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Scream your head off
all you like
we used to say
and looked the other way.
Ignore complaint.
The forest of desire
subtends the mountain of fear,
hills of anxiety.
What does subtend mean again,
I remember her from school
if you didn’t love her
you wouldn’t worry—
simple as that? Not exactly,
think of the way Schumann
subtends Brahms, say, 
or how at the end of his life 
Duncan took Brahms as his master, 
learn the piano, climb the cluff, 
you have more than one life to give.

2.
Never mind the angles, 
geometry is a wishful dream. 
There are ni straight lines 
anywhere. The house 
subtends your habits. 
But the dream subtends the day.
3.
I watched them shovel coal.
I watched them up on scaffolds
washing tall buildings. I watched
them washing our car in tunnels
full of gush and spray excitement.
Watching is like being in church.
Prayer is watching with other eyes.

4.
So when I ignore complaints,
mostly my own but yours too
alas, I mean the dream, night
or day, makes things happen.
Go back and dream again,
I tell myself, and all this
will be better, Or different at least. Nothing is the same. The wind comes through the trees.

1 September 2022
Remember the acrobat who could stand on one finger all the rest of him upside down straight up in the air? Unus I think he called himself, breathtaking to watch him. Writers are like that, all their wit and flesh and bones and love and fear, reverence, despair—all have to stand on a pen point, a little ink smudge all that’s left of who they think they are.

1 September 2022
I was thrilled to learn that *pointe* in French could mean in context something like sunrise. Now I stare at this dot on the paper and wait for my clouds to part/
Marconi on the Nova Scotia cliff
a signal sent, time slips past,
the message still on the way,
a galaxy is an idea in mind
not all hat astro-stuff, I just
want to think about the sea
o’er which his message passes
like some old rhyming verse,
gospel hym or Jordan jive,
come from where we ive all
the way to where we are. Think
of an Historical Event. Scare
the daylights out of your cat.
Hear Bismarck’s voice on an
incomprehensibly old recording, yes, Hamilton shot Aaron Burr and became Emperor of Mexico. I mean Marconi is still there, cold wind whipping up his knees, still doing his magic tricks so the Old Countries can hear. And what does any message ever say but I am here? Wake up, it was cold last night, the what came on while we slept, History had slipped out and was gone forever, left the door open behind.

2 September 2022
What do you do with an image or a so-called fact stuck in mind? You sing it out, hum a few notes into some words and out it comes. You don’t want pearls growing in your head.
I sat in the wooden armchair Pound built for Yeats. I sat on the triangular chair halfway up the staircase in Grasmere that Coleridge used. And O sat at breakfast table with Duncan, late afternoon coffee with Olson, you’d think my body by now would have learned something from these sacraments. At least it learned to say its prayers one fleshy word at a time.

2 September 2022
Galf, galf!
A flag raised upside down means vessel in distress. Help if you can.

But only boats wear flags—what can I do when I feel the Bay of Biscay lapping over my heels?

Galf, galf!
I cry and no one hears, or they think I’m playing
a game or drinking wine. But no wine ever touches these parched lips. Only the salt sea. Maube my flag is the sky and II can hoist it right side up.

2 September 2022
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Sorting old clothes
which to wear
and where to hang them,
which to give away,
which to trash. It is morning
I am trying to shovel out
sad images from a bad dream,
cliff top danger, wreckage
left in a decent forest,
back turned, thwarted
by everything I see. And then
some stranger kisses me!
Time to get rid of these
chinos with holes all over,
these jeans that don’t fit,
this bathing suit I never wore,
the sea is so terribly far away.
But after the clothes are heaped
or stored, the dream stays,
scarps of it, you in a raincoat,
your back to me, downhill,
I call and call, you speak clear
without turning, you say
you’re looking t the river.
I sit down on on the base of
a Roman concrete urn until
its gets cold enough to drive me away.

3 September 2022
At the front of the room
the Teacher snaps her pointer
firmly three times on her desk,
loud rough to startle me.

Don’t tell your dreams
just bore us with other songs,
tell us the capital of Gulistan
or who went with Noah as far
as Ararat and no farther, stayed
and built a pyramidal kingdom
upside down in the air, still here,
I sw it myself once when I flew, never mind why, from Trebizond to Budapest, I was pretty then so think of that instead.

3 September 2022
oiseaux uccelli many fowl
the fleet of birds
sudden as a word comes to mind
from nowhere, right?, these
birds sudden over the roof,
brown and white and black,
who are you doday mes amis?
Where will my next thought
come from, over the roof or
over the sea, pretend you’re me
and tell me what to hear,
what bird over the chimney,
white wings gliding upriver
a flight ip the Danube to the dark
forest whence it springs
windless to an eternity of flow,
why are you telling me this,
dear birds, what do you know?

3 September 2022
Do now is what all rivers say,, already I’ve passed.

3.IX.22, *lune*
Cloudy is now day, dense leaves look like fur on the trees.

3.IX.22 lune
SABBATH SERMON

When the trees are asleep
the bones of the skull
have todo their work.
The ancient contract still avails,
things never lie,
they body the clear conscience
of reality, why we listen
to the trees, or what the bones
whisper at the back of the head.

3 September 2022
The witness was always waiting. Pretended to be just standing at a bus stop but we knew better. We watched her, motionless, white skirt, dark hair, face turned away, young or old hard to say. But she had been there forever, she knew we were there, could hear our movements, could look down at our long shadows passing around her.
The sun was low. The years were passing haster and haster, and no buys ever came. I took us so many yeas to realize hat we were standing there too, we had turned into witnesses. Turn round, o please turn round I cried to her, her shoulders shook a little as if she laughed or sobbed. Then the bus came.

3 September 2022
Praise in the window
dinner in the door.
All the apostles summoned
all the tables heavy laden.
Iss! we say in German Eat!
No one tells us what to choose,
hands hover over plates,
doubting fingers linger,
spoons topple out of casseroles,
the bread piled high.
Who made this food, and we,
are we free to eat it?
They look at one another,
understanding beginning to dawn
in some eyes sooner than others. Finally one of the youngest bursts out This is ours, all this is ours, ours from the beginning, all we have to do is learn to eat.

4 September 2022
Box in the attic
you put it there
so long ago now
you forget what’s
in it. What’s in it?
you say and bend
down to pry it open.
Then stop in midair
not sure you really
want to know. Opening
anything is an immense
commitment are you,
just you, really ready
to make? Maybe call
for help. Someone downstairs might be free to come up and help—but won’t that be putting them at risk? Is that fair? Straighten up, leave closed boxes alone. Mystery is good for the soul.

4 September 2022
I sat in that street cafe in Arles like any middle-aged voluptuary watching women pass. But I wasn’t watching women, I was watching the Roman stones outside of town still pale, misty in my mind’s eyes, we can’t easily get over what we’ve seen, the stones of Glanum walk by, the road to Spain shimmers dry yellow earth through steam rising from cappuccino. I can feel my left hand tremble a little under the table, afraid
but of what?

All years are here
it shouts in my head,
there is no now anymore,
once you have been here
there is only then evermore.

I sip my coffee to calm down.
A widow woman all in black
walks in the middle of the street,

yes, color, color save me from the stones of Rome.

4 September 2022
Whistle. A thin stream of breath hurries from your lips, straight line ahead across the empty field. A bird comes down ad porches on it—see, you’ve given one creature pleasure, a place to stay. What kind of bird? you ask. Whistle again, and again until the field is alive with perches
and a whole flock comes down to rest, brodd, breed, sleep, be. You are the Noah of their pilgrimage, ark-less, your breath their paradise.

5 September 2022
Labor Day. Haven’t
I been here before,
a place like Connecticut
downriver, factories
hiding in the trees?

*amor arbor labor rus*

Hard to know what hides
in words, half-heard
a wod sings a different
truth, but who am I
to decide? Grey sky
when I look up,
bright blue if I dare
to close my eyes.
Today we celebrate the workers of the world by laying down our tools. Go for a spin, lie flat on the grass. Worry about all the days to come which are the real labor days. Follow the river to the Sound, turn left and ind the sea eventually. Nothing is easy. But didn’t Stalin assure us work is fun?

5 September 2022
If I were permitted
to lay the deepest
pleasures of my life
before you,

mountain streams
and operas, afternoons in Avignon,
skin close to skin,
the taste of water,
the sound of rain,
the ardor in the heart
in the middle of the Mass,
the first time I read Coleridge,
I would gladly set them,
neatly as my clumsy heart allows,
before you as an offering
to you who somehow, how
I still can’t figure out,
embody all of them
and promise even more
with the far light in your eyes.

5 September 2022
When we wave goodbye we use our right arms because they’re further from the heart. The body waves the absence in and tries to keep safe the ones who are leaving. So, children, only wave if you want them to come back.

5 September 2022
Wiping the door clean of shadow, but the guest stumbles over a sunbeam. Rouse by coffee, the drink the gods once drank in Africa. Or does the story mean humans came from there and gods need us? The guest catches her breath, tells at length all about what she heard in church
years ago, when
Sundays still spoke
or we believed.

(4.IX.22)
5 September 2022
ORANGEADE’

Wasn’t he the conqueror in the old days when Brooklyn still spoke Yiddish and the Bronx was Somewhere Else? Or was it Pepsi Cola, local, lemony and tank god too sweet or egg cream on corner of 8th? How little we know of all that we remember. Clothes the girls wore. Snide comments pf the guys. Boys are driven by hidden terrors, fears hidden in sneers. Where was i? Eastern Parkway at Utica,
antiquity is lost in us, try to remember your Plutarch, your Hesiod, the winner of the first Marathon died by winning, we die by living, pockets stuffed with soggy handkerchiefs, names of men, names of women, a chocolate malted slurped on Nostrand long before the world began.

5 September 2022
How late it was to come to be the stone over the glacis and the men went down, horses herded round the marsh below, on a day like this, grey, they say every acre is a castle, soft light, shadow of a structure that we for all our language cannot see. *Be true to me,* the air is always saying, *I am the custodian* and *I will let you in.*
2. All we ever talk about is weather, remember Thomas’s weather of the heart, Pound ‘s storms of history, Coleridge and all the monsoons of dream. What else do honest people dare to discuss? I’ll never tell you what I thought last night, barely remember it myself.

3. So that rock in the field a casual passerby might call random is the cornerstone of the castle, the chateau at least, palace
it is up to you to build and furnish with all human arts — you have half an hour to do it before the phone call comes.

6 September 2022
The rain has stopped. What is to be heard now is the soft slip of raindrops dripping from the eaves onto the porch roof. Song enough after such long dry weather. And the sky still looks as if it might be up to something, something on the way down.

6 September 2022
Find the old word for it hidden in your mouth, any it, let the mouth’s own mind remember.

2.
There, that’s the lesson for today, in the new ancient arcane physiology. Never mind desire for a minute, the fishing rod, the telescope.
3. The answer is right here and you know it. Mail is too slow, you need a question now. Don’t think you’ll find it in sleep. In fact don’t think at all. Just speak.

7 September 2022
Even a hundred miles away
the sea can wash the brain,
at the shore a slow conversion
sanctifies us sinners. Prove it,
you say, and I can’t, wouldn’t
if I could—the sea needs no
henchmen, no bumbling acolytes.
Like the air it does
all the work all by itself.

7 September 2022
Ninety-five on the equinox, 
snow on Halloween. 
The evidence started early, 
the slow derangement waiting for some great preacher to set it straight. Revise the text! we cried, Bring our old weather back! More decades passed and the closets got confused, overcoat in August? Where did my childhood go? But turns out we were all children gawking at the weather,
shivering at the window,
watching forests burn, blaming
whatever we could name,
coal, oil, chemicals, greed.
But naming didn’t work.
Now we stand in tears
at the window, crying for help.

7.IX.22
Spearmint. Are you still there?
Rock bottom, children play.
Spring up hillside dribbles
pure water down, shines stone.

Cool me with your memories,
gardener. You have yoked
so many rivers and can tell.
Tell. We listen like birds
perched on the talking trees.
Rods of white asparagus
and they kept a pig out back.
Who told you that? Grass
has no memory or we
would not dare walk on it, much less picnic and frolic and all the weird ancient mysteries of outdoors.

Leave it at spearmint, leave i rose for a dreamer maybe to lift to their lips.

7 September 2022
Look at the pictures until you hear the science say.

8.IX.22 lune woke me
After I tell you what it said will you tell me what I mean?

That’s what love is supposed to do, teach me what I’m on earth for by studying you until I can grasp the work required as birds explain the sky.

8 September 2022
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Sleep more sleep less
neither is best,
blue sky thunder
wash hands kitchen
faucet mountain spring.

8.IX.22
Woman in white
plays black piano.
Her face is young
her hands two
hundred years old.
Schumann. A man
waves his arms
wildly, a hundred men
make noises, each
on his own tool.
In quiet parts she
lifts her face, head
tilted back, eyes
closed and on heaven,
then the quick hard parts begin again.
So, someone watched closely what she said and wrote it down in images we hear.
No need to dream.

8 September 2022
Poets, learn your task by watching sunshine polish wet leaves.

Painters, learn your job by listening to raindrops falling from the roof.

Are there other arts put there? Oh yes, composers, sit down
and try to pry a word open and then make notes from what you hear.

Not even I have to tell a sculptors close your eyes see with your fingers.

8.IX.22
If I were nine
I would pray to ten,
if I were green
I would pray to indigo
if I were a horse
I would pray to anyone
come ride me, come ride me
I am strong as a mountain
and I can run.

9.IX.22
The time had come for her to turn into a tree, not forever, not even a long time, maybe just one afternoon in the sun to slip away back into her human form. But now a tree. Stand stiff and think loose, let words and images flutter as they will—
she knows the way. Arms out to catch the light or the dark, each turns into the other anyhow, fingers outstretched too, who knows what bird or bird-like thought will come to rest so briefly in her hand. She feels beneath her something of her sinking into the earth, feels something down there seeping back up into her, she is more and more tree
now, she is tree, she stays. After a time, trees don’t think about time, or they rule it anyhow, after some of it, whatever time is, after a little of it a sudden muscular flex convulses her, she lowers her arms and is a woman again. Or maybe for the first time, she feels so new, the leaves of all her thought flutter down around her, she walks across the lawn, she walks! She goes through a doorway then and says hello to a friend
siting there, who looks up, smiles vaguely, doesn’t know. Friends never know.

9 September 2022
Trees starting to pale,  
they get younger  
and I get older,  
winter is so unfair,  
But still a couple  
of months away,  
be green be green  
my dear teachers,  
I’ll be as brave  
as white hair can be.

9.IX.22
Share the beach with shells, meet new friends on the sand. Wake up far inland—[ray to the river, try to learn its true name, maybe it will teach you yours.

2. Go back to the sand. Night makes Algarve, black sand anywhere. Sleep or waking, it’s all one dream.
3.
They built a cabin out of sticks and reeds, glued clamshells to the roof to catch the rain in so the whole place gleamed in sunshine, they meant to mean their house lived under water under the sea if it could.

4.
Wake more firmly, the sand is only the dust that sleep silts to the eyes.
Blink the beach away
I tell myself, the sea
is always with you—
just don’t try to see it,
the sea is shy. It sends
the sky to look over us.

10 September 2022
Now I’ve told you
what the night told me.

It’s your turn to explain
the dy to me.

What islands
compel us to set out
to find them in an endless sea
and must we get our metal
always and always straight
from the mine?
Aren’t there amuwhere green leaves to hide behind?

Already I hear the pickaxe chopping at the lode, I’m thirsty, but breakfast, isn’t that another planet? And it’s all my fault—I live in a telescope pointed at myself.

10 September 2022
Lydia was full of gold, the river glistened with it but it did not keep, did it, wars away. I wonder, the wealth lingers, the trumpet falls, knives stay sharp. What can I do to live in peace with you— that’s the only riddle worth our time, blaze through the media muddle and be simple, Even that’s too easy to proclaim.

11.IX.22
Ask the waitress
for another napkin
then another.
Someday even my
lips will be clean.

11.IX.22
It feels like itself
all over again,
what could it be?

I ask te animal
I think is me–

he knows, but will
he think I’m his
enough to deserve
an answer?

I’m waiting
with my documents
in hand, ready
for the inspectors
under the streetlights
of this unknown city.

11.IX.22
ROOTLESS

City kids have no right to talk about roots. Under them the subway roars and goes but nothing grows. Farms are fantasies, an orchard something in the Bible. If there is even a Bible.

2. So when the day came I ride beside a farmer on his wagon, the horse slogging in front of us,
squeal of wheels, squeak of the whiffletree, brown horse, the wagon full of cow manure on its way to a field of beets I knew I was in paradise though it smelled like hell, paradise or something else, something only the mind can guess and never prove, this place, this juddering cart.

3.
Forgive me for remembering, a memory is something I want to give to someone else, why it rises up from nowhere
and makes its way into what consciousness you happen to be happening in. Memory is a coin, gold or silver or copper or zinc, to give away, give almost freely to another, whether they like it or not. So that’s why I insisted on giving my old nickel to you.

11 September 2022
I’m sitting in the car and waiting, sitting, waiting. though I wore my shopping shoes.

that’s how the song begins, country abd western glib, the ballroom on horseback, but I live here too, I remember before here was even here—no wonder I’m still waiting.

11.IX.22, Kingston
Leave me out of it,
the lotuses floating on the lake,
the stone wall by the old P.O.
are all we need,
rock and flower—
the different speeds
that matter thinks,
the shroud of history
blurry outline of all
we think happened.
She sat on the wall and talked about things from her childhood.

No way anything can ever end.

12 September 222
he thought there might be gophers living in this field but gophers only I live far west of here. Porcupines in our little woods? Closer, just across the river, rarely.

But vultures have come in the past twenty years, they swoop above the trees, they smell our kitchens, settle out of sight to feed. One with a wounded wing struggled on the lawn last night.
My wife took care of it as well as she could, always caring, always there. And she knows all about gophers too, her folks are from Colorado.

12 September 2022
Maybe cloudy,
maybe France.
Still life in the leaves.

12.IX.22
Color meant red in Spanish (like Colorado) but black Down South. What does color mean anyhow?

The dictionary is a minefield, no word safe from understanding something totally different what I think I mean in saying it.

12. IX. 22
He thought it was he Forum left over from ancient Rome because of all the stones, each one seemed deliberate. *memorious*, he thought, they are full of memories. No Roman would have thought such a sentimental thing but sunshine gives strange permissions to the mind, not just his fingers trailing along the warm stone. Feel.
2. Not Roman. Their triremes never came so far. No mason worked these rough geometries. Mountains rise and mountains crumble at the edge, boulders, spontaneous dolmens form, the wind scours Arizona, New Hampshire, the glacier left its signature, whaleback hills along the river. Here.

3. He forgot all that and sat down on a rock. Big wind today,
made an organ sound in the woods half a mile away. Rest. Let the stone seep its narrative aloft into me, he laughed. The worlds is different when you’re sitting down.

4.
At home he told his friends I saw a mountain today and chatted with its children. His friends smiled as they do—what are friends for? Sustain every flutter of belief, every
fibrillation of consciousness. They had dinner then and talked of other things.

13 September 22022
Unwilling assassin,
Lovecraft in Brooklyn
yet again, must fire
a pistol through a box
of Kleenex at a public
figure he admires,
do it at the corner
of Nostrand and Parker,
no such intersection,
run down the steps
into the subway, ditch
the gun, escape–
all of this clear
in his mind and still
to come. He hates
the future he can see,
smells the scorched
tissue already. Yet
he never knew how light
a gun could be in the hand.

14 September 2022
Suppose your cheekbones came from France and you ride your horse of a Harley along the Delaware where do the words come from? That hill in Lancashire, shortcut through Louisiana quick to the mothering sea? Spill the words it teaches you all over our thirsty ears.

14.IX.22
Sunshine and Lebanese cookies dates-meaty thick on the plate. Then the rain came down, torrents, the world in balance, I’m not the only Libra, scalepans quivering at the afternoon comes to rest. Rain over, sun sets. I feel I’ve heard an opera with my eyes alone. And all the while our talk went on, it’s what we have to do, our share of the music.

14.IX.22, for J&M
Trucks roar by
early morning,
mute the rest of the day
as if...

Never mind *as if*,
such speculation leads
to beds in hospitals
with meager mattresses.

Don’t think about it,
read a book instead,
*Cabala in Your Cupboard*,
say, eat your way wise,
the secret doctrine only
your taste buds can reveal.
Or skip it., forget that too.
Interpretation is so seductive,
but the riskiest feat of all.

14.IX.22
WHAT THE TREE SAID TODAY

When winter comes
we go to work
and think below the ground.

There all the will
is stored that works the world.
Will and not wish,

the ever-renewable resource
of the unseen.

Learn to will and not wish—
you see the sun’s light
but you cannot see the sun,
hidden in its own radiance.

You walk on earth—
learn to hear what lives,
speaks beneath your steps.

14 September 2022
The only thing more dangerous than desire is the absence of it.

–Sempronius Bufo

Wise man back then wrote in Latin, sort of, early Renaissance. maybe Swiss. they called him The Toad because from utter stillness he would leap into wit, pounce on the sleepy ears of all the meager monks. They wrote his sage remarks down in books and carefully
hid the books away.
A crow call made me fetch one down from a musty shelf at the back of someone’s mind.

14.IX.22
Thursday on God’s earth. I woke thinking all the changes are so slow, so hard to make, so hard to take, that maybe doing anything at all is a sin against perfection, a perfect world it is our task to recognize, tolerate, celebrate and no more. Strange taught, a deer standing on an autumn meadow, vigilant, a little bit afraid.

15 September 2022
Persephone snatched from flowery meadows into the underworld is any girl getting married.

There. The truth is out, took a long time for us to tell it, shout it out.

And through the blessing of her mother (her radical female intelligence) she comes back to her life part of every day, time
with him and time alone, 
night or sunshine as she chooses 
and is herself, nobody’s wife,

her own powerful voice aloud 
making kings tremble and artists 
flourish their sciences in song.

15 September 2022
A white car and a black car meet at a V-intersection. The white one pauses to let the black car go first. I take this as a good omen for this day. Later I’ll check it with the flight of crows.

16.IX.22
THE LECTURE

Close to the edge of the stage
he stood in the empty hall
to practice what he meant to say.
But what was that?

To calm
his mind he counted rows
stretching up in dark.
Thirty-two. But the hall
curved out dim from the stage
so no two rows were the same,
he’d have to count the seats
one by one. Not good.

So he began: “words
fail me” then stopped, realized he’d spoken a contradiction as well as a dumb latitude.

We fail the words, not their fault. Start again, tell the truth. “I have failed the words, yet stand here to tell you...”

This is the hard pert now, what is he going to say? “...to tell you, just tell you that I am here, and I think I’m here for you.” Stopped again, confused again.

What does ‘you’ look like? Japanese tourists? Naval cadets?
Young housewives of Palo Alto?
Who are the people of his world?
Don’t you have to know who they are before you speak?
No, he thought, by speaking I will find out who they are by how they listen.

But words are needed to rouse them, caress them, summon their identities. Hard work in an empty auditorium, so much harder it will be when they are there, here, they, they who will have to be what he means by ‘you.’
Are they ready for their task? Suddenly the lights come up, he hears the doors opening, his chest tightens, he draws in a sharp breath. He wishes there was a lectern to lean on, to read his message from.

But he has no message, already people are starting to drift in. He thinks “this is the cosmological moment, this is how things began.”

Maybe he’ll start by saying that—he feels safe in the fancy word.
Not fancy, just the truth.
Everything does begin
when they come walking in.

16 September 2022
DENDROTHERAPY

The trees heal me. The sight of them, sound of them, shadows of them more than adequate. They touch with the shimmer of their leaves, like Dr Mesmer’s passes, never actually touching the skin. The skin is our light we give to them as they send us so fully
the purifying wave.
Stay near the trees.
Watch the trees reverently,
listen to what they say in you.

16 September 2022
TABLE

Somewhere there is a able. One person is sitting at it, one hand resting on its otherwise empty wood. That is all I know, all that the prophet told us when we stood reverently at his shrine and said What should any of us know? He told the table, nothing more.
2. We who believe in prophecy have our options. Pilgrimage to find the actual table, learn whose hand is on it, what that being may tell us or require. Or we can take it all as metaphor and sped our fancies dreaming oak and walnut, pine and maple, till we come up with a stretch of empty wood wide as the sea and stare intently at that hand envisioned, till its moves, makes a gesture we can spend a century ot two interpreting.
3. When we were children we heard the grownups speak of the ‘water table’ – they meant the level beneath the ground from which water rises in the ell. But we saw something different, a vast sheet of shimmering light. And maybe that’s the one our prophet meant, the hand a claw maybe of some sea beast rising from underneath the world to shame us, shake us, seize us or pint the way to the stars. Who knows? We can’t tell wood
from water. I look down at my own hand and wonder. The smell of prophecy lingers as if some big wild animal had lived here for a while, then gone.

17 September 2022
THE UNKNOWN ORGAN

for M.P. and C.M.

Just as the thymus gland slowly shuts down its doings as its work is done and the child is growing nicely, so also there is an unknown gland ‘m going to tell you about–doctors are ashamed to. It starts growing about the time of one’s first kiss, when Other People suddenly take on a vital meaning for us, their bodies, their presences absolutely needed to supply something we didn’t even know we needed till then. This organ, so slow
beginning, grows stronger and stronger, and its arcane secretions generate or motivate more and more of our activities by the time that art and music and literature and religion all begin now to respond to that gland, answer some of its summons. The gland goes on growing. the arts and liturgy serve its urges, but never to the extent of making the body of the Other less appealing, less needed. All arts and worship are modes of yearning for the Presence of the Other. This gland never ceases producing its hormone. As long as we live, it summons us to love. And so for
centuries cabals of physicians and moralists have sought ways of muting its call—drugs have been developed but hey kill much more than desire. Let us pray the sciences learn to leave love alone. The gland guides us, and we have souls to lead us to what we truly need.

17 September 2022

What the tree told me
I tell you.
Never doubt my wood.
17.IX.22, lune
WESTMINSTER HALL
SEPTEMBER 2022

Lying in wait
lying in state
mother of so many
last lesson
teach us to grieve.

They walk weary, cold,
by the golden coffin,
a few bow, cross themselves,
genuflect, weep.
But most look baffled,
earnest, anxious, as if
so many hours standing
in the queue, now this.
Mother tell me
what to feel
and how to feel it,
tell me that this moment
has its meaning
even for me,
or what can I do to help.
am I here for you
or for me,
the soldiers motionless,
statues in weird uniforms,
they can stay, they
must strand but I
can go. Where
shall I go, mother, 
we have come to ask you 
that, your last counsel, 
where should we go?

18 September 2022
What is a pagan?
Someone who lives in the country and knows why.

Easier to hear the truth out here

and I’m lazy, like to lie here and listen, tree after tree.
Go read your alchemy,
your occult sciences,
city stuff, all those lights—
I’ll stay here and let
the air distill me,
see who first turns gold.

18 September 2022
A few miles north
the train is hooting
on the river. Comes
closer, following its sound,
moving only a tenth as fast
if that. So many times
it tells me Here I am
and here I come, listen,
the river teaches me
reverence for all that speak,. Which way is the train moving?
Coming sounds the same as going.

18 September 2022
If I had a country of my own
I wouldn’t let them sing
in its national anthem
any ‘bombs bursting in air.”

Instead I would pray
the way Mother Ann Lee did
for “the gift to be simple,
the gift to be free.” There
is the true American song.

18 September 2022
I don’t think it was an accident that at the crisis of His awakening Lord Buddha was seated quiet on a stone beneath a living tree. He listened to those two balanced voices, complements, the fixed and the flowing, and I think they helped, the last secret: what the earth knows.

18 September 2022
Rigorous solicitation breaks most silences, sandstone remembers knows how to keep both mum and murmur, word and won’t. Carve silence, solicit slices with quick gestural feints of mind, mood, mouth. Kiss me say to everything and why nor. The eager of my lustful questions breeds the world.
And not just one. *Rigor Vitae* is what is needed, ramrod truth and stand at rapt attention before. Everything is a mirror. Kiss me, say it again, rigorous as rain, ask, ask, everything is an answer, that’s what mirrors are, ;kiss me, prove you’re there, sandstone, celery stalks, palm leaves in Jerusalem, new year coming, good star on all of you, kiss me, kiss me again and again.

18 September 2022
My father when he was a kid worked in a sugar works dockside where they unloaded it, he stood in mountains of sugar shoveling it into sacks the way they used to, maybe still do. He hated the smell of the stuff, ever after, drank his coffee with only a tiny drop of milk. I’m not brave enough—bring on the sweet stuff but hold the cream.

18.IX.22
ACTION

As she walked past where he was seated he swiftly lunged forward and pressed his face firmly against her body.

What are you doing?

I am trying to include you i the circle of my love.

Why do it so roughly, give me a chance to say no.
None of us has a chance to say no. I pressed my face, my public identity, against your body, your private identity. When public twins with private, the result is yje secret— and so a secret bond was formed, in some sense we belong to each other now.

But I don’t want to belong to anybody!

No choice, I’m afraid. We belong in some way, some infinitesimal but genuine, efficacious way, to everyone we encounter. The more
people we belong to, the richer and more famous we become—celebrities belong to millions, hermits only to the wolves and brds and their image of God, but even that belonging sustains them. So now you sustain each other, somewhere inside us we have mingled our identities, just a little, but it works. Inside us we lift a single chalice, like in the Tarot card, and sip from it and are nourished. Just wait and see.

But you should have asked my permission, she complained.
O please try to understand—presence is permission enough, and now I am more fully yours than if we had just passed each other in the street—but that too would have changed us, chained us, you might think. Belonging does not hurt. You’ll see, it heals.

She said nothing,. Like a good scientist, she waited to evaluate the process by its outcome. Time will tell—that’s why we have time in the first place.
19 September 202
Warmer days are warning days, keep up your guard, All of us have our own glacier growing towards us day by day, down the slow slopes of the mountain of our difference it comes and comes, degree by degree, the cold that pit poor Ötzli to sleep all these millennia, sleep is on its way, the blankets that seem to shield you make you drowsy, drowsy, wool is the secret traitor
in the pay of cold, the sheep’s
revenge for all that shearing,
you and the shorn lamb stand
shivering in the face of what’s to
come.

19 September 2022
Twisting path around
go up the hill.
Tower atop. Fields
afar. I’d guess ten
thousand years but
what do I know,
what can I know
of this place the world?
Time has so many
hands, stone
so many languages
and the grass is always, always beginning.

I came here once and if never left.

20.IX.22
PLANCTUS

Deerskin slippers
bare legs, exiguous
tunic, staff at the side
standing like stone.
Woman surveys garden,
plans revisions, calm
cruelty of gardeners
giving only some things
lease to grow. The right
to live. I mourn
the sapling uprooted
for being too close
to the hibiscus, i grieve
for every plant or weed
or rose or tree she or I
or anyone ever cut down.
No business of ours
what happens in the ground.

20 September 2022
I FOUND A WELL
and lived beside it,
called it a wife
and worshipped it
in my feeble way,
a sip at a time and saw
not just my face
when I looked down
but the stars above me
as if all the heavens
hid in its waters.
All I am is what it
leaves in me, lets me lick
my lips and speak. 20.IX.22
Please write me later
poems say,
we need some more sleep.

20.IX.22, lune
ODE TO PERSEPHONE

Don’t make me keep your secrets. It’s not about writing books or french-kissing the clouds or getting a captive orchestra to hum along with your head.

It’s about being how you are and doing it right. Men discuss and evaluate; they stall. But you lunge forward, right to the goal, the Grail, you bring it back in your hands. Every day is holy and every day has its own Grail. And you smile.
and are quiet, and know, and so before we even think it through you instantly rush to do it, you bring home what we need to live.

2. Persephone, constant traveler, brings us back what we need, knowledge of the underworld. What the dark knows, what day tends to forget, busy children that we are, we need you, our emissary from the underworld. The *underword*. The word beneath what we think we mean.
Word, world, how could schools ever teach them different?

3.
Some say your name might once have meant the destroying voice—What did it destroy but timidity, male fear, stubborn speechlessness of men scared of their dreams? What a voice always rips open: silence, the sinister unspoken that chains men to dull routines out of fear,
weariness, wariness.  
YThe voice calls,  
a voice wakes them,  
clear shining trumpet  
call of the high female voice,  
no growl, all Grail and grace.

21 September 2022
The song of whatever sounds right sings me,
or how can a harp choose whose fingers caress its strings, tug them into telling?

My hands sleep the dream of words.

21.IX.22
Something
probably not enough.
But is the answer
ro nothing.
Man and woman,
mother and father
waves breaking on the shore,
all on the way
hurrying to now.

21.IX.22
Lie on your side.

--Why?

So I can see and admire Mount shoulder and the Hill of Hip.

—But isn't that where you started, so long ago? Watching bodies and thinking geology, watching mountains and thinking people?

Yes, yes! That's just how it was I saw who we are, beautiful pieces of earth
walking around. Seeing the body as landscape is to see us as we truly are.

21 September 2022

TO THE THEOLOGIANS

Why would God
create a dead world?

God didn’t.
God created a living world, a world of life,

life n an infinity of forms.

All things are alive, have consciousness each of its own kind.

Not all of them move around in space, sp,e move instead in time.

A stone can’t walk around
and we can’t dwell in intense concentration for a hundred thousand years.

God made a living world, a world of thinking, speaking, listening, understanding.

God made a world of knowing.

22 September 2022

AUTUMN NOW

The sun holds the scale-pans balanced before her eyes and smiles, then closes them.
We call it rain. Thunder louder than I ever heard it shakes e awake. Dark, scary, but I feel her smile so far away. First day of Libra. We rise into this time they call so strangely Fall.

22 September 2022

= = = = =

Interception. Astrology, a sign trapped between signs in one narrow house.
History. RAF heading off Stukas over the Wash. Message. Love letters seized by jealous government. What more can I tell you before they cut us off?

22 September 2022

STATIONS

I counted in dream the stations on the A train line, magic street of my home town,
from my own door to the home of my north-most friends all the way through commerce, college and secret temples of all my growing-up religions, bazaars of sacred sin, mermaid taverns of young mind, Canal, Houston, 8th, 14th, 23d through the golden zone artery of the the core.

from Euclid to 145th I learned to think and watch and write in the roar of its rush, where better to learn the world than speeding underground through flickering dark?
2.
But why did I dream them, why did I wake with their numbers on my lips, all the eight-block runs between stops on the merciful west side Manhattan runs? Am I a miser gloating with my fingers over the those who served me, express and local, carted hungry me fast to the feast? Friends and galleries and books and never come home, only literally, exhausted,
three in the morning, the few blocks from the end of the line?

3.
But nowadays that line goes on, and if I still lived in the Old Mill I’d be taking the A train in the other direction, east and south to the actual sea. But memory lets me do that now, right, I know the sea some, I know Rockport and Malibu, Norfolk and Normandy—but now I don’t have the names and numbers singing in my head, what is a train without stations,
a busy worm at work for others. How far apart, underground or over the bay, the Hammels, Playland, Lost Irish of Rockaway, just names now, numberless, nothing to dream about, no sidewalks in the sea.

23 September 2022
The calendar calls this the first full day of autumn. Wind tosses the trees about, they’re getting ready. But they’re always getting redy to be always there—what does a calendar know about the dreamlife of a tree? I’m not much wiser but I do try to wave back at ehw wind-waving leaves.

23 September 2022
Staring is fixed, hard and deaf, gazing is gentle and hears well. So many things I’ve been taught by the beech tree out beyond my morning window. Gazing is listening, leads to hearing, hearing happens language, language slips out of us into the world, translating this text of wind-quivering leaves.

23 September 2022
Sum up the being here
leave to another,
the sea’s not so far now
you keep inside you,
and all those caravels of thought
gaudy-pennoned tossed
on your waves!

And memory,
that soft-furred carnivore,
keep in her cage in comfort,
feed her a trickle of now.

24 September 2022
Unlike the owl
we are meant
to move on a straight line
Find it. Takes a while
but what else is time for?
And once you’ve found it
follow the guidepost of your nose,
onward! What else
are noses for?

24.IX.22
He woke and found the antiquated obvious all round him, soft as a hand-me-down quilt.

History is a load of laundry and the washing machine is on the fritz. They used to say that but who was Fritz?

More history, more musty smell as he tottered dwn the hall, too early, too early, the sun came up too soon.
The world is divided into moieties:
those who have no appetite
for breakfast and those who do.
Eating is such a commitment!
Even a cup of coffee enlists
in the army of the obvious.

So he went back to sleep, relieved
that his skin
was his only uniform.

24 September 2022
SCALES

A day any day
has scales like a fish,
the instants glisten
in the flood of time,
none truer than the next,
a gleaning going by.

2.
Catholics had to eat fish on Friday
to tell them the week was done,
gird for the sabbath and the day
beyond it when the Sun
wipes out old sins and rises—
every Friday Calvary,
every Sunday Easter.

But why the fish? The scales, the palest flesh, the ooze of it doesn’t look like blood? And we swim with them too, time our chilly mountain stream. Bo wonder those glamorous nutritionists assure us eating fish improves memory. But would we want to do that?

3. 
*Pescatori, affonde l’esca*
*per l’azura immensita*

is how it sounds when he sings it
big moment in the opera, 
Fishermen, plunge your net 
through the blue immensity 
and pray that it’s a fish you catch 
and not just a glimpse 
of the underworld busy below, 
 chests of gold, dancing bones, 
o fishermen maybe stay home, 
eat pasta, cheese and olive oil 
and love-apples they call them, 
try to forget as much as you can.

24 September 2022
Have you noticed that most people lie down to sleep? Does that mean that standing up and walking around are somehow unnatural? We are surface folk, we dig down, fly up a while, always come back onto the flat, the web of gravity holds us tenderly.

24.IX.22
Naming the dream people you know so well there but never waking. Sometimes they say their names themselves, such as I am Katherine with a K but mostly they leave nomenclature to you. To me, I mean, who have to wake and write them in this dream journal I call my life. Who are you now, are you the same
as yesternight, same eyes, different posture, a smile walking a way, a classic car driving through woods, crimson, just fast enough.

25 September 2022
NEUES LIEBESLID

Come zoom with me and be my love, and we on opposite shores of the sea will mash our time zones together, be and see and talk together but leave the touch to the air alone, surely it must waft me to you and you to me one day, even when the screen is dark.

25. IX. 22
The woods are dark today though the sky is pale.
All quiet. I barely know what I know.
Words woke me – how could they be mine
and yet I write them down/
Or is it up, against the impossible gravity
of language, always settling on some one thing
and meaning so much more.
Now the trees seem lighter already, after only a hundred
or so words in. Do we talk the day into place? No. We are only the poor prisoners of what we mean.

25 September 2022
Hercules rules a sudden island south of the mind’s reach. We depend on word of him brought my seabirds, and we have to listen carefully to learn he is still alive and well, labors afresh every year, bulls and barristers, lions and lovers, when you rule an island you belong to everything on it, near it, over it, and far away women dreaming of it, and men resolved to sail there if tomorrow ever gets here. You are safe,
Lord Hercules; alone at the core of every task you stand ready strong as a story, true as breath.

25 September 2022
The calibrations of desire required by a trembling leaf remind us of language, translating Proust, finding the right words to talk to God on the confessional or on the podium where angels listening surround us disguised as us. The leaf quivers in the least breath. What do you ask of me it asks of us, how can you see me in all my immaculate identity and not revise
the structure of your will, your wants, needs, grasp of your hands as you reach out, your fingers trembling too?

26 September 2022

_from & for Charlotte_
The coaster falls from the cup drops to the floor when I pick it up to drink. Doesn’t fall far, easily retrieved. But I feel terror of that tiny instant when a thing misbehaves, the stone rushes up into the sky.

26 September 2022
Be a tree today
so I can
hear you more clearly.

26.IX.22, lune
We all are virgins once—that is the secret.
Once virgin ever virgin.
A tabernacle in the heart inviolate. We say flesh but we mean other people.
We say love, but we mean the place pristine inside us whose radiance sometimes illuminates another’s face and we say we are in love, an odd old-fashioned way of saying that love is in us.

26 September 2022
Vultures flying over the shore
you saw and filmed a minute of
so I could study and could see
how seldom they flipped wings,
mostly soared or floated on
the living currents of the air
no one can see but they can ride,
every now and then flourishing
a wing almost as if saying thanks

26.IX.22
What the sea spells
I have said before
listening with my child ear
rapt along the shore
or brought home to hum
in the little tin pail
the back of my head,
occipital symphonies!
grown-up words to say
what the oldest animal
my mother told me
so I could, let me, tell you.

27 September 2022
Third childhood
when the light comes back—
no infant more! infant
means ‘can’t speak;
but hear him roar! One word
makes all the difference,
elegant or Brooklynese
the moon listens patient
as ever, eager even for more.
Keep talking so the world stays born.

27.IX.22
There are differences.
The crow says I see you!
A raven says See me if you can.
I heard a woman in Japan
talk about a falcon,
I heard a hawk squeal
right over my own head
I think though you never
can tell what the sky sees.
Differences, spaces left
between words to let
the light of truth shine in.
Punctuation makes to teach us
how to breathe. Writing
is so strange, made up
entirely of differences,
two vultures circling over
a duck-blind on the river.
Differences, so many, the birds
keep teaching us, so many birds
I can’t tell a shovel from a spade.

27 September 2022
The private life of a pronoun shows a little on the subway, how it leans against the door, swings from a strap, sways with the shuddering train or presses back against the pole or sits demurely eyes in a book or gazes frantically at all the rest yearning for its verb to come.

27.IX.22
All the mail I was writing
all dream long now finally
sent by waking I can rest,
breathe in that apple-sweet
silence where words are born.
Look out the window, child,
and wait attentive, write down
carefully what your teachers say,
tree, cloud, empty road.

28 September 2022
Things balance out. Balzac drank as much coffee precisely as the ink he dipped his pen in. Maybe? And all the stone Michelangelo chipped away some sly Briton pulverized brought home and laid a gleaming pathway leading to a secret shrine where one day a god appeared. You won’t read that in a book, it just happened to be, and whatever is, is true.
And think of the sea birds over the Thames, who heard Shakespeare’s voice shouting pr coaching in The Globe below, think of how well they heard him, carried the power of his words—so to this day we shiver in clarity when we hear a seagull cry.

28 September 2022
LLANTO

Soon all the books
I can no longer read
will roll away, maybe
all together in a caravan
on the way to wiser owners,
readers with eyes
and tender hands I hope,
who’ll flip through pages softly
and blow away the dust of all my
years.

28.IX.22
The webbing
under the upholstery
that holds the cushioning
that holds thee,
I use the singular
to express
there’s only one of you
no matter how many you are,
a love song
in other words,
the way music holds us
while we hold
our breath long enough
for the heart
(hat old plush easy chair)
eases our whole
body into speech.

29 September 2022
A word fell
from the sleep tree
rolled on the grass
came to a stop.
Now what.
Not a mushroom
native to thus ground
not an apple toppled
from a branch I knew.
So what to do?
Kneel down before it
(not in worship,
or not yet, though my knees
remember other genuflections)
bend close, closer to it,
take a deep breath and puff out,
blow the word and see where
and whither and why and who
it rolls its own way to.
Then use your breath to
keep it rolling, coax the rest.

29 September 2022
MICHAELMAS ODE

1.
The visiting professor from the University of Universe, chief justice in Supreme Clarity, photographed by William Blake, spokesman of speech itself, he lectures simultaneously in eight billion classrooms, those awkward chunky places at the back of our heads. And maybe not just ours.
2. Imagine: the mushroom hears him too, and the shark, sandstone, the billowing wave. And every bird. Not just me the crows were talking so fast and furious yesterday announcing the Eve of Language, glad day the messenger comes naked of all but his message.

3. *Who is like God* the books say his name means but they never told me whether
that ‘who’ is relative pronoun or a question, I don’t go to cocktail parties much anymore so hardly anybody I can ask. Maybe I’ll ask him, if I dare, I know he’s there, and there is sometimes here, and his feast is now. But then it always is.

29 September 2022
FLUMINA

When I was a kid
I was all about rivers,
wanted to know them,
cross them, sometimes even
float in a boat on one
a few minutes of its long day.
Shallow Delaware upstate,
vast Hudson sprawling
through our harbor into ocean,
the East all green and oily
and they said it was no river
but the sea, but good enough
for me. A river comes from
and goes to, and moves slow
enough for me to see everything that was and will be. And they had names! Rivers I would never see, Orinoco, Irrawaddy! Their names alone carried me along, children are rafts, everybody knows that, and there we float and some keep going. I live in the grace of what I have been given, a house with a window, from it I can see the slim Metambesen slipping down to be the Hudson.

29 September 2022
CARLESS IN RONDOUT

To be without an auto a day or three might be liberating. *Auto-* means self in Greek, so selfless you might stroll upside down (I know you always wanted to) toes tickled by the clouds, hair trailing down and tickling in its turn the brows of passing ordinary boring right-side-u[ pedestrians. When you get tired, sprawl out on the top of a leady tree, beech, say, with smooth leaves...
and listen to all the sweet silly endless talk below, generations jabbering away while you read the quiet pale prayer book of the clouds.

`  29.IX.22

for D & R
Altar is *alter*,
the other.
We are engineered to,
geared to,
feel compelled to the other.
All feeling lead there
to remind us, mind us
that we are here for,
only for the other,
person, mind, self—
the other is the altar
before which we pray.

*(from a recent note)* 29.ix.22
The effect of waiting is like a stadium both in the modern sense where games are sold and in the ancient sense we see in the arena of Paris or the bullring at Arles. Stone seats, wooden seats open to the air and something happening down there between us and the earth, something hard, a man maybe being beaten, a beast being killed and all we have to do is watch.
and call ourselves the people and gather here because we still think there is something to see.

29.ix.22 (recent v.v.)
It could be winter, it could be worse. The groundhogs are getting sleepy and I feel like one of them. 43 degrees, September. I need Mahler. I need a cigarette.

29.IX,22
I feel cut off
from whatever it is,
a sun-crunch ed cliff
in a paragraph of Proust,
a cello in a friend’s hallway
I once itched to play.
Nobody owns music
and she ran away.
In real life houses
lean on other houses
and the street runs on,
game court for mystery,
games of children, ball
and stick, will I ever grow up,
at the back of old people’s heads
a stuffed owl counts memories,
all the names, places and faces,
why bother to remember
when the sidewalk is right here?
Walk, the curb will lead you,
follow the rain, stay off the bus,
here is coming closer even now.
I ssay this sermon to myself
over and over. Someday I’ll get
brave enough to kneel down
and scrawl it in white chalk
on those neat cement pages
the book of sidewalk spreads,
smart as an 8-year old again.

299/30.OX.22
THE RIVER

Grey translucent sludge inching along, globs of food and organs in it. It scared you and that scared me until I knew suddenly that this is me, my being and my body processing what happens in it and to it, ugly crawl. Do something of course I told myself, exercise whatever’s left of me.

30 September 2022
Harsh as the dream was
to escape
at least it wrote me.

30,IX,22, lune
Germans say *du*
and French say *tu*
and mean just the one
person I’m talking to
but we say *you*
which used to mean
all of you, or as the wise
Southron says, *y’all.*
But now it’s anybody,
any may number can play
but we’ve let *thee* and *thou*
slip away, we only use them
to be heard in heaven.

30 September 2022
Not much going on,  
one more song  
hard enough to sing,  
trees are green,  
sky sort of blue  
and I love you  
all over again—  
that’s what days are for,  
plane landing over Idlewild,  
empty bottle on the shelf.  
notes I scrawled last night.

30.IX.22
Why do people go anywhere when here is right here?

30.IX.22, lune
What can you learn from Greece that this stone couldn’t tell you?

30.IX.22, lune
The picture is so different from its object. It makes me wonder if I’m the one who ought to be looking at it. Or is every image calling for the Other and I’m just intruding on a timeless intimacy between the image and Someone Else.

30.IX.22

=
Sp I have played
with every toy I could find,
Bible and commentary, Hesiod,
baseball, Donizetti, Faust.
But things stand still. asking,
objects are so demanding—
Listen to the chair tell
what it has endured,
and leaf shadows dancing on it
the pale curtain on the window
whispers. I am your mother.

30 September 2022
Have you ever tried the moon for breakfast? I hear troops marching on the ocean floor. Everything tells me I’m wrong, I cherish their unanimity—a blessing in being obvious.

30 September 2022
Oats litter the floor.
Stable. With spoon
I counteract the spill.
Horse here. A horse
is used to sharing.
No clothes, all warmth
comes from within/
The seed. The center.

30 September 2022
Kingston