

1-2020

**jan2020**

Robert Kelly

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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?<sup>1</sup>***

***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**

---

<sup>1</sup>a 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](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](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](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)**

**24.1.20**

=====

**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 our 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**

====

**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)*