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URHEIMAT

1.

Mixtures work.

Yamnaya,

let's face it

we come from Russia.

Or Armenia.

We are old, the people

pale with age,

exhausted by language.

But it works.

2.

Genetics is merciless.

Harsh grammar

of our long behavior,

sleeping with neighbors,

invaders.

3.

Who was the first one

to dare write a book?

And who were they copying

when they did so?

What ancient scribbled stone

or busy cloudwrack

had they seen
to give them such ideas?
Dwelt at peace
an age or two?
To write a book
first learn to sit still.

4.
Torsion maybe,
what they used to call twist.
Unscrew the bottlecap,
tighten the bolt.
We crossed so many rivers
to get to the edge,
thwarted, peaceful, oceanside.
Go no further so go in.
The book the ritual the same
place day after day
forever—so where
did our going go but in?

5.
We were the faraways
come home. And I don't
think *you* when I say *we*,
you are still free
of our geography
which turned into our geology

**and our stones talk.
And you are free to listen
or turn away
to sniff an orient rose
unvexed by speech's twist,
the lordly natural
from which we fled.**

1 June 2018

VINYL

**Waiting for things
to change.**

**Flip the disk,
we once knew how,
play the other side.
somebody loves me
anyhow,**

**the tune
sounds shorter,
the pencil snaps
the point of it goes flying.
Graphite, falsely called lead.
Pressed—all the words in the world
pressed in, like old songs in vinyl.
Things have a way
of changing,**

**no way
of their own.**

**But I, I,
am not as wise
as all this sounds.
I have a flip side too,
a jungle of luscious ignorance,
teeming with life and color
and maybe you, and you,
and not a clue.**

1 June 2018

=====

**Light of after rain and not yet sun
I catch my breath again and tryo to move
quick through the undergrowth of what I meant—
have I said it yet? Did the light come on?**

1 June 2018

PAS DE DEUX

**Hands clasped
over a cup of tea
to keep warm,
the steam rising.**

1 June 2018

=====

1.

If this were today
you'd be a bird.
But as it was
the tulip tree
tallest of all's
still so few leaves
it's mostly sky
with a curious
diagram in it
something old
alchemists scribbled
then sent it on
to Oppenheim
to be engraved.

2.

But it is today you say
so all my conditionals
are contrary-to fact,
I'm hust bad grammar.
Maybe. But I read
a book once that claimed
the jungle was a city once
and that vast desert space
a palace was, and there
we lived a thousand years,
warm hands, flute music,
and you believed me.

3.

Or with spinnaker billowing
take advantage of every breeze,
this one just knocked over
the pot of basil on the deck,
the winds that come from dream.
Trust those unfamiliar faces!

4.

The Faeries are a little wroth
with me , and a crow tells me why:
too much outside, too little in.

Let me go back a season
under the hill, you of all
people know the one I mean,

the glacier never budged it,
the birds are very fond of its shade,
the doorknob fits perfectly the hand.

5.

Tree awake
and a face in dream.
We are caught between
the raindrops, dry.
The song is settling
silently out there.
Appassionata here
the radio said,
then Boccherini,
then Saint-Saens.
These are my instructions
radio'd from headquarters.
Armed with them
I sneaked into sleep.

6.
And that's where the faces were.
Can you see me if I see you?

Am I a mirror
walking through the forest

waiting form trying to find
the right face?

The eyes that see me
tell me that there is is,

t he beautiful nothing
at all always going on.

2 June 2018

=====

**Condense the song
to a single gasp—**

**then I'll know
you mean it**

and I'll sing too.

2 June 2018

=====

**Too be awake
before the sky
turns blue—**

**the color comes
a little later
and just for you**

**you'll be alone
as you'll ever be,
alive as light.**

2 June 2018

NEWS FOR CAGLIOSTRO'S BIRTHDAY

**The magician (delicately
renamed 'occultist')
seeks power over other people.**

**Always. Don't be fooled.
But mystics seek
power over their own minds,**

in compassion and kindness tame the mind.

2 June 2018

=====

**Breezy, uneasy
as if someone's out there,
yesterday's hungry fox
with murder on his mind.
That's unfair. Every body
needs to eat, alas.
The wind knows it too,
iy eats nothing though,
it sighs for all of us.**

2 June 2018

= = = = =

**Cast in plaster
clouds above
Sankt-Gallen
permanent baby-blue sky.**

**What the world wants
is rafters, visible framework
so all that limitless
up there does not deceive us
into thinking there is somewhere else.**

**Art brings us back to earth,
even Baroque, even religion.
Anything with us in it
reveals all there really is.**

2 June 2018

SILVER

for Charlotte, on our 25th

Interesting, a little strange,
to think of all the years
that somehow fitted inside
the few weeks we've been
together, Not so long ago
Seattle, Victoria, Himachal
Pradesh, the Chablais.
And here we are in a little
town again, the ancients
called it Cedar Hill, we live
at the foot of it, where all
the roads come together.
You are so new to me still,
always surprise me with delight
that it is you, and you are here
and the days fit so snug together,
accurate with the beauty you confer.

3 June 2018

=====

So if I waited here
and there was a door
and I could let my shadow
fall full down along its wood
that might be key enough
to unlock the coming .

Does the door lead in or out.
Where does the light come from
that makes the shadow. Things
even hard ones are more peaceful
than thoughts. Waiting
inevitably means thinking, even
if it's just to keep the mind busy
so it doesn't hurt so much to wait,

so the sky doesn't just loom
sardonic and empty over my back,
I can almost feel the weight of it
pressing me down to this moment,
this never-ending now of no door.

3 June 2018

=====

**Rhapsodies everywhere.
Between one note and the next
the silence fills up with gladness—
the books call them overtones
but I know better. You hear them
twisting luxuriously from the violin
faster than you can count, those
shimmering silences that shiver
right down the spine. That's why
we have bodies, to listen to music,
Otherwise all the silence would be lost.**

**3 June 2018
(*listening to Joan Tower's Rising.*)**

=====

The aspersions
linger,
 like faces
I don't quite recognize
blaming me
for what I don't remember.
Why do they
speak ill of me now—
let me make up
a thousand reasons,
an *Iliad*-worth for anger,
faithlessness, despair.
All from a little remark
that spoils the afternoon.

3 June 2018

=====

**A white mess
all over:
a bag of barley flour
a fat raccoon stole
from a locker outside,
spread over deck and steps.
Wasted. Not eaten
by man or beast.
Maybe bugs unseen
will thrive thereon—
as Brakhage might say.
Only he could see them,
dust motes were his
cathedral windows.**

3 June 2018

=====

**Almost summer.
The attack
of the outside begins.**

3.VI.18

=====

1.

It is still
whatever it was.
Mosaic
on the wall
girls giving
goddesses pears,
clusters of grapes,
guides leading
squadrons of believers
through the street,
suburbs of God.
the fountain
ever full.
Light coming and going.
Trees so numerous
the ancients spoke
a sea of green.

2.

We live between.
Press against the mosaic—
tile is always cool,

skin always warm.
The images pictured
instruct the skin.
Offerings. Congress.
Jubilation. Night.
One night for sleeping,
one night full
of strange light.

3.
We came to know
what one another
feel. All politics
and music come
from that desire.
On the wall above
the mural a sign says
*I want to feel
what your skin feels.*

4.
We have that right.
Body gives it.
Democracy begins
with two men

**in the rain
each noticing the other
is equally wet.
We are water
mostly, the priests
explain, the rest
of us is bone
and gristle, mud
and pain. we sign
the contract
with every breath.**

**5.
What can we learn
by thinking out loud?
Opus 111. The Winter's Tale.
The taste of salt.**

**6.
Don't fuss, Robertus,
stop eating
your breakfast at night,
telling us what's
wrong and right,
sucker for the easiest rhymes,
stop trying to get
back to Mycenaean liberties,
bull-leaping, maidens**

**unsacrificed, mosaics
holding beauty
fixed permanently,
stop feeling with your skin,
skin is too loud,
too friendly, scars easy,
stop holding in the truth,
let the real you out
to play on those same
sacred illuminated sidewalks,
theosophy of other people,
colored chalk all on your hands,
kneel down and say your true name—
no rain will ever wash that away.**

4 June 2018

NEWFANGLED WEATHER

**makes them why implode.
Nobody knows. I doubt
the Freemasons did it
who did every else
you could think of,**

**my
girl's initials carved
into birch bark**

**O living tree
can you forgive
language, our tool
to scar you
and fool ourselves?**

**I will wait
for your answer
into eternity**

**a place halfway
up the mountain
in the French Alps,
the goats there
have six horns,**

**the farmer's wife
explains in detail
why I was born.
This thing we're doing
all somehow together
To privilege the unborn.**

4 June 2018

IN TILOPA'S SHRINE

**Monkeys sit around the temple,
bored-looking, maybe
when we go home
it's their turn to pray.
Outside, the trees are covered
with pink flowers, acacia,
water runs downhill and birds fly up.
Just like us
eventually.**

**How grey
and old the monkeys look,
squatting by the boundary wall,
taking the shade.
I look away quickly,
almost embarrassed,
as if I had glanced at a mirror
and did not feel at peace with what I see.**

4 June 2018

INSTRUCTIONS, 1

**Picture entablature
picture a hawk
overhead. Close.
Squeal of its appetite.
Shake your head.
In this country
it is safe to disagree
still. Send a postcard
(Half-Dome at Yosemite).
Don't sign it.**

INSTRUCTIONS, 2

**Radical reunion.
Carrots and cabbage
cook together.
Color alone
controls the Work.
The world.
So pick a color
right now! That
is your aura.
Everybody can see it.
You will never
be naked again.**

INSTRUCTIONS, 3

**Wait on line
if you can find one.**

Draw one if not.

**Study its trajectory
source and target,
the end in the beginning,
truth and legend.**

**Indians out there
know your kind, know
how you think about
them. Don't think.
Any line leads away.**

INSTRUCTIONS, 4

**Fill out a few forms at the Post Office.
Mail a letter to yourself
to test the system. Be suspicious.
When it's delivered, you will never
be quite sure—is this the same you
who wrote and sent it? Who
writes letters anyhow? Why not just
say what you mean, in Latin, very loud,
hoping they'll hear, wiping your eyes?**

**4 June 2018
Rhinebeck P.O.**

=====

for Charlotte

Insula
 means island
song
 when we couldn't
get to the island the island
sent weather
 from the sea
to be with us,
 whale and seal
sport as cloud over,
 floating light

behind them
 the sun our salt.

5 June 2018
first writing with new pen

=====

**When you grow
up in cities
glory's easy—
just look up**

**the lordly sky
serene between
all fabrications
even in storm**

**up there the light
almost unhandled
because we can't
touch glory glory**

touches us.

5 June 2018

=====

**Keep wanting?
A scar of desire
on the smooth cheek
of the pubescent day—**

**how great it would be
to meet a day
and not want
anything from it,**

**let it smile or frown
its way past me,
pass right through
the meshes of my intentions**

**like a mountain stream
with its twenty-four hour
non-stop babbling of
Good morning Good morning.**

5 June 2018

FLOWER POUCH

As if from Bactria
two thousand almost
years ago arriving
at our door,

leucohermetic,
the White Messenger
brings the god's flowers
to the fortunate.

And a day and a night now
they've hung in rain and sun,
silky to the touch
white flowers vibrant
hung from the house wall
like a trophy
from some sacred hunt
weaponless for light itself,

mother of flowers.

5 June 2018

=====

**Live long in the lyric
admire stones
for where they chose to fall.
Unmove them, listen to them
hard. Time is coming
towards you now,
the sly animal that eats colors,
leaves you pale, grey,
more like a stone every day.
And they know the way to hum
the soft music of persistence.
Be a place and never stop thinking.**

6 June 2018

=====

**I am a messenger,
I am trained to make
whatever I chant
sound like good advice.
I believe my own message
most of the time.
Go ask the river, ask the sun,
ask her if im right.**

6 June 2018

=====

**Dofferent colors of being wrong.
Wrong like the sky out the window,
wrong like a speeding clack car
wrong like a wine bottle, a wolf cub,
a church door, a postage stamp,
wrong like a middle name, or angry child.**

6 June 2018

=====

**What you saw in the movies
isn't what I saw.
I saw the gaps between the frames,
canceling the images of natural things,
women and men erased
by the machinery of seeing them.
You laughed at the comedy,
I wept at the lost faces, lost
friends, interesting villains,, the rabbi
who could sing even the devil away.**

6 June 2018

=====

**There are people who put salt on grapefruit
and people who put sugar on tomatoes
(I say to-may-toz) but are they the same people?
In fact I haven't seen either outrage performed
in years now but I swear it used to happen
in restaurants and at home, wherever sugar was easy
and salt within reach. Who were they?
I seem to remember serious looks, business faces,
the feeling of entitlement, clean white cuffs.
As if the silly little fruit before them came
unfinished from great Nature and needed help.
I never tasted either. Blame me for cowardice,
habit, being easy to please. I wonder how they taste
that way, but I'll never take the risk of finding out—
it would change my character, bad enough as it is.**

6 June 2018

POSTCARDS FROM THE WAITING ROOM**1.**

**Stone of counsel
who knows the dream?
 Meteora. Climb
climb.**

2

**.Provisions
hailed up b.y rope
to hermits on high.
Live alone
on the mountain
like a mountain.**

3.

**Certainties, walk there,
far away from Oxford Street
still wearing that
fancy ball gown you bought.**

4.

**C;ose the eyes
and imagine the sky.
What you see
will be me.**

6 June 2018, Kingston

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**Blue stone
shaped out of sky**

**oil of cloud
to polish it**

**extract of moonlight—
all these things**

**I have for sale
if you know how**

to make the right money.

6 June 2018, Kingston

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**Hatrack
they hang music on**

**so it's silence in you
while you think**

**call it a rhapsody
and sleep till it's done.**

6 June 2018, Kingston

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**Look at the dear form.
It proposes a future
built of pure language.**

**We are what we say.
We are what we say
to one another. Mercy
is in our gift, kindness
belongs. We are kind
because kin. Language
breeds us.**

**From afar
a family forms.
Vikings invade, the true
king hides. Comes back
only when the Queen
has found him. He speaks.
He rules us all.**

6 June 2018, Kingston

=====

**Losing your religion
is like losing your wife.
Everything is possible,
and nothing has meaning.**

7 June 2018

=====

**Schoolbus in heaven
bearing young angels
to their sacred drudgery.**

7.VI.18

=====

**Why aren't the leaves
sufficient on the tree?
Why must we write
more of them and
so few of them green?**

7 June 2018

== == == ==

**Poems like cannons
poems like bee-bee guns
depending on the target
if there even is one.
Scars left on silence.**

7 June 2018

= = = = =

**I am in my Late Stone Age
I father images of the sun
inscribe them in dark places
and worship them.**

**I who once
scarred Onegin in a duel
and chivvied Byron for his cowardice
am now just a gatherer of blank stones
trying to read out loud
the images that are not found there.**

7 June 2018

=====

**It is not clear who the truth is.
Is it robin with her breast on fire
or last year's ashes from the blessing of palms?
Going to sea seems a bad idea—
ruined lighthouses full of paperbacks.
The mind sinks low in variations,
or all copies and no originals? Wait,
there's a kind of beer glass called a schooner.
and they nail old tires to the side of the wharf
and some children are playing Monopoly in French,
a bunch of grapes is maybe closest of all.
My lips are sealed—come taste and tell.**

8 June 2018

NORTH RIVER

**Not so much waiting as sailing past.
The current helps, and 'sailing'
is just metaphor in your clothless canoe.
Indians were here, whatever they were,
you can tell from the million clam shells
(*Venus mercenaria*) heaped on the banks.
But we've given up tobacco once sacred
on these shoes. But not on the river—
never smoke on water. The bible says so,
I'll find the passage one of these days.**

8 June 2018

=====

**Closer and closer
to the horizon
hidden in her
the lover comes
but never reaches.**

**It is her nature
to be far, Sometimes
she too is sad
about the immense
distances she includes,
like a mountain
embarrassed by altitude.**

8 June 2018

=====

**Misty blue
up there
corny piano
downstairs**

**Schumann's birthday
but you'd never know it
no *Carnival*
let alone all the rest.**

**Sometimes music
is an insult
not just to the intellect
but to silence, the deep
carnal appetite
without which we
would not even be.**

8 June 2018

DAVIDSBÜNDLERTÄNZE

**The piano eludes
but the music pierces
anyhow. I can't spell them
but curious words
flutter from the trees.**

Interesting. Tell your doctor.

**I have too many
to make sense.
Surgery itself
is like a piano,
deft fingerwork
and a scar forever.**

8 June 2018

=====

**Mark the distance—
there is no well
for miles. Breath
lasts across a road,
no further. Shade
rare, amber thoughts
lull the aching mind.
It is to go. That
thing we do, so sad,
the going and going
and never wake.**

9 June 2018

=====

**Bright birds spring into trees.
Jays. I too am deciduous,
I live to caress the opposite.**

**The underside of up from
high the birds ascended—
I know that too, I am**

**minuteman of the obvious,
guarding the invisible frontier.
No shadow falls untasted**

on my brute lonely acres.

9 June 2018

= = = = =

**Time to go back
to my native country.
Here it is, my hand
waving is the flag of it,
my feet holds it in place.**

9 June 2018

= = = = =

**They have found their way
inside the mind.
Now the examination begins.**

**You have ninety seconds
to empty all your thoughts
so the real thinking can begin.**

9 June 2018

=====

1.

**Add up the days you ate
the gorgeous photos snapped one by one
of things the instant they disappeared
forever in the voracious mind.
Into thinking the seen descends—
what Rilke calls the heart0work begins.
Day by day striving. Apollo smiles.**

2.

**We'll call Sun that and praise her gold,
her glory yields him, heals him.
There was a shepherd who had no sheep,
a harper with no strings, a girl with no flute
wandered slow along the riverside
yet the son they do to the air never dies out.**

3.

**When the mind is full of images
and has no words at all,
Columbus sets out from Genoa
leaving the synagogue behind.**

**Is the whole world out west
worth the loss of the Lord's language?
There is nothing beyond the horizon
you haven't seen already in your dreams.
And not just dreams.**

4.

**History mixes weirdly in the day.
Out the window is a century back.
Ago. Agone. Not just that those trees
saw Chateaubriand pass on his way
to Albany and Melville on his way down
the river to Jerusalem at last. Not just
that these dust motes have been floating
past since the last glacier melted away.
The light itself is ancient and once lit Babylon.**

5.

**Not skepticism, heroism.
To accept the burden
of all we imagine,
to dare to remember
what we have seen.
To cheer one another on,
to sit there smiling,
talkative as a rose.**

10 June 2018

AN EXPIATION

**The bee keeps
dancing at the screen
buzzing me something.
I close the curtain—
ia am afraid I think
of her information.
I open the curtain
a moment or two later
and she's gone.
I feel ashamed,
failed hospitality,
her message unread,
not understood.
How merrily she danced
at my window, I think
of that now, will I ever
see that dance again?
And it might have told me
the whole history of this
day just beginning. Who
can I ask to forgive me?
I'm crying for what I lost.**

10 June 2018

=====

**Bituminous exhaust—
coal fire. The smell
of 1940, just before
we too became part
of everything else.**

10 June 2018

=====

**Uncork the mystery
and drink deep.
Then wipe your lips.
The stain on the napkin
is your only evidence.**

**File it away among
all the thousands of napkins
you used before. Work hard
and you will one day read what they say.**

11 June 2018

=====

**The chipmunks are not my business
but I have seen them chase
each other, race around my feet
as if I were a part of their world,
their problem. They move so fast,
over chairs and table, even my shoe
and there I am again, a stranger
to what is closest. Charlotte though
knows them, loves them, feeds them
from her lap, even from her hand.
I watch full of wonder, such trust
of them, of her, such living kindness.**

11 June 2018

=====

The Tour Saint-Jacques was clad in scaffolding last time I looked— they are repairing the Middle Ages and I am pleased. Popes and kings are good for costume, incense, chant in old-time dialects. But here it is, the tower of the alchemists, the spot where the pilgrimage begins. Workmen doing careful sluggish union things to this old stone. At that point I turned back to see the river, Sequana, who has taken so much of me away.

11 June 2018

=====

**Wind in one tree
not the others.
Then it moves
across the road
to a taller one.
Then comes close
to me in a third.
One small wind
playing with trees,
whose breath?
Childhood of things.**

12 June 2018

=====

**I wouldn't mind being
the horse you ride,
your secret places
pressing on my spine.**

**Maybe I am that
already, since I feel
your dark transmission
through my nerves alone.**

12 June 2018

=====

**Helping the angel
along. dancing in place
to keep him laughing,
talking nonsense
through my keyboard,
quarreling with friends.
Angels love a good fight
especially when it's full of
fluttering wings and kisses,
peace-making breezes abound.
I do what I can, transcribing
headlines from the future.**

12 June 2018

=====

Usually I know what time it is,
I've been around here quite a while.
But sometimes the day outsmarts me
and I sleep into the fat of the morning,
when everybody's busy doing what they do—
and that's the part I never understood.

12 June 2018

=====

**Something about messengers.
Something about reaching out in the dark.
Whose hand is this?**

**The opposite is also true—
too much knowledge and bad sleep.
Wake in the dark again,
not knowing. For knowledge
is only what has been known.
Not knowing now.
And at night, in the dark,
there is only now.**

12 June 2018

=====

**Can you carry a tune
they used to say
when I was young
I can I said so they
said carry this one
and I still do.**

12 June 2018

=====

**Speakable agitations
but there is another kind,
a kind with quiet scars
and luminous stitches. It quivers
almost unseen beneath
whatever thought's a-thinking...
The sufferer hardly notices it,
and those nearby, well,
they've seen worse. Still,
it does sometimes slow
up the wrong way street of the soul
if there is a soul. Something
anyhow, that lingers and senses and hurts.**

12 June 2018

=====

**My appetite just came back—
six months it's been sleeping.
I'm not sure I'll let it in—
living on less was a swami's trick,
a rope from the sky, a leaf
to shelter under in a storm.
I will lock the door against *I want*.
But I wonder what it learned
while I was fasting (an exaggeration)—
maybe I should risk learning
whatever else it learned to want.**

12 June 2018

=====

**Sleepless, I could fill my pens,
water the amaryllis,
interview the dramatis personæ
of my past, image by image,
till they all smell of ink and I can sleep.**

12 June 2018

=====

Things too close to touch.

**Tell me how to get
from here to somewhere else.
Will it be by plane or car,
a log raft floating in the dark?
That first bird starts to sing,
stay here, stay here—
it's what everything always says.**

12 June 2018

IN THE GARDEN OF DOUBT

1.

Taken by the garden
or captured by the guard
(translations differ)
—the sea was near, we
wandered along, delicate
wet lacework on our toes.
Delicious. Kept going until
there was only one way left.

2.

Were we alone? It doesn't say.
The moon (this is later)
seemed larger than usual.
The rock we slept beside
for shelter proved by morning
light to be deep red—
that made us feel privileged
somehow, like an October sky.

3.

Organic is the word that comes to mind
when you ask about the countryside.
Few people tending many beasts
all clear as sea fog and fresh water wells
could make us. We lived there too,

**lacking any sense of elsewhere. You know
how it is when you're alive, all you do
is think about keep going on. If I could
write more clearly you'd understand.**

4.

**O these American distances!
So far to travel
between lunch and dinner,
so far to the sea or the mountain,
how did everything get so far apart?
And the sun is always shining!
Someone walked off with our umbrella
and we never felt the lack of it.
But the garden is so lovely,
the guards so attentive, attractive,
the sunlight glistens in their hair,
makes us almost glad to be here.**

13 June 2018

=====

**Would it be any different
if it were right here? She or it
or he or theysoever? Isn't it always
over there they live—dwell, thrive,
contrive—and we be here?**

13 June 2018

=====

**“Definitely” she says on TV
and the house trembles.
We watch the end of all things
do-it-yourself apocalyose.**

**We wait for good weather
as much as our budget permits—
luck is rationed in these streets.**

**2.
Be calm, I tell myself,
every life is like this.
all the decisions have been
long ago decided. Sounds foreign.
I spin around to say who said
“alluvial.” Could it be the river herself?**

**3.
Children are playing near.
Not mine. I have no game
for them he said.. the sun
slapping the moon was play
enough for him he said.
I said any game is the opposite
of play, and he thought a little
and almosty agreed. I hope
I'm right. Play has no rules.
In playing, no one ever loses.**

**13 June 2018
Rhinebeck**

=====

**Subtle difference
stains the air
a mower, a motor
too early to be**

**did myth begin
with anger, rage
against the actual?**

**make it be different,
Lord, myuth knows
sound come and goes.
The story stays.**

14 June 2018

=====

**Bee dance at the window quick—
things that happen mean forgiveness too.
Space is there to understand.
Privileged ration of the universe: even hurt means.
Or so the bee explains. Millions of years.**

14 June 2018

=====

**Where the hand
lands, the heart
goes. Lingers.
History is not
what happened,
it is what we
thought we thought.
Wind in the trees.**

14 June 2018

=====

*You read a sea
when you see me*

**she said and we all heard
forever after**

**Always call a person
by what they say.**

15 June 20`8

=====

**What are the signs
by which we know who they are,
the ones who matter
in the heart's republic?**

15 June 2018

=====

**Renew the time
the all alone,**

**the sky a mirror
of inmost need.**

**See me and know
the answer given**

**even to your
bluest question.**

15 June 2016

= = = = =

**Don't lose
what has begun—**

**the drumroll
is far away,**

**the soldiers
are sound asleep.**

Sneak into dawn.

15 June 2018

NEW BEDFORD HYMN

Queen of Peace at her dock
when we are home no anchor needed

next wharf over,
an egg-toss closer to the sea

I have come to the Christ world,
the ocean always rising from the dead,
raising us, bidding us have done
with blood sacrifice, raise
a glass of water to the Mind in peace
and think deep salt

I heard him say,
and if you need another father than your own,
well, there's one up there to cheer you on,
and if ut happens that you need to pray,
hurry into a quiet room and shut the door.

2.

The sea is close at last.
Each fishing boat or ferry a tribune
on which we stand and bellow out
in jubilation such meanings as we find,
to praise the all-pervading *wet*
we are, its wavelets dream us all night long.

3.

I will have a boat
and name my white skiff *Eurydice*,
she will flee from me
with her boyfriend wind
but always come back
to make sure I noticed she was gone.

4.

Mythoblast, a swell of word
or swollen tale,
pinprick k it to let the lymph out,
the hidden years that swell a story up,
make it grandiose and operatic,
concealing the root:
this is what happened
and never again.

15 June 2018
New Bedford

= = = = =

**We are here
on the island again
after a year
without that wonder
a clear mere horizon.**

15 June 2018

CUTTYHUNK

=====

**the animal I
am saved by
the ceaseless intercession
of her hands.**

**That statement woke me.
In a cold cottage
in an old new
place, our own house
it seemed, the sea
waited for us outside.**

**There is magic here as
Robert said of other places,
but now dispersed turns
inside out—we live inside
an immense concentration where outmost
membrane is the ocean here.**

**Because magic—the kind, holy, salty,
healing—brings to light what dreams
have hidden in their weird academy.
Things have no opposites. Things exist.**

16 June 2018

=====

**Something about the six AM sun
title of a movie
starring me.
I stand gawping
on the clear new deck
shielding my eyes to see—
our lewd equipment of perception
dazzled by simplicity—
chaste light rebuking appetite.**

16 June 2018

=====

Residence in sea
followed blue hydrangeas
to the source. Caught
blackbirds for their shrill
and let them go. Day upon day
hammers wake us, tapping
the earth together so the sky won't fall.
What would we do then
if there were no over?

2.
Teach grass to sing I suppose.
Valiant as a beech tree in a storm,
everybody writes on me.
Old wood drinks more than old.

3.
My problem is lucidity.
Everybody understands me.
So I will be you a while,
the never understood,
the mystery queers the king
of hiddenness. As it is,
morning sunlight runs right through me
and I cast the shadow of a dead oak leaf.

16 June 2018

= = = = =

**Sound of sea!
at midnight almost!
the waves' eternal
(outside-of-time)
annunciation.**

16 June 2018

=====

**“Things beginningly”
he cried, “it’s all
in what you hear”**

2.

**All is more
than anybody bargained for
a palace on fire,
a falling star, August on the Opal Coast,
remember?**

**You were there
for the beginnings, the very hour
when they ploughed the sun
and the sweet rain fell.**

3.

**Laboriously,
 do what you planned
not just what comes to hand,
he said, rhyming us,
annoying us,
 preachers of all sects
are like that, half
their work is irritating us.
Irritation is a property of living organism,
the professor long ago explained.
You cannot irritate the dead.**

4.

But we can try—that's
the work of history,
an altogether different story.
It's not the company's fault—
they can't help it
if I sit in a place where there is no light
can they? Of course I look
for someone to blame, but even
the mirror snickers in its way,
it always has just enough light to show.

5.

O dubious discourse
that has me in it!
I should have been modest,
Actaeon with shielded eyes,
I should have looked away in time
that day when there was nothing to see.

6.

Salt box architecture they say
but our salt comes in cylinders.
Names always lead us astray—
they were our first disguises,
hiding places. And hidden
places of the Grail.

They call my name
but they're getting only me.

7.

The ocean hasn't said a word yet
though I hear it restless at the shore.
Or is that the word it's telling me,
there is an edge to everything,
go down and make it talk.
Make it yours. Speech
is always a confession, a concession.
Otherwise the blue sky in us
would just smile and smile and smile.

[naissance de Gounod 1818]

17 June 2018

=====

**Waiting is wading
through time
when I would swim.**

**But a friend stands
beside or behind
every tree.**

**There are considerations
of being nowhere,
wait and see.**

17 June 2018

=====

**It takes too long
to be me
so I will be Othering
today. Other
the Unknown, last
ruler of Indeterminacy
before it was absorbed
in Everywhere Else.**

17 June 2018

=====

**(How can anything new happen
if I'm still me?)**

17.vi.18

== = = = = = = =

(Somehow to be now

**on the other side of the house
in shade! new deck,
a hill out there, and over it the sea
and then America. A different country
from when I saw it last from that hill--)
on the other side
of the house.**

**Blue amazement
of a quiet sky.**

**The greenery,
the live-long day—**

**a new place
so close, same address,
verso and recto of the single text.
Jeff and Elaine are going to Alaska
(I hear the surf, loud, on the morning tide)
new people are in the Rose Cottage
we can't see it anymore,
thanks to the bushes grown tall.
(Now just the stone, the fence,
remnants of Betty's garden
(the sky like the backyard of Crescent St.,
558, sixty-five years ago,
aiee, the numbers!)
Hammering this morning too—Brodeurs'?**

Winter House?
(The Sabbath there to be broken)
I don't even know if the internet is out,
(country sleep? Island indifference?
Love conquers all, so cool in shade.)
The line of sun
is coming across the table—
a fifth of it in sun—

(which province in Ireland am I from,
Ulster of Kelly the mason,
Munster of my mother's seal-folk?
Connaught where they recognized me as a Kelly
as I just stood there on the street
in the little town with all the gorse hedges,
and fuchsia too, lambent in the dew.)

17 June 2018

=====

**When Melville sailed past these islands
was Agassiz at work here yet?
And was Caliban still howling on the hill
for his lost master? Sycorax
was still with him, but what good's a mother
when all the magic went away?**

**There is an answer to that question—
go swimming with the seals and you'll get it.
We're the first land he came to in the open sea.
That makes this bright June morning special,
as if a whale came spouting to the shore.**

17 June 2018

=====

**A poem doesn't have to have
many lines or even words in it
to be long. Just look at this.**

17 June 2018

=====

**Does it open
like an ear of corn,
firm tug at the tassel end
and leaf by sheath it comes to you?
Or is it more the gull above
who stares at you as he goes,
or the tern screams near her nest?
Or is it bilingual like a stone,
thinking its own thoughts your way
so you can speak them, you mere
dragoman of a sentient world?
Open is not so different from closed—
I was once a poor man
staring in the shop window, eager
for things I could buy
whether the shop was open or closed.**

17 June 2018

=====

friendship is a grammar

**the French essayist said
and it stopped me in my tracks.
Grammar of love, grammar
of affinity, grammar of being close.
The things we say!**

17 June 2018

=====

**Call time a permission—
a streak of light across a dark room—
guess what the brief glare ____
and more cautiously through this ___ space,
___ and warfare and crashing seas,
that buzzing bee a helicopter is
and language never fails you but you fail it.**

17 June 2018

It's as I'm never going back.

=====

But it was the helicopter
at 6:53 that stirred
three gulls to rise up fast
tridenting the eastern sky
hazy blue over islands.
Is that vague enough,
precise enough, to be
and be a part of history?
The grammar of what happens
is a terrifying discipline.
Dear John, it's a long time since I've seen you
and my thought is tender when it comes to you.

*

Or is it just a section
of something else? Not my thought
(though that is networked too—
Aeschylus, Pliny, the Britannica and me)—
or helicopters (they were the pop-sci
image of the future once, everybody
had one) but the numbers
we tell time with, abandoned
gods and goddesses (odds and evens?)
whose last temple is the keyboard.
Pinch them and see what happens out there,
in this art-wrapped mystery that lives us.

*

You tell me who I'm dreaming up,
I wake up a blank state
(remember blackboards?)
too early for blackbirds,
even the rain dove holds back from her sighs.
I'm talking silence and the sea—
are you surprised? I never dream
of anyone I know, but all the ones I dream
are fully-formed and all-too-specific,
with memorable faces, jobs and families.
No one can tell me who they are
but every now and then one will say her name.

*

I'm not pretending, I'm just trying
to be honest as sunshine this minute [?]
filtering through haze.
Who said that? Anybody who says I
really means somebody else,
and don't you forget it, *hypocrite lecteur*.
Can't you see how much work,
sheer noise and chattering it takes
to build a silent temple for you,
for you to walk in
and just feel, see, better than you do outside?

*

Call it Connecticut [?] and be done with it,
a hundred miles away across the water
snug in America, with schools and rivers.
And be glad it's far enough away
that we have whales and seals and town meetings
and all that romantic stuff
where once a naked tribesman stood
and knew his world intimate, complete.

*

Half Samson now, all strength gone
but still can see, a little, now
it's time to build that temple up again.
Not Dagon this time but the sea
he sprang from, the sea. The mind.

*

Now the rain dove
has caught up.
The lyric democracy
out there begins.
Yesterday you swam
beneath a fish-crow.
No seals around.
This is a postcard.

The picture is pretty.
Who sent it? You can't
make out the writing.

*

Am I being obvious? Yes.
Does it matter? Yes.
Should it be more or less?
I hid myself in being right,
now I hide is clarity.
And still no one ever comes.

*

You can stare at the phone all you like—
nobody calls. And you wouldn't dare.

*

Once there was anger
in every leaf,
a hurricane came up our street
and took some wires down.
Strange weather forever.
Mystery of the empty sky.

*

Wind say and sea say
never stop talking.
Silence too is what it says.
Be a blackbird. Be an oriole.
Finch at feeder—
he's saying, saying saying
all I mean you to understand.
Did you think this was a love song?
Or am I wrong?

*

O my. My means
the things that happen to me.

*

1

Amateur disclosures—
no one really here.
There are seven roads up every hill
but I know only one.
Or two in good weather.

*

**New constellations:
Man Carrying Fish.
Roof Without a House.
Three Birds Sleeping on a Branch.
Name them.**

*

**We're in a different time zone here.
It's called my time
and there's lots of it.**

*

***Forget the numbers.
Be continuous.
Be a bird.
The wing flaps from
this railing to the elm tree—
no number needed.
Suddenly you're there.
Your heart alone
has lifted you again.**

*

Absorbent surfaces suck thought dry. T/F

Reflective surfaces return the mind upon itself. T/F

A mirror is both. What can a poor face do?

**Hot in the heart
of the day—cool
at the flanges.
Wind is a promise**

**Pulse in fingertip
Bird on twig.
A towhee to tell you
Fear of color. [?]
When I look down
I see somebody's hand.
It makes me wonder.**

18 June 2018

=====

**Just the sea and me,
whoever she is,
walking the lonely sky.
Her tambourine
rimmed with small shells,
her mouth full
of all the words at once.
Plus salt.**

18 June2018

=====

LNR

The man who told me
told me.

 There is a way
and it is human,
 two nations know it,
they follow a man.

The men who told me
did not live in abstractions,
though water is realer than a river,
our essence lives in accident.

The mind that tells us
lives only in us.

*

How many days a man has left
count the bricks in the Tower of Babel—
for when the languages all changed
the numbers went crazy too
and no two people ever agree
about how many bricks are there,
how many we still must add
to reach the intended top. Birds
pay not attention to our mathematics
and little children have to be forced to count.
Next week, the rabbi said, I'll tell you
how to count how many breaths you have left.

*

No one needs me now.
I wait to hear
the rain-dove singing that,
and everyone who hears her sing
reaches out to need her even more.

*

Sun come through to say
fie on grammar
prose is a dragon that eats your time
but leaves your heart alone.

*

Write more than you know
to know more than you write.

*

When did laces replace
buckles on shoes?
We need to know these things.
The place in time
where things changed.
I picture Napoleon
(5'7" my father's height)

tying his shoelaces
and the picture seems wrong.

*

You never know what an animal is thinking,
he's the man next door.

*

Oy, gevult [=Gewalt]
we used to say,
the Power, the Power
but which Power?)

*

Easy attachment
cloud then sun then cloud
the changes know us
ourselves
 from the woods
a lion roars
whether or not any beast is there.
Evidence is lacking for everything.

*

Hear different.
It's the way.

*

**Speculative distances abound.
The sea looks so quiet today
but it's always moving.
The trees around me toss in wind
but aren't going anywhere.
This is almost a complete explanation.**

*

**Heraldry. Lions and tower and eagles
and trees, a prisoner bound to a rock,
three crows deploring a highway accident.
Clean fresh-cut wood is best.
A lawnmower coming up the hill.
Grass growing in the sky.**

19 June 2018

=====

**Everything that happens
(means I notice it)
is a science lesson—
often in a science
unknown before now—
porphyrology, the study of red things
and redness in things,
pothology, the science of tender relations.
I am always waiting there to take your hand.**

20 June 2018

=====

All day long
the quiet turbulence
of the amateur roofer
across the road,
tapping in 5/4 time.

*

The day too bright to see
I hear the sea out there
restless beyond my modest windowshade.

*

Diary of Not Being for a Change.

*

The back door often open
the oven cold but closed
yesterday's cookies are crumbs
the sun seems to push the shade aside
we are all animates
together in the world and
one way or another pay our taxes—
hammering across the way,
peace spills out of my ears.

20 June 2018

=====

**Far away I feel the hammer
gently strike the roofing nails
but still I feel the handle in my hand**

*

**If there were a girl walking along
I'd follow her with my eye,
if a dog got at the garbage
I'd chase him away,
if blackbirds came and stood around the way they do
I might put seeds out for them.
But as it is, nothing is happening,
so I content myself with writing this.**

20 June 2018

=====

**Learn Latin if you can,
let them teach you how to think
a different way, a way
to hide your thoughts from yourself
and be a joyous pagan Christian Jew.**

20 June 2018

=====

**The trial the desire
 the slow accumulation of evidence
 the sheer being outdoors—
 O woodmen without a tree
 sailor without a sea,
 come be me.
 Stone wall of ruined garden—
 not ruined, neglected.
 Not neglected, given
 back to Time, who made it.**

*

**Could it be elderberry?
 That comes to mind,
Holinder and Vienna and Hoffmann's tales.**

*

**Too high
 above the tabletop
 to write this cloud
 SW over open sea**

*

**Reaching down
inside
for a word—
what will it be?
Tatterdemalion? Organdy?**

*

**But through my mother's drapes I saw
the church across the street burn down.
May 1939—so many wars ago.**

*

**Does that count?
Is that canto?**

*

**Two men walk downhill
their legs scissoring in synch.
Everything is a ballet, everything is Japanese.**

*

**Misericord, a bench
to rest your bottom on
while the mouth utters prayer.
Liturgy= work of the people.
And you know what people are.**

20 June 2018

=====

**Try to get things right
the first time, this is
always the first time, we
are just the beginning.**

*

**Room for doubt,
a sack of barley flour
an old salmon by the weir—
we are rivers**

*

**Spillways offer
speed and fresh,
the roadways suffer.
Trudge a mile in me.**

*

**Are we ever ready?
The news that spills the day
spoils the weather.**

*

To expedite the animal
blue cords are muscles [?], ours,
why can't you hear
the high-C I am saying?

Great sky grey imagine me.
Flourishes of certainty
among the gloom.
Cherokee rose, from Formosa,
two gulls on the lawn—
that's all you need to know
or all I know how to tell

*

Currency of air,
blackbird still,
then skirl. This is my canto.

*

History is a long mistake
sometimes in noble weather.
Shrink ports and bottle rivers,
the ooze flows westward always
and mulches us.

Who's at the door?
Why do we let the shadow fall?
A morning old
before coffee or tea,

how did they warm
their little hands?
Our tiny ancestors—
Eve and Adam were born from trees.
Every story makes the same mistake,
tries to make sense.

*

Save black ink for paying bills
use the violet for I-love-you.
Distinctions are there to be made.
Be obvious. Rule the earth.

*

Drank from a tepid canteen.
Warm water is wetter—
the ancients knew that.
Wasn't it cold rain
that fell round Noah's boat?
Josephus doesn't say—
ask the rabbi and get good news.

*

Fox-free insular, alas
what else we lack—
marmot, chipmunk, coon.
But there are no woodcocks

back home, no snipe or ospreys,
landlady terns to scold beach revelers.
And God the glory of those gulls
right over us, an osprey
carrying a silvery fish.

*

Things come to mind.
There is no reason.
That is the reason.

*

If I wrote from Right to Left
I'd get younger every minute.
But as it is, I can't yet ____,
that Semitic trick, so slide
every day deeper down time's gorge.

*

Festival music for the King of France
waiting downstairs beside the old tube radio
as if he were ready to mount the cellar steps
(creak, squeak) and leave me to pull the cord
that turns out the light. I tune my viol,
hoist the clumsy thing up and follow him.
Music makes the morrow. Marin told me that.

*

The King I mean is any “random” thought
 (there’s no such thing as random, __ knew)
 that climbs the creaking stairs of consciousness
 and spills out, splat, in the __ waking mind.
 Wearing dark with ____
 but 60 watt ____ turn something on.

*

Stagger old legs,
 stumble achy feet,
 scratch plaguey skin,
 be a human again.

*

These timid little noticings
 keep fierce Philosophy in its place.
 (They used to see it as a She,
 I doubt it but you never know)

*

Sweater weather deo gratias
 How do you pronounce *your* Latin,
 Church or German or how the English
 thought Tully spoke, and Caesar ____ ?

But sweater comes with heather,
tartan, thistle and grey mist on the moors—
build a roof over your experience,
tile it with rubber shingles
to keep doubt out.

*

Now it's time for Russian music
sugar beets and golden ploughshare
grooving the steppe. Come home
when you have heard the *tone*—
it comes from the sun, you ___ --
strong lyre swells with it
nosing it down to earth, us,
in the *palais de son* -
the castle of sound
we choose to live.

*

Examine the other side, playboy,
where the sober monarchists preside
over bleak cliffs, and hand their fodder up
long ropes to summit Acme. These monks
were you once, or your type, who now
love God in silence all day long, the silence
they pray that you will find in you

*

**Of course the ladder reaches heaven—
what good is it if not? Birds
flock down and welcome, pretend
they love you only for your seed.**

**Who wrote *an Epic Without a Hero*?
Who painted your smile?
Liberty is close to dread—
look over your shoulder.
Or see the studious serpent
massage the grass he passes on—
everything makes history, and all history tells lies.**

This is at least as good as something else.

**Some of what I meant I have forgotten—
sunshine, say, and aspirin fizzing in Coke
when we were very young and thought
we needed help to see what wasn't there.
All gone now, with the _____ ,
and all the liquid sin we used to practice
when we thought that truth was something you take in.**

*

Swallow this, O ferryman,
a peach from Zoroaster's garden,
an orange from Delius' plantation
down on the St. John River, that flows
so slow among the dark green music.

*

John knew him best.
Write instead of thinking, he told him,
that way it lasts longer,
and you can examine it for truth—
thinking persuades the body of the thinker
too fast—blood and lymph and bile
quiver to the thought.

When you write
the hand does all the sensing
and soon rests he said.

*

And he knew John, loved him
for the images he could see dancing in John's eyes—
when eyes are full of images
the story he tells will be true.

*

**Vajrayana Apocalypse
everything is revealed
just as it is.**

*

**Don't make a fortress of the self—
break the wall down, let the outer
overwhelm, let the other
dance your dread away he said.**

*

Approximation is the thief of mind.

*

**I'm not here to see, I'm here to listen.
Listen close, not from afar.**

*

**John felt close to him too, a little timid.
When he saw those eyes caressing him
with wisdom, intelligence, cooler [?], colder [?].**

*

**It was time. He read the instructions twice.
Turned out the light and lay flat on the bare floor.**

Oak. Eke. Ache. Ash. *Ish*.
Oak. Oak.
Oh. It felt like sleep
but he wasn't sure.
It wasn't long. Animals
are easily bored
but men have will,
will to wake, to wait.
All the words said
the same. He slept.

21 June 2018

=====

Now John had skill in wort-craft and heal-cunning.
 Said to him one day when he was weary
 Be kind to yourself, take it easy.
 But he said to John,
 Begone, Satanling,
 not for ease did I plunge into the world,
 clamber over mountains,
 haul wisdoms in my arms through waded rivers,
 strove through all the Egypts
 to reach this simply holy here.

*

Portugal seems very close,
 a lick away.
 We have the same mother,
 Compostela, rocky road to Dublin,
 the gulls next door.
 I learned my first words there,
thalassa, thalassa,
 though some say it with a T
 and some say sea

*

Inky-veined gynocrat
upgendered policy,
want a woman to be king,
want men to have meaning

*

The etymology of it,
ire spills from fire,
love from above,
above means *from the egg*
the very first _____ ,
the sky the shell of it.

*

John drove him there that day,
waited politely in the car
while he strolled, then seated himself
in the garden a while.
John could see his back,
upright as he sat on a boulder there.
No slumping, he noticed. After a while,
in the gloaming of the evening
he saw two figures who seemed to stand
talking to him, but John
couldn't make out their faces,
tried to guess their names,
gave it up, took out a book and read
word after word till he came back.

*

Things help us along—
did you know that?
In a tiny Carthusian garden
a monk chops firewood.
Everything tries to pray.

*

Haven't you said enough about everything yet?
There's always more to come.
There's more to coming than just being there.

*

Parousia. Being close.
Being with us again.

*

In my storefront religion,
I use—just like the old German delis—
a mush of baking soda and water
to write on the big window
specials of the day—in Hebrew letters,
Tibetan alphabet, the few
Chinese remarks my hand can recall.
And some of our [?] alphabet too

for the goyim strolling past
licking their ice cream cones
or clicking bottle caps in your hands
like castanets—remember?
For we were human too a time ago.

*

Year comes from *your fear*.

*

The practice of lunacy alas
has lost all contact with the moon,
but someday it will be named anew,
joyous, and of the Sun,
then it will be *Solacy*, our solace.

*

Steel sheen on Canapitsit channel—
water is a mineral.

*

There are some things fatal to forget,
others to remember.

*

Neighbor flag
so much politics
so little policy.

Every fencepost
had a blackbird perched on it,
every one, till I came out
the disturber,
I disturbed her, the way things are.

*

Folk-etymologies are wrong
but tell the truth.

*

Measureless minefield
we make our way through.
Bivouac in dread.
Policy of the birds above Lacoste—
go sleep in air.

*

John jolted awake when he came back,
opening the car door, climbing in, closing it
quiet as could be, but John woke.
Did you have a dream? he asked
and John wasn't sure, I saw

two guys with you I thought.
You did, but they weren't guys.
Or girls either, come to that.
And said no more.

*

A postage stamp from Portugal
long ago shows—in olive green—
a woman leaping towards the moon.
Another, russet-red, shows a starfish
outspread in sand.
With such *ricordanze* [?]
we have to make do,
sobbing for our lost Atlantis.

*

So when he says one thing
he means another.
The whole system of education
from football stadiums to bevatrons
depends on that.
Or this.

*

They drove into town
to see a sick friend.
Can't heal, might help

John said. The other was silent,
unless a smile somehow
creates a small soft turbulence in the air,
who knows, some might hear.

*

Turba, a crowd.
Lenis, gentle.
A soft crowd?
We are suckers for an easy show.

*

A park nearby
they walked by
see-saw, by swings.
He sat on one of them
and John gave him a little push,
he laughed, John shoved harder,
and he began to rise, kicking forward
into the sky, the way children do.
And he was laughing like a child too,
higher and higher, John
had to get out of the way of his backswing,
higher and higher, he kicked into the sky.

22 June 2018

**You have to see it backwards
to see it right.**

Plato

**was kidding about Atlantis,
he meant an *island yet to come*
that would surge up one day
from the waves of our own efforts
and be there, gemstone of ocean,
living lapis,
analytic rock.**

*

**To see who a person really is,
you have to see them from behind
the unfakable, unmistakable
carriage of who they are.**

*

**You've said this before he said
yes I said I'm just trying
to get it right, *saying*
again is looking backwards
isn't it? Otherwise how would you know?**

*

The antimacassar on Aunt Annie's chair
protected furniture from only Victorian hair
when she was born, and my father too, kids
in an age whose sins we have overcome
and whose virtues we have lost forever—pity,
lost like Sunday lost like whistling in the street—
not at girls, I mean, but intricate remembered melodies.

*

We are castaways from the future
not good enough
for what's to come.

*

Lift my razor shave my chin
fishing boats, small ones, toss in the rain
at mooring—nobody goes out today
the poor fish are safe while God refills the sea

he said. John stood by the shore
of the largest lake, the longest river
and wondered who God was. And who he was
who spoke of him or her or it. And
who he himself was, who just listened.

*

The lepers on one island over
waited for him to come heal them.
And so it happened, one way or another,
medicine or grace or death, and they were done.
You can read their names on a certain stone,
Chinese mostly, and Russian, and who can tell?

*

This golf cart our chariot
on the rocky road to
the Ford of the Hurdles
which we must cross
so many times a day,
fording, wading through hours,
clutching the little we dare carry with us,
I who once spoke perfect Greek.

*

The Irish are like that.
The lies we tell
we make come true.

*

Want to be a pirate?
Draw a picture of a naked cutlass,
scratch the wooly beard that isn't on your chin.
Stand at the window and cry your eyes out

until the tears turn salt
and sweep you out to sea.

*

John barely glimpsed
what all that was supposed to mean
so he asked him and he said,
Dear friend, Everything is right here.

*

If you know what happened
don't bother telling it—
are you the wind
speaking only of where it's been?
Tell what you don't know,
know it in the telling
till the story's told.

*

Wind sweeps the sea smooth sometimes,
grey sky at peace. Not raining.
I too am the opposite of what you think.

*

Koine, the vernacular Greek
the Roman Empire spoke. Caesar, stabbed,

in fact cried out *Kai su, tekne?* You too, my son?

When a man is dying he tells the truth
or else the dear lie by which he lived.
Greek sprang to his lips, the natural way,
he said it to Brutus but he meant me.

*

Now some rain
changes the story.
The panther sleeps in his cage.
Rain spotted window.
Evidence. Fingers numb with cold.

*

Stop and refresh at the nearest library.
And you're allowed to read in church.
We live in a crowded desert—find the sand.

*

Wanting to know more
he closed his eyes.
(You've heard that one before)

*

Rain beats against the house,

elm tree convulses.
When you are young and when you're old
the weather always wins.

*

Why are you telling me all this?
I must, I must.
At least be music.
I must, I must,
write or die H.D. wrote.
We stood by her hotel and smelled the jasmine.

*

A smile to make things maybe right.
Catch the wind in your bonnet,
drink rain from my hand—
mugwort round his middle
to keep goblins away.

*

If you don't believe in demons
you've never lived in a house.
They're not malevolent as such,
they're just *there*. Their own agenda
intersects with yours. Now
turn out the light and go to
what you used to call sleep.

*

Time to see what I have sinned.
Turn round, turn round,
I was once your middle name
but then I saw the sea.
Build a house for me and I'll be quiet,
doze in the living room by the Franklin stove
or tell your stories about Uncle J.

*

They all come back—
you hear them beating on the door,
an archipelago of voices
growing closer and closer
loud islands in a silence sea

*

My fire burns without fuel—
shall I give it to you?
Or have you stolen it already?

*

Finding the way there is easy.
Finding the way back?
Few can make that voyage—

contrary winds and sunset soon.

*

**Virgil said it better, yes?
To call back your footsteps
not easy, not easy.
But that is the job, that is the Work.**

*

And the earth too lets flowers out.

*

Being thoughtful is the loyal opposition.

*

**If I were a blue house
perched on an Irish cliff—
but no apodosis is worthy of that premise.**

*

**Culture: we steal what we can
and buy the rest**

*

**Stop thinking and just know he said
but John was hardly listening.
Later, though, he remembered. And indeed
isn't remembering just thinking too?**

*

**A gull flew up
beside our house
silvery in rain,
flew into the wind
I wish I could.**

*

**Playful, yes,
but pain knows
how to play too.**

*

**Something isn't right
if you have to say so.
Fix it. Take the evidence.
Revise with your kindly eyes.**

*

**What did you do in the years before I knew you?
I guided timid holy men
over the high mountains,
I carried them in my arms
across rivers they couldn't swim.
I found them food, brought them
to mild places where they live still.
Then I sat down in a little cave
and waited till people found me
who needed me, and who helped me—
I recall a bag of rice, a plate of greens.
Tonight I'll make soup
and you will see.**

**I can't know where I've been
till I've gone somewhere else.
I don't know where I am
till I'm gone.**

**The stone has feelings,
a voice but no eyes
so he can know the essence
of what passes, not be
distracted by mere seeming.**

**That sounds smart
he said, but why are you crying?**

23 June 2018

At the intersection of awful and awesome
lies the sea he said
and she said Why do you speak ill of me?
Who could take better care of thee?
I wash your dull thoughts
clean every day with the sound of me.

*

What Coleridge called the Fancy
fools us all the time,
holds us hostage to seeming—
“mere seeming” the other man presumed to say

*

That is, oak leaves
rarer on the ground
than maple

Fun with facts? forget it,
up Misery Pike
trying to dance
around the maypole of memory.

Mugwort round your waist
this live-long day

*

**Sunrise, encomiast!
Get to work,
you haven't used
all your words up yet**

*

***Casus belli*
the dreamer heard,
time for war again.
How strange it looks
when written down,
more like law court
or old-time medicine.**

*

**He had learned his trade
from anxious doctors
in love with celebrity and truth
in equal measure.
He kept the true part
and left the glitter out,
came to my house one day**

**when I was sick,
cured me by caring.**

**But the water was waiting,
always is, always anxious
for an answer, our utterance
to rhyme aloud with its rigorous research
the waves we wander so unthinking**

**The tune
tells all**

**The sky was holy first—
what else was there to see?**

**Holy. Whole. Hale. Health.
That little plant by the house door
with so many flowers.**

*

Armed with sleep,
he hurried into the classroom
began to teach
before he forgot what he knew
or thought he'd known.
Then it was gone
and he talked on,
the language alone
carried him along.

*

Epic easy, haiku hard.
In between is poetry.

*

Don't answer if you're ready,
take me by surprise.
Be like an envelope
tippling through the slot,
be something with something in you
I'm meant to do
or learn or push out of mind,
you love so hard and all the time.

*

Plaster cast of my thought
on sale cheap.
Looks like the moon on a cloudy night.
Here it is, in your hands.

*

Catch up with Jupiter,
you Greeks.
 He likes
his new name,
most of us do.
But when I was a guest in Fairyland
I had a new name every day
and every name had a wife with it
and every wife had seven cats

*

Josephus, he squirms with embarrassment
when he speaks of the Sodomites—
he's of two minds,
two cultures. Two languages.
Thus he had two bodies too.

*

**Devon, I think our shire was,
though he strolled east into Somerset,
north all the way to Manchester
where for a little while he made hats.
But that's not what he really did.**

*

A profession is an imposture.

*

**In business you sell nothing but yourself.
So you come home at night to be renewed.
What are you, he said, an American?
Nobody believes that stuff anymore.
Business is just busyness, allays the fear.
Americans are terrified of silence.
So poetry will never be popular.**

*

**A head is a hook
to haul strange fish in—**

**the shimmering Others
in a sea of space**

**Precious waistcoat
mugwort on the middle
his skin damp from Jordan
the first John, dipper,
voice against authority,
middle of the year—
killed in the castle.
but some animal is always alive**

**The seasons come upon us
hand in hand
Girl Scouts at the door with cookies—
sweetish taste of old religions
I wanted to be a Cub Scout
but they wouldn't let me—
this rejection made me what I am.
Too young, they declared, too young,
so how could I ever get old?**

Now the cat is out of the bag
I try to sell you the bag he leapt from.
Here, feel it, soft, concealing,
all your woes, and in you go!

*

It makes you laugh
mist that shrouds
the other islands—
not at the mist, *muk-pa*,
that sacred foreignness
of space and distance,
but at the rock we thought we stood on,
over there, right here,
terra not too *firma*,
gone in a slow twinkling
of the wetter wind.

*

Become visible!
Argue her picture off the wall!
Make love to meaning all you like
there will still come Night,

**did you forget that lonely one
who presses tight around you?**

**Astyanax fell
from the city wall,
his name meant
Protector of the City,
Astyanax fell,
he's still falling,
what you read
in some book never ends.**

**Can't see the edge? Fall.
Can't see the bottom? Ascend.
Kick your way up to the stars.**

**But why would you want to be there?
he asked, and John laughed,
nervous as usual, sure
there was a proper answer
but where, where?**

**It's too late now for doubt.
He had lived his way into certainty.**

**Bright plains bordering on Germany.
The train from rainy Amsterdam.
e stood between the cars,
a kindof praying.**

**The action stops.
The faeries, with that sparkling
casual dignity of theirs,
droop back under the hill.
The subway starts again,
pulls out of the station
she looks up from her Bolaño,
a priest manspread by the door,
reading his breviary.
She wants to scream,
lets the train squealing round the curve
do that for her.
The priest looks up at her,
she hides in her book.**

At their glossy maple tables
the faeries are taking their tea.
Somehow the river renews all of them,
tell me about it,
pours into the sea.

*

John never learned to fish
though he had many fisher friends.
They told him it was simple—
with hook and fly (angling)
or with a big soft net
scouring the inhabitants of the sea.
Lake. Stream. But he
could not bring himself to try it.
What if they died?
What if someone cried?

*

Small dog from the sound of it
barks unseen in fog.
Why? And why do people
anyway? Plaintive,
plaintive. Towel
damp on the deck rail.

*

**Things that happen in the
no one sees night.
Tomorrow is no proof of anything.
I am the only evidence.**

24 June 2018

*

The things that didn't need me
waited in the sea barn
in the form of waves,
each wave a tongue
tense or lax, curled or flat
to say something
when the time would come

And the time came
they needed me again,
I listened and obeyed
I spoke.

*

He spoke, and John, astonished,
asked more about those 'theys'
that 'need' someone
but all he answered
was the sea has much science in it,
marvel, magic, mastery.

*

John felt grumpy.
Sometimes a smile is no answer at all.

*

**It wants me awake at half-past-six
so that the birds can come
some caresses left in the oldest hand**

*

**Here he is, a sparrow first thing,
sun nuzzling through cloud,
fair weather after fog,
I am the orchestra asleep
where is the maestro
to make me song?**

*

**I saw Achilles lying dead
or still busy dying,
who can say. Still young,
still strong, a foreigner
to the last. Dark his hair was,
and blood slipped down his chest.
I never liked the man
but I was grieved to see him dead.
Even the Trojans nearby
were quiet, distaste**

sharpened into awe,
the poor man, his groans
still plangent in our ears.
He said the syllables
in his northern speech
none of us could understand,
but it came into my mind
that what he meant was
Next I will be
a birch tree in Thessaly
tall and white and green
and you who slew
will bring her to me.

*

This is my job.
The rock I stand on
only the storm cloud will understand,
only the dark inside the aspen grove.

*

People on the steps.
How close we are still
to the beginning of time.

*

**Naught impedes the rude Jurassic roar.
Hymns still chant through every random chapel,
hear the music just beginning, hear the groan,
workers tired of the sense they're paid to make
and over Acheron a flight of fiery birds**

*

**And Phlegon of Tralles reported, to our grief,
he showed the nail marks in his hands and feet.**

*

**Where are the birds
going when they go?
Some nest in trees,
some under hedges,
some sleep on updrafts
above Sade's castle
safe in the emptiness of time.**

*

**We flee the unknown
but even more so what we know.**

*

**A dozen sparrows on the deck—
help me to live a long time
a year for every
seed I give you
so I can live until he comes again.**

*

**Pray to everything
and why not?
No hierarch to hinder us,
no love-blaspheming rule-soakedbook.**

*

**Walk out early morning
and just look a while—
isn't that a fitting job for any man?**

*

**On this side Portugal
just over the horizon.
On that side (hidden,**

over the hill, a field
of faerie folk
protects us in between)
just under the horizon
America.

*

Glacial hillock.
Twichell knew
the secret geology of us
but then he died.
Drumlin? This rock
supports the whole known world.

*

When he starts talking about schist and scree,
watch out for his vocabulary—
it's mostly *sound*. He dared
to build his house on the sound of words.

*

There are no women in the picture.
The men are seated round a table
littered with maps and charts and documents.

**One man, half-risen from his chair, waves
his arms excitedly above an unrolled map.
He reminds me of Lenin, I knew him
a little in Zurich long ago, in spring,
the women have better things to do.**

**We are ridiculous. Fact.
Laugh and break the somber spell.**

**Funest means the opposite
of what it looks like, kid.**

**Bounce your ball
my way for a change.**

**John was the first to see him
after the operation.
he lowered his sheet and showed
a line of heavy stitches above his abdomen.**

**And so our body is laced up
he thought. Everyone I think is me.**

**And the car
was in the middle of the air,
rose, then came down
and stood before us—
I have a picture of it somewhere,
in Josephus maybe, or Origen—
wheels of the chariot
Merkavah,
each wheel a distinction to be made**

**until we can tell
the shadow from the leaf
and taste the fruit
of that very tree.**

**Liters of oil.
Cruse of a lesser Virgin.
Legitimacy comes drop by drop**

Invited him to break his journey
he thanked her but kept going.
John wondered, and was told:
to break a journey
turns it into two of them—
for a journey is all about leaving where you are.
But won't she be disappointed, John asked.
A lovelier pair of birds will come to her instead.
Fowls of the air, all fire and fair.

*

One night they strolled,
heard a quiet mumbling
commotion off to the west—
philosophers playing golf
in perfect darkness.
Sometimes the ball finds the hole—
it's something balls know how to do.

*

But it's not about where I am
but who it thinks I am and what it says.

*

Then we turned back
glided down the hill
past the town hall and library.
Wind came up at us from the sea,
a rare east wind
from Santiago
where his brother sleeps.

*

I don't know if it's sleep or not—
noises in the silence,
like the stomach makes, or throats
clearing themselves, but soft
now the wind whips up
and drowns my feeble questions out.

*

Desert Suite
smell of sunshine,
song of sand.
The last oasis
hidden in your clothes.

25 June 2018

*

So the whole machine
runs backwards,
small diseases cure big,
the taste of healing in the mouth
___ as your own saliva.

*

Yes, you, he said and looked
straight past me at a mirror
as I thought, but when I turned around
to look, there was no image there.

*

the sorrow is
there is no other way
for it to be
unless you find it
and that is the joy

*

What would Armand and Allen and Paul
and all my dead friends
make of this ship we find ourselves on?
Do we find ourselves (as young poets strive)
and only ourselves? If so, whither journey
and why all the fuss, skirts and winds
and the romantic ocean? O my dear friends

**of so many languages, tell me where
you think our craft is going, tell me where you are,
and what it's like out there after the last word.**

**I've lost
the lust
for paratactic,
take it only
now, how it falls
quick from the maybes
I stumble among**

**calcium the blood of chalk
Dover over there across the Sand
potassium the ash below the fire
carbon what fire leaves behind**

and all the rest we breathe and call it air.

**You can say something only once
it leaves a scar on silence
and that's enough.**

Repentance means to think again

on what you've done—
only you can do it
but sometimes the weather
or a tune you caught at the Opera House
and walked home humming can help,

Poor Lenski!

*

(Aleksandr, you sly African,
how did you slip in?
I hummed you ere I had.)

*

And that is the point of it,
digressions are permitted.
this is no blue highway
that is a nest or net or gnarl
of country roads,
signposts few, detours many,
on the way to the way to you

*

Can't leave her alone,
the Grail that held his blood
a while, and brought it to us
across the water

to the King in us.

*

Stay out of sunlight

eagle angers
white streak
across your going

at a little French crossroads
where a gallows once stood
signpost arrows
pointing out two communes
Hiesse and Neaux
and a little boy sits on the ground
at the foot of the signpost,
seems to be weeping

*

Open the river

brocaded tavern
I saw this woodcut once
he made them dance
with him and to him
and to his un-place
under their own power—
their faces so confused

with lust and
dread as they danced

*

The little boy said
when I asked
Pourquoi les larmes?
said in English
Because you cannot choose
or stay with what you've chosen
so I and all who know you
weep for you.
But do you know me, I asked,
Everyone knows you,
the pebbles under your sneakers
even know where you're headed,
only you do not know yet—
I seem a little boy because I am the future,
and there is no past

*

I should not have been there
it was a faerie spot and not for me
or not for me yet, man as I am

he said, but the other healed him anyhow,
told him he would be ready soon
for such groves. Every place is sacred

once you draw a *temenos* around it
with the little golden trowel of your thought.

*

Stay out of sunshine
break the stick
shade under the buckthorn tree

rampage of reality

*

Specify me, darling, some more,
put all the commas in their places
the red [?] stars in the window

*

the family that owns the sea

*

or do the wrong thing right
the moralist perpend
the ball rolls down the hill
you hear them shout
and all the while he's thinking
they're deciding.
Wind at 9 knots, sleek sea

*

The family that owns the sea
has my mother in it,
so I too am a distant cousin,
and far as I am they make me feel at home

*

but where was John in all this?
Brooding about all the books he has to write
to make sense of all he's seen,
even this book you're reading now,
he made me write it out, his hand was tired

*

One time they went swimming
just the two of them on a long red beach,
the two of them and a reverent pelican
sat on a piling all the while they talked.
It was early morning as they swam.
John said How quiet that bird is!
And he told him, that kind of silence
never goes away,
no matter how many words you say—
remember that.
Then they swam some more.

*

Closed his eyes and saw,

square yard of earth
patchy grass
sandy soil shows through

there is something here
for him to do
dig or remember
or plant

water with his tears?
he hears the song of sand

26 June 2018

**I want to write a book that no one likes,
no one at all. Then I'll know
I did the writing right. Then I'll know it's fine [?].**

**In that country
the ink costs more than the pen**

26 June 2018

Lazy hazy mazy
the sky all mothering

where I fell.
I am a black
bird
 a sound
in your head
I hear in mine
and say that's me.
That is the sea

*

Forget rules of piracy.
Print what you like.
Just get the punctuation right.

*

Slowly in in
marvel by marvel

hold onto the sheen on Sound,
boatless, at peace
listen to the open door
the wind says in, believe the obvious,

magic of the squirrel
(none of them here)
wisdom of the woodcock
shelter under,
policy of the blackbird,
be numerous.
Long lines interrupt
no object in view.

*

There is a whale bone
on the lawn
jaw or rib it's hard to tell
all overgrown with grassy hedge

and I look at my left hand
this too once knew how to fly

*

refugees from the future
that hard mainland
Plato called an island.
But all the rest sank in the sea
and only Atlantis remained,
remains. You can stand

by Roxbury Standpipe and see it plain.

**When they tell you so much
belief comes easy.**

**Spread out the cards
and choose your hearts,
they call them cups
and fill them with pleasure**

**you think I said measure
and try to fit in—
a heart (a cup)
is big but can it hold
a whole other?
a balky query
only barbarians would ask**

**You see, one day he
decided to let it all out,**

**fluent and nameless
it flooded the *room***

**(old word that means
the space around us)**

**islanded with footnotes and calendars,
he looked up at the almost full moon
and said See, see, I have complied,
as you are full so I must be empty**

**and he was silent
mistaking silence for saying naught.**

**Arapahoe manners, he thought,
farm kids from Kansas
showing off in their first home town [?]**

**and the temperature got up there too
99 degrees at the needs, go up, go up
thou bald pate,
climb up Estes in your new car,
breathe cool among the wapiti
then come down and ask for Dharma**

all those paths that cross in Colorado

Now you see the danger of remembering
he said, already you're getting
lost in a past—where nothing happens!
a condition only
where you only *were*—
abstain from anamnesis
and learn to fly again
looking from side to side

*

the mirror fell off the wall
and didn't break
but the face it showed
was no longer mine—

the medicine had worked,
and I was someone else,
risen from the self.

*

That's right, he said,
it can happen like that.

*

**I thought it was religion
it was the other side of bed
the one where you were sleeping,
me and sunrise alone together
plus a fisherman walking down the hill**

*

**telling one water from another,
I'll have a glass of Buddhist water,
what logic would you like?
Resurrection or Always there?**

**I taste the water, tastes like water,
good.**

*

**Blake scoffs in heaven
it's about time.**

*

**The door was open
how could I not come in?**

*

Wind in tree,
leaves sound like laughter.

*

Death did not curtail his kindness—
the very thought of him is healing

*

The very thought

*

The heart's hot-rodders
were a long time ago,
antique adolescents
instructed by beer—
Won't you ever grow up?

*

We watched them carry
contraband ashore,

writers and artists aimed at success—
O if we had but ravens
to send down and feed them
Eden aspirations and honeycomb

*

And nothing happened.
But the world was changed.

*

Lift your paw and bark the answer
and don't think I'm not talking to you

*

Flightless birds and sightless bats
we muscle our way
through complex texts,
Hebrew in my holster,
Greek in my left claw,
Latin wrapped around my wrist
I ope my beak and bark
what I think the gods are telling

O glad futility of scholarship,

magniloquent __ , noble blunders

**and all the while the mind's at peace,
sailing calmly its own nature.**

**The wren's tessitura
falls onto my tinnitus,
tragedy of mingling
loss of identity**

**Attempting the amazement
the blue rhapsodic
at last**

**in daylight,
fresh wind,
under the Cherokee roses
thinking of you
who taught me so much,
the song of the science,
the heart's lexicon
and all the flowers**

and near the singer's feet
 a toad in grass, not moving—
 pale embassy of otherness
 and he loves you too
 or lives here too—
 I can't decide which one I heard,
 isn't it all music?

*

the amateur roofer
 slow taps at his shingles.—
 In Connemara once with thatch
 or in Wyoming naked sky—
 things are always ready for us, John,
 you are so kind and caring—
 and will they nibble tansy for fever,
 or chase migraine with feverfew?
 The mind has better medicines maybe—
 sit a while and listen to the garden.

*

You don't have to ___ the leaf
 or suck the flower like a bee—
 just sit *with me* and overhear what each says

*

In this warm robe
I can bible all I please,
look up the hill at the squire's house
and bless the cool air,
fresh wood, a lonely patio in love.

*

ehell, fugaces!
and even more the standing still,
the lingerers lost from faerie,
stay home and see the world.

*

Caught in the middle distance
a blue flower happening—
Hortensia? *blaue Blume*
straight out of a book,
no, the piano,
Schumann saw it, heard it,
Kreisleriana and it cures
young girls over the hedge

*

Emancipate. Liberate. Celebrate.

*

**The august assembly
biding its judgment
watches a documentary
about the invention of the compass,
the South-Pointing Chariot,
Imperial China B.C.
Outside an old dirt bike
snarls its way uphill.
Roads are few
where the mind reaches.**

*

**And it was Wednesday
but he put on a green shirt
to be disguised. No one saw him.
The light was mid-afternoon.
Movie light, unfading.
He was invisible as a river
so when he preached
no one could tell whence the words were coming.**

Wise words, children of Eve.

**Located in the blue
band of the spectrum
the ancestors relevant
emerge at nightfall
but only when the ground is broken
as by plow or backhoe
or a little boy with a plastic shovel—
you know what men are like—
then they come out,
look around and begin to speak.
Their archaic dialect
matches the bone structure of my ribs,
clavicle, temples.
I can almost understand.**

**There are hills and habits
to climb. To fall
into time. And you.**

**We speak the need
that brings us here,**

a fish on a steeple

wheel-using tribe on the steppe.

**So suppose I were
Central Asia like the song
and you were language—
could we marry and move
together west west west
into the strange land
the sun made
by going to sleep there
every night?**

27 June 2018

**In the weeks right after death
the Knowers do some of their best work
visiting the consciousness of their disciples
and many others to strengthen their wits,
their commitment to mind**

*

**That is what a week is
the heartbeat of the afterlife.**

*

**the ancient Jews in their piety
sought to calque that beat,
that shape, onto the human calendar**

*

to free us from the moon

*

**the Knower walks around inside my head
knowing me
so that I know**

*

**not just the head
the hale
the hall of sounds inside**

the sound of words

*

**there is comfort in knowing this
(and all the more so
in being-known-into knowing)
but even so John wept
often thinking of the one who'd gone—
even though he may—who knows?—
have only gone inside**

*

**just as we to poor fishes contrive
so the sea is a hook that draws us in**

*

**“grammar of friendship”
grammar of water.**

**take as long as you like
Death said
there is always someone ready to begin.**

**I think of the swans
my mother and father
fed every day
on the little sea creek
come up in Oceanside**

**Swans look like they know
do you think they do
John had asked, and he
had just smiled.
Hours later, out of context,
out of silence, no smile,
he suddenly said
We all do.**

*

**John ponders this still—
do we all look like
or do we really know?**

*

**Then I was running out of dream—
how close we come
before we go—
let the dream fall
from your open hand**

*

wipe the sweat from the workman's brow

*

there is no other way of knowing

*

**Keeping time
the bluest chariot**

over Lake Geneva
where all lovers
eventually congregate—
it is the middle of the world,
all the rivers of Eden
(not one of them water)
start there and run everywhere,
one flowed past my mother's apartment
and she fed swans there every day

*

Would you be a swan with me?

*

romantic hoo-ha, *Kreisleriana*,
glory, all men are young.
We don't know how to grow old,
we study famous actors in a book,
try on make-up beards,
adolescence of King Lear

*

**getting into the swing of things
fall out of the dream
you still feel on your fingertips**

*

**the best part is coming now
now is when it always is**

*

poetry is pure permission

*

**he quickly wrote an essay on that aperçu,
stored it in a wooden drawer
halfway down the consciousness,
locked the drawer, hid the key
but any day now you'll find it anyhow**

*

any day now

*

**cast-iron plows alarm the soil
I read it in a book**

**let the earth in your garden sleep
and see what flowers it dreams up**

**I had more to say than this
but then I woke**

Nothing is as I remember it.

**When morning looks like evening
and the gull rides the north wind
it is a sign—everything
is happening inside.**

I hope my skull survives apocalypse

so they can see the ball-court where I played

those who love to answer

those who love do answer

**swan-road
they called
the sea out there
back when**

**yesterday she found a dead cormorant on the
beach—
what killed it?
Where was the sky when this happened?**

Isn't the sky supposed to take care of us?

Aren't we its birds too?

*

**Idle chariot
square wheel of heaven
how loud the surf
the wind away**

*

**the hydrangeas are coming blue
at last, dew-wet, bring me home**

*

**I have feelings too
don't think I don't
just because I have so many words**

*

language is a tourniquet above an open wound

*

the smell of new-mown grass the cry of pain

*

faltering. Jungles
seem so far away

broomsticks
over the moon

shallowly inside

a gulf of seeing
baseball coming undone at its stitches
seams part
reveal

*

O the things the grass finds
and keeps mostly to itself
but listen.

*

far away is close enough, he thought.
But then the lion roared
and in that sound

he heard pain, and grief,
and yearning to be more.
So he slipped on his sandals
and walked down to the shore.
The lake was calm.
The lion spoke again
and this time he was ready—
he scooped up some water
and baptized the wind,
told it to go, go to the Lion,
ease him, tell him
of a better birth.

*

But who baptized the water?

*

28 June 2018

Then there was Sodom.
Lived a while too
in that town,
before the ashes fell,
fascinating to watch
boys turn into men
who lust for boys
to make them men again.

I too looked for someone
else who'd make me me,
couldn't find it in the masculine
but only, only, almost alas,
in the formal energy and ease of women.
I was a hopeless hetero.
hetero—means the other,
If I found her, she
was my other and I was home

*

That's what I heard
in the long night
of Rainday,

for Sodom kept no week
and every day was Sabbath—
and no one knew

*

So they call a day
by what it did
she said, smiling
at their simplicity

*

dawn winds up the mainspring
of desire, we wake
in fog to keep us sane,
to come slowly
to the mind's meal,
shy percepts drifting outside
and no birds yet

*

sunrise in fog soon
Coast of Opal

*

**Never be far from the sea—
that's all my Irish ever taught me**

**and the Hudson
has some habit of salt
and seals come up Beacon even**

**and swim beside you off the island here,
same sleek lordlings, same sea**

**I have to prove every day
that I am myself
I cannot leave it for some other
though it is I think
for her sake that I do**

**What do you do?
And I was silent.**

Wet wood
wet woods
everlasting Faerieland
emerging

*

first grackle
slides down the wind.

*

The lengthy precisions of desire
every glance a manifesto
wake with someone's fingers on the arm

*

a touch
causes or cures?
we'll never know

and if I close my eyes
the sun will rise

six AM the birds at last are happening

the sky dries
ENE over Nashawena—
how can I know
what that name
or any name really means?
nomina barbara
sacred to the Others

*

It can't be now yet
can it?
and Olson died for this
the double clarity
behind the mind

*

brightness *over*
but not in,
can you feel it round me
as I feel you
from so far away?

*

**the body is a text in braille
he said, and I demurred,
there must be a swifter way,
a knowing close from afar.**

**A kind of tele-touch? he scoffed
use your animal nation,
immigrate in**

**O perch on my railing
and tell me more,
the broken lyrics of a ship at sea,
cargo shifting subtly
tuneful in the hold**

everything we carry has our name on it

**Sun so effortless seems
to sweep the sky
how the raindrops glisten on the windowpane**

*

**the world is a children's book
published not all that long ago.
the pretty colored pictures fade**

*

**Marvel! that
raindove on the rail
has a shadow now!**

**Where have you been hiding
little dark one?**

*

**boulder on the lawn the glacier
brought all of this they say**

*

lonely miracle of dawn

*

Who am I to tell them

what they should tell?
I say what they tell me
and sleep deep, then
a rosebush wakes me,
a tree of thorns,
a sea of eyes,
a trickle of sweat beading down the moon.

All things are possible
at dawn
and nothing done

*

it all comes through
just wait for me

*

the lordly fog
confers
a welcome mystery—

sun finds us anyhow,
shows me a grackle, preening

*

I've lost the thread—
and then I knew there was none,
only waves, only waves
each one significant
come and are gone

The coming and going
*(see video, the sea rushes in beneath the ruined
barges at the beach, by Charlotte, 28.6.18)*
all beautiful in different ways
waves. Waves.

*

All flesh is grass he said
wheat is grass, barley, rye
green as sunshine
by Elmdendorph's Corners.

Rice near Patna,
we are grass—

egregious liberty
grasslands of North America,
yes, the grass belt
round the planet,

prairie, puszta, steppes of Central Asia
I stretch out like a tiger
I sleep with one eye open

the grasslands hunger for you,
Dakota.

*

And finally the ball stopped rolling.
He picked it up, squeezed,
a little moisture seeped out from a worn seam—
this was your country once
while you still cared

*

Care is all that keeps a country
keeps company with us
who were here before—
see my giant strides,
the *white shadow* I cast on your land
will be here ever after.

*

I am the word you spoke

And someone heard

**Then he tossed the ball to John,
who squeezed it too
so a little more essential oil oozed out**

**for he provideth the children with pencils
provideth the teacher with chalk
wherewith upon the wall he wrote
three Hebrew letters
some passing rabbis read as Eve,
Mother of all living, but some
graduates read as meaning snake.**

**Could she be one and the same?
Blasphemy is too easy.
I weary of hearing her blamed.**

**Don't fence me in
she sang
even as the longitude and latitude
closed upon her
and she was somewhere at last.**

**Now a great cloud
came up out of the east
and no one knew**

**Toss water in the air
baptize the passing moment**

**We have the south wind
to blame for this fine weather**

**Who decides direction?
The south-pointing carriage,**

the Emperor?
We are puppets
strung from the Sun
our mother,
 he said—
that's why we say
our prayers in the dark

*

light a candle
see a ghost

*

I saw a ghost that self-same day
he walked past me, apologetic,
a grey shirt on his shoulders—
how long had he been waiting?

*

That house is sold now,
but the Irish are still keening up the street

*

**Close the book and cast a spell
memory has nothing more to tell**

**led astray by the sound of words
he became a river, then its bridge
then its highway over the hills.
And there he rested. Silence is magic.**

What he meant I think

**Science is all talk
magic mostly silence
you can feel the distinction
like the faint webbing
between your third and fourth fingers**

**he said
you are a priest forever
after the order of Melchizedek**

*

**The Exodus didn't happen
just once he said
we are always leaving Egypt**

*

**Baroque music
mostly
wind or screen
to keep the Other out**

*

**Seldom hear the bell from the channel
so much depends on wind—
go with it, he said,
and on the way ask it where it comes from,
be with it when it gets where it goes**

*

29 June 2018

Heterode other song suffices

**flick of the wrist
string sounds
song some**

*

Weird dreams chamber music

*

**“You may find a scratch or bruise on that perfect
body, because at the end resistance developed.
But we had gone too far to stop” the dream said,
quoting a terrible unwritten book.**

*

**I think it is Joan’s day,
John thought, Jehane of Arc,
a 19 year old girl
the English burnt at Rouen**

*

You are a month late

to the day
but what is time
he said, not asking

*

Peccavi. I have told stories,
written them down,
let them out.
All fiction is nightmare.

*

What kind of sea
made you say that?

*

John went to him as he stood by the shore,
help me wash away my dreams.
He grasped John fondly by the shoulders,
shook him gently, said I too am what you dream.

*

Then he blew a puff of breath
on John's face and John relaxed,

**his sense of dream receded like a tide,
left a living starfish on his sand.**

**I was born too early
I've always known it,
now I have to live
until they're ready for me**

**The me I tell you
is no real rock
there is a channel called Canapitsit
between me and the other island.**

**Find your channel
patrol it in your little boat**

**the sun's high over Nashawena
but somehow it's not morning yet**

*

**A beacon lodges on the human eye
tells us where the edge is,
the edge of home**

*

**Just look at anyone,
look them in the eye
you'll understand.
It might take two or three times.
Silence helps.
And no thinking, please.**

*

**I found a picture of my soul
in a children's book of seashells.**

*

Plus you found a dead cormorant on the beach

*

**Leitmotif of beast desire—
wash this garment clean**

**Spent a long time at the surf
scrubbing away**

**Who comes after me?
he asked, and John was silent,
battered by the thought he would be gone—
cried out, Don't go!
and the other said I will never be gone**

**White sky white sea
things come after me
I am erased, clean,
swivel in the same wind
like the weathercock**

I admit it

from the start
most of me is sea

*

and he asked
if the salt should lose its savor
in quo salietur?
and who will put the taste back in?

*

Who salts the sea
salts me?

*

the bell in the channel
bongs softly to agree

*

look for a picture of a pretty flower
sea poppy or rugose rose
and that will be our gravestone surely,
bright native of the space between.

*

**A day without dread
if only**

and the pen dropped from my hand

*

Will it speak again?

*

**I open the book to ask
press firmly on the page
to change the story
after all**

*

**This simple chunk of porphyry
you brought up from the beach,
an inch or so across,
deep red when wet
is a tomb from Egypt.**

Many a queen is buried in it
and scrolls uncountable
of scripture we have never read—
I lick the stone and hear it glisten,
Decipher me, decipher me
and that is all one life can do

*

But it's time to talk
about fish—
we find a new species every now and then,
were they hiding or are they new-made?

*

Or where do all these human
souls come from to animate the billions of us?
Who is the miller of the psyches
and where is his mill? Her mill?
Or no one runs it,
there is a stream runs by that turns its wheel—
Metambesen, under Cedar Hill

*

**With some resilience
and some need—
a feeder for finches
hung on the rail—**

**and migrant thoughts,
they need their lodgement too**

**a priest by the shore
hearing the waves' confession
until his mind is clean again.**

**Superstition is the real religion—
everything else is prelacy**

**Don't despair
it grows from inside out**

**Will it let me go?
In time, time is all about letting,
telling, letting, telling, letting...**

**Outer harbor rife with sails
she said I could not see.
Poor sea!**

**be the determinant,
the hot sky.**

**home is where complaints ripen
Astyanax lies dead below the wall.
Achilles knew it's all somehow his fault.**

**Tell the clergy
of your need for bread**

*

I can't teach them history
she said, they have
no sense of wonder

*

Wonder is God

*

el-Hallaj tried to explain
but his explanation
seemed worse than his crime,
they burnt him up,
just like Joan—
different religions, same flames

*

a wind will come up
and chase the heat
until land and sea
are the same—
then quiet happens,
men mop their brows,

children swim

**and wafting in from far away
the smell of roses.**

**Quaint contrivance
this holy language
antique word by word
full-bodied tell.
Hold me while I speak**

30 June 2018

