

6-2022

Jun2022

Robert Kelly

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=====

**Rabbit, rabbit
we say first day of a month.
So June begins,
a girl god from the Adriatic sky.
How strange we call our time
by Roman gods and emperors,
just numbers when we run out of
names,
September, October...
Calendars frown at us
from the wall, fluttering pages,
fly-specked, warning us
that Time is not our own.
We are slow dancers
in a sluggish sequence**

**that suddenly, every now and then,
turns out to be now.**

**First day of a month named
for a Roman goddess
in a year counted from the birth
of a Jewish boy the Romans killed.
Maybe I should go back to sleep
and play with the rabbit.**

1 June 2022

=====

Pale day, vavasour,
word stuck to the rim of the mind,
It's the time of year
when chimneys stay cold,
a day when the leaves don't move.
Now you know all there is to say
and all the rest, poverty hunger,
inequity and war, all thrive
unspoken in the everywhere.
They tell me one tree
can grow half a million leaves.
Take comfort from that
as it comforts me,
I am a tenant of those woods,
I belong in that company.

1 June 2022

=====

Time for the rubber band
not just handy, a necessity,
a symbol of our nature—
stretch out to hold in.
If you don't use them
they tend to dry out and snap—
so moderate stretching
will enhance the local life.
By sympathy, shared need,
islands in the river, thoughts
start to wander, seals
on the rocks of Saugerties,
sounds like the German
word for 'mammal,' seals are
that for all their aquacade,
wait, where was I, Prospect Park

**zoo, sleek wet sea lions,
poems are the deftest rubber bands,
hold so much of what we love together.**

1 June 2022

OUTSIDE

Outside comes in.
Not just the tapping
hammer of some signer
or slip-shut slide door
on a quiet van. Or birdsong,
cardinal at the window vine,
more, more, something
I don't hear, don't feel
cool draught on my skin,
if it is mine, if it is wind,
no, something more.

2.

It is the real outside,
the lean enchantress
of so many green dreams,

deity, density, destiny,
desire, she and her consort
shape from Out There
whatever we mean by here.

3.

That's my theory of the day,
at least, to try and see
a little more than yesterday,
yestreen as Coleridge said,
unforgettable amphimacer,
not fallen angel but risen man.

4.

Back to the window
and be simple.
Out there it's all now,
in here a myriad thens

**tumbled in the chambers
of a pale morning.
Bird far off or moth nearby?
Myopia doesn't have to decide.
Something's there. Something
is always there.**

2 June 2022

=====

**Raptors. Fancy word
for birds of prey.
It irritates me that
our college team
calls itself that,
I forget which sport
they aim to be deadly in,
something with a ball,
something with movement
through the air. Fly
if you can but try to be kind.**

2.VI.22

=====

**Entering the Japanese Pavilion
at the World's Fair I discovered
the sun is ruby red the sky is white.
It's hard to understand that
all my life. Don't call this
adulthood. Call it the aftermath.**

2.VI.22

=====

for C

Say a word
say it back to me
so I can hear it
you are the only
one I understand,
I am lost
in nouns and numbers
and only one verb.
And you.

3 June 2022

WATER

**Your shadow on it
is enough to see,
it reads you right away,
any reflection is just
an aftertaste for you.
The shadow tells it all,
the shape you cast
between its urgent flowing
and the steady light
you see and see by
but water sees light is moving too.
You are the animal between—
now take your shadow
and listen to it on the way home.**

4 June 2022

=====

Summer seems eating,
eating time.
Toad's tongue lips out,
laps up a passing fly,
eighty feet over, a swift
seizes a mosquito
darting over the little bridge.
And we go out on picnics
to show that we have understood
this shakedown time,
this quiet orgy
among the grieving leaves.

4 June 2022

=====

**Abstract painting
means to cancel gender.
Fact. That's why and when
it began, the great conflict
to uplift ourselves
beyond the dualism of sex
but keep its pleasures.
Blur the image. No one knows
the gender of a Malevich square.
Or are all pale shapes girls
and somber masculines?
Pray to the light it be not so.
I think of the violent gestures
in Brian's painting, and Ashley's
sumptuously polychrome detail—
are they trying to break**

**the abstract law, reveal again
all the lusts and welcomings
figurative art spend 4000 years
exploring, explaining?
The gallery owner smiles
and asks if what I say
is in what I see
or only in me seeing it.
Now go outside and watch the crows.**

4 June 2022

====

The song forgets its words
like a faithless preacher
hums on and on.
But they'll come back
summoned by music.
You can't keep birds out of the sky.

2.

Children in back seat
of parents' sedan
out for a Saturday spin.
Opera on the radio—
is that how it begins,
all those voices in all that song
and not a word they understand?
Make the words up

**all by yourself—what else
can a poor kid do?**

3.

**But once you say it
it stays said.**

**Words are like sandstone
that way, stand
in the desert ever after
waiting to be heard again.**

4.

**The family stops at a diner
a little east of Babylon.**

**Peanut for the girl, black
raspberry for older brother.**

**No ice cream for the grown-ups,
we still wonder why.**

**Around the ice cream cones
the kids improvise language,
noises, have something to say,
irritate the busy silences
of our public space.
What else is language for?**

**5.
The world is homeopathic
isn't it, we cure music
by listening to it,
purify language by rabbiting
on and on (cf. *Finnegans Wake*),
cure silence by keeping still
and loving it. Just for one
moment, under the locust trees.**

4 June 2022

STRATA

**Walk out
outcrop
the rock is enough
call it an anticline
the curves of time
pressed on each other
year after year
the rock across the river**

**I used to climb such things
but now I know better.**

**The Rock's job is to stand there
my job is to stand here
thinking as hard as
that rock holds together
what the word said**

**year after year stone to stone
the endless mineral of our thought
focused, made to stand out there
outside me, beyond me
where you are
the only one I really mean.**

4 une 2022

=====

**Visual beauty of prose,
paragraphs islanding away
to the horizon, the margin,
between each island the next
the eye swims easily
in the usually clement waters
of that signifying channel,
though sometimes the chill
of difference sets in
even before one gets to land,
struggles ashore up the rocks,
difference, difference,
change of subject, a new voice
suddenly loud all round us,
caution, danger everywhere.**

5 June 2022

=====

**This month seems to be going by
fast, slipstream of days
or slope of time to tumble down,
wake late, sleep early, smile.**

2.

**Speed used to be our pal,
the swiftest spermatozoon
(what a word!) gets the girl
and so on. But now I wonder.**

2.

**I woke up thinking about
flying home from London
some years ago, and how
for all its speed, six hours**

**all the way to New York, weary
flight attendants trying to smile,
all the jet roar, airport flurry
flying seems so old-fashioned
now, fussy and antiquey
stage coach in the sky.**

3.

**Ovum grabs Zoon and they make
another life together
and call it me. You. Anybody.
TWA turns into DNA.Speed spills.**

4.

**From such confusions
Sunday plucks a cloudless sky,
mild pleasant breeze,
one blue and all the greens.**

Slow down, it says,
we're not going anywhere,
speed just seems—
and I woke up thinking also
sub umbra alarum tuarum
protege nos, protect us
under the shadow of wings,
dear God with wings,
such simple Latin,
not the wings of a passenger jet,
not even the wings of a bird.
The real wings. The here and now.

5 June 2022

=====

So she said to her partner
Let's dance but he answered
Haven't you read your Kierkegaard—
do not summon
for I do not dance.
But she answered so calm,
I wasn't talking about
moving your slow feet,
but something better,
intellectual, subtle, dangerous
and maybe you're at it already,
reading Danish,
quarreling with girls.

5 June 2022

=====

**Wake
when the need to piss
is the biggest
thng in the sky.
Come back and lie here
admiring emptiness.**

6 June2022

=====

**Days hurtle past
downslope
in mathematics
called catastrophe
then free fall
into the abyss of now.**

6 June 2022

=====

**Twenty-seven acres of meadow
leading up to the sky.
Be there. Romp with the clouds
in the smart breeze, the feel
not cold not hot we call fresh,
all the meadow all the green
over the hill from where we live.
I am speaking to my mind,
my other self, the one that lingers
in landscape long after I've gone,
the one that even now pussyfoots
through deep grass up to the trees
and what will he make me think then?**

6 June 2022

RADETZKY MARCH

**I love the anthems
of vanished kingdoms,
partly for their empery,
mostly because they're gone.
Grand that they could squeeze
some beauty out of war and money
before the lights went out,
flags changed, the emperor
sailed off to exile in a far hotel,
one more older adult left
refurbishing his memories.**

6 June 2022

PLACES NEAR

The White Horses of Barrytown

**As long as I've lived up here
on this road
just north of Rokeby
in trees just off the road
no buildings in sight
white horses stand.**

**Year after year
they are there,
one horse of two.
All these years,
white, I say white
but maybe not the flowing
white of stallions
heroes ride, just white,**

maybe greyish even,
there must be a name
for such colors, such horses,
years after year the same,
Schimmel? Palfrey?
If horses had ghosts
they would look like this.

One or two, never more.
But what do I know about horses?
Where I came from
a horse had four wheels
and was called Pontiac or Ford
or sometimes even Cadillac.
But here they are, still, how long
do horses live? Sixty years
I have been seeing these,
o sweet transmission of such

calm, peaceful, grazing beasts,
the sight blesses me as I pass.
Two days in a row now
I haven't seen them—maybe
they're ghost horses after all.

*

North Germantown Fishing Dock

I sit and see
what the river says to me

between train tracks and water
the ways of going

you stand on the jetty
studying birds and far shoe

**I sit in the car
imagining what I see**

**then the Albany express zips south
and a cormorant flies north**

we are the only islands here

Elmendorph Corners

**Half a mile wide flat field
the only open space nearby,
crossroads and cornfields once
I don't know what's growing now.
It's green and that's enough,**

and low, so we still can come
out here late at night to visit
constellations,
watch whatever else is going on
up there above the trees
that grow all round where we live,
the kindly trees that shield us from the
stars,

*

Barrytown Dock

There used to be a river here
but now there is a fence.
We used to cross the tracks
and idle by the water's edge
or at night drive close and cuddle

**in our cars, what cars are for.
But now Money has waddled in
and snatched the whole shore
for a private club, snatched away
even the sight of the river,
shut a road that once swept down
and carried us back up again.**

**Not now. Now is steel wire fence,
backsides of ugly sheds. Name
the crime that steals a river
from the shore, the road from us.
You have to drive a mile up
and down another road to get
to the other side of that tree.
Where at last you can see again
the river, our lost love.**

Ferncliff Forest

They gave it to the town,
decent men of the business club,
a whole forest for the town
to clamber around in, walk
their damned inevitable dogs
but stroll up to heaven
by way of a lake up the hill,
pond in the clouds, don't
just look, walk around it,
the path is easy, don't mess
with the log cabin, just smile back at
the pond and go south
up the trail winds up all the way up,
a wooden lookout tower thereon

whereon it was permitted to climb, up
the wooden ladder, even me,
summoned by sheer altitude.
Hollow thumb of wooden platform
under our feet, wind-worried,
but all the western
country even I could see
over the river that voluptuous
eroded peneplane The Catskills,
all ours, given to us by kind men
who knew a decent way to climb the
sky.

*

Cruger;s Island

Not an island
but maybe once,
not an island
but close to Mexico—
for here the legal loyal
loving loot Joohn Stevens
brought home from Yucatan
rested on its long migration
to Brooklyn, my own island,
where it reigns now
where Eastern Parkway
meets Grand Army Plaza,
the great arch, eye
of my island. So many
islands linger here,
Cruger's little island

still linked to the shore,
an almost-island over
the Amtrak trails,
we walk down some days
through the bird-wild
marshes north to step,
tentative, holy ground,
who knows what lives here
still, after so many
are they just years? or
something more, shifts
in the dimension of the now?

And here the last two
natives of the Esopus tribe
lived, servants, honored
as a servant can be, I guess,
and there they died.

**And all the other tribesmen
exiled from this river,
into the bone dry West.
But here the clamshells
still turn up, with arrowheads
and chiseled I bits from Yucatan.
Time knows how to cut stone.**

6-7 June 2022

=====

a wren woke me
loud at the west window,
I felt blessed to ne talked to
so early, as if the sun
herself was calling,

over and over the bird called,
I hear you, boss, I'm waking,
I promise I'll het up soon,
I would not lie to such a song
you keep leaping past the screen,
I hear you. And I know
with the fierce conviction
of a child the bird hears me.

7 June 2022

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**Envisioning the obvious
all over again,
imagining the actual!**

**Ah, there's the work of morning
read the scripture portion,
let the cows out of the barn,
o one by one, no stampede,
now plant a tree.**

2.

**The couple in Catskill did that,
a dozen or so, each
a different kind, tree dialects,
tree colors, till the whole backyard**

became a coat of arms.
Every morning it gleams
its motto out at the neighbors,
This is what we mean,
this is who we are.

3.

To the neighbors
and to the birds
who come to pick and choose,
a tree's a kindly bird trap
that lets them come and go.
But while they're there
they teach us music,
high tones to slip through dull ears.

4.

I get confused
sitting out among trees,
all those trees up there
and these right here,
all the languages they speak,,,
or is there only one
and I am numb?
Anyhow, I hear somebody talking.

5.

Morning. Eat food. Decide.
Imagine. Decide again.
There is choosing to be done,
a cloud comes over the trees.
Sometimes I feel so tentative,
caught between words and what

I think they mean, or I do, or
trees do, or where is music
when I need it most. Cloud,
dear cud, answer me.

6.

There was a life
when at this hour
speaking loosely
I would saunter
a few blocks north
to the subway and then.
And then all the rest of life begins.
Where are we going
when we stay at home?
Don't tell me there
is anywhere a state of rest.
It's all moving, what else can it do?

7.

**Hence imagine carefully
what is already here,
pretend that 'here' means a place
not our feverish attention caught.**

8.

**I have written so many books—
does that make me a liar?
I was just writing down
what came to be heard inside.
So I put the words out there,
the way you'd lead cows
to pasture, or toss crumbs to birds.**

**I thrived on mere obedience,
a reasonably well-behaved child
with a few tantrums of silence.**

9.

Come back and forgive me.

**The reality of the rose
challenges the skeptic.**

**Along the shore of your island
right now at high noon
the *rugosa* are flourishing.**

**I am confident of this
though I'm 200 miles away,
I read my Bible, the dictionary
does not know how to lie.**

10.

**But that's not putting
the rose gently in your hand,
not gathering great bouquets
to make altars of your tables.
It makes me feel so guilty,
dear reader, forgive me,
I just say the words,
you have to do the work.**

8 Junne 2022

=====

I walked to Roman ruin
the street in Glanum
and I knew where I was,

always knew where we were,
not just the orange trees
and the arena, we just know,

the stones tell us, and the moods
and motives of those who made
such places be, and left them

for us. For me to walk on
without a hat, no cigarette,
just a human as of any time,

**that time, that long ago
that was right here now, casting
its own shadow in our own sun,**

**I walked the ruins. Then I thought
of Rome, now I think of then,
time is in our hands if mind is true**

**and walking that mild leafy day
the Empire held me safe, I sat
on the arena and watched the sky.**

8 June 2022

J= = = = =

**Every word
makes the sky brighter.
It is the dream
they call morning.
Up early for a change
i got to hear the wheels turn,
eyes open to the beautiful machine.**

9 June 2022

=====

**The birds are further away
this morning,
I'd need a telescope
to hear what they say.
But nobody makes
that these days.**

**Philosophical Instruments
they used to call such things,
men made them to enlarge
the scope of what they know**

**or think they know.
Now what?
I have to make do**

**with holding a leaf
up to my ear and
hear it crinkling in my fingers.
So much for distance.
Now lie back and listen to the pillow.**

9 June 2022

=====

Erbarme mich
the chorus sings,
Take pity on me
each voice cries,
all those me's
to make one song.

9.VI.22

=====

**The important thing
is hearing the crow in the morning
and the owl at night.**

**Not as often as before
but still here, some,
among so many voices.**

**One good thing about the media
is we can learn to choose
what we listen to
even if their choices are ruinous.**

**So many voices, pick and choose,
the tree, the old wooden fence,
the silent bluejay perched on it
thinking of his next remark.**

9 June 2022

VINE

The ivy climbs up
the wall to your window
to bring birds close
and blue butterflies,
and the fresh feel
of raindrops quivering
off so many leaves.

And any window to which
the vine climbs will summon
the attention of ground-locked
 worshippers
who will look up and want
and pray and sigh.

**And o my god so much more
when at night a candle flickers on.
My whole life I've stared at that
window.**

9 June 2022

=====

**How dark among the trees,
brighter the day deeper the dark,
cavernous and who knows,
like a cave, yes, but no room in it
for dragons, up to us
to slip between the trees and see
what this darkness cherishes,
for a moment or two
be a child lost in the woods—
that kind of sacrament.**

9 June 2022

=====

**Turn your back on the tree
and read philosophy?**

Jamais.

**he tree
gave you Christ, the tree
sheltered Buddha seeing under it,
your wife brought home a leaf
from that very tree.**

**Cherish the shade of it,
the voice of its wood.**

**The book is precious because
its paper is made from trees—
try to sense them there, ignore
the words just this once,**

**just this little while,
, read what the thing in your hands
is really saying.
I was Plato once
but now I know so much more.**

9 June 2022

TRACING SHADOWS ON PAPER

All the way to the other side,
the owl in the middle of the alphabet—
it would be like dreaming
of Robert Duncan giving a reading
from his poems written on the other
side.

Yes, but it's only morning,
ordinary to look at,
I take dictation
from the nearby trees.

2/

Of course Athena's
was the bird of night,
how else could wisdom come

**exception when all the holy
distractions of the sacred senses
idled while we sleep,
quiet sedan purring in neutral
parked alongside the road
under the walnut trees.**

3.

**Talk to e about your dreams,
tell me everything
and don't forget the waking stuff,
bank account and manicure,
everything counts.**

**You know me, know what I crave,
absolutes and applesauce
and shapely shadows
moving on the window shade.**

4.

**Tell me the names
of people I used to know
until my fingers twitch
with reminiscence
and the elevator doors
sweep open and set me free
at a higher level,
the chromosomes of custom
cobbling a new personality
fit for the thirteenth floor.**

5.

**Ja, ja lieber Freund,
I was building in the night
and you were too,
someday we'll figure out
how to work on the same structure
so it will be there when we wake**

and then the house
will gobble us up,
you thought it was an owl
I knew it was a mourning dove.

6.

Another name is rain-dove,
I like that better, I love rain,
I'm Irish, or English, or some
islandish thing that makes wet
the answer to most questions,
and no more grieving.
So the name matters
more than people realize,
nomen numen the Romans said
either noticing or making it up,
the name is a god.

7.

**How far have we gotten in the
alphabet,
we're at the house but can't
see through the window yet,
I know she's in there,
afloat in the Jacuzzi,
I know he's on a stepladder
tacking a quotation in big letters
on the dining room wall.
But I can't see her,
I can't read what it says.
I'll try the Greek alphabet instead.**

8.

**They've told me so much this morning,
I sing my thanks in husky baritone,
breadcrumbs on the window ledge,
my breath goes out to feed a cloud.
I'm on the other side already,
I hear the crows at last.
Winter was with us long,
even last week I wore my overcoat
so again I ask the window
When does now begin?
Sometimes I miss going to church,
funny smells and awkward people
all trying to be good
but long ago church came to me,
I have to be the congregation
and the priest and altar boys
and sexton all by myself,
a lot of work for a lazy man.**

Trees have shadows.
Men have ideas.

9.

Maybe in the dream
he just recited alphabets
in that high, tender, West Coast voice of
his,
letters in order, letters all mixed,
X's and Y's and Q's all over,
more than natural. But then he said:
*I am nature—
be me if you can.*

10.

Every now and then blank verse is best,
the gleaming fur of listening people,

**you see the shimmer in the audience,
soft sucking of ears taking it all in
you think you hear them hearing you
right back,
listeners, magistrates of your craft.
They're here to certify your loving lies.
the audience, closest you come to god.**

11.

**So give more readers,
use more letters,
O and N feel neglected
but you've done your best for Z.
Now learn Russian.
Now play chess
the way you did once,**

**that virgin sport
that has no children,
just the ivory in your fingertips,
never stop touching me.**

12.

**When a bird passes overhead
and you know it only because
you see its shadow down below
you'll seldom know precisely
what kind it was—so much
for ornithology of everyday life
as Freud would say.**

**Now learn to read shadows—
what was that science called again,
something like scenosophy?
And there's nowhere to look it up.
So you have to do it all yourself,**

**start on the other side
of wherever you think you are,
leave the comfy motel of now
and follow the shadow home.**

10 June 2022

= = = = =

**Friday on earth
hier bin ich
ich kann kein anders
I cry to the audience the air,**

**the air can always hear me,
the air can understand...**

**I'm trying to tell you
that here I am, nothing else
I can do, but only the air
understands, can you?**

**Ask the mushrooms—they
know where we come from
or is it where we're going?**

**All the same, a moment
snatched from then, called
now. Can you bear with me
if I have no choice but to be here?**

**Is it different for you, lily,
hazel, amber, crocodile?**

**Everything must speak
before they let me be silent.**

10 June 2022

=====

cean of air
the waves of it
find us, touch us
everywhere
no way to hide
from their careers t
hey teach us
we are here to be touched,
we would not live
without heir embrace.

10 June 2022

=====

**When the waiter finally comes
explain your dietary issues
in broken French, wait
till he seems to understand,
then wait while he vanishes
presumably into the kitchen
to explain in broken Vietnamese
what he understood of you
and your spiritual needs. A waiter
is one who makes you wait.
Your stomach is growling but
you're scared of what happens
when you eat. This all-night bistro
is called ordinary life,
and you have had a conversation with a
friend. Now pray**

**to your coffee cup and see
what comes of honesty and hope.
You never know—he may have
understood.**

11 June 2022

=====

**In this dream we stood around
watching a form of amusement.
Atop a barebones wooden structure
a steply skoping roof.
Animals, size and color or cats
but not cats, would clamber up
the posts and once on top
flip a somersault in the air,
land on their backs and slide
swiftly off the polished roof
and land, on all fours down below.
We watched this a while but then
one of them hurt its paw
on the descent—you went
to comfort it and I lay down**

**in the snow, resigned to what might
come. It took me a while
longer to remember the word
'resigned.'**

11 June 2022

=====

**Say Yes to what is offered
even if it's weird
as long as it's not wrong.
Break no laws, hurt no one,
and everything else that comes
along is from the angels,
your own angels, not Rilke's,
you can touch them whenever
you feel your bare skin
suddenly, unexpectedly, arm
or rib or thigh, that is the angel
reminding you they're there,
they're there, and there is here
and here is everywhere.**

11 June 2022

CORNER

**A corner is clever thing,
teaches cars geometry
and they teach us. And when
you see someone standing
on a corner you understand
that is a special person indeed,
study their posture, their stance,
read the message in their eyes.
People are on the corner
even for a minie, seemingly
just waiting for a light to change,
for some reason, a reason
that relat,es to you or else
you would not be passing by
at this very hour. Read the reason.**

11 June 2022

CARGO

**Sometimes the ballast
you toss overboard turns
out to be the cargo after all.
Empty arrival at intended shore—
but you are what the land
demanded and was waiting for,
not sstuff they could get anywhere.
They wanted you. And here you are,
empty beach glorious blazing trumpets.**

11 June 2022

= = = = =

In the cave
“Come Home to Me”
the trees have formed
in their dense foliage
a place of refuge.

It calls to me
across this parking lot
loud-music’d by
the clang of shopping carts—

they call them chariots in France,
I call the ten million
leaves up there my true home.

11 June 2022, Red Hook

=====

**I watched tv last night,
saw a brief live shot
of sunset above Los Angeles,
solid red, flush of blood,
hot meat, flesh
of the animal we live inside.**

12 June 2022

=====

**Air breathes gently
in this morning
like a morning prayer.
Let everything be easy
just this once
so we can see
what peace would be like
after desires sleep
and no one calls.**

12 june 2022

=====

**Achilles, mildly wounded
in a minor skirmish Homer
forgot to mention, sprawls
on the shore, catching his breath,
thinks to himself: War
is an outer vector
of a spiritual journey,
that's why we fight,
not land or gold or love,
just to do outside
what spirit's always busy with.
But what is spirit, and who am I?**

12 June 2022

LESSON PLAN:

Trust your body. Your body is articulate and smart. Make a video of yourself doing something: running, walking, dancing, prancing, working at something, waving about, standing meaningfully still. Then watch the video, watch it without judging or revising, watch it keeping as quiet in your head as you can, watch it and let yourself hear what rises in you as words, write these words down. Don't describe what you saw as you watched, no need for that, let what you saw speak its own message through you. Never describe, only respond. Now take the words you write down, that

**poem (poem in Greek meant:
something made),
and record that as the sound track if the
video. Voice is body too. Let sound and
sight play with each other in easy,
imperious counterpoint.**

12 June 2022

=====

**From the windows of this house
I see in this exuberant summer
more leaves than there are
than people in New York,
all here, all articulate, all at peace.**

2.

**Sunday in Exurbia,
no church bell heard.
Churches empty,
statuesque in stone
or humble in wood and shingle,
they stand in fields or woods
like things dropped accidentally
on the way home by someone big
hurrying through the dark.**

3.

And in this one smooth church
right in town, my father sang once
his last Ave from the choir loft.

And it was empty then too,
empty already, only my father
and whatever listens in the stone.

4.

Saint Sylvia's the church is called,
still there, some rich man bought it
and painted the dedication out.

I never bothered to find out
who Sylvia was

so I could pray to her
and ask forgiveness for
all I cdin't do,

**What could I do
to keep music in and money out?
But her name must mean
Woman of the Woods,
so the trees will tell me
what I need to know.**

**5.
Pale green of nearby leaves,
youthful seem,
young folk reckoning
the needs of the day.
You can tell I'm praying
somehow, praying for peace.
Start with loving kindness,
shelter the weak—any tree knows that.**

12 June 2022

WHAT WOULD I SAY TO YOU

if we were friends?
If we were friends I'd want
to explain all that I see,
feel, understand, suspect
when I look at you, I'd want
to tell you in merciless detail
how differently wonderful you are,
I'd want my words to fit you
snug but graceful, colorful
but always true to you.
If we were friends you'd help me,
correcting all my misspellings,
all the all-too-obvious remarks,
until in that revision I suddenly
would know you even better.
And maybe you'd know me.

12 June 2022

=====

Overboard the animal,
the skeptic left
alone in the canoe.
Now what to do?
Paddle firmly north
into the truth,
drift south into the easy
natural, crocodiles, sunset, song?

2.
Birds many,
bring blue to the sky.
He watches,
drufts, resumes
his paddling,
off and on, day and night,
why do we fit

**the world so well
he wonders,
and it fits us so ill?**

3.

**What would you expect in a canoe?
Floating antique, slightly off-color
racial slur, a technique
stolen from those we destroyed,
deported, made into cartoons.
Shame on you, sir,
shame on your canoe,
that plastic paddle in or hands
killed a million Athabaskans.**

12 June 2022

= = = = =

Suppose it is
a certain time of night.
Suppose the rain
has started or has stopped—

there is so much to imagine,
a wren at the window
(or did I really hear it?),

a glass of Coca-Cola
idling by the sink.

The vessel itself
finally found
(or was it never far away?).

12 June 2022

GRAPEFRUIT

**They served me half of one
with a maraschino cherry
plumped in its core,
old-fashioned breakfast starter.
I ate the cherry first
then set to work, you know how,
spoon spoon, yum yum,
scrape scape. When it was fone
is when the fun begins.
Flip the rind over on the plate,
behold a golden dome,
its surface rich with pores,
like thin, but these
are marks of time. Because
already I whispered the magic spell
(there are dozens of them,
some work better than others,**

any child knows that) and now
the dome is an actual structure,
vast, in Babylonian majesty,
big enough to hold inside it
Vatican City and Jerusalem.
I stand before it reverently,
breathing a psalm or two
in syllables I just made up
in real awe of this huge structure
made by some southern tree.
I am about to enter the great dome
through an ogival doorway when
the waitress take the dome away
and sets a fried egg in its place.
though I think it is actually
the sun in a pale winter sky.

13 June 2022

=====

**Yeats' birthday.
My hair stands on end
like his in the photo
but there the likeness ends.
The sheer certainty
of his saying, his faith
in the image found,
when will that religion
come back to poetry?
I try, you try, we all try
and sometimes maybe,
maybe. I run my fingers
through my hair and get to work.**

13 June 2022

= = = = =

How far is east from here,
yankee doldrums of a Monday noon
in summertime yet, the brook
nearby babbling like Charles Ives,

*when the water
wants a daughter
the Naiades spring up,*

but here I am
nymphless in Dollarstan
watching the trees
purify the human will
o just now I see one walking in the
shade.

13 June 2022

=====

**The tree said to me:
Why are you always
waiting for somebody else?
I stand where I am
and I always.
And all I ever need
comes to me—air and water,
wind and rain,
birds of all languages,
little animals climb me,
and gorgeous pollinating
butterflies that rest so
like the flowers they elicit.
And we trees talk to one another
underground, root tip to root tip
and something more (I can't
tell you about it yet), swift,**

easy as your phone and internet,
and all beneath the earth,
song and scripture, wake or doze.
No more do we need,
the word is enough,
no need to travel,
everything comes to us,
that's why we stand here.

13 June 2022

= = = = =

Searching the caravel
for evidence of
who we were
before it bright s here,
log-book liturgy,
left-over language,
what tree gave us this mast
and where does it grow,
and all the other woods
and water still sloshing in its hold,
is it new or very old?
baptism or yesterday's rain?
Where were we
when here was there?

14 June 2022

COLD CALL

**Be there! Or not—
my voice is will,
will find a way
to reach you, slip
down your collar
or up your sleeve,
voices are smarter
than we are, know
where you hide, know
how to find you, know
how to wake your voice
so it will answer me
and I will heat it even
before the buzzing stops.**

14 June 2022

=====

**Send me a window full of sea,
send me a reddish cliff to stand on
safe over the same sea,
seals flapping up out of surf,
an old snapshot of kids
smoking weed when it was still
illegal and a lot more fun,
send me the whole state,
you know the one, a Bear
Walking fast on its white flag.**

14 June 2022

=====

**What would that word be
that left the mouth
satisfied, quiet,
lips softly closed?
It tasted like chocolate
just after the last
bite has dissolved.**

14.VI.22

A BIRD

Satisfied
on a branch
at rest,
the hermit thrush,
so deep at rest
he could in an instant
fly anywhere.
I saw a picture
and it sang this
more musically,
undistracted by words.

14 June 2022

POSTCARDS FROM MY NINTH YEAR

Whiffletree

sky dark

wagon full of beets

it could be Jordan

shallow sluice

cool to my ankles

stoof on sun-bleached stones

everything is next

nothing is now

can't help crying

*

child means
water still tastes good

*

nothing comes to mind
o I get it
the trees are still asleep

*

they dream
or drink
the morning sun

*

never talked to them
they talked to me—
am I still like that?

*

**the moment came
the black cow
turned and looked at me**

*

**taste of milkweed sap
forbidden
always risk of knowing**

*

**scrupulous churches
why so many, people
only one priest**

*

15 June 2022

== ==

**At a certain hour of the morning
the sun drains the blue
out of the beech leaves
and the whole tree turns gold.
All the blue becomes the sky
beyond, adobe, time
playing with colors like a child.
But what a child!**

15 June 2022

=====

**The day I thought it was tomorrow
was a long hard day,
too many people
not enough words to go around,
food left on the plate,
radio squealing baroque flutes.
And yet it is tomorrow now
and nothing lost. Experience
seems nothing we learn from.
We will do it all again.**

15 June 2022

IDIOMS

**Knock on
wood meant
touch the crucifix.
So when I say
I hope so who
really hoping
and what is so?**

15 June 2022

=====

**At a table in Bolzano
they served him a plump
baked potato and a thick
slice of gorgonzola.
He spoke Rumansch
and could do Italian,
evben Enhlish, so I ...
what could I do?
I drank my coffee,
kept up the conversation,
watched the pigeons.
But why wasn't I eating cheese?**

15 June 2022

LESSON FOR TODAY

**With left hip firmly
pressed against the shower wall
set your right foot
delicately down in tomorrow.
Feel the dry grass?
Feel its tickle on the toes?
Watch tomorrow's news—see.
no difference. But the music!
You never heard that before.
It's your own skin tasting time.
Now towel dry and write the future
down.**

15 June 2022

MEMORY

Lesser organisms
of beast desire—
scarecrow on the cornfield
long time no see—
bikini drying on a clothesline,
remember that rope
slung between city houses,
cloth telephone?

2.

But now is now
is wind playing
in the trees
or is it the trees
playing with it—
no man can tell.

3.

**We can always try
to start again,
midsummer murmurs
rises soon,
everything is on the way.
But will I understand it
when it comes?
And will it know me?**

4.

**Memory, that ramshackle
museum with the drowsy curator,
Corinthian columns supporting
a thatched roof
somewhere in Donegal**

where the girls are half-seal
and the gorse hedges
march around the fields at night.

5.

But love likes new things too.
There is a cellar under everything,
old brick walls, a barrel of wine,
a cloister of rats. Believe!
Each word emerges
and is right to do so,
no God but God
and we are at last where we are—
who dares quarrel with
the earth beneath their feet?
Our main business is inhaling all the
time.

16 June 2022

=====

**There was a time
when people said Absolutely
to mean Yes.**

**Suggesting that Relatively
should mean No.**

**But you know what people are like,
one day here, one day in Miamu.
Wouldn't you?**

16 June 2022

=====

**I wear an invisible hat,
you ride an invisible horse,
we slip through crowds
exciting no remark
only the usual hatred, scorn etc.
people offer one another.
My invisible hat is old-fashioned,
a grey homburg, your horse
is white and well0behaved.
Soon we come to the edge
of the harbor, I toss
my hat onto the dark green sea,
you dismount and let your steed
leap into its native ocean
and swim fast away to where he
and all the rest of us were born.**

**And there we stand
on the promenade,
counting the islands
that come and go,
you love the herons,
I like the cormorants
and we are quiet together,
happy, we have married
the earth to the sea once again,
our work is done, we sit
on the old wooden bench
and know, just know.**

16 June 2022

=====

A hot wind for a wonder
or call it warm to be milder.
slim woman in blue satin
singing on stage and call it time,
sky paling.

2.

A person
is mostly geography
anyway, sail the sea,
climb the massif,
remember the forest
where thought sleeps
and seeks out all
the elsewheres in the world
even before a single touch.

3.

The pale act worked,
a cloud has formed,
lightly, shouldering east.
Remember the signs
we saw in stores, Look
but Don't Touch. why
did we pay so deep attention
to such light-weight philosophy?
The trees know better in breeze,
it's morning, at least
wave back at their signally leaves.

4.

I felt this way
in California once
for no good reason,

**It must have been
just being west
of where I am
and here doesn't
fit on a plane.
So somewhere else
makes someone else
and the wind was warm.**

5.

**Look in a book,
find the old name for now,
and where her altar was
when we were sensible enough
to offer on it marigolds and memories
and pour out on its stone
the sweet wine of forgetfulness.**

6.

I keep trying
to keep it from
being a love song,
but keep failing.
Your face when you're sleeping
on your side, at my side,
turned towards me,
dreaming of an island,
and I see you right then
soon as I open my eyes,
gasping at the sight,
I lie there, a child
waking in the temple,
nothing to know but love.
I am, where you are.

17 June 2022

=====

**The metaphysical underpinnings
of the subway system,
I know J and you know A
and we assert existence,
drowsy as a trunk
sleeps past his stop
and still we are!
Triumph underground!**

**The old names said it right:
BMT, Be mine tonight,
IRT, In rapture thrive,
IND, I need delight
and it was darker down there then,
they knew what dark is for,
and the so-called river
pooled dark green overhead—**

**we knew it was there
because the dark was long.
Think of all of us,
a coupe of dozen
easy in one non-rush hour car,
all of us forming one mind,
the Mind on its Way Underground
and each of us brings home
a piece of it, or maybe loses it
in q bqr, or in a park
startled by the sight of a tree.**

17 June 2022

=====

**Talk to me about taxes
I mean Texas
places I have been,
debts I have paid.
Is everything the same
after all, or isn't it enough
for the government
that we are standing around?
I guess we owe for light and air.
And lots of that in Dallas
though the air is hot
and tinged with Rebel rhetoric
and lotd knows what they think of me.**

17 June 2022

=====

**Faces and flowers
the cost
of being seen**

**o the smile of them,
do they have thorns,
will they scratch me**

**of I take a petal
on my lip. or dare
to answer with mine**

the lips that smile at me?

So that was the romantic poem a picture of girls smiling in from of flowering bushes made him think.

Why iddn't he think about the dentists who kept their teeth so

even, so white? Why didn't he think about the sea, whose washy air kept the flowers pink and lush?

He didn't even think about their bodies, aroma of their showered skin, scent of the flowers, feel of flesh. Just petals and lips, those tired old synecdoches.

Kisses?

We kiss our maiden aunts, we kiss our nece's tabby cat. And yet he thinks of kisses, and thinks he's tgought of something passionate,

permanent as marble, classical and true.

BAKERY

It said over the door, but it was dim inside when I went in. Empty wooden counter faced me, a bare wall beyond it, no showcase, no big glass urns, nothing on display.

there was not even the feel of distant heat that comes off ovens even when they're cooling down, and no smell at all. When I leaned on the counter with the skilled impatience of shoppers expecting attention, I noticed off to the left an even darker area, and a slim woman with her back to me, leaning on a counter of her own.

I cleared my throat. I said Hello?

Oh, she said and turned around, came towards me briskly enough. She wore a long white apron, had a friendly-looking face with no special smile on it. Have you any bread? I asked, I was hoping for a french bread, you know, a baguette. No, she said, that is not how things are. It's all up to us. It depends on how we are shaped or shaken. Then I woke up.

18 June 2022

THE BIRD

for Nicole, bon anniversaire!

There was a young woman
from the mountains,
she had long legs
and she climbed hills,
when she grew taller
she could step over
the hill and later right
over a mountain.

Mostly she wanted
to be a bird,
and just like a bird
she had much to say.
As she grew older

she got tired of only
stepping over mountains
so she stepped over the sea.

New places, new languages,
and all kinds of new
birds in the sky. Restless
and with much to say
she learned to walk up walls,
she learned to walk
on the sky, always
with an eye on what's below,
friends and family, all
those beautiful terrestrial
responsibilities. One day
she got tired of waiting
for her people to wake up
and she had so much to say

**so she went outside
up over the harbor, and with
her bare feet wrote
a love letter on the sky—
the whole city found it
and read it when we woke.**

18 June 2022

VOCATION

The girl was a pirate
and laced her bodice tight.
Her ship, the *Plunder*,
roved among the islands,
hundreds of them,
the Seychelles—not
seashells, don't be funny—
*not every island
has people on it
and we are free
sing yur chanty
drink your coffee—
and don't dare call t java,
that's somewhere very else.*

2.

**But the girl, as I was saying,
wandered from town to town,
job to job, every one
taught her new tricks,
music for example, or cuisine. .
One day on the subway
she sat next to a sleeping priest,
relieved him of his breviary,
set to work learning Latin,
became dean of a junior college
in the suburbs but now and then
rode the subway until she found
her priest and gave him his book back.**

3.

In night's calm weather
she'd dream of her old ship,
harrying the habitants,
gold coins, crayfish chowder,
the beautiful bones flag
flapping over her head,
her all-girl crew
teachinbg captured
sailor boys to dance.

4.

Then at morning there was work
yet again, all that money!
Money is a satin comforter
she thought, too heavy, too warm,
presses you deeper in the bed,
too heavy for sleep. She got up,
"Get young!" she whispered

to herself, and sure enough
the bathroom mirror heard
and obeyed and she smiled back,
*:A girl forever
and all the seas are mine!"*

18 June 2022
Kingston

= = = = =

A predilection for comfortable bedding leads many astray. What shall I do when all my friends head south? Tag along to some sub-tropic shore, a Florida or even Mexico? But what would I do there, would I lift my arms up to the sky like some character In D H Lawrence or simply sit quietly down call memory to its job, play the lost subways, the thick corned beef sandwiches of my youth?

**18 June 2022
(oral)**

A LABOR

1.

**I have to cleanse my stables.
Too many hoof prints
in the dust, footprints,
too many names
scrawled on the stalls,
too many names in the index.**

2.

**One sunrise should do it,
because the sun is always
she is good for forgetting.
One sunrise, one prayer,
one newly-painted white wall,
a wet kiss offered freely
to the passing wind
and then it's done.**

3.

**Then the bare building
will be mine again—
'mine' means free of my own
history, free of my wants,
wins, failures, 'mine' means
just me, alone with what will come.**

4.

**But the old smells
still linger, stirred up
from the floorboards,
dirt of the yard, by the very
wind I hoped would heal.
And heal it does, but fragrance
takes a long time to go away.**

5.

Stallions and mares,
those who galloped.
those who slouched along
dragging a cart full of manure,
Carry me to glory!

I shouted as I rode,
but they who could drag
boulders out of earth
could not drag me out of me.

6.

So the stable stand empty now
and people ask me what

**that building is, is it a house,
who lives in it, is it for sale?
Everybody wants to get
out of the city. But not this house
if house it is. This house
is sacred to its absences.**

19 June 2022

= = = = =

So it's just a matter

**of standing on the corner
across the street
from where I am
so that I can see myself
clad in the dignity of geography,
a part of everything there is.
Those geological shoes,
that clothed hide!
Mildly surprising that there are
still animals like me.
And that zoos are everywhere.**

19 June 2022

THE PROFESSION

It's a real factory

**even if it turns out toys.
It keeps a worker fed
and with food for the spouse.
And when the worker
goes to sleep at night
a sense of almost-satisfaction
fills the mind. True,
more could have been done,
there is never an end to doing,
but just enough done
to let sleep come. And dreams
will deliver raw material, dump it right
at the door of waking.**

19 June 2022

= = = = =

Call the plumber

the well is weeping
it remembers the face
of someone once
who looked down
the dark shaft and saw
their reflection,
the well remembers,
strives to remember
the sky every day,
stars every night,
all that is hard enough
but then someone comes
and leaves an image in the water—
you can taste it to this day.

20 June 2022

=====

Warmer, breezeless,
summer will happen tonight
sometime, who knows
the number of the real,
the m dream night,
quiet day, holiday this year
in our country but does
the river know? Maybe
more people hike the hills.

Green pales in strong sun.
Pool frolic? Meadow tumbling?
I wouldn't know, I am alone
with the shadows small trees cast,
brilliant student work
among the towering masters.
Nothing moving but a bee
at the window. And a few cars

but of course cars don't count.

20 June 2022

FRONTIER

**Remind the border guard
what country he stands there
to protect, sometimes even he
gets confused, staring so long
out to sea, all distances
are dangerous, you can never tell.**

**Remind him how you played
together, pink rubber balls,
hide and seek, remind him
of the music they made you hear,
cruel boredom of school, glee
when snowfall whites out the day.**

**Soon you and he will sit down
next to each other, tell stories,
weep a little in a manly way.
And while you suffer histories
from the sea refugees come, sneak
into the land and make it better.**

20 June 2022

DE CUNICULIS

Lots of rabbits on the island.

Write the story of each one.

**Not so many as before the coyotes
swam across from the bigger island.**

They go out and shoot the coyotes.

The deer are stable.

**And a few years ago the crows came
back.**

**This feels like an allegory,
children's book with shotguns in it
but maybe it is not.**

**Not a dream and not a guidebook
but a cup of coffee is still
close to the wine of Eleusis,
mind jump, gods everywghere.**

**This is a real island
(but what isn't?)
has latitude and longitude
and its folk where shoes,
mostly, save when fishing in the surf.**

striped bass and sometimes hake.

**If I believe what I see
I'll believe anything.**

**I am a believer, believe everything,
no dogma too dull for my catechism,**

**my beliefs (here it comes)
are like the rabbits,
multitudinous and quick, cuddly and
furry if you take hold,
they dart in and out of all the wild**

roses along the seashore,
beliefs are rabbits, are flowers,
come and go and every time
one slips out onto the lawn
there is a reason to rejoice.
O I know that! I have known
that since Babylong! O here
you are again, Trismegistus,
Hollow Earth, sly alchemy.

It's not safe to talk about
rabbits around me.

20 June 2022

=====

The hansom cab seat two

the brougham seats four.
One for each wheel. Of course
you can squeeze anybody in
.One horse,, two or four—
the things you have to learn.
And in the rain! Lift the cloth
that serves as roof, feel sorry
for the coachman but keep going.
Slowly it dawns on you (you come
from an island): There is no place
that is not here. Slow down. Stop.
Tip the driver. Stand under a tree.
Soon you will only be me.

20 June 2022

=====

This is the day

**when the night come true,
sun wears her grey silk veil,
the trees are cogently inscribing
all they've learned leaf by leaf.
And all our colors change
according to the thinking.
The thinking that thinks us.**

21 June 2022

=====

**Falstaff at the bar
criticizing public TV:
“Masterpiece? Give me
Mistress’ Snatch anytime.
I want to hold the world
and touch it and taste deep-
thinking is for children...”
In my shock forgot to ask
what grown-ups do instead.
maybe I shouldn’t even have
written down what he had said.**

21.VI.22

=====

**No more love stuff
no more pussy cats—
I have an ancient
dignity to uphold,
clear-voice pronouncing
what the Gods have said
as reported by tree and stone.
Actaeon shows you
what They think of puppy dogs.**

21.VI.22

LAWNMOWER

Maybe there's a reason
the mower's roaring motor
disturbs us so much,
it's only sound, it gets louder,
gets softer, closer, awayer
and then comes back. Music
does that too, and we pay it to.
Maybe our annoyance really
is reading the pain of the earth,
this carbon soaking, crushing,
cutting, that kills insects,
animals, leaves poisons behind.

Maybe the annoyance we feel

**is us responding, dumb as usual,
to the earth's appeal.
At least we feel. So:
Let the grass grow.
If mow you must,
mow once a season.**

21 June 2022

=====

**It goes up a notch.
There. Tie it there,
a necktie on an oak—
they went to college too
I mean it came to them.
I taught at CalTech but
they know more. Pretty
tie though, silk, maroon,
sunset over redwoods,
we're always late for supper.**

21.VI.22

=====

**A note of desperation
in the song–
please listen to me
though we know I’m wrong,
telling is the only
touch i have, the only
miracle is you listening.
Of course I have
nothing to say,
that’s why I keep talking–
words find a way,
o let them bring me to you.**

21 June 2022

=====

**The lovely thing
about visual art:
you don't have to read it
out loud to an audience.**

**It sits here on the page
or on the wall and says
and says all by itself.
No book designer, printer,
vocal artist needed.**

**Yet somehow the words can
sometimes come off the page**

**and hum in your head,
linger maybe, change a little,
let them loose in the corral—
i hear suddenly the hoof beats
of a horse ot of nowhere.**

21 June 2022

=====

**Learning small things
on the way to being,
the smell of rain
is a kind of school,
and how long has that
boulder been there,
in the woods you thought
were yours to know?
Embraces. Deliveries.
Even the squirrels city
pastorals celebrate as if.
Engine throbbing far away
turns out to be your heartbeat.**

22 June 2022

=====

**There are so many countries
in the world now, so many flags.
And I have been to so few,
just enough to have a sense
of sea and cliff, subway and snow,
weird religions, a wombat
sleeping on my path. No, not
in Australia, in the Catskills,
a zoo, another weird religion.**

22 June 2022

TORCHSONG 2

I f eel like a book
you stopped reading
left it open
by the empty cup,
pages fluttering,
annoying, snapped
it shut and shoved
it back on the shelf,
my words still trying
to mean in the dark.

22 June 2022

=====

**If I didn't know
better I'd
think it was today.**

**22.VI.22
Lune**

=====

**The aroma of a checkerboard,
chessboard, so many games,
cigars, schemes, disasters.
Gambits, they say, and sacrifices,
time flushing past, knotted brow.
Why do I think of that, I wonder,
when the window is open, the
temperature has risen one
degree in the past hour
and a wren is singing?
None obsessive squares in sight,
black and red or brown and white.
Maybe chess went out with cigarettes.**

22 June 2022

=====

**A tree
is history
enough
for me.**

**Put that on your shelf
with sagas and edda,
leave me out here
with beech tree my Herodotus.**

22 June 2022

=====

**Quiet life of indoor man,
sole turbulence the uproar
of cooking and devouring.
Then peace again, all things
not just food being digested.
Music on the device. Images
on the screen. Memories
trying to forget themselves.
Thank God for the trees,
their leaves at the window.**

22 June 2022

GRIDLOCK

**Bach's fourth partita
last movement
cyclist zipping through
an tangle of counterpointed
trucks and cars.**

**Sometimes I think that only
music liberates. It certainly
knows how to captivate.**

**The piece ends. I fall
into silence.**

22 June 2022

CHIMNEYS

In summer you don't think
much about chimneys
but there they stand
brick or stone or cinderblock
or even round beach stones
round the dark tunnel to the sky.
Cold chimney used to mean
out of work. Now just summertime,
maybe once in a while
on cool nights some smoke
sneaks up from the fireplace Sunday's
papers burning
to take off Tuesday's chill.
And it's cold today too.

22/23 June 2022

=====

*Walk there. Stand here.
Or the other
way round*

**Sing that to your children
until they learn
to sing right back**

*We live in the ocean
we live in the air
we don't live here.*

23 June 2022

=====

**The longest day has come and
turned into yesterday.
Scaffolding holds up the sky,
emerald and jade, turquoise
hidden in the clefts. The cliffs
I mean from which attention
falls and then we're at peace,
alittle, a little while, long
as a song you never heard before.**

23 June 2022

=====

**Learn to love
what you are
and others
may learn too.**

23.VI.22

=====

**Mr Bitowft
whose name may
have meat 'baptized'
used to tell my father
Unasked for advice
stinks. My father
used to qupte him
often. And have I told
you all this before?**

23.VI.22

=====

**On mornings like this
(no asterisk required)
it takes a while to shake
the mind stuff out and let
the voices of the trees
come in and shape
what I think I'm saying.**

**On days like this the bus
is empty, the raccoon
is gresy from the pound
of suet he stole from the birds,
if I turned on the radio
it would probably say Chopin.**

**Silence. I don't dare. Cough.
Clear mind by clearing throat—
sometimes works. Again,
and a sip of cold coffee. Ah,
at least that feels like me.
Now come and make me other—
that's all we can do for each other.**

23 June 2022

=====

**Lies are like rubber bands,
they dry out and snap.
Nex explanations, confusion,
truth all over the floor.
Sometimes it looks like flowers.**

23.VI.22

=====

hey waited for me to begin,
I waited for them.
History of the world in one
compound sentence
or two if you don't like pauses.
It is waiting for all of us.
For all the slaves to be freed,
all the guillotines dismantled,
all the prisons torn down, all
the guns melted down into steel
to make cars and bridges from.
They're waiting for me still.
It's up to me now to begin .

23 June 2022

=====

**Only one little bridge
we crossed today,
flat, hardly noticeable,
where the Sawkill pond
is at its narrowest
and the road is strong.
Pondweed green sheen,
sky-mirroring further out
No ducks. No swan. No geese.
Just us and the water seven
seconds and we're all gone.**

23 June 2022

=====

**Tell your representative
in this new Dark Age,
tell the young linden tree
whose leaves hang
low and deep over the deck**

**tell it we need word
or two just to start the day,
nothing fancy
no Greek polysyllables,
simple, to make us understand
the nature of the light
that pours down from heaven**

**if that is heaven up there—
maybe it all overflows, maybe
everything is, and close to us,
something like a linden tree.**

24 June 2022

PLANH

If the voice to text
transcriber can't
understand my words
what does it say
about me? Never mind
my diction, it's
my mind that worries me.

24.VI.22

=====

Through the magnifying lens of dream
I sherlocked an alternate me,
friendlier, trying not to offend,
willing to play along, playful
in fact, but not too much.

I told someone I wrote sixty books,
subaggerating out of modesty—
is that a word? I wore
a pale cloth easy hat I have,
lowbrow, ordinary man walking,
could it be me? I woke up slowly,
counting clouds over Cedar Hill,
fortunately there was only one.

24 June 2022

=====

**I ring for the waiter
a womn comes over
and says Yes?
The question mark
spoils the whole thing.**

24.VI.2022

= = = = =

**After the aftermath
number written in the sky
the way they used to,
roar outside, siren
(who do they call it that)
at two a.m. why is the fisherman
selling his boat? Scandals
underfoot. Raptures
rip through every seam.
What is the noise that woke me?
Sometimes it's enough
to know that the mail has come.**

25 June 2022

=====

**It takes a while
to write the whale world down—
we're still at it,
the alphabet a big help.
And every now and then
some Rilke shows up
who jumps the story forward,
but the water in the brook
giggles and keeps running away.**

25 June 2022

=====

**Be serious for once—
this whole bold chanticleer
was once inside a little egg**

**and so were you
though your egg had so shell
and swung her arms around
and went swimming in the sea.**

**So now you can be anyone—
who would you pick
to be this midsummer fay,
choose to be, a bird, a bachelor,
a barrister, a baritone,
to mention only boys.**

**Heat in the air,
be anyone at all!
This is the day for it
just like every day,

everybody wants
to be alone with the sea.**

25 June 2022

=====

**Under the vig window
he sat in the deceit chair,
it was Good Friday,
he waited for the pain,
waited for the stormy sky
to open and God knows
what appear, the pain
was coming closer, heard
the dentist fiddling with
the instruments of torture,**

**It would hurt. And now
it did hurt, a lot, but the worst
part was the sky, the pain
would stop after a while
but the sky would still be there,**

**always there, blue or black,
always waiting for the scream
when it ripped open.
And he had to live with that.**

25 June 2022

=====

The task is blue today.
Something about the Danube
is calling me today,
not so much Vienna
as the Black Forest
where I stood and reverent
at its fountain, no to much
Budapest as the mouth
they call it where it pours
Europe into the Black Sea.
Black to black, music
on the way. But something more,
something I can only see
the color of, sky blue,
palm youreyes gently, gently,
look into that personal drk

**of yours , just your fingerprints
on that dark world, look
tenderly into your palms–
something like that. But blue.**

25 June 2022

NOBODY I KNOW

**On the boardwalk
slap of wet flip-flops,
o their hair glistens
proof of the sea they
swam or sat in or who
knows what they do
when there out of
sight in the sea? Seals
and sharks, I wouldn't know.**

2.

**Slip a coin
into the stanchioned
bg binoculars
stationed at the rail,
the shutters open,**

**you get to watch
the emty sea, watch
the antics of
the whale that isn't there.**

3.

**I personally love
the wood of the walk
sandy dry in sunshine,
slippery from all
the dripping bathers
on their way to drink
beer or piss it out or just
stand in the sunlight
being on display.**

4.

It could have been me
or you or Lily I forget
her last name but it wasn't.
It wasn't anybody I know,
can't even be sure
of gender or age, just
the print of two wet feet
on an otherwise dry patch,
sunflower husks scattered
around, nobody nearby.
My theory is they came
from heaven. Angels always
leave evidence. Fact.
Chew seeds. Spit out shells.

5.

And all this mess and other
(is that w word?) distracts
from the one fact, the basic
fact of being, here or anywhere,
the sea. Boardwalk and bikinis,
so what? Ocean surrounds us,
insides us. (Can that be a erb?
Why is it so hard to talk sense?)

6.

Enough equivocation.
I will go down to the surf
and stand there in wet feet,
fearful of going further,
content where I am. And now

**I am nobody I know,
just a pair of wet cool feet,
refreshed, sending joyous
messages north along nerve ways
into somebody's brain.**

25 June 2022

=====

**All those names that have no faces,
how can I paint them with the colors of
sleep**

**accurate enough to see their eyes
still after I wake up?**

Iris and Olaf, Edgar, Ulrica?

**No body I know bears them now
but something sturdies them in mind,
O can almost see his tweed jacket,
her sleek blond hair
but nothing more. Smell of tobacco,
tabby cat sleeping on a chair.**

26 June 2022

=====

**It's not so much that
summer's come as winter's
gone. Does that make sense?
Relief. Releasement.
And the trees articulate abound.**

26.VI.22

=====

**Pliable fiddlesticks,
marshmallows guitars?
Bad enough but much
Mushier things are crawling
on their way to ruin us,
mushy and evil and dangerous.**

**Hitler smiles up from hell.
Women's bodies are ruled by men,
creepy old men at that,
ancient bous love guns and war
and murdering legally
whoever they decide is criminal.**

**He shot his wife, last flourish
of male supremacy**

and then he shot himself.

What are we doing to ourselves?

**Why does the Right to Life
expire at birth?**

25.VI.22

=====

**Trees frown at me
when I speak about politics.
That's not my job
and certainly not theirs.
But they are certainly
consolations, like the big
white shapely cloud
just appearing from the north.
If I don't listen to trees
I become part of the problem.
No clean out my ears
with a little music,
cool suds to ease my grumpy views.**

26.VI.22

=====

**Stone that juts
out into the sea
where the white church stands.
We walk on its civility
safe to the edge.
The continuity of water
eases our sense of time
passing. Harbor. Bay.
Sea. Ocean, live now
means to live always.**

2.

**They call the church
the bigger Saint Mary
as if Her sacred self
had several or even**

many bodes that move
among us as she passes
us or we pass Her,
hardly noticing Her
blessing as we pass.
And of course She has.

3.
Skin of water
skin of light.
The water runs
into the city—
hard to tell lies
with so much truth around.

4.

Odd feeling that we're still
standing there years later,
no change but the weather
and you know what weather's like.
I feel the white stone
beneath my feet, the glimmer
of water so close, lets me see,
lets me see! And out
on the lagoon a slow skiff slides.

5.

Any stone on any sea?
Maybe. I'm not particular.
But maybe it is, maybe
this single antique ledge
is the only place in which

**very particular ideas or images
arise. Maybe each spot on earth
has its own chrestomathy
of meanings and solutions.
And I think the sea knows all of them.**

26 June 2022

= = = = =

**Walk the hallway
till it meets the moonbeam
a mesh of flimsy curtain
lets come in. Stand there
a while, I tell myself, stand
like the unpaid inspector
of reality you are. No, not fair,
I'm paid enough, amply, in fact,
but not by agency or government,
lots to eat, place to be,
food for thought, all paid
by the standing somewhere,
paid by the moon.**

26 June 2022

= = = = =

**Write to a friend
three mountains away,
tell hr to look at the sky
and count the soft white
teeth of a dandelion.
Pretend the number
has some meaning, pretend
you counted her own
footsteps from afar, pretend
you know what something means,
anything at all, then tell her that
and pray to God she has better
things to do that listen to you.**

26 June 2022

= = = = =

**Open the window
there is reason
for us to be here,
traffic curls around the Triangle,
Vulture hovers with its siblings
over the Commons kitchen roof—
they all know where food exists
so why don't I?**

27.VI.22 *viva voce*

=====

**Are nudists allowed to wear shoes
or do they have tough feet?
The Berkshires look pretty
civilized as we drive through
but I suspect that here and there
someone slips their socks off
to feel the hard flesh
of those young hills,
miraculous intelligence of our skin.**

27 June 2022

=====

**She wants to be born
a sea creature,
horseshoe crab perhaps,**

**but haven't we all
come from the ocean,
been such things already,**

**didn't we tentatively
come flapping up, learning
ito breathe dry oxygen,**

**didn't we sprawl in sunlight!
on some ancient
beach with no boardwalk,**

**didn't we waddle a while
like penguins, flourish
our few arms like octopods,**

**aren't we as they say
still wet behind the ears?
I was a lobster just last night
or maybe a little longer ago.**

27 June 2022

=====

The word is said,
the day is spoken,
the dark sculpted
in the sunlit branches
eye sockets. open mouths
in the green skull that holds
sofly a large mind busy
quietly saying. Or
so it sees in what I see.

28 June 2022

=====

**Held by the hand
and helped by the hammer
the stake rides into the ground.
Tie a rag to the top of it,
a flag, any color,
salute it reverently,
stand beside it, get
your picture taken,
not a selfie, ask someone else,
it's all about someone else..**

28 June 2022

== = =

**Wait for the doctor—
he sued to come calling
now only to the super rich
or to good friends.**

**Friendship is wealth—
the Romans knew all about that.
Stop waiting. Get dressed,
go to the doctor, wait in a room
meant for time to pass,
and when you get to see him
at last speak to him in Latin
because you never know.**

28 June 2022

=====

**You should know about me
I live with my love
at the base of a triangle.**

**We whisper to each other,
space is quiet, the birds though
have a lot to say, newborn wrens,
querulous blue jays. Trees.**

**Geometry makes all this happen
or the other way round.
The road points right at us
then forks and sweeps past,
the arrows fly past on either side.**

**A base is a quiet place
compared to west and east.
Come love with me, I said to her,
and for once in all that silence
we could hear each other speak.**

28 June 2022

=====

Inside outside same.
No dream.
Numbers have feelings,
make feelings,
days of some other week.
Turn like a tree,
stand like a wave.
Science hinders?
Knowing versus
understanding,
What is the song
sparrow really saying?
At last I'm here, Im here

29 June 2022

= = = = =

**Glimpse of white
in the trees
moving at
a person pace
with uphill skill.
Still, what do I know?**

29 June 2022

=====

**Ask the basker
on the shore
what is sunlight for.
I grew up thinking
nothing was horrider
than Florida,
hurricanes, sunburn
gators at your feet.
Yet once when we there
I saw a red beach
welcoming and a pelican
settled down beside us.
By a quiet sea human exiles
lived quiet in the shade.**

29 June 2022

=====

**If you've got a little
song in your head
you've got to let it out.
Otherwise it grows
into a kind of fish
that swims around
and hobbles all your thoughts.
Did you know that music
is poisonous, cn poison us.
homeopathy explains
the healing powers of Bach,
the irritant that sets you free,
makes you all better, baby,
soon as you hear it through.**

29 June 2022

=====

**So much work
to get where I am,
slippers and bathrobe
and brush my hair,
sip of cold coffee.
read the dumb email,
wouldn't you think
that's enough for a day?
But who knows what's
waiting out there
disguised as sunlight,
pretending to be now?**

29 June 2022

== == == == ==

**Sawdust on my toes
I must have been a sawyer once
but not now, now
I an barely tell me from a tree.
We both drink water—
let that be brotherhood enough.**

29 June 2022

=====

Could I tell; her even more?
The time slipped away—image
borrowed from an hourglass—
and my words still lay thick
untouched on her plate. She did
drink the glass of mineral water,
she did wipe her lips on my own
paper napkin. Nothing more.
But then she began to speak:

ravenous writer, spoiler of so
many silences, , listen up
and listen down, the words
take care of themselves, you'll see
tomorrow the plate is empty.
And I will be gone, so you'll

**never know. But you will
always know, because
elways and never are two
girls in a canoe, waving
to you with wonderful smiles
and paddling fast away.**

29 June 2022

=====

Reaching for the aroma
of cigarettes I smoked
forty years ago now
and not since, the smell
lingers in the linen
drapes that shield the mind
from too much now.

2.
I still love the smell,
I have it tucked away
but how strange it is
that people smoked.
And some still do,
coloring the air they breathe

**with the glamorous grey
of that dangerous delight.**

3.

**Somedays I think I'd do it again,
not smoke exactly, but find my way
into a crowded room in Athens
or in Istanbul and breathe deep.
I'd probably start coughing
and they'd all turn away for fear
I'm sick with worse than memory.**

29 June 2022

=====

**You don't make trees out of leaves,
don't make books out of letter.
What is the solid trunk
that thlds them all together
and akes something happen
in our heads when we watch them
one by one branch across the page?
Athena smiles to hear me ask
such a silly question, one
with no answer, and her little owl
perches above Her and makes
the soft consoling sounds they know.**

30 June 2022

INSCRIPTION

**Follow me
it says on a sig
beside the path
as you enter woods
beyond the field.
Follow me and find.
I am our own mind.**

30.VI.22

=====

**When Robert Duncan read
his high Western voice
made everything he said
clearer than anybody else.
The words in his poems
seemed to say themselves,
and music flowed. And when
he stopped and just spoke
you could hear —for the first time
maybe—the real song of prose.
Clarity is the sunning of his work.**

30.VI.22

=====

**From far away
today came calling,
God knows how long
it travelled, it seldom
tells what it encounters
along the way. Yet I hear
faintly, faintly, white
temples on steep hills,
se lapping at the shore,
loud gullsannoying sleepy
fisherman, we have to get
up so erly, out to sea,
and how did stone learn to speak?**

30 June 2022

=====

**How can I help the Sun
That's what yu ask,
She needs our help. Buy how?
Look in your horoscope—
see where She is, and use
the part of you governed
by the sign to decide.
Sun is in yibra, which rules
the hips. So I sit here ad
sit here and write down
whatever She brings to my mind.
Call me a secretary, I get paid
modest but regular. I love
my job, I'm lazy, love just sitting here.**

30 June 2022

=====

**Bouzouki music
but a blond dancer,
menu in English
food in Chinese,
why does the normal
always seem to weird?**

2.

**I went to Mexico
they have churches
cactuses roadside,
elegant cigarettes.
In the old days they
said Meshico but now
more like Mehico.
I wonder if the churches**

still do the same religion.
I never dared to enter one.

3.

So things make up their minds
for us onside. Something like that.
I walked around Berlin
looking for history or something,
big sky they have, low skyline.
What gives me the right to be
\anywhere at all? Luckily
nobody was looking, I could
walk back to my hotel
without having to explain.

30 June 2022

=====

**The discord nurturing
between the peach
and the peach stone
a woman walks
the street leads
directly to the Moon
but never gets there
the ripe peace for all
its insinuating slime
contains a wisdom
we learn to spit the pit
out the window, we learn
to swallow the sweet.**

30 June 2022 v.v.

= = = = = = =

**Saraland or sort of
sound to set in motion—
this stone was lava once
and still has rhythm,
the thing we mean by
'feeling,' as if the world
were made of skin,
as it most certainly is.**

30 June 2022

=====

**We brought our culture with us
from a book, we try to get
the trees and stream to cooperate
we speak in loud languages
we barely understand. But
we're here! And here is far
from the pages of that book.
A book is to travel from,
a book is the home
we have to leave
but in our flesh
its mother-love persists.**

30 June 2022

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