

3-2022

Mar2022

Robert Kelly

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

= = = = =

**When there's nothing to be said
but this. The sword of darkness
has cut off all discourse
and the body lies there,
talking to itself. Language
of pain. Language of turning away.
If it's so dark how can I feel so much?**

1 March 2022

= = = = =

**Saint David's Day,
harp and hope,
spring around the corner
but how cold the sidewalk is.
And this is the wrong language
ro say a thing in, but let
the sun come up anyhow.
There is a country where songs
still work, sea surf and remember.**

1March 2022

=====

How much is in the blood
and how much in the brain,
we can't be positive about
where knowing knows from.

Sometimes I think a nine
times great grandmother back
saw a pigeon on a fountain
and sent the seeing down to me.

Why do things matter so much,
some things, not other things.
The well by the willow tree,
the fox at the edge of the glade.

Old things, rare things now,
things I seem to have no first

March 2022 4

**hand knowledge of and yet
they thrill in me, memories
of what never happened,
or never happened to me.**

1 March 2022

=====

**Cavernous, the thought of you
walking through my mind
the way you do, the way they do
once you know them and are known.
All my corridors you know
better than I do, the little windows
that let the least light in,
you find your way.
Tell me what you find.
Tell me where I am,
hollow earth theory of the heart.**

1 March 2022

= = = = =

**Smoker in old
fashioned elevator
the lights sink
engulfed by ascent
each floor a new sea bottom
we breathe the smoke
happy for the air it carries,
when will we ever
escape from this geology?**

1 March 2022

= = = = =

**Not much to do
but do it again.
The fair day waits,
its fresh virginity
speaks Be gentle
to me, and I will be
your loving yesterday,
faithful as your dreams.**

1 March 2022

=====

And so it turned out to be
mostly my own fault,
the lilies on the altar,
cat asleep on the sunny steps,
no Sabbath anywhere in sight.
I had hauled the silence in
from somewhere, caverns
I had stumbled into, deep
below the obvious. My fault.
Now it was up to someone else
to bring the words back in.

2 March 2022

=====

**Arrogant animal, the academy,
dictator the dictionary,
hour-glass, language
shaped by the mere clock.
The clock strikes, the lesson ends,
go forth into the noisy world
ill-equipped to silence it.
And so how secretly we think,
try to find the road out of town.**

2 March 2022

=====

Sea dragon snorting salt
the air we live by. Saliva,
sal vitae, salt of life,
notes from an alchemist
still alive in Mindanao,
hiding from the warriors of peace.
Warm but not tropic. Beast
but with a brain. Miracles
by the hour, starting with time
itself, that passion play,
we are all dragged with Him
up the hill. Not alchemist
perhaps, a simple lover
peaceful in the Maine woods—
you can't trust me about geography.

2 March 2022

=====

**I turned away
from the raw beef liver
oozing on the butcher's counter.
I am still tuning away from it,
blood glistening on the wood,
I have never eaten such meat
but what else have I done,
what else have I done?**

3 March 2022

LO.gSAR

**New Year's Day,
Year of the Tiger in Tibet.
sTag they call him, as if
the hunter and the quarry were
somehow close to being the same.
Like this year and last year.
Like time and space.**

**2.
Tiger tiger white tiger
I'd say in Kentucky.
the way they greet each month
with rabbit rabbit
and a white on on new year's day.
So I think of the rare white tigers,**

Ive seen a couple in the zoo,
strange seeming, looking
at once angrier yet more peaceful.

3.

When all there was was folk
thetre was no folklore
only fact. Lore came in
when the folk were finished,
and smart professors
informed us of what we had been
and thought and told and loved,
told us to read books
to learn what we already deeply knew.

3 March 2022

=====

**Doves flutter in a cautious rose bush,
crow perches on a steeple—
which is truer?**

**What kind of people
worship in a stone chapel,
stone house, trying to understand
what the stone remembers?**

**O brick is made f bread and water,
a leaf is made from rain and laughter
all leaves are tongues, they tell
what the wind and earth tell them,
raise a glass to a stranger's window,
wet with rain, engrailed with vines
leaves tell the grapes all they know
and the wine remembers.**

Lick te glass to taste the final truth.

3 March 2022

= = = = =

**Slowing down,
no faster tgan a stone.
Could speed up
but why bother,
water is everywhere
and land and air.
We are already there.**

4 March 2022

= = = = =

**Things come to answer.
Sometimes I think there are
more gods than people.
Everything says Listen!
And the deaf amn hears most of all.**

4 March 2022

= = = = =

**Les Animaux
live in the zoo
but I am you.**

**We lurk outside,
at dawn we hear
the roars inside,
snorts, trumpeting,**

**their wake-up noises
marry us until
we are one again,
ready for the silent day.**

4 March 2022

=====

**Up the Narrows
there used to come
boats enough
to satisfy even me,**

**flags of far away,
blues and greens
flapping at dawn,**

**I'd sit there on the promenade,
on a kindly slatted city bench
and feel at home in Africa,
Norway, so many flags.**

**I knew the trickery of maritime law,
national registry, half
of all cargo ships seemed**

to come from Liberia, all that,

**but still there they were,
the flags at dawn, gulls
gracefully raucous around,
all the elsewheres
floated to my knees.**

4 March 2022

= = == = = =

Open it, infant,
as if it were a tale
you were about to sing
soon as you have words.

Mouth. Boca. Stoma.
A well with teeth in it,
a wet tongue. Lingua.
Zunge. Speak! speak

for Christ's sake, your
nearest Fod. let the nave
hear your wailing, wet
something on your brow,

murmuring cleric, soft arms.

4 March 2022

== == ==

**Absolute alone,
a kind of drink
turns green in spring
from all the winter white,**

**drink me. I am
the living answer
to the question you
have never dared to ask,**

**though it burns sometimes
at the back of your mind.
We a;; have one, you know,
and that is where to go
the next time doubt**

March 2022 22

**rousts you out of your house,
mice one, dull as furniture, repose.
Go to ,mind, it's the same one
for everyone, hurry, hurry
but it s never too late.**

4 March 2022

=====

**There are barriers
but wind whips over them—
be wind.
There are doubts on all sides
but music distracts you—
just be a song,
be a song for a while and the air
you hum will contradict
the lurking enemy,
so even if he wins
the song foes on.**

5 March 2022

=====

I keep thinking of brick houses
because I grew up in one
and never since. I keep dreaming
about zeppelins overhead
because there are none.
I keep reaching for a cigarette
I havent smoked in forty years
and nobody smokes now.
I wonder if all this means
I too have a personality,
a thin-soled mix of then and now.

5 March 2022

=====

I write to you in Thinglish
because I know no other way,
a hand, a knee, a sheet
of paper, a rose petal
found in the snow outside
a florist's door, a blue car
goes by when all the cars
are black and grey and white,
a fox in the backyard, yes,
feed him too, a book on the table,
don't even have to open it,
enough that it's there,
enough that it's there.

5 May 2022

=====

Animals on the mind,
a dog with beard,, no,
it's something in its mouth,
a glove maybe, or a cat
asleep on the porch rail, one
ruddy leaf floats down,
rests on his back, Nature
calling attention to herself
all over, any minute now
I bet a bird will fly by.

5 March 2022

=====

Susan saw a tiger
in her mind, took
a picture of it, sent
it to me. O thank God
for all the verbs in the world,
striped or dense or just
humming in our heads too
while we look around,
we do everything that is.

2.

It was in skimpy bushes
by a river I guess,
no quarry in sight, no speed,

just an orange animal
walking along. In India
they scared me when I never
even saw one, not even as I sat
drinking Darjeeling tea in a place
in Assam called Place of the Tiger.
But now when I see one,
this picture walking past me
slow, slow, aware of me
as I of him, there is no fear.

3.

Way out East they call
this Year of Water Tiger,
they know how words
fit together, no rubber bands
needed to hold nouns together.

**Water Tiger fierce and subtle,
wakes the energy and calms it down
until the moment comes.**

You know, the moment.

The tiger looks you in the eye.

5 March 2022

=====

**A friend accuses me
of graphomania. Wish
he were right and I
was mad and not just wrong.**

5.III.22

= = = = =

**So many people
waiting for the other
side of everything.
I would hurry across
a border but then
it would be just one more
country, another this
here place. Brothers
and sisters, it is hard
to chew thin air. Come
with me, burrow into here.**

5 March 2022

=====

**In Paris you never know
what time it is
because the bells are always ringing.**

**Even in the dark when no one sings,
there's still that long snaky confusion
called a river. What time is water?**

**When does a man walking on the quay
finally give up and turn up a street,
into that populous despair, hotels,
houses, and worst of all the closed
shops only daylight unlocks.**

**He stands by the glass and sees
a stuffed otter and a crossbow**

**barely lit by the streetlight. He
tries not to cry, tears are wasted
on an empty street, but still.
Are there dolphins in the Seine?
Only the carved ones on fountains.
But every little bit helps. Furthermore,
in Paris the time is always right.**

6 March 2022

=====

**Michelangelo's birthday.
discoverer of the human body,
though there's a self-portrait
by Dürer, nude, that gives
an early sense of it. Leg! Groin!
The ankle bones of David
before he became one more old king.**

6 March 2022

=====

**Stand at the cave mouth
wait for the voice.**

**Small cave, big enough for a bear
so not sure what kind of voice
the earth has here, what accent
it chooses to impart the lesson.**

**You're not afraid, you know
this cave was just an ice-house once
for the big house on the hill
in the dicey days before AC/DC.**

**No ice now. Just voice. Voices
of all the lovers, hunters, hidiers
who murmured in this hollow.
We hide from earth in earth.**

**A brilliant friend put on her play
right in there not too long ago,
actors and audience all squeezed together,
just the way it should be,
We are earth.**

6 March 2022

= = = = =

**Arrive, river.
You always knew
it would bring you home,
be home. You accompany it
year after year, respectfully
stying on the riverbank,
not dring to insert
the self that stands there
into the self that flows.
We are creatures of the shore,
nothing more.**

7 March 20022

=====

I looked for a letter
and found a tree—
wouldn't you like to be me?
I heard the song,
hurried to the window,
nobody there
but I could hear.
Hello who are you I called
but the window only shimmered,
morning light,
dawn all day long,
I'm glad I didn't lock the door.

7 March 2022

=====

**Marrying monks
or nuns is all we are,
poets in this society,
supported by old
cloisters they call schools
where we slave or slack
our lives away in holy
enterprise, teaching young
how to be just like us.
These places must be sacred
to pay us well for doing that.**

7 March 2022

=====

Turning away for a moment
from the question of pain
we examine the nature of the low ridge
between lawn and stream,
glacial, we reckon, trees on it,
most of them new growth, rose
since we first settled here. Grass
winter-withered, fern brake,
saplings, taller up the slope.
Climb the muddy path with me
to see the little river rushing
southwest on the other side,
safe in its own slim valley, eager
to get to its resting pond
(beavers, nutrias, mallards)
before it plunges north
and west again through rap[ids

down to its mother river at last.

**This information, sketchy
as it is, is all we can trust.**

Now what was the pain trying to say?

8 March 2022

=====

External travel, passport from hope,
leave the place of saying *Where I Am*
and cross the ocean, each wave
creating swift impermanent shadow
as Proust remarks. Reading
is how such travel starts—
you read and read and all at once
cry O there *is* somewhere else!
Already you hear the foghorns bleat.

8 March 2022

=====

Everlink, the sing-
song angeli.ng,
nothing ever all apart.

It's what the pregnant
person knows,
everything is different,

continuous. One knows:
"It is a murmur
in the midst of me,
it follows me to follow."

And then we're there.

9 March 2022

=====

Confess: there is a special city that you dream in.

Comfortable streets, buildings noble to the glance, no need to go inside. And a special river.

You in your silent helicopter float this way and that, watching, easy as a leaf, and then, when something catches your whim you instantly descend. Confess: you have borrowed bits of Paris, Berlin, even Delhi for your town but it is still mostly London.

In daylight you walk by the embassies and circle the Royal Albert Hall, RAH, you cheer, like the young men playing softball in the park.

**But the real city business is the night.
So many friends you've made in shadow!
And secret doings in the museum,
or the whole city is a museum,
a musing room you leave
reluctantly into the sightless sleep
of ordinary night. No fear,
your passport will not expires,
the river never stops talking.**

9 March 2022

ADRIATIC

1.

What we mean

is always on the other side.

Aeneas to Italy, Diocletian

to Dalmatia, endless ferrying, wine,
wanderers, words.

2.

It is like that in our town,

trees lacey with new snow,

the sun waiting. The book

lies open on the table,

poem, painted cover, body

leaping in a room, over

the lurking window, light.

3.

**We watched it from Venice
stood by the white church
and almost understood.
The sea makes far near,
the sun was coming out,
there is something to be done.**

4.

**I know it mostly though
from old poetry, Odysseus
chugging up the shore
to his lost found island,
epics and not much evidence
except the waves. The woman
waiting. Did his hands
tremble as he stepped ashore?**

5.

Mine did at waking,
mind milky with confused prayers,
there are days like pop songs,
trivial, public, irrelevant
but there they are,
I must learn to endure my mind.

6.

Or what is the other side of prayer,
other of the words
we think we mean we find
ourselves saying? Long
narrow sea, different languages apart.
Speak them for me. Speak me
at least in one.

7.

Or are we there already?
Other side, mother tide,
born over and over?
Forgive me, we means me,
I keep making that mistake
of thinking I am not alone.

8.

But, you'll answer, some real
you I mean, but one is, you are,
I am, never alone in language.
Open your mouth and you're in a crowded
room.

9.

White church, white surf,
white gull to gloat
over the fish dock
and they say things too

as they gorge on scraps,
little boy I was reading fat books.

10.

So that's what the sea says
but only if you think about it.
Cross me if you dare,
what you'll find is just more here,
Notice how ill-equipped
you are for swimming my miles,
the other side is just a dream
anyhow, listen to your mind,
you'll hear weird languages enough.

11.

I must be lonely
if I'm chatting with the sea,
and not even her local currents.
Not lonely, just early

waiting for the day to start
washing up on the shores of sleep.
Wake me at noon
when no one sleeps.

12.

Greece, or Italy.

I never could decide,
we took our law from one,
our logic from the other.

And war from both

On this winter day Slavs
murdering Slavs along
yet another sea, other side
of the other side.

13.

**I think of the dying Virgil
sailing back to the heel of Italy
and the long road Rome.**

**We do not need to kill our enemy,
it is enough to speak clearly once
their secret name, and then a feeling
comes between you, quiet, pale,
a little like an iris, or a lily.**

10 March 2022

= = = = =

**Clothes don't do much in rivers
so one takes them off, folds
netly on the dock, and slips in.
It sometimes helps to recite
the names of famous cities
on the river, any river. Rome,
Vienna, even Budapest, even
Pittsburgh, that has three
rivers of its own. One swims then
sleekly against the current—
one knows well where it's going
but not where it's coming from.
Where is the womb of rivers?
How can one find the mother lode
from which all this liquid silver flows?
Worth the effort. If you forget a name
one can always say it later, later,
when one series of the struggle,**

**rests on tube river bank sighing
Delhi or St. Petersburg, lie there
listening to kids singing on the levee.**

11 March 2022

=====

**It says the sun
and who would doubt?
The numbers are right,
the glass is shining.
I pick up an old Latin poem
and think along with it,
lovely Latin, but
when will my spring come?**

11 March2022

=====

**Looking out the window
can be treacherous—
it distracts you from the gearbox
in your cranium,
where your work is waiting
and the day is stored.
Blink and think?
No, none of that,
none of that thinking business,
try looking into your hands,
try to remember.**

11 March 222

NEAR KLAKE KATRINE

As you drive out of the lot
of the fancy grocery
(tinned herring from the Baltic,
a mesh sack of onions)
you see on your right
a massive rock wall, glacial,
its strata tiled down towards
the same highway you're waiting
to green light your way on.

This rock face to me seems
worth all the symbols of half
a dozen religions, it is sheer,
visible, permanent, it seems
(honesty) to love us as we pass,

**it has been kissing us since
before anyone was even here,
Lenape, Esopus, Dutch, Brits,
us, just us. The smile of stone!**

11 March 2022

=====

How each flake
fits together so
neatly with its mate
to make by billions
this bright opaque.
All shimmer, vague shape.
Ghost trees around
a roadside accident,
dark cars attending
car skidded into fence,
all like a silent movie
from nineteen hundred and five.

12 March 2022

=====

**Why is it so
no physicist explains
only how, only how,
never why. Or we
know why each
thing happens from
its local happener
but where did it start,
as well ask why is the wind.
Is the world a wound?**

12 March 2022

=====

**A line as long as a river
as quick as a bluejay's cry,
breath tumbling down a story
rigorous to tell, to get
the colors right, the sound
of wool, the diameter of wind,
and who is the captive princess
watching from the city gates?
Get it right when it happens again.**

12 March 2022

=====

**On the way to crying out
what doesn't need to be said
but yearns to hear itself spoken,

a scarf in summer, a a log
smoldering in the fireplace,
its flame forgotten. We need sleep

the way the world needs water,
dissolving the phony solids
of our education, calculations,

numbers and all our other mistakes.
Sing, for heaven's sake, sing!
Meaning wails in its cradle,**

meaning waddles down the street.
the mind never reaches puberty,
or rarely, capable of giving birth

to a thought in someone else,
priestcraft and rapture, pirate ship
braving a new-found coast,

and who will hear it when I run
my fingers on the tight-woven wool
gently to rouse the wary sleeper,

but who will hear me if I don't ask,
my silence a valentine lost in the mail,
now tell me what summer means.

12 March 2022

=====

She had learned too much down there to be let back on earth, especially with a husband who poured out songs and secrets the way a barmaid gushes wine from her pitcher. No, she had to pretend to m die again slid back down the long muddy chute into Uncle Hades' estate, where she, and what she knew, would be safe. Of course they would let her tell, tell true, bit by bit, year by year, to those of hes husband's tribe who cared to, dared to, listen to her

**whispers, rising right from the underworld
into the ear inside the ear.**

. . . 12 arch 2022

=====

**Blue sky white earth
us blood-bearers in between.
It must look like a flag from afar.
No wonder there is so much war.**

13.III.22

=====

Bare tree,
sun-cast shadow
on the snow.
Imagine all the shadow shapes
inscribed on the snow
by this one tree
on this one bright day
as the earth moves the sun around
or seems to, and the tree
makes up its mind.
Picture a scroll
pf all its shadows,
the silent ode to time it sings.

13 March 2022

=====

**Birthday season.
I see my friend's face
in the snowdrop,
voice in the golden
tongue of the crocus new-risen.
Spring soon, season
of remembering.
Everything reminds.
Oh that;s what words are for,
and legs to walk the new earth
and hands to say so.
Sometimes I think time
is our real anatomy.
I miss my friend. The sky is blue.**

13 March 2022

=====

**Cast ashore on this hour
from billowing dreamless sleep
I take myself seriously
and the sights around me.
This is the world where I must live,
no choice, I breathe on land,
*Guten Morgen, Herr Tag,
Bonjour, aujourd'hui.*
By nightfall I will try
to learn your actual name.**

13 Mrch 2022

=====

**Dolmen. Miracle.
Table in the sky.
Or gate of marriage,
two held in place
becoming one.
Frightening. Birds
fly through it,
a man could stand
in that arch and see.
What would he see?
Would he be afraid
of the shield above his head,
tons of rock, and what
come to think of it
must the sky weigh?
Let him step through and out
the other side.**

**We wonder what he has learned,
we read the bones of his settlements,is tombs**

to find out. But not enough.

**We have to stand where he stood
in the great stone danger door
to the world beyond, to see
endless meadow of our meaning.**

13 March 2022

=====

I would write a sonnet for you
if my fingers were cold—
that kind of poem needs gloves,
satin or cotton to say smooth.
But my hands are warm,
hungry even, want to touch
you directly, mediated only
by our skin itself, the soft
sentence we wrap our meaning in.

13 March 2022

=====

**Fear makes blind among its images, future
illusions, pat misunderstood.**

**Looking through the terrorscope,
no, trash that insidious tube,
roll your palms around pure light,
cup them to your eyes and really see.**

13 March 2022

=====

hen a child I watched
where the wind went
I wanted too
and all the way
the road kept talking
until even I as a child
could understand
but what I knew I still know now
a way away! something
ever on it, keep going,
sometimes I think it must be me.

13 March 2022

=====

**Tear your wa with me
blunt-fotted through the greenery,
rushes, radishes, who knows
the names of things
she's the one who will tell us.
move through, disturb the green,
all I know is brute my way
through whatever's there,
goal-less forward motion, rapt
sumbling, quick as oaf can,
that's how we move, move. Language!**

13 March 2022

= = = = =

**Fear the darkness
fear the light**

**both have their ways
of hiding the truth.**

14.III.22

=====

Where do the ashes come from
that line the ashtrays—
half-globes of black plastic
notched for cigarettes—
in this house where no one smokes?
I speak of the house I dream in
though the one I wake in
is just as smoke-free.
Those cheap little plastic bowls,
no cigarette in sight,
where do the ashes come from,
what do the ashes mean?

14 March 2022

=====

Milder morning
in so many ways,
I love you for the stone
you found on the beach,
stones I should say,
a flock or fleet of them,
which word is best,
arrayed on the stovetop,
each one a choice,
you bent to pick it from the sand,
a message from the world
only you could read.
I smile at those mystery letters now.

14 March 2022

=====

**But if nothing comes of this
but this, that too must be
a species of music—not opera,
perhaps, just a vice or two
sharing, daring, to say the same,
same what, tune, words, formulas?
Anything two voices do
is an equation—the heart solves for x .**

14 March 2022

THE IDES OF MARCH

The odes warned us:
passions are knives
we might be slain
in the senate house of our thoughts,
velleities, feelings, . Beware.

2.

But we thought it was just history.
we did not recognize
that I am Casar, every one of me,
and Brutus (*kai su, tekne*)
my fondest thought.

3.

Wounded by desire
we stubble to many strange altars,
kneel there, growl or whimper,

not sure to whom we pray,
is that Venus or Minerva,
or my own twisted shadow
on the old tile wall?

4.

History is only you.
You are the rebel
and the murdered king,
the prophet risen
and the prophet slain,
the senate and the thousand
campfires of an army on the plain.
No one but you, the other name of me.

15 March 2022

=====

for Kim

**Isn't it curious that X
ancient abbreviation for Christ
should come to be the letter
to mark the unknown quantity
in all our equations?
What are we really looking for?**

15 March 2022

=====

**A used to be a bull of course
menacing us with lowered horns,
and M a tuft-eared Owl
watching us from a local tree.
So that's what I am when I say am,
but what are you, and who
are all the other letters
stirring around us before our final ZZZ?**

15 March 2022

= = = = =

**It feels like now
but feelings can deceive,
the snow is mostly
melted but who knows?**

15 March 2022

A LOCAL HISTORY

**On the edge of campus
car skidded on ice
crashed into fence.
Nobody hurt.**

**But that same day
think of the two thousand
students and teachers,
all the fences they smashed
or climbed or built up in their
deep research or in their sleep,
think of what keeps us in
or out, think of how we cope
with such inclusion, exclusion ,
or rest there watching some
bird settle on the broken fence.**

15 March 2022

=====

**They could be waiting for me,
why not, everything else
is busy at the well-head or the river,
soaking up what flows,
trying to make it stop
and dry on their hands
so that they will finally
know what water knows.
But they have emptied their minds
of everything but me,
so I am left alone on the levee
waiting to become the one they mean.**

15 March 2022

THE MEANING OF IT

Purim on St Patrick's Day,
I can't tell my right hand from my left.
But the birds are at it,
those faithful Judeo-Christian pagans,
coming for spring or heading north,
every king should give a Jewish wife.

15 March 2022

=====

No one in the night.
I carved her initials
into a cloud, it rained.
I whispered it to a pine
ut the tree had other
things on its mind.
Not even sleep lets me say it.

16 March 2022

=====

His love song
was simple,
he wanted
to lick her wounds.
The prest said No,
the rabbi looked
the other way.
This is how rivers
are born, the wound
is healed, the song goes on.

16 March 2022

=====

**Thirty-six outside
seventy-two within,
a symmetry so rare
I've never noticed it
before. And I do spend
a lot of time looking at numbers.**

16.III.22

=====

I keep trying to read the answer
but somebody keeps moving the stones.
Should I read by shape or size,
mineral exactitude or how they feel?
And who keeps shifting them,
and why? What a way
to spend a life, mine or his.
People tell me the stones
are really words, pebbles
or boulders, just words.
Language is limitless, I try again.

16 March 2022

=====

**Seas and mountains
and nations between us,
a book is a little thing
that can float most of the way there,
slide down a slope, slip
through foreign languages,
puzzle the authorities.
Even puzzle the author.
Only the reader makes sense.**

16.III.22

=====

The chain breaks
the elephant runs free.
What is to become of me
in this strange cold country,
not a leaf on any tree?
Am I sure I'm even me?

16.III.22

=====

Edgewise

aviator

**as if only one
balanced wing
but the bird
could still fly
heaven-wise—
a call for unity,
heart on hold.**

16 March 2022

(from an old scrap)

=====

Cells of a honeycomb,
heart of a dragon,
room for one night
in the last hotel on earth,

yes, spring is coming,
you feel the green
but there are little
walls and corners everywhere,

enough to hear as rapture
the random shouts of birds,
taste the honey, close the door
and linger in the quiet loss,

let history be a broken habit.

16 March 2022

=====

**One crow feather tells enough of this,
sweep it over blank thick paper
and it will leave a map of France, central,
north of Luberon,
tiny roads that somehow
big people walk along. Town
to town the bird flies, feather here
a gift, and there a walnut
dropped on the back porch where
only natives dwell, or immigrants
sometimes from some decent dream.**

16 March 2022

=====

**The flower of being where she is
scents the whole day with color.
She walks alone along her river.
She understands.**

2.

**Sometimes, staring at the church
spiring up from the far shore
she feels she is a word, a new
word about to be spoken.**

3.

**Her mother told her so many things
but this thing she left for her
to discover herself. In herself.**

Feel of her tongue on the roof of her mouth
all over her body, making sense.

4.

The river was a part of the equation,
like the equals-sign pointing
to the x she aimed at.

Flow me with thee
she felt herself saying
and the language too was new.

5.

All the way, all the way,
that's all she demanded
of herself or of that other
self, the city around her
pierced by the river.

**She looked over at the church again
and thought the body reaches
to the end of the soul,
and wondered if was permitted
to think that thought.
Or any thought. Who are you,
she begged, Who are you?**

17 March 2022

= = = = =

**All by himself to find the way,
the way away is how to get here,
really here, where time is stored.**

17.III.22

=====

Vacant lot
on city edge
a boy with bow
arrows and a cardboard
carton to aim at,
no house nearby,
no sound but the snap
of bowstring,
crack of the target.

Or ten
years later
near the ballpark
thirty thousand
voices shouting one
word he can't recognize

but understands.

**Or an arrow
lost in the air.**

18 March 2022

== == == == == == ==

**What the night told Mahler
he whispered to me.**

**we do that for one another,
we all try, we all can,**

a stranger smiling in the street.

18.III.22

= = = = =

**She hurried up the hall
to answer the door
but left her shadow
on the wall—how else
would I know who
she was or where she'd gone?**

18 March 2022

=====

**Any image
is a flower.
Not all flowers
smell sweet
or are good to eat
but all of them
make a world.
Read them
where they are
or rearrange
at your own risk.
Or our risk
truly, if we read.**

18 March 2022

=====

**I am one of the lucky ones,
I can walk to work
on the ordinary ancient earth,
no wheel or wing required.
But I am a lazy one too—feet
on a hassock and cup in hand
I celebrate a day off, day at home,
music, e-mail, French coffee!**

18.III.22

IF YOU LOVE ME

pick an apple
from no tree,
peel it fine
and give it to me.
If I love you
I'll eat it all
save the little
twist of seeds
and those I'll plant,
scatter them
in the sky overhead
until the forest
Of our love
grows up all round us
and we live there
long and shadowy and deep.

19 March 2022

= = = = =

**Go to Joseph
the Pope said,
his name means
he makes more,
he will take care
of the little Jesus
growing in each
one of us, the Christ
child who needs
no other father,
he is born in us
from truth itself.
Go to Joseph,
he will provide.**

19 March 2022

= = = = =

Grey day, Cronopios!

I can hear Paul's voice
reading Cortazar on the radio,
what, sixty years ago,
WBAI and me beside him
reading alternate passages
but it is his voice I hear,
Paul Blackburn, not my own, \not
Cortazar's. Do words
belong to those who say them first?

19.III.22

=====

Green
is seeming.
The time
ripens
also. Grey
sky seeps
down into color
slowly.
I claim
the day begins,
color slowly
coming back,
any day now
a maybe rose.

19.III.22

=====

**Where the water pools
the hero stands.
We are instructed by
our living appetites.
And if I stay here where I am
what will come along
to feed me, or what
passes in the mind for food,
another idea floating from a tree?**

19.III.22

= = = = =

**Over there
a bare tree
like a hook in the sky.
What does it
mean to pull down?**

19.III.22

=====

I counted the pebbles
counted them again,
different sum, different stones,
even the fingers
were not the same.

Dreams do that
and not just dreams.

2.

Trees are waking now,
we'll be less lonely.
We'll all take our proper pills
and imagine morning.
Think: Light is a gift
we give to one another.

Every day is Christmas morning.
Don't be so silly. Why not?
Silly used to mean holy—
how do we get holy now?

3.

Encumbered with the obvious
we slack towards sleep.
A week ago we could have sledded
but the snow has melted now
and birds are many,
speaking of holy, messengers
busy in our seed—
I cherish the ambiguity.

4.

Empson called it amphiboly,
saying two things at once
and meaning them. I deem
most every word amphibolous—
think of what you mean by me.
And tree always stands for something else.

5.

Close the word book, baby,
and use the words,
scribble them in lipstick
on urgent surfaces
until even we can get the message
if there is one. Ask the birds.

20 March 2022

=====

**First day of spring.
The quiet miracle
has happened Gin.**

**What can I do to help,
share in the work,
melt away a cold thing,**

**say hello to a tree frog
and really mean it
but they can't hear me.**

20 March 2022

= = = = =

**Hello the other side
the blue forgetting
whirls night away
into the bright dream.
Came through nightmare
loaded with new duties.
Waking is obligation,
like walking, like mountains,
far ahead the day stretches out,
a cat asleep in the sun.**

21 March 2022

= = = = =

**Do this for me
I'll do that for you—
the oldest song
clink of a bronze coin.**

21.III.22

=====

**Build a ship in the desert
and why not? Nowhere to go,
might as well give the natives
something to marvel at,
cattle to sleep in its shade,
some new religion on its way.**

21 March 2022

= = = = =

**Bach's birthday
or it should be,
when everything
began again,
begins again. Green
cantatas, Rose
petals of the fugue.**

21 March 2022

=====

Empty canoe
upright
open on the shore,
I'm much too clumsy
for one of those
so I let my notions
climb in and float
down the Mississippi
of their choice,
no paddle needed
though there is one
in the boat I hope
because you never know.
Mybe someday my mind
will send me a postcard from Biloxi.

22 March 2022

=====

**Are we on the river yet?
Why isn't anything wet?
French has a strange way
of saying breakfast,
a soaked handkerchief
is as close as you get to Atlantic,
there are sparrows here,
plenty of them, adequate
for all your needs. Just
be a bird and see. Wake up,
stop reading that wordless book.**

22.III.22

= = = = =

**Baskerville breakfasts,
Legato lunch,
women of the world
rise up against the genitive case—
nothing belongs to anybody,
you know your Bible,
Christ has no father, see?**

22 March 2022

=====

I spend a lot of time
in parking lots,
waiting. The natives
are interesting
to watch, the cars
glisten in the sun.
And the sky is close.

2.

Quiet too, like a map
with no breeze to flutter it.
What can be more quiet
than a picture,
even of the ocean
or o some woman
carrying someone's
dinner home?

3.

**But there is wind here,
it comes down from the hills
and sounds like a car passing
or the one that pulls
into the space beside me
and idles for three minutes
before the engine cuts off
and the charioteer emerges
shopping list in hand
and I am left alone with the mind.**

22 March 022

Kingston

TYPOGRAPHY

**Is the wind
different from the mind?
In our signage
M means Man
W Means Woman.
Turn each upside down
and the world is complete.**

22.III.22

=====

for Vesna

I came in as the leaves
turned pale and fell away,
you came in when they
decided to come back.
Or was it you who brought them?
Libra looks across at Aries,
wonders always, did she make spring?

23 March 2022

=====

Taste of what I need,
handful of other,
a stroll on the cliff
high above now.
Somewhere down there
I am waiting to begin.

2.

That's everyday stuff,
the spice of light, gloom
of empty hands. Hurry,
hurry is its own reward.

3.

It is indeed somewhat
like an opera. Grass,
car, road, tree. Birds.

**How can it end? You bring
your own music to the theater
and the town does all the rest.**

4.

**By town we mean the place
surrounded, the fenced-in real,
the glorious ordinary. Big
as you like or little hillside,
a town, a tune, go
limp around its waltz.**

5.

**The color's all gone
into that little blue bottle again
windowsill of a grey day.
Weather's best when o hardly
notice it, someone's hand
lightly on your knee.**

6.

Look, someone walking up the road!
By the time I write it down
the figure's gone. Man or woman
who can tell now, the word stays,
the flesh is gone.

6. But that's what color does,
leads to metaphysics
surely as your grandmother
led you to the wishing well
and made you look therein
to see what or who was
doing all that wishing.
A color is your self come home.

7.

Hence all the fuss about grey
and green and slide trombones
yelping through the long parade,

because noises have colors too,
you don't need Rimbaud
to tell you that, though he gave you
so much of what you really need.

8.

Participate. Be
the color the world needs
right now, be sure
you're the right one,
measure the music,
pull the shimmer round you,
dance the seven veils
of the spectrum one by one
on the body till the day is born.

9.

I apologize for one more
cultural reference, So hard
to get away from what one thinks.

10.

So when I came in last night
I thought you were playing the flute
or the penny-whistle in a distant room
the way you used to play
The Lament for Limerick till even my eyes
paid their tribute to it,
to you, not to the losses
but all that music finds.
It was some other sound
but you were there, are here,
slowly colors are coming back.

23 March 2022

=====

Once you close a door
let it stay closed
until the house heals.
If they come and break it down,
it's on their conscience, not yours.
Sit at the table, watch
the birds outside, the shadows
sashay across the room.
Leave the door alone.
This waiting is hard
but it's good for the soul—
remember the soul,
that glowing stone at the core of you,
diamond or emerald or sapphire blue?
So let the door have a mind of its own.

23 March 2022

=====

**Rivers don't just peter out.
They get to the ocean
or the inland sea.
They are exactly the right length
to reach their goal—
and some of them reach
even further, Amazon, Orinoco,
seals these days come all the way
up the Hudson to Saugerties.
So be a dolphin—it all belongs to you.**

23.III.22

=====

The letter blew away
before I read it,
the phone rang
behind the locked door.
And the sky for once
was quiet. A day
with no messages!
Empty beach in sun,
the sea all to myself.

24 March 2022

=====

I don't have much time
this morning to tell
the truth night harvested
but I can telly ou one thing–
the answer is hidden in the question,
it shows itself suddenly,
sacrament of an opening door.

24 March 2022

=====

**Train tracks are so sentimental,
a snapshot of them looks
like a postcard from long ago
when people went places
with moderate speed, sitting
by the windows, smoking,
looking out at passing farms
and even mountains seemed to move.
How long will railroads last?
They've been around close
to two hundred years, old
wooden ties, love the look of them,
scarred, weathered, some still
choked with coal dust from
what used to burn the distances.
So now I stand at Barrytown
or Madalin and watch the rails**

chaperone the river till
the Albany express comes by
or sometimes the long train
on it way to Buffalo where we
once watched water fall and saw
not far away a whole other country.
The tracks go there too,
lonely so much of every day,
a crow on the semaphore,
wind in the tall grass.
I'm too sentimental—
I need to see a roaring beast roll past.

24 March 2022

=====

**Canonical hours
divide the day
by how we pray,
divide the year
by what chapters
we read each week,
once a year go to communion
or once a lifetime go to Mecca,
religion seems to be a technology
of shaping time, chopping time
into we are taught to think
meaningful pieces, speaking
or singing them or keeping still,
give up smoking or climb a hill
in Ireland o I wish I could do it today.**

24 March 2022

= = = = =

**Lion on a lamp post
wings outspread
over rain-glossy street**

**where am I he asked
a dream with wings, quiet
voice from those huge jaws.**

24 March 2022

GLASS

1.

Glance at the mirror
nobody there,
a whole day off,
free of being,
of being me.

2.

So what should who
do with this free day,
kiss the spring wind,
prat to the tree?

3.

Write trilogy
about going upstairs,

or with a chunk of blue chalk
draw a dolphin on a rock
and watch some ocean come to it.

4.

It's not so easy to begin
so don't decide.

Look up and watch
your hands are doing
up in the air, signaling?
waving to the empty tower,
or are you flying?

5.

Not so sure about that mirror,
a sheen of winter still in the glass.
Maybe not as awake as one needs
to be to be. Maybe look again,
tired eyes, the script of years?

6.

No, no, he cried,
for I am new,
this day is never
and always,
sugar and spice
and a bird on the tree
singing so sweet
Don't Listen To Me.

7.

I was that wing once
and you were the other,
remember how we flew
to all the nowheres-in-particular
where birds are most at home,
even those grey forests where

trees have roofs and windows.
Watch the people—one day
we will be them too.

8.

But happy enough being here
when the wound doesn't hurt
and the air is calm.

Nothing wrong
with as we are.

Or is that just one more religion?

9.

Read the book and find out—
anything's a bible
if you taake its word for it.

Its Book of Revelation
is an empty page.

10.

**Does that mean Go
back to bed some more
and sleep my way to hope?
Children in the sacristy
yearning to be acolytes—
serve the Service, sustain
the tottering old priest.**

11.

**You call that a dream?
I'd call it a harmless spider
crawling on your wrist
where a watch should rest—
but you're too sly for time,
I mean I am. And late again.**

12.

**After the concert we lay on the grass
but I was all alone, still
the music hovered in me,
warming the night chill.
Beautiful and terrifying too—
music always leaves you here,
right where you so utterly are.**

13.

**And then the mirror spoke:
You blame me for
each empty room,
for every wrinkle
on your worried brow,
isn't there great joy
in looking at something
then looking away? Sad me,
a thing I don't know how to do.**

14.

**So here we dance around
while matter grieves,
matter strives to messiah
its way in us, till each
is born anew and I am you,
no difference, utterly distinct.
O listen to the thingly chant.**

15.

**If glass could float
the sky would smile—
know what I mean?
If music could just
stop for a minute
and listen to itself
it would shock us awake.
War is the worst thing of all.**

16.

Canopy overhead

but no rain,

red carpet to the curb

but no car comes.

The doorman slumbers

on the steps. Ostiarius,

first of the minor orders,

the Porter who admits us

to the sacrament, the church,

the cave of wonders,

world echoing in my hollow head.

17.

And there I am at last

back in the mirror again.

Sigh of relief, mixed

a little bit with grief.

Who am I to dare to speak?

18.

Then magic. Presto!

the mirror is a window,

the gorgeous not-me out there

is singing, shining, fingering

our infantine neurology

until we feel. Weary

as a blackboard or fresh

as tangerine the tale goes on.

Every story runs two ways at once,

read backwards to get a glimpse of truth.

25 March 2022

=====

The geology of the heart,
profile of someone
you loved once, can't
name now, lost
in the strata
of indulgence,
layers of remorse.
I saw the face clearly
but who am I.

2.

Imagine a rose,
ordinary beauty
from the florist
or your aunt's garden,

imagine a rose
falls from your hands
onto a marble floor
and shatters

,into a thousand crystals
you try to sweep together
can't get all of them, some
stick under your fingernails,

where is your rose now,
from the far end of the nave
you hear a voice, angry,
speaking yet another language.

3.

Coast of Oregon
mudstone cliffs
I sat with roses

watched the sea come in.
Real roses, real sea.
I find it nowadays
sometimes in the heart
if I may use the ordinary
name we use for that
which lives our lives for us.
Roses by the sea.
Come laugh at men.

4.

The profile was clear,
youthful, smiling soft.
Who are you, I asked
but my mind was quiet
as if yo say Look,
don't talk, don't name
anything for once,
the shape of what you see

**is imbedded in you,
this face also is your earth,
follow the contours silently.
Sometimes any answer is a lie.**

26 March 2022

= = = = =

I see some self
coming over the dunes
down to the sea
at Rockaway,
outwash plain, sand
borrowed from the government,
a self in bathing costume
robed in cotton, striped
like the calendar, feet
slipping through sand,
is there a word 'slishing'
they sound like that,
too far away to tell
if boy or girl.

Sometimes

I think gender
is irrelevant to the ocean
and then I hear the waves laugh

**and realize I'm wrong yet again,
and why not? somebody
has to say these things.**

27 March 2022

= = = = =

**Shadow of a crow
floating overhead
sign of the cross
passes over me,
moves me, reminds me
how many blessings
there are in the world.**

27.III.22

THE DISCERNMINANTS

Hour after hour they.
Spooks on ladders,
tower windows. Pelf.
You knew it was coming
so it came. I knew
otherwise and so,
Certainty eludes. Picture
of money in the wall.
Aluminum pennies from the war,
most common metal of all,
noncommissioned officer,
flag drag in dirt. Apologies
galore. And more. The ghost
peers in every bloody window,
the dust speaks Latin, worry,
worry. My ankle hurts
but you're safe at home. Who.

Crouch closer listen tighter
till I tell. Do you hear it now?
Crocus by the door, wolfbane later.
Sympathize. I'm only here today
tomorrow there's another officer
shouting nonsense orders.
At least try to smile, be a meadow
for Christ's sake, vast and green
and bounded only by far forest.
Everything has an horizon
no hope of never. Suck on pebble.
Walk to the store. Spit it out
in the gutter before you go in.
Hunger abated, cash safe in wallet
but what else is in the pocket,
eh? What else hides in your have?
Twist-ties snug your zucchini
in clearest plastic, we know
what's coming, o share

the aisle with me fair stranger,
parking lot rimmed with trees
a ballet class leaps under some
I swear, youthful defenders
of wingless flight, I grieve
for my slowness, aching toes,
busy ads between innings,
agriculture makes you wait,
is it spring yet outside the book,
wanderlust for other rooms.

Dative case. All for you,
my sweet, but who knows the noun?
Emphasis like rain on roof tile,
south of France, dormice
live up there and a bat flies by
disturbed by my inspection.
Luberon owns half the sky.
But I came back home
no worse for archeology,

that's not me talking, quoting
from a guide book to Venus
he found in dream, a friend,
among so many, yes, you,
you're a planet too, conjoint,
aching with desire, exhausted
from satisfying them, joyful
in other words in other words.
Venus! I thought he said Venice,
got cold feet, wouldn't trust
my life to one of those, boats
are no better than mosquitoes,
no mosquitoes in church, safe,
safe a few minutes till
the bell starts ringing and the guys
come shuffling up the aisle
singing stuff. Flee while you can,
the truth is out there,
sitting on the slipper steps.

And then you're home,
kitchen table with a decent cloth
spread on it and a loaf of bread.
Now try to find a toothy blade
to slice in with. See what I mean,
they're everywhere, the little problems
add up to a huge solution,
glory over the Adriatic, wait,
over Fort Greene Park too
and Rockaway and your backyard
or mine, remember peach trees
in December wrapped in burlap,
remember the first time you crossed
and saw your ancestral island
busy with shipping, Portsmouth,
early morning, trying to learn French,
why not, somebody has to answer me,
someday, some smiling sea marsh,
bittern and mallard, Mozart

on car radio, make it up,
whatever you do don't just remember.
Sanitary pages, escalator
up to non-fiction in Hyde Park,
ours, not your, we're hoke now
trapped in one more sunbeam
on a cloudy day. Discover this.
It's coming, round as a plum,
sweet as a shadow, a color
she calls purple I call blue,
it's what religion does to you,
nothing ever tastes the same again.

Coda:

Maybe and maybe not.
Ask the lighthouse keeper
what he has seen from Gayhead,

what the Wampanoag let us glimpse, a
white cliff, big surf, vague
islands of no size. Ask
and if there is one he may tell
the confused dreams he has
after his legal marijuana suppers,
even Massachusetts makes mistakes,
I shouldn't be so ashamed
of my patternless sobriety.
And then the message broke off,
or did the instrument decide—
as so many of them do—enough,
poor human, thou hast heard
too much and never listened,
go back to the Chablais and carry
a loaf tucked under your arm
all the way home like a real man,
as if your feet could feel the road
and not just their own pain,

**as if you could see the hillside
with no timidity, no wolf for miles,
and answer all her letters
for Christ's sake, or there He is again,
who led me down the cellar stairs
and gave me a quiet little dusty room
my own, where I learned how to learn
and learned that was enough.**

27 March 2022

=====

Catch up with the reader by the gate
tell him something he doesn't know
not written already in the everlasting
ledger he props up on an apple branch
he reads you in, you know the cartoon,
you've been on the Threshold before
amid the broken crockery and the Wife
smiling nonetheless across the table
eggs again but how you wish you
even pray a way to eat and not hurt,
it's too late, spirit governs matter,
soul harps by the river and mourns.
What would you do? Glue the plate
together, buy a new teapot, sell
your second car, remember when all
garages were built of cinder blocks
we called them but no flame involved,

no deity invoked to shield the huffy
dark cars ago driving even now,
what could we have been without the
wheel!

Motionless to mind our way in body
all round the earth, everywhere to go
and be by thinking so, forgive my
tristesse,

AI walk on air! I'll soon be there!

And then the reader at the gate
consents to smile: you've tried
that trick before, remember Babylon
when you wore wings, or maybe
Athens when you pretended to be
stone?

The trick has never worked but who am I,
saint of Going In as I am, who am I
to tell you that it never will? Persist,

**my son, you never know. And that
ignorance travels you better than
any of those wheels that you disdain.
I'll see you here tomorrow early
morning in just a few more years.**

27 March 2022

ALTERITY

Golden raptor, time's thief
wants yto hear your hips
shape gravity, your lungs
let music out, you are
all other people, fascination
of the stonewall across the way
the girl next door, the Portugals
all of them beyond the seas,
son, listen to me, over there
is always a window, look,
look long as you like but no,
no suicide, no even crawling
down the ivy.

Hard as it is
to reckon, here is where it all is.
Your idiolect is animal enough—
take care of it, it grows sleek,
meaningful, sounds more like you
every day, until you can't

even remember me at all.
Then the shadows fall away
in the museums, the statues
come to life and bring you
sweet pomegranates in their white hands,
nobly nible on what they offer
but never ask for more.

In one small room the river
runs from stone to sea,
a syncline by your sofa,
the moon your chandelier—
isn't that enough? Mahler
on the radio from Stefansdom,
don't cry, or don't cry yet,
all too soon a friend is at the door,
go let them in but not too far,
all the mothers of the world
will tell you this. as if a mother

is the only other you'll ever need.

28 March 2022

=====

Cold rattle but no wind.
Awning, a flake or two
drifts in porch light. In,
go in. Weather decides us,
we decode it at our risk.
Answer the floorboard
when it creaks. A house
is an equation, set up slowly
for you to solve. All the hedges
at roadside won't really help,
the trees will but only if you listen.
Old Mr Bitowft (whose name
I think meant 'baptized' in Dutch)
used to say Unasked for advice stinks.
So hold your nose as you read me,
language is always at your elbow,
tugging, telling you the world

**is thinking you, no one in it
has the truth, but it has,
and it talks. Just listen to all
the foolish things you say
and solve for x . X is waiting.
 X is patient. X is talking to you now.**

28 March 2022

MAZURKA

Maybe. Lie there
all tangled in the comforter,
unwind the limbs,
let cool air in then snap
the cloth back on.
Roll over, let one foot
find the other, but not
your partner's tender heel
a mile away across the mattress,
try to sleep but dance is comely,
not so much wiggling as it's
rafting in the dark. Don't think
about friends, your first pet
was a turtle, consider that, relax
under the tessellated shell of night.

28 March 2022

=====

No now now.
The fang of then
sinks in the ankle—
pain is the past
lingering, consequence,
the bitter child.

2.
A little skin
of snow on the roof,
so little, just enough
to remind, weather
is never over,, pale sheen,
more like a shadow than itself.

3.

**After the obvious
the scholarly remorse.
How did it get into me?
What migrations
brought here here?
Ask, ask, and doubt the answer.**

4.

**She rode the city bus to school
Sutter Avenue seventy years ago
I did not see her face I don't
imagine it now. A person only
moving up the aisle. Images
must have a reason. Just like pain.**

5.

Stop the ache
and start again.

The wheat field is waiting.

Yesterday we saw meadows
that sprawled out peaceful
in my mind as much as out there,
there is a joy in meadows
rising gently towards the sky.

Nobody there. So there

I send my mind and lay it down
easy in deep grass, study
the blank sky until its words
start to appear. Everything
knows how to write.

The pain is almost gone.

28 March 2022

=====

**Of course it thinks in us—
we are its organs of expression.
How else could I even say such things?**

28.III.22

=====

Words came for him
in a long black car,
they tumbled out and he
spent half an hour
settling them up straight,
in proper order, [ointing
somewhere while they giggled
at the thought of meaning something.
Then tey drove him off to school.

28.III.22

=====

for Ashley Garrett

Then the blue
flew through the stone
and heaven was on earth,
in earth,. just the way
we always knew.

I think I can spot
the track of my fingers
a thousand years ago
right next to yours,
the marks, the marks
of how it all began.

28 March 2022

=====

Walk on my street
ride opmn ,y train,
we'll het to the seaside
somehow together,
maybe not touching,
maybe not even talking
words at each other
but together together,
how does the song go,
we live inside each other
let the sea do the talking.

29 March 2022

A TRAIN

I remember you well
lady of the train,
the same train
that carried us here,

and here is anywhere
we actually are,
no need for names, cities,
lamp posts and taxis,

we're here! I mean you
are over there and I
am somewhere else
but where could either

**of us be but here?
Where the train left us
on its way to a destination
only a train can know.**

29 March 2022

=====

Rapture is ma seizing,
a bue kay just did it
on the lawn, took a cookie,
a big one, tossed out
and flew it away, the jay
is not jusr a pretty color,
a seizng, a rapture yes
into the local air, here,
a cry. And the birds
called raptors, hawks
and such, are we all
of their gamily too, we
who live to take and hold
t our lips or clutch,
is the whole world a rapture
and we are its seizers?

29 March 2022

=====

**Don't forget the telegram
the antique instruments
we once deployed to keep
from talking to the one
right next to us, warm cheeks,
cold fingertips. Don't forget
the covered wagon that dragged,
the ferryboats that plied
across the bay to Oakland,
the zeppelin over Marine Park,
it's all like an old song
isn't it, or shouldn't it?
Are we still talking, flying,
colonizing, trying to make sense?
The instruments wear out,
the way still goes on. Weaponless**

**we waste our fury on the clouds,
painting, panting, printing,
hobbling up the marble stairs
to find that heaven's made
of vacant lots, milkweed,
nameless bushes, golden sand.**

29 March 2022

=====

**What are they
the little things
that dance along the light?
Snowflakes?
Mosquitoes at this season?
Why do I even
need to know? Enough
that they come and go
like thoughts in the mind,
not mine, or words
murmured by someone
busy in a croded dream.**

29 March 2022

=====

So much to figure out,
the long and short of it, her gown
between midnight and dawn,
her pale arm stretched out
beside me, moon in the window
planning his meeting with the sun.
Two days and they will be together.
So much to reckon, oceans, glaciers,
dictionaries, a deer park up the road
turns out to be a ranch where people
raise animals to slaughter and devour.
And what am I? And the candle flame
on on Chözang's altar, he toppled
birdcath knocked over by the bear,
plane overhead at morning, who
is he head of the family now, who

**writes the opera, who milks the cow?
Terribly I need to know. Whisper
onto my pillow, why does the wind
sound like a bird, I need to know
I think because I need to need
and real need needs so much to know.**

29 March 2022

REFERENCE BOOK

**Table of contents
copious detail
names numbers and dates.**

**Remember though
this is a statesman's kiss
so don't lick your lips.**

30 March 2022

=====

How long it takes
to wake and write
down a single thought
sparked in the middle of the night.
And Virgil saw a cave door
opening, stone leading down.

30.III.22

=====

**Sleep has no letters
to write itself with.
Keep waking up with images,
no better than old Egypt,
I want to learn an alphabet of dark
to spell out terror and fascination,
all the gaudy empresses of night.**

30 March 2022

=====

**Inaugurate the obvious,
its flags are everywhere,
and Ob is up there on the podium,
the congress of all of us around,
Ob's alone. the Obvious has no mate,
the Obvious wants all of us to be
husband and wife to it,
yes, you can be First Lady
and I can doo, Prince Consort
of Obvious, all we have to do
is leave things just as they are
and eat and drink and sing old songs,
only the old songs . The new is never.**

30 March 2022

=====

**Blood worries its way
down the arteries,
lingers sometimes, hurts,
gushes back up.
That's what the doctor says,
help it flow. Help the ocean
flow! We exist between
those two rivers, the Greeks
knew about it, Ocean River
they said, the secret out loud
it takes us so long to learn.**

30 March 2022

=====

Walking alongside the stream
from where it rose out of rock,
sometimes I stepped in, remember
it so well, the water washed
language right off my skin
and I could just go, go along
or even sometimes in, just go,
Tibetans call living beings goers
and I went. And still do. And so
do you. That is the miracle,
we go, we go on. Pennsylvania
was one name for the place,
no-name stream, they swam
where it was deep, all these years
I try to understand the water we are.

30 March 2022

=====

Not far away from where we swam
Charles Sanders Peirce
had listened to whispers from the moon, a
very man. Hawley,
not far from the Delaware, hot summer
midchannel dry with white stones.,.
only sunlight flowed there, speaking
of the moon, and mind, and men
thinking their way into books and
out the other side, cross the river,
walk the bridge, another state
is always waiting, all our maps
are wrong, but pretty in a kidlike way,
colors and squares and old-time
nameless shapes nobody ever saw
running wild. Here be river
but not much water, Here a book

and no word to be found in it—
come nibble my kabbalah and hope
the truth will kiss you back. Silence
does wonders, Or go outside and listen,
interview the moon that one
is fickle, fleeting but ful of fairytales
like calculus and evening star and rose
of Sharon blooming by the old garage.

30 March 2022

=====

There must be some news here
waiting in the thorn bush,
the bleeding arm,
the sleepless pain.

Maybe no meaning
but everything says.
What does it say?
Believe in this hour.
Take the taste away.
Pray.

Out of the woods
comes imping, someone,
a bear, a man
carrying a mirror
holding it out to me

like a shield, I will not look
at this opposite of me,
this shining lie. No,
He stumbles, the mirror
falls, no it flies, it rises
like a seagull into the dark.

Who would I have seen
if I had looked at me?
Would the pain have stopped then
because I had seen?

Is pain the refusal to know,
body aching not to learn?
It says again: the dark
tells the truth, the mirror lies.

I will try the wooden mask again:
I am a tree in the forest,

**sleep come with me,
but no leaves yet to hide in,
bare twigged, timid, torment.**

**Pretend it is a game,
then losing has some meaning,
part of the structure, thorn
in the foot but the road still goes.**

31 march 2022

=====

Rabbit in moonlight
why do I think of you?
There are so many who
admire your elusive
gentleness, harmless
habits, softest fur.
You don't need my dictionary,
my poignant vague desires.
Yet there you are
on my mind's meadow,
moonlight. Still there,
not sleeping, nibbling,
quietly meaning.

31 March 2022

= = = = =

**Pieces of wood
strips of felt–
build a carriage
out of soft and hard,
see if the wind
willpower it, drive
each to its opposite,
sunrise on the sea.**

31.III.22

March 2022 202

=====

**Willow? Some sort
of soft-seeming
rigid rod. A tree.
An answer to doubt:
Seem. Might be enough
for a whole day. Leave
being to be by itself.**

31 March 2022

IF I HAD A WORD

I would give it to you
but as it is, it is
and I am somewhere else
a silent place
where I keep talking
and no word comes
except the ones I think
to choose to use to speak
and who knows what
sense they make
so if I had a real word
I would give it to you
all the way to you
so that you would have
whatever I have too.

31 March 2022

= = = = =

**Across the table
we thought we had a deal
with the sun
setting behind the mesa.
the pantomime we live in
stutters sometimes,
the deal is off, the vulture said,
the sun is tired of laymen
dolloed up as priests, lie down
like shadows on the sand.
Tje bird flew away before
he saw whether we took the chance.
Wait, wait, we cried, yearning
for the simfort of his wing.**

31 March 2022

