

2-2022

Feb2022

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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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,
Karahane Tepe, Yosemite.
Terrifies me to think of it,
of then, but the earth
is still here, still gospeling
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

February 2022 13

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.II.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.II.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.**

9.11.22

=====

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 ofBetween,
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

KINDERSZENEN

Making problems
out of solutions,
children are good at that,
little alchemists with
knotted brow,
 don't
squint so hard, the right
answer opens a dark door.

2/

You know how the cellar is,
ok in daylight when the sun
filters in through the peach tree
and the fuzzy window screen.
But come the dark run
up the creaky stairs—

**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