

8-2022

**Aug2022**

Robert Kelly

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

=====

**Not exactly knowing  
people in the street  
birds overhead.**

**Soft sky, hard sun—  
you get that at the sea.**

**What else. Identity.**

**So much of life  
is getting the names  
and getting them right.**

**Ospreys, maybe.**

**Now name me.**

**1 August 2022**

**Cuttyhunk**



== == == == ==

**Lift the wall**

**I mean the curtain,  
let aristocratic sunlight  
enter humble house.**

**Or is it the other way round,  
the pilgrim light  
anxious for a place to rest  
a while among its endless  
journeying?**

**1 August 2022**

=====

**The argument precludes assent.  
The rigors of domestic life,  
heavy table, noisy chair  
are proof enough  
but of a different proposition.  
We welter in the real.  
Time to try again.  
Suppose we are filtered  
from the sky. Which star are you?**

**2.**

**Don't spoil it,  
it may yet be a flower  
the way some things**

**take time. Not me.  
I am always,  
and always mostly wrong.**

**3.**

**But time might come  
for me anyway, speaking  
with exaggerated clarity  
guiding my lessons  
in being a little bit somebody else.**

**1 August 2022**

## IN THE DARKHOUSE

I'm writing to you from the Tomb of Lazarus. It is a clean and empty place, empty of everything but us. There are many of us here, waiting for the voice that will call us, one by one, out into that other place, as once it summoned Lazarus, who showed us the way.

It's not clear to us, or at least to me, what that other place will be like, We call it *there*. and that seems name enough. We often sit and discuss our visions, versions, of what it will be like. Sometimes our

**discussions grow heated, with fierce logicians and lyrical storytellers at odds, and we take great pleasure in these controversies—it serves us or our religion, how we think about *there* and how that conception leads our everyday behavior.**

**The house, as I said, is clean. And it is big, its walls are made of some yielding sort of stone, in which a sharp stone, or even sometimes a fingernail, can dig a line, or many lines. images and symbols and words. Some of us spend our time writing into the walls all the words and thoughts that come to mind.**



**I'm writing to you, whoever you are, because you are out there, and know the place we can only fantasize or predict with dubious accuracy. You know what we will find when the voice calls and then chosen one lays down his chisel, blinks his eyes, and stumbles towards the suddenly opening gateway—no one ever knows where the gate will be, the light floods in, always a surprise—hurries, doesn't say goodbye, so eager to obey the voice so long yearned for.**

**So maybe one day you will see me coming towards you, and you will**

**recognize me, maybe, because you  
have read these words, and maybe  
you'll welcome me, or at least walk  
about in that new place and find my  
way.**

**1 August 2022**

**= = = = =**

**And all that anybody said  
was desire.**

**Anybody  
was Abraham, walked there**

**through the numbers,  
the woman trying to translate,  
the stars? the years  
of his waiting, or staying,  
or words?**

**Her sentences  
kept breaking into different parts  
or he kept breaking them,  
uneasy with women,  
no tree nearby to count its leaves.  
Summary: somebody  
said or did but nothing happened.  
Sluggish daylight on Earth island.  
Or was it me?**

**2 August 2022**

=====

**Make it run perfectly,  
rhyme with the sea.  
Bruises heal rapidly—  
gospel of skin.  
Align your mind  
with the incoming wave,  
touch and flush and roll away,  
let the new thinking think.**

**2 August 2022**

=====

**Mist last night less now–  
the eye's mind  
still in monochrome.**

**2.VIII.22 *lune***

=====

**Birding me now, who?  
A grackle,  
smart, articulate.**

**2.VIII.22 *lune***

=====

**Before you know it  
they get married and have a dog.  
Then where are you?  
How can someone you love  
turn into people like that?  
You're left bereft, desperate,  
feigning interest in their dog.**

**2.VIII.22**



=====

**Poetry is being nervous  
in public, stage-fright  
all life long. Hiding  
in language. Poor little  
bunny quivering under the hedge.**

**2.VIII.22**

=====

**Or poetry is coming on  
to all the [select gender]  
in the audience, hoping  
all of them really feel it  
but none of them linger  
when your reading is done.**

**2.VIII.22**

## **HYLONOETIC**

**A word I use to summarize a sense that has been growing clearer in me for a few years now, a sense that objects have consciousness, that matter has mind, that things think. How they think and what they think—little by little I get some slight inklings if an inkling, and I would not yet presume to say. But what is clearer to me is that things communicate with us, they speak of their origins, sufferings, triumphs, dailiness, destiny, and they speak to us.**

**We listen by speaking.**

**Anyone who lives near trees knows that trees communicate not just with one another, as science has recently become aware, but with us. They communicate with us by what comes to mind when we're near them, watch them. No, I don't mean when we're talking 'about' them. That's just us communicating with ourselves. I mean when we're with the tree.**

**Of course trees are what we call alive, so I don't get much argument against tree talk. People try to**

**communicate with their cats and horses, no surprise.**

**But I say the piece of wood from a tree killed a hundred years ago still possesses consciousness, and not merely residue of the living tree's awareness.**

**I stood once in a chapel in Leipzig, leaned against the cool, pale stone walls and felt an enormous sense of experience welling up out of the stone into me. Bach's church, as it happened. He played the organ here. Sentimental silliness, you think? Put your own cheek against the stone—you won't hear music, but you will**

**feel a powerful knowing, *a knowing that is not your own*. That is the gift of the object's mind, its long sojourn with us.**

**That was my most dramatic, instantaneous coming to awareness of hylonoesis, the memory embedded in things, the awareness they sustain.**

**We have to learn to listen. We listen by being quietly in contact with the object, sight or touch or whatever is polite, friendly, noninvasive, respectful, tender. We listen by opening our own awareness, we listen by what comes**

**to mind, and –specialized animals that we are – we listen by language.**

**The stone or wood or water is always speaking, but we are not always listening. Try to listen by speaking, by *saying what comes to mind*, or writing it down, or whispering it to someone next to us, sharing the message.**

**3 August 2022**

== ==

**At the cafeteria on West 57th  
at one table they spoke Welsh.  
If you wanted to learn  
what some Welsh word meant  
or how to say I love you, honey  
in Cardiff, you made your way  
into the Automat, and there  
near the change booth where  
we got our nickels from  
the no-nonsense supervisors  
the P-Celts sat at their tea,  
happy to help you, but still  
a little miffed they couldn't smoke.  
The Automat was strict about that,**



**who knows why, some crazy  
notion from Philadelphia  
when every other place,  
from dive to Delmonico's  
was full of easy, fragrant  
blue-grey haze from glowing  
tips and grateful lungs  
breathed back into the world.  
But Welsh was worth it.  
But what is the memory worth?**

**3.VIII.22**

=====

**The boat went out  
without a sound  
except the one  
we all sail on.  
Puns will be  
the making of us yet,  
when we finally  
come through our senses  
to our sense—  
or do we have to take  
a back road in the hills  
to reach a bone where  
we can see the sea?**

## 3.VIII.22

=====

**Like an honest engine  
sustain the flow–  
use as little essence  
as you can manage,  
watch out for wildcats  
in the quiet counties–  
some lynx will nip you sore.**

**3.VIII.22**

= = = = =

*Let desire simmer  
all summer long  
the dream said*

but then  
flags in sky  
dew on table top,

I woke to what I am,  
gnomic sentences  
running through the earth  
like veins of copper—

her metal

**who tells me this.**

**4 August 2022**

== == == == ==

**Don't lean back—  
the past  
knows how to bite.**

**4.VIII.22**

=====

**Arabian script  
hummingbird's  
flight path through tree leaves.**

**4.VIII.22 *lune***



=====

**The message renewed:  
mourning-dove  
caressing the air.**

**4.VIII.22 *lune***

= = == =

**Here on the island,  
here is made of rock,  
intensity of density  
in the vast fluidity of sea—**

**but that water has  
a density of its own,  
stars, moon, even  
the Sun shatters  
into a myriad brights  
on its never-still immobility,**

**o sea that whispers on every shore  
all day all night o here I am.**

## 4 August 2022

= = = == = = = =

Quiet fog  
that means us well,  
sun in it,  
saying.

## 5 August 2022

=====

**Too many things  
to think about  
so he thought about wood.  
Wet wood on picnic tables  
after rain or just heavy dew.  
Hard to tell. His mind's  
cautious fingers traveled  
along the grain of wood,  
gouged a little after years  
of what they used to call  
the elements. And knives  
And other, bolder, fingers.  
Beware of splinters.  
What kind of tree was this**

**a hundred years ago?  
What will I be like a century  
from now? Don't think  
about that, go back to wood.  
All the snacks and lunches,  
all the kids sprawled on it,  
the ants creep up the legs  
and satisfy. And why can't I?**

**5 August 2022**

## **SONG**

**Sit on a rock  
and face southeast  
now close your eyes,  
now what do you see?**

**Close your eyes and what do you  
see?**

**5.VIII.22**

=====

**On your way home  
from the library  
pick up something  
for supper—maybe  
a bilingual Polybius  
or the autobiography  
of Sancho Panza—has he  
published it yet?**

**5.VIII.22**

## **ISLAND WAKING**

**It's as if the air  
had gone to sleep.  
Sun spread in mist,  
nobody moving.  
And every house becomes  
a hill in heaven.**

**5 August 2022**



= = = = =

**I'll try to be serious for once  
but they'll all get up  
and flee the room,  
one of them looks back  
and explains we'll come back  
when you have something  
more interesting to say.**

**5.VIII.22**

= = = = =

**What the river said  
before we left  
the sea repeats,  
quotes it back to us now  
to make sure that we,  
even we, can understand.  
All going is a coming towards—  
something like that, just not  
as obvious, something  
more like going  
is not arriving, more like arising**

**and asking the sky to witness.  
I'm not as clear as it is—  
listen to it for yourselves.**

**6 August 2022**

**= = = = =**

**Leaves of my tree—  
my in the sense we use  
saying my father or my country,  
my leaves whisper  
to make sure I hear  
what the whole tree  
wants me to know**

**this very morning—it is good  
to be alone sometimes,  
better to be few.**

**But how can one man,  
even an egotist like me,  
manage to be few? That,  
says the tree, is where love comes in.**

**6 August 2022**

**= = = = =**

**Child left alone  
with the alphabet.  
No bossy aunt  
or elder sib in sight.  
The world at her fingertips.  
Things to remember,**

**the duck on the sofa,  
things to forget,  
tiger in the living room.**

**The fingers  
figure it out.**

**That's what we're for  
the letters say  
and don't forget us  
the fingers add.**

**One by one her new  
house is being built—  
it will be finished  
before anyone shows up  
to bother her, she'll stand  
behind a new curtain  
behind a clean glass window**

**and smile out into the sunshine  
she has just made.**

**6 August 2022**

=====

**Vacations are such hard work,  
easy habits left behind.  
Everything takes conscious skill,  
where the faucet is, where  
do we get a loaf of bread.  
Nothing easy. The body snoozes  
in pleasant sun and sea,  
the mind is frantic with  
what comes next? Over soon,  
then back to the easy life  
of mindless toil.**

**6.VIII.22**





=====

**This tree  
so many years  
we slept in its shade  
sheltered from the land  
open to ocean,  
and all those years  
it has been talking  
and only this morning  
shakes its head and smiles  
and tells me this.  
I bow in gratitude  
–its beauty brings tears  
so my eyes for a moment shimmer as  
the leaves do.**

**6 August 2022**

**KINDLING**

**Kindle. Call  
for the memory.  
Quick walker up the hill  
but what have you  
done for me lately?  
Shop-Vac suck up ashes  
maybe, sprinkle of  
what is that wet  
that comes before rain?  
Walk faster. She needs  
your answer, images will do,**

**just say who, faster,  
your shadow is at your heels.**

**2.**

**Late twelve-tone music  
strict numbers, lax sounds,  
tuneless, adrift. O better  
the daisy, bend low to retrieve  
the simplest flower,  
tell your telephone  
isn't there a tune in it  
somehow could whistle?  
All voices of a fugue in one hum?**

**3.**

**Auden on Cornelia,**

**Olson on Fort Square  
Duncan on Nineteenth.  
The triangle affair,  
the luscious lispings lips  
of all unlikeness  
speaks a whole city out  
bigger than the nation  
it lives in, because  
and just because  
a city stretches as far  
as you can hear or understand,  
no frontier, no stupid  
border guards like me  
smoking smuggled cigarettes.**

**4.**

**Well, we had come back from Asia  
Delhi to Dubai to the Black Sea  
and then up the river to Vienna.  
One more novel written in sleep.  
But still, picture me at dawn  
looking out at the Persian Gulf,  
ninety degrees already  
among all the white buildings.  
What did I see?  
I should have asked  
that Iranian water  
what makes me me,  
because it has seen so much,  
sad birds, drifting  
rafts of unchronicled despair.**

**5.**

**It has to go on,  
you can't stop now  
so close to the top  
of what you think is a hill.  
Boundaries in the sky!  
Lazy lovers in their sweaty beds!  
Skateboard snarling down asphalt!  
Liberty Bell cracked from the start—  
how fragile to be free.**

**6.**

**Could this then be a cenotaph,  
an empty tomb of one  
whose bones are somewhere else?  
Is that why school is so boring,**

**Scraps of words  
stitched together  
stamped in fragile  
sheets of paper  
stitched together  
and call it truth,  
biblion, book?  
I put it in your hand,  
trust me, it is my hand.**

**7.**

**In Vienna that basement room  
where princes of the blood  
are entombed, neatly,  
close together, inscribed,  
and upstairs a busy street goes by,**

ordinary as applesauce,  
you know, the way it slips  
cool sweet twixt teeth and cheek.

8.

When I was a kid  
one of the things I loved to do  
shoot arrows at cardboard boxes  
yards away in a vacant lot.  
Now I call it writing words,  
careful, careful, people  
moving in the middle distance.  
I loved the hollow thrum [? Sound?]  
the box made when the arrow hit.

9.



**I think the walker won his hill,  
no sign of him now, or her,  
whoever that was, o now  
he's coming down again,  
slow, slow, as if regretful  
to be leaving whatever it was  
the sky disclosed,  
or what else is up there  
you'd run so fast to see?**

**10.**

**In London they say mews,  
the houses behind the horses,  
they whisper the truth  
by spelling it awry, the tunes  
the grace, the meanings**

**all come from behind us,  
or we are the shadows truth casts  
shadows that mingle  
with one another, each hoping  
to get the story right,  
the one the Muse declared  
and left us to articulate.**

**11.**

**Wait, I'm getting ultimate again.  
It is Sunday after all  
in a couple of hours a bell  
will call a handful of maybes  
to some sort of service,**

**I don't know what, I know  
the beautiful mosaics on the wall,  
the chapel's over there,  
back beyond three houses, yes,  
it all comes from behind our back,  
the house behind the house  
where all of us get born.**

**12.**

**Small craft advisory  
all day today  
they say.**

**I love  
what people say  
not always how they say it but  
the words! the words!**

**each one an encapsulated symphony  
if I may be fancy yet again,  
a song is in them  
to say it simple,  
a song is in them,  
all you have to do is listen.**

**13.**

**Remember *La Bohème*,  
first act, Paris garret, winter,  
a writer burning his manuscripts  
in the little stove to keep warm.  
Music. The love story comes later,  
Girl needs light, song and sorrow,  
stick with the first act,  
the opera's all there, man burning**

words that he had put together,  
words that once were his own.  
Stick with the kindling,  
listen to the crinkling as it catches  
page by page, do it slowly,  
one page at a time, keep the warmth  
slower but longer,  
stick with the kindling.  
You never know who'll  
come, lured by that warm  
if feeble glow. The door  
is ready to be knocked on.  
Shiver, rub your hands, wait.

14.

Persia seems a long time ago,

**I had a beard then, and rings  
on my fingers, oil in my hair  
and thought I was a priest  
of a bodice [???] who had not yet  
told me her name before I woke,  
in Vienna. In Munich. In Paris.  
Or had she whispered it  
and I forgot? Priesthood done with  
I strolled along the Seine  
glancing at the stalls on the  
embankment,  
books and more books,  
old photos, engravings, more books,  
more books.  
Watch the river instead,  
try to look picturesque and Parisian**

for tourists in the tour boat passing.  
Stay with the water,  
let it do the running for you—  
I think my grandmother  
might have said that  
but I never knew her  
in real life, the phrase we use  
to mean time, earth time,  
more slippery than Seine.

15.

Man in white shirt  
passing slowly by white wall.  
Morning is magnificent.

16.

**If I got into a boat  
(scary enough)  
and motored up the bay  
to Woods Hole  
I could meet a maven  
who would explain  
whether or not  
the sea has boundaries  
of its own built in—  
if I were a fish could I swim  
anywhere on earth I wanted to?  
Or are there zones I know not,  
not just sharks and leopard seals  
but some immense awareness  
of where to be and where not.  
Can the ocean tell me that?**



**I asked that of the Persian Gulf  
but it was too busy with history  
to notice my mere speculations.**

**17.**

**So it always comes back  
to this hill, this place  
where earth swells up  
a little closer to her sky.  
Beautiful breeze today,  
grackles on the deck  
quiet for a change.  
Cloudy light, green  
shimmer in the bushes.  
Enough. You know  
where I am, now**

**no need to guess who.**

**Location is identity.**

***7 August 2022***

== == == == ==

**Brush your teeth with sunshine,  
sweep your floor with wind,  
I was born in the Depression  
and I can't throw anything away.  
Banana's brown as you know what?  
It has to get eaten anyhow.  
Save the coffee grounds  
to feed the hydrangea—  
my motto: Waste nothing but time.**

**7.VIII.2022**

=====

**Misty morning,  
big island missing,  
little one still here.  
There. The horizon  
coming for breakfast,  
closer, closer come  
closer, darling,  
when you wake.**

**7 August 2022**

= = = = =

**When the organ plays  
in the empty church  
it makes the pigments  
in the murals wake.  
I try to sneak in those times  
to watch the music  
but something always senses me,  
maybe the stone walls  
or those bright windows  
full of watchful saints,  
so by the time I slip into a pew**

**the paintings on the wall  
calm down again, as if to say,  
we are just images, don't  
put too much faith in us  
though we are made of colors  
and color is made of truth.**

**2.**

**But in the dream before that  
a man who should have known  
better  
inveighed against Charles Olson  
and all his poetry. I roused  
in defense, and more than that,  
arguing his voice owned out loud  
the words he said and the world**

**they meant, I heard his voice  
in my mind as I spoke in mine,  
full of gratitude and praise.**

**3.**

**And then there was the woman  
with a suddenly new man friend,  
not my friend her life companion,  
they sat close at a table  
in a bare room when I came in.  
Surprised to see her  
with someone else, a man at that.  
She was tall, dark-haired,  
nervous, slim, casually stylish,  
thirtyish, her hands uneasy  
on the table top. I sat down**

**and praised her for acting  
on her instinct not on a rule,  
rules are just habits. Not sure  
she understood just what I meant  
but she did not [know??] I was  
praising her,  
easing her mind as best I could.  
Guilt is such a gaudy mess,  
I wanted to wash her hands for her,  
or at least tell her they were clean.**

**8 August 2022**

**====**

**As if the rhythm  
understood all by itself**



**what the cloud meant  
to the finches  
chattering bellow,  
busy as a gamelan  
and who, really who  
is that who is listening?**

**2.**

**The rhythm knows.  
Out there are rocks,  
in here are dreams—  
I stubbed my toe on one  
and woke annoyed  
at how it made me think  
of what I wanted not to,**

**clumsy as a stub=ble  
by the bedroom door.**

**3.**

**Then I really woke and wrote  
a book called *The Triangle:  
Find the Point Where Dreams Live.***

**Stupid title unless I make it true.  
Outside, the working men  
are making all the noise they can,  
the finches fled.**

**Can't I atk about the morning too?  
Is it only the government**

**that owns the hours of the day?  
Go back to rhythm,  
little heart, count the beats  
and swim along between,  
hasten to the silences,  
little brain, make yourself  
at home in all of them**

**9 August 2022**

=====

He carried his shadow with him  
folded neatly over his arm,  
she wore hers over her shoulders  
since the day was chilly.  
A shadow comes in handy,  
you never know when  
you'll really need it,  
say after you walk fast uphill  
and lean on a lamp post  
to catch your breath—  
the shadow gives you good advice,  
find a bench where the four of you  
can sit and think the night through.  
Doze a little. Wake

**to hear seagulls calling dawn.**

**9 August 2022**

**BY THE TALL CHOKEBERRY BUSH**

**When the wind blows  
then the birds  
those visitors to our land  
from another universe  
where gravity is made of light  
and light is made of breath**

**they come down to us  
and swoon through the bushes  
they are what we know**

**when what we think we know  
is still mostly pretending,  
attempting to be awake**

**wind comes down and scares us  
but it's just a breeze,  
a little girl with a flower  
in her hand, sunshine comments  
with another flower  
that grows somewhere  
near the end of the mind,  
color of what you most desire.**

**9 August 2022 v.v.**



== ==

**Be my body  
stretching up to the tree**

**be the ripe peach  
my hand reaches, seizes, takes**

**be the sweet juice of it  
that trickles down my chin**

**be the little running stream  
I wash my sticky fingers in**

**love is how the world begins.**



**9 August 2022**

=====

**Your soft breath seems far away  
though you are here beside me.  
Where are you gliding  
in the half-light of almost dawn?  
Or is it my lonely hearing,  
muffled by the rags of sleep?  
Cool mist over the islands,  
almost chilly, workday, still quiet  
somehow, the wind breathes  
louder than you do, yet  
it is only a breeze from the sea.**

**2.**

**I can feel some fear**

**in what I'm trying to say.  
But why, not clear.  
Separation anxiety,  
bad weather, travel angst,  
impending noisy triumph  
of Wednesday in America?  
Illness? Mind-gap? So  
many things to fear  
and only one mind to do it.**

**3.**

**Is that what sunshine does  
on sunny mornings, allay  
the resident anxieties,  
distract the mind with light  
and all the colors that come with it?**

**Am I one more thrall of weather  
or is that just a pompous way  
to say, Wait, I'm a citizen of earth.**

**4.**

**Yet how happy it makes me,  
your quiet sleep beside me,  
even though I have to get up  
and rustle around the place  
to appreciate properly where  
I have just been and where you are.  
There really is an answer  
flowing through all our breaths.**

**10 August 2022**



## IN THE MIST

Gull on the railing  
girl next door—  
how tell them apart?

10 August 2022 *lune*

=====

**Your soft breath seems far away  
though you are here beside me.  
Where are you gliding  
in the half-light of almost dawn?  
Or is it me, muffled by rags of sleep?  
Cool mist over the islands,  
almost chilly, workday, still quiet  
somehow, the wind breathes  
louder than you do, yet  
it is only a breeze.**

**2.**

**I can feel some fear  
in what I'm trying to say.**

**But why, not clear.  
Separation anxiety,  
bad weather, travel angst,  
impending noisy triumph  
of Wednesday in America?  
Illness? Mind-gap? So  
many things I have to fear  
and only one mind to do it.**

**3.**

**Is that what sunshine does  
on sunny mornings, allay  
the resident anxieties,  
distract the mind with light  
and all the colors that come with it?  
Am I one more thrall of weather**



**or is that just a pompous way  
to say, Wait, I'm a citizen of earth.**

**4.**

**Yet how happy it makes me,  
your quiet sleep beside me,  
even though I have to get up  
and rustle around the place  
to appreciate properly where  
I have just been and where you are.  
There really is an answer  
flowing through all our breaths.**

**10 August 2022**

== == == == ==

**Gull on the railing  
girl next door–  
how tell them apart?**

**10 August 2022 *lune***

## THE SYCAMORE MAPLE

I try to listen  
while I'm speaking,  
not so easy, my words  
sometimes drown out  
my hearing. The tree  
just north of the back door  
reminds me to keep trying.  
They never stop,  
where trying is the same  
as listening. Softly, softly  
language listening is your mother.

**11 August 2022**

## **SAMALL CRAFT MOORED**

**There should be  
a kinder word han glare  
for all the gold  
rising sun casts on the sea.**

**=**

**Leaving the island,  
back into the other animal.  
We are inhabitants,  
I thought, and then the shade  
rolled up by itself  
and the sun came in.--**

**which came first,  
the ocean or the egg?**

=

**Tried again to wait  
but the sense went by  
like a man in uniform—  
what country are you from?  
I allied but he was gone.**

=

**Agilenas ampersands  
linking friends together  
birds introduce us**

**to the changing light.**

**Read the poem and find out.**

=

**Fluttering continuity**

**life on a barge**

**old movie on the Seine,**

**you always know the one I mean.**

**But why do men wear white shirts?**

**I watch from the river bank**

**you tell me what I see.**

=

**Eyes closed,  
in bright sunlight  
you can feel  
a cloud when it comes.  
We too live in the sky.**

=

**Words  
to puzzle and sustain you,  
pemmican  
for your journey  
through the arctic of everyday.**

=



**I am too nervous  
to stop talking  
or to say more.**

**=**

***Gnomika*, Greeks  
would have said,  
wise remarks  
smarter than  
the one who says them.**

**=**

**Things tell me what to do.**

**What about you?**

**11 August 2022**

=====

**The emphasis is on the vowel—  
that tells you all by itself  
how big the thing is  
that’s on your mind.  
Love is bigger than lust,  
lust is bigger than sex,  
sex is more that sticking it in.  
For instance. Say no more  
as the comedian kept repeating.**

**11 August 2022**

== == == == ==

**Brighter an hour ago  
and now the mist creeps in.  
Leaving the house,  
island, sea. Grief in going,  
joy in joining the ordinary.  
Christians have a sense of this  
or should have. Christ  
comes once a year  
but stays here every single day.**

**11 August 2022**

=====

=

**Where are the boundary lines  
that hem my meaning in?  
A word can be a prison  
or a great escape, a house  
in the country or a lion  
giving you the eye from the brush.  
Maube it is time to take a nap—  
but where will I take it?  
Where can such things licitly go?**

**11 August 2022**

**=====**

**=**

**Catch my breath and start again.  
Rough skin on left elbow, hmm.  
Lila walked by the Mississippi  
wanting to be in. Or over. Under.  
Coming up for air. There!  
That's where I wanted to go.**

**11 August 2022**

= = = = =

**Give each child a gnomie book  
words turned into pictures,  
pictures that suck colors  
from the world around, colors  
set free in the child's mind.  
A mind that never leaves us.**

=

**11 August 2022  
Cuttyhunk**

=====

**I am lying  
in the vicinity of down.  
Not quite there yet,  
my shoulders still tense,  
bracing for the half inch  
fall to the mattress.**

**Change  
of position  
is perilous.  
Who knows  
what may happen  
in between?**



**2.**

**And now, an hour later  
(an hour lower)  
we're on the boat,  
a dozen ketches  
moored in the harbor,  
a big tug  
waiting to haul metal away,  
long pipes, water mains,  
who knows iron's true name,  
we all are mixtures,  
British and copper,  
Africa means energy,  
slows down in Egypt,  
flesh, flesh wise flesh.  
And here we have**

a Yankee youth,  
standing on a surf board  
paddling across the harbor,  
trying to recapture  
continuity.

3/  
Puffs of breath,  
poem like a kid  
learning to smoke cigarettes.  
I yearn  
for the languor  
of a cigar,  
the kind I never smoked.

11 August 2022

# New Bedford, 3 PM

## **ANNANDALE**

**Mow here to home.  
Coming home  
is a magnifying glass  
to study the design,  
small lines, craquelure  
on the vessel of your life.  
The lies show up clearly,  
the truths a little harder to see.**

**2.**

**We've been away  
a month and three days,  
from Buck Miin to Sturgeon,  
years since I've been away**

**so long from the family  
business of carrying on.**

**A month by the sea!**

**That's the story I can tell my friends  
if I have ny left after my neglect,  
seems pretty quiet round here.**

**But real story is I spent  
a whole month inside the sea  
and the sea inside me.**

**3.**

**And the trees are back  
with me, the trees of us  
so dense this year of leaf.**

**Last night in darkness  
we drove down Route 22**

through a jungle, the trees  
have conquered, Ave Arbor!  
the dense dark woodland  
that in a hundred miles  
becomes Park Avenue,  
not a light, not a sign,  
just the dark tempestuous life.  
And now my trees,  
teaching me the prose of listening,  
the poetics of paying attention.  
Beech tree before me,  
linden on the lawn, and now  
the rose of Sharon has blossomed,  
we saw its flowers as we came home,  
heaven in headlights.

4.

Cool morning at the window sill  
the air so clear.

I need a shave, ergo

I must still be alive,

the Process waltzed on.

All this speaking

feels like clearing my throat

before trying to pronounce

this brand-new language

of still being here. Again.

The five million pages

I see from this window

(I'm guessing the number,

haven't counted, trusting

**the guesstimators of botany)  
are kind enough to read  
themselves to me, the breeze  
slight as it is, s kind enough  
to translate their words for me.  
There. That's how it feels.  
A system, a conformity  
that says itself in me.  
To saunter (the word  
once meant to go  
on pilgrimage) through  
the the flowering of the day  
with my ego on a leash.  
There, that's what I mean,  
to mean what it means.**



**12 August 2022**

= = = = =

*for Charlotte, in praise*

**Be intimate with me,  
sing the other song  
the angels taught you  
when land only when)  
you are so hard at work,  
the fierce animal of yur will  
ruling the range.**

**Be intimate with me  
enough so that from  
the quiet light in your eyes  
busy as you are  
I catch a glimpse**

**of what it means to be you,  
be intimate with me  
until I can do it too,  
invest everything in one small  
thing or one great work,  
doesn't matter, to let  
your will to make things right  
goads me to know  
and by knowing do,  
and by doing be really be.**

**12 August 2022**

## **A CELEBRATION**

**In the parking lot in Kingston,  
looking out on the town,  
the hills, an amazing discovery:**

***I live here!***

**This is my place,  
city of my town of my  
house in the country,  
this is where I live.**

**Suddenly, here, for the first  
time in sixty years,  
I feel at home.**

**(21 June 2022)**

**12 August 2022**

=====

**Not conscious  
of Citizen Desire  
they wander  
as if their skin  
owned sunshine.**

**Then we went five miles  
where children laughed,  
not all that young  
in the glad sad fervid  
days before school  
starts again, that horror  
puberty will at least  
make interesting.**

**Swimming pool,  
loudspeaker commentary,  
smell of water, chlorine,  
suntan lotion, skin.**

**And every laugh says  
I fear but I am here.**

**12.VIII.22 Red Hook**

## **CONTRA PORN**

**Rather imagine  
than settle  
for what I can see**

**12 August 2022 *lune***

== == == == ==

**In town  
late afternoon  
what it is  
is steel,  
                steel  
hauling steel,  
roar of combustion,  
human voices  
pretending to be in charge,  
of all that's happening.**

**12.VIII.22 Red Hook**



=====

**We left the cloud  
to take care of the sky  
and ran inside.**

**We are revolutionaries  
trying to turn everything  
upside down, but quietly,  
and only because  
we like the underside of things,  
the road behind us, the unseen.**

**2.**

**Yes, you're right,  
I am speaking of religion.  
But it is not me speaking,**

is it? It's really you  
understanding, *n'est-ce pas?*  
That sounds too easy.  
It's neither you nor me.  
It's the thing itself stalking,  
cloud language, bone language,  
the old saint said Faith  
is to believe in what we have not  
seen. I'd call it love instead,--  
the future is always behind us,  
waiting, walking along with us,  
But our necks don't swivel far--  
only the owl can spin its glance  
all the way back--  
that's why they call it the bird  
of Athena, goddess of wisdom.

**3.**

**We're walking behind someone  
or following them up the stairs  
we suddenly know them,  
something about them, vividly  
felt, utterly convincing,  
but impossible to put in words.**

**We know at that moment  
a thing they don't know themselves,  
we've seen their fact or future  
scribbled down their backs.**

**Luck for them and for us  
we've run out of words.**

**13 August 2022**

## **NORTH BAY**

**It's near the river**

**but it isn't the river,**

**it's all the same water  
but it doesn't go.**

**It lingers with us, idle  
kayak, a raft will just  
shimmer a little  
and not depart,  
a piece of paper will  
float, words up,  
still readable.**

**2.**

**Along the shore mallows grow,  
color a vibrant mauve  
(their name in French,  
Latin *malva*, color of a blush).**

**3.**

**So many things I want  
to tell you about this bay,  
riverine lagoon, placid pool,  
the train tracks beyond  
seem to keep it safe  
from the tidal river  
washing it away. A bay.  
A bight. A tender cloud  
in the sky of earth.**

4.

I want to be there now,  
snug on shore, cool morning,  
water clean enough to swim  
the mavens say, but I don't,  
water is a church I pray outside.

5.

We walked there more than once  
but all the visits blend into one,  
we're looking for something,  
bird? tree? flower? mushroom?  
who knows what, we walked  
through the two meadows  
then down the wooded headland  
to stand there, just looking,

and a train went by. We always  
seem to see them heading south,  
*eis ten polin*, to the city,  
not Is-tan-bul now ,New York.

6.

But you can never tell. Sometimes  
the City  
is right here, is every  
place that summons our senses  
and teaches us to know  
this landscape pr this lover  
and what that knowing means.  
This little marshy pond  
by the Hudson our metropolis.

*14 August 2022*

=====

**I'd like this county more  
if there were zebras in it.  
Not lions and elephants  
and such, just zebras,  
not even a whole lot of them,  
just enough that sometimes  
at evening we'd see their stripes  
dancing in and out of the bright slices  
of the setting sun  
at roadside, shy, cautious, strong.  
And sometimes we'd hear them  
mating in broad daylight  
in a clearing, loud, loud,  
the roar of their desire**



**no horse I know can equal.**

**Zebras. A little dangerous.  
By next year the village boys  
and teenage girls will find  
a way to ride them, and then,  
and then! You'll see a whole  
sacred procession of them  
stomping noisily down Market  
and all the timid cars  
scurrying away in fear.**

**14 August 2022**

== == == == ==

**Forget the knife,  
go back to chalk  
and listen  
so what you write  
on the rock  
the rain will forgive,  
words running down the stone  
back to where they came from  
and you will have done your duty  
and the words will have been heard**

**14 August 2022**

=====

**Get the date wrong,  
it may be a sign,  
misspell the name  
and claim a new identity.  
You never know  
what you never know.  
Do the math wrong  
and coins fall out of the air,  
futures you can hold in your hand.  
14 August 2022**

=====

**O the lengths and widths  
we gave to Gaia,  
walked on evening,  
slept on dawn.**

**Yet we do bow down  
sometimes before Her,  
shrine when we found one  
or thought we did,  
cave full of dark water,  
hilltop, lone  
tree on a lawn.**

**Mother make the winter mild  
a summer full of seed  
simple selfish children we pray.**

**Maybe she even loves us  
that way, greedy infants  
playing with her toys.**

**15 August 2022**

=====

**Mary Day.**

**The Church a century or so ago  
got around to declaring  
she went bodily to heaven.**

**But I have seen her around here  
and you have too,  
the virgin mother ever young  
still mourning what people did to her  
son  
but trying to forgjve us one by one.  
Always that way. You are alone  
when you meet her.**

**At first you think a trick of the light  
or a girl from out of town  
or just the other say I saw  
what I thought at first sight  
was one slender tree  
leaning against an older,  
hplding it upright  
high on a hill.**

**And today  
is her feast day,  
Catholics have to go to church,  
Protestants think their blessed  
thoughts  
at home, where she too perhaps**

**is more comfortable.  
Though she loves the music,  
the lean Gregorian mingling  
with passionate Romantic hymns.  
it makes her feel closer to him.**

**15 August 2022**



== == == == ==

**No cloud. Trees  
everywhere.  
Not a leaf moves.  
I am a human,  
I let myself think  
they are waiting  
for my breath  
to set the air in motion.  
Or maybe they  
make me think that.  
Here, I breathe out  
all the words you  
let me find.**

***(And no sooner had I written that when a breeze came cool through the window from the direction of the trees, straight ahead, a breeze and then a quiet and the morning seemed full of grace and and gratitude,)***

**15 August 2022**

=====

**Green and blue  
that; all can be seen  
from this window.  
Some of the blue  
leaches ojt of the green  
and floats up to be the sky.**

**Or else the yellow sunshine  
shivers the sky into five million  
green leaves wo float down,  
immigrants to earth's surface,**

**trees. How else can I explain it?  
But now a tiny white cloud**

**shrugs in over the tree tops,  
tells me there is more to thins  
than even all the lovely colors say.**

**15 August 2022**

=====

**Maybe I don't really need  
to learn the name  
of very blessed tree I see.  
I don't have to know the name  
of a woman walking by  
to admire her silken dress,  
a name is just a distraction,  
dragging the perceived  
person or object into a dreary  
world of yes and no, permissions,  
refusals, revenge, remorse,  
  
forgetfulness.**

**This tree is this tree.  
This man is a man. Let's  
just see what he does.  
We can name him from his deed.**

**15 August 2022**

## SINFONIA DOMESTICA

I hear the ice-box roaring in the other room.

–We call them fridges now, dear, short for refrigerator.

Or *frigo* if you want to sound French.

Fresh? I didn't mean to be impolite.

–No, FrENch. Ice-box is eighty years ago.

And so am I.

15.VIII.22

TAP TAP TAP

**1.**

**Woodpecker woke me.**

**I have friends in high places,  
they know the time,  
the deeds you lay down in dream,  
the ones you pick up in waking.**

**Almost seven, cool morning,  
59, nice for August, numbers  
help us too, but I try  
not to take them too seriously.**

**2.**

**Of course sleep is the temple  
of the first religion,**



**all the rest are trying to make sense of, usually by that kind of subtraction from the whole called focus. Sleep then,**

**3.**

**sleep now.**

**Open the great doors  
by closing your eyes.**

**That's what the bird said,  
Wake up  
so you can really go to sleep.**

**4.**

**Now Sun is**

saying something too,  
Sleep in daylight  
is an utterly different animal,  
frisky, full of tricks.  
Sometimes the temple  
bucks and quivers beneath you. Be  
liminal, animal,  
stand on the threshold  
one hand in the dark.

16 August 2022

= = = = =

Who are you today

seemed a simple question  
but was I asking them  
or they asking me?  
Words need a fletcher  
roset arrowhead at one end  
feathers at the other  
so we know, even the wisest  
of us, which way they're going.

2.

Who are ou today  
I think it's me asking,  
the words came to mind,  
my mind00but who  
put them there. The arrow  
problem all over again.

**3.**

**Or are they, words,  
like those old Chinese poems  
scribbled in moonlight,  
set afloat on a neighbor stream,  
words all by themselves  
out all night, never mind  
who finds them, reads them—  
they are written.**

**4.**

**But I, or someone like me,  
wants to know, really know,**

**who you are today,  
call out your name, or send  
me a picture so I can study  
the distance between your eyes,  
curve of forehead, arc of lips.  
No, don't bother with photo,  
I'd get it all wrong, mythology  
would get in the way.  
Just say your name,, your place  
and date of birth, and the last  
time you had to shed tears.**

**17 August 2022**

**= = = = =**

**Sometimes we find**

**things in what we've written  
that tell us what  
we did not know before.  
It's not all about publishing  
and royalties, it's the shock  
of learning something  
in your words that no one said.**

**17.VIII.22**

**= = = = =**

**Sometimes we find  
things in what we've written**

**that tell us what  
we did not know before.  
It's not all about publishing  
and royalties it's the shock  
of learning something  
in your words that no one said.  
17.VIII.22**

=====

**Let gravity  
do the work for you.  
Then write the date down  
on stone if you have one  
and know how,  
and there is your church  
to begin with, knowing  
when it is you are.**

**2.  
Of course all calendars  
are imaginary  
but there are shreds of truth  
in some, like no surgery**



**on Tuesday, no legal hassles  
on Knife Day in Yucatan.  
Dust of charcoal scattered  
on the marble pavement,  
a word's enough to tell you when.**

**3.**

**That's what I mean by gravity,  
Mongolfier in his dictionary  
floating over the Louvre,  
the Seine hurrying his shadow  
to the coast so we can see it too  
every time we look at the sea.  
What we do becomes our lexicon.  
Or am I thinking of two**

**brothers at Kitty Hawk or  
last night your hand on my arm?**

**18 August 2022**

=====

**K was worried about apocalypse, collapse of the environment, disaster. I like worrying too but couldn't go along with her. My guess is we're here forever, apocalypse is too easy, humans are barely at reaching puberty, boys fighting in the schoolyard, Ukraine. We don't understand death yet, which is why we let ourselves kill one another, murderers and electric chairs the same, governments ake murder legal when they do it,**

when old men in a chamber  
decide what kind of people  
to kill next and where  
to send the soldiers out to play.  
Thou shalt not kill. There are  
no exceptions to the fifth  
commandment  
But K wasn't satisfied,  
heard me out but I could tell  
her thoughts were climate  
change, drought, disaster.  
I whistled the national anthem  
of the sea, *Desalinate Me  
and Live Forever*. When all  
the traces merge into one  
is when the fun begins I cried.,

**humanity means migration,  
not just Celts Slavs and Magyars,  
we all have to be  
by being on the road,  
each civilization a long  
nights resting place.  
By then it was time for K  
to go, we left our words  
hanging in the air. Some  
of them may still be there.**

**18 August 2022**

=====

**In Ancient Crete  
girls jumped over bulls  
front to back  
levering themselves up  
and over by grabbing horns.  
Brave and beautiful  
and incomprehensible.  
In Ancient Athens they show  
o big owl on their silver coins,  
plus part of the goddess's name.  
I think the trees are talking to me.**

**18 August 2022**

=====

**You help me do my job  
by doing yours. You use  
up lots of words so I know  
the ones left for me to use.  
We keep saying things  
to each other and call it  
breakfast, culture, marriage,  
religion, th sneaky politics  
between mattress and sheet.  
But any moment we could  
drain all the vowels out  
and leave the husks of sound  
to entertain ourselves\while we  
drive to Fresno or learn French  
which has all kinds of**

**vowels of its own. Thank you  
for the blessing of your actual  
words! I'll take communion  
from their ancient hands.**

**18 August 2022**



=====

**When there's nothing else  
to do, that's  
the wrong time for it.**

**18.VIII.22 *lune***

=====

**OK, so words are  
children running in the rain,**

**OK. words come  
from every part of the body,  
flee out into the air  
where other bodies live,  
strangers glad to touch hands.**

**OK, every part of the body  
has its own words,  
and they're always specific—  
even a word like 'good'**

**comes from one place only  
but a different one  
in each one of us so  
language is always saying  
*Find it in you  
then give it to me.***

**18 August 2022  
Rhinebeck**

## ORNITHOSOPHY

A wren at evening  
who am I fooling  
wake to cars slushing  
up wet morning road  
but it isn't raining  
we live together  
radiant in Terra  
chips we all are  
of the Sun's hard light  
enough to stand the dark  
and come again  
I think it was a wren  
or someone looked like her  
and why not, the day

is very large, evening sigh  
chittering finches at dawn  
wave the window  
at the trees

2.

and these others  
who grow behind my back  
heart-shaped habit  
of profusion, shadow cool,  
caught between things  
the teeth of words

3.

so we hear the poultry  
in nobody's yard

**grace grace the accent  
changes with the time of life  
the empty rowboat  
drifts back to shore  
stare at the park bench  
till it tells you all  
lovers losers kindly folk  
absent-minded feeding  
pigeons at their toes  
these weathered wooden  
slats your history book**

**4.**

**or any bird at all  
history is just ornithology**

**of a flightless species  
how we got there anyhow  
over Bosphorus or broad  
sacred Atlantic to be  
anywhere at all  
man is a migrant  
she gets up and goes**

**5.  
flightless words?  
let the queen decide  
she has been here  
longer than stone  
yesterday's tempest  
in the river of our trees**

**but the road is dry today  
quiet as can be  
apart from the liturgy of leaves**

**6.**

**remember that  
when we shake hands  
we bring to each other's skin  
all the places we have been  
no wonder we bump elbows  
now in plague time  
but bones have been somewhere  
too, the body knows  
all too well the world it's in  
maybe all that hair and skin  
is just a message from the bone**



but meaning what?  
always looking for meaning  
like a kid for a candy  
meanings don't nourish us  
only the searching does  
migrations forever  
raindove on the railing  
we're there already  
but never know it

7.

Amplitude of evidence  
bulge in the pocket  
cloud in the north  
it costs so much to remember  
even without a therapist

lines of the face  
tribunal of her angry eyes  
he wanted to speak  
without using words  
wound up using  
words without speaking  
stories like that  
whispered in bathroom stalls  
scratch your name  
on metal door and wonder why

8.  
remember mucilage?  
used to stick things together  
weaker than glue  
but it worked, but it's

**up to the things to agree  
to be cobbled together  
marrying papers together  
the hidden dark  
crinkling in between them  
o marriage marriage  
high priest of the temple  
your wife is your pontiff  
and you'd better know it**

**9.**

**what did they tell you  
about me when they sent  
you out to lead me home?  
did they warn you  
to bring some silence with you?**

**you were a wren at the window  
that didn't do it so  
a woodpecker next time  
so now we're even  
we have awakened each other  
and it's still only Friday  
late for breakfast again  
can't remember what I ate  
only the news of the day  
they dared to call it  
slopped down beside my plate**

**10.**

**but I grew up with sidewalks  
fire hydrants the only  
wildlife the dog down the block**

**but the sea was near enough  
to walk down and see  
and that is my whole story  
the mafia of the public library  
enlisted me half  
against my will but my want  
was so strong it chained me  
to the next book and the next  
and then I went to France  
and who knows what happened  
then but enough about me  
I was only here to reassure you  
someone can speak a word  
or two and still survive,  
the ninety-nine inning ballgame  
nowhere near its end**

**11.**

**or was it poltergeists  
I meant I heard  
rustling the cellophane  
drives you up the wall  
in my nightmare  
I hear a blasted basketball  
bouncing slow and regular  
on asphalt, young men  
are demons, I was one  
but hated a ball I couldn't  
hold, squeeze in one hand  
the subway roared  
beneath the corner**

**you could hear it sometimes  
when wise folk came to visit  
to lecture from my leather chair  
who needs to know any more?  
sufficient to the day  
is the evil thereof  
I asked the priest  
and he explained  
what Jesus meant  
and all I carried away  
was a word of the day  
is enough to say  
or one word says it all**

**12.**

**but enough about birds  
my wife knows them so well  
can whistle in a dozen languages  
from Towhee to Oriole  
she can sing them down to feed  
takes gorgeous pictures of them  
I study the images  
until the color sinks in  
from what I see  
but enough about me  
you read poetry to learn  
a wider world than the one  
that only seems to be here  
sink into the word  
the empty boat will float you**



**all the way to the shores of  
the land of Goshen  
what is that? a racetrack  
in the country, a childhood  
forever coming back?  
settle down softly  
in the empty boat  
a word is waiting for you.**

**19 August 2022**

=====

**As if another answer  
were waiting for its question,  
cool dim of the church interior,  
dome vague, s, stained glass  
opaqued by evening. Wait.  
That's what churches always  
tell you, old ones especially,  
stone and mosaics and bronze,  
wait. Wait means just be here.  
You are in the interval between  
movements in the symphony  
of your life. Concerto, I mean,  
word meant conflict once,  
struggle of one against all,**

**slim flute versus fifty strings,  
drums, howling brass.  
That's you in the middle. Wait.  
It's not a game, it's music,  
the only thing that helps you  
when you stand up and go.**

**19 August 2022**

=====

**In the shade of an apple tree, in hope  
of the best.**

**I thought there was  
a wren at the window  
but it turned out to be  
a bird of another color altogether, a  
bird**

**I had never seen before,  
a bird with four wings  
and a little Golden crown  
on the top of it s head.**

**What kind of bird are you?**

**I asked. and it answered  
but not in English,**

**birds don't use human language very often, parrots of course an exception, but it did answer.**

**And what it said rang clearly in my mind. I am the bird of tomorrow I will always be here just past your reach come towards me I'm waiting for you one set of wings is for me and the other wings are for you—now come to me. The real business of humans is to reach tomorrow.**

**19/20.viii.22, v.v.**

=====

**Law of the lawn: lie flat  
let them play on you  
make love on you,  
lie in sun, or autumn nights  
let them lie quiet  
and watch the moon.  
The moon has so many names,  
the sun has one.  
The lawn knows all of them,  
worms and rabbits and voles  
helo the lawn remember.  
Live the lawn law in you too!**

**20 August 2022**

=====

**Waiting for the discus  
to scuttle down out of the sky  
two thousand years pass.  
Gibraltar endures  
half a dozen languages,  
the sea is a strict grammarian,  
don't you forget it, Julie,  
next time you 'borrow'  
somebody's canoe. Kayak  
weather yet to come. Waiting  
for the lute strings to snap  
at last and the interminable  
improvisations meet their term.  
But music never ends,**

just goes inside, rat  
in the floorboards of the mind.  
You can almost see the discus  
or whatever it is on its way,  
a shimmer whirling  
low ver the meadow,. Tthe grass  
has been waiting too, sheep  
after goat after aurochs,  
we're getting there,  
on the Pacific Palisades,  
speaking German, remember?  
His vocabulary did this to him  
Spicer said, in the wheelchair,  
in the elevator, a boy from Idaho  
always ready to pick up the song.  
I remember getting off the train



**in Pocatello9, finding my old  
friend now a youg mother,  
Mormons everywhere, the ghost  
of Ed Dorn still living in the air.  
The lute string snapped then,  
chronology falls apart when  
you look too close, don't kiss  
the calendar, you never can tell  
where or when it's been.  
Throwing means thinking,  
catching the ball means knowing.  
The discus is on its way  
but no one dares to catch it,  
keen-edged, whirling knife,  
let it finally come to earth  
and show you where, if**

**my luck or chance you're there.  
Sometimes you wake at night  
and hear ancient Sparta  
slipping fast through the sky.**

**20 August 2022**

=====

**e careful what you  
ask of me,  
I've too much to give.**

**20.VIII.22 *lune***

== == == == ==

**Warm. Sky  
impalpable landmark  
in this city of trees.  
Helps find my way  
through the leaves  
whether I'm walking  
on legs or eyes alone  
it shows. It knows.**

**20 August 2022**

=====

**Suddenly everything seemed smaller.  
Had I grown or had I gone  
further away from what I saw,  
see, need, try to touch?  
I am, like any human,  
just a decimal point  
moving left or right  
in the result of an equation  
we try to guess from the stars,  
lines in our pa, scratches  
on a rock, the look in someone's  
eyes.**

**20 August 2022**

**SUNDAY**

**To be in church  
every day  
and nowhere but  
church to be in  
until church  
is everywhere  
the tree and the maiden,  
river and wolf,  
the firnd's face  
smiling at you  
not too far away.**

**21 August 2022**

**= = = = =**

**Maple syrup  
still in the tree  
acorn still halfway  
up the sky  
how swet  
the future is  
spring only  
a winter away.**

**21 August 2022**

=====

**Sentimental circumstances  
your new black dress  
you tell me is dark blue,  
I don't argue with beauty,  
I have enough work to do  
coping with ordinariness.**

**21 August 2022**



=====

**Usually breakfast is an ordeal  
but two mornings in a row now  
I woke up hungry. And why  
am I telling you this, Oscar?**

**Never forget we are who we are  
mostly in little things, salt on egg  
India or China, cream or black.**

**The marble [postures we assume  
later in the Pantheon are sp  
easily forgotten, easily**

**confused with one another,  
William III or William IV**

**who can remember, but the ink  
stain on my finger lasts forever.**

**21 August 2022**

== == == ==

**Let's see who talks to me today—  
I open the mailbox of the mind,  
see it's empty, I love the clang  
of the door dropping or shoved  
back into place. Nobody there.  
Not even a bill from my mother  
or wa warning fro the priest.  
Dark hollow naive no one there.  
Maybe I should make it stand  
beside a busier road, maybe  
I should think of them some more  
instead of just smiling vaguely  
out the window at the gorgeous  
trees.**

**Maybe somebody will call me up instead—do people still talk in real time? These days, only spammers use the telephone.**

**21 August 2022**

=====

**It doesn't do  
to be too brief,  
remember they call  
underwear briefs,  
revealing, embarrassing.  
The less you say  
the more you stand revealed.  
Pour on the stanzas,  
slokas, cantos, snuggle  
down in profusion,  
hide in the underbrush of words.**

**21 August 2022**

## **THEY CALLED HIM ROBERTUS**

**because he was slow as me,  
miniature turtle, painted shell  
size of a silver dollar, my first  
and only pet. I see him even now  
floundering deliberately  
the way they do, under the big  
hydrangeas sky blue, he's finding  
a place of his own, I guess.  
And one day he was gone.  
And where I live now those  
flowers come up pink or white,  
no more blue But I do have  
a dollar or two still.**

**21 August 2022**

=====

**Then there was a snail I loved  
who knows where he came from  
I knew him for a day or two  
then he went missing. Days later  
we found him again, he'd started  
to swallow a thread in a curtain  
and it led him up the window  
to the top, where we found him,  
the thread all coiled inside him.  
Destiny scares me ever since.**

**21 August 2022**

== == == == ==

**Now back to the trees  
away from  
all the noisy me's.**

**21.viii.22, *lune***



=====

**They slept together  
only one night  
but a night can  
last a very long time,  
a life sometimes,  
not just the remembering  
of it but the knowing  
it knew in them—  
and knowing lasts forever.**

**21 August 2022**

=====

**Shake the pronouns  
till their all mixed together  
and call it a city.**

**Fling all the verbs  
out all the windows  
and call it living.**

**Them nouns come later,  
staid and solemn  
standing here and there  
firm in th dark**

**Then when morning comes  
watch the adjectives  
all the pretty clothes.**

**21 August 2022**

=====

**Quick, I have to write  
everything I don't know.  
It will take forever—  
at least that's my plan.**

**21.VIII.22**

=====

**Just for a moment  
suppose the sea  
Or not just now,  
let it last, vast,  
covering most  
of the globe, sea  
always leaving  
some room for us.  
For you and men.  
Now suppose me,  
insignificant indeed  
but at your side.  
Where things are**

**sometimes means  
more than what they are.  
Suppose the sea again  
now and be at peace.**

**21 August 2022**

=====

**But even in the trees  
some light was left,  
enough to tell  
branch from bole  
As we Irish say. At least I thought I  
was Irish,  
green, green,  
but who knows,  
who really knows?**

**21 August 2022**

**Red Hook, by the pool**

## **INTO THE TREES**

**I was lying prone on our lawn, reading a book a few inches below my face. You were standing a few feet in front of me, your legs wide-spread as if you had paused in the middle of a gymnastic exercise to watch something over my head, a bird most likely, you like birds.**

**In the deltoid vista formed by your spread legs I saw a figure coming our way out of the trees. As he came closer, I could see from his ragged once white garments and the bundle of papers he was carrying**

**that this was Orpheus, hurrying (not very fast, though) towards us.**

**Right behind him, almost up against his back, a woman. I saw it was golden-haired Eurydice herself, with her wide cheek bones and full lips.**

**Every now and then Orpheus would spin around to see if anyone was following him; whenever he did this, Eurydice would swing down out of sight so he saw no one, and trudged on sadly.**

**As they came by, Orpheus didn't even glance at us but I could see that Eurydice's right arm was pressing**



ever so gently at the top of his spine, pushing him along. She saw me looking at her, smiled at us, raised her left arm and set a finger on her lips, shushing me, as if to say Don't wake him, don't let him know that I'm still here, guiding him. She flashed a be-a-good-boy loving glare at me and they passed on.

But I needed to know, and cried out silently in mind, "But can I tell what I have seen?"

Her answer came just as clear within: "Tell all, tell all you think you've seen, tell whatever comes to

**mind. Not many will believe you anyhow.”**

**The couple kept walking on, his rags and pages flapping in the wind, her nakedness gleaming as they passed into the trees.**

**22 August 2022**

## CHAT WITH HORACE

*...aere perennius*

**“I have built a monument  
more lasting than bronze,”  
he declared. And I said  
“But where it is?” Then he:  
I just pronounced it—  
weren’t you listening?”**

**22.viii.22**

=====

**I have a stiff Cro-Magnon face,  
no one can tell when I'm smiling.  
This leads to Stone Age quarrels,  
put down that rock ax,  
I actually love you. Or do I mean  
Be calm, I'm your loyal friend.  
At times it confuses me too.**

**22.VIII.22**

=====

**Here I am  
I can say anything  
I like but only if  
you like it when I do,  
  
any of you,  
ears if a lover,  
ears of a child,  
language into which  
I pour or whisper  
whatever seems to think in me.**

**22.VIII.22 Rhinebeck**

**= = = ==**

**Why does a workman  
in yellow vest  
shoving ahead of him  
a dozen shopping carts  
nested, entrained together,  
resemble a house painter  
carrying an aluminum ladder  
to get him up to the attic?  
He doesn't.  
All long things are not the same.  
A road is not your arm though both  
can reach what your desire.**

**22 August 2022, Rhinebeck**

=====

**So white so sky  
the trees  
those lords my ladies  
have to call to mind,  
to leaf, the sun's  
gold, Sunday's blue  
to pledge their green.  
By such guesswork  
we all joy to live!**

**23 August 2022**

=====

**You put the top  
of the salt shaker  
bsck together,  
you fed a hundred birds,  
crows come to your call,  
you turned thousands  
of pages of Foreignese  
into luminous American prose,  
so many times you've done,  
saved my lfe or kept me living.  
And I love salt.**

**23.VIII.22**



=====

**Last week before school starts  
and how quiet the roads are,  
the fenced-in green  
where roads divide is calm now  
as a meadow in the hills.  
Super-quiet, you would say,  
super-green, the sky  
a big white smile.  
You can tell we're all  
getting ready for something—  
and now the sun comes out  
to pave the way.**

**23.VIII.22**

= == = = = =

If I were who I remember  
walking by the West Side  
midtown piers, in blue,  
watching the foreigners  
smie their way off steamers,  
if the friendly asphalt  
shimmered still from  
that morning's light rain,  
and if I were looking then  
as I ight be gazing now,  
o lord how the word look  
works both ways, nobody  
saw me, I wasn't there,  
it was a stranger

**pretending to be me  
and I still believe him,  
the people he looked at,  
men grey women blue  
and never now,  
where I wait eager  
to understand all that  
I think I've never seen.**

**23.VIII.22**

== == == == ==

*for Michael Avedon*

If you want to take a picture  
of me in my studio  
set me down at an open window  
looking out at trees, say.  
I am the canvas they write  
leaf by letter their words  
I write down as fast as I can,  
mere agent of what I see.

23.VIII.22

**= == = =**

**ThT cat who kills  
our Chipmunks  
was a kitten once**

**important to remember this  
the face that faces us  
has been many places  
shown many faces before  
this one we look at now.**

**(22.VIII.22)**

**23 August 2022**

=====

**As if the tree  
said it to me  
you think I meant  
but I didn't,  
I meant the tree  
said it to me.**

**2.**

**So I had come  
to my last religion,  
listening at the food  
the way a child does  
to half-hear half-  
guess the world,**

**listening. And it turns  
out to be the first,  
when first we heard  
a vice say Come  
listen to me.**

**24 August 2022**

=====

**Remember when everyone you saw  
was an angel, messenger of the  
other.**

**Walking a home from school  
left you dazed with identities,  
each one a character in that endless  
opera  
you script-less struggled  
forward through,  
guessing the way,  
singing loud as tou can?**

**24 August 2022**

=====



**Words get simple to confuse me.  
I'm trying to rebuild a whole culture  
starting with stones I find  
all over the ground, pluck  
without much effort, chips  
that happen to resemble  
ruins of Athens, pavements  
of Jerusalem, whatever I need,  
shadows of Glastonbury,  
your pearl earring on the carpet,  
come out of Eden, begin again.  
I'm drowning in simplicity.**

**2.**

**But what else could words be for**

**but to creste a lasting nation  
urgent with kindness  
and luminous permissions?  
Land of no lying, country of no kill.  
It's worth a try. Now start  
forever again.**

**24 August 2022**

=====

**The only law is  
listening.  
Obey with your soul.**

**24.VIII.22, *lune***

=====

**Smack on the pale  
green lawn a shadow.  
No one standing there.  
Go on, sounds interesting.  
Shadow dissolves a little  
in the middle. Acknowledge  
the tree, night's proxy,  
easing the grass. Hiding  
is a big part of being seem.**

**24 August 2022**

=====

**Love is a ladder  
that creaks sometimes  
as you climb.  
WOrry, but keep going.  
Try not to fall  
there's no one to catch you.  
Omce you/re on that ladder  
the only way is up.**

**24.VIII.22**

## **ROVINE**

**So much contemporary  
classical music feels  
like walking all alone  
through the ruins of Rome.  
Once there was a mighty  
nation there. no weird.  
echoes I shiver in shadows.**

**24 August 2022**

=====

**Is it my fault I  
tell the truth?  
Nobody needs to.**

**\***

**The truth is always  
facing you,  
I hum at your side.**

**24.VIII.22, *lune***

=====

**Cliffs of unknown rock  
stab up into my sky,  
yoys too, wherever you are.  
Dreams reveal what clouds hide.**

**24.VIII.22**

***)from an older scrap)***



=====

**Scratch in the upholstery  
cat claw or tome?**

**Not much difference—  
the soul peeks out.**

**24 August 2022**

== == == == ==

**From the bridge today  
the wisest whitest clouds I've ever  
listened to.**

**24 August 2022**

## **ONFESSION**

**So the street I lived on  
ended at the sea, paved  
as far as the marshes  
then the catwalks began,  
seagulls and herbs  
stray migrant birds, ,  
even a bittern once  
so I sensed I lived  
in the house of the sea.  
Never learned to swim—  
why bother when  
I was always in?**

**25 August 2022**

=====

**So often when I look  
early morning out  
at the trees, beeches  
and lindens and maples  
they make me think  
of ancient cities,  
young men and women  
lively, joyfully alive  
among the ruins.  
Why do I think of Rome  
where I have never been?  
Maybe they stir the Latin  
in my schoolboy mind,  
but I think they know**

**about what goes away  
and what lasts, they have  
a marble of their own/  
Time is the other side  
of what they are.**

**25 August 2022**

## **IMAGINARY ALIMONY**

**we pay to the sun  
whenever we go indoors,  
build houses for her  
to look at, rooftops  
she can admire her  
radiance upon,  
look at Manhattan  
from the air, or London,  
Paris, Shanghai and  
you'll see that they all  
are tables full of toys  
for her to play with,  
shadows and shimmers  
and then good night.**

**25 August 2022**

=====

**Every conversation  
is imaginary.  
In this sense:  
you remember it  
like some dialogue  
in a book you read.  
It lingers, shapes  
all kinds of earnings,  
hopes, anxieties,  
within the words  
and gestures you recall.  
And then the words  
themselves slip and slide,  
forget, remember,**

**smile and fret, now  
you are part of history,  
that endless comic book.**

**25 August 2022**



=====

**Save my words  
for a better basket?  
I suppose you're right...  
this old wickerware  
creaks and lets too much  
meaning slip in or out.  
But I like that really,  
all talk in playing  
with another, they catch  
or drop or toss it back.  
Who am I to mean what I mean?**

**25 August 2022**

=====

**Glanum, outside Arles,  
I keep coming back  
to that Roman street  
I walked on a few minutes  
marvelling, as if the earth  
beneath us always  
was some newfangled thing  
but this was really old.  
Silly, but it was stone,  
silly, but it was made by  
people long gone. Later  
I sat for a while in sun  
in the ancient bullring  
watching the bare field**

**men fight irritated bulls,  
but this is France now  
so they do not kill.  
Not far away a Roman  
road goes all the way to Spain,  
just a dirt trail now  
but what lingers for me  
is that little nowhere  
Roman street, the hard  
hard pavement below my feet.**

**25 August 2022**

=====

**One nice thing about  
hot summer days:  
you don't have to do  
anything about them.  
Dawn to dusk a day  
takes care of itself.  
Free at last, we linger  
by a real or fancied shore.**

**25.VIII.22**

=====

**When you tell the truth  
speak louder–  
someone might hear you.**

**25.VIII.22 lune**

=====

**I need a cloud.  
That's not allowed.  
I need a tree.  
*strictly interdit.*  
At least a leaf.  
Naughty little thief.  
Give me a bone.  
Not even a stone.  
Why are you so mean?  
I voice what you mean.**

**25 August 2022**

## **AFTER A TALK BY RUDOLF STEINER**

**The prayer can come later,  
park the car where it never was,  
a wooden platform, strange,**

**but notice the divorce:  
word and its meaning  
quarreling at the bar,  
half-drunk on ordinariness.**

**The color seems different today,  
more orange than tan. Air all  
around, I know how to breathe,  
You heard what the man sad:  
the outside needs to come in**

**and conversely, hence language  
or verse, the hum of happening  
back into the world. . Why would I  
have bought an orange car?**

**Don't make the prayer wait  
too long, the words too are  
good for you, I guess,  
because all words are. I've  
wanted to park there for years.**

**26 august 2022**



=====

**Glint of sun  
off windshield  
flashing by,  
dreams of parking,  
woke to truckish  
noises passing.  
A car-ish morning,  
the soviet of dream  
controlling the day.**

**26 August 2022**

## ZOOLOGY 301

**We share our space  
with animals, not all  
of them real. The ones  
who haunt us—hedgehog  
on her lap, tiger  
in the dining room—  
don't bite, or not exactly.  
They lurk in the mind  
and feed on our anxiety.  
Haven't you often been  
nuzzled by a hairy dog  
that isn't even there?**

**26 August 2022**

=====

**A wind word!  
A celebration  
somewhere out there  
unseen but green,  
I hear what I see,  
window comes from  
'wind eye' and  
that's what it means.**

**27 August 2022**

== = = = =

**Yesterday I got the dte wrong,  
doctor, right number but wrong  
month, what does it mean?  
And today doesn't feel exactly  
like Saturday. Do I need help?  
Is there any help to be found?  
Have I sinned against Time,  
Father, or just done a civil crime?  
Can I go back to sleep, darling,  
to start the while business again?**

**27 August 2022**

=====

**And sometimes  
the answer comes  
like a slip of paper  
fluttering on the breeze.  
Pick it up. It says:  
“ wrote this street.  
I breathed this town.”**

**28.VIII.22**

*[The other day in Taco Bell I asked Charlotte for a piece of paper, I meant to write while her chalupa and my burrito were on the way. Then I discovered I had no pen. So I put the little square she gave me from her notepad into my pocket. That night it wound up on my window desk. This morning I found it. And this time I had a pen. A little poem with a history that moves me, thank you, dear Love.]*

= = = == = =

**Progress. The Greeks  
were blond, the trees  
are still green. A door  
is still a mystery—  
pull or push, coax or shove?  
And when it opens  
what will be there for you?  
I think of glass doors  
in shops and offices,  
keep the body out  
but let the vision in—  
and what does that  
remind me of? Slowly  
we are turning into**

**chemicals. Colors  
began the process,  
north green, red west,  
south yellow, the east  
is blue. Glass reminds.  
Chemistry of the soul.**

**28 August 2022**

## **LAVABO**

**Now you've washed  
your face and hands  
you watch the water  
swirl down the drain.**

**From this observation  
if you think hard  
most of life on earth  
can be deduced—gravity  
density, the magnetic  
mysteries, and where  
water comes from and  
what it is that makes up**



**so much of us, it's all here,  
in the sink, soft gurgle  
that taught us to sing.**

**No wonder a few tears fall.**

**28 August 2022**

=====

**Photos of clouds  
are so beautiful to see—  
I think their beauty  
keeps us from reading them  
sometimes. Clouds  
inscribe the sky, they mean  
something when they come,  
not just rain or shade.  
In the photo of the clouds  
you can read the actual  
word of the moment,  
what the world is saying  
in this very place and not  
anywhere else. Each vista**

**a separate declaration.  
Hence the photo. Read me  
if you dare, pretty earthling  
down there, I'm writing go you.**

**28 August 2022**

=====

**Fish glue, rabbit skin glue,  
scraps of old leather.  
You think when you grow up  
you get away from all that,  
a sleeker world, digital,  
not animal, and digital  
is closer to the spiritual  
isn't it, more mind and less  
matter.? But the words  
are still there, heavy  
with meaning and past lives,  
held tight by pur sticky breath.**

**28 August 2022**

=====

**In the country people  
drive to church on Sunday,  
fewer now than years ago  
but still some still come.  
Churches have parking lots—  
for that hymn-soaked hour or so  
the lot is full of cars. I wonder  
if the cars are praying too—  
each vehicle has its intimate  
history, lovers, emergencies,  
traffic stops, all those miles  
that summer makes them drive,  
and all the mute or show-off  
incense plates, the rubber**

**lobster dangling from a bumper,  
bike racks, kayak on the roof,  
dirty windows, gleaming glass,  
So much to discuss, so much  
they have to tell us too  
if we stay outside and listen  
hard to them and never mind  
the preacher barking inside.**

**28 August 2022**

=====

**How do I know  
what I know?**

**You told me—  
but who are you,  
voice I hear so  
clear, so near  
inside my otherwise  
drowsy head?**

**Or not so much  
drowsy as busy,  
busy with what you  
told me yesterday,**

**I'm trying to work it out  
and still leave room for  
what you'll tell me today.  
What did you just say?**

**28 august 2022**



=====

**I don't want to have to  
write everything out,  
I want to talk it, *tawk* it  
with somebody listening  
who can talk right back  
or at least frown, or even smile.  
Deipnosophists, symposiums,  
dinner parties, anything,  
just sit down and hear me out  
or walk beside me, while I listen.**

**28.VIII.22**

=====

**If I were writing  
a story  
it would go on and on.  
But as it is,  
it is.**

**28.VIII. 22**

=====

**The small things again,  
and nothing easy.  
The geology of everyday,  
who made my mountain?  
This syncline in the mind,  
all those experiences  
pressing down together,  
graceful thunder weight of rock  
bending the moment, the old  
Who-am-I-today spring  
trickling down the shale.  
Too much to remember with  
such weak fingers, too far  
ahead to think with such bones.**

**2.**

**The dream made simple sense:  
a tall slim outfielder not only  
hits the long ball but steals  
bases too. Strength I guess  
and speed and knowing where  
to be and when to go.**

**Roma, rope a jenny to your caravan,  
it's actually always time to go.**

**3.**

**A mule, a mile, a breakfast on the  
move,  
spit out the cherry pits, the field**

is interested in new trees,  
roadside manners,  
life is the silent wolf  
slouching greedily behind.

4.

But am I there yet  
is a more plausible question.  
Location outweighs identity.  
Timing is trickier—is *now*  
truly when you think it is?  
Each being has its own now.

5.

**we failed geology  
but want the earth  
to be soft as shoes  
and easy as a spoon.  
A cup. A bowl. A lake  
in the oasis, shade  
of a handy tree.**

**Presumptuous to the last,  
when I say we I mean me.  
What do *you* mean?**

**6.**

**I asked the stone that once  
in New Hampshire,  
it glisteed in the sparkles  
reflected off the rushing stream**

**beside us both, and then  
it ummed back at me  
soft as a guitar, O little boy,  
meaning is just a human thing.**

**29 August 2022**

=====

**School starts today  
but I'm on sabbatical.  
Feels like floating on a raft  
on a pond in Central Park.**

**29.VIII.22**



=====

**Color pf momentum.  
Agency of wealth.  
Youth mixed on Harley,  
loud. Leaves  
sustain the tree  
in subtle dexterity.  
Evening breezing,  
laughter. Raven  
over the parking lot,  
his cry true pharmacy.**

**29 August 2022  
Red Hook**

=====

**The rose opens the door  
the wind decodes to come in  
just a little bit, just enough  
for the star of the petals  
to set free that fragrance  
that comes and grows at last  
into a single knowing,  
a flower of our own now  
grows safe inside us.**

**29 August 2022, v.v.**

= = = = =

**Hide the text inside itself  
and then she said  
Sit on the rock till you remember**

**\***

**Wash the basin,  
erase the stains  
along the rim. Who  
bled here? Whose  
wine did we drink  
and it was no accident?**

\*

**The wax the fingers  
mesh together  
on the chest of someone  
asleep in sunshine—  
no worse than that,  
the words lock,  
sometimes it's hard  
to spread them apart.**

\*

**To the graduate student  
I recommended she study  
the way Welsh and English  
poetic traditions influenced**

**each other even well before  
the Nineteenth Century.  
But she said: But I'm  
working in organic chemistry!  
so I said Precisely.**

**\***

**Wrap thing in thing  
until it's there,  
smear gobs of ointment  
on to find the skin.  
The target summons the arrow.  
But the fountain forever  
misses the naiad they took away.**

**\***

**No way we can have  
one without the other.**

**A word means what happens  
when you read it. Hear it.**

**Trust me, you are the dictionary.**

**\***

**That's where we went wrong,  
made the poor English teacher  
sit on a stool in the corner  
facing the wall. But angles  
sre always interesting, wrong  
turned out to be just a more  
detour on the road to Jerusalem  
and here we are.**

**30 August 2022**

=====

**They trimmed the weeds  
then went away.**

**Victims and perpetrators  
fled from the scene.**

**And the lawn was still here,  
a little paler green  
with not much rain.**

**Northeast drought,  
the center floods.**

**Blame the machinery.  
Out of nowhere a tsunami  
rose and swallowed me—**

**The dream told me: Pray  
to ocean for help, mother,  
mercy, salt and sympathy,  
desalination plants, kids  
with chemistry sets, rain rain  
come again. And tell the boy  
put the weed-whacker down.**

**30.VIII.22**



=====

I tried to brush  
a shadow of my knee  
it would not move  
but a breeze came  
gently in the door  
and I breathed  
my breath back out  
into it, glad to have  
a friend to share with.

**30 August 2022, v.v.**

== == == == ==

**Changing clothes  
with the statue  
means running naked,  
they do it all the time  
in the republic of childhood  
before time exiles them  
into wool and nylon,  
sometimes cotton reminds us  
of the feel of feeling.**

**31 August2022**

=====

**Not much to say today  
so the words are free to come  
streaming their sounds out  
so we can share. Dare to.  
Listen to them, not to me,  
Opening a notebook  
is opening the birdcage door  
and all the sounds fly out—  
and once a sound is on the wing  
it never stops till you stop hearing  
and even then something's left,  
a rhyme, a name you remember  
from childhood, sounds like  
you know better than I do.**

**2.**

**Axe handle but the blade is gone.  
Curious shapely wood, a little  
like the leg of an antelope, say,  
but with no jut of bone. A curve  
in the world, smooth pale wood.  
I can almost feel it in my fingers  
but wonder what I'm thinking it.  
Wood has its way with us,  
dreams its way into our hands.**

**3.**

**Axe handle came from X,  
I was just looking at the letter X,  
stands for Christ, for ten, for  
multiply, like 2 times 5, stands**

**for Time's History on Russian  
magazine, crossed arms, legs,  
crossed fingers, the spot marked  
to which all yearning hastens,  
an old peasant's signature.**

**And then I heard a raven calling,  
sunny morning, delivery truck  
paused at the door, no x in sight.**

**4.**

**See what U nean when I say  
have ntig to say?**

**Means you have all thus to hear,  
matter of the mind, sounds  
spilled on the sidewalk,**

**harbor full of ships from nowhere  
laden with goods and grain.  
And all of them for you,  
for the city you are.**

**31 August 2022**



