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The is continuous,

the is

is.

* 
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

* 
I woke up saying those things, in order—from what dream I can’t know. My only ontology?

1 February 2020
Rain on weekends,  
there’s a reason why,  
smokestacks and industry,  
carbon walking in the sky.

(Nursery rhymes are all we need.)

1 February 2020
Gey something written down
then pit the quill
back on the bird,
let it fly its own message now,
glory plumage, eloquent song.

1 February 2020
= = = = =

On the back lawn
a giant S
formed from the last
unmelted drifts
of last month’s snow.
How honest of it
to sign its initial
at the end of all
its write and went away.

1 February 2020
If you don’t bring the news who will?
The calculation is intimate,
embarrassing, sound
of a kiss in the dark.

Empty road, precocious daylight
so they in trees it looks like mist.
Knock on the door, pretend
to have a bible in your hands,
a new one. with new words, lords,
laws. Try to explain them
to the woman who opens the door
or man or child or just the door itself

if it stays closed. doors understand
these things, doors are made
of ancient laws. Do stand there
on the threshold and declare.

1 February 2020 S
There I am in my double-breasted grey sharkskin suit going down the subway steps Euclid Avenue on my way to school, CCNY, an hour and some minutes away, north.

It is 1951 in the Common Era. Inside there is worry: calculus, clean underwear? but also a sense of getting somewhere: Book VI of the Aeneid, Rilke’s Elegies auf deutsch.

Strange to think I have to go downstairs to know the world, or not so strange, Virgil had to, and Dante,
and that's what stairs are for, to let us know again the place or time we come from.

Does anyone still wear such clothes? Is there still some brighter way to school?

1 February 2020
Dry lips kiss open. 
The way is dark, 
hippo clouds 
above the barely legible—
a child drew this day.

2 February 2020
= = = =

Waiting as usual
for the right one.
No schedule!
A day with nothing on its mind

(so light the lights
as Stein makes Faust
lead us by the hand again
whither we would not go)

there are plenty of white
cars on the road, the phone
has lots of messages,
pick one for your own

and answer me. Yes me
for once. Gold sunlight
silver selves. I mean winter
after all.
How can I kiss your shadow? Tell me, that is all I want, the wait, the taste of after, the wise kings back on their camels and everything the same again. Only the taste has changed.

2 February 2020
CANDLEMAS

Light the candle this day is for.
Used to kneel at the altar rail,
the priest would come along with long candles crossed to bless our throats.

In the days of winter
the letters of the alphabet come inside and bless us too,

we sight through the arches of m vistas meant only for me,
and in the cup of u immerse our chill selves in that warm answer water the mind lets flow.

2 February 2020
Awake there are problems still—we taste the night like a sharp shrill leaf of basil afloat in my warm soup, *ribolino* I think the waitress said. I suck the leaf dry, lay it aside.

2 February 2020
Some lessons stay learned.
An equilateral triangle
always points up, can’t help it.
Be like that too.
Don’t listen to the wrong jazz
and if you write an opera
make sure that everybody sings.

2 February 2020
Birds after all are all about.

This is what the sun means by saying so.

Don’t turn against me. rest on my roof.

2 February 2020
Proper posture for sleep eludes his bones. Night drones on.

The clock says dawn but has no eyes to contradict itself. Dark, so dark as if it meant something more than just no.

He thought: But that’s what dreams are for, to transition us from consciousness to consciousness across this dark condition.

But then his conscience said Transition
is not a verb, there is no word for what you want, no boat for that sea.

That was some help at least--a boat is always good to think about, and sea will never fail. Think: you are a pirate now or commodore or cabin boy--what happens now? Isn’t this the same as sleep?

3 February 2020
Bone on a pillow
bird on a branch
no difference.
Way east no trace.

3 February 2020
Lock the shutters on the chicken coop
the birds are restless, they hear
outside in rustling grass
the fox of night.

Dark scares
everybody, you don’t have to be
a frightened child like me.
Some kinds of terror never
go away

eye change their shape,
get bronzed by time, smooth
maybe but then they shiver
on your skin some night
and you are five years old again.

3 February 2020
If I could tear the nap open
and see where you were born,
where the sacred body sprang
out of nowhere to be you.

Sacred from *sacer*, out-of-bounds,
other side of what is normal,
holy, unholy: something else.

That’s what flags and nations hide,
the other side of anybody
different everywhere.
I lick the foreign
language off your skin.

3 February 2020
Cruise ship
sad birthday cake afloat
crowded with nervous
celebrants of this
strange ritual, the sea.
Come home safe,
the sea will come with you,
you will never be alone.

3 February 2020
Worry keeps the wound at bay
it says all by itself on a pink
piece of paper, my handwriting,
I pick up from the floor, my floor.

I wonder what wound I meant,
I wonder if I’ve said this before,
wonder if I’ve wondered it before,
wonder lingers, words last

but what do they mean? Or was I
quoting a dream? I think I think
worrying about something keeps
the thing from happening, maybe.

Sonnets were invented to work out stuff
like this. Could this be one of those?

3 February 2020
The cat walks up her back. It knows what it knows—cats are like that. It pretends to be her lover’s hands, but not too much, doesn’t want to make her sad, the lover’s far away, in the next room, moving around, so far away. But the cat is here. A cat (it thinks) is what it means to be here, nobody is here-er than a cat. It curls between her shoulders to make its meaning clear to her. Even in her sleep she knows someone very dear is very here.

3 February 2020
= = = = = =

Castigate the inner clock? Never. It knows when I forget. Sleep right means wake later, the legislator is not in the room.

I stand with Trakl in a field of poppies knowing there is no mystery but sleep.

4 February 2020
How can I tell how far to go until I get there? Every footstep a destination, each a different vista, angle, glimpse of sun through cloud. We are not adrift.

4 February 2020
When you reach the middle of the story, stop right then. Life is all about beginnings—start again. Leave the endings to bourgeois novelists—you know the kind of music you get when the band plays on.

4 February 2020
Caught out of the air
the taste of someone far.

Clouds carry such information,
messages from no one
right to me. To you.
Look out any window and see me.

4 February 2020

me or something better...
There is a smile hidden in the heart of things, a mist in each mistake through which comes riding a knight to your rescue or a monk to cure your sins, a beautiful person to know? Or is it you, a pale shadow loving towards me after all?

4 February 2020
Answer me and far away
a ruby fallen on a marble floor,

answer me and blackbirds
circle overhead, O god
how I aim to be heard—

answer me and the sea rushes in,
some things will never stop,

pick up the stone and put it on,
I will never stop asking.

4 February 2020
Am I here or is it there
the world beyond the curtain
the wolf of self?
There were too many
waiting in the dark,
one I knew from years ago,
saw me from twenty yards ahead,
looked twice and turned away.
Monster me I must be seeming.
But enough of myth.
The cauldron where the milk
curdles into cheese
must be stirred from time to time.
This is the role of dream.

2.
I never touched her,
never loved her.
She had husbands
who were my friends.
That must have been my crime.
3.
How to outlive a dream--
open the window
drink the tepid cup
laid out the night before,
rub your hands together,
promise to be good
to someone somehow
when the day comes home.
Show up early for work,
hope that someone will be there,
that lovely, myth of someone else.

5 February 2020
At least it’s not about waiting. The beauty part of windows is to be right now. It could be Bushwick fifty years ago for all I know, so cast the curtain of repentance and see the light. Or dark. It doesn’t matter. Just as long as it’s there. Here. No waiting. The actual.
Don’t go yet
the doctor said

the dream one
who lives in my head
usually mute
the real Authority.

Don’t go yet,
something is waiting
to be said

It always is
I answered

Don’t be so smart
it said
just wait, you’ll see,
when did I ever lie to you?
Abashed, I quieted.
That play has been running
so many years,
*The Word in Edgewise*
I think is me.

5 February 2020
Im walk down the gulley and call our your name—dawn or shiver after. There is a spring there, small, I bend to drink, it bubble up from mossy stone, soft, soft, a name whispered over and over so even I will understand.

5 February 2020
1.
Sometimes I turn away from music
to another thing.
A thing I cannot name
or has no name
it is quiet there
but has much movement
lines and limits
shaped of light.
And no one’s there!
For once I am alone
the way music
never lets us be.
Alone in light
as if for this one
moment I am
nothing but I am.
2.
But who would remember such separations?
The cloud parts, necomes more or amy, and the sun speaks.
Such happenings remember me.
It was a child on a bus on his way to the movies.
It was a boy in the dark front row waiting for the screen to light up. Giant faces, weird places, just what he had come to see.

3.
School came later, the great antipathy.
It was not hard except to be in a room where nothing happened but it was very loud.
Far away the blackboard had magic names on it.
I think the chalk dust was psychedelic, it took me, took me into that bright place where the words are.

5 February 2020
The cost of things close to the heart hides in the dark

In an old sedan we try to find country but there are houses everywhere.

That’s where the heart lives, she says. And she knows best. She came down from heaven to teach us this.

Now turn off the engine and go to sleep.

6 February 2020
Wait long enough
and the others will be there
singing opera outside the window
speaking Frisian to confuse the Dutch—

you know how I am,
how long I too have waited
to be on the right raft
on the right canal

with all my silly love songs
floating in the air
like dust, or is it snow—
how could a man like me tell?

6 February 2020
But who was the Matilda
the swagman waltzed?
The song dissolves into dawn,
decades since I heard it sung,
I sang it too, sang it
without authority—
remember the ocarina?
Remember the old alkies
who sold paper poppies
under the El station
when there still was time?

2.
Scandalous, this memory machine.
So many teeth in so many gears,
saxophones, isotopes—

that’s what I mean. Moment
by moment the sky grows lighter.
Soon I’ll be able to forget.

6 February 2020
I stood in a field after a war,
green things began to grow.
A man stood with me I vaguely knew.
In silent hope we watched the light sleep across the meadow,
we had nothing to say but the very day.

6 February 2020
Invariant appetite as of the horizon.
Roads glisten with what might have been rain.
The chemicals we play with play with us too.
We are children together. And we may not be orphans after all.

6 February 2020
The conquistadors are sly, they come as birds, bring chocolate to the kids, slide down banishers, perch on the broad steps of public buildings, sleep on bridges, stand on corners trying to sell us breaths of air disguised as music. Fools they seem but they win out, at the end of the day it is they who own the night, when we are too frightened to go out they monopolize the dark. They extract from shadows wealth we can’t imagine—watch them carefully next day when you’re hurrying to work watch how they smile at you as kings smile at peasants, gently, half-pitying, half-goad ing you on.

6 February 2020
More milk than tilth
the burden irks.
That we have
and must, please
though it might.
the continuity
of appetite appals.
Sustain by being,
feed on the self
itself! Be sky
a while and see
how to live
by feeling alone.
If you must eat
dine on the sight
of the other, the others.

7 February 2020
Add to the obvious
every day--
in that way pyramids are built
and from the unknown country
the Nile flows into the inland sea.

7 February 2020
Sudden hunger invades the day--
was I an animal after all
no better than a mouse or mastodon,
need, need, need?
I will consult the lady
and see what she says
and maybe be the thing
she recommends, thing or beast
or back to the beginning,
one cloud per island,
one sun per cloud.

7 February 2020
Left in between
a dream and a touch
a morning—
bask
in grey light,
dear sister Meaning,
who is your brother?

I have not seen
this whole half-hour
a single bird
and wonder why.

7 February 2020
Always I hope
something left to do.
Finished Proust,
who comes next?

Washed the dishes
swept the deck,
time to triangulate
how tall the linden,

learn cuneiform
so I can write new
love letters to you
in the deepest past.

7 February 2020
Asking again
that sign on the door
you said means the sky

open open
let it come out
that curious bird
white as seafoam
its high shrill sweet call
annihilating history

You said it was no door
it was a book you said
instead, its binding stiff
with no one’s reading,

I ask how I can open it
you offer me your hand
instead, pale, clean,
unreadable inscription
in ancient lines on your fresh skin.

No book, no door, no word.
I take your hand and sort of pray.

8 February 2020
= = = = =

In the Tauric Chersonese there was a war, an afterward, a column of weary men finding their way home.

Now name for me a place where so such misery ever stalked the land. Now write the name of that place in the middle of the air without moving your hands.

The war is everywhere, not all the men have reached home even yet.

8 February 2020
Birds fly around my head
all kinds of birds.
Fly close
but do not touch me.

I walk inside
a canopy of birds,

they walk me where I am going.

9 February 2020
A FOREST IS ITS OWN DESCRIPTION.

(It was a sheen of snow
I saw last night,
persuaded myself it was just moonlight,
light of the full moon.)

9 February 2020
Runner up the road
athlete alone with his body
jogs through a few flakes of snow—
more coming? he keeps going
out of sight over the hill.
Things fall from the sky
I think they run to be alone,
alone as they can ever be.

9 February 2020
Snow. Is that enough to say about the day, one word carries it all away from what we mean and leaves us only what we must?

2.
I think of the poor guy who drives the plow pulled from his bed at 3 AM to startke me from mine at 4,

the roar goes by, he rubs his eyes, scouring the road, leaves mounds behind dangerous and pale,
white whale,
Clean roadway
for the sleepless us.

3.
Figure it out—
keep the lines short
winter math
is all adding,
subtracting, easy,
hard. Not yet
the glorious calculus
of summer, even
the golden trig
of spring sunshine
measuring bare trees.
winter is just more
and less. The snow
will go, the way
a choir finally
stops barking
and the Mass goes on.

10 February 2020
I’d finally gotten to sleep
an hour later the roar
of the snow plow woke me,
Bad news, you Democrat,
bad commute and everything
difficult, ha-ha
is what the plow blade shrieked
going NW fast, right through
my lamentable consciousness.

10 February 2020
(I’m not complaining. It could be raining, turning to ice in one degree.)

10.II.20
We saw a clip of Phoenix Park antlered deer all over the place. The deer they tell us came from Wales there are mornings everywhere, though—not just cities, grasslands, seas. The mystery resumes the minute you wake. Even before you switch on the TV.

10 February 2020
I keep filling my pen
from this empty bottle
and it still seems to work,
it seems to write.

But maybe later the words
will lose their meaning,
blankness leak in from the sky
and there’ll only be the sound

of what my lips said for you
to say again with yours.
If even the sound is left.
If you pick me up and read.

10 February 2020
So strange that right means correct, but left means what is left behind—trash, triumph, turd, temple? How well our words know us, our confusions, our few everlasting instruments.

10 February 2020
Someday soon
I’ll understand.

But to whom
will I explain
myself at last?

Free admission
in this dome—
come with naked ears.

10 February 2020
What I said to culture when it stared me in the face:
I love your language, your opera, your paved streets, boulevards and arches,
I love your benches in the park, your flower gardens for no one in particular, streetlights, road signs, bridges, the seacoast you leave magically alone.

10 February 2020
This day of grace

gratuitous grasslands
gone in waking

g, w,
the same difference

(the war la guerre
Guadalquivir < Wadi al-Kabir = the big river)

Wait at the gate

you have won.
You have gone.

11 February 2020
THE REMEDY

Are, not am—
for te, porary relief of me.

Plurality
is a cure for self.

11 February 2020
YOGA NOVA

Sit still. Rigid.
Tight as you can.
No move at all.

Slowly all the rest
of things, the world,
will move around you,

slow at first, then
fast, fast. This
is the dance.

this is what
you came into this
world to be part of.

11 February 2020
LINCOLN’S BIRTHDAY

This used to be a holiday. But then again, this used to be America, Roman Empire, Babylon, clay streets of Mohenjo-Daro, this used to be the moon of that bright hot wanderer our every-young mother the Sun.

2.
Everything contradicts us. It makes us strong. The Civil War never ended, never ends. Divided selves, divided peoples. Tussle mild or struggle fierce, then the furlough called dying.

12 February 2020
We begin of course where it ends. No need to live the same day twice. The cup is full again—the dog barked a lot in the night then ran away. It’s raining isn’t it?

13 February 2020
FLAUBERT’S COMMA

I need Flaubert’s comma
the one he took a weekend
to decide. I need to know
where the pause goes, I mean
where the breath stops
for an instant, holds itself
in its own arms then goes on.
The pause is how the music knows
and how sense is made.
His friends went hunting
left him alone at his desk
chasing the pause through all
the flourishing forest of his prose.
I think he found it—
but later set it free and left it out.

13 February  2020
DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR THIS VOYAGE

Receipt from delivery of reality

Consent Form (signed) for the weather

License for Bi-pedal Motion

Visa for Seeing Past Arms; Length

Medical Certificate Permitting Tactile Sensation (‘Touch’)

This List is Incomplete, and other Documents may be required in certain situations. Consult the nearest Authority if in Doubt.

13 February 2020
A LETTER HOME

Here I am in Topia
a little town on the way
to nowhere. Not there yet.
Mist over the big parking lot
crowded with grey cars.
Whose? More wheels than
feet in this sort of place.
Cold but not freezing,
day but not much light.
Complaint is natural—
complain about nature
itself next. All that dying.
Hands in my pocket
I slouch towards supper.
Pizza? No appetite. Stand
in front of Walmart’s
and count the pigeons.
Maybe Mexican food. Maybe
try the next town before dark.

13 February 2020
FOR CHARLOTTE, ON A SAINT’S DAY

The heart can only hold so much. Something overflows, rushes north to fill the mind, pours out east and west down the arms to find the hands, the same ones that touch you, try to touch or pick up pen or chisel to declare what the heart itself can’t say.

Yes, this is the day of hearts, hope of spring and blossoms and all that, all that I think about when you, you come to mind, the fantastic structures of your wise love, all your wisdoms. Work, words articulate as birds in air, simple, your simple complexity, your love and let, that you let me love you—that’s the most amazing thing, that you let me call you my Valentine.

13 February 2020
Say it longer, citizen.  
The music wants you,  
sticks to your lips,  
not like the kiss  
of a maiden aunt but maybe so,  
who knows  
what animal’s pulse so wild  
inside the softest fur?  
Have you ever been a mountain?  
Slide down yourself and see.  
We’re talking Gravity here,  
the balance act,  
the Justice card in the Tarot,  
when the wind drops and there you are.  
Sound familiar?  
You heard it on the radio  
before you were born.  
If I stop telling you  
what’s on my mind  
will you open at least the first door,  
the one with the peep-hole—  
you know enough about me already,
you have always known—
you gave it to me.
But I digress.

2. Comfortable afterthought—
an alphabet
made of bees.
I mean beads.
I mean prayers
strung together
to make sense
sound by sound—
you find them
in the flowers
somewhere some
time from now.

3. As the sun
licks the lawn
what happens?
The deer step down
the glacial ridge,
the wife rejoices. 
This is the card called The Sun—
have you ever been the Sun?
Aren’t you the living center of the system?
Name the system.
How else do you cast shadows,
the words we read,
I mean the words we breathe,
sorry, I’ll get it right,
the words that breathe us.

14 February 2020
If you must write about zebras
put them on the azimuth,
let them run like astronauts
over the red deserts of human speech—
I was there, I have seen, flew once
over the Hadramawt, I saw
the silence from which language comes,
We are not God’s zoo, but for all we know
we might be God’s kindly kindergarten.

14 February 2020
And then I heard
the (even!) horses sing—
the empty sky
brings language on.

14 February 2020
Something not
what I’m looking at
something else
it talks to me
outside not inside
not near not far—
something there,
right there.
It woke me
with its telling,
I know what it’s saying
without hearing a word.

15 February 2020
ONE STOPS ANOTHER IN THE STREET

There you are--we have use for you.

Who are you?

We are the Secret College--you’ve been waiting for us all your life and you know it.

I know it but how do I know you are it or of it or from it or what?

You can only know what I tell you and it rings true inside.

What if I have no inside?

Then you are one of us already--to be in the Secret College means to exist for the other. to be the water in their glass and a glass for their water, words for their mouths and you know the rest, don’t you?
I think I do.

Then write it down to make sure--writing is a clean kind of thinking.

[writes:] I am for the other.

Now you are one of us--in a little white you will be me--I have been you for a long time now, old friend, hello.

15 February 2020
for Tamas

1. Buy a yellow school bus
   park it in the woods.
   Keep it mostly empty,
   sit inside in daylight hours.
   This is your school.
   These are the subjects
   you will finally be tested on:
   Distinguishing Inside from Outside.
   All the ways metal is different from wood
   (the textbook calls it Hylic Ontology
   but who knows what that means).
   The Gifts of the Gods—
   subjective and objective genitives.
   Leaf shapes and what they mean.
   Zoological Affinity: animals who approach
   you vs. animals who leave you alone.
   The twelve kinds of silence.
2.
Don’t stay in the bus
when the weather’s too hot or too cold.
It’s up to you. But notice
that you’re happy as you can be
when you are in your bus.
And you can bring a nice friend
or two in with you sometimes.
But *doucement, doucement*—
don’t scare the woods.

15 February 2020
If blue is sky
and green is tree
we pray the red
we never see,
it stays inside
and makes us be.
And when evening comes
all colors are gone
and what we see
is only what we are.
Does night set us free?

15 February 2020
The birds of us
busy the sky.
haunt sky.

Polis
a pillow for the god’s head
sleeps us our deed.

Do. That’s all,
city, do and be done.

When the goid wakes we sleep.
I have never told you enough.

16 February 2020
PURCHASE ORDER

Think of the window as a monitor, a mirage,—what you see is pure assumption or pantomime, a program they boldly call it, they admit that’s what you’re seeing. Guarded (guided) by these thoughts (‘reflections’), dare to look away. This rain-spotted monitor, this busywindow is one you bought or rented, came with your house wall. Study the wall instead.

16 February 2020
We know who she is. She lives in the city and comes up to see whoever we are, swim in our lakes, grow close with our trees. You know her as well as I do and not one of us will ever know her better. She only seems to be here, she’s a shadow on vacation and we are shadows to her too. She smiles at us as she goes, the way you’d smile at a tree.

16 February 2020
Cheezits for breakfast—
that sort of day,
the tower of Babel
still to be climbed,
I’m somewhere between
V and U, on the way,
mixed three kinds of coffee
and it didn’t work, that
sort of day. some sunshine
for a while and not too cold,
so many people to talk to
and where is that noise
coming from—sounds like
music but you never know,
that sort of day, salty Sunday,
crows bold on the lawn,
wsh I had such dark wings.

16 February 2020
SEMLANCE

Winter people in the woods
look like deer walking
on hind legs. There is a pun
hiding here, dense dead leaves,
spring five weeks away, thrpb
of something ;ole sorrow in the throat.
I saw one walking at the edge
of the road. We pretend to be
human, to be going somewhere,
to be on the way. But the only way
we go is, the way trees go, strong
through all the springtimes to come.
Fast as we run we stand there still.

17 February 2020
Did you ever get tired of trying to be good and just sat there watching the ocean roll itself in and itself out?

Among the activists it’s hard to hear the waves. But sprawled alone there just being bad, you hear the non-stop gospel of the sea. Good sweeps in, bad sweeps out, all thought of them dispelled. This is what there always is—let it be you for a little while.

17 February 2020
INK

He writes the bottle dry
and people wonder why—
aren’t there enough songs
already?

Not at all, he said,
I want there to be so many
songs that every person
will have one of their own
and another one to spare
in case they get tired of the first,
I want them able to sing out loud
even when no one’s listening—
so bring me a new bottle, please.

17 February 2020
Why do we sit down to write?
Shouldn’t such *going* be
gone by striding or at least
tottering towards the spoken,
the absolute consequence,
the word?

   It’s the middle
of the night--when else
could such answers call
softly to our questions?

18 February 2020
Imperious midnight
to last till almost dawn!
How weak our numbers are
to tame your whirlpool dark.

18.II.20
Legs meant for walking
lie too long a-bed. Wake,
wander, walk! I tell them,
show everyone out there
how fast you can be gone.

18,II.20
I think those monks of ancient cities shaped stone with their hands—no chisels, no hammers, just pressed warm palms and rhythmimg fingers on the rock till shape appeared, beasts and faces, images of what they desired, they feared. And there the statues stood, or walls in high relief, or columns to hold the house up by images alone! Tools came later, when men forgot the intensity of original desire.

18 February 2020
Things sing
in the middle
of the night
things sing
sometimes the sound
of a word lasts
the whole dark
so dawn itself
seems an echo of it.

18.II.20
Clutch the table  
with the chair  
I am a folk-tale  
need to be told,  
snuff the candle  
but leave the light,  
put down that luminous  
mandolin your uncles  
brought home from Istria,  
put the lion to sleep  
by the cold fireplace, warm  
enough inside the mind  
for all the beasts of Africa--  
I have a cup full of the Nile,  
I tell, I tell, now tell me,  
tell me before I doze again  
in that harsh cathedral  
of dreamless sleep. Tell me now--  
all any now ever is is telling.

18 February 2020
5 A.M.
Vertumnus comes to mind--
could that be
the spring side of autumn,
the mirror, the opposite,
the self over there?
Every thing needs me
but who are you
whose name says
all by itself in my mind?
I have so many friends--
I read once in an old book
A man has as many sins
as he has bristles on his chin
and I believed. each sin
a friend, each friend a reaching out from inside me to the light.

18 February 2020
A LITTLE SPA MUSIC

There was a chance. disguised as daylight it was strong black Irish tea as such would trot a mouse we say

from country to city came strange land of sidewalks big windows showing only in people in tight clothes uncomfortably ambling by

yes, tea, especially with milk and sweet, even with dull music on the audio like mayonnaise,

yes, everything is now again little city little creel, life itself is an ambassador from afar from something else that has a message for us, did I say light?

18 February 2020, Kingsto
And if I sang with my hands 
would the world hear me? 
Quick footsteps of a woman 
passing. How g eels make music 
How music passes. Passes.

18 February 2020 
Kingston
NIGHT SKY OVER GULU IN UGANDA

There are constellations seen nowhere else.

Right above our heads we see the *Spinning Sisters* who weave the city with what they’ve spun.

The *Old Man Good at Math* who teaches children to count and multiply but then forget, he’s up there at top right.
The *Box with No Inside* is close to the Spinners, and the *River Along the Edge of Everything* holds the whole eastern horizon. The *Milk Jug* is bright in the rainy season when the milk of heaven flows only the wisest drink from its waters.

19 February 2020
THE MOUNTAIN YEATS CALLED BEN BULBEN

The trees are stone
the myths monogamous
will not leave this place
that wedded them,
worded them

I want to see a picture of this place
carved in ivory
photo on facebook
selfie of a mountain

not a mountain.
Something more,
a fox runs through the shade,
some brownish leaves
still brave the cold

up there, up there,

I passed by once
no hat on my head
no thought in my brain
but there it was anyhow,

that glorious thing
the something not me.

2.
Of course it is famous,
why else would the name of it
pull me from sleep.
I knew the famous part--
but I didn’t know it.
And nobody knows what any name means,
we just keep saying them
like kisses on the empty air.

3.
Am I home yet
I asked the wizard
Go back to sleep
the bed will sail you there
no ocean needed,
sleep is what you mean
the downward mountain at the heart of life

But how could I believe such things,
I had driven past the place
obedient to the road
that teasing thing that shows
you what you cannot touch,
cannot walk on -- no wonder
he talks up the advantages of sleep.
Because in sleep you can touch anything
and the stone trees of Sligo
suddenly bear apples and hazelnuts and
pears.

20 February 2020
When Christ came to Annandale and walked in our woods he wanted the place to be peace and asked the local tribes to keep the place as quiet as they could, meet here for parley or for feast but no fighting. My body he said will bear wounds enough so leave this land alone. He sat on a boulder the glacier had left, same stone the Buddha sat on a few hundred years before--not many people here back then so he didn’t stay on, just left his blessing tangled in the trees. Christ knew about that, knew that all the Generous Ones would come here, right here, these ridges, meadows, delves, they all would come and leave
their message here where we, even we, can find it if we look. And when I say right here I do mean everywhere.

20 February 2020
ANGEL TALK

Wanna write a million poems or earn a million bucks?
I’ll take the poems, sir.
Good choice, kid,
I’ll give you both.

20.II.2020
I’m near the tree
where it began
and so are you,
the organ shatters
the solemn difference
that keeps the church
inside itself, the sound
propels us to the world
where that tree stands.
And we stand under it
our hands if we’re lucky
holding one another
for dear life as we used to say
when we were all alone
in the endless city.

20 February 2020
They worry a lot about what’s under the floor who’s that at the door strange noises in the sink.

They are people they live on earth a hundred thousand years and still keep fretting. Who built the floor? Who opened the door?

20 February 2020
Words to begin with
words to beg
in with

please
let me in
I need to live

inside the order
of your intelligence
(beauty)

it is winter
where I am alone.

20 February 2020
I see what my father saw when he was very old. He sat on this same porch watching this road the few cars, fewer people walking or jogging past, his eyes were avid, a man reading the latest news.

Now I am here not much younger and there it is again or still or always, the whole world passing by.

20 February 2020
CHRITIAN HABENICHTS

Christian Habenichts, pilgrim, mystic, in late 18th Century wandered through northern Europe, from Frisian west to the borders of Russia. His avowal was beautiful: *Wherever men and women understand my words, that’s where I belong.* So he traveled endlessly, wherever German was spoken in some form or other, or could be more or less understood. *The road is my home,* he used to say when asked.

He called the Baltic Sea the real Mare Nostrum (*unsres echte Mare Nostrum*); a man of some education, he gave the names of places in the Mediterranean to places somehow topologically equivalent on or by the Baltic. So Spain was Norway, and Bornholm was Sicily, Sweden was Italy, and Jerusalem was Saint Petersburg. Naturally then he called Germany Africa, and called himself *der Afrikaner.*

Most of what we know of him comes from references in letters and journals of the time,
but there are two little pamphlets that bear his name. “What the Goose Thinks About while His Wing Heals” is dated 1791, published by Ankermann in Kiel; “I Dug a Star Up from the Ground” came seven years later, no publisher stated, just the town, Wismar.

He must have had a patron, or perhaps some family we know nothing about, to have secured publication of even such slender volumes.

Nothing is known of his date of death, and his birthplace is controversial. Novalis called him that wanderer from Stettin, but Kleist quotes a joke about Habenichts he heard in Berlin, that made the wanderer a native of Travemünde, on the sea near Hamburg. And his very name is surely assumed: a Christian who has nothing, who wanders through the world, everywhere and nowhere his home.

*I dreamt this man, 21 February 2020, 3 A.M.*
Did you know that every time you go into the water, sea or river, lake or even swimming pool you come out changed? Not the same one who went in, even though hardly anybody notices what's happened and even you don’t know now you are a new self. Who are you? that’s you have to find out. Every time it’s different, the touch of water does this every time. My mother taught me this when I was little, she knew more about the sea than any book. Sometimes I forget to tell people this as they scamper down to the waves and later I have to study them changed. Are they still my friends?

21 February 2020
The night wants its dinner now
wales me to feed it.
Wheat field in the Ukraine—
I must stand there in autumn moonlight
to gather its food. No moon here,
end of winter, very cold.
No matter. I have to be there,
stare through the field.
Something has to happen. A fox?
Lonely woman counting sheaves of wheat?
I kneel down and touch the dirt
and something not too far begins to sing.

22 February 2020
In another country
there is a tallish tree
people call
by half a dozen names,
depends on what they want from it—
leaves or sap or fruit or timber.
The tree responds to all their names
but has one of its own it never tells
and no one knows but me
and I only know it because
one time a while ago I was the tree.

22 February 2020
Going by
you’ve said enough
the songbird said,
it’s my turn now
to crack the egg
of morning open
and see what the day
will sing for itself—
shut up already
what’s on your mind.
What’s outside
will come to rescue
you and be both.

22 February 2020
Listen to the spider
stretching her web
over the mouth of the well.

It is not always
good to go down
is what she means

not always good
to drink
even from the purest source.

Sometimes you have to be
just where you are,
just being there alone.
A cat
on the chair
on the chair.

23 February 2020
dreamt as such
Coughed awake
bones ache
little boxes
frame our knowing.

* 

If the headache goes away
will the head stay?
Or does it belong
to all its experiences?
The pain is mine—
but am I its?

23 February 2020
It’s not sleep
coming and going,
it’s the geometry of sickness
lines to be folded
angles turned
the more or less elegant
sensations suddenly
crushed awake by a cough.

Being sick
is all about interruption.
Can’t sleep can’t read can’t think
I walk around blundering
in a dark house
only some of it outside.
Forgive me, I’m describing.
Go back to the Bible—
the Bible never describes.

24 February 2020
When Cicero denounced Catiline the Senate marveled more at his eloquence than at the baseness of the conspirator. Quousque, etc. Four of them survive, kids have to learn them in high school. at least I did. From which we learn the gleam lasts longer than the gold.

24 February 2020
We drove through Yeats country 
climbed his little tower 
Thoor Ballilee. A seal came 
up yo bless us out of Galway Bay. 
We visited Lady Gregory’s 
but history was noit home. 
What more could we do to show 
our lovbe for the man’s language? 
Brown eyes of the seal, hrass on the hill.

24 February 2020
Aesthetic means how you feel when you see something looking back at you. You study each other until you know. The way you know me now.

24 February 2020
CONTRADANCE

A cow’s splayed hoof
all that weght
a ship on the sea
bringing you here
for the first time

but dances are always
and always about again
one move makes the next
and the field fills up
cattle come before cities

and there you are, milk
in your mouth and the street
filled with foreigners
the foreigners we all are
the ship will never get here.

24 February 2020
Majesty of mother
beginning of all—
what the Virgin
held in her womb
was all of us.
There is no one on this planet
who is not the child of a mother
who was virgin once. Think on this.
Understand the majesty
we take so casually,
the blue sky her robe.

24 February 2020
Nada. Morning.
Getting better.
Nada looking out the window
nada, nada is nice.
Grey sky nada, no rain,
not cold, 50 degrees February,
not bad, nada is nice,
nada to do, nada is nice,
is nicer than nice,
nada is getting better,
nada is now.

25 February 2020
They know I’m here
but do they know I’m me?
That’s what every fugitive
has to figure out--by stars,
statistics, signatures of things.
If they’re not sure, I’m almost safe.
I’m the one who offended the system
by being myself. Or am I just
fooling myself out here, self-
important in the empty trees?

25 February 2020
Strange how much effort is needed for simple things, unscrewing a bottle, slicing a loaf of bread. But better that way than the food they offer in dreams on pale saucers slices of meat as if they were delicacies and we have to eat them or at least accept them and set them in front of us and grieve for all the beasts in the world. Not in my mouth their deaths.

25 February 2020
The little bit that’s left to tell is enough to spin another planet round our Mother Sun. What’s left to tell will fill the sky over Moscow, Pittsburgh, even some places where I live. The little bit that’s left to tell will take us all on, merry lives to sing. Or speak or mumble or scribble or just breathe out on some old stone wall—stone remembers.

(19 February 2020)
25 February 2020
Things to catch up with things on my side.
I see her a block or two ahead,
if I hurry I will be soon enough where she will have been.
Her traces will be left there, hints, haunts, evidences, remembrances. Then we will both go on.

25 February 2020
The part lasts longer than the whole. Yeats’ poems scatter through the world each one complete. The he in hero, the her in hero lead us home, the her in here.

26 February 2020
Rescue the rare
revere
the ordinary.
This is felicity
you have known
her all your life.

26 February 2020
Suppose it was a word I could read by chance in Russian or Hebrew, suppose it spoke to my condition (do I have one? would I know if I did?) suppose the page it’s written on came into my hands on paper or parchment or some glowing screen would I grasp at it at last, inhaling deep the fresh air of another language and do what it tells me to do or know or dread or sleep again?

26 February 2020
= = = = =

Day’s light
day’s right
walk the field
in baby steps
Winchester Cathedral
is very tall
look straight up the spire
and see how it points
to the very spot you,
just you, have to understand
in all the sky. Fact.
This is astronomy
before numbers got in the way.
This was pure knowing
of what the sky says.
Now cross the ocean again
and stand by my bed
your silhouette against the window
morning is all the news I need.

26 February 2020
When they come to take my horse
take my camel too, I need a beast
with wheels on its feet, I weary
of my weight on other people
even if they have four legs,
strong spines, and a lot on their minds
so they don’t especially hate it
when I ride. No more of that
for me. Give me a platform
with a fire on it, steam pipes
spinning wheels, glass cabins,
comfy armchairs, lots of noise
so I can’t hear my own fear,
terror of the road, weird going.
I think I will stay home today,
it’s a soft grey day, nobody out there
needs me today, do they? Do you?
Are you listening? If you were
I don’t think I’d be saying this.

26 February 2020
Nobody answers my unsent letters, something’s the matter with my mail. It shouldn’t need to have a stamp on it or squeeze through the internet for them to hear me thinking at them, they should know already what’s on my mind. Isn’t love the natural condition of each being, Dante says it moves the stars, it must move me, and you, and them to answer me, why so silent, maidens of Florence, wordy comrades of Cantabriga? Are you haughtier than the stars?

26 February 2020
Th overt animal aloft. Who was Saint Cloud anyhow, I’ve heard that name? Who is this holy personage who hides the sun? or dies the sun? Who dares to? Three dys of cloud and then the wind came to sweep open the robes of him or her who smiles and lets us see the sun at last?

27 February 2020
Dragons of importunity
mew at cave mouths
all through the city.
they want your custom
that mingled lust and fear
on which the market runs.
They live in big windows
and smile wickedly, sweetly,
thgey try to make you think
you’re stiull a child reading a book
and they are the book,
Buy me Try me Need me Feed me
they purr through the smoke.
Smile back and hurry past. Save
your cash for the plausible beggar
on the corner—he needs it more.

27 February 2020
The wolf
is with it.
He passed me once,
the nobility
of his singularity
owned the early night.
We walked a lot in those days
before the last wolf den on our ridge
gave way to a blue tin pole ban,
exeunt wolves.
And that evening he passed us,
trotting the same path, he downhill
we slower up,
the majesty of his indifference!
God send I can face my death
or dread or beast desire
with such calm golden eyes.

28 February 2020
Always room
for another
onion in the soup
iris in the dooryard
face in the door.
Always more--
that’s the religion
that meant us
where we are
and how we can endure
our own simplicity.
Call it the onion,
or the opera
the hungry overture
the aria that never ends.
And that makes us weep too,
sobbing over the cutting board,
one more, one more.

28 February 2020
I thought I heard you laughing
a few hundred miles away,
not heard, exactly, saw
instead in the mind’s eye
the toss of your hair,
sprightly glimmer of the eye
that goes with laughter.
But mind’s a dark place,
I can’t be sure.
I know it was you.
I pray it was laughing.

28 II 20
Sometimes it really is too far to tell. Cloud on the mountain--mist or snow? Movement in the woods. You know what I mean. We don’t have to know everything, you tell me, some things are just things, over there for their own reasons, or no reason, leave alone, just don’t know. But if I’m to live in this world I have to read its signs, read and obey, that’s what all the laws in all the worlds say. I need to obey that dark shape on the hillside, the cloud on the peak is my mother.

28 February 2020
The train of natural intent
coughs across the river
at 3 A.M., wakes me
to cough my own part.
Winter cold. Some nights
louder than others,
train sluggish loud along the water.
We live in a mirror.

2.
Caught. Cough.
A friend
takes up painting,
I think about his images,
his house, this house,
the mountains that mean us,
Heva’s garden.
Where is Adam when the Lord needs him?
Where art thou, art?
When the Lady needs him,
the red paint honest in his hands.
3.  
If I wanted to be awake  
I would begin to think,  
think of all the things  
it might be bearing to the city,  
everything winds up there any way,  
thousands of trains and trucks  
every day, the natural intent  
of going on, the trick of Babylon.  
My blood was issued there  
before the war.

4.  
One bite at a time. Spider,  
the spinner. The skin  
is perilous, it too can sleep,  
and when it wakes  
where is Eden then?  
I want to see Eva in the picture,  
naked, furry-pubis’d,  
her mouth half agape in a smile.  
Agape, the love we bear our kind.
5.
Let it pass by,
let it be cold a while
and then not.
*Quando ver benit meum?*
the Latin poem pleaded,
When does my spring come?
and who makes it mine?
Time rouses the green leaves,
stirs the roots,
sips the sap. I will walk out
and call it mine.
And Eve will laugh me off the lawn.

6.
This is what it made me understand:
when you draw a picture of a house
she is always there, inside, waiting,
not necessarily for you
or anyone you can name,
but she;ś there, she moves
from room to room,
tapestries, comforters,
credenzas, cabinets
full of tinkling glass.
The radio is on, internet,
Mahler from Vienna,
the symphony with words in its lap,
she hums them as she goes.

7.
That’s why you paint the picture
in the first place, of course,
to find her. Location is the first
principle of that branch of mathematics
called love. You know she’s there.
You listen at the door you just painted.
You hear the color of her being.
You lay the brush down
and I can sleep again.

29 February 2020
Not dawn yet
on a cold Leap Year Day
a train woke me
in the valley
and I thought of you.
Does it make sense
to say so?

29 February 2020
This is the last
of that bottle,
lovely violet ink
Waterman’s from France,
same kind I bought
in 1954 on the Boul’ Mich’,
this latest bottle gave
so much of 2019
snd two full months of new,
its last fill yesterday,
not a drop in it more,
just enough in the pen
to go on writing this,
and when it stops,
Paris will still be there,
and I’ll start writing
in black again, back
to black,
    the days’
poem is always a debutante,
anyhow, in basic black,
I can hardly wait.
But I can wait—
waiting is what writing does best,
this word I give you
you wait to read—
it will be there when you want it,
the way words are.
Imagine the truth—
all this is for you.
The complex machinery
of human language, physiology,
neurology, hope and lust and fear,
all it adds up to
is one more word, here,
for you, this one, this.

29 February 2020