

12-2019

## dec2019

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## **THE OTHERS**

**The light of what will come  
shows through our skin,  
we glow in the dark  
with a light we can't see.  
The others can. They know us  
for whaty we are. What we feel.**

**1 December 2019**

=====

**Take a long time to tell it—  
it gets truer as you talk,  
the anecdote, the history.  
Time massages truth,  
keeps it agile, keeps it young.**

**1 December 2019**

=====

**The white seats  
brave cars the road  
in wintertime  
all nouns turn verb.  
I listen to the silence,  
all colors they tell me  
fold into one  
beauty,  
  
the glorious absence.**

**2 December 2019**

=====

**Not much to say.  
The silence quiets me.  
It's as if what I think  
to say is itself  
just an echo  
of what's going on around me.  
Respectful now  
as they say  
silence observed.**

**2 December 2019**

=====

**It is a kind of news  
like a swan on the pond  
or new snow falling.  
It doesn't have to be white,  
it could be a dirt road  
through the woods, wooden  
statuette of an apostle,  
an Arhat, mother of God.  
Something made. We say:  
it made the news  
and know not what we say.  
What makes the new?**

**2.**

**The dangerous beauty of what there is.  
Fine snow drifting down still  
on all that has fallen.  
The phone lying on the table,  
silent. Waiting.  
Parallels. Music  
sometimes is too sad to bear**

**all the presumptions  
of human geometry.  
We meet at infinity.  
As if he limitless  
were the only news.**

**3.  
But all this happens first.  
The sky comes down  
and lies on the earth,  
the sleep of winter on us.  
Sleep with me, the sky says,  
I'll dream you dep  
into my silence till you know  
everything I know  
plus your own desire.**

**2 December 2019**

=====

**1.**  
**Not a word.**  
**Cast a coin**  
**out of wood**  
**pierce it, thread it**  
**wear it round the neck—**

**now you're ready**  
**to represent the world**  
**in this neighborhood**  
**pageant of language.**  
**They all will hear you**  
**breathing, and understand.**

**2.**  
**Or have I misunderstood**  
**from the dream**  
**of so many entrances?**



**In this sudden sunlight  
the snow amazes—  
three days almost  
it took to fall.  
And every vision  
is a door.**

**3 December 2019**

====

**Let it be a prayer,  
a prayer does not need  
a To Whom, a prayer  
reaches out reverent  
if desperate hands  
into the unknown.  
Language must have started  
as a prayer, and even now  
a word alone sings  
bravely in the great silence  
where fear and desire  
come to rest. Say it.  
Pray with me.**

**3 December 2019**

== == == ==

**Sometimes  
it can be so simple  
your hand  
on your lover's skin,  
always coming home.**

**3 December 2019**

=====

**That country across the river.  
is it safe, to go there, walk  
on those streets, speak?  
It seems close to the same language,  
the cars look really the same.  
But there are mountains,  
and mountains mean things.  
And this river between us,  
a river is always telling you something.  
*Stay here. or come with me,*  
that's what it says.  
Be afraid of the other side,  
that's where the wilderness begins,  
deep ravines, the snarl  
of mountain lions, waterfalls.  
Sunset lives there  
and the end of things.**

**3 December 2019**

=====

*heathery leathery pump*  
or count to five  
in a different language

i walked out on <sup>TM</sup> the water  
of the river,  
the Thames so wide here,  
turned back after fifty yards or so  
afraid I;m stumble and sink  
and I can't swim,  
the shore was safer  
and the night was dark,  
grey streets pretty empty,  
nice part of town, glimpsed  
familiar buildings far down one street  
felt better, tired though  
of carrying  
all these books.

By ten it was light and hungry  
so I turned into the Two Cousins  
full of middle-aged upper middles dressed to  
the nines and breakfasting noisily

and ine in the morning  
and a few were old--I held  
the door for one  
but went out again, no *cousines*,  
no pretty people, no one young.  
And the bridge across the river  
was now only a block away.  
Now I had all the time in the world  
so I woke.

4 December 2019

=====

**So much the night  
has to tell  
*dark glassy water*  
*I could walk on*  
where shall i keep  
what i almost learn,  
in what language  
can I hide where I have been  
and what I saw there  
and never did?  
*And all the streets have names*  
*you never knew.***

**2.**

**There is gret comfort  
in the image of a bridge.  
Etching, painting, photo,  
sketch--they all work well,  
they all tell *there is a way*  
*across the river, a way***

*to be another.* Just a glimpse  
of one at the end of a street  
cures you of the city soon.  
*But why am I walking alone?*  
And why is this alone enough to tell?

4 December 2019



=====

Layfp;l cluster  
round seemly altars—  
but on the celebrant  
a shadow falls.  
The wine of doubt  
leaves sour traces.  
Hands doubt  
what they hold.

4 December 2019

=====

**Eyes get tired  
interviewing skies.  
Faith can fade  
but practice holds.**

**4.XII.19**

=====

**Now check the mail.  
The answer may be ready  
already. At least  
some letters may tumble  
into sight, foretaste  
of the word to come.**

**4 December 2019**

=====

**The lewd exaggerations of the obvious  
become our holy weather,  
the one that warms us or proposes  
artifices to get through the cold.**

**Long lines of traffic in Delhi, empty  
embankment midnight London,  
who am I who have seen these things  
and why do I matter? the man asks.**

**Nobody answers so he rests content  
in that thing he calls himself,  
a plastic form modeled by experience.  
Sometimes it even talks to him.**

**4 December 2019  
Shafer**

=====

**Come to the aid  
of the garden:  
I danced at last  
with my double  
but neither of us  
was me,**

**Dream,  
that silent music  
does that to us,  
strangers in this place,  
strange as hardy  
purple kale  
growing in the snow.**

**5 December 2019**

=====

**Parson's Guilt—  
name of a wildflower  
blue, saw it in a dream  
and woke to know it.**

**5.XII.19**

=====

**When did the ending begin?  
Don't get scared—  
it all continues us,  
we are continuous.**

**That's what it is, and what it does.  
From the quiver an arrow,  
from trembling a clear idea comes—  
pretend there is a target**

**and you are flying there  
already, through the intelligent  
air. You're almost there.**

**5 December 2019**

=====

**The archeology of now—  
a string quartet  
Mendelssohn's fifth  
slow movement,  
the Holocaust  
pre-remembered)**

**you can hear the present  
sung long ago—**

**music knows these things  
sometimes before they happen,**

**Or maybe we  
are what it remembers.**

**5 December 2019**



## **THE LINE**

**Stay with the line  
darling, stay with the line,  
a line is as far as anything goes,  
it goes to the end  
and then you get born again,**

**a line is what your breath composes,  
shepherds the words along  
till they come to the end  
come to where you get born again,**

**stay with the line,  
the line knows,  
the line is how your body knows  
by breath where all the words should go  
and how they mean,  
a true line banishes all doubt,  
a line carries you all the way  
to the end of the world  
where all of us get born again.**

**5 December 2019**

=====

**Parking spaces  
seen in a dream  
the one pointing east  
over the wet meadow  
before the highway,  
the not-quite-legal one  
along the fire lane,  
snug fit by the concert hall,  
handicap slot at the foot  
of a narrow stairs,  
what a strange place  
the memory.**

**6 December 2019**

=====

**I need the sun  
colors need us.  
wake up  
there you are**

**Absence  
is the hardest  
thing of all  
to read,**

**its alphabet  
is always changing,  
what you thought  
was a sign**

**was only a sigh.**

**6 December 2019**

=====

**For all my talk  
of things and thingliness,  
things don't excite me  
like a letter from a friend  
or your voice in the next room.**

**Things amass—I don't collect.**

**I listen to them gravely,  
still trying to understand,  
to serve them, with  
the words they help me find.**

**6 December 2019**

=====

**1.**

**The steps  
leading up to the front door  
are called the stoop.**

**The space between the sidewalk  
and the sunken entrance  
to the basement entrance  
is called the area.**

**pronounced *airy way*,**

**The street that runs behind the ouses  
is an alley or an alleyway.**

**There are garages on it  
and fence gates leading to back yards  
where roses and pussywillows grow.  
And that is all I know.**

**2.**

**But even with such knowing  
there is more to feel  
and feeling makes talk  
and the presumption  
that I have felt enough**

so have something to say  
but I have not. all I have  
are the words to say  
what I don't know. And so I try  
year after year all afternoon.

3,  
The city I come from  
says it for me—  
something about sidewalks,  
something about fire hydrants  
let loose in August,  
something about parades.  
And all hospitals are  
is where people get born.

6 December 2019  
Shafer

=====

Blue glass on window ledge  
a phial of sky.  
Spell me right today,  
o highest Sun—  
let your skirt's hem  
sweep me clean.  
I have slept  
out of all my mistakes.  
Now marry me.

7 December 2019

**DITTY**

**Get a haircut,  
write a song,**

**keep pretending  
all life long.**

**There is nowhere  
you can't be,**

**you can be anyone  
at all but me.**

**7 December 2019**



=====

**I wanted it to be different  
the way the clouds are,  
new forms, I cried,  
new forms, new alphabets!  
But here I am with ABC  
on a cold bright morning,  
a million pages of snow  
all round us, unmelting—  
Earth has a way of holding on.**

**7 December 2019**

====

**Watch the kidney  
shape of a cloud  
call itself  
into a different form  
till all there is  
is change.  
The system purifies  
itself by change--  
there are organs in us  
that do so, and we do too,  
we are organs of the world  
making pure by change.**

**7 December 2019**

====

**Old men are cheered  
by simple things.  
a night's sleep, a glass  
of water gleaming  
in the morning sun.  
Sometimes they get tired  
of imagining the light.**

**7 December 2019**

=====

**In a hundred years  
this date will be ambiguous—  
but for a hundred years  
clarity persists.  
Numbers can be like marble  
if you use enough of them.  
For now these few will do.**

**7 December 2019**

=====

**Things I don't have to lie about  
are my blue skies. Truth  
is a temperature. And if you feel  
a feeling and know you're feeling it  
it's not a feeling anymore,  
it's something known.  
A fact. File it away,  
we're all encyclopedias anyhow,  
one fact as good as another,  
Or is that another of my lies?**

**7 December 2019**

=====

**1.**

**Getting ready  
for the answer,  
swoop the net  
through the stream  
and hope for fish.**

**2.**

**Children laugh at dawn—  
they still remember  
what the light means.  
Later they forget,  
just like us.**

**3.**

**Trust things hard as you can.  
There is a ghost in them  
that loves you, remember?**

**4.**

**I think I found the answer  
under snow, under dead leaves,  
tunnel where a small  
beast is sleeping.  
Under that too, under, under.**

**8 December 2019**

=====

**Sparrow seen sideways  
glimpse of a pattern,  
read the feathers  
and try to remember.**

**8 December 2019**



====

**10 degrees now, surely winter.  
But no wind—  
we shiver in our lodges,  
cold brings us back to the beginning.  
Before Aeschylus, or even Gilgamesh,  
there is this.**

**8 December 2019**

= ==

**Silence is the most  
awkward word of all  
if it's words you need.  
When you hear it  
the world shivers around you  
as if neither you nor it  
are really there. Of course  
far away a parade is passing  
by, it always is. But who  
are those people? Is there  
really a place for us to go?**

**8 December 2019**

## L'ARLÉSIENNE

I sat at a sidewalk cafe in Arles  
my fingers drumming politely  
on the tin tray on the table top

and a woman walked by  
tall and handsome, dressed all in black,  
walked right up the middle of the street  
slowly, looking straight ahead.

So this was she, the beautiful  
*woman of Arles*  
famous in epic and opera.

It was a blessing to be there,  
empty terrace, little tree,  
a coffee cup and see her

and soon she was gone.  
Sometimes it's enough to see a song.

8 December 2019

====

**The terrible thing about sickness  
is that sickness is selfish.  
Other npeople, other lives  
are of interest to the sick person  
only insofar as they can help,  
comfort, attend. The sick man  
sinks into his aloneness  
terribly. Those close to him  
are chattering birds. All friends  
are far away, across the endless  
ocean on his bedclothes, lost.  
Sickness is selfish. Don't be sick.**

**8 December 2019**

=====

**Legitimate differences—  
I hate words like that,  
not the words themselves,  
poor noble things, but how  
we mouth and mean them,  
All difference is divine.  
And law is a long dream.**

**9 December 2019**

=====

**A child walking to school  
(they still do that in town)  
is like a moonrise.**

**Why. Because the mystery  
is still working, streets  
go somewhere. The child  
has something big in mind.**

**And the moon too  
is mostly memory.**

**9 December 2019**

====

**Who invented glass?  
Who knew  
that light could hold water**

**or show your own face  
looking startled back at you?**

**Who knew that sand  
that ancient ruined rock  
could still stand up,  
come out of the fire  
and be there for you  
now, cold to the touch?**

**The wheel lets us travel  
if we must, but glass  
lets us hold the light in our hands.**

**9 December 2019**

## **BEYOND**

**Beyond is a door.**

**Open it**

**to find the way in.**

**In is a great mystery.**

**Its sign is a crow flying away.**

**10 December 2019**



## PRETERNATURAL

These Latin words of ours  
exceed our nature,  
*go beyond what we're born with,*

voice of a stranger  
calling from the next room  
and somehow they know my name.

10 December 2019

====

Enter the wall  
the wait  
will do you good.  
There is a bird in there  
will charm you to sleep  
not by its song  
but by the surf  
of its wings flashing  
white in the dark.

2.

I meant a wall  
all along. Stand  
between me and the other.  
What you do. The miracle  
of between. The sweet  
smell of obstacle.

3.

I write  
to keep from thinking.  
I say it again,

I am a wall  
between me and what I think.  
Thinking is a vampire  
sucking out my now.  
I am a wall. A wall  
is made of words. Things,  
Maybes. Memories.

4.  
We have been caught  
by what we thought,  
what we thought was our will,  
our will to know  
and by knowing  
be.

5.  
But we hit a wall—  
there was a wall  
built into thinking.  
It's mentioned on charts:  
Here the Outside Ends.  
What happens now  
is something like crying

**inside yourself  
without even knowing you're sad.  
And you're not sad.  
I know because I am the wall  
and the wall loves you.**

**10 December 2019**

====

**The more I read philosophy  
the less I think,**

**the more I want to say  
to say a simple thing**

**and then another  
until the world  
gets fully spoken.**

**Be an ocean,  
be a bird—  
speak without thinking.**

**11 December 2019**

=====

**The sun is shining  
on the new veil of snow  
I wake on a bridal earth  
late for the wedding  
but the organ is still loud  
the guests are dancing  
and the bride lasts forever.**

**11 December 2019**

=====

1.

Wait for the web  
to weave the lines of sight  
(what our tender  
lustful ancestors  
called eye-beams)  
together till we are wedded  
in what we see.

2.

The snow-trimmed branches  
help—no leaves but light,  
frosted with meaning  
like a page you scan  
quick to get the sense of

but not the heat, the real,  
the meaning of it.

**3.**

**Now look who's talking  
about meaning,  
I haven't meant a thing all day.**

**11 December 2019**



=====

**We go north  
and turn around  
we aim at the Sun  
and she listens.**

**There is a gate  
and we go through,  
every gate feels  
like coming home**

**I hope, I worry,  
I too want to be held  
but how? And who?**

**By now the gate has closed.  
Which side are we on?**

**11 December 2019**

====

Keep looking  
for your sparrow  
stays all winter  
too small  
to go away.

Be like that.  
Be a part  
of the place anyhow.  
The sun too  
goes south now—

be small enough to stay.

12 December 2019

=====

**The flow of days  
rivers us all.  
But language, Jim,  
is an eddy,  
a pool of pure lingering  
against the gone.**

**The river goes away  
but language goes on.  
The word is never gone.**

**12 December 2019**

====

No place but now  
and can't run away  
the air is too close  
and music moves you  
to stay. *Somnium*,  
a dream. A good word  
to know. It is the answer  
to most questions  
after the pain is gone.

13 December 2019

=====

**It's all about ethics,  
*Sittlichkeit*, all  
about being good every  
now and you and them.**

**Nowhere to hide  
in a moral world.  
The snow seems  
to melt by itself  
but we know better.**

**There is a book  
beneath the ground  
that reads us,  
what we call  
a day's a chapter  
of it.**

**Sometimes  
we can hear it  
reading softly aloud—  
this listening**

**happens in our breath—  
I think something out the window  
—sky maybe, spruce tree? —  
told me that just now,  
I pass the word on.**

**13 December 2019**

=====

**Something beginning.**

**Something needing.**

**Needing us.**

**Beginning us.**

**13 December 2019**

=====

**Night known  
but who,  
but whom—**

**Why is a weather  
ever after.**

**13 December 2019**



=====

**The whole host of habit  
watching as we go  
and how we do again  
again the things that brought us here.**

**Here is a habit of the heart,  
a tendency,  
a garment worn  
professed in our religion,  
a well-clad army  
bright-helmed,  
singing at the gates of what comes next.**

**14 December 2019**

====

**Playing with the lamp  
the child turns it off.  
Darkness! The first  
of his discoveries.**

**14 December 2019**

=====

**Reason is rebellion.  
A bowl of rice  
is close to peace.  
What did your mother tell you?  
Isn't it finally true?**

**14 December 2019**

=====

**Wait for the butcher  
to be a broker.**

**Inside the bone  
a nutritious hollow—  
saunter there in peace  
like the rabbis of old—**

**they knew better than most  
where tunnels lead  
and who owns the light.**

**They loved to tease—  
they called Her by a boy's name.**

**14 December 2019**

=====

**Measure me again  
or am I waking?**

**So many marches  
to one same sea.**

**14 December 2019**

=====

*The world is all we can know of God.*

1.

The sentence woke me.  
Walking somewhere in a dream  
and then the sentence spoke.  
No relevance to what I had been thinking,  
I hadn't been thinking,  
I was walking  
and then the sentence was.

2.

Eyes too tired to read,  
the TV off, the remote  
across the room,  
I sat there  
in the corners of the day  
thinking nothing.  
Too tired to move.  
Just enough energy to get

**up and go to bed.  
The wooden pilgrimage uphill.  
The sleep. The dream.  
The sentence.**

**3.  
Does the body know  
where it has been?  
Are answers everywhere?  
Just a blush of blue  
hints through the cloud.  
Does a car know  
all the roads it's run?  
Questions answer themselves  
like trees have leaves.  
Dear God let there be spring.**

**15 December 2019**

====

**The old taste  
of something new.**

**People are too busy  
to believe in anything  
but the next thing to do.**

**I wish I were slow instead.**

**15 December 2019**



=====

**Packages of air  
we take and give,  
a word comes with them,  
unwrap and read  
with your bright eyes closed.**

**15 December 2019**

=====

**Every now and then  
a word makes sense.**

**Or is that something else  
comes pouring out  
of what we say?**

**Not a meaning  
but a memory  
of something yet to come?**

**15 December 2019**

=====

**We grow the hills  
on which we stand  
we walk them  
into the sky**

**(woke with that)**

**\***

**Later, when all the ink  
has washed away  
the rock is left  
uninscribed, still  
talking clearly**

**\***

**Circles of air  
coming to answer us—  
don't ask—  
asking slows the answer down,  
just listen.**

**16 December 2019**

=====

These trifles  
trouble—  
                    sleep  
is morality  
in person

\*

I seem to have  
morals on mind  
these days—  
a good place for them—  
be careful what you read,  
it can remember you.

16 December 2019

=====

***Hylonoetic, everything thinks  
hylophatic, everything talks  
Matter means mind.***

\*

**But I have worn  
that shirt before,  
came to see you  
wearing it, silver  
as Herod's, pink  
as Brakhage's, gold  
for Sunday,  
white with knowing.  
White with forgetting.**

**16 December 2019**

=====

**By the time sleep gets us  
it's time for us to wake.  
Lamentable synchrony of dawn.**

**16.XII.2019**

## **THE PLOW**

**The things that know us  
white shapes moving in the window  
white things, lamps, chimneys,  
how deeply we are known.**

**The snowplow woke me  
long before dark, or say  
I answered it, a child still  
obedient to what happens.**

**17 December 2019**

=====

**I have no time  
for incoherence.  
Let alone making  
sense. The song  
is all that matters,**

**it means only  
what happens in you  
when you hear it.  
Isn't that  
morality enough?**

**17 December 2019**



=====

**There is always more to be said.  
This is Eden after all,  
we're still making our excuses.**

**17 December 2019**

=====

**And something else.  
A style of writing  
indifferent to the pen,**

**a thought crying for help,  
for a word to say it.  
And when you cross  
a word out  
what does it  
do to history?**

**17 December 2019**

=====

**Word games for weasels  
or give the man a break—**

**it's not all silence,  
somebody someday says.**

**They'll know what it means  
as soon as they hear it.**

**17 December 2019**

=====

**The naked bride  
the sun rising.**

**17 December 2019**

=====

**Caught a word  
let one go.**

**That's how you wake  
in sunshine**

**that Mother, that Other.**

**18 December 2019**

=====

**We take care of little things,  
the bronze turns greenish  
like the trees  
all by themselves we think  
but they know better.  
There's always wonder waiting.**

**18 December 2019**

=====

**Being sure of anything  
what a taste in the mouth—  
let everybody witness  
for you, your shadow  
sticks to the stone  
and the wind knows your name.**

**18 December 2019**

=====

**he sun does not rise  
till she has spoken  
the night away,  
spoken the word  
of the day it is for us  
to read. It is for us.**



**Spaces left to fill—  
only joy will do it,  
that old word  
I must haul back  
from the glooms  
of my recencies.  
Now needs joy,  
needs the old word  
made new again.  
simple as sunrise**

**18 December 2019**

=====

**I want a country with no army  
and its frontiers are meadows  
reaching to the horizon, fiulled  
with flowers, or now and then  
a fall od snow, a country  
with the sea along it, longboats  
shuffling through the waves  
bringing people stuff or bringing  
people where they want to go.  
I want toknow where people  
wat to go so I can know  
whether I want to go with them  
or just stay here among the flowers,  
snow showers, shadows  
of the pagodas, tallest things around.  
Staying makes for thinking,  
for example the smell of flowers  
and so on, the feel of snow.**

**18 December 2019**

=====

**When the wind waits  
who are we?  
Everybody wants to fly—  
I remember when  
over the sugarloaf even I  
soared into green clouds  
over the forests of—  
how can we ever forget?**

**19 December 2019**

=====

**It must be clearer now  
the thing I say.  
The long priestly vestments  
must be stripped away.  
A thought is there,  
simple as a newborn child  
all skin and shimmer in the cradle.  
Let it grow up and say its word,  
squawk or sense or symbol—  
wait for it to speak—  
that's what time is for.**

**19 December 2019**

=====

**Keep looking back  
till we get there,  
there are roses under  
the ice intact,  
we see them as we go.**

**Look down, look down  
the old rabbis said,  
it's all there below our feet  
those sluggish schoolboys  
barely shuffling along.  
Go slow, look down  
teach them to read,**

**keep going till it reaches us,  
that marble city built of clouds,  
its streets made of pure language  
we'll learn at last to speak  
though still with the accent of earth.**

**20 December 2019**

=====

No one ever's good enough to mother,  
any mother, every mother  
and the sun looks down--  
no wonder sunset is a weeping time,  
one more day we have not thanked enough.

*I think I did  
what she wanted,  
became what I should  
but I did not know her.*

\*

One day she sat in the corner  
with a new book of mine on her lap,  
the lap from which I came.  
She said Someday you'll write  
something I can understand.  
It was the saddest thing I had ever  
heard about me, the harshest

criticism so gently, almost tearfully,  
spoken. O she could read all right,  
was a school teacher, taught  
children to read and write and think.  
But my poems had grown too far  
away from life,  
had sunk into being poems about poetry,  
lost in the mirror of language.

*Sadly she looked at me,  
sadly I said I would try,  
I'm still trying. still  
staring into the corner  
looking for the language that means love,  
that means Here is something  
I found or thought of,  
something I want to give to you.*

20 December 2019

=====

**Picked a shadow  
off the ground  
and brought it home,  
looked vaguely familiar  
like someone he knew  
or his own hand  
reaching down to get it.**

**20 December 2019**



====

**Everything tended to be sunshine  
then some Arabia  
rose up out of the cleft of time**

**and cried out in each of us  
*It is all for me, I live by light***

**and all our little fears shrieked  
and ran away.**

**We can only go one way at a time  
but thank God all roads lead home.**

**20 December 2019**

=====

Someone woke me—  
Bach without the music  
*ich eile mit schwachen doch  
emsigen Schritten*  
the old woman was crying  
no more, no more—

but I was hurrying,  
my heart pounding.  
And you too beside me  
gasping in a dream.

6:44 on Winter Day  
the street lights fading.

But they weren't.  
Language is the blood of any dream,  
the lighthouse blazing  
deep underneath the sea.

21 December 2019

=====

**If a dream is all  
talk and no action  
why was my heart  
pounding wne I woke?**

**Was it the dream  
did it or waking, that  
biblical Hebrew  
of the sudden day?**

**21 December 2019**

= = = = =

it's all we can do  
watch the sky  
go from black to grey  
to almost blue,  
my grandmother  
came from England  
with a sky like that.  
I woke up with two  
words I wanted  
to write down but  
them forgot, hurry  
to check so see if  
the pipes were frozen,,  
they weren't but the words  
were gone, the silence  
yook over, a new  
old phrase came  
*after this our exile*  
and the sky comes home.

21 December 2019

=====

One lives for the next  
thing to say,  
a motorboat  
on a 1930s lake.  
Who is that blonde  
in a captain's cap  
and her friend with the fine  
Italic mustache?  
How can they hear  
each other over  
the motor's roar,  
the waves' replies?  
It is the movies,  
their endearments are visual,  
we see the way they feel  
we feel by seeing  
we feel too.  
Then sleep into the seeing—  
that's why movies live in the dark.

21 December 2019

=====

**The camera  
like language  
tells its own lies**

**and both have the habit  
of turning true,  
gradually, the way  
the sky turns blue.**

**22 December 2019**

=====

**It sounds like blasphemy  
to doubt the very  
word you say it by,  
this thing you think,  
this voluptuous whatever  
stuck in your mind  
and only one way  
to let it out  
by saying. Don't  
doubt your deliverer.  
The word sets free.**

**22 December 2019**

=====

**Sugar is the enemy  
don't we know that by now,  
the base addiction  
to repetition, made  
innocent islands  
into colonies, kept us  
buying, eating,  
made us fat and full  
of acids. Zombies  
walking through the sugar cane.  
Fear sweet. Salt saves.**

**22 December 2019**



I= = = = =

**don't have to have opinions.  
I eat what I can  
and leave the rest on the plate—  
others will consume it.  
Things don't need us,  
do they? A real question,  
I live for answer.**

**23 December 2019**

=====

**If I mention  
the sky  
one more time  
it will start  
charging me rent.  
Or am I paying it already  
breath by breath?**

**23 December 2019**

=====

**One miracle at a time  
the days advance.  
And no one notices!  
Sometimes at high noon  
a faint flutter of awe  
then business goes on.  
Our work, and we do it,  
glad or grudging,  
but we do it. We do.**

**23 December 2019**

=====

*das Lied ist aus*

**When the hand  
lets fall  
what it should hold  
the song is done.**

**23 December 2019**

=====

**Does the whole  
alphabet have to be new  
or just some words in it?  
Or all words  
everywhere? Is that  
what Christmas means?  
The game has changed,  
everything is a gift,  
give it all away, take it  
from my hand?**

**24 December 2019**

=====

**Glimpse on TV  
of Big Ben itself,  
13 tons of iron  
the bell we can  
all close our ears  
and hear. Hello,  
great iron mother,  
sower [?], song,  
lovemaking  
to the empty air.**

**24 December 2019**

=====

**Every man should have a  
blue suit she said  
she bought me one so  
here I am, Everyman  
again, just like the Middle Ages.  
But blue. A quiet blue  
like the last light on a winter's day.**

**24 December 2019**

## **A QUIET CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR CHARLOTTE AFTER A NIGHT OF CAROLING**

**We are all born to do something,  
something no one else can do,  
find a way or find a key  
or be a keyhole  
to an empty room, a room  
you fill or fill with morning light.  
The boy who was born today  
said I am the door.**

**Said  
many other things, some  
of them we even remember.**

**2.  
How far the road lets us go.  
Those three people came again,  
the ones who visited Abraham,  
the ones who chivvied Lot out of Sodom,  
and here they were again,  
pretending to be Persians,**



**speaking with funny accents,  
bringing gold and fragrances,  
resins that do not come from Persia.  
I wonder who they really are,  
that trio, magi, anishim, trinity?  
And who are they visiting today?**

**3.  
Because (they tell us) Christmas  
comes every year.  
What can that possibly mean?  
Someone always being  
born to save us, show us, shame us,  
shield us, walk ahead of us  
as if there really is a way?  
He said I am the way.  
So every year he's born again?  
No. Every day a child is born  
and every child is him  
and every child is you.**

4.

You knew I'd get around to you,  
I always do,  
you are the real, the other, the reason,  
you are why I got born,  
each is born to serve the other,  
merry meant once holy,  
and this day, this snowy Annandale,  
brush fires in Australia,  
riots in India, strikes in France,  
anger and injustice everywhere  
in this world he came to serve.  
That we too are born to serve.  
Save.

5.

You trim the tree  
I serve you breakfast.  
we tell our dreams  
or try to forget them,  
try to find music on the internet

real music, not Xmas stuff,  
music is not about reminding,  
it;s about minding,  
bringing our mind to the point,  
sharpening perception,  
making us listen. And what  
we listen to is always the other,  
the voice of Bach hummed in rhe cello,  
voice of the angels certain shepherds heard,  
voice of someone you love  
at the morning table,  
the voice of you.  
We are born to listen and to tell the truth.

6.

That boy, that boy,  
after so many healings,  
so many sufferings,  
went away, set off  
into emptiness his  
friends thought was the sky  
so they looked up and  
looked and looked until  
a passing angel (there's

always an angel passing)  
made fun of them and said  
(they almost understood)  
If you want to see him,  
look for him in the other,  
find Christ in the other,  
mothers, brothers,  
all your others—that's why  
we have Christmas every year.

7.  
Somehow we find  
each other in the world.  
I find the way to you  
and it exists in us  
and we care. We care  
and we take care  
of one another  
and each other. This  
is what we too are born to do.  
And we dare to call it music  
and we sing.

24-25 December 2019

=====

**We wake up early on Christmas  
still. The gifts are all given,  
no surprises, but still  
we wake up early. The light  
gilding the tree tops  
is a gift too I suppose,  
it wasn't the last night  
and here we are, waking  
early on Christmas  
the way it always was  
and did and we wake with it.**

**25 December 2019**

=====

**Suppose there were an opera  
shaped like this,  
every aria waking up the next  
until all the music is alive in us  
and we wake too, startled  
by the song I just forgot.**

**25 December 2019**

=====

**Sometimes it's hard to tell the gods apart.  
Their eyes show mostly  
through the dark, eyes  
bright with wisdom, soft,  
almost wet with compassion.  
And sometimes are they even tired too?  
of looking at us and we don't look back?  
Our life should be all answering.**

**25 December 2019**

=====

**Her mouth filled  
with what she'd been thinking,  
she opened her lips  
and it came out song.**

**26 December 2019**



=====

**Softly over trees  
a late morning  
begins. Am I in time  
or in someone's garden?  
Can a place suddenly happen?  
Can time be somewhere?**

**26 December 2019**

=====

**Be warm for me  
because I can't help it.**

**I kept the woman waiting  
in the dream, left her there,  
I was afraid to come closer,  
talkied instead to all  
those quiet young men,  
one especially who seemed  
to know all about me.`**

**And I was on the island again  
I can only escape by waking.  
How strange geography is,  
every place is a person  
and every person talks.**

**What a relief to be awake!  
But have I really earned it?**

**26 December 2019**

====

**Catch the corner  
of the blanket,  
flail it, flaunt it,  
flourish it in the air  
till all the birds fly out  
white ones and blue and green  
and fill the room,  
the walls dissolve,  
birds need sky. Now  
let the blanket fall.**

**26 December 2019**

= = = = =

Watch the ephebes haunt  
the columns of the temple,  
it's a library now but they  
are still young, the sun  
still casts strong shadows,  
ionic on the crust of snow.  
This is time. This is what  
wakes up in us unless  
we close the window, close  
the book, rub our hands  
together and do what?  
Something's always waiting  
to be done. Tell that to Lenin  
I said and then repented,  
cheap jokes don't unlock the door,  
do they? Or is there no door  
anymore, just a bunch of kids  
loafing like Whitman in the sun,  
a winter sun at that, earbuds  
glamorize the air they hear,  
pale fingers twitch to alien guitars.

**Architecture is to blame  
for most of us--imagine me  
without a floor to stand on,  
a wall to pound, a door to pray to.**

**26 December 2019**

=====

**Sit by the water  
wait for the sky  
it said in my wonder**

**where is anything  
when it needs you  
and all you have to  
say for yourself  
is a song?**

**Your mother  
wants to hear it  
so sit by the sky and sing.**

**27 December 2019**

=====

**Someone waiting for us  
on stage. By the look of us  
they think we've learned  
our parts by heart. How wrong  
they are. Not two words  
in a row are left of all  
that busy script we conned  
nervous on the subway.  
We'll fake it, we said, they  
will never know. And lo  
and behold they didn't  
and still don't. Even now  
our mouths are loud,  
full of mere impromptus  
and the play goes on.  
We enjoy it, some of the time.**

**27 December 2019**

=====

**If I were an animal  
who would I be,  
Dante or ickens,  
Lincoln or Lee?**

**Or just the lad  
around the corner  
who talks too much  
to shield his shyness  
from his beast desires?**

**Sit on the stoop  
and watch the words pass by.**

**27 December 2019**



=====

**Ready to begin something new  
*Pelerinage de la vie humaine*  
no accent marks, Middle Ages  
book, books are long ago,,  
pilgrimage of all our days,**

**no wonder legs get tired  
after so many years. I guess  
that's what Santa means:  
make things up, give them away  
and let the reindeer do the walking.**

**27 December 2019**

## **GEOGRAPHY LESSON**

*for Charlotte*

**No one is anywhere else anymore,  
everywhere has to be here now  
and there you are. Me too, adoring  
you and all the space you are.  
the latitudes of wisdom you hold.  
hold clear, hold dear, because you are.**

**27 December 2019**

## DATA

means given.  
Matter for mind  
work light  
through the trees,  
change the color of things.

2.  
For all we have  
we thank.  
That is the nature  
of the air. The given.  
No one buys it,  
no one makes it.

3.  
All we are given,  
the shapes!  
the shapes of things,  
curves, re-entrants  
salients, laps.

4.

Give, give back a little,  
what we can,  
can give. Do it  
with breath too,  
the words breathed out,  
don't dare care  
what they mean,  
every word's a prayer.  
At least a given,  
a giving.

5.

That's why we gathered.  
Gather. Data  
harvest [?]. Harmony  
of text with text,  
cloth on your back,  
roof of your house.

6.

Or in the cave  
the earth of texture still.  
We lived there once,

**one more city  
left behind us.  
The given and the given away.**

**7.  
I fear to say too much  
about it or any,  
to run out of data  
into meditation,  
the silent restitution,  
motionless dance.**

**28 December 2019**

=====

Lift the latch  
on so many doors.  
Enter again  
the world of our  
\_\_\_ and your own.

I was a doorway too  
I thought to let  
the music in  
but I came out instead  
into the gorgeous silence of  
what has not yet been said.

28 December 2019

=====

**It comes  
to be given.  
Where? Along.  
When? Ever.  
To whom? Ah,  
that's where genius enters,  
and poetry and teenage dreams  
and physical sensations,  
somatic apperception,  
not knowing what you're  
talking about but still  
keep talking. Keep talking.  
This is the art it means.**

**28 December 2019**

## SUNRISE

Light in tree tops  
ambering.

                  A friend  
in Africa, a friend  
in Attica,  
                  patterns  
woven in the cloth,  
patterns dyed in place.  
A little cloth rhinoceros  
my best friend gave me,  
amber turning gold now,  
a bat flies home to sleep.

29 December 2019



====

**Someone's feast  
is bound to be today.  
Saint Someone.  
Or some lad who wrote  
footsteps on the way to heaven.  
Wherever heaven is,  
*ah, lass, who led me there*  
on the bagpipes played  
always a song up her sleeve.**

**29 December 2019**

=====

**Pallid branches welcoming the sun.  
things tell us how  
the metastasis of principles  
from love to logic  
would save the world.  
So suddenly thinking itself  
would mean: be for the other.**

**29 December 2019**

=====

**Sometimes have to forget  
the night before  
to let the day begin,  
the actual today  
when the sun shows her face  
and color comes back to the town.**

**The walls of night fell down,  
you have brand-new friends now,  
a new mother calls you downstairs,  
brothers and sisters you never knew  
are waiting for you. Waiting to begin.**

**29 December 2019**

## APOSTROPHE TO A LILY

I remember you  
from when I was me  
and you still are,  
not me but free,  
free as a flower only  
is, to be.

The lily  
I think's the high priest  
of a religion we barely understand,  
we feel it best with our hands,  
the movements, O the wind  
does your walking for you,  
flower, stirs  
the sacred molecules of shape and color  
by which we know.  
But what do we know?  
Religion again, that vague  
important thing, altars and mantras  
the wind mutters too,  
cups and incense sticks,

patterns on the ground,  
you inscribe the earth  
with being and with shadow  
until I can't tell the difference.  
But then I never could.  
When you dream  
you are a deer alongside the road,  
you walk the open fields  
but the shadows come with you  
of all the trees you knew,  
and all the streams who  
run in your slow movement.  
Because we have come to the land  
of miracles, we have come  
to where the flower walks  
and you coax the wind  
to leave shadows behind  
of all the places it has seen.  
You wave in breeze so we see them too.

29 December 2019

**IN THE LAST LIGHT OF A DECEMBER DAY**

**The trees will be there still  
and there will be some eye  
to see them. Some I—  
a person does not vanish,  
cannot be gone from what has been.  
It holds together. We  
behold and we are held.**

**29 December 2019**

=====

Last Monday of the decade—  
do such things count?  
Headlights through the trees  
*grey day, grey day*  
as Blackburn made Cortázar say.  
*frey day, Cronopios!*  
I hear his voice inside me still.  
The trees, the trees,  
this little étude  
on the way to heaven.

30 December 2019

=====

**It's 9:35 A.M., 37.6° F.  
What more can I tell you?  
The Sun is in Capricorn—  
but you knew that already.  
I'm wearing a green bathrobe  
but then I always do. All  
the roads around seem  
void of going. The grey  
light pervades, seems matter.  
Here comes a car with lights on!  
Are you still listening?**

**30 December 2019**



=====

**She knows how to change  
blue light to green  
or red or back  
to daylight again.**

**I always knew  
she was really special  
but this surprises  
even me.**

**She murmurs  
and the light goes out.  
Comes on again  
peach pink**

**and music starts,  
horn concerto,  
Richard Strauss  
and I will dream well.**

**30 December 2019**



## HELLO, 1

If I wanted to say  
hello to someone  
it would be you.  
But I'm afraid  
the sky would hear me  
and start to snow.  
Best to keep quiet,  
hope is green.  
delicate, springtime  
is bound to come  
again, isn't it?  
But I'm thinking  
about you all  
the time, all the time.

30 December 2019

## HELLO, 2

I can add to your labors  
just by saying hello.  
You'd have to answer me  
if just to be or seem polite  
and then your words  
or sign or smile would cook  
some answering in me  
and there'd we be, talking  
and the beautiful isolation  
of your morning would be shot.  
Sp no hello. No email. No text  
in your pocket. But even love  
won't keep me from thinking.

30 December 2019

=====

**It is thirty five minutes  
later and two-tenths of a degree  
warmer than when I woke.  
I keep track of these things--  
somebody has to, it's not all  
about history and love songs.  
The great empires are gone  
but we have anesthetics  
and the internet is our Byzantium.  
See, I got here on my own flat feet.**

**30 December 2019**

=====

**Hug the secret  
haver of the heart--  
out in the ice world  
where cars only go**

**I felt from far. A far  
entity mouthing light.  
Squeeze tight what can--  
dawn's not close, even  
by tomorrow's standards**

**this should have been you.  
Every word is a puzzle  
you solve by living--the book  
is just a footprint in the sand,**

**you know the story, the waves  
soon enough wash it away.  
We're left with the muscle  
of another firm under own hand.**

**And this is just pilgrim report,  
travel stuff, the mind making  
sense of absence any way it can.  
Come back to me and know your name.**

**31 December 2019  
4:06**

=====

Can I listen at least,  
try to overhear  
what I'm dreaming?  
That's what waking's for,  
to come to terms somehow  
with where we've been.  
We've been in the dark  
among the unknown. Now this.  
This interpreter's babble,  
always inadequate, usually wrong.  
Dawn is analgesic, sweeping  
the sore and sorry litter away,  
the wreckage we make of our  
pure and truthful dreams.

31 December 2019



=====

**Come back, I want  
my hand in your pocket,  
my voice in your earbud,  
my text on your tiles.  
I want you to read my palms  
with your eyes closed,  
I want all this sacred distance  
to go back to heaven and  
leave us close. Yes, you,  
on earth, with me. I repeat:  
I want to be the air you breathe  
or the other way round. If  
there is one. I want the tune  
to hold these words together  
and coax you to come close.  
But where would a want  
like mine getso much music?**

**31 December 2019**

## OPENING TIME

1.

A day has to begin somehow  
even if you're not equipped for it.  
I left my ledger in the dream—  
birds are like passports  
eager for travelers.  
Sorry—nobody ever thought that.

2.

Everybody wants to belong  
though few are sure about to what.  
This is not what I meant to say,  
meant to be doing. I mean  
something altogether different, don't I?

3.

Then it was morning—  
like the ancient Greek orator's famous  
*hespera men ēn*  
but the other way round.  
The conspiracy of daylight

**is about to begin.  
It will suck you in, you'll be  
part of his secret army,  
an unconscious agent of Time  
the Illusory, the Mystery.  
Time is space experienced  
between places. Time is space  
happening to us. Ask  
your body, your body understands.**

**31 December 2019**