, sorry, boss,
I'm just standing here.**

8.

**Is it time
to call them home
those ancient birds
so long in the sky,

their color must
be weary by now
even though their**

wings are made of light,

shall we call them
home, spread out
the sea around our houses,
set a placid lagoon

in every bedroom,
whistle softly
at the top of the stairs
close as we can

get to heaven?

9.
Let it remember me too,
not all the work of Mnemosyne
be left for my tools,
where are other awls and chisels in the park,
pick one up and get to work,
remember the birds for me
and what they mean to you,
delicate awkward on legs, magnificent aloft,

**color of the purest desire.
I want to fold my wings and sleep.**

**10.
So that in dream
one may endlessly arrive,
birds in their season
soaring out of the Nile delta,
the coasts of Africa,
all the places you can name--
each one interviewed by birds,
inspected, educated, blessed.
Or so it seems to us
who sleep on beds of artifice
and leave the gentle marshes to the birds.**

23 October 2019

=====

**What will I do
with all these words
these swords
to remember love by,**

**these tantalus tempting clusters
grapes of impossible vines
these waterfalls
that cut through living rock**

**and you, what shall I do
with you?
who were to be the answer
not the question,**

not the question all over again?

23 October 2019, Shafer

=====

**You don't want to be caught
in those clutches
those wheelbarrows
full of potting soil
but who knows where the earth
came from, my arms
around you are bad enough,
never mind the weather. Ever,
because you're indoors always
in some ways, though the books
get damp pages and their spines
o my how their spines tell lies,
there's no election in selection,
no fullness in complete
and all the words get writ in gold**

23 October 2019, Shafer

====

**In Bet Shemesh the Sun's own house
the Jews found an ancient Christian church
rich with mosaics the papers don't reveal—
as if there were a difference!**

We are always who we always ever were,

**no difference. Jews baptized by rain,
Christians circumcised by time
and the women laugh through their tears—
they came before every religion—
men are the only mistakes they ever made.**

23 October 2019, Shafer

====

I am evrybody else.
My dream a heartbeat
a squirt of blood
pulse past the ear
lost luggage
reclaimed from a cliff
my god a cyclist
almost knocked me over the egde.
I woke with the heavy
canvas bag in hand,
a famous actor's
with no time for us,
non serviam I cry like Joyce
but it does no good.
Dream masters all.

2.

The woman from Boulder
told me the shop was still there
but couldn't be sure,

we didnt know how to talk
about the town, the local
names for local things, stores,
houses, prairie dog towns.
And the ordinary people
in houses you don't even notice.
the ones on whom the world is built,
the world depends--
are you one of us?

3.
But is was cold.
No desire,
no food on no table
solve for grace.
I usually am a kind of priest
who has no church.
Theology is the streangest gender,
always halfway somewhere else
or so it seems. Seemed.
For I was dreaming then
inside the dream, the words.
those usual suspects,

handsomely leading me around.
There was a bush in front
of somebody else's parish church
or mine when I was someone else,
like now, a bush, I say,
and in it bright red berries twinkled
cute as cats in animes --
if I could get one in my teeth
everything would change.
Maybe be all right.
Can't be sure. sunlight strong right here.

24 October 2019

`=====

**You can't leave a girl
alone with a question
yjay's what men ate for,
to drown out with dirty
fingernails and steel strings
the actual music of the world.**

24 October 2019

=====

**I write
what I can't read.
Wind anxious
in the trees.**

24.X.19

CHILDHOOD

**Childhood lingers
in the strangest ways,
pork spareribs
boiled with sauerkraut.**

24.X.19

IN THE MARKET

Suppose I asked you something
and the sun was shining
white walls of the Uffizi
glass ceiling, light arrives.

Suppose I wanted
to know you better,
suppose the window opened
and a bird flew in,
big one, a gull,
screamed at us and flew out,

nobody loves me—
is that what meaning means?
Just be normal for a moment,
don't be natural,
people are too close for comfort.

Forget you ever knew me,
I'm sorry I ordered all this
and now I face the music—

**Rossini's *Sins of my Old Age*
(pronoun all mine) .
Asterisk needed here,
footnote to my mind
(for the player piano)**

**and the the bird came back
and it was me.
Believe everything I tell you
and we will both be free.**

**24 October 2019
Kingston**

=====

**Always trying,
always whying.**

**the book falls open
to a hidden word**

**a shaft of light
slips through the wall**

**finds the word
tells it to be**

and you are.

**24 October 2019
Kingston**

ANNUNCIATION

**So now she knows
knows why
and even when
but not yet who,
who will come
of this word
she hears, yes,
suddenly hears
as if the book
she holds in her hands
suddenly spoke,**

**24 October 2019
Kingston**

=====

Looking at the law
rising through the trees
luttle ridge abaft the house
the leaves declining

but the law is lovely
I think, her colors
washing into all things
making them their own
by the lift of her light.

25 October 2019

=====

**By the standards of our grammar
I live in a museum
built to mark the methods of my day,
my work was play,
fiddling with the alphabet
till it broke, or spoke,
or broke somebody's heart,
most likely mine.
Shelves crowded with what I meant.
a floor lamp here and there
so I can find my way to myself.**

25 October 2019

=====

**I notice I'm writing
a lot about myself
lately, as if we had
just met--could it
be love? Flirt
with the person
I thought I was?
O laconic earth,
you told me long ago
how talk is dangerous
and only metamorphic rock
should ever write anything down.**

25 October 2019

=====

**And then the beer began to flow
in all the imagined Germanies of autumn
and men (mostly men) felt it right
to melt clarity into tumult
tune by tune and belch with beauty
but all I hear money changing hands
mothers sobbing, children beaten,
this language has no word for fun.**

25 October 2019

LET THE EXAMINATION BEGIN.

**The crows are ready,
those monitors of meaning
careful of our every misstep--
they know where we should be going
because they read the heart.
It is humbling to walk in the woods
and more so in the clearings
where you're alone with the sky,
and all the beings in it.**

**Every whim and word gets tested,
your breath betrays
the least falsity, your footsteps
reveal the grammar of your thought--
you've always known that.**

**So often you hunker down indoors
afraid of the scrutiny of crows.
But they call outside--**

**not right at your window,
nothing so punitive, just
a caw off in the east or north
to remind you that the test is still going on.**

25 October 2019

====

**But could I write this
with my hand
or do I have to wait
for evening shadows
to write it for me,
a little song that says today?**

25 October 2019

=====

**Maybe typing makes
what I mean too simple,
I worry about being too clear,
so clear the meaning sifts out,
sugar off the doughnut,
you're left with dull dough,
with meaning as a verb
that found no noun.
O lovely fountain though
that pours up from obscurities,
mistakes, seeds of the unknown.**

25 October 2019

====

**Drive the pen
over the bones of the dead.
Turn up a skull
that talks back to me.
And all the dead
of every place and time
speak my native language.**

25 October 2019

====

**Farmers up here in the valley
used to beat the trunks
of their older apple trees
to wake them in springtime
and make them bear fruit.
No wonder I don't like apples.**

25 October 2019

====

**Isn't it good
that we are so far apart?
Silence is a pregnant thing,
an agency of getting there
securely, the dark woods
of what we really mean.**

25 October 2019

=====

**I have accepted the silence.
I will explore absence
bravely as I can
in the wilderness of time,
hankering always
for the El Dorado of the Other
but accepting, accepting
this pathless path.**

25 October 2019

PLAUDITE

**If we got to bed on time
the ghosts could find us
easily, could tell their
own stories into our sleep
we wake up from to say
I had a dream. But a dream
is a collaboration, an opera
staged by all sorts of artists,
vocal, verbal, visual, And we?
We're just the audience.
Now wake up and applaud.**

25 October 2019

=====

The adequation of influence upon and influence from should be the balancing, the see-saw, on which the critical gesture depends. Or do I mean the swing. Ovid read Pausanias and Shakespeare read Ovid and we read Shakespeare, we Greeks. No way out of the bind, of time. It's oone long sentence being recited over a scant couple of millennia. Or nmaybe it's a single word, still resonating its core vowel as we speak. The emergency vehicles of time. The liturgy of breath.

25 October 2019

=====

**There are no changes.
There is only this single tree
lofting in a meadow
answering the seasons
as well as it can.
There are no changes,
there is only this breath
(mine, yours, another's)
going in, and resting,
and going out again
into the world. *Nothing*
changes the great Karmapa
said on his deathbed,
smiling. Nothing changes.**

25 October 2019

====

**When it is almost there,
a pain comes.
But that's only experience,
not truth. The truth
is what we cannot know.**

26 October 2019

=====

**It hurts you awake.
You rise to answer it.
You send a long letter
in the absence of desire.
The failure of fate
needs so much explanation.
To do things
only because it's right to do them.
Civilization misery.**

26 October 2019

=====

**I breathe through my fingers
differently. Typing
is fingers, writing is hand.
The other way round
also makes sense, but
don't let your living
breath hear about that.**

26 October 2019

A PAUSE IN HER ADVENTURE

Psyche stalls
amid her magic chores—
yes, everything comes to her aid.
But why do they do that?
Must she spend
all her love on gratitude?
Isn't there some one thing
she does all by herself,
out of her own desire,
not necessity, not
the rules of her story?
Or is desire itself
her necessity
and all the birds know it,
and the ants,
and the walls of her house?

26 October 2019

SLEEPLESS

**Waiting politely for sleep
to come around the corner
with a newspaper
under its arm
or is it a long
loaf of bread
or a sunray caught on iys elbow?
I am waiting in an empty street,
the children in those houses
are not allowed out to play—
how strict these mothers are!**

26 October 2019

=====

**Make up the tune
before you forget
the owl's call,
the chute of rain.
Find the song though
in your own breath,
the slow hurry of it
trying to get
out of you and
back to the world.
That kind of music
is.**

26 October 2019

=====

**It's all right to do it
but not think about it
whatever it is.**

**Thinking about it is the problem—
live in the moment,
the moment has no brain,
only a heart, sometimes,
sometimes a hand.**

26 October 2019

=====

**I hate it that I can't come to you,
Great Waiting Dream, but you must always
come to me. Night has no steering wheel,
the windshield plastered with dead leaves.**

26 October 2019

=====

**Are these just diary
entries or real
poems? You decide.
My job is just
to write them down.**

26 October 2019

PANTHEON

**They are bright things
given to us to play with,
devotional toys,
theologies, wistful
dreams of meanings
yet to be encountered
long may we live.**

26 October 2019

====

Dear Other Side of the River:

**I have loved you since I was little,
I still want to wander through your grassland
and wallow in your hills,
you are my special hours,
lean shadows, the skin of rain,
shine of standing pools,
your roads lead everywhere
i want to be. Even now
I taste you whenever I wake.
Your stones, my bones.**

27 October 2019

=====

**An hour later
I had learned to speak Russian
and could sing
pretty well sight-reading a score.
We got to the shore in time for the sea
he said, puzzling me.
Where else could it be,
or why were we hurrying,
singing so loud, clutching
each other almost frantically?
Language has a lot to answer for,
mosquitoes of the delta,
strange people walking through
dense fields of tree-high corn.
It was one of those mornings
when all the pronouns were wrong.**

27 October 2019

=====

**Casting a spell
I look like rain.
My road is wet,
my tree is vague.
Music goes
away after a while
the sky remains.
That's how you know—
you don't need a mirror,
just look straight up.**

27 October 2019

=====

**An hour later
it gets no brighter.
And the trees
still have lots
of leaves. Song
we used to call
Fall, a season,
a sensation runs
quietly through
I suppose the veins
we say, meaning
I suppose some
very different network
in us and out
there at once, and time
has the softest hands.**

27 October 2019

====

**Liberal leanings
lead astray. Stay
where there are benches
in the park, and stone
seats along boulevards.
Stay where great bells ring
joyous over almost
empty churches, stay alone
with the weather, telling
each day the story
it tells you until the both
of you are in cahoots
and you are ready at last
to meet your fellow creatures.
Good morrow, ladies of Babylon,
gentlemen of Ronkonkoma--
I was born in this island too,
would you believe? Every
pigeon testifies for me.**

27 October 2019

====

To write
the stone
time wrote
already,
pry the glitter
chip of mica
out of the Manhattan
schyst, say
the city all over
again, get the story
straighter
this time, ginkgo
trees, an old Vespa
scooter not too
noisy up Park Avenue.
Which will become US 22.
Which in only a hundred
miles will take you home.

27 October 2019

=====

**Where there is no internet
there is no you.
Your government wants it that way.
Yes, yours. All yours.**

27 October 2019

MISSIVE (1)

**Pouring
into the lap
of the cliff
cleft the small
fall soaks
all green—**

**a scene seen
no deeper
than a postcard
says, so
I say it,
send it top you.**

28 October 2019

= = = = =

**Color it suddenly
color it fleet—
overcast we say,
clouds inchoate
start thinking
about what shape
to take or form,
how to pronounce
the day they say.**

28 October 2019

=====

**The aftermath should be obvious,
birds more visible perched in leafless
trees--is that why south?
Is a simple temple grand enough
to baptize your thighs?
That's what keeps me wondering
late into the leafless night
when I am the only tree.
But now the belt of light
tightens around the world
nearby, still plenty of green
to disguise in amber
words on their way to you.**

28 October 2019

=====

**Make a notebook of the air
and gesture wildly in it
to make what sense you can
glean between your mind and the day,
or be cautious, keep a ledger,
list the ins and outs
o accountant, of this fuss
they dare straight-faced
to call reality. You know better,
partner, be your pointy self
and write it down.**

28 October 2019

=====

**When the car pulls out of the driveway
something changes--
the space vacated
has a sudden magic
lasts a minute, the grey
cement turns silver,
anything could happen,
a dragon tongue lick
light along it and a Person come,
glorious and momentary
to smile at me before
the vision fades, the car
is half a block away.**

28 October 2019

=====

**I just wanted to tell you this:
the Germans call a kiss a *Kuss*,
tongue-tangle sucks you me
at once, breaths conspire yes
yes yes--you know how it goes,
you read the book of growing,
of knowing some other body
suddenly closer than your own,
all that adolescent idolatry,
the girl in a spotted dress
on that bridge across the Arno,
the taste of great poetry,
saliva of another's mouth
sweet on your brave lips.**

28 October 2019

====

**I am a listless pilgrim
but I came from France
to Dover like anybody else,
following the road of should
turns into must and there I was
where language was my only street.
I could have been my ancestor
shucking Catholic dust free
from his weaver's hands.
But I felt more like a coal field
waiting en plein air
for the crew that would dig out
whatever it is I mean--
can words do that? Or women
with quiet eyes? Or men with nervous hands?
I have come to the place
where I can't fool anybody
anymore. In some way I must be home.**

28 October 2019

====

The sky is clearing,
the overcast still choosing
shapes to take on,
drifts asunder, blue appears,
the day changes.
The legislature of the real
is back in session,
I can go back to sleep
and leave the day in older hands
even than mine. O sleep
you crowded bus in another country,
hou marketplace with silent
farmers standing by what they have grown --
o sleep, how little I have brought to you
and how much taken from you for my own.

28 October 2019

====

**Can it say
what I suppose
myself to be saying?
I ask this of the runes,
birch bark, ball pens,
the alphabet. One of you
must know already
everything I mean
or how could I know
enough to mean it
all by myself?**

28 October 2019

=====

What the small
blue glass flask
desires is an air
as slow as water--
vessels yearn
for the absences
they enclose until
someone spills
otherness in them.
They can endure it
because heir own
form is so complete.
But all the while
(the little blue
bottle on my windowsill
explained) they
hunger to be themselves
alone, complete,
full of that emptiness
men call light it said.

29 October 2019

====

**She was good in the dream
the tawny blonde and sought her reward
or I wanted her to, to live
up to the softness of the body
by taking the form of the moment
as her own. A kiss
for instance, the judge
of the contest said, a kiss
is typically appropriate--
reward without possession
embrace without capture.
Kiss. As if he had been reading
books and forgetting
to look at the sky.
The sky kisses everyone she said
don't think I am something special,
I'm just a color you can feel with your hands.**

29 October 2019

=====

**When a man has no religion
everything becomes a god.
Religion is itself a protection against divinity,
against the multiplicity of gods.
Have no other gods but Me
one ancient theology begins.
But we were disobedient
and so we live with all the gods around us,
heaven and hell,
and have to hear
clearly the voice
of all of them and every other thing.**

29 October 2019

THE BARBERSHOP

Cast:

The barber.

The elegant beard.

The woman with short hair.

The missionary (Mormon)

The teenager lost in his device.

Rge old man too feeble to shave himself

**brought in every week by his gaughter for
a shave**

Setting:

**Wall of mirrors but just one swivel chair
the raor buzzes.**

The barber is Italian, past middle age.

Radio plays opera —Giordano, I think.

The beard in the swivel chair is persnickety.

The waiting clients are edgy.

The music is loud.

Do I have to tell you anything more?

29 October 2019

=====

**The evident day
so many birthdays,
birthday—the tax
that’s due to time.**

30.X.19

= = = = =

**Measure
things carefully,
groan of a truck
droning to a stop,
gearing up again,
going away.
Live by a corner
easy learn measure.**

30 October 2019

====

wanting to be
and be more
than be me,
wanting to be
me in you and
you in me, being
everything
we can be, all
of you, all
beings speak
in you I want
to speak, speak
all the way
to being more than me.

30 October 2019

= = = = =

Sandarac, gamboge,
old colored names
time knows
for trees in autumn
use them
while the light lets
colors be,
lets you use old
words left in your head.
My vocabulary the dying
Jack Spicer said *did this*
to me. Robin Blaser
heard him and told me--
now what will I do
with sandarac, gamboge?

30 October 2019

=====

**All that a man and a woman in
love are able to conquer,
Islands and continents unknown to birds of
the air,
fierce winds,
oceans of milk from the tears of their eyes
weeping glad truths...**

30.X.19

=====

**The light track
the overhead that happens
from the ground up—
we are its disciples.
That's what the floor lamps
and the sleek fluorescents said
when I dared to flick them on
as if I too were an horizon.**

30 October 2019

====

**Brooklyn Catholic boy
marries Boston
Protestant Jewish girl.
Put them all together
they spell Buddhist.**

30.X.19

THE MIRROR IS A MONSTER

**makes a monster
of all who look therein,
Grendel's eyes
that once made men of us
now turn us wrong,
bleak-witted, groaning
wuih misplaced desire,
coughing in dawn light,
bruisers, ,losers, males.
Because we became
the monsters we were meant
to overcome. We joined
the troupe instead,
put on the antlers and snatched
virgins into green woods,
put on the fangs and bit young men
wjo meant no worse than
writing a sonnet or a symphony
nut we wanted blood—
when we had so mch of our own!**

30 October 2019 Shafer

=====

I work in a five-sided room
one wall is almost all glass
and thus a forest of autumn
color as far as I can see.
deep otherness out there
knows me as I sit here trying
to be me and do what it is
this me is supposed to do.
But all the while the golden
outside soaks autumn into me,
soft season of *far niente*, not
at a;; the time to die. Glass
,ust remember always subtly
its own transformation from
grains of sand into panes of light—
any window is half nostalgia
anyhow, and this wall of glass
dissolves me in what I see.

30 October 2019
Shafer

=====

**Five in the morning
All Hallows Eve.**

**Everything follows from that.
All the wise advice
I ever gave ortook
no even a shimmer on horizon,
dark trees my destinies.**

*Close your eyes and read
the book that has not been written
it said, or no one wrote,
or *Desire is a bridge--
that's what Dante meant.**

**Some things are just true
but do not much good
to contemplate. *Think of this
the next time you try to think.***

2.

Little by little the light
grows stronger--that's
what Christmas meant
to those first Christians--
He had brought the light
and their business was
to keep it growing, *phos
augei!* they cried to one another

the way we still make love
to the darkest day.
Halloween we say,
squeezing the words
together, squeezing the sounds
until they frighten us
a little, and vague shapes
move among the trees.

3.

Every child knows this,
the senses are those faculties
given to us to make sense of,
every child knows

most of what we ever know

**until the darkness speaks,
that mother in the mind.
Don't mumble she tells me,
say what you mean
but don't stop there.
Use your words, hold
nothing back, keep
talki/ng, you're
only at the beginning.**

31 October 2019

=====

Luster of lost things
gleams in the dream.
Pen knife, turtle shell,
little stone from Jericho--
sunrise is a contradiction
or we contradict the light,
is that how it goes, the way
I dropped my handkerchief
by accident and had to watch
the white thing float away
swiftly down the dark river?

31 October 2019

=====

**Sixty degrees at dawn
warm for Halloween
though one year it was 90
and one year it snowed.
Sometimes it's enough
just to tell the truth.
And sometimes not.**

31 October 2019

THE CARPENTER

**Know how
to lift the hammer
off the workbench.
Everything
follows from that.**

**But did you see him
when he came this way
his hands worn with helping us?**

31 October 2019

=====

**Let me be to you
as no other did**

**let me be in you
as you yourself
want most to feel
or know,**

**let me be what you know
until I too can be
complete in knowledge**

**the other is the only
thing worth knowing**

**ecstasy of being in,
outreach of the heart,**

giving out all the way in.

31 October 2019

