

2-2022

## Feb2022

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= =

**Imagine living without Buddha  
without Christ without Abraham  
or Torah, Edda, Upanishads.  
Imagine living in a world  
with only the stones to talk with,  
Karahan Tepe, Yosemite.  
Terrifies me to think of it,  
of then, but the earth  
is still here, still gosselling  
in every rock and creek,  
get ready, get ready,  
we;re all on the way.**

**1 February 2022**

=====

Massive, the evidence,  
Vienna in winter fog,  
yes, rough stone columns  
of the Opera House, snow  
on the Admiral's head,  
just enough to make kids laugh,  
and the subway is warm.  
Can you hear it now, Bruckner  
at Sankt Florian, Perutz  
coming home from Palestine,  
everybody listening, everybody  
asking Why are we here?  
The Turks are camped outside town,  
Beethoven in his bedroom  
analyzing silence, Are these  
my fingers? Will it ever

**be time to be now? I heard  
horses clatter on cobblestones.  
I heard church bells. At least  
I thought it was a church—  
who else is singing at this hour?**

**1 February 2022**

== =

**Fridge whispering,  
the little one upstairs  
keeps lotions and potions  
cold but not too. I keep  
some secret chocolate kisses  
there and try to forget. But it  
remembers, it whispers.  
Now you know what morning's like.**

**1 February 2022**

=====

**So many thousands of years  
to tell the truth, cuneiform  
to computer code and even now  
we've just begun. Unless  
somebody got it written down  
way back when but we never  
noticed and when on writing.  
So which way should I face now?**

**1 February 2022**

**=====**

**“Blue Salvia means  
‘I’m thinking of you’,”  
she said. It was Canada  
and television but could  
it actually be true?  
What does a flower  
mean by ‘you.’ ?**

**1 February2022**

=====

**Come back to where we started,  
where the heart is, presumably,  
all its little songs guiding us  
this way and that, ebb tide,  
high tide, the eger blood  
making us understand.  
If this is so, we know where  
exactly to begin. Every  
moment is a morning waking.**

**1 February 2022**



**====**

**Leave the tent  
go pee in the river,  
hurry back  
write down what it said.**

**1.II.22**

=====

**History is migration.  
Governments and cultures  
are only incidents,  
bus stops on the endless  
wandering of peoples,  
so many east to west, now  
so many south to north.**

**I wonder where the center is  
round which the human world  
so long so slowly spins.**

**I think of the stone  
on the Hill of Tara  
we dozed alongside of**

**February 2022 10**

**one warm afternoon  
and I felt curiously at home.**

***Imbolc***

**2 February 2022**

=====

**Pick a flower,  
make a song of it.  
Where'll I get a flower  
in all this snow?  
Indoors, in stores,  
for money, money  
changing hands,  
credit cards, signatures,  
already the son's half done.**

**2 February 2022**

## ENCOUNTER

A young woman was standing on the sidewalk across the street, standing close to the curb, close to the corner, as if waiting for a bus. Is there a bus line on this street? She stood there in strong sunlight on this hot day, though there was shade a yard or two. She wore a shiny white dress with a floral pattern, the flowers on it the only bright colors on this concrete business corner.

I crossed the street and stood beside her, a few feet uproad from where she stood. She did not acknowledge my arrival, I did nothing to catch her

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attention. She stood in the sun. I stood in the sun. She took no notice of me and I saw her only out of the corner of my eye. Yet I felt something shifting. It felt that the distance between us had turned into a distance around us, as if we were now somehow islanded in the same place.

A minute or two into that feeling a bus did indeed come by, stopped, opened its door.. The woman stepped up, climbed the couple of steps. I watched the grace of her ascent but did not follow. The door gaped a few moments, as if waiting for me, but then shuddered close. As the bus roared away, I had the strangest certainty that I

**February 2022 14**

**would never again feel completely  
alone.**

**2.2.22**

=====

**All the embarrassment of yes  
lurks in the ask. What if.  
And then what. Seize on doubt,  
go out, fresh air sill ease  
even the want, ;eave the wish  
at peace under the deodars.  
Remember those? Pasadena  
perhaps. Certainty breeds silence.**

**2 February 2022**



=====

**It's one thing to wait  
another to want As the bug  
on the windowpane  
said to the Sun.  
Because we are always talking,  
can't help it, you know  
about a word, the word goes out.**

**2.**

**Bug is not a pretty name  
but I don't know the right one,  
didn't see it clearly, don't see it  
at all now, but still, roundish,  
not moving, but now it's gone.**

**3.**

**Call things by their right names—**

**I guess that's the point of it.**

**That's where love comes in,**

**who and whom and why and when**

**and fifteen volumes of Proust.**

**To know what we feel**

**and say so, so the Sun can hear.**

**3 February2022**

=====

**A window is a little like  
the human will–  
it shows and it foresees  
but does not get there  
all by itself. Bestir yourselves,  
o human limbs, otherwise  
linger in the shuttered room.**

**3.II.22**

=====

**All lines are white.  
It happened in the night,  
ice sleet and snow  
and ice again illuminated  
everything. A book  
to read, frightening  
and beautiful, the way  
the great things are  
always or a little while.**

**4 February 2022**

=====

Carrying it forward  
into the geology of  
what is a night with no  
dream, what presses  
the dark together so  
hard I wake with white  
mind, snow cold,  
nothing seen, nothing said?  
So let the faltering  
image take refuge in my sleep.  
so that I know, so that I know.

4 February 2022

=====

**Wait for the camera,  
the elephant is slow,  
we all adapt to our necessities,  
Mississippi! Ice  
around us, every road  
a glacier, no elephant in sight.  
Because we're here,  
in the other world, language  
lets us, things let us be.  
Listen to me raving! I, mere  
spokesman for unknown authority,  
your guess better than mine.**

**4 February 2022**

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**= = = =**

**Too nervous to say it right,  
bludgeoned by fear  
I stumble along in slippers,  
halls of my own house,  
doorways to my old space.  
Totter, totter, speed  
is for those who know  
what's ggoing on. Me,  
I'm just a footnote to the weather.**

**4 February 2022**

=====

**A glass of sea water  
scooped off the beach at Rockaway  
and the same from Biscay—  
how similar, how other?  
What is in each glass  
besides hydrogen oxide?  
Does water know where it is?**

**4 February 2022**



## ALBORADA MISTERIOSA

Gravel border  
rond the whole house  
stumbled on tree root  
didn't fall,  
fix it later  
went back for coffee  
then carried light  
bundles awkward  
down muddy drive  
maybe dropping one,  
the father already  
waiting in the little  
blue car impatient  
the top rolled down,  
though still chill,  
car running,

**waiting, the mother  
came talking jazz  
I raved about Thomas  
Waller, called  
'Fats' the best  
but she  
had an old LP.  
she wondered  
about Ellington.  
Where were we going?  
Who was I being again?**

**5 February 2022**

=====

**Sophomore simplicities  
but why do we insult  
those who still linger  
after a year of listening  
eagerly at first then  
wearily to our drone,  
our long rehearsed monologues  
about this and that, our shtick?  
Thy're still here. Their smiles  
insist we give them more.  
Now we too have to start to think.**

**5 February 2022**

**=====**

**You saw the rainbow  
I saw just ice.**

**The trees tell different  
tales to thee and me.**

**A listener makes u[ half the story–  
any Bible tells you that.**

**5 February 2022**

## **TALMUDIC QUERY**

**Why would we build a temple  
when we live in one?**

**Then again why write books  
when beech trees talk to us?**

**I guess mind is not enough—  
we need remind too.**

**5 February 2022**

=====

1.

Time is a step

on another road.

Where does it go with us—  
we linger to find out.

Wayside comforts,  
filling stations for the weary heart,  
all the lucent maybes  
glittering like garnet  
pebbles on the rock slope.  
And we climb.

2.

This is serious, this  
is human manners,  
broadcloth costumes,

**eyelashes, flower petals,  
passports, wedding rings.**

**3.**

**The black bishop of NewaRk  
gave me my charge:**

**Open the door and keep on  
opening it. The yellow**

**Lama of Nangchen**

**gave me all the language**

**to do it with. The white**

**mother who bore me**

**gave me my hands.**

**That's all I know about color.**

**4.**

**Forgive the shift in register,**

**it gets personal sometimes**

between the rocks,  
snow humps in the mogul  
we swivel to descend  
faster than our brethren  
to the sentence's end.  
I saw them on television  
and could hear what the snow said.  
Weather is laughing at us anyhow.

5.

Back to time, our master.  
Sunday morning, 18 degrees.  
Yes, I've noticed, this sermon  
made up of names and numbers  
and no thing we dare touch.  
Remember Thomas Wolfe  
who lived just down the river,



***dahin, dahin!* he cried out  
in German, away, away, so far away,  
guessing where time takes  
anything that matters.**

**6 February 2022**

=====

**The seed of speculation  
scattered on the number system  
and we grow sideways  
into history. Fomenko:  
the Trojan War and the Crusades  
the same invasion narrated  
otherwise. Severally. Who  
are we to believe he says  
if not the numbers?  
But not all truths are true.**

**6 February 2022**

=====

**The seed of speculation  
scattered on the number system  
and we grow sideways  
into history. Fomenko:  
the Trojan War and the Crusades  
the same event narrated  
otherwise. Severally. Who  
are we to believe he says  
if not the numbers?  
But not all truths are true.**

**6 February 2022**

=====

**The vigilance of night  
lasts into morning.**

**What will come now,  
winter flower?**

**Who will answer  
when you fail to call?**

**2.**

**They called them desperadoes  
out west, but what else  
could they be? Or we?**

**What is the law  
we did not know we broke?**

**3.**

**Guilt I mean, I guess  
we all are it.**

**Hoodwinked kid  
pressed against a tree,  
hide and seek.**

**we called it ringaleavio  
because there were no trees  
and now we call it  
one more grey day.**

**4.**

**Get over it  
should be  
our national anthem.**

**We wake into,**

**walk into, whatever,  
waiting for the wolf.  
But he has worries of his own.**

**7 February 2022**

## NORTHWEST

*for Tom on his Birthday*

Solway Firth is Puget Sound,  
northwestern water  
quickens your life,  
you bring it, it brings you,  
you bear America with you  
*the sun rises in the West*  
and you look out on the water.

2.

The grand chronicle of your words  
brings China up to our chins  
so that we taste the oracles  
ancient as right now,  
or glimpse the stars of Kerala,

shores of south India, then  
leap arc-wise over Africa  
to hear the ancient Saxons talk  
and everything right now,  
now where you who are all of these  
speak things they couldn't know,  
the new that is you.

3.

So at peace, in love,  
on the firth you watch  
waters of the Annan  
southing their way to be west,  
as we on our fjord,  
Muhikanuck, river  
that flows two ways,  
watch the Adirondacks flow



**down into ocean,  
same ocean. Nothing between us  
but the word of water!  
We are one!**

**7 February 2022**

=====

*for Susan, on her birthday*

I went to France when I was young  
to prove I could,  
I was fat and dumb  
they thought I came from Germany  
and I didn't know really  
where I was from.  
I stood high up on Notre-Dame,  
on the tower on the gospel side,  
so I could look out over—  
hey, this is my city!  
I didn't know you needed  
language to own a town.  
Now you, who speak so well,  
theirs and ours and in between,

**you're going to claim that land.  
Don't go! I cry, we love you,  
we need you here,  
what will I personally do  
without someone who can  
look right through us  
and see what we're up to  
the way you do? You see,  
you see! If you have to go,  
leave some of your insight for us.**

**7 February 2022**

=====

**Who called?**

**I heard nothing**

**but I know.**

**Things do that to me**

**but this was no thing.**

**Not a snowball over the fence**

**not the fake snow**

**of the Chinese Olympics.**

**not a sheeted ghost**

**but white, white.**

**So I ask again Who called?**

**Who is walking up the hill?**

**Farm house but no farm,**

**everything is so far away.**

8 February 2022

=====

In silhouette  
beside the ice-sheathed  
hibiscus two  
deer browsing on seed  
you left there.  
I came out to look at them,  
they ran away.  
Life is built of reciprocity.

8 February 2022

=====

**We carry here with us,  
we call oit language  
and pretend to be somewhere  
else, But we are here,  
always here.**

**8.11.22**

=====

**He said:**

**A poet is someone with  
nothing to say  
and all the  
rhyme in the world to say it.**

**I said:**

**That's cute, and almost right.  
But the world has ideas of its own.**

**9.11.22**

=====

**Call my broker  
tell him to sell  
what I don't have,  
tell him to buy  
the blue morning air.  
But don't give him my name.**

**9.11.22**



=====

**Use  
Roman numerals to confuse.  
They'll think that II  
means eleven and guess it's  
almost time for lunch.**

**9,11,22**

=====

**How small everything is today!**

**The Iliad could happen  
in half a dozen lines, how  
a Swedish princess got  
abducted by a Finnish prince  
and all the savage Norse  
came roaring east,**

**one more crusade against the rising  
sun.**

**9.II.22**

=====

Can it be the other way,  
the other side of the street at last  
where some girl lives  
you'll never know  
but you walk on her sidewalk  
watching a sparrow  
making some use of a bare tree,  
yes, you think, it could be me.  
Because that is what music is  
and does, *the shadow follows*  
*wherever I go*, you know that too.  
You know what the priest says  
not a matter of getting what you  
want but wanting what you get.  
That's what streets are for/

*9 February 2022*

## OTHERWISE

Other there  
is always wise,  
if you want to know,  
really know, ask  
someone else.  
even if it's someone  
buried deep inside you.  
I think that's where  
other actually lives.

9 February 2022

## A DECK OF CARDS

laid out for you,  
not Gypsy mysteries,  
just ordinary oracles.  
Count to ten and then  
again. Kings Queens  
and Jacks—who are  
these personages who  
presume to have no  
numbers of their own?  
Just things? Don't think  
too long, pick a card  
and say Hello. What more  
can they expect? Ay word  
is a pledge of allegiance.

9 February 2022

=====

**Croesus was a king  
sounds like increases,  
rich as bejesus,**

**the boy sits at the table  
bigger than any at home,  
this is a library  
where the books come first,  
snoozing on their shelves,  
keep silence, silence,  
the lady with glasses  
hushes his chuckles  
when he reads he  
hears funny variations  
on names inside his head,**

keep silence, read books  
with no pictures,  
just words, words  
till you can see them  
even better than pictures,

you need this big table  
to sit at all alone,  
plenty of room for the words,  
the woman with glasses  
leaves you alone, sometimes  
you close your eyes  
and remember all the words  
you've just been reading  
and see clearly again  
what you have never seen.

10 February 2022

=====

**Suppose I were listening  
to music right now instead  
of staring out the almost  
silent window, car or two  
shushes by now and then,  
what would it be? And who  
would I be hearing it  
different from the me now  
tolerating silence?**

**How eilat we forget  
that the world does us  
and keeps doing, and we  
do our little best, get up  
play Mahler on the radio.**

**10 February 2022**



=====

**Come away from the window  
and open the door,  
do what the bishop told you to.  
The big secret is everyone  
has more than one job,  
telling and showing and loving  
and get up and open the door.**

**10 February 2022**

**POET**

**I am the storyteller  
who tells no tales.  
I give you a flower,  
a woman walking by the river,  
a drone buzzing over Pittsburgh,  
an old Greek eating  
a hard-boiled egg.  
I leave it to you  
to unfold what happens.  
Or else leave it safe  
in the sacred darkness  
of still unsung miracles.**

**10 February 2022**

=====

**As iif a piece of paper  
*a shtick papier*  
could manage to hold  
the whole world on it,  
and somone could read it,  
understand it, clutch  
to mind and heart the  
Torah of a single word.**

**10 February 2022**

=====

**Up by Scranton  
they7 used to call it phosphate,  
we called it soda, had  
to get used to saying  
Lime Phosphate at the counter;  
did they say phosphate fountain?  
I bet not. There are limits.  
even in Pennsylvania.**

**10 February 2022**

=====

**A multitude, basket  
full of crabs, langoustines,  
where am I, Channel port  
but which language  
speaks me the sunshine?  
Count the creatures  
multiply by me, I grieve,  
I look down on hundreds  
of living beings  
that beings like me  
propose to kill and eat.  
Where can I run  
to hide from this horror?  
And who will feed me?**

**11 February 2022**

=====

**On the other side of an aisle  
a warrior slept.  
Like those noble sleepers  
carved in stone  
outstretched in old churches.**

**Always ready to wake  
not in their old bodies  
but in the heads of young  
men, young women  
watching the carved shapes,  
running warm fingers  
along the stone.**

**Warriors are easy to wake,  
kings harder, saints**

**harder still, But when  
they wake, the world  
around them moves  
obedient to their energies.  
So many things you learn  
by hanging around in church.**

**11 February 2022**

=====

**1.**

**The inchoate miracle  
begins. By noon  
it will be now.**

**2.**

**Scattered in the gravel  
old carnelians  
engraved with faces,  
emperors and saints,  
we have little  
more than words to guide us.**



**3.**

**So we anticipate the past.  
Was Gesar really Caesar?  
Did only one thing ever happen  
and it's not finished yet?**

**4.**

**Boys should stay out of history,  
they have a slippery sense of fact.  
Leave the chronicle to women  
who know the order of things,  
who know the difference.**

**5.**

**That sounds severe  
but was a cry for help,**

**man floundering in the surf,  
the names, the names,  
the tall oak trees of Dodona.**

**12 February 2022**

=====

**This used to be Lincoln's birthday  
then something happened.  
Valentine's Day comes next  
or is that leaving too? Feasts  
infrequent in a business world.  
More holidays! More furloughs,  
kids freed from school, yellow  
buses cooling in their barns.**

**12.II.22**

=====

*Be in no body*  
the print-oy read,  
small print, fuzzy—  
as if today the body  
is what we must come out of,  
not go further in,  
our own or someone's else,  
somebody as we say.

2.

The words said not be in  
but did not speify go out.  
Is there that other place,

**fabulous queedom of Between,  
where all the body knows  
meets the live knowing  
of the other?**

**3.**

**Maybe the dream tonight  
will clarify what last  
night's edict proclaimed.  
Maybe along the way  
I'll find out what being means.**

**12 February 2022**

=====

**Wake into distance  
sandy steps  
soft upon  
the new desert  
of the day. Who comes?  
Who calls?  
On the bright sand  
the shape stands clear,  
silhouette of sympathy,  
world full of friends?**

**2.**

**The project is simple:  
say everything.  
let the silence decide.  
Sometimes we come**

so close  
and then.

3.

It came again in the night.  
The sand was snow,  
the bright was white.  
Images tumbled from the sky.  
When this word speaks,  
everything stops  
for an hour or a day.  
They tell us each flake  
is unique. If only we  
could read each one  
for its own six-sided sake  
and learn the real  
meaning of what we see.

*13 February 2022*

**=====**

**Who am I yesterday  
and why is today?**

**The words come talking  
from inside us,  
god help us if we listen.**

**God helps us if we listen.**

**`3 February 2022**



## ROSES FOR CHARLOTTE

on St. Valentine's

*Margaret Rose Kane*

my mother, first rose  
in all my world, her hair  
so like yours, her love  
holds me upright still,  
I whisper her name  
and love you too.

*Saint Rose of Lima*

native girl who took such care  
of poor and sick she lofted

right up to heaven, first  
saint of the Americas,  
native oof love.

*Rose Gallagher*

Aunt Rosie Gallagher  
had a cat you wouldn't believe,  
redhead, twenty-some years old  
and mean. they wouldn't  
let me near it. My father's  
oldest sister, her son  
older than his uncle, the cat  
hardly moved, lay there,  
watched and growled and taught  
me what it means to be old.

*Gypsy Rose Lee*

Some roses delight  
in shaking their petals  
in the wind of music  
so you can see right down  
to stamen and pistil or what  
really is that gold  
they hold in their hearts?

*Rose Macaulay,*

English novelist,  
one I cared for

the way she knew  
the Other Places  
in the world, all  
English are good  
at that, mapping  
and coming ashore,  
conquering Jerusalem.

*Rose of Washington Square*

had no future  
but oh what a past,  
a song said that  
but I submit  
in this late winter light  
there is no past

but only now, this,  
this red petal, this  
fragrance in the cold room.

*Rose Selavy*

the maestro said,  
Marcel of the field  
who played chess  
on rooftops, yes,  
even in New York,  
who made a heroine  
out of necessity  
or so I read, time  
to get up and do it,  
that's life.

I woke early  
to write thi s down

so you would have  
flowers when you woke,  
best I could do,  
florists are not open yet.

*Rose of Tralee*

my father sang  
so often, the pale  
moon rising, sea  
rhyming with Tralee,  
no voice purer  
than the Irish tenor,  
wish I had one  
but this gruff I love you  
will have to do.

**February 2022 78**

**good morning, Love,  
by the crystal fountain  
of our purest will.**

**14 February 2022**

## COAST

And then the sea answered.  
I lay on the sand and listened  
like the child at Augustine's feet.  
Florida again. Wisdom  
of the pelican, watched  
and said nothing. The sea,  
only the sea. Not even the saint.

2.

I am not a natural  
sprawler on seashores  
but sometimes the language  
thereof relaxes me  
into the lesser lingo of my own.  
Toes wet, mind exalted, persist.



3.

This part goes with a cello  
I can't play, the holy hum  
of it across the bay, the gull  
looks up, the teacher looks ahead—  
it takes more than music  
to abrogate the truth.

But me, I listened like a clown,  
every sound had its word  
up to me to find. My teacher  
smiled and looked out to sea.

4.

The sand was red—  
that much was obvious  
even to me. A mile or two  
of Flagler Beach empty for spring.  
For me and thee and pelican,

**just like alchemy.  
And I was healed,  
emblems of my craft  
renewed. And the sea  
granted me fellowship  
and I could bring  
my true self home.**

**15 February 2022**

=====

If it came to be milder  
and the sun began  
its secret work inside  
man and landscape  
then the birds too  
would hurry back and  
we would feed each other  
on seed and sensibility  
till the night watchman  
comes, puts out the light.

15 February 2022

====

A little bit the way the haunted fugitive images of dream, desire, anxiety, *surréalisme*, turn into the majesty of great art, the frantic guesswork of early religious guesswork, like Enki, sun god for some folk in the Near East, turns hundreds of years later into the official God of the later Roman Empire, *Sol Invictus*, the Unconquered Sun. I think the little poem is a song about that.

16 February 2022

*(Soken to accompany the poem in the Calas Archive.)*

====

**Get the words right  
and the song comes straight—  
otherwise music gets lost  
in the branches of what  
you didn't know you mean.**

**16.II.22**

=====

Lent?, the child  
thought meant  
when winter  
relents again  
and lets the roses in.  
But why so sad  
he wondered,  
purple vestments,  
no little snacks.  
He began to sense  
grief before going,  
began to be scared  
of opening doors.

16 February 2022

=====

**What kind of dog  
would a wise man choose?  
One that can read books,  
watch TV, summarize the news.  
If he can't find one like that  
let him rest in his quiet room  
or chat with people. Or get a cat.**

**16 February 2022**

=====

Light also is a kind of drift,  
easy easy from here to there,  
not just sleeping on the field  
like a wombat snoozing under  
one of those trees they have  
there, peaceful chubby beast,  
I saw one once in a game farm here,  
sound asleep right at my feet.  
Maybe light really is like that too—  
so many things I've gotten  
sideways in my northern way.

16 February 2022



## **MEADOW**

**Meadow meaning  
what to say, do,  
stretch of looking  
up the slow rise  
into the trees, slope  
where history happens,  
small herd of deer,  
a dozen wild turkeys  
waddle among evergreens.**

**How rare to fly!  
The ground has such appeal,  
calls to the mobile Stay,**

**linger into me. Then  
the car speeds up  
and I have something else to see.**

**17 February 2022**



**ascend! Moab is up there,  
Nebo, Everest, at least  
the sofa of Paradise.**

**3.**

**I know whereof it speaks,  
I too in a made-over coal bin  
brought the clunky machinery  
of being me, chemicals, radio,  
typewriter, table, chair. There,  
a place to work it out.  
And every answer  
makes the problem worse.**

**4.**

**Not evil, just hrd to deal with.  
What do you do with a word  
once you've said it? And when**

**the solution urns blue in the tube,  
what on this blossoming earth  
do you do with what you know?**

**5.**

**Because it really is springtime,  
even down there, here,  
cold dark, switch off the desklamp,  
sit in the quiet, maybe a mouse,  
maybe the wind in the bushes,  
maybe the enigma of silence.**

**6.**

**You've spent so many years  
here, in childhood, working it out,  
sighing, going up to bed,**

**dreaming about Mary  
fleeing Jerusalem, on her way  
to Glastonbury. Didn't  
you meet Them there  
not so many years ago?**

**17 February 2022**

*Hen Groen*

Small square of cloth  
tucked under the saddle,  
soaked with the horse's sweat.  
Arthur pulled it out  
and wiped his sword with it.  
Now no one will be hurt by it.

*By Night on Glastonbury Tor*

He told me to sleep standing up  
so I lay down and let the earth  
stand guard for me till I woke  
walking a s[or]al up that hill.

17 February 2022

## THIRTY-TWO VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME

A Druid stood before his youngest students and explained  
*A letter on which moonlight  
is permitted to fall  
becomes by that fact alone  
a love letter, no matter  
what words the letter says—  
behold the infinite versions  
and perversions of love!*

1.

What we say is seldom  
all we mean  
the moon has other tings in mind.



**2.**

**A decent religion  
explains everything.  
The light in the room  
comes on, mice skitter off  
and workman rises—  
suns and humans get out of bed  
once a day and who knows why.**

**3.**

**A message from an antelope  
was waiting by the window:  
look out and think that every  
passing shadow might be me.  
That way your garden speaks.**

4.

I was a Druid in another life  
or maybe I still am—  
a stuffy kind of priest  
full of certainties, knowing  
the properties of all things,  
scoffing at the poets  
since all they do is guess.

5.

Walk slowly when you're in love,  
let the body catch up  
in its own time. Or town,  
yes, town. You live in a town  
that travels with you.  
It's always two minutes till dawn.

**6.**

**To hear the hummingbird tell it  
sunlight is almost food enough.  
Listen to logic and the moon shuts off.  
Say your prayers and dreamless sleep.  
You were a shepherd once  
and know how very little  
anything anybody needs.**

**7.**

**On the other side of moonlight  
the dim palpations of the stars—  
you feel them on your forehead  
like stray hairs from a lover's head  
sleeping beside you on the grass.**

**8.**

**I was closer to her once,**

close enough to read  
the lean red thread  
woven through her tweed.  
Close enough to see  
that love is like geology,  
stratum upon stratum piled  
compressed by time, care,  
vigilance, disappointment.

9.

But I opened the envelope  
anyway, the wind  
was blowing strongly  
so I had no fear, or only  
of the wind itself.  
And then the letter spoke.

10.

When you're in school they tell  
you what they think you need  
on the road of turning into them.  
You know something fishy  
is going on, you're too young  
to know exactly what. But  
you can smell it everywhere.  
You sit by the long, tall  
classroom window none too clean  
and pray to be out there,  
where air has nothing on its mind.

11.

Or up its sleeve  
unlike these Jesuits  
Gurus Mullahs Rebbes,  
Druids one and all.  
And yet their holiness

fills the classroom too,  
the things they know!  
But why does all that knowing  
leave them as they are?

12.

I decided to test them.  
Wrote I need to tell you something—  
can you guess what it is?  
on a nice piece of paper  
and left it in moonlight  
one whole night, night  
of the full moon too  
Then folded it up and sent it  
of course to you.  
You never answered as such,  
but later that day you  
came by, we went for a walk,

noticed how empty the sky was.

13.

Mercy is best

and in French says Thanks!

Mercy is best,

forgives the silence,

forgives the speaking.

Mercy is nest,

stand in the closet in the dark,

feel all the coats and shawls,

they are woven of mercy,

the man was talking to you.

14.

Years later

I found the letter,

no envelope any more.  
It had a round stain on it,  
as from a glass left standing on it.  
A glass of water,  
I remembered being told:  
a glass of water is the opposite  
of a lit candle, but does  
much the same work.

15.

I left the letter in your drawer  
and wondered not for the first time  
how can we really know  
if our plans and stratagems come true?  
Failure dances with success  
eternally, slim far-off  
figures twirling on the ice.



**16.**

**There is some merit  
in your surmise  
the teacher said.  
I smiled but resented  
his pompous adjective.  
He understood and said  
You have a most un-  
convincing smile.**

**17.**

**Picture the letter.  
Picture it held by the lower  
left corner in the hand  
of the bewildered addressee.  
Picture the hand shaking the page,  
picture the letters of the words  
shaking off the paper**

like ants from a picnic plate.  
Now think what love means.

18.

Curled up in my pocket  
rosary of malachite.  
I know my place in this parade.  
I count the names of those  
on whom I call—  
'god' they say meant originally  
'the one we call.'  
And all around me  
men and women are whispering their  
own.

19.

Under a tree  
was where they taught.

No truth without a tree  
they said, and only  
by a brook or pond  
can words make sense.

20.

Hazel or walnut,  
stream where it pools out  
and herons settle  
to mind the flow for fish.  
And such fish!  
They live on the shadows  
of hazelnut leaves.

21.

Moonlight is no accident,  
you know. We put  
the moon up there

to catch a glimpse of Her  
at night, to know  
that Mother still wakes  
though the world seems asleep.

22.

Running water rests in a glass.  
The words you spoke  
murmur inside  
some old piece of furniture.  
Nothing lasts  
and everything does.  
Breathe in, breathe out  
and see what I mean.

23.

Put on dark glasses  
to look at a stone—

all those years in it  
could dazzle you  
or even make you think  
that is the end of time.  
Or a dirt road. Or a nice  
afternoon in the country.  
Not every stone is a tombstone  
but we all do die.

24.

Cheer up, cheer us,  
the Druid said,  
you can't be happy  
unless you make  
somebody else happy too.  
And when you do  
the happiness sinks  
slow slow slow low

**back joyous into you.**

**25.**

**O these wise men  
these crows and ravens,  
these men with notions  
like artichokes, ideas  
unfolded with some effort  
leaf by leaf from a central core.  
O these wise men,  
all wine and wit and weather  
and wait for the question  
before the answer comes—  
but I blurt it out, how can I not,  
my answer was born  
before any question—  
might I too one day be wise?**

26.

Half a mile further on  
she rested on a boulder,  
took a sandwich from her bag  
and ate it daintily. I watched.  
From where I stood, no hunger  
in me, patient as ever, I watched  
the movements of her lips and jaw  
working through the tuna salad.  
Their movements looked like words  
spoken in another language,  
one I almost knew—  
Archaic Greek maybe,  
I got the sense she was saying  
something to the fish,  
to the stone, the tree  
and even to me.

**27.**

**The teacher didn't let  
them write down what he said.  
No Notebooks! he cried,  
write it in your stupid heads  
instead, and slow turn wise.  
So as they left the room  
they strove to remember it all.  
But there was the meadow  
all open and bright, birds, sun,  
and as we all know  
a bird carries everything away.**

**28.**

**So near the road and yet  
the trees stood still.  
So don't be shy**



of saying what you mean.

29.

So many kinds of love.

Will you have mine,

take it and turn it

till it's right-side up?

Words don't make sense

but make the senses

do the speaker's work,

the savage tenderness of human

speech.

30.

They didn't come from Egypt

but they knew the Nile  
ran north and green,  
they came from the ruddy  
hills of Anatolia,  
you saw them far below  
when you flew from the Baltic  
to Arabia. Long gone though  
when you looked down,  
those migrations are finished now,  
all you have is that green walnut  
a crow dropped on your porch.  
Time stops mattering so much  
when you stand beneath the tree.  
And there he goes lecturing again.

31.

Be glad with me

the teacher said,  
the moon has read us  
and remembered,  
the sun will rise in rain  
because it all comes together.  
He stopped then  
as if there were no more to say  
but I could see his secret smiling.

32.

The chair squeaks  
as the writer speaks  
his silence onto the page.  
Everything has something to say—  
wood creak, crow speak,  
look up from the table,

**close your eyes and read the letter.**

**18 February2022**

***2:39-4:06 AM***

**=====**

**Let the lightest light—  
liberty is a disease**

of frightened men  
trapped in the cells  
of everyday life—  
a true and kindly cell  
is the dark room  
where monk or nun  
dwells in light,  
*alone with the stone*  
all warfare on the wane.

18 February 2022

=====

**Experience knows how  
to tell lies. Things  
happen only once  
and yet we learn to say  
it happened again.  
There is no again. Every  
thing is the first time.  
The only time. This hand  
never touched you before.**

**18 February 2022**

=====

**Why is that?  
said the children  
though they weren't  
so young anymore.  
Because the moon  
is a man, a lover,  
a lecher, he teaches  
us to want what we  
see by his light.  
But what do we want?  
the students complained,  
worried as they walked away/**

**19 February 2022**

=====

For one afternoon  
the earth was green  
again, pale green  
and hints of brown  
but now all is white  
once more, far trees  
shimmer in organdy  
and cars go slow.  
Everything white. I'm  
trying to remember  
what we use colors for.

19 February 2022



=====

Silver. But who  
is the woman  
on the other side  
of the coin. Owl  
big-eyes stares  
at me. But who is she?  
It says her name  
and what she rules  
but who is she, what  
does she really want?  
I mean what is she  
actually thinking about?  
O Lady of the city,  
to know your mind!

19 February 2022

====

On the other hand  
a silver ring  
but this one bare  
of all but gesture.  
Can the fingertips  
alert in space define  
a parable, moving,  
moving all alone?  
O Lady can your eyes  
become my wishing well?

20 February 2022  
*[translated from Hypnokeltic]*

=====

Horse-drawn carriages  
gave way to trolley cars  
then they succumbed to roaring  
busses ran on rubber wheels  
(Malaya will never be the same  
but London is still smiling)

so what will come next?  
The moving sidewalks  
of the fat man's dream, a stream  
of airborne gondola ten  
inches off the ground, step  
up and be gone,  
a city  
is all going deeper into itself,  
hop on, the street is just

**February 2022 123**

**for children and the homeless.  
Everybody else is always going home.**

**20 February 2022**

=====

Ring binder  
they call it,  
to hold  
your notes  
from class  
or the many  
pages of my  
masterpiece,  
line the holes  
up with the little  
fangs and snap  
the rings shut.  
Sometimes I catch  
my fingertip,  
sometimes I tear  
a whole page out,

revision can also  
be blasphemy.  
And are your notes  
from physics accurate  
or were you too  
dreaming out the window  
when the right word  
came and passed unheeded?

20 February 2022

=====

**Snow gone  
from the northern Triangle  
still covers the southern lawn.  
Sometimes the world decides  
to laugh at our certainties.  
It helps to keep us thinking.**

**20 February 2022**

=====

**How close can I come  
to the old brick wall,**

**can I hear in the mortar  
the rain of former years,  
hear in the brick itself  
those utter words the lives  
of those who live there  
breathe out into the walls  
just by being and being there?**

**I love it best when the bricks  
are wet, and when the vines  
in winter scribble up the wall.  
And then I press against the brick  
and what my own life**



**played back at me  
with the deep fidelity of  
any actual thing.**

**20 February 2022**

=====

**Now the monkey  
has slid all the way  
down the pole  
and run away. The well-  
greased pig has eluded  
the hands of his pursuers  
and rushed into that same  
away. It is time. The cuckoo  
flies out of the clock  
and vanishes, the last  
we hear is his non-stop  
birdcall, counting all  
the hours of freedom.  
It is time. The carriage  
is at the door. Shake  
his arm gently to wake**

**the coachman up. Time.  
Love left us here, time  
to make our way home.**

**21 February 2022**

=====

A long line running from Aldebaran  
ends in a sparkle on our aventurine,  
ring on finger, song on lips,  
the human hum vibrates through space  
and answers the stars, epic  
consequences discovered  
almost entirely in dream.  
Or in your native rock.  
Terminal moraine, glacial plain,  
your glorious pale yellow sand.

2.

Stand at the mirror  
and repeat after me,  
always do what glass  
tells you to do.

Because glass was sand once  
and sand is rock, close enough  
to diamond to pay all your bills,  
the rent you pay to live  
in a spacious language  
with heat and running water.

3.

Epic, I said, the long song  
of how everything happened  
after the prose of how it all began.  
How long it took to give  
names to all the stars we could see  
not we, they, the ones who loved  
out on the sands where night is clean,  
not the mists of our wet skies.  
But here we see them too,  
from time to time, their Arab names

twinkling in our books,  
and that river that reminded  
us poor children of our spilled milk.  
But how long it took  
the light to reach your finger,  
white sapphire today,  
more costly, stone of Venus—  
while usually her eyes are blue  
love makes the light true.

4.

So where did love come in?  
Not in Homer, not much in Olson  
but we fools find it under every stone.  
Pick one up with me. Toss  
history away, skim it on the pond, one  
two even three  
skips before it sinks, toss

it in the sea, the soft hollow  
left in the earth is what it means,  
this love stuff, this yielding  
into one another when the war is done.

5.

I was never good at throwing things  
away,  
my mind cluttered with rich  
randomness,  
I could never skip stones the way  
my father could,  
I could pitch a mean curve  
but what good is that  
when no one's at bat,  
wait, wait, there's a song  
in this, yes, a star  
is a southpaw in the sky

and we are all at bat.  
Use the stone to catch  
the truth of what it launches,  
even though the song now peters out.

6.

But the names we give Up There,  
the Ghoul, the Dog, but pretty  
Cassiopeia combing her long hair,  
who knew, who told, who went  
up there and came back down  
smug with secret knowing?  
The line reaches down to us  
stretches through us, points  
if we follow it to that unimaginable  
place beyond names  
when we have spoken all the names  
and used up all the words.



**21 February 2022**

## ANGELS

With the answer understanding  
who stands over me  
when I think I'm thinking?

We call them angels  
as if they were only messengers  
but they are their own message

they speak them to us, through us,  
as us when we watch someone  
pass in the street we won't forget

but a street is all about forgetting  
away away in crowd in shadow  
swift bus and down subway stairs

how dare earth swallow us in public  
yet down we go into all the aways  
waiting for us like supper or the sea

they speak as us in us, they rejoice  
ar every tile we pat into place  
in the vast mosaic of all they know

we slowly slowly get a picture of.

21 February 2022

=====

**When everything is wrong  
I am right, she said,  
so when it snows I sun.**

**Where is your shrine, I begged,  
so i can kneel before you  
and pray to see things right?**

**Stumble deep inside the tangled  
forest of your mind and even you  
will find me there, you'll know me,**

**I stand, a little paler than a tree.**

**22 February 2022**

## **ONE WAY TO DO IT**

**Begin with a line by  
somebody else,  
a whistle from some  
body else's lips  
and then you're free,  
you've paid the rent  
for all we hare, now  
live in the words  
that flow now by themselves,  
nothing yours but everything.**

**22.II.22**

## QUERY

**If religion is more than organized hysteria or government-mandated mind control, there must be a developmental phase that awaits us, of Experimental Religion.**

**What happens when you sleep with your head to the north? Is it different from West? What conditions, what variables function when you think with attention fixed on some symbol or iage or entity? What does prayer do? Does it matter if we see the sun rise on rhe solstice? What happens to the soul if we eat forbidden foods? Is there a soul?**

**How can we find out? Or should i  
close my eyes and see my teacher's  
smile, and fall asleep?**

**22.2.22**

=====

**Words are made to worry with,  
like the amber beads old Greek  
gentleman finger in the cafe,  
little muscle movements  
relieve big doubts. Speak  
a word or two and watch  
where they go. Half your angst  
goes with them. Now notice  
the man at the next table  
smiling at his wife. Isn't that  
consolation enough? Of course  
they're married—why wouldn't they be?**

**22.2.22**



== == ==

**With Rilke in the cafe.  
Neither of us drinks wine.  
I have coffee, he has a tisane  
the kind he learned to sip  
in Paris years ago. We speak  
in French, sort of, his good  
but rusty, mine made of sticks,  
stones, guesses, snatches  
of librettos. But we talk.  
The topic varies with what  
passes the window: big black dog  
leading little man, woman  
standing motionless reading  
then folding the letter, going on.  
A monk on a motorbike, a rook  
snatches a morsel from the trash.**

**It is so good to sit here with  
a man I so admire, feel  
so grateful towards. And now  
he suggests a piece of strudl—  
we share it, the waiter with some  
reluctance brings us  
two forks for our one plate.  
People are often shocked by poetry.**

**22.2.22**

=====

**O contradiction, lay  
another name for being  
at my door.**

**2.**

**With such solicitations  
he invoked the opposite.  
Granite listened, and the tide,  
sandstone obedient as usual  
and the game goes on.**

**3.**

**City after city,  
Rilke's rose  
and now only now.**

**The valve of Heaven  
lets a little light  
drop by drop into  
what we seem to see.**

**4.**

**And Karahan shrill stands  
smirks at the teenage Pyramids,  
and then our friend  
lifts his stone fingers again  
and we are housed  
in a species of splendor.**

**5.**

**So big my city,  
bigger than a ball  
or wheel or hoop  
or dance floor even,**

paved with meaning  
till we wonder where  
all the horses went  
and who flung bridges  
over so many waters.

6.

Words in apposition,  
not contradiction.

Once there was a wombat  
in a small town zoo,  
all the way from Queensland  
to lie quiet at my shoe,  
no cage, soft earth,  
I could have stroked him  
but feared to break his sleep.  
Round cloud now

**in very blue sky  
and I am similarly shy.**

**7.**

**City on a river,  
bird on a branch  
what more proof do we need?  
Some people cut a hole  
at the bottom of their door,  
cover it with a leather flap  
to let their cat go in or out  
at its own will. Hold that  
in mind and go stand  
any time of year on the plain  
and study Stonehenge.  
Little by little the tune comes clear.**

**8.**

**Up the subway stairs  
to the ordinary street.**

**There is a key after all,  
hidden all these years in your hand.**

**23 February 2022**

**=====**

**A holiday from being me—  
is that what death entails  
or is she another man's daughter  
who only winks at me?**

**24 February 2022**



=====

Patchwork sleep  
I wake in pieces  
angry ar my bones.

And it's all made  
out of fear, just fear,  
the universal solvent.

Temples turn into museums,  
out in the empty land I hear  
someone sobbing in the park.

24 February 2022

=====

**Wait, be c careful  
crossing the street,  
this is what calculus  
was all about, remember,  
two speeds, two trajectories,  
sometimes nothing seems  
further than the other side.**

**24.II.22**

=====

**Fifty degree slope  
original *Russian Mountain*  
that is, roller coaster,  
St Petersburg, 18th Century,**

**why didn't I know, why  
didn't they tell us at Coney Island  
when we swooped on the Cyclone  
or coasted calm on the Mile  
Thru the Clouds across the street not  
far from the roaring El.**

**They showed us Tirzah  
showering in wine, and wax  
assassins at their trade  
and a mechanical elephant**

**that trumpeted and stomped.**

**but never told us where  
our dance with pure gravity  
came from, we thought  
it had just fallen from the mind  
with money always there to help.**

**24 February 2022**

## FRANCONIA

The well by the willow  
remembers every face  
that ever looked into it.  
When I was there  
so long ago the mountain  
had a face on it too.

25 February 2022

=====

But that wss what I thought  
last night, now what  
does the nude day think,  
all new, all dressed in white,  
only weather is naked in the snow—  
doesn't the old song say  
*the wether and the ewe  
make lambs come true?*  
Ah the hoard ot words  
waiting to spring out,  
athletes in the everlasting  
Olympics of what we mean.

25 February 2022

=====

I need to write  
a stupid song  
so even I  
can understand it.  
Hands lifted  
to the sky like  
the priests of old  
I feel the music  
on my skin—  
could this really  
be music enough?

25 February 2022

**BY THE CLIFF**

**Laminar  
thin pressed on thin  
pages  
of the stone book.**

**Each page has been  
read once already  
no need to read it again.  
And yet I yearn to.**

**25 February 2022**



=====

**On the wilderness scripture  
he wrote a civil commentary,  
wore a tie to parties, kissed  
only the fingertips of ladies.**

**He was a scholar and he meant  
a whole lot of things, some  
rather hidden in his monographs.  
tucked away inside footnotes,  
couched behind statistics.**

**No one trusted him—why  
should they when they knew  
insists on treating everything**

**as equally important, birdsong,  
groan of crocodile. History.  
Whereas nothing really matters  
but your mother's name.**

**26 February 2022**

=====

**Blue sky fresh snow  
a postcard day in Annandale.  
Not the one in Scotland  
or the scary place in Jersey,  
kust here, small, snow, sun,  
tall trees, clean sox, people  
learning to read Ancient Greek.**

**26 February 2022**

=====

I think of the Holy Lance  
Longinus' spear  
a wound to heal,  
a wound to comfort Him.

I'm sure that somewhere  
in the Christian world  
the spear is cherished, maybe shards and  
splinters  
of it in many gilded places,  
weapon made holy  
by the wound it made.

I picture the wood of it,  
not much different from  
a shovel's handle, wood,

**wood, feel it in my fingers.  
go shovel snow or sweep the floor,  
holy habit in the heart of wood.**

**26 February 2022**

## THE WOMAN

She gave us song  
and dance and story,  
now we chase  
after her anxious  
to discover  
what new pleasure  
she will inflict on us,  
the tenses of her verb  
constantly changing,  
dawn of a new day.

27 February 2022

=====

**Barely enough light  
to see, the light  
must be coming  
from somewhere  
else, where can  
somewhere be?**

**27 February 2022**

=====

Try to be warm  
again some day  
he said to his rod,  
the magic wand  
wherein all futures  
nested, waited,  
smooth to the touch.  
The Magus is a man  
who tries to live  
outside his senses.

27 February 2022



## **HAPPY CYNIC**

**Understanding evidence  
is lawyer's guff. We believe  
only what we need to—  
the rest can blow away.  
Empty your filing cabinets,  
excavate your closets!  
The truth is everywhere outside.  
He smiled at the picture  
of the cat on the wall  
and sailed nack to sleep.**

**27 February 2022**

## AT THE WHARF

It is a question  
of the sea  
flowing back in,

rude Newfies  
flooding the harbor,  
who gave them boats anyway,  
they have an island of their own.

Language is the deepest courtesy,  
barrels of hake and haddock  
speak their way ashore,

I am a stranger here,  
but can sense the tension  
between the locals

**and the incomers they need,  
need their commerce,  
merchandise and custom,  
is it that way in my city too?**

**I mean if I had a city too.**

**27 February 2022**

=====

**A little song  
between her fingers  
she thinks it's just  
strands of her hair  
but he knows better,  
he can hear the sound  
of what she's thinking.  
Any true lover would  
call that singing.**

**27 February 2022**

=====

Where the pain begins  
the tree of days  
couns its leaves,  
azimuth.

Desert wind,  
hexagons of snow.

How little we know—  
whose breath inside the organ  
playing loud in empty church,  
simplicity of fear.

High overhead  
the line reminds us—  
what do birds know,

**really? Are they  
all this while the old patrooms  
of our broken manor?  
Aching we tunnel through the light.**

**28 February 2022**

=====

Soothe, balm on it,  
I tell you so little  
I mean you so much,

*erbarme mich* the music  
seems to say, have pity  
on me because and because,

the sun is bright today  
is all I know.

Now the chorus  
comes in, the terror of so  
many voices claiming  
all the same words,  
loud as can be, thunder

**of unfulfilled desire,  
o let me hear  
just one voice at a time,  
your voice  
and even that will echo  
back from all the silences of grief..**

**28 February 2022**



=====

**Walking the log,  
feeding the stone,  
so many ways  
of taking care  
of this little world.  
The sun melts ice,  
what is our task?  
Start by saying them.**

**28 February 2022**

**=====**

**Just feed the birds  
and it will all come right.  
The morning told me that  
and I believed the light.**

**28 February 2022**





**February 2022 180**