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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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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 TM 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