

3-2020

mar2020

Robert Kelly

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=====

**Blue. The agreement
holds. Samphire
by the Dorset coast
he saw. Lightship
in the Narrows.
Snowdrops by the old brick wall,
Blithewood garden.
All the wild world at the doorsill,
all we care about.
And a car goes by.**

1 March 2020

=====

**Determined
to be enough
I waited.
All a bird can do
let alone a flower—
lateral sunshine
strict through trees
means She's coming
over the horizon,
mother of all this,
it is enough to be
here when she comes.**

1 March 2020

=====

**I don't endure too well
being just by myself—
that hated neighborhood
where all the news is old.**

1 March 2020

IN THE BEGINNING

\
.

By now the Child
has put the crayons
back in the box
and saunters back to sleep.
The day is complete.
Yes, it is a pilgrimage,
to *sainte terre*, the holy land
wherever the Child chooses,
supposes, that to be.
Everything we want is holy!
the Child thinks, sacred
by dint of wanting it,
sacred by being far.

2.

Once or twice I found
a bit of crayon on the ground,
picked it up, drew a bird on the sky,

**dropped the color,
frightened of my magic.
The things we do!
And where the bird is now
you know better than I do.**

**3.
Even so, it;s worth beginning.
It;s just a catnap
the Child is taking,
wake soon and resume
it claims above the threshold
of the Somnium--
can you tell the difference
between sleep and dream?**

**4.
Now the Child's awake again
the irresistible evidence
sprawled on all sides.
Delicately the engine shudders on.**

**For the Child this is all
one big picture book, understand--
no matter how long we live
we are rich with the insights
woke us when we were young,
the things we knew know us still,
die young, die old, the wisdom
is complete. I wonder
if the Child knows what already.
Eagerly turns the pages of the book.**

5.

**The Child sees a drawing
old Goethe with his million pages,
young John Keats with his scattered few.
The Child smiles and understands:
we all die at exactly the same age:
the minute that our work is done.
Out come the crayons
and the sky turns blue.**

1 March 2020

AIUTO, AIUTO!

**sings Scarpia stabbed
to death by Tosca,
be careful who you fall
in love with,
it's too late to call for help,
help then , love
is all about falling,
falling for and falling out
and just falling, falling,
like Tosca later in the play,
off the wall of the castle,
and that too had something
to say about love.**

1 March 2020

=====

**A stone fell
from the sky
and it was me.**

**I lie here still
dreaming clearly
my responsibilities**

***Respond, respond*
os what I hear,
all I ever hear.**

2 March 2020

S= = = = =

**I try to keep my promises
but glass has a will of its own,
a tension, that]s all it is,
light held in tension
and then a word is spoken,
the tension eases, the pieces fall.
Religion cracks, the old gods
tumble out of new churches,
everhything is the same
with different names—
is that what you mean?
I wouldn't dare. Meaning
is not something we
are allowed to have, meaning
wanders off through the treest,
more like a fox than a thesis.
We wake hungry, remembering
that meaning has soft lips.**

2.

**They have forgotten all that,
the theologians with their neat
distinctions,, they should linger
longer in dreams, listen to Mahler,
neglect assertion, impose
a little Len on their quarrels,
they should try to remember virginity,
how god happened in them then,
happens in them now, Amen.**

2 March 2020

=====

The wolf has come to the center of the world.

**A spring.
He licks gently
at the mossy cleft
the wter bubbles from.**

**It tastes so good,
he didn't know he was thirsty,
tastes so good
he drinks a mouthful more
and falls asleep.**

**Sleep is not an easy school to learn,
he has always had trouble with his lessons.
But now how.
He wakes refreshed
and knows something is changed.
Licks again at the spring.
still tastes good but he's**

**not thirsty anymore.
He is awake now.
And when the time comes
he will sleep.
That is what it means
to be at the center of the world.

To drink from that spring.**

2 March 2020

=====

**Her thought was strong enough,
long enough,
to slip like fingers
between layers of bedrock
so a little long-trapped water
would seep out.
In the night it froze,
icy tresses drifting down the cliff
The cleft.**

**Her thought
was hungry enough and strong enough
to drink that water when by morning
it had come back to itself again,
and all the years it slept inside the rock
could be her dream now,
slightly acid on the tongue, no more
than the thought of a lemon,
not even that.**

**Her thought was strong
enough to drink what came from time
and turn it all inside herself,**

gently as her own hand caressing
casually the soft hollow of the knee,

everything became oart of her—
that's what happens when you open the rock.
When your thought is long
and slips between things,
touching but not changing much,
No more than the moon changes the
mountain—
but it does, a little, doesn't it?
Everything changes—she whispered
that to the quiet rock she had opened..

2 March 2020

=====

**As long as the light is there
(I hear the light, it sounds
like the autobiography of a piano)
no, the light is grey,
warm for March, a variation
on the *Dies Irae*. What gender
does that make the day?
And this sky above me,
whose house is that through which
she comes through to give us light?
*I would be nothing without you.***

3 March 2020

FOX

**The fox walks cautiously
we call it stealthily
but what do we really know**

**walks through the world we have made
all around it, the fox
moves through this 3D movie
Human Life on Earth
and does the best it can.**

**Its job is to eat food and make more foxes
and feed them too.**

**It does its job with energy and intelligence—
even we notice that foxes are smart
though we use unpleasant words to say so—
cunning,, sly, sneaky, foxy—
but they find their food.**

**For some of us, it's a blessing
to see one of them in the woods
or trotting across the meadow**

or even, once, teaching its little
fox cubs how to jump
straight up into the air,
on the lawn over the river,
nobody nearby but me.

Some people don't like them,
trap them, shoot them even,
or at least string wire fences
to keep their intelligence away.

The fox observes all this,
understands it, they ate smart,
des o what it can
yo avoid our baleful attitudes.
dodge our gunshots,
keep their little sideways world intact.

But foxes too would like to be loved,
we're all like that, hungry
for something we can't name
or are afraid to name,
afraid to want so much

it hurts even more not to have it.

**Even the fox some nights
creeps out of the suburban woods
into our deserted parks,
hops up onto an empty picnic table,
stretches out there, dozes,
wishes someone would come along,
someone who cared, who could admire,
someone who could stroke so gently
that glowing red fur, that amazing tail.**

3 March 2020

LION

The lion shivers,
laxes, flanks
smooth out again.

The golden
eyes almost angry
open.

Why am I awake?

We seem
to each other
in a kind dream

but not sleep

Who will I take
into my body today?
Shelter
their little lives
in my great roar,
their bones

in my bones,

**I will chase them
by the shore
until they have no choice
but sea or me**

**I think I am the sea
the golden wave
the whole sea
I carry deep inland**

**as I will carry that lucky beast
I catch up with and consume--**

**how safe he'll always be
in me!**

I have room for all their lives in me.

4 March 2020

=====

**Can you recall
the last day
you could go swimming?
There, that's what I mean,
that's what winter means—
they say it was so mild
but I froze in October.
I write with an icicle
dipped in dwindling hope.**

4 March 2020

HORSE

**Horses think of themselves
as very small.**

**They measure themselves against the sky.
So they're always surprised
when a human hops on their back,
a big tall human with eyes!**

**Even a slender young woman
with hands on the reins—
their outside-the-body nervous system—**

**how did we ever get those
the horse thinks.**

**A horse
because it is always so little,
so young, tries always
to do what it's told—**

**I think that horses think
they are our children—
*why else would they sit on us,
ride us around,
make us race against each other?
Why? Why?
We were so happy alone with the sky.***

4 March 2020

CAT

He said:

**there are already too many cats in the
discussion**

leave some out

**there is a price to be paid
every time a living creature is removed from
the discussion**

banished

what is the porice?

something a little like a cat

a cat in fact

one goes out another comes in

wouldn't you?

wouldn't I what?

sneak into a place
a space where you are noit wanted,

all the great lovers did that,
Lancelot by her tower,

who is that knocking on my door
she cried

who indeed

it is I, the cat,
he answered in his deep voice

you are no cat i know

I am the cat that no one knows
thart's why you love me.
so you see the discyussion

always sucks the cat back in,
like a highway goibg nowhere
but with such shiny cars on it
purring in sunlight north
or east

to meet somebody
but will she be there
she always is, that cat.

But you have told me
Nothing about the animal itself

What mmakes you think it has a self

It is only your own idea
with soft fur all over it.

4 March 2020

=====

1.

it would come towards me
palm fronds and schoolboy poems
seacoasts of all the Bohemias,
just start shuffling along
it's bound to see you coming,
bound to come to meet you,
there, at the midpoint of the world.

2.

You're there now,
relaxed, stretched out
on a cliché, trying
not to think. Is it real,
this place after all?
Or is it a place?
Get up and keep going.
It's bound to be there.

3.

**The only place it can ever be
is in front of you.**

**It's the word you don't know,
the one burning your tongue to speak.**

4.

You never read it in a book.

I'm waiting for you

on the next page

she always said,

you turned eagerly

but true to her calling

she was always a page ahead,

you never found her,

you're still turning,

**sometimes you just close your
eyes and flip the book inside.**

5.

**Moth flutters at the LED
the ancient world
comes home.**

**This is a thinly disguised
clue for going on.**

**You are a cruise-ship in the desert
packed with identities,
you call the rising sun your sea,
sunset your sister
and then you try to sleep.**

**Those things up there are stars--
each one is the word you're looking for.**

5 March 2020

=====

**Sometimes it's not
the heart we need
but the hand.
the quiet skin,
the fond in fondle.**

5.III.20

=====

**Not being sure
what the other one is
wait at the gate**

**Gaze at the space
between the posts—
that's where the other
one will appear**

**framed by your expectations
framed by your stare.
Make it appear.
That's what gates are for.**

5 March 2020

= == =

**The maiden led the merchant
up the long stairs to her room,
Buy Me she said I;be your mother,
money always needs a mother,
do it. The merchant had camels,
barrels of salt, no gold in his pocket,
what can I buy you with?
Just say the word and I am yours.
From that day on the merchant
always did what he was told.**

6.III.20

THE SHIP

lay empty at her dock
one whole year. rime froze
on its hawsers, melted in spring,
by August a hot smell came off it
that people passing would notice,
hot but not evil. By October
people dared to creep aboard,
cabins empty, hold empty,
the bridge in shambles
as if the crew had mutinied
not against the captain but
against geography itself.
No binnacle. No wheel. No chart.
And the big windows smeared with paint--
the ocean is real enough
but people only, imagine it
one scrawl said, and another
said simply *Stay hom and be wise.*
The ship is still there. Seagulls
like it but people look the other way.

6 March 2020

== == == == ==

**It could even be tonight.
The rule in the riule book,
the bat in the linden tree.
These things happen, same
way you got here, or me.
At any moment, any thing.
Because we don't ourselves
know the structure of the game.
Let alone who plays it.
With us. Inside us. My very
doubt is part of the play.**

6 March 2020

=====

**With closed eyes I see
the white cliffs of Gayhead
on the Vineyard—no wonder
colonists called it Dover.
The mind when the eyes are closed
is like a telescope
held by the heart
to see again what has been seen.
The oure white of the dark inside,
see the cliffs clearly, hear
the waves mumble on the island rock—
the mind hears too,
if only it had hands.**

6 March 2020

=====

**Sleeping to Mahler,
Mahler's Goethe,
*all things that go away
are only symbols*
and I was gone.**

6.III.20

=====

**Preposterous antecedents
and yet here we are,
dry between the toes even,
speaking island language
on this strange continent,**

**kids on a rock
a raft
burning our skins on politics.
the drekh we should have left behind,
no one should rule us!
Be birds!**

6.III.20

=====

**When you dream
of talking politics
it is a relief to wake
into ancient weather,
the same sun! The beautiful
scrappy lawn all winter wan,
the phone lines legal through the trees.**

6.III.20

=====

for C

**The lights came on
when you came home.
They must have read
my mind. I mean my heart.**

6 March 2020

=====

1.
The responsibility
is afternoon.
when the light
seems mutinous
but we rightly
blame only ourselves.

2.
the trees so numerous
young and talkative
tell all they have learned
all winter watching
feeling waiting and now are
ready, so ready, to declare.
It is them I hear.

3.

That doesn't say it right,

Sounds cutesy, easy.

I mean the trees are people

Ad they talk, and I can hear them

As I pass by. You can too.

Just listen. That's

What I'm trying to say: just listen.

6 March 2020

A FIELD OF LUNES

**Open the door wide
see the bears
dancing in mid-air.**

**If you can't see them
look again
they might be beavers**

**hear the waterfall now?
They live close
build their lodge from light**

**keep your heart safe home
when you look,
out is full of brides**

**don't marry what you see
or else do,
call me to the feast.**

***/**

**Some real animals
no names please,
their dance will explain**

**bird on an oak branch?
don't need doors
to let you see that**

**stop imagining
make it up
from what you found there**

**I thought you said bears
or beavers—
you must have dreamt me**

**all the beasts are safe
in poems
those small city zoos**

**beavers survive on
coats of arms
or old turns of phrase**

*

**can a word stand all
by itself
and hold up the sky?**

8 March 2020

=====

**The virtuous blacksmith
lets his Sunday fire go out,
his anvil cold.**

**The horses are all at prayer
— the meadow,
white-fenced by rich men's houses,**

**all of them from far away.
Like the horses.
Only the blacksmith is native.**

Only a native has hands.

8 March 2020

LOVE LUNES

**Know the thrill you touch
can give to
accidental hands**

**(Don't know how to tell
you who I
think you really are)**

**Open the rock he said
I am there—
I am your hands too**

8 March 2020

DAWN LUNES

**Venison version
horizon
with a herd of deer**

*

**Called back to pillow—
never wake
longer than you must**

*

**Sun in empty trees
coaxing spring's
eternal answer**

*

**Have I words enough
to answer
all our silences?**

*

**Sometimes to lie low
goes further—
shadow at sunrise**

*

**You can see how hard
I find it
to stop making sense**

*

**So much to worry!
and only
me to do it right**

9 March 2020

PHARAONIC

**Carriers hurry up the slope
toting cubes for pyramids—
geometry was our first mistake—
but at least they get to hear
ibises chatter on the canal.
The foreman yawns
and shows his brilliant teeth.**

9 March 2020

=====

**I told you something in the night,
and wonder did you hear me?
I used plain English words
but didn't actually say them,
just thought them very clear,
close, into your hair, close
to your ear, clear as I could
then said them again urgently
no louder than before.**

9 March 2020

LOVE LUNES

**Know the thrill you touch
can give to
accidental hands**

*

**(Don't know how to tell
you who I
think you really are)**

*

**Open the rock he said
I am there—
I am your hands too**

8 March 2020

DAWN LUNES

Venison version
horizon
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Called back to pillow—
never wake
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*

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eternal answer

*

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to answer
all our silences?**

*

**Sometimes to lie low
goes further—
shadow at sunrise**

*

**You can see how hard
I find it
to stop making sense**

*

**So much to worry!
and only
me to do it right**

9 March 2020

== == == == ==

**A birthday is a barn
with all sorts of lovely
beasts inside steeds tu ride,
kine to nourish with sweet milk,
mice to keep you on your toes,
fowl to flutter round your hair,
the air you breathe, fresh
from their breaths, you come
into the richness of their gift,
and in the big bright doorway
all kinds of us are waiting for you too.**

10 March 2020

=====

**One day a shark
swallowed the whole sea.
From this mistake
a planet was born
we live on still.**

10 March 2020

=====

**Come closer
it means you now,

this word waiting
just before you woke.

Waking is forgetting.**

10 March 2020

LUNES IN THE DARK

**Play music gently—
that ancient
replacement for now.**

*

**Back to my pillow
keep the dream
safe inside my sleep.**

*

**The opening door
an angel
of maybe, maybe.**

*

**Close enough to taste
your name on
the tip of the tongue**

*

**You are the fullest
cup of all—
you hold everything.**

*

**The grass in the yard
is dreaming,
the sky is asleep.**

*

**The end of the line
where the fun
starts over again.**

10 March 2020

LUNES *AUX LECTEURS*

**I listen as long
as I can—
then it's up to you.**

**a hundred thousand
yesses and
one diamond-hard no.**

**in the night place you
keep going
further than the stars**

*

**all language becomes
a love song
if you just let it.**

*

**Dawn keeps company
with the dark—
we make our own light.**

*

**there'll be time for this
tomorrow,
we'll lie and name Now.**

10 March 2020

LOVE SONG

**Me big, you little—
I held you
safe in just one hand.**

**But you had to be
a small bird
to fit this picture**

**do you know which kind?
or am I
still telling you lies?**

10 March 2020

== == == ==

**Peel the shadow
off the desk,
soak it in
a little glass—
don't drink.**

**Dip a feather in it
and paint a simple
word with it
and all your life
obey that brilliant word.**

10 March 2020

LUNES AT DAYBREAK

Prayer's a good way to
start the day,
knowing the unknown.

*

Fox yelp in the trees—
I'd know that
girl anywhere asleep.

10 March 2020

LATE LUNES

Circumference cloud
my gray hair
Spring wind in my face

*

A game that plays all
by itself
I watch the trees pass

*

I wait in the car
while you shop
the road hurries past

*

Girls go in the store
Boys come out
O dangerous doors!

*

**Hyperboloid: Shape
of women.
Eternal chalice.**

10 March 2020
End of NB 430

LUNE AT MATINS

**Now more than ever
each sunrise
says its prayers in me.**

11 March 2020

== == == == ==

**Everything gets lost enough
all by itself
then our vocation calls
us to find it.
We find what we never lost.
So the sun rises.**

11 March 2020

LINGUAL LUNE

**Let your face relax—
your lips form
words all by themselves.**

11 March 2020

=====

The same sky!

**I am consoled
through my window**

glass never lies.

12 March 2020

=====

I don't want to think
what I'm thinking about
so I'll think about you.

You're wearing brown
and walking on a hill,
not up, not down,
along the swerve of it
you move.

Seeing you
helps me forget.
You look like you're looking
for something, stones or flowers
signs of wildlife,

signs. I wonder
what's on your mind
but don't want to know.
Enough to watch you

**going slowly, pausing
now and then.**

**I can't see
who you actually are,
forgive me, hope it doesn't
really matter. You save me
from myself, dear friend.**

12 March 2020

=====

**Day, dark day,
what do you have to say
to us all ill at ease
in sickness season,
9 AM and grey as dusk,
you must have something
on my mind
I wake to know.**

13 March 2020

=====

**Young men playing in the jungle
pretending to be jaguars,
chasing each other by the river
pouncing on shadows,
shouting songs in a language
they just made up—
watch them, hold them in mind.**

13 March 2020

=====

***Glamour:* a property
of flowers
and certain animals
in the middle distance,
lustrous, unafraid.**

13 March 2020

=====

***Skill*, the bones
of knowing
even if not why.**

13 March 2020

=====

**This
is what I am
supposed to do.
Or do I mean be.**

13 March 2020

=====

**Suddenly everything
is an island
we're on, not
tropical, not arctic,
not far out to sea.**

13 March 2020

=====

Your *sous*
will find the mind

my little coins
he meant,
my own two cents

a bottle labeled
from the dead
drink this
he said
and find right now—

accept your holy past
and everyone's
and you will suddenly
be your actual self.

14 March 2020

=====

**I wrote I thought
a page but all
the words in it
have gone back
to sleep in me,
maybe they
will wake me too.**

14 March 2020

=====

**Be warm
be over winter,
beavers
pray that too,
their work to do,
join our voices,
let the tre frogs sing.**

14 March 2020

MONEY

**the merry
motive of our gloom,
agglomerates of wedding bells,
magic spells,
abbreviated symphonies.
Look out the door before!
the manipulated water
washes up to your sill.**

14 March 2020

=====

**I don't know
what it means—
isn't hearing
it enough
like music
like it or not?**

14 March 2020

EXTRALINEAR TO A POEM CAME IN THE MAIL

Alyssum, we need that
in our crazy time,
it heals or holds off madness
as its name implies.

I wonder if a girl named Alyssa
saves her lover, saves her lovers
from that *divine madness* some
Frenchman calls love,
or whether she lets them suffer
but holds herself immune,
safe and beautiful, a bright
flower on a rocky mountainside.

*

When I say you
I don't really know
who you are or who

**I am, we are mysteries
at least to me, who dare
to say our name, *you*,
I, holy names I think
but can't say why.
Can I touch you
the way you touch yourself?
I mean can I know you
the way you know you?**

**I reach through the rock of words
to find the cloth at least
that guards the skin.
The one who is within.
My hands hurt with having.
Not having.**

(14 March 2020)

TESTIMONY

**The anonymous answer
loves us best.**

**Beethoven-era, coda,
resonant final thrum—
do you believe me, Sanhedrin?**

**I have testified all my life
street after street
this ancient rock.**

**You holy fellows sitting on a bench
deciding and deciding
while I wander dusty-toed
all day and most nights researching
where the wild words
are going now, go next
so fast—do you believe me?**

15 March 2020

=====

**They say a seal at Saugerties
basking on the lighthouse rock
a harbor seal they say they saw--
the sea is coming back!
The Hudson fjord renews
its marriage to the sea, the sea
comes closer, comes
to me! I want my sea,
I am all of islands made,
feel no comfort far from waves,
my sea comes back to me!
Remember once in Galway
how a seal came right up
and greeted us explicit in the bay,
that's how I knew I must be near home,
now home has come up the river
to bring me to myself.**

15 March 2020

=====

**Far away as you all are
I want to know what your husband
ate for supper, what
your wife saw in the parking lot.
what you thought about
between movements of the concerto
(Bruch, violin) on the radio last night.
If I can't learn these things
I'll never know who I am.**

15 March 2020

=====

**The lead jumped out of the pencil
hurried into the ice rings of Saturn
to learn from what he is waiting for**

**came back and tried
to write me warm again
Write your way to the sun
Iwrite your way to heat
Write your way to everyone.**

15 March 2020

LIMINALMLUNES

**Words lost in thinking
hawk flies by
makes it feel better**

*

**Pounce on the moment
go ahead,
be a beast for once**

*

**When days grow longer
nights do too—
when can the mind sleep?**

16 March 2020

=====

**Try to find a picture
of the other side—
a train along the river,
castle on a hill,
a raft with building stones
tugged north.
Close to shore only water,
water subtly moving,
a duck settles, paddles, flies away,
only water moving slow,
water. This is what is ours.**

16 March 2020

=====

O let all my times be *now* in me again.

**Find a face
to put the dream on,**

**find a landing slip
to moor the meaning—
the sea means so much!**

**Moths and chandeliers,
waves and the rocky shore**

the dream tells everything.

17 March 2020

=====

**Sand in your slippers
where have you been?**

**There is always another door
up to you to open it
Open by waiting
open by hope alone,
that cosmic maybe—**

I too am waiting for.

2.

**Who would have said this before?
Frightened Poe, luminous Coleridge?
I follow a furrow
in an earth I made
but was I me when I made it?**

17 March 2020

=====

**Hard times, these.
The grey sky
perhaps too patient.**

**In epidemic time
fear rules the mind.
Is it a good guide?**

**How much time
will it take to tell?**

17 March 2020

=====

**Once when I was little
most cars were black.
Now most are white
or light grey—
what am I to make of that?
Are they trying to be
invisible on pale roads?
or birds in some sky?
Color changes everything.**

17 March 2020

LOVE IN A FRIGHTENED TIME

Touch far friends
by sheer knowing
think them hard
safe from afar.

Make new friends
by finding *images*
then much later
when this is over
hold them firmly
in mind, find
their originals outside.

*(Versions of a dream that woke me this
morning in a time of social distancing.)*

18 March 2020

=====

**Look for the link
night sound
purl of the stream
across the road
passing, growl
of the freight train
over in Ulster
along the quiet river,
no birds to blame
but bad dreams do
trouble the breath.
silenced by a touch
where do they go?
where are sounds stored?
look to the link,
don't use bad words—
figure out if any words
could be bad and why.
The link is already in your hands.**

18 March 2020

=====

Reach as far
as go will go.
Wait there
for me,
have horses ready
I do not ride,
I will walk
alongside you
all the way
and when the mountain
comes closer
it will walk with us
so far, so far
we're almost there,
lift the latch
and lead us in,
horses and hill and sun
in with me,
please let me in,
please let me in.

18 March 2020

A RECORD OF IT

whatever it is
voice of Caruso
in 1902, child
in the street
with his toy drum
where is your mother?
Serioso. You ask that
of everyone and each thing.
dpm't be silly,
or are you just eager,
am I your brother?
You never can tell.
*Love forbids you
not to love me*
he sang, what is this
anima beyond animal
who lets or not lets us
depending on the music?

18 March 2020

PHOTO

Woman on a mountain ridge,
rim of a glacial lake.
It is cold, she's warm
wrapped snug
in wool, blacker
than the volcanic rock
all round. mountains
under the vast
cloud-congressed sky.

Look close. Her eyes
are skies too. They see
us, they let us walk
under their clouds,
their brightness.

Look closer—see us
inside her, room
for all of us there,
she holds us in mind.

Maybe this rock
was a volcano once,
burnt out, water came
from earth and sky
to fill its crater, old
Greek word for cup
or chalice. The water
remembers fire
the way night remembers
the day. The way
she remembers us.

But she is smiling, her lips
pursed a little as if
she were about to laugh.
Or just giggle at the silly
camera that sees only
the skin of what it sees

18 March 2020

FESTA DI SAN GIUSEPPE

**Things catch hold
or take the mind
that desert citadel**

**rock above the plain.
Saint Joseph's Day
so we know who we must be.
It comes to us
to be again
and be only for others.
How hard that is,
rock in the desert
when everything else is flat.**

**2.
You'll look in some book
and tell me it's just a Spring Feast
special to the Italians,
the way Patrick was to us**

when I was us. Or Easter
for everyone, Passover,
daffodils, asphodels.
But this day is different:
to be for the other
the way spring is for the world.

3.
Not sure you like
my explanation.
And it is mine,
like any real mistake.

4.
Raining now a little
not so cold
the roadway glistens.
Nothing moving.
It's all a huge answer.

5.

Go to Joseph
the Pope said.
Not the Joseph of Genesis.
that tormented tricky man,
but the carpenter,
the not-so-simple man,
the seeming father
of the One we need to be.
Not a simple man either--
like any father
living for the other.

6.

I write about him every year
and try to understand.
The *festa* at the parish church,
the Calabrian trombones,
the silence of the man himself.
his patience at the margin,
and never know what comes later.
Go to Joseph to understand

**what it means to live
in someone else's story
and be your truest self,
silence of flowers growing on the hill.**

19 March 2020

====

**Can you hear the stream
hurrying northwest,
can you hear the rain,
the old house creak its bones,
the air pass the window,
can you hear the streetlight
glisten on the wet road?
Night asks so much of us.
I sit at my desk in the dark
and try to answer.
But there are no colors in the dark.**

19 March 2020

[A VOROSEK SYMPHONY]

**Sometimes an orchestra
wants to march across the border
guns and drums
hard to tell apart.
Conqueror music,
Caesar in brass,
no glade safe from that cry.
*My mind is coming at you
you have nowhere to hide.***

19 March 2020

=====

**Outside it seems
to be falling apart
but my world
stays what I can say.**

19 March 2020

=====

**The evidence accumulates:
this is now,**

the actual after all—

**measure by daylight,
rip the slipcovers off.**

19 March 2020

== ==

**Wait for the water
the sky holds
that other air
it breathes us to live**

**o beast of me
my parapet heart
surveying so many distances**

**mountains of ocean
Andes of pure air**

20 March 2020

=====

learn how to do things
then come back
as rain

grey sky
her almost eye.

20 March 2020

====

**Time
is to be
another place**

**feel of water
even if.**

20 March 2020

NURSERY RHYME

**No more pudding,
no more pie.
I kissed the girl,
she made me cry.**

20 March 2020

DEAD ROSES

sounds like a sad piece
by Sorabji or Scriabin
but here they are
vivid dark still dead
but there is to them
some kind of life,

it comes from seeing them:
a life they bring
into the room
by shape and color
(dark room on a spring da)
and one more thing,
the memory of when
they were fresh and came
first time to live with us

dead roses red roses
welcome, not so sad
you have been and you are.

**Now we have the task,
sacred task, of living
your life for you,
meaning of roses,
meaning of red.**

20 March 2020

CAN WE EVER KNOW

**can we ever even know?
The sky takes
so much away
almost before we see.
Or dare to look.
I confess, I stood
on the crowded balcony,
a girl leaned over the rail
ro smile and wave
at a friend down there.
And her body smiled at me—
is that maybe the same
as the sound of a cello
from a house I pass at night,
all the quick joys no one
is entitled to, but there they are?
I ask you because no one else
can endure all my questions.
Or do they give you pleasure too?**

20 March 2020

CEREMONY

French press

colander

ballet

of what we learn to need

prancing

O whistle in my woods

almost see what I see

**pour hot water in
let old water out**

**thirteen dancers on the rim
you never knew moonlight was so bright
can almost see the things you see**

many ways to hold a candle

cloud

**Who wrote the music?
Who put it in?**

**the mind an oven
life is a kitchen**

**muffin tin
the dictionary**

**words were pressed
before we knew**

**we break our fast
on what the night brought
bought**

**commerce of dancers
unveiled unstaged**

their movements mean us

mean me

we belong to what we see

2.

**This piece needs music
wouldn't you say
who will fetch it for me
from what fountain poured
mountain roared
whistle in the woods?**

O sound me please.

(In Zeffirelli's *Turandot* blue clumps of people stir, restless in semi-dark. It is the opposite of Puccini's music then, as if he tried at last to cure us of what we hear, the senses deny each other. Spare the light.)

3.

**Thirteen dancers looking down at once
at one**

**I never knew I could move
moth-nimble from thing to thing,**

am I a word?

In someone else's mouth?

Speak me, I pray.

The brew I am must be ready now.

4.

**There are better ways
to tell
the age of a tree.**

Guess

is best,

guess is mind-gauge

God's accurate machine.

5.

Pour the coffee now at last—
it's lingered till full strength
and gone a little past.

Pour and pass.

Sometimes a morning
is too quiet, too quiet,
I want to hear
ducks quack on the stream out there
or in here the gurgle
pale water turned dark in the coffee pot—

pour, pour,
we die from silences.

6.

We speak as if,
and as if all these
were mere amusements,
poesy and all the Muse-y stuff

**but they are the red
cells in our blood.**

**Money and all the rest,
that's just plasma.**

**This is an ad for blood
the quiet religion
that believes in you**

**you hear it sometimes
on quiet mornings,
the dancers still asleep.**

21 March 2020

=====

**The real
estate
the roller skate
the ocean wave**

**the potted plant
drying out
too near the radiator**

**the universe is made of heat
no more
what was that flower?**

22 March 2020

GNOMIKA

**The line that runs
from here to there—
who knows its mother?**

**To touch the ski
is to be halfway in.**

**Passing bird
makes the wire tremble.
Information
is pure risk.**

Narration is the thief of mind.

22 March 2020

=====

I wanted to walk by the water
I wanted to drink from this cup .
the sun was in it
Her robes fluttered
in the form of clouds

I was allowed to want
and this one thing
is a great permission—
just by my being allowed
to desire, desire
itself becomes real
and its object comes
into being, there
on the horizon
or just over it
where water comes from
that fills this cup,
this cup I drink.

22 March 2020

=====

**Lose it in dream
go back to sleep
to find it again.**

23.III.20

SPRING SNOW

A little snow
so far
shofar
last quiet
horn call of winter

words lead us
through the night,
you call them puns
I can't them pundits,
prophets, soft skin
of a guide's hand.

23 March 2020

=====

**All the blue light
is trapped
in a tiny bottle
on my windowsill—**

**I'm sure I'll let it out
when the sun comes
out and calls for it—
I have always been
an obedient child—**

**how else could I have learned
what light is for?**

23 March 2020

WINTER WIEDER

**Or this weather
wounds us
anew—**

**“snowball fight”
he said,
“girls against boy”**

**are people
still living on this plane?**

**I love you, I throw
a cold packed heart at you
yearning to hit,
hear. As if to say
let me be again.**

24 March 2020

=====

**Someone shoveling snow.
Music to my edges,
frayed,
the sound of maybe.
Sunshine blue sky arrangement
God knows who made
the first tune.**

24 March 2020

=====

**Delicate dependencies,
thoughts in words.
Every word
a last will and testament—
we are the heirs of it,
study our inheritance—
poets are lawyers in this process
or priests, or pretty
flowers when the snow lets through.**

24 March 2020

LEARNING

a new language
is getting a whole new mind

everything is different
Over There
that how is in here,,
right here,
in you

so that you walk
like a total stranger
through your own woods
dream at night
in a strange bed
you've slept in for years.

Everything different.

24 March 2020

=====

**A rose
running up the stairs
purple iris leaning on white wall**

but where is the lily in all this?

**the door creaks open
with the sound of an old
man trying to learn the cello,
the red-winged blackbird
shivers at the squeak**

**blue squills tremnbe in slight breeze
but where is the lily in all this?**

**Soft and white and far away
veiled in the future
and time has the softest touch.**

24 March 2020

=====

**She got the news today
she was pregnant
by a stranger,**

**a touch she never felt
a whisper she had never heard**

**and suddenly someone
else was in her**

**a stranger, yes,
but she felt somehow calm
as if she somehow knew
the mind that makes such matters,**

**calm enough to answer
I will happen as you say.**

25 March 2020

Feast of the Annunciation

=====

**When I was Babylon
or my grandfather
the fields were lots
fate chose for me
by a private sea.**

**That is what it means
to wake any morning
and the dream is gone
but all the vanished evidence
leaves shadows in the mind—**

**that's why today
is always somewhere else**

**somewhere in cyberspace
a steersman listens
but not always to me
speaking, not always
to you listening
to what turns out to be**

**both of us,
 songs
 made of words,
words made of silence.
How can he live without breath?
Is the world itself
a lung that knows him?**

25 March 2020

=====

**The prick of silence
stabs deep.
When it reaches the core
we speak.**

25 March 2020

THE POET

**Curator of the obvious
attorney for the meaningless
I am a museum
of things so commonplace
you forget them as soon as you pass
each glittering exhibit.
And so (ha!) you have to
keep coming back
again and again to witness
the marvelous ordinary I have on show.**

26 March 2020

WHEN THINGS ARE OPEN
they are as doors

**the book said
in the maiden's hand
in a painting as if by Giotto
but why in English then?**

**And who was she
who knew the open spaces in all things
or didn't know them yet but read
a book of them to learn?**

**No, I know she knew. She knows.
And Giotto knew,
the words probably
wrote their way onto the page,
into the painting
all by themselves
because images are open too
and all kinds of you walk in and out.**

26 March 2020

=====

**Baby blue is the coldest sky,
we have such fun on earth
no wonder it's a grief to go.
Out there up in the chill
where the light comes from.
Is that our original home
or the unknown goal of all,
all this, all the colors and tastes
and touches and *endless Melody*
that finally has no room left
for my mere one more song?**

26 March 2020

=====

**Force of habit
force of destiny
do what you do
until you're done.**

26 March 2020

WEIRD WAKINGS

Let me be me again!
I cried out as I woke
silent as ever.

*

Then I thought
non omis moriar
but it didn't feel
as if it meant my
books and teachings
(as Horace meant
when he wrote
I will not die completely)
but some other fraction
or some other me.

27 March 2020

COMFORTS OF RHYME

Bright sun
time for a run.
I creep down the stair
rest out on a chair,
watch a small cloud
speak out loud
till even my head
can hear what it said.
I'll sit here in the sun
and let the wind run.

*

Sharper ears
bring more fears.

27 March 2020

=====

Ot is something else—
I know it, or I knew it
when I began
to taste this day.
Have I forgotten already
what it means to be now,
am I lost in remembering,
a mute Proust
with nothing more to recapture
than a girl on a bus in Paris,
a crowded A train paused
in the tunnel between stations.
What is wrong? What was her name.

27 March 2020

=====

**I tend to be skeptical
about myself
and wouldn't you?
All the gods are safe
from my suspicion.
But this character
in the mirror, I know
too much about him
already. Cautiously,
slowly, we try to come
to an understanding.
I need help, a capable
attorney, or just a friend.**

27 March 2020

=====

Knowing as much as we need

**the weather
your father's name**

**we can watch the sparrows
with confidence,
blackbirds come back,
finches turn gold
we wake in wonder.**

**2.
What is this pain
that knows my arm?
Is a deed I'm left to do?
Or, left undone, now
aches inside me?
The rot of time?**

3.

**Feel better later,
after you have named
each passing cloud,
drunk fresh water,
refused the cup—
now you are holy again—
that means careful.
That means pay attention.
Listen to me.**

4.

**You had a phone call from the dead.
You answered it,
you still are answering it,
word by word,
the line is still open,
they're still listening.
Don't stop speaking now.**

5.
Wind and asphalt
Connecticut over the hill,
walk your pony,
ride your dog.

Something's wrong,
it's been too long.
Mercy me! they used to say,
old women from south of me.

Check each driveway,
each might be the one.
But none is yet,
go home in dream,

squeeze all you know
inside yourself and sleep.
Even the quietest dream
is a shout in the night.

**6.
Remembering Olson
sitting around mostly
walking our heads off
in the kitchen
in the bar.**

**The size of language
welcomed us,
I was big and he was great,**

**he knew all about the sea
but for me the sea
was just my mother's house
I loved but left
without really knowing why.**

He made me come back home.

28 March 2020

=====

**They sat me down
and made me write this,
this forced confession
of who I am
when I stop to think about it.
Perilous pause!
I am only what you hear.**

28 March 2020

=====

**A yellow string
wrapped around a locket
but not tied to it**

**Earth in space
safe in those windings.
speak to me**

**I'm only here for you
that is the cave
from which I come**

**all of us, outline
of a hand on the wall,
see, we have hands now**

now we are ready to begin.

28 March 2020

=====

**I've got a lot to tell you
but I don't want to talk
and I think you don't want to listen
so we're even,
but we both know
the expression: Time will tell.
So It time do its work, time,
the single skin we live inside,
the only skin we're allowed to touch.**

28 March 2020

=====

**Horn cry
in ancient woods I hear**

it is I

It is I

I hear it.

**And You did too
.a call
from the world before we are.**

28 March 2020

=====

**We're not as busy
as bees ought to be
and yet there comes
some hum from the hive.**

**Just give us time—
the days get longer:
so much more silence
we need to fill.**

29 March 2020

GERRITSEN BEACH

Is this where I began,
a beach in the rain,
sea blending with sky
and a whisper of wind?
Is this the bowl of bay
where I for the first time
saw? I thought I was home
but I was just beginning.
And the wind was cold.

29 March 2020

=====

**Words lead us through the woods
but when we fet to a clearing
what then? What guides us
in such brightness, what
leads us through openness?**

29 March 2020

=====

**The sky is a slippery
road today, the light
slides down past me
so I shall walk today
on the ground instead.**

29 March 2020

=====

**It isn't mist.
It happens in the trees
at twilight.
It isn't mist—
it doesn't drift or waft
or blow away or move
when you walk in there,
just between the trees
themselves, the trunks
not the crowns,
as if the bark at last
breathed out
the long breath of the day.**

29 March 2020

=====

**Spring inside
happens too.
A sound from out
reminds
in to begin.
All the birds
flock in you now.**

30 March 2020

=====

**How vague and delicate
far bare branches seem
woven together just now
in pale morning light.
Unwrap this cloth!**

30 March 2020

=====

**I've done what I could.
Now it's time
to do what I can't.
That is a soul's real job.**

30 March 2020

=====

**These scenes scratched out of *Faust*
I scribble now,**

**confess to more sins than I own
deep as they are.**

**A word, onea word more!
A word is forgiveness.**

30 March 2020

SISTINE DOUBT

**My hands reach up
desperately for God's hand
or is it Adam's
fingers I touch?**

30 March 2020

=====

**Don't blame me for this
the secret tabernacle
with all the wilderness
inside it**

**can get here
following the bone
all by yourself,
hollow bone. chicken bone,
hustle down the shaft
follow the compulsory tunnel**

**you bought the light with you
make the habit if language
a brown cloth over your knees**

**to be here!
before the day comes!
the bone!**

**don't blame me
dream is a bone
won't bend
holds you firm
to stand**

**or go there
over and over**

**to find the place
so quiet on the outside
all the ravines within
loud with your own waters,
listen!**

**don't blame me
for the miracle
you find in there
when you finally
close the only door.**

31 March 2020

=====

**Account you wary,
pilgrims, rocks
and furniture alternate
to halt your quest,**

**be cautious
of the comforts
of remorse.**

31 March 2020

=====

**there is a simple song I know
called being still,
being in that time called here.**

Sometimes going is a sad excuse.

31 March 2020

=====

**How can we hurt
each other more
than by being together?**

**Ask yourself that
in the quiet moment
before take-off,
before you leave the earth yet again.**

31 March 2020

=====

Through the haunches
to the sea
there are no birds
in that dark space
nacreous: pearly
gleam of a fingernail

how the hand
dares to reach out
a miracle

2.
the last story
always comes first
only then are we ready
(short-breath)
to begin.

3.
I saw a tiger once where you walked

**and never looked again, the sea
dissolves all that. All this.
In mist you bend to stroke a daffodil.**

▪

31 March 2020