

11-2021

## Nov2021

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## **PAL YUL**

**It is the ordinary language, you hardly have to learn it, it teaches itself to you almost from birth.**

**Everybody is its teacher and the lessons are kindly, easy, but they never stop. It coaxes you to keep talking, to ask questions. It coaches you to recognize the right answers when they come. They always come.**

**1 November 2021**

## **SCORPIO**

**What a beautiful time of year,  
what a beautiful day,  
cool sunlight undressing the trees  
blue beyond with clouds in it,  
raggedy, shapely, lots of edges,  
lot , little awkward,  
a little like scorpions themselves.**

**1 November 2021**

## **WOLVES**

**I m a pack of wolves.**

**We have been chasing women  
all our years, up the lordly mountain,  
down the cunning valley.**

**it is what we do.**

**Sometimes I have been led to think  
they like the music of our owls,  
it helps them run, helps them  
to know who they are,  
makes each feel proud, how she  
is sought by so many,  
so eager, so animal, so persistent.**

**I cannot report that we  
have ever caught one, don't know  
what we would do with them,**

are people edible? Won't her hair  
choke our throats, her thoughts  
perplex with their intricacy  
our straightforward metabolism?  
We have no information,  
only the need to pursue,  
Sometimes when our prey  
shelters in a cave to sleep  
we drowse outside, tell stories  
of famous women caught,  
vague details, what to do then.  
And then we sleep too.  
Often she'll slip away  
while we're asleep,  
and we wake idle, need  
to find and chase another.  
Meantime we discuss

**in quiet growls,  
the nakedness or attire of this latest  
fugitive, her gait, the way  
she sometimes would look  
back over her shoulder at us.  
Evaluation is an important part of  
pursuit.**

**1 November 2021**

## AUBADE

Handful of Combos  
for breakfast  
in the parking lot, gulp of water  
from a bottle  
with a blue label—  
I thought water  
came from everywhere.

2.

Father carrying infant.  
We all are burdens.  
Sun in the autumn trees.

3.

Long legs short stride  
then many shorter daring longer,

seems natural, run fast  
to be where you are.

4.

No clouds now.

The sky's a certainty.

I never studied French

but there we were—

can't find a country

that doesn't make sense

all by itself.

*1.XI.21, Rhnebeck*



***DE SENECTUDE***

**I have hundreds of children  
but not a single son or daughter.  
That's what it means to give  
and give without begetting.**

**1 November 2021**

====

I think this word  
was waiting all day,  
hid behind a tree  
but which one, ran  
across the road  
in front of us but I  
was looking sideways  
at one more tree.

Then the word came back  
a little dusty from my neglect,  
was it moonlight, moorland,  
Marlins hand? Frost is coming,  
bring the potted pansies in,  
morning glow,, Morbihan?  
Why have I been away so long?

**November 2021 10**

**1 November 2021**

=====

**Empiricist, limp wrist  
we depend on  
what makes us fall.**

**2.**

**In the cavern of filing cabinet  
words change their meanings,  
letters turn into manifestos,  
dragons growl. Be like you know,  
the Chinese poet, who tossed  
his poem into the running stream,  
moonlight, water heals,  
everything reads.**

**3.**

**The fact is I have forgotten**

**what I meant to say.**

**Is forgetting also a fact,  
an impregnation of time itself,  
who knows what form it may  
take when it is born again.**

**4.**

**So I'm making excuses.**

**We all do. The Pope apologizes.**

**First frost tonight**

**but the euonymus still  
isn't blazing scarlet yet.**

**Pretty blue sky. Worry  
works its way in.**

**5.**

**Growing up in fascist countries**

**you learn that Truth  
is a lie no one dares to contradict.  
The Bible is a shotgun aimed at you.**

**6.**

**Not much left  
of what I meant.  
Picture on the wall,  
taste like cinnamon.**

**Leafblowers came  
out of the ground  
and drove the poor music away.**

**2 November 2021**

====

First frost,  
the words  
uncomfortable  
together,  
something taut,  
tough has come  
into the system.  
The words  
always know.

3 November 2021

====

Some uncle in the night

**who would have known such things,  
told such things.**

**Who defiled the monuments  
in such subtle ways,  
the ground glass in the park,  
a child who did not love  
his parents even once.**

**Uncles know these things,  
always they're at right  
angles to the fact.,  
watch it as it moves.**

**Facts move, he said,  
can;t get away from them.**

**Facts are the dogs  
that keep us busy  
feeding them, walking them,  
I'm glad I never had one.**



**November 2021 16**

**I still hear his cheerful voice,  
youthful, hoping to be wrong.**

**3 November 2021**

## **CHESS**

**Chess all day long.**

**I am the pawn**

**who waddles through the squares**

**one square at a time**

**and no turning back.**

**I envy the big pieces,**

**envy the other pawns**

**who sometimes seize**

**even a Queen! But I have**

**no house to bring her home to.**

**I capture no one. I am told**

**that if I reach the other side**

**still alive, something fine**

**will become of me. In hope**

**of heaven one trudges on,**

**November 2021 18**

**ever borderline  
so hard to cross--let me rest  
here a while and catch my breath.**

**3 November 2021**

=====

The world was winter  
for a while and then  
the sun came up and gave us  
back our autumn peace—  
just for a little while, mind,  
just for the bright day, to fill  
our eyes with green before,  
before all the colors  
hurry back indoors.

3.XI.21

=====

Leave all one  
none be gone.

**November 2021 20**

**Life's an antique  
store: Look  
don't touch.**

**4.XI.21**

=====

**Betty knew the value  
of the day, turned her grief  
into giving, bothered learning  
only the language of those  
who most needed her help.  
Politics, religion disappoint.  
She turned disappointment  
into dispensation, Build  
the republic one needy  
person at a time. And tell  
the world what you're doing,  
tell it in a gentle quiet voice. *4November  
2021***

=====

November 2021 22

**I know what to do--  
I will walk to the bakery  
in a little French town,  
strut home with a baguette  
tucked under my arm,  
I'll nibble an almond biscuit  
along the quiet stream.  
There. Just like an American.**

**4.XI.21**

=====

**Sometimes nothing changes.  
People lie on the sand  
absorbing the sun, enduring  
or welcoming the glances  
of those who are not sunshine.  
They think like Luther: Here I am,  
I can't do anything else,  
help me o Sun. Waves are good  
for lulling, especially like these,  
more Brighton beach than Waikiki,  
sleep in sunshine, wake  
a deeper color. Maybe  
drape a towel over your face,  
the wind is on your side today.  
We have been doing this**



**November 2021 24**

**for a hundred thousand years  
whenever we could find a beach,  
an ocean, Human is a seaside thing,  
we are littorals, never at peace  
too far inland. Think of Jesse James.  
No crime on the ocean only casinos.  
Don't let the sand get in your eyes.**

**4 November 2021**

**November 2021 25**

**=====**

**Are we a part  
of what we see  
or is all that  
a part of me?  
Decide quickly--  
winter's coning.**

**4,XI,21**

**=====**

**Looking a hummingbird**

straight in the eye—  
a little like meeting the Pope  
but no papal ring to kiss.  
a little like falling in love  
on the day you're moving away.

4 November 2021

== == == == ==

When you finally get here  
you'll have a slew of rivers  
around your ankles, hunks of mountain  
on shoulders and hips. you know it all.

**we bring it all with us, no traveler  
comes from nowhere  
Except I think sometimes I am and do.  
But here I am, not going anywhere,  
a rusted tank from an unfashionable  
war.**

**So it's always, as usual, all  
up to you.**

**I read Milton while I wait,  
get on that Trailways Bus  
and fling your living loving Latin  
presence here,  
bringing a new bright colored  
basket made of straw,  
a basket full of air.**

**4 November 2021**

**November 2021 28**

=====

And sometimes they forget all about it  
and the sun just shines.

Try Polybius. Josephus.

Sometimes even Ptolemy

but there is sadness in geometry,  
taking the measure of your mother.

Sadness is the kiss of time,

a bone with little meat around it,  
pebble in the shoe.

We can't really help

the way the morning spells us,  
the archipelago of all of us.

2.

I would call the sea a language

if I could speak it  
but as it is I pray to it  
the way we do to music.  
See, I am only one of us  
despite my loud insinuations,  
my jutting elbows, my noisy sleep.

3.

I learned Greek when I was little  
o my uncle summoned me  
to rule a small fiefdom in the attic,  
looking over grandfather's acres.  
But when I learned to shave  
he took the fief away,  
sent me to an island in Jamaica Bay  
where the Peloponnesians  
fished and carried on.

**And there I stayed,  
an exile to this day.  
I still shave but it doesn't help.**

**4.**

**I closed the book,  
that version of my life  
and cried out Remember me!  
to no one in particular--  
sometimes it just makes sense  
to shout out the window.  
A shout can be magnificent  
depending on who hears it--  
think of Abraham.  
Think of three thousand years.  
Then stop. The truth**



**lies somewhere in between  
(how can we say that truth lies?),  
out in the long text we call desert.  
Someone heard something,  
someone stopped, looked  
at the sky, changed  
direction and here we are.  
Ever and ever language is our fate.**

**5 November 2021**

**= = = = =**

**Listen to the pilgrim  
he has been to places  
that do not exist, worn**

his feet sore on roads  
that re yet to come, he  
has been everywhere  
and then some, as we  
(who never moved at all)  
used to say. Lust listen:  
You got Egypt wrong  
to start with, the Greeks  
were Vikings, the Trojans  
are Chinese. don't you  
see that even now? the Celts  
were aliens, you can see it  
in their eyes, please, please  
try to understand. so much  
I can explain, the ocean too  
tries all day long, tide after tide,  
to help you grasp the truth,

**all the books are wrong, Christ  
is still alive, lives with Abraham  
on a mountain I can't pronounce,  
radiant others with them. so many,  
come, at least I know the way .**

**5 November 2021**

## BRICKS

1.

Brickwork. English courses. Dutch courses, how the bricks are laid. We read with fingertips the older wall, wet under the dwindling vine, brick loves rain, fact, clay loves water. *This stone is made by hand.* The ridges the rough signature, man breath left in the made thing. The wall of the house where I was born is the actual wall I have to mean, the only one my fingers understand

**and could, maybe, bring to you.**

**2.**

**Inside a brick house  
you usually don't notice brick.  
Maybe by a fireplace, mostly  
indoors is made of smoother stuff.  
pale. easy on the skin. But press  
a cheek against said wall and still  
you'll feel, I swear it, like far-off  
music, the real wall breathing deep.**

**3.**

**My mother always said  
brick houses are damp**

but far as I know she never  
lived in any other kind.  
And always by the ocean.

4.

See everything turns  
into biography, a brick,  
a cup, a wall, a horse cart  
dragging through the street,  
oranges, ripe oranges.  
Hard to leave where one has been.

6.

So it's the Dutch painters  
who help us back  
away from the wall enough

to see the house, the city,  
crow on steeple, moon in cloud.  
Tender walls of Saenredam,  
who knew he inside is the outside too  
and brick is one more skin of us.

5 November 2021

=====

There was no door there  
but I went through.  
Seemed easy at the moment  
but don't ask me how.

**But I was in that garden  
they called it where so much  
of what I needed grows  
but in the dim light I carry  
I could see not much, a few  
mall blue flowers--I spoke  
to them as I might java addressed  
a taller person, and took comfort  
from the sense of being heard.  
Nothing more. I walked around,  
found a bench--though marble  
it wobbled as I sat. This place  
like all places has its danger.  
I stretched out and watched the sky,  
there are answers everywhere.  
I must have slept then;  
when I woke a dappled fawn**



**was looking at me so  
I knew it must be time to go.  
Going proved easy enough, and here I  
am.**

**6 November 2021**

=====

**I think the tree  
sometimes says  
Be quiet. Listen  
longer. Let the whale  
sentence ripen.  
Then hum the tune.**

**6 November 2021**

=====

**A mirror that protects  
from passing shadows,  
glass that will reflect  
only what lingers, bird  
or bride or bishop.**

**2.**

**This mirror says your name  
when you stop and see it,  
tell stories about your ancestors--  
are those your lips moving  
or ripples in the glass  
that make the words?**

**3.**

**Everybody needs one.**

**Teenage boys used to carry  
a little steel mirror in their pocket  
to check their pompadours,  
their curls when boys still cared,  
children played on sidewalks  
and great caravels full-bosomed sailed  
the sea.**

**4.**

**But when Other  
happened,  
mirrors lasted,  
still that suspicious  
eye on me even now.  
I look away to the words  
but they are shiny too**

**and hint at why I write them down.**

**6 November 2021**

=====

**Be near  
the windmill  
you'll hear plenty,  
wise man  
who welcomed wind  
to grind his wheat.  
No one knows his name.**

**6.XI.21**

=====

**Not many foxes these days,  
not many rabbits.**

**No more pheasants  
but fat turkeys come and go.  
Haven't seen a wolf in 20 years,  
a catamount in eleven**

**but there's a bobcat on the hill.  
Can't recall the last possum I saw—  
once they had been everywhere.  
But the deer are plentiful  
and the bears have come back--  
now all these different religions  
swell and shrink  
according to to some climate law,**

**it would be wise to know.  
Versions of reality  
on soft paws  
changing places in the night.**

**6 November 2021**



====

Alone with the sun  
as it was in Egypt  
when we were young,

sandstone walls in brightness  
every word a symbol  
I can no longer read.  
Hieroglyphs of the future.

So bright the wall,  
people hurrying past  
hardly cast shadows,  
brightness comes from all aides,  
from the wall itself, the ground.  
not just the sky.

**Egypt. Mall. Wall. Wait.**

**From market to market they hurry,  
brightness is their road.**

**I huddle in my dark car  
waiting for centuries to pass.**

**6 November 2021**

**Kings Plaza**

=====

**I could be waiting for you.  
Yu see someone standing there  
and that's what you think,  
what could they be doing there  
bnt waiting? what ese is there  
out in this blatant public world.  
Standing still is an invitation,  
insult, challenge, surrender.  
Yes. I could be waiting for you  
when I thought I was just here  
leaning on a sunbeam and you  
never actually came along.**

**6 November 2021**

**LUNES, NOVEMBER**

**Let the earth go home—  
the morning  
is busy enough.**

**\***

**The beech tree explained  
all you need  
is keep listening.**

**\***

**The quiet river  
remembers  
where its rain had been.**

**\***

**Castle on a hill**

**bee on rose—  
let your eyes decide.**

**\***

**If I brush your hand  
all it means  
is that I'm still here.**

**\***

**Rev the engine, gear  
up to go—  
distance needs love too.**

**\***

**Never stay too long  
in a place  
you have never been.**

\*

**Waiting for the leaf  
to float down,  
an oboe playing.**

\*

**Magic mirrors see  
inside out.  
We call them eyes.**

\*

**Wheat field but no mill.  
Silent child,**

**all things still to come.**

**\***

**Toad on path. a stone  
leaps aside—  
we are not alone.**

**\***

**Word is work. We all  
know that. Mow  
tell us what play is.**

**\***

**How I have fallen  
from my tree!  
Still, I know its name.**

\*

**This wall has no door—  
be at peace:  
the symphony starts.**

\*

**Blades raise the copter,  
sky slices  
shove earth far away.**

**7 November 2021**

**= = = = =**

**Oiling the car is the road  
turned inside out,  
it sleeks its way  
to god knows where**



**and there are roads there too.  
We get there  
and imagine we are somewhere  
but that's all fantasy.  
All we are is what the road  
makes us, same everywhere,  
dirt under my fingernails.**

**7 November 2021**

=====

Leaf by leaf  
she recorded it  
for me until  
the whole book  
sprang up aloud,  
deep silence,  
a human thinking.

8 November 2021

=====

**That woke him.**

**Linden leaf**

**wear against wicked.**

**Walk the blue line.**

**He stared into morning shadow**

**and understood a little more,**

**remember children,**

**how hard it is**

**to wake little people up.**

**8 November 2021**

=====

## **Erie Canal**

**great work of the heart**

**letting the sea into the land,**

**circulation of the more than blood.**

**They think better in New York.**

**8.XI.21**

====

I am watching a man  
do what he does  
not know how to do:  
open a small  
shrink-wrapped box.  
He cuts at it  
with scissors, pries  
a nail file under a seam,  
works it all around.  
The man is me.  
I am ashamed of myself--  
peel, peel it,

**I should have, tug,  
don't just insinuate.  
Eventually his thumb nail  
got caught on the warp  
and off the thing came.  
Answer to prayer.  
Be stupid long enough  
and something comes.**

**8 November 2021**

=====

**No wolverines in these parts,  
and only one or two alpacas  
on a farm up past Austerlitz.  
Otherwise you can never tell  
who you might meet in the woods.  
Whom. They people too,  
whoever they are, they have eyes,  
they can see you coming  
and make their own plans.  
I think I will stay indoors today.**

**8 November 2021**

=====

**You could tell it wanted  
me to say more. So I waited.  
I thought a well I looked down  
as a child in New Hampshire,  
thought of a grey mountain  
when all the hills were green.  
A busy Oxford Street in London, my  
father in a blazer  
hopping on a bus. Did it want  
me to think about things  
that were somehow mine or in me  
or was the silence something new,**



**new to both of us maybe,  
curve of a leaf, growth of a cloud?  
Should I keep asking questions,  
a question is always more,  
but all I could think about  
was that well, my face  
looking up at me from so deep—  
how can I be so far from myself?**

**8 November 2021**

=====

**At least to say  
the sun hello,  
the ady keeps putting  
words in my mouth.**

**2.**

**Hoot by the trestle,  
does the train always  
sound a warning there,  
warn the cruel  
duck hunters something  
even meaner on the way?**

**3.**

**So early light just  
falters through the trees,  
the tentative. Sleep again?  
Close the eyes again  
that spy such beauty now?**

**4.**

**A suit of clothes  
for every tree,  
music shrugged  
around silence.  
Consent! Everything  
else does, resistance  
is so immature.**

**9 November 2021**

**=====**

**Books do that—  
you knew that as a kid.  
They follow you to bed  
and even there keep  
talking in your sleep  
a story different from  
what you're reading  
when you were or will be awake.  
So there you are at morning,  
one book with two different  
texts, or even more, one  
you read and one that dares  
to remember itself in your sleep.  
A whole new story! Maybe your parents  
weren't so dumb,  
pitting you to bed with a thing  
that sticks to its story,**

**gave you a teddy bear instead.**

**9 November 2021**

=====

**A pillar of light  
sands across the green.  
This is older than Stonehenge  
and right here. Stones stand  
to remind us. Look, look up.  
There is always something there.**

**9 November 2021**

====

**Religion and science  
nibble gently greedy  
at what I try so hard  
to feel, just feel  
when I look around.  
Don't tell me what it means.  
Let me go on thinking  
what I see and feel is read.**

**9.XI.21**

====

**Pretend it's night,  
it so often is,  
already the tail lights  
wink crimson reflections  
from the damp road.  
the sun is high om a blue sky,  
a pure contradiction  
like Rilke's rose.**

**2.**

**Who are you anyway  
to whom I dare say such things?  
Are you just a typo for me,  
or am I only one  
shadow of your mountain.**



**3.**

**Landscape always works its way in.  
Something to do with mountainless  
Netherlands,  
gentle heft of the Cotswolds—  
was I water to have been  
so many quiet places,  
only my own voice blithering?**

**4.**

**No, it's not night,  
let the day alone,  
don't try to distil  
some essence from the hour,  
distillation tries**

**to extract the soul of things,  
bad for the alchemist,  
life for a life, leave the rose alone.**

**5.**

**Thank God it's just an ordinary day.  
truck, trailer, lingering leaves.  
I ask you again,  
not for your sacred,  
secret, identity  
just for a name to call you by,  
we say today is Woden's,  
over the border it's Mercury's,  
but isn't everything different in  
Mexico?**

**6.**

**I know a man who wants a dog.**

**How can I explain to him**

**that it's only legal,**

**speaking spiritually,**

**to have a dog if you have**

**at least a hundred sheep**

**to keep the dog honest and happy.**

**A dog is best when it is still**

**an animal, and knows it,**

**and you know it too.**

**How can I help my friend know that?**

**7.**

**Animals, autos, pretenses,**

**landscapes, running water,**

**oil of absolute. Let the meaning**

**rest undisturbed, like the corpse  
tomed beneath its marble effigy.  
A meaning isn't. A meaning does.**

**10 November 2021**

=====

**Strange noises in the other room.  
That's what other rooms  
are for, *to be real yet be not here.*  
Someone rearranging reality  
just out of sight. World  
made new. Meaning of a wife.**

**10 November 2021**

=====

1.

Walking along a window,  
being light. The cave  
I hid in folded away  
and left me on the avenue,  
that tall brick wall  
around some institution—  
mad or bad folk inside.  
But I was free, free and me,  
and out here like the wind.

2.

I try again to get past what I see.  
There is a suchness

**hidden from the eyes.  
I try to make it my own.**

**3.**

**Why is every song a failure?  
Because if it really moved  
we would be there already,  
get what it aims at,  
the goal, the grail, the throne  
and in silence wend it  
gloating maybe— but for how long?**

**4.**

**O power is a sometimes thing,  
a storm offshore, thunder on the  
mountain**

**but no water here. Climb  
the wooden hill to bed.**

**Sift through your catalogue of dreams,  
choose the right one,  
the Roman city, the tulip tree.**

**10 November 2021**

**LITTORAL**

**Coastal zone, cliffs of marble,**



only the old cry hallelujah!  
pippit shells in the sand  
glad friction, clean toes,  
and then the surf, the far  
off other islands. Gull.  
Gull. They all know you  
always have, the first  
time you heard one  
you knew yourself known.  
The recognition. And green  
sea0glass pale, she said  
your eyes were like that  
you always thought were blue.  
What do we know about us  
anyway ever? Heels feel  
better too. Don't sprawl  
on the sand like a walrus,

**be a man, stand there, eyes  
fixed on distance, waiting,  
that's what the sea  
teaches men to do.**

**11 November 2021**

=====

**One hundred and three years ago today  
a war ended we celebrate  
the end of, a conflict over there  
that killed a hundred thousand  
American troops.**

**We called it Armistice Day  
when I was a kid, red paper pansies,  
grizzled veterans peddling guilt.**

**But now they say Veterans' Day,  
honoring the survivors  
of our recent wars, survivors,  
not the fallen. I wonder  
will there ever be a holiday  
marking the end of the Civil War  
when seven hundred thousand**

**American soldiers died  
at each other's' hands  
along with who knows how  
many civilians, how many of us,  
bombed or burned, slaughtered  
along the way to victory.  
Is it possible that war never ended?**

**11 November 2021**

## **WAIT FOR THE WOMBAT**

**to wake , ask him  
how he does it,  
sleep on his side  
and still keep scooping  
earth gently away  
deepening his burrow.  
I watched him once,  
marveled at how much  
we can accomplish  
while we sleep. Go,  
watch the wombat,  
let his sleep soft into yours.**

**11 November 2021**

**=====**

High in the hall closet a hat,  
not mine. Instances of the letter H.  
Home, heroic, hand. How  
many other letters do we need?  
Who wears that hat when  
it is not in the closet but worn?  
Cows give milk—that tells us  
a little more. More, milk, mind.  
A little spilled on the old bard floor.

11 November 2021

EXPEDITION

**Wolf on sidewalk  
Passing us by.  
We tell ourselves  
What we know  
About the other.  
No problem.  
Don't look back.  
Never look back.**

**2.**

**You know it begins every time  
You set foot out of your house.  
*La vie sauvage à nos seuils*  
The French program said,  
Meaning no worse than  
the mole by the back door,**

**a dormouse in the thatch.**

**But we know what it really means—  
a savage world starts at your door.**

**Whether you go in or out.**

**3.**

**At first light the horrid**

**Shotguns at the river,**

**Men who kill waterfowl**

**For what seems pleasure,**

**Proving something, but all**

**The ducks they kill will never**

**teach them to fly.      11.XI.21**

**ASSERTIONS**

**The stripper's here,**

**the rain wind that relieves**



the trees of leaves,  
help them bare for winter.

2.

Mid-November, a cup  
of cool coffee for me,  
the way I like it, I want to be  
the only extreme--  
everything else, *mezzo mezzo,*  
*uguale.*

3.

When you translate from Latin  
you java to remember,  
that's all, just remember.

4.

**My name means Tuesday**

**I think, the girl said--**

**she didn't look mean or Mars,  
a little uneasy, new to the job.**

5.

**They're not here now**

**but on the way, you can tell**

**the way the earth turns**

**in case you haven't noticed.**

6.

**You see I'm trying to be polite**

**but I'm a man, American at that**

**so it's uphill all the way,**

**pebble in my goddam shoe.**

**7.**

**Some girls are only there  
in dream. Others grow old  
out here in Wake-up-land,  
I wonder which kind she is  
who faced the wall and talked  
quietly about her mother.**

**8.**

**Language lets you out  
of your story  
and into its own,  
ever-changing, no end in sight.**

**9.**

**I thought of Joyce  
as I woke, his Scribble.  
his voice miming the old  
women washing the river.**

**10.**

**Scribble is such a wisdom word.  
After waking, speak--  
when you have spoken,  
time enough to be.**

**11.**

**Assertions are miracles,  
you say something  
and it's suddenly so--  
for a while at least  
until the next miracle, or rain.**

**12.**

**The door was open,  
the interior flushed with light,  
barefoot, barefoot we go in  
walking softly on the light.**

**12 November 2021**

=====

**It only has to do  
with the tower,  
roofless, on Glastonbury Tor  
and the exact eyot of sky  
you see when you stare up,  
stare, not just look.**

**It only has to do  
with the stone flower pot  
full of blue poppies  
even after a week of cold.**

**It only has to do with the alleyway  
all secret and sacred and ordinary  
and full of little garages and gates  
that runs between Brown Street  
and Haring Street on the other**

side of the world,  
yes, open the gate if you doubt me,  
dunk under the pussy willow,  
the sea is half a mile away,  
that matters, that matters so much,  
it only has to do with sand,  
oyster shells, ancient laws  
inscribed in cursive  
all over the shells but who can read,  
it only has to do  
with the blind librarian,  
I'm sorry, I meant to say blond,  
the snow on Mount Wilson,  
why can't you feel the shells  
when I say so, damp, slimy even,  
so richly inscribed,  
why can't we read anymore,

**why do we need to open books,  
when letters are all over the place,  
just read them together in peace,  
marry words! mate with music!  
It only has to do with stone,  
that's what I'm trying to say,  
stone, the way she lisped,  
stone, the freckles on the cheek  
of the girl who held my coat,  
stone, my thumbnail scratching  
gently on the pillow  
so close to my ear I thought,  
o who knows what I thought,  
no better than Nick Bottom,  
stone, a thing you remember,  
stone, you build your house,  
stone, I lean my cheek against it,**



**stone alone knows what I see.**

**13 November 2021**

## **ASPERGILLUM**

**they called the golden  
sprinkler the priest  
scattered holy water from  
all over us.**

**Only if we are there,  
in church, or at graveside,  
in a solemn moment more  
or less traditional.**

**The meaning  
of the word depends on us  
being there. No one  
to sprinkle, the device asleep  
in its little silvery bucket.**

**Words depend on us,**

**we have to be there  
for them if not for us.  
Be there for them.**

**13 November 2021**

=====

0.

Wake in terror wondering

Does the body rule the brain?

Prayer might help--

can you make a prayer to say?

Dawn soon, our fond distraction.

1.

We are *cellf*

it made me say

the bios of all our logos,

when ere then one had ne'er guessed

**the neurons of that monarchy,  
pharaonic, earth squashing heaven,  
the habit of our house.**

**Surprise, surprise,  
so once I thought what thought me.**

**2.**

**There is a pinnacle  
not all that high,  
tourists exeunt the train  
and clamber up,  
selfies on the moor,  
selfies on the cliff.  
Plenty of time for the hotel.**

**3.**

**Or a spinnaker**

**full of wind**

**shouldering the air aside**

**to get there quick.**

**So much going!**

**Haul the sails down and linger.**

**This is your mother.**

**4.**

**At five a.m. the going's slow,**

home from the gin mill,  
still a snore or two ere waking.

5.

There's that word again!  
I do like them old,  
helps me recollect  
what I meant by being here.

6.

Catholics read Augustine,  
what do Jews or Buddhists read  
that knock them to their knees  
to start again. Immense

**power of humility,  
everything that happens  
is a text to you.**

**7.**

**So it's not all about cells, see,  
I was wrong, the cells have ears  
and do what we're told.**

**Simple as that, old Russian  
folksong about a field of wheat  
and whom you might meet,  
there, and only there.**

**8,**



Some drink kava,  
some chew gum.  
I wait for the full moon  
and rub my chin.

9.

No, that's not the song I meant  
or you wanted to hear,  
wasn't Mikhail Aleksandrovich,  
wasn't Mark Reizen,  
wasn't the Red Army chorus  
but still it left you thinking.  
And who is this who dares  
to speak without singing?

**10.**

**The wheat has all been reaped,  
the whole vast meadows now  
neatly shaved and simple  
in waxing moonlight.**

**Hardly any color but bright.**

**Yet look who walks there still,  
Hurry, shuffle through the stubble,  
but don't worry, your haste  
a sign of virtue, what you seek  
is there forever.**

**11.**

**Child, you are by the river.**

**No boat and no bridge.**

**The other side looks same as this.**

**So will you do?**

**The child**

**looks up and asks:**

**wat did you do**

**when you were me?**

**I am still here, mon fils,**

**we are still together.**

**12.**

**And then at last I understood,**

**the night itself is nourishment.**

**The man's sound asleep,  
running wild in the night club of his  
brain. The maitre-d' explains:  
dreams are not given to remember  
or mumble to your pallid shrink--  
dreams do you,  
they do and they do  
and every every night  
you grow more you--  
is that so hard to understand?**

**13.**

**There are two kinds of problems  
and the only one that interests me  
is the kind with no solution.  
That's where we get music instead.**

**14 November 2021**

=====

**She gave me a small stone  
I cannot lose,  
she carried it for ten thousand years  
and handed it to me.  
It's still in my fingers.  
Sometimes I think stone,  
and stone is the deepest thought.**

**14 November 2021**

=====

*for Raquel, remembering José*

**Death gives a certain dignity  
to those it borrows from us.  
But some of those it takes  
have a dignity of their own,  
intrinsic, an image that lasts,  
shows us how a man should be.**

**14 November 2021**

**====**

Let the word  
answer itself : limb  
of a tree, our beech,  
almost bare now, how  
dare I say ours?  
skeleton of a fish,  
name it, life  
in a cartoon.

2.

Firebreak in Western trees,  
even a word like west  
is a claim, isn't it, as if,  
as if we knew where we are  
or what kind of fish,  
the kind you see on the beach,



**gull ravaged,  
more names than things.**

**3.**

**More things than  
you have words for me,  
you with your Tatar boots,  
cozy ear flaps, odd alphabet.  
A word before dawn  
when no one listens.**

**4.**

**Hence, hence, or thence  
a pure word, for its own sake said.**

**Communication means  
exchange of gifts but this  
is one-way giving. Give it  
into the morning,  
ask nothing in return.**

**5.**

**Dear tree, Darjeeling deodar,  
Annandale linden, bright  
beech even now  
shimmering with new-lit cloud,  
pillars of my cathedral,  
by mine I mean  
the quiet place I kneel.**

**6.**

**I had to put that in about me  
so you'd know I meant it,  
loudmouth in my quiet way,  
heavens, it's almost light out now--  
what could I be thinking of?**

**15 November 2021**

**ZZZ**

**First car on its way to work--  
I'd better get back to bed.**

**Every day is a *siècle*  
and every *siècle* has its *fin*.  
I go regenerate my purity.**

**15.XI.21**

**ADVERT=**

**Fact: the items  
in your shopping basket  
equal in number the people  
who'll call you by your name,  
your own name, this week.  
Apply here to learn your name  
so you'll recognize them when they call.**

**15.XI.21**

**= = = = =**

**Still leaves enough  
to make the place green,  
light assembles in the shadows  
between the two  
they drink a kind of color  
almost yellow  
under the blue sk.  
I am describing what is here,  
what makes me be.**

**15 November 2021**

=====

**1.**

**Aim at the one  
to find the none  
the all of us at last,  
the beautiful emptiness  
full of everything.**

**2.**

**Stone Tree Man--  
only a woman  
can tell them apart.**

**3.**

**Sleepy theology,  
bird on the roof.**

**4.**

**Wake fast, walk slow,  
spit the cherry pits  
on fertile soil as you go.  
I bought my cherries  
in Paris years ago,  
they still taste sweet  
ark red, back of the mind.**

**5.**

**Indigenous perfection  
chipped by our alien ways,  
begin every day with apology,  
to the trees at first, the dirt,**



**the stone, the streams  
that flee from our touch.  
In the old days a river  
would stop and say hello.**

**6.**

**I know a woman  
who likes to swim across  
for the sheer pleasure  
of swimming back home.**

**7.**

**Where philosophy  
and theology  
snuggle down together  
in a tent, close, close,  
a flap blows open,**

**they can see the sky.**

**8.**

**I think sometimes  
gender is the only truth.**

**The stone overhears me and smiles.**

**9.**

**The day has begun.**

**Get up and do  
the wordless thing  
called living.**

**Roman or vegan or some  
suchthing,**

**busy body, images everywhere,**

**close the door and kiss the wood.  
Some call it waiting,  
I call it getting there fast.**

**16 November 2021**

**=====**

**The white wall  
knows all.**

The longer you look  
the more you remember.

2.

*in sunshine and in shadow*

old song,

ikd Irish song

the white stucco sings.

16 November 2021

=====

White sky wake the living.

Attitudes vary in the tilt of wind.

So many names by now forgotten

litter the antechamber.

**But noise means boys still,  
armies come roaring  
over the hill. no. it's just  
a truck speeding by, one  
more male mistake.**

**2.**

**Look at the facts:  
it's loud, it hurts  
more than the ears,  
it goes on and on.  
Masculine was perhaps  
your first mistake--  
why does quiet make us  
so terrified inside?**

**3.**

**Because we are waiting for  
a question that never comes.  
Beat the drum to dull the wait.  
Blow up bombs. Be Beethoven.**

**4.**

**Even I try to make the best of it,  
growling as I go, *lass mich schlafen*  
I groan out like Wagner's dragon,  
do what you want  
but let me sleep.  
sleep is the only silence left.**

**November 2021 126**

**17 November 2021**

=====

Is it right  
to be ripe  
when the road  
is empty?

We drove in an open  
car, rehearsing our speeches,  
the colors we wore  
were supposed to be meaningful  
but you'd have to see us passing  
to decide. My speech was in Russia, on  
climate. Or was it in  
Prussia, on *heimat*, homeland?



**So hard to remember  
what hasn't happened  
and the road was empty  
and we'd been travelling so long.**

**17 November 2021**

=====

**The archers stand baffled  
at the shore.**

**So many waves!  
Each thrown at them  
from this living lapis lazuli vastness  
but who could have told them  
that this was their enemy?**

**17 November 2021**

=====

**Did you ever hear stone scream?  
I did once, not even in a dream  
but in the place where a dream  
would be if I had been sleeping.**

**I try not to go to parties, walk  
if I can, avoiding taxis, sometimes  
the other has its way with me,  
cup of milk, ladder on the lamppost,  
what can I but listen to the stone?**

**17 November 2021**

**FACES OF THE MIND**

*for Pat & Marla Smith*

**Cautious Cathars  
peer out of where  
they hide in us,  
the pure ones, the ones  
whose purity lights up the mind  
when we see their eyes  
in a Bronzino or Raphael  
or that girl you think you saw  
that rainy dusk in Edinburgh.**

**Cathars, because pure,  
Cathars because always at risk,  
persecuted by the authority  
of the ordinary**

**that will not look at them,  
that will not see.  
So they take refuge in your hands.**

**18 November 2021**

====

**On the other side  
for instance  
of the wall there hangs  
a mirror showing clear  
every feature of an empty room.  
Now be that mirror  
sit down and be at peace.**

**18 November 2021**

=====

**This to start with  
a syllable aloft  
where the edge of the sky  
licks the gold  
trees of November,**

**Oh**

**she said, the trees, the trees!  
then we were among them  
and no need to say.**

**2.**

**Because in a way  
everything we do  
is answering,  
so close are we to the Mercy,  
the quiet never-ending question.**

**18 November 2021  
Shafer**



## **THE PATH**

**Call it a path,  
they come up along it,  
people, people  
from the past,  
the past turns into a path  
and they come.**

**I haven't seen you in years,  
why is that, and why now,  
are we just wooden figures  
on a chess board somebody  
is moving around? Is it a game?**

**Are you really here?**

**I mean is it really you  
coming up the path at me,  
a little fuzzier around the edges,  
saying my name?**

**2.**

**So we sit down in the garden  
or at the dining room table  
and we impersonate  
the ones we use to be,  
theater comes naturally with time,  
we pretend we are each other  
as we were, smile on cue  
at triggered recollections,  
drink something, nibble,**

often cake comes with the path, and  
talk, well, you know  
what they say about talk.

3.

Did I live with this one once?  
Did we travel to Montana,  
translate Pessoa together,  
play Schubert's four-hand fantasy,  
close to marriage as music comes?

Somewhere inside me  
isn't there a tiny vessel  
still filled with feelings?  
I'll never really know.  
The only thing to do

**is go outside and sweep  
dead leaves off to clear the path.**

**19 November 2021**

=====

**If it were a word  
I would say it—  
wouldn't you?**

**It is there, potent,  
present, loud even—  
but not a word.**

**Or not yet—  
go ahead, call out  
whatever comes to mind,**

**your cry  
will be the answer  
a word needs to exist.**

**19 November 2021**

**Rail for a curtain  
to hide the world.**

**Is that horizon  
or one more mistake of mind,  
waiting for the truth  
to unfold its clouds and stand bare  
over sea, over mountains, over me.**

**The things we need,  
our simple subway hearts  
hurtling in the dark, take care,  
some lines run out of city  
and then where are you.  
*trees and fields and me.***

**You know that song too well.  
I think the world is tired  
and wants to go to bed in me.  
I have resisted long enough  
for one day. Let the dark sing.**

**19 November 2021**



## THE MIRACLE

The beard keeps growing  
though the gardens of Greenwich  
are closed for the winter  
and few seals hop onto the shore  
and votaries for some reason  
drag corn stalks and pumpkins  
into their shadowy churches  
so the reverend has to rewrite  
his summertime sermons,  
and car windows are closed  
as they pass so you can't tell  
what your neighbors think is music

and even I get tired at times

of looking out the window  
or standing on the corner,  
choosing, tired of choosing.  
But the beard keeps growing  
though it's years now  
since I last let it have its way.  
It's telling me something,  
bristly harsh or next day softer,  
a fluent message every day,  
or goes on forever, like the grey  
pigeons of Manhattan, always  
there and always reminding .

20 November 2021

=====

**When you ask a machine  
what it wants for breakfast--  
rock oil? spirits of wine?--  
you're playing the game.  
The only game in town:  
talk to everything and listen  
to what they say, then speak  
again and so it goes. But don't  
talk too much to people,  
don't distract them from the game.**

**20 November 2021**

=====

*for Charlotte*

I wanted to buy you  
a furry stole, faux-fur  
of course, I wanted  
a sealskin coat for you  
*faux-phoque* to be sure  
but you had one of those.  
Hmm. Ten days on the Azores?  
But I hate travel these days  
and dread being alone.  
What does a selfish man  
give to the love of his life?  
Only his self, I guess, I guess  
he has plenty of that,  
doesn't even have to order it

**from Amazon, or cadge  
a ride to town to pick one up.  
Here it is, here I am,  
I mean all I am is yours.**

**20 November 2021**

=====

**O river ocean-wide these days  
water and sky one color  
and the hills fading on both sides,  
excites me and I can't say why,  
the wide, the wide open,  
the sea coming deep into the land,  
land opening at last, the live  
continuum we humble through  
saying prayers to brick and stone,  
exalted to see this deep openness  
and we dare to call it a river  
and give it a name.**

**20 November 2021**

=====

**Legends laugh at reason—  
the Bible stands firm  
in its goatskin mantle,  
teasing interpreters  
and why not? Eating apple  
means eating anything,  
turning a spiritual entity  
into a machine that eats  
living things, urns them  
into itself. Or did you thin  
an apple tree is not alive?**

**20.XI.21**

**=====**

**Without forgetting  
fence the garden in--  
enclosing the space  
is more important  
than what you plant there.  
The flowers and trees  
are incidents of travel  
in this now sacred space,  
vines are rivers, birds  
are messengers, all  
it takes is marking off  
the space, *temenos*,  
the sacred grove, no  
trees required. Without  
forgetting, stand inside.  
This is the place. the miracle,**



**a little like the space  
we give in our heart-mind  
to those we really love.  
But this is outside, clear,  
clean, so we can stand in love.**

**21 November 2021**

=====

*for Charlotte*

All I keep thinking  
about these days is you.  
How I can make things  
better but I can't find out,  
can't remember, improvise,  
even hum a tune that satisfies.  
I can't think my way to *thing*,  
thing to give, thing to snake happy.  
I seem to have lost my taste  
for thing. Now what?  
When time and place  
are all I have to give?  
I cannot find a thing  
I think would make you happy.

**Friends and food and music,  
film and narrative--those do the job  
but I am not them, or not  
them enough so when I say  
I give myself to you  
it feels not like a gift but  
like a burden laid on your knees.**

**21 November 2021**

=====

Someone walking up the road  
at a decent pace, too far  
to know, identity is difficult  
in a moving world. Gone  
out of sight now, trees  
and such, a person,  
a whole Iliad in a big dark coat.  
What are they thinking  
as they go? Is it actually  
what I'm writing down?  
We leave our prints on one another,  
doesn't take much, no actual touch,  
just a glimpse, a shadow on a path.

21.XI.21

=====

*for Charlotte*

I think or want to think  
there is an island,  
small and rich with difference,  
deep inside us, one  
island inside the two of us,  
and as we move the island  
grows caves and meadows,  
deep woods and marshes,  
a pond where seabirds come  
mingle with the birds of earth  
and we hear their voices  
speaking in us, song and spell,  
fairy tale and deep theology.  
We are this island, I say,  
and I dare to say it because

**you taught me what island  
means, you gave me one,  
a jewel in the near Atlantic,  
to show me what an Island is  
and year by year you taught me  
how to be the island that we are.**

**22 November 2021**

***Happy Birthday, dearest love,  
I bless the day we met,  
and thank you forever.***

**=====**

**Let us determine the day**

said the bird at the window  
before she started singing  
in her other language, o  
the song one, the one like  
lamp light reflected in a bright  
window on a sunny day,  
as if to say: haven't you light  
enough with all this and me?

2.

Music accuses.

We all know that,  
hymnbook, show tunes,  
the Bach chaconne--  
there's always a finger  
leveled at you—*did you,*  
*do you, finally get what I mean?*

**3.**

**So many languages  
and even one is hard to learn—  
ask any two-year old  
how hard it is to forget  
what he knows and learn  
English instead, or whatever  
they speak where he got born.  
His round eyes in that round face  
tell you that language itself  
is an instrument of forgetting.  
You think to pat his little nose  
but his eyes follow the fingertip  
and you think better of it. Close  
your eyes and join me in forgetting.**



**22 November 2021**

**=====**

**Let the star loose in you  
she said, I heard the Czar  
instead and lay back  
ruling the modest steppe  
landscape of my sleep.**

She spoke again and said  
I will be good to you,  
but in my daze I heard wood  
and tried to build a house  
from what I heard, sleep  
seems true architecture.  
Then she spoke again, so softly  
I couldn't catch her words,  
but this time I understood.

23 November 2021

=====

Clouds come in all sizes  
it's good to remember.  
The Sun is just one--  
to see Her in the sky  
is to know yourself a single

**voice amidst immensity.**

**23.XI.21**

=====

Lift the latch  
old lovers  
lift and sing.  
The tongue  
is always young,  
a wild child  
let loose.

23.XI.21

=====

**They speak in their sleep too  
but listen quietly—  
hearing is louder than speech  
sometimes. the vast  
gasp of waiting for an answer.**

**Just watch them mildly,  
corner of the eye, let  
conscious mind play  
with some mere idea  
but listen softly enough  
and the trees will speak.**

**24 November 2021**

**| = = = = =**

'm thinking of a friend  
three thousand miles west,

it's just dawn where she is  
but I bet she's still in bed—

nights are heavy out there,  
the sea over the hill, the cry  
of wildcats in the chaparral,

and dreams are different there too,  
dusty with what drifts in from Asia.

Come on, wake up, I need a friend  
in the arroyo, need to hear  
what you see when you wake,

**need to hear what's going on  
when you walk, all day,  
hills and houses, stone and story,  
write me a letter, sing me a song.**

**24 November 2021**

=====

**Petty Cury meant  
the little stable,  
fashionable yard  
bookstore and snug coats,  
autumn day in Anglia  
o I remember, friends  
bring forgetting,  
I chatted with I think he was  
a priest and he remembered  
for me, notch of blue sky over  
and a long walk to that church  
on the edge of the woods.**

**24 November 22021**

=====



I hear a dog bark,  
barking, not a good sign.  
But the sun is shining  
and it's above freezing.  
if you listen hard you'll hear  
me trying to make the best of it,  
a kind of barking noise  
at the back of the mind.

24.XI.21

=====

I don't seem to write  
too much at night  
I wonder why that is  
sometimes I think that light  
floods the words with energy  
but the dark is loud with word.  
Sometimes I think I just get tired and  
the dark lets me be.  
Or is it just as simple as I can't  
see the keyboard in the dark  
and my fingers can't find the words  
that all by themselves  
would turn into a chaconne?

24.XI.21

=====

Thinking about Palestrina  
the church where little Mozart

sat and listened and memorized.  
thinking about the cold Adige  
flowing down from the Alps  
past the Council of Trent, thinking  
about human prejudice, the right  
to go on living, music talks about it  
all the time, go on go on and find  
the thing you mean, to the rest of us  
it will sound like silence, hush, applause  
and lights come back on,  
the priests leave the chancel  
and you are what you really are.

24 November 2021

=====

It's not that one thing  
leads to another. It's that

**it leads to the other, the one  
precise shadow the present  
casts into the future, place  
where everything turns real.  
Wishing is a magic trick  
that often fails, but thinking  
always works—there is always  
something there when you arrive,  
out of breath, but with a smile.**

**24 November 2021**

=====

**Ancient people  
standing by the door  
disguised as fluted  
wooden doorjambs--  
run your fingers over  
to make sure--or even  
stone pillars, their voices  
like water in the baptistery  
scarcely stirred by some  
holy dipper's hand. They stand  
beside every entrance,  
because a door--think about it--  
is always about going in.  
There is no way out of the world.  
2.**

**Children learn it in churches,  
museums, even schools  
bring the doorish wisdom home.  
Then their own house  
can offer miracles--  
you see the little ones  
standing in the doorway  
sleepy-eyed, but brave  
enough to stare, their hand  
resting on an ancestral knob.**

**3.**

**Were things here before us?  
The answer is not clear,  
the scientists are distracted  
by far galaxies, noisier beginnings.  
Were things our ancestors**

**or just our teachers?**

**I just got an early**

**Christmas card from the beech tree,**

**it seems to lean towards Yes.**

**25 November 2021**

=====

**Holiday morning  
all the cars asleep,  
lazy windows barely  
keep their eyes open,  
the trees are still,  
motionless, graceful  
as an old engraving.  
Nothing to see.  
Everything to be.**

**Thanksgiving 2021**



== == =

**It begins with a syllable  
carved on a stone  
in ancient Rome before  
the carver lost interest  
or was snatched away.  
Two letters, hard to be sure,  
PA it seems, but is it Latin  
(;father,' 'suffer' be open' 'Pan')  
or Greek ('rod''Rhadamanthus')?  
And of course we can think  
of dozens more, possibles,  
possibles, what did someone  
mean to carve before  
he or the stone was swept away?  
2.**

**Of course it just looks like Dad to us,  
Father Stone, stone-faced father  
of a timid child, stop right there,  
a syllable is scary enough.**

**3.**

**But why, why the stone,  
and why it comes to mind?**

**I walked through Glanum  
on an easy day, Roman town  
left in the south of France.**

**This isn't Rine but what it does  
stone houses, its language  
dense in our vocabulary--  
we can't leave home without it.**

**4.**

**He was one of the three  
judges of the dead,  
guided Greek afterlives  
to the bardos of atonement,  
adjustment, beginning.  
Three kings to do all that work!**

**25 November 2021**

=====

**Not even a bird  
comes by  
to stir the vista.  
But the color  
seems a little  
different now,  
sun from cloud  
or tired eyes?  
With a world  
like this, you  
can never tell.**

**25 November 2021**

=====

**What time is it?**

**It's dark.**

**What day is it?**

**That too.**

**I have told**

**all my wishes**

**all night long.**

**Short of breath**

**now saying**

**so much.**

**Only the clock**

**tells lies.**

**26 November 2021**

**== == == == ==**

**The rebbe roared  
his benedictions,  
sounded urgent,  
angry even, blessing  
is an anxious business,  
fiere metabolism  
of wishing good  
on other people, all  
other people, bless  
till out of breath.**

**26 November 2021**

=====

**Problems of being  
here. Anywhere.  
Here holds you  
by your feet. Gravity  
music all day long.  
But sometimes  
in the night  
it mightt let go—  
and then where are you,  
dreamer on your precipice?**

**26 November 2021**

## **THE GARDEN**

**A walk in the garden  
used to mean talking  
a lot and bringing home  
what you said and all  
you managed to hear.**

**Walking in the garden  
used to mean Babylon  
and Rome, messages  
from your own skin.  
massages by this busy earth  
and water, water, pools  
for floating, no beasts,  
only birds, and only those  
who know how to sing.**



**Walking in the garden  
used to mean music  
in the glad gloom  
of a rain day dawn,  
cellos and oboes  
and all the grey silence.**

**Walking in the garden  
used to mean a hand  
in your hand, a smile  
passing by, love  
and no law, a lady  
studying every flower,  
a knight by every tree  
on guard, who knows why,  
there were no enemies**

in the leaves.

## Walking

in the garden

used to mean a couch

alongside the stream,

silken or woolen

bedclothes for every season,

lie there and read

the cursive of the clouds

until the story ends.

26 November 2021

LAP

A lap is a when

**not a what.**

**It's gone when you go**

**but when you sit down**

**it spreads out to welcome**

**a laptop or a lover,**

**sitting down is pure offering.**

**26 November 2021**

=====

**Let me linger.  
Lingering is love song,  
lingering is morning  
all day long.**

**26.XI.21**

=====

Quiet, friend.  
Sometimes a flower  
is enough to answer,  
even in autumn,  
sunflower, purple roses  
from the florists,  
money adds meaning,  
haven't you ever heard  
a rose roaring?  
So be patient, dear friend,  
I'll get around to answering you.

27 November 2021

## VAJRAYOGINI

*In crimson glow of sunset  
her body says:*

**Ride me to the sky.  
Through the ardor of inward  
or garce of sliding up along  
the outer contours of what I am,  
ride my bdy to beyond the sky.**

**27 November 2021**

=====

**Systems interlock  
at the level  
of the individual.  
You are where  
they come together.  
Each of us a different  
set of systems.  
Is that what a galaxy is,  
network of systems  
that overlap and interact  
at the points we call stars?  
I look out the window,  
morning, try for a minute  
to count the systems  
that engage me, entrap me,**

**define me, make me.  
I'll leave the job to you,  
you have them, you are them, too.**

**27 November 2021**



=====

**Ring clinks  
on keyboard.  
Everything  
wants to talk,  
everything is  
part of the poem.**

**27 November 2021**

**MIRACLES**

**Without getting smaller  
or the leaf getting bigger,  
Milarepa and his friend  
hid under a fallen leaf  
to shelter from the heavy rain,  
Don't ask how that is possible.  
Ask how it is done.**

**2.**

**Wisdom's not a thinking thing,  
wisdom is a doing.  
Think all you like and then decide  
No, I will do the right thing,  
do it right, save me  
and mine from heavy weather,  
from all that seems to come down.**

**3.**

**Not that I know how to do it.**

**I just do it.**

**Milarepa both did and knew—  
that's the difference.**

**4.**

**Start by trusting**

**the earth beneath your feet.**

**If you can trust the ground**

**the sky can't be too far.**

**They roll around each other**

**incessantly, and here you are.**

**5.**

**Never wait for the answer,**

**let the doing be the answer.  
Hurt nobody, help everybody,  
calm yourself and count to three.**

**6.**

**Almost as simple as that.  
But don't trust me.  
Am I the ground beneath your feet?  
Am I the least bit like the sky?  
I talk, and that's the use of me.**

**7.**

**They don't seem like miracles  
when they happen.  
They just feel right.**

**It's only later, in talking  
to one another, or in that  
sinister conversation called thinking  
that a holy wonder seems the least bit  
strange.**

**27 November 2021**

**=====**

**Six A.M When  
the real men  
get up. Hunters,**

harriers, carriers,  
but also priests,  
power grid workers,  
chicken farmers.

What am I doing  
in this company?

Six A.M. Not  
a hint of light  
except the globes  
those power workers  
string along the road  
from pole to pole,  
showing not much  
more than themselves,  
The lights, I mean,  
not the workers.

Six A.M. It's like

**a game that's busy  
playing me,  
I have to keep  
talking to justify  
being awake.  
If that's what it  
is or I am.**

**28 November 2021**

=====

**Sunday morning nobody says.  
Only in sleep do we reach  
out to one another. Wake  
is silencing, reverent enough  
but where are you  
when I am incomplete?  
Nobody answers  
but asking is comforting.**

**28 November 2021**



=====

*phos augei*

6:21 A.M.

Almost tell

the sky

from the trees

if you know

where to look.

Up, up, it all

says that.

First Sunday

of Advent,

three more to go

before the light

comes back.

28 November 2021

=====

**Charm the daylight down.  
Turn gloom into gloaming.  
Belong to your ancestors  
for an hour, you don't  
know who they are but they  
are speaking. Language  
is your real DNA.**

**28.XI.21**

**November 2021 202**

**=====**

**The keyboard  
says it all.  
Twenty-six  
major and minor  
keys. Every word  
a prelude,  
every sentence a fugue.  
No wonder we all write  
so much, the music lures us.**

**28 November 2021**

**=====**

**Now I see sky.  
It was there  
all the time.  
The world's an  
old housecat,  
never really asleep.**

**28.XI.21**

=====

**Tamper with the evidence  
till fully awake.**

**The animals back in the woods,  
and I am empty as a road  
at dawn. Now travel me.**

**28.XI.21**

=====

**And only now it shows  
it snowed in the night.  
First of this winter,  
the daylight surprise.  
Think marble, Michelangelo,  
don't think Moby Dick  
or pale cerements.  
Think Banksy smiling at a wall.  
Think soft white paper under your pen.**

**28.XI.21**

=====

**Was it enough to say good-night,  
your wrists slow bent as from  
a keyboard they were rising.  
Could I believe your hands?**

**2.**

**Go back to pressing ivory—  
Bach heard you before I did  
and knew precisely what  
to make of your touch.  
O body, body, how deeply  
you have held the world—  
now let go.**

**28 November 2021**

## **ADMONITIONS**

**1.**

**Catch as catch can,  
she turned the birds off  
went back to  
is it really sleep when we return  
or is there someone else inside,  
suddenly arriving from the day?**

**2,**

**The doctor said Hydrate,  
drink lots of water  
but I was a sipper, not a drinker,  
and water is too alkaline for me.  
Juices maybe, sugary, tart?  
But the doctor had left the room.**



**I think my mother was a seal,  
we love all the water  
but keep our mouths closed.**

**3.**

**Who is inside me when I sleep?  
I asked the rabbi and he roared  
a blessing on me and told me  
to be grateful to the One outside,  
the One who handles all the details.**

**4.**

**Why do priests and rabbis**

typically wear black  
but lamas wear red?  
Is it as simple as night and day?

5.

when I think of music  
I think of keys  
but my voice growls  
out song before  
I know the words.  
Sound like Russian to me,  
words are just there  
to set the music free.

6.

It's hard to shake a finger  
at oneself, but poets try.

Baudelaire, for one, but then  
the rhyme distracts them  
and they wind up frowning  
at their *hypocrite reader*,  
*just like me*. But his frown is sweet.

7.

Bluish, now greyish.  
Me-ish, now they-ish.  
The world stares  
right back at me,  
the wind a warning.

8.

Someone in white  
running up the hill,  
gone by the time

**I write him down.  
Fleeing is completion.  
Even the smallest  
details an offering.**

**29 November 2021**

**= = = ==**

**Abbreviate the parade.  
Alleviate the standers.  
So much can be done in one word,**

**one block, one sign  
floated by. But what will it say?  
The next thing that happens  
is your sign from the sky.**

**29 November 2021**

**=====**

***clove or scarlet,  
womb of light that bears the air we  
breathe***

and so it ended  
the psalm or ceremony  
that had brought me here  
the way dreams do,  
to leave us, naked  
on a strange shore.

30 November 2021

5:30 A.M.

=====

And then look to the east  
to see what is happening,  
people live everywhere  
glory of cities, bow-windowed  
row houses of old Bushwick,

**November 2021 214**

**every stoop a sacred hill  
hiding the secret airy-way, yes,  
people live beneath the ground.**

**30 November 2021**

=====

**When the dreams have ended  
and the night has no more to tell  
they ring a bell, the city wakes,  
the river listens, the bridges yearn.  
For most of us day  
means somewhere else..  
The old can stay home,  
they have learned  
to endure the place they are.**

**30 November 2021**



## **STRATEGY**

**Don't do anything  
for the first time  
today. Winter  
is on your trail  
and watching.  
Hide in habit.  
Save the new,  
your secret weapon.**

**30 November 2021**

=====

**Now wait with me  
till the road comes back  
and tells us where it's been.  
Things know these things,  
who walked with you  
outside when the music stopped.  
You probably don't remember  
and I never knew.  
Someone was with you  
and the night knew.**

**30 November 2021**

=====

I had a tennis racket once  
lord knows why  
snug in its wooden frame,  
a parallelogram and why not.  
Badminton was not beyond me,  
a decent even honorable sport,  
but tennis is so angry,  
the poor ball, the grunting serve.  
Why do we even have words at all?

30 November 2021

=====

What color would you call it  
if you didn't look?  
Is there a feel to the air around it  
or around you that hints  
at what light might  
be up to on the skin of things?  
I knew a man once said  
he can't imagine colors.  
If I said 'blue sofa' he'd see  
the word blue and some dim shape,  
no color at all. Maybe  
words really are enough.

30 November 2021

**November 2021 220**

**November 2021 221**