

11-2021

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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

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=====

**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,

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**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

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