

9-2021

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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Rescued from dream
by rain. Everything falls,
those danger steps
with no banister,
the brown river, the red car,
o my God.

But in the dream
there's always someone
wiser than I am,
have you noticed that too,
about you?

Yet the dream leaves
fingerprints smeared
all over the day.
I look at my own hands
and they seem strange.

1 September 2021

= = = = =

Enough about dream.
Cold coffee
takes away the fear,
some of it,
swirl on the surface,
clean in the throat
and little by little
it becomes today.
Sometimes the body
saves us from the mind.

1 September 2021

= = = = =

**In the Mayan calendar
after the day Knife
the day Rain
washes the blood away.**

1.IX.21

= = = = =

The trees seem to be
talking less these days.
They must sense
the falling of the leaf
and be gathering strength,
images to store up for winter.
But they are still generous,
spare a little conversation
because they hear us too,
and know how much strength
we borrow from their beauty.

1 September 2021

= = = = =

**How dare they,
how dare they
drive a white car
down an avenue of trees?**

1.IX.21

= = = = =

**The Empathy
or maybe sunlight
slivers of something
through the trees,
morning noises notwithstanding,
a head in the clouds
safe from Actaeon's hounds.
Be wise. Theologize.
Feel the feelings of all things
feeling their way along,
a breath of wind, gleam
on a wet leaf. Understand?
It's nit all in you. Not all in me
is the motto, taste it,
fresh air, feeling everywhere.**

1 September 2021

= = = = =

Watching
or is it waiting
for the rain
to fall or stop,
water in the kettle
to come to a boil
or cool down—
the vigilance
is what counts,
the long slow
song of patience.
Let us watch together,
waiting for each other.

1 September 2021
Rhinebeck

= = = = =

**Close enough to care
far enough to strive
against the mournful
distances.**

**We wait
in weather and wonder
who we really are.**

**1 September 2021
Rhinebeck**

= = = = =

All the little airplanes
zooming around
umping Americans
all over the world
a few hundred at a time,
and most of them come home,
someday, improved
by sheer otherness
and wait their turn
to be tossed somewhere else again.

(dream piece, 2.IX.21)

= = = = =

**What religion are you
said the blue sky to the tree.
I am oak and stand alone--
what about you? Oh me,
I am all the colors you can name--
I think we need each other
just to go on being true.**

2.IX.21

= = = = =

Seven in the morning,
after all that rain
the sky is blue. The storm
has passed, bending
northeast away from land.
Rivers are ripe, headlights
are still on. the trees are full.

2.IX.21

CAUTION

**At the first sign of waking
hurry out of bed
before the dregs of dream
claim you, stain you.
Now you know what light is for.**

2.IX.21

= = = = =

I look at the woman
and think about rock,
the great rock wall
on the highway north,
sheets of shale, I think,
dark, ill-clad in boscage.
On your right as you go north--
direction is important.

2.
In this religion
woman represents center.
doesn't have to go anywhere.
The sun is rising,
does all her travel for her.
Follow her shadow
to find where to go.

3.

But this is just religion,
not geology. The stone
knows better than we do,
has time the way we have hands,
uses it to learn the way of things,
and its own constant shadow
is church enough for it.

4.

Our sad gender politics...
and yet there is a difference
somewhere in the song,
soprano, basso, quivering
clarity, Queen of the Night.

5.

Dangerous ground.
Sunlight, internet back on--
things have gender too.

**Safer to know nothing,
least of all know what I know.**

6.

**Salient, the hand outstretched
from the castle. Gore, the unowned
land between parcels.
Law is dangerous too,
no clouds in the sky,
nowhere to hide.**

7.

**I thought I was a castle
just by myself,
I read the picture on my shield
and took it as instruction:
this must I be.
But I'm a man, not even stone,
let alone woman,
I have to go, and castles**

are poor at travel.
When I was young
I saw a road sign said NORTH
and I believed it,
I'm still stumbling on the way.

8.
So you see why that woman
made me think of that outcrop
on the way to Saugerties.
She stood there and I passed by,
she gave no sign that I was there,
conferred on me that blessed
invisibility we feel before a rock.
Looking at stone sets me free to go.

2 September 2021

ROOM

**Blue-sky'd sleep
and pale ceiled waking--
the room, always the room.
We contract all space
around us and call it room.
Then we shrink it further
and call it sleep.**

2.

**My hair's wet from a quick wash,
a water drop falls past my eye,
reminds me I am an animal again,
not whatever that thing
or population I was in sleep.**

3.

**Much to be said
for being an animal.
They have anima, soul,**

inside them or that they
are inside, who can tell
the letter the envelope?

4.

Suppose then
that I am written.
That sleep is a scribe
who scribbles fast
what is to come,
become of me. Script
in the dark, so hard
to read, we need
all the eyes we can find,
trees, birds, streets,
predestined passersby.

5.

I'm not sure
it ever is enough.
A life is filled
with unread books.

6.

So let the music take over,
come down the street
like a Sicilian parade,
music draws a crowd
and that's all it has to do,
I lose myself on the sidewalk
among the tee-shirts,
the rayon blouses, keep my eyes
fixed on the traveling trombones.
I can hear them now in this quiet room.

7. Too quiet.

**That tree
is laughing at me,
but in the kindest way.
It knows
how hard it is
to read the new day
and helps me all it can.**

8.

**I will not tell
what I dreamt about,
just the blue sky
at the very end
and the pale ceiling when I woke.
That has to be enough
to wake some meaning
as it woke me. All life
compact in any single image--
doesn't love tell us that**

September 2021 **21**

**on the way to art, isn't
one room enough for all of us?**

3 September 2021

= = = = =

I follow the word,
follow like a private
detective, the kind
they used to call flatfoot
from his plodding along.
I plod, I plod, and sometimes
round some corner
a burst of music comes
or flash of skin--
and who knows what happens then?

3 September 2021

= = = = =

**We are haunted
by our own names,
the almond tree
by the chapel,
the grace of living
where identity is clear
and men are storing enough
to bear the light.**

3 September 2021

= = = = =

**Don't let your religion
be built of prohibitions.
Let it be made day by day
by deeds of kindness,
compassion, telling the truth.
If you must pray, pray
for one another. If you need
a sacrament, let it be
the next thing you give away.**

3 September 2021

= = = = =

**She studied the geology of love,
worked her fingers
into the crevices
between the strata of the days,
sheer stratification of time,
the metamorphosis of feelings under twists of
time, chemicals
of desire and despair,
rough eroded surfaces of neglect, deep
igneous deposits from the start,
the heart, gazed with joy
at how the common becomes diamond
under the immense
pressure of closeness alone.**

3 September 2021

= = = = =

**Sometimes it's enough to wonder,
look away, close your eyes.
The miracle depends on us—
want it, wait for it, then look away.**

**Inside the body the future is ripening,
whoever they are, hey give
you time enough to let it out.
Then you are the one you're meant to be.**

Wonder. Pregnancy takes so many forms.

3 September 2021

THE PORTION

1.

**Whichever way
the portion was begun
you had to sing along with it,
that's what truth is for,
a city thing, hanging
out with the trees.**

2.

**The Jews have a name for it,
the piece of truth you need
to hum or nod your head to
for the given day.
It is a scarp of fabric
that still clothes the whole of you.
But abent religion,
what's a mind to do,**

**seize the nearest
and try to sing with it
all the way to afternoon?**

3.

**This is morning stuff,
morningland, everybody's orient.
When you see the sky
divorce the earth
and let light in,
take hold. This
is your portion.**

4 September 2021

= = = = =

Once when I was English
I slept on rock,
woke up and I was me again,
went over to France
but they spoke to me in German,
no wonder that I came home
where I could stand on two legs
and sleep sitting up
in that long lazy motel called school.

4 September 2021

ARS POETICA IX/21

**Write the testimonial.
endorse the tree
just as it validates you
in sheer beholding.
Write it, sign it,
send it to the world
just like this, Someone'
collects these documents.**

4 September 2021

= = = = =

By seven the trucks
poke their noses out
round here. Makes it
harder but more appealing
to go back to sleep.
They snout their way north
as if some gasoline Cathay
drew them by magic.
I seldom even notice them
though when they come home,
so I know less about
the *id* of such machines.

4.IX.21

= = = = =

Can I sleep now
on the other side of the word
where the meaning's
cool and fresh,
unsullied by my thinking,
soft on my tired cheek?

4 September 2021

SHRINE

**The simple shrine,
Buddha seated
at the foot of the tree
up the little hill
not far from the fence
and a chipmunk
lives underneath,
burrows under,
each thing holy as can be
and the meaning
keeps spreading
under the lawn and through
the trees and reaches out
and never stops,
no place that is not part of it.**

4 September 2021

SEPTEMBER 1838

**Barney Flaherty
cried Paper Paper
Read *The Sun*
read all about it.
No wonder. Irish
are always crying,
about something,
or nothing, the wind
makes the words,
cry louder, kid, sing,
music is the only news.**

4 September 2021

= = = = =

The severity of the situation
is linked to the late flowers,
Autumn impending, sleep.
Reveille they used to call it,
wake-up call, your car is waiting,
holiday traffic at pause, most
people are where they want
or at least planned to be.
The sky is bright but casts no shade,
yesterday was Bruckner's birthday,
I hear him now, his gorgeous
grumpiness woven through with birds.

2.

But anything you hear
is already in the past,
took its time to reach
your ear and even then

the mind is busy nibbling
its own now--the mind
is always now. The Sunday
of the nervous system,
sermons before breakfast,
to find me something
that I can't think about,
a mute upanishad,
a sleeping child. Because
we both live in weather
and around it all at once,
grainy bread and water
from a well up in the sky.
Yes, it looks like love
again today, I hear the leaves
listening to the very slight breeze.

5 September 2021

= = = = =

Sun at zenith
hides in haze.
Noonish. New
fish in the paper.
Admit that we too
are an invasive species.
Look what we've scribbled
on the naked map!

5 September 2021

= = = = =

The land on the horizon
is always illusion.
Built of cloud, wave,
shadow, reflection
it is still worth sailing to,
praying to, naming
on your tattered parchment
sea chart of reality.
Someday I will meet you there
and if you let me take your hand.

5 September 2021

HOKUSAI

said a sea
but what about me?
If words are waves,
then maybe..
I have longed
for the long, the deep,
yes, but the quick, the wet.
Sometimes it's too
bright to see.

2.

Not exactly Atlantic.
One yearns for the same
made different,
random nymphs and archipelagoes,
home safe under full sail.
Because one has stood

on the sand and understood
and prayed to the sea itself
that one might overstand.

3.

His famous wave
brought the land to the sea,
knew what color could.
Hurry to meet
what comes to meet us
and be glad.

4.

I will not be a shepherd
doubting his sheep.
Trust what you are charged with
the sky once said,
all you can do is what you can do
even if you can't.

5.

So if the dream is true
the sea is blue
and now is all there is,
a curve of wave
that never altogether falls.

6 September 2021

LABOR DAY MORNING

**Six A.M. but not to fear,
no mail delivery today,
words are safe asleep in books
and just don't answer to the phone.
Today is a holiday to labor in,
count the leaves on the trees
like Bruckner, walk
across the bridge with Kant
and call it thinking,
wisdom is an anecdote
where you forget the details
and only recall
the rivers that you cross,
vague and wet as water, you.**

6 September 2021

= = = = =

I sent love letters
to the multitude
and why not, I had
plenty of time on my hands
and a million words to play with
and some I used more than once,
I wonder if my lovers guessed--
you, for instance, did you feel
my ands had touched
someone else before you?

6 September 2021

=====

**Voracious answers
to timid questions,
they take a whole night
to explain the simplest stuff,
like Why was I born here
or When does now really start.
You wake up in another language
and then it's too late.
Breathe through the nose
until the mouth wakes up.**

6 September 2021

= = = = =

On the train to Philadelphia
I met a woman once,
we talked all through Jersey
and I forget what happened then.
But that is what distances are for,
far is for, remember that,
to meet and greet and soon forget
but all that travel keeps
remembering itself in you,
man, woman, silo, tree,
the outskirts of meaning
where the train slows down.

6 September 2021

= = = = =

The sky goes light.
One more dawn
embraced. he day
is safe, no I can sleep.

6.IX.21

= = = = =

Boardwalk littered with gulls
and people wearing white
as if the sky's
not bright enough.
But they have wings
and we shuffle along
the gentle old smooth wood
barefoot or flip-flops
while I in tight-laced shoes
have come only to inspect the sea.

6 September 2021

= = = = =

What is not to be seen
somehow stronger
voiced than what we see.
The cloud behind the tree,
the fairy-tale maiden
living down in the well,
the town crier mute 200 years.
Man, I'm talking politics,
politics and desire
and how little I know
of what makes me go.

2.

A city is a wall built on fear.
Then in time the wall comes down
and we live in meshes,
blocks, we say, like the toys
children play with to learn

**the alphabets of architecture.
No wall. Just number and fear.
Sea wall at New Bedford.
The coast of rain.**

6 September 2021

= = = = =

**Come back for the key
you can have the whole door
only a Pharaoh
dares seal up an empty room,
perfectly empty stone b y stone
and the years pass along
a story that keeps changing.
Here, open it yourself
and sing me a song
of what you find,
a little song,
so long have I been waiting.**

6 September 2021

LAWFUL

I wish I could tell a story about it, how the tiger only seemed to be in his cage, but when he pounced he only seemed to bite the passing antelope, who was the wrong kind anyhow to be in that part of the forest, no, it was a zoo so it could, could if it wanted to, come by the tiger's cage and tempt or be tempted. But none of this actually happened—how could it? Once we think about something, it's gone forever. There is a law here at work, the law the ancients called *Unicitas*—things can only

happen once, in the city or in the head. Or have
I said all this before?

6 September 2021

= = = = =

What I want to tell you
if I had the words—
but the pages
have all flown back
to their trees
and the words
blow off them,
turn into fluff
dappling the wind
across the pale sky.
So all I mean to tell you
hides itself in the actual.

6 September 2021

MEMBERING

In the fairy tale of dream, identities are fickle. I looked around the room--more chairs than people. Safe. Room to rest in thinking. As a group we performed a reference pomegranate, using real seeds,

We had come to be enrolled in a new science, the young man with the clipboard not sure what to call it. Eighteen or so neighbors we didn't know, but here we are. Here we are.

The sun was rising, so this was morning business. Strange coins to play with but not pay-- Babylonian? Did they even have them? Who invented money? Maybe in this session

we would find out. Whenever neighbors are gathered together, it's always about money, about property values, dreams of damages. So I began to wonder, not wrong, science is built on such. After all, confusion has fusion in it. So, as I said, we are safe here.

The fruit is distributed, the doors shut, the young man slowly takes down our banes and addresses as we speak them clearly. I don't recognize the streets they say, let alone their names, but they seem neighbors, neighbors.

Hours later, as we walked home, we were in mild disagreement about what we had witnessed, or even been part of, or had

enrolled in. I assume that is true of any even vaguely cultural event two people take part in together. Everything is a sort of opera, I like one aria, you like another, we both are bored by the chorus but argue about why. And so it is, all the way home.

7 September 2021

=====

So much to tell you
it's all about silence
and the shape of time.
A line runs through it
and the mind rides the line,
sound carries images,
wind in the leaves.

7.IX.21

= = = = =

**Listen harder
when in doubt,
listen harder
and it will speak,
listen harder
till what it says
slips from your lips.**

7.IX.21

= = = = =

Which of us
has touched the new moon,
and this one so special,
start of the year,
who has touched the year.
They whirl around us,
whirl us around
and we can never seem
to get our hands on them.
We count them and remember
and call it history,
but look at me, my empty hands.

7 September 2021

= = = = ==

Why is it snowing in September,
grey flakes under Brooklyn El,
driving vaguely west
to get northeast, trains
grinding overhead?
Fulton Street is just the way it was
so little choice of where we are
but the car is moving,
traf fic moderate, sidewalks
empty, all the little stores
(you call them shops) are closed.
How much sleep do we need
to get home? Rum raisin ice dream
if we could find any place open.
Slowly uncertainty develops
about what we mean
when we say going home.
Can't home ever be where we are?

7 September 2021

SEE

See?

See says

seen,

says say

what you see

till seen

is said,

see?

See in

see out,

but say,

just say

till see

is said

then breathe

free.

8.IX.21

AMONG LOST THINGS

Piano
in the middle room
so had to go
round it to go anywhere.
Or the path to
where we wanted to go,
wanted to be,
led through music.

*

Mahogany piano
in the middle room,
Bob Tipps would come
by and play it now and then,
Satie, because he
was in the air in those days,
Gnossiens on the radio,
Bob playing for us
as he had played once

for Robert Duncan
(all of us Roberts
in the thrall of music)
the *fanfares of the Rosy+Cross*,
anthems of Sar Peladan.

*

Cambridge, near the river.
Sometimes I touched it too,
trying to remember what the nuns
tried to teach me when I was ten,
where the fingers go
to make the music happen.
All I could manage
was the make sounds—
are sounds the same as music?

*

I woke this morning
thinking calmly
not sadly

about lost things
and recalled the mahogany piano.
See, I know more about
the wood than the tuning
though I love it when in Strauss
the voice goes up a ninth
and lovers swoon.

*

A piano by the river,
Upstairs Harvard's
assistant professor of skiing,
don't ask me why,
Bus at the corner,
pretty girls next door
from Portugal, my heart sore
because I could not bring
music of my own
from this great brown machine
in a room of its own
between two doors.

*

Is that enough
of the lost?
But how can I call them lost
when they were there,
right here,
this morning as I woke,
sun gleam on the polished wood,
Bob's ardent wicked Texas smile,
Robert Lee Tipps, that is,
who gave us music,
and thus let us win
a game we couldn't even play.

8 September 2021

N= = = = =

not a word
not even a wind
woke him.
He was dark inside
like a tree at dawn.
Everyone can see me
he thought,
but not who I am.

2.

Days are desires
the night fulfils--
that's how the story
usually runs.
He knew that much
but wished he could be
a sailor, always busy elsewhere,
in daylight, the wind
like a drunken friend.

3.

But wishes don't walk,
let alone sail.
At least count the pages
of what I am
and tell me where I end.

4.

Asking for help is hard
especially when non one's there.
It helps to cry out
like some king in a tragedy,
helps. but not much.
He is left alone with the morning.

5.

As usual in doubt
he consulted
the oracle of the window.
Pale sky, motionless trees,

**sleek wet street. Good omens
but for whom?**

**Can we ever really live up
to the full potential
of the roles we are assigned,
aren't we always
forgetting our lines,
coming through the door
at the wrong time.
missing the cue?**

**Or are our blunders
really what we're for,
the play of chance
to enlighten the play?**

6.

**See how much windows know!
~He is always surprised
by the wisdom of things,
how much they tell him
when he dares to ask.**

Or when he learns
that he can ask, can pile
all he knows on top
of one another and reach,
reach what, it gets vague here,
still no cloud in the sky
to show the way.

7.

When he was young
there were people called
existentialists. Nice quiet folk,
like a cross between
Greta Garbo and Santa Claus,
generous with their words,
trying to talk their way
safe into silence.
He wants that now
but can't find the words.

9 September 2021

= = = = =

The crow called me
back to work,
write before reading.
A word is a headlight
when you drive through dark woods.
(Later if you want:
Black Forest. The Clove
in the Catskills. Read
Hölderlin to find the way.)

9.IX.21

= = = = =

Last night the dream
strolled me on the boardwalk
with a small group of friends,
all shorts and shouts and bare feet
and I wondered why
we didn't step down onto the sand
and offer at least
our toes to the sea--
the sea is the reason
all of us were there,
are here, the sea is the reason.

9.IX.21

= = = = =

**Let me always remember
the words you say to me
even when you're not here
and they come, as if by themselves,
through the atmosphere of mind,
clear as if I could still see
you speaking them.
Let me go on hearing them,
one word enough for a day.**

9 September 2021

= = = = =

I wrote a poem
to your knees
because they're soft and smooth,
I wrote a poem to your
rich tangled hair
that lets me run my fingers through.
I wrote a poem to your heart
I sometimes hear
clearer than you do,
the tune of your love humming
while you're busy doing something else.

9 September 2021

OFFICE

The office used to mean
A work, a place too
Where one does the work of the day.
Where are we now,
Masked figure in an airy room
Waiting for a change
In the world's weather.
Come join me, hide
Your face with mine.

2,
We're good at complaining,
Goes with the job.
The office. No watercooler.
Unisex bathroom
With even a tub.
Call that complaining?
Bring me my bar of chocolate,
My little brown bible

To nibble all the afternoon.
No candy in the tin
But if there were it would
Be safe from mice.
Lots of mice. You smell them
Sometimes when you come in,
Pungent through the black
Mold reek of the basement.
Maybe masks are a good idea.

3.

No, there was chocolate in the tin
After all, senile a little, pale,
But just right in the mouth.
And I look up from it and see
The graceful native drum,
Its skin of zebra-hide,
That Harvey Bialy brought me
From Cameroon so long ago.
Harvey! I dreamt of him last night,
He's only been dead a few years

And he saw me as he walked
With his new colleagues at the college.
Turned back towards me, I jumped up
And ran to him, traffic,
So many people, watch out
For the busses, the big pink truck,
The photographers were waiting
Trying to get the moment
Of our reunion, smiles, handshakes,
Comradely stuff but we
Somehow couldn't find
Each other in the crowds,
The reporters desperate,
More and more people filling
This familiar street I'd
Never seen before.
So I'd better get up right now
And beat the drum.

9 September 2021

= = = = =

**What one tries to do
Is open the door,
Keep it open.
Don't give the wolf
A hard time,
Let him in, it takes
Him by surprise,
He sttles down
Between your slippers
And the fireplace.
In this way dogs became
And gave us new things
To worry about, new fangs
Outside the ever-open gate.
And still the wind comes in
Carrying the news we need.**

9 September 2021

=====

I sometimes wonder
If the parrot on the pirate
Knew more about the ocean
Than a tree bird should.
I myself have flown
Over the mountains of Anatolia,
Red sands of South Arabia,
Witnessed more than
My body was supposed to see.
So why shouldn't Polly
Know Poseidon? Maybe
It whispers accurate longitude
Into the pirate's gold-studded ear.

9 September 2021

THE DICTION

The word went before me
and I followed as best I could.
I had an old language with me,
one my London grandmother spoke.

2.

I never knew her
or any other
of those we call grand,
was born too late,
too late to be now?

But my mother and father
were great enough
for any possible me.

3.

It's a matter of sympathy,
a shared pathology,
the books I used to read
spoke that language too.
But now I only read
what we all do, endless
emails, edicts from the emperor.

4.

I found myself using
an old turn of phrase,
obsolete but there it was,
right out of my mouth
onto the page. And that
brought all this on,
this boast in the form of apology—
but *apo* plus *logia* means
taking the word away.

5.

Forget Greek.

In the Brooklyn alley

I stgood alone

with the pussy-willow.

A collie-dog came by

leading his lame master.

I saw right then

how langage works—

here, it's yours now too.

9 September 2021

HAPPY ENDING

**the goat ate the letter
ill-advisedly written
by the other lover,
the silken drapes flourished
in the window, nice day,
the camel passed by the gate,
didn't stop, the princess
looked up from her embroidery
and saw a big bird, eagle maybe,
come perch on the tower,
she knew then
that he would come back
so she hummed her little aria,
her signature tune,
softly as the curtain falls.**

10 September 2021

= = = = =

Haydn? Sikh?
So many languages
we don't understand.

Because everything sounds
like something else,
even music knows
how to break our hearts
with silence alone.

Pause. Paws.
We are at the mercy of *merci*,
we live to give thanks,
walk through so many
religions to find the right word.

10 September 2021

= = = = =

1.

The idea of your wandering
on the road to []
to learn the name of the day—
listen, as earth twists
the place will come clear,
the place will come to you,
sandstone of the temple,
leaf shadows of the grove.

2.

Then we will begin to know—
you have to help me here,
no one can do it alone,
to wake up on the right

side of the night.

3.

Calico priestesses,
bishops in fur—
we find, alas,
only what we're looking for.

4.

That's why I need
to ask your help,
candle flame, cigarette,
shadows on the boardwalk,
subway to the sun,
hear the wind blowing,
the tunnel is speaking,
hurrying or standing still

we'll all arrive.

5.

So this is the place at last.

Lie down on the grass

and listen while you sleep.

Gentle hillside, autumn weather

always sun still in Virgo

though, don't set your watch

by what I see.

6.

Wake now

and tell me what you heard

from all that ground beneath you.

Lawn and birdsong,

dew and breeze,
tell me what this place
really is,
tell me who I am.

11 September 2021

= = = = =

If the gate were open
what would we feel
about going through?
Do we sense what comes in
when we go out?
Most of our languages have lost
the old Indo-European optative mood
that said out loud what we
wanted to be so.
Albanian still preserves it
but the Adriatic coast is so far away.
But then again, everything is far
if you don't have a verb.

2.

Nouns are space,
verbs move them or cancel space.
So a verb has time
and wish and will

and do I mean it when I say
or do?

That;s why we are so strange,
animals all of us, nouns
who move through space,
go out and come in again.
May it ever be so.

11 September 2021

= = = = =

Nine/eleven
but I don't want
to remember
eleven September
treason and plot,
yes, I saw the second
plane crash into the tower
the explosion burst
from the other side,
I still don't understand,,
you know all about that,
more than I do,
my business is with the tree
and with thee
and all the nymphs
of language and of mind
who cheered the first responders on.
who console us or try to,
with their songs of bravery

and never again.

**Trees, I say,
the trees they are ashamed of us,
not just or savage lumberjacks,
but that so many of us seem
to live to hurt and love to do so.
If I had a sermon for this day
it would be as hard as this:
hurt no one, help everyone.
But you have heard all that before.**

11 September 2021

= = = = =

**Nothing to be said
about the now.
The now speaks for itself—
time for me to do likewise—
that's what I and you are for.**

11.IX.21

|= = = = =

Noisy pillow
testament of love
is it your breath or mine
that little oboe squeal
when breath comes out,
my breath or yours,
are we sleeping,
clear the nostrils
clear the throat,
clear the heart,
breath holds us together,
unites us, unties us
from our separate selves,
share the pillow,
share the thought,
please wake with me.

12 September 2021

= = = = =

**Self-absorption of the pure Vrgo,
late summertime,
stand by the Rondout,
watch the river tide
push the creek back up the hills,
sometimes all we see
is disguised astrology.**

12,UX.21

= = = = =

Not dawn yet
but I need a bite
of something ,
something that tastes
like food, but food
is not given in the night,
except what feeds the dream.
But I'm awake now
or is it?

12,IX.21

= = = = =

Being here long enough
waiting till the answer comes--
that's a man's job
or a woman's,
we come to a river
and watch it go,
we settle by its banks,
we are littoral creatures,
we need to be
at the edge of the sea or some
part of it hidden
in the hills that flows by,
right now, I can hear it
from my window
making its way cleanly
clearly to what it is.

12 September 2021

= = = = =

The dawn birds
chitter in the darkness
chipping away at it
till the light comes.
Robins. Wrens. Phoebees,
you tell me,
you know their calls,
those colors we can hear.

12 September 2021

TREES TELL

**Trees tell
tell me
about all
manner of things,
not just tree stuff,
not just leaves.**

**They have been here so long
and still keep becoming
more and more, listening,
discoursing, as I must do
if I'm to make
any kind of sense
of what little I know.**

**They know history,
chemistry, astronomy,
physics, architecture,
music, compassion,**

**theology. Philosophy
they leave to us,
they are too busy knowing
to have much time for thought.
And they are generous
with what they know.**

12 September 2021

= = = = =

**When we're kids
we play at being
different
kinds of people.
Who said we
ever stop?**

12,IX.21

= = = = =

In a dream I had to choose
between robes of a bishop
or simple deacon's surplice,
to both of which I was entitled
but in two different fairly
tenuous religions. Exiguous,
I'd say. I think I told the sacristan
to bring me either, I'd wear
whatever role he brought me,
as we all do, as we all do.
Then i joined the clergy on the roof.

12.IX.21

= = = = =

**Walking up the modest
hallway in the dark,
cave in the Himalayas,
twenty feet can take an hour,
all night, all life.
This place is all places.
Everything is now,
I can hear Milarepa
laughing in the dark.**

13 September 2021

THE ENTOURAGE

They travel with us,
the gibbering Iliads,
sutras we have neglected to read,
half-remembered prophecies,
Dante leading Virgil through the dark.
They press close around us
as we go, hands all over us,
pressing, some forward,
some back, they have
no minds to make up,
just ours, and when we want
to linger at the blue sea shore
and stare in peace
at some quiet mindless island
they push us to inhabit it with thought,
and how could the sea be silent
even if the chorus finally let go?

13 September 2021

= = = = =

**Why can't I be
a different island
every day,
and make of life
an archipelago
stretched across
what seems.
a boundless sea.**

13 September 2021

= = = = =

**There is another kind of Lent
that happens in the hollow of the year
where light is stored, turns
into a kind of bread
sustains us in that time,
bread and dew
and pray for rain.
No calendar discloses it--
you have to find the days of it
when your mind turns austere,
gives up its usual,
waits for what is on its way,
the radiant answer
that comes before
all our squalid questions.**

13 September 2021

= = = = =

Some birds feed in the air
on smaller customers of atmosphere,
some love better
to fly lower,
feed on seed the earth yields up
or kind women scatter on the lawn,
hang a seedy diner from the trees.
Some birds do more walking,
wild turkeys strut
down from the hill.
I wonder what I would do
if I had wings.

13.IX.21

=====

To wake the living,
a Japanese cup,
pale celadon,
waiting to be filled.

So many choices!
And yet the hands
that made it
must have had
something special
in their far-off mind,
white tea or black,
or a broth boiled
from turmeric,
yellow as sunset
in all that green.

13.IX.21

= = = = =

I followed the detective
over the moor, he searched
for hoof prints of that stolen stag,
I searched for clues to what
he had in mind. No client,
no crime, just his vision
of a great antlered beast
driven or dragged into this
by now wearisome desolation.

Where had the image come from,
why did he credit it,
why did I care? Care enough
to follow. I stopped and sat down
on a glacial stone, now at last
more interested in what I had in mind
than what he had in his
Here I am, I thought,
my homeland on earth,

why do I care
what someone else is thinking?
Isn't it enough to be me?

By now my sleuth was far ahead,
a sweep of tweed cape
and beyond him the shimmer of the sea.

14 September 2021

= = = = == = =

Where the river eases wide
into the bay the raft was waiting—
upstream with the engine
purring like violins, or quietly
out to sea? We do have choices,
thanks to the Lady, the one
who rules all rives, offers them
to her love, the Ocean Sea.
We play around the ankles pf the powers,
our choices their amusements,
the way we watch raindrops
race each other down the window.
I hear them chuckle as I strut about
waving my bright red atheist flag.

14 September 2021

= = = = =

Sometimes it's enough
and sometimes it's not.
Coconuts float island to island,
ospreys carry fish inland,
covert banquets on other species.
I want to be a vegetarian
then the cheese comes out
and categories grow confused—
so chickens give milk? Do clams
divide the hoof? O it's not old religion,
its common decency, it's not right
to eat people, but where do people end
and some other life begins?
They all think, feel, mate, beget, linger,
pass away. I look down at the lone
tomato on my white plate and wonder.

14 September 2021

= = = = =

So hard to understand
but how beautiful to see
what's outside the door
wonders of human psychology
lodged in soft shadow trees
that were weren't there
when I first lived here,
how kind they are
how they came to me
were they once my friends,
my relatives, my guides
who have come to me
and stand there in the green,
so many of them, so many.

13 / 14 September 2021

= = = = =

Watch where the eagle goes
then go the other way.
The emperor is asleep,
the logothete sleuthing by the harem,
the Hellespont is full of lovers
swimming bravely boldly
to prove something
they've forgotten by midstream,
dolphins sporting, nameless fish.

Fly or float the other way,
up the river under Leonardo's
bridge he never built,
learn a new language,
there are Northmen in these parts,
blond bodyguards of the palace,
they sound like dogs barking.
Leave all this to the eagle—

come upstream with me
into the quiet land
ruled only by grassland and the wind,
nobody cares, nobody's there,
sit with me beside the well.
And tell. And tell.

14 September 2021

= = = = =

What he didn't see
the tree saw for him.
The way it is with stone
too, that waits and waits
to tell him. Remembers well
but trees tell more.
He's being perfectly honest now
so it's hard for people to believe him.

15 September 2021

= = = = =

*I lifted love like a latch
when I found the door—
so sang some troubadour
before I got around to being,
but the echo of him lingers.
I lift love and open the door.
in those days they had gardens,
walled in, sealed, safe as crystal—
what have we? Lift the latch,
does the gate swing in or out?
I see the sun shining in there.
For the ten thousandth time
I dare myself to go in.*

15 September 2021

= = = = =

Living by loss
like trees in fall
getting ready inside
for that great green *again*.

15.IX.21

= = = = =

I don't feel fully qualified
to confront the day.
My uniform is tattered,
my diploma in shreds.
But the maiden is waiting
on the rock beside the stream,
her pale feet guiding, diverting,
writing the water as it flows by.
I have to meet her there--that
is what a day means. All it means,
going, meeting, and what happens then.

15 September 2021

= = = = =

**All you need to do
is say some words
nobody ever said before
but deeply we all know.**

15.IX.21

= = = =

Archaic formality of sleep
how we enter that dark hall
almost every night, obey
almost all the rules. Sometimes
there comes disorder
in that ceremony, we wake
when we shouldn't, the priests
and priestesses have vanished
though we hear them whispering
in other rooms. Or is it rain?
Alone in the dark with no chaperon,
we lose our place in the text,
flounder in thought, breathe out,
what can we do but wait--
isn't waiting what the dark is for?

16 September 2021

= = = = =

Trees don't especially care
what names we call them--
they are suspicious of,
a little amused by,
our meticulous taxonomies.
"The where-I-am is much
more important than
who-my-brother-is," I heard
one say when I was looking,
:no who without where--put that
in your botany." Yes, milord.
Or is it lady? That distinction too
keeps them chuckling as we pass.

16 September 2021

= = = = =

**When all the gas stations are gone
and we have only the sun and the wind
to move us, where will we go
to but milk on Sunday morning
or grab a Coke at midnight?
Ah, progress, progress,
I remember when a nickel
got your on the subway,
the only place even adults
were not allowed to smoke.**

16 September 2021

= = = = =

Lord, it is time,
Fritz began his prayer,
the summer was so huge
and he went on saying,
closer, more beautiful
than fields of ripe wheat,
his words true as the wind.
Our older brother, we follow
trying to learn his song.

16.IX.21

= = = = =

Am I cold
or is it happy
comes through windows
right now in daylight
and my skin knows it
before my mind, if I have
another mind than skin.

16.IX 21

=====

“Jever hava cuppa java at was skunky?”
Pardon? I said, and he asked again, slower, as
for a person, me, of sluggish apprehension.
“Did you ever have a cup of coffee that was
really skunky, I mean smelled like a real skunk
on a rainy night, coming in the window, did you
ever taste coffee like that?” I never had,
though I’ve had some feeble cups of coffee,
diner coffee, yuk, but no skunks yet. He
complained, explained that very morning he
had been given a mug of coffee with that skunk
smell in it, milk and sugar didn’t help. the smell
was in the taste, if I knew what he means. I
commiserated as well as I could, not hard,
because coffee’s such a sacred beverage for
me, evil thought to tinge it with skunks. Yet
their musk is used by perfume makers, yes?
Somehow the powerful sheer animal essence
of it, non-verbal, sensual as a squeeze,

somehow that smell animates many perfumes women pay lots of euros for. OK, "OK", he said, "I'm not trying to kill skunks, just keep them out of my coffee, and for the life of me I can't figure out how it ever got there." Me neither, I agreed.

16 September 2021

I

I