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 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 itstays 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 fpr older brother. No ice cream for the grown-ups, we still wonder why.
Around the ice cream cones
the kids improvise language,
oises, 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 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 nd now.

5 June 2022
So she said to her partner
Let’s dance but he answered
Haven’t you read your Kierrkegaard—
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 June 2022
Days hurtle past
downslope
in mathematics
called catastrophe
then free gall
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 adder, 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 urs, 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 iof 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
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 ross crumbs tp 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 te 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 p[laces 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
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 daying.
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,
ever 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 hoing? 
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 dfgferent 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 they teach us
we are here to be touched,
we would not live
without their 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 minute, seemingly just waiting for a light to change, for some reason, a reason that relates 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 stuff 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, et 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 didn’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 scrape. 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 
neighboring 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,
even English, 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,
clothy 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
ad 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 well-behaved. 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 nean 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.
Faces and flowers
the cost
of being seen

of 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 thought 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
The girl was a pirate
and laced her bodice tight.
Jer 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
teaching 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 clothy 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,
struves to remember
the sky evermy 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 withe shadows small trees cast, brilliant student work among the towering masters. Nothing moving bur a bee at the window. And a few cars
but of course cars don’t count.

20 June 2022
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 everywhere.
This is a real island
(but what isn’t?)
has latitude and longitude
and its folk where shoes,
mostly, save when fishing in the surg.

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 rild
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
I feel 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 runnel 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, a little, 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
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 empty 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 eave 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 knows 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.
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 abot 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.
Nunbers have feelings,
make feelings,
days of some other week.
Turm 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 gulls annoying 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 y ibra, 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