

1-2020

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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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=====

**Give the white rabbit a chance
the white mountain
the gaudy camisole
Hawaiian shirt
Liberty Bell.
Give the orchestra free hand
to heal all woes,
the amber necklace sings,
we need the sparks
park lark in the dark
we need the sound of things
and then again begins, , Janus
god of the opening door,
we need our own shadows
on the floor before us
to guide us, we come from light,
fierce young rabbits chase the weary hound.**

1 January 2020

MY JOB IS WAITING

**for the cup to fill itself.
This is what language
calls music, it has to,**

**it has to name everything,
that's its job, and music
is as close as it comes.
Right now, all that's
in the cup is light.
I bend close to hear it,**

**I have always been
a fairly obedient child
no different now,
a workman fondling his tools.
I'll wait here forever
if I have to, and actually
would rather like to.
I hope the cup is listening too.**

1 January 2020

=====

**When you were a kid
everything was important.
Just like now.**

1 January 2020

=====

**The Sun has just come out
on New Year's Day,
softly, as if to pervade
quietly the human sphere.
We hold to what we know
or think we do and she
above us helps. Knowing
is the main thing, what holds
firm in the mind at night
just before Sleep finds us,
that person with a gender of its own.
Let us find enough to eat
and let us think. The walls
fall down but the roof stands firm.**

1 January 2020

=====

**If you're good to me
I'll tell you a story.
There's a stone in your pocket,
a stone on my finger,
a stone on the altar. Now sing.
The story has almost begun.**

1 January 2020

SĒMATA TEĒS hODOU

**Schoolbus
before dawn
roaring by
to pick up children
in the dark.
How early
compulsions begins—
the road
tells me this.**

2 January 2020

EDUCATION

**There are things
you never need to learn:
what the other
thinks about you.**

**You must be clear
instead, about all
you think of her or
him— know them
keenly in your heart.
True love comes
from knowing yourself.**

2 January 2020

=====

**We have a whale
atop our Christmas tree,
on the twelfth day of Christmas
it goes back to the sea
corner of the dark garage.
I don't know why
I'm tell you this or
why such things are so.
Situations exist
to be noticed, spoken
into the common light.
No one needs to know why.**

2 January 2020

=====

I looked up from the keyboard
and it was day. Light
all natural outside. But who was I?
Henry James's typist on the old
brass machine in Kent,
or Sergei Rchmaninoff fooling
around in Beverly Hills?
When you're writing intently
you could be anyone at all,
or all of them at once, all
the personhoods that language speaks--
you know that song already,
I don't have to sing it to you
but I do.

2 January 2020

====

*So far to go
to get here
or to stay.*

A chip of tile
fell off the sky,
those words
were on it
in what seemed
to be Greek--see,
I learned something
in school, to bend
low in silence,
to pick things up
off the ground
and read them,
and people think
what they hear's
the murmur only
of what I mean.

2 January 2020

=====

**The discomforts of now--
the marathon runner
passes pushcarts
where pretty girls
sell neckties and gloves,
mustachioed Levantines
offer steaming shawarma,
children write in chalk
all over the pavement, he
has to run through all their
designs and messages,
his feet blur their meanings,
his eyes fill with tears,
he's nowhere near the finish line.**

2 January 2020

=====

**The world we see
is the silhouette
of someone else.**

**Goethe meant
to say this in *Faust*
but forgot.**

**The sun keeps rising
to jog his
memory in us.**

2 January 2020

BY METAMBESEN

**The Wappingers were on my side
and left this stream to me.**

**Esopus
came across sometimes, clambake
or liturgy, they left evidence of both.**

**The stream around my house, a loop.
a scoop of sacred water, my house
in its cup.**

**everything we don't understand,
everything that works,
we call medicine.**

**The guesses we call history, carved
on a rock,**

**bearpaw with claws,
VOTE FOR WILSON someone
took all afternoon to carve that in
a century ago.**

**My rock. My house
and what is carved in me.**

**The well
goes down two hundred feet,
that we may drink,
I mixed the vinegar myself
with honey from up the ridge,
glacial, just south of where
the stream pools out. Beaver.
Nutria replacing native muskrat.
I am a stranger here myself.**

2 January 2020

=====

**A house
is built of voice,
If the voice is silent
how can the house stand?**

3 January 2020

=====

**In the Leipzig church
the organ plays by itself—
the stone remembers
We only call it music when we hear.**

3 January 2020

=====

**There are spectral regions
where beginnings are stored.
The custodians smile at us
through the locked glass doors.**

3 January 2020

=====

**Night as punishment—
hell
as an extrapolation
from our dreams.**

3 January 2020

=====

de arte poetica

**Words that fit
shoulders and hips,
fur hold, fur
collar but no
beast harmed,
stocking verbs
to speed your feet.
And all this
comes with a song.**

3 January 2020

JANUARY 2020 20

WORRY

(because Charlotte told me not to)

Worry holds the wound at bay,
worry takes the place of play,
it's a game you always win,
always something more to dread,
a postcard from the recent dead,

forest fires rage near your home,
savage encyclicals come from Rome
explain that all your joys are sin,
your temple has a leaking dome,
all vestige of you is soon lost in foam.

3 January 2020

=====

**Give me one of those fancy
pens with a flashlight in its nose—
it's seven o'clock and sun porch dark
or not quite pitch, say ash
or applewood, I need some lamp
to let me write, I mean outside,
not like the Greek saying they
used to print in books how
having lamps they give to others
the light they share, that sort
of wisdom, I just need
to see where the margin ends
and something altogether else begins.**

4 January 2020

SABBATH

A little less dark
the road glistens
where streetlight falls.
Who goes at night?
Who wakes with me?

2.
Day of Saturn, Set,
hoofprints of the god
on the sanctuary floor—
we leave our mark in dust.

3.
Where is the road
coming from
and where is the light?
One day each week
is all arrival.
It has rained,
listen to the sky.

4.

We have some right
to know these things.
Stories abound.
Abide. Go out
for breakfast
the way cities do,
a job and a dream
woven together.
Wake!

5.

Cloud like, like winter.
Like using weather
to play with. Like tense
and number, to count
and count the days.
The road ends here.

6.

Ours is the last place
on a long road.
No wonder it's Saturday.

7.

Calendars make me uneasy
like poetry that rhymes—
I know it's pretty, I know
someone is talking
but I know they
are not talking to me.
Who made this Saturday?
What else could it be?

8.

The point of it was worship,
simple as a log
floating down a broad river
in some white man's dream.
Cut [Shut?] up and pray. Let
theology blossom from your breath.

9.

So who am I talking to
if talking to
is so important?
The loving little river
lolls around our house.
And the sky listens right back.

10.

So there should be a liturgy
of ordinary hours
made miracle by sheer noticing.
Sabbath is the day of taking note,
Sabbath is the day of knowing.

4 January 2020

=====

Vespertilio,
the ordinary bat,
child of evening,
an etymology
on quick wings,
awkward gait
compared to gulls
but here at night,
busy with all I can't see.
The name lingers,
comes to my lips—
I taste the way it flies.

4 January 2020

=====

**Paper made from trees
has more words
implicit in it than
paper made from cloth.
The trees still talk.
Fact. Up to us
to trace them out—
all we mostly are
is the flow of ink.**

4 January 2020

=====

**Nobody loves me
in your house no more.
Nobody answers the door
or puts a flowery chintz
cushion out to sit on
on the porch. My phone
has forgotten you,
afraid of the buzzing
rebuff of unanswering.
By now I'm not even
sure of your name.**

4 January 2020

=====

**Write down now
the texts that dream has stored,
the damp brick cellars of night
crowded with unwritten books—**

**where else would the words
come from we find in our
minds or mouths when we wake?**

4 January 2020

FUTURE ONEIROLOGY

The evidence keeps mounting—

**in the next century our science
must finally come to study the dream—
really study, not just opine.**

Oneirology may save us yet.

**1)Do dreams speak across the boundaries of
the person? Do others share one's dreams?**

**2)Do dreams and their imageries reflect or
even depend on the waking language of the
dreamer?**

3)How can we tell how far the dream goes?

**4)Can we invent a technology that projects
and records a person's dream in the act of
dreaming?**

JANUARY 2020 31

**I look up and see mist drifting through the
morning trees,**

and guess that's the best answer Ill get today.

4 January 2020

=====

**Lost in the found
where meaning begins,
vast museum
walls of stone
built of sheer remembering
using all the money [?] of the town.
A town (a fenced-in place),
a town remembers.
Why are the walls of the (say)
the Met like the bones
of my skull? They
remember everything. I
remember nothing.**

4 January 2020

=====

**Three o'clock and strange awake—
no panther walked my dream.**

**But something said. Said
this is the other thing, other side**

**no one knows of what. This
is different. Be awake for it.**

**A signal from outside inside me—
I'm afraid of looking out the door.**

5 January 2020

== == == == ==

**Who knows what such lips speak?
The inkblot of night
spreads over the daytime text,
mind frantic with forgetting.
Who dared teach children in the valley?
What did the church bells mean?**

5 January 2020

=====

**Chaste fingers
tempered by the pen—
what is written
is seldom wrong,
seldom right.
It is a song in silence,
we speak to make it true.**

5 January 2020

MESOPOTAMIAN ATTITUDE

**Between two rivers stand—
they flow in opposite directions
so who would build a city there?
And yet they did. School, churches,
college, camp. Stand on the street
and keep guessing.**

**The northbound Walkill
and the southbound North:
you'd think you could live
forever here, safe in between.
And over the corn fields crows
explain the meaning of each day.
A place like this is almost as
good as the ocean, but not quite:
the sea flows all ways at once.**

5 January 2020

=====

Too long ago to stay away—
breath on the back of a hand,
a piano piece by Liszt,
half-heard downstairs, one
of his *Years of Pilgrimage*.

Did they really know consciously
what they were doing, the great ones,
or did they just do a day to life
and then move on? Now we can guess
how angels work, press down
on busy hands to make them write the truth.

5 January 2020

=====

**But why did who
wake me?
My own voice
it used to say
arise, I rose
in the silence
If the Question
we call by its old
name, Night.**

**Sat in the dark,
made a little light
examining difference,
trying to forgive it.
That's what it is:
Someone far away
is thinking about me
loud enough to
come through the silence.**

5 January 2020

=====

for Vesna

I want a dragon
to guard my words
the way dragons guard
people crossing the bridge
in Ljubljana, guard them
from falling, from rivers,
from going away forever.

A bridge is holy,
a book is holy
it gets one across
the fluent silences,

the way dragons
come down the sky
to help us read
the ancient words of weather.

5 January 2020

=====

Hate it when it's so
quiet I can hear
myself inside.
What about that stream
out there, so close,
tumbling in the rapids,
why can't I hear that?

But no. Belly and intestines
talk, murmur really,
can't make out what
I seem to be saying.
In night stillness
it talks in me to me.

5 January 2020

=====

If looks could kiss

altered

provenance of stone

we began by wanting
only the waters
of the place we are.

2.

They still call it Africa,
Rift, origin, all that,
as if. But it was everywhere
at once, like air.

The gods were born
but we came first
or is that another lie
just one more -ology?

3.

**A cloud is guesswork too,
Dali's clock
a-droop over the want-scape.
Desire! Long legs of need,
the seething pillow,
the speckled dream.**

4.

**The victuallers stock up on appetite,
the vintners bury sunshine in the ground.
Who knows what dreams the butchers have
and ordinary people hear the voice of God.**

5 January 2020

=====

**Shape your alphabet
around your shoulders,
the fur of phonemes
will keep you warm—
every language different,
the same sounds not the same!—
I rest my cheek
on your bare shoulder,
so I can understand.**

6 January 2020

=====

**Knowing the last
things to do or do.
Twelfth Night is passed,
time will be normal again.**

6 January 2020

=====

**Saying something
is a compromise
one must
with silence.**

Who speaks?¹

***in praesipio*
in the cradle, Christ
witnessed.**

**We are taught to speak
but who taught Him?**

**Five hundred years before,
the Buddha gave birth to himself.
Another kind of strange virginity.
Today the Wise Men come**

¹a little book I wrote that only exists in German, *Wer spricht?*

**or are they kings, *Tre Re*.
Or are they priests
from some ancient temple
from whose golden roof
they watched the stars?**

**Fill bowls with rice,
quinoa, amaranth this day,
feed the hungry Kings,
give everything away.**

**6 January 2020
Epiphany**

=====

Hurry there anyhow—
it's always here
when you get there.
here, Annandale: all
apple word and evensong.
Fifty years to get here
starting now.
Quiet of a woman's hair,
pillow-warm her cheek.
I have been awake so long.

6 January 2020

=====

**Nowhere close to believing—
everything *is* accurate,
no need for creed,**

**no harm done, ma'am,
just sitting here
thinking about things.**

6 January 2020

=====

**In the place between
there is a cup
that drinks us
as soon as we wake.**

7 January 2020

====

**Stood on the corner
like a man
waiting for a tree
to come home.**

7 January 2020

=====

**Don't spoil it—
only say
what says itself.**

7.1.20

DWINDLING WOOD

**by elision
we kept things true,
vocative, all things
always calling**

**(leave out
the object of desire,
leave only
the desire in)**

**Elysium, did they say,
where all desires
walked eternally?**

**(Boneless beatitude?
Woke seven hours later, knew it had to be me)
it had no choice.**

7 January 2020

=====

**Formality of shipboard,
captain and cabin boy
subject to the same sea.
There is a politics there,
a republic of the unwilled.**

7 January 2020

=====

**Engine roar of the waking mind—
who better to analyze
the aardvarks and the zebras of the world,
the sob of knowing, the gulf of gone?**

7 January 2020

=====

**The devious simplicity
of dawn. Who woke you,
Sister Light? Where
did you sleep after I left?
Forgive my sleep— I sought
something only dark can show.
Now you bring it all back,
garnet necklace, religion,
horses of the Camargue.**

**7 January 2020
End of Noiebook 429**

=====

**I've said enough
to say good night,
dawn has focused
into day, everything
is itself again.
Again is where we really
live and what we mean.
Once was never enough.**

7 January 2020

=====

**Tell the robin
here all winter
time's on his side,
then ask him
to sing that
back to me too,
a sound of spring.**

7 January 2020

=====

1.

**The ordinary shell
springs open.**

All round things resemble.

2.

**In Paris they thought I was German
here I don't know what to think.
The way machines talk back
and our devices discuss
things among themselves in language
the dog understands better than we do.**

3.

**In fact it's morning again
on earth, blessed sunshine
glints off a passing pick-up
white as any villain's on TV.**

4.

In fact I said
but now I'm not so sure—
dream has a way of holding on,
dragging its tail through the day,
O crocodile.

5.

Round mirror
or square wall—
does anyone really believe
what mirrors show? I wonder.
But I do a lot of that.

6.

Faust wants Helen of Troy
and gets the girl next door—
I think the wall holds many mirrors
and the hall it runs through very dark.
A satisfied desire is a kind of wound.

7.

**Children still giggle on their way to school.
Watch carefully as I spread
this fuzzy coverlet over what I said
until only the shape of the remark
remains, a comfy hump on a distant bed.
That's all you will remember.
Fingers tingling. Every step
a high-wire act. Or is that me?**

8 January 2020

=====

**Can you tell the gender
of the meat you eat,
the beast it came from?
No wonder [?] vegetarians.
We know so little of what we kill.**

8 January 2020

CAPTURE RATIO

**Take it literally—
seize reason,
make it serve
the policies of love
all the livelong day.**

8 January 2020

PARSING THE DREAM

1.

Relentless grammar
of its unfolding.
Tell its truth
or Mother Light
will leave you in the dark again.

2.

So many cities
to have been
or been in.
Boulevards stacked
with apartment houses,
streets of tiny shops,
spires never seen
in waking, thousands
of houses, towers,
vistas. How? How?

3.

**A broom on a fifth story ledge,
ordinary, wooden blue stick,
yellow straw. I understood:
a sign, a lucky token a device
to sweep bad luck away.**

4.

**Now the cars are going to work
in the dreamless asphalt world.
In eight hours they'll come home.
The people in them seem incidental,
just baggage on the pilgrimage.**

5.

**No one is coming to see me today
the dream insists. The dream insists
that if one comes, that one**

**will be another part of dream. A dream
will feed you, will keep you warm,
Sometimes the dream becomes
your lover and takes you to sleep.
Or your mother shakes you to wake up.**

9 January 2020

IN PRINCIPIO

Strict cosmology
of living speech.
Be careful what you say—
the word remembers.
We stand awed
or bored or silent
about what we
know of God. Even
the idle omigod
is an act of reverence,
even the atheist's rant
is a kind of prayer.
That of which we think
exists. What we speak
begets the world. John
said it best: *in the beginning
there was the word.*

9 January 2020

=====

**It came from nowhere
and sat on my desk,
shadow of a bird
but no bird there.**

**The crows outside are real enough,
regal even in their observation,
explanations, they leave
little to chance, sing loud,**

**and say it all again they say
if I may dare to summarize.
But what does this shadow say?
Almost noon. Pay strict attention.**

9 January 2020

=====

A kind of bird
it knows my name
it takes the irises
of early spring
and makes me dream them.

2.

But there are other
things that people know
and I forget,,
landscape matters,fast
grey cars, or in childhood how
the insurance man came to the door.

3.

The light in the boudoir
halfway between pink and mauve,
speaking French to the pillow,
rosary beads clatter to the floor.

**Now you begin to understand,
it isn't all meadow and music
but there is something there--
beneath your ear the goosedown knows.**

**4.
Is it time yet?
Every breath is asking.
The meditator knows
silence is the best answer.**

**5.
Some day I should find out
what's in this cup
I've been drinking so long.
Chemist, where are you lurking?
Come out of your fusty study,
wipe your glasses and discern.
I need to know my past
it;s not enough to lick my lips
or her lips either.
It needs to know
and I am just an agent of it.**

6.

**My fingers are
talking to you
not my soul.
My soul is over
where souls are,
triangulated from
Mahler and Beethoven--
out there, anyhow,
near where the hardware ends,
close to the pure
matter of the other side.**

7.

**Imagine three strips of bacon
around a lone poached egg--
this is the Tarot card called
The Incomplete is Excessive Too,
if it turns up when your cards are read
the querent feels a certain relief--
someone is watching over him,
a small cursor leads him
through the screen of light.**

8.

So words are arrows,
pointing, wounding.
Even as a child you know
things aren't where they're supposed to be.
The library is far away,
and Christmas hardly ever comes.
Still, you believe the words,
you like their long smooth trajectory,
invisible traces left in the sky.

9.

Can't you tell
I'm writing from fear,
not need, not desire,
just from fear,
death and disorder,
shivering the timbers,
slipping through the ice,
drifting off into a dull novel
all about me. Fear.
But sometimes when I see

**or think about you
the fear forgets me
and I begin to remember
what words are for,
and why I'm here
for this little while
allowed to say them.**

10 January 2020

=====

The names we bear
are shadows
of those who gave them
on their way.

2.
That woke me
to wonder
what do we give
to the after?

3.
But be milder
this wet day,
full moon, full spoon
let pour
all colors of the light.
Kindly they used to sing
when the moon was new
and only man was old.

4.

How did we even dare
to give names to the colors,
we never dared to name
the air the way they touched us
intimate or public,
summer or sodden,
suddenly inside our clothes?

5.

So I sit here naming things
in hopes a shadow lingers
to keep you company.
That's what words do
to make this hour then
when you come round to hear.

6.

And hunger passed
the way a storm cloud does.

**No rain. No appetite.
Time suddenly at peace.
Stretch and flex the empty hand,
feels good to feel cool air alone in it.**

**7.
And it all comes
from the names we carry
so bravely,
thinking they're ours.**

**8.
I opened my name
in a book, it said
God is my strong tower
and showed the tower,
three pinnacles, slender
on a broad gold shaft
on a bare hillside
in an old country
I had never seen.**

9.

And that's no place
to leave a lover.

Springtime remains possible,
garbage in the street,
good things left over,
men on bikes, so quick
to get nowhere
all over again.

No wonder winter!

10.

We love what has us
He read Jakob Böhme in the night
while his wife slept.

He felt guilty and closed the book,
black, heavy, old.

Wisdom spoils if it's not shared.

10 January 2020

=====

**Crows.
If the sun rose
it would be different.
And now the treetops
say so too!
It's all coming back,
that old song of right now.**

10 January 2020

=====

**I saw a white box
roll up the hill
on wheels. Put
my glasses on
but it was gone.**

10 January 2020

=====

**Motive matters,
that's all I know.
And how to twist
the lid of a jar of olives off
or even read the Bible
if I could find
a copy with big print
and huge spaces
deep inside each word.**

10 January 2020

2:43

Can't sleep.
The African drummers
of the soul
are loud on a quest
my mind knows nothing about.

2.
A book between us
on the bed
tumbled in blankets
Goethe's *Faust*.
Will I ever be
worthy of this woman?

3.
With whose hand
do I write this?

4.

Ate meat yesterday,
pork cooked in Poland
brought here by a friend.
How far the poor pig
traveled to be me.
They laze but do not sleep.
It wakes in me now.

5.

Annual humiliation:
being brought back home
by the dream police,
dumped awkward on the porch.
At dawn the reproaches begin.

6.

I hear the small refrigerator
humming in the dark--
can't this be music too

and Oberon growling
and Ovid weeping
at the changes he had to write?

7.

Write a sentence
put it in italics.
Everyone will know
it is a quotation
from some famous book
or wise creature long ago.
And every sentence is.

8.

Isn't this all supposed to be
questions, why
is it warm for January
forty six fahrenheit degrees
and one full moon
or is it gibbous already or
how do *you* pronounce that word?

9.

I first really tasted tea
in India, a little airport in Assam.
At last I understood my mother
a little bit more, or was it growing
up as they say, though ascension
has nothing to do with it alas.
The place was called Place of the Tiger--
I did not see one there,
sweet milky tea
was animal enough for me.

10.

A priest in Bedford
who wrote Sophocles,
his son-in-law a poet
from Devon wounded
at Gettysburg, his son-
in-law an Irish cop

rose through the ranks.
Two generations later there was me.
I told you this is all about
questions, so answer me this:
what am I really asking you now?

11.
Love catches quick in well-born hearts
he wrote, set me to wondering
what on earth the heart is
and where does it get born?
I sense an English stone,
a drum from Africa, Cameroon
in fact, zebra-hide stretched
taut on a sloping cylinder
there must be a name for
in geometry, an over-ripe fruit?

12.

**Maybe they will let me sleep again,
those kindly angels of the before
and after life, the missionaries
who come to us in sleep,
knock on the door and tell
the long, long story of what they think is true.
And true it is as any dream can be.
The soul is quiet now,
remember that from childhood,
yes, how music gets tired of playing
cones back inside and goes to sleep?**

11 January 2020

JEUX D'ENFANTS (1)

**Child playing
with letters on the floor
playing with the alphabet
sliding the letters
around on the rug
by shape alone,
the look of things.
How surprised later
whem someone comes along
and reads the words they wrote.
The world says itself
using the smallest hands.**

11 January 2020

JEUX D'ENFANTS (2)

**The commodore
sails his battleship
across the floor.
The cat watches
safe from the sofa.
How many sailors
have drowned
in this deep carpet,
frigates, longboats,
rafts of pale survivors?
He fets to the door and sees
a whole new ocean sprad beyond it.**

11 January 2020

THE RING

As soon as the gemstone
touched my bone
I was instantly Byzantium,

gold rose up
and turquoise tile
a dome around my mind.

hypnagogic, 10 / 11 January 2020

=====

after Edith Södergran

Barefoot

**I had to walk through all the galaxies
before I found the first thread for my red dress.
And now I wash myself new.
Somewhere out there my heart's hanging
sparks stream out from it shattering the air
all the way to another measureless heart.**

11 January 2020

=====

Warmth of the needs
brings the smart day—
it was a child when I slept—
an hour was longer then,
a wheel rounder
but a river is arriving still—
it seemed pure obstacle
but in long dream woke it
purest flow. Now we know
where the night was hidden,
birds ride the wind
but we still wonder, walk.

12 January 2020

=====

**Who are those strangers
(friends to me but not
necessarily to each
other) who wander
through the alphabet
like children lost in the woods?
I think they are the Makers,
the Poets, who enchant my life
and bind me to language.
Every syllable is their memorial.**

12 January 2020

=====

To my astonishment
I am sitting outside on the deck
in full sun. Cool wind
but in the shade the glass
reads 65 degrees, and in full sun
76 degrees. What a gift for us
in winter. To be alone
in sunshine, and be outside!
Outside, the secret place
that winter hides, suddenly
the bright door springs open again.

12 January 2020

=====

There is a bird out here
I've never seen.
I thought it was a stone, no,
it is the carving of a bird,
shaped like a wren
but big and fat, a stone
bird came to our table
and lingers still. no, it's
heavy pottery deep glazed
I feel now that I dare
to touch it. Who are you?
I naturally ask. And
Who are you, it says.

12 January 2020

=====

**The earth today, this very day,
is full of holy beings,
from all times, even from now,
I see them walking invisibly
through the trees on the glacial
ridge just behind the garage,
this bright warm Sunday,
this year of grace. Welcome,
enlightened ones, bless you
for blessing us with your passage
through all our emptinesses
you are pilgriming light.**

12 January 2020

VOCABULARY ITEMS

**Orgulous witnesses
poets on parade
chanting loud
all they think or see**

*

**venison afoot
dart across the road at night
vehicular alert**

*

**Ghosts outside my window
where else should they be
are they streetlights
or someone else,
a silent car rolls by
or is it?**

*

**Campaign promises
heaped up by the door.
Inside, the veterans
swelter in wheelchairs,
memories their sole currency.**

*

**Captivate young persons
with narrative aplomb.
Then go home and cry yourself to sleep.**

*

**Cautionary sunsets
trees shiver in the chill--
everything reminds you of you.**

*

**Far away in the Bible
a luxurious tetrarchy
issues edicts quite ambiguous.**

**Women dance, men are sulky,
horses race around the track
and no one watches!
The high priest shivers aside his dinner plate.**

*

**Invidious opera,
to die so tuneful.
lyric lust, tragedy
you whistle all the way home.**

*

**Scarecrow preceptor
in a birdless field,
a professor in his rented robe.**

*

**A brass quartet
plays Jeremiah Clarke's
Voluntary over and over again--**

**commencement it is called
but will it ever end?
The parents rub their checkbooks
yawning in their stalls.**

**I didn't mean to be mean,
the veridical is always perilous,
six in the morning not a trace of light
it;s like landing in Amsterdam,
there, I did it again.**

**Spontaneity means getting
married to everything
doesn't he? No aisle
without its bride, no
word without its consequence.**

**Of all the embassies they could send
the fur-clad skaters are the clearest,
fake fur, of course,
they do not kill,
they zip across the pond
leaving only the sound
of the lines they leave in ice.**

**Autoimmunization
looking in the mirror.**

**Dark in here and dark outside
the windows are full of images
lives of the saints that I can't see,
may have vanished from the glass
by when I wake or dawn decides
but right now I can hear them,
prophets and preachers and soft
hands working miracles with light.**

*

If all these words
went away, still
they would have been written
and maybe once
is enough for anyone, the sacred
unicity of something said.

*

Rugose raiment
alarms soft skin.
Yet there is comfort
in the thought
caught between the self
and everything else--
if it didn't hurt a little
how would I know it's me?

*

**Learn another language
or else.**

*

**Alterity
the unreachable
girl next door.**

*

**Frantic
caught between
England and Germany
no wonder.**

*

**Devious elucidations
turn the light back off.**

*

**Carthusian architecture
the little backyards
of liberty.**

*

**I've been awake
long enough
to know better.
Now the umber
prelector beckons--
shlaf, kindl, shlaf.**

*

**If everyone woke up at once
would the Sun come out
suddenly to see such sport?
Or does dawn decide?**

*

**Raindrops
however multiple
do not reticulate.
They approximate
until the glass is full.
Now guzzle the wet light.**

13 January 2020

=====

Seeking deliverance from a common pest
I still couldn't stop thinking.
There I was, with faint acquaintances,
walking a quiet night-time city
yet again. I wanted nothing—
and that just didn't feel like me.
Everybody else was singing maybe
silently to herself, lights
went on and off, avenues were wide,
every now and then one saw the sky.
I wanted to want
but nothing whispered instead.

13 January 2020

=====

**Not even a dream.
A translation
from something I felt
when I remembered something else.
There— put that in your sky,
your crowded pantheon
and call it poetry,
a snowflake drifting by all alone.**

13 January 2020

HYLONOETIC QUERY

**If as I maintain
everything has consciousness
everything has something to say
why haven't I?**

13 January 2020

=====

Woke up scared
so much time
has passed since
we began

to be who we are
whoever we are

Someone else
living in my body
sleeping in my bed

*

Wake up instead.
What does it mean

'a sense of myself'
a friend asked
a line from a Swedish poem
nobody knew

**what does 'sense' mean?
Can you remember
being a self?**

**No wonder I'm scared.
Woke up a day,
woke late, a day is to do—
what have I neglected
by being someone else
drowsing on my pillow,
what have I done?**

**The normal anxiety of morning
slips away. C;Clocks and cars,
calls and customers, .
This is different. This is fear
and like all fear
it does not show its face.**

Or has no face.

**The doctor would say Go back to sleep
when you wake it will be better.**

**The doctor means
it will be other.**

**The sense of myself
will be there then,
same me, same pillow.**

**But fear once felt is never gone
completely. Fear is a meaning
that eludes you, a taste in your mouth
from something you never ate.**

**Still, the doctor's probably right.
healers, helpers, swamis,
hold the nice nurse's hand
and maybe you'll be yourself again.
the one you think or thought you are.**

14 January 2020

FOR SHERRY WILLIAMS IN THE TOWER

**Because you see.
Almost everybody sees
but you know how to see
and what to do with what is seen.**

**The seeing comes into you
and sleeps a while, a noble foreigner,
then wakes in full color
and says itself outside again
through your hands and eyes.**

**All right, all right, almost all
artists do something like that
but you know how to do it,
do it different,**

**I think you have more silence inside,
more listening,
I think you're made of love and lust and
kindness,
you keep your decent human fear**

locked up in a tower
disguised as a cat,
I think you are a native of this world,
a kind person, *kind* means natural,
native, nature, born to be you.
I think you have always been you.

Your drawings flirt,
your paintings marry...
am I getting warmer?
Is this the you you mean
when you answer the phone?
I have lived with a few of your paintings
long enough to think I know you
and the woman who comes through our door
(come soon again!)
looks just like what they tell me,
fast and funny and profound,
deep as the abyss of human skin.
You see us better than we see ourselves.
That's exactly what kindness means.

14 January 2020

MORALIST

**Should I stop pretending
to be myself
when someone else
is doing such a good jib of it?
Or is it me?**

15 January 2020

ARGUMENT

1.

The argument
begins the day
suddenly, me alone
by the window
watching.

2.

It used to mean
a summary of the plot
of what you were about
to read, a chapter,
canto of a long poem.
It used to mean
what was going to happen
if you kept going.
Read on. Or look away.

3.

**But now it has teeth in it
and happens between friends.**

**You have to be friends
to have an argument—
otherwise it's just a fight.**

**Only friends can have an argument,
characters in the same book.**

15 January 2020

DRAGON

Watch the dragon
walk across the wind.
They come from the other
side of the natural.

They know the secret
passages, they know
the way through.

Watch them rest on a cloud,
sleep wrapped round a tree,
hide in the sea. Watch
everything they do—

they come here to teach you.

15 January 2020

=====

**We speak
whay they say
through us,
the articulate dead.**

**Nimble frankincense
fills the shrine.
the smell makes the heart
remember.**

**Memory
is their dance too,
everything
is a reminder.**

16 January 2020

=====

**(Being honest
just means staying in line
saying what happened
in the order it did)**

*

**Health issues
worrying the sky.
Clouds and blue
but grey down here,
monosyllables
off our chest.
Who said it was a day?**

16 January 2020

=====

**Time I think
is a turbulent sea
into which the soul
is plunged at human birth.
Wars, wounds, enemies, friends,
caravans, crusades,
disasters.**

**Some say
there is a way
out of time
other than human death.
That is the song to seek.**

16 January 2020

=====

**I think
of ultimate things
a glass of water
a fluyrry of starlings
passing fast.**

17 January 2020

=====

**Come back to earth,
winter as it is,
you're here for the surprises,
like it or not.
Bright cold day,
everything trying to remind you.**

17 January 2020

=====

**The wind last night
swept away the clouds
but what did it bring?**

**What does spirit
always carry,
what does breath?**

17 January 2020

=====

**A roof to build
to hide the stars
you also are.**

17 January 2020

=====

Ordinary winter night
nothing to frighten—
cold now, snow tomorrow,
music on the radio—
Chabrier, music
lasts a long time.
In the next room
it sounds like spring.

17 January 2020

=====

1.

The world comes back today
it looks like this
there is a ribbon in her hair
cloth soft on shoulders
and she slips shadows
from her pockets
wherever she walks.

2.

You've been here before.
You know all this.
Snow will fall, will stop,
will be pure a while.
Try to recover
the child in the snow,
the sled, the tumble.
No. By being before
it is beyond.

3.

**So the joy is to be coined anew—
people come through door,
sit around on chairs, the floor, stand
in the doorway, talk, tell, talk.
There is enough there to feed you,
contact they call it, words
to touch one another with.**

4.

**Then the final liberty—
someone comes along
who answers your eyes,
understands your hands.
Marry this one.
The let the snow fall.**

18 January 2020

=====

**Even though it is morning
most of the light
is caught in the small blue glass
bottle on the window ledge.
The glass stopper holds it safe.**

18 January 2020

GETTING THE DISTANCE RIGHT

How far I go
to know

you
and all the rest
stars, states,
masterpieces, but
mostly you.

Because you include.

19 January 2020

=====

**Who knows I'm here
the sun behind the cloud
and all my yellow gold
makes your sky blue.
This is my first lesson.
Or second. See me rise.**

19 January 2020

WINDOW SHOWN

**The glow
of snowlight
an old word,
desktop,
Swan Lake,
wakes the heart.**

19 January 2020

=====

**When things get bad
only things can help—
the physical heals
the spirit. And vice versa.
The circulation. Every
object a relic, dream
of its maker still intact.
And who made me?
the catechism asks.**

19 January 2020

=====

**Why isn't my breath
my breath?**

**My breath is a rock
in Donegal,
a wall in Cyprus,**

**my breath is what
I have never seen,
but my breath is all
I've ever seen,**

landing gear of the dream.

20 January 2020

=====

**Paper crinkles
that has been written on.
Is it the acid in the ink,
the water somewhere down in there,
or the words themselves?
Words that make the paper shy,
uncaring, turn over
and over in its long sleep?**

20 January 2020

=====

**The night said too much,
fed me too much.
I wipe my lips on the blue sky.**

20 January 2020

=====

**We are closer to the explanation
but still don't detect all the parameters
of the problem itself. The swan goes by,
my mother tosses crumbs to it, the bird
lingers to consume. Or put it this way:
The waiter's hand trembles as he sets
before us a dish of rice. Or consider
the shadow of St. Patrick's spires
cast across Fifth Avenue at sunrise
but who is there to see them?
Every time I look out the window
another facet of the argument
presents itself. They amass like leaves.
They may even be leaves
of some barely conceivable tree.
We can start by looking for the trunk,
more feeling for than looking.
The philosophy of simple touch.**

21 January 2020

=====

**Mix black and blue together
her voice said
to make dark blue.
And she'd describe the weather
outside my window
but never tell her name.**

21 January 2020

== == == == == == ==

**I want to think of real things
the shadow of a bare branch
written across the snow.**

21 January 2020

=====

(WIDES, 1)

**We have heard, heard of,
the Voice of Silence.
Here is its face—
a tumult of colors
silencing form, speaking
so softly we forget
the word it almost said.
How rich and busy silence is!**

21 January 2020

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=e7ca25a58d&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg-f:1656362287133165530&th=16fc94b96fed07da&view=att&disp=safe&realattid=f_k5fdz8n11

=====

(WIDES, 2)

And there was one left
to tell the story.
A diamond to begin with,
pure light at the end—
and all the flesh of us
in between, pointing,
begetting, just standing there
holding the light firm.
All pictures tell stories.
This one tells them all.

21 January 2020

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=e7ca25a58d&attid=0.2&permmmsgid=msg-f:1656362287133165530&th=16fc94b96fed07da&view=att&disp=safe&realattid=f_k5fdz8oc3

=====

(WIDES, 7)

Then the trees bore light.
We always wondered
where it came from,
we doubted trees
for light is here all winter
when there are no leaves.
We forget, in our shallow reasoning,
that light once made
is permanent, has a life of its own,
sleeps at night and hides from cloud
but is always here,
always with us, hard, clear, hard,
eternal.

21 January 2020

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=e7ca25a58d&attid=0.7&permmsgid=msg-f:1656362287133165530&th=16fc94b96fed07da&view=att&disp=safe&realattid=f_k5fdz8qb7

**SCHUMANN:
*INTRODUCTION & ALLEGRO APPASSIONATO***

**the piano is a child
wandering
through a monstrous world,
monsters and masters
but at the end
kpwing he masters them.
they are his monsters,
his own only world.**

22 January 2020

=====

**(Limbo land
where doctors don't call back
all offices are closed
and nobody knows.)**

22.I.20

=====

**Caring for the weather
baby in the bosom
hard to get started
drive a thousand miles on Empty
try to catch up with the hills
recycling the never born
at length I caught a shadow
clutched it, spoke to it
until it spoke back to me
with a surprising
gentleness, urgency too
as if it had been waiting
all this time for me.**

22 January 2020

=====

Nothing left but saying so
the day winds down.
Midnight flounced past
almost unnoticed.
My own wings are tired,
and why not. But *saying so*
makes them flap again.
Be strong it says in whatever it says.

The breath a dynamo
of tell you so
I'm not telling you to listen—
I'm begging you to speak.

22 January 2020

LESSEN THE LEAD TIME

what comes after
depends how you spell it
the rune in the rock
Lud of Ludgate
the hill in the head.

God names reverence your lips,
pagan body in austere beliefs—
spell, speak, specify.
The morning sun.

I thought I heard them
listening too, live birds
remarking on the weather.
Everybody knows how now it is—
only a few skins can feel the shadow,
shadow of a tower fallen long before—
that's what I'm trying to spell right.

23 January 2020

=====

**And sometimes the words
seep back into the fingertips
and write the writer.**

**Different
now from when the script began.
Eyes keener, maybe, or even
closed against the exceeding light.**

23 January 2020

=====

**What can we know of other,
their skin's own
shine, lost gnostic
gospel of touch, swift
shadows writhe
through the words they say?
You have to know the other
from deep inside yourself.**

23 January 2020

=====

**(Rain is mostly
pop song NYC**

**where everywhere else
it also knows)**

24.I.20

=====

**Bright day casual waking,
wonder to be right,
right here, together,
the snow more like a page
welcoming than a blame.
To cheer the light
is all you can do.**

24 January 2020

=====

**Something else
always has to.
Be abstract
as an afterthought,
be now.**

**Be thingly for me,
be me if you can.**

**Shadowless thought,
light has a voice.**

24 January 2020

=====

**Far back in mind
the bagpipes drone—
where you come from
is always ahead of you,
the brown house,
the taste of wood
and something else—
there is always more.**

24 January 2020

== == == == ==*

(for Chatral Rinpoche)

**Blessings. Seeds.
Dissolve in the nervous
system en route
to the soul.
Nepal 2001.
You bring the monasteries home.**

24 January 2020

=====

**I don't know whether
I'm finished or just beginning,
a long book
written with an empty pen.
Read it aloud
in your convent,
discuss, revise, decide.
The resilient silences
of what has just been said.**

24 January 2020

LORI'S FLOWERS

\

for Lori Chips

**Coaxed out of paper
onto paper
with all the accuracy
of desire,
 exact
images of the real.
Real flowers, leaves,
capsules, thorns
I never saw,
flowers as real
as an old man petting his dog
or the moon over Nashawena
or the lines in my palm.
I reach out to touch them,
but only their colors
are there for me,
shape of a shadow
precise as sunshine.**

24 January 2020

=====

**Dream you
walking in the wood
along the grain of it
deep inside
how much you know**

**squeeze the lanes
together tight tight
and still pass through
a pilgrimage of touch**

**each step a trust
until you know
how much you know**

**every stumble
a caress, *be here*
the wood says,
love holds all things together**

**and each thing
wants you to believe
believe in me
inside a thing there is endless room.**

25 January 2020

=====

Yeter never,
never enough.
I will not stop you
till all has been said
and even then I might forget
to shut the blessed
microphone off
so we go on talking forever.

25 January 2020

== == == == ==

**Pastoral maybes
a chunk of ice
floating in the Hudson
in sunset gold
you saw, you caught,
you brought the gleam
of it home.**

25 January 2020

=====

**Tell the pen
to tell the paper
I want you
to tell my love
my love although
five hundred years
went by the words
still mean it,
the tune of telling
tells the truth,
sincerity
is in the breath—
tell it to breathe,
so she can feel my breath.**

25 January 2020

=====

**Being in tune
with the day.
But what kind
of instrument am I?
And who will play me?**

25 January 2020

=====

**And if they were going
we would be waiting
all night long for them
to come back from the stars
where they spend so much
of our time making meanings
from the slightest things
colors shadows shapes
waves breaking on the sand
I wonder if I possess
the patience to wait
for them, to wait with them
as long as time takes.**

**(24.I.20-- dictated)
26 January 2020**

=====

I suppose I'll be home
moonflowers at least
you must think so you
inscribe so many lines
in the sand you step
across stirring gently
grains of prehistoric rock
that come to us, come to us
tiny tiny slivers of reality
like the dreams we have.
like what we wake morning
on the island, there is always
an island, wake, go down to the shore,
find billion billion fragments
of another world, our world—
the part that's hardest for me
to understand: how time persists
in things, objects the years pass over
Byzantiums, history movies, a glare
almost like a tune we dance to

**almost naked, almost dancing
through the grasses of time
while every night we seem to sleep.**

**(24.I.20, dictated)
26 January 2020**

=====

**Without the pronouns
who wears the crown?**

**The words are all alone
marching through the silences.**

26 January 2020

=====

**Leave the things
out on the lawn
so the night
will polish them,
glad glow,
wonder of their meanings.
Someone is watching
from the trees,
can only be me.**

26 January 2020

=====

**Blue. Then
grey cloud
from north.
Who lives there,
who waves
this flag
of that country
we live in too
again and again?**

26 January 2020

=====

**Children hopping up and down—
families are so baroque.
All verticals, no forward march,
no legato, just tuneless busy work—
thank goodness for your tipsy aunt,
her naughty eyes are like a song.**

26 January 2020

=====

**are we two
not one
together**

*

**wearing heaven's
all night long
their fingerprints
are words in us**

*

**Persistent dreams if poems like those,
writing them down, writing variations on
them. They were in big letters, like posters,**

**meant to be objects, like the concrete poetry
of the 1970s.**

**to go
to gather
and be one**

**(Like that, gnomic, but always seeming to be
towards or about someone, lover, or partner
in some bright deed.)**

27 January 2020

=====

**It is enough to remember
some things. Some things
want to be forgotten,
hide in leaf shadows,
disguise themselves as lines
in old engravings, a smudge
of color on a wall where
someone pressed against it.**

27 January 2020

=====

**But the sky can be like that too,
forget its color and dream vague,
leaving us to contradict
evidence [?] with evidence.
Make it up as we go along,
like any song, hurry
towards the definite. Who
says we aren't scared?**

27 January 2020

=====

**Maybe the fish they caught
on the sea of night
was me. They threw me back
so that I could wake up
now, chosen and rejected at once,
gawping at daylight, sort of free.**

27 January 2020

EIGHTS

**Snowman or hourglass
the way we write oyr figure eights
Jung said said
a lot about us. What?**

**Left hand, right hand
cloud or sunshine,
do things yearn for us too,
chilly necklace for that warm throat?**

**I think everything tries
to tell us who we are.**

28 January 2020

=====

**Emergency means
just what comes out
from the trees of time,
beast or bane—
as if the *coming out*
is the bad thing,
the thing made plain.**

29 January 2020

ETYMOLOGY

**We never find
the actual root.
A root is hidden
deep inside
what we all come from
right now as we are.
Now turn around
and see the tracks you made
in coming here.
All the Byzantiums and Egypts
you stumbled through
to be here.**

29 January 2020

== == == == ==

**Make the cup shaped out of sea
it holds all it holds
by shape alone.**

29 January 2020

== == == == ==

**Holding their names
safe in mouth,**

**pressed up against the roof;
kept moist with own-breath**

**they are ready to speak
their meanings clear as a kiss,**

complex, ambiguous, real.

30 January 2020

=====

**Fighting
from the bottom up**

**always had to
or so it seemed—**

**who was I really
in those days**

so desperate to be me?

30 January 2020

=====

**Growing without knowing,
a heart filled only with blood?**

*

**I said I was a tree
I told the woods to come to me**

30 January 2020

SERMON

Conscious do
and conscience done.
gaberdine shawls and skirts and coats
grey as winter tree tios
all dubious resemblances
put on this cloth.
Spring is waiting.
This fez a friend
brought me from the Maghreb—
wear that too—
be a man in sunglasses,
impenetrable, strong.
Be weird.

What else can I tell you?
Be of service
to the obvious
and the hidden will find you,
occult sparrows
will perform on your lawn.
Make sure you have one,

**a lawn, I mean, in you,
make sure. Birds
come to water all by themselves—
and whither are you bound, pilgrim?
Have a cup with me before you go
so one of all of us at least will know.**

31 January 2020

AN EPISODE IN IMPERIAL HISTORY

The mechanical feminine voice
that announces phone calls
said You Have A Call From
Heliogabalus NY. Repeated it
as if I weren't scared enough.

I did not want to talk with any
emperor, especially not this
Roman one, naughty one,
a boy with bad ideas.

In fact it's morning, I don't
want to talk to anybody
but you, Language, my darling,
words strong in my mouth
like the day's first coffee.

**But who could it really have been?
They left no message, so
I'll never know—serves me right
for being so monogamous:
one wife, one language. Why
do I have a stupid phone anyhow?**

31 January 2020

MONOGAMY

**Waterfowl mate for life—
water is the same
wherever they fly.**

31 January 2020

SELF

**There is time
to be myself again,
look out the window
and count the trees
like Bruckner in his
second-class coach
from the capital to Graz.
When the window's dark
a face looks back,
most likely me.
Wonder if Bruckner saw me too—
it must have made that great man smile.**

31 January 2020

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**No wonder to wonder
we are all night people
and the master moon
clouds us with his light,**

**women have no way
no easy way to escape
that man thing happening
always at their heads,**

**but they can, can escape,
if only by the glint
of things, shadows cast,
coasts of immense seas,**

**the lines they read, that they
alone can read, lines
fallen rain-like through the light
from our mother the sun.**

I grieve to see them caught,
I try to pull the wall aside,
liminal! be liminal! I cry,
between the in and the out—

that's the only place to be,
only place to be free.
We want to be nice all the time
but music knows otherwise,

and silence, our sister, comes
along and strokes my cheek,
I swear she does, so kind,
but turns her ruby lips away.

31 January 2020

(responding to Tirzah Brott's video Reflections)