

11-2019

nov2019

Robert Kelly

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

ARCHAIC

**Young faces
in Greek stone
old eyes
describe
a manner or a method,
nothing more—
the truth they saw
is well beyond
the power of our liquid eyes.
Maybe what they saw
was us, as we really are—
remember?**

1 November 2019

=====

1.

Time to get it done
cross
the sea of reeds
one miracle more
we go to work
sleep releases
money is a mother
walks us to school
dark meanings of numbers
swallow overhead
this is my only castle

2.

but then it woke
in me another
after a night of storm
trees still have leaves
how old am I today
pale wood of branch and bole

shines through with morning

3.

**do I remember
enough to be now**

4.

**quibbling aftermath of dream
your lover is your doctor
your heart a semi-precious stone
light incident
wakes the interior
gleam of memory
from before I was
it was**

5.

**Apron of light
thighs of the trees
these quiet visitors
who never leave**

6.

has to be a raft
for us to float
it's flat can't sink
life outstretched
the riverbank moves along
amplitude of evidence
the Amazon?
so wide can't see the shores
here is the only where you are

7.

everything you say
I have to say
again is our answer
every leaf knows that

8.

Fill your pen
then drink your cocoa
there is a mother
in the merest things
minding your manner
a cup lifted
the light parts free

9.

listen to me
each thing says
my life is busy
with heavy things

10.

Why not a door
curvature of sound
summoning space to become
and there you are
at last again
all this policy
rafts you to me
if only you knew

11.

**come to my court
to try your case
I like your evidence
I lick it in my chambers
a Word between friends**

12.

**the priests wanted me to be a lawyer
then they'd make a judge of me
I had a different *prozess* in mind
feeding the story
till it comes out right.**

1 November 2019

November 2019 7

=====

Ivy trailing off the plane
our wings
show where we have been
and bring it home

one day of storm
two days of wind
and we are *left alone*—

that deep desire
of the social self
round which such ivy clings.

2 November 2019

LOVESONG

I dare to touch
your colors
with my hands
as once in Prospect's zoo
I reached out my hand
to stroke a lion's mane—
he looked at me
and I was changed.

Commentary:

The lion had a look that put me in my place. He saw my timidity but also my petty bravery in reaching out. He understood the magic of touch, and maybe even the magic of the human fingers, most diversely exalted agencies of flesh. He saw how small I was and made me see it too, see the childish boldness, the yearning, the deep respect I must have felt, will always feel, for such power as it, in

November 2019 9

**Rilke's phrase, disdains to destroy me. I got
the quick picture of why brave timid Irish
C.S.Lewis picked a lion to picture
God. Animist, simplistic, romantic--but I see
those golden eyes still.**

2 November 2019

ANTICIPATION

**is an empty bottle of ink
a contradiction
between parents,
a messy divorce,
a fandango danced
by drunken pronouns.
What is there ever
to wait for?
Nothing is coming
but many things have gone.**

2 November 2019

=====

I remember being
people I never was

vividly

places I have never seem.

It is something
to do with the head,
the habit of knowing

goes on even when
there is nothing to be known.
So I have walked with Kant
across the bridges of his town
speaking of our Celtic ancestors,
while Søren limped beside us
mocking us a little
for thinking that anybody has a past.

2 November 2019

November 2019 12

= = = = =

**he design is never the same:
it could be identical
but still not the same
and you wonder how that can be**

**there is a basket round all things
a kind of net
where difference thrives
so every identical brick is different**

and we live in this house forever.

3 November 2019

November 2019 13

FROM THE WINDOW

**Sight of a few cars
rolling down the road
angling past—
so small, toylike
their scurrying,
tender beasts almost
darting through the trees.**

3 November 2019

ENTABLATURE,

**the mercy place
where at last they tell you
the name of the thing
revealed**

**that you are about
to enter,
through the columns
into the shade
into the house inside a house**

2.

**They keep the sun in there
and let it out now and then
for people to bask in,
the people they call folk,
who walk dreaming along the streets
humming with sunshine
like some easy song**

3.

**but if you go in there
what do you really find?
the well-stocked library
of the endless mind.
shelves and glassware,
altars here and there
each with its shrine modest or huge,
to choose the way of worship--
but whoever you pray to
the same answer comes:
leave me here in the dim,
go out and help the people in the street**

4.

**we are all mestizos, yes?
half animal and half divine,
the tiny bishop in your wet pulpit
tells me so,
as if we are born again
every second of our lives**

5.

so what does this have to do
with architecture, Corinthian or otherwise?
what do your tiresome desires
tell us of the galaxy,
cosmology, the cost of mind?
But skeptic is like septic
and drains the mind of love

6.

and this is all about the mind
how we think
is how the world
happens
to us and to others.
Heal the mind
there is no other way.

3 November 2019

=====

**Expressing eagerness
can equal virtue—
a stone rolls down
what the physics class
calls an incline, we have
a briefer name but
we toll too. Smile
at the nice stranger,
you never know. A grin
even, if you can't do better.
Don't show your teeth—
only models in cheap
ads do that. Smile with your
eyes, lips, chin, mind.
Let them know you're glad
to see them, never mind
if that's a lie. Some lies
are god for the soul. As when
you tell the hunter Deer?
There's no deers around here.**

3 November 2019

ALTERNATIVES TO EDEN

Gone Eden.

**Who did you dream
last night,
was I there
when there were two of you
and then a third
chasing your bodies
through the dense trees**

gan Eden, a garden
in Paradise
pardes, from Persia,
an orchard

**what is the fruit
that hangs from all these branches**

may we eat them?

why even ask

how many trees are yours
how many have you climbed
how many vines and tendrils
have grown up out of earth
around you

how can you run so fast
with all those leaves

natives of Eden still
we never left the garden
did we, you?

when I shave today
I will see my oldest face
come to life again
in the swirling waters of the mirror
the pool you know too

the well in the garden

And here we are

November 2019 20

natives of this altar
all around us,
churchless sacraments
and bells screaming from the sky,

Eden gone
and we gone with it
into the dream

how pale the sky is
where we sleep

run a finger down the spine
old fashioned telegram
the touch

rosary of our bones

nodes knots needs roses

was it you who dreamed me that way last
night
I never dream of people I know
so when I dreamt

November 2019 21

of you it meant
I do not know you

yet you came and said
your giddy prayers in me
Gone Eden you said
what shall we do,
we are children sitting on the curb
outside the movie theater
after it closed
our feet in the little current
runs down the midnight gutter
afraid to go home

home is where Eden is most gone

no trees in the street
only one
a ginkgo, you know him,
the messy nuts the dizzy smell

the movie's over
the gates are closed
there are no busses

November 2019 22

there is no town

I watch your toenails
twinkle in the wet
this is as far as a dream can get

the sound of snow
falling a thousand miles away
or next week in New Hampshire

that soft a touch

How far did you think we would go?
I waited for all of you to come to me,
that seems foolish now
but it is my religion

to attend the arrival
and be there when it comes

I don't like dreaming
about people I know
it seems a waste of dream
to fuss with daytime folk.

November 2019 23

those goyim of sunlight

**so either I sinned or you sent
unknown aspects to afflict my sleep**

**love is like that, isn't it,
always some new trick,**

**always someone saying
Taste this if thou wouldst know me.**

4 November 2019

=====

**Trust time?
What else can we do—
time is arrivals,
shadows and shimmering,
time is the woman
who just walked out of the room,
you hope she'll come back
but when, when?
Time is the coffee
cooling in your cup,
look into it,
watch the quivering surface
bothered by your breath,
when the light is right
you'll see your own face
looking up—and time
is watching too. Time
is waiting for you.**

4 November 2019

November 2019 25

SEEMING

**How pale the grass
this sunny day,
almost yellow,
the blue has left
the green and flown
up to be the sky.
Pale up there too
but blue, blue.**

4 November 2019

November 2019 26

= = = = =

**Empty.
Empty is good,
is the sky
full of our prayers
full of our air.
Empty as a bass drum
has to be
to speak the truest sound.**

4 November 2019

November 2019 27

= = = = =

**One thinks:
dying might be just one
of those boring afternoons in the country.
Then we'll get back to town
and the real life kick in.**

4 November 2019

November 2019 28

= = = = =

**Women have two bodies—
not everyone knows that,
it takes a while to figure out
that while she's dozing there
on her belly on the bed
her other body's busy some
place on the other side of now,
somewhere you can't find her
but she's free. Poor men,
we men have barely one.**

4 November 2019

November 2019 29

THE DEATH OF WILLIAM RUFUS

**The Redhead
shot in the back—**

**what tradition
had he so threatened
they had to kill him**

witches' arrow or Catholic dart

New Forest New Year's Day

an accident?

The story shifts wit every telling,

**who am I afraid of most,
the authorities or the dark
potencies beneath the law
beneath logic**

fear killed the king.

2,

**Do not think history
before you go to sleep,
the book, the tv show,
history is a hammer in your head
the pulse of blood on your pi/llow
that is not yours**

**but wakes you
warns you**

**Who is coming through the door?
And why are there doors anyway?**

**Aren't we trapped enough
just in the way things are?**

**Stones of old castles,
relentless groan of the poor,
animals eat animals,
the rich slurping oysters down,
huge whales grow fat on krill**

3.

I think of the king
lying there
dying in the snow.
He'd been out hunting
and was hunted,
the arrow meant for deer
had found his heart.

I wake at night to hear him groan
beside me in my wife's troubled sleep,

just trying to work this out,
I'm always trying to escape
from what happened

but what really happened?
Knowledge hurts but ignorance is worse

if it were light
I could get dressed and go out
into the daytime dream
where cars go by and arrows fly

**where men with whisky on the breath
slouch through the woods
to kill some deer**

**put it in a book and call it history,
the text that leaves compassion out.**

**Now forgive the world
and go back to ordinary godsend sleep.**

5 November 2019

=====

**Warping
what we call
world**

**that's one side of the die,
the cube that tumbles
till it stops**

**fate choosing us.
My Halloween has come late,
belated horror fills the head**

when the news becomes a wound.

I am scared of what we all may do.

Election Day our witches' sabbath.

====

Slippers and pitchers and jugs
the way we fill things
the way we dream, you filled my dream
grazing wet meadows, crow call
under a denim sky,
bird song, voice on the telephone?
It is the way we put things into things
organize and control, tuck away
in an urn a small sack
of Butanese red rice, understand
what I'm saying?
God help us if we lose things,
boxes and tubes, filling
things is all we ever do,
packagers to the galaxy,
meat and mead and medicine
and Turkey carpets rolled
behind your chair. all we do,
you put words in my mouth
we say and we do and we sleep.

5 November 2019

OCTOVER
a little book
pieces of time
just now
before now
becomes then
Amen

5.XI.19

November 2019 36

=====

**Rapture of human speech
each day's edition
the sun comes up to hear.**

5 November 2019

THE PORTAL

I was the man
waiting in the portal
on the third stone
step up
 shielding from the rain.

You were the hurrying
figure in the rain hood
jumped up beside me
and knocked on the door

I would never have thought
of doing that, I have
a strained relationship
with wood,
but the door opened

and we were now people
inside. I only feel
at ease with strangers

but what was
this place
and how did you know it?

You slipped the hood off,
I was glad to see
no one I knew

but what kind of place
is this I asked
again and this time
you answered

 This
used to be a church
I think but now
it is an empty room
stone and strong and safe
anybody at all
can come inside
just as we do—
welcome home.

5 November 2019

TRAUMZETTEL—DREAM JOTTINGS

**Music on all sides
evidence of everything**

**Cave mouth like a cannon's bore,
the door came away in my hand**

**I met a dead friend
who said he weighed
thirty pounds more than I do**

**Close to waking, dreams get ordinary, lose
interest. They're the kind you toss away
every morning into the waste-basket of
daytime, the current of being awake.**

6 November 2019

=====

**Space lives where things cheat
and sidle out into the shade.
Once I knew a Japanese who knew
how to follow them, quietly,
your slippered feet would hardly
shush their permanent anxieties,
o things of our world, things
thast we have made, ever clamoring
to be good to us and be what we need.**

6 November 2019

=====

**The other half
of the mind
where music shapes
out of language
what the mind
and only the mind
can hear,**

**now mend
in silence,
let the ears rest,
those sweet ambassadors
of other people,
let them rest
and hear the mind
instead, listen
to the music
happens only in your head.**

7 November 2019

====

What could the answer be?

**>There was a silver question
lying in the flutter of the rain.**

**fondle it in your fingers to find out
the way you would an ancient coin**

**or someone's hair you loved,
just feeling, not meaning anything.**

Out of nowhere the answer comes.

7 November 2019

=====

The other half
 of the mind
make music shaped
out of language
so the mind hears it
never mind the ears.
Let the ears rest,
those sweet organs our
society abuses,
let them rest
and hear the music
of meaning, variation, renewal
just with your head.

7 November 2019

=====

**Look at the hand
that locks the door,
winds the old clock—
is it yours?**

**What makes you think
the self you wake with
is the same character
who went to sleep?**

**Isn't the whole sense
of past a dream?
We came from nowhere
and are immensely here.**

8 November 2019

=====

**Yellow leaves floating
angle soft past my window
from no tree nearby.
Just a dozen or so of them
slow, then none.
Gold leaf from heaven,
manna for hungry eyes.**

8 November 2019

=====

**What entitles me
to what I see in the mirror?**

**That was the real mistake
of Narcissus— the Greeks
as usual got it wrong.**

**He looked at his reflection
and thought it was himself.**

**He let himself imagine
his real self was what he saw.**

Identity is fatality.

8 November 2019

=====

**We have to fit inside
the obvious. Patience
is not just a game—
there are yards, yes,
and furlongs too.
¡Abajo! we cry out
romantics with our backs
against the wall.
But we are the ones
who must go down
trying to savor till the sweet end
the taste of the real.**

9 November 2019

=====

The weather calls your bluff—
back home, snug in a snood
you watch the wild wind
chase the last leaves.

How simple time is,
towers of Troy,
cracked aqueducts of Rome.
The world in general
makes you wait

then before you can catch
your breath, the color
fades out of your hair.

.

9 November 2019

DESIRING

**Getting to sea
all my describers
stretch across the globe**

**that bent horizon
we see as straight**

**where we raise
sky-high our promises
to know and be held.**

**2.
Music means it.
But could a bagpipe
carry so many
of us so far?**

**The Irish kind,
not the Scottish—
all squeeze and no blow.**

3.

Float on my breath,
chérie, a word
will bring you home.

4.

Passion means suffering
what happened
and happens now,

sight of the sea
illimitable one says.
never-ending discourse
of the waves themselves,

try to listen to it,
go to sleep with its rush,
its hush, the radio
of it speaking
the only news you can trust.

10 November 2019

=====

**The taste of it
the weight of it**

**amber leaves
the drift of them**

**close now
to the meaning of it**

**faster than morning
the touch of.**

11 November 2019

=====

rusting the other
is a bone
to build on
or it breaks

or even dare
sometimes we
are disappointed
with the weather—

a friend is like the wind.

11 November 2019

=====

Gamelan

**hiding in company
sneaky fingers
playing off
the other's rhythm—**

**where have I lost you
in the music?**

11 November 2019

=====

**Far better than a lie
even better than the truth—
sound of a finger
tapping on a piece of wood.**

11 November 2019

=====

for C

**Come back to bed
and tell me why**

**I didn't hear
the bird that woke you.
You said it was blue**

**I heard
a different color
and it held me tight.**

11 November 2019

LA MÉTHODE

What can I tell them
they don't already know
except what I don't know
until I say so?

They need
the sputter of my ignorance,
the guess-work, the sacred
word off the top of my head

and I need theirs,
body and soul,
the long strands of thought
beautiful as her long hair,

you know whose, you
know her, you see her
every blessed morning
coming up the longest stairs.

12 November 2019

FROM ARCHEOLOGY

**Ancillary evidence
hammer an unknown king
drew from the stone**

**and years later
at the end of his life
put it back in place**

**when some other kingdom
needed to be wrought
out of earth**

**and all our work
has to begin again.**

**(Who forged the iron? Who carved the handle,
wood from what tree? There is a time for**

finding things, a time to begin again. Mercury slips across the Sun and we keep watch, we pay a man to watch it for us, to catch the shadows of all the things that pass. Before I believe a single other star, I want to feel that wood in my hand.)

12.XI.19

=====

**The banks of willow
tall linden on the rock
what is this place
that flowed around me
as I slept a few hours
then woke in the strangeness,
my own house at night--
there could be no stranger place.
And outside the stream curls
north then west around me,
I hear it praying quietly
the gospel that water always says,
I think it is the only
thing that understands the night.**

12 November 2019

TO A ONE-TIME FRIEND

**Don't come back
unless you bring
the truth with you,
I know you'd rather
bring anything else,
words, or pictures, cups
to drink deception from.
Don't come back until
the truth makes you humble
enough to come empty-handed,
no pomp and promise, no gift,
just clean empty hands
and your mouth telling
calmly the facts of the case.
We are all of us on trial,
no lawyers and no jury,
and the judge is that person
you might not even notice
in the crowd, the one
with tears in her eyes.**

12 November 2019

ABOUT NARRATION

**I told the story
till it told itself
and let me sleep.**

Is writing a story different from writing? Writing serves it but doesn't discover it. The story seems to stand apart the way a poem never does. The story is waiting for you to tell it, while a poem is a part of your being, coming into being as you breathe. I've told half a dozen tales this week and wonder, Did they tell me to tell them, is that why they're called tales? I get nervous thinking about the difference. Plays are easier to think about, a play is just a bunch of beings-in-you writing poems of their own together at one another. No mystery there--why they're so popular. Everybody has beings in them, beings to spare, share, despair of, become.

12.XI.19

====

The shopping list
is written in moonlight--
the moon is full just now
it keeps me awake
wondering at the dark
noises of a house, taste
of a gingersnap you
nibble to be normal,
try to, brush the dark
until it gleams like fur,
a muff to hide in, a dream
to leave strictly alone--
I know better than to sleep.

12 November 2019

=====

In that country, every year on your birthday you get a letter from the High Priest telling you in some detail what you were doing a hundred or five hundred or a thousand years before. This gives you strong hints of your previous lives, hints enough to build memories from, or do research in libraries or genetic laboratories, build dreams from, correct ancient mistakes, prepare the future. Some people never open the envelope, some memorize the contents thoroughly. Which kind are you? Wait till the letter comes, and you'll find out.

12 November 2019

TYPING LESSON

But my hand did not find
these words, my fingers
found them at their tips
and they seem thinner,
finicky, finer maybe, but
I don't feel the muscle
in them, the swollen blood,
the blundering weight
of what is after all my meat.
I thought them into place
instead of breathing, words
under glass endure your stare.

12 November 2019

BEING GOOD TO THE EARTH

Does prayer help the earth?

What I know is this:

**immigration
is the circulation
of thje planet's blood.**

**Without it
we would be lost
in the stagnation of our singularity.**

**Peoples need to drift
or march or scurry
desperate through
the arteries of earth,**

**blood of the whole beast,
the animal we are.**

Even your old Bible says so:

**save the city? save the earth?
take the stranger in.**

13 November 2019

NEED

**the need is riddled through with doubt.
The owl looks out from the silver coin
wide-eyed as ever, ever
facing facts.
That's what they do.
As we should too.**

2.

**Never mind rhyming the reason,
just let it loose.
The ears, those clever animals,
will sort it out.
A word misheard
is a gift from on high.**

3.

**Or does it make sense
to stay below, watching
the ripples as the rowboat
floats along the river
or is it just a lake
and the far shore we**

**hunger for and barely see
is where we started out?**

4.

**It goes me
is what I think I mean,
it goes me
and I am gone
and so I am always here.
Sounds to me like a prayer--
can breath make a mistake?
Can a word go wrong?**

5.

**So what is this need
not hunger and not thirst
not love or truth or woolen gloves.
what is this thing
that says itself in me,
leaves me gasping for it,
my silly mind outstretched?**

6.

I'm afraid that if I knew
I wouldn't tell you
for fear you'd satisfy it
and the need be gone.
And where would I be then,
like some stuffed king of Babylon
carved on a rock cliff three
thousand years ago?

13 November 2019

=====

**The beach umbrella is furled
blue flaps of it uneasy
stirring in grey wind.
Apostrophe to weather: Why?**

**Where did the warm escape to,
why is my skin so pale?
My great- grand-sire
dwelt in Pakistan
when they called it Sind.**

**Where have I been
to feel the cold so keen?
Lost in the library
with my hothead a thousand
years away from my cold fingers.**

13 November 2019

**DURING A PERFORMANCE
OF DIMITRI MTRPOULOS'
*CONCERTO GROSSO***

1.

Can music say what I mean?

Can I say what "I" means?

**The difficulty sounds like drums
pr basses thrummed to make
the sound of drums.**

**The sound of me
he may have meant
who said so.**

2.

**Or what do I mean
to you?**

**Saying
is a floor
to dance on,
slippery wet
from years of weeping.**

3.

The train glides out of the station,
drags the station with it.
We never leave home.

4.

Olive trees of Pasadena,
red crush of them ripe
on the stone paths we
walk on fallen fruit
redder than blood,
more bitter than meaning.

5.

He came so far
to bring us this.
He could have whistled it
into the wind. He did,
Unbutton your collar, scholar,
feel it prick your chill skin.

13 November 2019

=====

**A few minutes before nine
the pretty cars
scurrying to work,
their drivers
along for the ride,
will spend the day
yearning for their beasts
to come and fetch them home again.
When we gave up horses
we gave up touch.**

14 November 2019

= = = = =

**You can't be
serious she said
yes I can't
I said, things
are too important
to take less
than lightly,
the snow
is melting, see?**

14 November 2019

=====

Where two roads come together
and the Sun comes up
it's still a picture in a picture frame
it's still your childhood bedroom
chasing after you all day long,
the comforter, the sad Venetian blinds,
the maple chest of drawers
that creaks all night—
nothing is left to remember,
it's all here, the roses
your aunt brought when you were sick,
her pretty daughter who did not know your
]name.

14 November 2019

=====

**“Matter is the highest form of mind”
he said and he was wrong
but I was delighted
to have all the evidence at last
teeming around me, dense
as traffic in Delhi,
rickshaws and oil trucks and scooters
horses and geezers on bicycles
heading everywhere at once.
You call this matter
but I call this me.**

14 November 2019

=====

**How to please the sky—
wear blue?**

14 November 2019

=====

Be near to me
be up and down the stairs in me
all the shiny books
are tumbling from my arms
and we hear, as if music,
the strong rush of gas into the tank
while the meter sings.
The sky is one more dream.
The answer is not politics,
more like an angry swan
swimming away, annoyance
brassier than war.
Most of what I meant
has melted now
into the slow reception room
grassy carpet and no ceiling
and the sun. There,
I mention her again, the dare,
the lascivious heresy of hope.
Come round tomorrow and read my palms,
I'll let them walk on you until you know.

2.

Office about to close, the bathroom handy,
the redbird fidgeting at the window—
it all makes sense
the way cows lay eggs
and we speak languages we never learned.
Language is a second language
and I say it again,
white is bleak and belak is black
and the world dribbles out of my hands.

3.

Breakfast in Portugal
with the girl next door
I see her changing through the window
from woman into catamount
leaping up the stairs,
I lose my appetite
and the Nepali restaurant is closed,
some ancient holiday they keep
that keeps us out.

November 2019 79

**Dinnerless in Boston yet again—
full of answers but no questions,
years pass by and I wake up
rather close to where I went to sleep.
The you is different and the me is gone.**

15 November 2019

= = = = =

for Crichton

**It had to be your voice
that woke me to speak--
that's what magic does,
stage or otherwise, your voice
in my mouth, your body,
that everyday sacrament,
open-gated mystery, moves
to make me think. Thought
is the shadow of actions,
my mind is other people,
see? True. Or true enough
to be Shakespeare with—
everything we ever have to say
we'll find that Shakespeare said—
which shows that writing
is not about saying, saying anything.
Writing is about answering
a question your presence asks,
you who are all of you,
the whole population of earth**

alone on the stage.
And as we have been told
there's nowhere that is not on stage.

The actor tells the writer what to do,
and you are both of them at once,
how strange, snow-flower,
midnight sun.

And once
you raised your voice at table
and in that instant I learned
what it was I really meant to say.

15 November 2019

== == == == ==

Lacustrine meadows
but insolent hillsides
the images are rising,
are rising, but who
is guiding their old
intolerant song?

The bird in my window
knows more than I do
of government, politics,
householding and song.

But I know the masses
are rising, hatred
turns legal, turns lyrical,
the street full of us
and all of us strangers.

...16 November 2019

=====

**There is a Stonehenge in the heart
hard facts of a mystery
we still don't understand.
It is ancient in us and always new
I think love is a shadow
that those stones cast
and always changing as the sun moves.
But who is the Sun?**

16 November 2019

=====

**If I throw back the curtains
what will I see?
Is it light enough
to see the dark
for what it is?
And who goes there
over grass and tinder?
Which of us does a curtain shield,
the inner or the outer,
householder, passerby, morning star?**

16 November 2019

=====

**Don't you worry—
the bishop's hand
is soft as it slaps
your cheek, mild
symbol of the strife
that is to come,
you will suffer
as a witness,
your truth
will trap you
and you will rejoice—
and all art
comes from this,
brave men
need no music
so be afraid.**

16 November 2019

=====

**Give someone a gift
so beautiful
it silences discourse.**

**Everything is complete
now between you.
Nothing to be said.**

16 November 2019

=====

**From my father
I learned to love music,
from my mother
I learned to love silence.**

**People say silence is golden
but I say that silence
is a mine where gold is found**

**and with great quiet effort
it can be brought out
the light of common speech.**

16 November 2019

=====

**Bring the book to bed
and let it read me.
I lust for other people's dreams,
strangers and caravels,
the sands of Lilliput.
How disappointing
to meet in dream
people I know in waking.
A waste of narrative space—
so keep the dream safe,
that Temple of the Others.**

16 November 2019

= = = = =

**Exhausted by honesty
he fears to sleep.
Who knows, who knows
what might come next
in the great Between?**

16 November 2019

=====

Use every breath.
Use it, don't
just let it go.

16 November 2019

=====

**Finding the way home
is hard,
hardest when you're there
already, body and soul.
But something is there
with you, something
that feels like distance.
So far to go
to be here.**

16 November 2019

=====

**Wait inside the bowl
for the wine to come;
Only when it starts to flow
is it time to go. Meanwhile
the busy sky communicates
a million messages you
have to choose to understand
and take it in, write it down
and think you're thinking.**

16 November 2019

=====

**We've lost so many
and still some voices come.
A girl heeds the verses
of an old man she never met
and the beautiful machine
runs on. O earth of us,
we still have not come to noon.**

16 November 2019

=====

If I were an Austrian composer
a hundred years or so ago
I'd write a song cycle entitled
"Hope" (*Hoffnung* it would say
on the score but hope's it means)
made of two dozen little poems
alternating alto and baritone
specifying all the evidence we have
for hope, starting with springtime,
religious conversions, crowded
markets, dreans where dead friends
smile at us and tell us just a little
bit of what is to come.
And after the last song the cello
would play alone a while
and then the viola would slide in
and they would calm each other down
the way nervous lovers do
and silence then would come
to make the meaning clear.

16 November 2019

====

**But remembering is hard,
to do and to hold
and to bear the weight of it,
the thing remembered, the by
definition the thing lost.**

**The shape of someone moving
across the room, standing
by the wall phone, leaning
eye closed at the sink. You weep
for those you never knew,
you sob for strangers. Because
we knew no one—they all
were shapes and passengers,
shadows and shouts, some
with names and some of them
so poignantly nakedly without.**

16 November 2019

November 2019 96

=====

**Graham cracker
at midnight
dry and sweet.
What more
is a dream made of,
something that yields
when we rake it in,
faintly nourishing,
faintly a mild pleasure
to hold onto in the dark.**

16 November 2019

GROTTO

You gave me a geode
shaped like a grotto,
stands upright, tall
triangular gateway
into the amethyst
severity within. Color
is the subtlest religion,
guides the thought
from point to point,
sharp, insistent daring
the mind to go inside.
To think itself among
the hundred crystals
each pointing elsewhere.
When I finally go in I find
elsewhere is the place
where here really is.

16 November 2019

GRISAILLE

of sky
the tendril trees
the Eighteenth Century
Netherlandish etching
we call reality,
Around us.

Morning,
where have you been
before us? All
your Australias
cling to you,
the fur of distance
gleams around our now.

I am describing
what I hope
to fall in love with:
this day,
the only one.

17 November 2019
Start of NB 429

November 2019 99

=====

**The one good thing
about mistakes
is living with them
shaming or scary
or even sweet, guides
to our next few steps.**

17 November 2019

MUHIKANUK

Once I worried about rivers—
the East opaque green
the Delaware rock-dry in August.
But then the Hudson took me

sand ley me live
beside its unstoppable
hithering and dithering.
river that flows two ways
my own fjord, my
caress from the whole sea.

17 November 2019

=====

**Dark-muzzled
the forest path—
to enter anything
is always risky.
Walk slow:
ghost branches,
tree roots have teeth.**

**If this were a dream
the woods would be
the body of someone
special, . profound
danger of human identity,
I would stumble and fall.**

17 November 2019

=====

I found a penny on my table
where no coin had been.

What can I buy for a penny—
a poem, maybe,
Joyce said *Pomes pennyeach*
an apple, a poem?

This little brown dusty coin
makes me write this.
The coin buys me,
it pays my way
into the image,

Lincoln, the War,
the bronze itself,
Scythian helmets, brass
buckle of my belt.

Can a penny keep me
from rushing out

**into the perilous day,
people, prophets crying out
on every corner, every tree
wants something from me?**

**I will stay home an hour
and try to understand
this thing on the tip of my finger.**

18 November 2019

=====

**A bracelet woven
on the wrist—**

**morning of the thing.
They show their faces,
want to be known.**

**Am I an actor even
in their long play,
a comedy I hope,
the King of Midnight,
the Queen of Noon?**

**Every object I touch or see
reminds me of
what I'm to say next,
this cup my cue.**

18 November 2019

=====

Nowhere near the dream
Boston bookshops
distances to run
the volume set aside
maybe there all the while
where I placed it,
maybe everything else changed.

*

Every dream is a bad dream.
The broken quest
crowds, crowds and
no one knowing who you are.

18 November 2019

=====

**Memo to self:
Waking is being rescued.
Remember that
tonight.**

18 November 2019

= = = = =

**Where did I lose
what I never had?**

18.XI.19

=====*

**Drank a thick beverage
approximating milk—**

touching the hem of night
**I wrote awake
and then I slept and did it,
pulled it, it fell upon me
and I sweltered in its wool.**

18 November 2019

=====

**Write my way to dreamless sleep—
leave all the images outside,
the terrible distances,
the needs to satisfy.**

18.XI.19

THE SHELF

**Woman standing on a chair
to shove my past
up out of sight
till I am saved from being
harmed by it again.**

18.XI.19

=====

To be in a state like prayer
with no words to say it—
this is the sometimes
beauty of the night.

18 November 2019

=====

Quiet enough to hear
the sounds my body makes
inside, the secret rain
I should not hear.

Doors opening and closing inside me
the grasslands stirring
in the unfelt breeze.
I overhear myself,
the real me
the busy streets inside.

18 November 2019

=====

None of this had to be said,
it just said.
So I wrote it down
to be at peace
with what it told me
or did I get it wrong again,
and if so, what is the difference
between what I hear
and what is there?
Fridge purring in the corner.
angel on the roofbeam, briefly.

18 November 2019

=====

**Ambitious daylight
snowless everywhere—
but the cardiologist
is fishing in the Yukon
and all the Paris bookstores
are closed for lunch.
Nonetheless, there is you know
a back door to everything.
We will use that
for our journey
all the way to go in.**

19 November 2019

=====

Ranging canned goods in the pantry
you think for a while you are
simply an American. Not so fast.
Provender insulates identity.
Thai fish sauce on your tongue,
you can't recite a single
stanza of Shelley's *Prometheus*—
is it a poem or is it a play?
Where should you stack
the tins of pink salmon?
And your mother never said tuna,
always tuna fish, one word.
Like waves breaking on the sandy shore.

19 November 2019

GATES

We build the gate
by opening the air,
so time rushes in
and counts us
as we stand, marveling
at the spacious
emptiness of mind
religion calls *sunyata*,
the origin of everything.
Open the air—
everything is there.

19 November 2019

=====

**The task
is right.
The task
is write.**

20.XI.19

=====

**When there is no color
in the morning a deer
leaps out of the trees
stands motionless for us
blinking its body in.**

**When there is no color
in the morning the birds themselves
are shy, quiet, I wonder
why everybody knows already
what we just now begin
to suspect—color
is probably the only real news.**

20 November 2019

=====

**I don't want
to want.
I'm tired
of being lured
by passing things.
In heaven I think
everything is here
already, hands
already clasped
on all we need,
everything complete.**

20 November 2019

=====

**You should paint a white line
down the middle of the road
of every experience to tell
whether you're on the way
there or coming back—sometimes
all you know is that you're moving.**

20 November 2019

THE ARROW

**points to you
always. Can't
help it, that's
what they do.**

**We're like that ourselves,
always towards
something, never still.**

2.

**Who is the bowman,
what is the bow?
Wouldn't you like to know
before you reach
this target world
or miss it and lie
harmless in grass?**

3.

**I'm not sure I do.
I imagine myself
master only of the air
I pass through
on my way to
whatever it is that
has never yet been said.**

20/21 November 2019

=====

Back in the day
when people smoked
cigarettes and
subways went
where we wanted to go
many of us still living
saw the light and started
our every morning pilgrimage—
tricycles, roller skates,
Volkswagens, out
into the danger.

Music happened us
along the way
and then the music stopped.

Here we are,
surgeons of our own time,
still trying to make it happen,
whatever it is.

November 2019 124

**Don't go too far from me
while I carry on
this toresome chapter
I only do it
to keep the conversation going.
Even now it is terrible to be alone.**

20-21 November 2019

=====

**Anybody can do this
as well as I can,
or better even, more skill,
patience, compassion.**

**Anybody can do it,
I just stand doing it
over and over
to show how easy it is to do
just do it, all
the time and every day,
do it, it knows
how to come out right.**

20-21 November 2019

=====

**I ate three lemon snaps
in the middle of the night.
I confess I have
cold coffee, sitting in the dark,
look out the window. Why
am I telling you this?
That's why.**

20-21 November 2019

=====

**But if there were no Bible
there'd be no handwriting
on the wall, no wall to write on
and no alphabet he thought.**

**But he was wrong— always
a way for the news to come,
birds bring it by leaving,
leaves by falling, trees
by standing still. The ordinary
is what endures.**

21 November 2019

=====

**Elegant procedures
deceive us.**

**The sky
is scripture, open
to interpretation,
devious theologians
cluster in the marketplace.**

**The *senses five*
tell their lies
but love us well.
The love at least
is worth our trust.**

22 November 2019

=====

**Eyebeams tangled
like tongues, remember?
Little lewder than a look,
how dare we? Pilgrims
shuffling up stone stairs,
kneeling together in amber [?],
one candle only on the altar,
stare at the cross on the wall.
Wander in wonder.**

22 November 2019

=====

for Charlotte

To say to you
even the shadow
of the echo
of what you mean
and mean to me
would take more breath
than there are words
to carry it
but day by day
I keep trying to say it,
today too—
your birthday
gave me life.

22 November 2019

=====

**Sharing geography
sit across the table
from the truth,
let fingers
touch the evidence,
compress. Now
you have fed Memory,
that goddess from Vienna,
relax. Sharing
is sharing is caring
is done. This
is what a table's for.**

23 November 2019

= = = = =

**The color of absence
long disturbance
but then the quiet coverlet,
the *quilt* they said
of all our, your, their,
presences. Gone
is also a kind of flower,
scent of one, at least,
dry petal fallen on the carpet
indistinguishable from the pattern thereof.**

23 November 2019

=====

Thingly innocent potent
thd way the waves
carry it, carry ashore
the elsewhere of it
ever coming in.

We are children of arrivals,
broken promises and worse
ones kept, innocent as snow,
dangerous. Children
of a virtuous idea, all our maybes
draped around the calm
outrageous softness of our skin.

The throat males language happen,
innocent, potent, sounds
searching for things to mean,
yo lean on in the physics world
where things fall down.

Becayse language while serious and true
has no gravity. Words float

**until they come to mind.
And then where are we,
listeners, endurers, actors
in a play that never stops,
godsend we say our lines right,

godsend we have words to say.**

23 November 2019

TRYING TO ANSWER THE DREAM

It's too dark
to know the day
the waves bring back

the sea so close
always so close

their faces welcome me
calmly, as if they knew

they always know.

2.

There is an apartment in the dark
where minor ills are cured—
growths and gashes.

There is a place
that knows you,
your name and heritage,
a place where every
man is a warrior,

and women laugh,
and everyone is known.

It is the dream, by definition,
a wild stretch in Wyoming
Medicine Bow mountain meadow
mosquitoes launch out
from under melting snow.

3.
Am I almost real now,
here, a strange hour
no one knows?

Can I credit
how known I am,
pillar and fountain,
eyes shut, hand
reaching out
to touch.

Am I real
enough to touch?

4.

In the middle of things
the meaning comes back.

My mother and my father
in a red car, come to meet me,

to drive down Seventh Avenue to Canal,
to find a bridge.

5.

Night hour. They call it
t'o rang in Tibetan,
the darjest time, just
before any hint off dawn.

Iy belongs to the goddess—
all dark belongs tro prayer.
If you don't know any prayers
just breathe out and follow your breath
as far as it will go,
and it will bear you with it all the way.

6.

Now where is the doctor,
where is the cure?
The toilet in the crowded room,
disciples discoursing,
guesses of truth?
Where is the staircase now
and the lost red car?

The subway
near enough to hear
its roar if it were running.
Infrequent trains,
lost hours. Who made the night
anyhow?

But nothing runs.
The law comes back
and I go down the stairs
onto the avenue,
hurry
home where I have never been.

23/ 24 November 2019

=====

Deer crossing the road
they are big now
novembering through the trees
ruddier than summer
somehow, strong.

The one with antlers
crosses last, Or is that
my patriarchal training
to imagine?

Cure me,
beast world! Cure me
of this society.

23 / 24 November 2019

THROUGH THE CURTAIN

Wet street
in lamplight
the skin
of night—

the diamonded dark
is a whole person
out there,
huge and calm.

Feel it standing guard.
Pray to know it better—
doesn't much matter
what or whether you believe—
prayer will find its own way.

WHEN THE THING GETS DONE

a sonata for Spinoza

**A day. A birthday.
A barrier. A ballroom
dead princesses dancing.
A balloon lifting travelers
over. Just over.**

**How to be
a wall. A bird
settles on your shoulder—
this is one thing
it means to be a thing.**

**Run in the park and then
lie down in wet grass
against all the mothers in the world.**

2.

He said Read Spinoza
I refused, reluctant
to spend eyesight on opinion
however serious—
opinion can never be accurate.

(If I'm not careful
next time he'll tell me
to read the paper
and the day would vanish
into its own shadow.)

But it's his birthday! he said
and I relented, I went so far
as to pick up his book
and hold it in my cold hand.

3.

That was the slow
movement, no
back to the jig.

The song shakes out its dust,

**the soul takes off its shirt
and runs across the piazza,
Rossini in the rain
faster and faster. The crowd
knows how to stand still,
listen, listen, even
pigeons come to rest
on the steeples. But you
don't know how to stop,
you are just music
and you just go.**

24 November 2019

=====

**Why is someone
walking slowly up
a country road
silvery in rain
like a golden triptych
behind the altar
showing saints at prayer
around a central Figure
from whom their meaning
flows into their welcoming
forms?**

**Daylight
is part of the answer.**

**An empty road is like heaven
I think. And when cars
come down it now and then
their headlights rush
ahead of them, reflecting
in glistening asphalt.**

**Things persist. These trees.
Might as well be Jerusalem,
pines of Rome, mistakes
on my calculus quiz, had
to work hard to get a B
in the course. Hate to work
at what does not interest.
Though how do you know
until you do?**

**Not raining
now. The root is in the air.
See, I was used to coasting
brilliantly through everything
without paying much attention.
Things are easy, mostly, soft
and slippery like wet roads,**

**wet skin, easy alphabets,
the runes are just a flock of trees
we are born with the knowledge
inside. The knowledge.
The interminable resemblances**

of things interweaving, breeding
with each other. the light
deciding.

Triptych
of the Madonna, her *meaning*
seemingly cradled in her arms.
Yet she is the original, her breath
is what we hear, we breathe,
her form far up the road,
gradually hidden by the trees.

24 November 2019

= = = = =

**If the sun came out
one more chalice
for us to drain.**

24.XI.19

TISCHREDEN

1.

Food on the table
among the elbows
of the jabbering guests.

2.

Friendship used to mean.
But then our distances
dispersed and we were
always in each other's faces
all the time o woe.

3.

Now it is a grey day
all over again
the colors asleep
beneath the trees

4.

I want to love them all
but amity needs sunlight
needs Waikiki and wantonness

and all I have
is moonstrips on the *tisch*,
some guacamole.

24 November 2019

====

**I walk up the bone
of the Moon God
I find the Sun Goddess
sitting on the terrace,**

how we influence the weather?

**I pick up a golden cup
that had been lying in her light
and fill it with earth
no matter how dirty my hands get
fill it with earth
and offer it to her
in humility and fear
and something like love,**

**then turn away, go back
the way I came, She sends
my shadow before me,
reaching me to the horizon.**

24 November 2019

====

If I could be
once again
the dashing young
Offizier I never was.
I'd hurry late at night
through all the quadrangles
on the campus of the heart
until I came
to the little dorm
where love is made,
I'd stare through the window
to watch how it is done,
then run away abashed
by ehat I'd seen,
and drift back into the dark
doubting I could ever
bring myself to give
so much of myself away.

24/25 November 2019

= = = = =

Light enough to be
by, and count the letters
of an unknown name,
resh, ayin thorn
and think you know
I mean I know
the one it means.

Because she's always
standing there, her fingers
loose on the brass doorknob
ready to go in.
To let me in.

Is that
who dawn is? Is all of this
a long permission
through which we stumble
I mean I stumble
trying to read the inscriptions
on the virgin stone?

24/25 November 2019

=====

**Where they cast the cannon
to fight off the British
two centuries ago
there's just a deep trench now,
grass-lined, a ship-shaped
falter in a meadow. War
was near here once, the shade
it casts never entirely dispels.
You hear the groan of it
on quiet nights and think it's just
the train from Buffalo and the west
but I know better.
The meadow
told me everything I know.**

24/25 November 2019

=

=====

**Drum antics,
maestro!
We have sunshine
at last!**

**I missed Her so,
the swirl
of her eastern skirt,
russet of her goodbyes,**

**But Thou art
pale today,
milady, I'll sing
to cheer you,
more hum than holler,
to greet Thee
dear ever returning.**

25 November 2019

====

**I have my convictions
all the fictions
I need to tell the truth,**

**roads and raptures,
all my religions,**

the soft smile on your sleeping face.

25 November 2019

====

**That the mind so-called
is a time-lapse photo
fresh every instant
from the camera of the brain.
It is so. But do I even know
what these words mean?**

25 November 2019

=====

**As if this too
were writing,
the quill pen
dipped in violet—**

**words on the breath
cried out between
gasps at how cold
the water is today
and I love you
my only message.**

25 November 2019

====

*Cautions,
controls,
but whose?
And who?*

**In manuscripts
the colored images
bright fantastical**

**are never realistic,
never.**

**They could
if they wanted to?
Dürer could—
witness his self-portrait
like anybody else.**

**o why is the actual
never represented?
Oh why bother to show
what we see every day—
isn't art imagining**

**out loud, in line
and color,
isn't art a dream
stain on parchment?**

**What I want you
to show me
is what isn't.
isn't the cat at your feet.**

26 November 2019

=====

**Saucer twice mended
maybe three times
by now, every house
is a museum, the world
is made for things
and we are the nervous
curators anxious
for our charges, for our jobs.**

26 November 2019

====

**Blue sky, don't answer me,
just smile at me all day.
I feel like a mountain in Japan
with pilgrims shuffling on my cliffs.
Blue sky, I haven't feel rise in me
a question even yet to ask of Thee—
be patient with mypatience, please**

ONEIROPENIA

The dream I lost
when I didn't go back to sleep
but sat instead at the window
bright with other people's morning,
meanings, where is it now?
Do dreams wait for us
like panthers at the zoo
pacing ovals in their cages
waiting for us to sleep?

2.

But all circles are perfect
by definition.
And we, we're always
on the outside looking in.
By definition once again.
A pilgrim is a man with no circle.
And we dare to talk
about our circle of friends--
a friend is a perfect
geometric or Platonic solid

you shall never enter.

A friend is a monument of reproach,

a moment of sudden terror.

a hoop, a perfect

circle rolling further and further away.

3.

But, Swami, now tell me this:

what do I do with my open mouth,

my empty hands?

What is this scripture

written inside me,

this book of empty roads,

sutra of the unanswered smile?

Tell me, Swami, why am I written

in an alphabet I don't know how to read?

Why is daylight such a mystery

I have to spend the whole

day trying to solve?

4.

The land-line is quiet,
the mailbox stuffed.
Everything is virtual--
the circle once again.
The office chair I;m sitting on
has rollers on its feet.
I travel best when sitting still?

5.

I'm trying to make light of it.
I loved them like music
and they answered like sculpture,
hard and cold to touch.
Most things are beautiful
seen the right way. Loved them
like a cello they answered like a drum.
God help us, we are saxophones
bleating in one another's crowded cafes.

6.

Mere rhetoric.

I haven't heard

a saxophone in years.

And I can't hear you either

and you can't hear me.

The circles are complete

as usual. No wonder

the sun gets tired and the earth

dreams on.

Wake up from being just awake

I cry, Trying to remember

what I mean by saying so--

all rapture and no rhetoric?

And by the fountain

a homeless man

waves gently at a pretty girl,

sometimes the circle opens

and a bird flies out.

26 November 2019

NOVEMBER'S THRICES

Things a
house has
into winter

Vowel by vowel
we hear
our other name

basket of numbers
fresh, caught
from what stream?

and if dice
knew decimals
who'd win?

Or what is loss
just one
more lyric?

**Temperature
such a long word
for what you feel.**

**Every sight
aan anniversary
of seeing.**

**Each lives
alone all
by deciding.**

**A will
a wire
all the way.**

**Short breath
long silence
is the truth.**

**Sometimes
is a strategy
of forever.**

**No moon
tonight,
that fox.**

27 November 2019

=====

The word
for wood
is weird—
the wonder
of what has
been spoken:
a word,
a destiny.

Know this: Fate is from Latin *fatum*, 'what has been spoken,' past participle of *fare*, 'to speak.'

27 November 2019

THE DAY BEFORE

1.

A word forming slowly
in the mouth a cloud
shaping on horizon slow
slow as tomorrow always is
a word some blue shows through

2.

he woke though and found
the alphabet broken by his bed
he'd need another if ever
he hoped to rise up
into the demanding verticals
of this imperious today,
today accepts no excuses,
no substitutes, no delays.
He picks the pieces up
and starts again. A is for
Anonymous. B is for Bathory
the Queen of Hungary, C

for Chichen Itza and already
his left foot is on the soft
Mongolian woolen carpet
spilling its spells beside the bed.
After F he forgets
what he's been doing
and everything is the same
all over` again. Next time
get a new one, bud.

3.

But there was a sparkle in the trees
so that's not so bad, and the vowels
swooped around his mouth
lusting for alien consonants--
you know how adolescents are--
a window is like a dictionary,
the good stuff is in the smallest print,
he squints o tease it out.

4.

When I compose a line of poetry
on the keyboard it's always longer
than when I write it by hand.

Does my wrist have such short breath
but my fingertips pant like greyhounds?
I should have asked Larry Eigner this
who breathed only through the keys.

5.

You can tell I'm avoiding tomorrow,
spouting out anything that comes to mind.
Every day is my thanksgiving
but no turkey. The things
I'm thankful for forever
never have to die.

6.

That sounds grumpy,
doesn't it, a little dour
for a more or less clean-shaven man,

November 2019 175

**not a grey beard in years.
Don't worry, it won't last,
I'm really just a blue sky
fondling my way through clouds
on my slow way to you.**

27 November 2019

= = = = =

**Clouds shaped in wind
thick sky**

**the act of worship
is the art we need**

**the deed of being
for another**

**Gods save us
from ourselves.**

28 November 2019

= = = =

**Big sky.
Sometimes awe
sometimes dear.**

**The look
of Judgment Day
above the skinny**

shivering trees.

28 November 2019

====

**She wrapped her arms
around me tight,
her cheek pressed to my chest.
Suddenly I felt like a tree—
had never felt like that before.
I bless
her for this new ontology.**

28 November 2019

THANKSGIVING AT THE KEYBOARD

Let's see what happens
FROM the fingertips,
this shy Scarlatti sonata
from a frightened hand.
Why fear? You never know
where the hand has been
and what it's seen, and felt
and brought back home
to the bone and now wants
and wants to dither about
all over the keyboard,
black keys especially O
I'll leap up.

2.

But keyboard
is organ is piano
typewriter computer
all the same, all
the dance of fingers
over a fallen world

redeemed by music.
Speech is music, maybe
the first music of all,
where all this hearing
things begins.

3.

That's how it begins.

Leaves it up to me
to find a tune to twine
all the touch-and-tells together.
If I come up with one
you'll be the first to know.

4.

When you worry about worrying
the engine starts.
You hear it purring or growling
in the garage of the heart.
Let it out, get it out
and drive it away,
see where it takes you,
view of the river from the cliff,
the mountain from the riverbank,

so many letters you need
to spell the day's name.

5.

O if only we could give
thanks, not just say it,
not just only feel it,
but give it, this plural
that is so singular,
thanks (we say) for nothing
or thanks for the memory.
The verb is missing so often.
Give thanks. How to give
is harder to guess than to whom
thanks should be given--
the problem is psychology,
ontology, not theology.
Give thanks and see who gets them,
who smiles back.
Leave them by the altar
of the actual and walk home.

28 November 2019
Thanksgiving

=====

**Tie the horse
to the house—
that's what we do best.**

28.XI.19

IMMIGRANTS

Invasion
must always
move into the west—
the Sun is our teacher
and shows the way.
One at a time
we come, carrying
our easts with us
as well as we can,
Celt, German, Magyar,
Mongol, Slav, hurrying
into the rich complex
light of the setting sun.

28 November 2019

=====

Sometimes the Fairies let a man come back.
But then he's strange—not all the time
but every now and then a glimmer in his eyes
or he blinks to shield a brightness
you can't see. But listen to his then.
mpt what he says, exactly, nit the breath
itself, the pauses in his speech, the gaps.
Through them you too can hear
what romantics called the horns of Fairyland.
But they are voices, and the land
they come from is closer than you think.

28 November 2019

ONE REASON WHY I WRITE

Writing rescues me from thinking.

Thinking is that place where anticipation, calculation and dread combine to stifle the heart's pure apprehension of the beauty and intensity of this very moment, the ever-returning, never-returning Now.

29 November 2019

====

The bedroom ceiling looks different when I close my eyes. Striations, brush strokes, *craquelure*, even patterns appear. shift— then disappear when I open my eyes and see the white expanse of ceiling above my bed.

29 November 2019

THE IDES OF DESIRE

**slim certainties
of what it means**

midpoint of the meaning

**The Greeks had none,
too far east,
the meaning had left
long before**

the long way west

*to us,
they came to us,
they wanted us*

**The Romans built
a calendar of stone
and passed it on,
we live in the rubble
of what they meant,**

but from their bright scraps and shards
construct
an empery on the other side of meaning

where music lives.

Not the solitary whistler on the hill
not the neighborhood gamelan

but what a single mind
snatches from the ruins
and makes a hundred people play—

is that when they are?

I think of 1904 Vienna—take that
as the fulcrum on which
time bent,

 and desire woke,
found itself out in the street
still in its nightgown, still
soft blurry eyes lovely from sleep.

29 November 2019

SENSED

**When the swan scuttles faster
and faster across the surface
of the lake then elaps into the air
what does the water remember
of his presence and his passage?**

**Right now I think we are the pond
from which the swan has flown.
There is something we keep
trying to recall, something
we know is there to remember.**

29 November 2019

= = = = =

**How kind the world
how care**

**every assertion
a question too**

**The nature
of nature is change**

aren't I?

30 November 2019

= = = = =

**Writing is sleeping out loud.
Warm light from a cold sky.
Our sciences, our little cars.**

**If there were an hour
when everyone stands still
happy enough to be
and nothing more.**

30 November 2019

=====

a patch of earth.
Where nothing grew
till you. Think
about that.

30 November 2019

=====

**Then the shadow moved
or was it a bear
or the thought of money**

**momentarily dimming the eye
the way it does,
can you?
A boulder between
road and river,
enough to rest on
or cast a shadow.
But now the shadow's gone.**

30 November 2019

=====

**Something is there.
Something always is there.
The prophecy is complete.
We know what comes.
It goes.**

**Don't laugh—
it is your mother too
who holds you
so tender firmly by the hand.**

30 November 2019

=====

**Things come toward us,
they know us.
Between us and things
there is a third kind
of motivic intelligence.
You hear them laugh
sometimes, when things
fit perfectly in place
with our wishes, or fall
out of our fingers
into some busily thithering stream.**

30 November 2019